

***Play
in the
Public
Realm***

The City of Cambridge invites you to design playfully



Everybody plays. Play is something that people of all ages—not just children—enjoy, and is an integral part of great cities. Play gets people moving, spurs curiosity and imaginative thinking, and brings people of different ages, abilities, and backgrounds together.

Play can take many different forms: running, climbing, or jumping in a field; engaging with an interesting piece of public art; playing board games on a cafe table. Play does not just happen in confined spaces: the entire city can be a place for play.

Whether publicly or privately owned space, the public realm is a representation of the community's values, and it is here that a city demonstrates and provides for the quality of life for its community members. Playful design in the public realm can make projects and places stand out, and playful places are ones that people are attracted to and want to return to again and again. A playful public realm can bring *engagement*, *serendipity*, and *delight* to members of a community, and it is important for everybody in Cambridge to have places and opportunities for play.



PLAY



BEYOND



THE



HAPPENS



PLAYGROUND



Surfaces: Walls, Sidewalks, Streets

Planes don't have to be plain

Are there elements that are child-friendly in terms of size, color, texture, design? Are there elements of the urban fabric that are inviting to seniors?



engagement



Where are the routes to schools, parks, business centers, other nodes of activity?



Infrastructure: Water, Light, Streetscape

Form follows fun(ction)



If integrated into the design process, playfulness should not interfere with function, take up extra space, or be excessively costly.





Spaces: Plazas, Corridors

*More than
empty space*



What makes this space special? Is there a sense of discovery, curiosity or wonder to visitors or passers-by? Does it stimulate imagination, or encourage people to engage with it?



Are there elements that can be enjoyed equally by people with or without physical, visual, hearing, or other disabilities?





Entrances, Transit

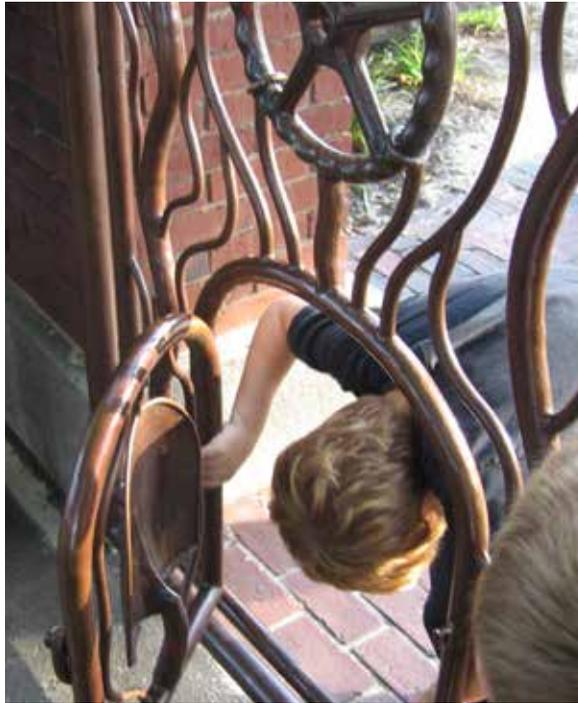
Façades,

Structures:

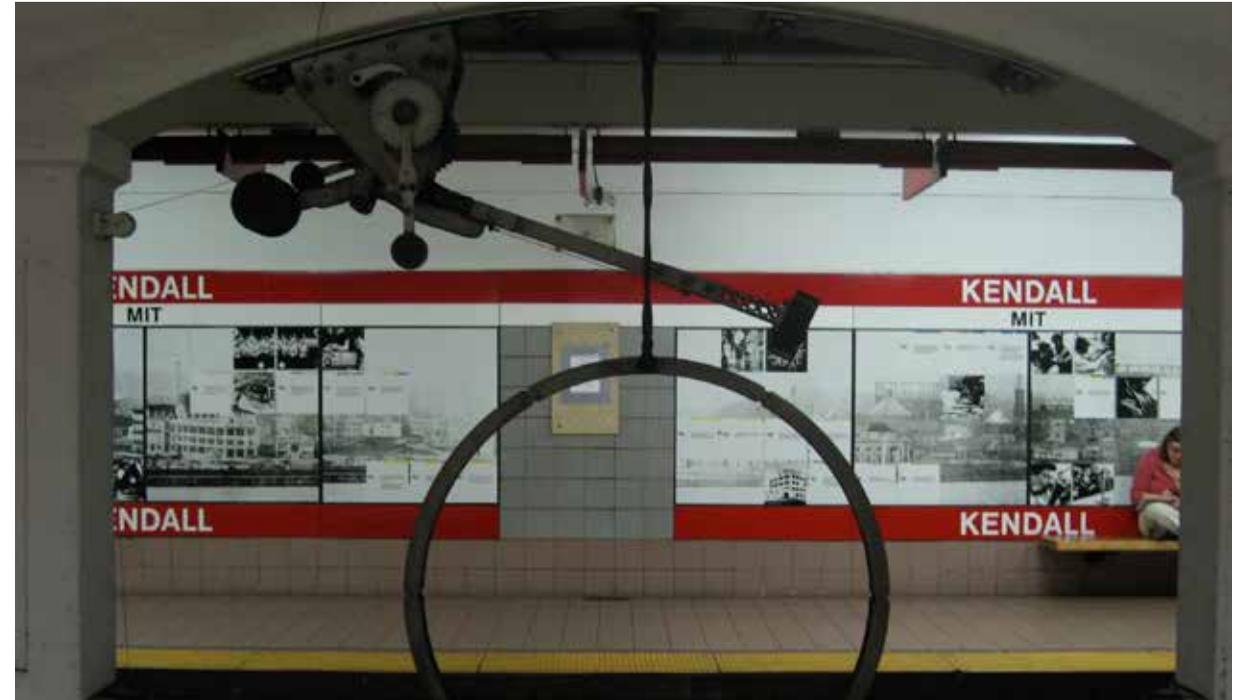
Stations, Public Buildings

Structure(d) play

All design is artistic, whether it is done by an engineer, an architect, or a professional artist. What are the ways that design can be used to provoke thought, stimulate imagination, and convey a message about a place without the involvement of an artist?

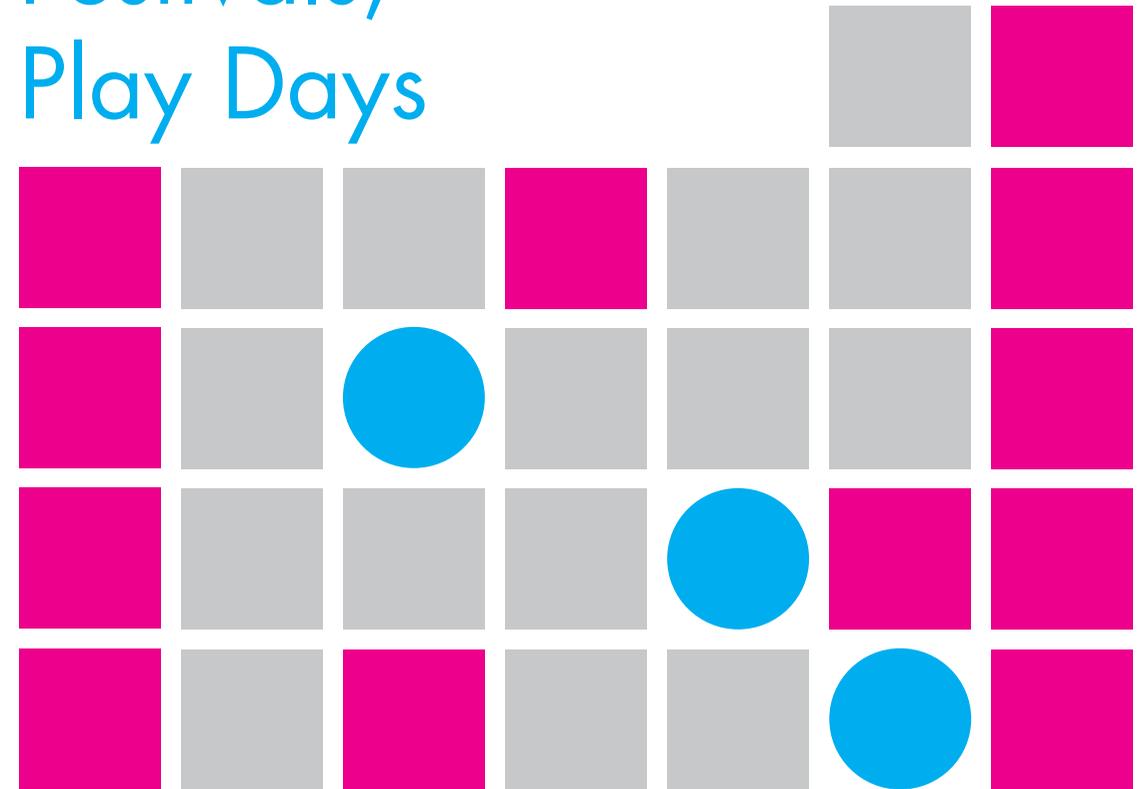


Consider "playfulness" in balance with other design factors, such as engineering performance, aesthetics, accessibility, environmental standards, and maintainability.





Programming: Performances, Festivals, Play Days



*All Work and No Play
Make Cities Dull Places*



Where do people of different ages go to play? Where do people meet? Where do people linger?

How can you make your city more playful?

Cut out the tiles from the following pages, and place them in a container. Choose 5 tiles from the container and place them face up – these will be elements to include in your playful city.

A piece of a fence that can be manipulated in an interesting way

A “focal” element within a public space that draws people together to view or interact with it (e.g., an interactive fountain, sundial)



An unexpected object that encourages make-believe (e.g., chairs carved out of tree stumps)

A “trail” of elements along a sidewalk that introduces the feeling of playfulness in one’s footsteps – perhaps linking neighborhood parks with each other, or with schools

(create your own)

An interactive, kinetic or musical installation found in an unexpected place (e.g., the musical sculptures at the Kendall MBTA station)

Features that offer a glimpse into engineering or science in everyday life, e.g., city infrastructure (storm drains, water system, electrical grid, etc.)

An unexpected natural space, like a small grove of trees, in the middle of the city

A painting or sculpture embedded into the urban realm in a surprising or unexpected way

Elements of the streetscape that are "child-sized," such as benches and chairs, to encourage use by children



A collection of features across an area that provide the experience of a scavenger hunt, code or puzzle

A game-playing space

(create your own)

A small patch of aromatic flowers

A grassy hill where people can sunbathe or where children can roll down or sled in the wintertime (e.g., the front lawn of Cambridge City Hall)

Signage, bulletin boards, or other physical features that allow community members to leave messages for others



Spaces that can host temporary outdoor gatherings, such as seasonal farmers' markets



A water feature that stimulates curiosity and exploration (e.g., the "misting fountain" outside the Harvard Science Center)

(create your own)

A stretching/gathering area along a running or bicycling route

An arrangement of streetscape features, such as seating, to enhance views and encourage gathering around an open space, body of water, monument, or landmark building

Accessible restrooms (in commercial buildings, civic buildings) near spaces that attract activity over long periods of time

An outdoor area with movable tables and chairs near an area with cafés, ice cream shops, takeout restaurants



Inclusive features that provide meaningful play opportunities for people with and without different types of disabilities (visual, hearing, motor, etc.)

Elements of the streetscape that encourage outdoor enjoyment and low-impact movement by elders, such as swinging benches

Signage, images, sculptures or other features that encourage people to think about and imagine past uses in the area, or even future uses

Bike shops or maintenance facilities near popular bike routes

(create your own)

A small "point play" element that can be spun, climbed on, crawled through, jumped over, etc.

A storm drain, stretch of curb, cycle track or sidewalk divider that is a playful shape or material





Images numbering based on upper-left position of the image, according to the grid above

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<http://www.flickr.com/photos/35034365374@N01/2434200018>

Decorated Fence

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/10064873@N00/galleries/72157624123168347/>

Bridge, Yekaterinburg, Russia

<http://yodigo-contrablog.blogspot.com/2011/02/domino-bridge-domino-bridge-domino.html>

Snail on Building

<http://www.fubiz.net/2009/11/17/grape-frogg/grape9/>

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2. City Museum in St. Louis, MO

<http://quirkytravelguy.com/the-city-museum-in-st-louis-a-giant-playground/>

3. Sidewalk Art

<http://www.streetartutopia.com/?p=2014>

4. ArtPrize Festival, Grand Rapids, MI

<http://junkyardarts.com/art-news/art-prize-finding-creativity-inspiration-and-success-in-michigan/>

5. *Imagine That* Bricolage, Grand Rapids, MI

<http://www.mosaicartnow.com/2009/10/news-updates-from-grand-rapids-hanoi-and-gloucester-ma/>

7. *Water Dances* (Phyllis Labanowski), Cambridge, MA

8. *Dino* (Conlastic)

<http://2009.gp.co.at/stayfocused/conlastic/>

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3. Decorated Building, Poland

<http://oddstuffmagazine.com/check-out-best-street-art-of-2012.html/attachment/69802>

5. *Whirlwind* (Conlastic), Dortmund, Germany

6. Table Tennis, Old Morse Park, Cambridge, MA

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<http://www.flickr.com/photos/87762368@N00/2911567465/>

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<http://sweet-station.com/blog/2010/10/120-bikes-on-a-wall/>

4. Green Wall, Mexico City, Mexico

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_wall

5. Green Street Garage Wall (Ed Andrews, artist), Cambridge, MA

6. Great Ormond Street Hospital, London, UK

<http://alfalfastudio.com/a-nature-trail-in-an-unexpected-place/>

7. Painting the Streets

<http://arch442544.wordpress.com/2012/03/20/tactical-urbanism/>

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<http://beforeidie.cc/site/brooklyn/>

5. Boulevard 28 de Setembro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Calçada_musical.JPG

6. Bounce Pads in Sidewalk, Copenhagen, Denmark

<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/74484954>

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<http://travelinglandscapearchitect.blogspot.com/2013/03/aguas-calientes-peru-walkable-town-in.html>

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5. Hydrant Attachment Street Art (Thor tel Kulve, artist), Arnhem, the Netherlands

<http://www.thorterkulve.nl/>

8. Drinking Fountain (Mags Harries, artist), Fresh Pond Reservation, Cambridge, MA

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http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nordre_Toldbod_-_Dragon_street_light.jpg

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5. Buscycle (Matthew Mazzotta)
http://www.davisbikeclub.org/club_news/newsletters/november_2011_changing_gears/the-buscycle-comes-to-davis

6. Piano Park Bench / Bike Rack (ADDI)

<http://addi.se/album/piano-bike-rack/>

7. Yarn-Bombing (NYCDOT), New York, NY

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/10812336@N02/3653613563/in/photolist-6yRi2i-8e7p5U-9S6dVV-9S6dUV-9S98xU-dhkR6C-aqR1mx-8JyPWw>

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<http://landperspectives.wordpress.com/2011/01/05/kids-together-playground/>

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<http://archrecord.construction.com/news/2011/10/Parklet-Program-slideshow.asp?slide=2>

3. Outdoor Library, Bogota, Colombia

<http://www.bilinguallibrarian.com/2010/02/21/paradero-para-libros-para-parques/comment-page-1/>

4. Park Bench (Jeppe Hein)

<http://www.trendhunter.com/trends/jeppe-hein>

5. *Invasión Verde* (Genaro Alva, Claudia Ampuero, Denise Ampuero, Gloria Rojas; photo: Musuk Nolte), Lima, Peru

<http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/2010/11/10/invasion-verde-genaro-alva-claudia-ampuero-denise-ampuero-gloria-rojas/>

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http://www.julianbeever.net/index.php?option=com_phocagallery&view=category&id=2&Itemid=8

5. Spring Street Parklet, Los Angeles, CA
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ladotpeoplest/>

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<http://www.hik-ontwerpers.nl/projecten/entree-station-overvecht/>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9n5z9LTbakk>
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<http://funventure.blogspot.com/2010/05/colorful-favela-paintings-in-santa.html>

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<http://yesyesno.com/nightlights>
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<http://www.timeout.com/new-york-kids/museums-institutions/childrens-museum-of-manhattan>
5. Kendall Band Interactive Musical Installation (Paul Matisse, artist), Kendall Station, Cambridge, MA
<http://kendallband.wordpress.com/about/the-kendall-band/>

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- Play Street, London, UK
<http://www.hackneyhive.co.uk/index/2012/09/stoke-newington-hackney-launches-first-street-play-in-london/>

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<http://freassociationdesign.wordpress.com/2010/06/09/user-generated-urbanism/>
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<http://streeteatscolumbus.com/2011/08/27/food-truck-and-cart-festival-2011/>

2. Play Me, I'm Yours (Celebrity Series), Cambridge and Boston, MA
<http://streetpianos.com/boston2013/highlights/#photos>
4. Allston Village Street Fair, Boston, MA
http://www.boston.com/yourtown/news/allston_brighton/2013/09/7th_annual_allston_village_street_fair_festival_set_for_sun.html
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http://www.dvice.com/archives/2008/08/bus_stop_swing.php

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March, 2014

www.cambridgema.gov/healthyplaygrounds