



# THE PLAY COLLECTIVE



[www.theplaycollective.org](http://www.theplaycollective.org)



[hello@theplaycollective.org](mailto:hello@theplaycollective.org)



## LARKIN PARK

PLAYGROUND SURVEY

### COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

To ensure community input meaningfully shapes design decisions for the Larkin Park playground, The Play Collective conducted a design-oriented survey that invited residents to weigh in on specific play elements, materials, and experiences. Informed by best practices in inclusive, child- and family-centered engagement, the survey received 177 responses from families, children, and older adults. **Survey responses reflect a shared desire for a natural playground that supports play, safety, inclusion, and connection at the same time, rather than asking the community to choose between them.**

# WHO PARTICIPATED



People who responded to the survey connect to Larkin Park in many different ways. More than half live nearby (56%), and most of those neighbors visit the park, either regularly or occasionally. About one-third of respondents visit often, another third have visited a few times, and a small number shared that they plan to visit in the future.

Respondents also described other ties to the park. Some use the senior center next door, some come for soccer practices and games, and others shared memories of spending time at Larkin Park when their children were younger. Together, these responses show that Larkin Park is both an active gathering place today and a space with long-standing meaning for many families and neighbors.

Most people who completed the survey were parents or caregivers (81%), reflecting the important role the playground plays for families with children. The survey also included responses from children and teens (13%), neighbors and other community members (16%), grandparents or family members (6%), educators or support professionals (6%), and older adults or senior center visitors (3%). This range of perspectives highlights Larkin Park's role as a place shared across ages and generations.

When asked who they usually visit parks with, respondents most often said children ages 5 to 12 (77%), followed by children under age 5 (41%). Smaller numbers reported visiting parks with teens (9%), adults (16%), or seniors (2%). **These responses suggest that while younger children are the primary users, the park also supports families with multiple ages, making flexibility and shared spaces especially important.**

**“We want the play structure to come from sustainable materials that capture children’s curiosity and imagination.”**

## PLAYGROUND STYLE

When asked about overall playground style, respondents showed a strong preference for natural play structures. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) selected play structures made with natural materials such as wood and rope, while a smaller share preferred traditional plastic play structures with bright colors (24%). A small number of respondents reported no preference or selected “other.”

This preference indicates that respondents favor a playground style that incorporates natural materials over predominantly plastic equipment. Several of the play elements prioritized elsewhere in the survey, including natural features, imaginative play, and cooperative play, align with this overall preference for natural-style structures.



# PREFERRED PLAY ELEMENTS

Survey respondents expressed a clear preference for a playground that offers a rich mix of active, creative, and shared play experiences. The most frequently supported elements include movement-based play, imaginative features, cooperative play opportunities, and natural elements that encourage exploration and connection.



## 82% MOVEMENT & VARIETY

The overwhelming majority (82%) of respondents emphasized the importance of playground features that encourage physical activity and exploration, such as swings, slides, climbing elements, and spinners. These features support gross motor development and keep children engaged through a wide range of movement opportunities.



## 63% STORYTELLING & IMAGINATIVE PLAY

In addition, 63% of respondents expressed a desire for play elements that spark imagination and creativity, including themed structures and spaces for role-play. These features allow children to create their own stories and experiences while playing.



## 59% COOPERATIVE PLAY ELEMENTS

Respondents consistently highlighted the value of play elements that encourage children to play side by side and work together. Cooperative features support social interaction, shared problem-solving, and inclusive play across ages and abilities.



## 57% NATURAL PLAY ELEMENTS

Natural features such as boulders, trees, logs, and nature-inspired materials were important to many respondents. These elements create a more inviting environment and support open-ended, exploratory play that evolves as children grow.

Beyond these core priorities, interest in intergenerational play (36%) and sculptural or artistic elements that provide seating or a break from play (30%) highlights a desire for a playground that serves not only children, but also caregivers, older adults, and the broader community.



# INCLUSIVE DESIGN



Rather than pointing to a checklist of individual features, the survey results reflect a shared desire for peace of mind. Respondents consistently emphasized safety, accessibility, and comfort as interconnected needs that allow children and caregivers to relax, explore, and participate fully in play.

Features like connected pathways, adaptive equipment, cooperative play opportunities, fencing, shade, quiet spaces, and sensory elements work together to create an environment where children of different abilities can play side by side and caregivers feel confident in their child's safety. The strength of support across these items suggests that respondents view inclusion as an experience, not a single feature — one shaped by how the playground functions as a whole.

In short, the community is asking for an inclusive playground that balances freedom and security, supports independent and shared play, and allows families to stay longer, return often, and feel welcome as their needs change over time.

**75% SMOOTH, CONNECTED PATHWAYS**

**69% COOPERATIVE PLAY FEATURES**

**68% FENCING OR BARRIERS**

**66% ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT**

**59% QUIET OR SHADED SPOTS**

**58% SENSORY ELEMENTS**

# COMMUNITY VISION FOR LARKIN PARK



Across responses, community members shared a clear vision for what they hope Larkin Park will become. The themes below reflect the priorities that came up most consistently and illustrate how residents imagine using and enjoying the park in the future.

## A PARK FOR EVERYONE

Across responses, community members expressed a clear desire for a playground that serves children of different ages, abilities, and developmental stages. This includes spaces where siblings can play together, older children stay engaged, and people of all abilities feel included.

**Across responses, community members shared they wanted Larkin Park to become a place where...**

- Everyone can play.
- All people can have fun.
- All kids are welcome
- All kids are welcome to play, learn and grow
- Families can make memories together
- Kids of all ages can play families can relax.
- It can be enjoyed by children from the age range of 2 - 10
- All can use
- People of all ages congregate and play
- Siblings of all ages can come and have something to do.
- More kids can enjoy the playground at the same time.
- can safely take my little ones to play and have all age groups enjoy.
- Multiple age groups can play alongside each other
- The entire family can be excited and look forward to spending time there.

## INTERGENERATIONAL!

- Our children, teens and seniors feel SEEN and can explore and unwind from the stress that comes with life.
- Children, teens, and adults (seniors) can enjoy creative new outdoor space together
- I can gather with grandchildren
- Everyone feels connected and enjoys being outside! By everyone - small children, seniors, middle schoolers!
- All ages come and play together.
- People of all ages can gather and enjoy the outdoors.
- People of all ages are stimulated mentally, physically and creatively.

## OLDER KIDS TOO!

## INCLUSIVE!

- My special needs adult daughter can have fun!
- Everyone, of all abilities, can play together
- People of all abilities can enjoy time together comfortably
- Children of all ages can enjoy an inclusive, community space.
- Kids of a wide range of ages and abilities have fun

- There is something for middle schoolers to do
- Kids, including middle schoolers will come gather respectfully.
- I hope it becomes a playground that is fun for older kids
- I hope Larkin park becomes a place for kids and teens
- Where every age group can meet and play
- We can enjoy ourselves, visit as we grow and have good memories there.
- My kids want to go as they are growing. There don't seem to be lots of spots for older elementary school kids to play/ parks geared towards older kids

# A SPACE TO BUILD COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Beyond play, respondents see Larkin Park as a place to gather, connect, and build community. Families want a space that supports shared experiences, strengthens relationships, and creates lasting memories across generations.

## Across responses people shared they wanted Larkin Park to become a place where...

- Neighbors of all ages can gather, play, rest, and feel a sense of belonging in a space shaped by the community's voice.
- the kids in the community come together and play
- I can meet with friends
- All Claremont residents can enjoy themselves and respect all
- People are nice and kind! And there are lots of kids.
- Kids can gather
- My kids want to go play and meet their friends.
- Families to gather; parents to connect with
- The community comes together.
- Children want to go and meet other kids in the community.
- People gather / Everyone likes to hang out!
- All ages can move freely and come together
- Children grow, parents find their community, and Claremont continues to move forward.
- I can regularly bring my four kids to play with others in the community
- My kids remember when they are adults as a place they loved because it was a place for community and fun.
- We can relax and be with our kids & others

# A SAFE, WELCOMING PLACE

Respondents consistently emphasized safety, comfort, and peace of mind as essential to enjoying Larkin Park. Families want to feel confident bringing their children, staying longer, and returning often, knowing the park supports supervision, comfort, and a sense of welcome.

## Community voices shared they wanted Larkin Park to become a place where...

- Every one feels welcome and safe
- We can have fun but be safe and express ourselves
- I can relax outside of home
- Many kids can visit and feel safe
- It is safer for families
- Kids are safe to play with their friends and family, away from the homeless.
- Families are safe to play
- I can safely bring my child
- A safe place for the community to gather
- It would feel safe being by the new building
- Children feel safe to play
- It's safe to play / Kids can play without worry
- Families feel safe and happy
- All children have fun in a safe environment
- All children are welcome and feel safe
- It's a safe place to visit. A place where families can visit and have a great time playing in the park.
- It feels safe and clean to play.
- It's a safe place for my kids to play without homeless junkies starting fires and leaving behind trash.
- Everyone feels safe and welcome
- We can visit and feel safe and comfortable
- Everyone feels safe and has a good time.
- The community can gather, enjoy a secure, shaded area to play, rest, and/or eat, while making connections across generations. I hope it remains a safe and secure place for babies, toddlers, and young children especially (as it is known for today). Is it possible to include a water feature for those hot days?
- Parents with multiple little can still go to find a fenced in play yard with shady seating for the adults along the perimeter. This was the only park we felt safe going to when the kiddos were 4 and under and have great memories of the frog and climbing structure.

## WITH FENCING & TABLES!

- Toddlers can still play with a fenced in area.
- We can have a birthday party. Need some picnic tables!

# A PLACE FOR IMAGINATIVE, ACTIVE, AND ENGAGING PLAY

Many respondents focused on the importance of play that feels real, engaging, and creative. Families want a playground that encourages imagination, movement, challenge, and exploration, offering enough variety to support play as children grow.

## Families and neighbors shared they wanted Larkin Park to become a place where...

- I can use my imagination and be able to run around with my friends and play freely.
- Young people will want play vigorously and take risks doing new things. I hope they will be challenged and experience the joy of meeting the challenges.
- We want to visit more frequently!
- I can explore
- I can go to a pump track to ride my scooter
- My kids ask to keep going back
- My children can have imaginative play with an artistic variety that represents Claremont's beauty and uniqueness.
- Children can role play and have a good time.
- My kids can find new ways to explore.
- My kids can play for hours
- Children engage
- My kids ask to go to
- I want to visit often with my kids
- Everyone can dream
- Play is reimagined like at Lewis Park
- I feel excited to recommend to my friends that they bring their children there.
- My kids request to go to
- My kids want to play at
- I feel the need to visit someday
- I want to take my family!
- Kids can still pretend to be pirates and use their imagination.
- We regularly want to go
- kids can have fun and creative activities.
- My kids are excited to visit
- I look forward to going
- We visit every day
- Kids can explore and enjoy
- We can go to regularly
- My child can grow more confident in physical and interpersonal skills
- Kids can enjoy fun imaginative play safely
- Kids can help each other learn new fun skills and feels safe.

## A PLACE THAT'S FUN!



- Kids can ACTUALLY play and have fun
- There are so many fun, engaging elements that my kids want to play by themselves (instead of needing someone to play with because the options are quickly too boring)
- My kids get excited knowing this is where we are headed
- My kids can create fun memories
- Kids have fun and play!
- Kids can play and have fun!
- Happiness doesn't end.
- Kids have lots of fun and they're always full of joy.
- Families will go to enjoy the playground and the park
- Kids can be kids
- It's safe and fun
- My two daughters can play together and have fun!



## A NATURAL, SHADED SPACE TO SPEND TIME

Shade, natural elements, and places to rest were repeatedly highlighted as key to a positive park experience. Respondents emphasized environments that feel calm, inviting, and comfortable for both children and caregivers.

**Community voices shared they wanted Larkin Park to become a place where...**

- Kids can play under the trees safely.
- Kids can all play together and it's a natural playground.
- People have fun, can relax, and connect with nature.
- Kids can play in a shaded area
- I feel safe and there's lots of tree coverage!
- I can bring my children to play in any and all weather.
- Kids of all abilities can cooperatively play on natural and imaginative play structures

## CROSS-CUTTING COMMENTS

In addition to comments on specific elements for Larkin Park, many community voices shared visions for Larkin Park across themes that voiced the desire for Larkin Park to incorporate multiple elements.

**Families and neighbors shared they wanted Larkin Park to become a place where...**

- Kids can play under the trees safely with well built long term structures that allow multiple ages at once.
- Children of different ages can engage in cooperative play & movement. We want the play structure to come from sustainable materials that capture children curiosity and imagination. As adults, it's our responsibility to create a space that is safe, accessible, and nurtures imagination. We are building not just a playground but a community from a single space. A community that serves children, parents, grandparents and friends.
- Kids can play safely and cooperatively, where there is ample shade and caregivers can rest, where community can connect and play together
- I can feel safe taking my grandchild to play, walk, and give her independence in a secured environment. Shady places to sit and watch her, pathways for us to walk. A clean park where kids can meet and play and parents and grandparents can also enjoy the park.
- Cooperative play flourishes, where kids help and inspire each other, and where natural materials like timber and stone give the park a warm, grounded character that reflects our community.
- I can visit safely with my young child and other neighborhood kids for vibrant, creative, active, play. My child wants bright colors.
- I hope it remains peaceful and calming.
- I can visit with my daughter to form new memories
- I feel safe and there's lots of tree coverage!
- We can have a stress free and fun playdate with friends
- My children and I can enjoy and feel safe. They can have a sense of wonder and imagination
- Children can play freely and adults can come together, in an inclusive, visually appealing, and unique play space that is environmentally conscious and ties in natural elements.

- My kids ask to visit....Where we feel inspired by imaginative play....Where we feel safe and have fun meeting other kids.
- Nature and imagination meet — where wooden structures, natural textures, and playful discovery trails bring children together in inclusive, unstructured, creative play.
- Play is inspired and community is created (with lots of shade).
- My children and I can enjoy and feel safe. They can have a sense of wonder and imagination
- Children and families can play safely in a space that is clean and well maintained
- Families with children of different ages can spend long periods of time enjoying the park with updated play structures that kids and parents love



# THANK YOU ...

**GET IN  
TOUCH**

[www.theplaycollective.org](http://www.theplaycollective.org)

[hello@theplaycollective.org](mailto:hello@theplaycollective.org)