



McElhanney

Revitalizing Play

Surrey Memorial Hospital Playground Improvements

Prepared for the Canadian Consulting Engineering Awards 2019

Submitted by: McElhanney

Category: I — Community Outreach and In-House Initiatives

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Project Description

TAB 3



75-Word Project Summary

The playground at Surrey Memorial Hospital Children's Health Centre was in disrepair, outdated, and many features were decommissioned as they were dangerous for young patients. McElhanney initiated a fundraising effort where they and others in the engineering and construction industry donated over \$500,000 worth of design, labour, and materials. The revitalized playground opened in July 2018 and its new and reused interactive, therapeutic play elements supports fragile children and their families during hospital stays.





Before: The playground was uninviting and items like the waterfall had been decommissioned.

Project Highlights

Q16. NATURE OF THE PROJECT

The playground at the Surrey Memorial Hospital Children's Centre was an unused and uninviting space that needed a major revitalization to serve the kids and families at the extremely busy pediatric centre.

Surrey is the second most populous city in British Columbia and the ninth largest in Canada. Surrey Memorial Hospital is the second largest in the province with one of only two dedicated children's health and pediatric emergency departments that provides specialized emergency care for over 43,000 children visits annually. Surrey is a "young" city with one in three Surrey residents under the age of 19. The centre opened in 2001 and since that time, the population in Surrey has grown by 53%.

The centre's existing 800 sq ft playground was in disrepair and many features were not appropriate for the young patients. For example, a waterfall was decommissioned because children's bandages were getting wet, wood play structures had no fall prevention, and the space had dim lighting with dull colours. Despite the vast number of patients, the centre's playground was scarcely used and needed a facelift.

After seeing the state of the outdoor playground while his son was receiving treatment, McElhanney's Surrey Branch Manager, Paul Deol, had the idea to create something of lasting value for the community. Paul also received overwhelming support from McElhanney to make this a key charitable initiative.



PROJECT GOALS

The playground redesign considered all physical abilities of the kids to create inclusive play – to make an unusable space usable again. The design needed to avoid climbing elements that would risk further injuries. The new interactive playground would provide a big space where children and their families can safely run, play, learn, relax, and enjoy the fresh air.

The playground was not part of the Surrey Hospital Foundation's original fundraising campaign to expand and transform the inside of the 18-year-old centre.

In fact, the playground transformation was a catalyst that kicked off the \$15-million centre transformation project that will create a larger, family-friendly space with more clinics for outpatients and a dedicated area for kids who need day care procedures. This will triple the outpatient clinic capacity from 6,000 to 18,000 visits each year, enabling the pediatric team to care for more children every year and bring care closer to home for thousands of families. **With such a large user base, the playground needed to be durable, safe, fun, but also tranquil.**



After: The revitalized playground is more colourful, safer, and interactive.





Generous donations from all corners of the community helped pay for the new playground.

Q17. EFFORT AND COMPLEXITY

STAFF EFFORT

Paul had the idea for the playground in October 2016 and the design began in January 2017. As the project lead, McElhanney brought in its engineers, landscape architects, surveyors, arborists, and administrators to listen to the hospital stakeholders which included doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, and administrators. It became clear that the playground did not function well for kids of all abilities and ages – it needed a complete makeover.

After listening to the desires of the stakeholders, McElhanney made sure the design was feasible and funds could be raised. The team also worked with the hospital's operations team to ensure that the revitalized playground could be maintained and would not create a burden on operations and janitorial staff.

The design was completed in the summer of 2017 with continuous input from stakeholders and the fundraising effort commenced.

COMMITMENT

The McElhanney team provided the detailed design, obtained the building permits, and managed the project. When the team needed a general contractor to coordinate the logistics, materials, and subcontractors, McElhanney reached out to its local design-build partner who, without hesitation, accepted the challenge and project managed the construction himself.

McElhanney created a nine-page catalog of needed materials and turned to industry partners, clients, and developers who donated time, equipment, materials, and / or financial contributions. The response was overwhelming, with over 77 donations pouring in through individuals and companies that raised \$181,000 in monetary donations. All costs relating to the playground were fully funded and paid for.



McElhanney Contributions

- Over \$36,000 in cash funds
- Over 1500 hours of employee time equaling approximately \$225,000

Contributions From Others

- \$245,000 dollars donated in time, materials and equipment
- Over 50 individual and company donors

CHALLENGES

In addition to the fundraising challenge, there were many site complexities, mostly stemming from the playground's physical location above a parkade and elevated above grade. This required materials to be carried by the crews and volunteers or handled by 120-tonne crane. For example, on the first official day of construction on January 27, 2018, over a dozen McElhanney volunteers spent a cold, rainy morning getting their hands dirty digging out tree stumps and shrubs, and removing the waterfall feature. All these items were carried out in construction bags.

The playground was officially opened on July 9, 2018, completing 22 months of planning, design, and construction.



Sponsors were recognized through the signage on crayons or items they donated.



Q18. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND OTHER BENEFITS

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Many will benefit from this new, colourful, purpose-built outdoor playground. It will help patients recover with elements now designed to support patient physical therapy, such as the slip-resistant steps and handrails. Interactive display walls, a sign language board, and a finger maze encourage learning and hand-eye coordination. The design also incorporates quiet spaces for families seeking solitude that is dearly needed during stressful times. **The revitalized playground now offers hope and respite to the hospital's littlest patients and their families.**

As mentioned, this project also became the catalyst for more improvements, kicking off the first phase in the Surrey Hospital Foundation's new \$15-million fundraising campaign to expand the inside of the 18-year-old centre.

"Without the vision, foresight, and hard work of McElhanney and their partners, this playground would never have happened," said Jane Adams, Surrey

Hospital Foundation President & CEO at the opening ceremony. "They transformed a barren outdoor space into a playground fit for royalty, complete with a wooden throne for our fragile young patients."

COMPANY BENEFITS

Using our minds and hands, instead of simply writing a cheque, McElhanney built new or forged deeper relationships with suppliers. Co-workers connected with each other and our industry partners on a more personal level that opened new avenues for communication and understanding. McElhanney as a whole continues to experience a deep sense of pride in the tangible impact the project brings to those in need.

Ron Knight, Surrey Hospital Foundation Chair, praised our initiative, "McElhanney's donation is unique in that most companies donate money. However, McElhanney wanted to use their skills and industry connections to provide a gift that otherwise would not have been possible."



Paul Deol cut the ribbon on July 9, 2018, officially opening the playground.

CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

This project is an example of the consulting industry coming together to initiate a project that nobody asked for – McElhanney saw a need and knew that we could fulfill it. All types of engineering consulting professionals donated their expertise and time. Our close work with the infrastructure industry, which includes contractors, further propelled the project through to completion.

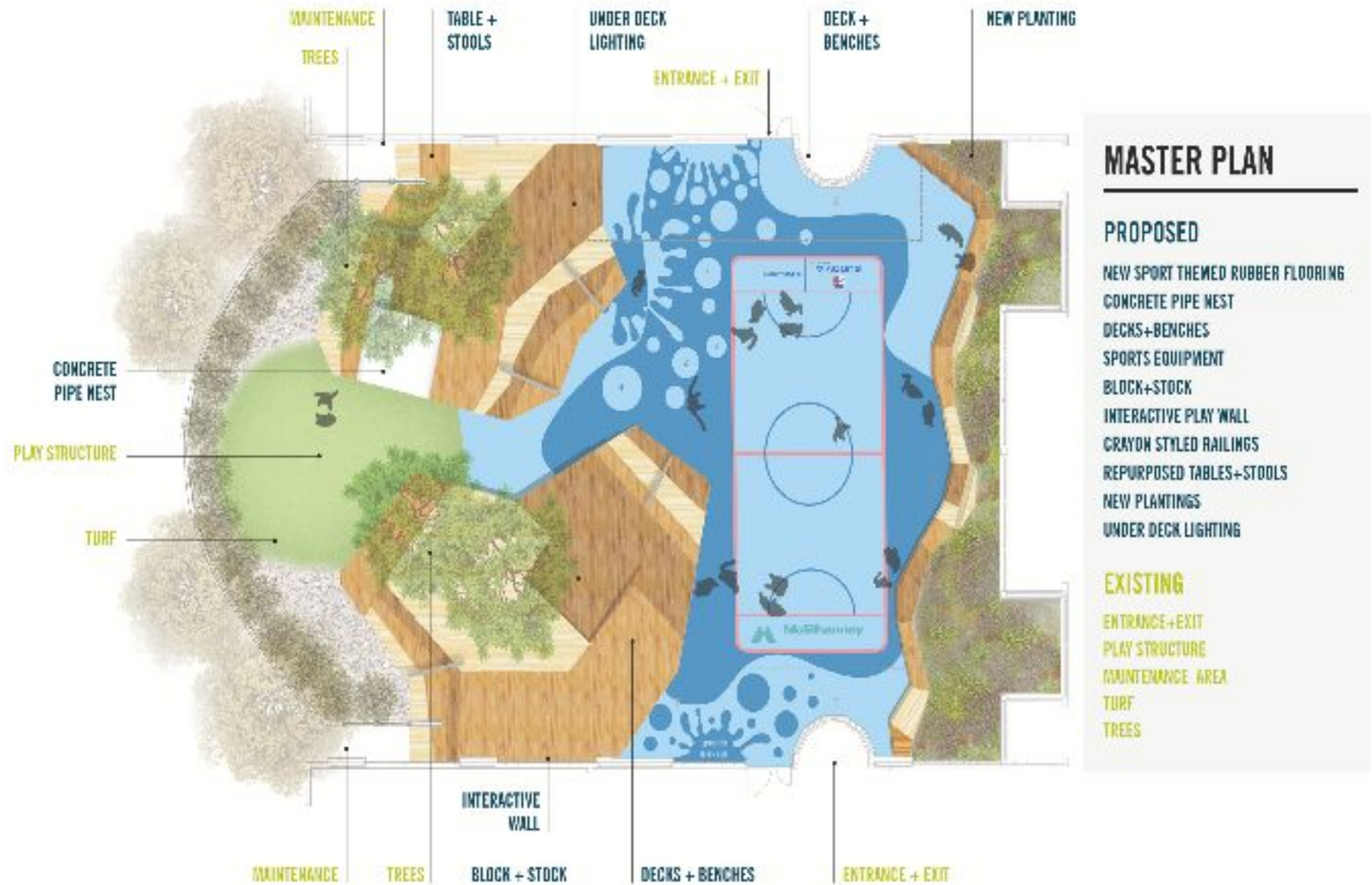
At the opening ceremony Jane Adams said, “When I look around tonight at the people and companies who helped Paul [Deol] with the playground, I can’t help but reflect on the fact that you are the same people who have built the infrastructure of this region, province, and country. You are the rainmakers. And I’m happy today that we’ve just experienced a deluge!”



Existing safe and durable outdoor structures were cleaned and maintained in place.



Design Concept





Top: The old wood carvings were hazardous as children had fallen from them.

Bottom: McElhanney volunteers on the first day of construction demolishing the decommissioned waterfall.



The 120-tonne crane mobilized to the site twice to remove items.



Top: The sign language board and finger maze encourages learning.



Bottom: The old wood carvings were reused and refinished by professional carver and HGTV personality Ryan Cook into new, safe furniture.



The foam blocks can be rearranged for seating to accommodate student lectures in the teaching hospital.