

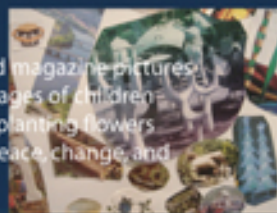
Imagination Alley

Located in the 1300 block of Vine St. in Over-the-Rhine, Imagination Alley offers a new opportunity for the community. A brightly colored 16' mosaic archway at the east entrance of the pocket park sits juxtaposed against the surrounding urban environment. The mosaic was created by community members through the organization of The Art Academy of Cincinnati and the Peaslee Neighborhood Center. Together, they are working to make Imagination Alley a reality. In the fall of 2004, the University of Cincinnati Community Design Center was approached to help create conceptual plans for the layout and design of the space.



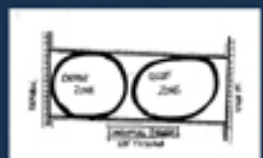
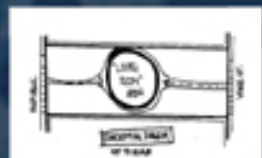
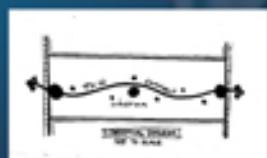
Conversing with local community groups at the Drop Inn Center, Washington Park Elementary School, Peaslee Neighborhood Center, and the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center helped generate ideas for various features within the park. The elements included additional mosaic artwork, benches, a water fountain, game tables, play equipment, trees, flowers, gardens, trash cans, fences, a picnic area, lighting, and a gateway for the west entry.

The second activity asked individuals to cut out words and magazine pictures, describing the atmosphere and objectives of the park. Images of children laughing and playing, people conversing, and individuals planting flowers were chosen. Words defining togetherness, community, peace, change, and happiness also helped form visions for the park.



A workshop open to community members, allowed them to prioritize various park features. Exercises helped participants develop concepts and establish the character for the space. Posters having a random list of possible park elements were tacked to the wall and people placed stickers next to those features with the highest importance.

Participants were then given a site plan and a set of images signifying different park elements. They were challenged to develop schematic plans for the space. This resulted in three distinct park layouts having emphasis on different aspects of the park.



The results of each activity were analyzed and condensed into a conceptual diagram and a final conceptual design. Compiling the park layouts, the conceptual diagram illustrates three distinct spaces; active and passive zones, and a central "living room area". Entries and exits were emphasized as well as clear circulation paths.



The paving patterns quickly draw the attention to the central living room space. The area contains a fountain and benches designed to facilitate both private and public interaction.



Flowing from the central space, the pathway meanders through the active zone. This area consists of play ground equipment, picnic tables, and a grill. Two large pillars welcome visitors and stress the notion that Imagination Alley is a cherished community space. Lights, trash receptacles, benches, and additional mosaic art work is also implemented throughout the park.



The final conceptual plan communicates clear entries at both ends. The east end is accentuated by the archway and vestibule area. This space consists of game tables, planters, park benches, and distinct paving patterns.

Participating Designers

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With funding from the National Endowment of the Arts, the Art Academy and Peaslee Neighborhood Center will continue developing art in the park. The Recreation Commission has participated in the design of the park and will be assessing the feasibility of providing proposed park improvements. For more information contact Michelle Markert, AAC at 721-5205