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# DETROIT FUTURE CITY

working  
with lots

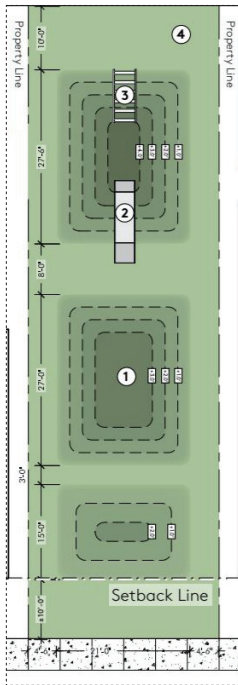
A FIELD GUIDE

DESIGNED + BUILT IN DETROIT — JANUARY 2020

(313) 294-LOTS FIELD-GUIDE@DETROITFUTURECITY.COM 2990 WEST GRAND BLVD., SUITE 2 DETROIT, MI 48202

## CATEGORY 3: TERRAIN

### MOUNDS OF FUN



#### DETAILS:

- Anticipated installation: Fall 2020
- You will need to hire a professional landscape contractor to implement this project
- There is the potential for a workforce development component to be integrated into the installation

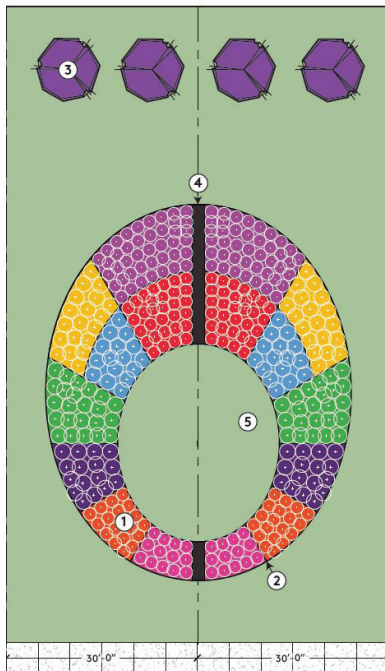
#### REQUIREMENTS:

- The ability to fence off the mounds while the grass seed establishes

#### IDEAL FIT:

- Well-suited for a schoolyard or community play lot
- An organization with a formal connection to children
- Access to a grounds crew that is willing to customize maintenance for the site

### PERENNIAL PROPAGATOR



#### DETAILS:

- Anticipated installation: Fall 2020

#### REQUIREMENTS:

- A long-term commitment to supporting a neighborhood plant exchange (five year min.)
- A committed volunteer group to with the planting and on-going maintenance

#### IDEAL FIT:

- This project is ideal for experienced gardeners
- A preference for at least two lots (or 60' of frontage)
- Nearby or on site secure storage for garden tools

# F

## LOT DESIGN: MOUNDS OF FUN

*Do you want to give your neighborhood kids a fun and imaginative place to play?*

GRANT AMOUNT UP TO: \$7,000

This lot design features three large mounds of varying sizes. The Mounds of Fun is suitable for a single lot, but can be more versatile and have a greater impact if implemented across multiple lots. Through topography, this lot design brings the spirit of play to an otherwise flat landscape.

### DETAILS:

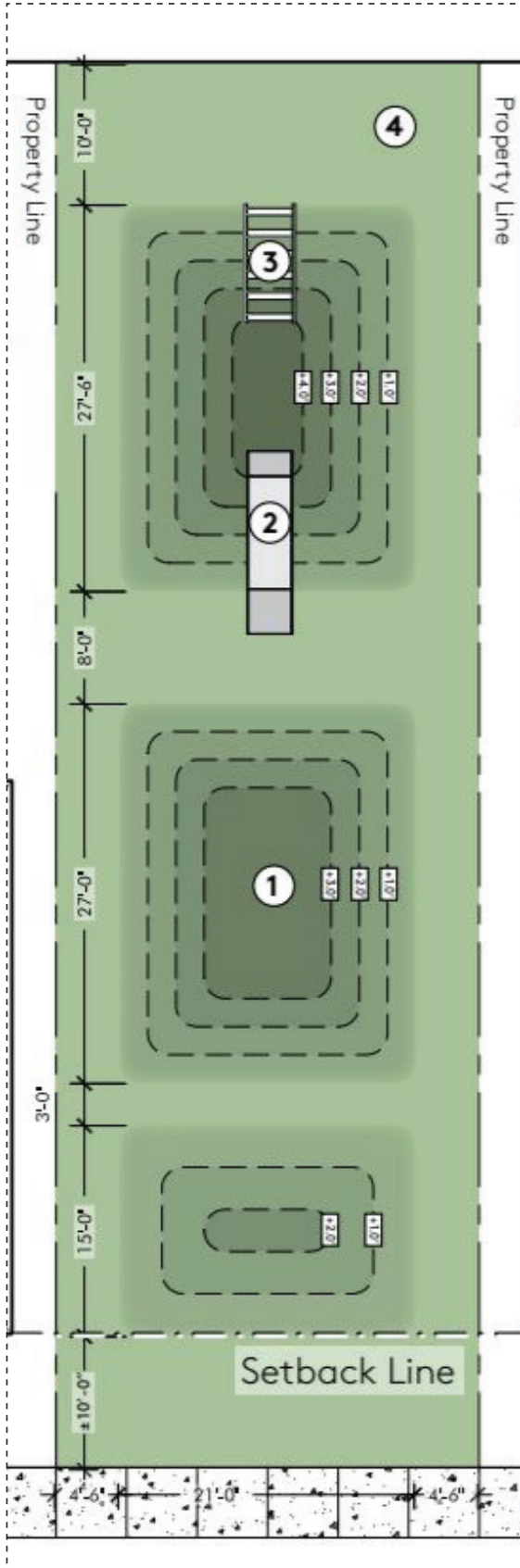
- Anticipated installation: Fall 2020
- You will need to hire a professional landscape contractor to implement this project
- There is the potential for a workforce development component to be integrated into the installation

### REQUIREMENTS:

- The ability to fence off the mounds while the grass seed establishes

### IDEAL FIT:

- Well-suited for a schoolyard or community play lot
- An organization with a formal connection to children
- Access to a grounds crew that is willing to customize maintenance for the site





Volunteer

Professional

**Volunteer + Professional**

# Mounds of Fun

Image Source: Julia Manzerova. "Maya Lin" 8 August 2009 via Flickr, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0





**This lot design features three large mounds of varying sizes. The mounds can be constructed for a number of activities, such as a dog park, sculptural art space, or informal playground.**

**The Mounds of Fun is suitable for a single lot, but can be more versatile and have a greater impact if implemented across multiple lots, creating a unique landscape.**

**The mound design is ideal for a community park or playground. The back mound is designed to accommodate a childrens’ slide.**

**For more information refer to [DFC-lots.com](https://dfc-lots.com)**

**What is the lot design likely to cost?**

The estimated cost of the Mounds of Fun is high (\$2,500 – \$5,500) and based on utilizing volunteer and professional labor. The Field Guide recommends hiring a professional for the earthwork and lot preparation. Planting can be completed by a professional or by volunteers. The cost assumes that residents or volunteers have access to basic safety gear and garden tools.

**How much upkeep will this lot design require?**

The maintenance of this lot design is medium. While establishing, low-maintenance fescue will require weekly watering and weeding. The lawn should be mowed once a year in the early fall; however, the shape and slope of the mounds may make mowing difficult with a standard mower. Consider using a weed whip or other special equipment when mowing mounds.

**Will the installation of this lot design require a professional?**

The installation of this lot design will require professional assistance for the first few steps. The Field Guide identifies volunteer opportunities if you, with the help and support of friends, family, or neighbors, would like to undertake the planting portion of this lot design. Please refer to the Step-By-Step section for guidance on the recommended professional and volunteer steps. If you do not feel able to tackle the volunteer aspect of this lot design, a professional can construct the entire project.

**How long will it take to install this lot design?**

While people tackle projects in different ways and at different speeds, the Field Guide estimates installation time of this lot design to be one full weekend with the help of at least two healthy adults or youth. The Field Guide assumes the lot is ‘construction ready,’ and all equipment and materials required for lot design have been acquired and are ready to use.

Cost	\$50 - 1,000	\$1,000 - 2,500	\$2,500 - 5,500	\$5,500 +
People	Volunteer		Professional	Volunteer + Professional
Experience	Beginner		Intermediate	Advanced
Upkeep	Low		Medium	High
Stormwater	Good		Better	Best
Location	Residential Lot in Sun to Shade (near a school or community hub is ideal)			

# Mounds of Fun

## Examples of Earthen Mounds

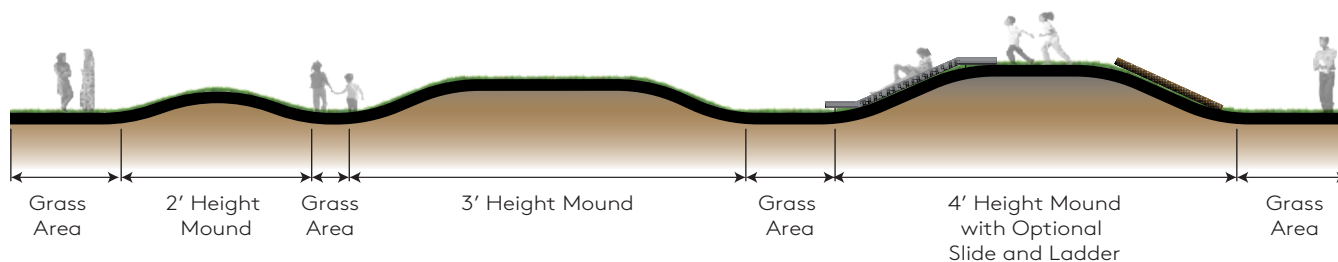


1 - Installation by Artist Maya Lin

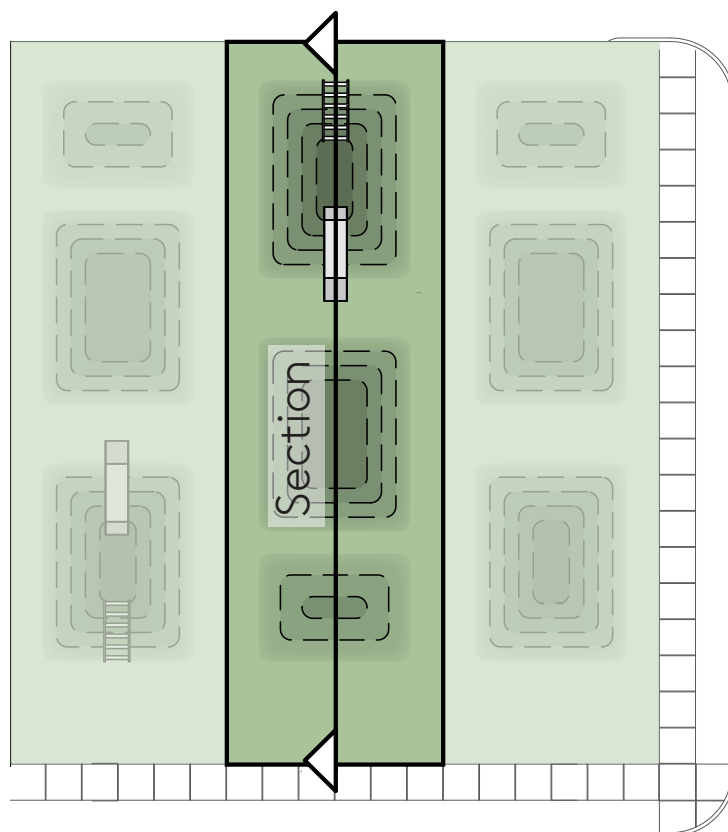


2 - Slide on Hill





## Section



## Where Do I Grow?



Mounds of Fun can be constructed on single or multiple lots and is suitable for corner properties. If placed on a corner lot or near a busy street, do not install the childrens' slide.

-  Earthen Mounds
-  Slide (Optional)
-  Ladder (Optional)
-  Grass or Optional Groundcover

## Before You Start

### 'Construction Ready'

This lot design assumes that you have prepared the lot to a 'construction ready' state.

'Construction Ready' refers to a lot that is clean and clear of trash, hazardous objects, unwanted trees, brush and vegetation, fences, and other unwanted structures.

It may be necessary to remove grass in preparation for your lot design. Refer to the Remove Your Grass box located on the right hand side of this page for more information.

Is there an available water source near your lot? Consider how and where you will access water during and after construction to ensure that your plants can establish.

If your lot is not ready for construction, refer to the Clean + Green lot design.

You can find the lot design at [DFC-lots.com](https://dfc-lots.com).

### Call Before You Dig

Locate underground utilities before beginning your lot design. MISS DIG provides a free service to Michigan residents by locating and marking utilities on requested properties. Call (800) 482-7171 or 811 at least three days before you plan to start digging on your lot.

### Test Your Soil

Harmful pollutants have made their way into many urban soils. To proceed with awareness, consider having your soil tested before construction. Two great options are available:

Soil testing is free to members of Keep Growing Detroit's Garden Resource Program. Call (313) 757-2635 for more information or visit [detroitagriculture.net](https://detroitagriculture.net).

If you are not yet a member, you can work directly with Michigan State University's (MSU) Extension Program. They have a Home Lawn and Garden Soil Test Mailer for \$25. For more information call (888) 678-3464 or visit [msusoiltest.com](https://msusoiltest.com).

If you are concerned about the presence of lead or other contaminants in your soil, call the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at (866) 691-5323 or (800) 424-LEAD.

### Remove Your Grass

Need to remove grass in areas where you are constructing your lot design?

There are many ways to remove unwanted grass. The first is to remove the grass and its root system by digging up the grass. Another option is to cover your lot with cardboard or a plastic tarp to smother your grass in darkness. It will take several weeks, but after being covered, the dead grass will be easier to remove.

### Till Safely

Before you till, inspect your lot for signs of buried concrete or rubble that was not removed during the cleanup stage. Large debris can ruin tiller blades.

When tilling, wear appropriate safety gear, such as covered boots with socks, long pants, safety glasses, dust mask, and ear protection. Make sure you understand the safe operating procedures of your tiller. Refer to the user's manual.

## What You Need: Shopping List

### Shopping List

The shopping list provides a breakdown of potential materials, tools, and resources required to construct this lot design.

**This shopping list is designed for a single lot (30 by 100 feet).**

### Materials List

#### Materials

- Clean, Imported Soil, 52 cubic yards
- Topsoil, 38 cubic yards

### Remaining Lot (Optional)

#### Groundcover

- Low-Maintenance Fescue Mix, 15 pounds of seed
- Germination Blanket, 4 rolls (8 by 112.5 feet)

Refer to page 10 for alternative groundcovers.

### Tools + Resources

#### Suggested Tools

- Marking Paint and Tape Measure
- **Safety Gear:** Gloves, heavy work boots, tall socks, pants, long sleeve shirts, dust masks, protective eye wear, ear plugs, and hard hats (if using heavy machinery)
- **Garden Tools:** Spades, shovels, rakes, trash bags, and wheelbarrows
- **Earth Moving Machinery:** Dump truck for soil and soil sculpting machinery, such as skid loader (if professional is not hired)
- **Trimmer or Special Mower,** for mowing mounds

#### Potential Water Sources

- Garden Hose with potential extension hose
- Sprinkler
- Rain Barrel in addition to other water sources

#### Field Guide Resources

Resources are available on the Field Guide's web site.

- Clean + Green
- Bulb Planting Detail

## Mounds of Fun Step-By-Step

### Let's Start

**Want to create the Mounds of Fun? The Field Guide recommends hiring a professional for some tasks. Here are a few guiding principles to help you understand the tasks involved in the lot design and the steps appropriate for volunteers.**

-  Check off tasks as you go along.

### Lot Design Steps

#### Professional Recommended:

- ☐ **Prepare Your Lot**
- ☐ **Import + Sculpt Mounds**

#### Volunteer Opportunities:

- ☐ **Sow Groundcover**
- ☐ **Maintain Your Lot Design**

### ☐ Prepare Your Lot

Mounds of Fun is one of the more complex lot designs in the Field Guide. It is recommended that you hire a professional for these steps: Prepare Your Lot and Import + Sculpt Mounds.

The Field Guide recommends to complete this lot design with the assistance of a professional. The Field Guide provides guiding principles below to help assist you with the installation of the lot design.

- This lot design utilizes a full 30 by 100 foot lot.
- Mounds of Fun should be constructed as shown on the plan to ensure mounds are the correct height and distance from adjacent lots or sidewalks.
- The base of a mound should be 4.5 feet away from adjacent property lines and at least ten feet from sidewalks.
- Use marking paint and a tape measure to map out the size, shape, and dimensions of the mounds.
- You do not need to kill grass in the lot as tilling will naturally help with grass removal.
- A childrens' play slide can be attached to the back mound. Consult a professional for installation requirements.
- Installation of play equipment with footings may require a permit from the City of Detroit's Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED).

## Mounds of Fun Step-By-Step

### ○ Import + Sculpt Mounds

The following are a few guiding principles for importing and sculpting the soil mounds. The Field Guide recommends hiring a professional to complete the earthwork portion of this lot design.

- Till the full 30 by 100 lot approximately six to eight inches in depth. Remove large clumps of grass, groundcover, and other forms of vegetation. The lot should be re-tilled after mounds have been constructed to remove compaction from heavy equipment during construction.
- **The three mounds require 52 cubic yards of clean, imported soil plus four inches (38 cubic yards) of topsoil for planting.**
- Special machinery should be used to sculpt the mounds.
- Mounds should be constructed according to the Construction Package. Refer to page 13 for more information.
- The two foot height mound is 21 by 15 feet (315 square feet) and has a 33% slope.
- The three foot height mound is 21 by 27 feet (567 square feet) and has a 50% slope.
- The four foot height mound is 21 by 27 foot Six inches (377.5 square feet) and has a 50% slope.
- Leave approximately 10 feet between any sidewalk and beginning of a mound.



**A list of seed mixes are provided on pages 10 if you are interested in alternative groundcovers to low-maintenance fescue mix.**

### ○ Sow Groundcover

If you are seeking a lower maintenance alternative to a traditional lawn, the Field Guide recommends a fescue seed mix. This family of floppy grasses is drought resistant and requires one cutting (in August or September) per year. The soil will be loosened and prepared for seeding through tilling of the lot after the mounds have been sculpted.

Fescue can be established in full sun to shade and should be seeded in spring (mid-March to mid-May) or fall (August to September). Seed mix should be applied to a damp lot. Sow seeds by using a seed spreader or by hand across the remaining lot. Spread seed mix evenly over entire lot. You may need to do this several times to get even coverage. A seed rate of five pounds per 1,000 square feet is recommended. **If you follow the Mounds of Fun lot design you will need approximately 15 pounds of seed mix for full 30 by 100 lot.**

Placing a thin layer of straw or a germination blanket over seeded areas will help ensure that your seed establishes by keeping seeds from blowing away and protecting them from birds. **Four 8 by 112.5 foot rolls of single net germination blankets will be required for a 30 by 100 lot.** Germination blankets or straw can be purchased at most nurseries and garden stores, including Detroit Farm and Garden.

Gently water seedlings daily until they are four to six inches in height. Eco-Turf Low Maintenance Fescue Mix is one recommended seed mix and can be purchased through the Michigan Wildflower Farm.

**Other Field Guide lot designs can be used as groundcovers. Check out the web site for additional options and ideas.**

**Next Level:** If you would like to bring additional color to your grass, plant bluebells, crocuses and/or daffodils to create a decorative show in spring. Bulbs should be planted in the fall.

For more guidance on blub planting refer to the [Bulb Planting Detail](#).

## Mounds of Fun Step-By-Step

### ○ Maintain Your Lot Design

Fescue grasses do not grow tall and should only need to be mowed once per year. The mounds' shape and slope may make mowing difficult with a standard mower. Consider using a weed whip or other special equipment when mowing the mounds. Always use caution when mowing slopes and follow manufacturers recommendations.

Once established, grass will not require supplemental watering except during unusually dry periods. **Plan to water your establishing grass for three weeks following installation or until your grass is four to six inches in height.**

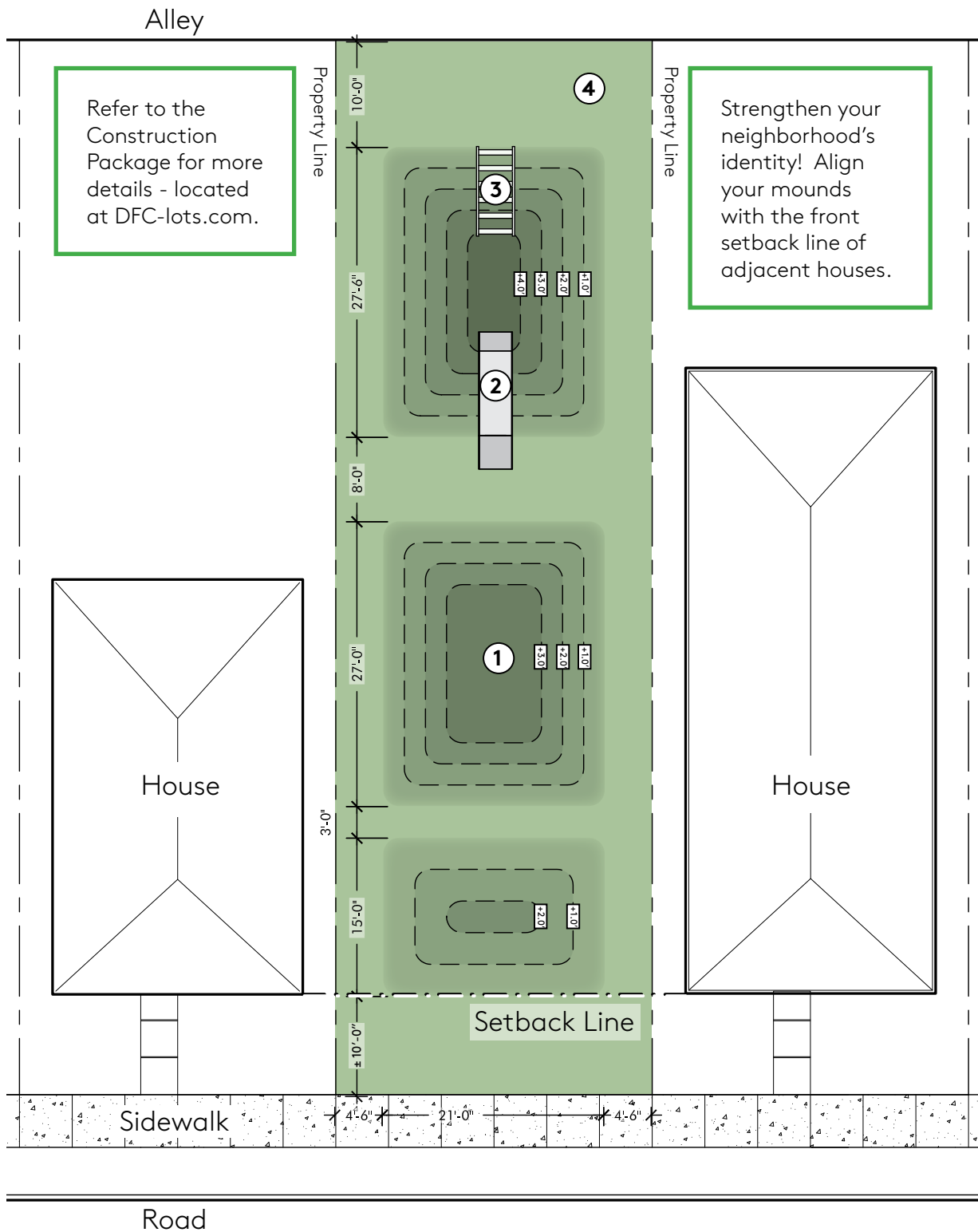


**Visit the Resources page on the Field Guide's web site (DFC-lots.com) to discover other vendors and places to purchase plants.**

### Average Height of Plants



## Mounds of Fun Lot Design



- 1 Earthen Mound
- 2 Slide (Optional)
- 3 Ladder (Optional)
- 4 Grass or Optional Groundcover

## Planting: Alternative Groundcover

### For More Information

If you are seeking a more interesting groundcover than a low-maintenance fescue, try one of the alternative options listed on this page.

For more information on using any of the seed mixes on this page, refer to the lot designs below on the Field Guide web site:

#### Partially Shaded Area Roadside Seed Mix

Refer to [Syrup Maker](#) lot design

#### Native Grassland Meadow

Refer to [Grassland Habitat Maker](#) lot design

#### Butterfly Garden Mix

Refer to [Native Butterfly Meadow](#) lot design

#### Clay Mix

Refer to [Clay Soil Mix](#) lot design

These seed mixes, additional groundcovers, and lot designs can be found at DFC-lots.com.

### Seed Mix for Full Sun to Part Sun

#### Native Grassland Meadow

Mixing three pounds of Native Grassland Meadow seed mix (Eastern Native Habitat & CREP, ERNMX - 173) with three pounds of Annual Cover Crop seed mix is recommended if selected for the lot design groundcover.

You can buy these seeds premixed at Ernst Conservation Seeds.

### Seed Mix for Full Sun to Part Sun

#### Butterfly Garden Mix

Mixing 15 ounces Butterfly Garden Mix seed mix with 24 ounces Annual Cover Crop seed mix is recommended if selected for the lot design groundcover.

You can buy these seeds premixed at Michigan Wildflower Farm.

### Seed Mix for Full Sun to Part Sun

#### Clay Mix

Mixing 15 ounces Clay Mix seed mix with 24 ounces Annual Cover Crop seed mix is recommended if selected for the lot design groundcover.

You can buy these seeds premixed at Michigan Wildflower Farm.

### Seed Mix for Part Sun to Shade

#### Partially Shaded Area Roadside Seed Mix

Mixing two pounds of Partially Shaded Area Roadside Seed Mix (ERNMX-140) with three pounds of Annual Cover Crop seed mix is recommended (oats or grain rye depending on sowing season) if selected for the lot design groundcover.

You can buy these seeds premixed at Ernst Conservation Seeds.

### Plant Sizes



**Seeds:** All plants can be purchased in seed form.

## Did You Know?

### Professionals Can Help

The Field Guide to Working With Lots provides a Construction Package for each lot design. The Construction Package includes information and details required for a professional to construct this design. On the Field Guide web site, use the [Construction Package](#) link located near the top of this lot design page to download and print. Your selected professional will then be able to provide a cost estimate and schedule based on the condition of your lot and the design you select.

### Want to Hire Locally?

DFC-lots.com has a growing list of Detroit-based professionals and suppliers of landscape materials and services.

Still unsure of where to start?

Call (313) 294-LOTS or email [fieldguide@detroitfuturecity.com](mailto:fieldguide@detroitfuturecity.com) for assistance.

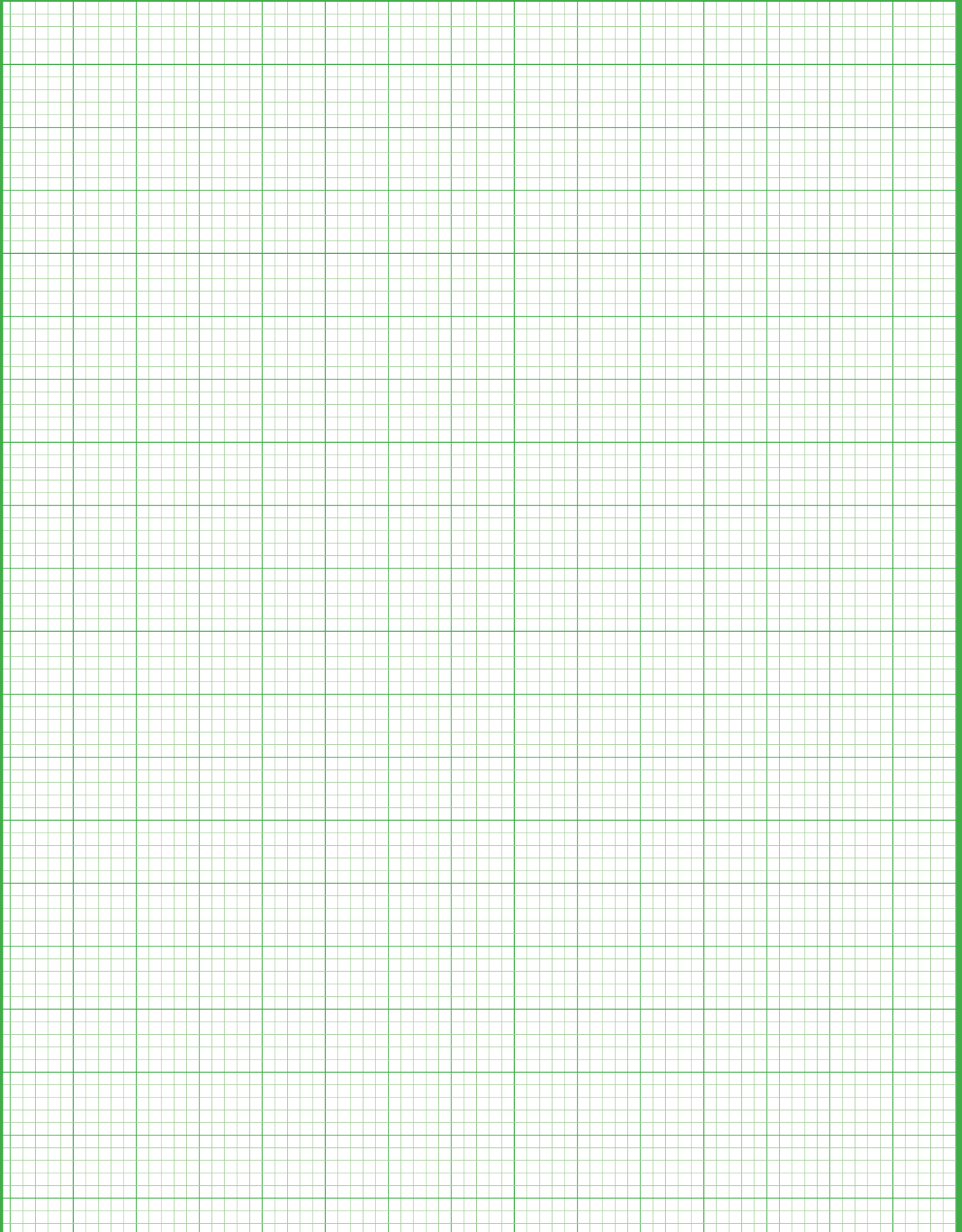
### Helpful Facts

- The tallest mound (four feet in height) in this lot design can accommodate a small childrens' slide. Check out Kaiser & Kuhne's web site for more information and images of hill slides.

### Planting Tips

- Call ahead to make sure the nursery or garden store has the plants you need for your lot design.
- Add bulbs such as crocus, snowdrops, or daffodils to mounds or grass for additional color.
- Mounds can be planted with a variety of groundcovers such as Creeping Phlox, Periwinkle, Bishop's Weed, or Bugleweed instead of grass. If any of these alternatives are planted, the mound would no longer be available for play or walking on.
- To create a taller appearance, plant ornamental grasses such as Pampas Grass, Fountain Grass, Feather Reed Grass, Little Bluestem, Switch Grass, or Maiden Grasses. This limits access for recreation and play.
- The best time to plant trees and shrubs is spring or fall.
- Do not sow seed mix in extreme heat.
- Water after planting and as needed.
- Do not attempt earthworks or earth moving following a rain event.

## Draw Your Lot



# Mounds of Fun Field Notes



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FUTURE  
CITY**

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**Visit [DFC-lots.com](http://DFC-lots.com)  
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