

North Boulder (NoBo) Branch Library Report

Growing Up Boulder's Summary of Findings
Published May 2020



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Overview

About Growing Up Boulder

Growing Up Boulder (GUB) is Boulder’s child and youth-friendly city initiative established in 2009 as a formal partnership between the City of Boulder, Boulder Valley School District, and University of Colorado. GUB is a program of the University of Colorado’s Community Engagement Design and Research (CEDaR) Center and is housed in the Environmental Design Program. GUB’s mission is to make Boulder an exemplary child and youth-friendly city by empowering Boulder’s young people with opportunities for inclusion, influence, and deliberation on local issues that affect their lives. Since its inception, GUB has engaged with more than 5,500 young people on more than 100 projects.

North Boulder Branch (NoBo) Library

The need for a full-service library branch in North Boulder with hours consistent with other branch facilities has long been identified as a goal for the community. In 2017, Boulder voters passed a ballot initiative that included funding for the future library, and a North Boulder Branch library became a primary goal of the 2018 Library Master Plan. Planning for the library began in 2018. Phase one outreach began in August 2018, and continued into the design phase in 2019. Prior to the arrival of the Coronavirus, construction was anticipated to begin in late 2020 or early 2021, with an opening in 2022. See the project webpage for details and updates [here](#).

“CONNECTING PEOPLE, IDEAS, AND INFORMATION TO TRANSFORM LIVES AND STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY.”

--Mission of the Boulder Public Library



NoBo Library Project Description

In February 2020, GUB began conducting phase two site design engagements with four school groups within the North Boulder Library catchment area: Crest View Elementary School fifth grade students, Foothill Elementary School third and fifth grade students, and Boulder Journey

School preschool students. GUB also co-designed activities to solicit parent input for the library, especially from the Latinx parent community.

Library staff specifically requested students focus on five spaces within the library's campus: an outdoor plaza, an outdoor playground, an outdoor community learning garden, and indoor and outdoor culinary makerspaces. Due to high levels of project interest, GUB staff tested a new engagement model to reach more classrooms. GUB developed a curriculum that teachers could teach or adapt as desired; the goal was for GUB staff to serve as curriculum designers and consultants, and then allow teachers to implement the curriculum with support from GUB staff coaches (behind the scenes) and GUB interns (in the classroom). GUB created extensive resources that students used to guide their inquiry into global precedents, to apply their knowledge to the NoBo library setting, and to design and recommend materials, equipment and programming for each space.

COVID-19 Arrival

When classes shifted to home learning due to the arrival of the Coronavirus, teachers and students were in various early stages of their NoBo library inquiry. GUB staff devised plans for working remotely with Crest View and Foothill teachers who expressed a desire to continue. Most teachers continued to engage with the project throughout April and May--some kept their original plans, while others adapted to lessons for the new realities of the home learning setting. Regretfully, the COVID interruption prevented GUB staff from engaging with LatinX parents, many of whom are residents of the nearby Boulder Meadows and Ponderosa manufactured home communities. In early 2020, GUB had virtually convened a coalition of engagement professionals and educators working at Crest View Elementary School, Foothill Elementary Schools, and at the City of Boulder, to plan meetings and a site visit/picnic for Latinx families at the current Nobo Corner Library and the future Nobo Library location. Unfortunately, all of these plans were cancelled due to COVID-19. GUB staff still feel such a site visit paired with a picnic for Latinx families would be beneficial, and we hope that such plans will be resurrected at a future time when it is safe to convene in person.

COVID-19 Adaptation

Despite the challenges presented by home learning, the majority of teachers and students adapted and continued to engage with the project (only one classroom declined to continue). As a result, GUB collected a wealth of student recommendations--ideas included everything from early, investigation-stage thinking to well-researched, slide deck presentations that demonstrated deep knowledge. This report includes the thinking of ALL students who shared their ideas with us. Here's a breakdown of who was involved:

By the Numbers (All Engagements)

- 262 Students, ages 3-11
 - 90 Foothill Elementary School, 3rd grade
 - 92 Foothill Elementary School, 5th grade
 - 75 Crest View Elementary School, 5th grade
 - 5 Boulder Journey School, Preschool
- 15 Teachers
 - 12 Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) teachers
 - 3 Boulder Journey School (BJS) staff
- 3 BVSD administrators
- 2 GUB staff
- 3 GUB University of Colorado Undergraduate Interns
- 3 City of Boulder staff, Community Engagement and Boulder Public Library
- 3 Library Commission members
- 3 Boulder City Council members
- 4 Architects connected with the project
- 1 CU Professor Emeritus
- 97 Engagement hours by young people

"The NOBO Library Project provided the students the opportunity to tackle real-life problems using the "Design Thinking" process. It was so powerful to see students research, collaborate, communicate, and design as they worked together to create spaces for our new community library. Teachers dream of opportunities like this when their students work on tasks that are authentic, meaningful, and community-based!"

--Teacher librarian, Crest View Elementary

Summary of Findings

Of the 282 students and 13 teachers who participated in GUB's project introduction sessions, 262 students and 12 teachers continued with project lessons after home learning took effect. Because of the large amount of data collected, this section focuses on data highlights and the story it tells. The data analyzed here originates from elementary school student share-out event recommendations, design sketches, 3D models, SketchUp designs, Lego models, and Minecraft models, student-researched and created digital presentations, and and student videos. It also includes insights from BJS preschool's independent study.

Student work samples and links are embedded throughout this report and also housed in the [Appendix](#) at the end of the report. For a complete collection of engagement documents, contact: growingupboulder@gmail.com.

Most Salient Elementary Student Recommendations

Students viewed the proposed NoBo Library as an asset with great potential to bring people together in community: an opportunity to connect, learn, play, celebrate, and develop new talents. Students generated design recommendations by researching one of the five library spaces: outdoor plaza, outdoor playground, outdoor community learning garden, and indoor and outdoor culinary makerspaces. Young people's most frequently recommended themes, along with detailed examples of each theme, are listed below with photos:

Outdoor Plaza

- **Water**—either a fountain (water play frequently requested), stream, small pond or playing in the nearby creek
- **Nature**—trees, plants, bushes, flowers, large grassy areas
- **Latinx culture**—showcase through events, art, culture, food, music
- **Community building**—events, performances, food gatherings, time spent with family and friends, year-round use/extended hours to attract different user groups
- **Art**—colorful murals, sculptures, playful lighting
- **Seating**—benches, tables, bean bag chairs, circular seating around trees, tree swings
- **Interactive elements**--plaza feature that allow children to move their bodies and climb, play, balance, and more



LatinX Heritage Mural (student)



Circular Tree Seating (student)



Curved Seating (student)



Waterfall Stairs (student)

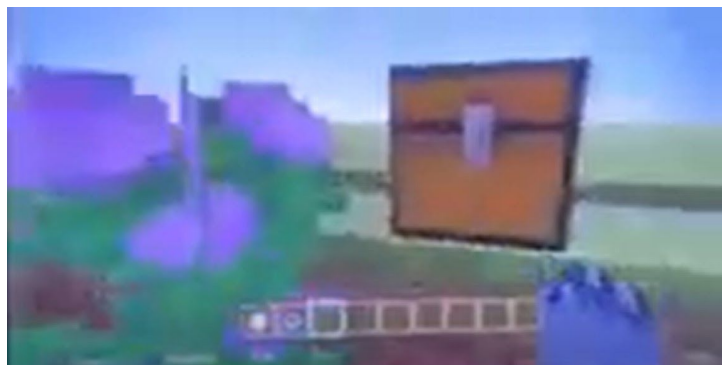
Outdoor Playground

- **Water and nature play**—splash pad, play in 4 mile creek (when water is there), open grassy areas to run
- **Gross motor skills**—climbing wall, monkey bars, slides, play structure, zip line
- **Relaxing**—at picnic tables, comfortable chairs, or hammocks in order to enjoy the view and read books
- **Creative & interactive**—moveable games, a castle, something adventurous, allow for social play dates, freedom to use imagination in the space



Playground structure (student)

[Paco_Santi's Minecraft Movie.mov](#) (click to watch)



Community Outreach



We were thinking that for all the food we make, we could donate to the community.

- Here are some places that we could donate food: Food banks, Homeless shelters, schools, senior living centers.

The community is about helping out, and we think the nobo library will really help out in the community. By giving people what they want if it is cooking or it is reading or you just want to have fun. the nobo library has that stuff.

We could also provide personal classes to help people in our community learn to cook.

Also we could maybe provide people who could get groceries for the elderly or disabled people.



Outreach Plans for the Community (student created)



Sketch Up Plans (student created)

Outdoor Culinary Makerspace

- **Connectivity**—between indoor and outdoor space, allow for overflow from indoor space, stone pathway
- **Active and interactive**—allow for messiness
- **Amenities**—sink, grill, ovens, table to prep food and then picnic on



Creating Foods from the Garden (GUB)



Minecraft Design (student created)

Outdoor Community Learning Garden

- **Educationally and sustainably-minded**—worm farming, composting, bee boxes, signs explaining what's planted, gardening tools and magnifying lenses, use recycled materials, attract animals to the area
- **Interesting plants in the garden**—edible and eye-catching flowers, flowers that attract pollinators, plants for Mexican cooking, variety of veggies and flowers, vertical garden wall
- **Fun**—interactive garden games
- **Artistic**—painted mailboxes, Mexican artwork, community-painted rocks lining the garden beds
- **Community-minded**—donate produce to EFAA and other food banks, create a mini-market whose proceeds go to charity, have the community tend to the garden
- **Programming**—offer yoga camps, classes, farmers' markets, events like Tea in the Garden, celebrations of Mexican culture
- **Relaxing**—cozy corner, comfortable chairs, tables and seating, blankets, water feature, twinkle lights



Carbondale, CO's Folk Art Garden (student)



Native Bee Boxes (student)



Water Fountain, Vertical Garden, Flowers, and Twinkle Lights (student created)

Overarching themes from students

In summary, six themes surfaced across the recommendations from the 262 students with whom we worked: *water play, interactivity, learning, sustainability and nature (plants, animals, and recycling), inclusivity (of cultures, ages and abilities), and community (bringing together and giving back).*

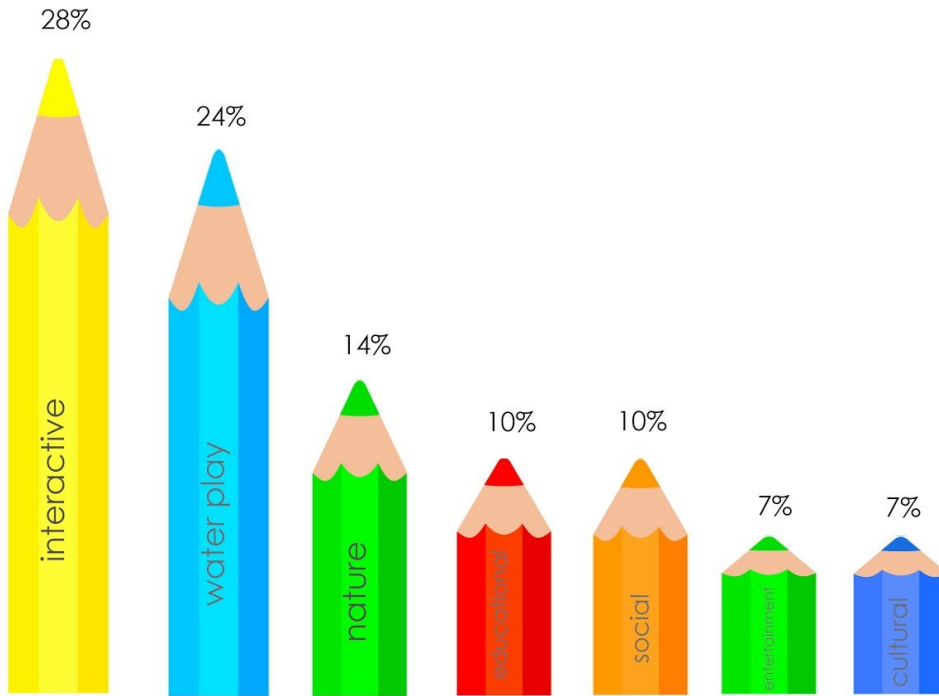
“Something I want to remember about today is a positive moment in a challenging time.”

--City Council member

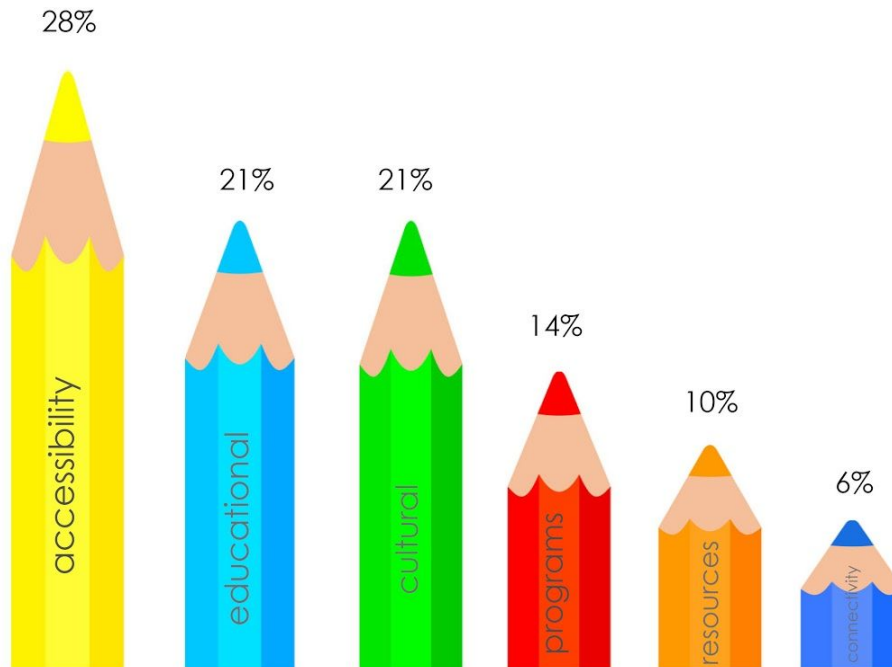
“Something that I want the students to remember is that we may not be able to implement every idea, but you will definitely see some of them when the library is fully operational. Your voice matters!

--Community Engagement Manager, City of Boulder

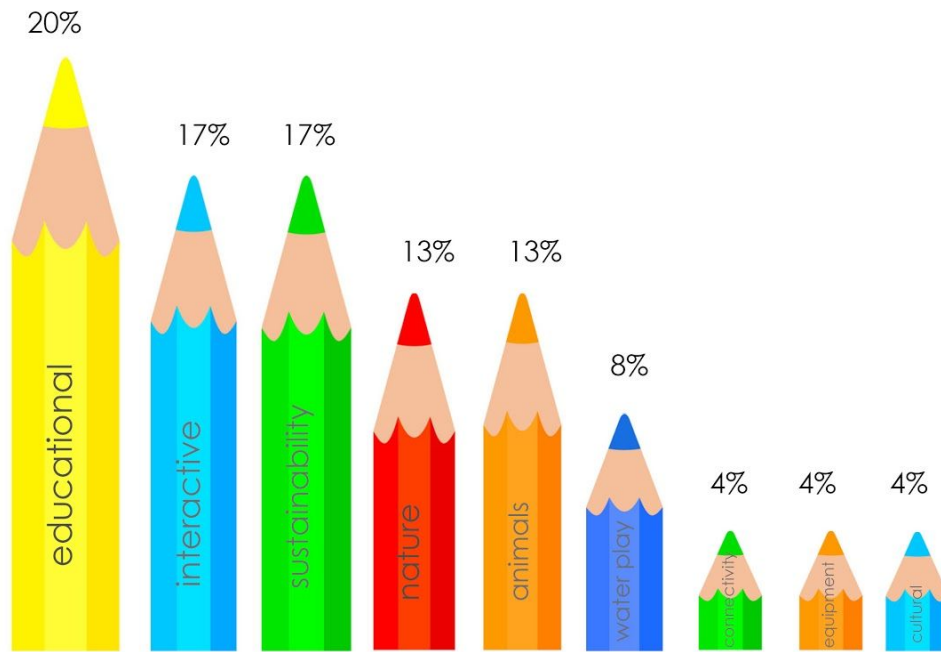
Outdoor Plaza Themes Chart: Interactive (28%), Water Play (24%), Nature (14%), Educational (10%), Social (10%), Entertainment (7%), Cultural (7%)



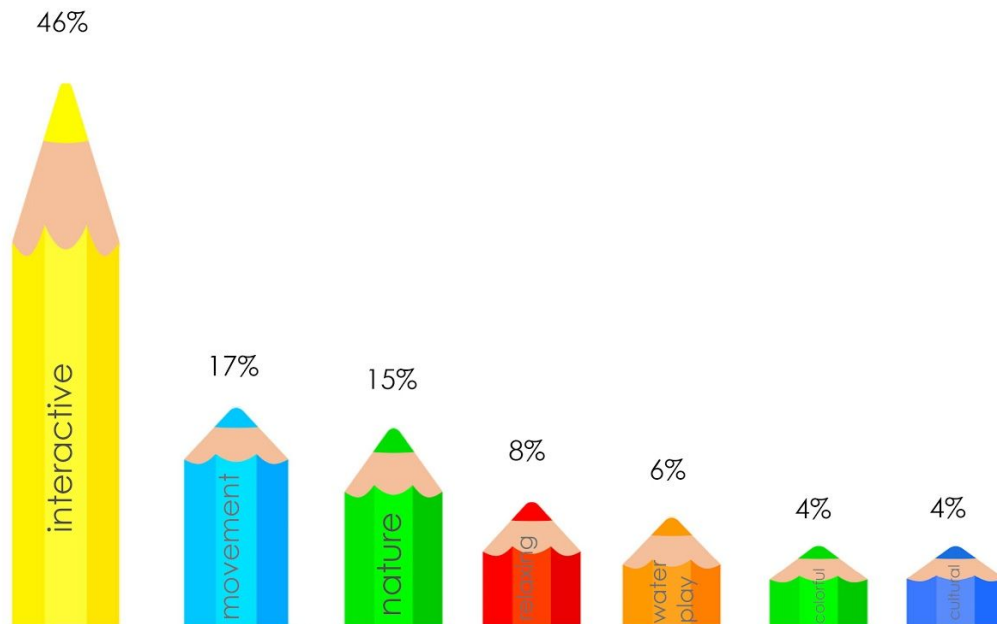
Indoor Culinary Themes Chart: Accessibility (28%), Educational (21%), Cultural (21%), Programs (14%), Resources (10%), Connectivity (6%)



Outdoor Community Learning Garden Themes Chart: Educational (20%), Interactive (17%), Sustainability (17%), Nature (13%), Animals (13%), Water Play (8%), Connectivity (4%), Equipment (4%), Cultural (4%)



Outdoor Playground: Interactive (46%), Movement (17%), Nature (15%), Relaxing (8%), Water Play (6%), Colorful (4%), Cultural (4%)



For a better understanding of GUB's engagement partners and process, please continue on to the next section.

GUB's Engagement Partners and Engagement Process

Boulder Valley School District Partners

In February and March 2020, GUB staff introduced the NoBo Library project to 282 3rd and 5th grade students from Crest View and Foothill Elementary Schools. The presentations included essential library project background information and described the goal of the work: to provide researched design recommendations to the city for five proposed library spaces.

Prior to the presentations at each school, GUB prepared several key documents for the students' inquiry: a detailed lesson plan outline, slideshows for each of the 5 spaces (including definitions of each space and global precedents), note-taking "packets" to support students' research, and a series of SketchUp lessons. Crest View and Foothill project models at both schools were intended to be showcased at their respective Innovation Fair and Maker Faire events.

Crest View Elementary School: 5th Grade

By the Numbers

- 75 Crest View 5th grade students
- 3 classroom teachers
- 1 Teacher librarian
- 70 engagement hours

Engagement Description

February - May 2020



Students and GUB share ideas

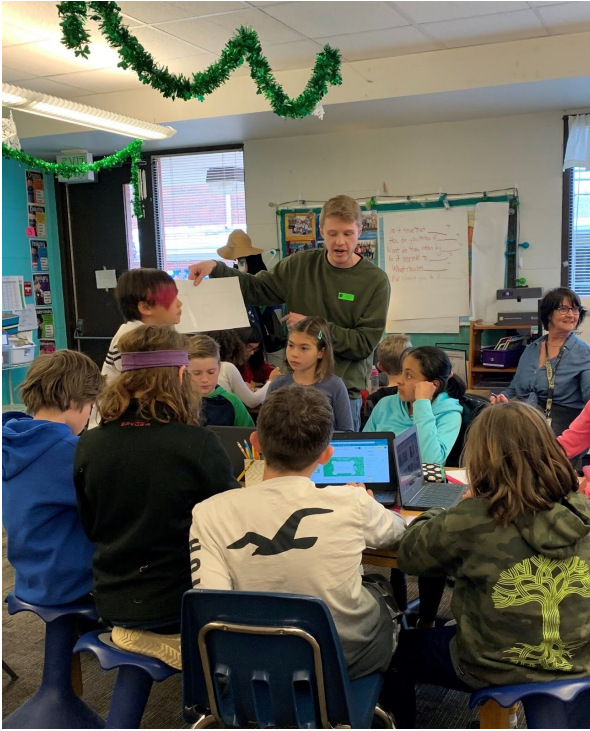
Following the GUB project introduction, 5th grade classes took a walking field trip to the NoBo Library site to gain perspective and inspiration. From there, students used the GUB slideshows and resources to complete research and brainstorming about which of the 5 areas most appealed to them. Students chose one area they wanted to focus on, and teachers assembled students into groups based on these areas.

At this point, teachers collaborated with the school's teacher librarian, who posted the slideshows and other research links on a Google Classroom. Students spent 1 hour a week in the library, as well as multiple hours during their classroom work time, researching, recording notes, and designing their areas. Shortly after students were tasked with building a prototype of their learning area, the Coronavirus arrived.

COVID-19 Interruption & Adaptation

As teachers and students transitioned to home learning, three learning options emerged: 1) to continue the project as originally planned via video conferencing, 2) to continue with an alternative approach, or 3) to not continue. Crest View's 5th grade team went in different directions based on the needs of their individual students. One teacher took option 1, two teachers took option 2 and worked with the teacher librarian, and one teacher took option 3.

Option 1 classroom highlights: Students infused their project research with the concept of giving back to the community and with learning design software. They (virtually) met with GUB interns who shared design tips, Sketch Up lessons, and other engineering concepts, and then incorporated what they learned into their group digital slide decks. As time passed, students narrowed their focus and looked more deeply at details. Cross-curricular connections were made to the following: measurement, research, language arts, technology, and hands-on building in 3-D and digital models using Sketch up and Google Draw. Time spent: approximately 30 hours. See slide deck presentations: [Community Learning Garden](#), [Indoor Culinary Makerspace](#), [Outdoor Plaza](#), and [Outdoor Playground](#).



GUB intern teaches 5th graders Sketch Up Lesson

“I had never seen my students work harder on a project, and I fully believe it was because they knew that it was real--not just a slideshow about the American Revolution or a famous mathematician. This was real life work that city leaders were listening to and wanted their input on...I look forward to more collaborative projects with GUB in the future. This was a tremendous project for fifth graders.”

--Fifth grade teacher, Crest View Elementary

“Something that impressed me was the team's ability to use their project to solve multiple social and environmental goals beyond the baseline requirements.”

--Landscape Architect

Option 2 classroom highlights: Teachers incorporated a kid-friendly design thinking process to teach students how to create their models: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test, and Share. A key step in their process was sharing their ideas with classmates, collecting feedback, and then working to improve their models. Students spent four weeks and approximately 20 hours each, and created slide decks in Google Slides or videos using Flipgrid and Minecraft. Projects were submitted via a [Google Form](#).

Finally, all three 5th grade classrooms integrated persuasive writing into project lessons. Students were encouraged to develop an argument for or against the building of the library. One classroom incorporated their opinions into their slide deck presentations, while two classrooms initiated a [letter writing campaign](#). Letters like the excerpt below were sent to civic leaders from the City Council, Planning Board, and Library Commission:

“Libraries provide a quiet place for kids to read and learn, whether they’re learning how to cook in the culinary makerspace or exploring a new place that they’ve never been in a good book. Libraries provide a safe haven for people of different cultures to express and celebrate their differences through food, art, music and many other ways. That is extremely important for everyone, especially those who live in Boulder. This library would also provide a place for kids and adults to find new interests and follow previous interests. Many people would love a library as it has a place for everyone. I would also, like many other kids who live in North Boulder, love to be able to bike on a bike path to a library rather than drive. This library wouldn’t just be fun, it would get kids outdoors and be more environmentally friendly than driving to the Boulder Public library. It would also give kids like me a lot more freedom to go to the library by themselves.”

--5th grade student, Crest View Elementary

“This project was great! We were really impressed with how the kids persevered and followed through even though they had to work from home. Many kids used technology in new ways to create and share their projects. The students (and teachers) LOVED the civic engagement as it created authenticity and buy-in!”

--5th grade teacher, Crest View Elementary

“Growing Up Boulder was by far the most rewarding experience in my college career. Through exposure and guidance, I learned the importance of community engagement and participation from ALL ages in the community. I hope to carry these values with me for the rest of my life”

--CU Environmental Design student and Growing Up Boulder Intern

Foothill Elementary School: 3rd Grade

By the Numbers

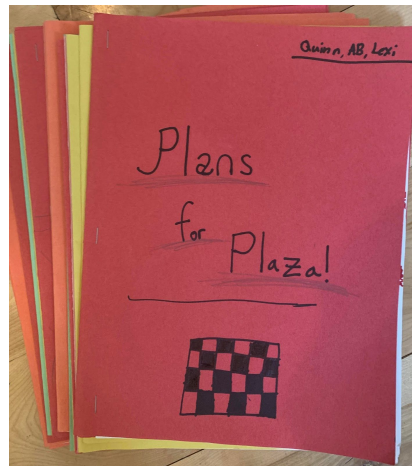
- 90 3rd grade students, ages 8 and 9
- 3 classroom teachers
- 1 teacher librarian
- 18 engagement hours

Engagement Description

March - May 2020



GUB project introduction



Students' research folders

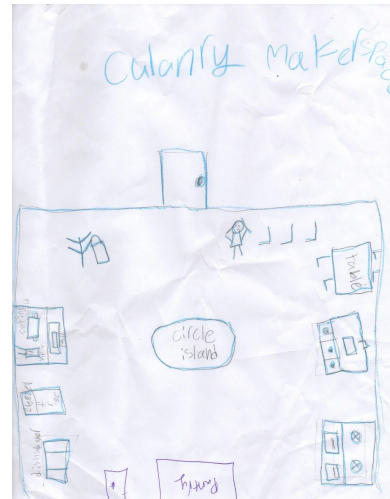
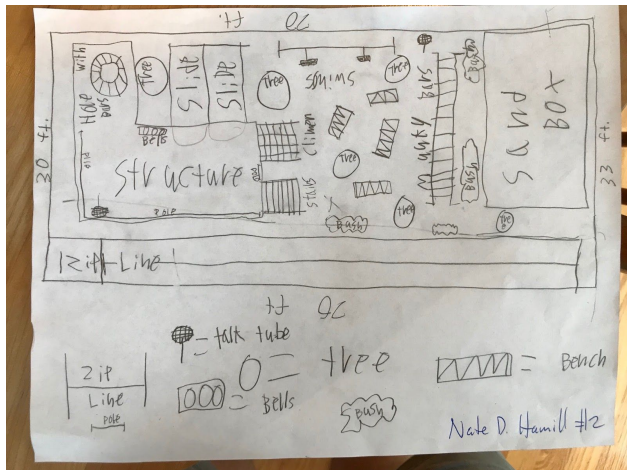
Foothill Elementary's teacher librarian coordinated the NoBo project for several classrooms, and he taught library lessons to students during their library instruction time. Students were placed into small research groups to explore and research their favorite library space. A series of research workshops helped students understand the area they were exploring and investigate various features using Google Image Searching. Students took notes on these features, highlighting information they liked, the materials they needed to build a model, and how to identify the benefits of each recommended element. The models were to be showcased at Foothill's annual Maker Faire in May.

A key feature of the research process involved students using tape measures and traffic cones to map out each area so they could see the actual physical size of the area they were designing. The project provided multiple avenues to embed 3rd grade curriculum: community, government, math, persuasive writing, mapping, working together, problem-solving, and research.

COVID-19 Interruption

Unfortunately, due to the closing of schools, the above mapping lesson was the last in-school lesson. Had students had the opportunity to continue, the next three tasks would have been to a) draw a plan/map of their area--see drawing samples below, b) make a model of the area using the school's makerspace, and c) film themselves and their models, thereby creating a NoBo Library "commercial" for city and library staff.

Post in-person learning, students were encouraged to think about their favorite idea for the NoBo library and share that during a virtual share-out event with guests from the city and library staff, city council, planning board, library commission, and the community. Virtual share-out meetings for each classroom were scheduled and well attended by city leaders. After sharing their ideas, students took comments and questions from adult stakeholders. You can read about the students' ideas [here](#).



Sample student sketches shared during virtual meetings: Playground and Indoor Culinary Makerspace

"Something that impressed me was the lengths GUB and the city went to reach out and get feedback from the kids, the stakeholders, who will use this building/area for years to come."

--3rd grade teacher, Foothill Elementary

Foothill Elementary School: 5th Grade

By the Numbers

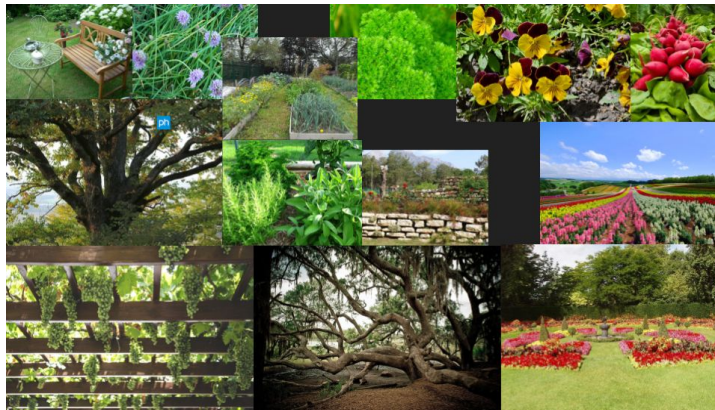
- 12 5th grade students, ages 10 and 11 (who met at lunchtime)
 - 5 English Language Learners (ELL)
 - 7 non-ELL
- 1 English Language Development (ELD) teacher
- 8 engagement hours

A mixed working group of 5th grade students met during lunch periods to learn about the library project and develop recommendations. Students watched GUB-created

slideshows on each library space (plaza, playground, garden, and makerspaces) to learn about them. Then, students formed partnerships and researched the spaces. GUB interns met with students to answer questions, provide design support, and to lend an extra hand. Students presented their [slide decks](#) to adult stakeholders in May.

COVID-19 interruption

Students were intending to create recipes for, and models of the indoor culinary makerspace, but that was not possible when school moved online. Instead, children shared their most important ideas for the project with adult stakeholders during an online share-out session.



Ideas to incorporate in the garden:

- Herbs for using in the kitchen
- A greenhouse for growing plants all year
- An ant farm or bee hive with glass walls for observation
- A variety of vegetables including lots of spicy peppers
- Have kids involved in a program to collect produce for food banks
- The garden should be built with environmentally friendly materials that don't hurt nature
- Using recycled materials like tires for raised garden beds
- Worm farming/composting areas
- Organize the plants by the ecosystem/area they come from
- Climbing tree

Sample slides from mixed-class 5th grade presentation

“Something that impressed me was the students' bravery in speaking up and sharing on Zoom!”

--City Council member

Boulder Journey School: Preschoolers

Boulder Journey School and GUB have enjoyed a long-time partnership, whereby GUB communicates current city projects to BJS staff, and BJS staff in turn chooses a relevant city project to incorporate into their curriculum.

By the Numbers

- 5 students, ages 3 and 4
- 2 teachers
- 1 engagement hour

Engagement Description

March 12, 2020

Two BJS teachers and their preschool students took a walking field trip to explore two plazas near their preschool and the future Nobo Library site: the plaza at Amante Coffee at Broadway and Yarmouth, and the plaza next to 4580 Restaurant. By observing what the children were attracted to and how they used the space (along the way and within the plaza areas), teachers drew conclusions about what elements the NoBo Library plaza might include to meet the needs of our very youngest residents.

One of the students' favorite activities was walking along a cement ledge of a planter bed. Designers working with children have noticed this behavior before, and they call these features "walkable edges." The children immediately climbed up on raised ledges



and were drawn to the various levels offered. Students walked in straight lines, navigating their way around it for the majority of the time they were there.

Children called it the "Balance Line" and the "Walking Wall Seat." A unique quality of this particular structure was that it had multiple entry points--no beginning or end.

The children were also drawn to another ledge walking around the plaza. This ledge circled around



a small area of rocks and water. One student exclaimed, "This looks like a bug bath. We can find things in here. Look, a bottle!"

Some of the students took advantage of the nearby tables and chairs to sit and relax (left). They propped their feet up and stretched out.

As they were leaving, students discovered some checkered squares painted on the concrete (right). These provided the opportunity to jump from square to square.



COVID-19 Interruption

BJs staff and students had planned to visit more plazas and playgrounds to see how the children interacted with the spaces, and then share their findings with GUB staff, but unfortunately, this was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Summary of BJS Findings

Children saw tiered ledges, a water feature, painted squares, and plazas in general as places for engagement. *This is an excellent reminder to city planners that a child-friendly city is not just about designated play spaces, such as playgrounds; a child-friendly city includes playable elements throughout the city.* The children moved their bodies in a variety of ways--they walked and hopped and put their arms out to balance. They were curious and happy in each space. Although their inquiry was interrupted by home learning, teachers' keen observations about young people's use of space provides a meaningful contribution to the planning of the library's outdoor plaza space.

"It was super fun and intriguing to explore our city through the children's eyes. I personally have been to these places countless number of times and never really took the time to notice a fun walking arena, a rock pond that offers treasures to be found, or windows that offer entry into an explored world (Amante). I typically think of plazas as a gathering place to relax but never as a place for engagement like the children saw today. They discovered multiple ways to use their bodies to bring life into these plaza spaces."

--Boulder Journey School Teacher

GUB Staff's Engagement Reflections

After completing a project, GUB staff finds it useful to reflect upon what we have learned. The North Boulder Library project offered even more reflections than usual, due to the nature of the changes in our environment due to COVID-19.

Adaptability: When the Coronavirus impacted in-person learning almost overnight, teachers, students, and GUB staff were required to shift the entire plan for the Nobo Library project. Stakeholders' (teachers, children, GUB undergraduates, and GUB staff) extraordinary flexibility, collaboration, and resilience lead to a curriculum that continued to be rigorous, meaningful, and authentic until the end.

Partnering with Latinx families and underserved communities:

Challenges to parent engagements

The GUB team had envisioned the Nobo Library project as a model for engaging Latinx families in meaningful, culturally responsive ways. Because the Nobo library is planned to have more Spanish-language resources and bilingual staff than any other Boulder library site, and because it is adjacent to two manufactured home parks with large Latinx populations, it was the perfect opportunity for parent engagement. However, the in-person engagements we had planned for a Families and Educators Together (FET) meeting and a family picnic-field trip to the site were cancelled abruptly due to COVID-19. We strongly encourage the City to engage with these groups prior to the library's opening.

Challenges to diverse student engagement

Classroom student engagement with underserved communities, many of whom are Latinx, was also interrupted by COVID in several ways. Many lower-wealth families had less access to technology (fewer devices with worse or little internet connection), less knowledge about how to use the technology, and fewer quiet/private home learning spaces than higher-wealth families; the result was that it was harder for our children from lower-income backgrounds to have as robust digital engagements as their wealthier peers. For example, it was more challenging to program in SketchUp or to participate via videoconference for some children during our share-out events.

Concurrently, some of our English Language Learner (ELL) students were less vocal about their ideas than their native English-speaking peers when presenting together. We believe that if the ELL students had had more time to work with their teachers on both curriculum content (they had only a few weeks to work on the curriculum before COVID interrupted them) and more time for group dynamics work (some of the students had just started working together during lunchtime meetings), the ELL students might have felt more comfortable sharing their ideas verbally during share-out events.

Successes in diverse student engagement

When teachers did have a full semester to support students, ELL students thrived as fully as their English-speaking counterparts in their share-out presentations. We believe this success was due to a cohesive classroom culture cultivated over an entire school year, and also due to extensive teacher-to-child outreach for this project in particular. It

takes courage to present your ideas to unfamiliar adults in your first language, no less a second language.

Students of all backgrounds also successfully offered their ideas for the library via written documentation. Whether through letter writing to the city's elected officials, completing written prompts with survey questions, or designing digital presentations and physical drawings, a diverse group of children shared their input for the library. This is a reminder that while we cannot repair all learning inequities, we do have tools to mitigate factors which contribute to the achievement gap. Offering multiple methods for meaningful engagement is one such tool.

Based upon these reflections, we recommend using the following principles for future projects, especially when home learning:

Build strong relationships: share-out events were successful when the GUB team, students, and teachers developed a well-established learning community. GUB staff and interns met and talked with children repeatedly and were able to build positive rapport over time. Students felt respected and appreciated, which leads to effective teaching, learning, and the creation of meaningful outcomes for everyone involved.

Offer community-embedded, project-based learning with voice: The authentic concept of students giving back to their community was especially impactful. That their voices would be heard, and their ideas would possibly come to fruition, was very powerful for them. They learned about giving back to the community and working together as a team.

Employ a variety of learning methods--the power of choice: Students were given multiple ways to engage in the NoBo Library project work in order to allow participants to choose what worked best for them. Methods included digital presentations, class discussions, small group lessons, whole group lessons, field trips, drawing and planning activities, research and note taking sessions, persuasive writing, model-making, and the use of technology. GUB-created learning tools, such as outlines, slideshows, and research packets, provided a useful framework for the extended work and set students up for success.

Create extended classroom inquiry for more thorough and blended recommendations: GUB staff noticed that the most well-thought out design solutions for the five library spaces came from elementary students and student groups who experienced deep classroom inquiry. Connectivity between library spaces was recommended often in extended-learning classrooms; for example, children suggested growing and harvesting foods in the learning garden, cooking it in the culinary space,

and then donating it to a local food bank or having a mini farmers' market. These blended ideas demonstrated that children understood the connections throughout the spaces and their connections to the community as a whole. Additionally, students who spent more time working on the Nobo library project thought about more diverse needs, including details like varying countertop heights for chefs of all ages and differently-abled chefs and offering culturally-responsive cooking classes.

“Something that Impressed me was the class I sat in was extremely thoughtful, thorough and comprehensive in their approach. I was impressed with the level of detail they provided for how the services could be used by all ages and abilities of people.”

--Boulder Public Library Director

Conclusion

Engaging children is an important part of public participation as children are active members of the community. Engaging youth in participatory planning outreach with a relevant project like this plays a key role in helping students understand the dynamics of city decision-making, in addition to contributing valuable ideas to the city from key users. GUB consistently finds that children, youth and their families are willing and able participants in community projects if the projects are presented in a sensitive and engaging manner. During this turbulent, pandemic era, teachers who engaged fully with this project told us it offered mooring and meaning to children's learning and sense of community.

Given the number of students, teachers, and city staff and community experts involved, this project was GUB's largest semester-long project in its 11 year history. 262 young people, 15 teachers, 17 city staff and community experts participated. Students demonstrated persistence for learning and a keen interest in participating in this community-based project, even in the midst of home learning and COVID-19. Student recommendations included design elements from 6 key themes:

1. Water Play
2. Interactivity
3. Learning
4. Sustainability and Nature (*plants, animals, and recycling*)
5. Inclusivity (*of culture, age, ability*)
6. Community (*giving back, bringing together*)

Students recommended water play and water features in nearly every space. They expressed a strong desire to interact with people, nature, playable structures, and the

garden. Young people consistently viewed the library as a place to learn new skills and develop new interests. They reported that sustainability was essential and that it should be present in all aspects of the library campus--in design materials, programming, and the overall built environment of each space. Students emphasized the importance of inclusion; specifically, that the North Boulder Branch Library should include and benefit everyone--across culture, age, and ability. Lastly, youth saw this library as a place for community. From growing, harvesting, cooking, and donating food to underserved communities and hosting farmer's markets to celebrating culture and art through plaza events, students clearly want to give back and bring people together for the common good. While recognizing that the students' visions will take significant fundraising efforts over time, library staff and community members wishing to support the future library have a wealth of youth voices to inform library design and programming decisions. The students have offered well-researched, creative, and feasible ideas for this future community resource. In conclusion, Professor Chawla summed it up best when she stated:

“Something I want to remember about today is the variety of interactive suggestions from students--the library has the potential to be a national model for all the different kinds of learning that a library can support.”

--Louise Chawla, Professor Emeritus, University of Colorado

Partners and Appreciation

This project was the result of a collaborative process. Several key partners made this possible including City of Boulder staff, including staff from Boulder Public Library, Library Commissioners, City Councilors, and WORKac architects. GUB would like to especially thank the partners who directly gave their time and energy to make this engagement possible, including the 3rd and 5th grade teachers and students at Crest View and Foothill Elementary Schools, and our young friends at Boulder Journey School. Antonia Gaona, North Boulder Library Project Manager, was an especially helpful partner, who made herself available to GUB Staff for meetings and updates as needed.

- City of Boulder
 - Aaron Brockett, City Councilor
 - David Farnan, Director, Boulder Public Library
 - Rachel Friend, City Councilor
 - Steven Frost, Library Commissioner
 - Antonia Gaona, Library Project Manager
 - Juana Gomez, Library Commissioner
 - Sarah Huntley, Community Engagement Manager

- Junie Joseph, City Councilor
- Jane Sykes Wilson, Library Commissioner
- Community Experts
 - Amale Andraos, Architect, WORKac
 - Nevin Blum, Architect, WORKac
 - Jamison Brown, Landscape Architect, JBFieldworks
 - Louise Chawla, GUB Co-Founder, CU Professor Emeritus
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 - Dan Wood, Architect, WORKac
- Crest View Elementary School, Boulder Valley School District
 - Monica Boykoff, 5th grade teacher
 - Jess Bracken, Assistant Principal
 - Hollene Davis, Principal
 - Katie Fitzcallaghan, 5th grade teacher
 - Bobby Lehman, Teacher librarian
 - Erin Shea-Bower, 5th grade teacher
- Foothill Elementary School, Boulder Valley School District
 - Megan Hanauer, English Language Development teacher
 - Holli Hoskins, 3rd grade teacher
 - Shannon VanScotter, 3rd grade teacher
 - Jonathan Warshaw, Teacher librarian
 - Natalie Warshaw, 3rd grade teacher
- Growing Up Boulder Staff/Team
 - Stephanie Andersen, ENVD Undergraduate GUB Intern
 - Oliver Brooks, ENVD Undergraduate GUB Intern
 - Cathy Hill, Education Coordinator
 - Mara Mintzer, Program Director
 - Ayushi Patel, ENVD Undergraduate GUB Intern

Appendix

If you would like more detailed data, please email growingupboulder@gmail.com.

- A. Crest View Elementary School, 5th grade classroom work:
 - a. Option 1 classroom [share-out Video](#)
 - b. Option 1 classroom slide deck presentation links:
 - i. [Playground](#)
 - ii. [Plaza](#)
 - iii. [Community Learning Garden](#)
 - iv. [Indoor Makerspace](#)
 - c. Option 1 [class log](#)
 - d. Option 2 classrooms [student projects](#)
 - e. Option 2 classrooms [class log](#)

- f. Option 2 classrooms [Sample Council Letters](#)

- B. Foothill Elementary School, 3rd grade classroom work:
 - a. [Student share-out event recommendations](#) (all 3 third grades)
 - b. [Class log](#) (all 3 third grades)
- C. Foothill Elementary School, 5th grade classroom work:
 - a. [Slide deck presentation](#)
 - b. [Class log](#)
- D. [How will it FEEL in your \(library\) area?](#)
- E. [What do you want to DO in your library?](#)