Growing Up Boulder (GUB) has actively engaged young people in a number of planning and design projects to increase youth voice. Some highlights of GUB’s work in the 2013-2014 academic year include:

- Youth engagement in the Transportation Master Plan update with Youth Services Initiative, Whittier International Elementary School, Casey Middle School, and Boulder High School’s AVID class
- Co-Design workshop and training for CU student graphic facilitators in GO Boulder’s Bike-Walk Summit
- Great Neighborhoods project to explore child-friendly, dense, affordable housing for the City of Boulder, in partnership with Whittier International Elementary School, Boulder High School’s AVID class, and a University of Colorado undergraduate Environmental Design praxis studio/seminar
- Youth engagement in the concept plan update for Valmont City Park with YMCA’s after-school programs at University Hill and Crestview Elementary Schools and with youth and parents from City’s Youth Services Initiative
- Outreach to children, youth and parents for the North Boulder Sub-Community Plan Update
- Presentations at the Transforming Local Government Conference and the Environmental Design Research Association Annual Conference
- Interactive presentations to four 3rd grade classes at Crestview Elementary School about how cities are planned
- A research grant from Campus Compact of the Mountain West to explore impacts of the Great Neighborhoods project
- Forthcoming publications about Burke Park and Great Neighborhoods projects

“Being an intern for Growing Up Boulder has been such an amazing opportunity. I was able to take my passion for design, art, and working with children, and combine them to help create a youth-friendly environment!”

– Anna Reynoso
Youth Engagement in Transportation Master Planning

GO Boulder and GUB partnered in the fall of 2014 to explore opportunities and barriers to youth mobility, especially for active transportation such as biking and walking. GUB engaged two middle school groups (Youth Services Initiative and Casey Middle School’s Applied Science class) and Boulder High School’s 11th Grade AVID class in three types of activities: map annotations, an interactive presentation, and a walk audit. Map annotations were designed to understand young people’s mobility patterns across the city: where they go, how they get there, and with whom they travel. Interactive presentations used a visual preference methods to ask about street design, sidewalk design, and physical infrastructure of mixed use and residential developments. In the walk audits, youth took photographs and notes about sidewalks, streets, and intersections.

Some of our mobility findings include:
- youth travel to various destinations by walking, biking, buses or cars, and the mode of travel is directly correlated with the distance: shorter trips are more often by walking or biking than longer ones;
- boys travel by bike more than girls; and
- middle school students live closer to their school (and therefore more are likely to walk or bike) than high school students.

Youth also made many suggestions for street design, safety, and aesthetics.

Youth want to see clearer intersection markings with more prominent signage at crosswalks

Students enjoy commercial spaces for the amenities they provide, but they do not currently feel safe in them when there is no clear separation between cars, parking, and pedestrian areas

Youth like art and spaces for interaction and personal expression along walking routes and at bus stops.

Students want to see wider sidewalks for walking with friends, as well as a green space that separates traffic from the sidewalk.

All photos taken by youth on the walk audits
GO Boulder also hosted a bike-walk summit in the winter of 2014. GUB facilitated a training in Co-Design methods with Environmental Design undergraduates (see Co-Design article, page 6) who then served as graphic facilitators at the workshop. GUB and GO Boulder also were able to incorporate some of the youth ideas into a summary graphic. GUB annotated this graphic to show how youth contributed to the vision for biking and walking in Boulder.
The Great, Green Neighborhoods Project
What does dense, affordable, child-friendly housing look like for Boulder?

In the spring of 2013, Boulder’s City Council announced its goal of providing more affordable and moderately-priced housing options in Boulder. In order to do so, council requested the development of a new, comprehensive housing strategy. A challenge in the development of this strategy, however, is that housing which provides better affordability for middle-income households, such as condos or apartments, is typically not very child- or family-friendly. The timing of the project also aligned with the University of Colorado’s redesign of its family and graduate housing north of Boulder Creek.

Through a year-long project, GUB partnered with Whittier International Elementary School, Boulder High School’s AVID program, and CU’s Environmental Design Praxis semester to consider design strategies that are dense, affordable, and also child-friendly. Because of both the city and university’s interest in this question, the Athens Court housing site was selected as a focal area.

**Outreach to Children & Youth**

In the fall semester, Growing Up Boulder used a variety of techniques to engage young people in the project. Children and youth visited award-winning dense housing developments, and identified needs and interests of different members of the community. They also explored meanings and examples of child-friendly cities and floodplain mitigation.

Elementary and high school student recommendations had a great deal of overlap [see inset, next page]. Both groups requested diverse natural areas integrated into play and recreation spaces. They both considered and called for features that promote sustainability (such as solar panels and roof gardens), mixed use (including coffee and ice cream shops as well as spaces to hang-out), and safety (including personal and traffic safety).

Children and youth repeatedly requested an integration of features rather than discrete zones of use for different ages.

**Assessments**

GUB utilized the United Nation’s Child-Friendly Cities Assessment tool with Whittier and BHS. Analysis shows a statistically significant increase in students who believe the government listens to their ideas.

Evaluation of the praxis semester will be funded by Campus Compact of the Mountain West. Initial reflections show the praxis to have been transformative in undergraduate’s thinking both about young people’s contributions to planning and also about child-friendly cities.

*At first I thought, “what are we going to be able to learn from 3rd graders building toilet-paper-tube models?,” but . . . they changed the way we were thinking and designing.*

– Shane Powers

GUB has and will continue to disseminate its results, including through professional conferences, academic papers, and a summary presented to the city for its housing strategy.
The Great, Green Neighborhoods Project
What does dense, affordable, child-friendly housing look like for Boulder?

CHILD-FRIENDLY FEATURES

- Natural features integrated throughout site
- Gardens and fruit trees
- Diverse play and recreation spaces
- Places to hang-out with friends and family, including cafés and ice cream shops, affordable food and creek side spaces
- Sustainable features in design and transportation
- Colorful housing and diverse housing types
Co-Design Workshop

Initially founded by Vancouver-based architect/planner Stanley King in 1971 and further developed with environmental educator Susan Chung, the Co-Design method affords an effective and democratic means of identifying public preference in matters of the built environment. Stanley and Susan visited CU Boulder in December of 2013 to conduct a workshop and lecture on their method for students and faculty of the Program in Environmental Design. City staff and ENVD faculty, staff and students participated in the lecture and workshop.

GUB has since employed the co-design method in its Valmont City Park outreach, North Boulder Sub-Community Plan Update, Crestview Elementary School teaching, and for the city’s Bike-Walk Summit. GUB helped adapt methods from Co-Design to guide community discussion about pedestrian and cyclist transportation at Boulder’s 2014 annual WalkBike Summit. Along with other community members, students of CU’s Program in Environmental Design and several Growing Up Boulder interns served as graphic facilitators for small groups of Boulder County residents participating in the summit.
North Boulder Sub-Community Plan

For the North Boulder Sub-community Plan Update, Growing Up Boulder used a variety of methods to ask young people and their parents, “What do you like or not like about North Broadway? What are the key opportunities for that area?” GUB’s outreach provided views from an important subset of the community that is often not represented at public meetings or in more traditional forms of outreach. Engagement methods included:

- Drawing sessions with elementary and middle school children at the public meeting on October 30, 2013 (n=3 elementary school children, n=1 middle school student)
- Questions for parents of young children via Boulder Rock’n Moms Yahoo Group post on November 7, 2013 (n=24)
- Questions for high school students via email on November 7, 2013 (n=4)
- “City-on-a-wall” activities and individual drawings with Foothill Elementary School 1st grade class on May 5, 2014 (n=24) [see co-design article/image, page 6]

Answers varied significantly by age group. Below is a summary of the most frequently requested design elements, in descending order of importance. A detailed report was provided to the city in May of 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Ideas &amp; Design Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School children</td>
<td>Fields, trees and flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zoo or space for animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toy store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth (middle + high school)</td>
<td>Increased safety at the Front Range/Broadway bus stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safer paths to walk and ride bikes in North Boulder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Indoor play space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water features (pool and/or splash pad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shade on playground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effective Participation provides opportunities for . . .

- Developing competencies
- Collaborative goal setting and decision-making
- Engaged dialogue
- Tangible outcomes
- Children, adults & professionals to learn together and from each other
In the spring of 2014, the City of Boulder Parks & Recreation Department began revisions to its 2008 concept plan for Valmont City Park. As a part of this process, Growing Up Boulder solicited ideas from groups of children, youth and families. GUB facilitated community outreach activities with school-age children from YMCA’s University Hill and Crestview Elementary programs, with middle- and high-school youth from the Youth Services Initiative (YSI), and with families of the YSI youth at a neighborhood event.

YMCA children were engaged with a Co-design activity during a field-trip to the site, where they created drawings of playgrounds in an imaginary newly developed park. YSI activities took place using photovoice during a field-trip to the site, and using a visual preference survey at the YSI meeting space. Parents of participating youth were interviewed at an informal social gathering for Día de los Niños at the Manhattan public housing site. Although responses varied between and within each group, two major themes that were prevalent for all three groups were nature and play.

- Younger children were interested in nature-play spaces, especially those that mimicked the existing prairie dog colony, for tunneling and gathering.
- Older youth were also interested in well-maintained meadow-like spaces.
- Both age groups expressed interest in adventure-play features such as climbing areas, zip-lines, tunnels and trampolines.
- Transportation interests were for better bus access and bike maintenance at the site
- Food interests were for grilling and fire pits as well as food trucks or food stands.

More detailed results were provided in a report that the city will use in the concept plan update in 2014.
Child-Friendly Cities

What is a child-friendly city? As the number of projects reported herein show, there is remarkable similarity in the overall features of a child-friendly city. These include specific physical elements as well as the ability to participate in dialogue and decision-making.

In order to promote our work as an exemplary child-friendly city initiative, Growing Up Boulder has been increasing the dissemination of our work through a wider range of venues. These include:

- Two presentations at the Environmental Design Research Association’s annual conference in New Orleans in May, 2014
- A presentation with city staff at the Transforming Local Government Conference in April, 2014
- Several papers due out in the coming year. These include analysis of Burke Park (a 2012-2013 project) and the Great Green Neighborhoods projects
- Two presentations at the 7th Child in the City Conference in Odense, Denmark in October.
- A panel session at the annual meeting of the American Society of Landscape Architects in Denver this November.

CHILD-FRIENDLY CITIES PROVIDE YOUNG PEOPLE WITH . . .

- Access to health & basic services
- Safe & secure environments
- Natural & diverse green spaces
- Freedom of movement (independent mobility)
- Peer gathering spaces
- Integration into their community, not just to child-designated spaces
- Opportunities to participate in the design and planning of their community
- Opportunities to engage in dialogue and decision-making along with adults and professionals
- Opportunities to learn about and care for their community

Presentations & Models from the Great Green Neighborhoods Project, (photos Lynn M. Lickteig)
Some faces of GUB

COORDINATORS
- Mara Mintzer
- Tori Derr

INTERNS & SCHOLARS
- Nathan Brien
- Nathalie Doyle
- Anna Reynoso
- Alessandro Rigolon
- Ildiko Kovacs, York University, Toronto,
- Flaminia Martufi, University of Trento, Italy

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
- University of Colorado, Children, Youth & Environments Center
- City of Boulder Planning & Sustainability
- City of Boulder Parks & Recreation
- City of Boulder Transportation
- Boulder Valley School District
- Boulder Valley YMCA

STEERING COMMITTEE
- City of Boulder Planning & Sustainability
- City of Boulder Parks & Recreation
- City of Boulder Transportation
- YOAB
- Boulder Valley YMCA
- Boulder Journey School
- Youth Services Initiative
- I Have a Dream Foundation
- Boulder Housing Partners
- Boulder Valley Head Start
- Children, Youth & Environments

GROWING UP BOULDER
GROWING UP BOULDER IS A CHILD- AND YOUTH-FRIENDLY CITY INITIATIVE THAT BEGAN IN 2009 AS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY OF BOULDER, BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE YOUTH.

Academic Year 2013-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Projects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Young People Engaged</td>
<td>268</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Interns, Visiting Scholars &amp; Volunteers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Undergraduate Participants [Praxis + Co-Design]</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Hours Working with Community</td>
<td>Countless!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OUR SUPPORTERS

- Campus Compact of the Mountain West
- Children, Youth, & Environments Center
- City of Boulder, Community Planning & Sustainability
- City of Boulder, Parks & Recreation
- City of Boulder, Transportation
- University of Colorado, Office for University Outreach
- University of Colorado, Program in Environmental Design