



At-A-Glance: Growing up Boulder’s Report on Young People’s Vision for the Ponderosa Mobile Home Community

Overview

In August 2017, the City of Boulder purchased the Ponderosa Mobile Home Community in North Boulder in order to update the infrastructure of the site and support resiliency and long-term affordability. This session was part of a series of ongoing engagements with the community to better understand the needs and desires for the future of Ponderosa. Children and youth were invited to participate with their parents in design activities held in February 2018. Parents and children responded to questions about Ponderosa, then used the “City as Play*” exercise to model spaces they wanted to see in the future. During these two activities, strong themes emerged surrounding green space, the nearby creek, community spaces, play spaces, safety, and adding new community amenities.

Project By The Numbers

- 15 children, ages 3-12, from Ponderosa
- 7 parents from Ponderosa
- 3 GUB staff
- 1 cultural liaison
- 1.5 hour engagement session



Residents of Ponderosa engaging in the “City as Play” activity. Photo Credit: Nihan Efeoglu

Importance of Children’s Involvement

As current and future residents of the Ponderosa Mobile Home Community, children deserve to be included in the design process because of the valuable perspective they bring. Children were creative in their thinking and had a great understanding of their own needs when they created their preferred spaces. The session itself positively impacted some of the youth, who expressed a desire to have more opportunities to eat and play with other young people in the community like they did during the engagement.

Children and Youth Reflections on Ponderosa

What I like about my community	Opportunities to improve my community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proximity to nature/wildlife ● Family and friends in community ● Views of mountains ● Close to play spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safety (roads, lights) ● New play and community spaces ● More/better outdoor green spaces and gardens

*“City as Play” is an engagement method developed by urban planner James Rojas; it is also called, “Place It.”

Summary of Findings

The children and youth of Ponderosa had a great affinity towards the outdoor spaces in the community, particularly near the creek area. Many of the ideas for change in Ponderosa included spaces that would be used not only by children, but by the rest of the community as well. Their recommendations enhance many aspects of Ponderosa that the residents already enjoy: outdoor spaces and the natural environment.

COMMON THEMES

Green Space: Many of the design solutions the residents came up with for Ponderosa included outdoor green spaces with flower and fruit gardens, landscaping, and many more trees around the site.

Engagement with the Creek: The creek is an important aspect of the site, and the youth wanted designs around the creek. This included a park, flowers/trees, and a playground.

Play: Children and youth expressed interest in having new play equipment and spaces to play outside, such as a sandbox, skating area, gym, and a nature play area by the creek.

Safety: Lighting and improved roads were also concerns that were raised multiple times and appeared in the children's designs. For example, the children expressed a desire for enclosed spaces for playing and a bridge to safely cross the creek.

Community Amenities: Many of the amenities featured in the designs strongly focused on community gathering. Parks, basketball courts, soccer fields, gyms and similar amenities were all mentioned as useful additions that could foster community and family gatherings.



Residents of Ponderosa engaging in the "City as Play" activity. Photo Credit: Sara Taketatsu

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