

# Neighbourhood Centres for Learning & Development Pilot Project



## **GENERAL GORDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Visioning Session 2009-04-14

Summary Report



Ministry of  
Education

VSB

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The visioning session for General Gordon Elementary was intended to bring the school community together with local and provincial agencies in order to develop a vision for the General Gordon Neighbourhood Centre of Learning & Development (NCLD). This was also a chance for agencies and members of the school and community who had not yet been involved in the process to learn more about the NCLD concept, overall vision and the specific objectives and values of General Gordon Elementary. Through this session, participants were given an opportunity to discuss potential synergies between the agencies and school to see how they might work together in a future NCLD at General Gordon.

A total of 45 people were in attendance at the session, comprised of 20 school and community representatives, 15 agency representatives, and 9 members of the project team (Brook + Associates (facilitation), Vancouver School Board (VSB), and Ministry of Education). The session was held on April 23, 2009 at the Vancouver School Board Education Centre (1580 West Broadway) and ran from 9:00am – 2:30pm. Visual materials at the session included a power point presentation and display boards depicting the aerial view of the site and the school floor plans.

This report provides a summary of the visioning session, including scans of the ideas that were captured on “tablecloths” generated by participants during the visioning session in the afternoon.

### Visioning Session Activities

#### a) Welcome & Introductions

The facilitator provided a brief overview of the agenda for the day, rules of engagement and round table introductions where each attendee was asked to state their name and affiliation to the project (project team, school, or agency).

#### b) What is an NCLD?

Representatives from the Ministry of Education and Vancouver School Board provided background information about the NCLD pilot project from a provincial and local context. This included a review of the overall vision and objectives of the project (please see below) and a brief description of the two other elementary schools (Queen Mary and Lord Strathcona) in Vancouver that are participating in the process.

#### **Vision**

NCLDs are intended to serve the needs and interests of parents and their children from the time of infancy through adolescence as well as the needs and interests of the community as a whole while meeting District and Ministry directions. These centres utilize space and resources in existing, renovated or new facilities to provide the surrounding neighbourhood an array of programs and services.

#### **Objectives**

1. To define facility operational programs for three NCLD model schools in Vancouver; and
2. To develop a set of policies and guidelines about how to integrate external services and community groups in facility planning on the school ground.

### c) Overview of Work Plan

The NCLD Work Plan was presented, which provides the project timeline and summary of deliverables executed and planned throughout the process. (See the Visioning Session Power Point Presentation in the Appendix for more detail).

### d) Guiding Principles

Members of the facilitation team presented the NCLD Guiding Principles (please see below) to the group and briefly discussed the stages of revision that the principles underwent throughout the consultation process thus far.

#### **Guiding Principles**

- Support the lifelong learning and development of young people, their families and community without compromising the educational programming, safety and functional space requirements for young people.
- Engage school and community partners and government in the development of the NCLD program.
- Provide for the direct involvement of agency partners in offering the programs, services and activities that serve the program of the NCLD.
- Strive for sustainability (economic, environmental, and social) by efficiently using resources and taking advantage of opportunities to support the current and future well-being of young people, their families and the community over time.

### e) School & Community Introduction

Representatives from the school community (Parent Advisory Council (PAC), teacher and students) gave various presentations about the school needs, values and current environment of General Gordon Elementary. The PAC representative presented a power point presentation (available in the Appendix) and discussed the concept of school design, local context of school sizes and locations and the efforts already made by the General Gordon school community to embrace the concept of school and community uses under one roof. The rest of the community and school representatives at the session were then asked to provide any other information about the school such as what they value most about the school and what they feel works well now that should be maintained in the future NCLD. (See Section B for more detail).

### f) Agency Opportunities

Agency representatives at the session were asked to introduce themselves, describe what programs and services their organization provides and how they felt they might fit in to a future NCLD at General Gordon. Members of the facilitation team then provided information about each agency that was interested in participating but unable to attend the session. To conclude, the facilitators presented a table outlining the potential relationships and opportunities for how the agencies might work in the NCLD, along with the associated constraints (See the Visioning Session Power Point Presentation in the Appendix for more detail).

The Ministry of Education representative clarified to the group that the Ministry will provide additional space as part of the capital project to accommodate basic services provided by any provincial and local agencies as part of the future NCLD. Provincial and local agencies are expected to provide operational funding to support the services delivered as part of the NCLD, and these agencies/partners are also encouraged to contribute capital funding, where possible, to provide enhanced facilities delivering community services (e.g., community sport/recreation facility/centre funded by City of Vancouver, public library by Vancouver Library Board, etc.).

### g) Visioning Exercise

The participants were divided into five smaller groups for the visioning exercise. A facilitator was at each table to record the thoughts and ideas of the group on to “tablecloths” of paper. In order to prompt conversation for the visioning exercise, the groups were asked to describe General Gordon NCLD in 2020. (See Section C for more detail about the outcome of this discussion).



Participants discussing their ideas and recording them on to “tablecloths” of paper.

### h) Report Out

Each group elected a representative to report back to the rest of the participants about the topics that were discussed at their respective tables. From this exercise, many commonalities between the small group visioning discussions became evident and were recorded by the facilitation team.



One group presenting their final “tablecloth” to the rest of the attendees.

### i) Observations + Directions

In order to synthesise the ideas and information gathered during the small group visioning exercise, participants were lead through a discussion to define a master list of common core education, programming and space requirements in the future school. (See section D for full details).

## j) Wrap-Up + Next Steps

The group discussed the next steps for consulting with the wider community about the project. Various options were considered, such as a public open house including the larger community, additional visioning sessions with the school community, and meetings with individual agencies. It was decided that the school Representative Team<sup>1</sup> would review the summary of the visioning session and discuss the best option for a consultation process moving forward at their next meeting.

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<sup>1</sup>A Representative Team (RT) has been created at each of the pilot schools. The RT is comprised of the school principal, teachers, parents and community members with a direct connection to the school. Members of the RT participate in a working group for the NCLD planning process at the school and share information between their respective constituent groups and the working group.

## B. SCHOOL VALUES

The following is a list of values described by General Gordon Elementary staff, students, parents and community members during the school & community introduction at the session. (Please see Appendix 5 for the complete package of school introduction materials, including handouts from the staff and students and the power point presentation by the PAC)

### Staff Values

- A focus on the whole child – child-centred
- Choice Theory – kids take responsibility for their choices
- Multiple intelligences – more than academic (music, art, sports)
- Learning French
- Vibrant music program
- Collaborative teaching and learning
- Bilingual school library
- Learning through technology
- Physical health / personal planning – school nurse
- Links to community – e.g. community link team, Jericho Kids Club, Brownies, More Sports, etc.
- Support of parents

### Student Values:

- Comfortable & welcoming environment
- All students are accepted and accepting
- Extracurricular activities
- Feeling of safety – supervision aids
- Clubs & teams – ex. Environment Club
- Performances, theme days, talent shows, etc.
- Students want to help and be involved
- Always learning new things

### Parent & Community Values:

- Schools are Neighbourhood hubs
- Expandable - intentionally 'too big' to allow for flexibility
- Built to last
- Sustainable
- Safe
- Consideration of Heritage
- Indoor / outdoor space
- Close, collaborative relationship between school & Jericho Kids Club
- School values the family unit – important piece of the community

## C. VISIONING EXERCISE

The visioning exercise began after the introduction to the project and background information was shared with all participants. Participants were asked to gather into five smaller groups for a more intimate table visioning session. Each participant was given a name tag with a coloured dot (red, green, yellow, light blue, dark blue) that represented what table group they were in. Each table was asked to respond to the prompt, “Describe General Gordon NCLD in 2020”.

The tables were set up with large paper “tablecloths” and one facilitator was positioned at each group to record ideas and prompt conversation. The table visioning exercise ran for 40 minutes and then a representative from each group was asked to report out to the rest of the participants what their team had discussed and captured on their “tablecloth”.

The following section includes a snapshot of each “tablecloth” that was produced and a summary table of the main themes (programs, services, spaces and other issues surrounding the NCLD) that arose from each of the table group discussions.

### Table Groups:

- Red Group
- Green Group
- Yellow Group
- Light Blue Group
- Dark Blue Group



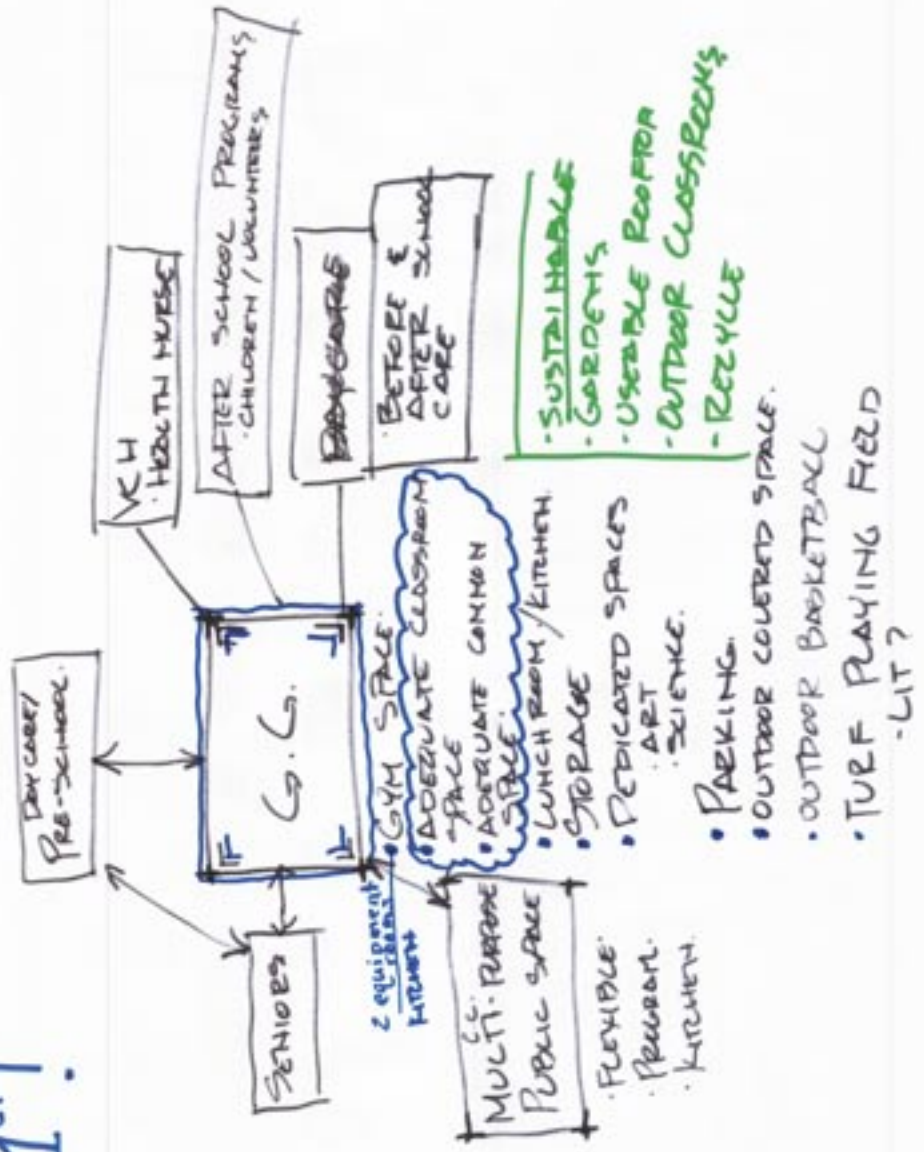
Programs + Services	Space + Use	Values / Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of school care</li> <li>• Childcare</li> <li>• Strong Start</li> <li>• Early Learning</li> <li>• Before &amp; After school recreation</li> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• Teen programs</li> <li>• MoreSports</li> <li>• Arts</li> <li>• Sports &amp; Recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classrooms:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interconnected</li> <li>• Project space</li> <li>• Access to washrooms, sinks and technology</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Multi-purpose space</li> <li>• Lunchroom (separate)</li> <li>• Gym / Fitness</li> <li>• Designated Special Needs space:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensory Room</li> <li>• Play areas</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Occupational Therapy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Designated performance space – stage, theatre, dance</li> <li>• Designated music space</li> <li>• Non-designated space for community use</li> <li>• Library (enlarged):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dual-track</li> <li>• Reading room</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Casual social space (atrium)</li> <li>• Student hang out space</li> <li>• Multi-use storage throughout</li> <li>• Visual Arts space</li> <li>• Outdoor covered play</li> <li>• Teaching / edible garden</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A building that suits the needs and allows for future needs</li> <li>• Sustainability &amp; life-cycle costing</li> <li>• More connection / cohesiveness between indoor/outdoor</li> <li>• Natural daylight</li> <li>• Windows that open</li> <li>• Heritage – retention / other options?</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Issues / Questions / Other</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operating funds to maintain infrastructure</li> <li>• Overbuild the school</li> <li>• Zonable space for community use</li> </ul>



2020

**Remember:**  
**It's a SCHOOL 1<sup>st</sup>!**  
**SPACE CONCERNS**

- loss of outdoor space
- **redundant agencies**
- Management of Agencies
- Who makes the final call?



**Green Group**

Programs + Services	Space + Use	Values / Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daycare / Preschool</li> <li>• Seniors</li> <li>• VCH – health nurse</li> <li>• After school programs – children, volunteers</li> <li>• Before &amp; After school care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gym (+ 2 storage spaces)</li> <li>• Adequate classroom space</li> <li>• Adequate common space</li> <li>• Lunchroom / kitchen</li> <li>• Storage</li> <li>• Dedicated spaces for Art &amp; Science</li> <li>• Multi-purpose public space:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible</li> <li>• Program</li> <li>• Kitchen</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Outdoor covered space</li> <li>• Outdoor basketball</li> <li>• Turf playing field (lit)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's a school space 1st!</li> </ul> <p>Sustainability: (spaces &amp; programs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gardens</li> <li>• Useable rooftop</li> <li>• Outdoor classrooms</li> <li>• Recycling</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Issues / Questions / Other</b></p> <p>Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of outdoor space</li> <li>• Redundant agencies</li> <li>• Management of agencies</li> <li>• Who makes the final call?</li> </ul>



# 2020 ... and beyond

## Sustainability/Environmental

- quality (avoid the details) throughout ... top to bottom
- facilities - equipment - invest for the long run
- natural lighting - minimize use of lights
- spider integrate building to environment
- solar collection on roof
- geothermal heating
- all outside space opportunities for learning
- adaptability (able to take best from past → future)
- life cycle costing
- efficiency use of space
- utility area

## Safe and Welcoming Community

- Good signage, accurate information
- Culture of kindness
- Bright clean
- Office right there, reception
- Signlights
- area to study at entrance building relationships

- Outdoor
  - after hours space available for community use.
  - covered space/awnings
  - more playground equipment
  - big spaces
  - green
  - play space
  - garden

## Programs and Services

- grass field, artificial turf
- community driven
- by the people that live in the local area
  - Summer program before and after school care
  - before and after school care
- Herrings
  - build what it's already in existence.
  - already in existence.
  - to the school community
- staff of building to do outside
- recognize
- rethinking the space



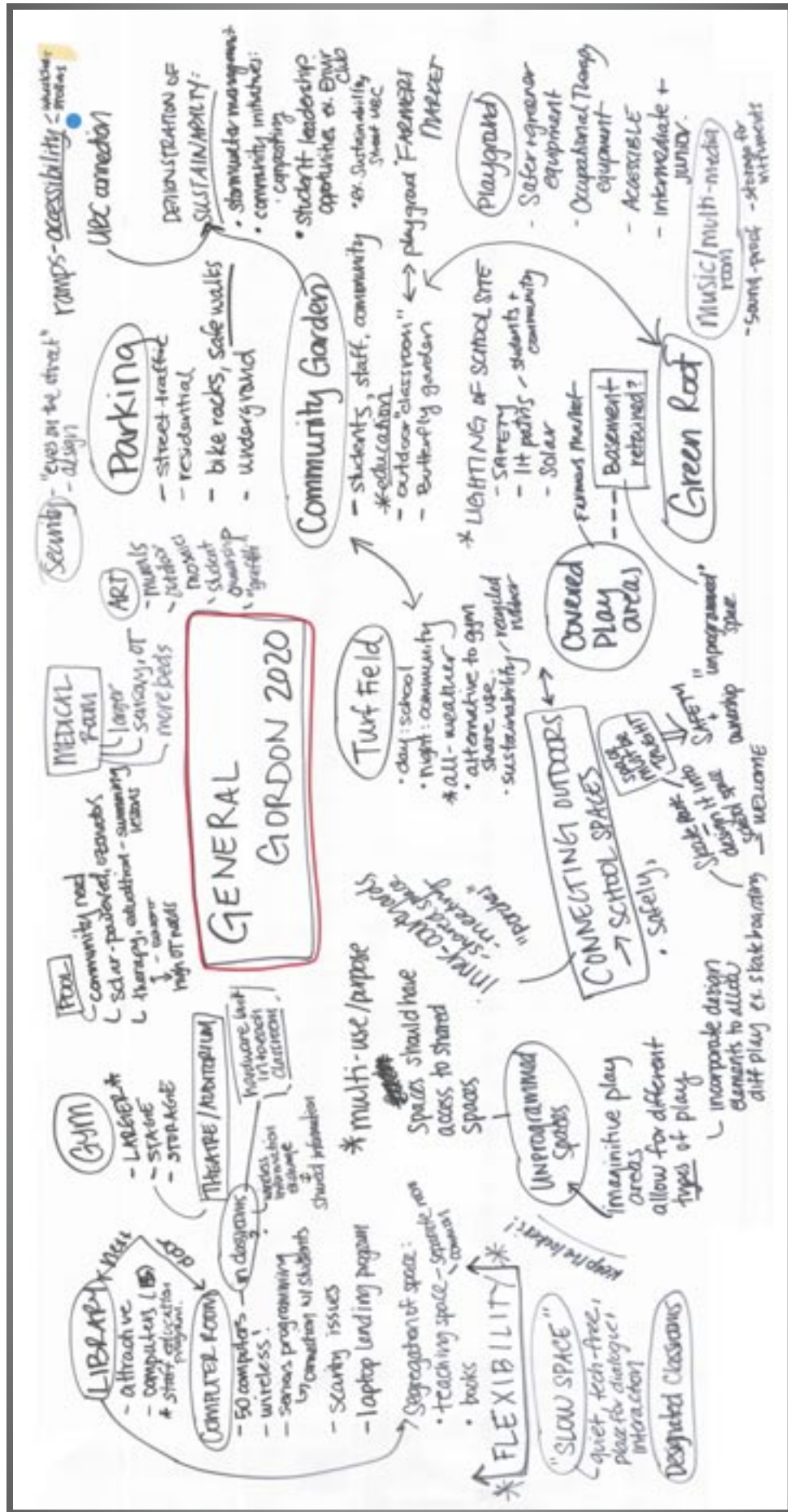
## Adaptability or Flexibility

- Large spaces, storage
- Sinks everywhere
- Dignified activities / parking
- Big gym / performance space
- Strong table collection
- different space for lunchroom - gym ...
- technology computers in class set computer
- complete to every classroom

**Yellow Group**

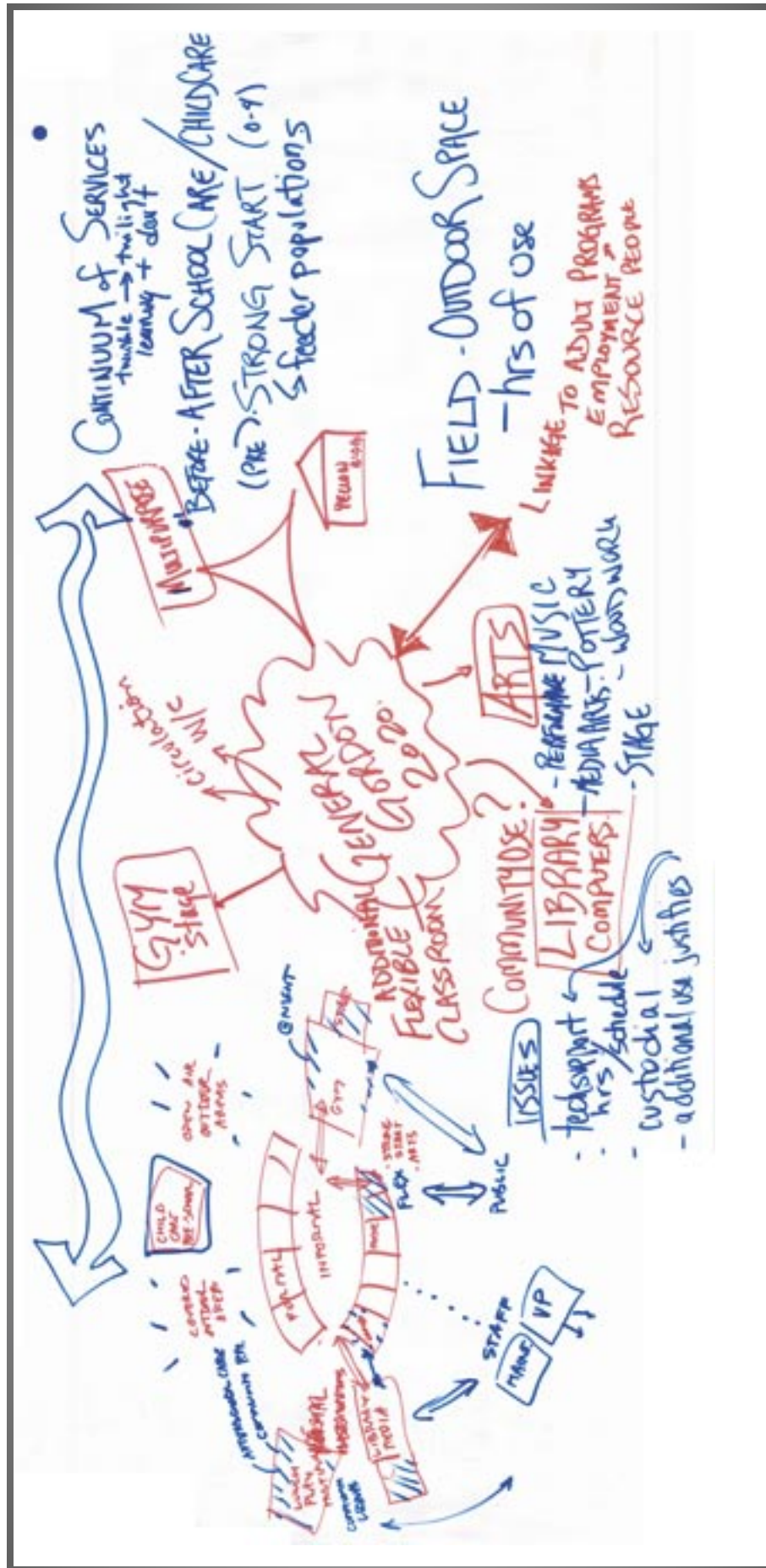
Programs + Services	Space + Use	Values / Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before &amp; After school care</li> <li>• Kindercare</li> <li>• Summer programs</li> <li>• Outdoor learning opportunities</li> <li>• Community-driven programs by the people who live in the local area</li> <li>• Complements what is already in existence and the school community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designated classroom space</li> <li>• Provision for in-between spaces</li> <li>• Multi-use space (maximize)</li> <li>• Large &amp; adaptable spaces</li> <li>• Storage</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Big gym</li> <li>• Performance space</li> <li>• Library – double-collection</li> <li>• Lunchroom (separate)</li> <li>• Technology / computer lab + computers in all classrooms</li> <li>• Field – grass or turf</li> <li>• After-hours space available for community use</li> <li>• Covered outdoor play</li> <li>• Green + open space</li> <li>• Garden</li> <li>• Play areas + more playground equipment</li> <li>• Good signage, accessible info</li> <li>• Bright, clean</li> <li>• Office / reception visible</li> <li>• Skylights</li> <li>• Area with seating at entrance to building (relationships)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best educational facility</li> <li>• Heritage:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shell of building kept</li> <li>• Re-do inside</li> <li>• Reconfigure</li> <li>• New technology, new spaces</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Safe &amp; welcoming community</li> <li>• Culture of kindness</li> </ul> <p>Sustainability / Environmental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality throughout</li> <li>• Facilities &amp; equipment</li> <li>• Invest for the long-term</li> <li>• Natural lighting – minimize use of lighting</li> <li>• Gardens integrate building to environment</li> <li>• Solar collection on roof</li> <li>• Geothermal heating</li> <li>• all outside spaces opportunities for learning</li> <li>• adaptability</li> <li>• life-cycle costing</li> <li>• efficient use of space</li> </ul> <p><b>Issues / Questions / Other</b></p> <p><i>none</i></p>





Programs + Services	Space + Use	Values / Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors programming – connection with students</li> <li>• Staff technology education programs (computers, library)</li> <li>• Outdoor education opportunities (community garden ) for students, staff &amp; community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street / residential</li> <li>• Underground</li> <li>• Bike racks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Safe walks</li> <li>• Community garden – outdoor classroom</li> <li>• Lighting of school site – lit paths, solar</li> <li>• Covered play areas</li> <li>• Playground:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer, greener equip</li> <li>• OT equipment</li> <li>• Accessible</li> <li>• Intermediate &amp; junior</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Turf field:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day school use, eve community use</li> <li>• All-weather, recycled rubber</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Social spaces (courtyards)</li> <li>• Music / multi-media room (sound-proof)</li> <li>• Gym (larger, stage)</li> <li>• Theatre / Auditorium</li> <li>• Multi-use space</li> <li>• Un-programmed space – imaginative play areas for different uses</li> <li>• Computer room</li> <li>• Designated classrooms</li> <li>• Slow space (quiet, meeting)</li> <li>• Pool:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community need</li> <li>• Education, therapy (OT)</li> <li>• Solar powered, ozonators</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Medical room:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more beds</li> <li>• Sensory / OT</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GG a demonstration of sustainability</li> <li>• Farmers market (gardens)</li> <li>• Student leadership opportunities (environment club)</li> <li>• Community initiatives – composting / recycling</li> <li>• Stormwater management</li> <li>• Green roof / garden</li> <li>• Connect indoor/outdoors</li> <li>• FLEXIBILITY of spaces</li> </ul> <p><b>Issues / Questions / Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security – “eyes on the street” - incorporate into design</li> <li>• Ramps / accessibility</li> </ul>





**Dark Blue Group**

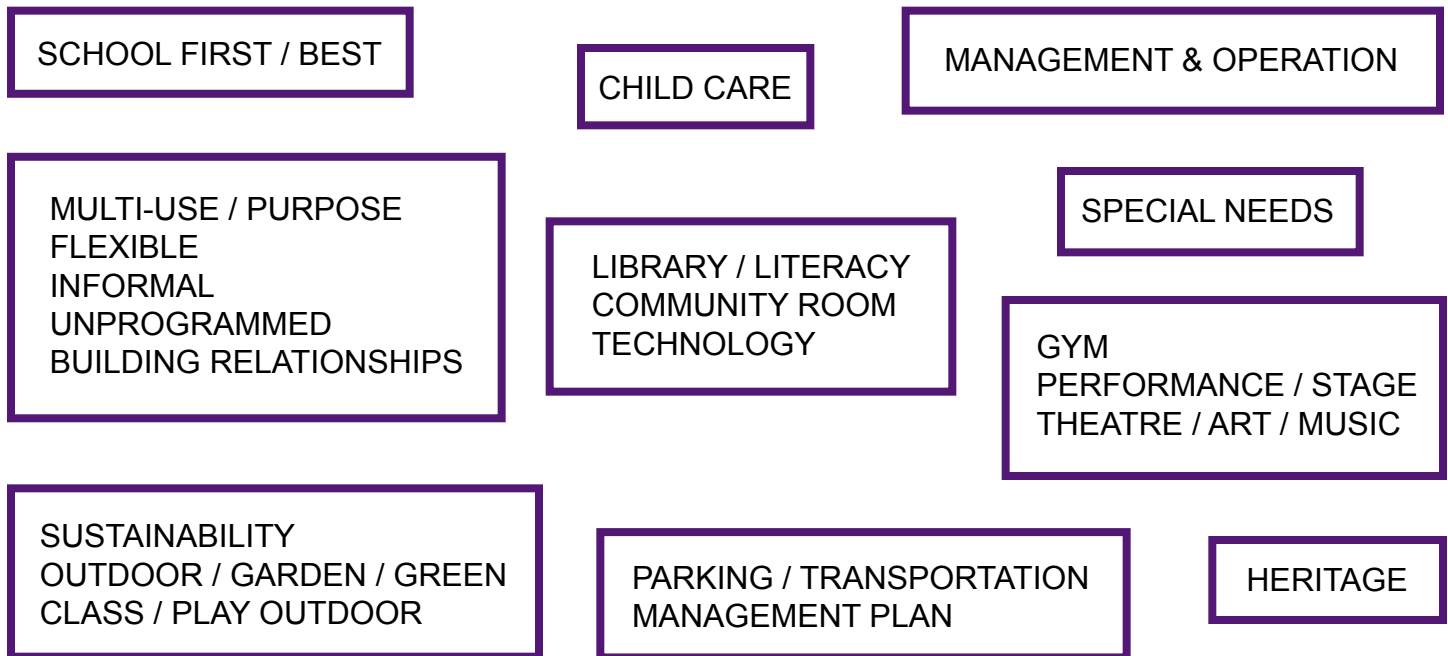
Programs + Services	Space + Use	Values / Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuum of services – twinkle to twilight – for learning and development</li> <li>• Before &amp; After school care</li> <li>• Childcare</li> <li>• Strong Start (0-4)</li> <li>• Preschool</li> <li>• Adult programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Resource people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library (computers)</li> <li>• Gym with storage</li> <li>• Additional flexible classroom</li> <li>• Arts space:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music</li> <li>• Pottery</li> <li>• Woodwork</li> <li>• Performance</li> <li>• Media arts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Stage</li> <li>• Field</li> <li>• Multi-purpose space</li> <li>• Informal &amp; formal spaces – separate but interact</li> <li>• Covered outdoor areas</li> <li>• Open air outdoor areas</li> <li>• Lunchroom</li> <li>• Yellow building</li> </ul>	<p><i>none</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Issues / Questions / Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical support</li> <li>• Library (computers) – community use?</li> <li>• Hours / schedule</li> <li>• Custodial</li> <li>• Additional uses justify more support</li> </ul>



## D. SUMMARY

After each group had presented their findings to the rest of the participants, many commonalities became apparent among the five “tablecloths”. In order to synthesize the ideas and information gathered during the small group visioning exercise, participants were lead through a discussion to identify the common spaces, programs and issues that would begin to shape the conceptual space program for General Gordon NCLD. The facilitator recorded the ideas of the group in the form of a “bubble diagram” that grouped related themes together.

Below is a representation of the space and program “bubble diagram” that resulted from the discussion that followed:



Further analysis was done to identify the common themes that arose from all five “tablecloths” at the session. Below is a table that summarizes the spaces, programs and discussion topics that were repeated in at least *two or more* of the five “tablecloths”:

Space Needs	Program Needs	Values / Themes
<p><b>INDOOR:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gym (larger)</li> <li>• Stage / Theatre / Performance</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Multi-purpose</li> <li>• Computers / Media</li> <li>• Lunchroom</li> <li>• Arts / Music</li> <li>• Designated classrooms</li> <li>• Special Needs (sensory, OT)</li> <li>• Atrium / gathering social</li> <li>• Un-programmed space</li> <li>• Flexible space e.g. classroom, meeting space, office, breakout space.</li> </ul> <p><b>OUTDOOR:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playgrounds</li> <li>• Covered play areas</li> <li>• Field (all-weather)</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Community Garden / Outdoor classroom</li> <li>• Green roof</li> <li>• Preserve open/green space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare</li> <li>• Strong Start</li> <li>• Early learning</li> <li>• Before &amp; After School Care</li> <li>• Seniors</li> <li>• Adult</li> <li>• Sport &amp; recreation</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Special Needs</li> <li>• Literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sustainability:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building design (lighting, heating)</li> <li>• Life-cycle costing</li> <li>• Recycling / compost</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Heritage</b></li> <li>• <b>Connection between indoor / outdoor space</b></li> <li>• <b>Flexible / unprogrammed space</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Issues / Questions / Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration / Management</li> <li>• Additional costs &amp; maintenance</li> <li>• Leadership</li> </ul>



## E. NEXT STEPS

After the information was synthesized in the Observations and Directions exercise, the group then discussed what the next steps should be in consulting with the wider community about the General Gordon NCLD. Various options were considered, such as a public open house, additional visioning sessions with the school community, and meetings with individual agencies. The option that the group felt would be most beneficial in moving the process forward was to develop a number of different conceptual program and space diagrams for the NCLD, using the tablecloths from the visioning session as a guide. Members from the VSB and MoE suggested that the Steering Committee discuss this option and confirm with General Gordon at their next Representative Team meeting.

This summary report will be distributed to all visioning session attendees, as well as those who were unable to attend, including school, agency and community representatives. The intent is that the agency representatives will bring this information back to their governing bodies to further define their role (financial, programming) and requirements for the General Gordon NCLD. The school, parent and community representatives will relay this information to staff, PAC and organizations, respectively and gather feedback from them regarding the vision and next steps in the process.

Based on the NCLD Visioning process, the next step is to develop a conceptual space program for the school. This conceptual space program is intended to illustrate school uses and proposed NCLD partners, programming and space requirements. A public open house meeting will be scheduled at General Gordon Elementary in early autumn to share the NCLD concept and obtain community feedback. Meeting details will be provided in September 2009.



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