NoBo Corner Library, aka the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears
NoBo Focus Group
Trainer Evaluation
June 8, 2017

6 participants (including 3 moms of small children)
   1 staff member (observer)
   1 Library Commissioner (observer)
Once there lived in the woods three bears, Father Bear, Mother Bear and Baby Bear. They set out on a stroll one day.

There came a girl named Goldilocks. I wonder who lives here.

Goldilocks was very hungry. She decided to eat the bears' porridge. Father Bear's and Mother Bear's were too hot to eat. Baby Bear's was just right and she ate it.

In the next room she saw three chairs. The first two were too big and hard for her to sit. Goldilocks sat on the small chair but then it broke down. She was sad.

Goldilocks was tired. She went to the next room where she saw three beds. The first two were too hard. She slept on the small bed.

The three bears came back from their walk and was surprised to see someone sleeping on the bed. Goldilocks woke up and ran out.
Participants want a bigger library...but not too big

Goldilocks was tired. She went to the next room where she saw three beds. The first two were too hard. She slept on the small bed.
There is a fear that a space that is too big will invite in the homeless population

There is a sense among participants that the small size of the NoBo Corner Library is part of the reason that the homeless do not use the space.

Participants are very worried that a large NoBo Branch will turn into the Main Library and that they will no longer feel safe in the library. One participant expressed that she does not let her daughter go to the Main Library by herself because she does not feel that her daughter is safe there.

They want the branch to be bigger, yes, but they also want retain a neighborhood feel.
Too small

Not enough books(!) came across loud and clear (several participants said they have “read all the books” at the branch)
Not enough DVDs
Not enough space:
   Feels awkward to read to your child when you feel so exposed in the space
   Want more kid's program, but what do you do when too many kids show up?
   There are “no nooks,” comfy spaces where you can curl up with a book
No spaces for events
No spaces for community meetings
Does not feel like a space to “hang-out” in; you come in, pick up your books and go
MORE books and DVDs for everyone

However, if there can only be room for one expanded collection, one participant advocated for more children’s and teen books, as these groups often need to browse to find a new title. In contrast, often times, adults know exactly what book they are looking for and will place a hold.

Rotate the collection more often, bring in new titles and highlight them

A makerspace
Spaces for events and community meetings (for book groups, teen groups)
Space to relax and to see and say hi to neighbors; keep it local
More privacy to sit and read

A café
Expanded hours; don’t close on Thursday and Friday (hard to remember the varying hours)
More programs

This group would be interested in:

- Programs for elementary-aged kids
- Book talks for adults
- Book group for adults
- Tech support
- Hands-on programs, like weaving
- Musical events
- Movies
- Makerspace
NoBo is a great community…but feels “cut-off” and “transitional”
NoBo strengths

NoBo is

A friendly community
Diverse
Growing
Engaged
Active
Affordable
Close to open-space access, a library and shops
The library’s role

The library supports the NoBo community by

- Being a free resource
- Increasing literacy
- Developing a love of books
- Being a place to meet people
- Building a sense of community
- Being a vital, civic space
- Being a place for conversation
- Encouraging summer reading
NoBo improvements

NoBo is

Cut off from services, such as a grocery store and post office
Feels transitional; commercial and residential real estate still haven’t figured themselves out yet
Is a “hodge-podge of stuff”
“Still in the making,” participants are both nervous and optimistic about “what the making will be”
Diverse but siloed
Home to a temporary library
The library should be

A safe haven; be a safe place to visit
Expanded so as to say, “we’re here to stay”
Built beyond it’s temporary storefront
A permanent part of the neighborhood
An anchor for the neighborhood
A civic counter-balance to the commercial area
A source of pride
Fun
A community hub; a place to learn about community events, participate in events and programs, meet neighbors
Other thoughts
Participants in this focus group are very book-oriented; they use the library to pick up held materials (books and DVDs), check out books and ask for book recommendations. This may be a function of the small space, which focuses on books over programming, or it may be a function of having a more traditional mindset in relation to libraries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picked up a held item</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checked out a book from the shelves</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked for a book recommendation</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used computers to access internet</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a program with a child/tween</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessed the BPL website</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used computers for printing</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used computers to access database</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed up for summer reading</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gone to the library to hang-out</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked a reference questions</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to stay relevant

Market programs better
Offer more programs
Host Spanish story times; brings kids in at a young age
Add Spanish classes for adults
Have a more dynamic, rotating selection of books and DVDs
More foreign language DVDs
Have the complete series for series books
Offer volunteer opportunities
Offer more bike parking
Potential partners

Schools
Co-ops
HOAs
Larger, Holiday neighborhood association
CU for programs
Farmer’s Market organization
NoBo art organizations
  Be part of First Friday Art Walk
  Create art at library
  Show art at library
Parking is a challenge

The library is well used by some people in neighborhood; uncertain about reach into all areas of the community

Unsure the community knows about the ability to place holds; that the library is more than just the size of the NoBo branch

Intersection in front of library is dangerous for families with small children; poor sight lines, people stop past the cross walk

There is a tension between feeling safe in the library and recognizing the need to be open to everyone in the community

“How do you not become a de-facto day shelter?”

Frustration among avid users that this is not a “true library”
“The librarians are amazing”
NoBo Corner Library feels welcoming
There is a benefit to the small space; you get to know the librarians