Culture + History
School + Community

Roosevelt High School
Boyle Heights, CA

Lanier High School
Westside, San Antonio
Presenters

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Learning Objectives

- Understand how to develop a community based foundational vision.
- Become familiar with how to translate that vision into a basis of design.
- Communicate the value of a transparent process that harnesses the values of diverse stakeholders.
How can design enhance and celebrate the culture of existing schools with deep historical roots?

[...or any school, for that matter]
Roosevelt High School
Boyle Heights, CA.

Roosevelt High School was built in 1922 in Boyle Heights, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, CA. With a rich history of immigrant groups, artwork, murals and gardens tell their stories. These artifacts are the backdrop to the community and to the school.
Lanier High School
Westside of San Antonio, TX

Lanier High School was founded in 1915 in San Antonio, TX’s Westside neighborhood. The current facility was constructed in 1975, with a rush of murals painted within the building shortly thereafter.
Lanier High School
Westside of San Antonio, TX
Community Parallels

Mural Culture
Demographics + Generational Residents
Social Climate
Stakeholder Engagement
Community Advocates
Key Specialists
Mural Culture

- Permanence
- Communication
- Pride
- Identity
Demographics + Generational Residents

- Ethnicity
- Socioeconomics
- Alumni
Social Climate

- 1968 East LA Walkouts
- Nationwide movement demanding equal opportunities and facilities
- Walkouts at LAUSD inspired threats of walkouts at SAISD
- Threats of Gentrification
Community Engagement Process throughout the Life of a Project

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- Project Identification Community Meeting - May 11, 2015
- Project Definition Project Advisory Group – Nov 4, 2015
- Project Definition Faculty Briefing – Nov 4, 2015
- Project Definition Community Meeting – Nov 9, 2015
- Planning Concepts Faculty Briefing – Nov 1 & 15, 2016
- Planning Concepts Community Meeting – Nov 30, 2016
- Design Update Project Advisory Group – Oct 17, 2017
- Design Update Faculty Briefing – Oct 24, 2017
- Design Update Community Meeting – Nov 1, 2017
- Town Hall Meeting – Feb 3, 2018
- Boyle Heights Planning and Land Use Committee - Feb 8, 2018
- Student Assembly - Feb 15, 2018
- Draft Environmental Impact Report Community Meeting – Feb 21, 2018
- Roosevelt High School Alumni Foundation - Mar 17, 2018
- Boyle Heights Planning and Land Use Committee - Mar 28, 2018
- Pre-Construction Community Meeting - Aug 16, 2019
- Project Advisory Group Update Meeting - Mar 12, 2019
FOCUSED STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Goal: Seek diverse opinions from a multitude of stakeholders to inform specific design decisions. Includes Students, Content Experts, Staff, Community Leaders, Alumni, Facilities

LARGE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Goal: Seek transparency through an honest discussion with larger community. Identify sensitive community issues that will shape the success of the project.
Community Advocates

The project teams benefitted greatly from the support of notable figures from within the community. These advocates became translators—trusted by residents to represent their best interests and relied upon by the design team to gain this understanding.
Community Advocates

- Candy Tanamachi, RHS Alumni Foundation President
- Rudy Trevino, Previous Lanier Art Chair, Mural Director
Key Specialists

Both LAUSD and SAISD involved experts to serve as a conduit to the community and to help guide design approach.
Roosevelt High School
Japanese Garden Landscape Architect

The Japanese Garden of Peace has a long-standing and important history on the Roosevelt campus.

Keiji Uesugi is not only a renown Japanese Garden Landscape Architect but also a member of Tenrikyo Church in the neighborhood.
Lanier High School
Original Muralists

The design team worked with the original muralists (teachers and students) to co-identify the most significant murals amongst the collection. The team then worked together to select a suitable mural facsimile material to install on the wall.
Project Parallels

Project Timeline
Need
Murals
Roosevelt Facilities Assessment

- Significant seismic issues - 5 buildings needed upgrades
- Building configuration did not accommodate standard classroom sizes
- 21% of classrooms were in portables
- Accessibility constraints
Lanier Facilities Assessment

- 200,000 SF, 19 Entries, 0 Windows
- Inflexible Learning Spaces
- Asbestos containing material prevalent throughout
- Outdated Technology
- Rusting Roof Deck
- Low Moral; No Love for the Building!
Murals

- Content
- Authors | Artists
- Locations
- Documentation
Design Solutions

Despite the similarities between projects, Roosevelt High School and Lanier High School had different solutions for bringing their learning environments into the next generation while honoring the history and culture of their communities.

The Districts also employed different approaches to memorializing existing campus murals.
Roosevelt High School
District Decisions + Design Solutions

The new design of Roosevelt High School consists of a series of portals—moments of vibrant color, lined with student and community authored murals. They bookend each public campus edge, highlight student activity, establish a sense of identity and connect the school to its cultural roots.
appreciate + organize + recreate + celebrate
new construction
existing building to remain
limit of work
future expansion area

1. main entry
2. promenade
3. quad
4. lunch shelter
5. lindbergh fountain
6. garden of peace
7. fields + hardcourts
8. parking

fields + hardcourts
parking
lunch shelter
lindbergh fountain
garden of peace
main entry
promenade
quad
lunch shelter
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parking
Lanier High School
District Decisions + Design Solutions

The new design of Lanier High School leverages light to illuminate the schools’ embedded potential.
Lanier High School
Lanier High School
District Decisions + Design Solutions

The district employed a “Three-Pronged Approach”
Recreate Significant Murals
Create a “Digital Mural Museum”
Designate room for “New Murals”

The district hosted an event to grieve the murals, a “Mural Funeral”
Summary

What did we learn from these projects that we can apply to others moving forward?
Stakeholder processes are individual and unique - be passionate about them!
A research-based approach benefits the community, the facility and all stakeholders.
These are universal problems common in established school district, but solutions should be specific.