community
^ Asset Mapping Workbook

Asset   n. 1. **a useful or valuable quality, person, or thing**

Mapping v. 1. **to explore or make survey of**
                 2. **to plan or delineate in detail**
                 3. **to locate**

The Asset Mapping Workbook is intended to provide information, tools, and inspiration to inventory the assets and resources within a community. This document is like a tool chest; take from it whatever works best for achieving your own neighborhood or community goals.

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Asset Mapping

Community Outreach inspires people to value and discover the existing resources within their community. Building upon what already exists, we encourage people to work together to strengthen the social vitality of communities. We believe that everyone has something positive to contribute. We believe that the resources needed to create a healthy, vibrant community already exist within the community.

One approach for learning about a community is to do an Asset Map—an inventory of the gifts, talents, and resources within a community. This approach can help you to connect and utilize those assets to realize the full potential of a community.

In order to locate the rich pool of assets within a community, it is important to recognize and honor that:

• Every person has talents, skills, and gifts that are important and relevant to the health and vibrancy of the community.
• Every time that individuals use these abilities, the community in which they live is strengthened.
• Strong communities are places where the capacities of local individuals are identified, valued, and put into action.

The skills that you will need in order to do an Asset Map are:

• An interest and curiosity about the people and places around you
• A treasure hunting mentality to see beyond the surface
• A method for capturing the information you learn about
• A desire to uncover and celebrate the strengths, or what is working well, in your community

There is no one-best-way to do an Asset Map. In the simplest form, doing an Asset Map includes walking around the neighborhood and having conversations to identify the people, places, and systems that exist within it. You can complete an Asset Map within as little as a day or take on a more in-depth process over a period of months. You can collect information through community canvassing, on-line research, reading community newspapers, 1:1 interviews, and/or Community Conversations. You might create:

• A *Community Map* that paints a broad picture of the many assets in the community
• A *Community Involvement Directory* that showcases the activities of formal and informal groups and ways to get involved in community efforts
• A *Neighborhood Business Directory* that lists all of the neighborhood businesses, resources, and contacts
• An *Individual Asset Bank* that features the gifts, talents, interests, and resources of individuals

You may want to create inventories or maps based on interests or specific topics. For example, you may decide to put together an inventory of:

• **Transportation**: public transportation stops, bike routes, flex car sites, people who want to carpool
• **Child care**: individuals interested in swapping child care or having play dates
• **Open Spaces**: meeting spaces, parks, playgrounds, walking paths
• **Food**: community gardens, individual/family gardens, fruit trees, urban edibles, farmers markets
• **Emergency Preparedness**: water lines, gas lines, trucks, cell phones, ladders, fire extinguishers
• **Local Economy**: goods and services that are available from the individuals within the community
• **Bartering**: skills and stuff that neighbors are willing to barter for and share with other neighbors

People

People are the central source of wealth for the community. Learn about each person through one-to-one interviews or Community Conversations. Decide what information you would like to capture about each person and determine a method for tracking the information that you learn.

Below are some questions that you could explore:

• What is important to you? What are you most passionate about?
• What skills have you learned at home, school, in the community, or at work?
• What are your hobbies or interests? What are really good at? What can you teach others?
• In what ways have you been involved in the community? In what ways do you want to be involved in the community?
• What skills, talents, resources, materials, or supplies do you have that you would be willing to share with neighbors or put towards a community effort?
• What skills or knowledge do you have related to your career or profession?
• What, if any, groups or networks are you a part of? What, if any, groups or networks would you like to be a part of or help to form?
• Is there anything that you need?
• What would you like to see in your community that doesn't exist now? What hopes and dreams to you have for your community?
• Who would you consider to be neighborhood historians? Who do you seek out for wisdom of the elders?
• What positive activities already happening would you like to see more of? What ideas do you have for enhancing the vibrancy of your community?
• What is the best way to contact you?

While learning about the individuals, you will begin to learn about how the people are interconnected. You will also learn about the informal groups that exist within a community. Voluntary associations are groups of people who know each other fairly well, work together, and have a shared interest. They are an asset in the community that can be mobilized into action. There are many types of voluntary associations between people connected to:

• **Interests**: art, music, sports, health, gardening, hiking, writing, books, politics
• **Work or Career**: networking, unions, business associations
• **A Cause**: charity, task forces, volunteering, drives, fund raising, service
• **Age**: youth, elders
• **Geography**: neighborhood associations, block watches
• **Spirituality or Faith**: congregations, study groups, choirs
• **Support**: parenting group, self-help group, support groups

Places

Organizations

Learn about the organizations that exist within your community. With each one, think about what possibilities exist within the organization. Think beyond their intended purpose(s). For example, you may have a church in your neighborhood. Beyond being a place of worship for its members, a church may have meeting space, a parking lot, a copier, chairs, tables, storage, and a kitchen. You may have a restaurant within your neighborhood. Beyond being a place to eat, a restaurant may offer opportunities for gathering, employment, internships, donations, or collaborations. On your exploration of organizations, seek to find out:

• What organizations exist within the community?
• What is the purpose, intent, mission, and goal(s) of the organizations?
• Who works with those organizations?
• What role would you like the organizations within your community to play?
• What goals, services, or projects do you hope for within these organizations?

You might look for: churches, colleges, universities, elderly care facilities, fire departments, hospitals, clinics, mental health facilities, libraries, police department, schools, utilities, community centers, radio or TV stations, small businesses, large businesses, social services, government agencies, home-based enterprises, non-profit organizations, religiously-affiliated organizations, grocery stores, markets, and/or restaurants.

Environment

Learn about the natural and built environment you live in. You might explore air quality, water safety, trees, landscaping, agriculture, plant and animal life, energy resources, forests, lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, minerals, natural landmarks, parks, recreation areas, vacant land, recycling, compost, and waste resources. You can explore the physical, built environment including buildings, bridges, sidewalks, street lights, roads, gardens, playgrounds, sculptures, or historical landmarks.

• What natural elements exist within the community?
• What open spaces exist?
• How is land used? How would you like to see the land being used?
• What buildings or structures exist within the community?
• How are the buildings or structures used?

Systems

Local Economy

Learn about how money is earned, spent, and invested within your community. You might explore: income, occupations, methods for exchange and bartering, major industries and services, community wealth, untapped economic resources, access to goods and services, and circulation of money. Some questions you might explore are:

• How does the community spend money on a regular basis?

• How does money stay in or leave the community?

• Does the community make their money outside or within the community?

• What forces outside the community influence its economic health?

• What ideas do you have to enhance the economic vitality of the community?

Culture & Spirituality

A community's culture binds people together and affirms their identity. Culture helps us to know who we are and how to be with one another and the world around us. Learn about the culture, customs, traditions, and way of life of a community. You might explore:

• What is the history of the community? How is history preserved, celebrated, and honored?

• What forms of art and music exist?

• How are community traditions and identity preserved?

• How are community members connected to their culture?

• How is culture transmitted to younger or newer community members?

• What forms of culture are seen? What forms of culture operate out of sight from the casual observer?

• What is the ethnic and racial diversity within the community?

• What languages are spoken? How is language used to affirm culture?

• What crafts are practiced?

• How is spirituality expressed by community members?

• What different forms of spirituality are present in the community?

• How are community members' spiritual beliefs and practice connected to community life?

Information, Knowledge & Communication

It is important to know how the community generates knowledge, shares information, and communicates amongst one another.

• What schools and training programs exist for the community?

• How are new skills and knowledge developed and shared?

• How do people learn about what is going on in the community?

• How is information technology used and by whom?

• To what extent and for what purposes are community members interested in communicating with one another?

Political Capital

Community life requires a continuous series of decisions on matters that affect its members. Learn about the structured process that determines how decisions are made on a formal basis for setting and enforcing policies in the community.

• What connections does the community have to political power?

• What is the formal process for making community decisions?

• Who are the people in formal positions of leadership within local government?

• How does the community influence political decisions?

Community as a Whole

It is good to take a look at the community as a whole. How do the people, places, and systems fit together? What skills, talents, and resources can be linked to one another to build a stronger and more vibrant community? Below are some questions that you can explore about your community.

• How are talents and skills recognized and developed?
• How are the people given opportunities to contribute their gifts and talents?
• How do people learn about what is going on in the community?
• How do people with shared interests exchange ideas and information?
• How is new knowledge generated, taught, or shared?
• What forms of art and music exist?
• How is culture seen? What cultural artifacts exist?
• What cultural values are practiced in everyday life?
• How are cultural differences valued?
• In what ways does the community express their spirituality?
• In what ways does the community have the desire and ability to work together?
• What is the level of trust and sense of safety and security within the community?
• What are sources of pride and joy within the community?
• How and where do people have fun?
• How do members spend their time and money?
• Where are the open spaces for recreation and visual appreciation?
• What land is available within the community and how is it being used?
• What natural elements are defining features of the community?
• How do environmental conditions affect human interaction?
• How consistent is access to food, shelter, and clothing?
• What symbolizes the community's history?
• How are people in the community cared for?

Think of all of the systems that impact an individual, family, or community's well-being and community life. Some of the systems include:

• Health care	• Government
• Education	• Food
• Housing	• Financial
• Transportation	• Recreation
• Child Care	• Employment
• Emergency Response	• Social Services
• Faith	• Utilities
• Environment	

Consider the three A's:
• Availability: Are goods and services available in the community?
• Affordability: Can people afford the options that are available?
• Accessibility: Can people utilize the goods and services that are available?

An Asset Map can illuminate skills, talents, and resources that exist within a community. These assets can be linked to one another and put to use in ways that realize the community's full potential.

Asset Map Example: One Street

8 Parking Spaces

Small Storage Shed

Fire Hydrant

Gabby the cat

Large Garden Plot

Lawnmower

Outdoor Eating Area
Seats 18-24

Apple Tree

Raised Garden Beds

Trampoline & Swingset

Adults: Deb Lui & Alder Conklin
Carolyn (17) and Tia (1) **3**
Deb is a chef; Alder is an electrician and house-painter; Carolyn is passionate about water conservation

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Adults: Jay Ebersole & Nancy Iya
Kids: Kaya (14), Maril (8), Xavier (2) **9**
Jay is a furniture designer; Nancy is a secretary at a medical office; Kaya babysits; Maril plays hockey

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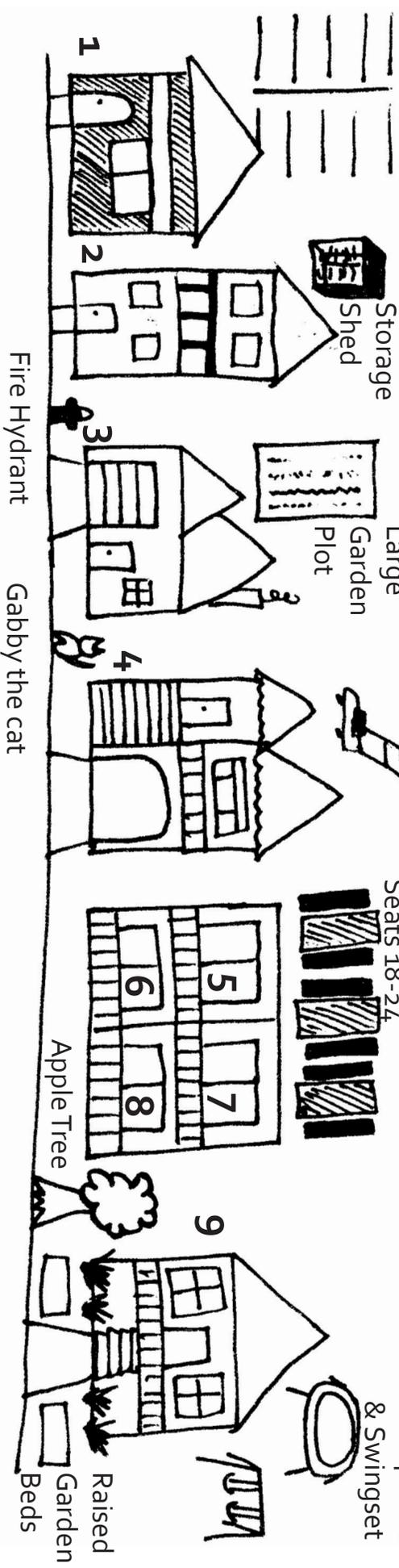
Bricks Cafe
Owners:
Cathy &
Michelle **1**
M-Sat
6am-3pm
Breakfast
& Lunch
Coffee, food,
cards, &
small gifts

Adults:
Carolyn Myer
Bill Bates
Kids: **2**
Sam (11)
Deena (7)
Bill is a great cook; Carolyn volunteers at the school; Sam plays soccer; Deena dances

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Adults: **4**
Dorothy &
Curtis Walker
Pets: Alex-
tan dog &
Gabby-cat
Dorothy is good with computers Curtis owns a drum shop and plays in a church band

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Adults: **5**
Mary Jo Rain
Kids: Ema (1)
Mary Jo works in social services & loves biking

Adults: Cari Smith
& Liz Taylor
Pets: Luna-black
dog **6**
Cari uses a wheelchair; Liz works at a bank

Adults:
Allison & Jose Foster
Kids: Ryder (3) **7**
Allison loves gardening and is a teacher; Jose works in marketing

Adults:
Margaret Richmond
Pets: Scarlet-small
brown dog **8**
Marg teaches canning

Asset Map Example: One Floor of an Apartment

Apartment 401 - Bob and Brenda Jones,
Buster the cat

←To elevators   Hallway

Apartment 402 - Maria Santos
Lots of Goldfish! And her plant, Fern.

Apartment 403 - Jim and Melissa Rogers

Apartment 404 - Marsha Hilton and
Samantha Mills, Groucho the dog

Apartment 405 - Naem Rashad

←To elevators   Hallway

Apartment 406 - Henry and Mary Goodwin, Billy (2) and
Sarah (6), Herman the hamster

4th Floor "Neighborhood"
Other areas of interest: Community Park (2 blocks
East), Gino's Grocery (1 block North)

Bob and Brenda have been married for 5 years. They moved in shortly after getting married. **Buster** came to live with them a few months ago. **Bob** – Loves to bike, interested in the outdoors, teaches at the local middle school. **Brenda** – Loves to cook. She especially loves making bread and entertaining. Brenda is interested in doing a cookout for neighbors at the park down the street.

Maria moved in about a year and a half ago. Maria is a full time student. She is finishing up her masters degree in biology. She wants to work on her Ph.D. after that. Maria loves hiking and knows a lot about native plants. Jane also likes to crochet. Her boyfriend, **Matt**, comes to visit often and he always brings treats for the neighbor's dog. Matt is the only person Groucho doesn't bark at!

Jim and Melissa are an older, retired couple and have been on the floor for a long time. Jim says he and Melissa enjoy quiet times together.

Marsha and Samantha are a couple and they moved in 3 years ago with Groucho, their dog. **Marsha** is an avid reader and works as a librarian. She is interested in American History. Marsha wants to learn how to knit. **Samantha** works at a local coffee shop and enjoys riding her skateboard. She aspires to be an artist and can draw very well. **Groucho** barks whenever someone comes to the door – Marsha and Sam are fond of saying his bark is worse than his bite!

Naem moved in 6 months ago and says you'll probably not find him at home much. He rides his "fancy road bike" wherever he goes.

The Goodwins moved in a year ago. They are from another state and moved here because Mary's work had an opening for her in town. They are very interested in getting to know people in town and frequently take Billy and Sarah to the park to play.
Mary works at a local branch of a large bank. She is the operations manager for the branch. Mary enjoys reading, knitting and baseball. She is a huge fan of the New York Yankees and knows everything about what's going on in the baseball world. Mary is also a great cook and is interested in doing some kind of party with the other neighbors.
Henry is Mary's husband. He is does technical support for a software company and works from home most of the time. Henry lost a leg in a motorcycle accident as a teenager so he needs to use a prosthesis and (sometimes) a cane. Henry likes computers, technology, football and brews his own beer.
Billy is 2 years old and toddles about the house a lot. He is an outgoing child, but is terrified of Groucho.
Sarah is 6 years old and just started 1st grade. She loves the color pink and wants to be an astronaut one day. Sarah is a little shy, but once she gets going she will talk a mile a minute!
Herman is the Goodwin's hamster. Herman was a birthday present for Sarah but she seems to have trouble keeping track of him. He roams around the house in his hamster ball. Somehow, he manages to keep escaping and has been caught in the hallway several times!

Asset Map Example: ABCD Example

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

CITIZEN ASSOCIATIONS

GIFTS OF INDIVIDUALS

Sewing

Reading

Typing

Landscaping

Painting

Ceramics

Hair Stylist

Fund raising

Gardening

Guitarist

Social Group

Union

Congregation

Neighborhood Association

Fire Department

Schools

Parks

Hiking Group

Recycling Center

Hospital

PTA

Book Club

Social Services

Businesses

Utility Company

Restaurants

Community Center

Asset-Based Community Development Institute
www.abcdinstitute.org

Resources

Getting Started
Resources in this section help familiarize you with concepts to facilitate community building.

Community Tool Box
Assessing community needs and resources
http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/chapter_1003.htm

Racial Equity Tools
A web site designed to support people and groups working for inclusion, racial equity and social justice.
http://www.racialequitytools.org/

Methods and Techniques
Resources in this section provide additional frameworks for community building activities.

Asset-Based Community Development Institute
ABCD resources
http://www.abcdinstitute.org/

Data Collection Toolbox
Conducting in-depth conversational interviews
http://www.caps.ucsf.edu/goodquestions/section3/3d_indepth.html

Inventories and Guides
Resources in this section guide you through the asset-based community-development process

The Capacity Inventory
A guided list of questions to ask individuals by ABCD Institute
http://www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/abcd/Capacity%20Inventory.pdf

Vitalizing Community: Building on Assets and Mobilizing for Collective Action
Facilitator's guide
http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/epubs/U2031/H003-2004.pdf

Vitalizing Community: Building on Assets and Mobilizing for Collective Action
Community guide
http://utahreach.org/rp/docs/VitalComm.pdf

Real World Examples
Resources in this section are real-world examples of community building approaches and initiatives.

Community Building Initiative
Community Building Initiative (CBI) is a nonprofit organization established in 1997 by government and civic leaders that works to achieve racial and ethnic inclusion and equity in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community.
http://www.communitybuildinginitiative.org/