LESSON 4  WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR COMMUNITY TO LOOK LIKE?

Overview
Students examine their community, or a neighborhood in their community, and sketch their plans for redesigning streetscapes or individual buildings to be more visually attractive and to enhance the overall visual appearance of their community using suggestions listed below or described with line drawings and photographs in the *Design Guidelines to Enhance Community Appearance* guidebook.

Objectives
Students will be able to:
1. Describe the character of their community or neighborhood.
2. Suggest modifications to the community streetscape or to individual buildings. Explain why each modification is proposed and how this change will impact the community’s visual appearance.
3. Incorporate the modifications from #2 into a drawing of their streetscape or building.

Procedure

Warm Up #1
Show students examples of what they are going to create from the Community Transformations website:
http://www.sieraclub.org/sprawl/community/transformations/index.asp
http://www.jointventure.org/resources/photosims/sim_index.html

Warm Up #2 (optional)
Before beginning this activity, show your students the video *Looking at Change Before It Occurs* (17 min.) by Maguire & Reeder Ltd., Alexandria, VA and distributed by Design Access.

Part I – Sketching Improvements
1. Students select a photo of their community that shows a view of a city streetscape, community sprawl on the outer edges of the city, or a view that they would like to “improve” the appearance of. (Students may use their own photographs from Lesson 3, or photographs may be provided by the teacher.)

2. Using a copier, enlarge each student’s photo to fit a sheet of 8¼” x 11” paper.

3. Students critique the first copy of the photograph, noting where improvements should be made.

4. Next, tape the second photocopy against a backlit exterior window or a light table, and
tape a piece of tracing paper over the photo. (NOTE: some students may be more comfortable sketching on a desk, which is fine as long as the detail of the photocopy shows through the tracing paper).

5. Students will trace their picture onto the tracing paper with a #2 lead pencil (not pen!). The students should omit any features in the photo that they would like to ‘remove’ from the scene, such as, unattractive signs, architectural features on buildings, transmission lines, exterior building materials or building facades, etc.

6. Next, students brainstorm a list of possible improvements to a building or streetscape to enhance its visual appeal and compatibility with community character. The Design Guidelines to Enhance Community Appearance and Protect Natural Resources guidebook provides visual examples of possible improvements that students may consider, including:
   - Location, size and shape of windows and doors on buildings;
   - Landscape design elements for buffering, screening, or aesthetic enhancement;
   - Size, location, height, materials, and design of street/building signage;
   - Pedestrian accessibility and safety;
   - Street furniture, benches, awnings;
   - Exterior building materials and colors consistent with community character and adjacent buildings;
   - Street lighting location and style; and location of utility wires.

7. Students sketch in the features that they would like to ‘add to the scene.’

8. Collect the sketches and photocopy each one before the students proceed to coloring in details.

NOTE: If digital photos are used and computers are available, students may do Steps 2-3 using Microsoft Powerpoint. The critique of the photo may be done using text boxes to show attractive and unattractive aspects of the streetscape. After step 8 is completed, the students may scan in their “improved” photo into their powerpoint program. Students will now have a series of three photos depicting the streetscape: i) original photo, ii) critiqued photo, iii) new and improved streetscape.

Part II – Describing Improvements

9. Upon completion of the sketches, students will write a paragraph explaining what changes they have made to the original picture and why. Have students respond to some or all of the following questions in their paragraph:

   a) Why would changes to the landscape, streetscape, or a particular structure, benefit the community or viewshed?
   b) What do you like about the visual appearance of the neighborhood? What is unique about this part of the community?
   c) Why would someone want to move to this part of town? Is it close to parks or other natural areas?
   d) Does this area fit the surroundings or is there a way to enhance the structure(s) to better blend in with the character of the neighborhood?
   e) Why did you select the “improvements” that you made to the overall ‘landscape’ or ‘streetscape’?
Part III – Develop a Business Plan

10. Using the outline on the next page, develop a business plan for one of the buildings in your neighborhood.

Assessment

Evaluate the following aspects of each student’s work:

♦ attention to detail in their tracing;
♦ creativity in designing ‘improvements’ to their streetscape;
♦ well thought-out responses to questions about their sketches, color, form, drawing, labeling, etc.
♦ develops a creative and complete business plan.

Michigan Content Standards Addressed

Language Arts

Standard 3.  
♦ All students will focus on meaning and communicating as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social occupational, and civic contexts.

Standard 11. Inquiry and Research  
♦ All students will define and investigate important issues and problems using a variety of resources, including technology, to explore and create texts.

Social Studies

Strand IV. Economic Perspective

Standard 1. Describe and demonstrate effects of economic forces on consumer decisions regarding purchase and disposal of goods and services and how this effects society.
Standard 2: Explain and demonstrate how businesses confront scarcity when producing and using resources, and when supplying the marketplace.
Community Business Plan

You will spend the next few weeks developing a business plan for a fictitious business in the local community. Your completed plan should contain all of the following elements:

I. Cover page
II. Mission statement
   • Explanation of what service or good you are selling
   • The days of the week and times your business will be open.
III. Market research and analysis
   • Why will the business be successful? Support with evidence.
   • To whom will you sell your product? Where? Why?
IV. Start-up costs
   • List things you only need to buy once in order to start your business.
V. Operating costs
   • Fixed overhead costs—costs that stay constant regardless of how much business you do.
   • Variable costs—costs that vary depending upon how much product you produce.
VI. Price structure
   • List of how much you will charge and reasons why.
VII. Profit margin
   • How much does it cost in materials & labor to produce one item?
   • How many items per month must be produced and sold to break even? (= Overhead divided by profit per item.)
VIII. Quality control
   • How will you handle dissatisfied customers? How will you maintain consistency in good/services provided?
IX. Advertising
   • Include business cards, building signs, advertisements, radio commercials, and other promotional materials.
X. Building design
   • Include a drawing of the building in town to be used for your new business. Be sure to describe how you will enhance this building and its site in order to attract customers. Will your business have a particular theme?
XI. Environmental Sustainability
   • What will you do to incorporate environmental sustainability principles into your business—using recycled materials, recycling wastes, conserving water, etc.