LESSON 5  WHO DECIDES THE VISUAL APPEARANCE
OF YOUR COMMUNITY?

Overview
By observing their community and interacting
with guest speakers, students will gain an
understanding of community land use planning.

Objective
Students will be able to:
1. Develop an awareness of the community planning process.
2. Recognize that some communities are planned and some are not.
3. Differentiate between planning and zoning.

Procedure
1. Invite a variety of community members that represent
different perspectives on community land use planning to
speak to your students. Ask speakers to make a 30 minute
presentation that describes their role in the community,
and discusses the following statement:

“My vision for the community is……. To accomplish this vision, I am doing……”

Some suggested speakers are:
♦ Landscape architect/designer
♦ City or county planner
♦ City manager
♦ Citizen Member of Local Planning Board
♦ Environmental organization
♦ National Historic Park
♦ Industrial Council or Chamber of Commerce
♦ Architect
♦ Photographer
♦ Scenic Michigan or Scenic America representative
♦ Realtor
♦ Member of local planning and zoning boards.
♦ Private property rights advocate

Be sure to give each speaker a concise overview of your unit objectives, and the questions below that
the students need to answer....

2. Give students the following questions to answer as they listen to each speaker:
   a. What is the speaker’s vision for our community?
   b. How is the speaker involved in accomplishing their vision?
   c. Does the speaker prefer ‘planning’ or should we let things happen whenever and wherever?
   d. What is the speaker’s definition of ‘visual environment?’
   e. What is the speaker’s preferred ‘visual environment?’
   f. What does the speaker think are the positive components of our community’s visual
      environment?

Providing questions for students to take notes on will better focus their listening and provide similar
information for later comparison during classroom discussion.
3. After each presentation, the teachers and students share their notes on the speaker’s responses to the above questions. The difference between community planning and zoning is clarified.

**Assessment**

*What did the speaker say?*

After each speaker, the teacher and students compare their notes on the speaker’s responses to the above questions. Teachers identify two or three main ideas or ‘quotes’ from each speaker and write quotes on sheets of paper. Each group is given a list of all of the speaker quotes. Students, working individually or in their groups, must match each quote to the speaker who said it.

*Why did the speaker say that?*

Next, students write a short explanation of each speaker’s ‘point of view.’ The student should explain which quotes they agree or disagree with, and why.

**Michigan Content Standards Addressed**

*Language Arts*

Standard 7. Skills and Processes
- All students will demonstrate, analyze and reflect upon the skills and processes used to communicate through listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing.

*Social Studies*

Strand III. Civic Perspective
Standard III.3 Democracy in Action
- All students will describe the political and legal processes created to make decisions, seek consensus, and resolve conflicts in a free society.