Looks Count! Community Planning & the Visual Environment

Presenters:
Joan Chadde, Education Program Coordinator
Western U.P. Center for Science, Mathematics & Env. Education
Michigan Technological University
1400 Townsend Dr., Houghton, MI 49931-1295
Tel: 906-487-3341 Email: jchadde@mtu.edu Website: http://wupcenter.mtu.edu

AGENDA

Unit Pretest

Introduction - *Back to the Future* video

Unit Objectives & Michigan Content Standards
Students will be able to:

a. Identify the cultural, historical and natural character of their community and what makes their community an attractive place to live;
b. Describe how the visual and natural environment impacts the economic, environmental and aesthetic qualities of their community;
c. Identify potential consequences of future land use changes;
d. Explain why there are different perspectives on community growth and change;
e. Identify parts of a community and be able to arrange in a compatible fashion;
f. Design, conduct and tabulate public surveys to determine community attitudes (towards future growth, sprawl, private property rights, and community character);
g. Understand how community planning tools can be used to enhance a community’s visual appearance and preserve the "character" of their community.
h. Make recommendations for how to enhance the visual appearance and livability of their community.
i. Design and implement a Community Enhancement Project to improve a part of the community (landscaping, adding park furniture, developing a public awareness campaign, improving signage)

Community of Choices video

"Shaping Our Future" survey

Activity Stations

**Station A: Across These United States**
Use postcards from Viewfinders Activity 1-3 to identify those places you find attractive and those where you would not like to live. Record responses on a bar graph
Station B: *Values Barometer* - participants reflect on their feelings about community growth


Debrief stations & compare responses

**Strategies & Challenges For Teaching This Unit**
(see *Teaching Controversial Issues*, Summer 2000, # 62 issue of Green Teacher, p. 29-32).
Science Connections
- Loss of prime farmland.
- Loss of biodiversity – include an activity where students compare the biodiversity of an undisturbed area, a city park, and a parking lot.
- Compare changes in runoff in forest, cropland, suburban area, pavement (see Color Me A Watershed in a Project WET).
- Transportation choices – sprawl requires people to travel in their cars, difficult for senior citizens and youth to get around, uses up valuable time and energy resources (see Divorce Your Car by Katie Alvord).
- Conduct stream monitoring and compare water quality and biodiversity of organisms in undisturbed upper watershed, suburban area, and downtown.
- Air quality impacts due to increased traffic.

Curriculum Resources
- Dunn Foundation’s Viewfinders (Gr. 3-5) & Viewfinders Too (Gr. 6-8) curricula
- Michigan State Extension’s This Land is Your Land curricula (Gr. 3-5)
- Looks Count resource list

Field trip to Community of Big Bay (see Lesson 3 – Neighborhood View Teams)

Workshop Evaluation