

Looks Count! Community Planning & the Visual Environment

Presenters:

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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

Station C: “*What Is The Message?*” Review children’s books (Lesson 9) using response form provided.

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