LESSON 3

NEIGHBORHOOD VIEW TEAMS

Overview
Working in small groups, students explore an assigned area of their community, such as several city blocks of the commercial area, or a neighborhood, noting: architectural details, presence of green space, signage, landscaping, utility lines, whether the area is pedestrian-accessible, compatibility of building uses and building designs, and whether they would consider the area’s overall visual appearance pleasing.

Objectives
Students will be able to:
1. Categorize the land uses within their assigned area.
2. Conduct a visual critique of an area, identifying pleasing and less pleasing visual characteristics.
3. Define and give examples of visual pollution.

Procedure
1. Group class into team of 3-4 students. The teams will continue to work together throughout the entire unit.

2. Using a map of your community, divide the community into different areas or neighborhoods of one or more blocks. Assign an area to each team. If your community is small, or your class size large, an area may have more than one team assigned to it. It is important that the areas are large enough, so that students can look at how the buildings and/or land uses in an area fit together. Each team will focus on their area throughout the entire unit.

3. Provide an instamatic, disposable, or digital camera to each student group. Instruct students how to use cameras. Each group member will take six pictures of their area. The photographs will be used again in Lesson 10 (What Do You Want Your Community to Look Like?), Lesson 14 (Design a Brochure), and Lesson 15 (Sharing With the Community - design a display board). The students within each group arrange their own camera rotation schedule, so each student can take their pictures and pass the camera onto the next student in the group, in a timely fashion.

Duration:
One or two 50-minute class periods.

Materials:
Cameras (one per group) & film
Map of community divided into assigned areas.

Key Vocabulary:
boundary, desirable, development, corridor (highway/green), historic resource, land use, industrial, commercial, residential, rural, suburban, urban, sprawl, visual aesthetics, visual pollution, brownfields, landscaping, perspective

Subjects:
Social Studies
Language Arts
All cameras should be returned at the same time. Establish a return date when you pass out the cameras. The teacher is responsible for getting the rolls of film developed. Try to complete the picture-taking in one week, as subsequent unit activities depend on having the students' photographs available.

4. Students should enter each of their photographs into the table (on next page) and answer the questions.

5. Each group will develop a visual improvement plan for their area. At least four features need to be addressed in their plan.

**Teaching Tip** - Invite a local photographer to conduct a photography workshop with students.

**Extensions**
Use the photographs to create a brochure and display board that describe their neighborhood improvement plan. Students should use at least four photographs for their brochure or display, so that the viewer can get a sense of the consistency, or lack thereof, in the land uses and building appearances within the area.

**Assessment**
Students are able to categorize land uses and describe their neighborhood photos using the proper vocabulary. Students are able to assess whether their “streetscape” is visually pleasing to them, or contains examples of “visual pollution.”

**Content Standards Addressed**

**Social Studies**

**Strand II. Geographic Perspective**

- **Standard II.2 Human/Environment Interaction**
  - All students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of ecosystems, resources, human adaptation, environmental impact, and the interrelationships among them.

- **Standard V.2 Conducting Investigations**
  - All students will conduct investigations by formulating a clear statement of a question, gathering and organizing information from a variety of sources, analyzing and interpreting information, formulating and testing hypotheses, reporting results both orally and in writing, and making use of appropriate technology.

**Strand VI. Public Discourse and Decision Making**

- **Standard VI.I Identifying and Analyzing Issues**
  - All students will state an issue clearly as a question of public policy, trace the origins of the issue, analyze various
perspectives people bring to the issue, and evaluate possible ways to resolve the issue.

Standard VI.2 Group Discussion
♦ All students will engage their peers in constructive conversation about matters of public concern.

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

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.

Standard 10. Ideas in Action
♦ All students will apply knowledge, ideas, and issues drawn from texts to their lives and the lives of others.

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.
# Photographic Record

Number your six favorite photos. Enter each of the photographs into this table. Then put your photos into an envelope to turn in with this assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Photo#</th>
<th>Neighborhood Features</th>
<th>What I Like About Photo</th>
<th>What I Don't Like About Photo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Visual character of area.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Signage on &amp; off-premise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Parking lot design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Landscaping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Streetlights, utility poles, parking meters, street barriers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Street art, street furniture, fountains and other features</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Open space or green spaces.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Architecture of buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Compatibility of building design and other built features.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Describe the 'visual character' of your area---pleasing, unpleasant, colorful, cluttered, open views, etc.

2. Do all of the buildings in your neighborhood have the same 'look' and blend together well?

3. Are there lots of signs, streetlights, and utility poles visible? Do they blend into the area or stand out?

4. Compare characteristics of your neighborhood to the characteristics of at least three other groups. Explain (on the back) whether your neighborhood looks similar or different to the neighborhoods photographed by other groups. Consider whether buildings from your neighborhood would fit in well with buildings in other groups' neighborhoods.