

Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart

Neighbourhood Gathering

A neighbourhood gathering is a fun way to engage residents and to document the many assets that are important to the neighbourhood. It also lays a positive foundation for beginning the process to create a project. Use the neighbourhood gathering to explain process to all the residents who attend, encourage them to participate in the process and encourage them to spread the word among their neighbours.

One asset mapping activity gathers information from residents by asking simple questions such as “What do I like about my neighbourhood?” and “What are the assets in the neighbourhood?” The results are displayed by using colourful dots on large maps.

Each resident will use different coloured dots that correspond to a specific type of asset [i.e. physical assets - things (material objects) and social assets - people (skills, knowledge, experience)] and place them on a map to identify the location of the particular asset within the neighbourhood. Use the chart on the next page as a guide for explaining the types of assets that might exist in the neighbourhood.

Helpful Hint: Number each dot and, on a separate legend posted beside the map, have the resident clearly write what asset the numbered dot represents. You can also include a separate sheet for non-physical assets that residents identify, for example, “We appreciate the teenagers in the neighbourhood who shovel our driveway in the winter.”

- On a large map, ask “What is your favourite place in your neighbourhood?” Put a dot on this place on the map.
- Then ask “What is your least favourite place in your neighbourhood?” Put a dot on this place on the map.
- Ask “Why?”
- Ask residents “What stories can you tell about your neighbourhood?”

Lastly, on a comment sheet or survey, ask residents,

- “What is the one thing I would change about my neighbourhood?”
This will give residents the opportunity to outline some of the issues in their neighbourhoods while providing the Neighbourhood Action Team with a list of preliminary actions to consider.

A successfully completed asset-mapping exercise should leave neighbours feeling energized for future events and meetings. It will bring new people into the process and provide information from which the team can begin to formulate the project.

Helpful Hint: In order to be as inclusive as possible, it is a good idea to provide culturally appropriate and healthy refreshments, childcare and transportation (e.g. bus tickets) so that all members of the neighbourhood have a chance to attend and participate in the asset mapping exercise.

The asset mapping section related to neighbourhood gatherings was adapted in part from the Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit, Tool B – Asset Mapping. View Hamilton's Toolkit at bit.ly/2hRLt6H.

Neighbourhood Walk

A neighbourhood walk can be scheduled before or after the neighbourhood gathering in order to start to understand the physical boundaries and assets of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood walk may include residents, City staff, the ward Councillor and other relevant community partners. An added bonus of the neighbourhood walk may be the opportunity to meet some neighbours you haven't met before.

When identifying the physical boundaries of the neighbourhood, you will want to think about such things as the natural and artificial features (e.g. trees, culverts, etc.) of the area, street patterns and traffic. You should also think about the following question – if certain areas do not belong to our neighbourhood, where do they belong? This question will help to ensure that all areas belong to a neighbourhood. At the end of the asset mapping exercises, firm physical boundaries should be established based on the work of the project team and input from the neighbourhood.

The neighbourhood walk will also help to develop a picture of the neighbourhood. This picture will include both the physical and social assets in the neighbourhood. You will want to think about such things as the history of the neighbourhood, what has already been done and what is being planned in the neighbourhood. City staff are one resource for identifying what is being planned in the neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Asset Chart

Every neighbourhood has a collection of assets that make it unique. The chart below can help you identify all the different assets that can be found within your neighbourhood. It is expected that many assets will cross categories as they serve multiple functions within a neighbourhood. This chart can also help residents focus on and identify what the benefits of each asset are for the neighbourhood.

Asset	Description	Examples
Places	Assets that serve as a meeting place to encourage residents to connect and spend time together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and playgrounds • Natural areas and green space • Community centres • Recreation facilities • Community gardens • Farmers' markets
Education, Health and Social Services	Assets that contribute to residents' quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libraries • Literacy centres • Early years centres • Schools, colleges and universities • Hospitals and clinics • Mental health facilities • Elder care facilities • Housing services • Social and income assistance programs
Amenities	Assets that provide goods and services to residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping malls/centres • Grocery stores • Markets • Restaurants, cafes and bars • Entertainment centres
Economic	Assets that generate income and economic well-being in the neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment training centres • Small and large businesses • Business improvement associations • Labour groups
Transportation	Assets that help residents get around within their neighbourhood and to reach destinations beyond their neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks • Trails • Bike lanes • Transit (stations, stops and lines) • Roads
Cultural	Assets that help residents enjoy and celebrate life through history, culture, recreation and sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events • Faith communities/places of worship • Cultural or ethnic groups • Historical or heritage sites/buildings

Asset	Description	Examples
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architecturally significant buildings • Museums • Sports teams and recreation clubs • Arts groups • Public art and monuments
Community	Assets that help residents foster belonging in their neighbourhood and address neighbourhood needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood associations • Advocacy groups • Not-for-profit organizations • Service clubs
Safety	Assets that help residents feel safe and increase neighbourhood safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police • Fire • Bylaw • Neighbourhood watch or crime prevention initiatives • Street calming features • Lighting
Individual	Assets that residents contribute to the wider neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Talents • Experiences • Leadership • Networks

The asset mapping section related to the neighbourhood asset chart was adapted in part from the Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit, Tool B – Asset Mapping. View Hamilton's Toolkit at bit.ly/2hRLt6H.