

BASIC GRIDDING EXERCISE

OVERVIEW

An activity designed to generate a shared picture of a community's space

OBJECTIVES

- To create a common operating vision of space
- To create awareness and pride in the assets and gifts that are contained in a community's space

TIME REQUIRED

The time required to facilitate the basic gridding exercise using the guidelines below is approximately 1.5 hours. Plan on at least that long, and add more time if you facilitate the process using the variations described on pages 48–50.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE DOING THE EXERCISE

- The most important thing to have beforehand is a purpose for gridding. Otherwise, the grid will not be a living, valuable tool for the work! See the list on the previous page for ideas on how to use the grid.
- In Step 2, the task is to define the physical boundaries of the community. If you know that a major lack of consensus exists around this issue, do some prep work before doing the exercise to come to common ground that will allow you to get through the activity.

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 1: Setting the context	10–15 min.	<p>Describe the function of gridding: “Everyone has a partial or different view of his or her community. Gridding allows a group to form a common picture of the community. This can be a tool for community organizing as well as a symbol for the community that people take pride in.”</p> <p>Talk about the focus of the work and record it on a flip chart: “The purpose of the grid that we are going to create today is _____” (e.g., to help us recruit people for an event, to identify where there are places for youth to hang out).</p> <p>“Remember—this is a community's own operating picture that we can use—it is not necessarily one imposed on us by the school, government, or other entities.”</p>	Flip chart with the purpose of the grid that the group is creating.
Step 2: Looking at our com- munity	10–15 min.	<p>Look at an actual map of the community. Ask: What do you notice? What are the natural features? What are the main lines? Where are the natural resources? Where are the boundaries? What are the built-up areas and open spaces?</p>	<p>United States Geological Survey (USGS), transportation, or Internet map</p> <p>Demographic info</p>

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WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
		Form a consensus around the boundaries for the grid that you are creating today. If that is not possible, decide what research or steps need to be taken to come to an agreement on this issue. [NOTE: if you know or think that this is a difficult issue, have preliminary conversations with group members ahead of time so that this matter is already clarified.]	
Step 3: Drafting grids	30–40 min.	<p>Describe the key features of grids: boundaries, pathways, gathering places, sacred spaces, landmarks, and subsections</p> <p>Use either copies of Handout 2E or a flip chart that describes what each feature is.</p> <p>Divide the group into 3 or 4 teams, with youth and adult representation on each team.</p> <p>Use a flip chart with instructions to describe the task.</p> <p>Each group should do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draw the edges of the community or area in pencil. 2. Plot the key pathways, gathering places, sacred spaces, and landmarks (you may want to color code these). 3. Divide the whole area into 3 to 7 subsections that show how people really think of the parts of the community. 4. Give each subsection a name that is something that people identify with—it could be the name that people who live there call it. 5. Draw the boundaries with a marker, trying to make them as clear as possible. 	<p>Flip charts that explain what each of these things are OR Handout 2E</p> <p>Flip chart with instructions as indicated at left.</p>
Step 4: Group sharing and reflection	30 min.	<p>Ask each group to put its grid on the front wall and quickly (less than 2 minutes) walk through it with the rest of the group.</p> <p>After all the groups have reported, ask the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What about the grids caught your attention? 2. Where do you see similarities? 3. Where do you see differences? 4. What did you learn about the community from this exercise? 5. What are the gifts or assets of our space that we might build on? [Facilitator should record these on the flip chart] 6. As we move forward with our project, how will we be able to use this information? 7. Are there any questions related specifically to the task for which the grids were created? <p>Ask for one or two volunteers from each group who could work with each other to combine the draft grids into a single grid and report back to the entire group at the next gathering.</p>	Flip chart

ELEMENTS OF A GRID

BOUNDARIES—

A community's edges or boundaries delineate it to the people who live there. These boundaries can be natural limits, like rivers or mountains, or human-made limits, like highways or railroad tracks.

DISTRICTS OR SECTIONS OF YOUR COMMUNITY—

Communities are made up of smaller areas inside their boundaries. They may be areas that are defined, like neighborhoods, or they could be defined by roads, pathways, or natural features.

PATHWAYS—

Streets, roads, paths, etc. that people use to get from place to place.

LANDMARKS—

A community has features that define it and make it unique. Landmarks also help outsiders identify the community. Water towers, church towers, trees, ponds, hills, and old buildings all are landmarks.

SACRED SPACES—

Places of worship, special landmarks and places, and other sacred places.

GATHERING PLACES—

These are buildings, restaurants, parks, and other places where people get together. These gathering places provide residents with the opportunity to interact and feel like they are part of the community.



VARIATIONS ON THE BASIC GRIDGING PROCESS

NAME	USE THIS VARIATION IF YOU...	POSSIBLE DRAWBACKS...	NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR
Mind mapping	<p>Want to get people “warmed up” for gridding.</p> <p>Want to bring out people’s views and feelings about community.</p> <p>Want to engage people in an activity that is more creative and open than the basic gridding activity.</p>	<p>Not grounded in real space.</p> <p>Can be somewhat repetitive with the gridding activity if people’s mind maps are focused on “real space.”</p>	<p>Additional time required: half an hour</p> <p>Expand Step 1 to include the steps included in the facilitator’s notes on page 116 of Section 3.</p> <p>See examples of mind maps on page 116 of Section 3.</p>
The story grid	<p>Have more time.</p> <p>Really want to understand the special meaning behind community places.</p> <p>Want to use gridding as part of a social studies or language arts class.</p> <p>Want to involve more people in the development of the picture of the space of the community.</p> <p>Want to gather more stories and insights from events that have been gridded.</p>	<p>Takes more time.</p> <p>Need to provide training and technical assistance on soliciting the stories from people.</p>	<p>Additional time required: several weeks to gather and document the stories.</p> <p>Once Step 4 is completed and you have a single grid that represents the space of the community, look at the grid to identify the landmarks, gathering places, sacred spaces, and so forth that have stories behind them. Develop a list for how to get stories about each space through looking at community archives or old newspapers or interviewing people.</p> <p>Have a short session to practice interviewing people and documenting their stories.</p>
The grid through time	<p>Really want the history wall (past) and vision (future) to be connected to the grid.</p> <p>Want to highlight changes in where people live, land use, transportation, and so forth.</p> <p>Want to use gridding as part of a history or geography class.</p>	<p>The process of gathering historical data about geography is complex and time consuming.</p> <p>Need to have access to and assistance in interpreting old maps and access to people who are familiar with the geography through time.</p>	<p>Additional time required: several weeks to gather and document data to show changes in the community’s space.</p> <p>Once Step 4 is completed and you have a single grid that represents the space of the community, brainstorm a list of resources for acquiring historical information.</p> <p>Finish the process by making a list or report of the trends that you have learned about (e.g., more roads, loss of farm land, more gathering places) so that you can share your results. Think about using this information to set the context for the vision day.</p>

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NAME	USE THIS VARIATION IF YOU...	POSSIBLE DRAWBACKS...	NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR
Gridding with technology	<p>Have access to geographic information systems (GIS) technology.</p> <p>Want a totally accurate picture of the community.</p> <p>Want to be able to correlate your grid with other demographic data.</p>	<p>Need to have access to GIS images of your area.</p> <p>It can be hard for people who can't use the technology to get involved.</p> <p>It likely requires the use of a resource person and computer equipment.</p>	<p>Additional time required: It will take several months to get the technology set up and teach people how to use it.</p>
“Layered” gridding (Manual GIS!)	<p>Want to highlight differences in perspective (such as in youth–adult gridding, below)</p> <p>Want to be able to have varying levels of data that you can combine or separate.</p> <p>Have access to an overhead projector.</p>	<p>You need to get demographic data and other information ahead of time.</p> <p>It can be difficult for people who don't feel comfortable with reading maps.</p>	<p>Additional time required: From one to several hours, depending on level of detail.</p> <p>In Step 3, give each group a transparency with an image of the community on it. Ask that each group map the boundaries, landmarks, and other elements on separate overlaying transparencies, using a different color marker for each element.</p> <p>In Step 4, use an overhead projector to compare groups' work and ask additional reflection questions about more detailed similarities and differences.</p>
Seasonal gridding	<p>Want to explore how the different seasons affect people's relation to their space.</p> <p>Are doing work in a community where there are major seasonal changes.</p>	<p>Takes longer.</p>	<p>Additional time required: From one to several hours, depending on level of detail.</p> <p>In Step 3, give each group four (or the appropriate number of seasons) transparency sheets with an image of the community on it. Ask that each group map the boundaries, landmarks, and other things that do not change on each transparency. Ask that they then map gathering places, pathways, and the other features that change in each season.</p> <p>In Step 4, use an overhead projector to compare groups' work and ask additional reflection questions about more detailed similarities and differences and implications for the work.</p>

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Youth–adult gridding	<p>Highlight the unique perspective that age brings to how we view place.</p> <p>Have access to an overhead projector.</p>		<p>Additional time required: about an hour.</p> <p>In Step 3, instead of breaking up into 3 or 4 teams, break into 2 teams, with youth in one and adults in the other.</p> <p>See the instructions in “layered gridding,” above.</p> <p>In Step 4, ask questions that prompt reflection on the similarities and differences in youth and adult grids.</p>
Issue-specific gridding	<p>Want to see how a certain issue plays out in space in the community (e.g., child care or technology).</p>	<p>Takes more time.</p>	<p>You first need to get confirmation of the issue from the group.</p> <p>All the other steps would be the same, but focused on one issue only.</p>
Gridding with photos	<p>Want to create a product that can be displayed.</p> <p>Want to incorporate the gridding activity with an art or photography class or project.</p>	<p>Takes more time and resources for equipment and film development.</p>	<p>Additional time required: Several weeks to shoot pictures and create the final product.</p> <p>Once Step 4 is completed and you have a single grid that represents the space of the community, make assignments for photographing key elements of the community space. One way to do this might be to assign a team of photographers to each subsection.</p> <p>Once the final product is created, have a celebration to share it (maybe in conjunction with a vision day). Use the celebration to ask some additional reflection questions.</p>

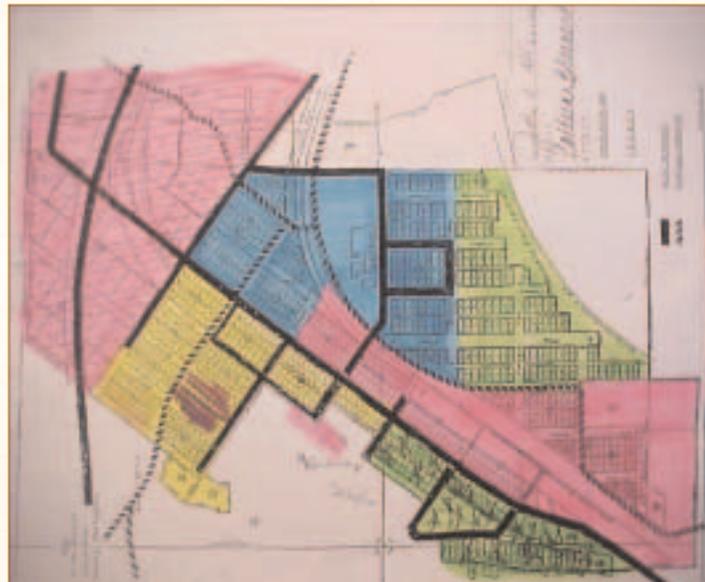
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Grids from Washtucna, Washington

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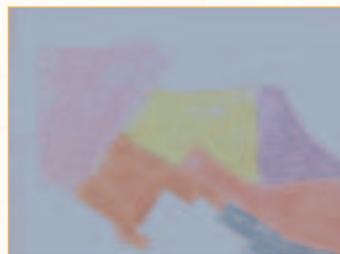
First, they got hold of a blank town map from the local department of transportation (not pictured). They decided to grid the central area of the community.

Next the group worked together to chart the important points on the grid and divide it into sections (see below). This allowed them to see where businesses, residences, and gathering places were.



Then, the group took the image that they had created on top of the map and simplified it—taking away lines, markings, etc. They highlighted just the pattern and colors of the sections.

They now have an image that is clean and neat and that can be shared! They can look at the different sections as a way to organize their work.

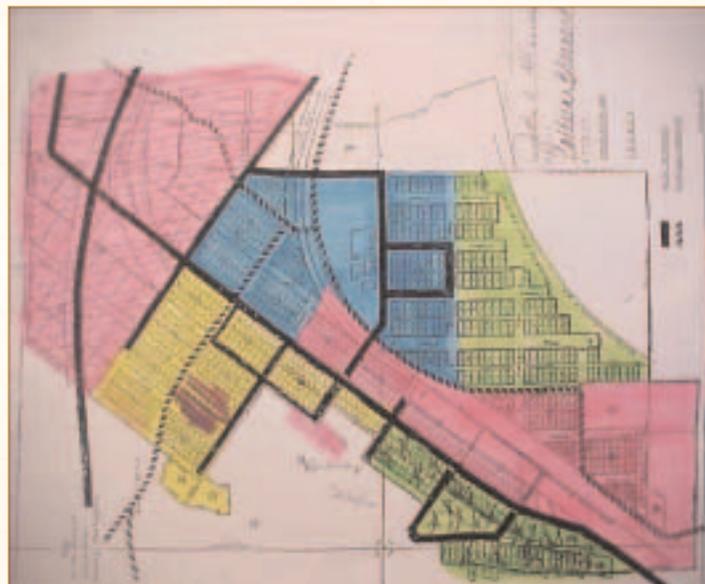


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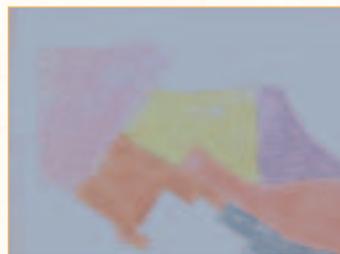
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TIPS FOR GRIDDING YOUTH AND ADULT PARTNERING

Tips for the gridding process presents special opportunities for youth and adults to work together to make a complete grid. Because youth and adults see their community in different ways, both have different ideas to add to the grid. For example, many adults use the government center in a community and would probably include it on their grid. Youth are more likely to place items like a local teen hangout on their grid. To get the best picture possible, it's important that both are included. What are some other reasons we should involve youth and adults in this process?

GENERAL TIPS

- Make it public—quickly! Get that grid or the information you discovered out there as soon as it is done.
- Grid for a purpose—have the grid be a team-building activity or part of a strategy for recruiting people to a meeting.
- Think about the different models you might use before starting (see the chart on pages 48–50)
- Involve as many community members as possible.

Gridding with GIS in Greater Grand Canyon, Arizona

Imagine what the experience of living in the Grand Canyon would be! There are advantages to living in such an inspiring place, but issues around community development are complex. The towns have no governing body; the National Park Service owns almost all the land. Decisions about where people live are made by the Park Service and the concessionaires.

When we did our asset mapping and gridding, we used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to help us better see and understand our community issues. A team of youth and adults from Grand Canyon and Tusayan worked with local Cooperative Extension Service staff and people from the University of Arizona College of Agriculture to do the work.

What we found out about community assets:

- There are fewer buildings that residents use and places to go in the Grand Canyon area than in other areas.
- More of the space in Grand Canyon is for the Park Service and tourists than it is for community resources.
- One of the most important nodes in the community is the Subway shop at the airport. It is affordable, and it provides a safe local space without feeling like you are "going to work" because it is not surrounded by tourists.

What we found out about potential resources:

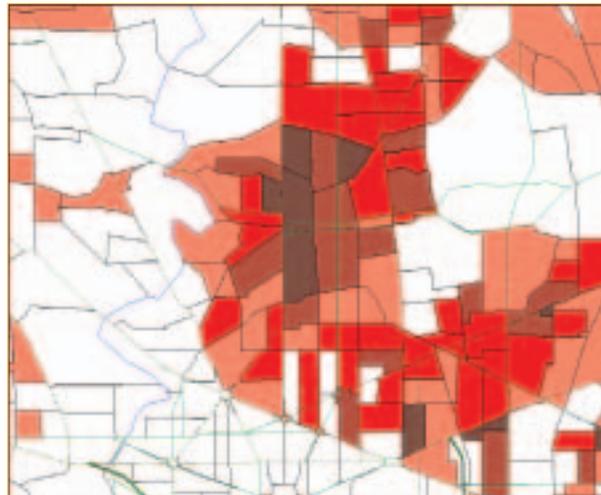
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- There is no public pool, but three of the hotels have swimming pools.



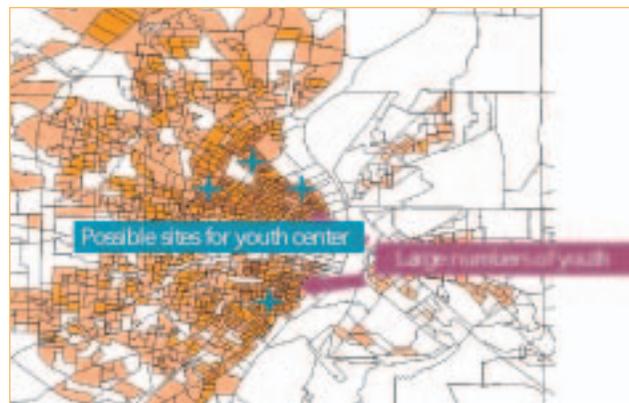
CONNECT TO TECHNOLOGY!

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software is now used by many communities to develop a grid. GIS allows communities to make layers that contain a single element (e.g., trees, streets, houses), then combine the layers into a single grid. Because the layers overlap, resources that involve two or more elements are easy to spot. For example, if your community has great hiking trails but no roads that lead up to the trails, the GIS software can help you find the most environmentally friendly place to locate an access road to the trails.

GIS software also can be handy if you've already completed the gift assessment process. If you want to see how concentrated a certain gift is within your community, you can plot the locations of people with that gift on the software. If you know places where that gift can be used, you can plot those, too. Then you can match up the need with the closest resource. In the map below, you can see how the city of Chicago used GIS software to look at the locations of public schools, tutor/mentor programs, and schools on probation in relation to the poverty levels in the city. If they noticed an area with a high concentration of schools on probation, they would start a tutor/mentor program there to help the students in those schools.



The map below is another example of the types of things you can do. In this case, you could use data from the U.S. Census to find out where the largest concentrations of young people are in this Washington, DC neighborhood. The darkest areas contain the highest concentration of youth between 5 and 17. The lighter the area, the fewer youth live in that area. If this community was interested in constructing a youth center, they might use the data to determine a convenient location for the center. Other data, like the location of schools and public transportation stops, would also be helpful in making the decision.



GRIDDING WITH PHOTOS

The 4-H New Upton Group in the Upton Neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland, undertook a Photo Survey Project of their community. The Photo Survey took several weeks to complete. First, they identified the boundaries of their community and then divided into small groups to photograph landmarks, historical sites, gathering places, and general assets and deficits within the community. As they photographed the area, they interviewed people and collected a variety of data about what assets within the community could be developed and built upon.

In addition to taking photos, the members also documented the process. They then used this information to develop their outreach plan. They shared their findings from the Photo Survey with a local neighborhood association, the Upton Planning Committee, and with other community partners and stakeholders. They also used the project as an example of community building during presentations at local, state, and national teen leadership conferences.

The 4-H New Upton Group recommends this project to others—they raised their level of awareness about the community, identified potential development projects, and learned to work more effectively as a team. They have also been identified by another planning committee as a major stakeholder in Upton, and have been consulted by local leaders to help develop the neighborhood planning process.

The Photo Survey Project was developed and led by Manami Brown, 4-H Extension Educator for the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension. Along with the Photo Survey itself, she developed lesson plans that focused on helping the group conduct community mapping to assess the resources and needs of the Upton Community. These lesson plans included project and life skill development, reflection, and accompanying hand outs.



Historical murals in the Upton neighborhood, Baltimore.



A community garden in Upton.

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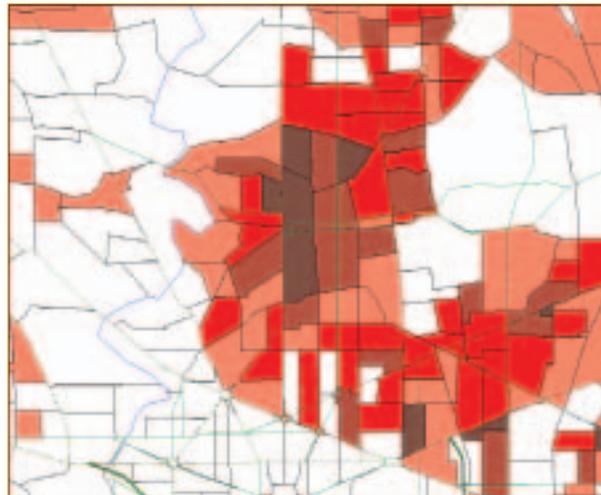
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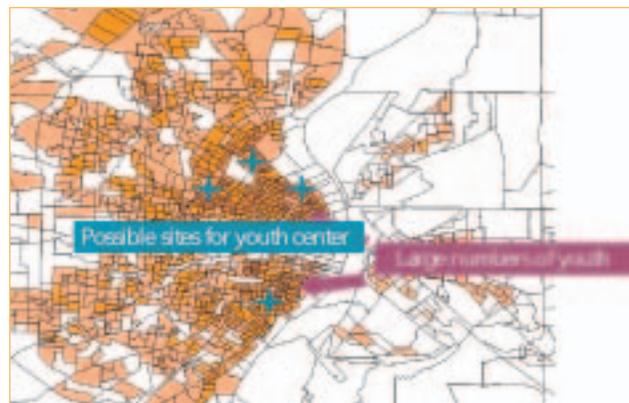
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