

## USE THIS ROOTS & SHOOTS COMMUNITY MAPPING TOOL ALONG WITH YOUR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS TO EXPLORE YOUR COMMUNITY AND:

- Learn the geography and layout of your local area
- Determine areas of need for people, other animals and the environment
- Identify resources that may support efforts to meet community needs
- Form a deeper commitment and resulting **empathy** towards the people, other animals and the environment that makes up your community

Community mapping practices many types of research including observation, internet and print media searches, as well as interviews with family, friends and community leaders who become **collaborators** with you on your efforts.



### TIME REQUIREMENT

2 hours minimum, suggested multi-day/week project



### MATERIALS

- Colored pencils, markers, or Crayons
- Regular pencil or pen
- Large sheets of white paper
- Glue or Tape
- Stickers
- Map (printed, purchased or hand drawn)
- Optional: Internet
- Optional: Google My Maps or Esri ArcGIS Online (see digital mapping tutorials)



**EDUCATORS:** Learn how to align mapping with different subjects at [rootsandshoots.org/lessonplans](http://rootsandshoots.org/lessonplans)

## 1 PART ONE: OBSERVING YOUR COMMUNITY

Take note of what is on the way to school or work when on the bus, in the car, biking, etc. Imagine you are looking at the community from a bird's eye view.

### SAMPLE GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Why is it important to learn more about your community?
- What are the roads around your location? Are there any major intersections?
- Notice the cars and people walking outside, imagine where they are going and what they do to have fun, where they work, eat, sleep etc.
- Do you see animals, wild or domestic? Where do they go during the day? get food? play? or go when they are sick?
- Where do you see plants or trees? How do they survive and how did they get there? What makes them important to your community?
- Be introspective! What role do you play in your community? How do the daily actions you take impact the people, other animals and environment around you?

Observations can be recorded in many different ways - photography, artwork, journaling, video production, presentations, the options are endless.

### SAMPLE GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do you feel about your community? Do you feel your community has the resources to meet the needs of both humans and animals? Do you feel that local officials consider the environmental impact of major changes such as new roads, parks, and other developments?
- What issue have you recently read or heard about that impacts your community? Does this issue primarily impact humans, animals, or the environment? Do you believe the issue will have a positive or negative impact on your community?



## 2 PART TWO: PREPARING YOUR MAP

Draw, print or purchase a map of your location. If you are mapping a radius around a zip code or specific location, two to five miles is sufficient. If it is a campus, request a map from the front office. If you are using a purchased map, draw a radius around your community.



### OPTIONAL CHALLENGE:

Use a blank sheet of grid paper (or the one included in the end of this guide) and see if you can draw your location from memory. How is your community or campus oriented —to the North, South, East or West?

## 3 PART THREE: MARKING COMMUNITY ASSETS

See the examples below to identify your community's unique assets. The lists below are just examples of assets, you don't have to map all of them, and you could map others depending on your community. Distinguish the three categories on your map by assigning each a unique identifier (i.e., color, shape, stickers). For example, mark human assets in blue, animal assets in red, and environmental assets in green.

### HUMAN ASSETS

- Places for school/work
- Highlight major streets
- Areas of leisure
- Libraries/Community centers
- Places of worship
- Grocery stores, farmer's markets, favorite restaurants
- Hospitals or clinics
- Shelters and food banks
- Fire and police stations

### ANIMAL ASSETS

- Animal sightings, species
- Domestic animal use (dog parks, dog friendly trails, etc.)
- Animal shelters
- Animal control facility
- Animal hospitals
- Animal sanctuaries
- Zoos and aquariums



### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

- Wild and/or protected spaces
- Bodies of water
- Mountains, beaches, etc.
- Recycling centers, landfill/waste management
- Water facilities
- Power sources (coal, nuclear, wind, solar and geothermal power plants)
- Environmental services (watersheds, reservoirs, wetlands)

## 4 PART FOUR: REFLECTION

Refer to your map as you reflect on the following suggested questions.

### SAMPLE GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Do any of the marked assets above serve more than just the one category? (human, other animal and Environment) Example, a recycling center benefits the environment but also provides a service to humans.
- What are some of the assets above that support the people, other animals, and environmental habitat in your community?
- What things do you like about your community?
  - One quality about your community that makes it a great habitat for people
  - One quality about your community that makes it a great habitat for animals
  - One quality about your community that makes it a great environmental habitat
- What makes you most proud (happy?) to live in your community?
- Is your community meeting the basic needs of people and animals?
- Is your community environmentally sustainable?
- What things could be improved for your community?
  - One quality your community could improve to make it a better habitat for people
  - One quality your community could improve to make it a better habitat for animals
  - One quality your community could improve to make it a better environmental habitat
- What other parts of your community should be included on the map? How are they important to the human, animal, or environmental habitats in your community?
- Reflect on the observations made in Part 1. How did your initial observations influence your map? Are there things that surprised you about your community as you were mapping?



Do this on your map, on a separate sheet of paper, or as a conversation.

Next up, use Step 3 of the Roots & Shoots formula to use your map to design a service campaign that addresses a need in your community. Visit [rootsandshoots.org/takeaction](https://rootsandshoots.org/takeaction).

## GLOSSARY OF COMPASSIONATE SKILLS & TRAITS PRACTICED THROUGH MAPPING



### CRITICAL THINKING

Exploring a topic from all angles before making a well-thought-out decision



### COLLABORATIVE

Embracing the inspiration and participation of others by accepting new ideas and perspectives



### EMPATHETIC

Connecting to feelings outside your own by viewing concepts through the lens of another



### INTROSPECTIVE

Examining your beliefs to consider how your actions affect the world around you

See more compassionate leadership traits and mapping activities at [rootsandshoots.org](https://rootsandshoots.org).