

DEVELOP A NEIGHBORHOOD-COMMUNITY ASSET INVENTORY

City of St. Louis Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative



DESCRIPTION

An asset inventory is the process of collecting and documenting the positive attributes and features of your neighborhood: both physical things such as buildings and parks, and social assets like residents, businesses, and organizations. This can be done in a number of ways, but hosting events like photographing days, walking tours, mapping tours, and interviews with residents are all ways to take stock of your neighborhood. This information can then be shared to celebrate and serve as a baseline for future efforts.

NEIGHBORHOOD BENEFITS

Environmental

- Preserved parks, trees, open space, and existing buildings

Social

- Residents becoming aware and invested in neighborhood assets
- Improved positive public image for your neighborhood
- Can be used in the future for asset-based planning
- Voice given to neighbors and residents about what is important and an asset in their neighborhood

Economic

- New and continued investment in the community
- Targeted specific new neighborhood developments
- New residents and businesses attracted through the new marketing tool



(en) Visioning Hyde Park



Book Cover for (en) Visioning Hyde Park

RELATED TOOLS

When paired with other tools, creating a neighborhood asset inventory can contribute to a more connected, prouder, and more marketable community. Think about community cohesion, public art, local prosperity, and healthy vibrant communities. Try combining this tool with:

- **Develop a Neighborhood Walking Tour & Market Your Neighborhood**
- **Create Public Art Installations or Exhibits**
- **Start a Shop Local or Green Business Campaign**

EXAMPLES

(en) Visioning Hyde Park, St. Louis, MO

A summer art and photography project for middle school students.

Southwest Garden Neighborhood Asset Inventory, St. Louis, MO

SLU students documented Physical Assets, Community Assets, Environmental Assets, Economic Development, and Transportation.

Cherokee Street OpenStreetMap #editathon, St. Louis, MO

A community mapping event of the main street held in 2013 by OpenDataSTL.



Open streets in Old North St. Louis

GET STARTED

- 1. Research** A neighborhood asset is anything that can be used to improve the perception or the quality of community life. It can be a person, a natural resource, a tool, a physical structure or place, a community service, or a business. Ask yourself a few questions and get an organization or other residents involved to help:
 - What is the size of my community? Find more information at the [Planning and Urban Design Agency](#) and through their [census](#).
 - Who is available to help me do the work? You can involve volunteers, other organizations, students, seniors, etc.
 - How much time can we dedicate to this task? Will it be one week, one month, or as much time as it takes?
 - What financial resources do we have to support the work? Some resources can be found through [foundations](#), [grants](#), and organizations such as [United Way](#) and the [Community Builders Network](#). Southwest Garden Partnered with [SLU](#) and Hyde Park Partnered with [Rebuild Foundation](#).

The [Asset-Based Community Development Institute](#) offers a guide at <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/kelloggabcd.pdf>.
- 2. Determine Assets** Next, determine what assets you want to inventory. Examples can be found [here](#) and through [HUD's guide available here](#).
- 3. Gather Information** Determine how to gather information. You can use a paper survey, an online survey, door-to-door surveys, or questionnaires at special events. Determine the kinds of questions you want to ask. Some examples can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- 4. Present Information** Asset inventories do not have to be a list. Some of the most interesting results come from projects that combine the unique talents of residents with an overall goal highlighting the assets. Combining artistic skills such as drawing, photography, graphic design, video, and website development can create exciting results. Achieve this with a community event such as a charrette or community work session, a school assembly, a walking/photography audit, an interview, or photo booth at local event, store, or farmers market.

OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. Advertise** Use the neighborhood assets to support actions that will improve your community. For example, you can:
 - Begin an [asset-based community development process](#).
 - Use assets to tackle a new community project
 - Publish a book, website, or report so the community can use the information for neighborhood improvement
 - Market your neighborhood to attract new residents and businesses
 - Target a particular area for development
 - Find ways to bring existing groups together to pool resources
- 2. Exchange** Create a program for exchanging assets, ranging from individual skill-swaps to cost-sharing.
- 3. Share** Share the information you have collected by creating something special for people to reference. Some examples are:
 - A book or report - available at local stores, the library, schools, and online.
 - A website - interactive and easily accessible to a wide group of people.
 - A video - this can be shared in schools, homes, libraries, and online.
 - A public art installation - visually show the results of your inventory for the whole community to see. One example is [Walk Your City](#).



Community yard sale in Skinker DeBlavieri

RELATED SUSTAINABILITY PLAN CATEGORIES

This tool supports the health and well-being of the entire neighborhood. This tool supports the following goals and strategies:

Urban Character, Vitality & Ecology

Strategies: F3-Create additional events, resources and publications that document and celebrate St. Louis' heritage; F8-Promote public engagement in the historic preservation movement; J1-Engage in place-based planning and improvements around community anchors.

Arts, Culture & Innovation

Strategies: E3-expand arts and cultural events and outdoor programs.

Empowerment, Diversity & Equity

Strategies: A5-Offer a variety of cultural events and awareness programs that celebrate diversity in the City of St. Louis.

Education, Training & Leadership

Strategies: H1-Develop a virtual meeting network; E1-Educated and empower citizens in methods and benefits of being environmentally sustainable.

Prosperity, Opportunity & Employment

Strategies: B7-Market assets and accomplishments of the City to attract new and retain existing residents; D5-Market and encourage living within the City of St. Louis for recent college graduates regardless of where in the region they are employed. G4-Market City assets to draw visitors to city neighborhoods.

For the most current examples, updated tools, and information, visit the City's Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative website:

SUSTAINABLENEIGHBORHOOD.NET