



VERMONT AFTERSCHOOL
**COMMUNITY ASSET
PROFILE GUIDEBOOK**

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Why Community Asset Profiling

Community asset profiling allows community members to collectively identify and provide information about local assets. A popular way to conduct community asset profiling is to create a map of the surveyed community with the assets labeled and described. Assets include skills, knowledge, resources, or supports an individual or institution can provide that improves and/or adds value to your community. Through the asset profiling process, your community will be able to recognize its strengths, find opportunities to build on the resources you already have, and better understand the perception of availability and accessibility around these assets. This information can then be used to inform a strategic plan that enhances third space opportunities.

Promotes community participation and empowerment

Builds community cohesion and generates a shared understanding of community assets

Helps expand community strengths and increase capacity

Profiles can be used to inform strategic plans and advocacy efforts

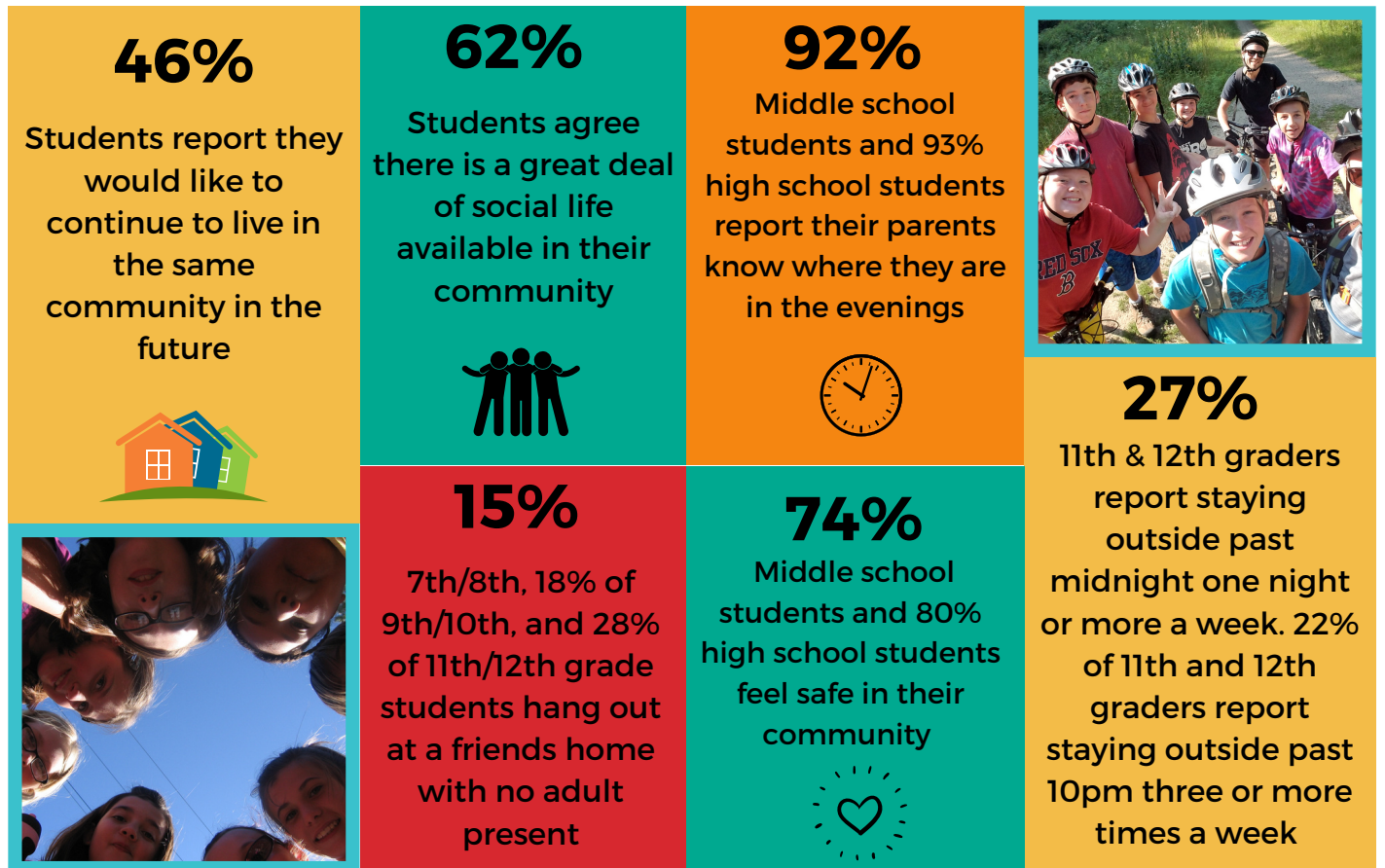
Finds new opportunities to improve the community

Third Space

What happens when youth aren't at home or at school--also known as the third space--really matters in a child and teen's life. This can be a significant amount of time when you take into account school vacation weeks and summer break.

It is important that young people are encouraged to engage in quality activities during the out-of-school time. Whether it's volunteering in the community, learning new skills, practicing for a performance, or hanging out with friends in a safe place, third space programs allow youth to further develop their social skills and build emotional resilience.

Participation in consistent, high-quality third space programs are also a known protective factor against substance use and risky behaviors. In sum, third space programs are an effective primary prevention strategy.



Steps to Community Asset Profiling

1

Organize a leadership team, create a common vision, and start setting goals!

2

Identify community assets through surveys and tools

3

Map community assets using Google Maps

4

Take action with the findings

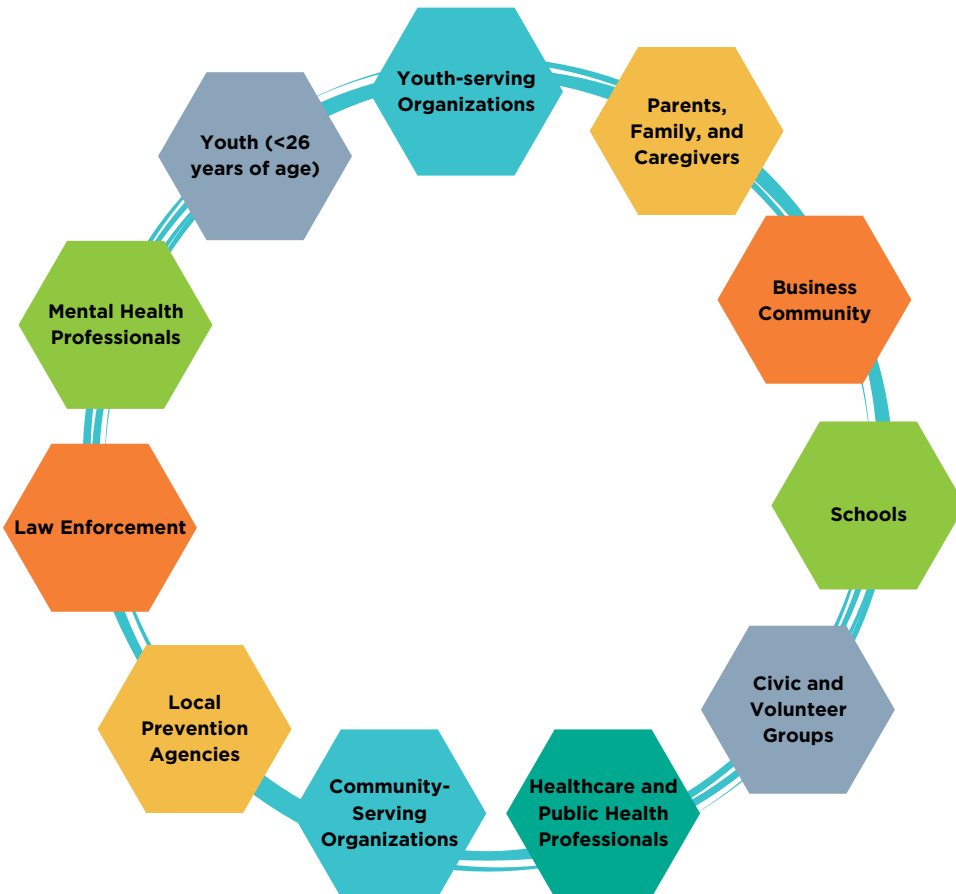
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Maintain the mapping efforts

Step 1: Organize Leadership Team



Gather a group together that can manage and direct the community asset profiling process forward. Involve stakeholders that are relevant to third space and youth empowerment. Vermont Youth Project communities should consider using their VYP coalition.



It is important that there are identified community members willing and able to drive the process forward and delegate work to other community members when possible. This process can involve a lot of community members; however, a core team is essential for decision-making, delegating, and progress.



Also, consider individuals and organizations that might be interested in participating, but are not necessarily part of leadership and decision-making. Work can be delegated to these groups to help gather information from the community



Reach out to Vermont Afterschool for support, additional resources, and questions. We have workshops and materials to help your community successfully implement a community asset profiling process.

Step 1: Vision and Goal Setting

The purpose of creating a vision and setting goals is to help you identify the resources in your community that will help you achieve these goals. Pick a goal and identify the community resources that will contribute to the goal's achievement.

Create a Shared Vision



Bring the leadership team together to brainstorm shared vision statements.



For example, "All youth have the opportunity to attend fun and engaging activities in the third space."



Once you have several statements, have the group form an agreement on one.

Using S.M.A.R.T. Goals to Achieve Vision



Specific, significant, and strategic. This step should define and answer: Who, what, when, where, and why.



Measurable, meaningful, and motivational. How are you going to do this work? This step should establish concrete criteria and milestones for measuring progress.



Attainable, achievable, and action-oriented. This step should establish how you are going to accomplish the goal, what barriers you may need to overcome, and the tools and skills needed.



Realistic, relevant, and results-oriented. Make sure your goals are relevant and realistic. Your goals should represent your mission.



Tangible and time-based. This step ensures that there is a clear timeframe for your goal.

Step 2: Identify Assets

Mapping Tools



Identify individuals, associations, and institutions that are an asset to your community and are relevant to achieving your goals. There are many methods to collect this information and it is worthwhile to do more than one. For instance, community meetings, surveys, and interviews are all great ways of gathering information from your community. Your team could also do your own research and brainstorming sessions.



This guidebook will review and provide examples of tools you can use and tailor to help identify assets in your community.



Please be as thorough as possible and clearly explain the value or skill the identified asset brings to the community; as well as, the availability and accessibility of the asset. The focus should of this process should be on understanding the gaps and expanding opportunities for youth to participate in the third space, not just creating a list of community assets. While a list or map outline the community assets can be useful; it does not always make clear what the gaps and opportunities in the third space are.



By centering availability and accessibility, it can reveal how your team should take action in your community. If we figure out what is preventing youth for participating the third space, we can take action to remedy these barriers. Therefore, it is recommended that a lot of time and energy should be put into analyzing perception of availability and accessibility of community assets.

Step 2: Identify Assets

Perceptions of Availability & Accessibility



Consider perceptions of availability of resources, use of current resources, and the asset's accessibility. This is one of the most important steps in community asset profiling. Getting to awareness of resources, availability, and use will provide essential information to your group.



During a community meeting or on a survey, ask community members and youth questions about their perception of third space offerings and their accessibility. Hand out surveys at events or in places unrelated to third space offerings for youth to make sure everyone in the community has the opportunity to fill it out and not just those who work and regularly participate in youth-serving organizations.



Some questions include: How often do you or people in your household participate in out-of-school (third space) opportunities? What out-of-school time opportunities do you participate in? Are out-of-school time opportunities current available and accessible to you and people in your household? What out-of-school time opportunities are not available or accessible, but you would like to participate in? What are the barriers to accessing these opportunities? How can the community improve the quality and accessibility of out-of-school time offerings in your community?



This information is essential in identifying gaps and looking for new opportunities in the third space. Understanding how the community is interacting with the assets, their barriers to using the resources, and their perception of availability, allows your team to further understand the needs of the community. For example, there may be a community center, but it's not on a public transportation route or it's not open during time youth are available to use it. Or, there's a sports team available, but only 12 spots for youth. These would be considered gaps in accessibility that need to be addressed. There should be a focus on these availability and accessibility questions, because it gives a clearer picture how we can expand third space opportunities and create an environment where every youth can participate if they want to.

Step 2: Asset Mapping Tool

Use this chart to identify assets and describe how they relate to youth and the third space. In the left hand column, list the asset. Then, use the other relevant columns to describe how the asset operates in the third space.

Tool 1: Asset Mapping. In the left-hand column, list the asset. Then in the other relevant columns, describe how the asset operates in the third space.

Community Assets Operating in the Third Space (List organizations, associations, projects, programs, initiatives, etc.)	Purpose/Mission of Asset	Services, Activities, or Skills Provided to Youth	Target Population/ Number and Age Group of Youths Served	Strengths of Asset	Barriers to Access (cost, transportation, unaware of asset, staffing, waiting lists, etc.)	Hours and Days Asset is Open
Community Center	To engage youth in meaningful activities outside of the classroom	Sports leagues, cooking classes, safe place for youth to hang out, etc.	Local youth grades 1-12	Safe, healthy environment for youth, free to access, can learn life skills	No public transportation to site, small staff	Monday – Saturday 9am- 9pm

Engage the Community in Identifying Assets

Community Engagement and Outreach



Inclusivity

It is important to continually communicate with your community about this process and allow them the opportunity to participate if they are interested. The people that live in your community all have unique experiences and insights; especially, those who interact with the third space. Parents, caregivers, and youth may be helpful in deepening your understanding of the third space opportunities already offered and where the gaps can be seen.



Think Outside the Box

Additionally, you want to hear from community members who are not already regularly involved in third space opportunities. Therefore, it may be useful to hand out surveys about third space and perceptions of availability in places other than youth-serving institutions as well. For example, at local businesses and community events.



Use Local Media

It is also important to think of what media channels work best in your community. For instance, some communities favor Front Porch Forum, some Facebook groups, and others rely on local newspapers. The platform you administer the survey also matters. Cognito is a useful online platform for collecting information, but paper surveys can be helpful for communities and individuals that lack reliable internet access. Either or both can be implemented to gather information in your community



Be Clear in Your Invitation

Outreach can also create new partnerships, new projects or programs, and help expand opportunities. Invite community members to community asset profiling meetings, send out a survey to get their input on third space offerings, and send out communication materials to explain the process and goals.



Follow Up

As you move forward with action steps, don't forget to provide updates to various people and partners involved on how the information is being used.

Community Meetings

Engage and Outreach to the Community

Outreach to community members who have a stake in the third space. This includes coaches, youth workers, mentors, parents and caregivers, educators, youth, afterschool programs, rec departments, libraries, and more!

Use the VYP data. Showing the community the risk factors of youth in the community can be a motivator in community engagement.

Who asks tends to be as important as how they ask for community participation. Those in your community with great influence may be the best people to ask the community to attend meetings.

Advertise through multiple channels and multiple times. For example: School all calls, multiple social media groups like PTA/PTO, local TV/radio/news spots, and messaging via political and/or faith networks.

Eliminate barriers to attendance by hosting meetings virtually or providing transportation, child care, and food when possible.

Facilitating the Meeting



Explain the community asset mapping process and the vision/goals. Send out a date and time when people can meet to discuss third space offerings; consider a couple of dates in order to accommodate different schedules.



Hand out the community asset profiling tool provided in this guidebook. Give time for members to gather in groups to brainstorm and to share their ideas with everyone. For virtual meetings, breakout rooms can be a good space for this. Take note of the recurring themes you hear throughout.



You can use the provided tool in meetings and also send to community members and partners to fill out in their own time..

Step 3: Mapping Assets



Once you have identified third space assets, you can create a visual representation by plotting on a map! Google Maps is a great, free tool your community can use. This tool provides the ability to easily see and look up any asset that is mapped. Additionally, you can save your map and come back later to add or change assets over time.



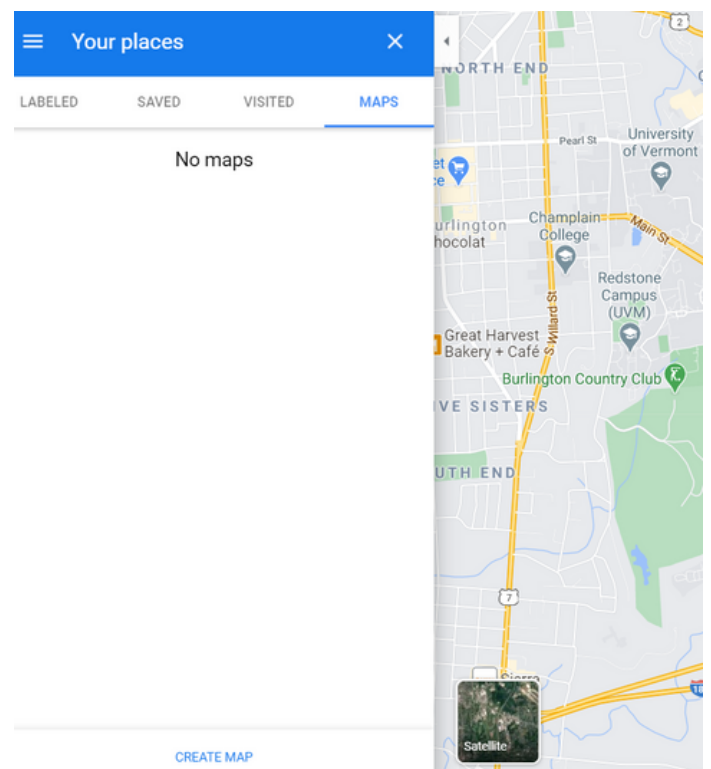
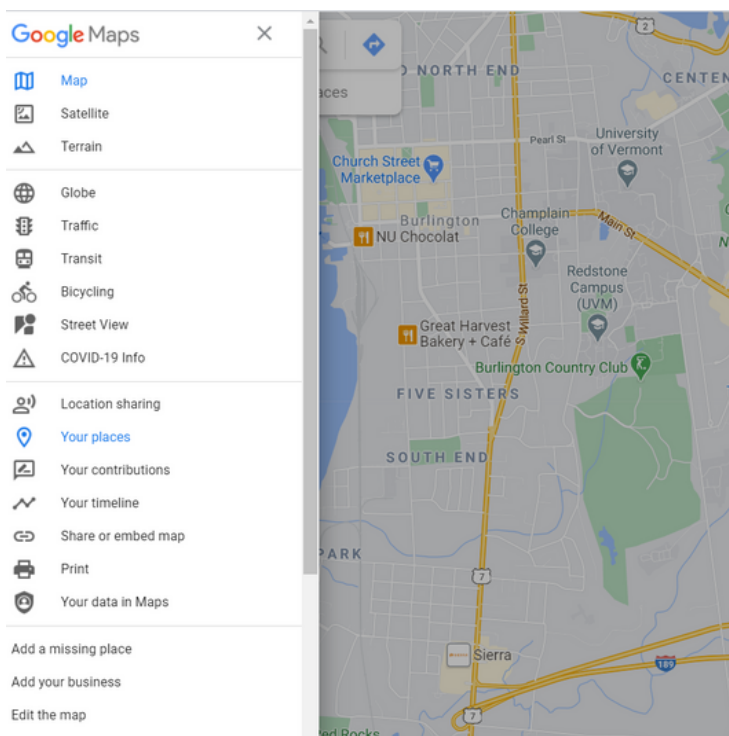
There are many different ways Google Maps can be used, so take some time to get familiar with the tool and decide the most effective way it can work in your community. Please reach out to Vermont Afterschool if you want support during the mapping process.

1

First, go to the Google Maps' homepage (maps.google.com) and select the button with three lines to find the sidebar. Then select places.

2

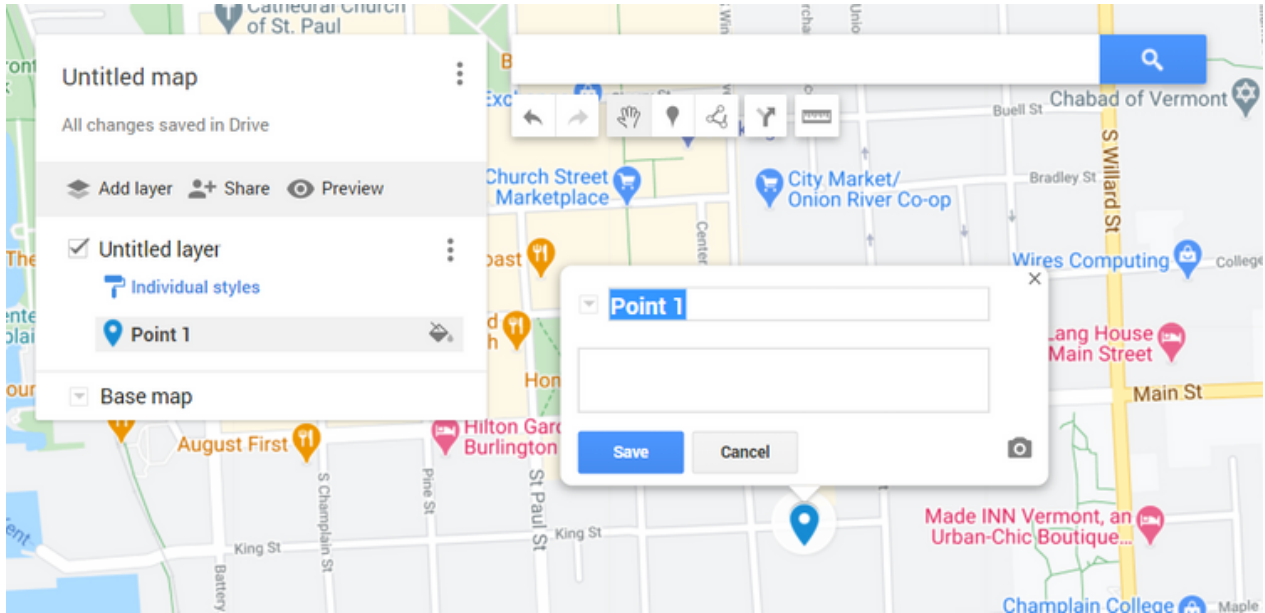
You will see a section labeled maps, then a create map button on the bottom.



Step 3: Mapping Assets

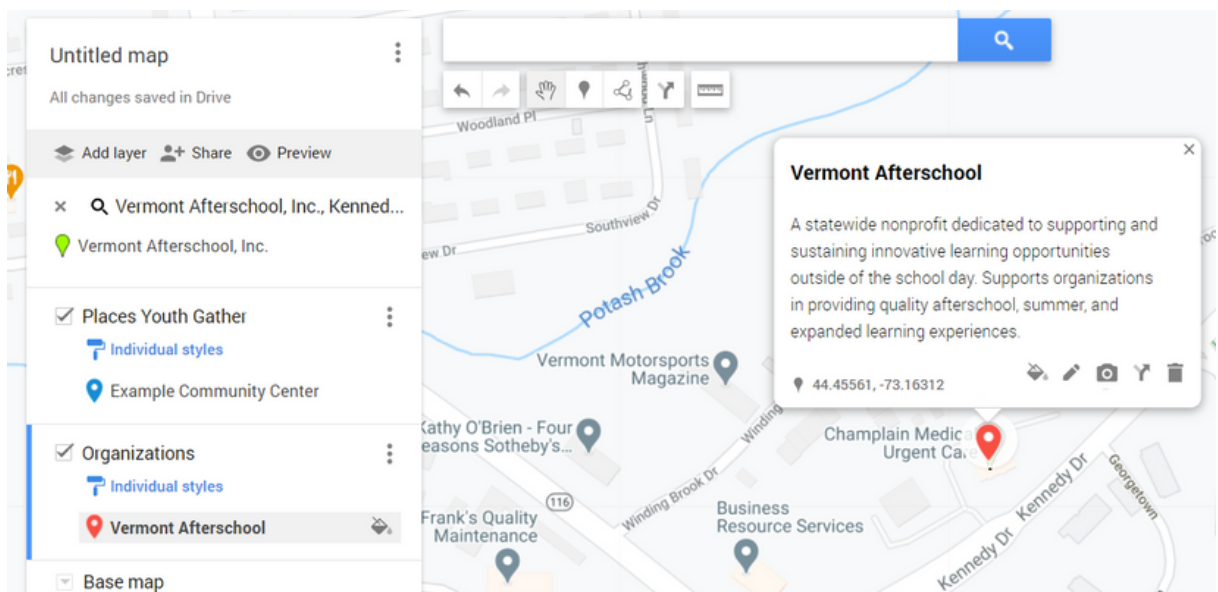
3

Zoom into your community and start plotting by using the add marker button under the search bar. You can label the point and add a description.



4

You can also create categories by labeling the layer a point is in and color coding the markers. For example you can rename "untitled layer" as "third space organizations" and create another layer called "youth associations" then each marker can be a different color depending on with layer it falls into.



Step 4: Taking Action

After you have identified your community assets, it is time to take action with the results. This allows the community to look for new opportunities, strengths, gaps, and areas to expand upon. You can use this information for strategic planning efforts, advocacy work, and community engagement. In this step, we will talk about how to use your asset map in your community.

Review the Findings

Strategic Planning

Advocacy

Building Partnerships

Step 4: Taking Action

Review the Findings

Once you have listed and mapped your community's assets, you can review the findings for opportunities to expand and develop your third space offerings. Look for new opportunities, strengths to build upon, gaps that can be filled with either existing or new organizations, programs, and projects, and areas of expansion. Use this chart to analyze the assets in your community to search for overlaps, gaps, and new opportunities. Think of ways to make overlaps more efficient, close any gaps, and find new opportunities by building on your community's strengths.

It may be beneficial to focus on the barriers to access, perception of availability, and accessibility information you have gathered throughout this process. Valuable insights can be found regarding gaps in third spaces opportunities for youth and opportunities to remedy any hurdles that prevent youth from accessing these offerings.

Overlaps	Gaps	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Two movie night events happening on the same day every week	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Limited space for third space offerings. No community center or youth center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Create a community center or gathering space for youth

Step 4: Taking Action

Strategic Planning

The findings of your asset map can be a helpful addition to your community's strategic plans. Using the information you have gathered, decide on a few third space-related projects you can implement to work toward your community's strategic plan or overall goals. See the next page for a tool to help develop action items and steps to turn your findings and goals into action. For example, if your asset map shows a gap in a safe, good quality place for teens to gather during after school hours, then a project might be to work toward creating teen center. As a result, a teen center might be added to your community's strategic plan. Again, the availability and accessibility information can be invaluable in understanding the needs of your community is surrounding third space and how your team can work towards an environment where all youth can access third space offerings




Strategizing Tool

Goals/Opportunities	Action Items to Achieve their Goals	Lead/point person	Timeline	Measures of Success	Challenges	How to Respond
Create a community garden for youth.	-Find a space -Get a group signed up to take care of it -Get plants	-Brianne Smith	-March 15 th process starts -Garden set and growing by May	- How many youth volunteer - How many youths get fresh vegetables	- Recruiting and safety precautions	- Recruit virtually - Provide masks, limit amount of people in garden at once



Use this chart to create action items and steps to implement the goals and opportunities you found from analyzing your assets.

Step 4: Taking Action

Advocacy

-  The results of this asset mapping process can also help in advocating for third space activities, places, and support. The asset profiles and analysis can be used as data on community needs, gaps, and opportunities. Therefore, this information can be helpful when applying for grants or making the case for additional third space support, funding, and sustainability.
-  Vermont Afterschool's Vermont Youth Project collects survey data from five communities to better understand what is going on with youth right now. Once the results of survey comes back, communities are more informed on what youth need and which protective factors need to be strengthened. The data is used as real time evidence for strategic plans and advocacy efforts regarding youth needs and creating a healthy, safe environment for youth.
-  Similar to how communities and Vermont Afterschool can use VYP data to show the importance of protective factors and healthy, safe youth spaces; your community asset map can be used to show the importance of third space opportunities. You will have quantitative and qualitative data regarding the third space, perception of availability, and accessibility. Use this information as leverage when trying to advocate for additional opportunities, close accessibility gaps, secure grant funding, or when finding a new space for youth to gather.

Building Partnerships

-  Finally, you can use your asset map as a resource to assist in networking between organizations and individuals. During your analysis, you might realize organizations, associations, or individuals may benefit from being connected to other organizations or associations. This can create new partnerships, new projects or programs, and help expand opportunities.
-  Additionally, through this process your coalition may find and connect with organizations, associations, businesses, or individuals who may be interested in future partnerships.

Step 5: Maintaining the Map

Maintaining the Community Map



Google Maps allows you to save your map and come back to it later to add or update anything that changes. If you want your map to continue to be helpful and effective, it is important to maintain your mapping efforts over time.



Evaluate the process your community undertook and consider what went well and what could be changed to make the process more effective next time.



Hold meetings and send out surveys 1 or 2 times a year to keep receiving updated information and opinions from the community. If you feel the map has become outdated and your community has changed significantly, run this process again to ensure the information is still useful.



It is important as a group that you all agree on where the map will live and who has access to it. Make sure you all designate a point person who is responsible for maintaining the map and continuing the process throughout the years.

Community Asset Profiling Toolkit

About the Toolkit



The toolkit accompanying this guidebook includes all the charts above plus a survey you can distribute throughout the community and during meetings.



The goal of these tools is to assist your community in identifying and analyzing assets that operate within the third space. We want to come away from this process with a quantitative and qualitative understanding of the third space in your community.



Reach out to Vermont Afterschool for support or assistance during the asset profiling process. We can answer questions, help facilitate meetings, and assist in mapping the assets.

Tool 1: Asset Mapping

Tool 1: Asset Mapping. In the left-hand column, list the asset. Then in the other relevant columns, describe how the asset operates in the third space.

Community Assets Operating in the Third Space (list organizations, associations, projects, programs, initiatives, etc.)	Purpose/Mission of Asset	Services, Activities, or Skills Provided to Youth	Target Population/ Number and Age Group of Youths Served	Strengths of Asset	Barriers to Access (cost, transportation, unaware of asset, staffing, waiting lists, etc.)	Hours and Days Asset is Open

Tool 2: Community Survey

Tool 2: Community survey questions.

What are your roles in the community (youth, student, parent/caregiver, community member, business, organization, etc)

How often do you or people in your household participate in out-of-school (third space) opportunities?

What out-of-school time opportunities do you participate in?

Are out-of-school time opportunities current available and accessible to you and people in your household?

What out-of-school time opportunities are not available or accessible, but you would like to participate in?

How can the community improve the quality and accessibility of out-of-school time offerings in your community?

What do you consider are the 10 most important assets in your community and how often do you use these assets? (Organizations, groups, individuals, businesses, community centers, etc?)

Tool 3: Reviewing the Findings

Tool 3: Reviewing the findings. Use this tool to identify overlaps, gaps, and opportunities.

Overlaps	Gaps	Opportunities

Tool 4: Strategizing

Tool 4: Strategizing Tool. Use this chart to create action items and steps to implement the goals and opportunities you found from analyzing your assets.

Goals/Opportunities	Action Items to Achieve their Goals	Lead/point person	Timeline	Measures of Success	Challenges	How to Respond



Strengthening Programs. Empowering Youth.

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