

Listening Through the Walls: Vacant Lot Planning

Objectives

- Students will engage with community organizers and urban planners.
- Students will utilize architectural/urban planning symbols and techniques when drawing a plan.
- Students will identify needs in their neighborhoods.
- Students will create plans for actual vacant lot spaces in their neighborhood.

Grade Levels: 6th-8th

Vocabulary and Terms

Architecture, urban planning, community organizer, urban planner,

Resources

Materials

Large printouts of actual vacant lots (found in Google Maps), pencils

Procedures

1. If possible, bring in urban planners, community organizers and activists to talk with students about the process of planning vacant land. Our students heard from a local government employee who was part of the planning process for vacant land near their school. A community organizer/activist also joined that day to discuss the role of citizens in the decisions that are made about their neighborhoods.
2. Students work in groups to discuss the needs of their neighborhoods: what is missing? Places to buy food? Physical fitness centers? Recreation centers? Shopping? Leisure? Banks? Etc.
3. Students start to create sketches to work through their ideas for a vacant lot in their neighborhood.
4. Students learn several planning symbols that are used to depict buildings, vegetation, transportation, etc. from several perspectives.
5. Students use planning symbols to draw on top of photos of vacant lots. They can use words as well to describe their ideas.

