Community Mapping
Geography 380, Summer 2019

Project Report for Gonzales Neighbourhood Association
_____

**Team member names: Julia Carr, Destany Crane, Isaac Dekker, Bilal Mohamed, Erin Springinotic
Date: June 22 2019**

1. **Introduction and Goals of the Project**

   ● Students from UVic's GEOG 380 Community Mapping course worked with the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association to gather community feedback on three issues: biking and walking routes, density planning, and greenspace. Community feedback on these three issues was recorded and plotted on Google My Maps.

   ● The Gonzales Neighbourhood Association felt that the City of Victoria's plans for the Gonzales neighbourhood did not align with the community's needs. In particular, the City of Victoria's 2017 community plan was met with criticism from the neighbourhood, and it has since been put on hold. Our goal was to collect community input on the three issues that were highlighted as most important in hopes to inform future planning in the Gonzales area.

   ● Goals were to gather community feedback on bike routes, density planning, and greenspace/ecology. The hope is that this feedback can be used to create a community green map to inform and enhance future community planning. Feedback would be used to populate a community map. The method of community mapping switched from Green Maps to Google My Maps as the project progressed.

   ● Goals of the project were defined through collaboration between the community partner (Suzanne Rautio of the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association) and GEOG 380 Community Mapping students at an initial meeting on May 23 2019.

   ● Links and background references used were:

     Canadian Urban Institute. (2017). Visualizing Density. Retrieved from
     https://static1.squarespace.com/static/546bbd2ae4b077803c592197/t/5910d3edff7c50491ece6ad9/1494275113214/CUIPublication.Visualizing%2BDensity.2017.pdf

     Victoria City Council. (2002). Gonzales Neighbourhood Community Plan. Retrieved from
     https://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Planning~Development/Development~Services/Documents/neighbourhoods-gonzales-plan.pdf

2. **Methods**

   ● Community mapping methods used were Google My Maps and a modified version of the community mapping game from the UVic Community Mapping Collaboratory. Of Alix Flavelle's methods described in "Mapping Our Land", the remote sensing technique was used along with sketch mapping. Large satellite images of Gonzales were laid out on tables for community members to place stickers on or draw onto with chalk pens on transparencies.

     Students from GEOG 380 collaborated with the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association to host a community mapping event on June 1 2019 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. During this time, over 70 community members attended and gave feedback on the three issues: bike routes, density planning, and ecology. Feedback was gathered through written surveys, notes taken during discussions, questionnaires, stickers with

corresponding feedback, and drawing on provided mylar over base maps of the neighbourhood. After the event, data was compiled into Google Docs and Google Sheets, and plotted in Google My Maps.

● Programs and applications used were Google Docs and Google Sheets to compile data, and Google My Maps to plot data.

● One challenge we faced was that since some of our data was not spatially explicit, we had difficulty figuring out what to do with it. We decided to put the data that wasn't spatially explicit in a separate document.

3. **Mapping Outcomes**

● The June 1 Community Mapping Event had a large and vocal turnout (70+ people).

  o Ecology findings - A large base map of the Gonzales Neighbourhood was provided with a proposed tree corridor. Community members proposed alterations to the tree corridor, plotted trees of importance and endangered plants and trees on the large base map. The majority of attending community members were in favour of the proposed tree corridor. From community feedback, the GEOG 380 mapping group plotted the following in Google My Maps: proposed tree corridor, community proposed alterations to corridor, ecologically significant areas that should be protected, non ecologically significant areas that should be protected, significant trees, trees that should be removed, and trees that have been removed.

  o Cycling/walking findings - A base map of the Gonzales Neighbourhood was provided with proposed bike lanes, existing bike lanes and routes, and off-street pathways. Members of the community commented on whether or not they supported the proposed bike routes, and denoted which areas should or shouldn't be included in the bike network. They also designated which cycling and walking routes they frequented and would like to see protected from things like development. Opinions around bike lanes and bike routes differed greatly between community members depending on their personal preferences and needs. Overall most community members wanted the neighbourhood to be safer for walkers and cyclists. Off-street pathways and greenways were popular for both cyclists and walkers and were of high priority for community members.

  o Density findings - A base map of the Gonzales Neighbourhood was provided with proposed areas of increased density. These were areas where apartments, townhouses, and multiplexes were proposed to be built for discussion purposes. Additionally, a layer showing all neighbourhood lots greater than 8000 square feet was displayed to show residents what properties could potentially be available for redevelopment under the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association's proposal in response to the City of Victoria's proposed 2017 neighbourhood plan where similar redevelopment was proposed for lots greater than 5000 or 6000 square feet. Members of the community submitted written comments and engaged in discussions. There was a wide range of opinions represented. However, two vocal majorities stood out: one group opposed any increased density in Gonzales and the other believed moderate density increases should be achieved through the building of suites and carriage houses, renovating large, older homes into multiple units, and townhouses or apartments no higher than three or four storeys. Other common views were that character restrictions should be put in place for new builds and more thought needed to be put into infrastructure requirements for any population increase. Many people were frustrated and concerned about parking and traffic. Additionally, concerns were expressed about environmental impacts of new building construction.

● We presented our findings as three separate themes in Google My Maps - one for each issue (greenspace, biking and walking routes, and density planning), along with a printed copy of each map highlighting some of the community members' comments. Data collected through questionnaires were organized and entered into a document. Finally our data was presented in a Google Slides during the community mapping conference.

● The GEOG 380 Community Mapping group has created three Google My Maps on the three themes: bike routes, density planning, and ecology. Ownership of these maps will be passed on to the community partner. A hard copy of each map will be provided to the community partner as well.

- These products will help communicate what the goals of the community are for future planning of the Gonzales Neighbourhood and hopefully inform decision-making that is better suited for the community.

- To best engage with the products in the future, the community partner will need a basic understanding of Google My Maps. A tutorial for Google My Maps is available online.

4. **Discussion**

- What did your analysis show?

    o Ecology Analysis - community members who attended the June 1, 2019 community mapping event were generally in favor of the proposed greenway or tree corridor. Community members proposed modifications to the corridor as well to include areas that they saw as having significant tree cover. Greenspace was identified by community members as an important aspect of community identity.

    o Cycling & Walking Analysis - community members who attended the June , 2019 community mapping event had many differing opinions on cycling and walking in the Gonzales area. People had contrasting views on which streets should be more accessible to bicycles, the City's proposed bike routes, and the most effective ways to make Gonzales safer for cyclists and walkers. Off-street pathways, bike paths, and greenways were most popular with cyclists. Off-street pathways and greenways were also popular with walkers, as well as back lanes.

    o Density Analysis - community members who attended the June 1, 2019 community mapping event had many different opinions on density in the Gonzales area. Many community members opposed any increased density, citing not enough infrastructure and loss of the neighbourhood's identity as main concerns. Others were in favour of moderate increases to density as long as infrastructure, particularly parking, is addressed and the character of the neighbourhood is maintained. Character, set-backs, and on-site parking requirements for new builds were popular suggestions for making new developments attractive to the community.

- Our project is relevant because Victoria is a growing city with a lot of development happening all over the place. Many of these projects do not adequately take into account the wants and needs of the surrounding community even though they are the ones feeling the impacts. The impact our project could have is that it could inform decision-making around the Gonzales area. The issues that emerged from this project are not unique to Gonzales; neighbourhoods everywhere wrestle with these same problems, so it is important that as a society we work toward better ways of dealing with them. Bringing community mapping principles into city planning is crucial to ensure that all voices are heard and true solutions can be found.

5. **Assessment Plan**

- Short and long term impacts of this project may be assessed on the basis of being implemented by the community in talks with the City of Victoria.

- The GEOG 380 Community Mapping team will consider the project a success if data and maps produced are used by the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association in future endeavors, and if future Community Mapping classes build off of our project.

- Future groups of community mapping students could measure the success of our project by following up with the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association to see what their view of the project was. The value of having impacts assessed by a future group of students would open the opportunities for more perspectives.

6. **Recommendations and next steps**

- The group taking over from us next term should be aware of planning requirements for the Community Mapping Event. Data gathering should be practiced and collected in a uniform way to make analysis easier.

- To continue with this project, community partners will need access to Google My Maps and all data collected. The community partner might also consider linking findings of this project to their website for the community to view.

- One recommendation for further community engagement might be holding future Community Mapping Events in venues that would gather feedback from a different audience (ex. Glengarry Hospital).

  In terms of the density planning, one recommendation would be to examine the approaches that other similar communities used to deal with high density situations. For instance, the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI), from research to action: building capacity for healthy communities, building and sustaining healthy urban development had conducted case studies throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe area that addressed driving factors that make density work to promote complete communities. According to CUI:
  - "Higher densities don't have to mean overcrowding and congestion"
  - "Good design and appropriate zoning can introduce density that is not intrusive".
  - Determine and encourage understanding of "attributes of complete communities to create vibrant, inclusive, desirable places for people to live and work".

  It is important that community members involvement and engagement is necessary to incorporated for further discussion on planning.

7. **Attachments**

Please see attachment "June 1st Mapping Event - Community Members Input - Density Planning"
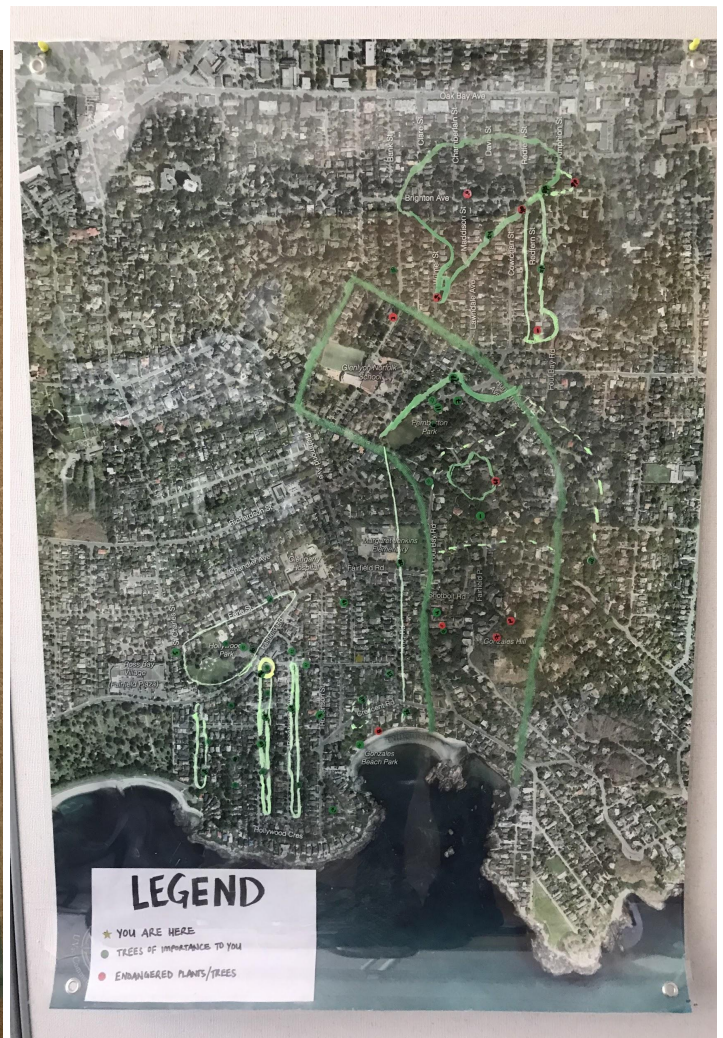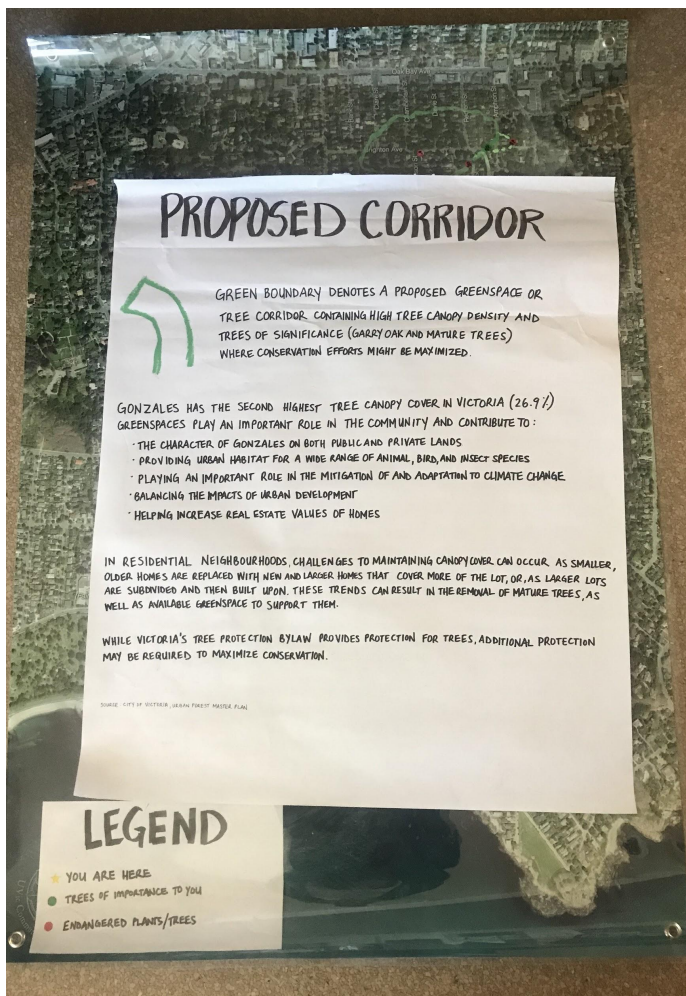https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YuFpvCzPYYLswbYKx_BLC9cS0bEzT_rzz0k1CJuIOEw/edit?usp=sharing

Please see attachment "Community Feedback from June 1 2019 Mapping Event - Ecology"
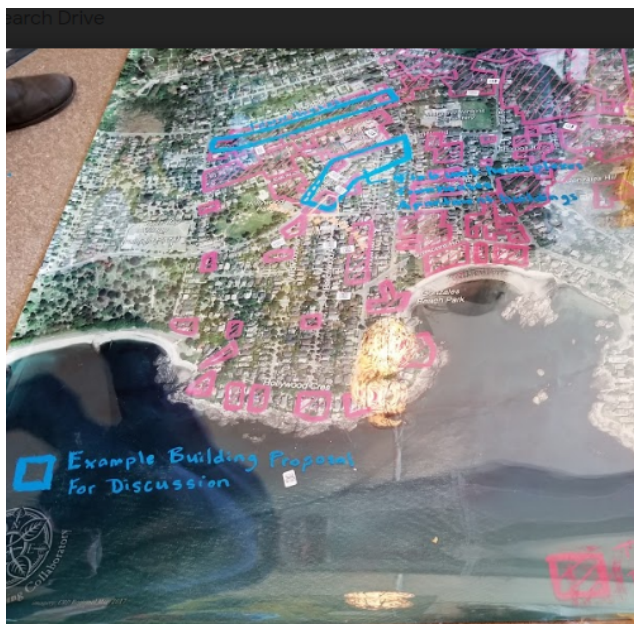https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MF_hAjToJAdCjq7K-8uq2qWbe_i6AxnYkehs2LwgVMY/edit?usp=sharing

Please see attachment "Community Feedback from June 1 2019 Mapping Event - Cycling & Walking"
https://docs.google.com/document/d/10YXqjVtF4MbCzytuLwxgaETaRLCXV2NDpiGaPXxBCsQ/edit?usp=sharing

Ecology base maps for with community input from June 1st, 2019 mapping event.

Density base maps from June 1st, 2019 mapping event

Cycling & walking base maps with community input from mapping event on June 1st, 2019.

8. **Acknowledgements**

- We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen speaking peoples on whose traditional territory we stand and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSANEC peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

- The GEOG 380 community mapping team would like to thank Susanne Rautio, Virginia Errick, and the Steering Committee from the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association, Lister Farrar, Thomas Munson, St. Jean Baptiste Paroisse Francaise, Ken Josephson, Teresa Dawson, and all Gonzales community members who came out to participate in the June Community Mapping Event.