



Commercial District Asset Mapping

POLYTECHNIC HEIGHTS MAIN STREET

Fort Worth, Texas
August 7, 2023

Dionne Baux
Vice President of Urban
Development
National Main Street Center



Contents

- About the Main Street Approach..... 3
- Executive Summary..... 4
- Session Overview and Takeaways: 6
- Main Street’s Approach to Asset Mapping – Whole Assets Approach..... 8
- WHOLE ASSETS MAPPING: *GROUP EXERCISE* 9
- Appendix: 13

About the Main Street Approach

The Main Street Approach™ is the National Main Street Center's framework for community revitalization. Centered around Four Points (see below), the Approach offers community-based revitalization initiatives with a strategic, adaptable framework for downtown transformation that is tailored to local conditions. The Main Street Approach underwent a refresh in 2015 to become more responsive to economic context, strategy-driven, and outcome-oriented.



Every community has a unique set of place-based assets, anchors, and consumer markets that contribute to a healthy business district. Leveraging those assets through a targeted economic development strategy requires a thorough understanding of the marketplace. One of the best ways to help retain existing businesses and recruit new ones is to prepare information about your existing customer base and better understand potential new customer segments that could be served by your business district. Your local commercial revitalization program provides an important benefit by developing a comprehensive analysis of the district market that aligns community vision and consumer data with strategies that drive the organization's revitalization programming.

Executive Summary

On Saturday, May 6, 2023, Southeast Fort Worth Inc. in partnership with the City of Fort Worth's department of Economic Development invited Polytechnic local stakeholders to participate in a Whole Assets Mapping session hosted by the Neighborhood Services division of the National Main Street Center (NMSC). The visit is sponsored by the City of Fort Worth Dept of Economic Development as part of the City's pilot Main Street program to support the development of two Main Street programs in the City of Fort Worth.

The session, led by Dionne Baux, Vice President of Urban Development, guided a cross-section of **forty** community leaders through a community asset mapping exercise to 1) identify Polytechnic's assets from district stakeholders' perspectives, 2) highlight how to best incorporate these assets into Main Street programming, and 3) provide an overview of the Main Street approach to foster excitement and commitment to be involved with the program.

The following learning goals were the session's main emphasis:

1. Recognize the benefits of and justification for the Whole Asset Approach in the development of corridor districts (Main Street programming)
2. Identify important resources (such as social, economic, and physical resources) along the local commercial corridor.
3. Use partnerships to discover opportunities for Main Street programming inclusion and to fill in any gaps.
4. Inspire enthusiasm and dedication for participating more in the Polytechnic Main Street activities.

We would like to express our gratitude to the following attendees for volunteering their time and skills throughout the training session.

Name	Organization
Akua Jones	City of Fort Worth
Alan Lieberht	Texas Wesleyan University
Alex Jimenez	East Fort Worth, Inc.
Ana Alvarez	City of Fort Worth
Ann Zadeh	Design Fort Worth
Christine Johnson	Nearby Polytechnic Heights Resident
David Howard	EmpowerMe
David Saenz	Fort Worth ISD

Debby Stein	Riverside Arts District
Debra Hunt	Grace Methodist Metroplex
Dexter Sykes	City of Fort Worth
Dr. P. Roberts Harris	Nearby Polytechnic Heights Resident
Drayone Jones	Polytechnic Heights Resident
Eduardo Martinez	Regional Hispanic Contractors Association
Ekua Anyanful	EM Wealth Management
Jennifer Clemmons	Texas South
Juanita Rischer	City of Fort Worth & Arlington Not Sure
Kamesha Kay West	FUSE Fellow
Kimberly Caldwell	Jewels Comfort Keeper
Kristine McDonald	Polytechnic Heights Resident
Leon Rischer	City of Fort Worth & Arlington Not Sure
Linda McSwain	Polytechnic Heights Resident
Louis Armstrong	Polytechnic Heights Resident
Manny Rodriguez	RJ Williams & Company RE LLC
Marty Sharp	Polytechnic Heights Resident
Mia Moss	Black Coffee
Monty J. Sharp	Polytechnic Heights Resident
Netty Matthews	Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce
Paul Kerpoe	East Fort Worth, Inc.
Phil Dupler	Trinity Metro

Reba Henry	Polytechnic Heights Main Street America
Renice Harris	Polytechnic Heights Resident
Sameer Vaidya	Texas Wesleyan University
Sharon Armstrong	Stop Six Neighborhood Association
Stacy E. Marshall	Southeast Fort Worth, Inc.
Tara Maldonado-Wilson	Nearby Polytechnic Heights Resident
Telemachus Evans	City of Fort Worth
Valerie Mitchell	Polytechnic Heights Resident
Veronica Tolley	Cook Children’s Health
Willie Powell	City of Fort Worth

Session Overview and Takeaways:

With the group, the facilitator started the day by defining asset mapping and outlining its advantages for corridor revitalization, giving a general overview of the different asset mapping techniques employed, and leading the group through a complete asset mapping exercise—Main Street's method of asset mapping.

Asset mapping is a useful and pleasant method for finding more about a community. Participants can think favorably about where they live, work, and play because to this technique. Groups are pushed to think about how outsiders could perceive and interact with the neighborhood.

The key advantages of asset mapping are:

- There are significantly more assets in a community than most people know.
- It is inclusive in how it evaluates assets, including public, community, and private assets.
- It promotes diverse and inclusive participation.
- It promotes varied and inclusive representation.
- When working to revitalize a commercial district, understanding its assets are important.

According to researchers at the University of Guelph in Canada, there are three fundamentally unique approaches to community asset mapping.

1. Whole Assets Approach (the tool Main Street implements):

This strategy considers every element that influences how people perceive the resources in and around their local community, as well as the area around them, include the natural, social, economic, and service elements of the local community system. Although it takes longer, whole asset mapping is thorough and can give a comprehensive map of the community and its support systems.



Key Steps to the Whole Assets approach:

- Resources that support assets
- Threats to assets
- Opportunities associated with assets
- Strategies to sustain assets

2. The Storytelling Approach: The community's social history is produced through this method. It shows how to combine assets that are frequently buried or dormant with other assets to create new ones. A story will frequently focus on human potential and the individuals who made it happen — those with a sense of purpose, vision, leadership, vigor, and loyalty to their community.

Key steps to the Storytelling approach

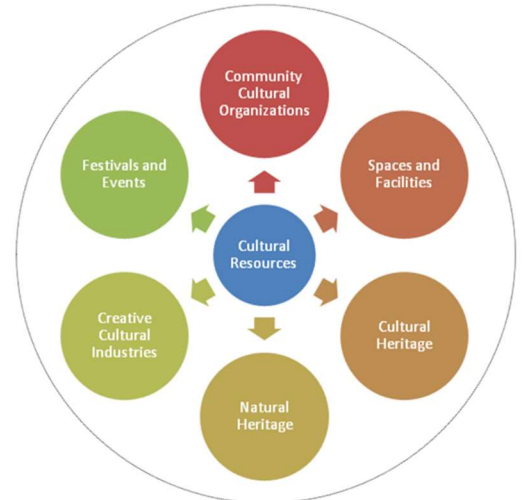
- Identify assets



3. **The Heritage Approach:** This method creates a picture (map or list) of the built-in or natural physical characteristics that give the town its unique character. In addition to architectural characteristics like a historic building, a longtime favorite coffee shop, or a museum, assets include natural heritage features like rivers, parks, and beaches.

Key steps to the approach

- Identify assets



Main Street’s Approach to Asset Mapping – Whole Assets Approach

*The **Whole Assets Approach** as advised by NMSC due to the dynamics of urban district revitalization. Participants are led through an activity for that is based on the ideas represented by the **Whole Assets Approach**.*

The Whole Assets Approach, as its name suggests, takes a far more comprehensive approach to asset mapping. It identifies resources across a wide range of potential outcomes. The Whole Assets Approach enables a variety of community members to highlight what they value in terms of the social, economic, and physical aspects of the defined area being evaluated from their own perspectives. Inputs from the Whole Assets Approach can help market understanding by identifying the most crucial assets. As a result, this asset prioritization can help create Transformation Strategies by identifying important customer and commercial niches for the district.

The Whole Assets Approach considers every asset that might be present in a society. For the purposes of this process, these are categorized and given the following names: **natural** (such as environment, parks, and water), **built** (physical things we create, such as infrastructure), **social** (the social aspect of living in the community, which may include clubs, social activities, gathering spaces), **economic** (jobs, significant employers, tourism features, and a diverse economy that people and communities rely on for their livelihoods), and **service** (such as health and educational services).

Summary Lessons on Asset Mapping

Here are three key points to remember about asset mapping:

- Asset mapping is a positive, inclusive approach to district development.
- Asset mapping combines community interests and creates “common cause.”
- Asset mapping is easy and fun to do.

WHOLE ASSETS MAPPING: *GROUP EXERCISE*

The facilitator requested each participant to express what they considered to be their greatest assets to get to know one another before the activity.

The following is a list the group shared were their greatest assets in their lives:

- Phil: Job and Home
- Mia: Self
- Ann: Community and consensus building
- Kenny: Family, education, connector, and problem-solver
- Ana: Family, faith, and service
- Alan: Family, community he works with at Texas Wesleyan
- Samir: Family and students
- Telemachus: Freedom
- Alex: 40 years of building relationships in Fort Worth
- Reba: Supportive family, faith in God, hope, and people she has come to know over her lifetime.
- Veronica: Health (medical, physical, and health of the community)
- Paul: Wife
- Mr. Jones: Finding a purpose.
- Stacy: Health and the ability to understand /reason.
- Jennifer: Gifts given from the kingdom to assist others.
- Leon: Children and church
- Juanita: Church and family
- Kimberly: Family, communities (dis-advantaged and re-entry community)
- Debra: Husband of 49 years
- Renice: Family, religion
- David: Intentionality, service
- Nettie: People she connects with
- Kay: Family and service to the community
- Monty: Freedom, neighborhood
- Debbie: Family, community work
- Kristine: Family and Willingness to serve the Fort Worth Community

The facilitator transitioned the group to begin identifying what they saw as the top assets in the community utilizing Main Street’s Four Points to illustrate which point each asset belonged to.

Main Street Four Point (s)	<p>ORGANIZATION Build leadership and strong organizational capacity Ensure broad community engagement Forge partnerships across sectors (Service)</p>	<p>PROMOTION Market the district’s defining assets Communicate unique features through storytelling Support buy-local experience (Social)</p>	<p>DESIGN Create an inviting, inclusive atmosphere Celebrate culture, historic character Foster accessible people-centered public spaces (Built & Natural)</p>	<p>ECONOMIC VITALITY Build a diverse economic base Catalyze smart new investment Cultivate strong entrepreneurship eco-system (Economic)</p>
Whole Assets Definitions	<p>SERVICE Anchor institutions (i.e., health, educational, social service, city government, etc.)</p>	<p>SOCIAL The social aspects of living in the community.</p>	<p>BUILT Physical things we build including infrastructure Natural Such as the environment and water</p>	<p>ECONOMIC Jobs and a varied economy that people and communities draw on for their livelihoods</p>
Polytechnic Main Street	<p>Re-entry groups work to lower recidivism and alter the narrative in a way that is more supportive of the organizations that provide services to this population and the persons seeking assistance.</p> <p>Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elementary - Junior High - Poly High - Texas Wesleyan University <p>Not for profit or social organizations located in the neighborhood.</p>	<p>Top access to highways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 820 / 30 / 35 / 287 / 20 <p>Strong individuals /organizations committed to development of the Poly Main Street area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Black coffee - People living outside of the district. - New economic / development opportunities - Focus on public schools 	<p>Education resources about incentives available to historic homes.</p> <p>Parks and views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Titas Paulsel Park - Sycamore Community Park <p>Historic buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poly theater <p>Top access to highways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 820 / 30 / 35 / 287 / 20 <p>Improved infrastructure on Rosedale.</p>	<p>Urban Village</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proximity - Multi-developments - Improved infrastructure on Rosedale - Projects aligned on E. Berry <p>Churches and Businesses</p> <p>Opportunities for redevelopment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low cost for real estate - Location and accessibility <p>Poly Hardware</p>

The group divided into four teams based on Main Street's four-point approach and worked together to highlight and discuss opportunities to sustain these assets and threats that may jeopardize fully realizing the community's assets after identifying and celebrating Polytechnic Main Street community assets.

Opportunities:

- Create a circular economy.
- Opportunity to construct in an affordable way - rebuild / renovate at an affordable cost.
 - Churches, commercial buildings (variety housing)
- Create opportunity to work with people to purchase affordable properties (e.g., down payment assistance and loan terms)
- Affordable Housing connect with Housing Channel (downpayment assistance programs)
- Opportunity to make zoning changes for compatible housing and commercial.
 - Create design standards.
- Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFI) Friendly Fort Worth (e.g., Housing, small businesses.)
- Opportunity to advance education.
 - Developing the type of programs that are necessary to grow the workforce in the neighborhood.
- Opportunity to educate residents on zoning and permits. Connect with city on department 101's on community owned assets.
- Community engagement: get everyone involved!
- Acknowledge the history of the area:
 - Systematic racism and crimes that were placed on African Americans and Hispanics in the Polytechnic community.
- Opportunity to work with youth in the area.
 - Bridge relationships w/27.5-year-olds (largest age group in the community)
- Community can educate itself on they systematic barriers that have plagued the community by reading the following books:
 - Color of Law
 - Color of Money
 - Systematic Racism 101

Threats:

- Outside investors purchase land and sell or rent properties at a high price!
- Lack of communication with the community (e.g., no door to door canvassing to get community members involved).
- No newsletter or website to promote what is happening on the Main Street and/or how to get involved.
- Residential and commercial displacement
- Not enough college-age kids by 2030 to support small universities (e.g., Baby Bust)
- Businesses are expected to change their structures.
 - Micro -certifications
 - Impact on Universities if they don't evolve.
- Lack of internationality to support small businesses.
- Lack of high-speed internet in the community -infrastructure.
 - Youth in Polytechnic are not connected to the internet.

- People over 50 years old in Polytechnic area are not connected to the internet.
- Overall community apathy
- Lack of education and low – income residents.
- Zoning policies
 - Community understanding of zoning policies and how they impact them and the community.
- Residential and commercial properties tax threats.
 - Community understanding on how to appeal their taxes.
- There is not a homeowner group to help people.
- Other developments in other communities are pulling away consumers to spend in other communities.

The facilitator provided a summary of the evening activities, thanked the group for sharing their enthusiasm and encouraged them to continue using this process to further its Main Street programming and partnership building work. This resulted in attendees selecting Main Street Committees in which they could offer their resources, connections, expertise, and time to move forward these efforts and other Main Street programming led by Southeast Fort Worth, Inc.

Please see below committees’ attendees elected to join:

Main Street Four Point (s)	ORGANIZATION Build leadership and strong organizational capacity Ensure broad community engagement Forge partnerships across sectors <i>(Service)</i>	PROMOTION Market the district’s defining assets Communicate unique features through storytelling Support buy-local experience <i>(Social)</i>	DESIGN Create an inviting, inclusive atmosphere Celebrate culture, historic character Foster accessible people-centered public spaces <i>(Built & Natural)</i>	ECONOMIC VITALITY Build a diverse economic base Catalyze smart new investment Cultivate strong entrepreneurship eco-system <i>(Economic)</i>
Committee Members	Kimberly Ms. Jones Paul Debra Samir Alex Manny Mr. Jones	Kimberly Mia David Ms. Jones Kenny Debbie	Monty Mia Akua Ann	Fort Worth East Area board Netty Paul Mr. Jones David Howard Kenny Kay

Appendix:

- Participant Agenda
- Slide Deck
- Asset Mapping Guide and Directions



National Main Street Center
53 West Jackson Blvd. Suite 350
Chicago, IL 60604
mainstreet.org



**MAIN STREET
AMERICA®**

Nationally recognized.
Locally powered.™