

Option 4: Map existing businesses

Definition



When youngsters want to identify the needs of the community, a possible way to approach that is to map the businesses that are, at the moment, located within the neighbourhood. Youngsters can brainstorm individually, in group amongst themselves or with people from the community. The main goal is to understand what kind of businesses are sufficiently present in the neighbourhood and what kind of businesses the community is lacking.

Using this method can be helpful because it is highly visual and forces the youngsters to have an overall picture of the community. Moreover, the skills of reading a map will increase. The disadvantage of this method is that it is quite time consuming, isn't suited for larger groups and it doesn't allow a lot of interaction with the people from within the community.

Preparation

- Define your neighbourhood: what do the youngsters see as the community? You can either work with what is your municipality or commune. Another way to approach what the community is, is by having a brainstorm and to try to define what the youngsters see as their community. Often there are certain unofficial borders, such as railroads or rivers.
- To map existing businesses, the first step is to have a map of the neighbourhood. This can be a print of google maps, a drawing of the floor plan (based on google maps) or even a scale model if the youngsters want to be creative. You can also use www.geopunt.be (in Belgium) or make a 3D or power map in Excel. It can be something like this:

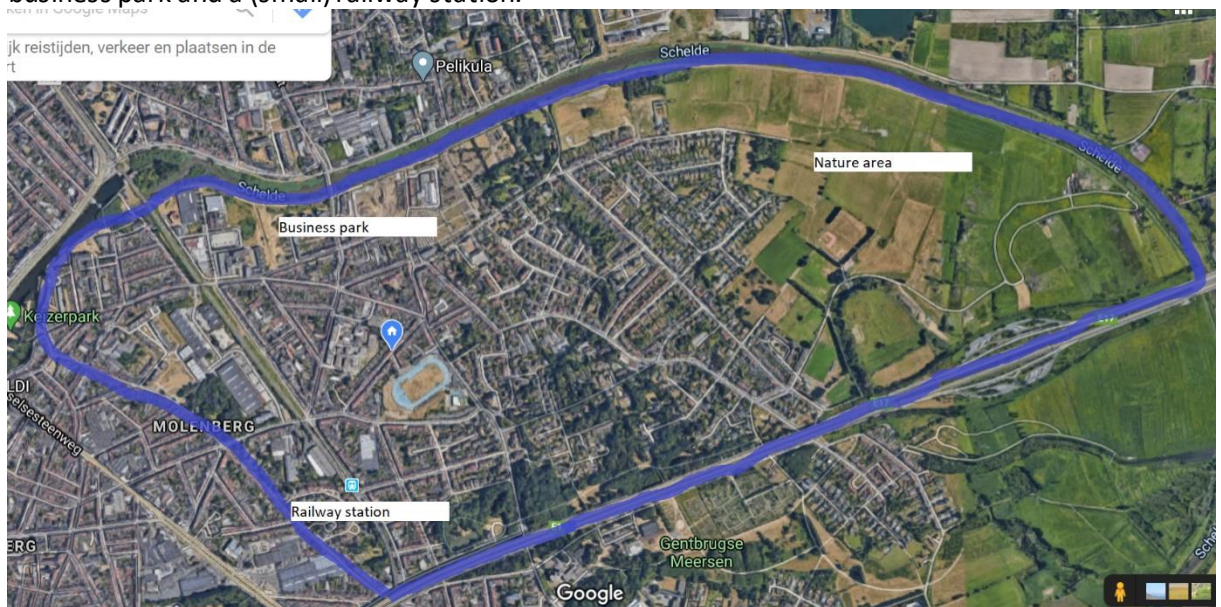


- The next step is to collect data about what kind of businesses there are in the community. If youngsters already have a business idea, they can limit themselves to businesses with a similar product or service and to businesses that can be potential partners. If youngsters

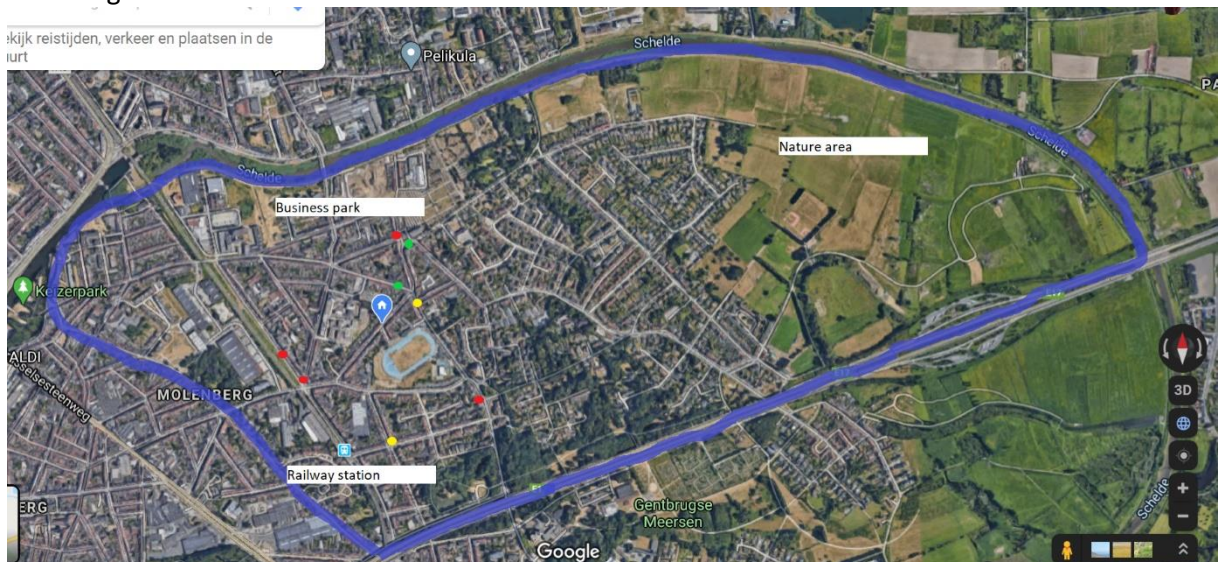
don't have a business idea already, they can opt to collect data about all businesses. The youngsters can collect information by walking in the neighbourhood and taking notes and pictures of every business. You can also do desk research, simply by using google and looking up the businesses that are in the community. Ideally, you use a combination of both methods.

Execution

- Place the map on a table. Try to identify important locations on the map such as parcs, railway stations, schools, ...
For my example, the most important locations are a nature area (with a lot of walkers), a business park and a (small) railway station.



- Use markers or thumbtacks to appoint each location on the map where there is a business. Ideally, you can use different colours for different kind of business. For example: the red dots here are restaurants and coffee bars, the yellow ones are bakeries' and the green ones are butchers.



- Based on the data you have collected during the preparation, you can now appoint to each location what kind of business is located there, is it a bakery? A restaurant? Do you have a bit more information about it? Price class? Target customer?
- Are their area's it the community with certain problems? If so, mark that on the map.
- If your map is complete, try to answer some questions during a brainstorm. Possible questions are:
 - Which roads are having lots of businesses?
 - Are there roads with no businesses?
 - Are their maybe more businesses close to the important locations? If not, what kind of business could be useful their?
 - Are their problems in the neighbourhood?
 - What could be possible solutions for the problems in the neighbourhood?
 - What kind of businesses are there plenty of in the neighbourhood? Do you maybe have multiple bakery's for example?
 - If you already have a business idea in mind: where are your potential competitors situated? Where are your possible partners? For example, if you want to open up a hamburger food truck, you can buy bread at a local bakery. Where are your potential buyers?
 - What kind of businesses is the community missing? (If you don't have a lot of inspiration, there are certain lists on the internet that you can use such as <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/201588> for example)

If I look at my example, I can see that most of the businesses are located near the church and the railway station. There is a huge part of the community were they aren't any businesses. There aren't a lot of restaurants located close by the business park. The business park is relatively new, and the restaurants that were in the neighbourhood haven't really played into that opportunity for example by offering lunch. There were often people, working in the business park, eating lunch in the streets and looking for restaurants. Now recently two new restaurants opened up close by the business park, offering lunch, and they are always fully booked during lunch hour. Another thing that comes to mind when looking at the map is that there is a huge nature area without a bar or restaurant close by. It would be really interesting if someplace could open up close by the nature area because there are a lot of walkers there as it is part of a walking route.

Possible online variation:

It is possible to map your neighbourhood also using an online application.

The program that could be used is Google my maps. It is free and it can be easily used to map a specific area.

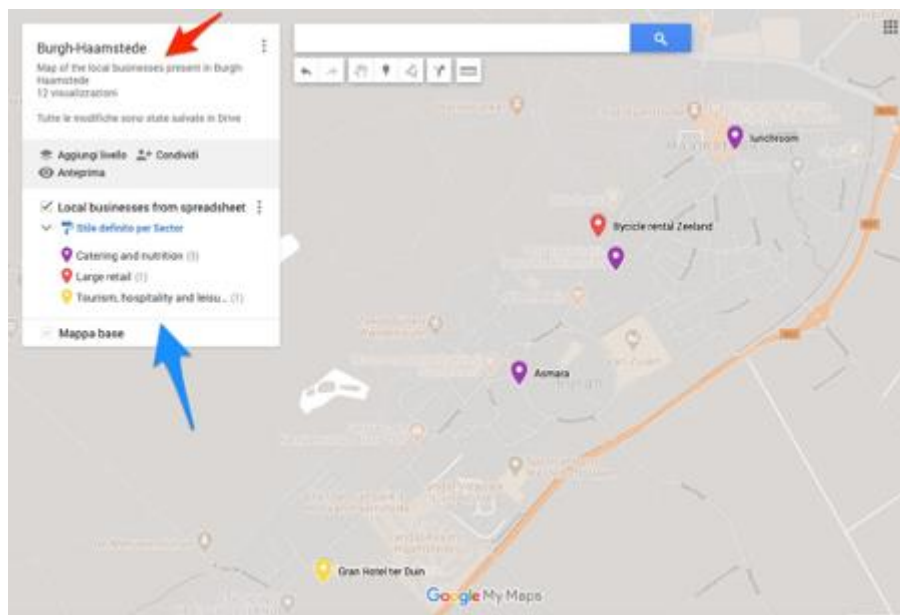
The specifics remain the same as before, but the overview is different.

In this case, by using a simple spreadsheet with the key information that are needed for the mapping, you can create a map.

Steps that need to be taken (you can also use power maps in Excel):

- Prepare an excel file with all the necessary information of the businesses: name, type of business, address, zip, city (it is possible to add more qualitative information); it's important to know that the file shouldn't have a first row but begin with all the information from the businesses from the start
- Go to the website <https://www.google.com/intl/it/maps/about/mymaps/>
- Press create a new map
- Here it is possible to give the map the appropriate name, add more information and it is also possible to share the map with someone else
- Now the excel file with all the information must be uploaded (under import)
- All the columns from the excel will appear, only address, zip, city should be selected
- Now a map will appear, and on the left side, the businesses will be divided by category. It is possible to change the category, in fact what we want to do is to underline all the same type of businesses and also that the names should appear.

This is an example of how it should look like



Some businesses, from the area of Burgh-Haamstede, were taken into consideration:

The red arrow indicates the general information from the map will be seen whereas the light blue arrow are the type of businesses.

In the example, it is possible to see how all the businesses from the same sector (in this case, catering and nutrition) are all indicated in purple and then there are two other types of businesses.

The below map can be changed as well in order to underline the important points.

You can also make power maps/3D maps in Excel.

Possible variations and tips:



- Youngsters can make a map, do the research and brainstorm alone but it would be beneficial to brainstorm with a group of youngsters.
- If the community is complex, or the youngsters themselves aren't from the community, it might be a good idea to ask people of the community to help them. They can do the preparation alone but can ask a group of residents to help them with the execution. It can help them to find some ideas about what businesses are lacking. If you are asking people of the community to join, make sure you have some drinks.

Material:



- Paper (to draw or print a map) or material to build a scale model.
- Markers
- Thumbtacks
- Drinks if people from the community are asked to participate
- If online => computer / internet / google account

Timeframe:



Preparation will be the most time consuming (2 days).

The execution can be done in half a day.

Do the youngsters have to be in group or can this method be conducted alone:



Preferably in group if possible.

Ideally, people of the community can join.

Sources and more information:



Adapted from 'Stratenplan'. More information about stratenplan:

Participatie aan het lokaal sociaal beleid. Participatiehefboom handvaten, Samenlevingsopbouw Vlaanderen, pg 52 – 55,

<https://www.participatiewordtgesmaakt.be/websites/52/uploads/file/Participatie%20offer%20-%20Handvatten.pdf> (Dutch)