YEP! Youth Engagement Planning is a non-profit organization focused on educating young people in grades K-12 by introducing them to urban planning and civic engagement, and creating opportunities for youth to have meaningful participation in advocating for change in their communities and the built environment.

**Teacher Instructions**

**Facilitators:** At least 1

**Ideal Age Range:** K-8 youth

**Length of Time:** 20 minutes

**Supplies:**

- ★ Large roll of paper (48” x 30’ at least)
- ★ Markers
- ★ Masking Tape to secure the paper to the table
- ★ 1 large drawing of each “not a neighborhood” examples (provided in handout)
- ★ 1 large drawing of a good neighborhood example (provided in handout or can be drawn directly on the paper roll)

**OBJECTIVE**

In this “We Are All Connected” (Imagine Your Neighborhood) activity, students will be able to define what a “neighborhood” means to them.

After completing the exercise, students will be able to define what a neighborhood is and have drawn what they imagine a neighborhood to be, including their home and school, building geographic awareness in map making.

Students will consider which features of their neighborhood are important to them.

As the students complete their neighborhood, they will have the opportunity to negotiate with their seat neighbors how they will connect their neighborhood to the ones to either side and across the table. Students may choose to connect by road, bike trail, waterway, air, etc.

Finally, students will have the opportunity to compare their vision of their neighborhood to those of other students.

**PRELIMINARY SET-UP**

If you would like to make your own versions of the “not a neighborhood” examples and/or the actual neighborhood example, this obviously needs to be done ahead of time.

The large roll of paper should be spread across the table and secured with tape.

All students can either use their own markers or the markers provided. The markers can be placed at each student’s place on the paper roll.

The example of a completed neighborhood drawing should be visible to the students at one end of the drawing, but will not be directly discussed during the activity.

Each student’s area of the paper is defined by the placement of their chair. (Optionally, you can add lines to the unrolled paper using a yardstick.)

Do not cut the paper roll! You want to have the option of unrolling more paper as more students join the activity.

Ideally, there should be room (even if just on the floor) at one end of the table to display the completed drawings if you need to unroll fresh paper onto the table.
INTRODUCTION: “IS THIS A NEIGHBORHOOD?”

1. Before diving in, in order to help the students brainstorm what should be included in their own drawings, show the students three absurd “not a neighborhood” examples:
   a. Show them the picture of just a couple of houses: “Is this a neighborhood? What is missing?”
   b. Show them a picture of just a shopping plaza: “Is this a neighborhood? What is missing?”
   c. Show them a picture of the whole city: “Is this a neighborhood?”

2. If you are short on time, or if students are joining the group at unpredictable times, you can also post the pictures at the front of the activity area with the added headings “None of these are neighborhoods. Do you know why?”, and then direct individual students’ attention to them as they join the group or as they encounter brainstorming challenges.

3. The example of a completed neighborhood drawing should be visible to the students, but doesn’t need to be directly discussed.

IMAGINE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

1. Once the group has discussed what should be included in a “neighborhood,” invite the students to draw their own neighborhoods, being sure to include their own house and school.

2. As the students are finishing their own neighborhood drawing, instruct the students to begin engaging their neighbors to the left and right and across the table. Have them negotiate with their neighbors how they will connect their neighborhoods (for example; road, bike trail, waterway, air, etc).

3. If the students fill up the unrolled paper with their drawings, unroll more onto the table, but leave the completed drawings visible.

CONCLUSION: COMPARING YOUR DRAWING TO OTHERS

1. If necessary, create a hard time cut-off by doing a ten second countdown. (“10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1... Put down your markers!”)

2. Invite the students to walk all the way around the table to view the other students’ drawings.

3. If time, once they get back to their seats, ask the students to raise their hands and call on 2-3 of them: “What did others include that you didn’t? Did anyone’s drawing surprise you? What are different way that people connected their neighborhoods? Why is it important to be able to travel from one neighborhood to the next?”

WHAT DO PLANNERS DO?

An urban planner is a professional who works to enhance the quality of life. A planner is a person who helps shape the design and form of a city or place, from buildings to roads, and parks and more. Planners observe and analyze the communities around them and with the help of community members, make recommendations to policy makers for improvements. Planners ensure that we all can connect with the places around us, whether by car, bus, train, boat, bike, or walking, our ability to access different spaces makes a community better!