

# Understanding Land Use

National Standards of Learning: English – 8; Social Studies – 3, 4, 10; Visual Arts – 1, 3, 5

Duration: Two class periods; 1.5 – 2 hours

## Overview

As people observe their surroundings, they realize that the built environment is comprised of different buildings, varying amounts of open space, and roads. Upon closer examination, people begin to comprehend that there is a certain organization to these essential components of any city. It is important for young people to understand the ways buildings and open spaces are organized in a city because a city's plan profoundly affects the everyday lives of its citizens. By understanding the ways buildings and land are organized—and why—students can better understand the places where they live.



## Objectives

Students will:

- Identify functions and places that people need and want in a city.
- Categorize buildings and places by use.
- Propose solutions for environmentally friendly and livable cities.

## Materials

- Copies of land use category handouts
- Paper
- Pencils
- Crayons or markers
- Computers and access to internet (optional)
- Newspapers or magazines with images of various building types

## Teacher Prep

- Collect newspapers and magazines showing images of various buildings.
- Copy land use category handouts (*Optional:* Enlarge the land use category handouts and use them as posters in your classroom).
- Review the basics of land use plans and categories by reading “What is City Planning?” on page 12 and “Which Buildings and Places Go Where?” on page 14 (*Optional:* These readings can also be used as handouts for older students).

## Vocabulary

- Land use categories
- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Public or open space
- Mixed-use
- Plan

# Lesson Plan

## 1. Discuss the People Involved in Planning a City

- Emphasize the various groups of people that influence it. Many people and organizations influence the community planning process. They include city planners, local government officials, developers, and citizens. Who else influences the planning of a city?

## 2. Introduce Land Use Plans

- Introduce the idea of a land use plan that incorporates the different land use categories, including mixed-use buildings and areas. Show students a land use map (an example can be found on page 16). Explain that a land use plan is a visual tool that helps people understand where different uses (e.g., open space, commercial, residential) are located and the kinds of buildings and spaces that serve those uses. State laws and the federal government also affect community planning locally and nationally.
- Define the five land use categories with your students and brainstorm the types of buildings found in each of them. Explain that each land use category is assigned a color to make mapping and organizing easier, and review the assigned colors with your students (see pages 28–32). Discuss mixed-use developments in a community and how they allow people to live closer to the things they need and want. Ask your students to name examples of mixed-use buildings or neighborhoods in their community (see pages 28–32).

## 3. Group Activity

- Divide your class into groups and assign each one a land use category. Each group is responsible for examining its land use category and collecting information about places found there, and what they look like. Newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and specific websites in the resources section of this booklet are good sources for pictures of different buildings. Designate a place in your classroom for students to display pictures, drawings, and written information about each land use category. TIP: Photocopy the line drawings on pages 28–32 to place on posters for display.

## 4. Discuss

- Discuss the different buildings found in each land use category. Ask your students:
  - Why is each one important?
  - Why is it preferable to have open space in addition to buildings?
  - What would a city be like without a recycling center, fire station, or open spaces to enjoy nature?
- Cities are like people, and, like a human body, a city needs all of its parts to function properly. Discuss how city planners organize buildings, land, and open space in the best way possible so that the residents have access to the places that they need and want. Ask the students to name places and buildings they live near and ones that are far away. If given a choice, would they move buildings around in their neighborhood to better meet their needs and wants? Why or why not?

## Taking It Further

Have students map their school's neighborhood.

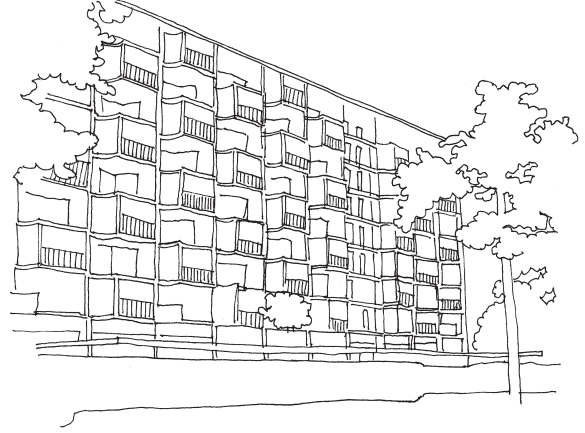
- Ask your students to edit their maps of the neighborhood to make it a more enjoyable, healthy, convenient place to live and work. Ask them to discuss and defend their changes.
- On your way to the Museum, have students use the attached *I Spy Buildings and Places* worksheet (page 34). Try to find as many buildings as possible. You may also use this sheet to find places in your school's neighborhood.

# Residential - Yellow

Places where people live



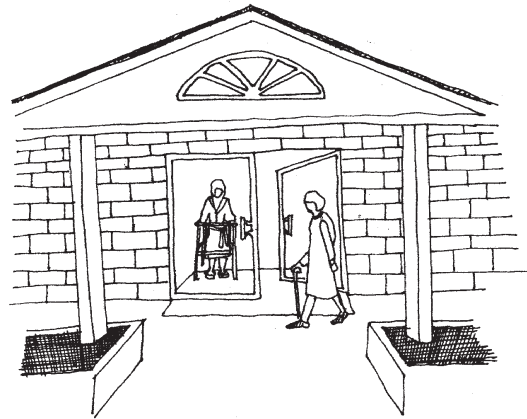
Single family home



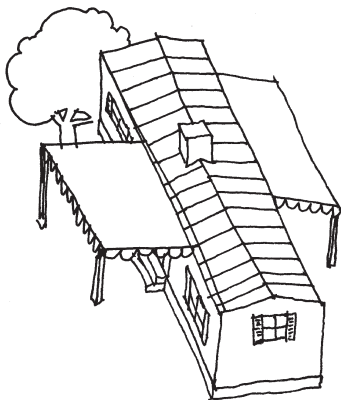
Apartment building



Townhouse



Retirement home



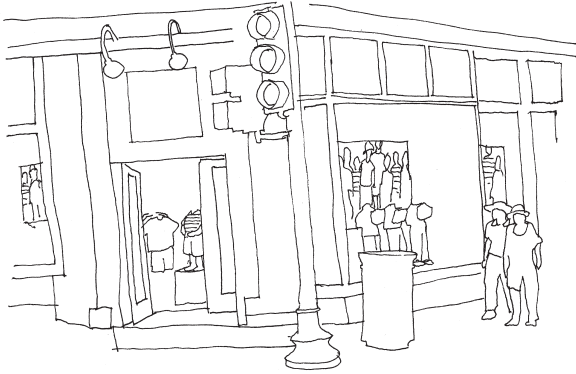
Mobile home



Duplex

# Commercial - Red

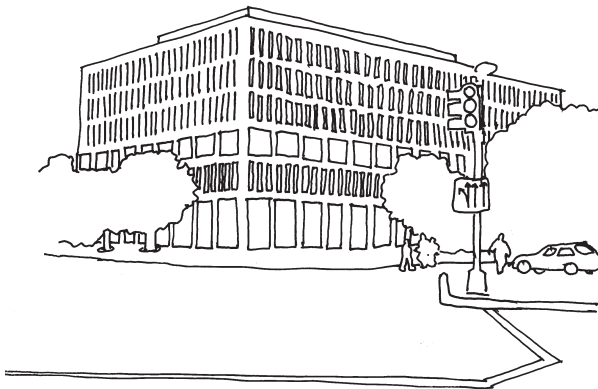
Places where people buy and sell things



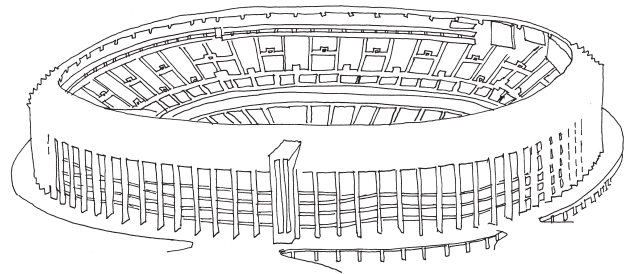
Clothing store



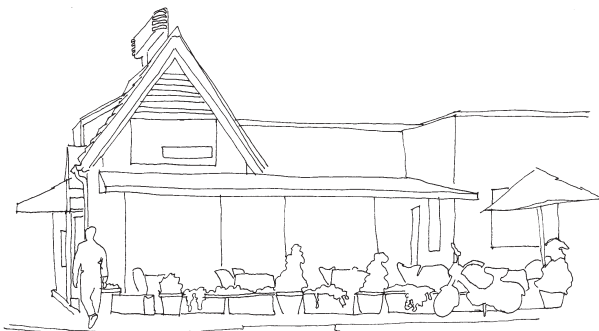
Bank



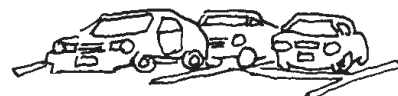
Office building



Sports arena



Restaurant



Grocery store

# Institutional - Blue

Places where people get help, learn, or receive government services



Police station



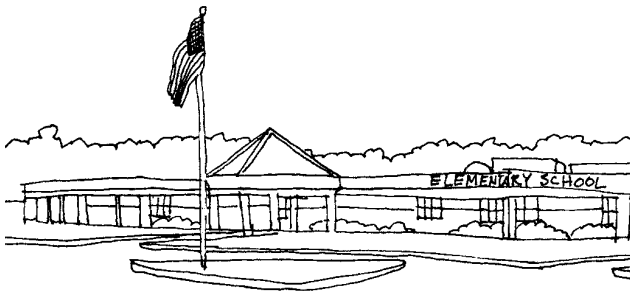
Library



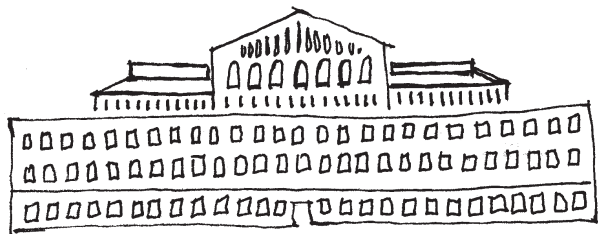
Government building



Fire station



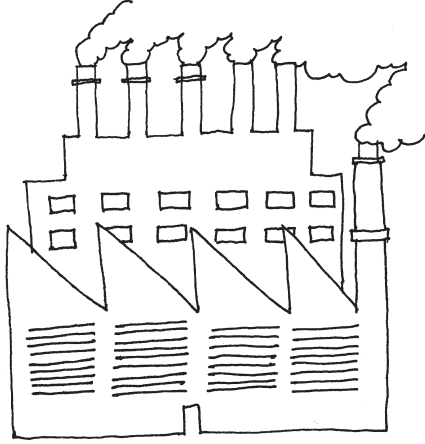
School



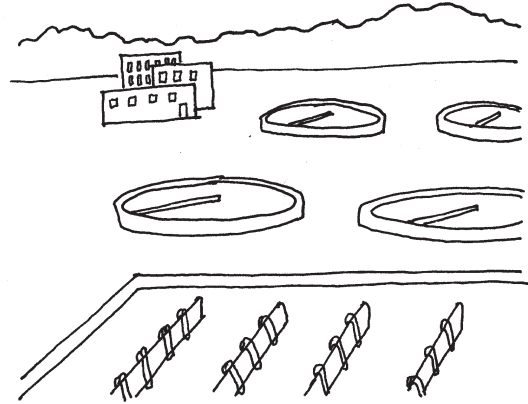
Museum

# Industrial - Purple

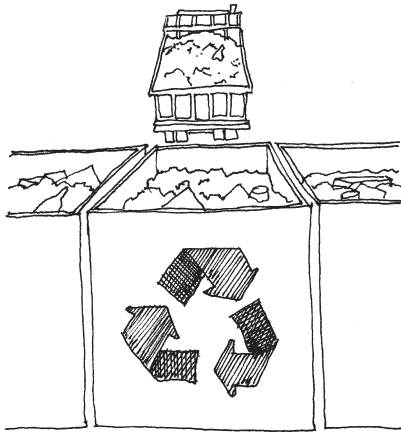
Transportation centers and places where things are made, discarded, or processed



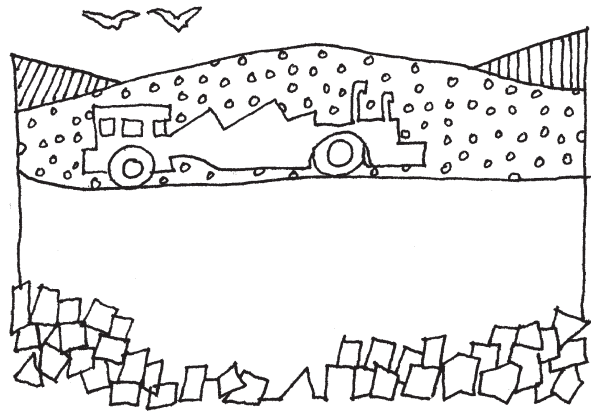
Factory



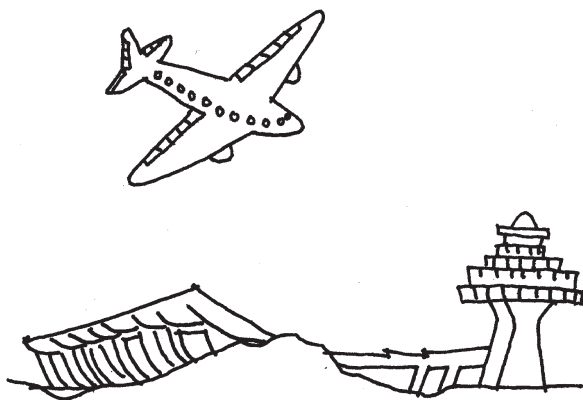
Water plant



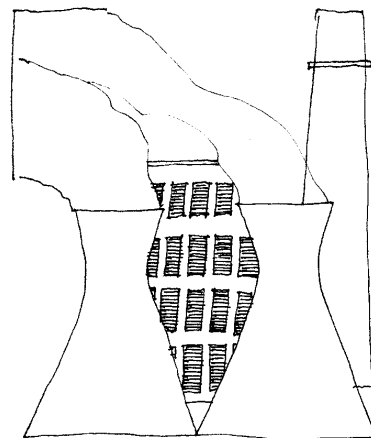
Recycling center



Landfill



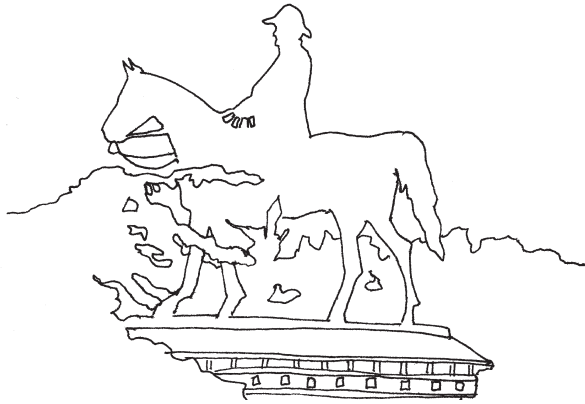
Airport



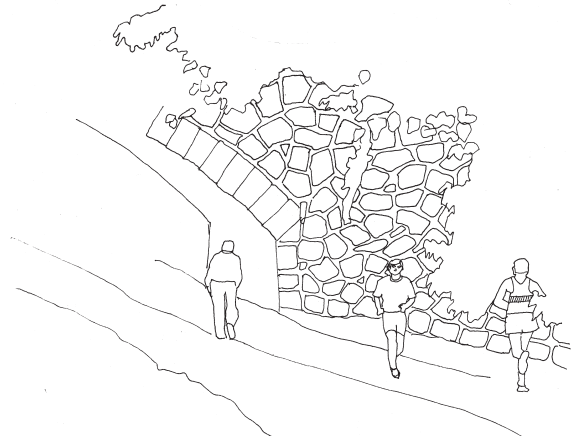
Power plant

# Open/Public Space and Parks - Green

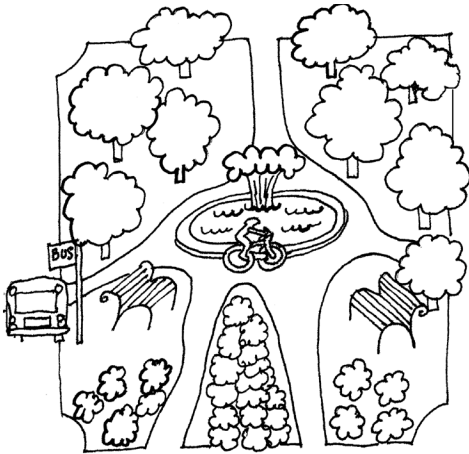
Places where people play, exercise, or enjoy nature



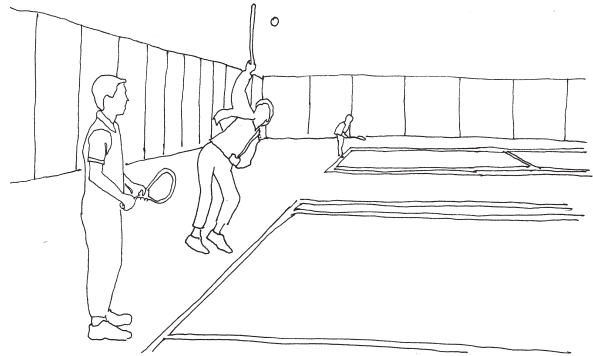
Monuments



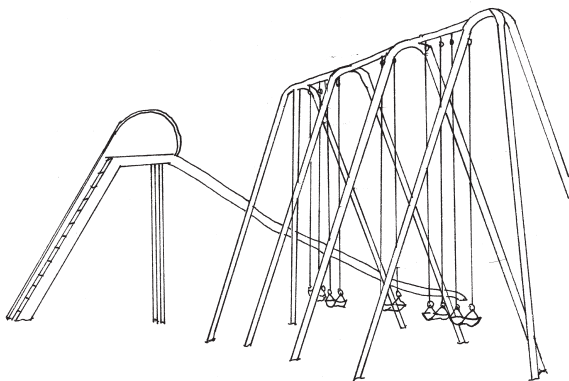
Hiking and biking trail



Plaza



Tennis court



Playground

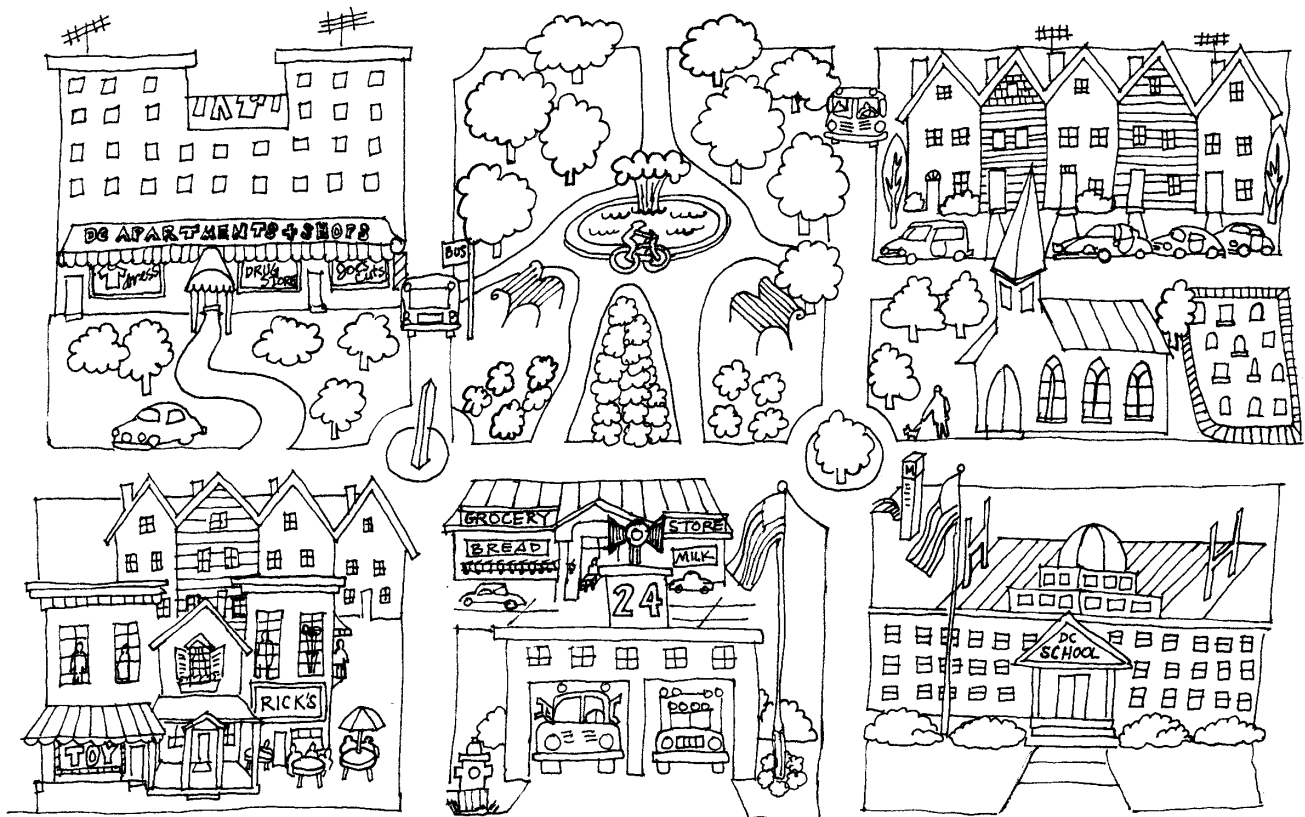


Duplex

# Mixed-Use - Combination of colors

Places that serve more than one function

- A building with apartments on the upper floors and stores on the bottom floor.
- An area of a city that allows both commercial and residential buildings.
- A neighborhood that includes residences such as houses, apartments, and townhouses; commercial uses like a coffee shop, dry cleaners, and a grocery store; institutional uses like a school; and open space like a park.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Worksheet

# I Spy Buildings and Places

As you travel to or from the National Building Museum, look around and see which buildings and places you can find. As you spot one of these buildings or places, circle it.

### COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS



Grocery store



Pharmacy



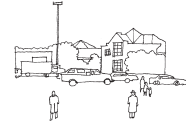
Clothing store



Bank



Office building



Shopping mall

### RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS



Single family house



Apartment



Townhouse



Duplex



Retirement home



Mobile home

### INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS



School



Fire station



Place of worship



Museum

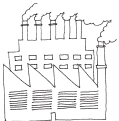


Police station



Library

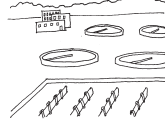
### INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS/SPACES



Factory



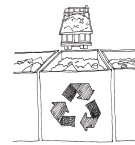
Landfill



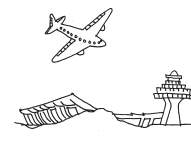
Water Treatment



Power Plant



Recycling Center

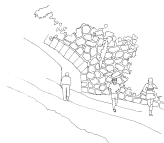


Airport

### OPEN & PUBLIC SPACE/PARK RECREATION



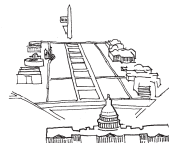
Monument



Park



Playground



National Mall



Bike trail



Town square