Kent County Community Asset Mapping Project
Kent County, Michigan

Community Atlas (v1.0)

Overview
The Kent County Community Asset Mapping Project is an attempt to incorporate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) into the community development process. This project is unique in that the communities of Kent County will be actively involved throughout the GIS development and analysis process. While some efforts across the United States have used GIS to identify areas of development need, few endeavors have used GIS as a community tool in a bottom-up decision-making process.

What is GIS?
GIS is essentially a relational database system with the added component of geography. It is estimated that as much as 80% of all data collected by organizations have a spatial element - that is, they refer to a place on the earth. GIS is able to transform this spatial data into a map which then allows for a visual interpretation. Data is more easily understood in this map format which then leads to better questions of the data and eventually better decision making.

First Steps
The maps included in this atlas represent only the beginning of the process. These maps provide a basic socio-demographic overview of Kent County and the four communities participating in the initial analysis as well as an idea of the different data layers which can be used for analysis. One additional map displays community assets funded by the United Way.

Future Steps
The next steps in the process include gathering various data sets of other community information and assets. Examples of this additional data include: neighborhood association areas, renaissance zones, bus routes, land parcels, religious organizations, historic sites, business and economic data, and crime data, among others. Once this data is gathered and in GIS-ready format, analysis of the data will begin in order to understand the current situation in the County as well as to target areas for community development.

Project Participants
The United Way is the lead agency for the project and is being assisted by researchers at the University of Michigan. Specifically, the Urban, Technological, and Environmental Planning Program is conducting the GIS analysis. This project is collaborative in nature and draws upon the expertise of many interrelated fields.

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Four Communities
Kent County, Michigan

Map Reference

Projection:
State Plane 1983, Michigan South
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United Way Projects

Community Assets

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files (block groups), U.S. Census Summary Tape 3A (1990).
Note: The scale of each community differs. See reference map for details.
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Population Density
People/Square Mile

- 9,130 - 15,539
- 5,490 - 9,130
- 3,221 - 5,490
- 1,293 - 3,221
- 0 - 1,293

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Kent County, Michigan

Average Household Income

- 79,605 - 125,794
- 55,187 - 79,604
- 40,243 - 55,186
- 28,079 - 40,242
- 6,240 - 28,078

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files (block groups), U.S. Census Summary Tape 3A (1990).
Note: The scale of each community differs. See reference map for details.
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% Very Poor below 50% of the poverty level

- 26 - 40
- 18 - 25
- 9 - 17
- 4 - 8
- 0 - 3

1 Dot = 10 People

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files (block groups), U.S. Census Summary Tape 3A (1990).
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Over Age 64
Total People

- 647 - 1253
- 338 - 646
- 185 - 337
- 93 - 184
- 0 - 92

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files (block groups), U.S. Census Summary Tape 3A (1990).
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% Female Headed Households

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files (block groups), U.S. Census Summary Tape 3A (1990).
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% Didn’t Finish High School

- 46 - 72
- 32 - 45
- 23 - 31
- 14 - 22
- 0 - 13

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files (block groups), U.S. Census Summary Tape 3A (1990).
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Four Communities
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Base Map Layer

Census Blocks

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files.
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Base Map Layer

Block Groups

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files.
Note: The scale of each community differs. See reference map for details.
Oakdale

Roosevelt Park

Wyoming

Kent County

Cedar Springs

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Base Map Layer

Census Tracts

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files.
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Base Map Layer

Zip Codes

Data Sources: U.S. Census TIGER files.
Note: The scale of each community differs. See reference map for details.
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Base Map Layer

Townships

Data Sources: Wessex Corporation.
Note: The scale of each community differs. See reference map for details.
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Base Map Layer

Unified School Districts

Data Sources: Wessex Corporation.
Note: The scale of each community differs. See reference map for details.
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Base Map Layer

Voting Precincts

Data Sources: Wessex Corporation.
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