

STREET MOBILITY PROJECT

Participatory Mapping



PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP,
BIRMINGHAM

IMAGE ©
MAPPING FOR CHANGE

March 2017

STREET MOBILITY PROJECT TOOLKIT:
MEASURING THE EFFECTS OF BUSY ROADS ON
LOCAL PEOPLE

This document contains information about one of the tools that we have developed so that local government and local communities can assess community severance in their area.

PARTICIPATORY MAPPING

What it is

Participatory mapping is a way for groups and organisations to help improve the places that matter to them by producing information. The UCL Street Mobility project used it to record and share the local knowledge and understanding that people have about the patterns of traffic and the way roads are used in their own area.

Participatory mapping is a way to engage groups and individuals in the local community. It can be carried out rapidly, or through a longer and deeper engagement with individuals and groups, in which problems are identified and solutions proposed, and assessed for suitability and relevance. The project uses maps to help people visualise or analyse their local area by focusing on particular issues or questions, allowing people to share their understanding of their environment with others.

How to do it

Start by visiting the area to identify places where people gather (e.g. community centres, shopping centres, religious establishments), and which ones are in the right locations to contact people who live in the area being mapped. In addition, check available online information, for example the Census, to ensure that you are making contact with the different groups living in and using the area. Contact local community groups, housing providers, and religious groups and ask about regular meetings, then ask permission to attend some to get familiarity and trust. Consider how to reach under-represented groups through their social connections – e.g. a local establishment that they frequent such as a church or a mosque. In addition, consider recruiting ‘community champions’ who can reach out locally to people who do not attend meetings or are housebound.



COMMUNITY
MAPPING WORKSHOP

IMAGE © 2015
MAPPING FOR CHANGE

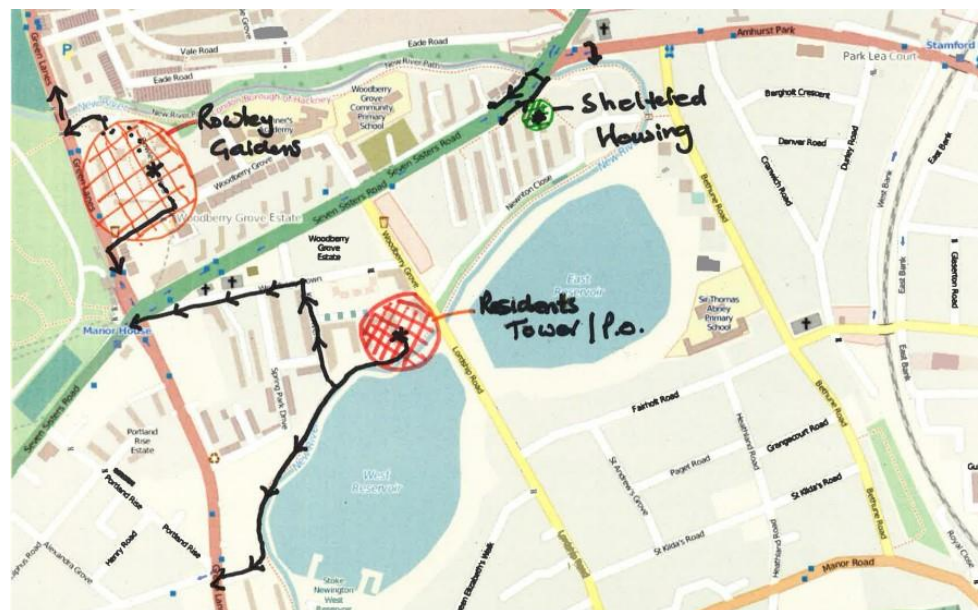
STREET MOBILITY PROJECT Participatory Mapping

After these early visits, a programme of community engagement should be carried out, in one or more of these three ways:

1. Rapid appraisal mapping, which involves stopping people in the street and asking them to spend a little time contributing information. The information can be captured on a medium-sized map or an aerial image of the area by asking participants to carry out a short task, such as marking problem spots for crossing the street, or tracing their planned route from home to local facilities. This can also be done in a shopping centre – or even by stopping people near a local traffic node (e.g. near a Tube station).
2. Longer community mapping workshops allow participants to discuss issues more fully. Here you can follow a more detailed process, such as the one depicted in the figure below. The process can involve working in groups, in a discussion over large scale maps or aerial images, printed so people can annotate them. Post-it notes and coloured stickers are recommended to mark places on the map of concern to the group. This process can then be followed up with detailed individual work to investigate areas identified (e.g. by collecting traffic counts, or recording household perceptions) and an additional workshop can be set up to share the results with the group. Online mapping tools can be used to collate and share the information. Such workshops are best held in a place that is familiar to the participants, such as a local library or a community centre.
3. In-depth individual interviews, often with participants in the rapid appraisal mapping exercise or from community groups, can provide deeper insights into issues emerging from the maps and rapid appraisals. These can be part of the later stage of the community mapping project, in which participants share detailed experiences about their area. The use of maps or aerial images allows participants to point to problem spots or to describe different characteristics of their environment, such as informal road crossing points or places where formal crossing provision is inadequate.

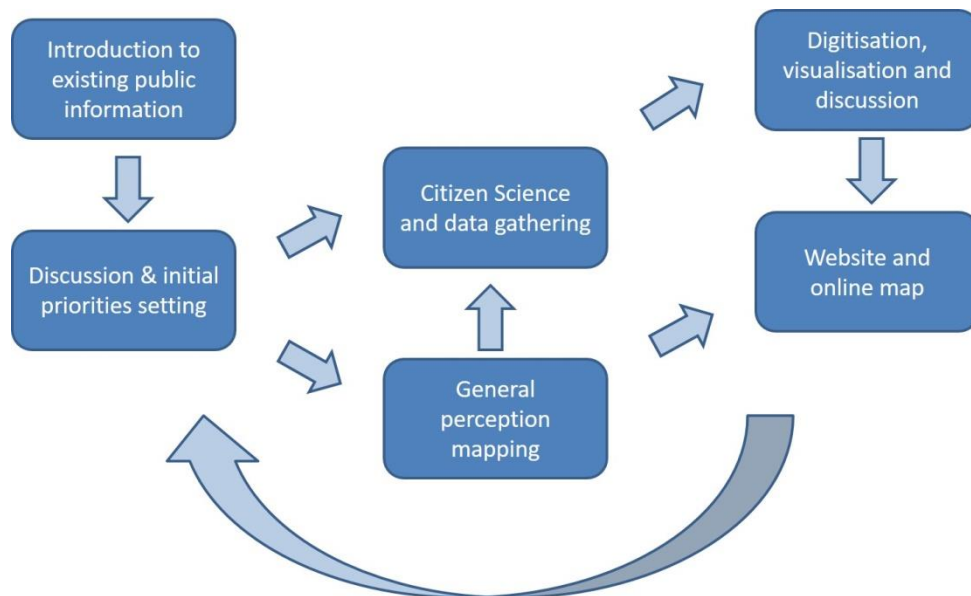
EXAMPLE OF MAP
ANNOTATED BY COMMUNITY
MEMBERS FOR
PARTICIPATORY MAPPING

IMAGE ©
OPENSTREETMAP
CONTRIBUTORS



Once the data are recorded on maps (either online or offline), they can be collated using a Geographical Information System (GIS) and analysed. Qualitative information and descriptions from the interviews can be classified into categories to visualise different issues across the area. This can be done by developing 'codes' – keywords that identify a specific statement or part of an interview. Work is usually needed to code and classify qualitative statements, and then to test how well the

coding works when it is used on different interviews or maps. A classification of the findings will then be produced. This can be used to visualise the information on a map, for example by indicating places that had positive comments – and those that had negative comments. Participants can then be asked in more detail about issues they raised concerning road traffic, pedestrian crossing facilities, use of public transport, social networks or neighbourhood boundaries.¹ The resulting map can be used to identify issues that are frequently mentioned by community members.



**DIAGRAM
SHOWING THE PROCESS OF
PARTICIPATORY MAPPING**

**IMAGE © 2015
MAPPING FOR CHANGE**

¹ For further information, see <http://mappingforchange.org.uk/> and <https://communitymaps.org.uk/welcome>.

CASE STUDY: PARTICIPATORY MAPPING IN SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

To understand how local residents experience local mobility issues and the impact of major roads, we talked to 52 people from various addresses across the area. The activities varied from informal mapping sessions and street mapping surveys to in-depth participatory mapping workshops, in which people spent an afternoon working together to identify issues and mark them on a shared map.

The aim of this engagement was to explore people's views on Queensway (a large, main road), particularly whether it acted as a 'barrier' with negative impacts on physical and psychological wellbeing, particularly for older people. We also looked for any other factors which influenced people's walking behaviour around Queensway, for example potential fear of crime.

Participatory mapping was the method used in all these engagement activities. We used large A0 and A3 maps of the case study area as the starting point for a series of informal questions about participants' perceptions and experiences of Queensway and nearby areas. Participants were asked to think about areas they visited and liked, as well as those that they found problematic or avoided.

The engagement was open ended, and we did not try to direct participants towards any particular issues or insist that they discussed only selected topics. Nevertheless several sites emerged from the discussions as especially problematic, making it difficult for participants to walk around the area. The nature of these issues varied for both physical and perceived characteristics. Participants commented predominantly on physical design, and on fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

During these sessions we recorded over 400 statements about the local area, which were then analysed and integrated, producing a report on common views. For example, an issue that came up frequently was the perceived danger to pedestrians from motorised and non-motorised traffic, particularly bikes and skateboards, riding on the pavement. These were predominantly related to a particular site, a shared space outside Southend's Victoria Station.

The participatory mapping exercise in Southend-on-Sea demonstrated that with a limited investment in time, and using rapid mapping sessions, valuable and relevant information can be gleaned about local perceptions of busy roads and movement in the study area.