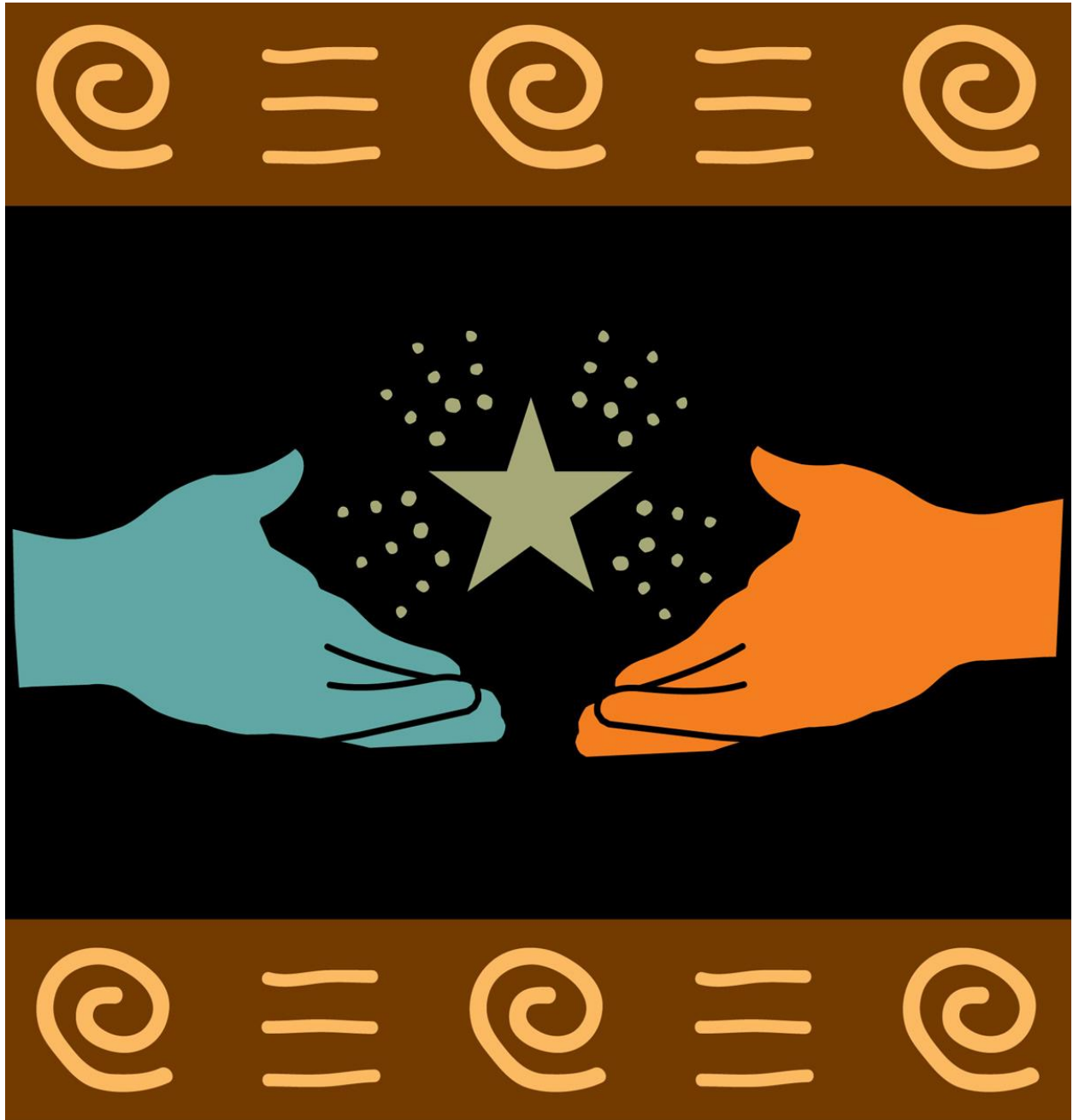


Partners in Transformation



*A guide to three weeks of conversation about neighbors working with neighbors
to transform the community
(A continuation of "Who Is My Neighbor?")*

Table of Contents

(If you would like additional guidance on facilitating a group, read the introduction to “Who Is My Neighbor?” For additional guidance on practicing the “World Café” process of conversations, please contact the regional office.)

Week One:	p. 3
Week Two:	p. 6
Week Three:	p. 8
Wrap up (congregants only):	p. 10
Appendix:	p. 11
Ground rules for group process:	p. 11
Café etiquette.	p. 12
Homework for week one:	p. 13
Homework for week two:	p. 14

Session One

You will need:

- Ground Rules for the Conversation (found on page 9); copies for individuals and a copy on butcher block paper to leave up all three sessions.
- Nicely decorated tables that seat four or five each, preferably with butcher block paper and crayons that allow people to draw or sketch or write
- Name tags
- Flip chart or white board
- Copies of homework (p. 10)
- Café etiquette cards (p. 12)

In Advance:

- Make sure to recruit a certain number of the bible study participants to be “table hosts.” (There should be one at each table of four or five people, and they should be able to record the highlights of the conversation and share those notes at the end of the process. Recruit them in advance—this also guarantees that church folk don’t all bunch up together when they arrive, since the table hosts will each sit at a different table.)
- Write the questions up on flip chart paper so you can post each of them for people to reference during the café conversations, but don’t have them posted in advance.
- Ideally, have coffee and snacks as people arrive.

During the session:

Make sure everyone gets a nametag as they walk in.

Welcome people and invite them to introduce themselves—who they are, where they live, and one thing they really enjoy doing.

Thank everyone for being willing to participate in this three-week session. Let them know that the primary purpose of these three weeks is for people in the room to share ideas and resources around how to strengthen this community/neighborhood, and that it emerges from a group study that the church did which helped the church remember how much it wants to be a partner and support of the work going on to better the community. Let them know how much it means that they would give up an evening three weeks in a row like this, and it speaks to their commitment to the community and that we are really eager to learn from this process. Continue in something like the following way:

The timeline will be that each session will be about 1.5 hours with a goal of having some concrete strategies around making the neighborhood even better by the end of the third session. The sessions will involve some small group as well as large group

conversation, and even a little bit of homework! To make sure that everyone has a positive experience in the conversations and leaves knowing that they are appreciated, we'd like to offer some basic guidelines for all three of our conversations.

Hand out and read through the Ground Rules for Group Process and ask if anyone has questions, if anyone has major disagreements or additions, and make sure that (once the document has been adjusted to meet the group's needs) the whole group agrees to use these rules.

Let them know the first session today is going to be using something called "The World Café" model, where there will be a series of questions in small groups, with the small group changing each time. Share with them the "café etiquette." Let them know that before starting that process, we're going to try a "practice round:"

Since the whole series is about our neighborhood, we want to get clear on what this neighborhood is. So in the small group you're in right now, take a moment to discuss the following, and then we'll come to a consensus as a large group: **What are the parameters of this particular neighborhood/community?** The process will be this:

The table host will invite someone to share for one or two minutes. That person will share without interruption or discussion, just being listened to. Then that person will invite the next person to share in the same way. This is called "mutual invitation." When everyone has shared, lift up what you heard in other people's definitions that you think are important, and then start moving towards a *shared definition* of what creates the geographic or cultural boundaries of this community (or the "neighborhood" created by the focus of this group of people—arts, justice, or ...). After 15 minutes, report back to the larger group and we'll try to create a working definition for all of us for the next three weeks. Again, this isn't a forever definition, but just the one we'll use for the next three weeks, so it doesn't have to be perfect.

After 6-8 minutes, let the small groups know they should be beginning to look for common phrases or ideas and beginning to create a shared definition of what constitutes this neighborhood. After another 5 or so, ask if any group would like to share their definitions. Write up key words or phrases on the flip chart and ask people where they see commonalities, where they see ideas they hadn't thought of before that might be an important definition of the neighborhood, and whether they see a definition of the neighborhood emerging. Write up a definition that includes some of the major themes from the small group and ask if we can work with this definition for the next three weeks, even if it's not perfect.

After this process, invite everyone except the table hosts to move, and to try to sit with different people than they sat with in the first group.

Now begins the café: There will be three specific questions that move us towards our main goal of partnering in making our neighborhood stronger. We invite you to start with the same "mutual invitation" process and then simply open up to discussion after

Partners in Transformation

everyone has had the opportunity to share once. After each major question has been answered, you'll change groups, with the table host staying at the same table to record the notes from the conversation.

Let them know they are welcome to draw and sketch and write on the tables if that helps their creative process. Give them 10 minutes for each question before they rotate to their next group to address the next group. When they rotate, give them 3-4 minutes to share what came up in their previous group before answering the next question.

1. What was a specific time you had a really positive experience in this community?
(How did it feel, who was involved, what was your role?)
2. What was a negative experience you had in this community?
(How did it feel, who was involved, what was your role?)
3. What can you imagine happening that would help us have more positive and fewer negative experiences in this community?
 - a. What would it look like?
 - b. Who would be involved?
 - c. What would your role be?

Ask the group what emerged from their conversations—share in the large group. Ask if there's anything that people are hoping we'll revisit in future sessions so that we can think about it concretely. *[CREATE A PARKING LOT—a list of issues that can be revisited in future weeks, written on the white board or a separate sheet of flip chart paper so the group can reference it at any point.]*

Next week we'll be talking about what's already happening in the neighborhood. The reason each of you is in the room is that you have important understandings of and involvement in the neighborhood, and we really want to make the best use of it, so what I'm about to ask is a particular gift you're offering to our church as we learn how to be better partners with you. So everyone in this room has a little homework: Each individual will share a 3-5 minute presentation based on some specific questions. The last question might be a hard one to answer, and we'll make sure someone from this church is designated to answer the same questions next week so that everyone has the same information.

[HANDOUT SHEET FOR HOMEWORK—page 13]

Ask if anyone has specific closing comments they'd like to make. Thank everyone again for allowing this session to be a little bit of a "get to know you" session so that the whole group can really roll up their sleeves and do some good work in the next couple of sessions.

Session Two

In advance:

- Make sure the church members know that ONE of them should do the homework for this week specifically about the church; others should do the homework about a group they're involved with in the community.
- See if someone is willing to be in charge of coffee and snacks in advance.
- IF YOU HAVE TIME, read "<http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/cafetogo.pdf>" which will help you create an even more rich World Café experience. (What we provided is very simplified but leaves out some very rich elements such as "harvesting" and using a graphic recorder to help express the group's ideas.) You can also give the "I'm a table host; what do I do?" page to your table hosts.

You will need:

- Markers (black, red, blue, green)
- Large pieces of paper
- Name tags
- Big sheet of paper with "Ground Rules for Group Process" from last week
- Sheet of paper with group's definition of this neighborhood from last week
- Pieces of paper and writing utensils for group
- Copies of homework (pp. 14-15)

During the session

Tape up a large piece of white paper

Go over the Ground Rules for Group Process again

Revisit definition of neighborhood from last week as a reminder

Take a few minutes to have them pair up with someone they don't know and share their name, how long they've lived in the neighborhood and their favorite neighborhood place to eat. Then have them introduce their partner to the group.

Let people know during the first half people will present, and during the second half we'll have a large group activity/conversation.

Suggest that each person be allowed to present without questions, and once everyone has presented, the floor is open for anyone to ask anyone else follow-up questions. Encourage people to write down their questions during presentations so they don't forget them. After the presentations and follow-up questions, ask if people noticed possible partnering opportunities, shared missions, or shared priorities among the groups represented. Make sure the conversation winds down by the 45-minute mark.

Group activity (second half of time)

- Ask someone to come up and draw a street map of the neighborhood as your group has defined it, using a black marker. Ask people to come up and draw their organization on the map in red.
- Brainstorm together (and place on the map) other possible partners in the neighborhood (draw them in blue.) (Businesses, organizations, houses of worship, clubs, anything.)
- Draw potential problem areas in the neighborhood—areas in need of additional help or services (draw in green). (poorly lit areas, liquor stores, areas known for drugs, etc.)
- Conclude with homework assignment/ overview of next session.: OBSERVE AND NOTICE—who else (organizations) is in the neighborhood, and what needs do you see? Take home sheets and write down others that need to go up on the map next week. (page ___) Give people a few moments to start sketching the things we already included in our map tonight before they depart.

Before departing, see if anyone has a final comment, something they want to make sure we address next week (add to the parking lot), or anything we talked about this week that resolves a “parking lot issue” already on the list.

Session Three**In Advance:**

Set up the room for World Café again (tables, candles, flowers, tablecloths with butcherblock paper and crayons so people can draw)

Make sure to choose good table hosts again—this time, consider using community members as well as congregants if that feels appropriate.

Put up the map from last week, plus markers.

Put up the ground rules for group process.

During the session

Welcome people, and ask them to cluster by their favorite kind of music—was it written before 1950? Between 1950 and 1970? 1970-1990? 1990-today? Let those groups introduce themselves to each other and name their favorite song, composer or band. Then ask them to share something they know about the community (whether they learned it over these few sessions or elsewhere) that is “music to their ears.”

As people sit back in their seats, turn to the map and ask if people had additions they wanted to make based on their homework. (Use the same color coding: potential partners in blue, problem areas in green.) Give them a moment to absorb the information on the map and ask if they notice any patterns in organizations or problems, and if they have any brief thoughts about that before moving on.

Let them know this week will use some of the same World Café principles from week one, but going a little deeper. Remind them to draw as they talk if that helps them brainstorm. Remind them they'll deal with one question with this group and then move to another group for the next question and so on, with the table host staying at the table and recording key points each time. When they move tables, they'll start by briefly sharing key points from their last group's conversation before starting their new question.

Have the group discuss one of these questions for 15-20 minutes with each group:

- What could you imagine happening in this community that would really inspire you? Who would be involved? What would your role be? (Has this answer changed over these three sessions?)
- What's the most positive change that's happened in this neighborhood that you know of? What's the most positive change you think could happen now? Who do you hope will be involved with it?
- What do you hope will emerge from this group of people and organizations that can help create the inspiring visions we discussed in the last two questions? Who else could be involved that is not in the room?

When the group comes back together, ask them to talk about themes they noticed emerged as they went from table to table. Ask if there were any big visions that a large number of them got excited about. Do an old-fashioned brainstorming process to see what people would like to do collectively. Make sure to get names of people who are willing and eager to be a part of creating it so you can follow up. Let them know the church group will be meeting to reflect on what has emerged and how the church can become more engaged in partnering with them and engaging the community as good neighbors. Ask what timeline the group would like to follow around the ideas that have emerged, and if possible, task a few people with coming together to make sure that timeline is honored.

Thank everyone again for their participation, ask what they got out of it, and ask if they have any final words of advice or support for this congregation as it continues to learn about partnering in the community. Send them off with words of thanks.

Who Is My Neighbor / Partners in Transformation

Wrap Up Session

After three weeks of meeting with neighborhood people, this is an opportunity to come back together as just the church community to celebrate and identify the learnings gleaned from the entire study.

SET UP

- Plan a casual meal for the members of the church who have participated in the study. This could be a potluck, an organized dinner at a host home, or a few pizzas delivered to the church – whatever works best for your congregation.
- Provide a flip chart or other tool for documenting the conversation.
- Set each place with a paper placemat (this can just be a piece of copy paper) with the question: “Who is my Neighbor?” printed on it. Encourage people to doodle on their paper or use it as a conversation starter during the meal.

DISCUSSION

Come together as a large group for a debriefing discussion. The facilitator should take notes on the flip chart as the group answers these questions:

1. What have we learned about our neighborhood through this study?
2. What have we learned about our church through this study?
3. What is God calling us to do in response to what we have learned?

Identify which of these next steps might be most appropriate for your congregation:

- Need to evaluate (or reevaluate) the vision and mission of the church
 - Recommended Resource: *And Still We Rise*
- Need to learn more how to engage the neighborhood
 - Recommended Resource: Alan Roxburgh, *Moving Back into the Neighborhood* (http://www.roxburghmissionalnet.com/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&page=shop.browse&category_id=19&Itemid=137&vmcchk=1&Itemid=137).
- Need to evaluate our location and/or property usage
 - Recommended Resource: Fresh Eyes consultation with CCNC-N regional staff and/or consultation with Church Extension staff
- Need to get back to basic spiritual practices and to seek God’s path
 - Recommended Resource: Martha Grace Reece, *Unbinding the Gospel*
- Need to take a break from thinking, studying, working
 - Take an intentional period of Sabbath as a congregation with a clear start-back-up date
- Know we need to do something but have no idea what
 - Call the Region, we can help you figure out what the next chapter might be for your congregation.

After finding consensus around next steps, CLOSE with a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing.

Ground Rules for the Group Process

- 1. First and foremost we commit to respecting the humanity of our conversation partners:** We begin with the assumption that everyone in this room has value and will be respected as an equal in the conversation.
- 2. Confidentiality:** What's said in the group stays in the group unless there is full agreement and permission to share a piece of information. This allows people to really share from their heart.
- 3. Respect:** Disagree without being disagreeable. Acknowledge the other person's point of view. Confirm that you heard correctly before responding. Avoid sarcasm and hurtful comments and tones of voice.
- 4. Truly Listen:** Sometimes the hardest thing to do is simply listen to a person without already thinking of what you are going to say back before they even finish. Rather than get into a "discussion," just simply receive the person's sharing and give only a response of affirmation or understanding.
- 5. Be more committed to relationship than to "winning" or being "right:"** It is hard to have true dialogue with people whose whole goal is to prove their point or win their agenda. It is best to be able to just listen and be respectful. Stay open in your sharing.
- 6. Sabotage or manipulation are not acceptable under any circumstances:** When destructive behavior is discovered, it must be named to the person (keeping in mind the above guidelines) and agreement reached to cease such behavior. Support and help should be offered as appropriate. A person who persists in this kind of behavior needs to be asked, with respect, to leave the group.
- 7. Be committed to attending each group and really "show up."** When we are busy or stressed it is easy to physically show up, but mentally or emotionally be elsewhere. Make the commitment to not only physically make the group meetings, but to be fully present to each other while you are here.
- 8. Affirm your conversation partners!** When someone shares something that comes right from the depth of their soul and you can tell this is not easy for them to do...thank them! When someone shares something you have been thinking or feeling yourself, but have been unable to articulate...thank them! A little affirmation goes a long way in reminding us that we are fellow travelers on this journey.

Cafe Etiquette

Focus on what matters.

Contribute your thinking.

Speak your mind and heart.

Listen to understand.

Link and connect ideas.

Listen together for insights and deeper questions.

Play, Doodle, Draw - writing on the tablecloths is encouraged!

Have fun!

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Homework from week one:

Fill in this form and share it with the group next week. Give it to the group facilitator so that s/he can make use of the information in the future.

Name of organization:

Purpose of organization:

What is the hurt your organization is trying to address or the strength your organization is trying to draw out of your neighborhood?

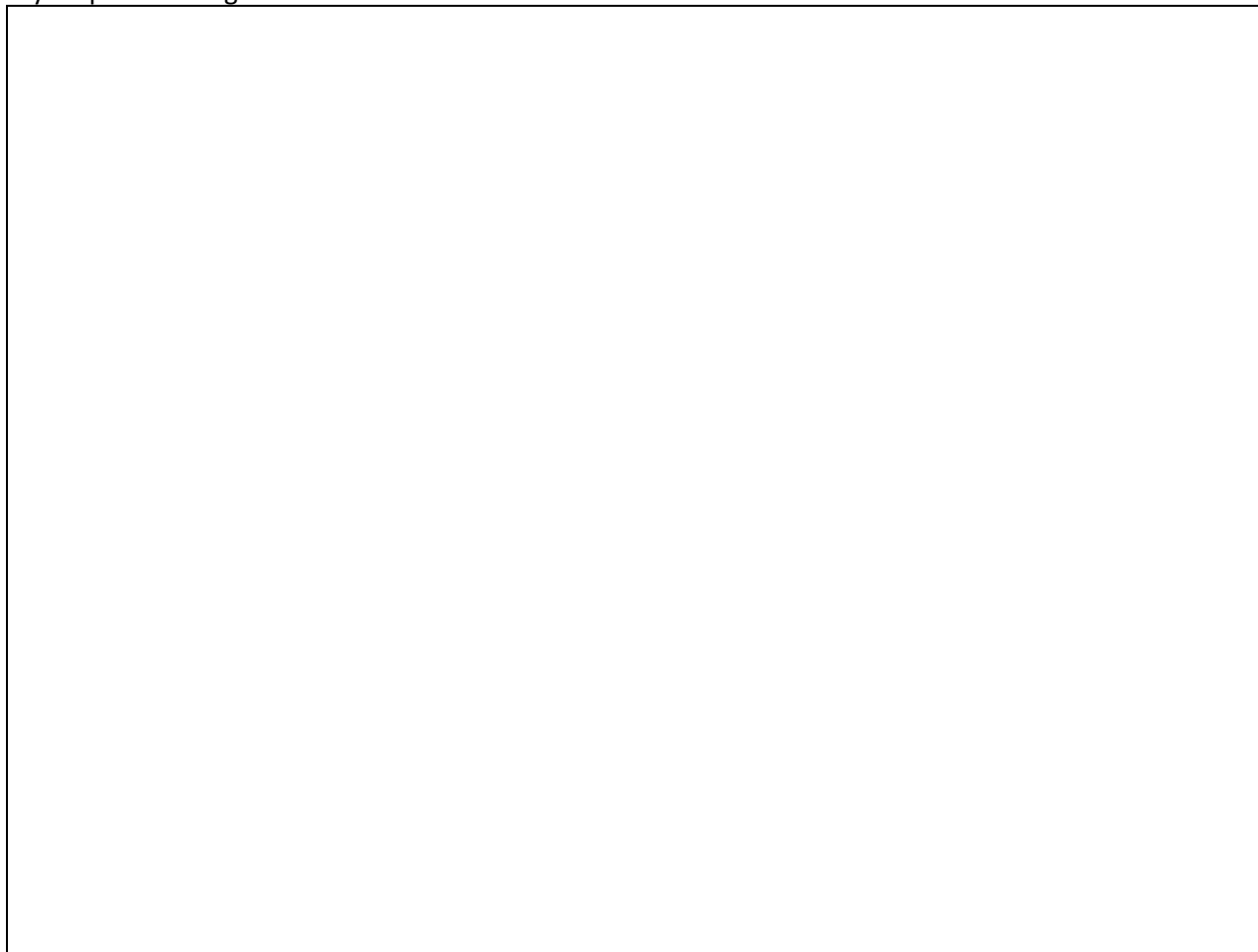
What is the thing you are most proud of that your organization has accomplished for or with people in this community?

What allies do you have and what allies do you need for your work?

Based on your understanding of church, how might this church be an ally?

Homework for week two: Notice and observe over the week what should be on this map.

My map of the neighborhood:



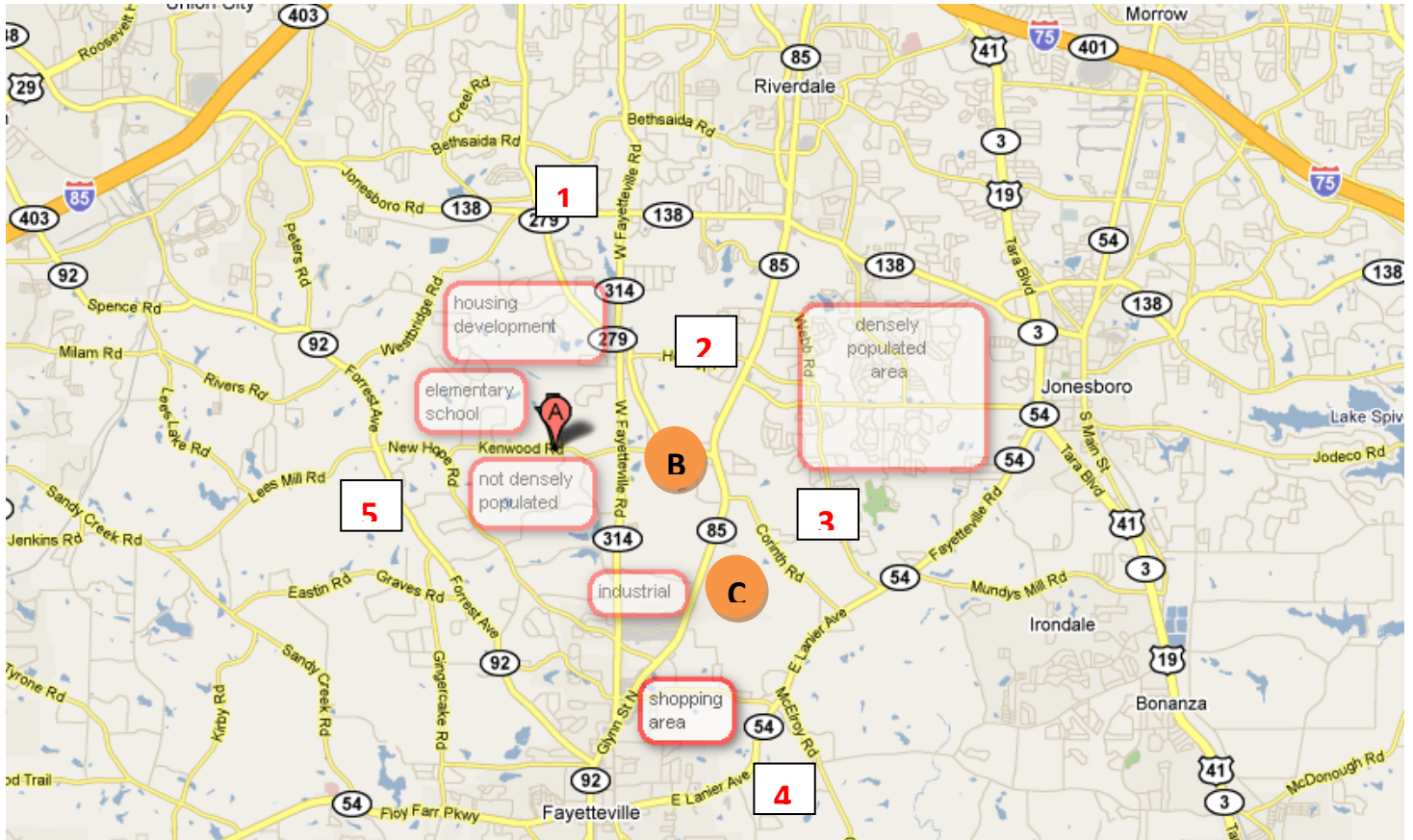
PARTNERS:

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1. | 11. |
| 2. | 12. |
| 3. | 13. |
| 4. | 14. |
| 5. | 15. |
| 6. | 16. |
| 7. | 17. |
| 8. | 18. |
| 9. | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

CHALLENGES/NEEDS:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| A | D | G |
| B | E | H |
| C | F | I |

Sample map:



- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1. Masonic temple | 11. |
| 2. Boys and Girls Club | 12. |
| 3. Boy scout troop | 13. |
| 4. Temple Beth Israel | 14. |
| 5. library | 15. |
| 6. | 16. |
| 7. | 17. |
| 8. | 18. |
| 9. | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

CHALLENGES/NEEDS:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| A. Graffiti | D | G |
| B. Undocumented workers | E | H |
| C. abandoned lot | F | I |