Community Mapping Proposal:

Moving Forward

Discussion Paper, January 2011

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by John Lutz, Acting Director, Office of Community Based Research

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Background

Over the past three years, the University of Victoria has modeled one of the most productive examples of community-engaged scholarship through a community-mapping collaboration between the community-based Common Ground Mapping Project, the Department of Geography, and the Office of Community Based Research. Through that partnership we have demonstrated the power of such collaborations, the impact they can have, and the profile they can achieve. With twelve completed projects including the South Jubilee Neighbourhood Map , the University-Community Green Map, the Highlands Community Regional Map, and two projects nearing completion include the Shelbourne Corridor Planning Project and the Oak Bay Community Map (http://mapping.uvic.ca/).   Responding to demand, but in the absence of a structure at UVic and transitions at Common Ground, these partnerships have been informal and often done "off-the-side" of the desk.   As a result, the success we have had to date is not sustainable in the long run and is hard to capture and promote as one of our strengths. There are also other units on campus, like the Libraries, Continuing Studies, the Humanities Computing and Media Centre, Environmental Studies, the Learning and Teaching Centre, the Office of Planning and Sustainability and departments beyond Geography, who have particular capacity and expertise related to community mapping which represent the potential for the University of Victoria to expand our existing strength, become an international leader, and have a distinctive community-university partnership which bring a positive regional profile and a distinctive brand to the university. Such a step would advance several goals in the University's Strategic Plan, simultaneously.

Vision

Within three years a joint university-community "Community Mapping Collaboratory" (name to be determined) will exist on the University of Victoria campus and be an international leader and model. The Collaboratory would be a combination of a) a wide, interdisciplinary collaboration of community and university expertise on community mapping b)   a physical space, a laboratory; c) laboratory instructional support for credit and non-credit community-mapping courses; d) technical support for undergraduate and graduate student and faculty research e) a liaison between teachers and students and community organizations to facilitate student service learning in the community; f) a resource centre , physical and virtual, for books, maps, software, internet resources, to assist students and the community with community mapping projects; g) a community of practice integrating scholarly and community knowledge. It would be a vital link in a dynamic regional and international community mapping networks. Within five years our "Collaboratory" will be celebrated internationally for its effective community-university partnership, its productivity, and its sustainability.

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[1] This discussion paper draws extensively on the UVic Strategic Plan, our community consultations and earlier discussion papers. I particularly acknowledge the work of Ian O'Connell, Ken Josephson, Maeve Lydon, and Charles Burnett.

Result of Consultations

Last fall the Office of Community Based Research did a survey of university and community groups/units on their interest in Community Mapping (see appendix for list of organizations/individuals consulted). We heard that there was a desire to:

- Celebrate the long history and productivity of Common Ground – a grass roots community-mapping organization

- Acknowledge and celebrate the productive Common Ground-Campus partnership that has produced a number of maps including the Victoria Green Map, the Campus Green Map, Highlands Green Map, the South Jubilee Neighbourhood Map…..

- Formalize the pathways between the partners to capture all that activity in a coherent narrative to be able clearly identify UVic with this innovative community-collaborative project, and seeing how we can facilitate the community-university mapping activity into the future.

- Research: Expand a community mapping research agenda already existing in community organisations and at UVic, particularly in the Geography Department.

- Teaching: Expand offering in credit and non-credit community mapping courses pitched to students in all disciplines

- A UVic-Community Mapping support team which would support teaching, community service and research

- Capitalize on the Library's reference expertise with respect to UVic's vast hard copy and digital map library

- Establish an archiving, data management and retrieval system for maps being created by/for community groups or community-university collaborations

- Create, expand and link existing open source software tools for the creation and display of interactive maps

- A network of community mapping organizations, facilitators, educators, with a B.C. focus but linked to national and international efforts
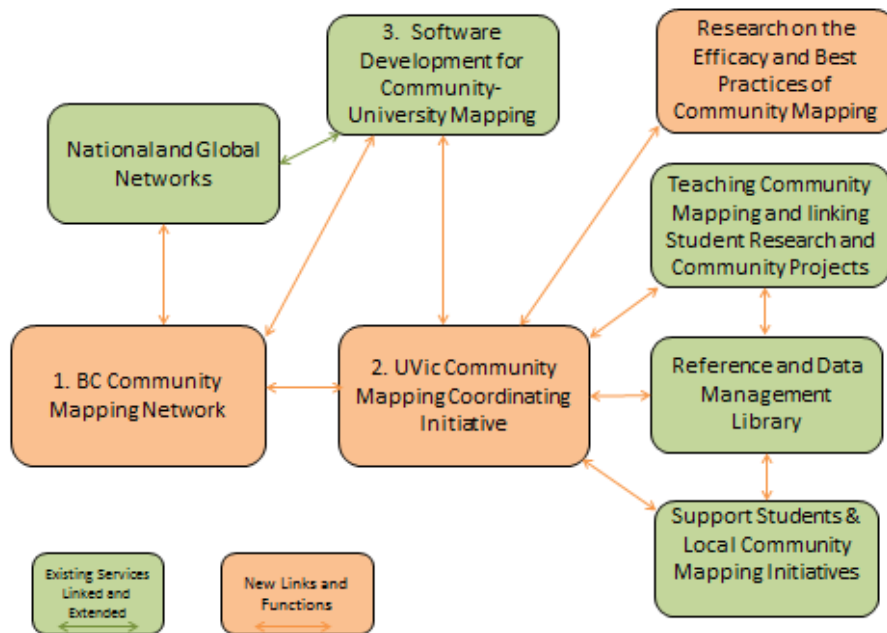

Ironically, most of these components now exist in some form at UVic, but they are not co-ordinated, they are not visible even to other experts, nor easy to locate, they are not pulled together in a package that can support and reinforce the other components, they do not all sit on a sustainable foundation and they are not easy to feature as one of UVic's unique capabilities or our national leadership.

Consolidating and Achieving the Vision

The next step is the formation of a campus-community working group drawn from potential partners to refine the vision and then develop it into concrete incremental steps. Although this vision is comprehensive, one of the strengths is that the different components can be developed independently as resources (including human energy – the most vital of all renewable resources) are available. As capacity in different areas is achieved the pieces can be linked.

The vision derived from our consultation divides into several parts which are related but which can also stand alone and proceed independently: a Community Mapping Service Unit; Teaching Capacity; Research Capacity; Reference Services; Software Development, and a Regional Community Mapping Network. As a starting point for discussion, what follows is a preliminary elaboration of the component parts of the vision with considerations to next steps, budgets, and resources. It is meant to demonstrate that the vision can be divided into achievable, incremental steps, rather than to define those steps. This is a preliminary draft to start to map assets, potential budgets, possible next steps and to open up discussion.

1. **Community Mapping Initiative (CMI) Coordinating Unit**

This "unit" would require staff support which can, in part, be reallocated from within existing budgets, Initial funding may be sought with funding applications to foundations and the SSHRC Partnership Development Fund next year.   Some matching contributions would be requested from the academic and administrative units involved. By partnering with Common Ground, we also have a potential revenue stream from consultation contracts. Since 1983 Common Ground has won over $700,000 in community mapping contracts.

Rationale:

Community Based Mapping (CBM also called Participatory Mapping or Participatory Action Research - PAR) is a perfect bridge between the university and community and one that generates an enormous amount of public and media interest. CBM highlights the interrelatedness of university and community based skills and knowledge. CBM has long-standing roots in geographic and cartographic studies, is increasingly capturing the imagination of students, scholars, University administrators, governments non-government organizations, and the general public. In fact, these and other groups are already working together to use CBM in a variety of teaching, research, and problem-solving contexts to ensure, for example, the sustainable use of natural resources, better-planned neighbourhoods, and the empowerment and social welfare of communities locally and abroad.

Existing Assets:

Over the past three years the Common Ground Network, the OCBR and the Geography Department have partnered on a variety of high profile community mapping projects on campus, in Victoria, Vancouver Island, British Columbia and overseas (e.g., in India and Brazil) often in partnership the international Global Green Map System <www.greenmap.org>. These projects include both printed and interactive on-line maps, seminars, guest lectures and workshops, conferences and roundtables, consultation and advising, incorporating CBM in teaching, and engaging in research. Examples include mapping health, wellness, transportation, sustainability initiatives, historical and cultural landscape stories and international connections of UVic, resource conflicts in indigenous communities, identifying treasured places in local neighbourhoods, and land use conflicts in major transportation corridors. The ongoing "Coastal Community Map of Saanich Inlet and Peninsula" is an excellent example of our capabilities to combine teaching, research. At this point, through the Common Ground-UVic partnership we have already trained dozens of student volunteers and interns (experiential learners, mappers, moderators.)

The Department of Geography has been a leader at UVic in responding to the growing demand to learn about the uses, techniques, and scholarly worth of this growing field of geographic and cartographic enterprise. Geography faculty along and staff person Ken Josephson are already well known within UVic and the wider community as a "go-to" unit for community engagement strategies for participatory planning and design, and for cartographic support. Key assets are the http://mapping.uvic.ca website,

the online UVic community Green Map, our teaching and research resources, and our cartography, web-mapping and facilitation expertise.

The Office of Community Based Research has served an important co-ordinating function for the UVic Common Ground relationship over the past several years. Associate Director Maeve Lydon is nationally known for her expertise in this area.

The Common Ground Mapping Project brings outstanding leadership skills, community organizing and mapping capability, wide local-to-global networks and an internationally   recognized track record. It has an archive and library of successful projects and enthusiastic partners.

Activities: The CMI would support teaching, research, and service as described below and co-ordinate with the library staff liaison with respect to data management and reference services.

      Governance: Joint University and community.

      Budget: The main expenses of the CBI may be
1) Staff time for an initiative co-ordinator (perhaps on the model of co-ordinator of a minor program with 2 course release)
2) Staff time for supporting community and students project
3) Staff time for community relations
4) Staff time from the library for reference and data management
5) Overhead for lab space/library

The revenues:
1) Foundation funding for community engagement activities and tools development
2) SSHRC partnership Development Fund and other agencies

3) Some staff support from University of Victoria primarily focussed on teaching support and community engagement.
   a. Support from the faculties of Social Science, Humanities, Computing Science, Education, Human and Social Development
   b. Matching support from the VP Academic
   c. Support from VP Research through OCBR
   d. Dedicated staff time from the Library
4) Contract cost recovery from community organizations, local government community initiatives.   Since 1983, Common Ground has earned over $700,000 in contracts for community mapping and planning work, and has involved the UVIc Geography Department and students in many projects.
5) Cost recovery from research grant support

Next Steps
- We have a $7,500 commitment from the United Way for a community mapping intern who can assist with the development of the initiative
- Seek matching seed funding from the university for staff support – Approx $5,000 to support service function and project development
- Form a joint interim UVic-Community working group to push project ahead.
- Co-ordination Role by OCBR
- Identify UVic champions to make case to the deans and VPA for support.

2. Teaching

Existing Assets: We already have experience teaching Community Mapping at UVic as a credit course by adjunct professor Charles Burnett in Geography, as a part of another on-going course taught by Ian O'Connell and as non-credit Community Mapping I and II courses that have been offered through Continuing Studies over the past several years, with full enrolment.   We have also experience training community members through the CBR (Community Based Research) Workshops and Common Ground has done this training over two decades. The Learning and Teaching Centre has expertise in the pedagogy of community engagement.

Budget

Credit Course: budgeted as part of regular geography offerings.
Non-credit courses: Cost Recovery through UVic Extension
Workshops: Annual workshops would be run on a cost recovery basis, ideally with some grant funding to support access for small groups with limited budgets.

Next Steps
Discussions with Geography, Continuing Studies about regularizing community mapping courses.

3. Reference and Data Management

Existing Assets:
In meetings with Ken Cooley, Associate University Librarian, the library has expressed a willingness to explore expanding their reference function with respect to UVic's vast hard copy and digital map library to include community clients as a part of this initiative. They have also expressed interest in offering an archiving, data management and retrieval system for maps being created by/for community groups or community-university collaborations.

Budget:
The initial anticipation is that this can be handled as part of the existing reference and collections staffing but that the acquisition and preparation of new maps, images, etc… will have to be financed with grant or project funding.

Next Steps: Bring library representatives onto the initiative steering committee and determine library priorities and linkages.

4. **Research:**

Contemporary community mapping is already a research focus of several faculty in the Department of Geography including Peter Keller, Jutta Gutberlet, Rosaline Canessa, Brenda Beckwith in Environmental Studies has done extensive research and course work involving Community Based Mapping. Historical community mapping is part of a GIS-based research project by John Lutz in the Department of History and he has participated in many of the community mapping processes. There is extensive interest in mapping as a research and dissemination tool in the Faculties of Education, Human and Social Development, Social Sciences, Humanities and Business.

Existing Assets: The Department of Geography has well equipped laboratory resources, trained faculty and highly qualified technical support.   The University Library system has an extensive collection of hard copy and digitized maps, aerial photos and a vast collection of historical maps relating to the region.

Budget: Small amounts of "incubation" time might be funded but in general when technical expertise is needed from the initiative for research it would be grant funded through such grants as   SSHRC Impact Development Funds.

Next Steps:
Work with faculty in Geography and other departments to determine their needs for research support, including liaison with community and assist with grant applications.

5. **Research: Software Development**

Rationale: The new Web 2.0 tools alongside the growing Open Source movement have created enormous potential to make Community Mapping more efficient, more collaborative and the results more interactive. Specific applications have already been created at UVIc to support research and teaching. Innovations that can be worked on at UVic as a contribution to an international effort to improve these tools include:

- Open layers – customizable taxonomy legend for Geo-referenced point, line and polygon data
- Nomenclature layers with support for aboriginal fonts
- Improved customizable rolls and levels of access / privacy by node (each data point)

- Secure hosting and serving of video for sensitive information until a community is comfortable with sharing it to a wider audience
- Data transfer to / from open green map
- Cadastral layers support

Existing Assets:

The main assets at UVic are the skilled staff in Geography, in the Humanities Computing and Media Centre, Computing Science, and in our partner on many projects, Geomemes, as well as in the tools and physical plant that support them. These professionals are already contributing internationally significant tools

Budget:

Software development can proceed as resources are available. Some of the work might be done by computer science students, some as computer science faculty support, and some as part of linked projects with their own funding.

Grant funding may also be available from Geoides, and NSERC. Some of the innovations have been made by local community mapping consultant firm, Geomemes and might be licenced for wide distribution.

6. **BC Community Mapping Network**

A network of community mapping organizations, facilitators, educators, with a B.C. focus but linked to national and international efforts. We could facilitate this with a secretariat based at UVic to support the network, host the website, organize annual workshops, produce an e-newsletter, and lead grant applications. Initially the OCBR could serve as the secretariat but the goal would be to transfer that to the joint UVic/Community Mapping Initiative as it gets established. In either case we would make a 3-5 year commitment and reassess at the end of the period.

Activities
- Annual 3-5 day workshops on techniques and tools modeled on the Digital Humanities Summer Institute; part of one day would also serve as the annual network face to face meetings
- E-Newsletter with news of conferences, software, tools, grant opportunities, updates on projects.
- Website Archive of E-Newsletter and links to members of network, tools, wider networks
- Preparation of joint applications for funding from foundations and granting councils

Existing Assets:

The OCBR and Department of Geography through their association with the Common Ground already have knowledge of some of the major community mapping initiatives and organizations. Many of the players have already been involved in our consultations, including partners at UBC Okanagan.

Membership: the membership would include educational institutions like colleges and universities or faculties/departments within them; non governmental organizations; First Nations organisations, government agencies at the municipal, regional and provincial level; businesses, and individuals.

Governance (suggested)
Elected board of directors including a representative from the Secretariat, three members elected by Institutional Members and three by individual members, each with a three year staggered term.

The Costs:

1) Communication start up: website creation: $2000; e-newsletter template creation: $500. Creation of wiki, listserve; facebook or other forums: $500. TOTAL $3000
2) Communication On-going. Website updates; newsletters, etc… $2000/annum

The revenues:
1) Founding Membership Contributions 8 x $500=$4000
2) Annual Membership fees (Institutional Members $100x10=$1000; Individual Memberships $50x$20=$1000)
3) Annual workshop will be self-supporting and perhaps generate surplus for communication through 1) tuition fees 2) grant funding

Next Steps

- Create an Interim Steering Committee
- The Office of Community Based Research has secured funds to bring the coordinator of the Global Greenmap Network, Wendy Brawer, for a Kick off event/work shop with March 16-18

OVERALL NEXT STEPS

TIMELINE

- Establish BC Mapping Network this spring using the March visit by Wendy Brawer as a focal point.

- Create Steering Committee for the Community Mapping Initiative this Spring

- Establish interim and long term partnerships with Common Ground Mapping project.

- Make some incremental steps towards integrating CMI this spring

- Use the creation of a new CRD print and online Regional Green Map as a focus-project for the collaboration.

- Finalize CMI proposal by July

- Make approaches to Deans and relevant Vice Presidents in the fall 2011 with a view to having some pieces in place in fiscal 2012-13

- Have a SSHRC Partnership Development Grant ready in the fall 2011 to fund this initiative.

Feedback

Please send your feedback to John Lutz, Acting Director,

Office of Community Based Research

jlutz@uvic.ca