



Solar Energy Site



Wind Energy Site



Renewable Tech Site



Water Recycling System



Bioremediation Site



Composting



Eco-Spiritual Site



Traditional Way of Life



Farmers Market



Eco-Agriculture Site

GREENMAPS • Maps give a notoriously subjective view of the world. Tom Stafford reports on a growing global project to create maps made by humans for people



This is a city map. It shows the roads and the buildings. Hard black lines against grey terrain. Maybe it shows where you can buy petrol. Or fast food. All you need to keep you going. Just.

It could be any city, because all cities look the same in this map. All the lines are drawn with metre accuracy, sharp and clean. There is a precise scale, all the methods for the map's construction formalised and explicitly stated in rules of

what can and can't appear. This professionalism could almost convince you that you are looking at the best possible map of the city. But accuracy isn't the issue, selectivity is. This map only shows part of what makes up a living city. This map only shows the dead, concrete world.

This is just one vision of the city; it is not the city itself. It was made to help strangers move through the city with ease. It wasn't made to show a city for living in.

Green eyes

Opposite are some very different city maps. They show bicycle routes, walks through parks and places where you can see the stars at night. They show the recycling banks rather than the money banks, the community centres rather than the car parks, the veggie cafés rather than the fast-food outlets. These maps show the city as it can be lived in, rather than moved through. They show the green spaces, the veins of a local economy, the places that are good for your heart and soul.

They are Greenmaps. They were made by people in their spare time. Cut together from a shared vision, their standards are not rules to be obeyed but ideals to be aspired to. The maps were sketched out on the backs of envelopes, discussed in front rooms over cups of tea. People argued at meetings about whether to show a café because it serves Fairtrade coffee – even though it's part of a large national chain. 'Maybe we should offer to put it on the next version of the map, but only if it changes all its chocolate and juices to Fairtrade as well,' someone suggested.

People walked around their part of the city looking for green spaces, for special trees, play areas, wild-growing fruits and herbs, and places to hear interesting sounds. People drunk too much organic ale at the local brewery, but put the brewery pub on the map nonetheless.

Greenmaps are never wholly accurate. Because they map human culture – precious things, moving things –, they are always becoming out of date. A local fruit and veg shop closes down. A new bike repair shop opens up. The mapping group decides it's time to mark on the map the place where people normally gather to protest in the centre of town.



Wastewater Treatment Plant



Landfills



Solid Waste Transfer Station



Incinerator



Energy Generating Facility



Blight Site



Danger Zone



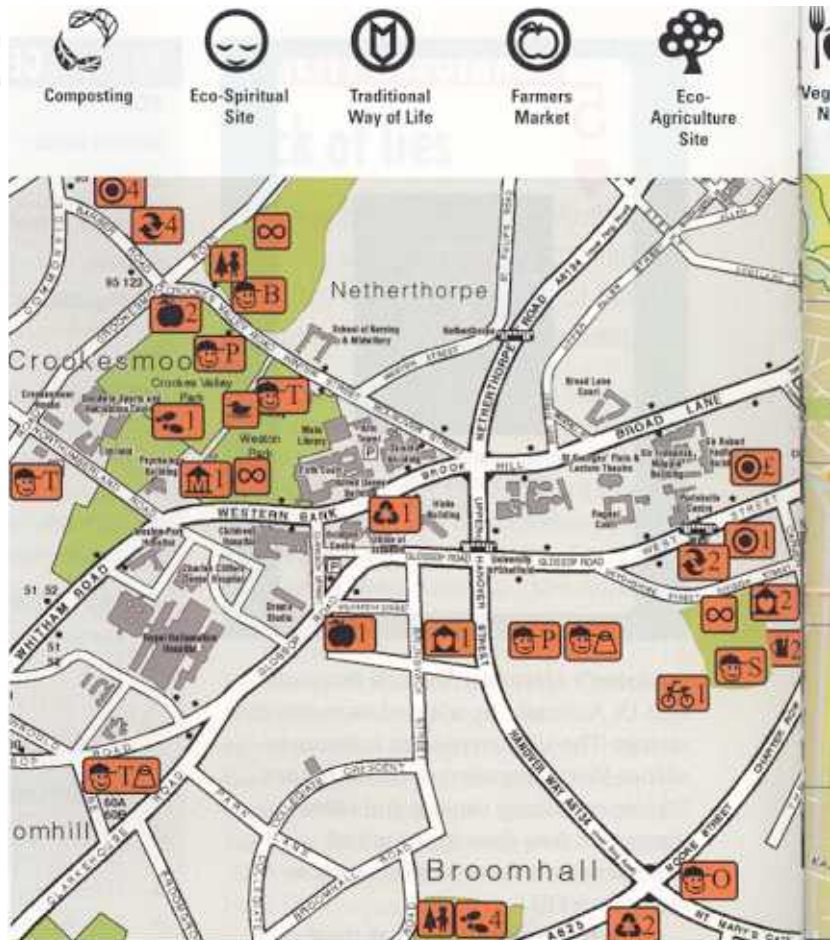
Traffic Hazard



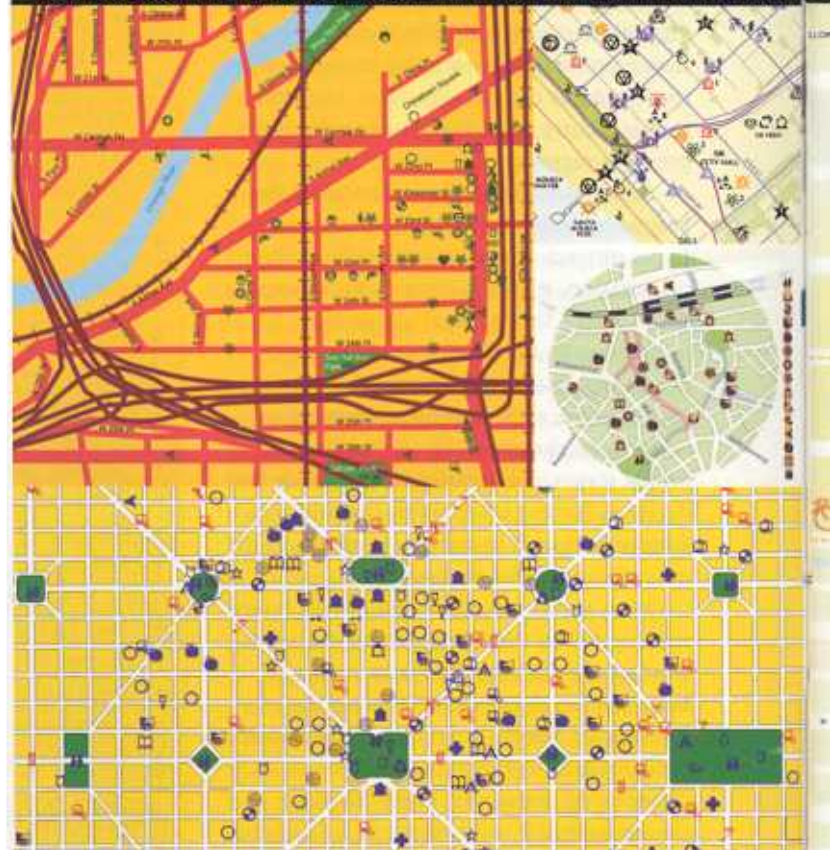
Noise Pollution Source



Air Pollution Source



Green maps (clockwise from top left): Sheffield (UK); Hamilton (New Zealand); San Francisco Civic Centre





Vegetarian/



Green Business/Service



Fair Trade/Social Shop



Eco/Conserving Products



Bicycle Site



Best Walks



Alternative Fuel Station



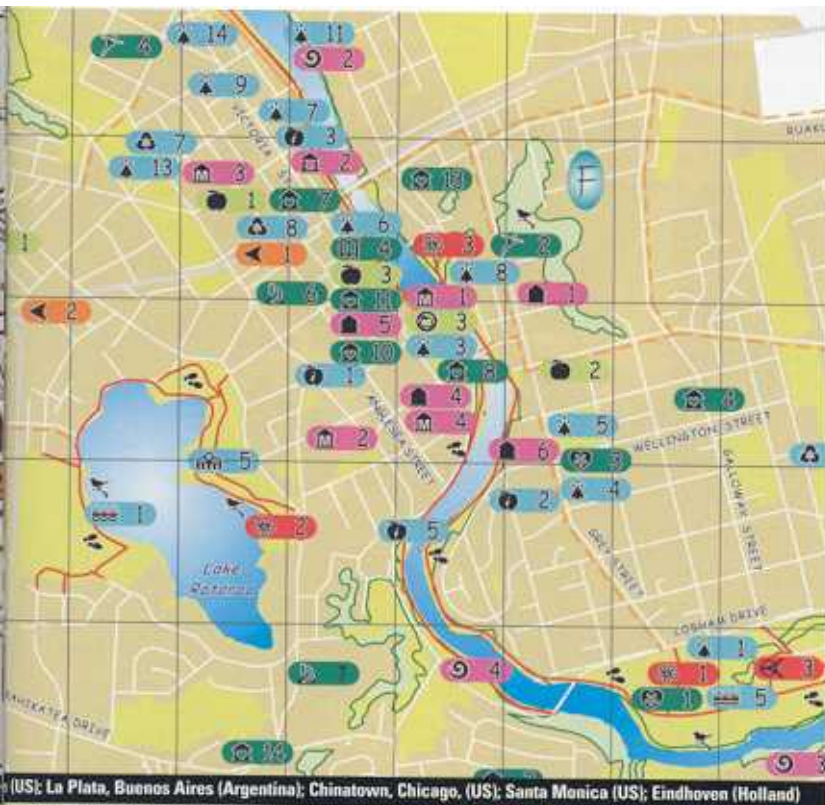
Star-Gazing Site



Open Space



Wetlands



(US): La Plata, Buenos Aires (Argentina); Chinatown, Chicago, (US); Santa Monica (US); Eindhoven (Holland)



Icon sharing

The Greenmap icons are shared between maps of different cities. The icons give continuity to a global network of local grassroots projects. It means the visual language of the Greenmap can be read even if you don't know the language spoken in a city.

Yet it is not prescriptive. In each city that's mapped the mapmakers adapt the icons to their particular needs, inventing new icons and redefining old ones. In Singapore, for example, they added an icon for mangrove forests. In Buenos Aires certain symbols show shantytowns and self-made housing. Mappers in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, added icons to mark deforestation and soil erosion. And in Sheffield a smiling child's-face icon shows things that you can play on outdoors, for free, like playgrounds, climbing boulders and tennis courts.

And so it goes on. The Greenmap of Havana was designed for schools to teach children about sustainability. In Toronto the Greenmappers wanted a map to promote green tourism. The Greenmap could help visitors enjoy a city they don't already know, or it could help current residents access environmental and community resources they maybe hadn't noticed before.

The Greenmap gives more choices for people who want to buy locally grown food, who don't want to support multinationals. The Greenmap encourages community participation, encourages really inhabiting the city space – enjoying it and getting to know your neighbours. Community centres shown on the map host time banks and community credit unions.

The Greenmap is part of localisation, not globalisation. It shows the economy that is particular to a city, not one that is the same everywhere. It is about working and playing together, rather than just buying and consuming alone.

The Greenmap re-imagines the city; it shows what is already there, and could serve for inspiration for what might be. It gives you back the city – not in someone else's sterile view, but as a riotous living tapestry of human activity. It manifests the connections between the environment and culture, between humans and nature. By aiming towards a sustainable city, it aims to create links between now and the future.

There could, and should, be a Greenmap for every city. Maybe there is already a Greenmap of your city. Maybe there isn't. Maybe you could be the person to start to make it happen.

Maps pretend to be objective, but always just show a selected view of the world. Whose vision of the world are you buying?

Visit www.greenmap.org for more. On maps in general, read *The Power of Maps* by Dennis Wood. Tom Stafford is a research assistant in the Department of Psychology at the University of Sheffield and a coordinator with the Sheffield Greenmap Project

THE HISTORY OF GREENMAPS

Wendy Brewer designed the original icons for the Greenmap system. They were first used in the Greenmap of New York in 1995. The 200th Greenmap project was launched in Kuala Lumpur this March; the city will be the 21st world capital to be mapped. Greenmaps now cover 37 countries on all six continents.

Explore the Greenmap network on the internet at www.greenmap.org. The copyright of the Greenmap Icons belongs to Modern World Design 1999.



Oil Spill



Oil & Natural Gas Facility



Underground Storage Tank



Officially Contaminated Site



Toxic Chemical Store



Waste Dump



Mining Site



Nuclear Facility & Waste Site



Scientific Research Site



Protest Point