

Community Mapping Workshop

Purpose

To create a map of existing and potential places to be active in a community. This map can be used to document assets, identify gaps, and as the basis for a walking guide or web app.

Overview

Every community has places to be physically active. This can include sidewalks, parks, bicycle lanes, recreation centers, hiking trails, school tracks, State or National Parks and Forests, or places that host exercise classes.

Bring together a diverse group of community members who know what some of these existing places are. You might start by leading a walking tour in order to get people thinking about the kinds of things to map. Allow at least two hours for the workshop – more if it will include a walking tour.

Materials

You'll need a large street map or aerial photograph of the area in order to create your map. You should be able to obtain this from your county assessor's office or from your regional planning agency.

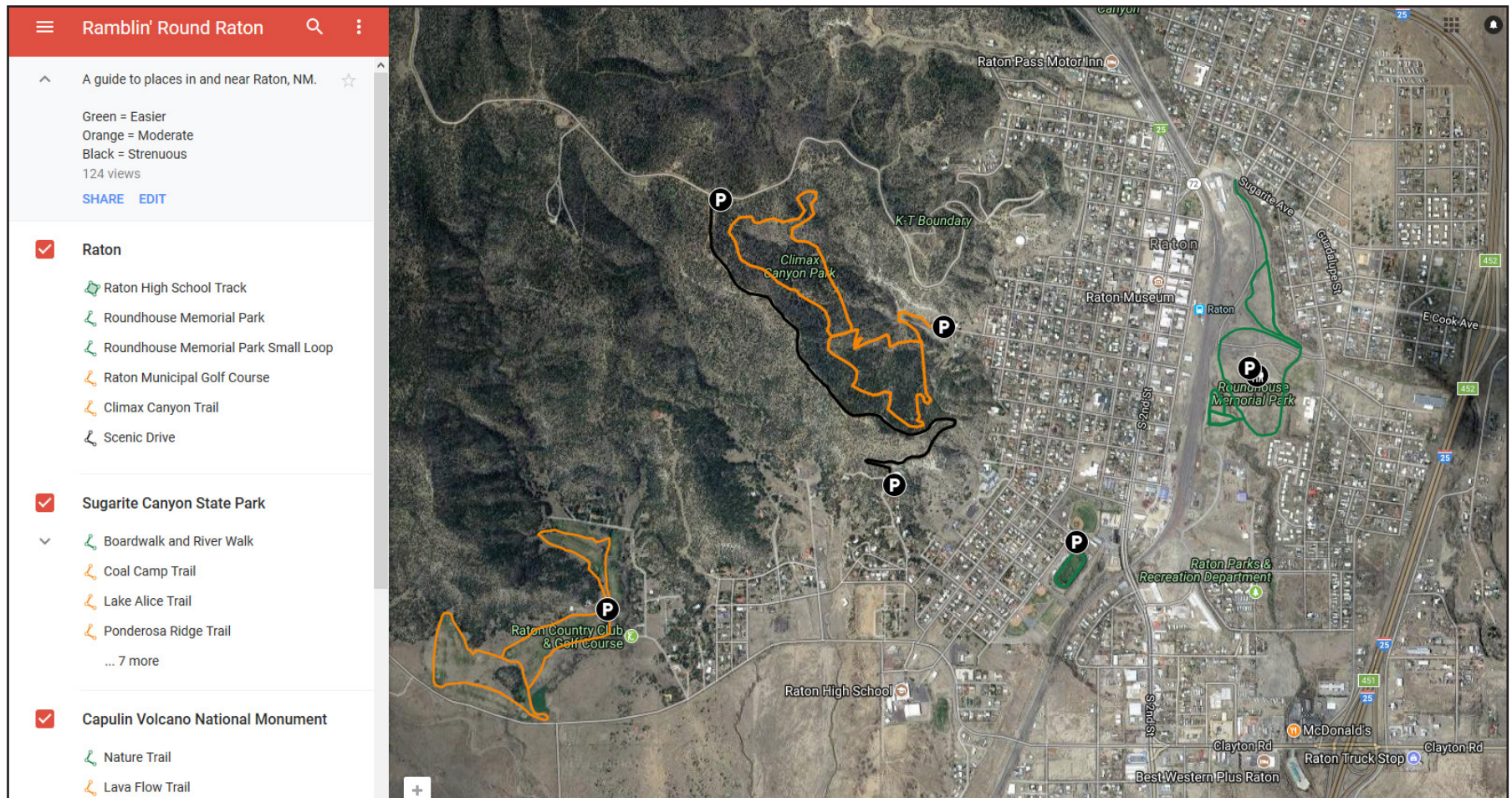
Once you have your group together, you can start to map your community's existing places to be active. These are the strengths that you will build from. Mapping these resources will help you to see where there are needs and opportunities. It can also help you to see how these places might be connected with additional paths, sidewalks, and crosswalks. For example, maybe your community has two municipal parks but residents don't feel safe walking between them because they need to cross a busy road. Maybe there is a sidewalk that connects the post office and the pharmacy so that people can run errands on foot rather than driving. These are important things to map. Having a plan that links your entire community together will help you to determine priorities and to get funding from NMDOT and other sources.



Community members assessing walking routes in Edgewood.

Steps — Create a Google Map

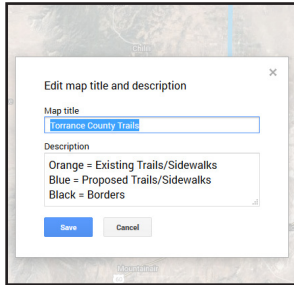
Once your community has identified the places to be active, you may wish to use this information to create a digital, shareable map. This might be a planning document that is shared only among the coalition, or it could be a digital guidebook that is shared with the community at large. You might create one of each.



Google Map of walking paths in the City of Raton, organized by location and difficulty.

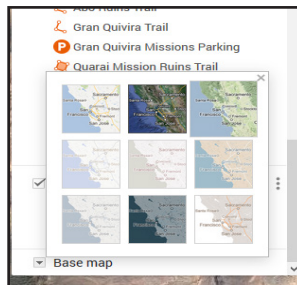
To Create a Google Map:

1. Go to maps.google.com.
2. Log in using a Google account. If you don't have one, you can create one for free.
3. Under Menu, choose Your Places, then Maps.
4. Click Create Map at the bottom.
5. Name your map and give it a description.



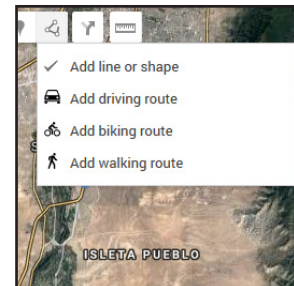
Step 5

6. In the menu on the left, you should see something called Untitled Layer. It's up to you how you want to organize your map layers. You might have one layer for existing places to be active and a separate one for potential places to be active. Or one layer for in-town walking paths and one for out-of-town walking paths. Name your layers accordingly
7. At the bottom of the Layers menu, click the Base Map arrow to choose an appropriate base map.



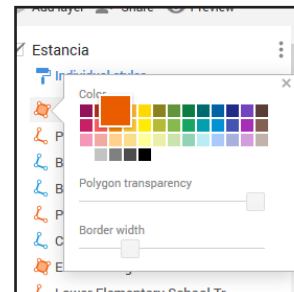
Step 7

8. In the search bar, search for the name/address of the first place you'll add to your map. If your resource comes up on the map, click + Add to map and continue to step #10. If it does not, continue to the next step.
9. Click on either the marker (if you want to add a point) or the line (if you want to add a path/route) below the search bar to add an item. Draw your marker or your line.



Step 9

10. In the dialogue that pops up, add a name and description for your addition.
11. You should see your addition appear in your layer to the left. Click on it, then click on the image of the paint bucket. Here you can choose an appropriate icon and color.



Step 11

12. Repeat this process for all of the items on your map.
13. Click the Share icon above the layers menu to share this with others.

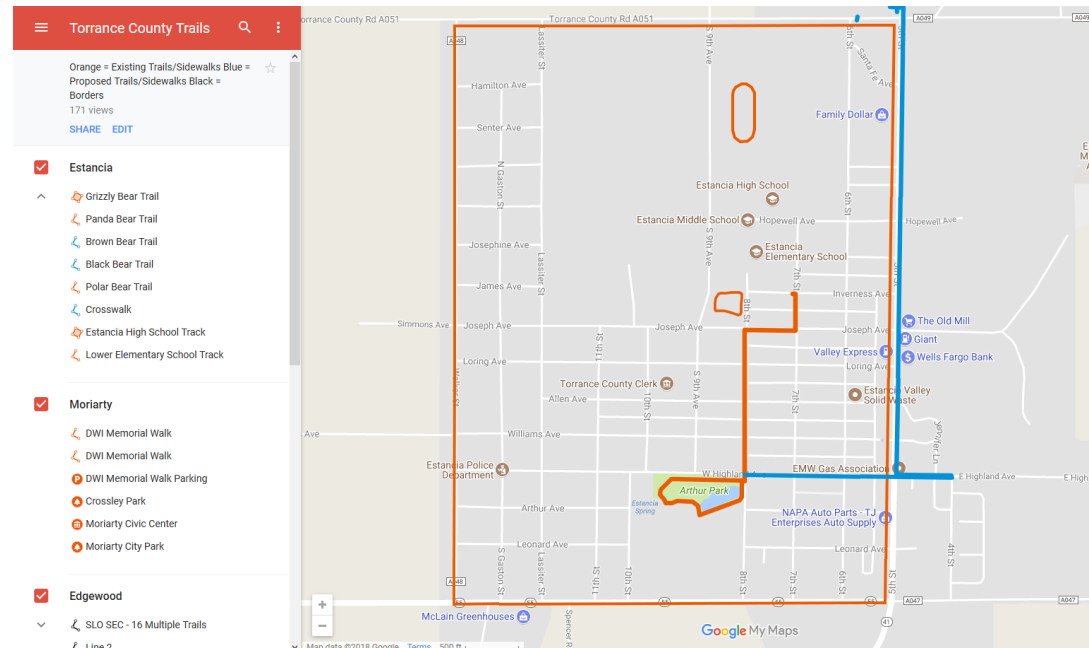
Lessons From the Field

Torrance County Partnership Trails group held a mapping workshop in 2017 in order to identify safe and accessible places where community members could walk. Individuals from the DWI Memorial, Department of Health, New Mexico State University Extension Office, Edgewood Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Prevention Research Center participated. One member brought a large satellite photo of the county obtained from the regional council of governments. Other participants brought smaller maps of towns within the county and numerous old planning documents. The documents, combined with local knowledge, went into creating a comprehensive map of places to walk in the county. The map also included places where paths might go in the future. Participants drew paths on the satellite photo using two different colored markers – one for paths that already exist and one for paths that they would like to create.

At the end of the workshop, three interns with the PRC left with the marked up satellite photo. They spent the next few weeks converting this document into a Google Map. At the following Partnership Trails Meeting, they shared the draft of the map with the group. Since that time, Partnership Trails has been using it to identify and prioritize projects that they'd like to take on. They are able to check the distances of trails and see where they are in location to one another. They also used the information to create a series of tri-fold handouts of places to walk in three of the towns in Torrance County – Moriarty, Estancia, and Mountainair.



Torrance County Health Council members and partners walk through the Village of Mountainair to scout potential walking routes.



The Google Map that members of Torrance County Partnership Trails use to identify and prioritize projects.



Additional Resources

- [Success Mapping: a brief guide](#)
- [Google My Maps Help Center](#)
- [umap](#)

Questions? Comments?
[Send us a message](#)