



# PARTNERING WITH A RURAL COMMUNITY TO DESIGN AND TEST A SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION PROGRAM

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# STUDY AIM

To assess multilevel factors influencing a rural county's capacity to develop an effective youth substance use prevention program using a community participatory and ethnographic approach.

# BACKGROUND

Rural communities have high rates of smoking and smokeless tobacco use and tobacco use is correlated with alcohol and other drug use.

Healthy People 2020 points to long-term health threats of youth substance use and the need to increase the proportion of youth who remain substance free (*DHHS, 2010*).

Yet many rural counties have little knowledge of effective strategies to prevent substance use.



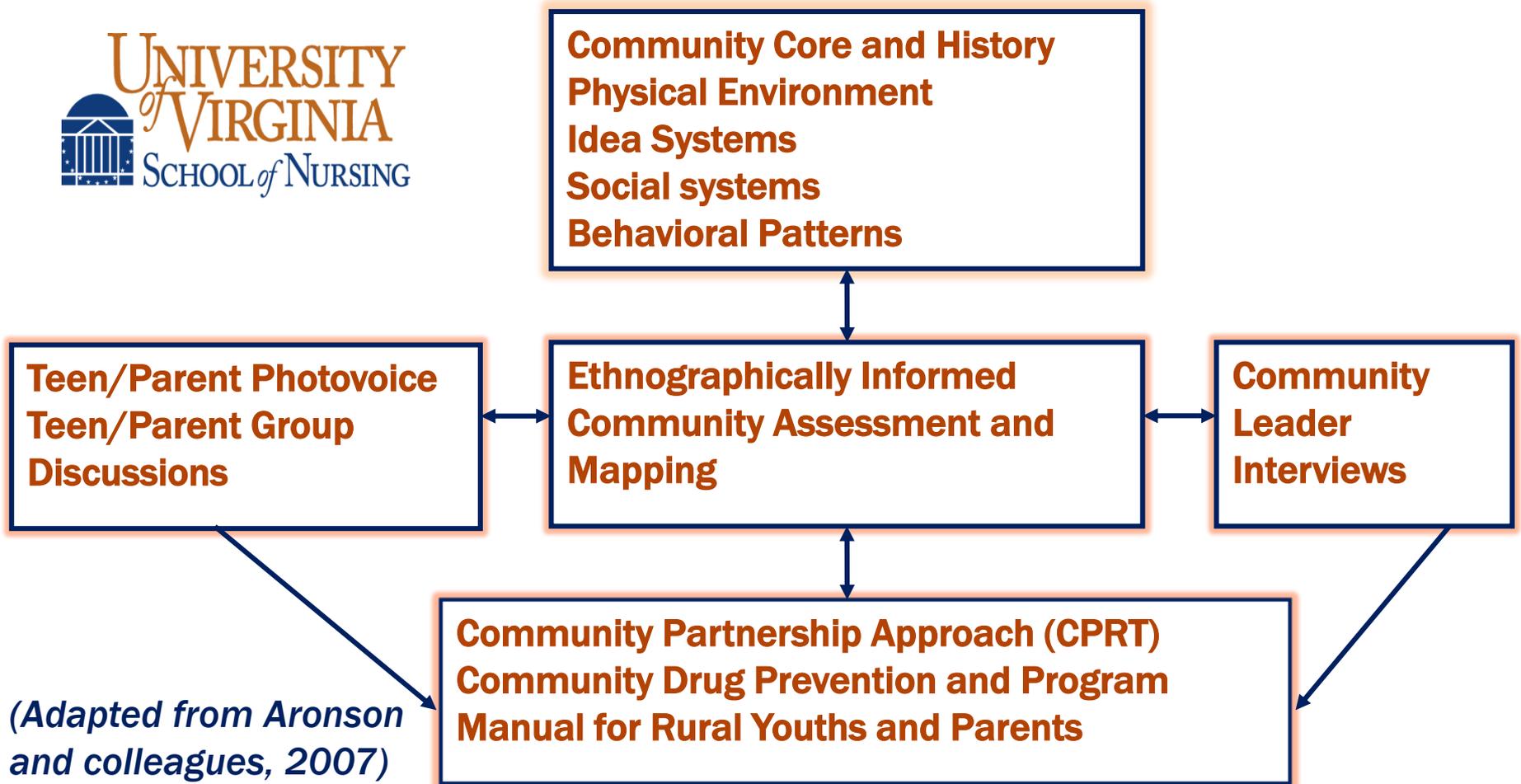
# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATORY ETHNOGRAPHIC MODEL

Builds on community-based participatory research (CBPR)

- Engages community members and leaders in action steps from problem identification to project evaluation and dissemination (*Israel et al., 2005*).

Ethnographic approach to substance use prevention

- Local community knowledge of substance nonuse and use provides a rich understanding of health assets and community needs;
- The environment surrounding substance-related health and illness; and,
- Attitudes, beliefs, and traditions related to substance nonuse- and use (*Agar, 1986; Karim, 1997; Trotter, 1993*).



**Figure 1. A Community Participation and Ethnographic Model**  
*(Kulbok , Thatcher, Park, & Meszaros, 2012)*

# METHODS



## Ethnographic study design

- Enables the community to identify important places for youth, from multiple voices, where an intervention program might be most effective.
- Emphasizes local knowledge in the design of data gathering and in the actual data.
- Increases sustainability of an intervention based on important places and depending on the congruence of “place” with experiences and perceptions of stakeholders including youth, parents, and community leaders.

## GIS mapping

- Can layer many types of data: Location of services, demographics, qualitative.
- Used in collecting, assessing, and displaying data.

# METHODS (CON'T)



## Spatial data gathered from:

- Monthly meetings of community participatory research team (CPRT), *i.e.*, 4 community leaders (CLs), 7 parents, 18 youth (during 4-year study);
- Interviews with 15 CLs, 39 youths, and 7 parents conducted by teams of investigators and CPRT members.



# METHODS (CON'T)



Interview question development

Developed with CPRT by nominal group process used to finalize interview guide.



Individual and group interviews (CLs, youth, and parents in the community)

Audiotaped interviews conducted by teams of researchers and CPRT members.



Transcripts analysis using constant comparative methods

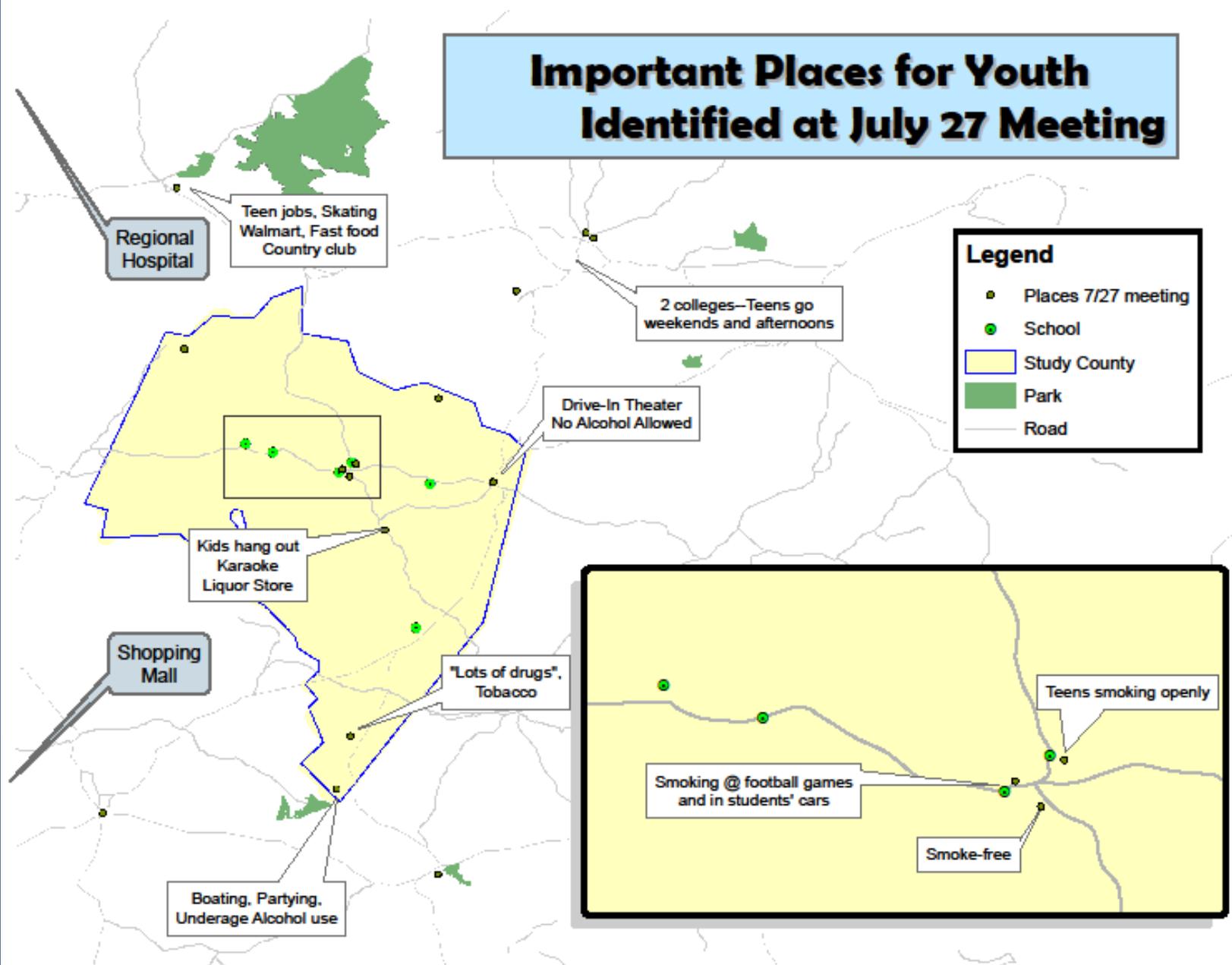
Important places for youth substance nonuse and use were identified.



Places grouped and compared among and between group members

Meanings and roles of places were interpreted.

# Important Places for Youth Identified at July 27 Meeting



# RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS

Schools

Home / Family

Church

Sports

Recreation / Fitness

Tobacco farms

Rural County

Jobs

Health facilities

Police

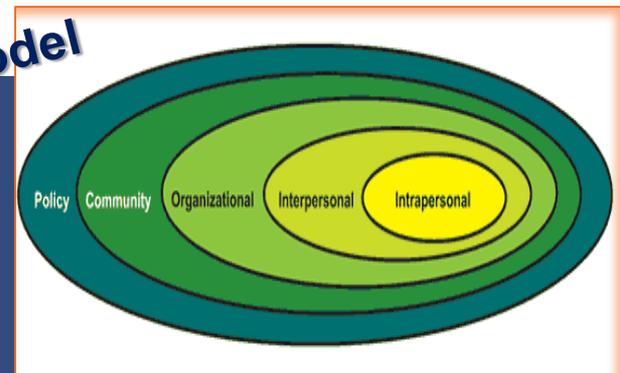
Unsupervised youth gatherings

Transportation

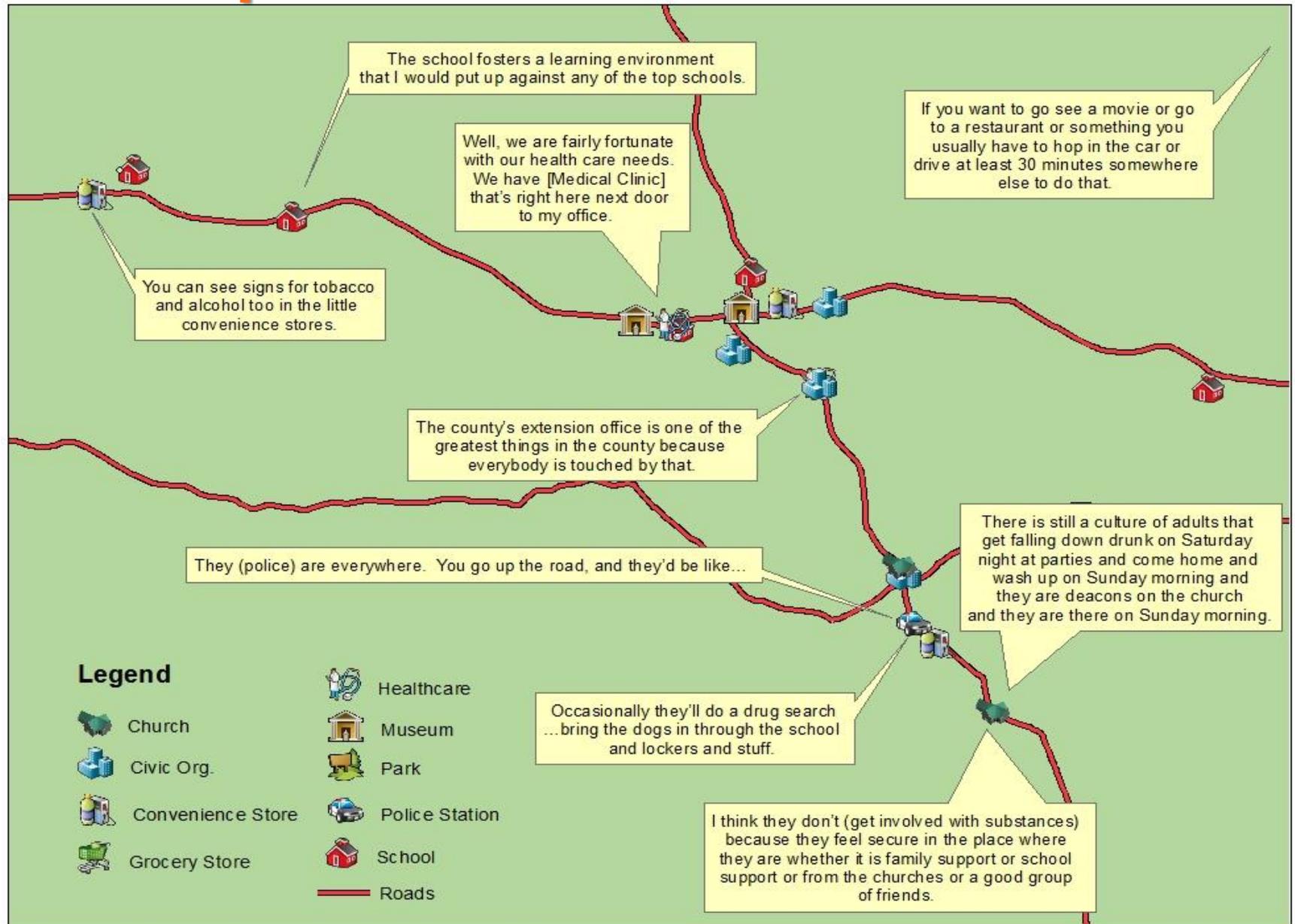
Advertisement

(Illegal) Markets

Ecological Model



# Spatial Data from Interviews



# RESULTS

## □ School

- Pride in school, preparing for future, social network, limited resources

## □ Home/ Family

- Importance of family connections, positive or negative influences, keeping problems quiet, boredom



# RESULTS

## □ Sports/ Recreation

- Community event, multiple local sports activities, coach as role model, few alternatives to team sports, no recreation center.



## □ Church

- “Bible belt,” active youth groups, adult role models, social support



# RESULTS

## □ Tobacco fields

- Perceived influence on use, tradition

## □ Law enforcement

- Visibility, personal connections with community



# RESULTS

## ❑ Job

- Lack of jobs for youth and adults

## ❑ Health facilities

- Local, role models

## ❑ Transportation

- Distance, car dependent

## ❑ Rural area

- Lack vision for future of youth, wish for more opportunities for youth, safety through slower pace and social connections



# RESULTS

## ❑ Unsupervised gathering

- Fields, houses, roads, lots

## ❑ Advertisement

- Near schools, noticed by youth

## ❑ Illegal markets

- ID enforcement, older buyers, informal sellers



# DISCUSSION

Place and environment are important factors in adolescent behavioral risk reduction.

Through interviews with diverse groups, we found that a place can have different meanings and roles for youth, parents, and community leaders.

There are few places for youth that are universally experienced as either protective or motivating factors for substance use.

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