

Cambridge People



MIT graduate student Jerrad Pierce is making a map of Cambridge that outlines the city's best — and worse — ecological resources.

STAFF PHOTOS BY KATE FLOCK

Mapmaker helps you find the green way around

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CHRONICLE STAFF

For people who toss a soda bottle into the nearby trashcan or who leave the bike at home because the racks are burgeoning, Jerrad Pierce is trying to turn things around.

Pierce, a senior undergraduate in urban studies at MIT, is plotting a green map of Cambridge. The map includes T stops, buses, public art spots, wildlife habitats, ecologically friendly businesses, and polluters as well.

Green maps use a detailed set of symbols to plot ecological features within a given area.

"People on campus complain, 'I don't recycle because there aren't any bins,'" said Pierce, 26. "Well, I thought, 'Like hell, there aren't,' so I decided to map them."

Pierce has devoted much of the last year to the project, which included research such as locating all the old landfills in the city.

"A lot of this data is pre-existing, but it's spread out all over the place," said Pierce. "Unless you're a very dedicated person, you're not going to know where to find it in the first place."

Included on the map are used clothing, book and music stores and places to buy fairly traded goods. By mapping public transportation and art, Pierce hopes people will be encouraged to get out and foot, bike or bus and explore.

He also mapped sources of emission, be it power plants or dry cleaners.



Jerrad Pierce shows off his map of ecological resources in Cambridge.

"It can be a little controversial, because I want to include the major polluters," said Pierce. "We have a lot of biotech companies, some of which happen to emit."

"I want people to be concerned, but I don't want them to freak out and say, 'Oh my God, I'm living in a cesspool.'"

The California native landed at \$1,000 grant from the National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology Program. But Pierce has thus far held tight to the money, which he wants to use toward printing costs to get the map into as many hands as possible.

"I want to distribute this to every possible person," said Pierce. "Not just at the Harvest Coop or Whole Foods — that's kind of preaching to the choir."

Pierce, who lives on Speridakis Terrace, said he always cared for the environment, and wants to do what he can to generate the same enthusiasm in others.

"I've always been into environmental stuff," said Pierce. "That's why I came to MIT in the first place."

"Just trying to get the information out is my goal."

Although green maps have been around almost a decade, they have yet to swell in popularity, said Pierce.

"There are about 100 made worldwide, so it's still surprisingly new," said Pierce. "Another eventual goal is to try to get more public involvement in the project."

Pierce's map also includes areas one mile outside Cambridge.

"If you happen to live on a border, you care about stuff within at least a three-block radius," said Pierce. "Pollution shows no boundaries."

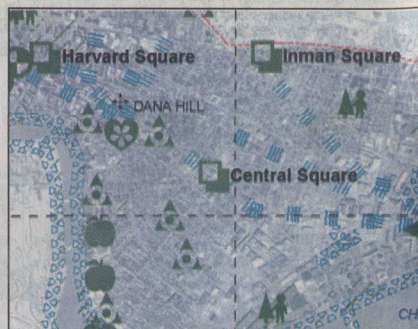
Pierce continues the search for additional funding and hopes to get the maps out this fall.

For more information about the project, the Web site is <http://green-map.mit.edu>.

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The map of Cambridge includes icons that label resources such as organic grocery stores (apples) and ZipCars (a circle inside a triangle).



Bike racks and green space are two of the resources that have found their way onto Pierce's green map of Cambridge.