Southernside Neighborhood
Vision Plan

Clemson University City & Regional Planning Department
This project was completed in the Fall of 2011 by the Clemson University City & Regional Planning Master’s Program in partnership with the City of Greenville Department of Community and Economic Development

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# Table of Contents

Executive Summary ........................................................................................................................................................................................................ 4
- Introduction ............................................................................................................................................................................................................... 4
- Purpose ...................................................................................................................................................................................................................... 5
- Neighborhood Overview ............................................................................................................................................................................................ 6

Neighborhood Planning Process .................................................................................................................................................................................... 8
- Step 1: Existing Conditions Report ............................................................................................................................................................................. 9
  - History .................................................................................................................................................................................................................... 9
  - Important Stakeholders and Community Influences ........................................................................................................................................... 10
  - Population ............................................................................................................................................................................................................ 11
  - Cultural Facilities .................................................................................................................................................................................................. 14
  - Environment ......................................................................................................................................................................................................... 17
  - Economic Conditions ............................................................................................................................................................................................ 20
  - Community Services ............................................................................................................................................................................................. 22
  - Housing ................................................................................................................................................................................................................ 24
  - Transportation ..................................................................................................................................................................................................... 28

- Step 2: Community Participation ............................................................................................................................................................................. 32
  - Feedback Session #1 – Map and Post-It Activity ........................................................................................................................................ 32
  - Feedback Session #2 – Neighborhood Characteristics Analysis & Dots Activity ................................................................................................. 34
  - Meeting Outcomes .............................................................................................................................................................................................. 36

- Step 3: Design Process ............................................................................................................................................................................................. 37
  - Southernside Vision Plan Goals ........................................................................................................................................................................... 37
  - Design Process ..................................................................................................................................................................................................... 39
Recommendations and Implementation Strategies .................................................................................................................. 51
  Neighborhood Services & Amenities ........................................................................................................................................... 51
  Neighborhood Identity .......................................................................................................................................................... 53
  Connectivity .................................................................................................................................................................. 56
  Streetscape & Infrastructure Improvements .......................................................................................................................... 57
  Housing Action Plan ......................................................................................................................................................... 62
Key Implementation Recommendations & Policies .......................................................................................................................... 65
Conclusion ........................................................................................................................................................................... 66

List of Figures

Figure 1: Aerial View of Southernside .................................................................................................................................................. 6
Figure 2: Aerial Map of Southernside .................................................................................................................................................. 7
Figure 3: Population Density .......................................................................................................................................................... 12
Figure 4: Close Up of Population Density ........................................................................................................................................ 13
Figure 5: Cultural Facilities Inventory ........................................................................................................................................... 16
Figure 6: Aerial of Floodplain Area ................................................................................................................................................... 17
Figure 7: Existing Environmental Conditions ..................................................................................................................................... 18
Figure 8: Flood Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Floodplain ....................................................................................... 19
Figure 9: Potential Corridor on W. Washington St. ........................................................................................................................... 20
Figure 10: Economic Conditions ....................................................................................................................................................... 21
Figure 11: Community Facilities & Infrastructure ......................................................................................................................... 23
Figure 12: Southernside Housing Conditions Assessment ........................................................................................................... 27
Figure 13: Existing Transportation Facilities & Infrastructure ...................................................................................................... 29
Figure 14: Transportation Facilities & Transit Routes ...................................................................................................................... 30
Figure 15: Public Input for Tax Dollar Priority ............................................................................................................................. 35
Figure 16: Southernside Conceptual Diagram ............................................................................................................................... 40
List of Tables

Table 1: Population by Race & Ethnicity, US Census 2010 .......................................................................................................................... 11
Table 2: Housing Summary, US Census 2005-2009 American Community Survey .......................................................................................... 24
Table 3: Housing Utilities, ESRI Consumer Expenditure Survey 2010 ........................................................................................................... 24
Table 4: Community Services & Amenities Action Plan ............................................................................................................................ 53
Table 5: Neighborhood Identity Action Items ........................................................................................................................................ 54
Table 6: Connectivity Action Items ......................................................................................................................................................... 57
Table 7: Streetscape & Infrastructure Action Items ................................................................................................................................. 59
Table 8: Housing Action Items ............................................................................................................................................................. 64
Executive Summary

The Southernside neighborhood presents a unique redevelopment opportunity for a dynamic mixed-use community in Greenville, SC. The first step is to establish a clear vision of how such a neighborhood would look and function. This vision can be achieved by analyzing on-the-ground realities and collaborating with neighborhood residents to design a feasible, forward-thinking unified plan accommodating to all residents. Once developed, the new neighborhood vision is reflected in the goals and strategies of the neighborhood plan. This vision planning process for the Southernside neighborhood was completed in the fall of 2011 and sought to address the following five goals:

- Increase access to commercial centers, employment, and recreational open space
- Enhance the Southernside community character
- Provide multi-modal circulation and greenway access within neighborhood
- Improve and enhance streetscape and neighborhood infrastructure
- Encourage infill and redevelopment to improve housing conditions for residents and to promote economic development

These goals are expanded upon later in this document and include action items and estimated timeframes for implementation. The end result is a plan that leverages existing opportunities while charting a path towards an improved quality of life for current and future Southernside residents.

Introduction

The Southernside Neighborhood is a diverse community rich in history and character, conveniently nestled on the boundary of Greenville, SC’s Central Business District (downtown Greenville). The neighborhood’s charm, traditional layout and access to transportation establish a framework for a unique community within Greenville’s urban core. The following analysis and proposed neighborhood plan serve as guides to leverage the existing conditions and assets of an already active and engaging community, while strengthening the community character of Southernside and embracing the ideals of community enhancement, sustainability, and connectivity.

This report documents baseline conditions in Southernside as they exist today, as well as opportunities and challenges within the neighborhood. This baseline information is then used to provide a vision plan concept and framework for improving quality of life in Southernside. Understanding the daily dynamics of the physical, economic and demographic components of an urban neighborhood cannot be emphasized enough. Through a detailed analysis and community input, neighborhood conditions suggest repair and redevelopment is a high priority and a feasible opportunity. The following analysis expands upon the unique opportunities of
Southernside with regards to location, historical and character value, linkage with future city and regional transportation objectives, and the potential for developing neighborhood and regional open spaces and greenways.

**Purpose**
The last housing strategy for the Southernside neighborhood was drafted in 2007. Residents were surveyed about the Southernside community and identified several goals to be included in the housing strategy. Among these goals were: elimination of blight; provision of sustainable and mixed-income housing opportunities; diversity in housing types; rehabilitation; improvements in public safety, infrastructure, and community facilities; provision of economic empowerment opportunities; strengthening the West Washington Corridor; and identification of key redevelopment sites. The Southernside Neighborhood Housing Strategy was drafted but was not finalized or enacted.

In the fall of 2010, the City of Greenville received a Community Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. By combining $1.8 million in funding from the Community Challenge Grant, a TIGER II Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, and over $1 million from local and federal investments, the City began a three-year project called Connections for Sustainability: Linking Greenville’s Neighborhoods to Jobs and Open Space. This project will create connections between affordable housing, transportation options, economic development opportunities, and open space in the west side of the City by focusing on citywide planning, west side comprehensive planning, education and outreach, and community involvement. The overarching goal of the Connections for Sustainability project is to create a comprehensive plan for Greenville’s west side to provide livable neighborhoods and communities for the City’s residents.

Along with creating a comprehensive plan for the west side, the City will fulfill the request for a neighborhood plan (this document) for Southernside residents. This plan will not only focus on improving housing but will also provide strategies for increasing connectivity, improving streetscapes, upgrading infrastructure, and providing additional neighborhood goods and services such as a local market and small shops. In addition to enhancing the overall quality of life, the City of Greenville anticipates that the neighborhood vision plan will:

- Encourage infill development, redevelopment and rehabilitation of housing, as well as commercial and mixed use developments
- Encourage owner and developer investments while enhancing neighborhood character and value
- Prioritize City of Greenville investments and capital projects
The principal goal of this plan is to leverage previous planning efforts and to unite the community under one vision. This vision will aid city officials, developers, and neighborhood stakeholders in making future-oriented development decisions. In doing so, this plan will identify areas targeted for rehabilitation and redevelopment, as well as address measures for improving infrastructure, infill and community assets, neighborhood commercial-retail and service oriented opportunities. The end result will be a blueprint for creating a dynamic mixed use community that remains unmistakably Southernside.

**Neighborhood Overview**

As a mixed-use neighborhood, Southernside encompasses 338 acres, or 0.53 square miles. It includes a wide variety of housing types, cultural and income groups, as well as commercial and industrial properties located approximately one mile due west from downtown Greenville. Such proximity offers convenient access to a number of attractive amenities: 75 restaurants, the Peace Center, Falls Park, Clemson University’s MBA program, and Flour Field among others. As a result, Southernside has recently experienced increased redevelopment activity by personal investors, real estate developers, and city officials. Since 1990, several projects and plans have been initiated by private developers, the city, and a combination of the both including:

- The Washington Pointe- a 29-unit development of homeownership and senior rental units, located off West Washington Street
- Mulberry Court Apartments- a 42-unit rental community for low-to-moderate income families
- The Mulberry at Pinckney development- a 34-unit mixed income homeownership community located at the corner of Mulberry and Pinckney Streets
- Brockwood Senior Apartments- a 68-unit community, located on West Washington Street
- Mulberry Street – Streetscape improvement project completed in 2007
- The West Washington Corridor Plan - completed in 2005
- The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center
- A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School
- Potential regional park and passive parkland- to be located south of Oscar Street (currently in planning phase)
Neighborhood Boundaries

The Southernside neighborhood is located west of Downtown Greenville. It is bounded to the north by the Pete Hollis Gateway Corridor and Viola Neighborhood, by Norfolk Southern Railroad to the west, by Mayberry St. to the south, and by the Hampton Pinckney Neighborhood, Butler Avenue, and Westfield Street to the east.
Neighborhood Planning Process

This vision planning process for Southernside incorporated an analysis of 2010 U.S. Census data and city documents, as well as feedback and guidance from neighborhood residents and city officials. As such, the plan reflects resident and stakeholder desires for growth and redevelopment within the neighborhood. Clemson graduate students began working on the vision plan in August of 2011 under the leadership of the community development and planning staff from the City of Greenville.

The students began the planning process by reviewing previous Southernside plans, including the 2007 Housing Strategy, and collecting information on the existing conditions within the neighborhood. This information included the history of the neighborhood, as well as data on population, cultural facilities, environment, economic conditions, community services, housing, and transportation. In addition to documenting information on the Southernside community, the students visited the neighborhood to photograph, map, and document existing structures and housing conditions. Using information gathered from research and the site visit, the students were able to identify target areas, constraints, and opportunities within the neighborhood to help guide in the creation of the neighborhood vision plan.
Step 1: Existing Conditions Report
This section identifies the existing physical, demographic, and economic conditions of Southernside as they exist in 2011. In doing so, this analysis creates a foundation of Southernside’s current characteristics to better define where the neighborhood envisions itself in thirty years. Understanding the daily elements of an area and how these opportunities and challenges speak to the physical design of the community is critical in developing a neighborhood plan. The following sections provide an overview of the neighborhood’s history, population, cultural facilities, environment, economic conditions, community services, housing, and transportation in order to construct an initial assessment of the neighborhood in 2011. This information is also useful in identifying the neighborhood’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and potential shortcomings in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the community plan. Collectively, this information will help guide objectives and goals for the Southernside vision plan.

History
Earliest known history of the community revolves largely around the work of individual community leaders and community organizations. Particularly, the community leadership of Lila Mae Brock and Mary Duckett has been pivotal in achieving Southernside community initiatives with respect to development and planning. Brock, a neighborhood resident from 1938-1996, is credited with leading a number of neighborhood movements encouraging many of the existing facilities and services that are found in Southernside today. Thanks to her hard work, the Southernside Community Center was opened in 1982. The upkeep and management of the center has always been a community effort relying on church donations and the individual sacrifices of Brock herself. Brock and the Southernside Neighborhood Association are credited with obtaining Department of Housing and Urban Development funds to build 68 units for the elderly and handicapped (currently known as the Brockwood Apartments). As director of the Southernside Community Center, Brock operated and coordinated several programs including a noon meal program feeding 1,600 homeless and senior citizens every month, Boys and Girls Scouts Clubs, supervised recreation programs, a
tutoring program in partnership with Furman University, and a daily after-school program. Mary Duckett currently serves as the President of Southernside Neighborhoods (SNIA) in Action neighborhood association. As a significant part of Southernside’s heritage, leadership and organization involvement are key objectives in the creation of this vision plan.

**Important Stakeholders and Community Influences**
Several stakeholders have been identified in the neighborhood. These include community residents, property owners, business owners, the Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School, neighborhood churches, the City of Greenville, the City’s Public Works Department, the Post Office, Miracle Hill Rescue Mission, Greenville Organic Foods Organization, and the Norfolk-Southern railroad corporation. Each of these stakeholders have their own interests and needs, which need to be identified and taken into consideration as future plans are developed.

In addition to stakeholders, there are several community influences that will play significant roles in the development of any future plans. The Southernside neighborhood is adjacent to the Hampton-Pinckney Neighborhood and Historic Overlay District, the Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center, A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School, and the expanding Swamp Rabbit Trail. Each of these elements has implications for the neighborhood. The historic Hampton-Pinckney neighborhood presents opportunities for Southernside to consider design guidelines that highlight the historic character of the neighborhood and surrounding homes. The Kroc Center and A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School present recreational, educational, and employment opportunities for community residents.

The neighborhood is located next to the Pete Hollis Gateway which has been identified as the commercial hub for Southernside and other surrounding neighborhoods, such as Viola. Southernside’s proximity to downtown Greenville and nearby neighborhoods can act as a catalyst for redevelopment, further diversifying the neighborhood and providing additional services and housing options to its residents. Lastly, a portion of the neighborhood is located within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplains. The environmental impacts of development need to be considered, particularly in the design framework for open space concepts within the neighborhood.

Transportation plans should consider integrating the neighborhood with these sites through sidewalks, bike trails, and the current road system. The Swamp Rabbit Trail offers walkable and bikeable alternatives for residents to access different parts of the City, as well as additional recreation opportunities.
Population
The population of the Southernside neighborhood is a relatively small percentage (2.4%) of the total population of the City of Greenville, yet it represents a substantial portion of the population living in close proximity to downtown. The neighborhood is also relatively diverse, with representatives from all major racial cohorts as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Southernside is historically an African American neighborhood, making up just more than 70% of the population in 2010. Whites are the second largest demographic at roughly 23%, and the Hispanic population represents a little over 5% of the neighborhood population. The existing diversity in Southernside is seen as a valued asset of the community. It is important that the vision plan aims to foster cultural heritage and neighborhood tradition in this unique urban neighborhood setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population by Race</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Population by Race & Ethnicity, US Census 2010, ESRI Bus. Analyst

Source: US Census 2005-2009 American Community Survey
Figures 3 & 4 represent the population density in and around the Southernside neighborhood boundaries. Southernside is quite dense compared to more suburban neighborhoods outside of the city core. This precedent lends potential to maintain or increase density while at the same time keeping the neighborhood character and diverse demographic that makes Southernside unique.
**Cultural Facilities**

The Southernside neighborhood contains several cultural facilities. These facilities encourage social interactions, the creation of relationships, and provide residents with opportunities to become involved in their community. Among these facilities are:

- **The Southernside Community Center** – opened under the leadership of Lila Mae Brock in 1982
- **Upstate Circle of Friends** – provides educational and recreational opportunities for growth and learning for at-risk children, children with disabilities, and their families
- **Miracle Hill Greenville Rescue Mission** – a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing daily meals for the local homeless population
- **Greenville Organic Foods Organization (GOFO) Headquarters** – GOFO teaches residents about the benefits of organic farming, and promotes growing organic foods through a local community garden
- **Six Community Churches**
  - Mountain View Baptist Church
  - Bethel Church of God
  - St. Peter’s Fire Baptized Holiness Church
  - The Holy Temple Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith
  - Mattoon Presbyterian Church
  - Tabernacle Baptist Church
- **Four Community Parks**
  - West Washington Park
  - Newtown Park
  - Pinckney-Fludd Park
  - Mayberry Park
In addition to the cultural resources within the neighborhood, Southernside is located in close proximity to other noteworthy facilities such as:

- **A.J. Whittenberg Elementary** - The first engineering focused elementary school in South Carolina

- **The Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center** - (the first Kroc Center in South Carolina) The Kroc Center has sixteen tennis courts, a pool with a waterslide, a rock-climbing wall, rooms that can be used for conferences and meetings, and a wellness and fitness center

- **Greenville County Museum of Art** - In addition to displaying artwork in several galleries, the museum hosts gallery talks, lectures, and mini-courses. Music and art classes are held on Sundays

- **Greenville Little Theatre** - The Greenville Little Theatre offers acting classes for adults and children, as well as dancing classes for adults

- **The Children’s Museum of the Upstate** - This hands-on museum provides children a fun and interactive opportunity to learn about topics such as conservation, construction, television studios, space, and the human body

- **Hughes Main Library** - Provides residents with the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities such as book discussions, computer classes, crafts, story time, and language classes

- **Hampton-Pinckney Historic District** - This beautiful and historic neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 12, 1977

- **Upcountry History Museum**
The Southernside Neighborhood presents many opportunities for the creation of additional cultural facilities, such as parks and gardens, as well as the enhancement of the neighborhood’s community center. Several major cultural facilities reside just outside of the neighborhood boundary. More residents can enjoy these facilities through increased multi-modal opportunities, enhanced infrastructure, walking and biking trails, traditional street grids, and sidewalks.
**Environment**

The most significant environmental constraint in the Southernside neighborhood is the presence of a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated floodplain and the Reedy River. The floodplain surrounds most of the industrial warehouse area north of the Reedy River and significant acreage south of the river, currently being utilized by the City’s Public Works department.

The floodplain presents opportunities for increased active and passive green space. The previously mentioned Southernside Housing Report discussed the opportunity for a park occupying the space where Public Works is now located. By transforming this area into a passive green space, residents and visitors will be able to enjoy the benefits of a local park where they can interact with nature and observe wildlife and ecosystems. In addition, protecting these floodplains from development will help to preserve and improve water quality in the Reedy River. Finally, by converting this land to a park, the Swamp Rabbit Trail can be further incorporated into the neighborhood, connecting residents with additional recreation opportunities as well as with nearby neighborhoods.

![Figure 6: Aerial of Floodplain Area](image)

The Southernside Neighborhood has four brownfield sites designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A brownfield is a parcel of land that is deemed to be contaminated by a hazardous pollutant. By ensuring that these brownfields are properly taken care of, the neighborhood will benefit from a healthier environment as well as additional land that can be designated as passive green space. Further investigation will be needed to address scope and necessary remediation.

There is significant potential in creating a regional open space anchor linked with the Swamp Rabbit Trail greenway network.
Figure 7: Existing Environmental Conditions
Figure 8: Flood Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Floodplain
Economic Conditions
The existing economic conditions within the neighborhood are characterized by high unemployment, as well as a deficiency of economic hubs and activity centers for employment and commerce. According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, 32% of the population was in the workforce. The neighborhood has consistently had high unemployment rates compared to the rest of the city. While access to jobs appears to be an issue, consideration should also be given to the skill set of the surrounding workforce. The neighborhood is a net importer of jobs, meaning that there are more jobs within the Southernside area than there are residents. According to ESRI forecasts for 2010 for the Southernside area, nearly 70% of the employment is in two sectors: transportation (49.9%) and services (19.9%).

The physical design of the neighborhood presents economic challenges as well. Figure 10 details the most significant land uses. Several of the buildings marked as commercial are abandoned or semi-vacant and will need to be renovated to be suitable for occupancy.

Figure 10 also presents two corridors for potential commercial development on Pete Hollis Boulevard (northern arrow) and Washington Street Corridor (southern arrow). The West Washington Street corridor leads from the Amtrak Station, which represents a significant portion of economic activity within the neighborhood, to downtown Greenville. Because of its strategic location, West Washington Street is a proposed corridor for the Bus Rapid Transit referenced later in the vision plan. Significant opportunity exists to create an economic or commercial node around the Amtrak Station which is circled in Figure 10. This location is an attractive site for a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) made even more so given the amount of City owned land at the intersection. The potential of the Washington Street Corridor was acknowledged in the Southernside Housing Report and a sketch was created detailing what redevelopment might look like (Figure 9).

A framework exists to restructure and build upon the fundamental street grid, existing and proposed future land uses, and the strategic location of Southernside. The proximity to downtown Greenville only heightens the importance and possibilities and the neighborhood vision plan will attempt to satisfy these issues.
Figure 10: Economic Conditions
Community Services
The Southernside neighborhood is equipped with sewer and water services at the street; however the condition of underground infrastructure is unknown, much like the rest of the City of Greenville. In addition, storm water piping is present onsite, but much of the drainage is daylighted. This is particularly of interest to adjacent flood plain and storm water management practices.

Police and fire services are located within a half-mile of the Southernside boundary.

The neighborhood does not have any type of local grocery store for residents to buy food to meet their daily needs. The nearest grocery store is located within a half-mile of the Southernside boundary. In addition, the neighborhood lacks restaurants and retail stores.

There is huge potential for expansion of community facilities to include basic services such as grocery stores, retail stores, and restaurants in a mixed-use setting. This mixed-use area would provide residents with local opportunities to meet their daily needs and act as the center of the neighborhood. This would greatly improve quality of life especially for residents who do not have access to a private vehicle. In addition, this neighborhood center could attract other small businesses and nonresidents, further increasing economic development and expansion in the Southernside neighborhood.
Housing
A significant portion of this plan is dedicated to providing material for the Southernside community to promote a more positive image, encourage diversity of housing and income types, and establish a framework for future residential development opportunities and rehabilitation. The neighborhood context, proximity to Downtown Greenville, and adjacent gateway corridors play a strategic role in providing neighborhood access to new and existing economic and cultural opportunities. This improved connectivity acts as a catalyst for improving the general welfare and housing conditions of the community.

Existing Housing Conditions:

A collective look at the Southernside neighborhood indicates a significantly lower median home value and owner occupied housing level when compared to the city. Of the 702 total housing units, only 570 units are occupied. Annual income spent on utilities indicates the significance of utilities available to a moderate housing supply in an older downtown context. The existence of utilities such as coal and wood suggest a more limited income demographic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Southernside</th>
<th>City of Greenville</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>1,407</td>
<td>59,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # of Units</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>29,134</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>25,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Home Value</td>
<td>$85,263</td>
<td>$173,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>12,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter Occupied</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>13,013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: US Census 2005-2009 American Community Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utilities/Fuels/Public Services</th>
<th>Average Amount Spent/Household</th>
<th>% for category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottled Gas</td>
<td>$24.99</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>$821.64</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel Oil</td>
<td>$24.55</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Gas</td>
<td>$253.47</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Services</td>
<td>$642.18</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water/Other Services</td>
<td>$232.21</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coal/Wood/Other Fuel</td>
<td>$3.11</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 3: Housing Utilities, ESRI Consumer Expenditure Survey 2010
Building/Housing Inventory and Existing Conditions

A windshield assessment was conducted in October 2011 to gauge building and street conditions. Listed below are the various factors taken into consideration when assessing the condition of the building structure and parcel upkeep. Data was gathered primarily by walking the neighborhood streets and assessing each individual structure. Notes were compiled regarding existing building footprints and accessory structures as they compared to the City of Greenville’s inventory.

- Foundation (cracks, settlement)
- Roof, gutters, downspouts, chimneys
- Deteriorated material doors, exterior walls, broken windows (frames)
- Driveway surfaces
- Sidewalks
- Landscaping
- Exterior surfaces & upkeep
- Stairs, rails, and porches
By analyzing these housing factors, homes were rated on the following building assessment scale:

- **Poor**: Public safety hazard, needs extensive rehabilitation or demolition
- **Fair**: Major defects- needs substantial rehabilitation
- **Moderate**: Some defects, minor rehabilitation
- **Good**: Minor defects, needs some minor repairs

Collectively, over 70% of the buildings within the Southernside boundary are in fair to moderate condition with only 12.6% in complete disrepair. Almost half (48%) of the building structures are in moderate to good condition. The analysis indicates pockets or target areas that are in critical condition, many of which are in isolated pockets or in sub-areas of the neighborhood. This could be broken down to formulate target area revitalization and housing strategy specifics. Generally, many of the structures along West Washington Street and near the historic neighborhood, Hampton Pinckney, are in significantly better conditions than those in the western portion of the site. Throughout the neighborhood most structures are livable; however, poor roof conditions, exterior surfaces, and hazardous porches and frames put many of the structures in the fair to moderate category. Of those in poor condition most are vacant and boarded up, but some indicate undocumented persons may be occupying them.
Within pockets of the neighborhood a number of houses have been recently renovated encouraging rehabilitation and redevelopment practices by individual homeowners. The neighborhood’s location and potential for revitalizing commercial corridors provide a framework for improving connectivity and access to jobs and other cultural opportunities. This in turn can improve existing residential values and quality of life. Recent streetscape and capital improvements in the area indicate redevelopment investments have begun and encourage further improvements. Finally, vacancies, vacant lots, and large pockets of city owned properties provide additional opportunities for community development and affordable housing.
Transportation
Five modes of transportation exist in the Southernside neighborhood. These modes include walking, bicycling, public transportation, private vehicle, and heavy railway offering regional Amtrak service. Some of these modes are well connected while others lack a sense of connectivity.

Pedestrian and Bicycle
Pedestrian facilities consist of sidewalks, bike lanes on West Washington Street, and the Swamp Rabbit Trail. Sidewalks, which normally are five feet wide, provide residents with a connection to downtown Greenville. The major streets, including West Washington Street, Mulberry Street, and Hampton Avenue are well equipped with sidewalks. There is an obvious lack of sidewalks between the northeast and the southern parts of the neighborhood.

The Swamp Rabbit Trail is a 14 mile long walking and biking trail connecting downtown Greenville with the northwestern half of the Greenville County. The trail on Willard Street serves as the only pedestrian facility connecting the northeast and southwest sections of the community. A newly dedicated bikeway on West Washington Street ties the neighborhood with the downtown area, as part of city’s bicycle master plan.

Private Vehicle and Transit
West Washington Street, Mulberry Street, and Hampton Avenue make up the three major driveways in the Southernside neighborhood. Among these streets, West Washington Street is the principal road connecting the neighborhood with downtown Greenville. The Greenville bus, Greenlink, has two routes, No.2 and No.9 that travel through the neighborhood. These routes run from White Horse Road to Berea, and operate between 6:30 am to 5:30 pm. The bus route flows along Mulberry Street and West Washington Street and includes 11 bus signs on both sides of the road. Three blocks south of the neighborhood boundary, residents can board Greenlink on Richardson Street for a transfer. Nearly all bus routes converge on Richardson Street.

Railway
The Greenville Railway Station opened in 1988 by Norfolk Southern Railway. This station serves as a replacement for the former Southern Railway Depot. The Greenville Railway Station is the fourth busiest of the 11 train stations located in South Carolina. This station has two platforms, three tracks, and carries an average of 50 passengers daily. It placed orders valued at $3,977,831 in FY10, making it the second highest in South Carolina.
Figure 13: Existing Transportation Facilities & Infrastructure
Figure 14: Transportation Facilities & Transit Routes
The pictures above represent some of the challenges and opportunities related to the environmental, economic, and transportation issues in Southernside. Recent improvements on West Washington Street have provided a multi-modal and an aesthetically pleasing streetscape framework for enhancing underutilized and vacant parcels to create more street frontage, denser urban form, and a neighborhood commercial services corridor. As indicated above, not all streets provide adequate and safe pedestrian facilities. Particularly, the outlying portions of the neighborhood are disconnected by the railroad, a barrier whose safety can be improved and streetscape beautified. Moreover, the bottom left picture indicates the large area included within the Reedy River floodplain. While considered a constraint for housing and commercial development, preliminary concept plans are in the works with the City of Greenville to develop a regional park, improving the recreational quality of Southernside.
Step 2: Community Participation

An equally important component to framing a comprehensive vision for the Southernside neighborhood derives from community feedback and participation. While existing conditions are critical in defining the parameters and issues of an area, attempting to grasp a community’s own understanding of the physical, economic, and social environments of their neighborhood is valuable to shaping a concept plan that is not only feasible from a design perspective, but also desirable to those currently living there. Moreover, coupled with the existing conditions analysis, the two processes can reveal major issues and concepts inherent in Southernside. Developing a community participation process occupied a significant portion of the group’s time during fall 2011 in order to receive the adequate feedback necessary to support and impact our initial analysis. The community was notified through neighborhood association meetings about the participation opportunity and was encouraged to provide their input in the process.

On November 15, 2011, the project team presented their existing conditions analysis to Southernside residents at a public meeting held at A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School. Approximately fifteen residents and stakeholders from the community were present at this meeting along with Clemson University faculty, three City of Greenville employees, and staff from Arnett-Muldrow & Associates, a Greenville-based urban planning and community branding firm. In addition to presenting their initial findings to the community, the project team conducted two community feedback sessions utilizing community and potential neighborhood concept images and maps to get resident and stakeholder input on how they envisioned their community and what they would like to see in a neighborhood plan.

Feedback Session #1 – Map and Post-It Activity

In this feedback session, attendees were provided with three green post-its, three pink post-its, and a large aerial map of the Southernside neighborhood. They were instructed to write three things that they liked about Southernside on the green post-its and three things that they would like to see improved on the pink post-its. Residents were then instructed to place the post-its on the map in order to show where these areas are located in the neighborhood. The primary goal in this exercise was to gain a better sense of target areas, both positive and negative, in Southernside and begin defining recurring issues and themes.
Feedback Session #2 – Neighborhood Characteristics Analysis & Dots Activity
The second feedback session gave residents the opportunity to brainstorm together as one large group to answer the following questions:

- What do you value most strongly about your neighborhood?
- What is your biggest frustration or concern?
- If funding were available, what would be the one thing you would change about Southernside?
- Whatever we do, don’t do this…

By asking these questions, the students were able to identify topics that mattered most to residents.

Answers that the residents provided were written on a large sheet of lined paper and hung up in the meeting room. After the questions had been answered, residents were each given eight dots that represented $100 of their tax dollars. They were then instructed to place the dots next to the items that they felt were most important. By doing this, key themes and concerns of the community could be identified utilizing the concept of real tax dollars towards improving one’s community. These key themes were then used to create goals and objectives for this vision plan.
### Public Input for Tax Dollar Priority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE VALUED</th>
<th>Infrastructure + Transportation</th>
<th>Business + Service</th>
<th>Home + Community</th>
<th>Policy + Planning</th>
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<td>Walkable streets accessibility</td>
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<td><strong>FRUSTRATION</strong></td>
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<td>No amenities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Poor lighting</td>
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<td>No grocery store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal disconnectivity</td>
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<td>Poor keep up of sidewalks</td>
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<td>Community center</td>
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<td>Neighborhood identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect Swamp Rabbit to Mulberry</td>
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<td>Sidewalks (improve &amp; expand)</td>
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<td>Update Post Office</td>
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<td>Clean Up (brownfields, vacant lots, school area)</td>
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<td>Consistent streetscape</td>
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<td>Grocery store</td>
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<td>Open bridge on Hampton</td>
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<td>Re-do corner of Mulberry &amp; Pete Hollis</td>
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<td>Displace residents</td>
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<td>Build the zoo</td>
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<td>Abandon the plan</td>
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Figure 15: Public Input for Tax Dollar Priority
**Meeting Outcomes**

The feedback sessions with the community provided insightful information to the students about what was most important to the Southernside community. The following five themes were identified as being most important to the community:

- Housing (keeping community character and improving the quality of existing and new housing)
- Neighborhood Identification
- Connectivity (access to areas within the neighborhood, adjacent activity hubs, and across barriers (train tracks))
- Streetscape & Infrastructure
- Neighborhood Services (neighborhood retail and daily services such as groceries, restaurants, & small businesses)

With these identified themes, goals were developed to drive the design process and provide direction for implementation.
**Step 3: Design Process**

**Developing Goals & Objectives**

The design process began with a synthesis of information gathered from the existing conditions report and community participation process. Through this synthesis of information, five main goals emerged for the Southernside neighborhood. These goals frame the evolution of a thematic neighborhood concept plan, a process that aims to integrate Southernside’s character, physical and social considerations and analysis, and community input of predominant issues through illustrative diagrams and concepts. From the goals developed below, the issues previously discussed in this report will be exemplified in the neighborhood concept plan, and developing objectives and policies related to implementation will be discussed in order to understand next steps.

**Southernside Vision Plan Goals**

- **Increase access to commercial centers, employment, and recreational open space**

  Although the community is on the border of downtown Greenville, residents expressed a desire for neighborhood services within neighborhood boundaries. Services addressed in the vision plan include a grocery store, increased active and passive parkland, a town center on the corner of West Washington and Mulberry Streets, and an expanded community center to cater to the needs of the residents. In addition, commercial development will be centered on West Washington Street and Pete Hollis Boulevard.

- **Enhance Southernside community character**

  Residents also expressed an interest in developing a strong neighborhood identification. Part of this identification will come from its proximity to downtown Greenville and its abundance of green space, creating opportunities for recreation and community gathering.

- **Increase multi-modal circulation and greenway access within neighborhood**

  This plan will address connectivity through the creation of several pathways and trails throughout the community. These trails will not only improve pedestrian safety, but will also provide residents with various transportation options. In addition, connectivity will be addressed by strengthening public transportation from the city via a proposed Bus Rapid Transit line along West Washington Street.
❖ **Streetscape and infrastructure**

Improvements to the neighborhood’s streetscape and infrastructure will be achieved through the creation and improvement of sidewalks throughout the neighborhood. In addition, landscape enhancements and the addition of street lighting will improve both the visual character and safety of the community.

❖ **Promote infill and redevelopment to enhance community character**

Housing was identified as one of the most important goals to address in the neighborhood vision plan. This plan will focus on creating a stronger homeownership base in the neighborhood. This will be done through public and private partnerships encouraging redevelopment, new construction, infill development, and the demolition of substandard housing.

**Southernside Vision Statement:** Southernside will strengthen itself as a vibrant neighborhood characterized by a strong housing stock, multimodal connectivity, green and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, and goods and services catering to the needs of the community.
**Design Process**

The design process for the Southernside vision plan attempts to leverage existing planning efforts, existing conditions, and community feedback to present a visionary impression of future conditions. As such, the scale commenced at the neighborhood level to establish conceptual ideals and was refined to an illustrative vision plan based on identifiable goals and objectives with specific action items. The following is a discussion of the progression from conceptual diagram, to the regulating plan, to an illustrative vision plan.

- **Design Inputs**
  - Community Feedback
  - Existing plans
  - Other neighborhood plans
  - Windshield assessment

- **Concept Diagram**
- **Regulating Plan**
- **Illustrative Vision Plan**
Figure 16: Southernside Conceptual Diagram
Concept Plan
The concept plan shows the basic components of the Southernside vision plan concept in a diagrammatic way. There are four basic elements used in the diagram: major paths, nodes, minor paths, and barriers. These elements come together in the concept plan showing opportunities as well as constraints in the Southernside neighborhood evolving from existing conditions and community input analysis.

Major Paths- The major paths, as seen in blue in Figure 16, are restricted to West Washington Street (running east/west) and Mulberry Street (running north/south) and represent the major corridors in and out of the Southernside neighborhood. The corridor on West Washington Street should be designed as a commercial corridor while the path on Mulberry Street should be designated as residential. Both corridors would be considered gateways to the neighborhood and would provide an excellent pedestrian environment. In addition, the corridors would serve as the main streets leading to the Neighborhood Center.

Nodes- Nodes, as seen in yellow on Figure 16, are the activity centers of Southernside. They act as the focal point for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The nodes are basically where “things come together” and coincide with the major and minor street intersections within the Southernside neighborhood.

Minor Paths- The minor paths, as seen in green on Figure 16, are the secondary corridors within the Southernside neighborhood and also coincide with the concept of pedestrian-oriented “green” streets. The more rigid grid pattern of the northern portion of the neighborhood relates to the existing street network and presupposes walkable, tree-lined residential streets exhibiting an integrated storm water management program as part of the overall green infrastructure of Southernside. In the southern portion of the neighborhood the grid dissolves into winding pedestrian paths within the open space of the potential regional park. This framework of the minor paths allows direct connectivity to all portions of the neighborhood.

Barriers- Barriers, as seen in red on Figure 16, are places that prevent connectivity to other portions of the neighborhood. Here, the major barriers within Southernside are the elevated railroad line that bisects portions of the neighborhood north/south as well as the Reedy River that bisects portions of the neighborhood east/west. The concept diagram shows the penetration of the barriers by the minor paths to improve overall connectivity and access.

The overall goal of the concept plan is to show the basic components of the Southernside vision plan in a schematic way. This allows the delineation of the major and minor corridors to be shown in proximity to the activity nodes as well as the prohibitive barriers to allow the emergence of a basic framework that directly informs the design of the illustrative vision plan.
Regulating Plan

- Greenville City Limit
- Southernside Boundary
- Railroads
- Street
- Lakes & Ponds
- Streams
- Commercial
- Residential
- Mixed-Use
- Open Space

Figure 17: Southernside Regulating Plan
Regulating Plan Concepts
The regulating plan is an effort to describe the basic land use classifications within the proposed Southernside redevelopment. There are 4 basic zones which comprise the whole of Southernside neighborhood:

Retail/Commercial District- This zone, shown in red on Figure 17, is a general use of retail and commercial on the ground floor with office and a small amount of residential on the higher floors. This character would be a street frontage reminiscent of classic downtown corridors found throughout the southeast. This district would normally be characterized by a two to three story neo-traditional facade, on-street parking, and a curb to building setback of ten to fourteen feet.

Mixed-Use District- The mix-use district, shown in mauve on Figure 17, is a general use commercial and light industrial area that already has existing within it an industrial character. The suggested additions to the existing infrastructure would be a small amount of ground floor commercial and retail oriented specifically to a more auto-centric and industrial use with potential for the incubation of a medical campus and supporting office space to support the services needed by the rapidly aging population of Southernside and the adjacent neighborhoods of downtown Greenville. The height limit in the mixed-use district will be more related to that of downtown Greenville with a 3 to 5 story limit, on-street parking, and a street frontage with a suggested curb to building minimum setback of ten feet.

General Residential District- The general residential district, shown yellow on Figure 16, comprises the majority of the residential use within the Southernside neighborhood and is the third largest, second only to the open space district. This district’s character is simply that of the classic urban neighborhoods of many southern cities. The dominant form is single family dwellings with relatively narrow side yards, on street parking as well as side driveways, and a typical one to two story, pitched roof heights, and a typical fifteen to twenty-five foot setback.

Open Space District- The open space district, shown in green on Figure 17, is the largest of the four in the Southernside neighborhood and is predominantly defined by the 500-year flood plain to either side of the Reedy River. The existing structures within the open space district are industrial in character, warehouse related, and are a reminder of Greenville's rich textile heritage as well as Southernside's proximity to the main railroad line. This district presents a challenge to redevelopment within the floodway and floodplain zones. However, there is potential to adaptively reuse some of the existing structures as well as the construction of new structures related to a potential regional park that is planned for the open space district within Southernside.
Figure 18: Illustrative Vision Plan
Vision Plan
The Illustrative vision plan for the Southernside neighborhood is a proposed synthesis of the opportunities and constraints of the existing neighborhood conditions as well as the desires of community residents obtained through the community input session. Other factors, including the Swamp Rabbit trail and a potential regional park in the floodplain area of the Southernside neighborhood, also contribute to the vision plan design.

The basic concepts of the Southernside vision plan are improving connectivity, encouraging retail and commercial areas within the neighborhood to provide goods and services, maintaining a clear neighborhood identity through appropriate density and architectural character, improving existing streetscape and infrastructure resources within the community to provide a safe, sanitary and walkable neighborhood, and a comprehensive housing strategy that deals directly with issues of dilapidated housing, affordability, and aesthetic character.

These major initiatives, as defined through the community input session with Southernside residents as well as background information as collected by the Clemson University team culminate in a clear vision of what the Southernside neighborhood could become as related to improved connectivity, increased economic activity, neighborhood character, streetscape and infrastructure, and a comprehensive housing strategy. These elements combined with the adjacent potential regional park that encompasses the Swamp Rabbit trail (a regional trail network) as well as the Reedy River create a comprehensive neighborhood vision plan that directly deals with concerns of the community residents while at the same time proposing neo-traditional strategies for neighborhood redevelopment that blends with the urban fabric of Greenville, SC. The synthesis of initiatives for the Southernside neighborhood will provide a clear and obtainable model of redevelopment that, when implemented, will exhibit a character and functionality fitting of great urban form for the 21st century.
Figure 20: Potential Regional Park, Arboretum & Community Garden
Figure 21: Neighborhood Center-Mulberry Street Corridor
Figure 22: Neighborhood Retail Corridor- West Washington Street
Figure 23: Pete Hollis Commercial Corridor-Mulberry Street
Recommendations and Implementation Strategies

Neighborhood Services & Amenities

A key purpose of the Southernside vision plan is to enhance the overall quality of life through the development of commercial and mixed-use areas, while enhancing neighborhood character and value. Although Southernside is situated in close proximity to the central business district of Greenville, the neighborhood itself lacks a wide variety of commercial and other neighborhood services. Community residents at the community meeting also stated their desire for community services within the neighborhood. With support from the City of Greenville and neighborhood residents, Southernside has the opportunity to redevelop to include community services that support the daily needs of its residents.

Neighborhood services and facilities could be located in the areas defined as Commercial and Mixed-Use in the Regulating Plan (See Figure 17). Neighborhood services and amenities include the following:

❖ Commercial Redevelopment Along West Washington Street and Pete Hollis

Commercial services include a neighborhood grocery store along Pete Hollis, situated to serve both neighborhood residents and other City of Greenville residents. A location along Pete Hollis would also place the grocery store on the bus route, increasing its accessibility by residents. West Washington Street would be lined with small local businesses, restaurants, neighborhood cafes, and offices, with some residential on top.

❖ Active and Passive Parkland Serving Both as an Opportunity for Water Quality Control, Wetland Restoration and Recreational Services

A large portion of the southern end of the neighborhood is located within the 100-year flood plain. Maintaining this area as open space will serve two-fold: improving water quality and wetland restoration as well as offering recreational facilities. The park will connect the neighborhood to A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School as well as the Kroc Center. An active recreational area will include sports fields, community gardens, and walking trails. Additionally, open pavilions will be created serving as civic space for community events such as concerts, fairs, picnics and farmers market. Smaller pocket parks and playgrounds will also be located throughout the community, woven into the neighborhood blocks and offering opportunities for residents to recreate throughout the community.

❖ Encourage Community Gardens and Fresh Food Sources

The Southernside community lacks a source of fresh food for residents and visitors. The City should make efforts to encourage businesses and services that can provide residents with access to fresh foods so that the neighborhood can meet their needs locally.
The City should encourage community gardens within the neighborhood’s vacant lots or undevelopable properties to provide additional food sources, increase aesthetics, provide residents with additional forms of social interaction, and encourage interactions with the environment.

❖ Develop a Larger Community Center

Southernside boasts a history of community involvement (through individuals and the community at large). Although a community center is currently located within the neighborhood, it is not sufficiently large to hold community members and host other community events. Consequently, the vision plan includes the creation of a community center located centrally and near the proposed town center. The area for the community center would be much larger than the current location, but it would keep in line with the neighborhood character and architectural design, and it would offer a place to continue the history of community involvement. The community center will make use of current programs provided by the City of Greenville such as:

Greenville Dreams- This program works with various leaders from neighborhood associations to identify and strengthen current assets within the community. Different training opportunities are provided to these leaders such as problem-solving, management and leadership neighborhood associations, planning and goal-setting skills, available resources, and effective communication. By providing neighborhood association leaders with these skills, both leaders and these associations will be able to continue making positive changes in their neighborhoods.

GAP Program- The Grant Assistance Partnership (GAP) program provided by the City of Greenville works with residents and neighborhood associations to make enhancements in their communities. Neighborhood associations can receive up to $2,500 to make improvements in one or more of the following areas: residential involvement, beautification, crime prevention, communication, housing development, organizational development, training and education, and capital improvements.

❖ Installation of a Landscape Buffer Between the Railroad Tracks and Residential Houses Through Installation of a Landscape Buffer and the Construction of Parking Spaces

The landscape buffer would serve as a transition between the residential houses and the Amtrak station, creating greater privacy for community residents. Parking spaces next to the Amtrak station would also serve as a Park-and-Ride area for the proposed Bus Rapid Transit line on West Washington Street.
Neighborhood Identity

- **Southernside Specific Signage**

  Providing signage throughout Southernside will both increase neighborhood identity as well as make Southernside a desirable place to visit. Various types of signage may be established throughout the neighborhood such as flags, street signs, and banners. All of the signage posted throughout the neighborhood will use consistent designs and serve as a visual form of identification for residents and visitors.

- **Develop a Town Center on the Corner of West Washington & Mulberry Streets**

  The development of a town center on the corner of West Washington and Mulberry Streets will provide residents with greater opportunities for social interaction. This town center will consist of two to three-story buildings with commercial and retail businesses on the first level and residential and rental units on the second and third floors. By enforcing this mixed use, residents have the option to live near potential employment opportunities. In addition, retail and commercial businesses will provide residents with the day to day resources and amenities that they currently do not have access to within the Southernside neighborhood. This town center will make use of similar architectural designs so that it fits in with the neighborhood context and further strengthens the Southernside neighborhood identity.

- **Develop Gateway Entrances**

  Much like the specific signage, aesthetically pleasing gateway entrances will serve as a marker letting residents and visitors know that they have entered the Southernside neighborhood. By providing these visuals, a sense of place and belonging may be achieved for those living in the neighborhood. These gateway entrances will set the neighborhood apart from other residential areas within the City of Greenville.

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Recommended Timeframe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage commercial redevelopment along West Washington Street and Pete Hollis</td>
<td>Short-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a larger community center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop active and passive parkland serving as an opportunity for water quality control, wetland restoration and recreational services</td>
<td>Medium-Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage community gardens and fresh food sources</td>
<td>Short-Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>Install a landscape buffer between railroad tracks and homes</td>
<td>Medium to Long-Range</td>
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Table 4: Community Services & Amenities Action Plan
❖ **Implement Neighborhood Design Guidelines**

Design guidelines should be crafted to ensure that revitalization efforts and new development projects fit in with the context of the Southernside neighborhood. Doing this will preserve the rich character that is found in the neighborhood and help to make this community character stronger. These design guidelines will thus ensure that a strong sense of place is achieved.

❖ **Maintain Abandoned and Vacant Properties**

The city should ensure abandoned properties and lots within the Southernside neighborhood are maintained by enforcing current codes and regulations. By doing this, the city will prevent further issues from arising on these abandoned lots. In addition, maintenance of the abandoned properties will contribute to the community character by keeping the lots aesthetically pleasing.

❖ **Improve Neighborhood Parks**

Neighborhood parks should be updated and have street lighting installed to improve visibility so that residents feel safe when visiting parks within Southernside.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Recommended Timeframe</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southernside specific signage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a town center on the corner of West Washington and Mulberry Streets</td>
<td>Medium-Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop gateway entrances</td>
<td>Short-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement neighborhood design guidelines</td>
<td>Short-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain Abandoned and Vacant Properties</td>
<td>Medium-Long Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Neighborhood Parks</td>
<td>Short-Medium Range</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5: Neighborhood Identity Action Items*
The following examples indicate the neighborhood character that could potentially be developed within Southernside:

Figure 24: Examples of Southernside Signage
Connectivity

One of the many strengths of Southernside is the close proximity to downtown Greenville, major commercial corridors (Pete Hollis), and the City’s most notable Greenway, the Swamp Rabbit Trail. Additionally, the northern half of the neighborhood is largely defined by a traditional neighborhood street grid, which encourages a walkable and engaging environment when the proper infrastructure and streetscape are in place. Consequently, improving connectivity between existing and proposed concepts of the plan is a significant goal of the community.

 Create New Connections to Swamp Rabbit Trail

In order to improve access from the neighborhood to the Swamp Rabbit Trail and regional park additional access points and side greenways have been proposed based off existing and proposed City of Greenville greenway trails. Overall, enhancing access points from different portions of the neighborhood will hopefully increase recreational activity and integrate greenway systems into the realm of everyday mobility in Southernside.

 Improve Vehicular and Pedestrian Connection- West Washington St. and Railroad Overpasses

Streetscape and infrastructure improvements are proposed for the most western portions of West Washington Street. The proposed density increase of the neighborhood center will require a strong consideration of traffic flow between West Washington and Mulberry Streets, as well as the West Washington Street extension passing under the railroad. Landscape and sidewalk improvements as well as a widening of the train overpass are suggested for pedestrian safety and vehicular visual improvements. Evaluate the possibility of opening the bridge on Hampton Avenue.

 Provide Multi-Modal Transportation Options

Southernside’s proximity to downtown Greenville, Greenlink Transit, and the Amtrak station provide ample opportunity to improve pedestrian, bus, and bicycle transportation options. The recent streetscape improvements on West Washington Street now provide bike lanes and improved bus transit stops. Additional bike share options should be considered for other main neighborhood thoroughfares such as Mulberry, Hudson, and Mayberry Streets.
- **Improve Pedestrian Safety - Reroute Oscar Street to Shirley**

Connectivity can be improved by providing safe passage for pedestrians and bicyclists. The existing conditions at the intersection of Oscar Street and the West Washington railroad connector provide dangerous conditions for vehicles and pedestrians alike. The rerouting of Oscar will lessen congestion, improve the safety of the intersection, and provide additional space for new development.

- **Create Pathways and Trails Throughout the Neighborhood**

The primary goal of the regional park is to encourage connectivity between the existing neighborhood, open space, and adjacent recreational centers. Providing trails throughout the park with numerous access points allows residents and visitors to encounter open space in a multitude of ways. In doing so, greenway improvement coupled with additional streetscape and infrastructure goals will enhance the comprehensive connectivity within the neighborhood.

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<th>Action Items</th>
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<td>Create new connections to the Swamp Rabbit Trail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve vehicular and pedestrian connection with redevelopment on West Washington Street- including safety and beautification improvements on rail overpasses</td>
<td>Medium-Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide multi-modal transportation options</td>
<td>Medium-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve pedestrian safety by rerouting Oscar Street to Shirley Street</td>
<td>Long-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create pathways and trails throughout the neighborhood connecting to the shopping center, town center, and Swamp Rabbit Trail</td>
<td>Medium-Range</td>
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Table 6: Connectivity Action Items

**Streetscape & Infrastructure Improvements**

Southernside possesses a disconnected streetscape and infrastructure network within neighborhood boundaries. Sidewalks, on-street bicycle infrastructure, and enhanced intersections complete a traditional grid system on the northern portion, enhancing non-motorized transportation and aesthetic design. The southern portion of the site is relatively neglected, possessing isolated and fragmented sidewalks and minimal streetscape enhancements. A significant recommendation in this vision plan involves upgrading streetscape and non-motorized infrastructure for aesthetic considerations, community character, and improved connectivity, policies which are consistent with the city’s Complete Streets Resolution passed in 2008.
❖ **Implement Street Typology Guidelines**

A recommendation for the Southernside neighborhood is to develop street hierarchy classifications and design guidelines for neighborhood streets. By establishing design guidelines and street typologies, Southernside will be able to accommodate multiple transportation modes while creating a positive sense of community and character consistent with previous efforts.

❖ **Install Curbs and Curb Lawns**

The installation and rehabilitation of curbs and curb lawns is consistent with the city’s Complete Streets resolution and stated preferences for street design in the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan (2011). The end result will produce increased safety for pedestrians and enhance community character.

❖ **Improve and Provide New Streetscape (Sidewalks, Landscaping, Intersection Paving, Bicycle Infrastructure)**

The vision plan recommends increasing sidewalk infrastructure, bicycling infrastructure, and greenway infrastructure considerably. The goal is to enhance transportation corridors that accommodate all modes while improving aesthetic considerations and community character. The pedestrian improvements should coordinate efforts with the city’s NSTEP program while bicycle infrastructure should coordinate with the city’s Trails and Greenways Master Plan (2007) and Bicycle Master Plan (2011). The increased network of infrastructure can be seen in Figure 25.

❖ **Update Existing Sewer, Water, and Sanitary Systems**

The plan recommends conducting further analysis of existing sewer, water, and sanitary systems when appropriate and subsequently establishing a timeline for future upgrades.
**Improve Safety Near Bridge by Installing Lighting, Landscaping, and Sidewalks**

The railroad track underpass represents a significant safety concern and design challenge. The plan recommends the installation of appropriate lighting, adequate sidewalks, and guardrails in the immediate area around the underpass. Landscaping and signage should also be used to calm traffic entering the underpass and alert individuals to proceed with caution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Recommended Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve and provide new streetscape (sidewalks, landscaping, intersection paving)</td>
<td>Medium-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Install curbs and curb lawns</td>
<td>Medium-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve safety near bridge by installing lighting, landscaping, and sidewalks</td>
<td>Long-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement street typology guidelines</td>
<td>Short-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update existing sewer, water, and sanitary systems</td>
<td>Medium-Range</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Streetscape & Infrastructure Action Items

![Figure 25: Example of Potential Streetscape](image)
Figure 26: Proposed Streetscapes & Infrastructure Improvements
Figure 27: Pedestrian Travel Shed Improvements
**Housing Action Plan**

- **Rehabilitate Housing Units**

A windshield assessment of dwelling units was conducted in the fall of 2011 to assess the condition of each home’s foundation, roof, gutters, downspouts, chimneys, doors, walls, windows, driveways, sidewalks, landscaping, exterior, stairs, rails, and porches. The results from this analysis showed 80 units (12.6%) to be in poor condition, 244 units (38.4%) in fair condition, 208 units (32.7%) in moderate condition, and 104 units (16.4%) in good condition. In an effort to ameliorate these issues, funds should be allocated towards the rehabilitation of these housing units. In addition to grant funding opportunities, the Southernside neighborhood should make use of the following housing improvement programs provided by the City of Greenville:

*Paint the Town*- Paint the Town is a partnership between the City of Greenville and Central Community Ministries that focuses on improving the exterior appearance of homes located in special emphasis neighborhoods. Volunteers are organized by Central Community Ministries and are provided with supplies, paint, and training by the city.

*Rental Rehabilitation Program*- This program provides property owners with low interest loans to upgrade their rental units to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing to low and moderate income families in special emphasis neighborhoods. Among meeting other qualifications, these units must be presently occupied by low/moderate income families and must remain affordable to low to moderate income occupants for the duration of the loan.

*Emergency Repair Program*- The City of Greenville provides emergency home repairs to homeowners facing threats to their health and safety. Examples of issues that may receive funding from the Emergency Repair Program include leaking roofs, electrical hazards, fire hazards, inadequate heat, and deteriorated floors, exterior walls, and ceilings. Up to $20,000 may be provided.

*Community Improvement Program*- The City’s Community Development Division uses Community Development Block Grants to provide qualified, low-income, owner-occupants with up to $24,500 in loans to upgrade their homes. These funds are intended to bring properties up to code, to repair or replace items that will need to be repaired within the next 18 months, for home beautification, for property improvements, and for soft costs such as appraisals and title searches.
World Changers- World Changers works with Community Development to make improvements to owner-occupied homes in special emphasis neighborhoods. Volunteers gather for one week during the summer and help to repair and redevelop substandard housing units. Volunteers are provided by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Greenville Baptist Association, while building materials are provided by the city.

❖ **Demolish Unsafe & Substandard Properties**

Homes and other properties that are deemed unsafe and beyond repair will be demolished by the city. In their place, homes, community facilities, and parks will be constructed to provide neighborhood character and to enhance quality of life. These new properties will be constructed using quality materials and designed to fit in with the neighborhood context. In addition, they will utilize energy efficient appliances to both cut operating costs for residents and to promote sustainability and environmental responsibility.

❖ **Develop Policies and Standards for Rental Properties**

The City of Greenville should develop a set of policies to prohibit landlords from allowing their properties to fall below neighborhood standards. These policies should include guidelines for housing and yard conditions and should aim to create a uniform appearance for the whole neighborhood.

❖ **Encourage the Development of Affordable Units**

In order to ensure that current residents are not displaced due to revitalization efforts, the development of affordable units will be encouraged in the Southernside neighborhood. Not only will this protect current residents from having to move out of their homes, but the development of affordable units will also provide other low to moderate income families with the opportunity to live in Southernside, thus allowing them to both benefit from improvements made within the community and from the proximity to downtown Greenville.

In addition, current and future residents will have the opportunity to participate in programs to improve their chances of attaining employment as well as improve their chances of becoming home owners. Current city programs that should be capitalized upon include:
**LADDER Program**- The Lifelong Advancement through Diligence, Determination, and Employment Resources (LADDER) Program provides individuals living in special emphasis neighborhoods with training and other vital resources so that they may work towards increasing their earnings, establishing self-sufficiency, further their basic education skills, acquire job skills training, obtain job placement assistance, receive supportive services, and obtain financial services.

**KEY Program**- The KEY Program works with residents in special emphasis neighborhoods to increase their likelihood of becoming homeowners. A wide variety of obstacles to homeownership are covered such as credit, savings, home maintenance, loan approval, and money management. The KEY Program’s goals are to both improve quality of life for residents and to help stabilize special emphasis neighborhoods.

**New Home Ownership Program**-This program provides funds to aid in covering down payments and closing costs to first-time homebuyers. In order to ensure a mixing of incomes, approximately 70% of new homes are allocated to low to moderate income families who have a total income at or below 80% of the median family income. Additional assistance may be available to families who earn below 80% of the median family income.

❖ **Invest in Infill Development**

In an effort to take advantage of the many opportunities in the Southernside community, the city will encourage infill development. This development will consist of new housing units, commercial and retail facilities, and parks that are designed to fit in with the neighborhood context. It will take place on vacant lots as well as on lots where previous structures have been demolished. Infill development will help strengthen Southernside’s community character, prevent sprawl, and provide residents with additional employment opportunities close to home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Recommended Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitate housing units</td>
<td>Short-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolish unsafe and substandard properties</td>
<td>Short-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage development of affordable units</td>
<td>Short-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in infill development</td>
<td>Medium-Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop policies and standards for rental</td>
<td>Short-Medium Range</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8: Housing Action Items**
Key Implementation Recommendations & Policies

The Southernside neighborhood offers a unique opportunity for the creation of a vibrant neighborhood characterized by a strong housing stock, multimodal connectivity, green and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, and neighborhood services meeting the needs of its residents. In addition to the implementation steps listed above, community leadership is essential for implementation of this plan.

This chapter presents an overall strategy to implement the Southernside vision plan. A combination of public and private partnerships will be included. The plan will guide decision-making concerning regulations that will affect the neighborhood, with the understanding that the plan is a policy document. Recommendations will, therefore, not be implemented immediately, or all at once. Nevertheless, the vision plan will provide guidance on the actions and policy that can take place to create a vibrant neighborhood.

❖ Revise Neighborhood Land Development and Zoning Regulations

In order to implement the type of development stated in the vision plan, it will be necessary to amend some of the city’s zoning and development regulations. In order to develop the mixed use areas along Washington Street, the zoning ordinances will need to allow a mix of uses and the creation of density-bonuses to encourage the development of affordable housing, parks, and the town center.

❖ Encourage Public-Private Partnerships

Developing partnerships with private developers and community organizations will support the action steps proposed. Such partnerships can help provide additional funding, planning, resources, and other expertise. The establishment of partnerships with developers can also be used to leverage funds for affordable housing in the neighborhood.

❖ Continued Use of City Programs

The City of Greenville should continue to carry out various rehabilitation programs such as the Emergency Repair Program, Paint the Town, Rental Rehabilitation Program, Community Improvement Program, World Changers, KEY Program, LADDER Program, and New Home Ownership Program. The programs will assist residents in repairing their homes and thus increase home values in the Southernside neighborhood.

❖ Encourage Small Business Development

The City will encourage the development of small businesses by providing tax incentives, business education classes, and low interest rate loans.
Continue Efforts Towards the Acquisition and Reuse of Property

Acquiring dilapidated and vacant properties provides the city with opportunities to implement infill development, adding to the overall neighborhood character of the Southernside community. In addition, the city will revitalize and reuse property with a special focus on the Brownfield study sites by making use of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Brownfield Assessment grant. Finally, the city will seek funds to acquire property in the Flood Zone and Brownfield study area through grant funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Conclusion

The Southernside story is one filled with a rich history of community involvement and leadership encouraging positive change in the neighborhood led by citizens, organizations and the City of Greenville. This is further reinforced by Southernside’s past and current planning initiatives- many of which were instigated and shaped by the community itself. The collaboration between the City of Greenville and Clemson University City and Regional Planning Program provided the opportunity to respond to the requests and concerns of Southernside residents in recent years regarding a lack of a clear vision plan and strategy for the neighborhood. Building off of the 2006 Southernside Housing Strategy, this neighborhood plan is a response to the community’s goal to establish a clear vision and strategy for Southernside’s future.

Through a careful analysis of the neighborhood’s physical, demographic and economic conditions and the community’s highly valued input; goals and objectives were developed to drive a comprehensive design process that not only considers physical design but also defines objectives with clear recommendations and policies relating to the five goals of Southernside: services and amenities; neighborhood identity; connectivity; streetscape and infrastructure; and housing. The Southernside Plan is meant to act as a decision-making guide for City officials, neighborhood leaders, residents, local businesses, private investors, and developers, with respect to land use and community development actions. The Southernside Neighborhood is unique due to its geographic boundaries, proximity to Reedy River and Downtown Greenville, and diverse demographics. As a result, the opportunities for neighborhood revitalization, particularly housing infill and redevelopment, mixed use retail growth, and community open space, are key principles that derive from this plan. Collectively, the vision, goals and strategies of the Southernside Neighborhood Vision Plan will help provide the framework for cultivating a sustainable and lasting urban neighborhood.