

Hightower Neighborhood

Introduction

The Hightower community is named after the prominent Hightower family who once owned most of the land that now forms the Hightower community.

General Condition

Generally, the Hightower community is a well-established residential community surrounded by non-residential uses as shown in the Land Use Map. The few commercially zoned lots are on the northern edge of the community. The southeastern edge of the community is mostly industrial as shown on the Zoning Map. The Future Development map calls for Hightower to develop into three character areas – Established Residential, Neighborhood Activity Center, and Park/Recreation/Conservation. There are only nine historic resources in Hightower, according to a recently completed survey of Lowndes County historic resources. These resources are shown on the Historic Resources Map.



Census Data

The Hightower neighborhood is included in parts of two Census tracts and parts of five Block Groups:

- Census Tract 109, Block Group 2 (46.1%)
- Census Tract 109, Block Group 3 (21.1%)
- Census Tract 113, Block Group 2 (3.2%)
- Census Tract 113, Block Group 3 (7.8%)
- Census Tract 113, Block Group 4 (17.8%)

The following data was compiled based on the percentage of the community included in each block group. Using this method, it is estimated that there are 190 families and 280 households in Hightower. The average income of Hightower residents is \$15,397 per year and 282 people are living below the poverty level. There are 191 people enrolled in school though only 0.42% have graduated from high school and 0.5% have a Bachelors degree or higher.

Table H-1 shows the age distribution of Hightower residents and Table H-2 reflects the racial composition of the community.

Table H-1	
Hightower - Age Distribution	
Age	Number
0-4	119
5-9	72
10-19	145
20-49	330
50-64	84
65 and up	86
TOTAL:	837

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

Table H-2 Hightower - Race Distribution	
Race	Number
White	195
African American	596
Hispanic	6
Indian	3
Asian	0
Other	0
TOTAL:	799

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

According to the Census figures there are 131 owner-occupied housing units and 148 renter-occupied housing units in Hightower. This data should not be confused with the data collected as part of the housing inventory as the purpose, and therefore the data collection and analysis, was very different.

Crime

Based on crime data obtained from the SGRDC for calendar year 2006, Hightower had the fewest crimes of the four neighborhoods, with only 22 total crimes. Roughly 55 percent of the crimes in Hightower were larcenies, which only accounts for 1% of all larcenies committed in Valdosta in 2006. These crimes were concentrated on Magnolia Street, the northern section of Orange Street, and the eastern section of Dunwoody Drive. In an effort to reduce these crime occurrences, police could work with residents in these areas to form neighborhood watch groups to increase visibility in the problem areas. Map H-2 details the location and time of day all reported crimes were committed.

Table H-3 provides information on the number of specific crimes committed in Hightower and how these incidents compare to the percentage of crime committed citywide.

Table H-3 Hightower Crime Statistics - 2006		
Crime	No. of Incidents	Percent of Total Crime
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	2	1.04%
ARSON	1	
AUTO-THEFT	2	
BURGLARY	4	0.56%
DRUG VIOLATIONS	8	
LARCENY	24	1.00%
RAPES	1	4.17%
ROBBERY	1	0.92%
SIMPLE ASSAULT	11	1.23%
WEAPONS VIOLATIONS	6	
TOTAL:	60	1.13%

Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities



Two parks are within walking distance for Hightower residents, Hightower and John W. Saunders Parks as shown on the Community Facilities Map. John W. Saunders Park is the larger park on the southern edge of Hightower and is shared by both the Hightower and Kill Me Quick communities. John W. Saunders

Park and the adjacent land to the east will be discussed in the plan for the Kill Me Quick neighborhood. Hightower Park is a medium-sized corner community park (3 acres) with playground equipment, picnic tables, and 2 benches with a passive area. Hightower Park, coupled with John W. Saunders Park on the southern edge of the community, provides adequate recreational opportunities for the Hightower neighborhood.



The Hightower community has two childcare facilities, as seen on the Community Facilities Map. The two locations are fairly accessible for the residential areas in the community. Although the community is small compared with the other communities, two childcare facilities may be insufficient.

The Hightower community does not have a community center, nor is any community center nearby for residents. Community centers provide a meeting area and a location for various community social services. A long term goal for the City should be that every resident will have access to a community center. Community centers are costly to build and maintain, so the City should strategically site in order to allow one center to serve multiple neighborhoods. It is recommended that future community centers be sited along a bicycle and pedestrian route to increase accessibility.

Infrastructure Conditions

Sidewalks are present in the Hightower community on Gordon Street, part of Hightower Street, and part of River Street. Sidewalks are generally only on one side of the street. Hightower Street, the stretch that connects John W. Saunders Park and Hightower Park, does not have sidewalks, which are needed to provide a pedestrian thoroughfare and link between the two parks. The City of Valdosta's Engineering Department is planning to connect the current sidewalk on the east side of Hightower Street, north of Magnolia Street, to John W. Saunders Park. The connector would encourage more pedestrian activity. The sidewalk on River Street ends abruptly at Hightower Street but will be discussed in the Kill Me Quick Section Plan.



Hightower Street lacks sidewalks forcing residents to walk in the street.

The Hightower community lacks connectivity in certain areas. For example, Magnolia Street on the eastern side of the railroad tracks is unpaved and crosses through a defunct city landfill. Currently the unpaved strip is extremely secluded and isolated, which leads to a perception that the area is unsafe. Paving and connecting this strip to Magnolia Street west of the railroad tracks would create a crossover facilitating east to west traffic leading to more visibility in the area.

Housing

According to the U.S. Census, the median year of construction of homes in Hightower is 1969. Though this housing stock is a bit older, it is very feasible to consider these structures as candidates for rehabilitation when circumstances warrant.

The housing survey team inventoried forty-two parcels in the Hightower Community. Thirty-eight structures and four vacant lots were documented. The results of the inventory are summarized in Table H-4 and shown on the Housing Conditions map. The Unused Lot Conformity map provides specific information about the size and location of vacant lots.

Table H-4 Hightower - Neighborhood Survey Summary	
Business	1
Churches	0
Multi-Family	1
Manufactured Home	0
Single Family	36
Vacant Lots	4
Valdosta Housing Authority	0
Park	0
Total parcels inventoried	42

Of the thirty-eight structures inventoried, thirty-five are occupied. The break-down of occupied units by use is detailed in Table H-5 below.

Table H-5 Hightower - Occupancy			
Use	Occupied	Vacant	Abandoned
Business	1	0	0
Churches	0	0	0
Multi-Family	1	0	0
Manufactured Home	0	0	0
Single Family	28	3	5
Valdosta Housing Authority	0	0	0
TOTAL:	30	3	5

Of the thirty-eight structures inventoried, only three were found to be in acceptable condition – one business, on multi-family unit, and one single-family unit. The vast majority are in need of major repair as shown on the Major Repair map. Fortunately, only two are dilapidated and warrant demolition as shown on the Dilapidated Map. A summary of the condition of the inventoried structures is found in Table H-6 below. The full inventory report is included as Appendix C.

Table H-6 Hightower - Condition				
Use	Acceptable	Minor Repair	Major Repair	Dilapidated
Business	1	0	0	0
Churches	0	0	0	0
Multi-Family	1	0	0	0
Manufactured Home	0	0	0	0
Single Family	1	8	25	1
Valdosta Housing Authority	0	0	0	0
TOTAL:	3	8	25	1

Planned Projects

According to the Valdosta School System, West Gordon Elementary is slated to become a Kindergarten through Fifth grade facility. To accommodate the increase in students, a new, larger school will be constructed immediately west of the present school. The City plans to make improvements to West Gordon Street and Hightower Streets to better manage the additional traffic. These improvements include the implementation of left turn lanes.

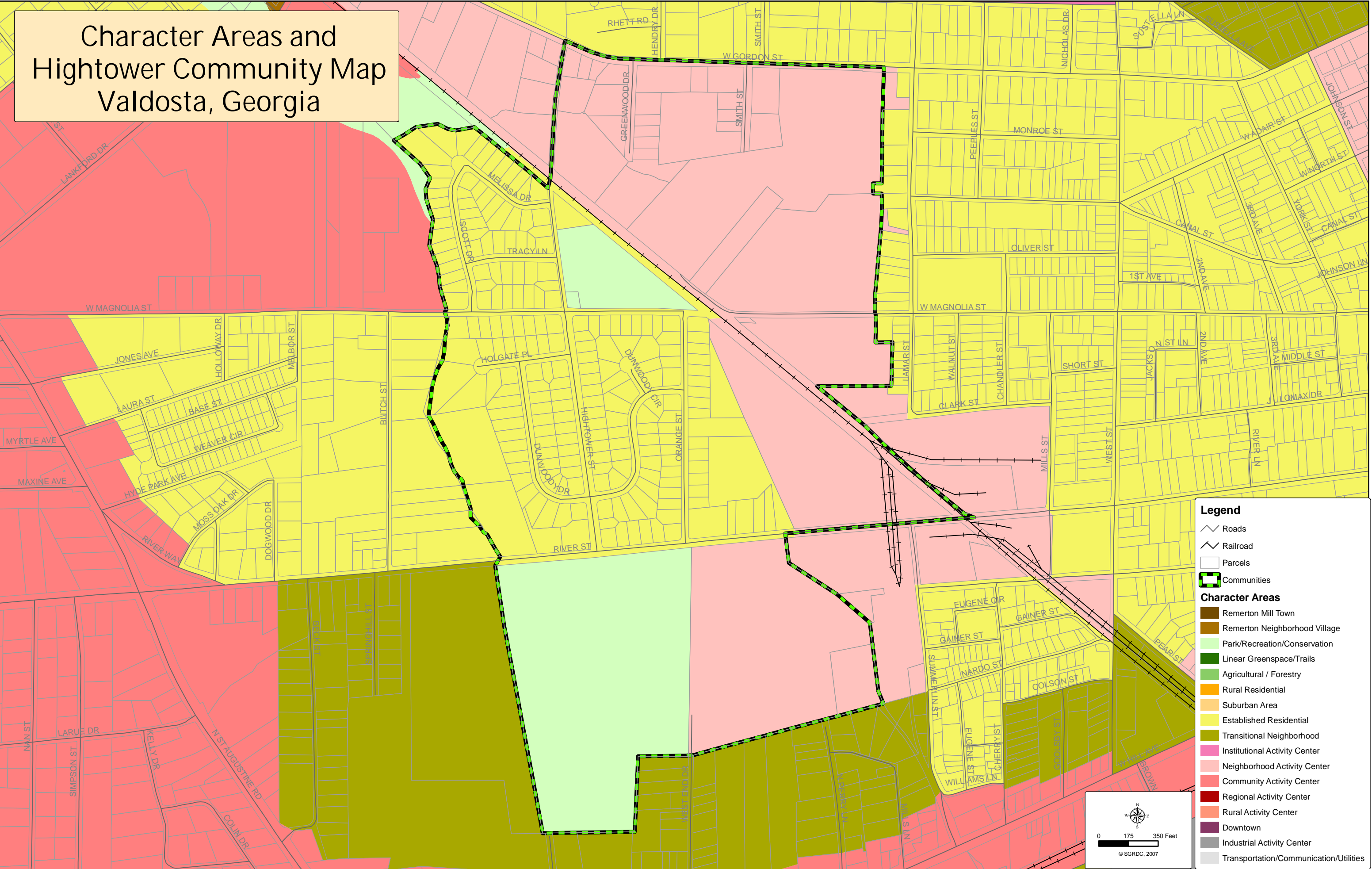


Conclusion

Overall, the Hightower community is rather stable. There appears to be a strong percentage of home-ownership and community pride. The close proximity of two exceptional recreational opportunities and a school will continue to draw new residents to the community maintaining stability. The Hightower community is almost exclusively residential and this works well for the community, no economic development is encouraged in the commercial sector. A list of suggested revitalization strategies can be found in the Neighborhood Plan Goals and Objectives.

Hightower Map Appendix

Character Areas and Hightower Community Map Valdosta, Georgia

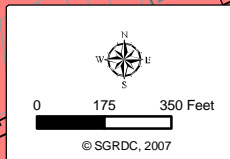


Legend

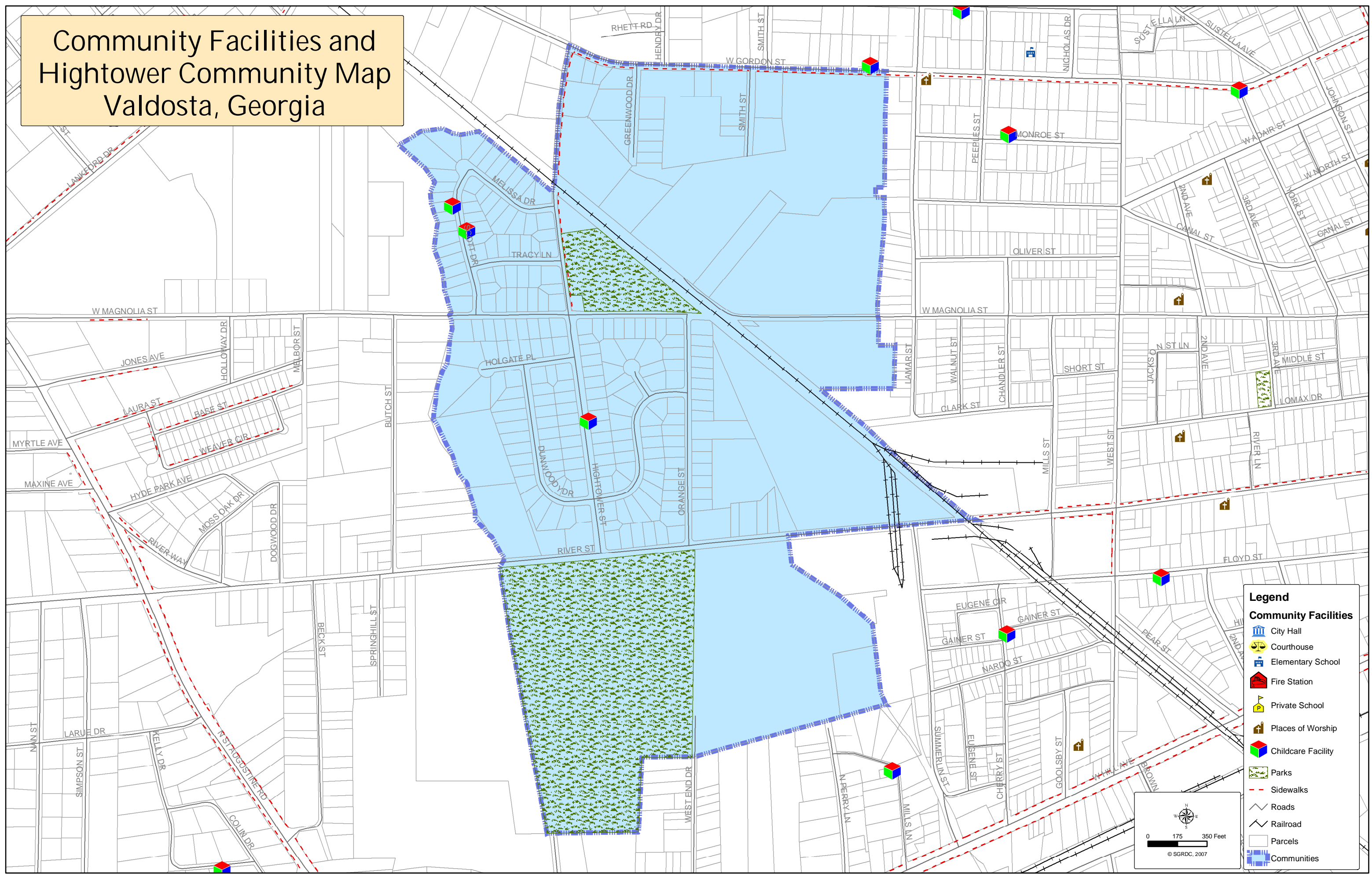
- Roads
- Railroad
- Parcels
- Communities

Character Areas

- Remerton Mill Town
- Remerton Neighborhood Village
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Linear Greenspace/Trails
- Agricultural / Forestry
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Area
- Established Residential
- Transitional Neighborhood
- Institutional Activity Center
- Neighborhood Activity Center
- Community Activity Center
- Regional Activity Center
- Rural Activity Center
- Downtown
- Industrial Activity Center
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities



Community Facilities and Hightower Community Map Valdosta, Georgia



Legend

Community Facilities

- City Hall
- Courthouse
- Elementary School
- Fire Station
- Private School
- Places of Worship
- Childcare Facility

Parks

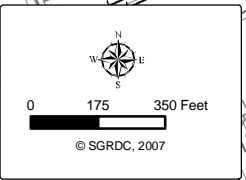
Sidewalks

Roads

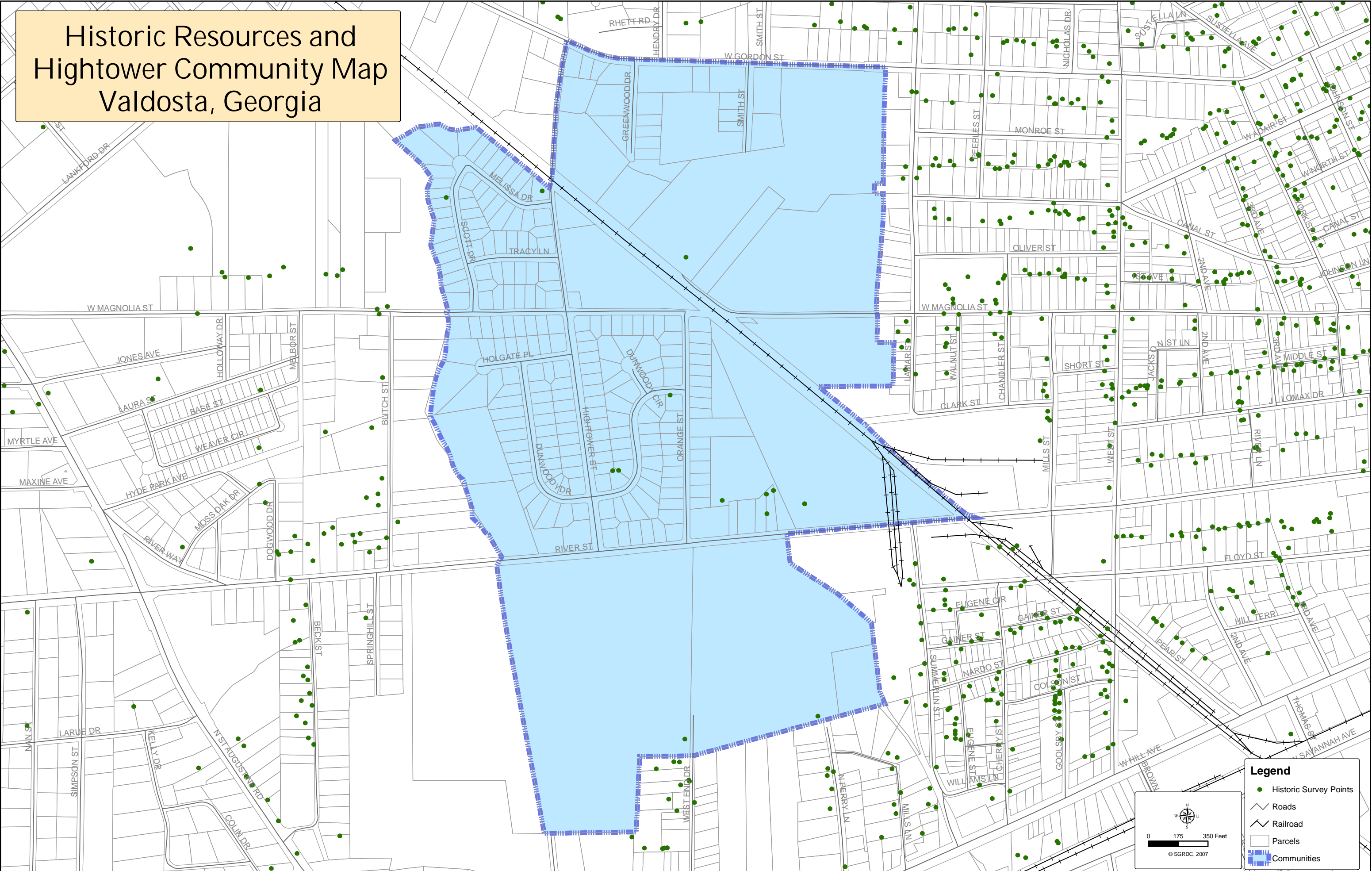
Railroad

Parcels

Communities



Historic Resources and Hightower Community Map Valdosta, Georgia



Zoning and Hightower Community Map Valdosta, Georgia

