

Leila Ellis Neighborhood

Introduction



Located just northeast of the Central Business District, the Leila Ellis neighborhood developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and is a first generation suburb of Valdosta. The name of this neighborhood is derived from the former Leila Ellis Elementary School located within this neighborhood, which is now the Lowndes County Social Services and LAMP building. The school was named for Leila Ellis, a long-time Valdosta resident and devoted school teacher and principle, who lived in Valdosta from 1865 until her death in 1950. A large portion of this neighborhood is within the East End Historic District, listed on the National

Register of Historic Places, and the western half of the neighborhood is also included within the Valdosta Local Historic District. This community is a close-knit and mostly residential community with several churches, professional offices, commercial businesses, and community services.

General Condition

The Leila Ellis neighborhood community has a mixture of three land uses as shown in the Character Area Map. The core of the community is mostly residential with commercial properties along North Ashley Street, North Lee Street, East Central Avenue, East Hill Avenue, and Forrest Street on the western, southern and eastern edges of the community. The southwestern corner of the community is a gateway area into downtown Valdosta, known as the Central Business District. The Character Area Map calls for Leila Ellis to maintain its three character areas: Community Activity Center, Established Residential, and Neighborhood Activity Center.

As a large number of the buildings within this neighborhood are historic, the need for repair and maintenance of this older housing stock is apparent. Overall, the community appears to be in a transitional stage, with a higher number of properties needing major repair. In recent months,

however, there has been a noticeable increase in property owners rehabilitating and improving housing and commercial buildings, and this trend is expected to grow and continue.



Census Data

The Leila Ellis neighborhood is included in parts of two Census Tracts and Block Groups:

- Census Tract 110, Block Group 2 (54.27%)
- Census Tract 113.02, Block Group 3 (0.94%)

The following data was compiled based on the percentage of the community included in each block group. Using this method, it is estimated that the total population of the Leila Ellis neighborhood is 1883. This community contains approximately 445 households. The median income of Leila Ellis residents is \$16,373 per year and approximately 46% of this neighborhood's population is living below the poverty level. There are 680 people enrolled in school. Only 18% of the community's population has graduated from high school and 3% have a Bachelor's degree. Table LE-1 reflects the racial composition of the Leila Ellis community and Table LE-2 shows the age distribution of the residents.

Table LE-1	
Ulmer Avenue - Race Distribution	
Race	Number
White	158
Black or African American	1696
Hispanic	29
Asian	3
Other	0
*TOTAL:	1886
<small>SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000 *Race alone or in combination with one or more other races.</small>	

Table LE-2	
Ulmer Avenue - Age Distribution	
Age	Number
0-9	403
10-19	354
20-49	640
50-64	331
65 and up	155
TOTAL:	1883
<small>SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000</small>	

According to the Census 2000 figures, there are 215 owner-occupied housing units and 416 renter-occupied housing units in the Leila Ellis neighborhood. 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 data obtained from the Valdosta Police Department and SGRDC for 2010, crimes committed in the Leila Ellis neighborhood made up 3% of all the crime within the City of Valdosta. Similar to other neighborhoods in the Neighborhood Revitalization Area, the largest percentage (30%) of crime in this neighborhood was larceny. These crimes were fairly evenly spread throughout the residential roads within the neighborhood. Drug violations and simple assaults each made up 19% of total crimes committed, and were concentrated along N. Troup Street, E. Hill Avenue, E. Magnolia Street and E. Adair Street. Twenty four burglaries occurred throughout the neighborhood, with concentrations on E. Hill Avenue, N. Troup, and E. Magnolia Streets. The locations of crimes committed in the Leila Ellis neighborhood are detailed on the Community Crime Map. Police officers could work with residents in this community to form neighborhood watch groups to increase awareness in the types of crimes in this neighborhood and its problematic areas, as well as increase their patrols of this neighborhood.

Table LE-3 on the following page provides information on the number of specific crimes committed in Leila Ellis and how these incidents compare to the percentage of crime committed citywide.

Table LE-3 Leila Ellis Community			
Crime	Number of Incidents	Percent of Total Neighborhood Crime	Percent of Total Crime Citywide
Aggravated Assault	9	6%	5%
Arson	0	0%	0%
Auto Theft	6	4%	4%
Burglary	24	15%	3%
Drug Violations	30	19%	5%
Homicides	0	0%	0%
Larceny	48	30%	2%
Robbery	3	2%	4%
Sex Offenses	4	2%	24%
Simple Assault	30	19%	4%
Weapon Violations	7	4%	3%
TOTAL:	161	100%	3%

SOURCE: SGRDC and Valdosta Police Department

Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

The Leila Ellis neighborhood boasts a number of community facilities to serve its residents, as well as citizens of Valdosta, and these facilities can be seen on the Community Facilities Map. The only park in the neighborhood, Smith Park, is located at the apex of East Central and East Hill Avenues, and is an urban triangular, landscaped park containing 1.6 acres.



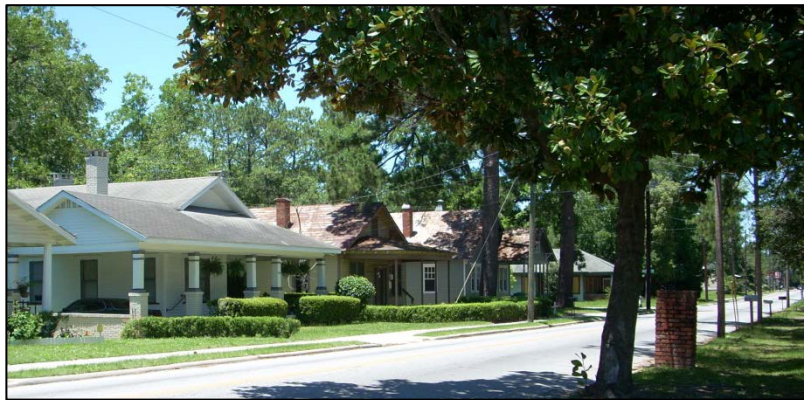
The administrative offices of Lowndes County's Social Services is located on North Lee Street in the renovated Leila Ellis School building, and provides a variety of assistance programs to citizens in need. The Lowndes Associated Ministries to People (LAMP) is also housed in a building on the Leila Ellis school site, and provides assistance services to impoverished and homeless persons.

The Valdosta branch of the Salvation Army is located at 320 Smithland Place, which provides a variety of services to the community. Emergency services, such as a homeless shelter and temporary financial assistance programs, are offered at this facility, along with traditional worship services and educational programs.

Although Valdosta City Hall, City Hall Annex, and the Lowndes County Judicial Complex are not located within the Leila Ellis neighborhood, their proximity to the neighborhood qualifies them as important and accessible community facilities.

Infrastructure Conditions

The Leila Ellis community contains sidewalks along its outer borders, near downtown and along its major corridors: North Ashley Street, East Central Avenue, and East Hill Avenue. Sidewalks also exist along many of this neighborhood's major corridors, as well as residential streets. The Troup Street sidewalk project is anticipated to be completed soon by the City of Valdosta's Engineering Department, but there are no other infrastructure projects, such as water/sewer utility, traffic-related, or stormwater projects, planned at this time for this neighborhood.



Overall, the Leila Ellis neighborhood could be improved by certain infrastructure projects. Some of the interior residential streets do not have curbing or gutters, which should be installed where feasible. On the residential streets that do not feature sidewalks, a sidewalk should be added to at least one side of the street. Finally, in order to

improve the neighborhood's aesthetics, all power lines could be buried underground.

Housing

According to the U.S. Census, the median year of construction of homes in Leila Ellis is 1954. Though this housing stock is a bit older, it is very feasible to consider these structures as candidates for rehabilitation when circumstances warrant.

The western and southern portion of the Leila Ellis neighborhood is located within the Valdosta Local Historic District, as well as the East End Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The entire neighborhood contains 311 documented historic resources. Care should be taken when rehabilitation or redevelopment projects are undertaken in Leila Ellis to preserve the traditional rhythm of residential streetscapes. Options are available for rehabilitation and new (infill) construction that protect historic character while maintaining affordability. For example, new construction should look to the Valdosta Historic District Design Guidelines and the surrounding housing stock for direction on issues such as roof style and pitch, fenestration (the arrangement of windows and doors), building setbacks, materials, etc. The Historic Resources of Leila Ellis are shown on the Historic Survey Points Map. Because of the historic nature of Leila Ellis, extra consideration should be taken when rehabilitation, and especially demolition and reconstruction, is suggested.



The housing survey team inventoried 296 parcels in the Leila Ellis community. 227 structures and 69 vacant lots were inventoried. The results of the inventory are summarized in Table LE-4 and are shown on the Housing Conditions map. Of the 227 structures inventoried, sixty-two were unoccupied and fifteen were abandoned. The break-down of occupied units is detailed in table LE-5 below.

Table LE-4 Leila Ellis - Neighborhood Survey Summary	
Business	38
Multi-Family	34
Manufactured Home	0
Single Family	155
Vacant Lots	69
TOTAL:	296

SOURCE: SGRDC Housing Inventory 2006

Table LE-5 Leila Ellis - Occupancy			
Use	Occupied	Vacant	Abandoned
Business	37	1	0
Multi-Family	33	1	0
Manufactured Home	0	0	0
Single Family	126	23	6
TOTAL:	196	25	6

SOURCE: SGRDC Housing Inventory 2006

Of the 227 structures inventoried in the Leila Ellis community, 95 were found to be in acceptable condition; this includes 37 businesses, 32 multi-family units, and 26 single family homes. One multi-family unit and 68 single family residences are in need of major repair, while one multi-family unit and 57 single family residences are in need of minor repair. One multi-family unit and 4 single family residences are in a dilapidated state. These conditions are shown on the Housing Conditions Map. A summary of the condition of the inventoried structures is found in Table LE-6 below.

Table LE-6 Leila Ellis - Condition				
Use	Acceptable	Minor Repair	Major Repair	Dilapidated
Business	37	1	0	0
Multi-Family	32	0	1	1
Manufactured Home	0	0	0	0
Single Family	26	57	68	4
TOTAL:	95	58	69	5

SOURCE: SGRDC Housing Inventory 2006

Economic Development Opportunities

Redevelopment

Almost all of the commercial activity in the Leila Ellis community is concentrated along the corridors of North Ashley and East Hill/East Central Avenues. There is ample opportunity for redevelopment of old and /or underused commercial buildings within this community, especially in these corridors. According to the future development



planning for this neighborhood, redevelopment is encouraged in both the commercially- and residentially-zoned areas. The majority of redevelopment opportunity is within the western commercial and eastern residential portions of this neighborhood; several structures are unoccupied and there are a number of vacant properties. It is recommended that unoccupied residential structures be targeted for redevelopment and reuse to provide the community with affordable housing, while respecting the historic character of the neighborhood in which they exist. Vacant lots should be targeted for new residential and/or commercial buildings to aid in the economic revitalization of these areas and contribute positively to the tax base.

Brownfield

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield as, “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant” (www.epa.gov). The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) has not identified any brownfields in the Leila Ellis community. However, the old gas station at 400 E. Hill Avenue and the Hall’s Auto Repair & Service center at 404½ N.



Troup Street have been considered as potential brownfields. The City of Valdosta’s Brownfield Assessment Grant program assessed the old gas station at 400 E. Hill Avenue and found no significant contamination that would impede redevelopment. As Hall’s Auto Repair & Service is an operating business, it would not be considered a Brownfield until unoccupied. In that case, the City of Valdosta would likely need to consider a solution to mitigate any contamination found on this site in order for redevelopment to occur.

Planned Projects

The City of Valdosta Engineering Department has proposed a sidewalk construction project for North Troup Street. This is the only planned project for the Leila Ellis neighborhood at this time.

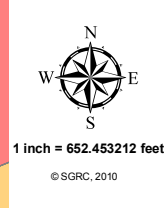
Conclusion



businesses in existing, unoccupied commercial buildings, and infill development projects will help make the Leila Ellis community thrive.

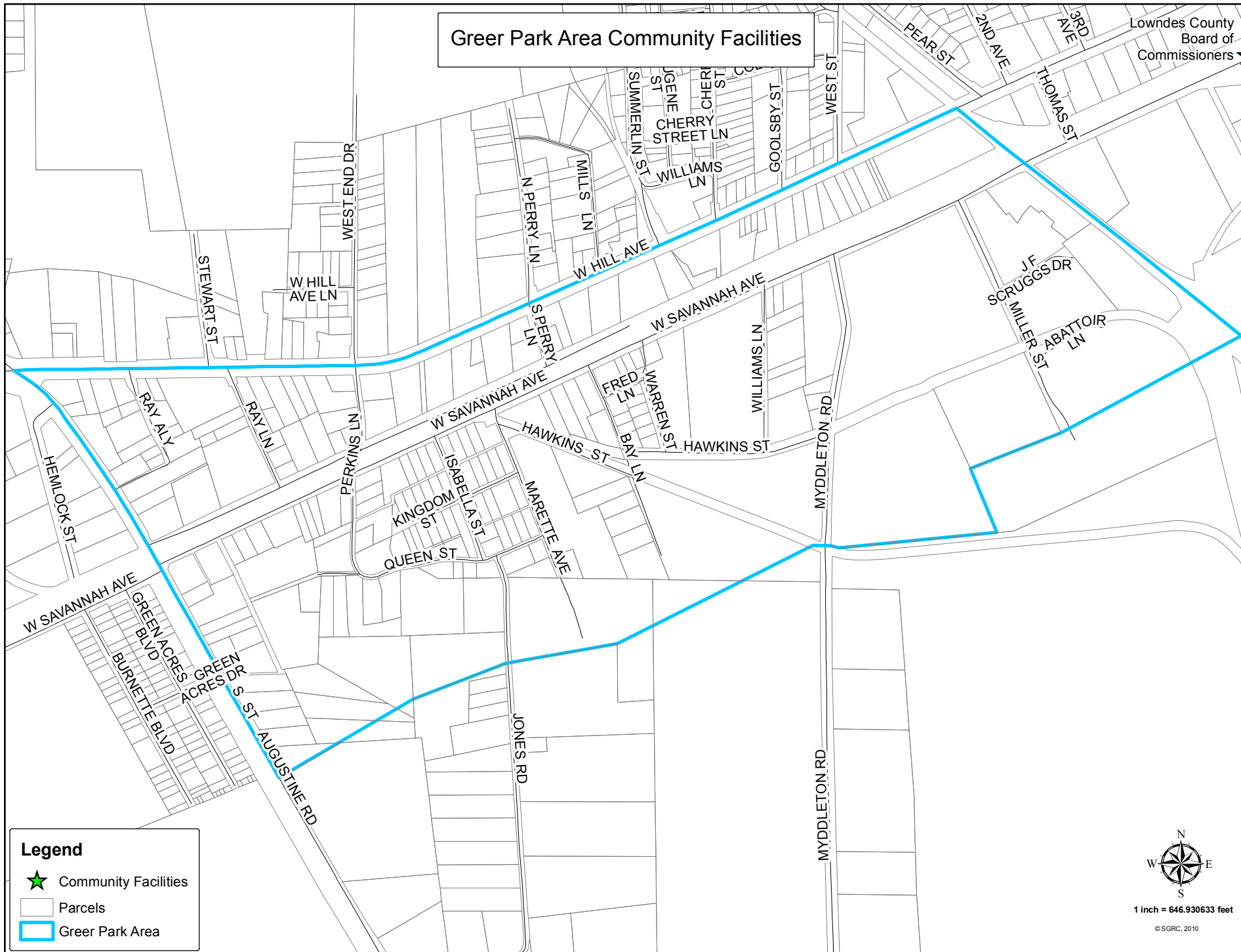
The Leila Ellis community has many assets including a pocket park and convenient commercial corridors. The neighborhood’s biggest asset is its number of residences, many of which are historic in nature, and convenient location to downtown. However, this housing stock is aging and many houses in the community need significant repairs. Housing rehabilitation projects, new

Greer Park Community Character Areas



Greer Park Area Community Facilities

Lowndes County
Board of
Commissioners



Legend



Community Facilities



Parcels



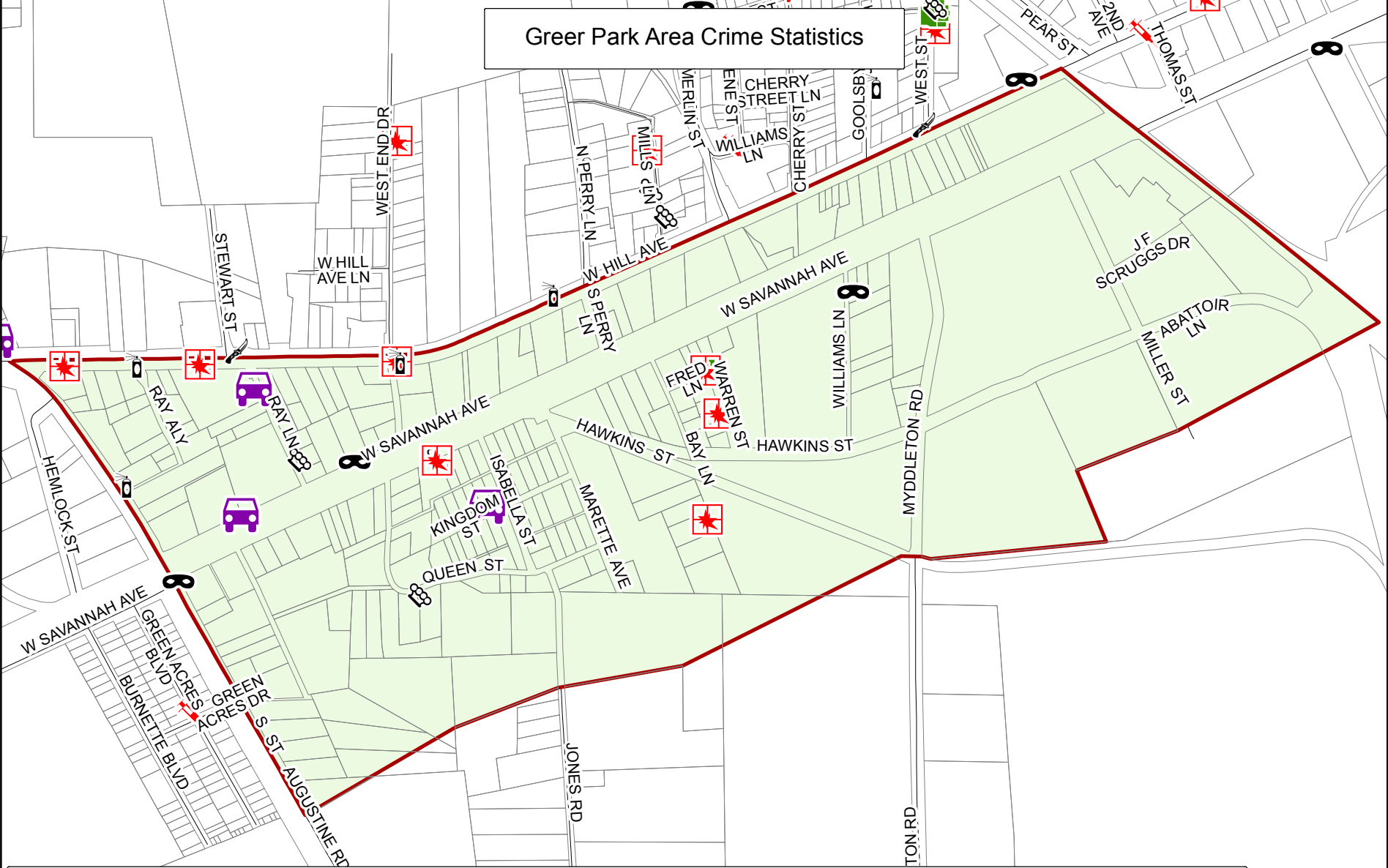
Greer Park Area



1 inch = 646.930633 feet

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Greer Park Area Crime Statistics



Legend

2010 CRIME



AGGRAVATED ASSAULT



ARSON



AUTO-THEFT



BURGLARY



DRUG VIOLATIONS



HOMICIDE



LAKOLEN



RAPES



ROBERT



SIMPLE ASSAULT



VANDALISM



WEAPONS VIOLATIONS



Parcels



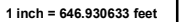
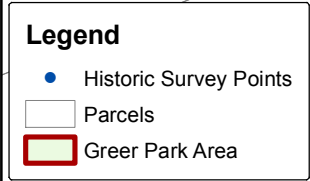
Greer Park Area



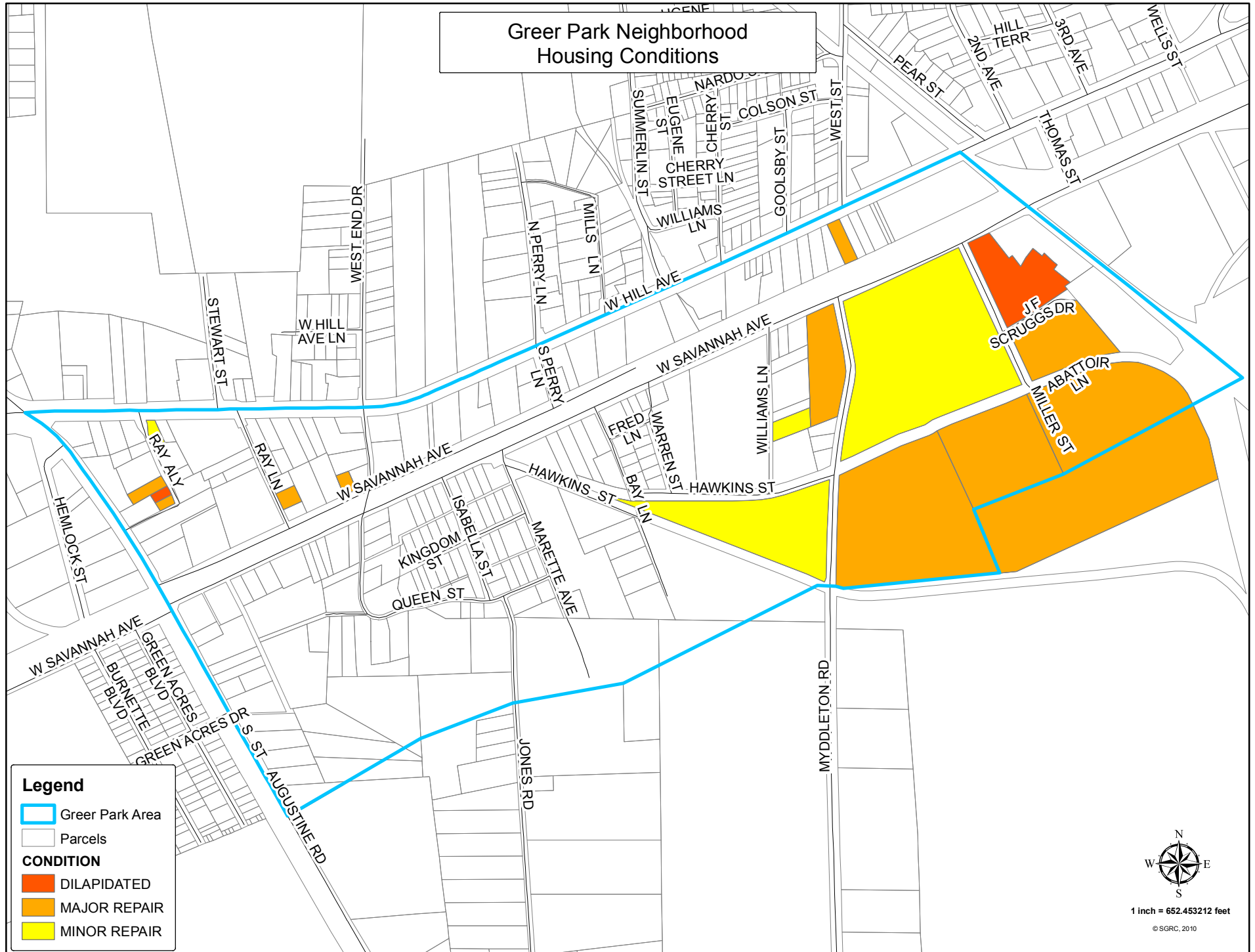
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Greer Park Area Historic Resources



Greer Park Neighborhood Housing Conditions



Greer Park Community Zoning

