

Southside Neighborhood

Introduction

The name Southside refers to the entire area south of the railroad tracks in Valdosta that grew to have commercial, civic and residential viability for African-American residents of Valdosta. Modest one-story frame residences are common for this district and many are resting on concrete block foundations or its original stone or brick piers. The Southside neighborhood that is the subject of this neighborhood redevelopment plan was split off from the larger original Southside in 1980-81 by the construction of the James Beck Overpass. Many residents have left the area due to suburban growth and development outside of Valdosta's city center and many businesses have been eliminated due to the construction of the overpass and the relocation of the CSX railroad tracks, leaving many buildings empty and deteriorating. Many houses have been demolished and many more are marked for condemnation by the city for various building code violations and unsafe living conditions. Habitat for Humanity is constructing several new homes along N. Oak Street and is one example of organizations and residents working actively towards rehabilitation of their neighborhood.



General Condition

Generally, the Southside community is a long established residential community bounded on the north and west side by rail road tracks, on the east side by SR 41/ S. Patterson Street, and on the Southside by SR 31/ Madison Hwy. This neighborhood consists of small lot residential homes with commercial highway and community commercial uses located along SR 41 and SR 31. The Future Development map shows the Southside Community divided into four character areas – Industrial Activity Center along the western rail road tracks, Neighborhood Activity Center along the northern rail road tracks and along SR 41 north of Old Clyattville Road, and Community Activity Center along SR 41 south of Old Clyattville Road and along SR 31. The remainder is shown as Established Residential. A small area in the south corner south of Dampier Street is classified as Park/Recreation/Conservation. There are 147 historic resources in the Southside community which are listed in the State's database according to a recently completed survey of Lowndes County historic resources. These resources are shown on the Historic Resources Map.

Census Data

The Southside neighborhood is included in one Census tract and parts of three Block Groups:

- Census Tract 108, Block Group 2 (57.1%)
- Census Tract 108, Block Group 3 (1.0%)
- Census Tract 108, Block Group 5 (14.4%)

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 361 residents and 117 households in Southside. The average annual income of Southside residents varies greatly by Block Group. Block Groups 2 and 3 show average annual incomes of \$4,999 and \$6,747 respectively, whereas residents in Block Group 5 earn an average of \$15,298 annually. In Block Group 2 80 people or 52% of the residents live below poverty level, in Block Group 3, two out of three residents live below poverty level, and comparatively, in Block Group 5, only 15% of the residents are below poverty level. For all three Block Groups, 34 students were enrolled in school. Graduation rate for High School also varies greatly between Block Groups: Block Group 2: 35%, Block Group 3: 17% and Block Group 5: 48%. 14% of the residents in Block Group 2 have a Bachelors Degree, 0% in Block Group 3, and 5% in Block Group 5. So although Block Group 2 ranks the lowest in average annual income and highest in poverty level, more residents here have a college degree. Statistics available, including retirement numbers, do not appear to have a ready explanation for this apparent inconsistency, so further field research might be necessary.

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

Table SS-1 Southside - Age Distribution			
Age	Block Group		
	2	3	5
0-4	7.1%	7.7%	7.4%
5-9	11.9%	6.2%	6.1%
10-19	19.4%	16.2%	15.2%
20-49	37.3%	34.4%	47.3%
50-64	13.8%	16.2%	10.9%
65 and up	10.4%	19.3%	13.1%

Table SS-2 Southside - Race Distribution			
Race	Block Group		
	2	3	5
White	12.3%	0%	24.6%
African American	87.8%	100%	74.5%
Hispanic	0%	0%	0.6%
Indian	0%	0%	0.4%
Asian	0%	0%	0.4%
Other	0%	0%	0.1%

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

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According to the Census figures, of the 117 households, there are 59 owner-occupied and 58 renter-occupied housing units in Southside. 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 2007, the Southside Community had a crime rate of a total of 82 reported incidents. Roughly 59 percent of the crimes in Southside were larcenies, and 15 percent were burglaries. The majority of the crimes were concentrated on S. Patterson Street (SR 41). In an effort to reduce these crime occurrences, police should work with residents in these areas to form neighborhood watch groups to increase visibility in the problem areas. Map SS-2 details the location and time of day all reported crimes were committed.

Table SS-3 provides information on the number of specific crimes committed in Southside and how these incidents compare to the percentage of crime committed in each category citywide.

Table SS-3 Southside Crime Statistics - 2007		
Crime	No. of Incidents	Percent of Total Crime City Wide
HOMICIDE	0	0%
AGGRAVATED ASSAULT	9	6%
ARSON	0	0%
AUTO-THEFT	7	3.4%
BURGLARY	12	1.7%
DRUG VIOLATIONS	23	4.4%
LARCENY	48	2.0%
RAPES	0	0%
ROBBERY	6	4.9%
SIMPLE ASSAULT	21	2.5%
WEAPONS VIOLATIONS	10	3.8%
TOTAL:	136	

Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities

One recreation/community facility is within walking distance for Southside residents north of SR 31/Madison Highway. There is no facility within walking distance available for residents living south of SR 31/Madison Highway. Southside Community Center is a medium-sized community park (3 acres) with playground equipment, picnic tables, a large pool, a ball field and a small community center for indoor recreational activities. Southside Park provides adequate recreational opportunities for the Southside neighborhood, but efforts should be made to increase local recreational activities for residents on both sides of SR 31 and connect the residents to those facilities with adequate side walks

and bike lanes to improve safety and accessibility to those facilities.



Plan



Other recreational facilities that are in the vicinity are Olympic Park, Vallotton Youth Complex across S. Troup Street and Woodlawn Streets from the Brookwood area. None of those are walkable, though because this portion of the Southside neighborhood is separated from these facilities by S. Patterson Street, a major arterial with heavy traffic.

Infrastructure Conditions

Sidewalks are only present in the Southside community on portions of N. Oak Street. This sidewalk is only on one side of the street, very narrow and not well maintained with weeds growing over the concrete and the concrete buckling in several places. Sidewalks also exist along the major corridors, but otherwise connectivity to encourage pedestrian activity in the interior of the neighborhood does not exist resulting in the unsafe condition that residents, especially children playing in the streets, share the same space as automobiles. N. Oak Street in addition serves as a north-south connector and speed limits are not always observed by passing motorists. Sidewalks and curbs should be installed where feasible. Buffers should be installed between residential and commercial and industrial uses in order to increase safety and aesthetics and separate incompatible uses. An additional improvement to the aesthetics and safety of the neighborhood would be the requirement to bury all overhead power lines underground.

Housing

According to the U.S. Census, the majority of homes in Southside were constructed between 1954 and 1963. 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 three hundred-nine parcels in the Southside Community. One hundred ninety-two structures and one hundred seventeen vacant lots were documented. The results of the inventory are summarized in Table SS-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 SS-4 Southside-	
Business	33
Churches	0
Multi-Family	3
Manufactured Home	4
Single Family	152
Vacant Lots	117
Valdosta Housing Authority	0
Park	0
Total parcels inventoried	309

Of the one-hundred-ninety-two structures inventoried, one-hundred-sixty-four are occupied. The break-down of occupied units by use is detailed in Table SS-5 below.



**Table SS-5
Southside - Occupancy**

Use	Occupied	Vacant	Abandoned
Business	33	0	0
Churches	0	0	0
Multi-Family	2	1	0
Manufactured Home	4	0	0
Single Family	125	18	9
Valdosta Housing Authority	0	0	0
TOTAL:	164	19	9

Of the one-hundred-ninety-two structures inventoried, fifty were found to be in acceptable condition. The vast majority are in need of major repair as shown on the Major Repair map. Eighteen 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 SS-6
Southside - Condition**

Use	Acceptable	Minor Repair	Major Repair	Dilapidated
Business	33	0	0	0
Churches	0	0	0	0
Multi-Family	2	0	1	0
Manufactured Home	4	0	0	0
Single Family	11	38	85	18
Valdosta Housing Authority	0	0	0	0
TOTAL:	50	38	86	18

Economic Development Opportunities

Almost all of the commercial activity in the Southside community is concentrated along the corridors of S. Patterson Street and Madison Highway. Heavy and light industry is located along Old Clyattville Road. All of these areas are likely to see further commercial growth, which is encouraged to provide employment opportunities in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, but the type of industry and business should be closely monitored and physically separated and buffered in order not to adversely affect the residential living conditions of the area. Neighborhood or community commercial development serving the community should be encouraged in this location. The majority of redevelopment opportunities are found within the residential area; many structures are unoccupied and there are still several large tracts of vacant land. Vacant or dilapidated structures should be rehabilitated where feasible or demolished and replaced with small lot and small structures to maintain the character of the area. All of these strategies would aid the redevelopment and economic revitalization of this neighborhood and therefore also positively contribute to the city's tax base.

Planned Projects

No major projects have been identified by the various City departments as planned for the Southside neighborhood.

Conclusion










The Southside community has many assets including its vicinity to the Valdosta City Center, the Southside Recreation Center, its many historic structures as well as its many mature trees throughout the neighborhood. Overall, the Southside community appears to be stabilizing and perhaps reversing its long decline. Several Habitat for Humanity homes have been constructed recently on vacant lots along N. Oak Street and this construction has started to have some spill-over effects on neighboring properties which have been experiencing small improvements and clean-up. There appears to be a sense of home-ownership and community pride developing and several churches are actively involved in the rehabilitation of the neighborhood. A list of further suggested revitalization strategies can be found in the Neighborhood Plan Goals and Objectives.

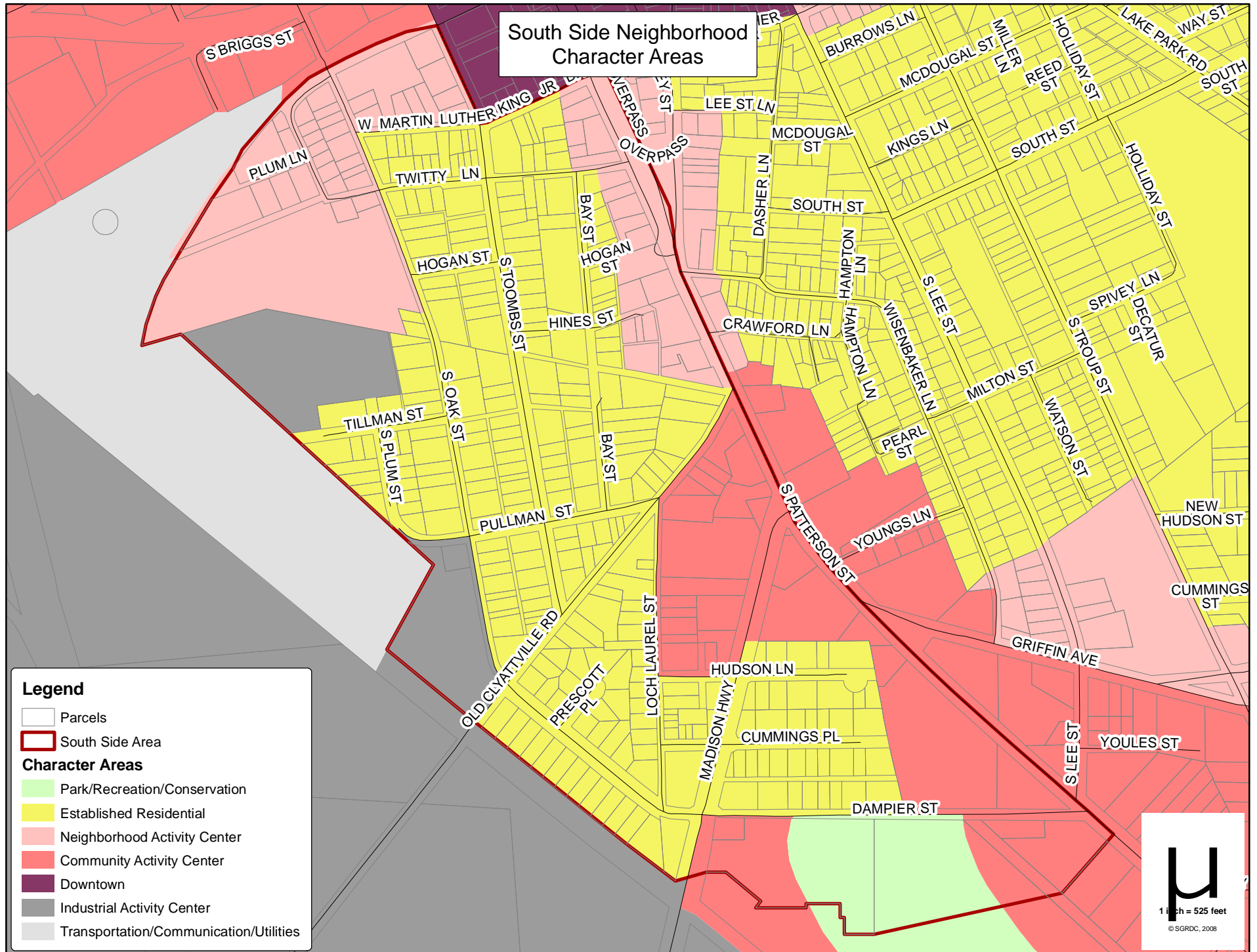
Southside Map Appendix

Map SS-1 Character Areas
Map SS-2 Community Facilities
Map SS-3 Crime Statistics
Map SS-4 Historic Resources
Map SS-5 Housing Conditions
Map SS-6 Land Use
Map SS-7 Zoning

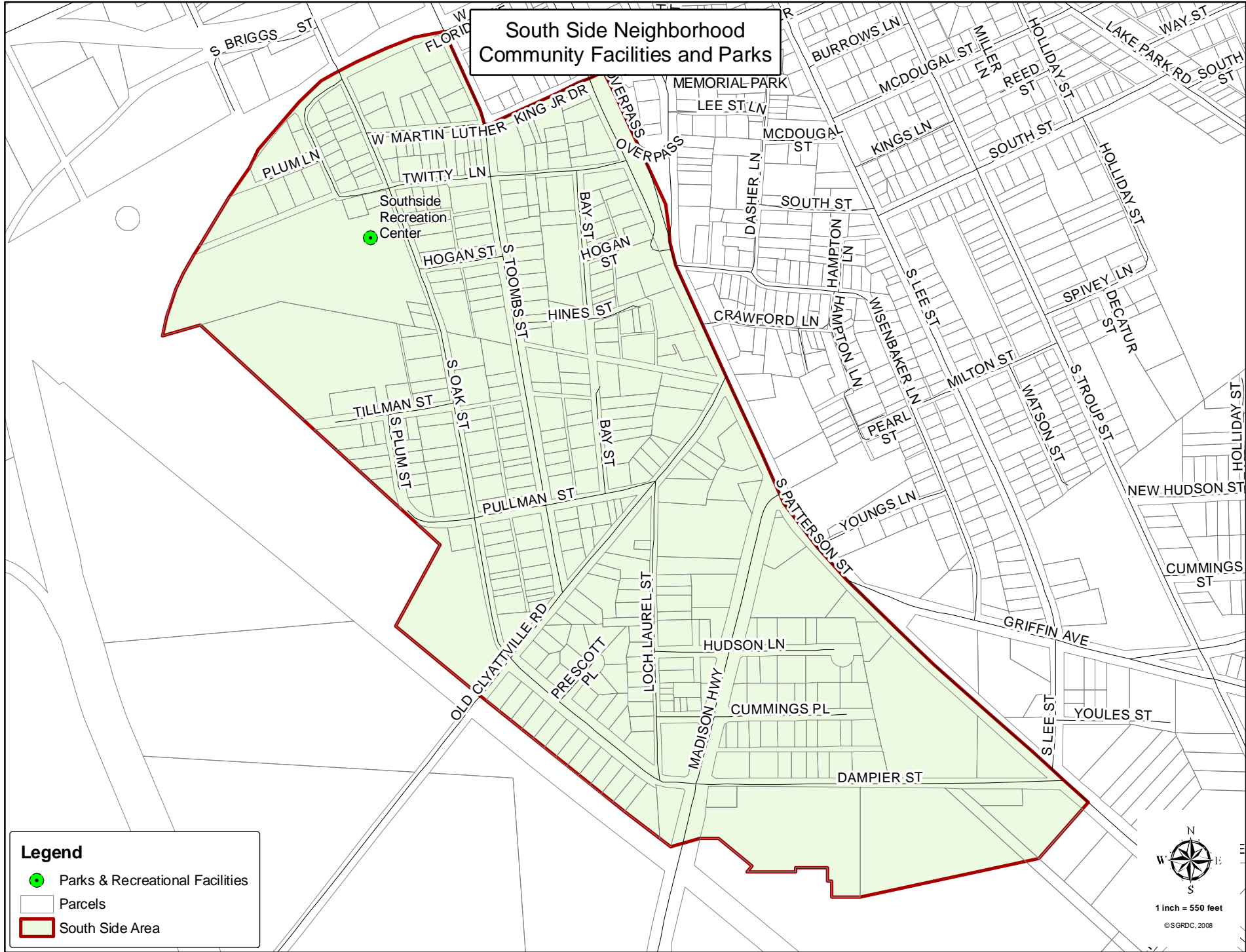
South Side Neighborhood Character Areas

Legend




-  Parcels
-  South Side Area
- Character Areas**
-  Park/Recreation/Conservation
-  Established Residential
-  Neighborhood Activity Center
-  Community Activity Center
-  Downtown
-  Industrial Activity Center
-  Transportation/Communication/Utilities



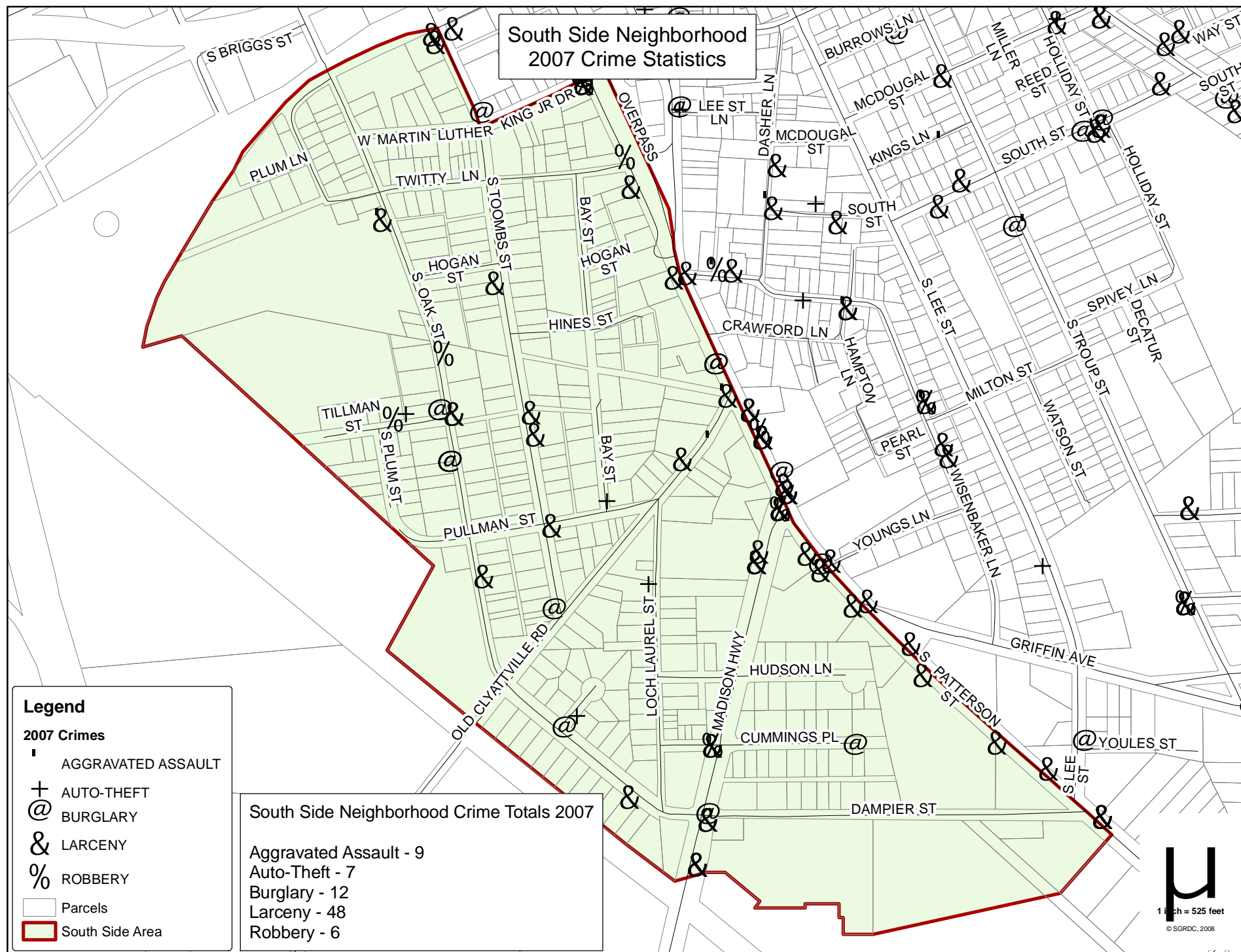
South Side Neighborhood Community Facilities and Parks

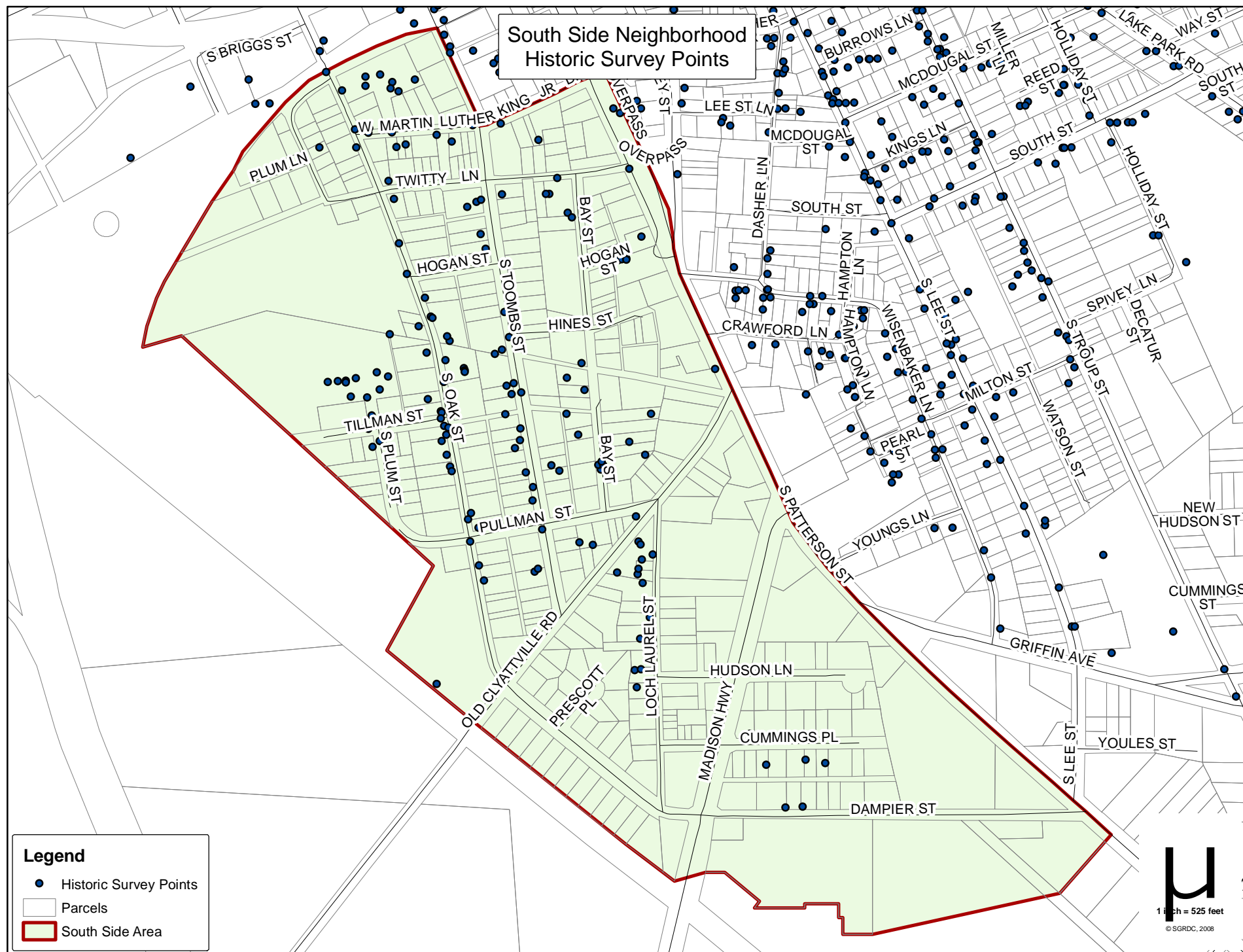


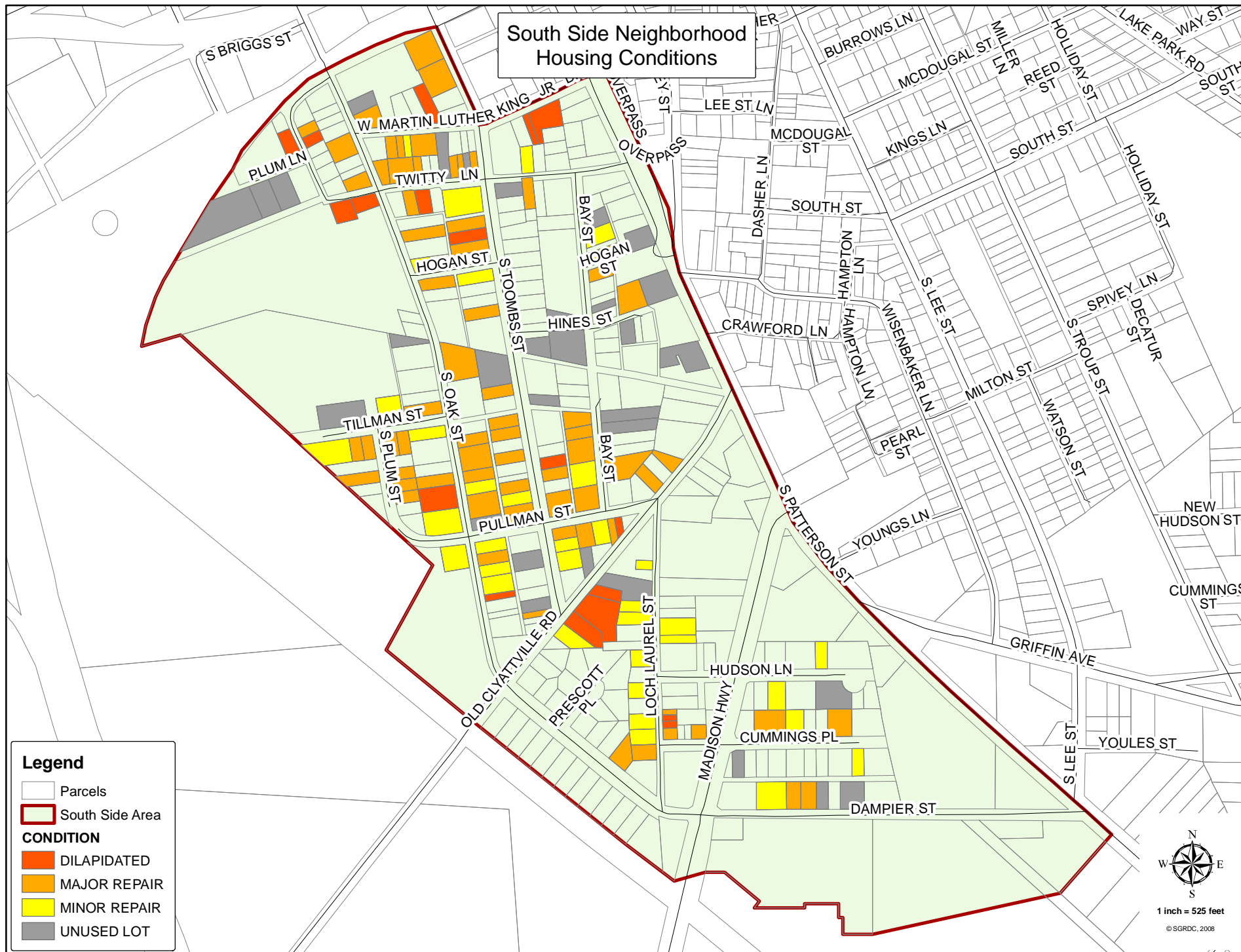
Legend

-  Parks & Recreational Facilities
-  Parcels
-  South Side Area





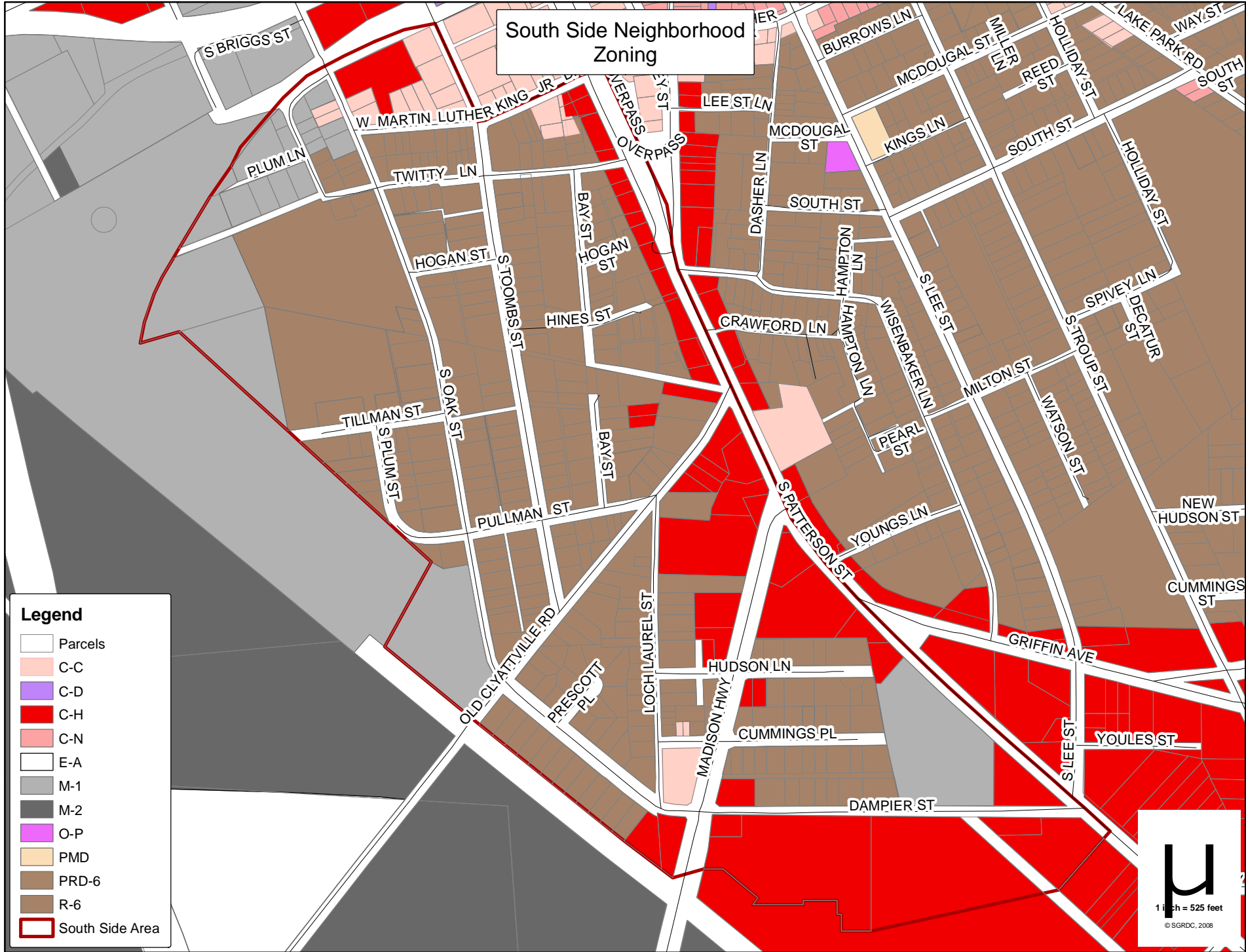




South Side Neighborhood Zoning

Legend

- Parcels
- C-C
- C-D
- C-H
- C-N
- E-A
- M-1
- M-2
- O-P
- PMD
- PRD-6
- R-6
- South Side Area



h

1 inch = 525 feet

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