

# West Side Neighborhood

## ***Introduction***

The West Side neighborhood developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The neighborhood is a first generation suburb of Valdosta. The West Side name is derived from the fact that this neighborhood is located on the west side of downtown Valdosta. A portion of the Fairview Historic District is located within West Side. This community is a close-knit and mostly residential community with several churches, professional offices, a park, and a community center (the Boys & Girls Club).

## ***General Condition***

The West Side neighborhood community has a mix of land uses as shown in the Character Area Map. The core of the community is mostly residential with commercial properties along North Oak Street and North Toombs Street on the eastern edge of the community. The southwestern corner of the community also has some light industrial uses as shown on the Zoning Map. The Character Area Map calls for West Side to maintain three character areas: Community Activity Center, Established Residential, and Neighborhood Activity Center.



Two-thirds of the eastern portion of West Side is in the Valdosta Local Historic District. The entire neighborhood contains 432 documented historic resources. Care should be taken when rehabilitation or redevelopment projects are undertaken in West Side to preserve the traditional rhythm of the streetscape. A wide variety of 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 West Side are shown on the Historic Survey Points Map.

Overall, the community appears to be in a transitional stage, with older housing stock and 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 West Side neighborhood is included in parts of one Census Tract and parts of three Block Groups:

- Census Tract 113.02, Block Group 2 (61.1%)
- Census Tract 113.02, Block Group 3 (16.9%)
- Census Tract 113.01, Block Group 4 (1.0%)

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 West Side neighborhood is 1,976. This community contains approximately 867 households. The median income of West Side residents is \$18,762 per year and approximately 780 people are living below the poverty level. There are 605 people enrolled in school, though only 24.5% of the areas entire population have graduated from high school and 8.5% have a Bachelors degree or higher.

Table WS-1 reflects the West Side community and distribution of the

<b>Table WS-1 West Side - Race Distribution</b>	
<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>
White	596
African American	1354
Hispanic	50
Asian	13
Other	39
<b>*TOTAL:</b>	<b>2051</b>

racial composition of the Table WS-2 shows the age residents.

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

\*Race alone or in combination with one or more other races.

<b>Table WS-2 West Side - Age Distribution</b>	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>
0-9	265
10-19	269
20-44	787
45-64	389
65 and up	266
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1976</b>

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

According to the Census 2000 figures, there are 292 owner-occupied housing units and 577 renter-occupied housing units in the West Side 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 2007, the largest percentage (31.9%) of crime was due to larceny. These crimes spread throughout the neighborhood, with concentrations occurring on West North Street, the eastern portion of J. L. Lomax Drive, and along West Gordon Street. Aggravated assaults and simple assaults were also concentrated along West

North Street and J. L. Lomax Drive. Twenty three burglaries occurred throughout the neighborhood, with concentrations on River, Mills, and West Gordon Streets. The locations of crimes committed in the West Side neighborhood are detailed on the Community Crime Map. Overall, crime in this community makes up 3.6% of total crime citywide. Police could work with residents in these areas to form neighborhood watch groups to increase awareness in the problematic areas.

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

<b>Table WS-3 West Side Community</b>			
<b>Crime</b>	<b>Number of Incidents</b>	<b>Percent of Total Crime</b>	<b>Percent of Total Crime Citywide</b>
Aggravated Assault	6	3.2%	4.0%
Arson	1	0.5%	4.0%
Auto Theft	7	3.7%	3.4%
Burglary	23	12.2%	3.3%
Drug Violations	34	18.1%	6.5%
Larceny	60	31.9%	2.5%
Rapes	3	1.6%	8.6%
Robbery	7	3.7%	5.7%
Simple Assault	39	20.7%	4.6%
Weapon Violations	8	4.3%	3.0%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

SOURCE: SGRDC and Valdosta Police Department

### ***Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities***



J. L. Lomax Park is centrally located in the southern portion of the West Side community. The park is 0.39 acres and has basketball courts, a playground, a small shelter, and picnic tables. J. L. Lomax Park is one of the smaller, public “pocket parks” in the City. It remains well maintained. The park provides excellent recreational opportunities for much of the West Side neighborhood, and is within walking distance for the majority of residents. However, due to the small size of the park, it cannot accommodate large numbers of people at one time.

The Boys and Girls Club of Valdosta has a facility at 614 North Toombs Street, which serves as a community center for the West Side neighborhood, as well as surrounding neighborhoods. The Boys and Girls Club offers a variety of programs and services for children in the area, in addition to providing childcare. Generally speaking, community centers provide a meeting area and a location for various community social services, and the Boys and Girls Club appears to fulfill this need.

The Valdosta Police Department headquarters is located at 500 N. Toombs Street. This location contains



the administrative office of the Police Department, as well as the Bureaus of Patrol Services, Investigative Services, and Support Services.

### ***Infrastructure Conditions***

The West Side community contains sidewalks along its outer borders, near downtown and along its major corridors, River and West Gordon Streets. A sidewalk exists on mostly the southern side of West Gordon Street between North Toombs Street and the West Side neighborhood's western boundary just past Lamar Street. Another sidewalk exists along mostly the northern side of River Street between North Toombs Street and the Norfolk-Southern Railroad. This sidewalk is on both sides of River Street in the Fairview Historic District and between West and Miles Streets. Along North Toombs Street, a sidewalk runs between West Magnolia and West North Streets. Sidewalks are not present in the interior section of the West Side community, and should be constructed along the streets immediately surrounding the J. L. Lomax Park. Sidewalks are planned to be constructed along Magnolia Street between Oak and York Streets, and Phase Two of the River Street Sidewalk Project is anticipated to be completed soon.

The City of Valdosta's Engineering Department is planning to conduct several projects in the West Side neighborhood. Stormwater drainage improvements will be made in the vicinity of Oak and Magnolia Streets, and a culvert and detention project will be conducted on Second Avenue. There are no paving, water/sewer construction, or traffic-related projects planned for this community at this time.



Overall, the West Side neighborhood could be improved by several infrastructure projects. River Street and West Street are in need of repaving. Also, West Street and several of the residential streets do not have curbing or sidewalks, which should be installed where feasible. Along the southwestern side where Scruggs Concrete is located, a wall should be constructed around the site in order to buffer this light industrial facility from the residential neighborhood immediately surrounding it. 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 West Side is 1961. Though this housing stock is a bit older, it is very feasible to consider these structures as candidates for rehabilitation when circumstances warrant.

A significant number of homes in the West Side neighborhood were built in 1959 or earlier. Along with other important considerations, structures that are fifty years or older are generally considered historic, according to the National Register Criteria. This, combined with the fact that two-thirds of this neighborhood is located within the Valdosta Historic District, should be taken into consideration when rehabilitation, and especially demolition and reconstruction, is suggested.



The housing survey team inventoried 549 parcels in the West Side community. 384 structures and 165 vacant lots were inventoried. The results of the inventory are summarized in Table WS-4 and are shown on the Housing Conditions map.



<b>Table WS-4</b>	
<b>West Side - Neighborhood Survey Summary</b>	
Business	49
Multi-Family	40
Manufactured Home	7
Single Family	288
Vacant Lots	165
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>549</b>

SOURCE: SGRDC Housing Inventory 2006

Of the 384 structures inventoried, sixty-two were unoccupied and fifteen were abandoned. The breakdown of occupied units is detailed in table WS-5 below.

<b>Table WS-5</b>			
<b>West Side - Occupancy</b>			
<b>Use</b>	<b>Occupied</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<b>Abandoned</b>
Business	49	0	0
Multi-Family	35	4	1
Manufactured Home	7	0	0
Single Family	216	58	14
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>15</b>

SOURCE: SGRDC Housing Inventory 2006

Of the 549 structures inventoried in the West Side community, 278 were found to be in acceptable condition; this includes forty-nine businesses, twenty-five multi-family units, seven manufactured homes, and 197 single family homes. 134 single family residences are in need of major repair, sixty-nine single family residences are in need of minor repair, and fifty three single family residences are in a dilapidated state as shown on the Housing Conditions Map. A summary of the condition of the inventoried structures is found in Table WS-6 below.

<b>Table WS-6</b>				
<b>West Side - Condition</b>				
<b>Use</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Minor Repair</b>	<b>Major Repair</b>	<b>Dilapidated</b>
Business	49	0	0	0
Multi-Family	25	3	10	2
Manufactured Home	7	0	0	0
Single Family	197	69	134	53
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>55</b>

SOURCE: SGRDC Housing Inventory 2006



## ***Economic Development Opportunities***

### **Redevelopment**

Almost all of the commercial activity in the West Hill community is concentrated along the corridors of North Oak and West Gordon Streets. Light industry is located in the southwestern corner of the neighborhood along River Street. These areas are likely to see further commercial growth, which is encouraged according to the future development of this neighborhood. The majority of redevelopment opportunity is within the centralized residential portion of this area; several structures are unoccupied and there is an abundance of vacant land. It is recommended that vacant residential structures be targeted for redevelopment and reuse to provide the community with affordable housing. Vacant lots should be targeted for redevelopment 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](http://www.epa.gov)). The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) has not identified any brownfields in the West Side community. However, the gas station at the southeast corner of North Oak and Gordon Streets and the car dealership on the southwest corner of this intersection may be considered as potential brownfields, should these businesses close. In that case, the City of Valdosta would likely need to consider a solution to mitigate any contamination found on these sites in order for redevelopment to occur.

### **Planned Projects**

No major projects have been planned for the West Side neighborhood.

### **Conclusion**

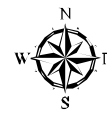
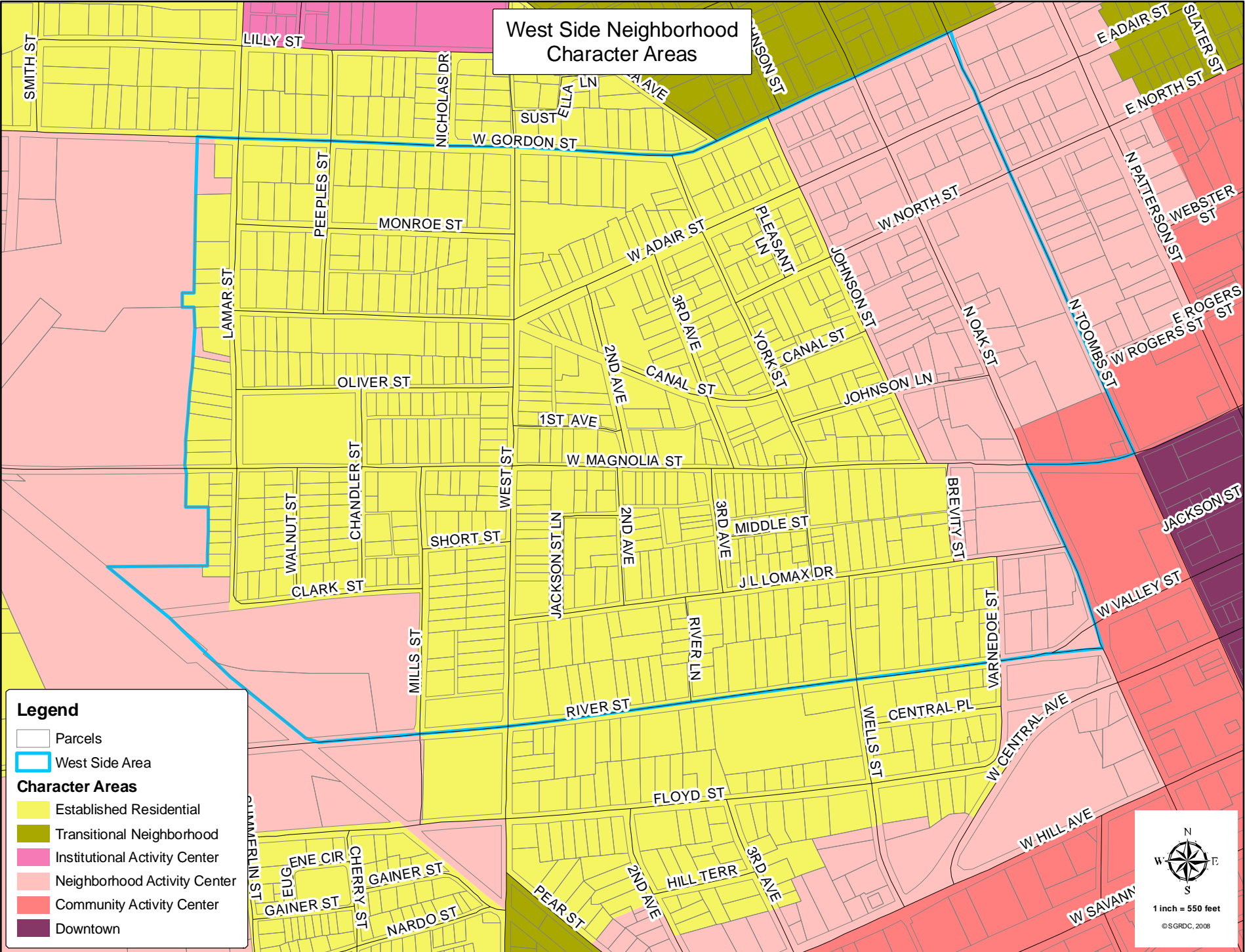
The West Side community has many assets including a pocket park and convenient commercial corridors. The neighborhood’s biggest asset is its number of residences, many of which are historic in nature, and convenient location to downtown and Valdosta State University. However, this housing stock is aging and many houses in the community need significant repairs. Housing rehabilitation projects and infill development projects will help make the West Side community thrive.



## **West Side Map Appendix**

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

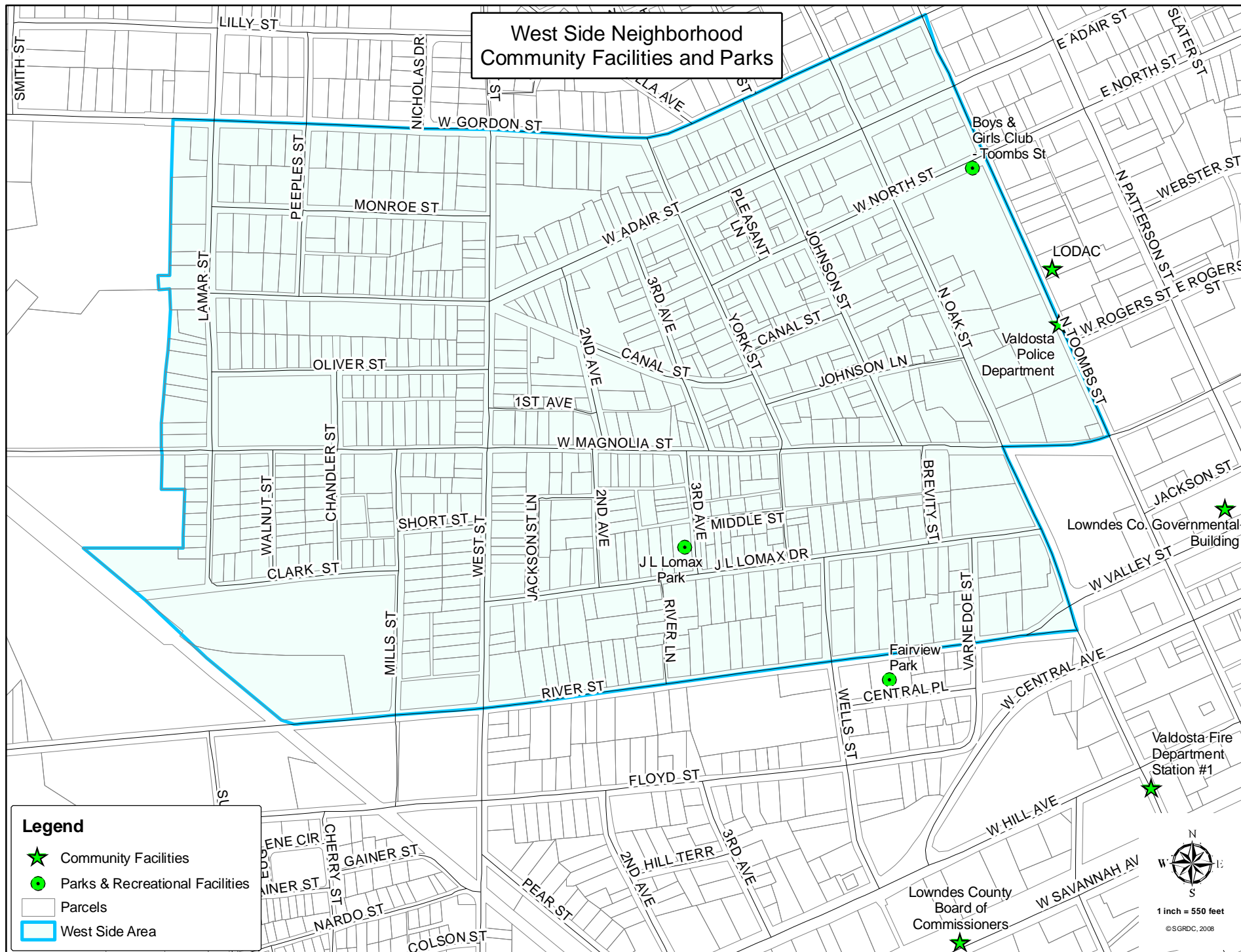
West Side Neighborhood  
Character Areas



1 inch = 550 feet  
© SGRDC, 2008



## West Side Neighborhood Community Facilities and Parks



**West Side Neighborhood  
2007 Crime Statistics**

**West Side Neighborhood  
Crime Totals 2007**

- Aggravated Assault - 6
- Arson - 1
- Auto-Theft - 7
- Burglary - 23
- Drug Violations - 34
- Larceny - 60
- Rapes - 3
- Robbery - 7
- Simple Assaults - 39
- Weapon Violations - 8

**Total = 188**

**Legend**

**2007 Crimes**

- AGGRAVATED ASSAULT
- ARSON
- AUTO-THEFT
- BURGLARY
- LARCENY
- RAPES
- ROBBERY

Parcels  
West Side Area

**Map Labels:** HENDRY DR, SMITH ST, LILLY ST, CORBETT ST, W GORDON ST, MONROE ST, OLIVER ST, WALNUT ST, CHANDLER ST, CLARK ST, SUMMERLIN ST, EUGENE CIR, CHERRY ST, FLOYD ST, WEST ST, JACKSON ST, J L LOMAX DR, RIVER LN, HILL TERR, 2ND AVE, 3RD AVE, W ADAR ST, CANAL ST, JOHNSON ST, PLEASANT LN, YORK ST, JOHNSON LN, NOAK ST, N TOMBS ST, W NORTH ST, E NORTH ST, E ADAR ST, E GORDON ST, SLATER ST, N PATTERSON ST, W ROGERS ST, W VALLEY ST, W HILL AVE, W CENTRAL AVE, VARNEDOE ST, BREVITY ST, MIDDLE ST, 3RD AVE, 2ND AVE, 1ST AVE, SUSTELLA AVE, W FORCE ST, JOHNSON ST, SUSTELLA LN.

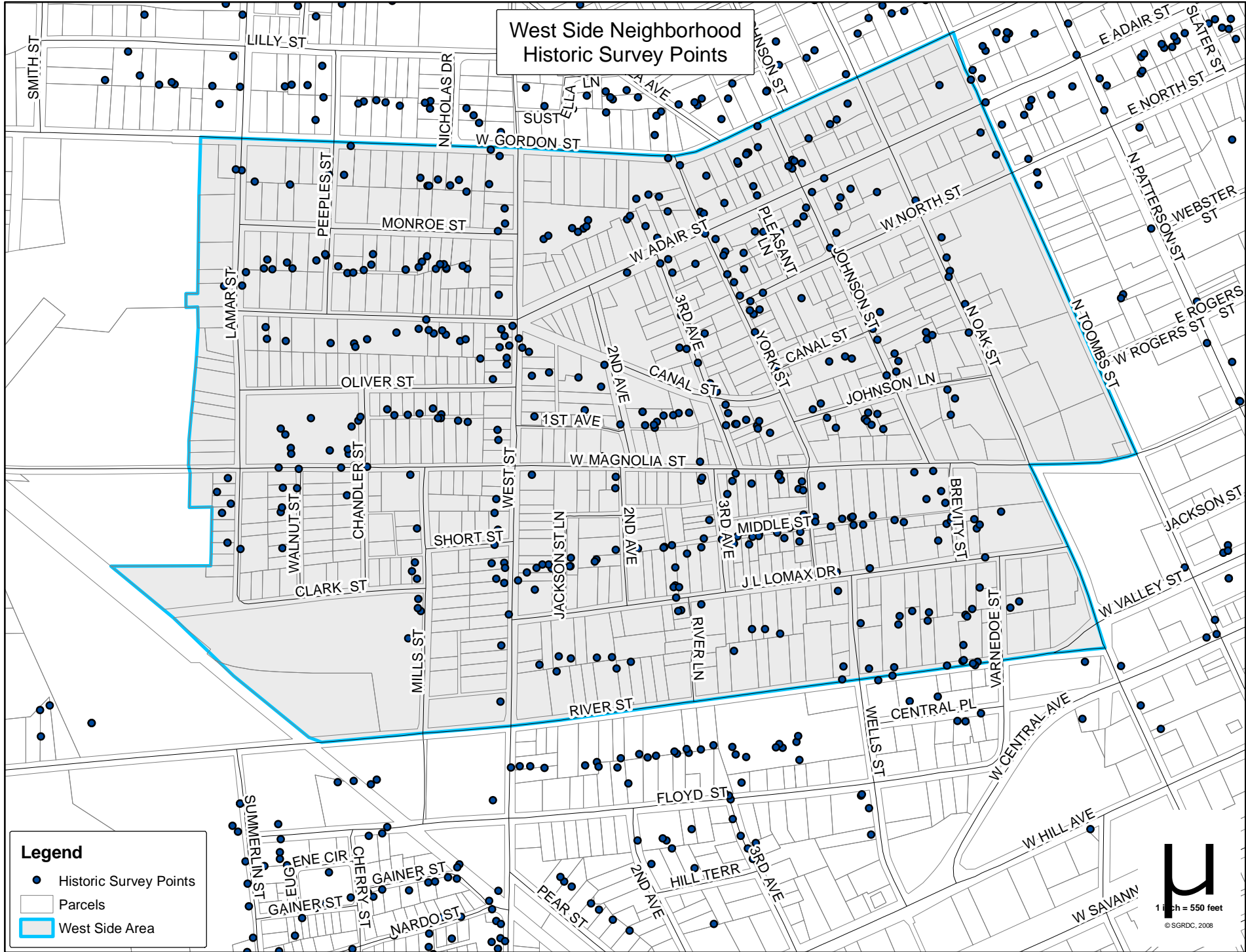
**Scale:** 1 inch = 575 feet  
©SGRDC, 2008

Total = 188

## 2007 Crimes

- 1 inch = 575 feet
- © SGRDC, 2008

# West Side Neighborhood Historic Survey Points



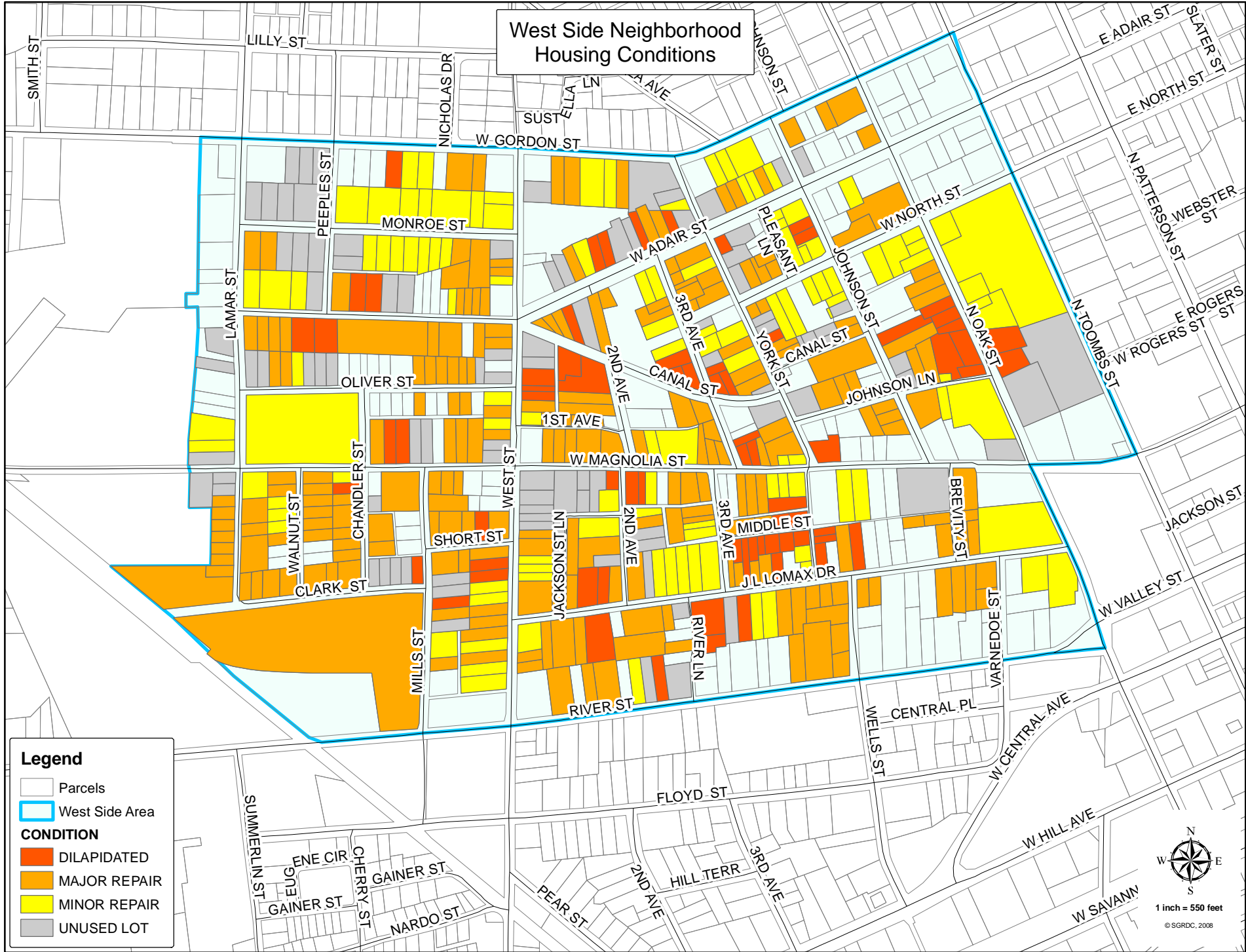
**Legend**

- Historic Survey Points
- ▭ Parcels
- ▭ West Side Area

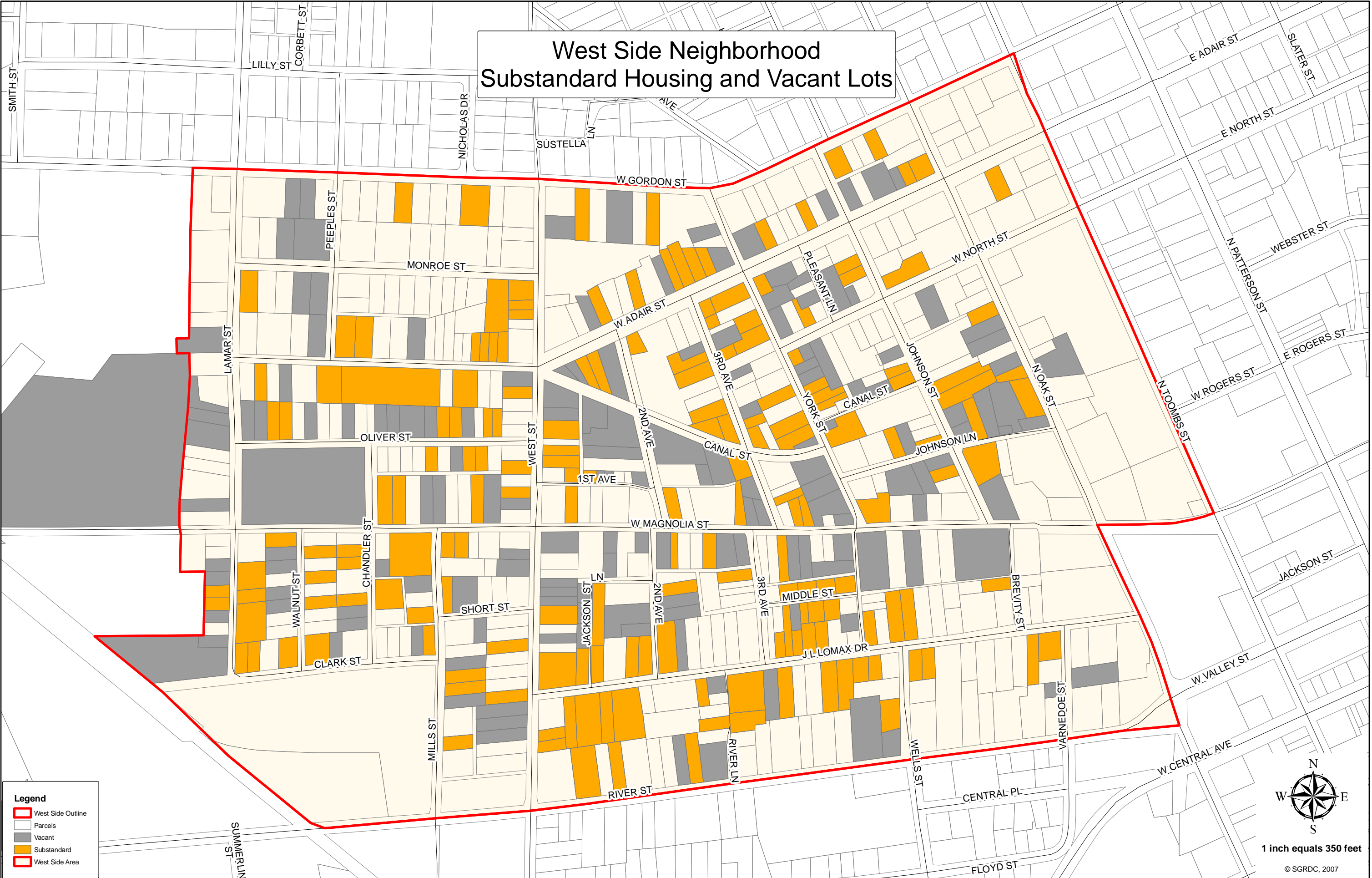
1 inch = 550 feet  
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# West Side Neighborhood Housing Conditions



## West Side Neighborhood Substandard Housing and Vacant Lots





## West Side Neighborhood Zoning

