



Brandon, SC  

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Community Plan



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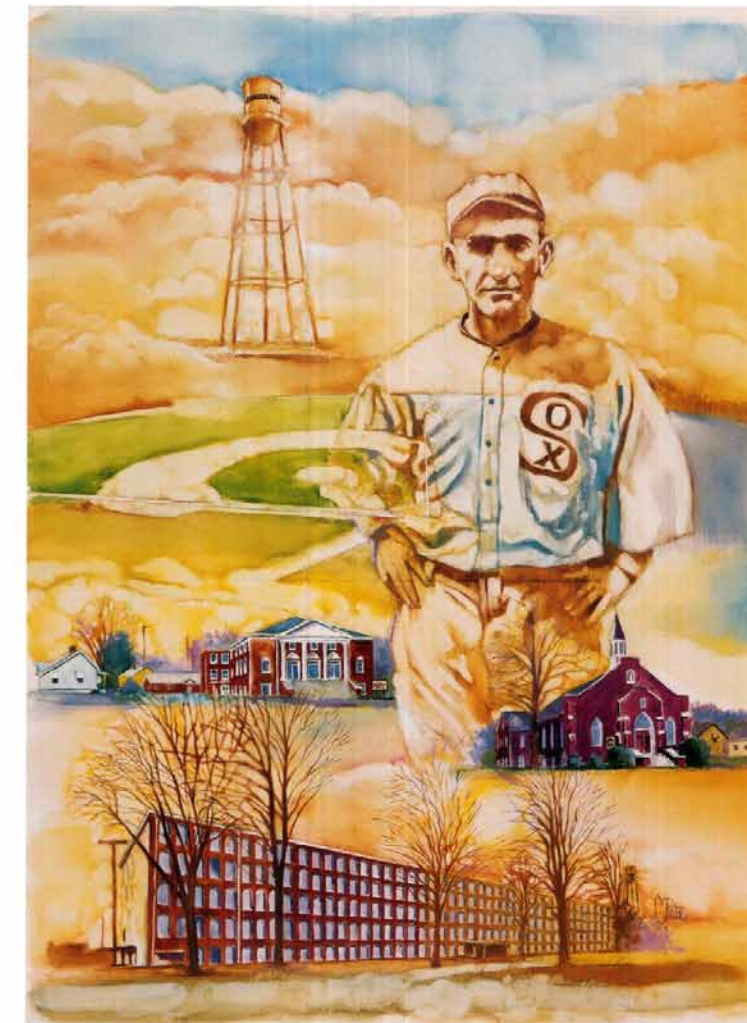
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# *Introduction*

In late 2012 Greenville County Planning Staff were contacted by leaders of the Brandon Community Association, formed earlier that year, eager to begin work on a Community Plan for this historic neighborhood. Staff began attending the regular monthly meeting of the Brandon Community Association to familiarize themselves with the community and its concerns.

This plan, created to reflect the Community's vision for the future, while honoring its past, represents the tireless efforts of countless members of the Brandon Community. In it, you will find a detailed history of Brandon from its earliest days, as well as a snapshot of the Community today. The document is rounded out by the most important section, the strategies and a work program. These elements will guide the community in its endeavor to map out the future of Brandon.



**BRANDON COMMUNITY**  
GREENVILLE COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA



# History

Groundbreaking for Brandon Mill, the creation of J. Irving Westervelt, occurred in February 1900, during a time of rapid growth in the construction of cotton mills in South Carolina. Westervelt had proposed plans for the mill to investors just six months earlier, and with an initial cost of \$220,000 raised, work on the initial 66 cottages for the mill's 'operatives' was soon underway. Next, the mill itself was built. By January 1901 the massive 5-story structure containing 10,000 spindles and 400 looms was up and running, employing 150 workers. One investor, Captain Ellison Smyth, had a request, however. The original name of the mill had been proposed as "Quentin Mill." Smyth suggested that the mill be named after a town near Belfast, Ireland called Brandon, which had a long history of weaving and textile creation. Smyth shared a Scots-Irish heritage with many of the future millworkers, and the new name for Brandon Mill was readily agreed upon.

The mill was an immediate success, and expansion soon followed. Additional capital was raised, and by 1916 Brandon mill had grown to contain 86,000 spindles, with a value of \$1.5 million. There were now 420 men, women, and children working at the mill, and 900 people now lived in the 450 homes of the village. The nearby mills were also expanding, causing property surrounding the mills to reach a value of \$1,000 an acre by 1907.

Most mill workers came from the tenant farms of the South, as well as the foothills of North and South Carolina. While pay wasn't high- ranging between \$4.00 to \$14.00 a week for 66 hours of work, Monday through Saturday, a steady paycheck was an improvement to the hard-working former sharecroppers. And there were 'luxuries' supplied by the mill that had been unheard of, previously. Mill homes had electric lights, and room for a backyard garden as well as a cow or pig to supplement the food items purchased at the mill store. There was also inexpensive coal, firewood, and ice. There were churches nearby as well as an elementary school. And there was baseball.

Baseball was more than a game to the mill villagers. Each mill had its own team, and games were attended by nearly everyone. The pride of each mill community rested on the success of its team. Around 1901 a young mill sweeper was noticed playing ball on the field south of the main mill building. Even at the young age

of 13 Joe Jackson stood out, first as a catcher, then as a pitcher, and he was soon invited to join the Brandon team. Jackson was a natural. He could hit the ball farther than anyone, and throw farther, too. Soon he was the star of the weekly Saturday afternoon games, hitting hard with his bat, nicknamed 'Black Betsy'. Joe's brothers passed a hat in the stands each time he hit a home run, and often earned \$25 or more for each game, more than he earned for a month of work at the mill. By 1908 Jackson was playing for Greenville's first professional team, the Spinners, and was known as 'Shoeless Joe' after abandoning a pair of new spiked shoes that hurt his feet during a game.



Greenville County Public Library Bookmobile

The phenomenal performance of Shoeless Joe quickly got the attention of recruiters, and he soon signed on with Philadelphia Athletics. There was one problem, however. Joe did not want to leave Greenville. His reluctance only served to create anticipation for the Philly fans, as he kept putting off his move. He boarded one train in 1908, only to turn around in Charlotte and head back home! Finally, however, he made the move, and his fame and skill increased. By 1915 Shoeless Joe was playing for the Chicago White Sox, earning an impressive \$6,500 a season, equivalent to over \$100,000 today. Joe was able to buy a home for his parents in Brandon, as well as a pool hall. By now Jackson was playing among the best in the world, and outplayed both Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb. But all this success was soon to change. The 1919 World Series matched Jackson's White Sox with the Cincinnati Reds. Although the White Sox were favored to win, they did not, and a cheating

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scandal was exposed. Shoeless Joe was among those accused of throwing the game in what was known as the 'Black Sox Scandal.' Although Jackson had signed a confession, he was also known to be illiterate, and could not have read what he allegedly signed. Jackson was cleared by a Grand Jury in 1921, however he was banished from baseball for life, and returned home to Greenville with no chance of playing professional baseball again. Before his death in 1951 there were many attempts to have his name cleared, and Shoeless Joe remained a home-town hero. His funeral at Brandon Baptist church was attended by hundreds of loyal fans.

The fortunes of the Brandon Mill and its owners were troubled during this time, as well. Westervelt had sold the mill in 1913 due to 'financial reverses' and the mill went into receivership. Later, the mill's stock was purchased by New York investors, however management remained local. In the 1920's life in the Brandon Mill Village was more prosperous, as millworkers continued to enjoy the community's churches, the new Parker High School, use of Greenville's traveling library, many classes and activities, and a trolley that took them to Greenville's downtown theaters. Baseball continued to be an important unifying element for the community. However, as the 1920's drew to a close, mill management began to demand additional hours from the workers at lower pay rates, and began to lay off older workers. Frustrated workers labeled this the 'Stretch Out' and surprisingly rebelled by striking. In March of 1929 over 1,200 Brandon Mill workers refused to work, and the strike began to spread to nearby mills. However, when Union representatives began to recruit, the mill management conceded by raising wages slightly, and work again returned to normal. More trouble was on the horizon as the Great Depression hit the nation in late 1929, however. The mill managed to remain open during the following years, despite low demand. In 1934 Union Workers from the north attempted to close down the mill, however they were rebuffed by workers.

By the early 1940's production boomed as wartime demand increased mill profitability. When the war ended, mill owners no longer wanted the paternalistic role that they had taken on. They began to sell mill homes to workers who were now in a position to buy them. However, the benefit of home ownership was offset by their new responsibilities as the mill no longer took care of all the needs of the community. Road maintenance, police protection and recreation were now in the hands of the community, not the mill management. Technical efficiencies at the mill meant fewer workers were necessary. The mills were sliding into decline in Greenville as well as the rest of the Textile Crescent. By 1977 Abney Mills was ready to close its Brandon plant, and the Brandon Community was forced to look to the future without the benefit of the mill as its center.

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# *Community Profile*

## I. Live

Population / Housing / Land Use

## II. Work

Economy / Employment

## III. Learn

Education / Recreation / Culture / Nature

## IV. Move

Population / Housing / Land Use

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## *LIVE: Population*

One of Brandon's greatest assets is its people. At the time of the last Decennial Census in 2010, the population of Brandon was approximately 1,584, and was projected to decrease slightly before eventually rising again as a result of greater than expected growth within the region. The median age of the Community was 37.0 years, on par with that of Greenville County as a whole (37.1), with slightly more women (53%) than men (47%). The Community has also become increasingly diverse over the years, with sizeable and growing minority populations reflecting similar trends throughout Greenville's Westside Communities.



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## *LIVE: Population*

The median age in Brandon in 2010 was **37**

In 2010, **71%** of the population in Brandon was over the age of 19

**53%** of the residents were Female

**47%** of the residents were Male



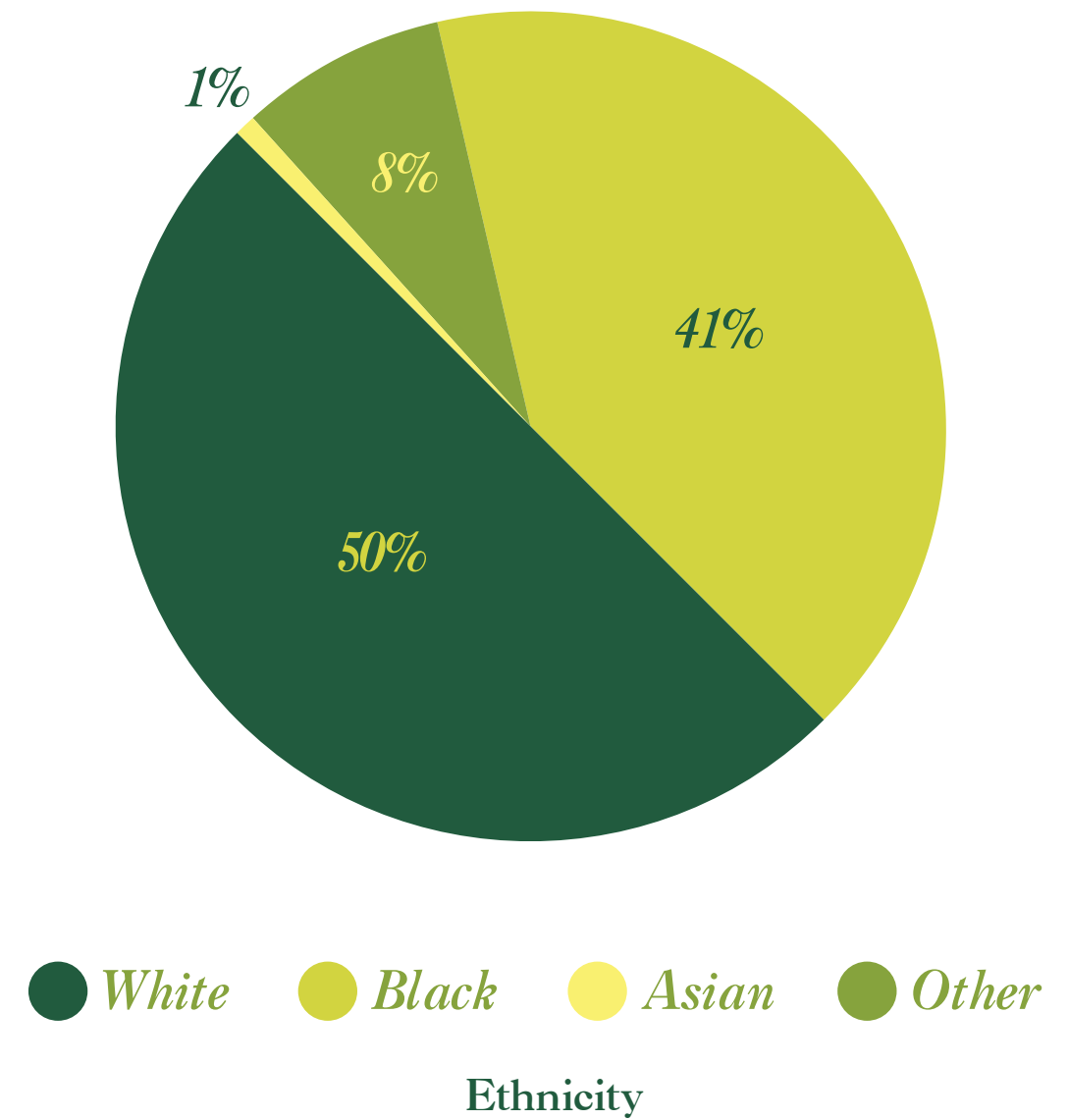
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## *LIVE: Population*



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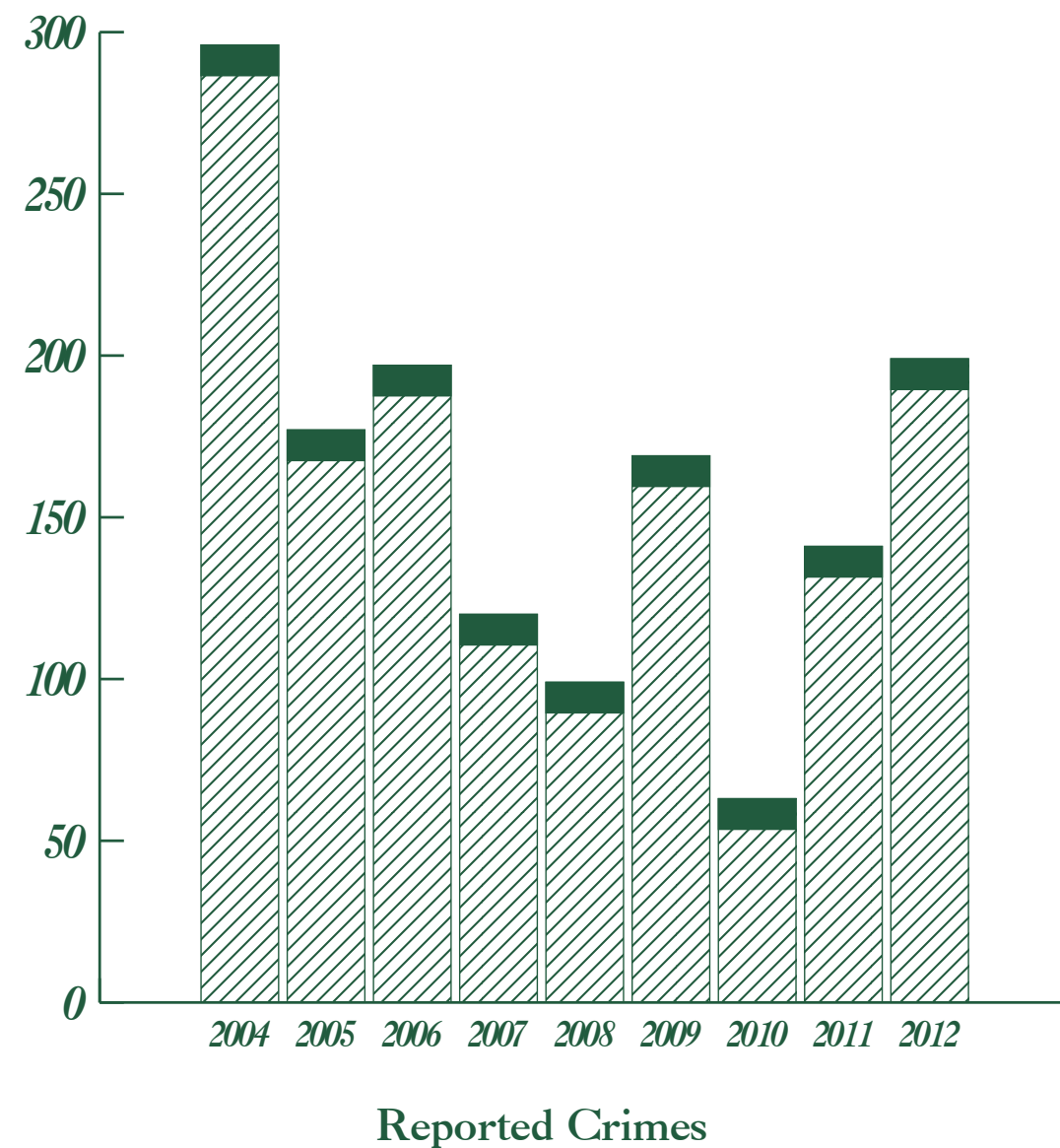
## *LIVE: Population*





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## *LIVE: Population*



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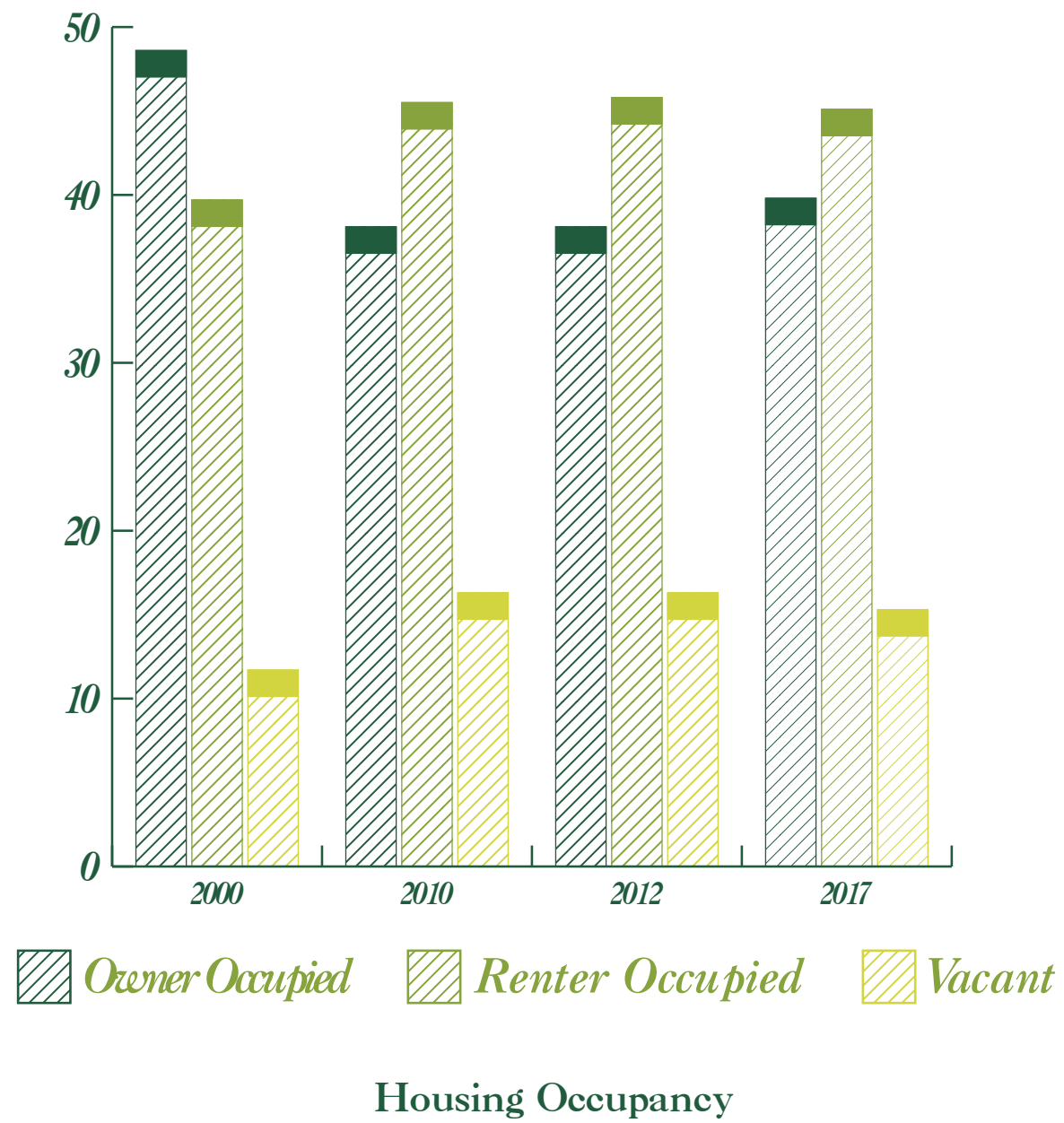
## *LIVE: Housing*

The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates that there were approximately 730 housing units in the Brandon Community in 2012. This existing housing is typical of the southern mill village vernacular, with mostly small single family homes, with an average of just over 1,100 square feet of living space, on lots less than a quarter acre in size. There are also several duplexes, small apartment buildings, and a few mobile home parks as well. Most of this housing stock was built around the turn of the 20th Century, during the initial development of the Brandon Mill, with sporadic infill development occurring since the 1960s.

Vacancy rates remain steady at about 16 percent, while the share of owner occupied housing has decreased from 48 percent to just over 38 percent since 2000. This decrease is likely the result of higher than average national foreclosure rates resulting from the subprime mortgage crisis of and the ensuing Recession of 2009. Regardless, Brandon remains an affordable option for many, with a median home value of \$66,509 in 2010, when compared to that of Greenville County as a whole at \$134,325 for the same period.



# *LIVE: Housing*



# *LIVE: Housing*



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## *LIVE: Housing*

In 2010, the housing units in  
Brandon were ... **88.0%** Single-Family

**10.8%** Multi-Family

**1.2%** Manufactured Homes

In 2010, there were **1,584** Residents in Brandon,

living in **610** Households.

The average family size in Brandon was **2.56**

and the average home value was **\$66,509**

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## *LIVE: Land Use*

Land Uses in Brandon are typical of those traditionally found in a Southern textile mill village, consisting of mostly single-family residential uses, with several pockets of multi-family housing, surrounding central industrial uses (the Brandon Mill, and KM Fabrics, Inc). Commercial retail, office, and service uses are located at the periphery of the Community, along major transportation routes. Several properties, about 10 to 12 percent, are currently either undeveloped or underdeveloped, offering significant opportunities for infill development or redevelopment.

This land use pattern has served Brandon well in the past; however, the location of two heavy industrial uses in the heart of the Community is viewed as largely incompatible with contemporary neighborhood standards and the current needs of Brandon's residents. Community members, private developers, and representatives of both the City and County of Greenville, have expressed an interest in the redevelopment of these industrial properties in a manner befitting this modern urban neighborhood.



# LIVE: Land Use



Parcels & Street Names

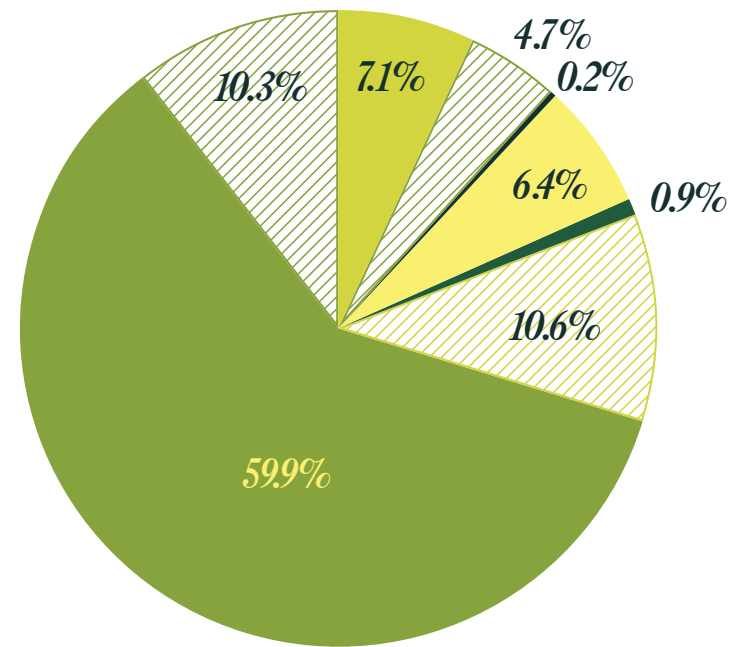
# LIVE: Land Use



Building Footprints



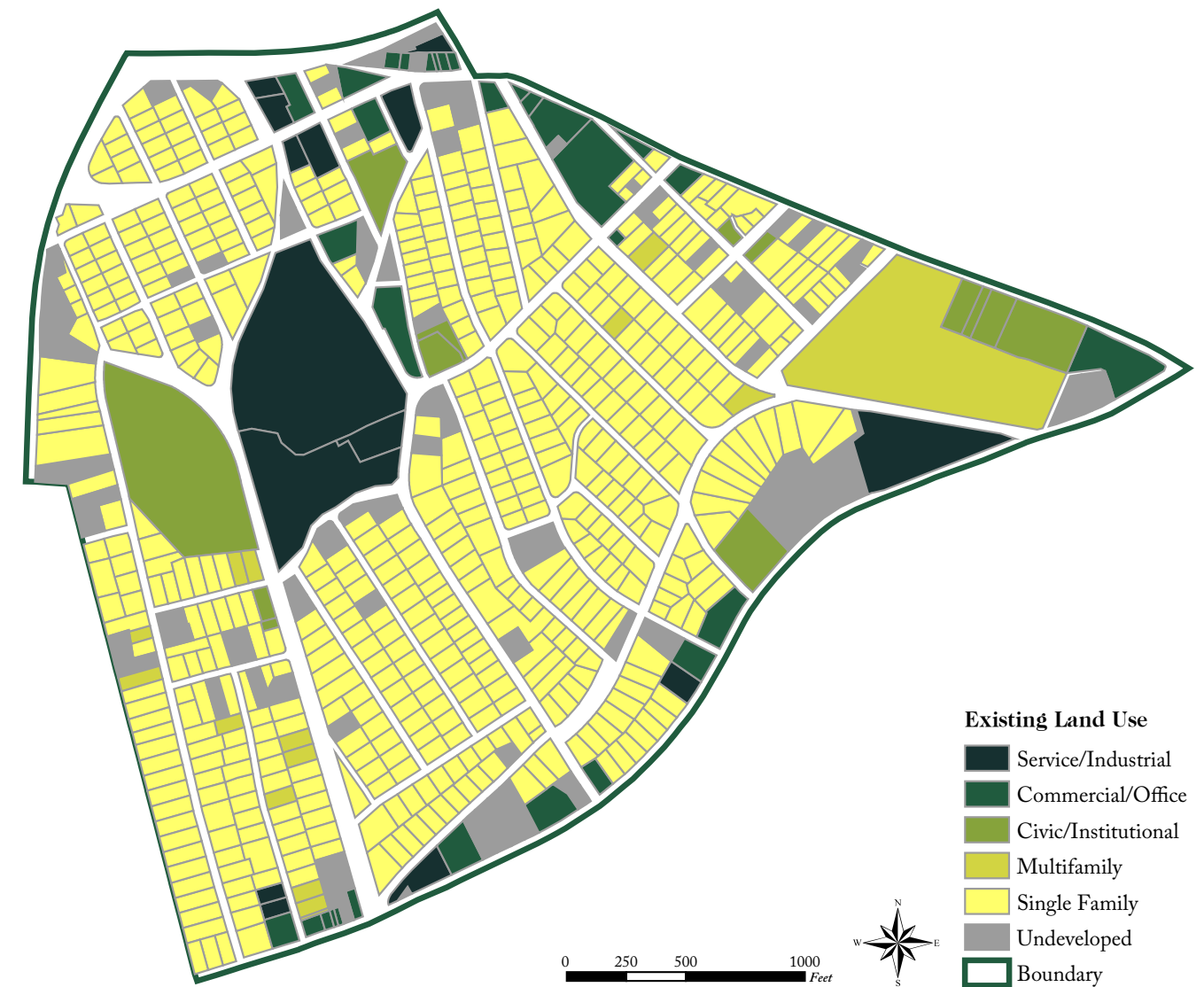
# LIVE: Land Use



- Single-Family Residential    ◌ Undeveloped    ● Civic/Institutional
- ◌ Commercial    ● Mobile Home Park    ● Multifamily Residential
- Office    ◌ Service/Industrial

Land Use Breakdown

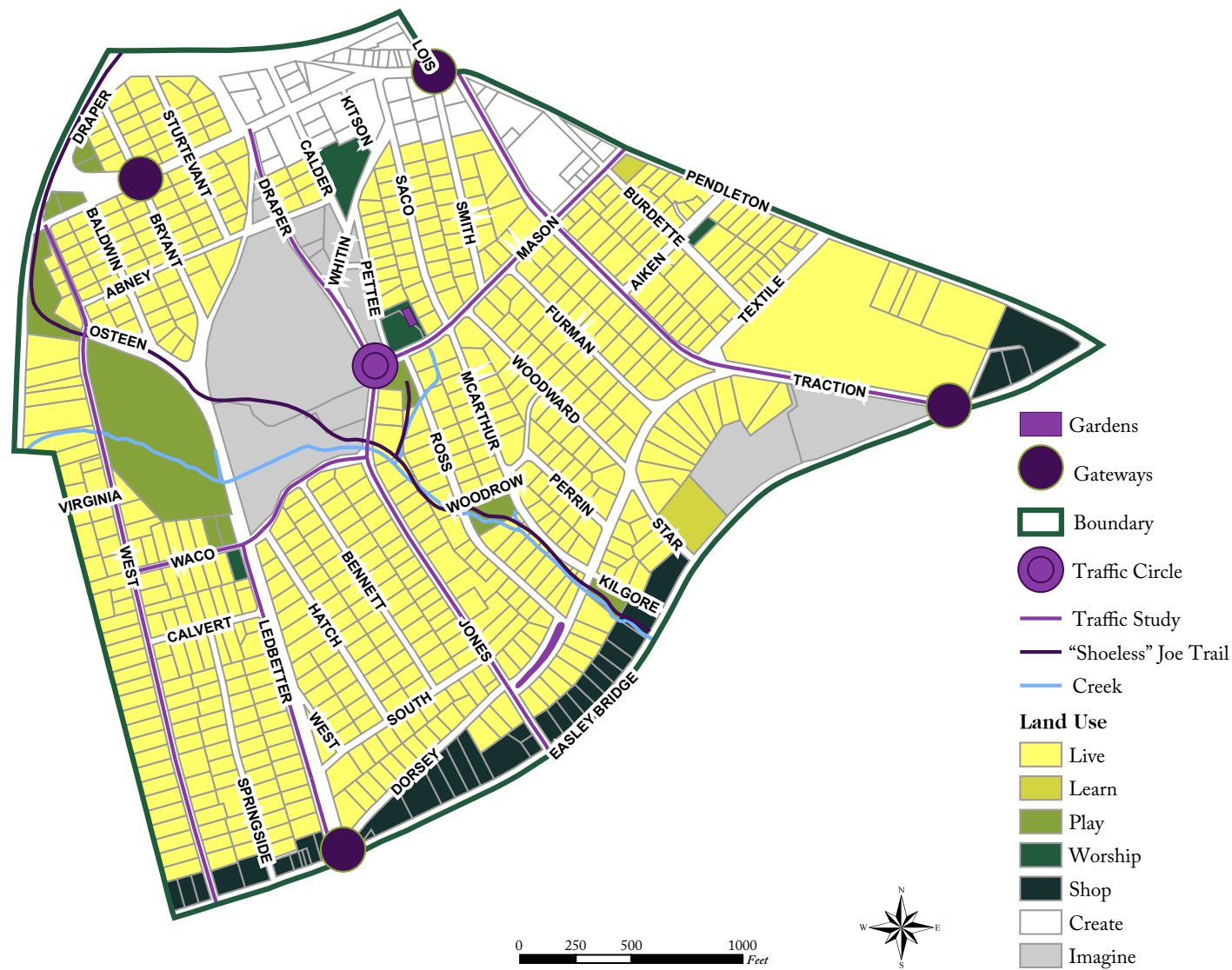
# LIVE: Land Use



Existing Land Use



# LIVE: Land Use



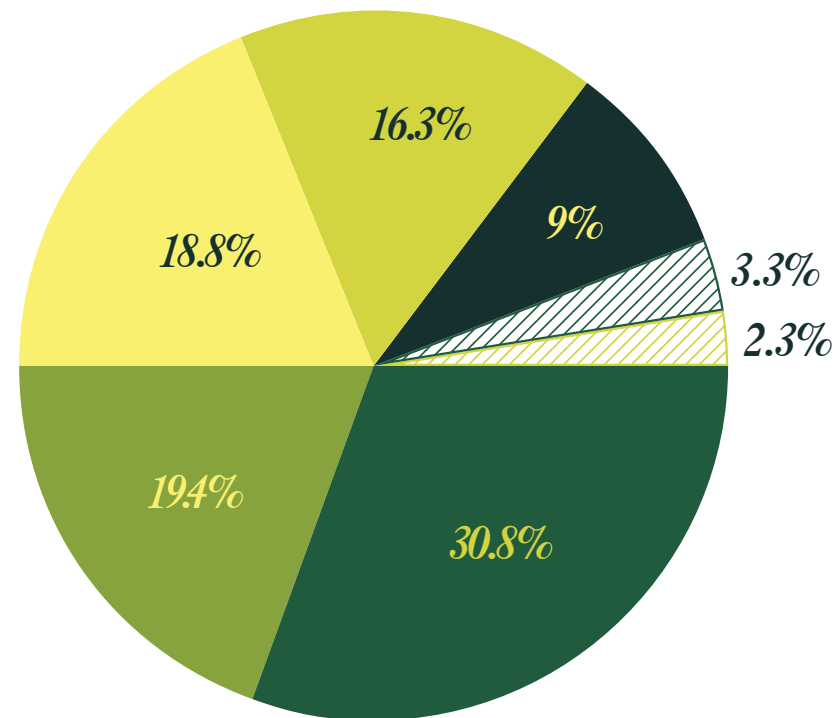
Conceptual Land Use Plan

# WORK: Income

The Median Household Income in the Brandon Community is significantly lower than that of the County of Greenville overall, at \$24,748 to \$44,387, respectively. The American Community Survey conducted from 2005-2009, estimates that 45 percent of Brandon households were below the poverty level during that time period. Incomes are expected to rise over the next five years at a rate faster than the nation, but slower than that of the State of South Carolina.



## WORK: Income



Households by Income

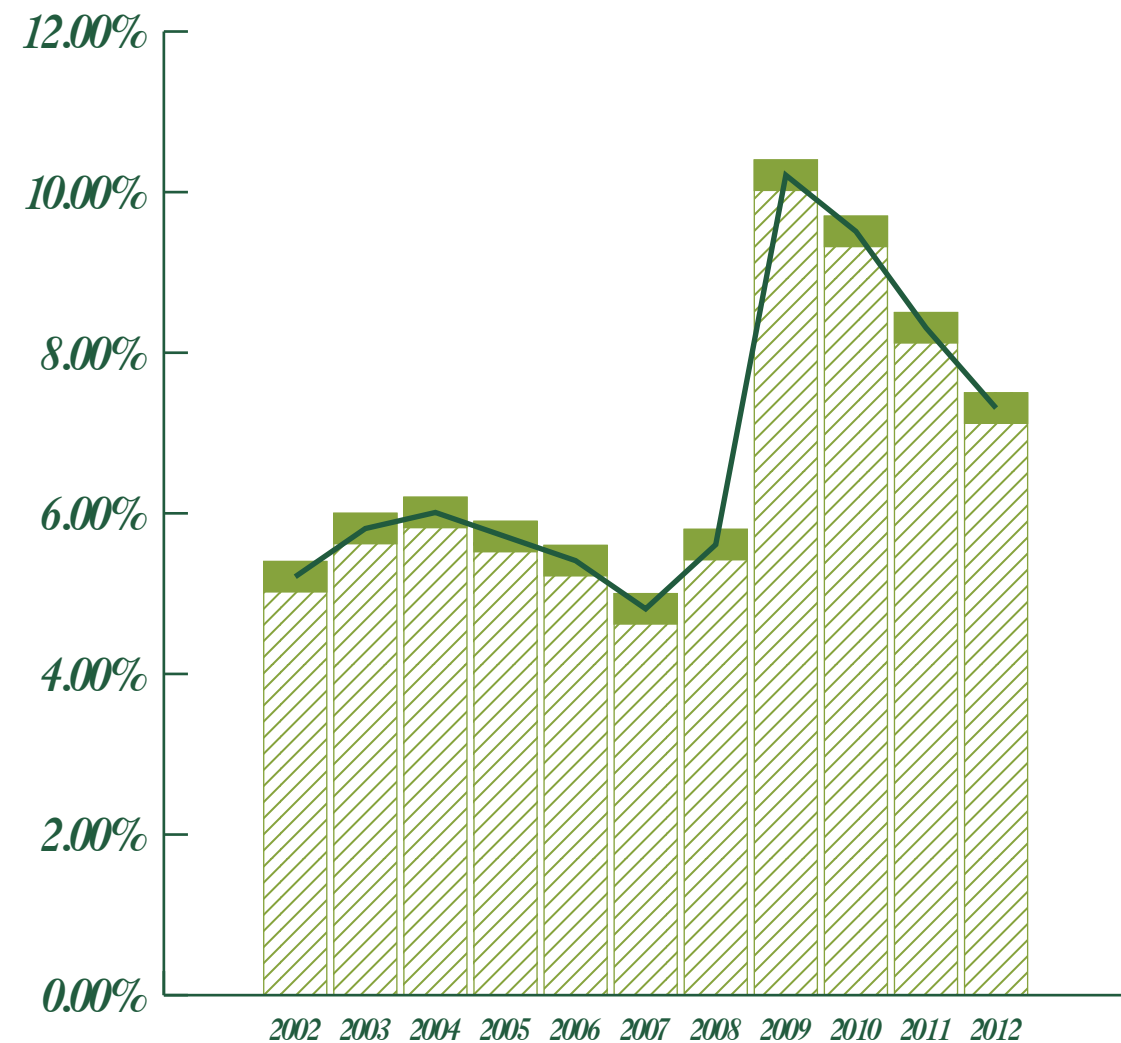
## WORK: Employment

The health of Brandon's economy can only be viewed within the context of that of the overall region. The unemployment rate in the Greenville Metropolitan Area rose sharply in 2008, from a low of 5.0 percent in 2007, to a ten-year high of 10.4 percent in 2009; again, a likely result of the Global Recession of 2009. Unemployment has steadily declined since then, as economic conditions - especially locally - have improved. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics currently estimates that the unemployment rate for our region has returned to a pre-recession rate of 5.0 percent.

More than 50 percent of non-military workers in Brandon, over age 16, work in just three employment sectors; these include Wholesale and Retail Trade, Manufacturing, and Hotel and Food Services. Less than 1 percent of residents is employed in either the Finance and Insurance, Education, or Arts sectors.



# WORK: Employment



Unemployment Rate: Greenville Metro Area

# WORK: Employment

Out of every **100** workers over the age of 16 in Brandon (non-military) . . .

- 23** . . . would work in Wholesale and Retail Trade
- 17** . . . would work in Manufacturing
- 13** . . . would work in Hotel and Food Services
- 12** . . . would work in Administrative Support
- 11** . . . would work in Health Care
- 10** . . . would work in Information and Other Services
- 8** . . . would work in Construction
- 3** . . . would work in Transportation and Warehousing
- 1** . . . would work in Finance and Insurance
- 1** . . . would work in Education
- 1** . . . would work in the Arts



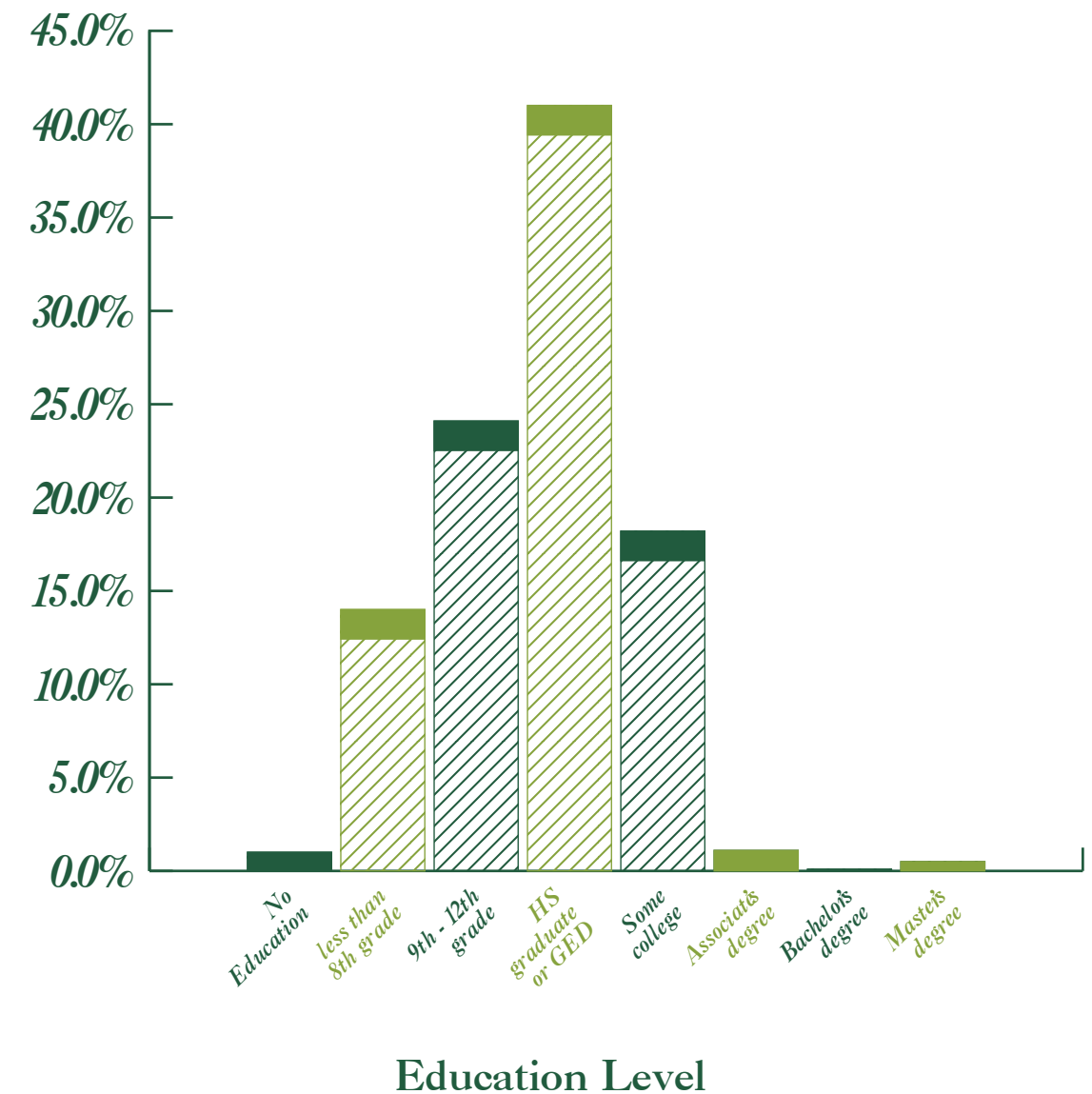
# LEARN: Education

Gone are the days of neighborhood schools that once served the children of Brandon within their own community. Today, Greenville County students attend Hollis Academy, in the nearby Judson Community, for elementary school, Berea Middle School, and either Carolina High School or Greenville High School depending on where they live. The Greenville County School District does, however, hold a School Assignment Choice Lottery each year for those wishing to attend a school outside of their assigned area. Currently 15 percent of Greenville County students take advantage of this program. There are also several competitive magnet and charter schools accessible to qualified applicants. Brandon is also home to the Easley Bridge Road early childhood Head Start Center.

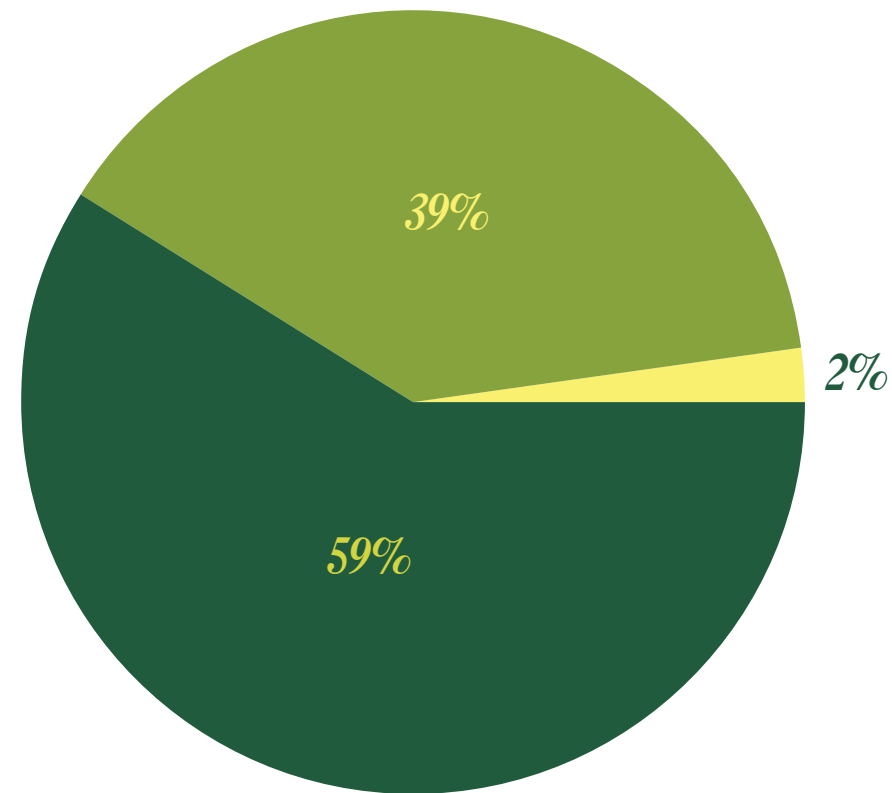
Though a majority of Brandon residents age 25 and over have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent, more than a third of the community does not. In addition, residents with an Associates Degree or higher make up less than two percent of the population of Brandon, as compared with 38 percent for Greenville County as a whole.



# LEARN: Education



# LEARN: Education



● *HS Graduate* ● *No Diploma* ● *College Degree*

Education Level

# LEARN: Education

## Area Schools

- Hollis Elementary Academy
- Berea Middle School
- Carolina High School
- Greenville High Academy

## CIA

- “Change in School Assignment Choice”
- Application required
- First-come, first-served
- Only if space available
- Parents must provide transportation

## Charter Schools

- Legacy Charter School





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## *LEARN: Recreation*

Brandon is the home of “Shoeless” Joe Jackson Memorial Park, a multi-use County park built on the same hollowed ground where “Shoeless” Joe began his baseball career. The park consists of a baseball field, slightly reconfigured, but in the same location as the original Brandon Mill field, a playground, picnic shelter, and outdoor seating. A stream bisects the property and trees abound in this urban oasis. Despite its pedigree, the park is currently underutilized, and some elements are in poor condition. Additionally, its location adjacent to an incompatible industrial use, and reputation as a criminal hot spot, is less than ideal for a park with such a storied history. Additionally, there is a basketball court and playground at the Westview Townhomes; however, this property is for the exclusive use of the residents of Westview.

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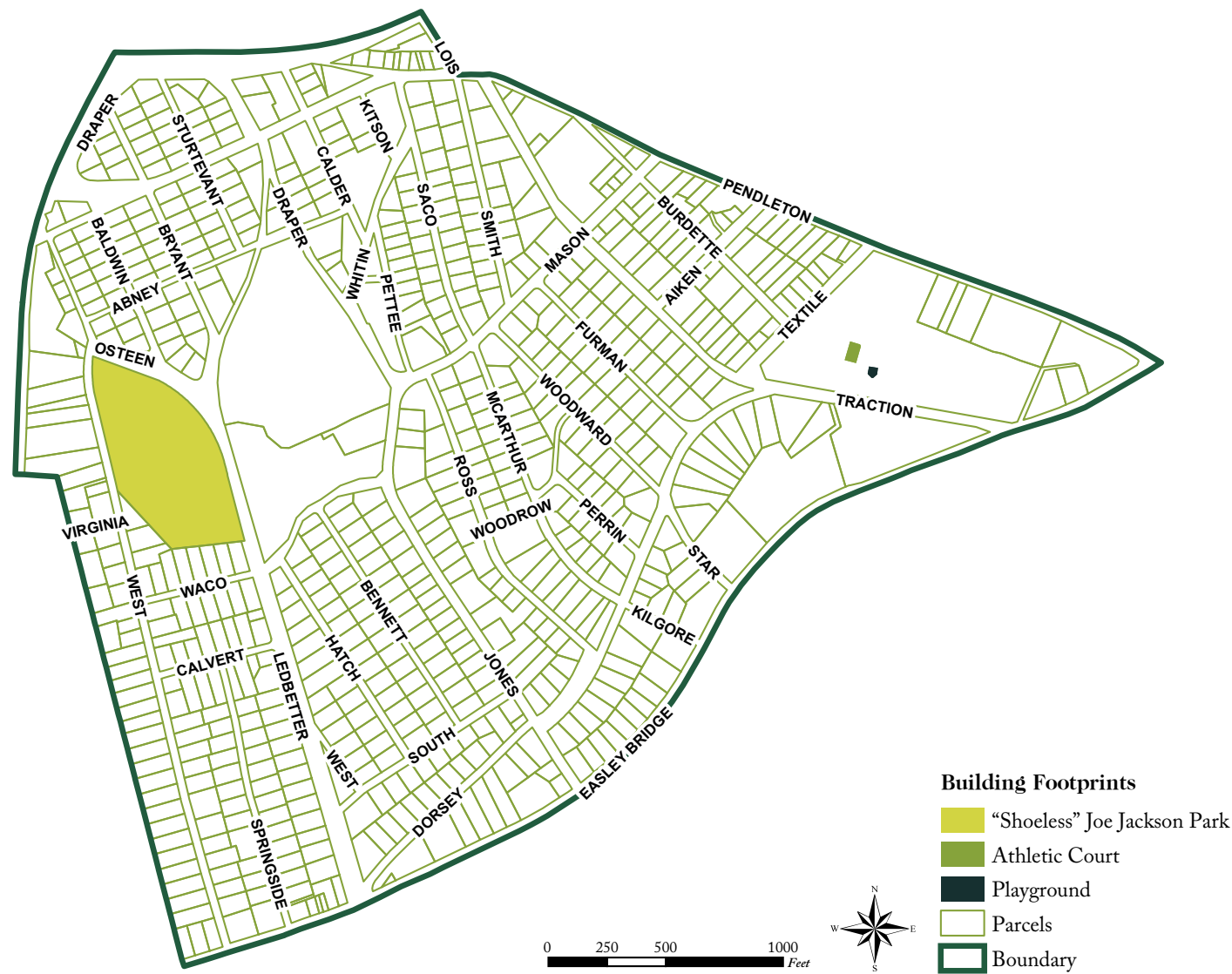
## *LEARN: Recreation*

### “Shoeless” Joe Jackson Memorial Park

This historic park is located on Greenville’s Westside in the Brandon Mill Community. Once part of a thriving textile mill complex, the original park/ ball field was home to mill workers who played baseball and competed against other mill leagues across Greenville County. Shoeless Joe Jackson grew up in Brandon, played for the mill, and is eulogized today as one of the the most talented players in major league history.



# LEARN: Recreation



Public Space

# LEARN: Arts & Culture

Brandon residents are proud of their unique heritage and identity among Greenville's Historic Textile Mill Village Communities. They are equally proud of major league baseball player, and hometown hero "Shoeless" Joe Jackson who grew up in, and started his career in Brandon. There are several monuments to "Shoeless" Joe, including a park, baseball field, and memorial plaque, located in Brandon, as well as a Museum, located Downtown, next to Flour Field.

Remnants of the past are still visible in this 100 year old community. From the stately oak trees, and well-built pre-war homes, to the original Boy Scout cabin, historic churches, mill, and storefronts along Pendleton Street, connections to the past abound in Brandon.

Brandon has also become somewhat of a destination for the local arts community. With several artist studios, galleries, a few boutique shops, and restaurants, the Village of West Greenville, as they call it, is quickly becoming a desirable place for young singles and families. Drawn by the area's affordability, charm, and history, these new comers are helping to set the vision for Brandon's next hundred years.

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# *LEARN: Arts & Culture*

## **Brandon Mill**

Brandon Mill's president, J. Irving Westervelt, originally named this mill 'Quentin Mill'. It was then changed to Brandon thanks to the advice of Capt. Smythe, the leading contractor in Greenville. Brandon was chosen to pay homage to the Scots-Irish weavers that came from the town of the same name near Belfast, Ireland. Its immediate success brought many families to the community.



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# *LEARN: Arts & Culture*

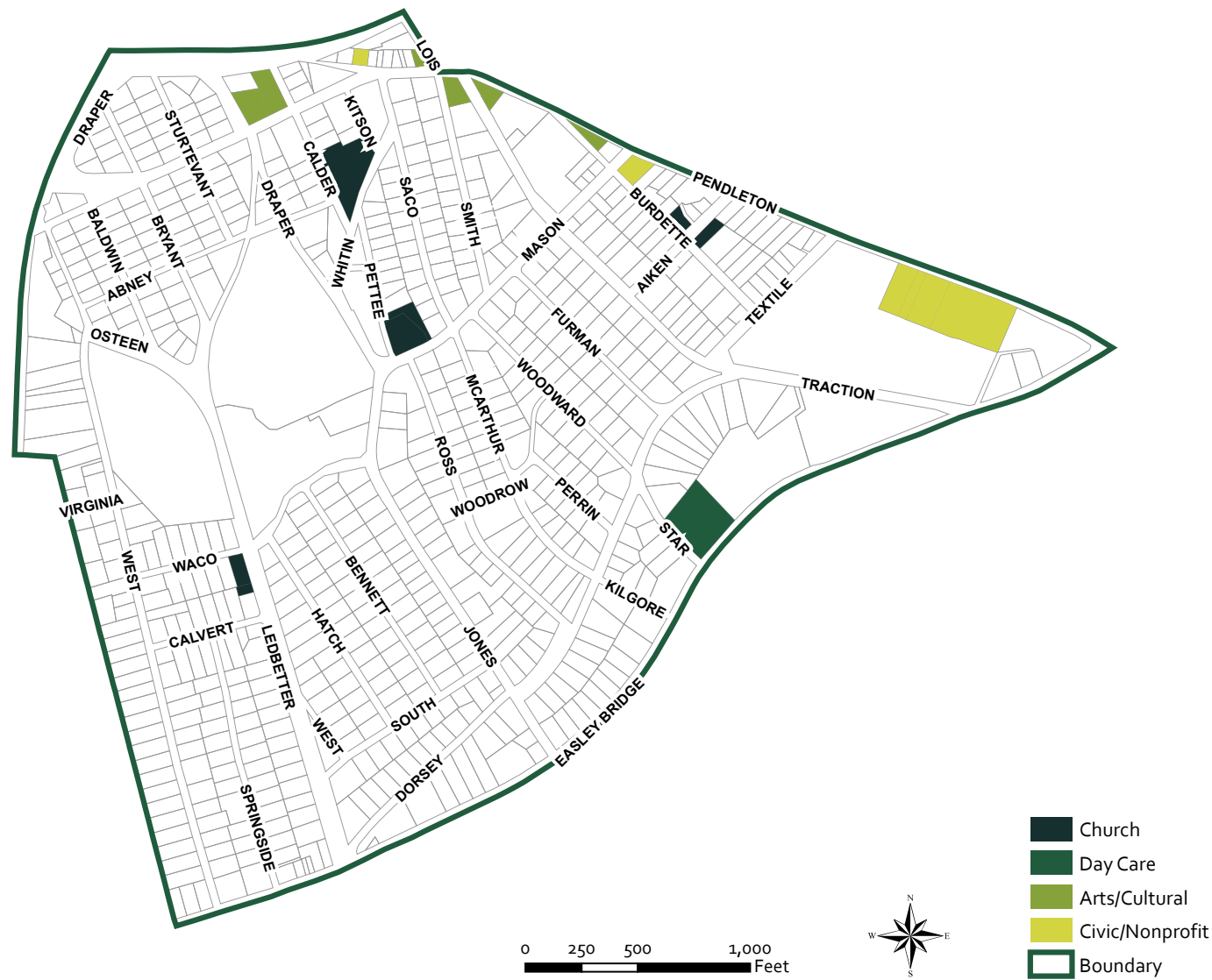
## **"Shoeless" Joe Jackson**

The Jackson family had worked for the mill since the 1890s and their son Joe had been there for several years when something came along that changed his fate forever - baseball. Joe Jackson went on to great fame as "Shoeless Joe" when he had to take his spike shoes off during a game.





# LEARN: Arts & Culture



Cultural Assets/Institutions

# LEARN: Nature



Flood Plain

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# *MOVE: Transportation*

The Community is bounded to the North by Pendleton Street (SC-124), an SCDOT maintained, Minor Arterial highway, with an Average Daily Traffic count of 7,200. Brandon is bordered on the South by Easley Bridge Road (US-123), an SCDOT maintained, Principal Arterial highway, with Average Daily Traffic counts of approximately 18,800. Additionally one through street, Jones Street/Draper Street, provides through access from Pendleton Street (SC-124) to Easley Bridge Road (US-123). This residential street is heavily traveled at peak times, with speeding and moving violations a major concern of local residents. On a more positive note, each of these corridors has seen an overall reduction in the amount of traffic over the past twenty years, averaging 5% since 1994.

Two rail lines also edge the community on the North and West. One of these lines is a heavily used Norfolk Southern trunk line (North), while the other is a somewhat less heavily trafficked CSX (CSXT) line. The Norfolk Southern line is grade separated, built atop a high berm, and the CSX line is at grade.



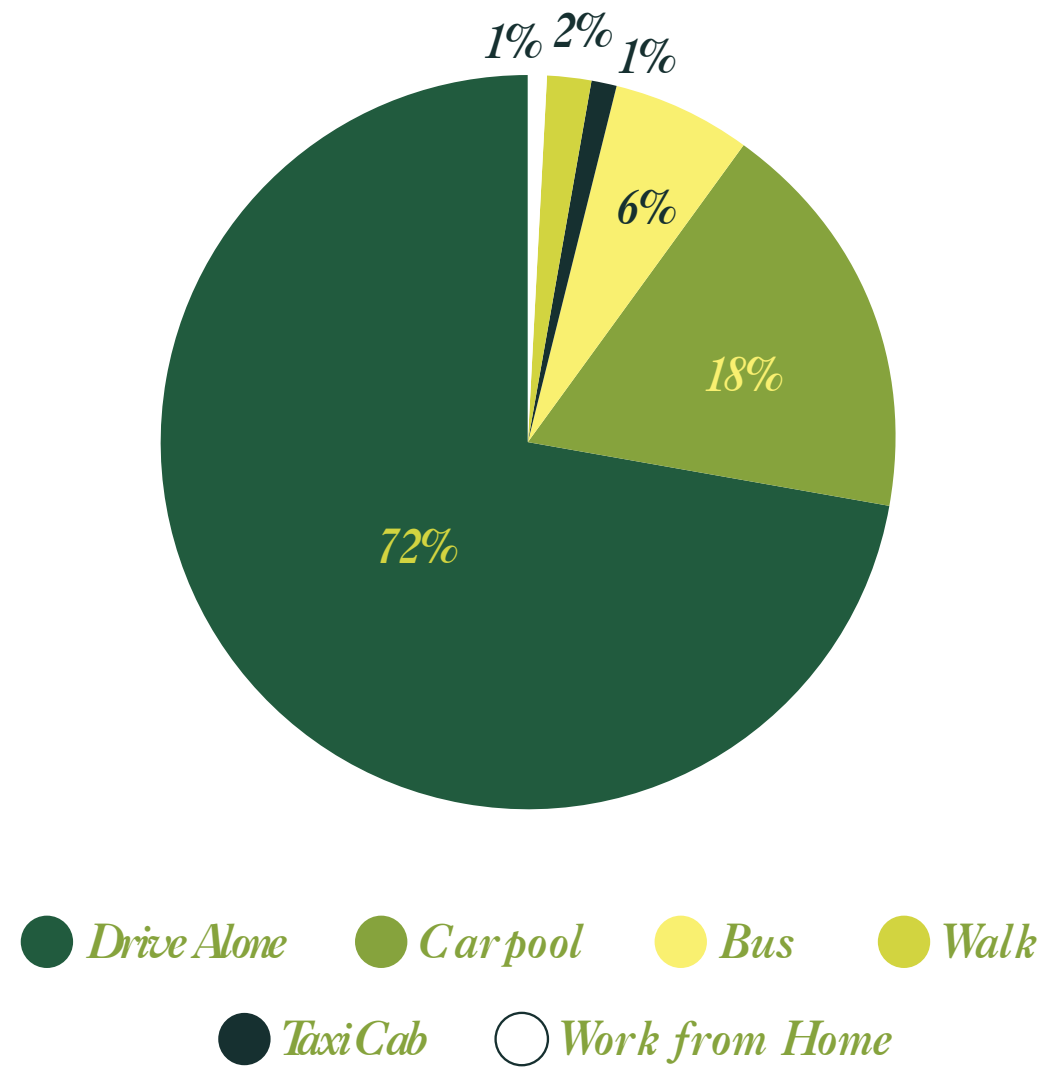
Greenlink and the Greenville Transit Authority provide fixed route bus service along the edges of the Brandon Community. These routes include the White Horse Road bound 2B with service to major shopping centers on the Westside and Downtown Greenville, as well as the 9I offering service between Downtown Greenville and Greenville Technical College's Northwest Campus, through the heart of the Berea Community. Service is less than ideal, with hour-long headways or wait-times between buses, and limited weekend operating hours.

Other non auto-oriented transportation infrastructure is either, sparse, poorly maintained, or simply nonexistent. While there are sidewalks along major corridors and a few residential streets within the Community, many lack critical connections, and are currently in disrepair. The City of Greenville has recently invested in new bicycle infrastructure along its portion of Pendleton Street, between Easley Bridge Road (US-123) and Saco Street, with a dedicated bike lane and shared road signage.



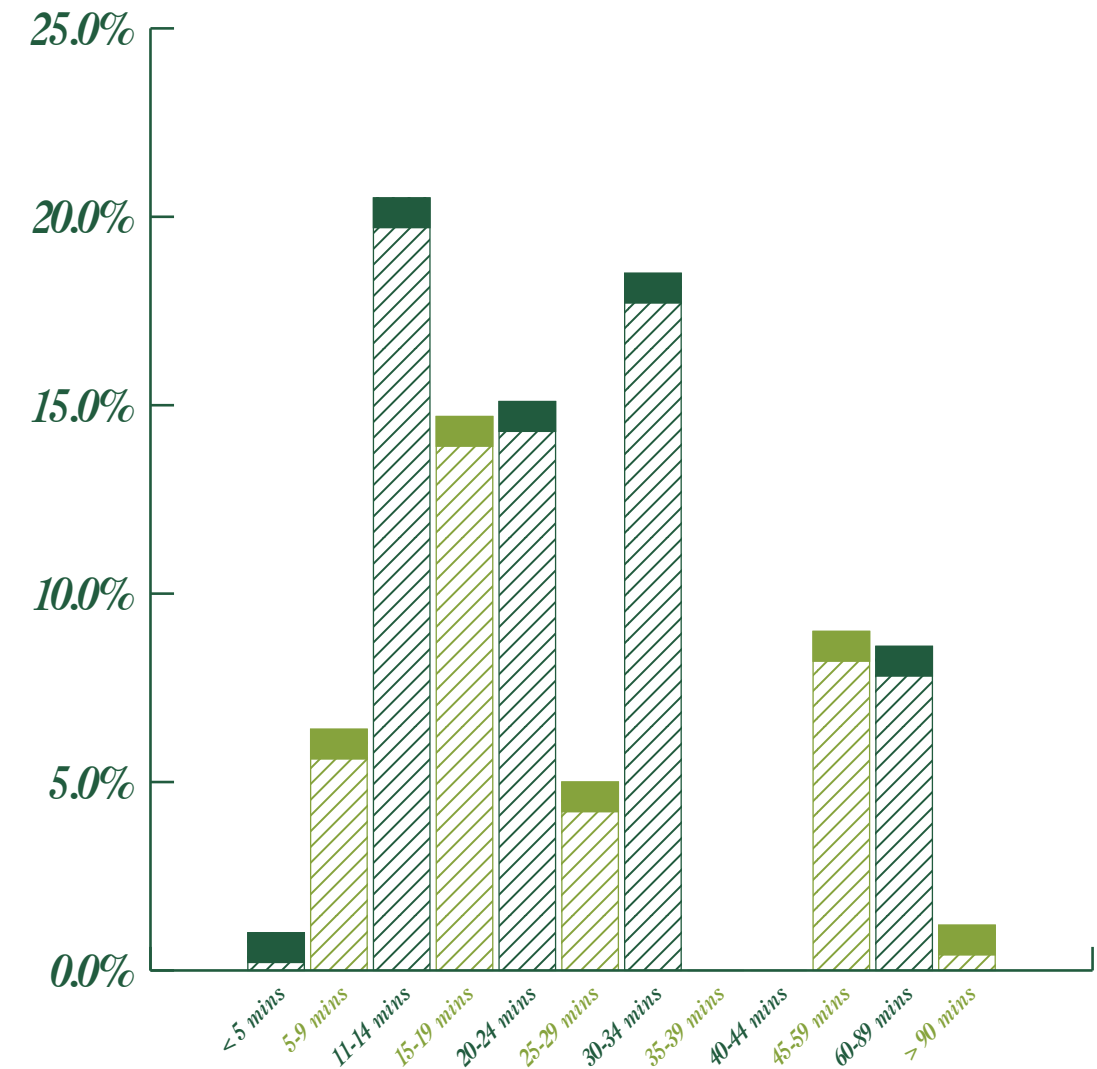


# MOVE: Transportation



Transportation to Work

# MOVE: Transportation



Travel Time to Work

# MOVE: Transportation



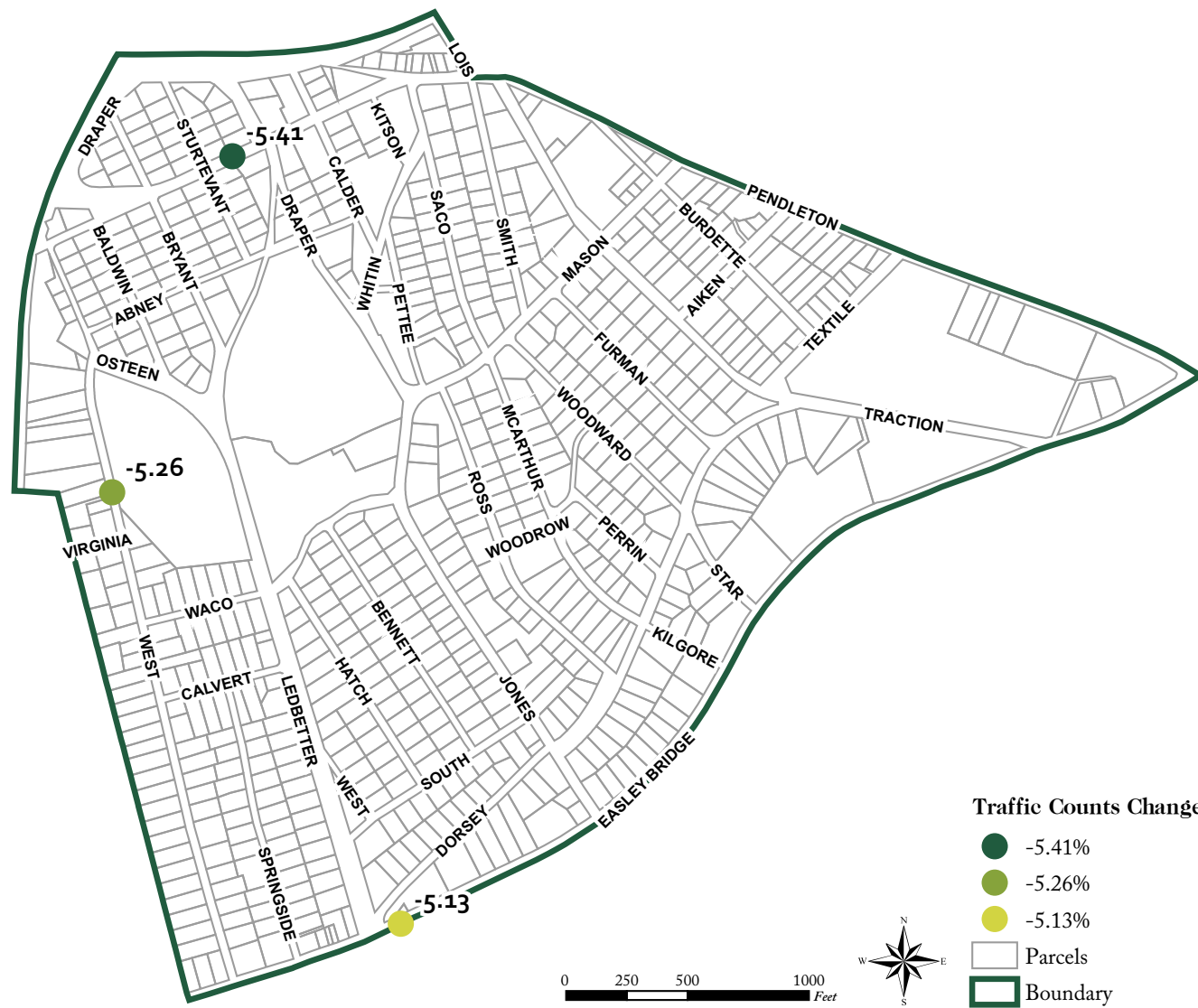
Street Ownership

# MOVE: Transportation



Street Level of Service

# MOVE: Transportation



Traffic Counts

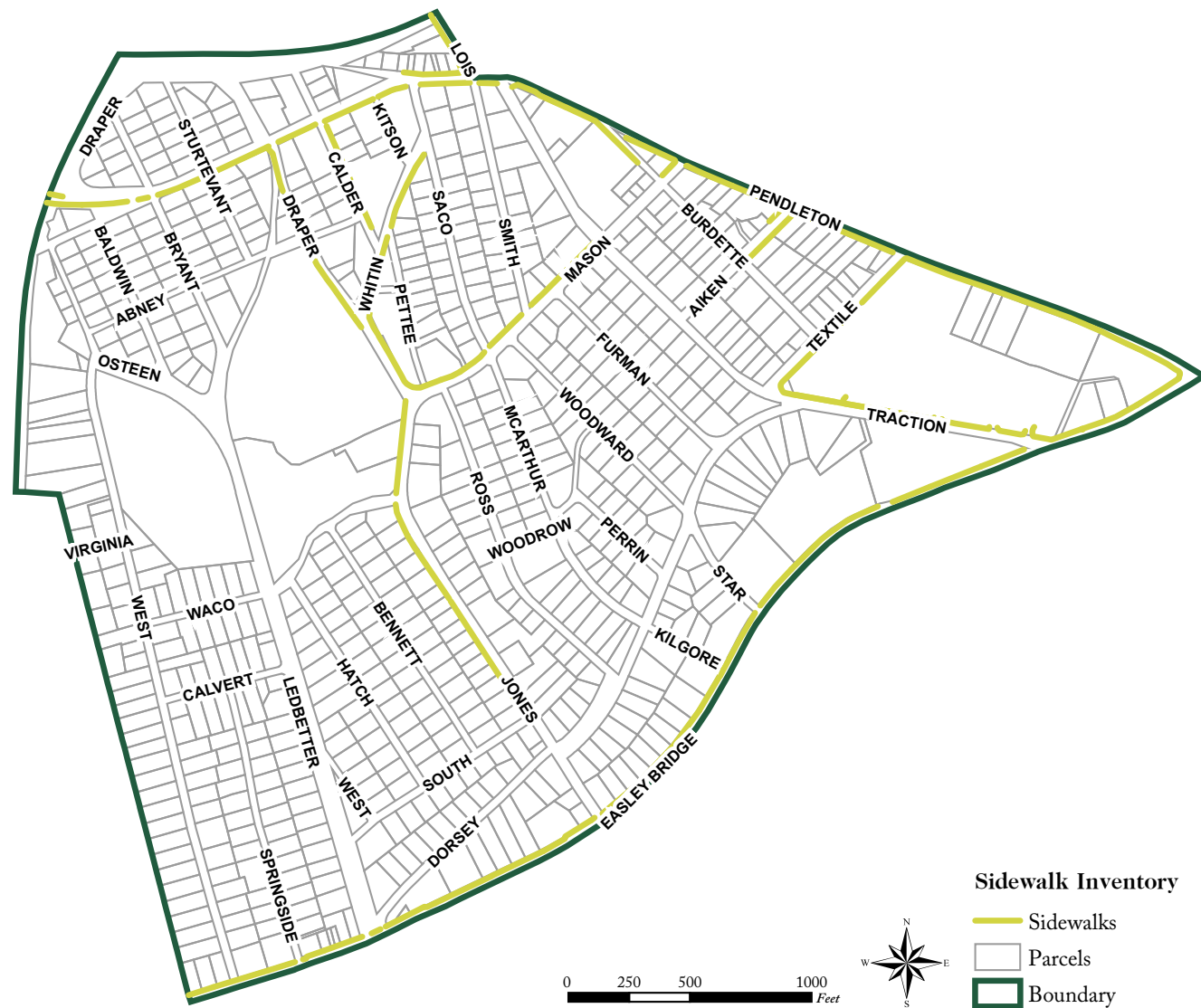
# MOVE: Transportation



Public Transportation Access



# MOVE: Infrastructure



Sidewalk Inventory

# Public Participation

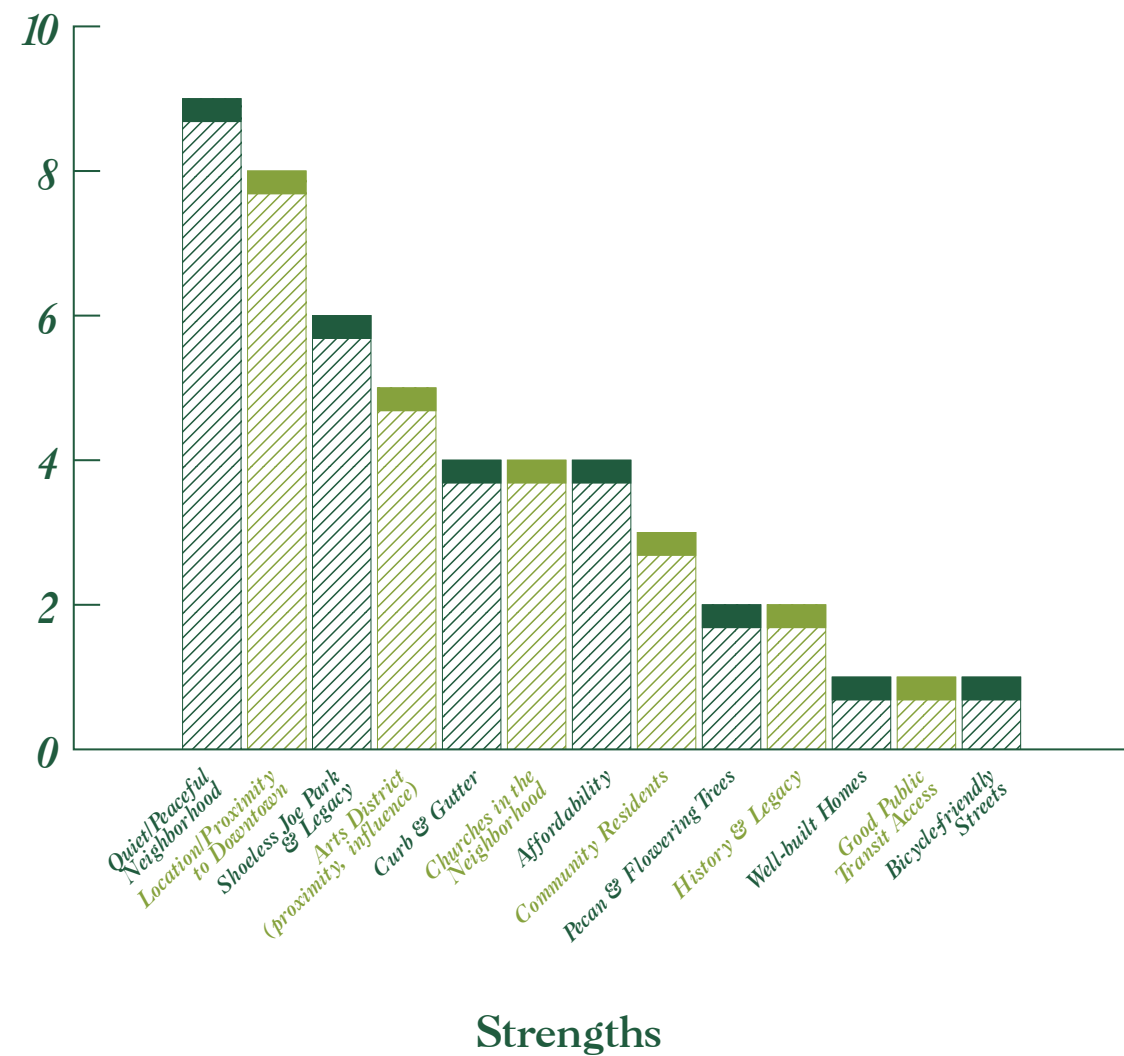
Over the course of a little more than a year, staff conducted monthly workshops at the Brandon Community Association meetings to better understand and interpret residents' wants and needs. Residents participated in various activities and exercises including:

- SWOT Analysis
- Shoeless Joe Memorial Park Design Workshop
- Community Goals and Visioning Exercise

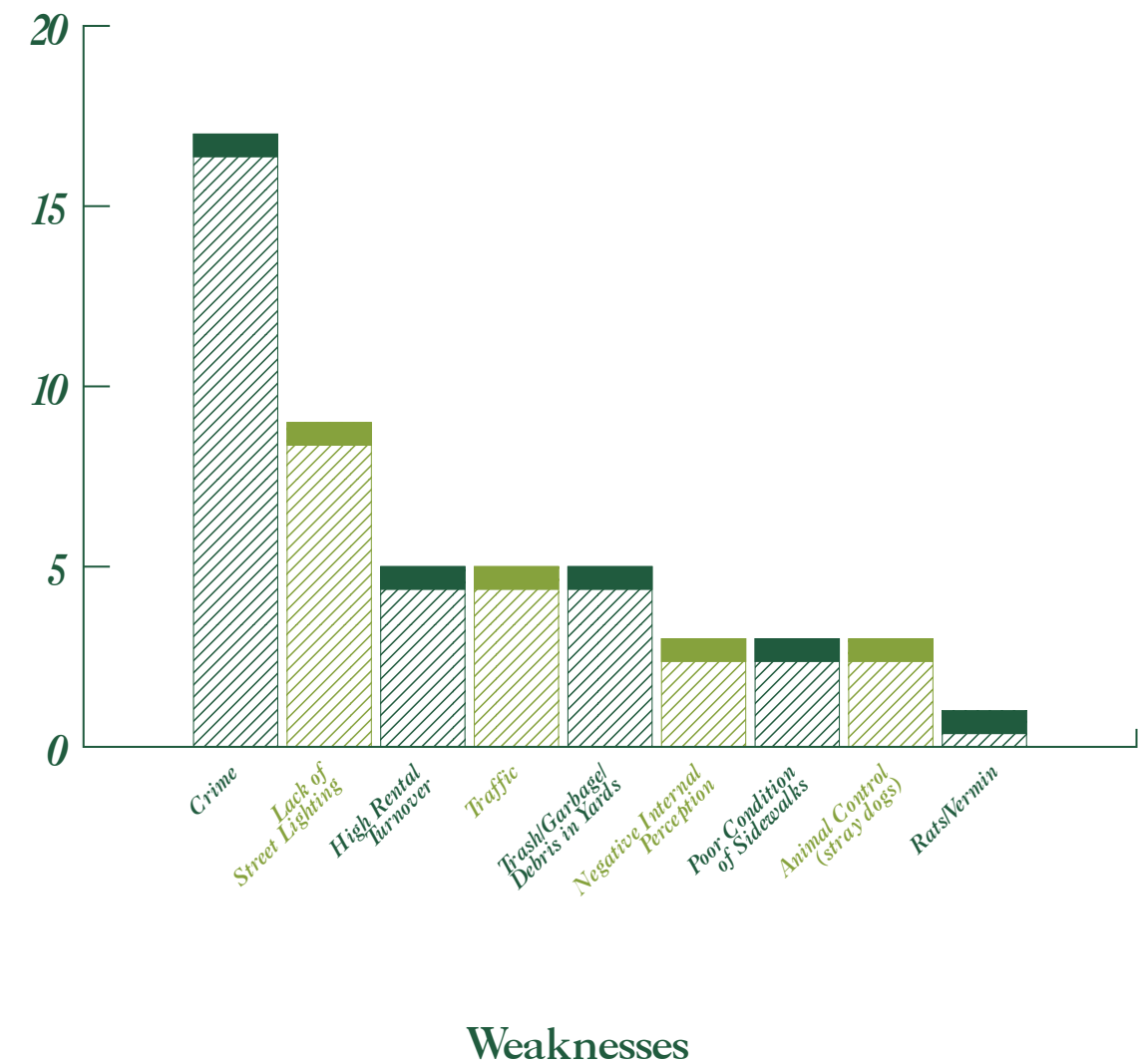


# PARTICIPATION: SWOT Analysis

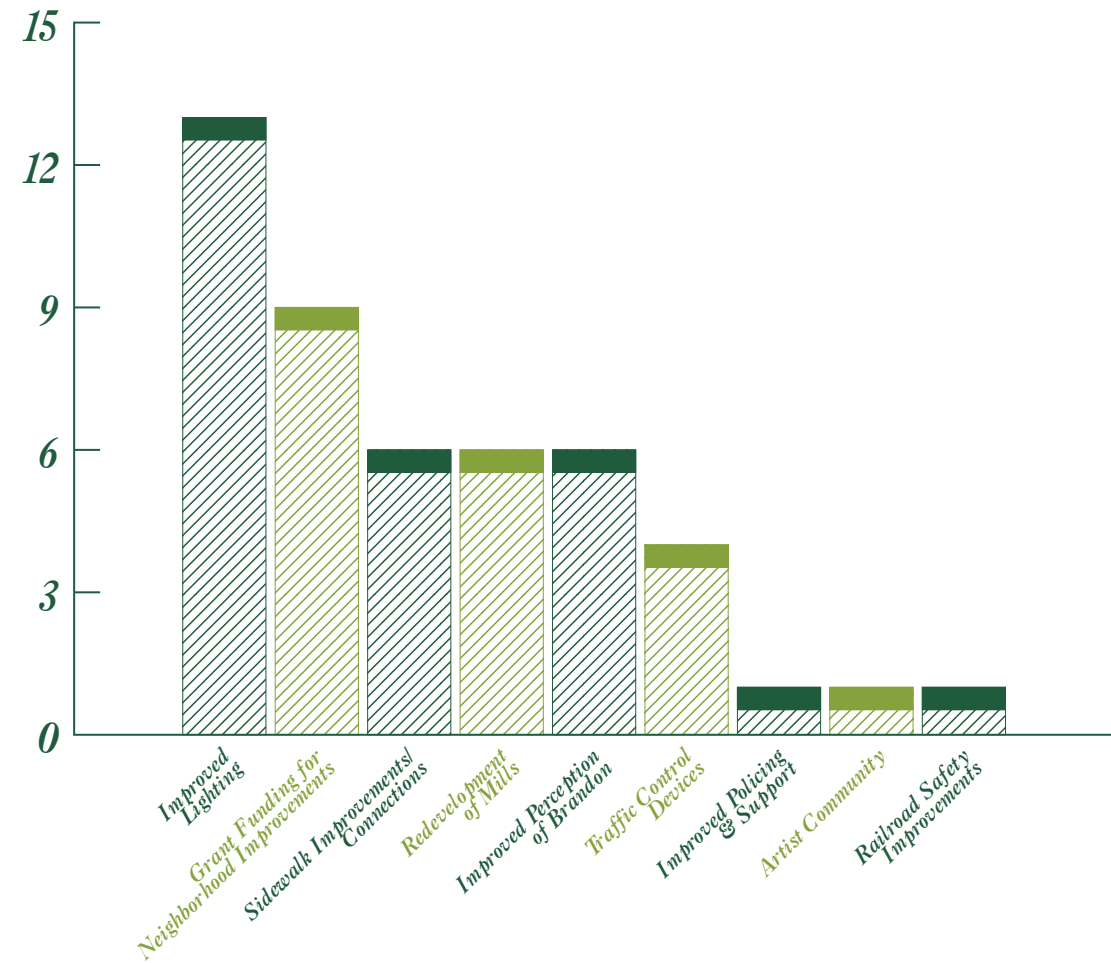
Staff guided residents in a discussion of the Brandon Community's Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats. Participants then "voted" using colored dots to prioritize primary assets as well as challenges to be addressed.



# PARTICIPATION: SWOT Analysis

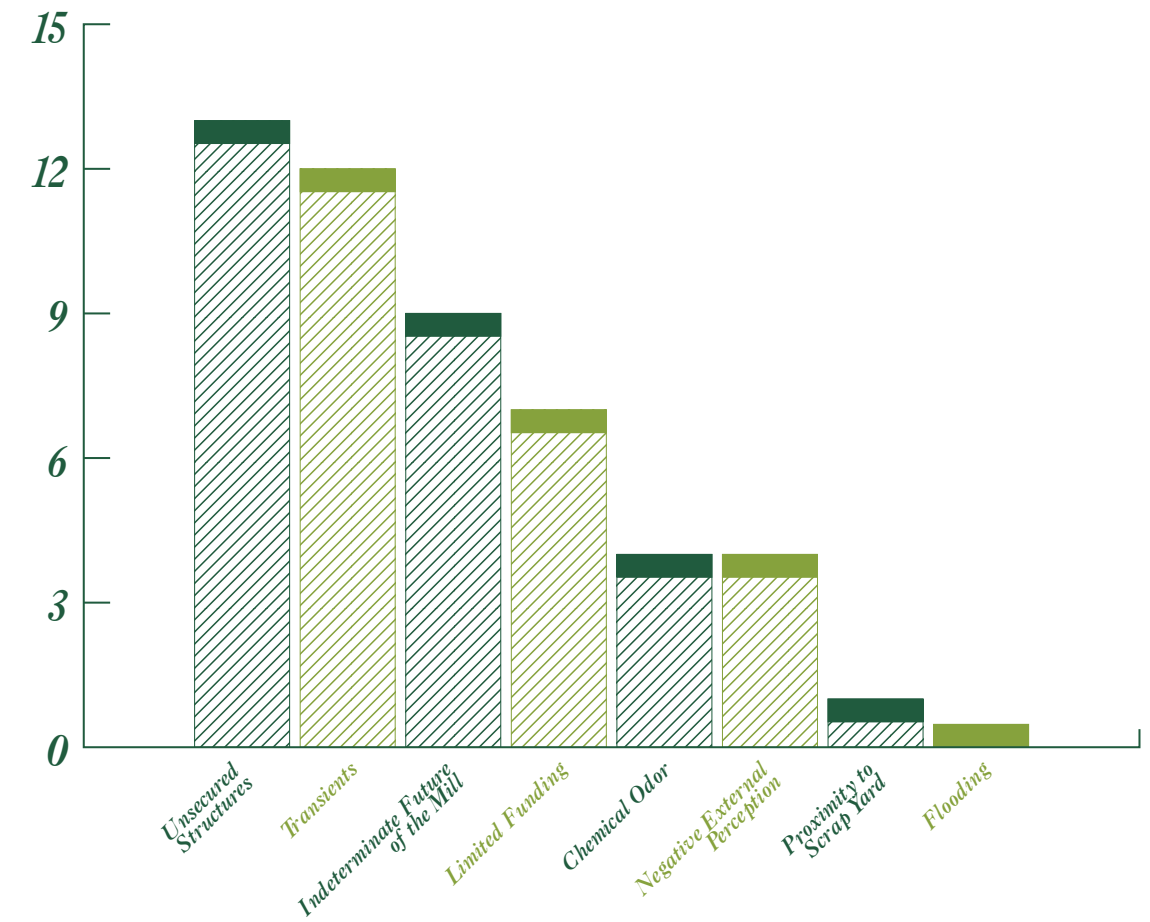


# ***PARTICIPATION:*** ***SWOT Analysis***



**Opportunities**

# ***PARTICIPATION:*** ***SWOT Analysis***



**Threats**



# PARTICIPATION:

## “Shoeless Joe” Memorial Workshop

Staff worked with the Community to re-imagine new uses for the existing park. Some proposed uses included a dog park, bandstand/amphitheater, among others.

### Shoeless Joe Jackson Park Brainstorming Concepts:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Community Garden                                 | Address Old Dam/Piers & Sewage Leaks                          |
| More Lighting (with motion sensors)              | Water Fountains   |
| Use for Jogging                                  | Water Pads  |
| Trails (making connections)                      | Bandstand/Amphitheater  |
| Capitalize on Sewer Easement                     | Obstacle Course   |
| Trail Systems                                    | Art Festival, Public Art, Sculptures                          |
| Reduce the expense of renting the ball field     | Benches & Garbage Cans (designed/ decorated by local artists) |
| Adult Exercise Equipment                         | Arts in Communities Grant                                     |
| Senior Programs (yoga, dancing, shag, tai chi)   | Open Studios (for new artists)                                |
| Better Access                                    | Fundraisers (for the park)                                    |
| Family Movie Night                               | Paint/Decorate Fire Hydrants                                  |
| Annual Celebrations                              | Art Walk  |
| Flowers  | Sun Shades (in trees)   |
| Dog Park   | Wrap the Mill (i.e. Christo)                                  |
| Dog Friendly (waste collection bags/ dispensers) | Additional Public Grills                                      |
| Night Lighting                                   | Wheel Chair Accessibility                                     |
|  | Level Surface   |

# PARTICIPATION:

## Goals & Visioning Exercise

Participants worked in small groups to brainstorm goals for the Brandon Community in six categories which included Housing, Public Safety, Codes Enforcement, Community Identity, Transportation & Infrastructure, and Beautification & Revitalization. These categories would later be used in strategy development. Participants were also asked to create a newspaper headline for their community both today and 20 years from now. These headlines form the basis of the Community’s Vision.



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# ***PARTICIPATION:***

## *Goals & Visioning Exercise*

### **July 18th, 2014 Headlines:**

“Brandon Blooms! Community Garden Bright Spot for West End”  
“Brandon Community Plans for Growth”  
“No Crack Houses in Brandon”  
“Mill Renovation Prompts New Investment in Brandon Community”  
“Brandon Promotes Community Ownership”  
“Home Sweet Home – Home Ownership = Community Pride”  
“Brandon Community Working Hard Toward Overall Growth and Drop in Neighborhood Crime”  
“Brandon Summer Cook-Out – Softball – BBQ – Play Area – Live Music”  
“Brandon – Classi-fied Neighborhood”  
“New Police Sub-Station in Brandon”  
“Brandon – Coming Together as a Community to Get Things Done”  
“A New Day, A New Beginning for Brandon”  
“Fowl Play – Brandon leads the County in Embracing our Feathered Friends”  
“Popular Park in Brandon Ready for Fun – Shoeless Joe Jackson Park Cleaned Up, Families Flock For Fun”  
“Brandon Lights the Way”  
“Solar Lights Illuminate Brandon Community through Partnership with Clemson Renewable Energy Department”  
“Bright Lights in Brandon”  
“Nice Community Comes Together to Bring Back to Old Glory”

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# ***PARTICIPATION:***

## *Goals & Visioning Exercise*

### **July 18th, 2034 Headlines:**

“Brandon Continues to Lead West End Redevelopment”  
“New Businesses, Investments, and Jobs Welcomed in Brandon Community”  
“George Turns 101!”  
“Brandon – Unique Blend of Greenville History and Nationally Recognized Art District”  
“Brandon – Wow! What a Difference! Ownership, Arts, and Affordability”  
“Brandon Community is Booming – Neighborhood Crime Lowest it has been in 20 Years”  
“Brandon Named Best Community in America!”  
“New Sidewalks on Saco”  
“Brandon Youth Group Wins National Award for Making Community a Better Place to Live”  
“From the Ashes – Brandon”  
“Brandon – The Star of Greenville”  
“Brandon Community of Textile Crescent Celebrates Ten Years ‘Off the Grid’”  
“Bobbie Jo McCombs: Celebrates her 20th Year as Mayor”  
“Brandon Community Lights up the West Side”  
“Brandon Once Again the Heart Beat of the Crescent”  
“Brandon – Twenty Years Later is Still Leading the Way in Re-growth and Re-Invention”  
“Local Neighborhood Wins All-American Community Award”

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# ***PARTICIPATION:*** ***Mill Redevelopment Workshop***

Staff held a workshop in August, 2014, to determine the community's preferences for the redevelopment of the Brandon Mill. Ideas were as follows:

## **Preferred Uses:**

- Grocery
  - Small scale
  - Affordable
  - Healthy
  - Produce
- Coffee Shop
- Satellite Library
- The triangular piece of land north of the mill between Abney and Draper Streets could be used as a park, dog park, or some other way that mill residents and residents from the greater community could co-mingle.

## **Concerns:**

- Will the mill be annexed into the City of Greenville?
- Parking needs to be internal to the site only.
- NO FENCE around the mill property: the community does not want to be cut off from the mill site or the mill community.
- Most importantly: THE COMMUNITY WANTS THE NAME OF THE REDEVELOPED MILL TO CONTAIN THE WORDS 'BRANDON MILL.' For example, 'West Village Lofts at Brandon Mill.'

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# ***PARTICIPATION:*** ***Mill Redevelopment Workshop***

## **Transportation Concerns:**

- How will traffic be affected?
  - County staff can request that a traffic study be done as part of the rezoning.
- Will bus use increase? (Considered a positive outcome)
  - Subsequently, a bus shelter would be required.
- Pendleton Street will likely see the most traffic.
  - Brandon Community signage would be well-suited for this street (gateway and wayfinding).
- Smith Street is currently a problematic roadway (too narrow, regular speeding).

## **Potential School Rezoning:**

- With additional population, the community hopes that a school rezoning will allow children to attend schools closer to home and reduce their commute times.

## **Community Appearance:**

- Regarding the Brandon Mill property:
  - Keep the stack.
  - Keep all historic structures.
  - Keep the colors the same.
  - No fence, especially no chain link fence surrounding the property.
  - Buffering by landscaping is permissible, but the neighborhood would like open interaction between the mill and the community at large, avoiding the feeling of isolation.
- Signage at the entrance of the neighborhood with internal wayfinding signage.
  - The watertower could be used as a billboard.



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# *Strategies*

The following section articulates Goals for the Brandon Community as determined by its residents, as well as the Strategies developed by the Community, Planning Staff, and Stakeholders aimed at achieving those goals. This section also lays out the Brandon Community Association's course, or direction, over the next several years, as it seeks to leverage grant funding and corporate sponsorship to grow and revitalize this unique Greenville Community.



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# *STRATEGIES: Housing*

A 114 year old community, Brandon stands as testament to the quality and craftsmanship of early 20th Century construction standards, and to the men who employed them. Most of the homes in the Community are in remarkably good condition, given their age. Foundations are sound, roofs are sturdy, and many exteriors are original, requiring only an occasional coat of paint. But while “the bones,” as they say, are there, some homes have suffered from the destructive forces of neglect and time. Whether this is the result of landlord and tenant neglect, or the lack of resources available to homeowners, is anyone's guess. Nevertheless, the Brandon Community has expressed a desire to improve the appearance of their community through strategies to revitalize existing homes, and incentivize compliance with local building and property maintenance codes, in keeping with the historic charm and character of the neighborhood. Such an effort will likely necessitate involvement and partnerships between County Planning and Code Compliance Staff, the Sheriff's Office, Greater Greenville Sanitation, the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority, and the many other public and non-profit agencies committed to improving the quality of housing throughout the community. The following goals represent the Brandon Community's vision for the future of housing within the community.

# *STRATEGIES: Housing*

**Goal: Improve the quality and appearance of housing within the Community.**

- Create a pattern book of historic mill village architecture to guide housing rehabilitation and renovations
- Research and provide information and education regarding historic preservation and other tax credits available to assist residents and property owners with home improvements
- Establish a home repair and development fund to help residents pay for home improvements
- Leverage community development financing through Community Works Carolina or similar agencies to improve and repair homes
- Identify, prioritize, and seek funding sources for the demolition of condemned, uninhabitable, or deteriorated structures within the Community
- Identify opportunities for volunteers to assist their neighbors with home maintenance for senior citizens, those with disabilities, and others
- Provide incentives for housing upkeep and beautification (i.e. Brandon Community Pride Award)
- Prepare a Housing Survey to indicate troubled rental properties and establish benchmarks for standards of development

# *STRATEGIES: Housing*

**Goal: Encourage appropriate development and redevelopment of housing in Brandon**

- Identify vacant properties suitable for redevelopment and develop strategies for determining their best use

**Goal: Address ongoing issues and concerns associated with absentee landlord and tenant neglect of properties**

- Identify ownership of problem properties and address these concerns with individual property owners
- Offer tenant recruiting assistance to rental property owners to encourage responsible tenancy

**Goal: Improve opportunities for home ownership**

- Identify members of the community interested in purchasing a home in the neighborhood
- Leverage community resources and work with local organizations to help with down payment assistance and first time homebuyer education
- Identify barriers to home ownership (i.e. poor credit, etc.) and develop solutions

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# STRATEGIES:

## *Public Safety*

Crime has been an on-going concern in Brandon in recent years. Gone are the days when residents felt comfortable leaving their doors unlocked as they once did. Though the neighborhood has very little violent crime to speak of, property crimes, including petty theft and larceny, as well as some instances of prostitution, have been reported by residents. These illicit activities have somewhat tarnished the image of this mostly peaceful community, discouraging private investment and public interest. However, the residents of Brandon will not be deterred in their pursuit of rooting out crime from this much-loved neighborhood. Already the community has seen reductions in crime rates resulting from greater community organization and participation, including the Brandon Community Association's efforts to educate residents, and promote awareness of public safety related issues. As a result, the Brandon Community has developed the following goals with the aim of further reducing and eliminating crime.



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ACTION ITEMS

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# STRATEGIES:

## *Public Safety*

### Goal: Improve the safety of Brandon residents and visitors

- Reinvigorate the community crime watch, recruit new membership, encourage regular participation and reporting
- Improve street lighting throughout the community
- Identify funding sources and grant opportunities for new street lighting and other public safety infrastructure (i.e. surveillance equipment, etc)

### Goal: Improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the Community

- Conduct a multi-modal traffic study to determine and prioritize potential traffic related issues
- Prepare a community transportation plan with strategies to prevent speeding and reduce cut-through traffic

### Goal: Reclaim the community from drug trafficking and prostitution

- Investigate opportunities for surveillance at the location of frequent criminal activities
- Create a task force to focus prostitution and drugs and to motivate and influence public policy

### Goal: Improve the safety and security of “Shoeless” Joe Jackson Memorial Park

- Prepare a proposal for park improvements and promote its use for community events and activities
- Work with Greenville County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism to plan for these improvements



# STRATEGIES:

## *Community Identity*

Like each of the Greenville area Mill Communities, Brandon has its own unique identity. From its recognition as the birthplace “Shoeless” Joe Jackson, the legendary baseball player, to its reputation as a hard-working, diverse, and determined community, Brandon has a character all its own. While much of this identity is steeped in traditions of the past, the residents of Brandon do not shy away from making plans for their future. Many have actively embraced the burgeoning arts community in the nearby Village of West Greenville, worked to attract new families and visitors to the community they love, and even carefully nurtured ideas of redeveloping the Brandon Mill property. Brandon is a community of neighbors dedicated to its past, but committed to a prosperous vision for its future. These goals represent just a few of the community’s efforts to firmly establish and promote its image.



# STRATEGIES:

## *Community Identity*

### Goal: Improve the perception of Brandon

- Create a branding strategy for the Community
- Design and prepare marketing materials to promote Brandon as a vibrant and livable community (i.e. community newsletter, etc.)
- Create Community Programs and Events to bring people to Brandon (i.e. movies in the park, festivals, open studios, etc.)
- Develop a strategy for encouraging positive media coverage and attention about Brandon happenings
- Publicize improvements through local non-profit newsletters and promotional materials, etc. (i.e. gardening for good)

### Goal: Celebrate Brandon’s Heritage through historical and cultural programming and events

- Organize adult and youth baseball/softball league programs
- Bring “Shoeless” Joe back to Brandon (i.e. memorials, monuments, art, etc.)
- Increase awareness of “Shoeless” Joe’s association with the Brandon Community (i.e. brochures/flyers for the museum at Fluor Field)

# STRATEGIES:

## *Community Identity*

### Goal: Nurture the Arts Community in Brandon and the nearby Village of West Greenville

- Develop and maintain ties with the Village of West Greenville Business and Arts Association (i.e. designated representatives from Brandon)
- Work with Clemson University on art installations and other creative projects in the Community (i.e. sculpture garden, art walk, art fair, etc.)
- Research and apply for arts in public spaces and other creative arts grant opportunities
- Encourage artists, young people, and families to reside in Brandon by marketing available property for sale or rent



# STRATEGIES:

## *Transportation & Infrastructure*

### Goal: Improve and Encourage public transit service to Brandon

- Develop a transit improvement plan to address deficiencies and safety concerns
- Work with regional transportation authorities to improve availability and access to public transportation
- Encourage the Greenville Trolley to come to West Greenville

### Goal: Improve lighting throughout the Community

- Develop a lighting improvement plan to address deficiencies and safety concerns
- Seek funding sources for lighting improvement and maintenance

### Goal: Improve sidewalks throughout the Community

- Develop a sidewalk improvement plan to address deficiencies and safety concerns
- Seek funding sources for sidewalk construction at strategic locations

### Goal: Improve access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail and other recreational amenities

- Develop a recreation improvement plan to address deficiencies and assess needs including a Swamp Rabbit spur trail
- Work with the Greenville County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department to improve facilities and programming in Brandon

# STRATEGIES:

## *Beautification & Revitalization*

### Goal: Establish Community Gateways and places of pride

- Plant flowers and trees throughout the community
- Work with non-profit and corporate organizations to obtain beautification resources and funding (i.e. TreesGreenville)
- Create community-wide public gardens
- Prepare a street tree survey and planting program
- Revitalize and Rehabilitate Historic Structures

### Goal: Support the redevelopment of the Brandon Mill and surrounding properties

- Create and articulate a clear vision of preferred redevelopment options for the Mill, compatible with the existing character of the surrounding neighborhood
- Address environmental concerns stemming from industrial uses with the neighborhood and propose alternatives for the future of industrial sites

# STRATEGIES:

## *Beautification & Revitalization*

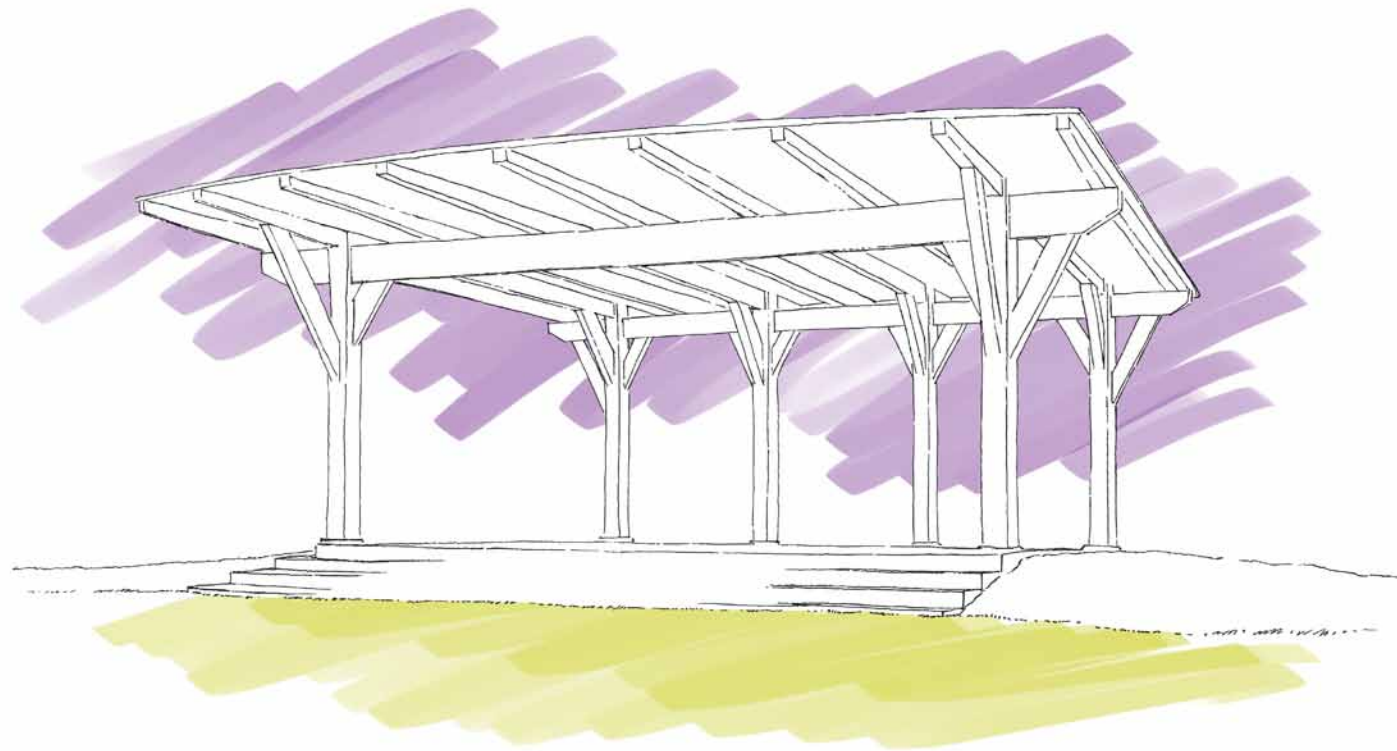


Sculpture Park & Exercise Path



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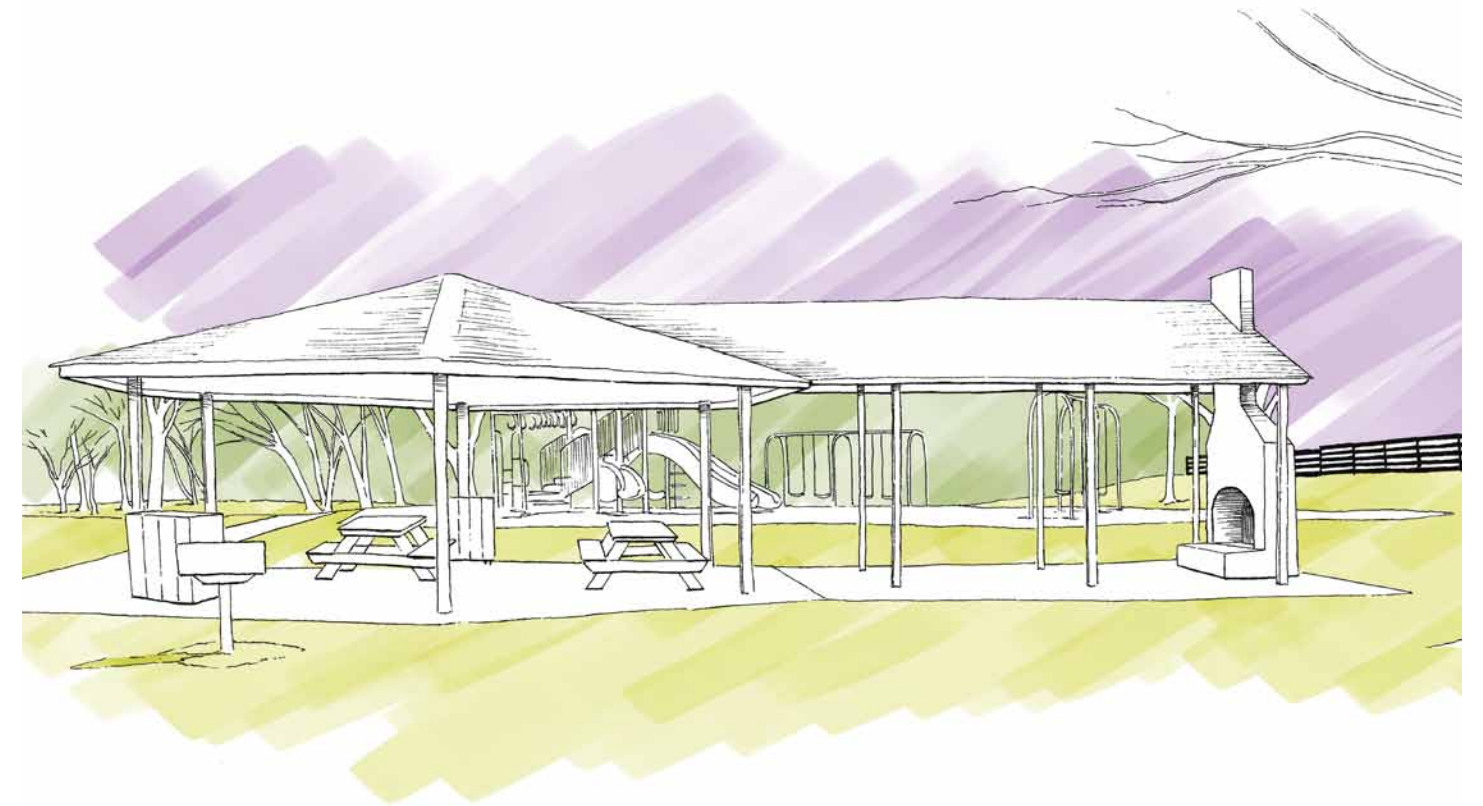
# ***STRATEGIES:*** *Beautification & Revitalization*



Covered Stage

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# ***STRATEGIES:*** *Beautification & Revitalization*



Extended Shelter with Outdoor Fireplace



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# ***STRATEGIES:***

## *Beautification & Revitalization*



**Dog Park & Exercise Path with  
Outdoor Exercise Equipment**

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# ***STRATEGIES:***

## *Beautification & Revitalization*



**Creek Trail**



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# Conclusion . . .

The Brandon Mill community has been reinvigorated over the course of the nearly two years of meetings that have been held in support of this plan. During that time residents have come to appreciate the many unique characteristics of Brandon. Together, they hope to nurture and grow the many good qualities that already exist, most prominently the strong sense of community. With the upcoming mill redevelopment, the neighborhood is poised to evolve in exciting ways and there will be many exciting opportunities for residents to participate in Brandon's future.

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# Acknowledgments

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Willis Meadows  
Xanthene Norris  
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## *Stakeholder Organizations*

Brandon Community Association, Brandon Baptist Church, Brandon United Methodist Church, City of Greenville Department of Economic Development, Gardening for Good, Greater Greenville Sanitation Commission, Greenville Center for Creative Arts, Greenville County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, Greenville County Public Works, Greenville County Redevelopment Authority, Greenville County Sheriff's Office, Greenville Dreams, Greenville Forward, Greenville Organic Foods Organization, Keep Greenville County Beautiful, Pace Burt, Inc., Palmetto Pride, Parker Fire & Sewer District, SCDOT, Bon Secours St. Francis Health System, Trees Greenville, United Way of Greenville County, and The Village of West Greenville

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