

# New Washington Heights Community Plan







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# The Big Picture



The New Washington Heights Community Association began gathering on a regular basis in the second half of 2012. With the introduction of Greenville County's Poinsett District project potentially directly impacting the welfare of the neighborhood, excitement and involvement developed further. Furman student groups also began to adopt the community as an area for personal investment. Councilwoman Xanthen Norris and State Representative Chandra Dillard made themselves available to the neighborhood at community meetings and took personal interest in the community's development. With Councilwoman Norris' influence, she encouraged the neighborhood to pursue developing a community plan with the Greenville County Community Planning & Development Department.

Since the winter of 2012, the Community Planning & Development Department has been involved in the community through their regular meetings, joining the community in neighborhood beautification and assisting with grant-funded projects. Over the course of several months, the Planning Department has conducted meaningful dialogue with the neighborhood and steering committee as well as a variety of visioning exercises in the facilitation and production of this document. As a result of these community efforts this community plan was produced and it represents the wishes and vision of renewal for New Washington Heights and its residents.





# The Origins of the Community

During the 1940s- 1970s, New Washington Heights was a prestigious community for middle-class African-American families in Greenville County. Poinsett Highway was the location of several textile mills, providing jobs for the residents.

New Washington Heights was a family-oriented neighborhood, and as such the idea for the Happy Hearts Park came about.

Before Happy Hearts, there had been the Brockman Family Club run by Ms. Dorothy Brockman out of her home in New Washington Heights. She then decided to expand the club to include the whole community.

In January 1949, a group of interested residents came together to discuss plans for improving the neighborhood. A Community Club was organized with Mr. Clate Davis as its first president, and Ms. Dorothy Brockman as supervisor. A committee was appointed to find a location for the park/ playground. Land was purchased from Mr. W.T. Henderson for \$2,600.00. A small down payment and monthly payments of \$50.00 were arranged.

William G. Sirrine was the first to donate to Happy Hearts, in the amount of \$25.00. He also served as the club's lawyer, and had the charter incorporated by the secretary of the state.

Several businesses and "friends" of Happy Hearts donated funds that made the park possible.

Happy Hearts was founded "to promote the interest of the citizens of the community, morally, intellectually, and physically."

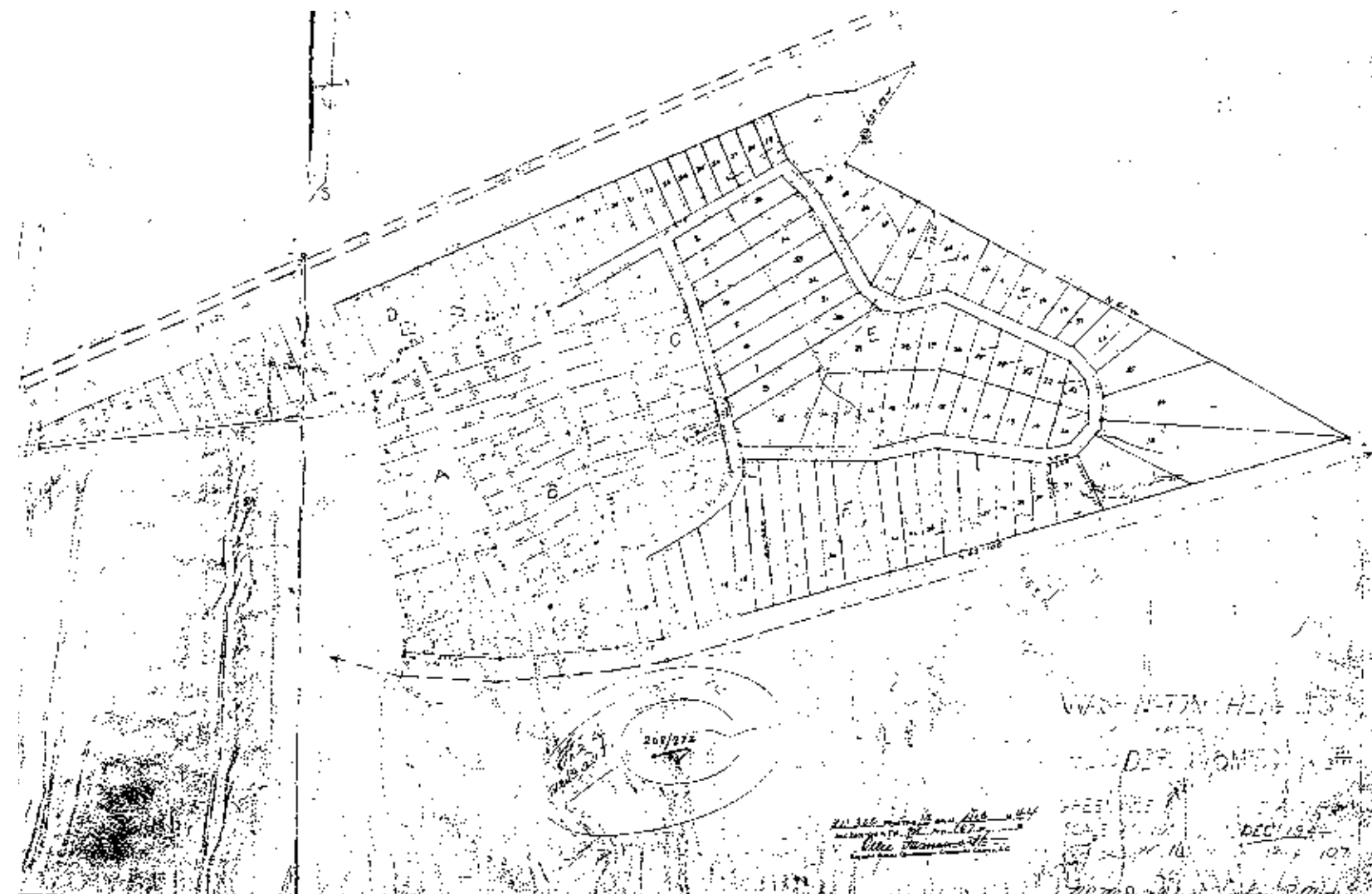


Figure 1: Plat of New Washington Heights Community



# The Heart of the Community

On June 5, 1949, an official ribbon-cutting ceremony opened the park. Then-Mayor Cass cut the ribbon.

Happy Hearts has been recognized by the City of Greenville, State of South Carolina, United States Congress, and United States Senate for its work.

Over its lifetime it has served as the center of events in New Washington Heights, hosting birthday parties, senior banquets, summer camps, and more.

In 1974, the residents of New Washington Heights celebrated Happy Hearts' 25th anniversary

In 1999, the 50th anniversary – where the Reverend Jesse Jackson, a Greenville native, was the guest of honor.

Happy Hearts Presidents  
from 1949 – 1974:

Mr. Clate Davis

Mr. F. P. Robinson

Mr. E.D. Brockman

Mr. Will Williams

Mr. Raymond Carter Sr.

Mr. George Sanders

Mr. James Allen Carter, Youth President

Happy Hearts Secretaries:

Mrs. Carrie Wilson

Mr. William G. Hill

Mrs. Hiawatha Parker

Mrs. Mary Wofford Cleveland

Mrs. Alma J. Grier

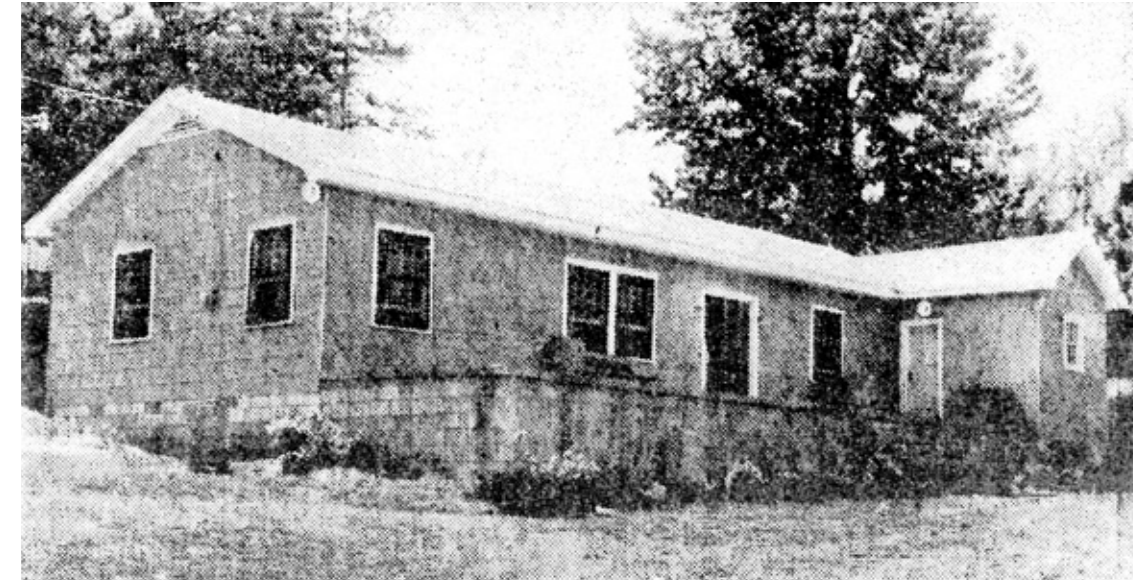
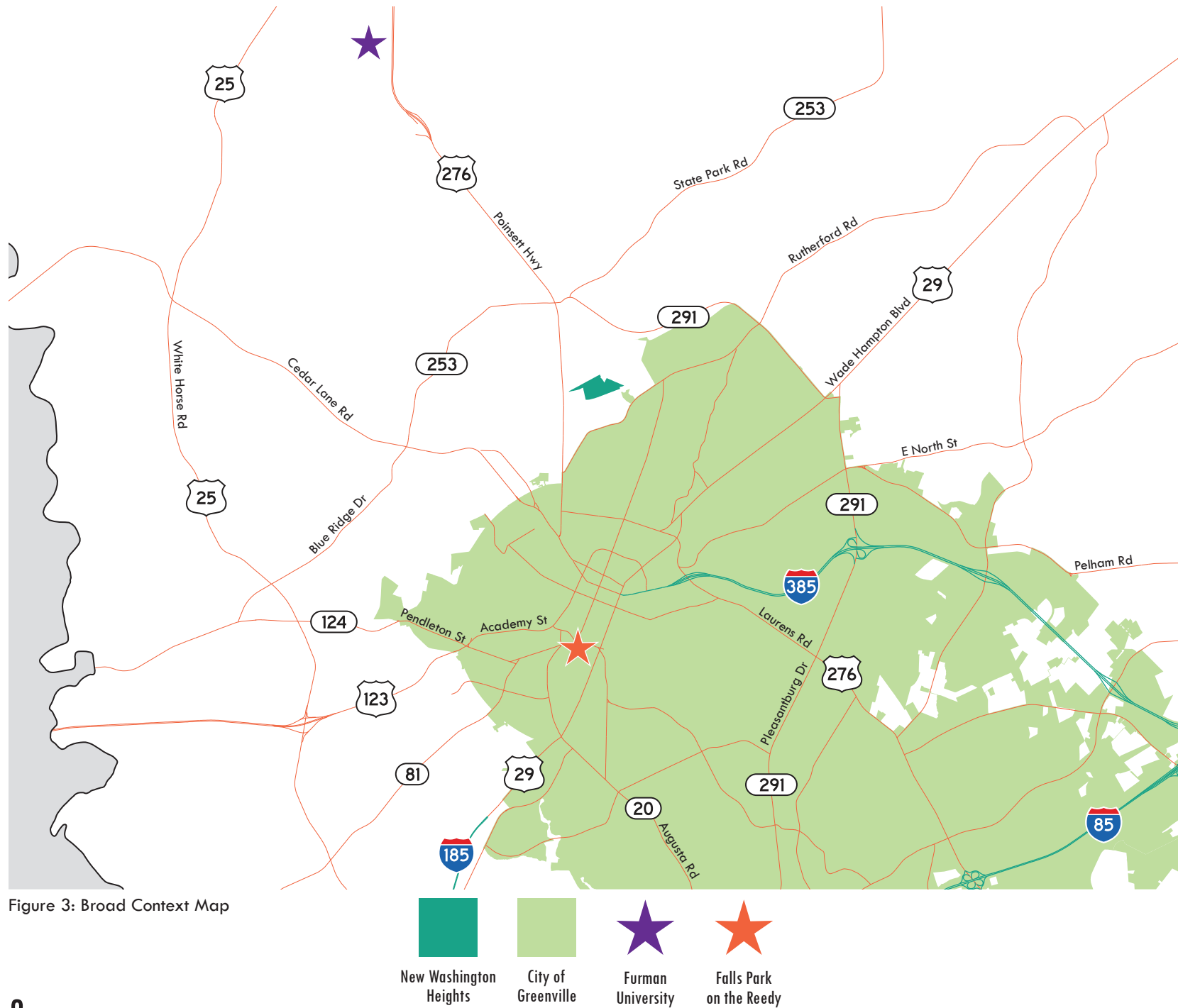


Figure 2: Happy Hearts Community Center



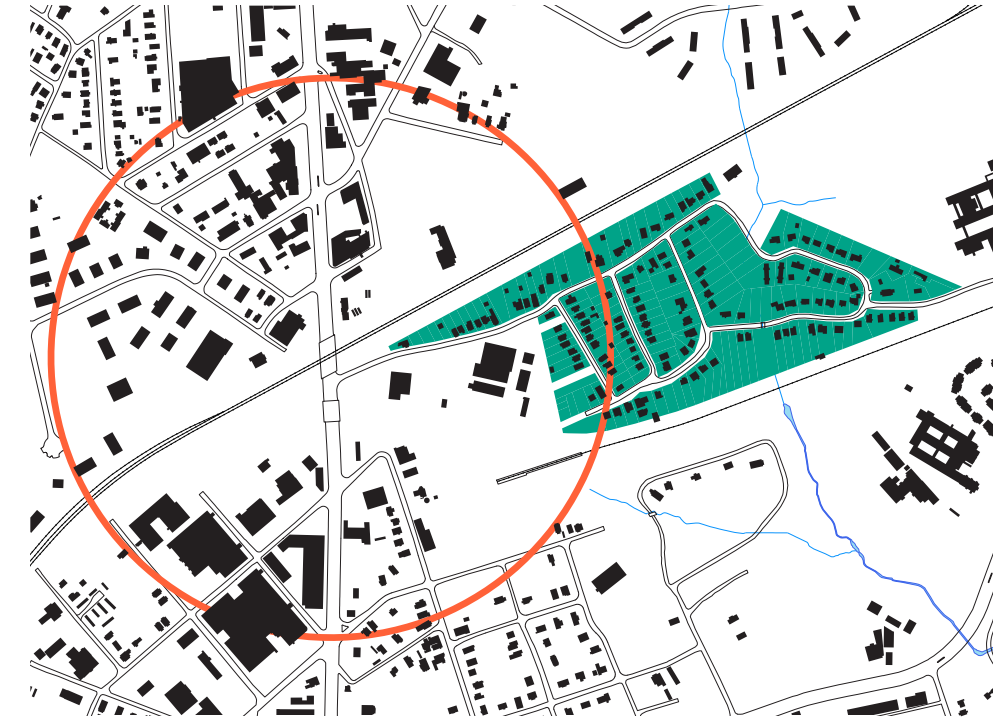


## The Mile-High View

New Washington Heights is located north of the City of Greenville, just outside the municipal boundary along Poinsett Highway (US Hwy 276) [See Fig. 3]. Individuals familiar with the general area may associate the entrance to Loop Street (the neighborhood's primary gateway) with such familiar Poinsett Highway landmarks as Duke Sandwich Company, the Goodwill building, Tool Shed, or even the iconic bridge installation over the railroad tracks.

New Washington Heights is also significantly located at the heart of the Poinsett District [Fig. 4], an urban renewal project conducted by Greenville County, along with a variety of stakeholders. This context is expected to have dramatic impacts upon the neighborhood over the next several years and decades. Some of these impacts are discussed in more detail later in this document.

The community itself demonstrates a wide scale of housing conditions. The moderately close-knit layout of the community is checkered with vacant or blighted units and cleared parcels. One of the most predominant features of the community is the abundance in canopy cover from old growth trees throughout the community [Fig. 6]. Unfortunately, many of these trees are in desperate need of costly pruning.





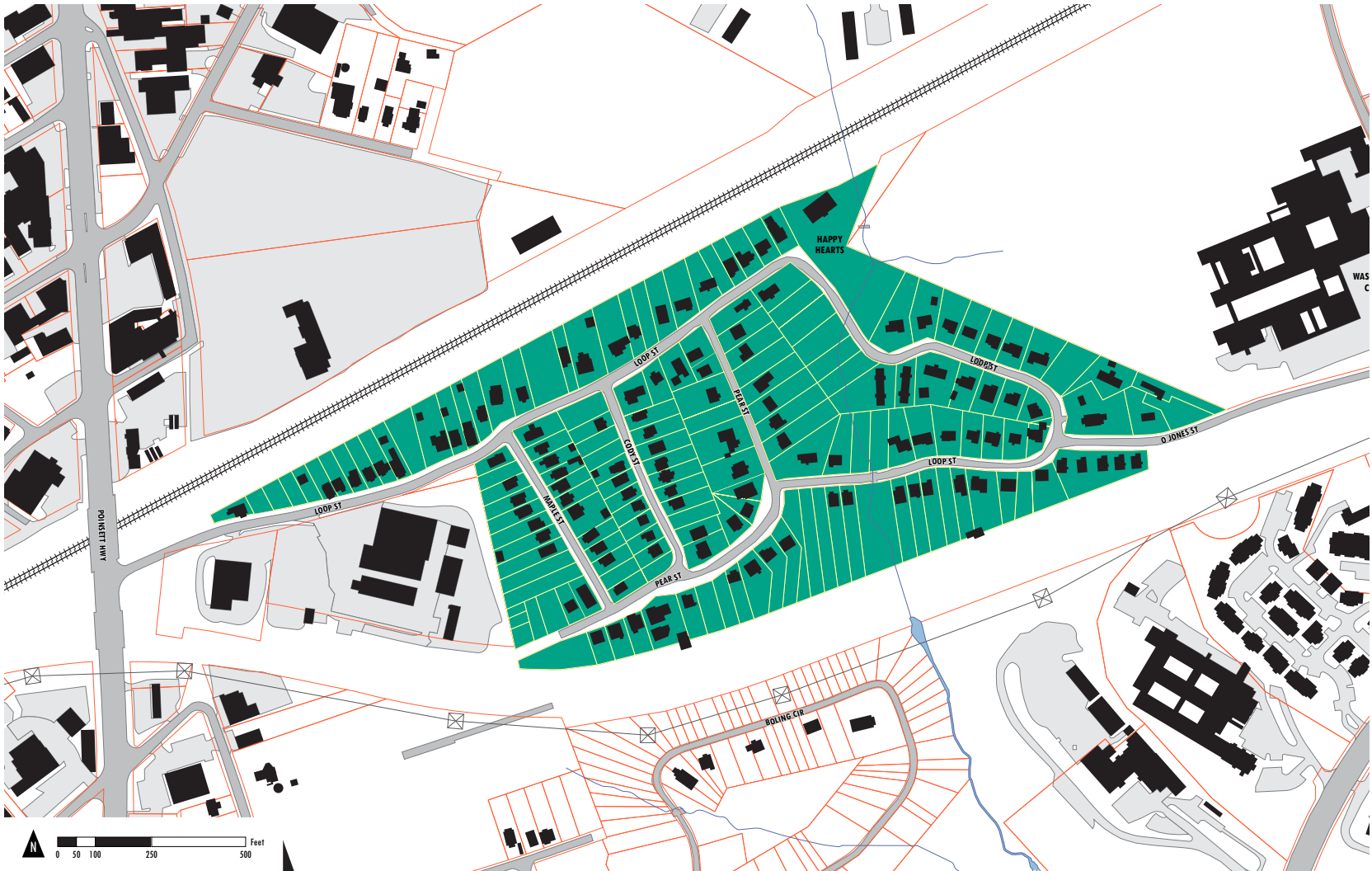


Figure 5: New Washington Heights Community Map #1



Figure 6: New Washington Heights Community Map #2



# The Demographics of the Community

As compared to broader samplings from across Greenville County, New Washington Heights presents some interesting statistical data. In comparison to a five mile proximity, New Washington Heights demonstrates a higher percentage of senior residents, also resulting in a higher median age for the neighborhood. These residents are a highly valued asset to the community due to their connection to the historical roots of the neighborhood and the oral tradition that they preserve. Furthermore, New Washington Heights boasts a greater diversity of people groups than the area at large, including Hispanics. However,

median household income is nearly \$7,000 below the overall area (and over \$16,000 below the average household income). The projected annual rate of median household income is also negatively projected for the community (-0.94%), with the five mile area sampling projected for a 2.21% growth. Alternatively, the rate of population, households, families, and owner households are projected to grow over this same time period at a higher rate than the surrounding area. This demonstrates a trend of families moving into a state of poverty as opposed to a community growing out of poverty.

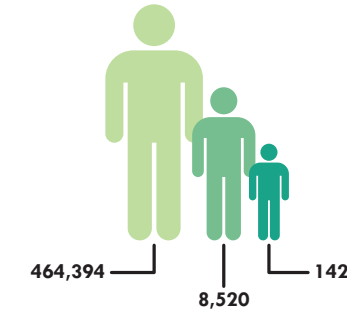
Population by Age



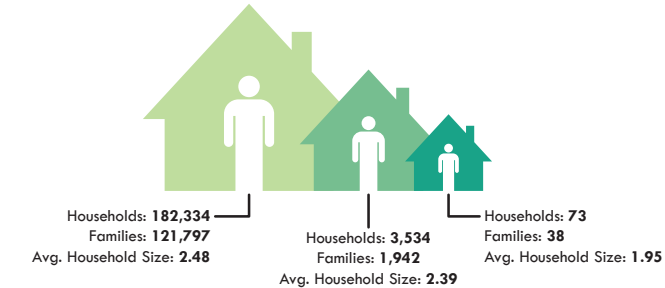
Source: 2012 U.S. Census American Community Survey, ESRI Business Analyst 2010-2011

Greenville County  
Poinsett District (1mi radius)  
New Washington Heights

2012 Population



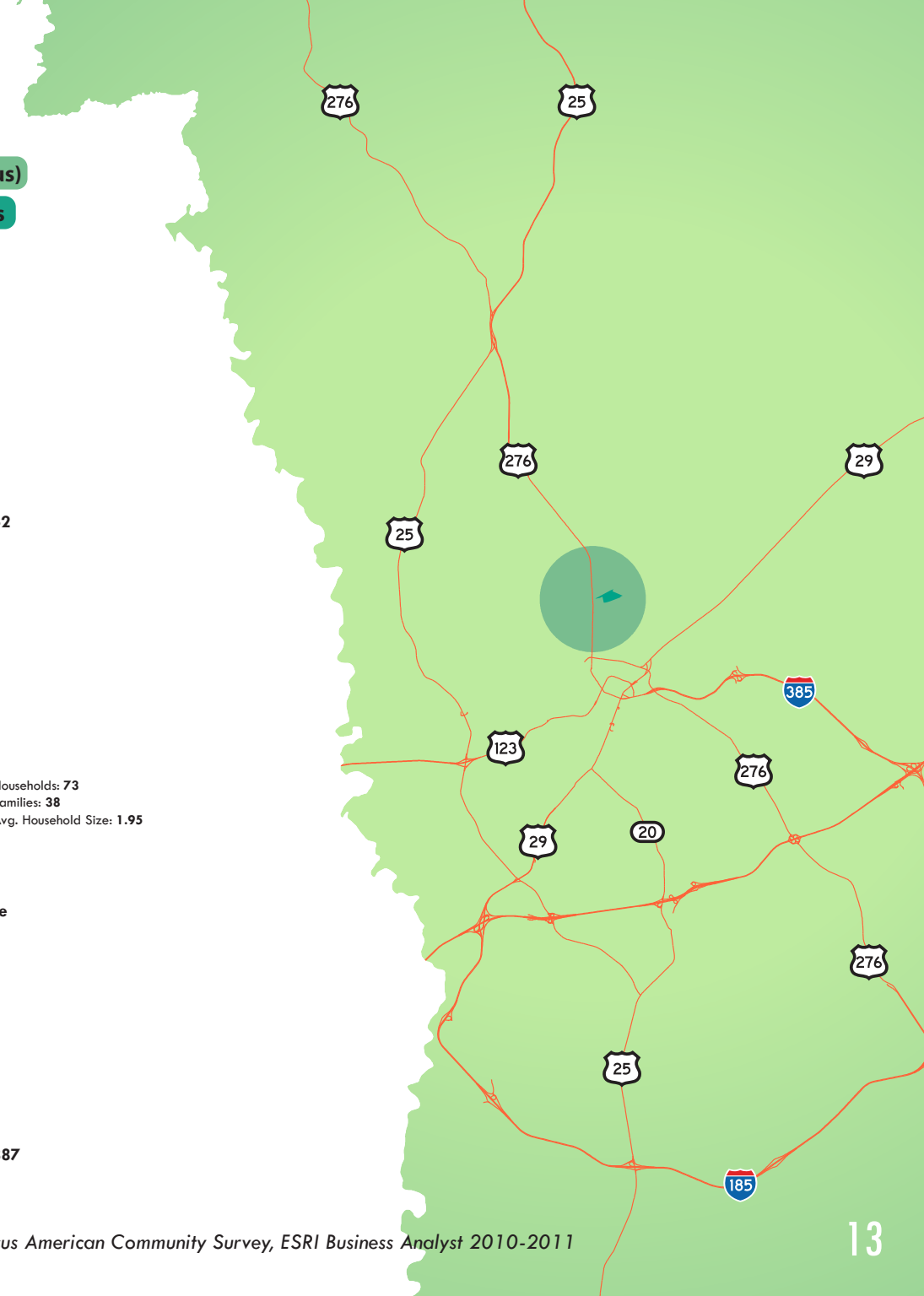
2012 Households



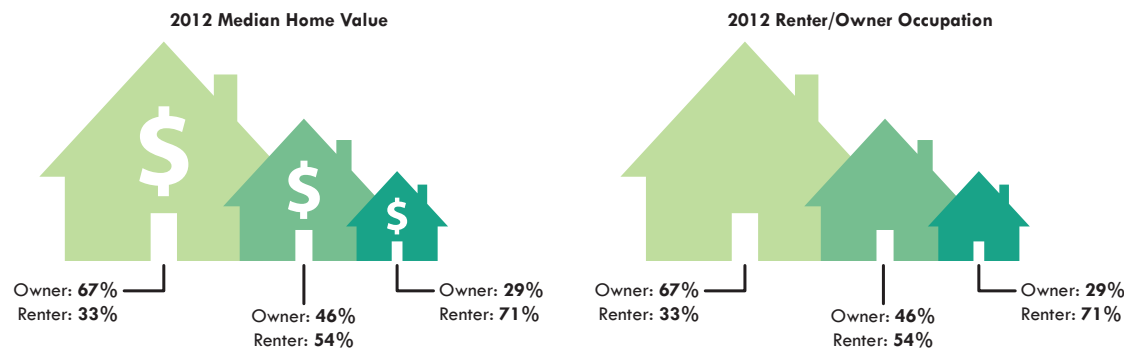
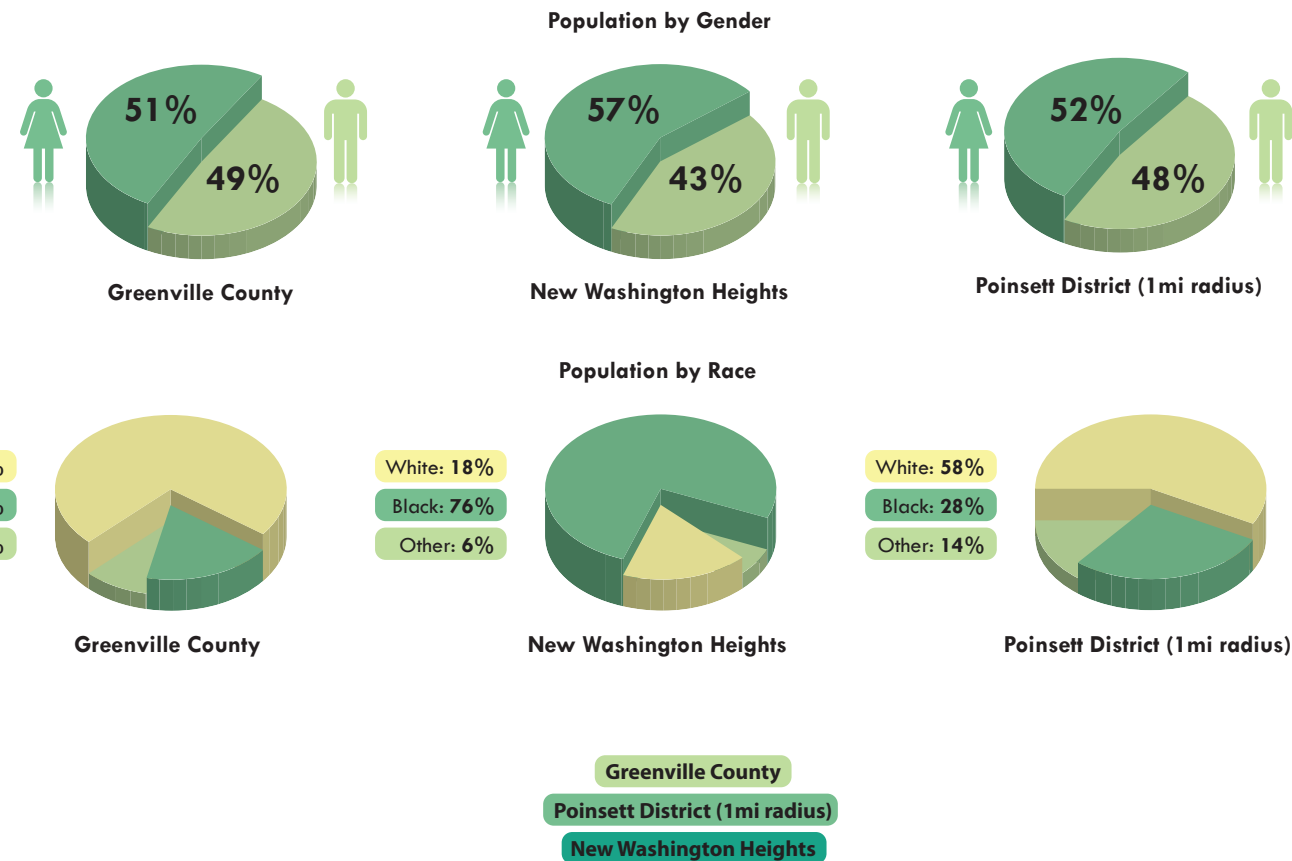
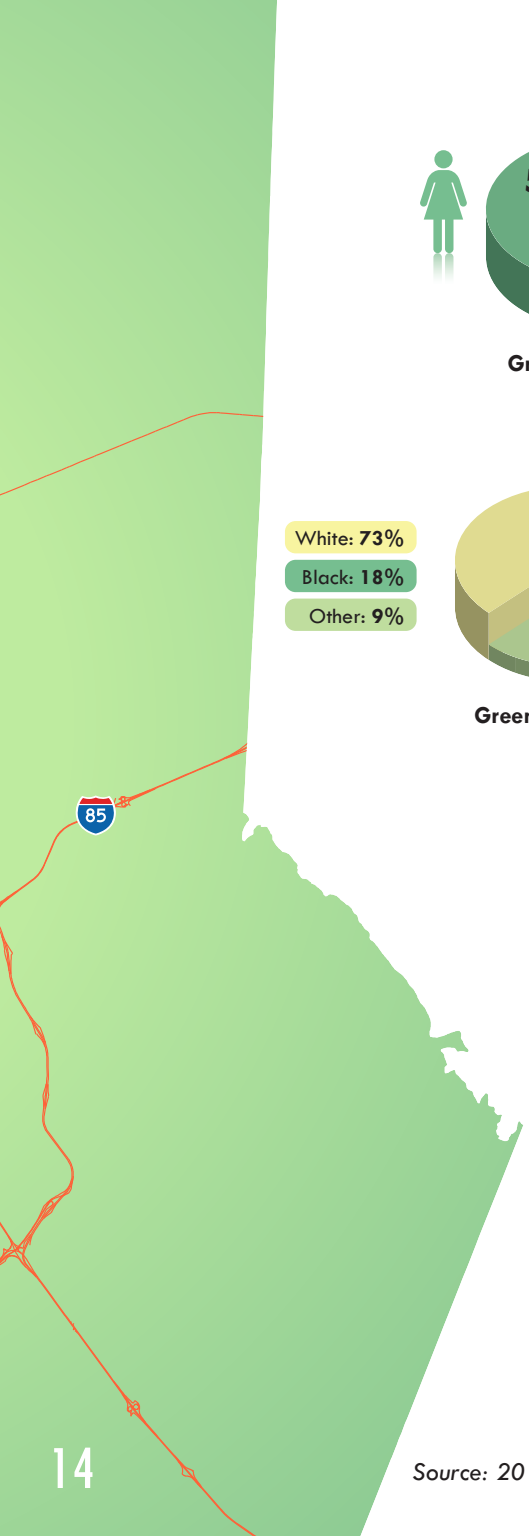
2012 Median Household Income



Source: 2012 U.S. Census American Community Survey, ESRI Business Analyst 2010-2011







Source: 2012 U.S. Census American Community Survey, ESRI Business Analyst 2010-2011

## Crime & Public Safety

Crime and safety are major concerns among residents of the community. Residents have expressed that their community in the past has been a safe place to live and raise a family. However the general conscious now is that criminal activity has been on the rise in the last couple of years. The statement is correct as Burglary/Larceny and Drug Offenses have been on the increase and they account for a majority of crime incidents. This is according to crime statistics provided by the Greenville County Sheriff's Office. Total crimes per 1,000 residents have remained steady with the exception of 2008 and 2012, in which both years experienced a sharp increase [See Figs. 7 & 8].

In August 2013 residents and board members of the Happy Hearts Neighborhood Association met with Neighborhood Crime Watch Coordinator with the Greenville County Sheriff's Office. Discussions focused on reviving the Neighborhood Crime Watch program for the community. The program includes setting up a committee and establishing a crime walk coordinated through the Sheriff's Community Patrol Officer. In addition to establishing eyes on the streets, the community can host events such as National Night Out ([www.natw.org](http://www.natw.org)) to show ongoing neighborly support toward crime prevention in New Washington Heights. The group believes that the Neighborhood Watch program can be implemented and that new signs posted in New Washington Heights are needed. The signs are relatively low in cost that can be purchased by the association.

Figure 7: Crime Incidents by Year

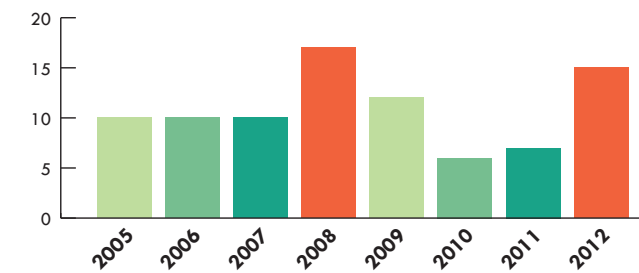
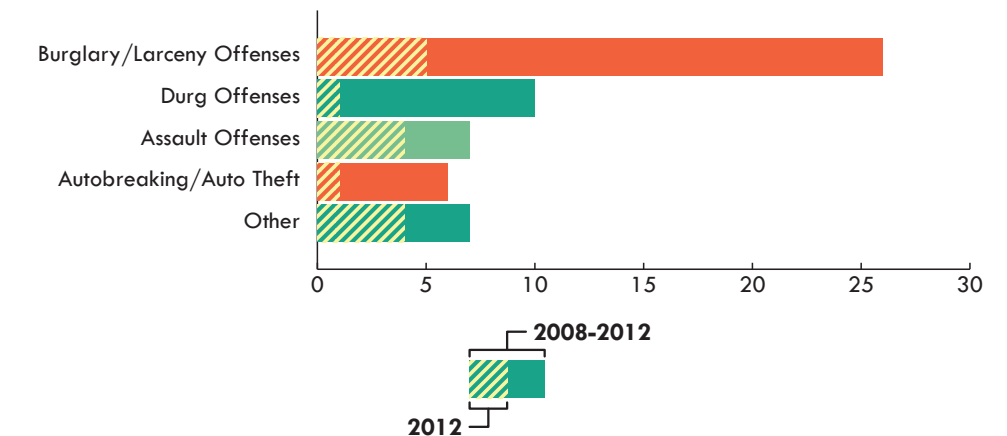


Figure 8: Crime Incidents by Type



Source: Greenville County, South Carolina Crime Incident Mapping System, 2013



# Property Ownership

A perpetual concern among members of the New Washington Heights Community Association has been the number of rental units versus owner-occupied units [Fig. 9]. The community has recognized a general relationship between home-owners who take pride in the community (and subsequently the appearance of their personal residence and landscape).



Figure 9: New Washington Heights Property Ownership Map

# Code Violations

Part of the partnership between the Greenville County Community Planning & Development Department and New Washington Heights has been the providing residents with resources to effect change and neighborhood improvement on their own behalf. A invaluable resource to the community has been developing a relationship with Greenville County Code Enforcement officers [Fig. 10]. Residents are encouraged to report violations from around the neighborhood, while representatives from Code Enforcement have consistently attended community meetings in order to provide support, field questions, or record new reports.

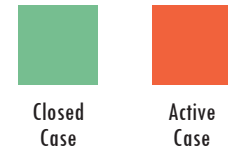


Figure 10: New Washington Heights Code Violations Map



# Road Types



One of the challenges facing New Washington Heights has been the fact that Loop Street, the primary arterial through the community, is a state road and it is in dire need of repaving [Fig. 11]. Many times residents of the community have requested improvements to this road, either in the form of speed bumps or replacing yield signs with stop signs in efforts to control speed. However, the capacity of local County agencies to respond to these needs are severely limited due to its low priority on SCDOT's road inventory. Furthermore, residents have expressed a deep desire to see sidewalks introduced through the neighborhood along with more effective street lighting, creating a safer, more walkable neighborhood.



Figure 11: New Washington Heights Area Road Types





# Public Transit

The Greenlink public transportation system provides a relative wealth of stops for residents in the Poinsett Highway/Rutherford Road area [Fig. 12]. While sidewalk bus stops are regularly placed along main arterials, unfortunately, the nearest bus shelter is located on Poinsett Highway in front of the Ingles shopping center, one mile from Loop Street.

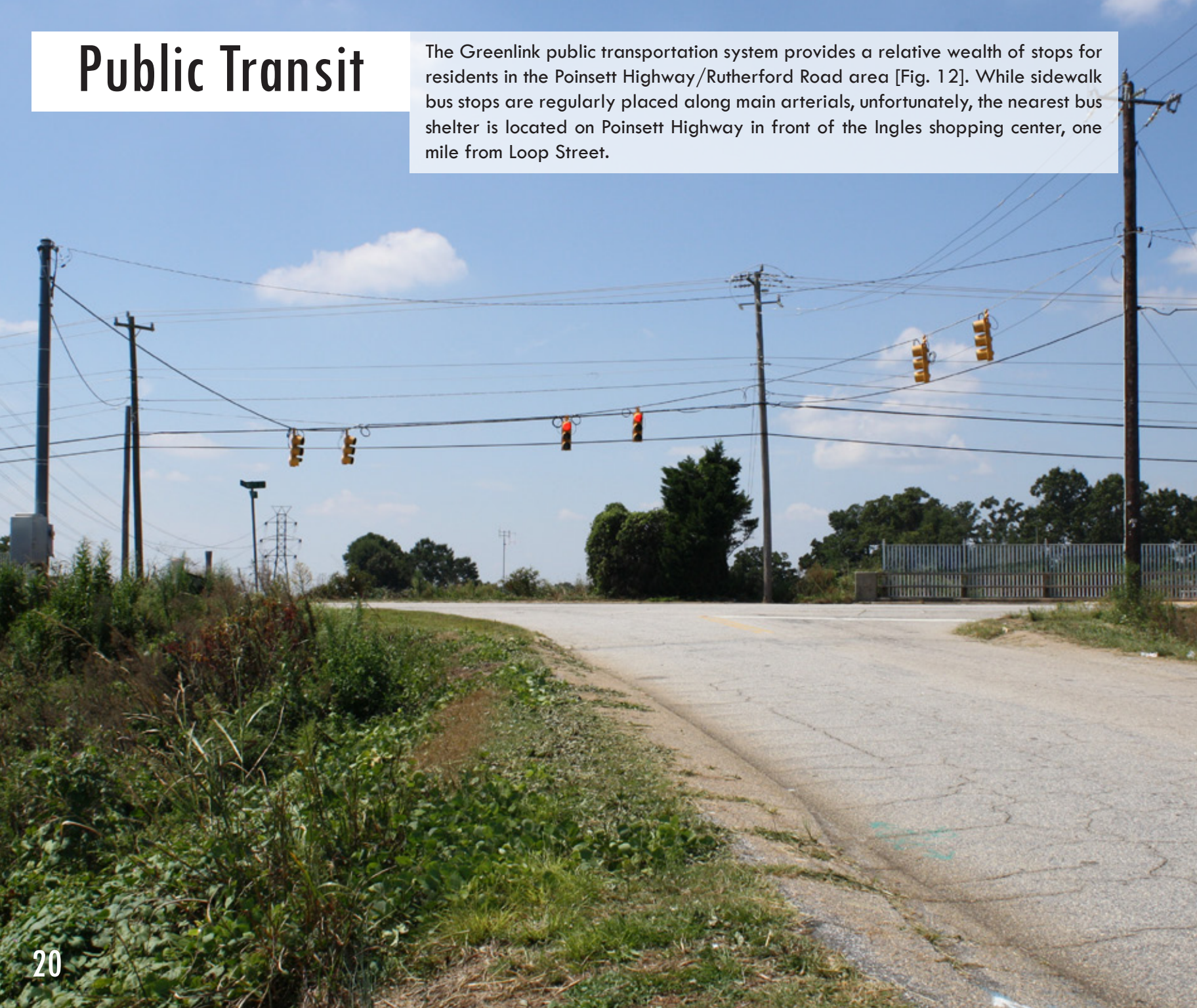


Figure 12: New Washington Heights Area Bus Stops





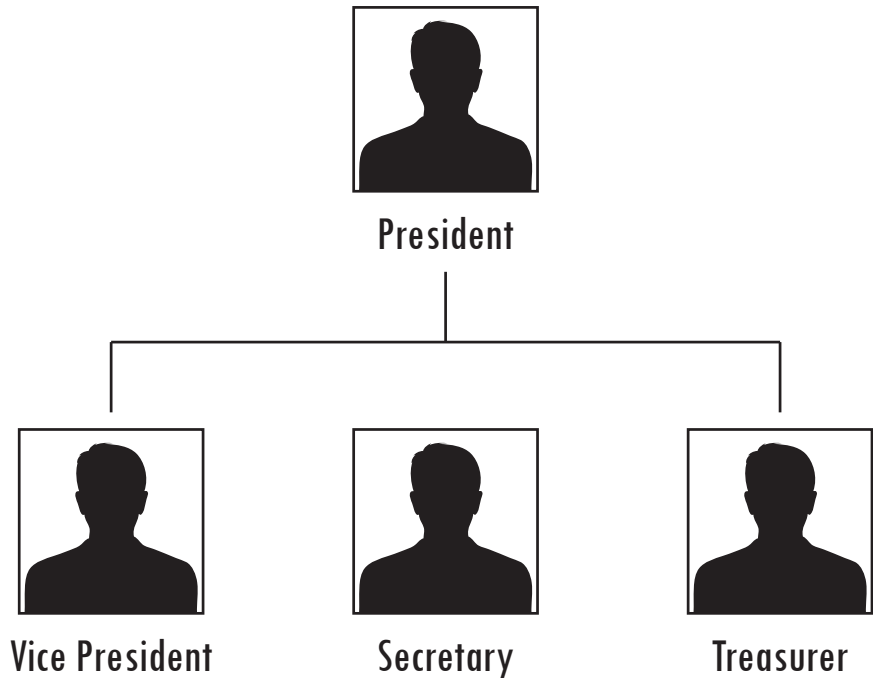
# New Washington Heights Community Association



Membership in the New Washington Heights Community Association expanded under the neighborhood's excitement and interest in the investment of the Poinsett District and the changes that it could bring the community. The community association grew to protect and promote its interests across the neighborhood. Residents banded together with a renewed community spirit that included paying regular dues, providing food for community meetings to increase participation, participating in community clean-up and development projects, and even providing neighborhood potluck meals for hungry volunteers.

As part of the neighborhood's first application for GCRA/United Way's Grant Assistance Partnership (GAP) this Spring, the New Washington Heights Community Association acquired State Charitable Organization Status. As part of the GAP funds that were awarded to the community association, the New Washington Heights Community Association is in process of applying for 501(c)3 status, furthering enabling the community association to pursue greater funding opportunities, among other things.

## NEW WASHINGTON HEIGHTS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



# Community Steering Committee



As part of the involved process of developing a community plan, members of the New Washington Heights Community Association were asked to make a greater involvement in the planning process. Several residents were eager to volunteer for the process and were diligent contributors with the Greenville County Community Planning & Development Department. This process involved more detailed dialogue about the vision for the community, the guiding principles for future development and renewal, and additional visioning exercises. Furthermore, the Steering Committee worked closely to edit the initial drafts of the community plan. Their input has been invaluable and their contribution cannot be overstated.



# Zoning Map

Zoning is a land use regulation which is known as a “police power” for local governments. Zoning regulates the use of a piece of property as well as building line setbacks, building height, the density of residential development, and location of accessory buildings for residential development. For nonresidential development, zoning regulates the use as well as parking requirements, the size and location of any affiliated loading and storage uses. New Washington Heights is largely zoned R-7.5, a residential zoning class that is intended primarily for single-family units, can also include duplexes or manufactured housing units.

### R-7.5, Single-Family Residential Family District

An area in which the principal use of land is for single-family dwellings, both attached and detached (all districts).  
Minimum lot size: 7,500 sq. ft.  
5.8 dwelling units per acre.

### I-1, Industrial

Established as a district for manufacturing plants, assembly plants and warehouses. The following are examples of permitted uses not limited to the following: Junkyards with a Special Exception, Group Industrial Development, and Industrial Uses.

### S-1, Services

Established to provide a transition between commercial and industrial districts by allowing commercial uses which are service related and uses which involve light industry having a minimal effect of adjoining properties. The following are examples of permitted uses not limited to the following: Institutional Dry-Cleaning, Commercial and Industrial Gas Sales, Kennel (outside runs), Pest or Insect Control Business, Photo Processing (production).

### R-MHP, Residential Manufactured Home Park

Established to allow manufactured home parks provided certain location criteria are met and the request is approved by County Council.  
Minimum Site Size = 2 acres

### R-M20, Multifamily Residential District

Established to provide for varying population densities. Minimum lot size – No minimum lot area for single-family detached, single-family attached (townhouses, condominiums), and two-family (duplex developments) under the open space option. Minimum lot size – 7,500 sq. ft. for single-family detached and two-family (duplex developments). Minimum lot size for Multifamily dwellings – 2 acres; however, within a 2 acre multifamily development, no minimum lot size required. Density is based on a maximum number of dwelling units per acre as specified by the zoning district.

### R-6, Single-Family Residential Family District

An area in which the principal use of land is for single-family dwellings, both attached and detached (all districts).  
Minimum lot size: 6,000 sq. ft.  
7.2 dwelling units per acre.

### C-3, Commercial

Established to provide for the development of commercial and light service land uses that are oriented to customers traveling by automobile located in non-residentially zoned areas and along major thoroughfares and for the convenience of local residents including but not limited to the following: Commercial Amusements, Animal Shelters, Cabinet/carpentry shops, Nursing Care Facilities, Firework Stands, Hospitals, Museums, Pawn Shops, Recording Studios, Sign Manufacturing. The C-3 district also allows single-family and multifamily residential as conditional uses.

### C-2, Commercial

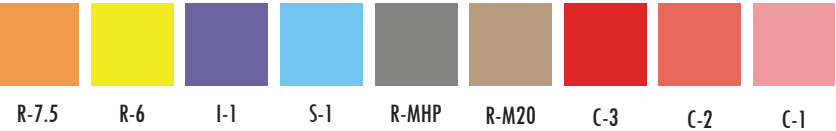
Established to provide for the development on major thoroughfares of commercial land uses that are oriented to customers traveling by automobile and for the convenience of local residents including but not limited to the following: Auto Service Facilities and Stations, Catering Establishment, Electronics and home appliance repair. The C-2 district also allows single-family and multifamily residential as conditional uses. The C-2 district is the only district in Greenville County that allows for ABC (Liquor Sales), and Night Clubs/Taverns.

### C-1, Commercial

Established to provide commercial establishments for the convenience of local residents including but not limited to the following: Garden Center, Laundromat, Medical Clinic and Office and commercial uses including Group Commercial (Shopping Centers), and Group Office uses not exceeding 75,000 square feet. The C-1 district also allows single-family and multifamily residential as conditional uses.



Figure 13: New Washington Heights Zoning Map



## Current Land Use

Currently, the majority of New Washington Heights neighborhood is zoned for R-7.5 [See Fig. 13], which corresponds to the majority of the ongoing land uses. However, some conflicts exist on 1, 3, and 13 Loop Street, where residential land uses are on I-1 (Industrial) zoned parcels. Furthermore, the former Washington High School site (205 Arcadia), zoned R-7.5, was recently purchased by GCRD for recreational fields.



# Current Conditions

## Community Facilities

New Washington Heights is primarily served by the Happy Hearts community center for its community facilities. The Brutontown community to the south provides the Brutontown Community Center, which is targeted towards youth with a variety of services for youth. The 2013 Greenville County Leadership Class is currently raising funds and resources to provide renovation to Happy Hearts and develop the community center into more of a cultural center that respects and honors the historical tradition of Happy Hearts and New Washington Heights.

## Sewer Infrastructure

Parker District currently owns, maintains and operates approximately 5,992 feet of gravity sanitary sewer mainlines in this neighborhood. Approximately 3,586 ft (60%) of this line is six inch (6") diameter vitrified clay pipe. Current SCDHEC standards for new sanitary sewer construction require minimum eight inch (8") diameter sewer piping. The remaining 2,406 ft (40%) of sewer mainline in this neighborhood is either eight inch or 12 inch diameter. A sewer rehabilitation project is planned for this neighborhood within the next 5 to 6 years.

There are at least 7 or 8 houses located on the western end of Loop Street, near Poinsett Highway, that do not have sanitary sewer service and are connected to septic tanks. We suspect that there are several more houses throughout this neighborhood that are connected to septic tanks rather than the sewer system, but we have no documentation to this effect. SCDHEC and Parker District policies state that a home connected to a septic tank must connect to an available sanitary sewer system only in the event of failure/damage to the septic tank. As long as the tank is functioning properly, the property owner may continue using it.

## Fire Information

According to Parker District Fire Marshal Larry Barron, the entire Poinsett District, including New Washington Heights, has an ISO rating of 2. This area is served by Parker Fire Department Station #3, located at 700 State Park Road [See Fig. 14].



Source: Greenville County, South Carolina Parker Fire District Sewer & Fire Data, 2013, 2012



# The Changing Context

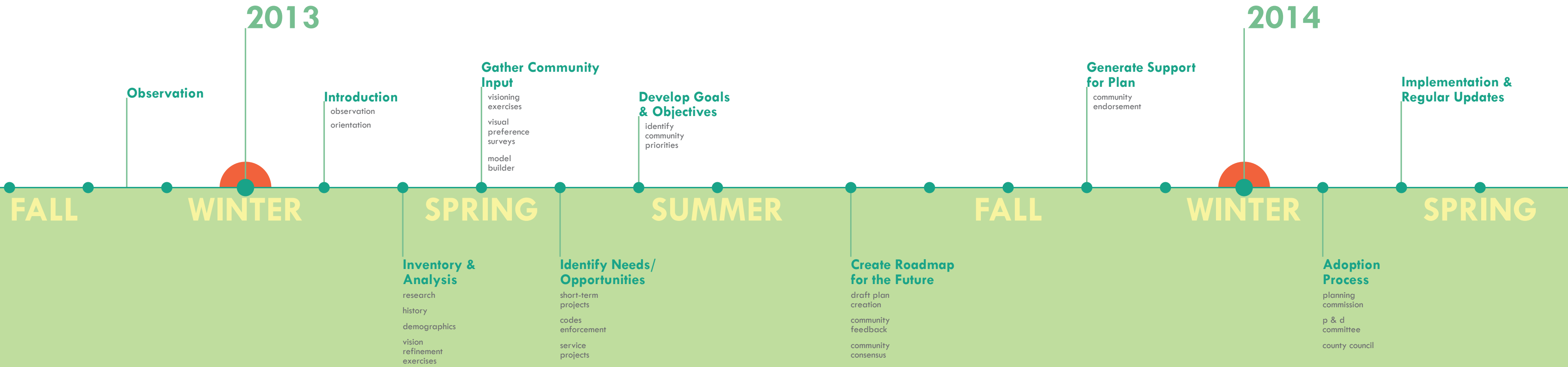
One of New Washington Heights' greatest opportunities lies in its relationship to the Poinsett District project and all the changes to the area that it has precipitated (see adjacent map). Some of these advantages include the purchase of the old Washington Center and its fields by the Greenville County Recreation District, the Poinsett District linear park, and the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority's plans surrounding the Brutontown Community Center. These initiatives work together to nest New Washington Heights in the middle of a dynamic, inter-connected greenway that combines both passive and active recreation. These changes, along with those coming to the Poinsett Highway streetscape, place New Washington Heights in a highly advantageous position from the perspective of future development. One of the risks of these opportunities, is the possibility of gentrification in this neighborhood as it becomes more attractive to more affluent demographics. New Washington Heights has repeatedly stressed the importance of renewing and maintaining the original heritage of this neighborhood, which will require a controlled approach to future development patterns in this neighborhood. Recommendations for this approach are outlined later in this document.





# The Path of the Community

The timeline provided here serves to illustrate the process by which the community develops, ratifies, and submits for adoption the community plan. There are a wealth of additional projects that do not appear on this timeline and which will extend far beyond 2013. Future proposals and projects that are listed in this document's action plan and conclusion. The community is committed to pursuing its action plan to further the interests of the neighborhood and looks forward to garnering the support of County Council and its related committees to developing and enacting a plan to strengthen the quality and character of New Washington Heights.





# A Participatory Community

## Community Participation and Partnership

One of the strongest assets of New Washington Heights' residents is their ability to draw interest and investment from outside parties in the growth and well-being of their neighborhood. Over the course of the development of this plan, New Washington Heights has attracted a number of groups ranging from Furman University, TreesGreenville, Hands On Greenville, Rotary Club of Greenville Evening, the 2013 Greenville County Leadership Class, Keep Greenville County Beautiful, independent volunteers, and more.

These groups have become more than mere stakeholders through their personal investment in New Washington Heights. Many of these individuals have developed relationships with the people of New Washington Heights, and the community has always demonstrated an incredible level of gratitude. Oftentimes, neighbors will come together to provide lunch for these diligent volunteers, amid their vocal thanks.

Part of this effort has always been to demonstrate the care of others outside of the neighborhood, thus further galvanizing and encouraging the resident of New Washington Heights and encouraging them to keep a mind that will give them an attitude of similar service and compassion to the struggling communities that surround them.



# A Beautiful Community

## Beautification Projects

One cannot merely ask a community to consider long-term changes without addressing the short-term needs within the neighborhood. With this in mind, the Community Planning & Development Department has worked with the residents of New Washington Heights to identify many of the present and latent concerns that could be immediately remedied. Through many of the aforementioned partnerships, several key community clean-up and tree-planting events have been conducted in order to quickly restore parts of the community and reclaim part of New Washington Heights' original community pride. These projects have been critical to developing relationships across the community as well as building trust.





# The Visionary Resident

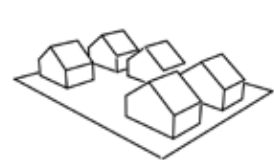
## Visual Preference Survey: Residential Development Types



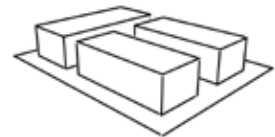
Throughout the course of the New Washington Heights Community Association's community meetings, the Community Planning & Development Department has been able to field many of the concerns and issues of the community. In addition to general discussion that have taken place, the department has also conducted several exercises that have been targeted at determining specific areas of interest to the community.

One area of particular interest to the community has been the functional and aesthetic standards that residents hope to see new development to follow. Discussions have revealed the importance of architecture and forms of development that respect the original context of the neighborhood, as well as the interest in redevelopment projects that have taken place across Greenville County, particularly those initiated by the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority (GCRA).

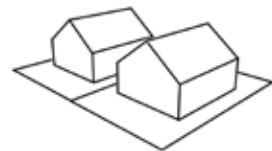
The Community Planning & Development Department followed up these discussions with visual preference surveys that aimed at both educating residents of the available development types while assessing what standards and architectural features are preferred by the community. The first phase of the visual preference survey exposed the community to one hundred different slides, representing a variety of development types across a variety of styles and conditions. Residents were given approximately fifteen seconds to respond to each slide by rating them on a one to five scale ranging from very unappealing to very appealing. The results from this survey were then tallied and averaged (the results of which are provided



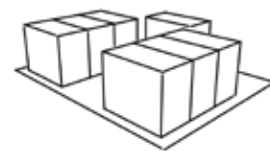
Clustered Homes



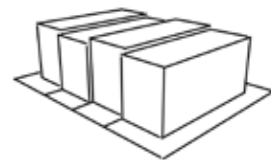
Apartment Complex



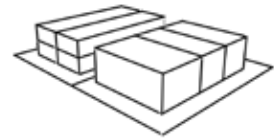
Single-Family Detached



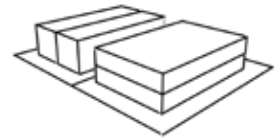
Clustered/Courtyard Townhouses



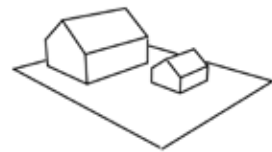
Townhouses



Plexes



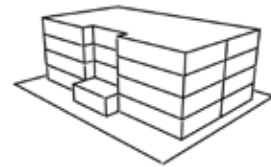
Duplex



Accessory Dwelling Units



Zero Lot Line



Apartment House

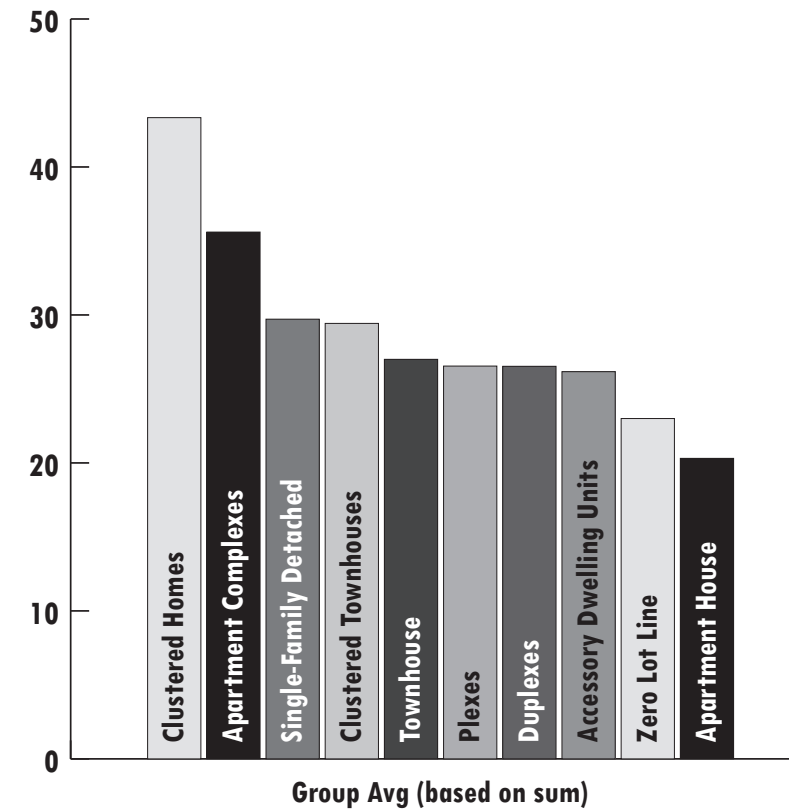


Figure 15: Residential Visual Preference Survey Results

in Figure 15). On the following meeting, the residents were shown the top three selections from each development type and asked to comment on what they found appealing or unappealing about each type.

The development type that residents responded to most favorably were clustered homes, also known as open space residential. This development type is similar to the single-family detached type; however, in this case, individual parcels are reduced in order to provide a corporately maintained and utilized open space. In addition, residents also demonstrated a relative affinity for apartment complexes, more traditional single-family housing, and even clustered townhouses.





# The Visionary Resident

## Visual Preference Survey: Commercial Development Types

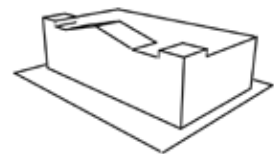


The residential development type visual preference survey was followed up with a separate survey that focused on commercial development types. In this case, residents were shown 59 different slides from a variety of different development types and asked again to rate each one based upon which types they found appealing.

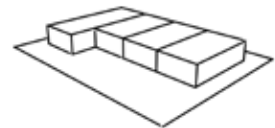
While New Washington Heights is primarily a residential neighborhood (zoned R-7.5 throughout), the Community Planning & Development Department recognized the potential for growth and change related to the investment by the Poinsett District project. With this in mind, the opinions of the residents for what types of commercial development they would like to see within their area (and potentially within the Poinsett District) was considered extremely valuable.

In similar fashion to the the residential development type survey, the Community Planning & Development Department returned to discuss the results of the survey with the community. This time, however, discussion also related to both the potential positives and negatives of each development and what could be expected from each.

The results [Fig. 16] revealed an affinity for the familiar big box stores such as Target and Walmart; however, within this category, residents also exhibited an interest in the particular case studies in which this development was limited by architectural standards (such as those found in a form-based code). Residents



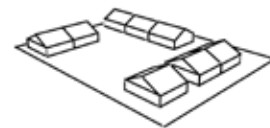
Big Box Retail



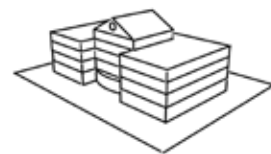
Commercial Shopping Center



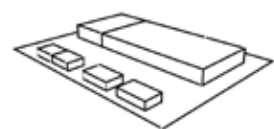
Free Standing Commercial



Office Park



Office Building



Commercial Outparcel Building



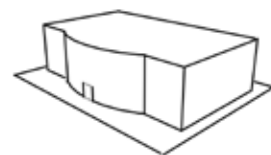
Live Work



Residential Office Reuse



Vertical Mixed Use



Flex Space

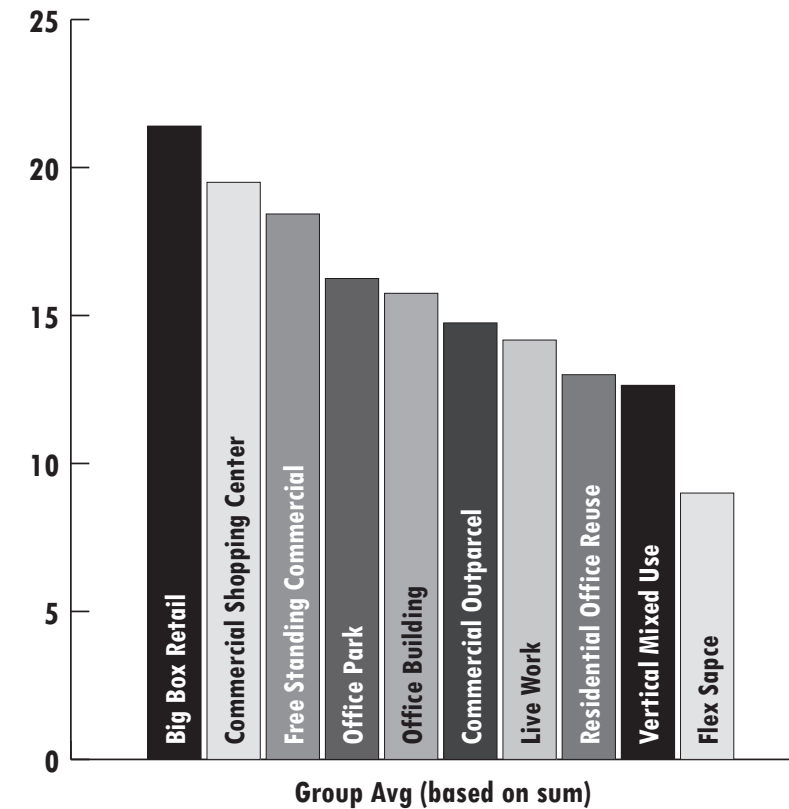


Figure 16: Commercial Visual Preference Survey Results

also responded positively to commercial shopping centers and free standing commercial, both traditional forms of commercial development. However, emphasis was still placed upon architectural standards that created attractive places to walk and conduct commerce.

Later exercises also exhibited an interest on the part of residents in residential office reuse, which allowed for a transition between the heavy commercial land use of the Poinsett Highway and the residential land use of Loop Street. Inspiration for this development was found on Stone Avenue and similar parts of the City of Greenville that graduated the intensity of commercial districts with residential housing districts.





# The Resident as Developer

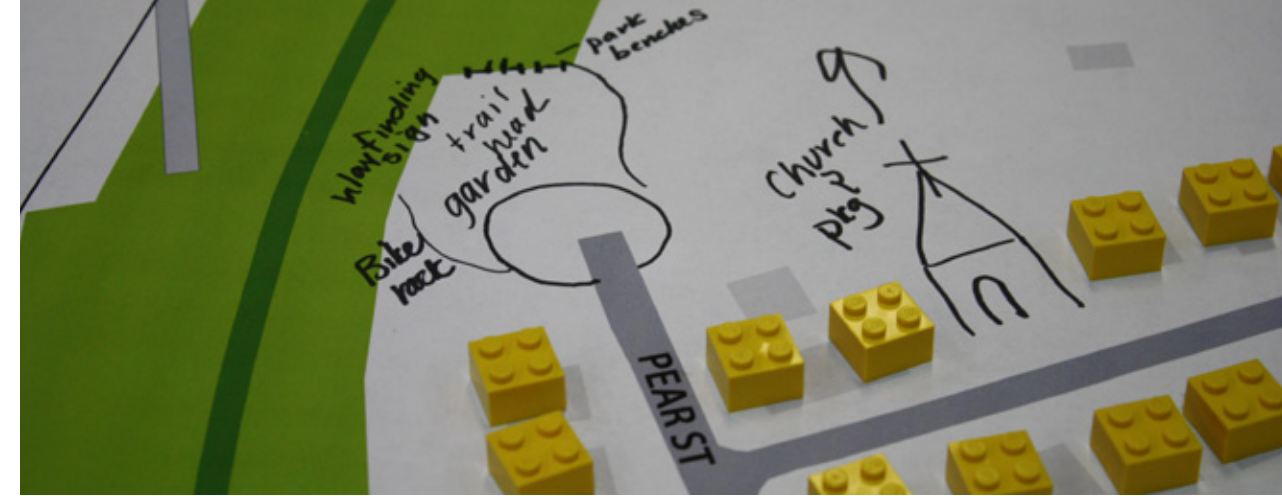
## Model Builder



As a follow up to the visual preference survey, and the increased understanding of how different development types can serve a community, residents were invited to participate in a model builder exercise that placed the resident in the place of a developer. The community was divided into three separate groups, each with planners to help inspire and challenge the residents' choices, and given legos that were scaled to the community and then asked to compose plans for the community that reflected their desires for future development in New Washington Heights.

The resulting plans utilized a variety of development types as well as connections and trails that took advantage of the linear park, as proposed by the Poinsett District project and the recently purchased Washington High School property by the Greenville County Recreation District. The results demonstrated not only a variety of development type applications, but also of differing considerations. While some plans demonstrated a radical break from current land uses, some exhibit a strong attachment to the existing form of the community. There were even some differences of opinion on where the neighborhood should officially begin and end between plans.

The results from this exercise were employed to develop a preliminary structure plan and, following that, a master plan that reflects the creativity and interests of the community.







One of the critical tasks of the New Washington Heights Steering Committee was to enumerate the key priorities that residents wanted to see addressed. These do not represent a to-do list, but rather outline the characteristics of the community that they want to become. Once the Steering Committee identified these key priorities, they were written on index cards. Committee members were then given a limited number of stickers that they could place upon whichever priority a member considered most important. In result, the leading priority is Safer Streets. Separate from the safety associated with crime (though not entirely divorced from the issue, either), this priority is concerned with the well-being of pedestrian traffic, on-street parking conditions, the longing for sidewalks and adequate street lighting, as well as the obvious vehicular traffic calming. Other notable high-ranking priorities were Community Participation, Public Safety, and Community Pride. Combined, these four priorities represent the residents’ passion to foster a more tight-knit community that reflects the mutual involvement of neighbors that they say characterized New Washington Heights at its zenith.



**Community Relationships**

The practice of intimately knowing, supporting, and being involved in the lives of one’s neighbors.

**Community Programs/  
Activities**

The enterprise of providing a variety of activities for residents to engage in across a variety of age groups to encourage unity, involvement, and social responsibility.



**Community Participation**

Involvement across the neighborhood in the interests and endeavors of the community, for the good of the community

**Community Appearance**

The agenda of upgrading the overall impact and quality of the neighborhoods surroundings, including private lots, communal areas, and community gateways.

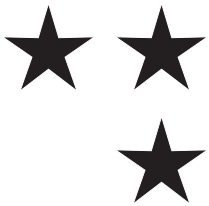


**Safer Streets**

The agenda of providing streets that function in the context of the neighborhood through traffic calming efforts, as well as potential sidewalks and street lights.

**Public Safety (Crime)**

The neighborhood-wide initiative of creating a safer environment for the flourishing of family and corporate life, including crime prevention and Neighborhood Watch.



**Stronger Organization**

Through more effective channels of leadership and self-sufficient residents, the community can react and respond to needs within the community and independently further the vision of the neighborhood

**Community Pride**

A corporate identity that ignites neighborhood-wide action and involvement, which manifests itself in individual responsibility.



**Public Recreation**

The initiative to create a safe place for youth to engage in physical activity that can both promote healthier living and provide alternatives to adverse lifestyles

**Neighborhood  
Revitalization**

The architectural revitalization of the community through a uniform pattern of development that respects the heritage of the existing community.



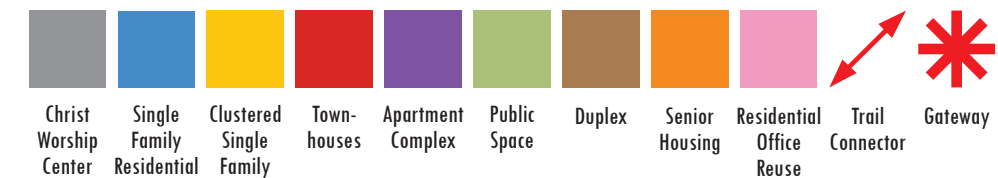


# The Vision of the Community

The ultimate vision of the community involves a structure of guiding development types and principles that reflect the interests of the community and its steering committee. The critical components include Residential, Commercial, Streetscape Improvement, Public Space, Community Church, and Public Safety. This represents not only an expectation from future developers and County Council, but also from within the community. New Washington Heights hopes that County Council will enforce zoning practices that reflect the values of the community, while residents partner together to foster stronger relationships between neighbors and with local community officers [Fig. 17]. The manner in which these cardinal development pattern components break down are explored in greater detail in later sections.



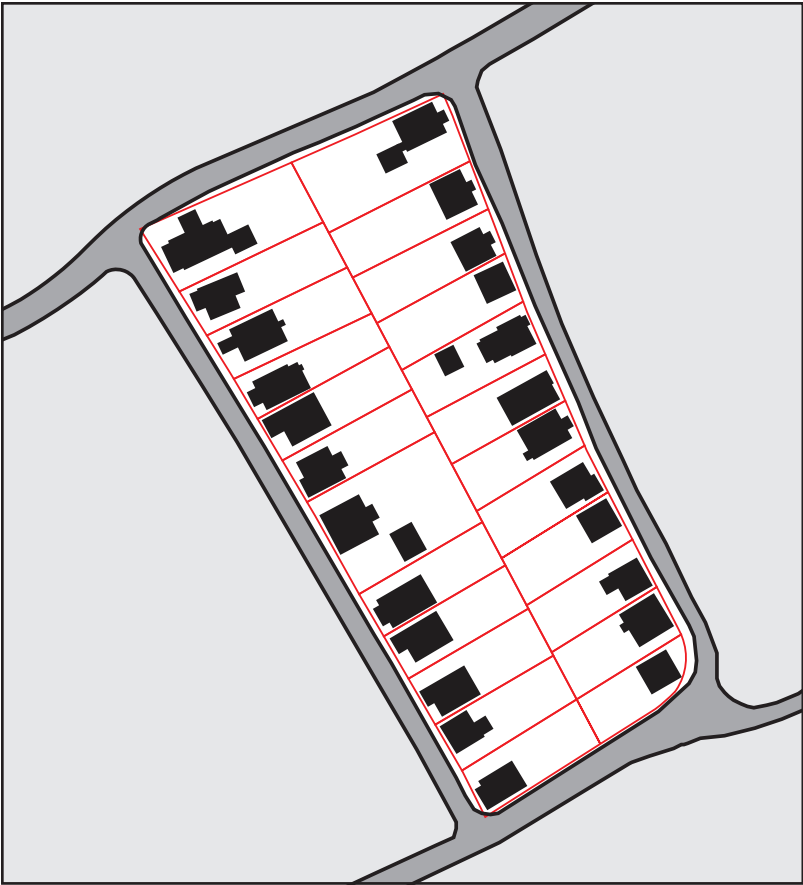
Figure 17: New Washington Heights Future Land-Use Map



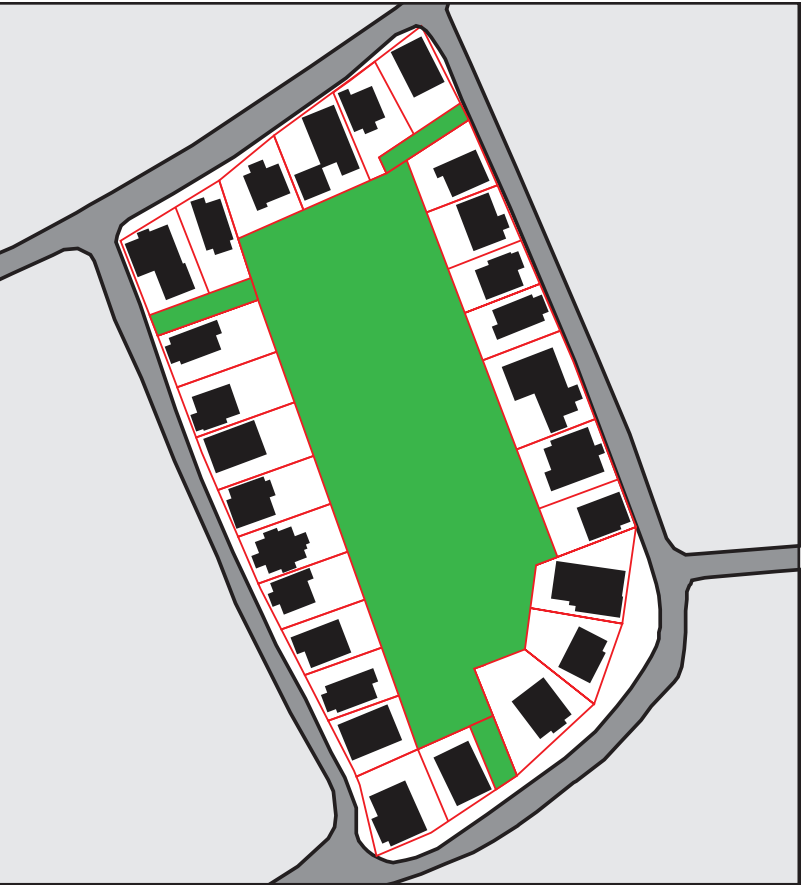


# The Alternatives of Space

One of the interesting discussions that arose out of the visual preference survey was the one regarding open space and personal yards. The results from the residential development type survey indicated a strong favorability for Cluster/Open Space Residential, due either to the shared open space aspect or merely to the attractive presentation quality that this development type often has. Nevertheless, some residents were dogmatic about maintaining a front and back yard on their own lot. In addition, the model builder exercise evidenced the fact that most residents didn't see a conflict with utilizing two separate development types within one community.



**Traditional (Private Lot)  
Development**



**Courtyard/Cluster (Shared Open Space)  
Development**

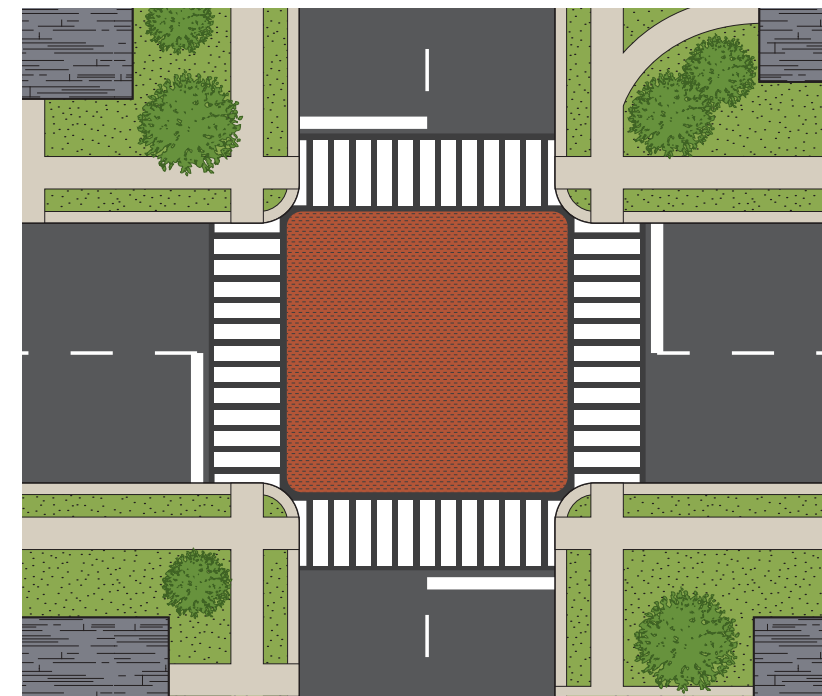






## Typical Street Section

If Safer Streets is the most important community priority for New Washington Heights residents, then the street profile and how it functions must be carefully considered. The recommended street section compiles feedback from the community and proposes guidelines, where applicable. Currently, New Washington Heights has no sidewalks and, due to the volume of pedestrian traffic and degrading road conditions, they combine to make unattractive and unsafe roadway conditions. If all new development were required to establish a required setback for the future installation of a sidewalk on a designated side of the street, then sidewalks could become a potential feature throughout the community as redevelopment occurs. Likewise, these guidelines could be combined with limitations on on-street parking that limit parking to the side of the street opposite the sidewalk. Furthermore, an important inclusion is street lighting, which functions to detract criminal activity, provide safer walking conditions at night, and create a more attractive environment for everyone.



## Raised Intersections

A perpetual source of concern within the community has been the condition and safety of the streets located throughout New Washington Heights. Where some streets have been repaired, speeding is still a problem for local residents. While action by the County on Loop Street is limited, due to it being a State road, community members still hope that this roadway in particular can be resurfaced. Suggestions have also been made to deal with the speeding issues throughout the neighborhood, including speed bumps. However, a more attractive and practical alternative could be the inclusion of raised intersections at key junctions. This is a method of raising the grade of an intersection to the height of the sidewalk and often changing the material or texture of the road across the intersection. The result is a functional, eye-catching (and, with a ground texture, ear-catching) alternative that makes pedestrian crossing safer and encourages slower vehicular travel. Local examples of this approach can be found on the nearby Mullberry Street. Another alternative solution could be raised crosswalks at key connections, particularly if sidewalks could be installed throughout the neighborhood or where trails cross streets.

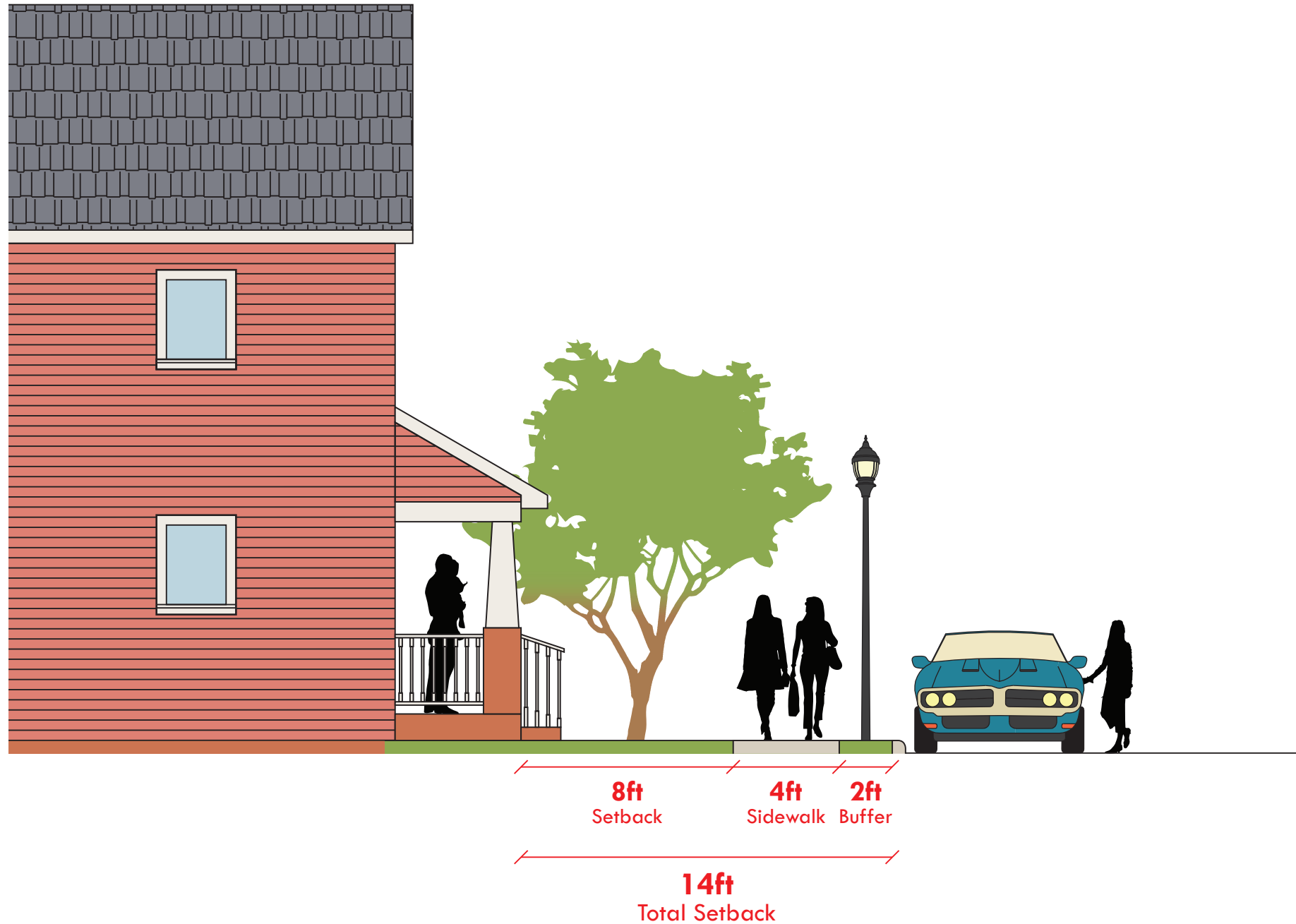






## Courtyard/Cluster (Shared Green Space) Setback

Converse to the traditional setback, cluster single-family residential will require a narrower distance to the street (approximately ten feet). By scaling back the overall area of the private land parcel, cluster (or open space) residential units may create a shared open space between them. This results in less landscaping to maintain for each individual resident as well as a particular relationship to the street that activates the street space in a far more public manner. The street functions more flexibly as both a pedestrian and public space.

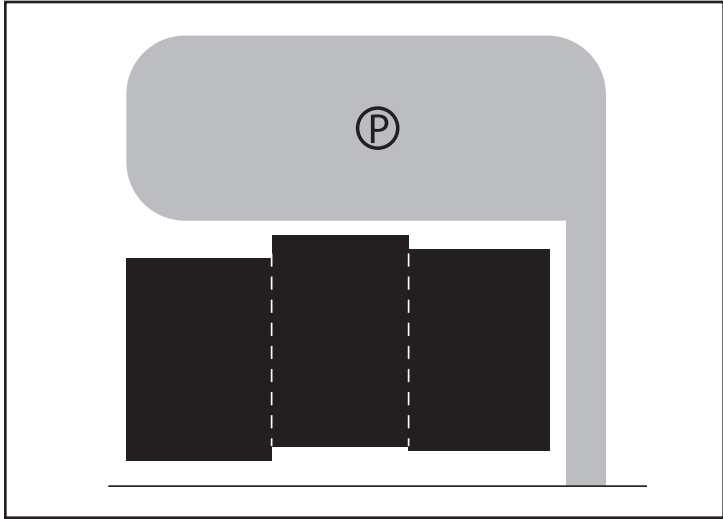




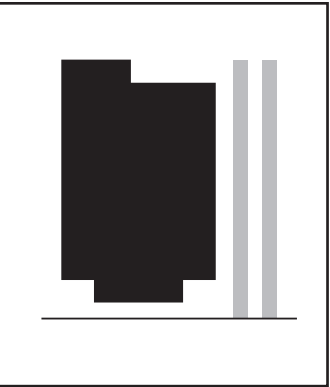
# The Alternatives of Parking

While the aspect of parking and driveways may not strike the average resident as a critical component to define, the results of the model builder visioning exercise demonstrated specific attention to this aspect. Given that this feature is not necessarily addressed immediately by either the development type or the streetscape, it is important to outline the principles here. One object of this is to avoid the housing type commonly referred to as “snout houses”, in which the most immediate or forward-facing feature of the residence is the garage, as opposed to the porch or facade of the home.

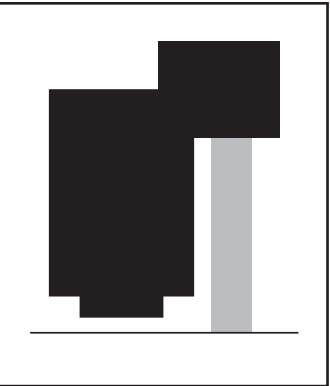
One desired condition of parking with townhouses is to push the building footprint up to the sidewalk, placing parking behind the structures. Currently, parking throughout New Washington Heights occurs along the street or on driveways. In the proposal for all future development, outdoor parking could be limited to traditional Ribbon Driveways that provide a benefit to capturing runoff water, while also creating an attractive, historical look to the landscaping. The covered parking options fall under two categories: attached and detached. Attached garages are a traditional approach to garages; however, they are encouraged to be positioned behind the first 50% of the building footprint, in order for the residence to make the first impression to street-side viewers (as opposed to large garage doors, or even an open, unkempt garage space). Detached garages (specifically requested by some residents) allow for covered parking, while also allowing for the traditional building footprints of the neighborhood. These secondary units should be placed behind the residence footprint in order to, again, allow the home to make the first impression.



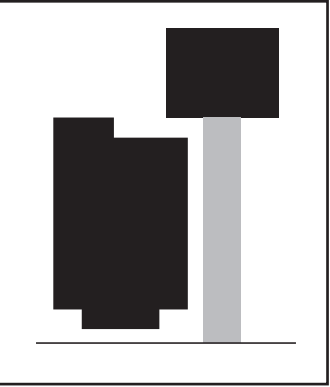
Townhouse Parking



Outdoor Parking/Ribbon Driveway



Covered/Garage Parking



Detached Garage Parking







# The New & The Old

## Development Strategy

With all of the challenges that New Washington Heights faces to accomplish real community revitalization, it would be a mistake to assume that the neighborhood requires a complete redevelopment strategy. Rather, there exist many homes in New Washington Heights that have been well-maintained over the years or otherwise still offer strong structural bones from which these homes could be more easily renovated than demolished. Where possible, renovation is recommended in order to preserve the tradition of the neighborhood, further pressuring new development to conform to the original heritage of the community. Examples of this strategy are common, such as in the local example of Sterling (pictured below) which demonstrates this pattern of preserving sound homes, while incorporating new development that respects the existing patterns.

## A Unified Community

While the residents who have been involved in the development of this plan understand that rental property holds an important part in their community and vision of the neighborhood as it develops in the future, there remains an emphatic desire to maintain a strong base of owner-occupied residents to support the integrity of a devoted base of occupants that have an investment in the quality and character of the neighborhood. Home ownership is a strong incentive to maintain one's property and build a sustainable identity. However, this focus must also be accompanied by an effort to encourage investment in the neighborhood among residents of all types through programs that include renters and make them aware of the opportunities to become potentially become owners themselves.





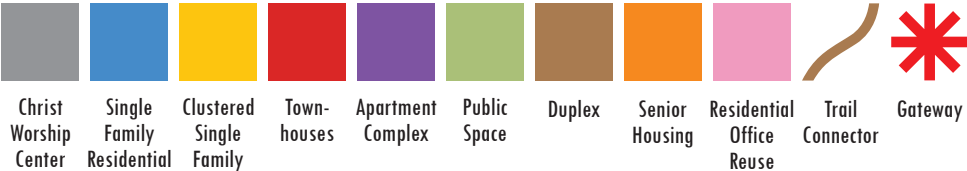
# Master Plan

## An Example of the Community's Vision

The Master Plan presented here [Fig. 18] reflects the cumulative vision of the residents of New Washington Heights who participated in the Model Builder visioning exercise as well as the regular dialogues that took place at community meetings. The development types illustrated here are not limited to the designated areas, but, more importantly, demonstrate the variety of acceptable types as well as the necessity for even transitions between them. The Master Plan is also an exercise of the principles that the community has highlighted throughout discussions, producing a diverse, inclusive environment. While this vision demonstrates a complete redevelopment of the neighborhood, as mentioned before, renovation is recommended where available in order to preserve the architectural traditions of the neighborhood, providing a context to be met by all future development.



Figure 18: New Washington Heights Master Plan

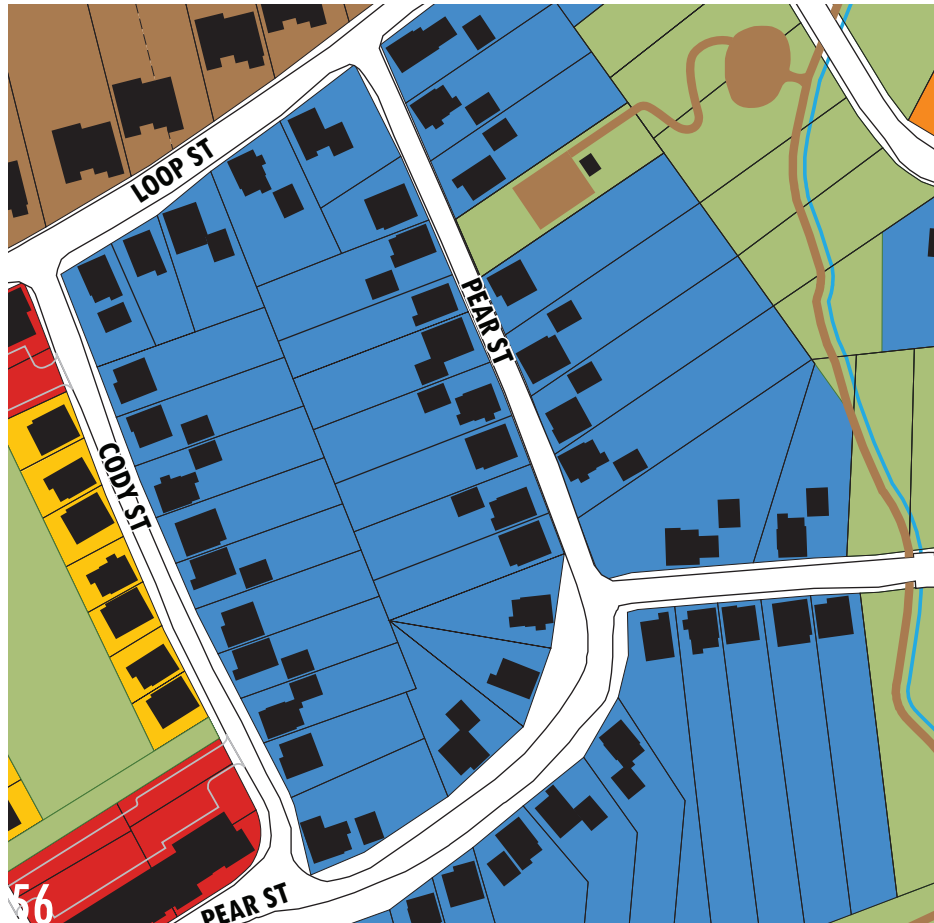




# Single-Family Detached

A single-family detached home is any free-standing house that is structurally separated from its neighboring houses, usually separated by open land.

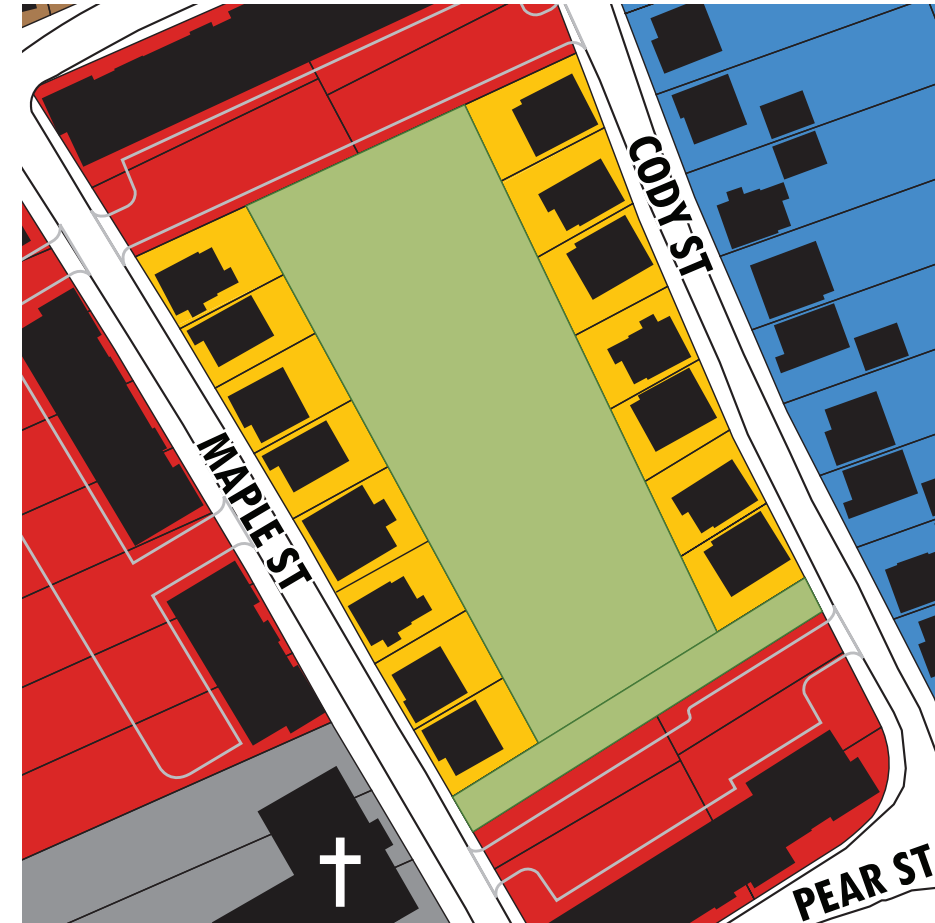
This residential development type is the staple of the community and necessary to draw the traditional family units that the neighborhood hopes to attract and who come to expect this type of offering. These homes may also reflect the original scope and feel of the neighborhood (along with the appropriate architectural treatments).



Single-family detached homes that are grouped or clustered together on a shared lot, often sharing a common green or central courtyard with several other homes. Referred to in the Greenville County Zoning Ordinance as Open Space Residential.

There are several advantages to this development type including, but not limited to, promoting community involvement, added amenities for developers, increased resale value, and promoting aquifer recharge

# Single-Family Cluster





# Townhouse

Townhouses are three or more attached units in a row sharing a “party” wall with its adjacent neighbor, each on a separate lot, and each having its own outside entrance. This development type is commonly referred to as Rowhouses.

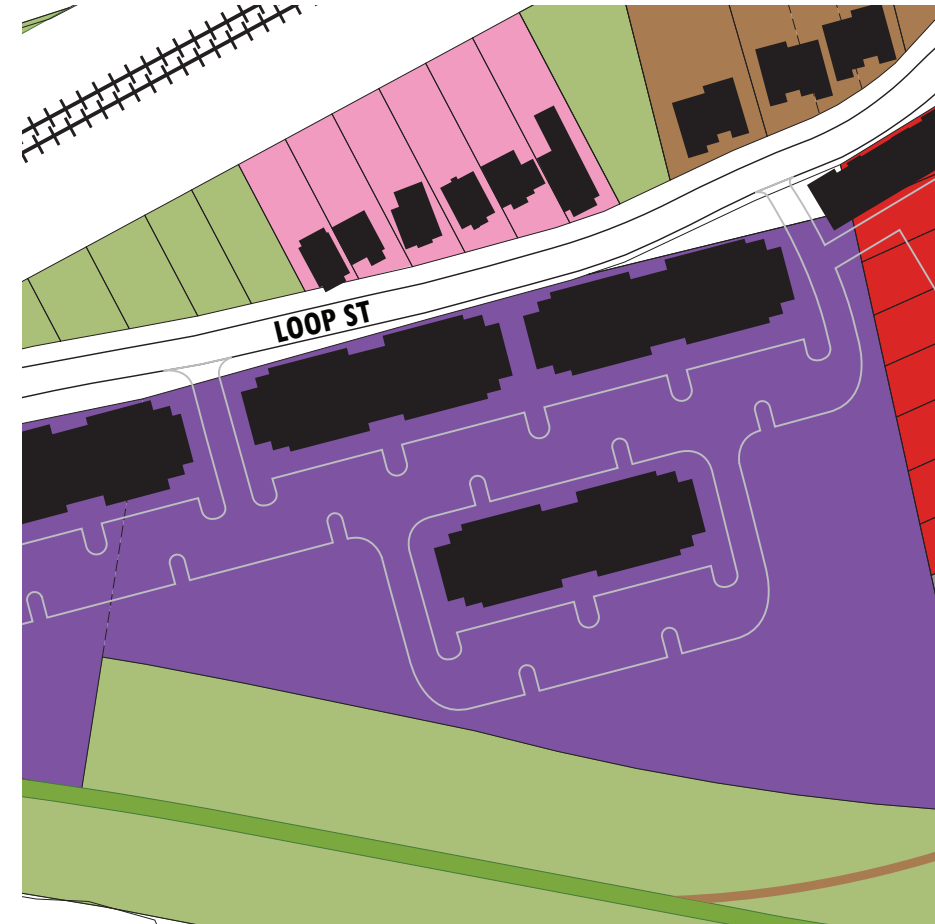
This development type affords greater density in desired areas as well as potential affordable housing types through this density. Individuals who are not capable of committing to some of the standards of landscape care and maintenance can take advantage of this development type through the offset of exterior upkeep.



Clusters of low-rise apartment buildings (1-3 stories) with three or more attached dwelling units in each building.

Like townhouses, apartment complexes afford a higher density, thereby generating special opportunities for a broader market of residents and lifestyles, making it an attractive offering to both the community and the Poinsett District at large.

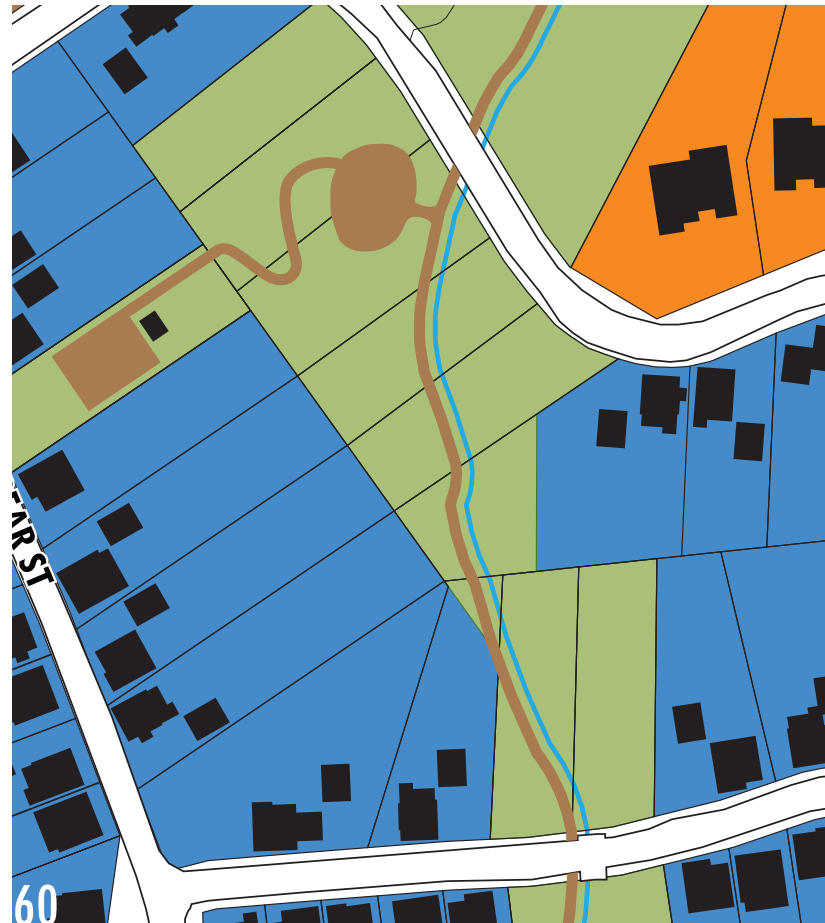
# Apartment Complex





# Public Space

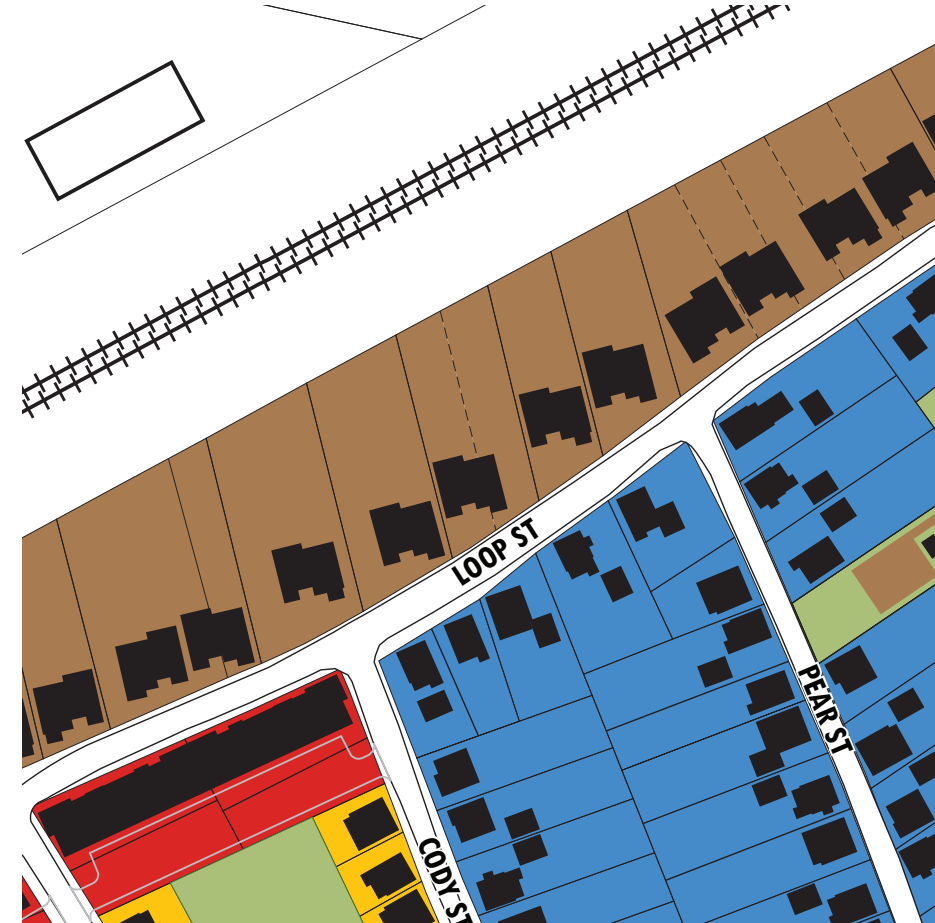
The master plan includes continuing ongoing efforts to develop public space projects such as the community center renewal, community garden, pocket park, GCRD fields, and trail connections. These efforts have the opportunity to promote community pride and social health of New Washington Heights.



A duplex is a residential building containing no more than two attached individual dwelling units located on a single lot or parcel of ground.

Duplexes have been a staple of affordable housing strategies across Greenville County, and New Washington Heights hopes that this trend may continue by providing this key development type and attracting a broader pool of potential residents and development options.

# Duplex

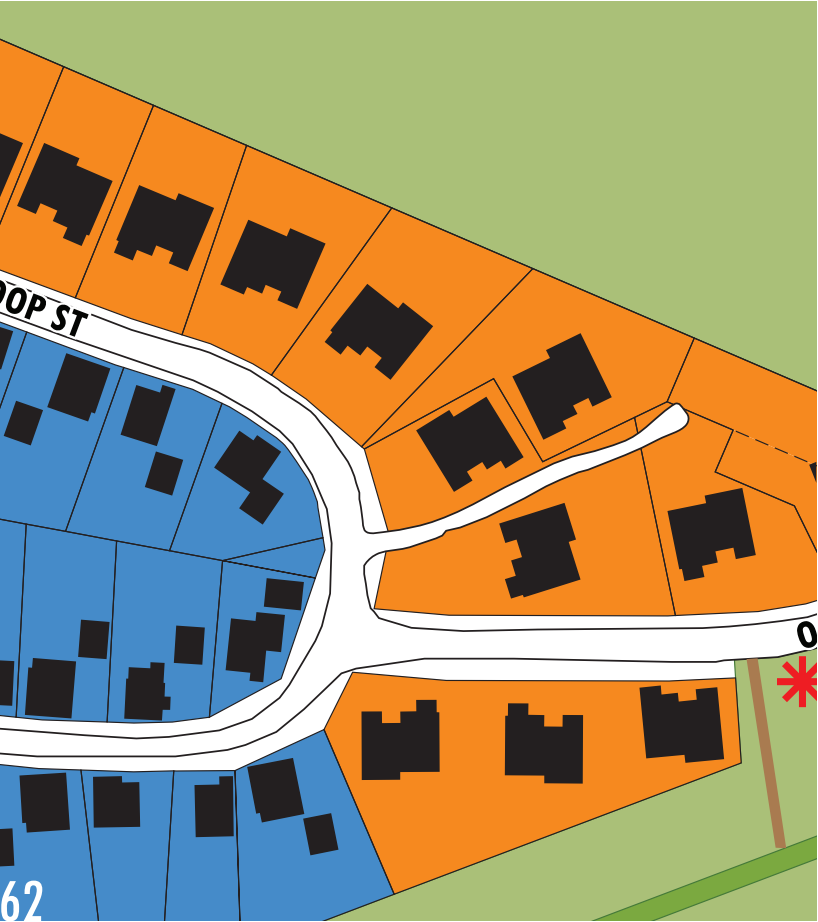




# Assisted Living & Senior Housing

Duplexes or otherwise single-family-scaled multi-unit housing can provide senior housing or assisted living for elderly or mentally disabled residents.

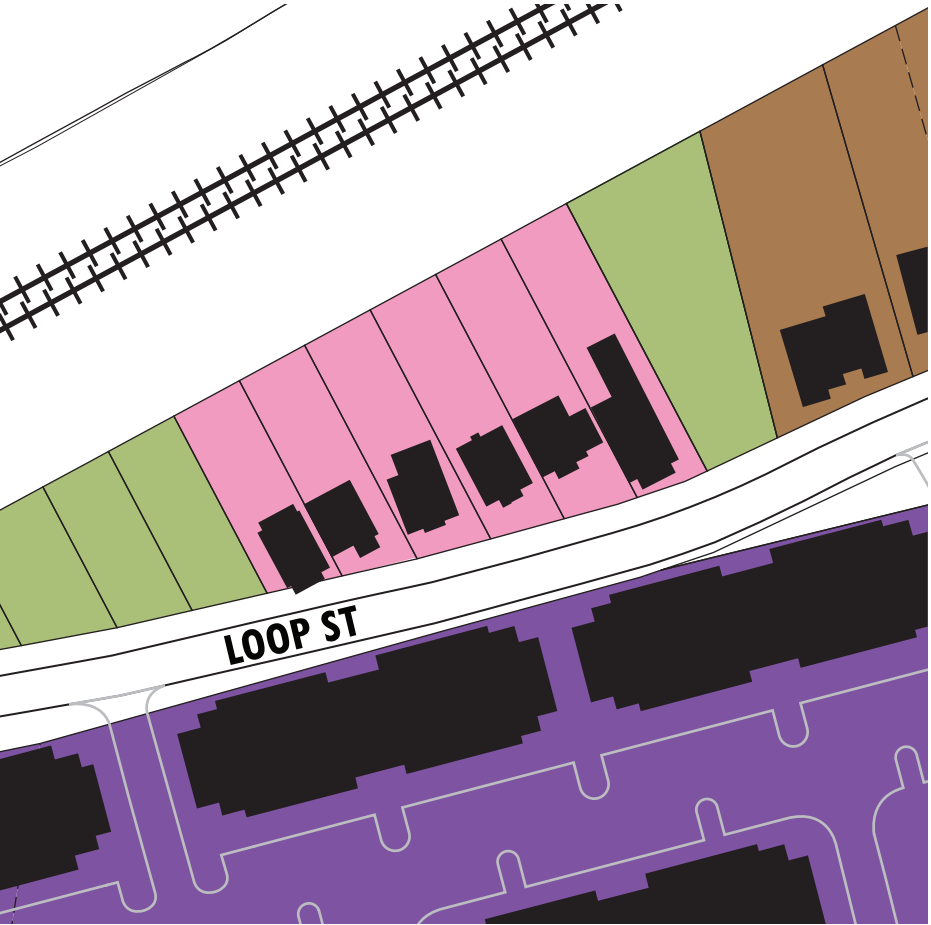
The inclusion of senior housing was an inspired inclusion by the residents in the model builder exercise. Senior and assisted-living housing reflects the overall compassion of the neighborhood along with the value that the community places upon it elderly residents. The proposed location is also key, due to the fact that it is directly adjacent to existing senior living housing to the South (off Rutherford Rd). These communities could take great advantage of the linear park that they straddle and pedestrian environment that it affords.



Another preferred land-use type is the single-family residential structure occupied by or converted for an office use.

As previously mentioned, the advantage of this commercial development type is to transition between the commercial land uses along the Poinsett Highway and the residential land uses that begin along Loop Street. The most appropriate uses in these spaces would be low-impact commercial use such as law offices, professional services, and the like.

# Residential Office Reuse





# Short-Term Objectives



## Organized Community Activities



## Inter-Community Outreach



The Action Plan portion of the New Washington Heights Community Plan is composed of those steps, both immediate and long-term, which are companions to the guidelines previously detailed. These are steps targeted at transforming the content and nature of the neighborhood, laying a foundation for new development to occur. The first of these categories listed here are the Short-Term Objectives, that is, those steps that residents of New Washington Heights may begin taking today. These are also the measures that, if taken, may potentially bring critical community revitalization even without redevelopment and may be completed within a year.

A component of developing pride and involvement within the community is to provide an assortment of activities, or reasons, to come together and develop relationships that are built around mutual interests. When asked to provide a potential list of activities, residents mentioned such functions as line dancing, gardening, neighborhood clean-up projects, a teen canteen, senior citizen exercise, a block party at the community garden, and even organized sports with neighborhood kids. If these are just the beginnings of what New Washington Heights can offer its residents, then the neighborhood can establish itself as a place that can offer more than mere residence, but a place for genuine community formation.

One of the recent accomplishments of the New Washington Heights Community Association has been the reward of the Grant Assistance Partnership from GCRA and United Way, which includes funding of the application costs for 501(c)3, or non-profit, status for the community association. Achieving this status will enable the community association to accept tax-deductible donations as well as apply for a broader variety of grants. In addition, the community association may pursue other ventures that include tax-free property ownership such as in the case of the new pocket park hub and potential trail feature.

## Community Facilities



## Beautification



## Non-Profit Status



A critical element of community formation is the space around which to gather and self-identify as a neighborhood. Happy Hearts has played a formative role not only in the history of New Washington Heights, but the African-American community of Greenville County as a whole. The 2013 Greenville County Leadership Class is currently committed to a revitalization project of the Happy Hearts Community Center, while Xanthene Norris has provided for a covered shelter on the property. Ongoing projects also include connecting the community center to the community garden by expanding the public space and creating a pocket park that will potentially function as a hub for trail connections between the Poinsett District linear park and the in-development GCRA fields.

A recurring theme at each community meeting with the New Washington Heights Community Association has been the longing to promote and engender a renewed community pride that encourages residents to take responsibility for their home and property. A committee is encouraged to take up this cause through annual community clean-up projects: an initiative that has historical roots in the neighborhood and which has been resumed, in part, by the help of volunteers and Furman student groups. The ultimate purpose of the committee would be to encourage a higher standard of personal maintenance of property and reporting negligence to Codes Enforcement.

Along with reaching out to new community members, an additional dedicated committee may provide outreach to communities outside of New Washington Heights. Through partnership with similar neighborhoods, including Brutontown, Poe Mill, Sans Souci, Judson, and others, New Washington Heights may expand its pool of community assets as well as share their own success with growing communities. Revitalization relies upon more than the qualities of a singular neighborhood and by being invested in their neighboring communities, New Washington Heights can make a broader stake in the overall revitalization of the Poinsett District and Greenville County, at large.



# Short-Term Objectives

## Public Service Projects

The residents of New Washington Heights are not only interested in the improvement of their private property and personal investments, community members have demonstrated an interest in methods of investing themselves and their assets in public service projects that enrich the broader community. In addition to organized community activities, residents have demonstrated an interest in utilizing their community assets (including Happy Hearts) to provide resources like a sign-language class (an area of interest that has arisen out of concern for hard of hearing residents) as well as Spanish language classes. These initiatives are important to becoming a neighborhood involved in the community at large, investing in the lives of people who are not necessarily residents of New Washington Heights.

## Welcoming Committee

In order for New Washington Heights to succeed as a growing community, it is valuable for committed, involved residents to reach out to new members of the neighborhood through a formalized committee that has the responsibility of making these individuals feel welcomed and made aware of opportunities and programs that may be of advantage to residents. Such initiative demonstrates inclusion, inviting new residents into the community's corporate identity. This committee can develop a simple welcoming package that may include the traditional baked goods, invitations to participate in the organized community activities, and even a community-created pamphlet that lists resources. This pamphlet may also stress community-driven initiatives such as property maintenance with some guidelines on expectations. In this way, new residents can become immediately involved in the community association by sharing their particular assets and being made aware of what their neighbors can offer.

## Neighborhood Watch

One of the banes of New Washington Heights has been the reputation of crime and drug-related activity that have plagued the neighborhood for several decades. Over the course of the last several years, the community has begun to rebound and is earnest in the fight to reclaim their quality of life. The Community Association is encouraged to develop an official Neighborhood Watch group that is committed to reporting crime and suspicious behavior, taking advantage of the services provided by the Greenville County Sheriff's Department's Community Officers. By fostering relationships between Community Officers and the neighborhood, a new climate of urban renewal may be achieved. The Sheriff's Department also offers a free training course for Neighborhood Watch leaders that residents can participate in to learn what to watch for and how to appropriately respond to each case.

## Community Participation Initiative

In order to grow involvement and investment in the New Washington Heights Community Association, residents must be proactive about recruiting and sustaining engagement. When asked to develop a list of methods, residents provided a variety of options ranging from the practical (planting/sharing flowers, checking on sick and elderly residents, pot luck dinners) to the creative (Vacation Bible School, bingo nights, a Labor Day parade and fireworks). However, the most frequent suggestion was to simply be intentional about engaging and getting to know neighbors personally. Whatever the method, the desired result is creating a base of mutually concerned for the overall well-being and revitalization of the neighborhood.

## Neighborhood Newsletter

Another simple way of reminding residents about important dates, resources, and community offerings would be a neighborhood newsletter. This brochure-length newsletter could be a quarterly feature that highlights community news, lists important numbers for residents, spotlights upcoming events, and offers reminders about future community meetings. This may be a very non-obtrusive way of providing a non-obligatory manner for currently uninvolved residents to be introduced to the community association and how they may can find a place in the neighborhood dynamic.



# Short-Term Objectives

Partnerships



One of the inherent strengths of New Washington Heights has been the compassion that the neighborhood has been capable of drawing from a variety of groups, including local business owners. The community association must be encouraged to continue to pursue and develop these relationships in the mid- to long-term in order to foster stronger connections between the neighborhood and the community at large. This investment in New Washington Heights has also encouraged the community to one day take their own success story and take it to other communities trying renew their own neighborhoods. Investment in New Washington Heights should be considered an investment in not only the Poinsett District, but the County at large.

Asset Assessment

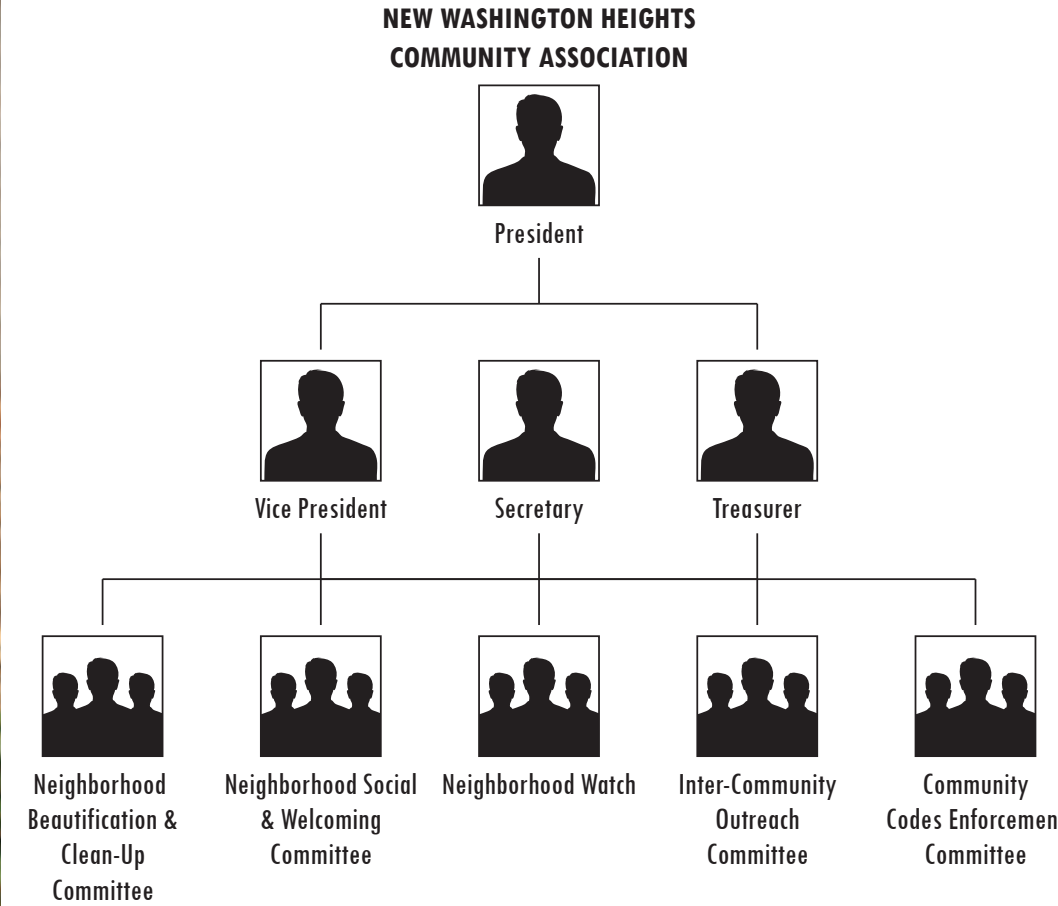


An additional method of developing community involvement and participation is through what is known as an asset assessment map. The process of developing this map involves conducting personal surveys across the community, asking residents what their individual skills may be (including everything from baby-sitting and carpentry to filing taxes and catering). An inventory of these skills may be made available to the neighborhood, providing them with a list of resources within the community, providing opportunities to establish a transfer of services that may potentially bloom into small-business opportunities for residents that may eventually extend beyond the boundaries of the neighborhood. In addition to personal skills, residents are recommended to inventory community associations, local institutions and resources, along with external assets that may become a perennial list of resources for the community.



## Grooming Future Leaders

Part of strengthening the New Washington Heights Community Association includes the creation of a variety of committees that address specific issues across the neighborhood. These committees may serve as go-to bodies that make these issues their priorities and develop relationships with the related local government and law enforcement agencies. By making some of the goals herein mentioned their priority, these committees may provide regular feedback to the community association and recruit residents that may be attracted to a particular mission, given their particular assets.





# Mid-Term Objectives

Mid-Term Objectives are those that require an extended timetable (approximately 2 to 5 years). These measures demand more concentrated planning, execution, and sources of funding. These steps also begin to provide transformations to the physical environment and mark a more significant stake in the community. These steps may require broader partnerships or even grants to fulfill, nevertheless, they are by no means outside of the community's capacity to fulfill.

## Historical Marker Initiative

One doesn't have to spend much time with the residents of New Washington Heights before they begin to tell you about their history: how their community began, what kind of status it held, what meaning it had for Greenville County, and the like. A potential feature to the neighborhood that residents have responded positively to is a historical marker, particularly for Happy Hearts, that communicates the significance of New Washington Heights, restoring an element of community pride and providing a physical stake in the ground that illustrates the respect for past leaders in the neighborhood's community. Arguments could be made for additional historical markers celebrating the community itself and the Washington Center school.

## Trail Development

A component of the success of New Washington Heights is creating physical connections between the surrounding community and the neighborhood itself, providing a veil of transparency that puts more eyes on the streets. Functionally, a central trail corridor creates an alternative connection to the GCRD fields that will occupy the old Washington Center property. The overall impact is intended to be one like that achieved by the Swamp Rabbit Trail, where activity and utility discourages errant behavior and encourages a beneficial exposure.

## Gateway Initiative

A frequent point of interest among residents of New Washington Heights has been the desired installation of a gateway marking entrance into the community. Currently, the neighborhood is designated by a small sign that was kindly donated to the community. However, there is interest in attractive, identifying signage from which the community can take a real sense of pride. Being in the heart of the Poinsett District, there is an opportunity for the community gateway to be highlighted at the corner of Loop Street and Poinsett Highway in the pattern and style of the Poinsett District project.

## Dangerous Limb Removal/ Tree Pruning

In many communities, old growth trees are consistently viewed as an asset. They are oftentimes indicators of historic neighborhoods. They are the product of both time and care and therefore have an inherent value in addition to their micro-climate benefits and the often cited correlations between tree canopy and lower crime rates. Unfortunately, in the case of New Washington Heights, the signature tree canopy that they possess (a key distinguishing factor from adjoining neighborhoods like Brutontown and Poe Mill) is considered a weakness in the community. Most residents lack the capital to address the increasing problem that many of these old growth trees present. In order to maintain this unique asset, the neighborhood needs to develop a system by which they can prioritize dangerous limbs, establish a recurring method of fundraising, and apply a tree pruning schedule for residents.

## Street Lighting Initiative

The desire for abundant street lighting in New Washington Heights by its residents is one feature that meets two different community priorities at once: safer streets and public safety. By including regular, neighborhood-scaled street lighting, pedestrians may walk more comfortably at evenings, with confidence that approaching vehicles will see them from a distance and adjust their speeds. Similarly, such lighting will discourage undesirable behavior by spotlighting all street-side activity and making it easier for local law enforcement to patrol the area and respond to suspicious behavior. Similarly, a Neighborhood Watch group will also better be able to serve its community by maintaining a clearer view of the street and any unwanted guests.





# Long-Term Objectives

## Land Use Regulations

The following objectives take a long view of community revitalization, but require no less purpose and attention in the meantime. These measures must be accomplished in coordination with state and local government agencies and are not anticipated to be complete within five years, but represent seminal improvements in the character and features of New Washington Heights.

In addition to a Design Overlay, some changes to land use regulations will be necessary to introduce new development types to the neighborhood. Apartment complexes, townhomes, assisted living, and residential office reuse reflect changes to the existing land use regulations. This is part of the larger vision that reflects an evolving, inclusive community that respects the traditions of the original community and its heritage.

## Sidewalk Initiative

One of the agendas of the residents of New Washington Heights is to make their neighborhood more pedestrian friendly. Loop Street functions as a key connector between Poinsett Highway and Rutherford Road, which, combined with the steep grade changes, makes this main arterial often dangerous for pedestrians. By providing sidewalks, residents walking between neighbors, to community meetings, or to nearby bus stops will then have a safer channel in which to travel. While many of the current conditions may not provide adequate room for sidewalks, design guidelines on new development could enforce the provision of a sufficient set back to accommodate a sidewalk, where desirable.



## Infrastructure

As per the recommendations of the Parker Sewer district, an inventory should be made of all residences that are currently on septic and upgrading their systems to public sewer. This will allow maintenance to be handled by local government, thereby ensuring proper handling and disposal of sewage by an off-site water treatment facility. Also, as future development occurs, it will be an advantage to handling potentially increasing loads and preventing possible overflows and ground contamination.

## Neighborhood Revitalization

Residents of New Washington Heights acknowledge the overall condition of disrepair that plague many of the homes in the neighborhood. Some of these conditions are the result of elderly or otherwise disabled individuals without the capacity or capital to maintain their property, while some unkempt property may be the result of negligence or general blight. The desire to restore New Washington Heights to its original reputation is one strongly felt particularly by residents who grew up in the neighborhood during its height. These individuals desire to see a course of redevelopment that pays respect to the original architectural heritage of the community and promotes diversity.



## Further Steps

While there are several things that the residents can do themselves to continue to encourage a stronger community and promote renewal, nevertheless, there are steps the planners from the Greenville County Community Planning & Development Department believe that Greenville County Council can take to make serious and progressive advancements that both protect and promote the interests of New Washington Heights, particularly as developer and investor become more interested in the neighborhood as the Poinsett District develops.

### Design Overlay

One of the strongest steps that Council can take to promote the interests of New Washington Heights residents is the implementation of a Design Overlay that guides all future development in accordance with the neighborhood's master plan. This process would require a far more detailed description of guidelines, informing developers of what is expected from them, providing them with clear guidelines and a sense of protection that their investment will be shared by all additional developers that commit to New Washington Heights.

### Street Re-Paving

A clear obstacle to the potential commitment of new developers and individuals capable of investing in the area are the current conditions of Loop Street. Loop Street is part of the SCDOT's road inventory, however, it is very low on their priority list for re-paving. For real transformation to occur throughout New Washington Heights, this primary neighborhood arterial needs renewed attention and a commitment of re-investment through re-paving.



# Acknowledgments

The process of developing this community plan has been the result of hard work on behalf of multiple parties and could not have been accomplished without their input and support. These supporters came together from a variety of sources and while this space cannot begin to cover them all, this section is intended make an attempt at highlighting just a few of the special contributors.

## Greenville County Council

- Bob Taylor, Chair
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- Paula Gucker, Assistant County Administrator
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- Joey Freeman
- Lawanda Curry
- Keilli McCormick
- Tom Meeks
- Eric Vinson
- Scott Park
- Suzanne Garnmeister
- Tyler Stone
- Dan Powell, Project Leader
- Jonathan Hanna, Project Leader
- Keith Brockington
- Tiffany Wedmore
- Brook Ferguson
- Anna Whitener
- Brennan Hansley

## Greenville County Sheriff’s Department

- Sheriff Steve Loftis
- Sgt. Brian Donnelly, Community Patrol Officer
- Dep. Joshua Franseen, Community Officer
- Master Dep. Natalie Hill, Community Services



# Special Thanks

- Jim Starr, Starr Resources
- Brian Eicke, Electrical Service Systems of South Carolina, Inc.
- Martin Livingston, GCRA
- Darius Jones, Community Works Carolina
- The 2013 Greenville County Leadership Class
- Waste Management
- Lowe’s

- Keep Greenville County Beautiful
- Keep America Beautiful
- Chick-Fil-A Cherrydale
- Starbucks
- Furman University
- TreesGreenville
- Bruce Forbes, S.H.A.R.E.







This plan was developed in 2013 by the residents of New Washington Heights with the help and support of the staff and administration of the

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