



Abandoned Housing Survey Report

April 21

2010

Abandoned, vacant, and blighted property in the City
of Sumter, South Carolina

The Sumter
City-County
Planning
Department

Abandoned Housing Survey Report

City of Sumter

April 21, 2010

Prepared by the Sumter City-County Planning Department

Michael Herr, Project Manager

Gloria Prescott, Field Resource Coordinator

George K. McGregor, AICP, Planning Director

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Purpose | 4 |
| Methodology | 4 |
| City of Sumter Precincts – Map | 5 |
| Results..... | 6 |
| Vacant and Abandoned Property in the City of Sumter - Map..... | 7 |
| Neighborhood Summaries | |
| Bates..... | 8 |
| Lemira..... | 10 |
| Savage Glover..... | 12 |
| Birnie | 14 |
| Wilder | 16 |
| Spectrum..... | 18 |
| Stone Hill..... | 20 |
| Morris College..... | 22 |
| South Liberty | 24 |
| Loring | 26 |
| Swan Lake..... | 28 |
| Folsom Park..... | 30 |
| Crosswell..... | 32 |
| Mullberry..... | 34 |
| Hampton Park | 36 |
| Palmetto Park | 38 |
| Magnolia Harmony..... | 40 |
| Millwood..... | 42 |
| Second Mill..... | 44 |
| Burns Downs..... | 46 |
| Conclusion | 48 |
| Comments..... | 48 |
| Next Steps..... | 49 |

Purpose

To locate, assess, and catalogue vacant and abandoned property in the City of Sumter.

Methodology

In order to provide a systematic way of breaking down the City into manageable pieces we used local voting precincts to delineate neighborhoods, and then created street maps of those neighborhoods using ArcGIS.

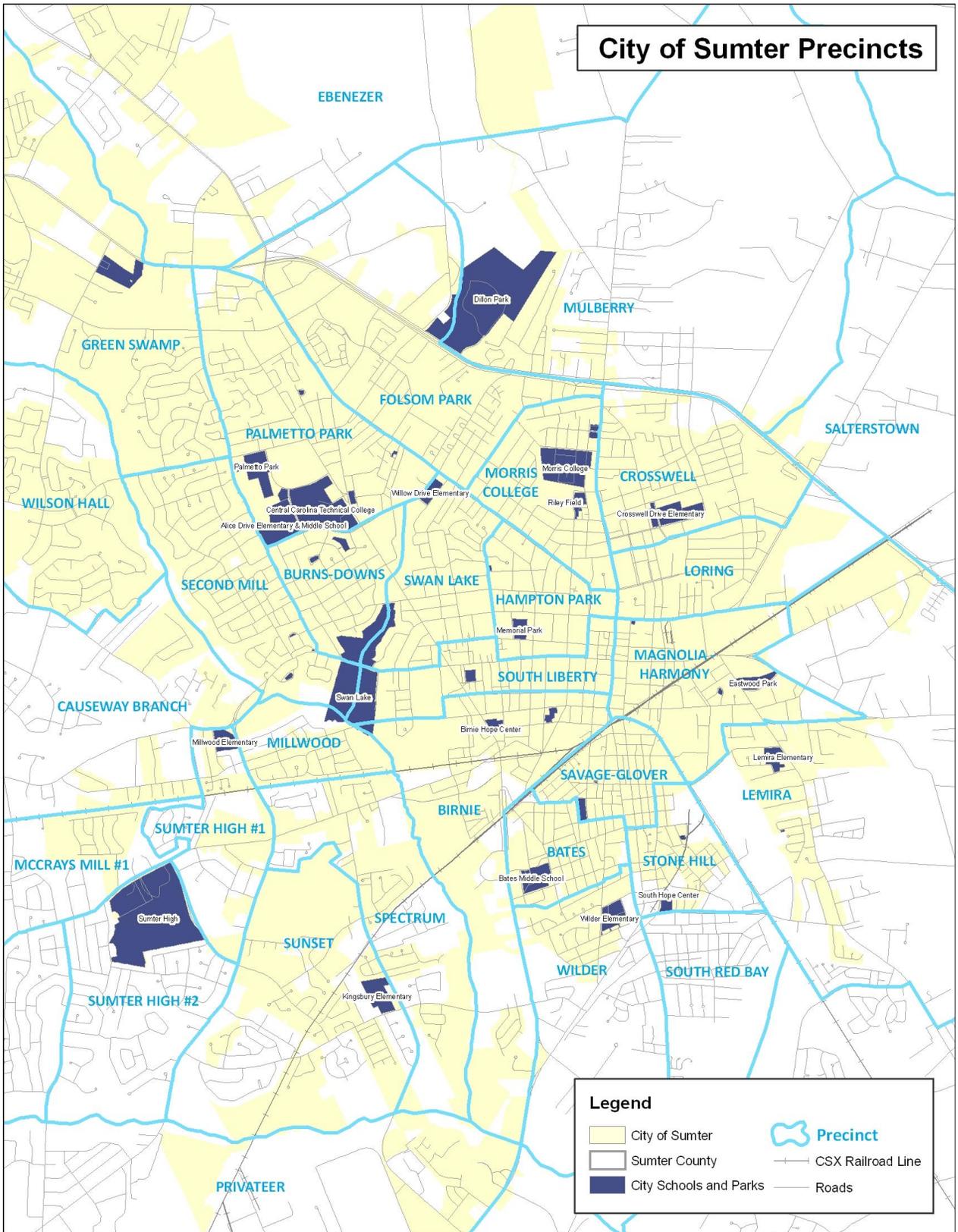
Between October 2009 and February 2010, we drove down each street in a neighborhood and looked at every house as we drove by. Any time we found a house that appeared vacant or abandoned we stopped, took a picture of the property, and used GPS tracking equipment to note the location of the house as well as its general condition. Houses that had lawns that were seriously neglected and overgrown, tax sales signs in their windows, missing electric meters, and broken or boarded up windows were all good indicators of a property that was vacant or abandoned.

We rated each structure we found as being either Good, Fair, Poor, or a Hazard. We used this simple classification system for two reasons. First, since the entire collection process took place from the road we were only able to make a general assessment of the overall condition of a property, as we could only see the exterior of the building. Second, the main intent of the survey was to locate vacant properties and note their general condition, not to assess the degree of how good or bad a property was. Determining the difference between bad, very bad, and extremely bad is unnecessary and beyond the capabilities of the data collectors and the time allowances at this point in the survey.

Concerning the property ratings, our roadside observation should be considered as cursory and not the definitive or absolute assessment of a property. From the road, it was impossible to determine the condition of the interior of most of the properties we identified, which may alter their overall condition quite considerably. Houses that appear good on the outside may have extensive interior damage, while other housing that appears poor from the roadside may be very charming on the inside. The only case that can be made for definitive judgments, for the most part, were those houses that were classified as hazards, as these generally showed extensive structural damage on the exterior, and while they still might be repairable in some cases, it is probably prohibitive to do so.

Finally, the collected data was transferred into ArcGIS, linked to each parcel with an accompanying photo, and their locations mapped. These parcel locations were then color-coded based on their overall condition using Dark Green for Good, Light Green for Fair, Orange for Poor, and Red for Hazard.

While doing the survey we came across a number of properties throughout the City of Sumter that could be considered to be below the normal standard of habitation in this Country; this study only gathered information about those structures that appeared to be abandoned, vacant or derelict. It is not the intent of this study to catalogue those houses that are currently being utilized, no matter how poor their current condition.



Results

The chart below summarizes the number of abandoned or vacant properties found within each neighborhood by overall condition. The percentage next to each represents the ratio of vacant houses compared to the total number of parcels in that neighborhood. The overall vacant percentage represents the total number of vacant or abandoned properties in addition to vacant lots found in the neighborhood compared to the total number of parcels in that neighborhood. It shows the overall percentage of unused space within each neighborhood. There are an estimated 1,572 abandoned parcels (716 vacant structures; 856 vacant parcels).

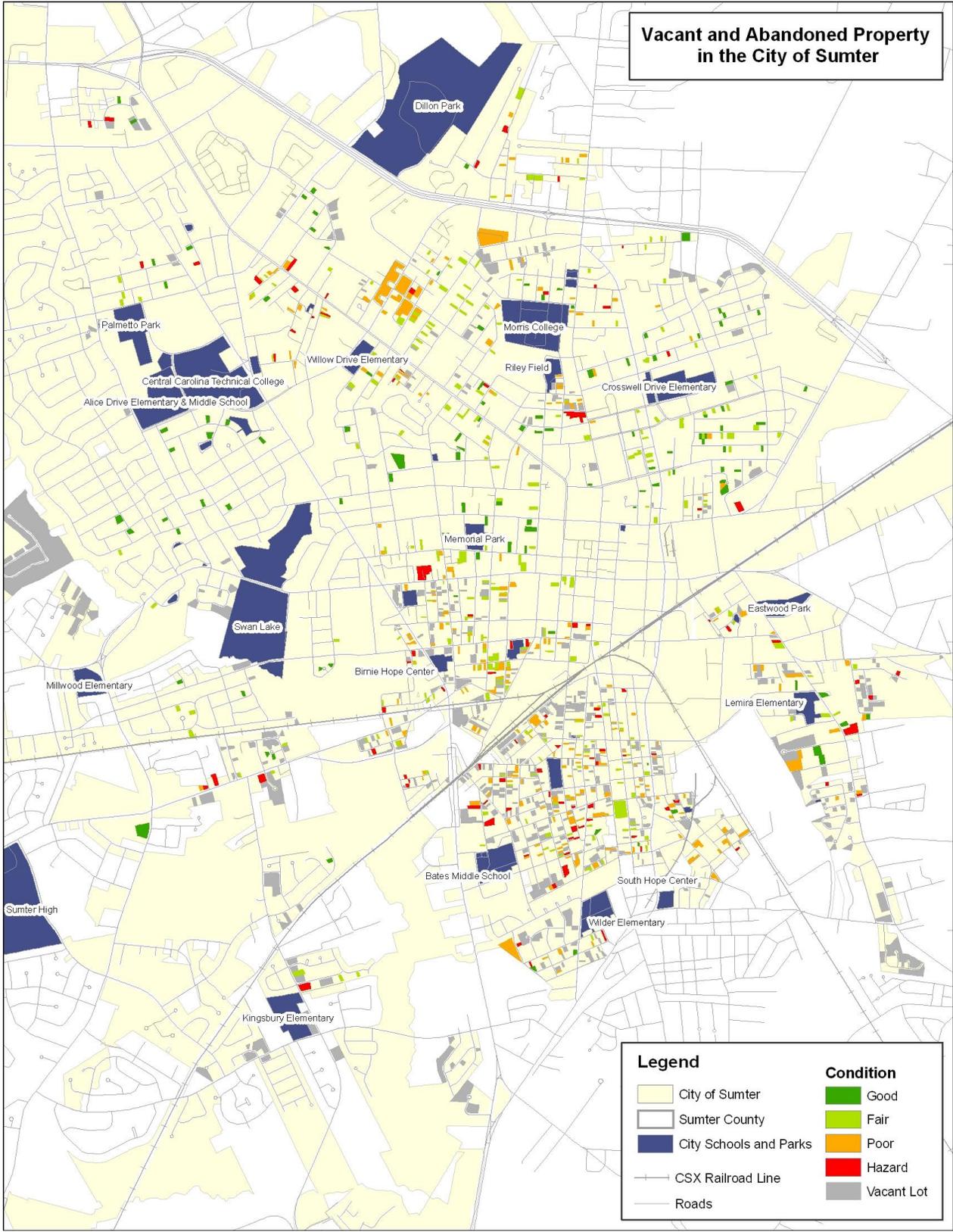
Each neighborhood map shows the total number of vacant or abandoned parcels by overall condition and shows the percentage that those vacant or abandoned properties represent out of the neighborhood as a whole. The results of these findings are organized similar to the chart below, beginning with the neighborhood that has the greatest overall percentage of vacant space and ending with the neighborhood that has the lowest overall percentage of vacant space.

The highlighted totals show areas that have an above average number of structures or vacant lots.

| Neighborhood | Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Parcels | Overall Vacant % |
|------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|---------------|------------------|
| Bates | 1 | 0.1% | 15 | 2.1% | 40 | 5.6% | 21 | 3.0% | 129 | 18.1% | 711 | 29.0% |
| Lemira | 6 | 1.0% | 6 | 1.0% | 13 | 2.2% | 8 | 1.3% | 123 | 20.5% | 600 | 26.0% |
| Savage Glover | 1 | 0.1% | 25 | 3.4% | 29 | 3.9% | 10 | 1.4% | 119 | 16.2% | 735 | 25.0% |
| Birnie | 3 | 0.3% | 35 | 3.6% | 50 | 5.1% | 13 | 1.3% | 123 | 12.6% | 975 | 23.0% |
| Wilder | 2 | 0.5% | 4 | 1.1% | 11 | 2.9% | 5 | 1.3% | 49 | 12.9% | 379 | 18.7% |
| Spectrum | 3 | 0.7% | 6 | 1.3% | 1 | 0.2% | 5 | 1.1% | 51 | 11.3% | 453 | 14.6% |
| Stone Hill | 3 | 0.5% | 7 | 1.1% | 21 | 3.3% | 6 | 0.9% | 53 | 8.3% | 639 | 14.1% |
| Morris College | 12 | 1.3% | 23 | 2.6% | 17 | 1.9% | 4 | 0.4% | 54 | 6.0% | 894 | 12.3% |
| South Liberty | 1 | 0.1% | 17 | 2.4% | 13 | 1.9% | 2 | 0.3% | 41 | 5.9% | 699 | 10.6% |
| Loring | 20 | 2.8% | 25 | 3.5% | 4 | 0.6% | 2 | 0.3% | 16 | 2.2% | 714 | 9.4% |
| Swan Lake | 5 | 1.1% | 11 | 2.4% | 10 | 2.2% | 2 | 0.4% | 10 | 2.2% | 457 | 8.3% |
| Folsom Park | 6 | 0.7% | 12 | 1.4% | 18 | 2.1% | 3 | 0.4% | 17 | 2.0% | 854 | 6.6% |
| Crosswell | 13 | 1.3% | 12 | 1.2% | 7 | 0.7% | 4 | 0.4% | 26 | 2.6% | 997 | 6.2% |
| Mullberry | 1 | 0.4% | 5 | 1.8% | 7 | 2.5% | 4 | 1.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 275 | 6.2% |
| Hampton Park | 14 | 2.3% | 18 | 3.0% | 4 | 0.7% | 0 | 0.0% | 1 | 0.2% | 601 | 6.2% |
| Palmetto Park | 7 | 0.6% | 12 | 1.0% | 9 | 0.7% | 10 | 0.8% | 17 | 1.4% | 1,239 | 4.4% |
| Magnolia Harmony | 0 | 0.0% | 6 | 1.3% | 4 | 0.9% | 3 | 0.6% | 5 | 1.1% | 465 | 3.9% |
| Millwood | 2 | 0.6% | 3 | 0.9% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 2.1% | 335 | 3.6% |
| Second Mill | 4 | 0.4% | 2 | 0.2% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 15 | 1.5% | 1,012 | 2.1% |
| Burns Downs | 8 | 1.7% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 484 | 1.7% |
| Totals | 112 | 0.8% | 244 | 1.8% | 258 | 1.9% | 102 | 0.8% | 856 | 6.3% | 13,518 | 11.6% |

Using ArcGIS, it was possible to calculate the amount of space used by these vacant properties. This space can be said to be underutilized because it is performing no useful role in the community. Overall, there are 638 acres of properties in the City of Sumter that are not being used to their fullest extent.

| Condition | Acres |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Good | 41 |
| Fair | 82 |
| Poor | 94 |
| Hazard | 33 |
| Total Properties | 250 |
| Vacant Lots | 388 |
| Total Vacant | 638 |



**Vacant and Abandoned Property
in the City of Sumter**

Legend

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| City of Sumter | Good |
| Sumter County | Fair |
| City Schools and Parks | Poor |
| CSX Railroad Line | Hazard |
| Roads | Vacant Lot |

Bates

Location

Bates is a residential neighborhood that starts at South Sumter Park and extends to Bates Middle School. The neighborhood runs from South Guignard Drive to Manning Avenue east to west and ends just above Perkins Avenue to the south. Hoyt and Palmetto Streets are the primary east to west travel corridors, while South Main and Bailey Streets serve as the neighborhood's north to south travel ways.

Survey Results

Bates covers approximately 226 acres and contains 711 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 711 parcels, 76 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 76 structures, it was determined that there were 1 Good, 15 Fair, 40 Poor and 21 Hazardous structures, with an additional 129 parcels found to be vacant lots.

| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|-------|-------|------------------|
| 1 | 0.1% | 15 | 2.1% | 40 | 5.6% | 21 | 3.0% | 129 | 18.1% | 711 | 29.0% |

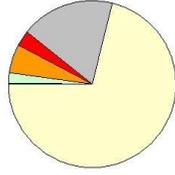
Bates has the highest number and percentage of Hazard properties and the highest percentage of Poor properties of all the neighborhoods studied. It also had the greatest number (second highest percentage) of Vacant lots.

The housing in Bates is primarily single-family residences that are a mix of houses and manufactured homes. The vacant properties are spread across the neighborhood, becoming more numerous as you move further away from Bates Middle School. The parcels around the school are primarily vacant lots.

Overall, Bates has the lowest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at only 71.2%.



Bates

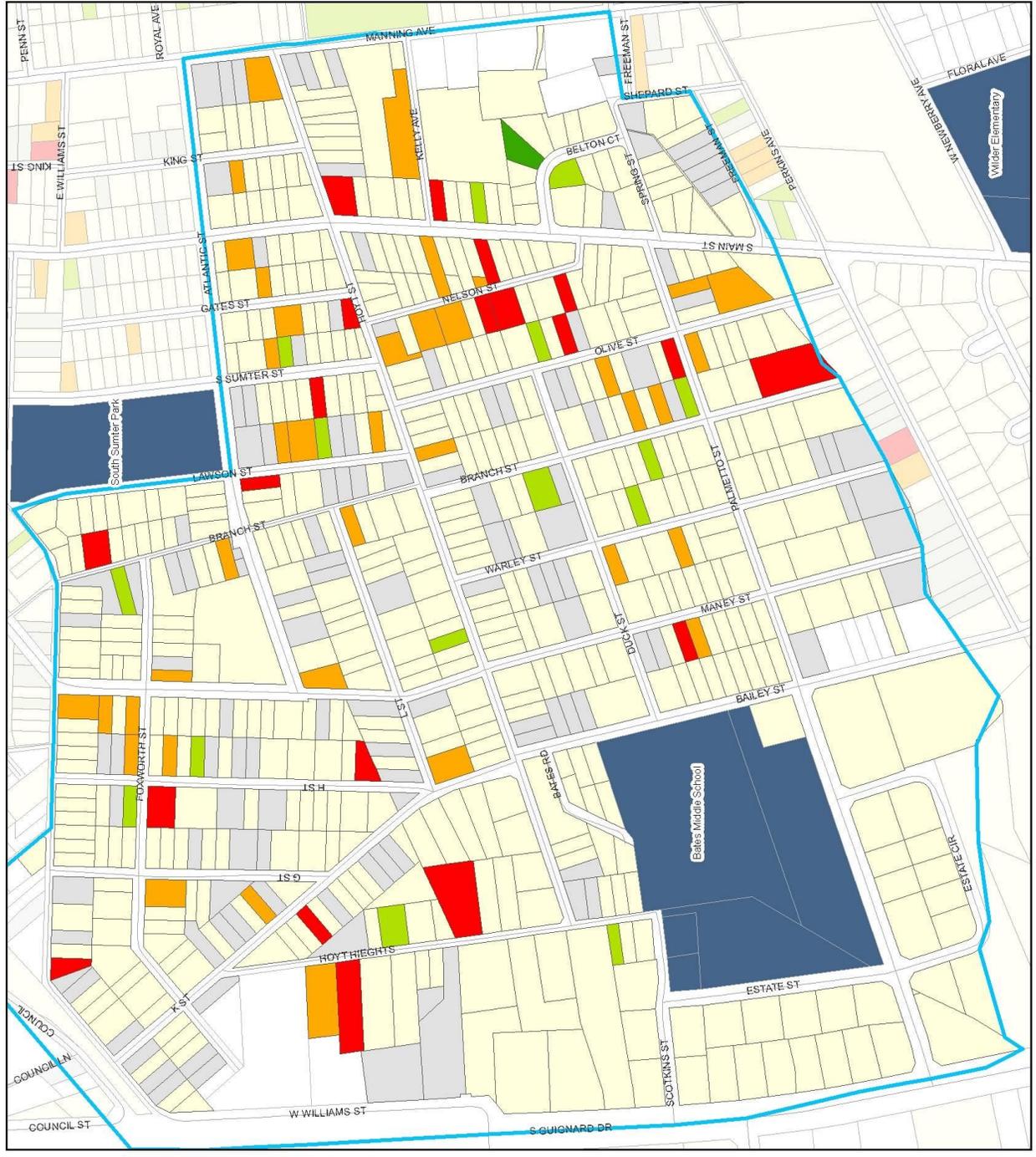


| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 1 |
| Fair | 15 |
| Poor | 40 |
| Hazard | 21 |
| Vacant Lot | 129 |
| Occupied | 506 |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 1 |
| Fair | 15 |
| Poor | 40 |
| Hazard | 21 |
| Vacant Lot | 129 |
| Occupied | 506 |



1 inch = 455 feet



Lemira

Location

Lemira is a residential neighborhood that centers around the Lemira Elementary School on Boulevard Road. The majority of the neighborhood that resides in the City lies along a narrow strip on each side of Boulevard Road with another small residential section just off Plowden Mill Road. A small industrial area stretches along East Liberty Street in between South Pike Road and the Myrtle Beach Highway. The majority of this neighborhood lies outside the City limits.

Survey Results

Lemira covers approximately 504 acres and contains 600 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 600 parcels, 33 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 33 structures, it was determined that there were 6 Good, 6 Fair, 13 Poor and 8 Hazardous structures, with an additional 123 parcels found to be vacant lots.

| Good | Fair | Poor | Hazard | Vacant | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|--------|--------|-------|------------------|
| 6 | 6 | 13 | 8 | 123 | 600 | 26.0% |
| 1.0% | 1.0% | 2.2% | 1.3% | 20.5% | | |

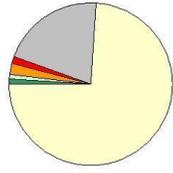
Lemira has a moderate number of Poor and a high number of Hazard properties, especially considering its small number of total parcels. It is also tied for the second highest number of total Vacant lots. This large number of vacant lots contributes to the second highest percentage of Overall Vacant Properties at 26%.

Most of the vacant structures are located close to the Lemira Elementary School, while the majority of the Vacant lots can be found in the southern portion of the neighborhood. A high percentage of the properties in this neighborhood are manufactured homes.

Overall, Lemira has the second lowest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at only 74%.



Lemira

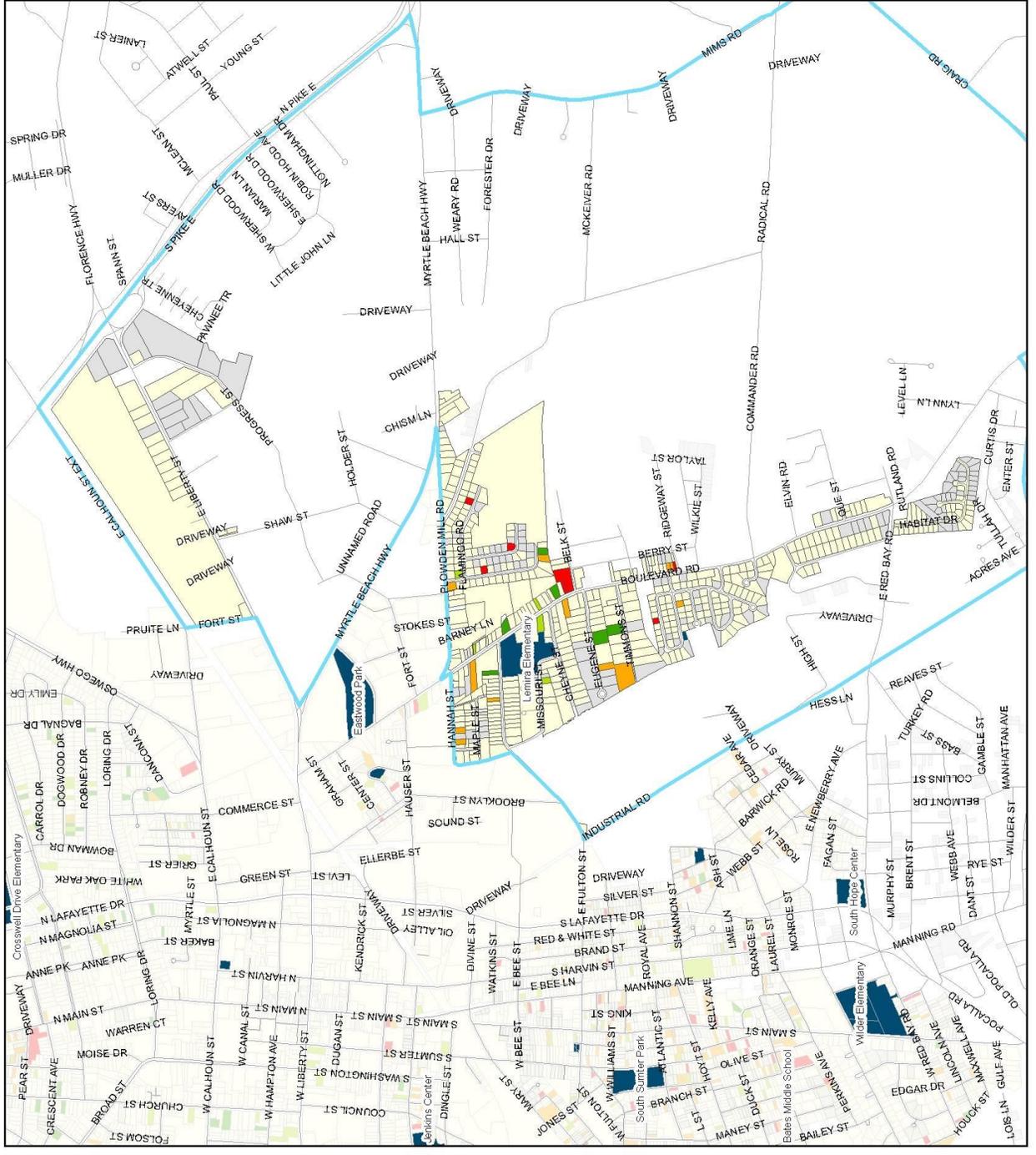


| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 1.0% |
| Fair | 1.0% |
| Poor | 2.2% |
| Hazard | 1.3% |
| Vacant Lots | 20.5% |
| Occupied | 74.0% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 6 |
| Fair | 6 |
| Poor | 13 |
| Hazard | 8 |
| Vacant Lot | 123 |
| Occupied | 444 |



1 inch = 1,873 feet



Savage Glover

Location

Savage Glover is primarily a residential neighborhood that starts just south and east of the CSX Railroad right of way and extends down to South Sumter Park, with a small number of commercial operations in the northeast part of the neighborhood. South Lafayette marks the eastern extent of this neighborhood. There are a number of north to south travel corridors in this neighborhood which include South Sumter Street, Manning Avenue and South Main Street. East Fulton Street is the neighborhood's only real east-west thoroughfare and connects Savage Glover to neighboring Lemira.

Survey Results

Savage Glover covers approximately 252 acres and contains 735 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 735 parcels, 65 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 65 structures, it was determined that there were 1 Good, 25 Fair, 29 Poor and 10 Hazardous structures, with an additional 119 parcels found to be vacant lots.

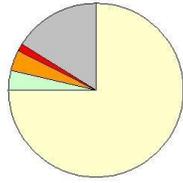
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|-------|-------|------------------|
| 1 | 0.1% | 25 | 3.4% | 29 | 3.9% | 10 | 1.4% | 119 | 16.2% | 735 | 25.0% |

Savage Glover has the third highest number of Hazard parcels, the third highest number of Poor parcels, the third highest number of Fair parcels and the fourth highest total of Vacant parcels. The majority of the Poor and Hazard parcels are located south of East Fulton Street and west of Manning Avenue, with many vacant lots along the northwestern portion of the neighborhood, near the railroad lines.

Overall, Savage Glover has the third lowest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at only 75%.



Savage Glover

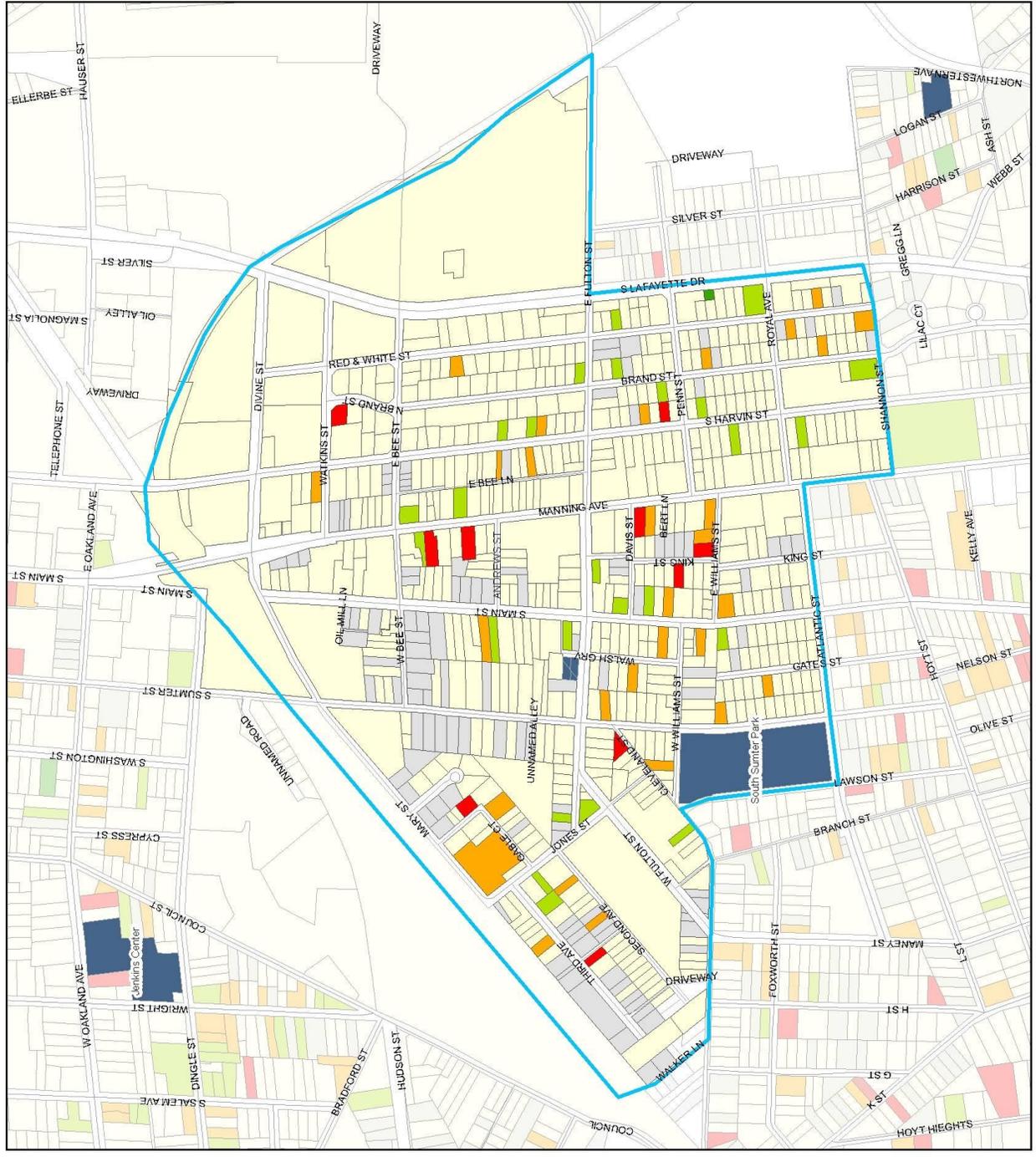


| Condition | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 1 |
| Fair | 25 |
| Poor | 29 |
| Hazard | 10 |
| Vacant Lots | 16.2% |
| Occupied | 75.0% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 1 |
| Fair | 25 |
| Poor | 29 |
| Hazard | 10 |
| Vacant Lot | 119 |
| Occupied | 735 |



1 inch = 630 feet



Birnie

Location

Birnie consists of a number of diverse residential areas centered around the Birnie Hope Center on South Guignard Drive. It stretches south from Bartlette Street to the CSX railroad right of way and west from the wetlands south of Swan Lake to South Main Street. A good deal of the neighborhood continues south along Guignard Drive, but lies outside the City limits. West Oakland Avenue is the main east to west travel corridor through the neighborhood, with Guignard Drive splitting it in half north to south.

Survey Results

Birnie covers approximately 670 acres and contains 975 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 975 parcels, 101 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 101 structures, it was determined that there were 3 Good, 35 Fair, 50 Poor and 13 Hazard structures, with an additional 123 parcels found to be vacant lots.

| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|-------|-------|------------------|
| 3 | 0.3% | 35 | 3.6% | 50 | 5.1% | 13 | 1.3% | 123 | 12.6% | 975 | 23.0% |

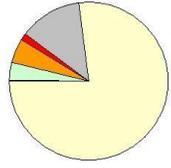
Birnie has the highest total number of Poor properties and second highest number of Hazard properties in the City of Sumter, as defined by this study. It also has the highest number and percentage of Fair properties and is tied for the second highest number of Vacant lots.

The neighborhood covers a wide range of parcels, from those that exist just outside of downtown along South Main and South Sumter Street to those out near the Sumter Fire Department training grounds. Vacant parcels are scattered across the neighborhood with a high density of properties centered around Dingle and Wright Street.

Overall, Birnie has the fourth lowest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at only 77%.



Birnie

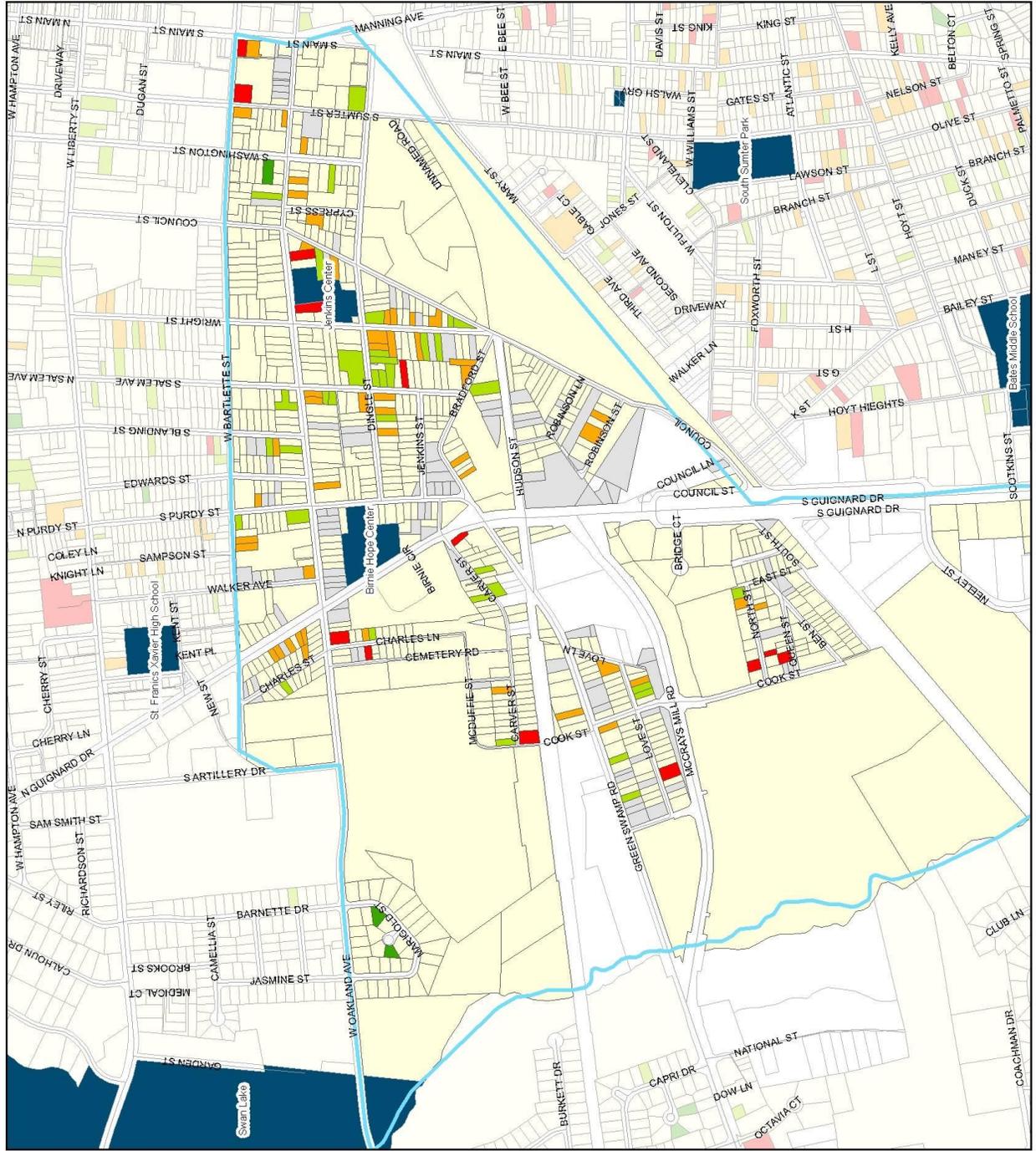


| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 3 |
| Fair | 35 |
| Poor | 50 |
| Hazard | 13 |
| Vacant Lot | 123 |
| Occupied | 751 |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 3 |
| Fair | 35 |
| Poor | 50 |
| Hazard | 13 |
| Vacant Lot | 123 |
| Occupied | 751 |



1 inch = 936 feet



Wilder

Location

Wilder is a residential neighborhood that runs along both sides of South Main Street, from Perkins Avenue to the intersection at Pocalla Road. Most of the neighborhood lies adjacent to Wilder Elementary School on the west side of South Main Street. South Main Street serves as the primary north-south travel route through the neighborhood. Albert Spears Drive and Red Bay Road act as major east-west travel routes.

Survey Results

Wilder covers approximately 175 acres and contains 379 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 379 parcels, 22 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 22 structures, it was determined that there were 2 Good, 4 Fair, 11 Poor and 5 Hazardous structures, with an additional 49 parcels found to be vacant lots.

| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|-------|-------|------------------|
| 2 | 0.5% | 4 | 1.1% | 11 | 2.9% | 5 | 1.3% | 49 | 12.9% | 379 | 18.7% |

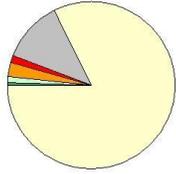
Wilder has the fifth highest percentage of Poor properties and is tied for the fourth highest percentage of Hazard properties. It also has the fourth highest percentage of Vacant lots.

The majority of the vacant properties lie along Perkins Avenue or reside south of Red Bay Road. Most of this neighborhood lies south of Pocalla Road, outside the City limits.

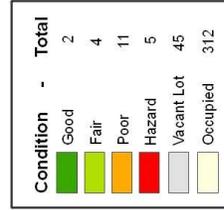
Overall, Wilder has the fifth lowest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 85.4%.



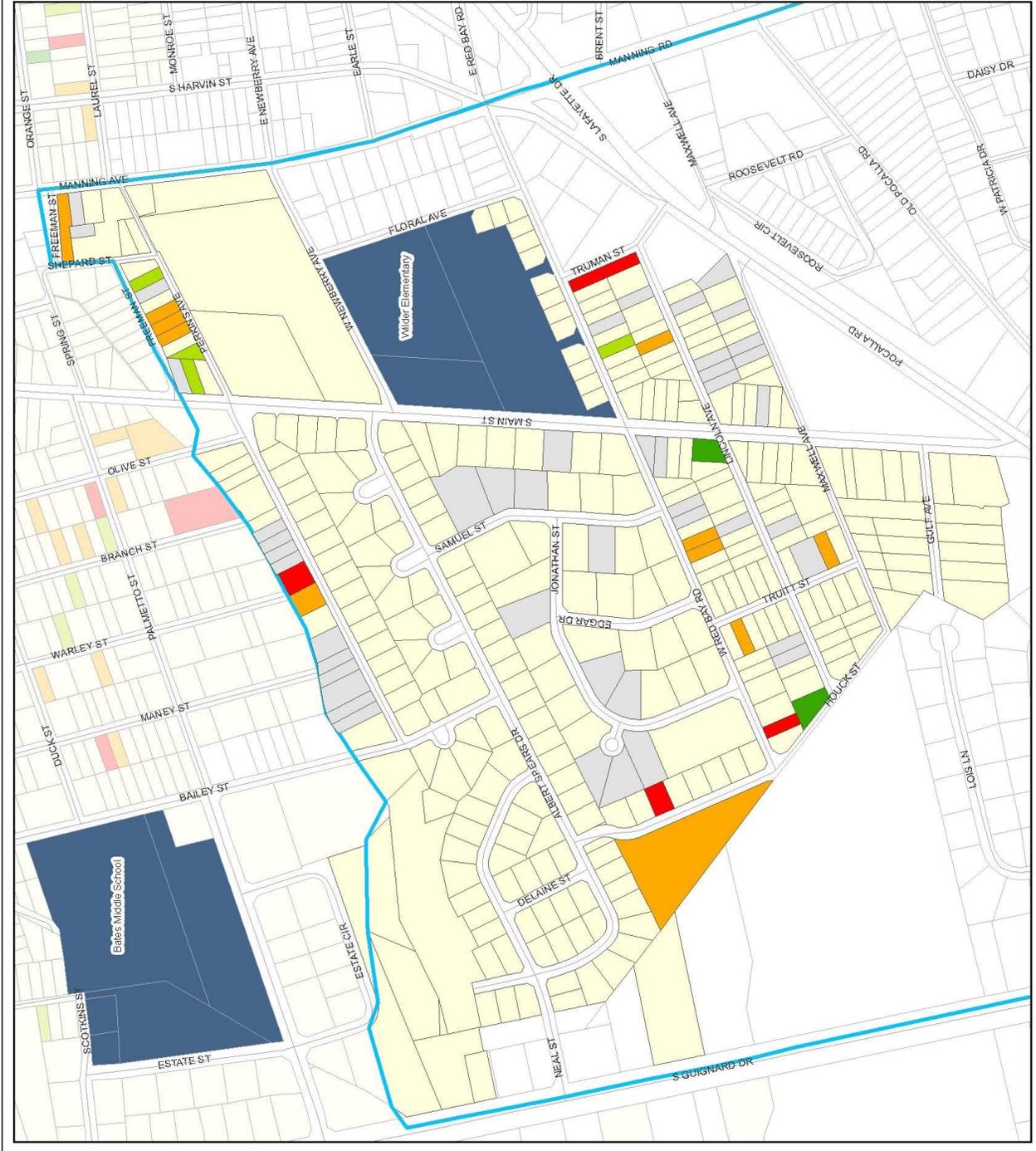
Wilder



| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 2 |
| Fair | 4 |
| Poor | 11 |
| Hazard | 5 |
| Vacant Lot | 45 |
| Occupied | 312 |



1 inch = 506 feet



Spectrum

Location

Spectrum is a residential neighborhood that runs along McCrays Mill Road as well as a number of roads that branch off from Lewis Road. McCrays Mill Road and Lewis Road serve as the primary east-west and north to south travel corridors respectively, with Kingsbury Drive in the southern portion of the neighborhood acting as an east-west connector to Birnie.

Survey Results

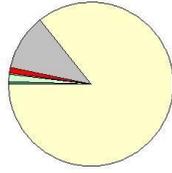
Spectrum covers approximately 373 acres and contains 453 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 453 parcels, 15 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 15 structures, it was determined that there were 3 Good, 6 Fair, 1 Poor and 5 Hazardous structures, with an additional 51 parcels found to be vacant lots.

| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|-------|-------|------------------|
| 3 | 0.7% | 6 | 1.3% | 1 | 0.2% | 5 | 1.1% | 51 | 11.3% | 453 | 14.6% |

Although there are only 15 abandoned or vacant structures in Spectrum, one third of those structures are rated as a Hazard. It also has a high percentage of vacant lots, which help account for the neighborhood's high overall vacancy rate. The residential areas in this neighborhood are all separated by tracts that exist outside the City limits, with the highest number of vacant properties found on or near McCrays Mill Road, and the rest being in one of the older subdivisions in the area.

Overall, Spectrum has the sixth lowest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 85.4%.





| Condition | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 0.7% |
| Fair | 1.3% |
| Poor | 0.2% |
| Hazard | 1.1% |
| Vacant Lots | 11.3% |
| Occupied | 85.4% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 3 |
| Fair | 6 |
| Poor | 1 |
| Hazard | 5 |
| Vacant Lot | 51 |
| Occupied | 387 |



1 inch = 1,555 feet



Stone Hill

Location

Stone Hill is primarily a residential neighborhood that runs south along the east side South Lafayette Drive between East Fulton Street and Red Bay Road, with a small portion stretching west to Manning Avenue. South Lafayette Drive and South Harvin Street serve as primary north-south corridors for travel and there are no clear main east-west routes.

Survey Results

Stone Hill covers approximately 155 acres and contains 457 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 457 parcels, 37 structures were found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 37 structures, it was determined that there were 3 Good, 7 Fair, 21 Poor and 6 Hazard structures, with an additional 53 parcels found to be vacant lots.

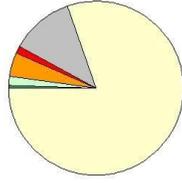
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 3 | 0.5% | 7 | 1.1% | 21 | 3.3% | 6 | 0.9% | 53 | 8.3% | 639 | 14.1% |

Stone Hill has the fourth highest number of poor structures representing the third highest percentage by neighborhood. It also has the sixth highest number of Hazard structures, fifth highest in terms of percentage of total neighborhood. Stone Hill has a total of 53 Vacant lots, making up 11.6% of the neighborhood, fourth overall. Vacant properties are spread across the neighborhood with the greatest concentration starting below Shannon Street and running down to Laurel.

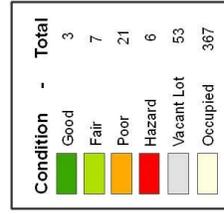
Overall, Stone Hill has the seventh lowest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 85.9%.



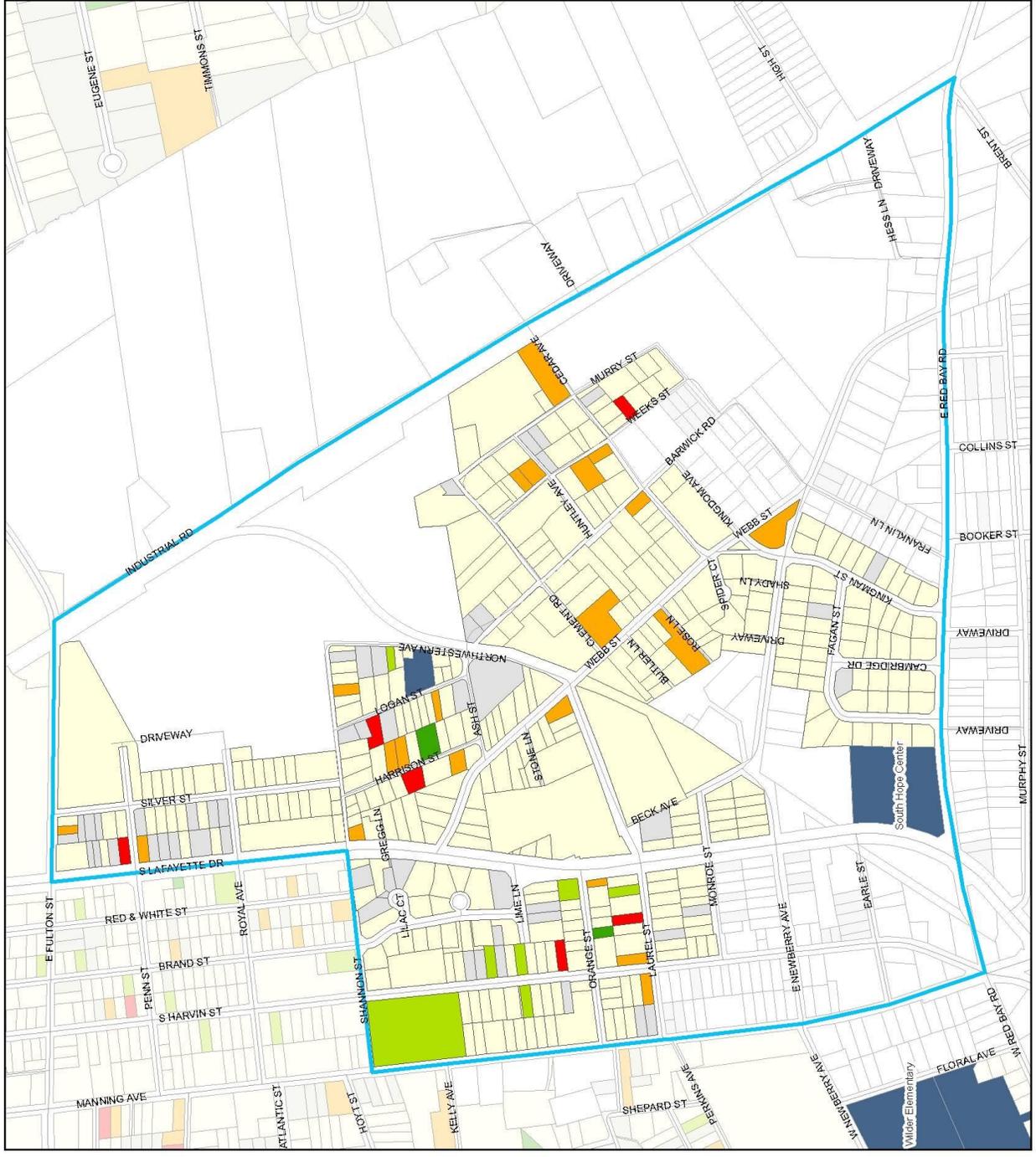
Stone Hill



| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 3 |
| Fair | 7 |
| Poor | 21 |
| Hazard | 6 |
| Vacant Lot | 53 |
| Occupied | 387 |



1 inch = 597 feet



Morris College

Location

Morris College is a residential neighborhood centered around Morris College, with the area along Broad Street being primarily commercial. It is bordered by North Main Street to the east, Poulas Street to the north, Carolina Avenue on the west and Broad Street to the south. There are no main travel corridors through the neighborhood, with the streets that border it making up the primary avenues of travel.

Survey Results

Morris College covers approximately 431 acres and contains 894 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 894 parcels, 56 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 56 structures, it was determined that there were 12 Good, 23 Fair, 17 Poor and 4 Hazardous structures, with an additional 54 parcels found to be vacant lots.

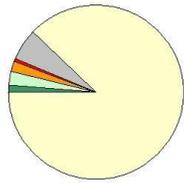
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 12 | 1.3% | 23 | 2.6% | 17 | 1.9% | 4 | 0.4% | 54 | 6.0% | 894 | 12.3% |

Morris College had a high number of Good and Fair as well as a moderate number of Poor and Hazard properties. The vacant structures are scattered around the neighborhood due to four distinctly different residential areas. The first is centered around Carolina Avenue and Milton Road, the second on Vining and West Moore Street, a third runs along Brown Street by Riley Field and the final around Corbet Street and Crescent Avenue. Most of the properties along Broad and North Main Street are commercial.

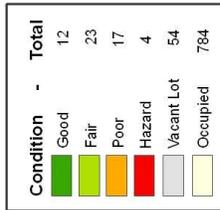
Overall, the Morris College has the eighth lowest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 87.7%.



Morris College



| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 12 |
| Fair | 23 |
| Poor | 17 |
| Hazard | 4 |
| Vacant Lot | 54 |
| Occupied | 784 |



1 inch = 865 feet



South Liberty

Location

South Liberty is a neighborhood with a mix of residential and commercial properties. It encompasses the western portion of the Central Business District as well as Liberty Street, one of the primary east to west travel corridors in the City. The neighborhood extends from Garden Street to Main Street east to west and south down to Bartlette Street. A very small section between Guignard and Purdy stretches north up to West Hampton Avenue.

Survey Results

South Liberty covers approximately 300 acres and contains 699 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 699 parcels, 33 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 33 structures, it was determined that there were 1 Good, 17 Fair, 13 Poor and 2 Hazardous structures, with an additional 41 parcels found to be vacant lots.

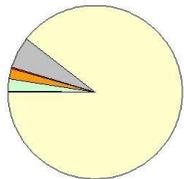
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 1 | 0.1% | 17 | 2.4% | 13 | 1.9% | 2 | 0.3% | 41 | 5.9% | 699 | 10.6% |

South Liberty has an average number of Poor and a low number of Hazard parcels. It also has an above average number of Fair parcels and Vacant lots. Most of the vacant parcels and lots are located in the heavily residential section of the neighborhood, between South Guignard Drive and Wright Street. The neighborhood has a large number of Vacant lots, which comprise over half of the Overall Vacant Percentage.

Overall, South Liberty has the ninth lowest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 89.4%.



South Liberty

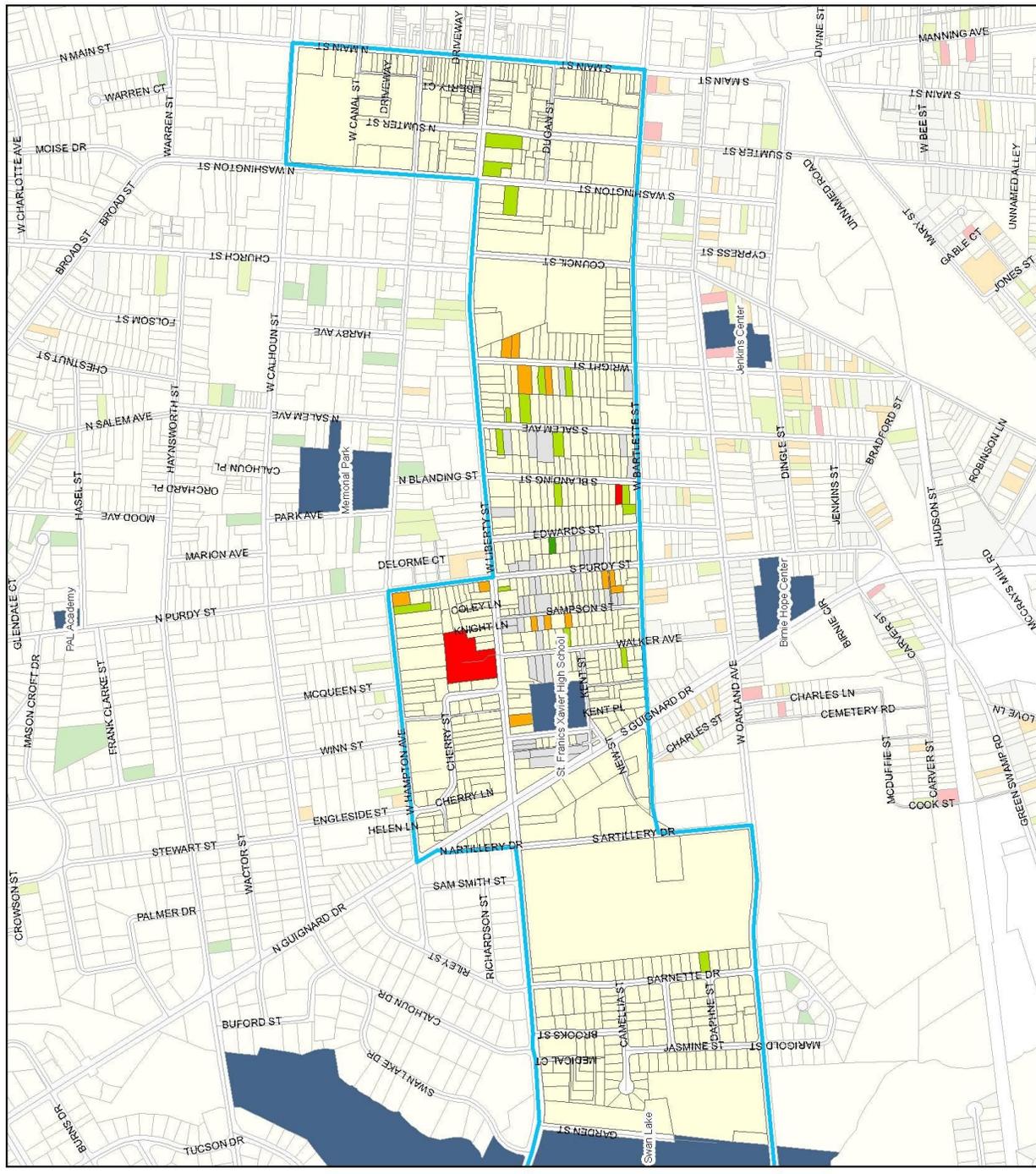


| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 0.1% |
| Fair | 2.4% |
| Poor | 1.9% |
| Hazard | 0.3% |
| Vacant Lots | 5.9% |
| Occupied | 89.4% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 1 |
| Fair | 17 |
| Poor | 13 |
| Hazard | 2 |
| Vacant Lot | 41 |
| Occupied | 625 |



1 inch = 917 feet



Loring

Location

Loring is a residential neighborhood that lies east of North Main Street between East Charlotte Avenue and East Calhoun Street. The primary east to west corridor is Loring Drive, which bisects the neighborhood. North Lafayette Drive serves as the neighborhood's main north-south corridor. Commercial properties are scattered along East Calhoun Street and North Main Street.

Survey Results

Loring covers approximately 395 acres and contains 714 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 714 parcels, 51 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 51 structures, it was determined that there was 20 Good, 25 Fair, 4 Poor and 2 Hazardous structures, with an additional 16 parcels found to be vacant lots.

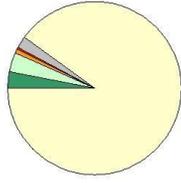
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 20 | 2.8% | 25 | 3.5% | 4 | 0.6% | 2 | 0.3% | 16 | 2.2% | 714 | 9.4% |

The majority of vacant buildings in Loring are Good and Fair structures, which make up over 6% of the total parcels in the neighborhood, while at the same time less than 1% of the neighborhood is either Poor or a Hazard. Overall, the neighborhood is in good condition relative to vacant residential structures; the two existing Hazard properties are generally removed from the majority of the residents. One is near the split of the Oswego Highway and East Calhoun Street, and the other is located on Harris Street, a dead end road off East Calhoun Street.

Overall, Loring has an above average Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 90.6%.



Loring



| Condition | Total | Percentage |
|-------------|-------|------------|
| Good | 20 | 3.0% |
| Fair | 25 | 3.8% |
| Poor | 4 | 0.6% |
| Hazard | 2 | 0.3% |
| Vacant Lots | 16 | 2.4% |
| Occupied | 647 | 89.9% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 20 |
| Fair | 25 |
| Poor | 4 |
| Hazard | 2 |
| Vacant Lot | 16 |
| Occupied | 647 |



1 inch = 697 feet



Swan Lake

Location

Swan Lake is a residential neighborhood that stretches between Broad Street in the north and West Hampton Avenue and West Liberty Street in the south, and from Swan Lake to North Purdy Street east to west. The properties that reside along Broad Street are primarily commercial. Haynsworth bisects the neighborhood and provides a major east-west travel corridor.

Survey Results

Swan Lake covers approximately 155 acres and contains 457 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 457 parcels, 28 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 28 structures, it was determined that there were 5 Good, 11 Fair, 10 Poor and 2 Hazardous structures, with an additional 10 parcels found to be vacant lots.

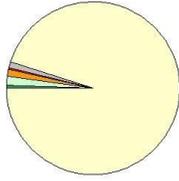
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 5 | 1.1% | 11 | 2.4% | 10 | 2.2% | 2 | 0.4% | 10 | 2.2% | 457 | 8.3% |

Due to its small number of total parcels, Swan Lake has a slightly above average percentage of Poor, Fair and Good structures. The neighborhood is primarily single-family housing with the parcels that are Poor, Hazard and Vacant lots clustered on three dead end streets in the northeastern portion of the neighborhood along Broad Street.

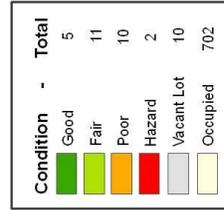
Overall, Swan Lake has an above average Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 91.7%.



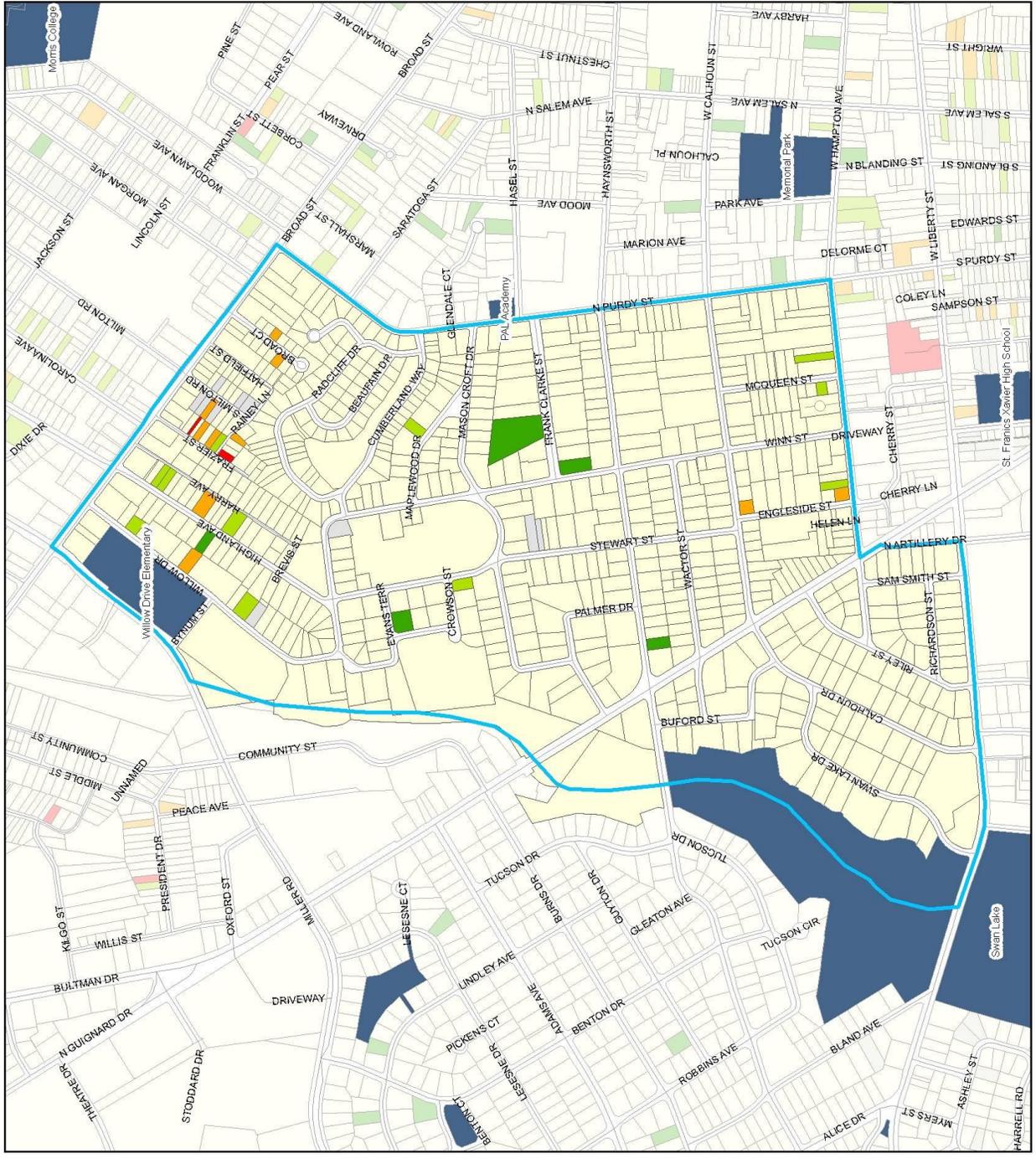
Swan Lake



| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 5 |
| Fair | 11 |
| Poor | 10 |
| Hazard | 2 |
| Vacant Lot | 10 |
| Occupied | 702 |



1 inch = 889 feet



Folsom Park

Location

Folsom Park is primarily a mixed-use area with a few smaller residential sections south of the Sumter Mall between the South Pike and Broad Street. Its southernmost extent reaches to Carolina Avenue, and much of the neighborhood's residential area centers on Miller Road and North Wise Drive, with commercial properties dominating most of the area along Broad Street. Another large portion of the neighborhood lies to the north around Jefferson Road and Electric Drive, an industrial area that lies outside of the City limits.

Survey Results

Folsom Park covers approximately 873 acres and contains 854 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 854 parcels, 39 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 39 structures, it was determined that there were 6 Good, 12 Fair, 18 Poor and 3 Hazardous structures, with an additional 17 parcels found to be vacant lots.

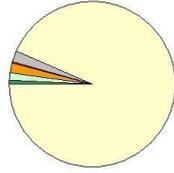
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 6 | 0.7% | 12 | 1.4% | 18 | 2.1% | 3 | 0.4% | 17 | 2.0% | 854 | 6.6% |

Folsom Park has a low number of Hazard parcels, although it does have a high concentration of Poor quality vacant and abandoned properties along and just behind Miller Road, many of which are multifamily residences that have fallen into disrepair. Most of the properties in this area that were found to be vacant or abandoned were residential, with only a few vacant commercial properties. It also has a low number of Vacant parcels, mostly due to the commercial nature of the neighborhood.

Overall, Folsom park has a high Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 93.4%.



Folsom Park

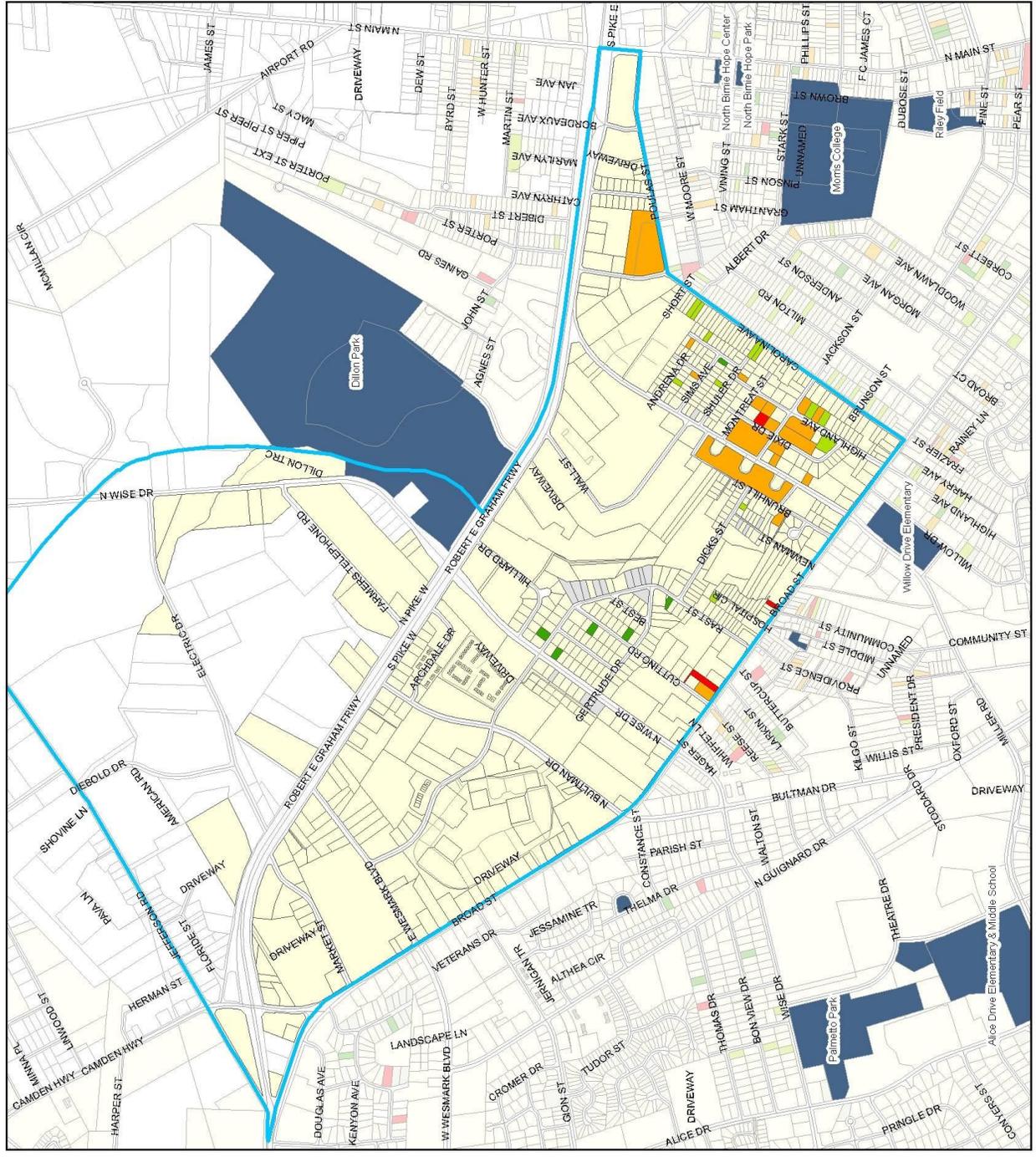


| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 6 |
| Fair | 12 |
| Poor | 18 |
| Hazard | 3 |
| Vacant Lot | 17 |
| Occupied | 788 |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 6 |
| Fair | 12 |
| Poor | 18 |
| Hazard | 3 |
| Vacant Lot | 17 |
| Occupied | 788 |



1 inch = 1,454 feet



Crosswell

Location

Crosswell is a residential neighborhood in the immediate area surrounding the Crosswell Drive Elementary School and Crosswell Park. It runs north and east of the school up to the South Pike. North Lafayette serves as the primary north-south corridor through the neighborhood, with many small east-west roads like Poinsette, Crosswell and Wilson Street. The neighborhood is delineated on the east by the Oswego Highway and to the south by East Charlotte Avenue, while North Main Street marks its westernmost extent.

Survey Results

Crosswell covers approximately 651 acres and contains 997 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 997 parcels, 36 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 36 structures, it was determined that there were 8 Good, 12 Fair, 7 Poor and 4 Hazardous structures with an additional 26 parcels found to be vacant lots.

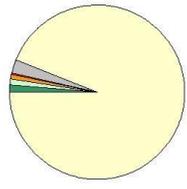
| Good | Fair | Poor | Hazard | Vacant | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|--------|--------|-------|------------------|
| 13 | 12 | 7 | 4 | 26 | 997 | 6.2% |

Crosswell had a slightly above average number of Good properties and a slightly below average number of Fair, Poor, and Hazard properties, and a low number of Vacant lots. It is a relatively homogenous neighborhood with the exception of the properties along East Moore Street in the north and the parcels west of North Lafayette Drive, which have a higher percentage of Poor and Hazard parcels.

Overall, the neighborhood has the eighth highest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 93.8%.



Crosswell

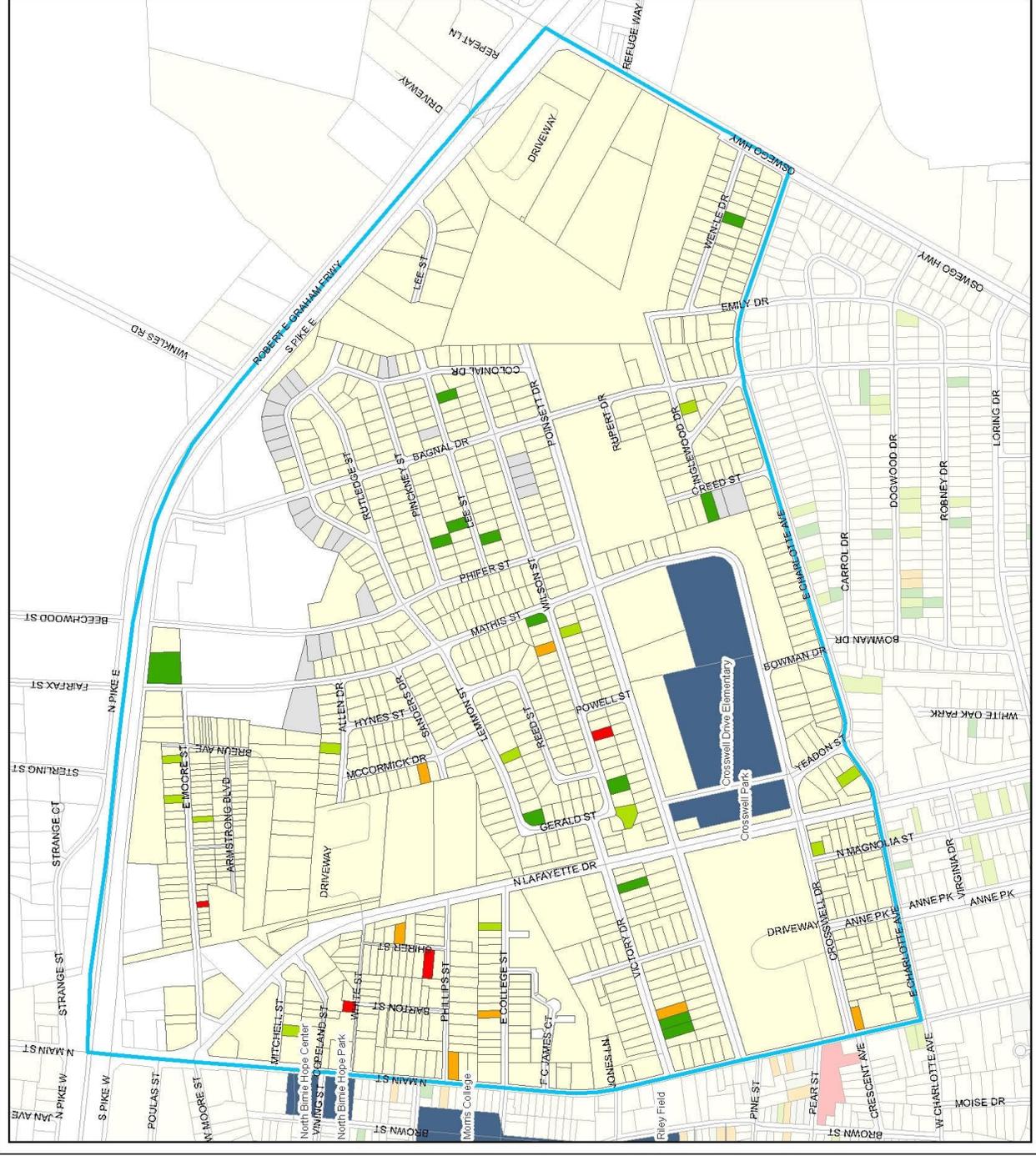


| Condition | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 13 |
| Fair | 12 |
| Poor | 7 |
| Hazard | 4 |
| Vacant Lots | 26 |
| Occupied | 93.8% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 13 |
| Fair | 12 |
| Poor | 7 |
| Hazard | 4 |
| Vacant Lot | 26 |
| Occupied | 935 |



1 inch = 842 feet



Mullberry

Location

Mullberry is a residential neighborhood that lies east of Dillon Park, extending to North Main Street, and reaching southward to the North Pike. Much of the rest of the neighborhood lies outside the City limits or is commercial and industrial property.

Survey Results

Mullberry covers approximately 396 acres and contains 275 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 275 parcels, 17 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 17 structures, it was determined that there were 1 Good, 5 Fair, 7 Poor and 4 Hazardous structures, with 0 vacant lots.

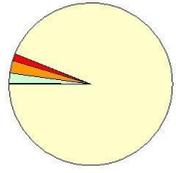
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 1 | 0.4% | 5 | 1.8% | 7 | 2.5% | 4 | 1.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 275 | 6.2% |

For its small size, Mullberry's 7 Poor and 4 Hazard properties represent an above average percentage of their total properties. It is one of only two neighborhoods that has no Vacant parcels. A high number of the abandoned or vacant properties in this neighborhood are manufactured homes.

Overall Mullberry has a high Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 93.8%, due in a large part to its lack of Vacant lots.



Mulberry

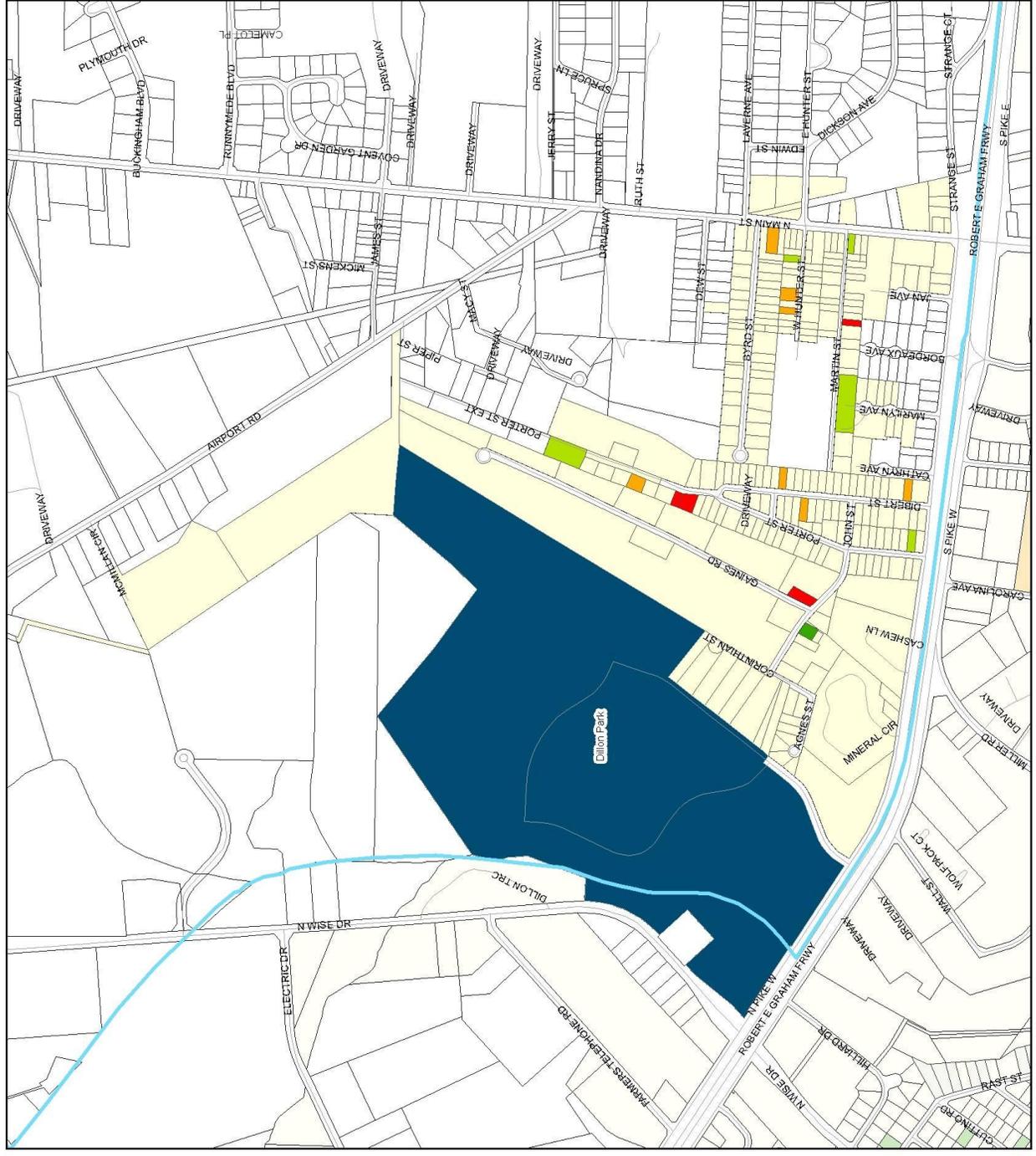


| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 0.4% |
| Fair | 1.8% |
| Poor | 2.5% |
| Hazard | 1.5% |
| Vacant Lots | 0.0% |
| Occupied | 93.8% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 1 |
| Fair | 5 |
| Poor | 7 |
| Hazard | 4 |
| Vacant Lot | 0 |
| Occupied | 258 |



1 inch = 945 feet



Hampton Park

Location

Hampton Park is a residential neighborhood that centers around Memorial Park in the Historic District of the City of Sumter. It is surrounded by Broad, North Purdy, West Liberty, and North Washington Street, with a small section that extends across North Washington Street between East Calhoun and Warren Street up to North Main near the Post Office. While essentially a residential neighborhood, the properties along Broad Street and North Washington Street are primarily commercial. West Calhoun Street and West Hampton Avenue are the neighborhood's primary east to west travel routes, while North Salem Avenue, Purdy Street, and Church Street make up the neighborhood's main north-south corridor.

Survey Results

Hampton Park covers approximately 291 acres and contains 601 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 601 parcels, 36 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 36 structures, it was determined that there were 14 Good, 18 Fair, 4 Poor and 0 Hazardous structures, with an additional 1 parcel found to be a vacant lot.

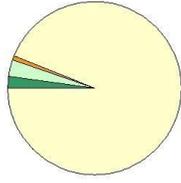
| Good | Fair | Poor | Hazard | Vacant | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|--------|--------|-------|------------------|
| 14 | 18 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 601 | 6.2% |

Hampton Park had a low number of Poor and Hazard structures. However, there were a fair number of Good and Fair vacant structures in the neighborhood. Only 1 vacant lot was identified. The vacant properties are spread fairly evenly across the neighborhood, with a slightly greater concentration around West Hampton Avenue and north of Hasel Street closer to Broad Street.

Overall Hampton Park has a high Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 93.8%.



Hampton Park

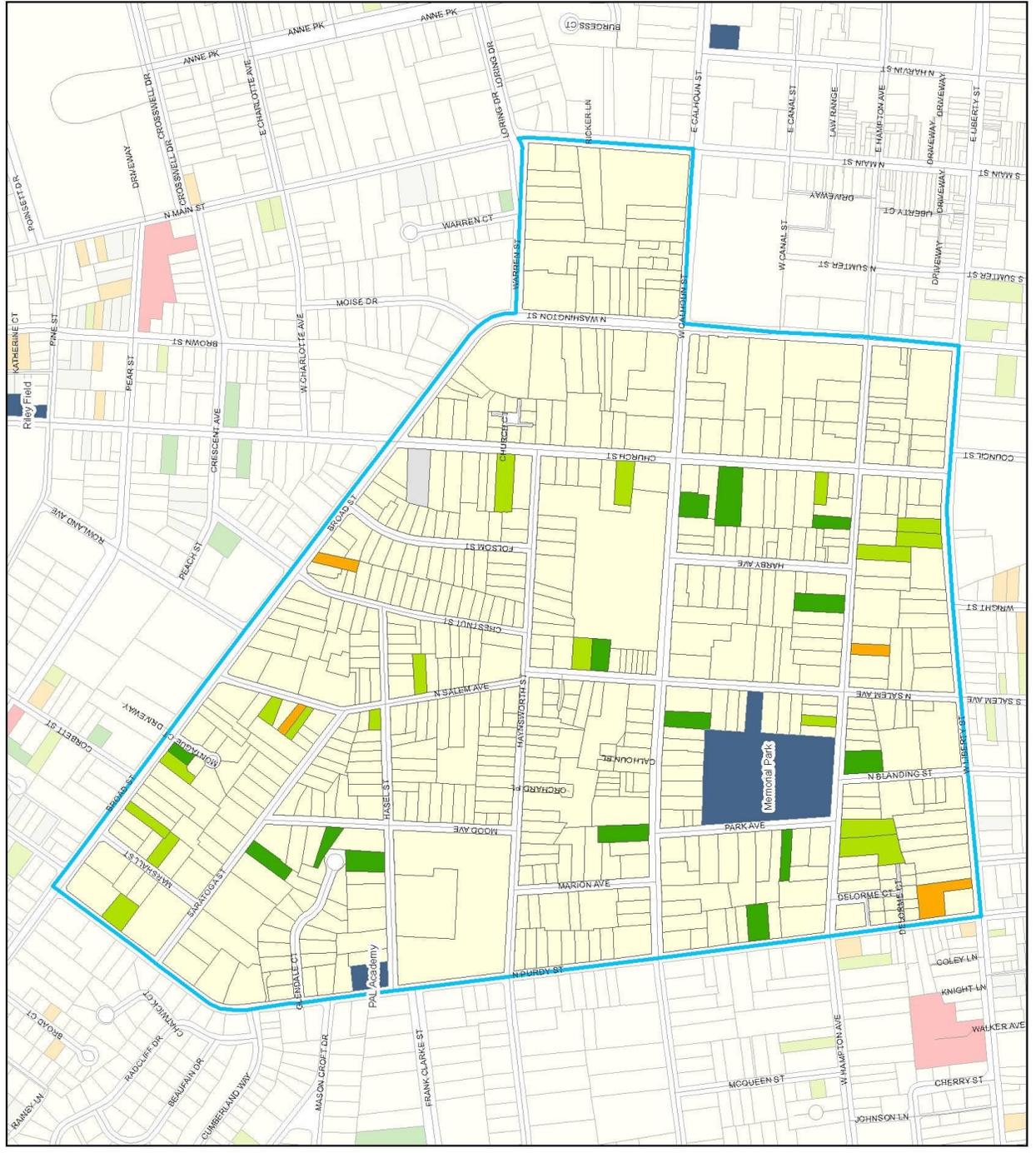


| Condition | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 14 |
| Fair | 18 |
| Poor | 4 |
| Hazard | 0 |
| Vacant Lots | 0.2% |
| Occupied | 93.8% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 14 |
| Fair | 18 |
| Poor | 4 |
| Hazard | 0 |
| Vacant Lot | 1 |
| Occupied | 564 |



1 inch = 630 feet



Palmetto Park

Location

Palmetto Park is primarily a residential neighborhood, however it also has a large number of commercial properties along the major streets that encompass it and run through it. This neighborhood is bordered by Broad Street to the north and east, Miller Road to the south, and Alice Drive to the west. It encompasses Alice Drive Elementary and Middle School, Central Carolina Technical College, and Palmetto Park. Wise Drive and West Wesmark Boulevard are main east to west transit corridors, while Guignard Drive and Bultman Drive bisects much of the neighborhood running north to south.

Survey Results

Palmetto Park covers approximately 880 acres and contains 1239 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 1239 parcels, 38 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 38 structures, it was determined that there were 7 Good, 12 Fair, 9 Poor and 10 Hazardous structures, with an additional 17 parcels found to be vacant lots.

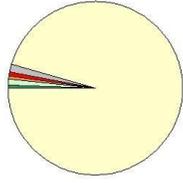
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 7 | 0.6% | 12 | 1.0% | 9 | 0.7% | 10 | 0.8% | 17 | 1.4% | 1,239 | 4.4% |

Palmetto Park has one of the highest numbers of Hazard structures in the City, yet low overall vacancy rate. Palmetto Park is comprised of a number of widely varying residential and commercial districts. East of Bultman Drive to Broad street lies an area of older single family houses that make up the majority of the Poor and Hazard structures found in this neighborhood. Newer brick faced homes make up the north side of Wise Drive which includes a number of houses that were found to be Fair or Good. North of this area up to West Wesmark Boulevard is comprised of Duplexes and other Multifamily apartments, which showed zero abandonment. North of West Wesmark lies a patch of older single-family residential homes that had a fair amount of vacant properties as well as vacant lots.

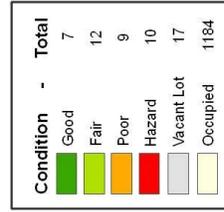
Overall Palmetto Park has the fifth highest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 95.6%.



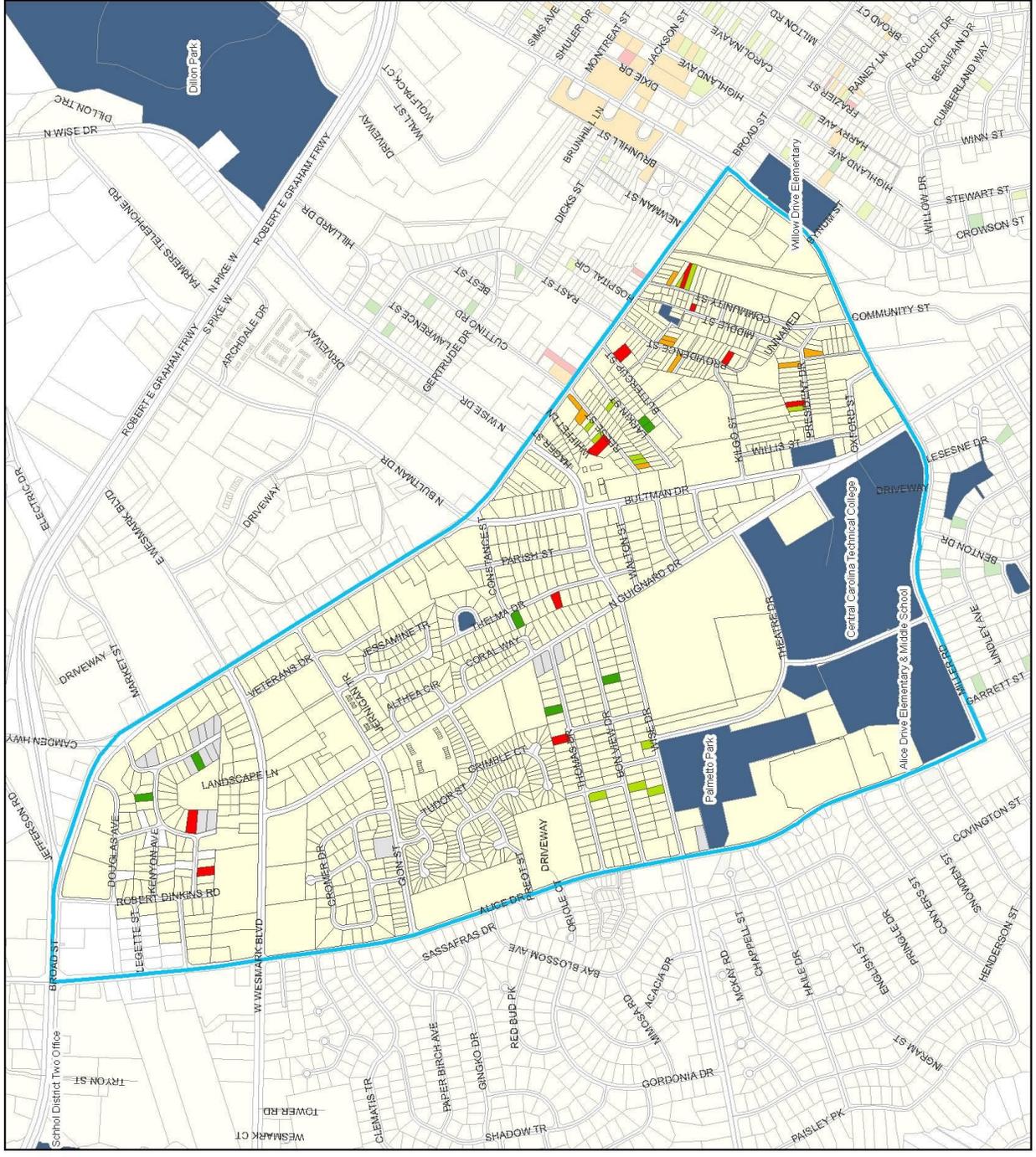
Palmetto Park



| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 7 |
| Fair | 12 |
| Poor | 9 |
| Hazard | 10 |
| Vacant Lot | 17 |
| Occupied | 1184 |



1 inch = 1,254 feet



Magnolia Harmony

Location

Magnolia Harmony is a primarily commercial and industrial neighborhood with a small residential area near Eastwood Park on Boulevard Road. It is bordered on the west by North Main Street and comprises the east half of the downtown Central Business District. East Calhoun Streets limits the neighborhood's northern extent, and the intersection of East Liberty and the Myrtle Beach Highway provide the neighborhood's eastern border.

Survey Results

Magnolia Harmony covers approximately 563 acres and contains 465 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 465 parcels, 13 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 13 structures, it was determined that there were 0 Good, 6 Fair, 4 Poor and 3 Hazardous structures, with an additional 5 parcels found to be vacant lots.

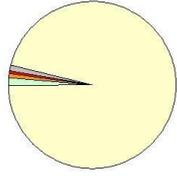
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 0 | 0.0% | 6 | 1.3% | 4 | 0.9% | 3 | 0.6% | 5 | 1.1% | 465 | 3.9% |

Although only a total of 6 Fair, 4 Poor and 3 Hazardous structures were found, they are heavily concentrated in the residential area of the neighborhood near Eastwood Park. Over half the vacant structures found in this part of the neighborhood were rated either as Poor or as Hazard.

Overall, Magnolia Harmony has a high Percentage of Occupied Parcels at 96.1%; however, this is mostly due to the high occupancy of the downtown area. The Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the residential area is closer to 70%.



Magnolia Harmony

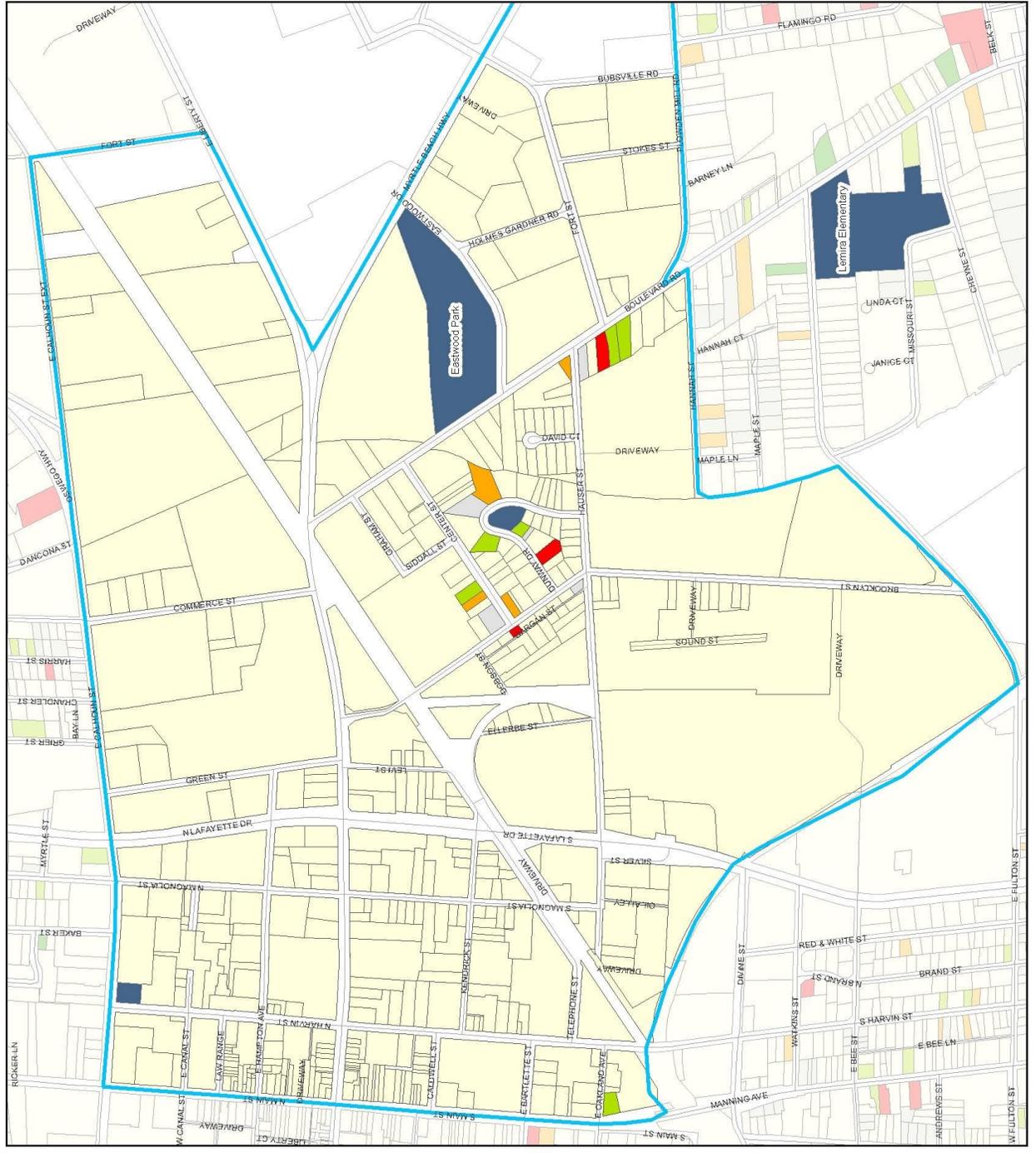


| Condition | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 0.0% |
| Fair | 1.3% |
| Poor | 0.9% |
| Hazard | 0.7% |
| Vacant Lots | 1.1% |
| Occupied | 96.0% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 0 |
| Fair | 6 |
| Poor | 4 |
| Hazard | 3 |
| Vacant Lot | 5 |
| Occupied | 447 |



1 inch = 753 feet



Millwood

Location

Millwood is a residential neighborhood that is bisected by West Oakland Avenue, with the majority of the parcels that lie within the City resting on the south side of the road. The neighborhood stretches from Old West Liberty Street and Pinewood Road in the west to the southern end of Swan Lake to the North and East. Its southern border ends at the CSX Railroad right of way.

Survey Results

Millwood covers approximately 197 acres and contains 335 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 335 parcels, 5 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 5 structures, it was determined that there were 2 Good, 3 Fair, 0 Poor and 0 Hazardous structures, with an additional 7 parcels found to be vacant lots.

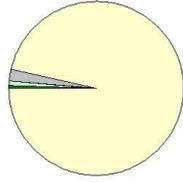
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 2 | 0.6% | 3 | 0.9% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 2.1% | 335 | 3.6% |

Millwood has a very small total number of Vacant or Abandoned properties, all of which were either Good or Fair. It also had only 7 Vacant lots.

Overall Millwood has the third highest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 96.7%.



Millwood

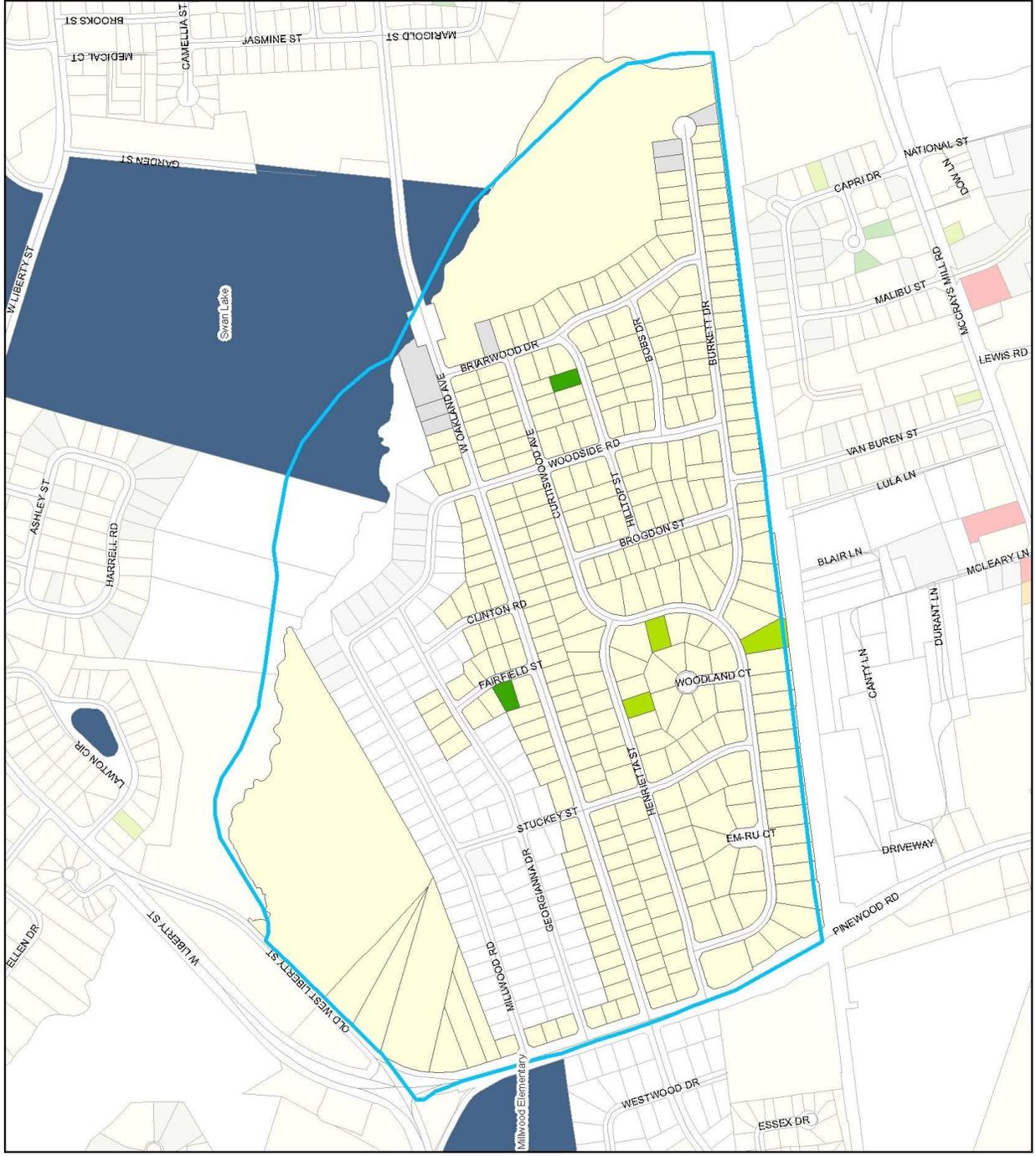


| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 0.6% |
| Fair | 0.9% |
| Poor | 0.0% |
| Hazard | 0.0% |
| Vacant Lots | 2.1% |
| Occupied | 96.4% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 2 |
| Fair | 3 |
| Poor | 0 |
| Hazard | 0 |
| Vacant Lot | 7 |
| Occupied | 323 |



1 inch = 638 feet



Second Mill

Location

Second Mill is a residential neighborhood that starts on the west side of Alice Drive and extends to Second Mill Pond, and runs from Wise Drive down across West Liberty Street to the south end of Swan Lake.

Survey Results

Second Mill covers approximately 637 acres and contains 1012 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 1012 parcels, 6 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 6 structures, it was determined that there were 4 Good, 2 Fair, 0 Poor and 0 Hazardous structures, with an additional 15 parcels found to be vacant lots.

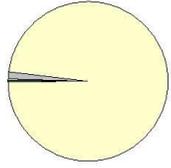
| Good | | Fair | | Poor | | Hazard | | Vacant | | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|------------------|
| 4 | 0.4% | 2 | 0.2% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 15 | 1.5% | 1,012 | 2.1% |

This neighborhood has the lowest number of vacant houses, and all were Good or Fair. Only the 15 Vacant lots in the neighborhood caused it to have the second lowest overall vacant percentage. All of the vacant properties are located in the southern portion of the neighborhood, below Baldwin Drive, with all the Vacant lots residing south of West Liberty Street.

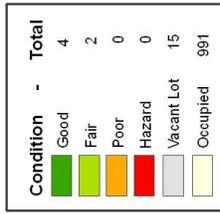
Overall Second Mill has the second highest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 97.9%.



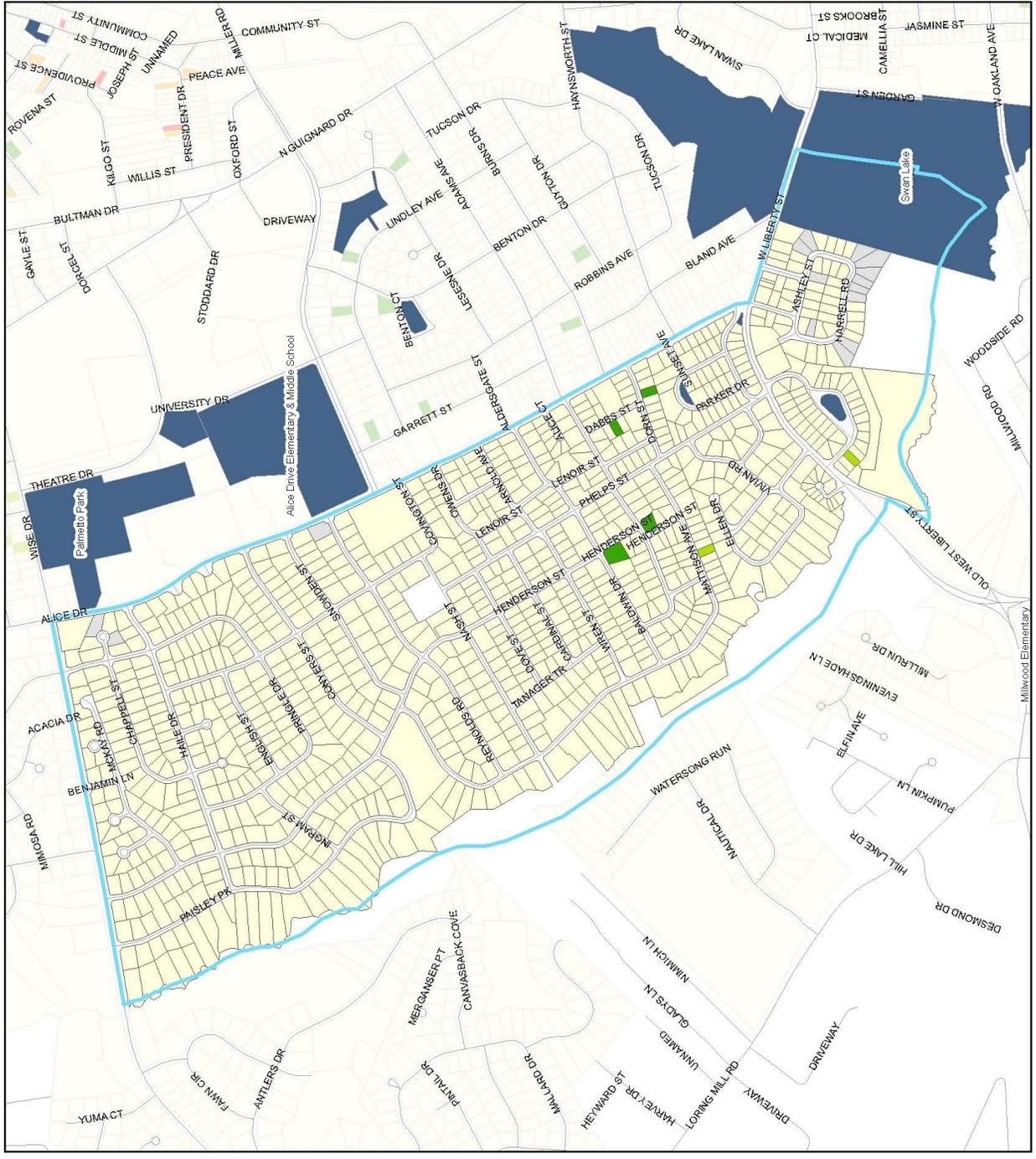
Second Mill



| Condition | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 0.4% |
| Fair | 0.2% |
| Poor | 0.0% |
| Hazard | 0.0% |
| Vacant Lots | 1.5% |
| Occupied | 97.9% |



1 inch = 1,159 feet



Burns Downs

Location

Burns Downs is a residential neighborhood that begins just below Alice Drive Elementary and Middle School and Central Carolina Technical College and extends south to Swan Lake. Alice Drive marks the western border of the neighborhood and it spills over into commercial properties along Guignard Drive and Miller Road to the east. Adams Avenue and Haynsworth Street are the neighborhood's primary east to west corridors, while Benton Drive and Robbins Avenue serve as main north to south routes through the neighborhood.

Survey Results

Burns Downs covers approximately 333 acres and contains 484 parcels that lie within the City of Sumter. Of the 484 parcels, 8 had structures found to be vacant or abandoned. Of those 8 structures, it was determined that there were 8 Good, 0 Fair, 0 Poor, and 0 Hazardous structures, with an additional 0 parcels found to be vacant lots

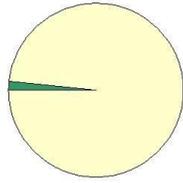
| Good | Fair | Poor | Hazard | Vacant | Total | Overall Vacant % |
|------|------|------|--------|--------|-------|------------------|
| 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 484 | 1.7% |

Overall Burns Downs has the highest Percentage of Occupied Parcels in the City of Sumter at 98.3%, only 8 structures were found to Vacant, and they were all classified as Good. It was also one of two neighborhoods in the survey to have 0 Vacant lots.

All of the properties found were in Good condition and most were located north of Adams Avenue.



Burns Downs

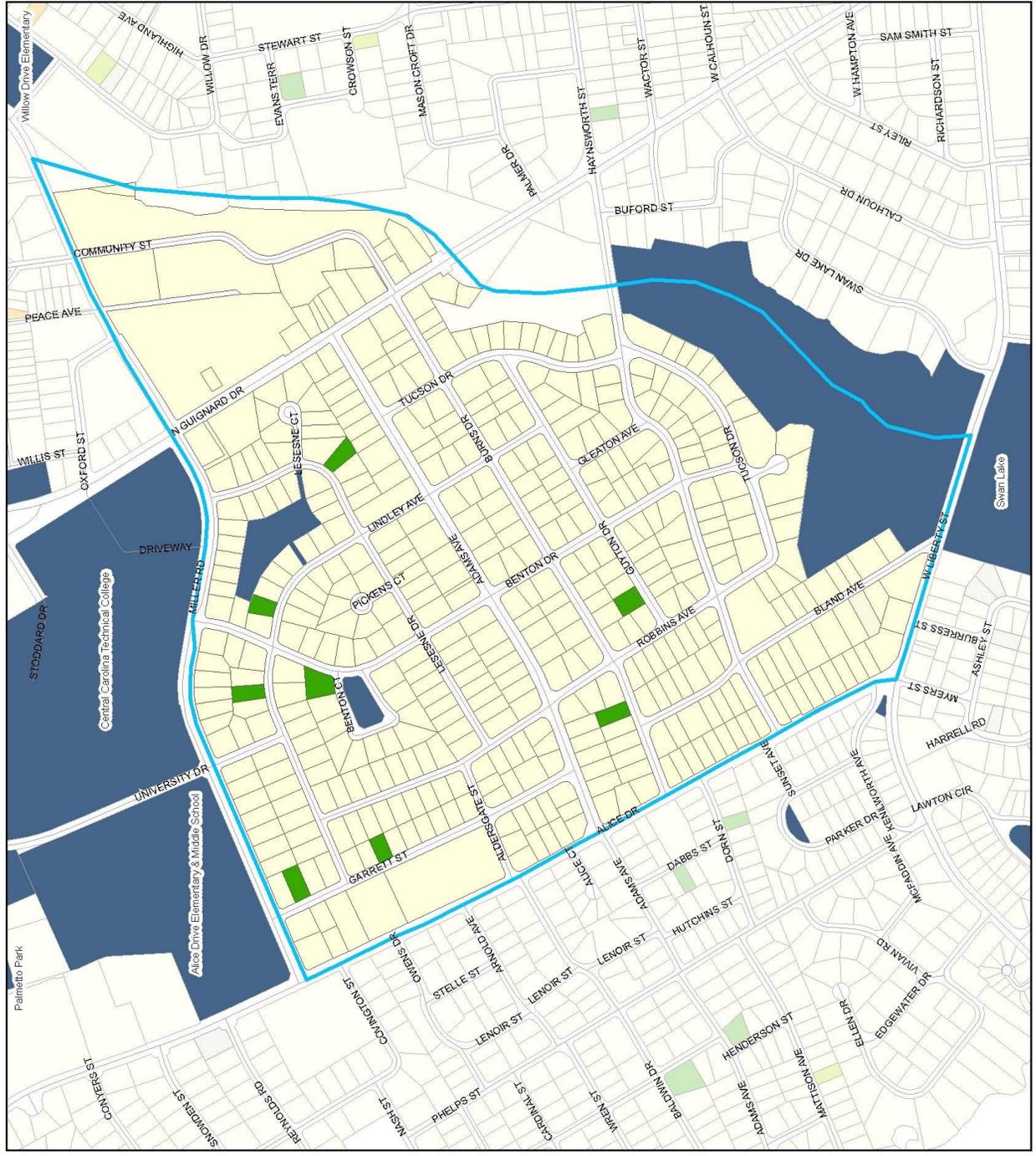


| Condition | Total |
|-------------|-------|
| Good | 1.7% |
| Fair | 0.0% |
| Poor | 0.0% |
| Hazard | 0.0% |
| Vacant Lots | 0.0% |
| Occupied | 98.3% |

| Condition | Total |
|------------|-------|
| Good | 8 |
| Fair | 0 |
| Poor | 0 |
| Hazard | 0 |
| Vacant Lot | 0 |
| Occupied | 476 |



1 inch = 727 feet



Conclusion

There is uneven distribution of vacant and abandoned housing in the City of Sumter. Neighborhoods such as Bates, Stone Hill, and Savage Glover in South Sumter have a widespread, disproportionately higher number of not only vacant properties, but also those properties that are in poor condition or that potentially pose a hazard to residents. Other neighborhoods such as Palmetto Park, Folsom Park, Magnolia Harmony, and Swan Lake have lower overall vacancy rates with localized areas that exhibited higher than average quantities of vacant or abandoned properties. Neighborhoods like Second Mill, Burns Downs, and Millwood had over 96% of their parcels occupied.

Parks and schools were not a good indicator of overall stability of housing in a neighborhood. Morris College is a good example of a neighborhood with an above average number of vacant properties, even though it boasts Morris College, North Birnie Hope Center, North Birnie Hope Park and Riley Field. The same can be said for the neighborhood of Palmetto Park, where the greatest number of vacant properties are all in close proximity to Central Carolina Technical College, Alice Drive Elementary and Middle School, and the sports complex at Palmetto Park.

Although less offensive and obvious to the eyes, the impact of vacant lots is an important factor to consider. Just because a lot is vacant does not mean that it does not need to be cared for, and more than likely it is not. Vacant lots can become overgrown and present areas for snakes, vermin and the collection of trash. They also create disruptions in neighborhoods, creating dead spaces between neighbors. At the very worst, they indicate an area that is being over served and under utilized. South Sumter for example has a greater than average number of vacant lots, each of which have connections to public services such as sewer, electricity, postal delivery and are along established garbage routes. These services are not being utilized to their fullest extent due to the amount of open space that is being served. Both time and energy is being wasted by having to drive past three vacant lots in order to get to the next mailbox, as well as having to maintain all the roads between them.

Even though this study did not attempt to quantify any substandard housing that people are currently living in, it can be assumed that those places that have an above average number of vacant or abandoned property in poor condition will also have a better than average number of occupied residential properties in poor condition as well.

Comments

This survey is a snapshot of the conditions of the housing in Sumter at this period in time and is by no means static. Even as this report was being compiled and written, vacant houses are becoming occupied, abandoned buildings are being torn down, and new houses are joining the ranks of vacant and abandoned buildings in the City of Sumter.

Next Steps

It would be a disservice to conclude the report without some consideration of potential options for the City. We are not alone, as cities nationwide deal with identical vacant housing issues and there is a wealth of best practices in which to reference. Research and experience suggest that the following options, among many others, be explored further:

1. **Directed Codes Enforcement.** Code enforcement plays a critical role in identifying, managing, and resolving property maintenance violations which span from repair to demolition. The overwhelming majority of these properties represent a code enforcement violation or potential violation of some type. Most, likely contain multiple violations (abandoned houses usually do not have manicured front yards!). There are 1,572 parcels identified in this study which are vacant or abandoned or both. According to the Director of Building, Steve Campbell, that represents a significant stand alone burden for codes enforcement—on an annual basis, 30% of current resource capacity. Divided among three current officers, each absorbs 524 cases a piece. For reference, in the study area alone (which represents a higher than average of code enforcement activity already), there are an estimated 13,518 total parcels.

Additional codes enforcement resources are necessary. Those resources go beyond simple manpower. As recommended by the Planning Department and Building Department respectively, amendments to local laws are necessary to better address property maintenance, estate/heir properties, landlord responsibility, registry of properties, and local contacts. Moreover, the Court system must help prioritize these enforcement measures.

2. **Land Bank Initiatives.** The City can play a major role by aggressively pursuing vacant property through purchase, foreclosures, and delinquent tax sales. Here, the vacant and abandoned property is seen as an asset for the City and community. Controlling vacant land helps the City to potentially direct new development to certain areas and to strike partnerships with public and private stakeholders alike. There are growing examples nationwide of this approach in places like Dallas and Youngstown Ohio.
3. **Open Spaces.** Abandoned lots are opportunities for parks, community gardens, natural habitat reclamation, or greenbelt connectivity. The green spaces are valuable amenities for neighborhoods, especially with community buy-in. Capitalizing on an enhanced open space network. These spaces can even be temporary in nature, returning to developed parcels when the market dictates. Many vacant lots are located in flood prone areas—some in the floodplain. These lots should be encouraged to go back to natural or open space uses.

-
4. **Demolition Program.** The City demolition program has been effective in removing dilapidated and unsafe structures. Since 2002, 264 structures have been removed from our neighborhoods using Community Development Block Grant funding. This program should continue to be supported. However, this program must be seen as a last resort. Effective interdiction, earlier in the process, may allow more buildings to be saved, and repaired. Moreover, demolition should be supported by a second phase—redevelopment. Without redevelopment, we create more vacant lots, with their own negative impacts on neighborhoods.
 5. **Redevelopment.** The single best solution is redevelopment of the vacant parcels. Redevelopment stabilizes our neighborhoods, breathes life into our neighborhoods—helping to reduce crime and enforcement violations. However, encouraging redevelopment and creating a marketplace for redevelopment are the most difficult of challenges. Tax incentives, zoning practice, and direct investment are some of the tools that can be employed. Redevelopment success requires a public discussion by the community-- public, private, community groups, not-for-profits—all have some role to play.
 6. **De-Annexation.** One impact of abandonment is that neighborhoods become less dense. Where urban and suburban neighborhoods normally contain 2-4 units per acre, many Sumter neighborhoods contain below 2 units per acre. This is in relevant part due to abandoned and vacant parcels. Frankly, these are not typical suburban densities. This impacts the provision of services by raising some of the costs of public services such as water-sewer delivery, police and fire protection, and sanitation. The lower the density, the less efficient the provision of public services.

Some cities nationwide are consider de-annexing portions of their cities which have been abandoned or are overwhelmingly blighted—where the costs of providing public services are no longer efficient or effective. These “shrinking” cities are focusing on services from a cost-effective perspective.