Pickens CDBG Village Renaissance

Revitalization Plan for

The Griffin Ebenezer Neighborhood

February, 2012

South Carolina CDBG Village Renaissance Award: 4-V-10-008

Table of Contents

Disclaimer v

Executive Summary vii

Section I: Introduction to Grant Process 3

The Village Renaissance Grant Award 4

The Citizen-Driven Planning Process 6

City Council Updates 6

Neighborhood-Wide "Open House" Events 6

The Neighborhood Advisory Committee 8

Section II: Neighborhood History, Condition and Location 11

History of the Neighborhood South of Main Street 12

The Neighborhood Today: General Challenges and Opportunities 13

Financial Condition 13

Aesthetic Condition 14

Location and Proximity to Resources 15

Land Use Overview 16

Gateway Corridor Overlay District 18

Ordinance on Future Mobile Homes 18

Section III: Neighborhood Involvement and Interaction 19

Resident Feedback on Neighborhood Involvement and Interaction 20

Neighborhood Buy-In and Ownership 21

Neighborhood Organization: Pickens Community in Action 21

Creating a Neighborhood "Brand" 22

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Involvement & Interaction 23

Section IV: Neighborhood Crime 25

Resident Feedback on Neighborhood Crime 26

Crime Data from the Pickens Police Department 27

By Type and Year 27

By Crime Category 28

By Street 29

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Crime 30

Section V: Neighborhood Housing and Physical Appearance 31
Resident Feedback on Neighborhood Housing and Physical Appearance 32
Housing Data from the Windshield Assessment 34
Sufficient External Condition 34
Minor Repair 34
Major Repair 34
Proposed Target Area Map for CDBG Housing Improvements 35
Photographic Display of Housing Condition 37
Potential Demolition Homes in the Study Area 38
Mobile Homes 38
On-Going Efforts to Address Affordable Housing 40
Allen Temple Community and Economic Development Corporation 40
Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church 41
Vacant Lots 41
Code Enforcement 41
Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Housing and Physical Appearance 42
Section VI: Neighborhood Public Facilities 43
Resident Feedback on Public Facilities 44
Study Area Sidewalks 45
Study Area Street Lights 48
Public Places for Meeting and Recreation 50
Potential Location for a Neighborhood Park 51
Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Public Facilities 53
Section VII: Neighborhood Infrastructure 54
Resident Feedback on Infrastructure 55
Professional Assessment of Infrastructure 55
Water 56
Sewer 56
Drainage 56
Roads 56
Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Infrastructure 57
Section VIII: Conclusion 58

Section IX: Summary List of Strategic Plans by Topic 60
Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Involvement & Interaction 61
Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Crime 62
Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Housing and Physical Appearance 63
Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Public Facilities 64
Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Infrastructure 65
Appendix I: Open House Flier and Newspaper Advertisements 66
Appendix II: Residential Open House Survey and Results 70
Appendix III: Advisory Committee *Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats* (S.W.OT.) Analysis 76
Appendix IV: Environmental Review Record 78
Appendix V: Low-to-Moderate Income Survey Determination 80
Appendix VI: Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Prioritization 82

Disclaimer

This report was prepared with the support of the South Carolina Department of Commerce, Community Development Block Grant Program. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Commerce.

Assurances of Non-Discrimination (U.S. Department of Labor, Executive Order 11246, and Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act)

This report was prepared by the South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments working under contract for the City of Pickens. Preparation of this report was supported by the federally funded *Community Development Block Grant* program as administered by the South Carolina Department of Commerce – Grants Administration. Future projects outlined in this report may also be supported by the Community Development Block Grant program. As such, both the City of Pickens and the Appalachian Council of Governments will continue to carry out the plan in conformance with ***the Civil Rights Act and related laws that prohibit discrimination*** on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, age, or disability.

The City of Pickens and the Appalachian Council of Governments will also continue to work in conformance with ***Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended***, on projects supported by the Community Development Block Grant program. The City of Pickens and the Appalachian Council of Governments agree that no otherwise qualified individual with disabilities shall, solely by reason of his disability, be denied the benefits, or be subjected to discrimination including discrimination in employment, any program or activity that receives the benefits from federal Assistance.

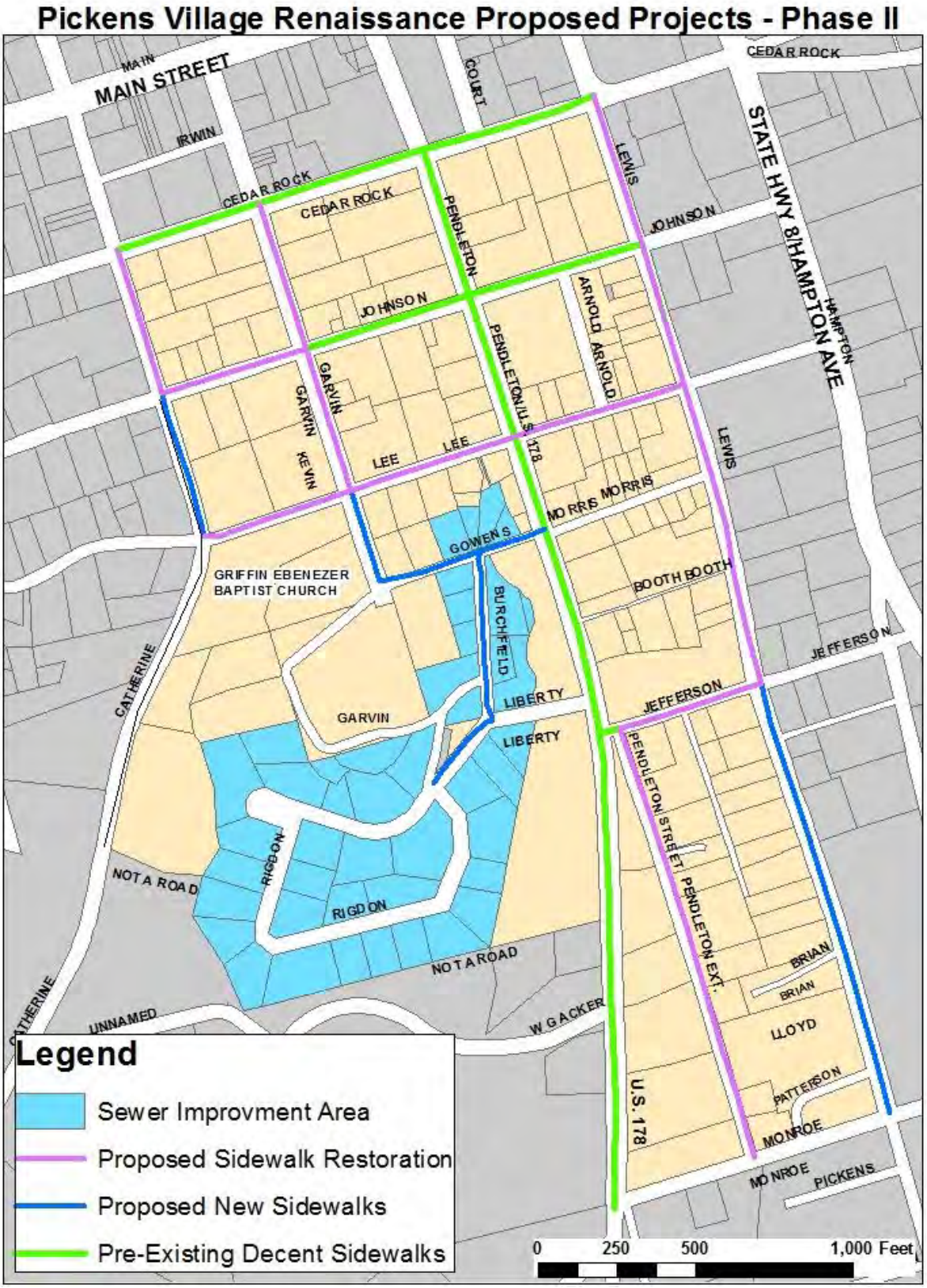
Executive Summary

The following *Strategic 5-Year Revitalization Plan* for the neighborhood south of Main Street in Pickens, South Carolina:

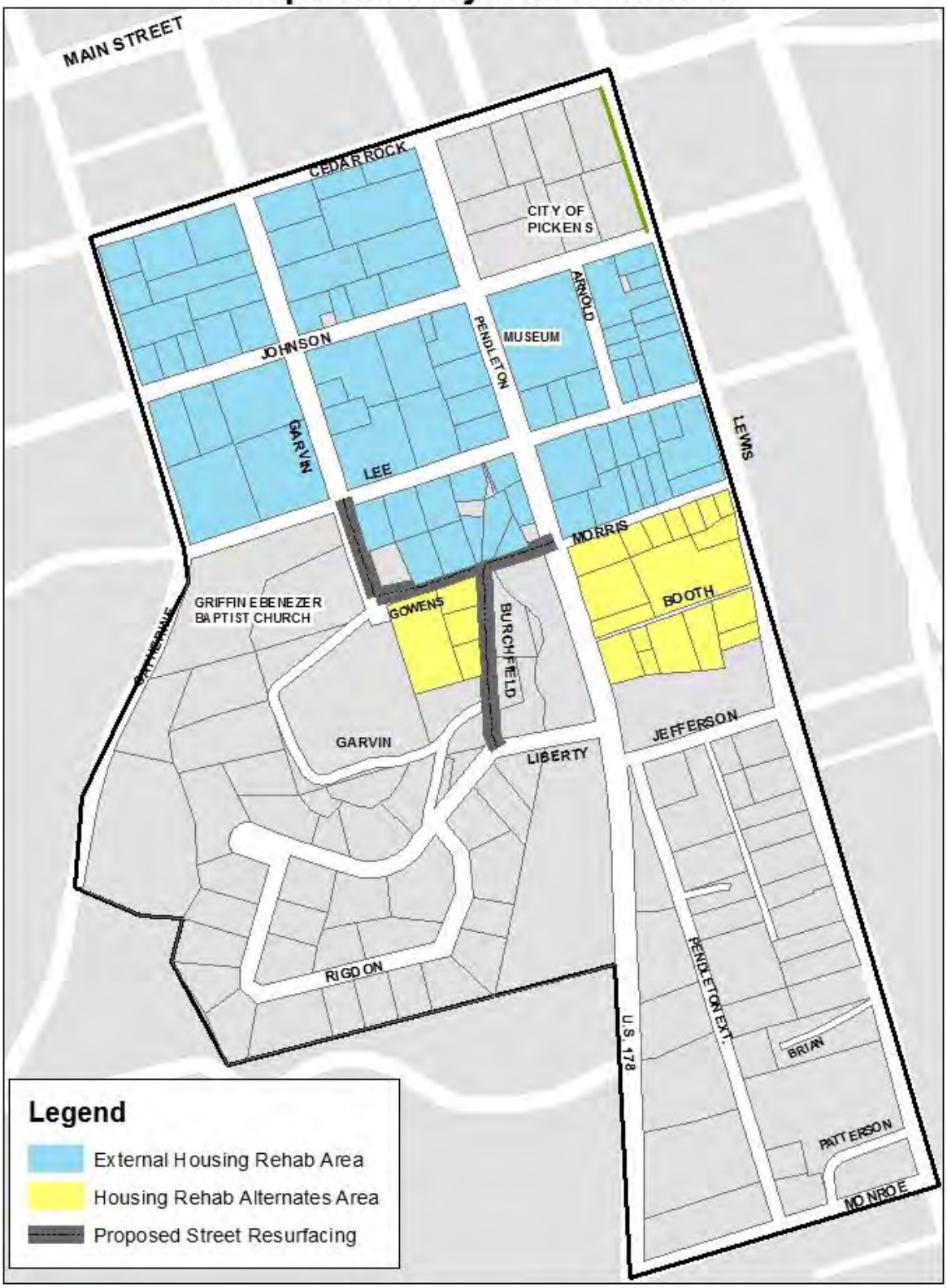
- Is the product of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Village Renaissance Planning Award provided to the City of Pickens by the South Carolina Department of Commerce (DOC) on December 6, 2010;
- Was prepared by the South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) who worked under contract for the City of Pickens;
- Is the product of a citizen-driven planning process which involved guidance from the entire neighborhood and from a neighborhood Advisory Committee which met monthly with ACOG and City staff throughout 2011;
- Describes the history, condition and location of the neighborhood, as well as its current problems associated with the condition of (1) infrastructure and public facilities, (2) crime & safety, (3) financial condition, and (4) affordable housing.
- Describes the strategic goals developed by the Neighborhood Advisory Committee as they correspond with the desired outcomes of the Village Renaissance program;
- Recommends comprehensive strategies, time frames, responsible parties, and partners for producing long-term revitalization solutions in the neighborhood.

The following page of this *Executive Summary* is a table of recommended capital projects for future CDBG Village Renaissance funding consideration. The order of projects shown in this table reflects a discussion between the City and DOC on aligning neighborhood needs with eligible fits of the SC CDBG program. These projects are only recommended at this point in time and are still subject to review by DOC in the form of a CDBG grant application submitted by the City on 02/29/2012. Following the table are two maps which display the proposed activities of each phase. The combination of projects outlined in this table intends to provide a comprehensive investment which will ultimately enable long-term revitalization in the Griffin Ebenezer neighborhood.

City of Pickens CDBG Village Renaissance Improvements: Cost Breakdown & Timeline			
Phase I			
Time Frame	**Activity**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**
2011	Citizen-Driving Neighborhood Planning Process	$22,000	$20,000 – CDBG $2,000 – City Match
Phase II			
Time Frame	**Activity**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**
2012 - 2013	Replacement of failing sewer lines in the Rigdon Circle section of the neighborhood, including all or portions of Liberty Dr., Gowens St., Birchfield St., and Garvin St.	$303,000	CDBG
	Dilapidated sidewalk restoration and select new sidewalk installation throughout neighborhood.	$162,000	CDBG
	Grant Administration	$35,000	CDBG
	Engineering, Inspection and Stormwater Mgmt	$50,000	City of Pickens
Total Phase II Cost Estimate		**$550,000**	**$500,000 – CDBG** **$50,000 – City**
Phase III			
Time Frame	**Activity**	**Cost Estimate**	**Funding Source**
2014-2015	External Housing Rehabilitation in northern section of neighborhood nearest Main St.	TBD	CDBG
	Select street resurfacing	TBD	CDBG
	Grant Administration	TBD	CDBG
	Housing Project Management	TBD	CDBG
	Project Engineering	TBD	City of Pickens
Total Phase III Cost Estimate		**TBD**	**CDBG** **City of Pickens**


Pickens Village Renaissance Proposed Projects - Phase II
MAIN STREET
MAIN
IRWIN
CEDAR ROCK
COURT
STATE HWY 8/HAMPTON AVE
HAMPTON
LEWIS
JOHNSON
PENDLETON
ARNOLD
GARVIN
KEVIN
LEE
PENDLETON/U.S. 178
MORRIS
GOWENS
GRIFFIN EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH
BOOTH
BURCHFIELD
JEFFERSON
LIBERTY
CATHERINE
RIGDON
NOT A ROAD
PENDLETON STREET, PENDLETON EXT.
BRIAN
LLOYD
PATTERSON
MONROE
PICKENS
U.S. 178
W GACKER
UNNAMED
Legend
Sewer Improvment Area
Proposed Sidewalk Restoration
Proposed New Sidewalks
Pre-Existing Decent Sidewalks
0
250
500
1,000 Feet

Pickens Village Renaissance
Proposed Projects - Phase III



Section I: Introduction to Grant Process

The Village Renaissance Grant Award

On December 6, 2010, the City of Pickens received a $20,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) award from the South Carolina Department of Commerce (DOC) for the purpose of producing a strategic five-year revitalization plan for the residential neighborhood directly south of Main Street. The City contracted with the South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) to help produce this plan.

The grant award falls under the DOC program entitled *Village Renaissance*, the purpose of which is "to assist in the development of sustainable communities through revitalization of in-town neighborhoods."[1] Successful local government recipients of these Village Renaissance grants apply on behalf of neighborhoods in need of revitalization which are adjacent to (within ½ mile of) the community's downtown or business center. The program involves three possible grant phases: (1) a neighborhood planning grant used to develop a five-year revitalization plan; (2) a subsequent 24-month "implementation" grant of up to $500,000 for construction activities identified in the Plan; and (3) another 24-month implementation grant of up to $500,000 for additional activities identified in the plan. The timeline below outlines the basic structure of three fully funded Village Renaissance grant phases from 2011 through 2015 for Pickens, though it is important to note that funding for any phase is not guaranteed:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Citizen-driven plan development throughout year ($20K Grant)	Receive Phase II Implementation award ($500K)	Construction	Receive Phase III Implementation award ($500K)	Construction
Submit draft plan to SC DOC in November; submit final plan in December; close planning grant	Begin construction in spring 2012	Complete phase II construction; close grant award in December	Begin construction in spring 2014	Complete Phase III construction
Submit Phase II Grant Application for Implementation in December	Construction	Submit Phase III Grant Application for Implementation in December	Construction	Close grant award in December

The five-year revitalization planning grant (Phase I) and subsequent implementation grants (Phases II & III) aim to achieve the following revitalization outcomes:[2]

- Improve neighborhood involvement and interaction
- Provide neighborhood safety and pride
- Address infrastructure and public facilities needs
- Identify in-fill housing opportunities
- Improve physical appearance and property values
- Promote sustainability and conservation

[1] SC Department of Commerce Grants Administration – CDBG Application Guidelines, 2011-2012, pg. 7
[2] SC Department of Commerce Grants Administration – CDBG Application Guidelines, 2011-2012, pg. 8

In order to help achieve these neighborhood revitalization outcomes, the following table includes a list of possible funding activities for Phases II & III of the Village Renaissance program[3]:

Possible Areas of CDBG Village Renaissance Funding for Rounds II & III	
Public Facilities -Sidewalks -Security Lighting & Cameras -Police Substation -Technology -Public Service Centers designed to address crime risk -Walking Trails -Green Space -Landscaping	***Housing*** -Infrastructure/Other Activities to Support Workforce Housing -Painting of Exterior Facades or Minor Exterior Repairs -Exterior Improvements to increase energy efficiency -Demolition/Clearance of Vacant/Dilapidated Properties
Infrastructure -Water -Sewer -Drainage -Roads	***Public Services*** -Crime Watch Program -Drug or Gang Education, Awareness & Prevention Programs

Funded Activities

Selection of the activities to be funded over the possible Phase II and Phase III grant awards is the result of two processes: (1) the citizen-driven planning process of the Phase I grant, and (2) coordination and negotiation with DOC. Prior to submitting the completed Plan and the Phase II grant application at the end of Phase I, the local government recipient must submit to DOC a Draft Plan with a list of prioritized implementation projects. After reviewing the draft, DOC then makes its final recommendation to the local government about which projects make the best fit for possible Phase II and Phase III funding. Upon receiving these recommendations, the local government then moves forward with editing the final Revitalization Plan and submitting the recommended Phase II grant application. Assuming successful and timely completion of the Phase II implementation project (within 24 months), the local government may submit a competitive grant application for Phase III projects.

[3] SC Department of Commerce Grants Administration – CDBG Application Guidelines, 2011-2012, pg. 9

The Citizen-Driven Planning Process

Allowing citizens to guide the development of this Plan was a key priority for the City of Pickens. The citizen-driven planning process was executed at three different levels: (1) periodic updates provided by ACOG at Pickens City Council meetings, (2) two Neighborhood-wide "Open House" events, and (3) an Advisory Committee of neighborhood stakeholders which met monthly throughout 2011.

City Council Updates

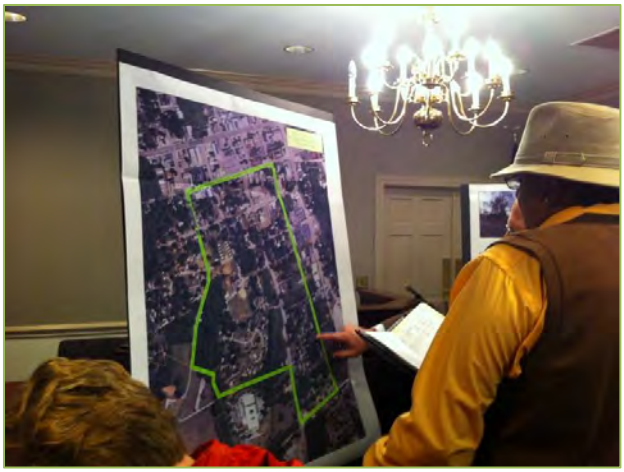
Pickens Mayor and City Council received updates on the Village Renaissance planning process at all of the following events which were advertised and open to the general public.

- January 13 –Regular City Council Meeting, grant award acceptance and program overview
- July 11 – Regular City Council Meeting, mid-year progress report
- October 17 – City Council Work Session, Draft Plan overview
- December – Regular City Council Meeting, review of Final Plan

Neighborhood-Wide "Open House" Events

In order to involve residents of the entire Study Area in the planning process, the City of Pickens held two publicly advertised "Open House" events. The first event was held on 01/26/11 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church. The historic African American church is located inside the Study Area at 450 Garvin Street and is a central meeting place for citizens of this neighborhood. For those residents who could not attend on this date, a second Open House was held at City Hall (also inside the Study Area) on 02/03/11. Fliers were sent to all neighborhood residents and property owners and the event was advertised on 01/19/11 in the *Pickens County Courier*.[4]

[4] See Appendix I for copy of flier and newspaper advertisements.



City officials welcomed attendees and a Village Renaissance program overview was provided by ACOG, complete with a large aerial map of the neighborhood and a large collage display of neighborhood images and revitalization concepts. A spirited town hall-style discussion took place about the neighborhood with many valuable comments and questions coming from residents.

A 3' x 4' print of the above collage was on display at the two Open House events. All but two of the photos were taken inside of the study area (the garden and revitalized gas station being the lone exceptions).

A survey on neighborhood issues was distributed to all Open House attendees.[5] In addition to the numerous "extra comments" that were hand-written by respondents, the survey included 28 total questions on the following topics:

- Neighborhood Involvement and Interaction
- Neighborhood Safety and Pride
- Neighborhood Infrastructure and Public Facilities
- Neighborhood Physical Appearance and Property Values
- Guiding the Future of the Neighborhood

The robust survey response from this Open House event provided the City and ACOG with invaluable, representative neighborhood data for the planning process. Throughout the course of this Plan, data from this survey will be referenced—particularly in regards to issue identification.

The Neighborhood Advisory Committee

The Pickens Mayor and City Council appointed an Advisory Committee of eight neighborhood stakeholders to guide the development of this Plan through regularly scheduled monthly meetings.

Name	Stake in the Neighborhood
Ms. Bonita Williams	Neighborhood Resident
Ms. Rosa Austin	Neighborhood Resident
Ms. Cathy Brazeale	Neighborhood Resident
Mr. Rodney Moon	Neighborhood Resident
Mr. Tommy Bray	Neighborhood Resident
Mr. Isaiah Scipio	Neighborhood Resident and Minister
Mr. Norman Rentz	Neighborhood Business Director (Canon Memorial Hospital)
Mr. Charlie Warth	Housing Non-Profit presently working in Study Area (Allen Temple Community and Economic Development Corporation)

The Advisory Committee met on the first Wednesday of each month throughout 2011. Each member is highly familiar with the neighborhood – whether they grew up there, live there presently, direct a business there, or direct a non-profit which is currently working there. Councilman Fletcher Perry, a lifelong Pickens resident and Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church member, encouraged Committee Members and served as a champion for this Village Renaissance effort on behalf of City Council. City Police and Administrative Staff also attended regularly to show support and to supply information.

Like the survey data provided in the neighborhood Open House, the Committee provided outstanding information which will be referenced throughout the course of this Plan. One particularly helpful

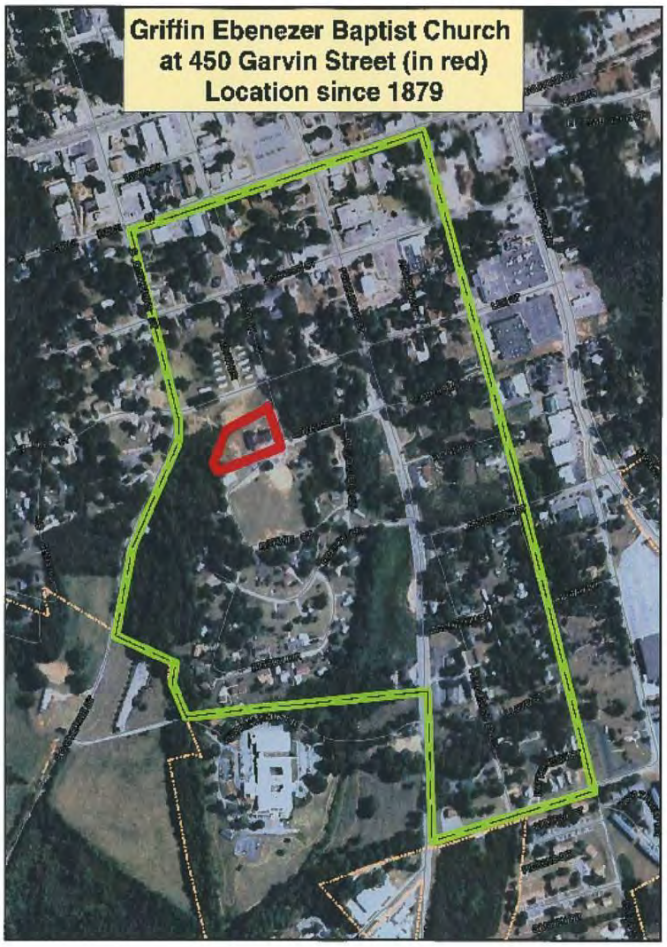
[5] See Appendix II for copy of the Village Renaissance survey and results.

activity the Committee completed was a "S.W.O.T. Analysis", which helped identify the neighborhood's greatest *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.* Below is a visual display of this analysis. The bigger the font of the words in the table, the more emphasis the Committee placed on that idea.

Pickens Village Renaissance Neighborhood S.W.O.T. Analysis	
Strengths The People (36) Layout & Location (12) Safe & Quiet (7) Neat, Clean & Green (4) Neighborhood/City/Police Relations (3)	***Weaknesses*** Roads, sidewalks, street lights (20) Education/Rec/Shopping/Job Opp's (16) Drugs & Crime (9) Infrastructure – water & drainage (9) Empty & Deteriorated Buildings/Houses (9) Residents not working together/trusting each other (4) Neighborhood/City/Police Relations (3)
Opportunities Increase Shopping/Recreation (18) Improve Housing Stock (10) Clean/Beautify Neighborhood (9) Improve neighborhood economy (6) Build neighborhood trust/pride/relationships (5) Reduce Crime & Drugs (3)	***Threats*** Crime, Disorderly Conduct, & Accountability (20) Drugs (15) Poor attitude and perception (10) Economic Impediments (jobs, health, training, etc.) (8) Deteriorated/Vacant Houses & Lots (6) Streets & Infrastructure (3)

Section II: Neighborhood History, Condition and Location

History of the Neighborhood South of Main Street



The history of the neighborhood just south of Main Street is just about as old as the incorporated City itself. The land was Cherokee Indian territory through the time of the American Revolution, after which it became inhabited by Scottish-Irish settlers who developed local businesses and farms. After being left destitute by the American Civil War, the land which is now Pickens became incorporated in 1868 when Elihu Griffin donated 40 acres for a Courthouse just north of the Study Area on what became Main Street. The County Courthouse still stands in that location today. Only three years later in 1871, newly emancipated African Americans established *Griffin-Ebenezer Baptist Church* within the Study Area at the intersection of Garvin St. and Johnson St. The church moved to its present location in 1879—only two blocks away at the intersection of Garvin St. and Gowens St. The history of this church is, in essence, the history of this neighborhood because it was the most notable development for residents south of Main Street. By default, the neighborhood around it became the African-American *side of town*.[6] Now a racially diverse neighborhood, the church continues to be its most central meeting place.

The church moved to its present location in 1879—only two blocks away at the intersection of Garvin St. and Gowens St. The history of this church is, in essence, the history of this neighborhood because it was the most notable development for residents south of Main Street.

[6] Historical facts taken from the book *Pickens: The Town and the First Baptist Church*, by Jane Boroughs Morris, published 1991.

The Neighborhood Today: General Challenges and Opportunities

Financial Condition

Through 1940, the local economy was based almost entirely on agriculture and primarily on the cotton industry. By the 1970's, however, a structural shift had taken hold. 99 manufacturing plants employed 15,000 residents in Pickens County, or roughly a quarter of the entire County population.[7] Like in the rest of the southeastern U.S., however, many of these plants were textile-based and eventually relocated to overseas destinations in the following decades.

Even in a rural area of the country with a comparatively high unemployment rate, the neighborhood does not compare favorably in its financial condition. Using its subscription to *ESRI,* the world's leader in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), ACOG ran a *Comparative Market Profile Analysis* of the neighborhood and its surrounding area. Below is a table of some key findings:

Comparative Market Profile of the Pickens Study Area and Surrounding Areas

2010 Data	*Study Area*	*Pickens*	*Pickens County*
Population	380	2,930	118,997
Age (median Yr 2010)	41.1 years	40.7 years	35.1 years
Race/Ethnicity (Yr 2010)	Caucasian – 63.6% AFAM – 32.7% Other – 3.7%	Caucasian – 81.1% AFAM – 15.3% Other – 3.6%	Caucasian – 88.6% AFAM – 7.1% Other – 4.3%
Owner Occupied Households	40.9%	53.3%	63.5%
Average Rent (Yr 2000)	$250 per Month	$320 per month	$409 per month
Median Household Income	$22,739	$33,663	$45,571
Median Home Value	$67,500	$78,438	$107,377
Per Capita Income	$15,732	$18,486	$21,644
Unemployment Rate, 16+ and in Labor Force	14.4%	13.8%	11.6%
Age 25+, no High School Diploma	29.8%	26%	18.5%

Source: ESRI forecasts for 2010 and 2015; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and housing.

In a door-to-door income survey executed during the application process for the Phase I Village Renaissance planning grant in September of 2010 and updated in January of 2012, 83% of Study Area residents qualified as being of "Low-to-Moderate Income" (LMI), according to U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards. LMI equals 80% or below of an area's median income.

[7] *Pickens County: A Brief History,* written for "*Pickens County Heritage"* by G. Anne Sherriff.

Aesthetic Condition

The aesthetic condition of the Study Area mirrors its financial condition. The neighborhood is primarily residential and the housing stock is aging quite rapidly. As noted above, there is little residential income to address maintenance and deterioration. 54.5% of the neighborhood houses were built in 1969 or before, while another 21.8% were built in 1979 or before. In sum, 76.3% of neighborhood homes are at least 30 years old, and most of them older. The median year in which all Study Area houses were constructed was 1968.[8]

Other concerning issues associated with housing appearance include the facts that home ownership went down by 3% (to 40%) while the vacancy rate went up by 4.7% (to 17.7%) over the last decade. Approximately 15% of the housing stock is made up of mobile homes which are dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Many of these mobile homes are in significantly poor physical condition.Vacant Lots

76.3% of neighborhood homes are at least 30 years old, and most of them older. The median year in which all Study Area houses were constructed was 1968.

One of many vacant houses in the Study Area.

Small trailer parks like this one on S. Lewis Street are located throughout the Study Area.

In addition to a general housing stock which is in need of aesthetic improvement, there are several empty and overgrown lots which also negatively affect neighborhood appearance. Such lots are scattered throughout the neighborhood and will be discussed in further detail in the *Housing and Phyical Appearance* section of this Plan.

[8] Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. All housing statistics cited in the "Aesthetic Condition" section of this report were taken from this source.

Location and Proximity to Resources

With respect to location, the Pickens Study Area was a great fit for the Village Renaissance grant program with its walk-able proximity to downtown and other important resources. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 28% of Study Area households do not have access to a vehicle – making the factor of *walking distance* an extremely important part of daily life[9]. With the exception of recreational amenities such as the Pickens YMCA and Hillcrest Memorial Park, the Study Area is situated in a geographically convenient place for residents who do not have automobile access.

Resource	Distance from Center of Study Area (miles)	Drive Time (min)	Walk Time (min)
Government Services			
Pickens City Hall	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens Post Office	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens Police Station	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens Fire Department	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens Village Library	0.5	1	10
Community Services			
Museum	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens YMCA	2.5	4	50
Social Services			
American Red Cross	0.3	1	6
Pickens Senior Center	1	2	16
Pickens County WIC Program	0.9	2	16
WINGS Program	0.8	1	14
Medical Services			
Cannon Memorial Hospital	0.2	1	3
Pickens Mental Health Clinic	0.5	1	10
Education Facilities			
Pickens Elementary School	0.7	2	14
Pickens Middle School	1.7	4	35
Pickens High School	0.6	2	12
Recreation			
Hillcrest Memorial Park	*1.9*	*4*	*39*
Outdoor Baseball Field/Basketball Goals at Griffin Ebenezer Church	Within Study Area	NA	NA

Note: Distance and transportation times are estimates generated by Google Maps from the center point of the Study Area.

[9] Source: ESRI forecasts for 2010; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing

In addition to the destinations listed above, there are some very exciting initiatives taking place in Pickens which will benefit Study Area residents:

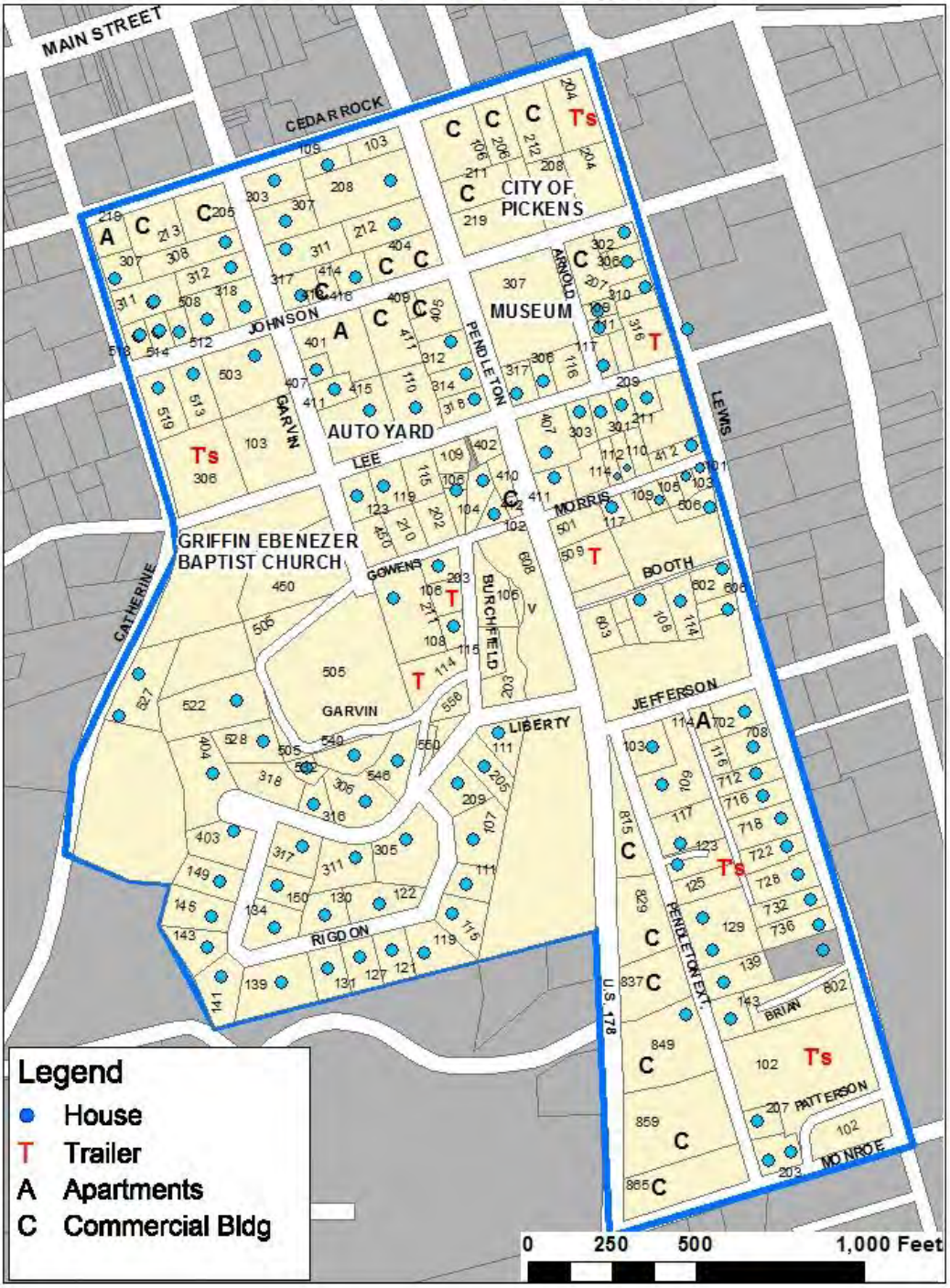
1. Downtown Pickens was recently designated as part of the national *Main Street Program*—a long-term committment which will lead to increased downtown revitalization and business activity;
2. *Town Center Park*, which is a prospective downtown development which will include a covered picnic shelter, walking trails around its perimeter, an amphitheater, a storm water retention pond & rain garden, and a main entrance with a fountain. While there is a Plan document in place for this park, the City is still searching for funding sources.

Land Use Overview

While the majority of the Study Area contains a combination of traditional stick built homes, mobile homes, and apartments, there are several commercial businesses and government offices in the northernmost section of the neighborhood along Cedar Rock Street and Johnson Street. These streets are an extension of downtown, each running parallel to Main Street from east to west and only one and two blocks south of it, respectively. They contain a mix of residential homes, commercial businesses, professional offices and government offices – including City Hall, the City Police and Fire Departments, and the Pickens County Museum.

Traveling south of Cedar Rock and Johnson Streets, one finds the remaining 80% of the Study Area to be primarily residential. The few exceptions include the large Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church property along Garvin Street, an auto yard which appears to be a towing business on Lee Street, and a row of six commercial lots near the southern border of the Study Area along U.S. Hwy 178. The following map displays the Study Area's current mix of land uses:

CURRENT LAND USE OF PICKENS STUDY AREA



Gateway Corridor Overlay District

U.S. Highway 178 (Pendleton Street) splits the Study Area in half from east to west as it leads northward to downtown Pickens. This section of Pickens is thus classified as being a part of its "Gateway Corridor Overlay District", which is "…designed to promote a quality impression of the community, and to provide integration between existing or established neighborhoods and market driven pressures for increased mixed-use development resulting from the location of transportation infrastructure in adjacent areas."[10] Through this statute, it is the desire of the City to preserve the residential *neighborhood feel* of this Study Area even in light of the fact that there is a frequently trafficked highway running through the center of it.

Ordinance on Future Mobile Homes

Another significant piece of local zoning legislation which affects this neighborhood is the City's recently passed ordinance dealing with future mobile homes. While 15% of the Study Area's present housing stock is made up of mobile homes, new mobile homes used for residential purposes are no longer permitted within the City limits.[11] Existing mobile homeowners may *replace* their mobile homes only under certain conditions, but by and large, the City is working to increase traditional affordable housing availability for mobile home residents.

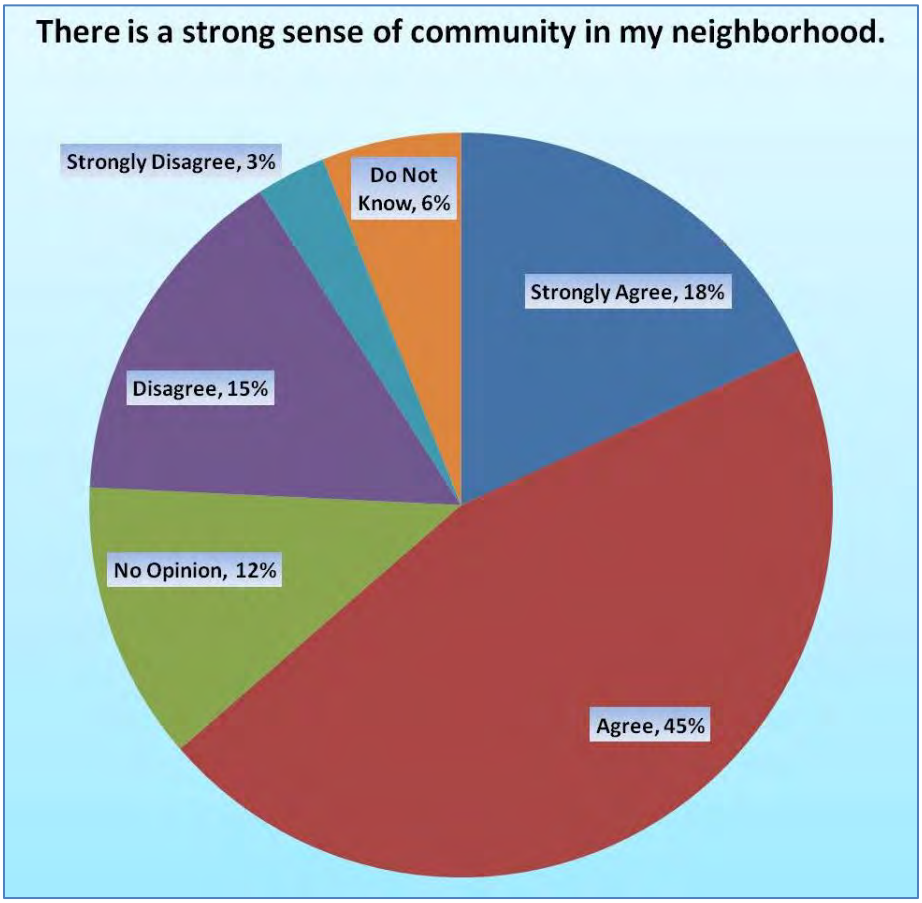
[10] Pickens Municipal Code, Section 413.3: Gateway Overlay District Regulations.
[11] The Official Zoning Ordinance of the City of Pickens South Carolina, Number 2010-10, adopted 08/30/2010.

Section III: Neighborhood Involvement and Interaction

In order to produce long-term success with any revitalization effort, it is essential for neighborhood residents to work together and communicate effectively. People in strong neighborhoods know one another and help each other in times of need. They improve security by forming crime watch programs and by keeping an eye out for suspicious occurrences or unfamiliar visitors. They bond with one another through neighborhood meetings in which community events are planned and in which serious issues are discussed. Both the Study Area Advisory Committee and the City of Pickens believe that neighborhood coordination is an essential component for future success.

Resident Feedback on Neighborhood Involvement and Interaction

Survey data from the Open House events revealed that neighborhood involvement and interaction is the strongest asset of the Study Area. 63% of survey respondents answered that there was "a strong sense of community" in their neighborhood, while only 18% disagreed. 73% of respondents stated that "residents often help each other out". When asked about residents working and volunteering together, only 27% of respondents provided a negative answer.



Source: Pickens Village Renaissance Neighborhood Survey, January-February 2011.

The Village Renaissance Advisory Committee reinforced the positive perception of neighborhood involvement and interaction through its *Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats* (S.W.O.T.)

analysis. The factor of "The People" was considered by far to be the greatest *Strength,* while "Safe and Quiet" and "Neighborhood/City Relations" also made the list of strengths. While "Residents not working together/trusting each other" was considered by some to be a *Weakness*, the Committee also saw a strong *Opportunity* to "Build neighborhood trust/pride/relationships."

Neighborhood Buy-In and Ownership

The idea of neighborhood-wide "buy-in" and "ownership" of the revitalization process was determined to be a top priority by the Advisory Committee. To make people feel like they are part of something positive would inspire them to volunteer more and to feel an increased sense of pride and ownership in *their* neighborhood. This phenomenon was proven at the Village Renaissance Open House events when more than 50 people attended to discuss the Village Renaissance planning grant. Most of the residents are not happy with the physically declined state of the neighborhood, but they do believe in their neighbors and are willing to devote their time and energy.

Neighborhood Organization: Pickens Community in Action

In order to channel the collective concern and energy of residents into positive, organized activities, leaders from the Study Area formed a neighborhood organization in the summer of 2011 called "Pickens Community in Action" (PCA). PCA now holds early evening meetings at Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church twice each month in order to address neighborhood issues and revitalization activities. The following mission statement was adopted by PCA on August 2, 2011:

> ***"The Pickens Community in Action's mission will be to seek effective solutions to problems and concerns of citizens of this community as they relate to the quality of life. PCA's mission will also be to work towards developing a cohesive relationship with the Faith based and Civic communities, the State of South Carolina and Pickens County and City governments, its administration and other elected officials in order to identify and recommend solutions for effective change that can improve our community."***

In only half a year, PCA has taken on the following initiatives:

- Completed the application for Articles of Incorporation in order to become an official 501c-3 non-profit organization
- Held a successful *Neighborhood Clean Up Day* on August 27, 2011
- Is presently discussing the formation of a community garden on church-owned property at the corner of South Catherine and W. Lee Street within the Study Area
- Has sought and received professional consultation from Clemson University Extension's Master Gardener program
- Is presently researching the idea of becoming a certified Community and Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) for the purpose of improving the neighborhood's low-income housing stock

- Held a Voter Registration Drive and registered fourteen new voters on September 24, 2011
- Is in discussions with the City Police Department about organizing a Neighborhood Crime Watch program

The photo on the left was taken at PCA's Voter Registration Drive on 09/24/11. The photo on the right was taken at PCA's Neighborhood Cleanup Day on 08/27/11.

Creating a Neighborhood "Brand"

The Village Renaissance Advisory Committee believes that the neighborhood's long and proud history should be showcased as part of its revitalized image. A successful "brand" would serve as a constant reminder to residents and visitors alike that this neighborhood is one of history and pride. While development of the brand is currently under discussion by members of the PCA organization, one branding idea which was discussed during Committee meetings was *neighborhood signage*. Advisory Committee members believe that effective signage located at frequently trafficked points in the neighborhood could read something along the lines of, "Welcome to the Griffin Ebenezer Neighborhood. Established: 1871." Signage was just one possibility discussed for utilizing a new brand image; brand development will be a key activity for residents as it moves forward towards revitalization.

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Involvement & Interaction

Village Renaissance Grant Program Desired Outcome
"Improve neighborhood involvement and interaction."

Pickens Village Renaissance Advisory Committee Goals

- "Increase neighborhood optimism and sense of ownership."
- "Increase residential familiarity with one another so that people work together."
- "Retain residents and attract new ones by increasing neighborhood and downtown attractions."

Supportive Findings

- Open House Survey data revealed that the Study Area contains a strong sense of community, selflessness and volunteerism;
- In the Committee's *Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats* analysis, "The People" were considered to be the neighborhood's greatest *Strength*, while a good *Opportunity* was to "Build neighborhood trust/pride/relationships."
- The Committee places neighborhood-wide "buy in" as a high priority.
- The neighborhood organization *Pickens Community in Action* (PCA) formed in the summer 2011.
- The Committee believes that building a neighborhood "brand" is very important for establishing sense of history and pride.

Recommendations

In order to help sustain its positive momentum, the City of Pickens should continue to support the PCA organization. Recommended activities:

1. Form partnership between Pickens Police Department and PCA to organize a neighborhood crime watch program, complete with a phone tree, signage, and regular meetings.
2. Continue to partner City Sanitation with PCA for Neighborhood Clean-Up Day events.
3. Coordinate relationship-building activities between Pickens Police Department and neighborhood residents, including recreational coaching by officers and neighborhood cookouts.
4. Work with PCA on designing and installing brand signage at key intersections leading into the neighborhood. Example: "Welcome to the Griffin Ebenezer Neighborhood. Established: 1871".

Time Frame

1-4. The partnership between PCA and City Leadership has begun and should continue indefinitely.

Responsible Parties

- Pickens Community in Action
- City of Pickens (Administration, Police Department, Sanitation)

Partners

- Neighborhood and nearby faith-based organizations
- Local non-profit organizations to provide guest speakers for PCA meetings and to provide resources and expertise during PCA events, such as clean-up days and voter registration drives.
- Clemson University Extension *Master Gardener's* Program to provide assistance with a future Community Garden.

Section IV: Neighborhood Crime

Resident Feedback on Neighborhood Crime

Advisory Committee members and other residents believe that neighborhood crime has risen in recent years and that economic struggles have contributed greatly to this trend. Residents have expressed a distinct concern about visiting drug dealers and other non-residents who bring criminal activity to the neighborhood and then leave. The Pickens Police Department (PD), on the other hand, desires to establish a stronger relationship and line of communication with residents in order to ensure that more crimes are successfully reported and pursued.

The table below reveals the Village Renaissance Open House survey results regarding residential perception of crime. The topics of drugs, theft, and night-time safety were revealed as the areas of greatest concern.

Open House Survey Neighborhood Safety and Pride	
Safety/Crime Topic	**% who think it's a problem**
Feeling safe when walking/riding bike During DAY	**18%**
Feeling safe when walking/riding bike During NIGHT	**48%**
Child safety while playing in neighborhood	**27%**
Drugs	**57%**
Theft	**48%**
Violence	**36%**
Vandalism	**33%**

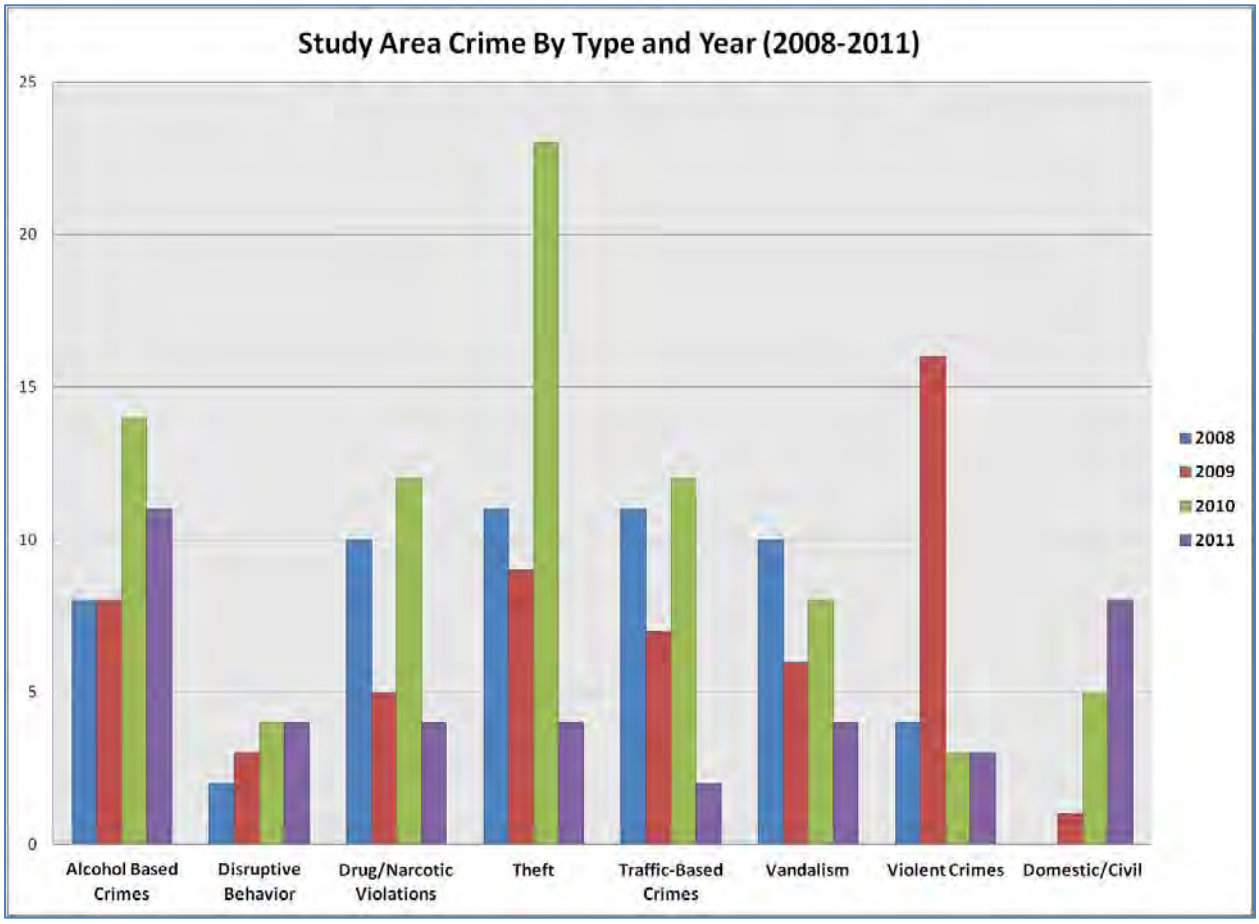
Source: Pickens Village Renaissance Open House Survey, Jan-Feb 2011.

The Village Renaissance Advisory Committee also voiced concerns about neighborhood crime in its *Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats* (S.W.O.T.) analysis. The area of "Drugs and Crime" was considered the third greatest *Weakness*, while "Neighborhood/City/Police Relations" was also considered to be a weakness. The two greatest *Threats* to the neighborhood were "Crime, Disorderly Conduct, and Accountability" and "Drugs". Finally, "Reduce crime and drugs" was considered to be a good *Opportunity.*

Crime Data from the Pickens Police Department

Almost four years worth of crime data provided by the Pickens PD from their *FBI Uniform Crime Reports* revealed that residential perception of neighborhood crime is justified. The following three tables reveal significant crime trends by (1) year, (2) type, and (3) Study Area street.

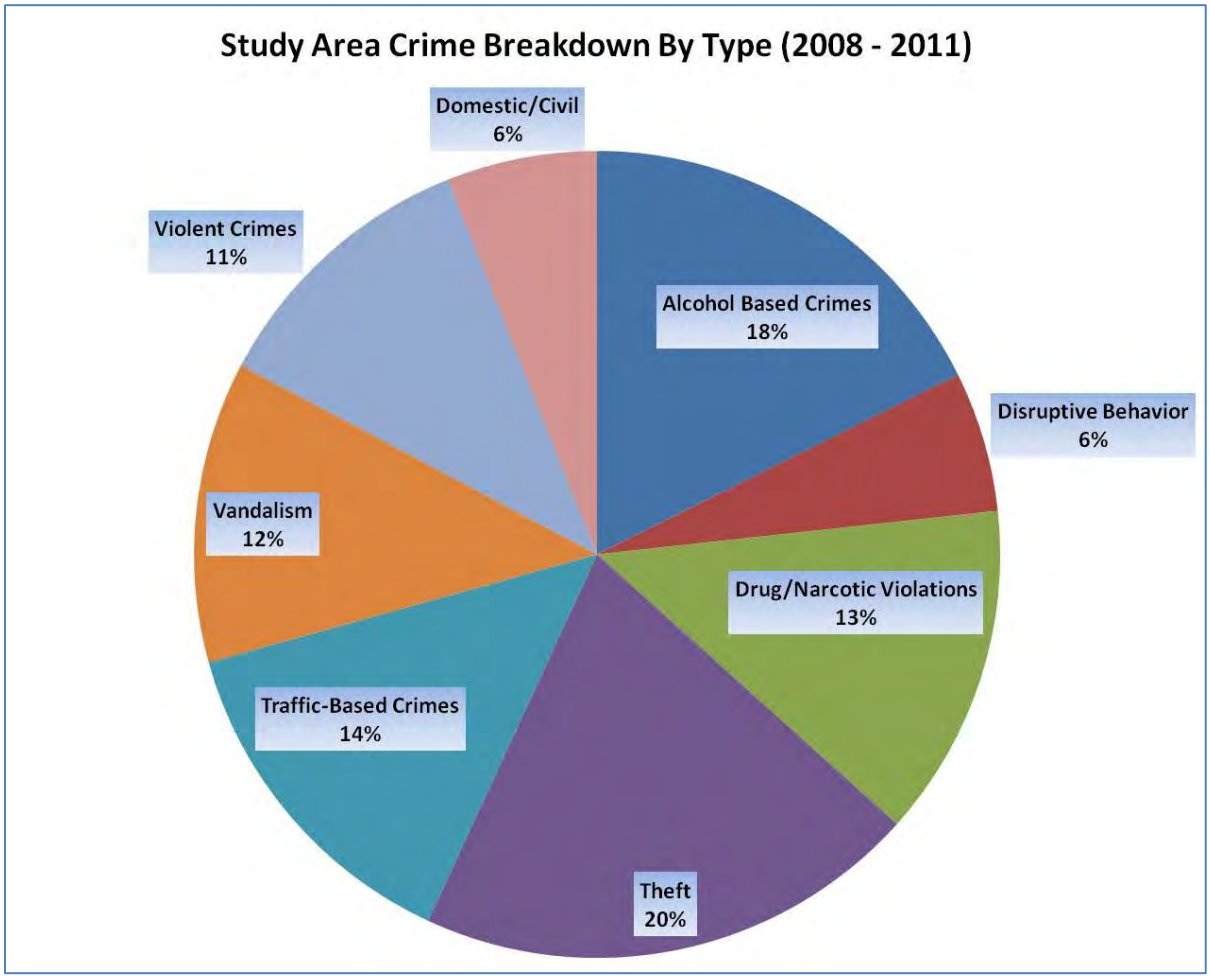
By Type and Year



Source: Pickens Police Department, FBI Uniform Crime Reports. Crime data was organized from these reports into general categories by the Appalachian Council of Governments. The category of "Disruptive Behavior" includes disorderly conduct, trespassing, and resisting arrest.

Analysis: While it is difficult to assess crime activity for year 2011 when the data displayed above only goes through August, Study Area crime levels seem to be trending downward during the current year. Violent crime spiked in 2009 but has since gone down significantly. 2010 was a hallmark year for alcohol, drug, theft, and traffic related crimes, but through August of 2011, these areas seem to have improved significantly.

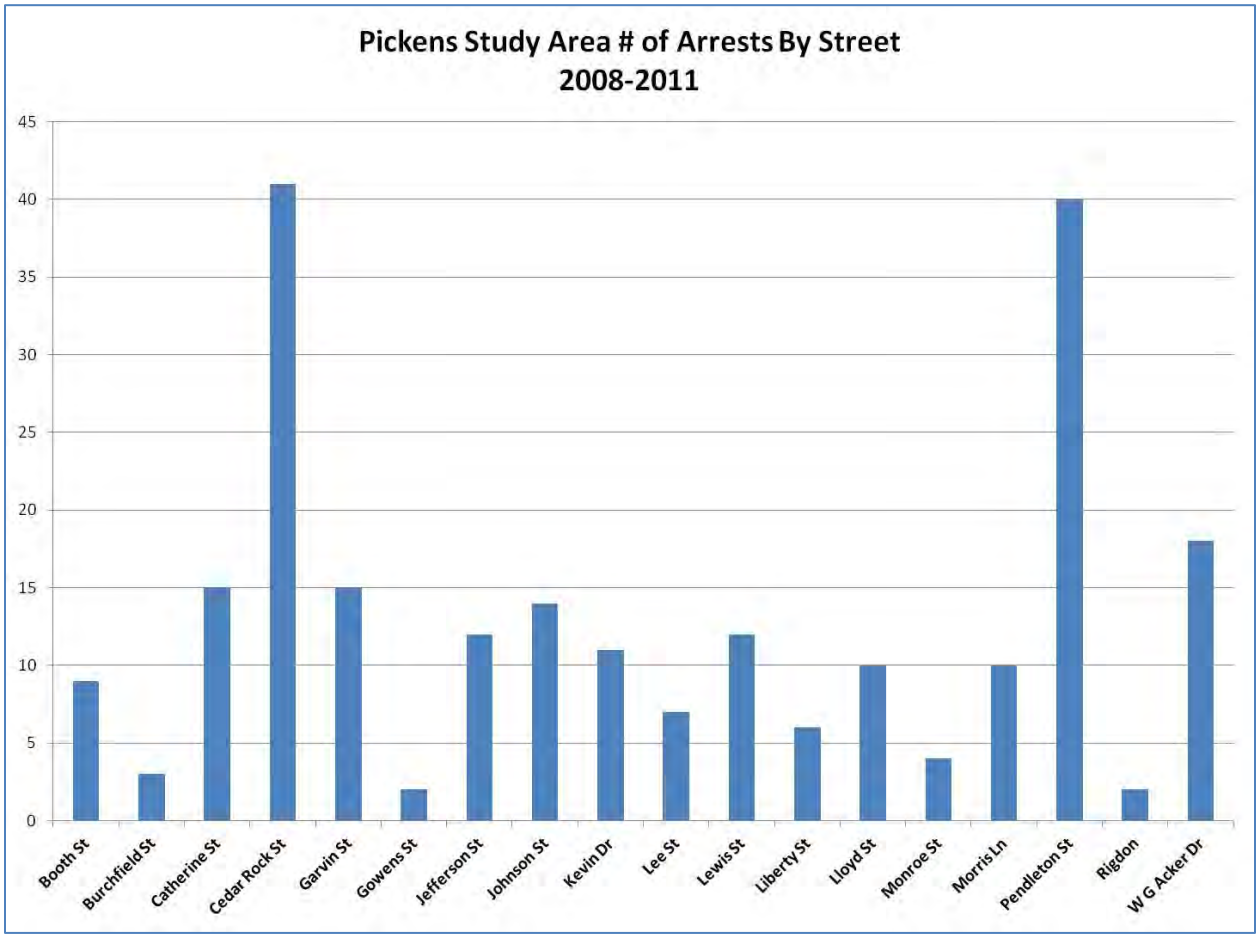
By Crime Category



Source: Pickens Police Department, FBI Uniform Crime Reports. Crime data was organized from these reports into general categories by the Appalachian Council of Governments. The category of "Disruptive Behavior" includes disorderly conduct, trespassing, and resisting arrest.

Analysis: When Study Area crime data is broken down into categories, one finds that residential concerns from the Open House survey are justified – particularly in regards to drugs and theft. The residents' greatest concern was drug-related crime, and if one combines drug and alcohol based crimes, then almost one third of Study Area incidents were related to that area. Similarly, if one combines the theft and vandalism categories, another third of crimes reported were attributable to that area. The violent crime and disruptive behavior categories combine to make up 17% of reported incidents, thereby justifying the residential perception of decreased safety during night hours.

By Street



Source: Pickens Police Department, FBI Uniform Crime Reports

Analysis: Clearly Cedar Rock Street and Pendleton Street (U.S. Hwy 178) have the most recorded crime incidents in the Study Area over the past several years. Cedar Rock Street runs parallel to Main Street from east to west and is only one block south of it. Virtually an extension of downtown, many crimes reported on this street are incidents which are more indicative of a commercial area—such as shoplifting and loitering. Many crimes have been reported at the old Jetco Gas Station on Cedar Rock Street, and, as a result, the Pickens PD monitors this site as a crime hot spot.

Pendleton Street is also different from the rest of the Study Area in that it is a busy State highway and less residential in character. Many crimes reported on Pendleton, as one might expect, are traffic-related.

The remaining streets in the Study Area have a fairly even crime distribution when one accounts for (1) comparative street length and (2) the comparative street population density. One exception to this rule is Rigdon Circle, which is comparatively dense in population and which has reported very little crime activity.

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Crime

Village Renaissance Grant Program Desired Outcome
"Provide neighborhood safety and pride."

Pickens Village Renaissance Advisory Committee Goals

- **"Increase awareness and education of neighborhood issues."**
- **"Build strong relationship with Pickens Police Department."**
- **"Decrease crime and nuisance activity."**
- **"Improve public image and reputation of neighborhood."**

Supportive Findings

- **Open House survey data revealed that a majority of residents have significant concerns about safety, drugs, violence, theft, and vandalism.**
- **The Committee S.W.O.T. analysis revealed neighborhood *Weaknesses* and *Threats* involving drugs and disorderly conduct.**
- **Data from the Pickens PD reveal that (1) a majority of crimes involve Drugs & Alcohol, Theft & Vandalism, or Violence & Disruptive Behavior, and (2) reported crime activity is distributed throughout neighborhood.**

Recommendations

1. **Facilitate partnership between *Pickens Community in Action* and Pickens PD to form a neighborhood crime watch program with regular meetings, signage and a resident phone tree.**
2. **Implement activities to build close relationship between City police officers and residents (recreational coaching, cookouts, etc.)**
3. **Partner with *Duke Energy* (service provider) to increase street lighting in dark areas of the neighborhood where criminal activity is more likely (see *Public Facilities* section of this Plan for street light assessment).**

Time Frame

1-2. Neighborhood Crime Watch discussions are on-going. Once established, this City-Neighborhood partnership should continue indefinitely.

3. See *Public Facilities* section of plan.

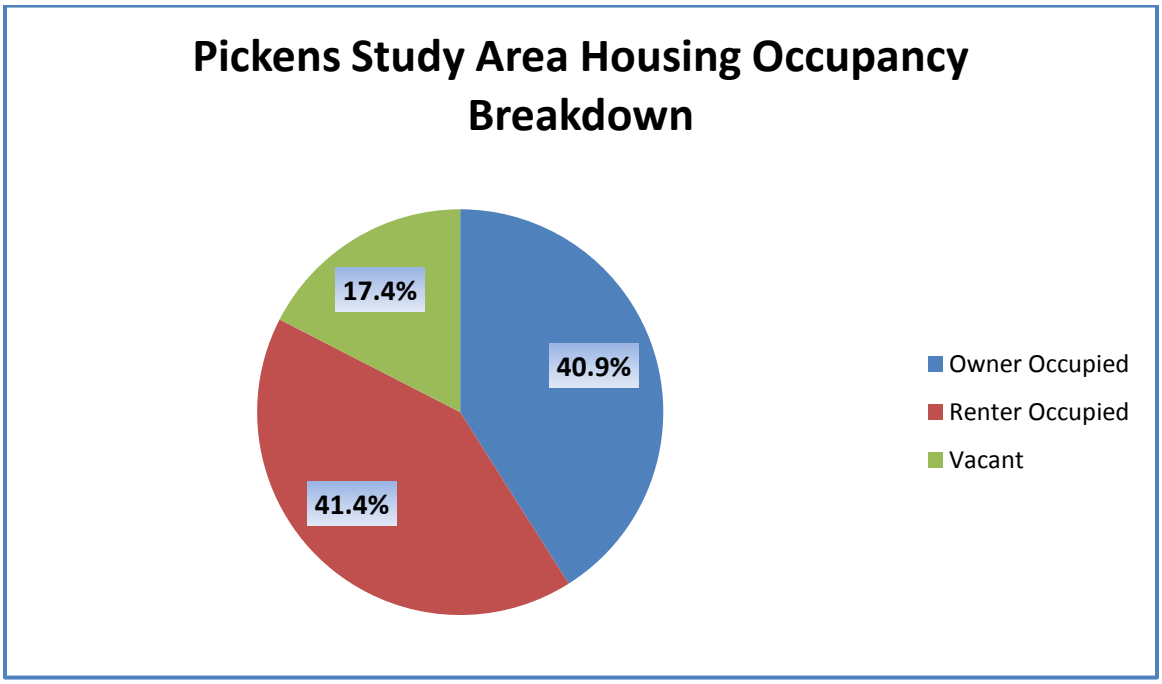
Responsible Parties
City of Pickens Police Department
Pickens Community in Action

Partners
Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church and nearby faith-based organizations.

Section V: Neighborhood Housing and Physical Appearance

As discussed in the *History, Condition and Location* section of this Plan, the housing stock of the Study Area is aging rapidly. 76.3% of neighborhood homes are at least 30 years old, and most of them much older—with a median construction date of 1968. As a low income neighborhood, maintenance of these aging structures is a significant challenge for residents. The Study Area vacancy rate is up to 17.4% from 13% only ten years ago, and approximately 15% of neighborhood dwellings are mobile homes. [12]

Home renters make up a little more than half of the Study Area population. Among the renters, the estimated average rent of $250 per month is less than both the City and County averages.

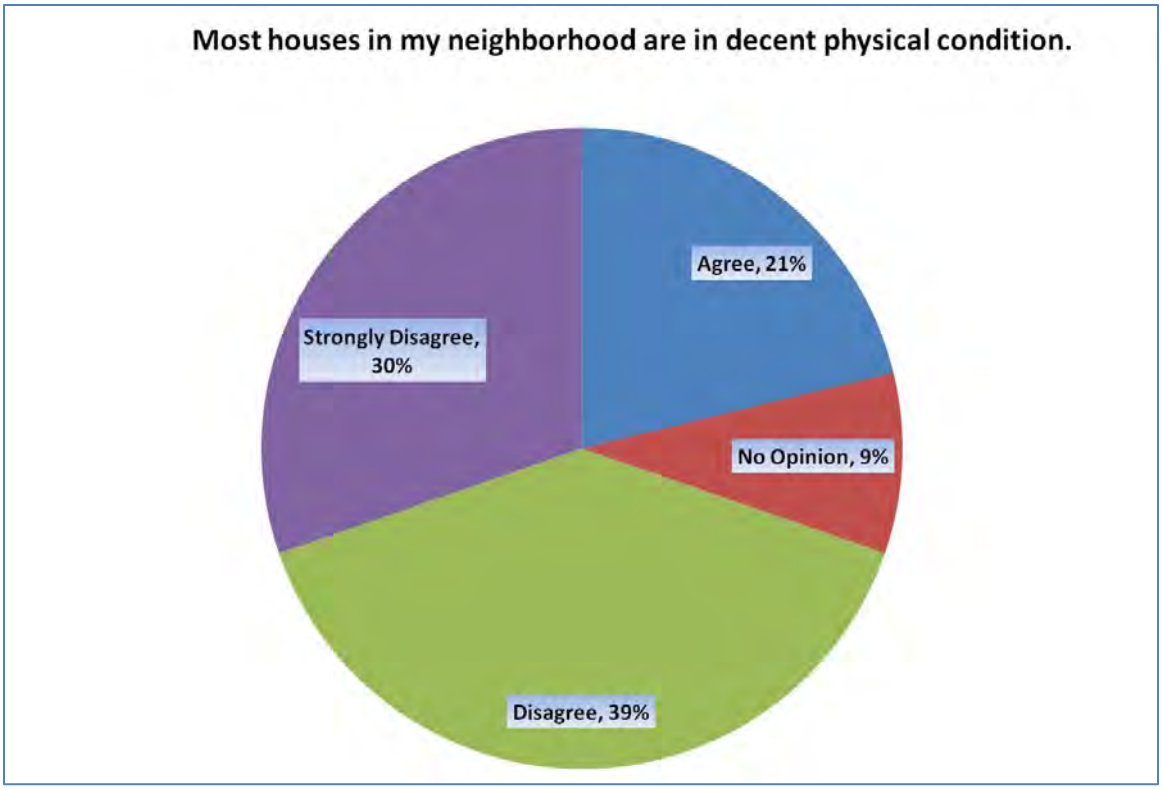


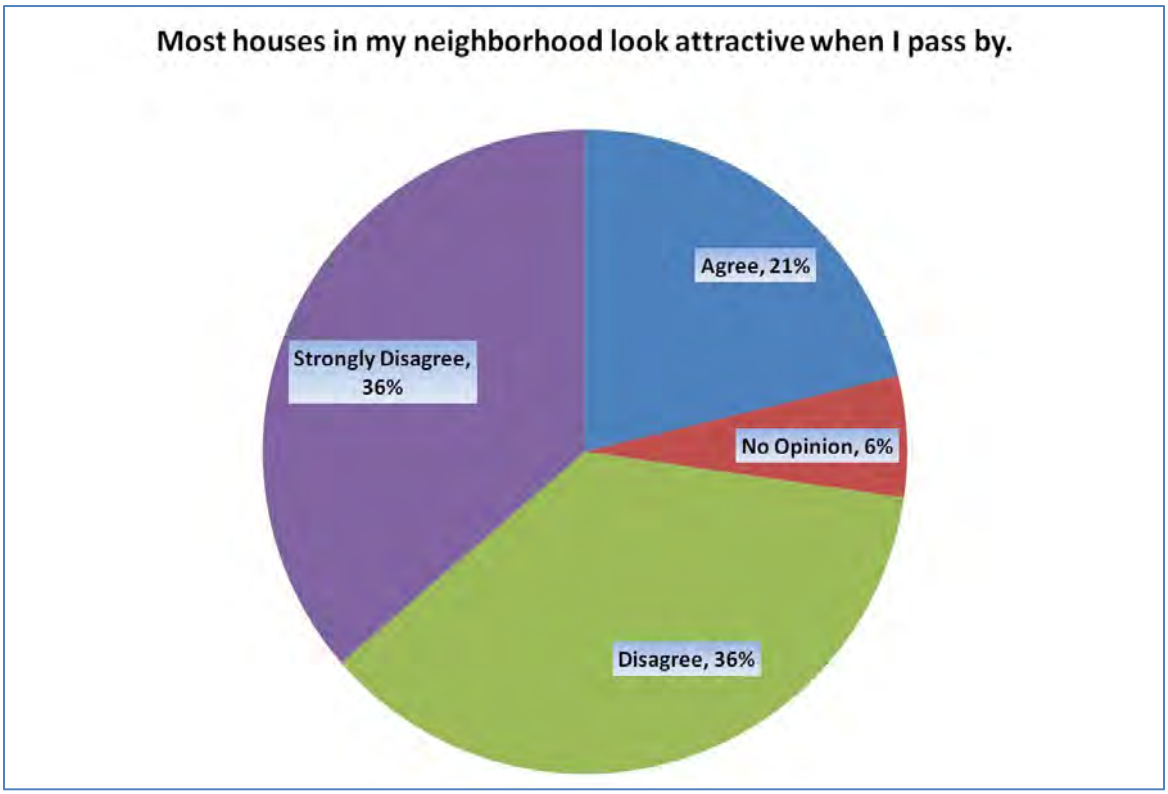
Source: ESRI forecast 2010 and 2015; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing

Resident Feedback on Neighborhood Housing and Physical Appearance

Open House survey data reveals that residents are mostly unsatisfied with the condition and appearance of homes in the Study Area. Only 27% of respondents stated that the neighborhood today is a more desirable place to live than it was 25 years ago. 51% of respondents stated that empty houses make the neighborhood less attractive, while 54% suggested that empty lots make the neighborhood look less attractive. When asked about the basic physical condition and attractiveness of neighborhood housing, the following pie charts summarize an overall negative perception:

[12] Source: ESRI forecasts for 2010 and 2015; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. All housing statistics in this section are taken from this source.





Source: Pickens VR Open House Survey, Jan-Feb 2011

Village Renaissance Advisory Committee members echoed this negative perception in their *Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats* analysis. One of the *Weaknesses* identified by the Committee was "Empty and deteriorated buildings and houses", while one of *Threats* identified was "Deteriorated/Vacant houses and lots".

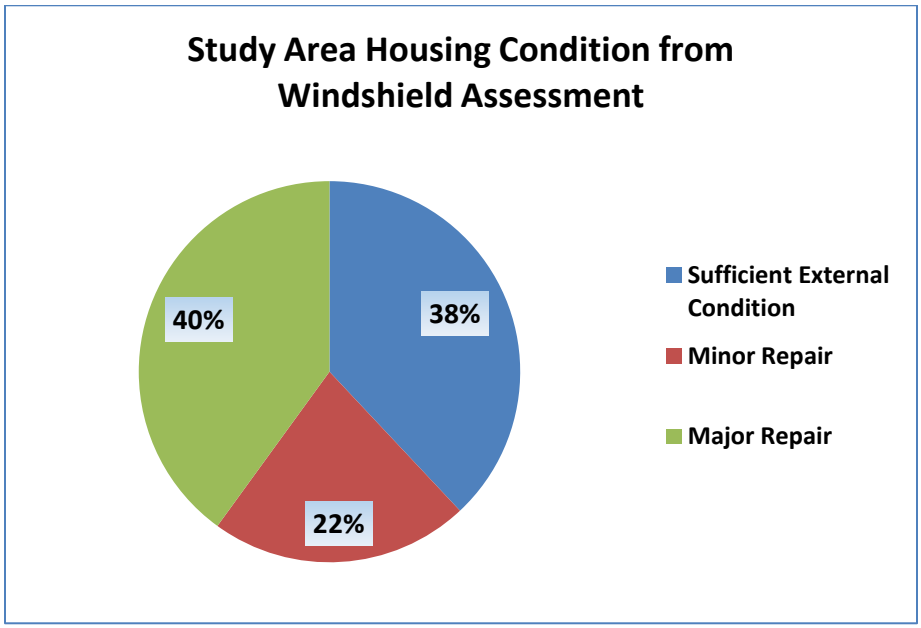
Housing Data from the Windshield Assessment

ACOG Planning and Housing Staff worked with a City Building Inspector to perform a "Windshield Housing Survey" of each house within the Study Area. While driving through the entire neighborhood with a camera and housing assessment forms, each home was surveyed from the outside and assessed as being in one of the following categories:

> **Sufficient External Condition** – home facades which were in good enough shape to forego potential CDBG housing assistance for exterior improvements;
> **Minor Repair** – home facades which were in relatively decent condition, but which were in need of minor repair improvements such as hand rails, guard rails, porch repair, new paint, etc.;
> **Major Repair** – home facades which were in need of not only the minor repairs mentioned above, but also a new roof, new windows, gutter repair, fascia repair, eave repair, etc.

Key findings from the Windshield Survey[13] include:

- 44, or 40% of the Study Area houses, were surveyed as being *Major Repair.*
- 24, or 22% of the Study Area Homes, were surveyed as being *Minor Repair.*
- The remaining 42 Study Area Homes (38%) were surveyed as being of *Sufficient External Condition.*



[13] The Windshield Survey did not include mobile homes or apartment buildings.

Proposed Target Area Map for CDBG Housing Improvements

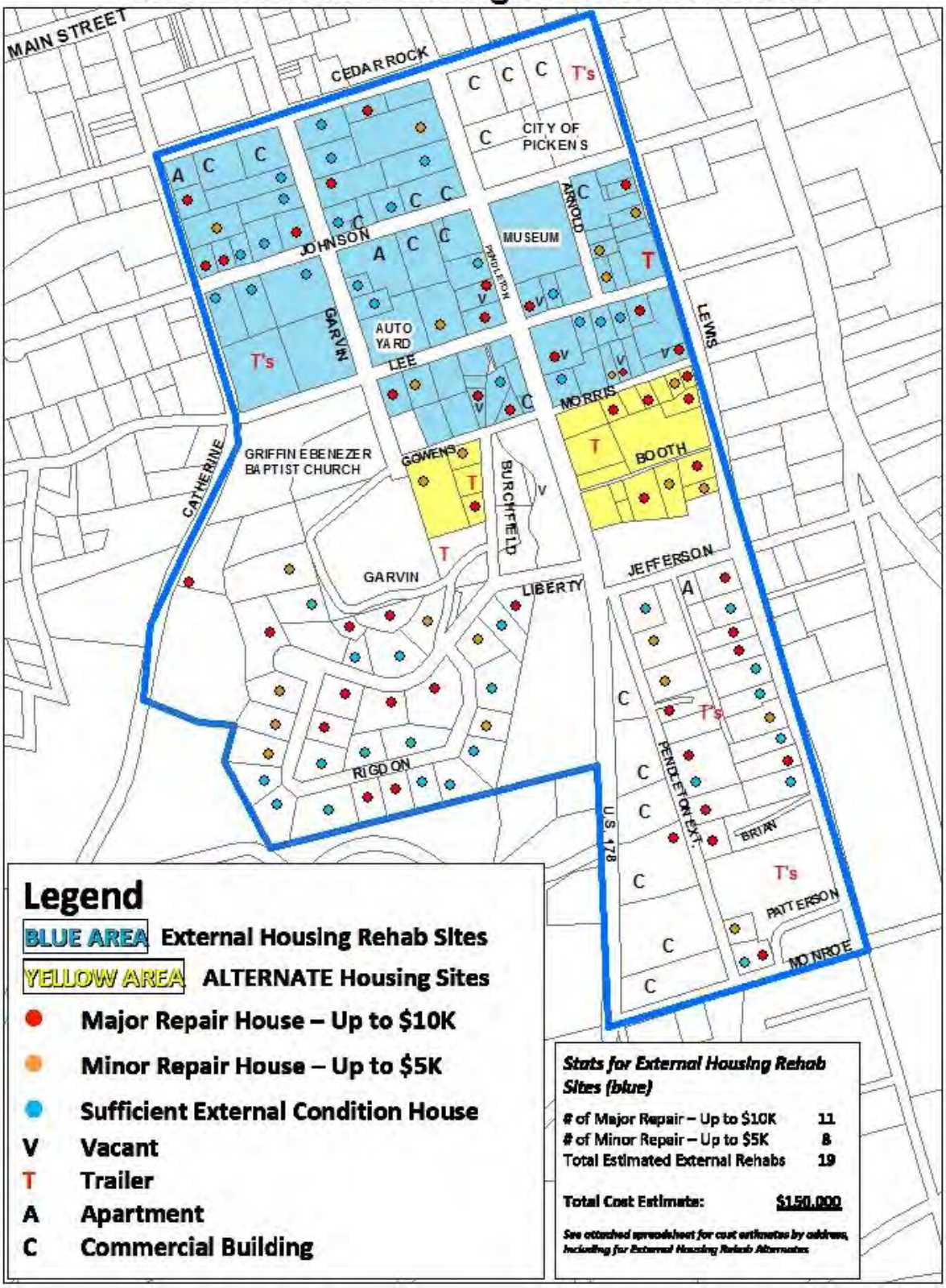
The map on the following page provides:

1. A proposed target area of CDBG external rehabilitation houses in the neighborhood, each of which are classified as either "Minor Repair" (up to $5K in estimated improvements) or "Major Repair" (up to $10K in estimated improvements);
2. A proposed area of alternate external rehabilitation houses, included as a contingency in the event that any of the target area houses do not participate in the CDBG program;

This target area of houses was identified strategically due to its proximity to downtown Pickens. A focused investment in this target area would complement the momentum of downtown with its new *Main Street* designation, thereby serving as a catalyst for the rest of the neighborhood. For a detailed analysis of this target area with addresses and cost ranges, please see the *Preliminary Engineering Report* (PER) which accompanies this Plan. *The City will pursue CDBG Housing Façade improvements in the second round of Village Renaissance Implementation (Phase III – 2014-2015). As that time approaches and pending successful completion of Phase II Implementation, residents will be re-surveyed not only to re-confirm their low-to-moderate income status, but also their status as owners and renters. Homeowners will receive priority over landlords for any potential CDBG-funded housing façade improvements. The current breakdown of renters and homeowners is found in the table below:*

Owner/Renter Breakdown Among *Major Repair* and *Minor Repair* Houses in Recommended Target Area			
Primary Target Area			
House Owner		House Renter	
Major Repair	Minor Repair	Major Repair	Minor Repair
7	5	4	3
Alternate Area			
House Owner		House Renter	
Major Repair	Minor Repair	Major Repair	Minor Repair
5	2	3	1
Combined Primary and Alternate Target Areas			
House Owner		House Renter	
Major Repair	Minor Repair	Major Repair	Minor Repair
12	7	7	4

Pickens V.R. External Housing Rehab Area and External Housing Rehab Alternates



Photographic Display of Housing Condition

The table below displays examples of the houses observed during the windshield assessment.

Major Repair Homes		
407 Pendleton St.	**306 S. Lewis St.**	**117 Morris Ln.**
Minor Repair Homes		
208 Pendleton St.	**119 Lee St.**	**114 Morris Ln.**
Sufficient External Condition Homes		
519 Johnson St.	**312 Pendleton St.**	**301 Lee St.**

Potential Demolition Homes in the Study Area

Included in the 17.4% vacancy rate of Study Area housing stock are abandoned, dilapidated houses in need of demolition. In addition to giving the Study Area a look of slum and blight, the Pickens Police Department suggests that such structures present opportunities for criminal activity. Performing the due diligence associated with identifying and demolishing houses which are beyond repair will remain an important priority for the City in its revitalization efforts.

Examples of Vacant, Dilapidated Homes in the Pickens Study Area

S. Lewis St.

Monroe St.

Burchfield St.

S. Catherine St.

Mobile Homes

Among the 15% of Study Area homes which are mobile trailers, many of them are packed densely on to relatively small, single lots. There are three such small trailer parks in the Study Area:

1. At the intersection of S. Lewis St. and Cedar Rock St. This group of trailers is not only on the same black as City Hall, it is also just one block south of Main Street and downtown Pickens.
2. Just across Lee Street from Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church.
3. On the southeastern border at the intersection of S. Lewis St. and Monroe St.

Three Dense Concentrations of Mobile Homes

Mobile homes at the intersection of S. Lewis St. and Cedar Rock St.

Mobile homes across Lee Street from Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church

Mobile homes at the intersection of Monroe St. and S. Lewis St.

As discussed in the *Land Use Overview* section of this plan, the City of Pickens recently passed a zoning ordinance which forbids new mobile homes to be located within the city limits.[14] Existing mobile homeowners may *replace* their units under certain conditions, but by and large, the City is working to create a broader market of affordable home options for mobile home dwellers.

On-Going Efforts to Address Affordable Housing

Allen Temple Community and Economic Development Corporation

During the summer of 2010, a valuable partnership developed between the City and the non-profit *Allen Temple Community and Economic Development Corporation* from nearby Greenville to develop some new and attractive low income homes within the Study Area at 312 S. Lewis Street. Due to Allen Temple's on-going involvement in the neighborhood, its Director was appointed by City Council to serve on the Village Renaissance Advisory Committee.[15] Clearance of dilapidated houses on this lot began in the summer of 2011. Four attractive, 900 square foot, energy efficient houses are presently being constructed there for families whose incomes are 60% or less of the area's median income. Allen Temple is utilizing federal HOME grant funds and partnering with *Pickens Savings and Loan Bank* to finance the project. Allen Temple will serve as landlord for these families, and, per its HOME grant requirements, ensure that the rent level will remain appropriate for low-to-moderate income tenants. As part of the agreement to occupy these new houses, tenants will undergo annual training through Allen Temple on topics relating to home ownership and personal finance.

Four LMI Houses Currently Under Construction by the Housing Non-Profit
Allen Temple Community & Economic Development Corporation

The photos above of the four LMI houses under construction at 312 S. Lewis Street were taken in September of 2011. Completion is anticipated before the end of 2011.

[14] The Official Zoning Ordinance of the City of Pickens South Carolina, Number 2010-10, adopted 08/30/2010.
[15] See *Citizen Driven Planning Process* in the Introduction section of this Plan.

Allen Temple plans to continue working in the Study Area upon the current project's completion. It is presently applying to the *Federal Home Loan Bank* office out of Atlanta, GA for funding to construct six more affordable homes within the Study Area: four of them at 812 S. Lewis Street (which is currently a mini trailer park), one at 550 Liberty Drive, and one at 112 Morris Lane. In addition, Allen Temple is also exploring the option of federal tax exempt housing bonds to develop further housing for low income citizens.

Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church

In another positive development, Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church purchased the small mobile home park across the street from it in the summer of 2011. Whether through partnering with a non-profit such as Allen Temple or by developing its own low-income housing development capacity, the Church intends for this property at the corner of Lee St. and S. Catherine St. to be filled with affordable housing units similar to the ones described above.

Vacant Lots

With 54% of the Village Renaissance Open House survey respondents suggesting that empty lots make their neighborhood look less attractive, it is important to develop creative in-fill development strategies. In addition to working with Allen Temple CEDC and Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church on in-fill housing initiatives, the City is also interested in exploring ways to develop recreational space for residents on undeveloped and unattractive lots in center of the neighborhood. This idea will be discussed further in the *Public Facilities* section of this document.

Code Enforcement

As part of the Village Renaissance initiative, the City of Pickens will continue to provide enhanced code enforcement surveillance of the neighborhood. Through a recent *COPS* grant, it has been able to staff a code enforcement officer who has aggressively monitored trash dumping, overgrown lots and other code violations in the neighborhood which have diminished its physical appearance. This activity is a key strategy for meeting the Village Renaissance desired outcome of improving physical appearance and property values.

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Housing and Physical Appearance

Village Renaissance Grant Program Desired Outcomes

- **"Improve physical appearance and property values"**
- **"Identify in-fill housing opportunities"**

Advisory Committee Goals

- "Revitalize the appearance of neighborhood properties which are in poor physical condition."
- "Increase the amount of attractive and affordable housing structures on vacant and dilapidated properties."

Supportive Findings

- Open House survey data revealed that residents are unsatisfied with the condition and appearance of housing and vacant lots.
- The Committee S.W.O.T. analysis revealed several *Weaknesses* and *Threats* based on housing; housing improvement was seen as a good *Opportunity.*
- A windshield housing survey revealed that 62% of Study Area houses are in need of repair.
- Mobile homes make up 15% of neighborhood housing; many are densely concentrated.
- Low residential income provides few resources for individual home improvement.

Recommendations

1. Seek CDBG Village Renaissance implementation funding for exterior housing rehabilitation in northernmost section of neighborhood which is closest to downtown.
2. Seek Federal HOME funding as it becomes available for housing renovation and new in-fill development on vacant lots and future demolition sites throughout neighborhood.
3. Continue to support/partner with Allen Temple Community and Economic Development Corporation to develop more affordable housing options.
4. Support Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church in finding resources/partnerships to develop recently purchased mobile home lot into an affordable housing development.
5. Continue to devote Police Department resources to enhanced code enforcement.

Time Frame

1. External Housing Improvements: 2014 – 2015, during the second round of CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation funding.
2. Seek Federal HOME Funds: regular applications to be submitted funding cycles are announced.
3. Support/partnership with Allen Temple is on-going and should continue indefinitely.
4. Support of Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church's efforts is on-going and should continue indefinitely.
5. Enhanced code enforcement is on-going and should continue indefinitely.

Responsible Party

- City of Pickens

Partners

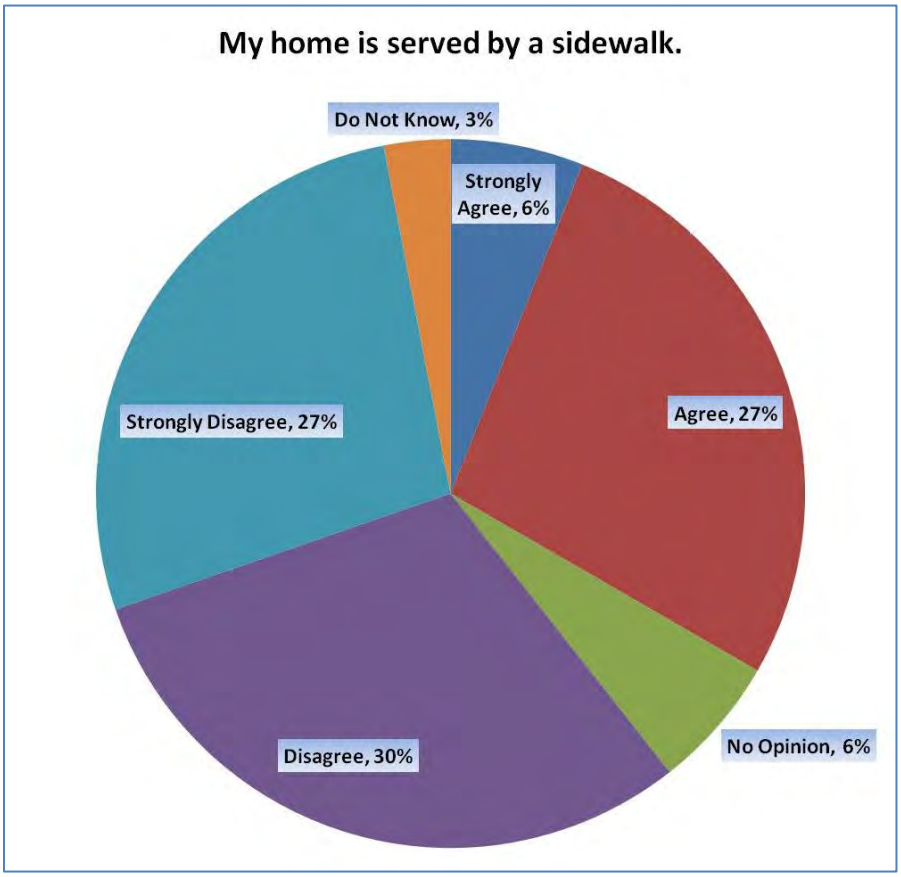
- Allen Temple Community and Economic Development Corporation
- Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church
- South Carolina CDBG Program
- Federal HOME Program and other comparable sources

Section VI: Neighborhood Public Facilities

Neighborhood public facilities such as sidewalks, street lights and parks are vital components for any healthy neighborhood. For residents to be able to spend less time in their cars by walking to places such as downtown, to a park, or to City Hall is valuable not only from a public health standpoint, but also from an economic standpoint. 28% of Pickens Study Area residents do not have access to a vehicle, making the factor of *walk-ability* an extremely important part of their lives[16]. As part of the Village Renaissance planning process, it is important to assess the adequacy of the public facilities which enable residents to exercise and to access destinations by foot.

Resident Feedback on Public Facilities

Open House survey data revealed that Study Area residents are unsatisfied with the condition of public facilities in their neighborhood. Only 24% of respondents suggested that there were adequate recreational places for children in the neighborhood, while only 30% suggested that there were adequate meeting places in general. A mere 15% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the current state of neighborhood street lighting, and the general opinion of neighborhood sidewalks was not much better.



Source: Pickens Village Renaissance Neighborhood Survey, Jan-Feb 2011.

[16] Source: ESRI forecasts for 2010; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing

The Advisory Committee also emphasized the inadequacy of neighborhood public facilities. In their *Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats* (S.W.O.T.) analysis, "Roads, sidewalks, streetlights" was ranked as the number one *Weakness* of the Study Area.

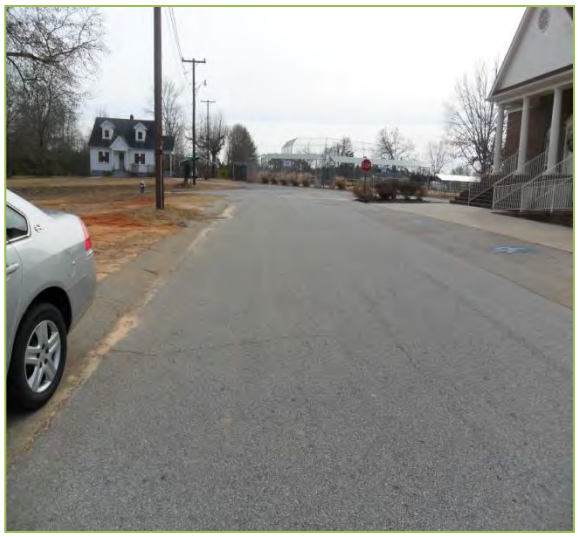
Study Area Sidewalks

The map on the following page displays a visual "Sidewalk Assessment" conducted by the ACOG planning staff and reviewed by *Beeson-Rosier Group Engineers*. Sidewalks in the map are classified in this map as being one of the following three categories:

- **No Sidewalks** – no sidewalk is present and the street is therefore unsuitable for foot traffic.
- **Upgrade Sidewalks** – deteriorated sidewalks characterized by deficiencies such as no curb protection, trees and roots growing through concrete, and jagged, broken concrete. This classification of sidewalk was considered to be unsuitable for safe foot traffic.
- **Decent Sidewalks –** sidewalks considered to be in suitable condition for safe foot traffic.

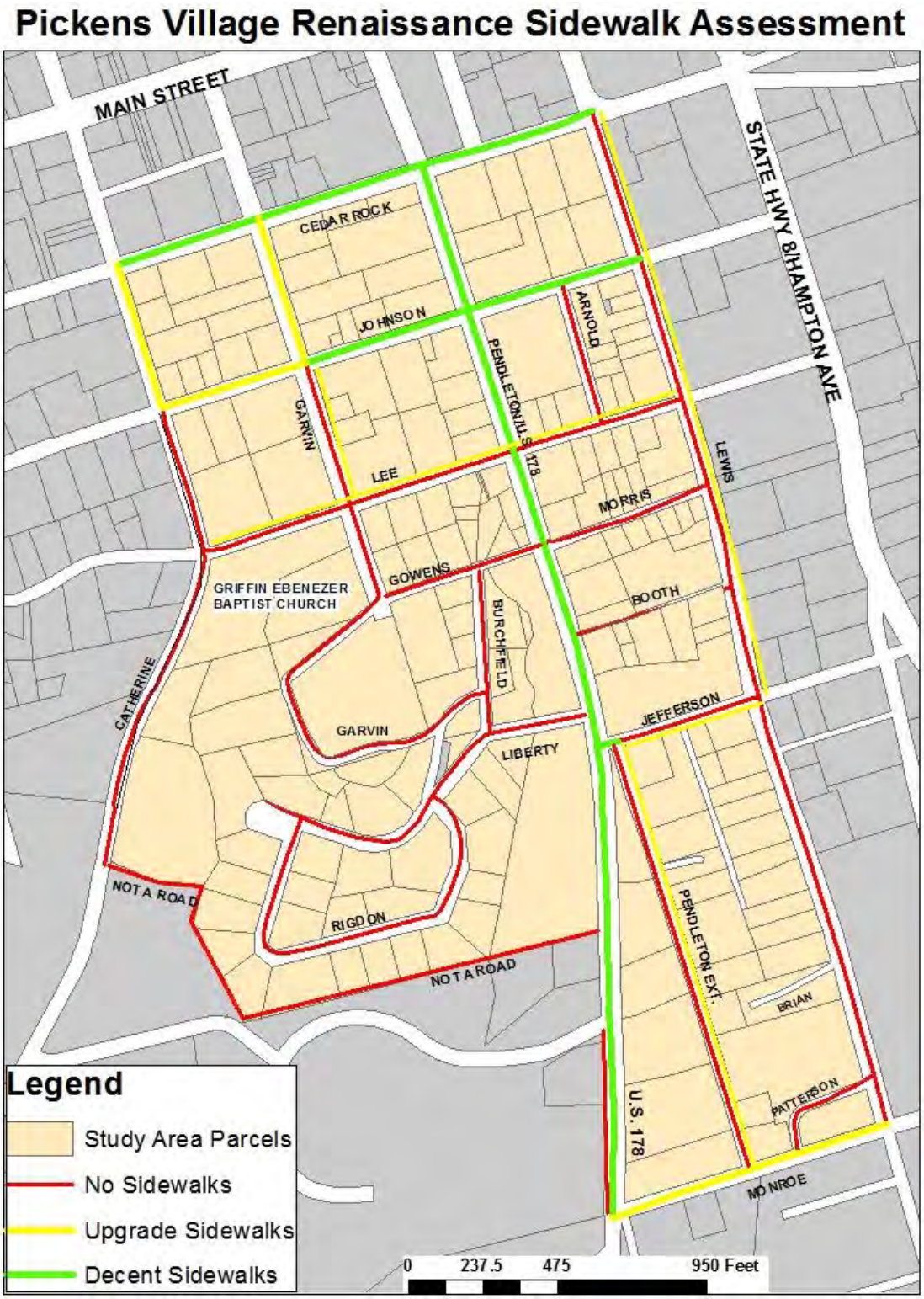
Key findings from the assessment include:

- Despite limited transportation access, most neighborhood residents are served by either *Upgrade Sidewalks* or *No Sidewalks.*
- A critical high foot-traffic area is on the western side of the neighborhood surrounding Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church. Despite being the center of neighborhood social gathering for 140 years, the streets surrounding this church have no sidewalks. (see photo on right)
- Another critical high foot traffic area is on the eastern side of the neighborhood along S. Lewis Street. Aside from being densely populated, the streets in this area connect neighborhood residents not only to downtown Pickens to the north, but also to a variety of commercial businesses to the east along State Highway 8/Hampton Ave. Being able to walk safely to these locations is critical for low-to-moderate income residents with limited transportation resources.

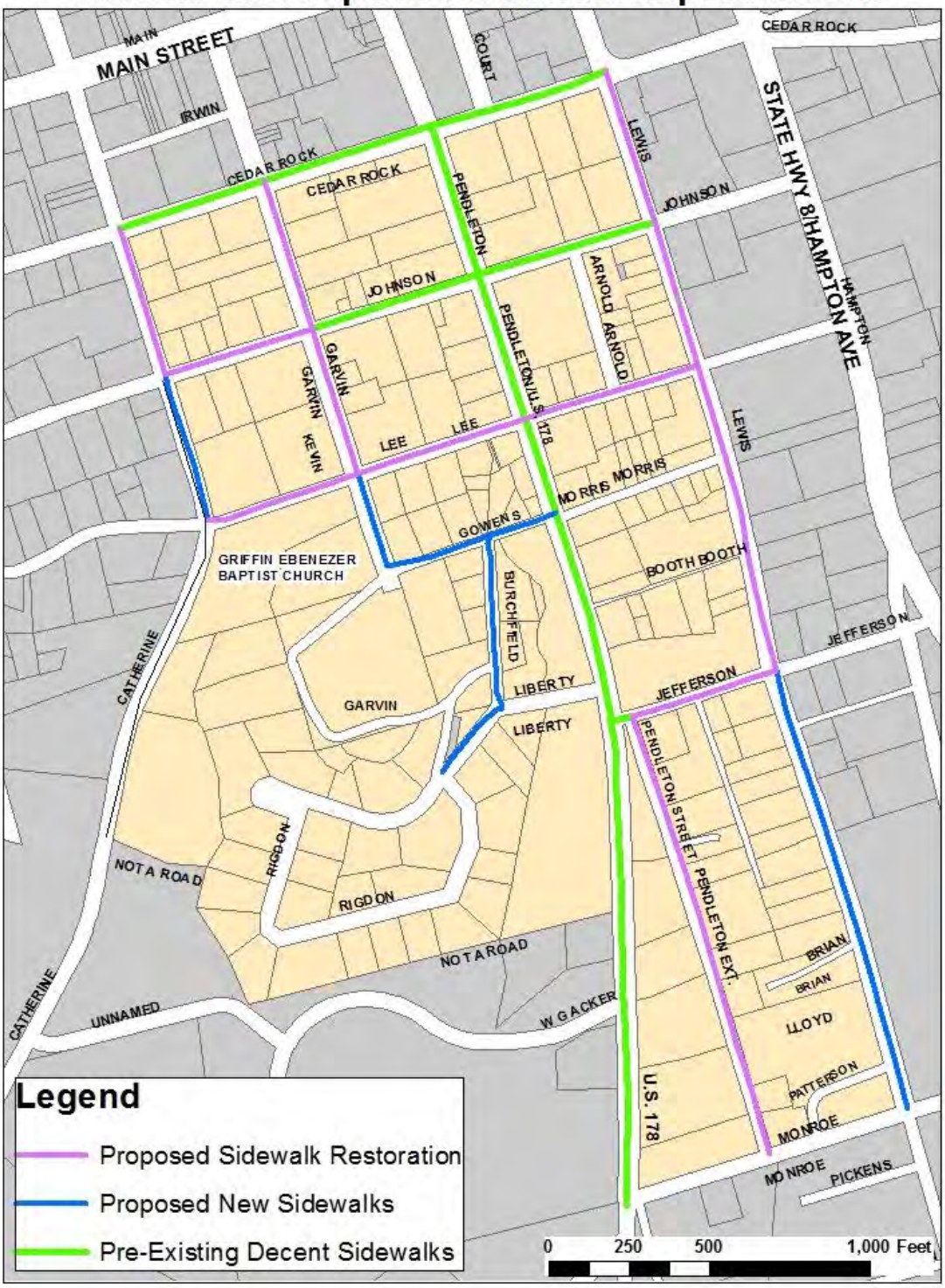


A combination is needed of mostly existing sidewalk restoration with the cutting out of new sidewalks in a few foot traffic areas on public roadways where there are presently none. In order to maximize the amount of improved walk-ability that could be achieved with scarce financial resources, the restoration/construction should occur only on one side of each recommended road in the improvement area (with restoration of *existing* being a priority over the construction of *new*, where possible). The

following two maps provide (1) an inventory of existing sidewalk condition, and (2) recommended sidewalk improvements.



Pickens VR Proposed Sidewalk Improvements

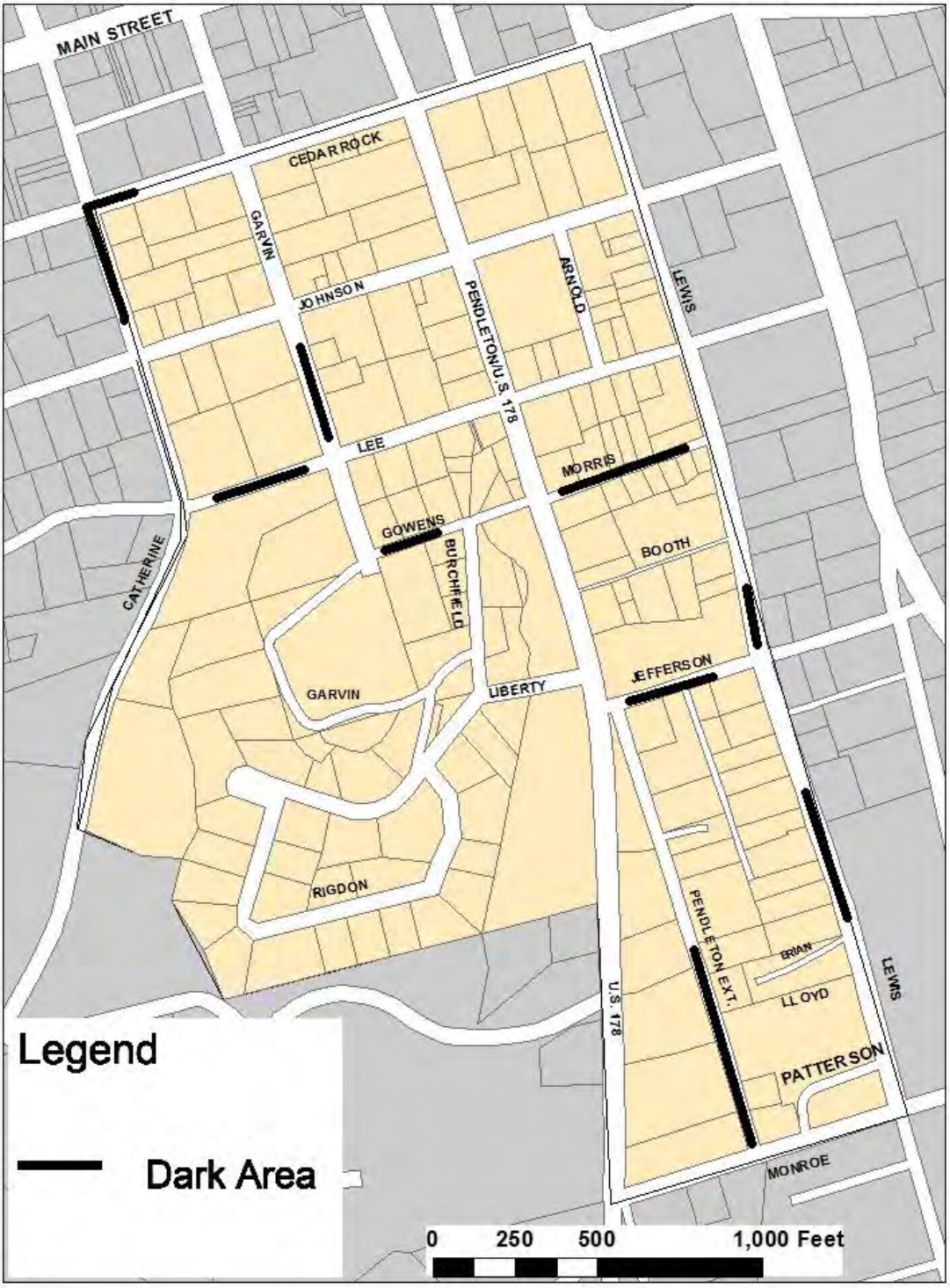


While the improvement area above does not cover every "Upgrade Sidewalk" or "No Sidewalk"-area in the neighborhood, it improves neighborhood walk-ability and connectivity tremendously.

Study Area Street Lights

It is worth repeating that only 15% of Open House survey respondents expressed satisfaction with the state of neighborhood street lighting. ACOG Staff performed a street light assessment during night hours to identify dark areas of the neighborhood. The Pickens Police Department suggests that dark areas often conceal illegal behavior from the public eye and are therefore inviting places for criminal activity. Furthermore, poorly lit areas can increase the likelihood of vehicular accidents. The map on the following page identifies the most prominent dark areas of the neighborhood. Improving the lighting conditions of these areas will be an important step for the City in its revitalization efforts. *Because the power company Duke Energy owns neighborhood street lights (which they lease to the City), this plan will recommend working with Duke outside of the CDBG process (since it is non-public infrastructure) to increase lighting where needed.*

Pickens Village Renaissance Street Light Assessment



Public Places for Meeting and Recreation

As discussed in the *History, Condition and Location* section of this Plan, the Study Area's central location and proximity to downtown affords residents close access to several important locations, including commercial, government, social, medical, educational, community, and recreational resources.

Resource	Distance from Center of Study Area (miles)	Drive Time (min)	Walk Time (min)
Government Services			
Pickens City Hall	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens Post Office	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens Police Station	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens Fire Department	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens Village Library	0.5	1	10
Community Services			
Museum	Within Study Area	NA	NA
Pickens YMCA	2.5	4	50
Social Services			
American Red Cross	0.3	1	6
Pickens Senior Center	1	2	16
Pickens County WIC Program	0.9	2	16
WINGS Program	0.8	1	14
Medical Services			
Cannon Memorial Hospital	0.2	1	3
Pickens Mental Health Clinic	0.5	1	10
Education Facilities			
Pickens Elementary School	0.7	2	14
Pickens Middle School	1.7	4	35
Pickens High School	0.6	2	12
Recreation			
Hillcrest Memorial Park	*1.9*	*4*	*39*
Outdoor Baseball Field/Basketball Goals at Griffin Ebenezer Church	Within Study Area	NA	NA

Note: Distance and transportation times are estimates generated by Google Maps from the center point of the Study Area.

While these resources are geographically close to the neighborhood, it is just as important for residents have convenient access to them. Addressing this issue adequately involves provision of quality roads and sidewalks by the City as well as neighborhood volunteer and coordination efforts such as those discussed in the *Neighborhood Involvement and Interaction* section of this Plan. As part of the

revitalization process, the City will continue support residential access to nearby resources on both fronts.

Potential Location for a Neighborhood Park

As previously discussed, the Open House survey revealed that only 24% of residents are satisfied with neighborhood venues for children's recreation, while only 30% are satisfied with neighborhood public meeting space. Residents who do not attend Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church typically leave the neighborhood in order to access these types of places. For this reason, the Advisory Committee suggests that construction of a public recreation park would greatly enhance residential quality of life, and, as a by-product, improve neighborhood physical appearance.

The ideal location for such a park is found in the very center of the neighborhood along Pendleton Street/U.S. Hwy 178. There are two large and vacant lots at this location which are a challenge for private developers because of their steep slopes and uneven topography. These lots are presently an eye sore for neighborhood residents as well as for travelers driving up U.S. 178 to enter downtown Pickens. Creative landscaping, however, might turn these challenges into a scenic asset for a possible City park. An added benefit of this location is its neighbor directly to the South – *Canon Memorial Hospital.* The hospital already contains an impressive walking trail on its campus. A future City park could also offer a walking trail on its periphery and even connect directly to the hospital's trail in order to make a longer, more ideal path for walking. Both the City and the hospital have expressed interest in exploring this possibility.

The image found on the following page displays the potential location for a central neighborhood park, along with images of the property and of the Canon Memorial Hospital trail directly to the south. As part of the revitalization planning process, the City will continue to explore this possibility and search for appropriate funding sources.

Pickens Village Renaissance Study Area: Potential Park Site (in Blue)

Two Vacant, Over-Grown Lots Leading into Downtown along U.S. Hwy 178

Photos of Canon Memorial Hospital Walking Trail

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Public Facilities

Village Renaissance Grant Program Desired Outcomes

- **"Address infrastructure and public facility needs."'**
- **"Promote sustainability and conservation."**

Advisory Committee Goals

- "Take advantage of the neighborhood's abundant green space and other natural assets through smart building and land use practices."
- "Improve the condition and accessibility of neighborhood road, sidewalk, street light, water, sewer and drainage facilities where this public infrastructure is found to be inadequate."
- "Revitalize the appearance of neighborhood properties which are in poor physical condition."

Supportive Findings

- Open House survey respondents suggest neighborhood sidewalks and street lights are inadequate.
- Open House survey respondents are dissatisfied with neighborhood public meeting and recreational venues.
- The Committee S.W.O.T. analysis revealed that "Roads, sidewalks, & street lights" is the #1 neighborhood *Weakness.*
- Two large, vacant lots in the center of neighborhood provide ideal location for a City park with a possible walking trail to connect with neighboring Canon Memorial Hospital walking trail.

Recommendations

1. Use CDBG Village Renaissance implementation funds to construct sidewalk renovations in high-foot traffic areas throughout neighborhood (see Phase II map found in the Executive Summary of this document).
2. Partner with *Duke Energy* to enhance street lighting in dark areas.
3. Search for grant funding to support development of a central neighborhood recreation park.

Time Frame

1. Sidewalk upgrades: 2012 – 2013, during the first phase of CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation funding.
2. Enhance street lighting: coordination with Duke Energy is on-going.
3. New Park Development: discussions among City officials are on-going. Negotiations with property owners and construction of park should occur as internal and external funding sources become available during the next five years.

Responsible Party

- City of Pickens

Partners:

- Duke Energy (street light utility provider)
- South Carolina Department of Commerce – Grants Administration
- Appalachian Council of Governments – Grants Division and Planning Division
- All possible recreational grant funding sources.
- Potential local business sponsors for the new park initiative.

Section VII: Neighborhood Infrastructure

The foundation of any healthy neighborhood is its infrastructure. Without adequate water, sewer, drainage, and road infrastructure, a neighborhood is limited in its ability to grow and flourish. As part of this planning initiative, the current condition of infrastructure was analyzed.

Resident Feedback on Infrastructure

Accurately assessing the condition of infrastructure is a technical exercise, thus it is possible for a neighborhood to have underground infrastructure problems which are not always evident to residents. Signs which might make such problems noticeable include dirty drinking water, sewage back-ups, and overflowing manholes. Residents were asked several questions about infrastructure in the survey administered at the Village Renaissance Open House. The table below is an aggregated summary of their responses:

Open House Survey Neighborhood Infrastructure	
Infrastructure Topic	**% who are concerned**
Water	36%
Overflowing Sewer	42%
Drainage	54%
Roads	60%

Source: Pickens Village Renaissance Open House Survey, January-February 2011.

Short of obvious physical signals which would indicate bad water lines, backed up sewer lines or flooding conditions, the area of roads is the most visible form of infrastructure for residents. Not surprisingly, that area received the greatest negative survey response.

In the Advisory Committee's *Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats* analysis, the topic of "Roads, sidewalks and street lights" was named as the neighborhood's greatest *Weakness*, while "Infrastructure – water and drainage" was tied with "drugs and crime" as the third greatest weakness. "Streets and infrastructure" was also considered to be a *Threat* to the neighborhood. None of the *Strengths* or *Opportunities* named by the Committee involved infrastructure.

Professional Assessment of Infrastructure

The current condition of Study Area infrastructure was analyzed by *Beeson-Rosier Group Engineers*. The findings of this assessment are found in the *Preliminary Engineering Report* (PER) which accompanies this Plan. Below is a general summary of the core infrastructure areas addressed in that report:

Water Substantial investment in neighborhood water lines has taken place over the last two decades. Water lines are mostly in decent condition and no Village Renaissance implementation investment is recommended at this time.

Sewer Failing sewer lines represent the greatest threat to this neighborhood's revitalization. Sanitary sewer is a basic foundational requirement for any vibrant community and failing lines in the southernmost Rigdon Circle section stand as an unsanitary barrier to revitalization. The ground disturbing activities required to replace these lines is a practical prerequisite to the other above-ground capital investments recommended in this plan. These sewer improvements are recommended for funding consideration, therefore, in the first round of CDBG Village Renaissance implementation (2012-2013).

Drainage Because it is located on a downward slope from Main Street, a significant amount of rain water does travel down-hill to and through the neighborhood. From a health and safety standpoint, it is important for this water to flow into adequate drainage facilities and not to pool above ground for long periods of time. On the eastern side of the neighborhood, there are two small areas where drainage facilities should be upgraded – including on Morris Street and Patterson Street. As the need for improved drainage stretches beyond the border of this CDBG study area, the City will look to other funding sources as they become available to address this issue.

Roads Garvin Street, Gowens Street, and Burchfield Street are City-owned roads which require significant resurfacing investment. These narrow and deteriorated roads present vehicular transportation and safety challenges for neighborhood residents and visitors alike. Their physical condition also negatively affects neighborhood appearance. These improvements are recommended for funding consideration during a second proposed CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation round (Years 2014-2015).

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Infrastructure

Grant Program Desired Outcome

- **"Address infrastructure and public facility needs."**

Advisory Committee Goal

- "Improve the condition and accessibility of neighborhood road, sidewalk, street light, water, sewer and drainage facilities where this public infrastructure is found to be inadequate."

Supportive Findings

- Water lines are in sufficient condition at this time.
- Failing sewer lines in the southernmost Rigdon Circle section of neighborhood are the most fundamental impediment to neighborhood revitalization.
- Garvin, Gowens and Burchfield Streets are narrow and deteriorating, presenting vehicular transportation and safety challenges and harming neighborhood appearance.
- Drainage improvements are needed in the eastern side of the neighborhood – particularly along Morris and Patterson Streets. Because this problem stretches beyond the CDBG study area, the City will utilize other sources of funding as they become available to address this issue.

Recommendations

1. Utilize CDBG Village Renaissance implementation funds to replace failing sewer lines in the Rigdon Circle area.
2. Utilize CDBG Village Renaissance implementation funds to resurface Garvin, Gowens and Burchfield Streets.
3. Search for other funding sources to address needed drainage improvements which are needed beyond this neighborhood's borders.

Time Frame

1. Replace failing sewer lines in the Rigdon Circle section of neighborhood during the first round of CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation funding, in years 2012-2013.
2. Resurface deteriorated Garvin, Gowens and Burchfield Streets during the second round of CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation funding, in years 2014-2015.
3. The search for funding sources to address the more broad drainage issues is on-going.

Responsible Parties

- City of Pickens

Partners

- South Carolina Department of Commerce – Grants Administration
- Appalachian Council of Governments – Grants Division and Planning Division
- Other grant funding sources, such as the SC Department of Transportation and the U.S Department of Agriculture, as funding opportunities become available.

Section VIII: Conclusion

General

The citizen-driven revitalization planning process which has taken place in the neighborhood south of Pickens Main Street throughout 2011 revealed numerous challenges but also a variety of creative solutions. The Neighborhood Advisory Committee and the City set out to develop strategies based on the following desired outcomes of the Village Renaissance program:

- Improve Neighborhood Involvement and Interaction
- Provide Neighborhood Safety and Pride
- Improve Physical Appearance and Property Values
- Promote Sustainability and Conservation
- Address Infrastructure and Public Facility Needs
- Identify In-Fill Housing Opportunities

For each of these topic areas, this Plan recommends strategies which will be both effective and realistic for a 5-year time frame and beyond. By virtue of having these strategies and all of their supporting data organized into a single document, the City has a blue print by which to support revitalization.

Future CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation

While all of the recommended strategies are important, it was necessary to prioritize a list of capital projects for future CDBG Village Renaissance funding consideration. In addition to these projects being both essential for revitalization and comprehensive in scope, they also had to be good, eligible fits for the grant program. **The highest priority project is replacement of the failing sewer lines in the southernmost Rigdon Circle section of the neighborhood.** With any remaining funds available in the Phase II CDBG budget, the City should seek funds to restore sidewalks and selectively install new ones where there are none in high-foot traffic areas in order to provide safe, walk-able pathways in this neighborhood where access to transportation is a challenge. With the neighborhood's close proximity to downtown and other important resources, an investment in sidewalks would have a great impact.

Activities recommended for **a proposed Phase III of Village Renaissance implementation (2014-2015)** include (1) exterior housing rehabilitation in the northernmost section of the neighborhood closest to downtown Pickens in order to feed off the momentum of the *Main Street* program, and (2) the resurfacing of the narrow and deteriorated Garvin, Gowens and Burchfield Streets. The proposed project list, time frame and maps are found in the *Executive Summary* at the beginning of this document. This combination of projects will serve as catalysts for long-term, sustained vitality in the Griffin Ebenezer Neighborhood.

Section IX: Summary List of Strategic Plans by Topic

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Involvement & Interaction

Village Renaissance Grant Program Desired Outcome
"Improve neighborhood involvement and interaction."

Pickens Village Renaissance Advisory Committee Goals

- "Increase neighborhood optimism and sense of ownership."
- "Increase residential familiarity with one another so that people work together."
- "Retain residents and attract new ones by increasing neighborhood and downtown attractions."

Supportive Findings

- Open House Survey data revealed that the Study Area contains a strong sense of community, selflessness and volunteerism;
- In the Committee's *Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats* analysis, "The People" were considered to be the neighborhood's greatest *Strength*, while a good *Opportunity* was to "Build neighborhood trust/pride/relationships."
- The Committee places neighborhood-wide "buy in" as a high priority.
- The neighborhood organization *Pickens Community in Action* (PCA) formed in the summer 2011.
- The Committee believes that building a neighborhood "brand" is very important for establishing sense of history and pride.

Recommendations

In order to help sustain its positive momentum, the City of Pickens should continue to support the PCA organization. Recommended activities:

1. Form partnership between Pickens Police Department and PCA to organize a neighborhood crime watch program, complete with a phone tree, signage, and regular meetings.
2. Continue to partner City Sanitation with PCA for Neighborhood Clean-Up Day events.
3. Coordinate relationship-building activities between Pickens Police Department and neighborhood residents, including recreational coaching by officers and neighborhood cookouts.
4. Work with PCA on designing and installing brand signage at key intersections leading into the neighborhood. Example: "Welcome to the Griffin Ebenezer Neighborhood. Established: 1871".

Time Frame

1-4. The partnership between PCA and City Leadership has begun and should continue indefinitely.

Responsible Parties

- Pickens Community in Action
- City of Pickens (Administration, Police Department, Sanitation)

Partners

- Neighborhood and nearby faith-based organizations
- Local non-profit organizations to provide guest speakers for PCA meetings and to provide resources and expertise during PCA events, such as clean-up days and voter registration drives.
- Clemson University Extension *Master Gardener's* Program to provide assistance with a future Community Garden.

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Crime

Village Renaissance Grant Program Desired Outcome
"Provide neighborhood safety and pride."

Pickens Village Renaissance Advisory Committee Goals

- "Increase awareness and education of neighborhood issues."
- "Build strong relationship with Pickens Police Department."
- "Decrease crime and nuisance activity."
- "Improve public image and reputation of neighborhood."

Supportive Findings

- Open House survey data revealed that a majority of residents have significant concerns about safety, drugs, violence, theft, and vandalism.
- The Committee S.W.O.T. analysis revealed neighborhood *Weaknesses* and *Threats* involving drugs and disorderly conduct.
- Data from the Pickens PD reveal that (1) a majority of crimes involve Drugs & Alcohol, Theft & Vandalism, or Violence & Disruptive Behavior, and (2) reported crime activity is distributed throughout neighborhood.

Recommendations

1. Facilitate partnership between *Pickens Community in Action* and Pickens PD to form a neighborhood crime watch program with regular meetings, signage and a resident phone tree.
2. Implement activities to build close relationship between City police officers and residents (recreational coaching, cookouts, etc.)
3. Partner with *Duke Energy* (service provider) to increase street lighting in dark areas of the neighborhood where criminal activity is more likely (see *Public Facilities* section of this Plan for street light assessment).

Time Frame

1-2. Neighborhood Crime Watch discussions are on-going. Once established, this City-Neighborhood partnership should continue indefinitely.

3. See *Public Facilities* section of plan.

Responsible Parties

- City of Pickens Police Department
- Pickens Community in Action

Partners

- Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church and nearby faith-based organizations.

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Housing and Physical Appearance

Village Renaissance Grant Program Desired Outcomes

- **"Improve physical appearance and property values"**
- **"Identify in-fill housing opportunities"**

Advisory Committee Goals

- "Revitalize the appearance of neighborhood properties which are in poor physical condition."
- "Increase the amount of attractive and affordable housing structures on vacant and dilapidated properties."

Supportive Findings

- Open House survey data revealed that residents are unsatisfied with the condition and appearance of housing and vacant lots.
- The Committee S.W.O.T. analysis revealed several *Weaknesses* and *Threats* based on housing; housing improvement was seen as a good *Opportunity.*
- A windshield housing survey revealed that 62% of Study Area houses are in need of repair.
- Mobile homes make up 15% of neighborhood housing; many are densely concentrated.
- Low residential income provides few resources for individual home improvement.

Recommendations

1. Seek CDBG Village Renaissance implementation funding for exterior housing rehabilitation in northernmost section of neighborhood which is closest to downtown.
2. Seek Federal HOME funding as it becomes available for housing renovation and new in-fill development on vacant lots and future demolition sites throughout neighborhood.
3. Continue to support/partner with Allen Temple Community and Economic Development Corporation to develop more affordable housing options.
4. Support Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church in finding resources/partnerships to develop recently purchased mobile home lot into an affordable housing development.
5. Continue to devote Police Department resources to enhanced code enforcement.

Time Frame

1. External Housing Improvements: 2014 – 2015, during the second round of CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation funding.
2. Seek Federal HOME Funds: regular applications to be submitted funding cycles are announced.
3. Support/partnership with Allen Temple is on-going and should continue indefinitely.
4. Support of Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church's efforts is on-going and should continue indefinitely.
5. Enhanced code enforcement is on-going and should continue indefinitely.

Responsible Party

- City of Pickens

Partners

- Allen Temple Community and Economic Development Corporation
- Griffin Ebenezer Baptist Church
- South Carolina CDBG Program
- Federal HOME Program and other comparable sources

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Public Facilities

Village Renaissance Grant Program Desired Outcomes

- **"Address infrastructure and public facility needs."'**
- **"Promote sustainability and conservation."**

Advisory Committee Goals

- "Take advantage of the neighborhood's abundant green space and other natural assets through smart building and land use practices."
- "Improve the condition and accessibility of neighborhood road, sidewalk, street light, water, sewer and drainage facilities where this public infrastructure is found to be inadequate."
- "Revitalize the appearance of neighborhood properties which are in poor physical condition."

Supportive Findings

- Open House survey respondents suggest neighborhood sidewalks and street lights are inadequate.
- Open House survey respondents are dissatisfied with neighborhood public meeting and recreational venues.
- The Committee S.W.O.T. analysis revealed that "Roads, sidewalks, & street lights" is the #1 neighborhood *Weakness.*
- Two large, vacant lots in the center of neighborhood provide ideal location for a City park with a possible walking trail to connect with neighboring Canon Memorial Hospital walking trail.

Recommendations

1. Use CDBG Village Renaissance implementation funds to construct sidewalk renovations in high-foot traffic areas throughout neighborhood (see Phase II map found in the Executive Summary of this document).
2. Partner with *Duke Energy* to enhance street lighting in dark areas.
3. Search for grant funding to support development of a central neighborhood recreation park.

Time Frame

1. Sidewalk upgrades: 2012 – 2013, during the first phase of CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation funding.
2. Enhance street lighting: coordination with Duke Energy is on-going.
3. New Park Development: discussions among City officials are on-going. Negotiations with property owners and construction of park should occur as internal and external funding sources become available during the next five years.

Responsible Party

- City of Pickens

Partners:

- Duke Energy (street light utility provider)
- South Carolina Department of Commerce – Grants Administration
- Appalachian Council of Governments – Grants Division and Planning Division
- All possible recreational grant funding sources.
- Potential local business sponsors for the new park initiative.

Strategic Plan: Neighborhood Infrastructure

Grant Program Desired Outcome

- **"Address infrastructure and public facility needs."**

Advisory Committee Goal

- "Improve the condition and accessibility of neighborhood road, sidewalk, street light, water, sewer and drainage facilities where this public infrastructure is found to be inadequate."

Supportive Findings

- Water lines are in sufficient condition at this time.
- Failing sewer lines in the southernmost Rigdon Circle section of neighborhood are the most fundamental impediment to neighborhood revitalization.
- Garvin, Gowens and Burchfield Streets are narrow and deteriorating, presenting vehicular transportation and safety challenges and harming neighborhood appearance.
- Drainage improvements are needed in the eastern side of the neighborhood – particularly along Morris and Patterson Streets. Because this problem stretches beyond the CDBG study area, the City will utilize other sources of funding as they become available to address this issue.

Recommendations

1. Utilize CDBG Village Renaissance implementation funds to replace failing sewer lines in the Rigdon Circle area.
2. Utilize CDBG Village Renaissance implementation funds to resurface Garvin, Gowens and Burchfield Streets.
3. Search for other funding sources to address needed drainage improvements which are needed beyond this neighborhood's borders.

Time Frame

1. Replace failing sewer lines in the Rigdon Circle section of neighborhood during the first round of CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation funding, in years 2012-2013.
2. Resurface deteriorated Garvin, Gowens and Burchfield Streets during the second round of CDBG Village Renaissance Implementation funding, in years 2014-2015.
3. The search for funding sources to address the more broad drainage issues is on-going.

Responsible Parties

- City of Pickens

Partners

- South Carolina Department of Commerce – Grants Administration
- Appalachian Council of Governments – Grants Division and Planning Division
- Other grant funding sources, such as the SC Department of Transportation and the U.S Department of Agriculture, as funding opportunities become available.

Appendix I: Open House Flier and Newspaper Advertisements

The Southern Pickens Village Renaissance Grant Program

The City of

PICKENS

will be hosting an **Open House** on **Thursday, February 3rd from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at City Hall** to inform citizens about a **grant** the City has received to develop a **Strategic 5-Year Revitalization Plan** for an area which is located in southern Pickens on the following streets:

ARNOLD, BIRCHFIELD, BOOTH, BRIAN, CATHERINE, CEDAR ROCK, CRUMPTON, GARVIN, GOWENS, JEFFERSON, JOHNSON, KEVIN, LEE, LEWIS, LIBERTY, MONROE, MORRIS, PATTERSON, PENDLETON (U.S. 178), PENDLETON EXT., RIGDON, AND ROB'S.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

· Address Infrastructure & Public Facilities · Identify In-Fill Housing Opportunities
· Improve Physical Appearance & Property Values · Promote Sustainability, Walk-Ability, & Conservation
· Encourage Community Involvement & Interaction · Strengthen Neighborhood Safety & Pride

THIS IS THE PROGRAM'S 2ND OPEN HOUSE AND WE ENCOURAGE ALL CITIZENS & BUSINESSES TO DROP IN, LEARN MORE, AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK FOR THE REVITALIZATION EFFORT!

For more information, including for those citizens who require special services to attend the Open House, please call City Hall at

864.878.6421

February 29, 2012

The City of

PICKENS

will be **hosting an open house** on

Wed. Jan. 26th at 5:30pm at Griffin Ebenezer Church

to develop a **Strategic Five-Year Revitalization Plan** for an area which is located in central and southern Pickens on the following streets:

CATHERINE, GARVIN, PENDLETON (U.S. 178), PENDLETON EXT., LEWIS, JOHNSON, CEDAR ROCK, LEE, RIGDON, MORRIS, BOOTH, JEFFERSON, KEVIN, GOWENS, BIRCHFIELD, LIBERTY, MONROE, PATTERSON, BRIAN, ARNOLD, ROB'S AND CRUMPTON.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPALS WILL BE:

Address infrastructure and public facility needs, Identify in-fill housing opportunities, Improve physical appearance and property values, Promote sustainability, walkability, and conservation, Promote civic participation with an emphasis on community, volunteerism, self-help, and public-private sector collaboration, and improve safety and neighborhood pride.

We need your input and feedback for this citizen driven process to help make Pickens a better place to live, work and play!

For more information please contact City Hall at

864.878.6421

Appendix II: Residential Open House Survey and Results

PICKENS

Where the Mountains Begin

The City of Pickens has received a 2011 Planning Grant from the South Carolina Department of Commerce to conduct a Strategic 5-Year Revitalization Plan for Central & Southern Pickens. The study area is comprised of the following streets: **Catherine, Garvin, Pendleton (U.S. 178), Pendleton Ext., Lewis, Johnson, Cedar Rock, Lee, Rigdon, Morris, Booth, Jefferson, Kevin, Gowens, Birchfield, Liberty, Monroe, Patterson, Brian, Arnold, Rob's and Crumpton.** The City has contracted with the Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) to develop this plan over the coming year. We need your feedback to be successful. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. We also encourage you to speak with City and ACOG staff about the neighborhood issues which are important to you. Thank you for your participation!

PLEASE BE OPEN AND HONEST! YOUR OPINION IS RESPECTED AND CONFIDENTIAL AMONG OUR STAFF.

Neighborhood Issue	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not Know
NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT & INTERACTION						
There is a strong sense of community in my neighborhood.						
The residents of my neighborhood often help each other out.						
Residents work & volunteer together to make my neighborhood a good place to live.						
NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY & PRIDE						
I feel safe when walking or riding my bike during the day time.						
I feel safe when walking or riding my bike during the night time.						
Children are safe when playing in my neighborhood.						
Drugs are not a significant problem in my neighborhood.						
Theft is not a significant problem in my neighborhood.						
Violence is not a significant problem in my neighborhood.						
Vandalism is not a significant problem in my neighborhood.						
INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC FACILITIES						
Roads in my neighborhood are in decent condition.						
My home is served by a sidewalk.						
PLEASE CONTINUE SURVEY ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE						
INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC FACILITIES, CONT.	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not Know

Sidewalks in my neighborhood are in decent condition.						
Sidewalks or other pedestrian pathways make it easy for me to walk or ride a bike in my neighborhood.						
There are adequate sidewalks which allow me to walk or ride a bike to the downtown area and to other public places (library, church, etc.).						
I am satisfied with the street lighting of my neighborhood.						
After it rains, water drains from the roads, sidewalks and ditches in a reasonable amount of time.						
After a heavy rain, sewer manholes do not overflow with water.						
I am satisfied with the quality of drinking water in my neighborhood.						
There are adequate public places for children to play in my neighborhood.						
There are adequate public meeting places for residents in my neighborhood.						
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE & VALUE OF PROPERTIES						
To the best of my knowledge, my neighborhood is now a more desirable place to live than it was 25 years ago.						
To the best of my knowledge, my neighborhood is now a more desirable place to live than it was 50 years ago.						
Most houses in my neighborhood are in decent physical condition.						
Most houses in my neighborhood look attractive when I pass by.						
While there are some empty houses, I do not think they make the overall neighborhood look less attractive.						
While there are some empty lots (where houses have been torn down), I do not think they make the overall neighborhood look less attractive.						
GUIDING THE FUTURE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD						
I would like to participate in voluntary meetings this year for this Village Renaissance Grant and the improvements it will bring to my neighborhood.						
Would you like to share additional thoughts? Please write them here.						

We consider you to be the best way to learn about helping your neighborhood, so we may want to contact you to learn more:

Resident Name:_____ Resident Address: _____
_____

Resident Phone #:_____ E-mail (optional): _____
_____

Pickens VR Open House Survey Tally Sheet						
NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT & INTERACTION	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
There is a strong sense of community in my neighborhood.	18%	45%	12%	15%	3%	6%
The residents of my neighborhood often help each other out.	15%	58%	15%	6%	3%	3%
Residents work & volunteer together to make my neighborhood a good place to live.	15%	36%	15%	24%	3%	6%
NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY & PRIDE	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
I feel safe when walking or riding my bike during the day time.	36%	33%	12%	15%	3%	0%
I feel safe when walking or riding my bike during the night time.	12%	24%	15%	39%	9%	0%
Children are safe when playing in my neighborhood.	6%	45%	21%	12%	15%	0%
Drugs are not a significant problem in my neighborhood.	3%	15%	15%	33%	24%	9%
Theft is not a significant problem in my neighborhood.	0%	27%	18%	33%	15%	6%
Violence is not a significant problem in my neighborhood.	9%	39%	12%	24%	12%	3%
Vandalism is not a significant problem in my neighborhood.	3%	42%	12%	21%	12%	9%
INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC FACILITIES	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do Not Know
Roads in my neighborhood are in decent condition.	9%	21%	6%	39%	21%	3%
My home is served by a sidewalk.	6%	27%	6%	30%	27%	3%
Sidewalks in my neighborhood are in decent condition.	9%	30%	9%	21%	27%	3%
Sidewalks or other pedestrian pathways make it easy for me to walk or ride a bike in my neighborhood.	12%	18%	18%	27%	21%	3%
There are adequate sidewalks which allow me to walk or ride a bike to the downtown area and other public places (library, church)	9%	36%	12%	30%	12%	0%
I am satisfied with the street lighting of my neighborhood.	3%	12%	3%	45%	30%	6%
After it rains, water drains from the roads, sidewalks and ditches in a reasonable amount of time.	3%	30%	12%	27%	27%	0%

After a heavy rain, sewer manholes do not overflow with water.	3%	27%	24%	18%	24%	3%
I am satisfied with the quality of drinking water in my neighborhood.	6%	45%	9%	15%	21%	3%
There are adequate public places for children to play in my neighborhood.	0%	24%	9%	36%	24%	6%
There are adequate public meeting places for residents in my neighborhood.	3%	27%	9%	36%	21%	3%
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE & VALUE OF PROPERTIES	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**No Opinion**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Do Not Know**
To the best of my knowledge, my neighborhood is now a more desirable place to live than it was 25 years ago.	6%	21%	15%	39%	12%	6%
To the best of my knowledge, my neighborhood is now a more desirable place to live than it was 50 years ago.	0%	21%	27%	36%	6%	9%
Most houses in my neighborhood are in decent physical condition.	0%	21%	9%	39%	30%	0%
Most houses in my neighborhood look attractive when I pass by.	0%	21%	6%	36%	36%	0%
While there are some empty houses, I do not think they make the overall neighborhood look less attractive.	9%	21%	9%	18%	42%	0%
While there are some empty lots (where houses have been torn down), I do not think they make the overall neighborhood look less attractive.	6%	27%	6%	18%	36%	6%
GUIDING THE FUTURE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**No Opinion**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Do Not Know**
I would like to participate in voluntary meetings this year for this Village Renaissance Grant and the improvements it will bring to my neighborhood.	29%	36%	24%	5%	3%	3%

Appendix III: Advisory Committee *Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats* (S.W.OT.) Analysis

Pickens Village Renaissance Neighborhood S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths	*Weaknesses*
The People (36) Layout & Location (12) Safe & Quiet (7) Neat, Clean & Green (4) Neighborhood/City/Police Relations (3)	Roads, sidewalks, street lights (20) Education/Rec/Shopping/Job Opp's (16) Drugs & Crime (9) Infrastructure – water & drainage (9) Empty & Deteriorated Buildings/Houses (9) Residents not working together/trusting each other (4) Neighborhood/City/Police Relations (3)
Opportunities	***Threats***
Increase Shopping/Recreation (18) Improve Housing Stock (10) Clean/Beautify Neighborhood (9) Improve neighborhood economy (6) Build neighborhood trust/pride/relationships (5) Reduce Crime & Drugs (3)	Crime, Disorderly Conduct, & Accountability (20) Drugs (15) Poor attitude and perception (10) Economic Impediments (jobs, health, training, etc.) (8) Deteriorated/Vacant Houses & Lots (6) Streets & Infrastructure (3)

Appendix IV: Environmental Review Record

IN PROGRESS

Appendix V: Low-to-Moderate Income Survey Determination

Low-to-Moderate Income Survey Determination

A Study Area-wide low-to-moderate income survey was administered in September of 2010 during the application process for CDBG Village Renaissance planning award number 4-V-10-008. This survey was updated in January of 2012. Below were its key findings:

Door-to-Door Survey of CDBG Target Area, September 2010		
Totals	**#**	**%**
Total Houses in Target Area	166	100%
Total Houses Responding	121	73%
Total Vacant, Occupiable Units	22	13%
Total Units not Responding	23	14%
Total Persons	280	100%
Total LMI Persons	232	83%

Appendix VI: Comprehensive Needs Assessment and Prioritization

City of Pickens, South Carolina
Needs Assessment

I. Introduction

On October 17th, 2011 at 5:00 p.m., the City held a community-wide Needs Assessment Public Hearing in order to receive input from residents on the needs of the community. Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) staff was there to conduct the hearing. The objective was to survey residents, government officials, and non-profit social agencies in order to: (1) identify and prioritize the City of Pickens' major community, economic, and housing needs; and (2) identify potential grant projects. Municipal officials worked to ensure the participation of the community in the needs assessment public hearing. This was undertaken as part of the application process for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) administered by the SC Department of Commerce.

A variety of issues were discussed at the public hearing. The attendees' main focus was on the need for improvements in the neighborhood just south of downtown along US Hwy 178. This neighborhood is the subject of an ongoing CDBG Village Renaissance planning award received in 2010, thus many of this neighborhood's needs have been fleshed out through a citizen driven planning over the past year. Many of the issues brought up during this hearing dealt with the need to replace this Village Renaissance neighborhood's existing water, sewer and drainage infrastructure. Other comments were made about improving the neighborhood's external housing condition, upgrading the quality of affordable housing for low income citizens, and improving the public facilities of sidewalks and street lights. Other community wide issues included requests for greater police presence in high crime neighborhoods, expanded sidewalks throughout the city, and improved drainage facilities in specific areas of town. The City of Pickens has been working to revitalize its downtown and attendees expressed a desire for continued beautification efforts in this area.

The public hearing was advertised in the October 5th, 2011 edition of *The Pickens County Courier*. Nine citizens and city officials attended the public hearing to provide input.

II. Pickens Vision 2008

The City of Pickens, in order to facilitate community improvement efforts, undertook a visioning process that was completed in winter of 1997. The residents of Pickens prepared the *Pickens Vision 2008 report* with assistance from City staff. The vision process included significant community involvement with numerous public meetings. The document identifies a vision for the community and identifies goals that will help direct future community improvement efforts in Pickens. These goals were beneficial to the needs assessment analysis for this application. The highest priority goals included:

1. "Rehabilitate substandard housing in the Griffin-Ebenezer Neighborhood and throughout the City."
2. "Improve and expand infrastructure (water lines, sewer, sidewalks, etc.)."
3. "Landscape and make downtown visually pleasing and pedestrian friendly."
4. "Increase planned social and cultural activities downtown."
5. "Increase the quality of life for its citizens."
6. "Preserve and rehabilitate the downtown buildings."
7. "Increase downtown housing."
8. "Enhance public services."

Pickens' visioning process identified many of the existing and future needs of the community as determined by the citizens. They also developed goals and implementation policies to achieve these goals in the future. The City Council supported the community's assessment and is actively working to assist with the implementation of the report's goals.

The two primary goals of the Vision 2008 plan were to improve substandard housing and improve the existing infrastructure. The city's commitment to this plan is evident in the efforts they have already undertaken to achieve their goals. The city has undertaken two housing rehabilitation projects in the Griffin-Ebenezer area of the community and is completing work to upgrade water lines in the downtown area. These projects have all been funded through the Community Development Block Grant Program.

An important priority in the community was improving the City's image and business district through improvements to Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Initial efforts included streetscaping along Main Street with new sidewalks, lighting, and street trees that has enhanced the downtown. Additional efforts have included purchasing land for a park adjacent to Main Street with plans for a park, walking trails, and an amphitheater in the future. Extensions of the streetscaping project are currently planned for other parts of Main Street. The City is now focusing on extending these efforts into the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. The area surround US 178 as it comes into the city includes neighborhoods and vacant areas that detract from the entrance into the downtown area. The City has identified improving the neighborhoods, infrastructure, and drainage as keys to improving the US 178 entrance corridor.

III. Demographics

The City of Pickens is located in the northern portion of Pickens County and is the County Seat. Table 1 indicates the population of Pickens in relation to other municipalities in Pickens County, as well as municipalities in close proximity to Pickens.

Table 1
Municipal Population Trends, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

Municipality	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
Central	1,550	1,914	2,399	3,522	46.8
Clemson	6,690	8,336	11,145	11,897	6.7
Easley	11,175	14,264	15,179	17,754	17.0
Liberty	2,860	3,167	3,228	3,009	-6.8
Norris	757	903	970	847	-12.7
Pickens	***2,954***	***3,199***	***3,000***	***3,012***	***0.4***
Six Mile	361	470	562	553	-1.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.

Pickens is the fourth largest municipality in Pickens County. Table 1 indicates that Pickens population remained steady between 1990 and 2000. This is compared to a six (6) percent decline between 1980 and 1990. Pickens' current population is at its highest level since 1970. Pickens has grown as much or more as all other municipalities in Pickens County except Easley and Norris since 1990.

Table 2 represents the same municipalities with population distribution by race. The City of Pickens, as of the 1990 Census, consists of 79.7% white population, 19.5% black population, and .4% percent Hispanic population. Pickens' race distribution most closely resembles that of the Town of Central. Pickens has a higher percentage of black population and the same percentage of Hispanic population as compared to the majority of municipalities in Pickens County.

Table 2
Municipal Population by Race, 2000

Municipality	Total Population	White	Black	Other	Hispanic
Central	3,522	2,807	537	178	152
Clemson	11,939	9,668	1,359	912	217
Easley	17,754	15,153	2,096	505	501
Liberty	3,009	2,616	347	46	30
Norris	847	746	82	19	2
Pickens	***3,012***	***2,426***	***506***	***80***	***75***
Six Mile	553	536	11	6	6

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 2000

Other = American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian & other Pacific Islander & others

Note: Hispanic does not denote a separate racial group, but is made up of members of all racial groups.

Table 3 provides a summary of housing counts by jurisdiction between 1980 and 2000. As seen from these figures, housing counts in Pickens increased by less than one (1) percent from 1980 to 1990. The city experienced considerably more growth between 1990 and 2000 with 82 new housing units, a 6 percent increase. The slow growth in new housing coincided with the community's relatively slow growth in population between 1980 and 2000. The limited population growth has kept the need for an increase in housing down to an extent. However, the age of the housing stock is getting older and there is a need for either replacement units or improvements to much of the existing housing to meet the needs of the current residents.

Table 3
Housing Counts for Municipalities in Pickens County, 1980 - 2000

	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980-1990	% Change 1990-2000
Central	896	1,262	1,832	40.8	45.2
Clemson	3,470	4,874	5,679	40.5	16.5
Easley	5,215	6,356	7,932	21.9	24.8
Liberty	1,264	1,357	1,404	7.4	3.5
Norris	331	399	400	20.5	0.3
Pickens	**1,353**	**1,356**	**1,438**	**0.2**	**6.0**
Six Mile	175	206	223	17.7	8.3
Pickens County	28,469	35,866	46,000	26.0	28.3

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

IV. Community Development Needs

A. Housing

Improving the housing stock in Pickens is an issue the community is continually trying to address. According to the *Pickens Vision 2008* report, improving housing conditions in residential areas of the community is one of the highest priorities for Pickens. The City of Pickens has completed two projects to improve substandard housing in this area of the community over the last several years.

Additional affordable housing development has occurred over the past year through the efforts of *Allen Temple Community and Economic Development Corporation,* **which** continues to apply for grant funding address substandard housing conditions in the Village Renaissance Neighborhood. Attendees recommended continue support of Allen Temple in this neighborhood where housing stock is greatly deteriorated.

B. Infrastructure

Water and sewer infrastructure in Pickens is a work in progress for the community. The City has upgraded several areas where water and sewer lines had significant deficiencies. However, there are still needed improvements for other areas that utilize aging lines built over 50 years ago. It is a priority on the southern side of the City. I&I problems (inflow and infiltration) are very costly and it is difficult to "band aid" this problem.

In addition, drainage problems are also prevalent in parts of the City. This is especially true along US 178 south of downtown where significant slopes and existing development have created drainage challenges. The City's new stormwater ordinance helps them to identify problems and address structural projects that might help alleviate some of the problems.

The *Pickens Vision 2008* report identified a need to improve and expand the community's infrastructure including sewer collection systems. Specifically the citizens present at the public hearing identified the need for improvements to the sewer system as a priority.

C. Public Facilities

While the improvement of public facilities was not emphasized in the previous year's Needs Assessment, this area received much attention from attendees at this public hearing. Due to this area being analyzed thoroughly during the current Village Renaissance planning process, residents feel strongly that both sidewalks and street lights are lacking significantly in the neighborhood directly south of Main Street. Attendees also emphasized that this neighborhood would be well served by (1) a police substation in an abandoned building toward the southern end of the neighborhood, and (2) a passive recreational park to be developed on two large, overgrown lots along U.S. 178.

D. Public Safety

Residents expressed that Pickens has needs for additional police officers and patrol cars. In order to adequately protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens, new police officers were seen as vital to

improved public safety. Citizens noted specific areas near the city center that had become known for drug activity and needed to be addressed.

E. Economic Development and Obstacles to Competitiveness

Pickens County has a very high unemployment rate (10.4%). This is slightly better than the region and state but still a challenge for residents. Comments at the public hearing centered on the idea that the City was challenged by the competition for business from Easley, Clemson, and Greenville. It was also stated that the City needed to focus on becoming a destination and not a "pass through" town.

Ideas to accomplish this focused on improving the gateway corridors leading into and out of Pickens. The City has implemented several zoning overlay districts to help with the long term beautification of these corridors. They also continue to look for ways to beautify these corridors to attract more business. The residents also expressed a desire for more business incentives to attract new operations.

F. Workforce Development –Training programs

Residents expressed a desire that the City work to develop a better relationship with Tri-County Technical College (TCTC) to indentify training programs available to residents of Pickens. Partnering on new training initiatives would assist residents improving their work skills and improve the marketability of those looking for work. The main campus of TCTC is 20 miles away and a new Easley campus is being built (along with a QuickJobs training site). Both locations will be an important workforce training opportunity for residents Pickens.

G. Neighborhood Rehabilitation

As a result of the momentum created by the ongoing CDBG Village Renaissance planning award for the neighborhood directly south of Main Street, the area of Neighborhood Revitalization was the most discussed topic during the Needs Assessment Public Hearing. Citizens have spent the past year discussing problems and solutions for this neighborhood and they anticipate future grant applications to implement important, revitalizing capital projects. They see a focus on the rehabilitation of this neighborhood as being complimentary to the City's significant efforts to revitalize downtown through the national *Main Street* program.

H. Downtown Rehabilitation

The City has recently become a certified *Main Street* community and much enthusiasm was expressed by attendees at this public hearing. The City has made significant investments in downtown streetscape and business recruitment which will in turn create jobs and produce prosperity in the community.

V. Priorities

The City of Pickens used the needs assessment public hearing to assess its community needs for 2011-2012. The following needs were prioritized based on the number of times the issue was addressed during the public hearing.

1. **Pickens #1 ranked priority: Neighborhood Revitalization. In keeping with the on-going CDBG Village Renaissance Planning Award, residents would like to apply for a second round of funding for Village Renaissance "Implementation" for years 2012-2013. Specifically, residents would like to upgrade the Village Renaissance Neighborhood's infrastructure and public facilities in order to incentivize positive investment in the neighborhood's housing stock. Attendees recommended that the list of priorities found in the Village Renaissance Plan document be recommended to the SC Department of Commerce as a proposed order of capital investments for any future Implementation funding award the City may receive.**

2. The area of **Infrastructure** both inside and outside of the Village Renaissance neighborhood as ranked as the second highest priority for the City of Pickens. Attendees understand that adequate infrastructure is a prerequisite for successful community, economic, and housing development.

3. The areas of sidewalks and street lights were discussed as high priorities for the topic **Public Facilities.** These topics were emphasized particularly in the Village Renaissance neighborhood, along with a desire for a neighborhood park and a possible police substation.

4. The area of **Housing** was emphasized thoroughly in the Hearing. Attendees emphasized the importance of supporting the non-profit *Allen Temple CEDC* in its continued work in the Village Renaissance neighborhood (where housing stock is largely deteriorated). Any funding the City can procure to compliment Allen Temple's work should be pursued.

5. **Economic Development** and overcoming obstacles to competitiveness was ranked as a very high priority at the Needs Assessment. Inspiring entrepreneurship and recruiting employers remains a key priority for citizens.

6. Attendees saw **Downtown Development** as the central driver of Pickens overall economic development efforts. Continued support of the newly established Main Street program was recommended.

7. **Public Safety** was ranked as an important priority, with citizens requesting both more safety officers, a possible police substation in the Village Renaissance neighborhood, and more effective communications between citizens and the local PD.

8. **Workforce Development** remains a key focus of the City and residents recommended continued support of the several colleges and training centers located near Pickens.

City of Pickens, South Carolina
Needs Assessment Public Hearing
MINUTES
10/17/2011
5:00 p.m.
Pickens City Hall

On October 17th, 2011 at 5:00 p.m., the City held a community-wide Needs Assessment Public Hearing in order to receive input from residents on the needs of the community. Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) staff was there to conduct the hearing. The objective was to survey residents, government officials, and non-profit social agencies in order to: (1) identify and prioritize the City of Pickens' major community, economic, and housing needs; and (2) identify potential grant projects. Municipal officials worked to ensure the participation of the community in the needs assessment public hearing. This was undertaken as part of the application process for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) administered by the SC Department of Commerce. The public hearing was advertised in the October 5th, 2011 edition of *The Pickens County Courier*.

Nine citizens attended the hearing (see attached sign-in sheet). ACOG staff member David Shellhorse opened the session by welcoming visitors and by explaining the purpose of the hearing as it relates to assessing the community-wide needs associated with community development, economic development, and housing development for low-to-moderate (LMI) income citizens. The federal CDBG program was described as well as the program as it is administered for non-entitlement communities by the State of South Carolina – Department of Commerce. No questions were raised from the attendees.

A variety of issues were discussed at the public hearing. Mr. Shellhorse facilitated the conversation based on four broad questions:

I. **"What do you like most about your community?"** The following responses were given by the attendees:
   - "The people"
   - "Becoming more business-friendly"
   - "Everything!"
   - "Safe and quiet"
   - "Home-Town feel"

II. **"What are the greatest challenges which face your community?"** The following responses were given by the attendees:
   - "Infrastructure – sewer, water, roads, drainage"
   - "Lighting"
   - "Beautification and Clean-Up"
   - "Quality Affordable Housing"
   - "In-Fill Housing and Development"
   - "Working together as a community"

III. **"I'm now going to bring up eight different community topics and I'd like to hear your thoughts and opinions about each as they relate to the needs of this community."** The following responses were given by the attendees:

Infrastructure

- *"Rigdon Circle area needs new sewer – bad"*
- *"Water drainage needs improvement on the south side of town"*
- *"Some roads need speed bumps – people drive too fast."*

Housing

- *"Allen Temple is doing some good things on S. Lewis but we need more of that."*
- *"Too many trailers and not enough for affordable housings options in town. City is not allowing new trailers so we have to have other affordable options."*

Public Facilities

- *"We need more sidewalks – not just on Main Street. Griffin Ebenezer church is a busy place and has no sidewalks."*
- *"A bus stop and police substation in the Griffin Ebenezer neighborhood would be nice."*
- *"It's dark in our neighborhood – we need more lighting."*

Public Safety

- *"We need more police officers."*
- *"A police substation for our neighborhood [Griffin Ebenezer neighborhood] would be good."*
- *"It's too dark around my house."*
- *"We need a park we can walk to."*

Economic Development and Obstacles to Competitiveness

- *"Main Street program is a good opportunity for new retail and restaurants."*
- *"This is a great location for retail and light manufacturing."*
- *"Downtown has come a long way over the past couple of years with the new Main Street program."*

Workforce Development

- *"We have a lot of colleges near us – Tri County Tech, Clemson…"*
- *"We need to keep kids from dropping out of high school."*
- *"There's a lot of opportunity in this area to get training – we just have to make sure people are taking advantage of those opportunities."*

Neighborhood Rehabilitation

- *"Village Renaissance is going to transform our neighborhood" [neighborhood directly south of Main Street]*
- *"We have a plan and a bunch of projects outlined for the neighborhood – now we just need to see them through."*
- *"Neighborhood Revitalization in general is the most important need in this community. Village Renaissance is helping us get a plan on paper for success in the neighborhood which has the greatest need. This could be a blue print for other areas of Pickens."*

Downtown Revitalization

- *"The Main Street program and the Village Renaissance grant are the most exciting things going on right now in Pickens."*
- *"We need to support Main Street and help recruit new retail for that area."*
- *"The Town Creek Park plan just north of Main Street is exciting – we just need to find a way to fund it now that we have it down on paper."*

IV. **Mr. Shellhorse asked one last question: "We've covered a lot of issues that are important to you. Now I'd like for you to rank these topics from 'greatest need' to 'least need'. Which ones do you want to address first? Why?** The following paraphrased responses were given:

1. Pickens #1 ranked priority: **Neighborhood Revitalization**. In keeping with the on-going CDBG Village Renaissance Planning Award, residents would like to apply for a second round of funding for Village Renaissance "Implementation" for years 2012-2013. Specifically, residents would like to upgrade the Village Renaissance Neighborhood's infrastructure and public facilities in order to incentivize positive investment in the neighborhood's housing stock. Attendees recommended that the list of priorities found in the Village Renaissance Plan document be recommended to the SC Department of Commerce as a proposed order of capital investments for any future Implementation funding award the City may receive.
2. The area of **Infrastructure** both inside and outside of the Village Renaissance neighborhood ranked as the second highest priority. Attendees understand that adequate infrastructure is needed for successful community, economic, and housing development.
3. The areas of sidewalks and street lights were discussed as high priorities for the topic **Public Facilities.** These topics were emphasized particularly in the Village Renaissance neighborhood, along with a desire for a neighborhood park and a possible police substation.
4. The area of **Housing** was emphasized thoroughly in the Hearing. Attendees emphasized the importance of supporting the non-profit *Allen Temple CEDC* in its continued work in the Village Renaissance neighborhood (where housing stock is largely deteriorated). Any funding the City can procure to compliment Allen Temple's work should be pursued.
5. **Economic Development** and overcoming obstacles to competitiveness was ranked as a very high priority at the Needs Assessment. Inspiring entrepreneurship and recruiting employers remains a key priority for citizens.
6. Attendees saw **Downtown Development** as the central driver of Pickens economic development and recommended continued support of the Main Street program.
7. **Public Safety** was ranked as an important priority, with citizens requesting both more safety officers, a possible police substation in the Village Renaissance neighborhood, and more effective communications between citizens and the local PD.
8. **Workforce Development** remains a key focus of the City and residents recommended continued support of the several colleges and training centers located near Pickens.