



# SOUTH CONVERSE NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PLAN

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## **Executive Summary**

The South Converse neighborhood in Spartanburg, South Carolina is a unique community that has residents who are proud of their neighborhood and are invested in improving it. This report will give an overview of existing conditions in the community, and then presents potential strategies that address some of the issues in the community that were identified during the community meeting held in October 2017.

### **Existing Conditions**

#### **Demographic**

The neighborhood is primarily African-American (79%), and Caucasian (19%) (U.S. Census, 2010). The median household income is \$25,508 (U.S. Census, 2010). There is a relatively high rate of unemployment, 8.7%, within the neighborhood (U.S. Census, 2010). Additionally, there is an education gap between the neighborhood and the City of Spartanburg, which has approximately 10% more residents with a higher education degree (U.S. Census, 2010). Over 25% of residents in the community do not have a high school diploma (U.S. Census, 2010).

#### **Housing**

In the neighborhood, 47% of housing units are renter-occupied and 32% owner-occupied (U.S. Census, 2010) The median housing value is \$85,714 (U.S. Census, 2010). Lastly, in 2010 there were 187 total vacant properties (U.S. Census, 2010).



## Neighborhood Conditions

The following conditions were highlighted by residents during the South Converse community meeting hosted by Clemson planning students. Most input was related to transportation or maintenance concerns.

### Transportation

Transportation and maintenance are the two main areas of concern in the community. These areas were identified as a result of the community meeting. In terms of transportation, safety and visibility are two concerns, especially on Union Street and Hudson L Barksdale



Boulevard. Additionally, it is important to ensure that there are no vegetation or structures blocking the motorist's view. There are sidewalks throughout the neighborhood, but there are locations where they are in poor condition. There are three bike lanes in the area, but they would

be more beneficial if they made connections to other amenities

### Maintenance

Neighborhood assets such as sidewalks, street trees, signage could benefit from additional maintenance. Additionally, vacant properties compose 21% of the parcels in the neighborhood (U.S. Census, 2010). These properties can be problematic because they can start to deteriorate without people taking proper care of them.

### Other Plan Ideas

In order to help create strategies, we drew from other plans to determine practices that have been used in other places. From the Story Neighborhood Plan, an overlay zone or the use of form-based codes were used to regulate infill (City of Phoenix Planning Department, 1987). Potential traffic calming could be accomplished through the usage of signage and/or lowering speed limits (Alcova Heights, 2014). The Sunrise Neighborhood Conservation Plan

implemented a program where there would be a warning for code violations, then the community would have a clean-up day to rectify the problem, then there would be citations given out. This plan also has a detailed implementation process outlined in it (El Paso Neighborhood Services, 2008).

## **Strategies**

There were strategies identified for the two overarching categories of conditions that need attention. For **transportation**, one of the main strategies is to improve the condition of the sidewalks. Additionally, it will be important to implement complete streets where it is feasible, which can help with speed of traffic (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000, as cited by NACTO, 2013). Signage, such as radar speed signs' can also help with the safety and speed problems within the neighborhood (Alcova Heights, 2014). Lastly, it is key to ensure that codes are followed, so there is nothing to impede driver's line of sight at intersections.

Strategies for **maintenance** include having code enforcement, which would follow the Sunrise Neighborhood Conservation Plan's recommendation (El Paso Neighborhood Services, 2008). As previously mentioned, this recommendation involves code enforcement initially distributing warnings to code violators, followed by a neighborhood clean-up day to rectify the code violations, and finally concluded with code enforcement returning to issue violations for any issues that were not resolved. Also, in order to help address the vacant property and potential infill development the form-based codes could be extended from the downtown area to identify appropriate design of new buildings, as well as establishing what the regulations for the neighborhood are. Form-based codes do not encourage or discourage development of the existing vacant parcels. However, form-based codes will help conserve the existing character of the neighborhood by identifying how new development should appear.

## Introduction

The South Converse Neighborhood of Spartanburg is a long-established predominantly African American community located less than one mile from downtown Spartanburg. South Converse residents care about their community. The neighborhood's sidewalks, parks, and dogwood trees are some of the features that the neighborhood takes pride in. Houses are found on large lots and many different styles of design.

Hard work and community engagement have helped South Converse make impressive steps forward as a neighborhood and the community is dedicated to continuous and ongoing improvements. The proposed plan builds on community input, current conditions, and background research to improve the quality of life for the residents of the South Converse neighborhood. This includes maintaining the character of the community and enhancing the many positive qualities of the neighborhood.

South Converse is bounded by Henry Street to the north, Union Street to the east, Park Drive and Caulder Avenue to the south, and Hudson L. Barksdale Boulevard to the west. Its proximity to a redeveloping downtown Spartanburg makes it an attractive neighborhood for current residents as well as a draw for new residents looking for a pleasant neighborhood lifestyle near city amenities (City of Spartanburg (a), n.d.).

The look and character of the southern Spartanburg began to change in the 1970's with widespread federally-funded urban renewal projects (City of Spartanburg (a), n.d.). This intended improvement policy actually led to demolition of many homes and businesses in the area and increased low income rental units that altered the demographics of the neighborhood (City of Spartanburg (a), n.d.). The South Converse neighborhood was less affected than other areas of the Southside, but generational turnover and migration have created threats to common residential life (Littlejohn R., Spartanburg Tour, September 14, 2017). Today, the

neighborhood maintains many of its original single-family homes, which provide insight into the history of other Southside neighborhoods (City of Spartanburg (a), n.d.).

South Converse Street Park is the neighborhood centerpiece with amenities such as the newly built playground. The southeast border of the neighborhood is Duncan Park, which draws visitors from across the county. Other notable features include the Camp Croft Public Housing Development, a large central cemetery, the Union Street commercial corridor, and access to schools near Hudson L. Barksdale Boulevard. Combined with sidewalks and old growth trees throughout the neighborhood, South Converse has the infrastructure in place to conserve its past while redeveloping vacant and lower quality lots to complete the cohesive community sought by the residents (Littlejohn R., Spartanburg Tour, September 14, 2017).

Finally, South Converse has an active neighborhood association. The association has made progress in organizing the community, securing grant funding for improvements, and working closely with the City of Spartanburg's Neighborhood Planning Department to implement initiatives that improve the quality of life in South Converse (Littlejohn R., Spartanburg Tour, September 14, 2017).

### **Planning Process**

The planning process consisted of four major steps. First, a guided driving tour of the South Converse neighborhood introduced the character of the community. This tour included Mr. Martin Livingston from the City of Spartanburg, Mrs. Ruth Littlejohn from the South Converse Neighborhood Association, and graduate students from Clemson University's Department of City & Regional Planning. The initial neighborhood tour occurred on September 14, 2017.

Second, a meeting with the South Converse Neighborhood Association was held on October 12, 2017 at the CC Woodson Community Center. Fourteen neighborhood residents had the opportunity to discuss their community in small groups of about seven residents with two to three Clemson students for each group. Additionally, the residents had the opportunity to

write their opinions on worksheets that included space to list the neighborhood’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This meeting allowed community members to discuss specific issues and concerns of the neighborhood. Discussions on the strengths of the community and areas for improvement helped guide the dialogue.

Third, an analysis of the demographics and current conditions of the community helped contextualize community input and provided direction for goals and targeted implementation strategies.

Fourth, analysis of other neighborhood plans gave some direction to what types of actions could be applied to South Converse. Understanding how similar communities in other areas address issues is a helpful tool for decision makers to consider when applying potential solutions.

Finally, these considerations and the concerns of the community were combined to make strategic proposals in a Neighborhood Conservation Plan for South Converse in Spartanburg.

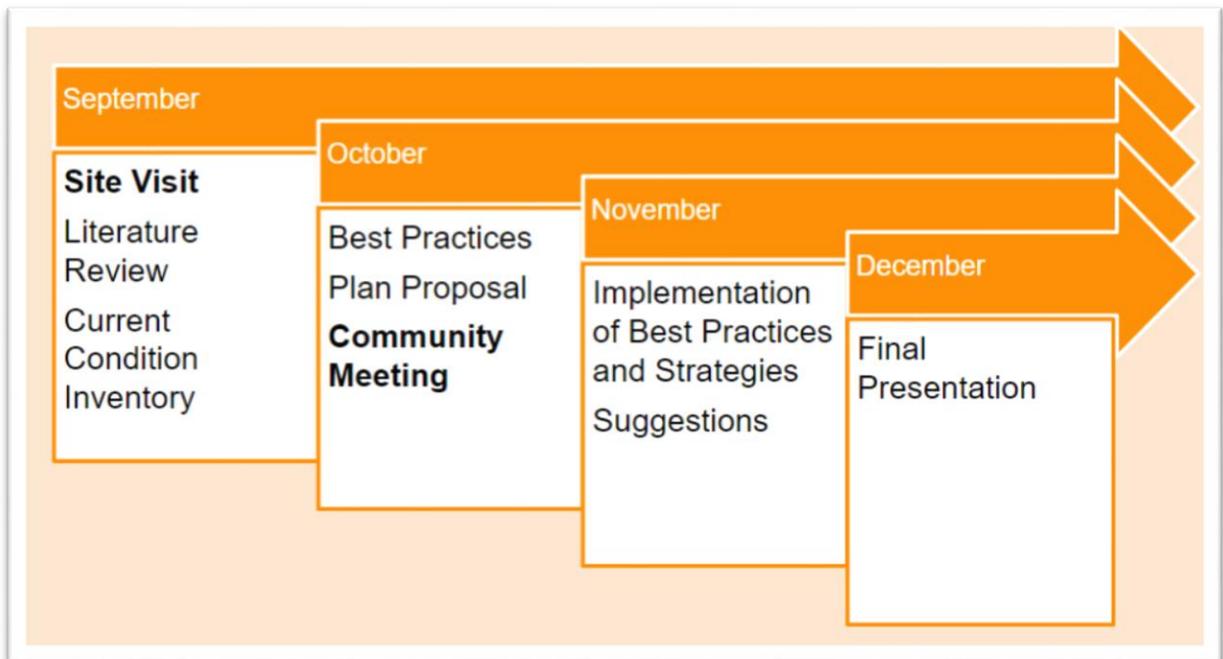


Figure 1. Planning Process

## Community Engagement



The meeting started off with seven people, but after ten to fifteen minutes another group of residents came into the meeting. We started out with an introduction

about what our group is doing in terms of this, as well as what is the expected result at the end of this semester. We refrained from making suggestions as to what we thought the issues



were, so that we would be able to hear what the community group thought. After the second round of people came in we split into two groups to have a better flow of communication.



We spent about forty minutes talking with the community members, and had them identify specific locations on community maps where there were issues in the community. These ranged from locations where sidewalks were in need of repair to refuse dumping

location to dangerous intersections. Each group had a map of the neighborhood and photographs of these maps are included below. In addition to discussion, residents were also given their own SWOT analysis worksheet that they could fill out on their own for us to collect at the end of the night.





Maps created at the community meeting.

## Existing Conditions

### Demographics Summary

South Converse has around 1,730 people, and 720 households with a median age of 43.8 years old (U.S. Census, 2010). The population in the South Converse neighborhood had a six-percent increase from 1,629 residents to 1,730 residents between 2010 to 2017 (U.S. Census, 2010). However, the neighborhood is still suffering from a population decrease; the population in 2000 was 1,908 residents and had a drastic reduction of 15% between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census, 2010). The racial distribution of the neighborhood was 79% black and 19% white per the 2010 U.S. Census (See **Figure 2**).

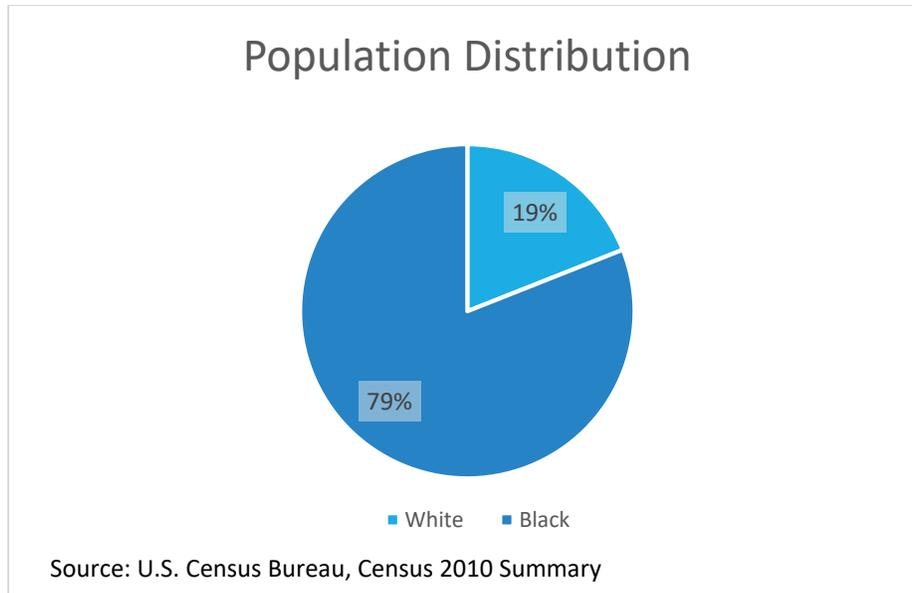


Figure 2. Population Distribution

The education pattern of the neighborhood indicates that 27% of the population has no high school diploma, and residents with a high school diploma, some college education, and college degree and above constitutes 24%, 32%, and 17% respectively (U.S. Census, 2010).

The median household income of South Converse is \$25,508 (U.S. Census, 2010). The largest category of household income in the neighborhood is even lower, between \$15,000 to \$24,999 (U.S. Census, 2010). Per capita income in the neighborhood is \$15,607 (U.S. Census, 2010). White collar employment constitutes most of the employment of the community with 60% of the population (U.S. Census, 2010). Blue collar and service sector constitutes 26% and 15% of the employment, accordingly (U.S. Census, 2010). The community also has an 8.7% unemployment. (U.S. Census, 2010)

The South Converse neighborhood, despite its close proximity to downtown Spartanburg, has a high vacancy rate, and unemployment. Therefore, the City of Spartanburg is better off in most measurements when compared to South Converse. The neighborhood's median age is 43.8 years old, while the median age for the City of Spartanburg is 37.3 (U.S.

Census, 2010). The education rate of the neighborhood is also lower than the City of Spartanburg. The City of Spartanburg has higher rates of college and advanced education while the neighborhood is 5% higher in the category of some college degree and 10% higher in the category of no high school degree (U.S. Census, 2010) (See **Figure 3**). The income of South Converse is also very low compared to the City of Spartanburg. The median household income in the City of Spartanburg is \$35,874 while the neighborhood median household income is \$25,508 (U.S. Census, 2010). Similarly, the per capita income of the neighborhood \$15,607, which is low compared to the city's per capita income of \$23,237 (U.S. Census, 2010).

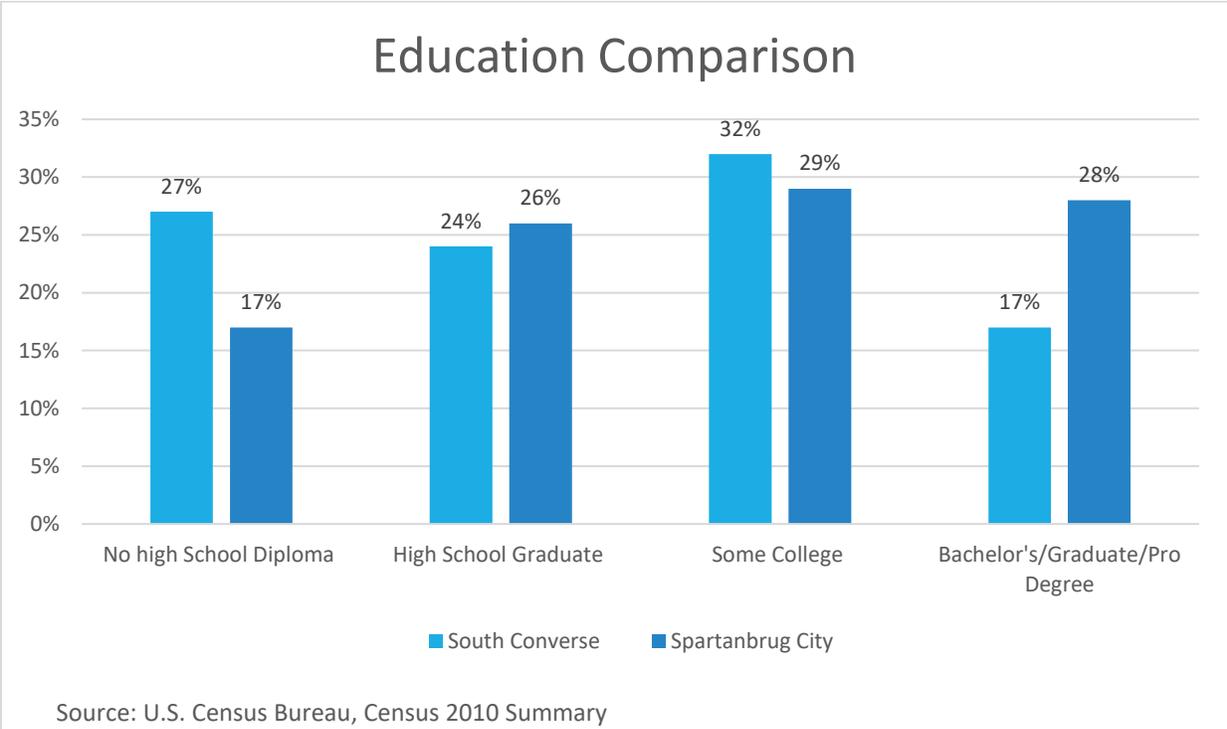


Figure 3. Education Comparison

**Business Summary**

South Converse is similar to the City of Spartanburg regarding employment distribution (See **Figure 4**). Based on the NAICS Codes there are 37 active businesses in the neighborhood (U.S. Census, 2010). The NAICS Codes indicates that Other Services Sector has the highest

number of the businesses in the neighborhood with eight active business followed by Retail Trade; Professional, Scientific, & Tech Services; and Public Administration Sectors with three businesses each (U.S. Census, 2010). Construction, Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Finance & Insurance, Legal Services, Administrative, and Healthcare Sectors with two active businesses each in the neighborhood (U.S. Census, 2010).

From the above businesses, the Public Administration sector has 78 employees, Other Services sector has 39 employees, Health Care & Social Assistance Sector has 30 employees, and Manufacturing Sector with 24 employees are the main employers in the neighborhood (U.S. Census, 2010).

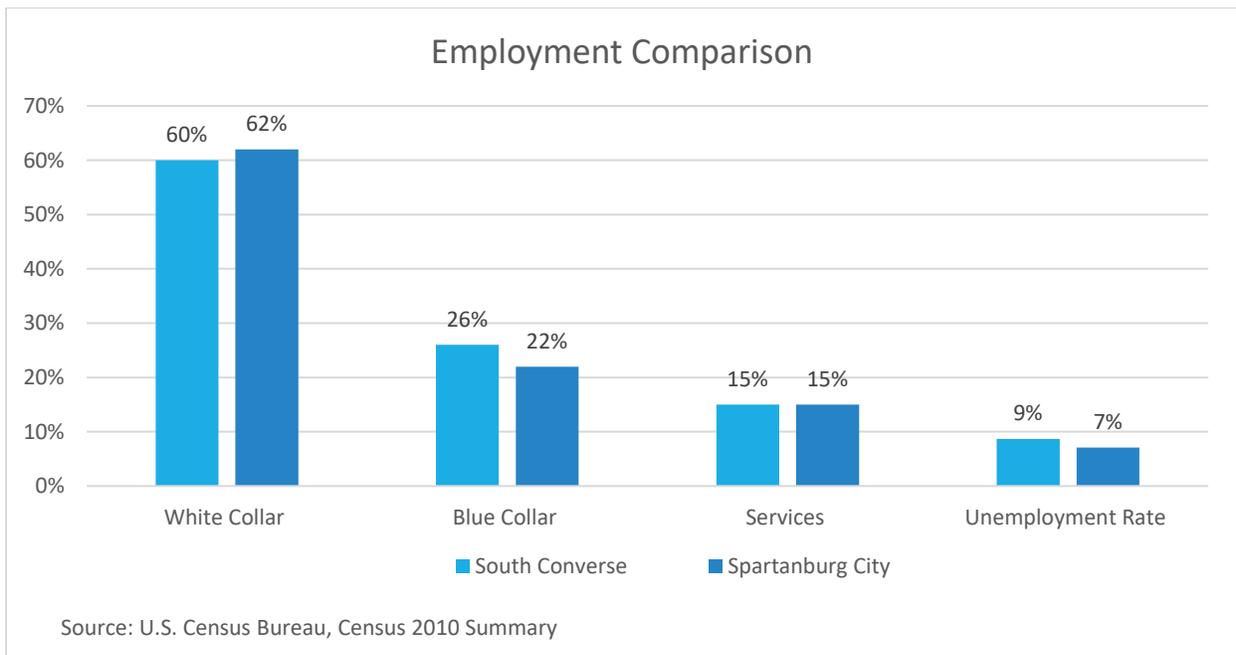


Figure 4. Employment Comparison

## Neighborhood Conditions

Based on neighborhood conservation research, community input, site visits, and GIS data, the neighborhood's priorities fit into two categories: transportation and property management. **Transportation** issues include roadway safety, sidewalk condition, and alternative transportation methods such as bicycling. **Property management** issues include beautification, code enforcement, property maintenance, and vacancy. The following current condition assessment represents a snapshot of community issues to be addressed in the final recommendation strategies.

### Transportation

#### Safety & Visibility

South Converse is located south of downtown Spartanburg between two major thoroughfares, Union Street and Hudson L Barksdale Boulevard. The neighborhood is bisected by South Converse Avenue from north to south. The convenience of being located near thoroughfares comes with transportation issues that affect public safety and visibility. Neighborhood streets are subject to serve as shortcuts or cut-throughs between the two main roads causing increased traffic and high speeds of travel. Only three roads have direct connections between Union and Barksdale, but five are partial throughways with wide streets conducive to shortcuts at high speeds.

The intersections of neighborhood streets with the main roads are obstructed by vegetation and structures on adjacent property that impair sightlines. This loss in visibility is concerning to the community and has the potential to cause motorist/motorist



and motorist/pedestrian collisions. This further highlights the need for improved property maintenance along the neighborhood edge.

### **Sidewalks**

Virtually all of the streets in the South Converse neighborhood have sidewalks, many of which are present on both sides of the road. This is a welcome amenity and a point of pride to the community. The condition of the sidewalks, however, is poor and in need of repair in



many locations. In some cases, uprooted concrete causes bumps and in some cases utility access causes depressions that create potholes. These tripping hazards are an obstacle to enjoying the community's opportunity for outdoor exercise, transportation, and socialization.

### **Bike Lanes & Trails**

Bike lanes are somewhat disconnected in neighborhood and throughout the City of Spartanburg. There are three bike lanes that pass through South Converse. The first one is on Hudson L Barksdale Boulevard, the second is on Marion Avenue, and third one is on Caulder Avenue. Bike lanes would be more beneficial if they were connected to nearby amenities and facilities, such as downtown Spartanburg and nearby schools.

### **Transit - Bus**

SPARTA has eight bus routes that provide public transit for the residents of Spartanburg. All eight routes connect at the SPARTA passenger center located at 100 N. Liberty Street, Spartanburg, SC (City of Spartanburg (b), n.d.). The South Liberty Street Route, or Route 6, covers the South Converse neighborhood (City of Spartanburg (b), n.d.). SPARTA generally operates from Monday to Friday from 6:00am to 6:00pm, and Saturday from 10:00am to 6:00pm (City of Spartanburg (b), n.d.). A one-way fare for adults is \$1.25 (City of Spartanburg

(b), n.d.). However, it is \$0.75 for students, elderly persons, and individuals with disabilities (City of Spartanburg (b), n.d.). It is free for the children under 36 inches tall (City of Spartanburg (b), n.d.). The transfer fee is \$0.25 for adults and free for individuals who receive a reduced fare (City of Spartanburg (b), n.d.). An additional discount is also offered for persons with disability and elderly during off-peak hours that will cost them only \$0.50 (City of Spartanburg (b), n.d.).

## **Maintenance**

### **Beautification**

The South Converse community is proud of its heritage and its neighborhood. Neighborhood assets such as sidewalks, street trees, signage could benefit from additional maintenance. As infrastructure ages and public agencies are tasked with increased duties throughout the city, upkeep of roadways, rights-of-ways, and public space is stressed. However, the neighborhood parks and trails are well maintained and this level of service should be continued.



## Property Upkeep

In addition to maintenance of public facilities in South Converse, the neighborhood has some vacant and condemned buildings due to lack of private property upkeep. In some cases, properties are vacant with no one to perform routine maintenance tasks, and in others the residents cannot afford to or do not desire to maintain their property to a level acceptable to the general community. In the 2010 Census, 21% of properties were identified as vacant. Many of

these properties contain dilapidated structures or dumping piles. From the community meeting, it became clear that residents are concerned about property values because neglected properties may reduce the values of other homes in the neighborhood.



## Housing Profile

One of the major concerns in South Converse is the vacancy rate in the neighborhood. The neighborhood has had a high vacancy rate since 2000. South Converse is suffering from a 21.2% vacancy rate in 2017 that will remain steady at this rate until 2022 based on the analysis of the U.S. Census. The owner occupancy rate is 32% and the rental occupancy rate is 47% in the neighborhood (See **Figure 5**) (U.S. Census, 2010). The median house value is \$85,714, and the average house value is \$95,517 (U.S. Census, 2010). The housing value in the South Converse is more skewed toward lower values, which suggests that most of the houses are in poorer condition (See **Figure 6**). From the 32% of owner-occupied units, 65% are owned with a

mortgage or loan, and the remaining 35% are owned without a mortgage or loan (See **Figure 7**) (U.S. Census, 2010).

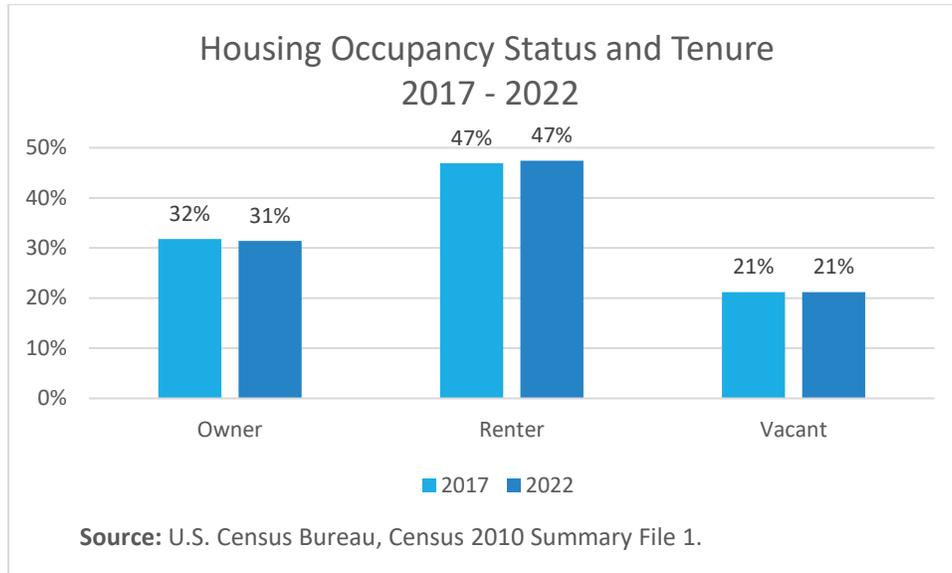


Figure 5. Housing Occupancy Status & Tenure 2017-2022

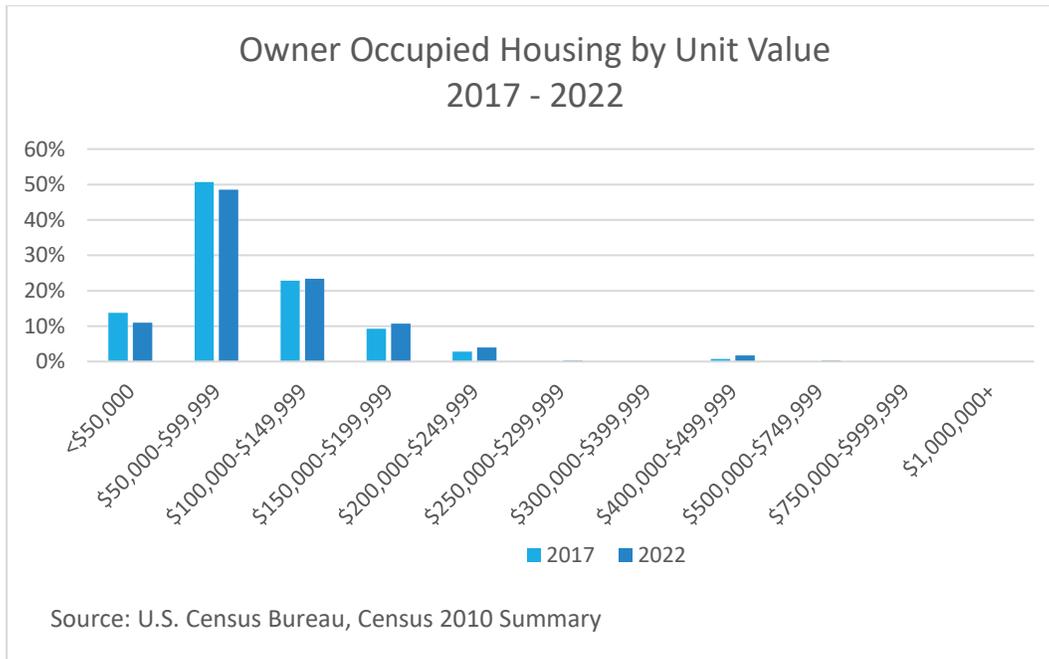


Figure 6. Owner Occupied Housing by Unit Value 2017-2022

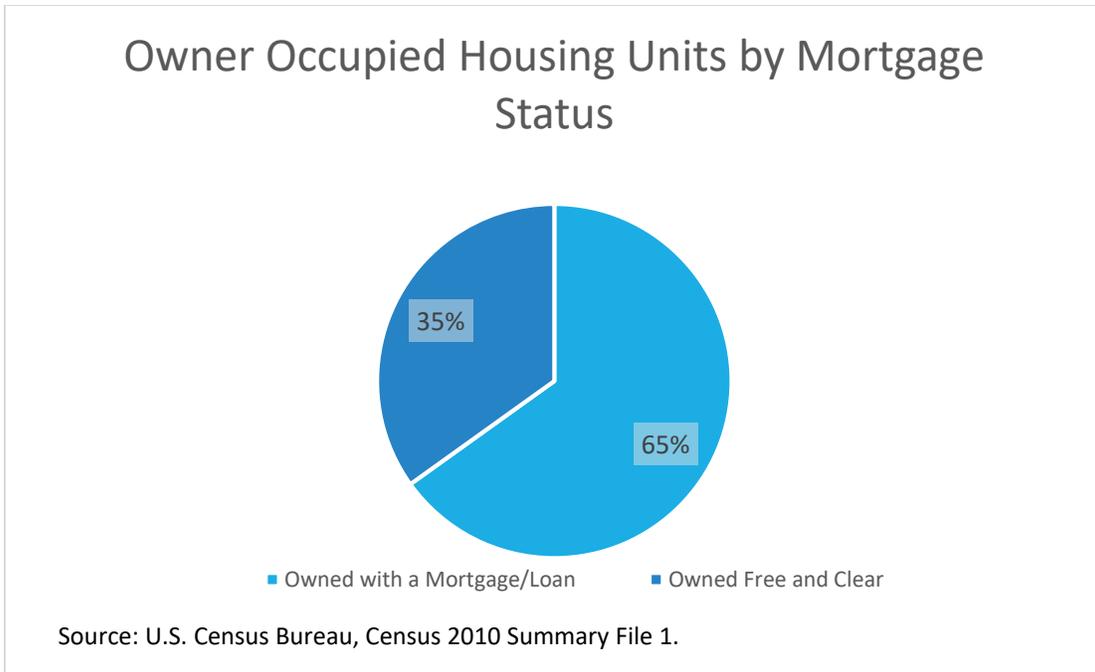


Figure 7. Owner Occupied Housing Units by Mortgage Status

In order to recommend potential strategies for the infill development in the South Converse neighborhood, it is important to identify the type of vacancy in the neighborhood. **Table 1** provides some information about the residential vacancy distribution in the neighborhood. The table indicates that most of the vacant houses are for rent. It does not indicate if these vacant houses are concentrated in one specific area or scattered all over the neighborhood because different infill development strategies are applicable for different status of the vacancies.

Table 1. 2010 Vacant Housing Units by Status

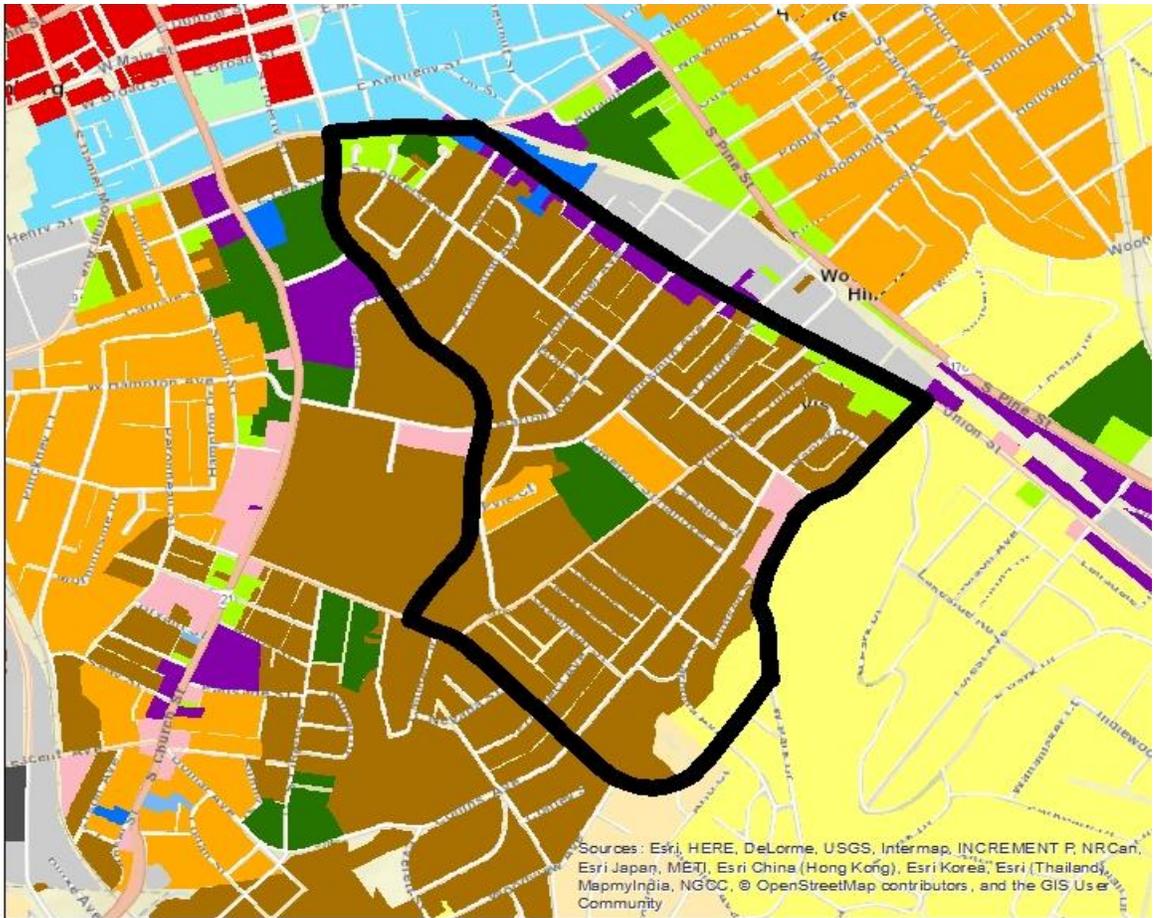
	Number	Percentage
Total	187	100%
For Rent	90	48%
Rented- Not Occupied	1	1%
For Sale Only	28	15%
Sold - Not Occupied	7	4%
Seasonal/Recreational/Occasional Use	2	1%
For Migrant Workers	0	0%
Other Vacant	25	13%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1

It is not just the residential vacancy rate that affects the neighborhood. The South Converse neighborhood is zoned for the R-6, General Residential District; B-3, General Business District; LOD, Limited Office District; B-3, Heavy Commercial



District based on the zoning ordinance of the Spartanburg City (See **Map 1**). This means that infilling the business districts and office district will also have an immense impact on the development of the neighborhood.



**South Converse**



**Land Use**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  B-1: Neighborhood Shopping District |  DT-6: Urban Core District          |
|  B-3: General Business District      |  GID: General Institution District  |
|  B-4: Heavy Commercial District      |  I-1: Light Industrial              |
|  Civic                               |  I-2: Heavy Industrial District     |
|  DT-3: Suburban District             |  LC: Limited Commercial             |
|  DT-4: General Urban District        |  LOD: Limited Office District       |
|  DT-5: Urban Center District         |  R-12: General Residential District |
|   |  R-15: Single Family Residential    |
|   |  R-6: General Residential District  |
|   |  R-8: General Residential District  |

Map 1. City of Spartanburg Zoning Map

## SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was developed as a way to combine the current condition information and give direction to implementation strategies (See **Table 2**). The strengths listed are some of the positive features in the community. These are aspects that we would like to protect or enhance. The opportunities listed are areas that are definite possibilities for improvement to improve the community. Weaknesses listed are some areas in the community that should be addressed to improve the neighborhood quality of life. Threats are concerns that have the potential to negatively impact the community. These could be risks that come with improvements to the neighborhood or in regard to current conditions promoting other problems.

Table 2. SWOT Analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community Involvement</li> <li>● Non-motorized transportation options</li> <li>● Parks - South Converse Street Park &amp; Mary H. Wright Greenway.</li> <li>● Parks - Close proximity to Mary Black Rail Trail &amp; Duncan Park</li> <li>● Tree Cover</li> <li>● Character and diversity in home styles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overlay or extend form-based codes from downtown</li> <li>● Mary H. Wright Greenway Park fountain</li> <li>● Bus routes &amp; shelters</li> <li>● Street lighting</li> <li>● Beautification</li> <li>● Code Enforcement</li> <li>● Vacant Lots (Development/Alternative Use)</li> <li>● Mary H. Wright Greenway</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unkempt properties</li> <li>● Overgrown lot</li> <li>● Condemned/Vacant Housing</li> <li>● Traffic safety - dangerous intersections, speeding cars, poor visibility</li> <li>● Condition of sidewalks &amp; impediments</li> <li>● Unhealthy trees</li> <li>● Debris left behind from landscaping or trash along Barksdale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased traffic/cut through traffic</li> <li>● Gentrification</li> <li>● Blighted Properties could increase crime</li> </ul>

## Implementation Ideas from Other Plans

Based on the current conditions present in South Converse, strategies were drawn from the example plans to develop potential policies that would be successful in the neighborhood. For example, either an overlay zone or an extension of downtown Spartanburg's form-based codes would regulate infill development as explained in the Story Neighborhood plan (City of Phoenix Planning Department, 1987). Additionally, the Alcova Heights plan in Virginia suggested traffic calming measures that would likely also be effective in South Converse (Alcova Heights, 2014). The Alcova Heights plan recommended lowering the speed limits on streets that cut through the neighborhood and placing signs to encourage reduced speed on certain streets (Alcova Heights, 2014).

The Sunrise plan in Texas included many recommendations that would also be relevant in South Converse in Spartanburg (El Paso Neighborhood Services, 2008). That plan recommended increasing visibility at dangerous intersections by removing landscaping that blocks sight lines. It also recommended increasing street lighting to provide a safe nighttime environment. Consistently enforcing codes regarding nuisances and dilapidated vehicles is another point emphasized in the Sunrise plan (El Paso Neighborhood Services, 2008). Rather than just citing property owners with violations, the plan suggests that code enforcement sweeps "can be timed to work in conjunction with neighborhood clean-ups that would allow for rectification of violations prior to issuance of citations. If violations remain following the clean-up, those properties will be officially cited" (El Paso Neighborhood Services, 2008, p13). This provides a method to improve the neighborhood without only focusing on punishing neighbors who violate existing regulation. Finally, the Sunrise plan also recommended creating goal statements with tasks, cost estimates, funding sources, and approximate timing for implementation (El Paso Neighborhood Services, 2008). The methods recommended in other neighborhood plans provide useful solutions to issues that currently exist in South Converse.

## Goals & Strategies

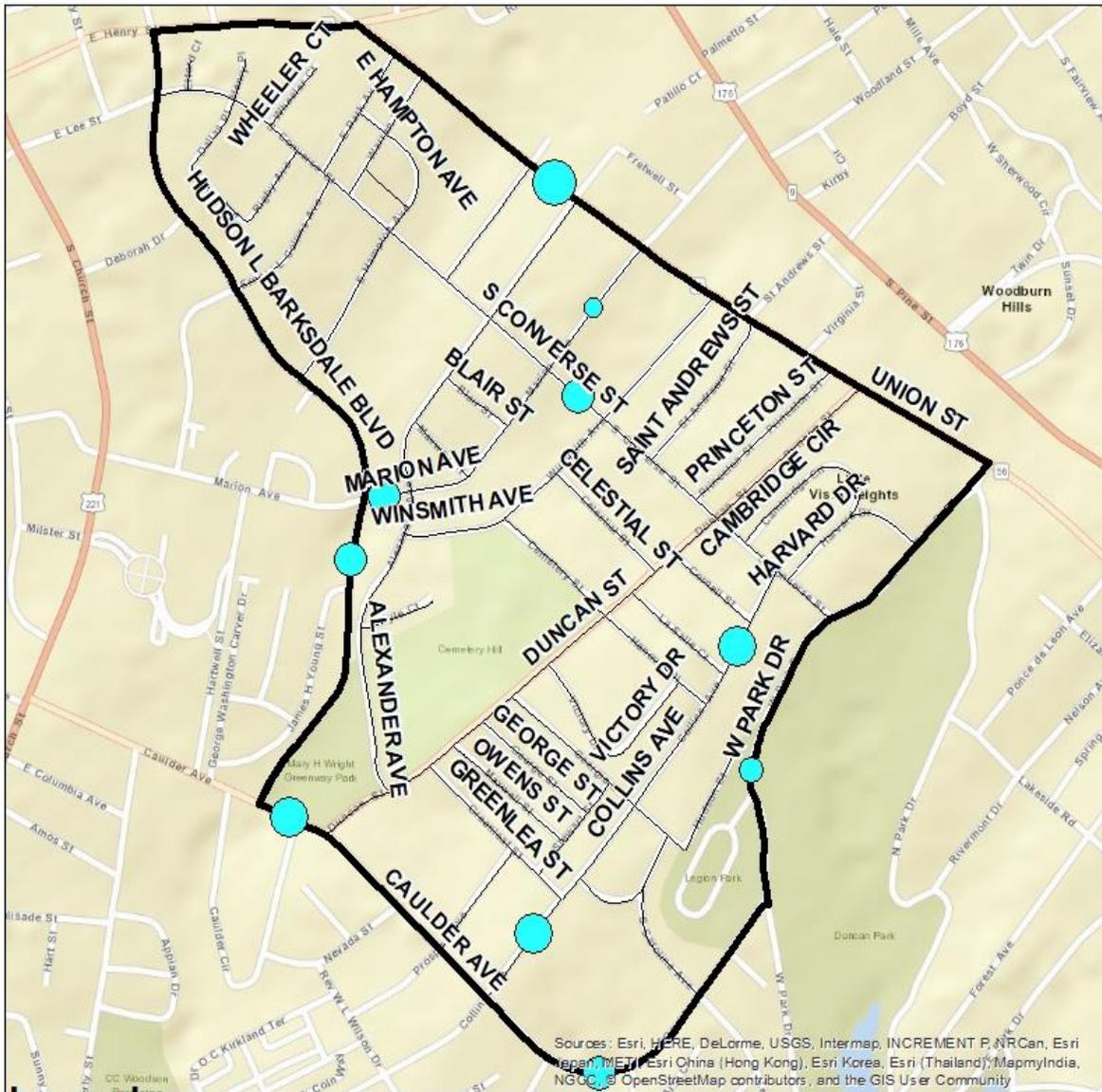
### Transportation

In order to improve transportation within the South Converse neighborhood, we propose that first there should be an effort to improve the pedestrian and bicycling environment. This would be done through repairing of sidewalks that have cracks or other problems. Additionally, through improving the roads and making them complete streets, when feasible, this will narrow the lanes, which will help to reduce the speed of traffic (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2000; NACTO, 2013) as well as improving the pedestrian and bicycling experience. Complete streets are roadways that accommodate multiple types of transportation (Smart Growth America, 2017). Incorporating complete streets include having bicycle lanes running on either side of the road and having signage about multiple modes of transportation (NACTO, 2013, 26). Additionally, textured or pervious pavement could be used to help delineate pedestrian areas of the roadway (NACTO, 2013, p. 26). There could also be street furniture and such emphasize the multi-use of the road (NACTO, 2013, p. 26). This would include ensuring that there are adequate sidewalks in places as well. Through the improvement of the sidewalks there is a reduction in the chance of injury, and it provides an environment that is inviting for people to walk through the neighborhood.

To promote safety on the roadway, signage should be incorporated in the best locations to reduce speeds. This would include radar speed signs that tell drivers what speeds they are actually driving (Alcova Heights, 2014). Specifically, we recommend including signage in areas with high traffic counts (See **Map 2**). Hudson L. Barksdale, South Converse Street near Marion Avenue, Collins Avenue, and Caulder Avenue are roads with high traffic counts that could likely benefit from radar speed signs. Signage could also be included near speed bumps as a way to enhance the existing traffic control devices. However, in order to determine the exact locations where radar speed signs should be added, a traffic study of the area is recommended. Lastly, intersections were brought up by the community as a problem that needed to be addressed.

One way to make these safer would be to ensure that the greenery and other potential impediments on corner lots are not blocking the line of sight of the drivers. During the community meeting, residents mentioned the intersections of Union Street and Marion Avenue, South Converse Street and Marion Avenue, South Converse Street and Alexander Avenue, South Converse Street and Dallas Place, and South Converse Street and Ridgewood Avenue, as dangerous intersections (See **Map 3**). Visibility in these areas could be improved through the use of code enforcement.

# 2016 Traffic Counts



## Legend

### Traffic Counts

- 1250
- 1251 - 1700
- 1701 - 2000
- 2001 - 3400
- 3401 - 10800

- Streets
- ▭ South Converse

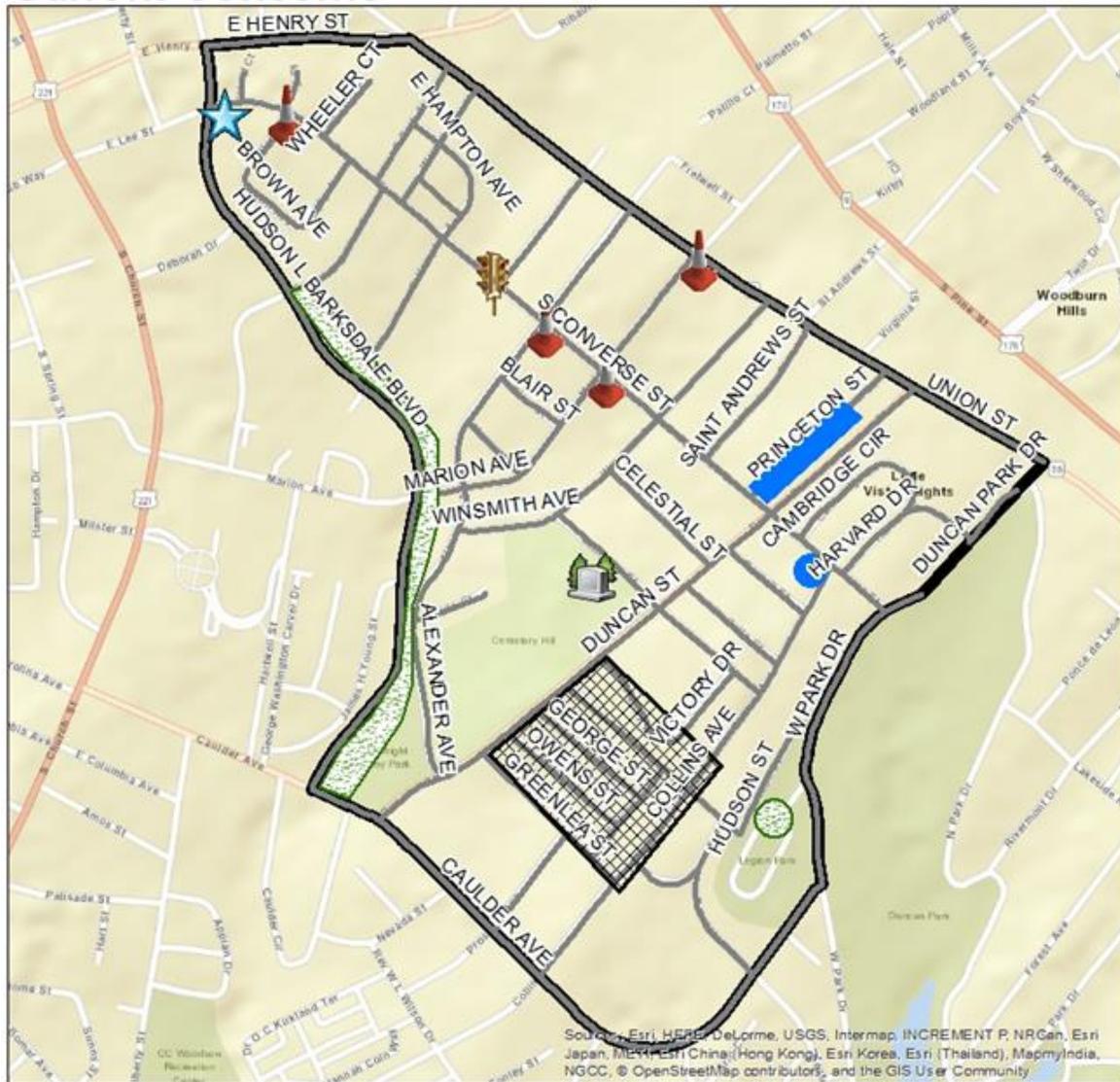
0 0.25 0.5 Miles



Source: City of Spartanburg

Map 2. 2016 Traffic Counts

# Current Concerns



Source: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## Legend

- Cemetery
- Fountain
- Broken Light
- Intersections
- Sidewalk Issues
- Maintenance
- Vacant Lots
- Streets
- South Converse Neighborhood



Source: City of Spartanburg

Map 3. Current Concerns

## **Maintenance**

In the South Converse Neighborhood, we recommend two maintenance related policies. One policy will be focused on code enforcement and another will be focused on form-based codes. The code enforcement policy will require collaboration between the City of Spartanburg's Code Enforcement Division and the neighborhood residents. Code enforcement will perform a thorough sweep of the neighborhood, giving all residents a warning about violations. This will be followed by a neighborhood clean-up day where residents can help each other resolve the violations. Finally, code enforcement officials will return to the neighborhood and give any properties still in violation a formal citation. This will encourage neighborhood upkeep without creating an environment that severely punishes violators and creates tension between residents and officials.

The next maintenance policy in South Converse will require the City of Spartanburg to extend form-based codes from downtown to the neighborhood. Form-based codes will regulate the structure and form of buildings, rather than land use (Formed Based Codes Institute, 2017). Because there is a significant inventory of vacant property in the neighborhood, a new code system will create a method to regulate redevelopment before any issues arise. The code system should be developed with public input, which will ensure that future development corresponds with residents' visions of the neighborhood. If infill development occurs without neighborhood input, it can lead to distrust between local residents and officials (Vallance, Perkins, & Moore, 2005). Form-based codes will provide some regulation regarding what buildings are appropriate and expected in the neighborhood.

## **Implementation**

The first implementation goal is to improve the neighborhood maintenance in South Converse. This will be done through two strategies (See **Table 3**). The first strategy is to perform code enforcement sweeps throughout the neighborhood and the second strategy is to

extend form-based codes from the downtown neighborhood to South Converse. Code enforcement sweeps will consist of code enforcement warnings provided to residents of the neighborhoods, this will be followed by a neighborhood clean-up day where residents work together to rectify any code enforcement violations. After the clean-up day, code enforcement officers will return to the area to officially provide citations to anyone that received a warning, but did not rectify the situation. All clean-up efforts can be completed by volunteers and code enforcement can be completed by the officers already funded by the City of Spartanburg. Therefore, the only additional costs for this strategy are the funds necessary to purchase clean-up tools. We estimate these tools to cost approximately \$1,000 per clean-up event in the neighborhood. This cost will cover tools and clean-up materials, such as hedge trimmers, gloves, trash bags, and potentially a dumpster rental. Likely, the neighborhood association could connect with local businesses, such as Home Depot or Lowe's, to receive donations of these materials. We expect this strategy to be an ongoing tool to assist with neighborhood maintenance, with clean-up days occurring two times per year.

The next implementation strategy for improving maintenance is to extend form-based codes from the downtown neighborhood to South Converse. Form-based codes are an alternative to traditional zoning that will encourage maintenance of the neighborhood because they regulate the form of the built environment, rather than land uses. Form-based codes will also create regulations for the upkeep of private property and their impact on public spaces in the neighborhood (Formed Based Codes Institute, 2017). Implementation of form-based codes will require collaboration between residents, Neighborhood Services, Planning, the Planning Commission, and City Council. Public meetings will be required for neighborhood input. Then, the codes must be drafted by city officials, before being approved by City Council. The only cost for this project will be the staff time associated with developing the form-based codes for South Converse. Due to the amount of time required for public meetings and approval by City Council, this strategy will take approximately a year to complete, despite the minimal associated costs.

Table 3: Implementation Strategies for Goal 1

<b>Goal 1 Improve neighborhood maintenance in South Converse.</b>					
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>	<b>Expected Completion</b>
<b>1a</b>	Code enforcement warnings, followed by neighborhood clean-up day, concluding with code enforcement citations	\$1,000 per clean up event	Code Enforcement Division, residents	Home Depot, Lowe's, Neighborhood Association, Grants and Gifts	Continuous -- 2x per year
	*Estimate - tools, materials, marketing				
<b>1b</b>	Extending form-based codes from downtown to South Converse	\$0	Neighborhood Services, Planning, Planning Commission, City Council	Staff time	1 year

The next goal for the South Converse neighborhood is to improve transportation conditions throughout the neighborhood. This will be accomplished through three strategies (See **Table 4**). The first strategy is to improve multimodal transportation through the incorporation of complete streets in applicable locations. This can be done by improving the sidewalk conditions throughout the neighborhood. This will be the costliest project, at approximately 27 dollars per linear foot (Brunshell et al., 2013). It will also require partnership with the South Carolina Department of Transportation, Public Works, Neighborhood Services, and Planning. Additionally, many of these partners could collaborate to fund the project which would make the costs more manageable. In addition to the resources provided by these partners, the Federal Highway Administration may have funding available through the Transportation Alternatives Program, the MAP-21 program. The Center for Disease Control, Safe Routes to School, and Partners for Active Living are additional organizations that may be able to provide some funding for sidewalk improvement. Due to the funding constraints, this project will take approximately five years to complete. That timeframe will allow for grant applications as well as rebuilding of existing infrastructure.

Also included in the complete streets policy would be to incorporate bike lanes where possible. This could potentially be along South Converse Street, to help narrow the road and thus the speed of vehicles (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2000; NACTO, 2013) as well as provide an accessible roadway that runs through the neighborhood. Also, Collins Avenue could have complete street elements incorporated into it, since it also has a higher traffic rate (See **Map 2**). Having bike lanes on Collins and South Converse roads would help provide connectivity in this neighborhood, since they would link with Hudson L Barksdale Boulevard's bike lanes (See **Map 4**). These could be the first two streets that if resurfaced, could have bike lanes incorporated into the design. The road restriping costs would amount to approximately \$75,000 per mile (Alta Planning, 2015). Similar to the sidewalks, the South Carolina Department of Transportation, Public Works, Neighborhood Services and Planning would be partners in this strategy. Potential

funding sources could come in the form of, SC DOT, if coordinated properly, can incorporate bike lanes into their resurfacing process (Palmetto Cycling Coalition, 2016). Additionally, grant applications can be submitted to People for Bikes' Community Grant Program, which helps fund bicycle lanes (People for Bikes, n.d.).

The next transportation strategy is to add speed limit radar signs that list "Your Speed" for the cars passing by. These will cost approximately \$3,000 per unit (Global Equipment Company, 2017). Implementing these signs will require cooperation between the South Carolina Department of Transportation and Public Works. Both of these organizations may also be able to assist with funding the sign implementation. As previously mentioned, we suggest implementing these signs on Hudson L. Barksdale, South Converse Street near Marion Avenue, Collins Avenue, and Caulder Avenue, or near existing speed bumps. However, as previously mentioned, we recommend a traffic study to determine the exact placement of these additions. This strategy is expected to be completed as funding becomes available because ordering and installing signs can occur quickly once the funding is available.

The final strategy we recommend is to increase visibility at key intersections (**See Map 3**). This will be accomplished through clearing and trimming existing foliage at intersections. this, will require cooperation between Neighborhood Services and Code Enforcement. However, it will require minimal funding because the foliage can be addressed through staff time and volunteer time. This project can initially be accomplished in approximately three months, but it will require consistent follow-up, especially during the growing season.

# Bike Lanes, Parks, & Greenways



## Legend

-  Bike Lanes
-  Parks & Greenways
-  South Converse Neighborhood

0 0.25 0.5 Miles



Source: City of Spartanburg

Map 4. Bike Lanes, Parks, and Greenways

Table 4: Implementation Strategies for Goal 2

<b>Goal 2</b>		<b>Improve transportation conditions in South Converse.</b>			
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Potential Funding</b>	<b>Expected Completion</b>
<b>2a</b>	Improve sidewalk conditions throughout neighborhood.	\$44.85 per linear foot	SC DOT, Public Works, Neighborhood Services, Planning	City of Spartanburg Public Works, SC DOT, Federal Highway Administration’s Transportation Alternatives Program, Federal Highway Administration’s MAP-21, Community Development Block Grants, Center for Disease Control Grants, Safe Routes to Schools, Partnership for Active Living, General Fund	5 years
Alta Planning - Contact					
<b>2b</b>	Bike Lanes (Pavement Markings)	\$75,000 (pavement restriping)	SC DOT, Public Works	People for Bikes, SC DOT, Public Works	As streets are resurfaced
Alta Planning, 2015 and Palmetto Cycling Coalition, 2016					
<b>2c</b>	Add "Your Speed" Speed Limit Radar signs.	\$3,000 per unit	SC DOT, Public Works	SC DOT, Public Works	As funding becomes available
Global Equipment Company, 2017					
<b>2d</b>	Increase visibility at key intersections.	\$0	Neighborhood Services, Code Enforcement	Staff time, volunteer time, and property owner time	3 months

## **Conclusion**

Many of the weaknesses in South Converse can be addressed through a few strategies that fall under the categories of maintenance and transportation. All strategies will require cooperation between the neighborhood and departments in the City of Spartanburg. Some projects require financial assistance from other organizations or grants and cannot be entirely supported by the City of Spartanburg. However, the projects will have significant impacts in the neighborhood for a reasonable cost.

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\*Maps utilizes City of Spartanburg's GIS Data