

# The West Side Connection



Winter 2013  
connections.greenvillesc.gov



## Public turns out to design workshop



Interested citizens talk to a member of the design team about the ideas presented at that night's pin-up session. This format allowed participants to see progress in the west side plan daily and give feedback or ask questions directly.

The last week in August was a busy one for the west side of Greenville as a group of 12 consultants came to the Kroc Center to host a weeklong design workshop.

Led by Julie Franklin of the Lawrence Group, the consultants' goal was to gather input and ideas from residents, business owners, and community members in the west side to help develop a plan for the area. As Greenville emerges from the recent recession, growth and development are recovering in the city. The west side comprehensive plan seeks to engage residents in developing a guide for directing the changes that may come as the city grows over the next 10 to 20 years.

The weeklong workshop began with a public kickoff meeting that featured an overview of the workshop process, stations to start conversations about the future of the study area, and a teen pizza/planning party. More than 80 people were in attendance for the kickoff



The community listens to an overview of the design workshop at the west side comprehensive plan kickoff meeting in August.

meeting, including more than 20 teenagers interested in shaping their neighborhood.

Throughout the remainder of the week, focus topic discussions were scheduled each day, drawing local experts and interested citizens. Some of the topics included Economic Development Strategies; Housing

Strategies; Churches, Schools, and Civic Buildings; and Community Support Services. Attendance varied throughout the week, but around 50 participants showed up over the course of each day to participate in the roundtable discussions.

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## West Side Fall Fair just around the corner

Remember the Spring and Green Fair last April and how much fun you and your family had learning and playing? Well now it's time for the West Side Fall Fair, which is going to be just as much fun with a talent show, free tree saplings, and a local history show-and-tell.

The fair will be held at the Kroc Center on Saturday, November 2

from 11 am to 2 pm with lunch provided and many activities for the entire family. Features of the fall fair will include an update on the west side plan and educational booths featuring topics such as the history of the west side and trees in the city.

Although the design workshop week wrapped up, the west side

plan is still in progress, and updated displays will be available for public review during the West Side Fall Fair. This is another chance to ask questions and make comments, so make sure to take advantage of this opportunity to stay informed before the final presentation of the west

CONTINUED, PAGE 2

### Upcoming Events

#### NOVEMBER

**West Side Fall Fair**  
Saturday, November 2  
11 am - 2 pm  
Kroc Center

Bring the family for a day of fun, featuring trees, history, food, giveaways, and a west side talent show!

#### DECEMBER

**West Side Plan Final Presentation**  
Tuesday, December 3  
6 pm  
Kroc Center

After months of providing input, come see the final plan presented!

For more events, please visit our website:

[connections.greenvillesc.gov](http://connections.greenvillesc.gov)

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# The West Side Connection

## West side tours informative and fun

Before the weeklong west side design workshop kicked off in late August, the consultants leading the planning project offered a tour of the west side study area by bike or foot. Over 40 people showed up on a beautiful Saturday morning for the event, and attendees could choose from four different routes through the Southernside, West Greenville, and West End neighborhoods.

The purpose of the tours was to get a new perspective on the west side and to note any obstacles walkers and bikers might face. The tours provided a fun learning exercise for the consultants as well as the participants, many of whom had never biked or walked through the neighborhoods. It was an exciting experience to get out from behind the wheel of a car and see how quickly you can get around these neighborhoods on foot or on bike!

The tours focused on the availability and condition of sidewalks, street lighting, and street trees, as well as on the feeling of comfort and safety when walking through the areas. Participants asked questions and filled out surveys as they went

through the areas to keep notes on what features made them feel safe and comfortable walking or biking. Ultimately, the comments and discussion with the participants will be used to help shape the west side comprehensive plan.

The bike tour routes covered the most ground, hitting some of the major corridors, such as West Washington Street, as well as the neighborhood streets. Many riders noticed that they felt safer on roads with bike lanes. One specific area that they noted as unsafe was the underpass at West Washington Street. The road narrows and steep curves limit visibility at this railroad underpass near the Amtrak station.

In addition to the wealth of information gathered at the design workshop, the comments from this very productive day will be incorporated into the final west side comprehensive plan. An update on the plan will be presented at the West Side Fall Fair on November 2 at the Kroc Center, and the consultants will give the final presentation on Tuesday, December 3 at 6 pm at the Kroc Center.

## Let's Play!



**Have you seen the MobiRec Van in your neighborhood yet?**

*The MobiRec van is used to reach neighborhood children who may not have access to recreation programs. There are many items in the van to play with, including: a parachute, footballs, soccer balls, hula hoops, and tons of other toys!*

Check out the Connections website for more information!



Participants on the West End walking tour take a moment to note what they like about the street and what makes them feel safe as pedestrians.



Participants on the bike tour rode along neighborhood streets and major roads, noting what features make them comfortable as bicyclists.

## The West Side's Got Talent!



**Come check out the West Side Fall Fair Talent Show!**

**November 2, 11 am - 2 pm**

### Fall Fair...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
side plan on Tuesday, December 3.

As part of the fair's history discussion, everyone is invited to bring in old photographs or other keepsakes and share stories about the west side. This interactive history exhibit will celebrate the west side's past as the community works to shape its future.

Trees are also a way of documenting local history as they live a long time and tend to become part of what we love and remember about our neighborhood. Trees in the urban environment are especially important and will be celebrated at

the It's a TREEmendous Day in the City event during the fall fair. More details are available on page three, but a "treemendous" experience is guaranteed!

A special addition to the fall fair is the West Side Talent Show! Participants of all ages were selected from the Southernside, West End, and West Greenville neighborhoods, and three judges have been handpicked to oversee the contest.

Come join the Connections team to celebrate the west side and support the local talent! Be sure to check the schedule on page one for other upcoming events.

# TREEmendous Day celebrates and educates

The City of Greenville is known for living up to its name with all of the parks, trails, and trees that line the streets downtown as well as other parts of the city.

Fortunately, the City is able to extend this feature to the west side through the recent award of a \$20,000 TD Green Streets grant, which supports cities in their efforts to use trees in urban settings and in underserved areas.

The grant kicked off at the City's Arbor Day celebration on April 27 and will fund the planting of 100 new trees along Hudson Street and the surrounding area.

The grant will also be used to create educational materials on urban trees and training for City staff. One fun item the grant has already produced is a coloring book written and illustrated by Livability Educator Jaclin DuRant.

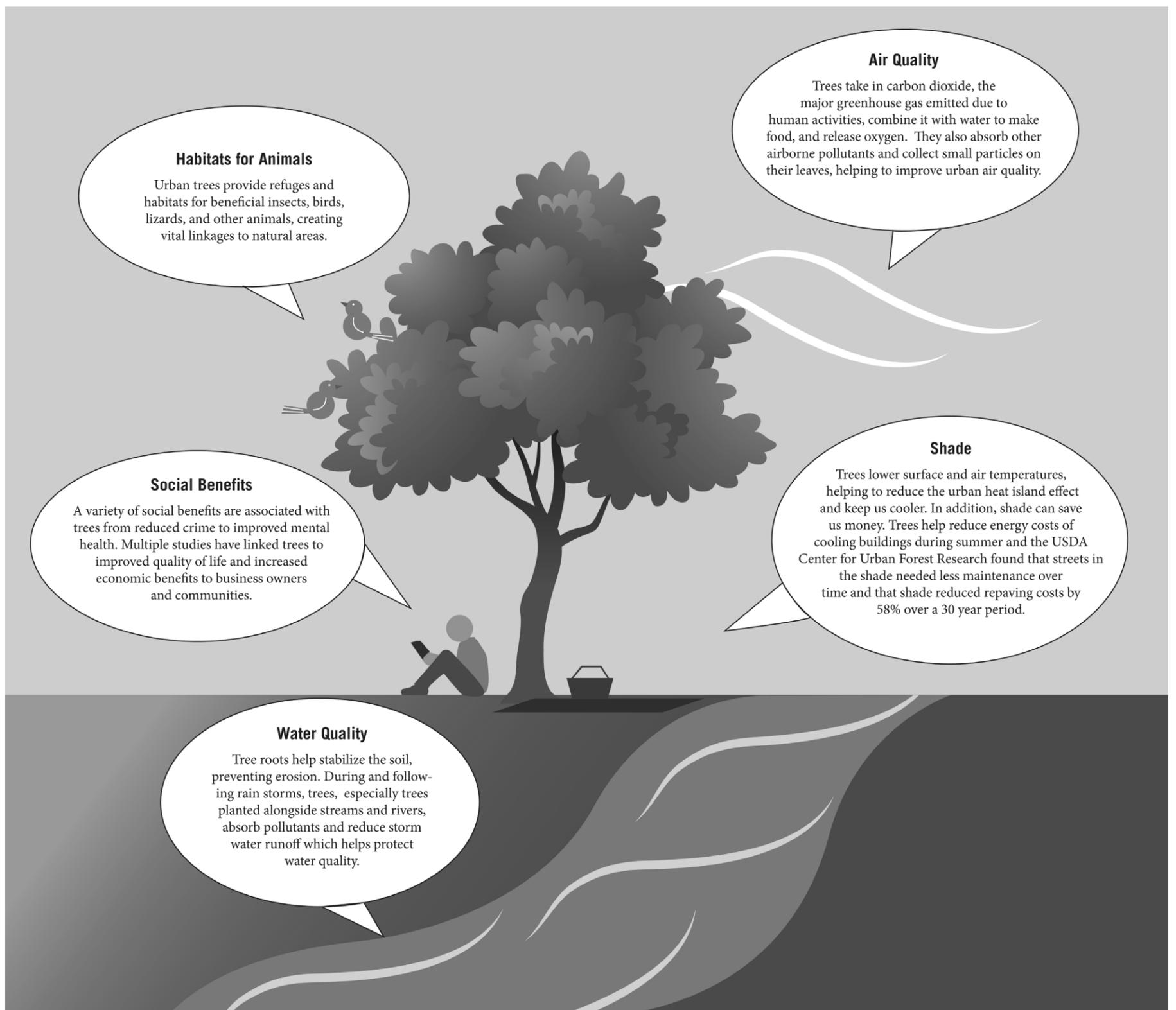
*A Tree!* tells the story of three friends and how they work together to plant a tree. They learn many benefits of trees along the way, so the coloring book is both fun and educational for kids. Copies will be available at the West Side Fall Fair, and an excerpt is shown on page seven.

Another exciting educational opportunity funded by the grant will be the It's a TREEmendous

Day in the City event that will be part of the West Side Fall Fair. The event will celebrate trees and educate the community on the benefits of trees in an urban setting.

Activities for this portion of the fair will include nature crafts and a demonstration on how to properly plant a tree. Tree saplings will also be available for those who wish to make a difference and plant a tree at home.

## Make a difference, plant a tree!



You might be wondering how trees are useful in areas like Greenville's downtown, beyond being pretty and offering shade in the summer.

Actually, there is very little that trees don't do. From fighting crime to lowering electric bills, trees are constantly working to make our city a healthier, happier place to live. It

might sound like we're talking about superheroes, but all of these great benefits come from trees!

Take a look at the scene pictured above. It may look simply like a tree in an ordinary setting, but read the informational boxes to discover the benefits of trees in an urban setting.

In addition to being attractive and making the city feel welcoming and

vibrant, trees improve or provide all of the following: air quality, water quality, shade, habitats for animals, and quality of life.

So the next time you find yourself outside in the city, take a moment to notice and appreciate the trees and other plants that constantly work to make our urban environments more enjoyable.

Also, don't forget to join the Connections team on November 2 at the West Side Fall Fair where there is going to be a special celebration of trees.

Free saplings will be available to those in attendance so they can help make Greenville a better place just by planting a tree!

# The West Side Connection

## Design workshop...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

At the end of each day, the design team stopped work to pin up and present the day's progress. These pin-up sessions reflected the collective input gathered throughout the day's meetings and how it could be incorporated into the west side comprehensive plan. Participation and discussion were robust with many attendees returning multiple evenings to see how their questions and comments were incorporated into the plan.

Wayne Leftwich, community planner and manager of the Connections for Sustainability project, commented, "We appreciate people coming out and joining in on the conversation about the west side. This is a critical part of the planning process, and the final product will reflect a variety of perspectives because of the level of participation this week."

Other highlights from the workshop included several visits from students of all ages in the community.

Four second grade classes were able to visit the workshop on Wednesday morning, and they drew what they wanted to see in their neighborhoods. That same afternoon, 18 Legacy Charter High School students joined the Parks and Open Space discussion, offering

ideas for better green spaces from their perspective.

Graduate students from Clemson University's City and Regional Planning program and the Real Estate Development program joined the discussion on Thursday for the session on Policy and Regulation, and many of these graduate students also came for the pin-up sessions throughout the week.

The images below provide a small sample of some of the ideas created during the design workshop, and these will be available to review at the West Side Fall Fair along with other updates on the west side plan. The images on page five show the youth participation that was part of the workshop.

On September 5, Julie Franklin presented her team's work from the design workshop to an audience of nearly 70. More comments and questions from the public were noted, and the team will continue writing the plan based on all of the input. An update on the plan's progress will be given during the West Side Fall Fair on Saturday, November 2 from 11 am to 2 pm at the Kroc Center, and the final plan will be presented to the public on Tuesday, December 3 at 6 pm at the Kroc Center. The latest presentations can be found at [connections.greenvillesc.gov](http://connections.greenvillesc.gov), and questions and comments are welcome.



Even people who did not attend the design workshop were reached. One team member rode through the west side and interviewed individuals one-on-one.

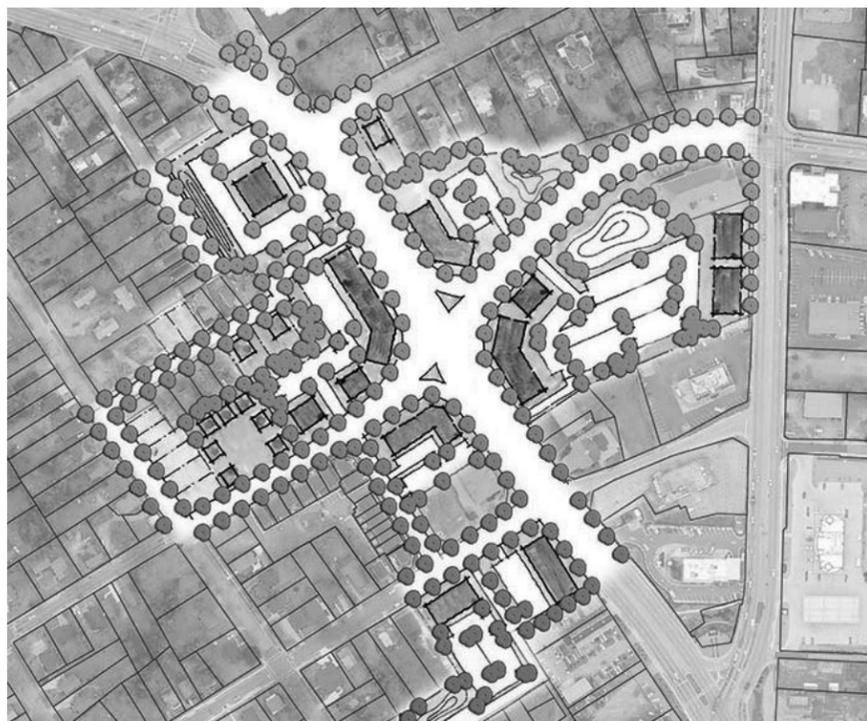
greenillesc.gov, and questions and comments are welcome.

The west side study area includes the Southernside, West End, and West Greenville neighborhoods as well as the Pete Hollis Boulevard, Pendleton Street, and West

Washington Street corridors. The plan will feature short-term and long-term recommendations and is part of the larger Connections for Sustainability project, which is the product of a \$1.8 million federal grant.

## WORKSHOP IDEAS

These are some of the concepts that came out of the design workshop. The images to the right show how artistic elements and minor cosmetic changes can make specific areas look more interesting and even feel safer by attracting more attention. These types of changes could be implemented in the short-term, while the changes in the image below might be implemented over many years. The intersection of Pete Hollis Blvd. and Mulberry St. shown below feature more intense cosmetic changes, but the intersection also depicts high potential for economic development activity, potentially helping to bring jobs to the area.



The intersection of Pete Hollis Blvd. and Mulberry St. is envisioned to be a bustling center of economic activity with more businesses and inviting streets.



This underpass on Lois Avenue is pictured with a quick upgrade by way of colorful decoration and a new sign. It's also safer with lighting under the bridge and a shared lane for bikes.



A portion of the Swamp Rabbit Trail is pictured with an artistic screen along a chain link fence.

# YOUTH HELP PLAN WEST SIDE'S FUTURE

The design workshop had strong participation from the community in general, but the west side's teenagers and kids also got involved in the planning process. Below are photographs of the various ways in which these youth were able to learn about planning and contribute to the west side comprehensive plan at the same time. The West Side Fall Fair will be another great opportunity for younger folks to get involved through various interactive presentations, crafts, a tree planting demonstration, MobiRec, and a talent show!



After the kickoff presentation, teens were invited to the Pizza Planning Party where they designed and built 3D models of what they would like to see in their neighborhoods with materials reused through the livability educator's programs.



Left: Community planner Wayne Leftwich listens intently to an AJ Whittenberg 2nd grader about her vision for her community. Right: The students drew what they wanted to see in their neighborhoods as a planning exercise.



Left: Legacy students from a newspaper class take notes and pictures during the design workshop to report back to their school. Right: The students joined the conversation, discussing what they find useful in parks and open spaces.

## Author coming to West Side Fall Fair



C. Michael Forsyth, creative writer, debuts his first children's book, *Brothers*, in 2012.

C. Michael Forsyth is the critically acclaimed author of *Hour of the Beast* and, most recently, *The Blood of Titans*, a dramatic love story between an African princess and a warrior. *The Blood of Titans* has been extremely well received and is a current favorite among fans and critics. Michael has received a lot of praise for the story and his ability as an author to truly captivate readers.

In addition to these gripping novels, Michael has authored his first children's book, entitled *Brothers*. In this book, Forsyth tells the story of a pet dog who gets in with a pack of strays. The fable is a metaphor for anti-gang awareness, and it is being published through the Greenville Family Partnership.

Michael displayed his talent and creativity as an author in high school, where he entertained classmates with comic strips. After high school in Harlem, he graduated from Yale with a degree in English literature before receiving a master's degree from New York University in film.

After school, Michael began a career in corporate communications. As a writer and reporter for the *Weekly World News*, the author was able to exercise his creativity on assignments for the tabloid investigating wild stories from around the world.

Eventually, Michael found himself in Hartsville, South Carolina at Coker College, where he taught film and journalism. Currently, he lives in Greenville, where he writes his novels and works on independent films.

Michael will be at the West Side Fall Fair on Saturday, November 2, where he will read an excerpt from one of his books.

In addition to reading an excerpt, Michael will be available for book signings. If you love these books as much as the rest of the country does, make sure you bring a copy for him to sign!

# The West Side Connection

## West side history, show-and-tell at fall fair



*If you don't know who this wild cat is, you need to come to the West Side Fall Fair and find out. There is a lot to learn about this musical phenomenon who came out of the west side of Greenville. For instance, this vocalist and pianist was the inspiration for an even bigger name in music. If you want to know who, make sure you come to the presentation on the history of the west side at the West Side Fall Fair.*



*If you don't know who Shoeless Joe Jackson is, you definitely need to get a history lesson at the West Side Fall Fair. This beloved baseball player grew up in a Greenville mill village and returned to Pendleton Street after his iconic career in professional baseball.*

*If you want to know more about Shoeless Joe, the museum will be hosting one of many educational booths at the West Side Fall Fair. If you have any memorabilia from Shoeless Joe or the mill league, bring it to the show-and-tell portion of the fall fair.*

The past few months have been spent primarily discussing the future of Greenville's west side, but what about its past?

In addition to celebrating urban trees at the West Side Fall Fair, the Connections team will be hosting an interactive history presentation and show-and-tell event highlighting the unique history of the west side. This celebration of the west side's past will not only be a fun learning experience, but the presentations will help us think about the changes the area is facing and how we want to shape that growth.

The celebration of our history will include a living history exhibit from local elementary school students about significant figures from the west side's past.

There will also be booths from several of the history organizations in town with information relating to the west side, as well as to other parts of Greenville. Another unique feature of this history presentation will be a show-and-tell opportunity for anybody who wants to participate. Some pieces and pictures relating to the west side's past will be presented by local history organizations, but if you have an interesting photograph or artifact that relates to the area's history, please bring it and share a story with everybody!

The West Side Fall Fair will be a fun day filled with activities for the whole family, but make sure you also take some time to check out the different history presentations and to participate in the celebration of the west side community's past.

**Have you been to one of our Sustainable Cinema or Sustainable Speaker events yet?**

*Light lunches or snacks provided  
Great learning opportunity*

Check out the Connections website for upcoming dates and the extended schedule!

## You've got questions, we've got answers

The design workshop and several neighborhood activities leading up to it, such as the walk/bike tour, were great opportunities for the public to give their input, but we'd also like to address some of the most frequently asked questions. As always, further questions can be directed to the City's Community Development Division at 864-467-4570.

**I like my neighborhood the way it is. Why should I participate in planning for change?**

The west side of Greenville, like many parts of the city, is experiencing growth and will continue to change because of it. Participating in the planning process ensures that the residents and business owners invested in the community have a voice in shaping that growth and change.

**Hasn't the west side already had master plans made for the area?**

Some of the neighborhoods and corridors in the west side area, including West Greenville and Pete Hollis Boulevard, have master plans that were created before this study. The west side comprehensive plan is different because it is looking at the bigger picture for the area and how the neighborhoods and corridors can work together. In fact, part of the process

is making sure that the plan that is being created for the area works well with the other existing plans to avoid conflicting visions.

**How long will it take to implement this plan when it's complete?**

When the west side comprehensive plan is complete at the end of 2013, it will have to be adopted by City Council. The plan includes elements that could be implemented in the next five to 10 years, but it also includes elements that wouldn't be implemented for 30 years or more.

**Why are these plans being created if there is not enough money to fully implement them?**

It is important to be proactive in planning, meaning that it is good to have plans ready to go when you need them. Growth and change are coming to the west side of Greenville, so the

City took the opportunity afforded through the Connections grant to fund this plan now. This has allowed the community the time to provide input and create a vision that will help shape future growth. If the plan were created too late, the plan would be reacting to growth that already occurred.

**What is the best way to stay informed about completed plans and these plans that are currently underway?**

The City's website posts plans under several different departments' pages. The Community Development page, <http://www.greenville.org/CommDev/default.aspx>, features a Neighborhood Master Plans link on the left sidebar. Neighborhood plans can also be accessed directly at: <http://www.greenville.org/PlanningZoning/MasterPlans.aspx>. You can also contact the Community Development Division at any time with questions.

### Neighborhood Associations

#### SouthernSide

*President*

Mary Duckett

*Meeting Time*

2nd Thursdays @ 7 pm

*Meeting Place*

813 Hampton Ave

#### West End

*President*

Henry Harrison

*Meeting Time*

1st Tuesdays @ 6:30 pm

*Meeting Place*

Pendleton Street

Baptist Church

#### West Greenville

*President*

Rev Vardrey Fleming

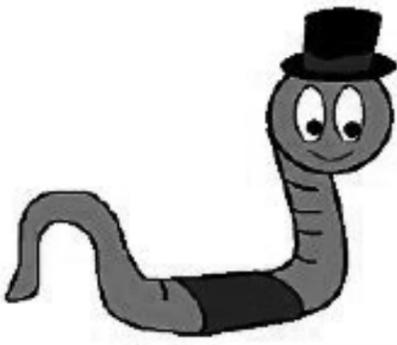
*Meeting Time*

2nd Tuesdays @ 6:30 pm

*Meeting Place*

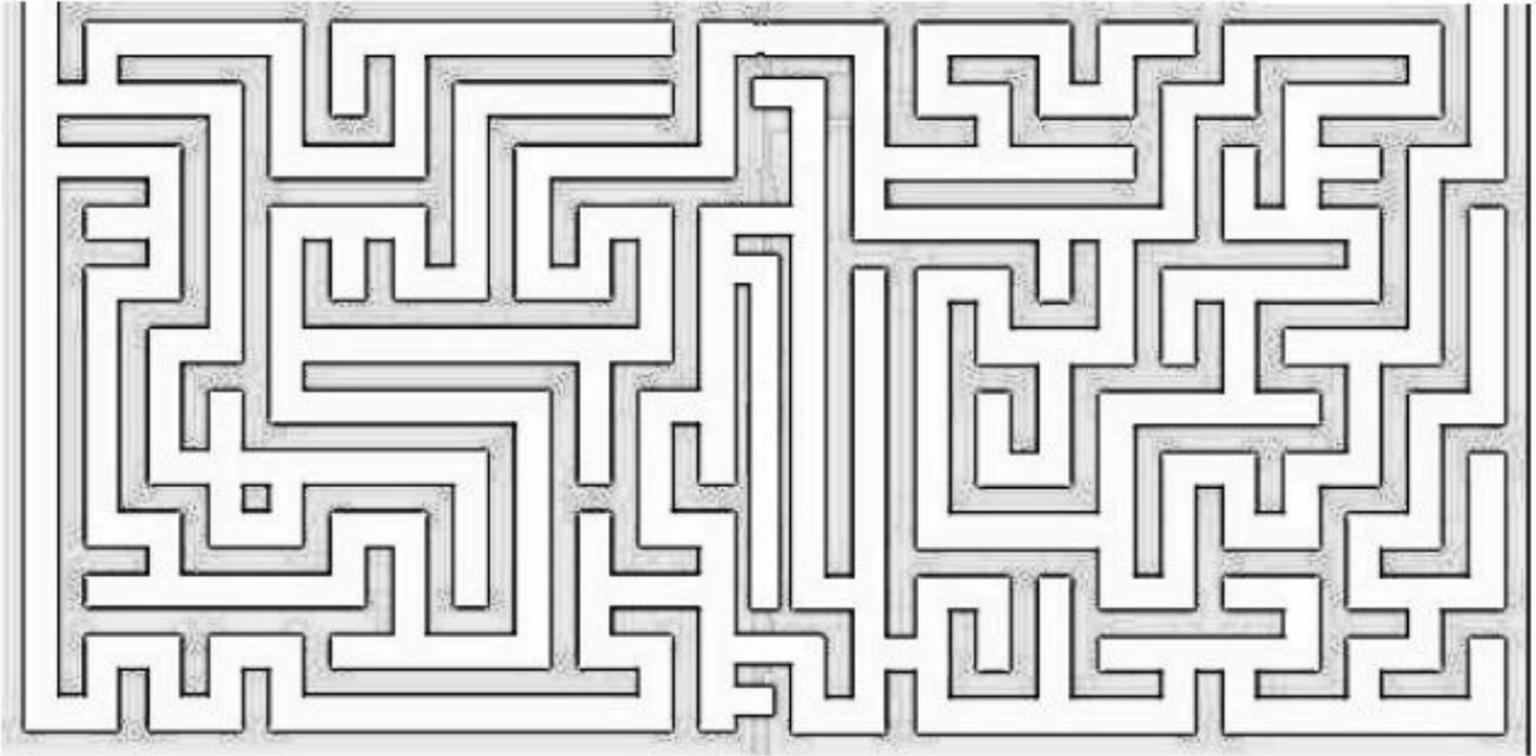
West Greenville

Community Center



# Healthy soil is important!

Can you help the hungry earthworm find his way through the maze to the yummy pile of leaves?

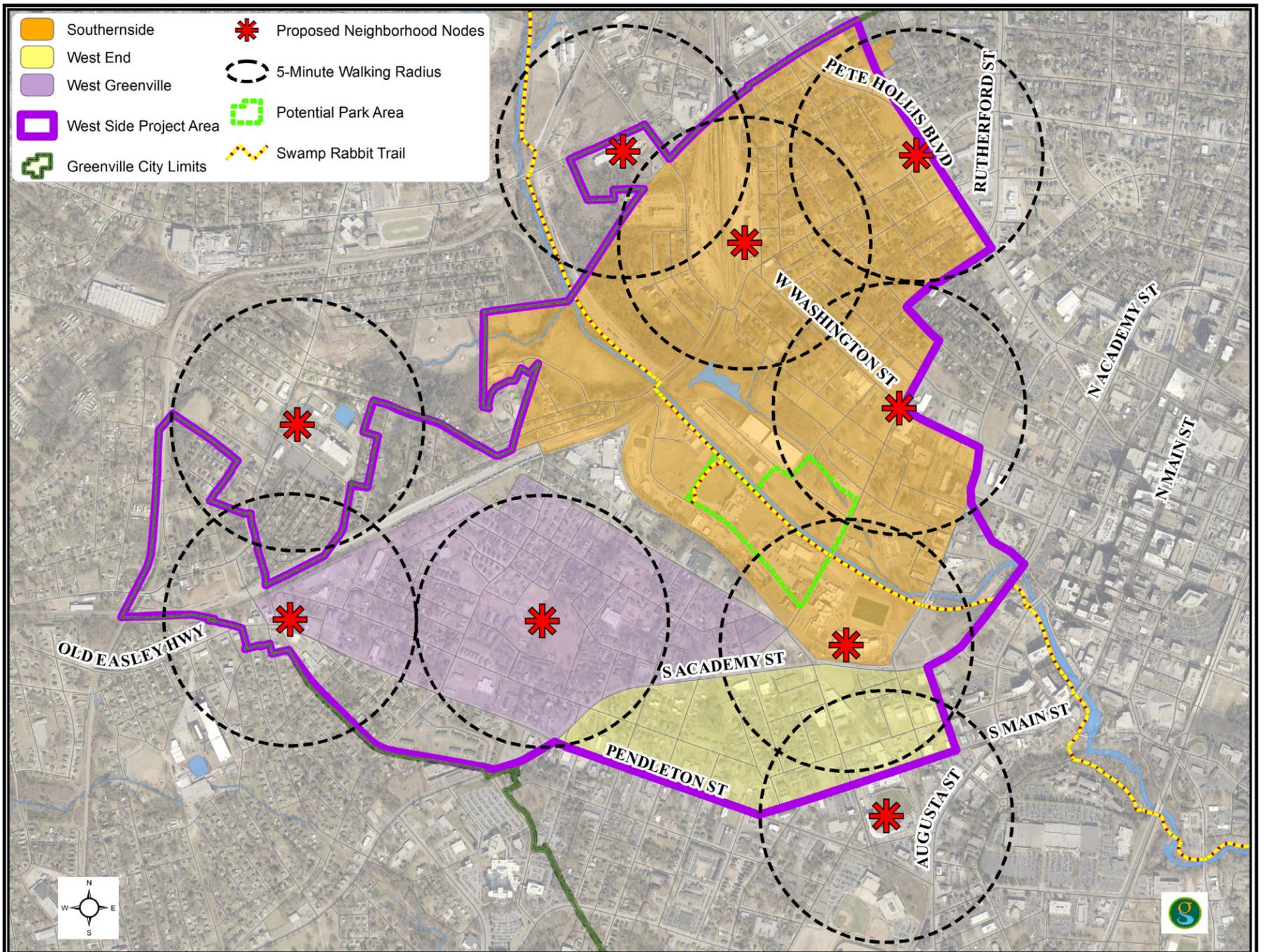


## Just for Kids!

This page is an excerpt from the children's coloring book, *A Tree!*, written and illustrated by Jaclin DuRant as part of the Connections for Sustainability and Green Streets projects. In the book, three friends: William Mouse, Edmund Frog, and Robin the Robin work together to plant a tree and learn all about the many things that trees can do to help improve their quality of life. Get your copy at the West Side Fall Fair on November 2 at the Kroc Center.



# The West Side Connection



The west side master plan study area, pictured above, is shown with nine neighborhood centers. Each of these centers, or nodes, is a current or proposed center of activity identified during the design workshop. The centers are shown with a quarter-mile radius, or a five-minute walk, which is a convenient walking distance for most people.

## Potential Park Plan

The Connections for Sustainability project funded a plan for a potential park in the heart of the west side along the Reedy River.

The design includes many features that will serve the west side as well as visitors from other Greenville communities and the rest of the Upstate region. One of the biggest draws to the park will be a playground with the potential for handicap accessible equipment and a sprayground water area. Additionally, the great lawn is suitable for entertainment.

One feature that would serve the west side community more directly is the community garden. This is envisioned to be a place where residents can grow their own vegetables and herbs. It will also feature space for the entire Greenville community to learn how to grow their own food through demonstrations.

Other features of the park include flexible sports fields, basketball courts, an adult fitness area, and a boardwalk and bridge over the Reedy River. Currently, the Swamp Rabbit



Trail runs along the south side of the river, but the plan includes an additional portion of the trail running along the north side of the river.

In response to two main concerns of funding and parking, the phased

construction identified in the plan will be key. Phasing would allow for elements of the park to be built at different times as funds become available. This would include parking, so it could be built as needed.

The park cannot move forward until funds exist, but the vision gets us ready for action when the timing is right. If built, the park will be a unique addition to Greenville's park system and to the west side.