

Research Report

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About This Paper:

The preservation of historic structures is important to communities as such structures contribute to the community, give it unique character, and provide touchstones to its history and heritage.

Unfortunately, conditions within the older neighborhoods in which such structures are often found may mitigate against their preservation, allowing for their deterioration and even demolition.

This preliminary study considered four neighborhoods where previous inventories had found numerous structures potentially eligible for historic landmarking, and then identified a set of factors that may increase the risk of these properties being allowed to decline and, ultimately, be demolished.

These neighborhood factors include: low property values; age of the structures; the presence of renter-occupied units; and low household income levels.

Additional research and analysis as to the implications these factors may have for the success of demolition delay as a preservation strategy is recommended.

**The Springfield-Sangamon County
Regional Planning Commission**

Room 212
200 South 9th Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701

Phone: 217.535.3110
Fax: 217.535.3110
Email: sscrpc@co.sangamon.il.us

www.sscrpc.com

Neighborhood factors that may affect the loss of historic structures

A preliminary consideration of risk factors associated with the potential loss of structures in legacy neighborhoods

It is intuitive that the health of a city's neighborhoods is vitally important to the overall health of the community itself, but the vitality of older neighborhoods may be of particular importance when it comes to preserving the legacy of the historic structures they contain.

Older neighborhoods are often blessed with many fine structures that contribute to the community, give it unique character, and provide touchstones to its history and heritage. Unfortunately, as time goes by neighborhoods and the structures they contain are affected by the normal deterioration of both the structures and public infrastructure, shifting living patterns, and even larger economic forces, potentially putting them at risk for decline. Without some public attention and protective measures, these forces may generate an overall loss of community and local quality of life as the historic legacy that these neighborhoods provide is lost due to the outmigration of their residents and the deterioration or demolition of their legacy structures. But how might these structures be better protected?

Both research and experience suggest that it is more efficient and effective to solve problems before they begin. The medical community, for example, continually reminds us of this fact related to our personal health, suggesting that preventative measures can often be taken that reduce both the cost and the severity of medical problems if only we recognize the risk factors in advance and then take preventative measures. This being the case, the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) began to look at whether the same preventative, risk-assessing approach could be used to identify and then mitigate the deterioration of our neighborhoods, particularly our older, legacy ones, that ultimately may lead to the loss of historic structures.

The following report is intended to serve as an initial step in this regard by considering the neighborhoods that have been identified as having multiple structures suitable for historic landmarking clustered within them, and then identifying factors that appear to be associated with increased risk of deterioration and associated historic structure loss.

The Approach

In order to obtain some operational definition and indication of neighborhoods that might be identified as “legacy” ones useful to this study, the SSCRPC turned to the City of Springfield’s list of properties subject to its “demolition delay” ordinance [Sec. 101.16, Springfield Code of Ordinances]. This ordinance seeks to identify structures that have been identified as potentially eligible for historic landmarking, but have not yet been so landmarked, requiring that the demolition of the structures on these properties be delayed so that alternatives to demolition may be considered and, hopefully, the structures saved. Properties included on the demolition delay list may be placed there because they contain structures on the National Register of Historic Places, Illinois Historic Landmark Survey, or on the Springfield Historic Sites Register, or because they have been identified on other lists or inventories of historic buildings or structures that meet certain conditions specified in ordinance. Only properties on the demolition delay list that have been judged unsafe and dangerous may be demolished without the required delay.

Since not all neighborhoods in Springfield have been the subject of an inventory to determine if any properties suitable for landmarking exist there, a number of neighborhoods that might otherwise be considered legacy ones were not included. However, using the existing demolition delay list did allow for at least a starting point for study, as it includes many more structures than those currently landmarked and these structures do not now benefit from the same protections that landmarked structures do.

A number of demolition delay properties are currently present throughout the city of Springfield; specifically in proximity to the city’s central area. The map on page 10 (***Demolition Delay Sites in Springfield***) shows the geography and spatial pattern of these identified demolition delay sites and four neighborhoods with which they are largely associated. These four neighborhoods and some specific characteristics associated with them that may be relevant to assessing the risk of loss of historic structures, form the basis for this study.

Demolition Delay Sites and Legacy Neighborhoods

Springfield currently has 613 identified demolition delay sites. Of these 613 sites, 513 of them (83.6%) fall within just four neighborhoods: Enos Park; Downtown; Old Aristocracy Hill; and, Vinegar Hill. For this reason we categorize these four areas as representing “legacy neighborhoods”. These neighborhoods reside in the central part of Springfield and contain some of the oldest and most historic spaces in the city.

After the neighborhoods were identified based upon the clustering of demolition delay sites, an analysis of the four areas was conducted to determine if they shared any common characteristics. Five characteristics were identified that the SSCRPC believes to be related to an increased risk of losing historic structures through either neglect or demolition.

The first commonality is that a majority of the properties within these neighborhoods is renter-occupied. Second, these are truly older neighborhoods with many of the structures built during the 1940's or even earlier. Third, most of the housing in these areas show a low net-worth value. Fourth, a large percentage of households are classified as low-income according to the US Census. And finally, a large portion of the resident population moved into the legacy neighborhoods between the years 2000-2009 (the previous decade at the time of this analysis). These characteristics imply that these older, legacy neighborhoods may become at risk of losing historic structures due to a combination of households with minimal assets, relatively short-term residents, and long-standing structures that need rejuvenation if not rehabilitation. Based upon this understanding, it is the SSCRPC's belief that to the extent that conditions around historic properties negatively change, the risk of their loss due to neglect and demolition increases.

These factors may also describe other neighborhoods which were not included in the initial analysis because they have not been the subjects of historic property inventories that would allow for the identification of additional structures eligible for landmarking and preservation. To determine if they do demonstrate similar risk factors, a second analysis was made of some surrounding neighborhoods. This second analysis is reported toward the conclusion of this report.

Value of Property as a Risk Factor

Property values may provide a useful correlation of geography and related potential risk associated with these neighborhoods. A neighborhood having low property values may imply a low or non-existing demand for properties located there, which could demonstrate the potential for both residential outmigration from the area as well as stimulate requests for demolitions. Conversely, and even absent sites on the demolition delay list, the potential demolition of structures in places demonstrating high property values may provide reasons for a delay. The greater the value of properties in the area, the lower the risk of property deterioration and, ultimately, demolitions.

Each neighborhood has its own unique classification of property values that are based solely on the neighborhood's values after exemption, and this was considered in the analysis in relationship to demolition delay sites.

For example, in Enos Park, 19 demolition delay sites are located on property valued well below the mean. The mean value for property in Enos Park is \$17,406, and 45 sites are situated on below-average valued property. This translates to 77.5% of the demolition delay sites in Enos Park are located on low-valued property. The **Enos Park Value After Exemption** map on page 11 displays this pattern.

Continuing to another legacy neighborhood, Old Aristocracy Hill also provides an example.

The mean property value is \$70,407. Out of 280 demolition delay sites, 177 are located on below-average property in regards to value. This equates to 63.2 % of total sites, continuing the spatial trend of demolition delay sites correlating with low-valued property. The spatial patterns in Old Aristocracy Hill are shown on the ***Old Aristocracy Hill Value After Exemption*** map on page 12.

The third analysis of property values is the area due west of Old Aristocracy Hill, the Vinegar Hill neighborhood. The mean value after exemption for properties in Vinegar Hill is \$40,772. Of the 44 demolition delay sites in this neighborhood, 20 (approximately 45%) are located on property that is valued below average. The spatial patterns can be seen on the ***Vinegar Hill Value After Exemption*** map on page 13.

Finally, the area identified as the Downtown is located directly south of Enos Park. Downtown's property values are much higher than other local neighborhoods, largely because of the significant presence of large commercial properties. For instance, Downtown's mean property value after exemption is \$209,924. Despite having a large number of demolition delay sites, Downtown has only four out of 131 sites located on low-valued property. That equates to 3% in total. The ***Downtown Value After Exemption*** map on page 14 illustrates the spatial distribution of demolition delay sites in the Downtown area.

Year Built as a Risk Factor

Another prominent characteristic of the four legacy neighborhoods considered in this study is the period in which the preponderance of the structures were built. Neighborhoods with older buildings tend to have more demolitions, for as buildings age, more upkeep is required, they become obsolete, and eventually a demolition may be deemed necessary. From research of the four legacy neighborhoods using *ESRI's Community Analyst*, buildings built before or around the year 1939 tends to correlate with the presence of structures subject to demolition delay in Springfield. This is quite reasonable since the demolition delay list focuses on properties that may be eligible for landmarking, which are most often those 50 years old or older.

In Enos Park, 42 demolition delay sites were built before 1939. This equates to 72% of sites, while 27 sites were built during the 19th century: 46% of all the demolition delay sites in Enos Park. The median year of structures built is 1940, and a mean year is 1902. The ***Year Built of Structures in Enos Park*** map is shown on page 15.

Old Aristocracy Hill is filled with demolition delay sites. Out of 280 sites, 163 were built before 1939, and 99 sites were built before 1900. In percentage terms, 58% were built before 1939, and 35% were built in the 19th century. The median year of structures built is 1940 and the mean year is 1921. The large number of sites correlates with the expectation that age of structure implies an increased number of sites potentially eligible for delays. The ***Year Built of Structures in Old Aristocracy Hill*** map is shown on page 16.

The third location of analysis is the Vinegar Hill neighborhood. Of the structures in this area, 26 were built before 1939, which represents 59% of all the demolition delay sites in Vinegar Hill. Examining even older structures, 15 sites were built in 19th century. This equates to 34% in total from the 1800's. The median year of structures built is 1952, and the mean year is 1917. The ***Year Built of Structures in Vinegar Hill*** map is provided on page 17.

The Downtown area has a high number of structures built before 1939 as well. Of the 131 structures in the area, 80 were built before 1939. This equals 61% of structures within Downtown and continues the expected trend of demolition delay sites correlating to the year a structure was built. Of these structures, 28 were built before 1900, or 21% of total structures. The median year of structures built is 1946 and the mean year is 1924. The ***Year Built of Structures in Downtown*** map is shown on page 18.

Renter Occupied Units as a Risk Factor

Another major shared characteristic of the legacy neighborhoods studied is high percentages of renter-occupied property. Data on multi-family housing was used to show rented properties within these neighborhoods. The reasons for using this dataset are because multi-family housing tends to be renter-occupied housing, and because other renter-oriented data could not be found. In other words, many renter-occupied properties may exist but are not be mapped.

The limitations of the data are shown in the case of Enos Park. According to the data available, Enos Park has only eight rented properties. Of these rented properties, two are demolition delay sites. Statistically speaking, three percent of properties are known, renter-occupied demolition delays. However, from ESRI's Community Analyst, Enos Park's property is 76.3% renter-occupied. The ***Known Rental Properties of Enos Park*** map is shown on page 19.

Old Aristocracy Hill has 25 known, renter-occupied properties. Of these 25 properties, 16 are demolition delays sites. Statistically speaking, 5% of Old Aristocracy Hill's demolition delay sites are renter-occupied. According to ESRI's Community Analyst, 79.8% of Old Aristocracy Hill's properties are renter-occupied. The map of ***Known Rental Properties of Old Aristocracy Hill*** is presented on page 20.

The final neighborhood analysis of renter-occupied properties are those in Vinegar Hill. This neighborhood has 50 rented properties according to the available dataset. Of the 50 known sites, none are demolition delay sites. Data from ESRI's Community Analyst informs that 73.7% of property in the neighborhood is renter-occupied. The map of ***Known Rental Properties of Vinegar Hill*** is shown on page 21.

Moving away from the more traditional neighborhoods to the Downtown area, seven rented properties are identified from the data. Of these seven sites, four are demolition delay sites. Three percent of Downtown's demolition delays are renter-occupied. However, ESRI's Com-

munity Analyst states that 92% of property is renter-occupied. The map of ***Known Rental Properties in Downtown*** is presented on page 22.

Median Income of Residents as a Risk Factor

The final major characteristic analyzed for the four central neighborhoods is median income. A large percentage of low-income households is present in the central areas of Springfield. According to U.S. Census data, household income levels at and below \$34,999 are classified as “low.” Combining demolition delay sites with income-level data may help in analyzing the spatial distribution of demolition delays and factors that may increase the risk of historic structure loss.

Median income in Enos Park is low throughout the entire neighborhood. Fully 100% of the demolition delay sites are considered to be in low-income areas. Levels of median income range from \$12,042 to \$27,500. The ***Enos Park Median Income*** map is provided on page 23.

Median Income levels of Old Aristocracy Hill are higher than that of Enos Park, however a vast majority of demolition delay sites (278 sites, 99%) are located in areas of median low-income. The two sites in areas above low-income are not far away (both geographically and statistically), with the median income level classified at \$36,289. The ***Old Aristocracy Hill Median Income*** map is shown on page 24.

Vinegar Hill’s median income levels are higher than Enos Park’s and Old Aristocracy Hill’s. This correlates to fewer demolition delays located in low-income areas. Moving on to the spatial information, 20 of 44 delay sites are situated in low-income areas, which equates to 45% of the demolition delays. The map ***Vinegar Hill Median Income*** is presented on page 25.

The Downtown area’s median income levels have the largest deviation of all the analyzed neighborhoods. Median income levels range from \$12,042 to \$36,289. However, 114 demolition delay sites are located in areas of low-income. This is 87% of the demolition delay sites. The ***Downtown Median Income*** map is shown on page 26.

Other Areas and Potential Risk

As mentioned toward the beginning of this report, the SSCRPC was interested in whether or not these factors may also affect other areas that while older, had not received the benefit of an historic structure survey or inventory. For this reason an additional analysis was conducted.

This second analysis was to determine if other, older neighborhoods shared any of the common characteristics found in the review of the central, legacy neighborhoods. That is: are the factors just as common for older neighborhoods in which demolition delay sites are not present as they are for those who have not been identified as having such sites?

After conducting this review the SSCRPC found other neighborhoods (see map on page 27) demonstrating these risk factors, predominately in the eastern section of Springfield. Neighborhoods such as Bunn Park, C. Lee Carey, Eastview, Ernie Bankhead, Pillsbury, Pioneer Park, Randall Court, Those Who Care with Integrity, and Visions in Progress, all shared multiple characteristics with the four initial legacy neighborhoods. The most common characteristics of neighborhoods with potential for future deterioration are high percentages of renter occupancy, low household net worth, and buildings built before or around 1939. One can easily see the geographic relationship between the four legacy neighborhoods identified in this study and the neighborhoods identified as having similar risk factors.

Some Conclusions

Even though this study is just a preliminary one and additional data and analysis is required, some initial conclusions are warranted

First, demolition delay sites and legacy neighborhoods correlate with a few characteristics representing risk factors for historic structure preservation when these factors are present in the surrounding area. Low levels of household income and low property values, combined with high percentages of renter-occupancy and long-standing structures, are the strongest indicators for the spatial distribution of demolition delays and represent noticeable risks for preservation if they continue. Not all of the characteristics are relevant for each demolition delay site, and some sites may have a higher relationship with certain characteristics and have no relevance with others, but even so, a relationship remains.

Low property values are a common characteristic of demolition delay site areas. In total, 48% of all analyzed demolition delay sites were located in low-valued property. This equates to 246 sites. Although less than half of the sites are situated on low-valued property, a correlation with value of property appears relevant. Property values in legacy neighborhoods that are higher than the low value remain relatively low in comparison to other regions of Springfield.

As mentioned previously, the year a structure is built is another characteristic that correlates to demolition delay, as is reasonable given the purpose for the delay. In Springfield, the year 1939 proves to be a marker for correlating demolition delay sites with legacy neighborhoods. Almost two-thirds (61%) of the demolition delay site structures were built before 1939. Most structures built after 1939 in legacy neighborhoods are generally long-standing buildings as well. For example, the most recent median year for buildings in legacy neighborhoods is 1952, which would be 64 years of age at the time of this report.

Renter-occupied property is another characteristic associated to areas where demolition delay sites tend to cluster. However, the data used in this analysis should be viewed as tentative and incomplete. Multi-family housing was used to illustrate rented properties, and these properties

are generally rented, but single-family housing units may also be rented.

Discovering renter-occupied data specific to individual demolition sites proved impossible. However, analysis of the multi-family properties still ensued. There were 22 demolition delay sites defined as renter-occupied. Based upon data from ESRI's *Community Analyst*, percentages of rented properties within individual legacy neighborhoods range from 73.7% to 92%. Identifying single, rented parcels could not be done from the data, but assuming that at least some of the demolition delay sites are rented is a rational supposition.

The final characteristic correlated to demolition delay sites is median income. Demolition delay site areas tend to be median low-income ones. According to the data from the Bureau of the Census, an income that is less than \$34,999 is classified as low. In all, 470 demolition delay sites are in areas where the median income value is considered low. This equates to 91%. Taking into consideration the greater Springfield area, the median household income is \$48,848. With that said, all of the demolition delay sites in legacy neighborhoods fall below Springfield's median income.

Earlier in this report we commented upon the fact that a large portion of the resident population moved into the legacy neighborhood between the years 2000-2009. We were unable to map this factor, but believe it relevant, as it appears logical that the degree to which a neighborhood has a transient population can affect the risk of decline, ultimately putting structures there at risk of deterioration and demolition. As transience may be associated with both rental properties and areas of lower income, the SSCRPC believes it to be a relevant factor and one that requires additional research and analysis.

Looking to the future, potential clusters of demolition delay sites associated with these risk factors can be anticipated in the eastern section of Springfield. The neighborhoods in the eastern portion of the city do not share all the same characteristics as the four legacy neighborhoods studied, but each neighborhood shares at least a few of their characteristics. A combination of low income and low property value, long-standing structures still in place, and/or short-term residents, are prevalent in portions of east Springfield. The prospective neighborhoods can be seen in ***Neighborhoods with Potential Demolition Delays*** map previously noted.

Given the initial results described above, it is the SSCRPC's hope that they will aid in decision making regarding demolition delay policy as well as begin a process of developing indicators useful in predicting locational variables that can positively or negatively effect the preservation of structures with historic merit. Along with landmarked properties, a number of demolition delay sites are currently present throughout the city of Springfield; specifically, in proximity to the city's central area. We believe that continued research can provide a proactive means of identifying the various factors putting these properties at risk so that actions can be taken to mitigate the risk factors in the neighborhoods where they exists, resulting in fewer demolitions of structures within them.

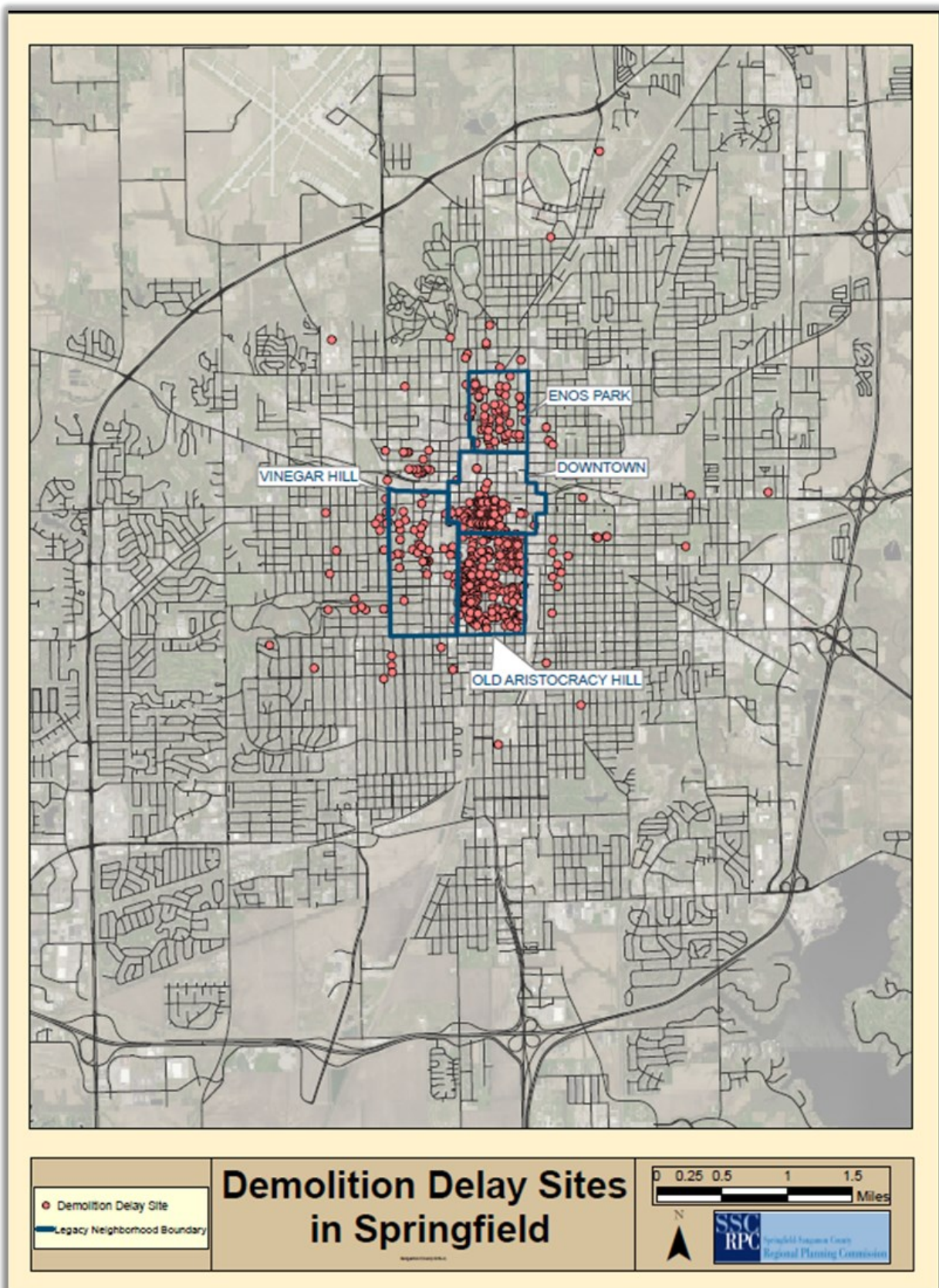
Another important aspect of this report is that it begins to identify some common characteristics useful in determining risk factors associated with legacy neighborhoods themselves. Applying them to other neighborhoods may be beneficial in land use planning as well as redevelopment project targeting.

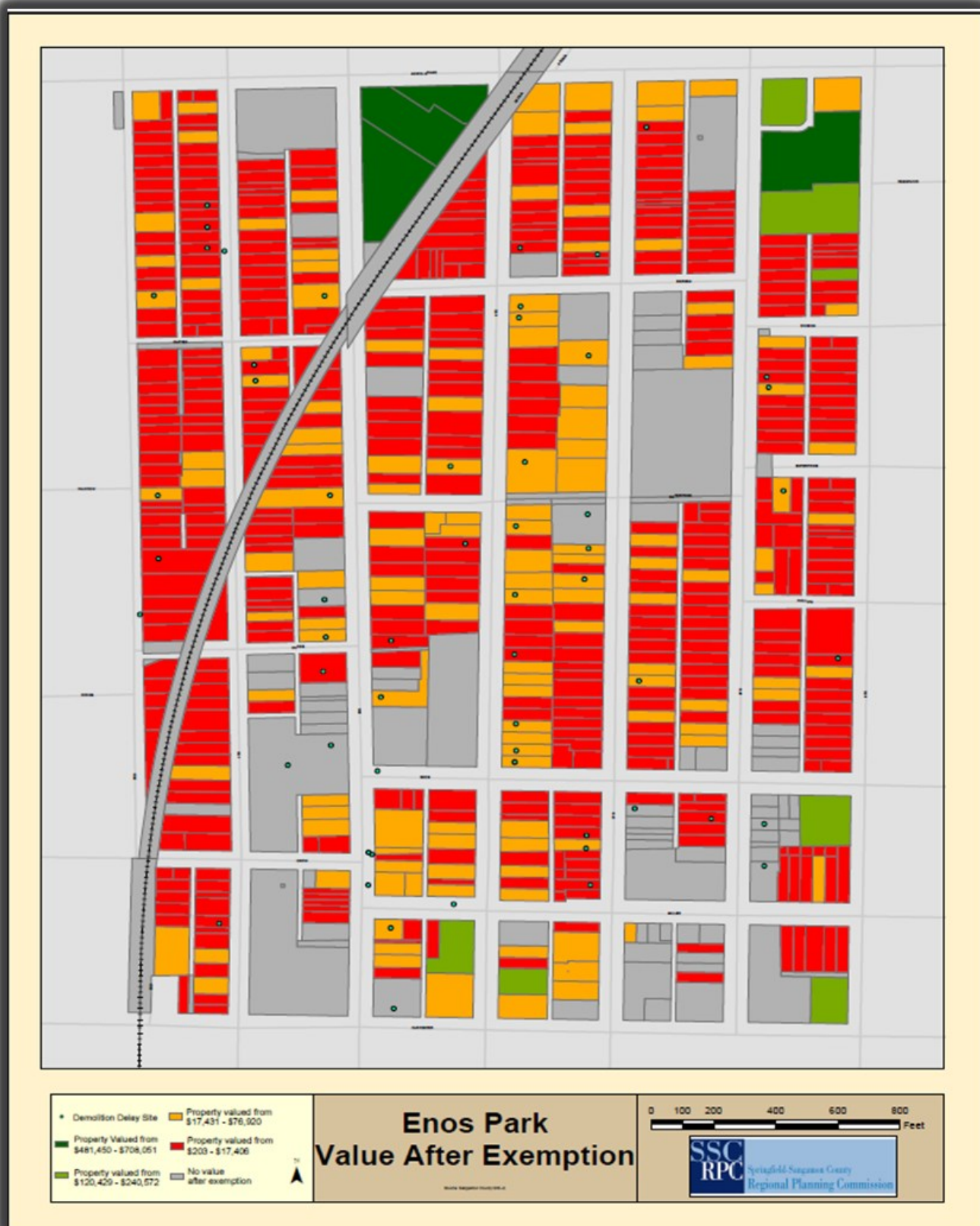
Local governments play a vital role in both the preservation of historic structures and the neighborhoods in which they reside, and it is therefore necessary that they devise effective strategies to achieve this end. As the intent of the Springfield demolition delay ordinance was to provide a period of time in which options other than demolition might be found, analyzing the relationship between the economic opportunity and value of such structures in relationship to their surrounding neighborhoods might help: determine the potential effectiveness of this approach; allow for an assessment of the most likely outcome of a particular demolition delay taking into account locational positives and negatives; and even help in formulating new, preventative, strategies designed to offset locational factors that may reduce demolitions.

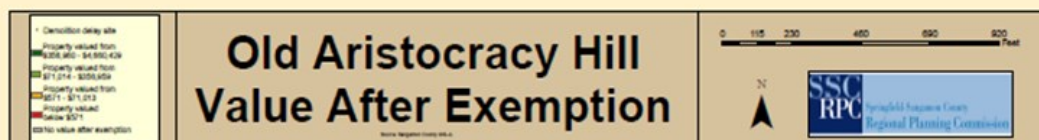
This Report Prepared by Jordan Leaf, Planning Specialist, SSCRPC

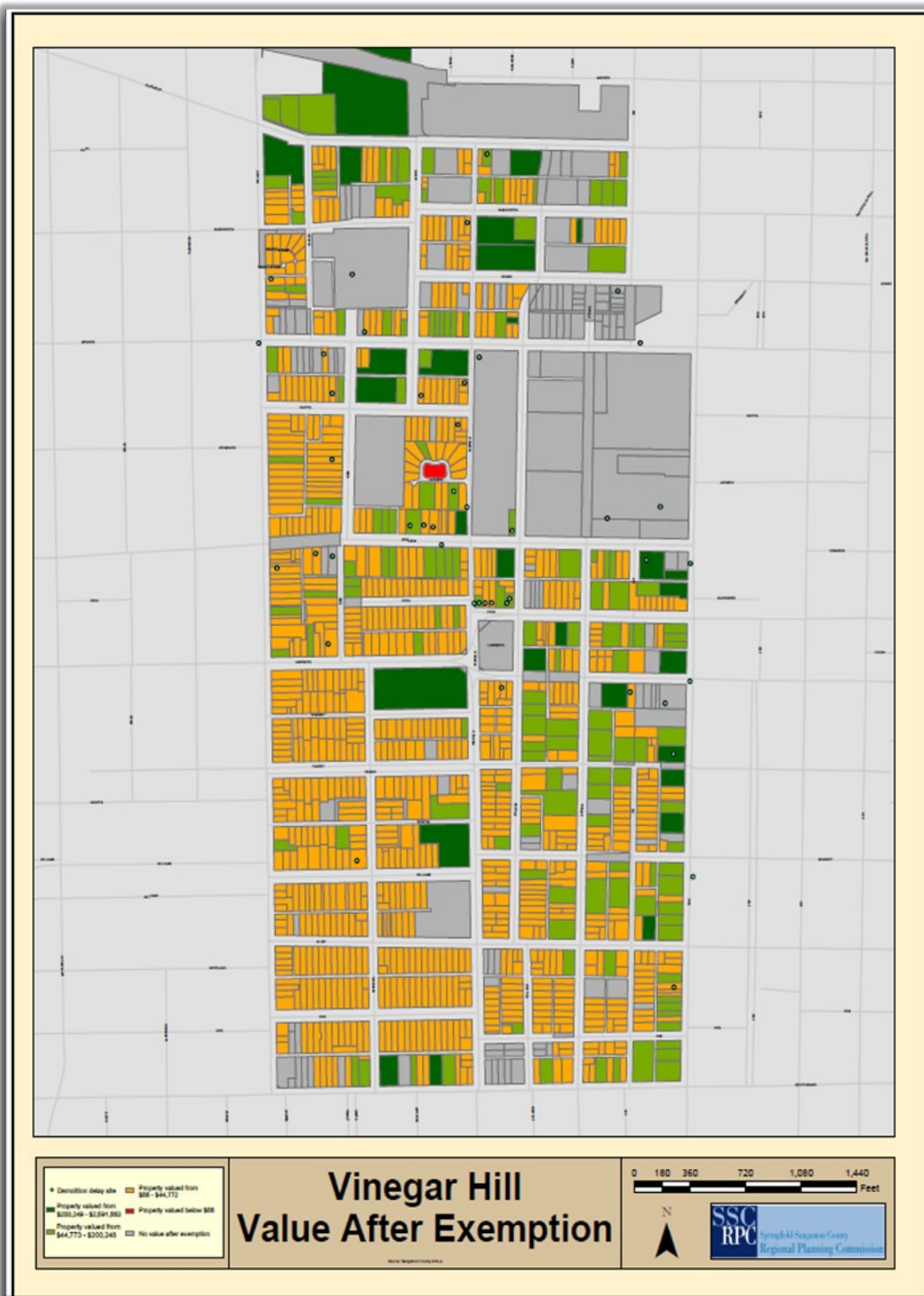
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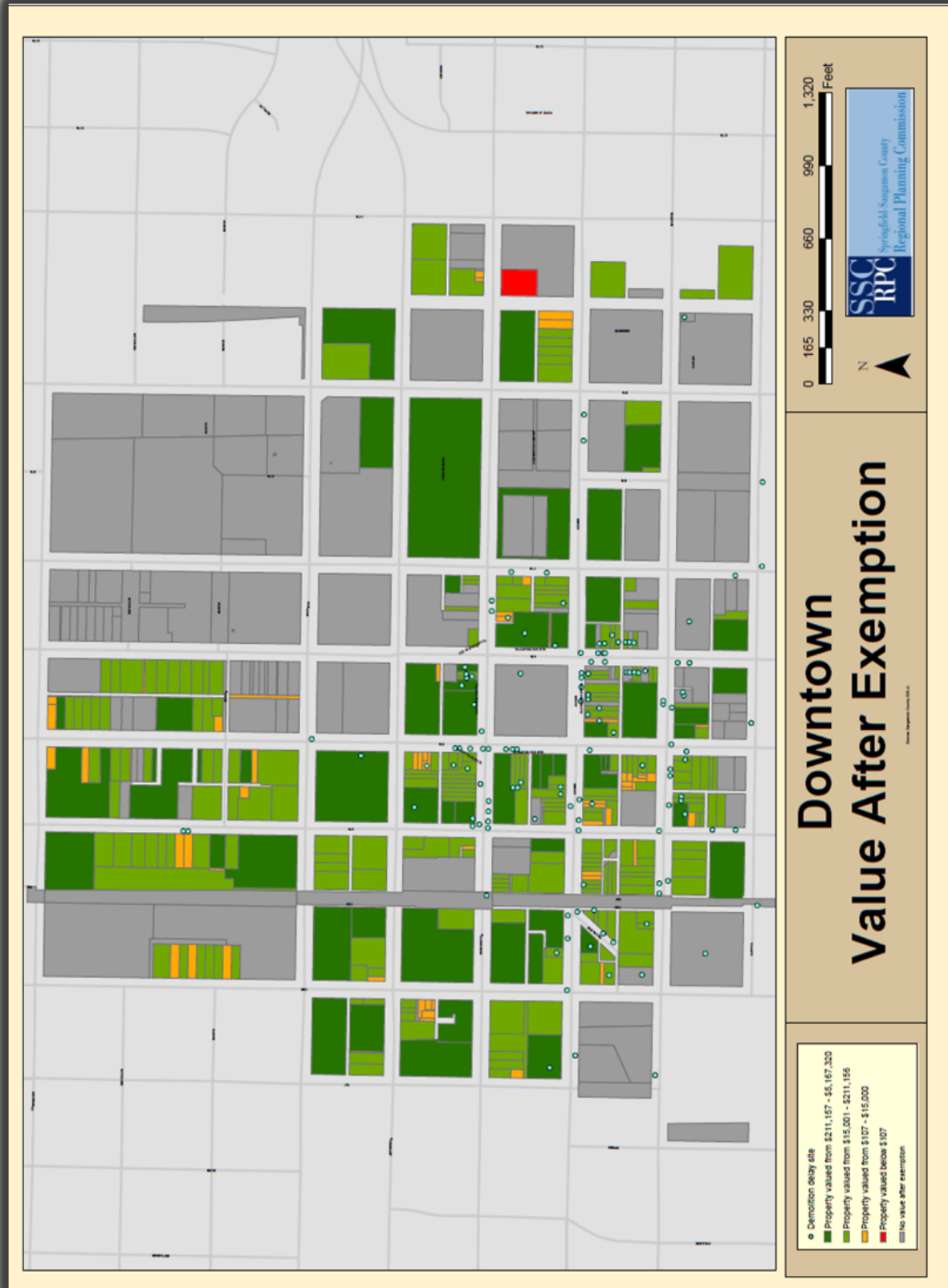
- ESRI *Community Analyst*.
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 *American Community Survey*.
- U.S. Census Bureau, *Census 2010, Summary File 1*.



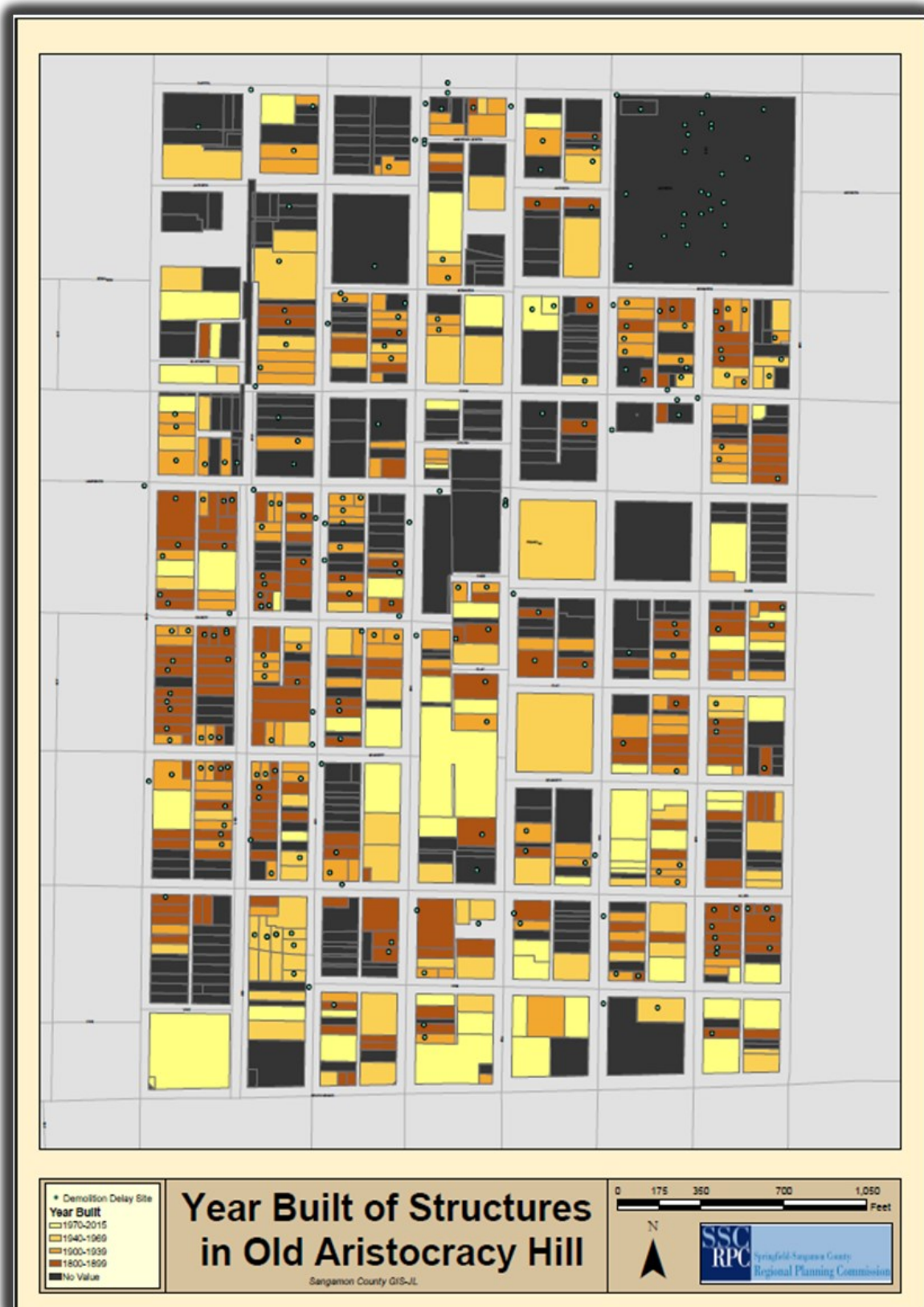


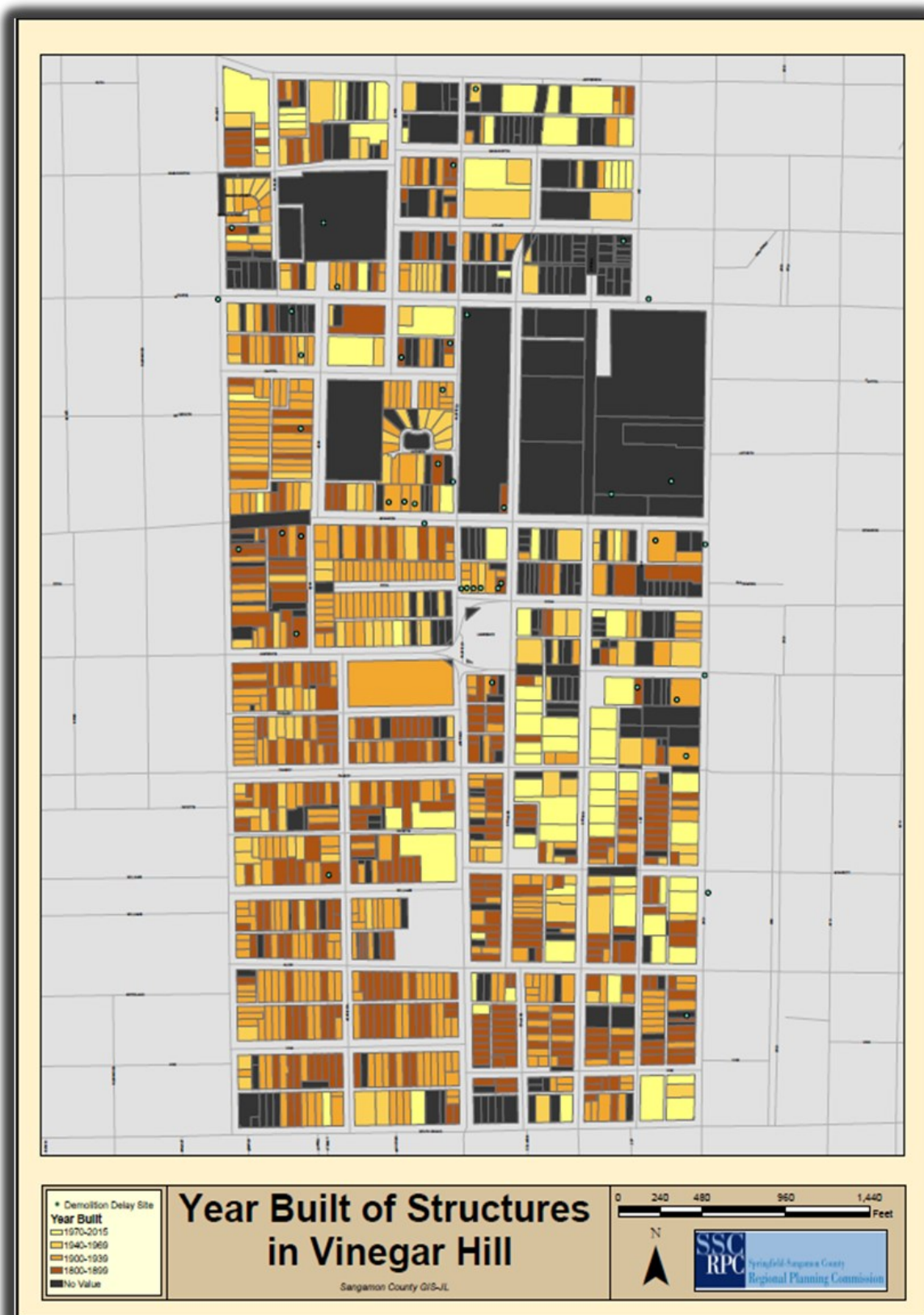


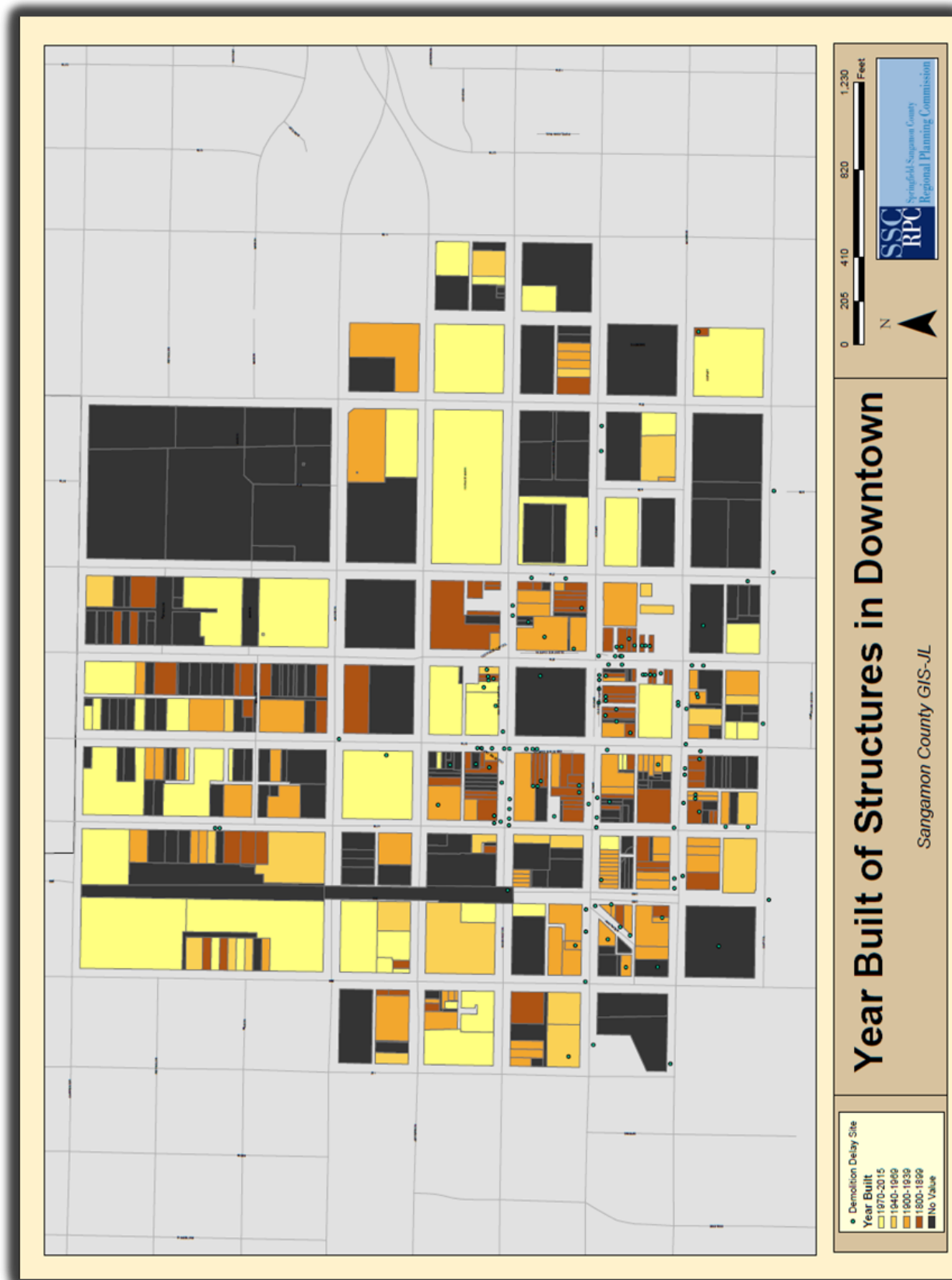


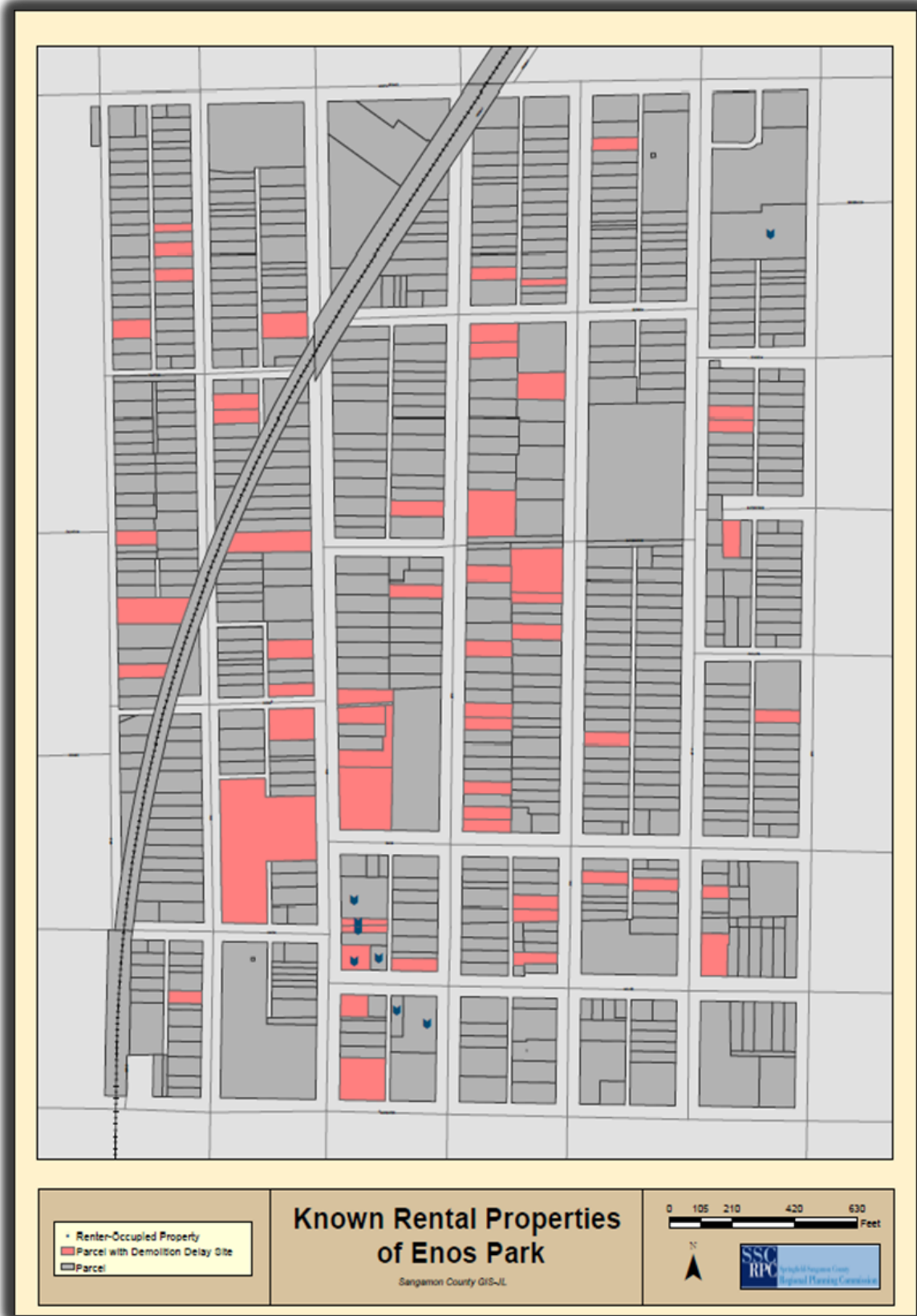


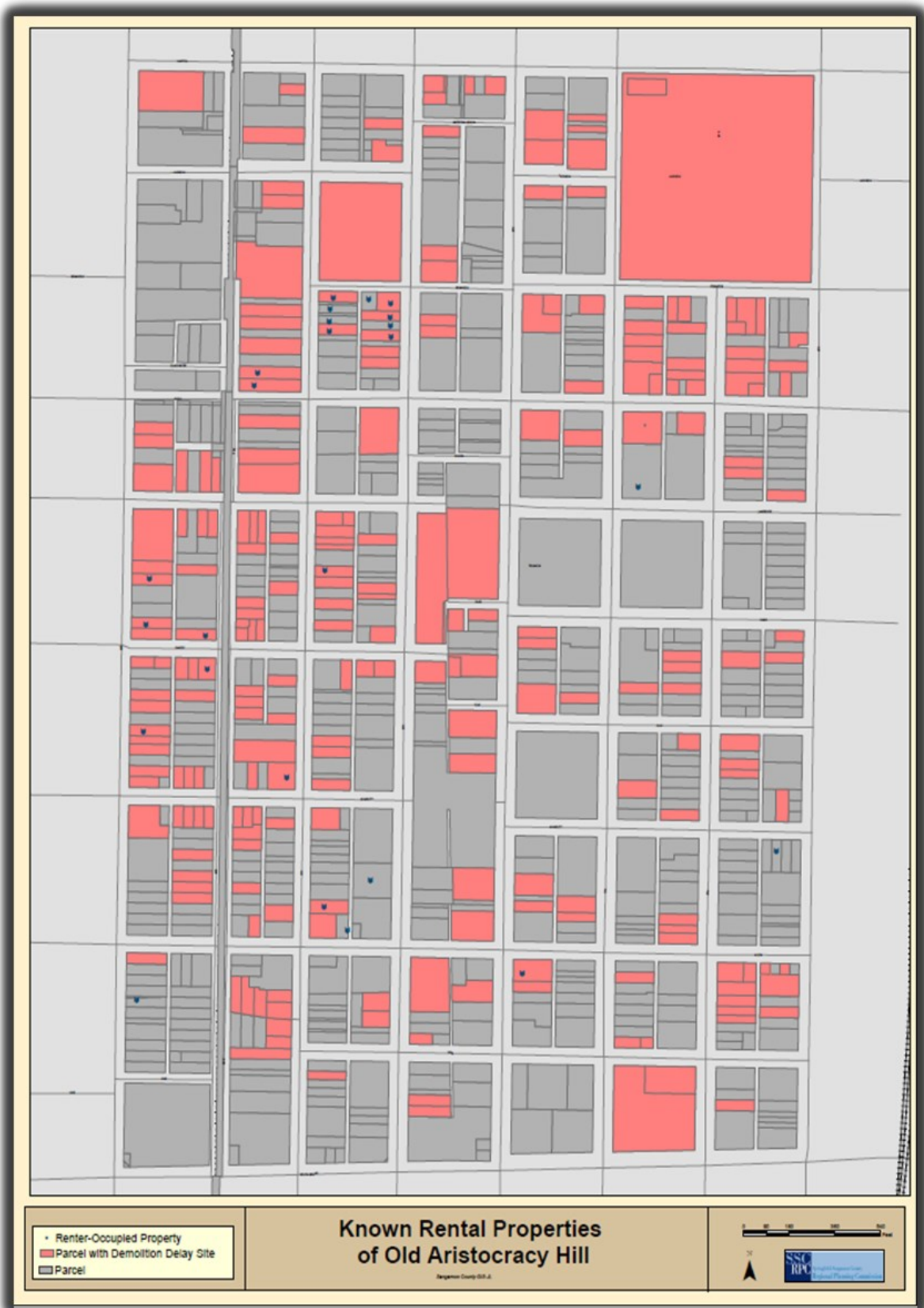


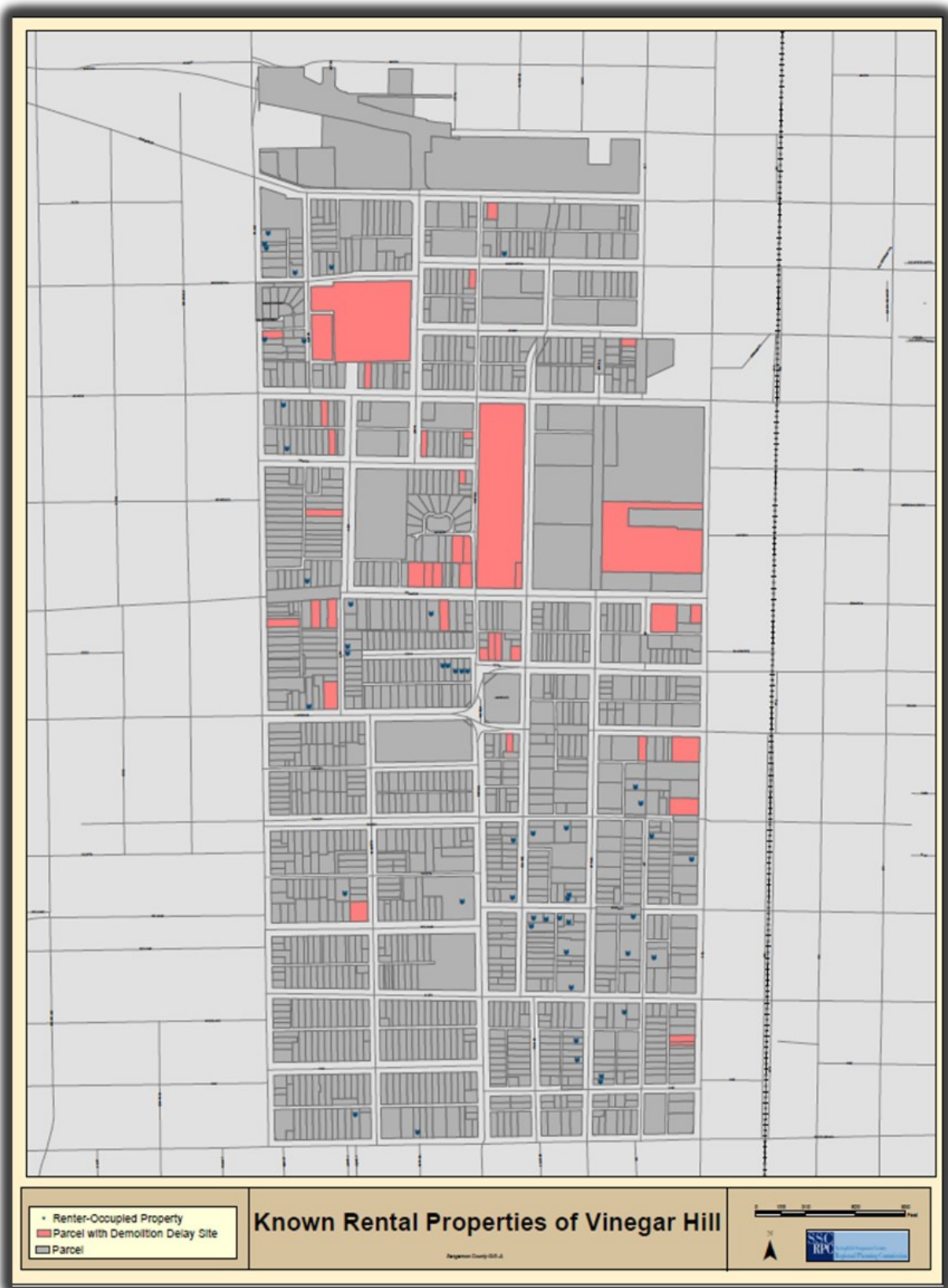


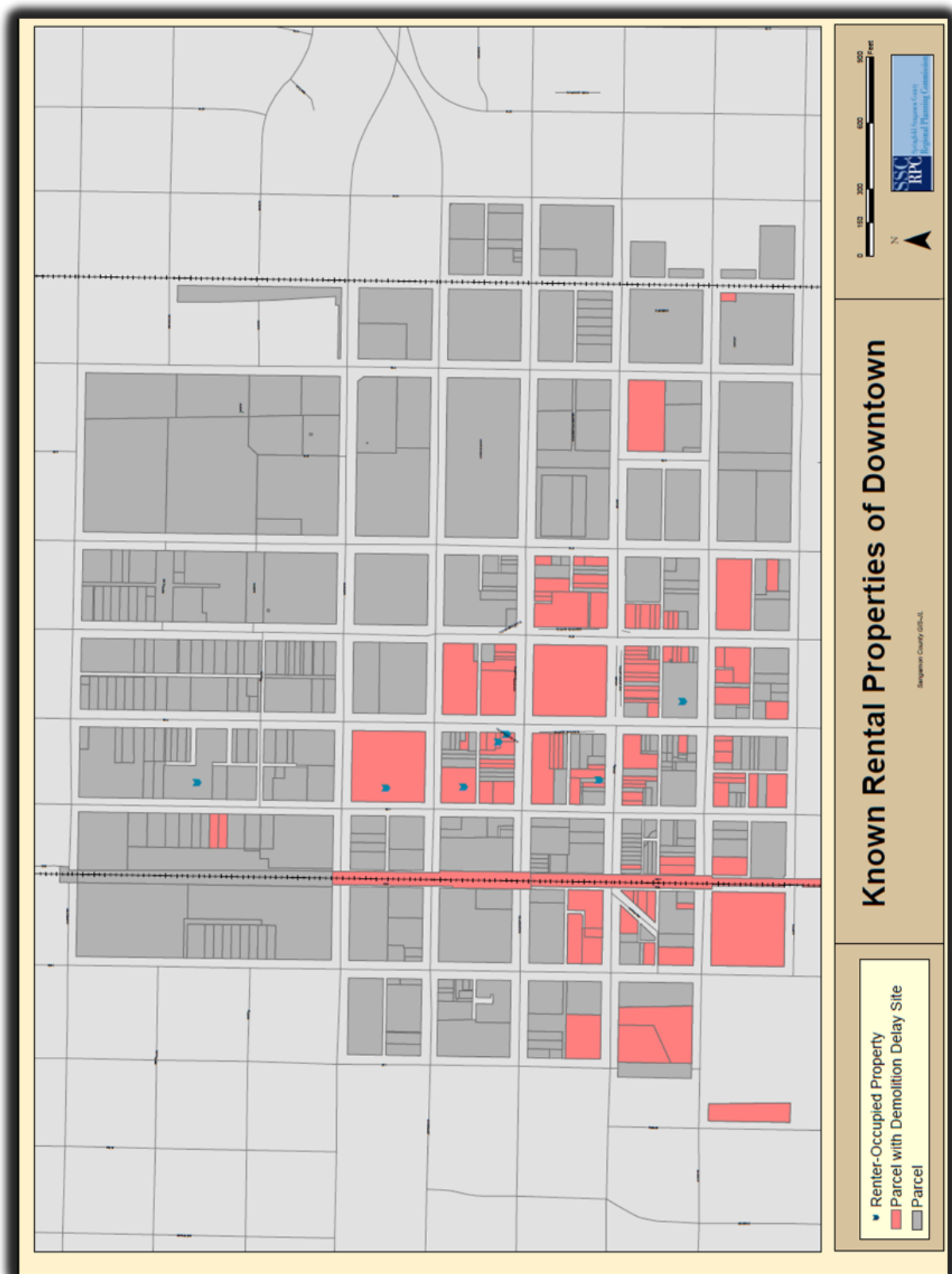


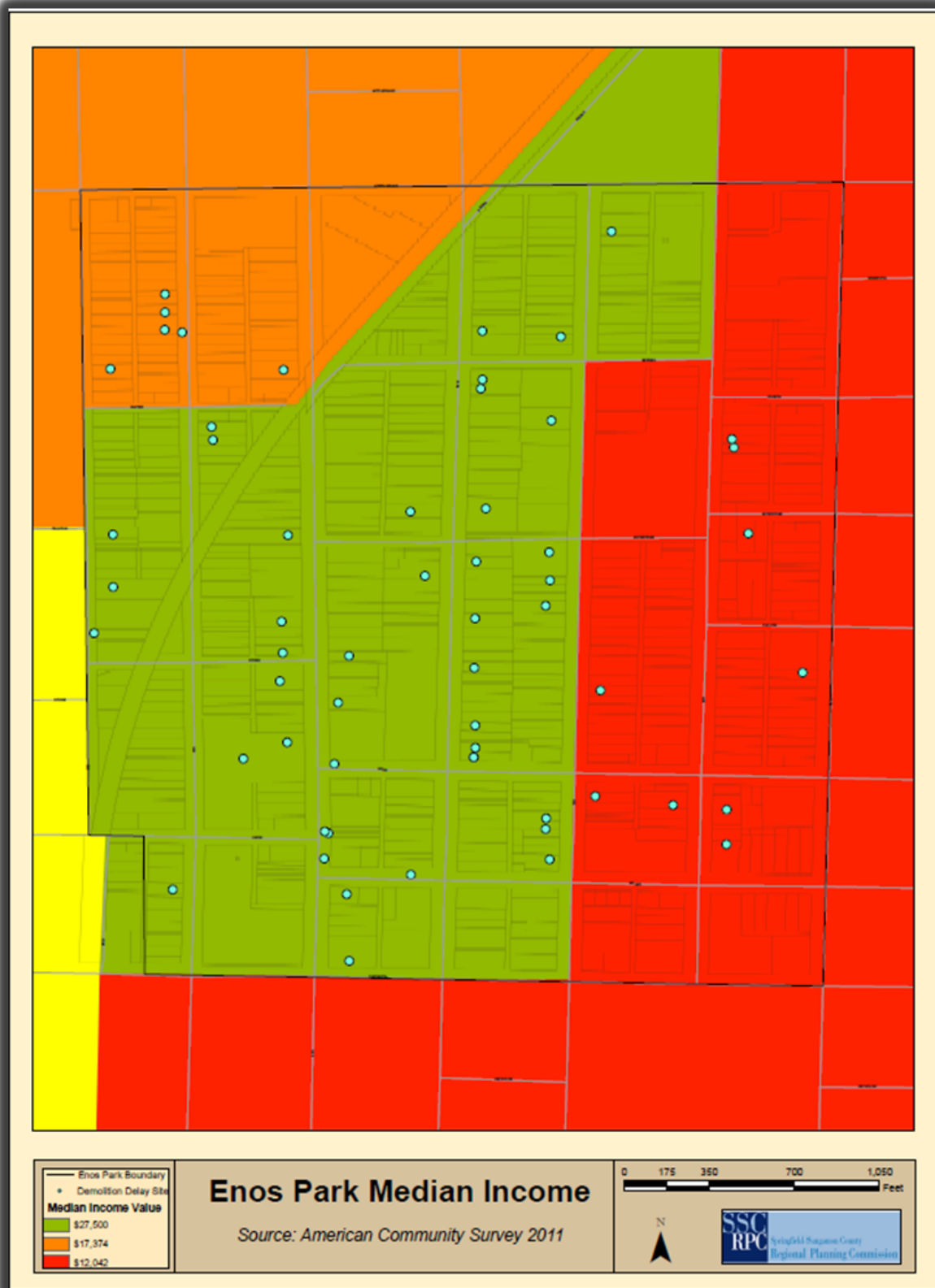


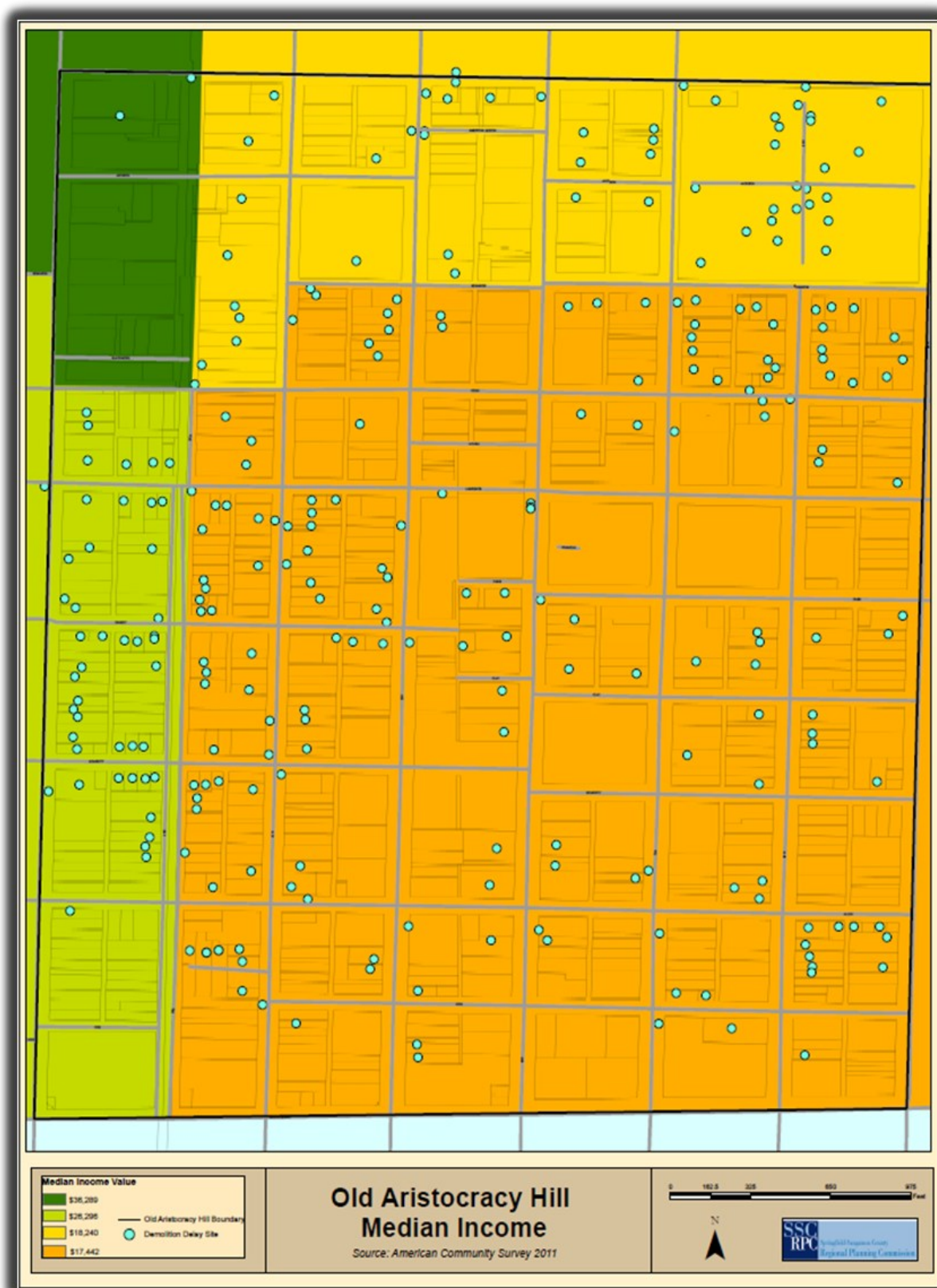


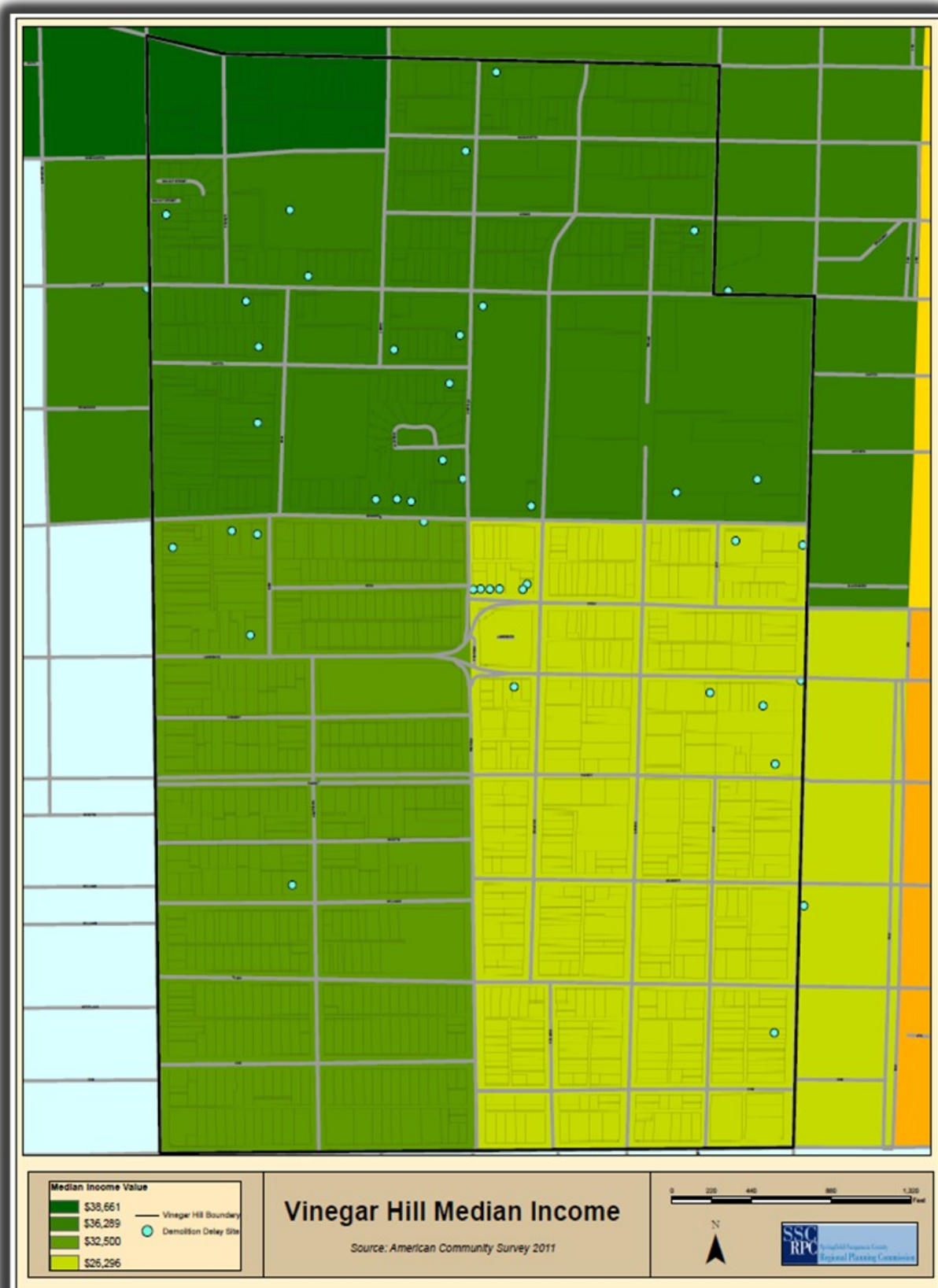


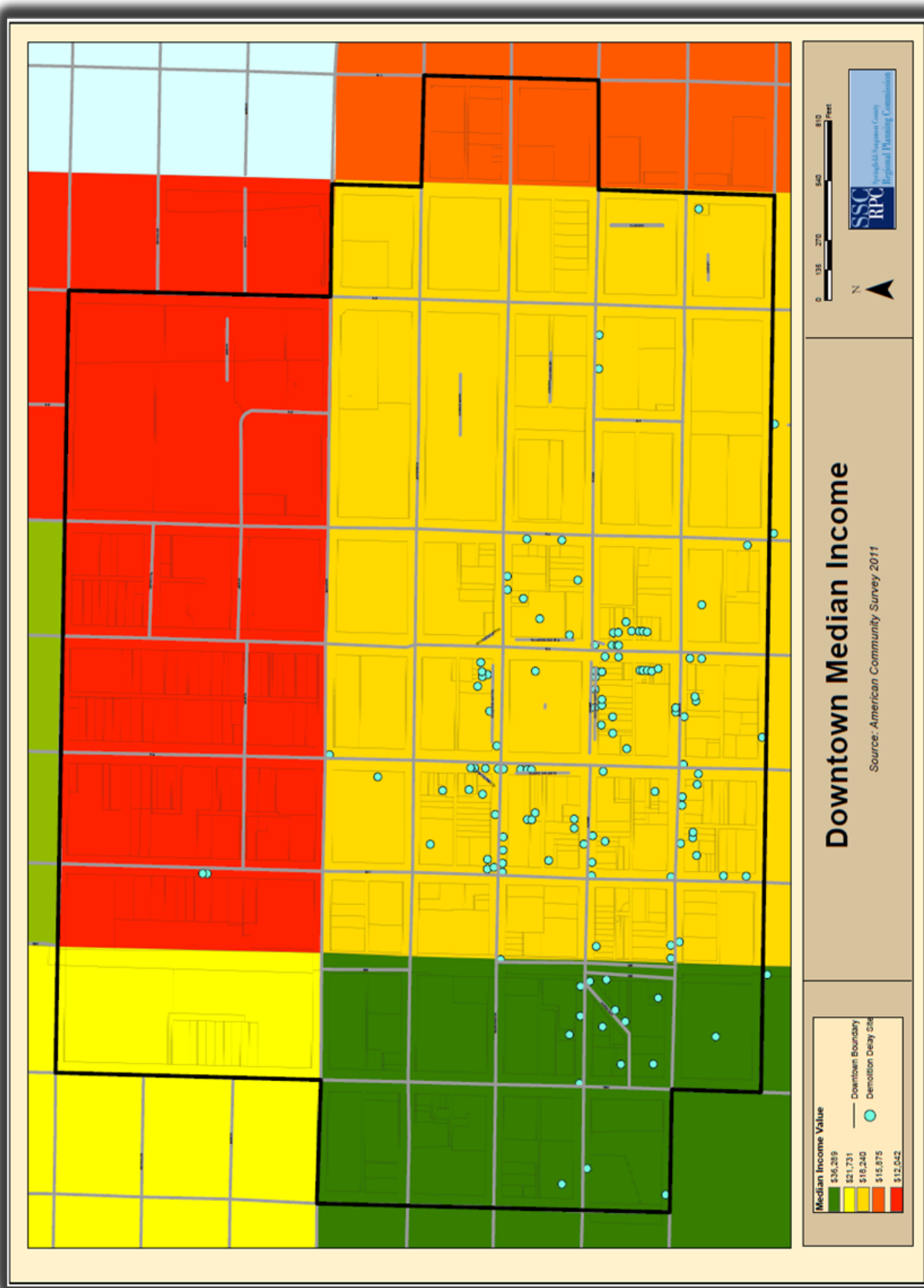


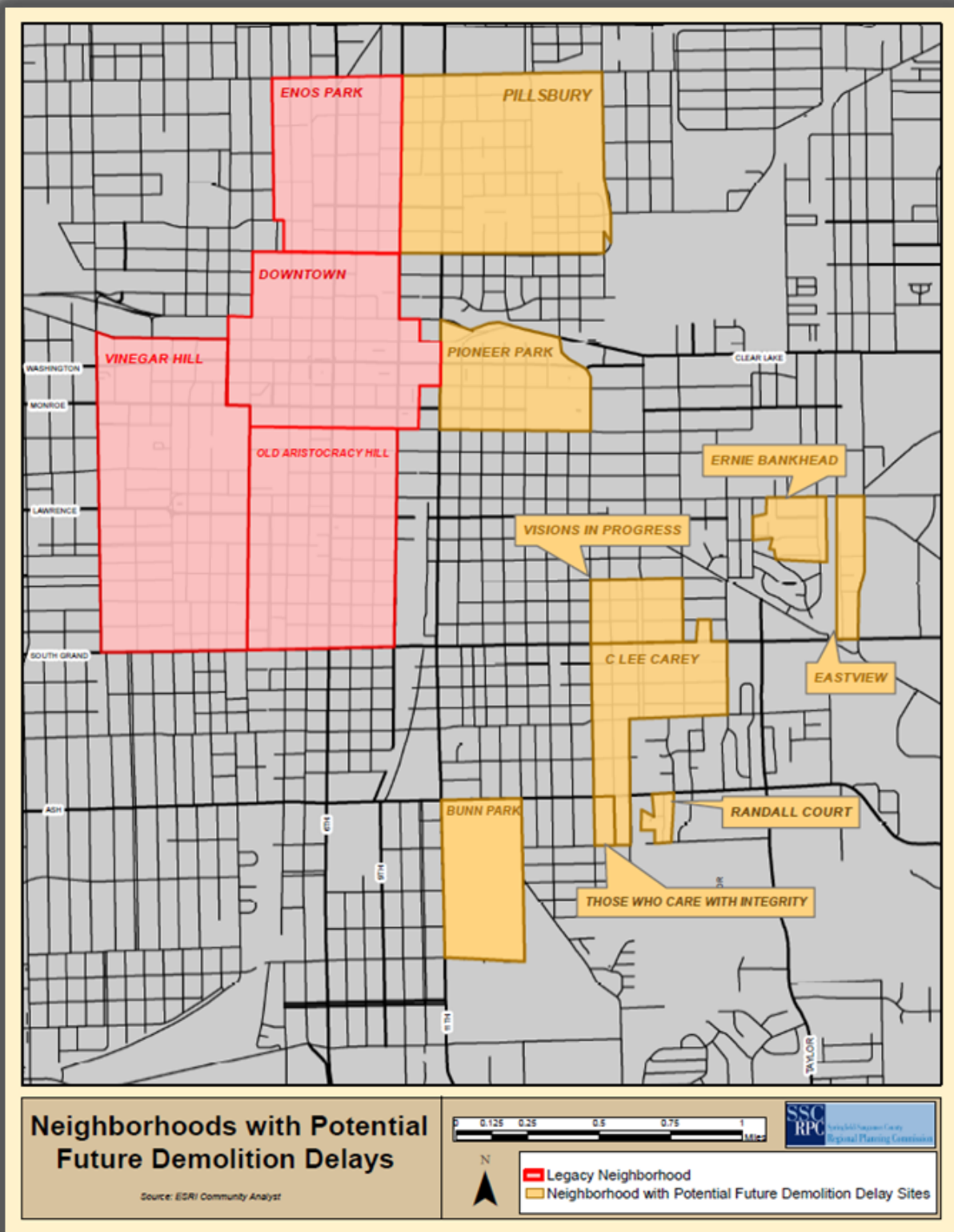














The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) serves as the joint planning body for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield, as well as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation planning in the region. The Commission prepares area-wide planning documents and assists the County, cities, and villages, as well as special districts, with planning activities

The Commission has 17 members including representatives from the Sangamon County Board, Springfield City Council, special units of government, and six appointed citizens from the city and county.

The Commission works with other public and semi-public agencies throughout the area to promote orderly growth and redevelopment, and assists other Sangamon County communities with their planning needs. Through its professional staff, the SSCRPC provides overall planning services related to land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economic development, environmental protection, and various special projects.

Its Executive Director also provides oversight to the Sangamon County Department of Zoning which addresses zoning and liquor licensing for the County.

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