Neighborhood Livability

Assessing the Quality of Life in Savannah neighborhoods

City Council Work Session - October 8, 2020

Office of Community Services

East Savannah, Savannah Gardens and Twickenham

Key Words

- Exceptional public services
- Residents, businesses and guests
- Safe, healthy and thriving

City of Savannah
Mission Statement

To provide exceptional public services to residents, businesses and guests, so they may experience a safe, healthy and thriving community.

Fulfilling Our Mission:
How do we know we're on the road to success?

- **Strategic Plan Implementation**

- **Effective Fiscal Planning & Management**

- **Community Input & Customer Feedback**

- **Internal Feedback – All Levels of the Organization**

- **Tracking Conditions & Measuring Improvement Over Time**

NEIGHBORHOOD

The Name Game

Future Decision Point

Resilience   Vibrancy   Quality of Life   Livability   Vitality

Resilient Resilience

The capacity to withstand, adapt and recover from adversity, stress, misfortune or change

Synonyms

Durable, strong, buoyant, pliable, tough, sturdy, flexibility

Vibrant Vibrancy

The degree to which an object or place pulsates with life, energy, vigor or activity

Synonyms

Alive, bustling, busy, flourishing, happening, lively, thriving

Quality of Life

The degree to which a person or place is healthy, safe, comfortable and able to provide for the enjoyment of daily living

Synonyms

General wellbeing, happiness, health, welfare, comfort, standard of living

Livable Livability

The degree to which a place is suitable or good for human living; fit to live in or inhabit

Synonyms

Fit to live in or occupy, habitable, in good repair, suitable for use, tenantable

Vital Vitality

The state of being strong and active; the energy and power to endure; capacity to live and develop

Synonyms

Exuberance, liveliness, robustness, vibrance, vibrancy, vigorousness

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How do we measure neighborhood livability/quality of life?

It depends on who you ask. It means something different to different people.

"Access to quality housing, transportation, jobs, education."

"Access to basic services, such as food, shelter, health services, and safety."

"Access to shopping and entertainment, convenient parking and other amenities."
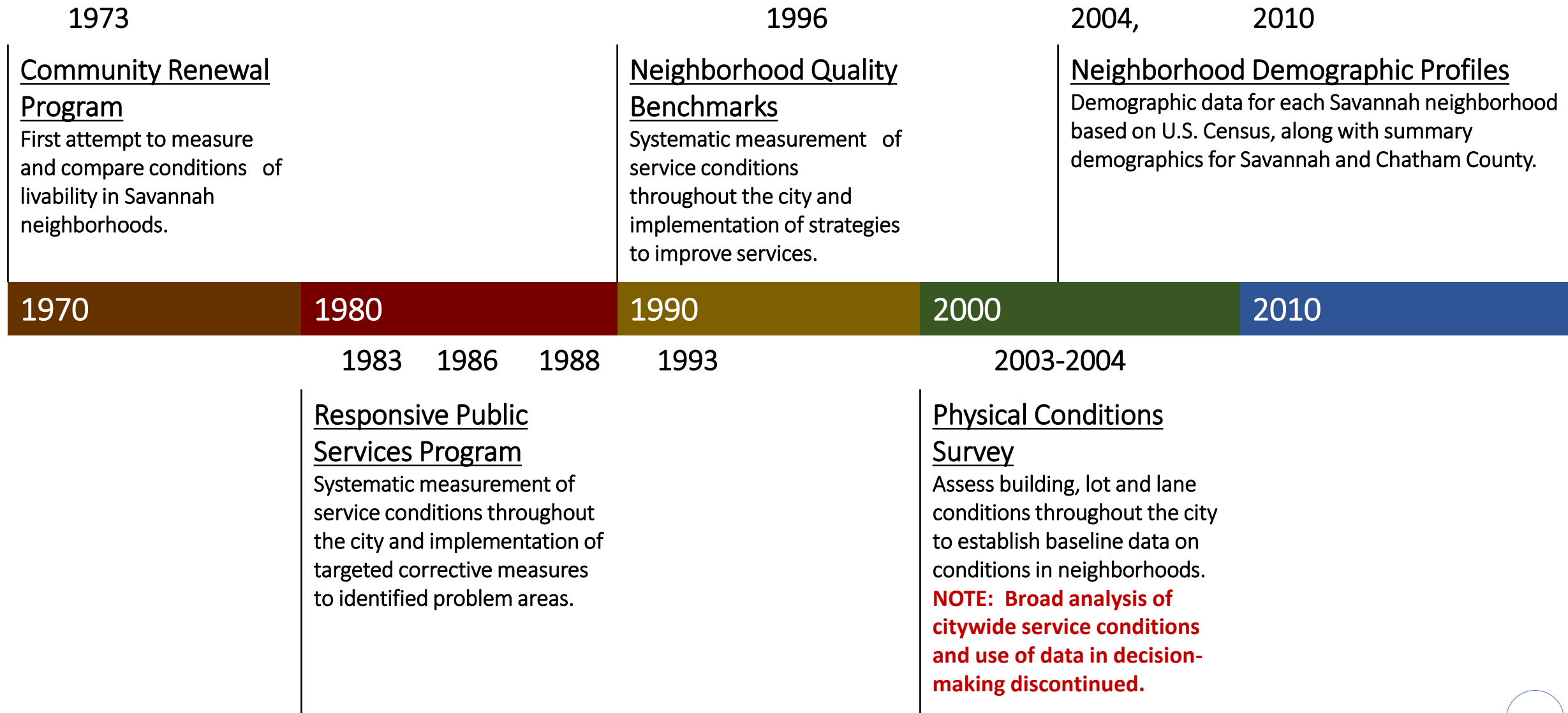
Livability Ratings

USA Today

Americans for the Arts

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)

U.S. News & World Report

WORST PLACES

BEST PLACES

Alarms.org

WalletHub.com

National Association for Realtors

NeighborhoodScout.com

American Planning Association

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

Livability.com

CNN, CBS, FOX News

AreaVibes.com

BestPlaces.net

BusinessInsider.com

Forbes Magazine

Intercontinental Hotels Group

CityRating.com

Movoto.com

City of Savannah

Assessing Neighborhoods: Our History

History: Measuring Conditions

1973

Community Renewal Program
First attempt to measure and compare conditions of livability in Savannah neighborhoods.

1996

Neighborhood Quality Benchmarks
Systematic measurement of service conditions throughout the city and implementation of strategies to improve services.

2004,   2010

Neighborhood Demographic Profiles
Demographic data for each Savannah neighborhood based on U.S. Census, along with summary demographics for Savannah and Chatham County.

1970	1980	1990	2000	2010

1983   1986   1988   1993

2003-2004

Responsive Public Services Program
Systematic measurement of service conditions throughout the city and implementation of targeted corrective measures to identified problem areas.

Physical Conditions Survey
Assess building, lot and lane conditions throughout the city to establish baseline data on conditions in neighborhoods.
NOTE: Broad analysis of citywide service conditions and use of data in decision-making discontinued.

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History: What we measured

Housing
building conditions, vacant structures/lots

Cleanliness
streets, lanes, lots, litter, illegal dumpsites

Recreation/Leisure
recreation facilities, equipment, landscape

Property Maintenance
lot conditions, wooded lots, vacant lots

Fire Services
fires, response time, education & awareness

Park and Tree
maintenance, repair, safety components

Police Services
person/property crimes, response time

Traffic & Transportation
traffic volume, travel speed, construction

Streets/Sidewalks
paved/unpaved, hazards/repair, lighting, appearance, cleanliness

Sewer System
unserved areas, sewer line conditions, lift station conditions

Water System
Distribution system, fire protection, leaks

Storm Water System
Flooding streets/ ditches, response time, maintenance

Demographics

Population

Age

Race, Ethnicity

Household Type, Number

Housing Units

Poverty

Household Income

Education

Unemployment

What worked, what didn't

What we did well:

- Measured conditions citywide

- Focused on conditions related to municipal services

- Performed periodic updates over time

- Used data to identify service area deficiencies/gaps

- Used data to inform major decisions: budget/resource allocation, citywide priorities

- Required bureaus/departments to address service area deficiencies as part of annual goals and annual work program

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What worked, what didn't

What we didn't do so well:

- Did not maintain consistency in types of conditions measured, or study frequency

- Did not analyze data comparatively over time

- Did not evaluate effectiveness of strategies, corrective measures

- Bureaus/departments allowed to "opt out", in subsequent years, weakening the study's utility

- Stopped using citywide data to inform decision-making
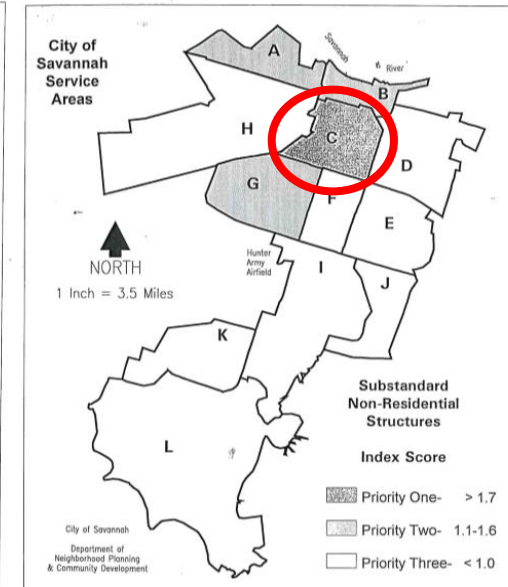
- Cautionary Tale: "Area C"

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Area C

Population: 22,415
Neighborhoods: 12
- Kayton-Frazier
- South Historic District
- Beach Institute
- Eastside
- Dixon Park
- East Victorian
- West Victorian
- Cuyler/Brownville
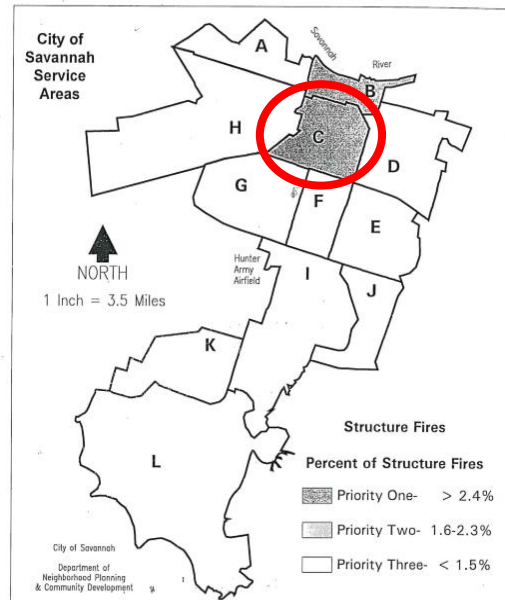- Metropolitan
- Thomas Square
- Midtown
- Baldwin Park
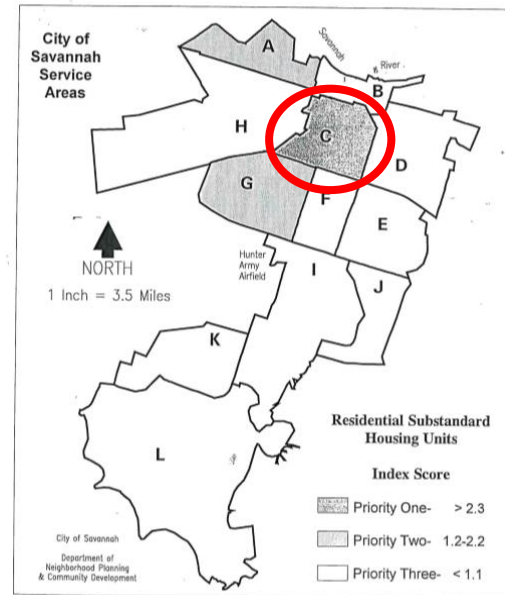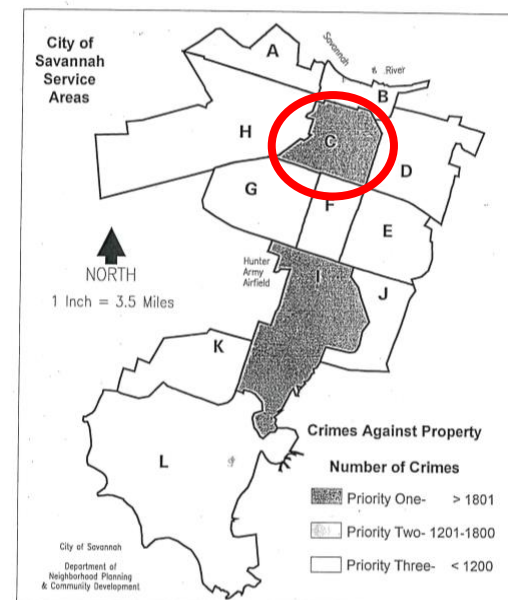

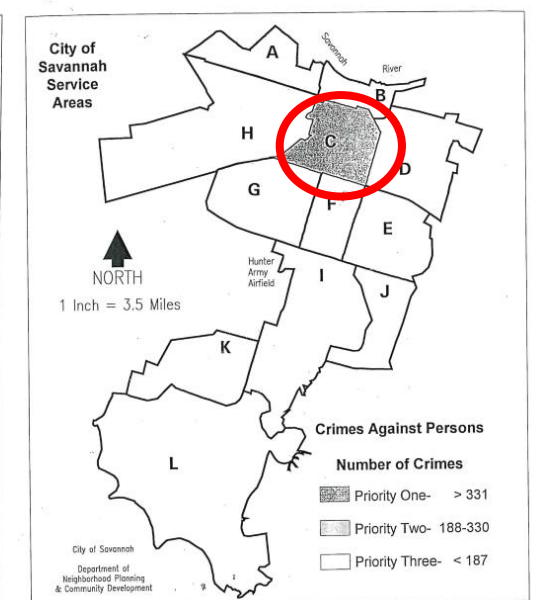**Substandard Residential Units**

Substandard Non-Residential
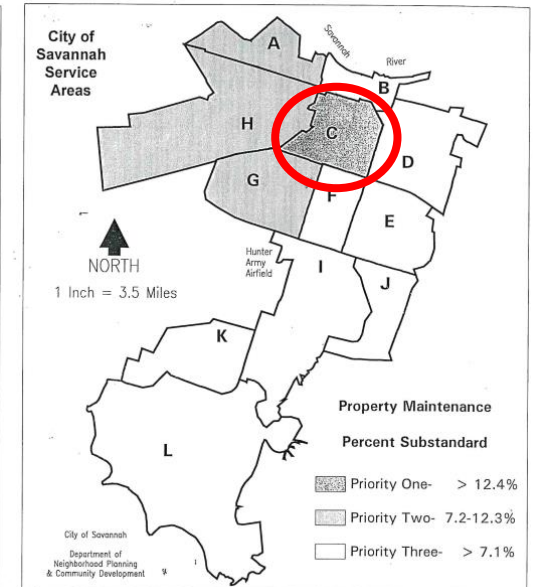
Property Maintenance

Percent of Structural Fires

Crimes Against Persons


Crimes Against Property

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Recommendations for Upcoming Assessment

- Assess conditions related to **core municipal services**

- Include **demographic data** to better understand population needs

- **Avoid duplication**, where data already exists

- Plan to **perform assessment periodically**, every few years

- Establish **minimum service level standards** for all Savannah neighborhoods

- Compare **neighborhoods to the standard**, not to:

  other neighborhoods or a "magic number" that suggests "best", "worst", "livable"

- Use data to **make informed decisions**, focus resources, plan interventions
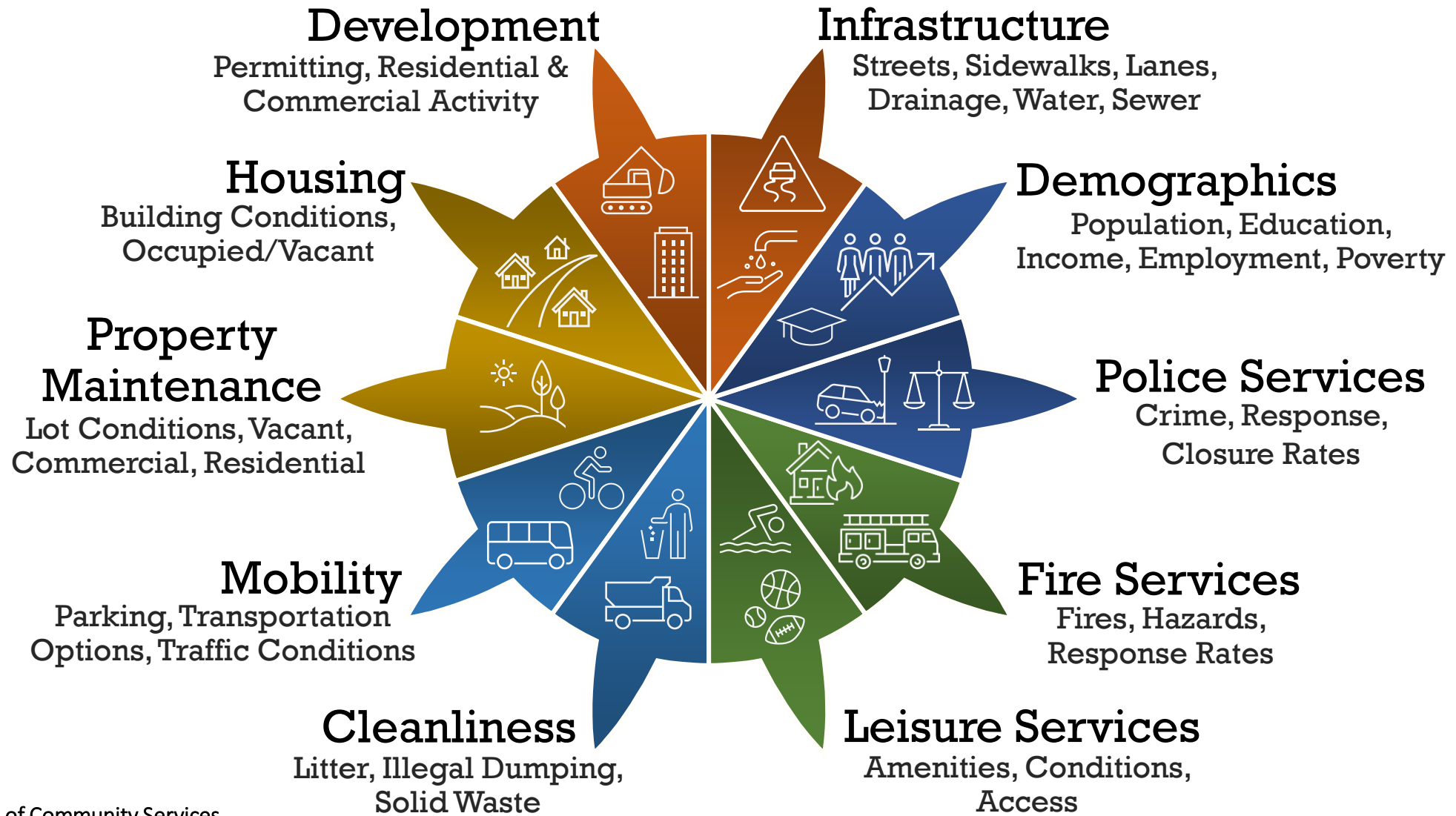
Resource Needs

- ✓ People (Field Survey Team)

- ✓ Survey Instrument (Software/Hardware)

- ✓ Funding (approx. $20-25K)

Note: Project Timeline depends on availability of personnel/resources.

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Thank You !