Presentation Title: Neighborhood Revitalization and GIS

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Presentation Abstract
Lee County, Department of Human Services, located in Southwest Florida, implemented a neighborhood building program in 1997. This program focuses on rebuilding neighborhoods by utilizing federal HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and partnering with other not for profit organizations. Our 6 neighborhoods have a high concentration of poverty and staff works with neighborhood leaders to combat crime and code violations. This partnership between the neighborhood and County staff improves both service delivery and capital infrastructure. GIS is a powerful key component in the process of neighborhood development. It is used in number of ways to map and analyze factors. Some examples of the way that it is used are to map out neighborhood assets, demographics, projections and code violations. GIS is a tool that the Department of Human Services relies heavily on to make planning and decisions easier.

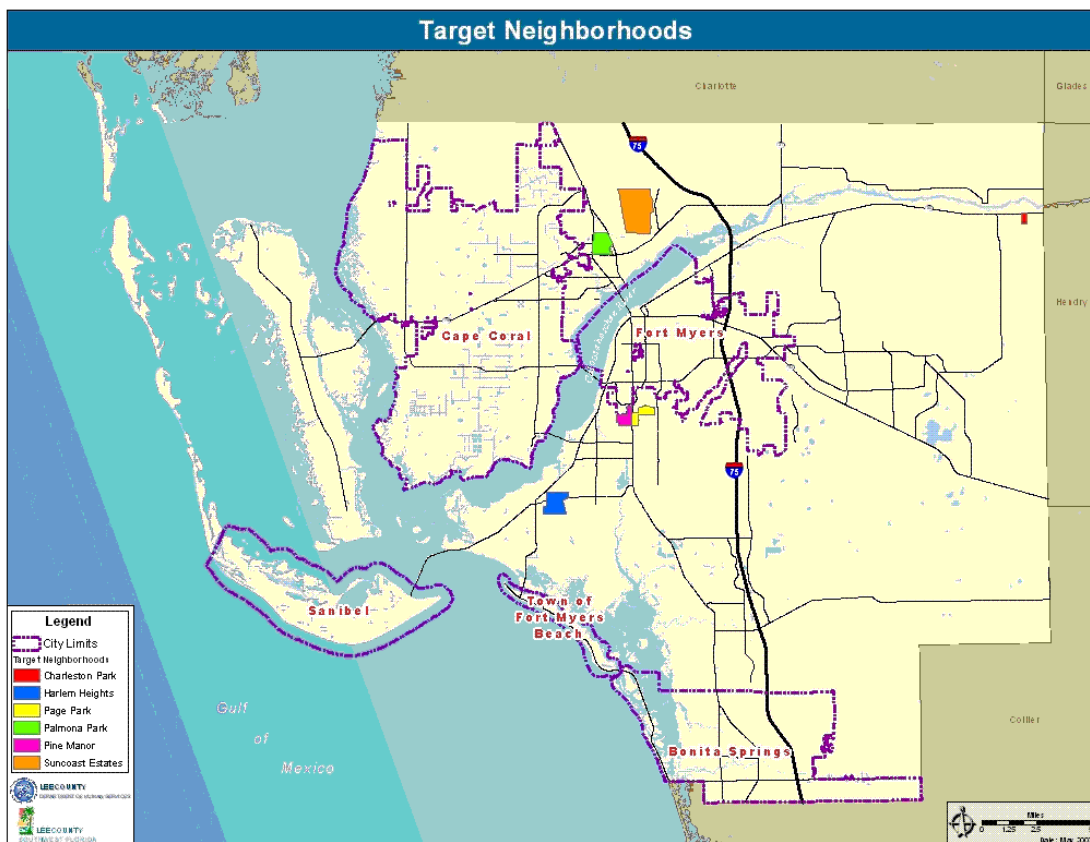**The Neighborhood Building Program in Lee County Florida**
The Lee County Board of County Commissioners established a Neighborhood Building Program in 1997 by focusing on a "grass roots" approach to assisting neighborhood leaders in finding solutions to issues in their neighborhood. The Lee County Department of Human Services' Neighborhood Building Program works with community leaders and residents in each neighborhood to increase safety and achieve a sense of community through identification of both strengths and unmet needs, and partners and resources to address those needs.

Lee County, Florida

Each neighborhood is unique in its culture, demographics and socio-economic status. The majority of neighborhood residents are low to moderate income. Neighborhood leaders work with the Human Service staff to develop Revitalization Plans focusing on safety, housing, transportation, capital and infrastructure improvements, social, educational and recreational activities. The Revitalization Plans are developed by the neighborhood and performance is measured annually.

The Neighborhood Building program works closely with the following six target neighborhoods:

- Charleston Park
- Harlem Heights
- Page Park
- Palmona Park
- Pine Manor
- Suncoast Estates
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Funding Source for Neighborhood Building
Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are utilized to assist the neighborhoods to achieve their revitalization goals.

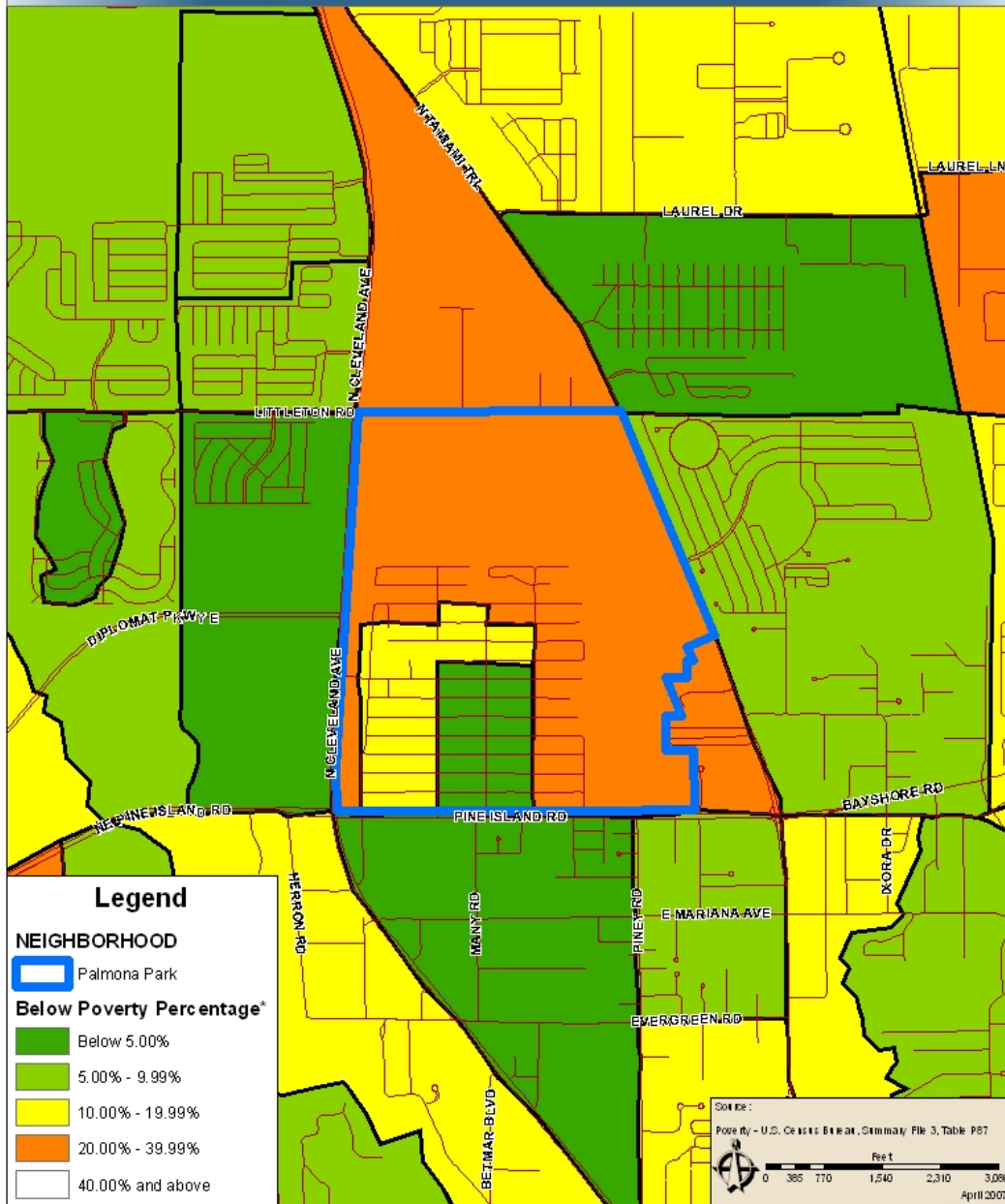Proposed projects must be consistent with the following national priorities for CDBG:
- activities that benefit low- and moderate-income people
- prevention or elimination of slums or blight
- activities to address an urgent threat to health or safety

CDBG funds may be used for community development activities (such as real estate acquisition, relocation, demolition, rehabilitation of housing and commercial buildings), construction of public facilities and capital and infrastructure improvements (such as water, sewer, and other utilities, street paving, and sidewalks), construction and maintenance of neighborhood centers, public services aimed at reducing poverty, and economic development and job creation/retention activities.

In order to comply with the CDBG regulation that an activity must benefit individuals and families whose income is low to moderate (income that is below 80% of the median income for the metropolitan area) at least 51% of the individuals served must meet the income criteria. This may either be determined by calculating each household's income or looking at the income of a geographic area to validate that at least 51% of the residents are low and moderate income. The six targeted neighborhoods all contain a majority of residents whose income is low to moderate.

GIS is an ideal tool for determining which neighborhoods within the County are eligible to participate in the Neighborhood Building program. Staff at Human Services utilizes United States Census data tables to map household income throughout the County. Staff may conduct household surveys to determine program eligibility in areas which are part of a larger census tract that does not meet the low to moderate income requirements overall but are known to contain high concentrations of low to moderate income individuals. This data is then map and an eligible neighborhood boundary defined.

Palmona Park Percentage Below Poverty

Legend

NEIGHBORHOOD
- ▭ Palmona Park

Below Poverty Percentage*
- ▪ Below 5.00%
- ▪ 5.00% - 9.99%
- ▪ 10.00% - 19.99%
- ▪ 20.00% - 39.99%
- ▫ 40.00% and above

Source:
Poverty - U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 3, Table P87

Feet
0   385   770   1,540   2,310   3,080
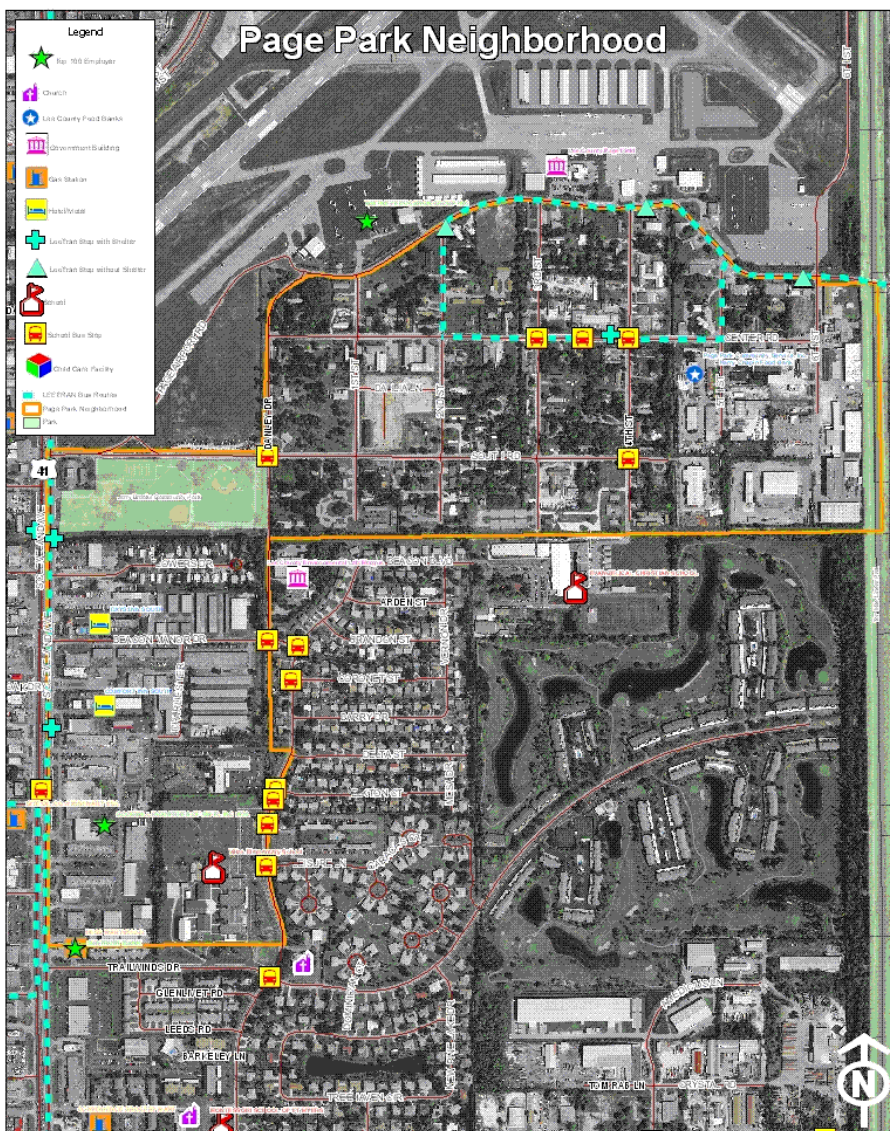
April 2007

This map was developed by joining a United States Census Table with a block group layer to get percentage of households below poverty.

Public Services using CDBG funding

Many of the neighborhoods choose to use CDBG funds for a Resident Coordinator position. This person assists the neighborhoods by working directly with residents, neighborhood leaders, and providers to meet the neighborhood revitalization goals. The Resident Coordinator assists in the coordination of neighborhood activities and linking residents to appropriate community resources.
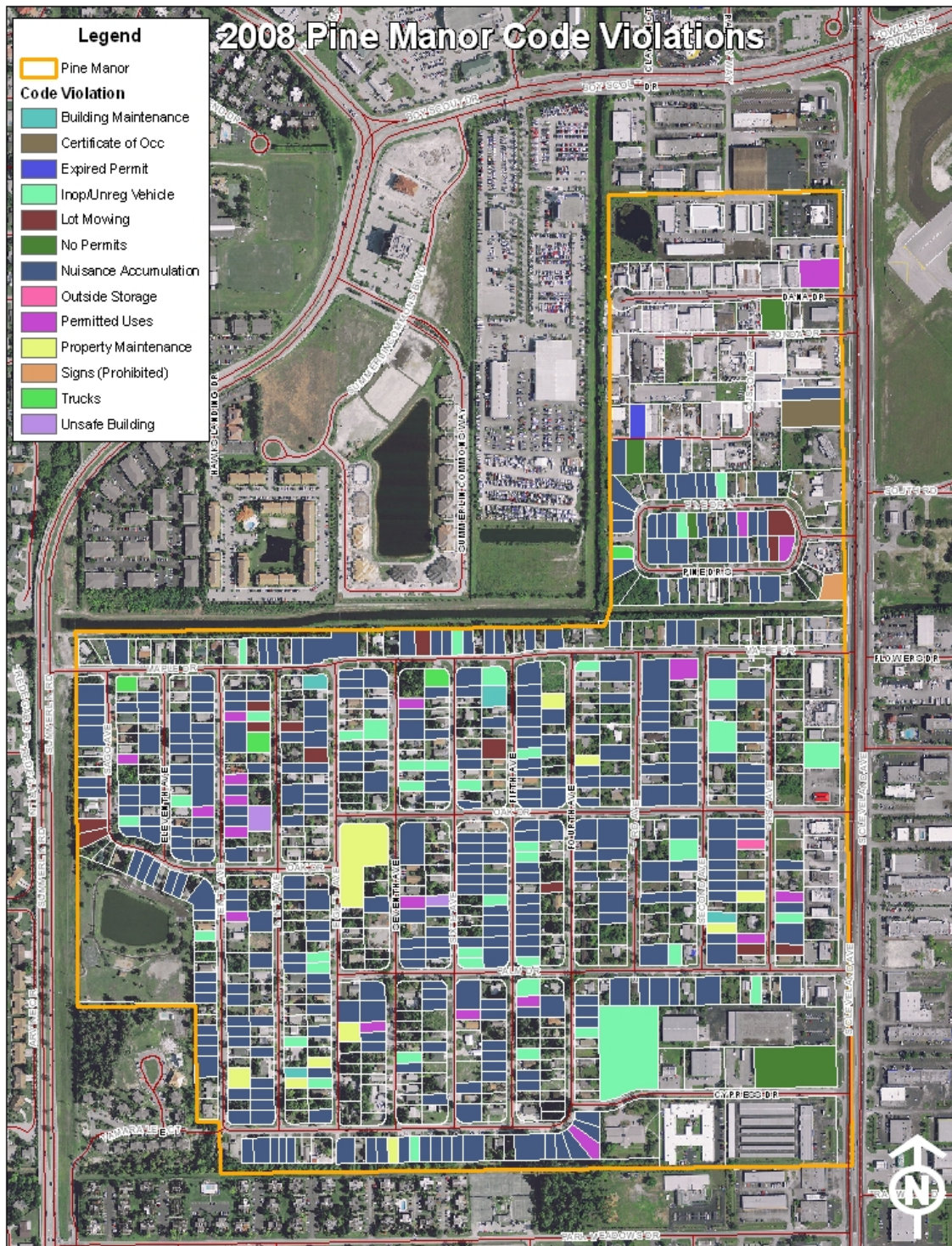
CDBG funds are also used to operate community centers in each of the six neighborhoods. The community centers provide a safe environment for educational, recreational, and social activities for people of all ages as well as providing direct assistance for food, clothing and social services.

This map illustrates assets such as child care, transportation, churches, and government offices and was produced with data from Spatial Database Engine (SDE) that is maintained by various departments throughout the county.

Public safety remains a major concern for the neighborhoods. In response, Charleston Park, Palmona Park, Page Park, and Suncoast Estates are using CDBG funds for Concentrated Code Enforcement while Page Park, Palmona Park, and Suncoast also use CDBG funds for Community Directed Policing.

Code enforcement and public safety activities are both eligible uses of CDBG funds and are considered public services.
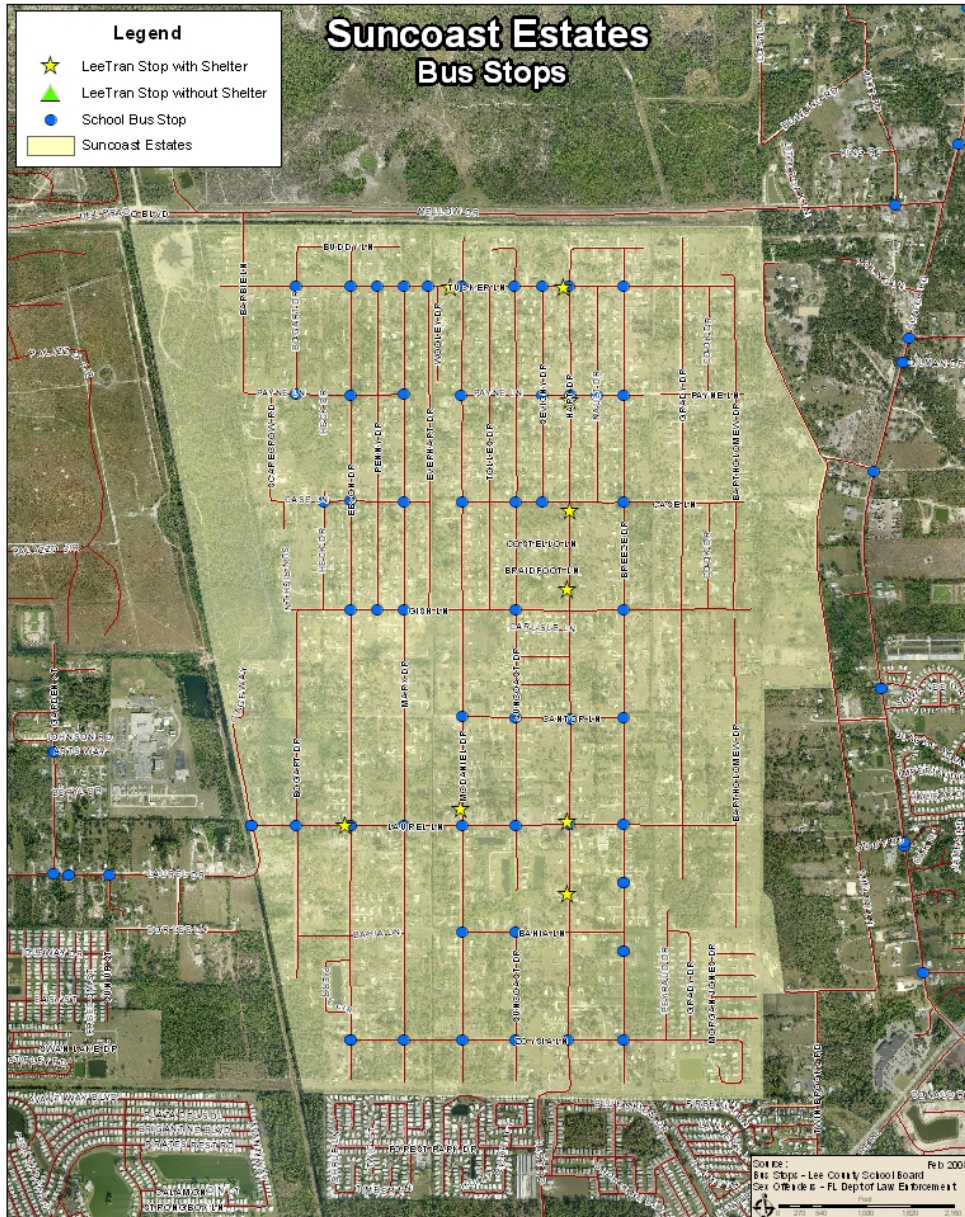

This map was produced obtaining code violation data from Lee County Community Development which was geo coded and mapped.

2006 Charleston Park Crime

Legend
- Burglary Residence
- Robbery
- Agg Assault
- Felony Battery
- Charleston Park

Crime data is closely tracked to determine the impact of community policing efforts. This map was produced obtaining crime data from the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

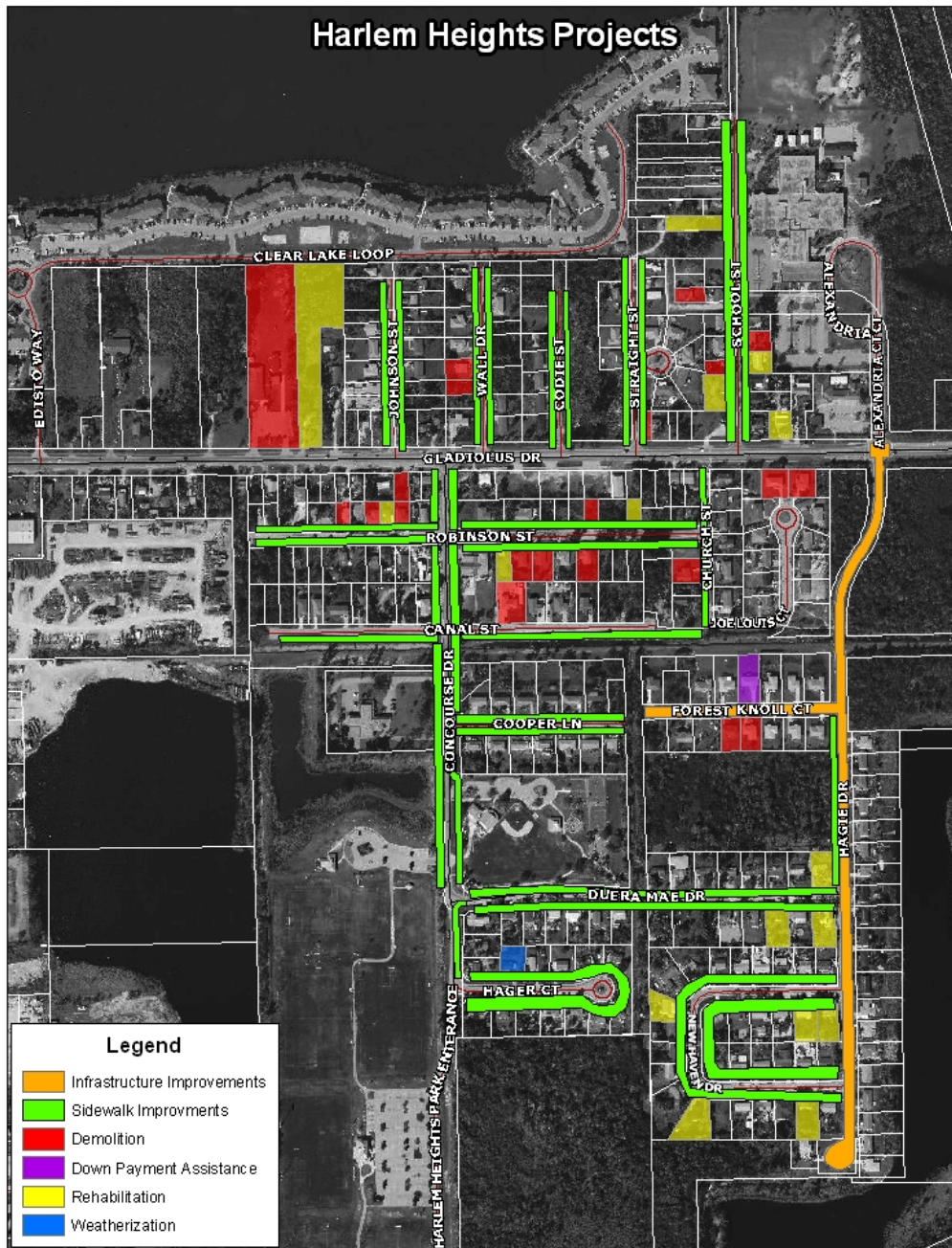## Capital and Infrastructure Improvements using CDBG funding

All six neighborhoods are committed to improving the safety and living conditions of their neighborhoods. Capital and infrastructure projects include sidewalks and storm water drainage in all six neighborhoods, land acquisition and construction of community centers in Palmona Park and Suncoast Estates, a pedestrian bridge in Harlem Heights, and installation of bus shelters in Suncoast Estates.

This map represents both school and public transportation bus stops. The Lee County School District provided a spreadsheet of school bus stops which was geo coded and inserted in a map with public transportation stops from the County SDE.

In order to illustrate the cumulative effect of capital and infrastructure improvements that have been made over time, the following map was developed to show all neighborhood improvements through the Neighborhood Building program as well as housing improvements (such as down payment assistance, rehabilitation, weatherization, and demolition) made by the Housing Services program.

Geographic Information System technology has greatly enhanced Lee County Human Services ability to work with the six targeted neighborhoods to both plan for and illustrate the accomplishments of neighborhood based projects.

End Notes
The Lee County GIS system operates under licenses for ESRI ArcGIS, ArcIMS, ArcSDE, and numerous extensions.   Lee County staff access a well established GIS system with over 350 active feature layers.   Previous presentations at the ESRI conferences by Lee County Human Services' staff include *GIS and Human Service Delivery*, *GIS and Youth Crime Reduction*, and *GIS and Disaster Planning*.

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