



07

# Community Facilities



Community facilities, when well-run and accessible to all, have a huge impact on everyone’s daily life. These are the places and services that everyone in the community shares. Whether or not you visited City Hall, a courthouse, a park, a school, or a library today, you have benefited from the water and sewer lines under your feet, and the police, fire, and solid waste services that keep you safe and healthy.

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## TOPICS

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Infrastructure, Services, Data, Customer Service, Public Works, Maintenance, Annexation, Public Safety, Parks



## Guiding Principles

- » **Resilient and well-maintained infrastructure**
- » **High-quality customer-oriented user experience**
- » **Safe and secure community**
- » **Efficient and collaborative practices**
- » **Connecting our communities**
- » **Planning for the future**
- » **A healthier community**

We believe in leaving a legacy of **resilient and well-maintained infrastructure**.

As the capital city, Columbia should set the tone for the state. As our infrastructure ages and our populations grows, we recognize that timely and thoughtful maintenance of our existing infrastructure is not only necessary but that it is vital to the success of Columbia.

Maintenance is not our only long-term infrastructure concern. Planning for resiliency involves thinking about how we adapt to and mitigate risks resulting from changes - whether those changes are due to population growth, development pressures, or our changing climate. As these changes place additional strains on our infrastructure, we must do our best to anticipate these changes, adapting to them and mitigating the issues to come. As such, we understand the critical nature of our choices, both with the installation of new infrastructure and the maintenance of existing infrastructure.

We believe in a **high-quality, customer-oriented user experience** for residents and businesses.

One of the seven Envision Columbia focus areas is "Leading the way in innovative and high quality municipal services." We recognize that in order to achieve this vision as a City, we must focus on the user experience. The City's residents and businesses engage with City government not only when taking on large projects, but also at their proverbial doorsteps. As a utility, information, solid waste, infrastructure, public safety, and service provider, all City staff should be equipped to efficiently and effectively support and inform our residents and businesses alike.

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We believe in **a safe and secure community** for all.

The concept of safety - both personal and community-based - was a constant topic of discussion during the public planning process. While this concept may have been expressed differently depending on participants' locations and experiences, being part of a safe and secure community is important to us all.

The City provides for public safety in a variety of ways - and some of these services are more readily visible than others. From the critical daily efforts of our public safety staff (police, fire, and emergency management) to the less visible maintenance of infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, vehicles, water, sewer, stormwater, and more - the City's action have an immediate impact on the safety and security of our community and of our residents. How we, as a City, approach this critical need proactively and thoughtfully will continue to be critical to Columbia's success.

We believe in saving time and resources through **efficient and collaborative** internal and outward-facing practices.

Columbia is at its best when its employees and its citizens break out of our silos and collaborate with one another. It is when we partner - between departments, within neighborhoods, and among communities - that we can accomplish the tasks that build upon our broader vision.

We understand that through collaboration we can increase efficiency and improve resiliency, the user experience, safety, and community health. As such, this guiding principle is integral to the vision set forth by the other six principles within this section, as well as *Envision Columbia*.

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We believe in **connecting our communities** through improved communication and high-quality built and digital infrastructure.

As the capital city and largest municipality in our region, Columbia is uniquely poised to foster communication on regional issues. We recognize that our participation is often critical to connecting our many communities, both within and outside of our municipal boundaries. As such, Columbia is also able to set the bar for innovative engagement with residents and businesses alike. We must strive to provide information and services to our citizens and our neighbors in ways which can empower citizens and enhance our region, fostering economic prosperity and endless possibilities.

We believe in addressing current challenges while **planning for the future**.

Taking the long view is critical to the success of Columbia. We recognize that in planning for the future we are better equipped to anticipate and therefore proactively address those changes that will impact our operations and the City as a whole. We also understand the opportunity to learn from our current challenges, reflecting upon both our successes and failures in a way that helps prepare us for future efforts.

With this update to our comprehensive plan, we reaffirm our commitment to planning, to upholding our guiding principles with our actions, and to setting and adhering to priorities. We recognize that planning for the future is best accomplished when all Columbians are at the table, and when we work together as a community to address our current and future challenges and to capture the many opportunities available to us.

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We believe in a Columbia where our facilities and services promote a **healthier community**.

The City of Columbia has the opportunity to lead by example, setting a tone through both our services and infrastructure that enables healthy activity and equitable access. Where facilities are designed with sustainability and resiliency in mind, they support mental and physical health. Employees, residents, and visitors alike can benefit from building and site design which promotes healthy activity, provides clean air, natural light, and ready access for all users.

As a service provider, the City has a unique opportunity to engage with the whole of Columbia - the services we provide also present opportunities to improve community health. Though our services range from delivering drinking water to providing children with after-school programming, how the City approaches the provision of these services has the potential to contribute to the health outcomes of our community. The infrastructure the City installs and maintains can both directly and indirectly affect the health of Columbians, from providing for clean drinking water to safe and inviting active transportation options.

## Existing Conditions

### UNDERSTANDING COLUMBIA

This section highlights some of the existing conditions of our community facilities. Additional details about the City of Columbia's various programs, facilities, and departments, as well as other publicly available facilities in the area, are provided in Appendix G: Community Facilities.

### DATA

To collect qualitative data for this section, interviews were conducted with City staff and other service providers, such as our local school districts. It may come as no surprise that some gaps in quantitative data were found, and that the need for better sharing, understanding of, and use of data has become one of the themes of this section.

### MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

The seven-member City Council, the City Manager, and the 2,400 employees of the City of Columbia serve more than 133,000 citizens<sup>1</sup>, 5,100 businesses, 140,000 water customer accounts, and the approximately 90,000 commuters, students, and visitors that come to Columbia daily.<sup>2</sup> As of December 2019, the City's boundaries incorporate approximately 140.7 square miles, though about 81.1 square miles (57%) are located within Fort Jackson and receive limited City services. The City administers over a hundred different services and programs available to its residents, businesses, and visitors, with a budget of approximately \$357 million for the 2019-2020 fiscal year (FY).

Columbia was established by act of the General Assembly as the seat of state government in 1786, and was originally governed by commissioners appointed by the General Assembly. Columbia was chartered as a town in 1805, and chartered as a city in 1854. The form of Columbia's government and administrative structure has changed throughout the years<sup>3</sup>, but in 1950 the voters instituted the council-manager form of government, the form of government used by Columbia today.

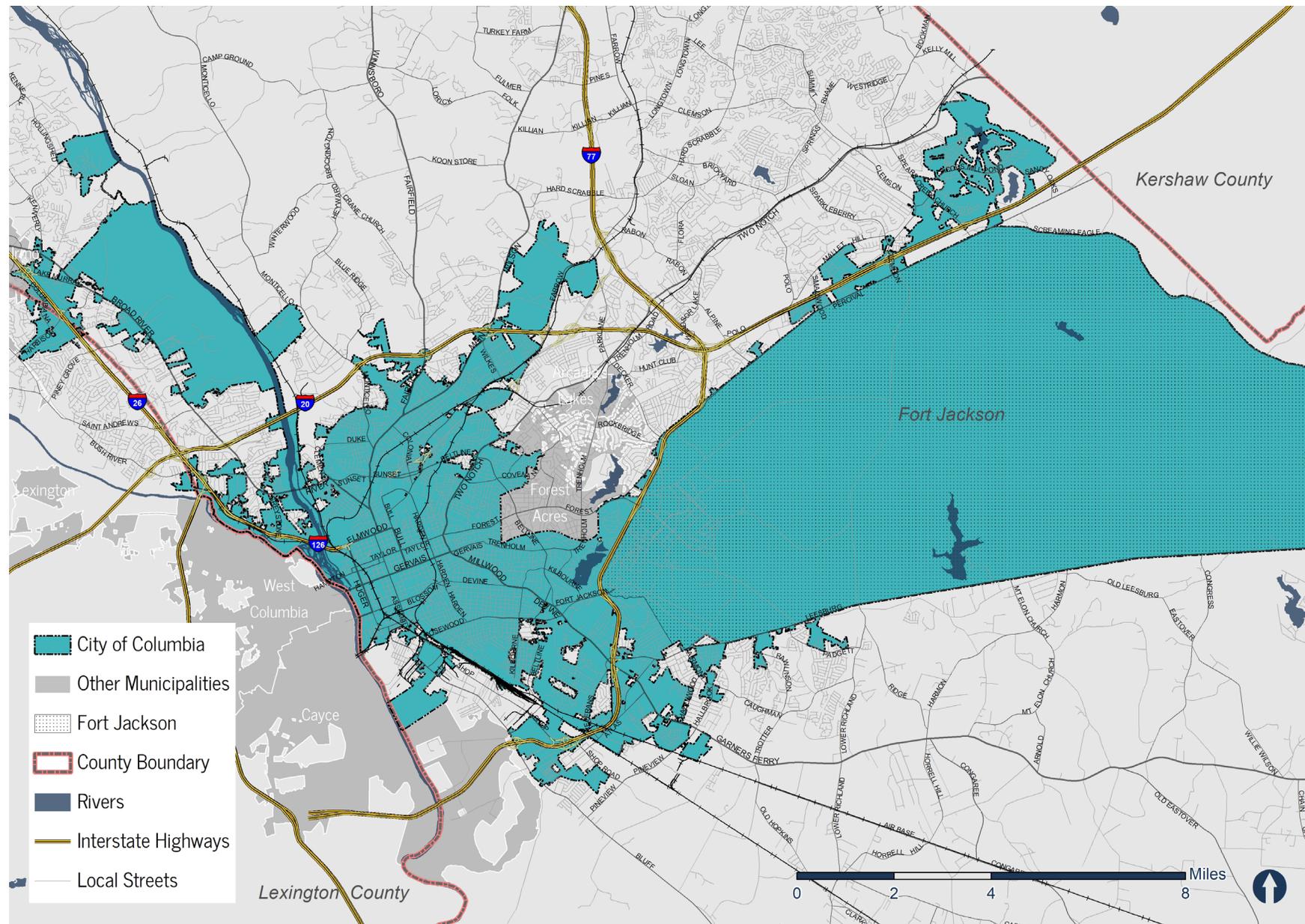
In the council-manager form of government, the council (including the mayor, who is a voting member of council) makes policy, holds legislative power, and appoints a manager to be the head of the executive branch of municipal government. As chief executive officer, the manager oversees the day-to-day implementation of municipal legislation and policy, and is responsible for the operation of all City departments. Council has the power to create, modify, or abolish departments and agencies, and also appoints the municipal court judges and municipal attorney.<sup>4</sup>



Members of the public and City staff attend a City Council meeting in historic City Hall.

# Existing Conditions

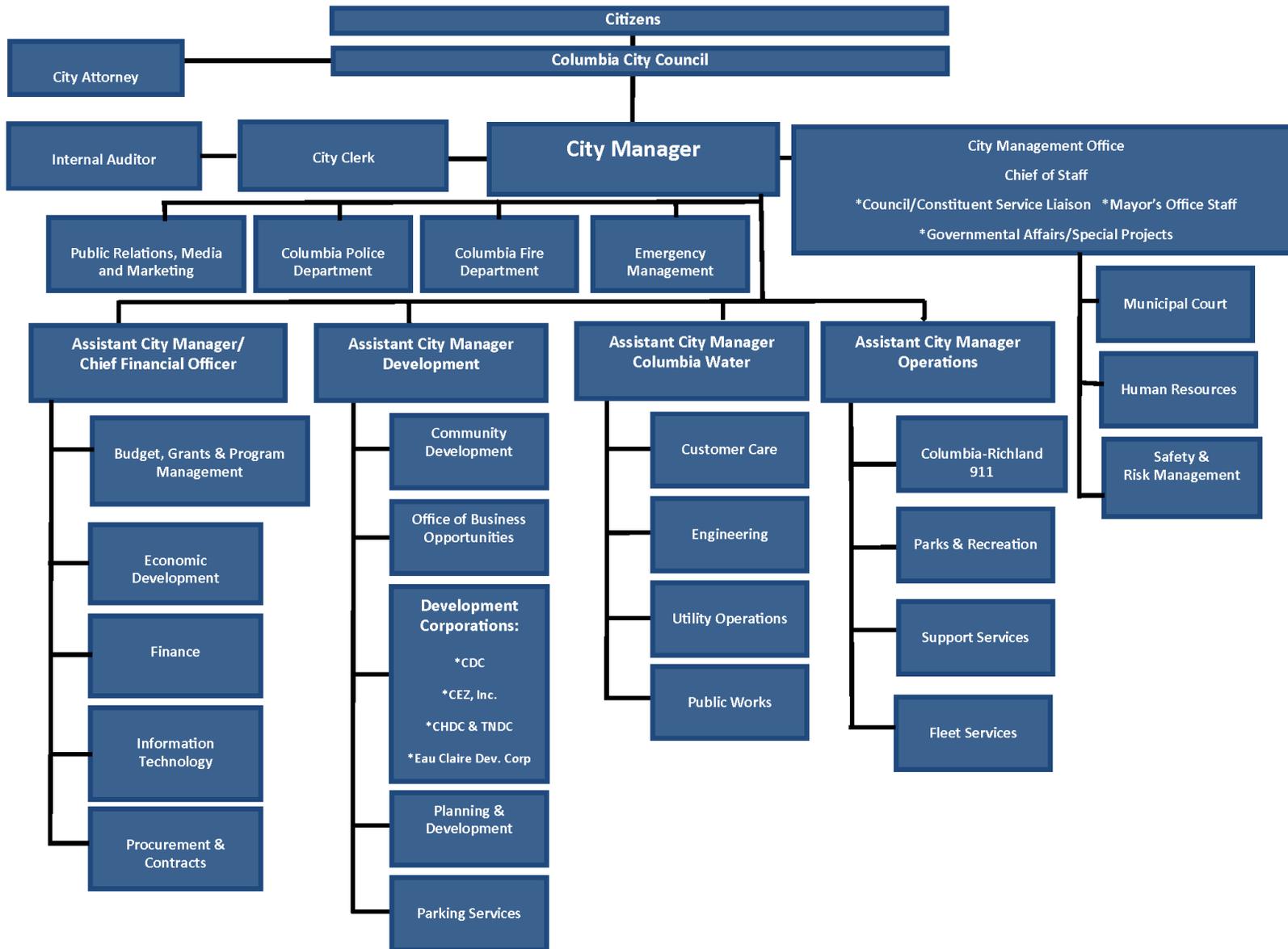
## City of Columbia Boundary



Boundary of the City of Columbia as of December 4, 2019

# Existing Conditions

City of Columbia Organizational Chart



Organizational chart as of July 2019

## Existing Conditions

### CITY DEPARTMENTS & PROGRAMS

Though departmental functions are not what immediately comes to mind when discussing “community facilities,” how the City is organized, and the many staff that work daily to ensure Columbians have access to the services they require, are essential to any discussion of governance and city functions. City departments are grouped on the following pages into four categories reflective of their primary focus and function. While the categories of public safety, built environment, community support and programming, and supporting services are not always a perfect fit for every function of an individual department, this categorization helps provide a larger picture of how departments collaborate to serve Columbia's citizens.

### PUBLIC SAFETY

Ensuring public safety for Columbians is at the forefront of the City's mission. The following departments work diligently to provide Columbians with, in many cases, 24/7 service, while also developing community relationships and planning for future emergencies.

#### COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT (CPD)

CPD earned accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies in November of 2017, reflecting its commitment to excellence in operations, management, policies, and procedures. Over 400 sworn officers and 100 professional staff in four bureaus, five regions, and fourteen police stations responded to over 175,000 calls for service in 2018.

Code Enforcement is also housed within CPD, and conducts over 35,000 inspections on quality of life concerns a year.



Community policing and outreach programs make for a safer community by strengthening the bond between citizens and the CPD.

#### COLUMBIA-RICHLAND FIRE (CFD)

CFD is the State's largest fire department, serving a population of about 500,000 over the 772 square miles of Richland County and portions of the City within Lexington County.

CFD has earned an Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification rating of 1 within the City limits. ISO rates over 48,600 fire protection areas, and less than one percent achieve this best-in-class rating. The ISO rating of 2 in the remainder of Richland County is within the top two percent nationally.

## Existing Conditions

### PUBLIC SAFETY, CONTINUED

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Drawing on lessons learned from the flood of October 2015, the City created a separate Office of Emergency Management to coordinate the readiness for and response to disasters and other significant events. It is anticipated that Emergency Management will move into a new command center in 2020.

#### COLUMBIA-RICHLAND 911 COMMUNICATIONS

Columbia-Richland 911 Communications serves as a consolidated dispatch center for Columbia as well as the rest of Richland County. Emergency and non-emergency dispatch service is provided for the Columbia Police Department, Richland County Sheriff's Department, Columbia-Richland Fire, and Richland County Emergency Medical Services. Additionally, they receive after hours Public Works service calls for both the City and Richland County.

#### MUNICIPAL COURT

Columbia's Municipal Court hears cases originating within the City limits involving traffic violations, misdemeanor criminal violations, and violations of city codes. It also accepts payments for traffic, criminal, or uniform ordinance summons.

#### PARTNER AGENCIES

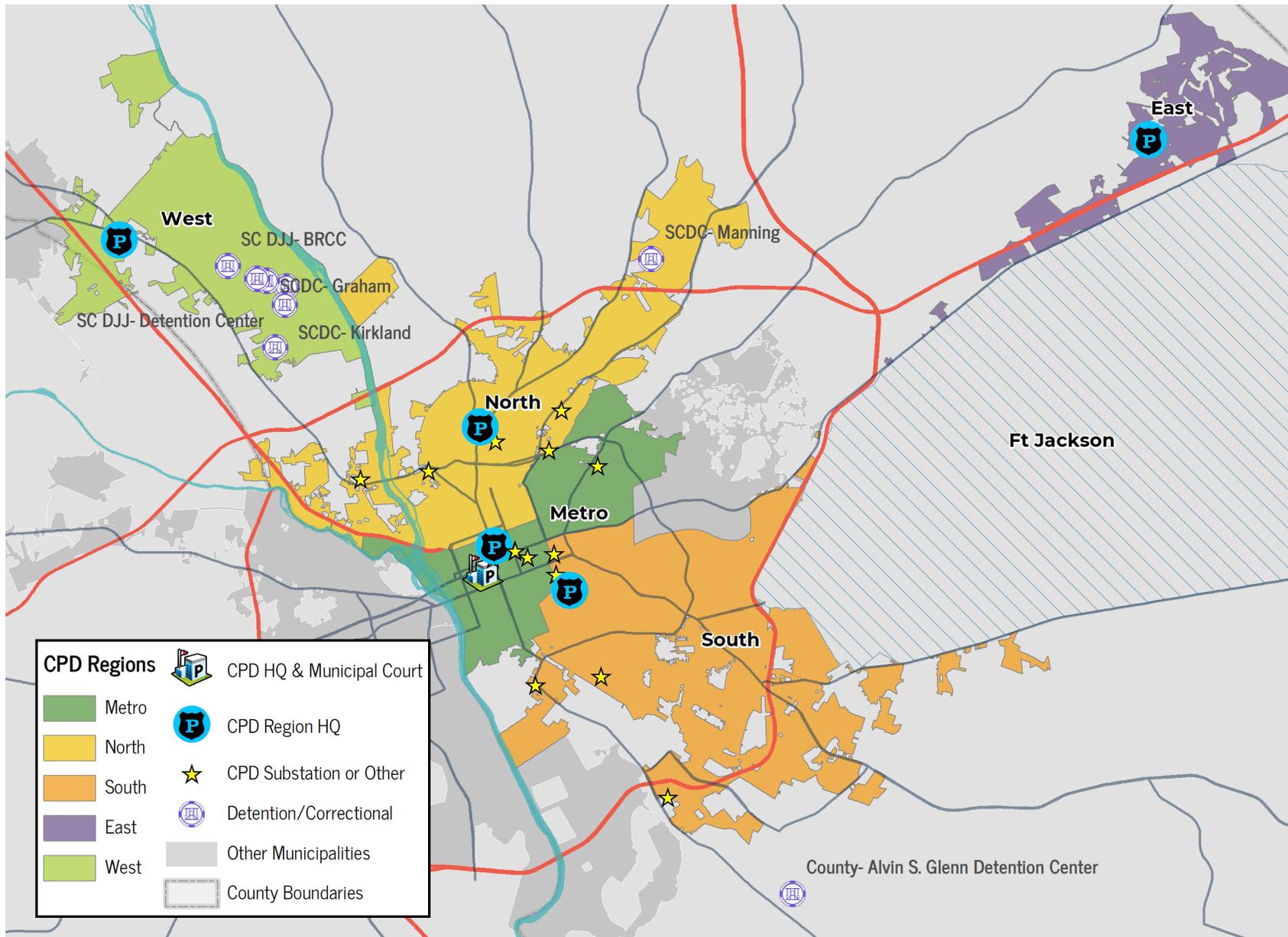
Both the Richland County and Lexington County Sheriff's departments, as well as emergency medical services, partner with the City to provide rapid and effective response in emergencies.



Law enforcement and other staff from numerous agencies convened in the Emergency Operations Center in October 2015 (top). The City's Municipal Court is located at 811 Washington Street, next to Police Headquarters (bottom).

# Existing Conditions

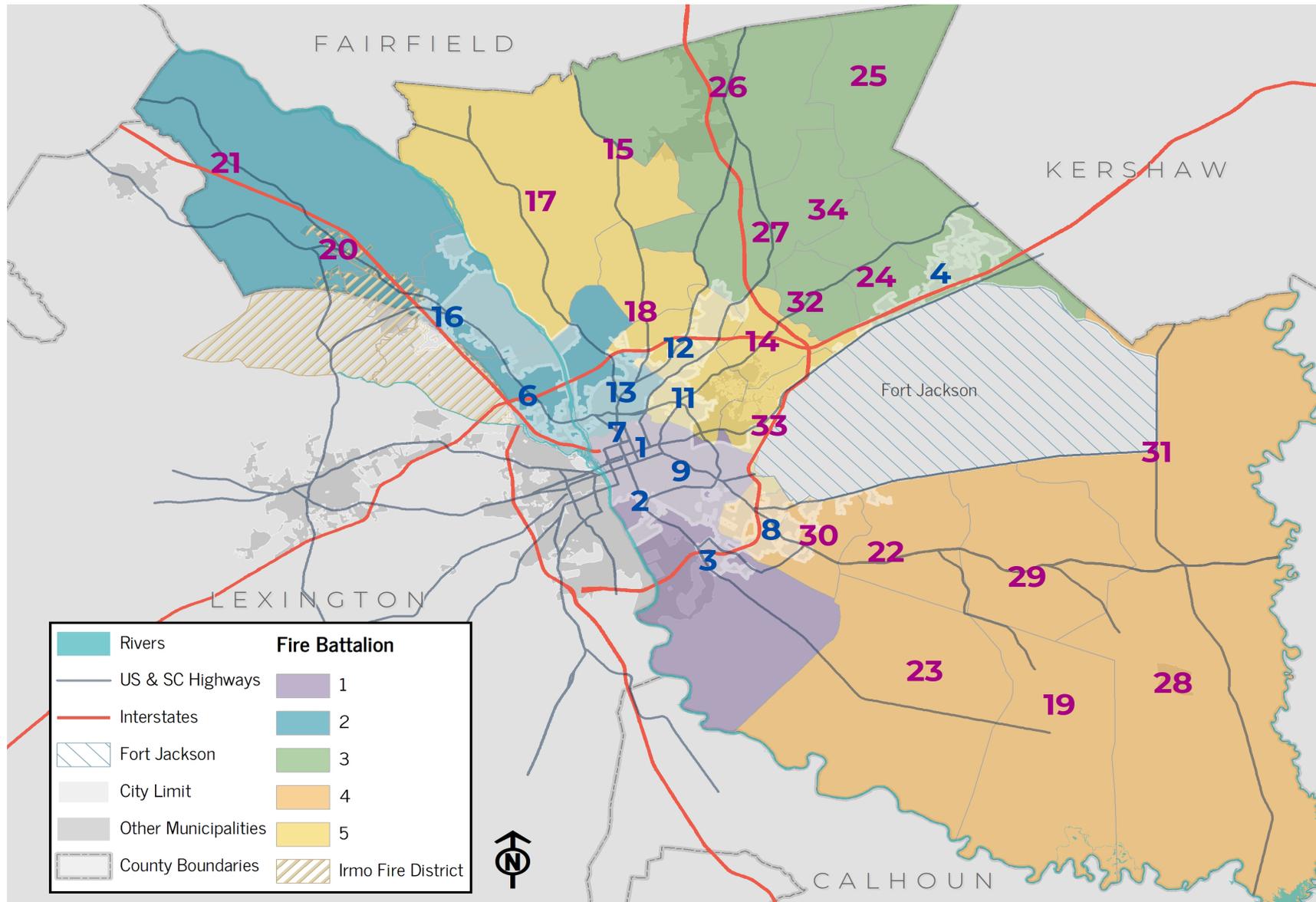
Columbia Police Department



Columbia Police Department regions as of December 2019, approximate location of CPD headquarters & stations, and approximate location of County and State detention and correctional facilities

# Existing Conditions

Columbia - Richland Fire



Existing Columbia-Richland Fire stations as of December 2019. City-owned fire stations are labeled in blue and County-owned stations are labeled in purple.

## Existing Conditions

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Those departments which fall within the built environment primarily focus on the provision and maintenance of infrastructure services. Though these departments also wear other hats, they are most readily associated with the infrastructure they operate and service.

#### COLUMBIA WATER

Under the umbrella of Columbia Water, the Utility Operations, Engineering, and Customer Care departments work to provide dependable wastewater, stormwater, and clean, safe drinking water throughout the City and beyond. Public Works is administratively part of Columbia Water but is addressed separately in this summary.

#### *Drinking Water*

Two water plants, located at the Columbia Canal and Lake Murray, can treat 150 million gallons of water per day and currently distribute about 21 billion gallons of water a year through 2,400 miles of water lines, serving a population of about 375,000 inside the City and beyond. A \$44 million upgrade to a clearwell and pumps at the Canal plant is nearing completion, and a \$41 million changeover to “smart” water meters (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) is expected to be completed by 2022.

#### *Stormwater*

In December of 2018, the City of Columbia issued \$37.9 million in “green bonds” - the first municipal Certified Climate Bond outside of New York and California - as part of a \$95 million investment to address the City’s flooding issues and stormwater infrastructure. Improvements are planned for the stormwater conveyance system, stormwater detention, stream restoration, and bioretention facilities.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Wastewater*

Wastewater collected from approximately 63,000 approved connections travels through about 1,125 miles of sewer lines to the wastewater treatment plant, which treats about 13 billion gallons of wastewater a year, and is rated to treat 60 million gallons a day. A major initiative, Clean Water 2020, was launched with a primary goal of reducing sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs), and includes system-wide infrastructure upgrades modernization of business processes.

#### *Customer Care*

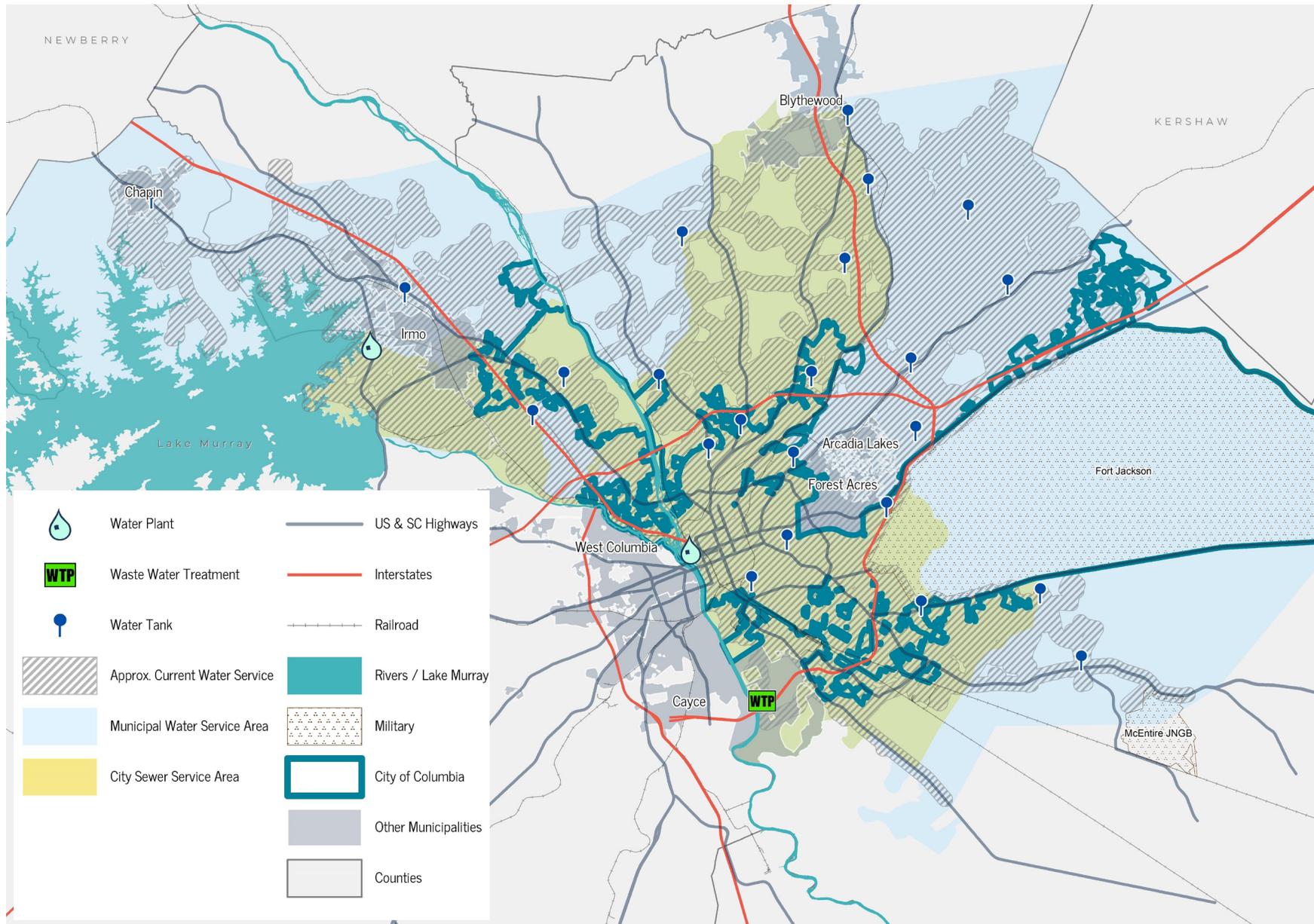
A part of Columbia Water, Customer Care not only assists utility customers with their service and billing inquiries, but also handles general concerns and questions. If the concern is related to a department or program outside of Columbia Water, they direct concerns to the appropriate City department. Customer Care is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phone, email, an online portal, or through an app, MyColumbiaSC, which is available through common app stores.



Columbia Water has two facilities (Riverfront and Lake Murray) that produce water delivered to over 150,000 individual water meters.

# Existing Conditions

## Columbia Water & Wastewater Service Areas



The water, sewer, and stormwater service areas shown in the above map delineate where the City provides or may have the capacity to provide these utilities to both City and Midlands residents.

## Existing Conditions

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT, CONTINUED

#### PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works is made up of numerous divisions dedicated to providing direct service to citizens and maintaining, updating, and constructing the City's infrastructure and basic facilities

#### *Solid Waste & Recycling*

Collection of garbage, recycling, and yard waste is provided to residents within the City limits, and services are also provided for special events and neighborhood cleanups. About 3,300 tons of yard debris were collected and mulched by the Solid Waste Division in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

#### *Streets*

Maintenance of City-maintained streets and sidewalks is coordinated by the Streets Division. Around a third of the streets within municipal limits are owned or maintained by the City, the rest are owned by the state, University, or are in private hands.

#### *Traffic Engineering*

The Traffic Engineering Division maintains and coordinates traffic signals, conducts traffic and lighting studies, and examines and coordinates neighborhood traffic control projects within the City limits.

#### *Forestry & Beautification*

City trees as well as landscaped medians and gateways are maintained for safety and improved quality of life.

#### *Animal Services*

Animal Services provides humane care of lost and unwanted pets throughout the County and enforcement of the City's animal control ordinance.

#### *Sustainability*

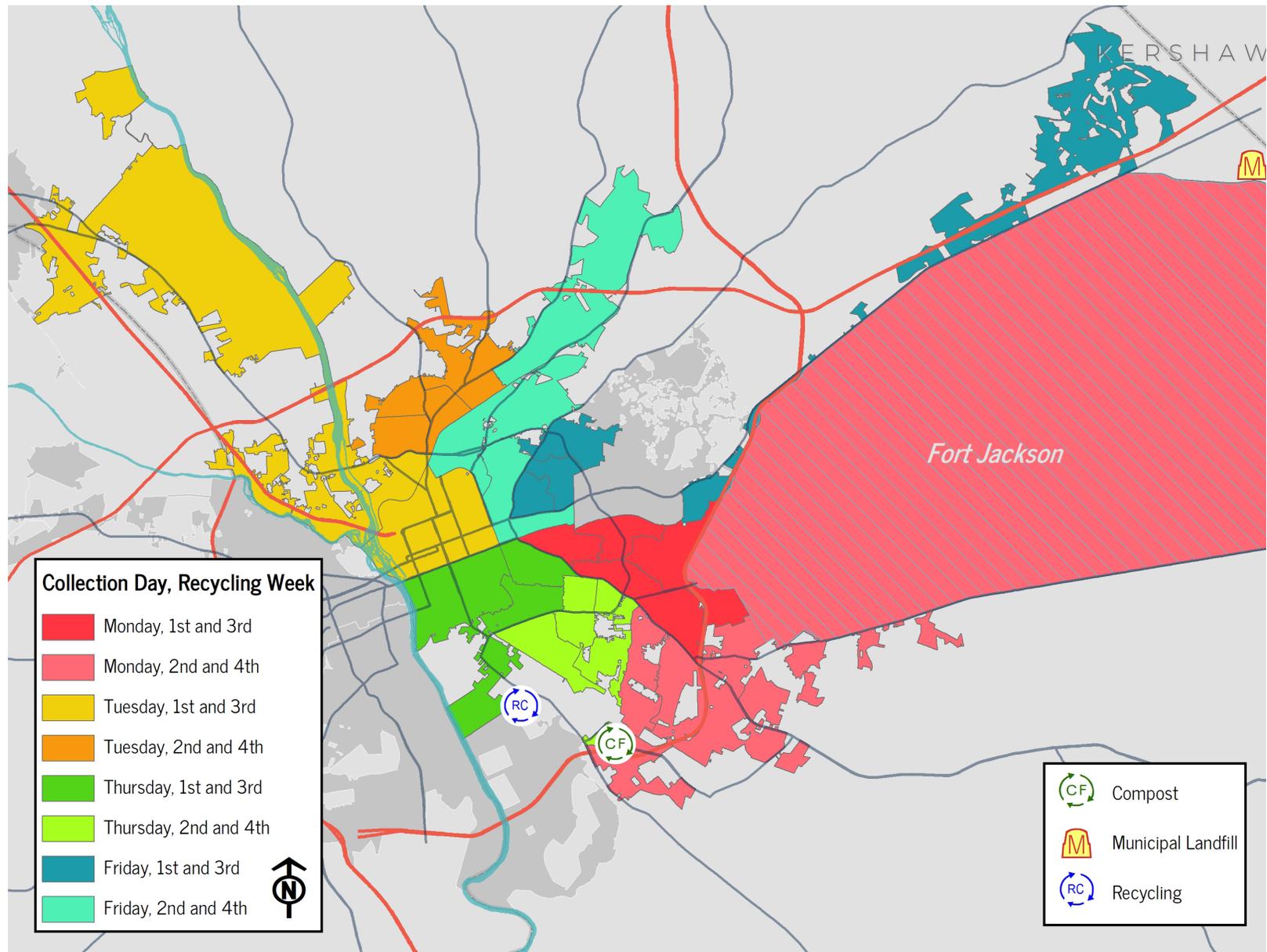
The Climate Action Plan was adopted in 2006 and guides the City's efforts to improve community sustainability and resilience. In 2017, City Council committed Columbia to power by 100% clean, renewable energy by 2036, an effort that the Sustainability Division is working closely on with the City's Climate Protection Action Committee.



The Streets Division installs a new crosswalk (top) and the Forestry & Beautification Division trims trees (bottom) along with maintaining other vegetation in right-of-way.

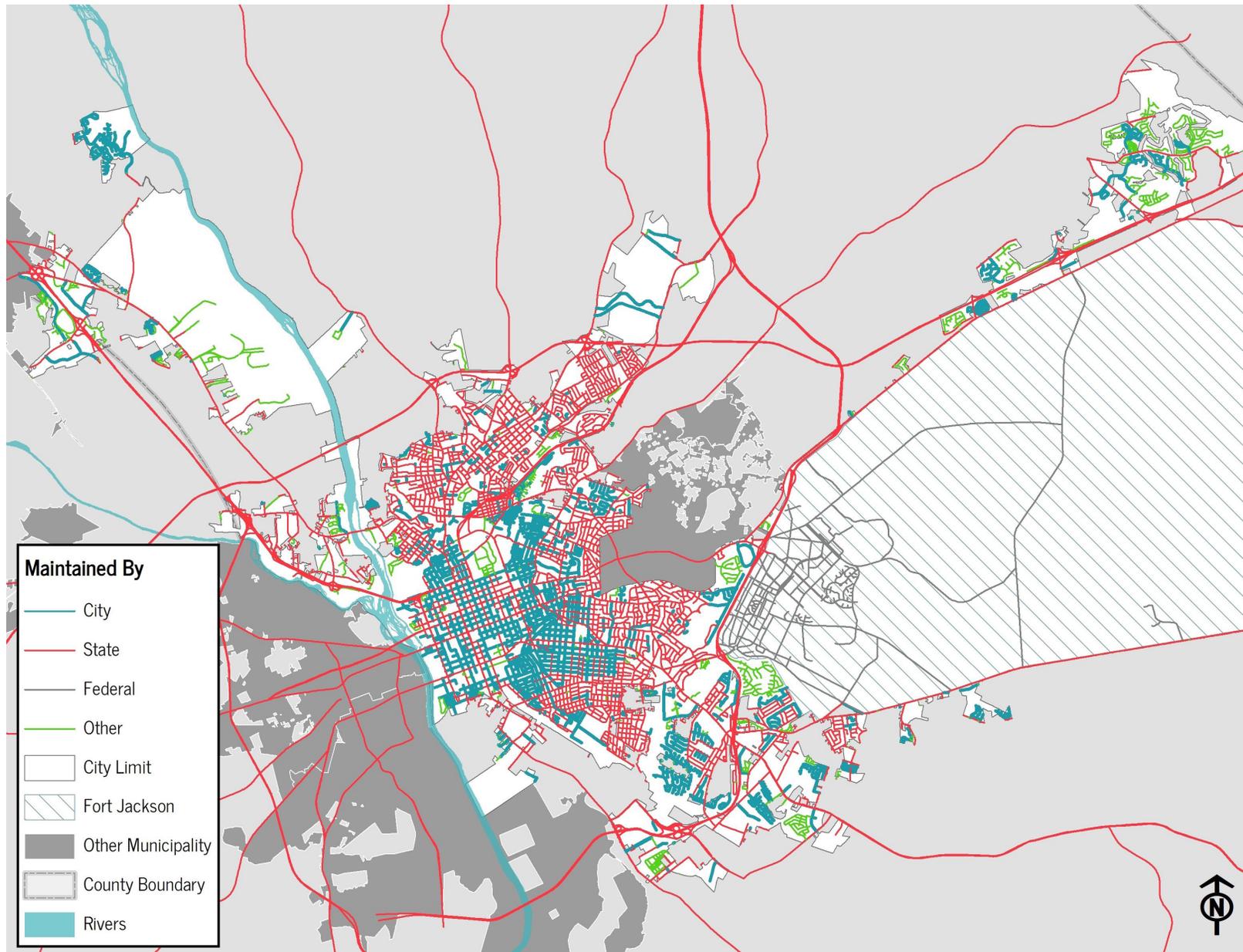
# Existing Conditions

Solid Waste & Recycling Schedule & Route Areas



# Existing Conditions

## Street Maintenance Responsibility



This map shows the maintenance responsibility of roads within the City limits as understood in 2019. Maintenance responsibility is not necessarily the same as the ownership of these roads.

## Existing Conditions

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT, CONTINUED

#### PARKS & RECREATION

Parks & Recreation provides a wide range of programs to the community, including athletics, summer camps, after-school care, senior and youth programs, community gardening, and cultural arts programming. As a department, their services are evenly split between the categories set forth in this chapter of built environment (through the provision of parks) and community support and programming (through the provision of recreational and cultural programming). As this programming generally occurs within park facilities, for brevity herein Parks & Recreation is listed solely under built environment in this snapshot of City departmental functions.

#### *Parks*

Parks & Recreation maintains 60 parks and green spaces over about 670 acres, including six regional parks, seven specialty parks, and 19 neighborhood parks. A new 20-acre park in the Bull Street District set to open in 2020 will daylight and restore a section of Smith Branch Creek. Planning for an overhaul to Finlay Park is also underway.

Riverfront Park, Granby Park, and newly constructed trails along Columbia's rivers provide unique and sometimes wild encounters with the natural environment. Dedicated Park Rangers provide interpretation of and an additional measure of safety in these spaces for park visitors.

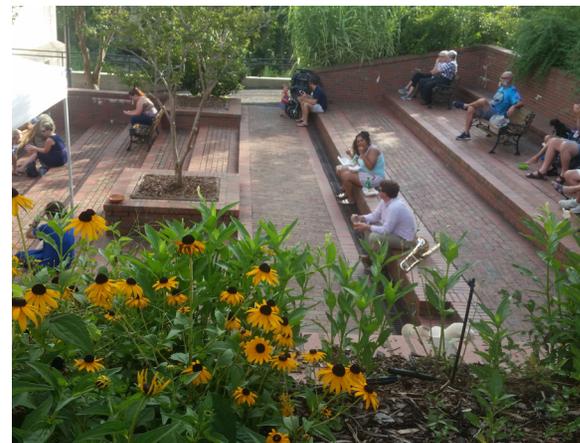
#### *Community Recreation Centers*

Eight community recreation centers feature full-size gymnasiums, game rooms, kitchens, playgrounds, splash pads, and more. There are also seven smaller neighborhood recreation centers. Together, these recreation centers provide space for the programs run by Parks & Recreation in addition to providing meeting space for community groups.

The Drew Wellness Center, completed in 2005, has a large indoor pool, a gymnasium, an indoor track, fitness equipment (including ADA accessible equipment), and hosts a full schedule of classes and special programs. The Columbia Art Center hosts classes, workshops, and open studio time for the visual arts.

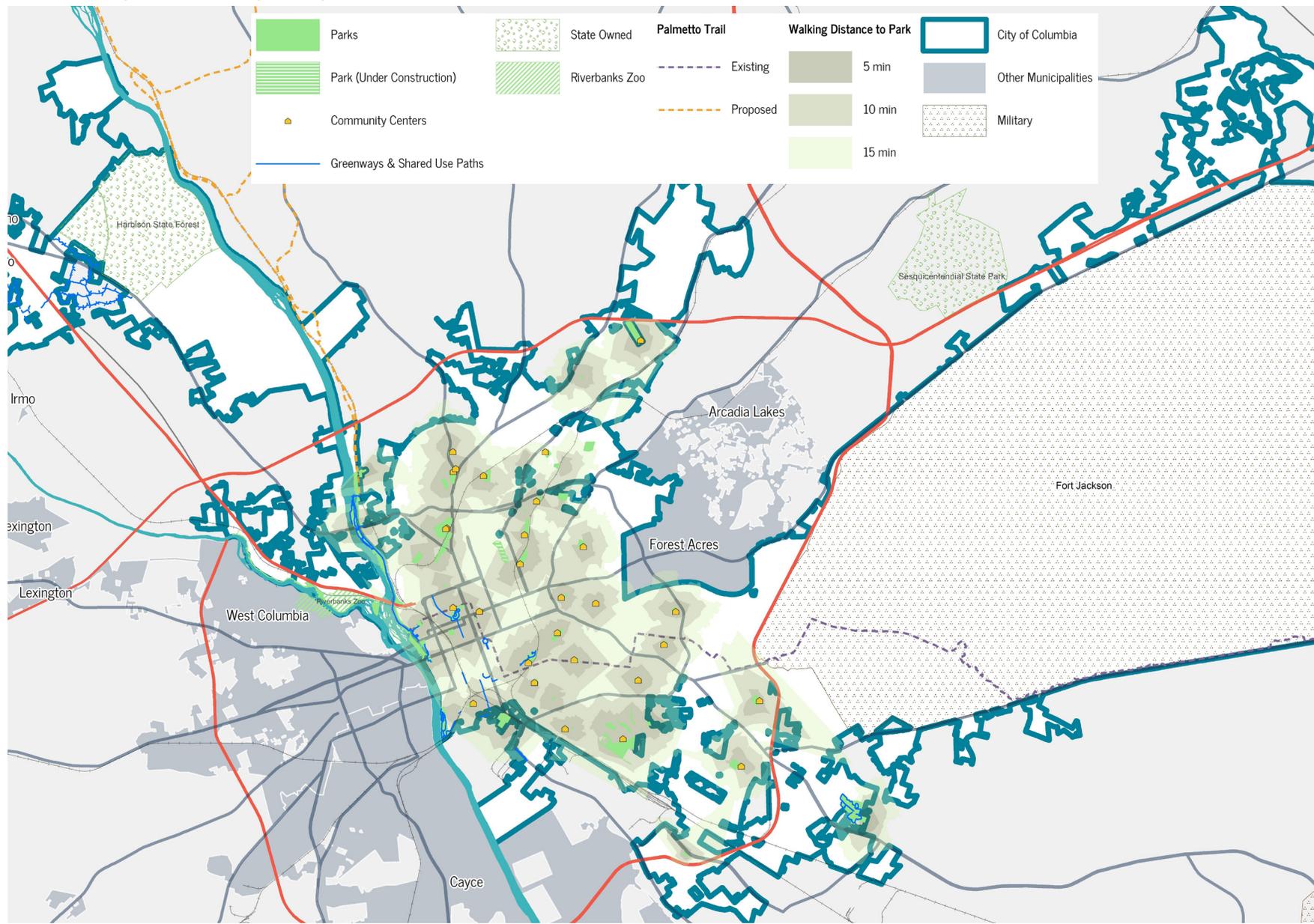


Riverfront Park (top) is a favorite location for a morning walk, jog, or run. The plaza at Riverfront Park (bottom) is popular public space on the riverfront, and is host to a variety of programs and events.



# Existing Conditions

## Park Facility Accessibility Analysis



Unshaded areas on the map are located more than a 15 minute walk to a City of Columbia Park. Mayor Benjamin has signed onto the 10 Minute Walk Campaign, making the promise to ensure that everyone in the City has a safe, easy access to a quality park within a 10-minute walk of home by 2050.<sup>6</sup>

## Existing Conditions

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT, CONTINUED

#### PARKING SERVICES

The Parking Services Department manages nine parking garages, three surface lots, and about 4,300 on-street metered parking spaces to facilitate the needs of vibrant business districts throughout the City. It also assists neighborhoods with parking issues and enforces parking regulations. Recently, payment options for meters have been expanded, including the option to pay through an app.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT & PROGRAMMING

City services are about more than just physical infrastructure - how the City works to empower residents, attract and retain talent, and partner with citizens to help achieve the community's vision for Columbia is essential to the City's vitality.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community Development partners with neighborhoods, organizations, and banks to enhance housing and economic opportunities throughout Columbia. Some of the programs they administer include local implementation of federal programs like Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), financial empowerment programs such as Columbia Kids \$ave, housing and loan programs, and neighborhood services

#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Columbia Economic Development (CED) helps companies identify and capitalize on new business opportunities and overcome obstacles to growth. They work with other economic development agencies and partners to assist these companies with strategic

planning, meeting workforce needs, identifying or navigating local expansion and relocation opportunities, and enhancing or creating new partnerships.

#### OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Small businesses that are located in or wish to do business with the City of Columbia - including minority, veteran, and women owned businesses - benefit from the technical, educational, and financial assistance programs provided by or through the City's Office of Business Opportunities (OBO). Programs include the Commercial Revolving Loan Fund for startups and existing businesses, and the Local Business Enterprise program for Columbia Water projects.



Attendees at the City's 7th Annual Small Business Week Conference (2019)

## Existing Conditions

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT & PROGRAMMING, CONT.

#### DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

Each of these organizations has their own mission, but they all operate in the private sector to invest in the economic strength of Columbia's citizens and businesses.

- **Columbia Development Corporation (CDC)** focuses on economic and residential development, particularly in Columbia's entertainment and shopping districts and surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Columbia Empowerment Zone, Inc.** focuses on encouraging and nurturing small business growth and urban revitalization.
- **Columbia Housing Development Corporation (CHDC)** focuses on creating and preserving housing in Columbia neighborhoods, especially those that have not experienced recent development.
- **Eau Claire Development Corporation** focuses on commercial and residential initiatives within Eau Claire / North Columbia part of the City.
- **Two Notch (TN) Development Corporation** focuses on developing and managing quality affordable multifamily housing.

#### PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Planning and Development Services Department handles a variety of land development and property-related issues, from the issuance of building permits to inspecting buildings for a business license.

The Development Center provides one point of entry for construction review and permitting. The staff shepherds projects from plan submittal to permitting, ensuring that reviews are completed concurrently where possible.

The Building Inspections Division reviews, plans and monitors construction work to ensure it conforms to established building codes

and regulations. Staff also provides inspections for businesses when they move or open in a new location to make sure the space is safe and meets building codes.

The Planning Division helps to facilitate and implement long and short-range plans for the City, through partnering with citizens, business districts, and neighborhoods. The Division is engaged with efforts to further the design and accessibility of public spaces throughout the urban core and along key corridors. This division also provides staff support to the Planning Commission and the Design/Development Review Commission, which includes historic preservation and urban design.

The Zoning Division administers the zoning and land development regulations for the City. These cover issues such as where certain uses can be established, the subdivision of land, the size and placement of buildings, parking requirements and more. Staff also provides support to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

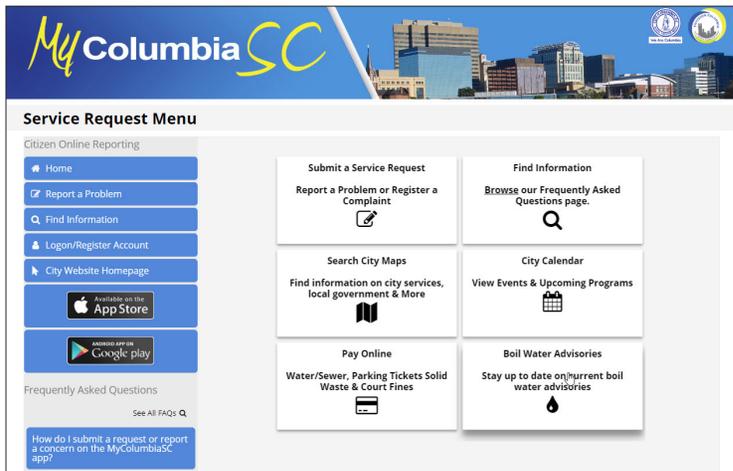


# Existing Conditions

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT & PROGRAMMING, CONT.

### BUSINESS LICENSE

The Business License Division of the Finance Department administers and enforces the business license ordinance and fees, and also collects the Hospitality Tax and Tourism Development Fee. Other licenses and permits administered by the Division include vehicles for hire, busking and sidewalk vending, and garage sale



Citizens and customers can report problems and access a wide range of City services through the MyColumbiaSC app and web portal.

permits.

### PAYMENT CENTER

The Payment Center is a division of the Finance Department, and it receives and posts payments for water bills, parking tickets or parking rental fees, and more. In addition to their primary location at the corner of Washington and Main Streets, they have a satellite payment center in the Eau Claire Town Hall building. The Division also facilitates a bank draft payment option for water and sewer customers, or customers can pay by phone or online.

## SUPPORTING SERVICES

### ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER SUPPORTING SERVICES

To serve the public, the City needs to keep vehicles running, technology secure, bills paid, and employees hired - much of what makes any city work is powered by these support services.

While the Office of the City Clerk and Public Relations, Media & Marketing have frequent direct interactions with the public, much of the work performed by these departments and programs happens behind the scenes. Even so, all of this work supports the citizens and businesses of the City, and is essential to ensure that Columbia leads the way in innovative and high quality municipal services. Some of these programs and departments are:

- Budget, Grants & Program Management
- Procurement & Contracts
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Safety & Risk Management
- Information Technology (IT)
- Support Services
- Fleet Services
- Internal Auditor



Maintenance of the city's information network is a fundamental part of ensuring the City can adequately serve the public.

## Existing Conditions

### OUTSIDE AGENCIES

The City of Columbia is just one of many agencies providing services and infrastructure within its boundaries and throughout the region. Schools, hospitals, libraries, private utilities, and other facilities are provided through and governed by other agencies. As the state capital and county seat, the City is host to a high concentration and assortment of federal, state, county, and private facilities. Strengthening partnerships and collaboration with these agencies will benefit the public both inside and outside of Columbia's boundaries.

#### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

City residents attend schools in three different school districts depending on where they reside. These districts, Richland One, Richland Two, and Lexington-Richland Five, have defined boundaries and taxation authority.

##### *Richland School District One*

Most of Columbia's students attend schools within this district. District-wide, over 24,000 students attend 52 schools and learning centers, 28 of which (16 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 3 learning centers) are within the boundaries of the City of Columbia.

##### *Richland School District Two*

Located in the northeastern part of the City and County, this district has over 28,000 students total in attendance at its 41 schools and learning centers. Currently, none of the district's schools are located within the boundaries of the City of Columbia, though a number of City residents live and attend schools within this district. Two 2018 bond referendums totaling over \$468 million are funding upgrades to academic, athletic, and arts facilities throughout the District.

##### *Lexington-Richland School District Five*

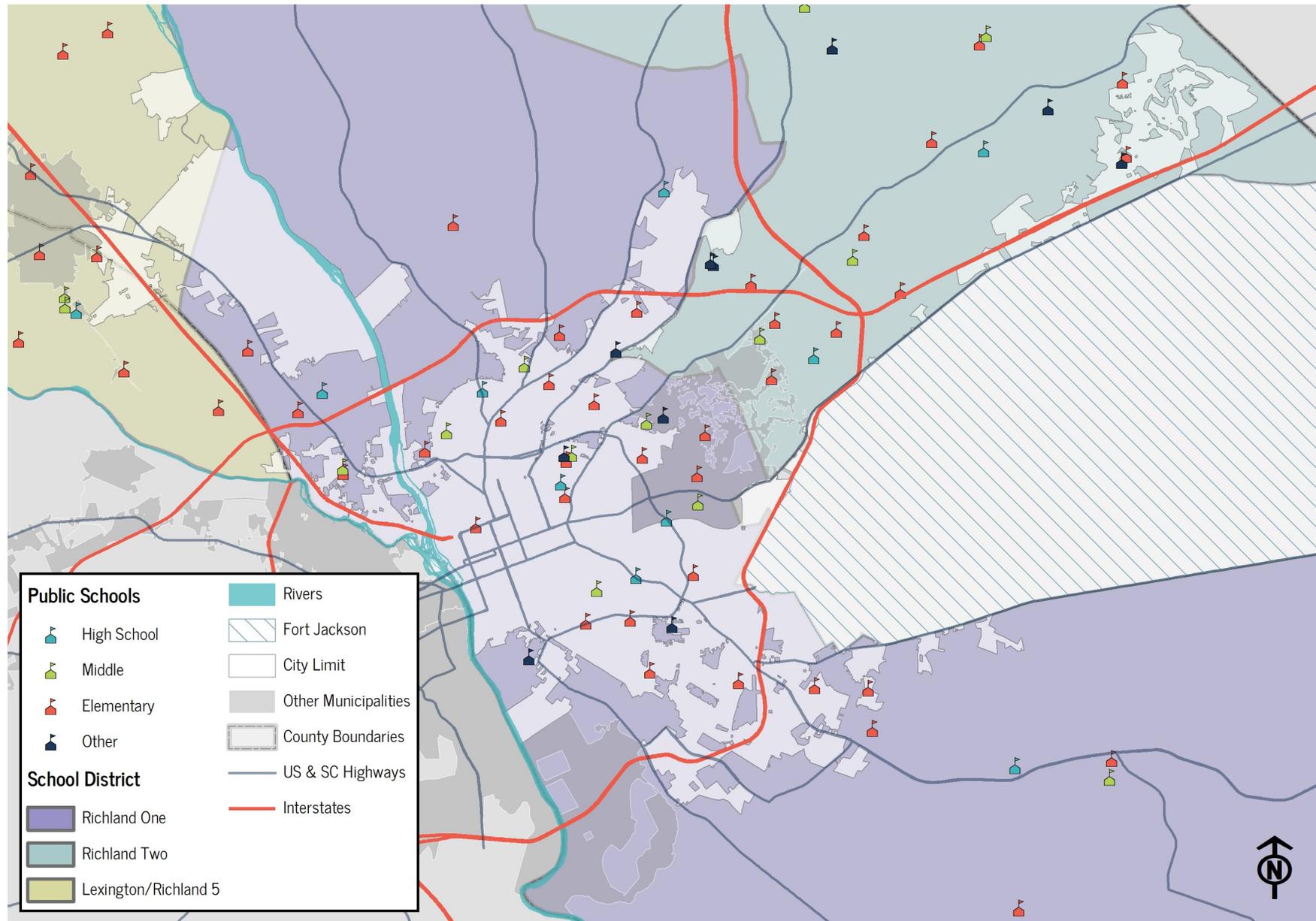
Over 17,000 students attend one of the 23 schools and learning centers in this district, located between Lake Murray and the Saluda and Broad Rivers. A handful of City's northwestern-most neighborhoods are within the district, and none of the district facilities are within the City limits.



Images: iStock.com/kali9 (top) and iStock.com/Django (bottom)

# Existing Conditions

## School Districts and Public Schools



Approximate location of public schools in relationship to the three school districts within the City of Columbia.

## Existing Conditions

### OUTSIDE AGENCIES, CONTINUED

#### HIGHER EDUCATION

Definitely more than a college town, the universities and colleges in the City play a significant role nonetheless. The University of South Carolina (UofSC) is the State's flagship university, and Columbia hosts about 34,000 students from UofSC alone. In addition to UofSC, Columbia is honored to be the home to numerous campuses, including:

- Allen University
- Benedict College
- Columbia College
- Columbia International University
- Lenoir-Rhyne University
- Midlands Technical College

#### RICHLAND LIBRARY

A system-wide modernization of buildings and services is nearing completion, and was fueled in part by a \$59 million bond referendum passed by Richland County citizens in November 2013. As a result, there are now 13 branches throughout the county, including the new Edgewood branch located at 2101 Oak Street in Columbia.

Richland Library provides much more than books to its patrons, and is nationally recognized for the impact of the resources and programs it brings to the community.

#### STATE & FEDERAL FACILITIES

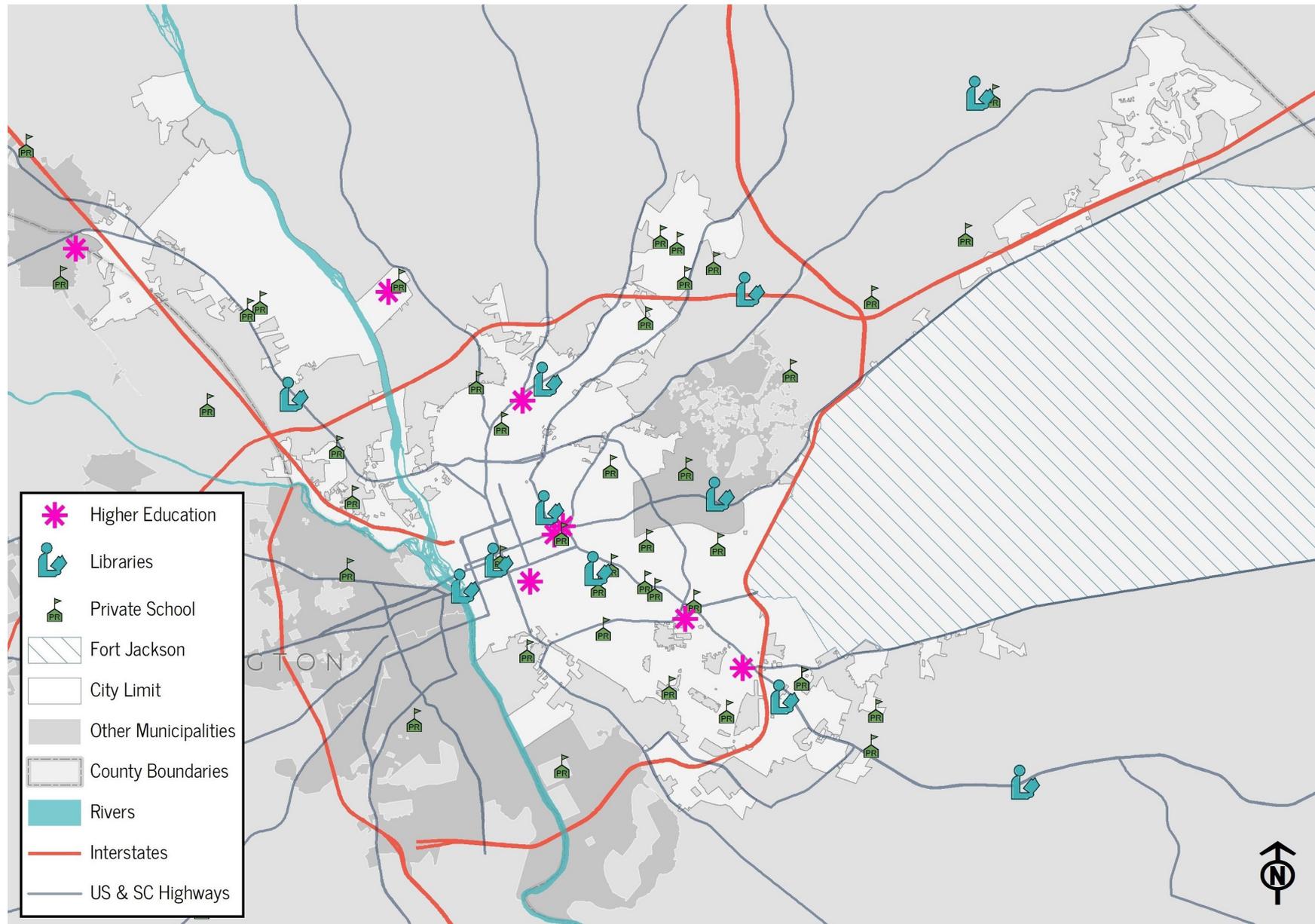
Columbia serves as the State capital and is home to several large federal facilities including Fort Jackson, the U.S. Army's primary basic combat training facility. The many state and federal functions in the region include offices, courts, parks, forests, military, and Veterans Administration facilities.



Richland Library Main (top) and Congaree National Park (bottom).

# Existing Conditions

## Higher Education, Libraries, and Private Schools



## Existing Conditions

### OUTSIDE AGENCIES, CONTINUED

#### COLUMBIA METROPOLITAN AIRPORT (CAE)

The Richland-Lexington Airport District operates Columbia's principal airport, which is about six miles southwest of downtown Columbia and serves over 500,000 passengers and about 30,000 tons of enplaned cargo annually. The district is governed by a 12-member commission; two of the commissioners are appointed by City Council, and five each are appointed by the legislative delegations of each county.

#### JIM HAMILTON - L.B. OWENS AIRPORT (CUB)

Columbia's downtown general aviation airport has a single 5,011 foot runway and is also a relief airport for Columbia Metropolitan Airport. Established in 1930, commercial passenger service departed for CAE in the 1950's. The current terminal building opened in 2005; the historic Curtiss-Wright hangar fell into disuse in the 1980s, but was sold and restored in 2016 and now is occupied by a microbrewery. The airport is governed by the nine-member Richland County Airport Commission, two of whom must be residents of adjacent neighborhoods.

#### COLUMBIA METROPOLITAN CONVENTION CENTER

Located on Lincoln Street in Columbia's Vista entertainment district, the 142,500 square foot convention center was built in 2004. In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the convention center hosted 372 events with an estimated \$14 million economic impact for the region. Experience Columbia SC - also known as the Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports & Tourism - operates the convention center. There are nine Authority board members; two each representing Richland and Lexington Counties, and five from the City of Columbia.



Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center (top) and Columbia Metropolitan Airport (bottom). Images courtesy of Experience Columbia SC, taken by Brett Flasnick, and Sean Rayford Photography, respectively.

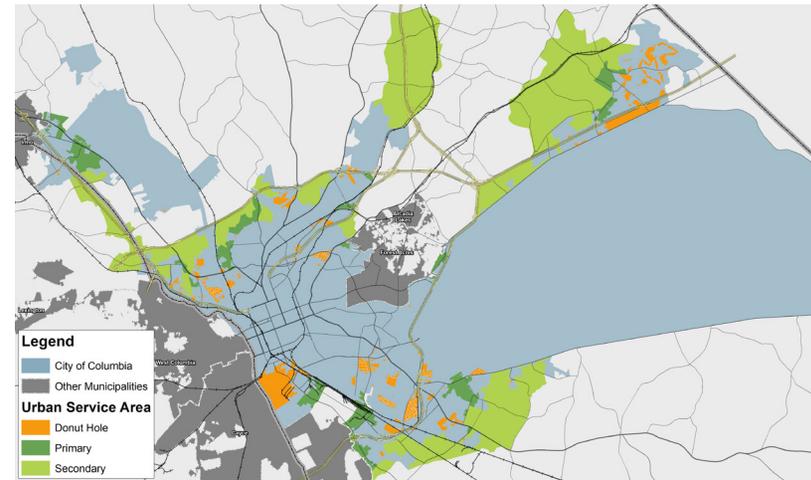
## Urban Service Area Plan

### WHAT IS IT?

Investment and redevelopment within the existing boundary of the City of Columbia is a priority, but with over 60% of the area population living in unincorporated areas, it is prudent to consider what areas the City can efficiently provide with services beyond its borders. However, any growth presents challenges we should plan for along with the opportunities that may be presented. The Urban Service Area plan provides a prioritization tool for City Council, staff, and the public to consider about the areas that present the best opportunities for the City's long-term growth, while minimizing both short-term and long-term challenges.

A review of existing infrastructure as well as the reach of our community facilities and services helps define how we classify areas within the Urban Service Area plan. Areas have been classified as Primary, Secondary, and Long Range areas - or as Donut Holes - in order to represent the general level of priority based on this review.

Importantly, this Urban Service Area plan is a policy guide, and not a determination about annexation on any individual property. Annexation of private property in South Carolina is by petition and except in limited circumstances a municipality cannot annex without the participation of the residents or owners of an area being considered for annexation. Whether it is presented with a petition from an owner, a group of freeholders, or a group of electors, City Council is tasked with making the determination of whether or not any proposed annexation is in the best interest of the City.



Urban Service Areas (2009 plan) overlaid against City boundaries (February 2019)

## Urban Service Area Plan

### BACKGROUND

The South Carolina State Legislature regulates how Columbia and other municipalities can grow by annexation, but it used to exert even more direct control over Columbia's ability to grow. For a little over 80 years following the founding of Columbia by act of the state legislature in 1786, its boundaries remained stable, the population slowly filling in the two-mile by two-mile original grid bound by the Congaree River and the streets now known as Elmwood Avenue, Harden Street, and Heyward Street.

In 1870, during Reconstruction, it was not City Council but the General Assembly that expanded the boundaries for the first time, and a strip of land about two blocks deep was added to the northern and eastern boundaries of Columbia. Curiously, in 1878 after the end of Reconstruction the General Assembly reversed course and removed most of the land added in 1870 - though a thinner strip (about 400') north of Elmwood Avenue was retained. Legislators also removed from Columbia a strip of land the depth of the three southernmost blocks, the area between present-day Heyward and Rice Streets. Finally, six years later, the General Assembly made its last direct change to Columbia's boundary by restoring these three southern blocks to the City in 1884.

The first annexation that was acted upon by Columbia's City Council was the 1907 annexation of a rectangular tract encompassing most of what is now known as Elmwood Park.

The City has been operating under essentially the same annexation policy since it was formally adopted by resolution R-90-064 in 1990, though elements of the policy were in place before then, and minor



A section of the 1895 Niernsee & Lamotte map of Columbia showing the approximate location of the original City limits (gray and purple), 1870 addition (orange and blue), 1878 removal (orange and purple), and 1884 restoration (purple).

modifications have been made since (most notably resolution R-92-058 in 1992). Amongst its recommendations was the development of an “urban service area” to identify areas that the City would be inclined to provide with urban services.

A May 1992 plan prepared by the Planning Department, *The Columbia Urban Community*, proposed an urban boundary based upon the characteristics of census tracts. Council reaffirmed the annexation policy in 2008, and at that time requested that staff develop a map of the Urban Service Area, including designation of primary, secondary, and long range areas. In 2009, a plan was presented to and subsequently adopted by City Council, and this plan forms the basis of the categories that have been used since.

## Urban Service Area Plan

### CLASSIFICATION

Regardless of Urban Service Area classification within this plan, the timing of when, or even if, any potential future annexation would happen is difficult, if not impossible, to predict. That being said, these classifications are meant to focus the City of Columbia's future annexation efforts in the most rational way possible, and to help guide staff in planning future upgrades or expansion to City services and facilities.

The classification or division of the Urban Service Area into sub-areas within this plan continues the basic framework laid out in the 1990 annexation policy and the 2009 Urban Service Area plan, with some minor modifications. The 1990 annexation policy suggested defining primary, secondary, and long-range areas. It also suggested prioritizing the annexation of "islands" of unincorporated territory and developed areas adjoining the City limits. The 2009 Urban Service Area plan used these suggested classifications, but referred to the "islands" as "donut holes". While a Long Range Area was initially proposed as part of the 2009 plan, ultimately no formal boundaries to this area were adopted.

The most significant modification to this previously developed classification framework is the further categorization of Donut Holes into Primary and Secondary Donut Holes based upon the level of service the City can readily provide. Also, in order to encourage a cohesive and comprehensible boundary, an effort was made during the mapping of these areas to classify neighborhoods or developments that are partially in the City limits into either a Primary Area or Secondary Area, even if the remainder of the surrounding area would otherwise be within the Long Range Area.

### DONUT HOLES

Donut holes are unincorporated areas that are completely surrounded by the City of Columbia and/or another municipality, or areas surrounded by the City of Columbia and a major geographical feature, such as a river. These areas pose a number of challenges to the City that can be addressed through annexation. Often, these are areas that were developed before the City or any municipality became adjacent, and may lack easy access to City utilities or other services.

Donut holes can often cause inefficiencies in the delivery of services due to confusion about jurisdiction, and if the land is in a jurisdiction with a different approach to code enforcement, these areas can negatively impact the quality of life for adjacent City residents. Such inefficiencies can impact property owners and residents both within and outside of the municipal boundaries through confusion over services as well as added operational costs to local government, resulting in a greater financial impact to City residents, who pay both City and County taxes.

Donut holes surrounded entirely by the City of Columbia, except in exceptional circumstances, should eventually be incorporated into the City limits. Likewise, donut holes surrounded by the City of Columbia and another municipality should eventually be incorporated into one of the adjoining municipalities, though not necessarily the City of Columbia.

As a general rule, these "split" donut holes are to be considered Secondary Donut Holes, a subclassification discussed further below, unless all or a portion of the Donut Hole would be more logically

## Urban Service Area Plan

### DONUT HOLES, CONTINUED

served by the City of Columbia. This would be, for example, when the City of Columbia serves a majority of an existing development, or intervening geographical or topographical features such as a river or railway separate the donut hole from other adjacent municipalities.

#### DONUT HOLES - PRIMARY

Donut Holes - Primary are the donut holes where services are readily available and the infrastructure is generally good. These services include fire, police, sanitation, and utilities.

Annexation within areas classified as Donut Hole - Primary is the highest priority. Barring unanticipated circumstances, annexation of these areas is recommended, and staff should work with individual property owners or neighborhoods/developments to encourage and expedite annexation.

#### DONUT HOLES - SECONDARY

Donut Holes - Secondary are the donut holes where the ability to provide all services and/or the condition of existing infrastructure may not be at optimal levels for annexation at this time. For example, it may be that the storm drainage and/or road system is substandard or that the area is in an overburdened service area.

Annexations within a Donut Hole - Secondary should be considered, but an assessment of the impact on the City's revenue and ability to serve the property/area in question is needed. In areas lacking infrastructure or serviceability, the City should work towards improving these conditions in collaboration with the communities, and the County and other organizations if possible.



Primary (orange) and Secondary (yellow) Donut Holes

# Urban Service Area Plan

## PRIMARY AREAS

Primary areas are made up of land contiguous to the City where services are readily available and the infrastructure is generally good. These services include fire, police, sanitation, and utilities.

Annexations within Primary Areas are the second highest priority, after areas classified as Donut Hole - Primary. Barring unanticipated circumstances, annexation is recommended and staff should work with individual property owners or neighborhoods/developments to encourage and expedite annexation.



Primary (dark green) and Secondary (light green) Areas

## SECONDARY AREAS

Secondary Areas are those areas where it may be logical or advantageous to provide City services, but where the ability to provide all services and/or the condition of existing infrastructure may not be at optimal levels for annexation. For instance, it may be that the property is outside of the generally accepted fire response area, or the storm drainage and/or road system is substandard. These areas may include “higher value” properties where annexation could prove beneficial to revenues.

Annexation within Secondary Areas should be considered, but an assessment of the impact on the City’s revenue and ability to serve the property/area in question should occur prior to consideration of and action on annexation petitions.

For example, the annexation of a single family residence may be beneficial to the property owner and of minimal impact to the City when it is in close proximity to other residences being provided with services such as police or solid waste. On the other hand, annexation may not be advisable for a similar single family residence that - despite being contiguous with the City limits - was isolated from other properties receiving these same services. While the City’s focus should be on Donut Holes and Primary Areas, staff should work with parties interested in annexation if workload permits, and may actively solicit an annexation if it is determined to be in the best interest of the City.

## Urban Service Area Plan

### LONG RANGE AREAS

Long Range Areas are those areas that do not meet the criteria of Primary Areas or Secondary Areas but are within the Columbia Water service area. They may not meet the criteria simply due to distance, because of the condition of the existing infrastructure, or because of the practicality of providing City services- or any combination thereof.

Even within the Columbia Water service area, not all areas beyond the Donut Holes and Primary and Secondary areas should be considered Long Range Areas. Long Range Areas are not mapped, but are generally those areas that meet these guidelines:

- Located within the Columbia Water Service Area
- Not located within another municipality, including the donut holes surrounded by that municipality
- A developed area of urban or suburban character, or an area undergoing development
- Not an area maintaining a rural character.

Rural character would typically be characterized by a low and stable population density (i.e. less than 200 people per square mile), or areas where the predominant existing and expected future land use consists of active or passive agricultural uses, or natural areas set aside for conservation. A rural or conservation future land use classification in a County land use plan, coupled with a rural zoning district assignment, may also be a marker of rural character.

Annexation within Long Range Areas is the lowest priority.

Annexation of small individual properties in these areas is generally not in the City's best interest, however new developments and group petitions can be considered for annexation with an assessment of the impact on the City's revenue and ability to serve the property/ area in question.

Generally, the City will not proactively seek to annex properties in a Long Range Area, including properties contiguous to the City limits. In particular, when the owner of a contiguous property in a Long Range Area wishes to connect to City water or City Sewer, the City, at its sole discretion, may wish to provide service without the requirement for a petition for annexation. In these cases, the owner would still be required to execute a recordable covenant agreeing to bind the owner and all future owners to annex into the City at a future time if or when the City deems it to be appropriate.

## Urban Service Area Plan

### UPDATING THE PLAN

A recommendation of Columbia Compass which can be found later in this chapter calls for an overall update to the Urban Service Area in coordination with City service providers at least once every five years. However, some adjustments to the classification of an area are warranted if one of these scenarios occurs:

- **If a new donut hole is created** through the annexation of surrounding areas, the classification should change to Donut Hole – Primary for areas previously within a Primary Area, and Donut Hole – Secondary for areas previously within a Secondary Area or a Long Range Area.
- **If an existing Donut Hole - Secondary is significantly reduced in size or divided** into smaller parts through annexation, the remaining donut hole(s) should be reviewed to determine if reclassification of all or part of it to Donut Hole - Primary is warranted.
- **Completion of significant capital improvement projects** (CIPs) may warrant a review of the affected area, especially in donut holes and those areas closest to the City limits.

### THE URBAN SERVICE AREA MAP

The four classifications mapped within the Urban Service Area are identified as follows:

-  Donut Hole - Primary
-  Donut Hole - Secondary
-  Primary Area
-  Secondary Area

It should be noted that the boundaries between the Urban Service Area classifications are illustrative and therefore not parcel-specific. When processing the annexation of parcels located on or near boundary lines, staff will determine the area to which it most appropriately relates based upon services and conditions

The Urban Service Area is, as its name denotes, a representation of the accessibility of City services as it relates to the annexation of land. To determine the location of each area, Planning staff worked in consultation with other City staff, including representatives from Columbia Water, Police, Fire, and Public Works. Initial meetings laid out the scope as well as the goals of the project. Each department supplied information on their services and constraints, including fire response areas, police regions and staffing, solid waste routes and their capacity, and water and sewer lines. The data gathered from departments was overlaid and analyzed along with municipal boundaries, existing conditions, and current development patterns to devise draft boundaries. These were reviewed with departments and revised based upon feedback and additional analysis.

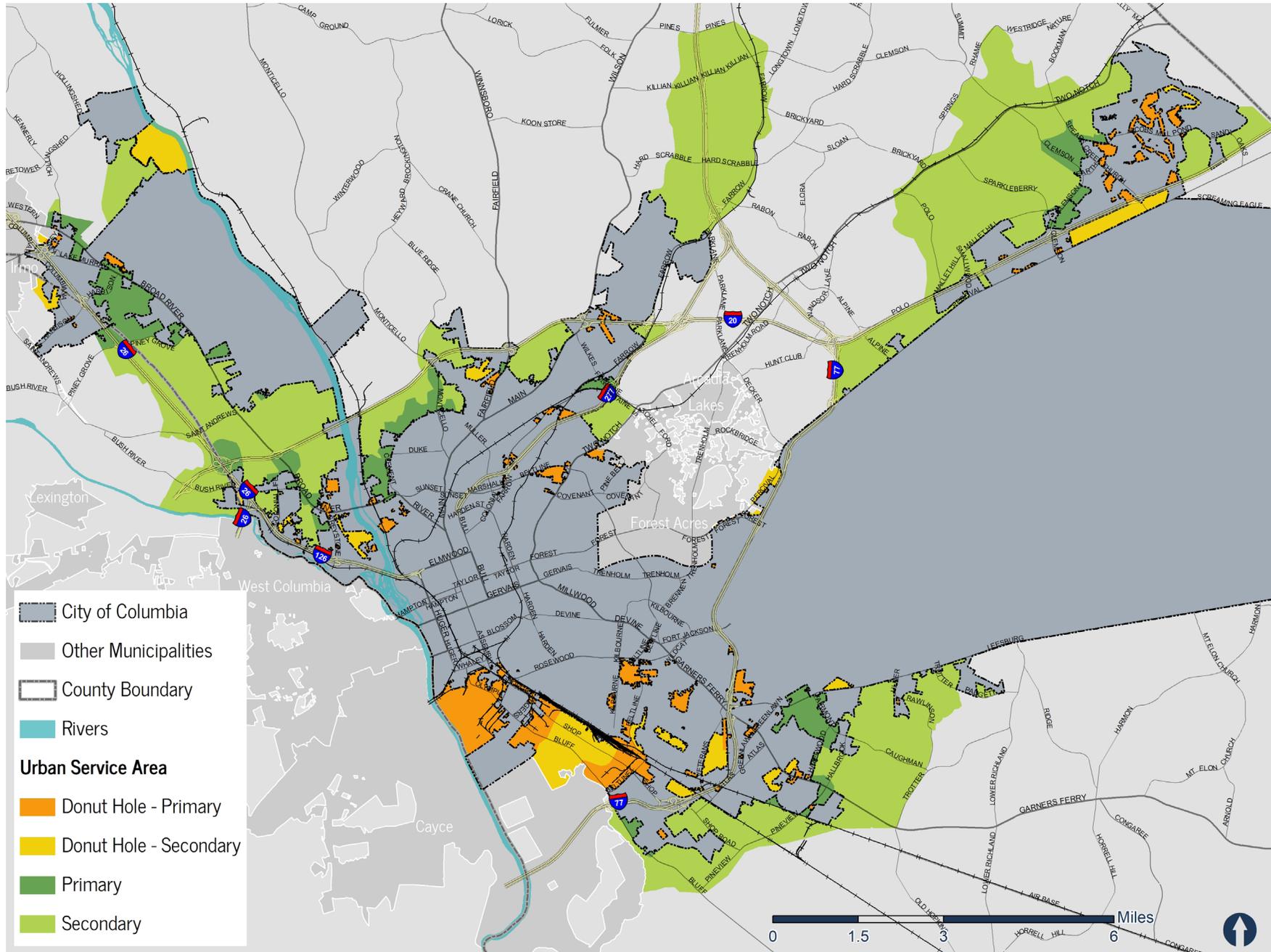
## Urban Service Area Plan

### THE URBAN SERVICE AREA MAP, CONTINUED

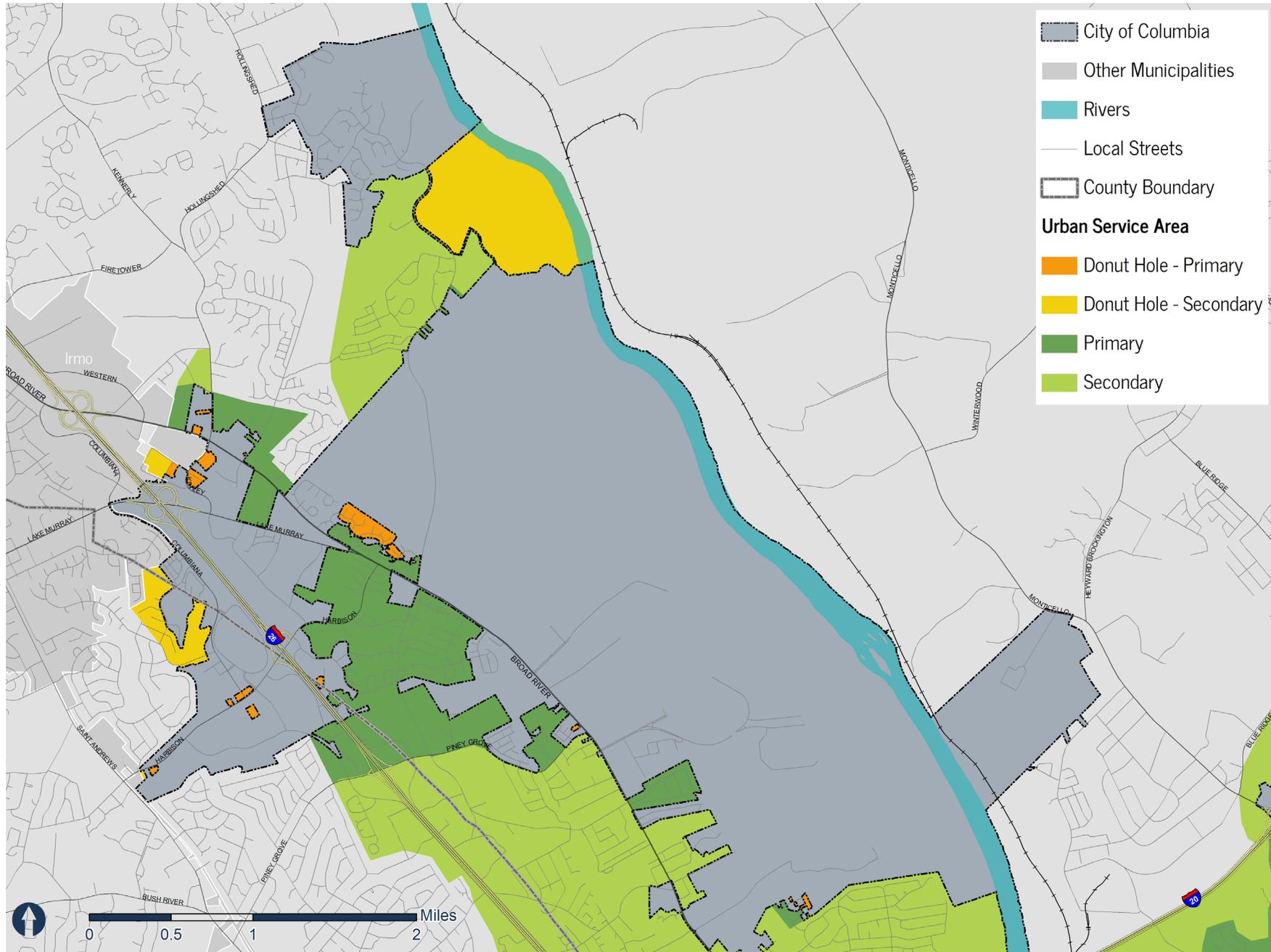
Some additional general information to aid in understanding the maps and the underlying factors influencing the extent of each of the service areas:

- Seamless fire service is available to areas within Richland County through an intergovernmental fire agreement between the City and the County, however fire service was only considered available for the purposes of the Urban Service Area if the fire service would be provided by a City controlled station. The Fire Department rightly cautions against a reliance on County-owned stations in determining the City's ability to provide service, as these stations may be relocated without consultation. The generation of revenue and service and funding responsibility that comes with annexation is addressed within the intergovernmental fire agreement, and is generally balanced
- Solid waste service on the Monday and Friday routes must consistently use overtime to complete pick-ups. Thursday is the least burdened route, but it is also nearly landlocked. Eventually the service dates will need to be changed for some customers to rebalance the work load between days, however changing service dates should not be done frequently as it will involve public outreach and involves changing ingrained customer habits. Annexation, especially the annexation of residences, brings immediate service and the associated costs, including the cost of providing garbage and recycling roll carts. Large annexations, like the annexation of an existing neighborhood, require planning to ensure that an adequate number of - and funding for - roll carts, trucks, and personnel are available on the date of annexation.
- As with Solid Waste, the Police Department may require adjustment to the staffing of or realignment between regions due to existing growth and development trends and/or annexation. In particular, the East Region has seen significant annexation and residential development over the last several years. Large annexations, like the annexation of an existing neighborhood, require planning to ensure that an adequate number of - and funding for - officers and equipment is available to serve the area on the date of annexation.
- Areas were ranked on the general availability of water and separately on the general availability of sewer. Availability does not necessarily mean that water and/or sewer extends to every lot. If water or sewer is not available to an area or parcel, the City may encounter some or all of the expenses of extending the utility or expanding capacity, and any required capital improvement projects (CIPs) require a significant amount of time and planning. In some areas sewer is supplied by another provider- as the City would not be involved in either the construction or maintenance of sewer in these areas, they are weighed the same as areas with high availability of City sewer.

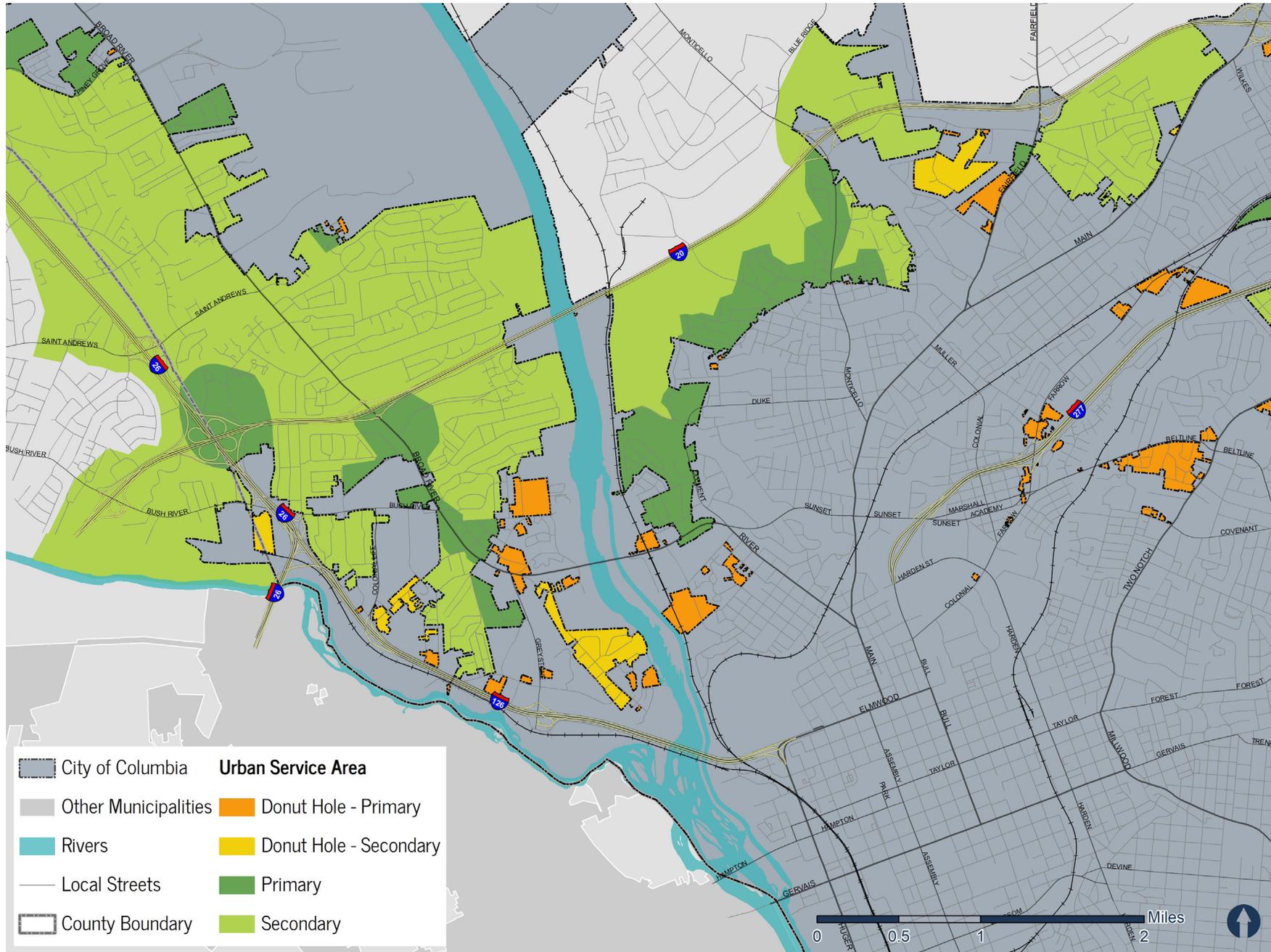
Urban Service Area Plan - Overview



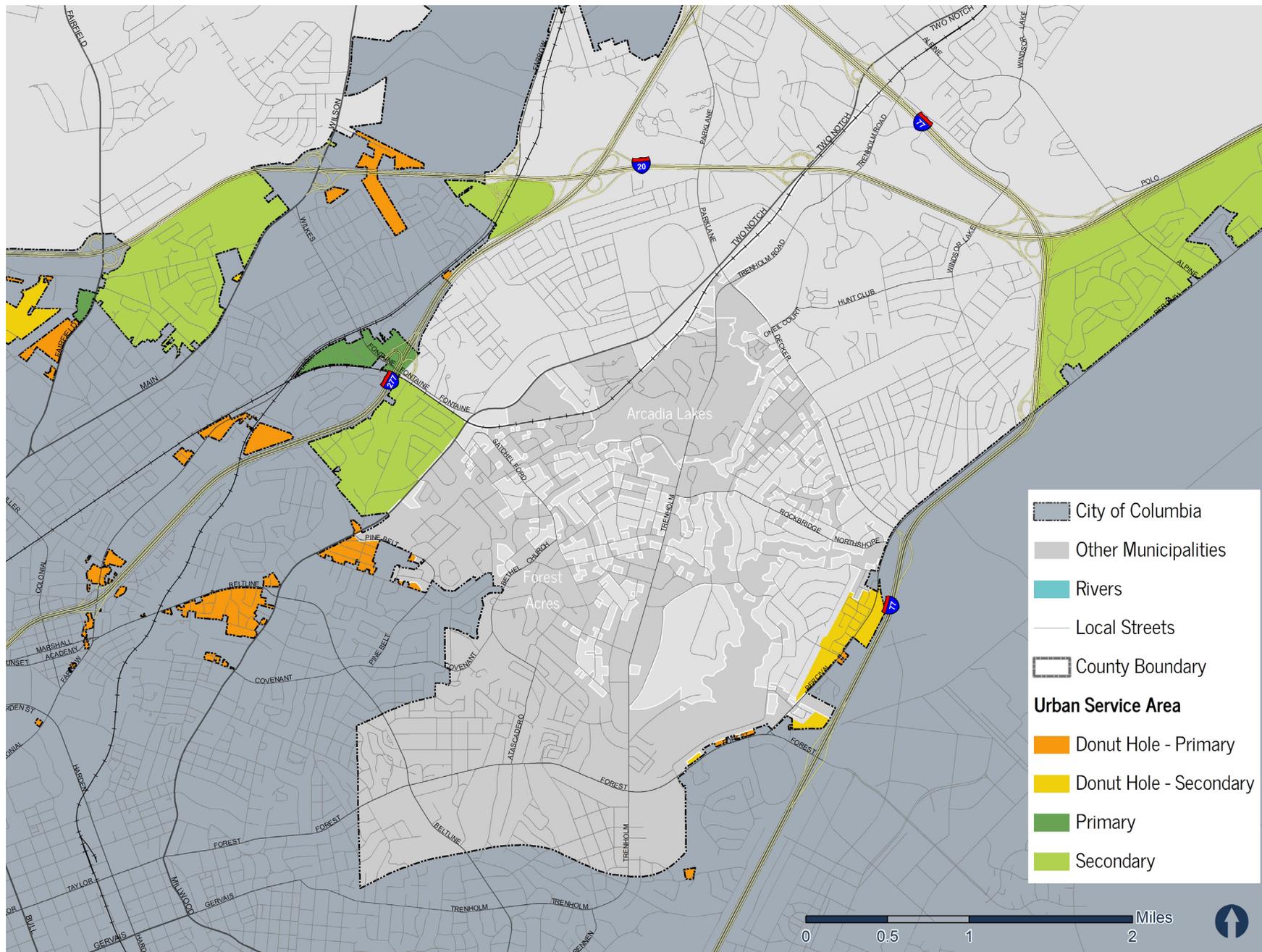
Urban Service Area Plan - Northwest



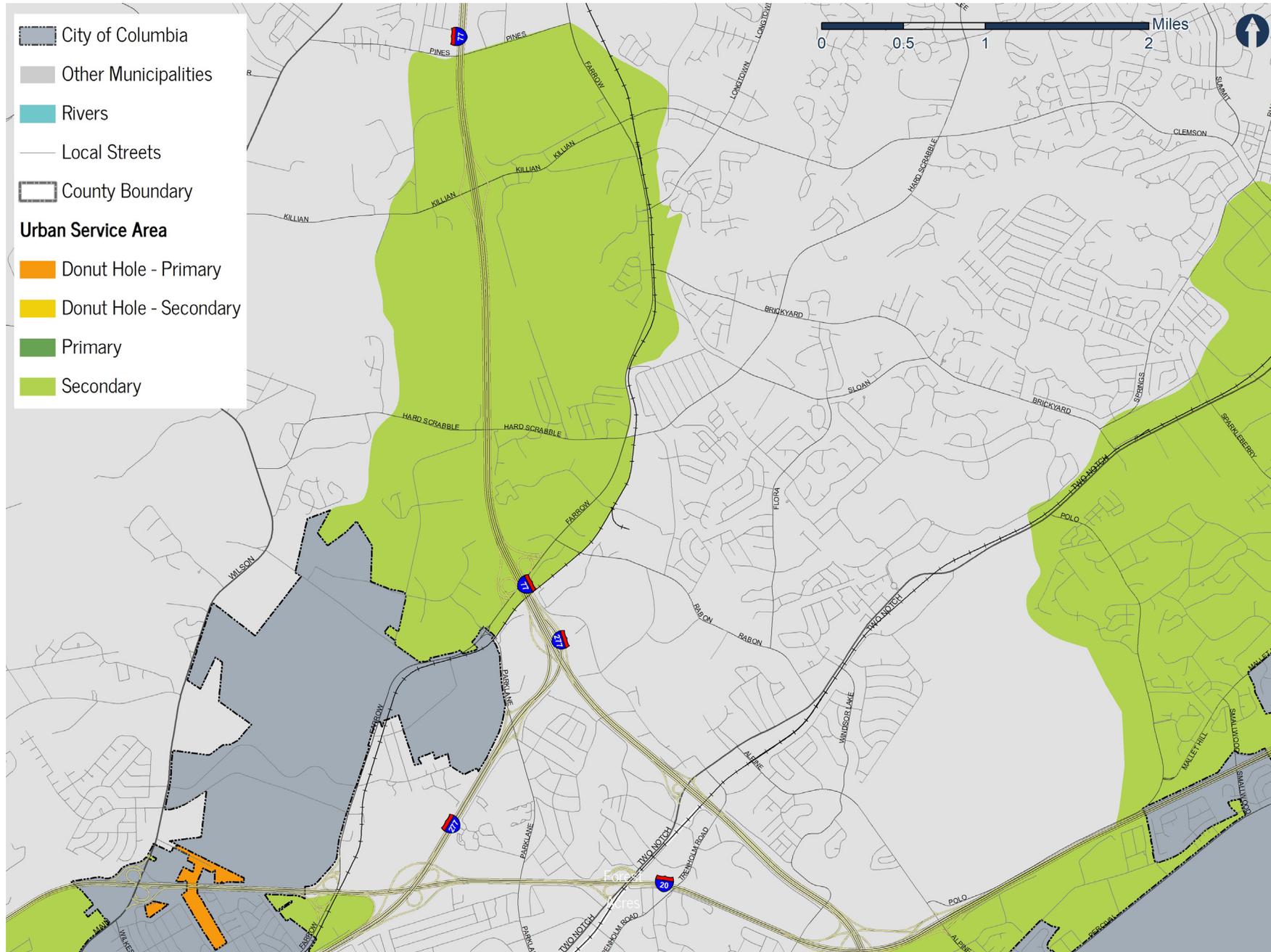
Urban Service Area Plan - West



Urban Service Area Plan - East Central



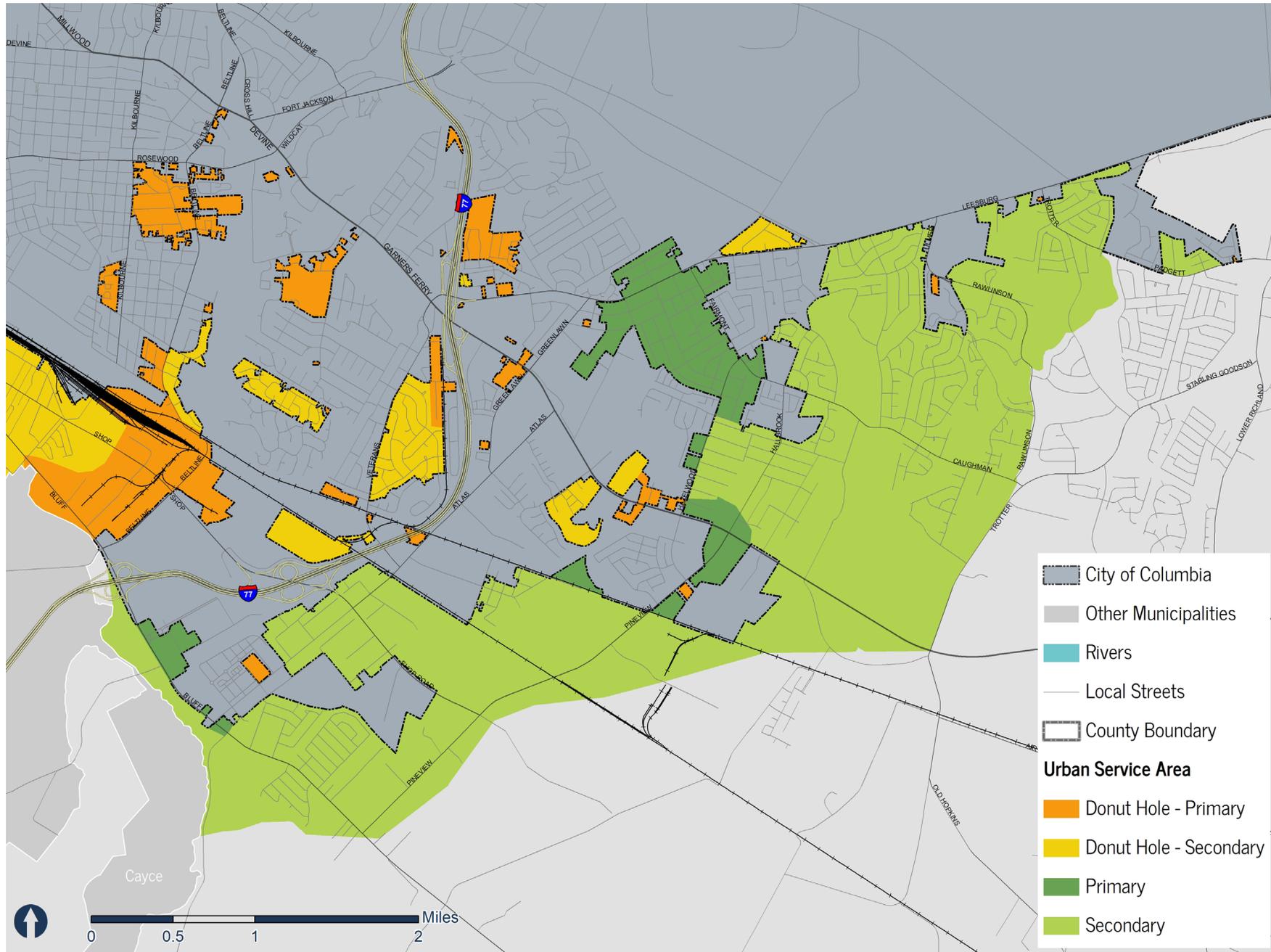
Urban Service Area Plan - North Central







Urban Service Area Plan - Southeast



## Urban Service Area Plan

### THE URBAN SERVICE AREA PLAN & ANNEXATION

Even if a property is within a defined Urban Service Area category according to this plan, it does not mean that the property will be annexed anytime soon – or ever. While the City can encourage annexation and even require annexation from those seeking City services, the decision to annex is primarily in the hands of the property owners or voters.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2010 about 66% of South Carolinians were living in urban areas, but only 35% lived in municipalities. Likewise, the jagged edges and donut holes seen in municipal boundaries throughout the state, and their resulting inefficiencies, are to be expected given the relatively strict annexation laws in South Carolina. Beyond South Carolina, as of 2006, thirty-nine states allowed for municipalities to initiate annexation to some degree, while still providing some degree of due process and other measures to protect property rights.<sup>7</sup>

### ANNEXATION PROCESS

A municipality in South Carolina cannot initiate annexations, except for the annexation of properties it owns or for cemeteries. However, because a municipality is under no obligation to provide services beyond its boundaries, it may require annexation as a condition of receiving any such services. Also, a municipality can work together with property owners and communities to encourage the completion of a petition for annexation. The three main methods of annexation authorized by state law all require a petition from the property owners or residents to initiate annexation.

#### 100% FREEHOLDER PETITION AND ORDINANCE METHOD

Using this petition method, any contiguous area may be annexed by the filing of a petition signed by all property owners. The annexation is complete once council adopts an annexation ordinance.

The “100%” method has been the most frequently used method of annexation for the City of Columbia. This method is the simplest because it involves a direct interaction between the City and the owners of the property being annexed.

#### 75% FREEHOLDER PETITION AND ORDINANCE METHOD

Under this group petition method, any contiguous area may be annexed by filing a petition, meeting certain specified requirements, signed by at least 75% of the freeholders who own at least 75% of the assessed valuation of the real property in the area requesting annexation. The annexation is complete if the governing body enacts an ordinance declaring the area annexed to the municipality. No election is needed, however a public hearing is held.

Prior to the annexation of 44 homes in the Garden Springs neighborhood in October 2018, this method had not been used by the City since 2001.

#### 25% ELECTOR PETITION AND ELECTION METHOD

A petition of 25% of the electors living in the area proposed to be annexed triggers this group petition/election method. The election is held only in the area proposed to be annexed.

This method has not been used by the City since before the state law was amended in 2000 to remove a provision requiring a petition and vote of property owners in addition to the vote of electors.

## Urban Service Area Plan

### SERVICE CONSIDERATIONS

When a city grows through annexation, many focus on the impact to population, land area, and the expansion and diversification of the tax base, but it is equally important to understand the impact on the city's services - and the costs associated with providing them - to any newly annexed area. To ensure that annexation does not impact services to areas already within the City, the impact of annexation should be a consideration in the review of any departmental budgets, especially those that provide direct services to residents and businesses, such as Public Works, Columbia Water, and the City's first responders.

Costs to the City upon annexation are real and often immediate. Except in the case of large capital improvements (for example, construction of a new sewer main), the provision of services begin immediately upon annexation, yet any revenue in the form of property taxes may not reach the City's accounts for a year or more. Furthermore, while the services from large capital improvements may not arrive upon annexation, the expenses of planning, design, and construction will certainly precede any revenue.

A small annexation, such as the annexation of a single home or small business, does not usually have a significant impact on revenue, budget, or ability to provide services. However, the impact of annexation to the City and its departments is significant in the following ways.

**Small annexations** generally have an **annual cumulative impact**.

New garbage and recycling roll carts need to be delivered to residential properties in addition to providing weekly pickups, but the carts are likely to be in stock. The Columbia Police Department assumes primary responsibility for any service calls, and the City

becomes responsible for zoning and code enforcement. Water and sewer rates are lower for in-city accounts, and some properties beyond the City limits may require the extension of water or sewer lines to serve the annexed property. Some additional street, sidewalk, and stormdrain maintenance responsibilities may be incurred. When located within donut holes or adjacent to areas already served, these annexations may reduce existing inefficiencies and encourage a continuity of service. However, if isolated from areas already served, a small annexation may create new service inefficiencies and costs.

**Large group annexations** (for example, the annexation of an existing neighborhood) generally have both an **immediate impact** and a **longer-term impact**. If a community annexes by way of a group petition, the City must be prepared to provide most of its services at the time of annexation, though it may provide a time frame for providing any capital improvements such as new sewer service. In addition to the service impacts mentioned above, advance planning and budgeting may be required to ensure that adequate equipment and staff is available to serve the area proposed for annexation. Other considerations include budgeting for long-term maintenance and potential future repairs or reconstruction of existing substandard infrastructure.

**Annexations of undeveloped land or land proposed for development** generally have a **longer-term impact** on City services. Even if the area being annexed is large, without existing development the immediate impact on City services would be minimal. However, as these larger tract annexations often involve proposed greenfield development, impacts may be substantial. The City should prepare and budget for future increased services, bearing in mind that market forces can accelerate or delay development.

## Recommendations

Specific recommendations for priorities and actions for the coming years are made in the pages that follow. Recommendations are the heart of the plan document. Built upon the foundation of the data and public input collected, through these recommendations we develop an action plan for the next ten years and establish the framework for our 2036 vision to be realized. Throughout Columbia Compass, these recommendations are organized in the same format, and all of the recommendations of the plan are compiled and summarized within the Priority Investment chapter.

### RECOMMENDATION FRAMEWORK

The recommendations that follow are organized to provide information about the critical path forward, and where necessary, to provide helpful case studies that may help the responsible party/ies as they move toward implementation. Each recommendation is made in the form of an action statement, the primary topical theme is identified in a box in the upper left, and key components are identified as follows:

-  **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?**  
Responsible parties may include City departments and divisions, but may also include partner agencies and organizations. Where multiple responsible parties are identified, a lead party or primary facilitator will be designated.

-  **DURATION**  
Implementation of recommendations will be staggered throughout the next ten years; the schedule for implementation is set forth in the Priority Investment chapter. The duration set for each recommendation identifies the amount of time it will take to complete these recommendations:

- short - 1 to 3 years
- medium - 4-6 years
- long - 7-10+ years

"Ongoing" may be added to short, medium, or long to indicate where a recommendation may be for a continual action, but the action may have a short, medium, or long duration. For example, the planning process for developing a neighborhood plan tends to take one year, but the City will plan for more than one neighborhood over the course of the 10 years to come, so the duration would be listed as "short, ongoing" in this case.

-  **PRIORITY**  
Recommendations are prioritized to correspond with the Priority Investment element. Prioritization helps us recognize items that may need to be completed prior to beginning others, as well as helps identify those priorities of greatest import to the City. By setting a prioritization system, we can strategically work toward implementation, even as funding is limited.

## Recommendations



### COST

Estimated cost ranges are made for each recommendation with the recognition that costs may change depending on the market and when implementation takes place.

¢ = \$0 to \$25,000	\$\$\$ = \$100,000 - \$500,000
\$ = \$25,000 to \$50,000	\$\$\$\$ = \$500,000 to \$1.5M
\$\$ = \$50,000 to \$100,000	\$\$\$\$\$ = \$1.5M +

 Many of the recommendations within the plan require staff support - where this is the case, the symbol to the left will accompany the estimated cost. Where staff support is a significant component of cost, often such support is already being provided, but an expansion of efforts may be necessary.

\* Often, implementing recommendations requires an upfront cost, though the recommendation itself will be cost-neutral or result in increased savings in the long run. This is generally noted in the text of the recommendation, but is also denoted by a small asterisk next to the estimated upfront cost.



### REFERENCE TO THEMES & OTHER ELEMENTS

The need for and impact of recommendations may relate to more than one element and theme. The primary theme is identified in **bold**, with secondary themes also listed. The topical index lists all recommendations by theme. Recommendations are housed under the chapter they are most related to, but their relationship to additional elements is listed herein.



### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

In many cases data must be collected to move forward strategically with a recommendation and/or to measure success.



### MEASURING SUCCESS

This section identifies milestones and benchmarks for each recommendation.



### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

Envision Columbia is City Council's vision and strategic plan; this section identifies how a recommendation helps to further the vision set forth in the Envision Columbia focus areas.

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Continue to develop and incorporate a community facilities plan into the budgetary process that addresses delivery of services, maintenance, and growth.

Are adequate funds budgeted for maintenance? At what point do maintenance costs and life expectancy of a building outweigh the cost of new construction? Are current space needs being met, and do the City's facilities adequately serve all of its residents and businesses?

The community facilities element of Columbia Compass provides an overview of the facilities in and around Columbia, but a deeper dive into the current and projected capabilities and needs of the City as a service provider is needed. In addition to planning for the future growth of the City and balancing service delivery needs, budgeting for maintenance of existing and planned infrastructure is a must.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Columbia Water (primary)
- Support Services (primary)
- Parks & Recreation - Operations & Maintenance (primary)
- Budget, Grants & Program Management
- Fleet Services
- Parking Services
- Planning & Development Services
- Public Works
- Safety & Risk Management

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

The up-front cost to implement this recommendation depends upon whether it is completed entirely in-house or if a consultant is hired to aid staff efforts. Completion of this plan will also inform updates to the Urban Service Area plan.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

**\$\$\$ \*i**

### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Built Environment

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Priority Investment
- Transportation
- Cultural Resources

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Existing capital improvement programs such as Columbia Water's planned improvements should be included in this plan.
- A community facilities plan should survey the condition, age, and life expectancy of City capital assets and explore when fiscal and service efficiencies may be achieved through expansion, renovation, or co-location. In addition to identifying costs, anticipated or potential revenue sources should be identified.
- Long- and short-term financial risks and benefits derived from different approaches to maintenance and resilience strategies should be considered.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

This recommendation will be fully implemented upon the completion, adoption, and utilization of a community facilities plan that serves as a resource in annual and long-term budgetary planning. Adequate and predictable funding will allow each department more freedom to meet current needs and plan ahead for the future. The plan should be regularly updated to ensure it reflects the City's needs and priorities.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

RECOMMENDATION

# Continue to develop and incorporate a community facilities plan into the budgetary process that addresses delivery of services, maintenance, and growth.

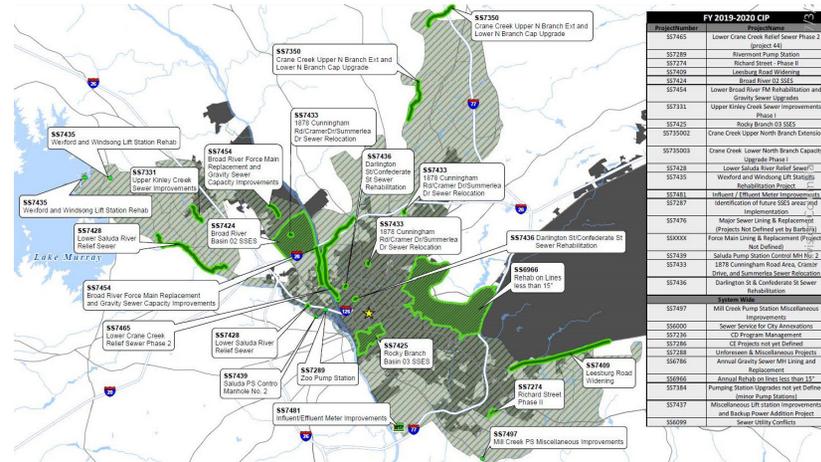
## Preliminary considerations for Columbia’s community facilities plan

The assessment and evaluation required to develop a community facilities plan for the City will paint a more complete picture of the current state of Columbia’s buildings and infrastructure than *Columbia Compass* is able to. It should also identify and help prioritize the improvements needed, through creating or revising maintenance and replacement schedules, identifying current and projected space needs for all of the City’s program areas, and identifying opportunities for improved operational efficiencies and short- and long-term cost savings.

Some specific projects have been identified within recommendations included in several sections of Columbia Compass, yet these are not the only facility needs or concerns. While far from an exhaustive list, a community facilities plan for the City of Columbia may address the following items, in no particular order:

- Fleet Services and Public Works - facility and space needs as well as capital equipment needs and programmatic functions.
- The feasibility of and needs associated with the co-location of emergency services functions at a public safety training and/or logistics facility.
- The feasibility of and needs associated with a potential downtown cultural center
- Municipal Court - facility and space needs, including security considerations.

- Space programming and facility needs for downtown public-facing offices.
- Capital improvements related to utilities and other infrastructure, including existing capital improvement plans.
- Opportunities for interdepartmental co-location of services or co-location with outside agencies.
- Other projects as identified during the development of the community facilities plan.



Wastewater Capital Projects as incorporated into the approved City budget for FY 2019-2020

# Continue to develop and incorporate a community facilities plan into the budgetary process that addresses delivery of services, maintenance, and growth.

## Case Study 1

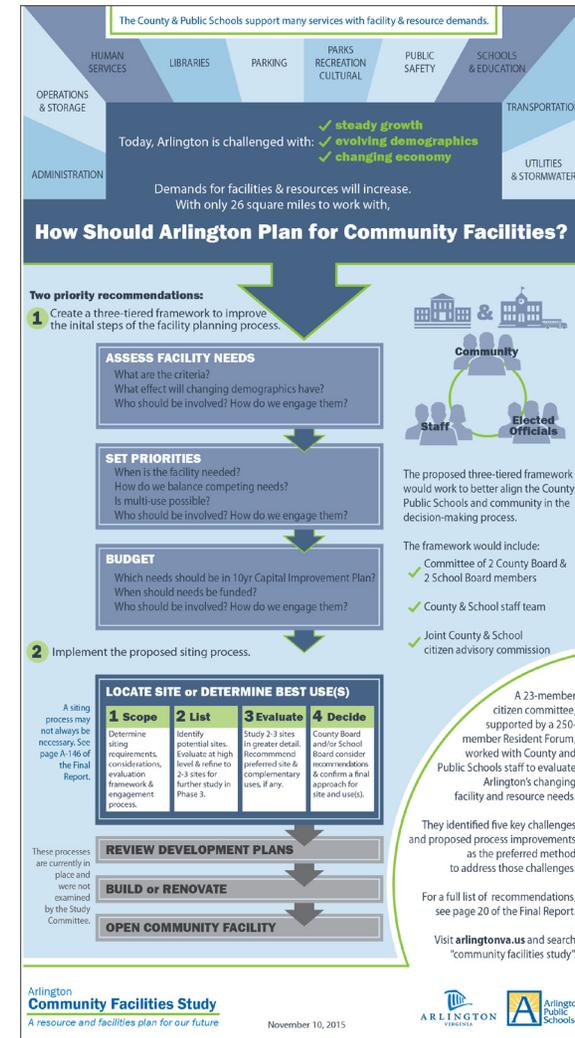
### Community Facilities Study, Arlington County, VA

Arlington, Virginia, a 26 square mile urbanized county government with approximately 250,000 residents, was confronted with a lack of available space for its public facilities and a threatened commercial base, and struggled with how to adapt to the changing needs and demographics of its community. In 2015 the County partnered with Arlington Public Schools and formed a citizen committee to rethink their approach to upgrading their existing facilities and siting new ones.

Arlington is more densely populated than Columbia, but like Columbia, a large proportion of its land is occupied by government and other institutions- about 45% of its total area. Primary recommendations focused on formalizing a facility assessment, prioritization, budgeting, and siting processes, including a citizen advisory commission.<sup>8</sup>

Some of their additional recommendations were:

- Making maximum use (and reuse) of existing facilities
- Encouraging joint or shared use of facilities; including with other jurisdictions
- Establishing a land acquisition fund
- Improving forecast and projection methods
- Using demographic factors to help define future facility needs
- Adding an economic impact section to private development project staff reports.
- Bolstering community awareness of key revenue and budget issues.



Primary recommendations of the Arlington Community Facilities Study. Used by permission from Arlington County and Arlington County Public Schools.

## Continue to develop and incorporate a community facilities plan into the budgetary process that addresses delivery of services, maintenance, and growth.

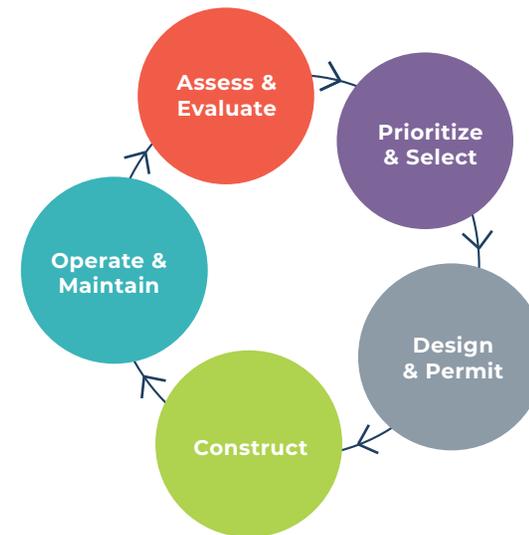
### Case Study 2

Clean Water 2020, Columbia, SC

While an overall community facilities plan is needed, there are some internal examples illustrating the process of assessment, planning, budgeting, and action required to provide high quality infrastructure and services to the City's residents and businesses into the future. One such example is Columbia Water's Clean Water 2020 program. Initiated for Columbia's wastewater (sanitary sewer) program, it is serving as a model to improve the water delivery network as well.

Clean Water 2020 was born out of crisis, but is being used as an opportunity for Columbia Water to become a leader in municipal utility service. The program was launched in part to reduce the occurrence and volume of sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) and to help the City meet the goals of its 2014 consent decree agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Health and Environmental Control. To address the significant portion of the City's wastewater infrastructure that was aging and constructed of materials no longer considered ideal (like clay pipes that tend to crack when they age), the program focused on operational improvements and business processes in addition to assessing and prioritizing wastewater infrastructure for renewal and upgrade.

A five phase project cycle was utilized, not only to ensure that improvements were appropriately prioritized to meet the objectives of the consent decree, but also to ensure the future efficiency and reliability of the system. To improve decision making and document



The five phases of the Clean Water 2020 project cycle.

or improve standards, new programs and processes were instituted, and new technologies were deployed or are being developed to assist in asset management, remote monitoring, and improving operational efficiency. Some of these are:

- Continuing Sewer Assessment Program
- Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program
- Transmission System Operations and Maintenance Program
- Gravity Sewer System Operation and Maintenance Program
- Cityworks asset and work management software

While most of the major programs are considered completed in terms of the consent decree, many, especially the operation and maintenance programs, require ongoing attention and effort.

RECOMMENDATION

## Adopt and adhere to design, renovation, and maintenance standards for City projects and facilities that provide for resiliency, sustainability, and appropriate and equitable public access.

The quality of the built environment affects not only the look of an area, but also how it feels. Where public investment is made in the quality of the built environment, property values tend to be more stable and other private investments often follow. To ensure projects and developments fulfill these goals, standards should include provisions for resiliency, sustainability, and public access to open spaces and natural areas. These standards can help people identify City-owned assets and make it easier for citizens to access these resources. Moreover, these standards should be administered equitably to allow for access for all citizens.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- City Architect (primary)
- Engineering
- Parks & Recreation
- Planning & Development Services
- Public Works
- Support Services
- Utility Operations

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

The cost to complete, adopt, and adhere to a policy would be a minimal expenditure, mainly reliant on staff willingness to change current procedures. New infrastructure would have a higher cost.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

\$ - \$\$

### THEMES

- Built Environment
- Equity & Accessibility
- Lead By Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Cultural Element
- Population Element

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Information about current City policies which incentivize or require resiliency and equity in projects or developments
- Current levels and locations of public amenities
- Identification of standards used by peer cities in their localities
- identification of existing industry standards for best practices that may be incorporated, such the Envision rating system used by the American Society of Civil Engineers and LEED

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- The creation and adoption of these standards
- Application of these standards - at the planning phase, the construction phase, and post-construction phase - for both City staff and contractors
- Regular maintenance is completed in line with these standards

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Connect
- Prosper
- Enhance

## Adopt and adhere to design, renovation, and maintenance standards for City projects and facilities that provide for resiliency, sustainability, and appropriate and equitable public access.

### Case Study 3

Water / Wastewater Administration Building, Columbia, SC

In 2017, the City of Columbia celebrated the completion of a new Water and Wastewater administration building on West Beltline Boulevard. This project renovated a blighted brownfield site of a former auto dealership into the City of Columbia's first LEED Gold certified building. To achieve this certification, this project made a number of eco-friendly and sustainable decisions including:

- Removal of over 2.5 acres of asphalt from the site with drainage designed to allow rain to filter naturally into the soil
- Water efficient landscaping to reduce water use by half
- A green roof and building design to reduce building energy use
- Reuse, salvage, or recycling of site materials
- A public plaza with water features and public seating<sup>9</sup>

During the dedication of this building, Mayor Steve Benjamin stated, "This is a classic example of what we can do when we're working together and we dream big- when we focus on neighborhood revitalization, when we focus on sustainability, when we focus on sustainability and adaptive reuse, when we focus on just being smart in what we do."

This statement underscores the importance of high-quality, sustainable, and accessible public spaces in Columbia. When the City invests in areas, it can have a positive impact on the surrounding communities. Ensuring that such investments adhere to quality design standards will allow the City to maximize the positive impacts of its expenditures.



Columbia Water/Wastewater Administration building with a green roof; image courtesy of Cox and Dinkins Engineering.

## Adopt and adhere to design, renovation, and maintenance standards for City projects and facilities that provide for resiliency, sustainability, and appropriate and equitable public access.

### Case Study 4

Richland Library Main, Columbia, SC

Richland Library is the public library system for of Richland County where it maintains a dozen facilities county-wide and facilitates hundreds of literary and cultural programs every year. In 1993, the Library constructed its main branch on Assembly Street. This branch boasts a progressive building style that stood in contrast to the style of building construction in Columbia at the time. In 2015, the interior of the building was remodeled and a public plaza was created. The building's form and the addition of public open spaces and maker spaces showcase the Library's commitment to providing residents of the County easy and convenient access to government resources and information.

The design of the main branch assisted in a strategic goal of the Library to become more customer-friendly and outward-facing. These changes have allowed the Library to serve customers more efficiently and given visitors a place to work and play organically. When designing new facilities for the City, designs should consider how best to support positive interactions with citizens and project a positive image of the City to all of its visitors.



Renovated interior and outdoor plaza of Richland Library Main

*An additional relevant case study of actions taken by the City of Phoenix, Arizona is provided within the natural resources chapter, in association with the recommendation to continue to invest in clean, renewable energy generation for community facilities.*

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Enable strategic planning for City services by examining and quantifying the comprehensive cost to the City of events, encroachments, enforcement, and other similar items.

Most municipal services serve either the City as a whole or serve a broad swath of the City’s citizens or businesses. Some services, for example the private use of public space through a temporary or permanent encroachment, or the public safety and public works services provided for a privately sponsored event, benefit a smaller subset of individuals or organizations.

Despite the costs, it is often in the best interest of the City to provide these services, especially when the City is best equipped to deliver the services, or is the only provider than can or should provide them. Regardless, having a full understanding of these sometimes hidden costs is essential when planning or budgeting for services, and the full benefit provided to user groups should be quantified both for transparency and accountability.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Budget, Grants & Program Management (primary)
- Columbia-Richland 911
- Columbia-Richland Fire
- Columbia Police Department
- Emergency Management
- Fleet Services
- Planning & Development Services
- Public Works

### DURATION

**MEDIUM**  
4-6 years to complete

Much can be quantified in the short term, however a complete survey of these costs might extend into the medium term, especially if no data currently exists.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

¢ - \$ 

### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Data

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Transportation

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identify all programs, or portions of programs, that help facilitate or are impacted by special events, encroachments, enforcement, and other similar items.
- As practical, identify the value of services provided for different constituencies- e.g. homeowners, small businesses, organizations.
- Determine the cost to the City of each of these programs, including employee cost/time and non-employee costs, such as costs resulting from equipment use or scheduling issues.
- Track the services and measurable costs over time.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Completing all or parts of this recommendation will provide a better understanding of the true costs of provided services and will help inform how resources are distributed towards meeting the City’s stated priorities.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Enable strategic planning for City services by examining and quantifying the comprehensive cost to the City of utility expansion.

The City of Columbia is in a relatively unique position as it is the region's largest city as well as the region's largest water and sewer utility provider. This role can allow the City to more effectively direct regional growth in a more constructive and responsible manner, which can benefit both the City and surrounding communities. Currently, the policy of the City is to allow for the extension of water and sewer when a developer meets certain conditions and pays for such an extension. This recommendation aims to reassess this policy to take into account unforeseen effects of increasing the sprawling nature of the City's utility networks, which may include social, monetary, and business costs, among others.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Engineering (primary)
- Utility Operations (primary)
- Planning Division
- Budget, Grants & Program Management

### DURATION

**MEDIUM**  
4-6 years to complete

Costs are largely due to analysis of current practices and changing policies as needed. This is a high priority for the City as the current policy of City is seemingly a high risk/high reward policy.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

**\$ - \$\$**

### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Data

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Natural Resources

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Current rate of expansion of water and sewer infrastructure
- Types of developments that occur following expansion of utilities
- Comparison of developments that occur outside City limits versus those that occur within the City
- Direct and indirect costs of service expansion as determined by various locational factors
- Analysis of development trends due to utility expansion over time

### MEASURING SUCCESS

- Development of a comprehensive, city-wide policy regarding utility expansion and service impacts
- Creation of utility expansion standards, including standards to deny utility expansion applications
- Increase in utility expansion and utility maintenance within City limits and areas near the City in comparison to areas outside the City
- Increased density and/or decreased vacancy rates inside the City

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

## Enable strategic planning for City services by examining and quantifying the comprehensive cost to the City of utility expansion.

### Case Study 5

“Grow Inside First,” Rock Hill, SC

The City of Rock Hill's Comprehensive Plan identified the City's highest priority goals in four core values. One of these core values was the concept of “Grow Inside First.” As described by the City, “this core value reflects the City's emphasis on infill and redevelopment and making maximum use of existing infrastructure maintenance and investment.” The core value further states, “In new town centers and redevelopment areas, this means creating comfortable mixed-use urban densities that support walking, biking, and transit and convenient neighborhood shopping.”

In speaking about utility expansion specifically, the value recommends that “in suburban areas, Grow Inside First means preserving environmentally sensitive areas and useful open space by encouraging the development of tracts already served by existing utilities and services rather than pushing out farther into undeveloped areas requiring new public investment. It means annexing unincorporated enclaves and working with the County, the school district, and other government partners to provide the most efficient service delivery possible.”

This core value is used to serve as a guide for City Council and City departments for making decisions related to development and utility expansion, and include the following policies:

- A moratorium on utility expansion and development along a major corridor until a traffic needs assessment is completed;
- An annexation policy which includes focusing on annexing and serving donut holes before expanding the City boundaries further outward; and
- Guidelines for staff to consider when making recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council for utility expansion and other planning matters.

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Before developing new hubs and centers of activity, celebrate and enrich our existing public spaces to build momentum while broadening amenities to make these spaces more welcoming.

While it is often difficult to get public support for funding routine maintenance activities, keeping up with our current resources is critical to the sustainability of the City. This includes the maintenance of existing parks facilities, public streets and sidewalks, and buildings. Maintenance is not just making repairs, but should also be preventative. Keeping up with a capital replacement schedule that recognizes the lifespan of equipment, materials, and other assets is critical. This is also an opportunity for the City to lead by example by taking care of and pride in its buildings and public spaces.

This approach is consistent with the focus of infill development efficiencies; putting our resources into existing neighborhoods, buildings, and infrastructure reinvigorates citizens to take pride in their communities and demonstrates a commitment to providing quality services to all residents.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Support Services (primary)
- Parks & Recreation (primary)
- Public Works (primary)
- City Council

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

Cost includes funds already budgeted for maintenance and capital replacement, however increased funding is needed. Proactive maintenance can lead to overall cost reductions in the long run and extend the life of facilities and infrastructure.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

**¢ - \$\$\$\$\$**  
annually

### THEMES

- Built Environment
- Lead By Example
- Safety

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Land Use

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Capital replacements schedule with annual budget from Parks and Recreation.
- Capital replacements schedule with annual budget from Support Services.
- Public Works maintenance and upgrades list with annual budget.
- Data collected for this recommendation should draw from and supplement the recommended community facilities plan.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Measuring success will need to involve keeping track of annual maintenance and capital replacements, reviewing the list annually, and planning and prioritizing the schedule for the following year. Tracking customer complaints, work orders, and claims of damages or negligence will also be a way to measure success, staying ahead of maintenance and safety issues and using a preventative approach.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Empower
- Enhance
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Establish a public safety complex to improve upon opportunities for training, efficiencies, and logistics.

The co-location of City services is used by many municipalities to reduce costs, make services more efficient, and create more collaboration between departments. Instead of requiring multiple facilities to be built and maintained, co-location of services provides increased order and savings for the City. This is particularly important for first responders whose relationship with one another directly impacts the health and well-being of the City's citizens. Such complexes can also increase interdepartmental and cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Emergency Management (primary)
- Columbia Police Department
- Columbia-Richland Fire
- Columbia-Richland 911
- Support Services
- Other public safety agencies

### DURATION

**LONG**  
7-10+ years to complete

While the creation of a dedicated public safety complex may be a costly acquisition, a policy of co-location can help to cut overall costs to the City.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

**\$\$\$\$\$**

### THEMES

- Safety
- Innovation & Technology
- Partner

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Land Use

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Determine potential facility needs and desires by holding a concepts and objectives meeting with all stakeholders to kick off the planning process
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine potential locations, facility ownership, programming, and maintenance
- Identify proposed departments for co-location and necessary training programs
- Identify how this complex can be accessible for the public
- Identify other entities who can use or rent portions of the complex or engage in training

### MEASURING SUCCESS

- Completion of a feasibility study
- Allocation of funds for the construction of the complex
- Acquisition of land for the new complex

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Prosper
- Lead

## Establish a public safety complex to improve upon opportunities for training, efficiencies, and logistics.

### Case Study 6

Public Safety Training Facility, Buncombe County, NC

In 2010, Buncombe County, North Carolina broke ground on a new public safety training facility. This facility was built to help train first responders for Buncombe County and its regional partners. The training center includes a defensive driving course, fire training tower, burn buildings, classrooms, a firing range, and other training facilities.

According to the County, “the facility [is] operated by Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College and will provide EMS, Law Enforcement, and Fire and Rescue personnel from Buncombe County and the western region access to enhanced training for all types of emergency response” which include:

- Fire service training including Firefighter certifications, continuing education, and specialized advanced firefighter training
- Law enforcement training including training to become a sworn officer, continuing education, and SWAT training
- EMS training which includes fire emergencies as well as rope and vertical rescue training

This training center has allowed Buncombe County to train more effectively and efficiently and has provided emergency services staff with the opportunity to learn from other County departments and personnel from other jurisdictions. It has also provided other regional public safety providers with access to a state-of-the-art facility without having to drive outside of the region.



Image of the Buncombe County Public Safety Training Facility, courtesy of Buncombe County.

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Update the Urban Service Area plan at least once every five years.

The Urban Service Area plan is a policy of City Council that anticipates areas of future expansion to City services and the City's boundaries. Investment and redevelopment within the existing boundary of the City of Columbia is a priority, but with over 60% of the area population living in unincorporated areas, it is prudent to consider what areas the City can efficiently provide with services beyond its borders.

This plan provides a prioritization tool for City Council, staff, and the public. Regularly updating this plan is an important part of a rational and measured growth strategy for the City and region; it is particularly useful in guiding annexation decisions and planning for future development and expansion of community facilities and services.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Planning Division (primary)
- Columbia City Council
- Columbia Water
- Emergency Management
- Public Works
- Columbia Police Department
- Columbia-Richland Fire

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

Columbia Compass includes an update to the Urban Service Area plan, last updated in 2009. Future updates should be made at least every five years, or more often if trends dictate.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

  
every five years

### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Data

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Population
- Land Use
- Economic Development

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Current and anticipated future service capacities of City service providers
- Projected growth patterns
- Urban Service classification of annexed properties, collected at the time of annexation

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Successful implementation of this policy recommendation would be reflected in regular updates to the Urban Service Area plan, at least once every five years. The Urban Service Area plan should be tailored to benefit the City as a whole and accurately reflect areas that may be served by, or benefit from being served by, the City of Columbia. This plan will help develop, as well as be influenced by, a comprehensive community facilities plan.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Connect
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Continue the implementation of priority based budgeting.

Priority based budgeting is a methodology that helps measure how closely aligned a budget is with an organization’s priorities, with a goal of improving decision-making and ultimately driving the budget towards those priorities. In priority based budgeting, individual programs - not departments - are reviewed, analyzed, and scored for how they achieve results and address the City’s priorities,

The City has used elements of priority based budgeting for a while, however the 2018-2019 fiscal year was the first year priority based budgeting was formally incorporated into the budgetary process. Priority based budgeting is not intended to replace the City’s line-item budget, but is instead a complement to the City’s budget process and a tool to aid decision-making.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Budget, Grants & Program Management (primary)
- City Manager
- City Council
- All City departments

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete,  
recurring

Staff time is already devoted to the budgetary process, but as a complement to developing the traditional budget some additional staff time is expected, especially in the first years of implementation.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3  
years

### COST



### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Data

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Priority Investment

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- A comprehensive inventory of all City programs
- The cost to the City of each program, including employee cost/time and non-employee costs
- Each program will have unique performance measures; if data on these measures is not already collected, a plan to fill the data gaps will need to be developed and executed.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Implementation of priority based budgeting is not a goal in and of itself, but rather a toolkit and process of data collection, review, and analysis to help the City reach its goals. Broadly, the City aims to foster a healthy economy, connect its communities, improve quality of life, collaborate & partner with others, and provide high quality municipal services. Each year in which the budget aligns more closely with the City’s strategic priorities is a mark of success.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- |                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| • Attract & Retain | • Prosper |
| • Plan             | • Enhance |
| • Connect          | • Lead    |
| • Empower          |           |

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Create standing interdepartmental project teams for City projects and process reviews to ensure holistic and collaborative decision-making.

In an organization as large as the City government, multiple projects are being pursued simultaneously by various departments all of the time. Regular interdepartmental coordination would not only prevent possible conflicts that arise, but would also present opportunities to collaborate and leverage funding for maximum efficiency. For example, when CIP funding is allocated for a water line replacement, it may be on a road where a bike lane is also planned. Repaving rather than patching the road after the waterline project would provide a better product long-term, but would also provide an opportunity to paint the bike lane on the newly paved road while crews or contractors are mobilized. In addition to helping coordinate projects, the collaboration inherent in an interdepartmental project team could also be leveraged to both review and streamline internal and public-facing business processes to help ensure efficiency, regulatory compliance, and positive customer experience.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Budget, Grants & Program Management
- Engineering
- Planning & Development Services
- Public Works
- Utility Operations
- All City departments

*The primary responsible party will vary on a per-project basis and should generally be the project manager.*

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

This should be a standing meeting that a representative from each department and/or division can attend to ensure things do not slip through the cracks.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST



### THEMES

- Lead By Example
- Built Environment

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Priority investment

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

Data on project management processes, project timelines, and the critical junctures for decision-making should be collected for each type of project in order to identify the best timing for collaborative efforts and grant applications.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success will be measured by the number of projects leveraged through this collaborative process. The use of CIP-funded projects as matching funds for grants which result in the completion of collaborative projects and the implementation of City plans could also count towards success.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Clarify the basic services that the City provides to citizens, business districts, and others.

The public does not always realize how many ways the City impacts their lives daily. During the Columbia Compass outreach process, public feedback indicated that it was not always clear what services the City provides to residents, businesses, business districts, and other groups; how frequently those services are provided; how to access services; or how to partner with the City for those services that are not standard. This is a missed opportunity to promote the City as a service provider and to quantify in real terms the value the City provides to all.

The City provides access to some services online and through apps, and publishes a guide to City services. To further clarify what basic services are provided, a lead coordinator should be chosen to partner with all City departments in documenting service types, levels, and frequencies. This coordinator should then work with Public Relations, Media & Marketing with regard to marketing and messaging. The ways in which we access information will continue to evolve, and attention must be paid to ensuring that messaging is always up to date and all users can understand, access, and enjoy the City's services.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- City Manager (Primary)
- City Council (Primary)
- Public Relations, Media & Marketing

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

As this is essentially accounting for existing services, this should only take a short time to implement, but should be updated as services change.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

¢ - \$ 

### THEMES

- Engagement & Outreach
- Plan & Implement

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Cultural Resources
- Housing

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- A survey of departments should be conducted to determine existing services provided and current means the public can use to access services.
- Identify current best practices for providing easy access to services.
- As practical, identify the value of services provided for different constituencies (e.g. homeowners, small businesses, organizations)
- Source(s) of funding for the services provided (e.g. general fund, fees)

### MEASURING SUCCESS

A clear understanding of services and how to access them will contribute to a greater public confidence in the City as a service provider, and build community understanding and trust.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Prosper
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Review permitting, licensing, and other business processes on a regular basis with a focus on user experience.

Staff must always strive to uphold the safety and community standards represented by a permit or license in a fair and equitable manner. Equally important is ensuring that the permitting, licensing, and inspection process is fair, efficient, and easy to access and understand.

The permitting and licensing functions of municipal government promote safety and accountability in our community, but over time existing processes may fail to keep pace with changing needs. Establishing a regular review of existing processes will help ensure that our City is strengthened through our processes, not hindered by them. Other internal and external business processes with measurable outcomes should be reviewed as well.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Business License (primary)
- Columbia Water (primary)
- Planning & Development Services (primary)
- City Manager
- Columbia Police Department
- Columbia-Richland Fire
- All City departments

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

Individual schedules for recurring top-to-bottom process reviews may be established during initial review, however significant problems or opportunities should be addressed as they arise.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST



### THEMES

- Equity & Accessibility
- Engagement & Outreach
- Lead By Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Housing
- Land Use

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identification of best practices, both regionally and nationally.
- Solicit input from end-users on their experiences and suggested improvements.
- Review new or improved technology / software for cost vs. potential efficiency gains.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

To the extent possible, measurable data should be tracked and reported upon as the initial step in any process review in order to establish benchmarks for measures of improvement. Examples of measurable outcomes include review times, number of reviewed items, and industry-specific standards. Some benchmarks may be set by industry standards.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive city-wide public engagement and governmental outreach strategy.

In order to effectively govern, a City must understand the wants and needs of the community it serves and effectively update the community on how it is addressing those needs.

Meaningful interaction with the public is made more challenging by the changes we are experiencing in how we all communicate, socialize, or otherwise engage with one another. This means that no single means of reaching out to the community is the “right way” to communicate.

Implementing a comprehensive and city-wide public engagement strategy will ensure that the City hears all the community’s voices and will help all City departments engage with a clear unified vision - yet in meaningful conversation - with the City’s diverse constituencies.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Public Relations, Media & Marketing (primary)
- Public Information Officers from all outward-facing City departments
- City Manager
- Emergency Management

### DURATION

**SHORT**  
1-3 years to complete

While Public, Media Relations & Marketing is the primary responsible party, collaboration across City departments will be crucial to success. Strategy development should occur in the short term, though updates may be necessary in the future due to a variety of factors.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

€ - \$ 

### THEMES

- Engagement & Outreach
- Equity & Accessibility
- Innovation & Technology

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Cultural Resources

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identification of best practices for public engagement and outreach, both regionally and nationally.
- Identification of key personnel in City departments and programs who participate in public engagement or outreach.
- Identification and review of existing participation patterns, and tracking of changing participation over time. Where appropriate, collection of demographic data can help facilitate this analysis.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

While component strategies will need to be adjusted on a nearly continual basis, one measure of success would be an increase in public participation and engagement in City events and processes. The continued use of proven effective communication and engagement strategies, as well as continued communication across departments on potential new implementations, are reasonable measures of success.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Connect
- Empower
- Enhance
- Lead

## Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive city-wide public engagement and governmental outreach strategy.

### Case Study 7

Government Outreach Strategy, Mount Pleasant, SC

Years of rapid growth and the challenge of adequately responding to the growing needs of the community led the Town of Mount Pleasant to create a government outreach strategy in order to increase meaningful public participation, combat misinformation, and help create a greater shared sense of community throughout the town.

In developing their strategy, they found that while many of their departments had high-quality outreach programs, there was not enough coordination between them to ensure that messaging was consistent. Also, through surveys, they found that many citizens felt they were impacted by decisions made in town hall and wished to be engaged, but there was not a single best time or method to reach the public. Many citizens wanted increased options for online participation, but there was also a desire to have continued opportunities for in-person interactions. Surveys found that the best time for a citizen to attend a meeting depended upon age, gender, occupation, or other individual circumstances.

Oversight of the Town's overall government outreach strategy is housed within their Community & Government Affairs Office, though the Office also coordinates with individual departments that maintain their own public outreach programs, such as the Police Department and Planning.

Many of the town-wide outreach programs are designed to be in-person, informal, and ongoing, in order to increase government openness and citizen familiarity with and confidence in the democratic process. Some programs include open-format community roundtable meetings for groups of 20 or less, monthly mobile office hours held by the Town Administrator in locations around the town, and "Mayor at the Market," where the Mayor meets with citizens at the local farmer's market.

These programs are complemented by regularly scheduled public meetings, the Town's open data portal (eMPower), and the Town Administrator's monthly E-brief newsletter that covers capital projects, special events, upcoming meetings, business development matters, announcements, and more.

The Town has found that follow-up with participating citizens is a crucial part of the outreach effort, whether it is by providing updates on any relevant topics and actions, or by simply writing a quick thank you note.

In addition to helping citizens become more informed and making elected officials and staff more aware of the community's priorities, the implementation of a public engagement and governmental outreach strategy has the potential to create a culture of collaborative partnership between citizens and their public servants.

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Implement a customer service empowerment policy and training curriculum for all City employees

When a customer feels they have not been treated respectfully or that their concern has not been understood or responded to appropriately, it reflects poorly on both the employee and the organization that should be serving them. The same structures and rules necessary to provide services in an efficient, orderly, and equitable manner can also serve to blind both the employee and organization to the reasonable needs of the customer.

All City employees should be empowered with decision-making ability in order to positively impact customer interactions, however the many missions of City government may require additional department-specific policies. Training for management and front line employees is essential and city-wide and departmental values must be clearly communicated.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Human Resources (primary)
- City Manager
- All City departments

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Drafting customer service empowerment policies can be accomplished relatively quickly, but all employees must be trained prior to implementation and on a recurring basis thereafter.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

**\$\$ - \$\$\$** 

### THEMES

- Lead By Example
- Equity & Accessibility

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Population

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- To develop training materials, concrete and real-world public sector scenarios that model the customer service values of the City and each department need to be identified.
- Regular customer feedback needs to be collected and used to coach and improve service.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The development and implementation of baseline customer service training curriculum by Human Resources would be the first milestone, followed by the development and facilitation of additional department-specific training. After implementation, a typical method of measuring customer satisfaction is through surveys; many examples of private and public sector customer service surveys exist and can serve as models. Different survey methods may need to be deployed depending on the nature of customer interaction for each area. In addition to improved public perception, empowerment tends to improve employee morale and retention.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Empower
- Prosper
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Celebrate and build upon departmental successes and encourage an entrepreneurial mindset by implementing an innovation program and forum for professional development.

Any organization that desires to lead in its field requires a highly engaged, well-trained, and committed workforce to deliver high quality and innovative services to its customers. City staff already work hard for the people of Columbia, but our society and technology are changing fast, and we must adapt in order to prosper.

Professional development should be cultivated. Columbia can also take inspiration from other municipalities and organizations that have adopted innovation programs. Individual and departmental innovations - and lessons learned - should be shared and recognized through formal programming. Employees can and should be coached in taking ownership of - and seeking solutions to - problems and empowered with the tools to implement them.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Human Resources (primary)
- City Manager

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

While the duration is medium, the groundwork and the pilots for the innovation and professional development programs can be completed in the short term.

### PRIORITY

**LOW**  
start within 7-10 years

### COST

**\$\$** 

### THEMES

- Innovation & Technology
- Lead By Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Population
- Economic Development

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Employee participation rates.
- Employee retention rates.
- Estimated and actual cost savings or other measurable improvements from proposed innovations.
- Training and other professional certifications obtained and maintained by employees.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Similar successful programs have started with pilot programs and expanded to most or all of their employees. Success can be measured in part by the number of employees that have been a part of the program, but the most important measures of success would be the number of innovations that have originated from employees and have been considered or adopted. To the extent possible, savings or other efficiencies resulting from innovation should also be measured.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Empower
- Prosper
- Lead

## Celebrate and build upon departmental successes and encourage an entrepreneurial mindset by implementing an innovation program and forum for professional development.

### Case Study 8

The Entrepreneurial Mindset Program, Albuquerque, NM

Investing in human capital is an important aspect of a functional city. Supporting the professional development of public servants leads to a staff that is more competent, knowledgeable, and efficient. Well-trained staff can be trusted to work independently and with more accountability.

The City of Albuquerque established “The Entrepreneurial Mindset Program” in 2015 to train their employees to “view their job from the perspective of ownership, empowerment, inspiration, and innovative problem solving.” According to the City, those who complete this program will be able to:

- Develop critical thinking skills that will enable them to identify and evaluate opportunities, manage risks, and learn from the results;
- Understand the process that enables people with limited resources to transform an idea into a sustainable success;
- Transform problems into opportunities;
- Apply fundamental aspects of entrepreneurial thinking across disciplines and as a means of personal empowerment;
- Establish goals, identify resources, and determine the steps required to accomplish their goals; and
- Identify and interact with local entrepreneurs within their own communities to solve real problems.

In addition to the impacts for employees and citizens, such training programs can increase employee retention and make employment at municipalities more attractive.

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Routinely examine the City's policies and adjust as necessary to ensure that the City is a competitive employer that can both attract and retain talent.

In order to the lead the way in providing high quality municipal services, the City must be able to both attract and retain quality employees. Examining and adjusting hiring, retention, and training policies, where necessary, can help ensure that City employees feel valued and respected. In stabilizing the City's workforce, efficiencies can be realized through a reduction in training needs and an increase in institutional knowledge.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Human Resources (primary)
- City Council (primary)
- All City departments

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Regular reviews may vary in cost, dependent on which systems they examine, and will likely rely heavily on staff support, especially from Human Resources staff and departmental managers.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

¢ - \$\$\$ 

### THEMES

- **Lead By Example**
- Data
- Engagement & Outreach

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

Data to be collected may include best practices, studies of policies our peer cities have in place, and an understanding of the impediments to attracting and retaining talent, both on a city-wide and a departmental level.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The City will be able to measure the success of attracting and retaining a talented workforce through measuring both average employee longevity and the depth of the applicant pool for jobs across the City.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Empower
- Prosper
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Continue to facilitate a safe and healthy work environment.**

Safe practices and proactively managing risks are integral to providing a healthy work environment in which employees can thrive. The City is focused on providing its employees the tools and knowledge they require to stay safe as their perform their critical services in support of the citizens of Columbia. Helping to develop a culture of risk avoidance and taking steps to mitigate potential risks to both individuals and the institution as a whole is critical to the City's stewardship of both financial and employee resources.

**WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?**

- Safety & Risk Management (primary)
- All City departments

**DURATION**

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

While managing risk and promoting safety may require training and insurance costs, these costs are far outweighed by the potential costs the City could occur should these issues be unaddressed.

**PRIORITY**

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

**COST**

**\$\$ - \$\$\$\***

**THEMES**

- Safety
- Data

**OTHER ELEMENTS**

- Population

**DATA TO BE COLLECTED**

Continuing to track the number, type, and tasks and personnel associated with recordable incidents and workers' compensation claims will allow the City to build upon successes and address concerning trends.

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

Success will be measured through a decrease in the number and type of recordable incidents, as well as a decrease in the number and cost of workers' compensation claims.

**CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA**

- Attract & Retain
- Prosper
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Review and adjust the City’s outward-facing technological platforms regularly to ensure the user experience is optimized.

The ways in which customers access goods and services have changed dramatically, even over the last few years. Not surprisingly, the user experience accessing information, services, or goods from municipal and other public sector organizations lags far behind the most successful examples from the private sector.

Keeping up with the ever-changing technological landscape, like finding adequate funding and maintaining essential privacy and security standards, is a challenge. However, keeping up with standards of service is not a luxury, and the City of Columbia can and should systematically reassess whether its website, payment portal, permit, licensing, procurement, and other outward-facing platforms are accessible, effective, and user-friendly. Adjustments can be simple, like adjusting content up-to-date and easier to understand, or larger overhauls that require greater investment of time and money.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Information Technology (primary)
- Public Relations, Media & Marketing (primary for website)
- All outward-facing City departments

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

The time and budget required to identify needs, assess and evaluate options, and implement the chosen solution for each platform will vary; priority should be given to those platforms with the greatest impact on the user experience.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

**\$ - \$\$\$\*** 

### THEMES

- Engagement & Outreach
- Equity & Accessibility
- Innovation & Technology

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identification of best practices, both regionally and nationally.
- Identification of common user requests.
- End-user input, through both focus groups and surveys.
- Other measurable variable may include items such as the amount of visitors to a page or application, time spent completing forms or transactions, and items identified through the review of best practices.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Much like a capital replacement plan, this recommendation can be considered a success upon the completion, adoption, and utilization of a process that serves as a resource in annual and long-term budgetary planning for this important element of customer service. Successful implementation of individual projects falling under this recommendation will be reflected in improved customer satisfaction and reduction of staff time needed to address common requests. Attention to accessibility, cybersecurity and data privacy is a must.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Complete the transition of City services to self service.

A number of City departments collect payments for a variety of services. The City has begun moving payment processing to sc.gov, which allows citizens to make payments both online and by telephone. Self service allows citizens to access key information quickly and efficiently, and the completion of this transition will both benefit the customer and the City through creating greater efficiencies.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Information Technology (primary)
- All City departments which process payments

### DURATION

**SHORT**  
1-3 years to complete

A one-time startup cost associated with transitioning is likely to fall within the \$ range, and the transition will require staff time and likely training. A smaller annual software cost is required to maintain access to self service.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

¢ - \$ 

### THEMES

- Equity & Accessibility
- Data
- Innovation & Technology

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

As part of the transition to self-service, departments will need to analyze their data to ensure compatibility with this public-facing portal.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Simply measured, success will be the transition of all departments which process payments to self service. Success may also be measured through qualitative feedback received from users regarding the ease of access of self service portals as well as user preferences, as well as a quantitative analysis of user choices.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Prosper
- Empower
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Protect the integrity of City information by strengthening our cybersecurity posture.

Cybersecurity should continue to be one of the most significant focus areas for the City. Increasing reliance upon networks, data, and artificial intelligence strengthen our decision making and efficiency, yet the threats to data security continue to multiply and evolve. Maintaining the security of our residents' and customers' critical information, the personal information of our workforce, and systems' information is and should be a top priority for the City.

Accordingly, the City is already deeply engaged in a wide range of internal and external policy and operational activities to enhance the City's cybersecurity posture. In the years ahead, the City should continue to strengthen situational awareness and incident response to address cybersecurity threats. In addition, the City should look for ways to improve cybersecurity awareness training to increase employee awareness and accountability.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Information Technology (primary)
- Budget, Grants, & Program Management
- Safety & Risk Management
- All City employees

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Projects involved will vary in the time and cost to implement, however assessment of needs and adjustments required will be continual and ongoing.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

**\$\$\$**

### THEMES

- Data
- Safety

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Transportation

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Both internal and external data should be identified. This data should be used to identify, protect, detect, respond, and recover from cybersecurity threats.
- Some of this data should be shared with other partner agencies to encourage collaboration. Enhanced shared analytics and real-time information sharing and reporting can improve enterprise cybersecurity situational awareness.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The goal of this recommendation is to improve the City's critical Infrastructure through cyber resilience. The City will improve policies and controls while conducting continuous monitoring and hardening of the City's infrastructure and network. The City will continue to assess and embrace relevant standards developed by partners, reducing costs for the City and speeding the integration of new technologies. The development of requirements and solutions that protect the privacy and confidentiality of the City's information is also a measure of success.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

## Protect the integrity of City information by strengthening our cybersecurity posture.

### Case Study 9

SamSam Ransomware Virus, Atlanta, GA

Regrettably some of the most important lessons are learned through crisis. When Atlanta was attacked by hackers using the SamSam virus to ransom the City's files in March 2018, they were not the first municipality or organization to be targeted, but they were one of the largest. Citizens lost the ability to pay their water bills, court scheduling was disabled, and police had to file reports on paper and lost records including dashcam footage. Overall about a third of the city's applications were affected. Ultimately, the City of Atlanta did not pay the ransom, but spent many months and millions of dollars in the effort to recover as much data as they could and restore services.

Rapid technological change and the industry move from physical servers and owned software to cloud-based services and annual software licensing mean that many municipalities struggle to budget for the high cost of technology upgrades, especially as these crucial services cannot be funded through municipal bonds like physical assets often are.<sup>10</sup> Atlanta was no exception, and a City Auditor's report two months before the attack found that they were using software that was no longer supported and that there were deficiencies in the City's cybersecurity practices, including using "ad hoc or undocumented" processes.<sup>11</sup>

Beyond merely recovering from the attack and putting things back the way they were beforehand, the newly elected Mayor hired a new Chief Information Officer to overhaul the City's IT operations. As a



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result of the attack, cybersecurity is a significant consideration in Atlanta's IT decision-making going forward. Password management was improved, cybersecurity awareness was bolstered for city-wide staff and the City's IT professionals, and access to sensitive data was reviewed. In response to the crisis, Atlanta accelerated the upgrade of many of its systems and is developing a new city-wide IT management plan.

New or strengthened interdepartmental and inter-agency collaboration have also played a large role in the recovery and planning for a stronger cybersecurity posture. The FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) helped in the midst of the crisis, but are also sources of information and ongoing support. Assistance is provided to local governments through the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, and by DHS' Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT), and one of the things recommended is to develop an action plan ahead of time in case of future cyber attacks

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Expand the city-wide open data portal in order to reduce the staff time and resources needed to respond to common records requests.

Much of the data the City generates and maintains can be considered public data, yet it may not be readily available to or usable by the public. When data is well-maintained and made accessible, machine-readable, and free to use, it becomes “Open Data”, providing value to the City and the public alike. Columbia has already launched an open data portal - it should be expanded to include more datasets and made easier to access.

City staff spends a considerable amount of time responding to requests for public records. As data is just one form of information the public frequently seeks, consideration should be given to grouping the open data portal with other commonly-sought open government information, such as public notices, City Council and board and commission minutes and agendas, and access to public information requests.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Information Technology - GIS (primary)
- Budget, Grants & Program Management
- Planning & Development Services
- Legal
- Public Relations, Media & Marketing
- Columbia Water

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

The very nature of open data is an ongoing process - data needs to be regularly updated, and as the City’s data infrastructure expands, new data sets should be evaluated for inclusion into the open data portal.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

**\$ - \$\$\$** 

### THEMES

- Data
- Engagement & Outreach

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Housing

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Release of new data for inclusion in the open data portal should be prioritized based on identification of the public’s most requested or desired data sets..
- Focus should be on non-personal data, and special attention should be made to privacy laws and privacy exceptions within open records law.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The City has taken some important first steps, including adopting an open data policy, creating a data inventory template, and forming an executive data governance committee.

The open data portal should be accessible through the City’s main webpage, and an expanded and more prominent open data portal should reduce records requests and call volume related to any newly included data sets.

The larger goals include increased economic development and citizen satisfaction resulting from improved access to valuable and relevant information.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

## Expand the city-wide open data portal in order to reduce the staff time and resources needed to respond to common records requests.

### Case Study 10

Data.Gov, United States of America

The federal government's open data portal, Data.gov, now contains over 250,000 datasets, but started with only a few dozen when it was launched in May of 2009. The impetus for Data.gov was an open government directive from the Office of the President, however, the OPEN Government Data Act<sup>12</sup>, effective in January 2019, made Data.gov a requirement in statute rather than just policy. Federal agencies are required to publish their information online as open data, using standardized and machine-readable data formats, with their metadata included in the Data.gov catalog.

While agencies are required to consider the costs and liabilities of providing open data, Data.gov highlights several cost saving and productivity benefits<sup>13</sup>, including:

- Saving time and money on Freedom of Information Act requests
- Discovering data held by other agencies and avoiding duplicative internal research
- Empowering employees to make better-informed decisions
- Positive attention from the public, media, and other agencies
- Growing the economy by making it easier for private sector entrepreneurs to create new innovations fueled by public data

Some of the nationally-known companies that leverage federal open data in their products are Kayak.com, LinkedIn, Zillow, Carfax, and ESRI.

In response to the OPEN Government Data Act, the Federal Data

Strategy was created<sup>14</sup>, including a detailed action plan drawing upon principles in the areas of ethical governance, conscious design (in terms of ensuring current and future relevance of data), and creating and maintaining a learning culture. Additionally, three categories of general practices to guide data stewardship and use were highlighted:

- Building a culture that values data and promotes public use
- Governing, managing, and protecting data
- Promoting efficient and appropriate data use

Keeping with the theme of open data, Data.gov itself was built with open source software available to anyone, including state and local governments. Likewise, while not required to do so under federal law, states and local governments may submit metadata to the Data.gov catalog to increase the visibility and accessibility of their datasets to the public. Guidance is available in the form of strategies and best practices, case studies, policies and standards, and other tools made available through Resources.data.gov

#### WHAT IS IT?

**Data** - A value or set of values that represents a specific concept or concepts. These can be numbers (quantities), descriptions, symbols, etc.

**Dataset** - A named collection of related records, with the collection containing data organized or formatted in a specific or prescribed way

**Metadata** - Data that provides information about other data. Data.gov requires certain fields including title, description, tags, last update, publisher, etc.

**Open Data** - Data that can be freely used, re-used, and redistributed by anyone. It should be machine-readable, available in bulk, and provided in an open format such as a .csv (comma separated values) file.

## Expand the city-wide open data portal in order to reduce the staff time and resources needed to respond to common records requests.

### Case Study 11

Open Government, San Diego, CA

The accessibility, transparency, efficiency, and innovation fueled by open data is impactful, but is only a part of making government more open. Likewise, the open data portal launched in 2016 is just one element that San Diego uses in their approach to facilitating open government online. In addition to the usual information about city departments, payment portals, and online services, when you arrive at San Diego's streamlined and award-winning website, a prominent blue "Open Government" button takes you to their open government page at [www.sandiego.gov/opengov](http://www.sandiego.gov/opengov).

San Diego's open government landing page is also relatively clutter-free and easy to navigate, with prominently displayed contact information and large illustrated links to:

- Meeting Agendas & Minutes
- File or Review a Public Records Request
- Browse the Open Data Portal
- Required Document Postings
- Public Participation
- Public Notices

Documents like agendas, minutes, notices, and other public records are not necessarily "data" in the sense of values one might find entered into a spreadsheet or database, but they are valuable items

of public information, and ready access to them is necessary to fuel the democratic process. Consolidating the access to all types of public records and public involvement in one place provides greater transparency and makes it easier for residents and businesses to be informed about and participate in their city's governance. Also, the staff time necessary to respond to open records requests is reduced when a citizen can access open data or other records they seek in the same place they would file an open records request.

Because they were unsatisfied with the manual upload requirements of their existing ready-made open data portal, San Diego's Performance & Analytics Department (Panda) created their own, automating the upload process and including notifications to other City staff when data is updated. They are also collaborating with other cities through the Civic Analytics Network to explore data format standardization across local governments, which can ultimately lead to lower software costs by reducing the costly customization required to adapt to each local government's unique needs.<sup>15</sup>

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Develop a collaborative inventory of internal datasets and a plan for internal data sharing and ongoing maintenance.

The GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Division maintains shared databases for much of the City’s geographically-based data. Likewise, there are several software systems implemented city-wide, such as CityWorks for work order tracking or EnerGov for permit review. These serve as shared and indexed sources of data that decision-makers can draw upon.

Despite these successes, there are still blind spots and some of the data owned by divisions of the City may not be used and shared internally as efficiently as possible. The development of this inventory has already begun. However, similar to the City’s open data policy, the internal sharing of data sets between all City departments should be formalized, and city-wide quality control and maintenance policies adopted.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Information Technology, especially GIS (primary)
- Budget, Grants & Program Management
- Legal
- All City departments

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Completing an inventory and plan for internal data-sharing can be accomplished in a relatively short time span and should be a high priority for the City.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST



### THEMES

- **Data**
- Plan & Implement

### OTHER ELEMENTS

*All elements of Columbia Compass are data-driven, and therefore relate to this recommendation.*

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Each department and division should inventory the data they own, regularly generate, or rely upon for decision-making using the data inventory template developed for the Open Data Program.
- City-wide data quality standards should be developed or modified if necessary, including required metadata (attributes regarding the origin, quality, age, and other features of the data).
- Safeguards to protect data integrity and privacy shall be implemented, and City departments and the Data Governance Committee should review whether each dataset is suitable for public release through the City’s open data portal.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

This recommendation will be considered to be successfully implemented when the inventory of the internal data sets is complete and formalized internal data sharing and maintenance is implemented. However, since data needs, data sources, and technology constantly change, regular reviews should be conducted to ensure the inventory is up to date.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

## Develop a collaborative inventory of internal datasets and a plan for internal data sharing and ongoing maintenance.

### Case Study 12

Contract Management Module, Columbia, SC

Contracts are often lengthy documents, and there is no exception when the contracts involve the City. Despite their importance to the City's operations, each individual document is not "data" in the traditional sense, however a significant amount of data is generated in the development of each contract and contained within each document.

Currently, the City's method for tracking and monitoring contracts has been varied and decentralized. Multiple departments and databases which retain official records exist throughout the City, making contract analysis, administration, and management problematic. This decentralized contract management process flow results in a less efficient process for maintenance, retrieval, and analysis of these City records.

Industry best practices incorporate a centralized module for contract management. The City's Procurement and Contracts Department is pursuing the use of a Contract Management Module, which can be added to and integrated with the City's current financial accounting system. Along with the adoption of this module, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be developed or modified to incorporate the Contract Management Module, which will help to standardize and set parameters for daily operations. These SOPs can also be used as a reference tool for staff city-wide, providing guidance on how to properly process procurement and contracting functions such as



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change orders, amendments, contract renewals, and extensions. The integrated contract management software module has the capability to address the following items, in addition to providing a centralized program for managing City contracts:

- Professional services contract amendments
- Construction change orders
- Scope expansion
- Identify and enforce change order thresholds based on acceptable standards approved by the City Governance.
- Clear and concise contract specifications to address monetary and technical changes
- Tracking of awards and payments to include prime contractors, vendors, subcontractors/sub-consultants, inclusive of Local and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.
- Automated notifications for critical contract milestones such as expirations, project and dollar thresholds, renewals, and extensions.
- Electronic approvals for all new contracts, renewals, extensions, amendments, and change orders.
- Enhanced reporting capabilities and transparency.

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Identify data needs relevant to improving and prioritizing City services, and engage with the public or outside agencies to fill these gaps where possible.

When trying to improve or prioritize City services, sometimes there is a partial or total lack of data which, if available, could help City staff fully understand the problem and/or identify solutions. Assessing long term and recurring data needs and partnering with others to fill these gaps is critical to providing efficient and data-influenced services.

Data is valuable in part because of the time and other resources needed for its collection and maintenance. Yet because many of the services cities provide and problems they try to address affect the daily lives of the community as a whole, often there are individuals or organizations either already actively collecting data, or who would be interested in partnering to collect such data. These relationships should be leveraged to fill data gaps, while recognizing and addressing the importance of data integrity and ongoing maintenance.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Information Technology, especially GIS (primary)
- Legal
- All City departments
- Willing outside agencies and individuals

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

Completing other recommendations in this section will help identify relevant data needs and data gaps, and thus this recommendation is a lower priority.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

¢ - \$ 

### THEMES

- Data
- Engagement & Outreach
- Partner

### OTHER ELEMENTS

*All elements of Columbia Compass are data-driven, and therefore relate to this recommendation.*

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- An example of data to be collected are the bicycle and pedestrian counts currently generated by staff and volunteers and coordinated by the Planning Division. This data is similar to automotive traffic counts, and can be used to support decision making when designing pedestrian and roadway improvements.
- Sharing of existing internal data sets is addressed in a separate recommendation, and provides needed context for this recommendation.
- Training to ensure data integrity is essential.
- Some data collection may be for one-time projects; otherwise a plan for ongoing maintenance is needed.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

This will be an ongoing process, however this recommendation can be considered successfully implemented when additional needed data sets are obtained and used.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

## Identify data needs relevant to improving and prioritizing City services, and engage with the public or outside agencies to fill these gaps where possible.

### Case Study 13

#### TreesCount! 2015-2016 Street Tree Census, New York, NY

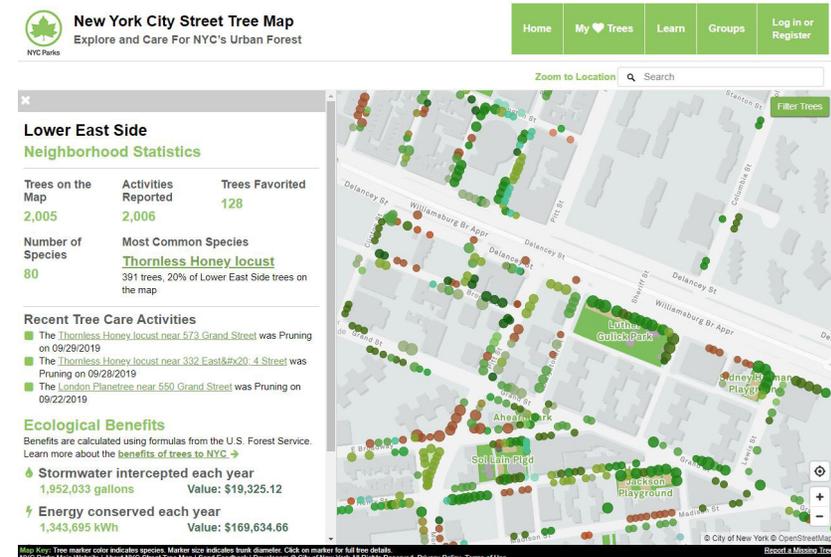
The City of New York conducted their third tree street tree census in 2015-2016 through the extensive help of 2,241 volunteers, or "treerecorders," who utilized TreeKIT training and software to collect critical data points on 666,134 street trees. In all, volunteers completed 34% of the census. Data collected included status, health, Latin and common names, location, tree diameter at breast height (DBH), if there were any problems affecting the tree site, and if there was evidence of someone actively taking care of a tree (street tree stewardship). Trees within parks were not included within this census.

The dataset allows the City to not only strategically plan for the short- and long-term maintenance and planting of the street tree canopy, but also to better understand the impact of the canopy on the City. Data collected allows the City to calculate the impact of street trees both on the City as a whole and by neighborhood - including the amount of stormwater captured and air pollutants removed each year. These ecological benefits are quantified both in unit measurements and in dollar value.

The New York City Street Tree Map, an interactive map portal, provides users with the ability to not only learn the species of street trees, but also how they might help care for trees, what tree care events have occurred recently, and how to contact or join tree care groups. Users can also "favorite" trees and record care activities, and

have access through a dashboard-type portal on the Tree Map. Data from this census, as well as the 2006 and 1996, are also made available on the City's Open Data portal, both in an interactive map and in downloadable GIS dataset. By making this data available to citizens and researchers, additional analyses can be completed that broaden the City's and the broader public's understanding of the importance and allocation of street trees.<sup>16</sup>

Due to the success of the New York City TreesCount! census, TreeKIT is working to build tools for other cities to conduct a participatory tree census of their own through the development of a progressive web app in the near future.<sup>17</sup>



Screenshot of the New York City Street Tree Map interactive map portal, used with the permission of NYC Parks.

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Champion regional data sharing; expand upon and/or formalize data sharing agreements with outside agencies where appropriate.

Our lives are shaped by local, regional, and global systems and events. In the interest of improved quality of life and regional competitiveness, local governments and private entities must work together to share the data needed to help understand what is working well, what needs improvement, and how we can be more competitive.

Some data sharing practices, including formal agreements with other agencies, are already in place or are in the process of being developed. Leading by example in this case means building and expanding upon data sharing arrangements with internally identified shareable data.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Information Technology (primary)
- City Manager
- Budget, Grants & Program Management
- Central Midlands Council of Governments

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Data sharing should occur when the opportunities arise, however focused efforts can occur after other recommendations addressing data needs are addressed. The time needed to establish individual agreements is short, however efforts should be ongoing.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

¢ - \$ 

### THEMES

- Data
- Lead By Example
- Partner

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Housing

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Internally, sharable data should be identified. The City's open data policy can serve as a general framework, however determinations within individual agreements would prevail.
- Along with sharing data, discussions with partner agencies should include what data standardization is appropriate.
- Examples of data to be shared include, but are not limited to, public safety data, sidewalk networks, permit data, and zoning information.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The goal of this recommendation is to improve the ability of the City and regional partner agencies to provide high quality services and infrastructure, efficiently, effectively, and responsively. Minimizing the duplication of efforts to collect data and access to larger data sets will provide cost savings and improve efforts toward data-enabled decision making throughout the region.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Strategically invest in technological infrastructure and smart community initiatives to provide better customer response, infrastructure management, and cost savings.

We still do not drive flying cars, but much of the future we once imagined is already here. Companies we do business with, the homes we live in, and even our cars are being transformed by “smart” technologies. It is difficult to imagine a prosperous city of the future without robust smart technologies and infrastructure.

The City of Columbia is already investing in smart infrastructure that combines physical infrastructure with digital infrastructure. Columbia Water’s new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) and the Columbia Police Department’s new implementation of a gunshot acoustic sensor technology are just a couple of examples. Looking forward, the City needs to continue to evaluate and implement smart technologies and invest in smart infrastructure with an eye on long-term efficiencies, regional competitiveness, and cybersecurity.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Chief Innovation Officer (primary)
- Information Technology (primary)
- Budget, Grants & Program Management
- All City departments

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

Implementing this recommendation as a City value and policy is short-term and ongoing, however the time frame for each project would best be classified as medium-term. Costs will vary.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

**\$\$ - \$\$\$\$\*** 

### THEMES

- Innovation & Technology
- Data
- Plan & Implement

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Transportation

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- The City has issued a request for information to help develop a strategic framework and best practices to evaluate the most effective smart community initiatives for Columbia.
- Beyond the evaluation of appropriate technological solutions to customer services, infrastructure, or budgetary concerns, the bulk of the data associated with this recommendation will be collected after implementation.
- Data should be collected, if possible, to establish benchmarks and existing performance measures prior to each implementation.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Once benchmark data is established, the value of any specific initiative can be measured, and successful projects should result in better performance at lower cost. Successful implementation of this recommendation as a whole will be reflected in increased efficiencies and recognition as an example of successful municipal adoption of smart city technologies. Attention to cybersecurity and data privacy is a must.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

## Strategically invest in technological infrastructure and smart community initiatives to provide better customer response, infrastructure management, and cost savings.

### Case Study 14

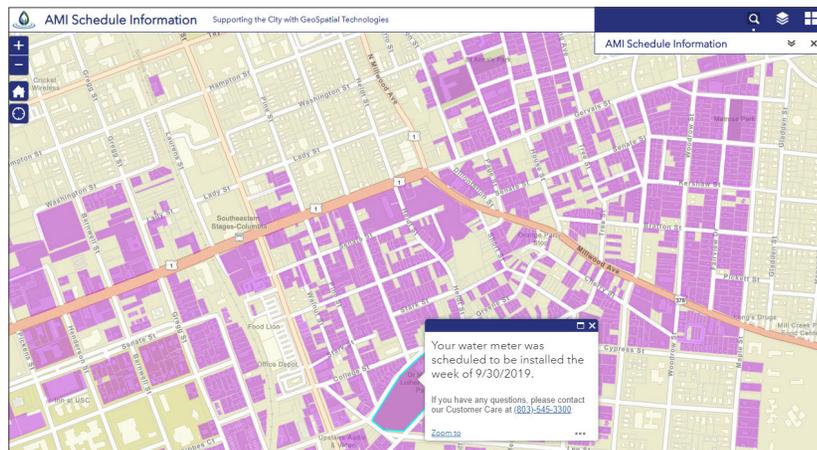
#### Advanced Metering Infrastructure, Columbia, SC

In the summer of 2019, Columbia Water launched a three-year, \$41 million roll-out of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) to its customers throughout Richland and Lexington County. In short, AMI consists of a “smart” water meter that securely sends water usage readings to Columbia Water by way of a cellular signal multiple times a day, and allows for customer and staff access to the water data through a web portal.

In addition to helping customers track their daily and hourly usage in order to manage their water consumption and troubleshoot plumbing problems, AMI can provide notification to customers if they have a spike in water usage, which may indicate plumbing problems such as a leak. From an operational standpoint, AMI can help identify and isolate leaks as well as help improve hydraulic modeling and system balancing.

Both the customer and Columbia Water will benefit from an improved customer experience (including fewer calls to Customer Care), lowered meter reading costs, the elimination of billing based on estimated usage, and the accompanying improved accuracy of readings and bills. The benefits extend to the environment through improved water conservation and reduced carbon emissions due to fewer miles traveled by service vehicles.

The implementation of AMI affects more than just Columbia Water. The City as a whole can benefit from AMI, since as a platform AMI has the potential to support other smart community initiatives in the future, such as street lighting, parking, and trash collection applications.



Customers can see when their meter upgrade is planned through an interactive map on Columbia Water's website

## Strategically invest in technological infrastructure and smart community initiatives to provide better customer response, infrastructure management, and cost savings.

### Case Study 15

#### E-911 Communications Technology, Various Programs

While all Columbians hope to never require immediate access to information or technology during an emergency situation, how emergency services invest in technology to make this communication as efficient and responsive as possible is a constant focus of E-911 Communications. A number of technological platforms exist which can aid in user interface, response times, and other efficiencies. As such, this case study provides examples of these technologies for reference and consideration.

#### EVERBRIDGE SOFTWARE

The City of Columbia currently utilizes Everbridge software (Nixle) to generate Columbia-Richland alerts, which provide alerts via text message to those who have opted in to the service. The City currently uses these alerts to notify users of public safety issues, power outages, missing persons, community events, road closures, meetings, traffic safety, and utility issues. Everbridge has also developed software that has the capability of generating event-specific opt-in notices - this would mean that at the entrance of an event or on social media the City could provide an opt-in text number for alerts specific to that event. These alerts could include basic information (such as parking directions) as well as emergency information (such as shelter instruction related to sudden weather) specific to the event.

#### SMART 911

Smart 911 allows citizens to upload information preemptively into the 911 dispatch system. Pictures of family members, medications, medical conditions, and more can be tied directly to home address locations so that dispatchers are made aware of information that may be critical to emergency services personnel during an emergency response. Among others, the City of Charleston is currently utilizing this system.

#### ASAP TO PSAP

Alarm system calls, whether they are life alerts, burglary, or other types of alarms, represent a large portion of the daily incoming calls to 911 dispatchers. ASAP, or Automated Secure Alarm Protocol, is a computer-aided dispatch system that alarm systems utilize to dispatch emergency services. This system, which reduces the time delay present in the person-to-person relay of information between the alarm company representative and the E-911 dispatcher, is being widely adopted by private alarm companies. In order to complete this time-saving connection, the PSAP, or Public Safety Answering Points, must be upgraded to receive the ASAP to PSAP computer-aided communications. Through the institution of ASAP to PSAP, E-911 Communications Systems can immediately receive notification of the alarm's trigger, and the type of alarm triggered, providing expedited dispatch and cutting critical response times of emergency services.

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Champion regional collaboration: identify and continue to act upon opportunities for cost savings and partnerships with outside agencies.

All public sector agencies share a common purpose of serving the public as effectively and efficiently as possible. Establishing or expanding upon strategic partnerships with other agencies can be a cost-effective way of leveraging the collective might of our region to serve our population better.

Fortunately, local examples of these partnerships already exist. For just one example, Columbia-Richland Fire Rescue is itself an example of such a partnership. The partnership has not been without its ups and downs, but it has resulted in the best ever ISO (insurance) ratings for the area it serves. CFD, like many departments, has also entered into mutual-aid and automatic-aid agreements with surrounding localities, which helps ensure that the right equipment is available for emergencies throughout the City.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Budget, Grants & Program Management (primary)
- Procurement & Contracts
- All City departments

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Identification of opportunities for partnerships and savings should begin as soon as possible. The time needed to develop each partnership varies and requires continual maintenance.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST



### THEMES

- Partner
- Lead By Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

The specific data to be collected varies, depending upon the partnership, but departments and divisions should identify opportunities to partner such as:

- Procurement, including joint bids or contracts.
- Providing or expanding service availability
- Sharing space

### MEASURING SUCCESS

- A successful partnership should benefit both parties and will require good-faith negotiation and ongoing maintenance of the agreement.
- Prior to entering into an agreement, the specific goals should be identified, and estimates of improved cost or service levels should be identified.
- Regular updates on the ongoing cost savings or service improvements are needed.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

## Expand upon partnerships with school districts and others to leverage recreational spaces (including arts spaces) to increase access for all users.

Access to open spaces and creative areas is critical to the well-being of Columbia's residents. While there are a number of parks, natural areas, and work spaces in Columbia, these areas are not always immediately accessible in an equitable manner. Such gaps in City-owned services can be filled by shared use of other facilities, such as those owned by the local school districts or other partners. Many communities have partnered with their local school districts to open schoolyards and other school resources to a school's neighbors for recreational purposes when school is not in session. Such partnerships can prevent the duplication of efforts and cut down on costs associated with maintenance and resource acquisition.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Parks & Recreation (primary)
- Public Works
- Local public school districts and private school entities
- Other public, nonprofit, and private providers of recreational and creative spaces

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete,  
recurring

This recommendation serves to help the City and its partners be more efficient when considering new recreational spaces. The cost to the City would likely be limited to maintenance agreements of existing spaces.



### PRIORITY

**LOW**  
start within 7-10  
years



### COST

**\$ - \$\$**



### THEMES

- Partner
- Built Environment
- Equity & Accessibility



### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Cultural Resources
- Land Use



### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identify areas lacking open spaces and creative areas
- Identify adequate open areas associated with schools
- Location and types of recreation and creative spaces needed in certain areas



### MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Increased number of recreational and arts spaces available for use
- Increased combined hours of operation of recreational and arts spaces city-wide
- Reduced walk and drive times to recreational and arts spaces



### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Enhance

## RECOMMENDATION

## Expand upon partnerships with school districts and others to leverage recreational spaces (including arts spaces) to increase access for all users.

### Case Study 16

NYC Schoolyards to Playgrounds, New York, NY

In an effort to expand the audience that uses the City's parks system and ensure that access to these resources are available equitably, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation began looking to open spaces owned by other entities, such as the local school districts, to fill gaps in service. To achieve this goal, the City partnered with the local Department of Education and the nonprofit Trust for Public Lands, and as a result many schoolyards were able to be reconstructed through capital improvements. Participants in the Schoolyards to Playgrounds program received improvements such as sports courts, play equipment, trees and landscaping, and benches. These improvements allow public access to areas when school is not in session and make use of land and green space that would otherwise be vacant outside of school hours.

These kinds of partnerships are beneficial for all parties involved. The municipality is able to provide needed recreational and outdoor services at a reduced cost, forgoing the need to acquire land and establish a new park. The schools are able to use the renovated space for enriching the lives of their students and the community gain new assets and recreational areas they may not have otherwise been able to access.

These kinds of partnerships that include municipalities, nonprofits, and private citizens can prove to be very effective in accomplishing objectives of all parties involved.

By pooling resources, the cost to any one partner can be significantly less and can have a larger impact than any one party can have on their own. Additionally, such partnerships open new funding options that individual partners may not be eligible for on their own, particularly funds that require in-kind support or require larger community buy-in.



Pictures of New York City PS 205K in Brooklyn schoolyard before (above) and after (below) the Schoolyards to Playgrounds program. Images courtesy of NYC Parks.



**RECOMMENDATION**

## Continue to partner with health-related agencies and nonprofits to expand the audience of informational campaigns and outreach efforts.

The health and safety of the population remains a primary concern of the City. The Midlands region has some of the highest concentrations of chronic diseases like diabetes and obesity in the state. Many residents of the region are also known to suffer from mental illnesses or communicable diseases like STIs. This recommendation is meant to encourage further partnerships with advocacy organizations and health agencies to provide crucial information and resources to the residents of the Columbia and ensure the City is a healthy and safe place to live and work.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Public Relations, Media & Marketing (primary)
- Community Development
- SCDHEC
- Richland and Lexington County Health Departments
- Health-related nonprofits

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Costs to the City would largely be due to assisting information campaigns and staff time for partnering with organizations.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

€ - \$ 

### THEMES

- Partner
- Lead By Example
- Engagement & Outreach

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Population

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Rates of diseases, including obesity, STIs, and mental illnesses, within municipal limits and regionally
- Outreach efforts that are currently facilitated by the City
- Status of partnerships between the City and other agencies regarding health issues

### MEASURING SUCCESS

- The following key metrics can be used to measure success:
- Increased number of outreach efforts the City partners in
  - Increased audience of City-sponsored outreach efforts
  - Decreased disease rates over time within the City limits and regionally

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Empower
- Plan

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Engage with the City’s businesses and multi-family buildings to improve recycling rates and encourage more sustainable waste management practices.

It is clear that where recycling services are easily accessible, participation is high. While the City provides recycling services to single-family residences, the majority of businesses and multi-family structures in the City must either contract with private waste haulers for recycling services or place recyclables into the solid waste stream, filling our local landfills. Other communities have been successful in requiring recycling options for these types of uses, either through regulation or through the development of a franchise agreement for local waste haulers which includes a requirement that recycling options be provided. The long term environmental and financial costs associated with locating new landfills are passed down to City residents, and the City should seek opportunities to increase recycling, and therefore stewardship of our local waste systems accordingly.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Solid Waste Division (primary)
- Sustainability Division
- CPD - Code Enforcement (if tied to rental ordinances)
- Business License (if tied to business licenses)

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

A study of regulatory and franchise options should occur in the short term, though implementation is likely to occur in the medium term. Shifts in the market for recyclables may affect the time frame.

### PRIORITY

**LOW**  
start within 7-10 years

### COST

¢ - \$

### THEMES

- Partner
- Conserve & Preserve
- Lead By Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Natural Resources

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

An in-depth review of best practices, including the viability of regulatory options and franchise agreements, should occur as part of the development of strategies to address commercial and multi-family recycling access.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Initial success can be measured through the completion of an in-depth review, however the true measure of success will be the expansion of recycling options for businesses and multi-family developments and their subsequent contribution to the recycling stream.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Examine, revise, and expand procurement procedures to ensure that the respondent pool and successful contractors are more reflective of the City’s diverse population.

In procuring everything from equipment and office supplies to new facilities and infrastructure, the City’s investments have a meaningful impact on our local and regional economy. The City currently incentivizes women-, minority-, and disabled veteran-owned businesses in an effort to increase the respondent pool for City contracts and ensure the respondent pool is more reflective of the City’s diverse population. Other communities regionally and nationally have expanded these incentives to other groups including disabled- and LGBTQ+-owned businesses, as well as businesses with certain hiring practices, such as actively focusing on employing disabled persons.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Office of Business Opportunities (primary)
- Procurement & Contracts (primary)
- Public Relations, Media & Marketing

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

This should be a fairly easy recommendation to achieve. The primary cost would be in changing the already existing policy and updating relevant documents.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST



### THEMES

- **Lead By Example**
- Equity & Accessibility

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Population
- Economic Development

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Rate of use of current procurement incentive programs
- Impact of current procurement incentive programs on diversity of respondent pools

### MEASURING SUCCESS

- The following key metrics can be used to measure success:
- Expansion of the current procurement incentive programs to other groups
  - Development of metrics to track increases in the number of contracts awarded to newly included businesses

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Empower
- Prosper
- Lead

## Examine, revise, and expand procurement procedures to ensure that the respondent pool and successful contractors are more reflective of the City's diverse population.

### Case Study 17

Expansion of Equal Business Opportunity Ordinance  
Nashville, TN Metropolitan Government

In 2019, Mayor David Briley of Nashville, Tennessee signed an executive order including LGBT-owned businesses as a recognized category for the Metro's Procurement Department. A press release from Mayor Briley's offices stated that the executive order charges Metro staff with the following:

1. Modifying the business registration documents related to procurement to allow for self-identification as an LGBT-owned business
2. Developing a process to acknowledge LGBT certification and the National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) as the certifying entity, in collaboration with the Nashville LGBT Chamber of Commerce as their local affiliate.
3. Monitor and track usage of LGBT-owned businesses in the procurement of goods and services for the Metropolitan Government
4. To the fullest extent permitted by Tennessee law and the Metropolitan Code, provide LGBT-owned businesses with similar programs and services as those offered to Minority, Service Disabled, Small, and Women-owned businesses in Davidson County to ensure such businesses are familiar with how to do business with the Metropolitan Government and are informed about procurement opportunities.

Nashville touts that this expansion will allow the Metro to better understand the availability of LGBT firms and assess if it is contracting with them equitably. This change also sets the foundation for LGBT firms to be included in future official disparity studies.



Mayor David Briley signs the executive order extending a procurement category to LGBT-owned businesses. Used with permission from @MayorBriley Twitter, taken by Metro Nashville photographer Michael Bunch

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Foster positive and supportive interactions between City employees, local partners, and vulnerable and concerned citizens through employee training.

Providing high-quality customer service is one of the most important goals the City has. The City prides itself on achieving fast and compassionate care when interacting with the public. Columbia's unique and diverse population necessitates that these interactions cannot be a one-size-fits-all exchange. This is particularly true when City staff interacts with concerned citizens, citizens who belong to marginalized communities, or citizens who may suffer from mental or physical illnesses.

To facilitate these interactions, various types of specialized training are necessary to ensure that City staff continues to be equipped to address citizen concerns and public interactions with empathy and efficiency. While baseline training can be provided to all City employees, it will be essential for each department to develop and customize additional training to equip their employees to approach the situations they may find themselves in a thoughtful manner.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Human Resources (primary)
- All City departments

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

The cost of this recommendation is largely dependent on the scope of the training. It is important that all City employees are trained effectively and receive periodic training updates.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

**\$\$\$**

### THEMES

- Equity & Accessibility
- Lead By Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Population

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identification of populations that City staff have historically struggled to engage with and why such barriers in communication have persisted
- Identification of City departments who require more specialized training
- Compilation of citizen feedback related to customer service and/or discrimination complaints and identification of common themes

### MEASURING SUCCESS

- The following key metrics can be used to measure success:
- Implementation of a city-wide training program with focuses on sensitivity and inclusion
  - Creation of a system to address citizen feedback from vulnerable communities

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Empower
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

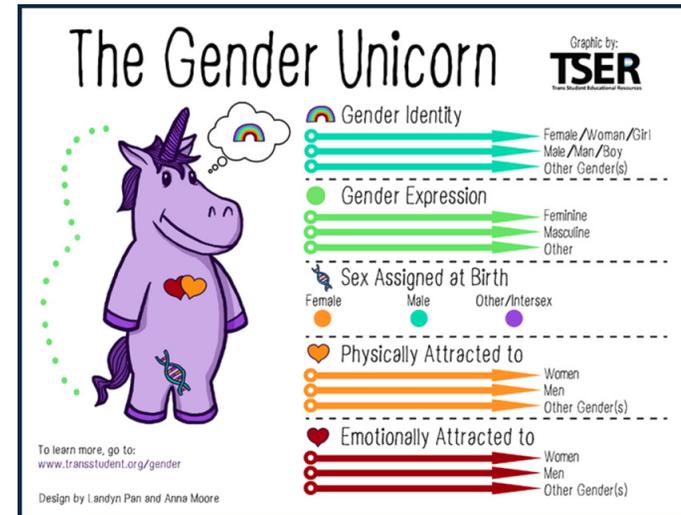
## Foster positive and supportive interactions between City employees, local partners, and vulnerable and concerned citizens through employee training.

### Case Study 18

Charleston Police Department Gender Identity Training  
Charleston, SC

In an effort to improve their community policing strategy, the Charleston Police Department implemented a course directly related to gender identity for all current police officers and new personnel in 2018. This training covered gender identity terms and concepts, the City's Fair and Impartial Policing policy, microaggressions, and implicit bias issues. This training aimed to teach sworn, non-sworn, and volunteer police personnel how to interact with all citizens in a professional, respectful, and courteous manner as well as provide services and enforce laws in an equitable way.

To develop content for the training, the Charleston Police Department reached out to local LGBTQ organizations. Charleston received the help of the Alliance For Full Acceptance which is an advocacy organization in the Lowcountry. This type of grassroots training curriculum served to not only provide police personnel with the vocabulary and communications tools that are practical and tailored to the local community, but also helped to give the Police Department credibility in that community. Such training could be expanded to all government personnel to ensure members of minority or vulnerable communities are treated with respect and empathy.



### HOW DOES LGBTQIA: GENDER IDENTITY TRAINING RELATE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT?

- Increase cultural and social awareness
- Exposure to new concepts
- Provide communication tools to produce best outcome
- Fair and Impartial Policing



Slides from Charleston Police Department's Gender Identity Training. Used with permission from Charleston Police Department.

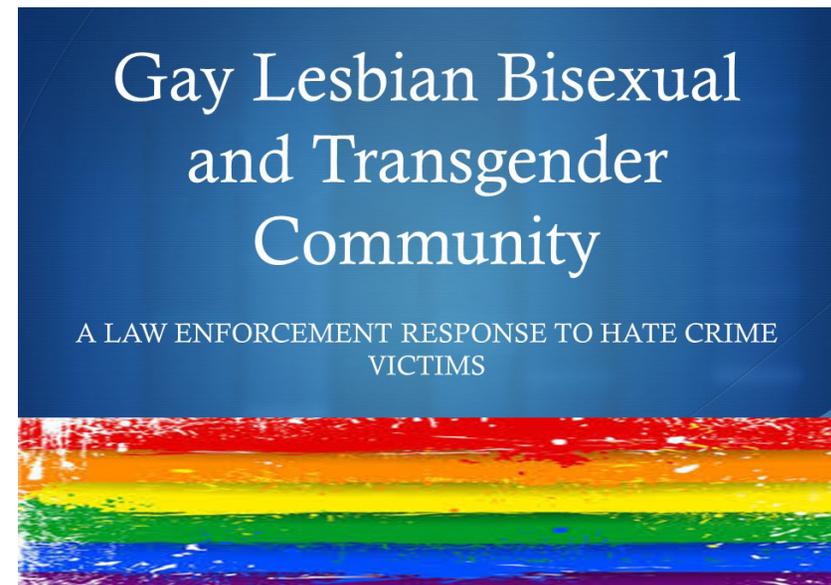
## Foster positive and supportive interactions between City employees, local partners, and vulnerable and concerned citizens through employee training.

### Case Study 19

Victim Assistance Unit, Richland County, SC

To address the principle of providing equal protection to all persons in Richland County, the Richland County Sheriff's Department established a Victim Assistance Unit. This Unit works to provide services to all victims of crime with compassion and respect, to ensure that the dignity of victims is maintained, and to promote healing of the suffering victims may have endured. The Unit specifies that no victim of crime will be turned away for any reason or discriminated against based on sex, race, religion, social or economic status, sexual orientation, age, or mental or physical disability.

The Victim Assistance Unit is designed to act as a liaison between a victim, police officers, investigators, and community-based agencies. A particularly noteworthy part of this Unit is the inclusion of a Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (GLLO). The GLLO is an investigator that serves as a point of contact for members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community who are victims of crime. This liaison officer also works with local and state advocacy organizations such as the Harriet Hancock Center and SC Equality to direct members of the LGBT community to resources and support groups. The inclusion of such a liaison resource is important for all government departments in order to provide specialized customer service to a community's diverse population.



Richland County Sheriff's Department incorporates specific curriculum during training to help their officers identify and handle hate crimes and discrimination against the LGBT community. Courtesy of Richland County Sheriff's Department.

**RECOMMENDATION**

## Embrace Columbia’s diversity and improve accessibility by expanding translation services.

Columbia has one of the most diverse populations in the state. Many residents of the Midlands primarily speak a language other than English, and many speak multiple languages. It is important to provide these residents the opportunity to fully engage with their government through the translation of key documents, communications, and press releases. Additionally, residents with auditory or visual disabilities would benefit from an expansion of translation services including Braille, sign language, and closed captioning that are currently facilitated by the City’s Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator. By achieving this goal, Columbia will become more equitable for its current population and more attractive to visitors and future citizens.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Human Resources (primary)
- Public Relations, Media & Marketing (primary)
- All City departments

### DURATION

**SHORT, ONGOING**  
1-3 years to complete, recurring

There is a clear and present need for such translation services. While the upfront costs of translating may be high, such costs should decrease as the program is implemented.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

€ - \$\$\$ 

### THEMES

- Equity & Accessibility
- Engagement & Outreach
- Lead By Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Population

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identification of key documents to be translated
- Identification of primary languages to be translated into
- Current ADA policies and best practices regarding translation services

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- An increase in the number of City documents that have been translated
- An increase in the number of City videos that have closed captioning

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Empower
- Prosper
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

## Embrace Columbia's diversity and improve accessibility by expanding translation services.

### Case Study 20

Local Law 30, New York, NY

In an effort to increase equity and access to City services, New York City passed Local Law 30 in 2017 which, according to the City, "requires covered agencies to appoint language access coordinators, translate commonly distributed documents into 10 designated languages, provide telephonic interpretation in at least 100 languages, and develop and implement language access implementation plans, among other requirements."

The City relied on Census data and other data sources to identify the communities that were in need of translation services and which languages to prioritize translation efforts. Local Law 30 aims to increase access to City documents to New Yorkers with limited English proficiency. This initiative aims to increase the percentage of New Yorkers who have access to these documents in their native languages to 86% of City's total population. This increased access will mean that approximately 100,000 more New Yorkers will be able to access City services using their native language.

Local Law 30 ensures it is implemented proactively and correctly by requiring periodic reports to New York's City Council. These reports typically contain reports from individual departments about the number of complaints and requests they received regarding translation services.

Additionally, these reports track the frequency that translated forms were requested as well as how these forms were used. These reports allow the City to monitor the progress of this law and plan for future efforts and make adjustments accordingly.

<b>Agency Name:</b> 311 (DoITT)	
<b>Language Access Coordinator:</b> Michael Hutchinson, Finance and Contracts Director	
<b>How members of the public can submit language access complaints/questions/requests:</b> 311 can receive complaints, questions and requests pertaining to language access from the public via several of its channels. A customer may choose to self-serve on several of these channels (social media, chat and mobile) or may call 311 directly to communicate the question, complaint or request.	
<b>Number of complaints received:</b> 0	<b>Number of requests received:</b> 311 received one request for additional languages access services. The customer suggested that the City should train call takers to become interpreters in various languages.
<b>How complaints were handled:</b> N/A	<b>How requests were handled:</b> This request pertaining to training Call Center Representatives in languages is not operationally feasible. 311 relies on bilingual (Spanish/English) staff that provide interpretation services, as well as, an interpretation services vendor for over 175 languages and dialects.

Example of Departmental Report as prescribed by Local Law 30 that is presented to New York's City Council.

RECOMMENDATION

## Expand life skills programs to help empower citizens to improve their lives and potential.

Life skills programs such as budgeting, cooking and nutrition, household management, vocational skills, and decision-making are important for both adolescents and adults. These programs are particularly important for those who lack a formal educational background or those who are attempting to escape the cycle of poverty. The City currently provides various classes and programs, mainly through the City’s Parks & Recreation and Community Development departments, which have historically been well attended. Expansion of such programs will help benefit a larger group of Columbians and help them to improve their lives.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- Parks & Recreation (primary)

### DURATION

**MEDIUM, ONGOING**  
4-6 years to complete, recurring

Cost is largely dependent on the scope of the programming. Expanding current programs likely would have less cost than creating new programs.

### PRIORITY

**LOW**  
start within 7-10 years

### COST

**\$\$ - \$\$\$**

### THEMES

- Equity & Accessibility
- Engagement & Outreach
- Lead By Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Population
- Economic Development

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Number, timing, and location of currently provided programs
- Attendance of currently provided programs
- Demographics of program participants
- Cost of currently provided programs
- Which types of programs the City should consider adding or expanding

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Increased number of programs offered
- More diverse programs offered
- Increased attendance at programs
- Increased diversity at programs

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Empower
- Prosper
- Lead

RECOMMENDATION

## Review and refine City policies and practices to improve upon efforts to conserve resources and reduce, reuse, and recycle.

While the City of Columbia's offices do take part in recycling practices, the City could benefit from an increased focus on conservation of resources and reduction of waste, reuse of materials, and recycling of non-reusable materials. Where the natural resources recommendations incorporate the reduction of resource use through procurement policies, this recommendation is more about examining City processes. These reviews should ask the following types of questions to help identify opportunities for systematic change:

- Is conservation of energy and resource usage a focus of automated and non-automated City practices (such as turning off lights and installing push-button operated splash pads)?
- Do departments effectively share resources with one another in order to promote reuse of materials and goods?
- Is recycling readily available not only to City staff but facility users at all City facilities?

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Sustainability Division (primary)
- All City departments

### DURATION

**SHORT**  
1-3 years to complete

The City's Sustainability Division should build upon the networking developed during the STAR Communities analysis to work with departments to determine efficiencies and help publicly celebrate procedural changes.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

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### THEMES

- Lead By Example
- Conserve & Preserve
- Engagement & Outreach

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Natural Resources
- Land Use

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

The data to be collected for this process will often be qualitative - by developing a better understanding of City processes and inefficiencies, suggestions can be made for improvements which provide not only a more sustainable approach but also substantial cost savings.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success will be measured through the development of interdepartmental discussions around inefficiencies and actionable strategies to address these. Through the identification of improvements, departments could make systematic changes, identify improvements for which funding should be pursued, and provide leadership in Columbia through undertaking these efforts.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Empower
- Enhance
- Lead

## Endnotes

- 1 Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places of 50,000 or More, Ranked by July 1, 2017 Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017. Source:\
- 2 U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Release Date: May 2018
- 3 2017 ACS 5-year estimates
- 4 Columbia was governed by commissioners appointed by the State from its founding in 1786 until December 19, 1805, when the new town of Columbia was\
- 5 first chartered. When first chartered, Columbia was governed by an intendant and six wardens elected annually. Columbia became a city through a second
- 6 charter granted on December 21, 1854, at which time it was governed by a mayor and six aldermen in three wards, elected annually. The number of
- 7 aldermen eventually grew to 12, serving a two-year term. In 1910, voters adopted a commission form of government, electing at-large commissioners who
- 8 controlled municipal services such as police, fire, public works, finance, etc.
- 9 South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 5, Chapters 7 and 13.
- 10 The \$37.9 million Green Bond sale has been certified by the Climate Bond Initiative, an independent global nonprofit that rates environmentally responsible
- 11 investments. (2019, December 17). Retrieved from the Climate Bond Initiative website at: <https://www.climatebonds.net/certification/city-columbia-south-carolina>
- 12 *10 Minute Walk: About*. (2019, December 1). Retrieved from 10 Minute Walk: Improving Access to Parks + Green Spaces: <https://10minutewalk.org/#About>
- 13 According to Rex L. Facer, II, in his 2006 article published in *Urban Affairs Review*, "Annexation Activity and State Law in the United States"
- 14 From Arlington Community Facilities Study - A Resource and Facilities Plan for our Future: Final Report. November 6, 2015.
- 15 WATSON TATE SAVORY, Inc. (2019). *Sustainability/LEED Case Study: City of Columbia Water Distribution Wastewater Management*. Columbia: WATSON
- 16 TATE SAVORY, Inc.
- 17 City Governments and Their Vintage Technology (2019, March 12). Retrieved from Marketplace website: <https://www.marketplace.org/2019/03/12/tech/city-governments-and-their-vintage-it/>
- 18 One Year After Atlanta's Ransomware Attack, the City Says it's Transforming its Technology. (2019, March 22). Retrieved from Statescoop website: <https://statescoop.com/one-year-after-atlantas-ransomware-attack-the-city-says-its-transforming-its-technology/>
- 19 The OPEN Government Data Act is the short title for Title II of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 Public Law 115-435, introduced
- 20 October 31, 2017 and effective January 14, 2019. In the short title, OPEN is an acronym for "Open, Public, Electronic, and Necessary".
- 21 Business Case for Open Data (2019, December 12). Retrieved from the Federal Enterprise Data Resources website, maintained by the Data.gov Program:
- 22 <https://resources.data.gov/case-studies/business-case/>
- 23 Federal Data Strategy. (2019, December 12). Retrieved from the Federal Enterprise Data Resources website, maintained by the Data.gov Program: <https://resources.data.gov/strategy/>
- 24 San Diego's Maksim Pecherskiy on Becoming a Leading Chief Data Officer. (2017, August 30). By Eric Bosco. Retrieved from Government Technology magazine website on December 12, 2019: <https://www.govtech.com/people/San-Diegos-Maksim-Pecherskiy-on-Becoming-a-Leading-Chief-Data-Officer.html>
- 25 New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. (2019, October 2). Trees Count! 2015. Retrieved from NYC Parks Website: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/trees/treescount>
- 26 TreeKIT. (2019, October 2). Retrieved from TreeKIT website: <http://treekit.org/>. TreeKIT notes that "Since the 2015-16 New York City TreesCount! Street Tree Census, we've been contacted by \*so many\* cities who are interested in doing a participatory tree census of their own... We are developing the next version of TreeKIT as a progressive web app where neighborhoods or cities will be able to create their own project portals to organize volunteers, and all tree data collected will be stored in a single, open database. Additionally, we are attempting to automate the creation of curb edge base data."