



01

# Population





The Population Element is used primarily to inform the other elements of the plan so that City resources can be allocated equitably and strategically. This section provides a demographic and sociocultural analysis of the residents of the City, as well as the people who come to Columbia for work, entertainment, and recreation.

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## TOPICS

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Columbia's Past, Present, and Future, Population Trends, Age, Race, Schools, Employment & Income, and Columbia's Diversity



## Introduction

The Population Element examines where we came from, who we are now, and where we are going in the future. This element also considers not only basic demographics such as age, race, and income, but also examines less noticeable segments of Columbia's populace. This element also compares the population of Columbia to our surrounding communities in the Midlands, as well as our peer cities in South Carolina and nationally. Having a better understanding of who lives, works, and plays in Columbia helps prioritize investment, address specific needs, and inform development.

Columbia is a hub of entertainment, innovation, and diversity in the State because of the people who live, work, and play here. Columbia is the State's capital and is home to the largest university in the State, the largest and most active initial training center of the United States Army, and dozens of well-established and historic neighborhoods. These influences have combined to make Columbia a unique city made of people of all stripes and backgrounds. This diversity is reflected in Columbia's numerous cultural activities and traditions.



## Guiding Principles

- » **Foster Columbia's unique diversity**
- » **Support those who are marginalized or in need**
- » **Reduce barriers and work together**
- » **Provide equitable access and services**
- » **Set the standard for innovation and inclusion**

We believe in celebrating and continuing to **foster Columbia's unique diversity** regardless of our residents' race, gender, sexual orientation, background, and beliefs.

Columbia is one of the most diverse cities in the State of South Carolina, and this diversity is one of the City's main strengths. The Columbian community is one where people of all walks of life come to live, work, and play together. Fostering relationships between our diverse citizens is key to growing Columbia into a vibrant city through the exchange of varied ideas and ideals.

This plan, and the associated outreach efforts, have helped to bring many disparate communities together to discuss Columbia's past, present, and future. While individuals and communities have unique desires and issues, having a better understanding of what unites us is the first step in working together.

We believe in **supporting those who are marginalized or are in need** so that all members of our community feel safe, secure, and valued.

While Columbia is a prosperous city, it is important to recognize that not all citizens prosper equally. Many Columbians face daily issues related to economic security, stable housing, acceptance for who they are, and personal safety. Many of these issues are not always immediately apparent and may require specific intervention efforts.

Columbia strives to be a place where all persons are able to not only succeed, but to thrive. To achieve this, the personal generosity of individuals and organizations will not be enough to solve the essential necessities of those in need. The City and its partner organizations should collaborate to address community needs, thereby creating a more lasting and further-reaching impact.

## Guiding Principles

- » Foster Columbia's unique diversity
- » Support those who are marginalized or in need
- » Reduce barriers and work together
- » Provide equitable access and services
- » Set the standard for innovation and inclusion

We believe in coming together as a city and region to **reduce barriers and work together** to become a more tight-knit community.

During the planning process many participants indicated a desire for greater cooperation between the City and individuals, organizations, and government entities. For example, a large number of people live outside the city limits and work within the City, and they too have a vested interest in the success of Columbia and the Midlands region. As such, regional accomplishments and improvements will continue to have an effect on the City's future.

Additionally, participants indicated that Columbia felt divided along racial, socioeconomic, and geographic boundaries. Many individuals indicated that Columbians came together for special events like festivals, but that such connections were fleeting. Making it easier to interface with the City is one of the key ways the City can reduce barriers to cooperation. Clear and effective avenues for partnerships and cooperative efforts will be necessary to facilitating such endeavors.

We believe in **providing equitable access and services** to all residents, regardless of their location.

The City is committed to ensuring that where a person lives within the City should not negatively impact one's quality of life. Currently there are a number of areas around town that lack ease of access to basic amenities such as grocery stores, medical facilities, and job centers. Barriers to these resources can lead to issues related to health, poverty, and social mobility.

Likewise, City and other governmental services should be readily available to all residents. These services, including parks and greenspaces, community programs, and transportation options, have the ability to enrich the lives of the people of Columbia. Ensuring equitable accessibility to these resources is important for the overall well-being of all of the City's residents.

## Guiding Principles

- » Foster Columbia's unique diversity
- » Supporting those who are marginalized or in need
- » Reduce barriers and work together
- » Providing equitable access and services
- » **Setting the standard for innovation and inclusion**

We believe in **setting the standard for innovation and inclusion.**

Columbia takes pride in pushing the envelope and exceeding expectations. Columbians want to be the first to do something and to be the best at doing it. Columbia is a city of progress and is always looking to improve its future.

The City looks to its citizens, as well as its peer cities and neighbors, for inspiration to improve and be a regional trend setter. By doing so, Columbia can continue to innovate and work toward becoming a world-class city. To achieve this goal, Columbia must embrace change and, more importantly, have the courage to follow through with ambitious plans.

In order to be an innovative city, it will be necessary for Columbians to unite and embrace inclusivity. An inclusive environment fosters creativity and insightfulness, and leads to action. The City aims to promote collaboration between citizens of different races, genders, and backgrounds to make the City prosperous for all.

## Timeline

The City of Columbia has a long and storied history dating back to its founding as the state's capital in 1786. Having a greater understanding of Columbia's history is critical to be able to plan for the City's present and future, as many decisions made in the past continue to resonate today.

Key events throughout the City's history have helped to shape our community physically, culturally, and socially. The timeline which follows highlights events at the local, state, and national level which have helped to shape Columbia as we know it today. Though not an exhaustive list, many of the events that follow have had a lasting impact on the shared memory of Columbians, and in many ways continue to influence how we approach planning for the future as a city.

### HOW TO USE THE TIMELINE

#### Local Events

Local events are denoted in **blue**. These events had a direct impact on Columbia's history and development. These events tell the story of how Columbia developed and help to inform where the City is going in the future.

#### State Events

State events are denoted in **green**. These events had an broader statewide impact, but still meaningful impact on Columbia. These events typically involve State laws that impact more than just Columbia, or State-owned properties in Columbia.

#### National Events

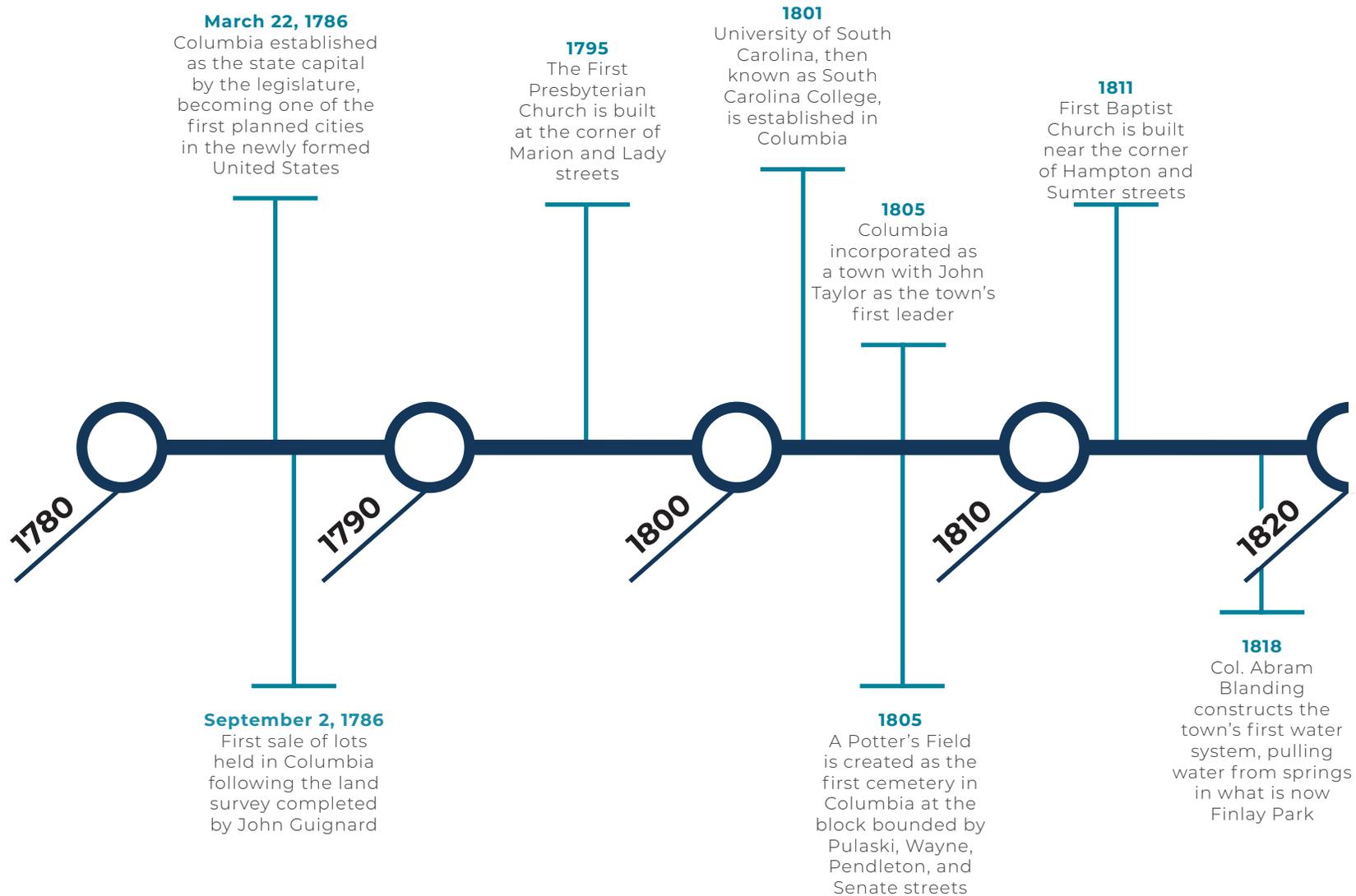
State events are denoted in **red**. These events had an impact on Columbia, though usually not directly or immediately. These events also involve national policies or federally-owned properties in Columbia.



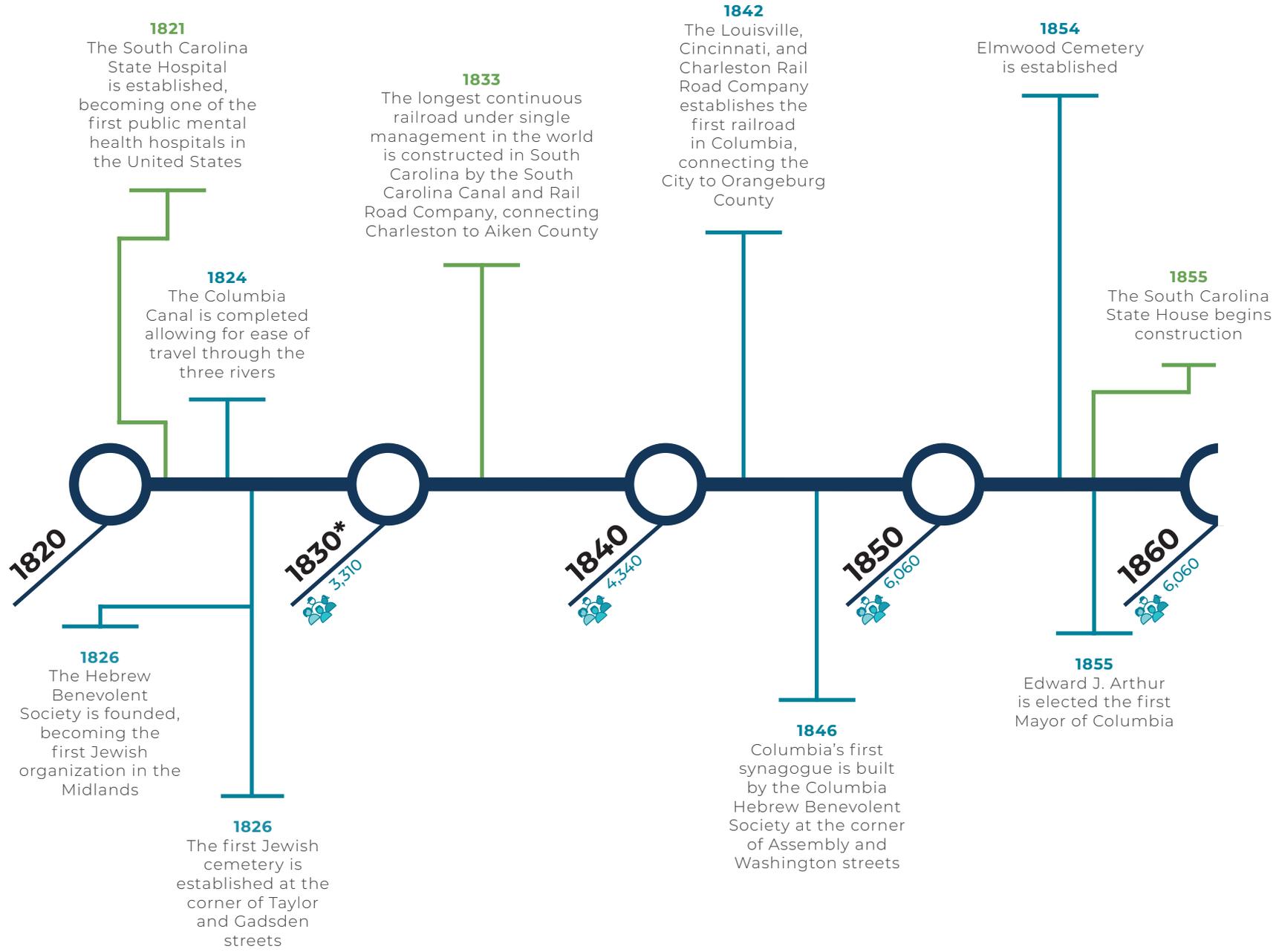
#### Total Population

The total population of Columbia at the time is located next to each decade. This information is from the United States Census Bureau.

# Timeline

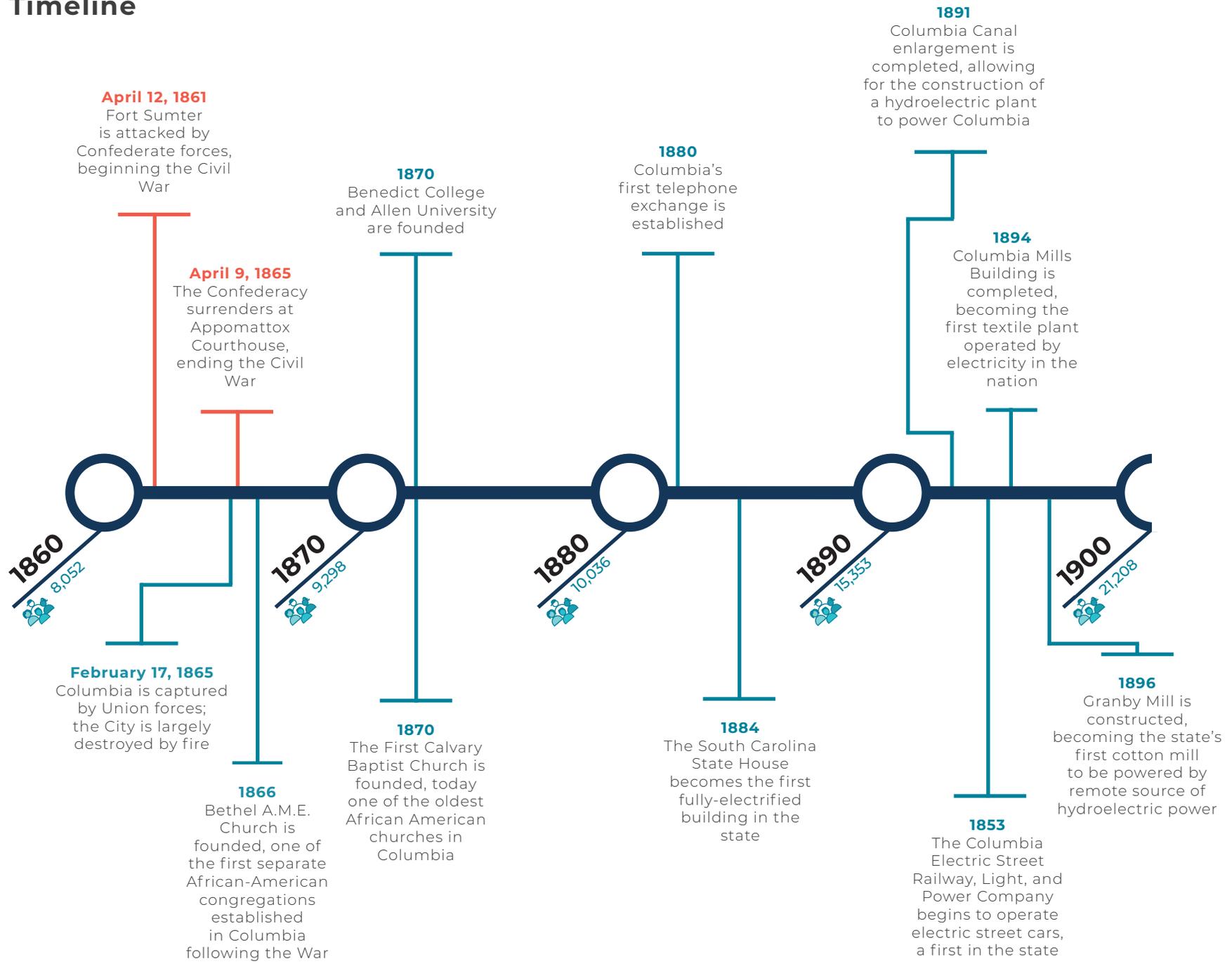


# Timeline

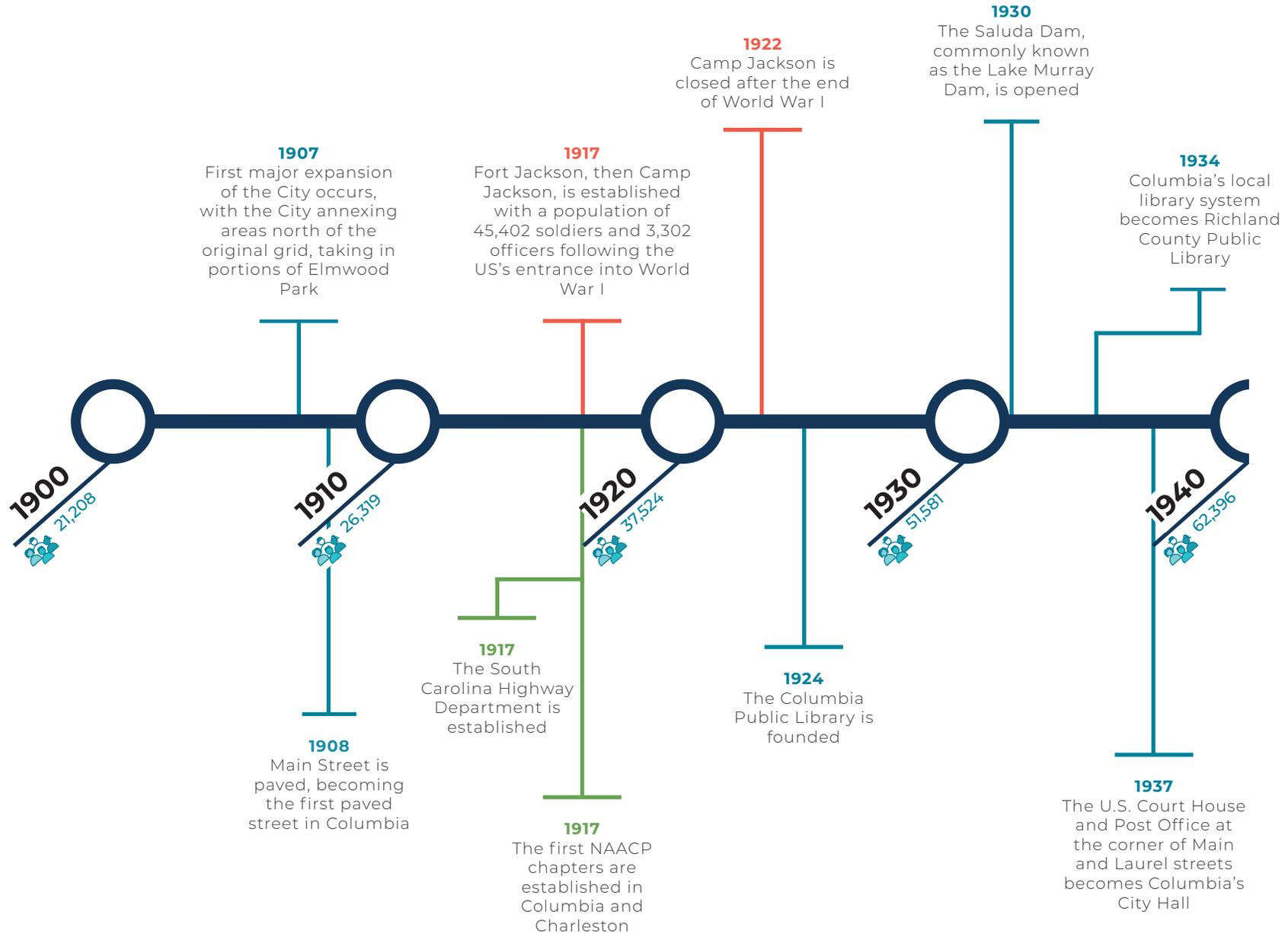


\*1830 was the first population data available from the US Census for Columbia

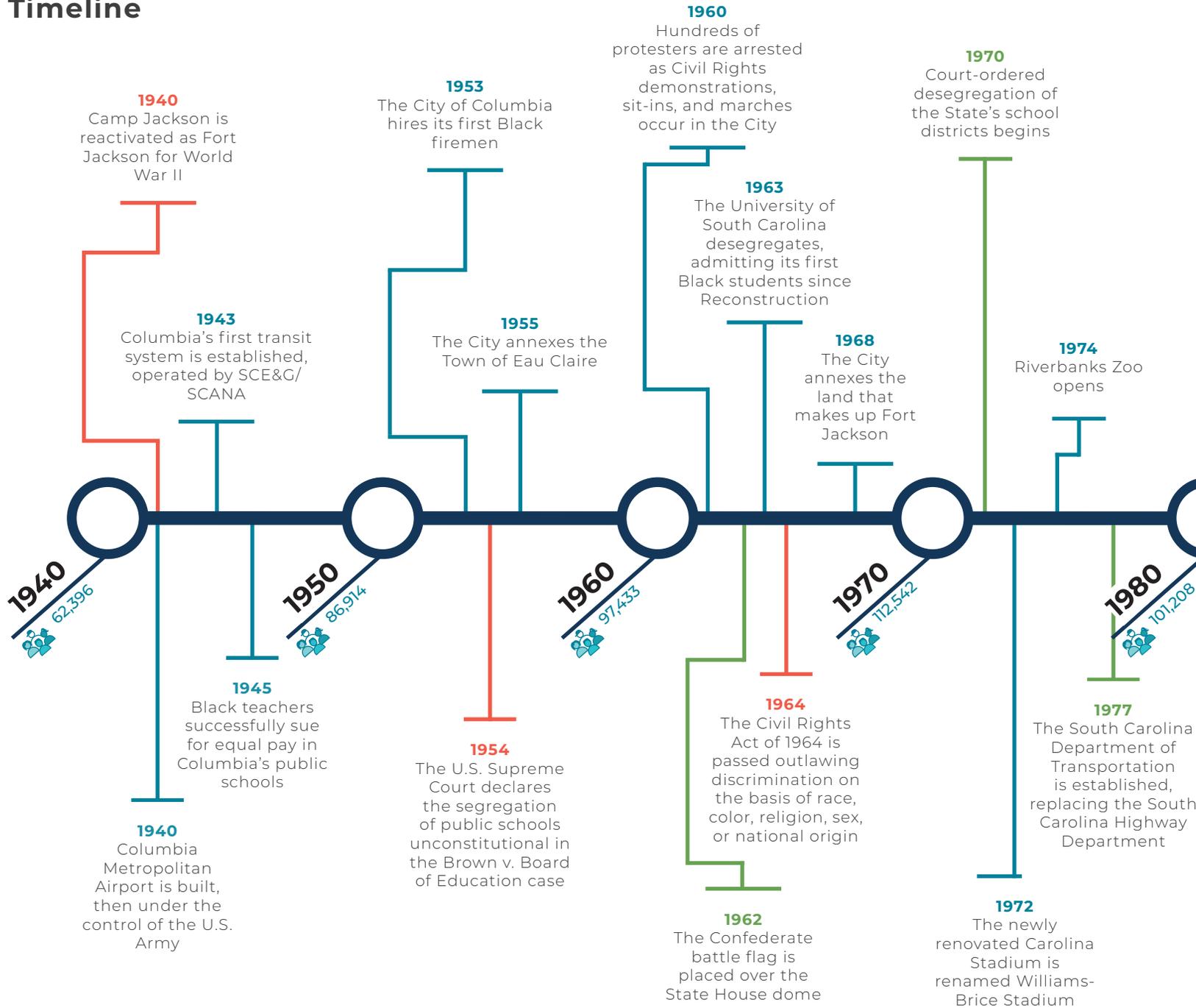
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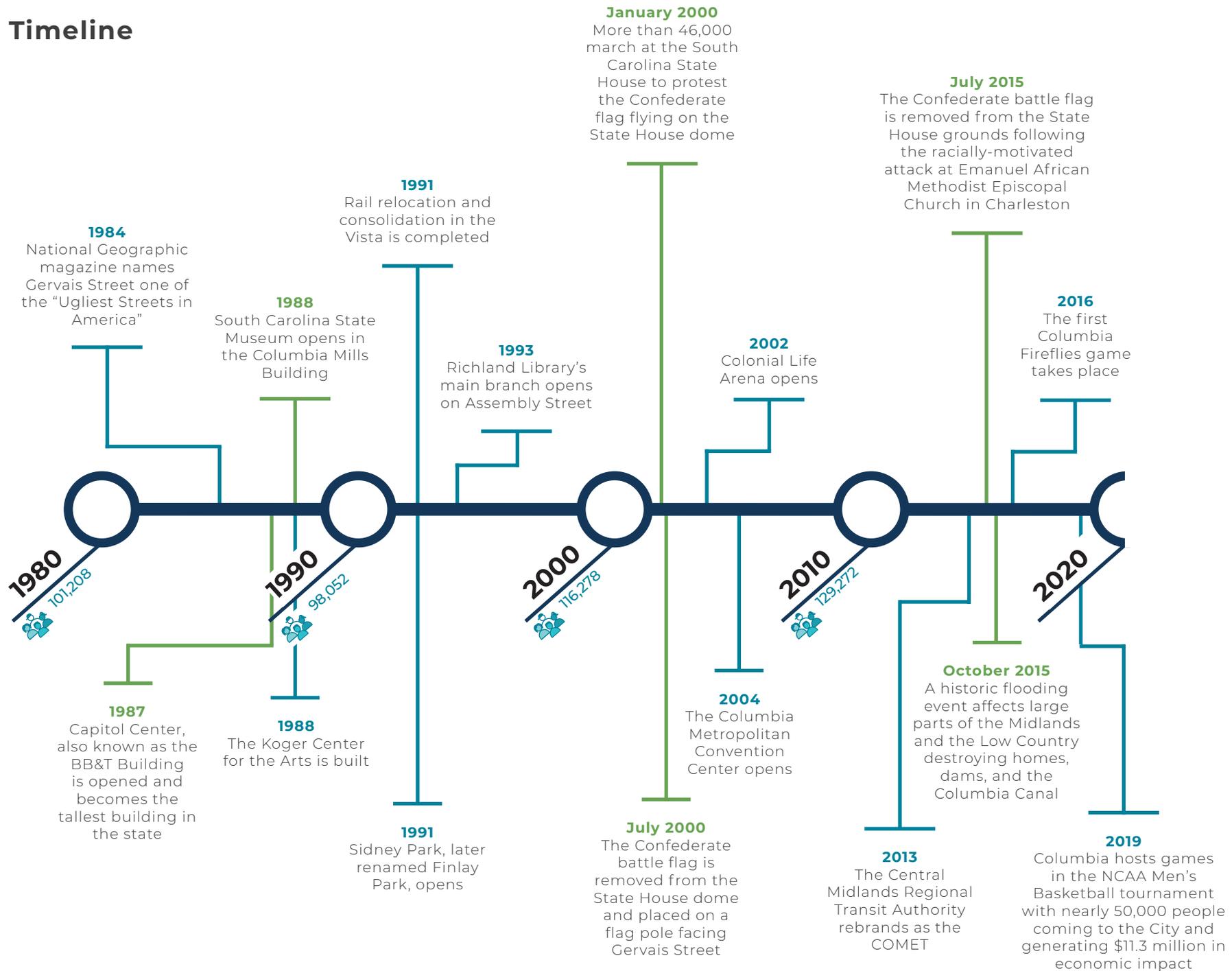
# Timeline



# Timeline



# Timeline



## Where We Came From

### UNDERSTANDING OUR PAST

Columbia is home to one of the most diverse populations in South Carolina. The people who live and work in the City are diverse in their backgrounds, beliefs, and cultural histories. In order to fully understand Columbia and its people, it is important to explore the City's current composition as well as the City's past. These factors will help to predict future development and patterns of movement in and around the City.

### IN THE BEGINNING

Columbia was founded in 1786 through an act of the State Legislative Assembly in an attempt to find a central location for the State's capital. Columbia was one of the first planned cities in the United States, with town commissioners creating a 400 block, two-mile grid that would make the new city. This mandated and planned city, along with its location at the confluence of the Congaree, Saluda, and Broad rivers quickly made Columbia a major hub of commerce, influence, and culture in the State. By the early 19th century, Columbia's population had nearly reached 1,000 residents becoming one of the largest cities in the state.

Shortly after Columbia's founding, the State's flagship university, what is now the University of South Carolina (U of SC), was established in downtown Columbia. South Carolina College, the precursor to the University, had an initial enrollment of nine students. In the intervening decades, the University rose to prominence throughout the South through teaching a traditional classical curriculum. These accolades brought new attention to the fledgling city and helped to attract students and educated citizens to Columbia.

A key component of Columbia's growth and development was its location along the three rivers. In 1824, the Columbia Canal was built using the labor of indentured Irish immigrants and subsidies from the State government. The Canal allowed the growing city to become an important trade route in the State, as it helped bypass a number of rapids and other obstacles along the rivers. The Canal also played a role in helping to stabilize the City against flooding.

The introduction of a railroad system to Columbia started a shift away from the Canal as the primary shipping route in Columbia. In 1842, the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad Company established the first railroad in Columbia. This railroad was initially designed to connect Columbia and Charleston to the Midwest, but only a 60 mile section was built, connecting Columbia to Orangeburg County. Eventually, a larger railroad network would make Columbia a conduit to funnel goods and people between Charleston and the Upstate. Columbia, being the natural midpoint between the Upstate and the Lowcountry, benefited from these railways as they brought goods, services, and people to the City, and helped to expand its influence in the State.

### NATIONAL ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COLUMBIA'S POPULATION

Columbia's position as a capital city, a hub of higher education, and the largest city in the State has resulted in Columbia being frequently in the national spotlight. At times, Columbia has found itself the focal point of national developments and debates, both positive and negative. These periods of attention have shaped how Columbia has been perceived both from within and from without and have been a contributing factor to the City's development.

## Where We Came From

### NATIONAL ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COLUMBIA'S POPULATION, CONTINUED

One of the most prominent national issues Columbia has been at the center of is that of racial equality. It is impossible to talk about the history of Columbia's population without recognizing the impact that inequality has had in shaping the City. While the broad effects of slavery and the Civil War are well known, and the burning of Columbia had a large impact on both the built environment and cultural memory, more recent programs have had a similar impact in separating people in Columbia. These national programs and policies, including urban renewal and redlining, broke apart neighborhoods and communities and their impacts are still felt today. At the same time, the citizens of Columbia have assisted in the effort to ensure equality for all of its citizens.

Understanding Columbia's contemporary population and how it came to be requires considering events and policies from throughout Columbia's history. The period from 1865 to 1877 is generally regarded as the Reconstruction Era, during which attempts were made to repair the damage done during the war, particularly in former Confederate states, while also ensuring the civil rights of newly freed slaves and Black citizens.

In the immediate aftermath of the War, many former Confederate legislators and their supporters attempted to reestablish political and societal control through the implementation of "Black Codes" and other similar laws. These "Black Codes" restricted the freedom of movement and employment of freed Black people in the State. These laws were met with resistance from the federal government, which passed the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 to prevent such discriminatory practices.

The Reconstruction Era is particularly important to understanding Columbia's development following the Civil War. In 1868, State legislators, led by Black delegates for the first time in the State's history, adopted a new state constitution which codified rights to all persons regardless of race and gave all men the right to vote. This constitution is also notable for establishing the first statewide public education system in the nation, one that would be "free and open to all children and youths of the State, without regard to race or color."

During this time, two institutions of higher education, Benedict College and Allen University, were established in downtown Columbia in 1870 and 1880 respectively. These schools were created in an effort to give recently emancipated people of color opportunities for higher education. Benedict and Allen were some of the earliest Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) that were founded in the South and contributed to Columbia's growth as a center for education in the State.

The progress of Reconstruction was short-lived, and subsequent State elections resulted in a shift in power and a backlash against these progressive changes. This power shift would eventually result in the passage of Jim Crow laws and policies of "separate but equal" in South Carolina. The chaotic nature of the post-war era, combined with Columbia being at the epicenter of the State's battle with changing social dynamics, likely contributed to the City's slow progress in rebuilding physically and socially after the Civil War.

Columbia's post-war rebuilding period lasted decades as the City and State attempted to repair not only the physical structures but also the City's societal status. One of the most important construction efforts of this time was the restoration and expansion of the Columbia Canal in 1891. The improvements consisted of a widening

## Where We Came From

### NATIONAL ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COLUMBIA'S POPULATION, CONTINUED

and deepening of the Canal, with the goal of allowing the Canal to be used for hydroelectric generation. This upgrade made it possible for numerous textile and cotton mills to begin production in Columbia.

The mills, and their surrounding mill villages, would become a main source of employment, housing, and culture in Columbia nearing the turn of the 20th century. In 1893, the first of these mills, the Columbia Mills, began to be constructed and would become one of the world's first textile mills to be powered solely by electricity. In subsequent years, many more mills would open near the rivers, solidifying Columbia as a manufacturing hub and a center of innovation. During this time, the Granby Mill, which was the State's first cotton mill powered by a remote source of hydroelectric power from the Canal was built. Additionally, the Olympia Mill, which was at the time the world's largest cotton mill under one roof, was also established.

The mills employed thousands of workers in Columbia and housed many workers' families in the surrounding mill villages. These mills and the promise of employment brought many new residents to the Columbia area and helped make the City a regional hub of commerce and trade. This economic boom continued through the turn of the century as numerous high-rises, hotels, shops, and restaurants were built and developed. During this time period, Columbia's population more than doubled, going from around 15,000 citizens in 1890 to over 37,000 people in 1920.

In 1917, Columbia was selected as the site of Fort Jackson, then known as Camp Jackson, due to its strategic location and temperate climate. Within the first few years of its opening, Camp Jackson

had over 2,000 structures built on it and had its own water supply, sewage system, telephone lines, and railroad constructed. The Camp's primary purpose was for the training of Army soldiers during World War I. During the War, tens of thousands of volunteers and draftees came to Columbia for basic training before going to fight in the War. Following the War, Camp Jackson was deactivated as a military installation, but continued to serve the Columbia area as a gathering place and recreation area.

World War II necessitated the reactivation of and an upgrade to the status of Fort Jackson. To accommodate the war effort, the Fort's area doubled in size to 53,000 acres, and thousands of buildings were built or refurbished. The reconstruction of the Fort would cost over \$18 million and would be one of the largest construction efforts ever completed in the Southeast. During the War, eight Army divisions trained at Fort Jackson and over 500,000 soldiers received training at the Fort. After the War, the Fort became a permanent training center for the Army, and many veterans came back to Columbia to live and work.

Veterans of color returning from World War II were met with discriminatory practices and Jim Crow laws that were contrary with the greater freedom they experienced during the War. As a result of these experiences and the build up of generational unrest due to discrimination, the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum in the mid-1950s throughout the United States. Locally, due in part to its status as the State capital, Columbia was a key location for protests and marches during this era. Through the 1940s and 1950s, there were sporadic efforts to push for racial integration and civil rights in Columbia, but the movement truly began to coalesce in the early 1960s. The pressure from this movement eventually secured victories locally; in 1962, sit-in protests paid dividends and all of Columbia's

## Where We Came From

### NATIONAL ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COLUMBIA'S POPULATION, CONTINUED

lunch counters were officially desegregated. The fight to integrate all of Columbia still continued, as following the application of a Black student to U of SC, over 1,000 U of SC students held a protest against integration of the University. When continued segregation was finally outlawed by the courts, in September of 1963 the first three Black students were enrolled in U of SC since Reconstruction. The mandated integration of all public schools soon followed throughout the State. While the path to integration was long and arduous, in many ways it was a successful effort. Looking forward, these efforts paved the way for the important and ongoing work of racial equality and justice in Columbia, the Midlands, and the State.

While the movement for equal rights was underway, national policies such as urban renewal and redlining were beginning to separate populations in other ways. Urban renewal was a program largely administered by the federal government during the 1960s and 1970s, with the stated goal of clearing out “blighted” areas and “slums” in inner cities to create opportunities for housing, businesses, and highways.

In Columbia, lower-income, predominantly Black neighborhoods tended to be targets for redevelopment under urban renewal policies. These policies have been linked to lasting issues of urban sprawl, gentrification, and a lack of affordable housing.

Some neighborhoods were able to fight back against the threat of destruction by these policies. In the early 1970s, Elmwood Park, one of the oldest suburbs of Columbia, was the proposed site of an extension of Assembly Street to connect it to River Drive. By this

time, portions of Elmwood Park had fallen into disrepair and were considered blighted and in need of renewal. This proposed extension would cut a swath through the historic neighborhood and would destroy the cultural fabric of the neighborhood. To combat this, the citizens of Elmwood Park attempted to restore the look and reputation of their neighborhood. Using grant funding from the federal government and the City, several homeowners were able to restore their homes and begin to renovate the neighborhood. In 1977, the residents came together to form the Elmwood Park Neighborhood Association, which helped to organize and promote the refurbished neighborhood and allowed the residents to have a unified voice in attempting to deal with community concerns like code violations and infrastructure needs. Due to this collective opposition to the project, the extension of Assembly Street was canceled and other similar projects were effectively stopped. In 1988, Elmwood Park was classified as an Architectural Conservation District by the City, and was later listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These designations allowed the residents of the neighborhood greater access to grants and gave the neighborhood greater protection.

Other neighborhoods would not be as successful. The neighborhoods lost to urban renewal, though generally impoverished and lacking in services, were nonetheless as culturally established and structured as any of the wealthier neighborhoods in the City. Urban renewal tore apart neighborhoods like Ward One, parts of which were renamed or absorbed into other neighborhoods like Wheeler Hill. Other residential neighborhoods, like Mott's Bottom, which is now largely an industrial area northwest of Five Points, were completely destroyed and its residents were permanently displaced. Many other neighborhoods were completely razed and redeveloped as the U of SC and downtown business

## Where We Came From

### NATIONAL ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COLUMBIA'S POPULATION, CONTINUED

districts expanded. While many of these neighborhoods no longer physically exist, they, and their loss, remain in the cultural memory of the citizens of Columbia.

While urban renewal resulted in noticeable changes, such as the demolition of homes and buildings, the impacts of another policy were felt in a subtler manner. Homeownership, and in turn social mobility, were on the rise after WWII due to a number of factors, including the new availability of the 30-year mortgage. This increased access to home loans, however, was not made available equitably. Redlining, a policy initially put into place by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), a federal organization set up to determine the relative risk of providing loans based on the condition of an area.

Lenders used this information to determine whether to give loans to individuals seeking to purchase homes in certain areas. Typically, the criteria for these loans were based on the physical condition of a neighborhood and the socioeconomic status of the people living in that area, but soon lenders began using this information to become more overly discriminatory based on the racial and ethnic makeup of an area. Loans from areas shown to have a majority Black population were considered to be more risky and were less likely to be approved.

Redlining practices meant that it was difficult, if not impossible, for residents of certain neighborhoods to obtain mortgages or home equity loans, essentially blacklisting an entire population and leading to a cascading effect of degradation and disinvestment in certain areas. The effects of this policy can still be felt today, as certain neighborhoods were never fully built or renovated, and these areas continue to struggle financially.

The effects of mapping “riskier” areas may have also contributed to how people felt, and continue to feel, about certain neighborhoods and their perceived safety and quality. How to help these neighborhoods grow and prosper in spite of decades of disinvestment will be a key part of the City's commitment to equitable governance. Figure 1 shows the approximate locations of redlined areas in Columbia.

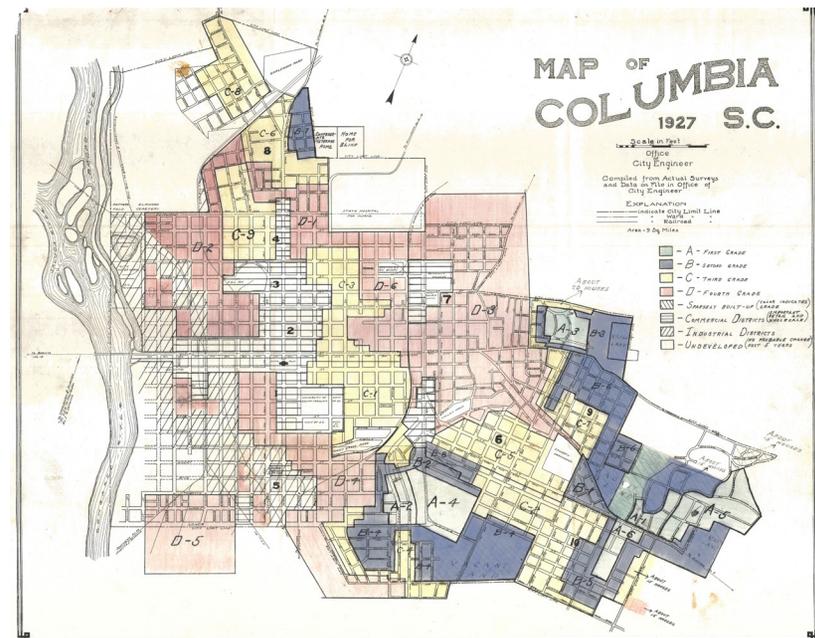


Figure 1: A redlining map of Columbia from 1927. Areas in green (“First Grade”) and blue (“Second Grade”) were deemed to be higher quality areas while areas in yellow (“Third Grade”) and red (“Fourth Grade”) were considered to be of lesser quality and therefore, areas more risky to invest or live in.<sup>1</sup>

## Where We Came From

### NATIONAL ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COLUMBIA'S POPULATION, CONTINUED

The quality of areas for these redlining maps was determined through a series of factors that were compiled on a series of checklists. An example of one of these forms is shown in Figure 2.

These area descriptions took into account the price and quality of housing stock, household income, race, ethnic origin, and perceived population stability. These factors were then combined to determine an area's overall "Security Grade." Areas with non-White or foreign-born populations, as well as areas of lower income, were downgraded, making securing loans and other funding more difficult for area residents or investors. Additionally, these area descriptions took into account more subjective details of these areas, including the relative location of majority Black neighborhoods, the need to travel through blighted areas, and the presence of multifamily housing. These descriptions and maps subsequently were a large factor in determining how Columbia developed, and to this day, areas that were redlined continue to struggle financially and in some cases lack basic amenities.

While these policies were being carried, a national cultural upheaval was also occurring which led people to move out of the core of many cities in the United States. Known as "White flight," people with the means to move from the urban core, primarily White people, moved to the outskirts of cities in an attempt to flee what they perceived as dirty cities filled with blighted slums and increasing crime rates. This movement created rapid suburbanization and increased the separation between races and classes. At the same time, the increasing prevalence of personal automobiles, as well as changing preferences, caused many who could afford to move out of

the cities to do so. These individuals typically sought larger lot, single-family houses. As a result, those left in the inner city were usually poor and, in Columbia, primarily Black.

FORM 8  
10-1-37

AREA DESCRIPTION - SECURITY MAP OF Columbia, S. C.

1. AREA CHARACTERISTICS:

a. Description of Terrain. Eastern portion level; Northwestern portion sloping downward.

b. Favorable Influences. Five cent bus transportation. Majority of area zoned for residential; apartments permitted. Proximity to schools, churches, and community business centers.

c. Detrimental Influences. Practically all restrictions have expired. About 20% of streets paved. Heavy traffic along Divine and Maple Streets. Proximity to negro 1<sup>st</sup> grade property of northern portion of area. Orphanage in area.

d. Percentage of land improved 80 %; e. Trend of desirability next 10-15 yrs. Downward

2. INHABITANTS: Executives, business and professional

a. Occupation men; clerical workers; b. Estimated annual family income \$ 1.5 - 20 M (Average 2.4 M) and skilled mechanics

c. Foreign-born families 0 %; None predominating; d. Negro No. ; 0 %

e. Infiltration of lower grade has about stopped

f. Relief families A few

g. Population is increasing very slow

3. BUILDINGS:

	PREDOMINATING	55 %	OTHER TYPE	40 %	OTHER TYPE	5 %
a. Type	2 sty 5-10 rm singles		1 sty 5-7 rm singles		2, sty 4-6 rm units (4-fam)	
b. Construction	Frame		Frame		fr 50%; B V 50%	
c. Average Age	20 Years		10 Years		10 Years	
d. Repair	Good to poor		Fair to poor		Good to poor	
e. Occupancy	99 %		98 %		95 %	
f. Home ownership	80 %		75 %		0 %	
g. Constructed past yr.	None		None		None	
h. 1929 Price range	\$ 3 - 12 M	100%	\$ 1.75 - 8	100%	\$	100%
i. 1935 Price range	\$ 3 - 12 M	100%	\$ 1.75 - 8 M	100%	\$	
j. 1937 Price range	\$ 3 - 12 M	100%	\$ 1.75 - 8 M	100%	\$	
k. Sales demand	\$ 3 - 5 M (fair)		\$ 1.75 - 5 M (fair)		\$	
l. Activity	Fair		Fair			
m. 1929 Rent range	\$ 25 - 60	100%	\$ 20 - 60	100%	\$	100%
n. 1935 Rent range	\$ 25 - 60	100%	\$ 20 - 60	100%	\$	
o. 1937 Rent range	\$ 25 - 60	100%	\$ 20 - 60	100%	\$	
p. Rental demand	\$ 25 - 60 (fair)		\$ 20 - 50 (fair)		\$	
q. Activity	Fair		Fair			

4. AVAILABILITY OF MORTGAGE FUNDS: a. Home purchase (a); b. Home building (a)

5. CLARIFYING REMARKS: This is a spotted area; better singles are on Divine Street, while poorer type homes are located in northeastern section of area and should be classified as "low" or possibly D grade, because of poor repair condition. Sales prices reached first peak in 1927-28; second and lower peak in 1930-31; hence, 1930 prices were not peak. (a) Mortgage funds for home purchase and building are limited in northern portion of area but in the southern portion are less limited, although not ample in any of the area. Insurance companies will lend in spots along Divine Street and in the 2200 block of Lee Street.

6. NAME AND LOCATION Shandon (northern portion) SECURITY GRADE C AREA NO. C-5  
Columbia, S. C.

Figure 2: An example of an area description for the "Security Map" of Columbia which was used to develop redlining maps of the City.<sup>2</sup>

## Where We Came From

### NATIONAL ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COLUMBIA'S POPULATION, CONTINUED

In 1977, the Community Reinvestment Act put an end to the formal practice of redlining and other forms of discriminatory credit practices against low-income and minority communities. This piece of federal legislation required banks who receive Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insurance to offer credit in a much more equitable manner. These new requirements, as well as subsequent legislation, helped to stymie much of the overt discrimination that had occurred up to that point.

The effects of policies of the past continue to be seen in the racial makeup of Columbia. As shown in Figure 3, in 1970, nearly 70% of Columbia was White. By 1990, the percentage of Columbia's population that was White had decreased to below 55%. Additionally, between 1970 and 1990, the City's population declined nearly 13%, from 112,542 to 98,052 residents. While the City's total population has rebounded since 1990, the effects of this population decline and the changing racial structure of the City continue to affect how the City grows and functions.

A more comprehensive picture of these trends can be seen at a regional level. Similar to the City, Richland County's White population declined from nearly 70% in 1970 to below 55% in 1990. However, unlike in Columbia, Richland County's overall population grew during this time, from 233,868 to 285,720 residents.

The racial demographic shifts during this time were not solely due to an influx of new residents, many of whom were Black. Instead, these patterns were also due to a population shift from Richland County to Lexington County. Between 1970 and 1990, the population

Racial Makeup  
Columbia

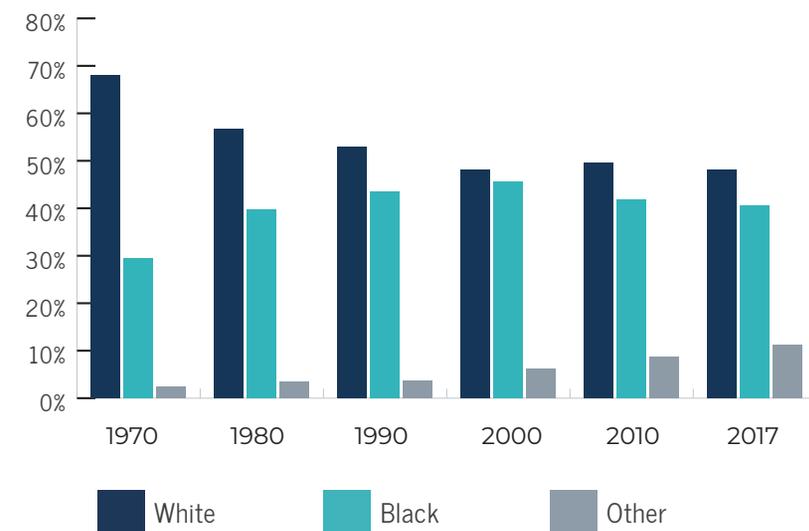


Figure 3: Racial Makeup of Columbia over time<sup>3</sup>

of Lexington County nearly doubled, from 77,861 to 146,535 residents. At the same time, the population of Lexington County remained overwhelmingly White, with the White population accounting for over 87% of the County's population. This movement has served to further fracture the region's population, which already had deep racial divides.

Understanding national trends during the late 20th century helps to inform the patterns of population and development seen in the Midlands. Lexington County's population boom has been bolstered by a large influx of White citizens, while Richland County's population increases appear to be more racially diverse. While it is difficult to pinpoint a single reason for the migration patterns seen in the

## Where We Came From

### NATIONAL ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COLUMBIA'S POPULATION, CONTINUED

Midlands, these patterns that should be considered when planning for the future of Columbia and the Midlands.

In the decades that followed the era of redlining, urban renewal, and white flight, the City sought to correct the ill effects of the past. In 1975, the City created the Community Development Department to provide a central location for providing citizens funding opportunities and information. The Community Development Department administers federal, state, and local funding including Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, which was established in 1975. Community Development programs have helped to increase home ownership in the City and build neighborhood capacity. They have partnered with businesses, nonprofits, and citizen groups to improve the quality of life in Columbia.

At the same time, following national trends, Columbia created its first development corporation, the Columbia Development Corporation, in 1983. Initially created by Robert Kennedy in 1966 to help redevelop Brooklyn, NY neighborhoods, community development corporations are pseudo-governmental entities that help restore specific areas. Development corporations have been touted to “get the market to do what the bureaucracy cannot.”<sup>4</sup> In Columbia, the City's development corporations focus on various areas including Eau Claire, the Two Notch corridor, and various entertainment districts throughout the City. These corporations assist the City by partnering with private sector entities to support sustainable development and increase opportunities for businesses, citizens, and visitors.

### LOOKING FORWARD

Columbia's past is as diverse as its citizens. Various groups have worked to keep the memory of Columbia's history alive. Preserving Columbia's cultural memories through walking tours of significant Civil Rights locations and continued activism to prevent the erosion of the character of Columbia's historic areas, are evidence of a larger effort to help retain and honor what makes Columbia unique and relevant. These efforts have helped to bring greater awareness and attention to Columbia's past and has helped to connect current and future generations to the City's history.

Recent events and developments may indicate that Columbia is ready to leave the negative aspects of its history in the past. As will be explored later, Columbia is becoming a more active, vibrant, and inclusive city. While the City cannot ignore its past, it can certainly learn from it to become a better city for the future.

# Who We Are

## UNDERSTANDING OUR PRESENT

Columbia has come a long way since the City's founding. It is now a statewide hub for entertainment, innovation, and diversity, and its people are the main reason for this. As this plan looks at the next ten years and eventually to the City's 250th anniversary in 2036, it will continue be important to take stock of who we are as a community, what we consider important, and what makes us unique.

## TOTAL POPULATION

The population of Columbia has been steadily increasing over the past few decades. In 2017, the Census Bureau estimated that there were 132,236 people who called Columbia home. This estimate includes homeowners and renters, as well as some of the population who reside in Columbia part-time, including university and college students as well as soldiers at Fort Jackson.

The total population of Columbia has remained relatively stable for the past few decades as shown in Figure 4. However, during the same period, surrounding communities and Columbia's peer cities have seen substantial increases in population as shown in Figure 5. While there has been a definite increase in the population of those municipalities and unincorporated areas surrounding Columbia, the City continues to be the center of employment, entertainment, and culture in the Midlands. As a result, a growing number of people are commuting into the City, and are placing a continually increasing burden on the City's infrastructure. While Columbia continues to be one of the largest cities in the State, the city's population is also constantly ebbing and flowing due to the transient nature of the its residents and workers.

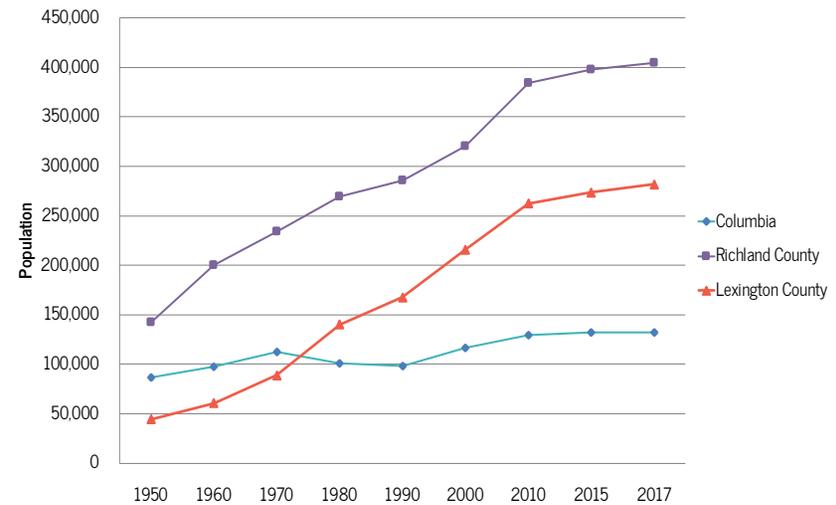


Figure 4: Total Population of Columbia and Adjoining Counties Over Time<sup>5</sup>

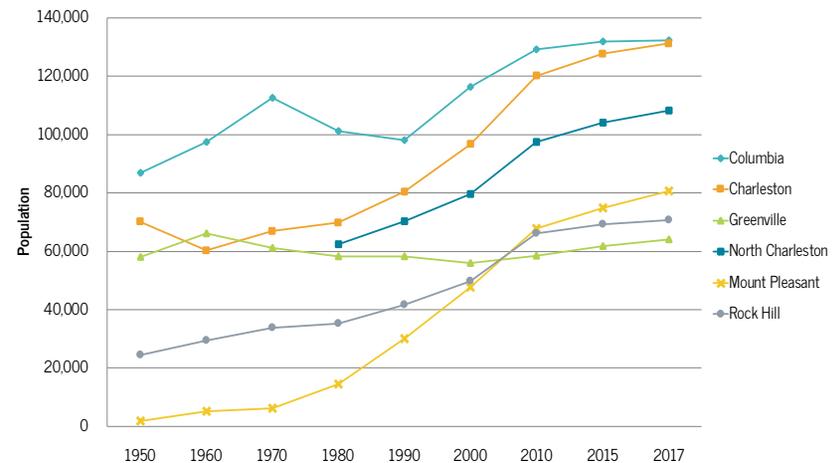


Figure 5: Total Population of the Six Most Populous Municipalities in South Carolina Over Time<sup>6</sup>

## Who We Are

### TOTAL POPULATION

As Columbia is the main economic center for the Midlands, the City's daytime population can double or more in size every day as people commute from other municipalities and outlying areas to their jobs inside of Columbia's borders. This daily absorption of citizens can be a boon to the City, but also can be an added strain on municipal services and infrastructure.

The City is also subject to a cyclical pattern of migration that could be considered more impactful on the City than daily commute patterns. The City of Columbia is home to the State's largest university, the University of South Carolina, as well as a number of other smaller colleges and universities. Those institutions have a combined annual enrollment of over 40,000 students. The vast majority of these students leave Columbia during their periodic breaks, effectively cutting the City's population by a third upon their departure.

Additionally, Fort Jackson, the U.S. Army's most active training center, is located within city limits and has been since 1968. Over 35,000 Army recruits enter basic training at the Fort annually. While these recruits rarely leave the Fort during their training, graduation ceremonies are held regularly for those who pass basic training, and during this time graduates are allowed to go off base with their family and friends. These celebrations result in a regular increase in visitors to Columbia, as well as an increase the demand for goods and services, during these periods. The Fort is also home to a number of enlisted men and women and non-commissioned officers who live in and around Columbia and contribute to the City's diverse population.

### AGE

Columbia, like many other communities in the U.S., is confronted with ever-changing demographics. One of the most discussed topics in the nation is that of shifting priorities and desires as the population ages. This changing age structure of the population has the potential to affect how, when, and where growth and development occurs nationwide.

In Columbia, the population is particularly stratified in terms of generations. Figure 6 depicts Columbia's population by age and gender as well as generationally. This shows that Columbia is a very youthful city, with over 60% of the population made up of Millennials and younger generations. Additionally, these younger generations appear to be predominantly male. While members of Generation X make up a relatively small portion of Columbia's overall population, the Baby Boomer generation comprises a much larger segment of the population, which is reflective of national trends. These older generations also tend to be mainly female. These generational differences could help signal some of the changes that may be in Columbia's future.

# Who We Are

Age Groups and Generations (2017)

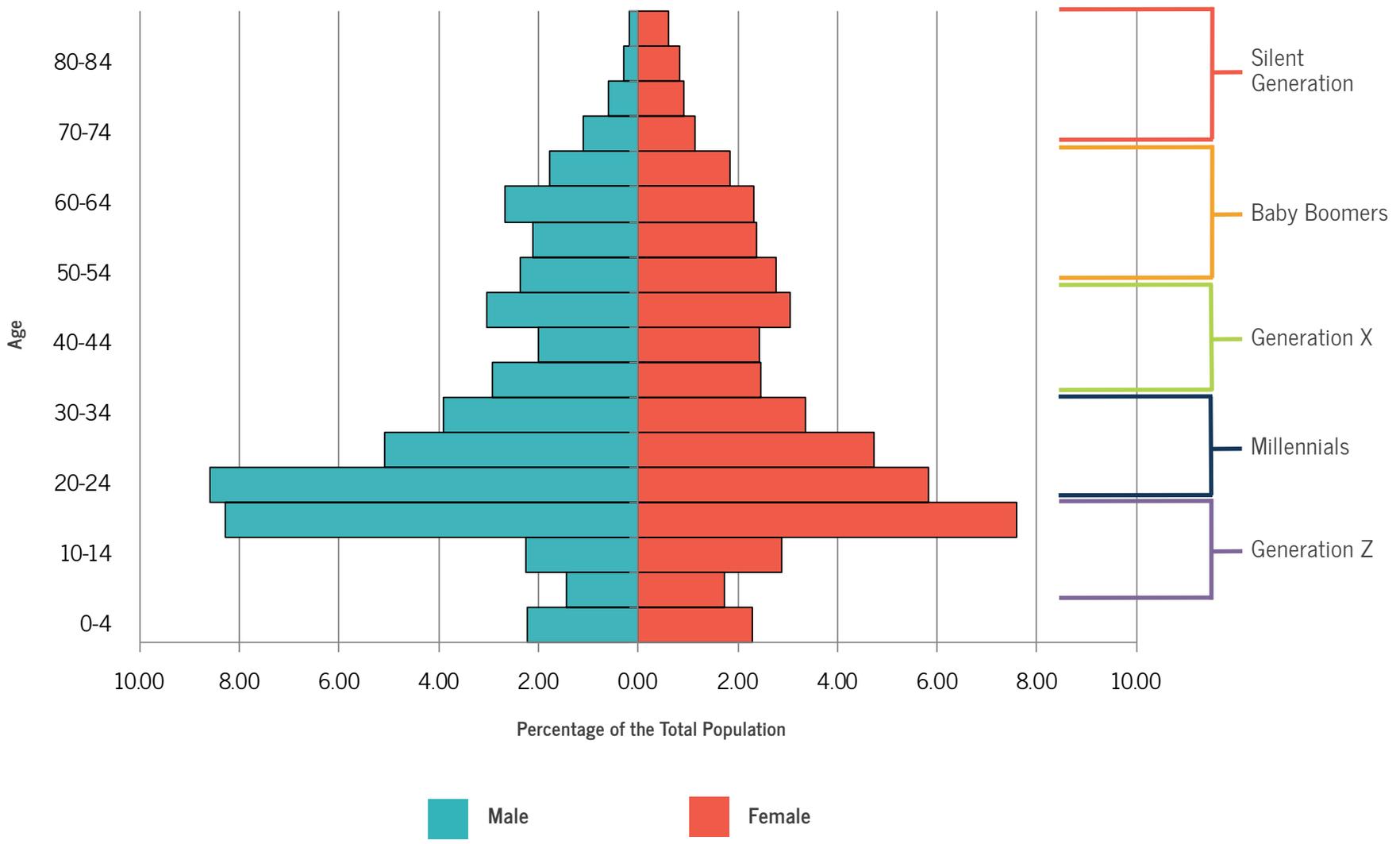


Figure 6: Age Breakdown of Columbia's Population (2017)<sup>7</sup> This cohort-component analysis breaks down the population by 5-year age groups as well as by gender, allowing a better understanding of Columbia's population as well as changes in the population as residents age. The positions of the generations listed are approximate and are meant to indicate the relative location of different age groups.

## Who We Are

### AGE, CONTINUED

Columbia is a relatively young city. As seen in Figure 7, the median age of residents of the City was 28.3 years old in 2017. In comparison, the State median age was 39.0 years old and the national median age was 37.8 years old. This youthful population, likely due in large part to the presence of the multiple universities and colleges and Fort Jackson, is one of the City's largest untapped assets. Throughout this planning process many have indicated that more needs to be done to not only attract but also retain these younger generations to make Columbia a more vibrant and competitive city.

#### Median Age 2017

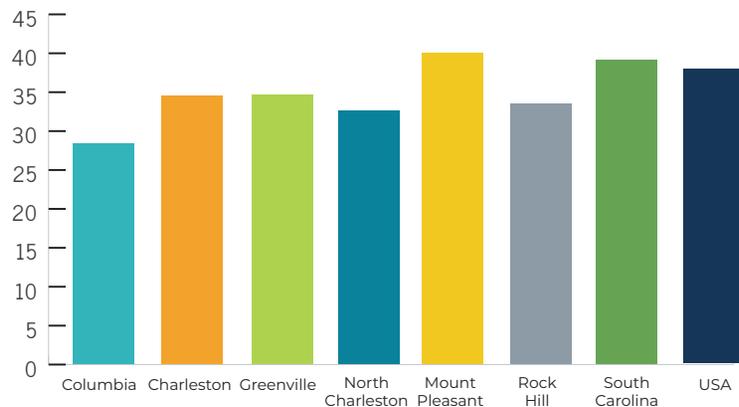


Figure 7: Median Age of Columbia and Peer Communities<sup>8</sup>

In order to plan for Columbia's future, it is necessary to have a better understanding of the needs and desires of the various generations who live in Columbia. Many of the aspirations people hold for Columbia's future overlap generational differences. However, the

delivery and the form these amenities take may vary based on the age of the people accessing them.

The preferences of the younger generations - the Millennials and Generation Z - will have a definitive impact on how Columbia engages its residents and what projects it will need to prioritize. Nationally, there has been a trend of greater urbanization; people are moving from rural and suburban areas to urban areas in cities. This trend has especially applied to both young and elderly generations, both of whom wish to live closer to amenities like restaurants, shops, entertainment, and services, as well as reducing their commute to their work. This preference will continue to place a greater demand for quality infrastructure and services in urban areas as residents increasingly desire walkable and bikeable communities.

Additionally, these younger generations are typically more minimalistic in comparison to older generations, decreasing the amount of possessions they own and the amount of space they need. As such, smaller footprint homes, including apartments, condos, and townhomes are becoming more desirable. This added demand for these spaces, as well as the presence of a large amount of college students demanding off-campus housing, has created a huge desire for affordable housing and apartments in Columbia. While Columbia has a relatively low cost of living overall, demand for these affordable housing options is going to continue to increase, potentially making the city less affordable to live in.

The next older age group is Generation X. Generation X, being a relatively smaller generation in terms of population, is a bit of an enigma in terms of their needs and desires. Generation X's position of

## Who We Are

### AGE, CONTINUED

being sandwiched between two larger generations - Baby Boomers and Millennials - lead to this generation often being overlooked. While this generation is relatively small, their position in today's culture is a significant one.

Generation X's position in society can largely be seen as a result of the time they grew up in. Generation X has also been called the "latchkey generation" due to growing up in a time of less parental supervision than previous generations, due to both parents having full-time jobs or increasing divorce rates. As adults, Generation Xers are noted to have smaller families and tend to have more of a focus on work-life balance than their parent's generation.

In Columbia, members of Generation X are generally in positions to succeed positions that are beginning to be vacated by members of the Baby Boomer generation as they begin to retire. For many, these career changes also coincide with other life changes, like their children graduating and leaving the home. While Generation X has largely continued the trend of suburbanization that was popularized by their parent's generation, these recent patterns may signal a change in how Gen X lives. As Generation X begins to become empty-nesters and gain higher-paying employment, they may begin to look toward downsizing or living closer to job centers

The generation which precedes Gen X, the Baby Boomer generation, has received a lot of attention nationally as the generation begins to retire. Governments, businesses, and other groups are having to speculate on the impact this aging generation will have on social

services, local economies, and housing availability. The Baby Boomer generation is one of the largest generations alive, encompassing nearly 20 years of births and nearly 76 million people nationwide. Because of this, the changes this generation are going through will reverberate for years to come.

Nationally and locally, as the Baby Boomers age, their need for certain types of services is beginning to shift. This generation will increasingly require public and private entities to provide various products and services that will not only affect the elderly but the entire community as well. For example, while mobility issues are not unique to the elderly, they certainly impact a larger portion of this age group. As such, high quality, ADA-compliant sidewalks and paths will need to be updated, created, and maintained throughout the City, particularly in areas that have large numbers of aging people. Similarly, this diverse population will require a wide variety of housing choices as they age.

As more Boomers retire, many are facing choices how to live out their twilight years. There has been a trend toward "aging in place", that is, retaining their homes or downsizing to smaller houses or apartments to live out the remainder of their lives. Others, particularly those with physical or cognitive issues, have chosen to leave their homes in favor of assisted living facilities or nursing homes. These changing preferences underscore the need for public and private amenities like parks, shops, and health services to be located closer, and more easily accessible, to the people who will be relying on them the most.

## Who We Are

### RACE

While different communities have different social structures and needs, Columbia strives to be a place where all people are accepted and included. During this planning process, participants indicated that they felt that Columbia's diversity was a hallmark and an asset for the City, one that makes it unique in comparison to some of the City's peers.

While this racial diversity is a testament to the nurturing atmosphere of Columbia, there is still more that can be done to bring people together. Many residents lamented that there didn't seem to be established networks in place to meet and collaborate with people of different races or from different parts of town. While the City boasts numerous cultural festivals and events, many have stated that participation in these is fleeting, as attendees gather for a few hours and then retreat to their same neighborhoods and social structures. This lack of more structured and regular interaction and collaboration has made it difficult for the citizens of Columbia to address the concerns that are shared throughout the City.

Racial diversity also is not just a Black and White issue. While White and Black populations make up nearly 90% of Columbia's population, the City is also home to a number of people of other races, ethnicities, and backgrounds. These communities also contribute greatly to the cultural fabric of Columbia. The various cultural festivals and programs that occur throughout the City have made a large impact on furthering cultural understanding and appreciation across racial and ethnic lines in the City. Outside of these fleeting interactions, many Columbians indicated they find it difficult to find opportunities to interact with people they don't routinely see.

Columbia continues to be one of the most racially diverse cities in South Carolina, as shown in Figure 8. In 2017, no one race made up a majority of Columbia's population. This varies drastically with some of our peer cities, and the State as a whole, whose population is overwhelmingly White. This diversity has helped to make Columbia the melting pot of backgrounds and cultural traditions it is today.

#### Racial Makeup 2017

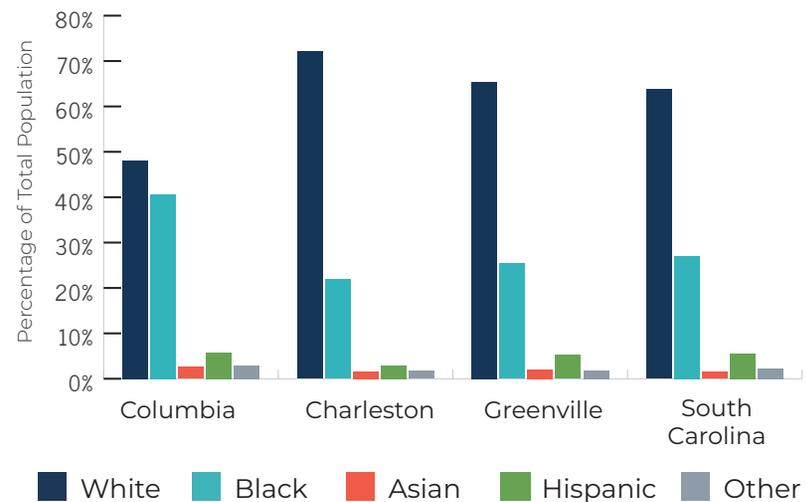


Figure 8: Racial Makeup of Columbia and Peers (2017)<sup>9</sup>

## Who We Are

### RACE, CONTINUED

While the Columbia area is made up of diverse groups of people, these groups do not always live in closely to one another. Figures 8 and 9 show that there are obvious spatial divides in where various races live.

These maps show that Lexington County is predominantly White, as are the Census block groups in the eastern part of the City of Columbia. In comparison, Census block groups in the northern part of Columbia and in southern Richland County are predominantly Black. In comparing data between 2015 and 1990, it appears these geographic divides along racial lines are becoming more distinct, with the White and Black populations being more segmented today than they were in 1990.

This separation can be more clearly observed at the local level. Figure 10 shows that many areas, primarily in the downtown core and Census block groups to the north, are becoming less diverse racially. In 1990, many of these areas had a majority Black population, but in the subsequent decades, have shifted to have a majority White population. This could suggest that the influx of White citizens in these areas has displaced some of the Black population, which then moved to areas that already had a majority Black population. The areas of increased Black population tend to be along the northern periphery of the City's boundaries, suggesting that a large portion of the Black population is moving away from the City's core, while the White population is increasingly moving to the core. This pattern of movement may be an indicator of increasing gentrification in these areas.

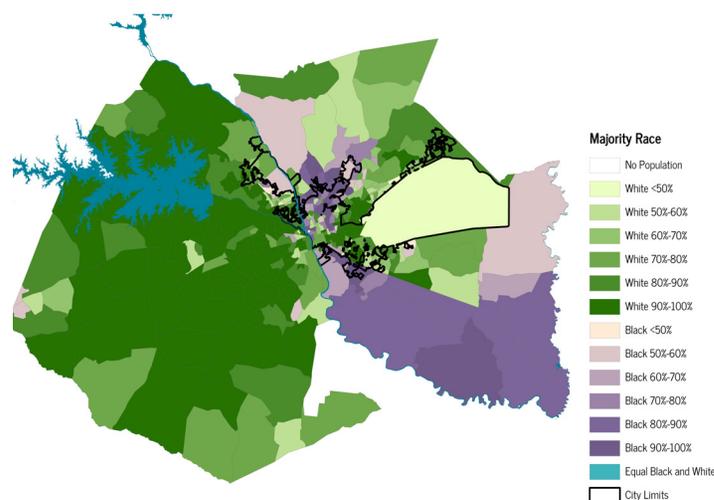


Figure 8: Majority Race by Census Block Group (1990)<sup>10</sup>

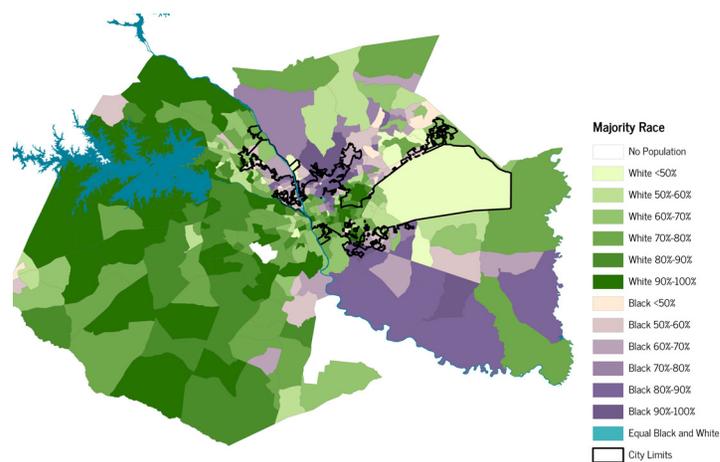
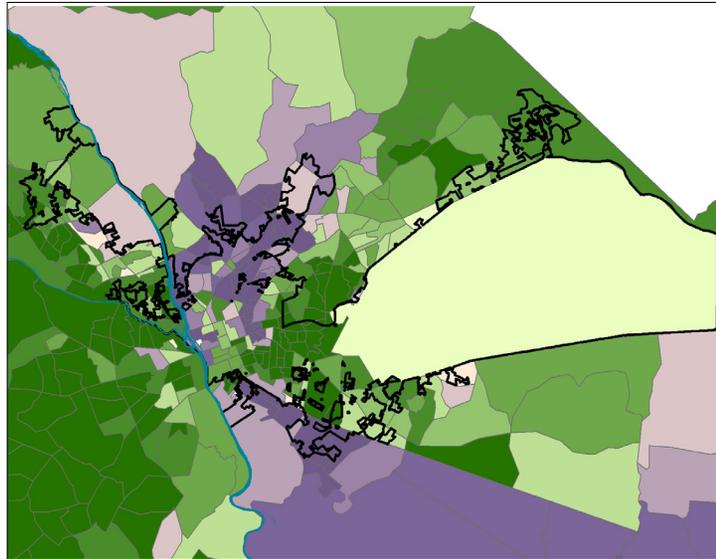
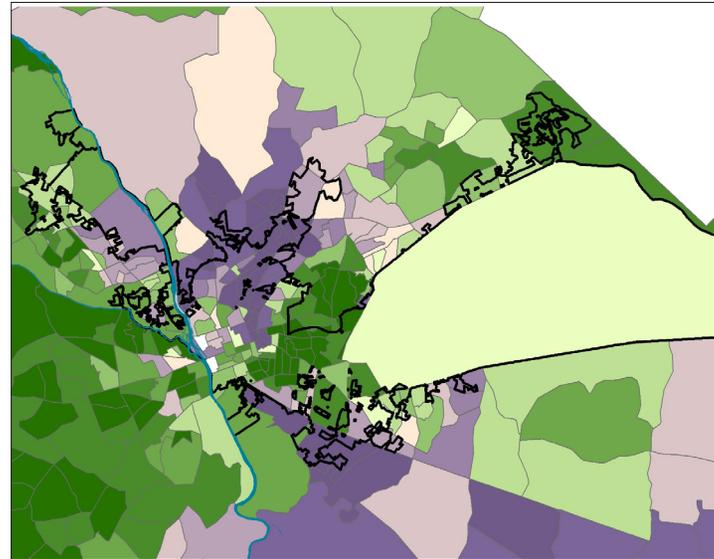


Figure 9: Majority Race by Census Block Group (2015)<sup>11</sup>

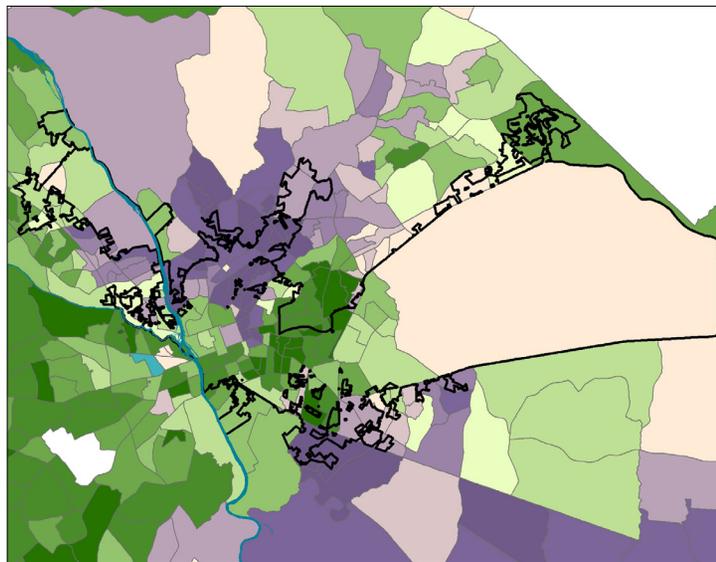
# Who We Are



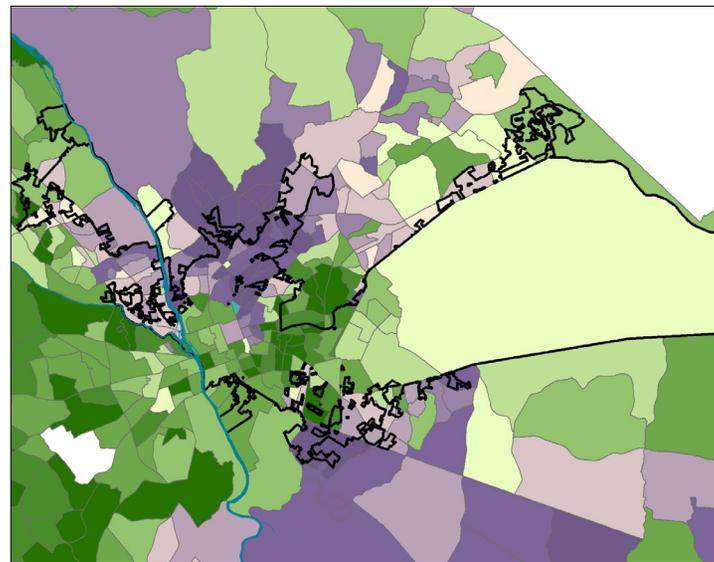
Majority Race - 1990



Majority Race - 2000



Majority Race - 2010



Majority Race - 2015

### Majority Race

- No Population
- White <50%
- White 50%-60%
- White 60%-70%
- White 70%-80%
- White 80%-90%
- White 90%-100%
- Black <50%
- Black 50%-60%
- Black 60%-70%
- Black 70%-80%
- Black 80%-90%
- Black 90%-100%
- Equal Black and White
- City Limits

Figure 10: Majority Race by Census Block Group Over Time<sup>12</sup>

## Who We Are

### RACE, CONTINUED

When speaking about race in Columbia, the conversation is usually dominated by a discussion of Black and White races. While the Black and White populations make up the vast majority of the population of Columbia, there are other races and ethnicities in Columbia that have rich cultural histories and tight-knit communities. However, due to limited information from the Census Bureau and the relatively low population of these communities, how these populations can be analyzed geographically is limited. Figures 11 and 12 show that there are numerous clusters of Hispanic and Asian people throughout the Columbia area.

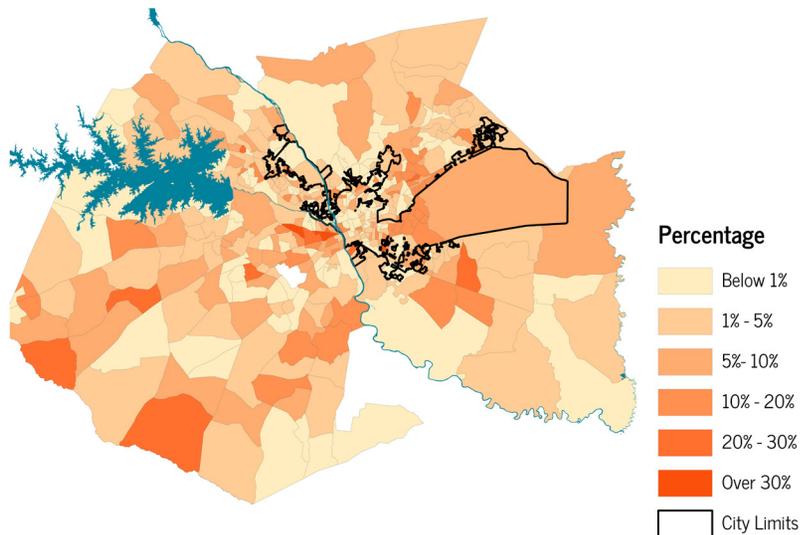


Figure 11: Hispanic Persons as a Percentage of Total Population by Census Block Group (2017)<sup>13</sup>

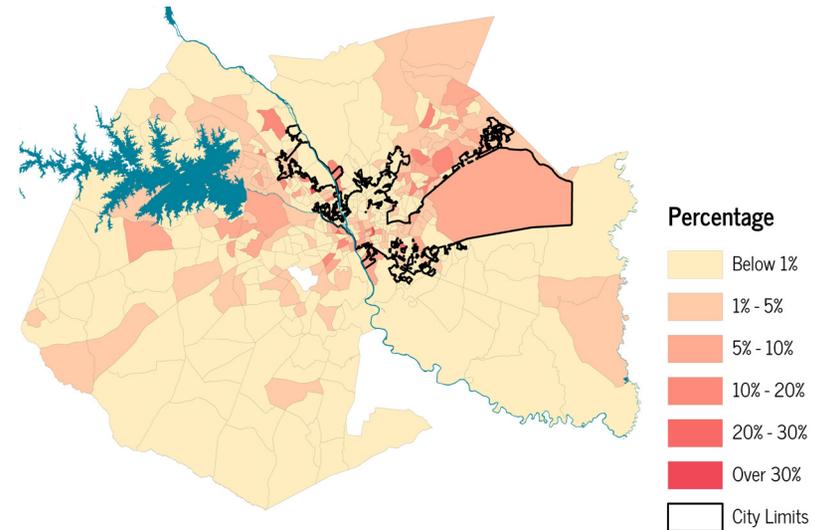


Figure 12: Asian Persons as a Percentage of Total Population by Census Block Group (2017)<sup>14</sup>

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The education of a city's population can be predictive of the future success of a city. Many individuals, businesses, and organizations use educational attainment data when making decisions to move or invest in a city. As shown in the Economic Development section, not only is the educational attainment of a city's residents important, but so is the relative educational specialization of the population. Businesses and organizations will be more easily drawn to regions that have a population already trained and educated in specific sectors. This desire of organizations underscores the importance of providing and facilitating career-focused education opportunities including internships and job training.

## Who We Are

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, CONTINUED

Table 1 shows the various industries that residents of the Columbia Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) work in. Over a quarter of Columbians are employed in the education, health care, or social assistance fields. Identifying the diversity of industries in the region can help to identify and leverage the strengths of the population here and identify where gaps exist. Creating a pipeline for citizens to be educated, trained, and employed in specific industries can help

Industry	Columbia	Columbia MSA
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0.5%	0.9%
Construction	3.6%	6.1%
Manufacturing	5.5%	8.8%
Wholesale trade	1.8%	2.7%
Retail trade	12.1%	12.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.3%	4.9%
Information	1.9%	1.9%
Finance and insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	8.3%	8.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.3%	9.3%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	26.8%	23.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	13.6%	9.4%
Other services, except public administration	4.5%	5.3%
Public administration	6.8%	7.3%

Table 1: Industries for Civilian Employed Population 16 years and older (2017)<sup>15</sup>

to ensure Columbia's economy remains strong and can help to boost the incomes and purchasing power of Midlands residents.

As has been stated previously, equity and access to services is key to Columbia's future, and access to educational opportunities is no different. Figure 13 shows that the educational attainment of the Columbia area varies drastically based on where someone lives. It should be noted that these areas of lower educational attainment closely align with areas that have populations with lower incomes, and with areas that tend to have a Black majority population.

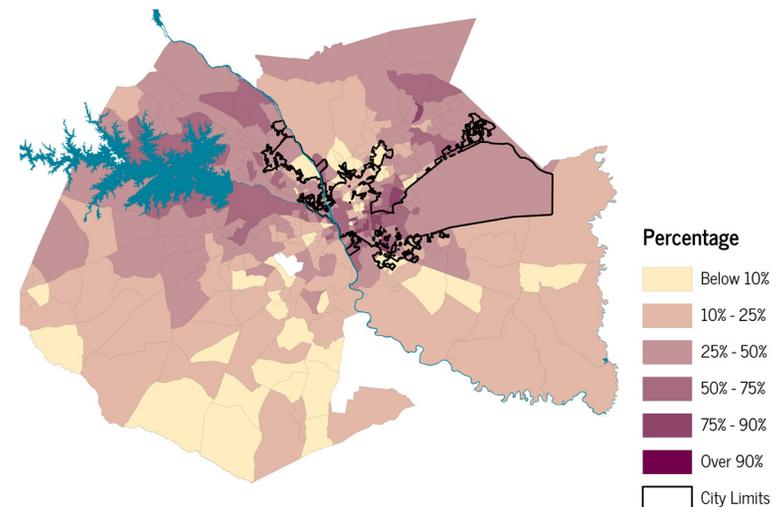


Figure 13: Percentage of Population with Higher Education Degrees by Census Block Group (2017)<sup>16</sup>

Columbia is a relatively well-educated city. As shown in Figures 14 and 15, Columbia has a higher percentage of high school and college graduates than State and national averages. However, Columbia is lagging behind other large cities in the State in terms of educational achievement. Cultivating an educated populace is important

# Who We Are

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, CONTINUED

for continued innovation and expanded personal and economic opportunities, as well as ensuring a high quality of life. As we look to the future, investing in education will be critical to improving the City and issues surrounding equality and equity.

Two major trends related to Columbians' education were identified by the public during the planning process: access to educational opportunities and a lack of career specialization in the City. As discussed in the next section, perceived school quality appears to correlate geographically with demographic characteristics. While there are a number of factors that drive school quality and the perception thereof, feedback received during the planning process indicates that many citizens of Columbia do not feel that they have the same opportunities for quality education as may be available elsewhere in the region. Such feedback suggests that many Midlands residents are actively comparing the educational opportunities in their communities to others, and it may also indicate a desire to live in areas which are perceived to have better opportunities.

During the planning process, many participants noted that Columbia's economy seemed to lack a clear identity or allure of its own, especially when it comes to private enterprises. While some of Columbia's peer cities such as Greenville and Raleigh have become destinations for engineering and research, Columbia does not seem to have the same sort of economic identity. A key factor in establishing this type of economic system is creating a pipeline for students to find employment in specific fields. Such targeted workforce training requires a great amount of coordination between educational institutions, private business groups, and local governmental entities.

### High School Diploma or Higher 2017

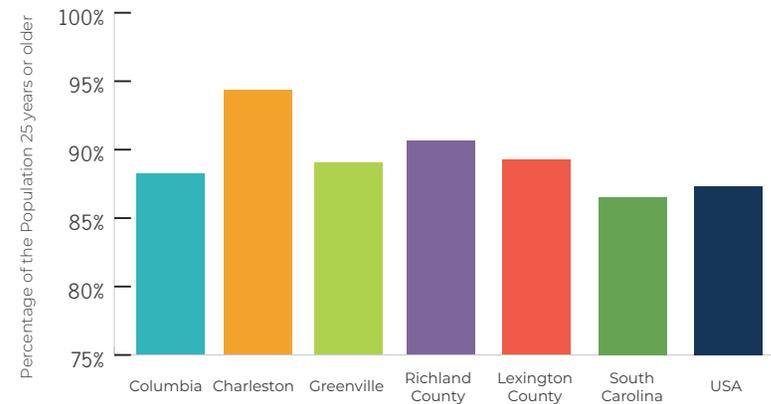


Figure 14: Percentage of Population 25 years or older with at least a High School Diploma (2017)<sup>17</sup>

### College Degree or Higher 2017

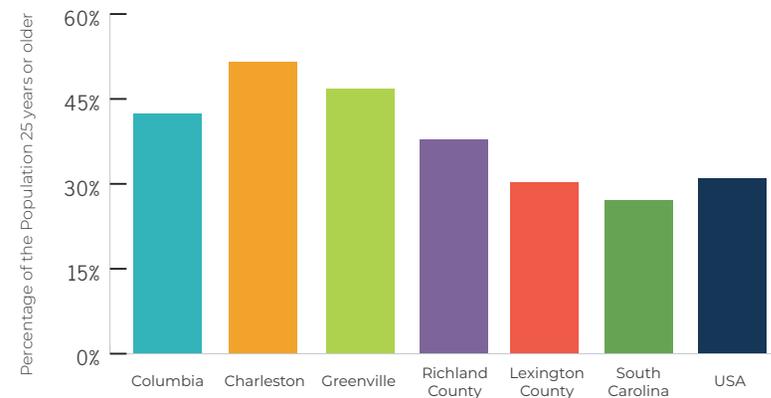


Figure 15: Percentage of Population 25 years or older with at least a College Degree (2017)<sup>18</sup>

# Who We Are

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There are three public school districts that serve City of Columbia residents: Richland One, Richland Two, and Lexington-Richland Five. The following maps show schools based on their overall ranking from the 2018 School Report Card produced by the South Carolina Department of Education. These reports are published annually and provide information about each school, including academic achievement, teacher qualifications, student safety, awards, and parent involvement. While the specific methodology of these reports may not capture all the nuances and programs a school may have, they do provide a government-calculated rating to Columbia residents and those who wish to relocate to the Columbia area. Along with other factors, these ratings as well as the perception of school quality, may directly or indirectly drive housing, employment, and other decisions made by current and potential Midlands residents.

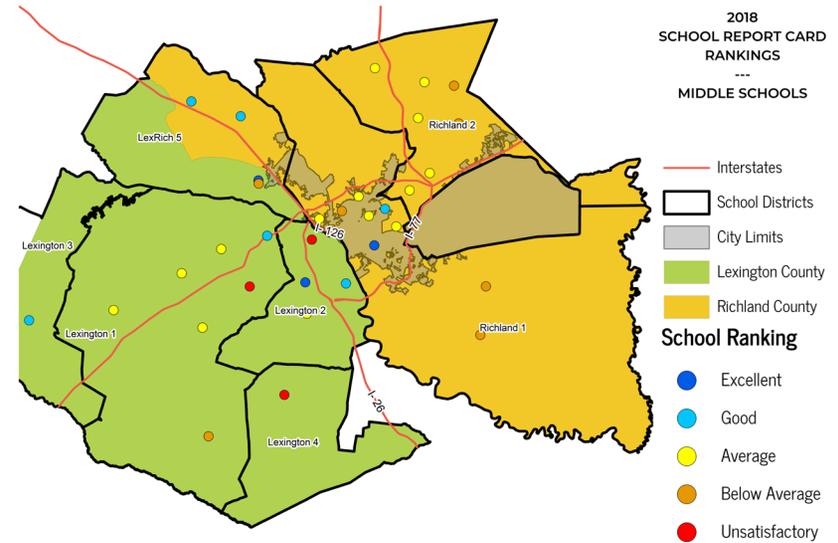


Figure 17: Middle School Report Card Rankings (2018)<sup>20</sup>

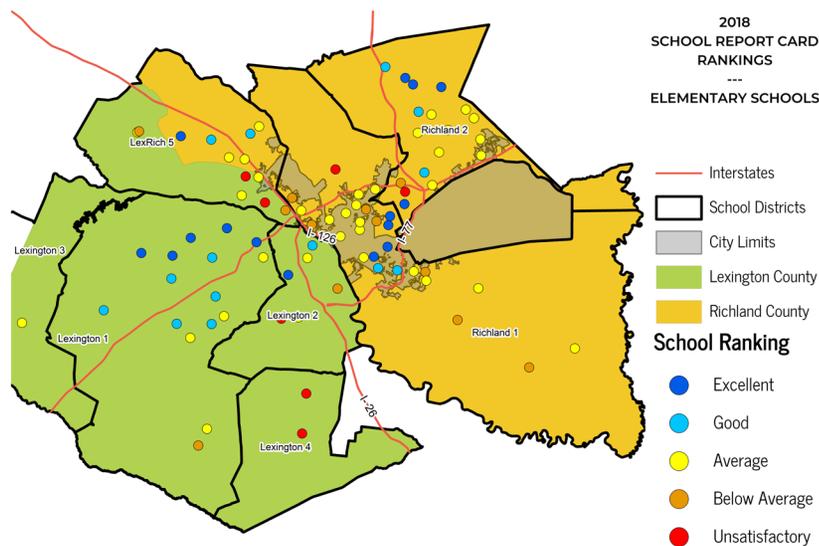


Figure 16: Elementary School Report Card Rankings (2018)<sup>19</sup>

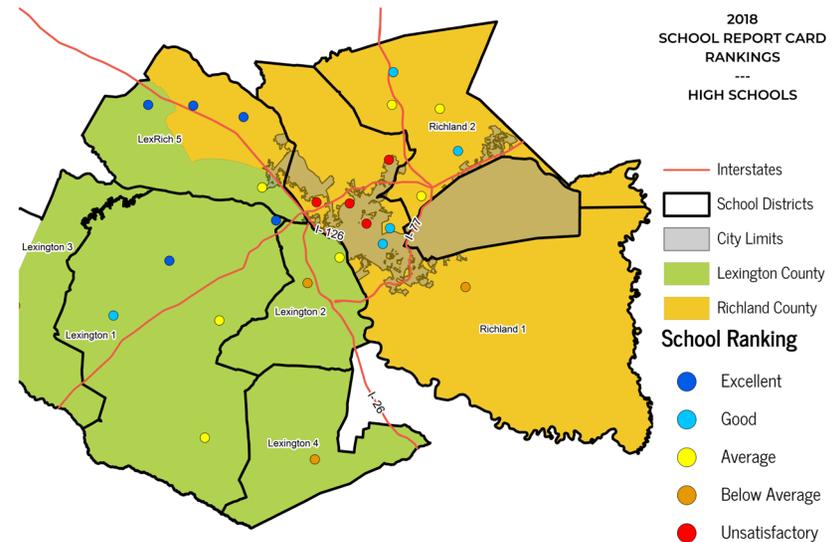


Figure 18: High School Report Card Rankings (2018)<sup>21</sup>

# Who We Are

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CONTINUED

While there are a variety of Report Card rankings across each school district, there are also noticeable spatial clusters of high scoring and low scoring schools. Attempting to discern the causes of these clusters is important to understanding Columbia’s population makeup and can help to predict future population movements. There appears to be a significant correlation between race and the Report Card ranking of schools, with higher ranked schools predominantly located in majority White areas and lower ranked schools predominantly located in majority Black areas. Figures 19, 20, and 21 show the majority race by Census block group compared to the location of schools in Richland and Lexington counties. When compared to the boundaries of the attendance zones for these schools, there appears to be a trend toward school attendance zones becoming more racially uniform. This trend appears to have become increasingly prominent over the past few decades.

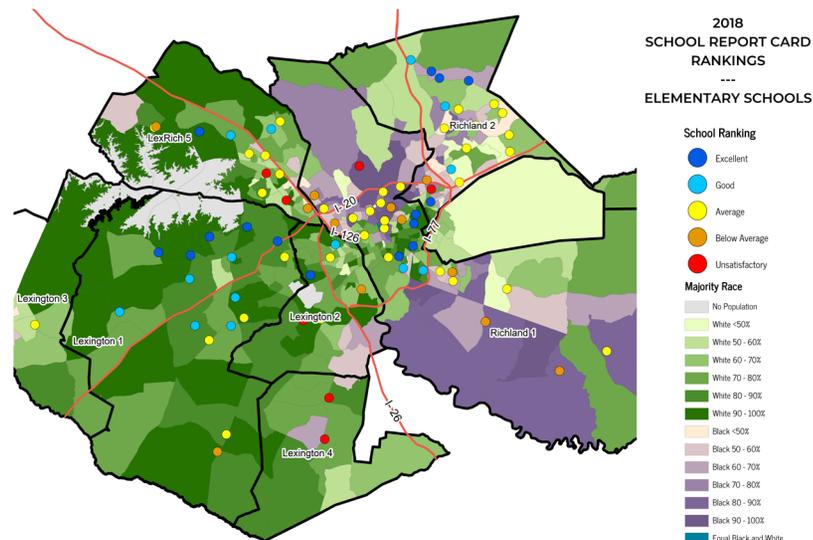


Figure 19: Comparison of Elementary School Report Card Rankings (2018) and Majority Race by Census Block Group (2017).<sup>22</sup>

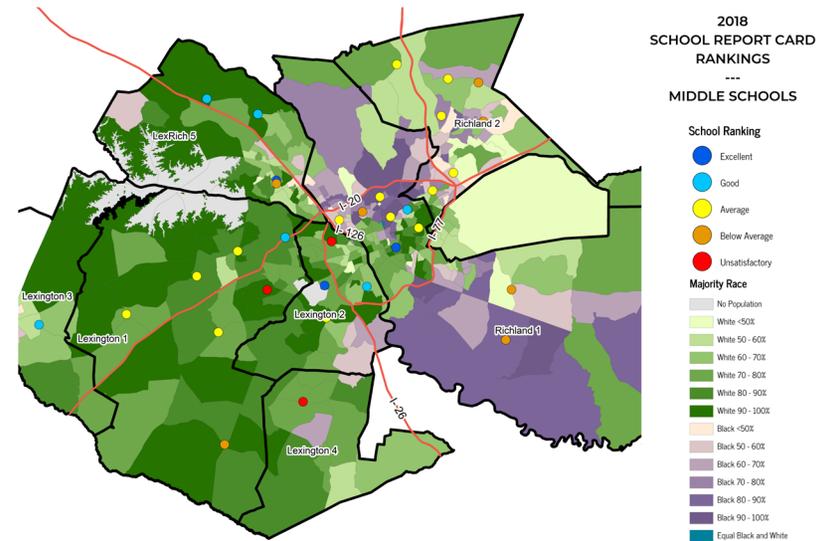


Figure 20: Comparison of Middle School Report Card Rankings (2018) and Majority Race by Census Block Group (2017).<sup>23</sup>

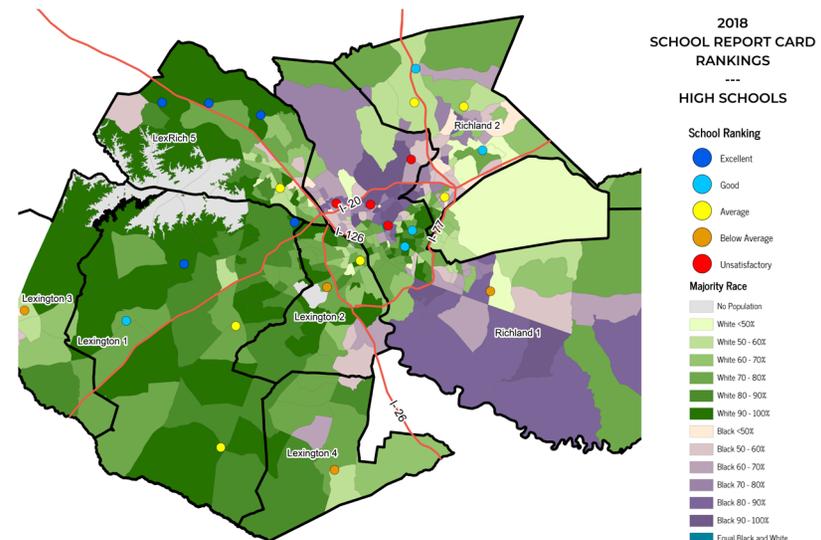


Figure 21: Comparison of High School Report Card Rankings (2018) and Majority Race by Census Block Group (2017).<sup>24</sup>

# Who We Are

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CONTINUED

However, race is certainly not the only demographic that correlates geographically with Report Card scores. Figures 22, 23, and 24 shows that there also similar correlations between Report Card ratings and median income. While school attendance zone boundaries and perceived and/or actual school quality may be only some of many contributing factors to Columbia’s racial and socioeconomic configuration, they should be considered when creating policies and initiatives.

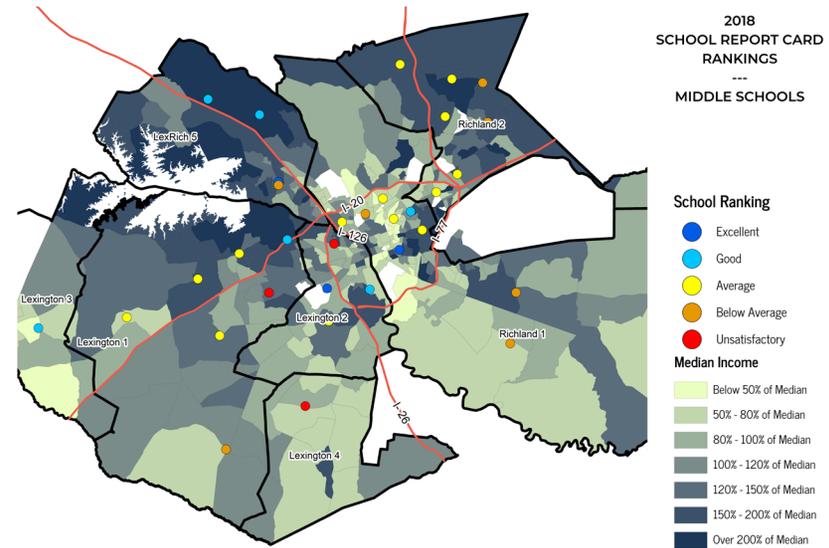


Figure 23: Comparison of Middle School Report Card Rankings (2018) and Median Household Income by Census Block Group (2017). Areas with no population appear as white.<sup>26</sup>

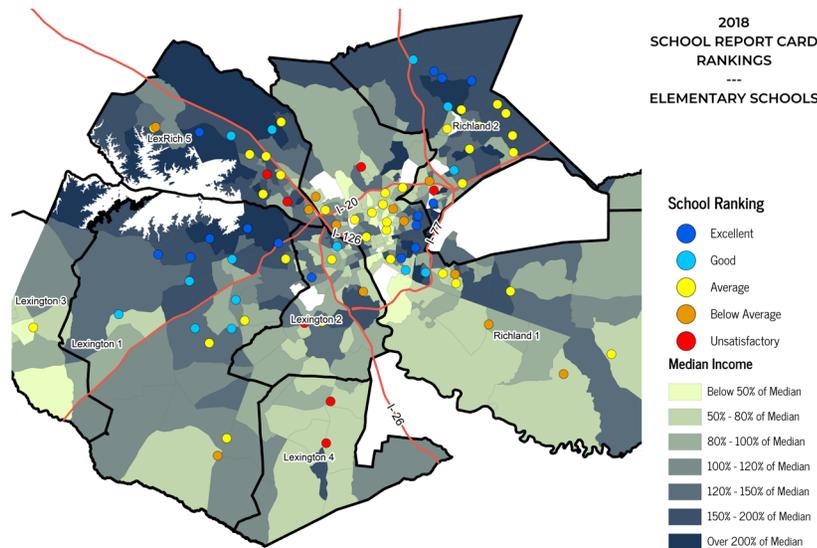


Figure 22: Comparison of Elementary School Report Card Rankings (2018) and Median Household Income by Census Block Group (2017). Areas with no population appear as white.<sup>25</sup>

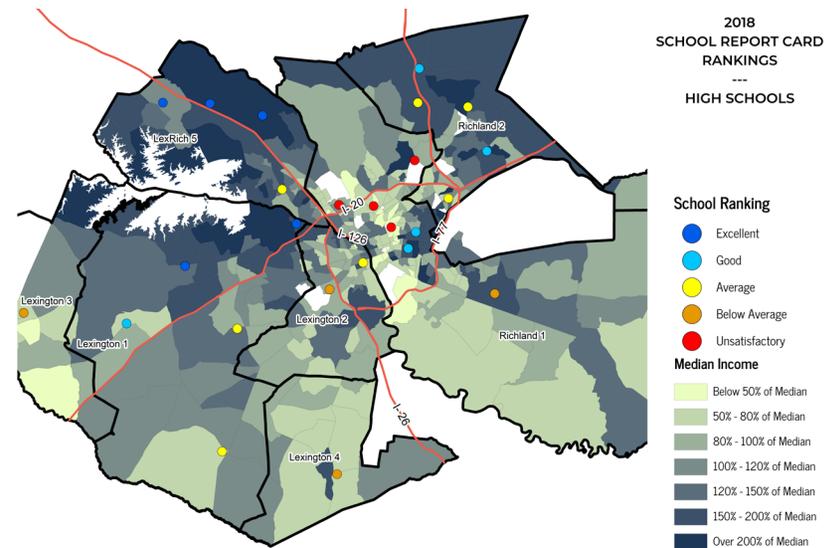


Figure 24: Comparison of High School Report Card Rankings (2018) and Median Household Income by Census Block Group (2017). Areas with no population appear as white.<sup>27</sup>

## Who We Are

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CONTINUED

It is difficult to compare a city's schools or school districts to those in other cities as local character and context can have a large impact on the accuracy of school rankings. Coordination and cooperation between individual schools, local residents, school districts, businesses, and government institutions are very important to creating an effective education network. How other cities achieve these types of mutually beneficial relationships could help to inspire similar successes in Columbia.

Throughout this planning process many members of the public, particularly those with children, stated that school attendance zones and perceived school quality were some of the largest factors in their choice of home location. Housing in neighborhoods that are served by public schools with better reputations is highly sought after and also tends to hold a higher market value. This demand for housing in specific school attendance zones has had a large effect on the makeup of Columbia, leading to equity concerns about the quality and availability of services.

Additionally, many residents indicated that the overall perceived quality of the school district was a large factor in where they chose to live, even if the quality of a certain school in that district was desirable. While many citizens relied on rankings and accolades to choose which school or school district to live in, many also stated that

word-of-mouth recommendations from people who lived or worked in Columbia were just as useful for choosing a school attendance zone to live in.

Many participants throughout the planning process indicated that these interpersonal recommendations tended to lead people away from certain school districts instead of advocating for one. Many further indicated that they chose to live outside of Columbia, typically in Lexington County, as they had heard the schools were better there and they could still have a reasonable commute to their jobs inside the City.

Making changes to schools or school attendance zones is a contentious issue with parents, students and, homeowners. Many prefer to maintain the status quo, as changes may lead to unknown changes for home values and marketability. Most of the school districts in the Midlands have not held a major rezoning of school attendance zones for decades. Instead, school districts have attempted to market existing school attendance zones by placing new programs into existing schools, creating magnet schools, setting up public charter schools, or making minor modifications to school attendance zones. While maintaining the status quo is preferable to many, this focus on stability may have contributed to inequities in the community at large.

# Who We Are

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

The type and availability of employment, as well as the amount of wages earned from a job, are some of the most impactful aspects on one’s life and future. Additionally, a person’s job and wages also can directly influence the people and neighborhood around them. As such, ensuring its citizens have opportunities for gainful employment and livable wages is one of the City’s more important duties.

Figure 25 shows that disparities in unemployment rates are apparent spatially. There appears to be a concentration of higher rates of unemployment concentrated primarily in the northern part of Columbia. These areas of concentrated unemployment also tend to be made up of predominantly Black and lower income populations; these, as well as other trends could point to larger, systemic issues. This lack of employment centers in these areas can also contribute to a lack of basic amenities such as groceries, medical facilities, and adequate transit services. Figure 26 shows that Columbia’s overall unemployment rate has risen and fallen in the past decades, however, this trend has not affected all racial or ethnic groups equally.

Unemployment Rate

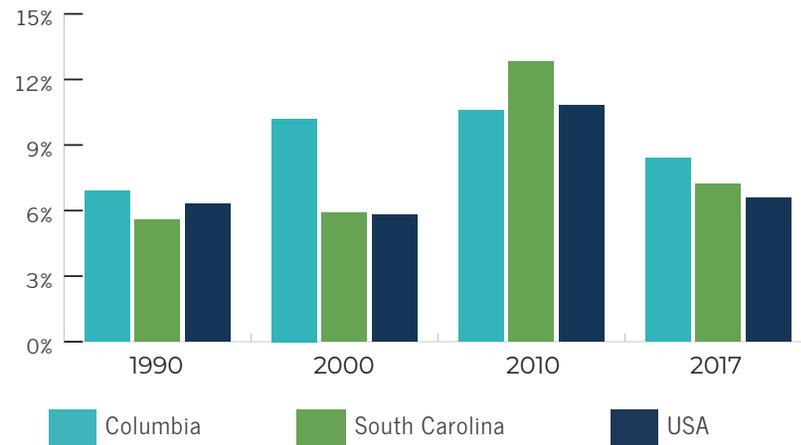


Figure 25: Unemployment Rate Over Time<sup>29</sup>

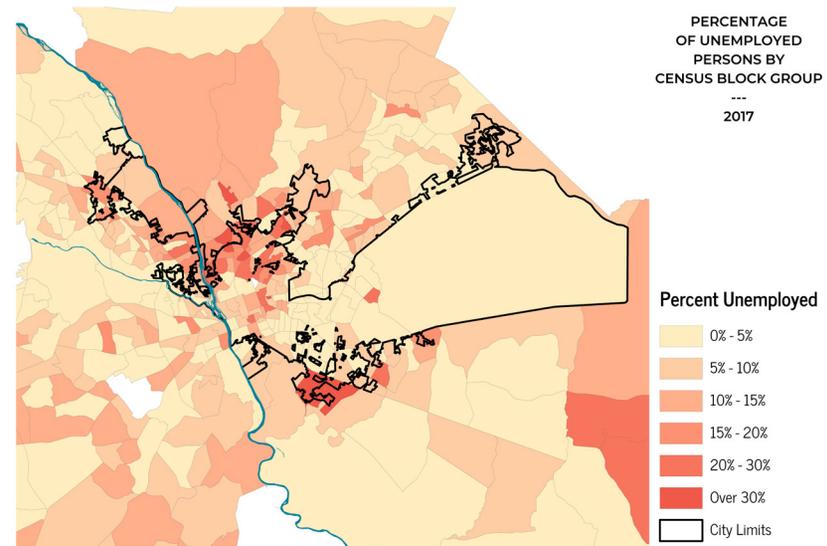


Figure 26: Percentage of Unemployed Persons by Census Block Group (2017)<sup>28</sup>

# Who We Are

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME, CONTINUED

Figure 27 highlights racial disparities in employment in Columbia in comparison to its peers. While the unemployment rates for White and Asian people are relatively low, unemployment rates for Black people were significantly higher in 2017. As Black persons are almost half of the City's population, the fact that the unemployment rate for Black residents is more than triple that of White residents is indicative of a significant equity issue within the City.

**Unemployment Rate 2017**

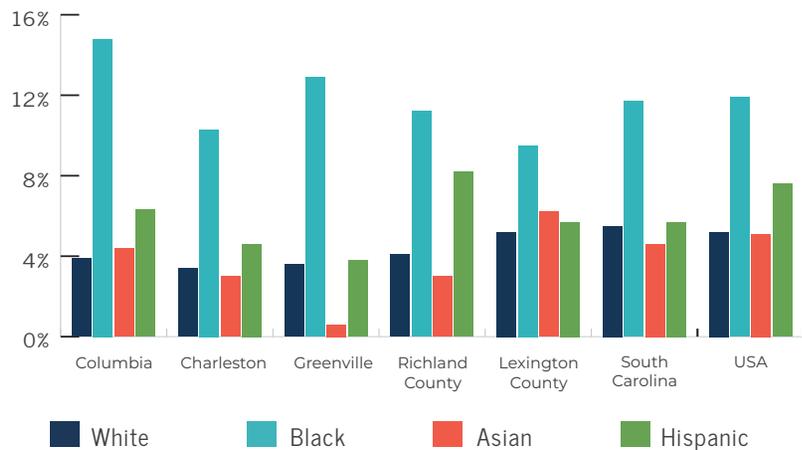


Figure 27: Unemployment Rate by Race (2017)<sup>30</sup>

Figure 28 shows the median household income of Columbians compared to the State and nation. Columbia's household incomes have lagged behind State and national levels and this disparity appears to have grown over time. While median household income is an indicator of a lower cost of living, it can also indicate that Columbians have less upward mobility and options to relocate in comparison.

**Median Household Income**

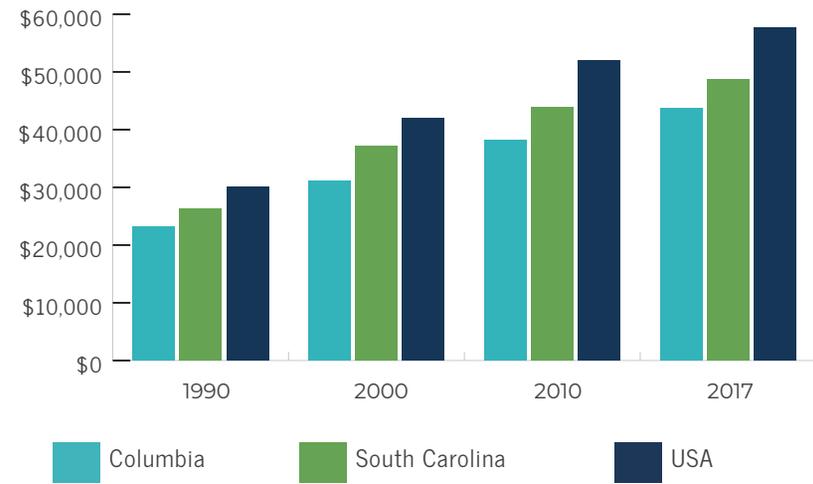


Figure 28: Median Household Income Over Time<sup>31</sup>

# Who We Are

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Figure 29 shows that, while incomes for all races in Columbia are below national averages, some races are affected to a larger degree than others. Though the median household income for Black households in Richland and Lexington counties is slightly higher than the national average, Black households in Columbia earn nearly \$10,000 less annually than the national average. Black households also earn nearly half of what White households earn, despite making up over 40% of the City's population. The median income for Asian households is nearly half of the national average, though this may be due in part to Asian individuals comprising only 2.6% of the City's racial makeup and therefore they may not be well represented in all business sectors.

### Median Household Income 2017

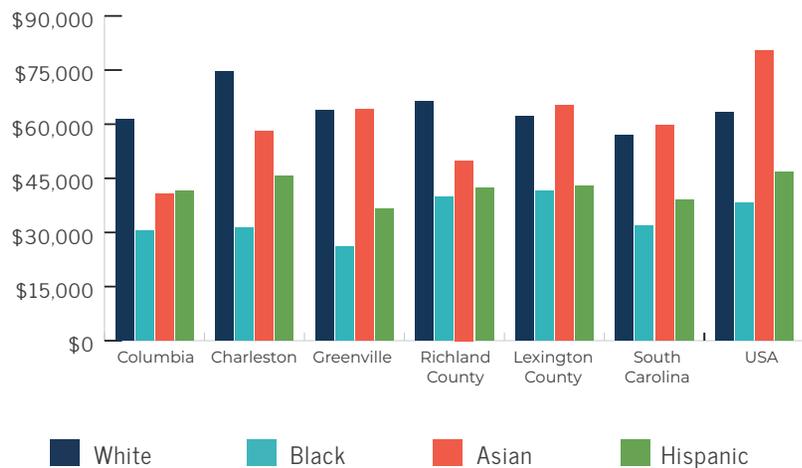


Figure 29: Median Household Income by Race (2017)<sup>33</sup>

## POVERTY

Figure 30 highlights those areas which suffer from higher rates of poverty. Residents of such areas also tend to have issues accessing to employment, reliable transportation and basic amenities like groceries and pharmacies. These areas also tend to fall within Census tracts or block groups with a majority Black population.

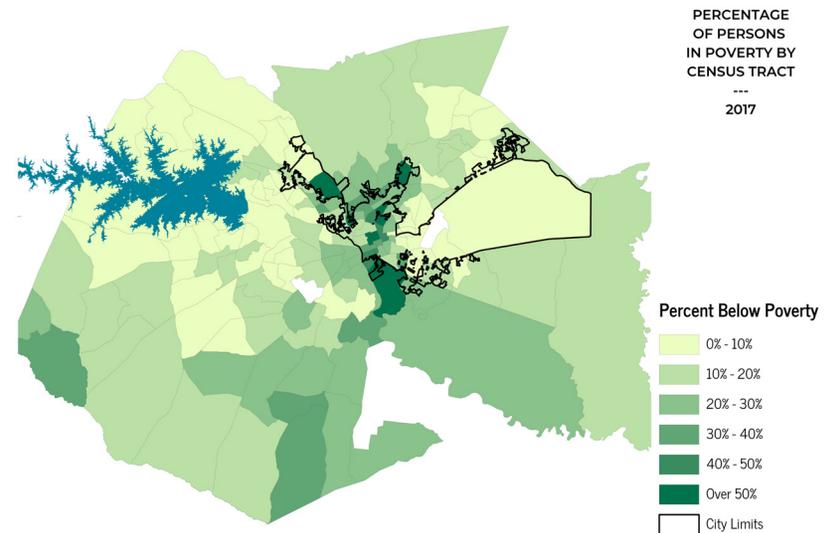


Figure 30: Percentage of Persons in Poverty by Census Tract (2017)<sup>32</sup>

## Who We Are

### POVERTY

As shown in Figure 31, in 2017 the percentage of individuals who lived in Columbia and earned an income at or below the poverty line was 22.3%, well above national and state averages. This rate is also significantly higher than some of Columbia's peer cities and surrounding areas. The varied factors that contribute to this high poverty rate in the City are discussed throughout this plan, and include access to jobs and education, as well as the high cost of basic needs such as housing and transportation.

During the planning process, citizens and community leaders stated that poverty is a real and immediate problem in many areas of Columbia. Poverty can be generational and cyclical, and where poverty is clustered geographically, disinvestment in neighborhoods tends to occur which can lead to decreases in quality of life and

#### Individuals in Poverty 2017

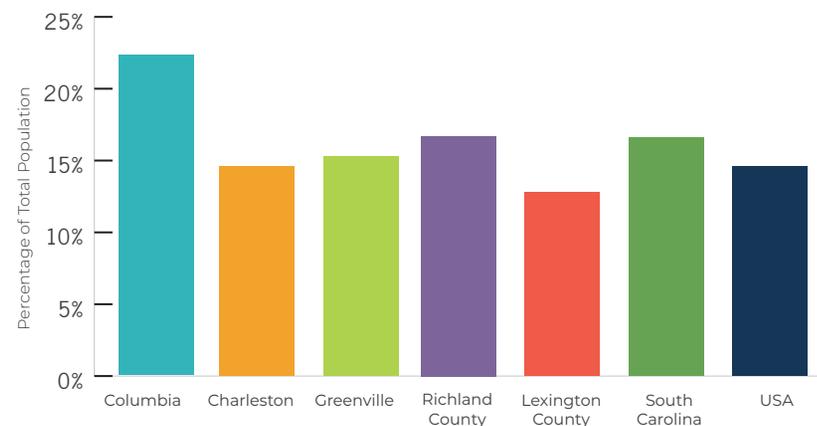


Figure 31: Percentage of Individuals in Poverty (2017)<sup>35</sup>

safety in these areas. Some residents have stated that educational programs and poverty relief efforts have been difficult to access or learn about, particularly in areas that have the most need.

### FEMALE-HEADED FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

Female-headed households, particularly those where the householder has children, have been found to be at a higher risk of poverty, food insecurity, and other negative impacts. The Census Bureau defines female-headed family households as those households whose primary decision maker is a woman, with no husband present, who lives with one or more related individuals. Pockets of higher concentrations of female-headed households in various parts of the City, as shown in Figure 32.

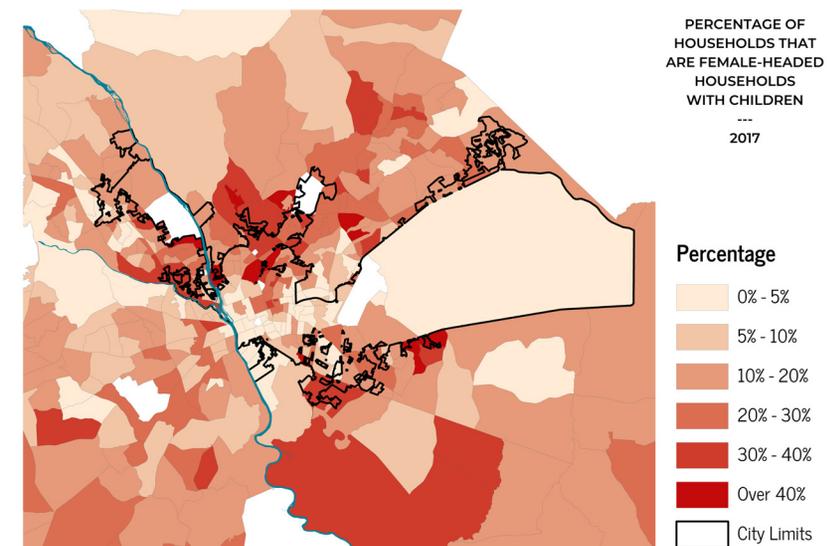


Figure 32: Percentage of Households that are Female-Headed with Children (2017)<sup>34</sup>

## Who We Are

### FEMALE-HEADED FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS, CONT.

As shown Figure 33, the City of Columbia has a larger percentage of female-headed family households than any of its peer cities and than the nation as a whole. This may indicate that there is a higher percentage of families and children who are at risk of poverty and other negative impacts. This rate may also indicate the necessity for greater services targeting women and their dependents in the Columbia area.

#### Female-Headed Family Households 2017

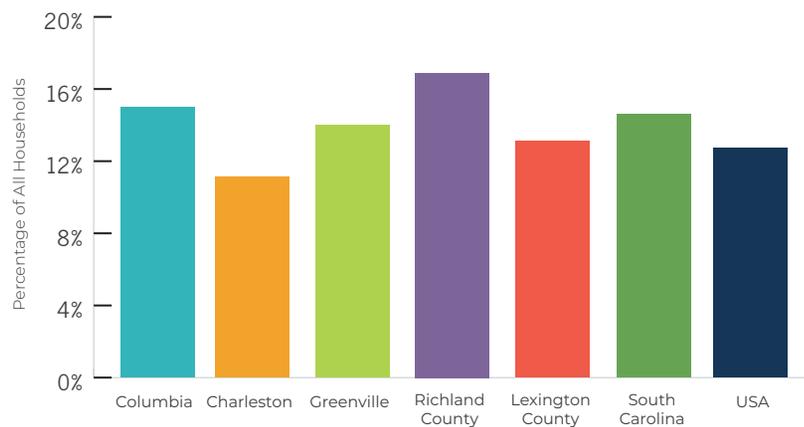


Figure 33: Female-Headed Family Households (2017)<sup>36</sup>

Since 1990, the percentage of female-headed family households has remained more or less stable, despite increases in population. Figure 34 shows that when compared with state and national averages over time, the number of these households in Columbia has continually been noticeably higher, indicating that this is a local and pervasive issue that should be better understood and addressed.

#### Female-Headed Households with Children 2017

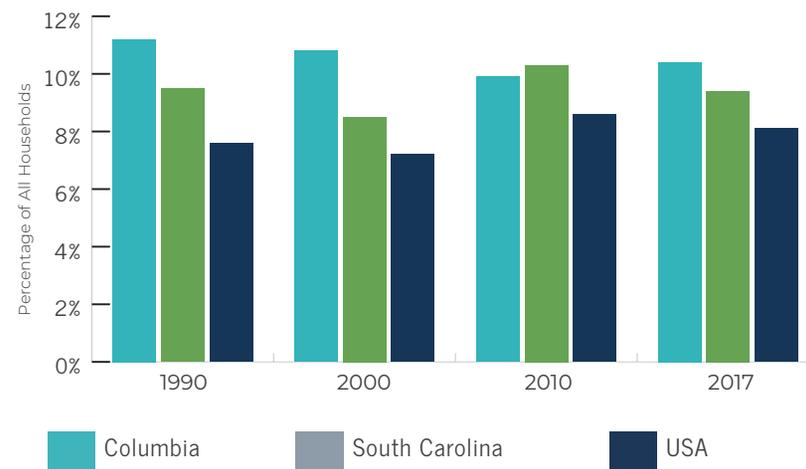


Figure 34: Female-Headed Family Households with Children (2017)<sup>37</sup>

# Who We Are

## THE BROAD PICTURE

A geospatial analysis of educational attainment, racial makeup, female-headed households with children, and median household income can indicate that residents of an area are at greater risk for negative effects such as poverty, health risks, and other forms of deprivation. There appears to be a relationship between the racial makeup of an area and other risk factors of marginalization, including lower levels of educational attainment and lower median household incomes, which can be seen in Figure 35.

These factors, which have been explored in depth previously in this document, can be predictive of the overall quality of an individual's life. Decreases in the number of female-headed family households, when coupled with increases in income and educational attainment in a community, can indicate greater stability and improvement to the quality of life within that community. As people who are already struggling may not have the opportunity to improve their lives on their own, local governments and other groups should be prepared to step in and help empower this population.

These factors, when considered together, show how Columbia's development has affected certain population groups. The following maps show a clear trend towards more neighborhoods becoming more uniform in terms of race, income and education. Areas of the City are becoming more segmented and concentrated with specific populations, instead of integrating with people of various means, backgrounds, and beliefs.

Table 2 shows how the demographic information that went into this analysis was weighted. These factors can help to identify those areas in Columbia that are at greater risk and may require additional City services to combat marginalization.

Non-White Population			Female-Headed Households with Children		
		Score			Score
<50% of Median	<15.6%	1	<50% of Median	<4.6%	1
80% of Median	15.6%-24.9%	2	80% of Median	4.6%-7.6%	2
100% of Median	24.9%-31.1%	3	100% of Median	7.6%-9.5%	3
120% of Median	31.1%-37.3%	4	120% of Median	9.5%-11.4%	4
150% of Median	37.3%-46.7%	5	150% of Median	11.4%-14.3%	5
>150% of Median	>46.7%	6	>150% of Median	>14.3%	6

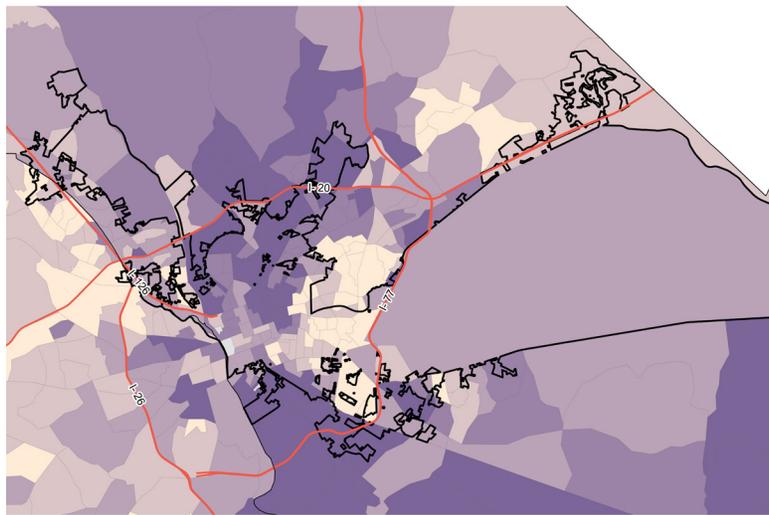
  

Adults without a College Degree			Median Household Income		
		Score			Score
<50% of Median	<35.0%	1	<50% of Median	Below \$23,650.50	6
80% of Median	35.0%-55.9%	2	80% of Median	\$23,620.50-\$37,792.80	5
100% of Median	55.9%-70.0%	3	100% of Median	\$37,792.80-\$47,241.00	4
110% of Median	70.0%-76.9%	4	120% of Median	\$47,241.00-\$56,689.20	3
120% of Median	76.9%-83.9%	5	150% of Median	\$56,689.20-\$70,861.50	2
>120% of Median	>83.9%	6	>150% of Median	Over \$70,861.50	1

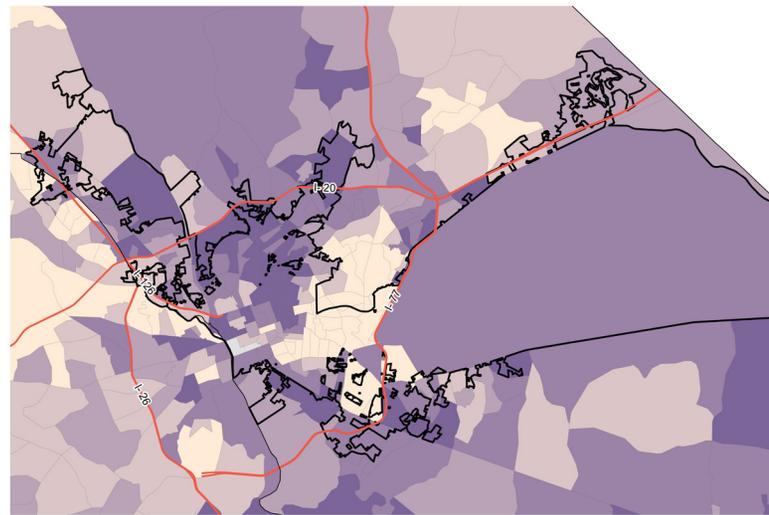
Table 2: Weights Assigned to Demographic Factors that Influence Inequity in Columbia for the Purposes of Mapping Populations at Risk of Marginalization

Of particular note are the areas in and around the urban core of Columbia. In 1990, these areas had a more diverse and intermingled population. In the decades since, it appears that populations that are at a greater risk of marginalization have been replaced with less at-risk populations. We can infer from the population shifts shown in the maps that follow that the populations that were living in these areas appear to have been pushed to the peripheries of the City and into unincorporated areas of the surrounding counties.

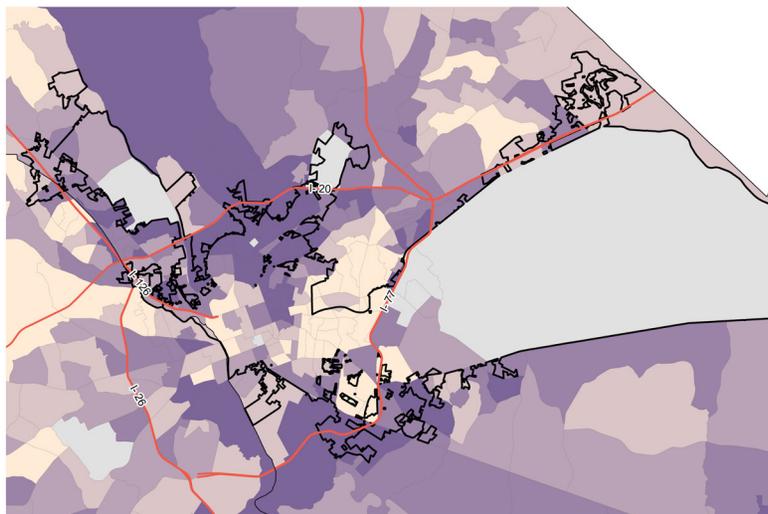
# Who We Are



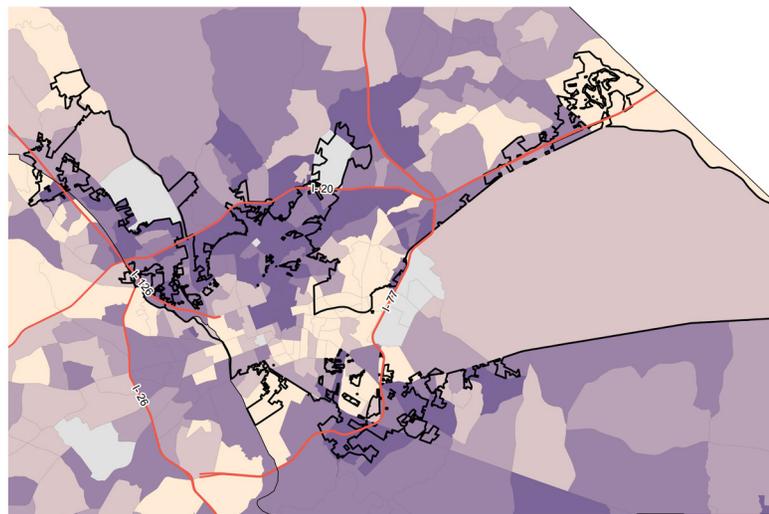
Multivariate Analysis - 1990



Multivariate Analysis - 2000



Multivariate Analysis - 2010



Multivariate Analysis - 2015

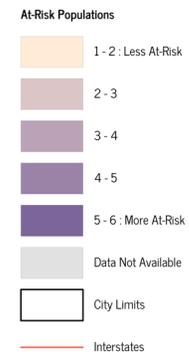


Figure 35: Weighted Geographic Analysis of Populations at Risk of Marginalization<sup>38</sup>

## Who We Are

### MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

Marginalized populations include people who, because of who they are, what they believe, or actions which they have taken or which have been taken against them, may be at a greater risk of being pushed to the periphery of society or otherwise overlooked. In planning for Columbia's future, it is important to consider all people who live and work here to ensure that their voices are heard. At times, this task can be challenging due to a lack of data about these groups or difficulties engaging with members of these populations. Working to help identify and empower those who are most vulnerable is essential to the City's mission and vitality.

### VETERANS

The City's low cost of living has also contributed to the large number of veteran retirees returning or moving to Columbia to settle down. This population is a boon to Columbia's diversity and stability, but also presents a heightened need for specific services. The presence of Fort Jackson and the Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia help to attract and retain veterans following their service. Columbia and surrounding areas have a higher percentage of veteran residents than the national average, as shown in Figure 36. Fort Jackson also attracts thousands of military families and friends to Columbia for graduation ceremonies that occur throughout the year. As the City plans for future growth, maintaining and strengthening its symbiotic relationship with the Fort, other military institutions, and the veterans who live and work in the City will be key to continued prosperity.

On average, veterans have a greater need for physical and mental health services than the non-veteran population. As shown in Figure 37, a quarter of Columbia's veteran population suffers from some form of

### Veteran Population 2017

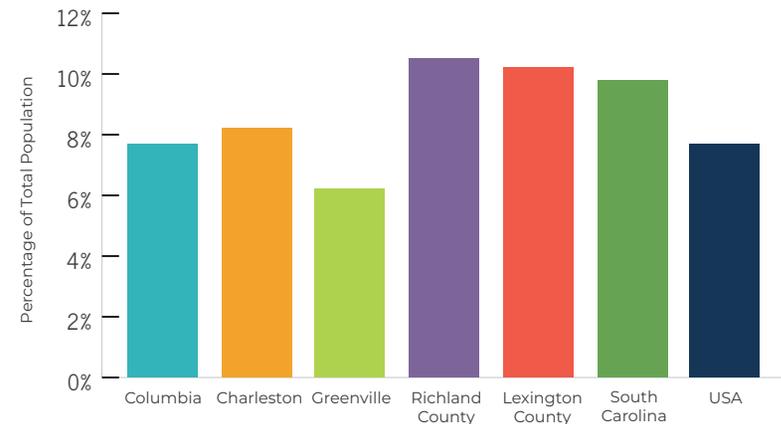


Figure 36: Percentage of Total Population who are Veterans (2017)<sup>40</sup>

### Disabled Veteran Population 2017

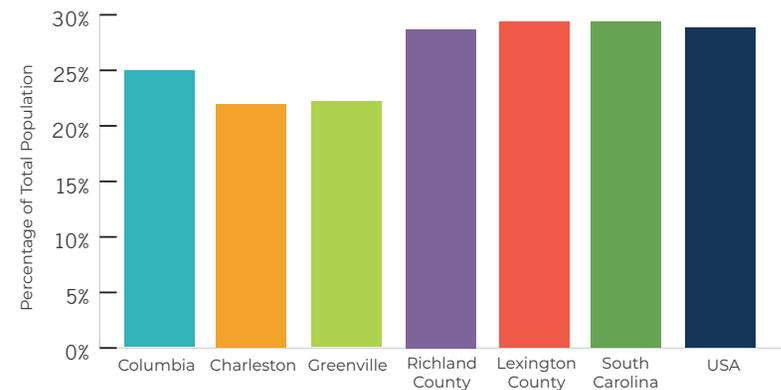


Figure 37: Percentage of Veterans who have a Disability (2017)<sup>39</sup>

disability. As the City plans ahead, the City will need to consider how to ensure the City and City services are easily accessible for this population.

## Who We Are

### LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

Columbia prides itself on being one of the most open and accepting cities in South Carolina, and this particularly extends to the LGBTQ+ community. In 2017, it was estimated that 3.5% of South Carolinians identified as a part of the LGBTQ+ community<sup>41</sup>, many of whom live in and around Columbia. There are a number of LGBTQ+ organizations and allied organizations that exist in Columbia who work to aid, advocate for, and highlight the LGBTQ+ community. These organizations provide much needed support to those LGBTQ+ members who have been displaced or are otherwise struggling to meet their basic needs. Other organizations help to emphasize and connect the LGBTQ+ community and its allies in the Greater Columbia area in order to promote tolerance and acceptance.

Members of the LGBTQ+ community have historically, and continue to be, frequent targets of harassment and scorn. While Columbia as a whole is seen as a very inclusive city, there are certainly aspects that can be improved. Focus group participants noted that within the community there is a perception of lingering issues within City government when it comes to representation, awareness, and acceptance of members of the LGBTQ+ community. Similarly, safety is considered to be one of the LGBTQ+ community's greatest concerns. While downtown Columbia is seen as a very safe and supportive area by many in the community, focus group participants indicated that this was not necessarily the case outside of the urban core. Outlying areas around Columbia and the Midlands may be seen by some members of this community to be less welcoming and/or safe for LGBTQ+ individuals. A regional focus on acceptance and safety is a necessity for the LGBTQ+ community and other frequently marginalized populations.

LGBTQ+ advocacy and assistance organizations also face challenges. These organizations tend to have issues related to outreach and resources, something local governments and other entities can help address. Many of these organizations have also identified the necessity of greater networking between LGBTQ+ organizations, the Columbia community, and local governments as a key factor in achieving common goals related to equity. Currently, there exist few regular lines of communication or liaisons between these organizations and the City outside of specific events.

Safety and inclusivity concerns are exceptionally important for young LGBTQ+ individuals. While advocacy organizations like the Harriet Hancock Center puts on events like Youth Out Loud and Queer Prom to specifically engage with LGBTQ+ youth, there remain more LGBTQ+ youth in need than there are resources to help them.

A large number of LGBTQ+ youths are kicked out of their houses by their guardians when they come out, leaving them homeless and at risk. Youth suicide rates are also particularly high in the LGBTQ+ community. Supportive services like Gay-Straight Alliances, sex education, trained and empathetic supervision, and mental health care can help to secure a safety net for those in need. Such services are lacking or completely non-existent in and around Columbia, leaving many desperate for help.

## Who We Are

### INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

As discussed earlier, the Greater Columbia area is a racially and ethnically diverse community. The various languages that are spoken in the Columbia area are highlighted in Table 3. The number of non-English languages being spoken at home in the Columbia area could be indicative of the presence of communities with limited English proficiency.

Non-English Languages Spoken at Home (2017)			
Language	Columbia	Richland County	Lexington County
Spanish	4.25%	3.99%	4.96%
French	0.35%	0.28%	0.26%
German	0.27%	0.41%	0.24%
Russian	0.21%	0.42%	0.14%
Other Indo-European	1.06%	0.86%	0.60%
Korean	0.11%	0.46%	0.11%
Chinese	0.72%	0.46%	0.33%
Vietnamese	0.25%	0.24%	0.17%
Tagalog	0.21%	0.17%	0.06%
Other Asian	0.44%	0.51%	0.34%
Arabic	0.28%	0.15%	0.05%
Another Language	0.26%	0.49%	0.13%
Total	7.41%	8.45%	8.40%

Table 3: Non-English Languages Spoken at Home by Population 5 Years and Older(2017)<sup>42</sup>

Translation services that are directly provided by the City or other entities tend to be rather limited, making it difficult for citizens with limited English proficiency to access vital information. City information and forms are generally only published in English, and press releases and other materials are rarely translated into non-English languages. Persons particularly affected by this void in translation services are those new to Columbia: new students, visitors, and tourists. Translation services not only help provide access to individuals who have made their home in Columbia, but also encourage those who wish to visit this city. As shown in Figure 38, nearly a tenth of the population of Columbia and surrounding communities speaks a language other than English. Of those, nearly 35% do not speak English “very well”, as reported by the US Census Bureau, meaning a sizable portion of Columbia’s population is likely unable to directly access basic City information or services.

### Population Who Speak a Language Other Than English at Home 2017

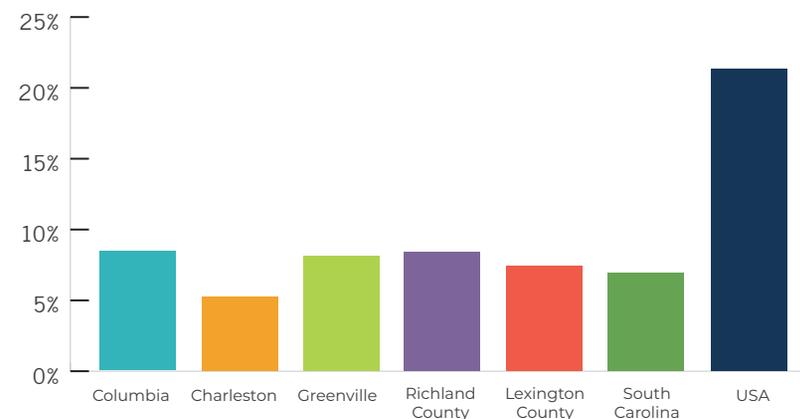


Figure 38: Percentage of the Population Which Speak a Language Other Than English at Home(2017)<sup>43</sup>

## Who We Are

### PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

As was mentioned in the section specific to Columbia's veteran population, persons with disabilities make up a significant proportion of Columbia's population. In 2017, the Census Bureau estimated that 11.7% of Columbians, over 13,000 people, are directly affected by a disability of some kind. Figure 39 shows the variety of disabilities that affect Columbia's residents. Each of these disabilities comes with unique needs and difficulties. Many essential services are not readily available to these populations, or there were additional costs associated with these services. This is a problem that is compounded by the fact that many of these individuals may have difficulties with acquiring or maintaining employment, have an otherwise limited income, and/or higher healthcare costs. While the City does have some services that specifically attempt to address these concerns, there are still gaps in service that exist. These gaps are two-fold: difficulty in accessing information and a difficulty in movement due to physical barriers.

#### Types of Disabilities - Columbia, SC

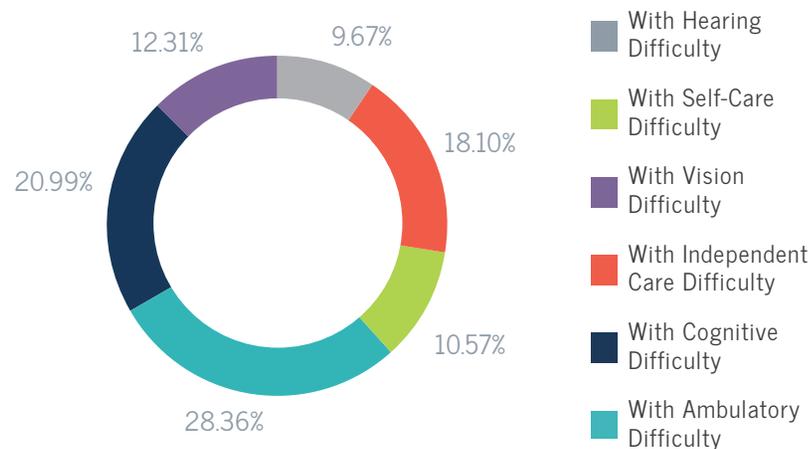


Figure 39: Types of Disabilities Affecting Columbians (2017)<sup>44</sup>

#### INACCESSIBILITY OF INFORMATION

City services are typically not readily available for those who are hearing or visually impaired. While the City has an ADA Coordinator on staff who responds to requests from the public and helps connect citizens with the correct City staff to address their concerns, in many ways, Columbia's approach is reactionary when it comes to ADA accommodations with support for the deaf, blind, or those with other disabilities being provided only when requested. The majority of City communications are not prepared with ADA accessibility in mind. While technology can help make written communications more accessible, access to information can be particularly difficult for those who do not have access to or lack the ability to access the Internet or such technological aid.

#### PHYSICAL BARRIERS

Many of those who have ambulatory disabilities are unable to get around the City effectively. Many roads in Columbia lack ADA compliant sidewalks, ADA curb cuts, and/or contain physical barriers which cause them to be exceptionally difficult to traverse for many with disabilities. Many people with disabilities are also affected by higher transportation costs. While the COMET does offer discounted fares for those who qualify as disabled, many of the COMET routes are not close to where people with disabilities live. Additionally, there is often a problem with the infrastructure that leads to or from COMET stops. These factors lead many who have disabilities to rely on the COMET's Dial-A-Ride Transit service (DART) or other ride-sharing services. These specialized services typically cost significantly more than a typical transit ride and can be less timely than traditional transit means. As such, the City's and region's current infrastructure and systems can make it difficult for those with disabilities to engage as fully and effectively as able-bodied citizens.

## Who We Are

### PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, CONTINUED

Not all populations within Columbia are affected equally by disabilities, as shown in Figure 40, the Black population is disproportionately affected by disabilities, with nearly 60% of the disabled population being Black. The financial and social strain of being disabled or having a disabled family member can be devastating, particularly for individuals and households who are already struggling. As discussed previously, the Black population in Columbia also tends to have higher than average levels of unemployment and lower than average median household income.

#### Racial Makeup - Persons with Disabilities

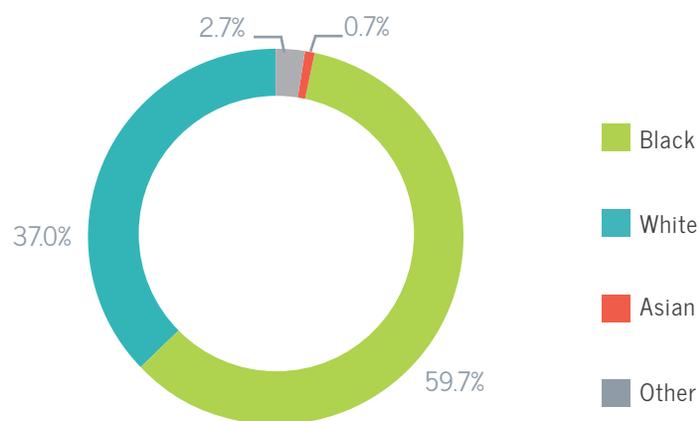


Figure 40: Racial Makeup of Persons with Disabilities in Columbia (2017)<sup>45</sup>

### CHRONIC DISEASE SUFFERERS

Individuals with chronic diseases, both physical and mental, have specific needs that are not always readily apparent. Serious chronic diseases like cancer and diabetes can have devastating personal and financial effects on individuals and families. Other diseases like asthma, arthritis, and depression, while usually not immediately life threatening, can nonetheless greatly affect the daily lives of sufferers.

Data for chronic diseases is typically difficult to ascertain at the local level due to how South Carolina's public health system is organized. The primary authority for public health is at the state level with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH). DHEC provides information about environmental affairs, health regulations, and public health measurements. DMH's primary mission is to operate mental health clinics and hospitals throughout the State and provide public reports about these facilities. While municipalities have the option to operate municipal health boards, many choose not to and the Richland County Health Department functions as the primary local health department for the City of Columbia. As a result of this hierarchy, health data is generally reported only at the state, county, or ZIP Code level, making it difficult to ascertain issues that are affecting the residents of the City proper specifically.

In 2017, the City adopted the *Walkable 29203 Pedestrian Master Plan*, a joint planning effort with Richland County. This plan identified a number of inequities and health risks in the 29203 ZIP Code area which encompasses the northern portion of Columbia and extends northward into suburban and rural Richland County.

## Who We Are

### CHRONIC DISEASE SUFFERERS, CONTINUED

This plan cited that, in 2017, nearly 65% of adults and nearly 33% of children in Richland County were either overweight or obese and more than 10% of Richland County adults had Type 2 diabetes. The plan made a number of recommendations, including construction of adequate bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and easier access to healthier foods, to attempt to lower these rates.

Other chronic diseases prevalent in the Midlands include sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) and sexually-transmitted infections (STIs). As shown in Table 4, Richland County has a higher rate of infection than the State as a whole. Also noteworthy is that Lexington County is below state averages for these diseases. Such chronic diseases are preventable through greater education about the risks of these diseases and the use of prophylactics.

Rate of STDs infections (Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, and Infectious Syphilis) in the Population (2017)		
Richland County	Lexington County	South Carolina
1,362.51 per 100,000	704.99 per 100,000	872.63 per 100,000

HIV Prevalence (2017)		
Richland County	Lexington County	South Carolina
0.9%	0.3%	0.4%

Persons with HIV Who Have Achieved Viral Suppression (2017)		
Richland County	Lexington County	South Carolina
58.8%	62.4%	56.7%

Table 4: Prevalence of Various STDs, SC DHEC Division of Surveillance and Technical Support (2017)<sup>46</sup>

Many mental illnesses can be classified in the same category as chronic diseases. While the symptoms of these illnesses are usually invisible to the naked eye, they nonetheless can have debilitating effects on the lives of both sufferers and their families. Table 5 shows the rates of adults with depression in the areas surrounding Columbia compared to state and national averages. Though rates appear in line with the national average, with approximately a fifth of the population suffering from depression, it is clear that greater resources are needed to address this issue.

Percentage of Adults with Depression (2015-2017)			
Richland County	Lexington County	South Carolina	United States
18.8%	23.4%	20.2%	20.5%

Table 5: Prevalence of Depression in Adults (2015-2017)<sup>47</sup>

An important consideration about chronic diseases is the financial burdens they place on their sufferers. As shown in Figure 41, Columbia has a higher percentage of residents who lack health insurance than national averages. The majority of these residents are between 19 and 34 years old. A lack of health insurance can be particularly ruinous for those individuals with chronic diseases, many of whom have lower incomes, and whose medical bills can lead to bankruptcy or worse. As such, chronic diseases can contribute to generational poverty and similar problems.

## Who We Are

### CHRONIC DISEASE SUFFERERS, CONTINUED

Chronic diseases have significant personal and financial impacts on their sufferers and their families. Identifying areas and populations that have higher rates of these diseases is the first step in attempting to target areas for improvement. Unfortunately, as stated previously, such data is collected at broader levels that do not follow City limits. As such, addressing these concerns should and must involve collaboration with regional stakeholders. The health and well-being of Columbia's residents is an important matter for the future of the City and needs to be explored further.

### Population without Health Insurance 2017

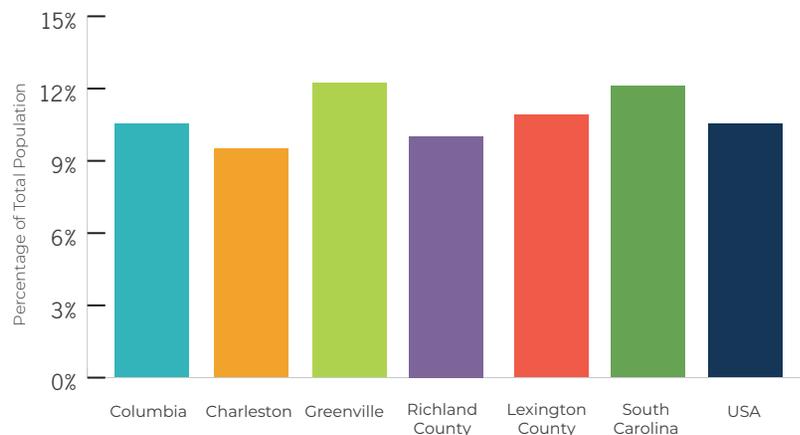


Figure 41: Percentage of the Population without Health Insurance (2017)<sup>48</sup>

### HOMELESSNESS

In Columbia and the Midlands there are a variety of gaps in services for those who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless. Such needs include housing, regular meals, job training, and other programs which can serve to provide stability and support to this vulnerable group. While there are numerous shelters and programs for these individuals in Columbia, the demand for programs and support typically exceeds the supply.

The City currently operates an Inclement Weather Center in partnership with United Way. The Center is open from November 1 to April 30, when the temperature is below certain thresholds, as well as throughout the year when large severe weather incidents, such as hurricanes, occur. From November 2018 to April 2019, the Center aided 783 individuals and served approximately 17,720 meals. Of those served during this time period, 56% had a disability and 10% were veterans. The City also allocates funds to support various homelessness support services around the City from the General Fund. Additionally, the City's Community Development Department funds various housing and homelessness support services through federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

In Columbia, there are numerous shelters that serve a wide variety of needs. Many of these shelters place restrictions on those who are allowed to seek shelter at their facilities, which typically include sobriety standards. Many shelters serve specific clientele, such as homeless women or homeless families. While these shelters address the needs of many in Columbia, there are still those, particularly older men with disabilities, that can fall through the cracks and are in need of additional support.

## Who We Are

### HOMELESSNESS, CONTINUED

Like many communities, Columbia has a complicated relationship with the homeless population. On the one hand, Columbia aims to be a caring and compassionate city, particularly to those in need. On the other hand, many fear the presence of homeless people and the perceived uncertainty their behavior can bring.

Currently, there is a large demand for services for those who are struggling with homelessness and similar transitional issues. The City's partners and other nonprofit organizations have done an admirable job in helping to take care of those in the most need in Columbia. To continue this positive momentum, Columbians will need to extend their compassion to this population and continue to embrace those in the community who are the most in need.

### “UNDESIRABLE” POPULATIONS

There are other portions of Columbia's population that many have preconceptions or misconceptions about. These people could be classified as “undesirables,” a term popularized by the urbanist William Whyte. As Whyte explains, this is a broad term used to classify those who live on the margins of society; those whose status is an uncomfortable reminder of how our lives could have come to pass, “but for the grace of events.”<sup>49</sup> Despite their societal status, it is important to remember that these individuals are people and citizens of Columbia. In addition to being ex-convicts, afflicted with addiction, undocumented immigrants, sex workers, or otherwise ostracized by society, they are fathers, mothers, siblings, sons, and daughters. Regardless of what life choices they have made or have

been made for them, these individuals are a part of the community, and they deserve the same respect and opportunity the rest of Columbia's citizens are afforded.

Data about these populations tends to be somewhat sparse, due in large part to the fact that these populations are not easily identified on a surface level and instead usually require self-reporting. Additionally, statistical information about these populations tends to be collected by individual agencies or specialized organizations instead of a centralized location. These factors make it difficult to accurately estimate the size of these populations in Columbia and the Midlands.

### A PATH FORWARD

In summary, there are people who live in Columbia who have been pushed to the margins. These individuals are in need of specific intervention and assistance, though at times such support may be difficult to access, due to societal misconceptions and fears. Columbia should strive to be a city inclusive of all people, regardless of their backgrounds, and should work to ensure all of its citizens have the opportunity to improve their lives. To quote President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself- nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory.”<sup>50</sup>

## Where We're Going

### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Central Midlands region (Richland County, Lexington County, Newberry County, and Fairfield County) is expected to nearly double in population between 2010 and 2050, as shown in Figure 42.

The vast majority of these new residents are expected to move to Richland and Lexington Counties and many of these will likely move into the City of Columbia.

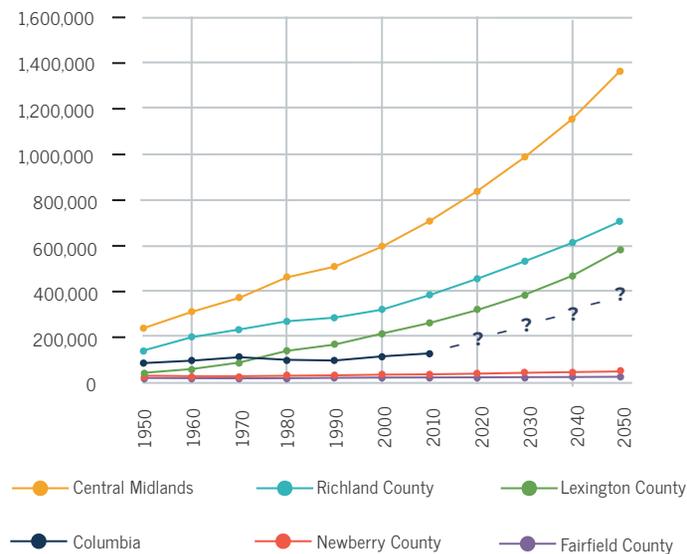


Figure 42: Projected Population of the Central Midlands<sup>51</sup>

How this new population will be dispersed geographically is difficult to estimate, as housing needs and preferences of individuals are tied to a variety of factors. While not all of these people will live within the municipal boundary of the City of Columbia, it is likely that the vast majority will travel to or through the City for work, education, housing, or entertainment. Having a better understanding of how the City's population will grow and where those people will go will allow the City to ensure funds and services are allocated appropriately.

### POPULATION DENSITY

Echoing national trends, it is anticipated that the Midlands population will continue to urbanize. As shown in the following maps (Figures 43-46), Columbia and surrounding areas are expected to continue to densify as people move closer to the urban core. While certain suburban areas, particularly in Northeast Richland County and Lexington County near Lake Murray, are expected to continue to attract new residents, Columbia is expected to absorb a large portion of its population increase in the urban core of the City and surrounding neighborhoods.

As the City plans for its future population growth, there will be a number of questions the City, its citizens, its businesses, and its neighbors will have to wrestle with.

- What will this influx of new citizens for the City's current neighborhoods, communities, and culture?
- Will these new citizens be welcomed into Columbia or will there be conflicts with the existing Columbians?
- What will changing demands mean for basic amenities like housing, transportation, and businesses?
- Is the City ready and flexible enough to meet the increased demands on City services and infrastructure?

It is increasingly important to consider the placement and expansion of programs for the City's current and future citizens. How Columbia will change because of this influx of new residents is difficult to ascertain. While we can look to national trends to make predictions, Columbia's unique population and culture will ultimately determine how the City and region are affected.

# Where We're Going

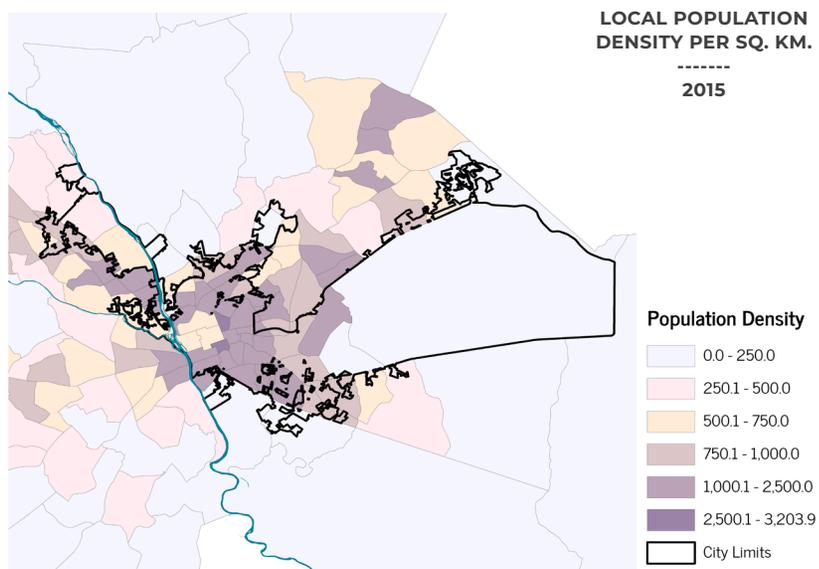


Figure 43: Local Population Density per Square Kilometer by Census Tract (2015)<sup>54</sup>

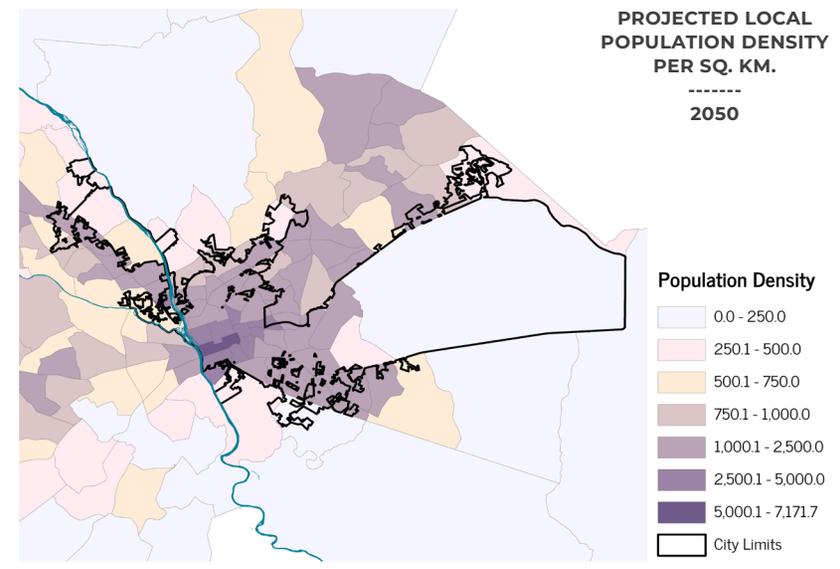


Figure 44: Local Projected Population Density per Square Kilometer by Census Tract (2050)<sup>52</sup>

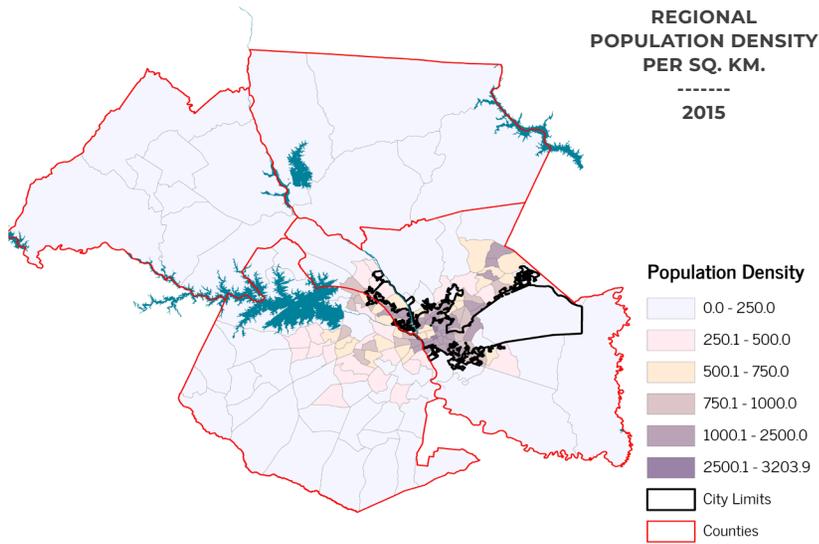


Figure 45: Regional Population Density per Square Kilometer by Census Tract (2015)<sup>53</sup>

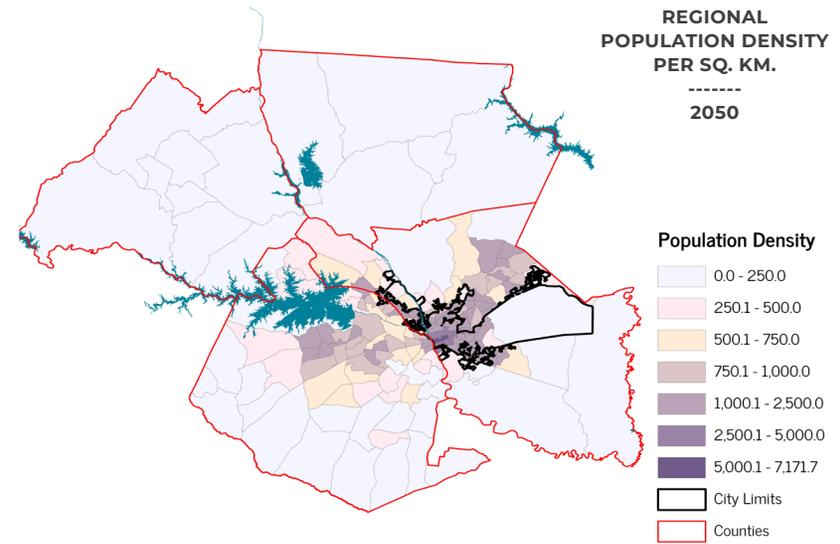


Figure 46: Regional Projected Population Density per Square Kilometer by Census Tract (2050)<sup>55</sup>

## Where We're Going

### MELTING POT VERSUS STEW POT

Columbia's culture is largely defined by the City's diverse population. Throughout this planning process, we heard feedback that Columbians found it difficult to define Columbia's cultural identity. Many lamented this fact, noting that some of Columbia's peer cities like Greenville and Charleston have a much more well-defined, articulated, and marketed identity. Exploring and understanding Columbia's unique and diverse population will be necessary to defining who we are as Columbians and may help bring us closer together as a community.

The United States of America is regularly referred to as a melting pot of cultures, a notion that this country is able to bring people from varied pasts, beliefs, and cultures and blend them into a unique cultural identity that is American. This implies that there exists a uniform ideal or culture that makes Americans Americans. While in a broad sense this identity helps to define the American consciousness, at local levels this melting pot looks more like a stew, a conglomeration of unique and varied cultures that happen to be in the same location whose combination of flavors contribute to the quality of the overall dish.

As Columbians work to create a shared sense of identity, the question we must pose is how we can create this identity while respecting the varied identities already present in the City. An individual's sense of identity can be very personal and even intrinsic to how they see themselves. When we discuss defining Columbia's identity, it will be important to have an open and equitable conversation that is inclusive of all Columbians' cultural experiences with the acknowledgment that cultural histories and traditions can vary wildly across Columbia. The ultimate purpose of having a shared sense of

identity is to help bring Columbians together and break down the barriers that divide us.

### CHANGING AGES, CHANGING DEMANDS

While we do not have a crystal ball to know exactly how the future will unfold, looking at the trends established in each generations can help to give us a more accurate picture of what will occur. As older generations continue to age and new generations emerge, demands for goods and services are will continue to shift. The City of Columbia will need to consider whether these new and changing needs and desires are being met, and if not, make plans to address them. One of the most important items the City will need to consider is how these new users interface with City services and the ease of which they are able to do so. Additionally, the City should consider if current City policies should be altered to assist in emerging needs.

#### *Gen Z and Future Generations*

The newest generation that cities and communities are only now beginning to understand is Generation Z, which is generally defined as those born between 1995 and 2010. While this generation's needs and preferences are still being studied, some trends seem to be emerging. Generation Z is the first generation to grow up with the Internet and social media, and this generation appears to prioritize uniqueness and the ability to socialize with their peers. Generation Z also seems to be defined by their desire for justice - racial, economic, and environmental. As such, as Columbia adjusts its services for younger generations, it will become necessary to change municipal services and public spaces to become more equitable and geared toward individual interaction.

## Where We're Going

### CHANGING AGES, CHANGING DEMANDS, CONT.

#### *Millennials and The Future*

Younger generations will also have an impact on how Columbia continues to grow and develop. As previously stated, the shared desires of the Millennial generation have shifted how cities prioritize the services they provide. Millennials are likely to continue to move toward urban activity centers, effectively making these centers denser and more compact. This means cities will likely continue to see a migration away from rural and suburban areas as Millennials search for places to live with lower commute times that are closer to work and entertainment. These trends underscore the need for active, accessible spaces where people can meet, work, and interact. Millennials also tend to prioritize experiences over physical goods, which may have ramifications for how Columbia portrays and markets itself. For example, highlighting the various shopping districts in Columbia may become less effective as newer generations search for things to do rather than things to buy.

#### *Generation X and The Future*

Generation X is classified as the generation born between the early-to-mid 1960s and the early 1980s. This generation is currently in or entering their middle age and many have families or children. Generation X is also noteworthy for having fewer individuals than the generations which immediately preceded it and followed it - Baby Boomers and Millennials. As a result, the particular needs and goals of this generation have largely been overshadowed by other generations.

As older generations begin to retire, members of Generation X will likely begin to take upper management positions that are being

vacated, though these positions may conflict with Generation Xers' desires to maintain a healthy work-life balance. While this shift in the workplace is underway, many of this generation are also beginning to focus on retirement, though many are anxious if entitlement programs like Social Security will allow them to retire in a timely manner or if it will be necessary to continue to work later into their lives. These personal uncertainties also lead to societal uncertainties. Questions surrounding housing, transportation, and economic development will need to be considered. Will Generation X continue to live in suburban areas? When they retire, will they occupy housing that is currently being created for the Boomer generation? How will increasing technology affect how this generation will communicate and interact with their neighbors?

#### *Baby Boomers and The Future*

As the Baby Boomer generation continues to age and leave the workforce in increasing numbers, the life changes this large generation undergoes will have impacts locally and nationwide. Compounding this shift is that the Columbia area is becoming a destination for retirees who come seeking the region's favorable weather and lower cost of living. One of the most impactful preferences of the Baby Boomer generation is the idea of "aging in place." Aging in place is ideal for many recent and soon-to-be retirees. Instead of moving out of their homes to retirement communities or assisted living facilities, many retirees prefer to remain independent for as long as possible, typically by staying in the house they have owned for years or by downsizing to smaller homes with access to better amenities for aging adults. This trend will likely have a number of impacts on the composition of Columbia's neighborhoods and communities in the coming years.

## Where We're Going

### CHANGING AGES, CHANGING DEMANDS, CONT.

As mentioned in the housing chapter of this plan, this trend of aging of place may have a impact on the types, amounts, and cost of Columbia's housing stock. This shift in preferences may also have an indirect impact on the relative stability of communities. When a large portion of residents in an area have lived there long-term, their actions can be catalysts for change or stability in that area. However, having a community largely made up of aging people could also have an adverse effect. If the majority of an area's population is made up of the Baby Boomer generation, there could be a period of time when a large swath of the aging residents are no longer able to maintain or remain in their homes.

If this occurs, many properties that have had stable residents for years could flood the market at the same time. It is difficult to predict what might happen to such a community as a result. Will a neighborhood retain its stable character through such a period of disturbance, or will a neighborhood change through new ownership or rentals? In light of these unknowns, the City will need to continue to examine how its actions contribute to neighborhood stability and adjust its policies accordingly.

### CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION

A number of participants indicated during the planning process that they did not want to see Columbia change significantly but rather that they would prefer that it retain its "small town feel." While it will continue to be important to take into account Columbia's current culture and feel, it is also important to recognize that some change is inevitable. Planning for these changes well in advance will help to mitigate any negative impacts on Columbia's population and will help to ease the transition toward the Columbia of the future.

Planning for the future will also be necessary for Columbia to remain a destination for new residents and visitors alike. Throughout the planning process, citizens lamented that Columbia seemed to be falling behind its peer cities like Greenville and Charleston in terms of development and activity. Many saw the growth and development of these cities as something Columbia should emulate, as this growth brought tourism and helped to energize these cities. Participants noted that Columbia seemed to be falling behind within the Midlands region as well, as surrounding cities have seen revitalization and resurgence. As discussed in the economic development section of the plan, a larger portion of recent development in the Midlands has taken place in other municipalities or in unincorporated areas when compared to prior decades and these areas of new development have also become hubs for population and commerce. These trends underscore the need, now more than ever, for Columbia to think and plan regionally.

To a certain extent, the City has at times aided in this expansion away from the City. As explored in the community facilities section of the plan, the rapid expansion of City utilities like water and sewer has

## Where We're Going

### CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION, CONTINUED

been a double-edged sword. While the expansion of these services has brought new customers and revenue to Columbia, it has also allowed subdivisions and commercial nodes to be built away from the City, bypassing redevelopment and revitalization opportunities within the City limits. This has likely contributed to the expansion of regional growth outside the City, and has likely helped to contribute to greater traffic congestion and less centralized basic amenities.

As Columbia looks to its future, more data-driven and proactive planning is necessary to ensure that Columbia continues to develop in a sustainable and sensible manner. Accurate and up-to-date data from traditional data sources will help with this task, but they may not be enough. Columbia should tap its greatest resource, its citizens, for help. Columbia's citizens are the ones who know what's happening in their neighborhoods, what issues need to be addressed, and where changes are taking place. In order to better address citizen concerns and needs, Columbia should build partnerships with and among its citizens, listening to and empowering those who live, work, and play in the City. In doing so, Columbia will be poised to become a more equitable and vibrant city.

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