



03

# Economic Development





Economic development is the process of building and sustaining the economic well-being of a community. Undertaking this effort is a multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency responsibility. This chapter identifies where some of the best opportunities are for the City to invest limited resources to the greatest effect, and makes recommendations about how to partner with and support other agencies who are working toward the same goals.

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## TOPICS

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Regional Coordination,  
Investing in Corridors, Business  
Development, Property Tax,  
Entrepreneurship



## Introduction

A community's prosperity can be measured in many ways, but a growing economy is the common denominator for most measures. A community's ability to attract and retain businesses and workers, support existing businesses, and encourage entrepreneurship are the foundational elements of economic development.

The realm of economic development is broad and therefore cannot be handled by a single agency or jurisdiction. Multi-agency coordination is critical to the success of any community's economic growth. While state agencies and universities may be focused on recruiting businesses and researchers from other states and countries, local governmental agencies and nonprofits are better suited to help support and grow existing businesses. Local economic development efforts benefit from a clear understanding of local economic sectors, educational and training needs, and the general strengths and weaknesses of a community. A clear vision of a community's economic direction and which sectors should be promoted makes each effort more successful, building upon prior successes. Similarly, limited resources are best used through the coordination of efforts, which reduces the duplication of efforts by multiple agencies.

As the central and largest municipality in the region, the City of Columbia is positioned to define and project a favorable image of the Columbia metro area to the rest of the world. Providing the elements of a livable city, such as high-quality infrastructure, well maintained natural resources, and access to cultural and historic resources is the most impactful contribution the City can make toward economic development.



## Guiding Principles

- » **Mitigating the tax burden on commercial property**
- » **Efficiency through partnerships**
- » **Coordination of education and training with the needs of local businesses**
- » **Investing in corridors to boost the image of the City and serve as a catalyst for private development**
- » **Following through with long-term, goal-based priorities**

We believe in **mitigating the tax burden on commercial property** with specific policies to help incentivize necessary and/or desirable development.

Attracting developers to Columbia from throughout the Southeast and United States requires a competitive market for development. The City has much to offer as a place to live, work, and build a business. Providing incentives to developers has proven to be a successful tool in encouraging development to ensure the commercial and industrial property tax does not stand in the way. Commercial development, inclusive of multi-family development, is critical to the development of our economy. Tailoring these incentives, without creating additional burdens, to encourage quality development in specific areas or with specific characteristics aligning with City plans would stretch this investment even farther to help the City meet larger goals and objectives.

We believe in more **efficiently allocating resources through partnership opportunities** between economic development groups and avoiding duplication of efforts.

There are so many great organizations and agencies working on economic development efforts in the Midlands. Better communication and coordination among various groups working on economic development, particularly with start-ups, will ensure the work of various organizations builds on each other's efforts and is not duplicative. Collaboration, better communication, and accountability among these groups would improve efficiency and create a more cohesive regional voice towards economic development for the City and beyond.

## Guiding Principles

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- » **Following through with long-term, goal-based priorities**

We believe in ensuring a properly skilled workforce and encouraging the retention of recent graduates through **coordination of educational programs with private sector businesses**.

The Midlands graduates 10,000 locally college-educated seniors each year, in addition to those graduating with technical and advanced degrees. This provides local businesses an enormous resource to draw from as they grow, and retain this young workforce. Capitalizing on this opportunity means connecting the businesses who need young professionals to the institutions who are educating them to ensure the knowledge base aligns with the need of local businesses. Additionally, expanding already successful apprenticeship programs between companies and K-12 learning institutions will also have an impact on connecting talent to industry.

We believe in **investing in high-quality infrastructure and beautification of priority corridors** in order to enhance the livability for residents, boost the image of the City for visitors, and attract private investment.

Whether it is a company looking to locate in Columbia or an individual getting a feel for the City, Columbia's major road corridors have a big impact on the image of the City as a whole. Beautiful, functional corridors can prove to be one of Columbia's greatest assets, both aesthetically and by increasing multimodal transportation options, making Columbia competitive with cities around the country. Past corridor improvement projects have been proven to spur private investment and uplift areas of the City, contributing to the growing success of these areas.

## Guiding Principles

- » Mitigating the tax burden on commercial property
- » Efficiency through partnerships
- » Coordination of education and training with the needs of local businesses
- » Investing in corridors to boost the image of the City and serve as a catalyst for private development
- » Following through with long-term, goal-based priorities

We believe in **following through with long-term, goal-based investments** to ensure maximum results for public funding decisions over time.

Some of the most successful economic development efforts in Columbia, as in cities across the country, are those that have been consistently implemented over a long period of time. In Columbia, such projects have resulted in the revitalization of Main Street and the Vista, the development of the Three Rivers Greenway, and long-term improvements to the wastewater and drinking water infrastructure that serves our citizens. Great cities have a clear vision, and implementable goals that support that vision. Investing resources strategically and carefully according to a plan is essential to their success. Having a fund set aside for unforeseen needs and opportunities can help ensure that planned funding stays put and is not redirected.

## Existing Conditions

This section provides a broad snapshot of economic development in the Midlands, then looks closer at the City's role in economic development policies, programs, and investments, and summarizes the public input received through surveys, focus groups, and public meetings. More detailed information can be found in Appendix C.

### SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURS

Supporting entrepreneurs and new businesses involves providing access to training, start-up facilities, and capital. Connecting entrepreneurs with research institutions, venture capitalists, and government agencies is the primary goal of those organizations that are focused on entrepreneurial support. These efforts are not limited to those taken on by the City of Columbia, and organizations with connections to universities and technical colleges or public nonprofits, such as the South Carolina Research Authority, also support entrepreneurship throughout the Midlands.

### SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESSES

Business retention and expansion includes advocacy for business interests, access to grants and loans, access to property, training, and marketing. Representing the needs of businesses to legislators happens at all levels of government, primarily through the state and local chambers of commerce. Other groups provide industry specific support, such as the South Carolina Retail Association. Development corporations provide area specific resources to catalyze development. Finally, area-specific business district organizations provide localized support in the way of organized advocacy, marketing, and hospitality.

### ATTRACTING CORPORATIONS/EMPLOYERS

There are a number of organizations in the Midlands that conduct economic development activities. Bringing established businesses to Columbia involves strategic partnerships between local, state, national, and international organizations. Financial incentives, such as tax reductions or reduced utility rates, are also tools that can enhance a deal for a potential location. The majority of economic development organizations in Columbia are at the county, regional and state level.

### ENHANCING LIVABILITY

One of the biggest impacts the City has on economic development is through enhancing livability, as land use, infrastructure and other City-driven items have such an impact on so many facets of livability. Livability can include commute time, cost of living, and access to arts, entertainment, and natural resources. Having a healthy, vibrant community that ranks high on the livability index helps make the City competitive in the regional economy.

Some key indicators of Columbia's livability are:

- **Cost of Living:** 1% more expensive than US average, 5% higher than statewide
- **Median home price:** \$164,000, 11% lower than US average
- **Commute Time:** 15 minute
- **Household Income:** \$42,875, 22% lower than US average
- **High School Graduation Rates:** 1% higher than US average
- **Total employed in Armed Forces:** 9,200
- **Civilian Veterans in Columbia:** 8.3% of the population

## Existing Conditions

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

During the planning process, statewide, regional, and local government organizations that focus on economic development provided insight and feedback. Throughout this process a summary list was developed which includes each organization and the types of economic development that they engage in to better identify types of overlap and potential gaps. Twelve areas of focus were identified, while 38 of 42 organizations focus on strategic partnerships, only six agencies focus on start-up facilities. A majority of these organizations focus on advocacy, strategic partnerships, and marketing and recruitment, while other focus areas are typically only supported by about a quarter of these agencies. In addition, when meeting with the leadership of these groups, there was consistent feedback from focus group members including that many do not coordinate on a regular basis, resulting in a great deal of overlap among roles and responsibilities of these agencies. Ultimately this contributes to confusion within the development community as to with whom they should be communicating.

#### Twelve Current Areas of Focus of Columbia's Economic Development Organizations

Advocacy/representation	Resources for Entrepreneurs
Strategic partnerships	Research and Development
Access to capital	Education
Access to property	Cluster specific support
Start-up facilities	Marketing and recruitment
Livability	Incentives



Coordination of economic development efforts in the next decade will be important to align the Midlands competitively with our surrounding region and global competition. Image iStock.com/fizkes

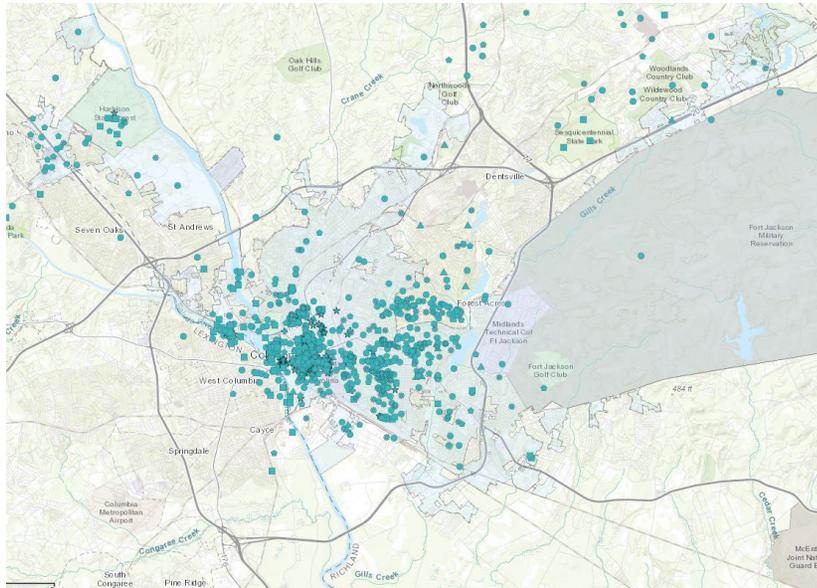


Providing quality incubator space for business will be key to advancing our region in the next decade. Image iStock.com/scyther5

## Existing Conditions

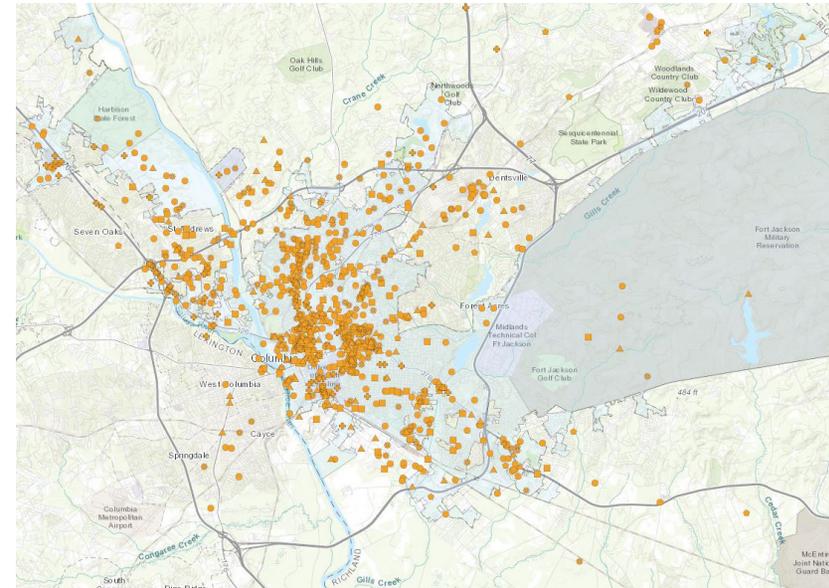
### STRONG AND WEAK PLACES

Economic development is often driven by perceptions. During the planning process, survey participants were asked to identify where they thought the strong places in Columbia were located on an interactive map. Of the 1,260 markers and 728 individual comments received, strong places identified included thriving and favorite businesses, parks and open space, areas identified as attractive, and local and regional attractions such as museums. Some of the key words that were used to describe these strong places included: “Amazing Transformation,” “Great,” “Whoohoo! Lookin’ good,” “Love,” and “One of the best in the City.”



Strong places identified by participants in the Fall 2018 survey.

Survey participants were also asked to share the areas in Columbia which they thought were weak and could use some improvement. Respondents provided a total of 1,117 markers and 700 comments. Some of the key words and phrases that were used to describe these weak places included: “Run down,” “Needs more activity,” “Needs Attention,” “Would like to see more development in this area,” “Please complete the infrastructure (sidewalks/bikes),” “Overgrown,” “Great location but area has to many abandon buildings and looks trashy,” and “pedestrian safety.” While Columbia has some very successful economic drivers, we also have some areas of the community such as commercial corridors where investment has been overlooked.



Weak places identified by participants in the Fall 2018 survey.

## Existing Conditions

### PROPERTY TAX LAND ASSESSMENTS

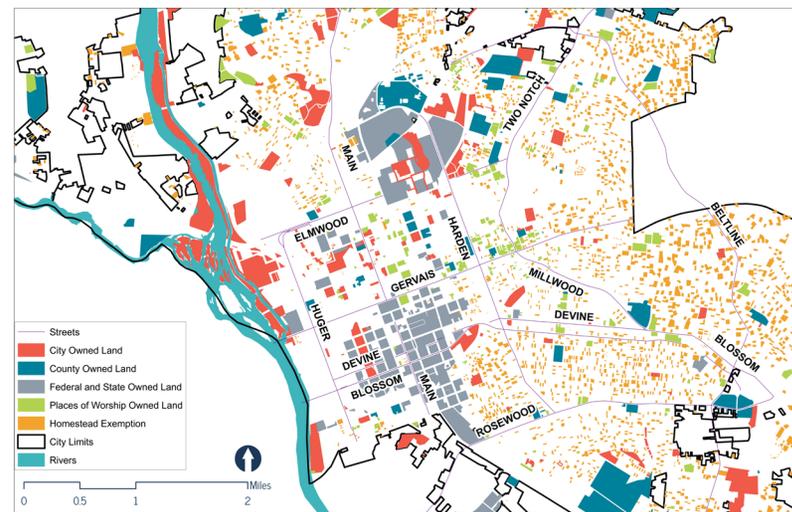
Property taxes are the main revenue stream for municipalities and governments in South Carolina. Property taxes are determined by the value of land and the value of improvements to the land, including structures and infrastructure. Taxes and fees have a significant influence on the success of a community, region, and state. Columbia is uniquely affected by a combination of comparably low residential taxation, comparably high commercial and industrial taxation, and the presence of nontaxable land being a larger portion of the city limits. Upon examination of the original two-mile grid of the City (Elmwood, Harden, Heyward, and the river), it becomes clear that a quarter of the original grid is currently nontaxable.

### TAX EXEMPT LAND AREA

The City of Columbia has 128.6 square miles of owned property within its boundaries excluding right of way. 36.5% of the owned property area of the City is fully or partially tax exempt (excluding Ft. Jackson). When Ft. Jackson is included, this percentage increases to 76.5%. Homestead exemptions make up 2% of the total, while County-owned land makes up 1.3% and City owned land is 1.4% (not including the 11.7 square miles of right of way). Federal and State governments make up 21.4% of the total of tax except land. Places of worship makes up 0.7% of the total.

### RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TAX

Columbia homeowners enjoy some of the lowest residential property taxes in the country, and many benefit from other clauses in the state statutes which result in reduced property taxes for veterans or those over the age of 65. In fact, Columbia ranks as one of the lowest cities in the country for property tax rates for primary



City of Columbia Land Ownership - Original City Grid, 2018 Data

residents over the age of 65 who live in an urban county. Also of note is that Columbia's tax rate for homestead properties is below that of Memphis, Jacksonville, Louisville, Atlanta, and Charlotte.<sup>1</sup>

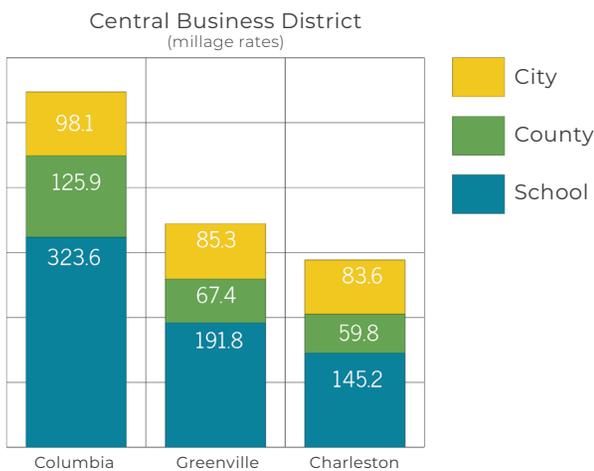
However, not all residents enjoy low property taxes. Columbia ranked 10 out of the 53 largest cities for highest taxation on urban apartments. Related to our peers such as Charlotte, Louisville, and Atlanta, those who rent rather than own do so at a significant cost, because the owners of rental units are taxed at a higher rate (6%), the cost of which they pass along to the renter. This has a significant financial impact on those whose only choice is to rent, and can make it more difficult for those trying to saving for down payment to purchase a home of their own.

It is also important to note that Columbia ranks 4th out of the 53 largest cities in each state with regard to the ratio between commercial and homestead classifications.

## Existing Conditions

### COMMERCIAL PROPERTY TAX

Commercial properties in the central business district of Columbia pay significantly more in property taxes compared to those in our peer cities of Charleston and Greenville. Reasons for this significant departure include higher county tax rates in Richland County and higher school tax rates in Richland One when compared to peer counties and school districts. A \$25 million valued commercial building in the central business district of Columbia pays approximately \$730,000 in taxes, while taxes for the same property in Greenville would be approximately \$500,000, 31.5% lower than Columbia. Charleston taxes on the same property would be approximately \$388,000, or 46.8% lower than Columbia. When compared with Greenville, Columbia's municipally-levied taxes are 1.15 times greater than the City of Greenville's, Richland County taxes are 1.8 times greater than Greenville County taxes, and Richland One School taxes are 1.6 times greater than those levied by Greenville Schools.



The above chart includes information regarding major taxing entities only; smaller millages are assessed by a variety of other entities which also contribute to the overall tax burden.

### INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY TAX

In 2015, Columbia had the highest industrial taxes in the US of the 53 largest cities in each state. In 2014, an industrial property assessed at \$25 million would pay \$1,985,861 in taxes in Columbia, in comparison to \$256,155 in Wilmington, DE (#53). South Carolina law assesses industrial buildings and equipment at 10.5% of market value, compared to assessments 4% for owner occupied residential and 6% for commercial properties. A property valued at \$100,000 with \$20,000 in fixtures has a net tax of \$3,673. Columbia's industrial tax rate exceeds that of Memphis, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Charlotte, and Louisville.



Industrial Parks in many regions assist to offset cost of single family and tax exempt properties. Columbia has limited industrial parks. Image iStock.com/MediaProduction

## Existing Conditions

### REGIONAL CLUSTERS

A trade cluster is a group of business which are located near one another and draw economic advantages because of their location and serve markets beyond the region. Columbia gained nine points within the trade cluster index value between 2014 and 2017. Current clusters within the region are centered around insurance, communications, and distribution and e-commerce. Emerging industry clusters in the region are pharmaceuticals, automotive, and engineering. Our trade clusters pay higher wages, and generate 90% of our innovation activity. When comparing our trade clusters over time, the Midlands Regional Competitiveness Report has shown that our trade clusters have risen by 29 points above the US average between 2014 and 2017.

### LOCAL CLUSTERS

A local cluster is a group of business, which are located near one another and serve the local market. Local clusters are in every region of the country regardless of the competitive advantages of a particular location. Our economy is driven by 70% local clusters and 30% trade clusters.

Major Employers in the City of Columbia consist of the State of South Carolina, Palmetto Health Alliance, and the University of South Carolina. Other larger employers including the City of Columbia are noted in the appendix.

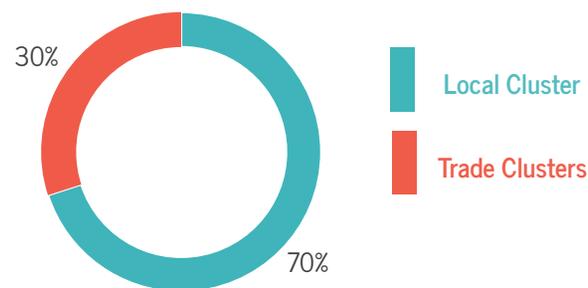
#### Region's Top Clusters

Insurance	Communications	Distribution and E-Commerce
3.64 location quotient	2.13 location quotient	1.26 location quotient
11,124 employment	1,725 employment	14,141 employment

A location quotient above 1.0 means the region has a higher concentration than the national average.

- 2017 Midlands Regional Competitiveness Report

#### Columbia's Trade Clusters vs. Local Cluster



Columbia's Trade Clusters are mainly based upon local trade

- 2017 Midlands Regional Competitiveness Report

## Existing Conditions

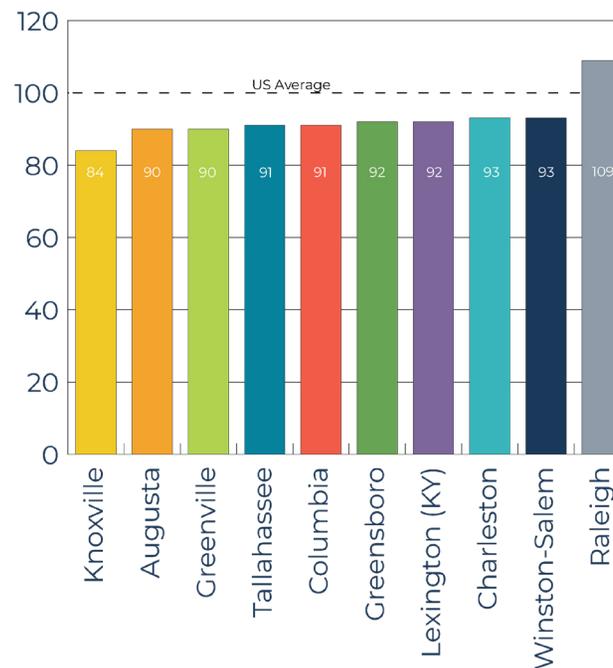
### TALENT

Attracting and retaining talent is a key to the success of successful communities and regions. Indicators of talent include GDP per worker, STEM degrees, knowledge works, educational attainment, global talent, and STEM salaries. Columbia has a relatively high talent index value compared with our peer cities, however all of our peer cities (with the exception of Raleigh) fall below the US average. The talent value in Columbia dropped 5 points between 2014 and 2017. During this time the strength of the US economic market grew, and as other regions were able to attract talent from the area Columbia was unable to keep up with increasing salaries and job access. In 2018, the City of Columbia was home to 13,080 companies with 57,741 employees. Of these, over 15,000 employees were in healthcare, 3,200 in scientific and technical services, and 4,800 in finance and insurance.

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The City's Office of Business Opportunities has a number of programs focused both on helping new businesses get off the ground as well as helping established businesses grow.

- FastTrac® GrowthVenture™ program
- NXLevel Micro Entrepreneur
- Small Business Week Conference:
- City's Commercial Revolving Loan Fund (CRLF)
- Columbia's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program (CDBE)
- City of Columbia Local Business Enterprise (LBE)
- Mentor Protégé Program (MPP)
- Sub-contracting Outreach Program (SOP)



Talent Index Comparison (2017)

### Index Value

An index is a construct meant to monitor the changes in the talent of cities over time.

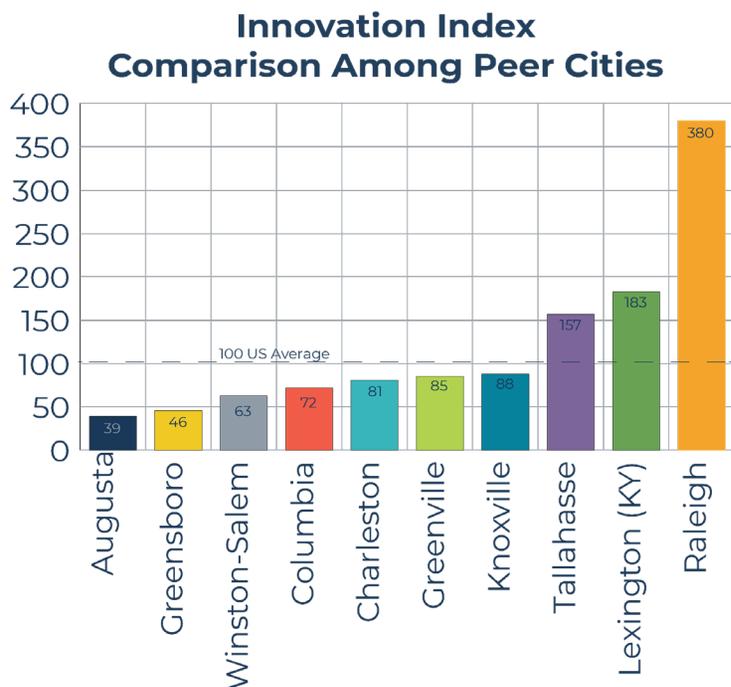
The index value on talent in Columbia dropped five points from 2014 (96 points) 2017 (91 points).

- 2017 Midlands Regional Competitiveness Report

## Existing Conditions

### INNOVATION

The strength of a community or region can often be measured by innovation capacity indicators. These indicators have been defined by the Midlands Regional Competitiveness Report for a number of years, and include innovation awards, intellectual property creation, research and development, academic achievement, and research and development funding. These indicators allow a community to understand how they align with other peer cities. The below chart shows that Columbia is below the US average, however we are clearly in the middle of peer cities but below by 10-15 points of Charleston and Greenville our most comparable cities in South Carolina.



Quality urban infill is a key to continued investment in our corridors.

### QUALITY URBAN INFILL

One of the greatest roles the City plays in economic development is the ability to shape the physical characteristics of the City in a way that enhances the livability for all residents. From land use policies to infrastructure improvements, the City has a critical responsibility to ensure that the day-to-day policies, operations, and spending decisions support the long term vision and values of the City.

Land use regulations and incentives are both effective tools used to guide private development. The City has recently rewritten the Unified Development Code, which addresses the need for quality urban infill. This important code rewrite process was undertaken for the first time in nearly 40 years, and will help to modernize regulatory tools and ensure they reflect the recommendations of the land use element, which was updated in 2015. Ensuring that land use regulations and a streamlined development review process support the desired growth patterns and are easily understood and transparent to the public is critical for the future of economic development in the City of Columbia.

## Existing Conditions

### TAX INCENTIVES

There are also a number of tax incentives that have been developed for specific types of redevelopment. The Bailey Bill, discussed more in Appendix H- Cultural Resources, is a City and County property tax abatement incentive that freezes a qualifying historic property's tax value for 20 years if a certain percentage of the current tax value is invested in qualifying expenses.

The Abandoned Building tax credit can be applied to property tax or income tax, and provides a credit equal to 25% of the cost of rehabilitation for buildings of which the majority of the space has been closed to business for at least five years.

A recent ordinance passed by the City provides a 50% reduction of property tax for public infrastructure. Passed in the Fall of 2018, the tax reduction is good for ten years and requires a minimum investment. Land use and tax incentives are also very effective tools in shaping development by providing voluntary programs that advance the City's goals and offer benefits to the developer.

Prior to the new land use code adoption, which reduces the off-street parking requirements, parking reductions are attached to all four urban design overlays as a way to offset the cost of development while acknowledging the additional modes of transportation that are available in the urban core. In the North Main Corridor, density bonuses are included for projects that include a percentage of residential development as a way to address one of the goals of the North Columbia Master Plan, which was to increase residential density along the corridor in order to support mixed-use development and walkability. Also in the North Main Corridor Overlay District, additional parking

reductions are given for projects that provide public space or public art adjacent to the right-of-way. This too was an effort to increase pedestrian-oriented development along a corridor with narrow sidewalks in a historically auto-oriented corridor.

### CORRIDORS AND GATEWAYS

Investing in corridors is one of the most effective ways to revitalize an area. Beyond serving as transportation arteries for cars, corridors have a significant impact on the image of the City. As noted later in the feedback section of this report, staff heard repeated concerns about the poor image the City's corridors projects. Streets that are dominated by fast moving traffic, utility poles with overhead lines, and which lack quality sidewalks and street trees, do not lend themselves to a safe, multimodal transportation system. While the transportation element discusses multimodal corridors in more detail, the impact of unattractive, auto-dominated corridors on economic development is significant. In addition to the design and condition of the right-of-way, the properties along many corridors present a predominance of surface parking lots with little or no landscaping, poorly maintained buildings, and sign clutter.

Reconfiguring a street to accommodate multimodal transportation not only improves mobility and safety, it makes destinations along the corridor more easily accessible to more people, which is good for business. Furthermore, businesses are looking to locate in cities that are meeting of the needs of the younger, working generation who are less interested in cars and more interested in active mobility and ride-sharing.

## Existing Conditions

### CORRIDORS AND GATEWAYS, CONTINUED

Utility upgrades, such as burying power lines along a corridor, can improve the image of the corridor as well as provide opportunities for shade trees. Both outcomes increase property values and make a safer and more attractive pedestrian environment. Similarly, installing duct-banks for fiber-optic cable and having appropriate opportunities for small cell wireless nodes sets the stage and ensures the highest quality services for new development.



Common condition of many corridors leading into the downtown core. 2019



Greene and Park Street 2017 improvements to sidewalks, lighting storm system (bioswales), and lighting



Pendleton Street. 2017 Improvements with sidewalks, lighting, parking and bike lines.



Public space and evening lighting within plaza area within Foundation Square.



Sumter Street 2018. Proposed to become a multi-model transit street.

## Recommendations

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

### RECOMMENDATION FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Recommendations



### COST

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

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

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

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



### REFERENCE TO THEMES & OTHER ELEMENTS

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



### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

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



### MEASURING SUCCESS

This section identifies milestones and benchmarks for each recommendation.



### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

RECOMMENDATION

## Ensure that long-term investment priorities stay on schedule by setting a defined amount of the annual budget aside to leverage unanticipated opportunities.

There is no question that in spite of planning and budgeting efforts, a municipal government will face unforeseen expenses each fiscal year. The City currently sets aside 15% of its operating budget as a contingency for emergencies. However, often unanticipated opportunities arise that are time sensitive and should not be passed up due to lack of funding. Examples include grant awards that require a funding match, or an unexpected partnership opportunity. The creation of a fund dedicated to these types of expenses could prevent monies from being siphoned from other projects and priorities while still allowing these unanticipated opportunities to be leveraged.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

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

### DURATION

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

Setting aside \$1M is recommended, however if through the budgeting process a smaller or larger amount is available than that amount should be considered.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

**\$\$\$\$**  
annually

### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Lead By Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Priority Investment

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Amount spent in last five years on unanticipated opportunities
- Ongoing documentation of funding for unanticipated opportunities and documentation of priority investments that go unfunded

### MEASURING SUCCESS

- Creating a policy
- Budgeting a dollar amount for unanticipated opportunities in annual budget
- Continued evaluation of priority investments and unanticipated opportunities in an annual summary

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

## Ensure that long-term investment priorities stay on schedule by setting a defined amount of the annual budget aside to leverage unanticipated opportunities.

### Case Study 1

#### Rainy Day Funds, Various Cities

The Great Recession changed how many municipalities looked at revenue and expenditures. Many communities, including Columbia, had to lay off employees and/or reduce services. Developing best practices, including having a significant reserve on hand, can ensure that long term investment priorities stay on schedule. In 2018 the Pew Charitable Trust hosted a panel discussion on the pros and cons of these municipal reserve funds. As of 2018, only 16 of the central cities of the 30 largest US metropolitan areas had such funds codified in ordinance or statute (see summary chart adjacent). In 2013 the average fund balance was 34% of annual general fund expenditures. However, it is not uncommon to see funds balances as low as zero percent or as high as 70 to 80 percent of annual spending.<sup>2 and 3</sup>

Pew identified three best practices for rainy day funds:

1. Funds should be designed with clear objectives on how much financial cushion will be needed.
2. Deposits should be directly tied to revenue volatility to take advantage of increasing during good economic time.
3. Withdrawals should be made in accordance with clearly established criteria.

2018 Central Cities in the Largest US Metro Areas With a Rainy Day Fund	
City	Summary
Boston, MA	Reserve
Cincinnati, OH	Emergency Reserve Account, General Fund Contingency Account.
Cleveland, OH	Rainy Day Reserve Fund.
Detroit, MI	Budget Stabilization Fund.
Houston, TX	Budget Stabilization Fund.
Kansas City, MO	Stabilization Arrangement.
Las Vegas, NV	Fiscal Stabilization Fund.
Los Angeles, CA	Budget Stabilization Fund, Reserve Fund.
Miami, FL	Contingency Reserve.
Philadelphia, PA	Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund.
Portland, OR	General Fund Reserve.
Sacramento, CA	General Fund Economic Uncertainty Reserve.
San Diego, CA	General Fund Reserve.
San Francisco, CA	City Rainy Day Reserve, Budget Stabilization Reserve.
Seattle, WA	Emergency Sub-fund, Revenue Stabilization Account.
Washington, DC	Contingency Reserve, Fiscal Stabilization Reserve.

Source: PEW Current Landscape of City Rainy Day Funds.<sup>4</sup>

## Ensure that long-term investment priorities stay on schedule by setting a defined amount of the annual budget aside to leverage unanticipated opportunities.

### Case Study 2

#### Integration of Priorities into Budget Process

Priority based budgeting is an accounting tool that seeks to improve performance by assessing an organization's activities and determining priorities prior to adopting a budget. The goal of the system is to reduce costs and channel resources into high priority areas of the organization. Columbia joined many other communities such as Alexandria, VA, Ft. Collins and Littleton, CO, and Kalamazoo, MI in preparing their organizations for the priority based budgeting process.

There are currently hundreds of communities throughout the US and Canada that have implemented and applied priority based budgeting to actionable decision making. There are four levels of mastery of the priority based budgeting process:

- Level one - rational tool to stabilize budget,
- Level two - reallocate resources,
- Level three - fuel resources towards results of tomorrow,
- Level four - mastery is leverage all of communities resources.

Currently the City of Columbia is at level one in this process.<sup>5</sup>

Moving forward with priority based budgeting has enabled many communities to realize their long term priorities more quickly.



In 2007 the City adopted the Innovista Plan with support from the Waterfront Steering Committee. Throughout the next decade the City prioritized the redevelopment of Greene Street and the creation of Foundation Square.

RECOMMENDATION

## Continue to explore fees for tax-exempt institutions to help fund the services the City provides.

The City of Columbia has 128.6 square miles of owned property within its boundaries. Excluding Ft. Jackson, 36.5% of the owned property area of the City is full or partially tax exempt. Whether or not properties pay taxes, the City of Columbia still must provide services. As a result, City resources are stretched to keep up with the cost of services to all who need them. The development of a fee structure for services in many communities allows for equity among users of city services. In addition, the development of joint agreements with large tax-exempt institutions so that they may contribute financially in some way would be a benefit to the overall quality of City services provided.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

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

### DURATION

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

This recommendation would have limited expenditures. Revenue generation is the key to this goal. Cost listed is associated with the upfront cost.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

\$\* 

### THEMES

- Partner
- Safety
- Built Environment

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Community Facilities
- Priority Investment

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Cost of services to tax-exempt properties
- Develop and maintain a data set of tax-exempt properties

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success could be measured in three steps.  
Step 1. Research best practices,  
Step 2. Open up the Conversation,  
Step 3. Implement.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

## RECOMMENDATION

## Continue to explore fees for tax-exempt institutions to help fund the services the City provides.

### Case Study 3

#### User Fees for Services, Various Communities

Municipalities typically generate revenue for operations through property tax and user fees. While nonprofits are exempt from property taxes they are not exempt from user fees. When a community reduces their reliance on property taxes and implements fees for specific services municipal funding is often stabilized.

There are a number of policy options for fees and charges:

- **User Fees:** are applied to both taxable and tax-exempt property owners.
- **Special Assessments:** pay for improvements that benefit specific properties within the municipality.
- **Municipal Service Fees:** are mandatory payments by nonprofits for services a municipality provides. These fees may be charged either only to tax exempt properties or to both tax exempt and taxable properties.

#### General Survey of Communities that have fees for services that apply to taxable and non taxable organizations

Community	Fee Purpose	Summary
Houston, TX	Roads, Stormwater	2010 vote was held to adopt a drainage fee for roads and stormwater system. The city specifically decided not to exempt churches, schools, and charities.
Milwaukee, WI	Snow And Ice Removal	This charge partially offsets the costs of plowing and salting streets. Applies to residential, non-residential property, and tax-exempt property.
Minneapolis, MN	Street Light and Maintenance	Minneapolis imposes two fees on nongovernmental tax exempt parcels
Salt Lake City, UT	Street Light and Maintenance	Charged to taxable and tax exempt properties by Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU). Each 75 feet of street frontage is 1 ERU/\$3.73 per month.

Communities that have instituted fees and or charges and how these fees or charges are structured.<sup>6</sup>

## RECOMMENDATION

## Continue to explore fees for tax-exempt institutions to help fund the services the City provides.

### Case Study 4

#### Voluntary Payments for Services, Various Communities

A number of communities have built successful partnerships with nontaxable entities to ensure adequate funding for municipal services. These voluntary payments are typically the result of collaborative discussions and negotiations, and tend to follow one of the two models discussed below.

- Voluntary Contribution – Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs):**  
 This type of payment is a voluntary payment(s) by tax exempt and nonprofits as a substitute for property tax. These payments result from negotiations between local governments and nonprofits. These types of systems are currently used in the western and northeastern portions of the US. In 2012, there were 174 communities in the Northeast, 15 in the South, 26 in the Midwest, and 3 in the West for a total of 218. The revenue generated from PILOTs in 2012 in the South alone was \$6.8 million. Most PILOTs can be found in communities with universities, colleges, and major medical institutions. In 2012, no PILOTs were in South Carolina, however, two communities in North Carolina, two in Georgia, five in Virginia, and one in West Virginia.
- Services in Lieu of Taxes (SILOTs):** Similar to PILOTs where there is a volunteer payment by the tax exempt or non-profit organization, the SILOTs result in a voluntary service, which is provided by the nonprofit or tax exempt organization.<sup>7 and 8</sup>

### 2011 Selected Revenues of Cities That Receive PILOT Contributions

Community	Summary
Boston, MA	The City identified 45 private nonprofits that owned tax-exempt property in excess of a \$15 million threshold established under the PILOT program. Collectively, 33 organizations contributed \$19.4 million—a 28 percent increase from FY2011 and 90.4 percent of the requested \$21.5 million
Durham, NC	In 2004, the fire service fee paid by Duke University was \$300,000
Davidson, NC	\$132,561 revenue was generated in 2012.
DeKalb County Schools, GA	Emory University (including Emory Healthcare) made approximately \$2.5 million in voluntary payments in FY2010.
New Haven, CT	In FY12, the New Haven City Budget reported both a Yale Fire Service Fee (\$2,704,872) and Non-Profit Voluntary Payments (\$6,403,894).
Winchester, VA	\$402,224 revenue in 2012.

Selective revenues of cities that receive PILOT contributions <sup>9</sup>

RECOMMENDATION

## Dedicate a portion of hospitality tax funds to high-visibility gateway and corridor enhancements.

The hospitality tax is currently used exclusively to support groups and organizations in the City who bring visitors to the City. While this is an appropriate use of funds, there are also other appropriate uses, such as infrastructure enhancements that can have a tremendous impact on the image and function of the City for visitors and residents alike. Given the lack of available local funding for corridor and gateway enhancements, dedicating a portion of the hospitality tax fund could be used as a match to leverage federal or other grant funding for these projects.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- City Council (primary)
- Planning & Development Services
- Economic Development
- Development Corporations
- Public Works
- Partners, such as Business Associations, BIDs, Chamber of Commerce, etc.

### DURATION

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

The cost of this program would be minimal or would require matching funds.



### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years



### COST

**\$\$\$\$**  
annually



### THEMES

- **Built Environment**
- Plan & Implement



### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Transportation
- Cultural Resources



### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Precedent research about other cities that have successfully funded similar projects with hospitality tax dollars.
- Development of a system for identifying and prioritizing projects that will result in desired outcomes such as benefiting the largest number of residents, or economic gain for the City or specific area of the City.



### MEASURING SUCCESS

Many communities in SC spend hospitality funding to improve gateways and specific areas in the community. Success can be measured by a variety of ways after work has been completed. This can be done through:

- Collecting public input/opinion
- Documenting changes to real estate and investment/reinvestment levels in the defined area.



### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

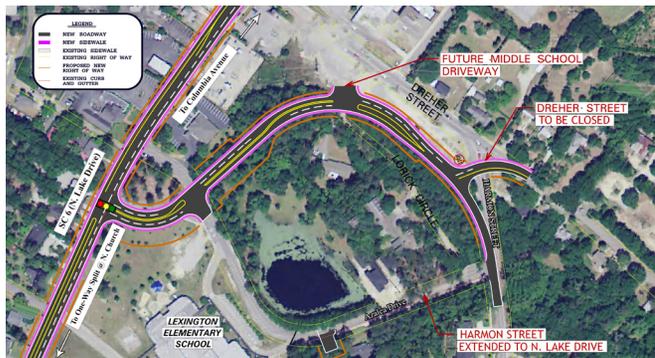
## RECOMMENDATION

## Dedicate a portion of hospitality tax funds to high-visibility gateway and corridor enhancements.

### Case Study 5

#### Corridor Enhancements, Town of Lexington, SC

The Town of Lexington began the first phase of a multi-phase project or the Corley Mill at Sunset Blvd Gateway Improvement Project in 2018. "This first phase included the widening of Ginny Lane from Sunset Boulevard to Saluda Point Drive, creating dual right hand turn lanes. Additionally, improvements were made at the I-20 Westbound ramp creating a right turn at the exit signal."<sup>10</sup> The entirety of the first phase was funded through the Town's hospitality tax. The second phase of the gateway improvements include the construction of an overpass joining Corley Mill Road to Davega Road. The funding of Phase Two will be generated by a TIF District supported by the Town, Lexington County, and Lexington One School District. The Town is also funding two other road projects: a one-way pair in the downtown area, and the realignment of the intersection at S. Lake Drive at Hwy 378 and Dreher Street.



Town of Lexington - Hwy 378 and Dreher / Harmon Street realignment project, image courtesy of the Town of Lexington, SC.



Town of Lexington - Downtown one-way pair project, image courtesy of the Town of Lexington, SC.



Town of Lexington - Corley Mill / 378 intersection redesign with paired one way streets for 378 traffic and Corley Mill bypass over Interstate 20, image courtesy of the Town of Lexington, SC.

## RECOMMENDATION

## Dedicate a portion of hospitality tax funds to high-visibility gateway and corridor enhancements.

### Case Study 6

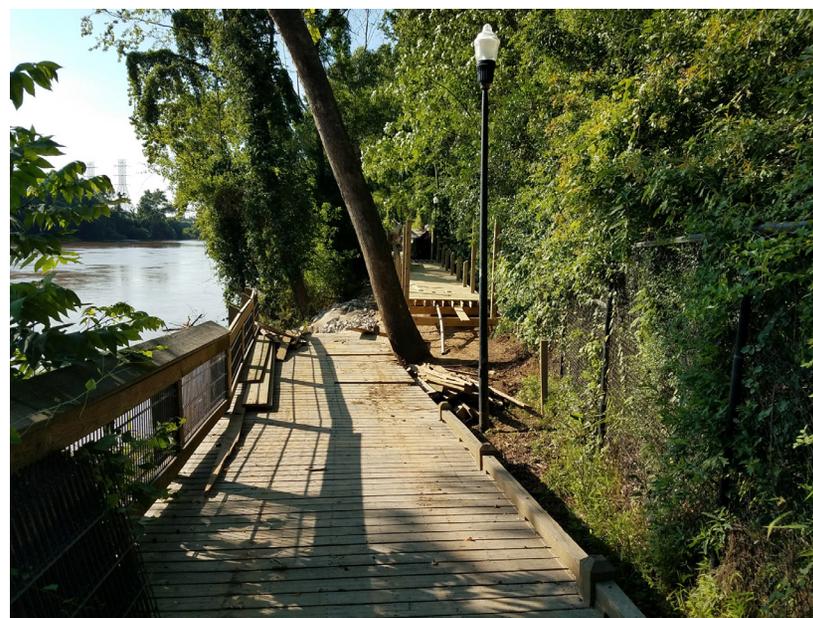
City of Cayce, South Carolina

In 2014 the City of Cayce completed the last miles of their 12 mile riverwalk. The riverwalk brings over 600,000 people to Cayce yearly. The City of Cayce funded the original phases of construction from the general fund.

In 2015 the Midlands region experienced flooding along all streams and rivers. During this flood the Congaree River crested 32 feet over its banks (normal flood levels are 19 feet). As a result the Cayce boardwalk and boat launches were severely impacted and were closed to the public. The repairs took 11 months at a cost of \$1.4 million dollars. The City of Cayce decided to use hospitality funding and FEMA funding to rebuild the boardwalks and boat launches. The riverwalk and boat launches were reopened to the public in February of 2018.



City of Cayce Boat Launch, image courtesy of the City of Cayce



City of Cayce boardwalk under reconstruction after the 2015 flood, image courtesy of the City of Cayce

RECOMMENDATION

## Strengthen relationships with both counties to support future TIF Districts in key areas.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts are tools that are commonly used throughout the Southeast and the United States by local taxing authorities to leverage public investment and attract development. Tennessee was the first state to create legislation in 1945; most states have followed suit. South Carolina passed legislation in 1984 enabling TIF districts. Relationship building between municipalities, counties and school districts is critical for TIF development in South Carolina. Each entity must support the creation of the TIF district in order that the benefit apply. Strengthening relationships with the counties and school districts and developing a clear standard operating procedure on how the creation of TIF districts should be coordinated between all three entities early in the process are essential first steps.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- City, County, and School District Administration (primary)
- City, County, and School District Budget, Financial and Legal Advisors (primary)
- City, County, and School District Elected Officials
- City County, and School District economic development staff
- City, County, and School District planning and development staff

### DURATION

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

Successful TIF Districts require upfront costs for financial evaluation, creation of a clear and detailed plan, and coordination with other approving agencies. While there are upfront costs, such investment can have long term economic benefits for all parties.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

**\$\$\$\***  
Per TIF District

### THEMES

- Partner
- Lead By Example
- Plan & Implement

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Transportation
- Housing
- Community Facilities

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Gather statewide data, best practices, and success stories
- Develop best practices for developing a team approach between the jurisdictions of the City, counties and school districts. Develop a financial and legal team of advisors that each entity is comfortable with.
- Coordinate with assessors to compile relevant property data
- Develop an educational program to understand how a TIF should and should not work.
- Examine the knowledge base, perceptions, and misconceptions about TIF districts by staff, elected officials, and the general public.
- Develop best practices for marketing TIF to counties and school districts

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success will be able to be measured at various stages:

1. Examining the willingness of each administration to begin the conversation.
2. Bringing governmental bodies together to put the past behind and look to the future to discuss TIF possibilities.
3. Coordinating with the U of SC to develop a reporting mechanism on how TIFs throughout South Carolina are impacting economic development.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

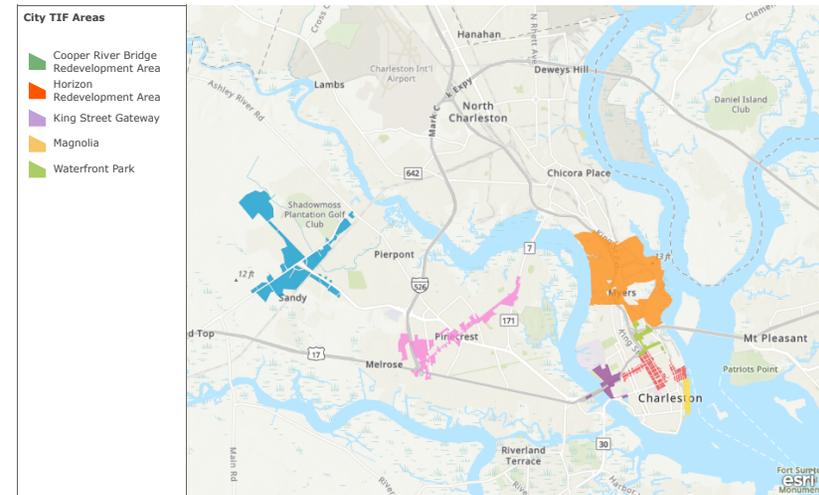
## RECOMMENDATION

## Strengthen relationships with both counties to support future TIF Districts in key areas.

### Case Study 7

#### TIF Districts, City of Charleston, SC

The City of Charleston created their first TIF district in 1993. As of 2019, they have created six districts with many districts ongoing with a number of amendments. Their first districts were located within the peninsula, within the historic downtown, and along the waterfront, all during the 1990s. More recently, between 2004 and 2019, they have created districts near the Cooper Bridge Redevelopment Area, Horizon Redevelopment Area, and West Ashley Redevelopment Area. Assessed value in the first district started at 7 million dollars and to grown by 2018 had an assessed value exceeding 78 million. Property tax increment generated in 2019 for some of the districts was not available, however, for those where property tax increment was available, the increment ranged from just under one million to seven million dollars. A detailed summary of each of Charleston's districts is provided on the following page.



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS | Charleston County GIS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA

Charleston SC locational Map of TIF districts. Map from City of Charleston Public GIS Viewer.



Charleston, South Carolina, USA at the Waterfront Park Pineapple Fountain. Image iStock.com/SeanPavonePhoto

## Strengthen relationships with both counties to support future TIF Districts in key areas.

### Case Study 7 (continued)

TIF Districts, City of Charleston, SC

District Name	Year Established/ Closed	Purpose	Acres	Assessed Value of Property at Creation	Assessed Value January 1, 2018.	Incremental Property Tax Generated - Received 2019
King Street Gateway	Adopted - 1993 Amended '96, '98, '99. & 2010	Located on the peninsula, this district focused on infrastructure related to redevelopment over a two decade period.	101	at creation \$4,661,250 amended to \$8,754,080	\$78,998,420	\$7,945,050.34
Magnolia / Neck	2004	Located on the peninsula just south of North Charleston, the district is intended to fund infrastructure related to redevelopment as envisioned in the 2003 plan for the area.	1,690	\$5,645,280	\$21,699,640	\$3,686,286.30
Cooper River Bridge Redevelopment Area	2007	Located in the East side Neighborhood that has been split by the bridge, the district is intended to fund improvement projects that will "reknit" the community together. <sup>11</sup>	101	\$1,915,440.	\$10,948,720	\$2,393,255.22
Horizon Development	2008	Located near the RiverDogs baseball stadium this district is intended to fund infrastructure parking garage and assist with new development	154	\$11,701,750	\$14,801,140	\$815,479.74
West Ashley Redevelopment Area	2016	Public investment projects within the West Ashley TIF District will help facilitate the transformation of obsolete land uses and aging corridors into vibrant redevelopment opportunities and thereby increase the tax base. <sup>12</sup>	503	\$18,216,020.	\$17,099,010	NA
Church Creek Drainage Redevelopment Area	2018	Funding public investments within the TIF District through tax increment financing will aide the City of Charleston in making the necessary storm water infrastructure improvements for the area. <sup>13</sup>	938	\$3,346,140.	NA	NA

City of Charleston, Department of Budget, Finance & Revenue Collections

## Strengthen relationships with both counties to support future TIF Districts in key areas.

### Case Study 8

TIF District, City of Florence, SC

The City of Florence has one TIF district which is located within the downtown area. This district was created by the City, County, and School District One in 2006 with a 20-year life span for a projected closing of 2026. This district has been instrumental in funding the successful redevelopment of downtown. The district has expensed \$20,945,119 as of the third quarter of 2019. The district was extended in 2016 for another 30 years, setting a projected closing date of 2046. The original estimated property value was \$282,500,000. Upon extension to 40 years (2046) and to incorporate additional properties, the estimated property value is \$357,500,000.

The current 2019 assessed value of the TIF is \$8,468,116. The TIF district project plan includes pedestrian infrastructure, streetscape enhancements, underground utilities, parking lots and structures, and ingress/egress improvements. The district was extended in 2016 to allow for the redevelopment of the McClenaghan High School and Poyner School by the School District One, development of food hub/node and farmers market, improvement to the business incubator and public transit facilities,

In 2016 the estimated investment in the TIF District was over \$100,000,000 (by both public and private sectors). Public sector investment has included the \$37 million Francis Marion University Performance Arts Center. An example of a private investment is the Waters Building renovation, which was completed in 2014 with an estimated value of four million dollars.



Downtown Florence, image courtesy of Emily Whitehead

RECOMMENDATION

## Diversify our economic development tools to include Municipal Improvement Districts (MIDs).

The State of South Carolina, along with other states, allows for the creation of Municipal Improvement Districts (MIDs). A Municipal Improvement District (MID) is a special assessment district that assess fees to property owners in a specific area to fund public improvements that provide a benefit to the properties in the district. These districts have an improvement plan adopted by the governing body of the community. The owner of properties within the MID must give written permission to include their property within a district. Improvements funded along a MID may include pedestrian facilities, parking facilities, street improvements, underground utilities, and façade redevelopment, to name a few. The benefits of a MID can include the stabilization of or increase in property values, or the creation of amenities that can be shared and provide added value. Currently, a few communities in SC use MIDs as an economic development tool.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Economic Development (primary)
- Budget, Grants & Program Management
- City Manager/City Management Office
- Office of Business Opportunities
- Planning & Development Services

### DURATION

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

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST



### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Built Environment
- Engagement & Outreach

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Housing
- Transportation
- Land Use

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Research of other programs and potential costs
- Develop an understanding of how MIDs are used among other cities that we are competing for economic development.
- Work with U of SC to develop a report on MIDs to better quantify their strengths.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Developing an economic development tool box that has information on the benefits of MIDs and how business districts, property owners, developers can work with the City to use such tools.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

## Diversify our economic development tools to include Municipal Improvement Districts (MIDs).

### Case Study 9

#### Riverwalk Municipal Improvement District, Rock Hill, SC

Riverwalk is a MID in Rock Hill that was established for a 1000 acre redevelopment project on the Catawba River in 2009.

This MID was used in conjunction with a TIF due to the total investment needed to redevelop the property. The former industrial site was home to a 2.5 million square foot former chemical manufacturing plant for almost 60 years, which required a \$40 million in cleanup.

The vision for the development was a collaborative one, with the developer, City and County representatives, and stakeholders participating. Ultimately the plan resulted in a mixed-use, pedestrian village concept along the river that provided open space, connectivity through greenways, and new commercial centers which also provided tourist attractions. The development was expected to produce \$600 million in private investment, increase property taxes by \$4 million annually, and provide 4,000 new jobs. TIF and MID bonds were used to construct public amenities in the early phases of the development. Without the MID, the project could not have been built.



Rendering of Riverwalk development. Image courtesy of City of Rock Hill, SC.



Rendering of open space. Image courtesy of City of Rock Hill, SC.

RECOMMENDATION

## Diversify our economic development tools to include Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

Some business districts require or desire particular services and amenities which require additional funding for those services or amenities. Providing a mechanism for those districts to be partially self-funded and therefore more autonomous with regard to funding allocation can be a successful win-win for both the district and the City. Currently, the City has one Business Improvement District (BID). Increasing our support for such tools can advance our economic development and put us at a similar platform as other cities. Many cities nationwide successfully use these tools beyond their central downtowns. Encouraging these self-funded tools empowers business districts to make sophisticated decisions about self-funding options.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- City Manager (primary)
- City Management Office (primary)
- Budget, Grants, & Program Management
- Finance Economic Development Office
- Office of Business Opportunities
- Planning & Development Services

### DURATION

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

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST



### THEMES

- Engagement & Outreach
- Built Environment
- Plan & Implement

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Housing
- Transportation
- Land Use

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Research other programs and potential costs.
- Develop an understanding of how BIDs are used among other cities that we are competing for economic development.
- Work with U of SC to develop a report on business districts which compares the strength of those districts that utilize BIDs with those that do not.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Developing an economic development tool box that has information on the benefits of BIDs and how the business community can work with the City to use such tools.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

## RECOMMENDATION

## Diversify our economic development tools to include Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

### Case Study 10

#### Business Improvement Districts, Various Cities

What is a Business Improvement District (BID)? BIDs are private corporations governed by business property owners within a geographically defined area. These organizations are authorized at the state level and require approval of the local jurisdiction. Once established, property owners pay an assessment that funds the BID and its activities.

The International Downtown Association is a leader for the creation of vibrant and livable urban centers from larger to small communities, and in 2011 they conducted a census and national survey on business improvement districts. They found that BIDs exist in nearly every state and within a variety of community sizes. They note that almost half of cities under a population of 100,000 have a BID, and that there are 97 BIDs in communities that have a population greater than three million. The largest states with BIDs are California (232), New York (115), Wisconsin (82), New Jersey (77) and Illinois (59). Many cities also have more than one BID; New York City and Chicago both have 73, Milwaukee has 51, and Los Angeles has 41. Within these cities, BIDs are established not only in the downtown areas, but also in neighborhood commercial areas.

The US has an average of 20 BIDs per state, while North Carolina has 49 throughout the state and is ranked 6th in the US. At the time of the International Downtown Association survey, around 60 BIDs were

in the process of being created across the US. Cities of all sizes had established BIDs; the median city population for cities with BIDs was 102,804.<sup>14</sup> About 20 percent of all Main Street Programs use a BID to support the ongoing revitalization of a commercial district.<sup>15</sup>

Most BIDs in the United States focus on capital improvements, consumer marketing, economic development, maintenance, policy advocacy, social services, and transportation. BIDs are unique because property owners come together to form a BID with a common goal for their community, and they fund the implementation of this goal through their own financial contributions.<sup>16</sup>

An example of a neighborhood Commercial BID is the Historic King Drive BID No. 8 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The area was originally settled by German settlers, and by the 1920s was a thriving African American community. The BID was created in 1992 with a mission to improve the district by fostering a culture of trendy and authentic retail experiences while also embracing the commitment to hard work and strong character the community was founded on. The BID is 16 blocks along MLK Jr. Drive and is the home to America's Black Holocaust Museum. In the past 15 years the neighborhood BID has seen over \$400 million in new development. The BID works together with the neighboring community of Harambee.

RECOMMENDATION

## Incentivize infill development to put vacant/underutilized parcels back on the tax rolls.

Encouraging development in areas where there is existing infrastructure is the most efficient use of City resources. In order to guide development towards vacant parcels in urbanized areas, incentives are sometimes necessary to make the bottom line work for developers. Corridors and older commercial areas in Columbia are in need of (re)investment, but the commercial and industrial tax structure, along with the cost of land consolidation, can make this type of development less attractive. In the past five years, the City of Columbia and Richland County have partnered twice, once to incentivize private student housing and then in 2019 to incentivize development projects that exceed \$30 million in investment. The City should consider targeting specific geographic areas along key gateway corridors with incentives that target commercial and multifamily development to encourage infill development and corridor improvements.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Economic Development (primary)
- City Council
- Office of Business Opportunities
- Planning & Development Services
- Richland County Council
- Lexington County Council
- State of South Carolina

### DURATION

**LONG, ONGOING**  
7-10+ years to complete, recurring

The actual resolution would have no cost. Tax credits results in a short term loss, however the long-term increase in taxable value would benefit would lead to revenue increases in the long run.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

**\$\***  
annually

### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Built Environment

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Housing
- Land Use

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identification of vacant/underutilized parcels within the City limits
- Property tax value for those properties
- Identification of geographic clusters of vacant and underutilized properties
- Analysis of tax impacts on new development and determination of the dollar amount or profit margin that is holding back development.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success would be measured through the development of an incentive program approved by the City and County. Mapping vacant parcels over time and tracking (re)development that took advantage of implemented incentives would also help track success rates. Keeping track of participation levels in incentive programs, the dollar value of private investments leveraged, and the increases in taxable value would also help tell the story. This information could inform whether to keep or extend an incentive or modify it if necessary.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Enhance
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

## Incentivize infill development to put vacant/underutilized parcels back on the tax rolls.

### Case Study 11

Downtown Development Districts, Delaware

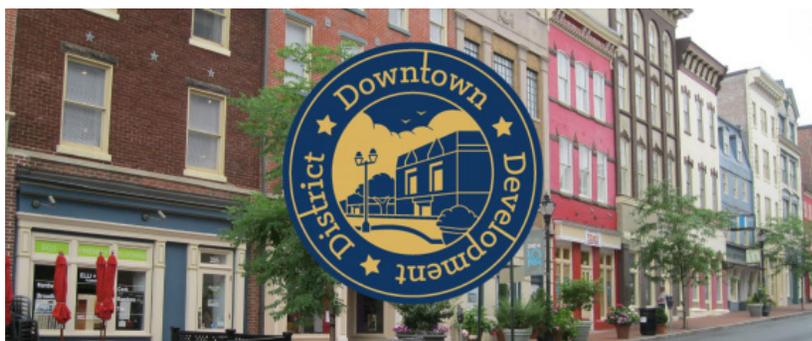


Photo courtesy of Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination

On June 5, 2014, the Delaware General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 191 that authorized the establishment of Downtown Development Districts (DDD). The Act is designed to promote healthy and vibrant downtowns as critical components of Delaware's economic well-being and quality of life. The purpose is to leverage resources of the state government in a limited number of Delaware's cities, towns, and unincorporated areas in order to:

- “Spur private capital investment in commercial business districts and surrounding neighborhoods;
- Stimulate job growth and improve the commercial vitality of such districts and neighborhoods;
- Help build a stable community of long-term residents by improving housing opportunities and building a diverse array of successful businesses; and

- Assist municipalities in strengthening neighborhoods while harnessing the attraction that vibrant downtowns hold for talented people, innovative small businesses, and residents from all walks of life.”<sup>17</sup>

Selection as a DDD will entitle a private construction projects within the identified districts to receive grants to offset up to 20% of their capital construction costs. Investors who make qualified improvements to residential, commercial, or industrial properties in designated districts may also qualify for additional state and local development incentives. Grant funds to investors are administered by the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA).



Seaford, Delaware established a DDD and provided 0% interest sidewalk loans, photo courtesy of Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination

As of January of 2015, three communities had been designated as DDDs; by August of 2016, five more communities had been designated. Each community has the ability to tailor the incentives they offer to their local needs and abilities. Incentives include fee and tax waivers, tax abatements, expedited permitting, low or no-interest loans, and A&E feasibility assistance.

RECOMMENDATION

## Identify basic commercial amenities that promote community livability and target areas lacking these amenities with City programs.

Many areas and properties in the City do not have the amenities (grocery stores, pharmacies, doctors, etc.) that make for a livable community. Often the reason for this lack of amenities is because of the local market or economy. Many communities layer incentives that may include land costs, grants, forgivable loans, infrastructure, and property tax abatements into packages that sweeten deals enough to make developments possible and attractive to private developers. In order to be successful, the City and other economic development groups should collaborate and combine resources with a focus on creating value (such as increased or maintaining population) in an area to sustain these amenities.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- Economic Development (primary)
- Office of Business Opportunities
- Planning and Development Services
- City Manager
- City Council
- Outside partnerships

### DURATION

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

Costs for such a program could be variable. Access to current funding sources could be created, or access to new funding sources or programs may be developed.

### PRIORITY

**LOW**  
start within 7-10 years

### COST

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

### THEMES

- Equity & Accessibility
- Lead By Example
- Partner

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Housing
- Cultural Resources

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Gather and maintain data on food deserts, health facilities, convenience stores, and other relevant data.
- Coordinate with Business Licensing to update data yearly.
- Maintain data on funding options from counties, State, and federal government.
- Develop data and maintain success stories that demonstrate the impact of programs and policies.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

At the most basic level the appearance and success of sustaining amenities such as food store, pharmacies, doctor's offices, and other community will be the greatest measure of success. In addition, the stabilization of the population and area and more importantly the increase in area population will demonstrate greater opportunities for amenities to be viable in the long term.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

## Identify basic commercial amenities that promote community livability and target areas lacking these amenities with City programs.

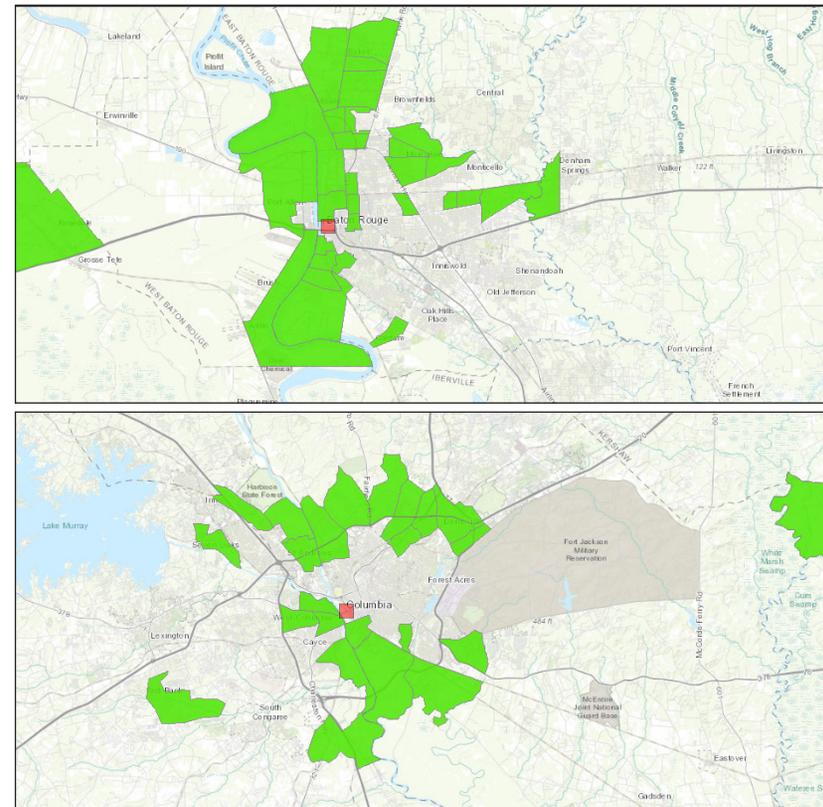
### Case Study 12

#### City of Baton Rouge, LA

Many communities within the US have one or more food deserts. The City of Baton Rouge has food deserts that cover more than half the city.<sup>18</sup> The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines a food desert as a census tract with a poverty rate of 20 percent or greater, a median family income at or below 80%, and low access to a supermarket or grocery store (where 33% of the population lives more than 1 mile from such store).<sup>19</sup> In 2011, Hope Enterprise partnered with the City in a Fresh Food Retailer initiative. This initiative was funded by a \$14 million repackaged Community Development Block Grant fund. This program opened three new stores, including a Whole Foods Market. Currently, the City is looking to locate a new grocer in the North Baton Rouge area and once again is working with Hope Enterprise Corporation, a Jackson, Mississippi based credit union, which will make loans to supermarkets, grocery stores, and other fresh food retailers that relocated in or plan to open in a low-to moderate income area of Baton Rouge.<sup>20</sup> The Corporation works in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. The goal of the project is to develop a pipeline for interested parties.<sup>21</sup> The City is providing 1.5 million over three years, with some funds coming from the general fund and others from repackaged CDBG funds from hurricanes Gustav and Ike, as well as funds from the Healthy Baton Rouge program.

Programs like those in Baton Rouge have been successful in other locations, such as Detroit, who leveraged \$4.2 million in city, state, and federal funds to land a Whole Foods in 2011. In March of 2019, US

Senators from the Midwest and East Coast introduced legislation that would aware tax credit and grants to food retailers servicing in low-income communities. In addition to bringing fresh food to these communities, each new grocery store roughly creates 62 new jobs, according to an economic impact study of new grocery development by Tulane University.<sup>22</sup>



Food desert maps of Baton Rouge, LA (top) and Columbia, SC, (bottom) maps from the USDA Atlas.

RECOMMENDATION

## Utilize City polices to increase economic opportunity in areas which are served by lower scoring schools.

The City traditionally has focused economic development, housing, and CDBG funding in certain areas of the City based upon income levels. There is significant research that has developed over the past decade tying future economic opportunity to school quality. The City of Columbia has a variety of high scoring and low scoring schools based upon SC Department of Education data, and as such there is a potential for residents to have varied economic outcomes depending on their school attendance zones. This recommendation is designed to encourage City programs, policies, departments, and staff to consider prioritizing lower scoring school zones as areas for investment. It is not the intent of this recommendation to base decisions only on school scores, but to integrate this data into existing analysis and decision making.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- City Council (primary)
- Community Development
- Economic Development
- Columbia Housing Authority
- School districts and other community partners
- Parks & Recreation

### DURATION

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

Cost would be relatively low and consist of mostly staff time, as this recommendation would be implemented via policy and existing programming.

### PRIORITY

**LOW**  
start within 7-10 years

### COST



### THEMES

- Equity & Accessibility
- Partner

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Housing
- Transportation
- Community Facilities

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Attendance zones of lower scoring schools, as tracked by SC Department of Education
- The relationship between demographic trends in attendance zones to school report card ratings
- This should be added to the impediment analysis of the fair housing plan.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

- Development of a rubric for prioritizing funding that balances HUD requirements to invest in low to moderate income areas and areas with lower scoring schools
- Establishment of regular meetings with school districts and other community partners to foster collaboration and ensure projects are meeting community needs
- Development of tools to analyze the impacts of interventions

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

RECOMMENDATION

## Collaborate interdepartmentally and with other governmental agencies to target and acquire property for catalyst projects.

Government entities often acquire a variety of properties over time. For a variety of reasons; these properties may be residential, commercial, greenfield development, vacant land, or brownfield sites. These lands are often managed by various departments or portions of a larger institution. Many communities use these typically underutilized properties as a catalyst for improving the corridors and neighborhoods they are a part of. The City's ownership of land is currently handled by many departments, and as such identifying opportunities to use these assets to leverage future investment can often be difficult. Coordination between various departments and planning initiatives can be a key to creating and maintaining strong, unique corridors and neighborhoods. This strategy should encourage the use of these properties only as a result of the careful partnership with others to leverage economic investment.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- City Manager (primary)
- SC Dept. of Administration
- Finance
- Richland & Lexington counties
- Development Corporations
- Community Development
- Real Estate
- CPD - Code Enforcement
- Planning & Development Services

### DURATION

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

The identification of a prioritization framework for land acquisition and use should occur in the short term, with planning processes being undertaken in an ongoing basis, at least once every year.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

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

### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Built Environment

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Transportation

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Database of all properties owned by all levels of City government and the purpose of ownership.
- Database of all properties owned by County, State and federal Agencies.
- Identification of properties that can be used to leverage investment
- Identification of properties that overlap recommended catalyst projects.
- Collecting data early and ongoing to balancing between investment and minimizing gentrification.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success will be measured based upon:

- Development of a City strategy.
- Development of MOU to coordinate with other governmental agencies at all levels.
- Successful coordination and partnership with a developer/investor.
- Measuring how property ownership and investment is leveraged with TIF districts, opportunity zones, and other tools.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Enhance
- Lead

## Collaborate interdepartmentally and with other governmental agencies to target and acquire property for catalyst projects.

### Case Study 13

Omni Hotel, Louisville, KY

The City of Louisville, the Water Authority, and the Parking Authority had acquired a number of properties and buildings cluster downtown between 2nd and 3rd Street and Liberty and Muhammad. The area is located within blocks away from the convention center, and the 4th Street Live venue. The site had been the home of Louisville Water going back to 1860. In 2015 the City entered into an agreement with Omni Hotels to build the tallest hotel in Louisville with 612 guest rooms topped by 225 luxury apartments, Dining, meeting space, amenities, and a ground floor lifestyle grocer were included in the project. The \$289 million public private partnership involved 52% funding from Omni, and 48% funding from City and state agencies, including a rebate of taxes. The development includes a \$17 million parking garage that will be owned and operated by the Parking Authority of River City.

"The planning of buildings, city blocks and public spaces determines how businesses, governments, civic organizations, and neighbors come together and interact as a community."

~Laura Bush, then-First Lady of the United States  
(Remarks at the Cooper Hewitt National Design Awards -July 2006)



Omni Hotel, Louisville, photo courtesy of Omni Hotels & Resort.

## Collaborate interdepartmentally and with other governmental agencies to target and acquire property for catalyst projects.

### Case Study 14

#### Columbus Commons, Columbus, OH

In the mid-1980s the City of Columbus and the State of Ohio began to work on the redevelopment of blocks just south of the State House. Capital South Development Corporation was created for this purpose, and worked to acquire land for the redevelopment of this area. The development corporation completed the development of a downtown mall with underground parking, a parking garage, and hotels and offices in 1989.

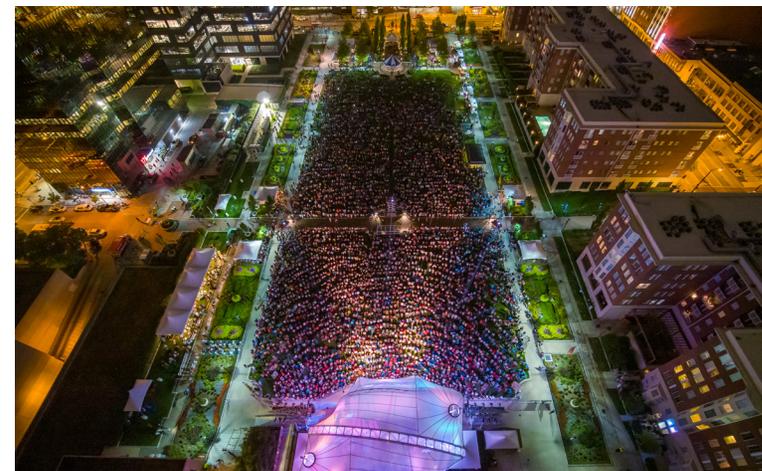
By the early 2000s the mall's ownership changed hands, and the development corporation regained ownership after a subsequent owner defaulted. In 2007 the Capital South Development Corporation began to plan for the redevelopment of the mall. As the underground parking had long term commitments and removal was not an option, engineers determined that the mall could be removed while retaining the parking. The existing mall was demolished, and in its place a unique urban park was built which was surrounded by residential, retail, and office uses. Surrounding out-parcels for offices and apartments were sold outright, the proceeds from these sales assisted in the payment of funding obligations for the park as well as building funds for future programming and improvements.

The park space, which opened in 2011, is designed in such a way that the space can be regularly activated through programming and other efforts. Instead of focusing on more expensive permanent fixtures, the majority of funding is devoted to activating the park through summer concerts, a winter light display, and other programming. Though

ownership of the park remains with the development corporation, a permanent easement was granted to Columbus and Franklin County Metro Parks to ensure the park was well maintained and continued in perpetuity. The cost of redevelopment was quickly paid back through parking revenues and three million dollars in corporate sponsorships, and the park continues to be a success.



Columbus Commons afternoon event, image courtesy of the Capital South Development Corporation



Columbus Commons evening event, image courtesy of the Capital South Development Corporation

RECOMMENDATION

## Develop a criteria-based prioritization system for gateway and corridor improvements.

Often initiated by a utility or infrastructure need, corridor improvement projects present an opportunity to provide amenities that support multimodal transportation and livability, thereby having a tremendous impact on the economic viability of the corridors and surrounding neighborhoods. Developing a prioritization system that takes into account the condition of existing facilities, potential to leverage additional funding sources, potential impact on corridors and surrounding neighborhoods, inclusion in adopted City plans, safety issues, and public input could result in the most efficient use of funds by ensuring every aspect of redevelopment is considered and coordinated in advance of the initiation of a project.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- City Manager (primary)
- Planning & Development Services
- Engineering
- Budget, Grants & Program Management
- Partners including Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG), SCDOT, the COMET, and Blue Bike
- Public Works

### DURATION

**SHORT**  
1-3 years to complete

The identification of a prioritization framework should occur in the short term, with planning processes being undertaken in an ongoing basis, at least once every two years.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

¢ - \$\$\$\*

### THEMES

- Plan & Implement
- Built Environment

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Transportation
- Priority Investment

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

Analysis for better coordination of plans, including the following:

- City Capital Improvement Plan
- City planning efforts
- CMCOG Long Range Transportation Plan
- CMCOG Transportation Improvement Program
- SCDOT Statewide Transportation Improvement Program

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success would be:

- Interdepartmental coordination on all infrastructure work between utilities, engineering, planning, COMET, and SCDOT.
- Coordination of funding, grants, and decision making to advance economic development.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

## RECOMMENDATION

## Develop a criteria-based prioritization system for gateway and corridor improvements.

### Case Study 15

Transportation Master Plan, City of Boulder, CO <sup>23</sup>

#### MULTIMODAL CORRIDORS: PRIORITIZATION



Boulder's City Council adopted a Transportation Master Plan in 1996 which identified 10 multimodal corridors, however it did not provide guidance on how to implement or prioritize corridor development. Over the next seven years, a prioritization process was developed that emphasized multimodal transportation investments by multimodal corridor and incorporated an improved understanding of the elements and integration needed to produce a corridor that worked well for all modes. The 10 corridors were divided into 41 segments, then the segments were ranked by a matrix of criteria that include the level of transit service, regional connections, existing facilities and need, and existing and future land use and other factors using a Multimodal Corridor Prioritization Spreadsheet.

Boulder stipulated that corridors were not simply made up of the roadway that defines them, but that they also include the facilities, transit service, land use, and design which extend to ¼ mile on either side of the roadway.

Prioritization criteria incorporated into the spreadsheet include the following:

- Corridor congestion
- The need for safety upgrades
- The need for multiple existing transit routes
- Key regional transit routes
- Whether the project is included in the current CIP
- Consistency with TAB bicycle corridor prioritization
- Whether the corridor contains current transit expansion projects (JUMP, LEAP BOUND)
- The priority for future transit expansion
- The presence of missing pedestrian links
- If the corridor serves key civic activity centers
- If the corridor serves key development or redevelopment areas
- If there are connectivity to other multimodal corridors
- If there are connections to other greenway corridors
- If the corridor serves a major multimodal center (South Boulder, UMC, Downtown, and Table Mesa Park and Ride)



The Boulder TMP is closely coordinated with other City Plans. Image and logo courtesy of the City of Boulder, CO

RECOMMENDATION

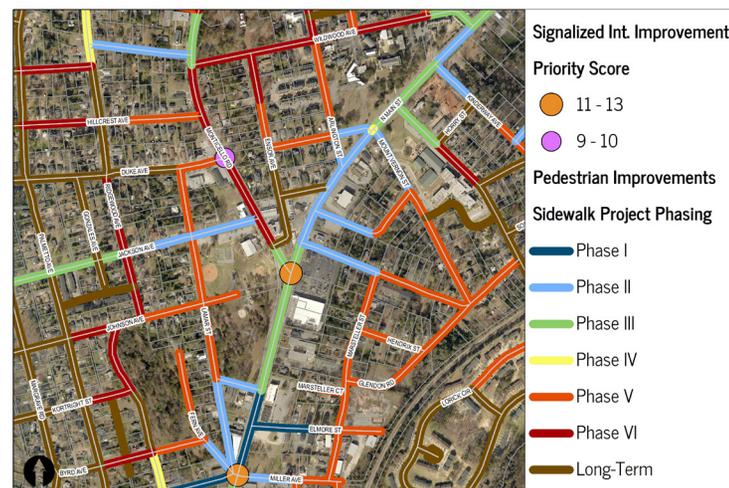
## Develop a criteria-based prioritization system for gateway and corridor improvements.

### Case Study 16

Walk Bike Columbia Master Plan, Columbia, SC

When the City took on the task of creating a city-wide master plan for pedestrian and bicycle transportation in 2014, it was a thorough and comprehensive process. However a 20-year implementation schedule for over one billion dollars of infrastructure can be overwhelming. Part of the plan included a methodical weighted scoring process to ensure all criteria would be considered, and that the projects most suited to meet the goals of the City would rise to the top as a targeted list of city-wide priority projects.

This prioritization system was used for the proposed pedestrian improvements, bicycle improvements, and for proposed intersection improvements. The plan took into account the opportunistic projects that may come about due to a utility or resurfacing project and acknowledged the need to take advantage of those opportunities.



Signalized intersection and sidewalk priorities identified by Walk Bike Columbia

Criteria	Definition	Input	Score
Demand	Does the project promote walking by providing facilities in an area with high demand?	Pedestrian Suitability Analysis demand category; includes where people live, work, learn, play, and access transit	2-4 points (higher points for higher demand scores)
Supply	Does the project improve conditions on a segment with low quality pedestrian infrastructure?	Pedestrian level of service	1-4 points (higher points for lower supply score)
Equity	Does the project benefit under-served communities?	Equity composite measure; 1) families living near or below the poverty line, 2) households with no vehicle available, 3) non-white populations, and 4) households with a limitation on English speaking ability	1-4 points (higher points for higher equity score)
Previously Proposed Projects	Does the project have direct support expressed by inclusion in an adopted planning document?	2006 CMOG Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, Penny sales tax pedestrian project, 25 miles of planned sidewalks	3 points
Promote Safety	Does the project improve a location with a recorded safety concern?	Pedestrian collisions, 2010-2014	3 points
Public Input	Does the public support this project as a priority?	Online public input map	2 points

Walk Bike Columbia pedestrian facilities prioritization criteria

RECOMMENDATION

## Develop incentive-based design guidelines for corridors and districts.

Sometimes too many mandatory regulations can be overwhelming to the development community. Choosing critical items to regulate with ordinances or mandatory guidelines and making others incentive-based provides more flexibility and can be a win-win for both the developer and the corridor or district. Incentives can be financial, such as a reduction of development fees, but can also include loosening certain requirements, such as parking, in exchange for providing something additional that contributes to the district or corridor, such as street trees or public art.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Planning and Development Services (primary)
- Economic Development
- Office of Business Opportunities

### DURATION

**SHORT**  
1-3 years to complete

Cost would be minimal and would involve staff time, community input, and basic supplies for documents. Outside cost for graphics could be \$10,000-\$20,000. If a consultant were to be hired to develop guidelines, cost would increase to \$50,000 to \$100,000.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

**\$ - \$\$\$**  
per corridor

### THEMES

- Built Environment
- Partner
- Plan & Implement

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Cultural Resources

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Inventory and evaluation of projects in current districts and corridors that have utilized incentives
- Precedent research about other cities that have successfully utilized incentive-based guidelines

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success would be measured by keeping records of the developments that take advantage of the incentive(s) and seeing an increase in the amenities that are being provided. If an incentive isn't attractive to the development community, then it is not useful in providing anything to the public and may need to be revised accordingly.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Enhance
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

## Develop incentive-based design guidelines for corridors and districts.

### Case Study 17

#### City of Roswell Economic Development Incentive Policy, Roswell, GA

The purpose of the City of Roswell Economic Development Incentive Policy is to provide incentives for the retention and/or expansion of existing businesses located within the City of Roswell and to encourage the location or relocation of new targeted businesses within the City. While not directly tied to urban design guidelines, the subsidies provided are discretionary and are linked to criteria that ensure a public benefit is being provided.

The policy requires that the project must meet City goals as described in the Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Economic Development Plan, that it creates at least five new jobs which meet a certain threshold, and that the recipient makes a capital investment in the City. In addition, there are other considerations to help determine whether a project qualifies for an incentive, such as the economic benefit to the City, the impact of the proposed development on existing businesses in the City, its compatibility with City land use and development plans, and its level of compliance with any design guidelines.



The City of Roswell, GA became a partner in the farmer's market to increase local participation. Image courtesy of the City of Roswell

Available incentives include:

- Waiver or Reduction of Permit Fees. The City may waive or reduce all building permit fees associated with the business location/expansion including all building fees associated with new construction, plan review, and tenant finishes.
- Waiver or Reduction of Impact Fees. Businesses relocating to the City that meet the criteria defined in this policy may qualify for a waiver or reduction from impact fees assessed.
- Waiver or Reduction of Business Registration Fees. The City may waive or reduce applicable business license fees assessed pursuant to Chapter 10, Occupation Taxes of the Roswell Code of Ordinances up to the sum of \$7,130 each year for a period up to three years.
- Expedited Permitting Process: The City may expedite the permitting process required for business location or expansion.<sup>24</sup>

Small projects (incentives less than \$25,000) are evaluated by a committee of five senior staff members, and larger projects are recommended by the committee to City Council. This program provides flexibility and discretion to ensure that a public good will result from the use of a private subsidy, consistent with the policies of the Mayor and Council.



Canton Street beautification project, image courtesy of the City of Roswell

RECOMMENDATION

## Advance street lighting technology and pursue a more sustainable funding approach.

This is a two-part recommendation:

1. Undertake a planning process to move the lighting system of Columbia forward. This plan should examine the current state of the lighting system and establish standards for services based upon street classifications, public space, entertainment districts, existing funding, and potential funding. In addition, the plan should look at the potential for the integration of other departments and coordination.
2. Implement the plan, which should include setting aside funding to move the system forward and to provide high quality services with a focus on efficiency and safety.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Public Works (primary)
- Planning & Development Services
- City Manager
- Columbia Police Department
- Safety & Risk Management

### DURATION

**LONG, ONGOING**  
7-10+ years to complete, recurring

Plan costs should fall within **\$\$**. Implementation will require grants, matching funds, that may come out of federal transportation funding or safety funding. Once more cost efficient lighting is installed and lights are converted from rental to owned, cost savings should occur.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

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

### THEMES

- Safety
- Built Environment

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Land Use
- Community Facilities
- Transportation

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Analysis of existing system(s), costs, funding sources, and needs
- Analysis of State authorization of municipal authorities and funding mechanisms
- A review of relevant existing and emerging technologies
- Continue to partner with CPD regarding street light outages.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success will be measured by:

- Funding program for streetlight upgrade and new installation.
- Development of a comprehensive plan to move the system forward
- Development of a plan of implementation.
- Development of a plan for long-term management and funding.
- Development of a lighting system which goes beyond providing lighting for vehicular traffic and addresses the nexus between public safety, multimodal users of roadways (to include pedestrians, bikes, transit, micro mobility), and economic development.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

## Advance street lighting technology and pursue a more sustainable funding approach.

Streetlights in Columbia are used on portions of our major corridors, minor corridors, residential streets, and in public spaces. However, there is not a consistent plan to fill in gaps and update the existing system. Streetlights are used around the world to increase visibility, promote road safety for drivers and pedestrians, discourage crime, and regenerate commercial areas and public spaces.

In recent years street illumination technology has expanded to incorporate more than just lighting. New lighting systems can be interconnected with the regional and national small cell network, and lighting can be dimmed or increased by a central system. Lighting systems can now measure pedestrian traffic in urban areas, thus providing data that can be used for economic development and business recruitment. Improvements in technology also allow for the integration of lighting systems with ShotSpotter (used by the City of Columbia) to broaden the coverage area of this gunfire detection technology and reduce costs per unit.

Currently, the City of Columbia has a street lighting program that is made up of leased lighting, owned lighting, and lighting that is shared. Most of the City's streetlights are high pressure sodium lights, which are less efficient and result in higher electrical costs than other options. Our system is not yet integrated with small cell technology, which could also help offset costs. Many of the City's streetlights are rented; typical rental leases include the cost of streetlight installation. In addition to electricity costs, however, the City pays an ongoing charge for the equipment at a high long-term cost, which severely limits the City's resources to improve upon and expand the existing system.



Lighting in the Innovista area of downtown Columbia.



Lighting on Washington Street between Assembly and Main - note that only one side of the street has lighting, there is more glare than in the Innovista area.

## RECOMMENDATION

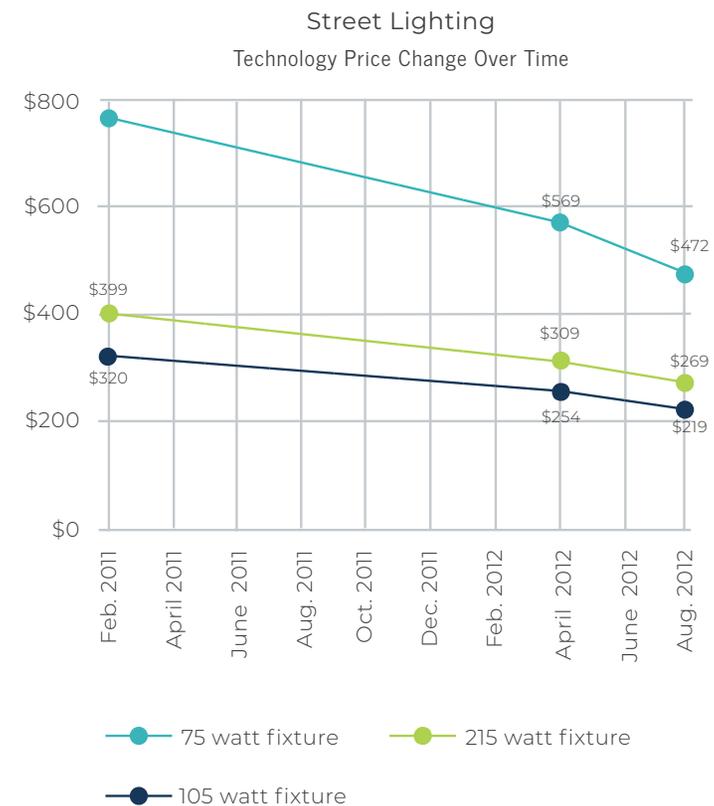
## Advance street lighting technology and pursue a more sustainable funding approach.

### Case Study 18

Conversion to LED streetlights, Asheville, NC

In 2007 the City of Asheville created a sustainability committee with the goal of reducing the City's carbon footprint 2% per year. This goal was doubled in 2011 to 4% per year by City Council. The City analyzed their carbon footprint over a three-year period and found that their buildings and fleet were the largest contributors to the City's carbon footprint. Street lighting had the third largest impact, higher than municipal water production and distribution.

Asheville worked with their electrical provider to examine new rate dynamics. The old rate system had a flat rate per fixture, which included capital investment, energy, and maintenance costs. As a result of these discussions, the electrical provider developed two new rate options for LED streetlights: a City-owned rate and a utility-owned rate. The City of Asheville chose the first option, deciding to purchase and own the fixtures outright, though the utility would install and maintain these fixtures at a flat rate cost per fixture. This involved a larger upfront investment, but resulted in a lower per-fixture rate, with an anticipated five-year return on investment. From an environmental perspective, the new option allowed the community to see a CO<sub>2</sub> reduction of 6.2% for a cost of \$2 million. The first phase of the project included 8,000 fixtures and resulted in an annual savings of \$400,000 and an energy savings of 43%. After completion of the program, Asheville had a 0.02% complaint rate, with the complaints mostly requesting shields for brightness.<sup>25</sup>



LED streetlight costs in Asheville dropped over the first 18 months of the City's street lighting conversion. The Asheville saw a 34% average price drop and a 1.4 year decrease in the return on investment.<sup>26</sup>

## RECOMMENDATION

## Advance street lighting technology and pursue a more sustainable funding approach.

### Case Study 19

#### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), Various Cities

##### TECHNOLOGY:

Technological advances have greatly influenced how cities plan, develop, and provide services to improve the quality of life and enhance the urban environment in which people live, work, and recreate. In 2019, the City of Columbia's Police Department began using ShotSpotter to improve response times, aid in investigations, and deter crimes. In 2015, ShotSpotter partnered with GE Lighting to add sensor detection software into the GE's intelligent LED streetlights.<sup>27</sup>

##### CRIME REDUCTION:

In 2019, multiple departments in New York City partnered to design a randomized controlled trial involving 40 public housing developments, all of which had elevated crime. New street lighting was installed in half of the developments, while no improvements were made to the other half. The study found that with new lighting levels index crimes were reduced by 36%, while overall crime was reduced by 4%.<sup>28</sup>

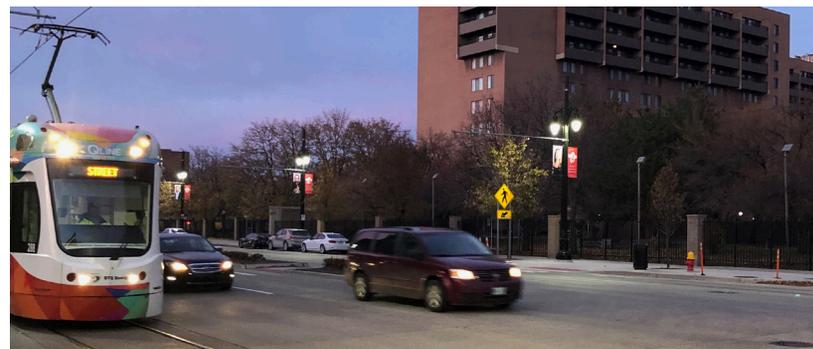
##### REDUCTION OF PEDESTRIAN DEATHS:

In 2014, the City of Detroit began to rebuild an 88-year-old street lighting system that had seen disinvestment over a 20-year period. The Public Lighting Authority was created to improve, modernize and maintain the street lighting system of the City of Detroit. A total of 65,000 lights were installed between 2014 and 2016, bringing light to both residential and commercial streets that had previously been dark. In 2018 a new report on the streetlight installation project was issued

which found that the number of pedestrian deaths decreased from an average of 24 per year to one, due in part to the replacement of the 65,000 lights. Since 2009 pedestrian deaths have dropped 16%, while throughout the rest of Michigan they increased 47%. In addition, the City of Detroit has seen a reduction of 55% to 60% in their energy bill.<sup>29</sup>



City of Detroit - New LED lighting looking towards downtown redevelopment and Renaissance Center. Image iStock.com/Pawel Gaul



City of Detroit - New LED lighting provided a 24% reduction in pedestrian deaths. Image courtesy of John C. Fellows

RECOMMENDATION

## Advance evening and winter accessory lighting as an economic development tool.

Throughout the country and in many parts of the world decorative and seasonal lights bring extra light to evenings and those darker days of winter. Accessory lighting can increase economic activity, especially within commercial corridors, downtowns, and public spaces. Often once the sun goes down these spaces are less frequented by consumers. However, the addition of night time and seasonal lighting has provided added value for economic development efforts from downtowns to outdoor lifestyle centers. Over the past decade the City of Columbia has increased the use of seasonal decorations targeted towards the holidays in December. Developing a plan and a yearly funding program for this type of lighting can be a relatively inexpensive economic development tool. In addition, illumination of structures by private entities has started to become popular in Columbia. Incentivizing private development to illuminate structures could be another tool to advance economic development. For implementation of this recommendation to be fully successful, interdepartmental coordination will be essential.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Public Works (primary)
- City Manager
- Planning & Development Services

### DURATION

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

Development of a funding program where the cost of programming is shared by business districts and the City can allow for the City of Columbia to become a city of winter lights within a decade.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

**\$\$\***  
annually to develop a successful program

### THEMES

- Safety
- Built Environment

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Land Use
- Transportation

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Comparative analysis of the economic vitality of streets with and without decorative, building accent, and/or winter accessory lighting
- Analysis of similar data or reports from peer cities throughout the Southeast and United States.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success will be measured by:

- Development of a policy for funding with public and private dollars.
- Integration of electrical systems into streetscape projects to easily advance this economic development tool
- Development of a plan of implementation city-wide for gateways and corridors.
- Develop lighting installations with the pedestrian as a priority

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Connect
- Enhance
- Lead

## RECOMMENDATION

## Advance evening and winter accessory lighting as an economic development tool.

### Case Study 20

#### Nighttime Lighting Plans

Cities throughout North America and the world have begun to illuminate their streets and public spaces in different ways. As technology has evolved and become more energy efficient, reliable, and cost effective, new and innovative designs have become available. Many communities provide holiday lighting either through a municipality, a business, or other partnerships. However a growing interest in illuminating buildings and spaces within private development has become more mainstream. Property owners, developers, and marketers have found that by illuminating their buildings they become more inviting, memorable, and marketable.

Old Montreal developed a business district lighting plan in 2003 which has since been completed to great acclaim. Specific building lighting plans helped to highlight critical buildings - the lighting plan for City Hall won an award from the Illuminating Engineering Society.<sup>30</sup>

The illumination of the skyline by private properties also provides a unique identity for a community. A decade ago the lighting plans for skylines were fixed, yet today with the advent of new technology city skylines can respond to events, moods, and seasons. For example, the vision for the new Bank of America lighting in Charlotte was inspired by "light paintings" of scenes from NC, Charlotte sports, and the Carolina Sunrise.<sup>31</sup>



Examples of private investment in nighttime and seasonal illumination. First Citizens Green with holiday lighting in December. The Arcade building on Main and Washington Streets is illuminated year round.



Old Town Montreal developed an illumination plan in 2003. This 2012 image shows some of the implementation. Image [iStock.com/gregobagel](https://www.iStock.com/gregobagel)



Re-illuminating the Charlotte skyline - Bank of America lighting upgrade. Image [iStock.com/digidreamgrafix](https://www.iStock.com/digidreamgrafix)

## RECOMMENDATION

## Modernize the sign ordinance.

Regulation of signage can be a controversial and a legally tricky topic. However, providing clear and consistent guidance is the best way to avoid challenges over regulations. The City's sign ordinance is in need of updating, as are the guidelines for signs in urban design and historic districts. Having a document which reflects the latest case law for sign regulation and also addresses the modern technologies available in the industry would benefit the City as well as the business owners.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Planning & Development Services (Primary)
- Economic Development

### DURATION

**MEDIUM**  
4-6 years to complete

Two options:

- Staff - outreach, graphics, etc. at \$20,000.
- Consultant - \$50,000 to \$150,000, depending upon complexity.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

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

### THEMES

- **Built Environment**
- Plan & Implement

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Transportation

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Review of model sign ordinances from other municipalities that have written new sign codes since *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*
- Analysis of current trends locally, regionally, and statewide to understand Columbia's position compared with our peers
- Inventory of existing permanent signage
- Inventory of existing non-compliant signage

### MEASURING SUCCESS

Success would be the adoption of a new sign code adopted that addresses the concerns of all stakeholders and meets current legal standards.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

## Modernize the sign ordinance.

### Case Study 21

#### Sign Ordinance Revisions, Baton Rouge, LA

In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on a case that dramatically changed the legality of sign ordinances around the country. The Town of Gilbert, Arizona had a sign ordinance that classified temporary signs into content categories with different size regulations based on the category. A church applied for a temporary sign permit for directional signs to a service and was denied. The pastor of the church sued the Town, citing that similar temporary signs that had political or ideological messages were allowed more square footage. While the Town did not make decisions based on the content of each sign, the Court ruled that the ordinance was on its face discriminating against certain content by placing more restrictions on a sign based on its content, making it not “content neutral.” The result of this lawsuit is that municipalities across the country are revising their ordinances.

The City of Baton Rouge, Louisiana realized immediately that they needed to address this issue - they had 39 types of signs identified in their ordinance based on content. They hired an outside consultant for the project, which included forming a steering committee of planning advocates, neighborhood groups, developers, designers, and engineers. The City met separately with the billboard representatives.

The toughest topics during the rewrite process included the allowable size of signs, digital message boards, and how to handle temporary signs, which do not require a permit. While this last topic was never resolved, they managed to have the new ordinance passed without a hitch.

After the ordinance amendments were drafted, the International Sign Association sent the draft to their membership in the surrounding area to get feedback. The draft was also vetted by the Baton Rouge Growth Coalition, representing business interests, and the Greater Baton Rouge Civic Association, representing single-family neighborhoods. The process was so thorough that by the time the draft got to the Planning Commission and City Council, there was no opposition to the new ordinance.

Frank Duke, Baton Rouge's Planning Director, said staff and stakeholders were all very pleased with the outcome, which resulted in 13 sign types, reduced from 39 in the old ordinance, and an ordinance that is much easier to administer and enforce. Getting the stakeholder groups involved early and keeping them engaged throughout the process was key to making this a smooth transition for all involved.

RECOMMENDATION

## Consolidate economic development organizations.

During the comprehensive planning process City staff facilitated economic development focus groups as well as a number of public and neighborhood meetings. Throughout these discussions several common themes emerged related to economic development. There are a dozen or more groups working on economic development, however group members recognize that they are not coordinating and communicating enough, resulting in a duplication of efforts. Focus group participants agreed that as a region we need to collaborate better on economic development efforts. Stakeholders also noted that the City and the region struggle to compete with our peers. Our most successful peers have found that collaboration and consolidation have been the key to moving forward in today's economic structure.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- A champion economic development organization (primary)
- Regional economic development organizations
- City Manager
- Economic Development

### DURATION

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

The overall cost to the City is low as consolidation would occur between various organizations. The City might consider bringing in experts, consultants, or others to assist with the process.

### PRIORITY

**HIGH**  
start within 3 years

### COST

\$ - \$\$\* 

### THEMES

- Lead By Example
- Engagement & Outreach
- Plan & Implement

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Land Use
- Housing

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Develop a report that provides a clear understanding of what each economic development organization focuses their efforts on and how each operates.
- Compare how the focus and roles of economic development organizations in the Midlands relate to others in the Southeast and nationwide.
- Develop a report outlining options of how our economic development organizations and chambers of commerce can be realigned and consolidated to be more competitive and collaborative.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

The first step in success is an agreement to move forward with a study of our approach as a region - collaboration will be important. A second step is to jointly develop a report in concert with all regional organizations, to determine what format(s) and type(s) of organization should be created going forward. Finally, success will be seen in a streamlined, well-coordinated, and collaborative economic development structure for the City and region.

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

## Consolidate economic development organizations.

### Case Study 22

Charlotte Regional Business Alliance, Charlotte, NC

In 2018, the Charlotte Chamber and the Charlotte Regional Partnership united to create the most vibrant, innovative, and healthy economy in the nation. Their motto was “one economic enterprise for one region with one dream of prosperity for all.”<sup>32</sup>

The Charlotte Regional Business Alliance (CRBA) unites the exceptional and diverse strengths of all the counties in the region. The Alliance is a nonprofit/private economic development organization. The Alliance focuses on 16 counties (12 in NC and 4 in SC) and is divided into regional chapters - Ballantyne, Central, North, and South. A larger component of the CRBA is attracting and retaining business and talent.

The Business Alliance focuses on economic development, with specific a focus on advanced manufacturing, automotive industry, financial services, headquarters, healthcare, information technology, international business, and logistics and disruption. They also have an advanced research group that tracks the economic and demographic trends of the region. A third element of their program is public policy with a focus on policies that impact the business community.<sup>33</sup>



Cityscape view of Charlotte, North Carolina and Romare Bearden Park.  
Image iStock.com/Pgiam



Charlotte, NC, Seventh Street Station for Charlotte's Area Transit System, CATS.  
Image iStock.com/J Michael Jones

## Consolidate economic development organizations.

### Case Study 23

Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation,  
Denver, CO

“The Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is a national model for regionalism in economic development, political cooperation, culture and sports.”<sup>34</sup> The EDC is the nation’s first regional economic development entity. The EDC was developed out of the Greater Denver Corporation and the Metro Denver Network, and has repeatedly been cited as “a mode for a new era of regional politics.”<sup>35</sup> The EDC brings together 70 cities, counties, and individual economic development agencies into one collaborative organization. The EDC focus areas are: economic development, political cooperation, and arts and culture.

Over the past three decades the EDC has been instrumental in diversifying the region’s oil and gas dependent economy, spearheading construction of the nation’s only new airport in 25 years, and rolling out the nation’s largest, single transit build out.

The EDC has operated under a code of ethics since the merger of the Greater Denver Corporation and the Metro Denver Network in the mid 1980s. The EDC takes a collaborative approach towards economic development, supporting the arts, fostering bipartisan dialogues among the region’s mayors, and attracting and retaining entertainment venues such as major sports franchises.<sup>36</sup>



Denver, Colorado downtown skyline viewed from Red Rocks at dawn. Image iStock.com/sean pavone.



The tracks of Denver’s Union Station partially covered by the canopy architecture. Image iStock.com/george clerk.

RECOMMENDATION

## Facilitate partnerships between businesses, schools, and other entities to establish internships and workforce training programs.

Helping to build a city's economy and enrich its citizens' livelihoods is a primary responsibility of a municipality. To achieve this, many cities have used their position and infrastructure to facilitate training programs and internships for those who may not have access or may not know about such programs. Such facilitation may include advertisement through City-owned channels, allowing access to City-owned buildings and spaces to conduct training and education programs, providing coordination between educational institutions and private enterprises, and providing programmatic funding. By helping to facilitate such programming, the City can assist in developing and empowering a more educated, experienced, and ready workforce to continue to build Columbia's future.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Economic Development (primary)
- Community Development
- Local educational institutions and businesses
- Midlands Workforce Development

### DURATION

**LONG, ONGOING**  
7-10+ years to complete, recurring

The cost and duration of such efforts are largely dependent on how much the City chooses to invest in its citizens and businesses.

### PRIORITY

**MEDIUM**  
start within 4-6 years

### COST

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

### THEMES

- Partner
- Equity & Accessibility
- Lead by Example

### OTHER ELEMENTS

- Population
- Community Facilities

### DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Compile information about internship programs that the City currently participates in or facilitates, inclusive of their cost to the City.
- Compile information about regional internship programs
- Identify business sectors in need of interns and/or workforce training and development.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

- Increase in number of internship programs that the City participates in
- Increase in internship and workforce training programs in Columbia and the Midlands

### CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Empower
- Prosper

## RECOMMENDATION

## Facilitate partnerships between businesses, schools, and other entities to establish internships and workforce training programs.

### Case Study 24

#### Workforce Development Programs, Louisville, KY

Louisville, Kentucky has a number of economic development initiatives that speak to a regional and collaborative approach.

**Louisville Forward** is an integrated approach to economic development which includes a Workforce Solutions Manager. This person serves as a concierge for companies already located in or looking to locate in Jefferson County, and works closely with Louisville's education system, higher education institutions, and workforce development partners and programs.

**KentuckianaWorks** is a regional workforce development board which operates in seven counties in the Louisville metro area. The organization helps workers find jobs and obtain relevant training and education, and connects employers with the skilled workers they are seeking. The benefit of this regional approach is the breadth and depth of resources that both workers and employers have access to. There are more than a dozen programs facilitated by KentuckianaWorks in various industries such as construction, healthcare, and technology.



KentuckianaWorks logo, used with permission.

**REImage** is a program for persons who have been in the court system and need assistance getting their lives back on track through job training and placement.

**Project C.A.S.E. Creating Access to Successful Employment** is a program focused on helping individuals with disabilities find training in healthcare, manufacturing, and information technology. The program works with employers in these fields to provide participants with internships, job shadowing opportunities, and ultimately job placement.

**KentuckianaWorks College Access Center** is a one-stop shop for those seeking a college education who may not otherwise have access for various reasons. They provide financial aid and educational and career counseling to participating individuals.

The key to success in all of these programs is the broad commitment to reach the diverse population, and the depth provided by focusing on a few local sectors of the economy. The more resources people have to access education, training, and jobs, the more successful the local economy will be for all.

"It's better for everyone when worker skills and employer needs align," Michael Gritton, the Executive Director of KentuckianaWorks, stated. "But that doesn't happen magically. You need companies, schools, government agencies, and community organizations all working together around this common goal. Our job is to facilitate that process."<sup>37</sup>

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