



Public Engagement

Face-to-Face

- Public Open Houses
 - October 2018
 - February 2019
- Neighborhood Meetings
 - Fall/Winter 2018
- Business Districts
- Civic Organizations
- Lunch With a Planner
- Focus Groups
- Events

Online/Mailing

- Interactive Online Surveys
 - Fall 2018
 - Spring 2019
- Website
- MailChimp Emails
- Newsletters
- Facebook & Twitter
- Dedicated Email for Comments
- Water Bill Mailers

We estimate 5,500 people of engagement so far!
(Not including...)

Appendix L

Public Engagement

This appendix highlights the various forms of engagement with the public that have occurred throughout the life of this planning process. While some types of engagement were more effective than others, they all provided opportunities to learn more about how Columbians engage with their City and how they perceive the future of Columbia.

IN THIS SECTION

Introduction	L-854
In-Person Participation	L-855
Online Participation	L-863

TOPICS

Public Meetings and Open Houses, Focus Groups, Social Media Outreach, Other Digital Outreach

Introduction

The most important part of any planning process is obtaining feedback from the public. Ensuring that all members of the community have the opportunity to voice their opinions results in a plan that is the most reflective of the desires and needs of the community at large. Ultimately, a plan that is developed by the people is more likely to be followed, implemented, and seen to fruition than a plan that lacks community buy-in.

To ensure that as many members of the public were reached as possible, a number of engagement strategies were used throughout the planning process. These techniques ranged from formal open houses and public meetings to in-person meetings with neighborhood groups and focus groups. One of the most effective ways the public was able to engage in the planning process was through the use of technology in the form of online surveys, informational emails, a website, and through social media. By using these techniques citizens were able to engage in the manner that worked best for them.



In-Person Participation

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups provided an opportunity to discuss topics with leaders in their field in a small group setting. Focus groups allowed City staff to ask more pointed questions to participants and gather feedback about specific subjects. The numerous focus groups that were held throughout the phases of the planning process provided City staff with information that assisted in the creation of a number of recommendations in this plan.

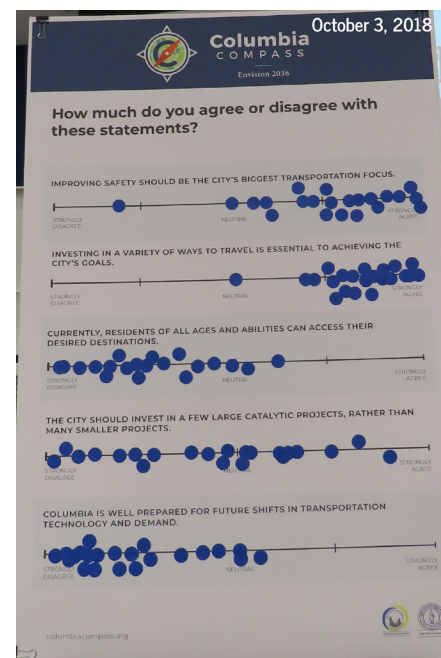
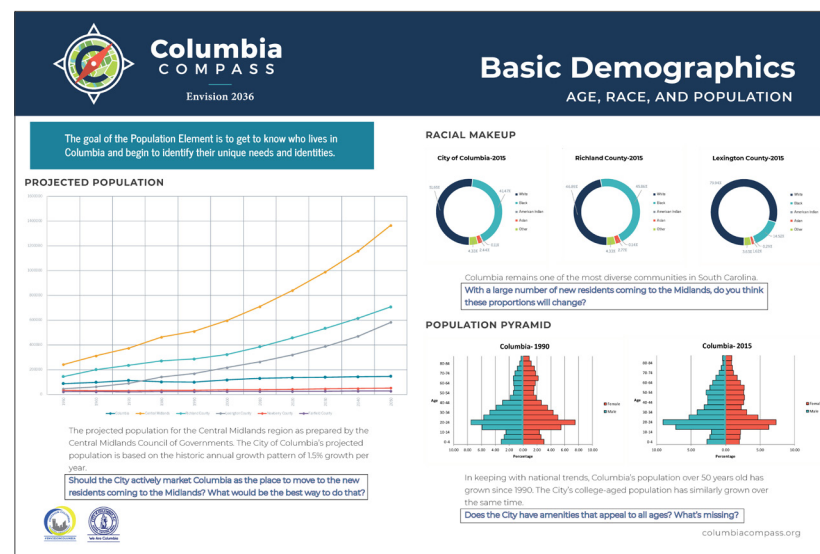
During the three phases, planning team met with over 500 people in nearly 50 separate focus group meetings. These individuals represented organizations and groups that play critical roles in the development of Columbia as well as the daily functions of the City. Focus group participants included: representatives of citizen groups, business leaders, educators, and City and government leaders, among others.



In-Person Participation

OCTOBER 2018 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

In the Fall of 2018, the first formal events of the Columbia Compass planning process were held. These Open Houses were held at Richland Library Main and the Eau Claire Print Building. Over 60 people attended these two meetings. Attendees were given an opportunity to learn more about the comprehensive planning process, the nine elements of the plan, and provide feedback about their vision for Columbia's future. Interactive boards were developed which allowed participants to give feedback in response to specific questions about each plan element. Additionally, a recorded video with subtitles was played on repeat during the meeting to provide participants with an overview of the planning process without the requiring the interruption of a formal presentation.




In-Person Participation

FEBRUARY 2019 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

In February 2019, City staff hosted another round of public open houses. These open houses were drop-in meetings which had a series of displays for each of the nine elements to provide information that had been gathered during the first phase of the planning process. This format allowed participants to interact directly with the project team and provide more direct feedback. Specifically, participants were asked to pick their top draft implementation strategies for each element. This feedback allowed the project team to fine tune and reprioritize topics that would eventually be put into the final plan. These open houses were conducted at Richland Library Main and at the Woodland Park gymnasium, with a total of over 60 attendees.














**Columbia
COMPASS**
Envision 2036



Natural Resources

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

NATURAL RESOURCES GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe in...

-  **Fostering a culture** that appreciates and is committed to protecting our natural resources. (Goals 3, 4, and 5)
-  **Leading by example**: the actions of our employees and our citizens set the standard in our state. (Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)
-  A Columbia that **reduces, reuses, and recycles**: decreasing our production of waste and pollutants. (Goals 1, 3 and 5)
-  **Clean and accessible waterways**. (Goals 3, 4, and 5)
-  A **robust urban tree canopy** that contributes to the health and beauty of our city. (Goals 2, 3, 4, and 5)
-  A Columbia where our **natural resources benefit our community's health**. (Goals 2, 3, and 4)
-  A **prepared and resilient community** in the face of our changing climate. (Goals 1, 2, 3, and 5)
-  A Columbia powered by **clean and sustainable energy**. (Goals 1, 2, and 5)
-  A **data-driven and innovative approach** towards natural resource conservation and preservation. (Goals 1, 2, 3, and 5)

ENVISION COLUMBIA GOALS


#1 Grow opportunities for entrepreneurship, business development, and a skilled workforce to achieve a healthy economy.

#2 Connect the City's neighborhoods and business districts through cohesive land use, infrastructure development, and transportation planning.


#3 Foster a healthy quality of life focusing on safety, culture, and recreation.

#4 Collaborate and partner with entities within the Midlands region to become the state's prime destination for residents, visitors, and businesses.


#5 Provide high quality municipal services, effectively, efficiently and responsibly.



Are we missing any guiding principles for this element?
If so, leave yours with us on a sticky note.



columbiacompass.org



**Columbia
COMPASS**
Envision 2036

Natural Resources

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Which three of the below are the most important (●) for Columbia to accomplish in the next 10 years? Let us know by placing your dots.




Pick 3!

most important (●)

GROW AWARENESS Partner with state and local agencies, nonprofits, schools/universities, neighborhoods, businesses, and other community groups to grow awareness and effect cultural change.	
LEAD BY EXAMPLE Examine City policies and practices to identify baseline data, improve efficiencies to conserve resources, harness our buying power, and reduce, reuse, and recycle.	
COLLABORATE & MAINTAIN A SYSTEMS APPROACH Natural resource issues do not adhere to municipal boundaries – coordinate watershed-based planning efforts and collaborations, and partner to provide consistent and effective messaging on regional needs and goals.	
PLAN FOR RESILIENCY Identify and implement robust strategies for managing natural hazards and increased strains on resources, including consideration of climate change-related risks.	
BE READY FOR 100% CLEAN & RENEWABLE ENERGY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in clean energy generation for City facilities • Invest in and incentivize clean energy usage in development • Work with local utility providers to improve efficiency while prioritizing access for citizens facing the largest energy burdens (financial burdens) and pollution hazards. 	
TACKLE WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS Work to improve water quality through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and outreach • Stream and wetland restoration • Sustainable stormwater and wastewater infrastructure improvements 	
PROTECT, PROVIDE, & ENHANCE ACCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect, preserve, and enhance access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the City's rivers and waterways • open spaces and natural areas • a healthy urban tree canopy 	
DEVELOP THE RIVERFRONT SUSTAINABLY Set the standard for integrating the rivers into City life in a way that provides public access, brings activity to the riverfront, and protects ecosystem services.	
TRACK OUR PROGRESS Work to identify and gather the data needed to set a baseline and measure both our successes and failures.	

columbiacompass.org

Is there a strategy we are missing that we should consider accomplishing in next ten years? Write it down on a sticky and leave it here.

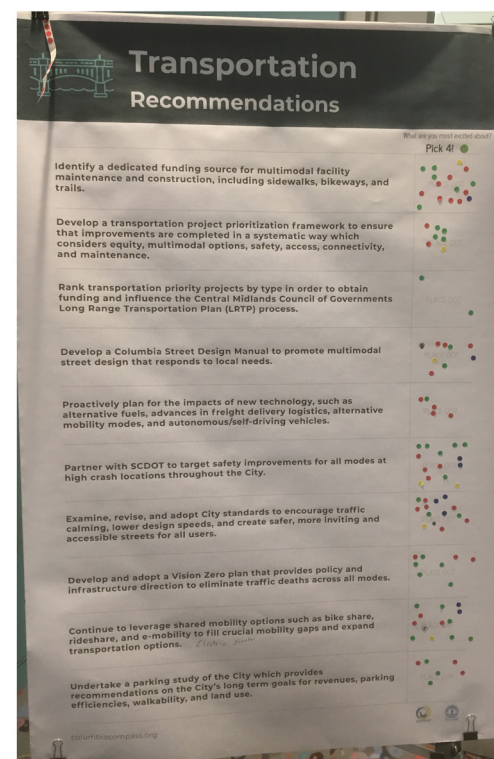
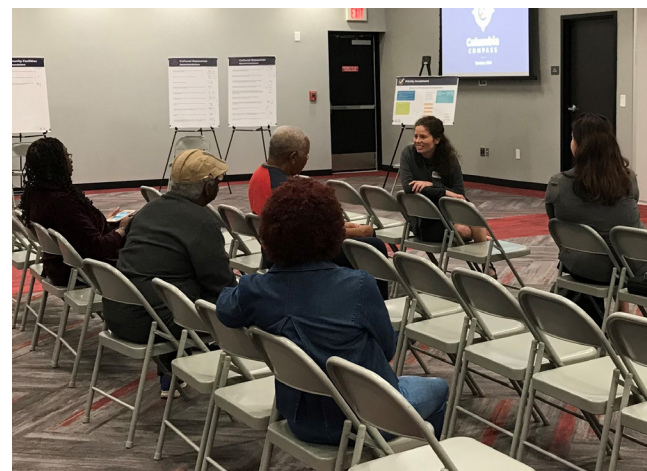




In-Person Participation

JANUARY 2020 PUBLIC MEETINGS

In January 2020, the City entered the final phase of the *Columbia Compass* planning process by holding the last series of public meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to present the completed draft of the plan to the public. These meetings provided an opportunity for the public to interact with the project team and share their comments regarding the plan draft. Unlike the public open house format used in October 2018 and February 2019, these meetings included a brief formal presentation which was given twice per meeting at advertised times.

Participants were asked to identify the four recommendations from each element they were most excited about. The feedback from this meeting was used by City staff to reconsider the prioritization of recommendations of the plan. These public meetings were conducted throughout the city at Richland Library Main, Richland Library St. Andrews, Richland Library Southeast, and the Busby Street Community Center. These meetings were held earlier in the evening than previous meetings, from 5:30 to 7:30. The earlier portion of each meeting saw the highest attendance. In total, over 130 people attended these meetings.



In-Person Participation

MEETINGS IN A BOX

In an effort to streamline community meetings and ensure that each meeting conveyed the same critical information, City staff worked to develop a “Meeting in a Box.” The Meeting in a Box concept was developed by City staff in coordination with the consultant team of Clarion Associates and planning NEXT. The purpose of this meeting format was to allow City staff to be adaptable to different audiences, time constraints, and content. The initial plan for this meeting type was to standardize meetings for various time frames and allow for these meetings to occur simultaneously throughout the City, thereby improving efficiency.

City staff used the Meeting in a Box format to conduct small format community meetings in the Fall of 2018. These meetings were used to bridge the gap between the first and second open houses by having meetings with groups of neighborhoods, located within neighborhood centers. These meetings provided attendees with a brief explanation of the comprehensive planning process and City staff asked open-ended questions to elicit feedback and discussion. Attendance at these meetings varied but provided an opportunity for staff to reach out to specific neighborhoods for their feedback. Unfortunately, these small-scale meetings did not result in a large enough participation to be considered worthwhile. This series of 10 community meetings had less than 60 participants in attendance combined.

Why do we need to hear from you?

- Community input is a priority for City leaders.
- Your input is needed to make sure the plan reflects community needs and values.
- The comprehensive plan will impact your community.

Question 1

What do you think are critical opportunities that this city-wide plan should address to make Columbia a better place?

Slides developed for the Meetings in a Box

In-Person Participation

AMPLIFY MEETINGS

Amplify Columbia was a collaborative effort between the City of Columbia and One Columbia which aimed to identify opportunities for broadening public participation in arts and cultural activities. The Amplify Columbia planning process helped to inform the Cultural Resources element of the Columbia Compass plan. Facilitated community conversations were held involving a broad cross section of Columbia's community. Amplify meetings focused on four core areas:

- Economic prosperity for the Columbia region
- Cultural vitality
- Social and cultural equity
- Ways to embed arts and culture across the City's comprehensive plan.

These meetings were held with community, advocacy, and business groups throughout the planning process.



In-Person Participation

LUNCH WITH A PLANNER

In an effort to provide a greater variety of opportunities for the public to engage with City staff during the planning process, an event called Lunch with a Planner was created. Lunch with a Planner encouraged the public to bring their lunch and meet with City staff during lunchtime hours. These drop-in events gave members of the public an opportunity to discuss the nine elements of the comprehensive plan and other planning topics in a more casual atmosphere than traditional public meetings.

The Lunch with a Planner events gave City staff an opportunity to go to where the people are rather than enticing people to come to them. To achieve this, these events were held in areas where people would be midday. These areas included the city's business districts such as the Main Street District and Five Points, as well as popular public areas like Riverfront Park. The results of this program were hit-or-miss and certain locations were more successful than others at attracting participants. While public participation in these events was limited, the Lunch with a Planner events provided a valuable opportunity for staff to learn more about how to effectively engage with the public. In total, 6 Lunch with a Planner events were held with less than 20 people participating.

City of Columbia
We Are Columbia

Envision Columbia
REVISIONCOLUMBIA

Lunch with a Planner

The City of Columbia is hosting "lunch with a Planner" discussions throughout the year as part of Columbia Compass, the ten-year update to the City of Columbia's comprehensive plan. Your input is vital as we seek to define a vision for Columbia, and identify the policies, programs and infrastructure investments necessary to make that vision a reality.

TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2019

12 - 1 PM

**MERIDIAN BUILDING PLAZA,
1300 BLOCK OF MAIN STREET**

***PLEASE NOTE: BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH
OR COFFEE, AND COME PREPARED TO CHAT!**

**RAIN LOCATION: THE PLANNING DIVISION
CONFERENCE ROOM, 1136 WASHINGTON,
3RD FLOOR.**

In-Person Participation

OTHER COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In an effort to spread awareness of the Columbia Compass planning process and elicit as much feedback as possible, Planning staff sought unique ways to meet with the public. The manner of outreach was largely dependent on the event or meeting staff was attending. Some of the outreach that was conducted included, but is not limited to:

- Placing advertising inserts in customers' monthly water bills
- Presenting to Columbia's Council of Neighborhoods
- Presenting to the Forest Acres and Downtown Rotary Clubs
- Handing out information to students on USC's campus
- Presenting to a teen group at the Boys & Girls club
- Presenting to a children summer camp at City Hall
- Providing information to attendees at National Night Out

Throughout the planning process, staff worked to present to as many people as possible in an effort to get a diverse range of respondents and grow awareness of Columbia Compass.



Staff handed out information about the first interactive survey to students on U of SC's campus

Online Participation

MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS

Throughout the planning process newsletters were developed with two goals in mind. The first goal was to allow residents, businesses, City employees, and City Council members to stay engaged in between public meetings. The second goal was to be able to regularly disseminate the information, data, and knowledge that was being collected to the public throughout the process instead of just at public meetings.

The newsletters focused on each of the nine elements as well as key themes and general background information. Newsletters were available in paper format at outreach events, and were also posted to the project website. Those that signed up for the Columbia Compass email list also receive links to the newsletters.

April 2019

Considering our Natural Resources

What are natural resources and why are they important?

Natural resources are all around us, even in the urban core. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and the places we play outdoors are all resource-driven. They provide clean air, water, food habitat, opportunities for recreation and tourism, and help mitigate extreme weather events.

In considering natural resources, we tend to think of resources individually instead of as part of a system. The interaction between resources and their functions makes up the natural ecological function. Ecological functions are defined in terms of ecosystem services - for example, trees provide clean air, water, and shade. However, the value of these services to people is difficult to fully quantify.

Recent studies have focused on the economic impact natural resource-based sectors, such as forestry or outdoor recreation, however it is much more difficult to quantify the value of ecological functions. For example, according to the US Forest Service, "very little is spent on planning and caring for a community tree yields benefits that are two to five times that investment" - benefits that include cleaner air, improved water quality, and reduced energy costs.

Did you know?

A recent Oxford study found that natural resource-based sectors contribute \$33.4 billion in economic activity to the state's economy and are responsible for 218,719 jobs!

Getting ready for 100% Clean Energy!

In June 2017, Columbia's City Council approved a resolution to establish a community-wide goal of transitioning to 100% clean and renewable energy by 2036. Columbia was the first municipality in SC to make this commitment, and the 25th in the US - to date, 113 cities have made this commitment.

Lower energy costs, improved water quality and stormwater control, and increased property values! While we often forget about the ecological function, without it the human value would not be present.

Developing our Riverfront Sustainably

As Columbians, our rivers are a large part of our identity - and they also provide one of our greatest opportunities. During our first phase of engagement, many citizens noted that the riverfront was underutilized and disconnected from the life of the City in spite of its proximity. While we can look to other cities like Asheville, Austin, and Portland for examples of successful riverfront revitalization, our riverfront is uniquely Columbia, and we should treat it as such. Most riverfront development examples are in fact redevelopment - Columbia didn't industrialize along the riverfront, constricting and polluting

Columbia Compass is the update to the City of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan. To learn more about the process and planning efforts, please visit www.columbiacompass.org

Planning Director: 803.545.3222

July 2019

Taking a look at Transportation

Transportation is a vital part of everyday life in Columbia. As the City grows, it is crucial to plan for a transportation network that provides for the needs of current and future residents, as well as works towards the City's economic development, urban design, and sustainability goals.

Transportation examines different types of travel - we utilize our transportation network to commute to work and entertainment, to recreate, and to bring goods. Columbia's position as the job center of the region is particularly evident when examining regional commuting trends. Over 40% of Columbia residents work within the City, while just 18% of the City's total workforce resides within the City's borders. This creates a major strain on the City's arterial roadways as over 100,000 commuters travel between dispersed residential areas to a few centralized job centers at predictable times each day.

September 20th is Parking Day!

Parking Day is a short design competition that not only attracts but also engages the community through the physical design of the space itself. The City joins SCOLA in this nationwide celebration each year in September, and you can be a part of it by designing and implementing your own park! www.parkingday.org to redesign transportation infrastructure into a park!

Transportation encompasses multiple modes of travel - roadway, greenway, and rail lines are all part of our transportation network. Technology continues to expand our transportation options - shared mobility options (such as rideshare or bikeshare) have changed commuter behavior and commuting patterns, and autonomous vehicles are expected to result in further behavioral shifts. While the larger Columbia metro area is very auto-centric, a very high proportion of Columbia residents walk to work.

Did you know?

Transportation encompasses multiple modes of travel - roadway, greenway, and rail lines are all part of our transportation network. Technology continues to expand our transportation options - shared mobility options (such as rideshare or bikeshare) have changed commuter behavior and commuting patterns, and autonomous vehicles are expected to result in further behavioral shifts. While the larger Columbia metro area is very auto-centric, a very high proportion of Columbia residents walk to work.

September 20th is Parking Day!

Parking Day is a short design competition that not only attracts but also engages the community through the physical design of the space itself. The City joins SCOLA in this nationwide celebration each year in September, and you can be a part of it by designing and implementing your own park! www.parkingday.org to redesign transportation infrastructure into a park!

Columbia Compass is the update to the City of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan. To learn more about the process and planning efforts, please visit www.columbiacompass.org

Planning Director: 803.545.3222

October 2019

Taking a Thematic View

As we've been working diligently to draft the plan documents, we'd like to share with you some of the themes that emerged during this public planning process. These themes are an important part of Columbia Compass, and they help us remember how each of the plan's elements are interwoven with one another to complete our overall vision for Columbia.

Broad Themes:

Throughout the planning process several broad themes emerged which speak to not only desires for Columbia and Columbians, but also the underlying needs of the community. These themes of **Equity & Accessibility**, **Safety**, **Health & Resilience**, and **Recreation & Place** are the community's overall vision for Columbia.

Equity and accessibility is both a broad theme and a topical theme for Columbia Compass. In focusing on equity, we look to provide Columbians with what they need to succeed - some may require more assistance than others, but all should be provided with opportunity. A component of addressing equity is examining how accessible the City's space and services are, with our diverse population in mind.

Safety emerged as a broad theme early in the planning process, receiving the greatest number of references in the fall 2018 survey. As a broad theme, safety includes one's perception of personal safety, the ability to safely move throughout one's community (using all modes of travel), safety in regard to natural and manmade hazards, and public safety/ emergency management. Safety is also a topical theme.

Health & Resilience is both a broad theme and a topical theme for Columbia Compass. In focusing on health, we look to provide Columbians with what they need to succeed - some may require more assistance than others, but all should be provided with opportunity. A component of addressing equity is examining how accessible the City's space and services are, with our diverse population in mind.

Recreation & Place is both a broad theme and a topical theme for Columbia Compass. In focusing on recreation, we look to provide Columbians with what they need to succeed - some may require more assistance than others, but all should be provided with opportunity. A component of addressing equity is examining how accessible the City's space and services are, with our diverse population in mind.

Check out our new video!

In celebration of Planning Month, we've released a [video](http://www.columbiacompass.org) that discusses both the broad and topical themes in depth. Stay tuned to social media and [our website](http://www.columbiacompass.org) - we'll be releasing more videos in the coming months to highlight some of the plan's recommendations!

While the City of Columbia is not a healthcare provider, much of what the City does has the potential to be a lasting impact on its residents. The City is involved in conserving our natural resources, providing safe and attractive infrastructure and spaces for recreation, and engaging with members of the community to facilitate healthy choices and opportunities.

Planning for **resiliency** is about anticipating and adapting to change. Resilience thinking examines how we adapt to and mitigate risks resulting from changes, whether those changes are due to population growth, development pressures, or our changing climate. The recommendations made within Columbia Compass all seek to identify ways that the City and its partners can better prepare the community with adaptation and mitigation of risks in mind.

Topical Themes

In addition to the four broad themes discussed above, ten topical themes were identified which allow the reader to review the plan not only by element, but also by theme. These themes include: Data, Partner, Lead By Example, Plan & Implement, Equity & Accessibility, Engagement & Outreach, Safety, Built Environment, Conserve & Preserve, and Innovation & Technology.

Columbia Compass is the update to the City of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan. To learn more about the process and planning efforts, please visit www.columbiacompass.org

Planning Director: 803.545.3222

November 2018

Columbia's Population

Population Projections

OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA ARE APPROXIMATELY 100,000 CITIZENS. The number of people calling the Midlands region home is expected to increase dramatically in the coming decades. In order to support the influx of new people, we must try to understand where these people will live and the impact that will have on Columbia.

Estimated Percentage Increase 2010-2036:

- +93% Central Midlands Region
- +84% Midlands Region
- +121% Lexington County
- +77% City of Columbia

While we believe that the density of the urban core will continue to increase based on regional and national trends, it is difficult to accurately estimate how many of these people will actually live within the City limits. Regardless of where people choose to live, the City will still have to address the impacts of this regional population increase as the majority of these people will come to Columbia to work or for entertainment.

As can be seen in the above charts, the City of Columbia has a large number of people age 20 to 30, due largely to the presence of USC and other universities and colleges, as well as the City's low cost of living. In the future, the City's economic growth, national trends, along with a large number of young adults entering the workforce, it is important to retain residents and workers, it is important to ensure Columbia is attractive to people for all age groups.

Age

Columbia is a vibrant community with various age groups living and working next to each other. To plan for everyone regardless of age or capability, it is important to better understand who calls Columbia home.

Columbia 1980

Columbia 2015

Columbia Compass is the update to the City of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan. To learn more about the process and planning efforts, please visit www.columbiacompass.org

Planning Director: 803.545.3222

February 2019

Land Use Planning: Framing the Vision

What is land use planning?

Land use planning is the process of thinking about how we'll use our built and unbuilt environment to look in the future. Built on a vision of the future, it frames the discussion for the steps the City needs to take to make that vision a reality. As a municipal government, the City helps facilitate this community-wide vision process through updates to the comprehensive plan and through smaller area planning efforts.

As part of the broader comprehensive plan, the land use element helps provide guidance on where and how growth should occur within the existing context of the City's built environment. The planning process helps to identify the context, character, and quality of the City's built environment, and makes recommendations for improvements from redevelopment and innovation to preservation and protection.

Did you know?

The City's Boards & Commissions frequently look to the recommendations of the land use element, as well as recommendations made in adopted neighborhood and corridor plans, when making decisions about applications for rezoning and development. While these recommendations are not binding, they help provide context by informing decisions of the community's vision and guiding principles.

Please Join Us!

We're hosting our second round of open houses - have you just one of them on your calendar yet? Please be sure to come and let us know if the recommendations we've developed affect your long term vision for Columbia. We're hosting two identical drop-in open houses:

- Tuesday, February 12, 2019, 5:00-8:00pm, Woodland Park Gym
- Wednesday, February 13, 2019, 5:00-8:00pm, Richard Library Main Auditorium

Neighborhood, Area, & Corridor Planning

Planning for a smaller geographic area, residents, business owners, and others come together to define a vision for the feel and the look of that area. They spend time thinking not only about what they'd like their area to look like but what steps need to be taken to make their shared vision a reality.

If you've taken part in a visioning process for your community, it's likely you've joined in this type of plan and helped shape the vision. To maintain in scale and in more recent years, the City has adapted neighborhood, area, and corridor plans as addenda to the comprehensive plan, and therefore as city policy. More recent planning efforts can be found on the City website.

Part of the Plan Columbia planning process was also developing a strategy about how best to move forward with area plans throughout the City. Recognizing that many

Columbia Compass is the update to the City of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan. To learn more about the process and planning efforts, please visit www.columbiacompass.org

Planning Director: 803.545.3222

March 2019

Community Facilities

What are community facilities?

Community facilities are the places and services that everyone in the community shares - whether they use them or not. Schools, fire, police, parks, utilities, courts and administrative functions, when well-run and accessible, add to everyone's quality of life. Community facilities are more than just buildings. The location and condition of city hall and your child's school are both essential ingredients for a successful community, but just as important are the quality of the services provided and the ease of accessing them.

Columbia Compass will focus primarily on the City-owned facilities the citizens of Columbia use every day, as City policies can more directly affect the administration of and improvements to these facilities. However, Columbia is also home to facilities owned or operated by Federal, State, and County government agencies as well as private interests. These include, but are not limited to, schools, hospitals, parks, and private utilities. As the State Capital and County Seat, Columbia benefits from a wide assortment of these facilities, and strengthening partnerships and collaboration amongst agencies will better serve the public both inside and outside of our borders.

A dedicated stream of funding to complete projects and keep us up to date with maintenance. Prioritizing the development, funding, and implementation of maintenance plans for our current facilities will lay down a solid foundation upon which we will build the Columbia of the future for our citizens and visitors.

A Growing Community

The Central Midlands Council of Governments is estimating that the Midlands region's population will nearly double by 2050. As we add people to the City and surrounding areas, more facilities from schools to emergency personnel to infrastructure will be needed to continue serve the community effectively. Planning ahead will allow the City to know where these services will be needed and how to fund them.

THE CITY OF COLUMBIA EMPLOYS MORE THAN 2,200

TO SERVE RESIDENTS, BUSINESS, AND VISITORS

Planning Ahead

We received a lot of feedback through surveys and focus groups on the topic of deferred maintenance of City properties. There was a common feeling that the City was so busy "putting out fires" that there wasn't an opportunity to look forward and create effective maintenance plans. While creating effective plans may take slightly more effort and funding upfront, the time and money saved in the long run can make the City more efficient and reduce duplication of efforts.

Part of an effective maintenance plan is having a dedicated stream of funding to complete projects and keep us up to date with maintenance. Prioritizing the development, funding, and implementation of maintenance plans for our current facilities will lay down a solid foundation upon which we will build the Columbia of the future for our citizens and visitors.

Columbia Compass is the update to the City of Columbia's Comprehensive Plan. To learn more about the process and planning efforts, please visit www.columbiacompass.org

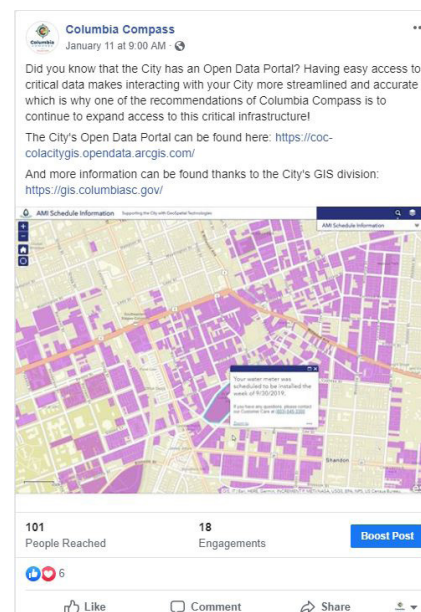
Planning Director: 803.545.3222

Online Participation

SOCIAL MEDIA

A new way City staff sought to elicit feedback and provide information about the *Columbia Compass* planning process was through the creation of a social media presence on Facebook and Twitter. Using the handle @ColaCompass, these social media accounts allowed staff to interact with the public in a real-time, informal manner and provided an avenue to disseminate information about the comprehensive plan.

As the Planning Division did not have a social media account prior to the *Columbia Compass* planning process, staff worked to build these accounts from the ground up. Staff relied on the City's Public Relations, Media & Marketing Department for guidance and partnered with other City department and outside agencies to build the *Columbia Compass* social network. The social media accounts were also bolstered by “boosting” posts and creating ads on Facebook advertising the page and upcoming public meetings which allowed staff to reach people who may have not been previously engaged in this process. As of February 2020, the *Columbia Compass* Facebook and Twitter accounts had over 300 followers combined.



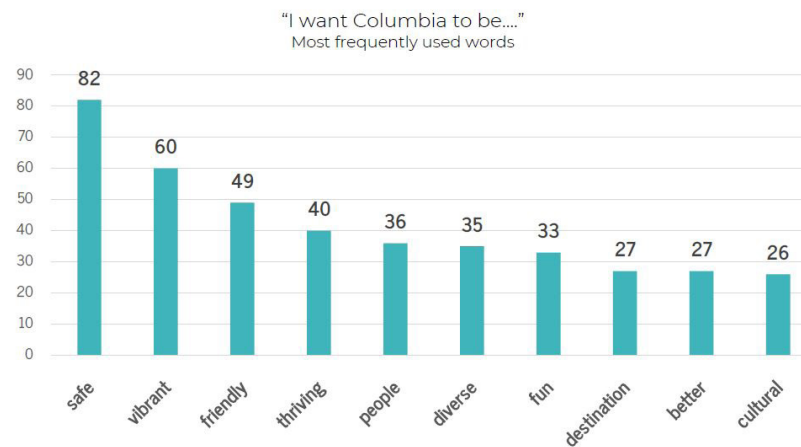
Online Participation

ONLINE SURVEYS

During the Columbia Compass planning process, two surveys were created to allow participants to provide direct feedback and opinions about Columbia's future. The first survey was created in conjunction with the first series of public open houses and launched in September 2018. This survey was created using the MetroQuest survey platform and was administered by Kimley-Horn and Associates. This survey was used to collect feedback on the following topics: Plan Elements, Planning Statements, Mapping, Vision, and Demographics. Over 1,100 participants took the first survey.

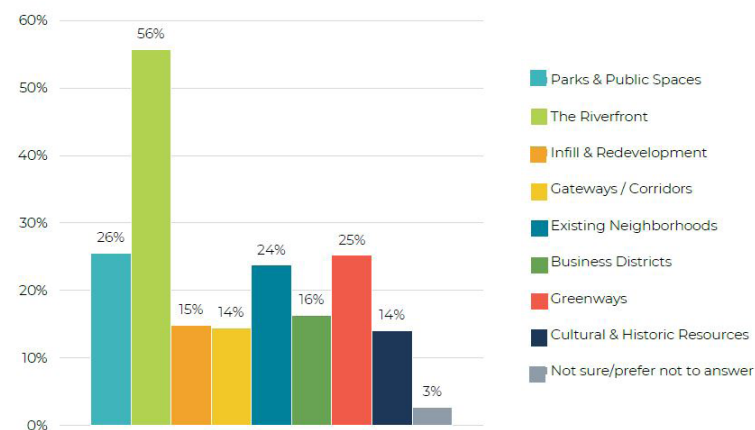
A second survey was created in February 2019 to collect feedback on potential improvement strategies. This second survey, which used the Survey Monkey platform, allowed Planning Division staff to use the feedback and information that had been gathered from the previous survey and public meetings to ask more pointed questions of participants. Feedback from this survey and other feedback was used to create the plan's recommendations. Over 1,800 participants took the second survey.

These surveys were boosted using the *Columbia Compass* Facebook page to gain additional participants from ZIP codes that have had lower participation. The planning team also used this information to post social media updates about participation by ZIP code, which in turn helped to encouraged others to share and participate in the survey. Detailed results and participation of these surveys are presented in Appendices I and J.



The Fall 2018 survey allowed participants to provide a number of open-ended comments. One question asked participants to complete the sentence "I want Columbia to be..." with an answer of 50 characters or less.

Which of the following opportunities should Columbia capitalize on for the most impact? (Select up to two)



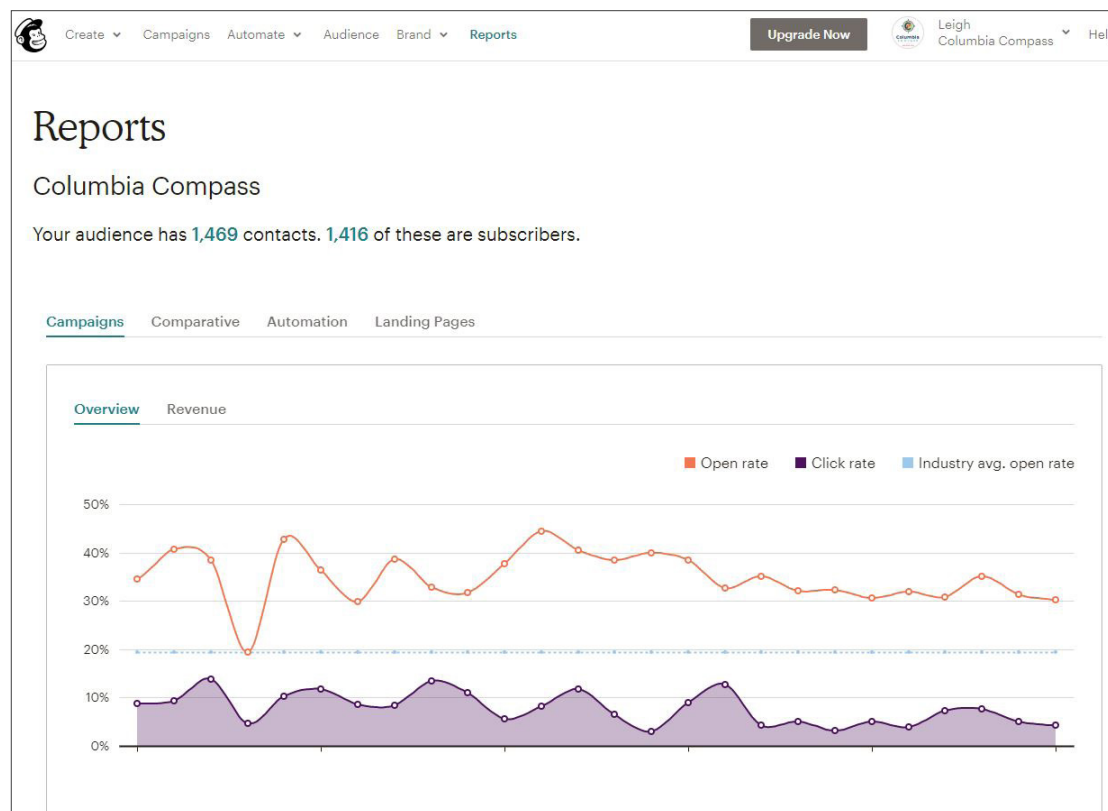
The Spring 2019 survey asked participants more pointed questions about potential implementation strategies like the one shown above.

Online Participation

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

To facilitate public participation, Planning staff created a Mailchimp participant email list and the email address columbiacompass@columbiasc.gov. This email list was used to alert subscribers to upcoming Columbia Compass events and meetings. The email list was also used to distribute newsletters and other information and solicit participation in surveys and other forms of feedback. The subscriber list was initially created by adding City department heads and neighborhood presidents, but quickly grew as participants requested to be alerted to news about the comprehensive plan. From an initial list of 322 contacts who received the first Mailchimp email in September 2018, the number of subscribers grew steadily, building to 1,418 by late January 2020.

This email was curated using the marketing platform Mailchimp.com. Mailchimp was selected due to its ability to integrate other planning outreach efforts such as social media accounts and the Columbia Compass website while maintaining the branding style of the Columbia Compass plan. These factors helped the Columbia Compass email to surpass average open and click rates for the industry and reach people in their own homes.



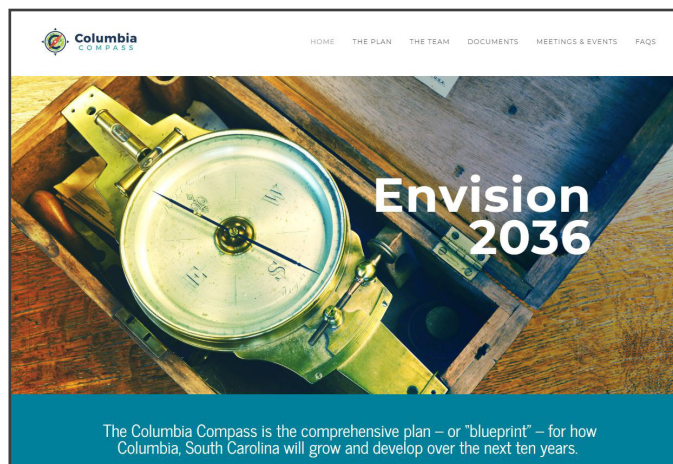
Mailchimp audience and participation rates from September 2018 to January 2020.

Online Participation

WEBSITE

To provide a hub for all information pertaining to the *Columbia Compass* planning process, Planning staff and the graphic design and marketing team created a website and purchased the URL www.columbiacompass.org. Developed using Weebly, a web hosting platform, the *Columbia Compass* website functioned as a place for the public to easily access information about the comprehensive plan and ways to participate. The website also allowed users to easily access the plan's social media accounts and sign up for Mailchimp emails.

The website hosts information about the various elements of the plan as well as information about the history of the planning process, the staff working on the plan, meetings and events, documents, and FAQs. The website also allowed for dynamic editing which provided the most up-to-date information about the planning process. Following the completion of the plan, the website will remain active and be updated regularly.



The website developed for the plan was purposefully designed to be both attractive and easy to navigate (left). Through reviewing Weebly analytics regularly to identify spikes and lags in website visitation, the planning team was able to determine what types of outreach were most effective at not only engaging with the public but also encouraging them to delve into the additional resources provided on the website. The chart below analyzes website traffic from September 2018 through January 2020.

