Community Revitalization Plan Narrative

Columbia Compass Plan - Overview

Fernwood at Five Points would contribute to *Columbia Compass*, a concerted community revitalization plan in Columbia, South Carolina. The City of Columbia ("City") conducted research on the community's population, natural resources, land use, transportation, housing, community facilities, cultural resources, and economy. After compiling this research and consulting with the community, the Columbia Compass plan was adopted in 2020. Columbia Compass provides a blueprint for how the City of Columbia will grow over the next ten years.

There are several objectives of the Columbia Compass plan: **housing**, population, natural resources, economic development, transportation, land use, community facilities, cultural resources, and priority investment. Each of the objectives has thoughtful guidelines and recommendations that are supported by community research and engagement.

For the housing objective, the guiding principles of the Columbia Compass plan are:

- Creating walkable and vibrant neighborhoods connected to destinations where residents can learn, shop, work, and play;
- Enhancement and stabilization of underserved neighborhoods using inclusive efforts to expand opportunity, choice, and safety;
- Managing change in existing neighborhoods to support the protection of historical and cultural characteristics and reduce impacts on established neighborhood character;
- Advancing development of adequate and affordable housing for our families, workers, **seniors**, and disadvantaged community members;
- Ensuring the Columbia community has access to a mix of housing and neighborhood choices throughout the City.

Fernwood at Five Points expands affordable housing, enhances underserved communities, and fosters vibrant neighborhoods in Columbia. This rehabilitation of existing affordable housing will increase the quality of the affordable housing stock, ensuring that the Columbia Housing Authority can continue to support low-income seniors from many more years. Within the plan's 11 specific recommendations that address the housing objective, the Columbia Housing Authority is a responsible agent in five of them.

First, the plan aims to work collectively to leverage resources and create housing solutions for vulnerable neighborhoods. This includes, "ensuring that Columbia's residents have access to

stable, affordable housing" (p. 230). The plan emphasizes the prevention of neighborhood decline and avoiding displacement of existing residents. Fernwood at Five Points will providing stable, affordable housing to low-income seniors in the Columbia community by preserving an asset that is functionally obsolete and would otherwise become uninhabitable and displace 58+ seniors.

Second, this community revitalization plan recommends providing ongoing neighborhood assistance to the most vulnerable neighborhoods in need of revitalization. The plan reads, "Columbia has a number of older neighborhoods that are in need of reinvestment in order to maintain a high-quality housing stock and neighborhood infrastructure" (p. 231). Fernwood at Five Points will rehabilitate dilapidated public housing stock and allow the Columbia Housing Authority to maintain higher quality affordable housing with project-based rental assistance for many more years.

Third, the Columbia Compass Plan aims to leverage public land and funding to develop affordable housing. The plan emphasizes that, "Public-private partnerships will also be key to meeting the City's affordable housing needs. In particular, the City can work with developers to provide discounted public lands for the construction of affordable housing and require the inclusion of affordable housing when public land or incentives are involved" (p. 241). The Fernwood at Five Points project perfectly encompasses this aim by forming a partnership between Brinshore Development, a private affordable housing developer, and the Columbia Housing Authority. Additionally, the financing for this project will include Federal and State LIHTC, a CHA land and building contribution, in addition to a private first mortgage.

Fernwood at Five Points addresses the guiding principles and goals outlined in the housing objective of the Columbia Compass community revitalization plan. To see the full Columbia Compass Plan, please see Exhibit 1 in this section or visit https://planninganddevelopment.columbiasc.gov/the-comprehensive-plan/.

<u>The Columbia Compass Plan – SC Housing Compliance</u>

1. Formal Adoption of a Plan Covering the Project Area

Requirement: The plan must be formally adopted by a local government before the preliminary application deadline and must cover the geographic area where the project is located.
Evidence: The Columbia Compass: Envision 2036 plan was adopted by the City of Columbia on August 4, 2020, via Ordinance 2020-028, as noted on the Introduction of the plan (Exhibit 2,

page 1). The Housing chapter (Exhibit 1) confirms the City's focus on revitalizing neighborhoods across Columbia, including those with aging housing stock and vulnerable residents (p. 219–221). The recommendations (Exhibit 1, p. 230–241) are citywide in scope but emphasize targeted neighborhood investment, making the plan geographically inclusive of sites such as Fernwood at Five Points.

2. Certification that No Principal of the Project Initiated the CRP (other than a public housing authority)

Requirement: The local government must certify that no Principal (outside of a PHA) initiated the plan. *Evidence*: Columbia Compass was created through a multi-year public planning process, led by City staff and professional consultants, with over 5,500 points of community engagement (Exhibit 2, p. 11–12). No individual developer or project principal directed the plan.

3. The Project Supports the CRP's Stated Goals

Requirement: The proposed development must contribute to one or more goals of the plan. *Evidence*: The project supports multiple goals from the Housing chapter (Exhibit 1), including:

- Enhancement and stabilization of underserved neighborhoods (p. 219, 231).
- Walkable, vibrant, mixed-income neighborhoods (p. 219, 235).
- Increased housing affordability and choice across income levels (p. 220–221, 237).
- Prevention of displacement and promotion of equitable reinvestment (p. 230–231).

The Fernwood at Five Points development directly supports these stated goals by creating new, affordable housing units in an existing neighborhood, advancing the City's equity, anti-displacement, and affordability priorities.

4. Local Government Investments in Non-Housing Infrastructure or Amenities

Requirement: The local government must have made or committed to making investments in amenities or infrastructure outside the proposed project. *Evidence*:

- The plan includes specific recommendations for sidewalks, greenways, parks, and transportation improvements to support walkable, complete neighborhoods (Exhibit 1, p. 235–236).
- The Walk Bike Columbia initiative and Public Space Public Life plans are integrated into Compass and guide public space and infrastructure investments beyond any single housing development (Exhibit 2, p. 4–6).

Exhibit 1

Community Revitalization Plan – Housing Portion



04 Housing



Housing is a vital part of everyday life in Columbia. Stable housing is essential to people's health, safety, and well-being, and it is a primary factor in determining people's access to resources and opportunities. This chapter lays out the City's housing trends and needs, and identifies key challenges and opportunities to be addressed in the comprehensive plan.

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IN THIS SECTION

Introduction	218
Guiding Principles	219
Existing Conditions	222
Recommendations	228

TOPICS

Housing, Complete Neighborhoods, Affordability, Equity

Introduction

Housing and neighborhoods are the fundamental building blocks of our community. While housing is built primarily by the private market, the City's role is to guide and manage development to meet community, neighborhood, and household needs. To plan effectively for housing, it is important to consider land use and transportation trends, demographic and economic trends, and past and current policies that have contributed to and continue to influence current housing conditions.

The success of our neighborhoods has a direct impact on the overall successfulness of the City, making it important for the City to help promote safe, stable, and affordable housing options for all of its residents. Communities should strive to be inclusive through providing housing choices adequate for a range of households and needs. Whether people are elderly, aging retirees, empty nesters, working families, young workers, or students, they should have housing options that offer different price points, sizes, number of bedrooms, and locations. Also important is the consideration of where housing is located in relation to jobs. People invest more money and time in a community if they both live and work there. Additionally, some community members have special housing needs that require assistance, such as foster children, persons experiencing homelessness, low-income households, persons with disabilities, and persons recovering from addictions and mental health challenges.

This chapter discusses key issues that were identified throughout the Columbia Compass planning process, including managing change in neighborhoods, revitalizing neighborhoods, promoting housing affordability, providing a variety of housing choices, and supporting complete neighborhoods.



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Guiding Principles

- Walkable and vibrant neighborhoods
- Enhancement and stabilization of underserved neighborhoods
- Protection of historical and cultural characteristics
- Affordable housing
- Mix of housing and neighborhood choices

We believe in creating walkable and vibrant neighborhoods connected to destinations where residents can learn, shop, work, and play.

Neighborhoods that provide a variety of destinations and accessible, connected transportation routes help to create complete communities where all residents can access opportunities. Like many southeastern cities, Columbia is most easily navigated today by car due to infrastructure and development patterns that support driving and the separation of housing from jobs and commercial centers. As the City continues to grow and preferences evolve, there is and will continue to be increasing demand for alternative transportation infrastructure as well as amenities and services that are located closer to housing. It is important that Columbia's transportation network consist of an interconnected street and sidewalk system that will safely and conveniently connect residential areas to destinations. These destinations should include a mix of housing choices as well as places that people access in their daily lives — jobs, schools, grocery stores, transit stations, and public open spaces and recreational facilities. The City of Columbia should foster and support these elements of complete neighborhoods in order to create vibrant and livable neighborhoods.

We believe in enhancement and stabilization of underserved neighborhoods using inclusive efforts to expand opportunity, choice, and safety.

The upkeep and rehabilitation of older homes can be costly, and this can be a challenge for some homeowners, particularly those challenged by historically significant societal challenges such as discrimination. The City of Columbia's neighborhoods contain a relatively old housing stock — 36% of the City's housing stock was built before 1960 compared to just 15% for the metro area overall. Maintaining these aging homes is important for preserving the unique character of Columbia's neighborhoods as well as for ensuring that the City continues to offer a high quality housing stock. The City can help strengthen these communities by supporting home maintenance as well as by making investments and improvements that will provide services and amenities to these neighborhoods. It will be essential to involve residents in these planning processes in order to promote "placekeeping" — equitable growth where investment in existing neighborhoods enhances the community where they live without resulting in gentrification that displaces them. It will be particularly important for the City to work with renters, who are more at risk of displacement.

Guiding Principles

- Walkable and vibrant neighborhoods
- Enhancement and stabilization of underserved neighborhoods
- Protection of historical and cultural characteristics
- Affordable housing
- Mix of housing and neighborhood choices

We believe in managing change in existing neighborhoods to support the protection of historical and cultural characteristics and reduce impacts on established neighborhood character.

Columbia's lengthy and rich history makes it home to a number of established neighborhoods that display the City's unique architectural style, character, and culture. Preserving the older homes in these communities not only protects the identity and culture of the neighborhoods and residents that live there, but also strengthens home values and supports local economic development. While much contemporary development has marked a departure from the craftsmanship found in older homes, there is a desire to return to a local architectural style. Columbia has existing policies in place to protect neighborhood character, including historic districts, community character districts, and design standards. The City should continue to embrace its history and character while also welcoming the future. Change will be necessary in order to create more complete neighborhoods, housing choices, and affordable housing. This change should not be resisted, but instead should be managed so that Columbia can grow and thrive while maintaining its special culture and character.

We believe in advancing development of adequate and affordable housing for our families, workers, seniors, and disadvantaged community members.

Historically, Columbia has been a relatively affordable place to live compared to other U.S. metro areas. However, like many cities, the City of Columbia is now facing a shortage of affordable housing. Since 2010, rental and for sale prices of housing in Columbia have risen faster than incomes, resulting in rental and for sale gaps in the local housing market. These gaps in affordable units especially affect low-income residents. Rising housing prices are also impacting the City's workforce. Currently, Columbia metro workers can only afford 42% of the City's rental units and 21% of homes sold in the City, meaning that many people who work within the City of Columbia cannot afford to live here. Models predict that affordability for both rental and homeownership units will continue to decline. The City will need to address this challenge in order to meet the desire for quality affordable housing that is well-maintained over time and provides residents with access to opportunities.

Guiding Principles

- Walkable and vibrant neighborhoods
- Enhancement and stabilization of underserved neighborhoods
- Protection of historical and cultural characteristics
- Affordable housing
- **Mix of housing and neighborhood choices**

We believe in ensuring the Columbia community has access to a **mix of housing and neighborhood choices** throughout the City.

The City of Columbia is comprised of a diverse population with people of different needs and preferences. The housing stock in Columbia should include a range of housing types and sizes for rent and for sale at affordable prices throughout the City in order to serve the needs of all of Columbia's residents. Changing housing preferences and shifting demographics have created a desire for a wider variety of housing options, including smaller homes that have less property to maintain, are proximate to downtown, and are in walkable neighborhoods. Additionally, it is important for housing options to be available at a range of price points throughout the City, in locations with safe and convenient access to jobs, schools, amenities, and services. By expanding and incentivizing the development of diverse housing choices, the City can help provide people with more housing options that are affordable, meet the changing preferences of aging residents and younger workers and families, provide residents with better access to essential services, and provide more opportunities for people to age in place.

Existing Conditions

THE DATA

A housing assessment was conducted as part of the Columbia Compass: Envision 2036 planning process. Completed in 2018, the assessment was generated using 2012-2016 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates available at the time, 2015 U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, and local market data for rental and for sale properties.

HOUSING STOCK

Based on the 2012-2016 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Columbia is home to approximately 132,500 people living in about 45,300 housing units, in addition to 116 neighborhood associations. At 55%, a little over half of these Columbia households are renters. Similar to other metro areas, the surrounding suburbs of Columbia have higher ownership rates than the central city. In the MSA, approximately two-thirds of households are owners while the remaining third of households are renters. **Ownership is also lower overall in Columbia than in the MSA, across all age cohorts.**

Columbia has slightly more single-family homes than other housing types. Fifty-five percent of homes in Columbia are single-family detached structures, 24% are attached units in relatively small structures (less than 10 units), 21% are attached units in larger structures (10 or more units), and about 1% are mobile homes. As shown in Figure 1, the housing type breakdown differs across owners and renters. Ninety-one percent of homeowners in 2016 lived in single-family detached homes. In comparison, renters lived in a variety of housing types: 25% lived in single-family detached homes, 74% lived in attached units, and about 1% lived in mobile homes. The 2008 recession had a notable impact on Columbia's local housing market. Based on local building permit data, there was diminished residential construction during and following the recession. In 2017 and 2018, single-family permitting reached its highest points since 2008. The City of Columbia remains the main focus of multi-family permitting in the region.

The homes in Columbia are older and have fewer bedrooms compared to the MSA overall. Thirty-six percent of Columbia's homes were built prior to 1960, whereas only 15% of the housing stock in the MSA was built before 1960.

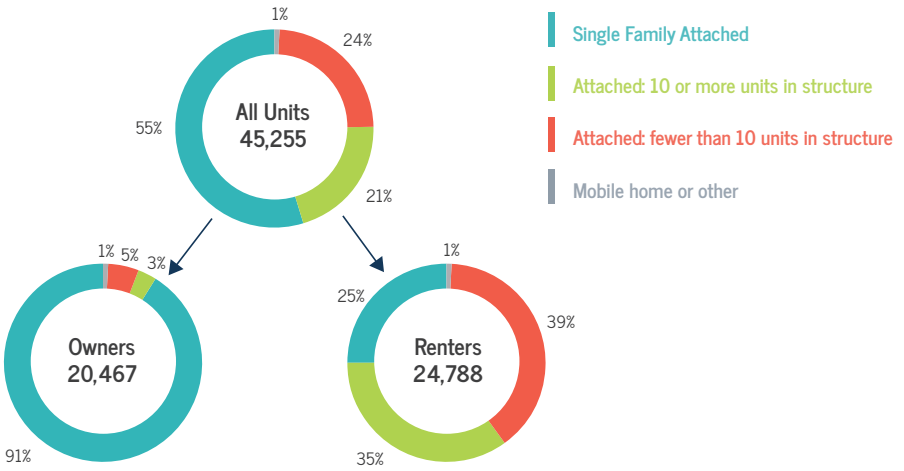


Figure 1. Housing Type, Columbia, (2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates)[1]

Existing Conditions

MARKET TRENDS

Between 2010 to 2016, the median household income in Columbia rose from $38,000 to $42,900. During that same time period, the income distribution shifted up for both renters and owners. These income shifts were comparable to state and national trends. However, Columbia still remains in the lower half of incomes for the region.

Columbia's commuting patterns highlight the fact that Columbia is a job center, but that residential centers are dispersed throughout the region. 113,298 people work in the City and live outside the City; 28,285 people live in the City and work outside the City; and 20,254 people live and work in the City. The relatively small number of people who both live and work in the City indicate that most people are not living and working in the same community. Only 15% of Columbia's workforce lives in the City, with 85% of Columbia workers living outside the City. Of those who live in the City, the distribution is more balanced but still indicates that most people are not living and working in the same place. Over 40% of Columbia residents work within the City, while about 60% of residents work outside the City.

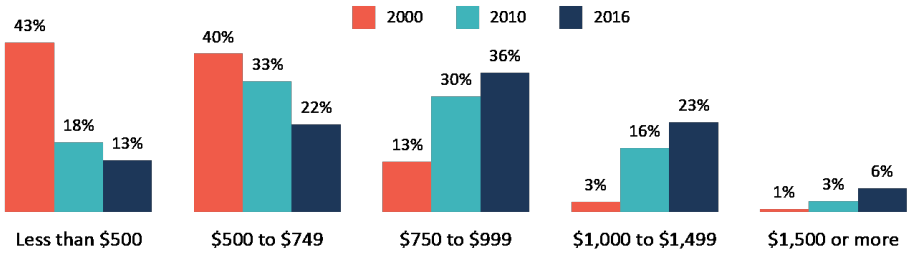


Figure 2. Rent Distribution, Columbia, 2000, 2010, and 2016[2]

Rental prices have increased substantially in Columbia between 2000 and 2016, with median rents rising from about $530 to $850. This trend is consistent with the regional market overall. Figure 2 shows how the price distribution of rentals in Columbia has changed between 2000, 2010, and 2016, with the percentage of rentals below $500 a month decreasing from 43% to 13% in that time period.

Figure 3 shows the spatial distribution of median rental rates within Columbia's central city. Census tracts with median rent over $900 per month include land downtown and directly north and south of downtown. Tracts with median rent between $750-900 per month include land east of downtown, extending to Fort Jackson, and tracts in the northwestern portion of the City. Areas with median rent prices below $750 a month are primarily located in the northern portions of the City and also extend south to I-77.

Existing Conditions

MARKET TRENDS, CONTINUED

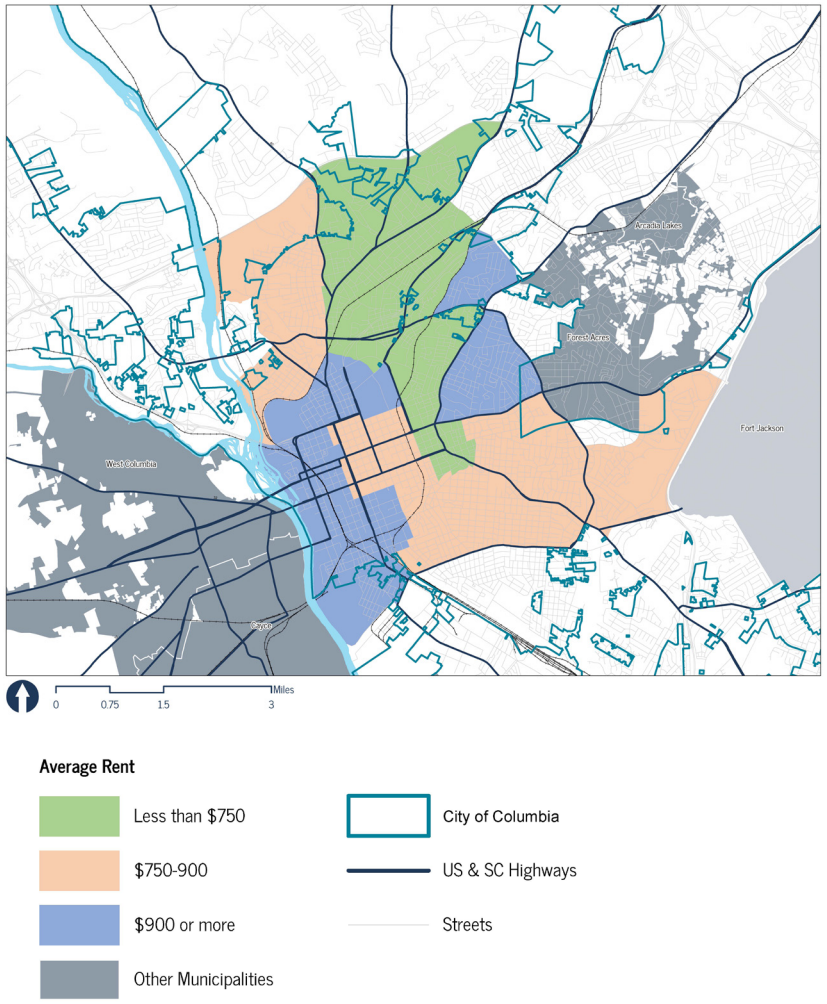


Figure 3. Median Gross Rent within Central City by Census Tract, Columbia, 2016[4]

Self-reported home values in Columbia are higher compared to the MSA. The median home price in the City is $164,000 compared to $143,000 in the MSA. Figure 4 shows the distribution of home values in Columbia and reveals the substantial decline in the proportion of homes valued at less than $100,000, decreasing from 51% in 2000 to 23% in 2016.

Zillow data shows that median home prices in Columbia's for-sale market have risen 32% since the recessionary low in 2012. Columbia's median home price is lower than the state and nation overall, but the price is still high for the City and may pose challenges for potential buyers, especially given the simultaneous increase in interest rates.

2018 housing sales data shows that most of the homes sold were single-family detached homes. The forthcoming addition of over 3,000 single-family homes, primarily in northeast Columbia, suggests a continued growth of suburban single-family homes. Patio homes also appear to be in high demand and only stayed on the market for a few weeks before being sold, which suggests that there is an unmet demand for different unit types.

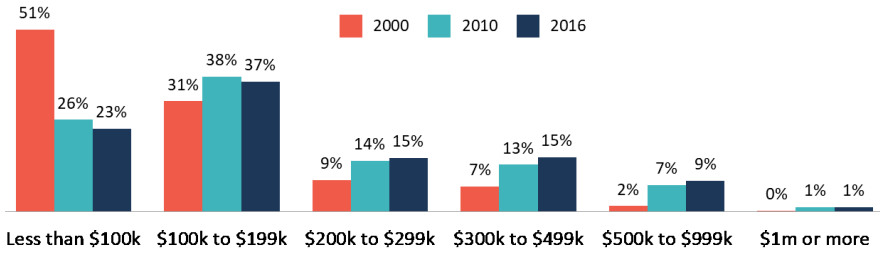


Figure 4. Home Value Distribution, Columbia, 2000, 2010, and 2016[3]

Existing Conditions

MARKET TRENDS, CONTINUED

Between 1999 and 2016, incomes and sale prices rose at comparable rates, as shown in Figure 5. **However, rents rose faster than incomes, which may make it difficult for renters to save for a downpayment.** Self-reported home values rose faster than incomes and home prices, which suggests an increase in equity for current homeowners, but also an increased cost of entry to homeownership. It is also important to note that rent and sales prices shown in Figure 5 do not include additional costs, such as utilities, insurance, and taxes. These are all added costs that get factored into the affordability of a rental unit or home.

	1999	2016	Percent Change	Trend Relative to Income
Median Income	**$31,093**	**$42,875**	**38%**	
Median Rent	$536	$853	59%	↑
Median Sale Price	$93,750	$126,643	35%	=
Median Home Value	$98,500	$164,200	67%	↑

Figure 5. Summary of Market Trends in Columbia, 1999-2016[6]

The City's growth patterns have been influenced by a history of settlement, access to amenities and transportation, and housing lending practices such as redlining. Current patterns of housing values reflect these influences, as shown by the clusters of lower and higher valued neighborhoods across the City in Figure 6.

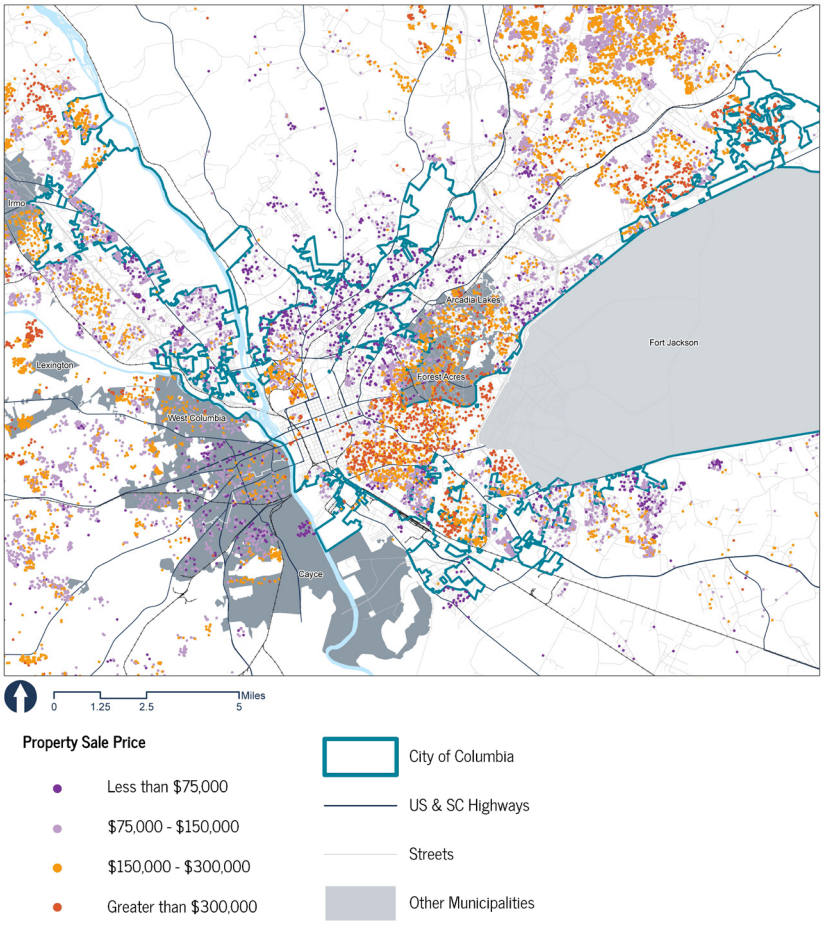


Figure 6. Homes Sold by Price and Location, Columbia, 2017-2018 Q2[5]

Existing Conditions

AFFORDABILITY GAP ANALYSIS

An affordability and gaps analysis was conducted as part of the housing assessment in order to determine how well Columbia's housing market is meeting the needs of residents and how likely the market is to accommodate future demand of residents and workers. The analysis uses data from the 2012-2016 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Multiple Listing Service, and 2015 U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics.

The analysis revealed that there is a mismatch in rental units, particularly for lower income renters earning less than $20,000, which encompasses 36% of all renters. There is a gap of more than 3,200 units for extremely low income households, not including students. There is also a mismatch in rental units for those earning between $50,000-$100,000.

When looking at what workers in the City's top five industries can afford, only one industry (Public Administration) has average wages high enough to afford the City's median rental and sales prices. The average metro worker could afford only 42% of rental units and 21% of homes sold in the City between 2017-2018, indicating a mismatch of prices and incomes.

FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS

With rents and home prices increasing faster than incomes, it is likely that households will be out priced in the future. Figure 7 shows forecasted affordability over the next 10 years using trends from the past 16 years. The model shows that both rental and owner affordability declines over that time period, with rental affordability declining substantially. **The decline in rental affordability will be especially important to plan for, as renters are particularly vulnerable to displacement.**

Owner Affordability Forecasts

Income Range	Max Affordable Home Price	% of Renters			% of Homes Affordable		
		2016	2021	2026	2016	2021	2026
Less than $35,000	$125,900	58%	51%	43%	36%	32%	28%
$35,000 - $50,000	$179,857	16%	16%	15%	30%	31%	30%
$50,000 - $75,000	$269,785	15%	17%	19%	21%	23%	25%
$75,000 +	$269,785 +	12%	16%	22%	13%	15%	17%

Rental Affordability Forecasts

Income Range	Max Affordable Home Price	% of Renters			% of Homes Affordable		
		2016	2021	2026	2016	2021	2026
Less than $20,000	$500	36%	30%	25%	13%	9%	6%
$20,000 - $35,000	$875	22%	21%	19%	40%	30%	21%
$35,000 - $50,000	$1,250	16%	16%	15%	34%	41%	47%
$50,000 +	$1,250 +	26%	33%	41%	13%	19%	25%

Figure 7. Affordability Forecasts, City of Columbia, 2016 to 2026[7]

Existing Conditions

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

In addition to analyzing the existing housing stock, market trends, gaps in affordability, and projections for future housing needs, the City met with various stakeholder groups who provided input on housing issues and solutions in Columbia. Conversations with neighborhood and historic preservation advocates, housing developers and real estate professionals, affordable and transitional housing advocates, colleges, and the Columbia Planning Commission revealed support for the following solutions to address housing and neighborhood issues discussed in the Guiding Principles:

- Expanding affordable housing can be achieved through strong incentives to private housing developers, through discounted public lands made available to affordable housing developers, and through a new community land trust that can produce, own, and manage new affordable residential units.

- Expanding a mix of housing and neighborhood choices in Columbia can be achieved by increasing the variety of housing types available in downtown and surrounding areas, providing a mix of residential units within redeveloping transportation corridors, and designing new multi-unit homes within existing neighborhoods to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

- Protection of cultural and historical characteristics can be supported by incentives to property owners to maintain and improve their older homes, ensuring that development standards require new units constructed within existing neighborhoods are compatible with the surrounding character, and increasing community and property owner awareness on the value of historic assets and protection tools in place in Columbia.

- Enhancement and stabilization of underserved neighborhoods can be supported by providing ongoing planning assistance to vulnerable neighborhoods to identify needed improvements and prioritize investment of these, working with vulnerable neighborhoods to identify the potential for displacement of current residents and seek solutions, and to increase access to homeownership assistance and home maintenance assistance.

- Fostering walkable and vibrant neighborhoods can be supported through designing neighborhoods to include parks, greenways, and public spaces; funding construction of greenways and sidewalks in neighborhoods that desire these facilities; and providing neighborhoods with better access to transit.

These insights, along with inputs provided through community workshops and online surveys and discussions with City leaders and staff support the following housing and neighborhood recommendations.

Recommendations

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

RECOMMENDATION FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendations

COST

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

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

Develop collaborative teams comprised of multiple departments, agencies, and organizations to work collectively to leverage resources and create housing solutions for vulnerable neighborhoods.

Ensuring that Columbia's residents have access to stable, affordable housing will require a collaborative effort among stakeholders that contribute different types of knowledge, resources, and technical support. This collective effort should focus on creating mixed-use housing solutions to better support housing, service, and employment needs of Columbia's vulnerable neighborhoods. These communities may require assistance to prevent or reverse neighborhood decline or to avoid involuntary displacement of residents. The City of Columbia should take a team-based approach by working across City departments and agencies, as well as partnering with non-governmental organizations focused on housing advocacy, to maintain and enhance affordable housing in these neighborhoods.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- Columbia Housing Authority
- Development corporations
- Planning & Development Services
- Regional partners such as Affordable Housing Coalition of South Carolina, Midlands Housing Trust Fund, South Carolina Community Loan Fund, SC State Housing Authority

DURATION

SHORT, ONGOING
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Opportunities for partnerships will be identified and formalized in the short term; relationship building and collaboration will be an ongoing process.

PRIORITY

HIGH
start within 3 years

COST

¢ - $*

THEMES

- **Partner**
- Engagement & Outreach
- Equity & Accessibility

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Population

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identify organizations that have existing relationships with communities in vulnerable neighborhoods in order to better engage with and understand the needs of these communities
- Evaluate areas of overlap with departments and agencies in order to improve internal efficiency and external provision of services
- Evaluate current processes and standards for information-sharing among departments and agencies

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- The effectiveness of new partnerships, as measured by qualitative data, such as a survey of staff members, and quantitative data, which could measure the number of policies, programs, and services that result from new partnerships

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Empower
- Enhance

RECOMMENDATION

Provide ongoing neighborhood assistance to the most vulnerable neighborhoods in need of revitalization and potentially challenged by displacement.

Columbia has a number of older neighborhoods that are in need of reinvestment in order to maintain a high quality housing stock and neighborhood infrastructure. It will be critical to plan with community members in order to support revitalization that strengthens neighborhoods and fosters equitable growth without displacing residents. Ongoing planning assistance will require identifying and monitoring changes in vulnerable neighborhoods and engaging with communities to identify opportunities for investment. Policies and programs to encourage investment should be coupled with anti-displacement measures, such as providing funding for construction of sidewalks and greenways while also improving access to homeownership assistance, considering opportunities for a wider variety of housing types that would include affordable units, and offering heirs property assistance.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- Public Works (primary)
- Columbia Housing Authority
- Development corporations
- Planning Division
- Nonprofits and State and federal agencies working on housing

DURATION

SHORT, ONGOING
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Identification of vulnerable neighborhoods should be completed in the short term, with monitoring and planning assistance provided on an ongoing basis.

PRIORITY

MEDIUM
start within 4-6 years

COST

¢ - $$*

THEMES

- **Equity & Accessibility**
- Partner
- Plan & Implement

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Cultural Resources
- Land Use
- Population

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Track housing market and demographic trends in order to identify neighborhoods where residents might be at risk of displacement, and to monitor trends over time. This data could include home sales, rates of new development, vacancy rates (both vacant buildings and vacant lots), rental prices, median household income, and demographic characteristics such as racial makeup.
- Identify neighborhoods that are declining or threatened by decline. This can be assessed by analyzing metrics such as the number of nuisance complaints and code enforcement issues, the number of building permits being applied for, reported property maintenance issues, and property valuation changes over time in comparison to comparable neighborhoods or the area as a whole.

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Reduction in code enforcement cases and reported property maintenance issues in identified vulnerable neighborhoods
- Increase in property values (measure city-wide and by school attendance zone, in comparison to identified vulnerable neighborhoods)
- Minimal residential displacement at the neighborhood level (as observed by neighborhood associations)

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Empower
- Prosper
- Enhance

RECOMMENDATION

Provide ongoing neighborhood assistance to the most vulnerable neighborhoods in need of revitalization and potentially challenged by displacement.

Case Study 1

Fruitvale Village, Oakland, CA

Fruitvale, a neighborhood in Oakland, CA, is a relatively unique community. Similar to other urban neighborhoods, it has exhibited the signs of gentrification, as housing prices, homeownership rates, median household income, and educational attainment have risen. However, unlike many communities, its residents, who are primarily members of the Latinx community, have not been displaced. While individual resident turnover is difficult to track, a 2018 UCLA study examined neighborhood level trends and found that despite these economic changes, there were minimal changes in the proportion of Latinx residents between 2000-2015.



Fruitvale Village, Oakland, CA. Image by Eric Fredericks, Flickr

Many attribute Fruitvale's revitalization without displacement to the redevelopment of a transit station. The project aimed to revitalize the declining neighborhood by transforming a surface parking lot next to the Fruitvale Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station into a mixed-use, transit-oriented development. The project was developed by the Unity Council, a local community development corporation, who pushed for the provision of new public services to better support the current residents. These services included community services such as schools, senior and youth centers, a public library, a clinic, legal services, and a Head Start program. The development also included 47 housing units, 10 of which are affordable, with more affordable units planned for the next phase of construction. The affordable housing units and community services, as well as the accessible and connected design of the village, have helped the neighborhood population stay together while also spurring the development of new homes and businesses nearby.

Public-private partnerships were crucial to the success of this project, including between the City of Oakland, the local community development corporation, BART, and other city, county, and regional government agencies. The City supported the project by creating an overlay zone that allowed for high density, mixed-use development in the area. These partnerships were also critical for financing. The City obtained federal HUD grants, issued a $19.8 million bond, included Fruitvale in a tax increment financing district, and participated in land swaps with the Unity Council in order to help fund the project.

RECOMMENDATION

Support and incentivize the maintenance of properties in existing neighborhoods.

Maintaining aging properties is essential to preserving Columbia's high quality housing stock and unique character. However, maintenance of older buildings can be expensive, and some property owners struggle to afford payments for improvements to their property. The City should provide support and incentives for homeowners to maintain their properties in order to help combat displacement and neighborhood decline. This could be done through evaluating, expanding, and strengthening current low-income homeowner grant programs to assist with maintenance of properties in vulnerable neighborhoods. Both emergency and preventative home repairs should target on improvements to safety, accessibility, and energy efficiency, in addition to aesthetic repairs.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- CPD - Code Enforcement
- Development corporations
- Planning & Development Services

DURATION

SHORT, ONGOING
1-3 years to complete, recurring

The evaluation of current grant programs will occur in the short term, with updates and expansions implemented within three years.

PRIORITY

HIGH
start within 3 years

COST

¢ - $$
annually

THEMES

- **Built Environment**
- Engagement & Outreach
- Equity & Accessibility

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Cultural Resources
- Population

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identify populations and neighborhoods that may struggle with property maintenance for the purpose of knowing who the target audience is for these resources
- Examine potential funding sources for these programs, including incentives, grants, and more

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Reduction in code enforcement cases and reported property maintenance issues
- Stabilization or increase of property values and/or median household income
- Increase in number of residents taking advantage of low-income homeowner grant programs

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Empower
- Enhance

RECOMMENDATION

Support and incentivize the maintenance of properties in existing neighborhoods.

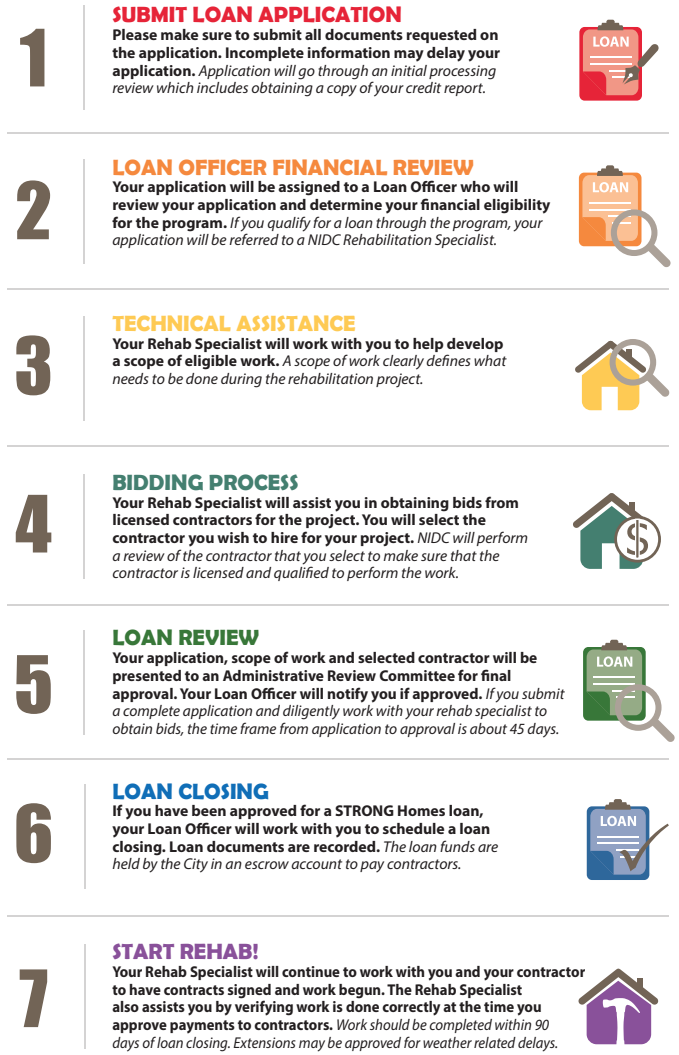
Case Study 2

STRONG Neighborhoods Plan, Milwaukee, WI

Milwaukee's STRONG Neighborhoods Plan is a 2014 initiative to combat tax foreclosures in the City. Funded through allocations in the annual budget, the plan created and supported a number of programs that assist homeowners with maintaining their homes:

STRONG Homes Loan: offers low-interest, deferred, and partially forgivable loans up to $20,000 to owner-occupants for emergency and essential home repairs.
Home Rehabilitation Loan Program: offers forgivable, low-interest, and deferred payment loans to owner-occupants within certain income ranges and who reside within a City Targeted Investment Neighborhood (TIN).
Neighborhood Improvement Project: offers assistance to owner-occupants with home repairs for code violations, maintenance, and mechanical work in the form of a forgivable loan.
Compliance Loan Program: offers 0% interest, deferred payment loans to homeowners for repairs to fix code violations.

The City works with a wide range of partner organizations that provide additional services, such as Revitalize Milwaukee, a nonprofit that provides free essential home repairs to individuals over 60, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. The City of Milwaukee also has other homeowner maintenance assistance programs that focus on improving energy efficiency and managing stormwater.



STRONG Homes Loan Process. Graphic courtesy of the City of Milwaukee

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to proactively examine and revise existing and proposed City standards to better align with elements of complete neighborhoods.

Complete neighborhoods are connected, walkable communities that include a range of housing options and allow all residents to safely and conveniently access employment, services, and goods needed in daily life. The City should support regulations and initiatives that incorporate elements of complete neighborhoods into existing and new developments. Implementation could include encouraging a mix of uses and housing types in new and existing neighborhoods; requiring new neighborhood streets to connect; providing access to public spaces and transit in neighborhoods; and improving neighborhood accessibility for people of all ages and abilities. Promoting complete neighborhoods will require updating and investing in City standards related to engineering, code enforcement, zoning, land development, public works, and forestry,

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Planning & Development Services (primary)
- Community Development
- Development corporations
- Engineering
- Parks & Recreation
- Public Works
- Utility Operations

DURATION

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

Examining and revising the City's standards related to complete neighborhoods will be an ongoing process throughout the next ten years.

PRIORITY

MEDIUM
start within 4-6 years

COST

¢ - $$

THEMES

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

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Cultural Resources
- Land Use
- Transportation

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Evaluate which neighborhoods should be targeted for sidewalk or street crossing expansion and improvements
- Perform a spatial analysis to determine where housing units are greater than a 1/2 mile from the following: transit, employment and commercial centers, grocery stores, healthcare facilities, schools, parks, and emergency facilities
- Inventory existing neighborhood amenities accessible to residences
- Track unit counts of all housing types and distribution of types across the City

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Increase in the number of residential units within a 1/2 mile radius of transit, employment and commercial centers, grocery stores, healthcare facilities, schools, parks, and emergency facilities
- Increase in mileage of the City's sidewalk and bikeway networks
- Increase in the mix of development types and residential development within targeted neighborhoods

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

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

RECOMMENDATION

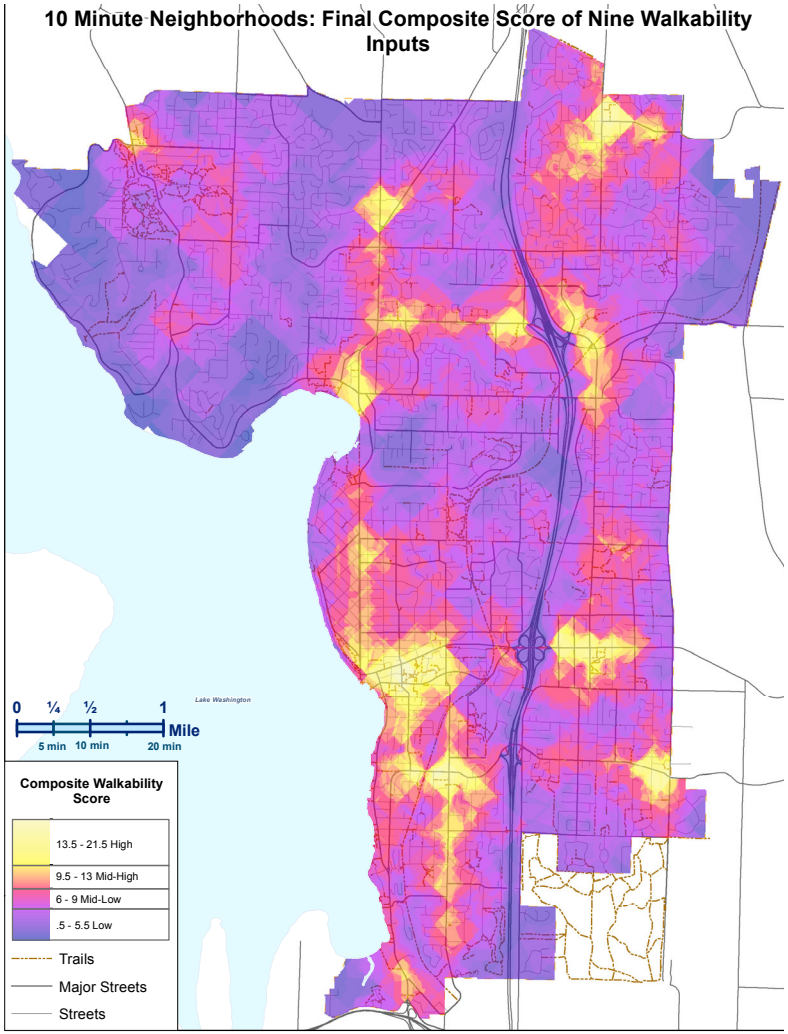
Continue to proactively examine and revise existing and proposed City standards to better align with elements of complete neighborhoods.

Case Study 3

10 Minute Neighborhood, Kirkland, WA

As a part of an update to their comprehensive plan in 2015, the City of Kirkland completed a 10 Minute Neighborhood Analysis as a tool for measuring walkability. 10 Minute Neighborhoods are communities where residents are able to walk a short distance — 1/2 a mile, or about ten minutes — to access destinations that meet their daily needs. Two key concepts serve as the foundation for Kirkland's definition of a walkable community. The first is destinations, meaning the community has places to walk to, which could include places that meet commercial, recreational, or transportation needs. The second is accessibility, meaning residents are able to conveniently access these destinations, not only by walking, but also by biking or by wheelchair.

The 10 Minute Neighborhood Analysis borrowed from the City of Portland's methodology for measuring complete neighborhoods. Using GIS mapping software, the analysis mapped grocery stores, a variety of commercial types, parks, schools, bus stops, intersections, sidewalks, and trails. They then used a scoring system to calculate cumulative scores and create the heat map shown on the right. This analysis is an important initial step in promoting complete neighborhoods because it allows the City of Kirkland to identify gaps in infrastructure or amenities, prioritize future investments, and model future walkability under different land use scenarios.



Heat map showing neighborhoods in the City of Kirkland that are the most walkable and neighborhoods where walking to meet daily needs would be a challenge. Graphic courtesy of the City of Kirkland

RECOMMENDATION

Establish incentives to encourage developers to construct affordable housing units.

The City of Columbia is facing a shortage of affordable housing for both renters and homeowners. Private sector developers can be key actors in the provision of affordable housing; however this often requires intentional partnerships, policies, or regulations. In order to encourage the private sector to provide more affordable housing, the City should establish a points system or similar tool that would offer incentives for developers to construct affordable housing units. Incentives could include benefits such as density bonus provisions and regulatory waivers, as well as an expansion of the tax abatement program. Development projects would earn points, and thus incentives, based on predetermined standards for affordability. This points system should be aligned with the City's locational criteria for affordable housing, which is discussed in a following recommendation regarding locational standards. Any City incentive program should require developers to provide affordable units whenever residential or mixed-use construction is involved.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- Planning & Development Services (primary)
- Development corporations

DURATION

SHORT, ONGOING
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Incentives should be identified and implemented in the short term. Monitoring and evaluation of these incentive strategies should occur on an ongoing basis.

PRIORITY

HIGH
start within 3 years

COST

¢ - $

THEMES

- **Equity & Accessibility**
- Built Environment
- Plan & Implement

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Population

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Track unit counts for all residential units and distribution of types across the City, including affordable units
- Conduct a local market-based study that identifies thresholds for triggering a developer to use incentives
- Identify city-owned land that could be sold or used by the City for the development of affordable housing

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Increase in the number of affordable units available
- Decrease the gaps in affordable price points available in the rental and for sale markets
- Lower number of cost-burdened households, as tracked by the Census
- Reduced or stabilized median housing rent and for sale prices

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Prosper
- Enhance

RECOMMENDATION

Establish incentives to encourage developers to construct affordable housing units.

Case Study 4

Land Use Incentive Grant Program, Asheville, NC

Asheville utilizes a variety of strategies to incentivize developers to provide affordable housing. One of these policies is the Land Use Incentive Grant (LUIG), which provides grants to development projects that fulfill important public purposes. The City of Asheville's definition of important public purposes includes the development of affordable and workforce housing. While North Carolina laws prevent the City from offering tax rebates, the grant amounts are equivalent to annual City property taxes, with the actual grant amount determination guided by a points system.

Projects are reviewed and approved by the City Council through a discretionary process. To be considered for a grant, developments must meet the following requirements:

- Consist of three or more dwelling units for rent
- Include at least 10% of units that meet City affordability standards
- Remain affordable for at least 20 years (reported annually to City)
- Be located within city limits
- Be in a location that provides residents with convenient access to jobs, schools, and services

Projects receive more points for including a higher percentage of affordable or workforce units, being located closer to a transit stop with frequent service, extending long-term affordability, and proposing brownfield redevelopment.



A key component of the Land Use Incentive Grant is that affordable housing is developed in locations that make it easy for residents to access jobs and community services, which is why developers can earn an additional 20 points by locating projects downtown. Image iStock.com/Kruck20

RECOMMENDATION

Incentivize development of multi-unit housing along redeveloping corridors and within downtown.

Columbia contains a mix of housing types, but most homes within the City are single-family detached structures. It is important for a city to offer a range of housing options that can support people's diverse preferences and needs. Multi-unit housing can provide housing choices that are more affordable, have a smaller footprint per unit, and offer convenient access to goods and services. To support increased housing choice, the City should encourage the development of multi-unit housing along redeveloping corridors and within downtown. Incentives could be built into the points system that was suggested in the previous recommendation regarding the creation of incentives, or the City could offer separate incentives, such as density bonuses and regulatory waivers for providing a variety of unit types within a development.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- Planning & Development Services (primary)
- Development corporations

DURATION

SHORT, ONGOING
1-3 years to complete, recurring

Incentives should be identified and implemented in the short term, with monitoring and evaluation occurring on an ongoing basis.

PRIORITY

HIGH
start within 3 years

COST

¢ - $

THEMES

- **Built Environment**
- Equity & Accessibility

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Land Use
- Population
- Transportation

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identify vacant and redevelopable land that could be suitable for affordable multi-unit housing
- Identify City-owned land that could be used for multi-unit housing

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Increase in percentage of multi-unit housing within downtown and along redeveloping corridors
- Increase in the number of units created within downtown and along redeveloping corridors

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Connect
- Prosper
- Enhance

RECOMMENDATION

Update the City's policy for affordable housing locational standards to align with community goals and comply with federal guidelines.

The City of Columbia has locational criteria that establishes where new affordable housing can be located. This policy stemmed from concerns that affordable housing might become concentrated in certain neighborhoods, but it has raised questions about potential unintended consequences and compliance with federal guidelines. To better support affordable housing, the City should update the policy to allow for more flexible locational criteria. The criteria should be amended to incorporate factors that address access to opportunity, as defined by HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule, and any established policies of the South Carolina State Housing Authority. These geographic designations should be examined and updated annually through an administrative process in order to keep up with changing trends. Additionally, the City should ensure that locational criteria are aligned with the points system referenced in a previous recommendation regarding the creation of incentives for affordable housing, as well as other affordable housing policies.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- Planning & Development Services
- Development corporations

DURATION

SHORT, ONGOING
1-3 years to complete, recurring

The policy should be updated in the short term and reviewed on an annual basis.

PRIORITY

HIGH
start within 3 years

COST

¢ - $

THEMES

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

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Land Use
- Population

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Analyze possible impacts of proposed policy updates on protected class populations identified in the U.S. Fair Housing Act
- Identify the zoning regulations in areas currently eligible for affordable development to determine the use types permitted that could support affordable housing

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Updates are made to the current policy
- Increased development of affordable units throughout the City
- Increased development of affordable units in areas of opportunity (based on the HUD Opportunity maps)
- The updated policy should be continually examined to ensure alignment with City goals as well as state and federal policies and goals

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Empower
- Prosper
- Enhance
- Lead

RECOMMENDATION

Leverage public land and funding to develop affordable housing.

The City of Columbia should leverage its resources in order to develop affordable rental and for sale housing. Raising local public funds to develop affordable housing is an effective approach that can be used to complement regulatory and incentive-based strategies and other funding sources. Public-private partnerships will also be key to meeting the City's affordable housing needs. In particular, the City can work with developers to provide discounted public lands for the construction of affordable housing and require the inclusion of affordable housing when public land or incentives are involved. The City should also consider acquiring additional public land as part of a long-term strategy for affordable housing provision.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- City Council
- City Manager
- Columbia Housing Authority
- Development corporations
- Grants Division
- Planning & Development Services
- Real Estate

DURATION

LONG
7-10+ years to complete

The City should begin identifying possible funding streams, as well as land to be acquired or redeveloped, in the short term so that these resources can be leveraged in the long term.

PRIORITY

HIGH
start within 3 years

COST

$$ - $$$$

THEMES

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

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Land Use
- Population

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identify publicly-owned land that is suitable for housing development (considering topography, hazard risk, etc) and accessible to transit, services, and amenities
- Identify lands to strategically acquire
- Identify public-private partnership opportunities

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Increase in the number of affordable units available to meet demand
- Decrease the gaps in affordable price points available in the rental and for sale markets
- Lower number of cost-burdened households, as tracked by the Census
- Reduction or stabilization in median housing rent and for sale prices
- Increase in the acquisition and development of public land for affordable housing

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Prosper
- Enhance

RECOMMENDATION

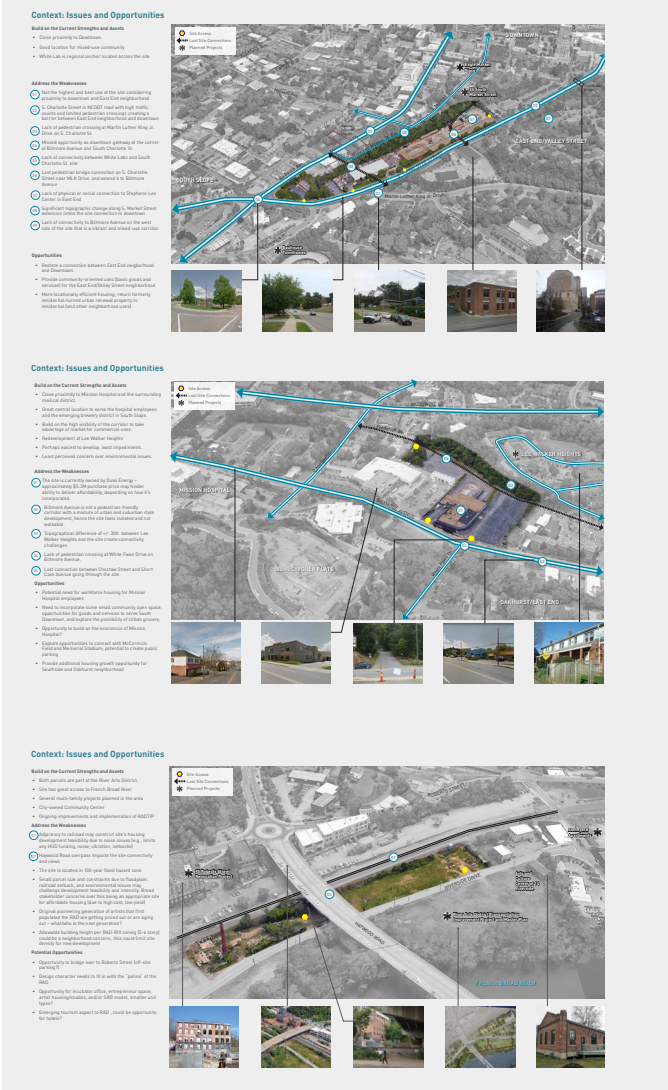
Leverage public land and funding to develop affordable housing.

Case Study 5

Redevelopment of City-Owned Land, Asheville, NC

In November 2016, Asheville residents voted for a $25 million affordable housing bond to support priorities and strategies centered around affordable housing. The general obligation bond allocated $25 million to affordable housing over seven years, with $15 million of the bond dedicated to the repurposing of underutilized, locationally efficient City properties for affordable housing. The City developed guiding principles for redeveloping City-owned land, which focus on respect for the surrounding community, high design and construction standards, density along transit corridors, environmental sustainability, inclusive housing, walkability, and a high return on investment.

The City of Asheville is considering a number of City-owned properties for the development of affordable housing, through public-private partnerships with developers. Three “high impact sites” were identified based on their potential for a high return on investment. The City then contracted with a design firm to perform a due diligence study for the three sites in order to determine the feasibility of successfully developing affordable housing on each of the sites. The study involved community engagement and analysis of design, land use, engineering, and financial scenarios. While these sites have not yet been developed, the findings from the study suggest the redevelopment of these sites to be a promising strategy for creating more affordable housing in Asheville.



Site assessments of High Impact Sites. Image courtesy of City of Asheville

RECOMMENDATION

Work with regional partners to establish a regional housing land trust that can manage affordable units.

Affordable housing is a long-term problem that requires long-term solutions. Housing land trusts, also known as community land trusts, are nonprofit organizations that effectively create permanent affordable housing options for low-income individuals and families by separating land ownership and homeownership. Housing land trusts retain rights to the land but allow homeowners to purchase the home through a long-term renewable ground lease (typically 99 years) so that the housing land trust can ensure continued affordability. Working with regional partners to establish a regional housing land trust is recommended as housing affordability issues do not stop at the City's borders. A regional model also allows the City to collaborate with neighbors and partners also working on housing. The City of Columbia can adopt a policy in support of collaboration to create a regional housing land trust, facilitate creation of the land trust with partners, and measure progress after implementation.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- Development corporations (primary)
- Planning Division
- Columbia Housing Authority
- Regional non-profits and other local government departments working on housing

DURATION

LONG
7-10+ years to complete

The establishment of a regional housing land trust should be a long term goal for the City.

PRIORITY

LOW
start within 7-10 years

COST

¢ - $$$
annually

THEMES

- **Equity & Accessibility**
- Built Environment

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Land Use
- Population

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Examine details of neighboring jurisdictions' affordable housing programs to evaluate opportunities for partnerships
- Identify land that could be acquired by the housing land trust
- Determine the appropriate criteria to qualify as a housing land trust homeowner (i.e., percentage of AMI)

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Increase in the City's affordable housing stock at the citywide level
- Decrease the gaps in affordable price points available in the rental and for sale markets
- Lower number of cost-burdened households

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Plan
- Prosper
- Enhance

RECOMMENDATION

Work with regional partners to establish a regional housing land trust that can manage affordable units.

Case Study 6

Community Home Trust, Orange County, NC

The Community Home Trust is a nonprofit organization located in Orange County, NC that works to create and maintain permanently affordable housing options for the community. Their goal is to target homeowners such as nurses, university employees, and teachers, who work in the community but would not be able to afford a market rate home in the area. The Community Home Trust specifically serves households that earn less than 60% of the area median income.

The trust is able to ensure permanent affordability by retaining the title to its properties and conveying ownership using a renewable 99-year ground lease, which helps to prevent home values from rising due to increasing property values. At the same time, homes earn limited appreciation each year, which preserves affordability while still allowing the current homeowners to build equity.

The trust currently oversees over 300 homes throughout Orange County. Some of the homes are located in developments that were entirely acquired by the trust, and other homes were built by private developers who are required to provide a certain percentage of affordable housing in order to meet local inclusionary housing standards. The trust is funded through a mix of local government grants, private contributions, earned income, and other sources.



Community Home Trust offers a variety of housing types, including single-family homes, town homes, and condos. Image courtesy of Community Home Trust

RECOMMENDATION

Work with regional partners to establish a regional housing land trust that can manage affordable units.

Case Study 7

The Guadalupe Home Ownership Program, Austin, TX

The Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation (GNDC) is an important affordable housing provider for East Austin. The neighborhood of East Austin has traditionally served low to moderate income minority populations, following the City's 1928 Master Plan which institutionalized racial segregation by recommending moving residents of color to east of East Avenue (now I-35). However, as residential areas near city centers have become more desirable, East Austin's minority population has decreased and the home prices have increased, making it difficult for long-time residents to stay in their homes.

GNDC offers both rental and homeownership opportunities for low to moderate income households. In 2012, GNDC developed the first community land trust home in the state of Texas. GNDC prioritizes current tenants and those with ties to the East Austin area, with the goal of preventing displacement of long-time residents. In addition to individual community land trust homes, GNDC is in the process of developing a subdivision that will contain 90 sustainably designed affordable housing units, including single-family, duplex, and townhouse units. 58 of these units will be designated for homeownership as community land trust homes.

A key factor that helped GNDC to establish their community land trust program was a 2011 state law that increased the affordability of land trust properties by making them tax-free. GNDC has also been strategically acquiring land since the 1980s, which allowed them to buy property before prices skyrocketed. Additionally, GNDC has been able to use funds from a City of Austin affordable housing bond in order to acquire more land.

While GNDC is not a regional housing land trust, it demonstrates how an established, local organization can operate a housing land trust. This case has the potential to serve as a model for how the City of Columbia could launch a housing land trust program, with the long-term goal of establishing a regional housing land trust.



GNDC community land trust homeownership unit. Image courtesy of GNDC

RECOMMENDATION

Continue to partner with organizations and agencies that provide transitional housing services.

The City of Columbia has a number of established partnerships with organizations that provide transitional housing services for individuals in need of temporary housing, which could include persons challenged by homelessness, recovering from addiction, returning from incarceration, and recovering from natural disasters. Transitional housing not only provides critical housing and shelter for individuals in need, it can also reduce the potential for homelessness. However, demand for these services continues to exceed the resources available. The City should continue to partner with local organizations that work to provide transitional housing services, as well as consider expanding upon and creating new partnerships, in order to maintain and enhance support for Columbia's population in need of transitional housing.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Community Development (primary)
- Columbia Housing Authority
- Local and regional nonprofits and agencies that help provide transitional housing services
- SC Department of Mental Health

DURATION

MEDIUM, ONGOING
4-6 years to complete, recurring

The City should evaluate and consider expanding partnerships in the short term. Collaboration should be ongoing.

PRIORITY

HIGH
start within 3 years

COST

¢ - $$$*

THEMES

- **Partner**
- Equity & Accessibility

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Community Facilities
- Population

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Track the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in order to assess transitional housing needs
- Identify additional populations in need of transitional housing services in order to understand who the target audience is for these services
- Identify current agreements and funding provided to organizations and programs that provide transitional housing services

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Transitional housing services meet local demand for transitional housing needs
- Reductions of people suffering from homelessness
- Increase in funding, advertisement, and/or volunteering with homeless/transition services

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Attract & Retain
- Empower
- Plan
- Prosper

RECOMMENDATION

Provide equitable development processes for establishing residential care uses that provide necessary services but may spark opposition.

Securing stable housing is particularly challenging for individuals with special housing needs, which may include persons experiencing homelessness, recovering from addiction, returning from incarceration, and recovering from natural disasters. Transitional and emergency housing provide essential services for these populations. These housing types often face development obstacles due to procedural hurdles or neighborhood opposition. The City should support the development of transitional and emergency housing throughout the City by amending the Zoning Ordinance to clearly define the uses, permissions, and standards for housing types that would serve the needs of these populations. The City should also consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance that would permit residential care facilities by right in appropriate districts, with applicable standards.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

- Zoning Division (primary)

DURATION

SHORT
1-3 years to complete

City processes will be evaluated and amended in the short term and revisited annually.

PRIORITY

HIGH
start within 3 years

COST

¢ - $*

THEMES

- **Equity & Accessibility**
- Built Environment

OTHER ELEMENTS

- Community Facilities
- Land Use
- Population

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

- Identify location of current emergency and transitional housing units
- Identify number of Columbia residents who are in need of transitional or emergency housing services, including those experiencing homelessness, recovering from addiction, returning from incarceration, and recovering from natural disasters

MEASURING SUCCESS

The following key metrics can be used to measure success:

- Supply of emergency and transitional housing units meets local demand

CONNECTION WITH ENVISION COLUMBIA

- Plan
- Prosper
- Lead

Endnotes

1 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
2 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
4 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates and Clarion Associates
3 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
5 Multiple Listing Service and Clarion Associates
6 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, Multiple Listing Service, and BBC Research & Consulting
7 BBC Research & Consulting

Exhibit 2

Community Revitalization Plan – Introduction Portion



Columbia
COMPASS

Envision 2036



We Are Columbia

CITY OF COLUMBIA

Comprehensive Plan
Envision 2036

Adopted
August 4, 2020, Ordinance 2020-028

Cover photo iStock.com/Zheka-Boss
Photo to left iStock.com/Kruck20

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City Council (2018-2020)

Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin
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With special thanks to:

City of Columbia staff, as well as our counterparts throughout the Midlands. We are grateful for their support and willingness to share their time and expertise throughout this planning process.

We are also grateful to the many State of South Carolina employees and University of South Carolina faculty members who have generously provided their time and knowledge, as well as helped to compile the data that informed this planning effort.

Also deserving of our thanks are our many stakeholders and advocates who have not only stayed engaged but also acted as a resource during this planning process - their passion for Columbia inspires us all in our vision for the future.

Letter From The Mayor

Greetings!

As Mayor of this great city, I am honored to be part of guiding Columbia towards our 250th anniversary in 2036. Planning for our future is a critical part of what I and my fellow councilmen and councilwomen work on as your elected officials. In many ways, it is our shared passion for planning that brings us to public service. That being said, long-range planning is not just for Council and City staff - we hope that you, too, continue to be engaged in this critical collaborative effort.

Columbia is a City built on planning - as one of the first planned cities in the United States, our very purpose grew out of a planning effort, and we continue to honor this tradition with *Columbia Compass: Envision 2036*. In my time as Mayor, we have adopted critical updates to the City's comprehensive plan, including the adoption of the *Walk Bike Columbia Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan*, and the *Plan Columbia Land Use Plan*. As a City, in recent years we also have thought more about how we envision public space - partnering on a *Public Space Public Life Action Plan* for the



City's core, and taking up demonstration projects such as Park(ing) Day, Do Good Columbia, EnjoySC, and Open Streets Columbia.

This planning process has helped us all better understand the city we love, and the analysis of our needs and your critical input has led to developing actionable steps as we look towards Columbia's future. As a City, the tasks it lays at our feet are neither small nor to be taken lightly. While most of the recommendations set forth herein may require the involvement of City staff, most also identify the public partnerships essential to their implementation. We have come together as a City to develop a vision and a plan for the next ten years, and our continued collaboration will be critical to Columbia's success. I look forward to seeing all Columbia can accomplish in the years to come.

Always remember that together, we're growing a great city for all people.

Sincerely,



Mayor Steve Benjamin
City of Columbia, South Carolina

Table Of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary 9
Planning in Columbia - A Brief History 14
Envision Columbia 17
Engaging the Public 22
What We Heard 23
Navigating the Plan 24
Taking a Thematic View 28

1. POPULATION

Introduction 34
Guiding Principles 35
Timeline 38
Where We Came From 45
Who We Are 53
Where We're Going 83

2. NATURAL RESOURCES

Introduction 93
Guiding Principles 94
Existing Conditions 99
Anticipating Change 111
Recommendations 115
Case Study 1 118
Case Study 2 119
Case Study 3 121
Case Study 4 122
Case Study 5 123
Case Study 6 127
Case Study 7 128
Case Study 8 133
Case Study 9 138
Case Study 10 139
Case Study 11 141
Case Study 12 142
Case Study 13 144
Case Study 14 145
Case Study 15 148

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction 155
Guiding Principles 156
Existing Conditions 159
Recommendations 169
Case Study 1 172
Case Study 2 173
Case Study 3 175
Case Study 4 176
Case Study 5 178
Case Study 6 179
Case Study 7 181
Case Study 8 183
Case Study 9 185
Case Study 10 187
Case Study 11 189
Case Study 12 191
Case Study 13 194
Case Study 14 195
Case Study 15 197
Case Study 16 198
Case Study 17 200
Case Study 18 203
Case Study 19 204
Case Study 20 206
Case Study 21 208
Case Study 22 210
Case Study 23 211
Case Study 24 213

4. HOUSING

Introduction 218
Guiding Principles 219
Existing Conditions 222
Recommendations 228
Case Study 1 232
Case Study 2 234

Case Study 3 236
Case Study 4 238
Case Study 5 242
Case Study 6 244
Case Study 7 245

5. TRANSPORTATION

Introduction 251
Guiding Principles 253
Existing Conditions 256
Walk Bike Columbia 261
Transportation Maps 266
Street Design Priority Matrix 304
Other Route Maps 307
Recommendations 309
Case Study 1 315
Case Study 2 320
Case Study 3 322
Case Study 4 324
Case Study 5 328
Case Study 6 333
Case Study 7 335

6. LAND USE

Introduction 349
Guiding Principles 351
Existing Conditions 355
Critical Components 358
Adaptive Reuse, Infill, Redevelopment, & Greenfield Development 360
Connections & Design 364
Development Types 374
Development Types/Building Types Matrix 444
Building Types/Land Uses 453
Area & Neighborhood Plans 468
Recommendations 471
Case Study 1 477
Case Study 2 479
Case Study 3 480
Case Study 4 481
Case Study 5 483

7. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Introduction 489
Guiding Principles 490
Existing Conditions 494
Urban Service Area Plan 516
Recommendations 534
Case Study 1 538
Case Study 2 539
Case Study 3 541
Case Study 4 542
Case Study 5 545
Case Study 6 548
Case Study 7 555
Case Study 8 558
Case Study 9 564
Case Study 10 566
Case Study 11 567
Case Study 12 569
Case Study 13 571
Case Study 14 574
Case Study 15 575
Case Study 16 578
Case Study 17 582
Case Study 18 584
Case Study 19 585
Case Study 20 587

8. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction 593
Guiding Principles 594
Existing Conditions 598
Recommendations 604
Case Study 1 610
Case Study 2 612
Case Study 3 614
Case Study 4 615
Case Study 5 617
Case Study 6 618
Case Study 7 620
Case Study 8 621
Case Study 9 623
Case Study 10 625
Case Study 11 626
Case Study 12 628

Case Study 13 629
Case Study 14 632
Case Study 15 633
Case Study 16 635
Case Study 17 636
Case Study 18 637
Case Study 19 639
Case Study 20 641
Case Study 21 643
Case Study 22 646
Case Study 23 648

9. PRIORITY INVESTMENT

Introduction 652
Recommendations 653
High Priority Recommendations 656
Medium Priority Recommendations 679
Low Priority Recommendations 689
Priority Transportation Projects 694
Conclusion 698

GLOSSARY **700**

INDEX **711**

APPENDIX A **A-1**
Population

APPENDIX B **B-35**
Natural Resources

APPENDIX C **C-71**
Economic Development

APPENDIX D **D-99**
Housing

APPENDIX E **E-148**
Transportation

APPENDIX F **F-196**
Land Use

APPENDIX G **G-228**
Community Facilities

APPENDIX H **H-331**
Cultural Resources

APPENDIX I **I-396**
Fall 2018 Survey

APPENDIX J **J-763**
Spring 2019 Survey

APPENDIX K **K-832**
Public Open House Input - February 2019

APPENDIX L **L-852**
Public Engagement

APPENDIX M **M-868**
Walk Bike Columbia



Executive Summary

About Columbia Compass

Columbia Compass is the comprehensive plan - or "blueprint" - for how Columbia, South Carolina will grow and develop over the next ten years. The Columbia Compass planning process provided citizens with the opportunity to help shape the vision and recommendations that will guide decision-making in the City for years to come.

Regular comprehensive planning represents good stewardship and establishes a foundation for well-supported policies to create the best possible future. A comprehensive plan is a long-term guide that expresses the values and aspirations of a community. It is the broadest public policy document a community can create, and it establishes a long range vision for a community.

A comprehensive plan is also a tool to prepare for change and acts both as a business plan and a guidebook for decision makers. The plan is not a regulatory document, but it serves as a foundation for City budgeting, zoning and land development regulations, capital improvements, development decisions, and more.

Cover photo iStock.com/Kruck20

What's in a name?

The name Columbia Compass helps remind us both of the tools that surveyors used to lay out the original grid of Columbia and how the comprehensive plan will help us navigate our future. While Columbia Compass is a ten year plan as determined by the SC Code of Laws, we believe that our vision for Columbia in 2036 (and on its 250th anniversary) is important, and the goals we set and the changes we plan for over the next ten years will be integral in making that vision a reality.



Our Vision

Columbia Compass builds upon the vision set forth by City Council in Envision Columbia. In the document that follows, analyses and recommendations have been related back to the seven focus areas set forth by Council in Envision Columbia. The goal of Columbia Compass is to define concrete, implementable strategies that can work to bring the Envision Columbia vision to life.

Executive Summary

Plan Elements

The SC Code of Laws requires that comprehensive plans address all of the elements shown to the right. This plan is organized accordingly, with a chapter for each element. However, as the name implies, the elements of a comprehensive plan are interwoven with one another, and together they tell us the story of Columbia's future.

Project Timeline

The planning process for Columbia Compass can be broken into three key phases. The project team began with initial research and focus group meetings in 2018, hosting public meetings and an online interactive survey in Fall 2018 to better understand the goals and desires of Columbians. Once this initial analysis was complete, the team returned to the public through meetings and a second survey in early 2019, asking citizens and City staff to provide critical feedback on potential priorities for implementation. This iterative process allowed the project team to develop a robust draft plan document during the final phase, built upon citizen feedback and in-depth case study research of implementation successes elsewhere.



POPULATION

A study of historic trends and population projections helps us better understand our community and plan for the provision of services for all.



NATURAL RESOURCES

In identifying our natural resources, we can better understand how to conserve, protect, or improve upon them in the years to come.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

How do we encourage a diverse, resilient, and vibrant economy which attracts employers **and** employees?



HOUSING

What does our housing market look like, and where are there gaps? This element considers different sizes and types of rental and owned-housing and how they are interwoven into the fabric of Columbia.



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is about mobility and accessibility for all – not just cars, but pedestrians, bikes, transit, freight, and passenger rail.



LAND USE

How we look at density, scale, and context – what types of uses are appropriate, and where?



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

We all rely on community facilities, from utilities and emergency services to parks and educational facilities – how we plan for these services over the next 10 years is vital to the heartbeat of Columbia.



CULTURAL RESOURCES

Columbia is a city steeped in culture, from historic structures and fine arts to engaged artists and arts educators. The Amplify Columbia planning process helps define this element.



PRIORITY INVESTMENT

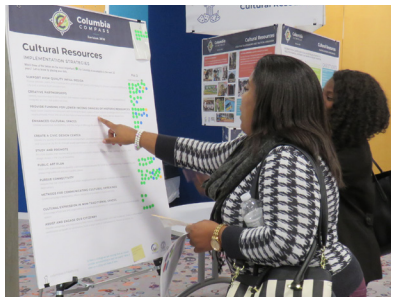
A guide to how we can move forward and bring our shared vision for the City to life. In a broad sense, this element represents the City's 10-year to-do list.

Executive Summary

Public Engagement

A critical component of the Columbia Compass planning process was developing opportunities to engage with the public. By providing opportunities for discussion and feedback, the planning team was better able to understand community desires and concerns, and to distill these in order to first develop and later test a shared vision for Columbia.

The project team developed a broad engagement strategy that included in-person public and neighborhood meetings, interactive online surveys, lunch and learn events, newsletters and email updates, social media outreach, and more. As a result of this strategic approach, we estimate that during the first two phases of the planning process, staff had **over 5,500 points of engagement**.



February 2019 public open house

What We Heard

The wealth of feedback the project team received is summarized throughout the plan, and this feedback was essential to charting the course for our future through the development of implementation strategies, or recommendations.

VALUES

Throughout the process, citizens noted how much they valued their neighborhoods, the City's cultural offerings, opportunities for engagement, the City's historic and cultural assets, and walkability. These values informed not only their vision for Columbia, but also their priorities for plan implementation.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

In order to address our future, we must learn from the lessons our past has to offer. During the planning process members of the public were open and honest with their feedback, both positive and negative. Columbians routinely noted that they felt that as a City, we:

- do not prioritize,
- do not complete the projects we start,
- are disconnected from one another through physical and social barriers,
- do not act in a way that leverages our resources, and
- have looming infrastructure needs - related to maintenance, modernization, and implementation.



During the first survey, Columbians were asked to describe what they wanted Columbia to be. The most frequent words indicated in response are depicted above.

Executive Summary

Identifying Themes

A number of themes were identified during the planning process as a result of public input, research, and analysis. While the chapters of Columbia Compass are organized by element, it is important to note that these themes run through the plan as a whole, interweaving elements and influencing recommendations. The themes of Columbia Compass are organized into broad themes and topical themes.

Throughout the planning process several broad themes emerged which spoke to not only desires for Columbia and Columbians, but also the underlying needs of the community. These themes of Equity & Accessibility, Safety, Public Health, and Resiliency relate back to the community's overall vision for Columbia.

Topical themes are more nuanced, and tend to be complementary to one another. The relationship of these themes to plan recommendations is identified to help the reader understand the broader impacts of plan implementation.

Topical Themes

- Data
- Partner
- Lead By Example
- Plan & Implement
- Equity & Accessibility
- Engagement & Outreach
- Safety
- Built Environment
- Conserve & Preserve
- Innovation & Technology

Recommendations

Specific recommendations for priorities and actions for the coming years are made in the chapters that follow, and are summarized in the priority investment chapter. Recommendations are the heart of the document, and they are built upon the foundation of the data and public input collected. The recommendations of Columbia Compass are organized to provide information about the critical path forward, and, where necessary, to provide case studies of similar implementation successes in other communities.

The Next 10 Years

The real work of Columbia Compass: Envision 2036 is in the next ten years. Learning from our past, we can strategically focus on bringing our shared vision to life by using this document as a tool and as a guide for action. The course that the City and community partners choose for the next ten years should not only reflect but also build upon this shared vision. Through regular reporting on the plan outcomes, we will be celebrating our successes and learning from our failures in the years to come. This will help us adhere to our priorities as well as recognize where these priorities may need to be modified.

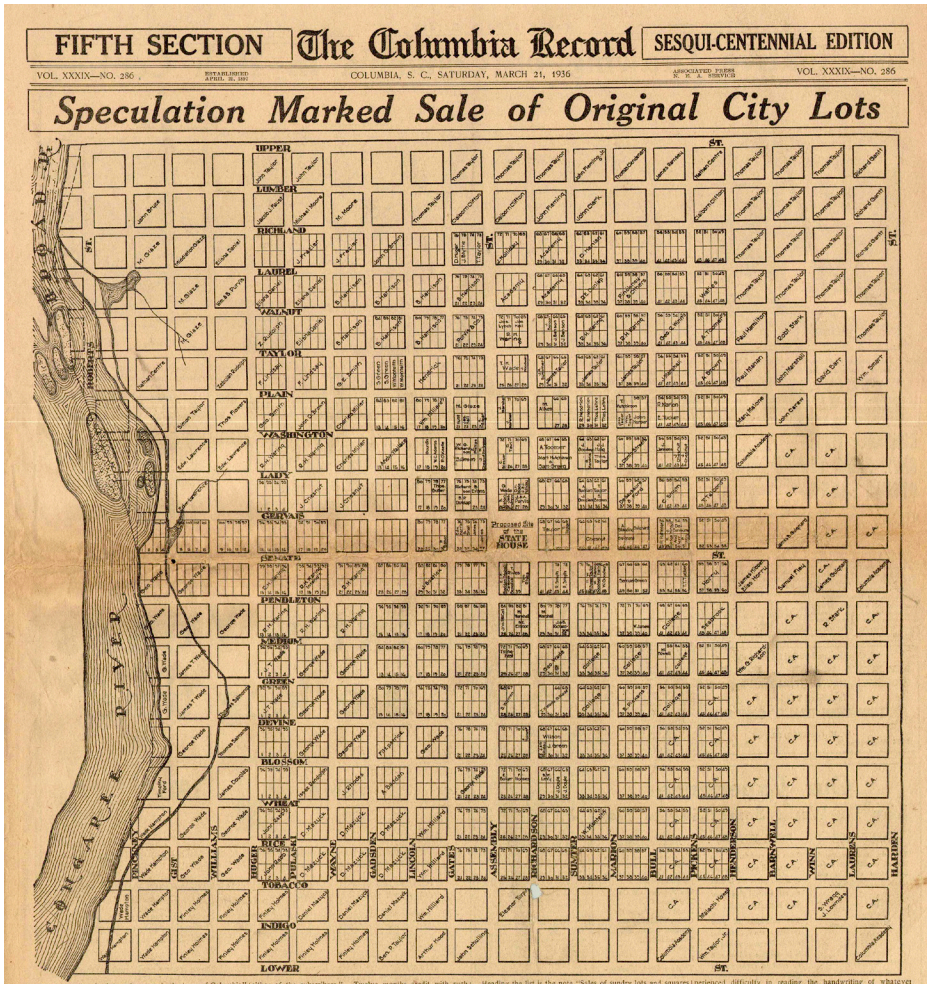


Planning in Columbia - A Brief History

Starting from Scratch

The first major planning effort for Columbia was the creation of Columbia itself. In March of 1786, a bill was approved by the legislature to create a new, centrally-located state capital. With the recent conclusion of the Revolutionary War in 1783 by the Treaty of Paris, this made Columbia one of the first planned cities in the new United States of America.

A commission was established, and set forth a design of a two-mile square city on the banks of the Congaree River with 400 blocks. These blocks were divided into half-acre lots and sold to speculators and prospective residents in September and November of 1786, with a block reserved for the State House at the center. Perimeter streets (Harden Street, Upper - now Elmwood Street, Lower - now Heyward Street, and Roberts - two blocks West of Gist, this street no longer exists) and two through streets (Assembly and Senate streets) were designed with 150-foot rights-of-way; the remaining streets were designed with 100-foot rights-of-way. These rights-of-ways were exceptionally wide for their time, due to the belief that the mosquito could not fly more than 60 feet without dying of starvation along the way.[1] Early property purchasers included the University of South Carolina (then South Carolina College) in 1801.


FIFTH SECTION The Columbia Record SESQUI-CENTENNIAL EDITION

VOL. XXXIX—NO. 286 COLUMBIA, S. C., SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 1936 VOL. XXXIX—NO. 286

Speculation Marked Sale of Original City Lots

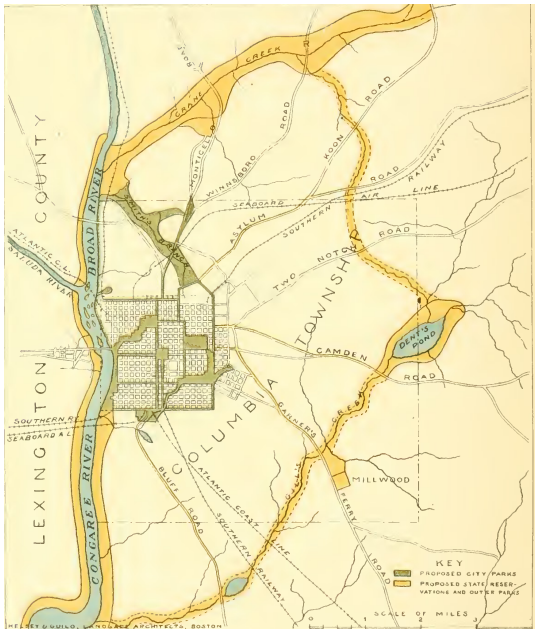
For their sesquicentennial edition in March of 1936, The Columbia Record published a reproduction of the original sales map of the City, noting that the sale resulted in high levels of land speculation, "indicated by the large numbers of lots resold before the final date noted in 1804."[2]

Cover photo iStock.com/Kruck20

Planning in Columbia - A Brief History

Notable Past Planning Efforts

Once the City was established, the first major comprehensive planning effort undertaken was through the development of *The Improvement of Columbia South Carolina: Report to The Civic League, Columbia South Carolina, by Kelsey & Guild, Landscape Architects, Boston, Massachusetts* (1905). Civic leaders contracted with Kelsey & Guild to develop a vision for Columbia. This vision, based in the City Beautiful movement, included a survey of the streets and native trees.



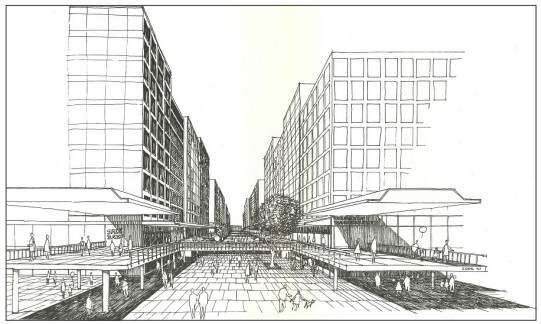
A plan for parks, recreations, and connections excerpted from the 1905 plan.

Among its broader recommendations, the plan included those for linear parks and green connections, public parks to promote the welfare and happiness of all of Columbians, broad boulevards with wide sidewalks, powerline removal, and a system of alleyways. Recommendations were also made for a number of parks and streets by name, cataloging existing conditions and desired improvements.

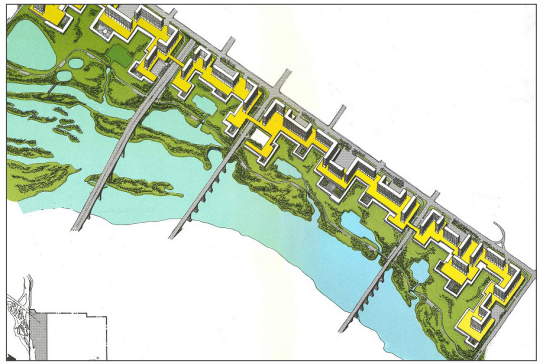
As perhaps the first attempt at fostering an identity and feel specific to Columbia, many of the recommendations have been, and continue to be, echoed both by the community and subsequent planning efforts.

Another plan which had the potential to vastly reshape the City's feel and identity was the 1969 *Central City Columbia SC Master Plan*, also known as the Doxiadis Plan. While the Kelsey & Guild plan had been designed with the flow of people in mind, it had also focused on botany and the creation of idyllic open spaces in a reaction to the industrial conditions seen at the turn of the Eighteenth Century. In contrast, the Doxiadis Plan was a modernist plan; it focused on efficiencies, density, and the flow of goods and services through the now auto-dominated City.

Plan recommendations focused on not just the built environment, but the constructed environment. Development was to be dense and hardscaped, with focus on ensuring productivity and maximizing efficiency. Also comprehensive in nature, the plan's signature projects sought a wholly new identity for Columbia, rejecting the past in favor of a constructed future. Recommendations included a raised mall along Main Street, and block style apartments fortified against the river's edge.



Conceptual drawings of the recommendations for Main Street (above) and the riverfront (below) made by the 1969 plan.



Planning in Columbia - A Brief History

Planning for the City

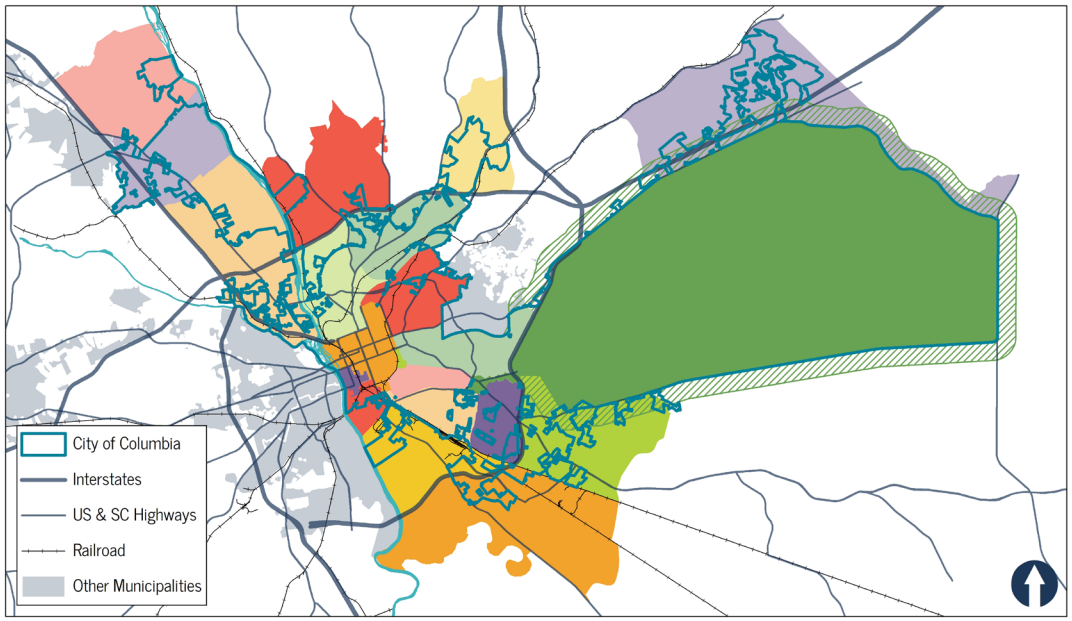
The purpose of comprehensive planning is to create a long-term guide that expresses that values and aspirations of the community. The comprehensive plan is the broadest policy document a community can create, and it establishes a long range vision for the City. This plan, as with those that preceded it, is a tool to prepare for change, and acts as both a business plan and a guidebook for decision makers. Comprehensive plans are not regulatory documents, but they serve as a foundation for City budgeting, zoning and land development regulations, capital improvements, development decisions, and more.

The City's comprehensive plan undergoes a thorough update once every ten years, as required by the State Code of Laws. The prior ten-year update, *TCP 2018: The Columbia Plan*, was adopted in 2008. Subsequent major amendments to *TCP 2018* included the adoption of the *Plan Columbia: Land Use Plan* and *Walk Bike Columbia*. The *Plan Columbia: Land Use Plan* represented a thorough update to the land use element of *TCP 2018*, whereas *Walk Bike Columbia* was a detailed, long-range plan which replaced the bicycle and pedestrian section of the transportation element.

With the adoption of Columbia Compass, we anticipate regular updates to the plan which will summarize progress toward implementation, address shifting trends, and incorporate new priorities for the City. Broader shifts may require similar updates to individual elements of the plan, the replacement of sections, or the addition of new elements as the City plans for the future.

Planning for Smaller Areas

While comprehensive planning takes a broader approach, the City also has a rich history of planning for neighborhoods, areas, and corridors in partnership with community members. As part of the *Plan Columbia: Land Use Plan*, the City sought to more strategically identify areas for future neighborhood, area, and corridor planning efforts. Recognizing that municipal limits do not necessarily reflect perceived community boundaries, a number of the future planning areas identified represent joint planning areas, where multiple jurisdictions work together to best plan for a community.



Future neighborhood, area, and corridor planning areas. Larger maps are located in the land use chapter.

Envision Columbia

Council's Strategic Plan

The Envision Columbia Vision Statement was unveiled in 2017, and helps to define Council's strategic plan. The City of Columbia will celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2036, and Envision Columbia identifies what the ideal state for citizens, businesses, students, and tourists should look like as we celebrate. The document includes seven different focus areas, and is intented to drive new projects and initiatives in the coming years.

The Plan & The Vision

The connection between Envision Columbia and the comprehensive plan update has been at the forefront of the Columbia Compass planning process. In the document that follows, analyses and recommendations have been related back to the seven focus areas set forth by Council in Envision Columbia. The goal of Columbia Compass is to define concrete, implementable strategies that can work to bring the Envision Columbia vision to life.

The Vision

"By 2036, Columbia has captured the new American dream. While embracing our 250-year rich history, we enthusiastically welcome the future. We are proud of our soul, our unique character, our diversity, and our human potential. We stand as a city for all people. As a center of commerce, technology, and education, we have defined our city as one full of vitality and inclusion with a charming and cosmopolitan feel. We will create our desired future. We will continue our success."

The Focus Areas

The vision is clarified further through the development of seven focus areas (shown below), which are articulated on the following pages.



Envision Columbia

1 Attracting & Retaining Talent

Columbia, South Carolina is the center of the global knowledge economy and the leading hub of insurance technology in the world. It is home to more corporate headquarters than any other city in the Southeast and home to the talented leaders and employees of those companies. Having sought innovative ways to nurture businesses over 20 years ago, Columbia today reflects progressive energy and highly desirable growth. It attracts business interests and investment from around the globe.

A laser-like focus on ensuring a business-friendly environment has resulted in Columbia being the jewel of the south. Its results include the largest GDP of any city in South Carolina, the lowest unemployment, and a steady stream of talent that emerges from its colleges and universities. Columbia experiences a steady increase in its number of residents and businesses with disposable income. There is a low business vacancy rate and phenomenal growth throughout Columbia and the surrounding region. Columbia's thriving urban core serves as home to most of the state's cultural destinations with the core surrounded by vibrant neighborhoods and schools. Columbia's exciting riverfront is the envy of the Southeast.



iStock.com/Dean Mitchell

2 Planning Together

Building on its history as the first planned capital city in America, Columbia continues its pace in defining what a great American city can be. Its planned underground grid showcases an integrated utility and City operating system. It preserves and treasures its natural resources and historic properties, evidenced by the City's multiple recognitions as one of the best planned, sustainable cities.

Columbia is well recognized as a genuinely authentic, well-planned city, and continues to set the pace for America. The planning process features and protects a strong urban core, fully developed riverfront, great neighborhoods, well canopied streets, both large scale and pocket parks, well-connected modes of intermodal transportation, and an abundance of pedestrian and bike paths.

Regional government exists, offering superior, cost effective basic services to citizens and businesses with a well-balanced, growing tax base. The success of this new government is largely the result of engaged citizens and visionary leaders.

Envision Columbia

3 Connecting Our Community

With three beautiful rivers running through the heart of the City, three interstate highways that connect the region to over 75% of the American economy, and a historically designated and well-planned urban core, Columbia is recognized as the economic engine of the South. The City's laser-like focus on the delivery of sound and sustainable infrastructure, along with its best practices and cutting edge technology have enabled it to manage and operate one of the largest and most modern utility systems in the South.

Columbia has integrated infrastructure delivery that is coupled with a vision of establishing itself as the most walkable city in America. The City thus provides its citizens with a green, high tech inter-modal transportation system that services and connects the entire metropolitan area. A superior network of 100 miles of bike and pedestrian friendly connectivity supports the healthy lifestyles of Columbia's citizens and visitors and has earned the community accolades for decades. The City's stunning tree canopy makes Columbia the longest consecutively recognized municipality by Tree City USA. The canopy camouflages an intricate network of smart technology, green infrastructure, and renewable energy sources that serve citizens and businesses, while promoting healthy living.



iStock.com/CasarsaGuru

4 Empowering Our Residents

Columbia is an inclusive, caring, and compassionate city that embraces diversity. We provide a variety of services and resources that develop human potential and invest in the growth and development of all residents.

Our citizens live in safe, sustainable neighborhoods where children are thriving, learning, and having fun. Our residents are financially and physically healthy and lead peaceful and productive lives. Our citizens are invested in the community and empowered to live their fullest potential. Columbia prides itself on engaging its citizens and providing a high quality of life with endless possibilities.

From premier educational institutions to strong neighborhoods and thriving businesses, the City is well known as an environment in which there are opportunities for all. We are home to state-of-the-art K-12 schools, a myriad of public and private institutions of higher learning, as well as a nationally ranked technical school system. All of these opportunities

Envision Columbia

empower residents to transform their lives and inspire people, young and not so young, to achieve their dreams. Workforce development is a hallmark of the Columbia community, coupled with a focus on successfully leveraging public and private partnerships to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to obtain skilled, high paying jobs.

High level medical services, abundant recreational amenities and a beautiful and safe natural environment allow citizens to live healthy and active lives.

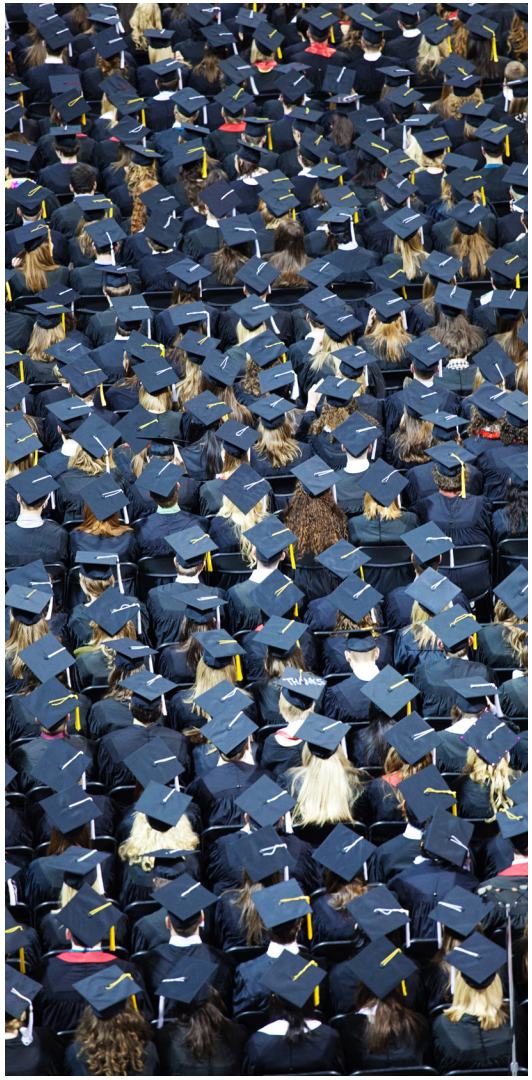


iStock.com/skynesher

5 Economic Prosperity & Endless Possibilities

Columbia is a capital city of endless possibilities! A balance between fiscally responsible government and strategic investment has encouraged desirable private sector growth. The City has an internationally recognized business friendly environment that has produced a sustainable revenue stream to support reinvestment in our public infrastructure, schools, neighborhoods, and our arts and cultural community.

The City creates an atmosphere that generates rewarding employment opportunities for all. The state's flagship institution of higher learning, the University of South Carolina, along with our many high quality universities and colleges and world-class technical college system support abundant, well-focused job training. Our many core educational facilities have attracted high tech industry and innovative businesses that change the world.



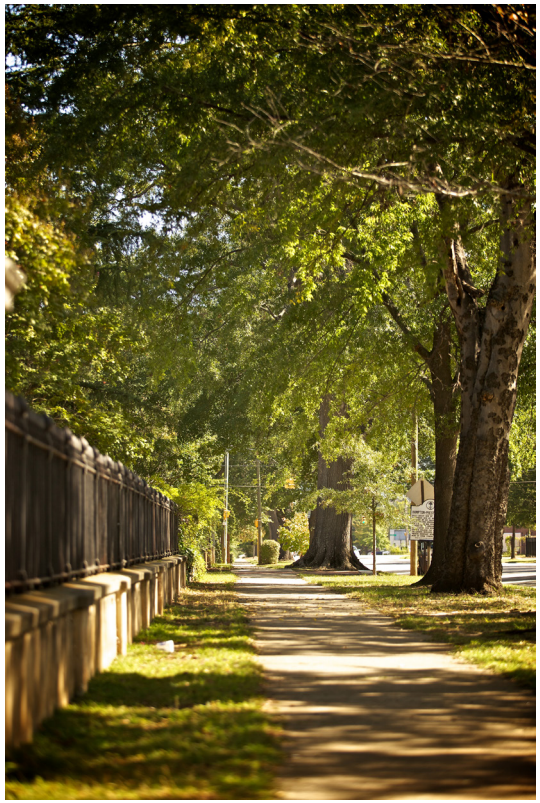
iStock.com/YinYang

Envision Columbia

6 Enhancing Columbia's Neighborhoods

Columbia reflects neighborhoods that are filled with historic homes, museums, parks, and natural resources. The City boasts safe, secure neighborhoods that are free from over-development and other consequences of growth. Housing exists for residents in a variety of income categories and states of life, including choices from traditional single-family homes with tree-lined streets to high-rise urban living. Our city is a seamless mix of neighborhoods with tree canopies that create a nurturing environment in which our citizens can prosper and grow. The City maintains a diverse mix of housing stock from urban development to family oriented neighborhoods with backyard cookouts.

The City protects and honors the uniqueness and character of its history. Columbia attracts employees and families that desire a safe, sustainable, and accessible community. It has distinguished itself by managing growth to protect and improve its valued quality of life. Sustainable development has been carefully blended into the City. Careful expansion and redevelopment have made Columbia a pedestrian-friendly, livable, social and economic center.



Photograph by Brett Flashnick, image courtesy of Experience Columbia SC

7 Leading the Way in Innovative & High Quality Municipal Services

Long considered a leader in municipal service delivery, the City of Columbia embraces new technologies and is committed to the highest level of customer care and constituent service for residents and visitors.

We operate in an environment that is business friendly to promote the growth of our small and large businesses. Our practices are solution-oriented. Our business processes have been streamlined to ensure an effective and efficient approach to address the needs of our business community.

Tools for citizen engagement are utilized to empower our residents to interact and access City services in an efficient, timely, and helpful manner. The city of Columbia's staff implements best practices that are on the cutting edge of municipal governance. The use of technology allows City staff to increase productivity and decrease response time in addressing customer requests and concerns.

Engaging the Public

Why Planning is a Public Process

A critical component of the Columbia Compass planning process was developing opportunities to engage with the public. By providing opportunities for discussion and feedback, the planning team was better able to understand your desires and concerns, and to distill these in order to first develop and later test a shared vision for Columbia.

Trying New Tactics

As planners, there are a number of ways we hope to provide opportunities for meaningful public input. As with other plans, the planning team reached out to citizens through holding public meetings, facilitating stakeholder focus groups, and by attending neighborhood and business association meetings. Having found recent success with the Walk Bike Columbia interactive online survey, the team also developed two separate interactive online surveys, with varying formats, and advertised these widely, reporting on participation by zip code in an effort to increase participation in underrepresented areas (analyses of these survey results are provided in the appendices).

We know that technology and access have changed how we communicate as a society - planners have also seen these changing trends impact how the public engages with planning processes. While planning is critical to the City's success, it is rarely high on one's daily to-do list - in a society where there are increasing demands on our time, we recognize we have to innovate in order to obtain the meaningful public input that planning efforts hinge upon.



October 2018 open house at Richland Library Main

The team built upon our prior successes in public engagement by trying new tactics as well. Neighborhood meetings were grouped in an attempt to reach all neighborhoods, to varied success. New spaces, such as Richland Library, were utilized for public meetings, in hopes of engaging with participants who might not have previously been engaged in planning processes. City staff sough speaking engagements with civic organizations throughout the region.

As a result of this innovative approach, we estimate that during the first two phases of the planning process, staff had **over 5,500 points of engagement**.

Embracing technology, the team developed a project brand and website that was bright, attractive, and easy to navigate, and linked to social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter. We employed an email subscription service - one which was easy for the public subscribe (or unsubscribe) to, and which could provide important analyses back to staff on the effectiveness of newsletters and other messaging.

What We Heard

A Plan Built on Engagement

The wealth of feedback the project team received is summarized throughout the plan, and this feedback was essential to charting the course for our future through the development of implementation strategies, or recommendations. More comprehensive summaries and analyses of public engagement opportunities are provided within the appendices, as well as mentioned throughout the plan document.

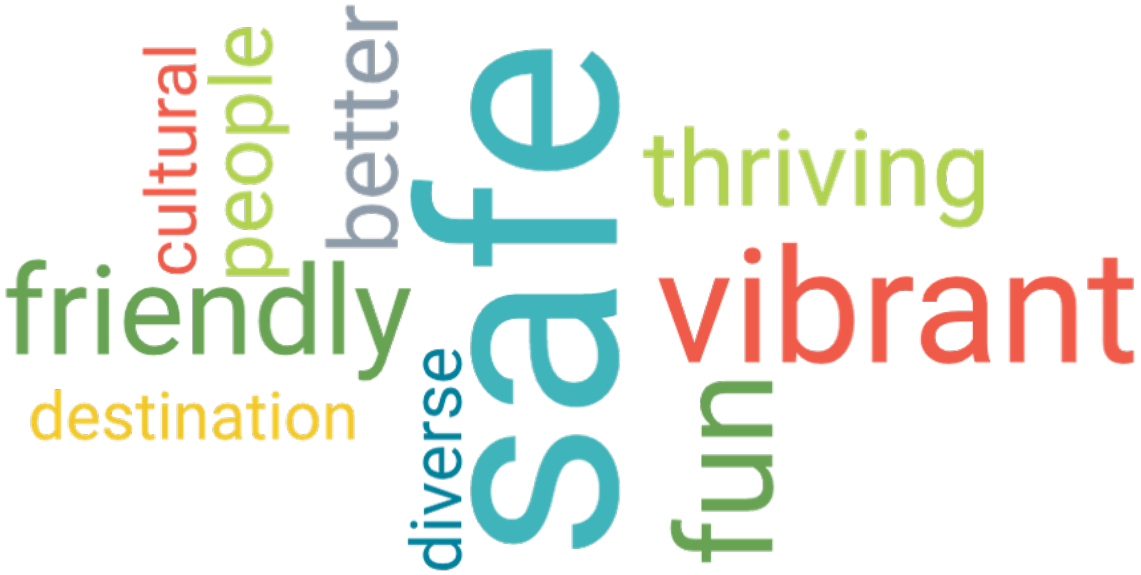
Values

Throughout the process, citizens noted how much they valued their neighborhoods, the City's cultural offerings, opportunities for engagement, the City's historic and cultural assets, and walkability. These values informed not only their vision for Columbia, but also their priorities for plan implementation.

Public Perception

In order to address our future, we must learn from the lessons our past has to offer. During the planning process members of the public were open and honest with their feedback, both positive and negative. Columbians routinely noted that they felt that as a City, we:

- do not prioritize,
- do not complete the projects we start,
- are disconnected from one another through physical and social barriers,
- do not act in a way that leverages our resources, and
- have looming infrastructure needs - related to maintenance, modernization, and implementation.



During the first survey, Columbians were asked to describe what they wanted Columbia to be. The most frequent words indicated in response are depicted in the adjacent graphic, and are sized according to their relative frequency of use.

Navigating the Plan

Using the Plan

Columbia Compass is meant to serve not only City staff and decision-makers, but all Columbians. As such, this document attempts to set forth the complexities of planning for Columbia in a concise and accessible manner. This section is meant to provide a road map to Columbia Compass, and help the reader not just navigate but also utilize the plan. As an official City policy document, Columbians can and should engage with Columbia Compass and help move these recommendations forward by partnering with their communities, the City, and local organizations to implement recommendations.

Plan Elements

The SC Code of Laws requires that comprehensive plans address all of the elements shown to the right. This document is organized accordingly, with a chapter for each element. However, as the name implies, the elements of a comprehensive plan are interwoven with one another, and together they tell us the story of Columbia's future. As such, these connections between and across elements are identified throughout the narrative.



POPULATION

A study of historic trends and population projections helps us better understand our community and plan for the provision of services for all.



NATURAL RESOURCES

In identifying our natural resources, we can better understand how to conserve, protect, or improve upon them in the years to come.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

How do we encourage a diverse, resilient, and vibrant economy which attracts employers **and** employees?



HOUSING

What does our housing market look like, and where are there gaps? This element considers different sizes and types of rental and owned-housing and how they are interwoven into the fabric of Columbia.



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is about mobility and accessibility for all – not just cars, but pedestrians, bikes, transit, freight, and passenger rail.



LAND USE

How we look at density, scale, and context – what types of uses are appropriate, and where?



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

We all rely on community facilities, from utilities and emergency services to parks and educational facilities – how we plan for these services over the next 10 years is vital to the heartbeat of Columbia.



CULTURAL RESOURCES

Columbia is a city steeped in culture, from historic structures and fine arts to engaged artists and arts educators. The Amplify Columbia planning process helps define this element.



PRIORITY INVESTMENT

A guide to how we can move forward and bring our shared vision for the City to life. In a broad sense, this element represents the City's 10-year to-do list.

Navigating the Plan

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles were developed for each element (with the exception of Priority Investment) in response to the feedback received and analysis conducted, and in reflection of best practices. These principles were established relatively early in the process, and tested and fine-tuned through public engagement. These principles support the overall vision set forth in Envision Columbia.

Existing Conditions

Each element chapter contains a brief synopsis of the data gathered during the planning process. This summary of existing conditions provides a concise review of data relevant to the element as a whole, and to the recommendations within. Existing conditions reports with far greater detail are provided, per element, within the plan's appendices.

Unique Content

Certain plan elements contain additional content that is not found in all of the element chapters. The Population chapter does not contain recommendations, but contains a much more detailed statistical analysis of Midlands trends, as well as a review of demographic projections. Both the Transportation and Land Use chapters contain official maps, which incorporated into the plan document provide policy guidance in addition to the guidance provided in the recommendations section. The Land Use chapter also contains policy guidance within each of the critical components identified within the chapter.

Recommendations

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 lay 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. Recommendations contain the following information:



Who is Responsible?



Duration



Priority



Cost



Reference to Themes & Other Elements



Data to be Collected



Measuring Success

Connection to Envision Columbia

Navigating the Plan

Responsibility

The recommendations set forth in Columbia Compass often identify City of Columbia divisions or departments as responsible parties, in addition to other entities. Where only one or two divisions within a department are listed as responsible parties, these are called out specifically. In the interest of brevity, where three or more divisions of a single department are responsible, the department as a whole is listed as a responsible party. If a single division should be listed as the primary facilitator, this will always be identified, whether the department is listed or not.

Budget, Grants & Program Management

City Clerk

City Manager

City Management Office
- City Council Liaison & Constituent Services
- Governmental Affairs/ Special Projects
- Mayor's Office & Staff

City Council

Columbia-Richland 911

Community Development
- Community Liaison

Customer Care

Economic Development

Emergency Management

Columbia Police Department (CPD)
- Administrative Bureau
- Code Enforcement
- Community Safety Officers
- Emergency Services
- Office of the Chief
- Office of the Deputy Chief
- Operations Bureau
- Professional Standards/Accreditation
- Public Information
- Special Services Bureau
- Traffic Safety Unit

Columbia-Richland Fire (CFD)
- Administration
- Budget & Communications/IT
- Fire Marshal
- Health & Safety
- Operations
- Professional Services
- Public Information

Development Corporations
- Columbia Development Corporation
- Columbia Empowerment Zone, Inc.
- CHDC
- Two Notch Development Corporation
- Eau Claire Development Corporation

Engineering
- Architect
- Civil Engineering
- Construction Management
- Floodplain
- Mapping
- Real Estate
- Stormwater
- Survey

Finance
- Accounting
- Business License
- Payment Center
- Payroll
- Treasury
- Accounts Payable/ Receivable
- Water Billing
- Financial Reporting

Fleet Services

Human Resources

Information Technology
- GIS
- Help Desk
- Network
- Systems

Internal Auditor

Legal

Municipal Court

Office of Business Opportunities

Parking Services

Parks & Recreation
- Operations & Maintenance
- Park Rangers
- Parks
- Recreation

Planning & Development Services
- Building Inspections
- Development Center
- Land Development
- Planning
- Zoning

Procurement & Contracts

Public Relations, Media & Marketing

Public Works
- Animal Services
- Forestry & Beautification
- Solid Waste
- Streets
- Sustainability
- Traffic Engineering

Safety & Risk Management

Support Services

Utility Operations
- Drinking Water Compliance
- Wastewater Compliance
- Wastewater Maintenance
- Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Water Maintenance
- Water Plant

Navigating the Plan

Priority Investment

The Priority Investment element acts as a to-do list, summarizing the recommendations of the plan. As such, this chapter is organized in a different manner from the other element-based chapters, and organizes the recommendations set forth in all of the element chapters by their priority (high, medium, or low).

Thematic Index

Ten topical themes identified during the planning process allow the reader to review the plan not only by element, but also by theme. Recommendations that relate to each of these themes are listed in a thematic index, much like a cookbook provides an index by ingredient. This index is meant to help the reader navigate the recommendations by theme, should they wish to read the plan in such a manner.

Glossary

While we have tried to stay away from the use of jargon wherever possible, a glossary is included which is meant to help the reader understand new or unfamiliar terms during their review.

Appendices

In order to focus on key messages and the implementation of recommendations, a number of appendices are included in Columbia Compass. These appendices include background data and information, as well as summaries of feedback received throughout the planning process.

Taking a Thematic View

Identifying Themes

A number of themes were identified during the planning process as a result of public input, research, and analysis. While the chapters of Columbia Compass are organized by element, it is important to note that these themes run through the plan as a whole, interweaving elements and influencing recommendations. The themes of Columbia Compass are organized into broad themes and topical themes.

Broad Themes

Throughout the planning process several broad themes emerged which spoke to not only desires for Columbia and Columbians, but also the underlying needs of the community. These themes of Equity & Accessibility, Safety, Public Health, and Resiliency relate back to the community's overall vision for Columbia.

Equity & Accessibility

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 spaces and services are, with our diverse population in mind.

Safety

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 relationship to natural and man-made hazards, and public safety/emergency management. Safety is also a topical theme.

Public Health

While the City of Columbia is not a healthcare provider, much of what the City does has the potential to leave a lasting impact on public health. 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.

Resiliency

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 provide for the community with adaptation and mitigation of risks in mind.

Taking a Thematic View

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. Each of these themes is prevalent throughout the document, and these themes have been identified for the reader specific to each recommendation. The themes that follow are complementary to one another and often overlap, however a single primary, and in some cases secondary, themes have been identified for each recommendation. Throughout the document, the meaning of the following topical themes may be nuanced, and might shift slightly across different plan elements.

- Data
- Partner
- Lead By Example
- Plan & Implement
- Equity & Accessibility
- Engagement & Outreach
- Safety
- Built Environment
- Conserve & Preserve
- Innovation & Technology

Data

In our increasingly technologically-driven and outcome-oriented society, much of how we view the world is driven by data. Access to meaningful data can allow the City and the community to set informed priorities; to better address inequities; to receive feedback on and adjust systems and services to improve quality and efficiency; and to measure successes.

Partner

While Columbia remains the largest city and the center of employment in the Midlands region, the City must plan and provide for its citizens while keeping the region in mind. Columbia's future is intertwined with that of the region, and both public and private partnerships are crucial to implementing the recommendations of Columbia Compass.

Lead By Example

As the regional hub and state capital, the City of Columbia should lead by example. Many recommendations set forth in Columbia Compass rely upon not only a commitment to excellence but also a cultural shift. When City staff, and the City as a whole, choose to lead by example, we can act as a catalyst for our community, our region, and beyond.

Plan & Implement

Anyone involved in a planning process has heard the old adage about plans just sitting on a shelf and gathering dust. This theme is not just about the planning process, but about setting and sticking to priorities and seeing them through.

Equity & Accessibility

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 the opportunity. A component of addressing equity is examining how accessible the City's spaces and services are, with our diverse population in mind.

Taking a Thematic View

Engagement & Outreach

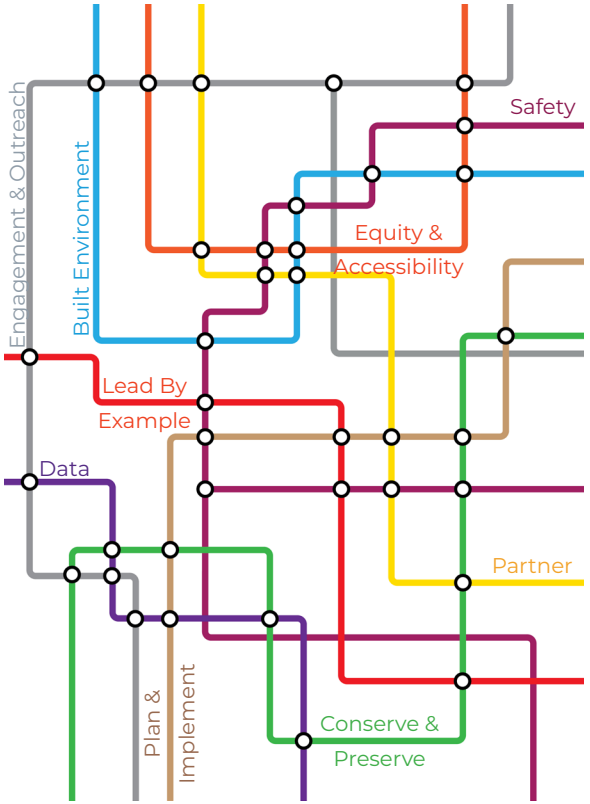
Engagement and outreach is about providing all Columbians with the tools and information required to help our community thrive. Local government functions are often a mystery to the average citizen. This theme tackles how we as a city can facilitate a broader understanding through developing relationships with and aiding in the education and empowerment of our community, while also improving upon the customer experience. Engagement and outreach efforts may often work to target equity and accessibility concerns as well.

Safety

Safety can include one's perception of personal safety, the ability to safely move throughout one's community (using all modes of travel), safety in relationship to natural and man-made hazards, and public safety/emergency management. Safety is also a broad theme.

Built Environment

The City's built environment includes buildings, gateways and corridors, connections, design and historic character, public space, walkability, accessibility, and more. This theme is about how development, in the broadest sense of the word, shapes the feel and functionality of our City.



iStock.com/Svetlozar Hristov

Conserve & Preserve

As members of a community, we are all caretakers of our resources. This theme is about how the City, businesses, and citizens alike can lighten our impacts and plan responsibly for our future needs and the needs of our broader ecosystem.

Innovation & Technology

As Columbia seeks to attract and retain talent, focusing on and fostering innovation and technology will be central to these efforts. Innovation is not just about bringing something new to Columbia, but instead is defined by setting the bar, for the region or beyond, and thinking outside the box. Much of this innovation will hinge on technological advances, both within City government-operated systems and within the region. This theme is often complementary to the themes of **Lead By Example** and **Data**.

Endnotes

1 City of Columbia. (2019, December 1). *A Brief History of Columbia*. Retrieved from the City of Columbia Website: https://columbiasc.gov/about-columbia
2 The Columbia Record. (1936, March 21). Speculation Marked Sale of Original City Lots. *The Columbia Record*, pp. 1-2

Exhibit C

City Certification

May 22, 2025

Richard Hutto, Executive Director
SC Housing
300-C Outlet Pointe Boulevard
Columbia, SC 29210

RE: City of Columbia Community Revitalization Plan Certification

Dear Mr. Hutto,

This letter confirms that the City of Columbia ("City") has formally adopted Columbia Compass: Envision 2036—a comprehensive plan that sets a long-term vision for how Columbia will grow and develop through its 250th anniversary and beyond. As part of the implementation of this plan, the City has identified strategic areas of investment and revitalization aligned with public input and City Council adopted vision.

In accordance with the requirements set forth in the South Carolina Housing Tax Credit Qualified Allocation Plan ("QAP"), the City hereby certifies that no Principal of the Fernwood at Five Points project initiated or directly influenced the adoption of this revitalization plan, nor contributed to its development, with the sole exception of participation by a public housing authority, where applicable.

Columbia Compass reflects broad public engagement—including over 5,500 points of community input—and outlines clear strategies to support equitable growth, neighborhood enhancement, and infrastructure modernization, among many others. The plan is intended as a tool to guide decisions on multiple topics to include land use, housing, transportation, and capital investments, and to serve as a policy foundation for shaping Columbia's future.

Please feel free to contact our office for any further information or supporting documentation.

Sincerely,

Teresa Wilson

Teresa Wilson
City Manager

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