



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024

The Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee will conduct a meeting on Tuesday, October 22, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Second Floor, Columbia, SC 29201. The meeting can be viewed online at www.columbiasc.gov. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at (803)545-3045 or cityclerk@columbiasc.gov if you have questions regarding the meeting.

The Honorable Peter M. Brown, *Chair*

The Honorable William Brennan, District III ▪ The Honorable Aditi Bussells, At-Large

Prior to entering the meeting please turn all electronic communication devices to the silent, vibrate or off position. All presenters are asked to speak directly into the microphone for recording purposes.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of the August 13, 2024 and September 24, 2024 Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes.

PRESENTATIONS

2. Shaw Circle's Southeast Innovation Tour Report - Mr. Jordan Fowler, Chief Executive Officer
3. Reaching Riverbanks Community Mobility Plan - Mr. Kevin Bacon, AIA, AICP, Director of Urban Design, Southern US, Toole Design

ADJOURNMENT



MEETING DATE: October 22, 2024

DEPARTMENT: City Clerk

FROM: *Erika Hammond, City Clerk*

SUBJECT: Approval of the August 13, 2024 and September 24, 2024 Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes.

FUNDING SOURCE & ORIGINAL BUDGET:

ATTACHMENTS:

- EDIC_MN_08132024 (PDF)
- EDIC_MN_09242024 (PDF)

HISTORY:

10/08/24 Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee MEETING CANCELLED
Next: 10/22/24

Draft
09/26/2024



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 2024 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Second Floor, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Peter M. Brown, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and the following members were present:

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Peter M. Brown	Chair	Present
Will Brennan	Member	Present
Aditi Bussells	Member	Present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of June 11, 2024 Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Dr. Bussells, the committee voted unanimously to approve the June 11, 2024 Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee Meeting Minutes.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

2. Central SC Alliance Update - Mr. Jason Guilietti, President and CEO – *Received as information*

Mr. Jason Guiletti, President and CEO said we have revitalized our internship program; strengthened ties with the City, private sector, and the University of South Carolina; and established a key partnership with SCbio (SC Biotechnology Innovation Organization) to boost Columbia's attractiveness to businesses. A rebranding effort will be unveiled by the end of the year. Our data-driven lead generation program is expanding internationally with city staff involvement. The fiscal year budget is set, with plans to use state resources to support marketing and lead generation. A strategic planning process will soon begin to develop a regional plan that addresses both economic and community needs, while aiming to attract new companies and create jobs for residents.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024

There was discussion about all economic development partners being on the same page; gathering statistics from the new webpage; and engaging with the Israeli healthcare sector.

3. Economic Development Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Partner Contracts - Mr. Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director – *Received as information*

Mr. Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director reported that funding levels remain consistent with previous years, with the addition of Columbia Opportunity Resource (COR) as a new partner.

There was discussion about increased involvement from partners; defining measurable success for coordination and collaboration; and opportunities for real time feedback from the committee to the economic development partners.

There was consensus of the committee to refine the fiscal year 2024/2024 partner contracts based on today's discussion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Dr. Bussells, the committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 1:42 p.m. to discuss **Items 4** and **5**.

4. Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(5)

Project Sparrow

5. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)

Trinity Partners

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:09 p.m.



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2024**

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk

Attachment: EDIC_MN_08132024 (9667 : Approval of Minutes - August 13 and September 24, 2024)

Draft
09/26/2024



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2024**

CALL TO ORDER

The Columbia Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Peter M. Brown, Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and the following members were present:

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Peter M. Brown	Chair	Present	
Will Brennan	Member	Present	
Aditi Bussells	Member	Present	

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Economic Development Partner Contracts for Fiscal Year 2024/2025 - Mr. Ryan Coleman, Director/Economic Development

Councilor Brown recalled that at the last meeting, we asked for additional information to establish targets during this period of great collaboration.

Mr. Ryan Coleman, Economic Development Director presented quantifiable items for the City of Columbia economic development partners. Individual and group discussions were had with the partners and the scope of services were revised.

There was discussion about establishing outcomes and quantifiers that build a sustainable Columbia; producing data that can be shared; and organizing the collaborative efforts of the partners.

There was consensus of the committee to move forward with City Council's consideration of the fiscal year 2024/2025 contracts with economic development partners. At the appropriate time, partners will present their goals and models for success to the committee.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Brennan and seconded by Dr. Bussells, committee members voted unanimously to enter into executive session at 3:16 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 2 and 3**.

Attachment: EDIC_MN_09242024 (9667 : Approval of Minutes - August 13 and September 24, 2024)



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2024**

2. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)

Convention Center

3. Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(5)

2725 Drayton Street

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk

Attachment: EDIC_MN_09242024 (9667 : Approval of Minutes - August 13 and September 24, 2024)



MEETING DATE: October 22, 2024

DEPARTMENT: Office of the Mayor

FROM: *Daniel Rickenmann, Mayor*

SUBJECT: Shaw Circle's Southeast Innovation Tour Report -
Mr. Jordan Fowler, Chief Executive Officer

**FUNDING SOURCE &
ORIGINAL BUDGET:**

Shaw Circle will provide an update on the Peer to Peer Southeast Innovation Tour complete with metrics and qualitative observations.

HISTORY:

10/08/24	Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee	MEETING CANCELLED
Next: 10/22/24		



MEETING DATE: October 22, 2024

DEPARTMENT: Planning and Development Services

FROM: *Krista Hampton, Director*

SUBJECT: Reaching Riverbanks Community Mobility Plan - Mr. Kevin Bacon, AIA, AICP, Director of Urban Design, Southern US, Toole Design

FUNDING SOURCE & ORIGINAL BUDGET:

FOCUS AREAS: Built Infrastructure, Economic Growth, Vibrant Community

The Central Midlands Council of Governments (CMCOG) is working with Toole Design to develop a plan to improve local mobility. The City of Columbia and Richland County have participated as stakeholders in this public planning process, and anticipate incorporating the resulting plan document into the City's comprehensive plan through the public hearing process so that it can be utilized as a guiding policy document with land use and transportation decisions moving forward.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Riverbanks CMP_Final Presentation-COC-EDIC_FINAL (PDF)
- Reaching Riverbanks_Final Report_FINAL DRAFT-240910-spreads (PDF)
- Riverbanks_Framework Plan Board_FINAL DRAFT-240910 (PDF)
- Reaching Riverbanks_Appendix A_Market Study-FINAL DRAFT-240910 (PDF)

HISTORY:

10/08/24 Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee MEETING CANCELLED
Next: 10/22/24



REACHING RIVERBANKS

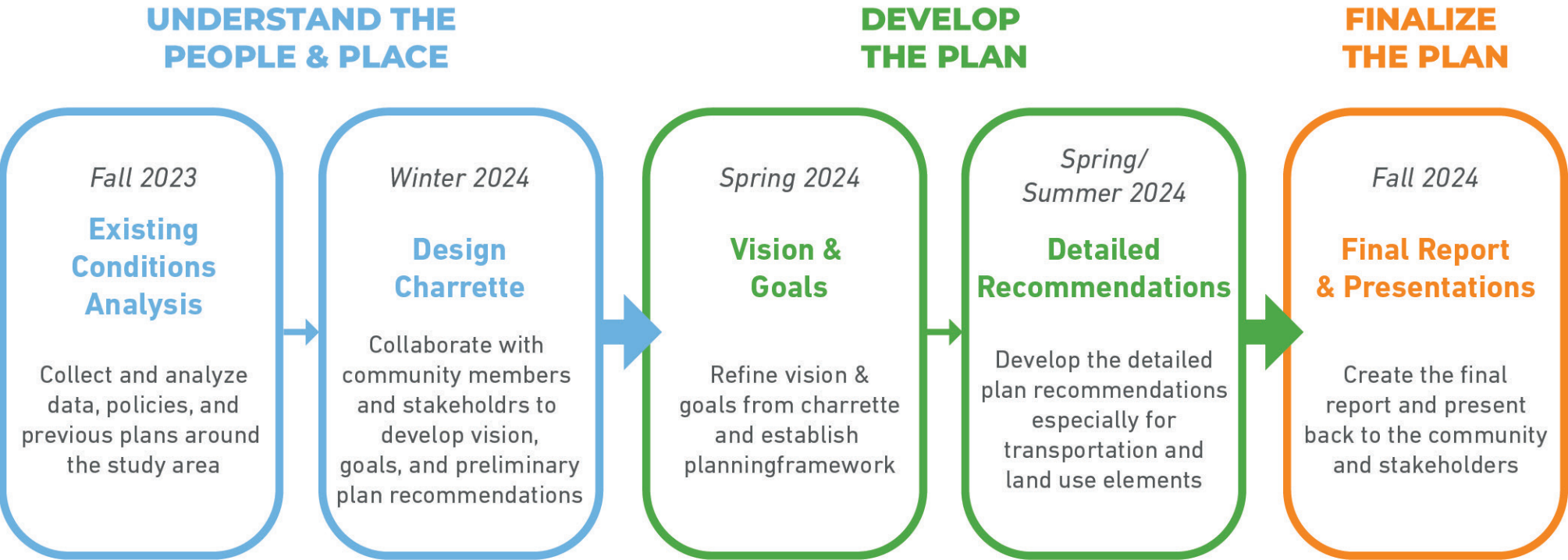
Community Mobility Plan

City of Columbia
Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee
October 8, 2024

About This Plan



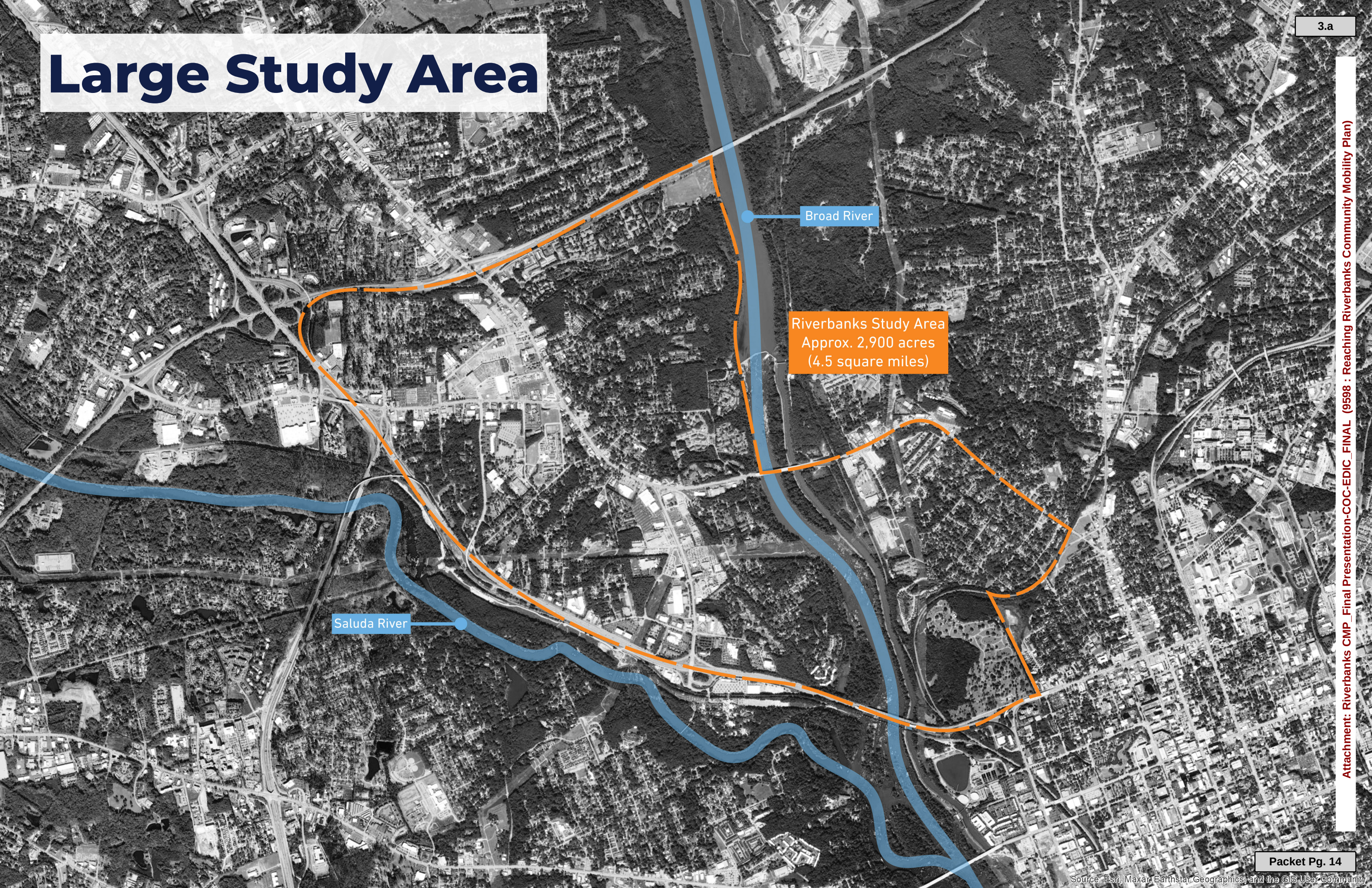
Process



Analysis: Key Findings

1. Located between two rivers but has little access or relationship to the rivers
2. Complex patterns of development that defy any single characterization
3. Current development is the result of a mobility system that prioritizes major corridors
4. Previous plans focused on big changes to the major corridors to catalyze development
5. The study area is partially located in both the City of Columbia and Richland County
6. It's a big study area, really big

Large Study Area

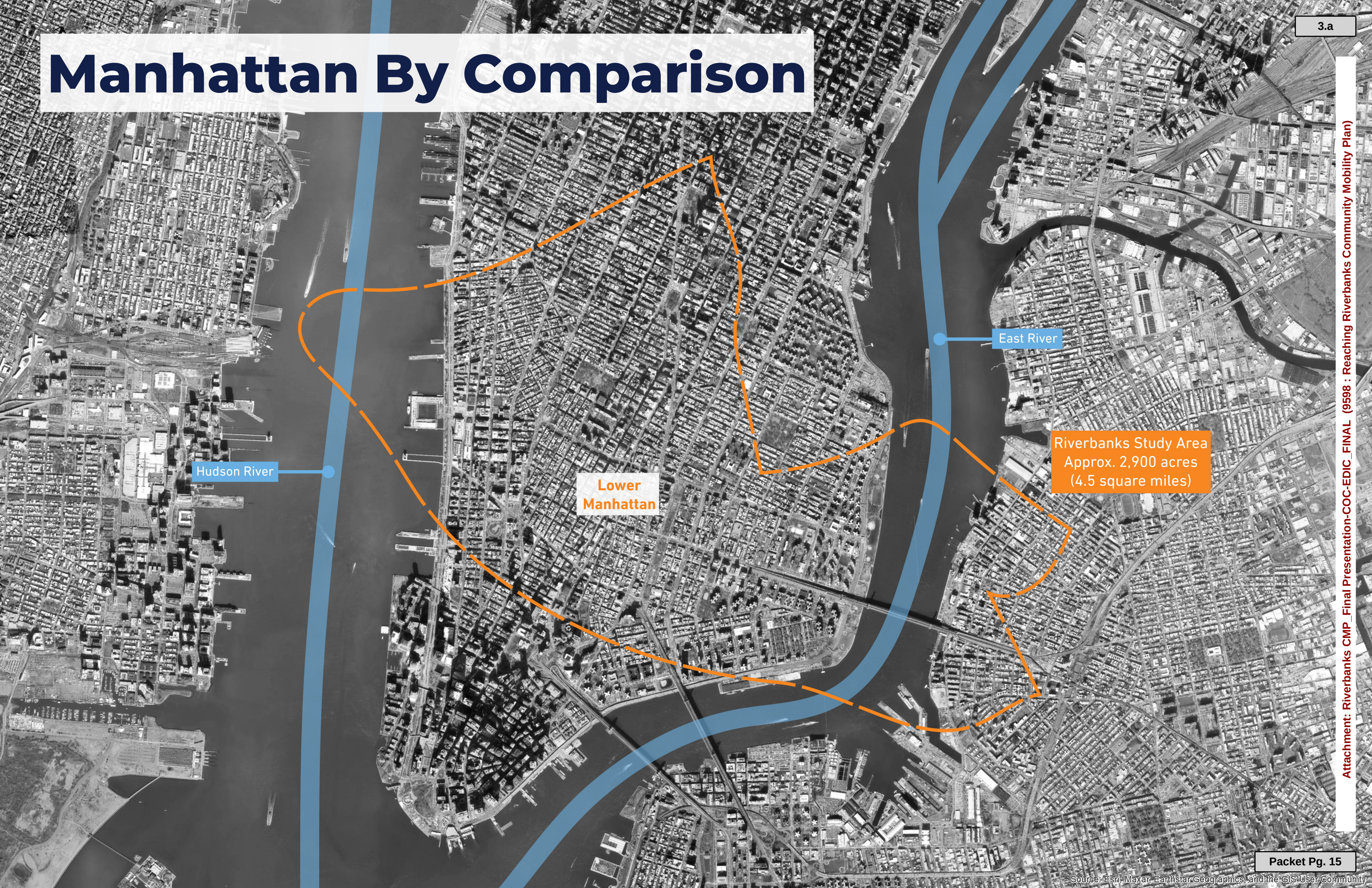


Broad River

Riverbanks Study Area
Approx. 2,900 acres
(4.5 square miles)

Saluda River

Manhattan By Comparison



Hudson River

Lower
Manhattan

East River

Riverbanks Study Area
Approx. 2,900 acres
(4.5 square miles)

Future Land Use

Between the City and County, there are 17 different future land use classifications associated with the Riverbanks study area.

City

UCMR-2

Urban Core Mixed Residential-2

UEMR

Urban Edge Mixed Residential

UCMF

Urban Core Multi-family

UCR-1

Urban Core Residential Small Lot

UER-1

Urban Edge Residential Small Lot

UER-2

Urban Edge Residential Large Lot

UCAC-1

Urban Core Neighborhood Activity Center

UCAC-2

Urban Core Community Activity Center

UCAC-3

Urban Core Regional Activity Center

AC-2

Community Activity Center

AC-3

Regional Activity Center

EC

Employment Campus

TU

Transportation & Utilities

C/I

Civic/Institutional

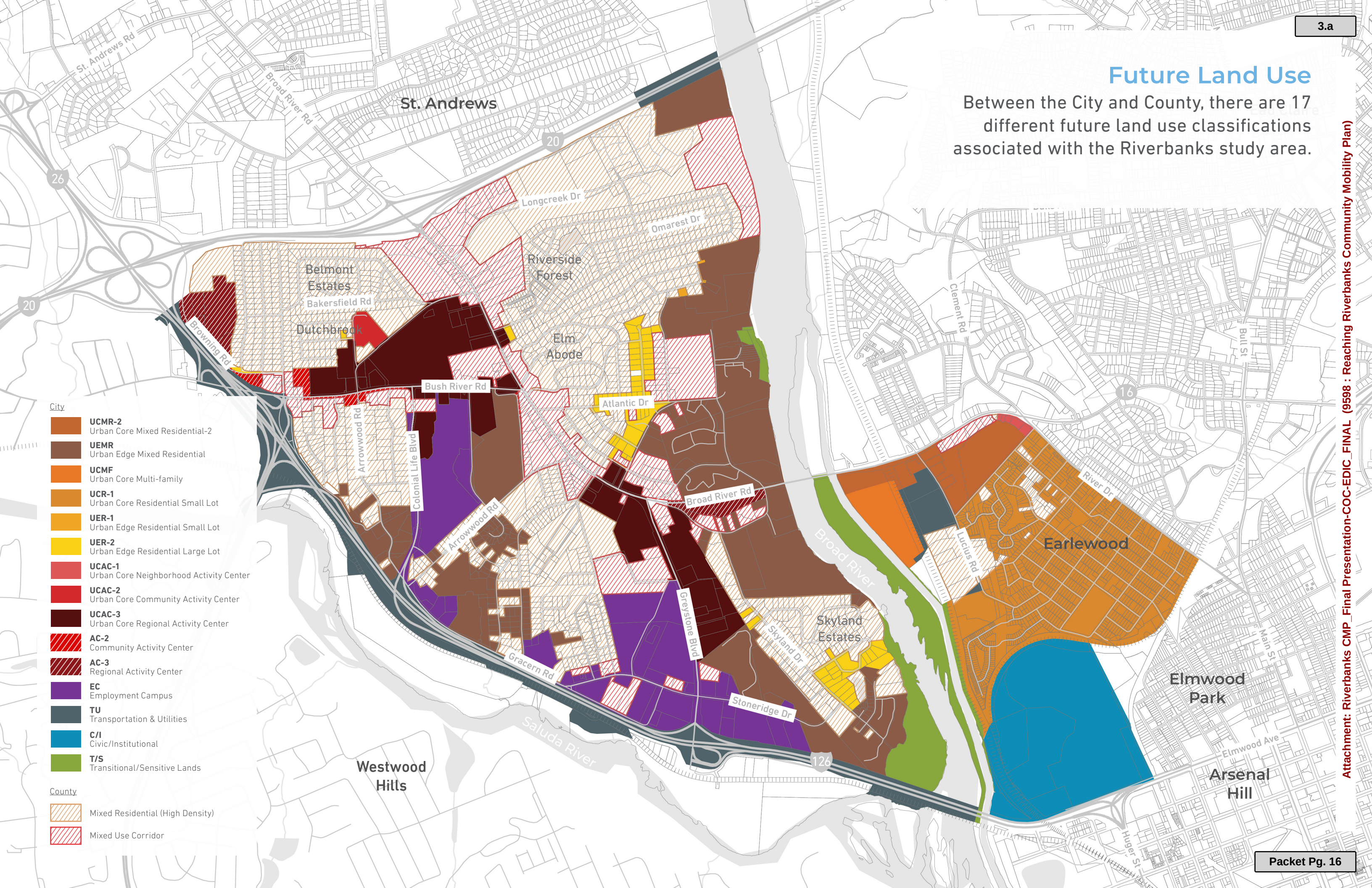
T/S

Transitional/Sensitive Lands

County

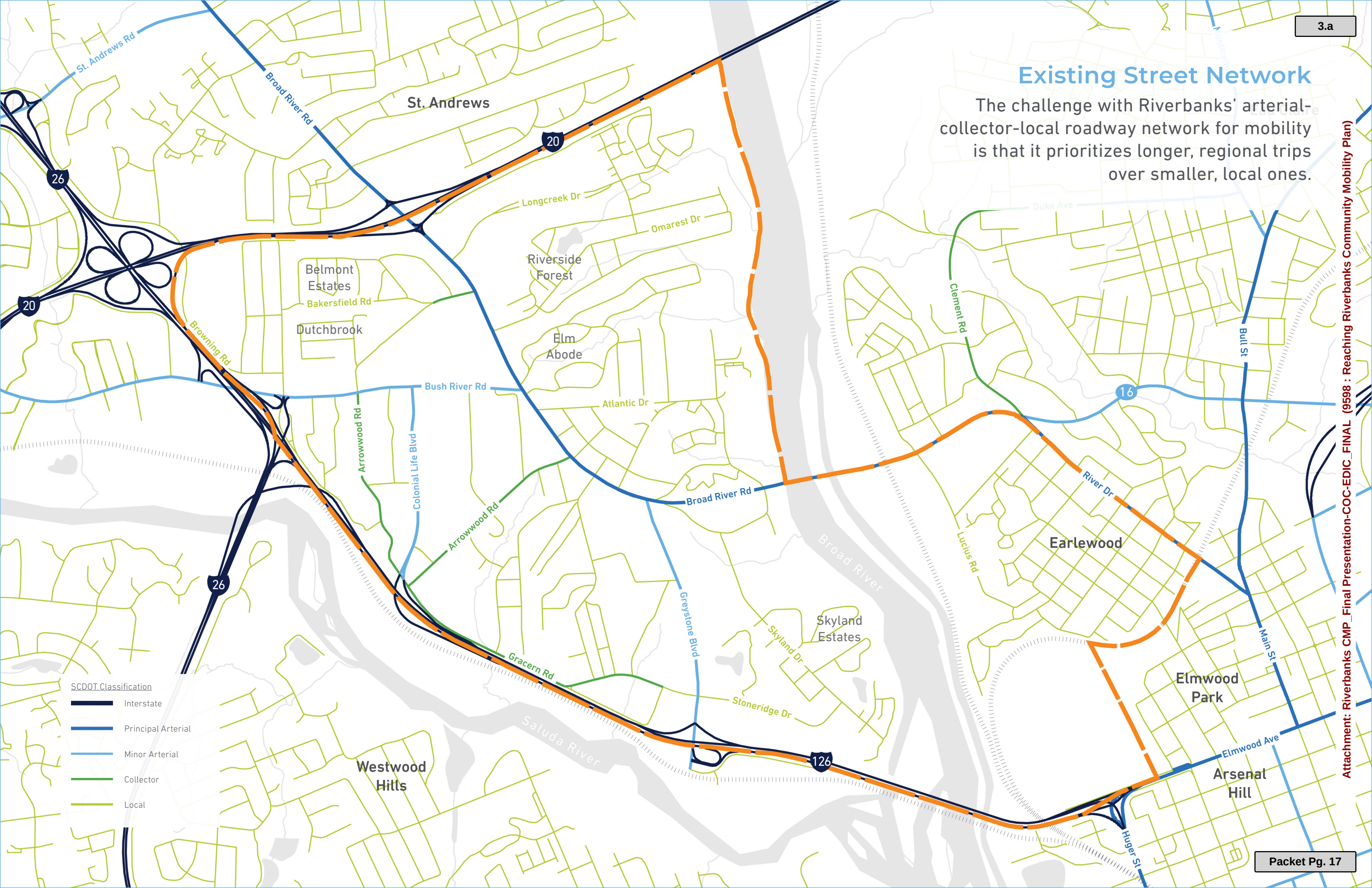
Mixed Residential (High Density)

Mixed Use Corridor



Existing Street Network

The challenge with Riverbanks' arterial-collector-local roadway network for mobility is that it prioritizes longer, regional trips over smaller, local ones.



SCDOT Classification

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local



3.a



Reaching the Rivers

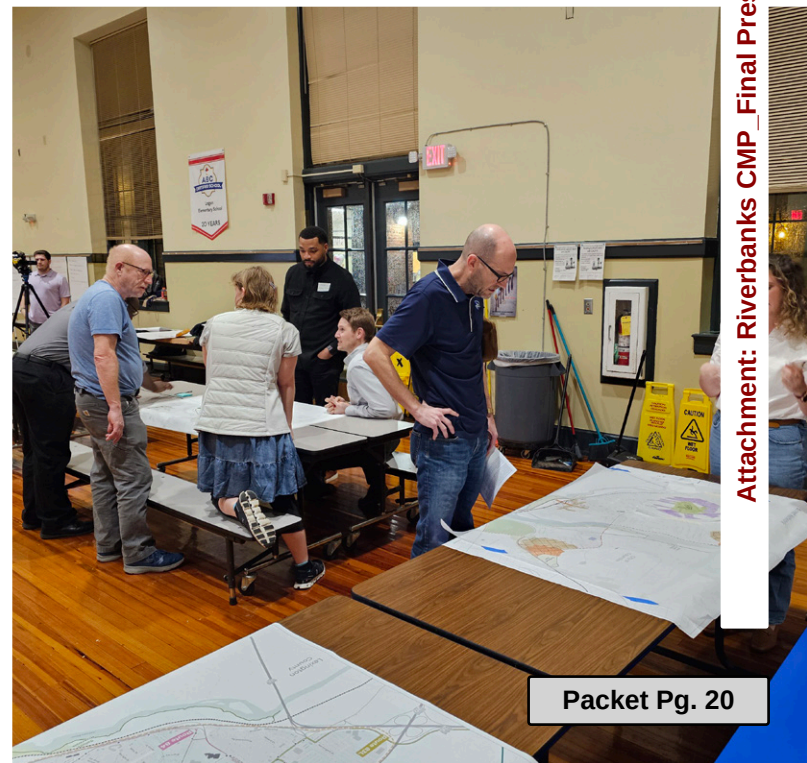


Saluda Riverwalk
Credit: Palmetto Outdoor



Broad River Trail
Credit: HD Carolina

Community Charrette



Riverbanks Vision

The Riverbanks area is a distinct community that creates places and spaces for residents and visitors, celebrates and connects to its natural beauty, and provides safe, comfortable, and accessible transportation options for all people.



Plan Goals

Goal 1: Make everyone feel welcomed, celebrated, and comfortable.

1. Focus on human-scale development and infrastructure that is reflective of the community and its values.
2. Create lively and welcoming public open spaces that are accessible to all.

Goal 2: Celebrate the area's natural beauty.

1. Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the rivers and existing park spaces.
2. Connect the Broad River to the Saluda River through the community by rebalancing existing infrastructure.
3. Identify new parks and open space areas for all.

Goal 3: Foster, showcase, and attract businesses and new development.

1. Create opportunities for businesses to attract a more local workforce.
2. Encourage new workforce and senior housing.
3. Coordinate across jurisdictions to provide a consistent zoning district or overlay to incentivize new development that enhances the character of the community.

Goal 4: Create safe, accessible, and comfortable multimodal facilities.

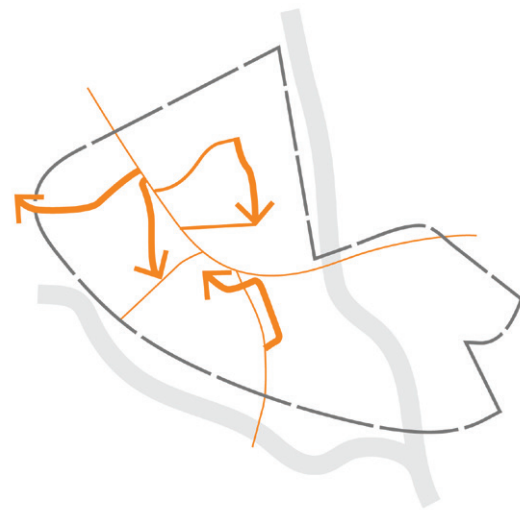
1. Rebalance Broad River Road, Greystone Boulevard, Bush River Road, and Colonial Life Boulevard for pedestrians and bicyclists.
2. Improve or identify small neighborhood connections that improve internal circulation away from the major corridors.
3. Re-imagine Interstate I-126 as an at-grade boulevard that: serves as a gateway into the community and Downtown Columbia, improves access to the Riverbanks Zoo and the Elmwood and Randolph Cemeteries, and creates opportunity for new development.

Framework Approach



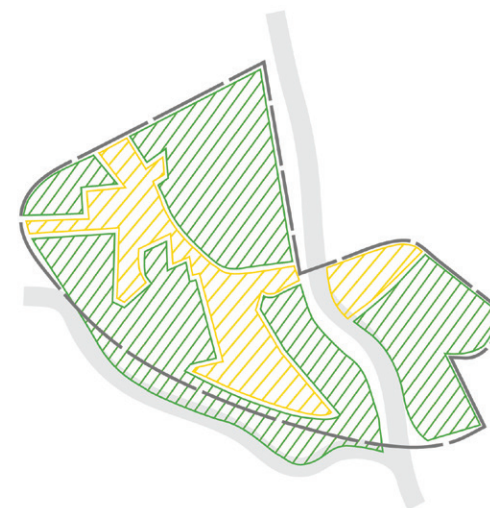
River Access

The River Access layer is the base of the community mobility plan. It focuses on those non-vehicular connections – urban and naturalized greenways – that connect the people of Riverbanks with its rivers and other natural spaces and, by doing so, also facilitates local trips within the study area. These connections support mobility alternatives to driving but also includes retrofitting existing roadways to include these options as well.



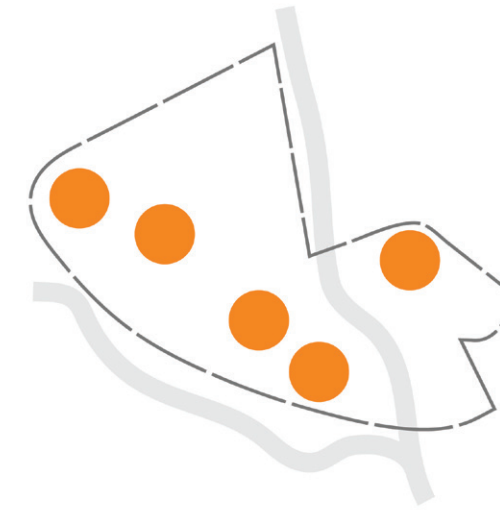
Street Connections

The existing street system is built-on access to and from the study area's major corridors: Broad River Road, Bush River Road, and Greystone Boulevard. Almost every trip in the study area is required to use these roads even if the trip begins and ends in Riverbanks. There are many, small street connections that can improve connectivity by making it possible for local trips to avoid these roadways that were built for regional, through trips. The Street Connections layer identifies and details these new potential connections.



Growth Strategy

Riverbanks is growing. The transportation system envisioned by this community mobility plan is designed to support community members both present and future. The Growth Strategy framework layer outlines an approach for considering the areas of Riverbanks most suited to receive its future growth. This strategy underpins specific recommendations for future land use and development policies in line with the plan's vision and goals.



Opportunity Sites

Some areas of Riverbanks are well-suited for substantial, future new development. This plan has no control over when these areas may redevelop but offers recommendations to guide future redevelopment to align with the vision and goals of this plan and that are consistent with the recommendations for River Access, Street Connections, and the Growth Strategy Framework Layers. The plan is not dependent on the redevelopment of these areas, but its potential outcomes are maximized by them.



The Framework Plan

PROPOSED MOBILITY NETWORK

- Street Connections
- On-street Greenways
- Off-street Greenways

EXISTING MOBILITY NETWORK

- Existing Streets
- Existing Greenways

OTHER MOBILITY NETWORK

- Potential Greenway
- Potential Bicycle Facilities



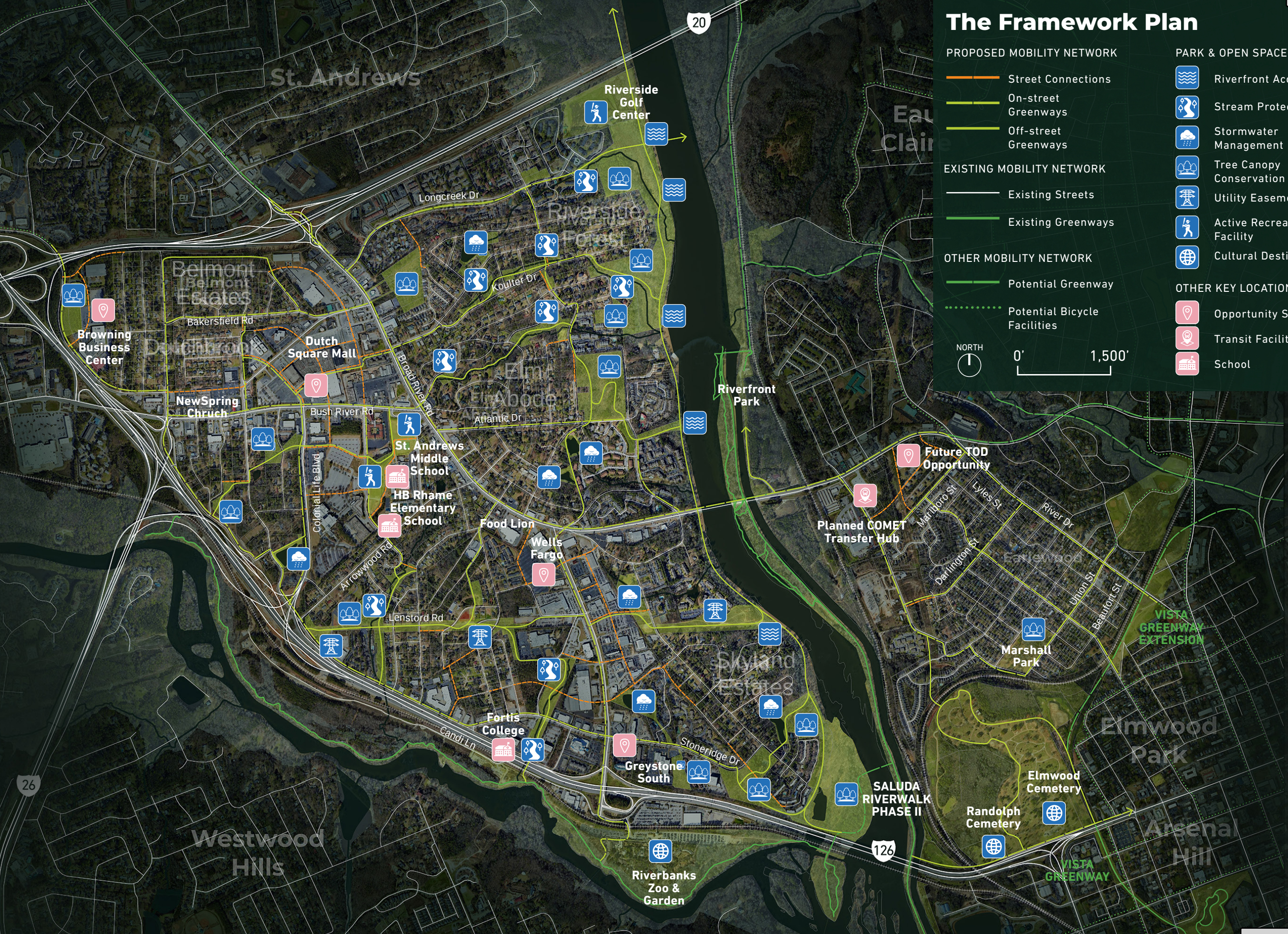
0' 1,500'

PARK & OPEN SPACE TYPES

- Riverfront Access
- Stream Protection
- Stormwater Management
- Tree Canopy Conservation
- Utility Easements
- Active Recreational Facility
- Cultural Destination

OTHER KEY LOCATIONS

- Opportunity Site
- Transit Facility
- School



River Access

Park & Greenspace Opportunities



Broad River access off of Omarest Drive

Riverfront Access

Like the Saluda Riverwalk or the Riverfront Park, these are spaces located on the riverfront that are opportunities to provide direct river access. Typically located within floodplains, opportunity for active recreational facilities are limited.



Vegetation and tree canopy within a stream buffer at Koulter Drive

Stream Buffer

Typically private property that is undeveloped due to stream buffer regulations. These spaces are an opportunity to provide greenway connections that allow protection of watersheds and tree canopy areas.



Stormwater Management by the Columbia Zen Buddhist Priory

Stormwater Management

Areas that were developed to retain stormwater runoff until it can seep back in the groundwater supply. Often restricted for access, redesigned they could also become recreational spaces.



Tree Canopy at Stonebridge Drive

Tree Canopy Conservation

Large, undeveloped areas that contain dense coverage of mature trees. Designating these areas for conservation allows protection of the tree canopy and opportunities for greenway connections.



Utility Easement at Skyland Drive

Utility Easements

Wide-open swaths of land for major utility connections. These linear spaces are opportunities for additional greenway connections on previously cleared land that often offers incredible viewsheds.



Andrews Middle School

Active Recreational Facilities

Existing recreational facilities, such as ballfields at local schools, that could follow national trends of opening these spaces for public use outside of regularly scheduled organized sports and athletics.



Riverbanks Zoo & Garden

Cultural Destination

Existing major destinations within the study area, particularly the Riverbanks Zoo, which are a regional attraction but also have an opportunity to play a local role in recreation and connectivity.

River Access

Greenways Defined

Naturalized Greenways



Shared use paths that operate in parks and open spaces outside of street and rail right-of-way.

Urban Trails



Shared Use Paths

A path for pedestrians and cyclists within an existing street right-of-way (next to a road) that is physically separated from vehicular traffic by an open space or a barrier.



Bicycle Lanes

A lane in the roadway designated for use by cyclists through striping, signage, and markings.



Two-Way Cycle Tracks

Bike paths that are physically separated from vehicular (and also often pedestrian) traffic by a barrier or vertical separation (i.e. at sidewalk level) and allow bicycle movement in both directions.



Bicycle Boulevards

Streets with low existing vehicular speeds and volumes that are enhanced to improve comfort and safety for cyclists riding in shared lanes with cars, such as traffic calming, pavement parking, and signage.



Sidewalks

Wide paved path for pedestrians on the side of a road.

Street Connections

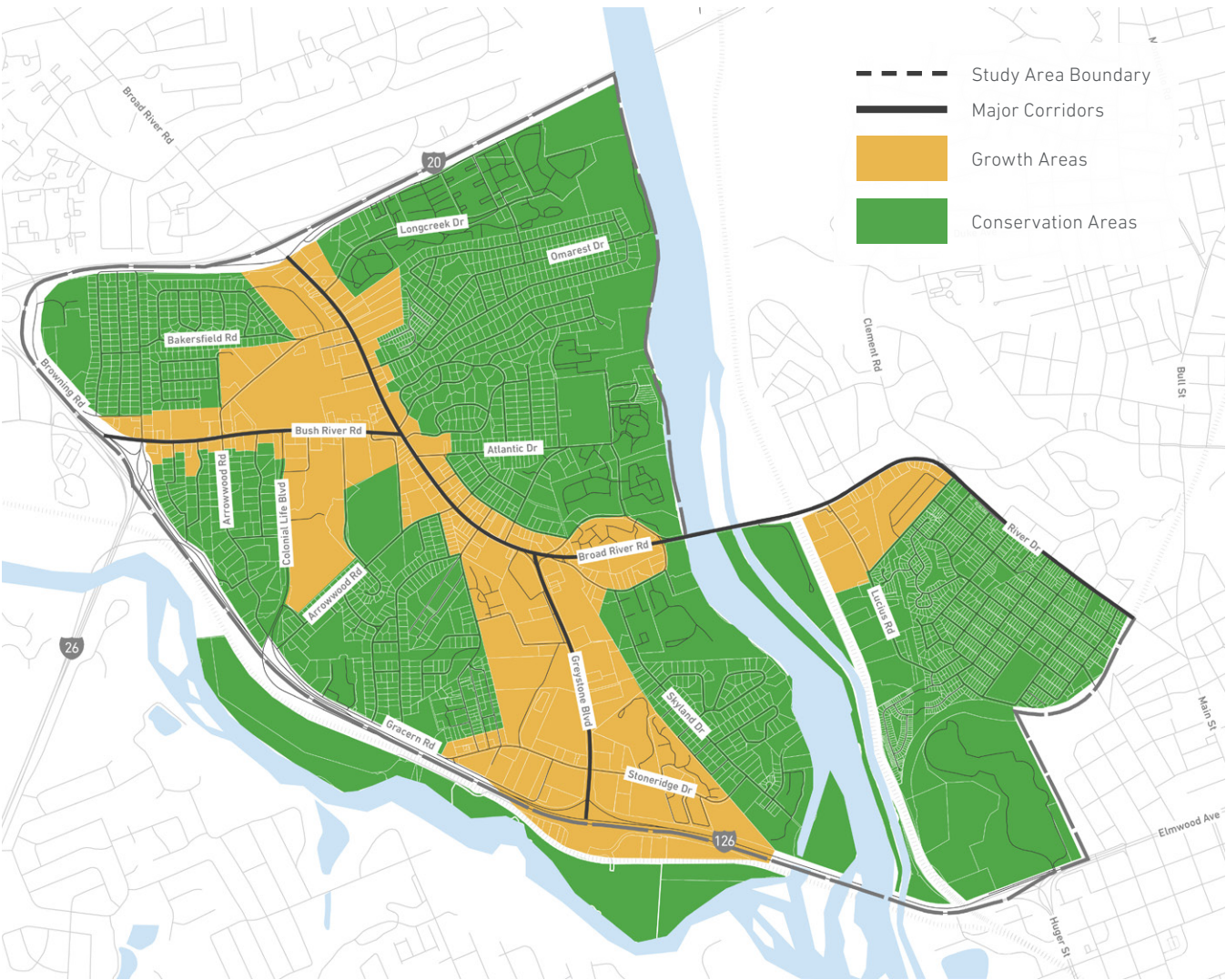


Nighborhood Links



Opportunity Site Connections

Growth Strategy



Growth Areas



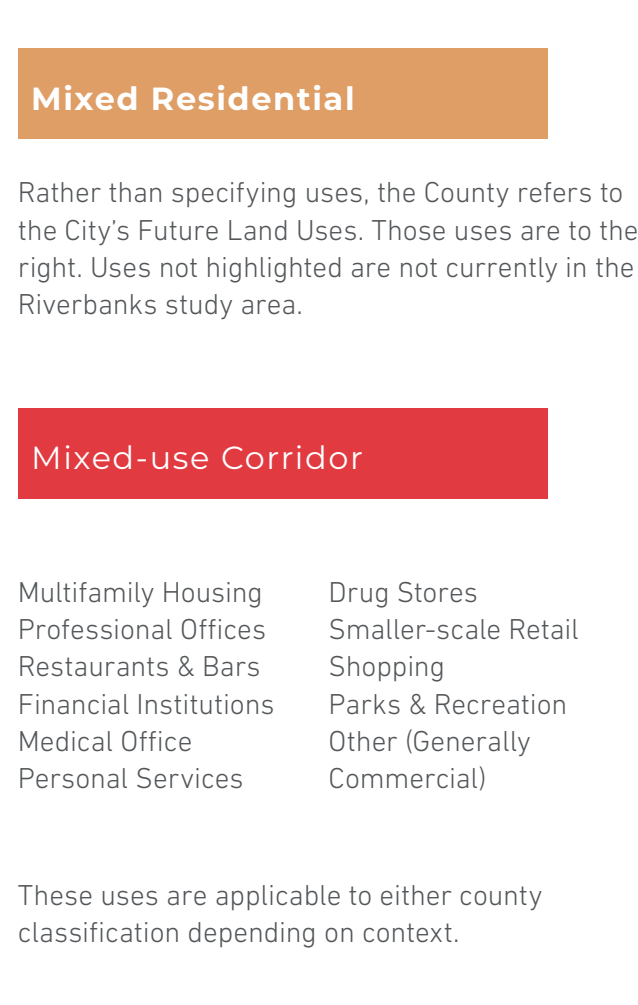
Conservation Areas

Growth Strategy

City of Columbia



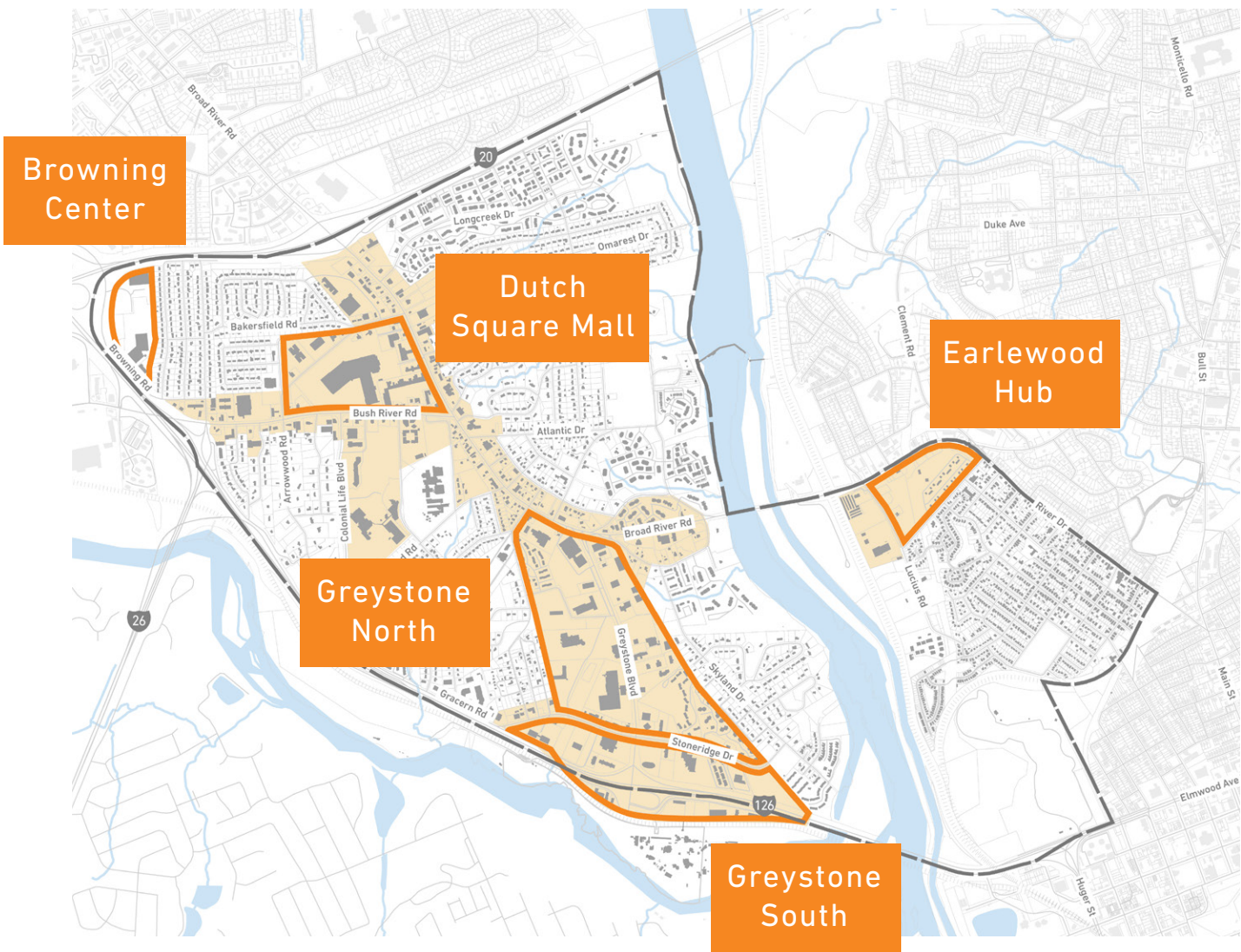
Richland County



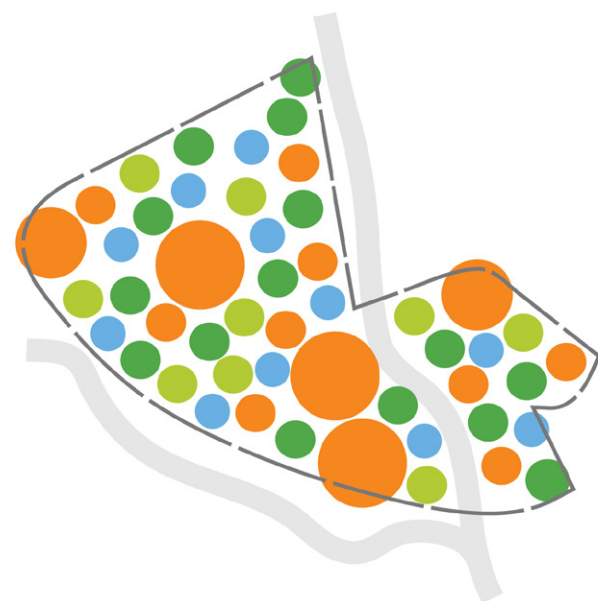
Riverbanks Study Area



Opportunity Sites



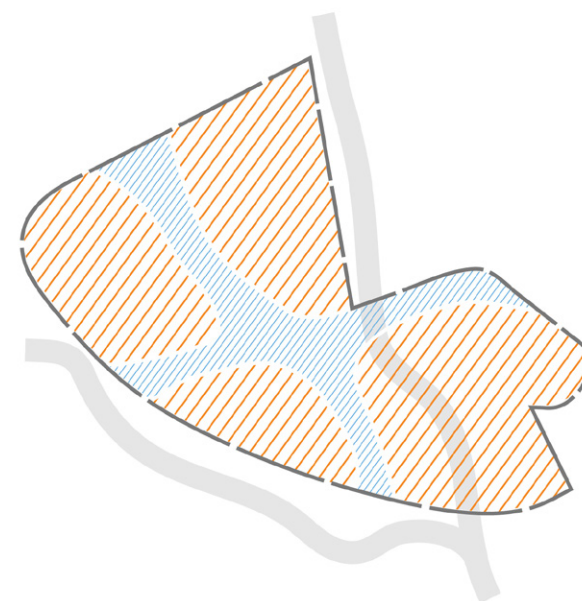
Implementation Strategy



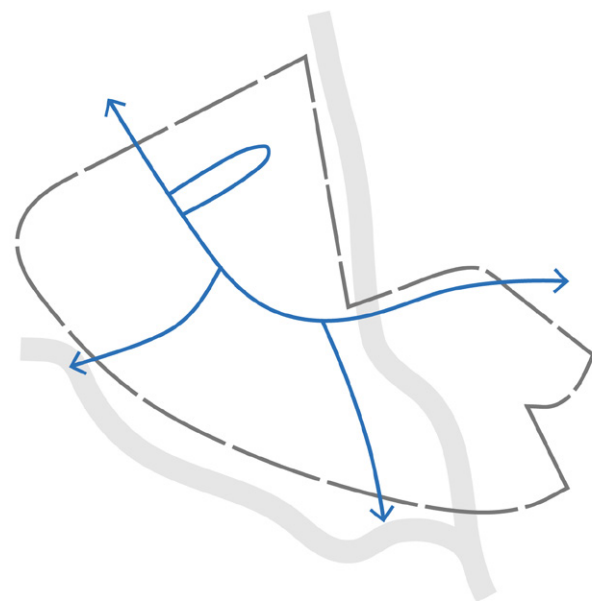
1. Riverbanks is a big area with a lot of projects: organize these for implementation success.



2. Focus on smaller projects that connect with the rivers and build out the internal mobility network.



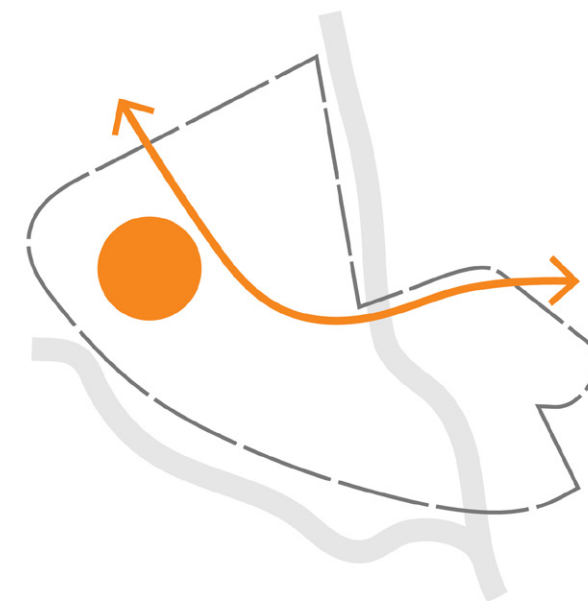
3. Adjust and simplify land use policies to set the foundation for the desired development outcomes.



4. Revisit transit service as the area grows and becomes more connected.



5. Make decisions about key transportation projects to affect development outcomes.



5. Time larger project investments with larger development projects.

The Focus Areas

To facilitate implementation, the Riverbanks study area is organized into four focus areas. While the projects in each of these areas all connect to form the area's future network for local mobility, each of these areas supports the overall network by focusing key connections with a specific study area destination.

1: NORTHWEST

Connect neighborhoods to the Broad and Saluda River

2: NORTHEAST

Provide connections to the Broad River

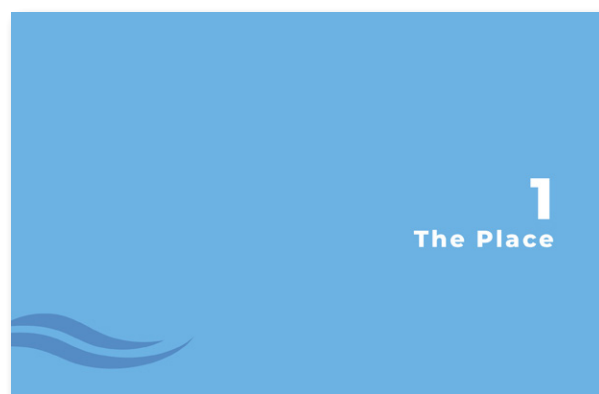
3: CENTRAL

Provide connections to the Saluda River

4: EAST

Reinforce connections to the Broad River and Downtown Columbia

Final Report Outline



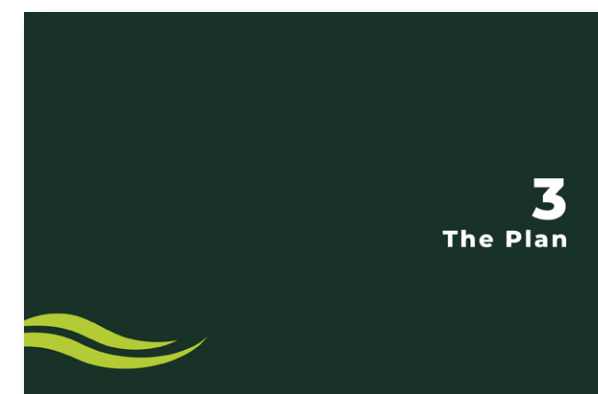
The Place

- Summary of existing conditions
- Understanding of site size, natural assets, and relationships to surroundings
- Understanding existing mobility network and development patterns



The People

- Important findings from the Market Overview
- Summary of community engagement including key themes
- Plan vision and goals as derived from engagement



The Plan

- Urban design framework approach
- Detailed framework plan focusing on local mobility network and connection to the rivers
- Opportunity sites and connection/land use scenarios



Implementation

- Implementation strategy: small projects to make big changes
- Projects by focus areas including catalyst project for each
- Project lists with planning level cost projection and timeframe

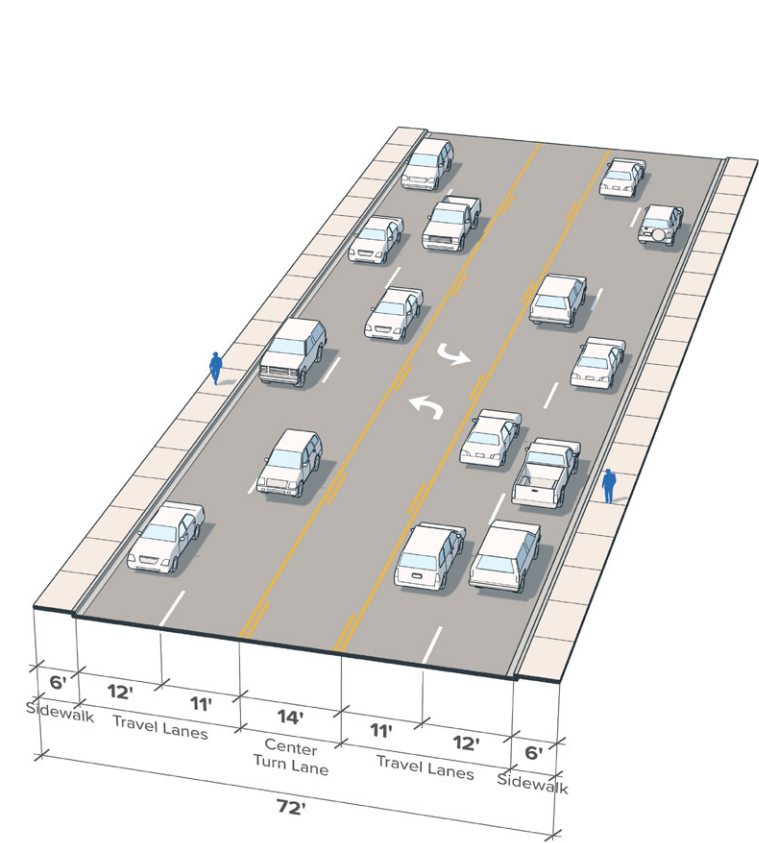
Key Recommendations

1. Improving local mobility and access to the rivers are intertwined
2. Focus on getting the small things right to make big changes; build momentum for bigger moves
3. Land uses are generally aligned: support growth where it makes the most sense
4. Multiple alternatives can support the same planning outcomes
5. City and County coordination will be crucial; keep working with community members
6. This is a long-term vision

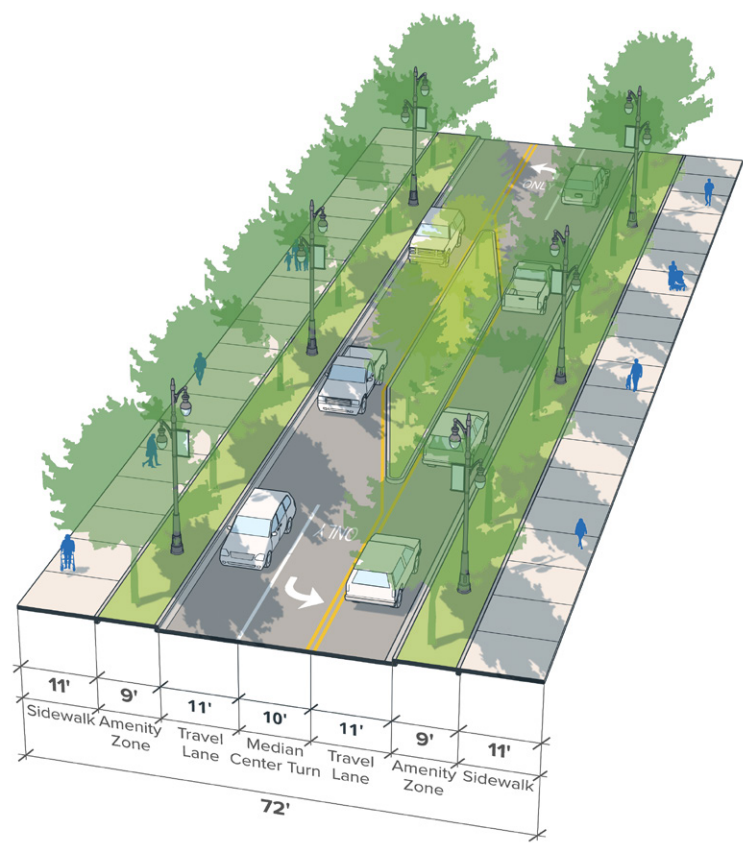


River Access

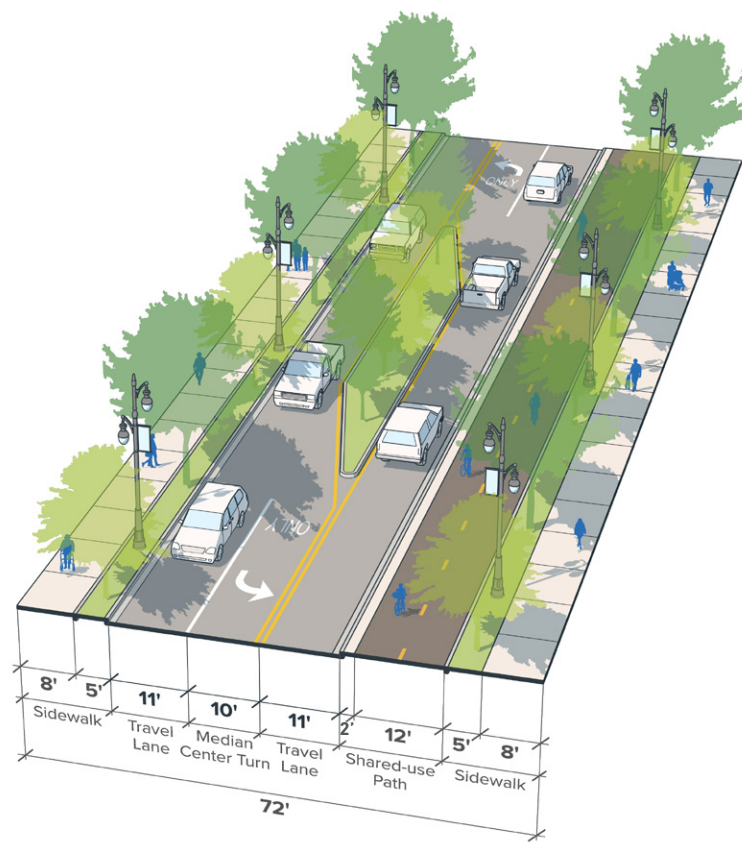
Adapting Major Corridors: Broad River Road



Existing Conditions



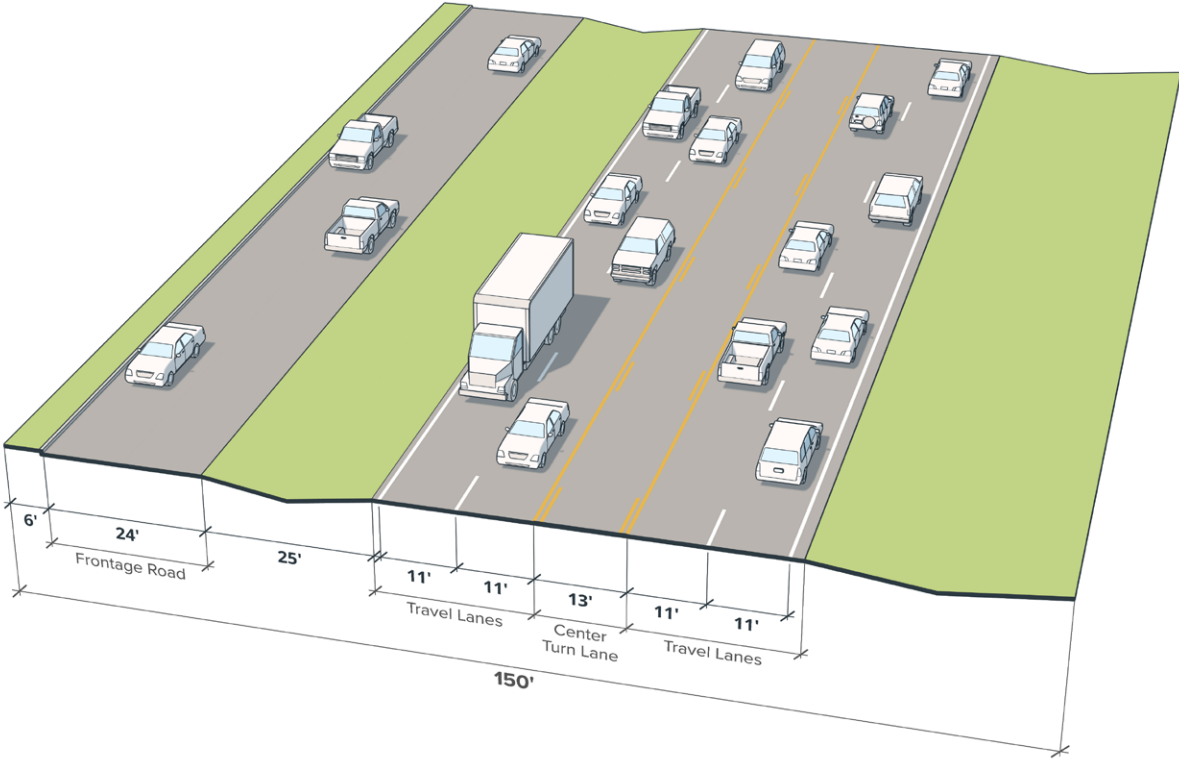
Potential Concept Alternative 1



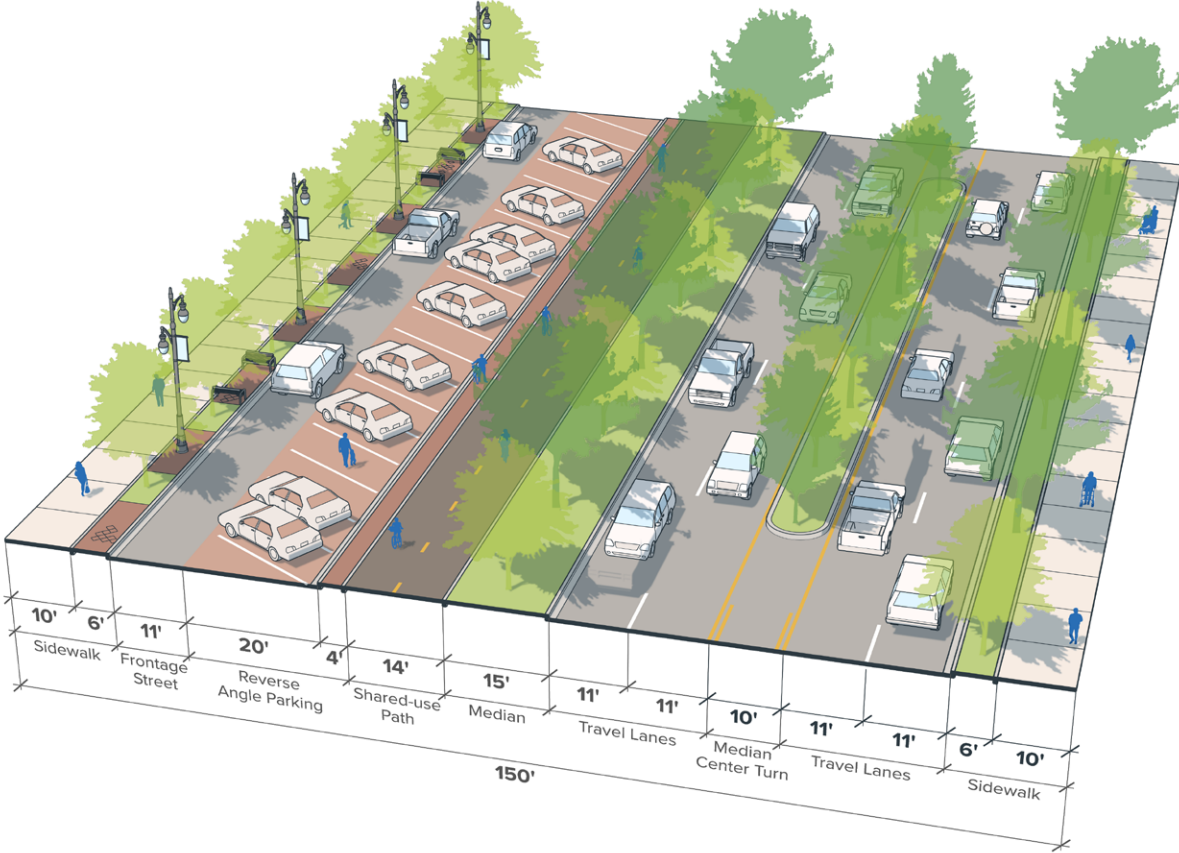
Potential Concept Alternative 2

River Access

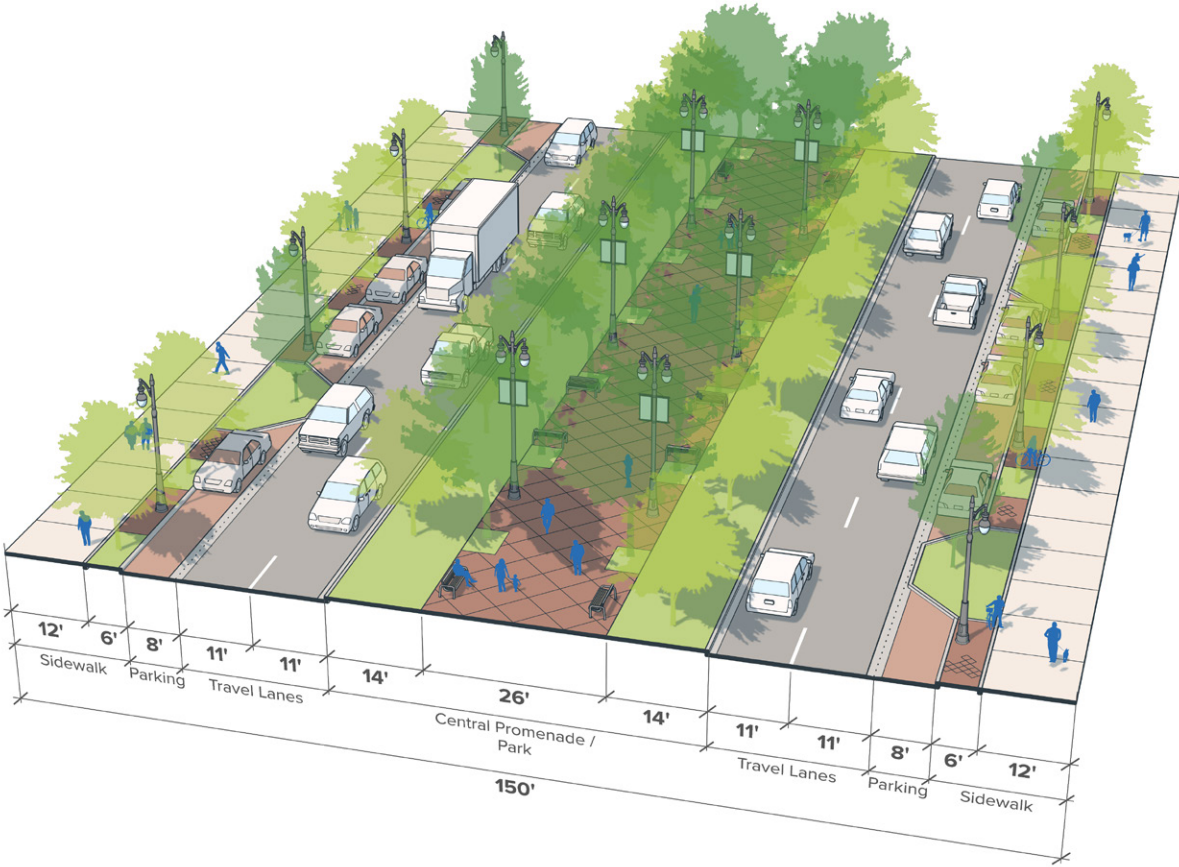
Adapting Major Corridors: Greystone Boulevard



Existing Conditions



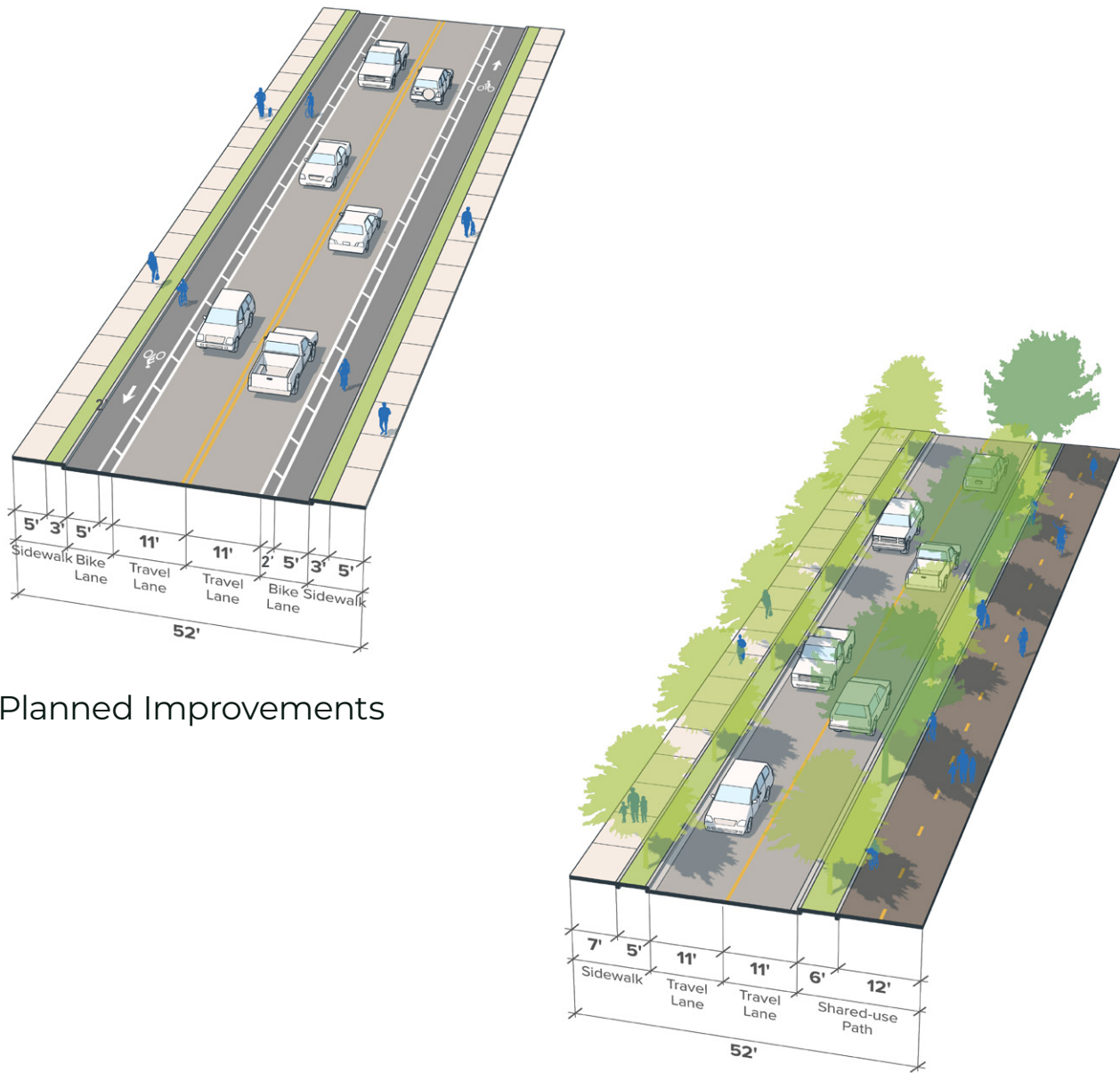
Potential Concept Alternative 1



Potential Concept Alternative 2

River Access

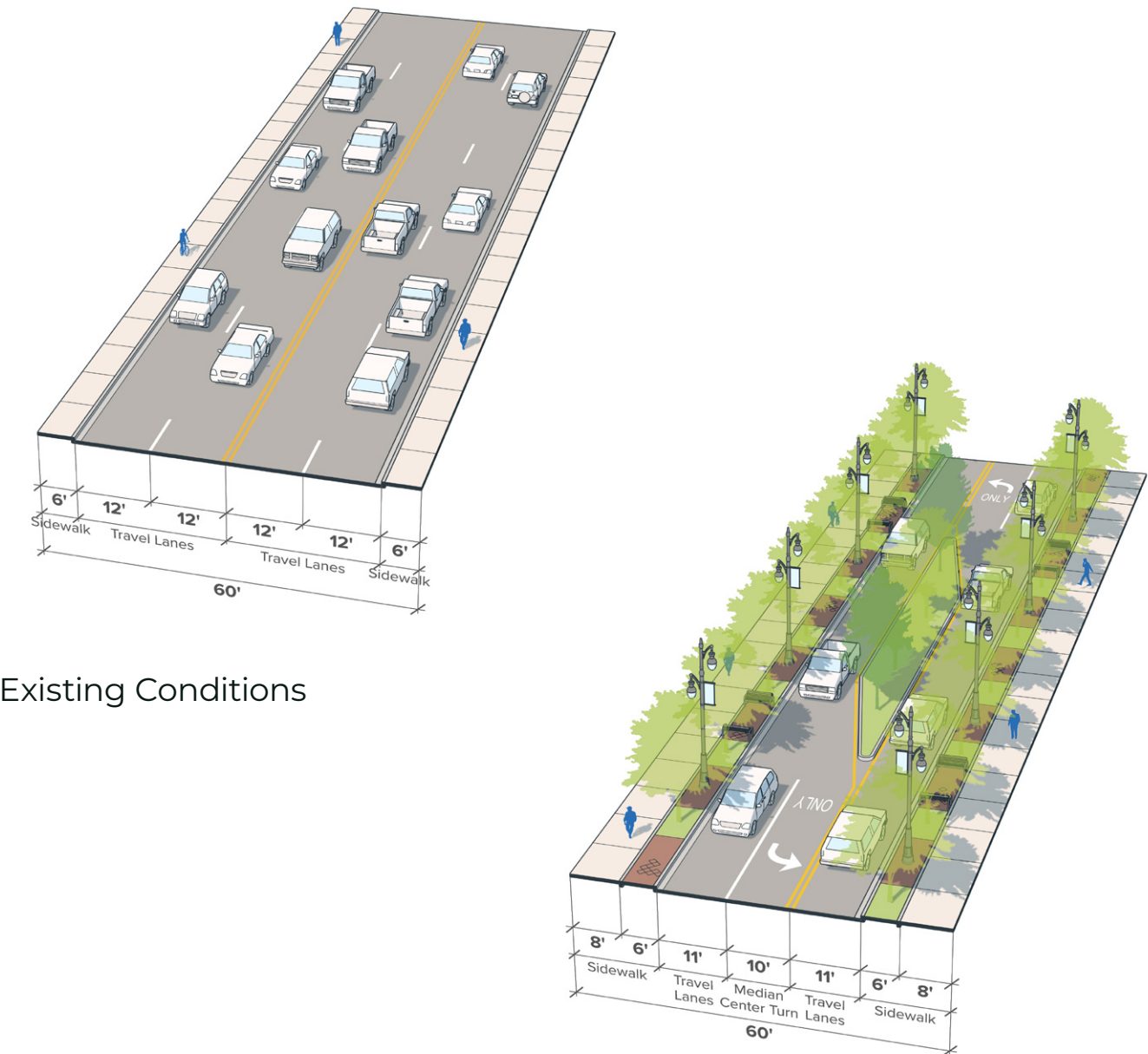
Adapting Major Corridors: River Drive



Planned Improvements

Potential Concept

Bush River Road



Existing Conditions

Potential Concept



REACHING RIVERBANKS

Community Mobility Plan

DRAFT
9.10.24



Contents

Why We Plan	4
About This Plan	5
Planning Process	6
1	
THE PLACE	9
The Place	10
Between Two Rivers	14
Development Character	18
Corridor Based Mobility	24
No Small Plans Were Made	34
Caught In The Middle	36
Large Site	37
2	
THE PEOPLE	39
The People	40
On Paper	42
In Person	47
Plan Goals	52
3	
THE PLAN	55
The Plan	56
Framework Approach	58
River Access	62
Street Connections	74
Growth Strategy	76
Market Recommendations	78
Future Land Use	84
Opportunity Sites	86
4	
IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN	107
Implementing the Plan	108
The Strategy	110
Project Parameters	112
Northwest Focus Area	116
Northeast Focus Area	124
Central Focus Area	130
East Focus Area	138





Why We Plan

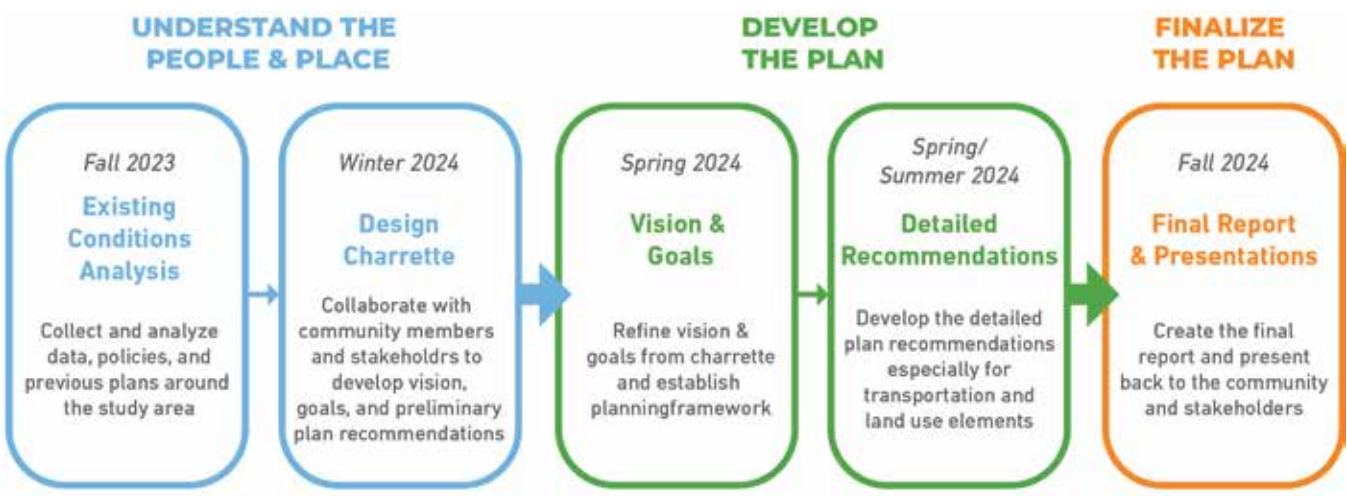
A plan is a proactive effort to create a vision for a future outcome linked with specific steps to help achieve that outcome. Planning is an important process for making decisions for areas of all shapes and sizes ranging from the most focused of transportation projects to entire cities and regions. They are most impactful when they thoughtfully consider the uniqueness of the physical place and meaningfully engage community members, stakeholders, and agency partners in the process. For an area as large and complex as Riverbanks, the *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan* is an invaluable tool for making intentional decisions about transportation and land use policies and projects that, when combined, create a physical place rich in experience and full of options for the way community members, present and future, live their everyday lives.

About This Plan

The Riverbanks area of northwest Columbia is looking to the future to be better prepared for new growth and development. The goal of the *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan* is to prepare the area's infrastructure, chiefly its transportation systems, and land use policies to direct this growth in a way that benefits existing and future residents. These transportation and land use decisions have been guided by a visionary planning process that began with understanding the people and places that comprise Riverbanks today and then worked with community members to create a vision for the place Riverbanks should become. The resulting plan proposes a new framework for community mobility built upon establishing new relationships with the area's riverfront, surrounding neighborhoods, and Downtown Columbia.

Planning Process

This new plan for Riverbanks is built on rigorous, thoughtful analysis of the study area’s existing physical and market conditions combined with close collaboration between the planning team, public agencies, major stakeholders, and the community at-large. Collaborating with so many partners on a study area as large as Riverbanks required a creative engagement process that ensured the community’s voices guided the plan’s development while also balancing project efficiency. To accomplish this, engagement activities were focused into a weeklong Community Planning Charrette during the project’s transition from analysis to design. This allowed the planning team to work alongside community members and other partners at multiple locations in the study area to develop the plan and its recommendations in real time. The final report for the *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan* is a record and product of that collaboration.



The entire process to develop the *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan* lasted almost a year with its launch in September 2023, the Community Planning Charrette in February 2024, and the development of the final report in August 2024.



Attachment: Reaching Riverbanks_Final Report_FINAL DRAFT-240910-spreads (9598 : Reaching Riverbanks Community Mobility Plan)



1 The Place

The Place

The study area for the Riverbanks plan sits at the convergence of the Saluda and Broad Rivers and Interstates I-20, I-26, and I-126. It is a short distance northwest of Downtown Columbia and includes the Earlewood neighborhood and Elmwood Cemetery to consider the larger study area’s transition and access to downtown. It includes notable destinations such as the Dutch Square Mall, H. E. Rhame Elementary School, St. Andrews Middle School, and the COMET facilities on River Drive and Lucius Road. Riverbanks is partially located within the city limits of Columbia with the balance lying in unincorporated Richland County. The area was selected for a closer planning study to respond to anticipated growth and change as well as transportation changes stemming from SCDOT’s Carolina Crossroads project affecting all interstate highways and their access along the periphery of the study area.

Riverbanks is a complex study area with many different facets that defy any single characterization. Traveling at high speeds on the interstates along Riverbanks’ periphery, the two rivers and dense tree canopy tell a story of the study area’s incredible natural assets. From the inside, traveling along Riverbanks’ major corridors of Broad River Road, Bush River Road, and Greystone Boulevard, it’s tempting to define this place in terms of its sprawling suburban development waiting for new life. Neither view tells the complete story and overlooks many different dimensions in between. Even the study area’s name of *Riverbanks* evokes more of a reference to the City’s beloved Riverbanks Zoo along the Saluda River than any real sense of connection to the rivers themselves.

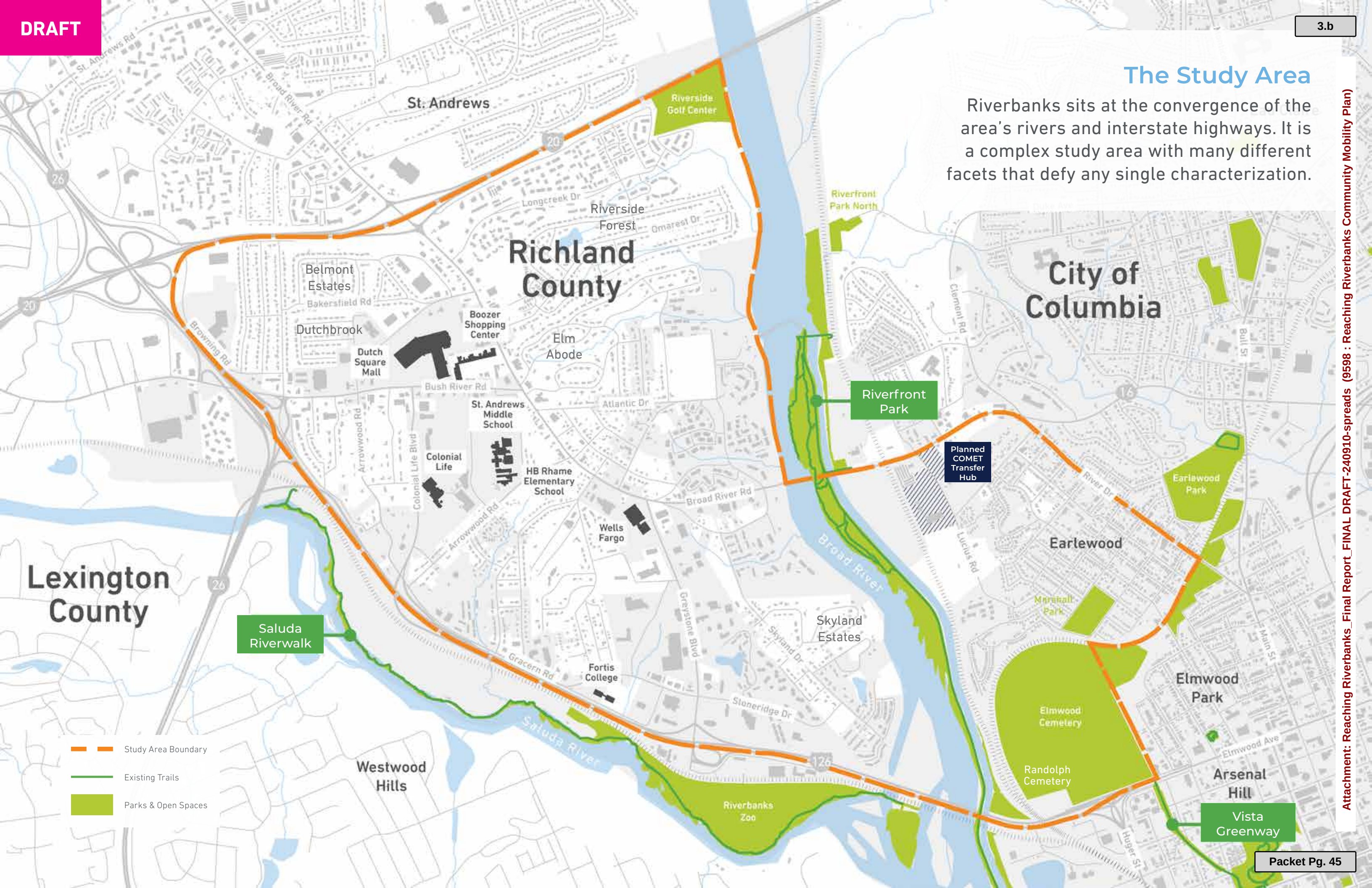
While this plan includes tangible recommendations for improving the study area’s transportation systems and land use policies, the true outcome of this plan is elevating Riverbanks as a place. This section focuses on establishing an understanding of that place as it exists today.

The North End of Riverfront Park (opposite page, above) and Dutch Square Mall (opposite page, below) highlight the stark contrasts present in the physical characteristics of the Riverbanks study area.



The Study Area

Riverbanks sits at the convergence of the area’s rivers and interstate highways. It is a complex study area with many different facets that defy any single characterization.



Between Two Rivers

On first glance, the majority of the Riverbanks study area is a peninsula formed by the Saluda and Broad Rivers as they converge into the Congaree River off of the peninsula’s southernmost tip. The peninsula includes the neighborhoods of Belmont Estates, Dutchbrook, Riverside Forest, Elm Abode, and Skyland Estates as well as the notable Dutch Square Mall. A smaller portion of the study area includes the Earlewood neighborhood that sits between the Broad River and Elmwood neighborhoods. The entire study area links to Downtown Columbia via two very different roadways over Broad River: the major arterial of Broad River Road/River Drive and Interstate 126 (I-126). The two rivers are a shaping force for the study area’s transportation system as much as they physically shape the peninsula itself.

From the roadways, the rivers provide a breathtaking view of the study area. Internally, they are an asset with limited, but improving, access. I-126 and the railroad create barriers between the Saluda River and the 7-mile Saluda Riverwalk on the western edge of the study area’s peninsula. The Saluda Riverwalk is a popular greenway but is only accessible by car at a single trailhead on Candi Lane. Steep grades and gated multifamily apartment communities block access to the Broad River on the eastern edge of the peninsula while the riverfront on the opposing side features the Riverfront Park: an almost 6-mile trail that connects this easternmost side of the Riverbanks study area directly with Downtown Columbia.

There are plans to extend the southern portion of the Saluda Riverwalk around Boyd Island and across the Broad River to connect with the Riverfront Park. Not only will this link two important greenways in the area, it has the potential to expand the use of the trails from recreational assets to critical links in the area’s mobility network.



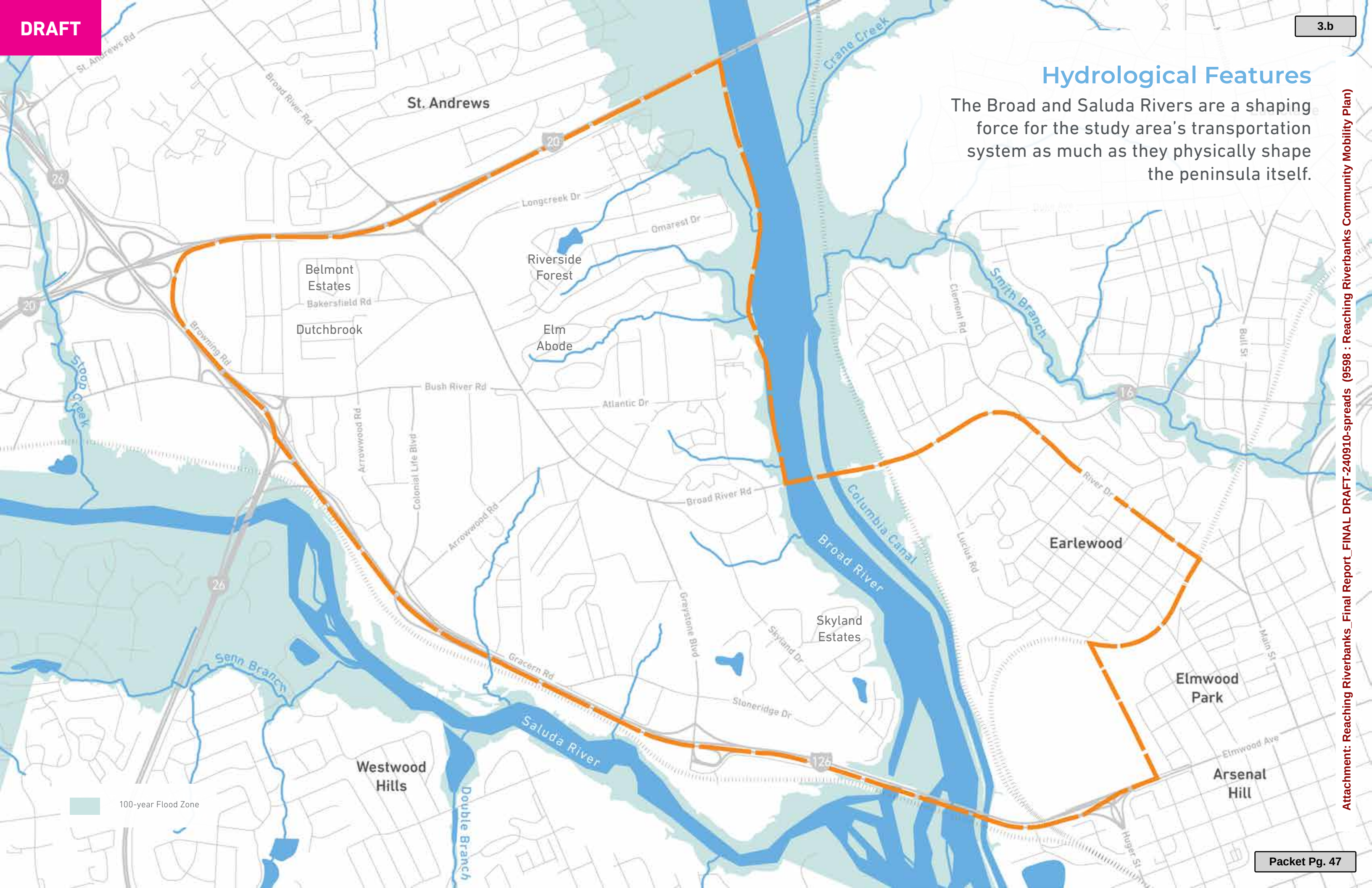
Saluda Riverwalk
Credit: Palmetto Outdoor



Riverfront Park
Credit: HD Carolina

Hydrological Features

The Broad and Saluda Rivers are a shaping force for the study area's transportation system as much as they physically shape the peninsula itself.



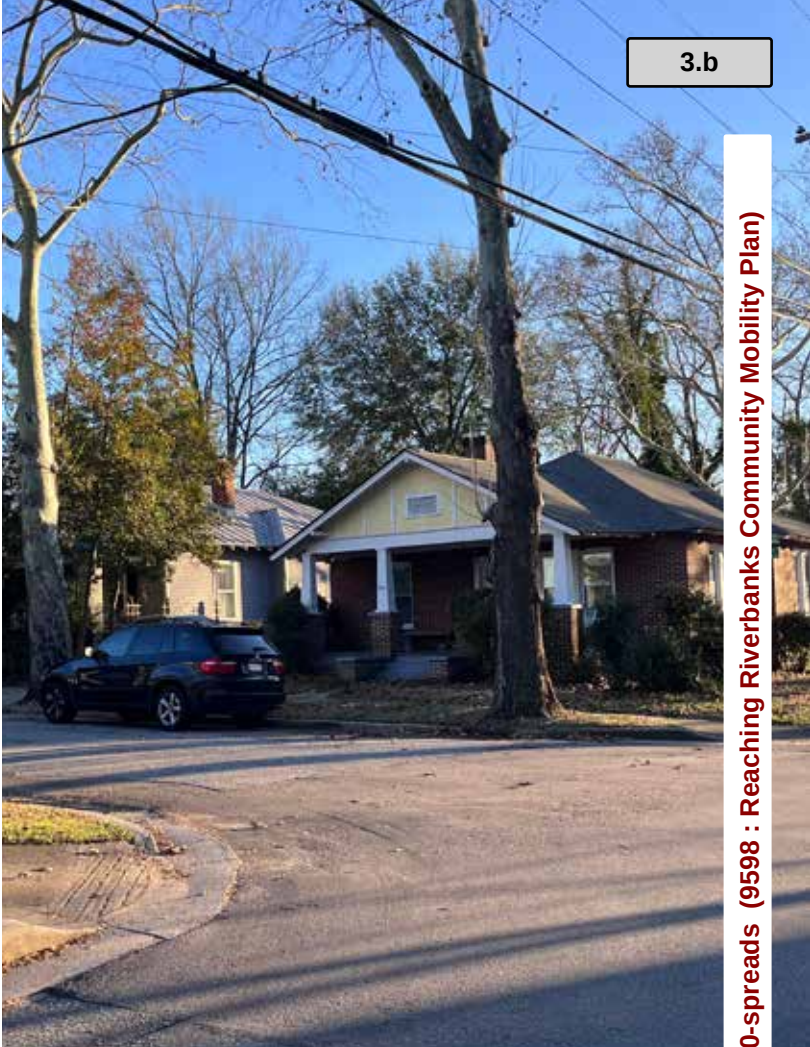
100-year Flood Zone

Development Character

Riverbanks' suburban strip commercial development along Broad River Road, Bush River Road, and Greystone Boulevard gives the first impression upon entering the study area by vehicle. This is punctuated by the 75-acre Dutch Square Mall site between Broad River Road and Bush River Road towards the northern end of the study area. Peeling back this first layer reveals a more complex mix of development.

Beyond the suburban corridors lies a variety of different residential neighborhoods ranging from detached single-family residential homes on compact lots in the northwestern portion of the study area to larger, suburban lots and homes along the western edge of Broad River. Gated, garden-style apartments occupy this same edge clustered around the crossing of Broad River Road over the Broad River as well as the northern edge along I-20. The Earlewood neighborhood in the southeastern portion of the study area features the most compact single-family homes. These are also some of the oldest structures in the study area and development in this area is governed by a historic preservation zoning overlay district and corresponding guidelines administered by the City of Columbia.

Notable office developments include Colonial Life on Colonial Life Boulevard and Wells Fargo at the intersection of Broad River Road and Greystone Boulevard: both of these are major employers that draw workers from outside of the study area. Additionally, the Browning Business Center near the interstate cloverleaf in the northwest corner of the site contains a concentration of office development and related uses.



Future Land Use

Between the City and County, there are 17 different future land use classifications associated with the Riverbanks study area.

- City
- UCMR-2
Urban Core Mixed Residential-2
 - UEMR
Urban Edge Mixed Residential
 - UCMF
Urban Core Multi-family
 - UCR-1
Urban Core Residential Small Lot
 - UER-1
Urban Edge Residential Small Lot
 - UER-2
Urban Edge Residential Large Lot
 - UCAC-1
Urban Core Neighborhood Activity Center
 - UCAC-2
Urban Core Community Activity Center
 - UCAC-3
Urban Core Regional Activity Center
 - AC-2
Community Activity Center
 - AC-3
Regional Activity Center
 - EC
Employment Campus
 - TU
Transportation & Utilities
 - C/I
Civic/Institutional
 - T/S
Transitional/Sensitive Lands
- County
- Mixed Residential (High Density)
 - Mixed Use Corridor



Signals of New Investment

Richland County

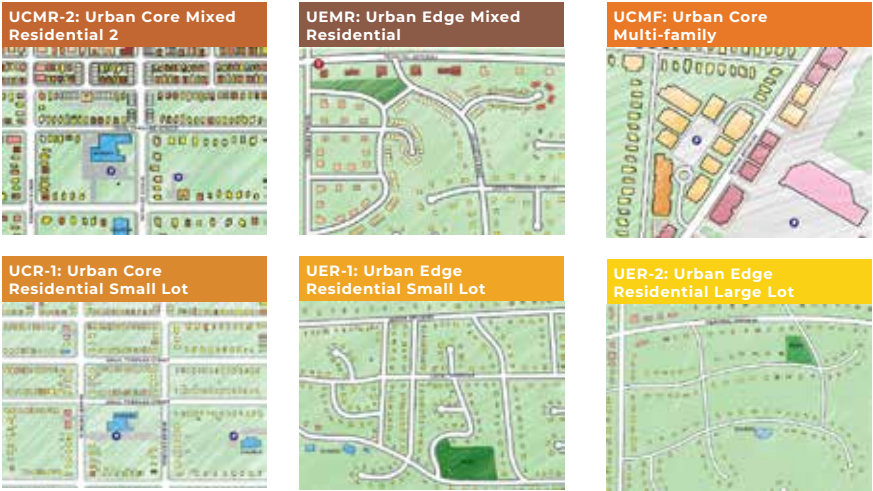
The County only has 2 different land use classifications for the entire study area.



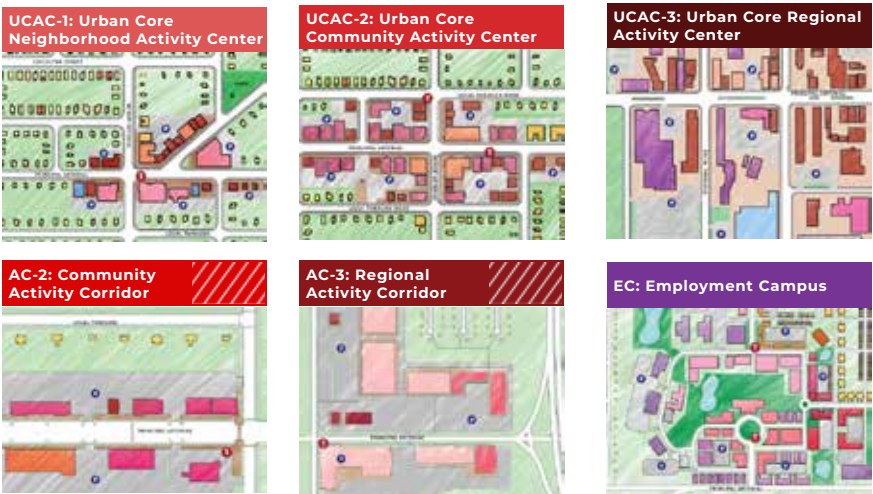
Between the City and County comprehensive plans, there are 17 different future land use classifications associated with the Riverbanks study area. These classifications are current as of the 2015 Richland County Comprehensive Plan and the City’s comprehensive plan, Columbia Compass Envision 2036, adopted in 2020. These run the spectrum of uses associated with a desire to change use and density, focused along the area’s major corridors, to those aimed at protecting existing uses, particularly in the residential areas. While it’s not uncommon for cities and counties to balance areas for growth and change with those for protection, what’s missing from either policy framework is a clear, guiding vision for the sum of these uses. In other words, what does Riverbanks want to become when it grows up?

City of Columbia

The City has 15 different land use classifications for the same area.



6 classifications are for different patterns and densities of residential.



6 classifications are different intensities of mixed-use and specialized uses.

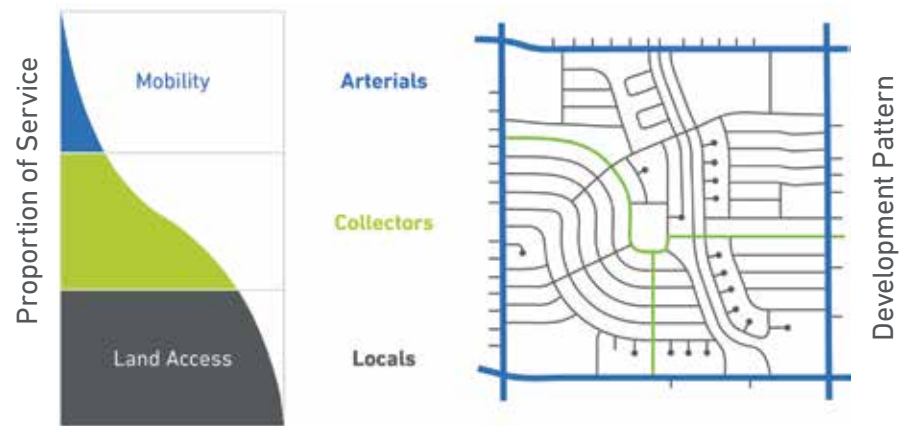


3 classifications can be located within residential or mixed-use contexts.

Corridor Based Mobility

The existing development in Riverbanks is a direct product of the infrastructure designed to support it: the hierarchy of interstates and arterial, collector, and local roadways. This type of street system is designed to balance efficient movement of high volumes of vehicles along larger roads (interstates and arterials) while focusing access to adjacent development on smaller roads (collectors and locals). Aside from the mobility functions, this system tends to segregate land uses into larger districts whose access favors vehicular. Riverbanks is no exception. Despite the wide mix of development type and uses within the study area, these tend to be in large, isolated clusters. The major corridors of Broad River Road, Bush River Road, and Greystone Boulevard focus on moving vehicles between Downtown Columbia and destinations outside of the study area while also acting as barriers to local destinations within Riverbanks.

The challenge with this system for mobility is that it prioritizes longer, regional trips over smaller, local ones. Travel for daily needs in the study area, beyond commuting to or from it for employment, can be extremely difficult as access to all homes, businesses, and other destinations requires trips on the largest arterial corridors. Not coincidentally, development and uses along these corridors have little to no relationship to surrounding development. For Reaching Riverbanks to be a plan that truly serves community mobility, it must propose recommendations for a multimodal transportation system that responds to the needs of community members.



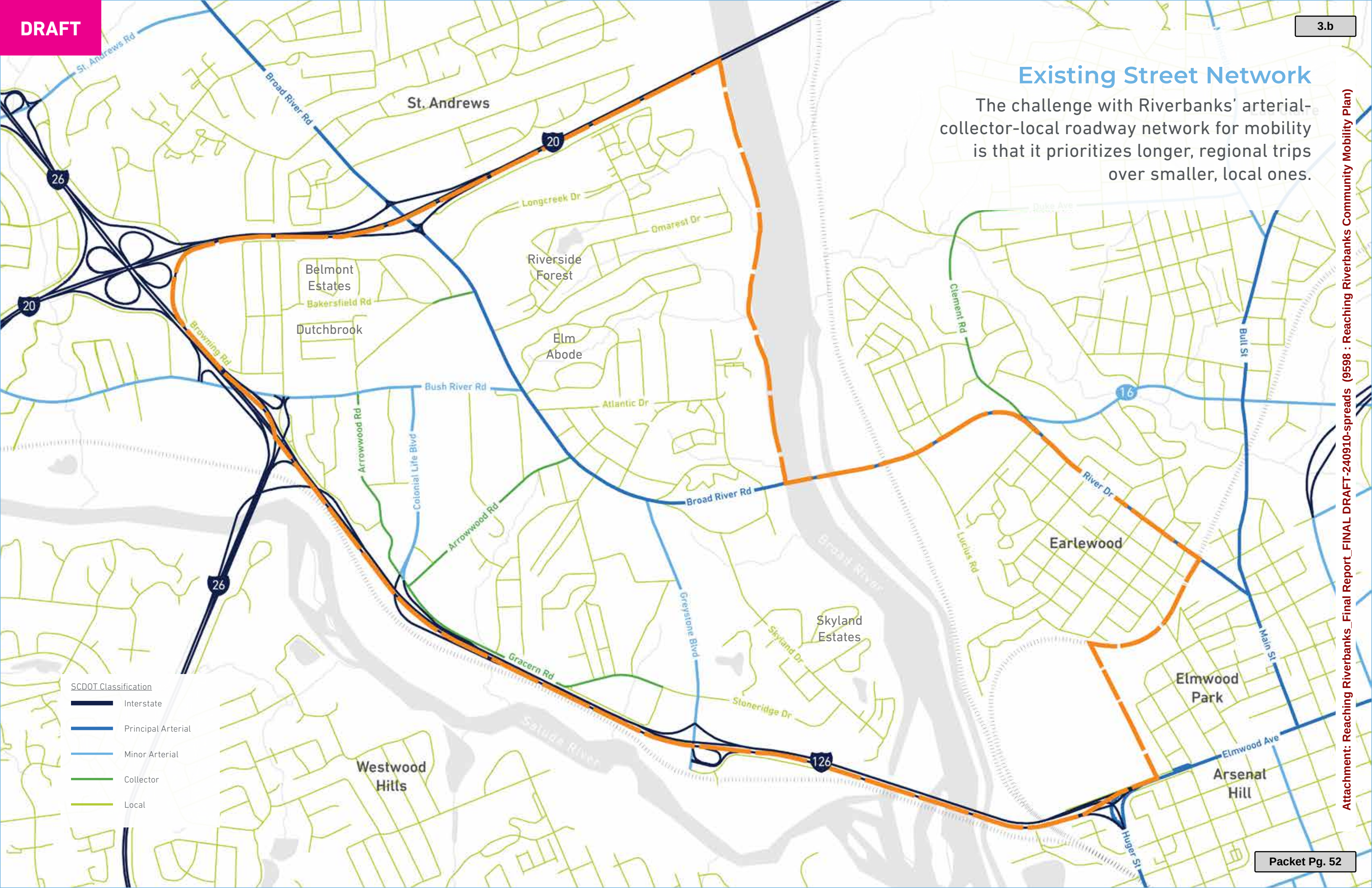
The Modern Functional Hierarchy of Streets and the Resulting Patterns of Development

Opposite Top: Broad River Road | SCDOT Principal Arterial, 5 Lanes
Opposite Bottom Left: Bush River Road | SCDOT Minor Arterial, 4-5 Lanes
Opposite Bottom Right: Greystone Boulevard | SCDOT Minor Arterial, 5 Lanes

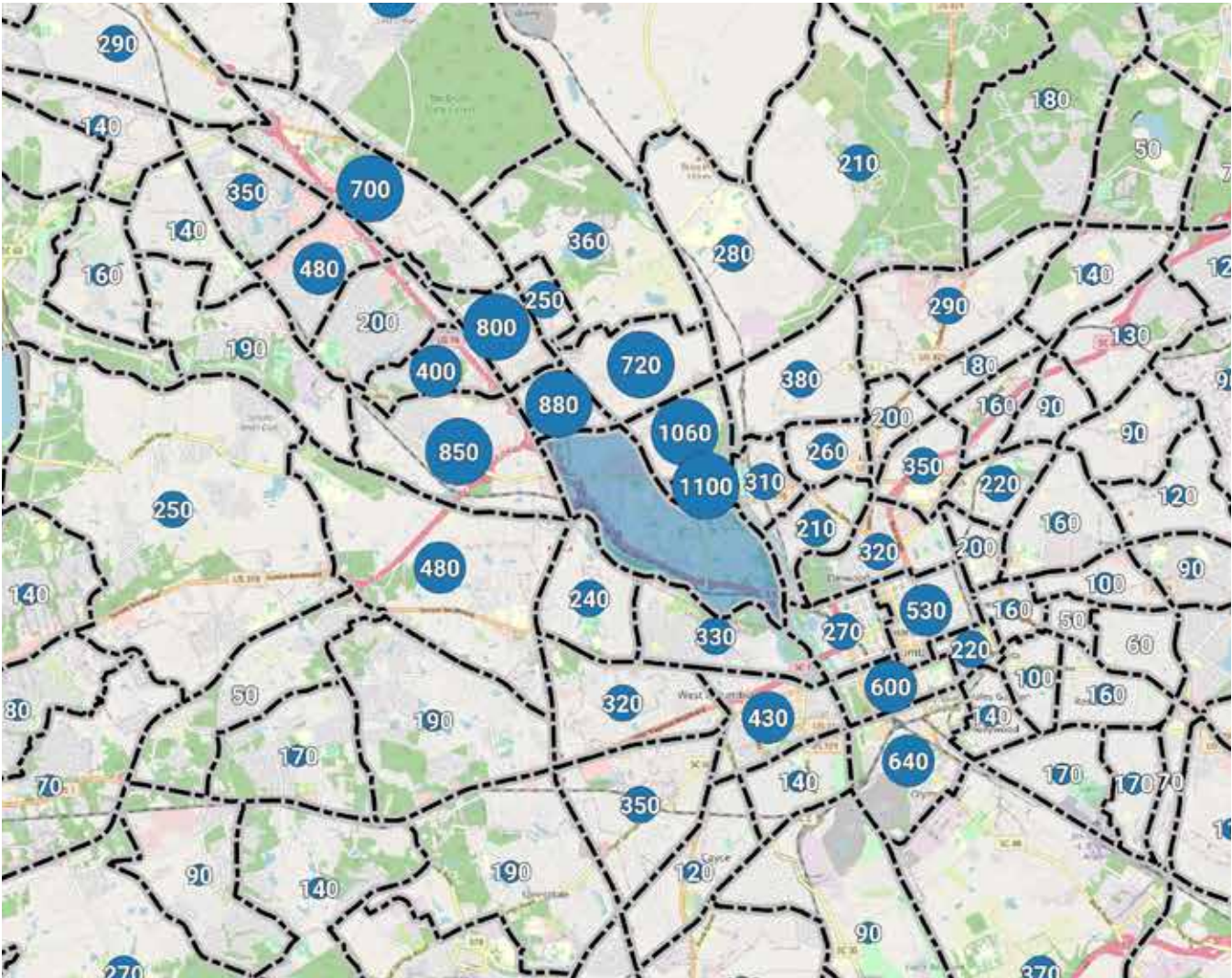


Existing Street Network

The challenge with Riverbanks' arterial-collector-local roadway network for mobility is that it prioritizes longer, regional trips over smaller, local ones.



- SCDOT Classification
- Interstate
 - Principal Arterial
 - Minor Arterial
 - Collector
 - Local



Origin of trips to census tract 104.3

Passing Through

Development based on high-capacity corridors dates back to the study area's formative years when US 76 and Broad River Road first provided access to Riverbanks before the arrival of the interstates. I-126 was the first interstate to be constructed in the study area replacing US 76. I-20 and I-26 followed shortly with Dutch Square Mall arriving not long after the completion of these highways. This network of highways cemented Riverbanks as a place for *passing through* for the last several decades. Today many of the trips that pass through the study area begin or end in areas just beyond Riverbanks, particularly in Downtown Columbia to the southeast and St. Andrews to the north.

Riverbank's major growth and development coincided with the completion of the interstate highway system which opened the area for auto-oriented development.



1951
Pre-Interstate



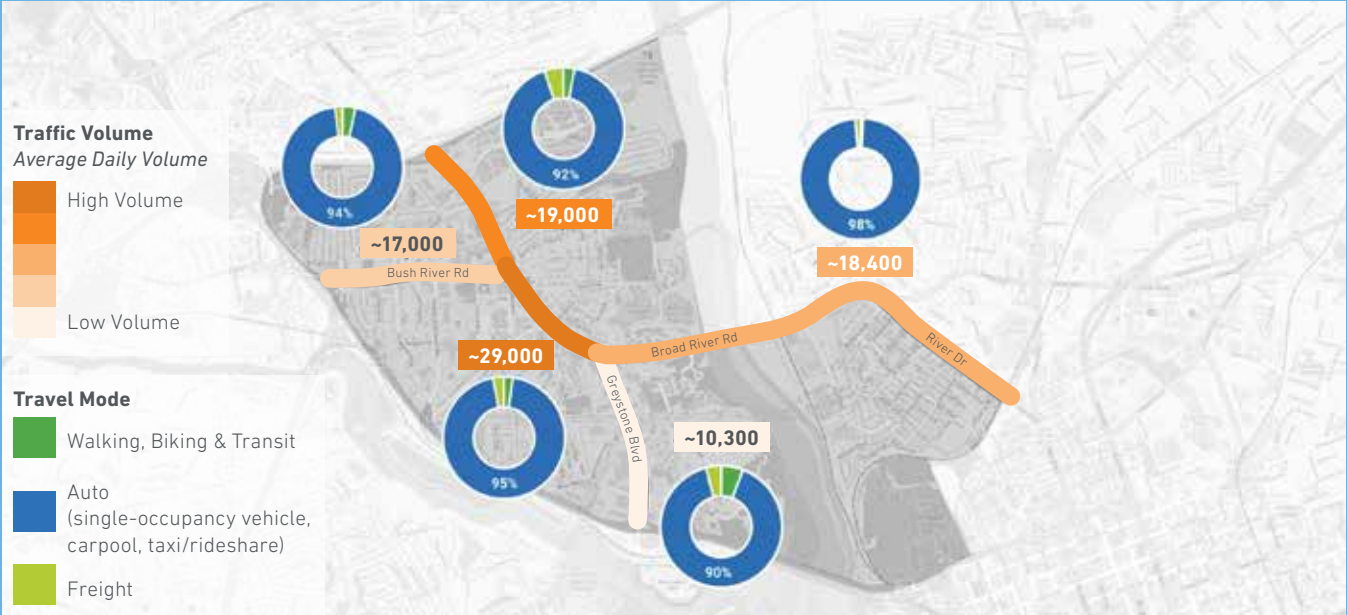
1960
Interstate Arrival



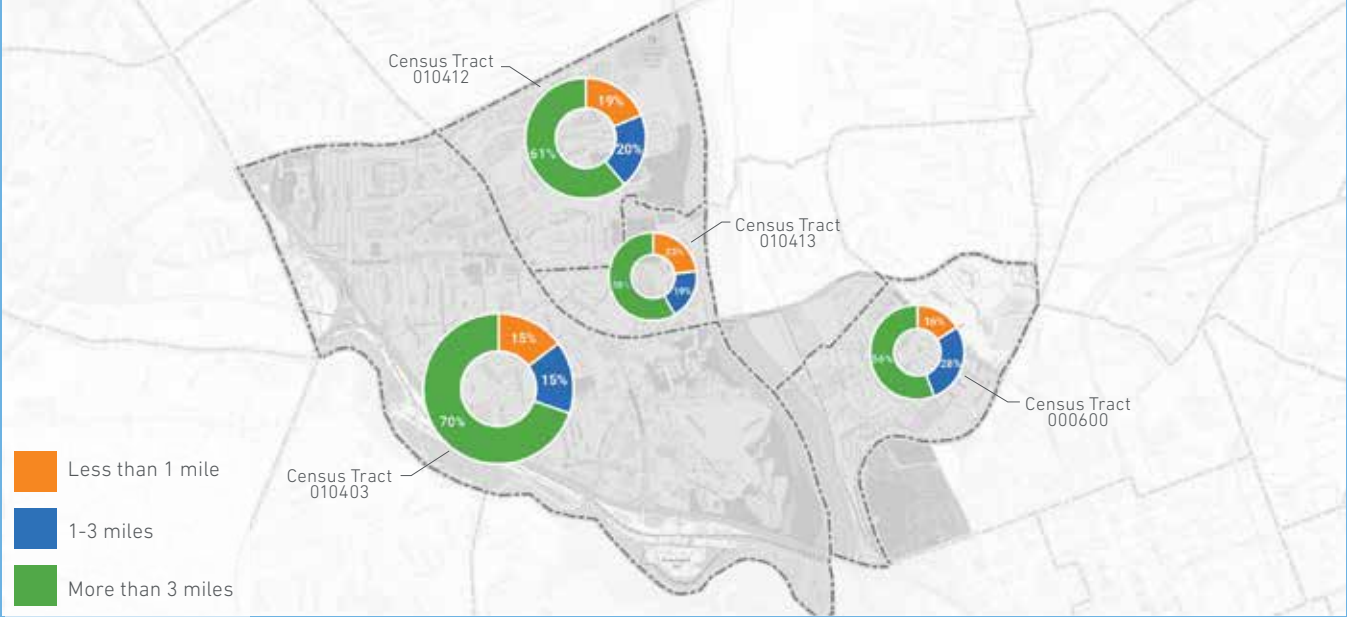
1966
Interstate Completion



1970
Dutch Square Mall & Suburbanization



Trips by Travel Mode



Trip Distance

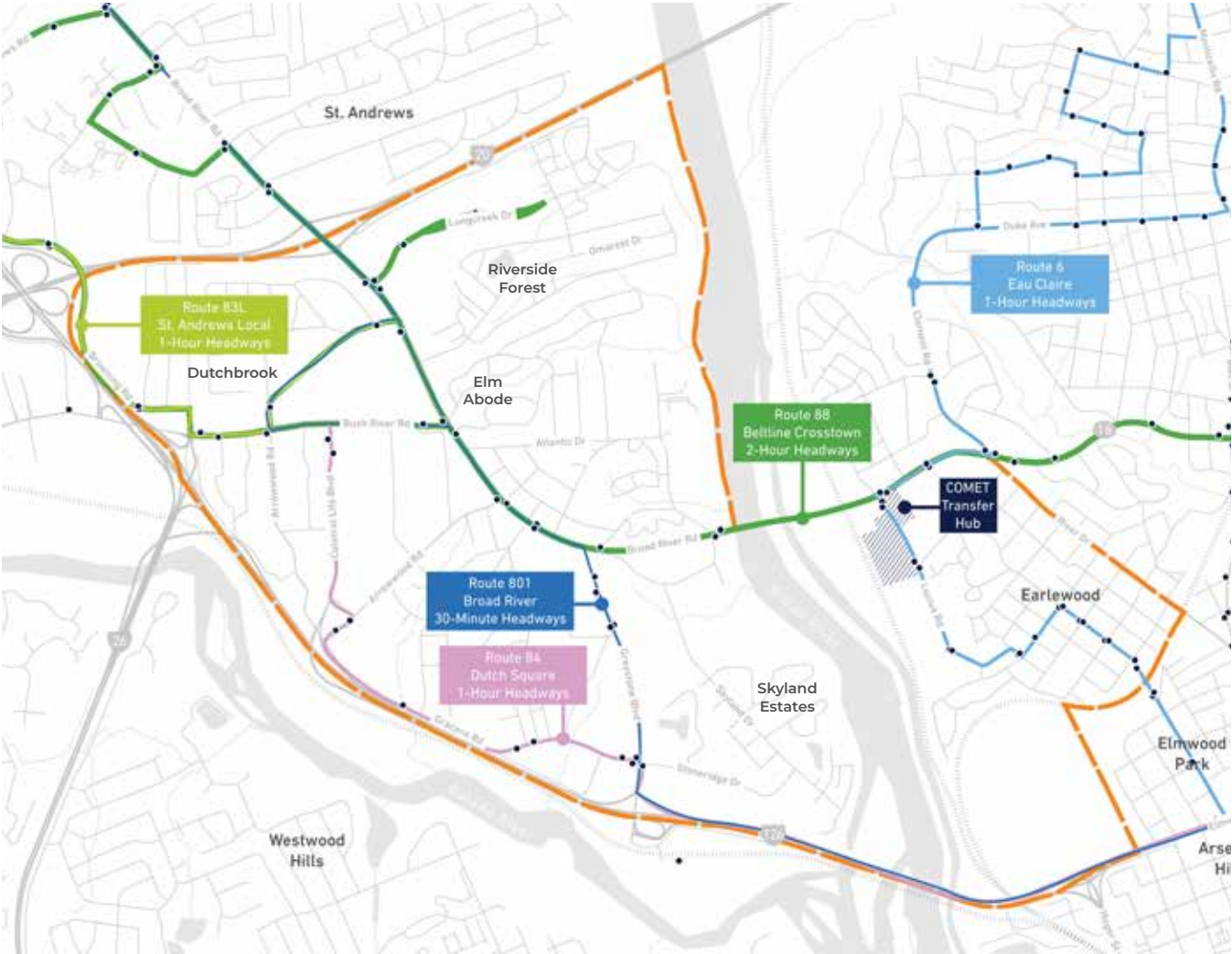
Most trips are done by car, however, many local trips are less than three miles. These local trips could be walkable or bikeable if infrastructure was provided.



Broad River Road approaching the Greystone Boulevard intersection

Local Trips

While Riverbanks' roadway system favors longer trips, local trips make up almost half of all trips taken in the study area meaning these trips both start and end within Riverbanks. Of these local trips approximately 20% of these are less than a mile, a walkable distance, and another 20% are between 1-3 miles, a commonly accepted bikeable distance. This tells us that there's potential opportunity to accommodate some of these trips by an alternative mode of transportation if the right infrastructure were present. As it stands today, the prioritization of vehicular trips on the arterial-collector-local roadway system has minimized the presence of sidewalks and bicycle facilities throughout the study area. Sidewalks, where they do exist, are narrow and immediately adjacent to wide, high-speed roadways making walking here an uncomfortable and unsafe experience. Biking on the arterials, which are required for all trips in the study area, is not a reasonable option in their present form. The opportunity for this community mobility plan is to consider how existing streets could be redesigned to accommodate multiple transportation modes and propose new connections, street or otherwise, that support shorter trips between destinations in the study area.

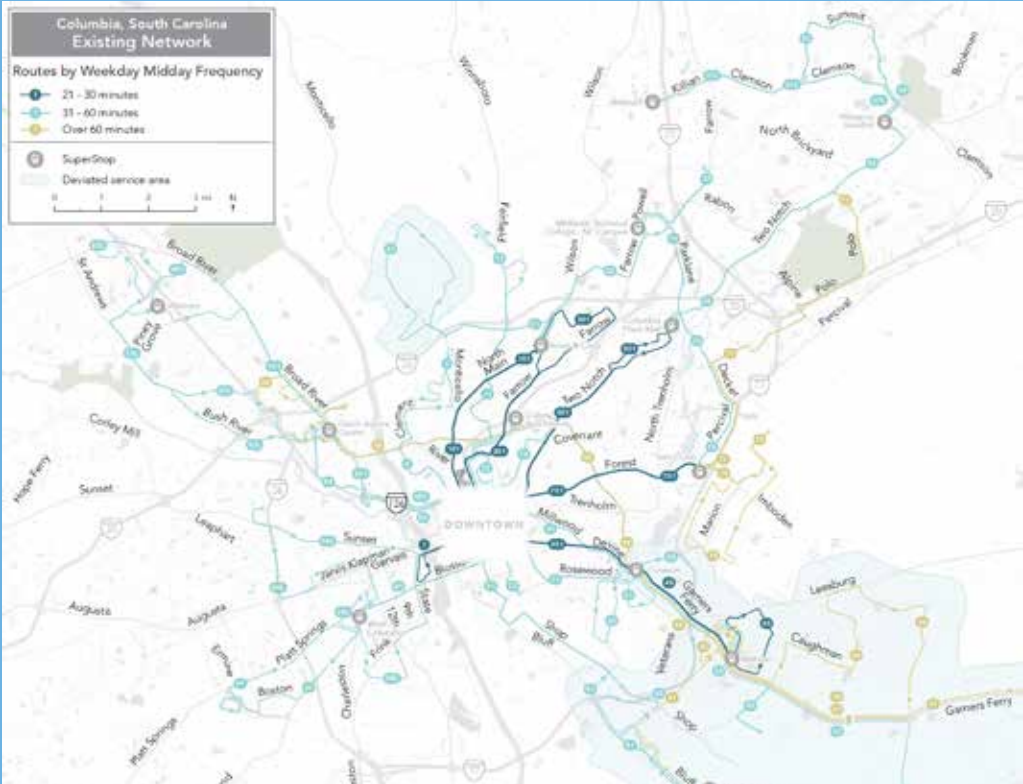


COMET bus routes and stops in the Riverbanks study area.

Transit for the Midlands

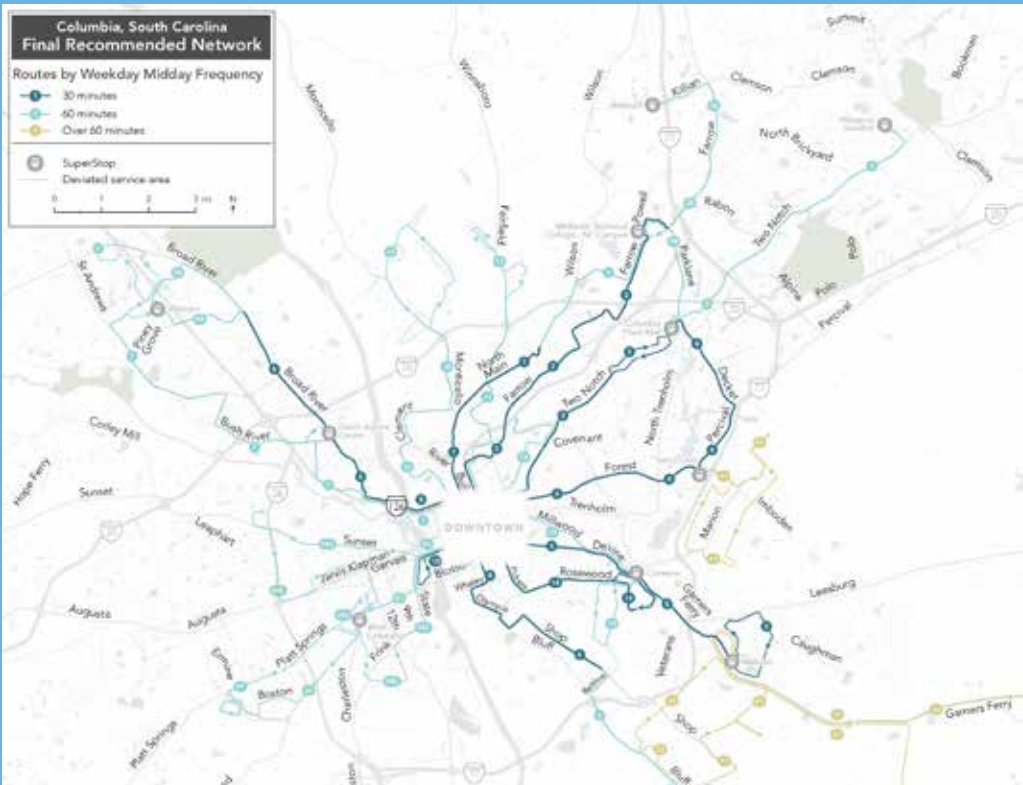
Riverbanks is served by the COMET (Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority) which provides bus service to transit riders throughout the Central Midlands region. There are currently five routes located in Riverbanks. These are generally found on the area’s major corridors with headways ranging from 30 minutes to two hours. While it’s possible to use the COMET to reach destinations within the study area, the routes and headways are primarily designed to support trips to regional destinations. In 2022, the *Reimagine the COMET* study proposed changes to the bus network that would better balance ridership and service areas. The impact on the study area, if implemented, would be the loss of Route 801. While the overall system, existing or proposed, does little to support local trips within Riverbanks, it’s important to ensure that bus stops are easily accessible for riders and that any proposals for multimodal roadway design accommodate COMET’s buses.

Recommended route changes from the *Reimagine The COMET* that focus on balancing resources between maximizing ridership and providing adequate service coverage.



Existing Network

Five bus routes provide access to regional destinations with headways ranging from 30 minutes to two hours.



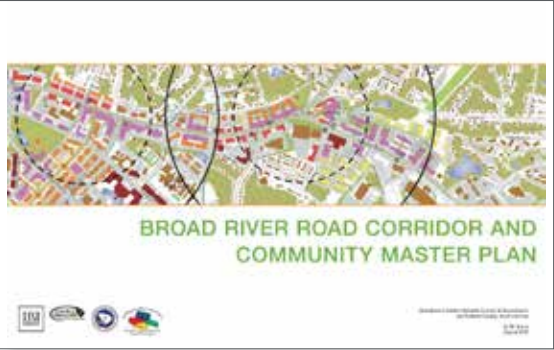
Proposed Network

Some routes with longer headways, such as Route 801 in Riverbanks, are eliminated to better balance ridership with service coverage.

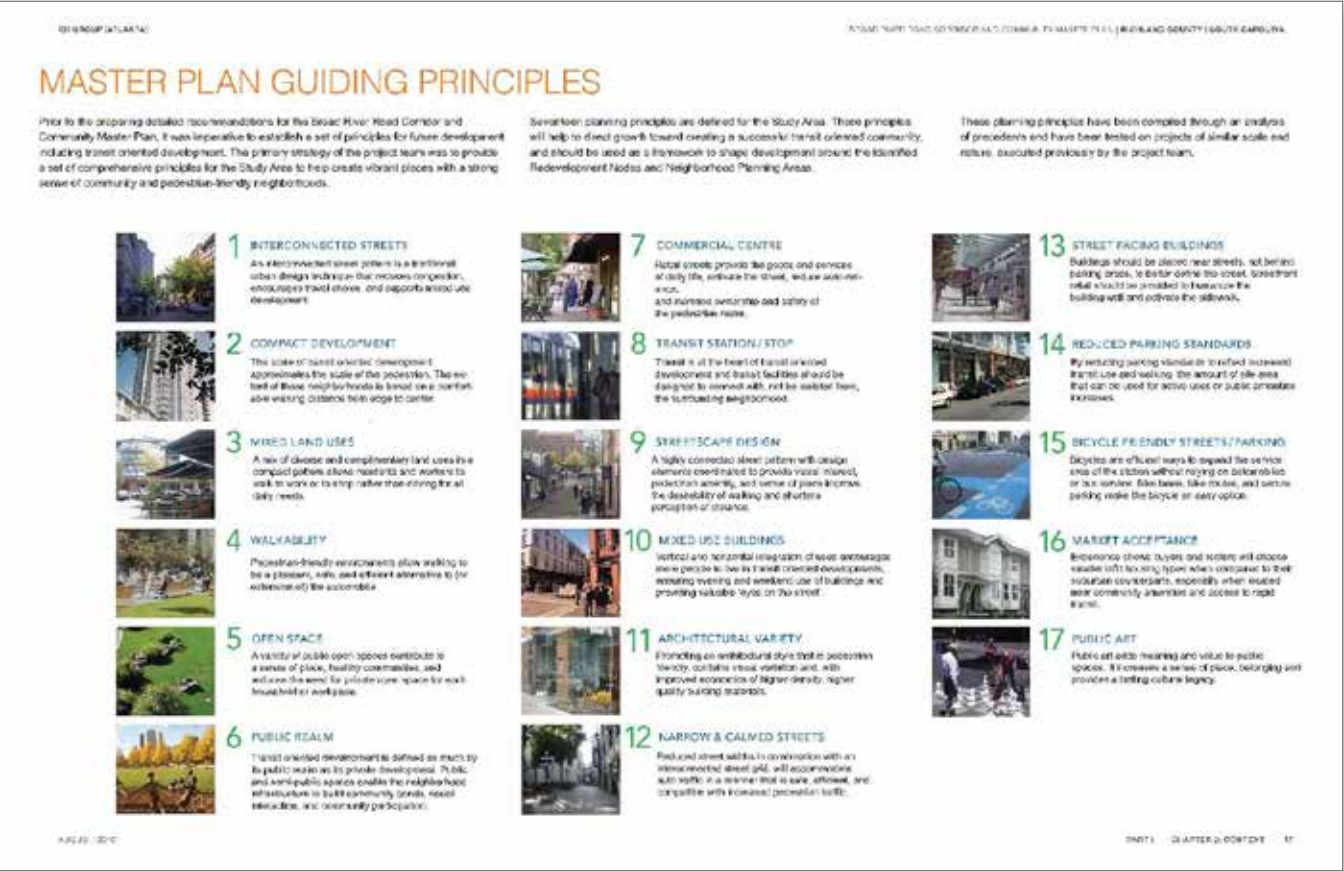
No Small Plans Were Made

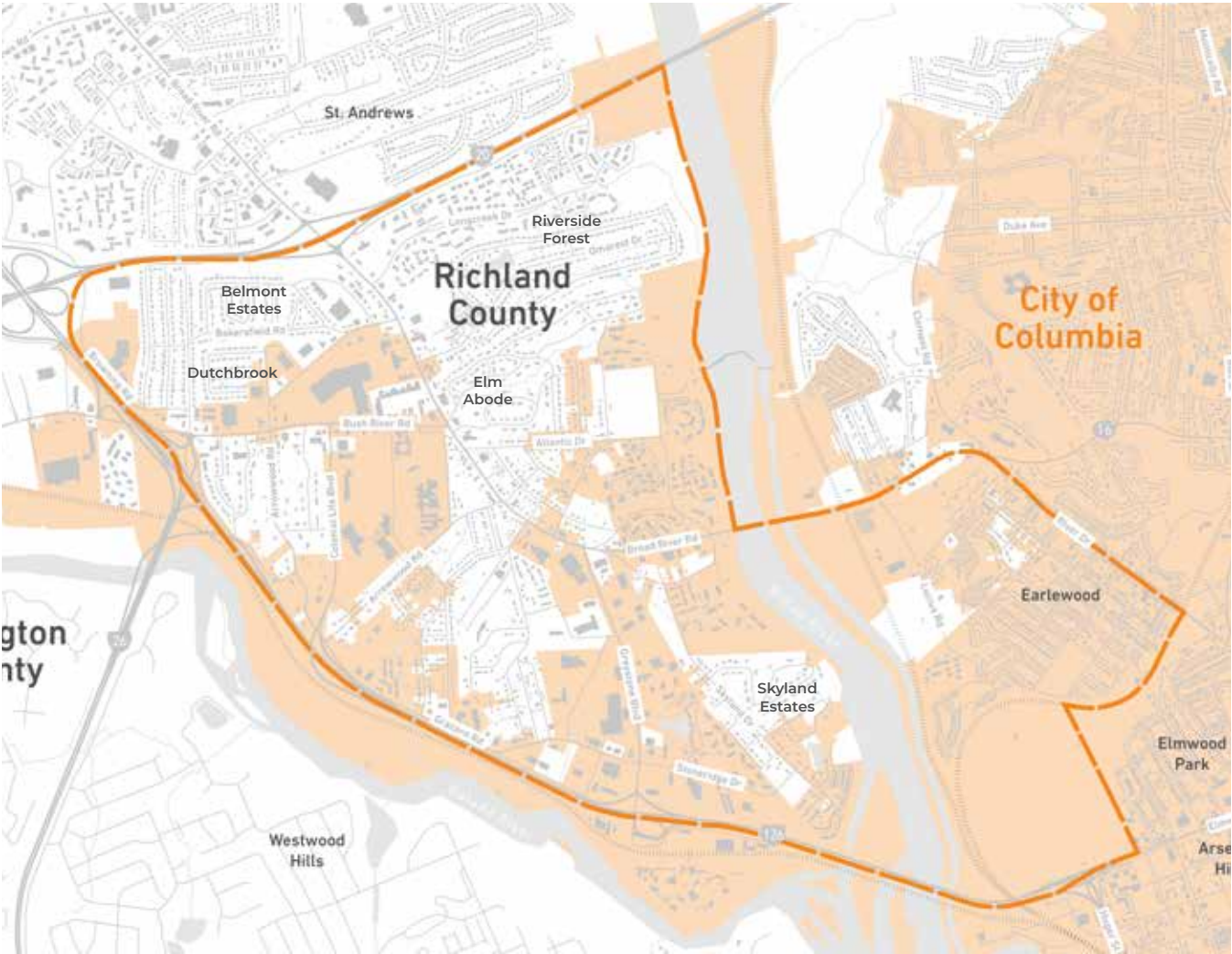
City and County comprehensive plans have set and maintained comprehensive development policies for the study area, such as transportation and land use, that are intertwined with the bigger picture of city and county development issues. But the *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan* is not the first planning study to consider Riverbanks. In 2010 the *Broad River Road Corridor and Community Master Plan* (led and adopted by CMCOG and Richland County) presented a vision and recommendations for the transformation of Broad River Road and adjacent areas from the suburban arterial corridor it is today into a densely developed corridor capable of supporting a variety of transportation types. The goals of that plan, which prioritizes incremental development, connected streets, walking and biking, and new open spaces, are still relevant today and generally considered elements of good planning. The challenge is that little has come of the plan 14 years later.

Often planning will tout Daniel Burham: “make no small plans.” While this line reminds us to be visionary and think wholistically about the future, it’s critical for plans, particularly ambitious ones, to be grounded in reality. Especially with the complicated realities of implementation. Transforming Broad River Road, as the centerpiece of a plan, is a herculean effort. It requires multiple governments (city and county), partnering agencies (local and state), major stakeholders, and community members to work in lockstep and be constant champions. It also requires a massive amount of funding and market conditions that incentivize private development to complement public investment. These are challenging conditions to align. It’s not to say that these big efforts shouldn’t be undertaken, but that they don’t have to be the prerequisite on which all other actions hinge. The key to implementation of a community mobility study will be to consider what is achievable at the community level and can build momentum for larger tasks.



Broad River Road Corridor and Community Master Plan (2010)





City and County boundaries as of the outset of the planning process in Fall 2023

Caught In The Middle

Riverbanks is caught in the middle of being 60% in the City of Columbia and 40% in unincorporated Richland County. The study area's incremental annexation into the City over time has left it with an inconsistent municipal boundary that zig-zags around the study area including large appendages and gaps. This boundary adds another layer of complexity for implementation. Identifying projects that fall strictly within the City or County portion of the study area that serve the best interests of community mobility will be a virtually impossible task. Complete annexation into the City is also a highly unlikely scenario. The recommendations of the plan, and its implementation strategy, will need to consider an approach that enables the City and County to work in partnership in the easiest possible way.

Large Site

Developing a plan that supports community mobility for the entire Riverbanks area is no small task: Riverbanks is no small study area. At almost 4.5 square miles (2,900 acres) Riverbanks is larger than Downtown Columbia and other downtowns in similar riverfront cities like Chattanooga. In fact, all Lower Manhattan could fit within the Riverbanks study area.

What does this mean for the plan and its process? It means that mobility recommendations of this plan must be developed with a strategy for implementation at the outset. This strategy must avoid the potential pitfall of putting too many eggs in a single basket. Rather than a central, large project from which all other projects flow outward, this *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan* must think about incremental projects that add up to something that is bigger than the sum of its parts: an approach that prioritizes community needs first and satisfies regional mobility needs second as opportunities for funding and implementation present themselves.



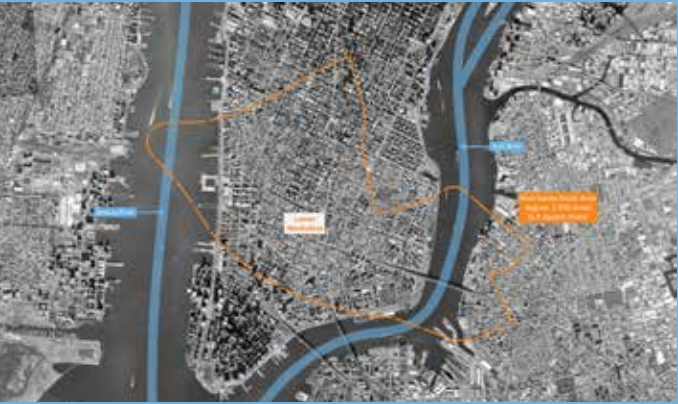
Riverbanks Study Area



Downtown Columbia



Downtown Chattanooga



Manhattan



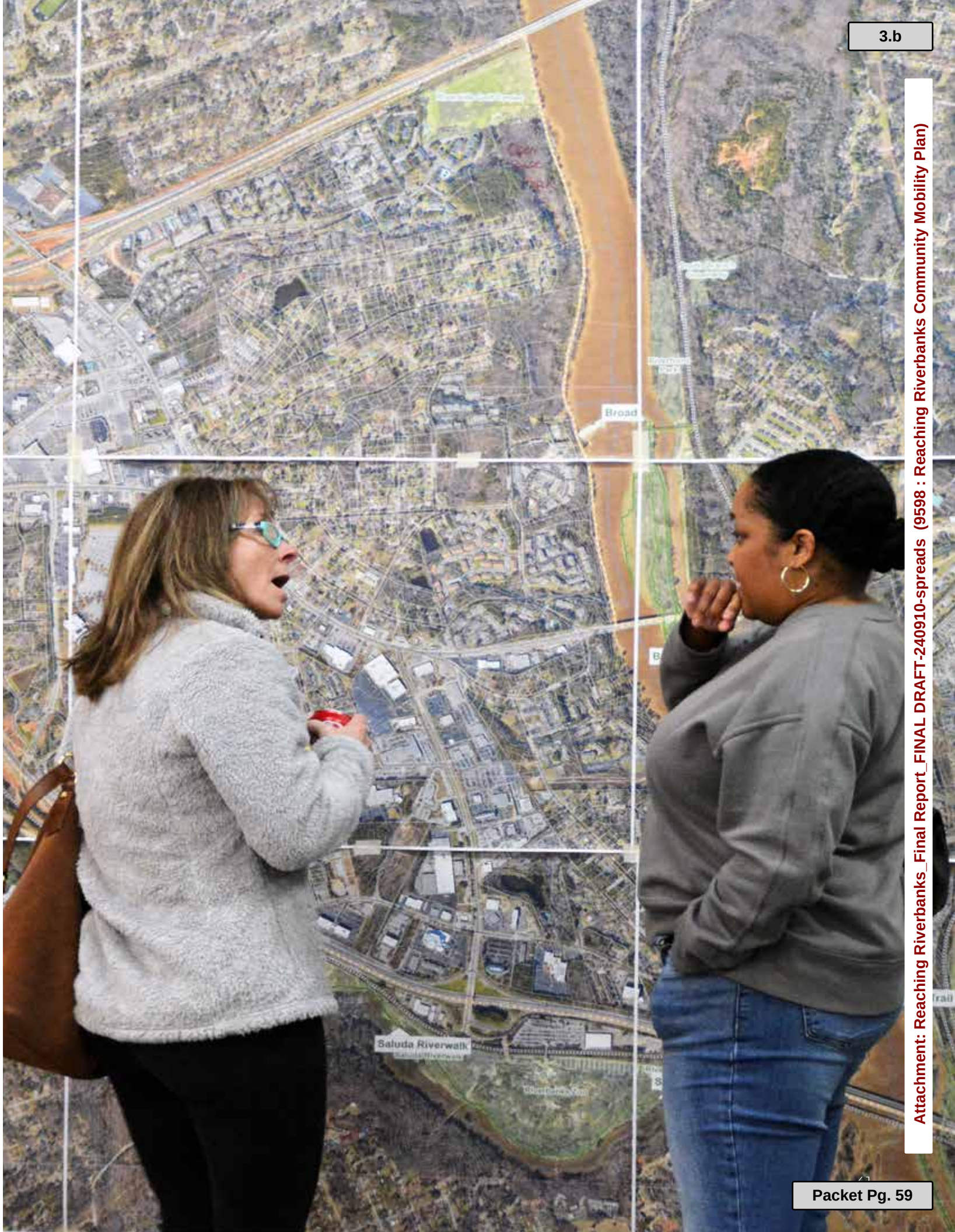
2

The People

The People

The first section of this document focused on understanding Riverbanks as a physical place. This section focuses on understanding Riverbanks by the people who live and work there today. While planning for a future outcome is predicated on anticipated growth – new residents, workers, and visitors – it’s vital that planning considers the needs and desires of the existing community first and foremost. While growth and change can be positive things, they are only positive if the benefits are realized by existing community members and improve the options for the way they want to live their lives.

The planning process for Riverbanks approached understanding community from two perspectives. First, the process included an in-depth market study and housing needs assessment to create a data-driven profile of the community. It’s important to understand what the data tells us about the types of recommendations a plan should consider especially for new development and land uses and the transportation systems that support it. This must be coupled with engaging the community directly. Community members are important partners in the planning process. They can help validate or fill in the gaps of the data analysis, provide important anecdotal information about daily activities in the study area, and most importantly, help us establish a vision and goals for the plan. Our process included a weeklong Community Planning Charrette on-site in the study area to spend a wealth of time with community members and key stakeholders to collaborate in the creation of this plan. The following pages provide an overview of key themes of what we learned about the people both on paper and in person.



On Paper

A market overview and housing needs assessment were prepared as part of the *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan*. The market overview examined demographic and economic data, household income information, jobs by industry in the study area, industry jobs by resident, primary employers, and commute flow information. The housing summary assessed tenure, vacancy rates, age, and sizes of units, as well as home sales and rents, housing affordability, and job-resident employment gaps. The complete, supporting study can be found as an appendix to this final report.

This information helps us identify the sectors and development types that should be targeted to assist with economic growth in the Riverbanks study area, prepare a housing needs assessment, and determine the relative vulnerability of existing residents to displacement. With the market overview, the housing needs assessment, the site visit and information gleaned from stakeholder interviews, and the public workshops during the charrette, we are also able to develop a set of anti-displacement strategies for the existing residential and commercial communities as part of the final plan recommendations presented later in this report.

Riverbanks is Growing

Riverbanks had 11,582 residents and 6,128 households in 2023. This represents an 8 percent increase in residents since 2010, more than double the 3.7 percent population growth in the City of Columbia. Riverbanks also saw a 7.2 percent increase in households though Columbia’s households grew over twice as quickly at 15.5 percent.

The median age of Riverbanks residents is 34.4 years, slightly older than the City’s median age of 31. This difference can be attributed to the large population of college students attending the University of South Carolina, located in Downtown Columbia. Approximately 53.9 percent of Riverbanks residents are Black/African American, 35 percent are White, and 4.6 percent are Hispanic/Latino. Population growth and housing information demonstrate the need for additional housing units. The Riverbanks population is growing faster than that of Columbia (8.0 percent versus 3.7 percent), and overall home vacancy rates are relatively low (9.7 percent).

Population

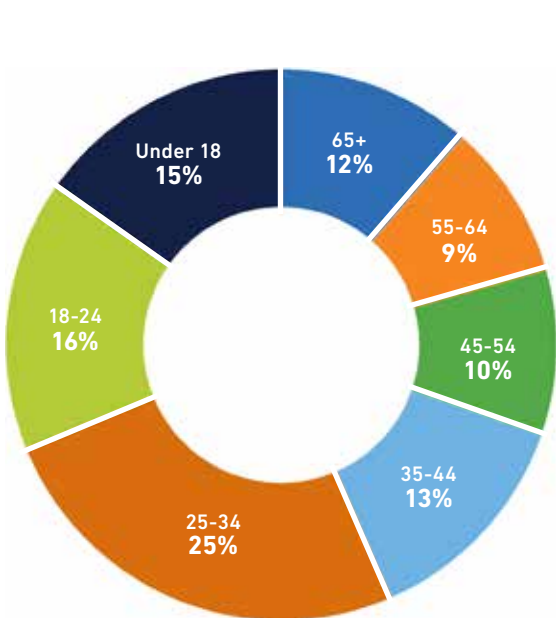
2010	10,721	+8%
2023	11,582	

Number of Households

2010	5,719	+7%
2023	6,128	

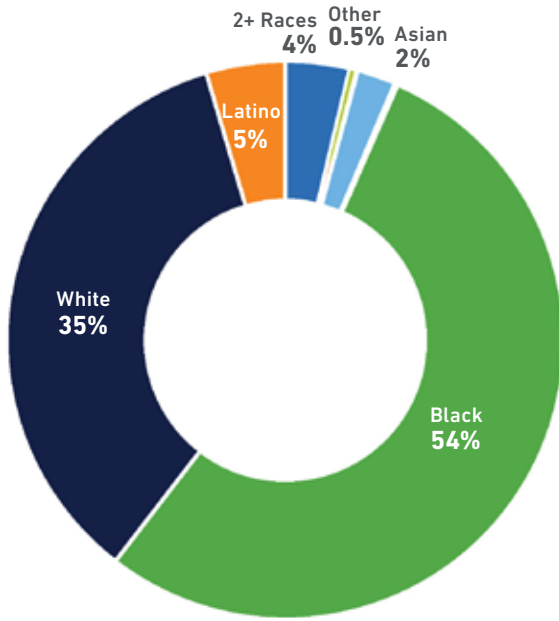
Average Household Size

2010	1.85	+2%
2023	1.89	



Age Distribution

[U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE 2024]



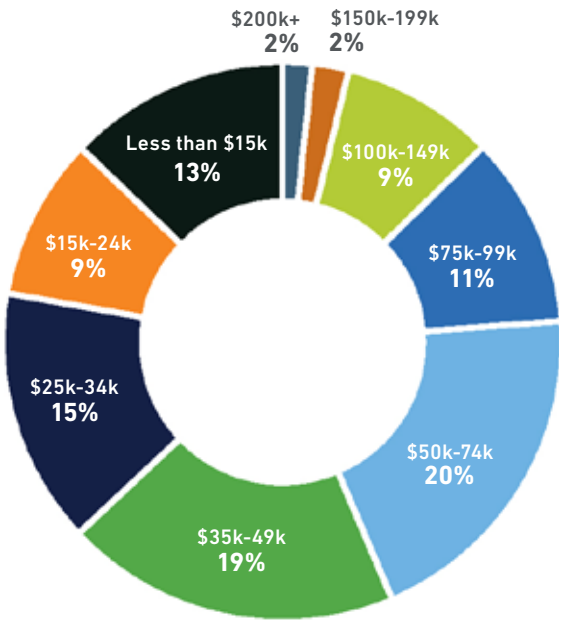
Race & Ethnicity

*Hispanic/Latino includes all races for those of Hispanic/Latino background.
[U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE 2024]



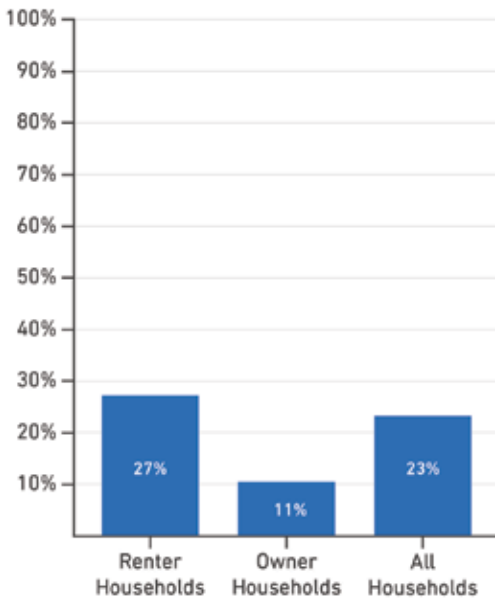
Commute Flows

Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamis via OnTheMap, 2021; BAE, 2024



Household Income

[U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE 2024]



Cost Burdened Households

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data; BAE 2024.

Signals of New Investment

Demographic, economic, and market information signal new investment and potential gentrification for Riverbanks. The area has significantly more jobs than employed residents (1,329 workers), attracts workers from outside the Riverbanks study area (other parts of Columbia, St. Andrews, and Lexington), and has a large renter population (69.7 percent of all households).

Given the imbalance between jobs and housing and the large amount of commuting by Riverbanks residents, improving transportation options is key. Residents need improved transportation options to commute to Downtown Columbia, as well as other parts of the region.

Housing Affordability

According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an overwhelming majority of all households within the Riverbanks study area earning 50 percent or less of the HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) are spending 30 percent or more of their income on housing. While there are more than twice as many cost-burdened renter households than owner households, the distribution of cost burden across both household types are comparable to the distribution across all households.

Although an issue, the cost burden rates among lower income households do not indicate severe cost burden issues for the area. In most housing markets, households earning up to 50 percent of the HAMFI are typically cost-burdened, and Riverbanks is not an exception. The notable difference can be seen in the relatively low levels of cost burden earning more than 50 percent of the HAMFI. Most middle-income and workforce households in Riverbanks are not extremely cost burdened, which indicates the current affordability in the local housing market. This points to a need for policies to help maintain affordability for current residents.



In Person

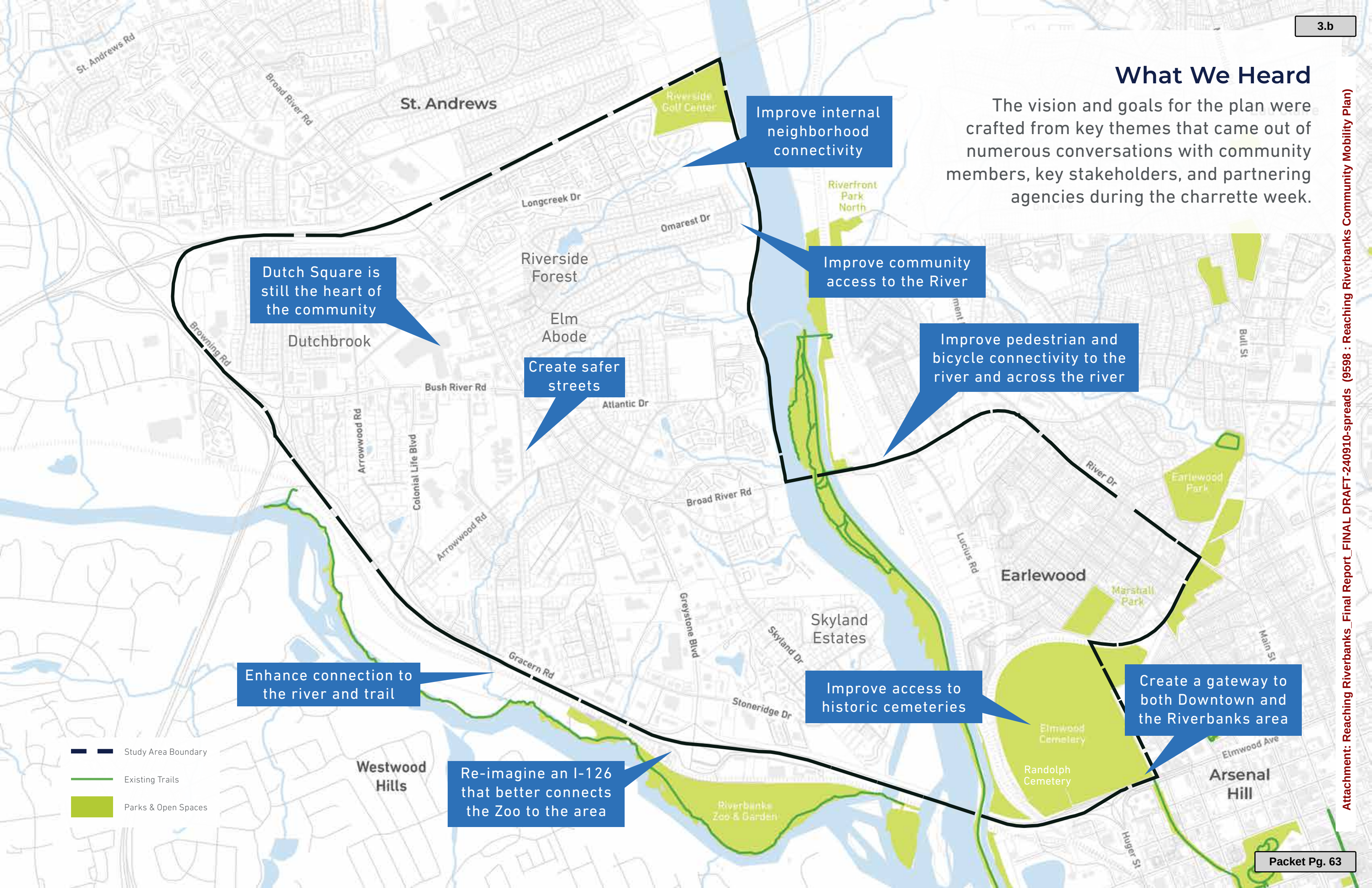
The planning process for Reaching Riverbanks leaned heavily on engaging community members through a Community Planning Charrette. A charrette is a creative, intense work session that mixes planning production time, additional stakeholder interviews, and focused community engagement activities to create a collaborative planning process that established the plan’s foundation. In this process, ideas that are developed during the charrette are shared with stakeholders and the community for feedback to help refine these ideas in real time. The primary goal of the charrette is to conclude with planning and design decisions and products from which a plan can be finalized.

For Riverbanks, the goal of the charrette was to develop clear transportation and land use recommendations driven by a cohesive vision and goals developed with community members. The Community Planning Charrette was hosted during the week of February 26, 2024 and included a community kickoff meeting, several stakeholder group interviews, open studio time, pop-up workshops throughout the study area, and a closing open house. The vision and goals for the plan are found on the following pages. These were crafted from key themes that came out of numerous conversations with community members, key stakeholders, and partnering agencies during the charrette week. They underpin the core recommendations of this plan.



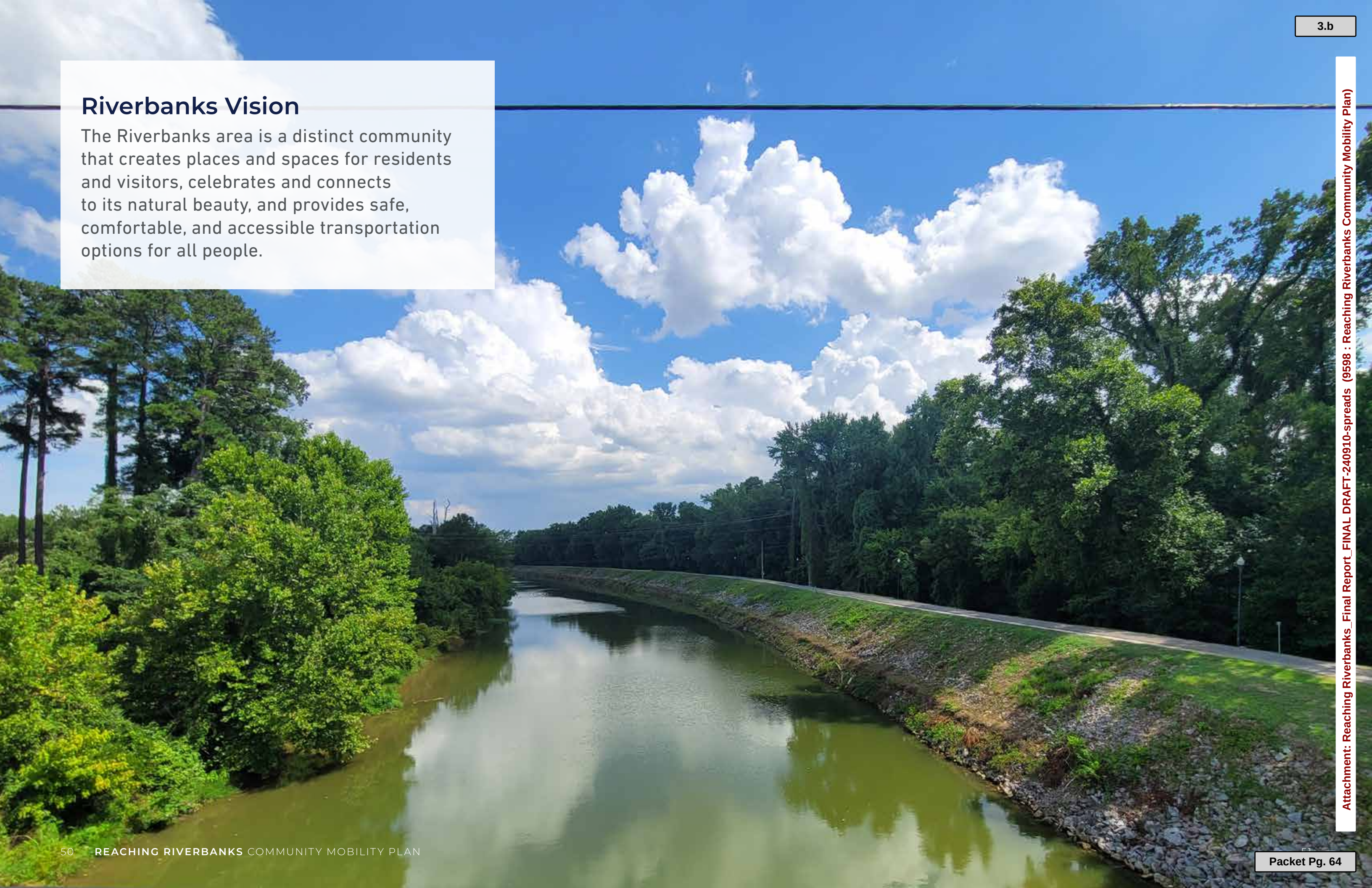
What We Heard

The vision and goals for the plan were crafted from key themes that came out of numerous conversations with community members, key stakeholders, and partnering agencies during the charrette week.



Riverbanks Vision

The Riverbanks area is a distinct community that creates places and spaces for residents and visitors, celebrates and connects to its natural beauty, and provides safe, comfortable, and accessible transportation options for all people.



Plan Goals

Goal 1: Make everyone feel welcomed, celebrated, and comfortable.

1. Focus on human-scale development and infrastructure that is reflective of the community and its values.
2. Create lively and welcoming public open spaces that are accessible to all.

Goal 2: Celebrate the area's natural beauty.

1. Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the rivers and existing park spaces.
2. Connect the Broad River to the Saluda River through the community by rebalancing existing infrastructure.
3. Identify new parks and open space areas for all.

Goal 3: Foster, showcase, and attract businesses and new development.

1. Create opportunities for businesses to attract a more local workforce.
2. Encourage new workforce and senior housing.
3. Coordinate across jurisdictions to provide a consistent zoning district or overlay to incentivize new development that enhances the character of the community.

Goal 4: Create safe, accessible, and comfortable multimodal facilities.

1. Rebalance Broad River Road, Greystone Boulevard, Bush River Road, and Colonial Life Boulevard for pedestrians and bicyclists.
2. Improve or identify small neighborhood connections that improve internal circulation away from the major corridors.
3. Re-imagine Interstate I-126 as an at-grade boulevard that: serves as a gateway into the community and Downtown Columbia, improves access to the Riverbanks Zoo and the Elmwood and Randolph Cemeteries, and creates opportunity for new development.



3

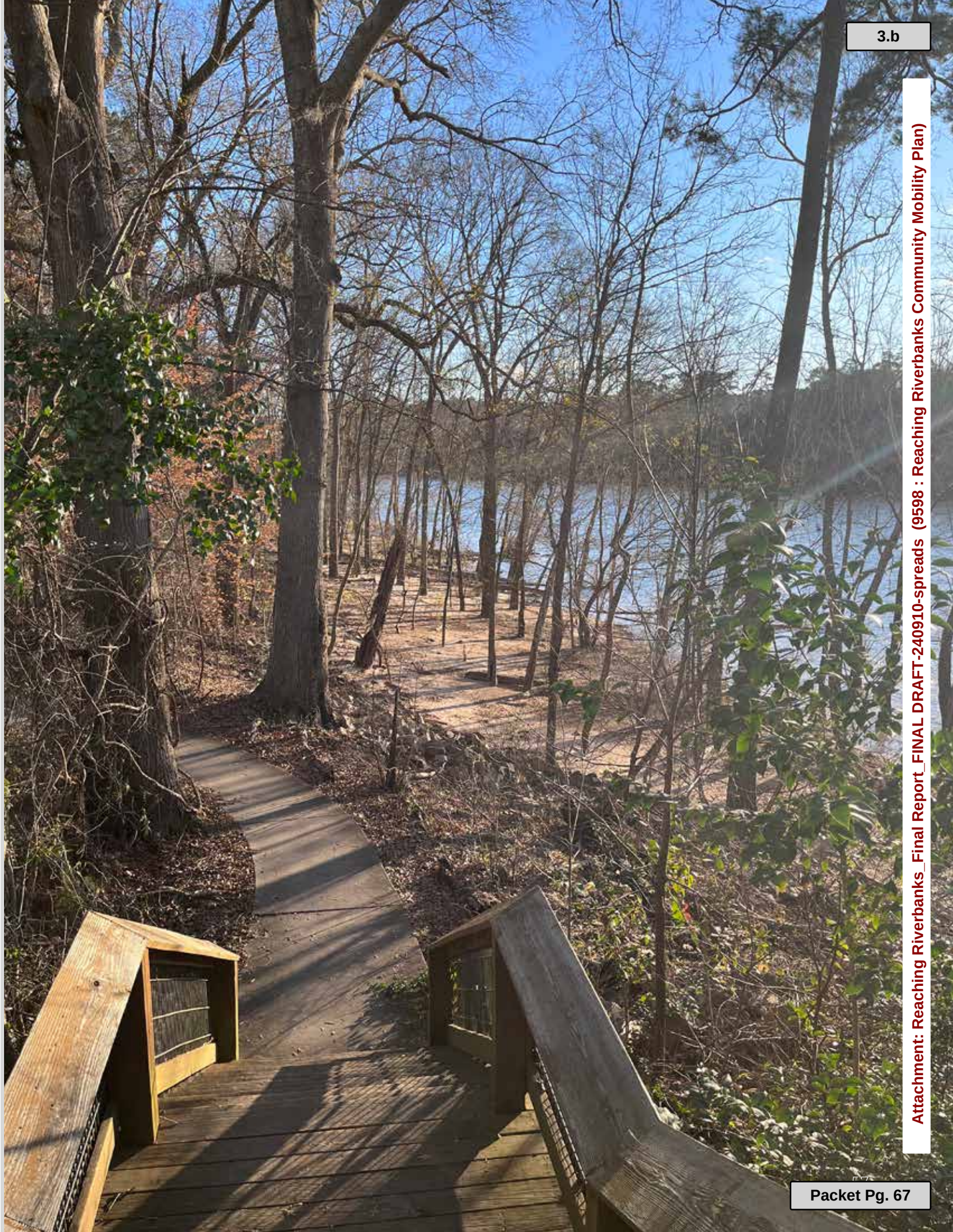
The Plan

The Plan

Riverbanks’ vision is rooted in connecting its people with its natural spaces, primarily its rivers, and using these new connections as the backbone of a new, non-vehicular mobility system that supports local trips first. It’s an ambitious vision that focuses on a collection of smaller projects, rather than a singular, large move, to achieve a successful outcome. An outcome of connecting people with place.

The Plan for Riverbanks details how these numerous, smaller moves add up to achieve the plan’s vision and goals. It’s built on a framework of different layers that organize the plan’s various recommendation to ensure that improvements to the study area’s mobility are coupled with sound land use and development recommendations that maximize the benefits for all community members. It also establishes a system for implementing projects in bite-size pieces that will help build momentum to accomplish larger tasks later. It’s a patient approach that puts community-oriented improvements first, and larger, regional improvements second.

This section explains in greater detail this framework approach, the complete framework plan for community mobility, and then dives into the details of each layer. It’s followed by an implementation strategy in the next section aimed at making this plan as achievable as possible.



Framework Approach

A framework is a system of organization. In planning, a framework is a useful approach for organizing complex aspects of a plan, especially one that covers a lot of territory and topics, to understand the interrelatedness of its constituent parts. For the *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan* this means understanding the key recommendations for improving the study area’s transportation options and how these can shape land use policy and future development to achieve a future outcome that aligns with the plan’s vision and goals. The framework for this plan is based on four layers: River Access, Street Connections, Growth Strategy, and Opportunity Sites.



River Access

The River Access layer is the base of the community mobility plan. It focuses on those non-vehicular connections – urban and naturalized greenways – that connect the people of Riverbanks with its rivers and other natural spaces and, by doing so, also facilitates local trips within the study area. These connections support mobility alternatives to driving but also includes retrofitting existing roadways to include these options as well.



Street Connections

The existing street system is built-on access to and from the study area’s major corridors: Broad River Road, Bush River Road, and Greystone Boulevard. Almost every trip in the study area is required to use these roads even if the trip begins and ends in Riverbanks. There are many, small street connections that can improve connectivity by making it possible for local trips to avoid these roadways that were built for regional, through trips. The Street Connections layer identifies and details these new potential connections.



Growth Strategy

Riverbanks is growing. The transportation system envisioned by this community mobility plan is designed to support community members both present and future. The Growth Strategy framework layer outlines an approach for considering the areas of Riverbanks most suited to receive its future growth. This strategy underpins specific recommendations for future land use and development policies in line with the plan’s vision and goals.



Opportunity Sites

Some areas of Riverbanks are well-suited for substantial, future new development. This plan has no control over when these areas may redevelop but offers recommendations to guide future redevelopment to align with the vision and goals of this plan and that are consistent with the recommendations for River Access, Street Connections, and the Growth Strategy Framework Layers. The plan is not dependent on the redevelopment of these areas, but its potential outcomes are maximized by them.



The Framework Plan

PROPOSED MOBILITY NETWORK

- Street Connections
- Urban Trails
- Naturalized Greenways

EXISTING MOBILITY NETWORK

- Existing Streets
- Existing Greenways

OTHER MOBILITY NETWORK

- Potential Greenway
- Potential Bicycle Facilities



0' 1,500'

PARK & OPEN SPACE TYPES

- Riverfront Access
- Stream Protection
- Stormwater Management
- Tree Canopy Conservation
- Utility Easements
- Active Recreational Facility
- Cultural Destination

OTHER KEY LOCATIONS

- Opportunity Site
- Transit Facility
- School





River Access

The River Access layer of the plan’s framework is comprised of two main elements: new greenway connections to the Broad and Saluda Rivers and new parks, and open spaces that protect Riverbanks’ natural spaces and invite additional greenway connections. Combined, these elements are the foundation for a new network that supports local, non-vehicular mobility. While the plan identifies numerous potential new greenways and park spaces, these are primarily smaller connections and spaces that can be more easily implemented incrementally over a longer period. Parks and open spaces in this framework are less about large investments in new active, recreational facilities and more about the protection and conservation of natural assets like the study area’s tree canopy and watersheds. And the term *greenway* itself is used expansively to include many types of pedestrian and bicycle connections that can more easily be adapted to different site conditions while still functioning as part of a singular network.



Park & Greenspace Opportunities

Today, there is a lack of public parks and open spaces in Riverbanks. However, it's natural areas and other physical features offer numerous opportunities to create these types of spaces. They are also opportunities to protect these natural features and unique characteristics of the site from future growth and development.



Broad River access off of Omarest Drive

Riverfront Access

Like the Saluda Riverwalk or the Riverfront Park, these are spaces located on the riverfront that are opportunities to provide direct river access. Typically located within floodplains, opportunity for active recreational facilities are limited.



Vegetation and tree canopy within a stream buffer at Koulter Drive

Stream Buffer

Typically private property that is undeveloped due to stream buffer regulations. These spaces are an opportunity to provide greenway connections that allow protection of watersheds and tree canopy areas.



Stormwater Management by the Columbia Zen Buddhist Priory

Stormwater Management

Areas that were developed to retain stormwater runoff until it can seep back in the groundwater supply. Often restricted for access, redesigned they could also become recreational spaces.



Tree Canopy at Stonebridge Drive

Tree Canopy Conservation

Large, undeveloped areas that contain dense coverage of mature trees. Designating these areas for conservation allows protection of the tree canopy and opportunities for greenway connections.



Utility Easement at Skyland Drive

Utility Easements

Wide-open swaths of land for major utility connections. These linear spaces are opportunities for additional greenway connections on previously cleared land that often offers incredible viewsheds.



Andrews Middle School

Active Recreational Facilities

Existing recreational facilities, such as ballfields at local schools, that could follow national trends of opening these spaces for public use outside of regularly scheduled organized sports and athletics.



Riverbanks Zoo & Garden

Cultural Destination

Existing major destinations within the study area, particularly the Riverbanks Zoo, which are a regional attraction but also have an opportunity to play a local role in recreation and connectivity.

Greenways Defined

Greenways are thought of as linear open spaces that connect multiple destinations along a corridor and are predominately natural in character. Because the Riverbanks area is so large with many different conditions and characteristics, this plan expands this definition. Here, we include in the term *greenway* the combination of different pedestrian and bicycle facilities that link this system of active transportation and natural areas with Riverbanks' more developed areas. In some locations, context and physical constraints call for the use of pedestrian and bicycle facilities other than the traditional shared use path for portions of the route. Examples are below.

Naturalized Greenways



Shared use paths that operate in parks and open spaces outside of street and rail right-of-way.

Urban Trails



Shared Use Paths
A path for pedestrians and cyclists within an existing street right-of-way (next to a road) that is physically separated from vehicular traffic by an open space or a barrier.



Bicycle Lanes
A lane in the roadway designated for use by cyclists through striping, signage, and markings.



Two-Way Cycle Tracks
Bike paths that are physically separated from vehicular (and also often pedestrian) traffic by a barrier or vertical separation (i.e. at sidewalk level) and allow bicycle movement in both directions.



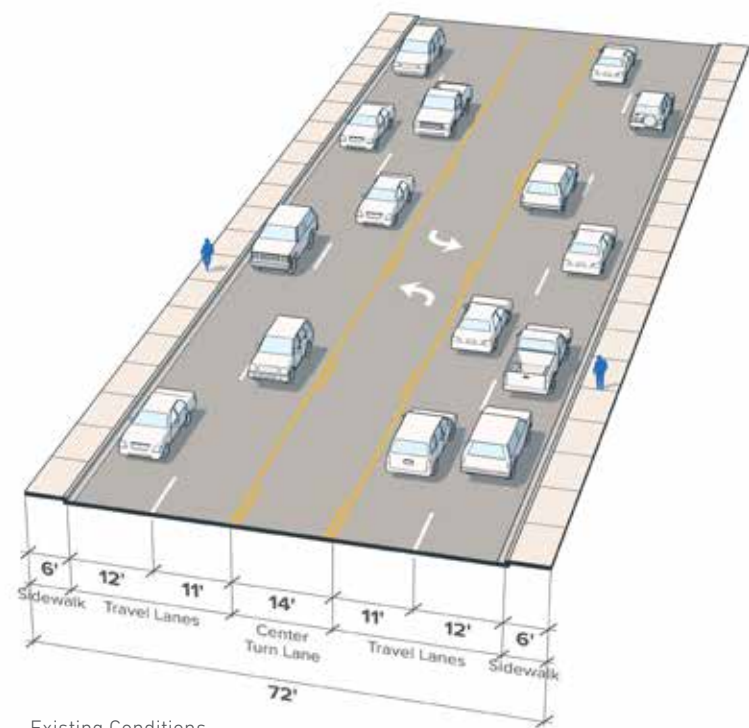
Bicycle Boulevards
Streets with low existing vehicular speeds and volumes that are enhanced to improve comfort and safety for cyclists riding in shared lanes with cars, such as traffic calming, pavement parking, and signage.



Sidewalks
Wide paved path for pedestrians on the side of a road.

Adapting Major Corridors

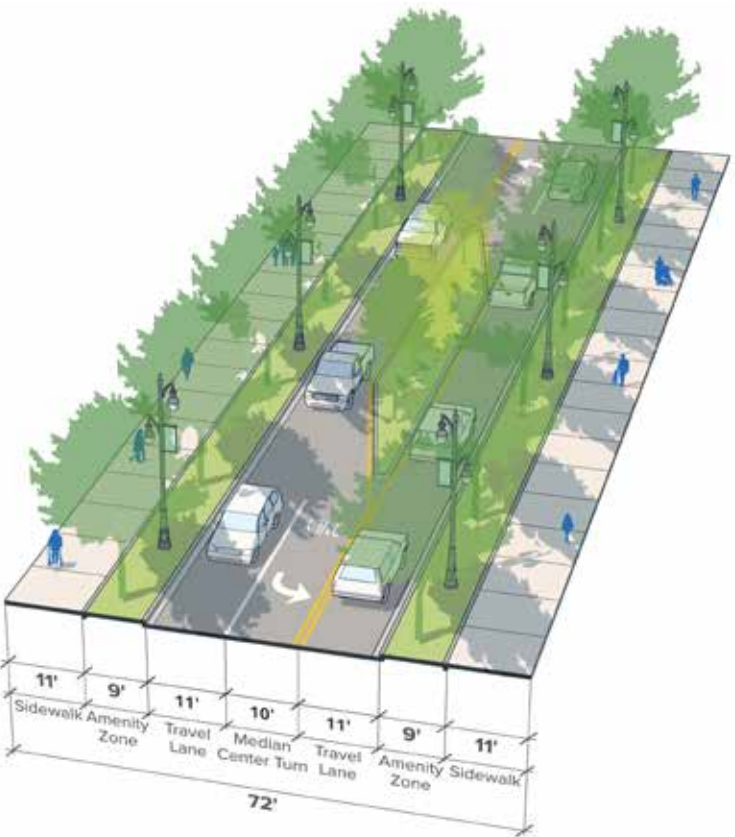
When the term *greenway* is used to encompass a broader range of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, it allows them to play a role in building out the River Access network. This is true of the small neighborhood streets to major, suburban arterials. This section illustrates how the study area's largest corridors – Broad River Road, Bush River Road, and Greystone Boulevard – could be adapted to better serve local mobility. While these would be transformative projects, the plan is not dependent on these improvements happening first but rather elevated by them when they do happen. These are concepts for illustrative purposes only; additional design and engineering study and community engagement would be required to advance them.



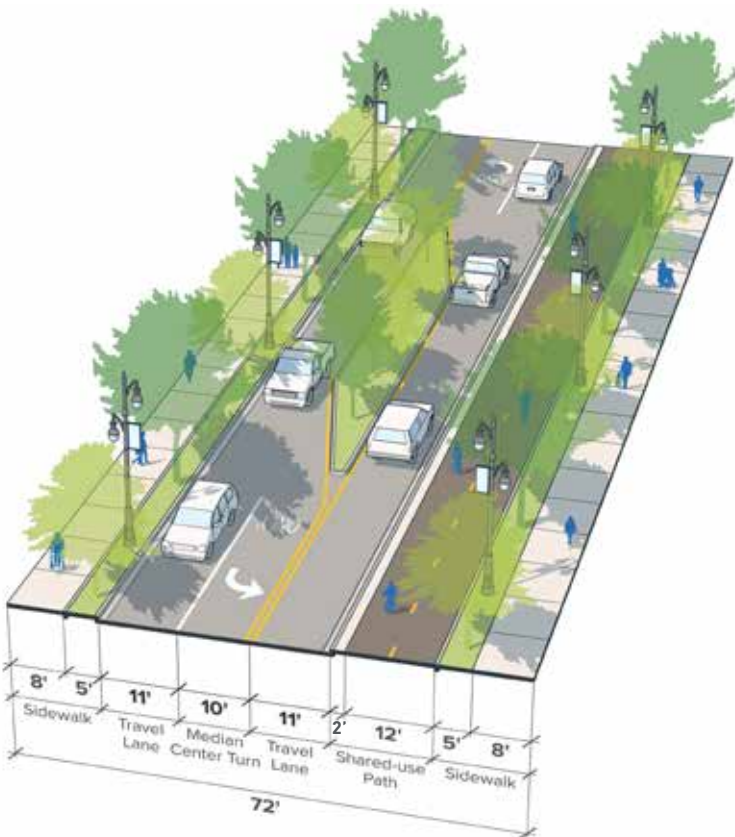
Existing Conditions

Broad River Road

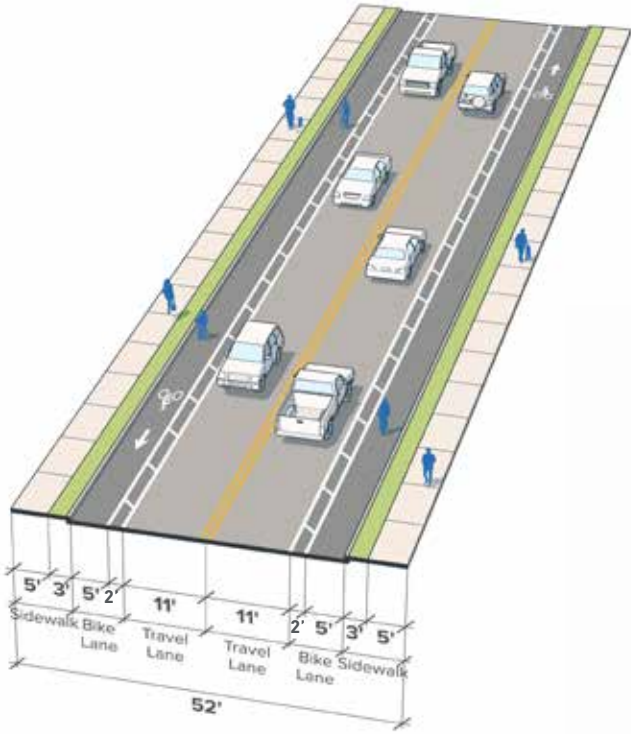
This is the key corridor that connects Riverbanks with destinations beyond Downtown Columbia. It is a five-lane arterial with narrow back of curb sidewalks that offer pedestrians little protection, and are regularly interrupted by curb cuts. Average traffic volumes just under 20,000 vehicles per day reveal that the roadway could be a candidate for a lane reduction from five to three lanes. The space gained back from this lane reduction could be reallocated for wider sidewalks with a healthy, landscaped separation from the street or even include a shared use path.



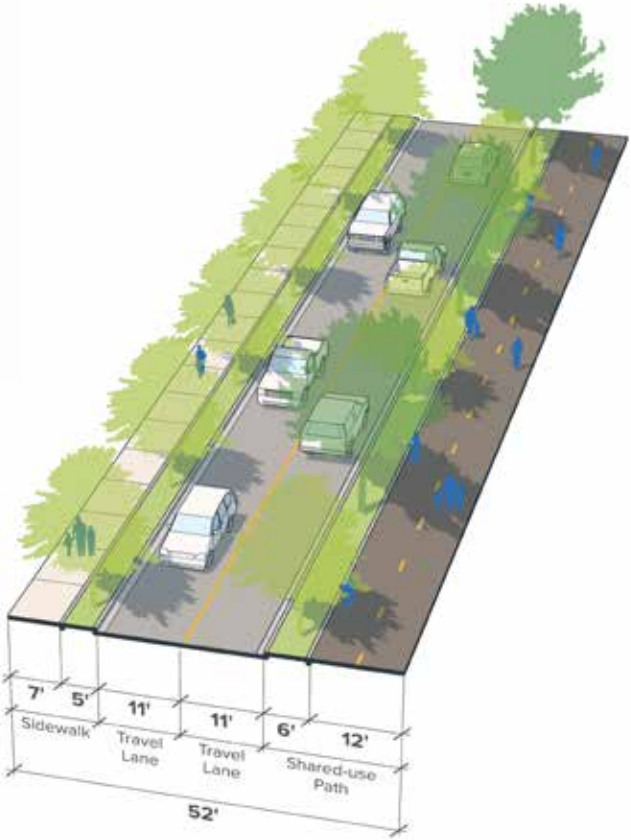
Potential Concept Atternative 1



Potential Concept Atternative 2



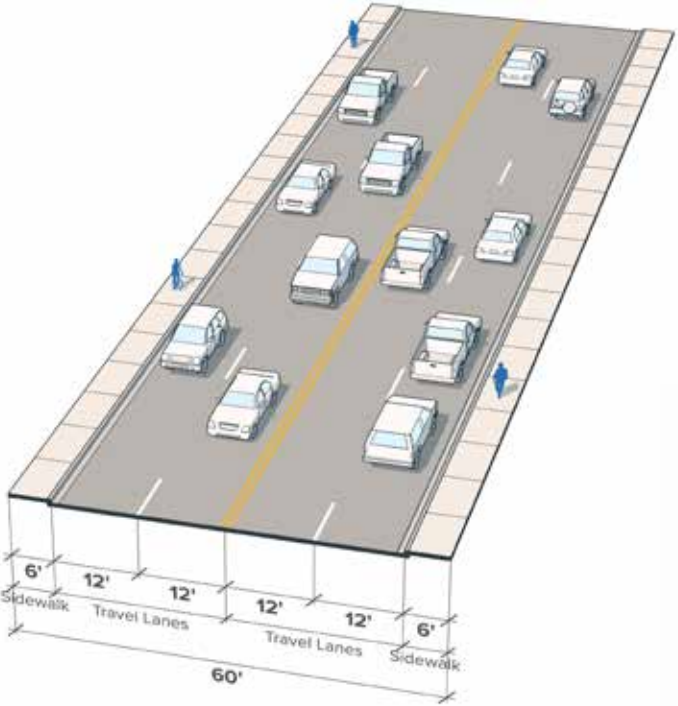
Planned Improvements



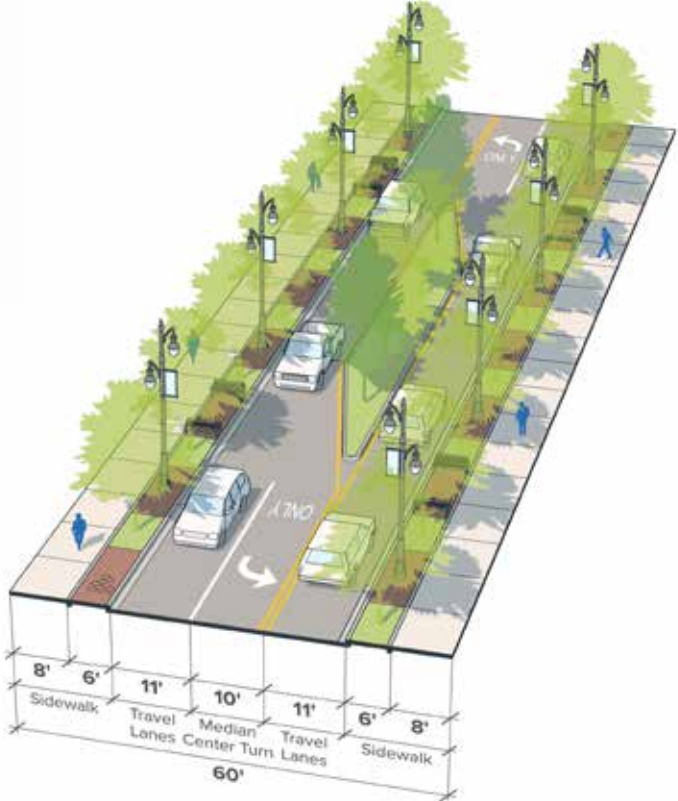
Potential Concept

River Drive

A continuation of Broad River Road after it crosses the Broad River and then turns south toward Downtown Columbia after the Clement Road intersection, this corridor is planned for buffered bike lanes consistent with City of Columbia’s Walk Bike Columbia Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan adopted in 2015. If implemented, this would be the first bicycle lanes of this type in the city. While the current proposal is to accomplish this initially with striping, pavement markings, and signage, the concept image here shows a potential future version that solidifies these improvements with additional landscaping features.



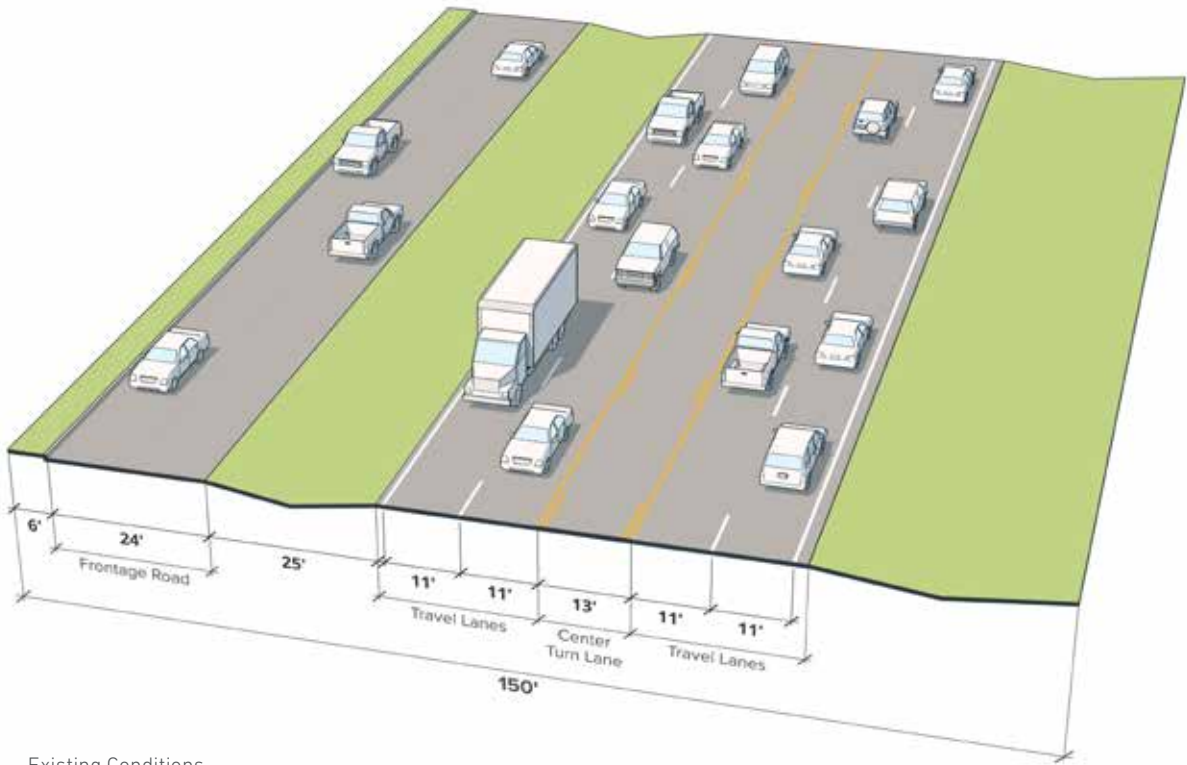
Existing Conditions



Potential Concept

Bush River Road

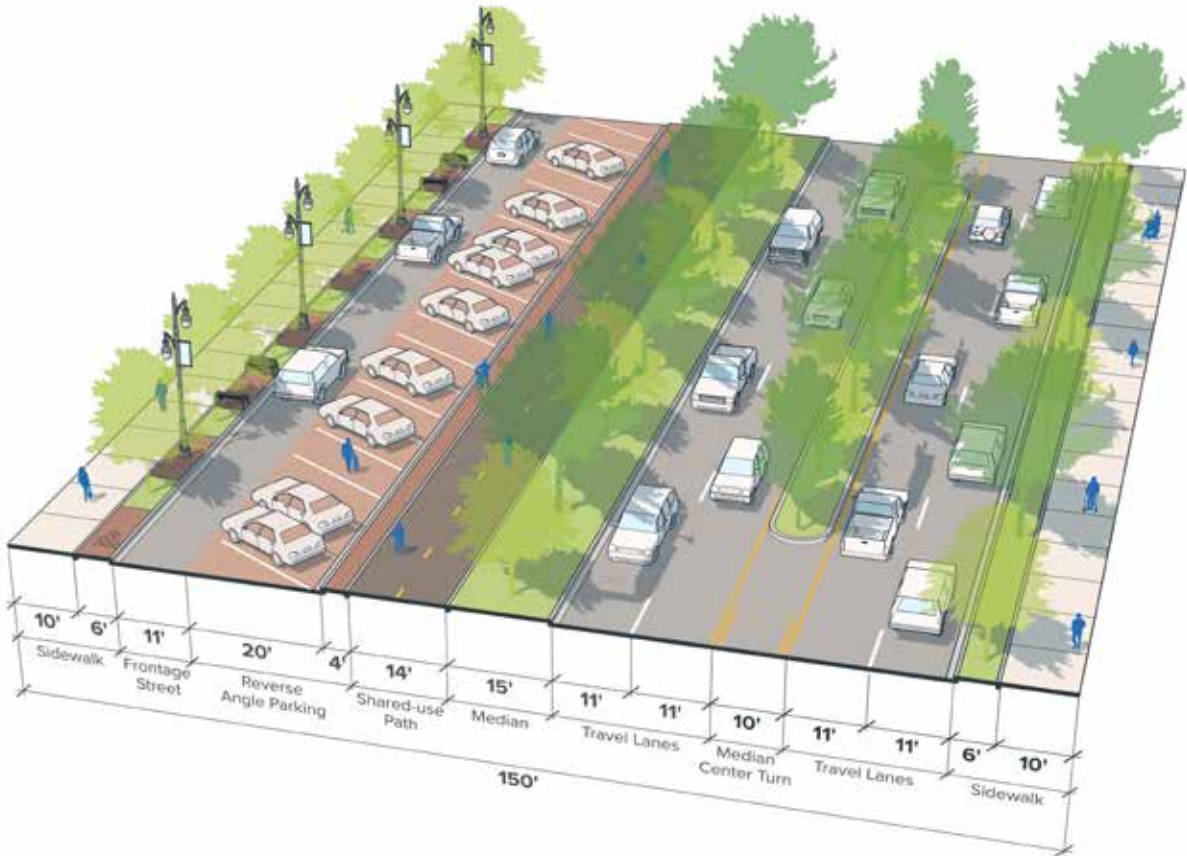
Like Broad River Road, Bush River Road is also a candidate for a lane reduction to three lanes based on its traffic volumes. Due to the narrower right-of-way and single lane reduction, including fully protected bicycle facilities would be a challenge but wider, protected sidewalks would be a strong option. Additionally, converting the middle lane to a two-way center turn lane would facilitate turning movements without impeding the flow of traffic. This lane could also include occasional medians which would provide additional opportunities for planting and landscaping features, as well as access management that could increase safety.



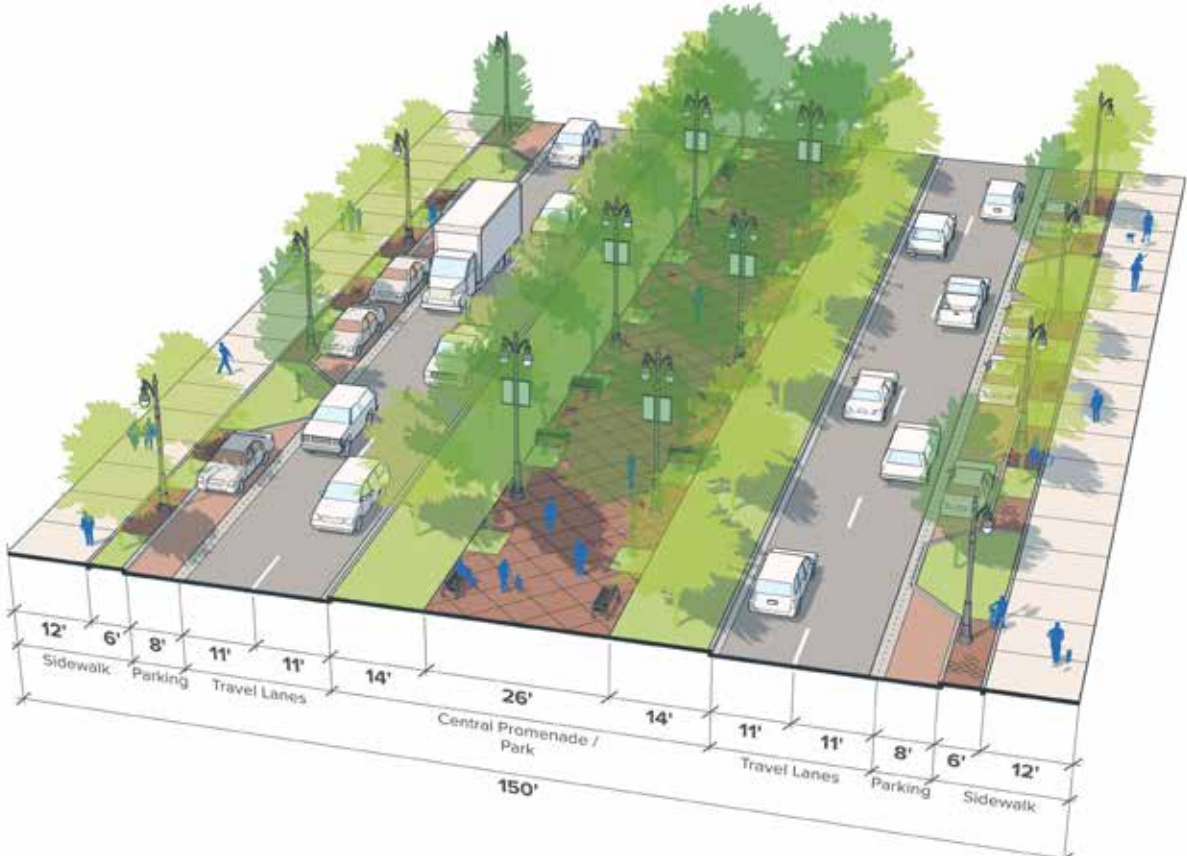
Existing Conditions

Greystone Boulevard

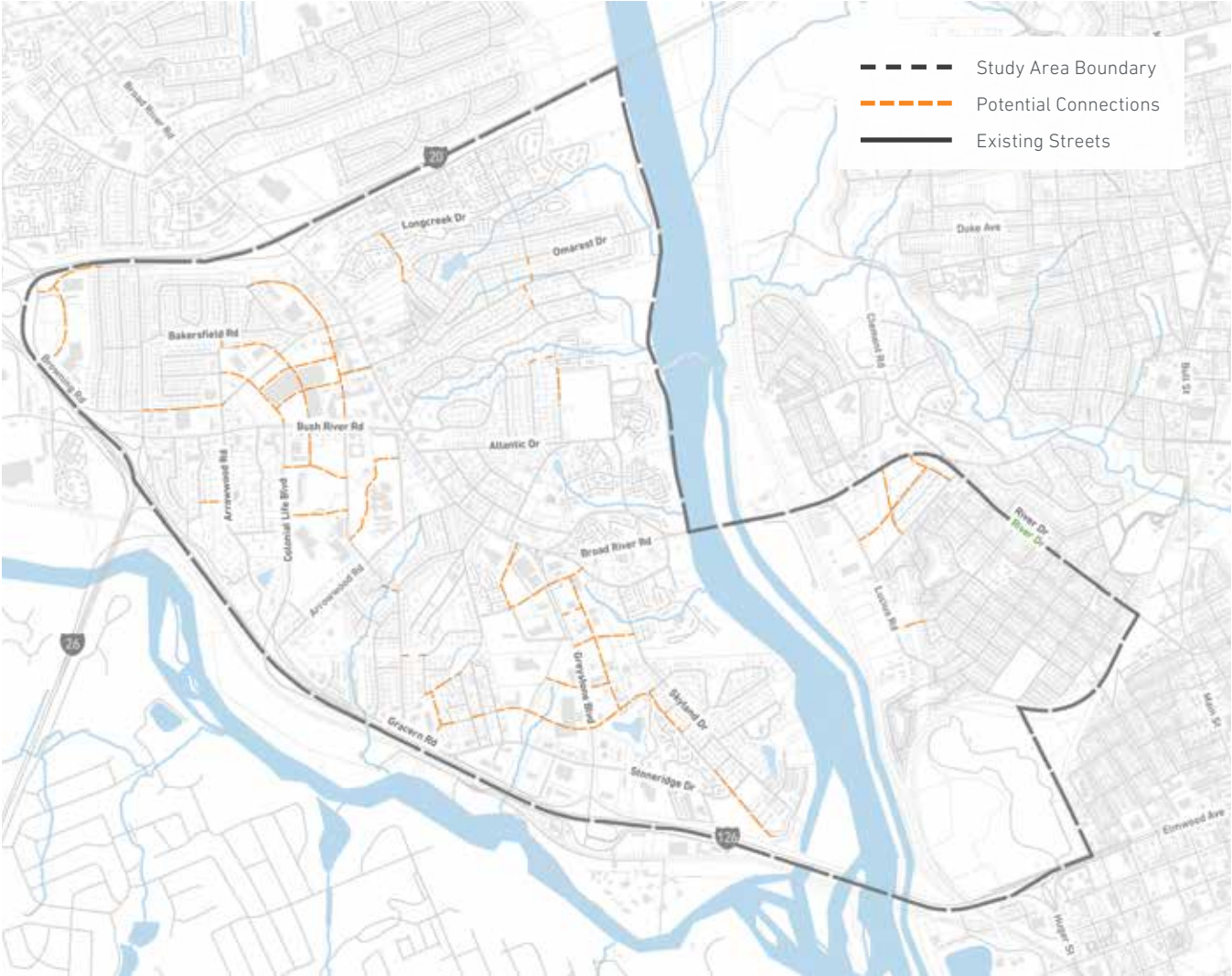
The widest of the corridors in the study area, Greystone Boulevard was originally intended to be a highway linking Riverbanks with West Columbia over the Saluda River. The highway was never completed and now the roadway, including a side access road, is much wider than needed for the volume of vehicles it serves. Its extreme width provides great flexibility for how Greystone Boulevard could be transformed to serve as part of the River Access framework. These options range from a conversion to a multimodal corridor with wider sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and planted areas to a concept that includes a promenade where a centralized area of the roadway surpasses being a greenway to become a park itself.



Potential Concept Alternative 1



Potential Concept Alternative 2



Street Connections

While the River Access framework is the most crucial aspect of the plan in the creation of non-vehicular connections and transformation of roadways into multimodal corridors to support local trips, new street connections are the second most important aspect of creating this network. In Riverbanks, almost every local trip relies on the use of its major corridors – Broad River Road, Bush River Road, Greystone Boulevard – at some point. This can put excessive, unnecessary demand on these roadways, making local trips take longer, and, in the event of a closed segment, provide few, efficient alternative routes. This plan identifies several new street connections that can offer these routes for local trips and add another layer of connectivity to the River Access framework. These are smaller, shorter connections within the residential neighborhoods and longer, more substantial connections across larger areas that may someday be candidates for redevelopment.



Neighborhood Links

These are smaller street connections made within neighborhoods. Their purpose is to improve community mobility to destinations between neighborhoods, not provide cut-throughs for regional traffic. They are primarily created by using space in existing, unimproved right-of-way or undeveloped properties. For example, in the northwest portion of Riverbanks these types of spaces exist to connect Cambout Street to Koulter Drive and Carl Road allowing residents of Riverside Forest and Elm Abode to move freely between these neighborhoods that would otherwise require the use of Broad River Road.



Opportunity Site Connections

Opportunity Sites are large portions of the study area that may one day be candidates for redevelopment. These sites, such as Dutch Square Mall, currently act as barriers within Riverbanks due to their sheer size and lack of public, multimodal connections. Should the opportunity arrive for their redevelopment or adaptive re-use, their plans should include new public multimodal connections that make these places more accessible while also improving local mobility. While one potential street framework is illustrated here, there are multiple alternatives to developing these connections. These are discussed in further detail in the Opportunity Sites framework layer.



Growth Strategy

Often planners talk about the interrelatedness of transportation infrastructure and land use policy as a means for achieving a desired outcome for growth and new development. The precursor to those policies is a more fundamental question: where should growth occur? The Growth Strategy layer of the plan’s framework takes a step back to ask this question. It looks for areas appropriate to receive additional growth contrasted with those that should be protected or conserved. As Riverbanks continues to grow, previously developed low density properties along the major corridors often have the latent capacity to absorb this new growth incrementally over time. Conversely the residential neighborhoods on the study area’s interior are less likely to receive this growth and contain the majority of Riverbanks’ natural spaces: areas for conservation. Together, the concept of areas of Growth and Conservation helps guide more specific decisions on future land use.



Growth Areas

Areas for additional growth and development are located along Riverbanks’ major corridors. Properties in these areas are lower intensity with capacity to add growth with the most direct access to major roadways and transit that can serve this growth. Growth Areas align with city and county future land use districts that already contain policies to transform corridor development to this effect.



Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are located more internally to the study area and often located closer to the actual banks of the rivers. Aside from being primarily residential in nature, they also contain many of the study area’s natural assets that are part of Riverbanks’ unique character and should be protected. Conservation Areas generally align with existing city and county residential future land use classifications. It’s not to say these areas won’t receive any growth, but growth here will be much more modest and residential in nature.

Market Recommendations

After establishing a strategy for organizing Riverbanks for growth and conservation, we can better assess and address target industries for job growth, potential new development types and future land uses, and housing needs with the understanding of where these may be located generally within the study area. The demographic and economic trends analysis and the housing market analysis and needs assessment have provided a set of recommendations pertaining to these topics. This report can be found in its entirety in the appendices of this final report. The specific recommendations for Riverbanks, discussed here, should be considered by CMCOG, as well as the City of Columbia and Richland County. While there is no formal existing agreement between the two governments on a set of policies, ideally the City and County will recognize the importance of doing so and work constructively together toward improving the area for its current and future residents.

Key Growth Industries

1. Target the Industry Sector of Healthcare and Social Assistance for Economic Development

Columbia and Richland County should make a concerted effort to attract and retain healthcare and social assistance businesses and service providers in the Riverbanks area and encourage employers in the sector, most notably Prisma Health Midlands which is headquartered in the study area, to employ and help build skills for Riverbanks residents in the healthcare sector. The healthcare and social assistance sectors have the highest proportion of jobs in Riverbanks and employs the second highest proportion of Riverbanks residents, after the educational services sector.

Since healthcare is important in the region, it makes sense for economic development to promote the strength and opportunities in Riverbanks and the region at large. It is also important to maintain strength in the healthcare sector to preserve jobs in Riverbanks. This should include supporting skill development in the healthcare sector, perhaps in partnership with Prisma Health Midlands, to build a stronger workforce in the healthcare sector, thereby creating advancement opportunities, especially for Riverbanks residents.

2. Target the Finance and Insurance Industry Sector for Economic Development

Columbia and Richland County should also make a strong effort to attract and retain finance and insurance jobs in the Riverbanks study area. Though the finance and insurance sector is not a high growth sector overall, the sector provides a wide range of jobs from entry level position (e.g., tellers, call center jobs) to high level administrative jobs. Within that range are family supporting positions that would provide stability and work options for Riverbanks residents. Additionally, there may be partnership opportunities with Colonial Life and Accident Insurance Company to hire local residents.

Target Uses

3. Encourage Mixed-Use Development, Primarily Housing and Retail

The Market Overview and Housing Needs Assessment clearly show there is demand and need for housing in the Riverbanks study area, including both affordable and market rate housing. This includes demand for quality apartments. At the same time there are underutilized commercial properties on Bush River Road and Broad River Road and the surrounding area that are prime for redevelopment. Mixed-use developments that combine housing as the primary use, with supporting retail, create a built-in market for the retail uses.

The City of Columbia and Richland County should promote the Multi-County Industrial Park Tax Credit, a tax abatement for up to 10 years for mixed-use development projects that create substantial taxable development. Though there is a rigorous review of mixed-use development projects applying for the tax abatement, the savings in taxes for developers is significant.

Mixed-use development in the Riverbanks area will help to build the local economy, adding new population which, in turn, encourages other investment. Also, mixed-use developments, which are large by definition will contribute to the tax base in the City of Columbia and Richland County.

4. Encourage Selective Retail Particularly Experiential or Restaurants with Entertainment

While acknowledging that online shopping and other issues have changed the way most consumers shop, there is still room for experiential retail focused on creating an engaging consumer experience rather than just selling goods or products. This trend, when matched with what Riverbanks' community stakeholders point to, demand for better quality restaurants with table service, improved fast casual restaurant options, and restaurants with entertainment, typically live music which some in the industry refer to as *eatertainment*. There are the retail and restaurant uses that should be encouraged from the time the developer submits concept plans for the mixed-use housing and retail developments described in the

recommendation immediately above. Over the longer term, if these mixed-use developments are successful, demand for grocery stores and other retail will likely increase.

5. Preserve Office Space in the Riverbanks Study Area

According to CoStar data, there is more than two million square feet of office space in the Riverbanks study area, most of which is located along I-26 in the Riverbanks study area or near the Dutch Square Center. This Class B office space has fared relatively well in the post-COVID market with a vacancy rate of just over 12 percent. Economic developers contacted for the study agree that much of this office space fills a specific niche of mostly small, locally-owned businesses that do not need to be in Downtown Columbia or in Class A space. Because the tenants in this space potentially employ local residents and pay higher wages than retailers, it is important to preserve the space and wise to maintain economic diversity to not be too dependent on any one type of business in the area.

Housing Needs & Anti-Displacement Strategies

6. Improve Transportation Options for Riverbanks Residents

Preempting specific needs for housing supply, there is an imbalance between jobs and housing and the large amount of commuting by Riverbanks residents that points to the need for improved transportation options, especially to Downtown Columbia. This includes everything from better, reliable public transportation to more biking and walking trails and pathways to connect to public transportation and job centers.

7. Create More Housing in the Riverbanks Study Area

There is significant amount of unmet demand for housing units. This assessment includes the following key findings relative to this shortage:

- A total of 8,286 housing units are needed for Riverbanks’ households with workers under the age of 62.
- There is a shortage of 924 housing units for households with workers under the age of 62.
- There is a shortage of at least 170 housing units for severely cost-burdened elderly households currently, with an addition 52 housing units needed for cost-burdened elderly households in the near future.
- For each additional job created, there needs to be 0.96 housing units for worker households under the age of 62.

Housing leaders should prioritize the development of housing, especially affordable and workforce

housing in the Riverbanks area. They should employ the housing preservation and production strategies listed below that have the dual benefit of helping to prevent displacement.

8. To Prevent Displacement, Implement Housing Preservation Strategies

The housing needs assessment finds that there is risk for gentrification and displacement of Riverbanks study area residents. Elderly households with one or two persons 62 years old or older, and small family households with only two people, both under 62 years old, are the most vulnerable households for displacement in the Riverbanks study area, especially if they are renters.

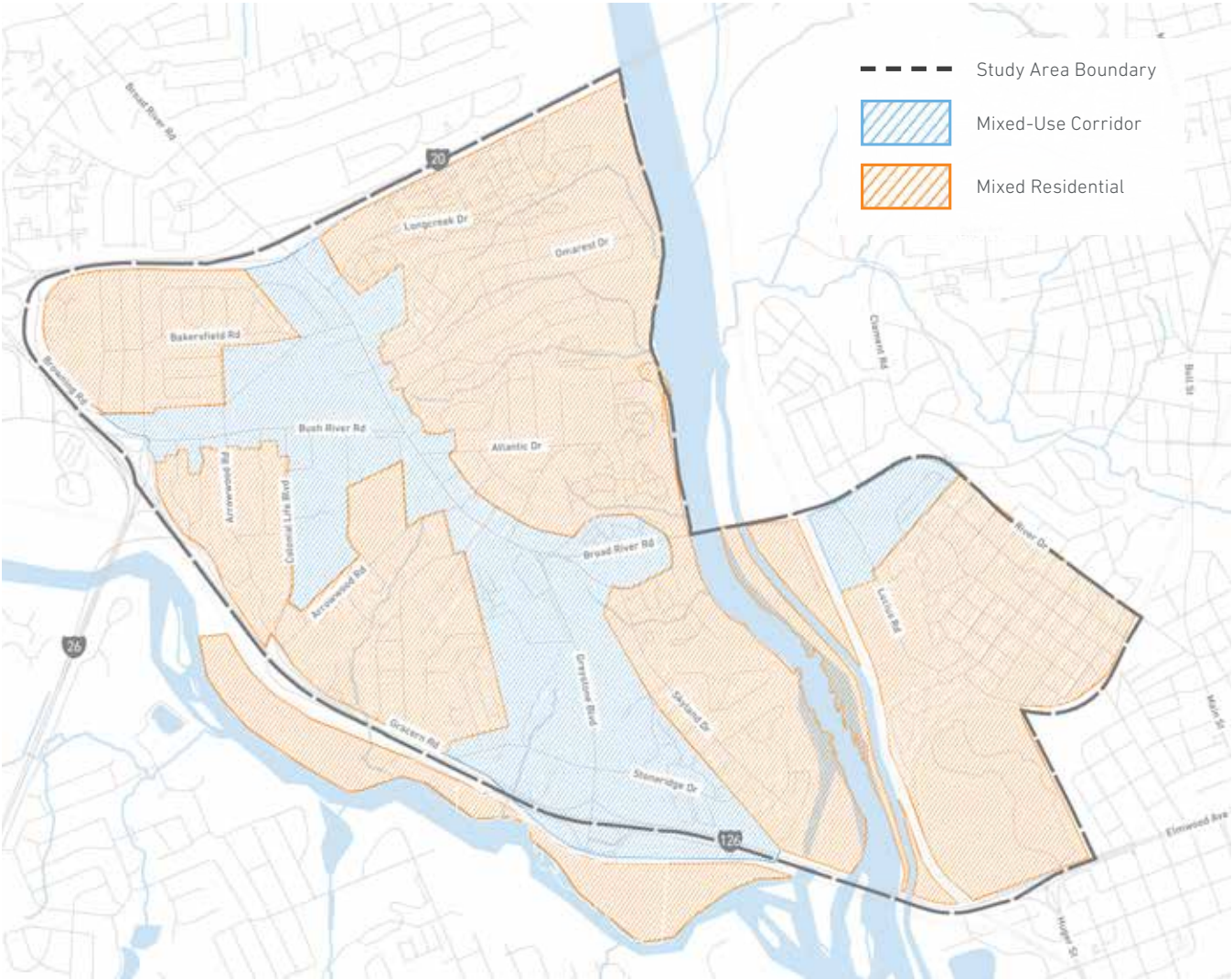
Accordingly, housing leaders, especially the City of Columbia’s community development office, Columbia Community Development, and the Richland County Office of Community Development, along with Columbia Housing (the local housing authority) should work to improve the quality and maintain an inventory of affordable housing units in the Riverbanks study area. To do so the City and County should 1) prioritize programs that preserve and improve the existing affordable housing stock, 2) preserve the quality of market rate units through better code enforcement of non-owner occupied units, and 3) preserve local communities by providing more homeowner counseling services and monitoring neighborhood displacement risks. For Columbia Housing this would also include proactively marketing project based vouchers to expand landlord participation.

9. To Prevent Displacement, Expand Housing Production Capacity

Housing leaders should work to improve the quality and maintain an inventory of affordable housing units in the Riverbanks study area and implement the following housing production strategies: 1) provide concierge services to housing developers to guide them through all of the different permitting and review departments; and 2) assemble vacant or underutilized private and public property to provide housing developers with sites that are at or below market rate prices.

10. To Prevent Displacement, Expand Funding and Financing Mechanisms to Increase Housing Development

Housing leaders from the City of Columbia and Richland County should work to expand funding and financing mechanisms that will enable increased housing development in the Riverbanks study area. To do so, they should align local housing initiatives with federal and state resources including the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority, to maximize the impact of new housing developments. They should also seek funding for affordable housing from other sources, including Community Development Financing Intermediaries (CDFIs), such as Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Enterprise Community Partners. LISC now has an Upstate South Carolina office but indicates the national program has funded investments throughout South Carolina, including in the Midlands Region. Enterprise has a southeast regional office and has helped to fund developments throughout South Carolina.



Future Land Use

Cities and counties establish policies to guide the use of land within their respective boundaries. Depending on the city or county, these policies, usually coupled with colored districts on a map, can range from just a few future land use classifications to very many. These policies often try to strike a balance between designating places where a change in use, density, and character is desirable and where it is not. Riverbanks is no exception. Here the City of Columbia and Richland County both maintain future land use maps to this effect. Due to the irregular municipal boundary, these land classifications crisscross in interesting ways.

Aligning Existing Land Uses with the Growth & Conservation Strategy

Strategy

Growth Areas

Conservation Areas

Future Land Use

Mixed-Use Corridor

Mixed Residential

Primary Uses

- Multi-family Medium & Large
- Multi-family Mixed-use
- Commercial Retail Small & Medium
- Offices/Services Small & Medium
- Business/Employment Medium & Large
- Civic/Institutional

- Single-family Detached & Attached
- Two-family
- Three-family
- Multi-family Small & Medium
- Parks & Recreation

Future Land Use

Where the City has 15 classifications to establish future land use policy in the study area, Richland County has only two. In spite of this mismatch in terms of quantity, there is a discernible pattern in how their respective uses align in terms of desired growth and change along major corridors and protected, residential uses beyond them. What’s more is that these future land use classifications generally align with the industries, land uses, and housing needs identified in the market overview recommendations. The overarching Growth Strategy framework more clearly links this relationship and establishes a clear vision, across municipal lines, for growth and

City of Columbia

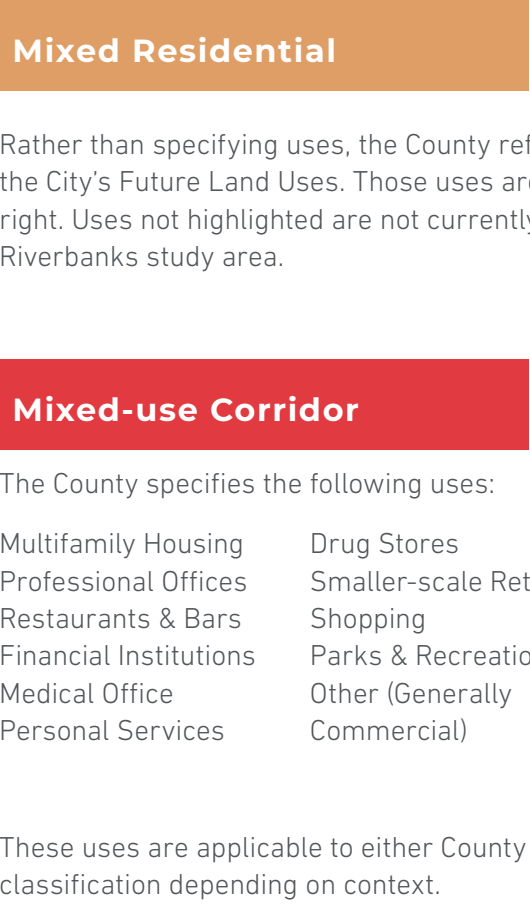
The City has **15** different land use districts for the Riverbanks study area.

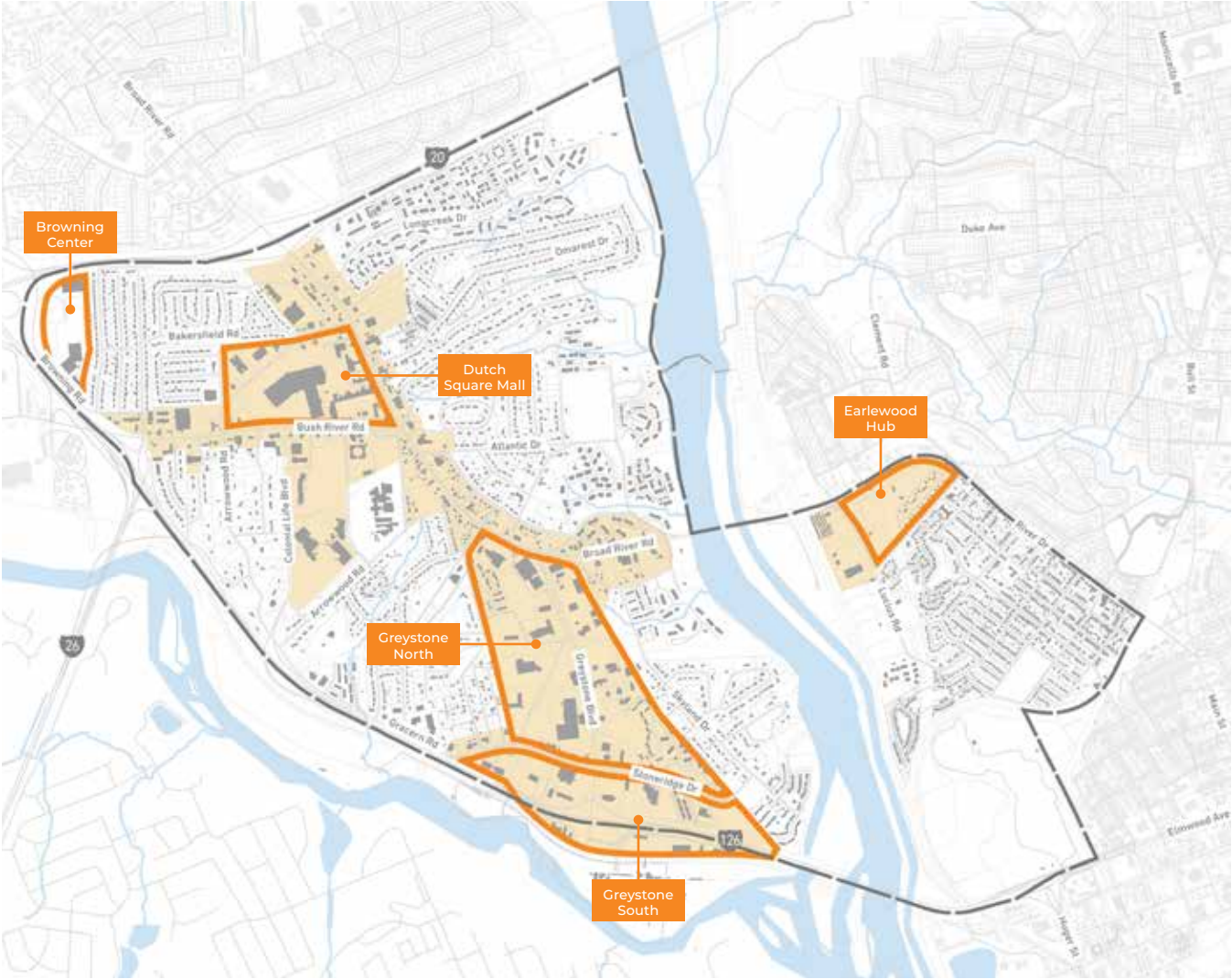


conservation. It very closely resembles Richland County’s two-district approach of future land use by designating Mixed-use Corridors (for growth and change) and Mixed-use Residential (for conservation with modest growth). This plan recommends following this more generalized approach for future land use policy. Allowing greater flexibility in uses, both for mixed uses in Growth Areas and a variety of residential development types that matches the existing character in Conservation Areas, can make it easier to accommodate the change in uses and needs of housing over time.

Richland County

The County only has **2** different land use districts for the same area.





Dutch Square Mall is one of the prime examples of opportunity sites

Opportunity Sites

The final layer of the plan's framework focuses on Opportunity Sites. The previous framework layer organizes the study into areas for growth and conservations. Opportunity Sites are special sites in the Riverbanks study area, primarily in Growth Areas, that are a high susceptibility to receive future growth and change. They are typically large sites that offer great potential for new, high intensity development in a wide range of uses and opportunities for several new connections, both vehicular and non-vehicular, to give local mobility some of its biggest boosts. These are privately-owned properties. The ability and timing for the transformation of these sites will be dependent on the properties' owners and the timing of the market forces that compel these owners to action.

Beyond recommendations on growth versus conservation and future land use, the framework plan shows one potential scenario for providing a new layer of connectivity across these sites. It will be the responsibility of the City of Columbia and Richland County to ensure that future development plans align with this vision. But the best plans anticipate the need to be flexible to accommodate any number of future visions for new development on these sites. To provide this accommodation, this next section highlights each of the Opportunity Sites identified in the plan and illustrate different scenarios that new connections could be provided on these sites while still aligning with the vision and goal of this plan. Other scenarios may also exist and could be perfectly acceptable so long as they meet the intent and spirit of this plan.

Dutch Square Mall

Dutch Square Mall and adjacent properties in the area bounded by Broad River Road, Bush River Road, and Dutch Square Boulevard form an approximately 75-acre site in the heart of Riverbanks. First opened over 50 years ago, Dutch Square Mall, like many other suburban shopping malls throughout the country, has long since past its peak retail-use era and has spent over a decade looking for new tenants and purpose. The 2010 Broad River Road Corridor and Community Master Plan includes a reimagination of the mall site that includes introducing new street connections to transform the superblock into smaller, walkable blocks, new public spaces, mixed-use private development, and a potential transit hub. These are all moves that generally align with this plan that focuses on community mobility. That this transformation hasn't yet occurred is less about the sound planning principles and vision the concept is built on and more a testament to the magnitude of resources, partnerships, and time that are necessary to make the vision a reality.

This site is still an enormous opportunity to create connections for community mobility and accommodate new, high intensity mixed-use development. At the time of this planning process, Word of God Ministries, a major faith-based organization and community stakeholder located along Broad River Road, is in the final stages of acquiring the Dutch Square Mall. Their vision for the site includes transforming the mall into mixed-use hub that is anchored by an animation studio and center for innovation that adaptively re-uses the existing structure of the mall. Later phases may potentially include new housing, such as condos, and a hotel constructed in the mall's existing parking areas. Development plans are still fluid at this time with much to be decided. The intention however is solid: bring the community back to Dutch Square Mall and creating opportunities for community to be a part of that process.

Opppostie: Dutch Square Mall in 1974



This plan provides options for various ways the Dutch Square Mall Opportunity Site could potentially be reconnected with the surrounding community. The base framework plan shows major new River Access and Street Connections that improve community connectivity across the existing mall site while generally respecting the mall's existing footprint. Some connections would require modification of the mall's structure but could be done in phases. One of the most impactful connections is a new multimodal street connection from Averyt Avenue that extends north across the site, passes by Word of God's existing facilities at the north end of the study area, and connects with Statler Road in the Belmont Estates neighborhood.

Alternative 1 shows a different potential configuration for these connections that balance maintaining the mall's footprint while focusing new connections directly into the Dutchbrook neighborhood to the east. Alternative 2 shows a much more ambitious series of connections that result in new blocks closer in size to what is proposed in the 2010 plan but would only be possible if the mall were completely redeveloped. All three scenarios presented here demonstrate the numerous ways that future development of this site could potentially meet the goals for community mobility in this plan.

Proposed Street Framework Base



Proposed Street Framework Alternative 1



Proposed Street Framework Alternative 2

Browning Center

The Browning Business Center is an approximately 40-acre site tucked away in the northwestern corner of the Riverbanks study area between the interchange of I-20 and I-26 and the backs of the Belmont Estates and Dutchbrook neighborhoods. The business center is served only by Browning Road which connects south to Broad River Road and north under I-20 into the St. Andrews neighborhood.

The base framework plan for this Opportunity Site includes a greenway connection along Browning Road that has been identified in previous plans including the City and County's respective comprehensive plans. An existing easement along a portion of Browning Road has left a portion of the site undeveloped which has protected the existing tree canopy: the plan identifies this as a potential open space within the River Access framework. Two new street connections better link this site directly with the existing neighborhoods to the east. This scenario assumes that the Browning Business Center will continue to exist on this site.

An alternative scenario contemplates the potential for the business center to be redeveloped for new housing that would dovetail with the existing neighborhoods. In this scenario, additional street connections subdivide the existing site into block sizes that are similar in size to the adjacent neighborhoods and integrate the new blocks with the neighborhoods themselves.



Proposed Street Framework Base
Proposed Street Framework Alternative 1



Earlewood Hub

This Opportunity Site was identified with transit-oriented development in mind. The Earlewood Hub is an opportunity to leverage COMET's new transit facility at the corner of River Drive and Lucius Road to create new connections that provide access to transit and set the stage for adjacent development that capitalizes on this same access. It is understood that there are currently many on-going conversations between partnering agencies and major stakeholders regarding the future operation of this facility. These scenarios show potential opportunities assuming use of this transit as it exists today. Additionally planning studies would need to be produced if a different outcome for the facility comes to fruition.

The base scenario illustrated in the framework plan is the most ambitious to provide the best overall connectivity between the transit facility, the existing Hammond Village housing development, River Drive, and the Earlewood neighborhood to the south. It takes advantage of existing street circulation within Hammond Village though some modifications would need to be made to connect with the transit facility and River Drive. Due to topography between these areas, these potential connections would require further study. The resulting new blocks are opportunities for new development that takes advantage of its direct adjacency to transit which can reduce personal vehicle dependence. This scenario offers the greatest connectivity to transit for both existing and future residents.

The alternative scenario shows a lighter approach to connectivity should the challenges to overcoming site topography and modifying Hammond Village prove unfeasible. New connections in this scenario aim at better organizing the site immediately around the transit facility for new development. This scenario focuses on improving access to transit for new potential residents in adjacent development.



Proposed Street Framework Base
Proposed Street Framework Alternative 1

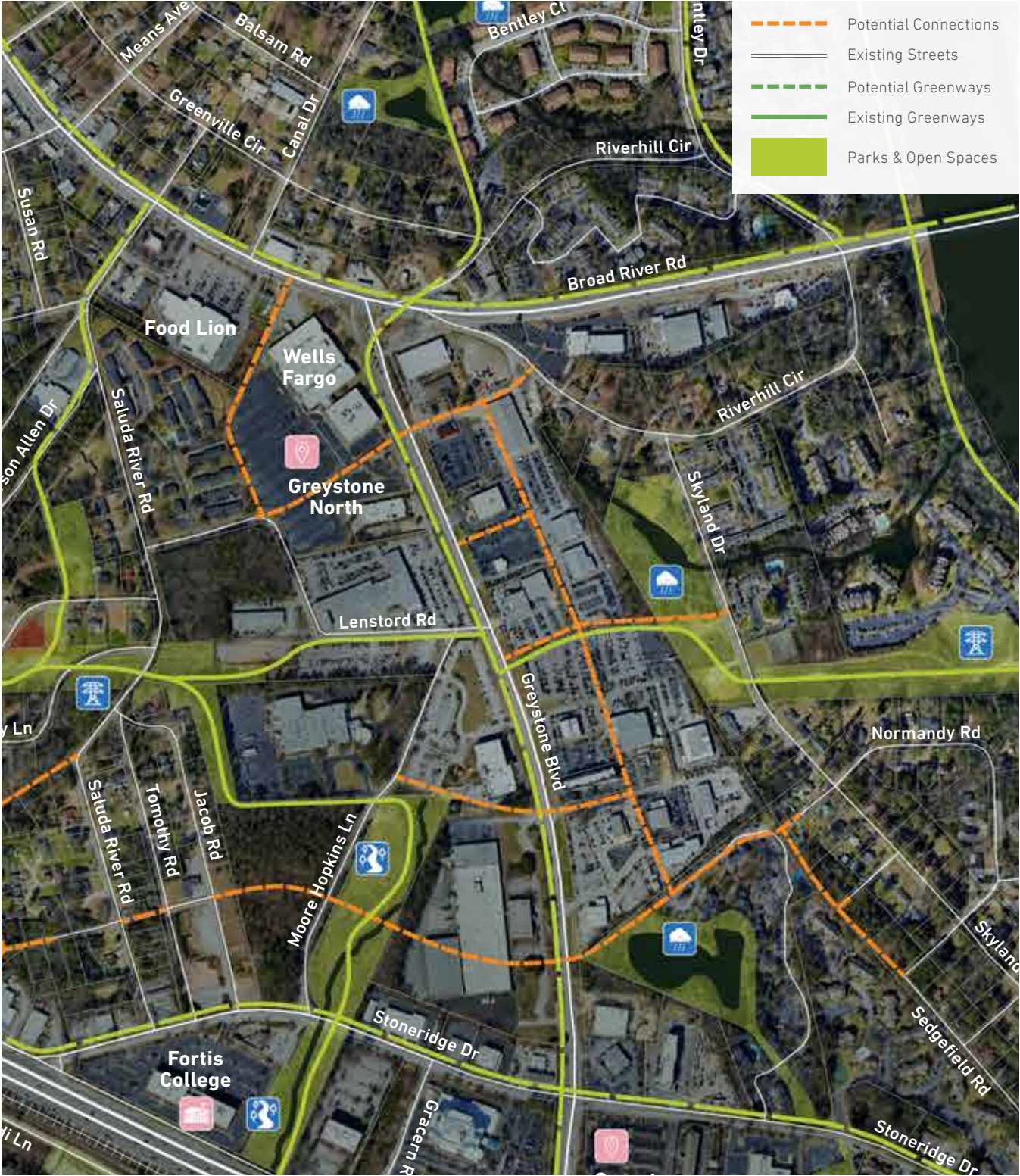


Greystone North

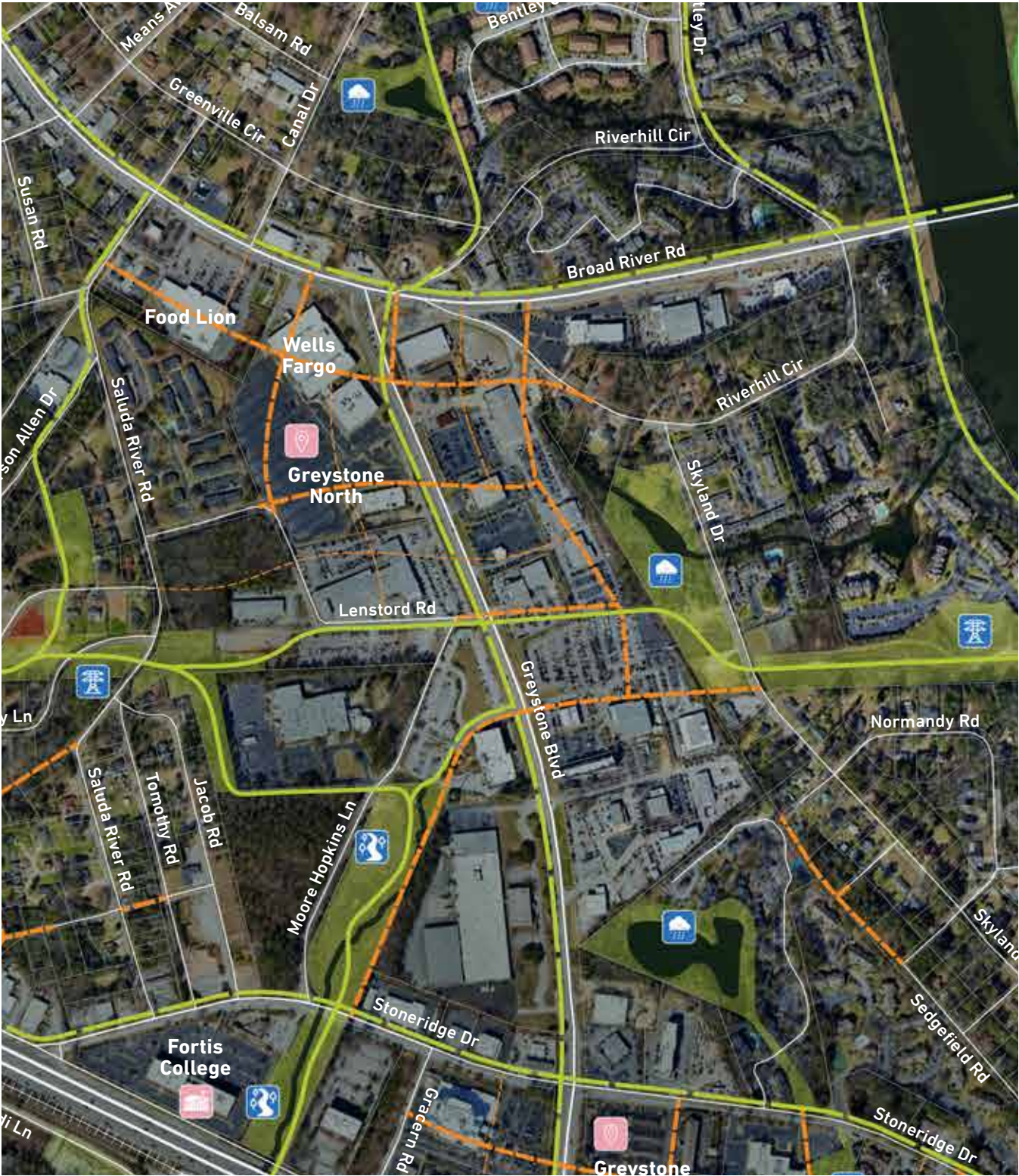
Like the Dutch Square Mall Opportunity Site, Greystone Boulevard is another transformative opportunity contemplated by the 2010 Broad River Road Corridor and Community Master Plan. The vision illustrated by this plan is for dense, mixed-use development surrounding a new transit hub at the intersection of Greystone Boulevard and Broad River Road. Unfortunately, like Dutch Square Mall, this vision has yet to be realized though many of its elements align with the vision and goals for community mobility in this plan. Given recent developments, it seems unlikely that a transit hub would be the catalytic spark to transform this corridor. The base scenario in the framework plan, as well as the alternatives, instead focus on the potential for Greystone Boulevard to transform into a multimodal corridor that would be the backbone of additional community connections and new adjacent development. While most of this corridor is currently occupied by large automobile dealerships, it will be a tremendous opportunity for redevelopment should these dealerships one day relocate. The different alternatives demonstrate different ways this transformation could unfold incrementally.

In the base scenario, new greenway and street connections following internal driveways and circulation features within existing properties to improve connectivity between Greystone Boulevard and adjacent neighborhoods to the east and west. This approach makes it possible for these connections to be pursued today without the need for complete redevelopment of these properties. The creation of these connections would be contingent upon agreements and partnerships with existing property owners. Once in place they set the foundation of a smaller, more walkable development pattern that is ready to accept new mixed-use development in the future. This development should be higher density with frontages that priortize Greystone Boulevard designed to enhance the street's public realm.

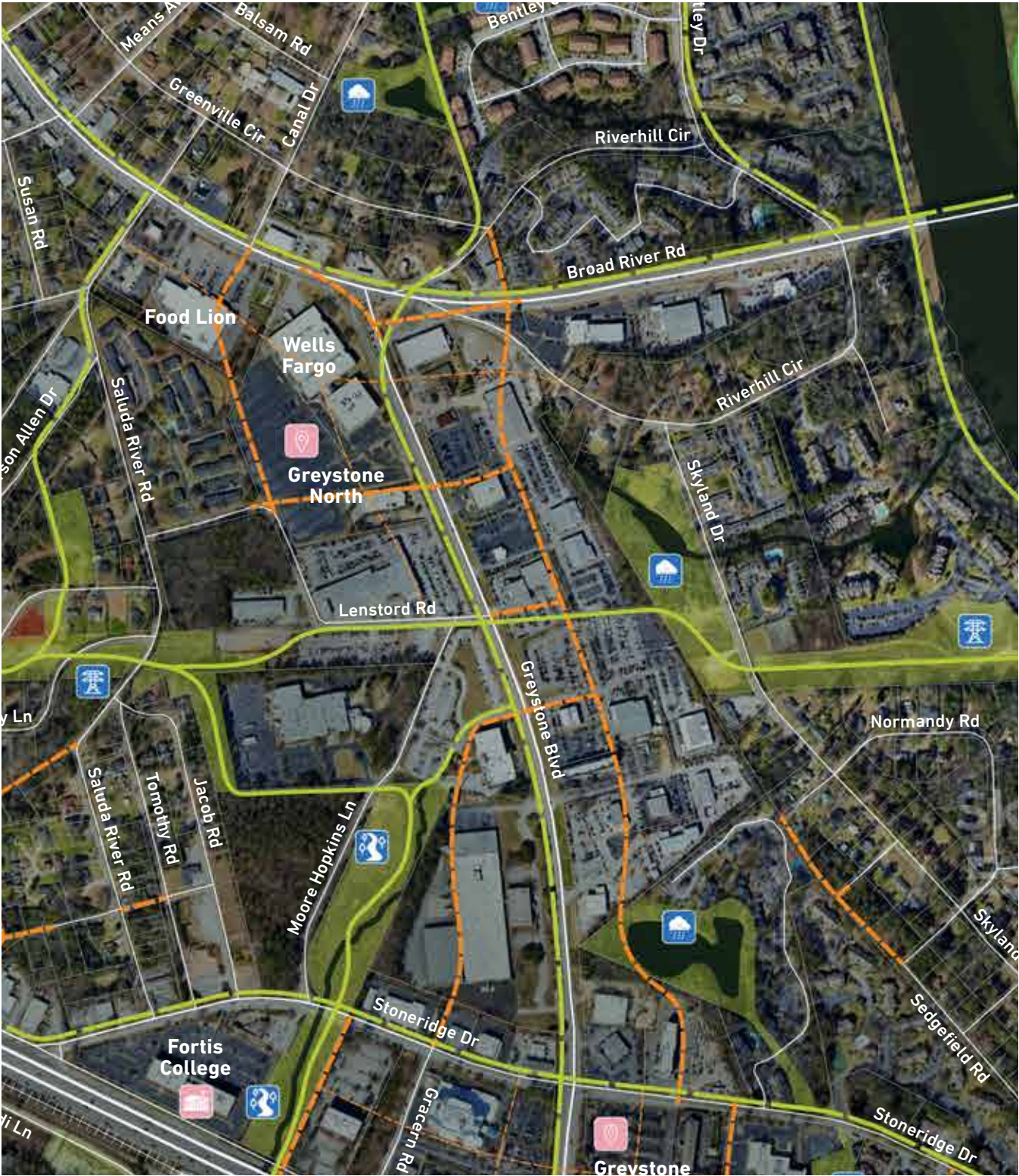
The first alternative scenario shows a modified approach that focuses on orienting development to better address frontage on both Broad River Road and Greystone Boulevard. The drawback is that the resulting connections require more intensive modification to existing properties along Greystone Boulevard. This would require that all properties be redeveloped and reconfigured at the same time. The second alternative features many of the same street connections from the base scenario and instead relies on modifications to the Wells Fargo and Mazda properties to realign the intersection with Broad River Road to achieve the same development frontage relationships like the first alternative.



Proposed Street Framework Base



Proposed Street Framework Alternative 1



Proposed Street Framework Alternative 2

Greystone South

Greystone South faces different challenges and presents a different opportunity from its northern counterpart. While it consists of many large properties north of the interstate (particularly hotels), its challenge is to overcome the barrier that I-126 creates between the community assets on the south side of the highway – the Saluda River, Riverwalk, and Riverbanks Zoo – and the development and neighborhoods on the north side. The baseline scenario in the framework plan proposes a new greenway connection along Greystone Boulevard to connect over the interstate highway and through existing circulation in the Riverbanks Zoo to access the Saluda Riverwalk. It proposes a second connection down the utility easement next to Fortis College and tunnels under the interstate to access the existing Riverwalk trailhead on Candi Lane. Neither of these are easy projects but are the options available assuming the interstate remains.

The two alternatives make an ambitious assumption: transforming I-126 to a surface street that includes multimodal enhancements. This will require tackling the challenge of eliminating the interstate's grade separation and reconciling the site's topography on either side. As audacious as this may sound at first, many communities across the country have either already taken these same steps (Chattanooga, TN; Boston, MA; San Francisco, CA) or

Proposed Street Framework Base



Proposed Street Framework Alternative 1



Proposed Street Framework Alternative 2

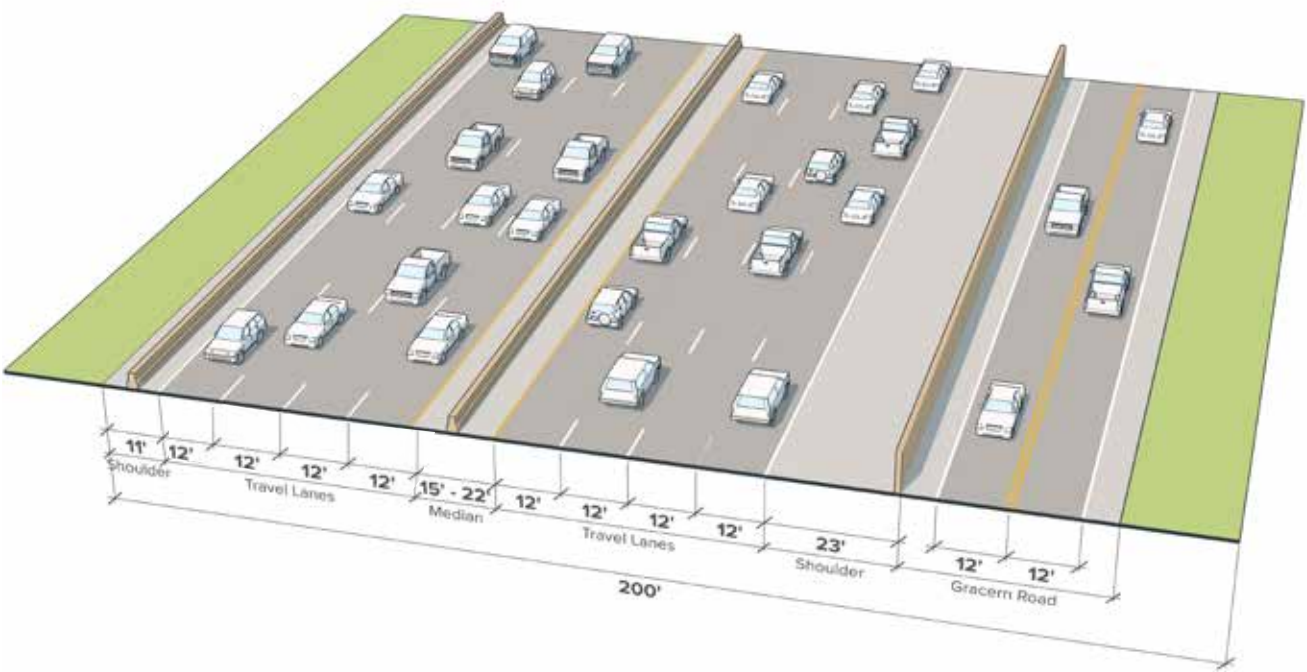
have begun planning to do the same (Atlanta, GA). More information on what this transformation could look like, the federal programs that support it, and a case study are included on the following pages. All of these efforts have been undertaken realizing the incredible benefits of restoring community connectivity. In addition to providing a wider set of options for considering potential new street and greenway connections over a surface level roadway, these new connections organize the site for new development opportunities that infill between these connections. In short, it restores the urban fabric and allows unblocked access between Riverbanks and the Saluda River.

Transforming I-126

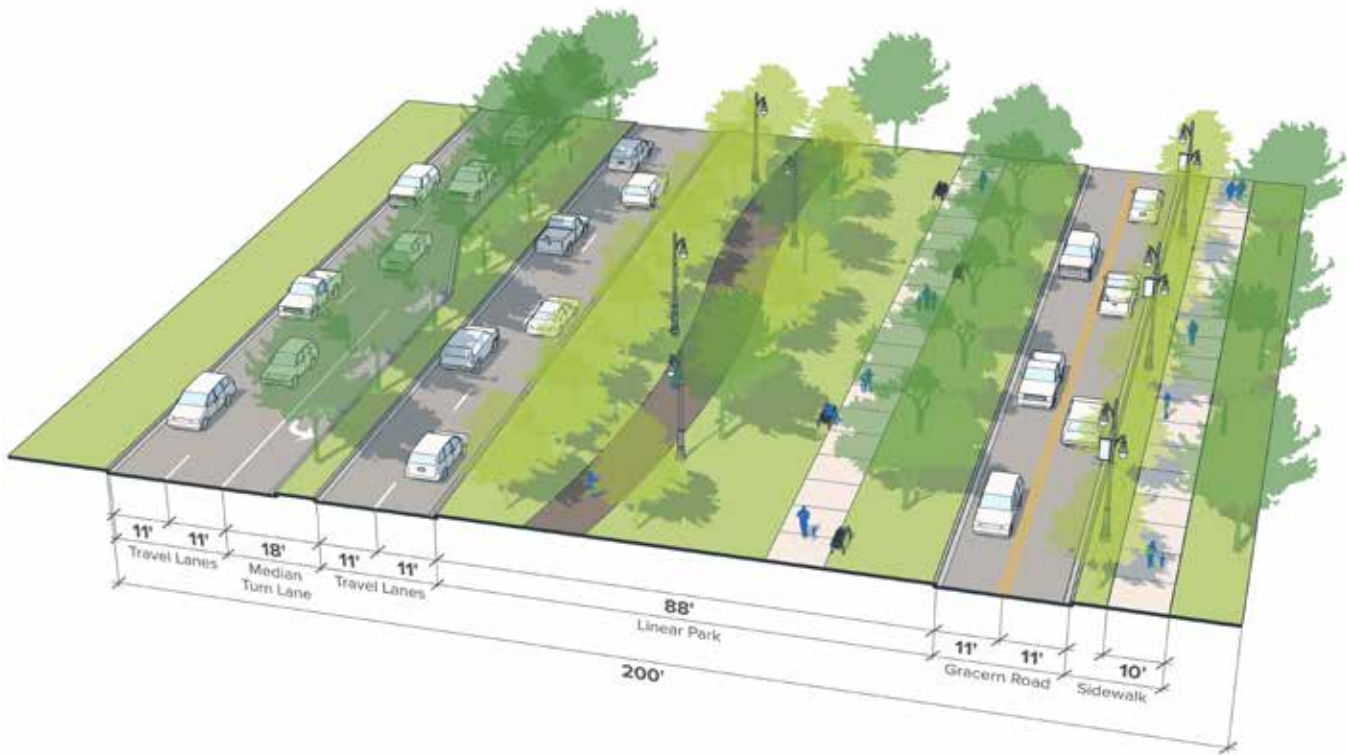
I-126 was one of the first interstates to arrive in Columbia. It replaced the former US 76 highway that connected Columbia regionally and nationally. Unfortunately, this investment in the highway reinforced its presence as a barrier that separates Riverbanks from the Saluda River on the other side: it disconnected the community from the place. The Saluda Riverwalk and the Riverbanks Zoo are incredible, citywide assets but are only accessible by vehicle via Greystone Boulevard. The ability of this entire area of Riverbanks to transform into something different and more community supportive is intertwined with the fate of this highway.

As I-126 enters Downtown Columbia, it transitions to a wider, surface arterial roadway except for where there is a bridge across the river. This point of transition should be reconsidered. It could be shifted farther north to Arrowood Road or all the way to the intersection with I-26 effectively eliminating I-126 altogether. In either scenario the roadway would be redesigned as a multimodal corridor that could accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists while handling the same volumes of vehicles. The illustration on this page shows a potential concept where I-126 is transformed into a multimodal corridor that includes shared uses paths that could better connect the existing Saluda Riverwalk with the greenways proposed in the River Access layer of this plan. Additionally, bringing this roadway to surface level makes it possible to introduce other new street connections that can reconfigure the entire area for new, community-oriented development.

This idea isn't far-fetched. Many other cities, from San Francisco to Chattanooga and Boston, have successfully realized the opportunity of transforming massive highways that once disconnected communities into public realm assets that have stitched communities back together. In fact, the federal government recently established the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program to assist communities to this effect. Should CMCOG, the City of Columbia, and Richland County ultimately seek to take advantage of this opportunity, this grant would provide support for planning, design, and implementation.



Existing Conditions



Proposed Design Alternative

Learning from San Francisco

Removing the Embarcadero Freeway has revitalized San Francisco's financial district, freeing up over 100 acres of land from the freeway for a new waterfront promenade and public plaza. It led to the redevelopment of historic buildings like the Ferry Building and recast entire districts like the formerly industrial South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood as a hub for tech companies. It opened in 2002 and carries three lanes of traffic in each direction and has a streetcar line running down the center, along with a bike lane and an adjacent waterfront trail. While it accommodates substantial car traffic, it also increased transit options and introduced a substantial amount of public open space. By 2006, housing in the area has increased by 51% and jobs by 23% since the freeway's removal. The freeway's removal has also led to other efforts to reclaim street space for people.

Source: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/rcnprogram>



Embarcadero, San Francisco
Photo Credit: Above: Lance Yamamoto / SFGate; Opposite: Wikipedia





4 Implementing the Plan

Implementing the Plan

The *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan* is a long-term vision for aligning community needs for local mobility with future land use and development decisions. Due to the enormity of the Riverbanks study area, Implementation of this vision will unfold over decades and potentially generations. The recommended transportation projects in this plan, as detailed in the plan’s River Access and Street Connections framework layers, are numerous but fundamental to transforming Riverbanks into an area that connects its people with its places. The transportation infrastructure designed and built is the biggest factor in the places that coalesce around it.

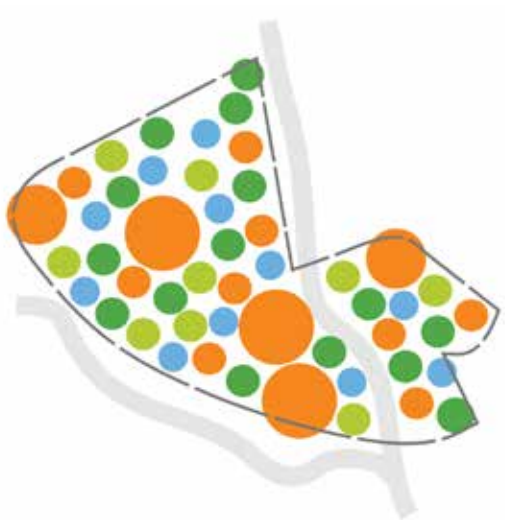
The goal of every plan is its implementation. Though this plan is considered a long-term vision, this section is organized to provide detail on the transportation projects identified in this plan. Some of these have been carried forward from previous plans and are further along on the pathway towards implementation. These are great catalysts to build momentum for the new projects identified in this plan which will need to follow a more detailed planning and design process of their own. Continued engagement of Riverbanks community members will need to be a vital component of this process to ensure they stay true to the vision and goals of this plan.



The Strategy

At almost 3,000 acres, the Riverbanks study area is massive. It will be a generational effort to implement the number of potential projects within the proposed framework plan. It's imperative that these projects be organized in a way that promotes implementation. The challenge of past planning efforts is that they tended to be centered around big, catalytic projects. These are important but require significant political will, funding, and a robust development environment to move forward. When these ingredients are in short supply, implementation doesn't happen. Instead, this plan focuses on smaller projects to connect people with the rivers, build out the internal mobility network, and create momentum for tackling larger efforts later. This incremental approach includes organizing the large Riverbanks study area into four, smaller focus areas to help prioritize further.

Many of these projects cross jurisdictional boundaries and will require close coordination between the City of Columbia and Richland County. This is an opportunity for both partners to bring their future land use policies in alignment based on the recommendations in this plan. As the area begins to grow and the need for transit increases, they'll need to work together with COMET to re-evaluate transit service within the area especially as it relates to the design transformation of the major corridors in the study area.



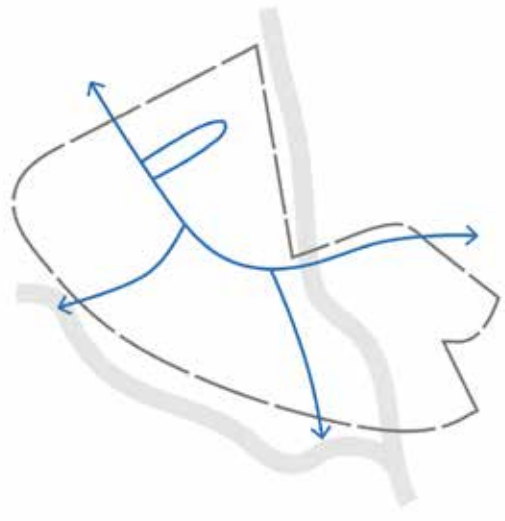
1. Riverbanks is a big area with a lot of projects: organize these for implementation success.



2. Focus on smaller projects that connect with the rivers and build out the internal mobility network.



3. Adjust and simplify land use policies to set the foudation for the desired development outcomes.



4. Revisit transit service as the area grows and becomes more connected.



5. Make decisions about key transportation projects to affect development outcomes.



6. Time larger project investments with larger development projects.

Project Parameters

Developing a comprehensive and detailed list of the transportation projects was a key part of the *Reaching Riverbanks: Community Mobility Plan* process. While the lists on the following pages provides this detailed information based on the recommended locations as depicted in this plan, it's important to understand that the location, lengths, characteristics, and potential costs of these projects should be taken as a starting point for making final decisions. Each project, though some may be pursued collectively, will require its own planning, design, and engagement process to make specific decision on alignments, facility types, and destinations. That these projects will change and evolve as they are understood in greater detail is a normal and healthy part of any project development process. Changes that ensure that these projects align with the vision and goals of this plan and include community members in the decision-making process are welcomed.

Prioritization

- **High:** These are projects that have already been vetted in previous planning processes and should occur as soon as possible. They help build connections to the rivers and are also the backbones of local mobility. They are critical to establishing early momentum and setting the foundation for the success of future projects.
- **Medium:** These projects continue to build out local mobility network. They build-off of the high-priority projects and further connect local residents and workers with destinations inside of Riverbanks study area.
- **Low:** These projects will require a level of planning and funding that must be formulated over several years. Building community and political support and collaboration with multiple agencies and stakeholders will be critical. These projects will have the potential for high, positive impact on community mobility but will require the highest level of effort.

Although implementation priorities have been established, these designations are for planning purposes only; actions should be implemented as soon as opportunities arise. For example, if circumstances provide an opportunity to complete a low priority (more difficult) project in the near-term, then implementation should be pursued despite its priority designation.

Cost Projections & Funding Sources

Where applicable, an estimated order-of-magnitude opinion of probable cost is presented for each recommendation in the Action Plan. For policy and planning actions, cost is estimated based on professional experience with similar efforts. For capital projects, costs were developed by identifying pay items and establishing rough quantities; these costs include a planning-level contingency. Unit costs are based on 2024 dollars and were assigned based on historical cost data from working with many state DOTs and other sources. Lump sum costs have been assigned to some general categories such as utility relocations, engineering, and right-of-way acquisition; however these costs can vary widely depending on the exact details and nature of the work. The overall estimates are intended to be general and used for planning purposes. Construction costs will vary based on the ultimate project scope (i.e., potential combination of projects) and economic conditions at the time of construction. These cost projections do not include estimates for on-going maintenance. For all infrastructure improvements, particularly separated facilities, the City and County will need to plan and budget for these accordingly.

Funding sources for these projects will vary greatly. Smaller projects are great candidates for local funding (general fund, T-SPLIT) that have fewer requirements in terms of process and implementation. Larger projects, such as transformations of major corridors, will likely require state and/or federal funding grants to be implemented. While these grants can offer substantial funding capacity, the requirements attached to state and federal processes can extend the implementation timeline of these projects.

Potential Partnerships

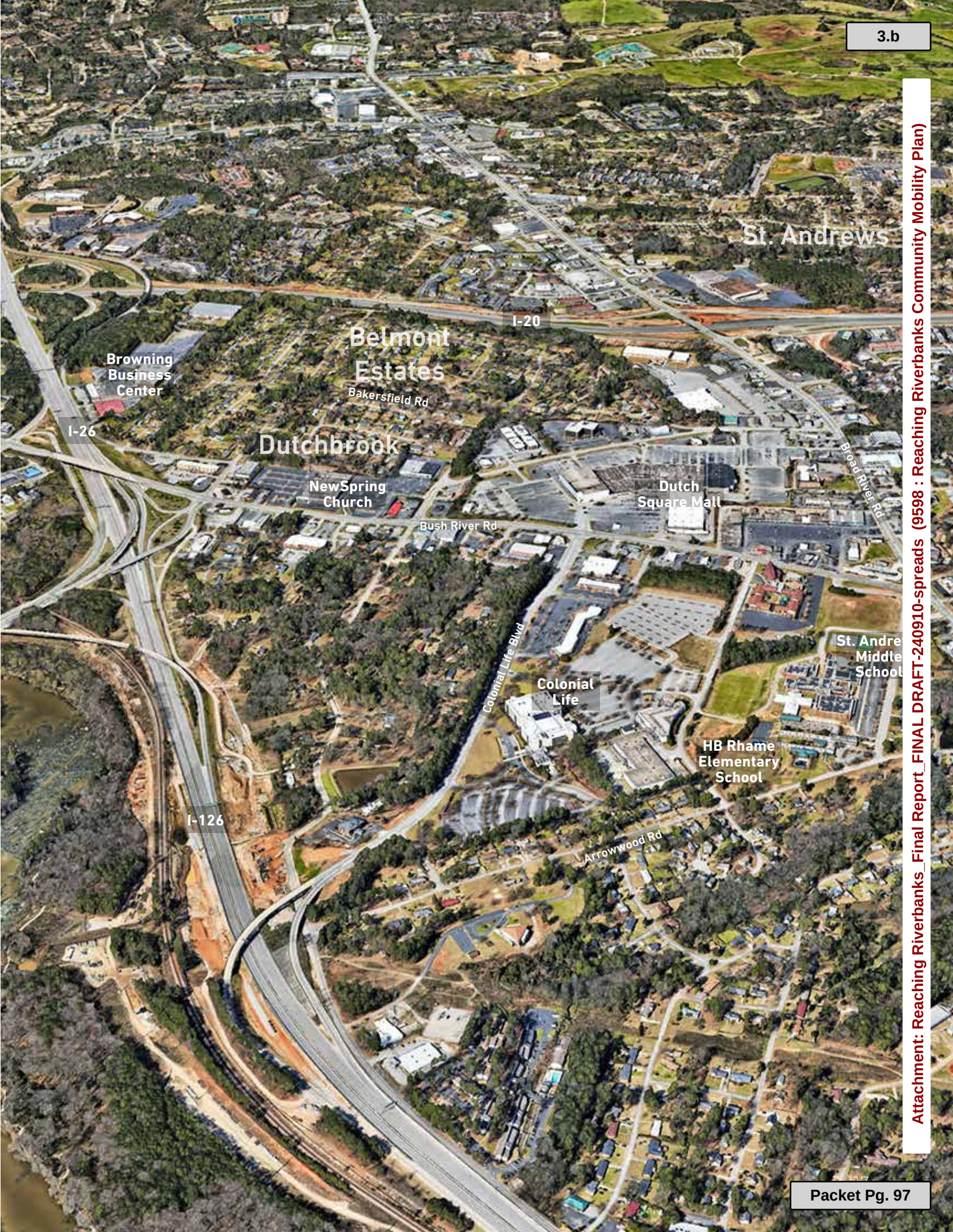
While potentially numerous partnerships are involved in any transportation project, the project list in this plan identifies those key agencies that will need to collaborate for implementation. Due to the complex jurisdictional boundaries in Riverbanks, often this collaboration will start with the City of Columbia and Richland County as well as CMCOG as the regional metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and sponsor of this plan. Additionally, many of the existing roadways within the study area are owned by SCDOT requiring that they be an early partner. The COMET, Central Midlands Transit, will be a partner for those projects that fall on an existing, planned, or future potential transit routes.





Northwest Focus Area

The Northwest Focus Area lies between Bush River Road, Broad River Road, and the confluence of the interstate highways in the northwest corner of the Riverbanks Study Area. It includes the Belmont Estates and Dutchbrook neighborhoods. The most remote from the rivers, it offers one of the greatest opportunities to connect these neighborhoods with the Broad and Saluda Rivers through the redevelopment of the Dutch Square Mall Opportunity Site as well as the Browning Center. This area includes the transformation of Bush River Road as well as an important connection across the Colonial Life property.



Northwest Implementation Projects

No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
NW-01	Street Access	Build new two-lane street from Gale Road to Browning Road.	Low	0.21	One cost: assumes 24' wide road matching rural section and 5' sidewalk.	\$587,800 - \$795,300	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NW-02	Street Access	Build new two-lane street connecting NW-01 to Browning Road.	Low	0.28	One cost: assumes 24' wide road with curb, gutter, and 5' sidewalk.	\$748,000 - \$1,012,000	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia
NW-03	Street Access	Build bicycles lanes and a sidewalk between I-20 and Morninghill Drive.	High	0.73	Low cost: assumes building a multiuse path with existing street remaining. High cost: assumes removing asphalt and widening the roadway to 36' ,build curb and gutter, include a 6' painted bike lane on both sides of the street, and a sidewalk with amenity zone.	\$641,800 - \$868,300 \$5,916,400 - \$8,004,600	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia
NW-04	Street Access	Bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings on Morninghill Drive from Burnette Drive to Gale Drive.	Low	0.42	One cost: assumes bicycle boulevard.	\$9,300 - \$12,600	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NW-05	Street Access	Bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings on Gale Drive from Morning Hill Drive and Statler Road.	Low	0.42	One cost: assumes bicycle boulevard.	\$9,100 - \$12,300	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NW-06	Street Access	Bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings on Statler Road to Bakersfield Road.	Low	0.14	One cost: assumes bicycle boulevard.	\$3,100 - \$4,200	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NW-07	Street Access	Bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings on Bakersfield Road from Morninghill Drive to Broad River Road.	Low	0.69	One cost: assumes bicycle boulevard.	\$15,300 - \$20,600	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NW-08	Street Access	Upgrade roadway leading to Dutch Square Mall to be two-lanes with an urban trail and sidewalk.	Medium	0.11	One cost: assumes rebuilding road as 24' with a sidewalk, urban trail, and amenity zone	\$258,800 - \$350,200	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia, Word of God
NW-09	Street Access	Build new two-lane street connecting Statler Road and NW-11.	Low	0.50	One cost: assumes 24' wide road, curb and gutter, and sidewalk with amenity zone.	\$2,118,900 - \$2,866,700	CMCOG, SCDOT, Word of God, City of Columbia, Richland County
NW-10	Street Access	Build new two-lane street connecting NW-09 and NW-15.	Low	0.28	One cost: assumes 24' wide road, curb and gutter, and sidewalk with amenity zone.	\$936,700 - \$1,267,300	CMCOG, SCDOT, Word of God, City of Columbia
NW-11	Street Access	Build new two-lane street with urban trail connecting NW-15 and NW-27.	Low	0.23	One cost: assumes 24' wide road, curb and gutter, sidewalk, side path, and amenity zone.	\$1,022,600 - \$1,383,500	CMCOG, SCDOT, Word of God, City of Columbia
NW-12	Street Access	Build new two-lane street connecting NW-10 to N Arrowood Road.	Medium	0.22	One cost: assumes 24' wide road, curb and gutter, and sidewalk with amenity zone.	\$441,900 - \$597,900	CMCOG, SCDOT, Word of God, City of Columbia, Richland County

Northwest Implementation Projects Cont.

No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
NW-13	Street Access	Build new two-lane street connecting NW-12 and NW-11.	Low	0.09	One cost: assumes 24' wide road, curb and gutter, and sidewalk with amenity zone.	\$16,230 - \$22,000	CMCOG, SCDOT, Word of God, City of Columbia
NW-14	Street Access	Build new two-lane street connecting NW-11 to NW-25.	Medium	0.24	One cost: assumes 24' wide road, curb and gutter, and sidewalk with amenity zone.	\$722,900 - \$978,100	CMCOG, SCDOT, Word of God, City of Columbia
NW-15	Street Access	Build new two-lane street with cycle track connecting N Arrowood Road to Bush River Road.	Medium	0.28	One cost: assumes 24' wide road, curb and gutter, sidewalk, cycle track, and amenity zone.	\$1,382,300 - \$1,870,200	CMCOG, SCDOT, Word of God, City of Columbia
NW-16	Street Access	Build urban trail on N Arrowood Road from Bush River Road to Innsbrook Drive.	Low	0.32	Low cost: assumes building a 12' urban trail with existing street remaining. High cost: assumes building a 12' urban trail with amenity zone.	\$423,300 - \$572,700 \$667,900 - \$903,600	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia, Richland County
NW-17	Street Access	Build new two-lane street with urban trail connecting N Arrowood Road to Bakersfield Toad.	Low	0.05	One cost: assumes 24' wide road, curb and gutter, 12' urban trail, and amenity zone.	\$75,300 - \$101,900	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NW-18	Street Access	Build new two-lane street connecting Morninghill Drive to N Arrowood Road.	Low	0.27	One cost: assumes 24' wide road, curb and gutter, and sidewalk with amenity zone.	\$840,500 - \$1,137,500	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia, Richland County
NW-19	Street Access	Build urban trail on Bush River Road from Morninghill Drive to Broad River Road.	High	0.95	Low cost: Assumes urban trail build with no changes to the existing roadway. High cost: Assumes reducing the road from 5 lanes to 3 lanes, building a 12' urban trail on both sides of the street with an amenity zone. Includes a planted median. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$1,252,100 - \$1,694,000 \$25,600,500 - \$34,636,000	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia, Richland County
NW-20	Street Access	Build bike lanes on Frontage Road/Lawand Drive/ Arrowwod Road from Bush River Road to Colonial Life Boulevard.	High	0.94	Low cost: Assumes building a urban trail with curb and gutter, no roadway improvements. High cost: Assumes widening the roadway to include 6' bike lanes on each side, curb and gutter, and a sidewalk with amenity zone. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$1,287,800 - \$1,742,300 \$11,292,100 - \$15,267,600	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia, Richland County
NW-21	Street Access	Build naturalized greenway connection between Lawand Drive and Colonial Life Boulevard.	Low	0.42	One cost: assumes a 12' shared use path.	\$1,028,100 - \$1,391,000	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NW-22	Street Access	Build two-lane new roadway connection between Lawand Drive and Arrowood Road.	Low	0.09	One cost: assumes 24' wide road.	\$46,500 - \$62,900	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County

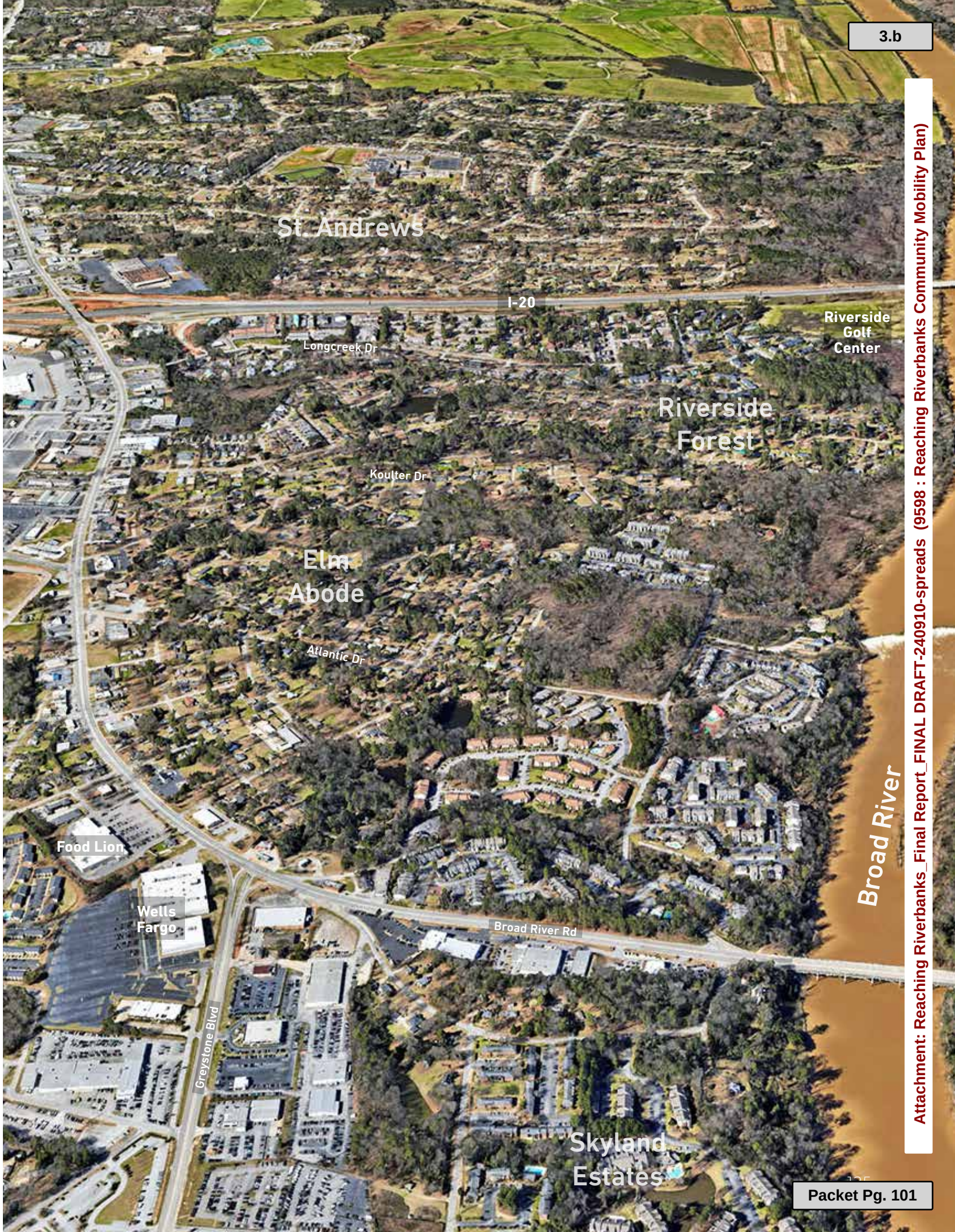
Northwest Implementation Projects Cont.

No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
NW-23	Street Access	Build naturalized greenway connection between Arrowwood Road and Colonial Life Boulevard.	Low	0.12	One cost: assumes a 12’ shared use path	\$106,300 - \$143,800	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia
NW-24	Street Access	Build cycle track on Colonial Life Boulevard between Bush River Road and Arrowwood Road.	High	0.67	Low cost: Assumes building a shared use path with curb and gutter, no roadway widening. High cost: Assumes milling the roadway to restripe a road diet, adding medians, and a two-way cycle track. No roadway widening. No changes to sidewalks. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$765,000 - 1,035,000 \$3,165,200 - \$4,282,300	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia, Richland County
NW-25	Street Access	Build two-lane new roadway connection with urban trail between Colonial Life Boulevard and Averyt Avenue.	Low	0.22	One cost: assumes 24’ wide road, curb and gutter, 12’ shared use path, and amenity zone.	\$1,046,800 - \$1,414,900	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia
NW-26	Street Access	Build two-lane new roadway connection between Colonial Life Boulevard and Averyt Avenue.	Low	0.20	One cost: assumes 24’ wide road, curb and gutter, 5’ sidewalk, and amenity zone.	\$710,200 - \$960,900	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia, Colonial Life
NW-27	Street Access	Build two-lane new roadway connection between NW-11 and Bush River Road.	Low	0.15	One cost: assumes 24’ wide road, curb and gutter, 5’ sidewalk, and amenity zone.	\$532,700 - \$720,700	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia, Richland County
NW-28	Street Access	Build urban trail on Averyt Avenue.	Medium	0.59	Low cost: Assumes building shared use path with curb and gutter. High cost: Assumes including an amenity zone between path and road.	\$673,200 - 910,800 \$1,202,900 - \$1,440,500	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia
NW-29	Street Access	Build naturalized greenway connection from Averyt Ave to Bush River Road around St. Andrews Middle School.	Medium	0.25	One cost: assumes a 12’ shared use path.	\$220,200 - \$262,900	CMCOG, SCDOT,City of Columbia, St. Andrews Baptist Church, St. Andrews Middle School
NW-30	Street Access	Build out access road from St. Andrews Middle School as a two-way street.	Low	0.36	Low cost: Assumes existing street remains and adding center line striping, includes a 5’ sidewalk on one side. High cost: Assumes including an amenity zone between sidewalk and street.	\$330,700 - \$447,500 \$653,900 - \$770,700	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia, St. Andrews Middle School



Northeast Focus Area

The Northeast Focus Area consists primarily of residential neighborhoods, including Riverside Forest and Elm Abode, beyond the first layer of development along Broad River Road. This focus area features numerous greenway connections aimed at connecting with the Broad River particularly in the most northeastern corner of the site where at-grade access with the river is the most feasible. Some of these direct connections along the Broad River already exist though they are well-hidden secrets and not currently part of any larger mobility and access strategy.



Northeast Implementation Projects

No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
NE-01	Street Access	Build urban trail on Longcreek Drive from Broad River Road to approximately Riverwind Drive.	Medium	0.81	Low cost: Assumes building 12’ shared use path and leaving the roadway the same. High cost: assumes building an amentity zone between the road and urban trail.	\$1,837,400 - \$2,213,900	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NE-02	Street Access	Build new two-lane street from Gale Road to Browning Road.	Low	0.21	One cost: assumes 24’ wide road matching rural section and 5’ sidewalk.	\$587,800 - \$795,300	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NE-03	River Access	Build naturalized greenway along Broad River.	High	1.51	One cost: assumes a 12’ shared use path.	\$1,908,300 - \$2,581,800	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia
NE-04	Street Access	Bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings between Longcreek Drive and Omarest Drive.	Medium	0.19	One cost: assumes bicycle boulevard.	\$4,200 - \$5,700	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NE-05	Street Access	Build new roadway connection with on-street urban trail between Omarest Drive and Koulter Drive.	Low	0.07	One cost: assumes 24’ wide road with bicycle boulevard treatments.	\$32,300 - \$43,600	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NE-06	River Access	Build an urban trail from Koulter Drive to proposed naturalized greenway along Broad River.	Medium	0.43	One cost: assumes 12’ shared use path.	\$454,800 - \$615,300	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia
NE-07	Street Access	Build new two-lane street with bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings connecting Koulter Drive to Carl Road.	Low	0.09	One cost: assumes 24’ wide road with bicycle boulevard.	\$41,500 - \$56,100	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NE-08	Street Access	Build bicycle boulevard connection from Carl Road to the end of Elmgren Street.	Medium	0.27	One cost: assumes bicycle boulevard.	\$19,000 - \$33,000	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia
NE-09	River Access	Build naturalized greenway along stream from Elmgren Street to Melissa Lane.	Medium	0.51	One cost: assumes a 12’ shared use path.	\$539,000 - \$729,000	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NE-10	Street Access	Build urban trail connection along Omarest Drive and Koulter Drive to the proposed off street naturalized greenway connection.	Medium	0.36	One cost: assumes a 12’ shared use path	\$274,600 - \$371,500	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NE-11	Street Access	Build two-lane new roadway connection from Riverwind Drive to Burbank Street.	Low	0.19	One cost: assumes 24’ wide road.	\$83,400 - \$112,800	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County
NE-12	Street Access	Build two-lane new roadway connection between Elmgren Street and Adella Street.	Low	0.08	One cost: assumes 24’ wide road.	\$35,100 - \$47,500	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia

Northeast Implementation Projects Cont.

No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
NE-13	Street Access	Build two-lane new roadway connection connecting Elmgren Street.	Low	0.10	One cost, assumes two-way 22' wide road with no curb and gutter. No sidewalk.	\$43,900 - \$59,400	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia
NE-14	River Access	Build naturalized greenway connection from end of Elmgren Street to proposed greenway along Broad River. Include spur trail to connect to Atlantic Drive.	Medium	0.74	One cost: assumes a 12' shared use path.	\$707,200 - \$956,800	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia
NE-15	River Access	Build urban trail along Atlantic Drive from Broad River Road to Bentley Drive.	Medium	0.61	Low cost: Assumes existing street section remains the same with 12' shared use path. High cost: Assumes adding curb and gutter and including an amenity zone between sidewalk and street.	\$535,500 - \$724,500	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia
NE-16	River Access	Build urban trail connecting Atlantic Drive to Riverhill Circle going on and off street.	Medium	0.43	One cost: assumes a 12' shared use path. On-street connections maintain rural section with no curb and gutter.	\$327,300 - \$442,800	CMCOG, SCDOT
NE-17	River Access	Build urban trail connection along Bentley Drive from Atlantic Drive to Broad River Road.	Medium	0.30	One cost: assumes a 12' shared use path that maintains rural section with no curb and gutter.	\$317,100 - \$429,000	CMCOG, SCDOT
NE-18	Street Access	Rebuild Broad River Road from I-20 to Broad River Bridge as a road diet with urban trail.	High	1.76	Both costs assume a road diet from 5-lanes to 3-lanes. Low cost: assumes milling the existing roadway and adding in new striping for vehicle travel lanes, reallocating two lanes for a protected two-way cycle track on one side, and maintainig existing sidewalks on both sides of the street. High cost includes a planted median, removing all existing asphalt and concrete, and upgraded ammentity zones for pedestrians and bicyclists. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$10,241,800 - \$13,856,600 \$32,117,000 - \$43,452,400	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia



Central Focus Area

The Central Focus Area has the potential to be the most transformative, even more so than the Northwestern Focus Area that contains the Dutch Square Mall Opportunity Site. The many auto dealerships and other larger properties that line Greystone Boulevard offer numerous possibilities for new community connections and mobility if and when these properties are ultimately ready for redevelopment. These connections can provide greater access to the Saluda River and existing Riverwalk but only if the transformation of I-126 is part of the equation. Due the complexities of cost, partnerships, and political will, the transformation of I-126 is not included in the project list for this focus area at this time. The list focuses on the connections that are achievable with the presence of the interstate.



Central Implementation Projects

No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
C-1	Street Access	Build naturalized greenway from Greenbrook Court to Gracern Road with spur trail to Betsy Drive.	Medium	0.47	One cost: assumes a 12’ shared use path.	\$496,400 - \$671,600	CMCOG, SCDOT, Richland County, City of Columbia
C-2	Street Access	Build naturalized greenway along utility easement from Gracern Road to Greystone Road.	Medium	0.94	One cost: assumes a 12’ shared use path.	\$992,000 - \$1,342,000	CMCOG, Utility company, Richland County, City of Columbia
C-3	Street Access	Build new two-lane street from Greenbrook Court to Betsy Drive.	Low	0.06	One cost: assumes 24’ wide road.	\$103,000 - \$139,300	CMCOG, SCDOT, City of Columbia
C-4	Street Access	Build urban trail and naturalized greenway from Broad River Road to C-2.	Low	0.45	One cost: assumes a 12’ shared use path that maintains existing rural condition.	\$395,300 - \$535,000	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-5	Street Access	Build new two-lane street between Betsy Drive and Starlight Drive.	Low	0.08	One cost: assumes 22’ new roadway matching existing rural section.	\$137,300 - \$185,700	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-6	Street Access	Build bike lanes on Gracern Road from Colonial Life Boulevard to the end of Stoneridge Drive.	High	1.64	Low cost: Assumes maintaining rural section with a 12’ shared use path built on one side of the street. High cost: assumes widening the road by 12’ to add 6’ bike lanes on each side, adding sidewalk, and maintaining existing rural section. Road widening includes removing existing asphalt and repaving road. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$1,439,900 - \$1,948,100 \$6,522,300 - \$8,824,300	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-7	Street Access	Build new two-lane street between betsy Drive and Saluda River Road.	Low	0.14	One cost: assumes 24’ new road.	\$240,200 - \$325,000	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-8	Street Access	Build new two-lane street between C-7 to Gracern Road.	Low	0.19	One cost: assumes 24’ new road.	\$326,000 - \$383,500	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-9	Street Access	Build new two-lane street between C-8 to Normandy Road.	Low	0.65	One cost: assumes 22’ new roadway matching existing rural section.	\$1,115,200 - \$1,508,800	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-10	River Access	Naturalized greenway connection from C-2 to the Saluda River Walk.	Medium	0.72	One cost: assumes a 12’ shared use path.	\$642,300 - \$857,000	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT

Central Implementation Projects Cont.

No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
C-11	Street Access	Build new two-lane street from C-9 to W Shawnee Road.	Low	0.18	One cost: assumes 24' new road.	\$308,800 - \$417,800	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-12	Street Access	Build new two-lane street from C-9 and C-13.	Low	0.46	One cost: assumes 24' new roadway with curb and gutter and 5' sidewalk.	\$1,551,400 - \$2,098,900	CMCOG, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-13	Street Access	Build new two-lane street from C-14 and Riverhill Circle.	Low	0.28	Low cost: assumes 24' new roadway with urban section and 5' sidewalk. High Cost: Includes amenity zone.	\$578,100 - \$782,100 \$898,200 - \$1,954,800	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-14	Street Access	Build new two-lane street from Broad River Road and C-13.	Low	0.22	Low cost: assumes 24' new roadway with curb and gutter and 5' sidewalk. High Cost: Includes amenity zone.	\$391,500 - \$530,000 \$576,300 - \$779,700	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-15	Street Access	Build new two-lane street from Greystone Boulevard and Skyland Drive.	Low	0.20	One cost: assumes 24' new roadway with 5' sidewalk on both sides of street.	\$223,400 - \$302,200	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-16	River Access	New naturalized greenway from Greystone Boulevard to Broad River Road Greenway.	Medium	0.64	One cost: assumes 12' shared use path.	\$674,900 - \$913,100	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-17	Street Access	Build new two-lane street from Moore Hopkins Lane to C-12.	Low	0.21	Low cost: assumes 24' new roadway with curb and gutter and 5' sidewalk. High Cost: Includes amenity zone.	\$284,900 - \$385,300 \$452,700 - \$612,500	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-18	Street Access	Urban trail connection along Greystone Boulevard.	High	0.73	Costs assume a road diet from 5-lanes to 3-lanes. The low cost assumes milling the existing roadway and adding in new striping for vehicle travel lanes,reallocating two lanes for a cement protected two-way cycle track on one side, and adding sidewalks on both sides of the street. Does not include removing any curb or relocating curb. Does not include amenity zone. The high cost includes a planted median, removing all existing asphalt and concrete, relocating one curb and gutter to narrow the road, and amenity zones for both sides of the street.	\$1,761,800 - \$2,383,600 \$13,930,600 - \$18,835,500	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT

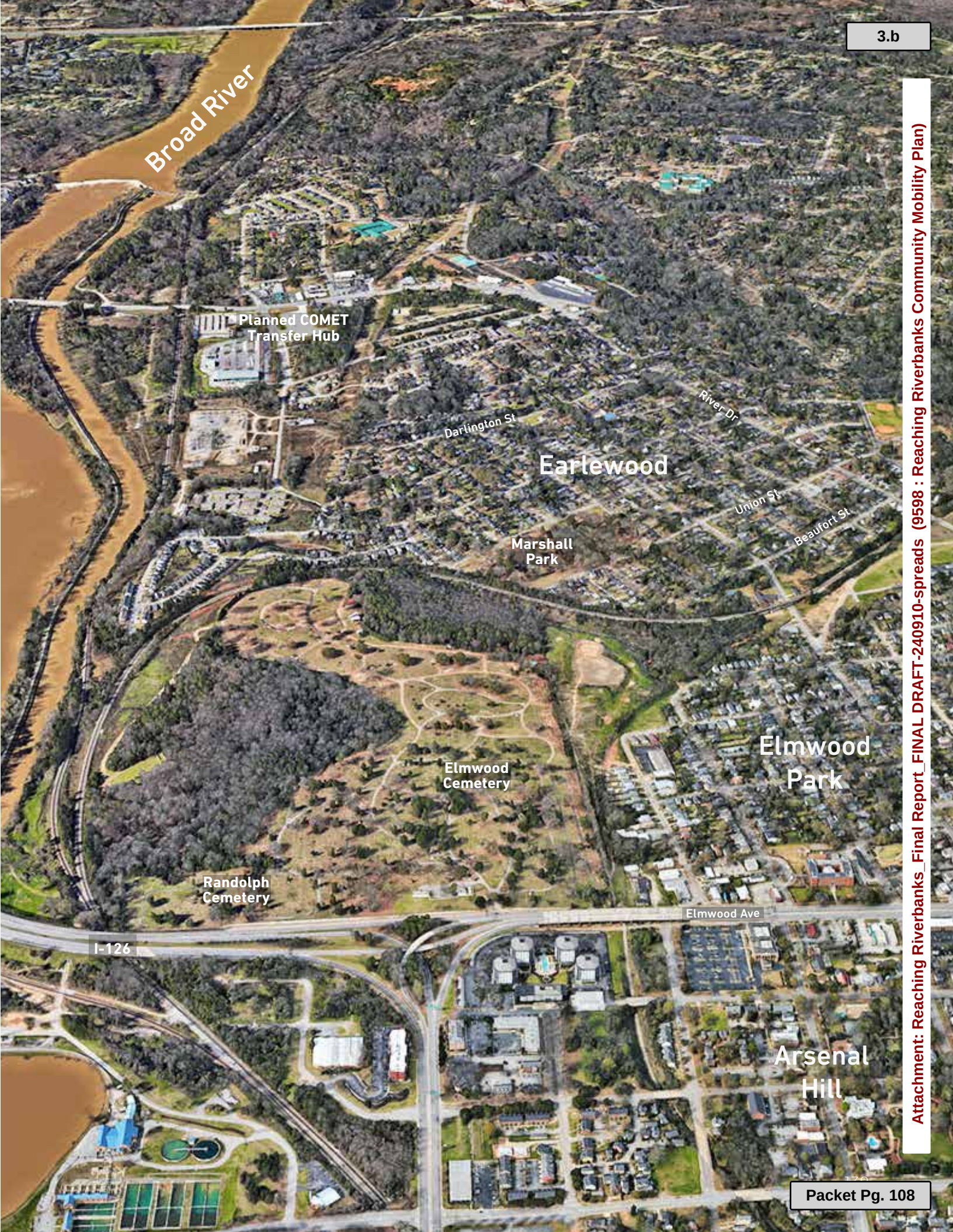
Central Implementation Projects Cont.

No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
C-19	River Access	New street connection from Skyland Drive to Sedgefield Road.	Low	0.29	One cost: assumes 24' new roadway.	\$197,600 - \$267,300	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-20	River Access	New naturalized greenway along Broad River Road connecting from the Broad River Bridge to project C-6. Includes spur trail.	Medium	1.63	One cost: assumes 12' shared use path.	\$2,059,600 - \$2,786,500	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-21	River Access	New naturalized greenway connecting C-20 to other end of C-20.	Medium	0.43	One cost: assumes 12' shared use path.	\$454,800 - \$615,300	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT
C-22	River Access	Urban trail connection from C-18 to Saluda River Greenway.	High	0.58	One cost: assumes 12' shared use path.	\$917,200 - \$1,240,900	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia, SCDOT



East Focus Area

The East Focus Area is an opportunity to reinforce the Riverbanks study area's connection with the Earlewood neighborhood, Downtown Columbia, and the Broad River. It focuses on adapting local streets in the neighborhood to provide multimodal options. The planned COMET transfer hub along River Drive is both an opportunity for new connections and transit-oriented development that takes advantage of the anticipated number of transit routes that will pass through this area. The Elmwood Cemetery and other historic cemeteries that fall within its general boundaries present exciting opportunities for new local, non-vehicular connections that provide access to these important open spaces and cultural assets that also link with Downtown Columbia.

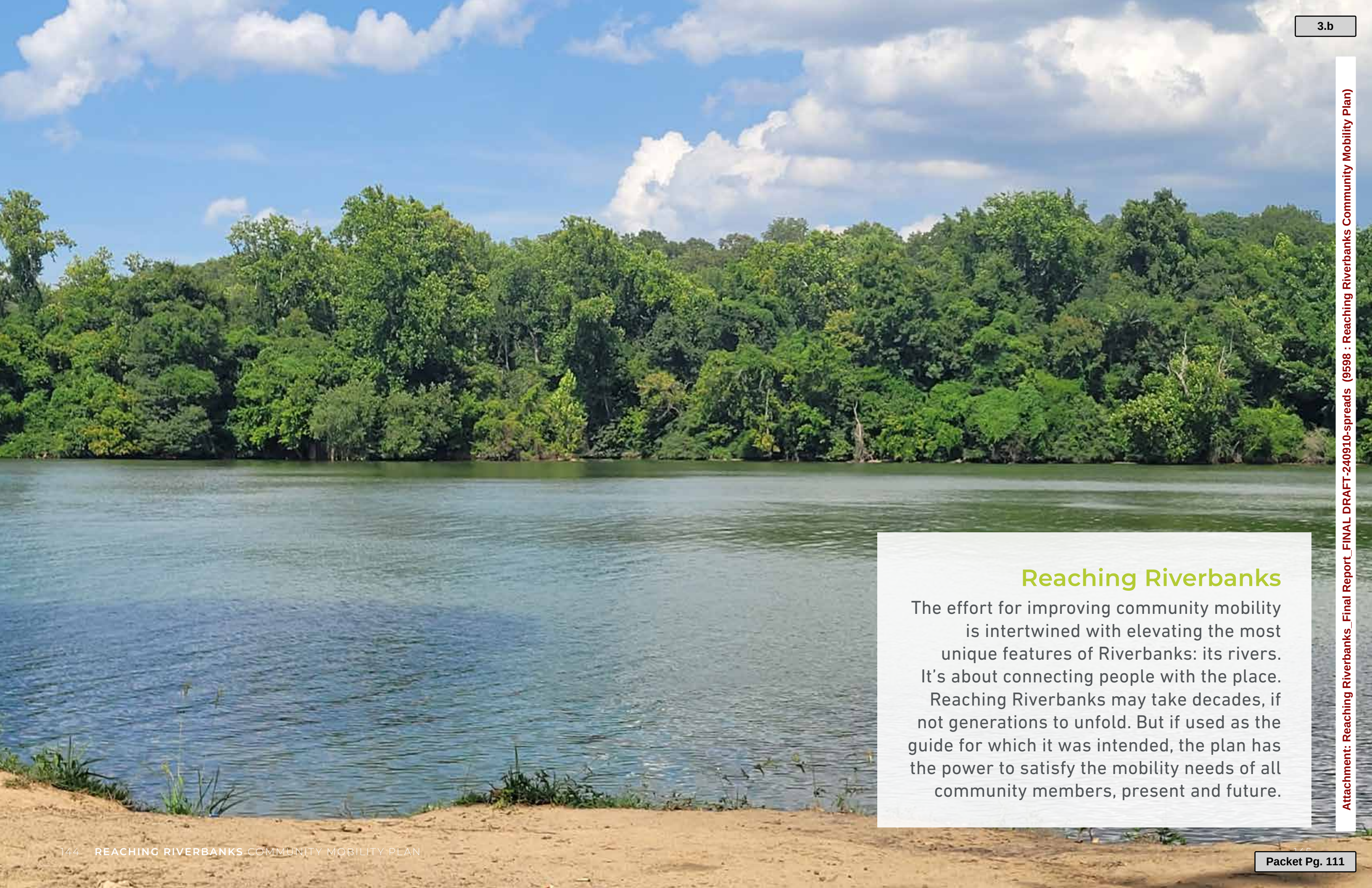


East Implementation Projects

No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
E-1	River Access	Urban trail connecting Three Rivers Greenway to Vista Greenway.	Medium	0.65	One cost: assumes 12’ shared use path. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$686,000 - \$928,000	CMCOG, City of Columbia, The River Alliance
E-2	River Access	Naturalized greenway circulating through Elmwood Cemetary.	Medium	1.56	One cost: assumes 12’ shared use path.	\$1,405,100 - \$1,901,000	CMCOG, City of Columbia, Elmwood Cemetary
E-3	River Access	Naturalized greenway connecting Elmwood Cemetary to Lucius Road.	Medium	0.25	One cost: assumes 12’ shared use path.	\$265,200 - \$358,800	CMCOG, City of Columbia, Elmwood Cemetary
E-4	Street Access	Bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings on Union Street/ Richfield Drive/Northwood Street between River Drive and Lucius Road.	High	0.92	One cost: assumes bicycle boulevard. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$20,300 - \$27,500	CMCOG, City of Columbia
E-5	Street Access	Urban trail on Lucius Road between River Road and Canal Pl Way.	High	0.62	Low cost: assumes building a 12’ shared use path along existing rural section, no changes to the street. High cost: assumes building curb and gutter on both sides of the street with amenity zones between 12’ shared use path one one side and a sidewalk on the other side of the street. Assumes no removal of of existing asphalt or repaving. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$545,700 - \$738,300 \$2,493,500 - \$3,373,600	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia
E-6	Street Access	Bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings on Park Street from the railroad to Marlboro Street.	High	0.82	One cost: assumes bicycle boulevard. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$18,100 - \$24,500	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia
E-7	Street Access	Bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings on Darlington Street from River Drive to end of existng roadway.	Medium	0.43	One cost: assumes bicycle boulevard.	\$9,500 - \$12,900	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia
E-8	Street Access	Buffered bicycle lanes on River Drive from Clement Drive to the railroad.	High	0.81	One cost due to ROW constraints: assumes existing roadway is milled and restriped to create two travel lanes with a two-way buffered bicycle lane. On street parking is removed. Existing sidewalk remains. Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia.	\$347,800 - \$470,600	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia

East Implementation Projects Cont.

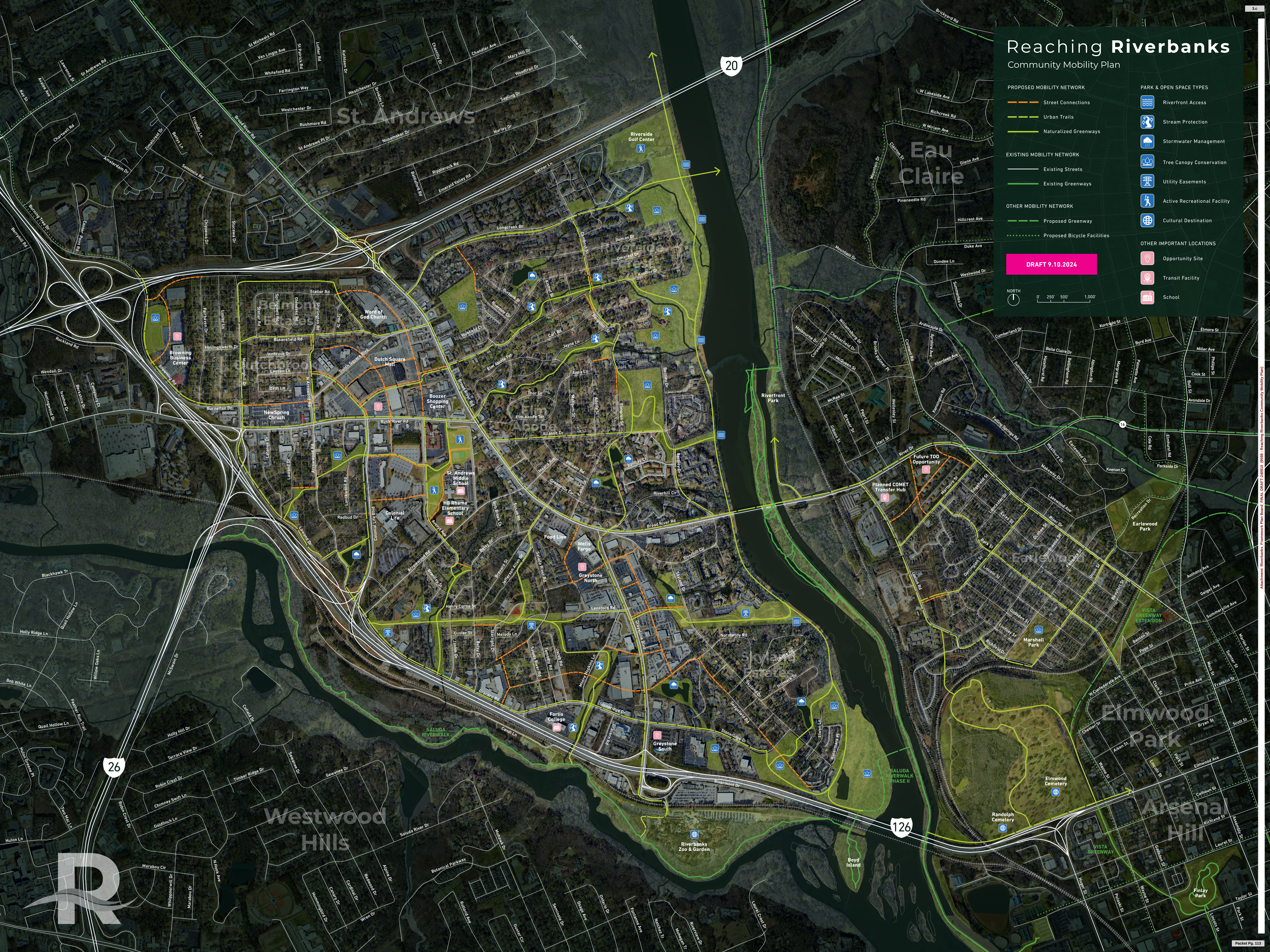
No.	Type	Description	Priority	Miles	Notes	Cost Range	Partners
E-9	Street Access	Bike lanes on Marlboro Street from Lucius Drive to River Road.	High	0.41	Low cost: assumes roadway is milled and restriped to include a 6' climbing bike lane and a sharrow on the downhill. No changes to curbs or sidewalks. High cost: assumes widening the roadway by 8' to add 6' bike lanes on each side of the street with sidewalks on the both sides.Previous plan: Walk Bike Columbia	\$81,300 - \$110,000 \$1,482,000 - \$2,005,100	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia
E-10	Street Access	Build new two-lane roadway continuing the bicycle boulevard/shared lane markings from Darlington Street to Lucius Road.	Low	0.11	One cost: assumes new 24' road with no curb and gutter.	\$75,400 - \$102,000	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia
E-11	Street Access	Build new two-lane roadway from River Road to Keels.	Low	0.13	One cost: assumes new 24' road with curb and gutter, 5' sidewalk on one side.	\$165,300 - \$223,700	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia
E-12	Street Access	Build new two-lane roadway from Lucius Road to Keels.	Low	0.14	One cost: assumes new 24' road with curb and gutter, 5' sidewalk on one side.	\$218,700 - \$295,900	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia
E-13	Street Access	Build new two-lane roadway from River Road to Keels.	Low	0.07	One cost: assumes new 24' road with curb and gutter, 5' sidewalk on one side.	\$39,200 - \$53,100	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia
E-14	Street Access	Build urban trail on River Drive from the bridge to Clement Road.	High	0.90	Both costs assume a road diet from 5-lanes to 3-lanes. Low cost: assumes milling the existing roadway and adding in new striping for vehicle travel lanes,realloating two lanes for a protected two-way cycle track on one side, and maintainig existing sidewalks on both sides of the street. High cost includes a planted median, removing all existing asphalt and concrete, and upgraded ammentity zones for pedestrians and bicyclists.	\$5,316,900 - \$7,254,300 \$17,003,100 - \$23,004,200	CMCOG, Richland County, City of Columbia



Reaching Riverbanks

The effort for improving community mobility is intertwined with elevating the most unique features of Riverbanks: its rivers. It's about connecting people with the place. Reaching Riverbanks may take decades, if not generations to unfold. But if used as the guide for which it was intended, the plan has the power to satisfy the mobility needs of all community members, present and future.





Reaching Riverbanks

Community Mobility Plan

PROPOSED MOBILITY NETWORK

- Street Connections
- Urban Trails
- Naturalized Greenways

EXISTING MOBILITY NETWORK

- Existing Streets
- Existing Greenways

OTHER MOBILITY NETWORK

- Proposed Greenway
- Proposed Bicycle Facilities

PARK & OPEN SPACE TYPES

- Riverfront Access
- Stream Protection
- Stormwater Management
- Tree Canopy Conservation
- Utility Easements
- Active Recreational Facility
- Cultural Destination

OTHER IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

- Opportunity Site
- Transit Facility
- School

DRAFT 9.10.2024

NORTH
0' 250' 500' 1,000'

DRAFT
09.10.24

A Appendix

REACHING RIVERBANKS
MARKET OVERVIEW, HOUSING NEEDS
ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

bae urban economics

Riverbanks Land Use and Transportation Plan: Market Overview, Housing Needs Assessment and Recommendations

Prepared for The Central Midlands Council of Governments

May 31, 2024 Rev. September 5, 2024



bae urban economics

May 31, 2024

Britt Poole, Executive Director
The Central Midlands Council of Governments
236 Stoneridge Drive
Columbia, SC 29210

Dear Mr. Poole:

BAE Urban Economics is pleased to submit the Riverbanks Land Use and Transportation Plan Market Overview, Housing Needs Assessment and Recommendations. The market overview includes a demographic and economic profile, household income information, jobs by industry in the study area, industry jobs by resident, primary employers, and commute flow information. The housing summary includes information on tenure, vacancy rates, age, and sizes of units, as well as home sales and rents, housing affordability, and job-resident employment gaps.

With this information we are able to identify the sectors and development types that should be targeted to assist with economic growth in the Riverbanks study area, prepare a housing needs assessment, and determine the relative vulnerability of existing residents to displacement. With the market overview, the housing needs assessment, the site visit and information gleaned from stakeholder interviews, the public workshops and the charrette, we are also able to develop a set of anti-displacement strategies for the existing residential and commercial communities as part of the final plan recommendations .

Thank you for the opportunity to work with Central Midlands Council of Governments and Toole Design on this important project.

Sincerely,



Mary Burkholder
Principal

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
Data Sources.....	5
DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC TRENDS	6
Demographic Trends	6
Economic Trends.....	11
Targeted Industry Sectors and Development Types.....	18
HOUSING MARKET CONDITIONS.....	23
Housing Characteristics.....	23
For-Sale Housing Market	27
Multifamily Rental Housing Market.....	30
Multifamily Affordable & Senior Units.....	32
Key Market Overview Findings	33
HOUSING NEEDS	34
Housing Affordability.....	34
Job-Resident Employment Gap.....	40
Needs Assessment.....	40
Housing in the Pipeline.....	43
Key Findings - Housing Needs Assessment.....	43
RECOMMENDATIONS	45

List of Tables

Table 1: Population and Households, 2010 and 2023	6
Table 2: Primary Private Employers, Columbia, 2024	14
Table 3: Commute Destinations, Riverbanks Study Area, 2021	16
Table 4: Vacancy Status, 2010 Decennial and 2020 Five-Year Sample Data.....	25
Table 5: Residential Sales, Riverbanks, February 2023 – February 2024.....	30
Table 6: Market-Rate Multifamily Rental Overview, Q3 2023.....	31
Table 7: Affordable & Senior Multifamily Rental Overview, Q4 2023, City of Columbia	32
Table 8: Job-Resident Employment Gap, Riverbanks Study Area, 2023	40
Table 9: Vacancy Status, Riverbanks Study Area and Columbia, 2020	41
Table 10: Riverbanks Study Area Housing Needs Summary Table	42

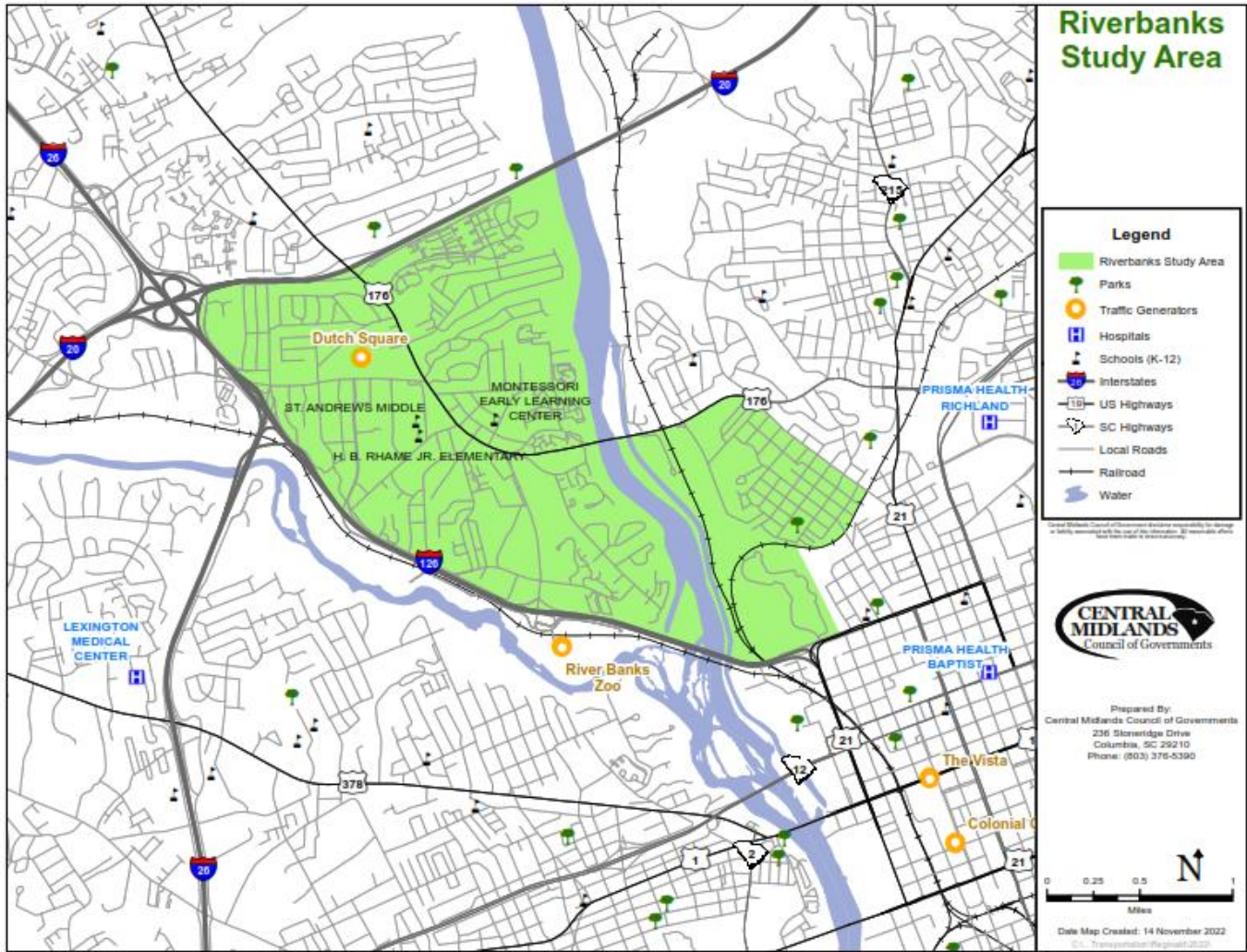
List of Figures

Figure 1: Riverbanks Study Area Map.....	4
Figure 2: Distribution of Households by Type, 2023	7
Figure 3: Age Distribution, 2023	8
Figure 4: Race and Ethnicity, 2023	9
Figure 5: Educational Attainment Rates, Residents Aged 25+, 2023.....	10
Figure 6: Household Income, 2023	11
Figure 7: Employed Residents Aged 16+ by Industry, 2023.....	12
Figure 8: Jobs by Industry, 2023	13
Figure 9: Commute Flows, Riverbanks Study Area, 2021.....	15
Figure 10: Employed Riverbanks Residents' Workplace Destinations, 2021.....	17
Figure 11: Riverbanks Employee's Home Destinations, 2021	18
Figure 12 Housing Units by Tenure, Riverbanks, 2010 - 2023.....	23
Figure 13 Housing Units by Tenure, City of Columbia, 2010 - 2023.....	24
Figure 14 Housing Units by Year Built, 2021	26
Figure 15: Housing Units by Number of Units in Structure (a), 2020.....	27
Figure 16: Residential Sales by Unit Type, Riverbanks Study Area	28
Figure 17: Homes Sold by Unit Size, Riverbanks Study Area	29
Figure 18: Home Sold by Sale Price, Riverbanks February 2023 – February 2024	29
Figure 19: Map of Riverbanks Study Area Census Tracts Used for Housing Affordability Analysis	34
Figure 20: Cost Burdened Households, Riverbanks Study Area, 2020 Five-Year Sample Data.....	35
Figure 21: Cost Burdened Households, City of Columbia, 2020 Five-Year Sample Data.....	35
Figure 22: Cost Burdened Households by HAMFI Level, Riverbanks Study Area, 2020 Five-Year Sample Data (a).....	37
Figure 23: Cost-Burdened Elderly Households, Riverbanks Study Area, 2020.....	39
Figure 24: Cost Burdened Small Family Households, Riverbanks Study Area, 2020	39

INTRODUCTION

This market overview, housing needs assessment and recommendations are prepared as part of the Riverbanks Land Use and Transportation Plan. The market overview, focused on the Riverbanks study area shown in Figure 1, includes information on population and households, household composition, educational attainment, household income, housing cost burden and other factors as well as resident employment, jobs in the study area, and commute patterns. The housing summary includes information for the study area on housing tenure, housing types, the age of housing units, and units in structures. The housing summary also includes information on multifamily rents and vacancies, net absorption and unit sizes as well as residential sales information. This study also includes a housing needs assessment for the Riverbanks study area. The last part of this report is a descriptive listing of economic, market and housing recommendations, including displacement strategies. The information included in this study offers a basis for planning of land use and transportation solutions needed to support future development and redevelopment in the area.

Figure 1: Riverbanks Study Area Map



Sources: Central Midlands Council of Governments, 2023.

Data Sources

BAE used the following data sources to complete the analysis:

- **U.S. Census Bureau:** BAE used demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) as well as commute data from the U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program (LEHD).
- **Esri Business Analyst:** Demographic data was obtained from Esri Business Analyst, a third-party tool that provides demographic, economic, and spatial data which is verified against U.S. Census data as well as other public sources.
- **CoStar:** Data about multifamily rental housing inventory, rents, vacancy rates, and absorption rates were obtained through CoStar, a third-party provider of real estate market data.
- **Redfin:** Home sale data, including size, price, and type, was obtained from Redfin, a real estate site that congregates information from current and previous listings published through the Multiple Listing Service (MLS).
- **Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** Information on housing burden was accessed via HUD's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS). CHAS identifies households that are spending 30 percent or more of their gross income on housing costs.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

Demographic Trends

Population and Households

As shown in Table 1, as of 2023, Riverbanks had 11,582 residents and 6,128 households. This represents an 8 percent increase in residents since 2010, more than double the 3.7 percent population growth in the City of Columbia. Riverbanks also saw a 7.2 percent increase in households. Interestingly, Columbia's households grew over twice as quickly at 15.5 percent.

Riverbanks' average household size is 1.89, compared to 2.08 in Columbia. The Riverbanks average household size grew by .04 between 2010 and 2023, while Columbia's average household size shrunk by .11.

Table 1: Population and Households, 2010 and 2023

Population	2010	2023	Change, 2010-2023	
			Number	Percent
Riverbanks	10,721	11,582	861	8.0%
Columbia	135,621	140,670	5,049	3.7%

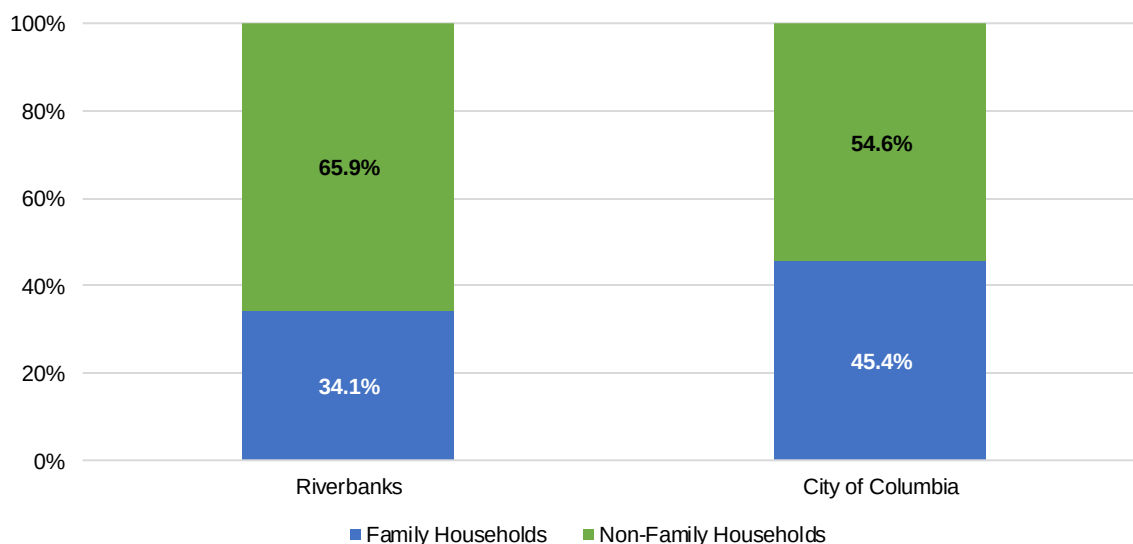
Households	2010	2023	Change, 2010-2023	
			Number	Percent
Riverbanks	5,719	6,128	409	7.2%
Columbia	48,364	55,878	7,514	15.5%

Average Household Size	2010	2023		
Riverbanks	1.85	1.89		
Columbia	2.19	2.08		

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Household Composition

Figure 2 illustrates the breakdown of households by household type. Approximately 34.1 percent of Riverbanks households are family households and 65.9 percent are non-family households. This compares to the City of Columbia's 45.4 percent of family households and 54.6 percent of non-family households. The number of family households in Riverbanks actually decreased by 1.7 percent since 2010, while non-family households grew by 12.4 percent.

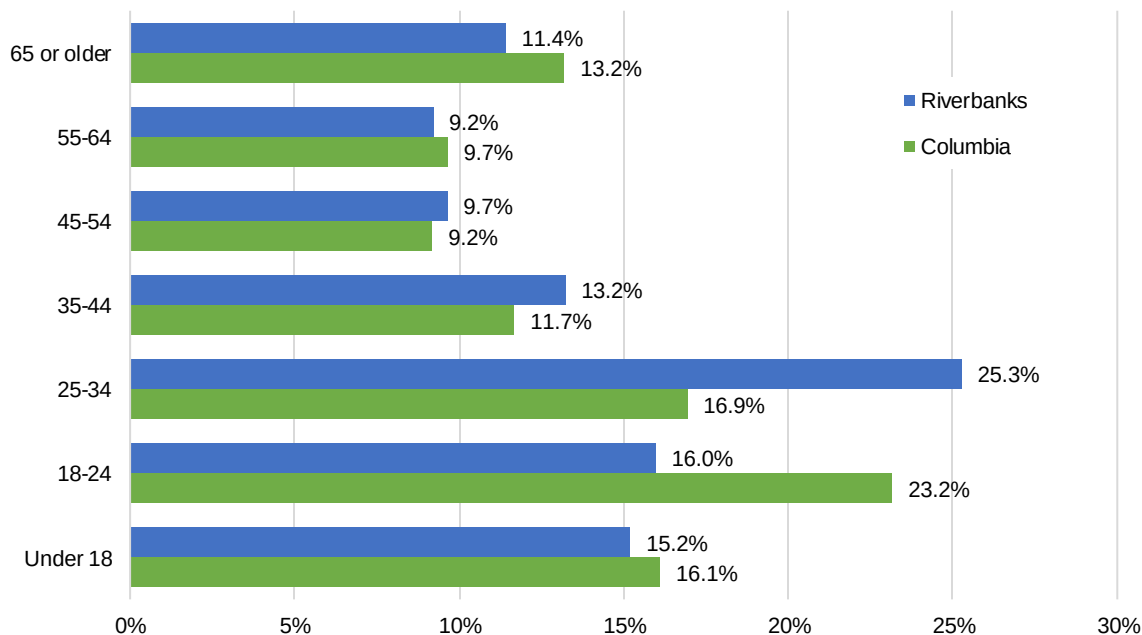
Figure 2: Distribution of Households by Type, 2023

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Age Distribution

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the population of Riverbanks and the City of Columbia by age. Riverbanks residents aged 25 to 34 make up the largest age cohort (25.3 percent of all residents), followed by residents 18 to 24 (16 percent) and under 18 (15.2 percent). Columbia has similarly high shares of residents in those age groups as well, with 18 to 24 year olds making up 23.2 percent of the city's population, 25 to 34 year olds at 16.9 percent, and residents under 18 at 16.1 percent.

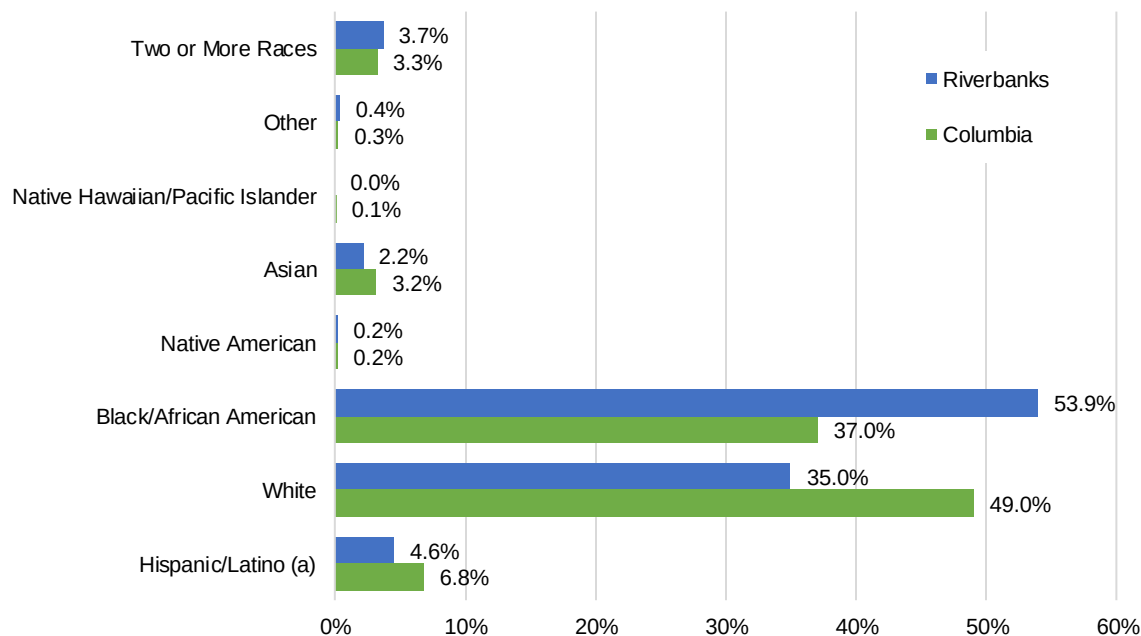
The median age of Riverbanks residents is 34.4 years, slightly older than the City's median age of 31. This difference can be attributed to the large population of college students attending the University of South Carolina, located in downtown Columbia.

Figure 3: Age Distribution, 2023

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024

Race and Ethnicity

Figure 4 shows the populations of Riverbanks and the City of Columbia by race and ethnicity. Approximately 53.9 percent of Riverbanks residents are Black/African American, 35 percent are White, and 4.6 percent are Hispanic/Latino. Overall, White residents make up 49 percent of Columbia's population, followed by Black/African American residents at 37 percent, and Hispanic/Latino residents at 6.8 percent.

Figure 4: Race and Ethnicity, 2023

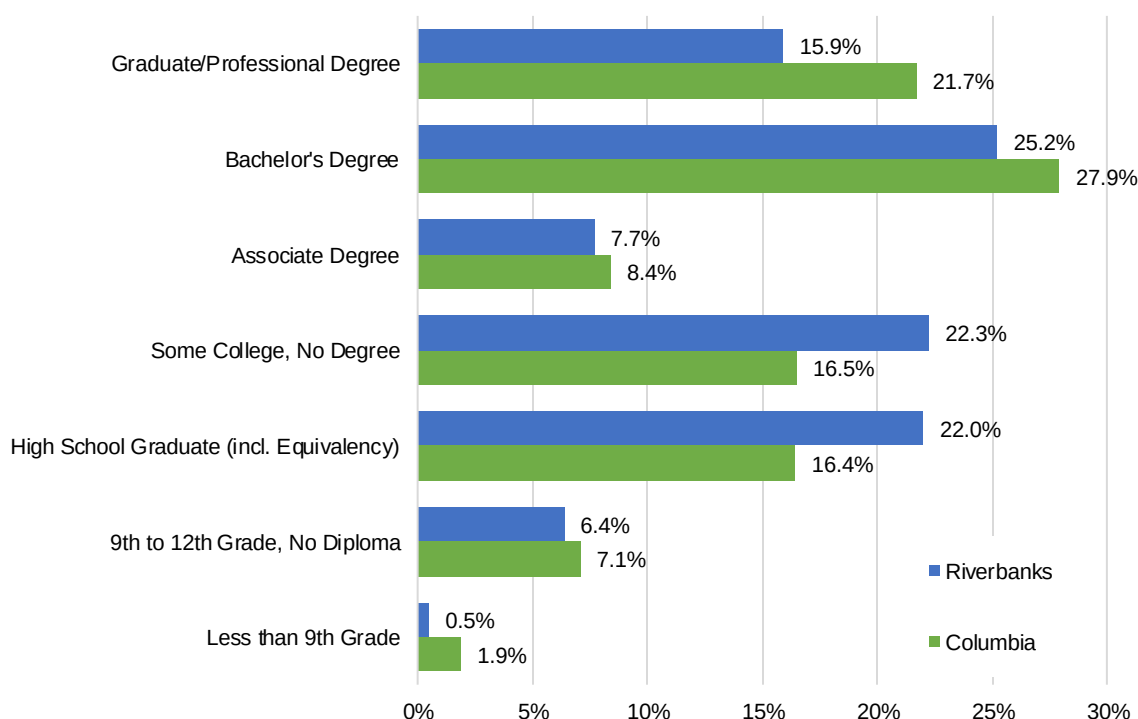
Note:

(a) Includes all races for those of Hispanic/Latino background.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Educational Attainment

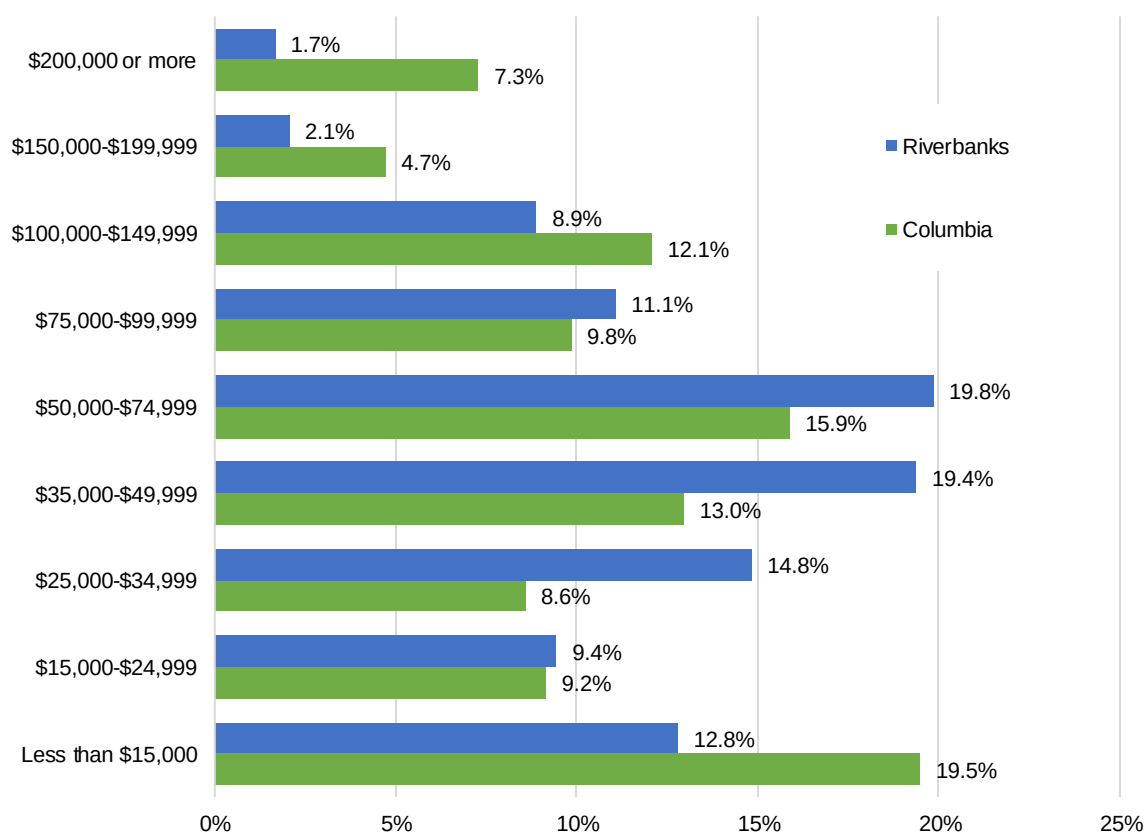
Figure 5 illustrates the educational attainment rates of the residents of both Riverbanks and the City of Columbia. Riverbanks has a slightly higher percentage of high school graduates than Columbia as a whole (93.1 percent versus 91.0 percent). However, Columbia, home to the University of South Carolina, boasts higher levels of residents with bachelor's degrees or higher at 49.6 percent of the population, compared to Riverbanks' 41.1 percent.

Figure 5: Educational Attainment Rates, Residents Aged 25+, 2023


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Household Income

As shown in Figure 6, the Riverbanks median annual household income is \$43,746, lower than Columbia's median household income of \$49,735. Columbia has a larger percentage of lower-earning households and a larger percentage of higher-earning households compared to Riverbanks. Households earning less than \$25,000 annually make up 22.2 percent of Riverbanks households and 28.6 percent of Columbia households, while households earning \$100,000 or more make up 12.6 percent of Riverbanks' households and 24.1 percent of Columbia's households.

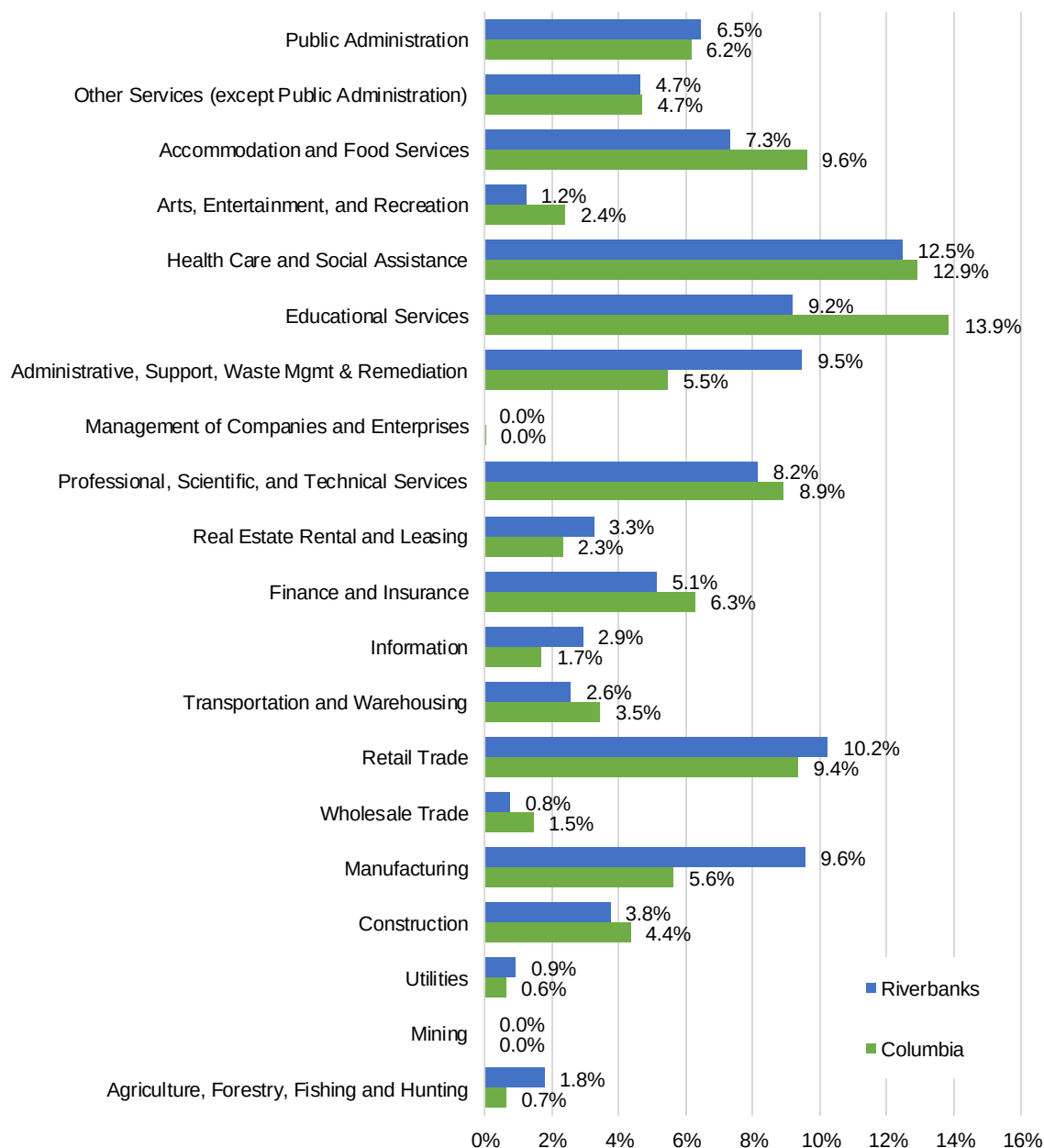
Figure 6: Household Income, 2023

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Economic Trends

Resident Employment

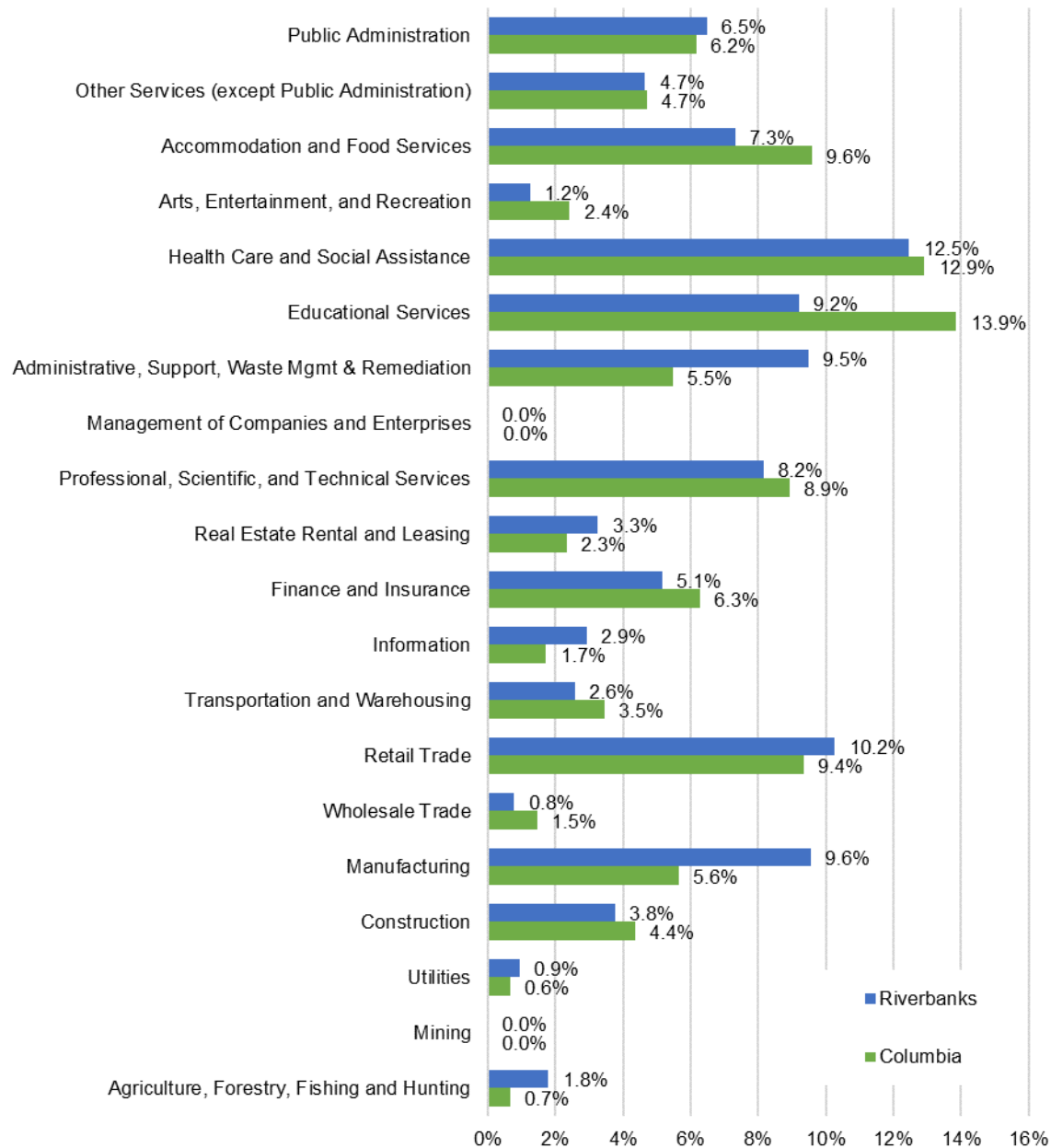
As shown in Figure 7, the industries in which the largest shares of employed Riverbanks residents work are health care and social assistance (12.5 percent), retail trade (10.2 percent), and manufacturing (9.6 percent). This differs from the City of Columbia, where the industries that employ the most residents are educational services (13.9 percent), health care and social assistance (12.9 percent), and accommodation and food services (9.6 percent).

Figure 7: Employed Residents Aged 16+ by Industry, 2023

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Jobs

As shown in Figure 8, the highest proportion of jobs in Riverbanks are in retail trade (15.7 percent), finance and insurance (13.3 percent), and health care and social assistance (11.4 percent). The industries with the most jobs in Columbia are health care and social assistance, 19.9 percent of all jobs in the city, public administration (18.6 percent), and accommodation and food services (9.5 percent).

Figure 8: Jobs by Industry, 2023

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Primary Employers

According to the Central South Carolina Alliance, the region's economic development corporation, the State of South Carolina is the largest employer in Columbia, employing more than 60,000 people. The top private employers in the City include Prisma Health Midlands, with 15,000 employees, BlueCross BlueShield (10,998 employees), and AT&T South Carolina (2,100 employees).

Across the top 15 private employers in the city, the most popular industries include health care and social assistance, educational services, and finance and insurance.

Table 2: Primary Private Employers, Columbia, 2024

Employer	Total Employees
1 Prisma Health Midlands	15,000
2 BlueCross BlueShield of SC	10,998
3 Richland County School District (One & Two)	7,919
4 University of South Carolina	6,456
5 AT&T South Carolina	2,100
6 MUSC Health	1,625
7 Dorn VA Medical Center	1,457
8 Palmetto GBA	1,300
9 Allied Universal Security	1,200
10 AgFirst Farm Credit Bank	1,151
11 Teleperformance (TPUSA)	1,000
12 Truist Bank	950
13 Colonial Life & Accident Insurance	872
14 Wells Fargo Bank (Call Center)	800
15 Burr Forman	720
Total Employees	55,888

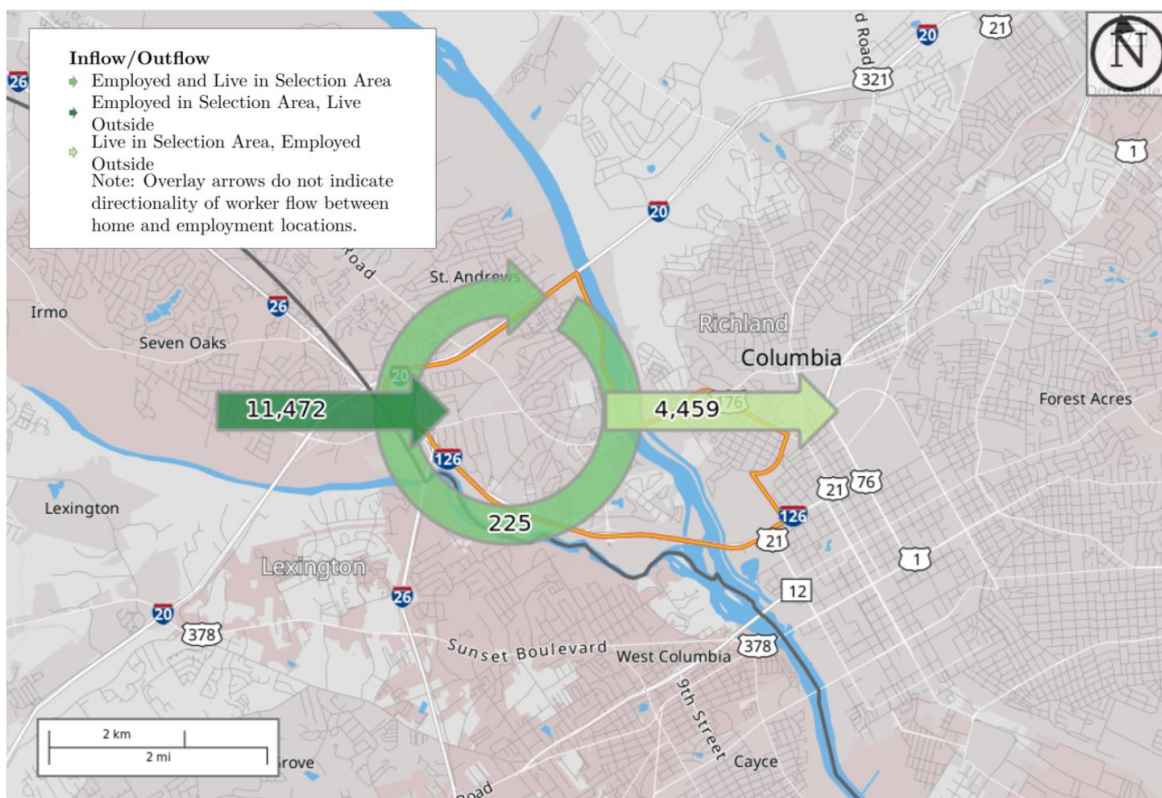
Source: Central South Carolina Alliance, 2024.

Note: Totals for the some of the larger employers including Prisma Health, BlueCross BlueShield, and Richland County School District, are area totals, though a significant number of these employees are located in the City of Columbia.

Commute Patterns

According to the Bureau of Labor-Employer Dynamics program (LEHD), as of 2021, 11,697 people were employed in the Riverbanks study area. Figure 9 indicates 11,472 people (98.1 percent of all employees) commute into the Riverbanks study area for work while only 225 people (1.9 percent) both live and work in the area. At the same time, 4,459 Riverbanks residents, 95.2 percent of employed residents, commute outside of the Riverbanks study area for work.

Figure 9: Commute Flows, Riverbanks Study Area, 2021



Sources: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics via OnTheMap, 2021; BAE, 2024.

Table 3 further shows, as of 2021, only 8.9 percent of people who commute to jobs in Riverbanks live in the City of Columbia. Two other areas, St. Andrews and Lexington are residences for other Riverbanks workers, with 2.6 percent and 2.0 percent of workers living in each locality, respectively. Of the employed Riverbanks residents, 33.6 percent work in Columbia, 3.6 percent work in Seven Oaks, and 3.1 percent work in Cayce.

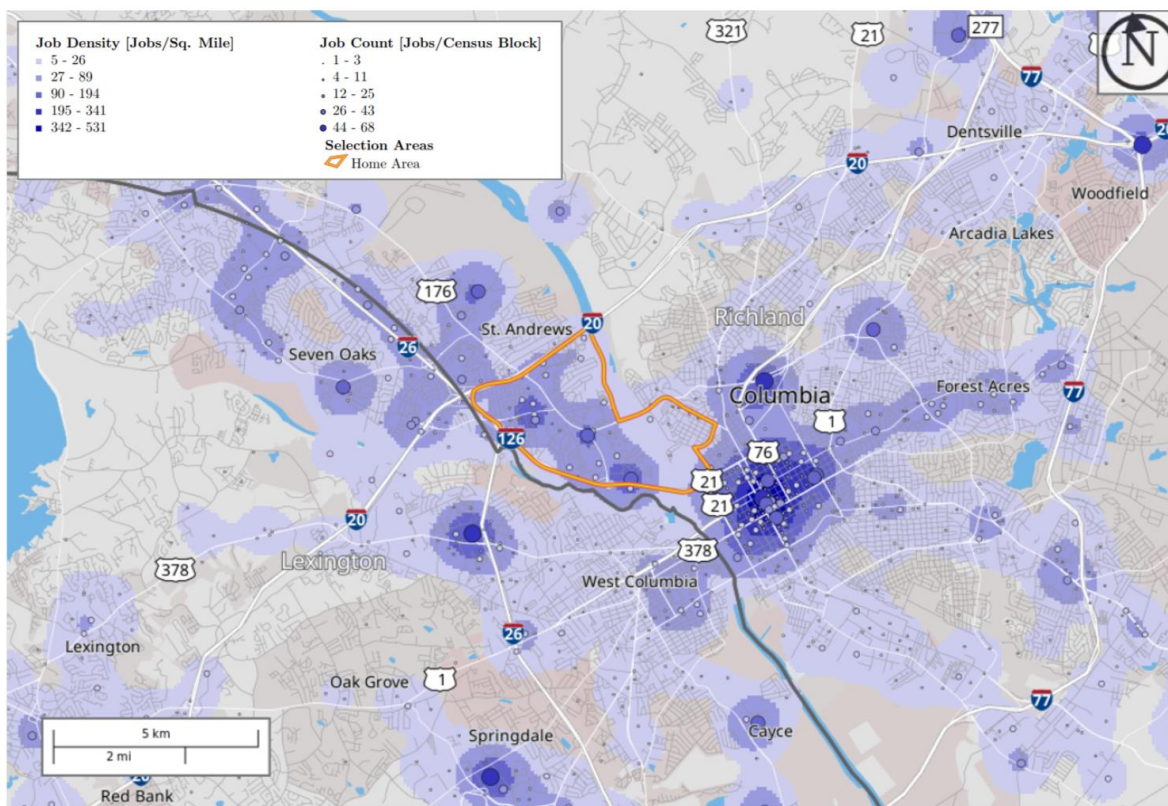
Table 3: Commute Destinations, Riverbanks Study Area, 2021

Workers by Place of Residence			Residents by Place of Work		
Place of Residence	Workers		Place of Work	Employed Residents	
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Columbia city, SC	1,041	8.9%	Columbia city, SC	1,573	33.6%
St. Andrews CDP, SC	303	2.6%	Seven Oaks CDP, SC	167	3.6%
Lexington town, SC	231	2.0%	Cayce city, SC	146	3.1%
Seven Oaks CDP, SC	196	1.7%	Lexington town, SC	129	2.8%
West Columbia city, SC	170	1.5%	West Columbia city, SC	127	2.7%
Oak Grove CDP, SC	164	1.4%	St. Andrews CDP, SC	106	2.3%
Irmo town, SC	146	1.2%	Forest Acres city, SC	83	1.8%
Red Bank CDP, SC	129	1.1%	Greenville city, SC	81	1.7%
Dentsville CDP, SC	126	1.1%	Irmo town, SC	74	1.6%
Cayce city, SC	119	1.0%	Dentsville CDP, SC	70	1.5%
All Other Locations	9,072	77.6%	All Other Locations	2,128	45.4%
Total Workers	11,697	100.0%	Total Residents	4,684	100.0%

Sources: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics via OnTheMap, 2021; BAE, 2024.

Given that most Riverbanks residents commute out of the Riverbanks study area for work, Figure 10 shows more specifically where these residents commute to in the region. The map demonstrates the concentration of jobs in the Columbia region, and more specifically, that there is a large number of residents who work in the downtown area.

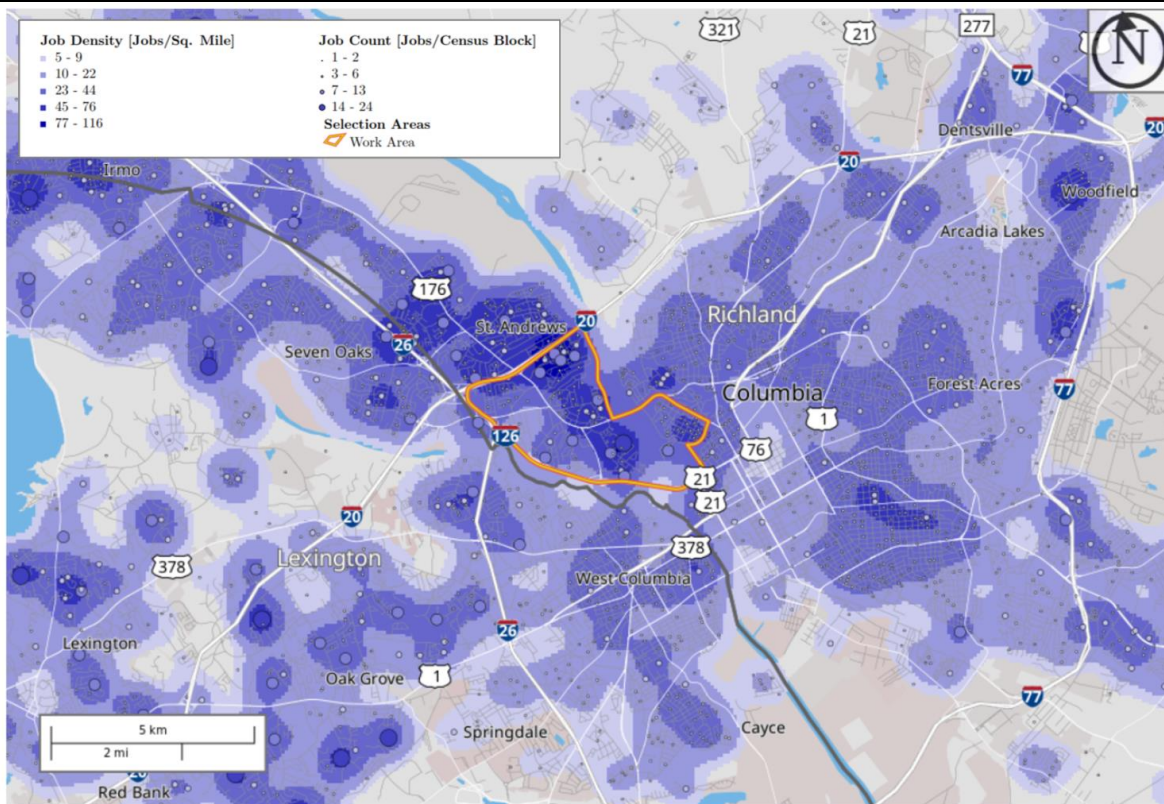
Figure 10: Employed Riverbanks Residents' Workplace Destinations, 2021



Sources: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics via OnTheMap, 2021; BAE, 2024.

Figure 11 displays the areas around Columbia where those who are employed in the Riverbanks study area live. Employees commute from all across the Columbia region to their workplaces in Riverbanks, with a concentration of those commuting from just north of the study area.

Figure 11: Riverbanks Employee's Home Destinations, 2021



Sources: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics via OnTheMap, 2021; BAE, 2024.

Targeted Industry Sectors and Development Types

With the information collected on jobs by industry, industry jobs by resident, commute flows, wages, and other information BAE analyzed what industry sectors and development types offer Riverbanks the best competitive advantage going forward. This includes the retail sector which has undergone substantial changes in recent years. In addition to the information included in this Market Overview, BAE contacted and met with staff from the City of Columbia's Office of Economic Development to discuss the City's target industries and uses and the economic position of the Riverbanks study area. Finally, BAE also considered community stakeholder input from area businesses, residents and organizations, on what industry sectors and development types they see as the best fit for Riverbanks going forward.

With the quantitative and qualitative information collected BAE identifies the following industry sectors and development that have good economic potential and community benefits, serving an expressed need for the Riverbanks community.

Industry Sectors

After careful review of the jobs by industry, industry jobs by resident, commute flows by wages we can identify two industry sectors to target: health care and social assistance and finance and insurance. A brief explanation for the identification of these sectors follows.

1. Health Care and Social Assistance

The health care and social assistance sector has the highest proportion of jobs in Riverbanks and employs the second highest proportion of Riverbanks residents, after the educational services sector. The health care and social assistance sector employs more people than other sector in the Columbia region, offering a range of jobs from entry level to technician positions to the highest levels of medical and administrative services. It is also noteworthy that the primary employer in the health care and social assistance sector in the Columbia region, Prisma Health Midlands, is headquartered in the Riverbanks study area.

Health care is a growing sector that provides jobs with growth and advancement opportunities that have the potential to provide stability and many work options for residents of Riverbanks. Employing more Riverbanks residents in health care positions that offer career paths could improve the economic position of the study area and help create paths to homeownership and other investment in the community. With the Prisma Health headquarters located in the Riverbanks study area, there is an opening to establish a partnership with the company to employ and help build skills for Riverbanks residents in the health care sector.

2. Finance and Insurance

The finance and insurance sector provides the second highest proportion of jobs in Riverbanks by sector. Finance and Insurance is identified as a targeted sector because jobs in the sector are higher paying than many other sectors, including retail trade, but also because the Riverbanks study area is the headquarters of Colonial Life and Accident Insurance Company. Riverbanks also has several other finance sector employers with operations in the area.

Though finance and insurance is not a high growth sector overall, the sector provides a wide range of jobs from entry level positions (e.g., tellers, call center jobs) to high level administrative positions. Within that range are family supporting positions that would provide stability and work options for Riverbanks residents, thus contributing to improving the economic position of the area. Additionally, partnership opportunities with Colonial Life to hire local residents and grow careers could be explored.

Development Types

BAE, working with the consulting team, identifies the following development types that present opportunities for the Riverbanks study area:

1. Mixed-Use Development – Housing and Retail

The Market Overview and the Housing Needs Assessment that follow clearly show there is demand and need for housing in the Riverbanks study area. This includes both affordable and market rate housing, including quality apartments. At the same time, there are underutilized commercial properties on Bush River Road and Broad River Road and the surrounding area in the Riverbanks study area that are prime candidates for redevelopment. Some of these properties will require assemblage to have a large enough sites to ensure feasibility but the location of the properties within the metro area is ideal for commuters to downtown and other employment centers.

Mixed-use developments that combine housing as the primary use, with supporting retail, create a built in market for the retail uses. The retail in the mixed-use developments can be incorporated into the ground floor of apartments or elsewhere on the site, if feasible. While the retail uses in mixed-use development can range from specialty goods to basic needs (i.e., grocery, pharmacy, etc.) often the retail types that are the best fit are restaurants or cafes, including sit-down restaurants, fast casual, and coffee spots. Quality restaurants are among the uses that stakeholders interviewed for this study cited as needed in the Riverbanks study area.

In an effort to encourage growth in taxable commercial development, the City of Columbia and Richland County have partnered to offer a tax abatement for up to 10 years for mixed-use development projects that create substantial taxable development. Each mixed-use development project requesting a tax abatement will be reviewed by the City of Columbia and Richland County economic development offices and evaluated according to the size of the project, the amount of taxable investment, and any additional public benefit and amenities within the project to determine the percentage of tax abatement and timeframe. Projects are evaluated on a case-by-case basis and both Columbia City and Richland County Council must approve consent in order for the tax abatement to be granted.

Aside from construction jobs, mixed-use developments themselves do not generate many more permanent jobs. They do, however, help to build the local economy, adding new population, which in turn will encourage other investment. Additionally, mixed-use developments, which are typically large by definition will contribute to the tax base in the City and Richland County.

2. Selective Retail

It is widely known that the way consumers shop today has dramatically changed from past decades. While the Dutch Square Center thrived for many years after opening in 1970, when the Columbiana Centre, an “indoor super-regional mall,” opened in West Columbia in 1990, its fortunes sharply declined. Since that time, consumers began to

prefer “town center” shopping with external store entrances versus the interior store entrances in malls, and shopping at big box stores like Target, Walmart, Home Depot and others that typically did not locate in malls. The popularity of on-line shopping, led by Amazon, has had an adverse impact on shopping centers and malls everywhere, not to mention the COVID-19 lockdown that occurred in 2020-2022 that may have permanently changed shopping habits.

Despite those changes in the way consumers shop, there are certain retail types that are still in demand, including in Columbia and the Riverbanks study area. Consumers today are looking for “experiential retail” focused on creating an engaging customer experience rather than just selling goods or products. Community stakeholders expressed the need for the following retail types in Riverbanks: grocery stores, better quality restaurants with table service, improved fast casual restaurant options, and restaurants that include entertainment, typically live music, as a feature. In BAE’s experience, the latter, that some in the industry refer to as “eatertainment,” are notably popular in older suburban areas like Riverbanks.

Though the Riverbanks area has one supermarket, the Food Lion on Broad River Road, stakeholders and others noted the desire for another grocery store. Though this may be desired, there are not enough households in the Riverbanks area to attract another grocery store presently, even a smaller one under 20,000 square feet. That could change if new housing is built in the area, particularly higher density housing.

A smaller grocery store or the other restaurant and café uses desired by the community could conceivably be part of a mixed-use housing and retail development as described above. If the mixed-use development can offer good visibility from a major thoroughfare, a grocery store has the potential to serve a larger trade area. Restaurants are less dependent on visibility but a restaurant within a mixed-use development in the Riverbanks study area would still have the potential to become a destination. And much like grocery stores, a restaurant’s likelihood of success would be enhanced with more housing and households in the immediate area.

3. Enhanced Recreational Tourism Uses

It is widely agreed that the Riverbanks study area’s two rivers, the Broad River and the Saluda River, and the parkland and trails alongside them, are among the best features to be found in the Columbia metro area. Several of the community stakeholders who participated in interviews and attended the two public workshops and charrette held in February 2024 expressed this, noting their use of the parklands and trails for walking or running and the rivers themselves for fishing, kayaking, and tubing. Additionally, several stakeholders mentioned that they had become members of the Riverbanks Zoo and Garden specifically to run on the protected pathways inside the zoo and garden parts of the property.

Some of these same stakeholders, as well as City officials, expressed the need for more amenities along the two rivers, but especially the Broad River. On the Broad River along the Columbia Canal, amenity suggestions, mostly centered around modest food and drink offerings ranging from a place for coffee and/or sandwiches to a beer garden. Nothing was suggested that would necessarily change the character of the area just potentially make the experience visiting more enjoyable.

On the Saluda River, the suggestions were more about improving access to the river for fishing and kayaking and connecting the trails on both sides of the river. There has also been a suggestion for adding other recreational pursuits along the river frontage but these are somewhat controversial in the community.

The River Alliance, a non-profit organization with a mission to “connect people to the river, making them accessible but protected” is the group that would lead some of the work and changes discussed here. Certainly, improving access and adding amenities would be a positive change that would benefit both residents and visitors to the area.

4. Office Space for Small Business

According to CoStar, as of Q4 2023, there is 2,356,379 square feet of office space in the Riverbanks study area, most of which is located along I-26 in the St. Andrews area or near the Dutch Square Center. According to real estate brokers and economic development officials contacted for this study, the Riverbanks’ office space, which would be considered Class B in the broader office market, has fared relatively well in the post-COVID market, with a vacancy rate of 12.3 percent. The owner of the Browning Business Center, one of the largest office buildings in the area with 187,183 square feet of leasable space, even decided the market was strong enough to invest in the renovation of the office building recently.

Office space in the Riverbanks study area fills a specific niche of mostly small, locally-owned businesses that do not need to be in downtown Columbia or in Class A space. The location of the office space in Riverbanks is generally convenient to interstate highways and available at lower lease rates than in Columbia, with an average asking rent of \$17.76 per square foot versus \$19.80 average asking rent for Columbia overall as of Q4 2023.

Because the tenants and users in office space in the Riverbanks study area potentially employ local residents and pay higher wages than retailers, it is important to preserve this space. Additionally, with so much of the commercial space in the Riverbanks study area in retail use, it is wise to have a level of economic diversity to not be too dependent on any one type of business.

HOUSING MARKET CONDITIONS

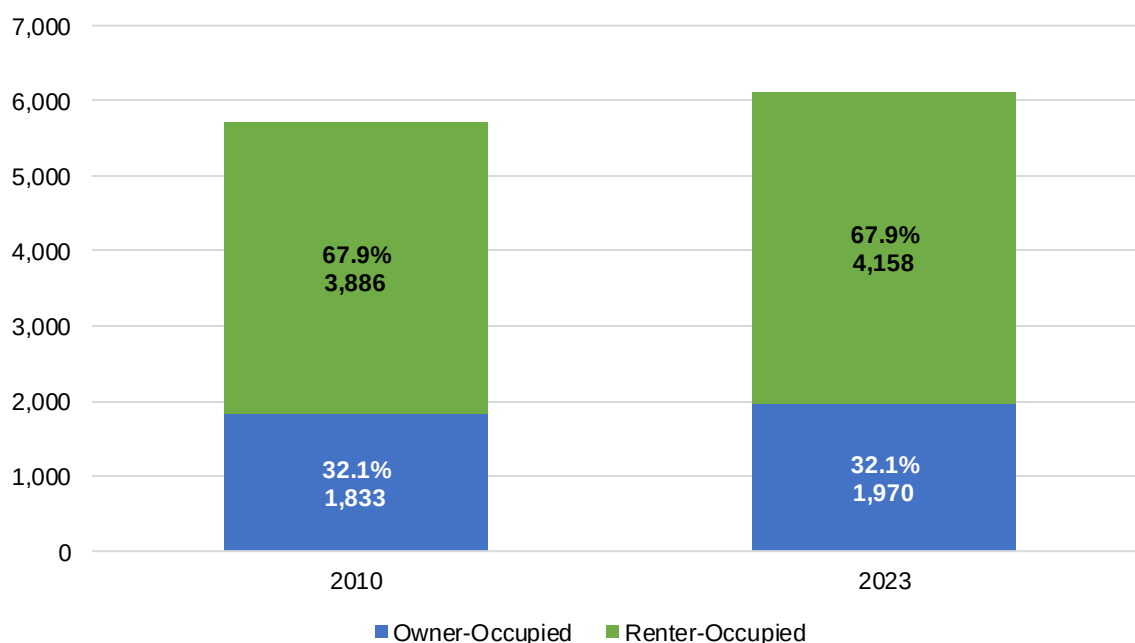
This section of the report is a review of current housing conditions and trends in the study area. Sources for these summaries include U.S. Census, Esri, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), CoStar, and Redfin. The findings of this study help to identify the most prevalent housing needs of the Riverbanks study area and inform policy recommendations.

Housing Characteristics

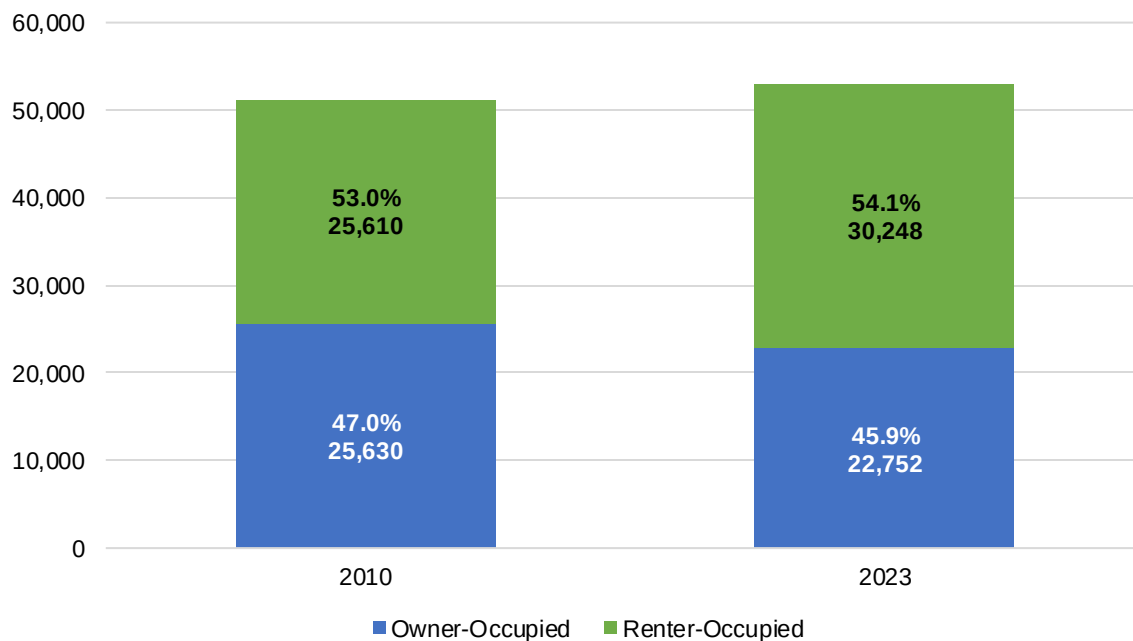
Housing Tenure

Households in Riverbanks and Columbia are primarily renters. As shown in Figure 12, in 2023, 67.9 percent of all units in the Riverbanks study area are renter-occupied and 32.1 percent are owner-occupied, essentially the same as it was in 2010. While in the City of Columbia, Figure 13 shows 54.1 percent of units are renter-occupied and 45.9 percent are owner-occupied in 2023. This reflects a slight change from 2010, where only 53 percent of units were renter-occupied, and 47 percent were owner-occupied.

Figure 12 Housing Units by Tenure, Riverbanks, 2010 - 2023



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Figure 13 Housing Units by Tenure, City of Columbia, 2010 - 2023

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Housing Units and Vacancy

As shown in Table 4, Esri estimates that as of 2020, the Riverbanks study area had 6,620 housing units, of which 9.7 percent were vacant. By comparison, of the 61,776 housing units in the City of Columbia, 12.3 percent were vacant. Although the total number of housing units in Riverbanks only grew by 1.6 percent between 2010 and 2020, the total occupied units increased by 4.5 percent and the total vacant units decreased by 18.8 percent in the same period.

Table 4: Vacancy Status, 2010 Decennial and 2020 Five-Year Sample Data

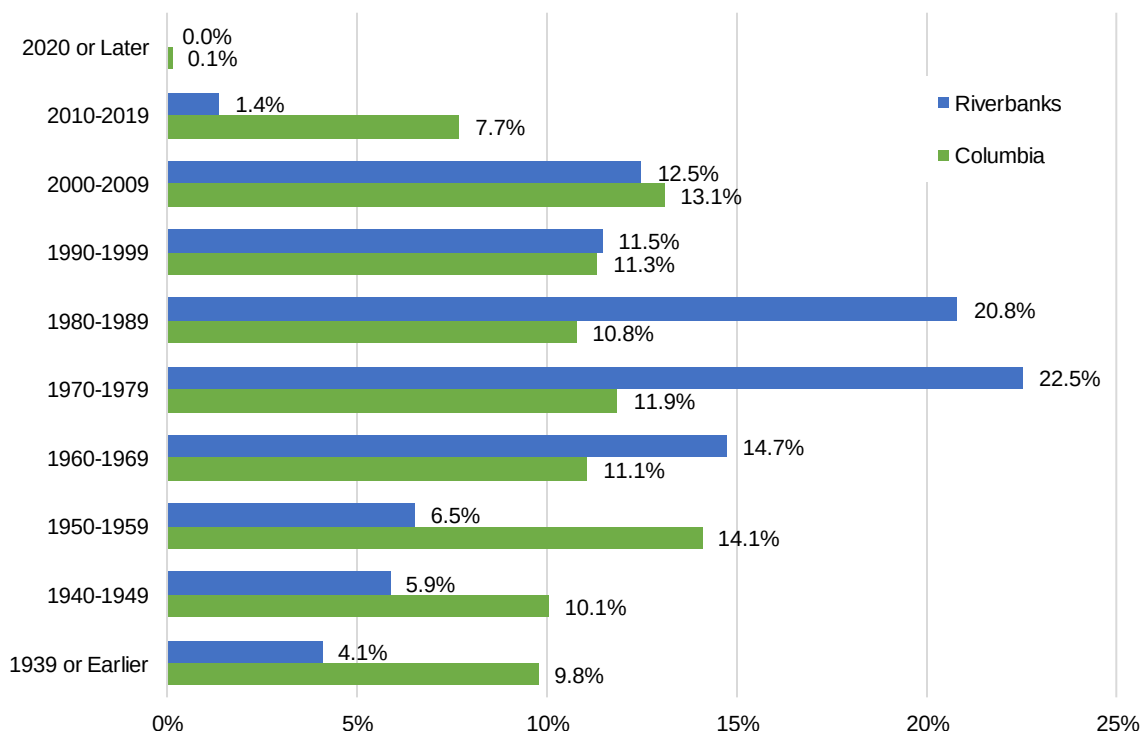
	2010		2020		Change 2010-2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Riverbanks						
Occupied units	5,719	87.8%	5,975	90.3%	256	4.5%
Vacant units	794	12.2%	645	9.7%	(149)	-18.8%
For rent	512	7.9%	419	6.3%	(93)	-18.2%
For sale only	103	1.6%	52	0.8%	(51)	-49.5%
Rented or sold, not occupied	20	0.3%	57	0.9%	37	185.0%
For seasonal, rec, or occasional use	22	0.3%	11	0.2%	(11)	-50.0%
For migrant workers	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	n.a.
Other vacant	132	2.0%	106	1.6%	(26)	-19.7%
Total Units	6,513	100%	6,620	100%	107	1.6%
	2010		2020		Change 2010-2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Columbia						
Occupied units	48,362	87.2%	54,150	87.7%	5,788	12.0%
Vacant units	7,091	12.8%	7,626	12.3%	535	7.5%
For rent	3,901	7.0%	4,283	6.9%	382	9.8%
For sale only	971	1.8%	557	0.9%	(414)	-42.6%
Rented or sold, not occupied	285	0.5%	676	1.1%	391	137.2%
For seasonal, rec, or occasional use	446	0.8%	396	0.6%	(50)	-11.2%
For migrant workers	1	0.0%	5	0.0%	4	400.0%
Other vacant	1,591	2.9%	1,709	2.8%	118	7.4%
Total Units	55,453	100%	61,776	100%	6,323	11.4%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2010 & 2020 via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Year Built

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021 sample data, as shown in Figure 14, the majority of the development in Riverbanks (82.1 percent) occurred between 1960 and 2009, with over half (58.1 percent) of the units constructed between 1960 and 1989. Columbia, however, saw relatively consistent residential development levels from before 1939 to 2009 with slight increases in construction from 1950 to 1959 and 2000 to 2009.

Housing construction slowed significantly in Riverbanks and Columbia between 2010 and 2019. In that period, just 1.4 percent of housing units were built in Riverbanks and 7.7 percent were built in the City.

Figure 14 Housing Units by Year Built, 2021

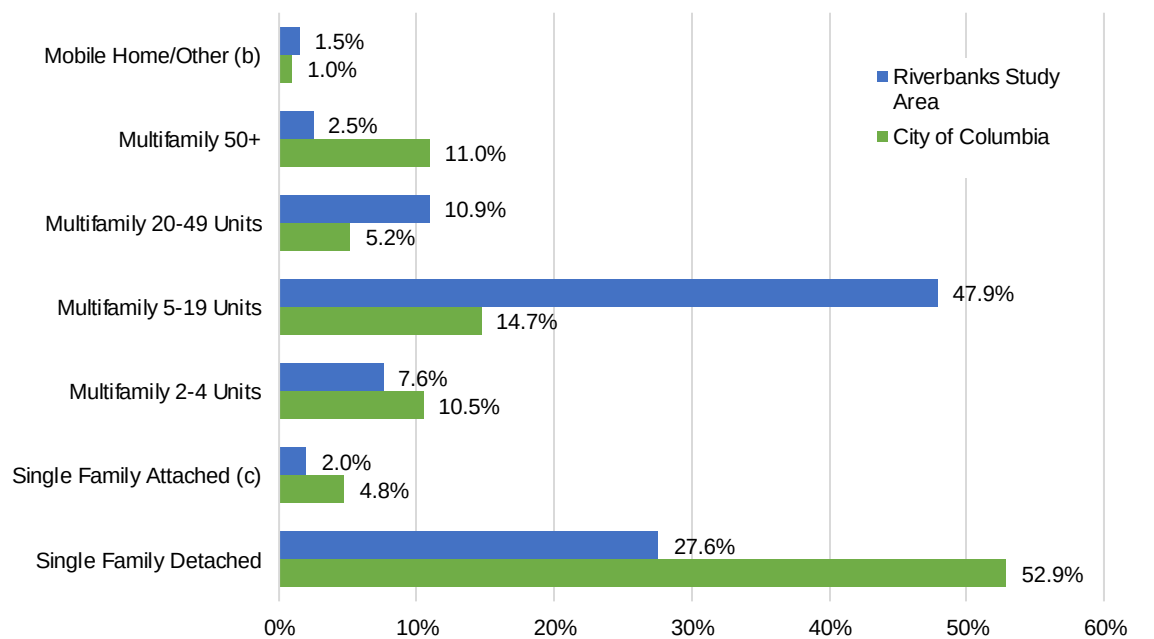
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021 five-year sample period via ESRI Business Analyst 2023; BAE, 2024.

Units in Structure

Figure 15 shows the total housing units by units in structure from the ACS 2020 five-year sample data. In 2020, units in multifamily buildings with five to 19 units constitute the largest share of units in Riverbanks. As shown in Figure 15, approximately 47.9 percent of Riverbanks units are housed in these types of structures. In the City of Columbia in 2020 only 14.7 percent of units are located in multifamily buildings with five to 19 units. In 2020 only 27.6 percent of housing units in the Riverbanks study area were single-family detached homes, compared to 52.9 percent of all housing units in the City of Columbia.

Furthermore, 10.9 percent of housing units in Riverbanks are located in multifamily buildings with 20 to 49 units and 7.6 percent of units are located in buildings with two to four units. Only 2.5 percent of Riverbanks units are located in large multifamily buildings with 50 or more units, 2.0 percent of units are single-family attached homes, and 1.5 percent were mobile homes or other non-traditional residences.

Figure 15: Housing Units by Number of Units in Structure (a), 2020



Notes:

(a) Riverbanks Study Area data is approximated, using available data based on census tracts 104.03, 104.12, & 104.13.

(b) Includes boats, RVs, vans, or any other non-traditional residences.

(c) Includes townhomes and rowhouses.

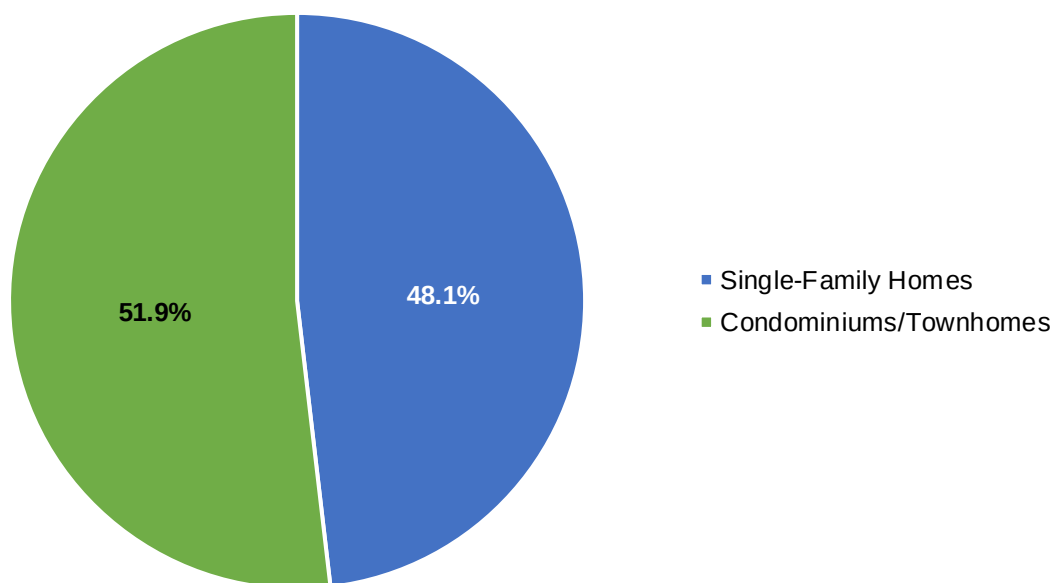
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2016-2020 five-year sample period via ESRI Business Analyst 2023; BAE, 2024.

For-Sale Housing Market

Home Sales by Unit Type

According to Redfin, between February 2023 and February 2024, there were 81 recorded single-family and condominium/townhouse sales in the Riverbanks study area. Of these verified sales, 39 are single-family homes and 42 are townhouses. Figure 16 shows the distribution of the homes sold from February 2023 to February 2024 by type. Approximately 48.1 percent of homes sold during this period are single-family homes, while 51.9 percent of units sold are condos or townhouses.

**Figure 16: Residential Sales by Unit Type, Riverbanks Study Area
February 2023 – February 2024**



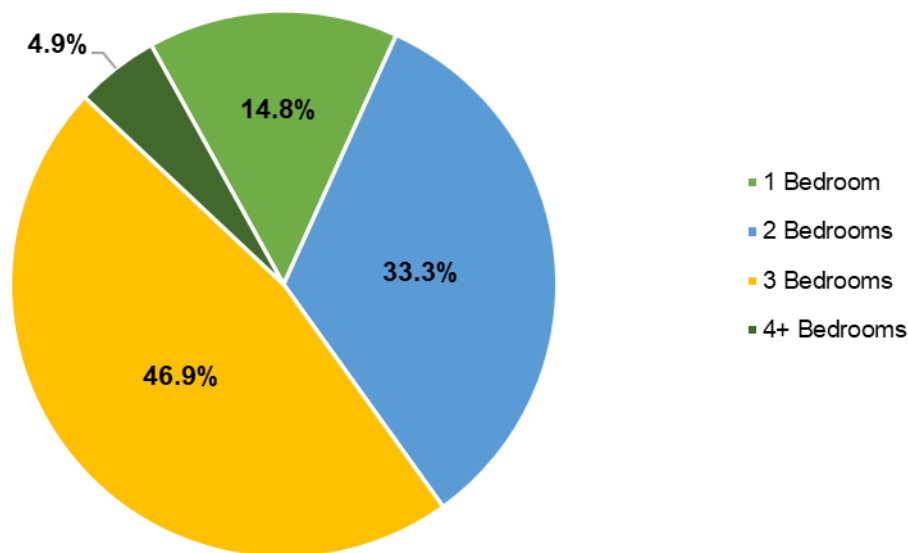
Sources: Redfin; BAE, 2024.

Home Sales by Unit Size

Figure 17 displays the breakdown of homes sold in the Riverbanks study area by size. The homes sold are on the larger side, with almost half of all homes sold, 46.9 percent, having three bedrooms. Approximately 33.3 percent of homes sold during the period have two-bedrooms.

As shown in Table 5, single-family homes sold are on average larger than the condos and townhouses sold. Of the 39 single-family homes sold, 92.3 percent have three or more bedrooms compared to only 14.3 percent of condos and townhouses. During this period, no one-bedroom single-family homes were sold, nor were any condos or townhouses with four or more bedrooms. The average size of a sold single-family home is 1,745 square feet, while the average size of a sold condo or townhome is about half of that size, at 953 square feet.

**Figure 17: Homes Sold by Unit Size, Riverbanks Study Area
February 2023 – February 2024**



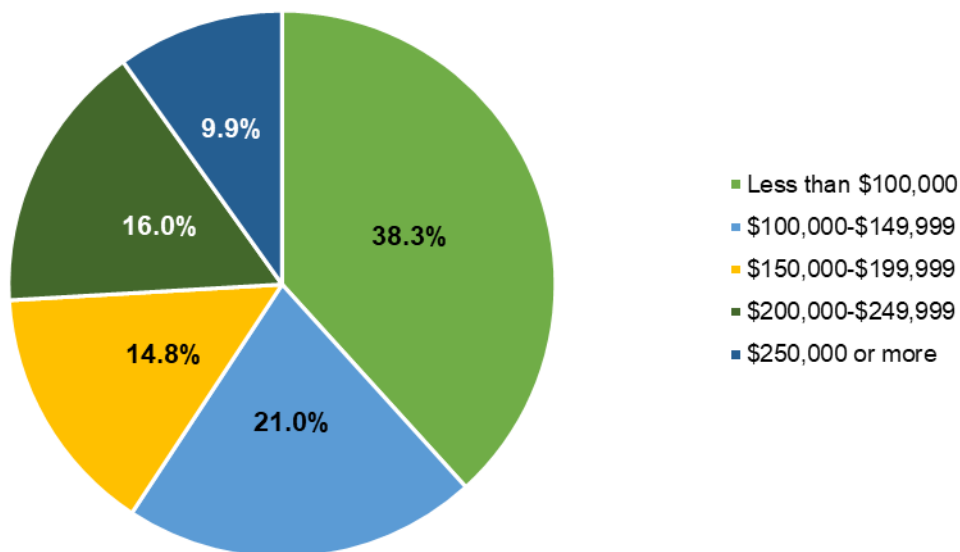
Sources: Redfin; BAE, 2024.

Sale Prices

As shown in Figure 18, 38.3 percent of all home sales in Riverbanks, the largest share, were under \$100,000 and 21.0 percent sold were between \$100,000 and \$149,999.

Furthermore, Table 5 shows the median sale price for a single-family home in the Riverbanks study area was \$196,000. The median sale price for condos and townhomes was much lower, at \$75,000.

Figure 18: Home Sold by Sale Price, Riverbanks February 2023 – February 2024



Sources: Redfin; BAE, 2024.

Table 5: Residential Sales, Riverbanks, February 2023 – February 2024**Single-Family Homes**

Sale Price Range	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4+ BR	Total	Percent of Total
Less than \$100,000	0	0	4	0	4	10.3%
\$100,000-\$149,999	0	1	5	0	6	15.4%
\$150,000-\$199,999	0	1	9	0	10	25.6%
\$200,000-\$249,999	0	1	11	1	13	33.3%
\$250,000 or more	0	0	3	3	6	15.4%
Total Units Sold	0	3	32	4	39	100.0%
Percent of Total	0.0%	7.7%	82.1%	10.3%	100.0%	
Median Sale Price	n.a.	\$170,000	\$193,500	\$265,000	\$196,000	
Average Sale Price	n.a.	\$159,667	\$177,969	\$277,000	\$186,719	
Average Unit Size (SF)	n.a.	1,424	1,605	3,108	1,745	
Median Price per SF	n.a.	\$102.20	\$115.14	\$98.19	\$110.01	
Average Price per SF	n.a.	\$113.86	\$111.88	\$92.86	\$110.08	

Condominiums/Townhouses

Sale Price Range	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4+ BR	Total	Percent of Total
Less than \$100,000	9	14	4	0	27	64.3%
\$100,000-\$149,999	3	7	1	0	11	26.2%
\$150,000-\$199,999	0	2	0	0	2	4.8%
\$200,000-\$249,999	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
\$250,000 or more	0	1	1	0	2	4.8%
Total Units Sold	12	24	6	0	42	100.0%
Percent of Total	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%	
Median Sale Price	\$77,500	\$83,000	\$57,500	n.a.	\$75,000	
Average Sale Price	\$75,742	\$78,329	\$62,750	n.a.	\$74,709	
Average Unit Size (SF)	774	960	1,451	n.a.	953	
Median Price per SF	\$95.25	\$77.16	\$42.06	n.a.	\$77.16	
Average Price per SF	\$99.00	\$81.15	\$43.56	n.a.	\$82.98	

Note:

Data reflect publicly available sales from February 15, 2023 to February 14, 2024.

Sources: Redfin; BAE, 2024.

Multifamily Rental Housing Market

Table 6 provides a summary of the multifamily rental market in the Riverbanks study area and the City of Columbia. According to the CoStar database, as of Q3 2023, the Riverbanks study area has approximately 3,385 market-rate multifamily rental units.

Unit Sizes

The majority of units across both geographies are smaller. As shown in Table 6, 94.9 percent of Riverbanks units have fewer than three bedrooms, compared to 84.1 percent of City units.

Rents

Table 6 also shows the average market-rate multifamily rents in each geography by bedroom size. According to CoStar as of Q3 2023, average rents are lower in Riverbanks compared to the city (\$1,015 compared to \$1,229). Rents in the corridor have decreased by 1.1 percent while rents in the City have risen by 2.7 percent.

Vacancies

In Q3 2023, Riverbanks has a vacancy rate of 13.3 percent for all multifamily units, while Columbia has a lower vacancy rate of 8.8 percent according to Table 6. There is a particularly high vacancy rate of studio apartments and apartments with four or more bedrooms, attributable to the much lower inventory of total units of these sizes.

Table 6: Market-Rate Multifamily Rental Overview, Q3 2023

Riverbanks Study Area						
	Studio	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4+ BR	All Unit Types (a)
Inventory, Q3 2023 (units)	171	1,501	1,539	156	18	3,385
% of Units	5.1%	44.3%	45.5%	4.6%	0.5%	100.0%
Occupied Units	37	1,320	1,323	138	13	2,831
Vacant Units	14	181	216	18	5	434
Vacancy Rate	28.3%	12.0%	14.0%	11.7%	26.2%	13.3%
Avg. Asking Rents, Q3 2022 - Q3 2023						
Avg. Asking Rent, Q3 2022	\$1,423	\$909	\$1,069	\$1,259	\$1,216	\$1,026
Avg. Asking Rent, Q3 2023	\$1,392	\$886	\$1,060	\$1,363	\$1,254	\$1,015
% Change Q3 2022 - Q3 2023	-2.2%	-2.5%	-0.8%	8.3%	3.1%	-1.1%
City of Columbia						
	Studio	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4+ BR	All Unit Types (a)
Inventory, Q3 2023 (units)	1,936	10,507	15,307	4,628	605	32,983
% of Units	5.9%	31.9%	46.4%	14.0%	1.8%	100.0%
Occupied Units	1,658	9,559	13,805	3,862	296	29,180
Vacant Units	158	948	1,360	340	27	2,833
Vacancy Rate	8.7%	9.0%	9.0%	8.1%	8.3%	8.8%
Avg. Asking Rents, Q3 2022 - Q3 2023						
Avg. Asking Rent, Q3 2022	\$1,093	\$1,065	\$1,215	\$1,452	\$1,649	\$1,197
Avg. Asking Rent, Q3 2023	\$1,096	\$1,080	\$1,251	\$1,527	\$1,620	\$1,229
% Change Q3 2022 - Q3 2023	0.3%	1.4%	3.0%	5.2%	-1.8%	2.7%

Notes:

(a) Unit totals may not add up due to some units lacking classification by number of bedrooms.

Sources: CoStar; BAE, 2024.

Multifamily Affordable & Senior Units

Multifamily affordable and senior units are essential components of an area's overall affordability. Although it would be ideal to examine these units in the Riverbanks study area, there is insufficient data for the neighborhood. As the unit distribution, inventory, and senior rents may vary by geography, and provide general insights about the local market, affordable rents are determined by HUD at a regional level, and as such these rents would remain the same for units located in Riverbanks. CoStar shows that the average asking monthly rent in Columbia for Q4 2023 affordable units is \$918 and \$1,129 for senior units. For comparison, the average asking rent for market-rate units in the Riverbanks study area is \$1,015, only about \$100 more than the regional average affordable rent level. The similarity between market-rate and affordable rents is an indicator of current affordability levels in Riverbanks.

Table 7: Affordable & Senior Multifamily Rental Overview, Q4 2023, City of Columbia

Affordable Units						
Multifamily Summary	Studio	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4+ BR	All Unit Types
Inventory, Q4 2023 (units)	665	2,212	2,903	1,183	240	7,203
% of Units	9.2%	30.7%	40.3%	16.4%	3.3%	100.0%
Occupied Units	630	2,060	2,699	1,123	225	6,737
Vacant Units	35	152	204	60	15	466
Vacancy Rate	5.2%	6.9%	7.0%	5.0%	6.2%	6.5%
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	639	725	972	1,202	1,366	924
Avg. Asking Rents						
Avg. Asking Rent, Q4 2022	\$629	\$810	\$950	\$1,014	\$1,294	\$911
Avg. Asking Rent, Q4 2023	\$638	\$815	\$959	\$1,035	\$1,220	\$918
% Change Q4 2022 - Q4 2023	1.4%	0.6%	0.9%	2.1%	-5.7%	0.8%
Senior Units						
Multifamily Summary	Studio	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4+ BR	All Unit Types
Inventory, Q4 2023 (units)	322	1,058	278	37	0	1,695
% of Units	19.0%	62.4%	16.4%	2.2%	0.0%	100.0%
Occupied Units	274	962	257	34	0	1,527
Vacant Units	48	96	21	3	0	168
Vacancy Rate	14.9%	9.1%	7.7%	6.8%	n.a.	9.9%
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	553	720	1,025	1,303	n.a.	764
Avg. Asking Rents						
Avg. Asking Rent, Q4 2022	\$1,046	\$1,054	\$1,241	\$3,314	n.a.	\$1,093
Avg. Asking Rent, Q4 2023	\$1,042	\$1,059	\$1,402	\$3,314	n.a.	\$1,129
% Change Q4 2022 - Q4 2023	-0.4%	0.5%	13.0%	0.0%	n.a.	3.3%

Sources: CoStar; BAE, 2024.

Key Market Overview Findings

With compiled data, key high level market observations leading to actions for the Riverbanks study area include:

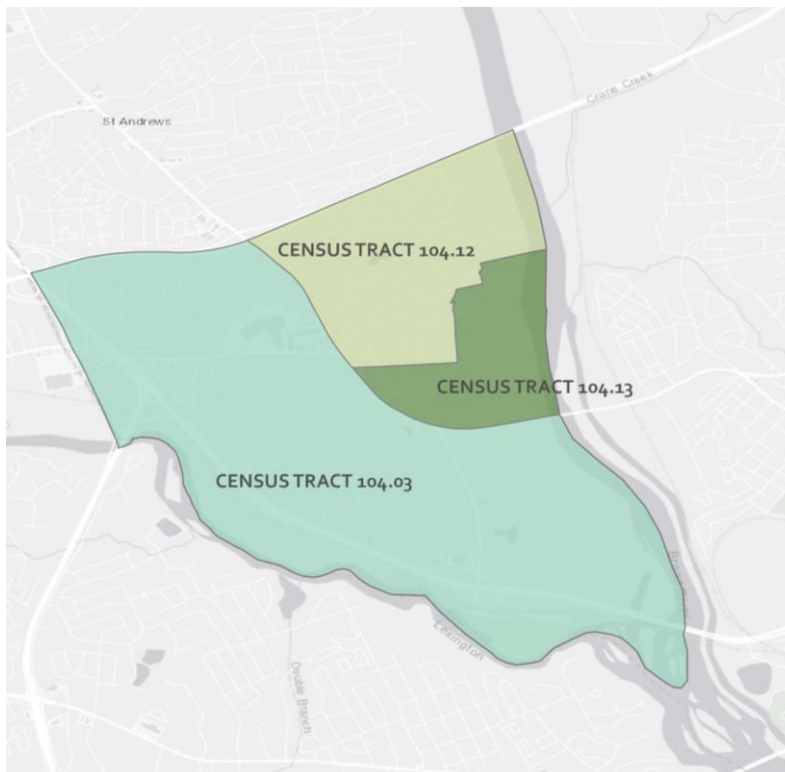
- Population growth and housing information demonstrate the need for additional housing units. The Riverbanks population is growing faster than that of Columbia (8.0 percent versus 3.7 percent), and overall home vacancy rates are relatively low (9.7 percent).
- Demographic, economic, and market information signal new investment and potential gentrification for Riverbanks. The area has significantly more jobs than employed residents (1,329 workers), attracts workers from outside the Riverbanks study area (other parts of Columbia, St. Andrews, and Lexington), and has a large renter population (69.7 percent of all households).
- Given the imbalance between jobs and housing and the large amount of commuting by Riverbanks residents, improving transportation options is key. Residents need improved transportation options to commute to downtown Columbia, as well as other parts of the region.
- Housing is currently relatively affordable for the area. This points to a need for policies to help maintain affordability for current residents. The majority of the homes sold in the Riverbanks area within one year sold for less than \$150,000 and rental units averaged only about \$100 more than the HUD-mandated affordable rents in the City.

HOUSING NEEDS

Housing Affordability

A cost burdened household is defined as one that spends more than 30 percent of its income on housing costs. Households that are severely cost-burdened spend more than 50 percent of their income towards housing costs. Data was approximated for the Riverbanks study area by using available Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data from HUD from three census tracts that cover a majority of the study area.

Figure 19: Map of Riverbanks Study Area Census Tracts Used for Housing Affordability Analysis



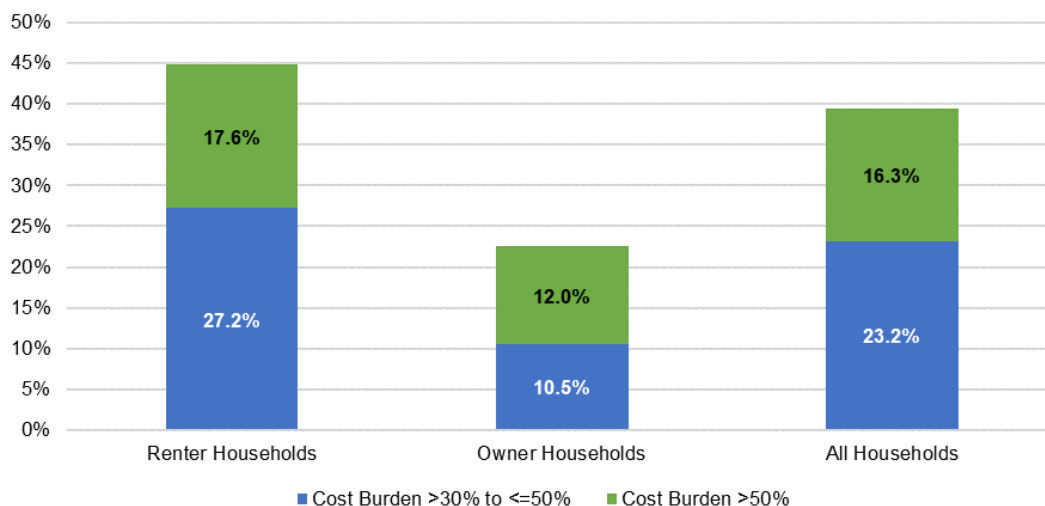
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024.

Housing Affordability by Tenure

In 2020, 75.9 percent of Riverbanks households are renters, while 24.1 percent are owners. Figure 20 shows Riverbanks households based on the level of housing burden among renters, owners, and all households. In 2020, it is estimated that 39.5 percent of all Riverbanks households are cost-burdened, and 16.3 percent of households are severely cost-burdened. This issue is more prevalent among renters than owners, with 44.8 percent of renter households being cost-burdened, compared to only 22.5 percent of owner households.

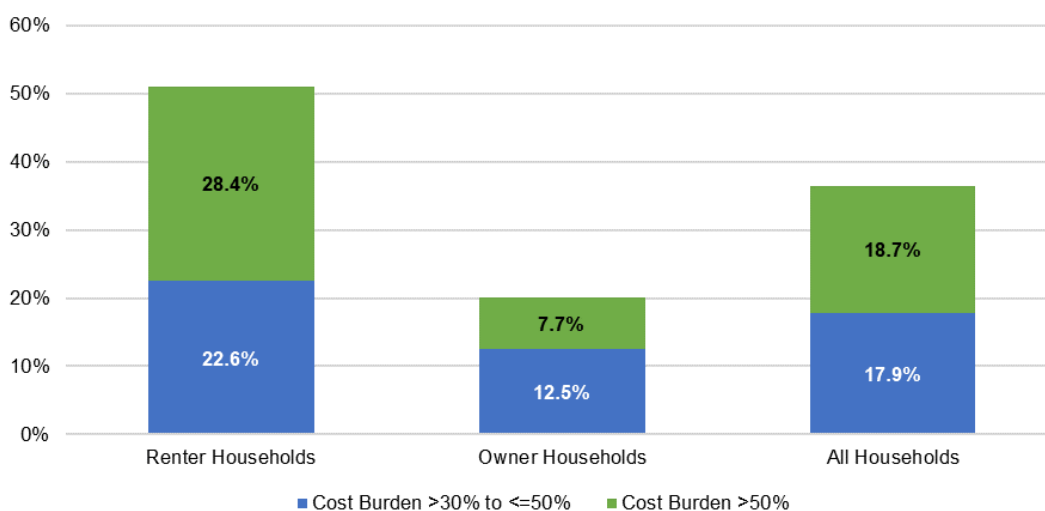
Similarly, Figure 21 shows Columbia households based on the level of housing cost burden among renter, owner, and all households. Approximately 36.5 percent of households in the City of Columbia are cost-burdened, and 18.7 percent are severely cost-burdened. The disparity between renters and owners is even larger, with 51 percent of renter households being cost-burdened compared to only 20.2 percent of owner households citywide.

Figure 20: Cost Burdened Households, Riverbanks Study Area, 2020 Five-Year Sample Data



Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data; BAE, 2024.

Figure 21: Cost Burdened Households, City of Columbia, 2020 Five-Year Sample Data



Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data; BAE, 2024.

Housing Affordability by Income

Figure 22 presents the household cost burden of Riverbanks by household income level and tenure. According to HUD, an overwhelming majority of all households within the Riverbanks study area earning 50 percent or less of the HUD Area Median Family Income¹ (HAMFI) are spending 30 percent or more of their income on housing. The HAMFI for the Columbia, SC HUD Metro Fair Market Rent Area in 2020 was \$72,600. While there are almost twice as many cost-burdened renter households than owner households, the distribution of cost burden across both household types are comparable to the distribution across all households.

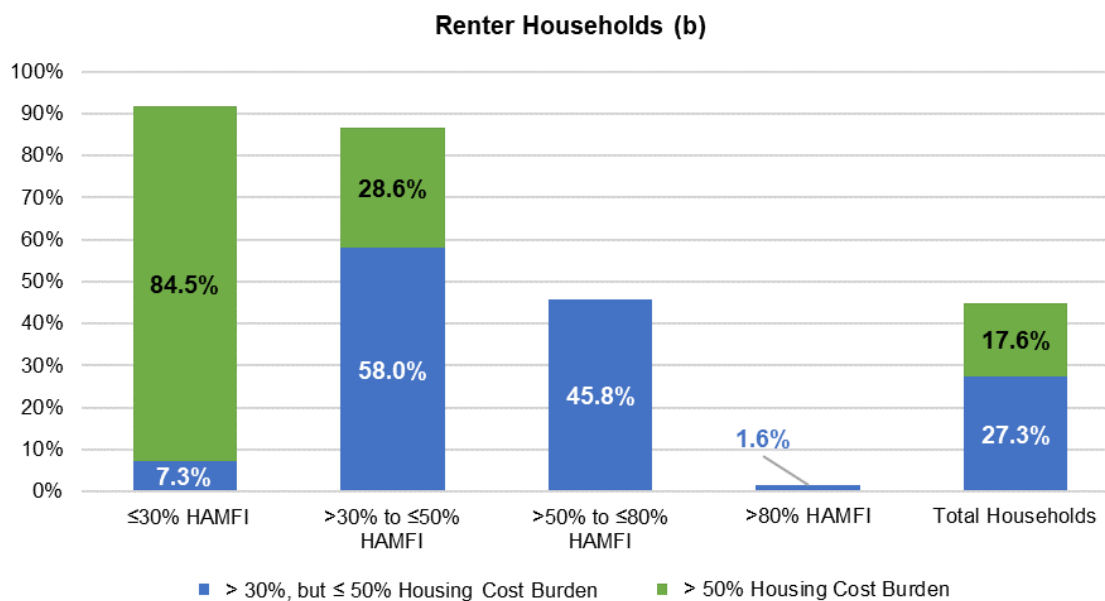
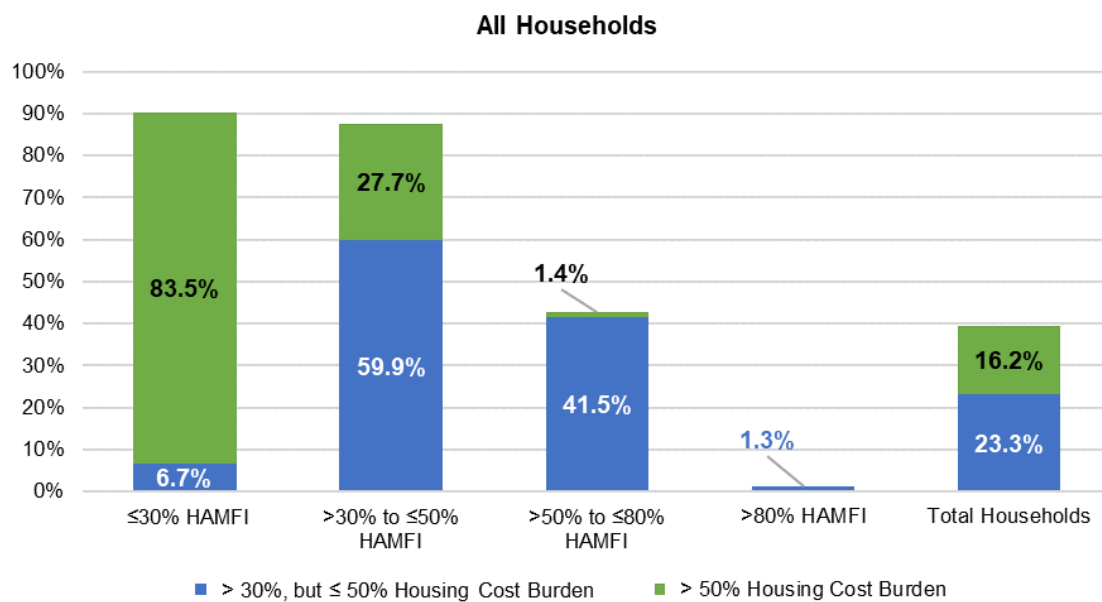
According to the CHAS data, 90.2 percent, 91.8 percent, and 81.7 of all households, renter households, and owner households earning 30 percent or less of the HAMFI, respectively, are housing cost-burdened. Most of these low-income households are severely cost-burdened.

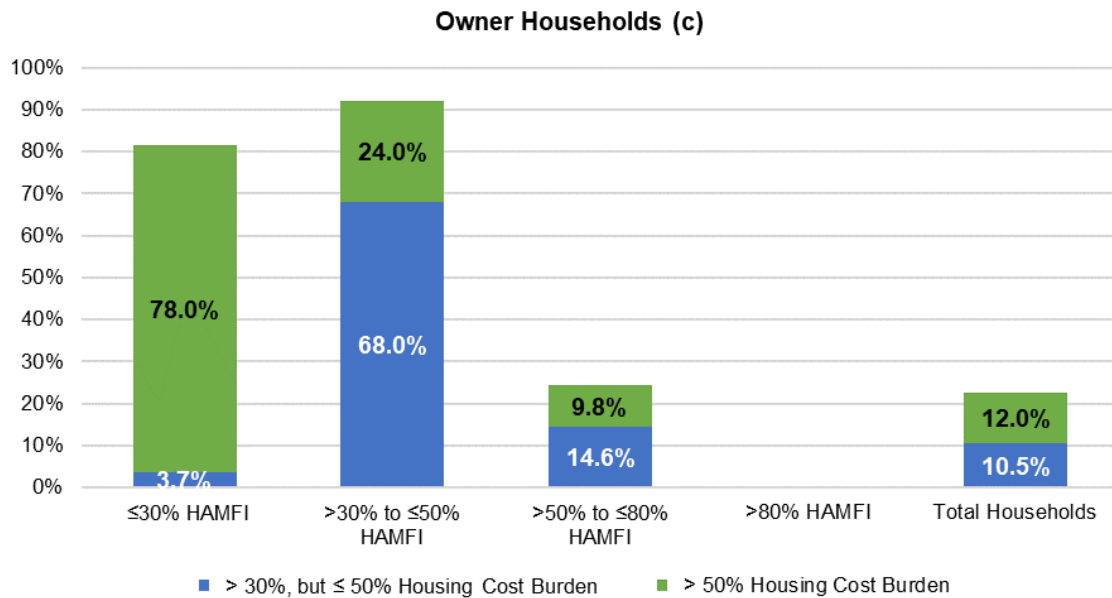
Roughly, 87.6 percent of all households, 86.6 percent of renter households, and 92.0 percent of owners earning more than 30 percent up to 50 percent of the HAMFI, are cost-burdened. About 43 percent of all households, 45.8 percent of renters, and 24.4 percent of owners earning more than 50 percent, but up to 80 percent of the HAMFI are housing cost-burdened. Finally, 3.5 percent of all households, 3.8 percent of renters and zero owner households earning more than 80 percent HAMFI are housing cost burdened.

Although an issue, the cost burden rates among lower income households do not indicate severe cost burden issues for the area. In most housing markets, households earning up to 50 percent of the HAMFI are typically cost-burdened, and Riverbanks is not an exception. The notable difference can be seen in the relatively low levels of cost burden earning more than 50 percent of the HAMFI. Most middle-income and workforce households in Riverbanks are not extremely cost burdened, which indicates the current affordability in the local housing market.

¹ This is the median family income calculated by HUD for each jurisdiction, in order to determine Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and income limits for HUD programs. HAMFI will not necessarily be the same as other calculations of median incomes (such as a simple Census number), due to a series of adjustments that are made.

Figure 22: Cost Burdened Households by HAMFI Level, Riverbanks Study Area, 2020 Five-Year Sample Data (a)





Notes:

(a) "HAMFI" is the HUD Area Median Family Income for Columbia, SC HUD Metro.

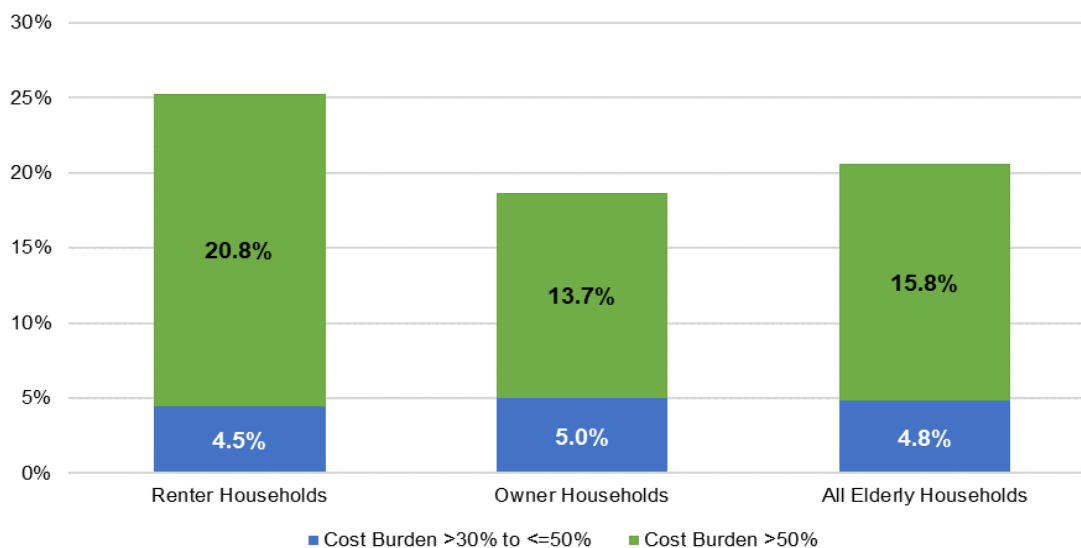
(b) Housing costs for renter households include gross rent, which is the contract rent plus the estimated average monthly cost of utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer) and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.) if these are paid by the renter (or paid for the renter by someone else).

(c) Owner households include those with and without a mortgage. Housing costs represent the sum of payments for mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, or similar debts on the property (including payments for the first mortgage, second mortgages, home equity loans, and other junior mortgages); real estate taxes; fire, hazard, and flood insurance on the property; utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer); and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.).

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data; BAE, 2024.

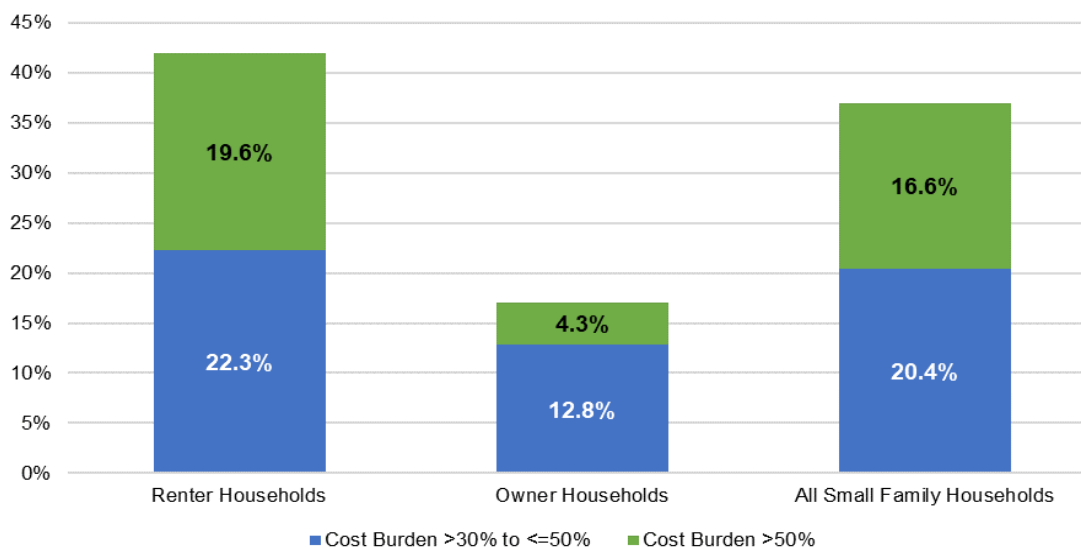
Housing Affordability for Small Family and Elderly Households

In addition to all households, HUD also calculates CHAS data for elderly households (with one or two persons 62 years or older) and small family households (with only two people, both under 62 years old), as these are the most vulnerable households, especially if they are renters. According to the CHAS data for elderly Riverbanks households, just over 20 percent of all elderly households are cost-burdened. As shown in Figure 23, 25.2 percent of elderly renter households are cost-burdened, and 18.7 percent of elderly owner households are cost-burdened.

Figure 23: Cost-Burdened Elderly Households, Riverbanks Study Area, 2020

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data; BAE, 2024.

Although a majority of elderly households are owner-occupied, most of the small family households are renter-occupied (80 percent). Among all Riverbanks small family households, 37 percent are cost-burdened, with 90.8 percent of cost-burdened households being renter-occupied. As can be seen in Figure 24, about 42 percent of all renter-occupied small family households are cost burdened, compared to just over 17 percent of owner-occupied households.

Figure 24: Cost Burdened Small Family Households, Riverbanks Study Area, 2020

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016-2020 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data; BAE, 2024.

Job-Resident Employment Gap

Table 8 shows the job-resident employment gap analysis for the Riverbanks study area. As an in-commute area, there are 2,354 more jobs in the Riverbanks study area than employed residents in 2023. As reported in Table 8, this statistic suggests that a significant share of Riverbanks workers live outside of the area and commute in for work. More specifically, the largest job-resident employment gaps in Riverbanks lie in the finance and insurance and retail trade industries, accounting for more than 68 percent of Riverbanks' total job-resident employment gap. Finance and insurance accounts for nearly 37 percent of the total job-resident employment gap and retail trade comprises roughly 32 percent of the total job-resident employment gap in Riverbanks.

Table 8: Job-Resident Employment Gap, Riverbanks Study Area, 2023

Industry	Jobs	Resident Employment	Job-Resident Employment Gap
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting	35	120	(85)
Mining	1	0	1
Utilities	132	63	69
Construction	272	251	21
Manufacturing	325	639	(314)
Wholesale Trade	185	52	133
Retail Trade	1,432	685	747
Transportation/Warehouse	221	173	48
Information	431	196	235
Finance & Insurance	1,208	344	864
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	213	218	(5)
Professional/Scientific/Tech Svcs	384	545	(161)
Mgmt of Companies/Enterprises	2	0	2
Admin/Support/Waste Mgmt Svcs	736	634	102
Educational Services	249	615	(366)
Health Care/Social Assistance	1,042	833	209
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	552	83	469
Accommodation/Food Svcs	783	490	293
Other Services (excl. Public Admin)	549	311	238
Public Admin	287	433	(146)
Total	9,039	6,685	2,354

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Needs Assessment

In order to calculate the total need for housing in the Riverbanks study area, we must look back at the data gathered in this report, including information on households, jobs, employed residents, and housing unit inventory. Using the data already gathered, we can calculate the total housing units needed to accommodate the current workforce, assess the future affordability of Riverbanks, and plan for future growth.

Structural Vacancy

The Riverbanks housing market has a vacancy rate of 9.7 percent of all units, 9.0 percent of rentals, and 2.9 percent of for-sale units, as shown in Table 9. A vacancy rate above five percent but below 10 percent indicates that the Riverbanks study area housing market is reasonably healthy. The Riverbanks' housing market is slightly better than the City's, which has an overall vacancy rate of 12.3 percent, a rental vacancy rate of 12.4 percent, and a for-sale vacancy rate of 2.3 percent.

Table 9: Vacancy Status, Riverbanks Study Area and Columbia, 2020

Vacancy Status	Riverbanks		Columbia	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Occupied units	5,975	90.3%	54,150	87.7%
Vacant units	645	9.7%	7,626	12.3%
For rent	419	9.0%	4,283	12.4%
For sale only	52	2.9%	557	2.3%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Current and Future Needs

Table 10 summarizes data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau as well as the estimates of the total necessary housing units for workers, the shortage, and how many units will be needed in the future. The steps to identify these calculations are as follows:

1. Determine the employed residents per household (1.09 workers per household).
2. Calculate the total number of units needed to house all employees in Riverbanks by dividing the total number of jobs by the workers per household, resulting in 8,286 needed housing units.
3. Tabulate the existing shortage by subtracting the total needed units from the existing units and increase the value by 5 percent in order to accommodate structural vacancy, which results in a total existing shortage of 1,395 units.
4. Finally, subtract the existing vacant units (471 units) from the calculated net units needed (1,395 units) from to see that the market has a shortfall of 924 units.
5. To account for the elderly households not included in the workforce, additional affordable senior units should be built for the 170 severely cost-burdened elderly households.
6. Additionally, identify the number of units needed per job created going forward by dividing the total needed housing units by the total number of jobs, while including a 5 percent structural vacancy to get 0.96, or realistically one additional housing unit needed for every job created.

To summarize, 1,094 units need to be built to address Riverbanks' present housing needs. This includes the 924 units currently not available for working households, and an additional 170 set aside as affordable housing for cost-burdened elderly households. Going forward, as Riverbanks continues to see investment and growth, at least one new housing unit needs to be constructed for every job created.

Table 10: Riverbanks Study Area Housing Needs Summary Table

Sourced Data	Number	Calculated Values	Number
Total Households	6,128	Employed Residents Per Household	1.09
Total Jobs	9,039	Total Units Needed for Workers	8,286
Total Employed Residents	6,685	Existing Worker Housing Shortage	924
Total Housing Units	6,957	Existing Elderly Housing Shortage	170
		Housing Units Needed Per Additional Job Created	0.96

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

As it currently stands, Riverbanks is a relatively affordable area, with most homes selling for under \$100,000, low vacancy rates for both rental and for-sale units, reasonable rents on par with the regional affordable rents, and a relatively low proportion of moderate income cost burdened households.

Affordable housing will be absolutely necessary, especially for lower-income and vulnerable households already cost-burdened. The total amount of planned affordable housing units for all households ultimately depends on the enacted policies. As mentioned previously, at least 170 units of affordable housing should be dedicated to senior households, which is the bare minimum. If policies were stronger, an additional 52 units should be constructed, to accommodate the cost burdened, but not severely cost burdened, elderly households to combat any rising housing costs, which is an estimated 222 elderly affordable units. Future housing policies can dedicate a portion of, or all of, the 924 worker household units, as affordable to help support current residents. This would give a total affordable unit housing range between 170 and 1,146 units to meet the needs of the community.

If Riverbanks is able to improve its connectivity through expanding transportation options to the rest of the metropolitan region in coming years, it is likely that the area will see significant investment, and in turn, increased high-earning jobs and housing costs. In this case, it is imperative to build more market-rate housing, as well as affordable housing, to combat displacement of current residents and keep housing costs reasonable. Not only is an increased inventory crucial to stabilizing the market, but it will help maintain affordability for middle-income and workforce households. Building housing and developing more anti-displacement strategies are necessary to protect the community from future gentrification.

As mentioned above, in order to supply enough workers with homes in the area, 924 units need to be constructed to meet the workforce demand, as well as at least one additional unit

must be constructed for every job created. Riverbanks employs workers from a range of industries, mainly finance and insurance, health care and social assistance, and retail, and in turn, a variety of housing types are needed to accommodate both white collar and blue collar workers.

In addition to more affordable housing, more ownership units are certainly needed. As indicated by Figure 12 and Figure 15, the majority of Riverbanks households are renters residing in small multifamily buildings. Figure 20 shows the disparity of housing cost burden between renter and owner households, with renter burden almost twice the rate of owners. Also, while the low vacancy rates, shown in Table 9, are generally a sign of a healthy market, the for-sale rate for both Riverbanks and Columbia are much lower than the rental vacancy rates. These statistics indicate a demand for homeownership units, ideally affordable for sale units. Building affordable for-sale homes would strengthen the community and help prevent mass displacement. If new housing production follows the current distribution, 67.9 percent of new units should be allocated to renters and only 32.1 percent as owner units. With more intensive policies that encourage homeownership opportunities, however, the share allocated to owners can be increased.

Housing in the Pipeline

BAE contacted the City of Columbia's Department of Community Development for updated information on any affordable housing in the pipeline. We learned that there is one senior affordable housing development, Stoneridge Senior Village, to be located at 201 Moore Hopkins Lane in the Riverbanks study area. This 90-unit, four-story residential building is currently in the pre-construction phase, with a groundbreaking expected soon.

Stoneridge Senior Village is for persons 55 years or older. With funding in part by federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs), all residents must be income-qualified, earning no more than 60 percent of the area median income. This development is expected to be complete by year-end 2025 or early in 2026. While this senior housing may not provide many units for the severely cost-burdened elderly, these units can be counted against the 222 elderly affordable units needed in total.

Key Findings - Housing Needs Assessment

In review, the key findings of this housing needs assessment for the Riverbanks study area are as follows:

- A total of 8,286 housing units are needed for households with workers under the age of 62.
- Currently, there is shortage of 924 housing units for households workers under the age of 62.

- There is a shortage of at least 170 housing units for severely cost-burdened elderly households currently, with an additional 52 housing units needed for cost-burdened elderly households in the near future.
- A planned senior affordable housing development for the Riverbanks study area, Stoneridge Senior Village with 90 affordable senior units, is to be delivered late in 2025 or early 2026. This will address some of the 170 or 222 senior affordable unit shortage described above.
- For each additional job created, there needs to be an additional 0.96 housing units for worker households under the age of 62.
- Elderly households (with one or two persons 62 years or older) and small family households (with only two people, both under 62 years old), are the most vulnerable households for displacement in the Riverbanks study area, especially if they are renters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the key findings of the demographic and economic trends, the housing market analysis and the housing needs assessment, we have identified a set of recommendations to be included in the final Land Use and Transportation Plan. This set of recommendations for Riverbanks should be considered by the Central Midlands of Governments, as well as the two jurisdictions that make up the Riverbanks study area, the City of Columbia and Richland County. While there is no existing agreement between the two governments on a set of policies to address issues and challenges noted in the market overview and the housing needs assessment in the Riverbanks study area, ideally the City and County can recognize the importance of doing so and work constructively together toward improving the area for its current and future residents.

Market and Economic Development

1. **Target the Industry Sector of Health Care and Social Assistance for Economic Development**

Columbia and Richland County economic developers should make a concerted effort to attract and retain health care and social assistance businesses and service providers in the Riverbanks area and encourage employers in the sector, most notably Prisma Health Midlands which is headquartered in the Riverbanks area to employ and help build skills for Riverbanks residents in the health care sector. The health care and social assistance sectors has the highest proportion of jobs in Riverbanks and employs the second highest proportion of Riverbanks residents, after the educational services sector.

Since the health care is an important in the region, it makes sense for economic development to promote the strength and opportunities in Riverbanks and the region at large. It also important to maintain strength in the health care sector to preserve jobs in Riverbanks. This should include supporting skill development in the health care sector, perhaps in partnership with Prisma Health Midlands, to build a stronger workforce in the health care sector, thereby creating advancement opportunities, especially for Riverbanks residents.

2. **Target the Finance and Insurance Industry Sector for Economic Development**

Columbia and Richland County economic developers should also make a strong effort to attract and retain finance and insurance jobs in the Riverbanks study area. Though the finance and insurance sector is not a high growth sector overall, the sector provides a wide range of jobs from entry level position (e.g., tellers, call center jobs) to high level administrative jobs. Within that range are family supporting positions that would provide stability and work options for Riverbanks residents. Additionally, there

may be partnership opportunities with Colonial Life and Accident Insurance Company to hire local residents.

3. Encourage Mixed-Use Development, Primarily Housing and Retail

The Market Overview and Housing Needs Assessment clearly show there is demand and need for housing in the Riverbanks study area, including both affordable and market rate housing. This includes demand for quality apartments. At the same time there are underutilized commercial properties on Bush River Road and Broad River Road and the surrounding area that are prime for redevelopment. Mixed-use developments that combine housing as the primary use, with supporting retail, create a built in market for the retail uses.

The City of Columbia and Richland County should promote the Multi-County Industrial Park Tax Credit, a tax abatement for up to 10 years for mixed-use development projects that create substantial taxable development. Though there is a rigorous review of mixed-use development projects applying for the tax abatement, the savings in taxes for developers is significant.

Mixed-use development in the Riverbanks area will help to build the local economy, adding new population which, in turn, encourages other investment. Also, mixed-use developments, which are large by definition will contribute to the tax base in the City of Columbia and Richland County.

4. Encourage Selective Retail Particularly Experiential or Restaurants with Entertainment

While acknowledging that on-line shopping and other issues have changed the way most consumers shop, there is still room for “experiential retail” focused on creating an engaging consumer experience rather than just selling goods or products. This trend when matched with what Riverbanks’ community stakeholders points to demand for better quality restaurants with table service, improved fast casual restaurant options, and restaurants with entertain, typically live music which some in the industry refer to as “eatertainment.” There are the retail and restaurant uses that should be encouraged from the time the developer submits concept plans for the mixed-use housing and retail developments described in the recommendation immediately above. Over the longer term if these mixed-use developments are successful demand for grocery stores and other retail will likely increase.

5. Preserve Office Space in the Riverbanks Study Area

According to CoStar, there is more than two million square feet of office space in the Riverbanks study area, most of which is located along I-26 in the Riverbanks study area or near the Dutch Square Center. This Class B office space has fared relatively well in the post-COVID market with a vacancy rate of just over 12 percent. Economic developers contacted for the study agree that much of this office space fills a specific

niche of mostly small, locally-owned businesses that do not need to be in downtown Columbia or in Class A space. Because the tenants in this space potentially employ local residents and pay higher wages than retailers, it is important to preserve the space and wise to maintain economic diversity to not be too dependent on any one type of business in the area.

6. Improve Transportation Options for Riverbanks Residents

There is an imbalance between jobs and housing and the large amount of commuting by Riverbanks residents that points to the need for improved transportation options, especially to downtown Columbia. This includes everything from better, reliable public transportation to more biking and walking trails and pathways to connect to public transportation and job centers.

7. Create More Housing in the Riverbanks Study Area

A housing needs assessment prepared as part this study concludes that there is significant amount of unmet demand for housing units. This assessment includes the following key findings relative to this shortage:

- A total of 8,286 housing units are needed for Riverbanks' households with workers under the age of 62.
- There is a shortage of 924 housing units for households with workers under the age of 62.
- There is a shortage of at least 170 housing units for severely cost-burdened elderly households currently, with an addition 52 housing units needed for cost-burdened elderly households in the near future.
- For each additional job created, there needs to be 0.96 housing units for worker households under the age of 62.

Housing leaders should prioritize the development of housing, especially affordable and workforce housing in the Riverbanks area. They should employ the housing preservation and production strategies listed below that have the dual benefit of helping to prevent displacement.

8. To Prevent Displacement, Implement Housing Preservation Strategies

The housing needs assessment prepared for this study finds that there is risk for gentrification and displacement of Riverbanks study area residents. Elderly households with one or two persons 62 years old or older, and small family households with only two people, both under 62 years old, are the most vulnerable households for displacement in the Riverbanks study area, especially if they are renters. Accordingly, housing leaders, especially the City of Columbia's community development office, Columbia Community Development, and the Richland County Office of Community Development, along with Columbia Housing (the local housing

authority) should work to improve the quality and maintain an inventory of affordable housing units in the Riverbanks study area. To do so the City and County should 1) prioritize programs that preserve and improve the existing affordable housing stock, 2) preserve the quality of market rate units through better code enforcement of non-owner occupied units, and 3) preserve local communities by providing more homeowner counseling services and monitoring neighborhood displacement risks. For Columbia Housing this would also include proactively marketing project based vouchers to expand landlord participation.

9. To Prevent Displacement, Expand Housing Production Capacity

Housing leaders should work to improve the quality and maintain an inventory of affordable housing units in the Riverbanks study area and implement the following housing production strategies: 1) provide concierge services to housing developers to guide them through all of the different permitting and review departments; and 2) assemble vacant or underutilized private and public property to provide housing developers with sites that are at or below market rate prices.

10. To Prevent Displacement, Expand Funding and Financing Mechanisms to Increase Housing Development

Housing leaders from the City of Columbia and Richland County should work to expand funding and financing mechanism that will enable increased housing development in the Riverbanks study area. To do so, they should align local housing initiatives with federal and state resources including the South Carolina State Housing Finance and Development Authority, to maximize the impact of new housing developments. They should also seek funding for affordable housing from other sources, including Community Development Financing Intermediaries (CDFIs), such as Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Enterprise Community Partners. LISC now has an Upstate South Carolina office but indicates the national program has funded investments throughout South Carolina, including in the Midlands Region. Enterprise has a southeast regional office and has helped to fund developments throughout South Carolina.

