



**Columbia Health Social and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Meeting Agenda**

**Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 1:00 PM**

City Hall • Mayor's Conference Room

1737 Main Street, 2nd Floor, Columbia, SC 29201

City Clerk's Office: (803)545-3045 or [cityclerk@columbiasc.gov](mailto:cityclerk@columbiasc.gov)

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The Honorable Sam P. Johnson, At-Large, Chair  
The Honorable Edward H. McDowell Jr., District II • The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey, At-Large

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**Call to Order**

**Approval of Minutes**

1. February 24, 2026 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

**Presentations**

2. Riparian Buffer Zone Considerations – Mr. Bill Stangler, Congaree Riverkeeper
3. Tree and Appearance Commission Update – Ms. Viola Hendley, Chair
4. Animal Services Ordinance Revisions - Ms. Victoria Clary, Superintendent / Animal Services
5. City Beautification Update – Mr. Robert Anderson, Director / Public Works

**Adjournment**



**Columbia Health Social and Environmental Affairs Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, February 24, 2026**

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**Call to Order**

The Columbia Health Social and Environmental Affairs Committee conducted a meeting on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201. The Honorable Sam P. Johnson, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr was present. The Honorable Tyler D. Bailey was absent.

**Approval of Minutes**

1. Approval of October 28, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Johnson, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the October 28, 2025 Health, Social, and Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes.

**Presentations**

2. City Beautification Update – Mr. Robert Anderson, Director / Public Works and Mr. Brian Neiger, Superintendent / Forestry & Beautification

Mr. Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager of Columbia Water welcomed Mr. Eric Jensen, Richland County Assistant Administrator and Ms. Sandra Haynes, Director of Animal Services for Richland County.

Mr. Brian Neiger, Superintendent / Forestry & Beautification provided an update on the City's beautification efforts. He highlighted corridor mowing; downtown self-watering planters; fence and median upgrades; enhanced sidewalk maintenance; new equipment to improve median cleaning efficiency; and the new "Welcome to Columbia" signage. He also discussed the "Beat the Heat, Plant a Tree" partnership with Columbia Green, which has distributed approximately 2,000 trees over two years.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Director / Public Works shared that the City has implemented an Adopt-a-Street program, which focuses on major thoroughfares with organized cleanups held several times a year. He also noted that the City is in the early stages of additional beautification efforts, including evaluating flood-prone lots for potential pollinator gardens and enhanced plantings. He stated that the City will continue partnering with community groups to support these initiatives.

There was discussion about group crossover with regard to beautification efforts; designated areas for gateway projects; use of the street sweeper; a grant program to standardize signs at neighborhood entrances; the employment of youth for beautification efforts; a road safety audit performed by the Department of Transportation; and a map of neighborhoods that have or have not submitted tree planting requests.

3. Animal Services Update – Ms. Victoria Clary, Superintendent / Animal Services

Ms. Victoria Clary, Superintendent / Animal Services presented proposed updates to the City's animal services ordinances, including reorganizing sections, adding definitions, and aligning regulations with Richland County. Key changes include replacing the outdated kennel model with a breeder permit requiring inspections and humane standards, and strengthening the tethering ordinance. She noted that most revisions focus on necessary animal welfare improvements. She shared the need for facility upgrades.

There was discussion about addressing current ordinance language; penalty enforcement; timeline for implementing proposed changes; building demolition; tethering in bad weather; ear cropping; differential licensing exemption for service/show dogs; levels of enforcement; and flawed building functionality.

There was consensus of the committee to review the proposed changes and continue this discussion at the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC, CPM  
City Clerk



# Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission

Health, Social & Environmental Affairs Committee

Board of Commissioners  
March 2026

# The Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission's (CTAC) Mission

*To enhance and improve the visual quality and aesthetic characteristics of the city of Columbia, supporting City Forestry & Beautification in preserving & enhancing our tree canopy for future generations.*

## **Our Commissioners**

Vi Hendley, Chair

Gray Taylor, Chair-elect, *Arborist/Horticulturist*

Johnston Cox, Secretary

Ian Hamilton, *Columbia Green*

Laine Ligon, *Realtor/Developer*

Patrick McLean

Susan Hitchcock

Meredith Blackwell

Ralph Hilsman

Christopher Neuman, *Architect*



## CTAC 2026-27 Focus

- Year 1 of 3 of our Trees4SC Grant from SC Forestry Commission canopy mapping and code audit
- Separate The Columbia Landscape & Tree Fund from general fund
- Bring awareness of utility undergrounding as best practice
- International Dark Sky Lighting standards along our greenways



# The Value of Trees



Reduces energy use



Raises real estate value



Supports recreation



Cleans stormwater



Reduces stress



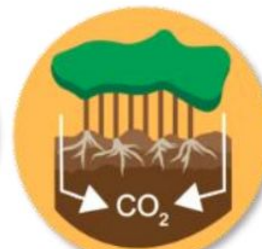
Beautifies the City



Decreases crime



Cleans the air



Sequesters carbon



Lowers temperatures



Regulates flooding



Provides wildlife habitat



Increases revenue



Decreases accidents

# Project Objectives

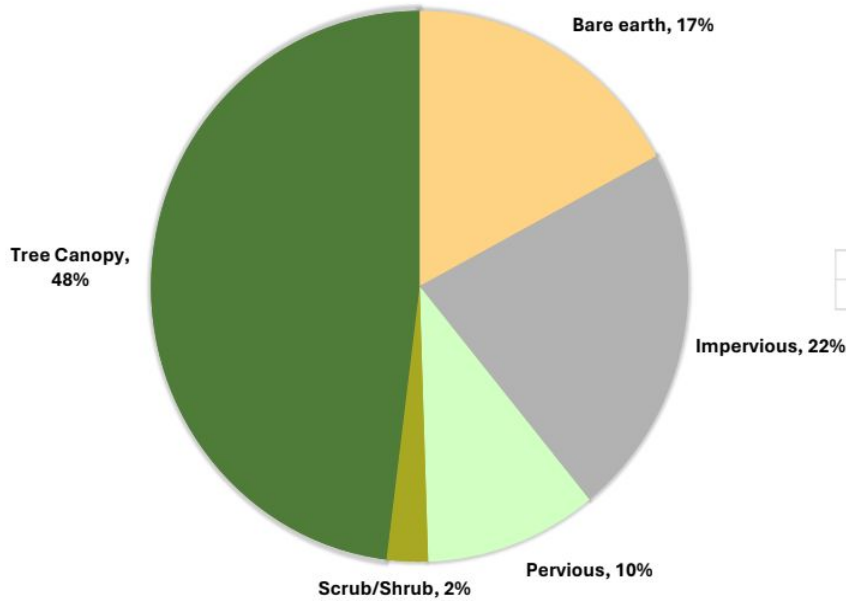


Support Columbia from **planning to planting**

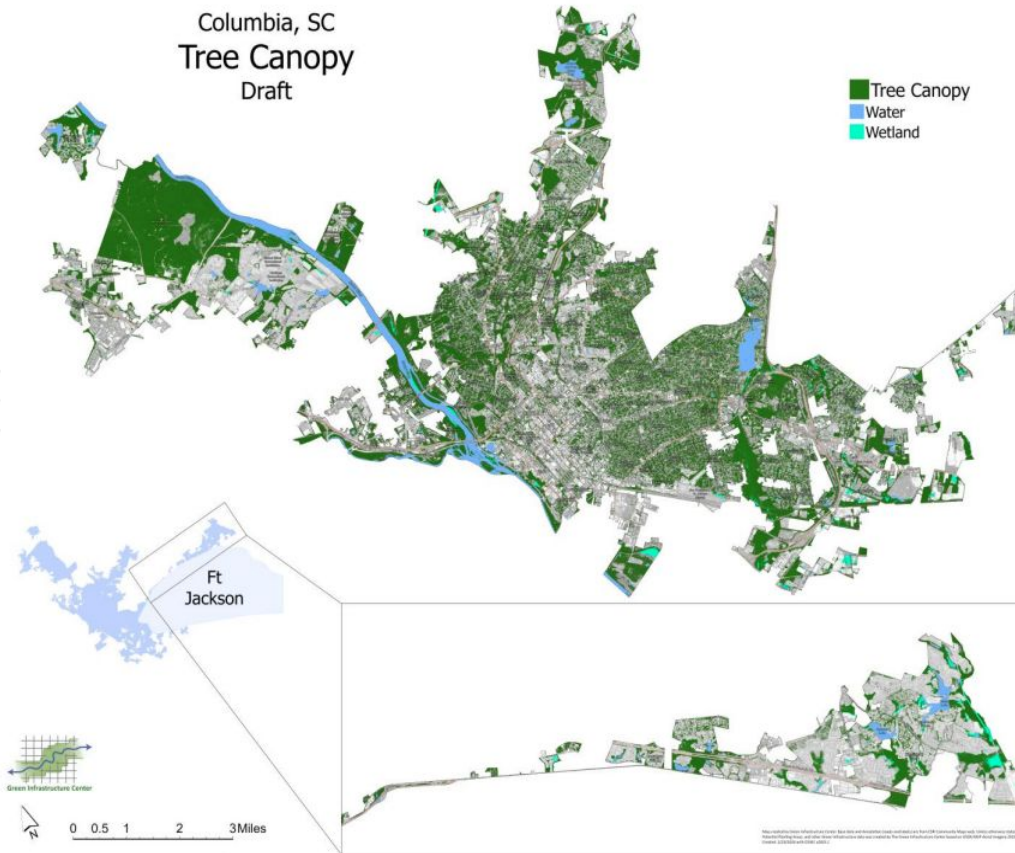
Outcomes:

1. Review of city ordinances and recommended strategies.
2. Maps representing tree canopy, planting areas, and ecosystem services: Stormwater, heat mitigation, etc.
3. Strategic tree canopy plan with maps and goals.
4. Grassroots program capacity, community building, education and engagement
5. Trees distributed and planted.

# Columbia's Canopy



Columbia, SC  
Tree Canopy  
Draft



Citywide 48% (Draft)



NAIP Leaf-On



Land Cover



Potential Planting Area (PPA)



Potential Planting Spots (PPS)



Potential Canopy Area (PCA)



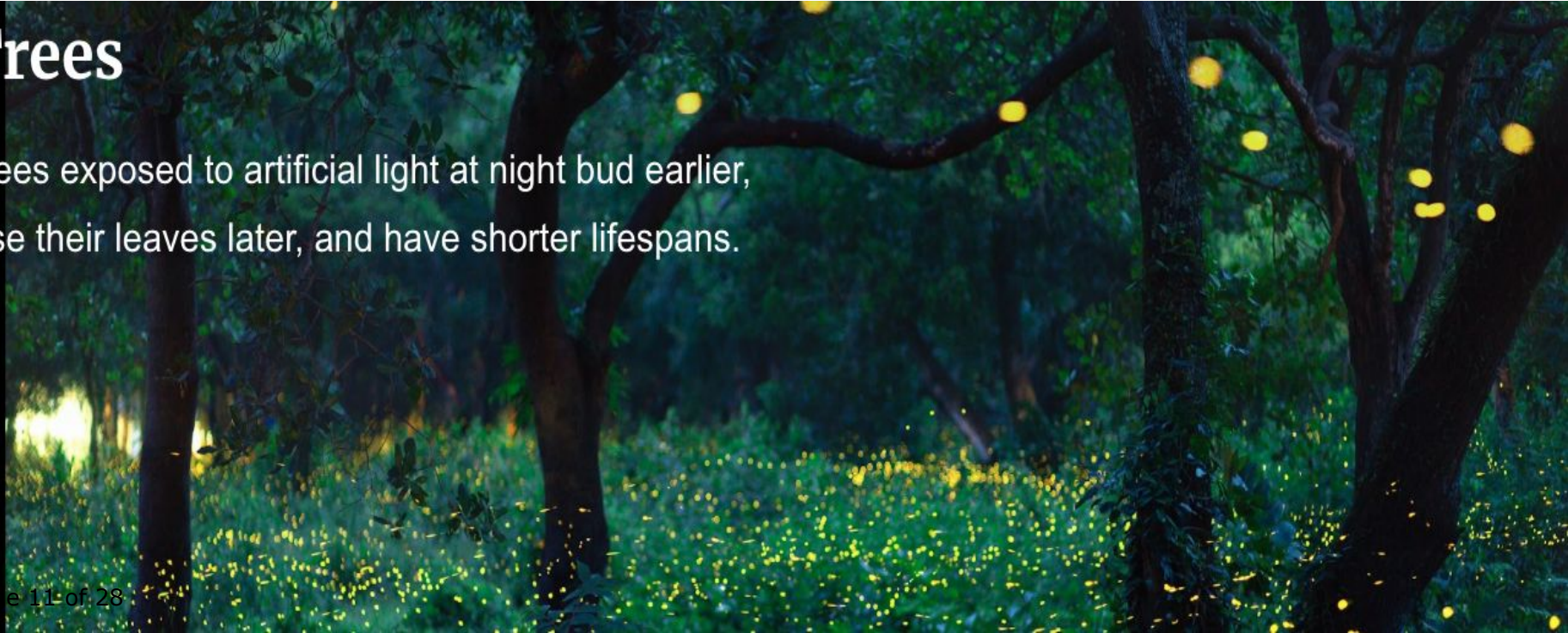
Potential Land Cover



# Why adopt International Dark Sky lighting standards Along our Parks & Greenways?

## Trees

Trees exposed to artificial light at night bud earlier,  
lose their leaves later, and have shorter lifespans.







**UNACCEPTABLE**

Unshielded/  
Poorly shielded



**BAD**

Partially shielded



**BETTER**

Fully shielded  
(Light source fully covered)



**BEST**

Fully shielded +  
timer/motion sensor

# Underground Utilities

Superior Reliability & Resilience

Enhanced Safety

Reduced Maintenance Costs

Improved Aesthetics & Property Value

Protection from Damage

- **Camden, SC** 90% of utilities are underground. Per Utilities Director reports \* Rarely receive calls regarding trees \* neighborhoods & businesses have undergrounded \* Tree canopy quickly recovered \* Significant reduction of power loss due to cars downing power lines.

“It looks really good. Seems like we don’t lose power as often, so we have been really pleased. The more that you do it, the better. I think that it is good for the city. It looks good, it’s attractive and I think it’s a good use of money.” Duncan Macintosh, citizen of Camden, SD

- **Other SC cities applying best practices**  
Hilton Head, Greenville, Mount Pleasant, Forest Acres, Aiken, Myrtle Beach



# Collaborations

- Midlands Business Leadership Group
- Columbia Green
- Stakeholder in the Riverfront Park development
- University of South Carolina
- City Council, the Mayor, Assistant City Manager Columbia Water

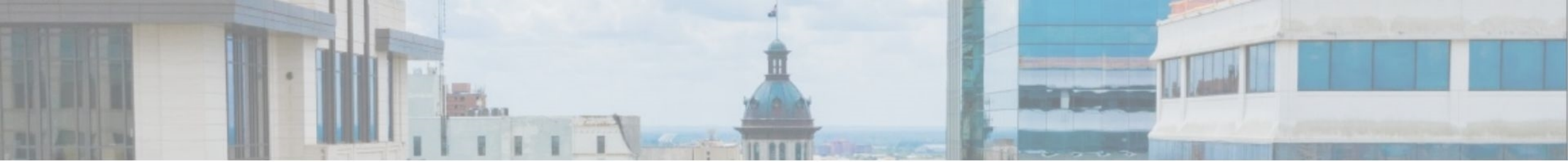
# Columbia Animal Services

Shelter Update



## Animal Ordinances

- Reorganized articles for a more concise flow
- Added necessary definitions for stronger clarification
- Most notable changes are:
  - Kennels and breeding (*modified*)
  - Tethering (*modified*)
  - Animal care generally (*modified*)
  - Sale of animals (*added*)
  - License for cats and dogs; rabies vaccine (*modified*)
- All modifications result in alignment with Richland County's ordinances



## Kennels and Breeding

- Commercial pet breeders must now obtain a pet breeder permit from Animal Services
- Pet owner must pass inspection for breeder permit which requires:
  - Obtaining a City of Columbia business license
  - Vaccinating and licensing all pets over four months of age
  - On-site inspection by animal services to ensure environment is in accordance with ordinance

## Tethering

- Changes include:
  - Shortening time frame to no more than 2 hours in a 24-hour period.
  - Specifying appropriate age for tethering
  - Specifying appropriate type of tether
  - Specifying appropriate condition of the animal for tether (not sick/injured)
  - Specifying appropriate temperature/weather for tethering (between 40° and 90°)



## **Animal Care Generally**

- Defines proper shelter
- Added stipulations for temperatures less than 40°
- Prohibits ear cropping by anyone other than a licensed veterinarian
- Addresses animal abandonment

## **Sale of Animals**

- Not permitted in public properties, rights-of-way, roadsides, and flea markets
- Addresses appropriate age for separation from mother dogs
- Prohibits retail sale of dogs and cats in pet stores



## Differential licensing program

- Sec 4.62 – License for dogs and cats; rabies vaccination:
  - Currently, pet licensing is required annually with options of a \$25 fee for unaltered pets or a \$5 fee for altered pets
- Proposed changes:
  - No change to annual \$5 fee for altered pets
  - Increased annual fee for unaltered pets to \$100
  - Provide a one-time life-time pet license to altered pets who are also microchipped.
- Benefits:
  - Improved license compliance
  - Faster pet-owner retention
  - Intake and cost reduction of shelter pets over time
  - Increased revenue for unaltered pets and stronger community return on investment
  - Spay/neuter incentive accompanied with low-cost spay and neuter programs
- Per a recent meeting with Richland County, they would like to discuss with their Council and possibly align their ordinance with these proposed changes.
- Advertise with this years budget with date for implementation to be determined based on discussion with Richland County.



## Differential licensing program

- Exemptions from differential licensing - Sec. 4-3 (c)
  - Elaboration of medical exemption from a licensed veterinarian
  - Specification of type of show for show exempt animals
  - Removal of trained service animal
    - Difficult to verify with blends between emotional support vurses true service animals

# City of Columbia

## Neighborhood Beautification



## **Neighborhood Beautification**

- Grants
- Signage
- Landscaping
- Litter Control
- Neighborhood Cleanups
- Neighborhood Engagements
- Youth Engagement



## Grants

- Community Development Department Involvement
  - Grant Development/Guidelines
  - Committee Approach
    - Grants
    - Sign Design
  - Cap on Funding Amount
  - Recurring Funding
  - City Wide Grant Opportunity

## Signage

- Standard Template
  - Public Relations has Engaged a Company for Preliminary Designs
    - Easy to Maintain
    - Color Standard
    - Material



## Landscaping

- Designs from Public Works Forestry and Beautification Division
- Designs will be Specific to the Neighborhood
  - Space
- Neighborhoods will Plant and Maintain
- Possible Planting Educational Component

## Litter Control

- Neighborhoods to Provide Litter Collection
  - Number of Times per Year
    - Adopt a Street is Four per Year
- Litter Collection Supplies
  - Bags
  - Pick-up Sticks
  - Safety Vests
  - Buckets
- Pet Waste Stations



## Neighborhood Cleanups

- One per Year on Request
  - Police
  - Code Enforcement
  - Solid Waste
  - Animal
  - Forestry and Beautification
  - Volunteers

## Neighborhood Engagement

- Columbia Council of Neighborhoods
- Cleanup Luncheons
- Community Pride
- Ownership of Program
- Commitment



## Youth Engagement

- Developing Partnerships
  - Neighborhood Youth
  - Churches
  - Colleges
  - Local School Groups
  - Police Engagement Programs
  - “4” Block Promise
- Possible Compensation (Model Available from ONSE)

## Partners

- Community Development
- Police
- Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement
- Public Relations
- Forestry & Beautification
- Solid Waste



# Proposed Signs

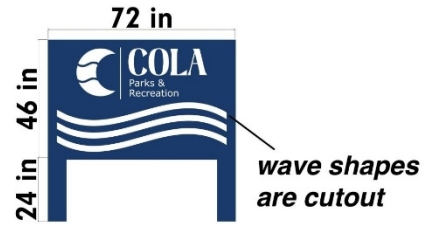
- Navy Signs w/ White Lettering
- Resembling Signs Produced in COC Parks
- Crawford Designing new Signs that would better reflect Neighborhoods (In-Progress)
- Signs are Displayed at 72" x 46"
- Secured 24" in Ground (see images)

# Estimate

- Proposed Project Funding: \$200,000.00
- Signs: \$8,100
- Installation: \$1,500
- Total (tax): \$10,100.00

**Estimated Number of Signs That Can be Funded: 20**

CITY OF COLUMBIA PARKS AND RECREATION  
Aluminum Sign - Main (Horizontal)  
72 in



**ORDER NUMBER:** 24790  
**DESIGNER:** AW

**DESCRIPTION:**  
3/4" Aluminum Plate  
Aluminum .125 Mill Finish  
Oracal 951 Premium Cast Vinyl - 2 Mil  
Double sided  
Qty 1 sign

**DIMENSIONS:**  
72" (W) x 46" (H)

**COLORS**  
■ 2758 C  
□ white vinyl logo

**CONTACT INFO**  
Stephanie Coulter

