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COLUMBUS

ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE

AUGUST 2021

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ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE

For Program Years 2021 to 2025

COLUMBUS, GA

Community Reinvestment Department

August 2021

Prepared for Columbus by
Mosaic Community Planning, LLC



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Chapter 1. Introduction

Fair Housing Planning

Equal access to housing choice is crucial to America’s commitment to equality and opportunity for all. Title VIII of the United States Civil Rights Act of 1968, more commonly known as the Fair Housing Act, provides housing opportunity protection by prohibiting discrimination in the sale or rental of housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. The Act was amended in 1988 to provide stiffer penalties, establish an administrative enforcement mechanism and to expand its coverage to prohibit discrimination on the basis of familial status and disability. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), specifically HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO), is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Fair Housing Act and other civil rights laws.

Provisions to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH) are basic long-standing components of HUD’s housing and community development programs. The AFFH requirements are derived from Section 808(e)(5) of the Fair Housing Act which requires the Secretary of HUD to administer the Department’s housing and urban development programs in a manner to affirmatively further fair housing.¹

Local communities like Columbus that receive grant funds from HUD through its entitlement process satisfy this obligation by performing an “Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice” (AI). In an AI, grantees evaluate barriers to fair housing choice and develop strategies and actions to overcome identified impediments based on their histories, circumstances, and experiences. Through this process, communities promote fair housing choice for all persons, including classes protected under the Fair Housing Act, and promote racially and ethnically inclusive patterns of housing occupancy, identify structural and systematic barriers to fair housing choice, and promote housing that is physically accessible and usable by persons with disabilities.

HUD presumes that a grantee is meeting its obligation and certification to affirmatively further fair housing by taking actions that address the impediments, including:

- Analyzing and eliminating housing discrimination within the jurisdiction;
- Promoting fair housing choice for all persons;

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. *Fair Housing Planning Guide: Volume 1 (Chapter 1: Fair Housing Planning Historical Overview, Page 13)*. March 1996.

- Providing opportunities for racially and ethnically inclusive patterns of housing occupancy;
- Promoting housing that is physically accessible to all persons to include those persons with disabilities; and
- Fostering compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of the Fair Housing Act.

Through its Community Planning and Development (CPD) programs, HUD's goal is to expand mobility and widen a person's freedom of choice. The Department also requires Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program grantees to document AFFH actions in the annual performance reports that are submitted to HUD.

In 2015, HUD published a final rule on Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, which outlines procedures that jurisdictions and public housing authorities who participate in HUD programs must take to promote access to fair housing and equal opportunity. This rule stipulated that grantees and housing authorities take meaningful actions to overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected class characteristics. Under HUD's final rule, grantees must take actions to:

- Address disparities in housing need;
- Replace segregated living patterns with integrated and balanced living patterns;
- Transform racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity; and
- Foster and maintain compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.

To assist grantees and housing authorities affirmatively further fair housing, HUD began providing publicly-available data, maps, and an assessment tool to use to evaluate the state of fair housing within their communities and set locally-determined priorities and goals. HUD's final rule originally mandated that most grantees begin submitting to HUD an assessment developed using these tools in 2017; however, a 2018 HUD notice withdrew the requirement to prepare such assessments. A subsequent notice further required that grantees instead prepare and keep on file a current Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. In September of 2020, HUD repealed its 2015 AFFH rule altogether, however, absent any substitute guidance from HUD on precisely how to assure compliance with their obligations to affirmatively further fair housing, many grantees continue to prepare AIs as a fail-safe measure. By periodically conducting an AI and working to implement the policies and programs proposed by the analysis, grantees provide themselves a solid footing for their AFFH certification.

Mosaic Community Planning assisted Columbus with the preparation of this Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. This AI follows the requirements in HUD's *Fair Housing Planning*

Guide but also complies with the regulations and assessment tool established in HUD’s 2015 final rule. In several chapters, it incorporates the maps and data developed by HUD for use by grantees as part of the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing final rule.

Definitions

Affirmatively Further Fair Housing – In keeping with the text of HUD’s 2015 *Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing* regulation, to Affirmatively Further Fair Housing Choice (AFFH) is to take “meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.”²

Affordable – Though local definitions of the term may vary, the definition used throughout this analysis is congruent with HUD’s definition:

- HUD defines as “affordable” housing that costs no more than 30% of a household’s total monthly gross income. For rental housing, the 30% amount would be inclusive of any tenant-paid utility costs. For homeowners, the 30% amount would include the mortgage payment, property taxes, homeowners insurance, and any homeowners’ association fees.

Fair Housing Choice – In carrying out this Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, Columbus used the following definition of “Fair Housing Choice”:

- The ability of persons of similar income levels to have available to them the same housing choices regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or handicap.

Impediments to Fair Housing Choice – As adapted from the HUD *Fair Housing Planning Guide*, impediments to fair housing choice are understood to include:³

- Any actions, omissions, or decisions taken because of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin which restrict housing choices or the availability of housing choices.

² “Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing; Final Rule,” published July 16, 2015, at 80 FR 42272.

³ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. *Fair Housing Planning Guide: Volume 1 (Chapter 2: Preparing for Fair Housing Planning, Page 2-17)*. March 1996.

- Any actions, omissions, or decisions which have the effect of restricting housing choices or the availability of housing choices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin.

Protected Classes – The following definition of federally protected classes is used in this document:

- Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 prohibits housing discrimination based on race, color, national origin or ancestry, sex, or religion. The 1988 Fair Housing Amendments Act added familial status and mental and physical handicap as protected classes.

Data Sources

Decennial Census Data – Data collected by the Decennial Census for 2010 and 2000 is used in this Assessment (older Census data is only used in conjunction with more recent data in order to illustrate trends). The Decennial Census data is used by the U.S. Census Bureau to create several different datasets:

- 2010 and 2000 Census Summary File 1 (SF 1) – This dataset contains what is known as “100% data,” meaning that it contains the data collected from every household that participated in the Census and is not based on a representative sample of the population. Though this dataset is very broad in terms of coverage of the total population, it is limited in the depth of the information collected. Basic characteristics such as age, sex, and race are collected, but not more detailed information such as disability status, occupation, and income. **The statistics are available for a variety of geographic levels with most tables obtainable down to the census tract or block group level.**
- 2000 Census Summary File 3 (SF 3) – Containing sample data from approximately one in every six U.S. households, this dataset is compiled from respondents who received the “long form” Census survey. This comprehensive and highly detailed dataset contains information on such topics as ancestry, level of education, occupation, commute time to work, and home value. The SF 3 dataset was discontinued for the 2010 Census, but many of the variables from SF 3 are included in the American Community Survey.

American Community Survey (ACS) – The American Community Survey is an ongoing statistical survey that samples a small percentage of the U.S. population every year, thus providing communities with more current population and housing data throughout the 10 years between censuses. This approach trades the accuracy of the Decennial Census Data for the relative immediacy of continuously polled data from every year. ACS data is compiled from an annual sample of approximately 3 million addresses rather than an actual count (like the Decennial Census’s SF 1 data) and therefore is susceptible to sampling errors. This data is released in two different formats: single-year estimates and multi-year estimates.

- ACS Multi-Year Estimates – More current than Census 2010 data, this dataset is one of the most frequently used. Because sampling error is reduced when estimates are collected over a longer period of time, 5-year estimates will be more accurate (but less recent) than 1-year estimates. The 2012–2016 ACS 5-year estimates are used most often in this assessment.

Chapter 2. Community Participation Process

Community Engagement Overview

An important component of the research process for this Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice involved gathering input regarding fair and affordable housing conditions, perceptions, and needs in Columbus. The project team used a variety of approaches to achieve meaningful public engagement with residents and other stakeholders, including community meetings, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and a community-wide survey.

Community Meetings

The public meeting offered residents an opportunity to identify housing and community development needs in their neighborhoods. The public meeting began with a short presentation providing an overview of the Consolidated Plan and related grant programs. The presentation was followed by an interactive discussion of housing and community development needs in the city. 43 members of the public attended the virtual meeting.

Stakeholder Interviews

The planning team also engaged with stakeholders representing a variety of perspectives through in-depth individual interviews. Interviews typically lasted 50 minutes to one hour and included discussions about barriers to fair housing, discrimination, access to opportunity, and fair housing resources. Eighteen (18) community stakeholders participated in interviews with the planning team. Participating stakeholders represented a range of viewpoints, including affordable housing, community development and planning, domestic violence services, health services, homelessness services, real estate, transportation, and others.

Participating Organizations

Organizations from which one or more representatives participated in the development of this AI include the following:

- Chattahoochee Valley Libraries
- City of Columbus, City Council
- City of Columbus, Community Reinvestment Department
- City of Columbus, Fire & EMS
- City of Columbus, Parks and Recreation
- City of Columbus, Planning Department

- Coldwell Banker KPDD
- Columbus 2025
- Columbus-Phenix City MPO
- Habitat for Humanity
- Home for Good
- Homeless Resource Network
- Hope Harbour
- Housing Authority of Columbus, GA
- MercyMed
- NeighborWorks
- Paz Amigos

Focus Groups

In addition to the community input sessions and stakeholder interviews, the planning team hosted a virtual discussion with faith leaders in the city's Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. The discussion focused on the city's housing and community development needs, as well as fair housing issues in the city. The focus group was held via Zoom during the IMA's monthly meeting. Participants could attend online or by phone. During the focus group, the facilitator provided an explanation of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice and led a discussion on barriers to fair housing choice in Columbus.

Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance Focus Group

Friday, May 7, 2021

10:00 AM

Community Survey

A final method for obtaining community input was a 21-question survey available to the general public, including people living and/or working in Columbus and other stakeholders. The survey was available in English from April-June 2021 and in Spanish from May-June 2021 via an online link on the Community Reinvestment website. A total of 94 survey responses were received.

Public Comment Period and Hearing

The City of Columbus will hold a public comment period to receive input on the draft Analysis of Impediments from June 26 – July 26, 2021. A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 6:30pm to receive feedback from the public. All comments received on the draft will be appended to the final plan.

Publicity for Community Engagement Activities

Advertisement for the public meeting and survey targeted the general public, as well as nonprofits, service providers, housing providers, and others working with low- and moderate-income households and special needs populations. Public notice of the community meeting was given to residents through a notice in the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, social media posts on the Community Reinvestment Facebook page and a project flyer. Flyers were emailed to more than 60 contacts representing a variety of viewpoints including elected officials and staff, housing authority staff, housing developers, nonprofit organizations, homeless housing and service providers, health service providers, civic organizations, and others. Meeting advertisements noted that accommodations (including translation, interpretation, or accessibility needs) were available if needed; no requests for accommodations were received.

Community Engagement Results

Comments from interviews and meetings and the results of the community survey are summarized below. All comments and surveys were accepted and input was considered in the development of this AI. Note that these comments do not necessarily reflect the views of the City of Columbus or Mosaic Community Planning.

Interview, Public Meeting, and Focus Group Results

- 1. What types of housing needs are greatest in Columbus? Are there parts of the city where the need is greater than others?**
 - Housing that is affordable, available, of good quality, and in safe areas
 - Single-family houses for rent
 - Assistance with first and last month's rent
 - Housing affordable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households

YOU'RE INVITED!

Please join us for a conversation about housing and community development in Columbus.

- What are the housing needs in your community?
- Does your neighborhood have access to good schools, jobs, transportation, healthcare, and grocery stores?
- What barriers limit the range of housing option available to you?
- Do you know what to do if you feel you have experienced housing discrimination?

Join us for a virtual meeting
Tuesday, May 18
6:30pm

Join online:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86511430622>

Or by phone:
Dial: 929-205-6099
Meeting ID: 865 1143 0622

Take the survey at:
www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan



The City of Columbus is currently developing its 5-Year Consolidated Plan to assess the City's housing and community development needs for 2021-2025. The Plan will guide how the City spends funding received from HUD to address community needs. A second study, the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice is also being conducted to examine barriers to equal housing and access to jobs, schools and transportation across the City. For more information about the project, please contact Jeremy Gray, Mosaic Community Planning, at 470-435-6020 or info@mosaiccommunityplanning.com.



- “Missing middle” housing available for sale at \$150,000–\$250,000
- Housing affordable to households earning 120% AMI (or the “working poor”)
- Demolition of blighted homes
- Repair work/Maintenance on rental housing
- Family housing
- Senior housing
- More Section 8
- Utility assistance
- Energy efficiency upgrades/weatherization
- In-fill
- Housing for the homeless (e.g., temporary housing, tiny homes)
- Homeless veteran services
- One-bedroom units that are energy efficient.
- Mental health independent housing with intensive case management
- Removing restrictive zoning
- Affordable housing in north Columbus
- Rent assistance, utility assistance. Churches get a lot of requests for these services, especially on the south side.
- Transitional housing for families.
- Additional landlords who will accept housing vouchers.
- Home improvement
- First time homebuyer assistance

2. What parts of Columbus are generally seen as areas of opportunity? What makes them attractive places to live? Are there barriers someone might face in moving to one of these areas?

Residents and stakeholders noted multiple areas of opportunity in and around the city, including:

- North Columbus. It is more expensive to live here but there are more amenities. Most development is in North Columbus.
- Midtown Columbus is the center of town. It has a wide range of housing but also income disparity and blight.
- Uptown and the Historic District are ideal for people who like to walk to their destination. These areas have mixed uses, the Columbus State University campus and access to the Riverwalk.

Residents and stakeholders noted multiple barriers to moving to areas of opportunity:

- It is expensive.
- Housing availability and affordability

- Shortage of places to buy or rent.
- If you cannot afford a \$150,000 mortgage, the available housing stock is old and in poor condition/in bad neighborhoods.
- Unspoken barriers based on status.
- Landlords market to Ft. Benning families to get the most rent.
- Lack of financial wellness classes
- Limited lending resources for non-English speakers
- Landlords require 3 times the rent in income.
- Transportation
- Credit checks and criminal histories
- How a person looks.
- Lack of housing that is ADA accessible and does not segregate disabled persons into clustered housing.
- NIMBYism towards LIHTC in non-minority areas.

3. Are you aware of any housing discrimination?

- A white woman with mixed children has difficulty finding housing.
- Landlords use VAWA rules as a reason not to accept Section 8 tenants.
- Once people are housed, the quality of maintenance by the landlord depends on the tenant.
- Realtors steer people away from areas. Our realtors do not know the areas where they do not work, so they just generalize.
- There is a community barrier. They fight affordable housing on every level.
- A co-worker had to go to three different mortgage lenders because they were getting an inflated interest rate.

4. Are people in Columbus segregated in where they live? What causes segregation to occur?

- Harris County took a lot of white people when integration began.
- Columbus is segregated by money.
- There is a lot of history you must deal with here and you have to challenge it when you hear it.
- Yes. Jobs and transportation cause segregation to occur.
- Yes, due to redlining.
- Macon Road has been the dividing line. South of Macon Road there are African American communities.
- Yes, the schools are 99% one way or the other.
- Yes. I think it is related to income, not race.
- Yes. We started having white flight in the early 1990s.

5. What types of fair housing services (education, complaint investigation, testing, etc.) are offered in the area? Who offers them? How well are they coordinated with the work of other organizations in the community?

- Community Reinvestment has resources on fair housing.
- You can call the real estate commission or HUD directly.
- Metro Fair Housing (Atlanta-based)
- Home for Good
- Georgia Legal Services.
- I do not know.

6. Are public resources (e.g., parks, schools, roads, police & fire services, etc.) available evenly throughout all neighborhoods in the city? Do some areas get more/less than their share?

- I live in midtown. We have sidewalks and police patrols.
- It is uneven. Shirley Winston Park – there is a pool that I have never seen open but the pools on the north side are open.
- The fire department is certified so they are strategically placed. The stations have been built in the last 20 years.
- Garbage service needs to improve. Houses where evictions took place – the trash stays there a long time.
- There was a work camp where inmates would mow grass on city property. But with the pandemic they were not locking people up, so the grass has not been cut.
- Bus routes are difficult. Some health clinics are not on a bus route.
- Most of the TIAA projects and infrastructure dollars have been spent in south Columbus.
- Columbus has pockets that are nicer than others. It is not very cohesive.
- The taxes do not allow for services to be evenly available everywhere.
- The roads are terrible everywhere.
- You can call the police and maybe they will come and maybe they will not.
- I live in south Columbus and was informed that animal control does not come out on weekends. However, my friend who lives in another part of town has gotten animal control to come out on the weekend.
- No. I do not think everyone is on the same page about what public space is for. A public good does not always make a profit. Recreation and transit routes should depend on the needs of the people, not where you can make a profit.

- It is pretty even. Our police department lacks officers because police come to Columbus to get trained then go elsewhere.
- Lack of staff pay is a citywide issue that affects services.

Community Survey

The community survey asked residents and stakeholders about barriers to fair housing access, affordable housing needs, and provision of public services in the City of Columbus. A total of 94 people responded to the survey.

Participant Demographics

- Of the survey participants who identified their race or ethnicity, 62% were white, 31% were Black, 5% were Other, non-Hispanic, and 4% were Hispanic or Latino. Smaller percentages of participants identified themselves as multiple races (2%), Native American or Alaska Native (2%), and Asian (2%).

Figure 1. Age of Survey Respondents

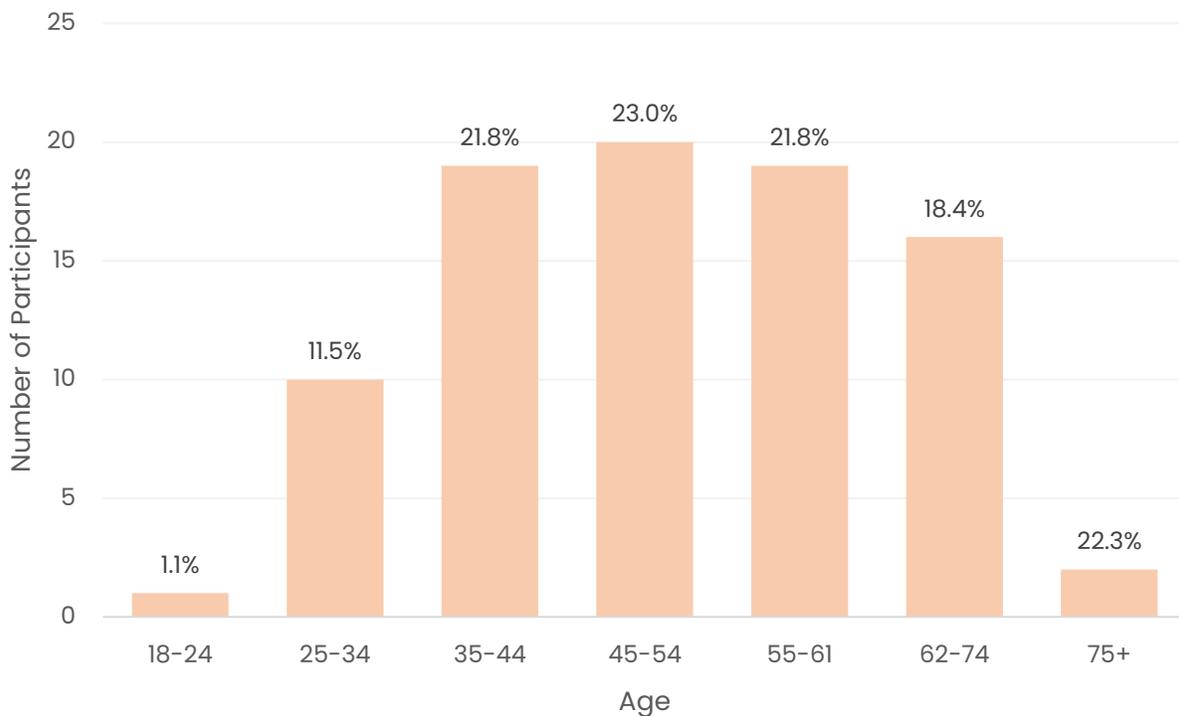
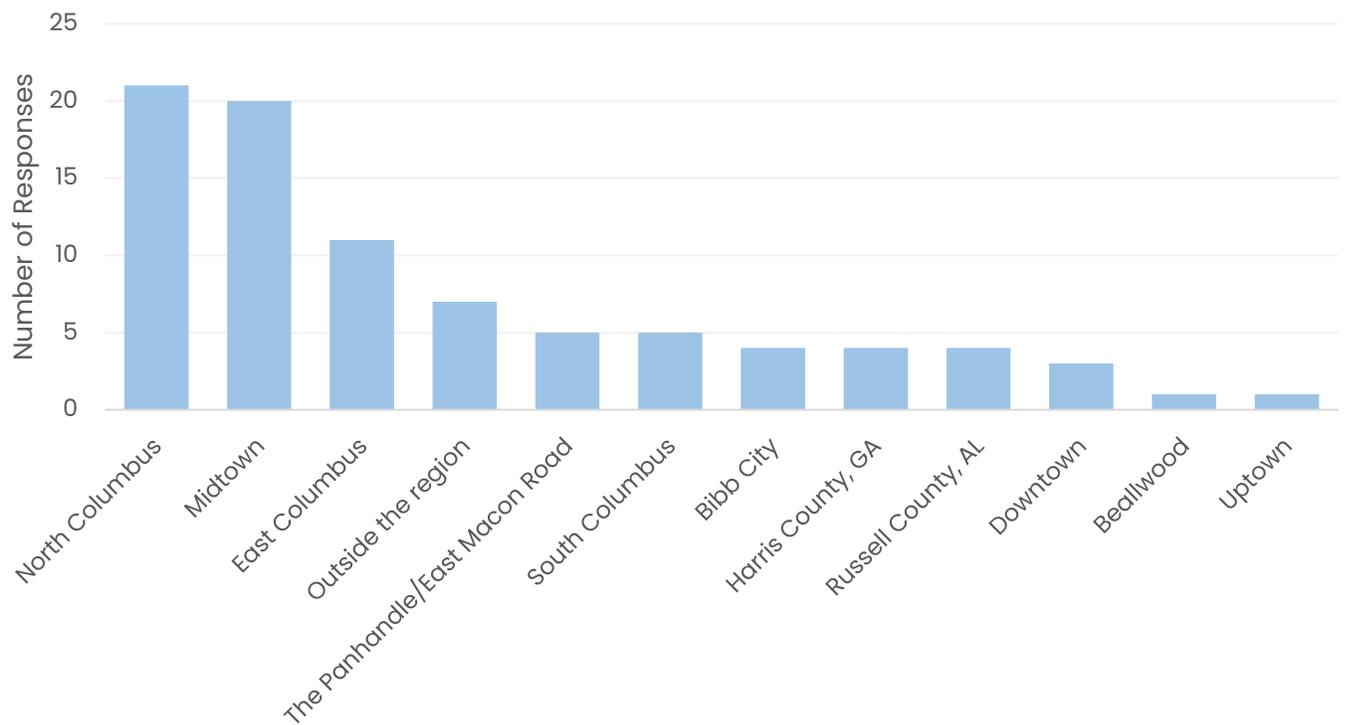


Figure 2. Income of Survey Respondents



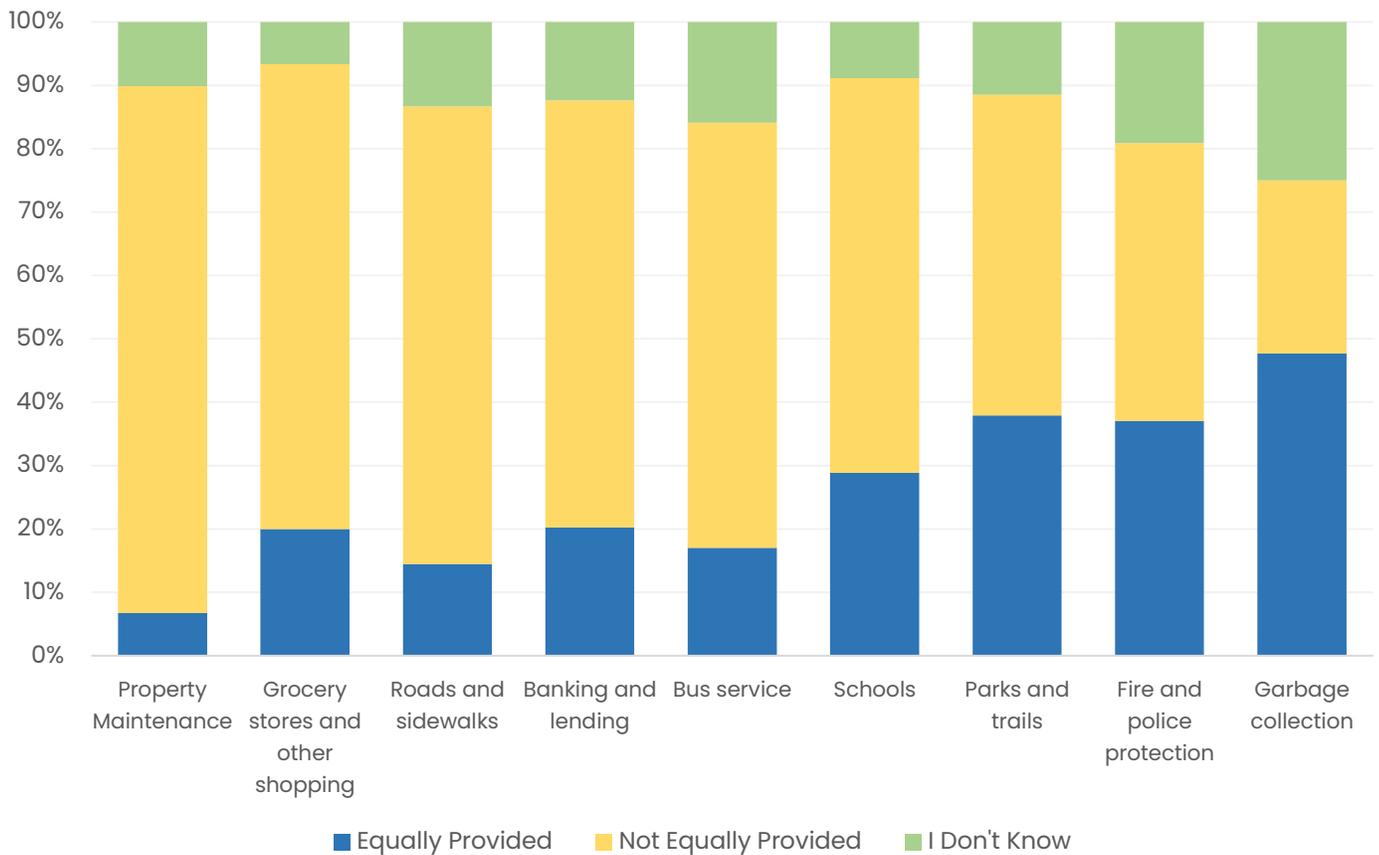
Figure 3. Neighborhoods of Survey Respondents



Respondents' Thoughts about their Neighborhoods

- When asked about the distribution of community resources, 47% of survey participants said that garbage collection was equally provided throughout all neighborhoods.
- More than 50% of survey participants noted that parks and trails, schools, bus service, banking and lending, roads and sidewalks, grocery stores and other shopping and property maintenance were not equally provided throughout the city (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Availability and maintenance of Community Resources in Columbus from the Community Survey



Respondents' Thoughts about Fair Housing

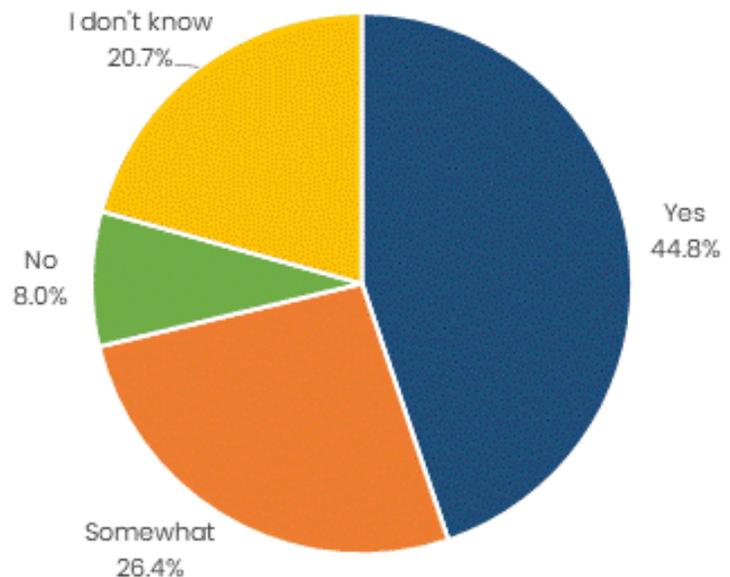
- Most survey participants reported knowing or somewhat knowing their fair housing rights (60% and 26%, respectively). While only 14% of respondents said that they did not know their fair housing rights, 39% would not know where to file a fair housing complaint.

- Twelve (12) survey participants experienced housing discrimination while living in Columbus. Of those 12 people:

- Ten (10) stated they were discriminated against by a landlord or property manager, three stated they were discriminated against by a real estate agent, two said they were discriminated against by a mortgage lender, and two by a city, county, or housing authority staff person.

Figure 5. Perceptions about Housing Discrimination in Columbus

Do you believe housing discrimination is an issue in Columbus?



- Race/color was the most common basis for discrimination, cited by 10 people, followed by familial statuses, cited by 4 people.

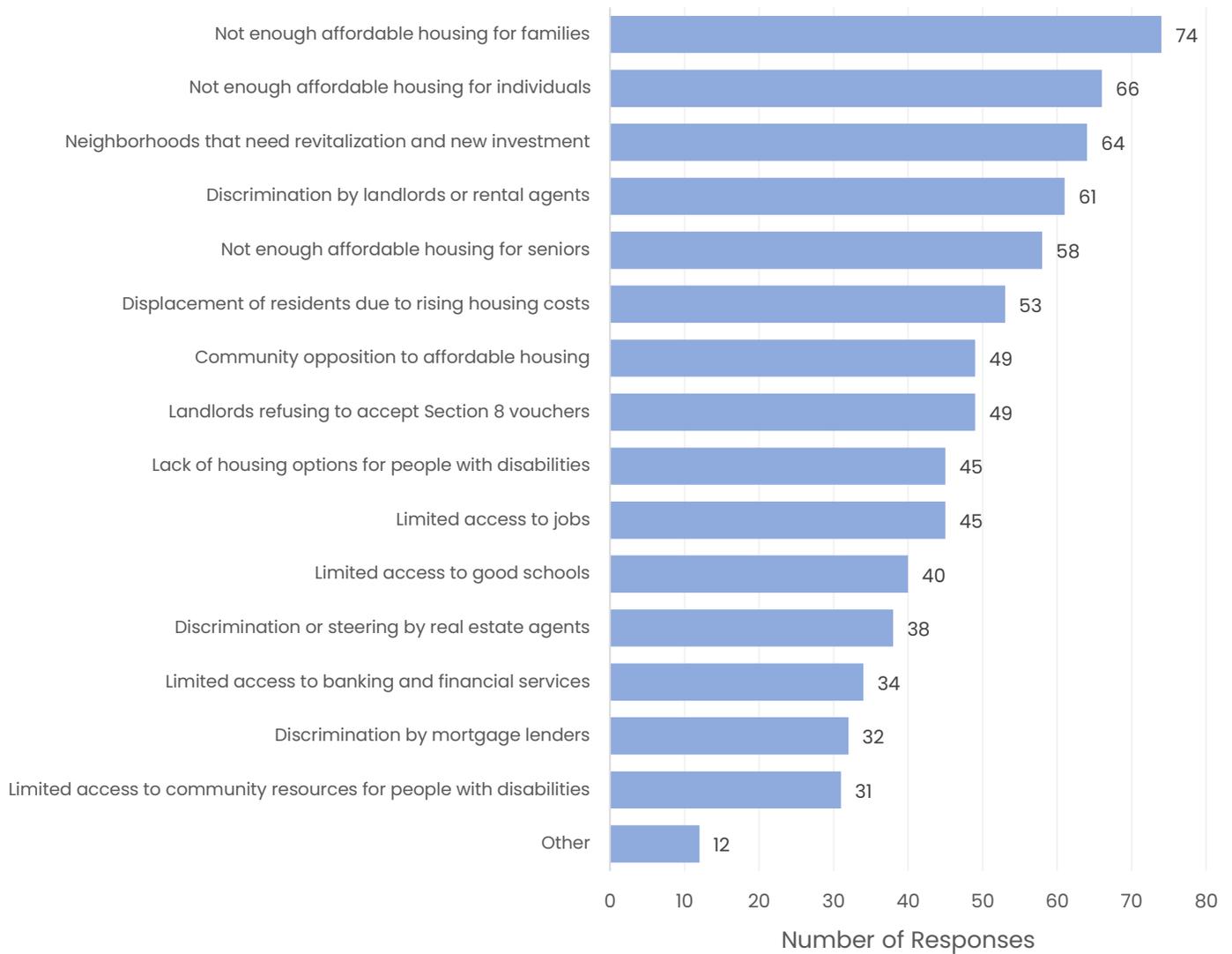
- Three people filed a report of discrimination. Reasons for not filing discrimination complaints include not knowing what good it would do (identified by 6 people), not knowing where to file (identified by 1 person), not knowing it was against the law (identified by 1 person), fear of retaliation (identified by 2 people), and other reasons (identified by 2 people).

- Approximately 71% of survey respondents said they believe housing discrimination is a problem or is somewhat a problem in Columbus (see Figure 5).

- Asked to select any factors that are barriers to fair housing in Columbus, respondents most commonly identified the following (see Figure 6):

- Not enough affordable housing for families (selected by 88%);
- Not enough affordable housing for individuals (selected by 78%);
- Neighborhoods that need revitalization and new investment (selected by 76%);
- Discrimination by landlords or rental agents (selected by 74%); and
- Not enough affordable housing for seniors (selected by 70%).

Figure 6. Fair Housing Barriers in Columbus as Rated By Residents and Stakeholders in the Community Survey



Chapter 3. Socioeconomic Profile

The City of Columbus is home to an estimated 195,739 residents according to the 2015–2019 Five-Year American Community Survey (ACS), the most recent ACS data available. The city’s population comprises about 63.8% of the Columbus Region of about 285,201 residents, which includes Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Marion, and Harris Counties in Georgia, as well as Russell County, AL. The city’s population grew by around 3% since 2010 while the number of households have remained virtually unchanged over the same period. The population of the city of Columbus grew at a slower rate compared to the state and national growth rate of 7% and 5%, respectively, since 2010.

Demographic Profile

The two largest racial groups in Columbus, non-Hispanic Black and white residents, account for 85.6% of the total population. Non-Hispanic Black residents comprise the largest racial or ethnic group representing 45.6% of the city’s population. Non-Hispanic white residents comprise a slightly smaller share of the city’s population (40.3%). The Hispanic or Latino population is the third largest racial or ethnic group representing 7.6% of the total population. Residents that identify as two or more races comprise a slightly larger population share (3.3%) compared to Asian or Pacific Islander residents (2.6%). Native American and other racial groups make up less than 1% of the city’s population.

Non-Hispanic white residents are the only racial or ethnic group to decrease in both population and share size since 2000. The non-Hispanic Black population grew to be the largest racial or ethnic group in 2010 as the white population shrunk in size and share. All other groups have grown in population and increased in population shares by more than 10%. The Hispanic and Asian populations experienced the fastest growth rate between 2010 and current estimates by increasing in size by 78.1% and 67.6%, respectively. The Native American population grew at a slower rate (28.7%) while the Black population grew at the slowest rate among all groups (10.6%). Contrary of the growth rates, the Black population experienced the largest growth in absolute numbers compared to all other groups.

The racial and ethnic composition of residents at the regional level are similar to that of the city of Columbus, however, the white population represents the majority of the region’s population. The shares of the region’s white and Black populations are opposite of the shares of the two groups found in the city. White residents comprise 46.6% of the population and Black residents making up 40.8% of the region’s population. Population shares of Hispanic, multiracial, and Asian residents are nearly the same as the city, but slightly smaller compared to the city.

Demographic changes in the Columbus Region between 2000 and 2019 were very similar to changes in the city. Similar to the city's shrinking white population, the region's white population declined, but at a slower rate (-4.3%). Population growth rates followed a similar pattern, however, Hispanic and Asian populations grew at a slightly faster rate. Although the Native American population comprises a similar share in the region, the growth rate was much slower in the region (2.4%) compared to the city (28.7%).

National Origin

Foreign-born residents comprise about 5.3% of the population in the city of Columbus. Share size of foreign-born residents remained relatively unchanged since 2000, when 5.0% of residents were born outside of the U.S. The share size of foreign-born residents in the Columbus region has also remained unchanged from 4.0% in 2000.

In both the city and the region, the most common country of origin for the foreign-born population is Mexico, followed by India and Germany. Other common countries of birth for foreign-born residents include Korea, Panama, Guatemala and the Philippines.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Population dynamics for residents with limited English Proficiency (LEP) often resemble those of foreign-born residents in a community, however, share size of the LEP population in Columbus is smaller compared to the foreign-born population. Around 2% of residents in both the city and the region have limited English proficiency.

The most common languages of the LEP population in the city and the region reflect the national origin of foreign-born residents, however, share sizes of LEP language populations suggest a portion of foreign-born residents originate from countries where English is commonly spoken or a native language like India or Germany. The largest LEP population in both the city and the region speak Spanish and account for 2.1% and 1.8% of the total population, respectively. Korean is the second most common LEP language in both the city and the region, ahead of German, Tagalog, Urdu, and other Indic languages.

Disability

About 17% of the population in Columbus and the Columbus region have a disability, and the two geographies have nearly identical distribution patterns by disability type. The most common disability type is difficulty with ambulatory movement, comprising around 9% population in both the city and the region. Disabilities that typically require more extensive assistance such as difficulties with independent living or self-care make up around 6% and 3% of the population, respectively, in

both the city and the region. About 8% of the population in each area has a cognitive difficulty and sensory disabilities such as hearing and vision difficulties impact about 4% of the population in both city and region.

Age

The age distribution in Columbus and the Columbus Region are similar and follow normal distribution patterns. The majority of the population (60–62%) in both the city and the region are between the ages of 18 and 64. Around one-quarter of the city and region’s population is under age 18 while seniors over the age of 65 comprise about 13% of the population. The population distribution over the two decades shifted to indicate an aging population in both the city and region as the population over the age of 65 increased a couple percentage points from around 11% in 2000 and 2010.

Sex

Female residents make up a slight majority of the population in Columbus (51.2%) and the Columbus Region (50.6%). There have not been significant fluctuations in these shares since 2000.

Family Type

In the City of Columbus, 31.9% of households have children. The share of households with children is virtually identical (32.3%) in the region. In both the city and the MSA, the share of households with children declined slightly from around 39% in 2000 to current levels. The share of married couples with no children is larger in the region (24.4%) compared to the city (21%).

Table 1. Demographic Overview

Demographic Indicator	City of Columbus			Columbus Region		
		#	%		#	%
Race/Ethnicity						
Non-Hispanic or Latino		180,836	92.4%		285,201	93.0%
White		78,974	40.3%		142,963	46.6%
Black		89,275	45.6%		124,586	40.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander		5,088	2.6%		6,420	2.1%
Native American		790	0.4%		1,011	0.3%
Other Race		279	0.1%		774	0.3%
Two or More Races		6,430	3.3%		9,447	3.1%
Hispanic or Latino		14,903	7.6%		21,587	7.0%
Total Population		195,739	100%		306,788	100%
National Origin						
#1 country of origin	Mexico	1,413	0.7%	Mexico	2,032	0.7%
#2 country of origin	India	1,306	0.7%	Germany	1,647	0.5%
#3 country of origin	Germany	1,156	0.6%	India	1,430	0.5%
#4 country of origin	Korea	753	0.4%	Guatemala	914	0.3%
#5 country of origin	Panama	624	0.3%	The Philippines	697	0.2%
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Language*						
#1 LEP Language	Spanish or Spanish Creole	4,078	2.1%	Spanish or Spanish Creole	5,537	1.8%
#2 LEP Language	Korean	687	0.4%	Korean	751	0.2%

#3 LEP Language	German	267	0.1%	German	309	0.1%
#4 LEP Language	Tagalog	136	>0.1%	Other Indic languages	189	>0.1%
#5 LEP Language	Urdu	135	>0.1%	Tagalog	186	>0.1%

Table 1. Demographic Overview (continued)

Demographic Indicator	City of Columbus		Columbus Region			
		#	%		#	%
Age						
Under 18		48,288	26.0%		74,188	24.2%
18-64		112,252	60.5%		190,883	62.2%
65+		24,995	13.5%		41,717	13.6%
Disability Type						
Hearing difficulty		8,100	4.1%		13,578	4.4%
Vision difficulty		6,780	3.5%		10,975	3.6%
Cognitive difficulty		16,580	8.5%		24,300	7.9%
Ambulatory difficulty		18,055	9.2%		27,881	9.1%
Self-care difficulty		6,799	3.5%		10,365	3.4%
Independent living difficulty		11,731	6.0%		18,538	6.0%
Total Population with a disability		34,150	17.4%		52,666	17.2%
Sex						
Male		95,539	48.8%		151,449	49.4%

Female		100,200	51.2%		155,339	50.6%
Household Type						
Family Households		44,801	61.6%		73,612	64.5%
Married Couple, Children		12,317	16.9%		21,012	18.4%
Female Householder, Children		8,891	12.2%		12,725	11.1%
Male Householder, Children		1,991	2.7%		3,094	2.7%
Married Couple, No Children		15,382	21.1%		27,876	24.4%
Female Householder, No Children		4,516	6.2%		6,355	5.6%
Male Householder, No Children		1,704	2.3%		2,550	2.2%
Non-Family Households		27,958	38.4%		40,543	35.5%
Female Householder		15,138	20.8%		21,662	19.0%
Male Householder		12,820	17.6%		18,881	16.5%
Total Households		72,759	100.0%		114,155	100.0%

Note: All % represent a share of the total population within the jurisdiction or region, except family type, which is out of total families. The most populous places of birth and languages at the city and regional levels may not be the same and are thus labeled separately.

Data Sources: 2015–2019 5-Year American Community Survey, Tables B03002, B05006, B01001, B18101 to B18107, and B11005; 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey, Table B16001

Table 2. Demographic Trends

Demographic Indicator	2000		2010	
	#	%	#	%
City of Columbus				
Race/Ethnicity				
White, Non-Hispanic	90,200	48.5%	82,890	43.7%
Black, Non-Hispanic	80,698	43.4%	85,119	44.8%
Hispanic	8,368	4.5%	12,110	6.4%
Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	3,036	1.6%	4,439	2.3%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	614	0.3%	599	0.3%
National Origin				
Foreign-born	8,632	5.0%	9,116	4.9%
Limited English Proficiency				
Limited English proficiency	1,852	1.1%	5,241	2.8%
Age				
Under 18	49,879	26.8%	48,598	25.6%
18-64	114,170	61.5%	119,205	62.8%
65+	21,732	11.7%	22,082	11.6%
Sex				
Male	90,375	48.6%	90,870	47.9%
Female	95,406	51.4%	99,015	52.1%
Household Type				
Families with children	27,259	39.1%	25,922	35.0%
Households with female householders	9,863	14.2%	10,775	14.5%
Columbus Region				
Race/Ethnicity				
White, Non-Hispanic	149,400	53.0%	147,518	50.0%
Black, Non-Hispanic	112,297	39.9%	117,386	39.8%
Hispanic	11,340	4.0%	16,896	5.7%
Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	3,692	1.3%	5,454	1.8%

Native American, Non-Hispanic	987	0.4%	995	0.3%
National Origin				
Foreign-born	11,364	4.0%	11,687	4.0%
Limited English Proficiency				
Limited English proficiency	2,720	1.0%	6,525	2.2%

Table 2. Demographic Trends (Continued)

Demographic Indicator	2000		2010	
	#	%	#	%
Columbus Region (continued)				
Age				
Under 18	75,512	26.8%	74,864	25.4%
18-64	174,048	61.8%	185,326	62.9%
65+	32,208	11.4%	34,675	11.7%
Sex				
Male	138,945	49.3%	143,476	48.7%
Female	142,823	50.7%	151,389	51.3%
Household Type				
Households with children	41,048	39.5%	40,153	35.5%
Households with female householders	13,552	13.0%	15,335	13.5%

Note: All % represent a share of the total population within the jurisdiction or region for that year, except family type, which is out of total families.

Data Sources: U.S. Census 2000 SF1 Tables P008, P012, PCT012, P019, PCT019, P027 and P035, U.S. Census 2010 SF1 Tables P5, P12, P20, B05006 and B16001

Racially and Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty

This study uses a methodology developed by HUD that combines demographic and economic indicators to identify racially or ethnically concentrated areas of poverty (RECAPs). These areas are defined as census tracts that have an individual poverty rate of 40% or more (or an individual poverty rate that is at least 3 times that of the tract average for the metropolitan area, whichever is lower) and a non-White population of 50% or more. Using a metric that combines demographic and economic indicators helps to identify a jurisdictions' most vulnerable communities.

The racial and ethnic composition of neighborhoods with concentrations of poverty is disproportionate relative to the U.S. population overall. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Black and Hispanic populations comprise nearly 80% of the population living in areas of concentrated poverty in metropolitan areas, but only account for 42.6% of the total poverty population in the U.S.⁴ Overrepresentation of these groups in areas of concentrated poverty can exacerbate disparities related to safety, employment, access to jobs and quality education, and conditions that lead to poor health.

Identification of RECAPs is significant in determining priority areas for reinvestment and services to ameliorate conditions that negatively impact RECAP residents and the larger region. Since 2000, the prevalence of concentrated poverty has expanded by nearly 75% in both population and number of neighborhoods. The majority of concentration of poverty is within the largest metro areas, but suburban regions have experienced the fastest growth rate.⁵

Analysis of 2011–2015 5-Year American Community Survey data indicates that there are 11 census tracts (14, 16, 22, 24, 25, 27, 29.02, 30, 32, 34, 106.06) that are designated as R/ECAP in the city of Columbus. R/ECAP census tracts are generally located in southwest quadrant of Columbus. The population residing in R/ECAP census tracts in Columbus is 21,384, which accounts for 10.9% of the city's total population. The Black population accounts for a significant majority (84.6%) of the population in R/ECAP communities. The discrepancy between population shares of Black residents in the R/ECAP census tracts and the city as a whole (45.6%) and the region (40.6%) clearly indicates disproportionate representation of the Black residents in these communities. All other racial and

⁴ United States, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. "Overview of Community Characteristics in Areas with Concentrated Poverty." ASPE Issue Brief, May 2014, https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/40651/rb_concentratedpoverty.pdf.

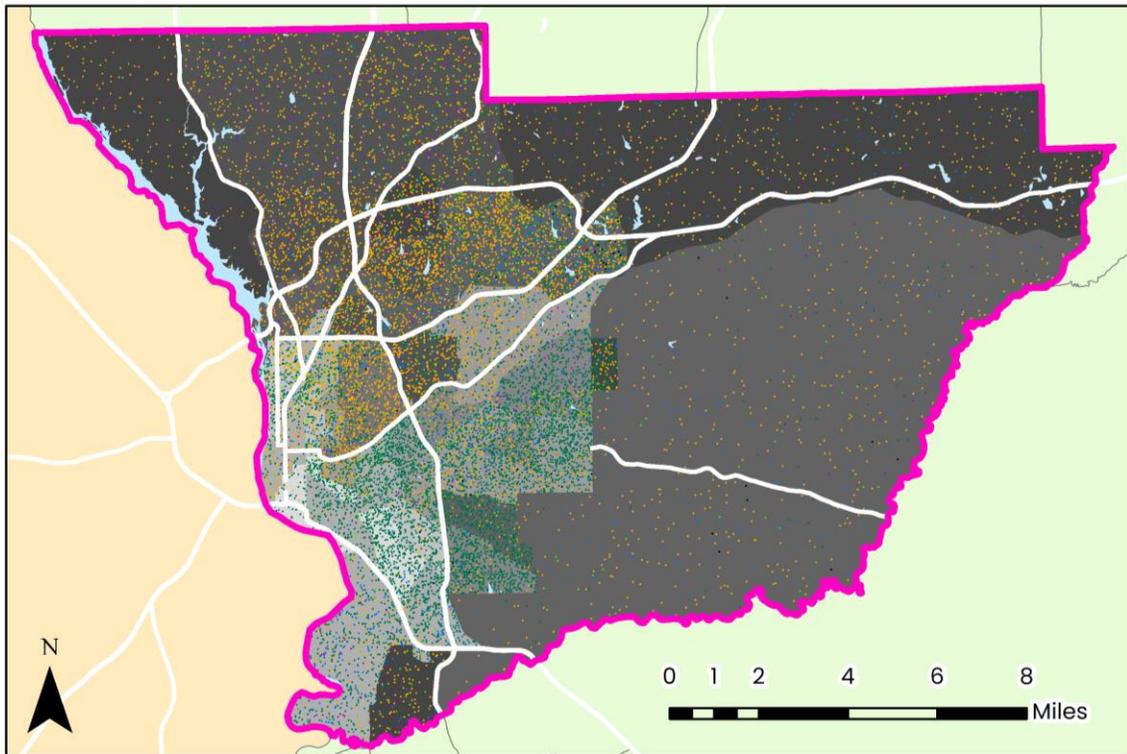
⁵ Kneebone, Elizabeth. "The Growth and Spread of Concentrated Poverty, 2000 to 2008–2012." *The Brookings Institution*, 29 July 2016, www.brookings.edu/interactives/the-growth-and-spread-of-concentrated-poverty-2000-to-2008-2012/.

ethnic groups comprise smaller shares of the R/ECAP population than their shares of the population in each jurisdiction.

Figure 7 categorizes census tracts by percentage of population below poverty level and population distribution patterns by race and ethnicity throughout Columbus. Census tracts with the highest percentage of residents below the poverty line are mostly located in the southwestern quadrant of the city where Black residents are concentrated. Conversely, census tracts with the lowest percentage of residents below the poverty line are located along the northern border of the city. The racial and ethnic composition of the low poverty areas seem more diverse, however, there are clear indications of racial and ethnic segregation and spatial patterns to suggest an overrepresentation of white and Asian populations in low poverty census tracts.

Foreign-born populations in Columbus mostly reside in the western half of the city. There are several clusters of residents from Mexico scattered in census tracts of varying degrees of poverty. Similarly, residents from Germany are also clustered in census tracts with varying levels of poverty. Residents from India mostly reside in the northwest corner of the city in low poverty census tracts, however, there is also a strong concentration in a centrally located census tract with higher rates of poverty. The Korean population reside mostly in neighborhoods along the northern border, but also have a concentrated presence in a small central area of the city.

Figure 7. Poverty and Race/Ethnicity in Columbus



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Percent of Population Below Poverty Level in Past 12 Months



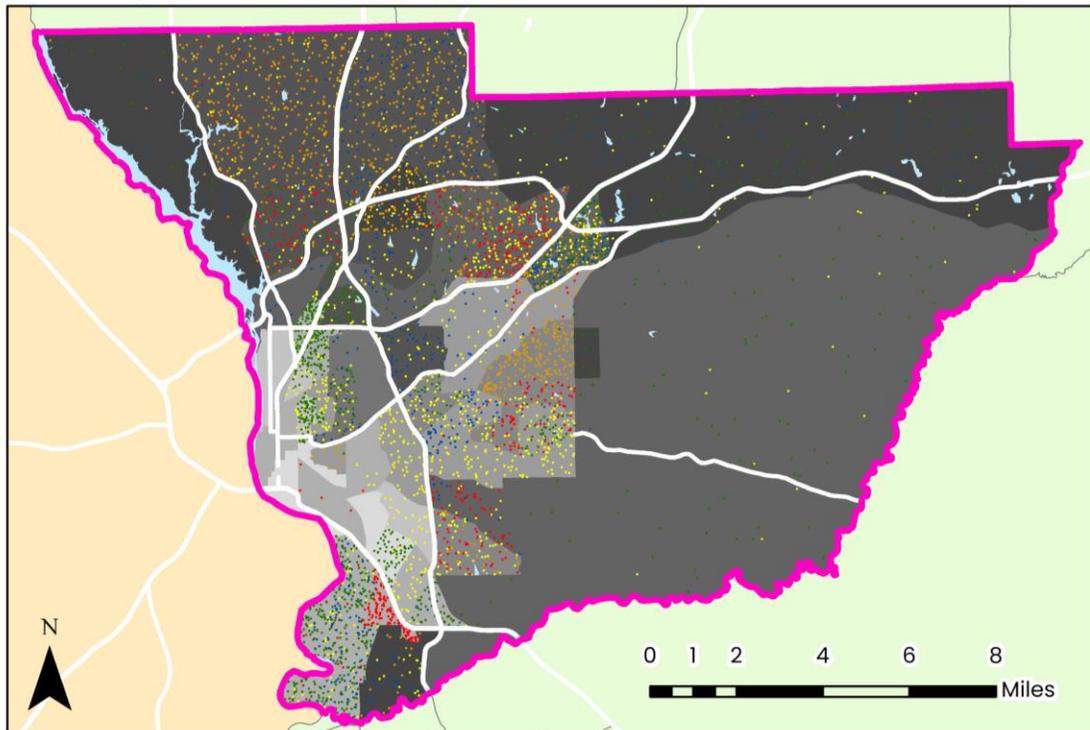
Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

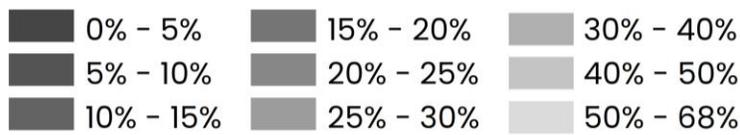
- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Figure 8. Poverty and National Origin in Columbus



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Percent of Population Below Poverty Level in Past 12 Months



National Origin of Foreign-Born Population (Top 5 Most Populous)

1 Dot = 1 Person

- Mexico
- India
- Germany
- Korea
- Panama

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Chapter 4. Segregation and Integration

Communities experience varying levels of segregation between different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. High levels of residential segregation often lead to conditions that exacerbate inequalities among population groups within a community. Increased concentrations of poverty and unequal access to jobs, education, and other services are some of the consequences of high residential segregation.⁶

Federal housing policies and discriminatory mortgage lending practices prior to the Fair Housing Act of 1968 not only encouraged segregation, but mandated restrictions based on race in specific neighborhoods. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 outlawed discriminatory housing practices but did little to address the existing segregation and inequalities. Other federal housing policies and programs, like Section 8 and HOPE VI, have been implemented in an effort to ameliorate the negative effects of residential segregation and reduce concentrations of poverty. Despite these efforts, the repercussions of the discriminatory policies and practices continue to have a significant impact on residential patterns today.

Race and Ethnicity

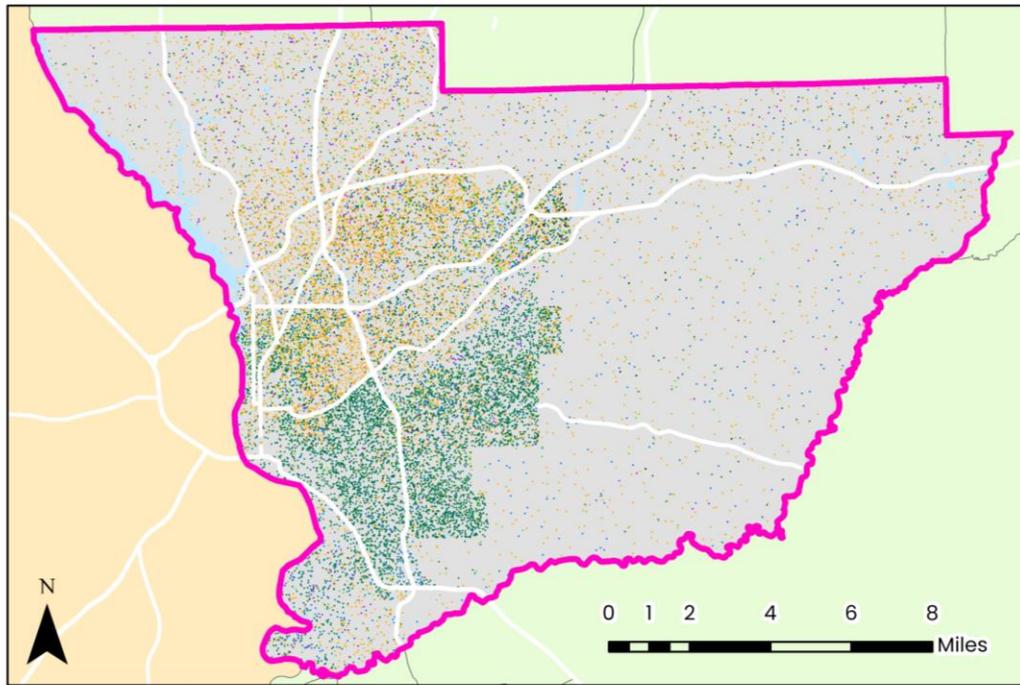
Figures 9 through 11 map Columbus' population by race and ethnicity using 2000 and 2010 Census data and the 2015–2019 5-Year American Community Survey. The majority of the city's population resides in the western half of the city with the highest residential density located in central city neighborhoods. Population distribution patterns by race and ethnicity throughout Columbus show strong patterns of residential segregation between white and Black populations. Figures 9 through 11 indicate decentralization and outward expansion of the overall population, however, a clear division between Black and white populations still exists.

Although patterns of racial segregation are not as strong as in 2000, there are still clear patterns to indicate a geographic division between white residents concentrated in the northwest corner and the city's Black population located primarily in the southwest quadrant. Spatial patterns over time also suggest a shrinking white population with increased racial and ethnic diversity and integration. Residential patterns show an expansion of other racial and ethnic groups into areas that were

⁶ Massey, D. (1990). American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass. *American Journal of Sociology*, 96(2), 329–357. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2781105>

previously predominantly white. There is some visual indication that suggest Asian populations have historically resided in areas with high percentages of white residents.

Figure 9. Population by Race and Ethnicity in Columbus, 2015–2019



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015–2019

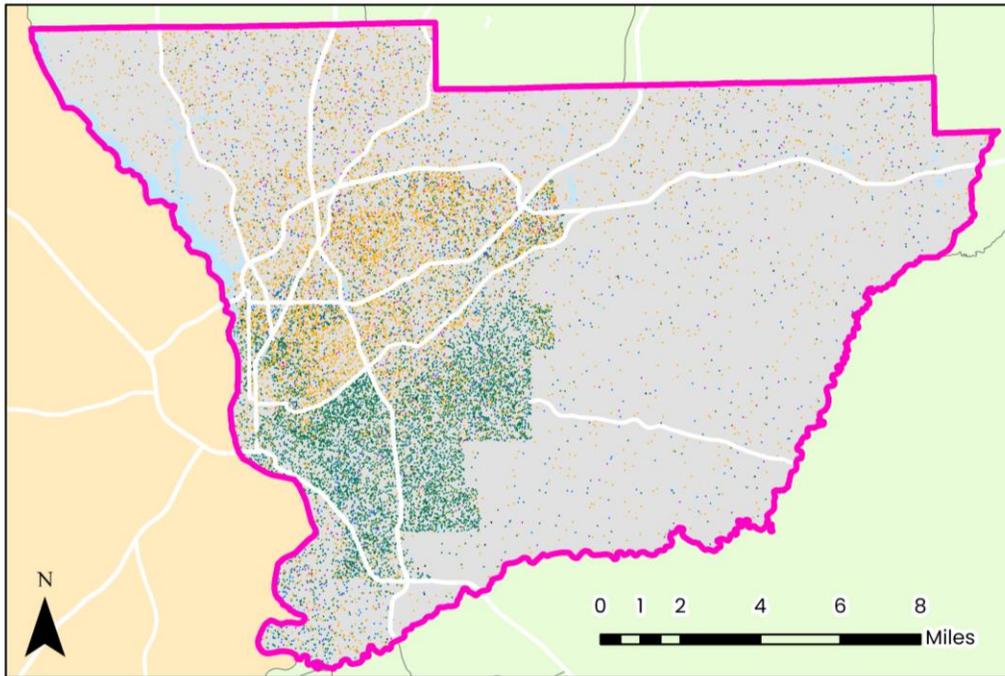
Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

- ▭ City of Columbus
- ▭ Roads
- ▭ Water
- ▭ Georgia
- ▭ Alabama

Figure 10. Population by Race and Ethnicity in Columbus, 2010



Source: Decennial Census, 2010

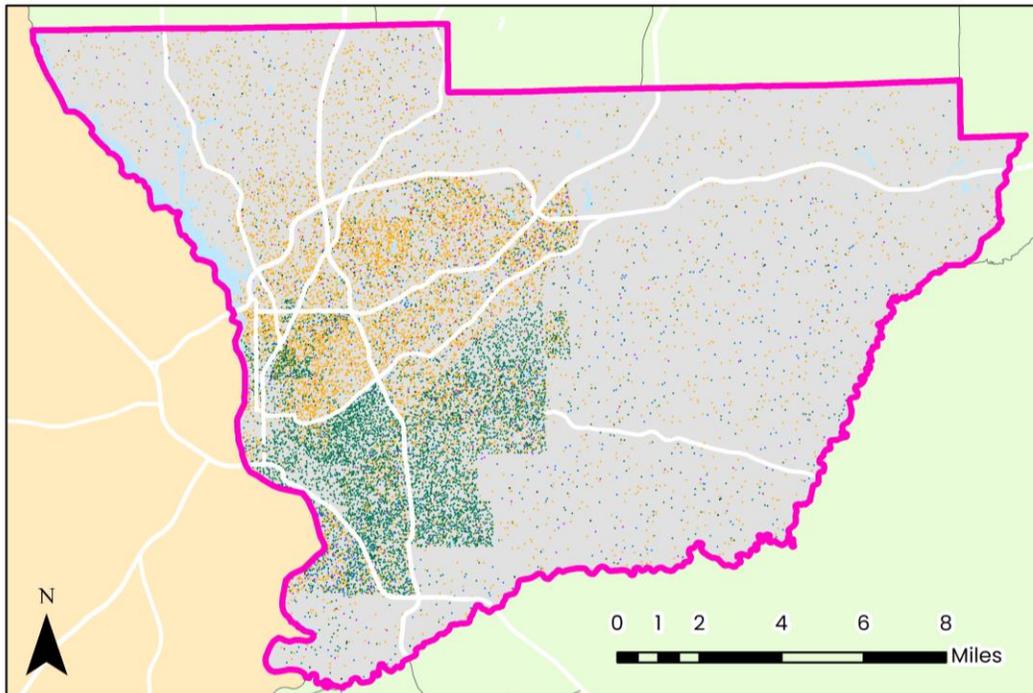
Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Figure 11. Population by Race and Ethnicity in Columbus, 2000



Source: Decennial Census, 2000

Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Segregation Levels

In addition to visualizing the racial and ethnic composition of the area with the preceding maps, this study also uses a statistical analysis – referred to as dissimilarity – to evaluate how residential patterns vary by race and ethnicity, and how these patterns have changed since 1990. The Dissimilarity Index (DI) indicates the degree to two groups living in a region are similarly geographically distributed. Segregation is lowest when the geographic patterns of each group are the same. For example, segregation between two groups in a city or county is minimized when the population distribution by census tract of the first group matches that of the second. Segregation is highest when no members of the two groups occupy a common census tract. The proportion of the minority population group can be small and still not segregated if evenly spread among tracts or block groups.

Evenness is not measured in an absolute sense but is scaled relative to the other group. Dissimilarity Index values range from 0 (complete integration) to 100 (complete segregation). HUD identifies a DI value below 40 as low segregation, a value between 40 and 54 as moderate segregation, and a value of 55 or higher as high segregation. The DI represents the proportion of one group that would have to change their area of residence to match the distribution of the other.

The table below shares the dissimilarity indices for three pairings in Columbus. This table presents values for 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010, all calculated using census tracts as the area of measurement.

Table 3. Racial and Ethnic Dissimilarity Index Trends in Columbus

Race/Ethnicity	City of Columbus			
	1980	1990	2000	2010
Black/White	61.5	62.7	63.6	59.0
Hispanic/White	45.4	44.3	42.6	34.6
Asian or Pacific Islander/White	42.2	35.6	28.6	23.8

Data Sources: “Diversity and Disparities” data from the American Communities Project by Brown University; Retrieved from: <https://s4.ad.brown.edu/projects/diversity/Data/data.htm>

The Dissimilarity Indices calculated for each pairing in Columbus indicate high levels of segregation between Black and White populations throughout the period between 1980 and 2010. DI values for the Black/white pairing decreased to the lowest level in 2010 indicating a slight decrease in

segregation from the highest levels in 2000. However, the DI value of the Black/white pairing in 2010 still exceeds the threshold designating high segregation.

Hispanic/White pairings indicate decreasing levels of segregation from moderate levels of segregation between 1980 to 2000 to low levels of segregation in 2010. The lowest DI value in 2010 was between Asian or Pacific Islanders and whites. DI values for Asian or Pacific Islander/White exceeded the threshold for moderate segregation in 1980 but have remained at low segregation levels with steadily decreasing DI values since 1990.

National Origin and Limited English Proficiency Population

Settlement patterns of immigrants significantly impact the composition and landscape of communities across the United States. Large central cities have the largest population of foreign-born residents, but suburban areas are experiencing rapid growth of foreign-born populations recently.⁷ Clusters of immigrants of the same ethnicity form for a variety of reasons. Social capital in the form of kinship ties, social network connections, and shared cultural experiences often draw new immigrants to existing communities. Settling in neighborhoods with an abundance of social capital is less financially burdensome for immigrants and provides opportunities to accumulate financial capital through employment and other resources that would otherwise be unattainable.⁸

Populations with limited English proficiency (LEP) are typically composed of foreign-born residents that originate from countries where English is not the primary language, however, a substantial portion (19%) of the national LEP population is born in the United States. Nationally, the LEP population has lower levels of education and is more likely to live in poverty compared to the English proficient population.⁹ Recent studies have also found that areas with high concentrations of LEP residents have lower rates of homeownership.¹⁰

⁷ James, F., Romine, J., & Zwanzig, P. (1998). The Effects of Immigration on Urban Communities. *Cityscape*, 3(3), 171-192.

⁸ Massey, D. (1999). Why Does Immigration Occur?: A Theoretical Synthesis. In Hirschman C., Kasinitz P., & DeWind J. (Eds.), *Handbook of International Migration, The: The American Experience* (pp. 34-52). Russell Sage Foundation.

⁹ Zong, J. & Batalova, J. (2015). "The Limited English Proficient Population in the United States" *Migration Information Source*. Retrieved: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states>

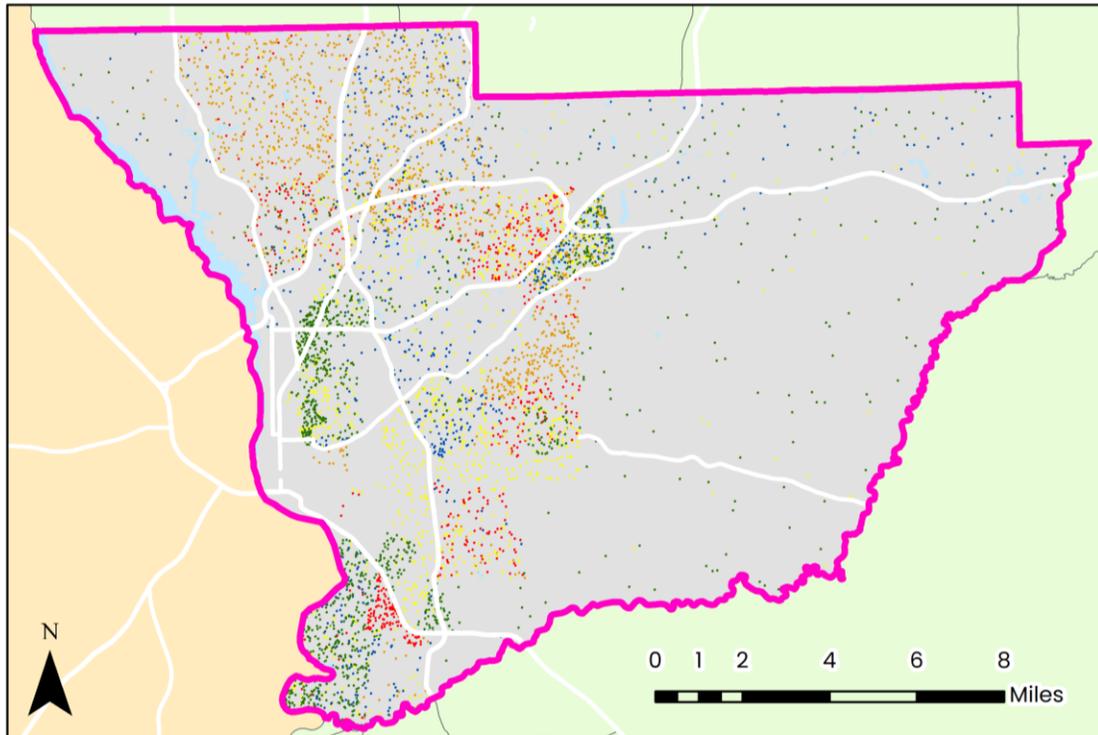
¹⁰ Golding, E., Goodman, L., & Strockack, S. (2018). "Is Limited English Proficiency a Barrier to Homeownership." Urban Institute. Retrieved: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/limited-english-proficiency-barrier-homeownership>

Communities of people sharing the same ethnicity and informal networks are able to provide some resources and opportunities, but numerous barriers and limited financial capital influence residential patterns of foreign-born and LEP populations.

The residential patterns of foreign-born populations in Columbus are shown in Figure 12. The five most populous foreign-born groups include residents from Mexico, India, Germany, Korean and Panama. Generally, foreign-born populations in Columbus mostly reside in the western half of the city. There are three strong clusters of residents from Mexico in areas that also seem to house concentrations of German residents. Residents from India mostly reside in the northwest corner of the city with another strong concentration more centrally located. The Korean population reside mostly in neighborhoods along the northern border, but also have a concentrated presence in a small central area of the city where there are clusters of other foreign-born populations.

Typically, the geographic distribution of residents with limited English proficiency (LEP) generally coincides with the locations of the foreign-born population. The Spanish-speaking population is the largest among the LEP population in Columbus and are distributed throughout the city with a strong concentration in the southwest corner of the city. The second largest LEP population speaks Korean and residential patterns mirror the foreign-born population originating from Korea. Similarly, the residential locations of German-speaking LEP population are identical to the German population. Although Tagalog, is the fourth most common LEP language, there are no spatial patterns to indicate any clustering or concentration of residents that speak Tagalog. The Urdu-speaking population is isolated to two concentrated areas in the northern half of the city.

Figure 12. Foreign-Born Population by Nationality in Columbus, 2015-2019



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

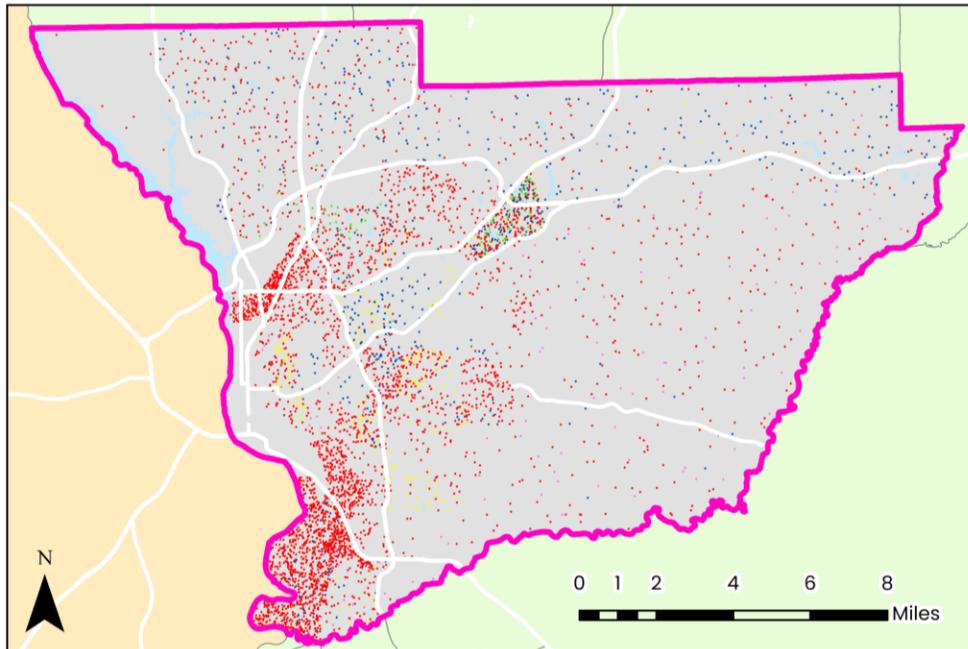
National Origin of Foreign-Born Population (Top 5 Most Populous)

1 Dot = 1 Person

- Mexico
- India
- Germany
- Korea
- Panama

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Figure 13. Population with Limited English Proficiency in Columbus, 2015–2019



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2011–2015

**LEP Population
by Language Spoken***
(Top 5 Most Populous)

1 Dot = 5 People

- Spanish or Spanish Creole
- Korean
- German
- Tagalog
- Urdu

* For population aged 5 years and over

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Chapter 5. Access to Opportunity

Where people live shapes prospects for economic mobility and access to resources and services such as high-quality education; affordable transportation; a healthy environment; fresh, affordable food; and healthcare. However, neighborhood or housing choices are often limited by discrimination in housing markets or public policies that result in concentrated poverty, disinvestment, and a lack of affordable housing in neighborhoods with access to high-performing schools and jobs that pay living wages. In this way, limited housing choices reduce access to opportunity for many protected classes. In addition to proximity, access to opportunity is also shaped by economic, social, and cultural factors. For example, residents may live in locations with high numbers of jobs but may be unable to obtain them due to gaps in education or skills, a lack of reliable transportation, or childcare needs.

The strategy to improve access to opportunity through housing and community development programs has been two-pronged. Programs such as tenant-based housing vouchers provide recipients with mobility to locate in lower-poverty areas, while programs such as the Community Development Block Grant and Choice Neighborhoods Initiative provide funds to increase opportunities in low- or moderate-income neighborhoods. The following sections discuss access to opportunity in Columbus, including employment and workforce development, education, transportation, environmental quality, fresh food, and healthcare.

Employment and Workforce Development

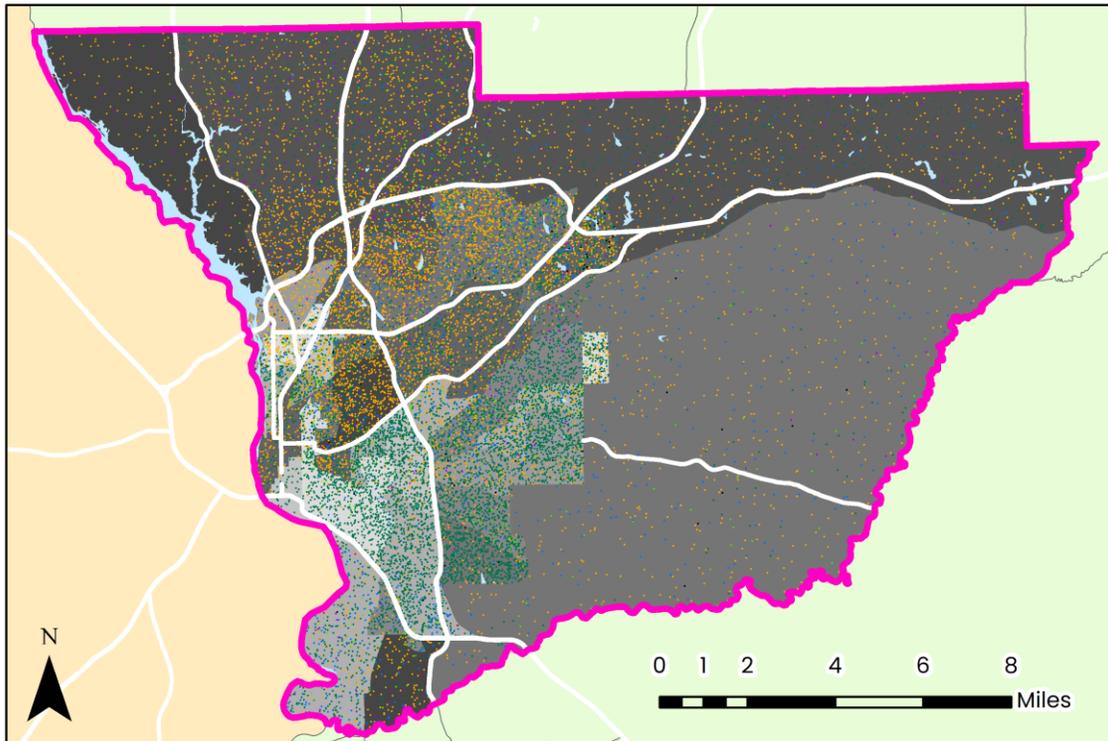
Neighborhoods with high numbers of jobs nearby are often assumed to have good access to those jobs. However, other factors--transportation options, the types of jobs available in the area, or the education and training necessary to obtain them--may also shape residents' access to available jobs. For example, residents of a neighborhood in close proximity to a high number of living-wage jobs may not have the skills or education required for those jobs, and thus may continue to experience high levels of unemployment, work in low-wage positions, or need to commute long distances to access employment. This section analyzes indicators of both labor market engagement and jobs proximity, which, when considered together, offer a better indication of how accessible jobs are for residents.

Labor Market Engagement

Educational attainment, labor force participation, and unemployment are indicators of residents' engagement with the labor market. In Columbus, 25.8% of residents aged 25 and over hold a bachelor's degree or higher, according to American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2015-

2019. Geographic disparities in educational attainment exist in the city, with the percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees or higher ranging from 1.1% to 58.7% across the city's census tracts. Residents in north Columbus tend to have the highest levels of educational attainment, while educational attainment tends to be lowest in west-central Columbus (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Educational Attainment by Race/ Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Percent of Population Aged 25+ with Bachelor's Degree or Higher



Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

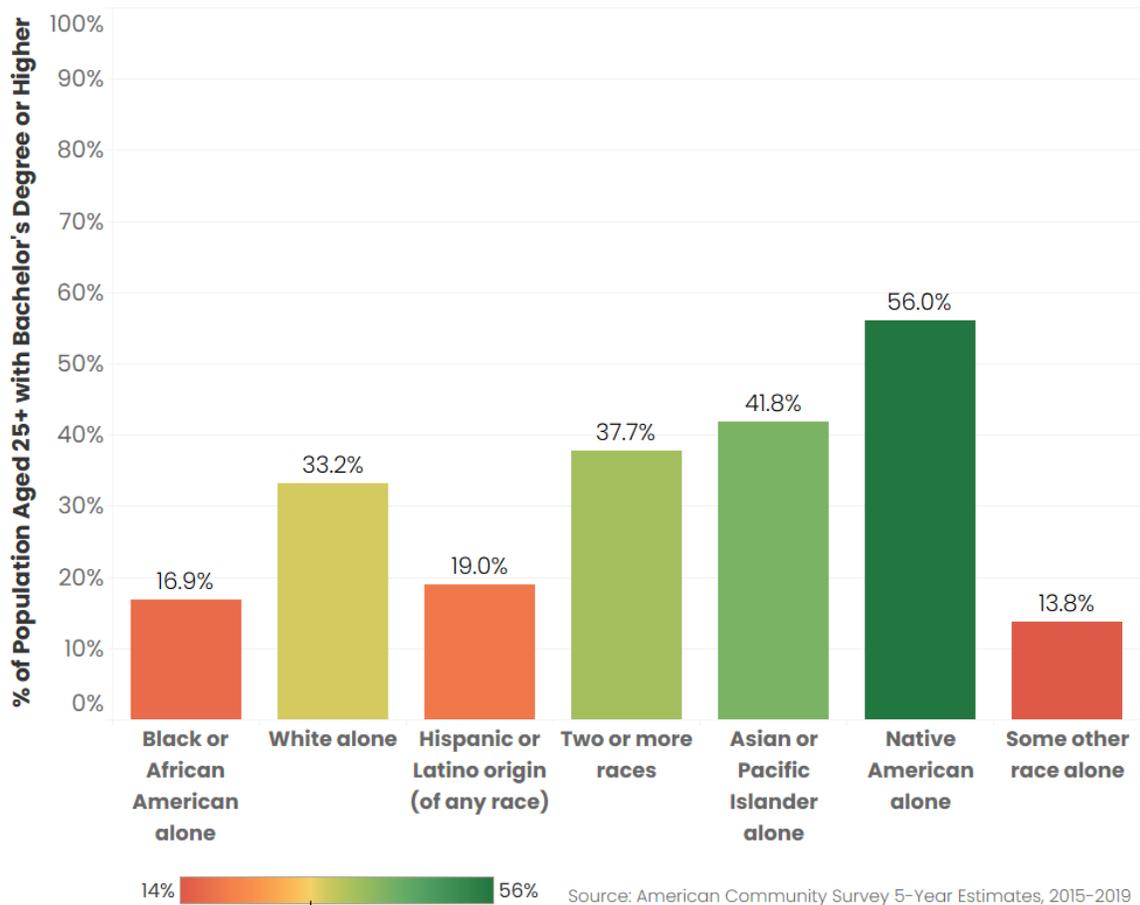
- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

“More real life educational and higher educational programming is vital. And more focus on our public schools and even creating more alternative schooling opportunities. If we start with our youth, the future of Columbus will be bright and prosperous. THEY are the ones who will dominate our economy in 20 years- not the current middle-aged people. Gardening, mental health, yoga, river education, environmental education, real life skills. Trauma awareness, guidance, and recognition for our school teachers, doctors, and community leaders is also essential.”

-Survey Respondent

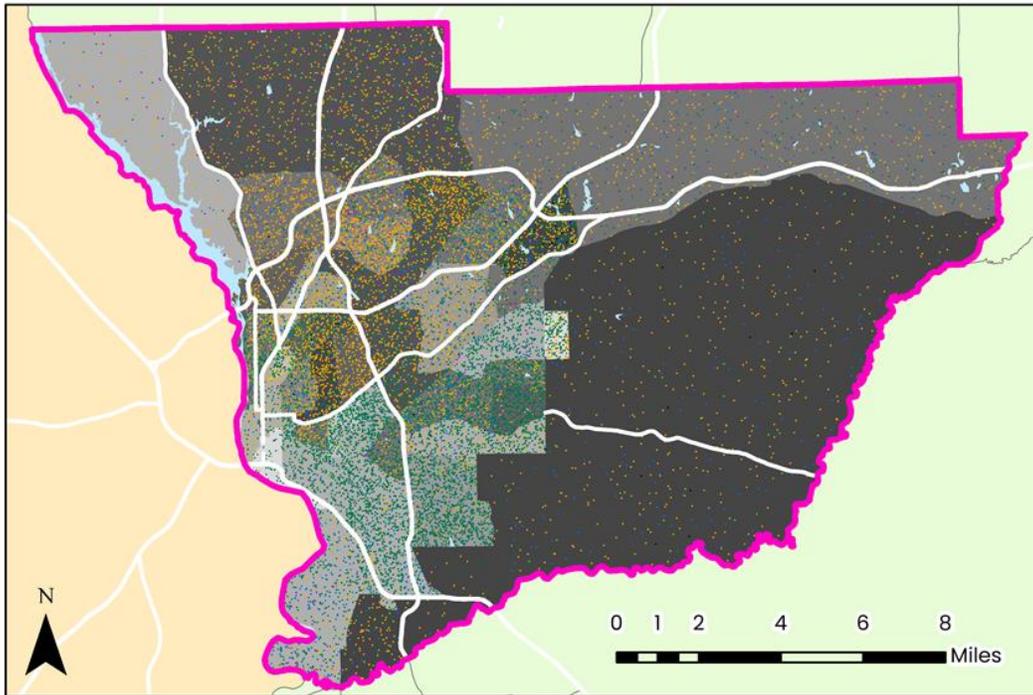
Disparities in educational attainment also exist by race and ethnicity in the city. Native American and Asian or Pacific Islander residents tend to have the highest levels of educational attainment (56.0% and 41.8% have a bachelor’s degree or higher, respectively), while residents of some other race alone, Black or African American residents, and Hispanic or Latino residents are least likely to have higher levels of education (13.8%, 16.9%, and 19.0% have a bachelor’s degree or higher, respectively). See Figure 15).

Figure 15. Educational Attainment and Race/Ethnicity



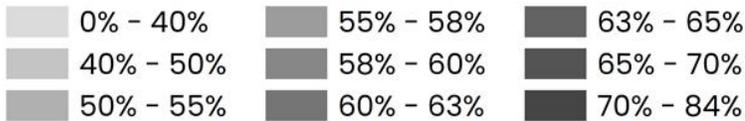
An estimated 60.6% of the population aged 16 and over in Columbus participates in the labor force (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019). As with educational attainment, geographic disparities exist, with labor force participation rates ranging from 36.5% to 84.2% in census tracts across the city. Residents of Fort Benning and other areas of east Columbus tend to participate in the labor force at the highest levels, while participation tends to be lowest in west-central Columbus (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Labor Force Participation and Race/Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Percent of Population Aged 16+ in Labor Force



Race and Ethnicity

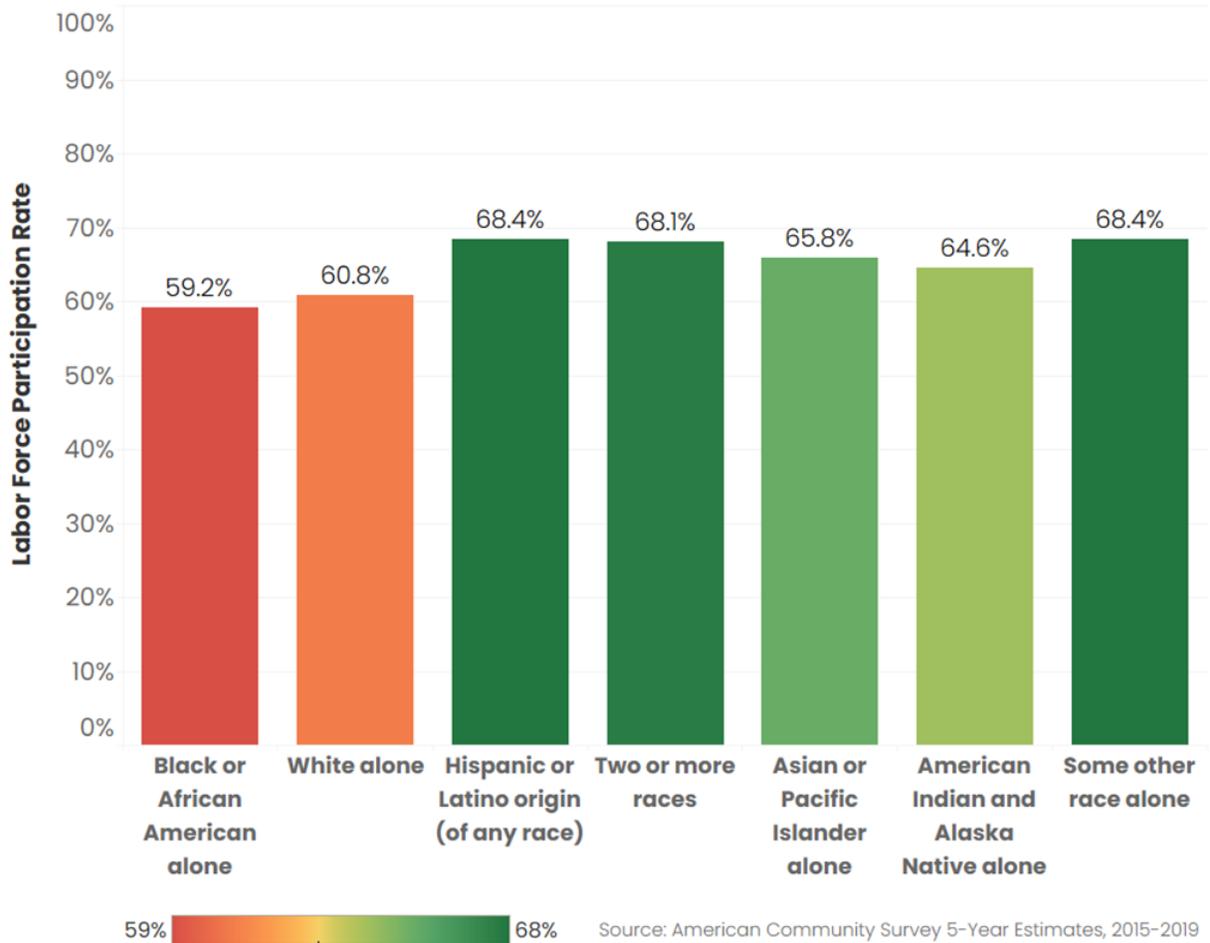
1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

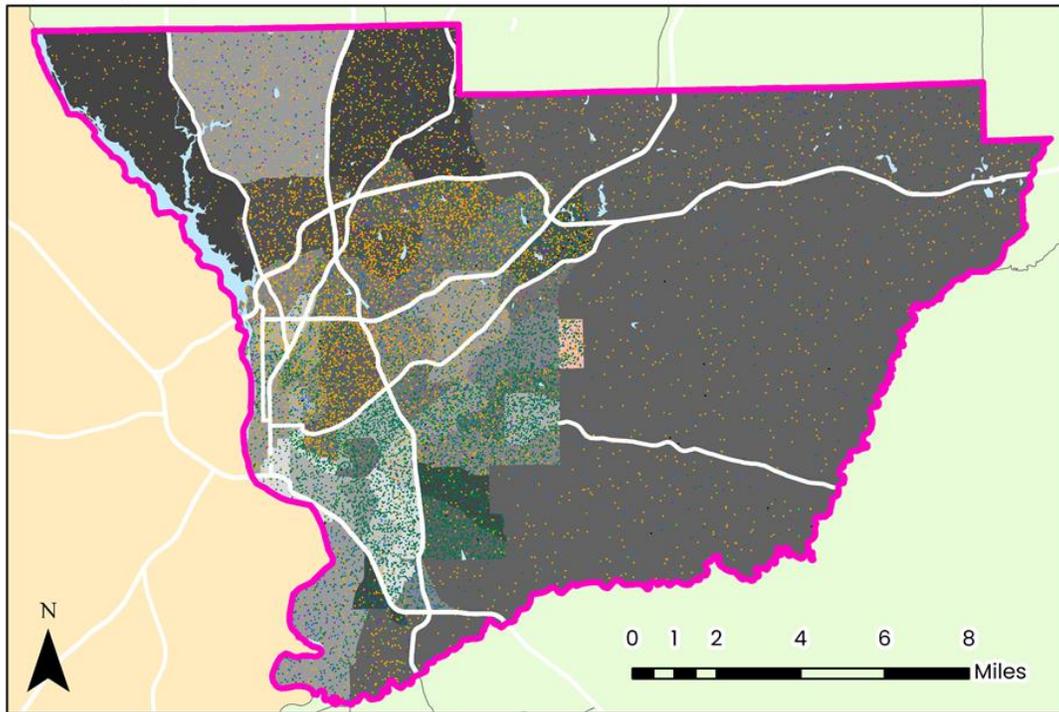
Labor Force participation is highest among Hispanic or Latino residents and residents of some other race (68.4% of whom participate in the labor force) and lowest among Black or African American and white residents (59.2% and 60.8% of whom participate, respectively. See Figure 17).

Figure 17. Labor Force Participation by Race/ Ethnicity



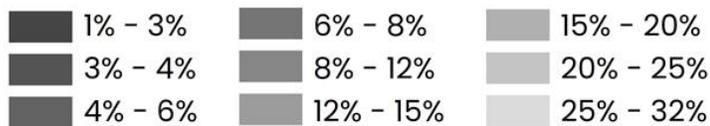
An estimated 9.2% of Columbus residents were unemployed as of the 2015–2019 ACS five-year estimates. More recent data from the Georgia Department of Labor shows the unemployment rate at 5.3% as of March 2021. As with educational attainment and labor force participation, unemployment varies across the city’s census tracts, ranging from 1.1% in one tract in north Columbus to 32.4% in a tract in south Columbus (see Figure 18). Twelve census tracts in south and west-central Columbus have unemployment rates above 20%.

Figure 181. Unemployment Rate and Race/Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Unemployment Rate for Population Aged 16+



Data Unavailable

Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

City of Columbus

Roads

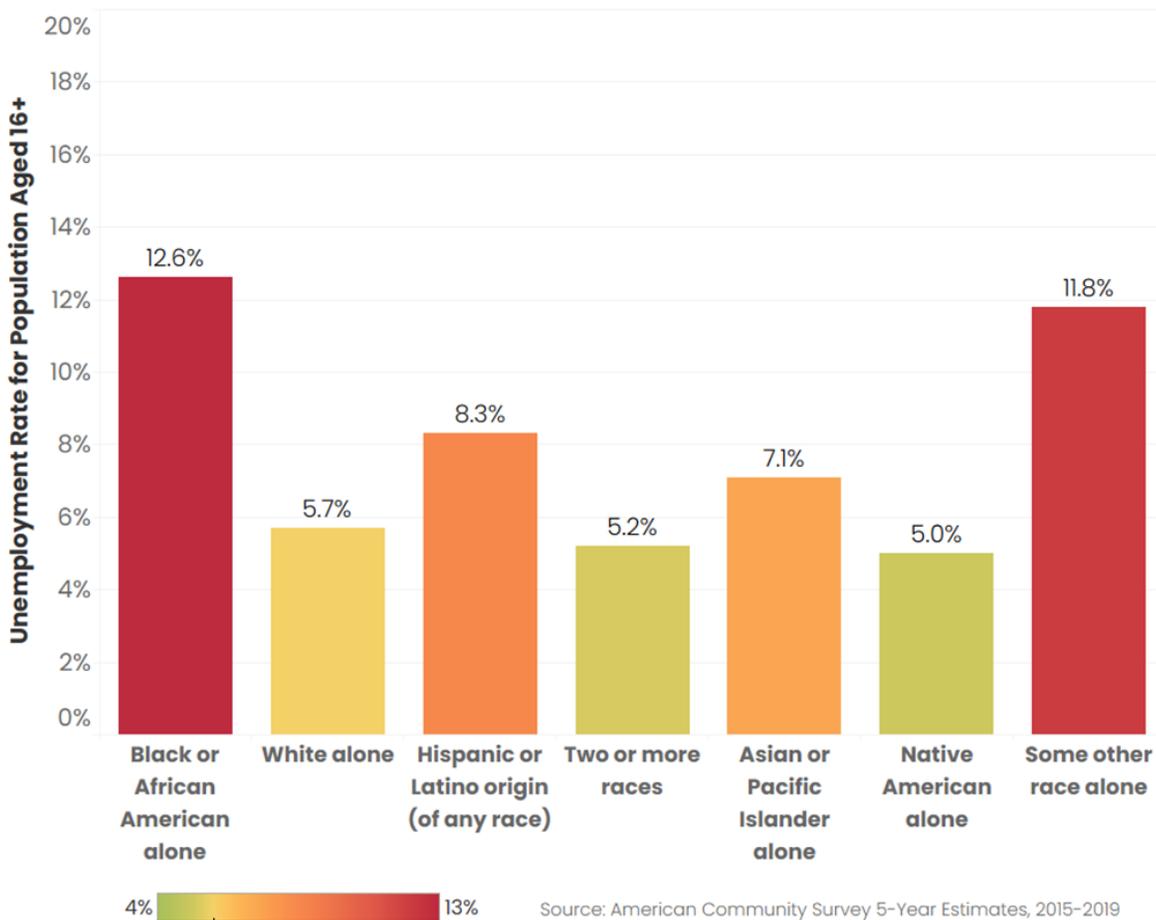
Water

Georgia

Alabama

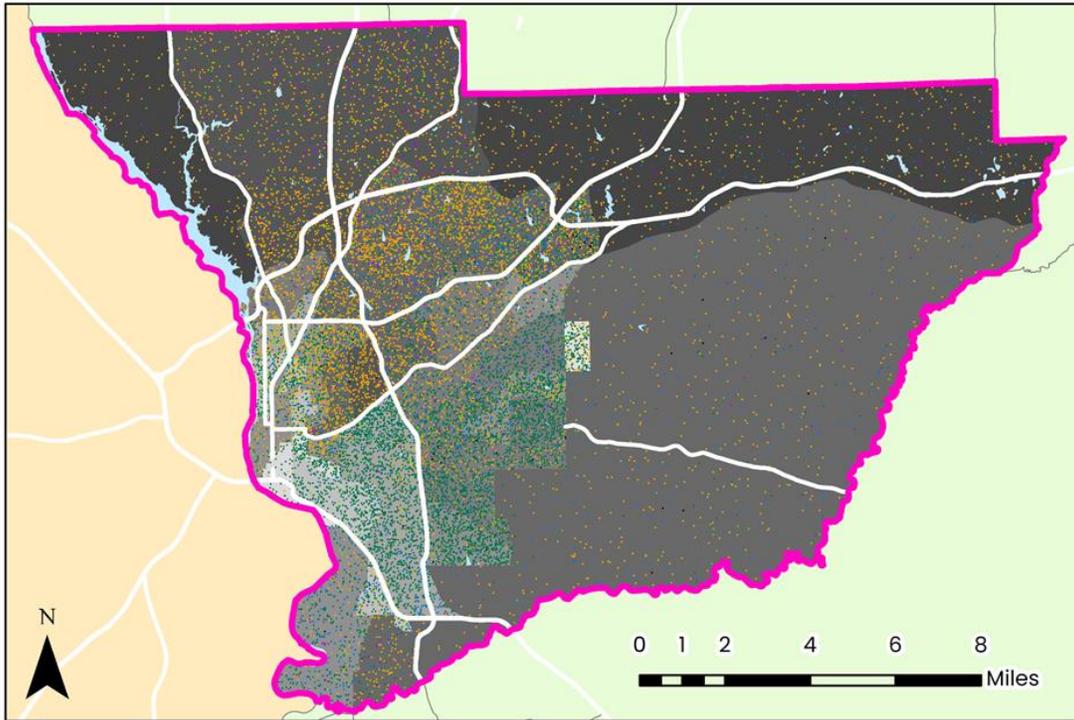
Variations in unemployment rates exist across racial and ethnic groups in Columbus. Black or African American residents and residents of some other race experience the highest levels of unemployment (12.6% and 11.8% are unemployed, respectively), while Native American residents and residents of two or more races are least likely to be unemployed (5.0% and 5.2%, respectively; see Figure 19).

Figure 2. Unemployment by Race/ Ethnicity



Household income is another indicator of access to employment and jobs that pay living wages. Median household incomes are lowest in west-central and south Columbus, where they fall below \$20,000 in eight census tracts. Median incomes tend to be highest in north Columbus, topping \$80,000 in four census tracts (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Median Household Income and Race/Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Median Household Income

Lightest Gray	\$9,000 - \$15,000	Dark Gray	\$40,000 - \$50,000
Light Gray	\$15,000 - \$20,000	Medium-Dark Gray	\$50,000 - \$70,000
Medium Gray	\$20,000 - \$30,000	Very Dark Gray	\$70,000 - \$90,000
Dark Gray	\$30,000 - \$40,000	Black	\$90,000 - \$128,000

Race and Ethnicity

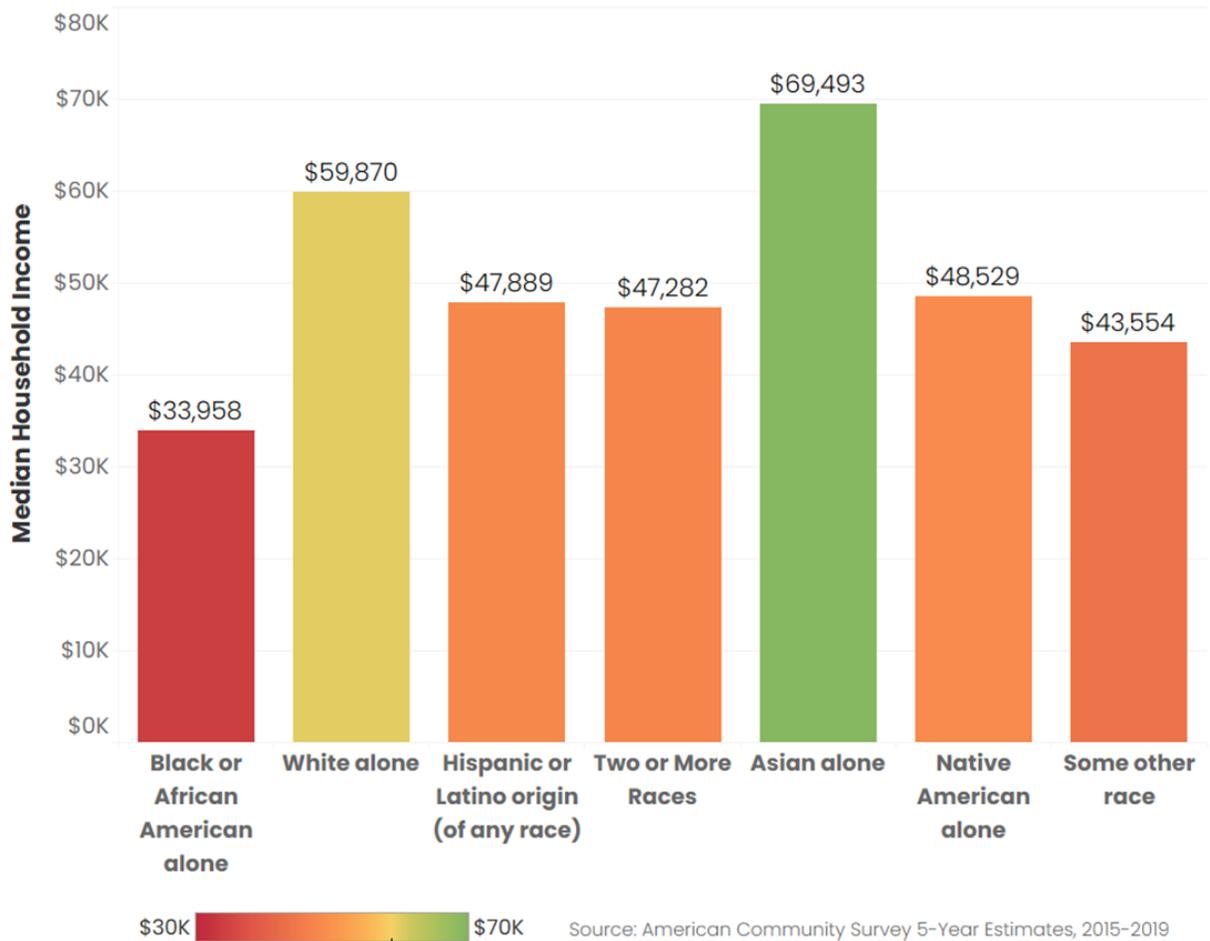
1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

- ▭ City of Columbus
- ▭ Roads
- ▭ Water
- ▭ Georgia
- ▭ Alabama

Household incomes tend to be highest for Asian and white households and lowest for Black or African American households and households of some other race (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. Median Household Income by Race/ Ethnicity



Low median household incomes in many of the city's census tracts highlight the fact that a high proportion of households do not have sufficient incomes to afford basic needs. Costs for a family of two working adults and one child in Columbus, including housing, childcare, healthcare, food, transportation, taxes, and other miscellaneous costs, are estimated at about

“Some jobs pay \$7.50 per hour. These times are so different. Sometimes parents have to work two jobs to make ends meet, so in a lot of instances we see kids really raising themselves.”

-Stakeholder

\$5,226 per month (or \$62,710 annually).¹¹ Yet, 23.6% of primary jobs held by Columbus residents pay \$1,250 per month or less (\$15,000 or less per year), and 43.5% of primary jobs pay between \$1,251 and \$3,333 (between \$15,000 and \$39,996 per year).¹²

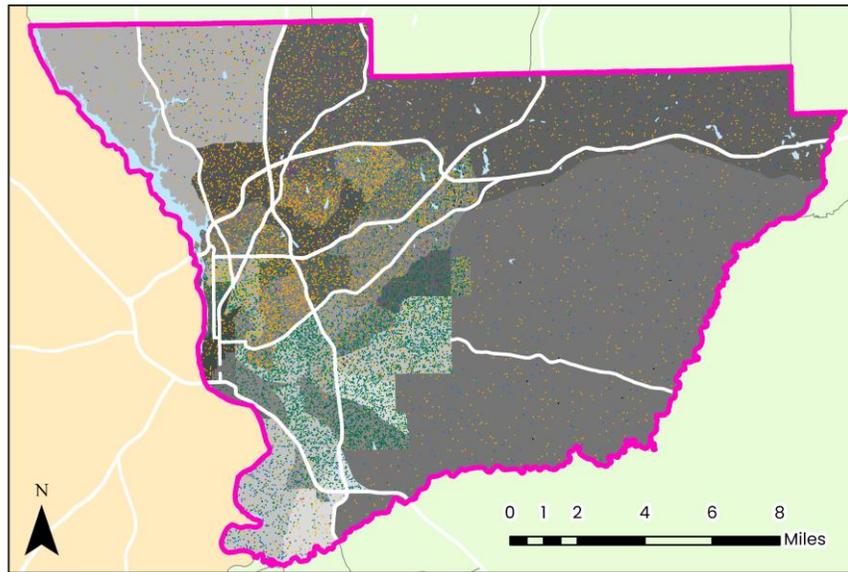
Jobs Proximity

Jobs in the county tend to be clustered in downtown and north Columbus, while census tracts in south Columbus tend to have the fewest jobs (see Figure 22).

¹¹ MIT Living Wage Calculator. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

¹² Longitudinal Employer–Household Dynamics data, 2018. Home Area Profile Analysis. Retrieved from: honthemap.ces.census.gov/

Figure 22. Jobs proximity in the City of Columbus



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap, 2018

Number of Jobs by Census Tract (All Jobs)

23 - 200	751 - 1,000	2,001 - 4,000
201 - 500	1,001 - 1,500	4,001 - 8,000
501 - 750	1,501 - 2,000	8,001 - 13,191

Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

City of Columbus

Roads

Water

Georgia

Alabama

Residents and stakeholders who participated in this planning process noted that access to efficient public transportation in the city is often a barrier to accessing employment and services for residents who do not have access to vehicles.

Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics data also indicates that a substantial share of workers living in Columbus work outside of the city. Specifically, an estimated 65,077 employed residents live in Columbus, including 40,522 residents who are living and employed in the city of Columbus (62.3%) and 24,555 residents who live in the city but are employed elsewhere (37.7%; see Table 4). The high levels of commuting across jurisdictions demonstrates that lack of access to vehicles and low levels of public transportation access may be barriers for residents in accessing employment.

Table 4 – Inflow and Outflow of Workers (Primary Jobs), City of Columbus, 2018

Inflow and Outflow of Workers	Number	Percent
Living in City of Columbus	65,077	100.0%
Living in the City but Employed Outside of the City	24,555	37.7%
Living and Employed in City of Columbus	40,522	62.3%
Employed in City of Columbus	80,677	100.0%
Employed in the City but Living Outside of the City	40,155	49.8%
Employed and Living in City of Columbus	40,522	50.2%

Source: Longitudinal Employer–Household Dynamics (LODES) data, 2018

Education

School proficiency is an indication of the quality of education that is available to residents of an area. High-quality education is a vital community resource that can lead to more opportunities and improve quality of life. Public schools in the city of Columbus and Muscogee County are part of the Muscogee County School District, which consists of 53 schools, including seven high schools, 12 middle schools, 31 elementary schools, and three system-wide magnet schools. Several private schools are also located in Muscogee County. Students in the Muscogee County School District attend schools based on the primary residence of their parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Residents may also apply to enroll their children in magnet schools if students meet certain criteria.

Performance varies among schools in the district. Among elementary schools, scores on the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) range from 95.4 at Britt David Elementary Computer Magnet in north Columbus to 51.9 at St. Mary’s Video and Communication Technology in southeast Columbus (see Table 5). All elementary schools that score above 80 on the CCRPI are located in north or central Columbus, while all elementary schools that score below 60 are located in east and southeast Columbus.

Significant variations in student demographics exist by school—including by race, ethnicity, and percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged— and disparities in school performance exist along these lines. In almost all elementary schools that score below 65 on the CCRPI, more than 60% of students are economically disadvantaged. These schools tend to be highly segregated by race and ethnicity, with white students comprising 4% or fewer of students in all but one of them. In almost all schools that score above 80 on the index, fewer than 30% of students are economically disadvantaged (see Table 5). White students make up 31% to 56% of students in all but one of the schools scoring over 80 on the CCRPI.

Overall, geographic disparities in school performance and disparities by population in academic performance indicate a need to ensure all students have access to the resources and support they need to succeed. Residents and stakeholders who participated in this planning process emphasized a need for community centers, youth activities, after-school programs, and improved internet access.

Table 5. College and Career Ready Performance Index Scores and Student Demographics (Elementary Schools)

School	Overall College and Career Ready Performance Index Score (2019)	Percent White Students	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent with a Disability	Percent English Language Learners (ELL)
Britt David Elementary Computer Magnet	95.4	47%	9%	8%	2%
Mathews Elementary School	93.6	51%	11%	13%	0%
Eagle Ridge Academy	88.5	41%	22%	19%	10%
Clubview Elementary School	85.2	56%	23%	12%	1%
Downtown Elementary Magnet Academy	81.3	5%	75%	20%	1%
North Columbus Elementary	80.9	43%	17%	10%	13%
Midland Academy	80.7	31%	26%	14%	10%
Johnson Elementary School	78.8	39%	62%	31%	0%
Lonnie Jackson Academy	76.9	8%	69%	13%	1%
Wynnton Elementary School	76.9	21%	59%	12%	1%
Waddell Elementary School	73.9	12%	59%	12%	0%
Blanchard Elementary School	72.8	57%	27%	16%	5%
Gentian Elementary School	71.5	31%	47%	22%	0%
River Road Elementary School	70.9	38%	48%	14%	29%
South Columbus Elementary School	70.6	6%	73%	9%	27%
Forrest Road Elementary School	70.0	2%	57%	15%	0%
Reese Road Leadership Academy	67.3	21%	42%	17%	14%
Double Churches Elementary School	67.0	55%	24%	11%	1%
Key Elementary School	66.3	8%	70%	19%	12%

Allen Elementary School	66.0	39%	41%	18%	22%
Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School	65.9	2%	80%	11%	20%
Hannan Elementary	65.8	17%	56%	21%	1%
School	Overall College and Career Ready Performance Index Score (2019)	Percent White Students	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent with a Disability	Percent English Language Learners (ELL)
Dawson Elementary School	64.8	1%	71%	18%	1%
Davis Elementary School	64.3	3%	89%	13%	0%
Dorothy Height Elementary School	61.6	3%	84%	18%	2%
Fox Elementary School	61.1	10%	87%	21%	0%
Georgetown Elementary School	58.4	2%	67%	13%	0%
Dimon Elementary	57.7	2%	53%	8%	1%
Rigdon Road Elementary School	55.1	2%	68%	10%	0%
Brewer Elementary School	54.0	3%	78%	14%	16%
Wesley Heights Elementary School	54.0	4%	64%	12%	0%
St. Mary's Video and Communication Technology	51.9	2%	70%	10%	0%

Source: Georgia Department of Education. (2019).

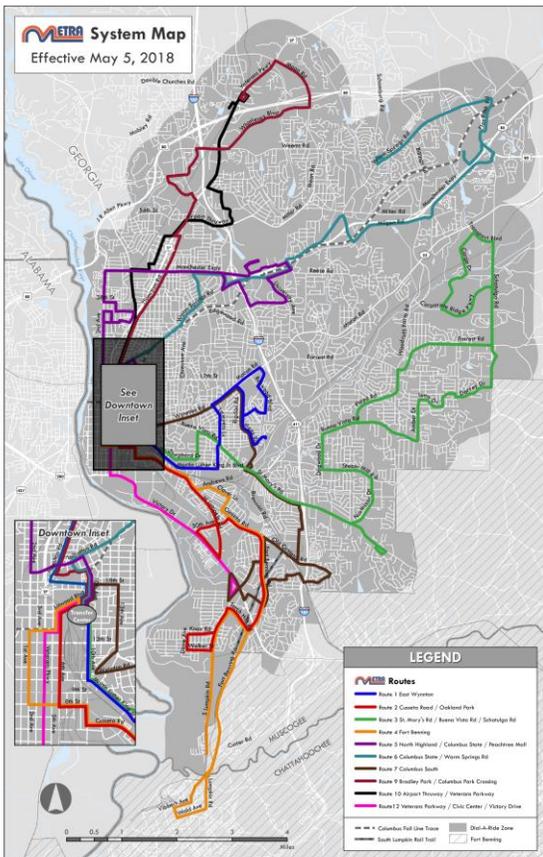
Transportation

Affordable, accessible transportation makes it easier for residents to access a range of opportunities, providing connections to employment, education, fresh food, healthcare, and other services. Low-cost public transit can facilitate access to these resources, while a lack to access to affordable transportation poses barriers to meeting key needs, particularly in areas with low levels of walkability and a lack of access to vehicles.

Access to Affordable Transportation

Metra Transit System provides bus service in Columbus, operating 18 buses on 10 bus routes in the city outside of Fort Benning. Routes are clustered in downtown and west Columbus and extend out to east Columbus (see Figure 23). In addition to bus services, Metra offers complementary paratransit services for eligible persons with disabilities.

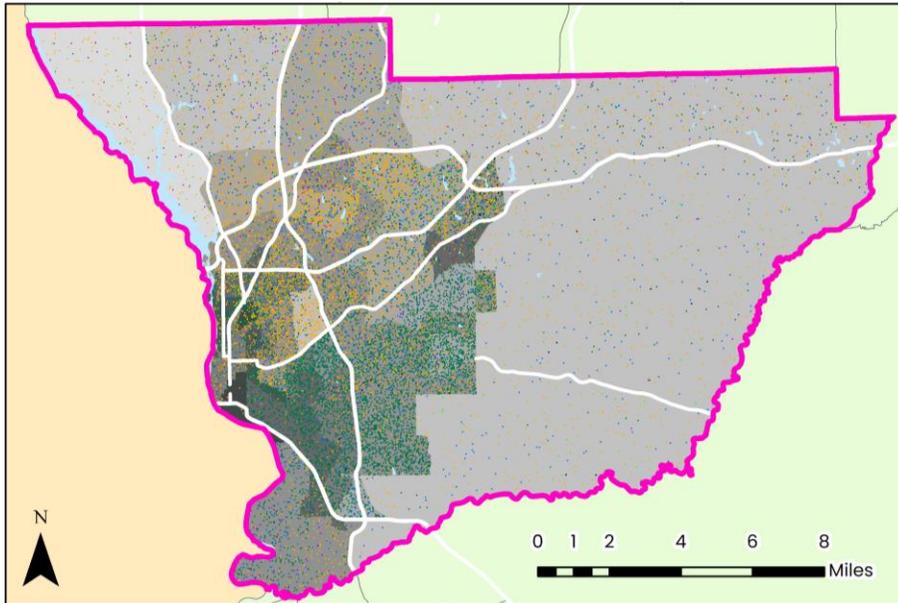
Figure 3. Metra Transit System Map



Together, transportation and housing costs shape overall affordability in neighborhoods. HUD’s Location Affordability Index provides estimates of housing and transportation spending relative to income for families of a range of sizes and incomes. Figure 24 estimates transportation expenses for a three-person single-parent family with income at 50% of the regional median income for renters. Estimates of housing and transportation costs as a percentage of household income for this family range from 60.2% to 97.6% in census tracts in Columbus.

Residents of this family size and income level in downtown Columbus, who have the greatest access to the Metra Transit System, tend to have the lowest housing and transportation costs relative to income. Transportation costs tend to make up a greater share of income for this family in north and east Columbus, which have lower levels of access to transit. In areas outside of central Columbus, the combination of a lower proximity to jobs and high proportions of residents’ incomes spent on transportation may present barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment.

Figure 4. Location Affordability and Race/Ethnicity



Source: Location Affordability Index, 2012-2016

Housing and Transportation Costs as Percent of Household Income (Low-Income Renter Households)*

60% - 65%	80% - 85%
65% - 70%	85% - 90%
70% - 75%	90% - 95%
75% - 80%	95% - 98%

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

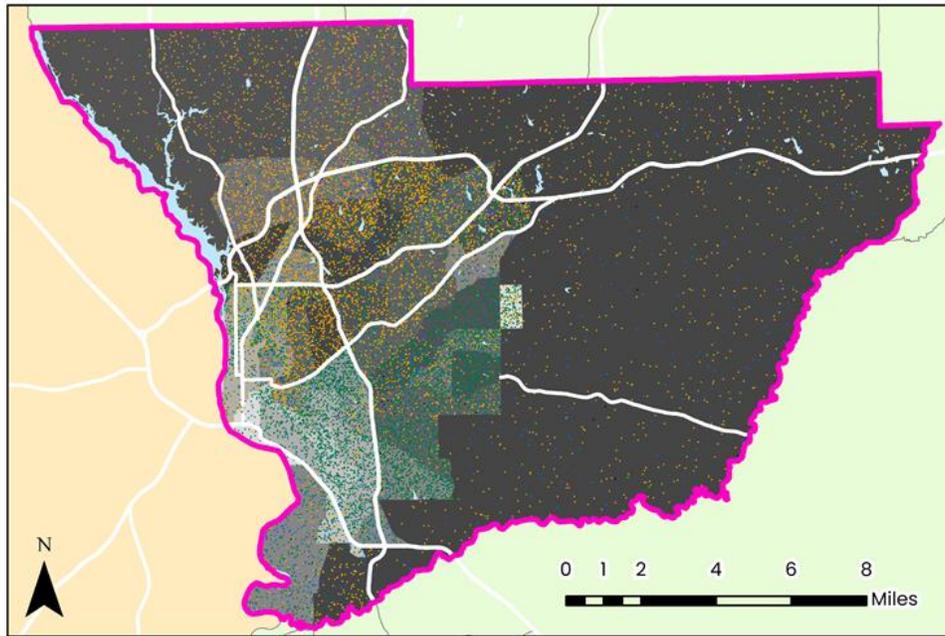
*Based on estimates for a 3-person single-parent family with income at 50% of the median income for renters in the region

Vehicle Access

Access to vehicles also shapes residents' ability to connect to employment and education opportunities, resources, and services, particularly in areas with limited access to public transit. An estimated 10.4% of households in Columbus do not have access to a vehicle, according to American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2015 to 2019. While vehicle access is high overall, disparities

exist by geography and reflect access to public transit in the city. Residents of downtown and south Columbus tend to own vehicles at the lowest rates: in five census tracts, 42% to 68% of households do not have a vehicle. In contrast, in 10 census tracts in north and east Columbus, including Fort Benning, fewer than 3% of households do not have access to vehicles, reflecting the need for vehicle ownership in areas with less access to public transit (see Figure 25).

Figure 25. Vehicle Access and Race/Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Percent of Households with No Vehicle



Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

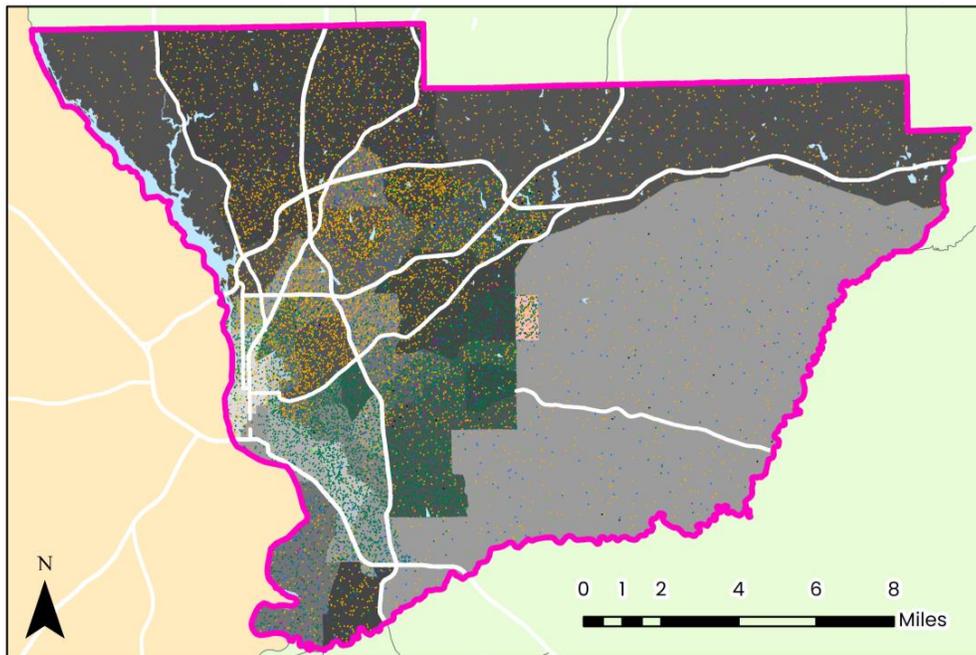
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- Multiple Races
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- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Stakeholders who participated in this planning process emphasized that a lack of access to vehicles is often a barrier to employment for residents living in areas with low proximity to jobs and without access to public transportation. A lack of access to vehicles also creates barriers to accessing needed services in areas in which those services are not located within walking distance and transit access is limited. In this way, residents without access to vehicles often find their housing choices limited to locations where public transportation is available. The combination of high levels of vehicle ownership and high transportation and housing costs as a percentage of household income in areas that are not well served by public transit reflects a need for transportation options that reduce household transportation costs in these areas.

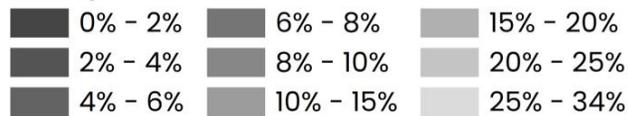
As would be expected, areas with lower levels of vehicle access tend to have higher proportions of residents who take public transportation, walk, bike, or take taxis to work (see Figure 26). In five census tracts in downtown and south Columbus, 20.2% to 34.0% of residents use these forms of transportation, the highest proportions in the city. In 10 additional tracts in south and west Columbus and Fort Benning, 10% to 20% of residents use these forms of transportation.

Figure 26. Means of Transportation to Work and Race/Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Percent of Workers Aged 16+ Who Take Public Transportation, Walk, Bike, or Taxi to Work



Data Unavailable

Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

City of Columbus

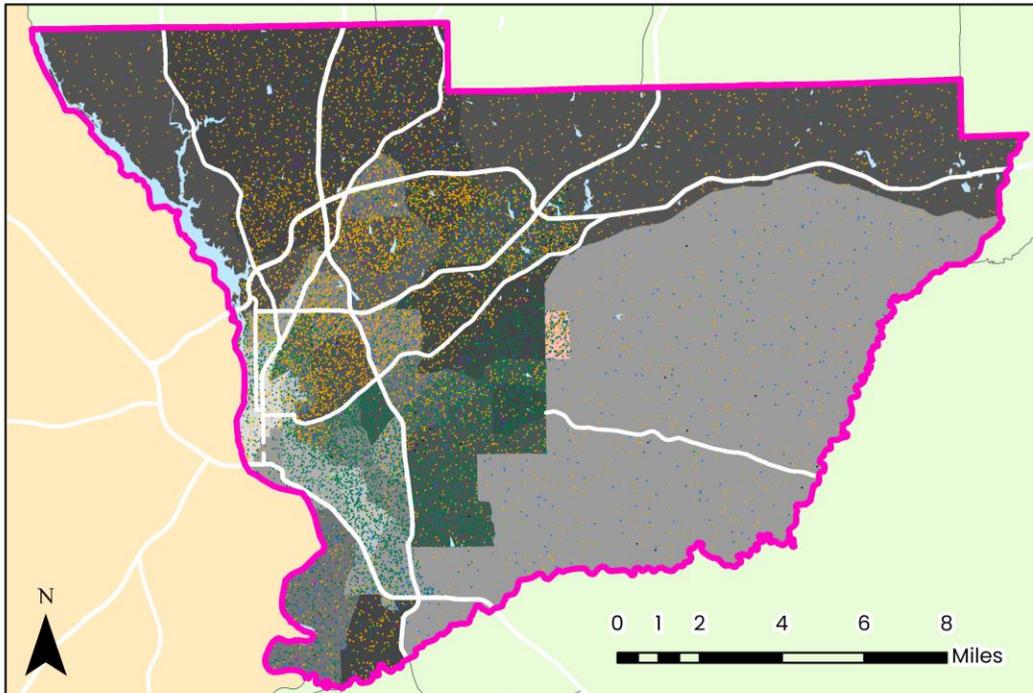
Roads

Water

Georgia

Alabama

Figure 27. Means of Transportation to Work and Race/Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Percent of Workers Aged 16+ Who Take Public Transportation, Walk, Bike, or Taxi to Work



Data Unavailable

Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
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- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

City of Columbus

Roads

Water

Georgia

Alabama

Walkability

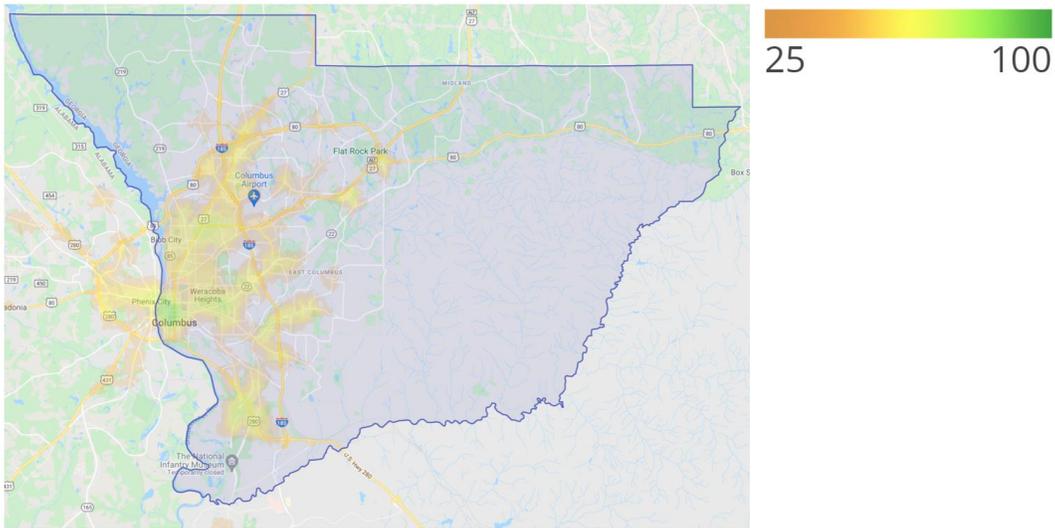
Along with access to transit, low-cost transportation, and vehicles, walkability shapes the extent to which residents are able to access employment, resources, and services. The city of Columbus scores 26 out of 100 on WalkScore's walkability index, indicating that most errands require a car.¹³ While the city is generally car-dependent, parts of downtown Columbus and the surrounding area have high levels of walkability (shown in green in Figure 28). Residents and stakeholders emphasized that many areas of the city lack sidewalks or lighting, making accessing resources and services via walking more difficult and less safe, particularly for residents with disabilities. In this way, low levels of transit and vehicle access may pose a more significant barrier to accessing jobs and services for residents living in areas with low levels of walkability. Overall low levels of walkability in the city combined with low levels of access to low-cost transportation point to challenges for residents without access to vehicles in connecting to employment, resources, and services.

"Pedestrian-friendly infrastructure goes beyond sidewalks and bike paths. It's also how our buildings are designed, how ride share/deliveries enter and leave an area, reducing parking/concrete to improve density and/or native landscaping, capturing and storing more water on site, etc."

-Survey respondent

¹³ Walk Score measures the walkability of any address by analyzing hundreds of walking routes to nearby amenities using population density and road metrics such as block length and intersection density. Data sources include Google, Education.com, Open Street Map, the U.S. Census, Localeze, and places added by the Walk Score user community. Points are awarded based on the distance to amenities in several categories including grocery stores, parks, restaurants, schools, and shopping. The measure is useful in showing not only walkability but also access to critical facilities.

Figure 5. Walkability, City of Columbus



Environmental Quality

Environmental quality and access to environmental amenities also shape the opportunities available to residents. Access to parks and other green infrastructure in counties, cities, and neighborhoods provides a range of environmental, social, and health benefits, including access to nature and recreation opportunities; cleaner air and water; alternative transportation options; improvements in physical and mental health and wellbeing; and opportunities for food production and other local economic development. At the same time, environmental hazards, such as poor air quality and toxic facilities, are associated with negative health effects including increased respiratory symptoms, hospitalization for heart or lung diseases, cancer and other serious health effects, and even premature death. Certain population groups, such as children, have a greater risk of adverse effects from exposure to pollution.¹⁴

¹⁴ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). Managing Air Quality – Human Health, Environmental and Economic Assessments. Retrieved from: <https://www.epa.gov/air-quality-management-process/managing-air-quality-human-health-environmental-and-economic>

Access to Parks and Greenspace

Much of the city's downtown and surrounding areas fall within a 10-minute walk of a park, while in large portions of north, south, and east Columbus, residents must travel further than a 10-minute walk to access parks (see Figure 29). The Trust for Public Land's ParkServe data rates areas on their level of need for parks based on factors including people per acre, mean land surface temperature, respiratory hazards, density of people of color, density of low-income households, prevalence of poor mental health, and prevalence of low physical activity.¹⁵ Of areas not already within a 10-minute walk of a park, areas of the city with the highest levels of need based on these factors include south Columbus and portions of west-central and downtown Columbus (see Figure 30).

Stakeholders emphasized a high level of need for parks and recreation facilities and improvements, noting that significant variation exists among areas of the city with regard to the quality of parks, available amenities, and maintenance. About 37.2% of survey respondents noted that parks and trails are equally provided in their communities, while about 51.2% said that they are not equally available.

When asked about public facility needs in the city, 56.8% of survey respondents noted parks, gyms, and recreation facilities as high level needs. A high level of need for community centers was noted by 61.2% of survey respondents, making it the second most identified public facility need after childcare centers. Improvements to existing facilities--including ADA accessibility improvements--were noted as a high need by 51.7% of survey respondents.

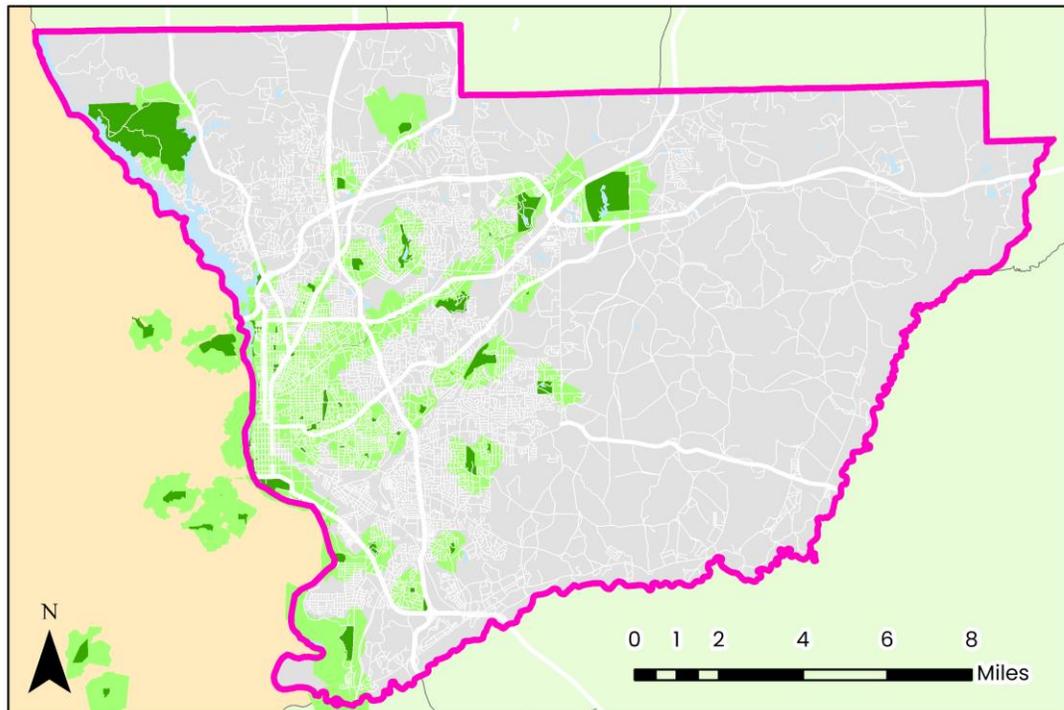
In addition to investment in parks and recreation facilities, survey respondents indicated a high level of need for investments in general neighborhood revitalization. About 75.9% of respondents rated 'neighborhoods that need revitalization and new investment' as a barrier to fair housing in the city, making it the third most identified barrier, following barriers focused on a lack of affordable housing for individuals and families. In combination with the identification of community centers as the city's second greatest public facilities need, the noted need for neighborhood revitalization and

*"If more neighborhoods had programs like Boys and Girls Club, then [youth] would have directed activities to keep them busy. These programs need to be exciting and robust! Our community needs more recreational facilities."
-Survey respondent*

¹⁵ The Trust for Public Land. (2021). ParkServe Data Downloads. Retrieved from: <https://www.tpl.org/parkserve/downloads>

reinvestment indicates that access to recreation facilities should be a priority as the city considers opportunities for neighborhood reinvestment.

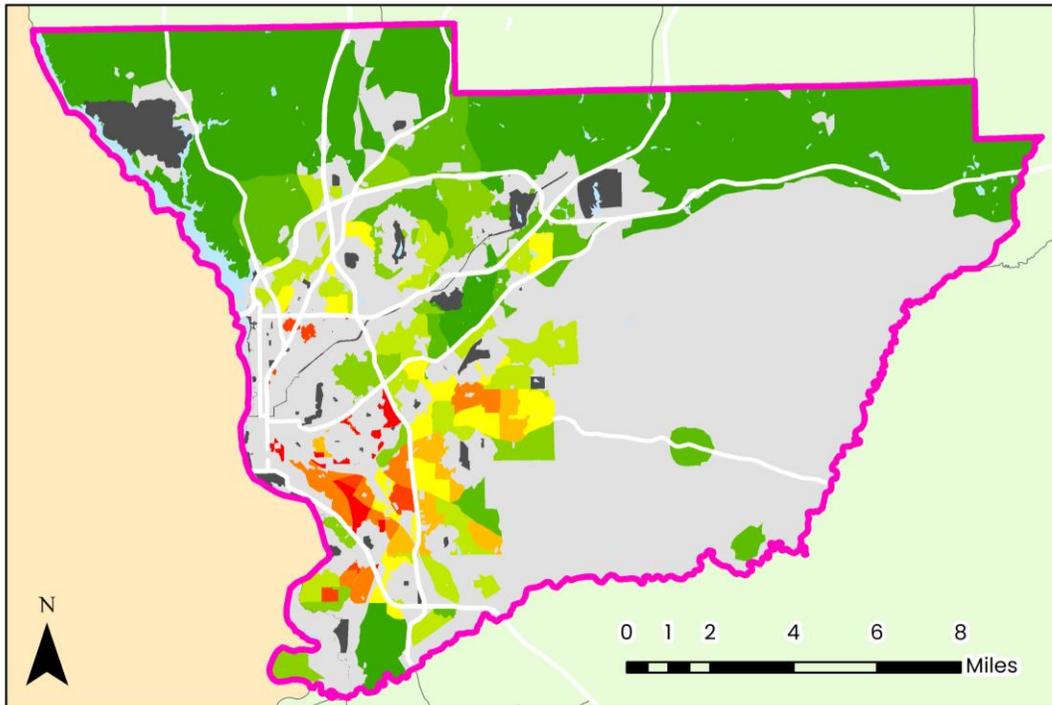
Figure 6. Park Access, City of Columbus



Source: Trust for Public Land ParkServe, 2021

- Parks, Trails, and Playgrounds
- 10-Minute Park-Walk Service Area
- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Figure 30. Park Need, City of Columbus

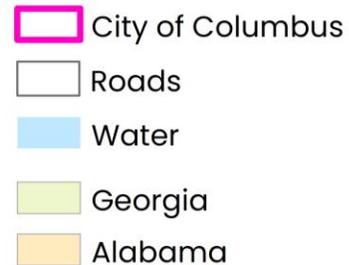


Source: Trust for Public Land ParkServe, 2021

Park Need Score for Park Priority Areas*



 Existing Parks, Trails, and Playgrounds

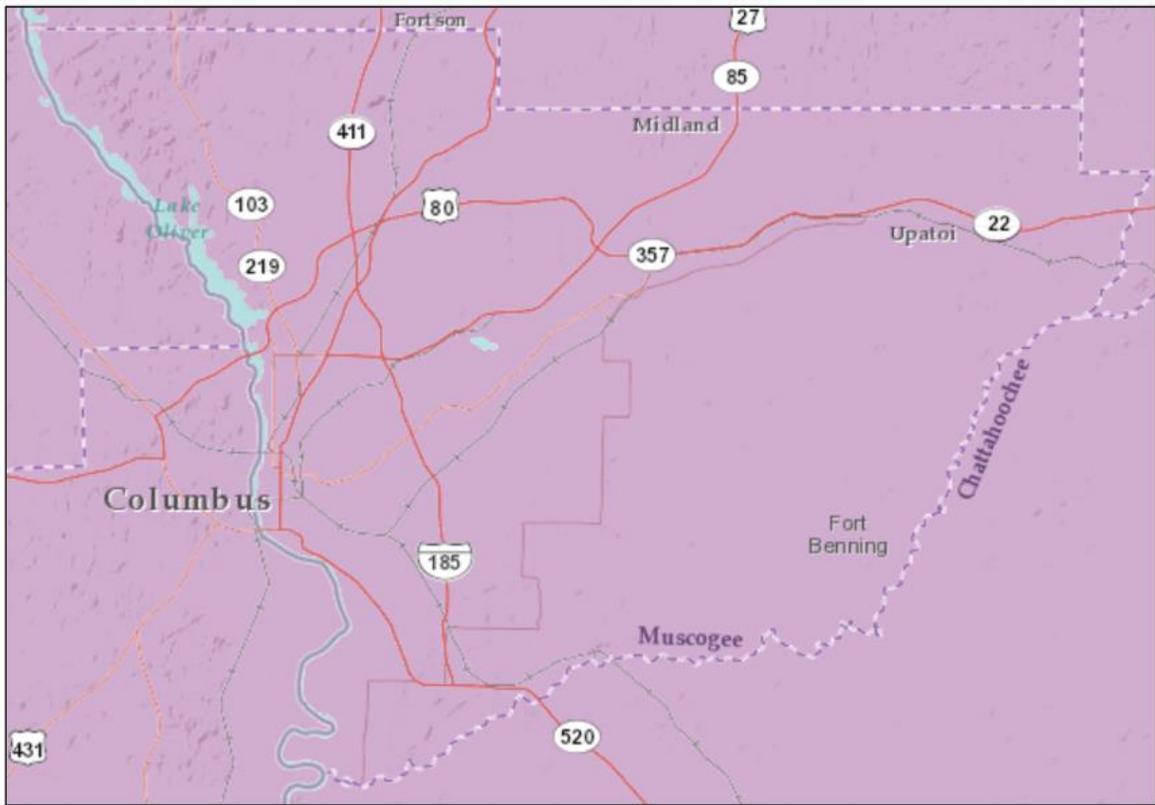


* The Trust for Public Land’s Park Need Score is based on the average of ranks for people per acre, mean land surface temperature, respiratory hazards, density of people of color, density of low-income households, and the average of ranks for prevalence of poor mental health and low physical activity. Ranks are relative to the city by quintile.

Environmental Hazards

Toxic sites may pose risks to residents living nearby and thus may constitute fair housing concerns if they disproportionately impact protected classes. A Superfund site is any land in the United States that has been contaminated by hazardous waste and identified by the EPA as a candidate for cleanup because it poses a risk to human health and/or the environment. These sites are placed on the National Priorities List (NPL). No NPL sites are located in the city of Columbus (see Figure 31).

Figure 31. Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) Sites, City of Columbus



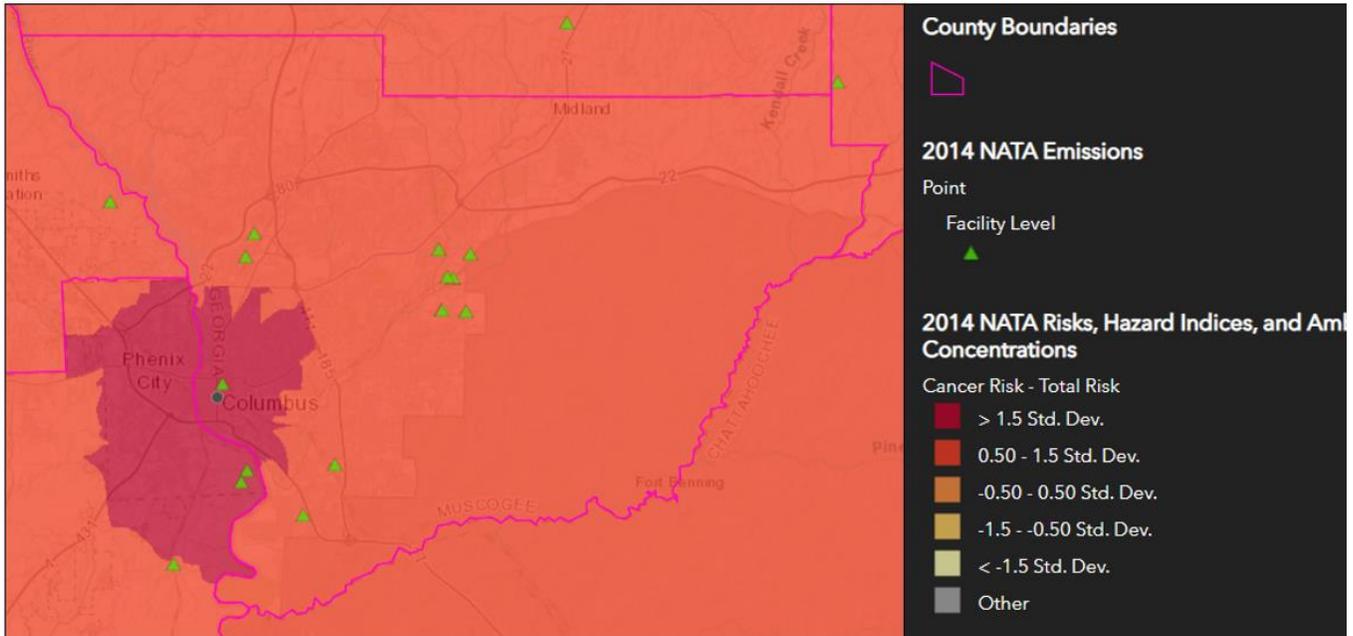
Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) Sites with Status Information

- ◆ NPL Site
- Deleted NPL Site
- Proposed NPL Site

Source: U.S. EPA

The EPA’s National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) estimates health risks from air toxics. The most recent assessment, released in 2018, uses data from 2014 to examine cancer risk from ambient concentrations of pollutants. Columbus has moderate to high levels of cancer risk from air toxics relative to the United States as a whole, ranging from about 45 to 52 per million in city census tracts. Risks from air toxics are highest in downtown Columbus. Point sources of emissions are dispersed across the city, with a cluster of facilities in east Columbus (see Figure 32).

Figure 32. National Air Toxics Assessment

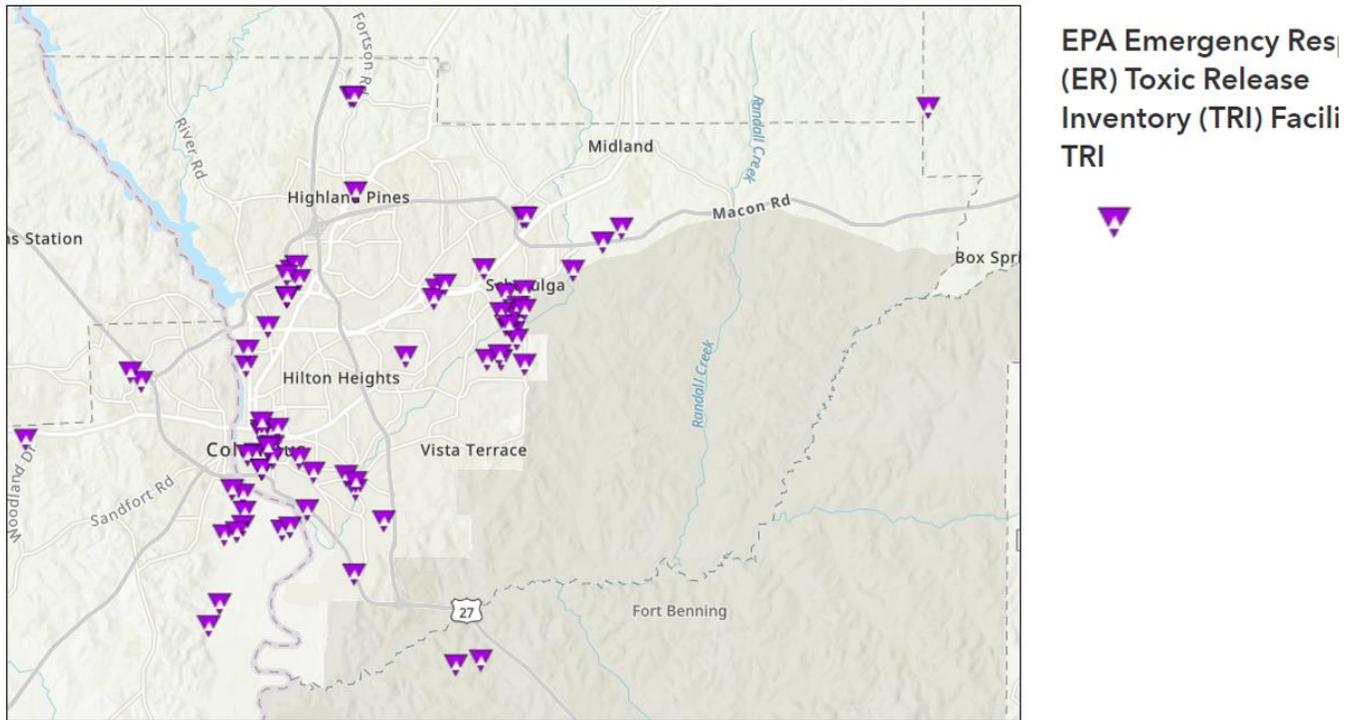


Source: Environmental Protection Agency National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA)

The Environmental Protection Agency’s Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) tracks the management of certain toxic chemicals that may pose a threat to human health and the environment. Certain industrial facilities in the U.S. must report annually how much of each chemical is recycled, combusted for energy recovery, treated for destruction, and disposed of or otherwise released on- and off-site.¹⁶ While toxic release inventory sites are located throughout the city, the greatest numbers of sites are clustered in downtown and east Columbus (see Figure 33).

¹⁶ U.S. EPA. (n.d.) Toxic Release Inventory Program. Retrieved from: <https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program/what-toxics-release-inventory>. Data retrieved from: <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=2c4a0b5f85b945f8a67125e6a93fa7fe>

Figure 33. Toxics Release Inventory Facilities



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

Food

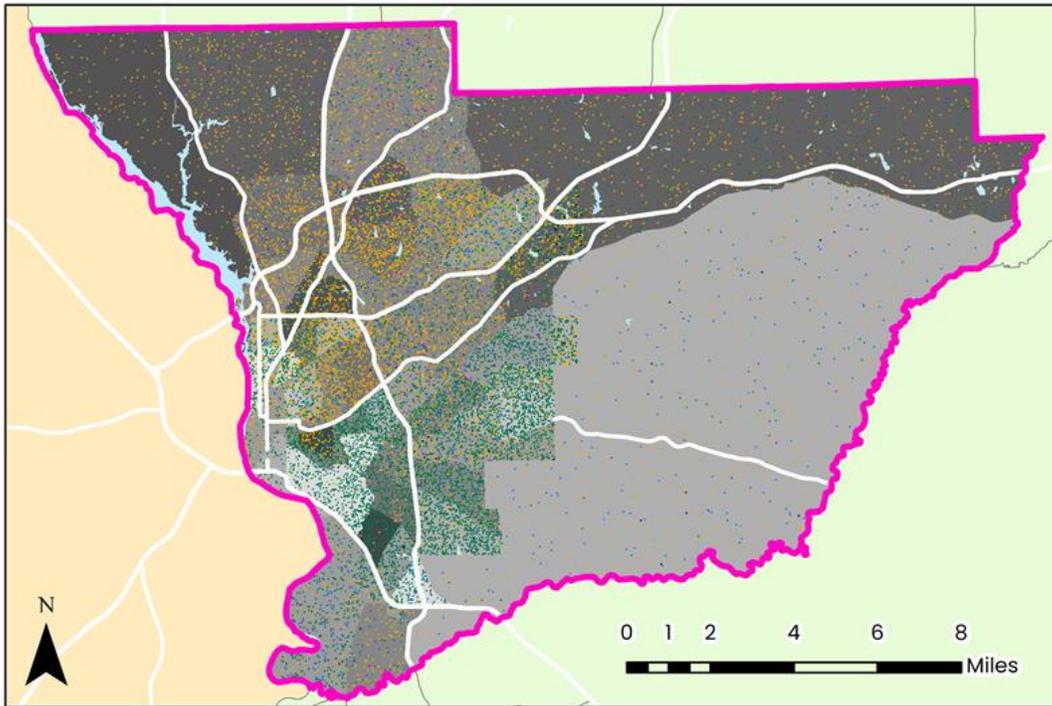
Many individuals and families in the United States face challenges in accessing food that is both healthy and affordable. In neighborhoods in which the nearest grocery store is many miles away, transportation costs and lack of access to vehicles may pose particular challenges for low-income households, who may be forced to rely on smaller stores that are often unaffordable and may not offer a full range of healthy food choices. Even in areas with fresh food retailers nearby, the higher cost of healthy foods such as produce often present barriers to accessing healthy food.¹⁷

Analysis of the most recently available USDA Food Research Atlas data (2019) indicates that the share of residents who have low incomes and live further than ½ mile from the nearest supermarket is highest in census tracts in south and west-central Columbus. In six census tracts in these areas, an estimated 60% to 76% of residents have low incomes and live more than ½ mile from a

¹⁷ Valdez Z, Ramirez AS, Estrada E, Grassi K, Nathan S. Community Perspectives on Access to and Availability of Healthy Food in Rural, Low-Resource, Latino Communities. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2016;13:160250.

supermarket. In 11 additional tracts in west-central and east Columbus (including Fort Benning), between 40% and 60% of residents meet the USDA definition of low-income and low-access at 1/2 mile (see Figure 34).

Figure 7. Food Access and Race/Ethnicity



Source: USDA Food Access Research Atlas, 2019

Percent of Population Who Are Low-Income and Live More Than 1/2 Mile from a Food Store*



* Defined as a supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store

Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

In contrast, tracts in parts of central and north Columbus tend to have the lowest proportions of residents with low incomes who live more than ½ mile from a supermarket. In five tracts in these areas, fewer than 10% of residents are considered low-income and low-access.

Stakeholders interviewed during this planning process also reported lower levels of food access in south, west-central, and east Columbus. Survey respondents echoed concerns surrounding food access, with 74.2% noting that grocery stores and other shopping opportunities are not equally available in all neighborhoods.

In addition to distance from food outlets, the quality and affordability of fresh food available at those outlets are important factors in considering food access. Much of south and east Columbus is served primarily by dollar stores or smaller food outlets, indicating that many residents need may access to vehicles to access one of the area’s larger supermarkets.

Poverty and a lack of access to vehicles also contribute to issues of food access and insecurity in the city. An estimated 20.7% of Columbus residents were living below the federal poverty level as of the 2015–2019 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, indicating that low incomes are a substantial barrier for a substantial portion of residents in accessing fresh food. Disparities in poverty rates exist by race: an estimated 33.4% of residents of some other race, 28.6% of Black or African American residents, and 25.2% of Hispanic or Latino residents (of any race) were living below the poverty level in the past 12 months from 2015 to 2019, more than double the share of white non-Hispanic residents living in poverty (11.7%). Poverty rates are highest in parts of south Columbus, ranging from 51.3% to 68.1% in four census tracts.

Further, in many census tracts—particularly in south, east, and downtown Columbus—significant shares of households do not have a vehicle. In particular, more than 40% of households do not own a vehicle in parts of south and east Columbus. Low levels of vehicle ownership indicate that food access is particularly challenging for significant proportions of households in areas of the city with limited access to public transportation and low levels of walkability. In this way, the combination of

*"That's one thing I hear often in the community. Where are our fresh foods? We have food but not the kind that Publix would have. We have an overwhelming amount of Family Dollars and Dollar Generals. It's almost if we keep closing grocery stores and only have access to Family Dollars and Dollar General, I would put us in the category of being a food desert."
-Stakeholder (east Columbus)*

uneven distribution of food outlets across the city, the substantial proportions of households with low incomes, and a lack of access to vehicles create barriers to food access and security.

Healthcare

Access to high-quality, affordable physical and mental healthcare shapes community health outcomes, including both length and quality of life factors. Residents of Muscogee County have access to healthcare providers at a rate of 940 residents per primary care physician, 1,750 residents per dentist, and 320 residents per mental health provider, indicating higher levels of access to healthcare providers than in the state of Georgia overall (see Table 7).

Table 6 - Ratios of Population to Healthcare Providers

	Muscogee County	Georgia
Primary Care Physicians	940:1	1,510:1
Dentists	1,750:1	1,920:1
Mental Health Providers	320:1	690:1

Source: County Health Rankings, 2021.¹⁸

"I feel like social determinants of health impact our patients long before they come to the clinic. They need MercyMed after surviving day to day. Having a decent place to live, a job, and transportation."

-Survey respondent

Disparities exist in access to health insurance across the city. Residents of west-central and south Columbus tend to be uninsured at the highest rates in the city (22% to 32% uninsured residents in eight census tracts), while parts of north and east Columbus, including Fort Benning, have the lowest percentages of insured residents (less than 5% uninsured in six census tracts, see Figure 35).

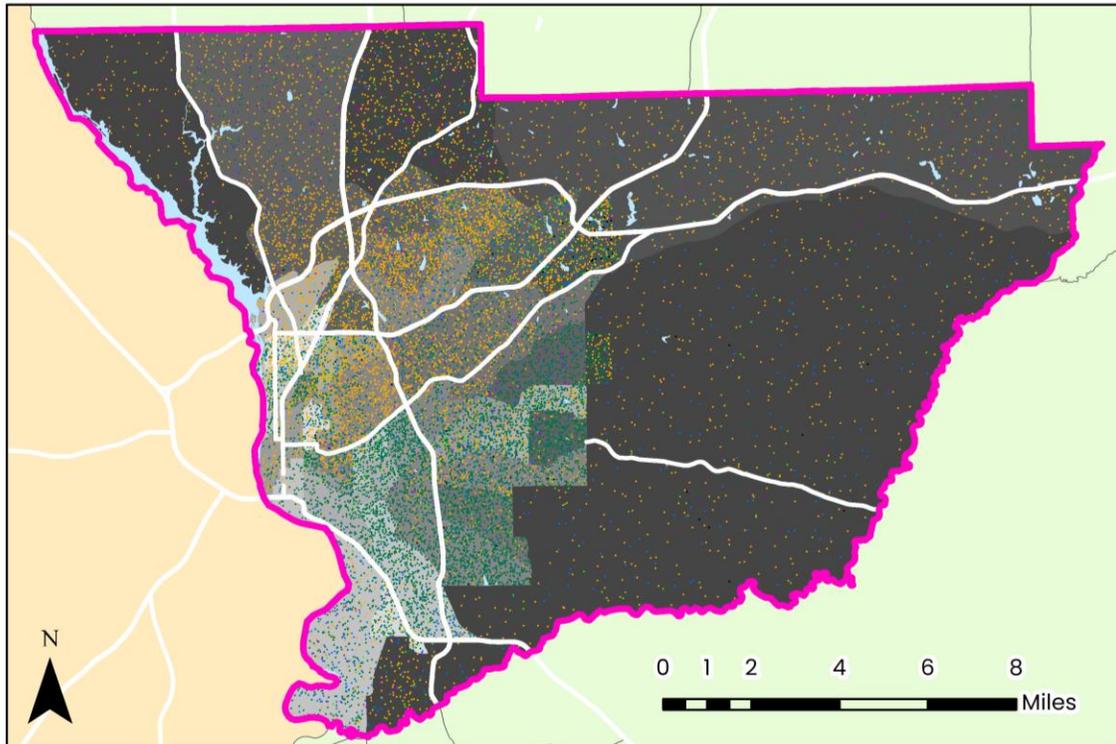
Access to healthcare providers and health insurance shape health outcomes in the region. In its 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment,¹⁹ Piedmont Columbus Regional Hospital notes the following health trends in Muscogee County:

¹⁸ The 2021 County Health Rankings used data from 2018 for primary care physicians; data from 2019 for dentists; and 2020 for mental health providers.

¹⁹ Piedmont Columbus Regional Hospital. (2019). Community Health Needs Assessment. Retrieved from: <https://www.piedmont.org/media/file/PCR-FY19-CHNA-Strategy.pdf>

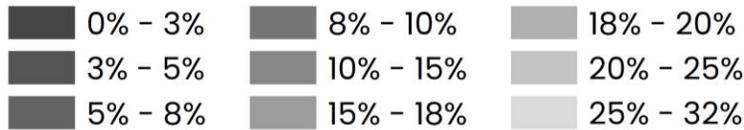
- Muscogee County ranks high in measures related to clinical care, especially when it comes to physician to patient ratios.
- Rates of premature death have declined overall during the last 15 years, though they still remain higher than the state average.
- Though still not close to its peak in 2010, rates of physical activity are climbing back up after a steep decline in 2013.
- Sexually transmitted infections are also falling after a steep jump in 2014, when rates were about 50 percent more than they were in 2017.
- The uninsured rate in Muscogee County is high at 14 percent, and severely disproportionately impacts minorities.
- Heart disease still remains the community's biggest threat.
- County residents have rates higher than state and national averages for new cancer diagnoses and overall incidences.
- Rates of diabetes incidences have continued to rise over the last ten years.
- Self-reported poor mental and physical health days have continued to rise over the last five years, particularly among minorities.

Figure 8. Health Insurance and Race/Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Percent of Population Without Health Insurance*



* For civilian, non-institutionalized population

Race and Ethnicity

1 Dot = 10 People

- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
- Multiple Races
- Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic
- Native American, Non-Hispanic
- Other Race, Non-Hispanic

- City of Columbus
- Roads
- Water
- Georgia
- Alabama

Overall, healthcare access is shaped by multiple factors, including availability of providers, health insurance coverage, and access to vehicles or other transportation options. Programs designed to increase access to healthcare may help support access for underserved residents. These may include mobile clinics, development of community-based clinics in underserved areas, transportation assistance to support access to healthcare, community health workers, and sliding scale services for low-income uninsured residents, among others. Stakeholders who participated in this planning process noted a particular need for mental health services and transportation.

Chapter 6. Housing Profile

The availability of quality affordable housing plays a vital role in ensuring housing opportunities are fairly accessible to all residents. On the surface, high housing costs in certain areas are exclusionary based solely on income. But the disproportionate representation of several protected class groups in low- and middle-income levels can lead to unequal access to housing options and neighborhood opportunity in high-cost housing markets. Black and Hispanic residents, immigrants, people with disabilities, and seniors often experience additional fair housing barriers when affordable housing is scarce.

Beyond providing fair housing options, the social, economic, and health benefits of providing quality affordable housing are well-documented. National studies have shown affordable housing encourages diverse, mixed-income communities, which result in many social benefits. Affordable housing also increases job accessibility for low- and middle-income populations and attracts a diverse labor force critical for industries that provide basic services for the community. Affordable housing is also linked to improvements in mental health, reduction of stress, and decreased cases of illnesses caused by poor-quality housing.²⁰ Developing affordable housing is also a strategy used to prevent displacement of existing residents when housing costs increase due to economic or migratory shifts.

Conversely, a lack of affordable housing eliminates many of these benefits and increases socioeconomic segregation. High housing costs are linked to displacement of low-income households and an increased risk of homelessness.²¹ Often lacking the capital to relocate to better neighborhoods, displaced residents tend to move to socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods where housing costs are most affordable.²²

This section discusses the existing supply of housing in Columbus. It also reviews housing costs, including affordability and other housing needs by householder income. Homeownership rates and access to lending for home purchases and mortgage refinancing are also assessed.

²⁰ Maqbool, Nabihah, et al. "The Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health: A Research Summary." *Insights from Housing Policy Research*, Center for Housing Policy, www.rupco.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/The-Impacts-of-Affordable-Housing-on-Health-CenterforHousingPolicy-Maqbool.etal.pdf.

²¹ "State of the Nation's Housing 2015." Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/jchs-sonhr-2015-full.pdf>

²² Deirdre Oakley & Keri Burchfield (2009) Out of the Projects, Still in the Hood: The Spatial Constraints on Public-Housing Residents' Relocation in Chicago." *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 31:5, 589-614.

Housing Supply Summary

According to the 2015–2019 American Community Survey (ACS), there are 84,723 housing units in Columbus. The supply of housing units in Columbus has increased 11.6% since 2000, up from 75,940 units. Comparatively, the number of housing units in the five-county Columbus region grew 19.3% between 2000 and 2019. Nearly 86% of all Columbus housing units are occupied by renters or homeowners. However, around 14% of the city’s housing units are estimated to be vacant. The city’s vacancy rate has increased nearly 6 percentage points since 2000. Census estimates indicate that the homeowner vacancy rate – or percentage of vacant “for sale” units – is 2.3%; the rental vacancy rate – or share of vacant “for rent” units – is 5.5%.²³ The city’s remaining vacancies, which make up 6.6% of all units, include sold but not occupied units, seasonal/occasional use units such as short-term rentals, units that are under renovation or in need of renovation, and other types of vacant units. The percentage of vacant units is higher in the Columbus region (14.9%) than in the city of Columbus, however, the vacancy rate has grown more slowly than in the city.

Table 6. Housing Units by Occupancy Status

	2000	2010	2015–2019	2000–2019 Change
Columbus				
Total Housing Units	75,940	82,213	84,723	11.6%
Occupied Housing Units	69,599	72,124	72,759	4.5%
Vacant Housing Units	6,341	10,089	11,964	88.7%
Vacancy Rate	8.4%	12.3%	14.1%	+5.7 points
Columbus Region (Chattahoochee, Harris, Marion, Muscogee, and Russell Counties)				
Total Housing Units	112,431	126,900	134,112	19.3%
Occupied Housing Units	101,050	109,062	114,155	13.0%
Vacant Housing Units	11,381	17,838	19,957	71.4%
Vacancy Rate	10.1%	14.1%	14.9%	+4.8 points

Data Source: 2000 Decennial Census, 2010–2014 & 2015–2019 5-Year ACS, Tables H003, DP04

²³ 2015–2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Table DP04

Table 7 below shows the variety of housing types in Columbus. Housing structure variety is important in providing housing options suitable to meet the needs of all residents, including different members of protected classes. Multifamily housing, including rental apartments, are often more affordable rental options than single-family homes for low- and moderate-income households, who are disproportionately likely to be non-white households. Multifamily units may also be the preference of some elderly and disabled householders who are unable or do not desire to maintain a single-family home.

Single-family detached homes make up the largest share of the city's structure types (65%). Another 16% of the city's residential structures are small multifamily developments with 5-19 units. Duplexes, triplexes, and quadraplexes are the third most common structure type, comprising 8% of all housing units, followed closely by large multifamily developments (7%). The city also has smaller shares of single-family attached units (2.1%) and mobile homes (1.3%), offering a variety of structure types to meet resident preferences and needs. Like Columbus, the region is primarily composed of single-family detached units (66.7%). The region, however, has a larger share of mobile homes (6.5%), and fewer shares of single-family attached units or multifamily than the city.

Table 7. Housing Units by Structure Type

Units in Structure	Columbus		Columbus Region	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1, detached	55,085	65.0%	89,478	66.7%
1, attached	1,798	2.1%	2,761	2.1%
2-4	7,030	8.3%	10,103	7.5%
5-19	13,433	15.9%	16,251	12.1%
20 or more	6,280	7.4%	6,787	5.1%
Mobile home	1,079	1.3%	8,694	6.5%
Other (RV, boat, van, etc.)	18	>0.1%	38	>0.1%
Total	84,723	100.0%	134,112	100.0%

Data Source: 2015-2019 5-Year American Community Survey, Table B25024

A variety of housing sizes is also important to meet the needs of different demographic groups. Neighborhoods with multi-bedroom detached, single-family homes will typically attract larger families, whereas dense residential developments with smaller unit sizes and fewer bedrooms often accommodate single-person households or small families. However, market forces and affordability impact housing choice and the ability to obtain housing of a suitable size. Markets that do not offer a variety of housing sizes at different price points can lead to barriers for some groups. Rising housing

costs can, for example, lead to overcrowding as large households with lower incomes are unable to afford pricier, larger homes and are forced to reside in smaller units. On the other hand, people with disabilities or seniors with fixed incomes may not require large units but can be limited by higher housing costs in densely populated areas where most studio or one-bedroom units are located.

Table 8 shows the city’s housing units by the number of bedrooms and resident tenure (whether the occupants are renters or owners). There are 49,788 housing units with two to three bedrooms, representing more than two-thirds (68%) of Columbus’s occupied housing units. Large housing units with four or more bedrooms make up 20% of all occupied housing units (14,583 units). Studios and one-bedroom units make up only 12% of the city’s occupied housing units. Stakeholders participating in the community engagement process indicated a need for additional one-bedroom units suitable for seniors and other single persons, as well as small families.

Columbus has a slightly larger share of renters than homeowners, with renters comprising 52% of all occupied housing units compared to 48% for homeowners. Rental units offer the widest variety of housing sizes: 71% of renter-occupied units have 2–3 bedrooms, 19% have 1 bedroom, 8% have 4 or more bedrooms and 3% are studio apartments. Conversely, owner-occupied housing is largely split between 2–3-bedroom units (66%) and units with 4 or more bedrooms (33%).

Housing size trends in the Columbus region mirror housing sizes in the city. Renter-occupied housing offers the greatest variety in the region. Nearly 72% of the region’s renter housing has 2–3 bedrooms. However, the region has a slightly higher percentage of 4+ bedroom units (10%) and a smaller percentage of one-bedroom units (16%) available for rent than in the city. Owner-occupied units in the region are split between 2–3-bedroom units (66%) and 4 or more-bedroom units (33%). These factors further indicate that larger-sized families in Columbus and the Columbus region may find more appropriately sized housing as homeowners and may compete for rental units with 4 or more bedrooms.

Table 8 – Housing Units by Size and Tenure

Number of Bedrooms	Columbus		Columbus Region	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Owner-Occupied Housing Units				
Zero	31	>0.1%	102	0.2%
One	321	0.9%	667	1.0%
Two or three	23,056	66.0%	41,454	65.9%
Four or more	11,528	33.0%	20,670	32.9%
Total	34,936	100.0%	62,893	100.0%

Renter-Occupied Housing Units				
Zero	988	2.6%	1,170	2.3%
One	7,048	18.6%	8,427	16.4%
Two or three	26,732	70.7%	36,761	71.7%
Four or more	3,055	8.1%	4,904	9.6%
Total	37,823	100.0%	51,262	100.0%

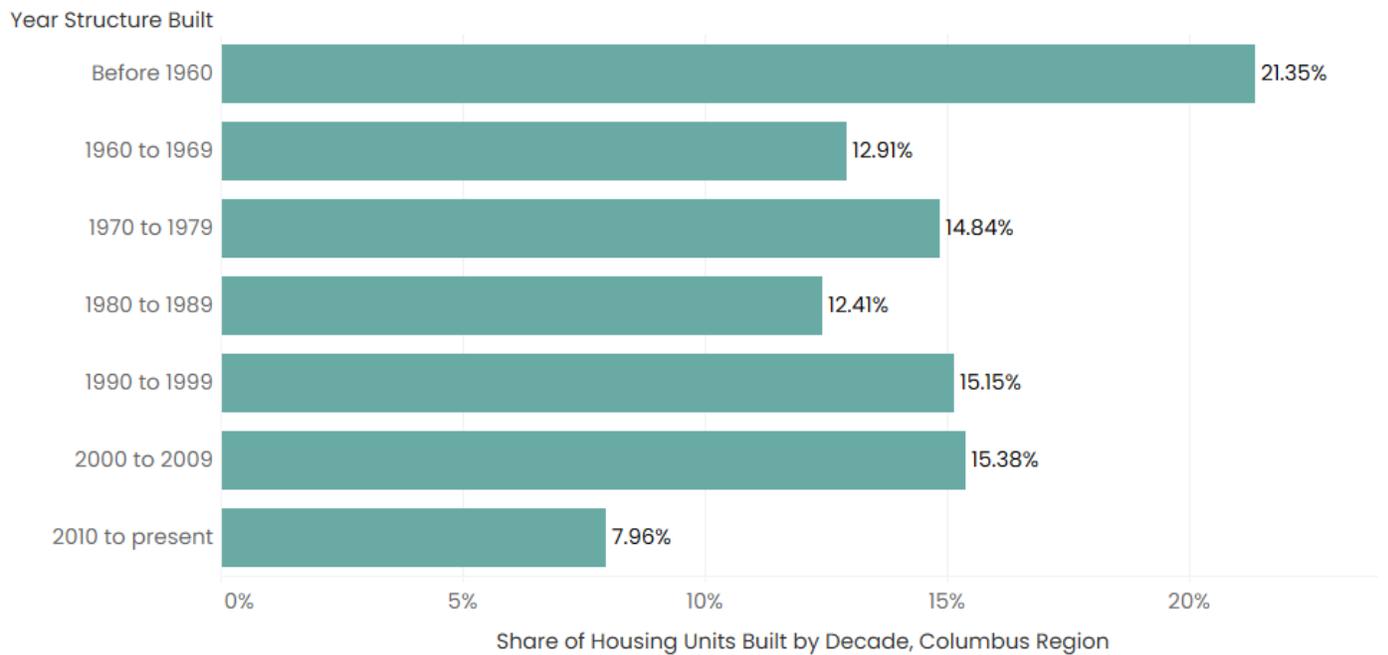
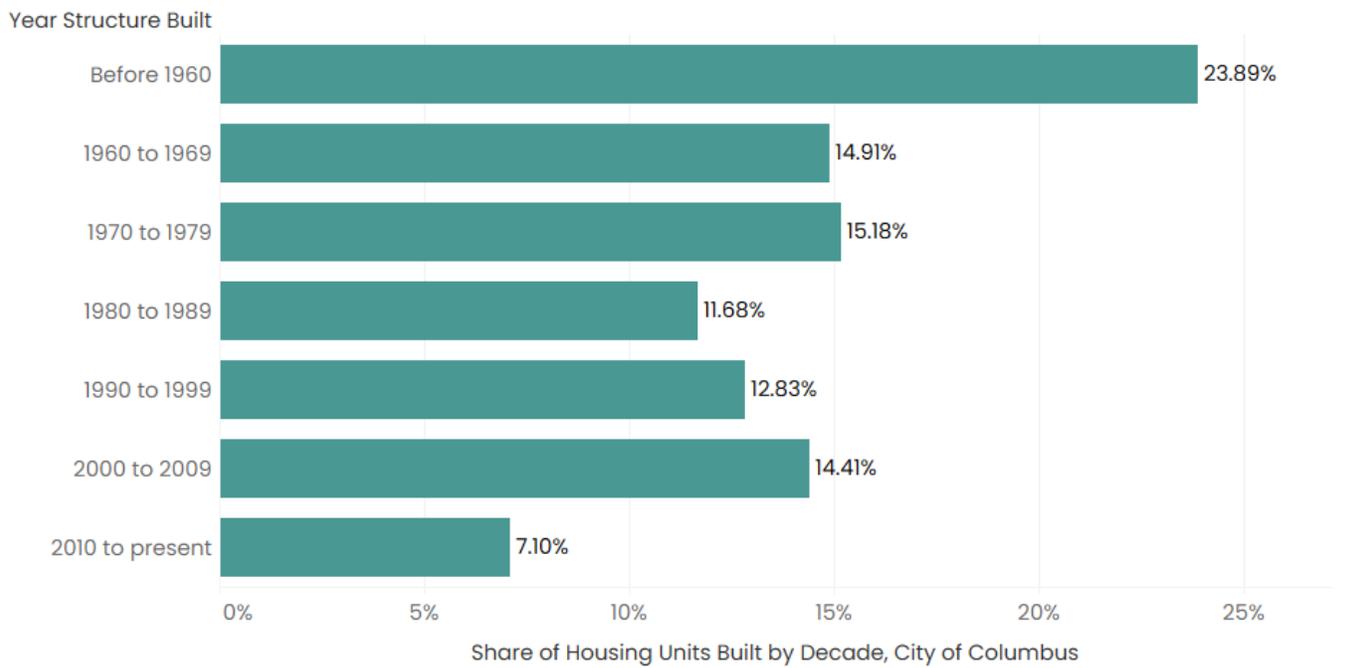
Note: Total add to the total number of occupied housing units in each geography. Unoccupied units are not included in this table because tenure data is not available for these units.

Data Source: 2015–2019 5–Year American Community Survey, Table B25042

One final variable, housing quality, also determines the safety and availability of the city’s housing stock. The age of an area’s housing, for example, can have substantial impact on housing conditions and costs. As housing ages, maintenance costs rise, which can present significant affordability issues for low- and moderate-income homeowners. Aging rental stock can lead to rental rate increases to address physical issues or deteriorating conditions if building owners defer or ignore maintenance needs. Deteriorating housing can also depress neighboring property values, discourage reinvestment, and eventually impact the quality of life in a neighborhood. Additionally, homes built prior to 1978 present the potential for lead exposure risk due to lead-based paint or lead pipes carrying drinking water. Assessing housing conditions in various areas in the city can provide a basis for developing policies and programs to maintain and preserve the quality of the housing stock.

Age of housing in Columbus is shown in Figure 36 below. Census records indicate that the largest share of Columbus’s housing units was built prior to 1960 (24%). The second largest share of housing development occurred between 2000 and 2010 (14%). Except for the 2010s, census data indicates that Columbus experienced the least amount of new residential development in the 1980s. Housing in the Columbus region region’s is similar in age to housing in the City of Columbus, with 21% of all housing units built before 1960. However, the region experienced a slightly greater share of housing development between the 1990 and 2010 than Columbus, reflecting stakeholder input on homebuyers’ desires to move to adjacent jurisdictions, such as Harris, Lee, and Russell Counties.

Figure 9. Age of Housing in Columbus and the Columbus Region



Data Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015–2019

Stakeholders participating in the public engagement process noted that the supply of for-sale housing available in the City of Columbus and the Columbus region has decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Limited housing availability of all types during the pandemic indicates that market stressors may have significantly reduced the city’s vacancy rate. Furthermore, families may choose to “double-up” or share a larger housing unit to reduce the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as job loss or eviction.

Housing Costs and Affordability

The most common housing need identified by stakeholders related to affordability, particularly for low- and moderate-income households. This section will explore housing costs for renters and homeowners in Columbus.

Renter housing costs are examined through the National Low Income Housing Coalition’s annual *Out of Reach* report. This report examines rental housing rates relative to income levels for counties throughout the U.S. The figure below shows annual household income and hourly wages needed to afford Fair Market Rents (FMRs) in for one, two, and three-bedroom rental units. Fair Market Rent (FMR) is a standard set by HUD at the county or regional level for use in administering its Section 8 rental voucher program. FMRs are typically the 40th percentile gross rent (i.e., rent plus utility costs) for typical, non-substandard rental units in the local housing market.

Figure 10. Required Income, Wages, and Hours to Afford Fair Market Rents in Columbus-Muscooke County, 2020



Note: Required income is the annual income needed to afford Fair Market Rents without spending more than 30% of household income on rent. Minimum wage in Columbus is \$7.25. Average renter wages are \$15.70 in Columbus-Muscooke County.

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition *Out of Reach* 2020, Accessed from <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/georgia>

The fair market rent (FMR) of a one-bedroom rental unit in Columbus is \$670. To rent a one-bedroom apartment without being cost burdened i.e., spending more than 30% of income on housing) would require an annual income of least \$26,800. This amount translates to a 40-hour work week at an hourly wage of \$12.88. It would take a 71-hour work week at the minimum wage of \$7.25 to afford the

apartment without being cost burdened. The *Out of Reach* report indicates that the average renter wage in Columbus is \$15.70 per hour. A household earning the average renter wage would be able to afford a one-bedroom apartment at FMR without being cost burdened.

The most common rental unit size in Columbus is 2- or 3-bedroom unit. The *Out of Reach Report* estimates that a two-bedroom rental unit has an estimated FMR of \$790. A three-bedroom unit has an estimated fair market rent of \$1,062. To afford a two-bedroom unit without being cost burdened, a renter would need to earn an annual income of at least \$31,600, or \$15.19 per hour for a 40-hour work week. To afford a three-bedroom unit, a renter's required annual income would increase to \$42,480. A renter working 40 hours per week would need to earn an hourly wage of \$20.42 per hour to afford a three-bedroom unit without being cost burdened. The *Out of Reach Report* further indicates that average renter wages in Columbus-Muscogee County are \$15.75, which is more than the required hourly income for a one- or two-bedroom unit at fair market rent.²⁴ However, at average renter wages, a renter could not rent a 3-bedroom unit at FMR without being cost burdened.

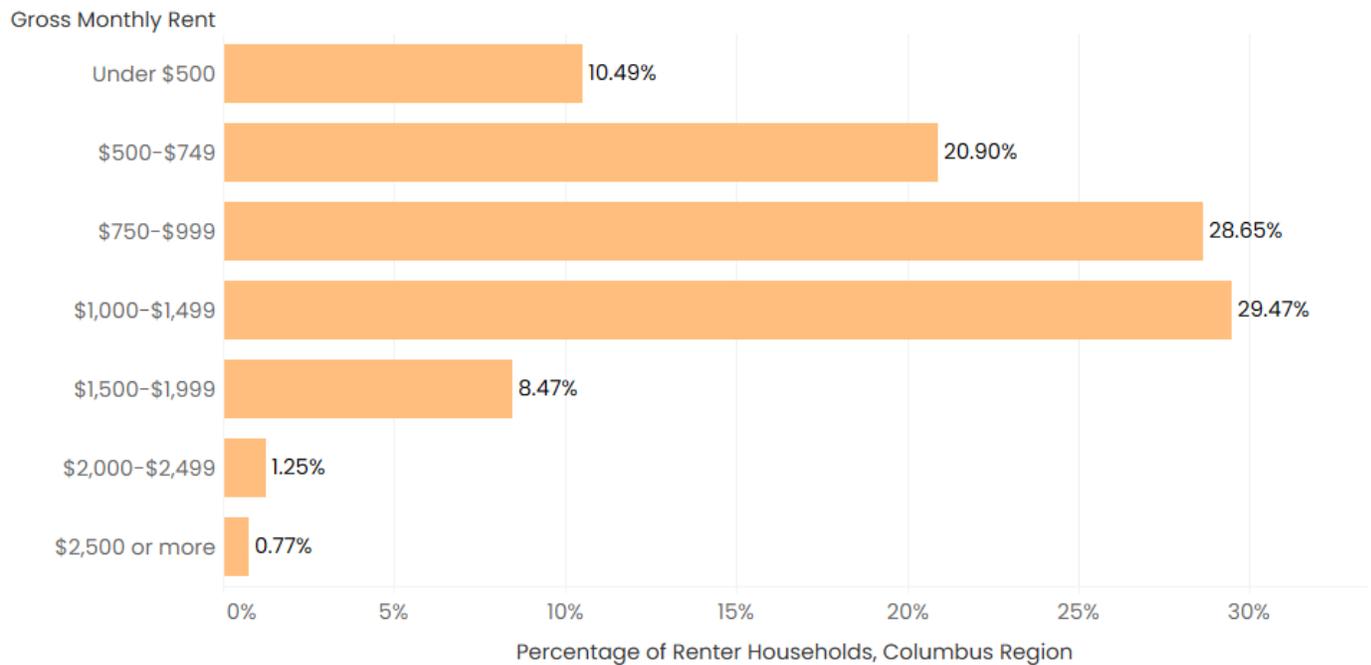
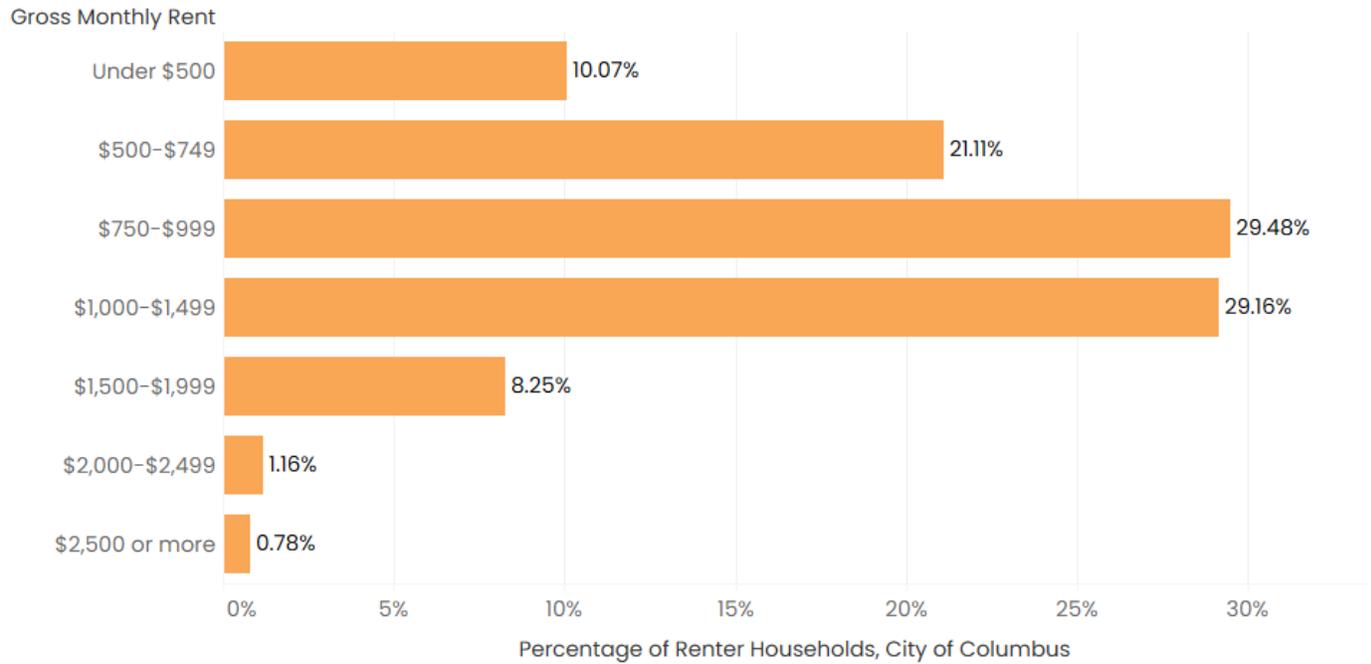
Census data provides a second perspective on rental rates in Columbus, as shown in Figure 38. Approximately 31% of Columbus renters spend less than \$750 per month on rent. Another 30% of Columbus renters spend between \$750 and \$999 per month on rent. 29% of all renters spend between \$1,000 and \$1,499 and around 10% spend more than \$1,500 per month on rent. Census estimates indicate that although one-bedroom and two-bedroom units at fair market rent may be affordable to renters earning the average renter wage, the supply of housing available at fair market rent is limited.

Homeowner housing costs in Columbus offer insight into the affordability of owner-occupied housing in the city. Census estimates, shown in Figure 39, demonstrate that around 3% of Columbus homeowners with a mortgage spend \$500 or less on their monthly housing costs. More than one-quarter (27%) of homeowners with a mortgage spend between \$500-\$999 per month on housing costs. Around one-third (34%) of the city's mortgage-holding homeowners spend between \$1,000 and \$1,499. However, approximately 37% of Columbus homeowners spend more than \$1,500 per month on housing costs with a mortgage. Regional figures indicate nearly identical trends in homeowner housing costs, with 29% spending less than \$1,000 per month, one-third (33%) spending between \$1,000 and \$1,499, and 38% spending more than \$1,500 per month. These figures indicate that for both homeowner and rental housing, only around 30% of all occupied housing costs less than \$1,000, both in Columbus and in the region. The limited supply of housing affordable to low-

²⁴ Note that the average renter wage was derived by the National Low Income Housing Coalition from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data for the purpose of evaluating local housing affordability.

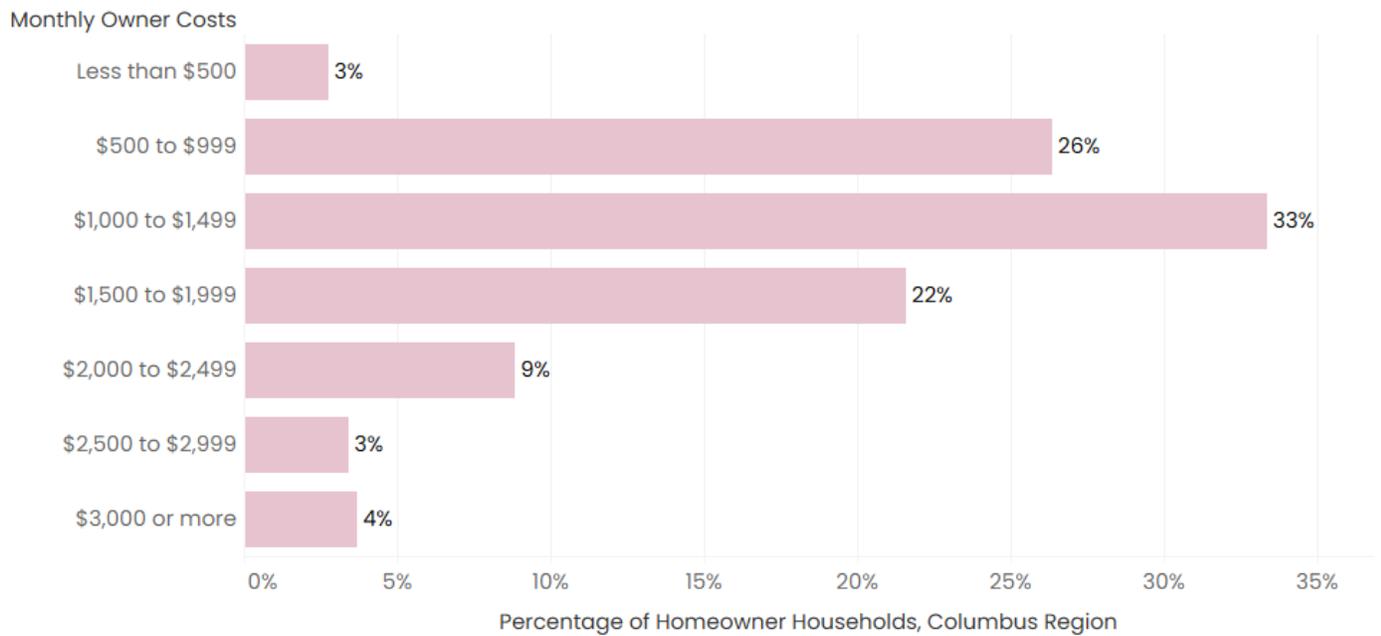
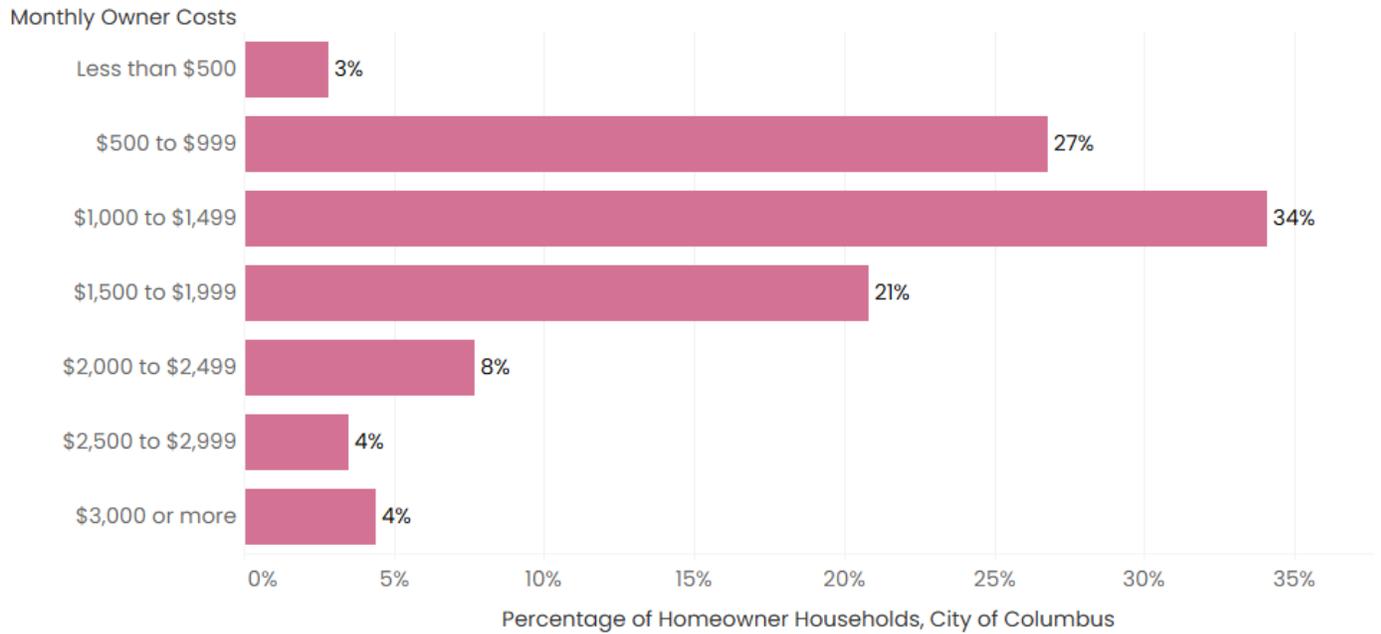
and-moderate income families causes families to become cost burdened or severely cost burdened, or to live in overcrowded conditions in order to find affordable housing.

Figure 11. Gross Rent for Renter Households in Columbus and the Columbus Region



Data Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019, Table B25063

Figure 12. Monthly Owner Costs for Owner Households with a mortgage Columbus and the Columbus Region



Data Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2015–2019, Table DP04

Stakeholders participating in the community engagement process note that the city has a “missing middle” supply of housing, specifically a limited supply of for-sale housing available for \$150,000 to \$250,000. Lack of affordable housing supply has become exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Stakeholders report a missing supply of for-sale housing available at all price levels, due to several factors including out-of-region cash buyers and an overall housing shortage. The city’s overall limited housing supply may also encourage landlords and property managers to raise their rents, causing individuals earning average renter wages to become increasingly burdened by housing costs.

Housing Needs

Housing cost and condition are key components to housing choice. Housing barriers may exist in a jurisdiction when some protected class groups have greater difficulty accessing housing in good condition and that they can afford. To assess affordability and other types of housing needs, HUD defines four housing problems:

- A household is *cost burdened* if monthly housing costs (including mortgage payments, property taxes, insurance, and utilities for owners and rent and utilities for renters) exceed 30% of monthly income.
- A household is *overcrowded* if there is more than 1.0 people per room, not including kitchen or bathrooms.
- A housing unit *lacks complete kitchen facilities* if it lacks one or more of the following: cooking facilities, a refrigerator, or a sink with piped water.
- A housing unit *lacks complete plumbing facilities* if it lacks one or more of the following: hot and cold piped water, a flush toilet, or a bathtub or shower.

HUD also defines four severe housing problems, including a severe cost burden (more than 50% of monthly housing income is spent on housing costs), severe overcrowding (more than 1.5 people per room, not including kitchens or bathrooms), lack of complete kitchen facilities (as described above), and lack of complete plumbing facilities (also as described above).

To assess housing need, HUD receives a special tabulation of data from the U. S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey that is largely not available through standard Census products. This data, known as Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data, counts the number of households that fit certain combination of HUD-specified criteria, such as housing needs by race and ethnicity. CHAS data for Columbus and the Columbus Region is provided in the tables that follow.

In Columbus, around 38% of all households (28,250 households) have at least one housing problem. Approximately 20% of households (14,842 households) have a severe housing problem. Housing problems and severe housing problems occur at slightly lower rates in the Columbus region, where 36% of households have a housing problem and 18% have a severe housing problem.

Looking at housing needs by the race and ethnicity of the householder, Native American, Other, non-Hispanic, Black and Hispanic households experience housing problems at an above average rate. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the city's 173 Native American households have at least one housing problem. Around 51% of Other, non-Hispanic households, 46% of Black households and 39% of Hispanic households have at least one housing problem. Asian and White households have the lowest rates of housing problems, affecting 35% and 30% of these households, respectively.

Severe housing problems also affect specific racial and ethnic groups at above-average rates. Approximately 39% of the city's Native American households has a severe housing problem, as do 27% of Other, non-Hispanic households, 25% of Black households and 23% of Hispanic households. Asian and White households have the lowest rates of severe housing problems, affecting 21% and 15% of these households, respectively.

Table 9 also shows rates of housing need based on the size of the household. In Columbus, non-family households are most likely to have a housing problem, with 46% of non-family households affected by a housing problem. Around 41% of large family households and 33% of small family households also have a housing problem. These rates are relatively similar in the Columbus region, where 45% of non-family households, 41% of large families and 30% of small families have housing problems.

Table 10 examines severe housing cost burden in Columbus. Approximately 17% or 12,714 households in the city experience severe housing cost burden. Black households experience above average rates of severe cost burden, with 23% of Black households spending more than 50% of their monthly income on housing costs. Around 18% of Hispanic households experience severe cost burdens. All other groups experience below average rates of severe cost burdens. Around 16% of Asian households, 14% of Other, non-Hispanic households, and 13% of Native American and White households spend more than 50% of their monthly income on housing costs.

At the regional level, 15% of all households in the 5-county area are severely cost burdened. Black, white, Hispanic and Asian households experience lower rates of severe cost burden in the region. Here, 21% of Black households, 17% of Hispanic households, 15% of Asian households and 11% of white households spend more than 50% of their monthly income on housing costs. However, rates of severe cost burden increase to 17% for Native American households and 18% for Other, non-Hispanic households in the region.

Table 10 also discusses severe housing cost burden by household size. Non-family households have the greatest rate of severe cost burden in the city (27%). Around 15% of all large families of five members or more and 14% of small families also experience severe housing cost burdens. In the region, 25% of non-family households pay more than 50% of their incomes on housing costs, compared to 14% of large families and 12% of small families.

The maps below indicate the prevalence of housing problems in Columbus, along with population by race, ethnicity, and national origin. The highest rates of housing problems are identified in downtown and parts of midtown Columbus along Veterans Parkway, south Columbus along Victory Drive, and east Columbus along Schatulga Road. East Columbus tract 106.06 has the largest share of housing problems (80%) in the city. Demographic data indicates that the tract is 63% Black, 30% white and 4% Hispanic.

Tract 34 in south Columbus has the second highest rate of housing problems, affecting 69% of households in this census tract. This tract is located south of the junction between Fort Benning Road and Victory Drive. 64% of the residents in this tract are Black. Another 17% and white and 14% are Hispanic. This tract also has a large share of residents born in Panama (approximately 128 residents). Tract 111 covering parts of downtown and midtown Columbus has the third highest rate of housing problems. Housing problems affect 64% of all households in the tract. The downtown census tract is 53% white, 40% Black, and 3% Hispanic. Finally, tract 33.01 in south Columbus has the fourth highest rate of housing problems, with 63% of households affected. This census tract is 72% Black, 21% Hispanic, 3% Multiple races, and 3% white. An estimated 62 residents were born in Mexico. Black residents make up the largest share of the population in those census tracts with the highest rates of housing problems. The next section will look at homeownership and mortgage lending in Columbus.

Table 9. Demographics of Households with Disproportionate Housing Needs

Disproportionate Housing Needs	City of Columbus			Columbus Region		
	# with problems	# of households	% with problems	# with problems	# of households	% with problems
Households Experiencing any of the Four Housing Problems						
Race and Ethnicity						
White, Non-Hispanic	9,730	32,485	30.0%	16,214	57,100	28.4%
Black, Non-Hispanic	15,275	32,895	46.4%	20,474	46,409	44.1%
Hispanic	1,785	4,525	39.4%	2,473	6,039	41.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	505	1,459	34.6%	614	1,706	36.0%
Native American, Non-	110	173	63.6%	141	283	49.8%

Hispanic						
Other, Non-Hispanic	845	1,639	51.6%	1,101	2,214	49.7%
Total	28,250	73,176	38.6%	41,017	113,751	36.1%
Household Type and Size						
Family households, <5 People	13,020	39,690	32.8%	19,245	64,280	29.9%
Family households, 5+ People	2,510	6,085	41.2%	3,960	9,689	40.9%
Non-family households	12,725	27,410	46.4%	17,800	39,770	44.8%

Households Experiencing any of the Four Severe Housing Problems	# with problems	# of households	% with problems	# with problems	# of households	% with problems
Race and Ethnicity						
White, Non-Hispanic	4,705	32,480	14.5%	7,446	57,098	13.0%
Black, Non-Hispanic	8,280	32,915	25.2%	10,958	46,433	23.6%
Hispanic	1,055	4,525	23.3%	1,383	6,041	22.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	300	1,459	20.6%	370	1,706	21.7%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	73	186	39.2%	96	296	32.4%
Other, Non-Hispanic	429	1,618	26.5%	611	2,196	27.8%
Total	14,842	73,183	20.3%	20,864	113,770	18.3%

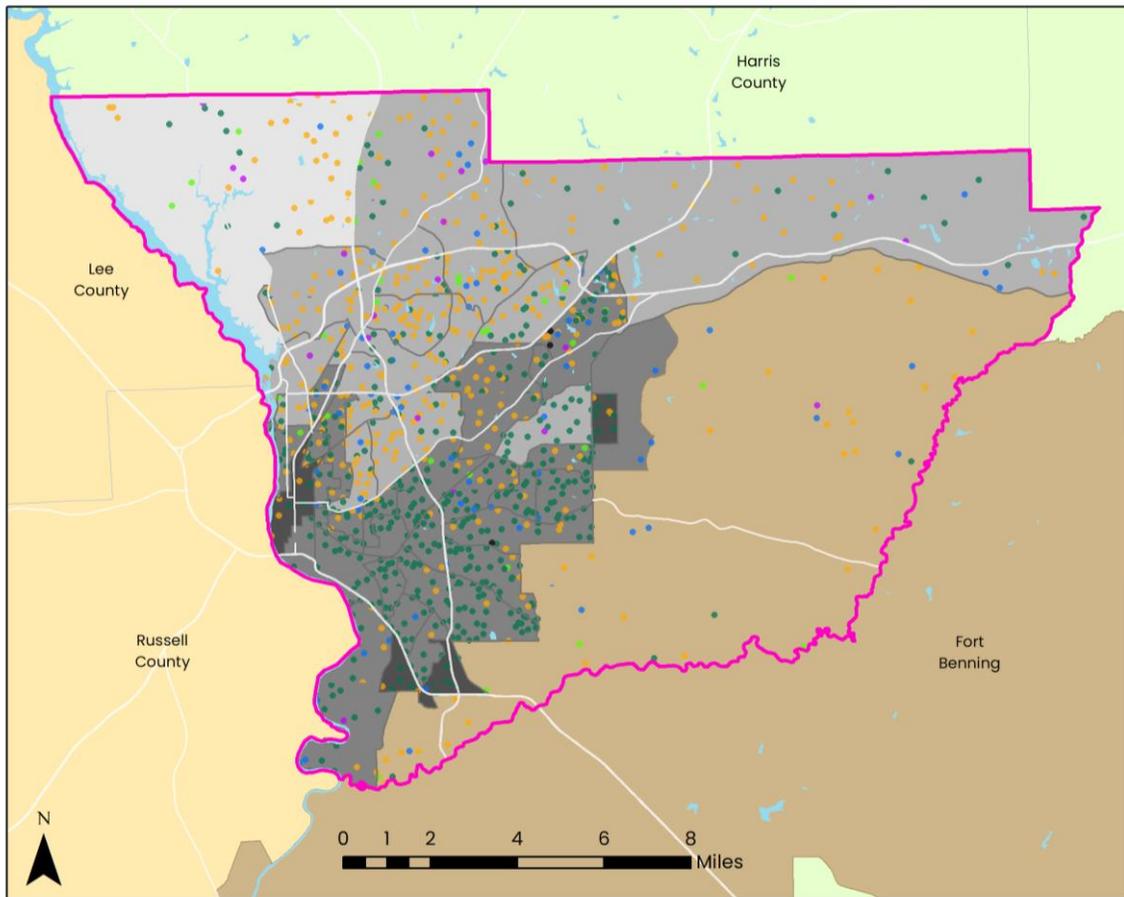
Note: All % represent a share of the total population, except household type and size, which is out of total households.

Source: CHAS, Tables 1, 2, 4

Table 10. Demographics of Households with Severe Housing Cost Burdens

	City of Columbus			Columbus Region		
	# with problems	# of households	% with problems	# with problems	# of households	% with problems
Race and Ethnicity						
White, Non-Hispanic	4,045	32,475	12.5%	6,210	57,085	10.9%
Black, Non-Hispanic	7,400	32,905	22.5%	9,565	46,405	20.6%
Hispanic	795	4,520	17.6%	1,024	6,029	17.0%
Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	230	1,470	15.6%	265	1,719	15.4%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	24	180	13.3%	48	284	16.9%
Other, Non-Hispanic	220	1,635	13.5%	389	2,220	17.5%
Total	12,714	73,185	17.4%	17,501	113,742	15.4%
Household Type and Size						
Family households, <5 People	5,555	40,125	13.8%	7,748	64,997	11.9%
Family households, 5+ People	845	5,650	15.0%	1,248	8,979	13.9%
Non-family households	6,305	23,140	27.2%	8,490	34,403	24.7%
<p>Note: Severe housing cost burden is defined as greater than 50% of income. All % represent a share of the total population within the jurisdiction or region, except household type and size, which is out of total households. The # of households is the denominator for the % with problems, and may differ from the # of households for the table on severe housing problems.</p> <p>Source: CHAS, Tables 7, 9</p>						

Figure 13. Housing Burden and Race and Ethnicity in Columbus



Source: CHAS, 2013-2017

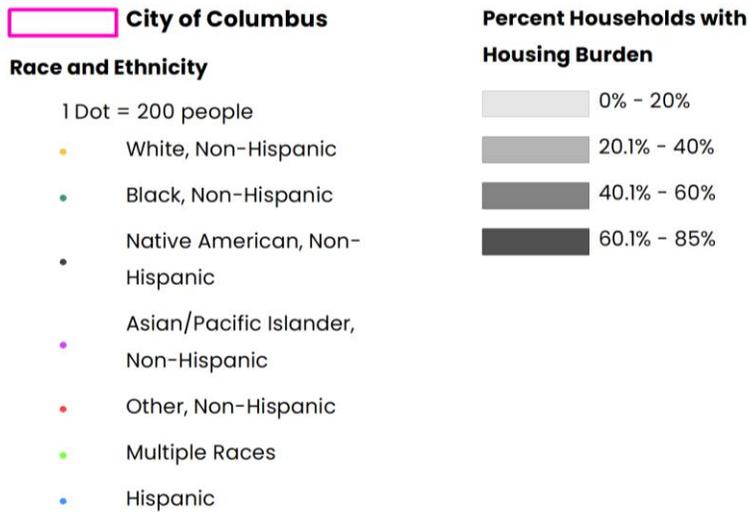
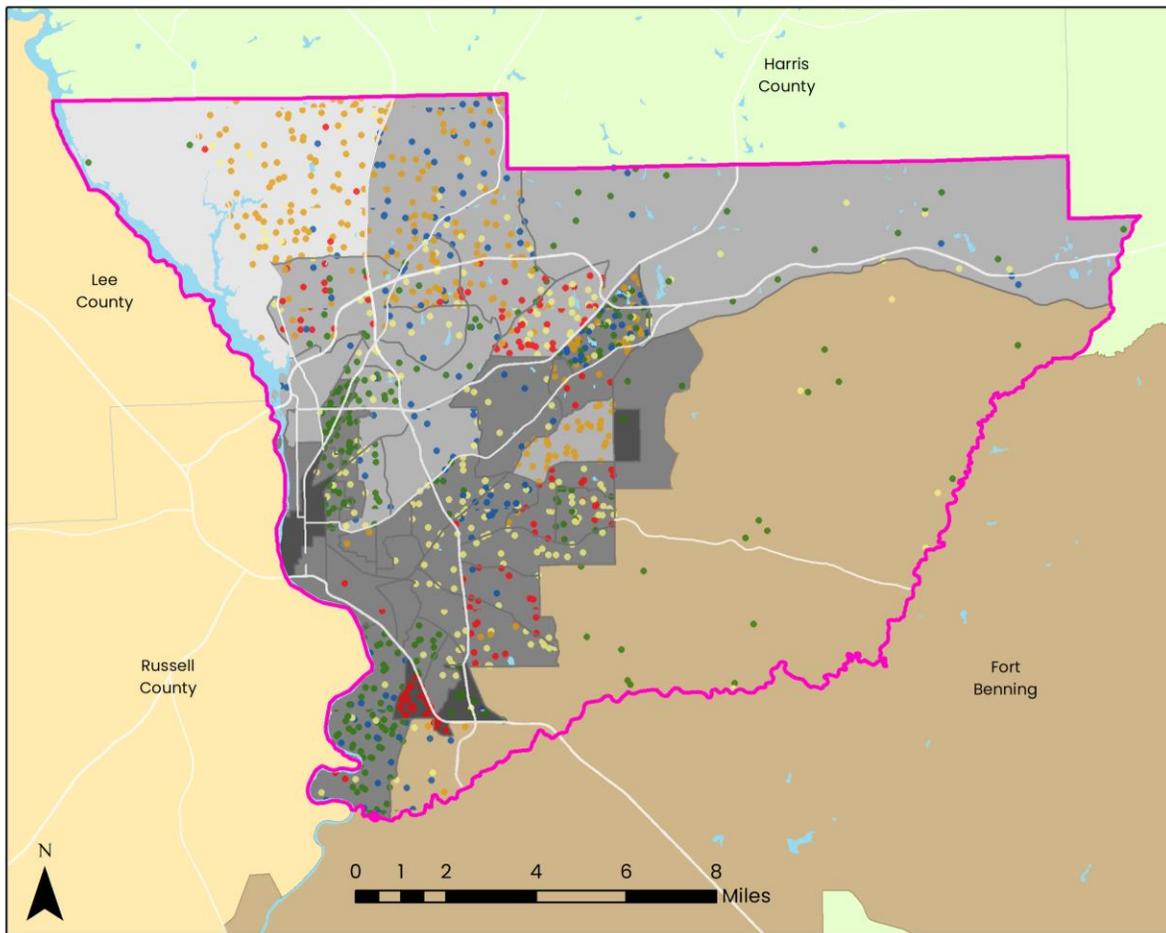
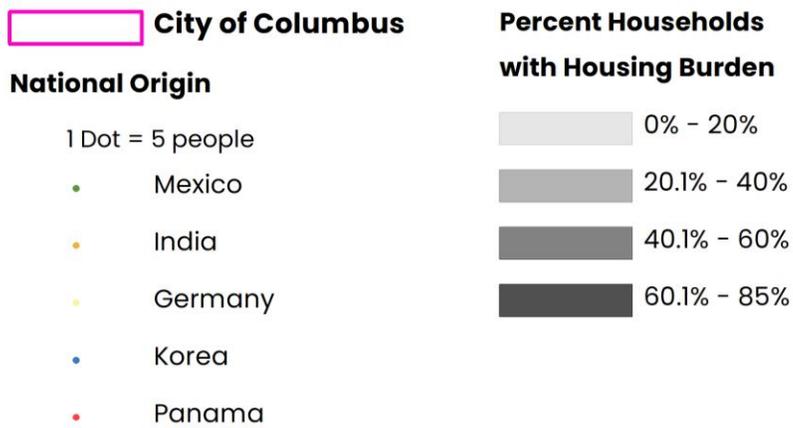


Figure 14. Housing Burdens and National Origin in Columbus



Source: CHAS, 2013-2017



Homeownership and Lending

Homeownership is vital to a community's economic well-being. It allows the opportunity to build wealth, is generally associated with higher levels of civic engagement,²⁵ and is correlated with positive cognitive and behavioral outcomes among children.²⁶

Federal housing policies and discriminatory mortgage lending practices prior to the Fair Housing Act of 1968, along with continuing impediments to access, have had significant impacts on the homeownership rates of racial and ethnic minorities, particularly Black and Hispanic populations. The gap between the white and Black homeownership rate is the largest among racial and ethnic groups. In 2017, the U.S. Census Bureau reported a 21.6 percentage point gap in homeownership rate between white and Black households; just a 2.9 percentage point decrease since 1997.²⁷

Homeownership trends have changed in recent years because of significant events in the housing market and labor force. The homeownership rate for Millennials (the generation born between 1981 and 1997) is 8 percentage points lower than the two previous generations, controlling for age. This discrepancy can be attributed to a multitude of factors ranging from preference to urban areas, cost of education and associated debt, changes in marriage and childbearing patterns, rising housing costs, and the current supply of affordable houses.²⁸

The table that follows shows the number of owner and renter households, as well as the homeownership rate, by race and ethnicity for Columbus. Nearly 49% of all Columbus householders are homeowners. The highest rates of homeownership are held by White, Non-Hispanic households (61%). Asian households also own their homes at an above-average rate (51%) compared to the city. Conversely, Black, Hispanic, Other, non-Hispanic and Native American households have below average rates of homeownership. Only 39% of Black and Hispanic households, 29% of Other, non-Hispanic households and 22% of Native American households are homeowners. Homeownership

²⁵ Manturuk K, Lindblad M, Quercia R. "Homeownership and civic engagement in low-income urban neighborhoods: a longitudinal analysis." *Urban Affairs Review*. 2012;48(5):731-60.

²⁶ Haurin, Donald R. et al. "The Impact of Homeownership on Child Outcomes." *Low-Income Homeownership Working Paper Series*. Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University. October 2001, <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/liho01-14.pdf>.

²⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. Homeownership Rates by Race and Ethnicity of Householder: 1994 to 2017.

²⁸ Choi, Jung et al. "Millennial Homeownership: Why Is It So Low, and How Can We Increase It?" The Urban Institute. February 2000. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98729/millennial_homeownership_0.pdf

rates are higher in the region for all racial and ethnic groups, with Native American households experiencing the largest increase in homeownership rate to 32% (up 10 percentage points). 35% of Other, non-Hispanic households, 41% of Hispanic households, 44% of Black households and 52% of Asian households are also homeowners in the region. However, these groups fall below the regional average homeownership rate of 55%. White households are the only group with an above-average homeownership rate at 66%.

The maps that follow show the share of owners and renters by census tract in Columbus. Renting is most common in uptown Columbus south of 35th Street, downtown Columbus south of 9th Street, properties on the north side of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and several tracts adjacent to Fort Benning. Many of these areas are sites of large public housing and other publicly supported housing sites such as Columbus Commons, Arbor Pointe Apartments, and Ashley Station, which are owned and operated by the Housing Authority of Columbus, GA. Housing in several of these tracts is composed of more than 90% renters.

Conversely, homeownership rates are greatest in the city’s northwest corner (west of River Road), where the homeownership rate is 90%, and in the Panhandle area (encompassing northeast Columbus from Blackmon Road to the Talbot County line), where the homeownership rate is 86%. A third area in midtown Columbus, covering Hilton Heights and Clubview Heights, has a homeownership rate of 87.5%.

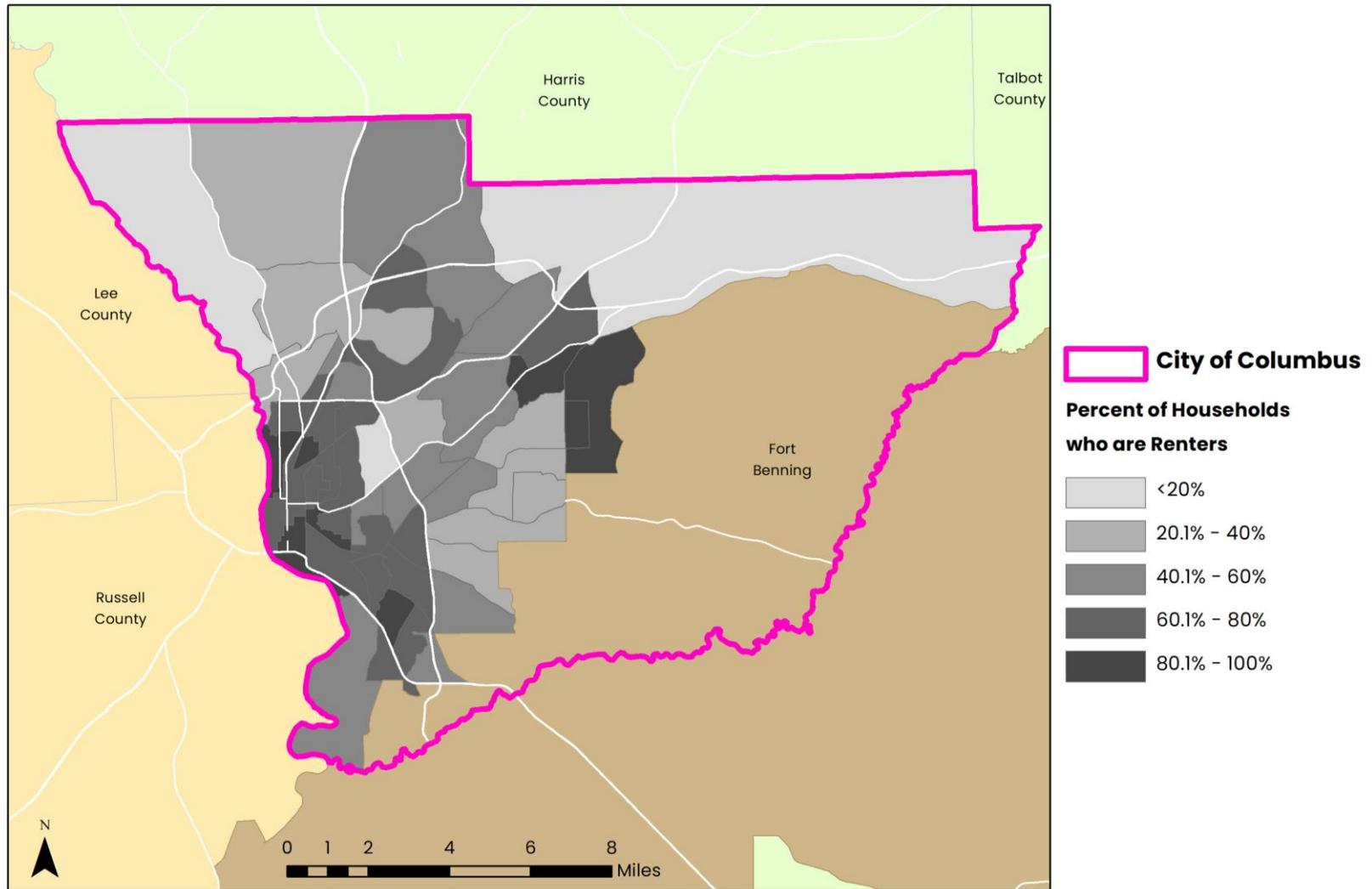
Table 11. Homeownership and Rental Rates by Race and Ethnicity

Householder Race/Ethnicity	Columbus			Columbus Region		
	Owner Households	Renter Households	Home-ownership Rate	Owner Households	Renter Households	Home-ownership Rate
Non-Hispanic						
White	19,725	12,750	60.7%	37,520	19,565	65.7%
Black	12,750	20,155	38.7%	20,350	26,055	43.9%
Asian	750	720	51.0%	900	819	52.4%
Native American	40	140	22.2%	90	194	31.7%
Other	455	1,180	27.8%	770	1,450	34.7%
Hispanic	1,740	2,780	38.5%	2,489	3,540	41.3%
Total	35,460	37,725	48.5%	62,119	51,623	54.6%

Note: Data presented are number of households, not individuals.

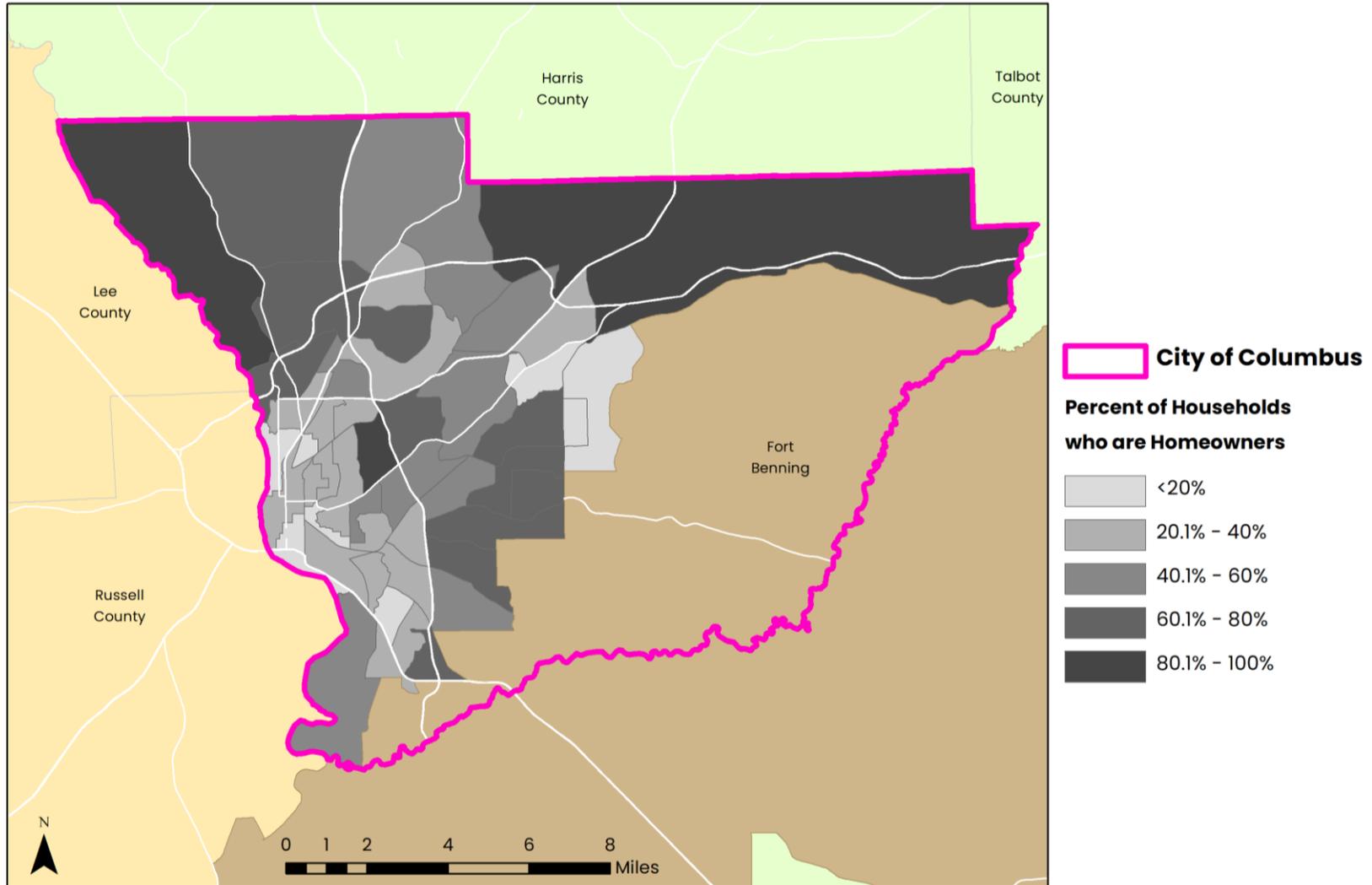
Source: CHAS Table 9

Figure 42. Share of Households that are Renters in Columbus



Source: 5-Year ACS Estimates, 2015-2019

Figure 15. Share of Households that are Homeowners in Columbus



Source: 5-Year ACS Estimates, 2015-2019

Mortgage Lending

Prospective homebuyers need access to mortgage credit, and programs that offer homeownership should be available without discrimination. The proceeding data and analysis assesses the degree to which the housing needs of local residents are being met by home loan lenders.

The Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975 (HMDA) requires most mortgage lending institutions to disclose detailed information about their home-lending activities annually. The objectives of the HMDA include ensuring that borrowers and loan applicants are receiving fair treatment in the home loan market.

The national 2019 HMDA data consists of information for 15.1 million home loan applications reported by 5,508 home lenders, including banks, savings associations, credit unions, and mortgage companies.²⁹ HMDA data, which is provided by the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC), includes the type, purpose, and characteristics of each home mortgage application that lenders receive during the calendar year. It also includes additional data related to those applications including loan pricing information, action taken, property location (by census tract), and information about loan applicants such as sex, race, ethnicity, and income.

The source for this analysis is tract-level HMDA data for census tracts in Columbus for 2019, which includes a total of 2,525 home purchase loan application records.³⁰ Within each record, some data variables are 100% reported: "Loan Type," "Loan Amount," and "Action Taken," for example, but other data fields are less complete. According to the HMDA data, these records represent applications taken entirely by mail, Internet, or phone in which the applicant declined to identify their sex, race and/or ethnicity. Missing race, ethnicity, and sex data are potentially problematic for an assessment of discrimination.

Of total mortgage loan applications during the year examined, 9.2% were denied. There is no requirement for reporting reasons for a loan denial, and this information was not provided for about 0.6% of home purchase loan denials. Further, the HMDA data does not include a borrower's total financial qualifications such as an actual credit score, property type and value, loan-to-value ratio, or loan product choices. Research has shown that differences in denial rates among racial or ethnic

²⁹ Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. "FFIEC Announces Availability of 2019 Data on Mortgage Lending." June 24, 2020. <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/newsroom/ffiec-announces-availability-2019-data-mortgage-lending/>

³⁰ Includes applications for the purchase or refinance of one-to-four single family dwellings in which the property is or will be occupied as the owner's principal dwelling and in which the mortgage will be secured as first lien. Includes applications for conventional, FHA-insured, VA-guaranteed, and FSA/RHS-guaranteed loans.

groups can arise from these credit-related factors not available in the HMDA data.³¹ Despite these limitations, the HMDA data play an important role in fair lending enforcement. Bank examiners frequently use HMDA data in conjunction with information from loan files to assess an institution's compliance with fair lending laws.

Complete information about applicant race, ethnicity, and income is available for 2,174 purchase loan applications and 498 home refinance loans (about 76% of all purchase and refinance applications). Forty-seven (47%) percent of applications were by white, non-Hispanic applicants, 26% were by Black, non-Hispanic applicants and 7% were by Hispanic applicants. Asian and Other, non-Hispanic applicants made up 4% and 2%, respectively. Compared to overall population shares, this breakdown indicates that white households are overrepresented among purchase and refinance loan applications relative to their population citywide (47% of loans versus 40% of the population). Hispanic and Asian applicants have a rate of loan approvals that nearly equals their share of the population. Hispanic applicants make up 8% of loans versus 7% of the population while Asian applicants make up 2% of loans and 3% of the population. Conversely, Black residents make up a smaller share of the loan applicant pool than they do the city's population (26% of loans versus 46% of the population).

The table below shows approval rates for completed home purchase and refinance loan applications by race and ethnicity at various income levels.³² For the City of Columbus, the median income in 2019 according to HUD income limits was \$59,600. The income tiers below represent low-income applicants earning up to 80% AMI (\$47,700), middle income applicants earning between 80% to 120% AMI (\$47,701 to \$71,520), and high-income applicants earning more than 120% AMI (over \$71,520). Not included in these figures are applications that were withdrawn or closed due to incompleteness such that no decision was made regarding approval or denial.

³¹ R. B. Avery, Bhutta N., Brevoort K.P., and Canne, G.B. 2012. "The Mortgage Market in 2011: Highlights from the Data Reported Under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act." Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. Federal Reserve Bulletin, Vol. 98, No. 6.

³² The low-income category includes applicants with a household income at or below 80% of area median family income (MFI). The middle income range includes applicants with household incomes from 81% to 150% MFI, and the upper income category consists of applicants with a household income above 150% MFI.

Table 12. Loan Approval Rates by Race and Ethnicity in Columbus Census Tracts, 2019

Applicant Income		Applicant Race and Ethnicity					All Applicants [†]
		Non-Latino				Latino/ Hispanic	
		White	Black	Asian	Other		
Home Purchase Loans							
Low Income	Completed Applications	301	239	10	11	46	693
	Denial Rate	10.0%	15.9%	30.0%	9.1%	15.2%	14.3%
Middle Income	Completed Applications	332	185	23	12	55	690
	Denial Rate	3.9%	11.4%	4.3%	8.3%	12.7%	7.5%
High Income	Completed Applications	607	184	56	21	92	1,069
	Denial Rate	4.0%	9.2%	5.4%	4.8%	4.3%	6.2%
All Applicants^{††}	Completed Applications	1,254	608	90	44	194	2,525
	Denial Rate	5.5%	12.5%	7.8%	6.8%	9.3%	9.2%
Home Refinance Loans							
Low Income	Completed Applications	75	78	5	3	14	203
	Denial Rate	28.0%	33.3%	40.0%	66.7%	35.7%	31.5%
Middle Income	Completed Applications	41	20	2	0	4	86
	Denial Rate	22.0%	45.0%	50.0%	0.0%	75.0%	38.4%
High Income	Completed Applications	172	50	23	3	8	289
	Denial Rate	14.5%	40.0%	21.7%	0.0%	25.0%	22.1%
All Applicants^{††}	Completed Applications	414	292	38	12	50	987
	Denial Rate	18.4%	26.4%	26.3%	16.7%	24.0%	21.8%

Note: “Completed applications” includes applications that were approved but not accepted, denied, and approved with a loan originated. It does not include applications withdrawn by the applicant or closed for incompleteness.

[†] “All applicants” includes records where race/ethnicity information was not provided by the applicant in a mail, internet, or telephone application.

^{††} “All applicants” includes applicants where no applicant income was indicated.

Data Source: FFIEC 2019 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data, Accessed via www.consumerfinance.gov/data-research/hmda

HMDA data indicate that at low-incomes, 14% of all home purchase loan applications in Columbus were denied in 2019. Asian applicants experienced the highest rate of purchase loan denials (30%). Hispanic and Black applicants also experienced above-average rates of purchase loan denial, with denial rates of 15% and 16%, respectively. Only 10% of low-income white applicants and 9% of low-income Other applicants were denied a purchase loan. A significantly higher share of refinance loans was denied to low-income borrowers in 2019 (32%). All non-white groups experienced above average rates of refinance loan denial at low incomes. Other, non-Hispanic applicants experienced the highest rate of refinance loan denial among low-income applicants (66%), followed by Asian applicants (40%), Hispanic applicants (36%) and Black applicants (33%). 28% of low-income white applicant were denied a refinance loan.

At middle incomes, around 8% of all home purchase loans and 38% of all refinance loans were denied. Hispanic applicants earning middle incomes experienced the highest rate of purchase loan denial (13%), followed by Black applicants (11%) and Other, non-Hispanic applicants (8%). At middle incomes, only 4% of white and Asian applicants were denied mortgages. Refinance loans were denied at significantly higher rates, with three out of four Hispanic applicants and 50% of Asian applicants being denied a loan. Black applicants were also denied at an above average rate (45%). 22% of White applicants were denied a refinance loan at middle incomes.

At high incomes, only 6% of purchase loans and 22% of refinance loans were denied in 2019. However, Black applicants for purchase loans had twice the denial rate (9%) as their white counterparts (4%), even at high incomes. All other groups experienced below average denial rates at high incomes, including a 4% denial rate for high income Hispanic applicants and a 5% denial rate for high income Asian and Other, non-Hispanic applicants. Similarly, high income Black applicants applying for a refinance loan were denied at a rate of 40%, nearly twice the city average. Around 25% of Hispanic applicants were denied a refinance loan at high incomes, as were 22% of Asian applicants and 15% of white applicants. Higher rates of refinance loan denial for Black applicants restricts the ability of these applicants to obtain more favorable interest rates and other terms over the length of their mortgage. This disparate effect may have long term ramifications for the cost of housing for Black homeowners, and may impact their ability to afford necessary improvements or maintenance.

Stakeholders participating in the public engagement process indicate that the housing market has tightened significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. One contributing factor is a number of new homebuyers from other markets (e.g., west coast, northeast) who can make cash payments to purchase housing. Stakeholders note that local buyers who are not “cash heavy” are unable to

compete for housing, especially if they are using an FHA loan to make a home purchase. Furthermore, individuals requiring any assistance from the seller (e.g., closing costs) are not as attractive to sellers as those homebuyers who do not need assistance. While programs such as the Georgia Dream grant are designed to help first-time homebuyers purchase a home, stakeholders note that even this program can make a homebuyer less attractive to sellers. The Georgia Dream grant offers \$15,000 toward down payment assistance. However, the loan application requires at least two rounds of approval from the Georgia Dream program, which can extend the homebuying process from its normal 30-day period to a 45-day period. By slowing down the loan approval process, stakeholders report that the program puts buyers at a disadvantage when the housing market is highly competitive. Together, these variables create significant challenges for all Columbus homebuyers, and particularly those who have low-to-moderate incomes.

Zoning, Affordability, and Housing Choice

Comprehensive land use planning is a critical process by which communities address a myriad of public policy issues such as housing, transportation, health, recreation, environmental protection, commercial and retail services, and land values, and address how the interconnection and complexity of these issues can ultimately impact the entire municipality. “The land use decisions made by a community shape its very character – what it’s like to walk through, what it’s like to drive through, who lives in it, what kinds of jobs and businesses exist in it, how well the natural environment survives, and whether the community is an attractive one or an ugly one.”³³ Likewise, decisions regarding land use and zoning have a direct and profound impact on affordable housing and fair housing choice, shaping a community or region’s potential diversity, growth, and opportunity for all. Zoning determines where housing can be built, the type of housing that is allowed, and the amount and density of housing that can be provided. Zoning also can directly or indirectly affect the cost of developing housing, making it harder or easier to accommodate affordable housing. The following sections will explore how the zoning and land use codes in Columbus impact housing affordability and fair housing choice.

³³ John M. Levy. Contemporary Urban Planning, Eighth Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009.

Intersection of Local Zoning with Federal and State Fair Housing Laws

One goal of zoning is to balance individual property rights with the power of government to promote and protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the overall community. Zoning codes regulate how a parcel of land in a community may be used and the density of development. Local governments may divide their jurisdiction into zoning districts by adopting a zoning map consistent with the comprehensive plan; define categories of permitted and special/conditional uses for those districts; and establish design or performance standards for those uses. Zoning may regulate the height, shape, and placement of structures and lot sizes or shapes. Jurisdictions also can expressly prohibit certain types of uses within zoning districts.³⁴ In this way, local ordinances may define the type and density of housing resources available to residents, developers, and other organizations within certain areas, and as a result influence the availability and affordability of housing.

While local governments have the power to enact zoning and land use regulations, that power is limited by state and federal fair housing laws (e.g., the Georgia Fair Housing Act (GFHA), the federal FHAA, the Americans with Disabilities Act, constitutional due process, and equal protection). The FHAA prohibits both private individuals and government authorities from denying a member of a protected class equal access to housing, including through the enforcement of a local zoning ordinance that disproportionately limits housing choice for protected persons. In *Texas Department of Community Affairs v. The Inclusive Communities Project*, a 2015 landmark disparate impact case under the FHA, the Supreme Court affirmed that part of the FHA's central purpose is to eradicate discriminatory housing practices, including specifically unlawful zoning laws and other housing restrictions.

Besides intentional discrimination and disparate impact, discrimination on the basis of disability also includes:

[A] refusal to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, when such accommodations may be necessary to afford such person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. FHA § 804(f)(3)(b).

This provision has been held to apply to zoning and land use decisions by local governments.

³⁴ Local government power to regulate land use derives from the State's expressly delegated police power, first to municipal governments and then to counties, as found in the various enabling statutes of the state constitution and Official Code of Georgia Annotated. See O.C.G.A. § 36-66-1 *et seq.* (zoning authority cities). State law grants local municipalities authority to adopt and enact local comprehensive plans, but such plans are not intended to limit or compromise the right of the governing body of any county or municipality to exercise the power of zoning. See O.C.G.A § 36-70-5.

The Georgia Fair Housing Act permits political subdivisions to adopt local ordinances against discriminatory housing practices, but despite Georgia state law generally leaving zoning and land use regulations to local decision-making, O.C.G.A. § 8-3-220 explicitly precludes the expansion (or limitation) of fair housing rights by local jurisdictions beyond what is provided for in the state law.³⁵

Columbus Zoning Ordinance Review

Although comprehensive plans and zoning and land use codes play an important role in regulating the health and safety of the structural environment, overly restrictive codes can negatively impact housing affordability and fair housing choice within a jurisdiction. Examples of zoning provisions that most commonly result in barriers to fair housing choice include:

- Restrictive forms of land use that exclude any specific form of housing, particularly multi-family housing, or that require large lot sizes or low-density that deter affordable housing development by limiting its economic feasibility;
- Restrictive definitions of family that impede unrelated individuals from sharing a dwelling unit;
- Placing administrative and siting constraints on group homes for persons with disabilities;
- Restrictions making it difficult for residents with disabilities to locate housing in certain neighborhoods or to modify their housing;
- Restrictions on occupancy of alternative sources of affordable housing such as accessory dwellings, mobile homes, and mixed-use structures.

Columbus's treatment of these types of issues is explored and evaluated in the table and narrative below.

Because zoning codes present a crucial area of analysis for a study of impediments to fair housing choice, the latest available Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) for Columbus was reviewed and evaluated against a list of ten common fair housing issues. Taken together, these issues give a picture of (1) the degree to which exclusionary zoning provisions may impact affordable housing opportunities within the jurisdiction and (2) the degree to which the zoning code may impact housing opportunities for persons with disabilities. The zoning ordinance was assigned a risk score

³⁵ "A political subdivision of this state may adopt verbatim the laws against discriminatory housing practices cited in Code Section 8-3-202, 8-3-203, 8-3-204, 8-3-205, or 8-3-222 of this article as a local ordinance but may not expand or reduce the rights granted by this article." O.C.G.A. § 8-3-220.

of either 1, 2, or 3 for each of the ten issues and was then given an aggregate score calculated by averaging the individual scores, with the possible scores defined as follows:

1 = low risk – the provision poses little risk for discrimination or limitation of fair housing choice, or is an affirmative action that intentionally promotes and/or protects affordable housing and fair housing choice;

2 = medium risk – the provision is neither among the most permissive nor most restrictive; while it could complicate fair housing choice, its effect is not likely to be widespread;

3 = high risk – the provision causes or has potential to result in systematic and widespread housing discrimination or the limitation of fair housing choice, or is an issue where the jurisdiction could take affirmative action to further affordable housing or fair housing choice but has not.

Research has shown that restricting housing choice for certain historically/socio-economically disadvantaged groups and protected classes can happen in any number of ways and should be viewed on a continuum. The zoning analysis matrix developed for this report and the narrative below are not designed to assert whether Columbus code creates a per se violation of the FHA or HUD regulations, but are meant as a tool to highlight significant areas where zoning and land use ordinances may otherwise jeopardize the spirit and intent of fair housing protections and HUD’s AFFH standards for its entitlement communities.

The issues chosen for discussion show where zoning ordinances and policies could go further to protect fair housing choice for protected and disadvantaged classes, and yet still fulfill the zoning objective of protecting the public’s health, safety, and general welfare. Specifically, the issues highlighted by the matrix inform, first, the degree to which the zoning ordinance may be overly restrictive and exclusionary to the point of artificially limiting the affordable housing inventory and directly contributing to higher housing and rental costs. And secondly, the matrix helps inform the impact the City’s regulations may have on housing opportunities for persons with disabilities, a protected class under state and federal fair housing law.

The following chart lists the ten issues reviewed and Columbus’s score for each issue.

Table 13. Columbus Zoning Code Risk Scores

Issue	Risk Score
1a. Does the jurisdiction’s definition of “household” have the effect of preventing unrelated individuals from sharing the same residence? Is the definition unreasonably restrictive? 1b. Does the definition of “household” discriminate against or treat differently unrelated individuals with disabilities (or members of any other protected class)?	1

Table 13. Columbus Zoning Code Risk Scores

Issue	Risk Score
<p>2a. Does the zoning code treat housing for individuals with disabilities (e.g. group homes, congregate living homes, supportive services housing, personal care homes, etc.) differently from other single family residential and multifamily residential uses? For example, is such housing only allowed in certain residential districts, must a special or conditional use permit be granted before siting such housing in certain residential districts, etc.?</p> <p>2b. Does the zoning ordinance unreasonably restrict housing opportunities for individuals with disabilities who require onsite supportive services? Or is housing for individuals with disabilities allowed in the same manner as other housing in residential districts?</p>	3
<p>3a. Do the jurisdiction’s policies, regulations, and/or zoning ordinances provide a process for persons with disabilities to seek reasonable modifications or reasonable accommodations to zoning, land use, or other regulatory requirements?</p> <p>3b. Does the jurisdiction require a public hearing to obtain public input for specific exceptions to zoning and land-use rules for applicants with disabilities? If so, is the public hearing process only required for applicants seeking housing for persons with disabilities or required for all applicants?</p>	2
<p>4. Does the ordinance impose spacing or dispersion requirements on certain protected housing types?</p>	1
<p>5. Does the jurisdiction restrict any inherently residential uses protected by fair housing laws (such as residential substance abuse treatment facilities) only to non-residential zones?</p>	3
<p>6. Does the jurisdiction’s zoning and land use rules constitute exclusionary zoning that precludes development of affordable or low-income housing by imposing unreasonable residential design regulations (such as high minimum lot sizes, wide street frontages, large setbacks, low FARs, large minimum building square footage or large livable floor areas, restrictions on number of bedrooms per unit, and/or low maximum building heights)?</p>	1
<p>7a. Does the zoning ordinance fail to provide residential districts where multi-family housing is permitted as of right? Are multifamily dwellings excluded from all single family dwelling districts?</p> <p>7b. Do multi-family districts restrict development only to low-density housing types?</p>	1
<p>8. Are unreasonable restrictions placed on the construction, rental, or occupancy of alternative types of affordable or low-income housing (for example, accessory dwellings or mobile/manufactured homes)?</p>	1
<p>9a. Are the jurisdiction’s design and construction requirements (as contained in the zoning ordinance or building code) congruent with the Fair Housing Amendments Act’s accessibility standards for design and construction?</p> <p>9b. Is there any provision for monitoring compliance?</p>	2
<p>10. Does the zoning ordinance include an inclusionary zoning provision or provide any incentives for the development of affordable housing or housing for protected classes?</p>	2
<p>Average Risk Score</p>	<p>1.7</p>

Columbus’s total average risk score (calculated by taking the average of the 10 individual scores) is **1.7**, indicating that overall there is **medium** risk of the zoning regulations contributing to discriminatory housing treatment or impeding fair housing choice.

Questions 1a and **1b** in Table 14 cover Columbus’s definition of “household.” While the city does not define “household,” it provides a flexible definition of “family” as “any number of individuals, not necessarily related, living together as a single housekeeping unit with kitchen facilities on the premises.” The Departments of Justice and Housing and Urban Development have jointly established that persons with disabilities must be allowed to live together in single-family districts, even if they live in group homes. Any definition of “family” or “household” that permits unrelated individuals to live together but subjects group homes of the same size to a more rigorous review or approval process or prohibits group homes altogether is facially discriminatory.³⁶ Columbus’s permissive definition of “family” allows two or more unrelated persons, including persons with disabilities” to form a household unit without being treated differently than related persons forming a household unit.

Questions 2a and **2b** inquire about Columbus’s treatment of housing for persons with disabilities. Housing that is restricted by zoning district regulations, spacing requirements, and special use permits has the effect of limiting the amount and type of housing available to persons with disabilities. Columbus’s UDO lists two housing types for persons with disabilities. These housing types are assisted living facilities and personal care homes. Assisted living facilities serve elderly residents, offering independent living facilities, assisted living or skilled nursing care. Personal care homes serve two or more adults that may or may not be disabled, providing personal care services in a residential setting. The Type I personal care home, which allows up to six adult clients to live in a residential setting, is permitted by right in 11 of the city’s zoning districts. Therefore, UDO does not unreasonably restrict the placement of personal care homes in the city.

However, it should be noted that the UDO excludes individuals undergoing treatment for current or former use of addictive or controlled substances from its definition of “disabled.” Under the Fair Housing Act, a “drug addiction (other than addiction cause by current, illegal use of a controlled substance)” is considered a “physical or mental impairment.” A person with a former drug addiction is considered a person with a disability under the Fair Housing Act. Furthermore, the Fair Housing Act does not treat persons living in a home for persons in recovery any differently than housing for other

³⁶ Department of Justice and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. (November 2016) “State and Local Land Use Laws and Practices and the Application of the Fair Housing Act,” p.7-8.

<https://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/909956/download>

persons with disabilities. Possible disparate treatment of “transitional housing facilities” or similar housing types for members of this protected class should be mitigated through changes to the city’s definition of “disabled.”³⁷

Questions 3a and 3b explore the city’s reasonable accommodations policies for persons with disabilities seeking relief from zoning or other regulations. For persons with disabilities desiring to live alone or in a community setting, a reasonable accommodations ordinance can help the resident(s) make alterations to their unit without acquiring an approved variance or undergoing a public hearing.

The UDO allows special exemption variances for encroachment into the minimum building setback. Any reduction of the minimum setback which does not exceed 25% can be approved through an administrative approval. Therefore, persons seeking to add accessible accommodations to a residential unit may not be disparately impacted by the city’s special use variance process. However, the creation of a reasonable accommodation or reasonable modification ordinance may help explain the administrative approval process and expand the process, where needed, for persons seeking to make their homes more accessible.

Question 4 explores the city’s spacing or dispersion requirements for protected housing types – specifically housing types serving persons with disabilities. Regulations for Type I personal care homes are found in Sections 3.2.50 of the UDO. These regulations do not mandate spacing or dispersion requirements for Type I personal care homes. Assisted living facilities are not listed on the Permitted, Special Exception and Prohibited Uses table, but may be allowed without spacing requirements as a “similar use” to the city’s Type II personal care homes (See Section 3.1.1(E)).

Question 5 explores the restriction of protected housing types, such as residential substance abuse facilities, from residential zoning districts. The Type I “transitional housing facility” is designed to serve persons in “treatment, therapy, medical care, counseling, guidance or other assistance for current or former use and abuse of addictive or controlled substances” (See Section 3.2.66(A)). This use is allowed by special exception permit in the city’s RMF1 (Residential Multifamily – 1) and RMF2 (Residential Multifamily – 2) zoning districts. The Type I transitional housing facility is prohibited from single-family districts except for those detached units allowed under RMF1 zoning. Special exception uses must undergo review and approval from the city’s Planning Advisory Commission and City Council. Therefore, this protected housing type does experience disparate treatment from other housing types for persons with disabilities. Additionally, the UDO requires a minimum separation

³⁷ Ibid. p. 6-7

distance of 1,000 feet between transitional facilities when they are in a single-family or historic residential zoning district. However, these siting requirements may not be applicable to the RMF1 and RMF2 zoning districts.

Question 6 examines the city's exclusionary use of zoning and land use regulations to minimize the occurrence of affordable or low-income housing. Columbus has 18 zoning districts that are residential or offer a mix of uses including residential uses. However, it should be noted that the city's Zoning Map indicates that more residential areas north of Manchester Expressway utilize Single-Family Residential zoning districts. These districts prohibit the placement of condos, duplexes, and multifamily developments.

Questions 7a and 7b inquire if the zoning ordinance allows multifamily uses by right. Multifamily uses are allowed by right in the city's RMF1 (Residential Multifamily – 1) and RMF2 districts, as well as the Historic, MROD (Mill Restoration Overlay District), RO (Residential Office) and CRD (Central Riverfront District).

Question 8 explores the city's restrictions on the construction, rental or occupancy of accessory dwelling units and mobile homes. Columbus allows mobile homes by right in its MHP (Mobile Home Park) district. Guest cottages are allowed by right in the city's larger lot zoning districts, including RE-10, RE-5, RE-1, RT, SFRI and SFR2. Guest cottages are defined as "secondary, subordinate dwelling that is attached to or detached from and located on the same lot as the principal structure." Employee residences also allowed by right in the Historic District and Residential Estate districts.

Questions 9a and 9b asks about Columbus's design and construction requirements as they pertain to the Fair Housing Act. Columbus utilizes the 2018 Edition of the International Building Code (IBC). HUD identifies the 2018 IBC as one of several editions of the standard building code that is considered "safe harbors" under the Fair Housing Act, promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the public through building construction. Monitoring compliance with these codes is not required but is a good practice for ensuring safe and accessible housing products.

Question 10 explores the city's use of incentives to encourage affordable housing development or housing for protected classes. The city offers density bonuses to developers to help conserve land in new subdivisions. Incentives are also offered for job creation or other public benefits (such as the creation of a park) (See Section 2.5.13). While these incentives may indirectly produce additional affordable housing, none are explicitly designed to increase affordable housing.

Columbus's total average risk score (calculated by taking the average of the 10 individual issue scores) is 1.7, indicating that overall there is medium risk of the zoning regulations contributing to discriminatory housing treatment or impeding fair housing choice. In most cases, the zoning and

other land use code sections are reasonably permissive and allow for flexibility as to the most common fair housing issues. Receiving a “3” (high score) means the local government could be subject to fair housing complaints and expensive litigation. In such cases, improvements to the rules and policies could be made to more fully protect the fair housing rights of all of Columbus’s residents and to better fulfill the mandate to affirmatively further fair housing.

Chapter 7. Publicly Supported Housing

Publicly supported housing encompasses several strategies and programs developed since the 1930s by the federal government to ameliorate housing hardships that exist in neighborhoods throughout the country. The introduction and mass implementation of slum clearance to construct public housing projects during the mid-1900s signified the beginning of publicly supported housing programs. Government-owned and managed public housing was an attempt to alleviate problems found in low-income neighborhoods such as overcrowding, substandard housing, and unsanitary conditions. Once thought of as a solution, the intense concentration of poverty in public housing projects often exacerbated negative conditions that would have lasting and profound impact on their communities.

Improving on public housing's model of high-density, fixed-site dwellings for very low-income households, publicly supported housing programs have since evolved into a more multi-faceted approach overseen by local housing agencies. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 created Section 8 rental assistance programs. Section 8, also referred to as the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, provides two types of housing vouchers to subsidize rent for low-income households: project-based and tenant-based vouchers. Project-based vouchers can be applied to fixed housing units in scattered site locations while tenant-based vouchers allow recipients the opportunity to find and help pay for available rental housing on the private market.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 created the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program to incentivize development of affordable, rental-housing development. Funds are distributed to state housing finance agencies that award tax credits to qualified projects to subsidize development costs. Other HUD Programs including Section 811 and Section 202 have also provided funding to develop multifamily rental housing specifically for disabled and elderly populations.

The now-defunct HOPE VI program was introduced in the early 1990s to revitalize and rebuild dilapidated public housing projects and create mixed-income communities. Although HOPE VI achieved some important successes, the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative program was developed to improve on the lessons learned from HOPE VI. The scope of Choice Neighborhoods spans beyond

housing and addresses employment access, education quality, public safety, health, and recreation.³⁸

Current publicly supported housing programs signify a general shift in ideology toward more comprehensive community investment and de-concentration of poverty. However, studies have shown a tendency for subsidized low-income housing developments and residents utilizing housing vouchers to continue to cluster in disadvantaged, low-income neighborhoods. Programmatic rules and the point allocation systems for LIHTC are thought to play a role in this clustering and recent years have seen many states revising their allocation formulas to discourage this pattern in new developments.³⁹ The reasons for clustering of HCVs is more complicated since factors in decision-making vary greatly by individual household. However, there are indications that proximity to social networks, difficulties searching for housing, and perceived or actual discrimination contribute to clustering.⁴⁰ This section will review the current supply and occupancy characteristics of publicly supported housing types and its geographic distribution Columbus.

Supply and Occupancy

Columbus residents are served by one housing authority, the Housing Authority of Columbus, GA (HACG). Data from the HACG's 2019 Moving to Work Report notes that 518 traditional public housing units were leased that year. Approximately 3,220 housing choice vouchers were in use in 2019 as well as 1,062 project-based vouchers at 13 sites. Twelve of the HACG's PBRA sites received LIHTC tax credits. Apart from those LIHTC developments associated with the HACG, the City of Columbus also has approximately 2,103 additional LIHTC units.⁴¹ Publicly supported housing units make up an estimated 8.1% of the housing units in Columbus. In the region, publicly supported housing makes up 3.5% of all housing units. Columbus has a high need for additional housing affordable to very low-income families. According to the HACG's 2022 MTW Annual Plan, there were 440 households on the waiting list for housing choice vouchers and 6,243 households on the waiting list for public housing

³⁸ Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Evidence Matters: Transforming Knowledge Into Housing and Community Development Policy*. 2011. www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/EM-newsletter_FNL_web.pdf.

³⁹ Dawkins, Casey J. *Exploring the Spatial Distribution of Low Income Housing Tax Credit Properties*. US Department of Housing and Urban Development, www.huduser.gov/publications/pdf/dawkins_exploringliht_assistedhousingrcr04.pdf.

⁴⁰ Galvez, Martha M. *What Do We Know About Housing Choice Voucher Pro/gram Location Outcomes? A Review of Recent Literature*. What Works Collaborative, 2010. www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/29176/412218-What-Do-We-Know-About-Housing-Choice-Voucher-Program-Location-Outcomes-.PDF.

⁴¹ This figure excludes LIHTC developments that are no longer monitored.

units/converted RAD project-based vouchers – nearly six times the current number of project-based vouchers in use by HACG residents.

Table 147. Publicly Supported Housing Units by Program Category

Housing Units	Columbus	
	#	%
Total housing units	84,723	
Public housing	518	0.6%
Project-based vouchers	1,062	1.2%
Tenant-based vouchers	3,220	3.8%
LHHC program	2,103	2.5%

In Columbus, white and Black households make up nearly equivalent shares of the population (44%). However, around 37% of all Black households earn less than 50% AMI, compared to 18% of white households earning less than 50% AMI. Black households are disproportionately represented in publicly supported housing, comprising 93% of all housing choice vouchers, 90% of the city’s public housing residents, 89% of Mod Rehabs, 83% of Other multifamily (including Section 202 housing) and 67% of project-based vouchers. Comparatively, white households are underrepresented in all forms of publicly supported housing. White households make up 6% of housing choice vouchers, 7% of public housing and 12% of Other multifamily. However, white households make up nearly one-third of all project-based vouchers.

Hispanic households make up the third largest share of households in the city (around 6%). Nearly one-quarter (25%) of Hispanic families earn less than 50% AMI per year. However, Hispanic households are also underrepresented in publicly supported housing, comprising no more than 3% of any housing type. Asian and Pacific Islander households make up around 2% of the city’s population and have no representation in several programs, including public housing and housing choice vouchers. Asian and Pacific Islander households are represented in project-based voucher rental housing (1%) and other multifamily housing (2%). The project-based voucher program has the greatest amount of racial and ethnic diversity of all HACG housing programs.

The Columbus Region shows similar trends in housing and income based on race and ethnicity. Black households make up a smaller share of all households in the region (40%). However, 37% of Black households earn no more than 50% AMI. Black households also comprise nearly equivalent shares of publicly supported housing as in the City of Columbus (93% of housing vouchers, 90% of public housing, 65% of project-based vouchers). White households make up around 50% of all

households in the region, but only 18% of white households earn less than 50% AMI. White households are underrepresented in publicly supported housing in the region overall, however, they make up nearly one-third (31%) of project-based voucher housing. Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander households make up smaller shares of the population in the region (5.3% and 1.5%, respectively). As with Columbus, these groups are also underrepresented in the region’s publicly supported housing compared to their share of the population. However, Hispanic households see a slight increase in their share of housing choice vouchers in the region (up 0.4%).

Table 158. Publicly Supported Housing Residents by Race/Ethnicity

Housing Type	Race/Ethnicity							
	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian or Pacific Islander	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Columbus								
Public Housing	33	7.0%	425	90.0%	9	2.0%	0	0.0%
Project-Based Section 8	171	29.0%	394	67.0%	18	3.0%	6	1.0%
Other Multifamily	12	12.0%	83	83.0%	2	2.0%	2	2.0%
Mod Rehab	5	11.0%	40	89.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
HCV Program	189	6.0%	2,922	93.0%	31	1.0%	0	0.0%
0-30% AMI	3,135	9.7%	6,935	21.1%	635	14.0%	150	10.2%
0-50% AMI	5,950	18.3%	12,155	36.9%	1,115	24.7%	260	17.7%
0-80% AMI	10,365	31.9%	17,910	54.4%	2,075	45.9%	445	30.3%
Total Households	32,475	44.4%	32,905	44.9%	4,520	6.2%	1,470	2.0%
Columbus Region								
Public Housing	143	10.9%	1,145	86.9%	26	2.0%	0	0.0%
Project-Based Section 8	232	31.4%	478	64.8%	19	2.6%	6	0.8%
Other Family	15	12.0%	100	83.0%	2	2.0%	2	2.0%
Mod Rehab	5	11.0%	40	89.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
HCV Program	233	6.0%	3,602	92.5%	53	1.4%	0	0.0%
0-30% AMI	5,052	8.8%	9,460	20.4%	865	14.3%	154	9.0%
0-50% AMI	10,330	18.1%	16,910	36.4%	1,428	23.7%	289	16.8%

0-80% AMI	18,560	32.5%	25,145	54.2%	2,690	44.6%	514	29.9%
Total Households	57,085	50.2%	46,405	40.8%	6,029	5.3%	1,719	1.5%

Note: Data presented are number of households, not individuals.

Source: Decennial Census; CHAS, Tables 1 and 9; APSH

Geography of Supported Housing

In the map that follows, the locations of publicly supported housing developments are represented along with the levels of Housing Choice Voucher use, which is indicated by gray shading.

The orange markers on the map indicate the locations of traditional public housing developments. The HACG has two remaining public housing developments: Warren Williams Homes off Wynnton Road near 10th Avenue and Elizabeth Canty Homes off Cusseta Road near Brown Avenue. These developments, which were originally built in the 1940s and 1950s, are less than 2 miles apart on the south side of Columbus.

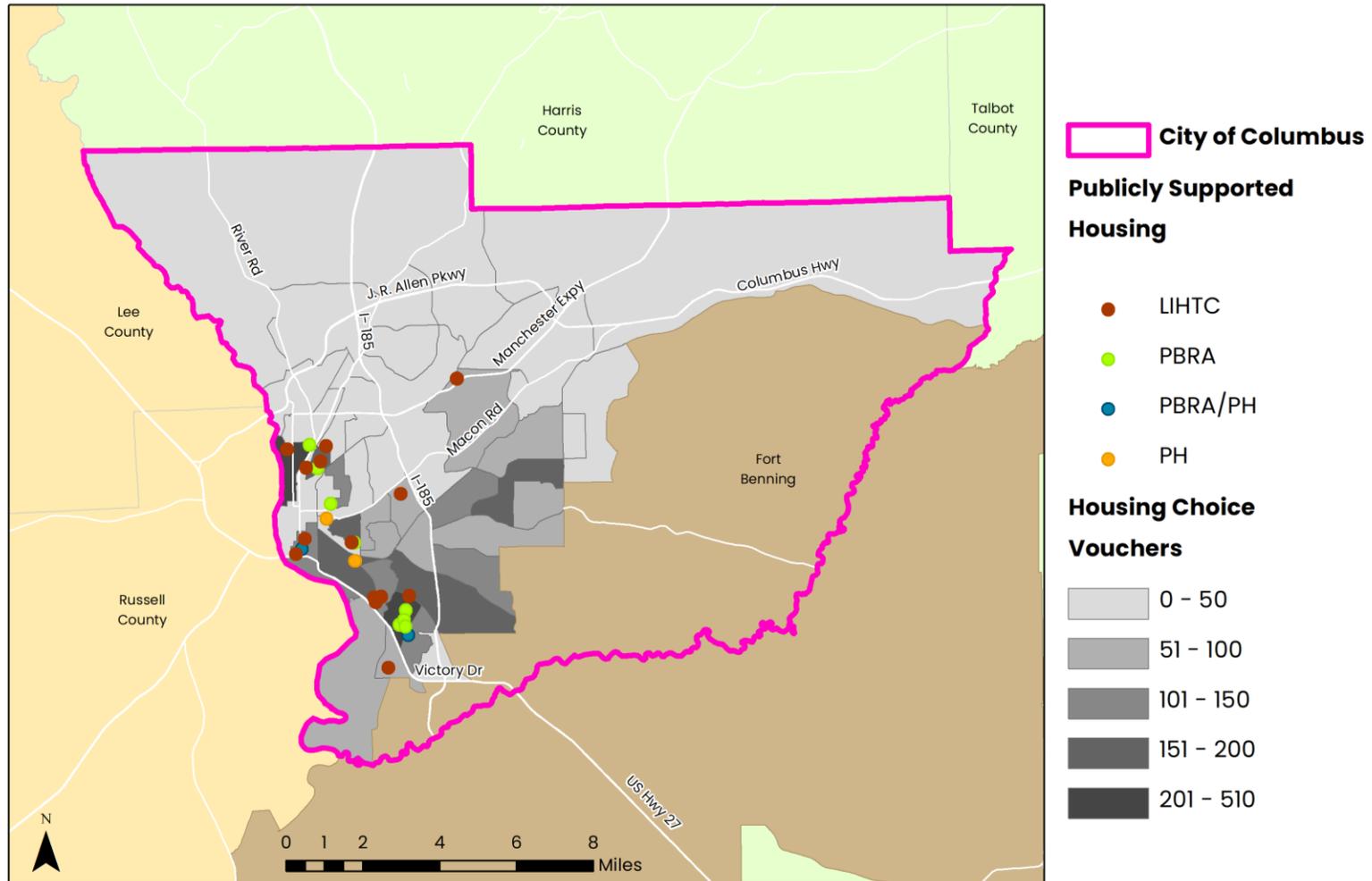
The green and blue markers on the map indicate the location of other project-based voucher developments. There are approximately 9 sites, two of which – Patriot Pointe and Columbus Commons – are currently combined PBRA/public housing. All PBRA sites are located west of I-185 and sit near or adjacent to one of three major corridors: Veterans Parkway, Macon Road/Wynnton Road and Victory Drive. PBRA tend to be clustered in these areas, filling the sites of former public housing developments.

The brown markers on the map indicate the location of low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) properties provided to HUD’s LIHTC database. LIHTC sites shown below exclude those that are no longer monitored or those operated by the HACG. There are approximately 14 LIHTC sites clustered in areas such as uptown/Bibb City, the Historic district/downtown, and the Victory Drive Corridor. One LIHTC site is located on Warm Springs Road near Manchester Expressway and the Columbus Airport. The remaining sites are clustered near existing publicly supported housing.

The number of Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) in use per census tract is also represented by the shading on the map below. HCVs are issued to households and may be used at a rental unit of the tenant’s choosing to reduce the tenant’s share of rent payments to an affordable level. Therefore, unlike the publicly supported developments marked on the map, HCVs are portable and their distribution throughout the city is subject to fluctuate based on location preferences of individual voucher households and the participation of landlords in the HCV program. Data from the Picture of Subsidized Housing indicates that the greatest number of housing choice vouchers can be found in

uptown/midtown Columbus around 2nd Avenue (367 vouchers) and in the Avondale Heights, area bordered by Victory Drive, Ft. Benning Road, Cusseta Road and N. Lumpkin Road (510 vouchers). Vouchers are predominantly used south of Macon Road. Census tracts located north of Macon Road tend to have no more than 50 vouchers in use per tract, with 6 census tracts in north Columbus having no reported voucher use. This map indicates severe segregation of publicly supported housing south of Macon Road. The clustering of all publicly supported housing opportunities to areas with fewer amenities, grocery stores and other employment opportunities acts as a barrier to housing choice for persons with low incomes.

Figure 16. Publicly Supported Housing and Race / Ethnicity in Columbus



Source: HACG, LIHTC Database

Policy Review

As a Moving To Work agency, the Housing Authority of Columbus, GA (HACG) may adopt its own admission policies procedures in place of standard HUD requirements. The HACG currently utilizes an ACOP to govern the operation of its public housing units and an Administrative Plan to govern the operation of its housing choice vouchers. These policy documents have been reviewed below. The ACOP and Admin Plan set policy for who may be housed by the housing authority and how those tenant households are selected. Six aspects of the ACOP and Admin Plan are examined here: tenant selection, local preferences, tenant screening, subsidy standards, de-concentration, and reasonable accommodations. These policy types allow local determination by the HACG and are among the most central to matters of fair housing choice.

Tenant Selection

Under the HACG's Administrative Plan, applicants are eligible to receive a voucher if they:

- Meet the definition of "family,"
- Fall within determined income limits,
- Possess social security numbers for all family members, and
- Provide evidence of citizenship/eligible immigrant status.

To meet the definition of family, an applicant must be a single person (e.g., elderly, displaced, person with disability, or other single) or a group of persons (two or more persons, including elderly persons, who plan to share residency and apply their income and resources to meet the family's needs). Income limitations require that the applicant have a very low income, or be low income under certain circumstances (e.g., a "continuously-assisted" household or a displaced household). Current HACG tenants are also eligible for a voucher if they eliminate outstanding debt owed to the HACG and follow ACOP procedures for applying to the program.

Eligible applicants in the Section 8 program may apply for housing and are given a lottery number to participate in the housing lottery system. Priority and preference are determined based on the date and time that the lottery number was assigned.

Under the HACG's ACOP, applicants must participate in a personal interview with HACG staff, at which time the applicant completes an application with the staff person. The applicant is required to present eligibility documentation during the interview such as family, income, and citizenship verification. The ACOP utilizes a different definition of "family," identifying a family as a family with or without children, an elderly family whose head is at least 62 years old, a disabled family whose head

or spouse is a person with a disability, a displaced family, the remaining member of a tenant family, or a single person. Eligible families in the public housing program are selected based on unit type and size, followed by preference, then by the date and time of the application.

Local Preferences

Local preference gives applicants additional weight under the HACG's tenant selection process. Families are offered housing in the order of preference, with all families of a certain preference receiving housing before the next preference is served. Local preferences listed under the Administrative Plan are in the following order:

- Eligible families who have experienced a federally declared disaster.
- Families that have been displaced due to a public improvement or code enforcement action.
- Families living in a qualified census tract in a proposed redevelopment area.
- Families displaced by RAD conversion or Modernization who are "over-income" for LIHTC properties (earning up to 80% AMI).
- Families wishing to convert their project-based voucher to a tenant-based voucher under the mobility option.

Additional local preferences for Section 8 vouchers are offered for the HACG's Home for Good Homeless program, the Next Step Voucher program (for children aging out of foster care), and for specific sites undergoing RAD conversion. For example, the redevelopment of Booker T. Washington Homes initiated local preferences for elderly and near elderly former residents, persons with developmental disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and persons displaced by the redevelopment of the site.

Local preferences for the public housing program include:

- Eligible families who have experienced a federally declared disaster.
- Families including victims of domestic violence,
- Families that have been displaced due to a federal, state or local government action, public improvement or code enforcement action. This category includes households displaced through the RAD conversion of HACG properties.
- Families with an adult working at least 25 hours per week continuously for 3 months.
- A single person working at least 25 hours per week continuously for 3 months.

Tenant Screening

When a voucher is about to become available for an applicant, the HACG will conduct verify the applicant's income, social security numbers, citizenship, and other eligibility factors. Applicants are

required to disclose information on previous arrests, convictions or evictions related to drug and alcohol abuse or violent criminal activity. The HACG may deny applicants where a family member has been convicted for selling, possessing, or distributing a controlled substance. Following eligibility screenings by the HACG, landlords are also required to screen the family for suitability as tenants.

Under the public housing program, staff conduct verification of suitability for the program through reference, which may include landlords, employers, social workers, parole officers, drug treatment centers, etc. Staff may also require the applicant to provide written authorization to obtain police or other crime records. Applicants must have a satisfactory record meeting their financial obligations. Applicants must not be indebted to the HACG or any other federal housing program. Applicants must also not have a history of grossly unsanitary or hazardous housekeeping.

Applicants are prohibited from federal housing under the following circumstances:

- Eviction from federal housing due to drug-related criminal activity (unless the evicted tenant completes a rehab program approved by the HACG)
- Current use of illegal substances
- Conviction of the manufacture of methamphetamine
- History of criminal activity, including violence to persons or property.
- Individuals subject to lifetime registration under a state sex offenders registration program

Subsidy Standards

The HACG generally uses a subsidy standard which allows a minimum of one person per bedroom and a maximum of two persons per bedroom for each unit. Five-bedroom units are an exception in the Section 8 program, where the minimum number of residents is 6 persons. The HACG allocates a separate bedroom for persons of different generations and sexes and unrelated adults. Children under the age of 6 may be required to share a bedroom with a parent, or with another sibling regardless of their gender in the Section 8 program. The Admin Plan does not place such shared bedroom requirements on older children. The ACOP, however, assigns siblings of the same gender to share a bedroom.

De-concentration

The ACOP contains a de-concentration policy, which states that the HACG strives to create mixed-income communities and reduce the concentration of very low-income residents. If the HACG determines that more than the required 75% of its tenants are very low income, the authority may accept persons with higher incomes to The HACG conducts outreach to encourage higher income families to live in the public housing program.

Reasonable Accommodations

The HACG offers reasonable accommodations to help persons with disabilities acquire and maintain publicly supported housing. Reasonable accommodations offered to voucher holders and Section 8 applicants include:

- Conducting individual voucher briefings at the home of the voucher recipient,
- Offering an extension of the initial voucher term of up to 120 days to make the program accessible and usable to the family member with a disability,
- Allowing a person with a disability to lease a unit from a family member as a reasonable accommodation.

Reasonable accommodations offered to public housing residents and residents of assisted housing include:

- Assisting the tenant with reading or interpreting documents,
- Providing translation assistance,
- Conducting interviews at alternative locations,
- Installing ramps, grab bars or other equipment to increase accessibility in a unit,
- Including requests for reasonable accommodations on the housing application

Chapter 8. Housing for People with Disabilities

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 19% of the U.S. population had a disability as of 2010. Research has found an inadequate supply of housing that meets the needs of people with disabilities and allows for independent living. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development identified that approximately one third of the nation’s housing stock can be modified to accommodate people with disabilities, but less than 1% is currently accessible by wheelchair users.⁴²

Identifying and quantifying existing accessible housing for all disabilities is a difficult task because of varying needs associated with each disability type. Unique housing requirements for people with an ambulatory difficulty may include accessibility improvements such as ramps, widened hallways and doorways, and installation of grab bars, along with access to community services such as transit. People with hearing difficulty require modifications to auditory notifications like fire alarms and telecommunication systems while visually impaired individuals require tactile components in design and elimination of trip hazards. Housing for people that have difficulty with cognitive functions, self-care, and independent living often require assisted living facilities, services, and staff to be accessible. For low- and moderate-income households, the costs of these types of home modifications can be prohibitive, and renters may face particular hardships as they could be required to pay the costs not just of the modifications, but also the costs of removing or reversing the modifications if they later choose to move.

Modifications and assisted living arrangements tend to pose significant costs for people with disabilities, who already experience more difficulty affording housing compared to populations with no disability. Studies have found that 55% of renter households that have a member with a disability have housing cost burdens, compared with 45% of those with no disabilities.⁴³

In Columbus, an estimated 34,150 persons have a disability, representing 18.4% of the total population. Seniors (age 65 or older) have the highest disability rate at 43.9%. In contrast, the rate for those age 18 to 64 is 17.5% and just 7.3% of children under age 18 have a disability. These rates track closely with those of the region, where 18.2% of residents have a disability, including 43.8% of seniors and 6.4% of youth.

⁴² Chan, S., Boshier, L., Ellen, I., Karfunkel, B., & Liao, H. . L. (2015). Accessibility of America’s Housing Stock: Analysis of the 2011 American Housing Survey. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Office of Policy Development and Research.

⁴³ America’s Rental Housing 2017. (2017). Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.

Ambulatory disabilities are the most common type in both the city and the region, affecting 10.5% of city residents and 10.4% of the region’s population. Cognitive and independent living disabilities are the next most common disabilities, impacting approximately 8% to 10% of the population in both geographies. Vision and self-care difficulties are the two least common disability types, each affecting fewer than 4% of the city’s and region’s residents.

Table 16 – Disability by Type

Disability Type	Columbus		Columbus Region	
	#	%	#	%
Hearing difficulty	8,100	4.4%	14,217	4.7%
Vision difficulty	6,780	3.7%	11,553	3.9%
Cognitive difficulty	16,580	9.7%	25,020	9.0%
Ambulatory difficulty	18,055	10.5%	28,939	10.4%
Self-care difficulty	6,799	4.0%	10,789	3.9%
Independent living difficulty	11,731	8.5%	19,271	8.6%

Note: All % represent a share of the total population within the jurisdiction or region.

Source: 2015–2019 5–Year American Community Survey, Table S1810

Table 17 – Disability by Age Group

Age of People with Disabilities	Columbus		Columbus Region	
	#	%	#	%
Age 5–17 with disabilities	3,512	7.3%	4,868	6.4%
Age 18–64 with disabilities	19,654	17.5%	30,803	17.0%
Age 65+ with disabilities	10,984	43.9%	18,948	43.8%

Note: All % represent a share of the total population within the jurisdiction or region within each age group.

Source: 2015–2019 5–Year American Community Survey, Table S1810

Accessible Housing Supply and Affordability

For multifamily housing, any new housing with five or more units constructed after 1988 using federal subsidies must include a minimum of 5% of units accessible to persons with mobility impairments

and an additional 2% of units accessible to persons with vision/hearing impairments (or one unit of each type, whichever is greater). Additionally, HUD provides support for accessible housing through its Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly and Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities programs.

A search for affordable elderly and special needs housing using HUD's Resource Locator tool was conducted to identify affordable rental properties in Columbus designed to serve people with disabilities. The search returned three results; all of which are specifically designated for elderly residents (Calvary Community, Saint Mary's Woods Estates, and Tubman Gardens, developed under the Section 202 program), although disabled residents of any age may also be able to qualify. These projects offer 108, 48, and 50 one-bedroom units, respectively.

A similar point-in-time search on socialserve.com for affordable apartments with accessibility features currently for rent in the Columbus area returned 93 results, all but 21 of which had waiting lists for available units. Monthly rents for these advertised units ranged from \$395 to \$1,000. The accessibility features offered varied significantly across these units and were far from comprehensive. For example, the only accessible feature noted in one unit was a counter-height microwave, and the unit had steps to the entryway. None of the listings made apparent any accommodations for vision or hearing-related disabilities.

Based on a standard Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payment of \$794 per month (equating to an affordable rent of \$238 or less), it is highly likely that people with disabilities who are unable to work and rely on SSI as their sole source of income face substantial cost burdens and difficulty locating affordable housing. Publicly supported housing is often a key source of accessible and affordable housing for people with disabilities. As described in Chapter 7, there are 518 public housing units in Columbus and 3,220 housing choice vouchers. The share of residents with a disability in various types of publicly subsidized housing in Columbus and the Columbus region are shown below. In both the city and region, the share of residents with a disability living in project-based Section 8 units is much greater than the share of the population with a disability (18.4% in the city and 17.5% in the region). Housing Choice Voucher units house people with disabilities at rates slightly higher than their share of the population, and public housing units house people with disabilities at slightly lower rates than their population share. Data on the disability status of Section 202 and 811 households is not available.

Table 189. Disability by Publicly Supported Housing Program Category

Housing Type	Share of Residents with a Disability	
	City of Columbus	Columbus Region
Public Housing	16.0%	16.0%
Project-Based Section 8	36.0%	36.0%
Section 811 Housing	N/A	N/A
Section 202 Housing	N/A	N/A
HCV Program	20.0%	18.3%

Note: The definition of “disability” used by the Census Bureau may not be comparable to reporting requirements under HUD programs.
Source: HUD AFFH Data

The outsized shares of project-based Section 8 households that include people with disabilities suggests that this housing comprises a significant component of the area’s supply of affordable and accessible housing. With the accessible housing needs evident in project-based Section 8 units and the vast majority of units in the private rental market having waiting lists, it is clear that the need for accessible housing options in Columbus is not met by the current supply. Stakeholder input supports this finding, noting that there is a lack of safe and affordable housing for people with disabilities, and units that are available are not adequate or safe. Further, 65.2% of respondents to the public survey conducted in conjunction with this analysis indicated a high level of need for housing accessible to people with disabilities, and 54.2% noted that the lack of housing options available for people with disabilities poses a barrier to fair housing.

Zoning and Accessibility

Definition of “Family” and Group Housing for People with Disabilities

Often one of the most scrutinized provisions of a municipality’s zoning code is its definition of “family.” Local governments use this provision to limit the number of unrelated persons who may live together in a single dwelling. Unreasonably restrictive definitions may have the intended or unintended (depending on the motivations behind the drafting of the jurisdiction’s definition) consequence of limiting housing for nontraditional families and for persons with disabilities who reside together in congregate living situations. Columbus defines family as:

Any number of individuals, not necessarily related, living together as a single housekeeping unit with kitchen facilities on the premises.

This permissive definition of “family” allows persons with disabilities to live together in a family unit without disparate treatment toward their protected housing type.

Columbus allows unrelated persons with disabilities to reside in personal care homes, which are allowed by right in the city's Historic, Residential Estate (RE-10, RE-5, RE-1), Transitional (RT), Single Family (SFR1, SFR2, SFR3, SFR4) and Multifamily districts (RMF1, RMF2). However, the UDO makes a distinction between disabled persons and persons with former drug addictions. This distinction treats housing for persons with former drug addictions differently than other housing for disabled persons. For example, Transitional housing facilities which serve persons in treatment or therapy for drug and alcohol addiction are required to complete a special exemption use approval. The approval process includes review and consideration by the city's Planning Advisory Board and City Council. Overall, the city has created a permissive regulatory environment for housing for persons with disabilities. The city can take additional steps to ensure access to fair housing by correcting its disparate treatment of housing for formerly addicted individuals.

Reasonable Accommodations

Adopting a reasonable accommodation ordinance is one specific way to address land use regulations' impact on housing for persons with disabilities. Federal and state fair housing laws require that municipalities provide individuals with disabilities or developers of housing for people with disabilities flexibility in the application of land use and zoning and building regulations, practices, and procedures or even waive certain requirements, when it is reasonable and necessary to eliminate barriers to housing opportunities, or "to afford persons with a disability the equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling." (The requirements for reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are the same as those under the FHA. 42 U.S.C. 12131(2).) However, the FHA does not set forth a specific process that must be used to request, review, and decide a reasonable accommodation. Columbus allows an administrative approval for special use variances that do not exceed 25% of the minimum building setback. However, there may be occasions where this provision is not sufficient to accommodate the accessibility needs of the resident. Columbus could adopt a clear and objective process by which persons with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation/modification to zoning, land use, and other regulatory requirements, but it is recommended that all zoning authorities do so.

Model ordinances are available that have been approved by HUD or the DOJ as part of fair housing settlement or conciliation agreements. These model ordinances include a standardized process so that there is transparency and equality in how requests are treated, and gives the director of planning or zoning administrator, or her designee, the authority to grant or deny reasonable accommodation requests without the applicant having to submit to a public hearing process.

Chapter 9. Fair Housing Activities

Fair Housing Resources

Georgia has adopted a parallel version of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3601 et seq. (the “FHAA”), known as the Georgia Fair Housing Act (O.C.G.A. §8-3-200 et seq.). Both the federal and state laws prohibit discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on sex, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, or familial status. These laws also protect persons from retaliation for exercising fair housing rights. Although federal law sets the minimum standards for fair housing enforcement, it does not preclude local and state laws from expanding protected classes and fair housing rights. Georgia’s FHA does not extend protections to any other class of persons outside of those protected by the FHA. Under the state law, local governments may “adopt verbatim” the state’s laws against discriminatory housing practices, but O.C.G.A. §8-3-220 prohibits cities and counties (or “political subdivision[s] of the state”) from adopting fair housing ordinances that extend protected class status to individuals who are not currently protected under the Georgia Fair Housing Act.

HUD provides funding annually through the Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) to State and/or local agencies that enforce fair housing laws certified by HUD as “substantially equivalent” to the substantive rights, procedures, remedies, and judicial review processes of the federal Fair Housing Act. Under Georgia’s Fair Housing Law (O.C.G.A. § 8-3-200 *et seq.*), the Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity (GCEO) is the state agency with the authority and responsibility to administer and enforce fair housing rights. The GCEO ceased to participate as a FHAP agency in 2012 but has been working in partnership with HUD in recent years to regain “substantial equivalence” status.

On August 3, 2020, Governor Brian Kemp signed HB 969 amending the Georgia Fair Housing Law to change provisions pertaining to unlawful practices in selling or renting dwellings and the procedures, remedies, and judicial review related thereto; to correct certain cross-references and repeal conflicting laws; to clarify that complaints of discriminatory housing practices may be filed with the federal government as well as with the GCEO; to specify the procedures for dual complaints; and to provide for administrative proceedings to be conducted by an administrative law judge, among other amendments. This was the final requirement needed for the GCEO to become an FHAP Interim Certified agency, which was announced on September 1, 2020. As an interim certified agency, GCEO will receive funding, training, and technical assistance from HUD on a noncompetitive basis for up to three years as it builds its fair housing enforcement capacity.

In addition to the GCEO's authority to investigate and enforce housing discrimination activities, one local nonprofit fair housing advocacy organization serving Columbus/Muscogee County has been awarded grant funding under HUD's Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP). Metro Fair Housing Services, Inc., was awarded \$360,000 in 2020 grant funding under HUD's Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP). Under the FHIP, HUD awards grant money to local fair housing advocacy organizations who assist persons believed to have been harmed by discriminatory housing practices; to help people identify government agencies that handle complaints of housing discrimination; to conduct preliminary investigation of claims; to carry out testing and enforcement activities to prevent or eliminate discriminatory housing practices; and to educate the public and housing providers about equal opportunity in housing and compliance with the fair housing laws.

Fair Housing Complaints

An individual in Columbus who believes he/she has been the victim of an illegal housing practice under the FHA or Georgia Fair Housing Act may seek assistance from the GCEO or file a complaint with the appropriate HUD Regional Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) within one year of when the discriminatory practice occurred. Typically, once certified, HUD will refer complaints of housing discrimination that it receives back to the state or local FHAP agency for investigation, conciliation and enforcement activities. HUD policy favors having fair housing professionals based locally where the alleged discrimination occurred because it has found that a state or local agency's closer proximity to the site of the alleged discrimination provides greater familiarity with local housing stock and trends and may lead to greater efficiency in case processing.

After the GCEO or FHEO receives a complaint, it will notify the alleged discriminator (respondent) and begin an investigation. During the investigation period, the GCEO/HUD will attempt through mediation to reach conciliation between the parties. If no conciliation agreement can be reached, the investigative authority must prepare a final "Determination" report finding either that there is "reasonable cause" to believe that a discriminatory act has occurred or that there is no reasonable cause. If the GCEO/HUD finds "reasonable cause," it must issue a "Charge of Discrimination." If the GCEO/HUD determines that there is no "reasonable cause," the case is dismissed. The advantages of seeking redress through the administrative complaint process are that the GCEO/HUD takes on the duty, time, and cost of investigating the matter on behalf of the complainant and conciliation may result in a binding settlement. However, the complainant also gives up control of the investigation and ultimate findings.

If a charge is issued by the GCEO/HUD, the parties may elect to have the claims asserted decided in a civil action brought by the state attorney general if under state law claims or by the DOJ if under the FHA on behalf of the aggrieved person or to have the matter referred to an administrative law

judge. The ALJ may award the aggrieved party injunctive relief, actual damages, and also impose civil penalties; but unlike federal district court, the ALJ may not impose punitive damages. Administrative proceedings are generally more expedited than the trial court process. Any party may file a petition for review in court to appeal an adverse decision by the ALJ.

The investigation, conciliation, reasonable/no reasonable cause findings, and charge procedures under the Georgia Fair Housing Act are substantially similar to the FHEO process under the FHA. However, where the matter involves the legality of any state or local zoning or other land use law or ordinance, the GCEO administrator must refer the matter to the state Attorney General for appropriate enforcement action instead of issuing a charge.

An aggrieved party may bypass the federal and state administrative routes altogether, and instead file a civil action directly in federal district court or state superior court within two years of the discriminatory act (or in the case of multiple, factually-related discriminatory acts, within two years of the last incident), thus maintaining control of the case and the potential to collect punitive damages. Where an administrative action has been filed, the two-year statute of limitations is tolled during the period when the GCEO/HUD is evaluating the complaint. Civil litigation is available without first exhausting administrative remedies unless the parties have already entered a conciliation agreement, or, following a charge of discrimination, an administrative hearing has already commenced.

The state attorney general or DOJ may initiate a civil action where the agency has reasonable cause to believe that any person or group of persons is engaged in a pattern or practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of any of the rights granted by fair housing laws or that any group of persons has been denied fair housing rights and such denial raises an issue of general public importance.

Housing discrimination claims may be brought against local governments and zoning authorities and against private housing providers, mortgage lenders, or real estate brokers.

Complaints Filed with HUD

Region IV of the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) receives complaints by households regarding alleged violations of the Fair Housing Act for cities and counties throughout Georgia (as well as Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee). The mission of the FHEO is to eliminate housing discrimination, promote economic opportunity, and achieve diverse, inclusive communities. To achieve this mission, the FHEO receives and investigates complaints of housing discrimination, and leads in the administration, development, and public education of federal fair housing laws and policies.

The Atlanta Regional Office of the FHEO maintains data reflecting the number of complaints of housing discrimination received by HUD, the status of all such complaints, and the basis/bases of all such complaints. The office responded to a request for data regarding complaints received affecting housing units in the City of Columbus for the last five-year period.

From January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2020, HUD reported the filing of 14 complaints alleging housing discrimination in Columbus/Muscogee County. The complete data table provided by HUD is included as an appendix to this report with the HUD case file number, filing date, closure date, basis of complaint, issues cited, closure reason, and monetary relief provided. Two of the complaints were reported to HUD in 2016; one in 2017, seven in 2019, and four in 2020.

More than one basis of discrimination may be cited in a single complaint. Of the 14 complaints received and investigated by HUD, disability was cited as the basis of discrimination in 8 cases (57% of cases); race in 6 cases (43% of cases); and familial status in 1 case, national origin in 1 case, and retaliation in 1 case. Two cases cited more than one basis/protected class underlying the alleged discriminatory actions.

Table 10. Complaints by Basis in Columbus

Complaints by Basis						
Basis	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Color	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	2	1	0	4	1	8
Familial Status	0	0	0	1	0	1
National Origin	0	1	4	1	0	1
Race	0	0	0	3	3	6
Religion	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retaliation	0	1	0	1	0	1
Sex	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Request to HUD Region IV Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity

Complainants also may cite more than one discriminatory act or practice, recorded as the discriminatory *issue*. Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, services, and facilities was reported in 11 cases (78% of cases). Discriminatory acts under Section 818 (coercion, etc.) was the second most common issue, identified in 7 (50%) of the filed complaints. Otherwise deny or make housing unavailable was identified as an issue by complainants in 6 (nearly 43%) of cases. Discrimination in

terms/conditions/privileges relating to rental housing was cited in 5 (nearly 36%) of cases, as was failure to make a reasonable accommodation. Redlining and discriminatory advertising, statements and notices were each cited once.

Of the 14 complaints filed, HUD assisted in closing half of the cases (7) through successful conciliation/ settlement agreements. Four cases were closed after investigation and a “no cause” determination. Two complaints were withdrawn by the complainant after resolution. One case was still open and pending resolution at the time of reporting.

In cases resolved by settlement/conciliation, the respondents did not necessarily admit liability, but may have settled to avoid further expense, time, and the uncertainty of litigation. Monetary damages were awarded to three of the complainants in amounts ranging from \$550 to \$5,000.

Complaints filed with the Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity

The GCEO is under the auspices of the Office of the Governor. The GCEO has a Board of Directors made up of attorneys and community leaders statewide. The CGEO has two divisions: the Equal Employment Division and the Fair Housing Division. The mission of the Fair Housing Division is to promote broader housing choices in Georgia; to promote understanding of the Georgia Fair Housing Act and the federal FHA; to encourage integrated communities/neighborhoods; to secure compliance with state and federal fair housing laws; to eliminate discrimination; and to punish persons who violate fair housing laws.

The GCEO, which maintains complaint data by counties, reported that it had not received any formal complaints of housing discrimination in Columbus/Muscogee County for the period January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2020.

Complaints filed with the Metro Fair Housing Services, Inc.

Metro Fair Housing Services, Inc., headquartered in Atlanta, uses the FHIP funding it receives to conduct fair housing education and outreach; complaint intake, investigations, and processing; fair housing testing (systemic and complaint-based); and referral services of meritorious claims to HUD/FHEO in service areas that include Columbus/Muscogee County. Metro was awarded \$300,000 in FY2019 and \$360,000 in FY2020 in FHIP funding.

As of the writing of this report, Metro Fair Housing had not responded to a request for housing discrimination complaint data regarding housing in Columbus for the recent five-year period.

Fair Housing Lawsuits and Litigation

State fair housing laws deemed “substantially equivalent” to the federal Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHA)—with parallel provisions regarding rights, procedures, remedies, and judicial review and enforcement—may qualify for HUD-subsidized, state-level enforcement of fair housing laws through HUD’s Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP). Under Georgia’s Fair Housing Law (O.C.G.A. § 8-3-200 *et seq.*), the Georgia Commission on Equal Opportunity (GCEO) has the authority and responsibility to administer and enforce fair housing rights. The GCEO ceased to participate as a FHAP agency in 2012 until September 1, 2020, when HUD announced that the GCEO qualified as an interim certified agency following legislative amendments to the Georgia Fair Housing Law to bring it into substantial equivalence with the FHA. The GCEO will receive funding, training, and technical assistance from HUD on a noncompetitive basis for up to three years as it builds its fair housing enforcement capacity.

Both the federal and state laws prohibit discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on sex, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, or familial status. These laws also protect persons from retaliation for exercising fair housing rights. Although federal law sets the minimum standards for fair housing enforcement, it does not preclude local and state laws from expanding protected classes and fair housing rights. Georgia’s FHA does not extend protections to any other class of persons outside of those protected by the FHA. Under the state law, local governments may “adopt verbatim” the state’s laws against discriminatory housing practices, but O.C.G.A. §8-3-220 prohibits cities and counties (or “political subdivision[s] of the state”) from adopting fair housing ordinances that extend protected class status to individuals who are not currently protected under the Georgia Fair Housing Act.

In May 2021, the City Council unanimously approved an anti-discrimination resolution (132-21), setting the groundwork for an ordinance that would protect residents’ equal rights to housing, employment, and public accommodations beyond the seven protected classes in Georgia’s FHA. The local ordinance would include race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, familial status, and veteran status as protected classes. Under the drafted ordinance, a five-member committee would review and investigate complaints filed by residents to the Clerk of Council. If the committee finds reasonable cause for a violation, the case would be referred to a mediator for non-binding mediation. Cases not resolved by mediation, would be referred to a hearing officer who could hear evidence and make a final ruling, including charging offenders up to \$500 for each violation. Appeals for judicial review could be filed with the Muscogee County Superior Court within 30 days after the ruling.

Protected classes of persons alleging a violation of the state or federal fair housing laws may file a complaint with HUD, with the GCEO, or an aggrieved party may bypass the federal and state

administrative enforcement process and file a civil action directly in federal district court or state superior court, thus maintaining control of the case and the potential to collect punitive damages. Civil litigation is available without first exhausting administrative remedies unless the parties have already entered a conciliation agreement or, following a charge of discrimination, an administrative hearing has already commenced.

Housing discrimination claims may be brought against local governments and zoning authorities and against private housing providers.

For the recent five-year period—January 1, 2016 through June 1, 2021—no significant civil cases or precedential decisions were found regarding allegations of unlawful housing discrimination occurring in Columbus or Muscogee County that resulted in federal or state level litigation or a HUD ALJ decision. An update concerning the post-*Olmstead* settlement agreement between the DOJ and the state in *U.S. v. Georgia*, Civil Action No. 1:10-cv-249 (N.D. Ga. 2010), requiring the state to expand community alternatives to institutionalization for persons with mental or developmental disabilities, is discussed as this affects the fair housing rights of persons with disabilities at the local level.

***U.S. v. Georgia*, Civil Action No. 1:10-cv-249 (N.D. Ga. 2010).**

Community-based, supportive housing for persons with disabilities has been profoundly impacted by the Supreme Court’s landmark decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999), and the state level enforcement actions that followed. The *Olmstead* decision held that people with disabilities have a qualified right to receive state funded supports and services *in the community* rather than in institutions when (1) the person’s treatment professionals determine that community supports are appropriate; (2) the person does not object to living in the community; and (3) the provision of services in the community would be a reasonable accommodation when balanced with the needs of other similarly situated individuals with disabilities receiving services.

On October 19, 2010, the DOJ entered into a comprehensive Settlement Agreement with the State of Georgia, resolving the federal government’s investigation and allegations that individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities confined in State hospitals were unnecessarily institutionalized and subjected to unconstitutional harm to their lives, health, and safety in violation of the ADA and the U.S. Constitution. The settlement agreement required Georgia to expand community services so that individuals with mental illness and developmental disabilities can live in home-like settings rather than institutions and receive support in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. Specifically, for individuals with developmental disabilities, the agreement provides that Georgia will cease all admissions to the State-operated institutions; transition all patients by July 1, 2015; create more than 1100 home and community-based waivers (NOW and COMP) to serve individuals in the community; serve those receiving waivers in their own

home or their family's home consistent with the individual's informed choice; and provide family supports, mobile crisis teams, and crisis respite homes.

The Court appointed an Independent Reviewer to assess the State's progress under the agreement. The anticipated date for substantial compliance was July 1, 2015; however, in 2016, the DOJ filed a motion requesting the Court hold Georgia in contempt for its failure to meet the settlement agreement's terms and requested that the court order the state to remedy its non-compliance—specifically regarding provisions that require support coordination, quality assurance, transition and discharge planning, and supported housing to support persons with disabilities in the community.

After renegotiation, the parties entered an Extension of Settlement Agreement to allow more time and resources for the State to transition persons with disabilities from institutional settings to community-based, residential homes; implement a system that monitors support services and provides surveillance for persons in the system; and increase the number of NOW and COMP waivers to keep eligible people in residential settings rather than nursing care or psychiatric facilities.

The original Settlement Agreement, filed on October 19, 2010, and the Extension Agreement, filed on May 18, 2016, both require an Independent Reviewer to file reports each year with the Court. The latest report filed September 21, 2020, focuses on the activities of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) during the period from July 1, 2019 until June 30, 2020, and specifically the DBHDD's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in continuing services and protecting the state's mentally and developmentally disabled population in its care.

Although *Olmstead* and *U.S. v. Georgia* did not interpret the Fair Housing Act, the objectives of the FHA and the integrated, community-based housing mandate of these decisions are consistent. The Fair Housing Act ensures that persons with disabilities have an equal opportunity for housing choice. A local zoning ordinance would violate the Act and the integration mandate of the ADA and *Olmstead* if it treated supportive housing for persons with disabilities less favorably than other single-family housing or required residential care homes to be concentrated in certain areas of the jurisdiction. The Unified Development Code of Columbus treats personal care homes for six or fewer residents as a permitted use in all residential districts.

Past Fair Housing Goals and Related Activities

The City of Columbus last prepared an AI in 2016 that identified eight impediments to fair housing choice in the city, set goals for each of them, and outlined priority actions to address them. The impediments from this prior AI are shown in the table that follows, along with a statement of the progress made toward addressing them over the intervening period of time.

Table 22. Actions Taken to Address Previously-Identified Impediments

Impediment	Goal	Actions Taken Since Previous AI
Fair housing education and outreach efforts may not meet community needs, and there is no local fair housing organization to conduct these efforts	Increase education and outreach throughout the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City has consistently provided funding for fair housing education and outreach activities, including billboards, and seminars. • The City hosts fair housing activities in April to honor Fair Housing Month and has reached over 100 elderly and/or disabled residents through fair housing seminars. • All HOME Program publicity materials targeted to the public, owners, or potential tenants include a statement regarding the City’s Affirmative Marketing Plan as well as the applicable fair housing laws. • All newspaper and other media announcements, as well as any printed materials, include the Equal Housing Opportunity logo, slogan, or statement. • Fair Housing Posters are displayed in the offices of all of the City’s subrecipients.
The City does not have an adequate formal policy for ensuring that persons with limited English proficiency can access its housing and community development services and programs	Ensure that persons with limited English proficiency can access the affordable housing services and programs offered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Reinvestment Department continues its membership on the Hispanic Outreach Committee which consists of various community organizations that put activities together that provide information about programs and services to the Hispanic Community.
Multi-family development, which tends to provide more affordable housing options, is heavily restricted by the City’s Unified Development Ordinance	Ensure that the City’s UDO allows for a wide range of residential housing options to meet existing and future market needs for all income levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Tenants using Housing Choice Vouchers may not be aware of the full range of affordable housing options in lower poverty areas.	Enable Housing Choice Voucher recipients to move into higher-opportunity neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City has coordinated with the Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia to offer mobility counseling services to help Housing Choice Voucher recipients find suitable units and access amenities within higher opportunity areas.
Lack of affordable housing in higher opportunity areas, especially affordable housing that is accessible.	Make affordable housing development in higher opportunity areas a priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Columbus allocated significant grant resources to multifamily affordable housing developments which has expanded the affordable housing options for income-eligible renter households.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funding is regularly provided to support housing rehabilitation, and new construction of affordable units. • The Land Bank Authority was revitalized and now has a dedicated staff, new branding, and a new website. The land bank has begun successfully acquiring properties through in rem tax sales. • Through the Continuing Hope and Home Accessibility programs, elderly households and households that have members with disabilities are provided with much needed repairs and modifications.
<p>Members of the protected classes are more likely to have lower incomes, higher unemployment rates and higher poverty rates. Limited housing choice restricts access to community assets for members of the protected classes.</p>	<p>Remove barriers to access to community assets for members of the protected classes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City has begun developing a business incubator project in partnership with StartUP Columbus and the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce. This project will provide individuals of all income levels the opportunity to explore business ideas and accelerate their start-ups. • The City has maintained its partnership with Home for Good (the lead agency for the CoC) through which a comprehensive system to increase access to employment and mainstream benefits is conducted. The CoC’s Coordinated Entry System ensures individuals are assessed and connected to the appropriate services and programs.
<p>The public transportation system in Columbus is fragmented and does not adequately connect RCAPs to higher opportunity areas and jobs.</p>	<p>Advocate for public transit systems to connect lower income neighborhoods with major employment centers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<p>Members of the protected classes—particularly those living in RCAPs—are disproportionately denied mortgages in the private sector.</p>	<p>Work to increase the financial readiness of qualifying minority homebuyers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Columbus provides funding for down-payment assistance and homebuyer education programming. • Neighborworks Columbus is a HUD-approved and Georgia DCA-recognized housing counseling agency that provides classes assisting prospective homebuyers with the basic “financial literacy” skills of budgeting, saving, credit and debt management.

Chapter 10. Identification of Impediments

Described below are the fair housing impediments identified in this Analysis of Impediments, along with associated contributing factors. Contributing factors are issues leading to an impediment that are likely to limit or deny fair housing choice or access to opportunity. Recommended activities to address the contributing factors are provided in Table 22, along with implementation timeframes and responsible parties.

Impediment #1: Low Labor Market Engagement and Limited Incomes Restrict Housing Choice and Access to Opportunity Among Protected Classes

Significant disparities in labor market engagement exist by geography, race, and ethnicity in Columbus. Residents of north Columbus tend to have the highest levels of educational attainment and the lowest levels of unemployment in the city. In contrast, residents of west-central and south Columbus tend to have the lowest levels of educational attainment and labor force participation and are unemployed at the highest rates. Median household incomes are highest in north Columbus and lowest in west-central and south Columbus, where they fall below \$20,000 in eight census tracts. Among racial and ethnic groups, Black residents and residents of some other race have the lowest rates of educational attainment, the highest rates of unemployment, and the lowest median household incomes. Low levels of labor market engagement drive down wages, thus restricting housing choice and access to opportunity. Combined, the city's low labor market engagement among protected classes and high segregation levels contribute to racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty.

Place-based strategies allow for the targeting of resources and outreach efforts to areas with high proportions of residents whose housing choices may be limited by low earnings or unemployment. These strategies can be combined with other approaches focused on closing skills gaps and developing career pathways, increasing job creation and quality standards, and raising the wage floor. Examples of place-based strategies to increase labor market engagement include increasing awareness of high-growth jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and connections to the training necessary to obtain them and targeting neighborhoods with high proportions of low-earning workers as priorities for interventions that increase awareness of available subsidies and resources.

Planning efforts underway in the city and region identify gaps and provide recommendations for increasing labor market engagement and earnings in Columbus and Muscogee County. The Columbus Consolidated Government 2038 Comprehensive Plan, the River Valley Regional

Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (updated in 2017), and the Columbus 2025 plan (Regional Prosperity Initiative: A Vision for a Greater Columbus) detail several opportunities to increase labor market engagement through workforce development, including maintaining connections with local employers to ensure that skills needed are addressed in workforce training initiatives; encouraging apprenticeships and internships for businesses to teach high school and college-aged students; developing region-wide mentoring programs to include internships and apprenticeships; creating a comprehensive cradle-to-career (C2C) partnership to align education, training, business, and social services around increasing talent levels in Greater Columbus; ensuring that three- and four-year-olds have access to high-quality early childhood education; and ensuring that infants, toddlers, and expecting parents have access to comprehensive child development and family support services, among others.

Efforts to address these and other workforce development goals—such as through the Columbus 2025 plan, Lower Chattahoochee WorkSource Georgia, the Partners in Education program, and other workforce and economic development planning efforts and programs—can be targeted to areas of the city with lower levels of labor market engagement. These efforts are vital to improving labor market engagement among protected classes and thus to increasing housing choice and economic mobility in Columbus.

Impediment #2: Continued Need for Neighborhood Investment in South, Central, and East Columbus

Low levels of access to resources and services in areas with higher levels of poverty—combined with moderate levels of segregation by race, ethnicity, and income—also create barriers to access to opportunity in Columbus. The need for neighborhood investment is particularly acute in parts of south, central, and east Columbus, areas of the city with the highest poverty rates and lowest levels of access to resources, such as parks, fresh food retailers, and healthcare services. Data from the American Community Survey, local plans and studies, the community survey conducted as part of this planning process, community input from meetings and stakeholder interviews, and other sources indicates that residents of south, central, and east Columbus tend to have lower levels of access to high-quality neighborhood facilities, resources, and services:

- Schools in the Muscogee County School District that have greater shares of economically disadvantaged students tend to receive lower College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) scores, indicating disparities in school performance by socioeconomic status. These schools tend to also have lower proportions of white students, indicating high levels of segregation by school and disparities in access to the highest performing schools by race

and ethnicity. Stakeholders interviewed during this planning process emphasized a need to expand youth education programming and expand internet access.

- Low levels of access to transit in north and east Columbus mean that low-income households tend to spend greater proportions of their incomes on housing and transportation costs in these areas. In areas outside of central Columbus, the combination of a lower proximity to jobs and high proportions of residents' incomes spent on transportation may present barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment.
- Much of the city's downtown and surrounding areas fall within a 10-minute walk of a park, while in large portions of north, south, and east Columbus, residents must travel further than a 10-minute walk to access parks. South Columbus and portions of west-central and downtown Columbus have the highest level of need for parks based on the Trust for Public Land's index of factors shaping park need, including people per acre, mean land surface temperature, respiratory hazards, density of people of color, density of low-income households, prevalence of poor mental health, and prevalence of low physical activity. When asked whether certain resources and opportunities are equally available in all neighborhoods, 51.2% of survey respondents said parks and trails are not equally available across the city.
- Disparities in access to fresh food exist across the city. In six census tracts in south and west-central Columbus, an estimated 60% to 76% of residents have low incomes and live more than ½ mile from a supermarket. In 11 additional tracts in west-central and east Columbus (including Fort Benning), between 40% and 60% of residents meet the USDA definition of low-income and low-access at ½ mile. Much of south and east Columbus is served primarily by dollar stores or smaller food outlets, indicating that many residents need may access to vehicles to access one of the area's larger supermarkets. 74.2% of survey respondents noted that grocery stores and other shopping are not equally available across the city.
- Disparities exist in access to health insurance across the city. Residents of west-central and south Columbus tend to be uninsured at the highest rates in the city (22% to 32% uninsured residents in eight census tracts), while parts of north and east Columbus, including Fort Benning, have the lowest percentages of insured residents (less than 5% uninsured in six census tracts).

Together, these measures indicate that a lack of access to high-quality neighborhood facilities, resources, and services in areas of the city restrict access to fair housing choice by limiting opportunity for residents. To address disparities in neighborhood resources and associated lack of access to opportunity, meeting attendees and stakeholders interviewed during this planning

process emphasized the need for continued investment in neighborhood services, facilities, and infrastructure, particularly in south, central, and east Columbus.

Impediment 3: Housing Options for Some Protected Classes are Limited by Poor Housing Conditions

Stakeholders participating in the engagement process indicate that Columbus has a shortage of housing supply that is safe, affordable, and available. Housing that is available, they report, tends to be expensive and/or less accessible by public transportation. On the other hand, housing that is affordable tends to be dilapidated. Data examined in the AI confirms many of these concerns. Housing found in areas of opportunity (identified as north of Macon Road) has lower rates of housing problems than in south Columbus. Furthermore, the data indicates that housing problems are highest in areas with Black residents. Citizens express concern about housing conditions for residents, but also the cumulative effect of dilapidated housing on these communities in terms of property values, crime, and business attraction. Columbus has made major investments in blight removal on the south side, which stakeholders report has had a positive overall effect. The continuation of blight removal in combination with landlord and homeowner investments and infill development may increase the availability of housing options for protected classes.

Impediment 4: Publicly Supported Housing Options are Concentrated Outside of Areas of Opportunity

Columbus's publicly supported housing is concentrated along central corridors in the southern half of the city (south of Macon Road). Stakeholders report that NIMBYism has largely kept affordable housing developments outside of areas of opportunity. The limited expansion of publicly supported housing is especially problematic as waitlists for the city's newer PBRA developments indicates a significant need for affordable housing. PBRA waitlists currently have over 6,000 applicants, which is more than six times the number of available PBRA units. A DOJ and HUD Joint statement indicates that elected officials may not use perceptions of incoming residents as a reason to deny the siting of affordable housing. The City should consider additional tools to help encourage affordable housing development in areas of opportunity.

Impediment 5: Insufficient Housing Options for People with Disabilities

In the survey conducted as part of this analysis, almost 97% of respondents classified housing for people with disabilities as a "high need" or "moderate need" and 54% described the lack of housing

options for this population as a barrier to fair housing. Outside of accessible housing units located in public housing developments, there are few housing options specifically designed and intended for occupancy by people with disabilities. As a result, publicly supported housing units house a disproportionate share of the city's disabled population, with 36% of households in Project-Based Section 8 housing including at least one person with a disability. Most publicly supported housing programs require at least 5% of the units in a development be accessible, but these programs (e.g. Section 202 and LIHTC housing options), often are targeted to serve seniors. Therefore, few options remain for adults under 65 who, for example, may have functional needs and require assistance with independent living.

Point-in-time searches for available accessible housing units in Columbus using different online tools produced few results: three sites with Section 202-funded units and several others with various (but not comprehensive) accessibility features. For example, a unit may be listed as accessible because it has lowered countertops that would be within reach for someone using a wheelchair but may not offer a zero-step entry. Such a condition would often require further modifications to be truly accessible for someone with a mobility impairment.

Additional housing opportunities for people with disabilities is a significant need in Columbus. Given the present condition where these units are most commonly found in subsidized housing developments, there should be a priority placed on locating any new accessible housing in neighborhoods of opportunity that are served by transit and with other important amenities such as retail, healthcare services, and walkability.

Impediment 6: Need for Enhanced Fair Housing Education and Enforcement Activity

The City of Columbus and the Housing Authority of Columbus, Georgia (HACG) have consistently worked to promote fair housing throughout the city by conducting outreach and education around fair housing rights and responsibilities. Despite these important efforts, the community survey conducted as part of this AI indicated that only about 60% of survey respondents reported knowing their fair housing rights and just 42% said they knew where to file a complaint of housing discrimination.

The share of survey respondents who said they had experienced housing discrimination was nearly 14% but 75% of the time, those perceived instances of discrimination went unreported. The majority of these respondents (60%) stated that they did not file a report because they "did not know what good it would do". Complaint data from HUD indicates a relatively low number of housing discrimination complaint filings over the five-year period reported, however, the AI's survey data suggests that for

every formal housing discrimination complaint filed, approximately 3 other potentially discriminatory incidents go unreported. Further, the absence of any fair housing litigation specific to housing located in Columbus is likely to indicate not a lack of actionable discrimination claims but a lack of advocates available to assist claimants through the filing, investigation, and litigation processes.

Table 22. Fair Housing Goals and Activities

Contributing Factors	Recommended Activities, Goals, and Timeframes	Responsible Parties and Partners
Impediment #1: Low Labor Market Engagement and Limited Incomes Restrict Housing Choice and Access to Opportunity Among Protected Classes		
<p>Low levels of labor market engagement among adult residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to bring together and partner with key stakeholders with the goal of implementing strategies contained in The Columbus Consolidated Government 2038 Comprehensive Plan, the River Valley Regional Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (updated in 2017), and the Columbus 2025 plan (Regional Prosperity Initiative: A Vision for a Greater Columbus) (Ongoing, 2021), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain connections with local employers to ensure that skills needed are addressed in workforce training initiatives - Create a comprehensive cradle-to-career (C2C) partnership to align education, training, business, and social services around increasing talent levels in Greater Columbus - Support the transition from military to civilian jobs - Launch a broad-based adult education campaign to connect individuals who did not complete high school or college coursework with opportunities for advancement and employment • Support resident and employer participation in available job training programs, including programs through Columbus Technical College, Columbus State University, and WorkSource Georgia (Ongoing, 2021). • Develop or expand paid job training programs (Ongoing, 2021). • Collaborate with residents to understand barriers to accessing existing job training programs, and develop strategies to address these barriers (Ongoing, 2021). • Continue to engage in local hiring for City contracts (Ongoing, 2021). • Include neighborhood residents, business owners, industry representatives, and representatives from neighborhood groups in planning processes for workforce development programs (Ongoing, 2021). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Columbus • WorkSource Georgia • Columbus State University • Columbus Technical College • Employers • Nonprofit community partners

Table 22. Fair Housing Goals and Activities (continued)

Contributing Factors	Recommended Activities, Goals, and Timeframes	Responsible Parties and Partners
<p>Continued need to expand opportunities for youth education and workforce development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to bring together and partner with key stakeholders with the goal of implementing strategies contained in The Columbus Consolidated Government 2038 Comprehensive Plan, the River Valley Regional Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (updated in 2017), and the Columbus 2025 plan (Regional Prosperity Initiative: A Vision for a Greater Columbus) (Ongoing, 2021), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate and encourage programs within the local school systems (Dual Enrollment, etc.) - Encourage apprenticeships and internships for businesses to teach high school and college aged students - Develop region-wide mentoring programs to include internships and apprenticeships - Ensure that three- and four-year-olds have access to high-quality early childhood education - Ensure that infants, toddlers, and expecting parents have access to comprehensive child development and family support services - Expand efforts to introduce students to education and career possibilities from a young age - Leverage existing programs to coordinate a community-wide mentoring program for at-risk K-12 students - Connect business and education providers to develop post-secondary programs and high school curricula that support target business growth and introduce young people to job opportunities - Challenge the region’s business community to leverage, expand, and develop internship and apprenticeship opportunities for high school and college students • Continue efforts to integrate K-12 systems, higher education institutions, and major employers to ensure educational programs meet employer needs for high-demand jobs that pay living wages and identify gaps in current programming (Ongoing, 2021). • Fund youth-focused programming, including education, mentoring, and job training (Ongoing, 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Columbus • WorkSource Georgia • Columbus State University • Columbus Technical College • K-12 system • Employers • Nonprofit community partners

Table 22. Fair Housing Goals and Activities (continued)

Contributing Factors	Recommended Activities, Goals, and Timeframes	Responsible Parties and Partners
Impediment #2: Continued Need for Neighborhood Investment in South, Central, and East Columbus		
Continued need for neighborhood reinvestment in south, central, and east Columbus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using CDBG or other funding, fund projects that develop, expand, or improve community centers and programming, healthcare facilities and services, and other public facilities, infrastructure, and services in low- and moderate-income census tracts, including in south, central, and east Columbus (Ongoing, 2021). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Columbus Nonprofit community partners
Lack of access to fresh food retailers in south, central, and east Columbus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using CDBG or other funding, fund projects that increase access to fresh food retailers in low- and moderate-income census tracts, including in south, central, and east Columbus (Ongoing, 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Columbus Nonprofit community partners Fresh food retailers
Geographic disparities exist regarding school performance, and disparities in academic achievement exist among protected classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with local nonprofit organizations or other partners to provide resources and services to students in lower-performing schools, particularly in south, central, and east Columbus. Resources and services may include basic school resources and supplies, school readiness, mentoring and tutoring, family engagement and literacy, health services, behavioral and social supports, enrichment programs, food access, transportation services, support for ESL students and students with disabilities, resources for students experiencing homelessness, and other resources and services (Ongoing, 2021). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Columbus Nonprofit community partners and other partners
Need to further engage low- and moderate-income communities in planning decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand community engagement efforts focused on community needs and priorities in low- and moderate-income census tracts, including working with residents and community groups to shape the City's approach to community engagement. Implement targeted outreach to engage with residents to identify areas for investment (Ongoing, 2021). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Columbus

Table 22. Fair Housing Goals and Activities (continued)

Contributing Factors	Recommended Activities, Goals, and Timeframes	Responsible Parties and Partners
Impediment #3: Housing Options for Some Protected Classes are Limited by Poor Housing Conditions		
Landlords in some neighborhoods fail to adequately maintain and improve rental properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a minimum standards ordinance for residential properties (Q1, 2022) • Consider a rental rehabilitation program that would provide incentives to landlords to maintain their rental properties in good repair. (Q4 2021) • With input from code enforcement officers, homeless service providers and the housing authority, develop a protocol for ensuring tenant households reporting code violations are protected from homelessness as a result of displacement from substandard housing pursuant to code enforcement action. (Q3 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Columbus • Nonprofit community partners • Housing Authority of Columbus, GA
Local organizations can benefit from capacity building to assist homeowners with rehab/repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with national housing organizations to build the capacity of local non-profit organizations that can participate in rehab/repair programs. (Q3, 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Columbus
Low-income households, including the elderly and people with disabilities, have difficulty making needed home repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue using HUD funding to support housing rehabilitation programs; consider focusing resources on substantial and necessary repairs that will extend the useful life of the housing rehabilitated. (Ongoing, beginning Q3 2010) • Work with the nonprofit community to support programs that assist people with disabilities with the cost of accessibility modifications to their homes. (Annually, beginning Q1 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Columbus • Nonprofit community partners

Table 22. Fair Housing Goals and Activities (continued)

Contributing Factors	Recommended Activities, Goals, and Timeframes	Responsible Parties and Partners
Impediment #4: Publicly Supported Housing Options are Concentrated Outside of Areas of Opportunity		
Affordable housing, including publicly supported housing, is limited, particularly in desirable areas where neighborhoods offer enhanced access to some types of opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New affordable housing development, whether by the cities with CDBG or HOME funds, the local housing authorities, or private-sector LIHTC developers should be given priority consideration when it will be located in an area that increases access to new types of opportunity not generally available in neighborhoods where existing affordable housing is located. (Ongoing, beginning Q3, 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Columbus
Not In My Backyard (NIMBY) attitudes limit multifamily and affordable housing development in North Columbus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver community education around the concept of affordable housing and its cultural and economic value to the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an adaptable slide deck and presentation on the subject of the value of affordable housing, including qualitative and quantitative arguments. (Q1, 2022) Establish a small “speakers bureau” of designated city staff or other community partners to deliver the presentation to local groups. (Q2, 2022) Market the presentation and available speakers to community groups such as neighborhood/homeowners’ associations, associations of Realtors, homebuilders, and lenders. (Ongoing, beginning Q1, 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Columbus Nonprofit community partners

Table 22. Fair Housing Goals and Activities (continued)

Contributing Factors	Recommended Activities, Goals, and Timeframes	Responsible Parties and Partners
Impediment 5: Insufficient Housing Options for People with Disabilities		
<p>Insufficient accessible housing exists to serve the needs of people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider opportunities to encourage or incentivize the construction of new accessible housing units for people with disabilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any public subsidies for new housing development for people with disabilities should be given priority consideration when the housing will be located in an area that increases access to transit and opportunities. (Ongoing, beginning 2021) - When new accessible housing is proposed by a developer, organization, or agency, express support (through letters of support and/or certifications of consistency with the Consolidated Plan) wherever possible. (Ongoing, beginning 2021) - Review local funding mechanisms and federal grant sources for opportunities to incentivize development of new accessible housing units. (2022) - Meet with local providers of accessible housing and permanent supportive housing to discuss resources available and potential for collaboration on future proposed housing developments. (2022) • Adopt a Reasonable Accommodation Ordinance that will streamline the process for retrofitting existing homes for greater accessibility (2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Columbus
<p>Low-income households, including the elderly and people with disabilities, have difficulty making needed accessibility modifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with the nonprofit community to support programs that assist people with disabilities with the cost of accessibility modifications to their homes. (Ongoing, beginning 2021) • Continue to fund housing rehabilitation activities to preserve the condition and affordability of housing in the City allowing the housing stock to serve the needs of residents as they age in place. (Ongoing, beginning 2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Columbus • Access 2 Independence • Columbus Area Habitat for Humanity • Other nonprofit partners

Table 22. Fair Housing Goals and Activities (continued)

Contributing Factors	Recommended Activities, Goals, and Timeframes	Responsible Parties and Partners
Impediment 6: Need for Enhanced Fair Housing Education and Enforcement Activity		
<p>Public input and data on housing discrimination complaint filings indicate that more fair housing enforcement is needed along with enhanced fair housing education targeted to renters, housing professionals, and members of the general public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to allocate funding for fair housing education and outreach; seek opportunities to sponsor fair housing workshops and trainings (Ongoing, beginning 2021) • Establish a dedicated page on the City’s and HACG’s websites with information about fair housing (“What is Fair Housing,” “What Does Housing Discrimination Look Like,” “What are My Fair Housing Rights,” etc.) and where to make a housing discrimination complaint or get other assistance related to fair housing (2022) • Consider coordinating support within the community for a dedicated fair housing organization uniquely focused on broad community education, advocacy, complaint investigation, and enforcement activity. Financial support could be provided through CDBG funds as well as local philanthropic sources. The organization could be contracted by the City to design and coordinate an annual fair housing education program that reaches the public with information about fair housing rights and responsibilities, how to recognize discrimination, and how and where to file a complaint. As part of the annual program, include education efforts geared toward housing industry professionals such as landlords and lenders (2022). • Consider requiring housing-related businesses and housing industry professionals found to be in violation of city codes, business licensing, or other local regulations to attend a fair housing training session as part of the requirements to cure the code or regulatory violation. (2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Columbus • HACG

APPENDIX A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY HANDOUT

ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS OVERVIEW

The City of Columbus has prepared a fair housing study known as an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). This study discusses patterns of race, poverty, and housing needs; access to opportunity; and housing barriers in the city. It also outlines strategies that Columbus plans to take to improve housing choices for its residents.

Community Engagement

The City of Columbus began its public engagement for the Analysis of Impediments by conducting a focus group with the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. In subsequent weeks, the City held a virtual public meeting and conducted stakeholder interviews with 18 representatives of government and non-profit agencies. Additionally, 94 individuals responded to the city's community survey, which was available to the public on the city's website.

Looking at responses to the public survey, respondents identified Columbus's top housing needs as the rehabilitation of affordable rental housing or apartments, family housing, and housing that accepts Section 8 vouchers. When asked about needs related to homelessness, survey respondents identified the top needs as transitional/supportive housing programs, supportive services/case management and homelessness prevention.

The top three public infrastructure needs identified through the public survey included high-speed internet access, street/road improvements, and water/sewer improvement or expansion. Top public service needs included health and mental health services, substance abuse/crime prevention, and childcare.



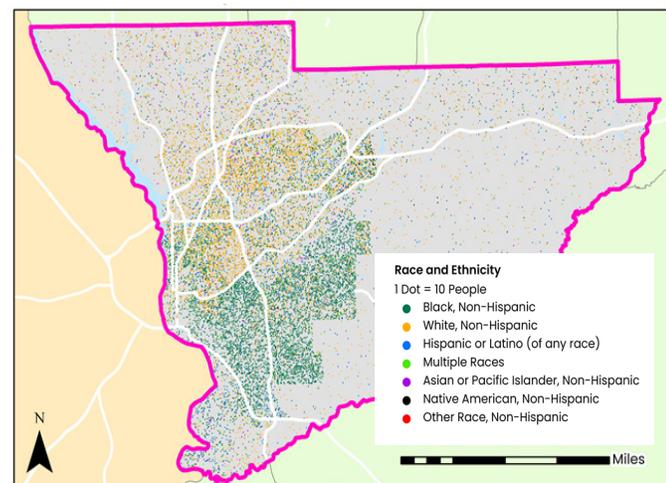
Stakeholders interviewed during the community engagement process also identified the top housing need as housing that is affordable, available, of good quality, and in safe areas. Housing choices in Columbus are primarily impacted by cost, availability, poor housing condition, and transportation, among other issues.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Columbus's current population is estimated at 195,739 people, according to 2015-2019 Annual Estimates from the US Census. Non-Hispanic Black residents account for 45.6% of Columbus residents (89,275 persons). This figure represents an 11% increase from the city's 80,698 Black residents in the year 2000. Non-Hispanic white residents make up 40.3% of the population (78,974 persons). The number of white residents has decreased 12%, down from 90,200 in the year 2000.

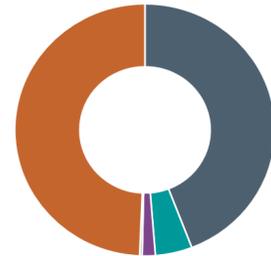
Hispanic residents make up 8% of Columbus's population (14,903 residents), increasing by 78% between 2000 and 2019. Asian residents make up 3% of the population, while Native American residents make up less than 1%. The percentage of Asian residents has increased 67%, from 3,036 in 2000 to 5,088 persons in 2019. Native American residents have also increased by 28%, from 614 in 2000 to 790 in 2019. Figures from the region, which includes Muscogee (GA), Marion (GA), Chattahoochee (GA), Harris (GA), and Russell (AL) Counties, indicate that non-white residents made up 53% of the region in 2019, while non-Hispanic White residents made up 47%. In 2000, these figures were reversed, with non-Hispanic White residents comprising 53% of the region compared to 47% who were non-white.

Foreign-born residents make up 5.3% of Columbus's total population. The top three countries of origin among foreign-born residents are Mexico, India and Germany. Together, these countries of origin produce approximately 37% of the city's foreign born population. Other significant countries of origin include Korea and Panama.

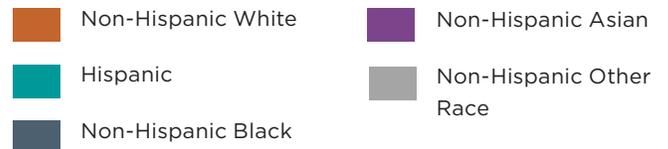
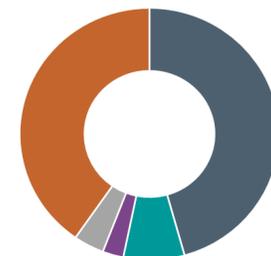


Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Race and Ethnicity, 2000



Race and Ethnicity, 2015-2019



Residential Patterns and Segregation Levels

The map on the left shows the distribution of Columbus's population. Overall, the largest percentage of residents live in the areas south of J.R. Allen Parkway and north of Victory Drive. Both Black and White residents live throughout the city, although Black residents are highly clustered south of Macon Road, while White residents are highly clustered north of Macon Road. Hispanic residents have the greatest density between Macon Road and J. R. Allen Parkway, as well as south of Victory Drive. Asian residents primarily live north of Manchester Expressway and in neighborhoods west of Floyd Road to the south.

Demographic data from 2010 indicates high levels of racial and ethnic segregation in Columbus, particularly between Black and white populations. Segregation is denoted when members of different racial or ethnic groups cannot be geographically matched in the same census tracts. Hispanic/White and Asian/White groupings indicate low levels of segregation in Columbus in 2010.

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

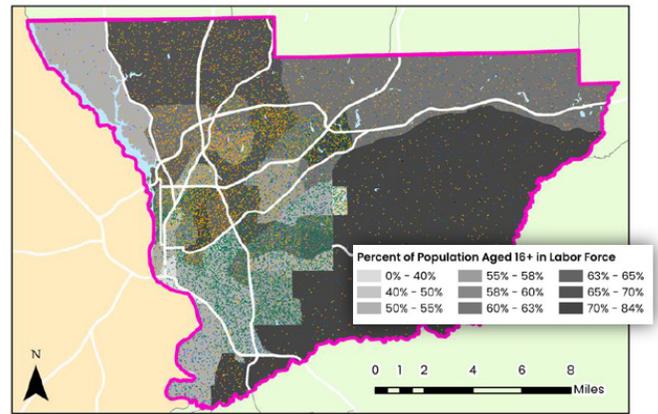
Among the many factors that drive housing choice for individuals and families are neighborhood characteristics including access to quality schools, jobs, transit, and a healthy environment. To measure these conditions at a neighborhood level, the Analysis of Impediments studied ACS 5-Year Estimates from the US Census, primarily at the census tract level. The AI reported findings on several “opportunity dimensions,” including labor market engagement, job proximity, transportation costs, school proficiency, environmental health, food, and healthcare. Higher scores (and darker shading on the maps below) indicate greater access to opportunity.

Labor Market Engagement

Around 61% of Columbus residents are in the labor force. Columbus’s labor force participation is shown in the map to the right. Labor force participation is generally higher in those census tracts north of Macon Road, with the exception of census tracts along Forest Road and Floyd Road in East Columbus. This data correlates with the location of jobs in the city, which tend to be clustered downtown and in north Columbus with significantly fewer jobs in south Columbus.

White residents have labor force participation rates equally to those of the city as a whole (61%). However, White residents who are looking for work experience low levels of unemployment (6%). Hispanic and Asian residents have above average rates of labor force participation (68% and 66% respectively), yet they have higher rates of unemployment than their white counterparts (8% and 7% respectively). Black residents experience the lowest rates of labor force participation (59%) and the highest rates of unemployment (13%) in the city. Black households are also earn the lowest median incomes in the city (\$33,958), compared to Hispanic households (\$47,889), White households (\$59,870) or Asian households (\$69,493).

Labor Force Participation and Race/Ethnicity



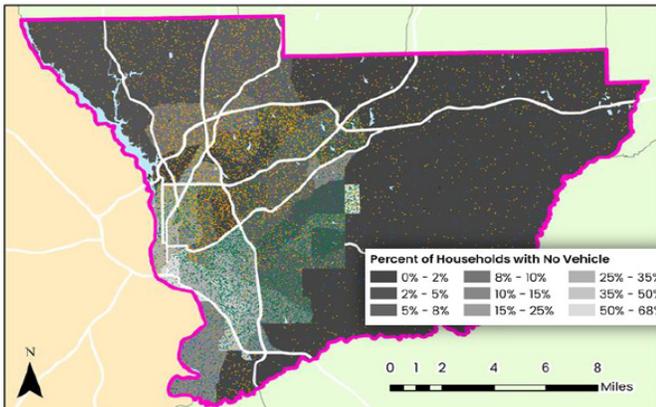
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

Transportation

Around 90% of all Columbus households own a car. However, disparities in vehicle access exist in various areas of the city, as shown in the map to the left. In five census tracts covering downtown and south Columbus, between 42% and 68% of households do not own a car. Conversely, the city has 10 census tracts in north and east Columbus where fewer than 3% of households do not own a car. Furthermore, Columbus scores 26 out of 100 on WalkScore’s walkability index, indicating that more errands require a car.

In lieu of car transportation, Columbus residents may access public transit services through the Metra Transit System, which contains 10 bus routes, as well as paratransit services. Residents living in or near downtown have the greatest access to transit. These residents also tend to have the lowest housing and transportation costs compared to their incomes. Transportation costs make up a greater percentage of income for residents in north and east Columbus, who have limited access to transit. Residents and stakeholders who participated in the planning process noted that lack of access to vehicles or efficient public transportation in the city is often a barrier to accessing employment and other services.

Vehicle Access and Race/Ethnicity



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2015-2019

FAIR HOUSING

Fair Housing Act legislation provides protection to homebuyers, renters or those seeking other housing assistance from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability. Through Columbus’s public survey, which was available on the city’s website, 94 respondents had an opportunity to share their experiences with fair access to housing.

Knowledge of Fair Housing Rights

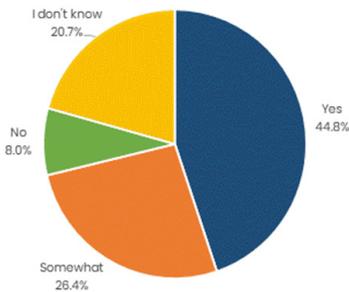
Around 60% of Columbus’s survey participants report that they know their fair housing rights. Another 26% of participants report “somewhat knowing” their fair housing rights. Only 14% of respondents stated that they do not know their fair housing rights. Despite the number that know or somewhat know their fair housing rights, 39% of all respondents stated that they would not know where to file a fair housing complaint.

Stakeholders interviewed during this process identified a limited number of fair housing service providers serving the area. These providers include the city’s Community Reinvestment and Real Estate Department, GA Legal Services, the local real estate commission, and HUD.

Housing Discrimination

More than 70% of all survey participants stated that housing discrimination was an issue or somewhat an issue in Columbus. Only 8% of survey participants stated that they did not believe housing discrimination was an issue in the city.

Do you believe housing discrimination is an issue in Columbus?



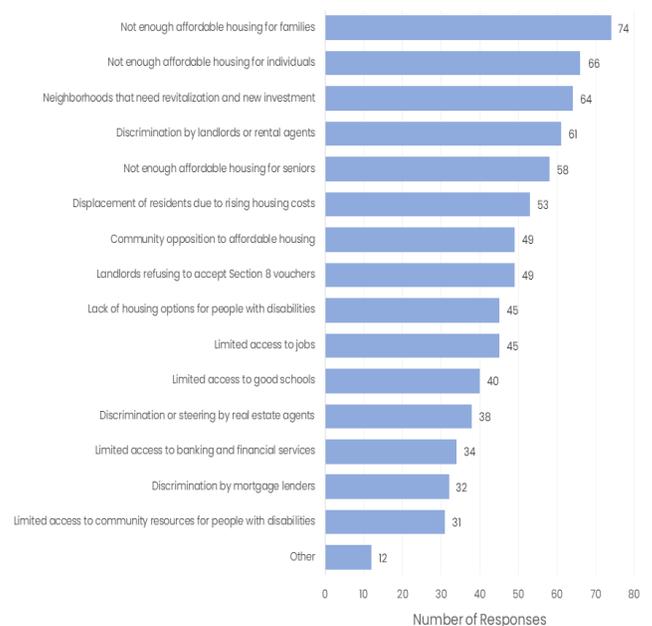
Twelve survey participants (approximately 13% of all survey respondents) stated that they had experienced housing discrimination in Columbus. Ten of the 12 participants who reported experiencing housing discrimination stated that they were discriminated against by a landlord or property manager. Three participants reported discrimination by a real estate agent. Two participants reported discrimination by a mortgage lender, or a city, county, or housing

authority staff person. Race and familial status were the most common bases for discrimination. Of the 12 respondents who experienced housing discrimination, only three participants filed a report. Common reasons for not reporting discrimination were “not knowing what good it would do” and fear of retaliation.

Barriers to Fair Housing

Fair housing planning is designed to expand residents’ mobility and their freedom of choice, particularly in housing. Looking at the provision of community resources, 47% of survey participants expressed that garbage collection was equally provided in the city. However, more than half of all respondents stated that parks and trails, schools, bus service, banking and lending, roads and sidewalks, grocery stores and other shopping, and property maintenance were not equally provided in Columbus.

The top three barriers to fair housing identified by survey participants were not enough affordable housing for families or individuals and neighborhoods that need revitalization and new investment.



HOUSING NEEDS

The availability of quality affordable housing plays a vital role in ensuring housing opportunities are equally accessible to all residents. On the surface, high housing costs in certain areas are exclusionary based solely on income. But the disproportionate representation of protected class groups, particularly non-White families at low and middle income levels, can lead to unequal access to housing options and neighborhood opportunity in high-cost housing markets. Black and Hispanic residents, immigrants, people with disabilities, and seniors often experience additional fair housing barriers when affordable housing is scarce.

Housing Needs

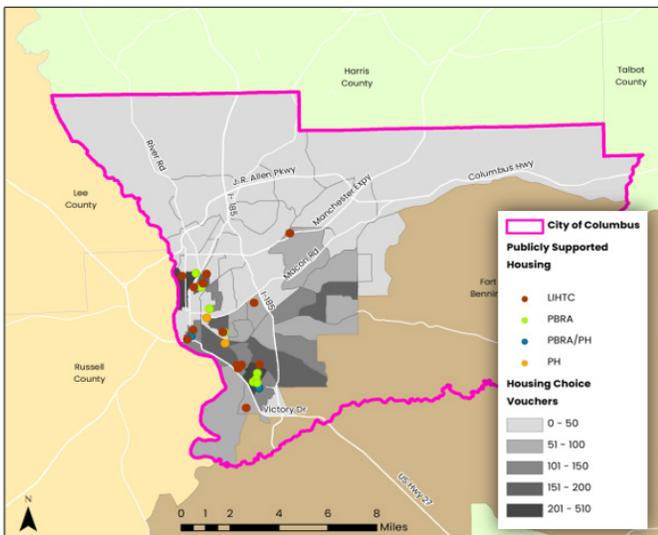
In Columbus, 39% of households have one or more of the following housing problems: cost burdens, overcrowding, or lack of complete kitchen or plumbing facilities. Levels of housing need vary by race and ethnicity. About 30% of white households (9,730 households) have a need compared to 64% of Native American households (110 households), 52% of Other non-Hispanic households (845 households), 46% of Black households (15,275 households), 39% of Hispanic households (1,785 households) and 35% of Asian households (505 households).

Disproportionate Housing Needs	City of Columbus		
	# with problems	# of households	% with problems
Race and Ethnicity			
White, Non-Hispanic	9,730	32,485	30.0%
Black, Non-Hispanic	15,275	32,895	46.4%
Hispanic	1,785	4,525	39.4%
Asian or Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	505	1,459	34.6%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	110	173	63.6%
Other, Non-Hispanic	845	1,639	51.6%
Total	28,250	73,176	38.6%

Affordable Housing Locations

The AI also looked at the locations for traditional public housing, project-based Section 8, Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), and other multifamily units in Columbus. All of the city’s traditional public housing developments and 13 project-based Section 8 developments are located south of Manchester Expressway and west of I-185. There are also 14 LIHTC developments in the city, which are also located in the southwest corner of the city. Housing choice vouchers are in use in the city, primarily south of Macon Road, with significant numbers of vouchers also in use near Bibb City.

Publicly Supported Housing, 2020



Source: HACS, LIHTC Database

Looking at the racial and ethnic composition of households in various types of publicly supported housing, Black residents make up the largest share of HCV holders (93%), traditional public housing households (90%), project-based Section 8 households (67%), and other multifamily (83%). Black households are overrepresented in these publicly supported housing types, since 54% of the city’s Black households are low-to-moderate income. The largest share of White households living in publicly supported housing live in Project-based Section 8 housing (29%). White households are slightly underrepresented in this housing type, since 32% of the city’s White households are low- and moderate-income. Hispanic and Asian households make up less than 5% of all publicly supported housing types, despite 46% of the city’s Hispanic households and 30% of Asian households are low-to-moderate income.

IDENTIFICATION OF IMPEDIMENTS

Based on the data and public input collected for this analysis, the following fair housing impediments were identified. For each impediment, selected activities planned to address the impediment are shown below. The full report contains descriptions of each impediment and a complete listing of associated activities, goals, timelines, and responsible parties.

IMPEDIMENT #1:	<p>Low Labor Market Engagement and Limited Incomes Restrict Housing Choice and Access to Opportunity Among Protected Classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support resident and employer participation in available job training programs, including programs through Columbus Technical College, Columbus State University, and WorkSource Georgia • Develop or expand paid job training programs.
IMPEDIMENT #2:	<p>Continued Need for Neighborhood Investment in South, Central, and East Columbus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with local non-profit organizations or other partners to provide resources and services to students in lower-performing schools, particularly in south, central, and east Columbus.
IMPEDIMENT #3:	<p>Housing Options for Some Protected Classes are Limited by Poor Housing Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with national housing organizations to build the capacity of local non-profit organizations that can participate in rehab/repair programs.
IMPEDIMENT #4:	<p>Publicly Supported Housing Options are Concentrated Outside of Areas of Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New affordable housing development, whether by the cities with CDBG or HOME funds, the local housing authorities, or private-sector LIHTC developers should be given priority consideration when it will be located in an area that increases access to new types of opportunity not generally available in neighborhoods where existing affordable housing is located.
IMPEDIMENT #5:	<p>Insufficient Housing Options for People with Disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider opportunities to encourage or incentivize the construction of new accessible housing units for people with disabilities. • Adopt a Reasonable Accommodation Ordinance that will streamline the process for retrofitting existing homes for greater accessibility.
IMPEDIMENT #6:	<p>Need for Enhanced Fair Housing Education and Enforcement Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a dedicated page on the City's and HACG's websites with information about fair housing ("What is Fair Housing," "What Does Housing Discrimination Look Like," "What are My Fair Housing Rights," etc.) and where to make a housing discrimination complaint or get other assistance related to fair housing.

APPENDIX B

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION RECORD

Public Engagement Advertisements and Flyers

Facebook Posts

by the City of Columbus

For the May 18 Virtual Community Meeting



CCG Community Reinvestment
May 7 at 9:59 AM · 🌐

WE NEED YOU!!!!!! PLEASE SHARE!!!!!!

The City of Columbus is beginning development of its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan, 2021 Annual Action Plan, and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. The five-year plan and annual action plan will identify community development and affordable housing needs and set priorities for investment of federal grant funds to address them. The process is heavily influenced by input from stakeholders such as yourself. We are inviting you to participate in the completion of a community needs-based assessment. Please see the flyer below.



YOU'RE INVITED!

Please join us for a conversation about housing and community development in Columbus.

- What are the housing needs in your community?
- Does your neighborhood have access to good schools, jobs, transportation, healthcare, and grocery stores?
- What barriers limit the range of housing option available to you?
- Do you know what to do if you feel you have experienced housing discrimination?

Join us for a virtual meeting
Tuesday, May 18
6:30pm

Join online:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86511430622>

Or by phone:
Dial: 929-205-6099
Meeting ID: 865 1143 0622

Take the survey at:
www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan



The City of Columbus is currently developing its 5-year Consolidated Plan to assess the City's housing and community development needs for 2021-2025. The Plan will guide how the City spends funding received from HUD to address community needs. A second study, the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice is also being conducted to examine barriers to equal housing and access to jobs, schools and transportation across the city. For more information about the project, please contact Jeremy Gray, Mosaic Community Planning, at 470-435-6020 or info@mosaiccommunityplanning.com.

For the July 20 Virtual Public Hearing

 **CCG Community Reinvestment** June 15 · 🌐

PUBLIC NOTICE

HEARING AND REVIEW PERIOD FOR THE 5-YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN, ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, FAIR HOUSING REPORT, NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AREA STUDY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The City of Columbus invites members of the public to review and offer comments on its 5-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) Study and Citizen Participation Plan. ... See More



COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT ⓘ

COLUMBUSGA.GOV
Community Reinvestment Department | Columbus Consolidated Government

👍 2 1 Share



CCG Community Reinvestment added an event.



June 15 at 6:40 PM · 🌐



COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT

TUE, JUL 20 AT 7:30 PM EDT

HUD Consolidated Plan, Action Plan, Fair Housing, NRSA Study and Citizen...

☆ Interested

3 people going

👍 1

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share

Public Notices

Published May 11, 2021 in the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer

CITY OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA PUBLIC NOTICE OF COMMUNITY MEETING FOR THE CONSOLIDATED PLAN, ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, AND FAIR HOUSING ANALYSIS

The City of Columbus, GA is beginning development of its 2022-2026 Consolidated Plan, 2021 Annual Action Plan, and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. The five-year plan and annual action plan will identify community development and affordable housing needs and set priorities for investment of federal grant funds to address them. The fair housing analysis will identify barriers to equal access to housing and propose strategies to overcome those impediments. These plans are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the City to receive Federal money through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) programs.

The process is heavily influenced by input from local residents, who are invited to participate in public meetings and a survey. The community meeting will be held virtually on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 6:30 PM. Members of the public can join the meeting using the contact information below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86511430622>
Meeting ID: 865 1143 0622

-or-

Dial in: 929-205-6099
Meeting ID: 865 1143 0622

Residents may also learn more about the project and take the online survey at <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>. Drafts of the plans will be posted on the project website for public comment beginning in June 2021.

Other Information

If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation, please contact Robert Scott, City of Columbus Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate, prior to the meeting at 706-225-3918 or scott.robert@columbusga.org.

PUBLIC NOTICE
HEARING AND REVIEW PERIOD FOR THE 5-YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN,
ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, FAIR HOUSING REPORT, NEIGHBORHOOD
REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AREA STUDY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The City of Columbus, Georgia invites members of the public to review and offer comments on its 5-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) Study and Citizen Participation Plan.

Background

The City of Columbus has developed its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and 2021 Annual Action Plan, as well as a fair housing study called the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, and a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) Study of South Columbus. The five-year plan and annual action plan are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the City to receive federal money through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME programs. These plans have identified community development and affordable housing needs in Columbus and set priorities for investment of federal grant funds. The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice has identified barriers to equal access to housing and proposed strategies to overcome those impediments. The completion of the NRSA Study serves as an economic development tool, allowing the City to utilize CDBG funding more flexibly to promote investment in South Columbus. Finally, the City has updated its Citizen Participation Plan. The Citizen Participation Plan establishes the number and type of public engagement on the above-mentioned plans and allows citizens to participate, review and comment on all documents prior to submission to HUD.

Public Review Period

The 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan, 2021 Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, NRSA Study and Citizen Participation Plan will be available for public review and comment from June 26 to July 26, 2021. The documents may be downloaded from the City's website:
<https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>

Public Hearing

A public hearing will be held at which the City will present information on the reports and receive comments from the public regarding the draft reports. The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 6:30 pm virtually. Members of the public can join the meeting using the contact information below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88516320261>

Meeting ID: 885 1632 0261

-or-

Dial in: 929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 885 1632 0261

To Make Comments

The City will receive written comments until 5:00 p.m. EST on Monday, July 26, 2021. Comments regarding the report may be e-mailed or mailed to the City of Columbus Department of Community Reinvestment at scott.robert@columbusga.org or Attn: Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate, Columbus Consolidated Government, 420 10th Street, Columbus, GA 31901. Alternatively, comments may be made orally at the Public Hearing described above.

Accessibility and Accommodation

Please contact Robert Scott at 706-225-3918 if you require any special accommodations.

Public Meeting Presentations



Columbus 5-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan and Fair Housing Study

May 2021

1

BEFORE WE GET STARTED: USING ZOOM

How to **change your name** in Zoom
(Participants button > Click your name > More > Rename)

Raise your hand during discussion and the host will unmute you (Participants button > Raise Hand)

Send comments + questions using the **CHAT** button at bottom of screen

If accessing the meeting from your phone:
*6 to mute/unmute
*9 to raise hand

2

WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

3

CONSOLIDATED PLAN & ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

- Identifies and prioritizes community development and housing needs
- Serves as funding application for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, and Emergency Solutions Grant programs
- Develops a strategy to target federal grant money to areas with greatest needs

4

PLANNING PROCESS



5

CDBG FUNDING OBJECTIVES

- Develop communities through:
 - Decent housing
 - Suitable living environment
 - Expanded economic opportunity
- Result in:
 - Benefit to people with low or moderate incomes
 - Prevent or eliminate slum or blight
 - Meet an urgent need



6

CDBG ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Wide variety, including:
 - Housing & other property activities
 - Public facilities & public services
 - Economic development activities
 - Funding to nonprofit organizations
 - Planning and administration
 - Other activities



7

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Employment training○ Public safety○ Childcare○ Health or dental needs○ Senior services○ Recreation services | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilities & infrastructure<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Streets & sidewalks○ Water & sewer○ Parks & playgrounds○ Recreation facilities○ Homeless shelters○ Group homes |
|--|--|

SAMPLE CDBG ACTIVITIES

8

HOME Program

HOME

- Focused on affordable housing
- Rental or for-sale housing new construction, housing repair/rehab, first time homebuyer assistance, rent assistance



9

FAIR HOUSING STUDY

10

ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE

- Assesses equal access to housing as set forth by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Fair Housing Act of 1968, which:

“protect a person’s right to own, sell, purchase, or rent housing of his or her choice without fear of unlawful discrimination”



11

Any action, omission, or decision that restricts, or has the effect of restricting, the availability of housing choices, based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status

A HOUSING IMPEDIMENT IS...

12

WHAT WILL THE FAIR HOUSING STUDY INCLUDE?

- Analysis of the local fair housing landscape
- Four specific fair housing issues:
 - Integration and segregation
 - Areas of poverty
 - Access to opportunity
 - Housing need
- Fair housing priorities and goals



13

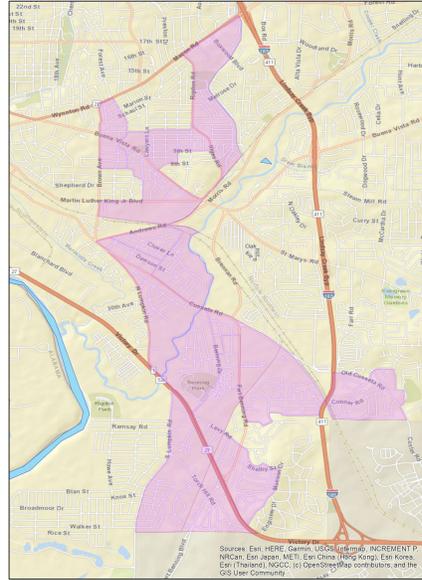
DISCUSSION

14

NRSA Study

Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) study

- Designates local target areas for revitalization
- Allows the city to use its CDBG funds more flexibly within the target area to improve economic development and housing for low to moderate income households.



15

NRSA Study

NRSA Public Meeting Wednesday, June 2

6:30pm

<https://zoom.us/j/94790580842>

Or by phone at 929-205-6099

Meeting ID: 947 9058 0842

For More Information, contact:

Marilyn Hall

ColumbusNRSA@hallplanning.com

16

Take the online survey:

www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan

Share more comments:

info@mosaiccommunityplanning.com

195 Arizona Ave NE, Suite 123, Atlanta, GA 30307

770-366-7893

THANK YOU!



Columbus 5-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Fair Housing Study and NRSA

July 2021

1

BEFORE WE GET STARTED: USING ZOOM

How to **change your name** in Zoom
(Participants button > Click your name > More > Rename)

Raise your hand during discussion and the host will unmute you (Participants button > Raise Hand)

Send comments + questions using the **CHAT** button at bottom of screen

If accessing the meeting from your phone:
*6 to mute/unmute
*9 to raise hand

2

CONSOLIDATED PLAN & ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

- Identifies and prioritizes community development and housing needs
- Serves as funding application for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships programs
- Develops a strategy to target federal grant money to areas with greatest needs between 2021 and 2025.

3

ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING

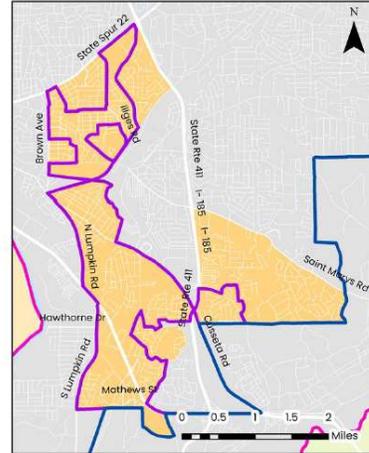
- Identifies barriers to equal housing options and proposes strategies to overcome them
 - Integration and segregation
 - Areas of poverty
 - Access to opportunity
 - Housing need
- Recommended by HUD for all CDBG fund recipients

4

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AREA

- The NRSA Study helps determine strategies for revitalizing a community's most distressed neighborhoods.
- With the completion of a NRSA study, Columbus can use its CDBG funds with greater flexibility to conduct revitalization activities in the study area.
- The South Columbus NRSA study covers the city's Wynnton, Willett, and Avondale Heights neighborhoods.

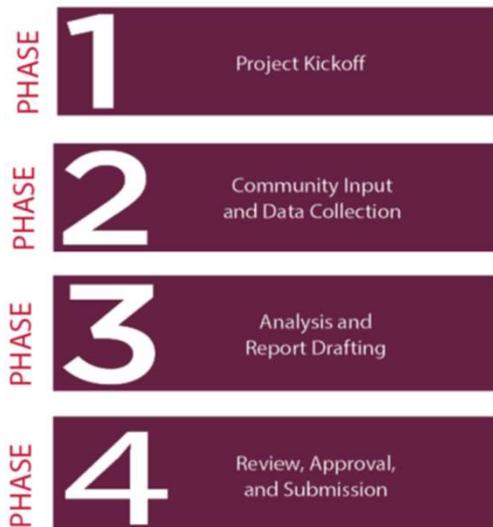
South Columbus NRSA and Study Area



Source: TIGER/Line Shapefiles, 2019

5

PLANNING PROCESS

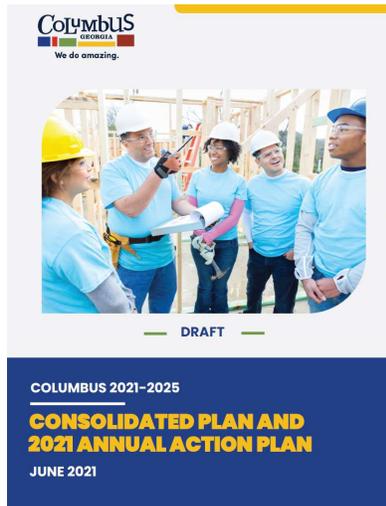


6

DATA SOURCES

- U.S. Census
- HUD Community Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)
- Housing complaint data
- Prior research and plans
- Stakeholder input
 - Public meeting and focus groups
 - Community survey
 - One-on-one stakeholder interviews

7



CONSOLIDATED PLAN & ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

8

HOUSING NEEDS

- Affordability is the most common housing problem for low to moderate income households.

2 out of every 3 low-to-moderate income households is cost burdened.

Renters are nearly 3 times as likely to be cost burdened as homeowners

- Other housing needs include improved housing quality and blight removal, home rehab/repair for homeowners (especially for seniors), and rental and utility assistance

9

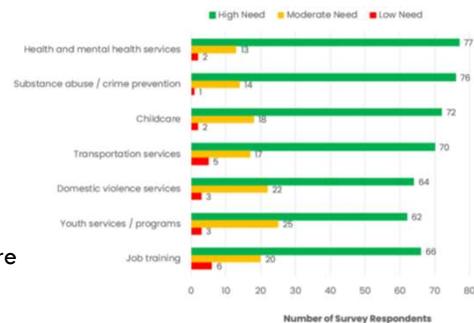
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Public Infrastructure and Facility Needs

- Participants in the community survey identified high speed internet access, street and road improvements and sidewalk improvements as the top infrastructure needs.
- Public facility needs include childcare centers, community centers and homeless centers.

Public Service Needs

- The community survey indicates that health and mental health services, substance abuse and crime prevention and childcare were the top public service needs.



10

FIVE-YEAR HOUSING PRIORITIES

1. Expansion of Affordable Housing Supply

- Invest in new housing supply serving low to moderate income households
- Provide down payment and closing cost assistance, as well as housing counseling

2. Housing Rehabilitation

- Preserve housing by assisting income-eligible homeowners with housing repairs and accessibility improvements.

11

FIVE-YEAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

3. Blight Removal

- Demolish blighted properties

4. Infrastructure and Public Facility Improvements

- Fund improvements for sidewalks, streets, park and recreation facilities, ADA accessibility, etc.

5. Public Services

- Increase access to employment and training programs, youth programs and childcare.

12

FIVE-YEAR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

6. Fair Housing

- Provide fair housing education to help residents, landlords and other providers understand fair housing rights.

7. COVID-19 Response

- Respond to the COVID-19 pandemic through rent and utility assistance, small business assistance, food access, medical supplies, etc.

8. Program Administration

- Provide administration of the CDBG and HOME programs.

13



ANALYSIS OF IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING

14

Any action, omission, or decision that restricts, or has the effect of restricting, the availability of housing choices, based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status

A HOUSING IMPEDIMENT IS...

15

IMPEDIMENTS TO FAIR HOUSING CHOICE

1. Low labor market engagement and limited incomes restrict housing choice and access to opportunity among protected classes
2. Continued need for neighborhood investment in South, Central and East Columbus
3. Housing options for some protected classes are limited by poor housing conditions
4. Publicly supported housing options are concentrated outside of areas of opportunity
5. Insufficient housing options for people with disabilities
6. Need for enhanced fair housing education and enforcement activity

16

FAIR HOUSING GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

- Develop or expand paid job training programs.
- Fund the development, expansion or improvement of community centers and programming, health care facilities and other public facilities.
- Create a rental rehabilitation program that incentivizes landlords to keep their properties in good repair.
- Support programs that assist people with disabilities with the cost of accessibility modifications to their homes.
- Give priority consideration to new affordable housing developments in areas of opportunity.

17

FAIR HOUSING GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

- Develop community education around the concept of affordable housing and its value to the community.
- Adopt a Reasonable Accommodations policy to streamline the approval process for making homes more accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Establish a dedicated page on the city's website with information about fair housing.

18



19

NRSA STUDY

South Columbus NRSA and Study Area

Source: TIGER/Line Shapefiles, 2019

- 91% of residents are Black
- 36% of residents are below poverty level
- The median household income is \$21,542 (compared to \$46,408 for the city as a whole)
- Nearly one-third of residents in the study area are unemployed.

20

NRSA GOALS

- Support neighborhood revitalization; clean up and beautify blighted commercial areas.
- Ensure residents have the skills and connections needed to obtain employment with living wages.
- Support entrepreneurs in South Columbus.
- Support the development of high-quality, affordable, for-rent and for-sale housing.
- Rehabilitate existing single-family housing for affordable homeownership

21

NRSA GOALS

- Provide navigation assistance to residents seeking information on available housing programs.
- Provide well-maintained parks and community recreation spaces for South Columbus residents.
- Improve pedestrian connectivity to create safe, walkable environments.
- Ensure all city services, such as code enforcement, trash collection, and bus transportation are provided equally and at comparable levels of service.

22

NRSA RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

- Encourage commercial infill and mixed-use development.
- Launch adult education for individuals who did not complete high school.
- Utilize the land bank to purchase property for redevelopment.
- Develop and maintain a formal maintenance program for all City facilities.
- Improve recreational facilities in low-to-moderate income census tracts.

23

DISCUSSION

24

WHAT'S NEXT?

The City will receive written comments on the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, and NRSA Study until **5:00 p.m. EST on Monday, July 26, 2021.**

Final drafts of these plans will be considered for action by the Columbus City Council on Tuesday, July 27th at 5:30pm.

If approved, the final version of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan will be submitted to HUD *no later than* Tuesday, August 10, 2021.

25

Share more comments:

Director Robert Scott

Columbus Reinvestment and Real Estate Department

scott.robert@columbusga.org

THANK YOU!

26

Emails to Adjacent Jurisdictions



Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Phenix City Housing

Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>
To: Carly Weddle <cweddle@pchousing.org>

Fri, May 7, 2021 at 1:48 PM

Good afternoon Ms. Weddle,

Thank you for your response! On May 18th, Columbus will host a public Consolidated Plan meeting which is open to all audiences. We would love for tenants to attend as well as administrative staff. I am attaching the flyer for the May 18th meeting that can be distributed as you see fit. There is also a public survey, which is advertised in the flyer as well. Thank you for the follow-up. We look forward to hearing any input the Phenix City Housing Authority may have on the Con Plan priorities and needs.

Sincerely,
Kim Mitchell



Kimberly Mitchell
Associate Planner

Mosaic Community Planning
195 Arizona Ave NE
Suite 123
Atlanta, GA 30307
Office: 470.435.6020 x109
Direct: 470.435.6024

[Quoted text hidden]



Public Meeting Flyer - Columbus..png
422K

YOU'RE INVITED!

Please join us for a conversation about housing and community development in Columbus.

- What are the housing needs in your community?
- Does your neighborhood have access to good schools, jobs, transportation, healthcare, and grocery stores?
- What barriers limit the range of housing option available to you?
- Do you know what to do if you feel you have experienced housing discrimination?



Join us for a virtual meeting

**Tuesday,
May 18
6:30pm**

Join online:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86511430622>

Or by phone:

Dial: 929-205-6099
Meeting ID: 865 1143 0622

Take the survey at:

www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan

The City of Columbus is currently developing its 5-Year Consolidated Plan to assess the City's housing and community development needs for 2021-2025. The Plan will guide how the City spends funding received from HUD to address community needs. A second study, the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice is also being conducted to examine barriers to equal housing and access to jobs, schools and transportation across the City. For more information about the project, please contact Jeremy Gray, Mosaic Community Planning, at 470-435-6020 or info@mosaiccommunityplanning.com.





Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Columbus Consolidated Plan Available for your Review

1 message

Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>
To: cityclerk@phenixcityal.us

Thu, Jul 15, 2021 at 4:01 PM

Good afternoon Mayor Lowe,

The City of Columbus invites you to review its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, now available on its website. These plans are required by HUD to establish priorities for the investment of federal CDBG, HOME and ESG grant funds in Columbus. To view the plans, please visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>.

Attached to this email you will find an introductory letter from Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate. You will also find a public notice with additional information on the planning process, as well as a flyer for the city's upcoming public hearing on July 20, 2021. If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or contact Robert Scott at scott.robert@columbusga.org.

Sincerely,
Kim Mitchell



Kimberly Mitchell
Associate Planner

Mosaic Community Planning
195 Arizona Ave NE
Suite 123
Atlanta, GA 30307
Office: 470.435.6020 x109
Direct: 470.435.6024

3 attachments

- Public Notice - Comment Period_updated 6.17.21.pdf**
152K
- Intro Letter - Director Robert Scott.pdf**
59K
- July 20 Public Hearing - 7.15.21.pdf**
651K



Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Columbus Consolidated Plan Available for your Review

1 message

Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>
To: CDBG.Biz@dca.ga.gov

Thu, Jul 15, 2021 at 3:38 PM

Good afternoon,

The City of Columbus invites you to review its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, now available on its website. These plans are required by HUD to establish priorities for the investment of federal CDBG, HOME and ESG grant funds in Columbus. To view the plans, please visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>.

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Sincerely,
Kim Mitchell



Kimberly Mitchell
Associate Planner

Mosaic Community Planning
195 Arizona Ave NE
Suite 123
Atlanta, GA 30307
Office: 470.435.6020 x109
Direct: 470.435.6024

3 attachments

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July 20 Public Hearing - 7.15.21.pdf
651K



Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Columbus Consolidated Plan Available for your Review

1 message

Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>
To: hbuhr@russellcountyal.org

Thu, Jul 15, 2021 at 3:42 PM

Good afternoon Ms. Buhr,

The City of Columbus invites the Russell County Commissioners to review its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, now available on its website. These plans are required by HUD to establish priorities for the investment of federal CDBG, HOME and ESG grant funds in Columbus. To view the plans, please visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>.

Attached to this email you will find an introductory letter from Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate. You will also find a public notice with additional information on the planning process, as well as a flyer for the city's upcoming public hearing on July 20, 2021. If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or contact Robert Scott at scott.robert@columbusga.org.

Sincerely,
Kim Mitchell



Kimberly Mitchell
Associate Planner

Mosaic Community Planning
195 Arizona Ave NE
Suite 123
Atlanta, GA 30307
Office: 470.435.6020 x109
Direct: 470.435.6024

3 attachments

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651K



Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Columbus Consolidated Plan Available for your Review

1 message

Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Thu, Jul 15, 2021 at 4:03 PM

To: hcgadistrict1@harriscountyga.gov, hcgadistrict2@harriscountyga.gov, hcgadistrict3@harriscountyga.gov, hcgadistrict4@harriscountyga.gov, hcgadistrict5@harriscountyga.gov

Good afternoon Commissioners,

The City of Columbus invites you to review its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, now available on its website. These plans are required by HUD to establish priorities for the investment of federal CDBG, HOME and ESG grant funds in Columbus. To view the plans, please visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>.

Attached to this email you will find an introductory letter from Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate. You will also find a public notice with additional information on the planning process, as well as a flyer for the city's upcoming public hearing on July 20, 2021. If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or contact Robert Scott at scott.robert@columbusga.org.

Sincerely,
Kim Mitchell



Kimberly Mitchell
Associate Planner

Mosaic Community Planning
195 Arizona Ave NE
Suite 123
Atlanta, GA 30307
Office: 470.435.6020 x109
Direct: 470.435.6024

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651K



Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Columbus Consolidated Plan Available for your Review

1 message

Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>
To: marionga@windstream.net

Thu, Jul 15, 2021 at 4:04 PM

Good afternoon Chairman Neal,

The City of Columbus invites you to review its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, now available on its website. These plans are required by HUD to establish priorities for the investment of federal CDBG, HOME and ESG grant funds in Columbus. To view the plans, please visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>.

Attached to this email you will find an introductory letter from Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate. You will also find a public notice with additional information on the planning process, as well as a flyer for the city's upcoming public hearing on July 20, 2021. If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or contact Robert Scott at scott.robert@columbusga.org.

Sincerely,
Kim Mitchell



Kimberly Mitchell
Associate Planner

Mosaic Community Planning
195 Arizona Ave NE
Suite 123
Atlanta, GA 30307
Office: 470.435.6020 x109
Direct: 470.435.6024

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152K

July 20 Public Hearing - 7.15.21.pdf
651K



Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Columbus Consolidated Plan Available for your Review

1 message

Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>
To: cison@talbotcountyga.org

Thu, Jul 15, 2021 at 4:10 PM

Good afternoon Ms. Ison,

The City of Columbus invites the Talbot County Commissioners to review its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, now available on its website. These plans are required by HUD to establish priorities for the investment of federal CDBG, HOME and ESG grant funds in Columbus. To view the plans, please visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>.

Attached to this email you will find an introductory letter from Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate. You will also find a public notice with additional information on the planning process, as well as a flyer for the city's upcoming public hearing on July 20, 2021. If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or contact Robert Scott at scott.robert@columbusga.org.

Sincerely,
Kim Mitchell



Kimberly Mitchell
Associate Planner

Mosaic Community Planning
195 Arizona Ave NE
Suite 123
Atlanta, GA 30307
Office: 470.435.6020 x109
Direct: 470.435.6024

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July 20 Public Hearing - 7.15.21.pdf
651K



Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Columbus Consolidated Plan Available for your Review

1 message

Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>
To: probatejudge@mindspring.com

Thu, Jul 15, 2021 at 3:44 PM

Good afternoon Chairman English,

The City of Columbus invites you to review its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, now available on its website. These plans are required by HUD to establish priorities for the investment of federal CDBG, HOME and ESG grant funds in Columbus. To view the plans, please visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>.

Attached to this email you will find an introductory letter from Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate. You will also find a public notice with additional information on the planning process, as well as a flyer for the city's upcoming public hearing on July 20, 2021. If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or contact Robert Scott at scott.robert@columbusga.org.

Sincerely,
Kim Mitchell



Kimberly Mitchell
Associate Planner

Mosaic Community Planning
195 Arizona Ave NE
Suite 123
Atlanta, GA 30307
Office: 470.435.6020 x109
Direct: 470.435.6024

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Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Columbus Consolidated Plan Available for your Review

1 message

Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>
To: bocclerk@ugoccc.com

Thu, Jul 15, 2021 at 4:12 PM

Good afternoon Ms. Huff,

The City of Columbus invites the Chattahoochee County Commissioners to review its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan, now available on its website. These plans are required by HUD to establish priorities for the investment of federal CDBG, HOME and ESG grant funds in Columbus. To view the plans, please visit <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>.

Attached to this email you will find an introductory letter from Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate. You will also find a public notice with additional information on the planning process, as well as a flyer for the city's upcoming public hearing on July 20, 2021. If you have any questions, please feel free to reply to this email or contact Robert Scott at scott.robert@columbusga.org.

Sincerely,
Kim Mitchell



Kimberly Mitchell
Associate Planner

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**COLUMBUS, GEORGIA
A CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT
P.O. BOX 1340, 420 10TH ST. COLUMBUS, GA 31901
PHONE (706) 653-4613 FAX (706) 225-4513**

July 12, 2021

Greetings,

The City of Columbus has completed drafts of its 5-Year Consolidated Plan, 2021-2022 Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) study. These documents are available for your review on the city's Community Reinvestment website at <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>.

If you would like to provide comments on these plans, please send your comments to me via email at scott.robert@columbusga.org. Comments may also be mailed Attn: Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate, Columbus Consolidated Government, 420 10th Street, Columbus, GA 31901. The comment period will end on July 27, 2021.

We invite you to attend a public hearing to discuss these documents. The public hearing will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, July 20th at 6:30pm. Please see the attached public notice to access the Zoom link, along with other pertinent information.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Robert Scott'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Robert Scott
Director

Columbus Residents You're Invited!

Provide your feedback on the following plans:

**5-Year
Columbus
Consolidated
Plan**

**Analysis of
Impediments**

**South Columbus
Neighborhood
Study**

Share your thoughts
on Columbus's housing
and community
development needs



Join us for a
virtual meeting

**Tuesday,
July 20**

6:30pm

[https://
us02web.zoom.
us/j/88516320261](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88516320261)

**Zoom Meeting ID:
885 1632 0261**

The Five-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice and Neighborhood Reinvestment Strategy Area (NRSA) study are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a prerequisite to receive funding and address local needs related to housing, economic and community development, and homelessness. If you need special accommodations to attend this meeting please contact the Director of Community Reinvestment, Robert Scott, at 706-225-3918.

PUBLIC NOTICE

HEARING AND REVIEW PERIOD FOR THE 5-YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN, ANNUAL ACTION PLAN, FAIR HOUSING REPORT, NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AREA STUDY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

The City of Columbus invites members of the public to review and offer comments on its 5-Year Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) Study and Citizen Participation Plan.

Background

The City of Columbus has developed its 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan and 2021 Annual Action Plan, as well as a fair housing study called the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, and a Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) Study of South Columbus. The five-year plan and annual action plan are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the City to receive federal money through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME programs. These plans have identified community development and affordable housing needs in Columbus and set priorities for investment of federal grant funds. The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice has identified barriers to equal access to housing and proposed strategies to overcome those impediments. The completion of the NRSA Study serves as an economic development tool, allowing the City to utilize CDBG funding more flexibly to promote investment in South Columbus. Finally, the City has updated its Citizen Participation Plan. The Citizen Participation Plan establishes the number and type of public engagement on the above-mentioned plans and allows citizens to participate, review and comment on all documents prior to submission to HUD.

Anticipated Funding Amounts

In FY 2021, the City of Columbus is anticipated to receive the following funding amounts:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - \$1,672,656
- Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus Round 3 (CDBG-CV3) - \$1,143,059
- Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) - \$986,139
- Home Investment Partnership Program – American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) - \$3,574,055

Proposed Activities

A list of proposed activities is available in section AP-38 of the draft Consolidated Plan. None of the proposed activities are likely to result in the displacement of families.

Public Review Period

The 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan, 2021 Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, NRSA Study and Citizen Participation Plan will be available for public review and comment from June 26 to July 26, 2021. The documents may be downloaded from the City's website: <https://www.columbusga.gov/communityreinvestment/Consolidated-Plan>

Public Hearing

A public hearing will be held at which the City will present information on the reports and receive comments from the public regarding the draft reports. The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 6:30pm virtually. Members of the public can join the meeting using the contact information below:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88516320261
Meeting ID: 885 1632 0261

-or-

Dial in: 929-205-6099
Meeting ID: 885 1632 0261

Accessibility and Accommodation

Please contact Robert Scott at 706-225-3918 if you require any special accommodations.

To Make Comments

The City will receive written comments until 5:00 p.m. EST on Monday, July 26, 2021. Comments regarding the report may be e-mailed or mailed to the City of Columbus Department of Community Reinvestment at scott.robert@columbusga.org or Attn: Robert Scott, Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate, Columbus Consolidated Government, 420 10th Street, Columbus, GA 31901. Alternatively, comments may be made orally at the Public Hearing described above.

Final Consideration by City Council and Submission to HUD

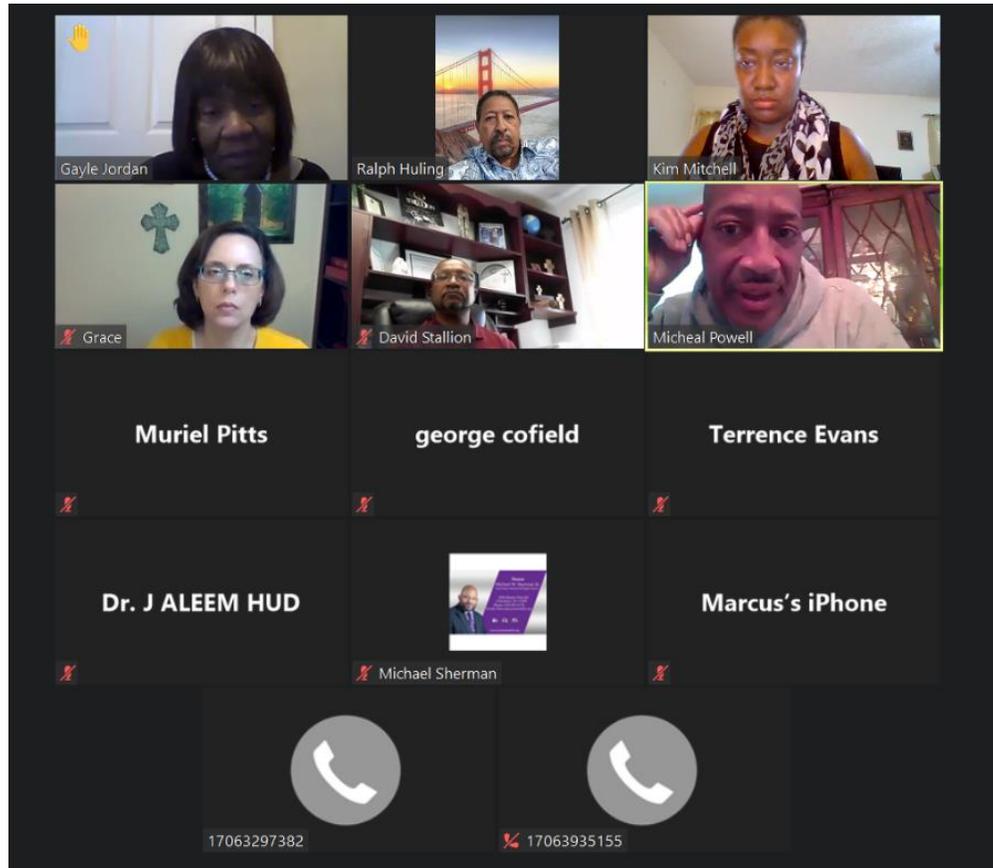
Final drafts of the Consolidated Plan, Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, NRSA Plan and Citizen Participation Plan will be considered for action by the Columbus City Council on Tuesday, July 27th at 5:30pm. If approved, the final version of the Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan will be submitted to HUD *no later than* Tuesday, August 10, 2021.

Public Comments

Focus Group

May 7, 2021

Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance



Comments Received

Columbus's greatest affordable housing needs:

- Senior housing
- Rent assistance, utility assistance. Churches get a lot of requests, esp. on the south side.
- Transitional housing for families. There is a lot of assistance but not a lot of affordable supply. Few landlords want to accept assistance.
- Home improvement
- Homeless veterans' services
- First-time homebuyer assistance

Columbus's greatest community improvement needs:

- Support for young men that are hopeless because they made bad choices early in life.
- Technical assistance for organizations

- Training for ex-offenders
- Urban gardens, playgrounds, sidewalks, speed bumps and stop signs in Oakland Park.

Barriers that might impact a person's housing choices:

- Credit scores
- Financial literacy programs. Programs claiming to fix credit may take the client's money.
- Waiting lists for housing.

Public Meeting

May 18, 2021

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. On the left, a slide titled "CDBG FUNDING OBJECTIVES" is displayed. The slide content is as follows:

- Develop communities through:
 - Decent housing
 - Suitable living environment
 - Expanded economic opportunity
- Result in:
 - Benefit to people with low or moderate incomes
 - Prevent or eliminate slum or blight
 - Meet an urgent need

The slide includes three small images: a woman in an orange shirt, a construction site, and a group of people eating. On the right side of the Zoom window, a grid of 16 participant thumbnails is visible. Some thumbnails show names like "John Mitchell", "John Scott", "Phodge", "Louie Roberts...", "PAT FRIEL", "Abdullah CHESTNUT", "Toya Tucker", "Galaxy J", "Denise", "Martha Robert", "Kawana", "Kyle A. Bair", "Michael Baker", "Ashley Becker", "John House Col...", and "Verge Church". The Zoom toolbar at the bottom shows options for Mute, Stop Video, Participants (43), Chat, Share Screen, Record, and Reactions. The system tray at the bottom right shows the time as 6:37 PM on 5/18/2021.

Comments Received

WHAT ARE COLUMBUS'S GREATEST AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS? ARE THERE PARTS OF THE CITY WHERE HOUSING NEEDS ARE GREATER THAN OTHERS?

- In the Wynnton area, there are several blighted properties. My next-door neighbor (property) has had several owners and it is hard to keep the yard maintained.
- In South Columbus people are leery of buying property in that area due to crime. The dividing line has been Macon Road. People south of Macon Road are seen as a "lesser caliber." More development goes north of Macon Road.
- It's called the "Macon Dixon line"
- In my neighborhood (Oakland Park), there are 15-20 vacant homes. When the parents passed away, the houses sat empty. People are being encouraged to go north of Macon Road.
- I am a landlord and the areas have become blighted. When people have vouchers, they are encouraged to go north of Macon Road. In the Wynnton area, it used to be stable. The city can work with agencies to get landlords and tenants involved.
- This is also true in Beallwood. The city land trust office has talked about deserted properties where it's not clear who owns the property. There is a lot that can be rehabbed.
- Abandoned properties lead to not-good behavior and activity.

- I worked in law enforcement for 20 years. The population of people released from prison, jail and mental health facilities is at an alarming rate. Everyone has their safety at heart, but if they are released with no residence, you will find people being vagrant, unsavory activity. I had difficulty helping people find a place to live. Sometimes felonies or poor credit stopped people from being housed.
- Properties are blighted because no one is there. It's as if people are being told "don't go there." There is property there. We have a homeless problem. Once these moratoriums are up, we are going to have a higher rate of homelessness.
- I have property in Oakland Park and Beallwood. The solution can be easily done in the consolidated government. We have departments within Columbus that are not coordinating with one another. We could do a better job with code enforcement. People are getting evicted.
- There are going to be an increase in foreclosures, and we are looking for funds to keep people in their homes. People will have to have the 7-8 months of payments. Emergency funds is a need. There is not enough because the funds are spread around the state. Either we need more housing counselors to help people on the back end and we need funds to help people on the front end.
- One of the issues is finding property in Columbus that would be willing to be in the program – they were offering \$700/mo.
- However, the turnaround time between the application being submitted and the funds being available may be up to 4-5 months. The housing stock affordable with a voucher is minimal. Those that are available are not in good condition.
- The money that my organization has had has been a drop in the bucket. We have been trying to do (mortgage) modifications, but the flood gates are opening.
- Scattered affordable housing on the north and south side of the Columbus.
- Improvements to the southside affordable housing and community.
- Affordable housing that is available for rent, not just buying – seniors prefer to rent.
- More information is needed about how to access quality government-subsidized housing. Columbus is converting its public housing units to RAD, but people generally don't know what that means or how they may be able to access housing.
- Public/government-subsidized housing is limited, which means people are looking for places to live in the private market. Then there are pretty much two options – somewhere overpriced or somewhere affordable that is poor quality/in a slum. There is no middle ground in Columbus.
- In Midtown, there is a rise in the number of people who have bought up properties, improved them, and are now renting them as Airbnbs/short-term rentals. This takes housing out of the available stock for-sale or rent
- Resources for older residents living in dilapidated housing and providing them more information about assistance such as home repairs, ramp installation, etc.
- Some residents are interested in homeownership but saving for a down payment is a hurdle.

- There are a lot of community resources available that people don't know about, particularly short-term rental assistance. Giving people information about that will be particularly important as extended unemployment benefits end. Landlords also don't know that they can apply for various programs to receive assistance.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE COLUMBUS'S GREATEST COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT NEEDS (E.G. JOB TRAINING, HOMELESS PREVENTION, PARKS/PLAYGROUNDS, YOUTH ACTIVITIES, SENIOR CENTERS, SIDEWALKS, INFRASTRUCTURE, ETC.)?

- Infrastructure is one. And youth activities. I think Columbus has some job training, but I don't know how it's being done during COVID. Are these trainings in person or virtual? If you don't have wifi, how do you get on Zoom to do your training?
- Urban playgrounds and urban gardens. Oakland Park needs sidewalks and streetlights. It was populated during WWII and the demographics have shifted dramatically. There are lot of young kids, and they play basketball in the street. (One example is the playground by the library on Macon Road).
- I live 2 houses from an elem. School. I attempted to walk to the playground, but the gates were locked. We are encouraging bad behavior (jumping over the fence).
- At Dawson Elementary, they re-did the parks and they gated it because they don't want children in the park after hours. The park is for the school. This is a problem for us in District 4. The outdoor basketball goal is the only one in this neighborhood. There is no other available basketball court.
- This is a case of lack of coordination of facilities. The school is in the neighborhood. We need better coordination and centrally located services – when you receive govt money you have to coordinate services. Homelessness is a big problem.
- Job training and homeless prevention – you can job train, but the pay is not keeping up with the cost of living. Some people are living better on unemployment than when they were working.
- A lack of effective communication is an issue. We don't listen to comprehend; we listen to respond. I can see that there is a disconnect.
- If you get a job making \$1,200 and your rent increases to \$800, this is called a "cliff effect"
- 12-24 "long term" case management would help people get past that one year on their own, including housing, education, activities for children. Case management tends to be tied to housing programs.
- There is a 6-month follow-up with case management, but by this time there can be a lot of issues, such as lights turned off.
- In the foster care program, when youth were transitioning out they would pay all of their rent. Or their contribution would be smaller every month and would increase over time. This would integrate teaching responsibility. There were also classes on budgeting and preparing healthy meals.
- More sidewalks and ramps that are level for wheelchairs.
- Wheelchair accessibility in general.
- Job training.

- Economic development to promote employment opportunities.
- More community resource centers are needed in distressed areas, such as along Casita Road, Manchester Highway, or other areas with poverty. The City met with the minister alliance to talk about what CDBG could be used for and that was helpful.
- Health Department was just moved up Veterans Parkway and people in south Columbus no longer have access to what they need. Resources in south Columbus would be helpful.
- A better job and spreading information and bringing partners to the table would be good.
- Childcare is a major issue.
- There is a need for improvement in the area downtown between 5th and 6th Avenue and on 5th Avenue in front of unemployment office. It is an eyesore. The apartments are in terrible shape and should be rehabbed or torn down and redeveloped. There are also empty houses nearby that people use illegally. They should be redeveloped or taken down
- There's a need public safety need for cameras that are monitored off-site to prevent crime, human trafficking, and other things that are not seen or addressed.
- Funding for Neighborhood Watch patrols for gasoline or other resources. This would be a good use of CDBG funding if allowed.
- Sidewalks are needed everywhere but focusing on streetscaping/sidewalks can be a sign of gentrification for more depressed areas. Sidewalks shouldn't be a focus for use of CDBG funding. Focus instead of rental assistance, home repair for seniors, and other programs that help people having trouble financially.

ARE THERE HOUSING OR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES YOU KNOW OF THAT HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY SUCCESSFUL? WHAT MADE THEM SUCCESSFUL?

- Patriot Point Apartment Complex – because it's quality housing that is also affordable.
- No responses to this question. Not aware of programs outside of Columbus that the City should try. It would be good to have more knowledge of what other places are doing.

ARE THERE NEW USES OF HUD GRANT FUNDS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE COLUMBUS CONSIDER? (OPTIONAL, BASED ON AUDIENCE)

- Demolition of blight – specifically abandoned houses and trailer parks.
- Support entrepreneurs.

WHAT ABOUT NEEDS RELATED TO FAIR ACCESS TO HOUSING? DO RESIDENTS OF SIMILAR INCOMES GENERALLY HAVE THE SAME RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS? ARE THERE ANY BARRIERS OTHER THAN INCOME/SAVINGS THAT MIGHT IMPACT HOUSING CHOICES? ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY HOUSING DISCRIMINATION?

- Asked for more education on fair housing.
- No responses about fair housing needs in Columbus.
- Regarding barriers/discrimination, there is a need to address housing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and source of income. There is a need to protect

against this because there is a lot of homelessness in the community, including people living in hotels, often with their families.

- Transportation can be a barrier for housing choices, and for employment as well. People may want to work at places on the edge of town, but the bus line doesn't go there and it's too expensive to rely on other transportation like cabs.

WHAT TYPES OF FAIR HOUSING SERVICES (EDUCATION, COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION, TESTING, ETC.) ARE OFFERED IN THE AREA? WHO OFFERS THEM? HOW WELL ARE THEY COORDINATED WITH THE WORK OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY?

- Home for Good
- Homeless Resource Network
- Neighborhood Works
- There could be more communication about the fair housing and other services those organizations provide.
- Increased fair housing education would definitely help as well as more knowledge about what services those organizations provide.
- These organizations need more resources/funding to expand their programs.

THINKING ABOUT PUBLIC RESOURCES IN COLUMBUS (E.G. PARKS, SCHOOLS, ROADS, POLICE & FIRE SERVICES, ETC.), ARE THESE RESOURCES AVAILABLE EVENLY THROUGHOUT ALL NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CITY?

- There's a need for a park north of Moon Road, something closer than Double Churches, especially as more people with children move into the north Columbus area
- There are some food deserts in south Columbus.
- There's a Walmart on Victory Drive that meets some of the need for a grocery store, but there are also many Dollar Stores in south Columbus, which are not good grocery options.
- Another Navy Federal with working ATMs would be helpful.
- Buses should accept debit/credit card for electronic payment rather than people having to bring cash.

IS THERE ANYTHING WE HAVEN'T DISCUSSED THAT YOU FEEL IS IMPORTANT TO OUR RESEARCH?

- Hopefully the City will start constructing a more walkable path around the spider web in south Columbus. The planned roundabout would be good, along with pedestrian paths and bridges like on Andre Clover Victory Drive.
- Electrification of public transportation would have environmental benefits and address public needs. Using a US-based bus manufacturer would be good.
- Bike path expansion would be good.

Public Hearing

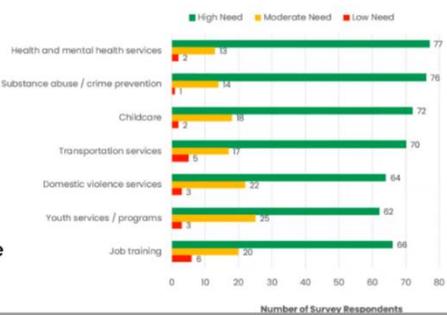
July 20, 2021

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

- **Public Infrastructure and Facility Needs**
 - Participants in the community survey identified high speed internet access, street and road improvements and sidewalk improvements as the top infrastructure needs.
 - Public facility needs include childcare centers, community centers and homeless centers.
- **Public Service Needs**
 - The community survey indicates that health and mental health services, substance abuse and crime prevention and childcare were the top public service needs.



Kim Mitchell



Service Category	High Need	Moderate Need	Low Need
Health and mental health services	77	13	2
Substance abuse / crime prevention	76	14	1
Childcare	72	18	2
Transportation services	70	17	5
Domestic violence services	64	22	3
Youth services / programs	62	25	3
Job training	68	20	6

Community Q&A on the draft documents

Q: The aged are not included as a protected class. I have had personal experience with senior housing in Columbus and I was really disappointed. They need to be included in the protected classes. The Area Agency on Aging is a council to help the aged. I thought they could help us with the senior housing with waiting lists and potential senior housing. This information could be centrally located with that agency. Rent should be one-third of your income. There is a crisis for housing for seniors.

A: Protected classes are set at the federal level. There are two future senior housing developments coming to Columbus. This is one of the department's priorities.

Q: Are there any measures in place to address food and medical desert in south Columbus?

A: Yes. We have funded entities who operate food pantries in south Columbus. The Department of Public Health applied for funding for a generator-based mobile medical unit that can go into low-income neighborhoods. They can start treating people there who cannot necessarily get to the Department of Health. We are early in the process of determining locations where services will be offered.

Q: Is there a specific percentage of entrepreneur assistance set aside for local/protected group owned businesses?

A: We recently implemented a small business, economic development opportunity through a grant program. We partnered with Start Up Columbus to help 28 businesses with up to \$4,000 in grant funding to retain or create a job for a low-income worker. We do not have a project like this right now, but this can be funded through other funding sources.

Q: Will there be anything to incentivize grocery store chains coming into south Columbus?

A: Our office is working with the Chamber of Commerce to align the right kinds of opportunities to address food insecurity and the underlying economic conditions that attract grocery stores. At the June 2nd meeting, we learned that the only food options in south Columbus are Dollar Generals, Dollar Trees and Family Dollars. We must bring the right parties together to create the right plan.

Q: Is there a potential to annex commercial blight for more permanent facilities in use of public services?

A: Yes. That is what we want to see happen, not just with commercial blight but with residential blight as well. The mayor has let it be known that he is on a war path against blight. Our office is working on a reconstitution plan. We are working on a strategy to reconstitute/repurpose neighborhoods and build the capacity to allow for sustainable, consistent commercial and residential development.

Q: Will there a rent stabilization policy enacted for the residents of Columbus, especially those in south Columbus?

A: I have not seen any rent stabilization policies in Georgia. However, this would have to come from the city council. There is always a con. Someone will win (residents), and someone will lose (landlords). Is this something we believe is attainable? Yes. We would love to see this considered.

Q: Please elaborate on the land bank process and opportunities.

A: The land bank is a quasi-governmental entity. It is empowered with the rights to extinguish debts and liens on properties and re-sell them for affordable housing development. We have a land bank. We are reconstituting the land bank's powers. A large portion of the board is new and needed to go through training. The land bank will go to the tax commissioner and acquire a batch of properties. The land bank will then market those properties for less than the original price on the hopes that the properties are reconstructed to become tax-paying parcels. This will be a key piece of how we plan to create affordable housing in the city.

Q: Will there be penalties for landowners as well that have allowed their properties to become overgrown as the properties in neighborhoods such as the Winterfield neighborhood?

A: There is already a policy for properties that are overgrown called a "weed lien." If the grass is too high, the city will come out and cut the grass and put a weed lien on the property. I would recommend that you reach out to the code inspector and the city council.

Q: Educating homeowners on cosmetic modifications would be beneficial. Can we get some meetings like that?

A: As we work to develop the South Columbus strategy area covered in the NRSA plan, we will look to provide several services. To move the needle, people must have knowledge. We do not just want to educate homeowners on cosmetic modifications, but also educate renters on their rights. We want to create programs to increase homeownership. We want to offer credit counseling. We want to offer programs that lead to upward mobility.

Q: In the Winterfield neighborhood, many of the property owners are being assessed these fees, but they are still not maintaining their properties. Many will pay the fee and the properties are still overgrown. They still have trash and debris on them. What steps need to be taken to rectify this? Many of these properties are easements. Children are walking on these properties (e.g. properties on Mellon Street). There are copperhead snakes in that area. How can we rectify that situation?

A: The only thing I can recommend is working with the Director of Inspections and Codes. While our blight efforts mostly focus on structures, beautification is also something that we can consider. If the area is in our south Columbus NRSA, that is something we can look at.

Q: What process does the city plan to implement for evaluating/improving utility access (internet, power, etc.)?

A: Broadband is of interest to us because of the equity aspect, but I do not have an answer.

Q: Will new construction all be ADA accessible or alternate power (solar)?

A: That is outside of the Community Reinvestment toolbox. That is more code/inspections and planning. However, our office would promote solar because of the sustainability that it would provide. New housing authority and LIHTC developments are required to have a 5% threshold of ADA accessible units.

Q: Can we use the old recreation centers or homes on our tax lien sales list for community policing centers?

A: Possibly. We are unable to do anything until FY2023, which starts July 1, 2022. However, if it is something you want us to consider, send me an email and talk about the need. We will incorporate it in our appendix. As we work over the next few funding cycles, it is something we can look at.



Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

FW: [EXTERNAL] River Valley Area Agency on Aging

1 message

Robert D Scott <Scott.Robert@columbusga.org>
To: Kim Mitchell <kim@mosaiccommunityplanning.com>

Wed, Jul 21, 2021 at 11:06 AM

Robert Scott**Director of Community Reinvestment and Real Estate**

Columbus Consolidated Government

420 10th Street

Columbus, GA 31901

scott.robert@columbusga.org

Office: (706) 225-3918

Cell: (706) 457-2709



From: NANCY GLYNN <nancyglynn2@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2021 8:48 PM
To: Robert D Scott <Scott.Robert@columbusga.org>
Cc: John House <jmhouse6@gmail.com>; Mimi Woodson <MWoodson@columbusga.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] River Valley Area Agency on Aging

Thank you for the information earlier this evening at the Zoom meeting.

I mentioned in the meeting about River Valley Area Agency on Aging. Actually, I didn't know the proper name for the agency but that is it and they are located on Front Avenue near the Coca-Cola Space Science Center. Sharing their website link:

<https://rivervalleyaging.org/>

8/6/2021

Mosaic Community Planning Mail - FW: [EXTERNAL] River Valley Area Agency on Aging

I think this agency would be a good contact for seniors looking for senior housing as a central information source here in Columbus.

The agency has a much larger service area than simply Columbus but they are located here in Columbus.

There is an overall housing shortage and senior residences are no exception. I think a working relationship with this office would prove beneficial for all concerned.

The agency could have a list of all the senior residences in Columbus and also it would probably be good to have one central location for the senior residences waiting list. Even though you may desire a particular apartment building, this office could alert seniors of the most immediate availability.

Thank you for your time,

Nancy Glynn

Public Hearing Agenda

Council Members

R. Gary Allen
Charmaine Crabb

Jerry 'Pops' Barnes
Glenn Davis

John M. House
Bruce Huff

R. Walker Garrett
Toyia Tucker

Judy W. Thomas
Evelyn 'Mimi' Woodson

Clerk of Council
Sandra T. Davis



Council Chambers
C. E. "Red" McDaniel City Services Center- Second Floor
3111 Citizens Way, Columbus, GA 31906

July 27, 2021
5:30 PM
Regular Meeting

MAYOR'S AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor B.H. "Skip" Henderson, III, Presiding

INVOCATION: Offered by Rev. Thad Haygood at St. Luke Church of Columbus, Georgia

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Henderson

MINUTES

1. Approval of minutes for the July 13, 2021 Council Meeting and Executive Session.

UPDATE:

2. An update on COVID-19

CITY ATTORNEY'S AGENDA

ORDINANCES

1. **2nd Reading-** REZN-05-21-0891: An Ordinance amending the Zoning Atlas of the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia to change certain boundaries of a district located at **0 Whittlesey Road** (parcel # 190-050-001) from LMI (Light Manufacturing / Industrial) Zoning District to RO (Residential Office) & GC (General Commercial) Zoning District. (Planning Department and PAC recommend approval)(Councilor Davis)
2. **2nd Reading-** REZN-05-21-1003: An Ordinance amending the Zoning Atlas of the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia to change certain boundaries of a district located at **2458 Martha's Loop** (parcel # 085-054-026 / 085-054-017A) from SFR4 (Single Family Residential 4) Zoning District to RMF2 (Residential Multifamily 2) Zoning District. (Planning Department and PAC recommend approval)(Councilor Barnes)
3. **2nd Reading-** An ordinance providing for the demolition of various structures located at: 1) **4720 Sentry Street** (Lillian E C Howard & Kenneth Allen, Owner) 2) **4131 2nd Avenue** (Cash King, LLC, Owner) 3) **2908 Beacon Avenue** (Donna J Peddicord, Owner); 4) **3626 Irwin Way** (Robert F Kirby, Jr, Owner); 5) **222 28th Avenue** (Hattie Bass, Owner); 6) **345 Liberty Avenue** (Abby Bridgon, Owner); 7) **220 Kelly Avenue** (Morgan Vickie Moore, Owner); 8) **2125 South Andrews Circle** (Accessory Structure) (William & Catherine E Bowden, Owner); 9) **906 Brooks Road** (Richard B & Elouise White, Owner); 10) **1337 20th Street** (Larry W Bussey, Owner); 11) **1025 42nd Street** (Travis E Jackson, Owner); 12) **6800 Macon Road** (Alberi Properties, LLLP, Owner); 13) **37 Mason Drive** (Jessie McCray, Owner) 14) **1209 Carmel Court** (Deborah Burns, Owner); and for demolition services for the Inspections and Code Department in accordance with the attached Tabulation of Bid sheet. (Mayor Pro Tem)
4. **2nd Reading-** An Ordinance amending the FY22 Budget of the Consolidated Government so as to provide a fee waiver in the amount of one month's solid waste collection fee per residential property in Columbus, Georgia; and for other purposes. (Councilor Davis)
5. **1st Reading-** An ordinance amending Ordinance No.14-41 which renewed Business Improvement Districts in Columbus, Georgia through December 31, 2024; and for other purposes. (Request of Uptown Columbus BID, Inc.)

RESOLUTION

6. Add-On Resolution: **EXCP-05-21-1002** - A Resolution authorizing a special exception to operate a used auto sales in excess of 0.50 acre but less than two(2) acres located at **3072 Victory Drive**.(Planning Department and PAC recommend approval)(Councilor Woodson)

PUBLIC AGENDA

1. Mr. Rocky Marsh, representing Local Organizer, Re: The inability to request a venue through the Department of Parks & Recreation.
2. Mr. Paul Olson, Re: Government Center elevators, TSPLOST Projects, referendum and River Valley Region.

CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

1. Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax Intent for Election on November 2, 2021

Approval is requested to call for an Election on November 2, 2021 for consideration of a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) for capital projects totaling \$400 million and authorize the issuance of General Obligation Sales Tax bonds in an amount not to exceed \$200 million in connection with the imposition of the SPLOST.

2. Property Acquisition of properties on 8th Avenue and 9th Avenue

Approval is requested to acquire multiple properties on 8th Avenue and 9th Avenue. The city is interested in property owned by Campbell's located on 8th Avenue and 9th Avenue in the Liberty District as part of the ongoing plan to facilitate redevelopment in the Liberty District. Total fair market value of these properties according to the Tax Assessor's information is \$103,520. The city offered, and Campbell's accepted, \$25,000/acre for a total of \$70,525. Funding is available in the 1999 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax Liberty District project.

3. Dragonfly Connection – River Road/Bradley Park and Lake Oliver Marina to the Riverwalk

Approval is requested to authorize the next Columbus Dragonfly Trails connector that will connect River Road/Bradley Park and Lake Oliver Marina to the Riverwalk. Funding is budgeted in the FY22 budget in TSPLOST Discretionary at \$283,000 and the balance will be provided by other sources. The estimated project budget is \$850,000.

4. Columbus Ice Rink Donations for United We Play: Columbus Urban Hockey Program

Approval is requested to accept financial and equipment donations from local City and Business Leaders and Organizations to supply equipment needs and/or cover any fees associated for the United We Play: Columbus Urban Hockey Program.

5. Memorandum of Agreement with Faith Tabernacle Community Church

Approval is requested authorizing the execution of a Memorandum of Agreement for the installation of signals and adding a signal phase to the existing signal system to serve the Church exit. The estimated cost for the City improvements is \$2435 for signal installation and materials. The Church expended funds for access improvement and will be responsible for \$1337.49 for a detection loop.

6. Lease Agreement – Liberty Theatre Cultural Center - 823 8th Ave

Approval is requested to authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute a lease agreement for 823 8th Ave, with Liberty Theatre Cultural Center, Inc.. The City will collect an estimated \$1/year in rent, plus legal fees related to lease. The utilities, maintenance, upkeep, and repairs will be paid by Lessee.

7. 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan, 2021 Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, NRSA Study and FY21 Annual Action Plan Amendment Submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Approval is requested for the filing of the 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan, 2021 Annual Action Plan, Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, NRSA Study and FY21 Annual Action Plan Amendment to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

8. PURCHASES

- A. Fleet Maintenance/Truck Shop Services and Repairs (Annual Contract) – RFP No. 21-0023
- B. Brokers for General Insurance Placement (Annual Contract) – RFP No. 21-0033
- C. Protective Fire Clothing and Accessories (Annual Contract)
- D. Customization Services for the Court Management System
- E. Additional Software Licenses for GIS – Cooperative Purchase
- F. Consulting Services for Employee Benefits Plans (Annual Contract) – RFP No. 21-0028
- G. Storage Facility Rental Payment for the Sheriff’s Office
- H. Add-On - Amendment 1 for Supplemental Yard Waste Collection Services (Annual Contract) – RFP No. 21-0018

9. UPDATES AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. River Center Update - Norman Easterbrook, Executive Director/CEO
- B. Enrichment Service Update - Belva Dorsey, CEO
- C. Tax Commissioner Update - Lula Huff, Tax Commissioner
- D. Yard/Bulk Waste Update - Michael Criddle, Public Works Director
- E. American Rescue Plan Update - Pam Hodge, Deputy City Manager

BID ADVERTISEMENT

August 4, 2021

1. Sports/Uniform Active Apparel (Annual Contract) – RFB No. 22-0003

Scope of Bid

Provide sports/uniform active apparel to include t-shirts, sweatshirts, polo shirts, hats, caps, jackets, etc. to Public Works, Columbus Fire and EMS, Parks and Recreation, METRA and other Departments on an “as needed” basis. The contract term will be for two years with the option to renew for three additional twelve-month periods.

2. Asbestos Abatement for Former Georgia State Farmers Market – RFP No. 22-0001

A Mandatory Site Visit is scheduled for 1:00 PM on Wednesday, August 4, 2021. Contractors shall convene at the Georgia State Farmers Market entrance that is closest to the corner of 10th Ave and 4th St in Columbus, GA; the Georgia State Farmers Market is located at located at 318 10th Ave in Columbus, GA. Attendees will be required to wear face masks and observe social distancing.

August 18, 2021

1. Service Contract for Various Types of Engines (Annual Contract) – RFB No. 22-0001

Scope of Bid

The Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia is requesting bids to repair/rebuild various types of engines for METRA Transit System. The services will be procured on an as-needed basis. The contract term shall be for three (3) years.

2. Uniform Dress Shoes and Boots (Annual Contract) – RFB No. 22-0003

Scope of Bid

Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting bids from qualified vendors to provide uniform dress shoes and boots for various City Departments on an “as needed” basis. To accommodate walk-in service on some occasions, the successful bidder shall have a business located within a 25-mile radius of Muscogee County. The contract term shall be for two (2) years with the option to renew for three (3) additional twelve-month periods.

August 20, 2021

1. Asbestos Abatement for Former Georgia State Farmers Market – RFP No. 22-0001

Scope of RFP

Columbus Consolidated Government (the City) is requesting proposals from qualified asbestos abatement contractors to provide all labor, materials, equipment, permits, and incidentals necessary to complete all tasks associated with remediating asbestos-containing building materials identified in structures located at the former Georgia State Farmers Market.

CLERK OF COUNCIL’S AGENDA

ENCLOSURES - ACTION REQUESTED

1. RESOLUTION - A Resolution excusing Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen from the July 27, 2021 Council Meeting.
2. RESOLUTION - A Resolution excusing Councilor Jerry “Pops” Barnes from the July 27, 2021 Council Meeting.
3. Email Correspondence from Mr. John Jackson, Chairman of the Commission on International Relations & Cultural Liaison Encounters (CIRCLE) advising that SarahAnn Arcila is resigning from her seat.

4. **Minutes of the following boards:**

Board of Tax Assessors, #22-21 and #23-21

Historic & Architectural Review Board, June 14, 2021

Hospital Authority of Columbus, May 25, 2021

Pension Fund, Employees’ Board of Trustees, January 13, February 10 and March 10, 2021

BOARD APPOINTMENTS - ACTION REQUESTED

5. **MAYOR’S APPOINTMENTS- ANY NOMINATIONS MAY BE CONFIRMED FOR THIS MEETING:**

A. CONVENTION & VISITORS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Marianne Richter

(Mayor's Appointment)

Restaurant / Retail Industry

Not Eligible to succeed

Term Expires: December 31, 2021

These are four-year terms. Board meets monthly.

Women: 5

Senatorial District 15: 3

Senatorial District 29: 8

B. YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Mayor's Nominee: _____

6. COUNCIL'S DISTRICT SEAT APPOINTMENT- ANY NOMINATIONS MAY BE CONFIRMED FOR THIS MEETING:

A. KEEP COLUMBUS BEAUTIFUL COMMISSION:

Sheila Mitchell

(Council District 3- Huff)

Not eligible to succeed

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

Warren Wagner

(Council District 5- Crabb)

Resigned

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

Susan Gallagher

(Council District 7- Woodson)

Does not desire reappointment

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

Mark McCollum

(Council District 8- Garrett)

Not eligible to succeed

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

This is a two-year term. Board meets every other month beginning in February.

B. PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMISSION:

Friar Noel Danielewicz

(Council District 3- Huff)

Seat Declared Vacant

Term Expires: October 31, 2022

C. YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL:

District 1 Nominee: _____

District 6 Nominee: _____

District 2 Nominee: _____

District 7 Nominee: _____

District 3 Nominee: _____

District 8 Nominee: _____

District 4 Nominee: _____

District 10 Nominee: _____

District 5 Nominee: _____

7. COUNCIL’S APPOINTMENTS- ANY NOMINATIONS WOULD BE LISTED FOR THE NEXT MEETING:

A. BOARD OF FAMILY & CHILDREN SERVICES:

Dr. Deepali Agarwal

Open for Nominations

Not Eligible to succeed

(Council’s Appointment)

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

Charonda Huff

Open for Nominations

Resigned

(Council’s Appointment)

Term Expires: June 30, 2022

*In accordance with O.C.G.A. 49-3-2 (Amended via 2015 SB 138) the governing authority (Local County Board of Commissioners) shall ensure that all appointments made on or after July 1, 2015, are made from the following categories: (1) **Pediatric healthcare providers (active or retired)**; (2) **Appropriate school personnel (active or retired)**; (3) **Emergency responders (active or retired)**; (4) **Law enforcement personnel (active or retired)**; (5) **Private child welfare service providers (active or retired)**; (6) **Alumni of the child welfare system**; (7) **Mental health care providers (active or retired)**; (8) **Former foster parents and (9) Leaders within the faith-based community (active or retired)**.*

This is a five-year term. Meets monthly.

Women: 5

Senatorial District 15: 5

Senatorial District 29: 0

B. KEEP COLUMBUS BEAUTIFUL COMMISSION:

David Goldberg

Moving out of county

At-Large Member

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

Open for Nominations

(Council's Appointment)

Arsburn "Oz" Roberts

At-Large Member

Not Eligible to succeed

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

Open for Nominations

(Council's Appointment)

Dr. William Kendall

At-Large Member

Not Eligible to succeed

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

Open for Nominations

(Council's Appointment)

Fran Fluker

At-Large Member

Not Eligible to succeed

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

Open for Nominations
(Council's Appointment)

Orlean Baulkmon

At-Large Member

Not Eligible to succeed

Term Expired: June 30, 2021

Open for Nominations
(Council's Appointment)

Larry Derby

At-Large Member

Did not desire reappointment

Term Expired: June 30, 2020

Open for Nominations
(Council's Appointment)

The terms are two-years. Meets every even month.

C. TREE BOARD:

Frank Tommey

Not Eligible to succeed

Residential Development Member

Term Expired: December 31, 2020

Open for Nominations
(Council's Appointment)

Troy Keller

Not Eligible to succeed

Educator Member

Term Expired: December 31, 2020

Open for Nominations
(Council's Appointment)

This is a four-year term. Meets as needed.

Women: 6

Senatorial District 15: 4

Senatorial District 29: 7

UPCOMING BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

- A. Animal Control Advisory Board
- B. Board of Honor
- C. Columbus Ironworks Convention & Trade Center Authority
- D. Uptown Facade Board

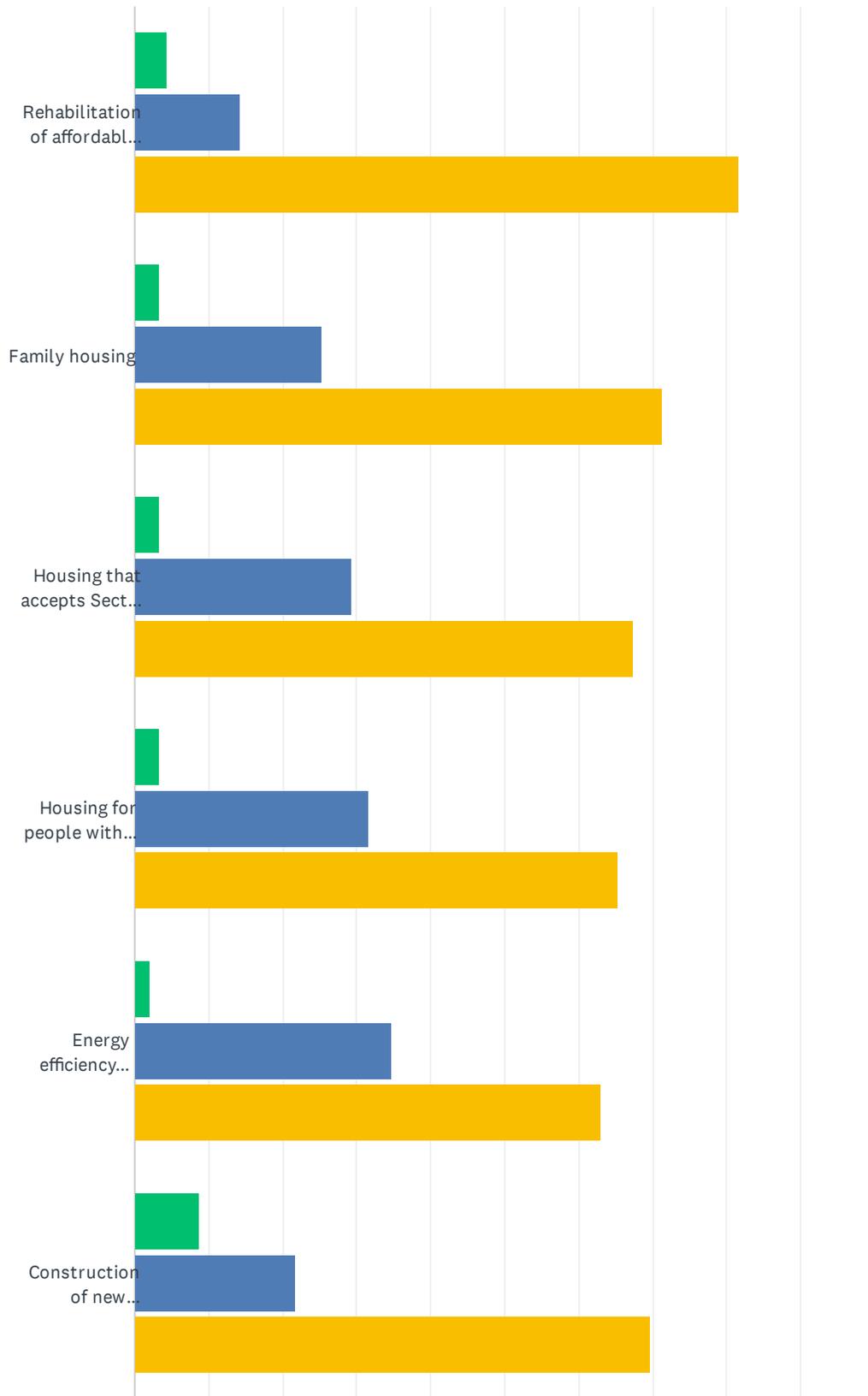
The City of Columbus strives to provide accessibility to individuals with disabilities and who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting. If assistance is needed regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities, individuals may contact the Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities at 706-653-4492 promptly to allow the City Government to make reasonable accommodations for those persons.

APPENDIX C

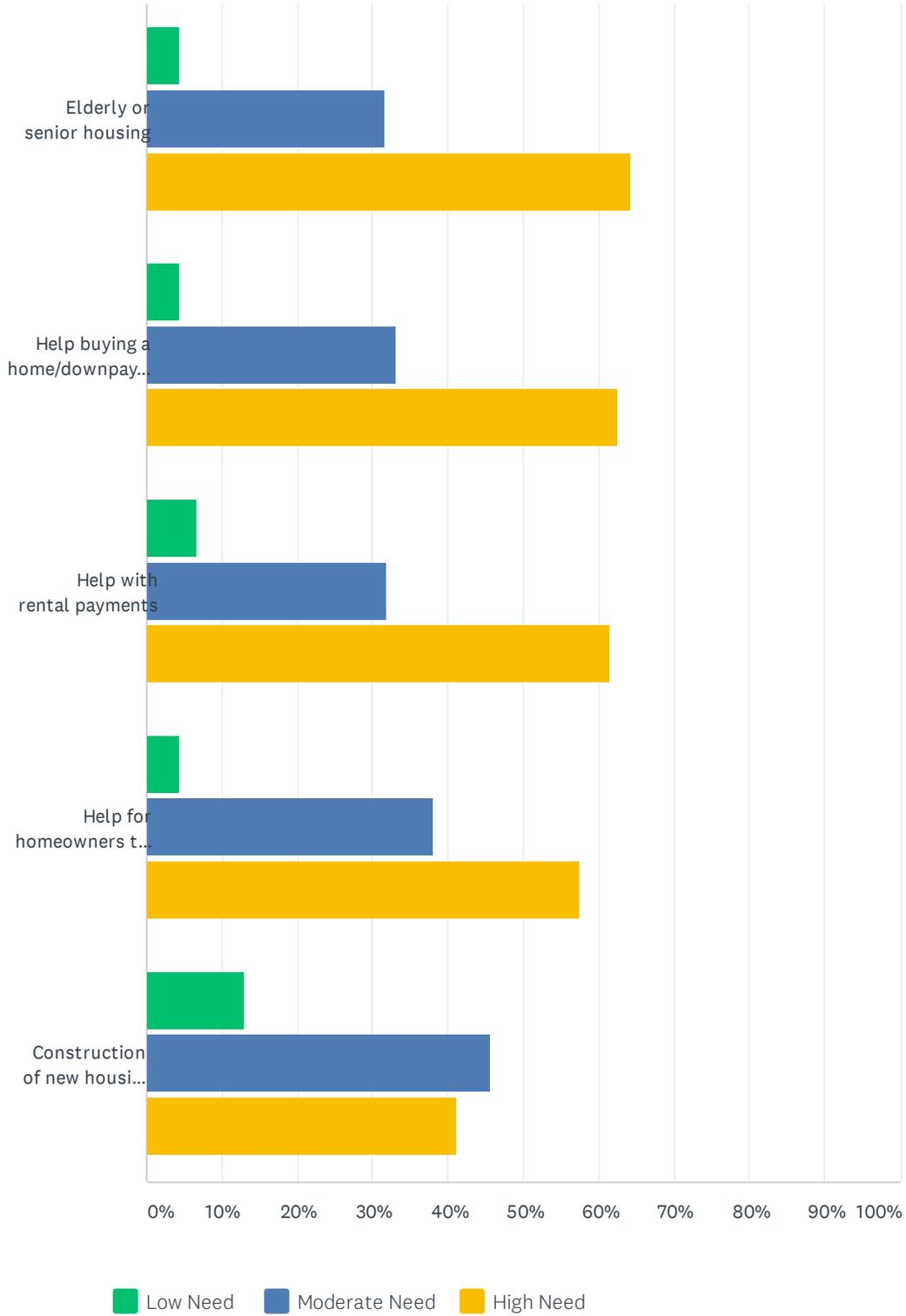
PUBLIC SURVEY INSTRUMENT AND RESULTS

Q1 Please rank the following affordable housing needs in Columbus on a scale ranging from a low need to a high need.

Answered: 92 Skipped: 1



Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey



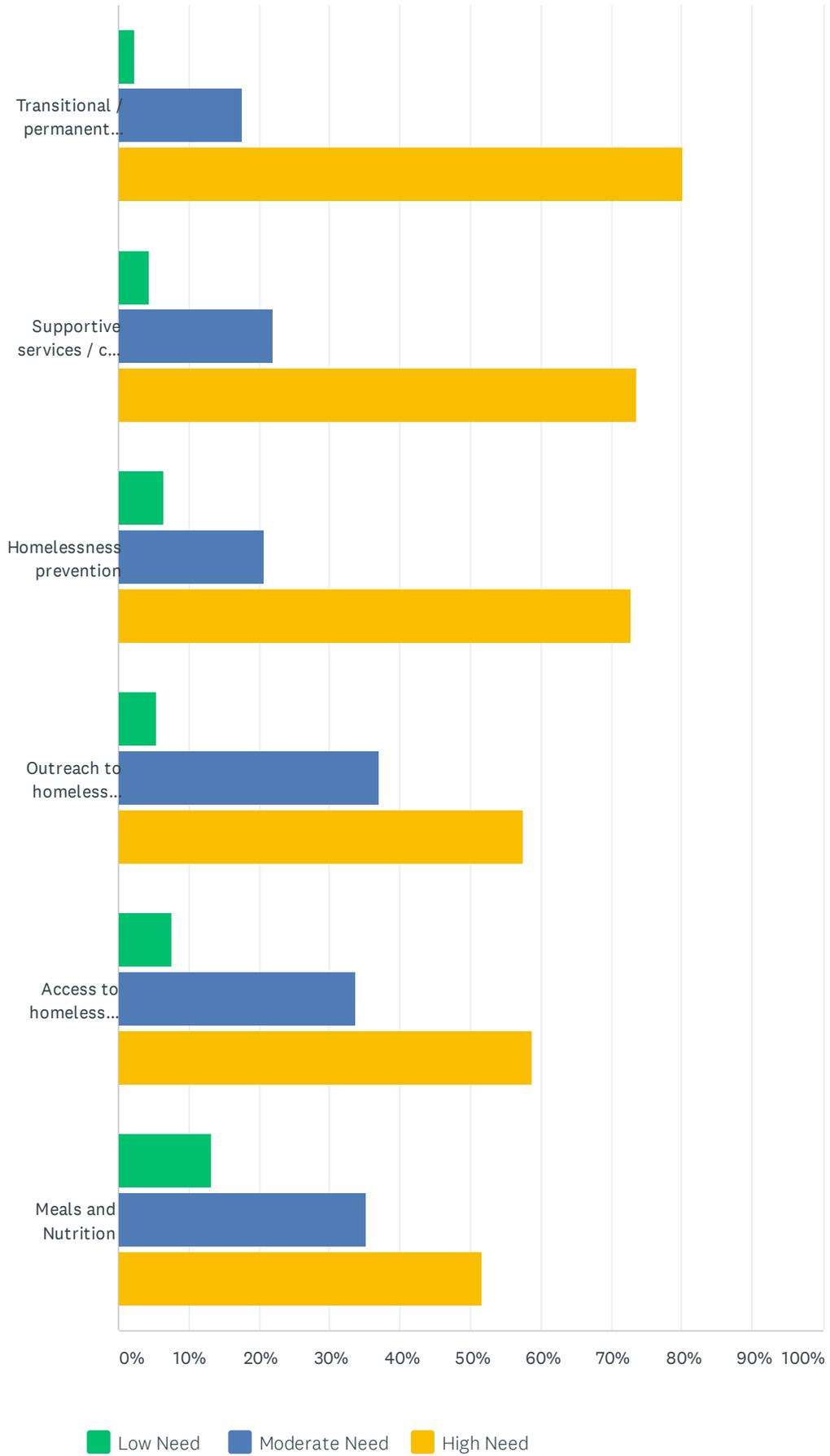
Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

	LOW NEED	MODERATE NEED	HIGH NEED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Rehabilitation of affordable rental housing/apartments	4.35% 4	14.13% 13	81.52% 75	92	2.77
Family housing	3.30% 3	25.27% 23	71.43% 65	91	2.68
Housing that accepts Section 8 vouchers	3.26% 3	29.35% 27	67.39% 62	92	2.64
Housing for people with disabilities	3.26% 3	31.52% 29	65.22% 60	92	2.62
Energy efficiency improvements to housing	2.17% 2	34.78% 32	63.04% 58	92	2.61
Construction of new affordable rental units	8.70% 8	21.74% 20	69.57% 64	92	2.61
Elderly or senior housing	4.35% 4	31.52% 29	64.13% 59	92	2.60
Help buying a home/downpayment assistance	4.40% 4	32.97% 30	62.64% 57	91	2.58
Help with rental payments	6.59% 6	31.87% 29	61.54% 56	91	2.55
Help for homeowners to make housing improvements	4.35% 4	38.04% 35	57.61% 53	92	2.53
Construction of new housing for homeownership	13.04% 12	45.65% 42	41.30% 38	92	2.28

Q2 Please rank the following homeless needs in Columbus on a scale ranging from a low need to a high need.

Answered: 92 Skipped: 1

Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

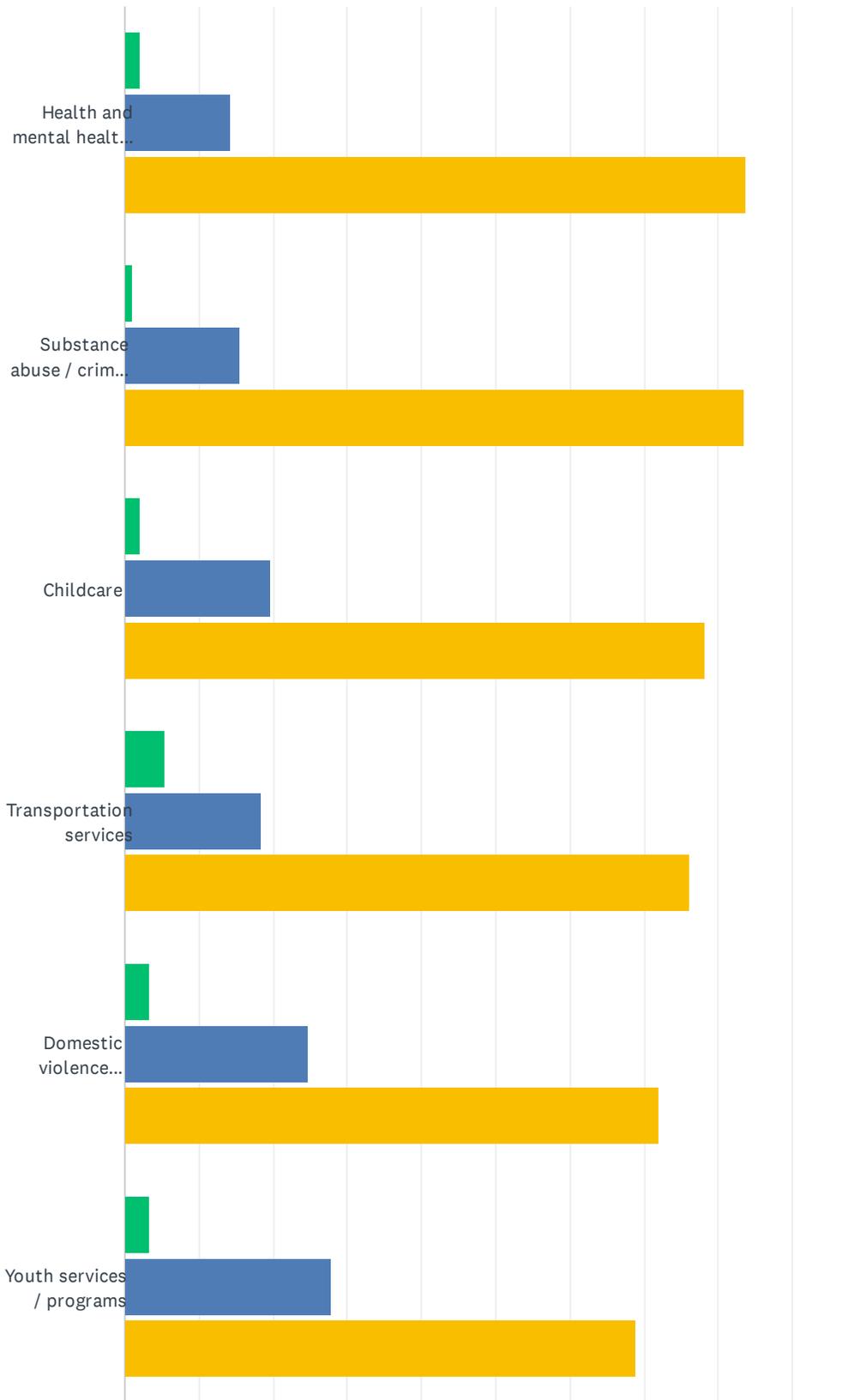


Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

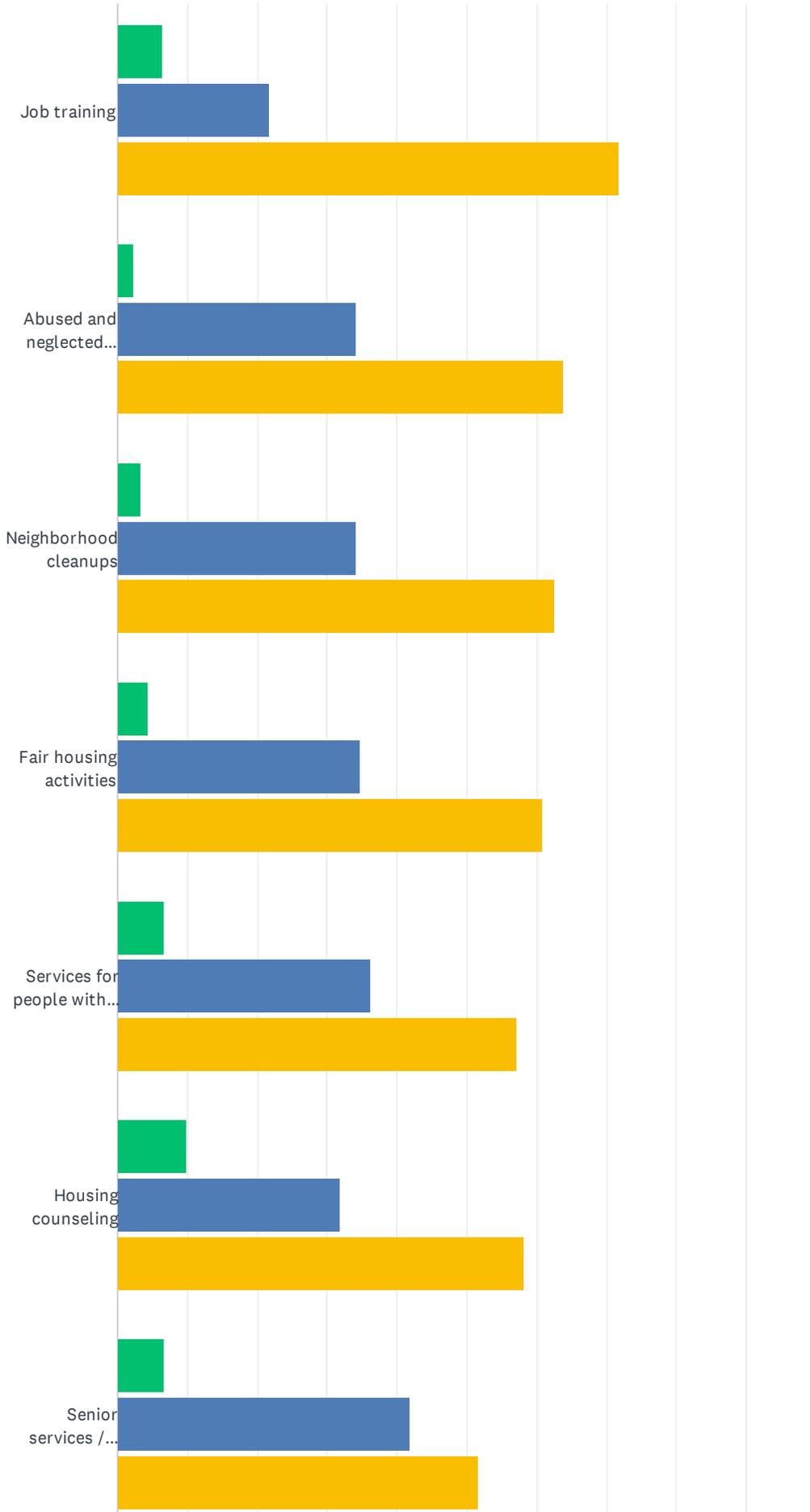
	LOW NEED	MODERATE NEED	HIGH NEED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Transitional / permanent supportive housing programs	2.20% 2	17.58% 16	80.22% 73	91	2.78
Supportive services / case management	4.40% 4	21.98% 20	73.63% 67	91	2.69
Homelessness prevention	6.52% 6	20.65% 19	72.83% 67	92	2.66
Outreach to homeless persons	5.43% 5	36.96% 34	57.61% 53	92	2.52
Access to homeless shelters	7.61% 7	33.70% 31	58.70% 54	92	2.51
Meals and Nutrition	13.19% 12	35.16% 32	51.65% 47	91	2.38

Q3 Please rank the following public service needs in Columbus on a scale ranging from a low need to a high need.

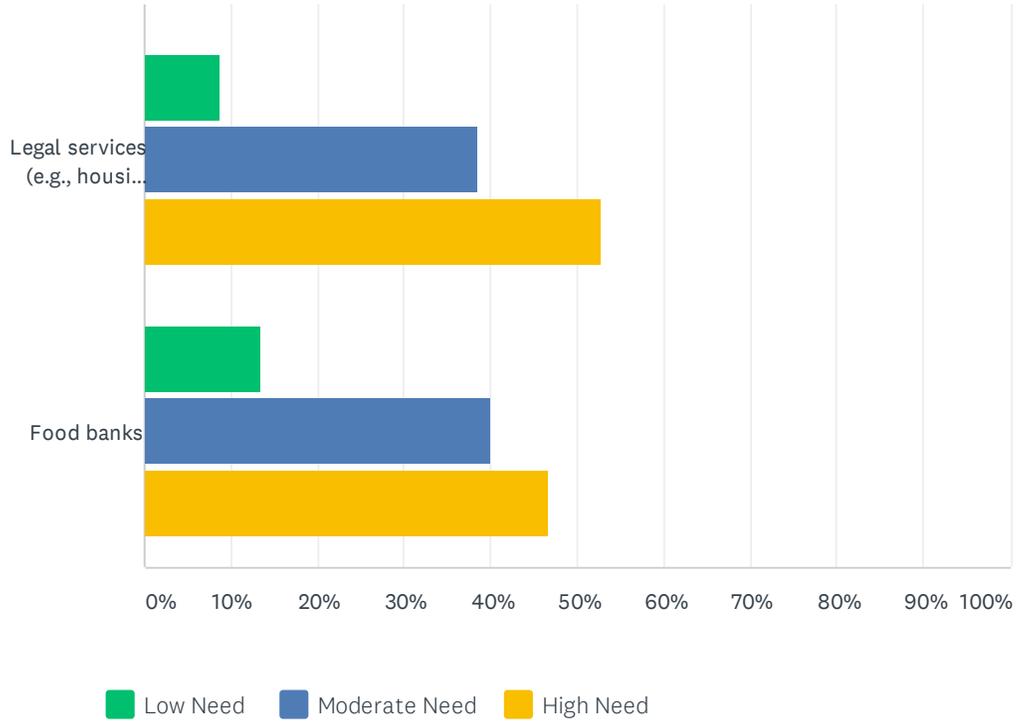
Answered: 92 Skipped: 1



Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey



Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

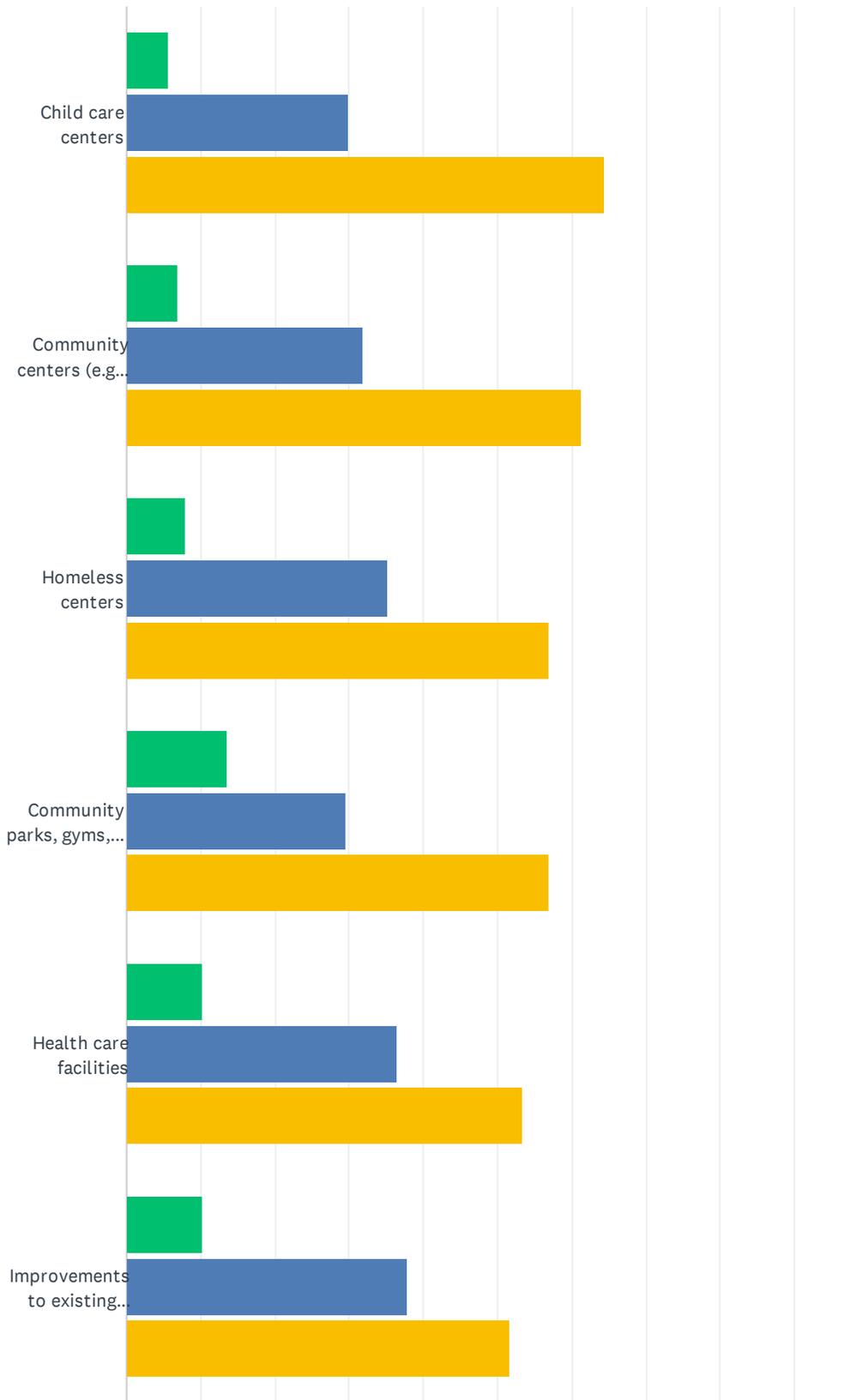


Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

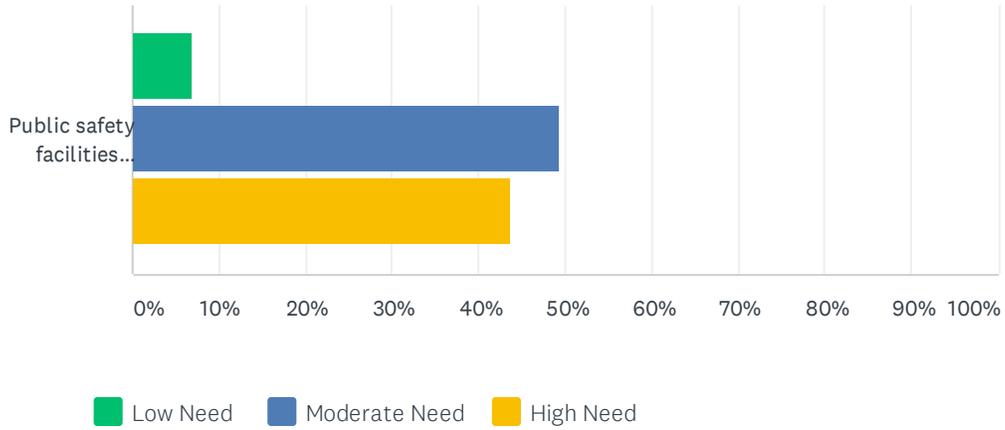
	LOW NEED	MODERATE NEED	HIGH NEED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Health and mental health services	2.17% 2	14.13% 13	83.70% 77	92	2.82
Substance abuse / crime prevention	1.10% 1	15.38% 14	83.52% 76	91	2.82
Childcare	2.17% 2	19.57% 18	78.26% 72	92	2.76
Transportation services	5.43% 5	18.48% 17	76.09% 70	92	2.71
Domestic violence services	3.37% 3	24.72% 22	71.91% 64	89	2.69
Youth services / programs	3.33% 3	27.78% 25	68.89% 62	90	2.66
Job training	6.52% 6	21.74% 20	71.74% 66	92	2.65
Abused and neglected children services	2.20% 2	34.07% 31	63.74% 58	91	2.62
Neighborhood cleanups	3.30% 3	34.07% 31	62.64% 57	91	2.59
Fair housing activities	4.35% 4	34.78% 32	60.87% 56	92	2.57
Services for people with disabilities	6.59% 6	36.26% 33	57.14% 52	91	2.51
Housing counseling	9.89% 9	31.87% 29	58.24% 53	91	2.48
Senior services / programs	6.59% 6	41.76% 38	51.65% 47	91	2.45
Legal services (e.g., housing, health, consumer protection, family relationships)	8.79% 8	38.46% 35	52.75% 48	91	2.44
Food banks	13.33% 12	40.00% 36	46.67% 42	90	2.33

Q4 Please rank the following public facility needs in Columbus on a scale ranging from a low need to a high need.

Answered: 89 Skipped: 4



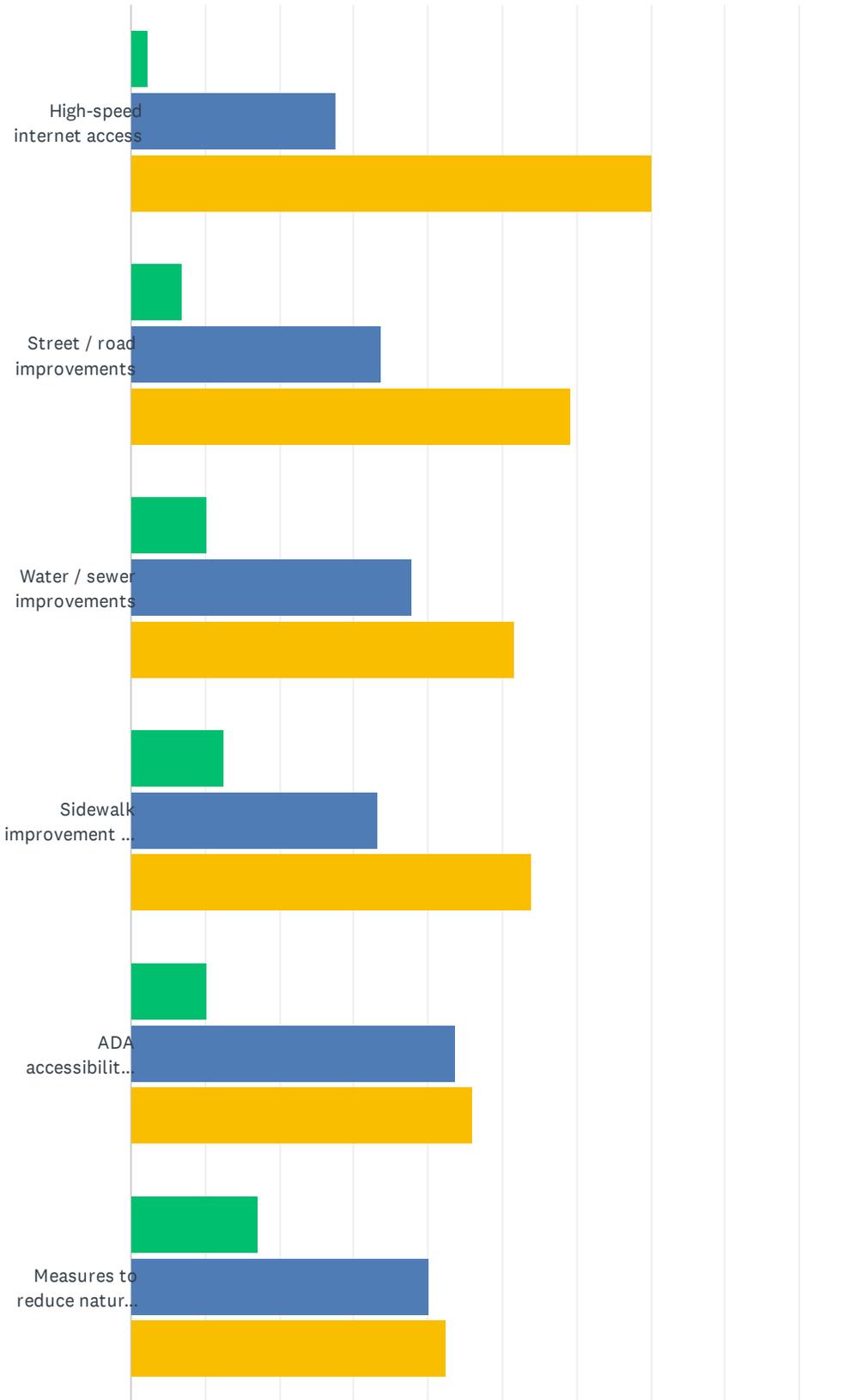
Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey



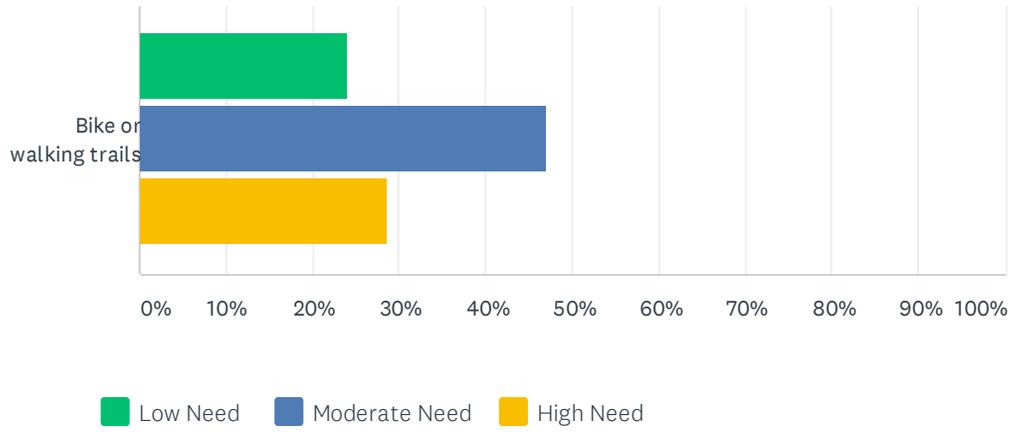
	LOW NEED	MODERATE NEED	HIGH NEED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Child care centers	5.75% 5	29.89% 26	64.37% 56	87	2.59
Community centers (e.g., youth centers, senior centers, cultural centers)	6.82% 6	31.82% 28	61.36% 54	88	2.55
Homeless centers	7.95% 7	35.23% 31	56.82% 50	88	2.49
Community parks, gyms, and recreational fields	13.64% 12	29.55% 26	56.82% 50	88	2.43
Health care facilities	10.23% 9	36.36% 32	53.41% 47	88	2.43
Improvements to existing facilities / ADA accessibility	10.34% 9	37.93% 33	51.72% 45	87	2.41
Public safety facilities (fire, police, emergency management)	6.90% 6	49.43% 43	43.68% 38	87	2.37

Q5 Please rank the following public infrastructure needs in Columbus on a scale ranging from a low need to a high need.

Answered: 89 Skipped: 4



Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

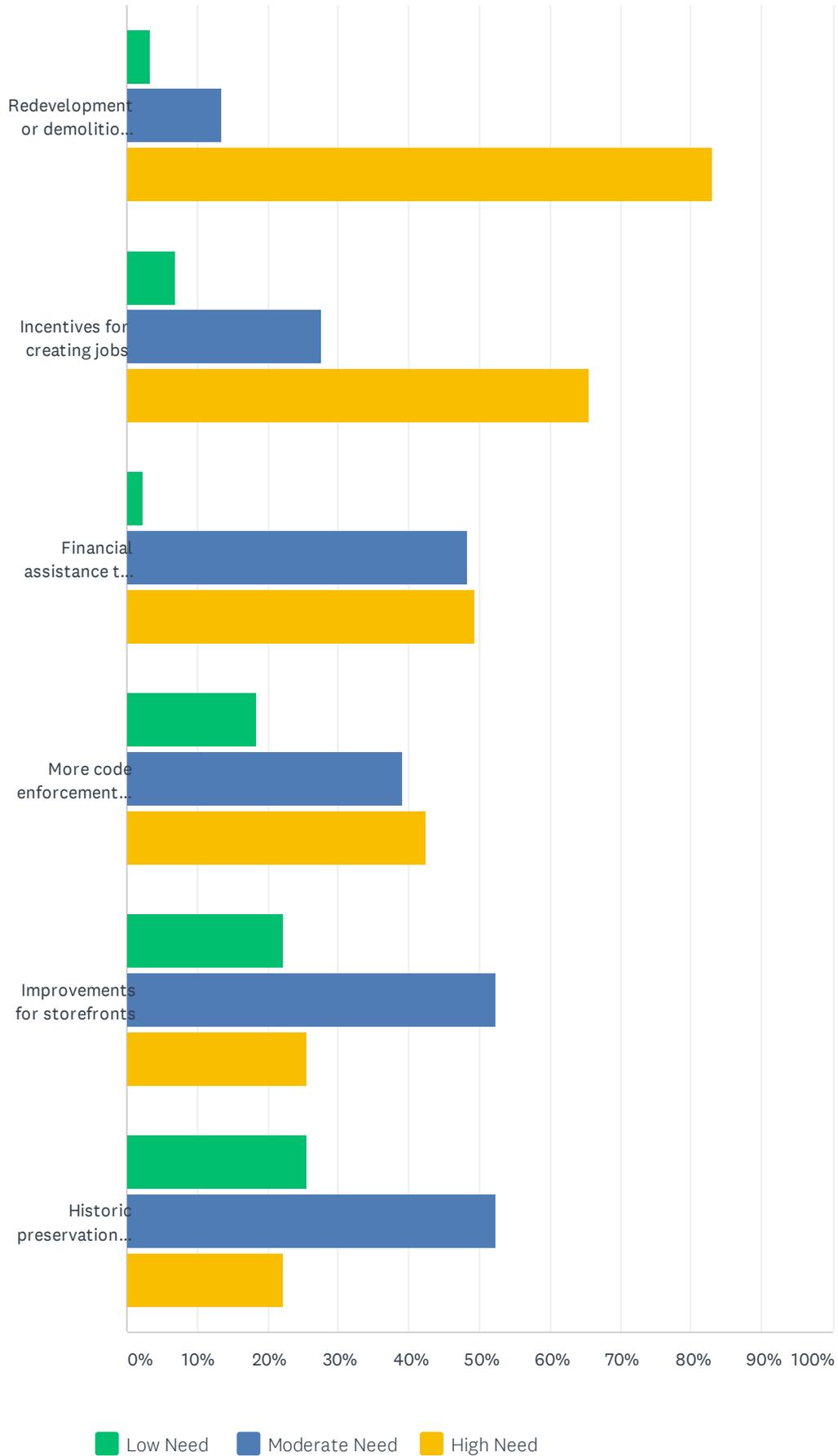


	LOW NEED	MODERATE NEED	HIGH NEED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
High-speed internet access	2.30% 2	27.59% 24	70.11% 61	87	2.68
Street / road improvements	6.98% 6	33.72% 29	59.30% 51	86	2.52
Water / sewer improvements	10.34% 9	37.93% 33	51.72% 45	87	2.41
Sidewalk improvement or expansion	12.64% 11	33.33% 29	54.02% 47	87	2.41
ADA accessibility improvements	10.34% 9	43.68% 38	45.98% 40	87	2.36
Measures to reduce natural disaster impacts	17.24% 15	40.23% 35	42.53% 37	87	2.25
Bike or walking trails	24.14% 21	47.13% 41	28.74% 25	87	2.05

Q6 Please rank the following economic development needs in Columbus on a scale ranging from a low need to a high need.

Answered: 89 Skipped: 4

Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

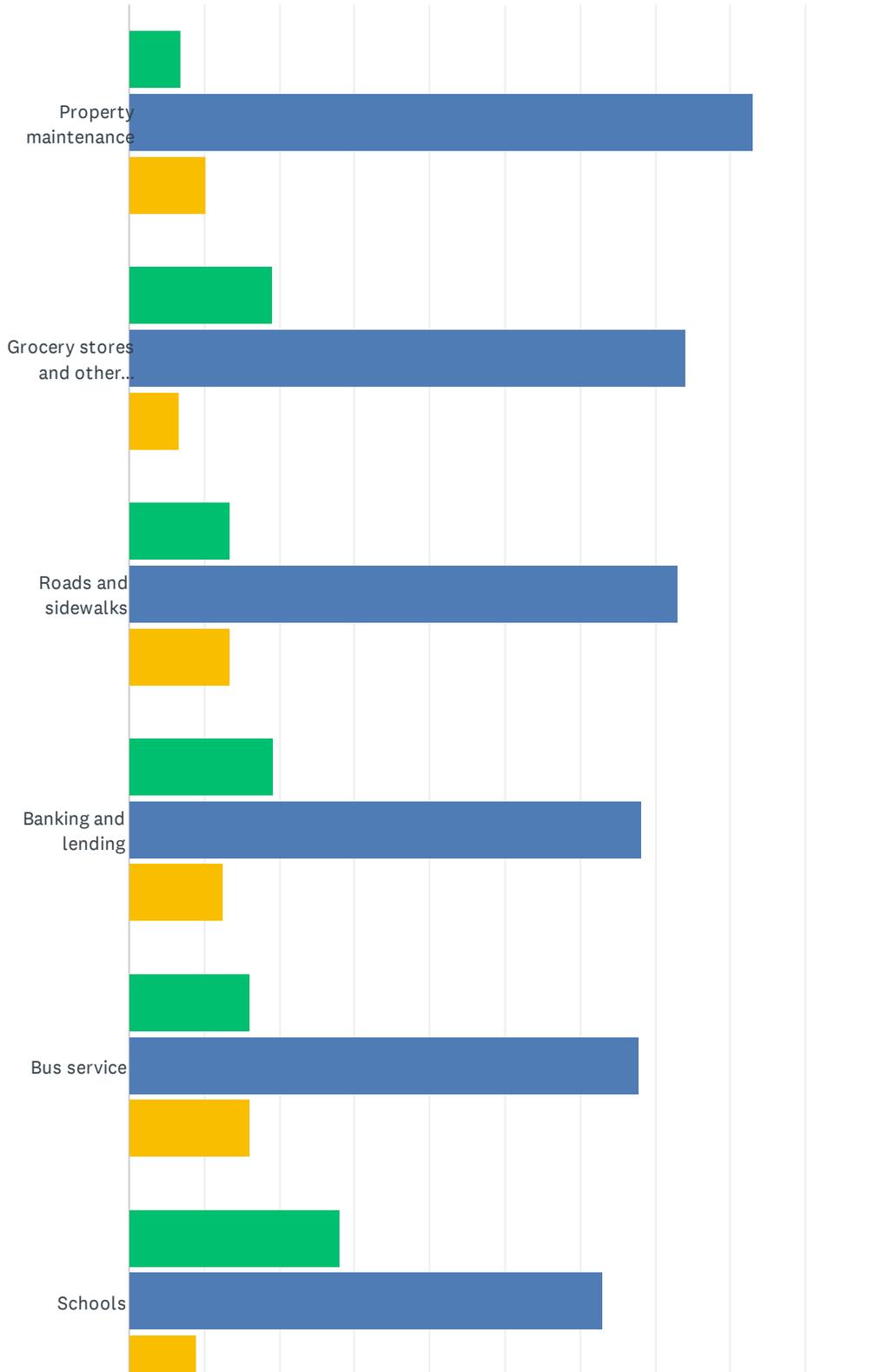


Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

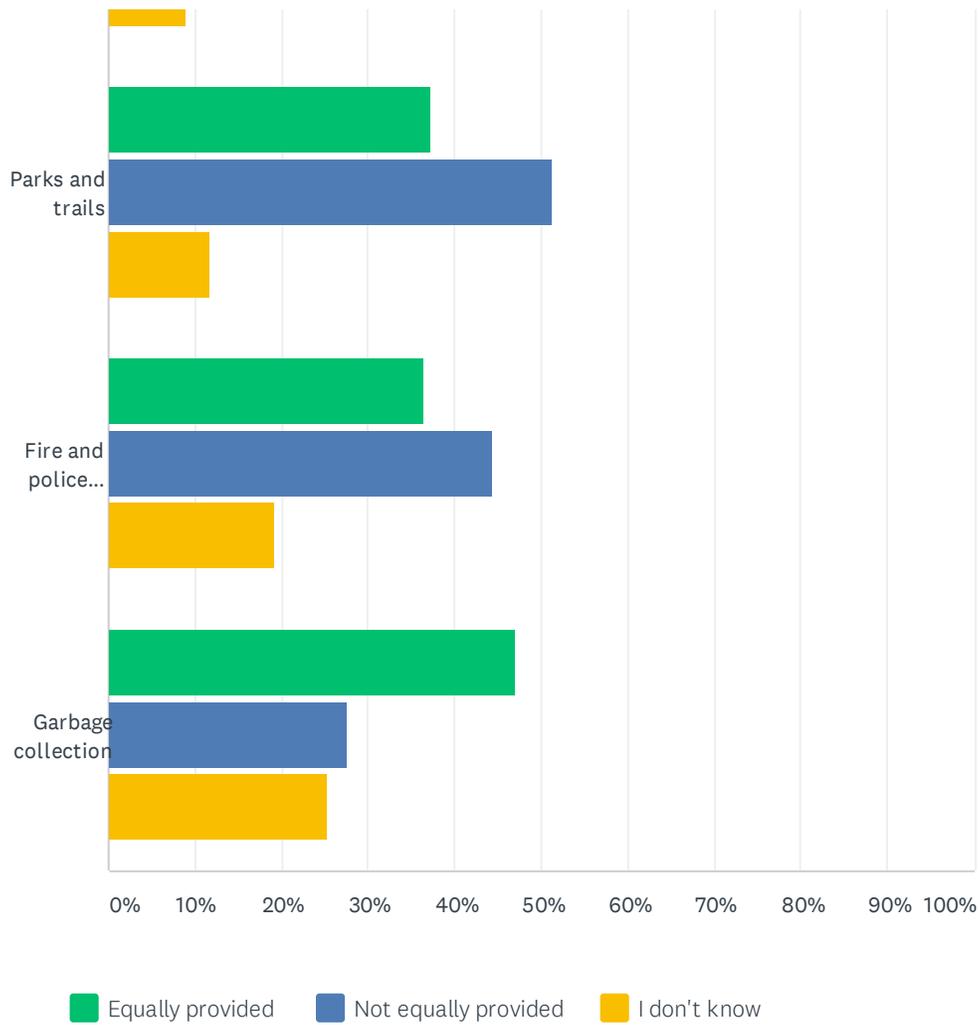
	LOW NEED	MODERATE NEED	HIGH NEED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Redevelopment or demolition of blighted properties	3.37% 3	13.48% 12	83.15% 74	89	2.80
Incentives for creating jobs	6.90% 6	27.59% 24	65.52% 57	87	2.59
Financial assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses	2.35% 2	48.24% 41	49.41% 42	85	2.47
More code enforcement efforts	18.39% 16	39.08% 34	42.53% 37	87	2.24
Improvements for storefronts	22.09% 19	52.33% 45	25.58% 22	86	2.03
Historic preservation efforts	25.58% 22	52.33% 45	22.09% 19	86	1.97

Q7 Thinking about the availability and quality of community resources in Columbus, please check whether you think each of the following are provided equally in all neighborhoods.

Answered: 89 Skipped: 4



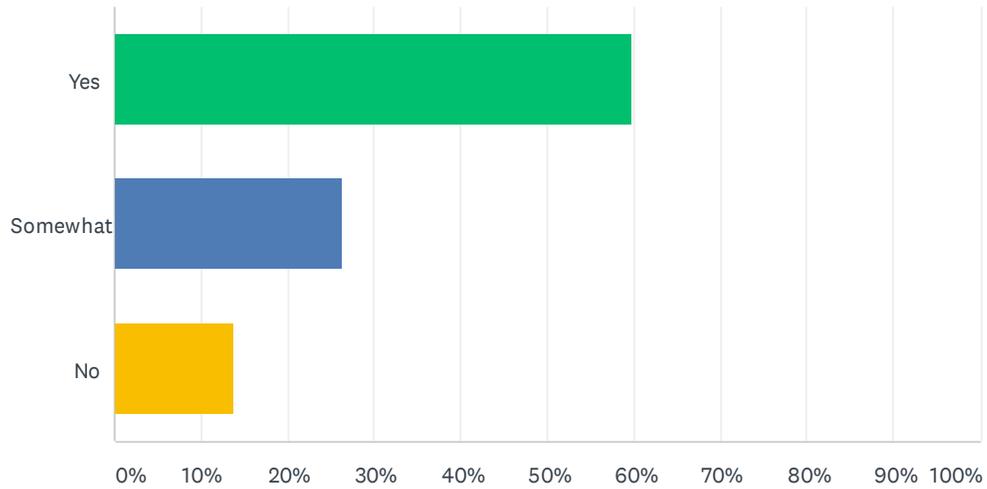
Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey



	EQUALLY PROVIDED	NOT EQUALLY PROVIDED	I DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Property maintenance	6.82% 6	82.95% 73	10.23% 9	88	0.08
Grocery stores and other shopping	19.10% 17	74.16% 66	6.74% 6	89	0.20
Roads and sidewalks	13.48% 12	73.03% 65	13.48% 12	89	0.16
Banking and lending	19.32% 17	68.18% 60	12.50% 11	88	0.22
Bus service	16.09% 14	67.82% 59	16.09% 14	87	0.19
Schools	28.09% 25	62.92% 56	8.99% 8	89	0.31
Parks and trails	37.21% 32	51.16% 44	11.63% 10	86	0.42
Fire and police protection	36.36% 32	44.32% 39	19.32% 17	88	0.45
Garbage collection	47.13% 41	27.59% 24	25.29% 22	87	0.63

Q8 Do you understand your fair housing rights?

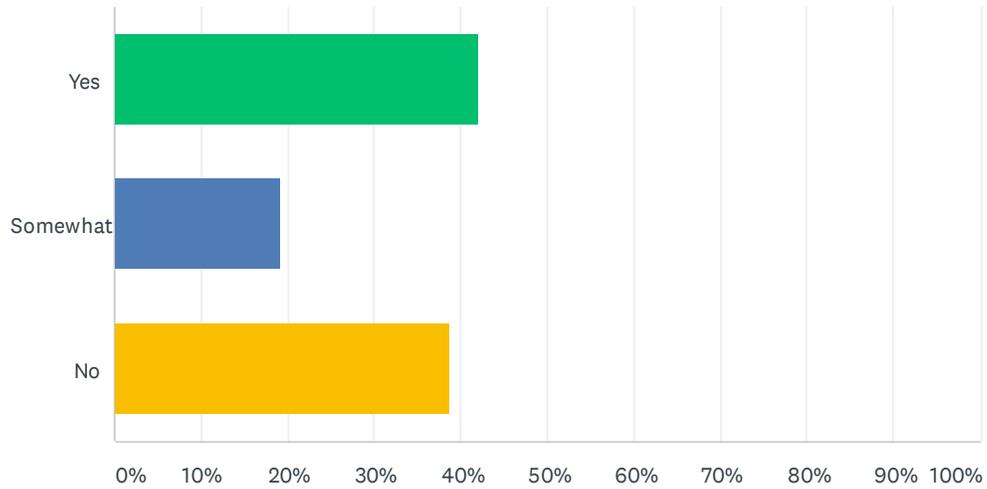
Answered: 87 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	59.77%	52
Somewhat	26.44%	23
No	13.79%	12
TOTAL		87

Q9 Do you know where to file a housing discrimination complaint?

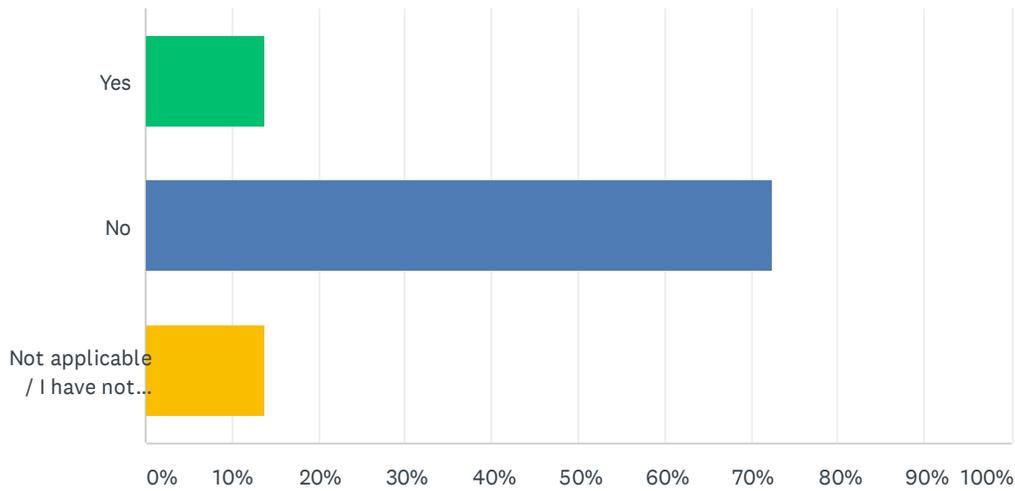
Answered: 88 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	42.05%	37
Somewhat	19.32%	17
No	38.64%	34
TOTAL		88

Q10 Have you personally experienced housing discrimination when looking for housing in Columbus?(For example, the following actions would represent housing discrimination if based on your race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability: refusal to rent or sell or negotiate the rental/sale of housing; falsely denying that housing is available for inspection, sale, or rental; setting different terms, conditions, or privileges for sale or rental of a dwelling; or providing different housing services or facilities.)

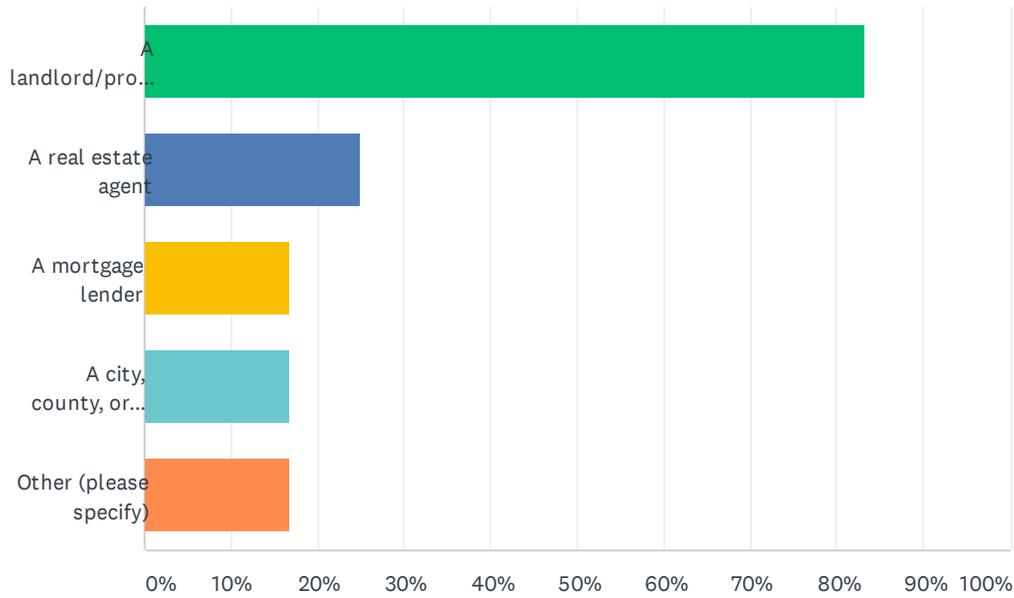
Answered: 87 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	13.79%	12
No	72.41%	63
Not applicable / I have not looked for housing in Columbus	13.79%	12
TOTAL		87

Q11 Who discriminated against you? (Check all that apply.)

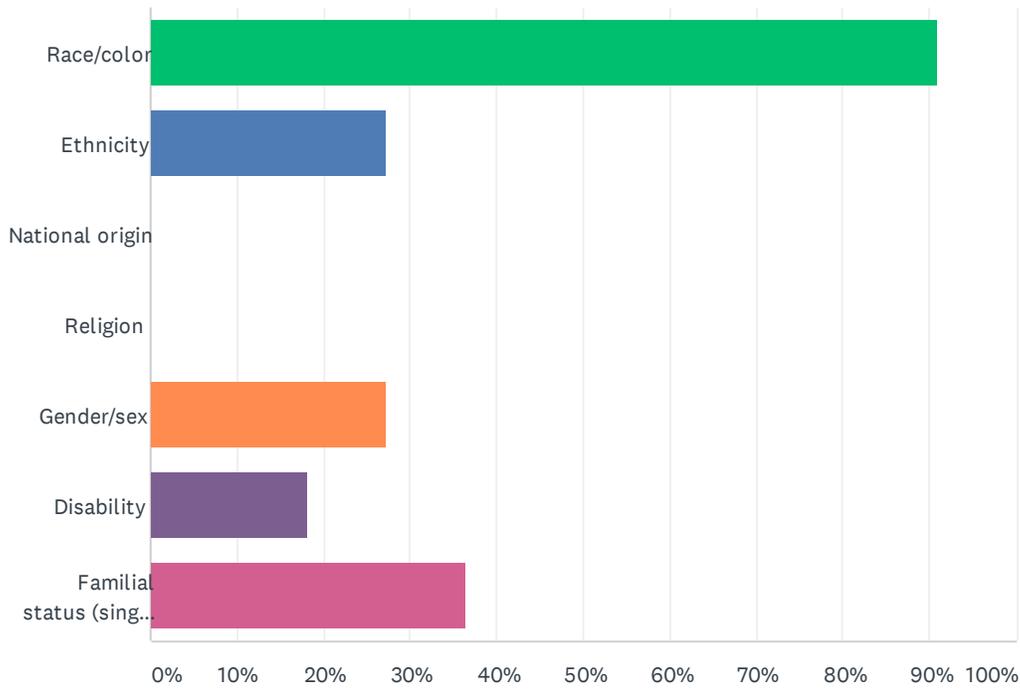
Answered: 12 Skipped: 81



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A landlord/property manager	83.33%	10
A real estate agent	25.00%	3
A mortgage lender	16.67%	2
A city, county, or housing authority staff person	16.67%	2
Other (please specify)	16.67%	2
Total Respondents: 12		

Q12 On what basis do you believe you were discriminated against? (Check any that apply.)

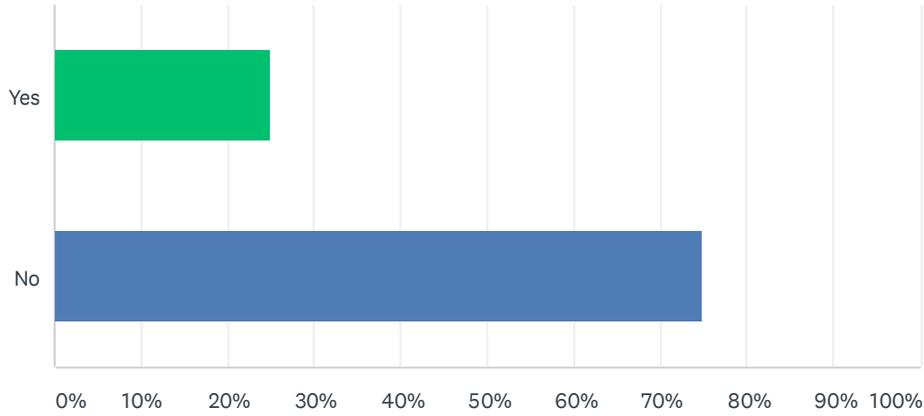
Answered: 11 Skipped: 82



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Race/color	90.91%	10
Ethnicity	27.27%	3
National origin	0.00%	0
Religion	0.00%	0
Gender/sex	27.27%	3
Disability	18.18%	2
Familial status (single parent with children, family with children, expecting a child)	36.36%	4
Total Respondents: 11		

Q13 Did you file a report of that discrimination?

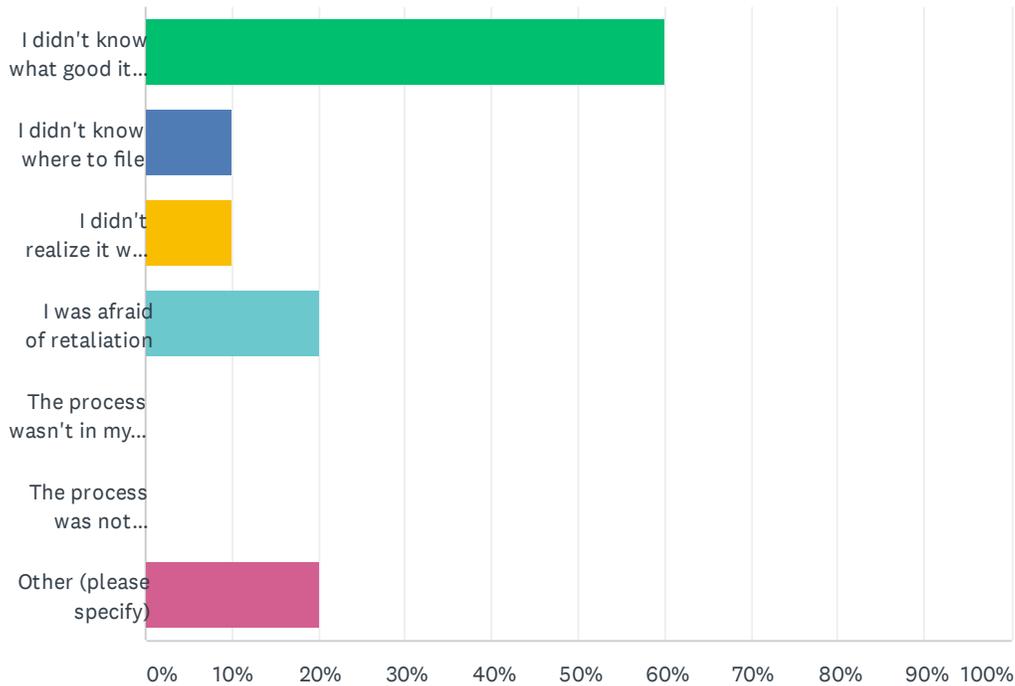
Answered: 12 Skipped: 81



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	25.00%	3
No	75.00%	9
TOTAL		12

Q14 If you did not file a report, why didn't you file? (Check any that apply.)

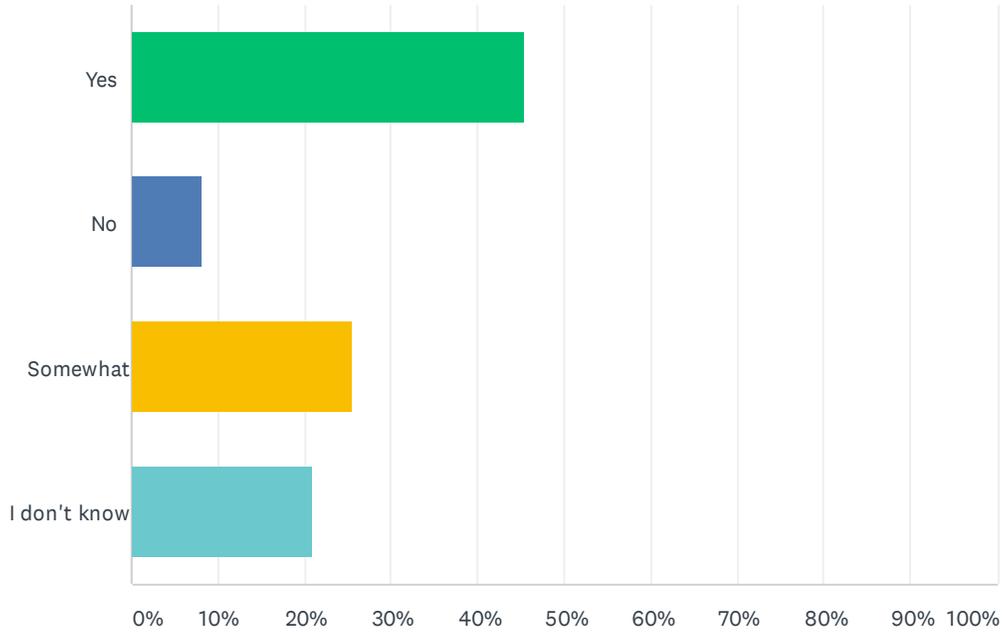
Answered: 10 Skipped: 83



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I didn't know what good it would do	60.00%	6
I didn't know where to file	10.00%	1
I didn't realize it was against the law	10.00%	1
I was afraid of retaliation	20.00%	2
The process wasn't in my language	0.00%	0
The process was not accessible to me because of a disability	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	20.00%	2
Total Respondents: 10		

Q15 Do you believe housing discrimination is an issue in Columbus?

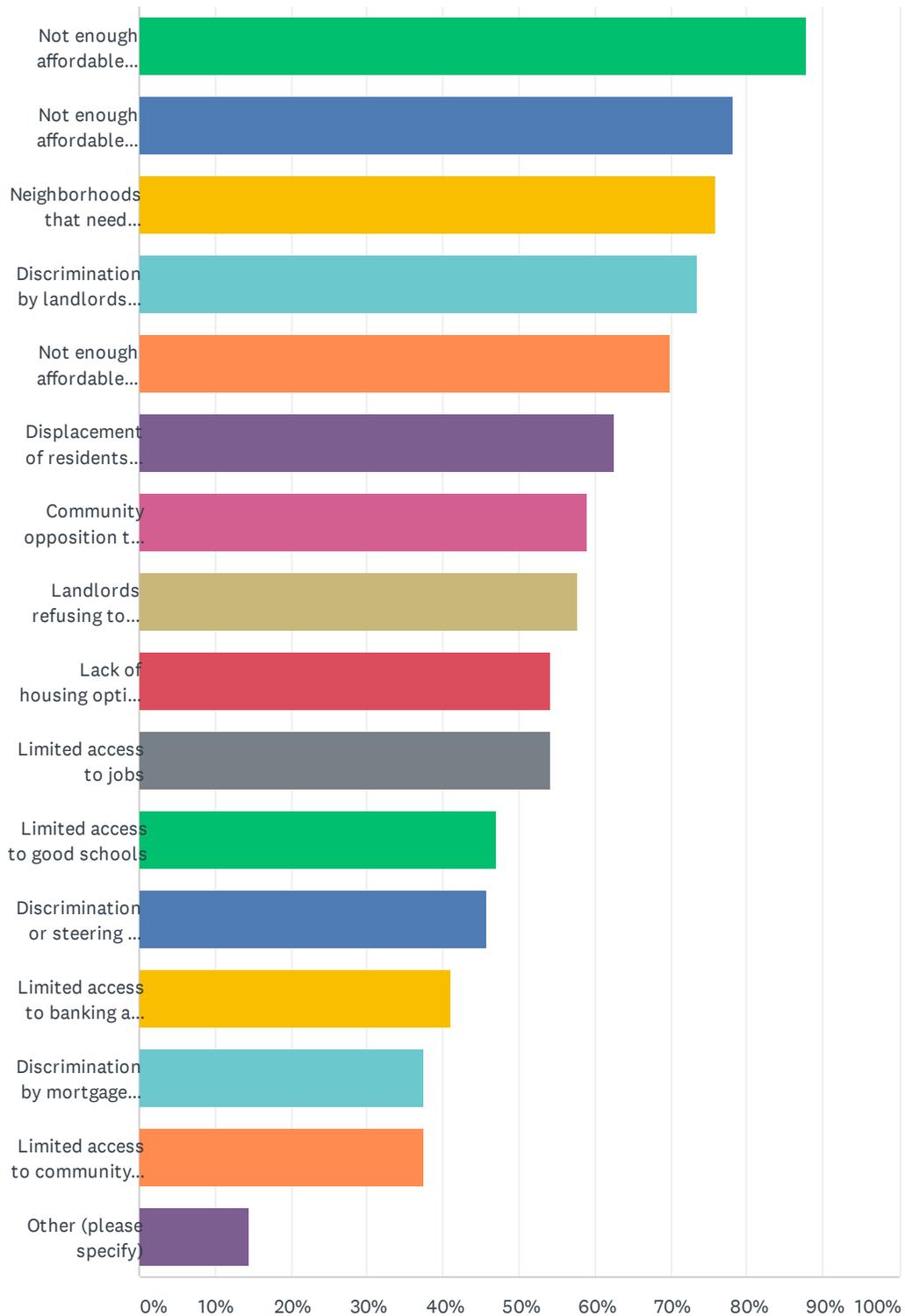
Answered: 86 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	45.35%	39
No	8.14%	7
Somewhat	25.58%	22
I don't know	20.93%	18
TOTAL		86

Q16 Do you think any of the following are barriers to fair housing in Columbus? (Check any that apply.)

Answered: 83 Skipped: 10

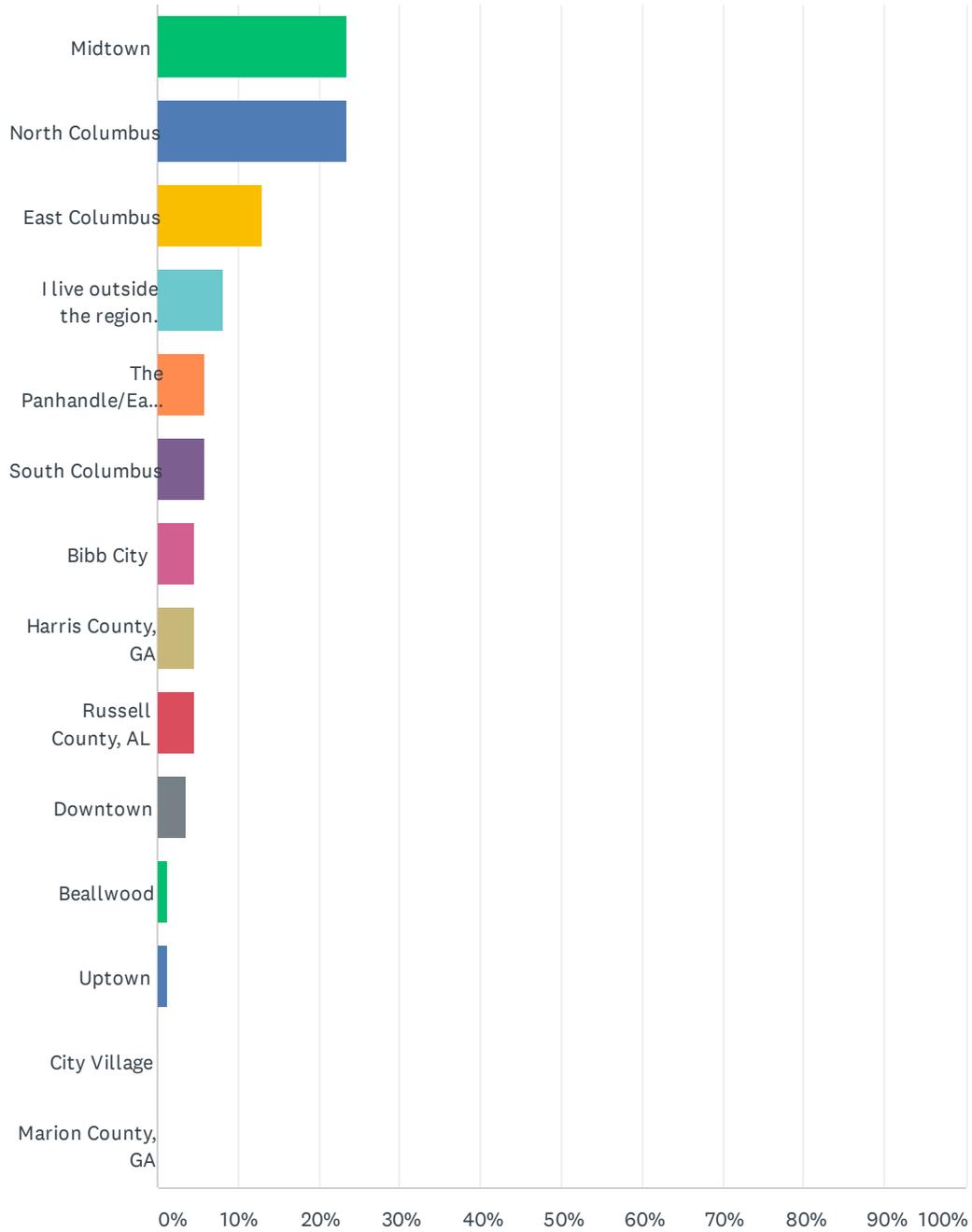


Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not enough affordable housing for families	87.95%	73
Not enough affordable housing for individuals	78.31%	65
Neighborhoods that need revitalization and new investment	75.90%	63
Discrimination by landlords or rental agents	73.49%	61
Not enough affordable housing for seniors	69.88%	58
Displacement of residents due to rising housing costs	62.65%	52
Community opposition to affordable housing	59.04%	49
Landlords refusing to accept Section 8 vouchers	57.83%	48
Lack of housing options for people with disabilities	54.22%	45
Limited access to jobs	54.22%	45
Limited access to good schools	46.99%	39
Discrimination or steering by real estate agents	45.78%	38
Limited access to banking and financial services	40.96%	34
Discrimination by mortgage lenders	37.35%	31
Limited access to community resources for people with disabilities	37.35%	31
Other (please specify)	14.46%	12
Total Respondents: 83		

Q17 Please select the neighborhood where you live.

Answered: 85 Skipped: 8

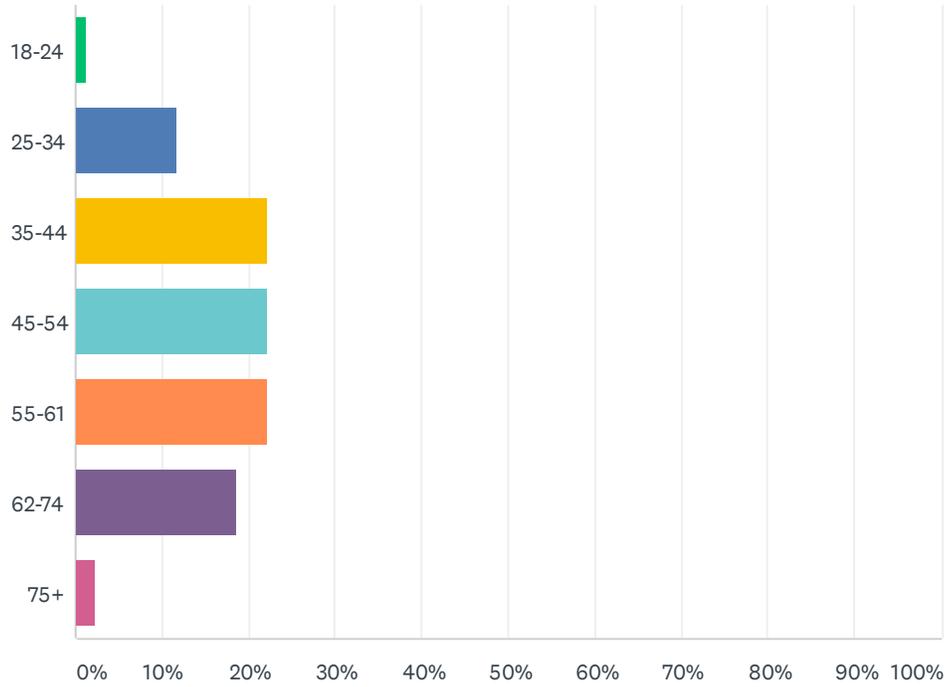


Columbus Housing & Community Needs Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Midtown	23.53%	20
North Columbus	23.53%	20
East Columbus	12.94%	11
I live outside the region.	8.24%	7
The Panhandle/East Macon Road	5.88%	5
South Columbus	5.88%	5
Bibb City	4.71%	4
Harris County, GA	4.71%	4
Russell County, AL	4.71%	4
Downtown	3.53%	3
Beallwood	1.18%	1
Uptown	1.18%	1
City Village	0.00%	0
Marion County, GA	0.00%	0
TOTAL		85

Q18 What is your age group?

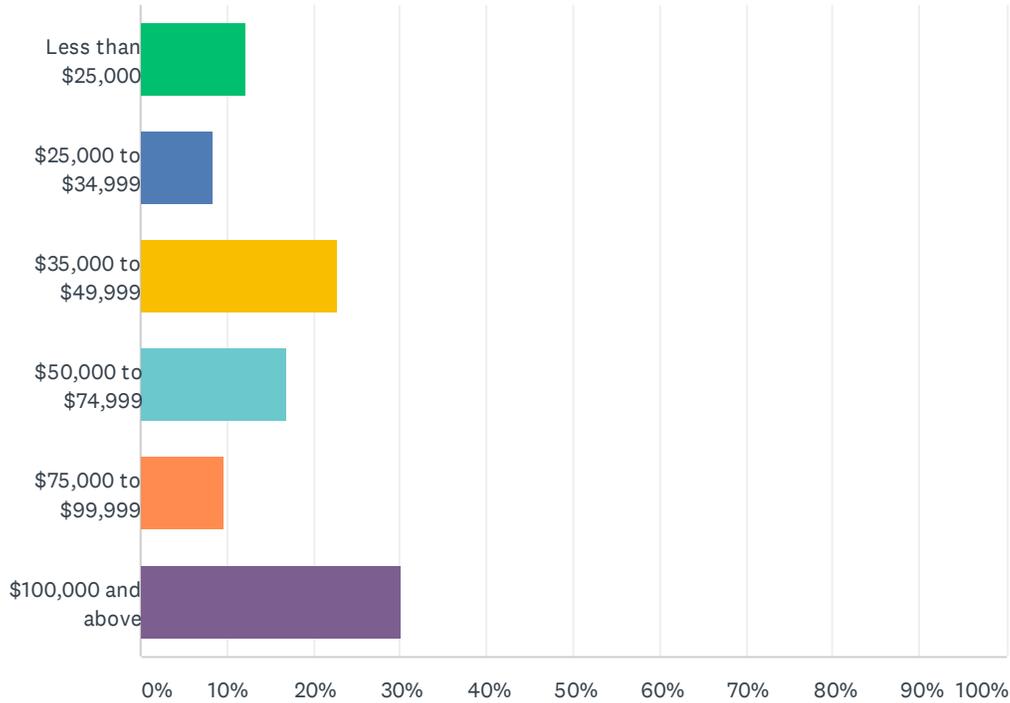
Answered: 86 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
18-24	1.16% 1
25-34	11.63% 10
35-44	22.09% 19
45-54	22.09% 19
55-61	22.09% 19
62-74	18.60% 16
75+	2.33% 2
TOTAL	86

Q19 What is your total household income?

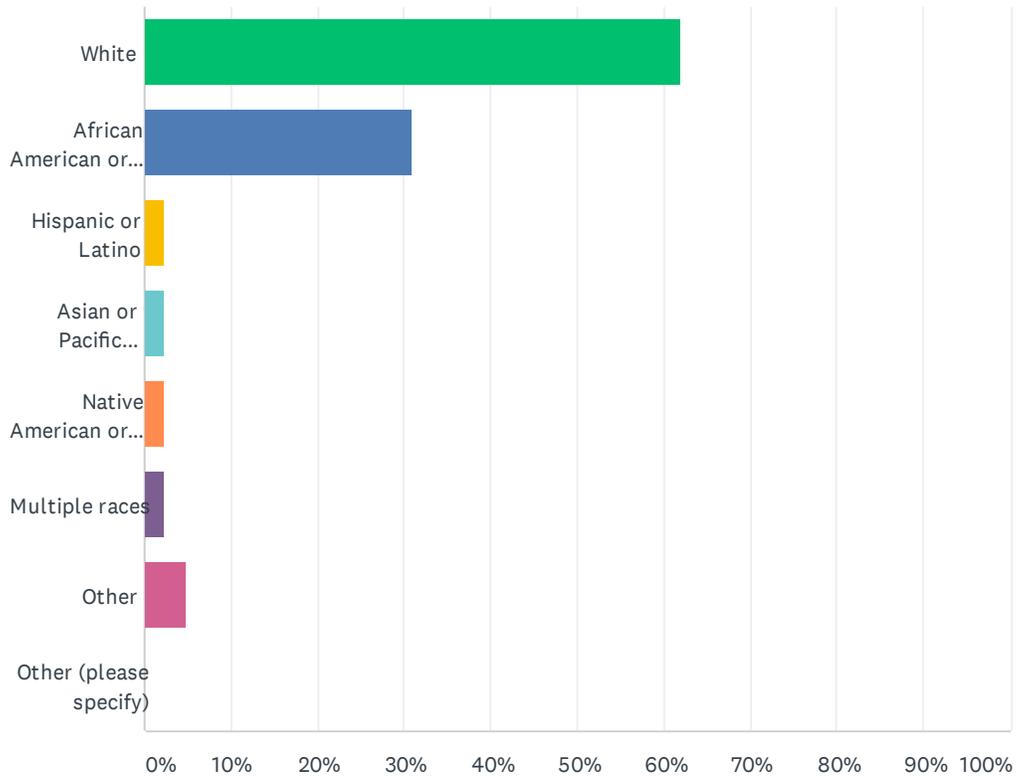
Answered: 83 Skipped: 10



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than \$25,000	12.05%	10
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.43%	7
\$35,000 to \$49,999	22.89%	19
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.87%	14
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.64%	8
\$100,000 and above	30.12%	25
TOTAL		83

Q20 What is your race / ethnicity? (Check any that apply.)

Answered: 84 Skipped: 9



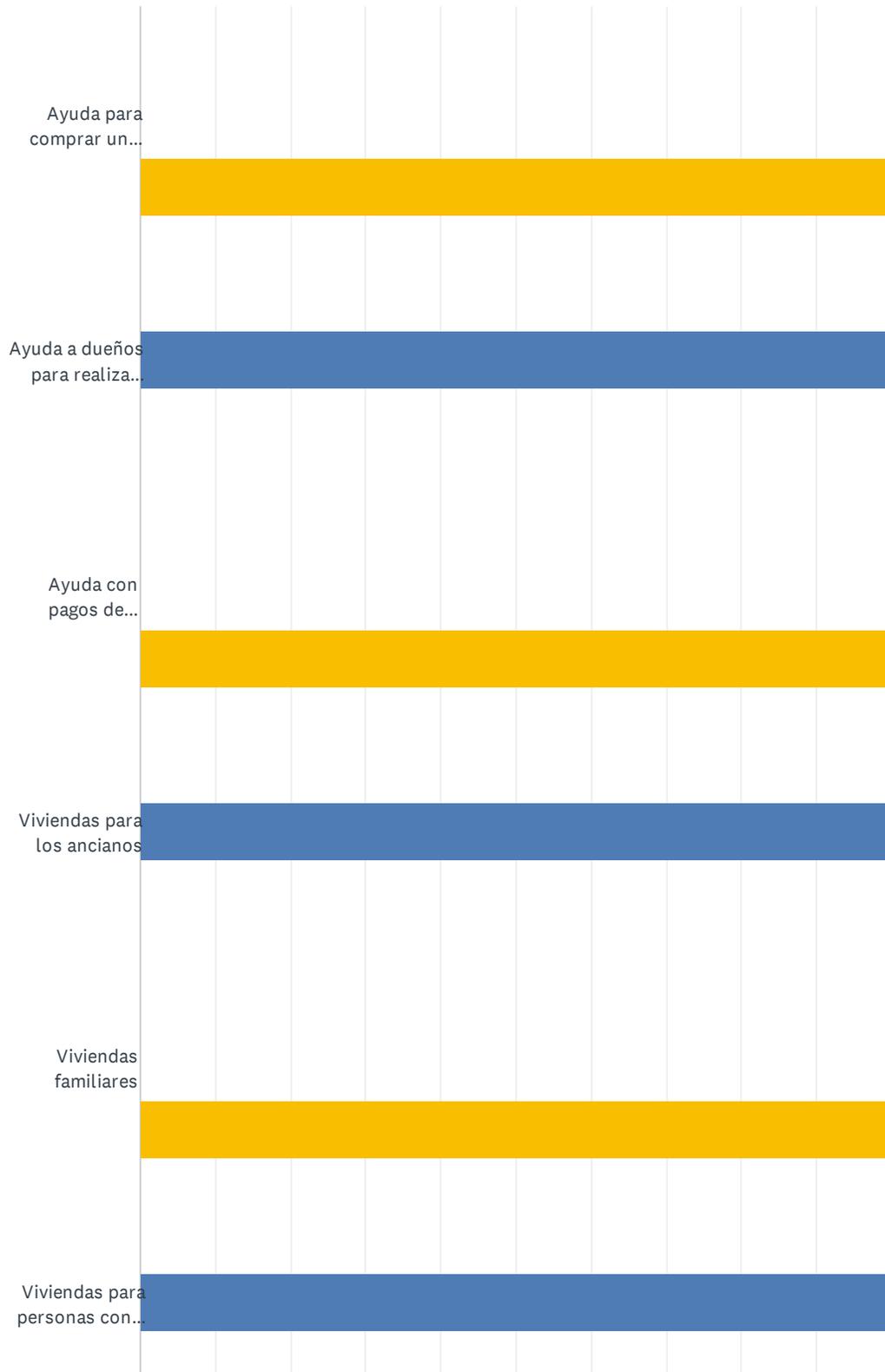
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White	61.90%	52
African American or Black	30.95%	26
Hispanic or Latino	2.38%	2
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.38%	2
Native American or Alaska Native	2.38%	2
Multiple races	2.38%	2
Other	4.76%	4
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 84		

Q21 Please use the box below to provide any additional information regarding housing and community development needs in Columbus.

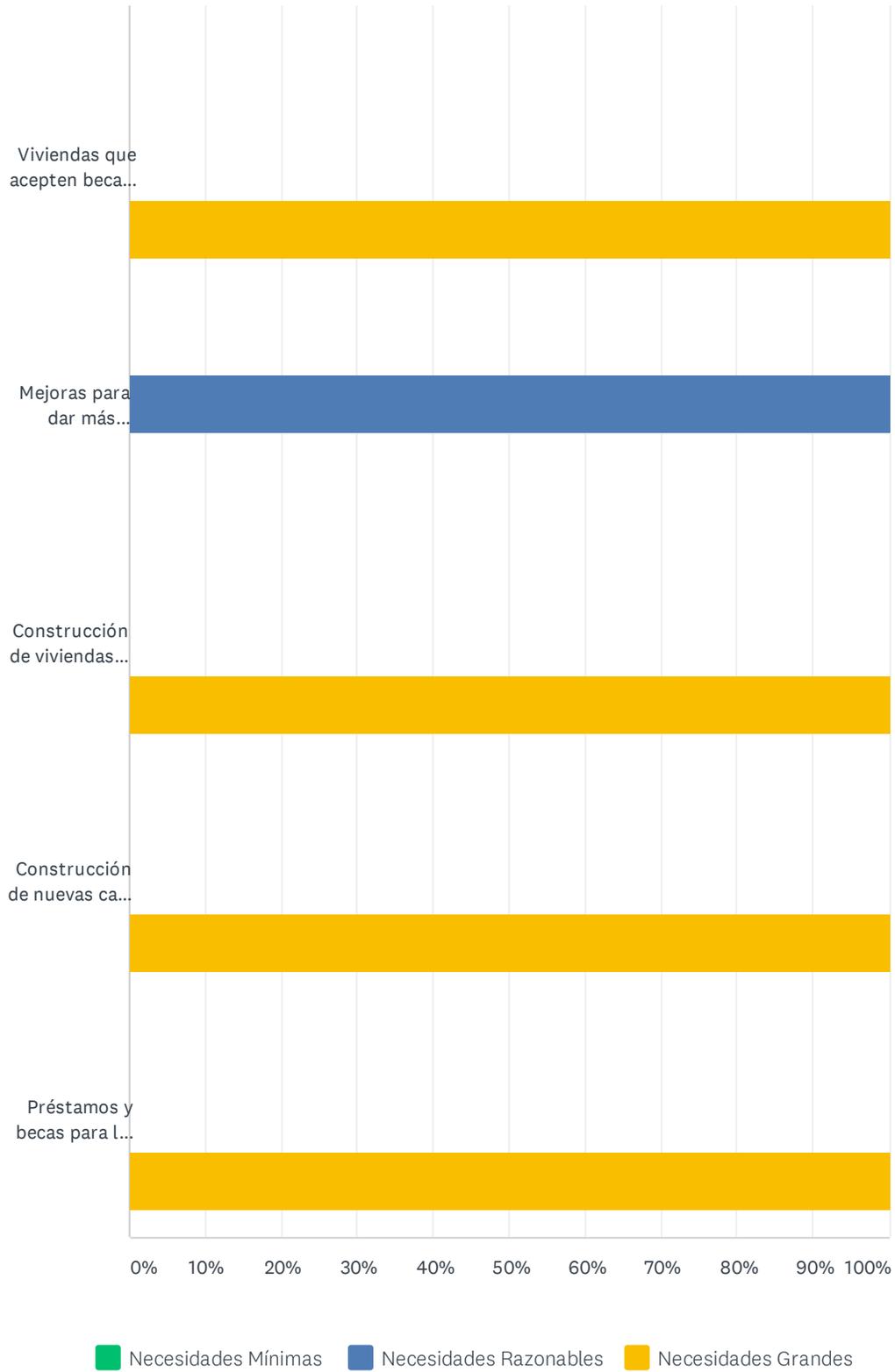
Answered: 20 Skipped: 73

Q1 Por favor califique las siguientes necesidades de vivienda asequibles en Columbus usando una escala que va desde necesidades mínimas hasta necesidad grandes.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

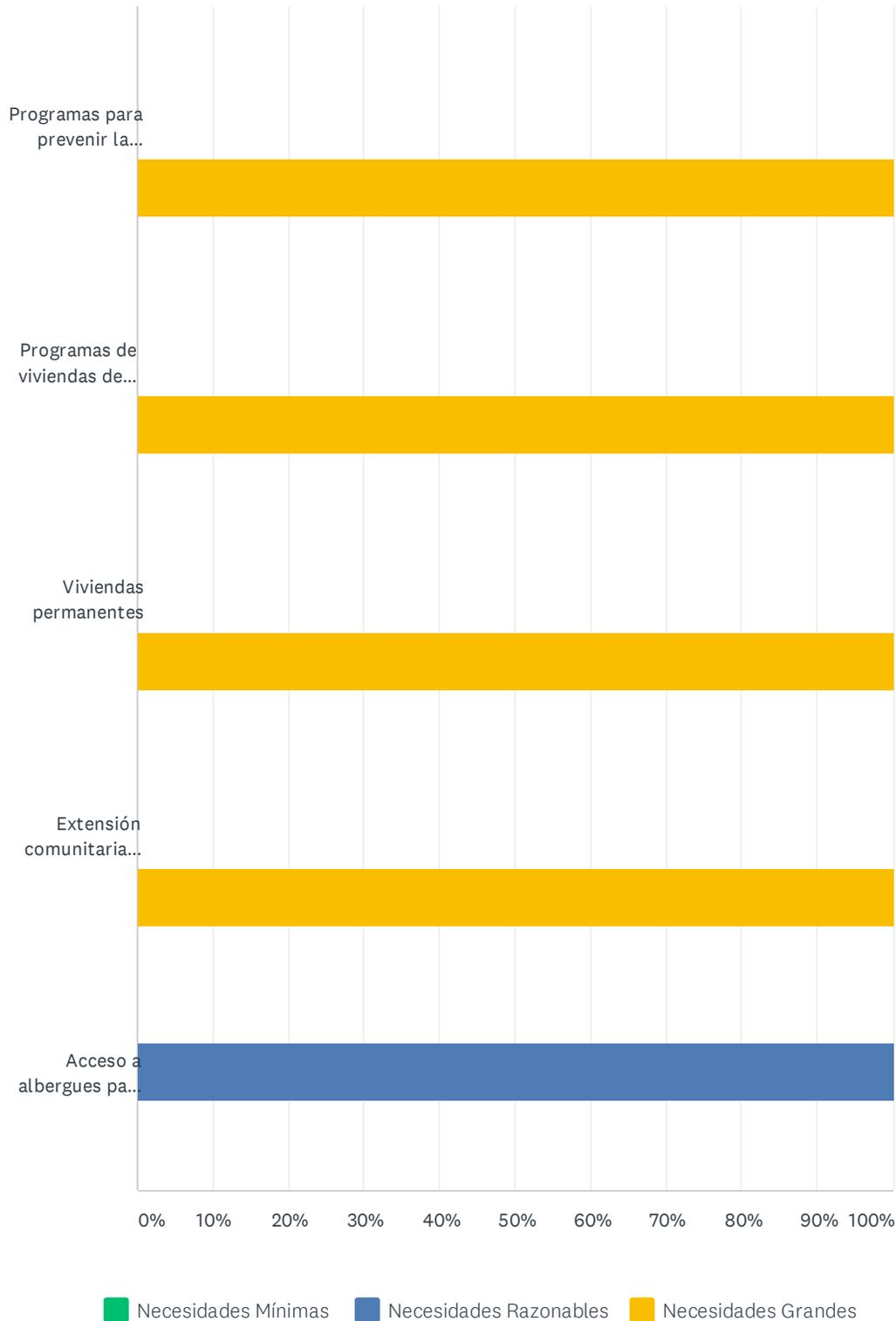


Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

	NECESIDADES MÍNIMAS	NECESIDADES RAZONABLES	NECESIDADES GRANDES	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Ayuda para comprar un hogar/para dar depósitos	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Ayuda a dueños para realizar mejoras en sus viviendas	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Ayuda con pagos de alquiler	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Viviendas para los ancianos	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Viviendas familiares	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Viviendas para personas con discapacidad	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Viviendas que acepten becas del programa Sección 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Mejoras para dar más eficiencia energética a las viviendas	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Construcción de viviendas de alquiler asequibles	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Construcción de nuevas casas para viviendas propias	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Préstamos y becas para la rehabilitación de unidades de alquiler o apartamentos asequibles	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00

Q2 Por favor califique las siguientes necesidades de las personas indigentes en Columbus usando una escala que va desde necesidades mínimas hasta necesidad grandes.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0

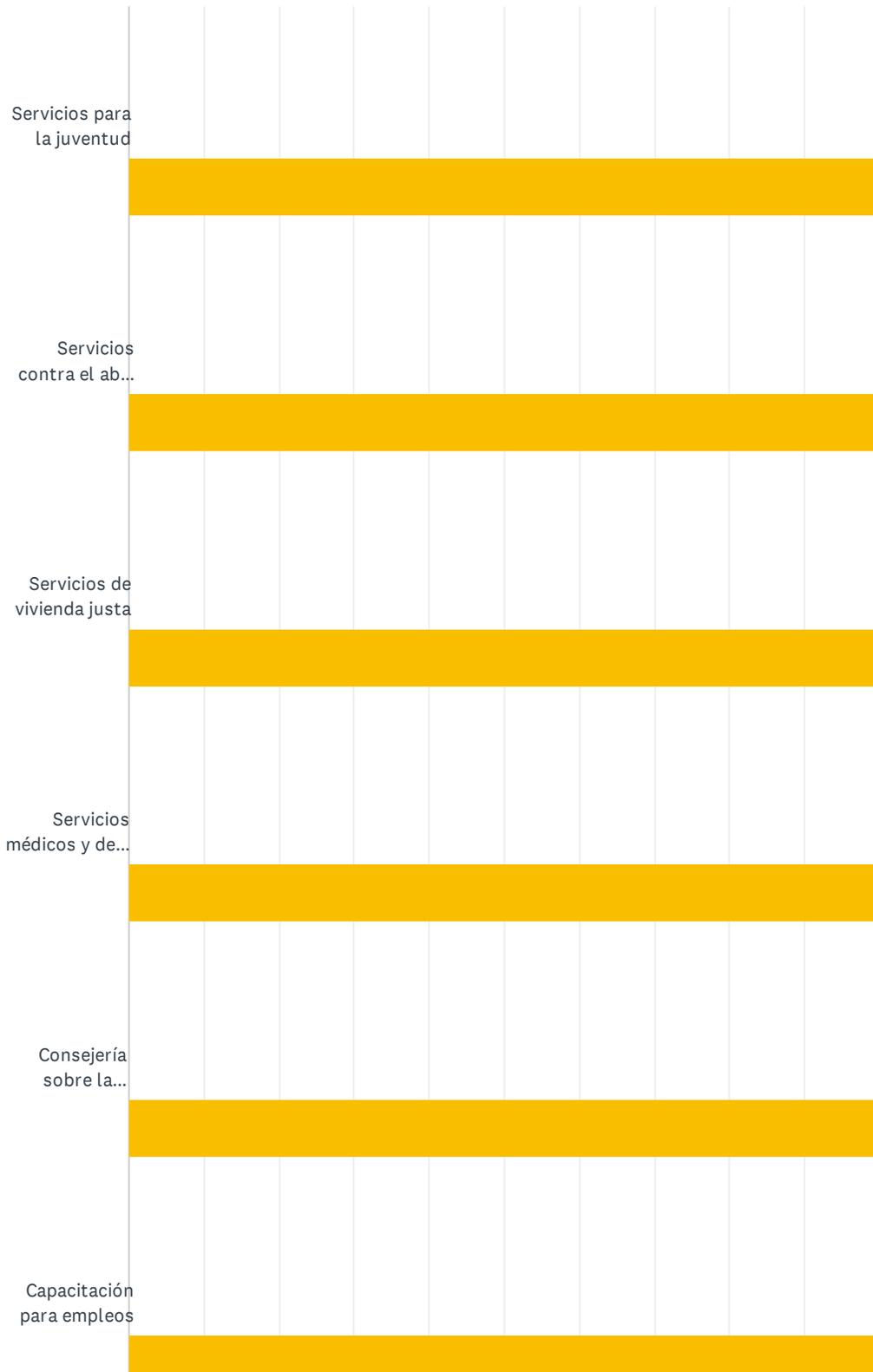


Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

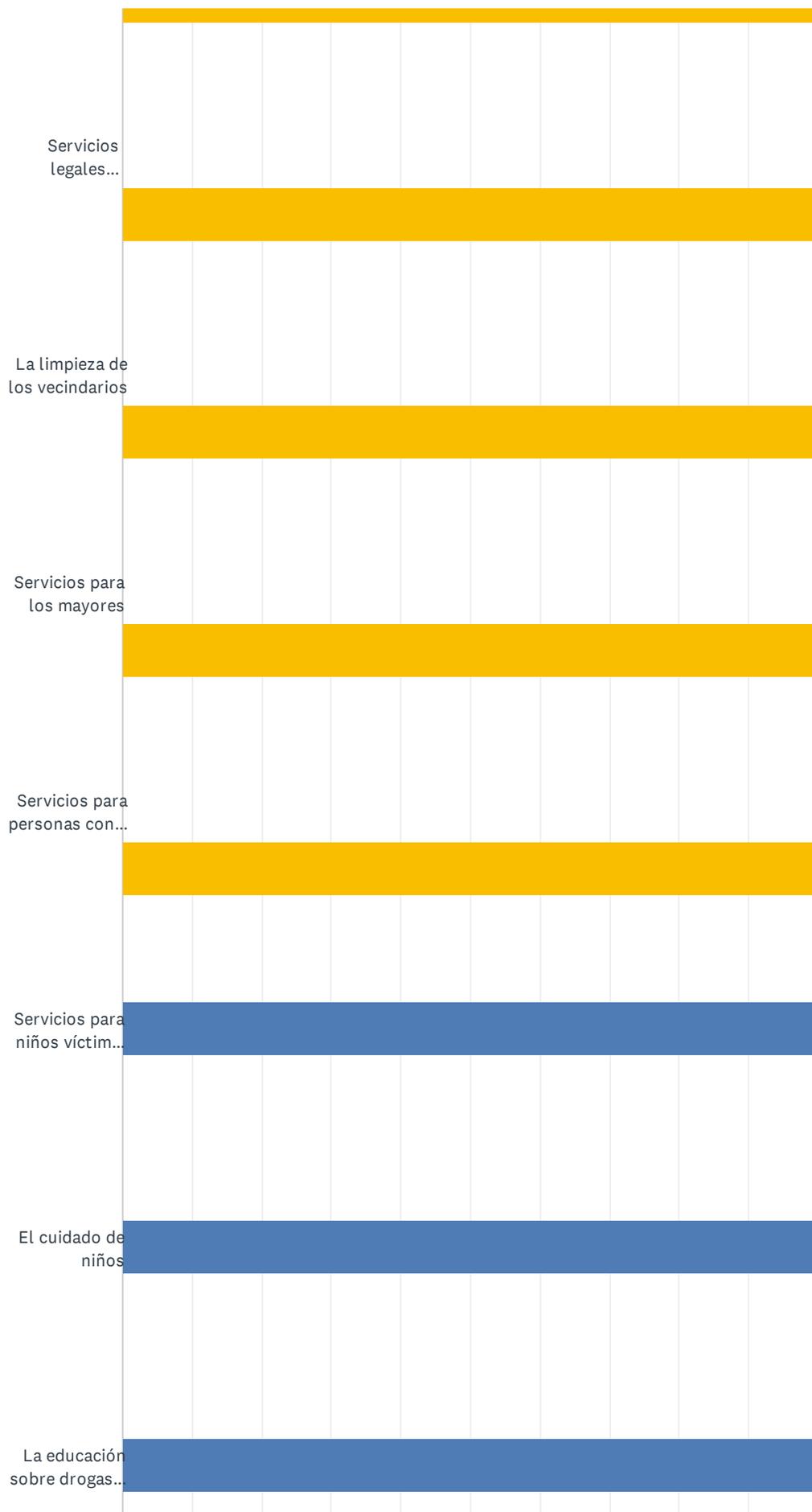
	NECESIDADES MÍNIMAS	NECESIDADES RAZONABLES	NECESIDADES GRANDES	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Programas para prevenir la indigencia	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Programas de viviendas de transición y apoyo	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Viviendas permanentes	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Extensión comunitaria para los indigentes	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Acceso a albergues para los indigentes	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00

Q3 Por favor califique las siguientes necesidades de servicio público en Columbus usando una escala que va desde necesidades mínimas hasta necesidad grandes.

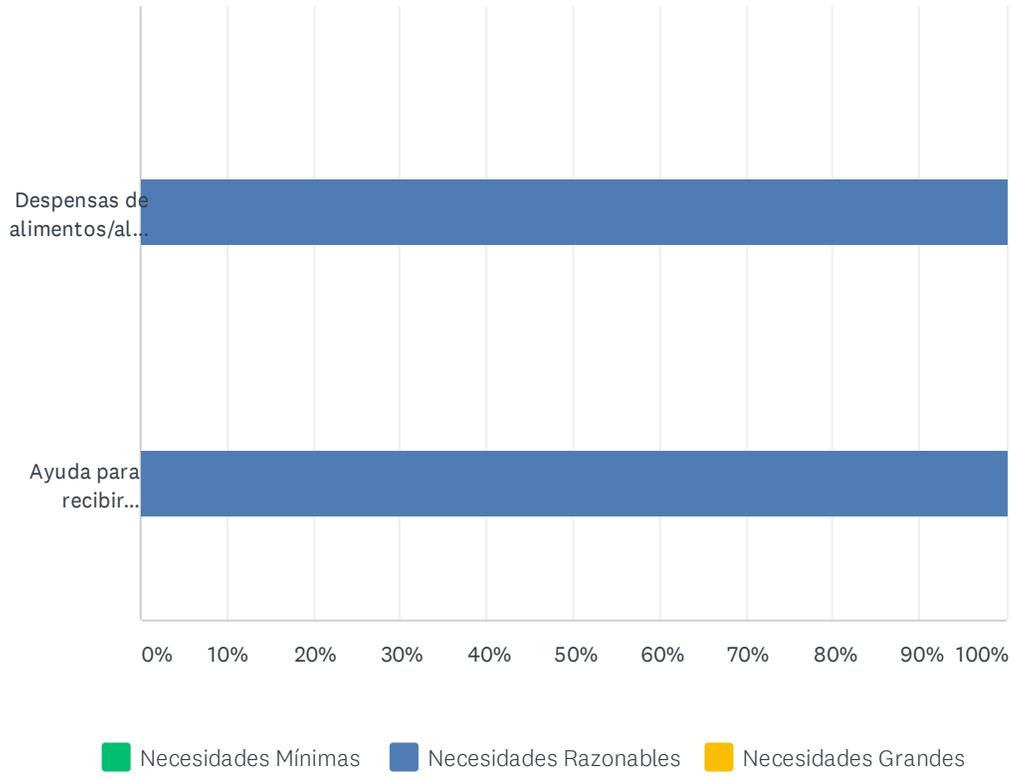
Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus



Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus



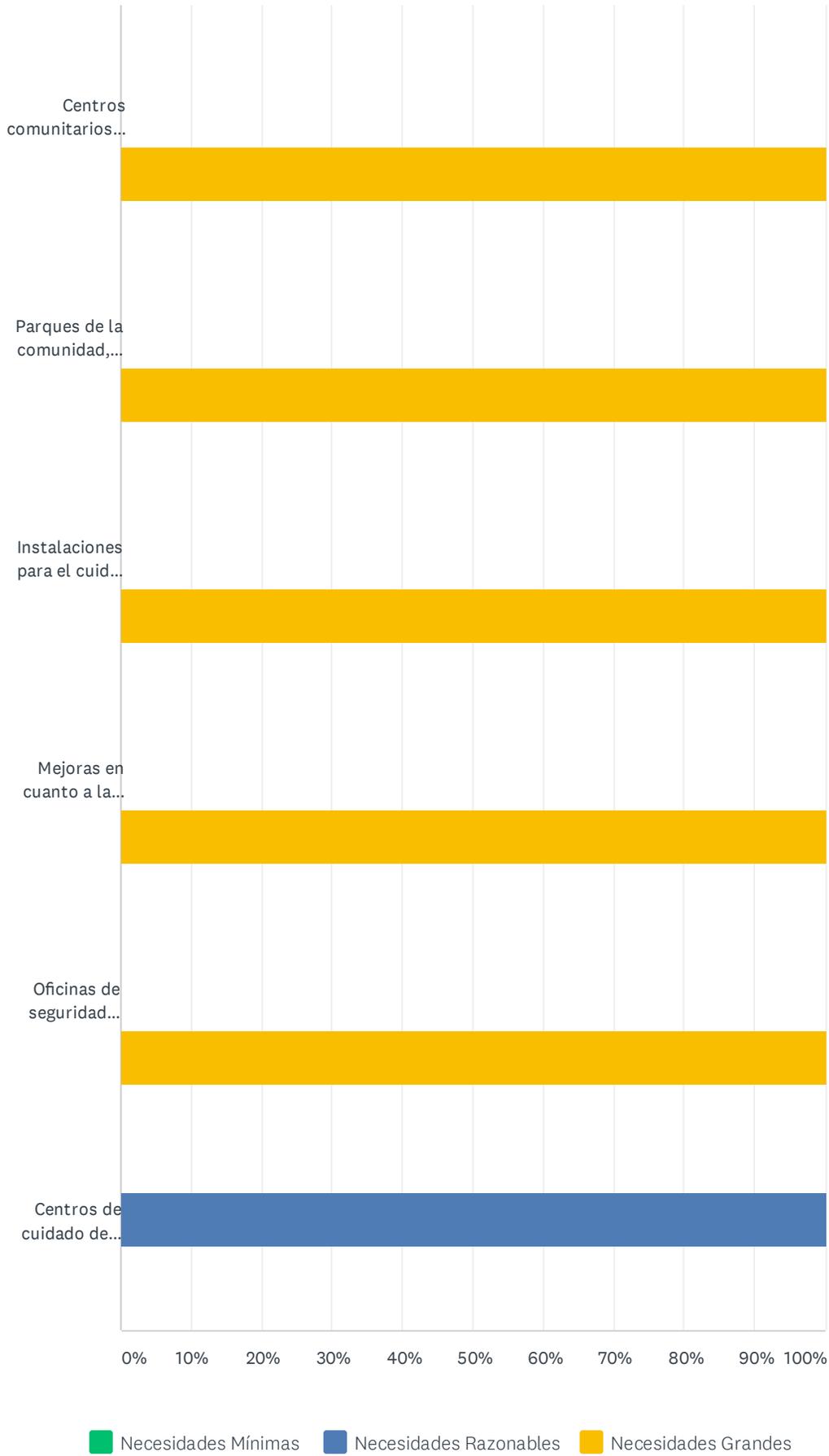
Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

	NECESIDADES MÍNIMAS	NECESIDADES RAZONABLES	NECESIDADES GRANDES	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Servicios para la juventud	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Servicios contra el abuso doméstico	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Servicios de vivienda justa	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Servicios médicos y de salud mental	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Consejería sobre la vivienda	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Capacitación para empleos	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Servicios legales relacionados con vivienda, salud, familias, etc.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
La limpieza de los vecindarios	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Servicios para los mayores	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Servicios para personas con discapacidades	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Servicios para niños víctimas de maltratos o descuido	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
El cuidado de niños	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
La educación sobre drogas / prevención del delito	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Despensas de alimentos/alimentación comunitaria	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Ayuda para recibir transporte	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00

Q4 Por favor califique las siguientes necesidades para instalaciones públicas en Columbus usando una escala que va desde necesidades mínimas hasta necesidades grandes.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0

Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

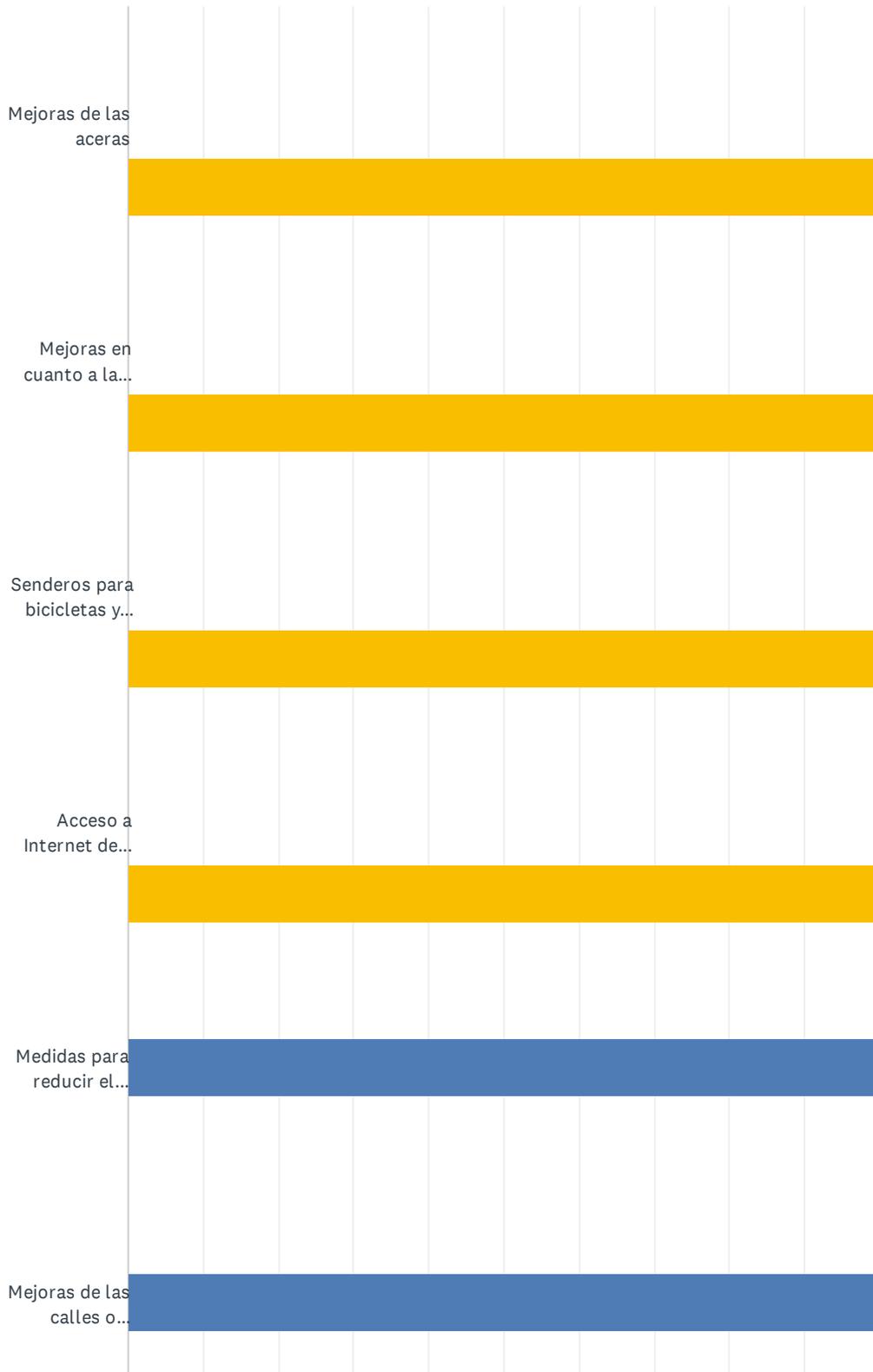


Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

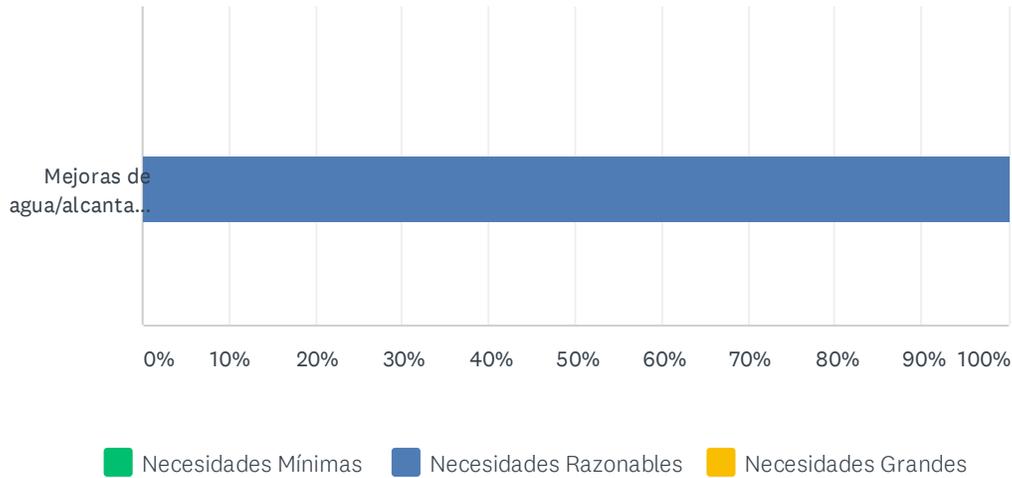
	NECESIDADES MÍNIMAS	NECESIDADES RAZONABLES	NECESIDADES GRANDES	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Centros comunitarios (centros para la juventud, centros para personas mayores, centros culturales)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Parques de la comunidad, gimnasios y campos deportivos	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Instalaciones para el cuidado de la salud	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Mejoras en cuanto a la accesibilidad por la Ley de Americanos con Discapacidades (American with Disabilities Act, o ADA, por sus siglas en inglés)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Oficinas de seguridad pública (bomberos, policía, gestión de emergencias)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Centros de cuidado de niños	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00

Q5 Por favor califique las siguientes necesidades para infraestructura en Columbus usando una escala que va desde necesidades mínimas hasta necesidades grandes.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

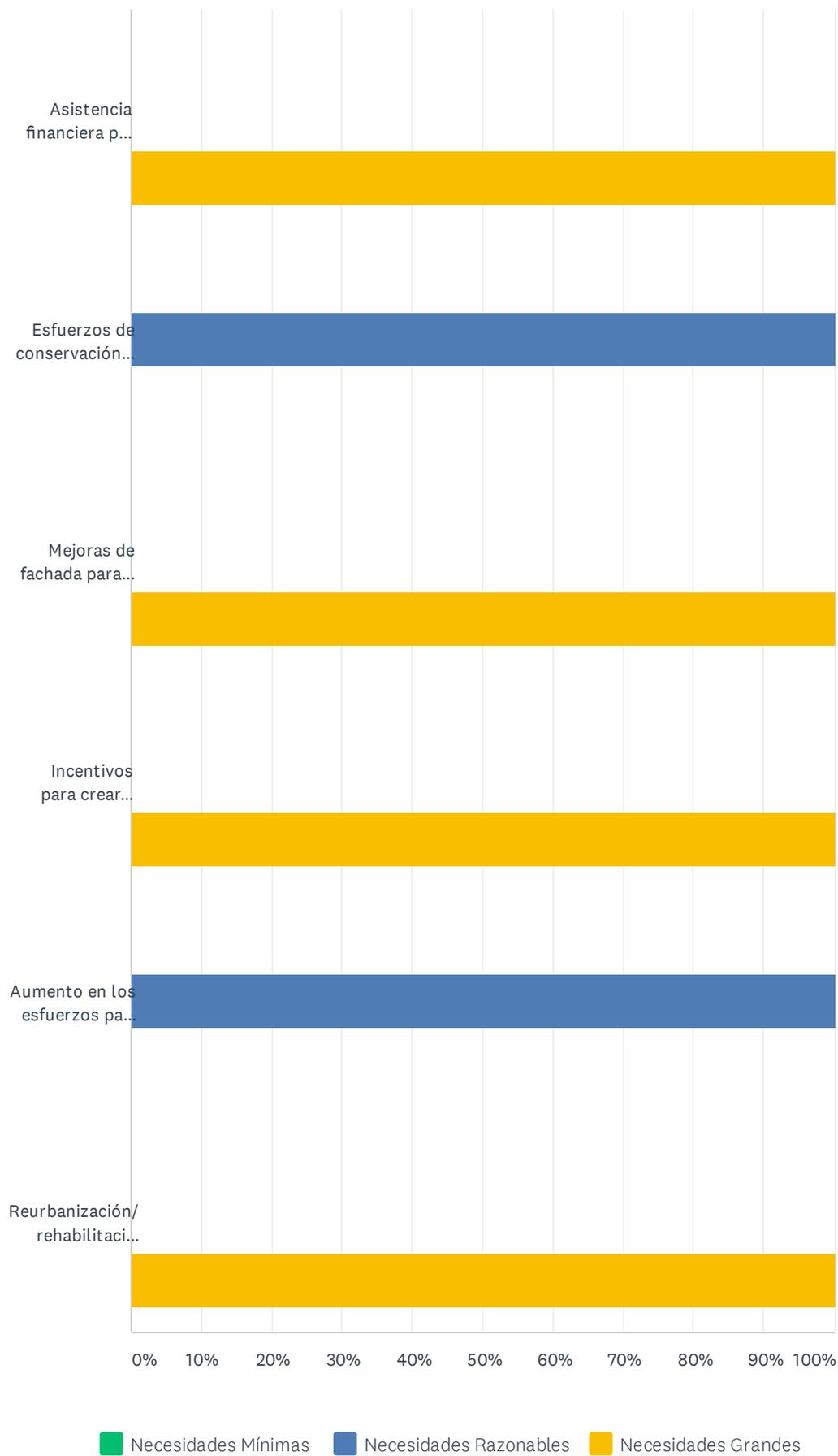


	NECESIDADES MÍNIMAS	NECESIDADES RAZONABLES	NECESIDADES GRANDES	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Mejoras de las aceras	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Mejoras en cuanto a la accesibilidad por las personas con discapacidades	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Senderos para bicicletas y caminatas	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Acceso a Internet de Banda Ancha	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Medidas para reducir el impacto de desastres naturales	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Mejoras de las calles o carreteras	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Mejoras de agua/alcantarillado	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00

Q6 Por favor califique las siguientes necesidades de desarrollo económica en Columbus usando una escala que va desde necesidades mínimas hasta necesidades grandes.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0

Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

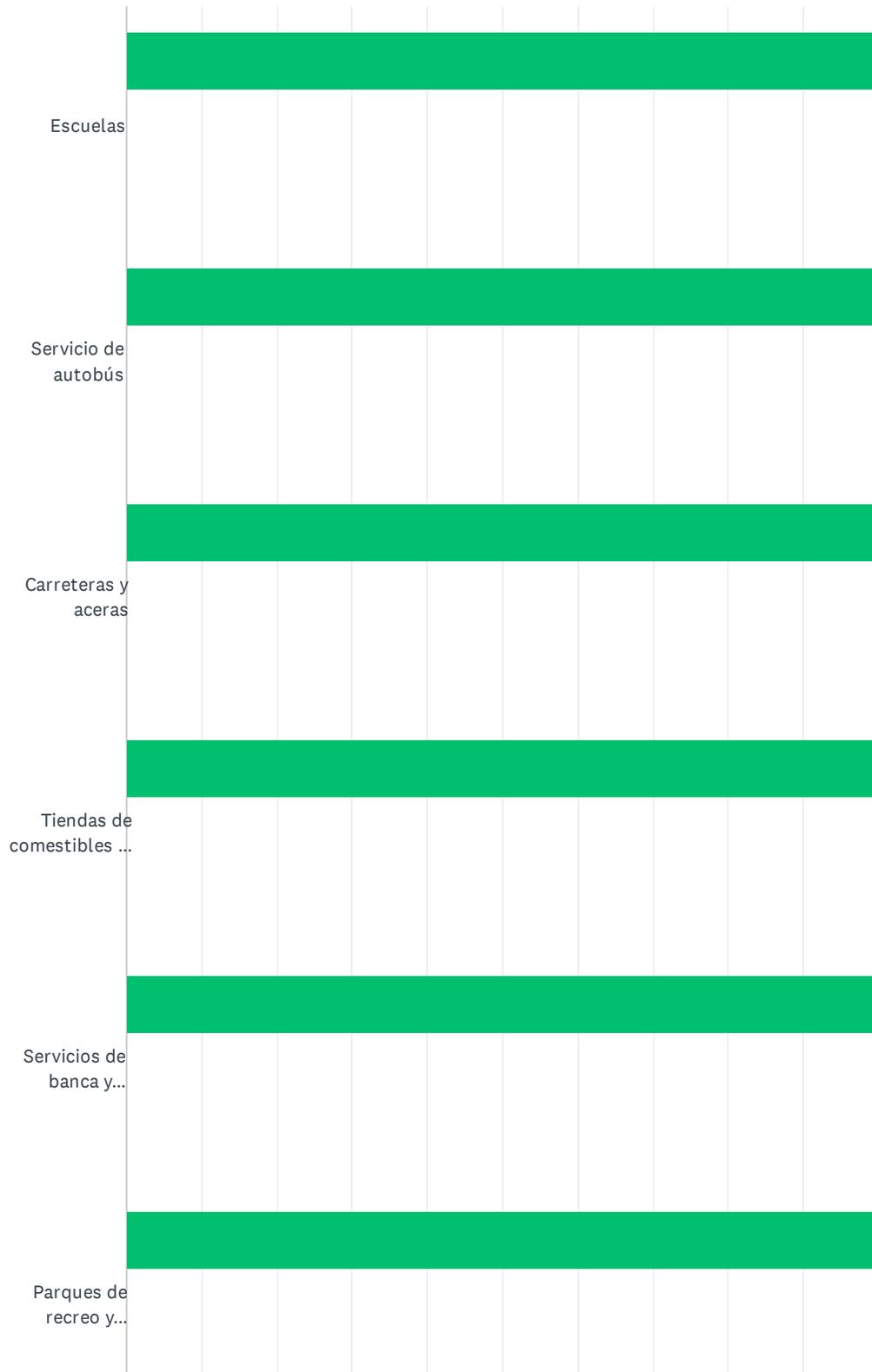


Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

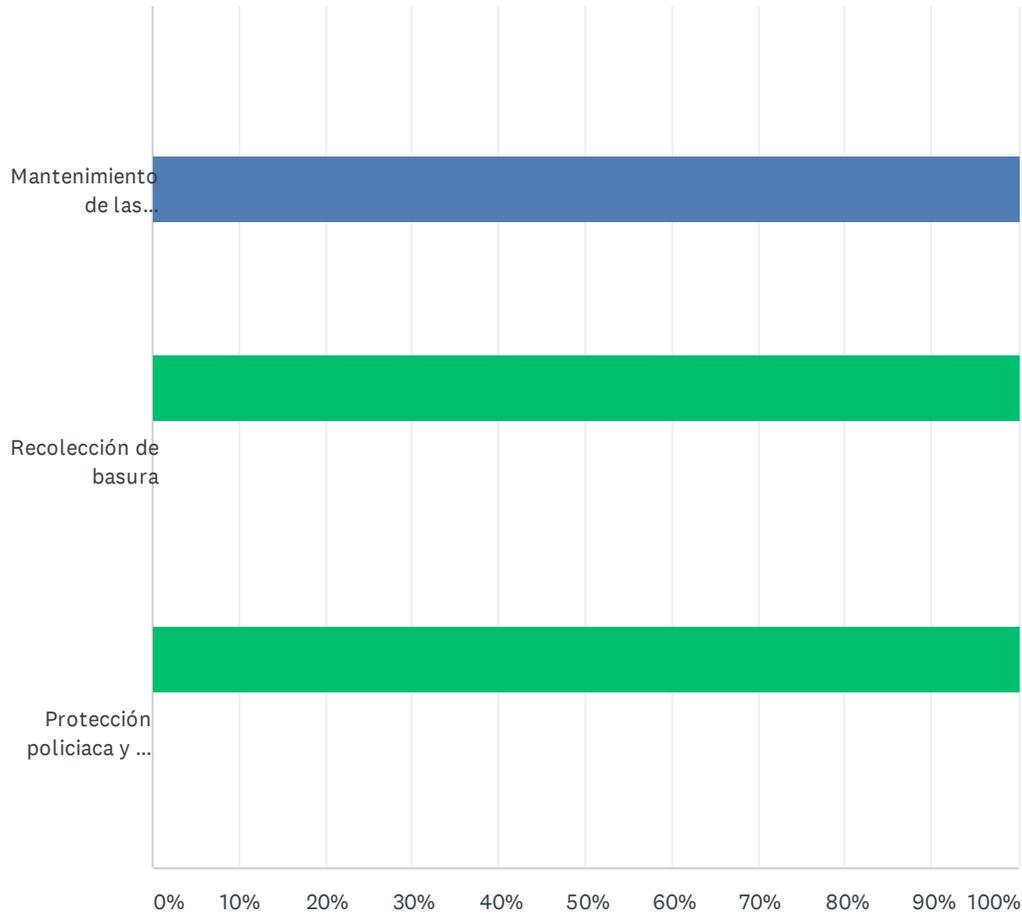
	NECESIDADES MÍNIMAS	NECESIDADES RAZONABLES	NECESIDADES GRANDES	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Asistencia financiera para pequeños negocios	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Esfuerzos de conservación histórica	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Mejoras de fachada para los negocios	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Incentivos para crear empleos	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00
Aumento en los esfuerzos para la ejecución de códigos	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Reurbanización/rehabilitación/demolición de propiedades arruinadas	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	3.00

Q7 Tomando en cuenta los recursos comunitarios disponibles en Columbus, indique si piensa que cada uno de los siguientes recursos están disponibles de igual o desigual manera.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

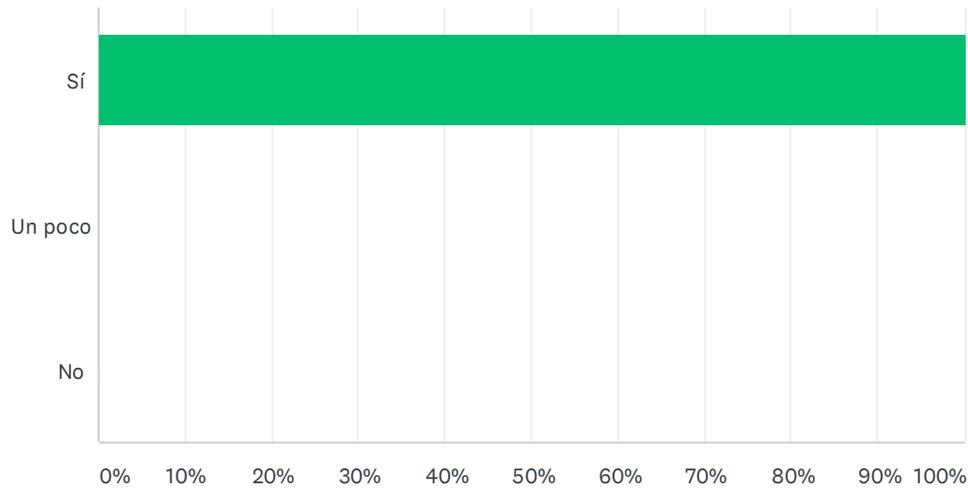


■ Disponibilidad igual
 ■ Disponibilidad desigual
 ■ No sé

	DISPONIBILIDAD IGUAL	DISPONIBILIDAD DESIGUAL	NO SÉ	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Escuelas	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	1.00
Servicio de autobús	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	1.00
Carreteras y aceras	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	1.00
Tiendas de comestibles y otros comercios	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	1.00
Servicios de banca y prestamos	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	1.00
Parques de recreo y senderos	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	1.00
Mantenimiento de las instalaciones	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	1	2.00
Recolección de basura	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	1.00
Protección policiaca y de bomberos	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	1.00

Q8 ¿Conoce los derechos que tiene en cuanto a la de equidad de vivienda?

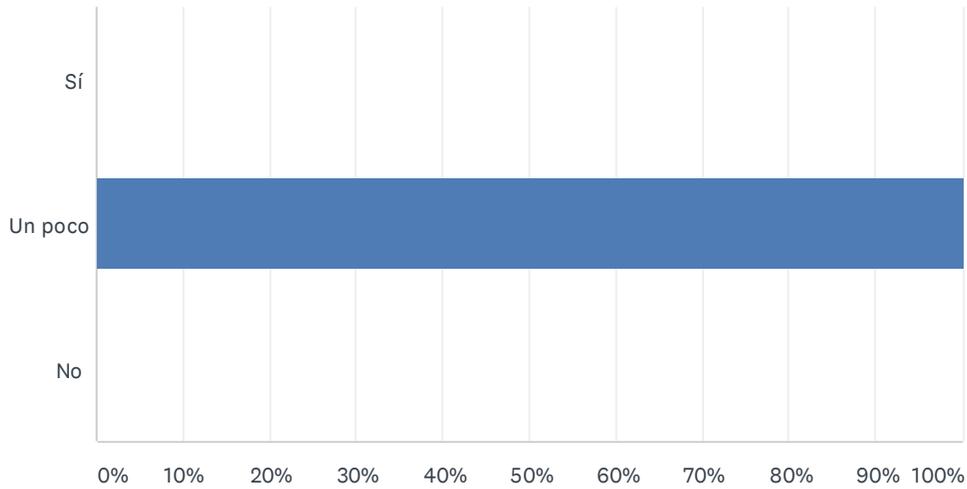
Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Sí	100.00%	1
Un poco	0.00%	0
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		1

Q9 ¿Sabe dónde presentar una queja sobre la discriminación de vivienda?

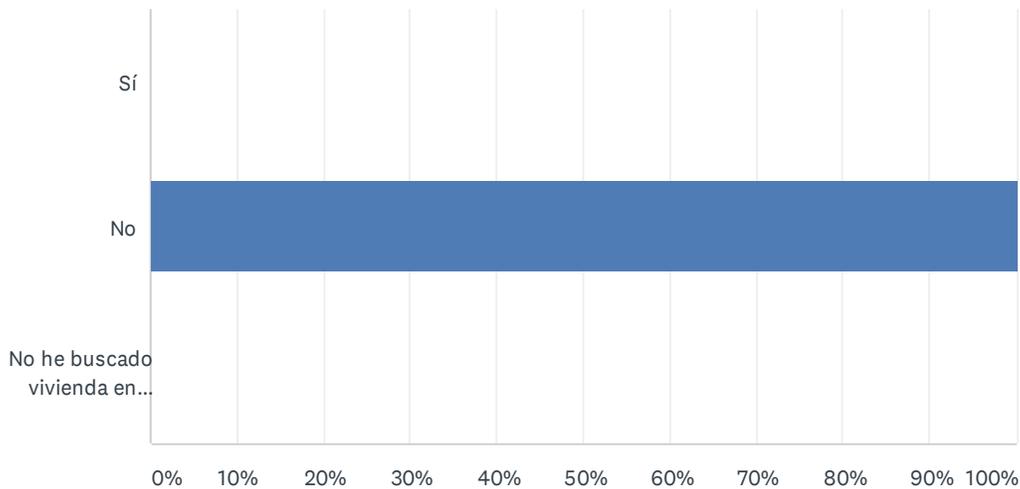
Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Sí	0.00%	0
Un poco	100.00%	1
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		1

Q10 ¿Ha experimentado discriminación en materia de vivienda al buscar vivienda en Columbus? Las siguientes acciones son ejemplos de discriminación en materia de vivienda si se basan en su raza, color, país de origen, religión, sexo, religión, situación familiar, o discapacidad: rehúsan alquilarle o vender una vivienda, rehúsan negociar el alquiler o venta de la vivienda con usted, le niegan que la vivienda está disponible para alquilar o venta cuando sí lo está, establecen diferentes términos o condiciones de alquiler o venta para usted, o le proveen viviendas o servicios de vivienda diferentes.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Sí	0.00%	0
No	100.00%	1
No he buscado vivienda en Columbus / No aplica	0.00%	0
TOTAL		1

Q11 ¿Quién discriminó contra usted? (Seleccione todas las opciones que correspondan.)

Answered: 0 Skipped: 1

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
El dueño/gerente de propiedad	0.00%	0
Un agente de bienes raíces	0.00%	0
Un prestamista hipotecario	0.00%	0
Un empleado de la ciudad, del condado o de la autoridad de vivienda	0.00%	0
Otro (especificar)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 0		

Q12 ¿En base a qué cree que discriminaron contra usted? (Seleccione todas las opciones que correspondan.)

Answered: 0 Skipped: 1

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Raza	0.00%	0
Origen étnico	0.00%	0
País de origen	0.00%	0
Religión	0.00%	0
Sexo	0.00%	0
Incapacidad o discapacidad	0.00%	0
Situación familiar (padres solteros con niños, familias con niños, madres embarazadas)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 0		

Q13 ¿Presentó una denuncia por discriminación?

Answered: 0 Skipped: 1

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Sí	0.00%	0
No	0.00%	0
TOTAL		0

Q14 Si usted no presentó una denuncia discriminación, ¿por qué no lo hizo? (Seleccione todas las opciones que correspondan.)

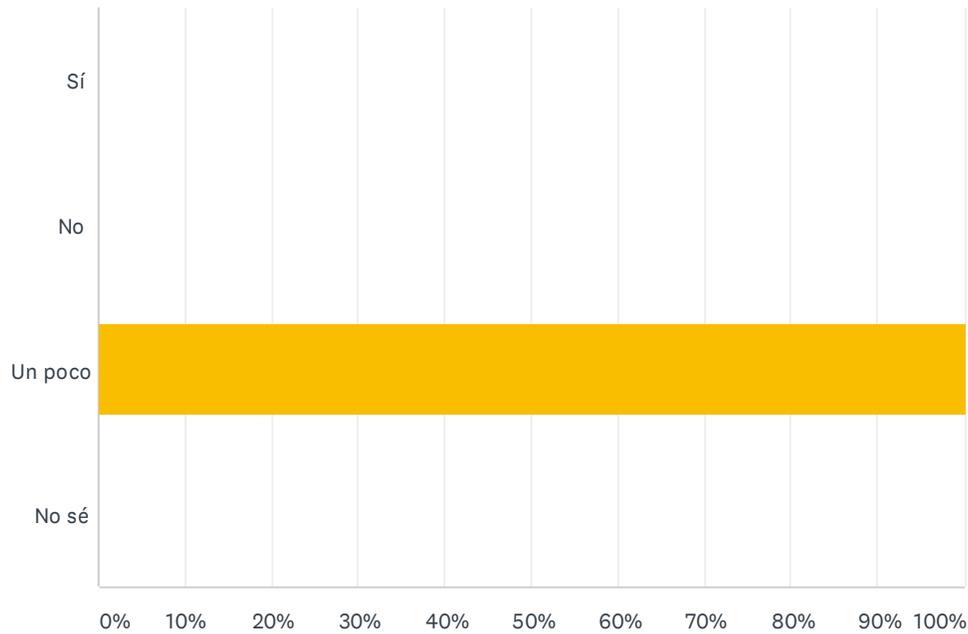
Answered: 0 Skipped: 1

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yo no sabía lo bueno que iba a hacer	0.00%	0
No sabía dónde archivar	0.00%	0
No me di cuenta que era una violación de la ley	0.00%	0
Tenía miedo a las represalias	0.00%	0
El proceso no fue en mi idioma	0.00%	0
El proceso no era accesible para mí debido a una discapacidad	0.00%	0
Otro (especificar)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 0		

Q15 ¿Cree usted que la discriminación en materia de vivienda es un problema en Columbus?

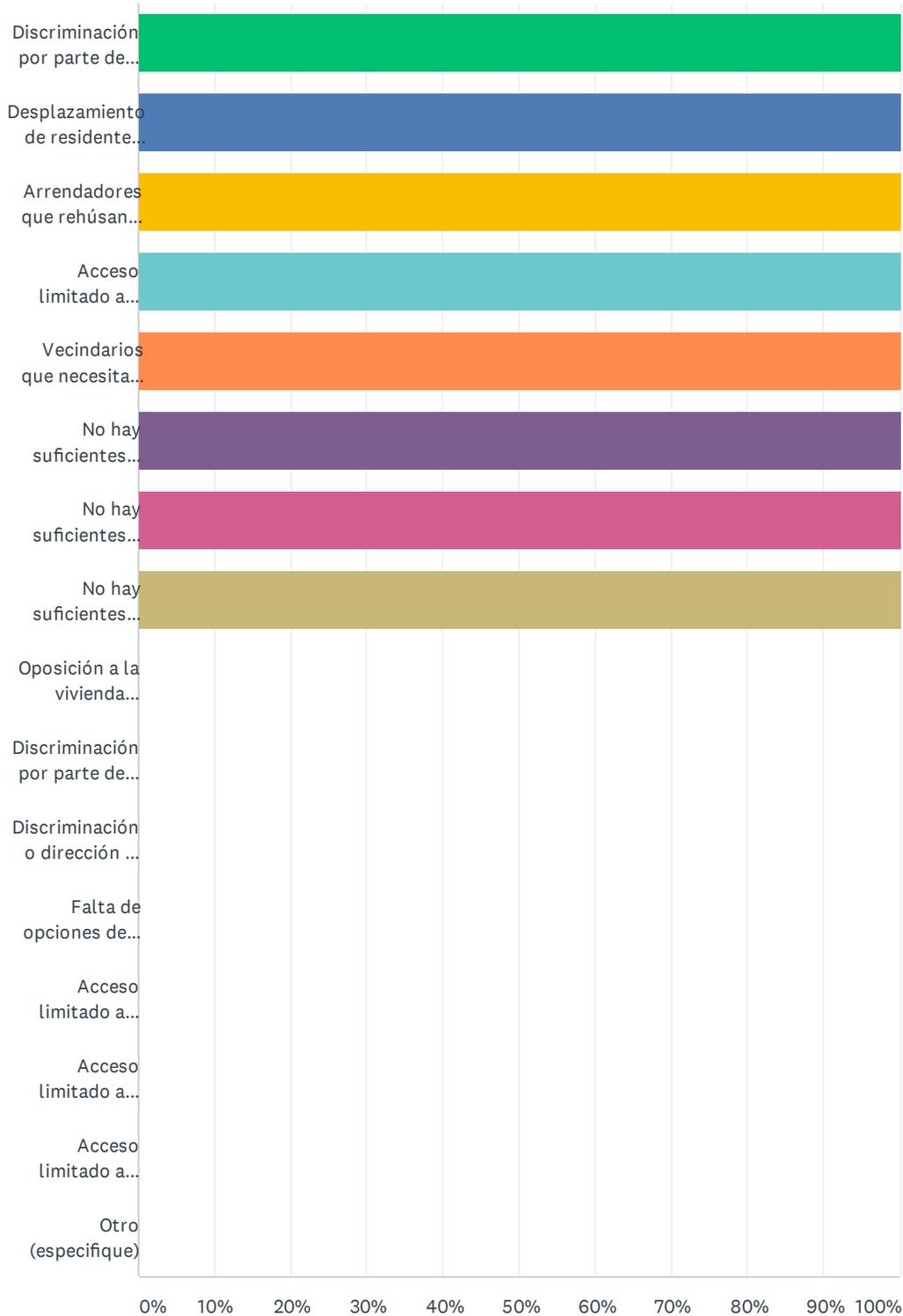
Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Sí	0.00% 0
No	0.00% 0
Un poco	100.00% 1
No sé	0.00% 0
TOTAL	1

Q16 ¿Crees que alguno de los siguientes son las barreras a la equidad de vivienda en Columbus? (Seleccionar todo lo que corresponda.)

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0

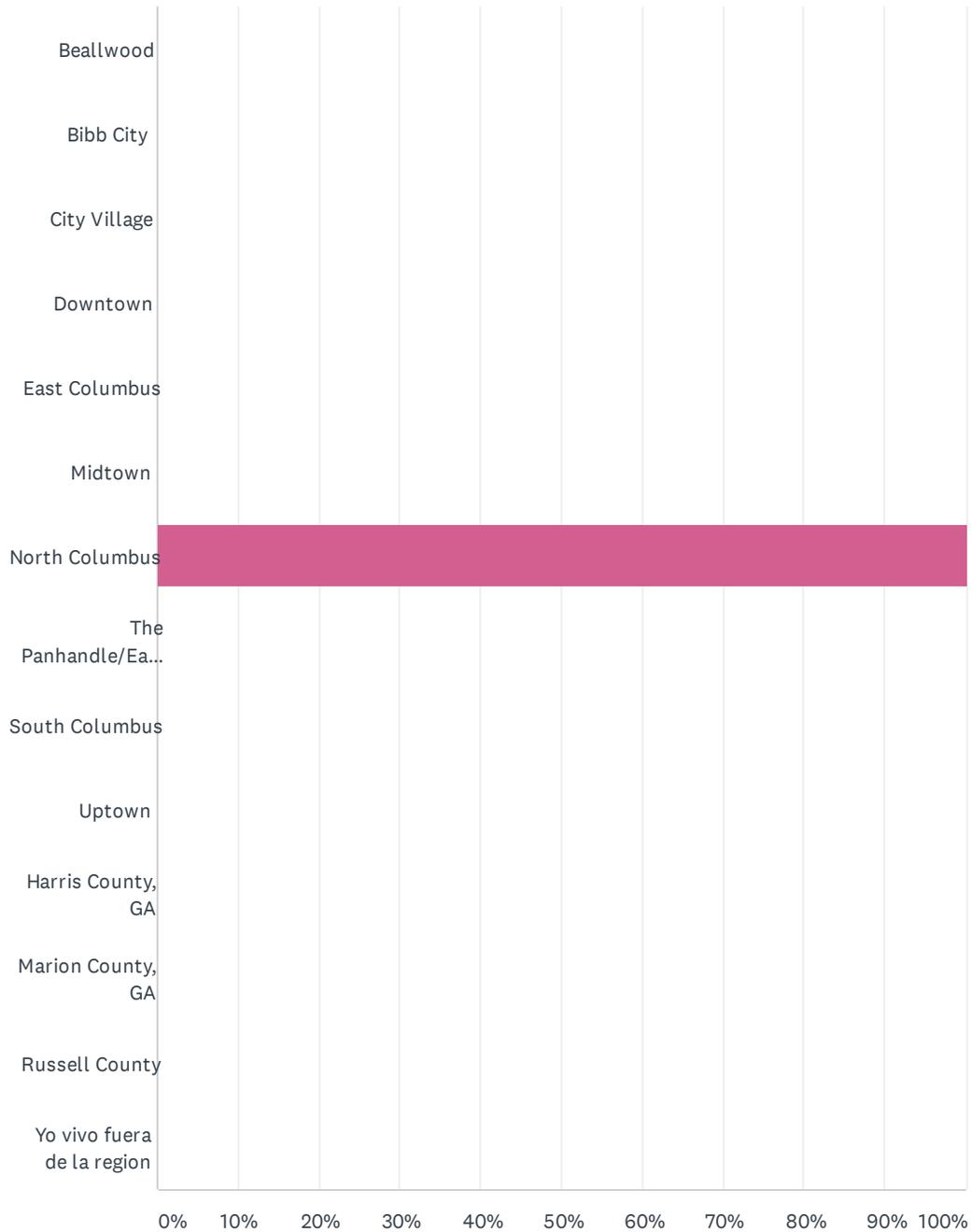


Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Discriminación por parte de los propietarios o agentes	100.00%	1
Desplazamiento de residentes por los incrementos en costos de vivienda	100.00%	1
Arrendadores que rehúsan aceptar vales de la Sección 8	100.00%	1
Acceso limitado a escuelas buenas	100.00%	1
Vecindarios que necesitan ser renovados y recibir nueva inversión	100.00%	1
No hay suficientes viviendas asequibles en alquiler para las personas	100.00%	1
No hay suficientes viviendas asequibles en alquiler para las familias	100.00%	1
No hay suficientes viviendas asequibles en alquiler para adultos mayores	100.00%	1
Oposición a la vivienda asequible de parte de la comunidad	0.00%	0
Discriminación por parte de los prestamistas	0.00%	0
Discriminación o dirección de parte de los agentes de bienes y raíces	0.00%	0
Falta de opciones de vivienda para personas con discapacidades	0.00%	0
Acceso limitado a bancos y servicios financieros	0.00%	0
Acceso limitado a empleadores	0.00%	0
Acceso limitado a recursos de la comunidad para personas con discapacidades	0.00%	0
Otro (especifique)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 1		

Q17 Seleccione el área en dónde vive.

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0

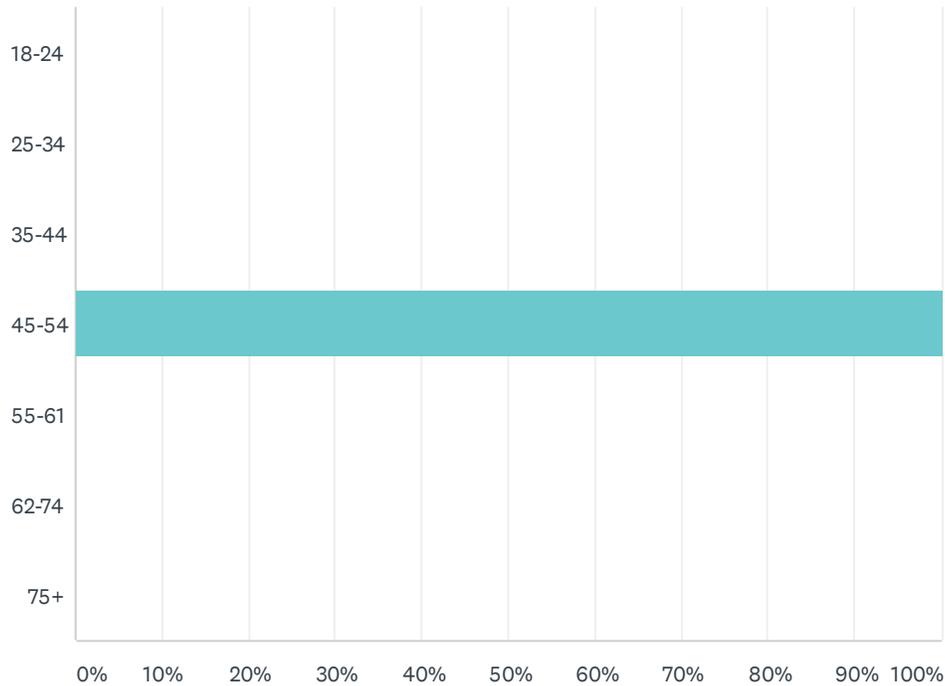


Encuesta sobre la Vivienda y las Necesidades Comunitarias en Columbus

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Beallwood	0.00%	0
Bibb City	0.00%	0
City Village	0.00%	0
Downtown	0.00%	0
East Columbus	0.00%	0
Midtown	0.00%	0
North Columbus	100.00%	1
The Panhandle/East Macon Road	0.00%	0
South Columbus	0.00%	0
Uptown	0.00%	0
Harris County, GA	0.00%	0
Marion County, GA	0.00%	0
Russell County	0.00%	0
Yo vivo fuera de la region	0.00%	0
TOTAL		1

Q18 ¿A qué grupo de edad pertenece?

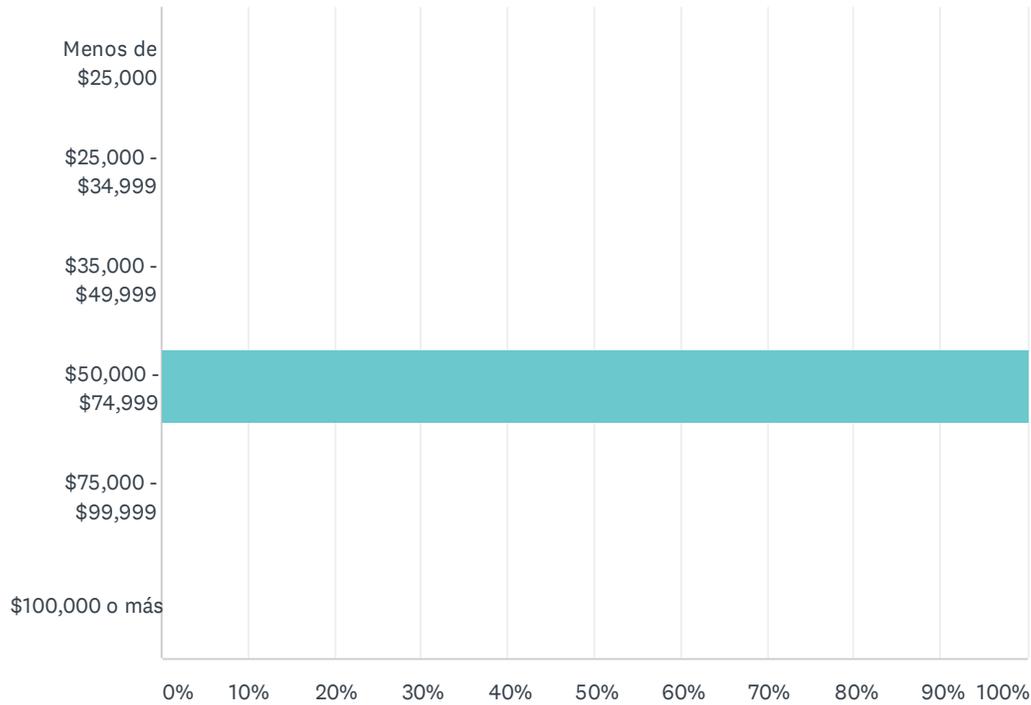
Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
18-24	0.00% 0
25-34	0.00% 0
35-44	0.00% 0
45-54	100.00% 1
55-61	0.00% 0
62-74	0.00% 0
75+	0.00% 0
TOTAL	1

Q19 ¿Cuál es el ingreso total de su hogar?

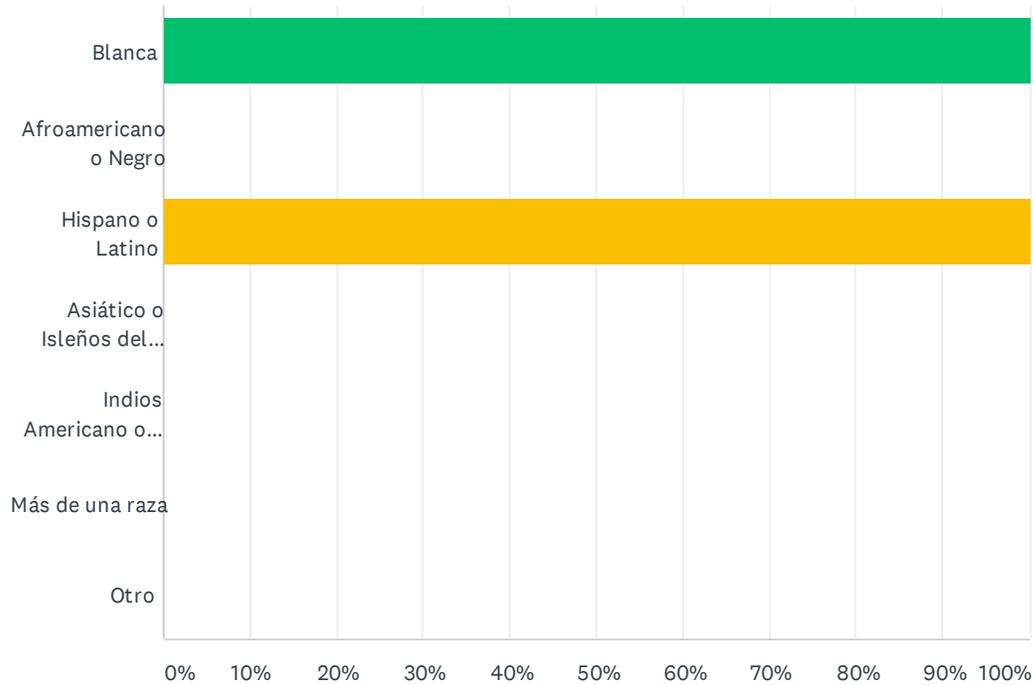
Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Menos de \$25,000	0.00% 0
\$25,000 - \$34,999	0.00% 0
\$35,000 - \$49,999	0.00% 0
\$50,000 - \$74,999	100.00% 1
\$75,000 - \$99,999	0.00% 0
\$100,000 o más	0.00% 0
TOTAL	1

Q20 ¿Cuál es su raza/identidad étnica? (Seleccionar todo lo que corresponda.)

Answered: 1 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Blanca	100.00%	1
Afroamericano o Negro	0.00%	0
Hispano o Latino	100.00%	1
Asiático o Isleños del Pacífico	0.00%	0
Indios Americano o Natural de Alaska	0.00%	0
Más de una raza	0.00%	0
Otro	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 1		

Q21 Sírvase utilizar el espacio de abajo para información adicional con respecto a las necesidades de vivienda y del desarrollo comunitario en Columbus.

Answered: 0 Skipped: 1

APPENDIX D

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW RESULTS



Columbus, GA Interview Notes

Participating Agencies

● Paz Amigos ● Columbus 2025 ● Coldwell Banker KPDD ● Habitat for Humanity ● Columbus Parks and Recreation ● Homeless Resource Network ● MercyMed ● Columbus City Council ● Columbus Planning Department ● Housing Authority of Columbus, GA ● NeighborWorks ● Hope Harbour ● United Way - Home for Good ● Columbus-Phenix City MPO ● Columbus Community Reinvestment

What types of housing needs are greatest across the city (e.g. workforce housing, affordable rental housing, housing for people who are homeless, assistance for first-time homebuyers, rehab/repair programs for homeowners, housing for seniors or people with disabilities, etc.)?

Affordable housing.

- Columbus does not have enough. We are about 12,000 units short. The housing that is affordable to 30%-120% AMI is also lacking. Too many people are paying more than 50%.
- Columbus has a housing crisis that is 2-fold. The gap between what is affordable and available is 14,000 units (this figure came from the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta – summer of 2019). People can either live in slum housing or pay more than they can afford. 25% of mortgage holders are still underwater.
- Affordable housing across Columbus, especially in the northern part of the community. That is a high need for Columbus. A lot of people cannot afford to live in places where they work.
- According to some of the comment from meetings form years past, it seems like Columbus has affordable housing. We may not have quality affordable

housing. For instance, city employees make less than \$30,000, so where do they live on that budget? Residents earning above certain incomes do not qualify for some of the benefits available with TANF or Section 8. However, they do not make enough money to stay in the apartment complex that may be safer.

- Fort Benning drives the prices of our properties. The soldiers get a housing allowance and that is what is driving our housing prices. When we look for apartments, we ask the question - is it safe, near good schools, transportation, grocery stores, but the issue is affordability.
- Columbus has a higher-income amount of housing that is available, but middle of the road (\$150K-\$250K) is really hard to come by.
- Affordable housing in safe areas and in good school districts, close to the community centers/Boys and Girls Clubs.
- With a lot of landlords, a renter has to earn 3x the rent in income.
- Everything comes down to data and dollars. There is no public support for families earning 80% AMI. Even at 120% AMI, they are the working poor. Affordability is relative to what you make, how many kids you have, etc. The future belongs to our children. If they are not well, it affects all of us.

Housing in good condition.

- For the LMI housing stock, it is difficult to find housing stock of quality. That has come up from different slumlord situations.
- There are a lot of complaints about slumlords. The city needs improvements in affordable housing locations and communities. I cannot recall a time when a list of blighted properties was done. Code enforcement certainly has a list. They receive complaints about exterior and interior issues.
- There is not enough low income, quality housing. Columbus has some substandard housing that is being rented to people.
- Columbus housing is so old.
- If you look at who owns rental property in Columbus, it is in the areas with economic issues. And the owners do not live in town. Houses may not get kept up as they should be. The renter does not keep it up. If an older person dies and passes the house on, the relative does not keep it up.
- Biggest challenge is someone who get disability \$794 that is affordable but passes basic minimum inspection. The places that are available are not adequate and not safe.
- In the past, home rehab programs were only offered to homeowners. The city had a rental rehab program where landlords did receive assistance in the late 1990s/early 2000s.

Housing for rent.

- There are only like 2 apartment buildings in Columbus. Also, the biggest deterrent is coming up with the first and last month's rent.
- Columbus may not have affordable apartments because of Fort Benning (apartments may be \$1,400-\$1,600). In this market, it is hard to find housing.

Changes to property tax policy.

- Columbus has a policy that artificially that holds down values that encourages families to not move.
- Residential building is not taking place in Columbus because the region is growing more so in Phenix City and Harris County. Columbus has a tax issue – the way the property tax is structured – people with older houses pay very little so the newcomers must pay much more. People move to Harris County instead. Maybe this is why Columbus does not have more construction of that middle of the road housing. There is a freeze on taxes on older homes. Columbus does not see the turnover of people moving into senior living.
- Residents will vote for the ESPLOST. It is clear-cut what it is, based on the projects. TSPLOST was a job creator. But the city did not do as well of a job of communication about the Homestead Exemption. Community Reinvestment is understaffed.
- It is hard once you give something to take it back. We are a self-centered society. "If you do not vote to keep this freeze, the taxes will go up." We are a misinformed society. There was bad information going around and an abysmal lack of telling what changing the freeze would do. There is an arrogant belief that if you tell people, they will understand. They do not get it. The TSPLOST was just adding on, but the property tax was perceived as taking away from people. The question was worded badly.

Demolition and blight removal.

- The city demolished a trailer park, and it had a good rebound with that. The owner got the bill. Some property owners heard this and fixed up their properties. Demolishing the two trailer parks took up most of the demolition money.
- The mayor spent \$1 million on demolition. At first the focus was trailer parks because they looked like a war zone. People did not have their trailers

connected to the sewer system. The people living around those houses are usually older and the blight attracts crime.

- Demolition needs to keep up with demand. No one wants to put a business in these areas. On 2nd Avenue, Chase Apt has been knocked down and there will be new LIHTC and a Mercer campus. On 2nd Ave, Mercy Med has a large farm – they got into urban farming because they wanted to teach people what foods to eat to be healthy.
- The city has cleaned up some of the run-down mobile home parks in south Columbus. The south Columbus reputation for crime is higher, and you have lower income housing. But it needs to be kept up and everyone needs to feel safe.
- Just because you put in homes, it does not mean the neighborhood will get better. You cannot put a home in a high crime or rundown neighborhood. A lot of the homeowners are also new to home owning and are not good at maintaining the home, especially the exterior. People need to move into an established neighborhood to learn new things. They have to be in areas that are growing. If the city could enforce some code, that would help the neighborhood. Demolition is a high need.
- There is housing that needs to be demolished. Infrastructure needs to be updated. There are drug houses.
- I hate to use money for slum and blight but it makes a difference.

Infill.

- Several local organizations do infill or minor housing repairs.
- Columbus has a land bank but there is no one running it. Having an active land bank manager would be helpful.

Maintenance in existing neighborhoods.

- Some of our neighborhoods have never gotten better. The homes are being paid off, but they look worse than when they started. The city is doing some new major roads and a high school in one of our areas. They are starting to do major projects so it may help down the road.

Senior housing that is safe.

- There are a number of seniors that need housing. Years ago, a lot of people were cycling through Ft. Benning. As the army contracted and the city grew northward, the neighborhoods became terrible in south Columbus. There are a

lot of older people that cannot get away from that area because they own their home. When they bought their home 50 years ago, the neighborhood was nice, but now you go one block over and it is not nice.

- There is a senior DCA LIHTC on Cain Blvd off of Veterans, Highland Hill, Flat Rock Park (family and senior). Most of it is senior independent. Family independent with Classon School and the one near Flat Rock Park.
- Columbus does not have enough 1-bedroom units, especially with seniors. The development on Warm Springs is senior housing, mostly 1-bdrm. Highland Terrace is senior housing.
- LIHTC projects are mostly senior housing because there is such a gap of this in the city. The city has such a lack of public dollars, so the focus has been on low-income veterans, senior low-income citizens who are so vulnerable to crime and health, and young LMI families.

Housing for very low-income households.

- The group of folks that have been left behind in housing developments have been the poorest of the poor. People who live on \$750 per month on their SSI check have really poor living conditions. Nearby, there is a development in a neighborhood considered vulnerable, the development was built 108 units, with a minimum income of \$1,100. That is great and Columbus needs that, but what is also true is people who live across the street would look at it, see the requirements, and not have access to it. That is how bad the poverty is. It is a real struggle. Our public housing authority is at capacity for what they can do. The city needs more Section 8, more real estate, and landlords able to offer it. Issues among housing are really among the really low-income crowd- getting roof over their head and affordable housing.
- For renters, I think that in north Highland, there are a lot of folks who move in May into a house, it is great. Rent is \$400 per month and they can afford it. They get their first power bill and it is \$300 because it is not energy efficient. People do not know which bills to pay. People get upside down quickly, which leads to evictions and kids going to different schools in the middle of the year.
- There is a need for housing in the LMI range. 23% of the population lives below the poverty line. People may only have a high school education. Columbus has a problem in both of those areas. There are a lot of people trying to help (both to find a job and get housing).
- If your rent is \$400, it is just not in a safe area.
- Some people are making \$20,000 per year. What can you afford? NeighborWorks is building some single homes on Victory Drive on the south side.

There are plans right now for apartment complexes on the north side, but they may not be in the price range of affordability. This housing may be more geared toward mid-tier soldiers.

- It is faster for people to move into the Phenix City Housing Authority but if they do not have transportation, it is more challenging.

Housing for the homeless.

- The homeless are concentrated near downtown along 2nd Avenue. A lot of people have looked at tiny homes to give them a transition. But that has not gotten past talking.

Housing for persons with mental illnesses.

- There needs to be some sort of mental health independent housing. Clients that have mental health issues have a place that they can live independently, e.g. more intensive case management. More availability of mental health services.

New construction.

- Columbus has a critically low supply of all housing.
- In any price bracket there is not enough supply. People who need to sell cannot sell because there is nothing to buy.

Less restrictive zoning regulations.

- Also, another big thing – Columbus’s zoning is very restrictive. There is very small, low hanging fruit things that have not been able to happen. ADUs – there should not be an issue to allow this in zoning. This is the aging in place component or renting out for extra income. Also, with a university here, it could allow for affordable student housing. This part of the zoning needs some tweaking to allow for more housing opportunity. As well as NIMBYism.
- In terms of the public meetings, affordable housing is not really humanized. The city seems like it is just spitting out facts and not really attempting to qualify (not quantify) or humanize it. Not make it abstract. I have not seen an attempt to show the benefits of multifamily housing types: good use of space, allow people to live in areas of opportunity, add diversity.

Residential planning that avoids displacement.

- When people start taking an interest in the city in neighborhoods – Bibb City (Chase Homes) there is a lot of tension about this. People said yes these are run down but where are they going to go? With people being interested in accessibility to the riverfront, it looks like gentrification. Chase Homes was built next to a power facility. It is an environmental justice issue. But is that housing being rebuilt at a 1-to-1 ratio? Will these residents have access to transportation? That area is close to downtown and other centers of interest. Are they going to be able to continue living here?

Housing that is competitive with the region.

- You get more for the money in Phenix City. Harris County also has a lower tax and is more rural. You have larger lots and you hear about less crime. But generally, if they are looking in the Columbus area, they are open to one state or another. Military families seem to prefer Alabama unless they have money and want to stay in Columbus. In Phenix City you can get more yard and more house. The draw in Phenix City is that they are by the 280 Bypass and other amenities. If they are a parent and are looking for schools, they prefer Lee County over Russell County. Military buyers end up in Ft. Mitchell because it is 6 minutes from the back gate of Ft. Benning. There is a Family Dollar and a gas station and a couple of mom-and-pop shops. They will move there to be close to work.

Timely use of homeownership assistance programs.

- With the state of the current market, people who are not cash heavy are unable to be competitive, especially if they are using an FHA loan. Because the appraisal requires the structure to be in good condition. People who saved for the down payment are not competitive if, for example, they need assistance with closing costs from the seller. It is discouraging. For a while, there was the Georgia Dream grant, which could be used. But the grant slows the process because it is not regular financing.
- If the buyer is under contract and has The Georgia Dream grant, it requires bank approval, then approval from Georgia Dream, then back to the bank. Instead of 30 days, it might take 45.

Tracking and response to state and national housing trends.

- In Columbus there are some investors that you know by name through tax sales. But there are fewer of them. Investors are not picking up all of the supply. You see it here a little but not really.
- Another big contributing factor is that people are moving from other markets. Businesses are staying virtual and people are moving to cheaper housing markets. That is why those buyers (e.g. from the west coast, up north) are able to pay cash.
- It was good that they lowered the interest rates. But when you see that go up, it will lessen the buyer pool. Also, with the mortgage forbearances, people are living for free. When the government starts forcing people to pay their mortgage then they will sell.
- Georgia passed a law last year that allows non-profits not to pay property tax on lots sold with a 0% mortgage.



How big of an issue is homelessness in Columbus?

- There are a lot of homeless on 2nd Avenue. Because the city is attached to Ft. Benning, a lot of the homeless men are vets. A lot of it has to do with mental illness. Local religious shelters require you to be sober. There need to be resources for those who are unable to be sober.
- Because Columbus has Home for Good, it is not that big of an issue. They have a good system worked out. However, there are people that just do not want to be housed. Home for Good works well with other agencies.
- Homelessness is a big issue. Abandoned schools could be reused for shelters. Somewhere in south Columbus, 30th Street, it could be reused. I do not know what that would entail.
- I think it is big. I think everyone sees the groups at the park downtown, especially at the park by the hospital (Columbus Water Works Park). There are pockets of woods around downtown. There are campgrounds in the woods. In the winter when there is no greenery, you see a lot of people living in the woods.
- Columbus has done a good job in 5-10 years. The numbers have trended well (gone down). If people see homelessness, people will say it is a problem. People are usually seen near the [Chattahoochee] river.

- The biggest issue is sex offenders. The state's distance requirements on sex offenders. There is an issue about where they can be placed.
- I think it is getting better. When the moratorium is lifted and people must pay their rent/mortgage, it may look different. There may be a lot of people end up in that situation. It will completely overwhelm the programs in town. There will be a lot of people that may not have worked for a year. Staff burnout and being able to pay staff a livable wage will be an issue. Very seldom is it just an 8-hour day.
- Go downtown on Broadway. There are homeless people there every day. There are homelessness organizations, but some people do not want to come off the street. It can be a hindrance. They come up to you and greet you. It can be frustrating when you are trying to have a good time and people keep asking for donations. It is not all the time, and it is not citywide. It is about the same as it has always been in terms of the numbers downtown, because everything is conveniently nearby.

Resources for the homeless by population:

- **Chronically homeless**
 - The number of chronically homeless has gone down over the years. There are people that have been out there and will continue to be there. They live in the uptown area, and everyone knows them by name.
 - The city offers warming shelters in the winter and cooling shelters in the summer and those individuals will use them. There was an incident in 2014 where someone froze to death. The city has a good system of spreading the word.
 - There is nothing for chronically homeless families. Chronic homelessness has been lessened in the last few years. Organizations have difficulty documenting chronic homelessness. Beds stay available because the documentation is not there to get people in there. Some people do not want to work a program that is required for some of the permanently supportive housing.
 - Emergency shelters closed down in COVID. Half will not ever re-open. There are new motel programs. Many people are still living outdoors or in a car.
- **Homeless families**
 - Hotel programs are available through Home for Good and the Salvation Army. These programs focus on families. The Salvation Army opened an

emergency shelter for families with children. They are in a capital campaign but can only house 5 families.

- Until 2 years ago, a man with children had no place to go, as did a female with a male child over 12. It was changed due to data. The Salvation Army had been an exclusively male shelter.
- Family Promise (served families with minor children) closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Individual men/women**

- Very few resources.
- Trinity House. The only place for men is Grace House and they serve people who are formerly incarcerated. They also serve people who are court mandated for drug treatment.
- One of our male shelters closed in March 2020. Safe Haven opened an emergency shelter that afternoon.
- The city needs more single male and female shelter beds. The Salvation Army closed a single male shelter.

- **Unaccompanied youth**

- Columbus does not see much of that because of where we are. Referrals come from the school district, but there are no services that reach out to youth at all. The school district has a McKinney Vento staff person to make sure the children get connected to other services.
- There are no resources for youth under 17. This is not a place young folks come to. A kid can normally find a place to stay.

- **Sex offenders**

- This is complicated in GA. Depending on what year of the offense, they have different rules. No organization works with sex offenders, except maybe Grace House.
- There is a camp where the sheriff knows that people are and they report there. Law enforcement knows that is where they are. The law is confusing – if someone has no income, they have nowhere to go, but if they have income, they cannot find places to live. There is a big push to move the camp.
- The issue is the distance requirements and whether a landlord is willing to rent to person with a sex offense.
- Having a conversation about this subject is progress. When you bring it up, people do not want to talk about it anymore. The sheriffs and police

are involved now. The city does not have a plan but has the funds (ESG) regardless of whether or not you are a sex offender.

- There needs to be planning before someone is released from jail or prison.

- **Non-religious persons**

- There are existing services that require you to attend chapel.
- I do not know what the requirements are with Grace and Trinity because they receive government funding.
- Columbus has come a long way. Organizations cannot try to impose a faith. There are homeless services for non-religious individuals.

- **Persons with Mental illness**

- Emergency shelters do not have any special case management. The city also does not have a "safe house." During the pandemic people have exhibited a lot more mental health issues. People with higher barriers are finding it more difficult during the pandemic.

- **Veterans**

- HUD has prioritized veteran homelessness. There are no longer the number of homeless veterans that there used to be. Old Vietnam War vets used to be homeless for 11 years. But everyone is in support of vets now. Younger vets do not have so much anger, but it will be interesting to see how this plays out in future years.
- In 2016, there were 54 homeless veterans. It is down to 9-10 in 2021.
- Local organizations have a lot of coordination with the veterans' domiciliary in Tuskegee.

- **LGBT**

- There are not really any LGBT shelters. Those organizations that receive government money handle that differently, but others do not. That has a huge impact with youth homelessness.
- The only place LGBT persons cannot go is Stewart Community Home and House of Mercy. They are clear that they will not accept LGBT. But five years ago, the list was much longer.

- **Persons with HIV/AIDS:**

- There are programs that are run well. The Homeless Resource Center does those well.

Gaps in the service delivery system (needed services) for special needs population and persons experiencing homelessness:

- Pre-COVID there were more requests for clothing and laundry. There are no programs that do laundry. You must have cash to wash your clothes. 2nd Ave – a lot of the homeless programs are over there. Valley Rescue Mission closed; the Salvation Army men's shelter closed. There is less homelessness, but there has been a lot of redevelopments around 2nd Avenue. There is pressure not to have visible homelessness.
- There is a big need for subsidized housing. If you do not get disability and you have been denied (benefits) and you are not going to work, there are no options for you.
- There is a need for substance abuse treatment (e.g., distribution of Narcan).
- There is a lot of need for information for how things work. Social Security is closed. The Department of Labor office is closed. The food stamp office is still closed. So many things have been on hold for a lot of people.
- Case management is needed before and after – people do not understand the number of resources it takes to house a family.
- General outreach. Not just to vets or people with mental illness. To everyone.
- Coordinated entry does not serve clients well. If you have access to a computer or phone, it is easier, but if you do not it is easy to get left behind. That is a big issue. People are not computer literate.
- Organizations house people before doing intake with coordinated entry. This is a way for agencies to pick and choose which clients they work with.



What do you believe are the city's greatest community development needs?

Youth activities.

- Crime is always reported as coming from youth aged 14-20. I know of 4-5 different Boys and Girls Club locations. If you drive through Columbus, there are churches available. The family unit is an issue.

- Youth activities is a big one. There is the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA, but unless you have a family with a lot of money, there is not a lot to do. The city needs more activities after school. There are kids that may not do well with childcare, but their parents have to work until 11pm.
- Youth sports have been active during the pandemic, but I do not think the rec centers or senior centers are open.
- There are not a lot of activities for youth and seniors. If you have money, there are things to do, but if you do not have money not so much.
- Young people need a way to learn civics, like how to be kind to other people. There is a gang problem in Columbus. Young people haven't learned that there are other ways to get belongingness. Some people want to find a group to join to tell them that they are good. Pratt and Whitney had trouble several years ago when they tried to do on the job training. The kids were smart, but there was a lack of a work ethic. They lost a lot of people as employees because they did not show up to work. Families and churches might not have gotten to them. They have failed to learn the social skills to keep a job once you get it. Churches are active in doing this, as are the schools. Employers want people to have a HS diploma to show that they can function in a structured environment. The METC takes kids that have been in the juvenile justice system and help them get a GED or other skill.

Affordable Childcare facilities.

- There used to be CAPS money for childcare assistance. Community centers had youth programs. Those programs are limited in Columbus. Transportation – getting children to a program, getting yourself to work. Having access to that is important. I do not know about senior facilities. Really it is just a safe place for kids to go while you are working. A safe place where people know each other.

Job training and trade programs.

- Businesses need help getting employees and training the employees on interviewing.
- Truth Spring has a trade school. The community said “we need something for housing, jobs, and kids.” One of the trades is construction. A foreman from Columbus Tech runs a crew. The crew is renovating a home in North Highland to make it more efficient.
- Job training and workforce development. There are a bunch of different pockets of poverty in Columbus. The overall health of a community starts with a healthy workforce. When that is not there, there is a decreased sense of pride and

families intact. The trade school is a group that applies to get into a trade school and are paid at minimum wage, learn soft skill training, are placed in construction, urban farming, cooking. They are employees of Truth Spring. The feedback they have gotten has been so unexpected, about soft skills training—sending an email, asking for days off, basic math. People say they thought they would never have the confidence to do these things. It is creating self-efficacy among the workers, where they are able to understand the value of their work and have a lot to contribute. They can invest in a career. It is taxing work, and it is the first year the trade school has been open. A lot of the service providers are immediate emergency type things, food shelter, clothing. Services should focus on getting people employed so they can get housing and obtain these things.

- Wages are low in the city. If you are not paying people more than what they get in unemployment, you need to think about what you are paying. Some jobs pay \$7.50 per hour. These times are so different. Sometimes parents have to work two jobs to make ends meet, so in a lot of instances kids are really raising themselves.
- Columbus does not really see a lot of those opportunities for ages 12-24. There is a missing piece to developing an informed resident. The city can create opportunities for youth to earn money and learn. The city has a lot of positions that stay open. The city does not effectively reach those populations to teach them how to take up those positions.

Investment in small businesses.

- Invest in small businesses that provide food, jobs.

Address food deserts.

- Some church groups (and non-church) are trying to help people farm so people can eat healthier. These are small plots of land. This is a way to feed people.
- There is programming to try to get healthy food in some areas.

Commercial development in south Columbus.

- New stores and restaurants are usually north of Macon Road.
- There are two grocery stores in south Columbus: a Piggly Wiggly and a Walmart. Further down is a Winn Dixie and a Publix. These two grocery stores serve approximately 30,000 residents. People almost feel like they do not matter. People ask, “Where are our fresh foods?” These stores have food but not the kind

that Publix would have. South Columbus has an overwhelming number of Family Dollars and Dollar Generals. The area is a food desert.

- The city needs to do a needs assessment about what will be sustainable in this area. A lot of people want Kroger in this district. There is a small Walmart.
- Residents want a Chili's or Olive Garden because those chains will not go to South Columbus. How do we get jobs in south Columbus or something besides a Walmart?

Infrastructure.

- The city needs sidewalk repairs and additions.
- For a rural city, our infrastructure is so odd. Sidewalks are almost non-existent. One of our worst neighborhoods still has ditches and people have to drive over a culvert. It fills up with rainwater and trash. How does the city decide who gets sidewalks? Consistent infrastructure in neighborhoods would be nice.
- The city has a SPLOST that enables it to do capital projects on its road infrastructure.
- Infrastructure is aging, especially in downtown and south Columbus. It needs a lot of work and money.
- The city is capital strained due to the tax freeze. The roads are bad. The senior centers are bad.
- The city needs to leverage its funding more appropriately. CDBG can be used for infrastructure. For certain funding streams, the state does not like to deal with projects that are under \$500K. The city has to prioritize the funds to have bigger projects.
- We need more sidewalks and elevated sidewalks throughout Columbus. In some areas in the community people walk in grass. There have been incidents where people were hit and killed because they were walking on ground level sidewalks. On Steam Mill Road, two people have been hit and killed. The curb can help someone not to get hit.
- The city could do better for aging in place for people across the board but especially for those on fixed income.
- Columbus relies way too much on sales tax. LMI households pay for infrastructure when that is not equitable.
- The city needs to do more than just apply band-aid approaches.
- Columbus's transportation network does not support light manufacturing. It has been said that light manufacturing does not come to Columbus because there was no east-west interstate. Our transportation network does not match other

places in the state. That is part of the problem of trying to entice light manufacturing here.

Equity in transportation.

- Try to tie in trails to low-income census tracts, for populations that are more vulnerable. There are no trails on the east side, a more black and low income side of the city. A lot of people will think about trails as recreational. The high rate of pedestrian collisions and fatalities is a real equity issue.
- One major need is a greater focus on ADA. The city has an ADA transition plan that has not been updated since 2013. When the city has planning documents that are out of date, it does not seem like everyone is on the radar. The plan has nothing about sidewalks and curb cuts. It is all about universal design. It has to be equitable for everyone. This extends to families with strollers, transit riders who do not have slabs to go from sidewalks to grass, and people crossing the street in a powerchair.
- There are not enough accessible sidewalks. Disabled persons taking the bus or families with strollers have a hard time getting on the sidewalks because there are too few curb cuts. Quite a few transit riders have disabilities or have families with small children.
- Resurfacing is an opportunity to add painted amenities. If a street is getting repaved, the city can paint in a bike lane or crosswalk. In a lot of cities, that is what people do to retrofit streets so they become complete streets. The complete street ordinance has not been adhered to.

Expanded transit routes and bus shelter infrastructure.

- You would think there would be one streamlined bus route down Veterans. But there is none. All of our bus stops need a bench. There are no shelters from the rain. That is another deterrent from people taking transit.
- It would be great if the Columbus and Phenix City transit systems were consolidated because they need one transit system. Phenix City service only runs from 8am-3pm but most people have to be at work at 8am. Combined service would help both cities. The services used to be consolidated in the 1980s but were split due to funding issues on the Alabama side.

Additional parks and park upgrades.

- The trail system director is getting funding to connect the trails for recreation and transportation. The trail system should be like a beltline to the city, but there

need to be some additional legs of the trails to connect people to places where they work.

- Columbus is low on parks and playgrounds per 10,000 residents.
- Public swimming pools need to be repaired and maintained.
- I like the bike trails. The city should keep those safe and up to date.
- Columbus needs upgrades to its parks. Some parks need more care than others. Park bathrooms are not ADA accessible.
- Many park facilities need to be repainted; roofs replaced in all areas of the city. Buildings need to be rehabbed. The newest building was built in 2002. The parks need newer amenities. The city has tried to include playgrounds needs more. There also needs to be outdoor recreational programming.
- Columbus only has 2 neighborhood pools. There are two outdoor pools and one indoor pool for 200,000 people plus neighborhood counties. There are no activities that will deter future crime. Kids need something to do.
- The city needs more youth programs but just does not have enough staff.
- The parks are in bad shape. There is a huge demand to get the kids off the street and into programming. But the programming is not necessarily in place. The super community centers are not accessible on foot for many children.

Civic spaces.

- Community events are a big deal – the residents need things where people can come and be entertained.
- Some of the problem/challenge is finding a place where people can obtain services. First Baptist Church has a new center that they allow people to use. But at times, finding a facility is hard. It is difficult to rent space at the Civic Center. Groups might just need a classroom. The city needs facilities/non-profits where people can go.

Programs and infrastructure for persons with disabilities.

- The city needs more programs for people with disabilities who receive SSI. When people get housed they wonder, "What do I do now?" The community has put a lot of resources downtown. They could focus on some other areas as well.
- More ADA compliance. Some city buildings have finally gotten automatic doors. I think this is a need in many other places, as well as wheelchair accessibility.

Mental health services.

- Although you can walk in to AmericanWorks, you might have to wait 6 hours for services. People need more access to those services. People are dealing with trauma and untreated mental illness. Non-profits can house people with severe mental illnesses, but they have to have these other supportive services to be successful.

Resources for non-English speakers.

- It would be good to have signage in different languages would help people. As well as a hotline for Spanish speakers to find resources.

Police.

- In Columbus, there is a huge shortage of police. There is a shortage of about 100 police. The training is good but the pay is not, so they get trained and leave. The police force is a necessity. If Columbus had a stronger police presence, people would feel safer. When you see the feel-good videos of police going to schools or playing basketball – they cannot do this because they are so short on staff.

Communication across the city.

- Communication is not very strong. I do not know if there is a community calendar to even know what's going on at the Civic Center.
- Communications and the image of affordable housing can be hard to deal with. The Housing Authority is getting rid of public housing and replacing it with affordable housing. The perception is that the housing authority is throwing people out on the street.



What recent housing or community development initiatives have been especially successful in the city? What made them successful? How/where can they be replicated?

- In the Bibb City area there is some new affordable housing. They are upgrading a lot of public housing. They built new properties in downtown Columbus. It is

important to make people feel like this is their home. There is one right off of Victory Drive.

- Columbus is a strong place to do business- Aflac, Global Payments. A strong group of folks fostering good will in town.
- Downtown is good – it has a cool vibe, lots of assets.
- The City has done a lot to encourage investment and wellness – trails, activities.
- The city has an awesome director who is caring and innovative. I believe he will help encourage or empower individuals to take advantage of the resources. The city has a new generation of leaders who are invested in their communities- kids in high school, college, new elected officials who have been waiting to be a part of the solution.
- I like the concept of tiny homes for the homeless. I have seen this work well.
- HOME for Good has been tremendous. That has been beneficial to Columbus. I think this was the right start. I haven't seen other ones.
- Knoxville, TN has a one-stop-shop for homeless individuals. They had places to shower, eat (cafeteria), mailroom, and all kinds of resources available for homeless individuals.
- Successful initiatives in Columbus include projects with HACG – Ashley Station, Columbus Commons. These used to be Section 8, but they are now mixed use. They are well-maintained. Some complexes have vouchers, but it is a community where people who have both vouchers and people sufficient in taking care of themselves. Some of them may be LIHTC.



Are there new uses of HUD grant funds you wish Columbus would consider?

- There is still a demand for multifamily. CDBG should really be used more for infrastructure. There is a need for sidewalks because kids are walking to school in the street.
- Repairs – a lot of seniors do not have money to do normal repairs to their home.
- The city should think about more than the economy and pay more attention to how the lower income would serve the community better.
- If there were something that HUD could do to provide households necessities. The rent and utilities programs are a huge help.

- Increase the ability to pay for staff with some of this funding.
- As a provider –nothing happens in a timely fashion. I have trouble opening encrypted emails. Dark photocopies of checks get rejected and you have to keep resending documentation.
- Consider approval for affordable housing across Columbus as a whole. The city is trying to help educate the public into what affordable housing is and what public housing is. Sometimes they confuse the two. That is been the challenge here in Columbus. You hear people say, “I do not want that in my community” “It can cause crime.” Nothing positive. The city has a new development in Columbus off of J.R. Allen near Kitten Lake – people who live on the southside will work there. There is a Chick-Fil-A, Chicken Salad Chick, and a Gas Station at Flat Rock. The new development is about a mile and a half back with a Kroger, Costco, Culver’s. The community pushed back on any affordable housing in that area.



What parts of the city are generally seen as areas of opportunity (i.e. places people aspire to live, places that offer good access to schools, jobs, and other amenities)? What makes them attractive places to live? Are there barriers someone might face in moving to one of these areas?

- There is a general sense that its north Columbus.
- Anybody can live anywhere if you want to.
- Uptown and in the historic district for people who like to walk places. The housing is not affordable but it is available. The north side has everything. Part of the more west side – they are starting to do things and I am glad. At Buena Vista Road – they are making a better bridge over 185. And they will put in an exit at 185 for Cusseta Road. That will help that part of town access the freeway better. Just new cement, new things will help. It is just starting to get run down. Even putting in new street lamps – it is helping. The southwestern side is getting better. The southeastern side, no.
- Those would be north Columbus or midtown Columbus- areas of opportunity. They are generally more affluent and have more good stuff.

- Uptown, midtown and north Columbus (everything that borders Harris County). SW Columbus is the area that is been left behind. Uptown has mixed uses, has the Riverwalk, is the place to go for tourists. CSU campus. Midtown Columbus is the center of town (6 square miles, Wynnton, Lake Bottom, Wynton Heights, Harbor Heights). This is a wide range of housing, income disparity, blight (it is a good mix of right and wrong). When Columbus grew, it grew from down.
- Midtown is one of the best areas.
- North Columbus and Midtown (Macon Road, Wynnton Road, Weracoba Park) and a little bit of Uptown. It leaves a lot of south and east Columbus as needing improvements.
- North of Macon Road.
- Midtown to north Columbus.
- The panhandle and east Columbus are areas of opportunity. The panhandle is more expensive. East Columbus is usually more affordable (east of I-185).

Barriers to moving to areas of opportunity:

- A lot of it is affordability. When you start getting into north Columbus, there are a few apartment complexes that can no longer compete with Section 8 rents. There is a lot of older housing in north central Columbus. Families live elsewhere and use it as rental property. Section 8 is the biggest opportunity for people to live in parts of the county that they might not be able to afford.
- Columbus has a lot of Spanish and German speaking people. There is now an internal MLS directory to serve non-native English speakers. The city needs to put resources out there for people who might be afraid to reach out to a mortgage lender.
- It is expensive to live in areas of opportunity, both to rent and buy. People tell you to move to the north part of Columbus. Harris County took a lot of white people when integration began. The school system tries to combat that – they try to work hard with the teachers and students.
- A barrier to being able to buy housing is education. Those programs where you have to attend a class to get a grant would be helpful. There also need to be financial wellness classes. People cannot rent an apartment without putting someone else on the lease. You pay a company to dispute your credit and it stays on the credit report. People who start at a disadvantage stay because they do not understand what their finances even mean.
- For moving, the barriers are cost- there is a huge shortage of places to buy or rent. That is across the country. Without being able to evict anyone, there is a shortage of turnover. Cost in north and midtown is \$400-\$500 more per month.

In some cases, there are unspoken cultural barriers- not race, but status. It is not what people are used to. Especially folks with limited transportation.

- Fort Benning and the stipends. Landlords are going to work on marketing to whoever will give them the most money. Fort Benning is having a housing crisis. Housing is limited on Fort Benning. They also cannot find somewhere to stay in Columbus at times.
- Availability and affordability. Public transportation is pretty good. The district tries to make all schools "schools of choice." There are pockets of employment opportunities.
- Schools are an issue. For instance, one district has only two elementary schools that are not failing. Kids in the third grade cannot read. People do not want to move to these areas, but do not have a choice.
- When it comes to anything of quality, it is not in close proximity in parts of south Columbus. This is the city, and it should share the wealth with development. Develop these areas as much as other areas. Most development is occurring in north Columbus and uptown - grocery, retail, mixed use development in uptown. There is a TAD in uptown, a TAD in Midtown/Cummings. How do you push for projects throughout and it be equitable?
- People mostly focus on getting away from violence. There has been a lot in the last year. Crime and substance abuse is a way bigger concern than it has been.
- People would want to live on the north side but not all parts of the north side. It depends on what you can afford.
- It is expensive to live on the north side of Macon Road. It is more of your higher middle class to upper class in those areas. Less poverty. For many residents, getting a mortgage in this area is not an option. It is not realistic.
- If you look at the AMI and rental market north of Columbus, they do not match. If the landlord requires me to have 3x monthly rent in income it does not compute.
- It is still an ideology that "certain people can afford to live in certain areas." Of course, you have more amenities in the north area, as well as downtown Columbus. Barriers might include not being able to afford it. It could be a point of discrimination. Discrimination still exists, such as pastor recently asking how to get black members out of his church.
- Transportation. Location of grocery store, jobs. People look at school districts.



Are you aware of any housing discrimination?

- I know a white woman who does okay finding housing, except when she shows up with her three sons who are mixed. Officially they will say “you did not tell me you had 3-4 kids.” Companies know, but the staff also need fair housing training.
- I am not personally aware of any housing discrimination. The times I have dealt with it – people want to live in a more diverse community. Or sometimes people want to live in a neighborhood near people that speak their language.
- You can either afford to buy a nice house or what you can afford is a piece of junk. If you cannot afford \$150K or more, what you can afford is horrible housing. It is so old. There is a gap. There is new building going on, but in the last year it is been hard to find a house anywhere because interest rates are so low. There are houses available but not in good condition. Few that are affordable and in good condition. Or the ones that are affordable and not in bad condition, they are in bad neighborhoods.
- I am not (aware of housing discrimination). That could be different for some of the other housing operators.
- People do not recognize discrimination as discrimination because that is how life is all the time. It is hard to pinpoint. Landlords have to sign that they will not discriminate based on VAWA, but this is often used as a reason not to sign on to programs. That allows them to treat tenants how they want to treat them.
- Once people are in housing, the repairs and quality of the house varies by tenants.
- Realtors steer people away from areas. Many realtors do not know the areas that they do not work in, so they just generalize. They do not care enough to figure it out. Maybe their decision to not find out is racially biased.
- A lot of times people are concerned that as certain people come in, it decreases property value. There is a community barrier and they fight it on every level. They have the money and resources to fight it.
- Credit checks and criminal history checks affect where people can live and stay.
- Past criminal record. How people look. A friend of mine has experienced steering.

- My coworker had to go to 3 different mortgage lenders because they were getting an inflated interest rate.
- At a fair housing seminar serving persons with disabilities, a great concern was that they wanted to live in a neighborhood where everyone is not disabled. They felt that because they were disabled, they had to live in certain parts of town.



Are people in Columbus segregated in where they live? What causes this segregation to occur?

- There has been a lot of work in Columbus to be more inclusive and bring communities together. There is a lot of suspicion on both sides. There is a new Walmart on the south side. There are bike trails on the south side. But there is a lot of history that you have to deal with here and you have to challenge it when you hear it. There are things that people see or know and they do not say anything.
- Columbus is segregated by money. South Columbus is looked down upon.
- Yes. I think jobs and transportation cause segregation to occur. There are a lot of restaurant jobs, but if you work until 11pm you may not get a bus ride home. Jobs that work extended hours are not available for people who rely on public transportation. I think a small percentage take public transit. It is not promoted. When you go overseas, public transit – everyone uses it. It does not have a stigma. In the US, in smaller places it has a stigma. I see a lot of stops on Veterans Parkway but there is no one bus that goes down the main drag.
- Columbus has been segregated for many years because of redlining, and it is still apparent. When you create a silo for communities, you do not get rid of them. You see where Black people are heavily populated, and it is still like that. They petitioned not to have affordable housing complexes in areas where white people live. “Save Midtown” was a campaign against an affordable housing complex.
- Macon Road has historically been known as a dividing line. South of Macon Road and heading toward Fort Benning, there are African American communities all over. Over 90% of students in schools in those zip codes are African American, and the neighborhoods happen to be pretty run down as

well. There are no nice shopping centers or grocery stores. There is a Walmart. With the exception of North Highland, it goes through parts of the old mill town area. Those areas were full of blue collar workers. It was pretty diverse. The median household income is pretty low.

- Oh yes. A little bit of everything.
- Yes. I do not think there is any question. When you look at the schools (neighborhood-based schools) and see that they are 99% one way are the other, yes. And the neighborhoods are therefore segregated. North Highland in the Mill District is probably the most diverse street. That is only because it is affordable and available.
- Yes and no. There is some of that. I think it is income and poverty. As the city expands north, I think it is just related to income. I do not think it is a race thing.
- Yes. Stupidity is the cause. It started in the early 90s. Columbus had white flight for real. It is just now in the last 2-3 years where people are coming to the realization that they can get value on the south side.
- The assessment and the appraisal do not come together. A house is not economically feasible and a bank is not willing to lend money for what a house is worth.
- To a point, certain areas of town are segregated. In the south part of the city, a lot of it is segregated. You have more blacks than whites. It is the mindset of people that causes this to occur. In order to become well-rounded, you have to be in a community where people will accept you for who you are. Sometimes residents have to leave home to make a change and have a difference. The "Take the City" program helps children become well-rounded through its afterschool program.



What types of fair housing services (education, complaint investigation, testing, etc.) are offered in the area? Who offers them? How well are they coordinated with the work of other organizations in the community?

- I cannot think of one. If Columbus does not have someone focused on that, it is a need.
- You can call the real estate commission or call HUD directly.

- I do not know.
- I just learned that Community Reinvestment had resources on fair housing. I would like more resources on fair housing. The city was under a moratorium and people were not supposed to be evicted. However, major apartment complexes whose people were on section 8 were getting eviction notices. They were getting unemployment. If people would have known to contact Community Reinvestment, that would have been such a help.
- The Community Reinvestment department did not do anything last year or this year. In 2018-2019, the city had a lot going on with fair housing “estate rights” or “inheritance rights” (heir property). Families were thinking through who the decision makers on their property would be.
- I do not think the city does that well enough. They will do it in April during Fair Housing Month. Columbus is trying to incorporate more accessibility features, but as far as promoting fair housing – I see NIMBYism all the time, especially when it comes to LIHTC going into non-minority neighborhoods. There should be more rules when it comes to zoning. Departments cannot see outside the box to rewrite the policies to have better quality.
- There is no fair housing agency. The closest office is Atlanta.
- I would start with Home for Good.
- GA Legal Services, however, they do not return phone calls.
- Metro Fair Housing comes down from Atlanta to facilitate seminars.



Are public resources (e.g. parks, schools, roads, police and fire services, etc.) available evenly throughout all neighborhoods in the city? Do some areas get more/less than their share?

General Thoughts

- I do not know. I almost want to say it is uneven. A lot of people come and say they want to be north of Macon Road.
- Yes, but poorly provided. Taxes do not allow for services to be well provided.

- I think that depending on who you ask, you will get a different view. But to me, Columbus feels very different. It has pockets that are nicer than others. It is not very cohesive.
- What is missing is a conversation about the purpose of public space. I do not think everyone is on the same page about that. When I think about what public space is for, I think about eyes on the street, people gathering, having a reason to be there, e.g. playgrounds, programming. Having more frequent and diverse programming in the parks would allow it to feel safer because you would know the people more often.
- I think it is pretty even.
- Things in north Columbus are better taken care of, but I do not go to south Columbus parks.
- The city should try to make sure to help those people that are further out. Not everyone will have a job in the city. There are people that work in Phenix City and Auburn. The city needs to start thinking about how to reach people in Midland and other areas. One big issue with the state of GA. Public space and transit is a public good and a right.

Parks

- There is an effort being made in south Columbus – they are trying to build more parks.
- In my opinion, a public good does not always make profit. However, the thinking is that it should make a profit. Recreation is not guaranteed to make a profit, but the idea is that it is a public good to teach swimming in the public park because the community would rather have a child that learns how to swim that one that does not.
- Shirley Winston Park – there used to be a pool that I have never seen open, but the pools on the north side are open. There are trails, but it does not seem safe to me. There has been a shift, but I think those things take time.

Roads and Sidewalks

- Some of the roads are state roads and they are maintained. But not the city roads.
- The roads are terrible everywhere.
- Most infrastructure dollars have gone into SW and SE Columbus, which is the more poverty-stricken area. Most of the TIAA projects were in south Columbus. The city works hard to be equitable. The city handles street paving on a scoring

system. South Columbus is the oldest part of town, so they are at the top of the list.

- There will be an interchange at Cusseta Road and I-185.
- Midtown has sidewalks.
- In some outreach areas, there are no sidewalks.

Police

- Midtown has police patrols. Do people get stopped in south Columbus, I am sure. I am sure Columbus is a microcosm of the police issues in the country. There are a lot of murders. I would like to see more funding go into social workers.
- Police – I have no idea how they are covered.
- Police precincts are in different parts of the city.
- I feel like there is a shortage of police across the city.
- In some of the harder parts of town, there is a gang issue and a drug issue. That is a safety thing and a community thing.
- Some people do not feel safe on the trails without police. There are talks about putting armed park rangers in the park.
- You could call a cop and maybe they will come and maybe they will not. Our public services are poor.
- Our police department has had a lack of officers for a number of years now. (Lack of pay – although this is a citywide issue. Even if you have a passion and can receive more money, you go elsewhere. They come and get trained, then go elsewhere.) You have police precincts in north and south Columbus.

Schools

- The higher rated schools are north of Macon Road. I have seen them on the south side tearing down the trailer park and building the \$53 million high school.
- Dorothy Height Elementary was built, Spencer High School was built 2 years ago and will get a stadium. The building was on a hill and started sliding down the hill. They rebuilt Carver in the last 10 years. There are anchor institutions on Ft. Benning Road to make people want to stay.

Fire

- There are fire departments everywhere. Those seem to be spread out.

- The fire department is certified so they must be placed strategically and have been built in the last 20 years.

Garbage Pickup

- Garbage service needs to improve. A couple years ago they tried to “Unthaw the Freeze.” If there is no increase on taxes, how does the city pay for things? A house’s taxes do not change unless a new person buys it. People will gripe that trash pickup went from 2x per week to 1x per week.
- They are 2 months behind with picking up bulk waste. Houses where evictions took place, that trash stays out there for a long time.

Public Property Maintenance

- There was a work camp where inmates would mow grass on city property. Only certain inmates were doing this. But with the pandemic, they were not locking those people up, so the grass has not gotten cut.

Health Services

- There are great healthcare centers in the city. However, only Valley Health Care, MercyMed, Piedmont HealthCare, and St. Francis are the options for low-income residents. The bus routes are difficult, and some clinics are not on a bus route.
- According to the federal government, the city has a shortage of health care professionals. Doctors are difficult to recruit.

Transit

- The city uses income tax to pay for public transit. The reason why the bus routes change is because there is not enough ridership. If public transit is a public good, they will not just follow the routes that make the most money.
- Columbus does not have a bus that will take you to the DMV. You will have to get a ride or an uber. That is an issue. Those are documents that a person needs in order to vote.

Animal control

- Animal control does not work on the weekends in certain neighborhoods. My friend who lives in another part of town has gotten animal control to come out on the weekends.

Youth programs

- The city has youth shadowing programs, summer job programs. There is also a youth council that is educated on the city government.



Is there anything we haven't discussed that you feel is important to our research?

- A lot of people have community gardens and this should be promoted more. I think this is a good thing. There are a lot of lots around and things grow fast around here. If someone has a garden, maybe their taxes could be different. There are little private lots. One of the old high schools has a track/football field where they are growing things like flowers. I am not sure if they have to pay taxes on that or if it is part of the school.
- I would encourage that next year's AAP really look at how homelessness has changed. What will happen when people get evicted or do not have extra unemployment or food stamps. A year and half from now, homelessness will not look the same.
- I think the city could put some focus on helping landlords not be slumlords. Tools, incentives, etc. Some landlords have just let it go.
- I would love to see more development of homes that are affordable for low-income renters and a variety of bedroom sizes. There is a need for 1-bdrms that are energy efficient.
- Our city does the best it can with what it has.
- You have incredible agencies, but the city needs to make funding easier to receive. Make the reimbursement process easier because these organizations have clients to serve.
- There should be funding streams available for furniture and childcare, not just rent and utilities.
- Solar panels would be a great for weatherization. Columbus is in the south.

- Broadband – Universal broadband in LMI tracts, trying to get different towers. Between 95-99% of households are within 2-5 miles of a library. Since our libraries are already scattered sites, why not invest in hotspots for the libraries?
- The community is aware of the crime rates in Columbus and realize they just cannot sit it out. The churches have to be involved, community organizations have to be involved. It has to be multifaceted with many community partners, a public-private partnership being an umbrella and providing the resources.
- Columbus needs more “neighborhoods.” Get people who live in places to be participatory and have a say in what happens. It is hard to get people to participate when they do not understand how things are presented. I would like to see more grassroots engagement.

APPENDIX E

HOUSING DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT DATA

**Housing Discrimination Complaints in City of Columbus, GA
January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2020**

Case Number HUD	HUD/FHAP	Violation City	Violation County	Violation State	Filing Date	Closure Date	Bases	Issues	Case Disposition	All Compensation and Victims Fund Amount
04-16-4752-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	06/14/16	09/08/16	Disability	Discrimination in terms/conditions/privileges relating to rental; Otherwise deny or make housing unavailable; Discriminatory acts under Section 818 (coercion, Etc.)	Complaint withdrawn by complainant after resolution	\$0
04-16-5454-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	09/27/16	04/17/17	Disability	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities; Otherwise deny or make housing unavailable; Failure to make reasonable accommodation	Conciliation/settlement successful	\$0
04-17-8636-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	06/20/17	10/16/17	Disability	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities; Discrimination in terms/conditions/privileges relating to rental; Otherwise deny or make housing unavailable; Failure to make reasonable accommodation	Conciliation/settlement successful	\$850
04-19-5844-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	02/21/19	04/04/19	Race, Familial Status	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities	Conciliation/settlement successful	\$0
04-19-5845-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	02/21/19	05/10/19	Disability	Discriminatory advertising, statements and notices; Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities; Discrimination in terms/conditions/privileges relating to rental; Discrimination in services and facilities relating to rental; Discriminatory acts under Section 818 (coercion, Etc.); Failure to make reasonable accommodation	No cause determination	\$0
04-19-6824-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	05/01/19	09/26/19	National Origin, Disability, Retaliation	Discrimination in terms/conditions/privileges relating to rental; Other discriminatory acts; Discriminatory acts under Section 818 (coercion, Etc.)	Conciliation/settlement successful	\$0
04-19-6925-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	05/08/19	06/11/19	Disability	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities; Failure to make reasonable accommodation	Conciliation/settlement successful	\$0
04-19-7205-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	05/31/19	11/06/19	Race	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities; Redlining	Conciliation/settlement successful	\$5,000
04-20-2028-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	05/29/20		Disability	Discrimination in terms/conditions/privileges relating to rental; Otherwise deny or make housing unavailable; Discriminatory acts under Section 818 (coercion, Etc.); Failure to make reasonable accommodation		\$550
04-20-2950-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	08/07/20	11/12/20	Race	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities	No cause determination	\$0
04-20-3531-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	09/17/20	11/25/20	Race	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities; Discriminatory acts under Section 818 (coercion, Etc.)	No cause determination	\$0
04-20-3650-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	09/25/20	02/04/21	Race	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities; Discriminatory acts under Section 818 (coercion, Etc.)	Complaint withdrawn by complainant after resolution	\$0
04-20-9572-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	11/18/19	03/03/20	Race	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities; Otherwise deny or make housing unavailable	Conciliation/settlement successful	\$0

**Housing Discrimination Complaints in City of Columbus, GA
January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2020**

Case Number HUD	HUD/FHAP	Violation City	Violation County	Violation State	Filing Date	Closure Date	Bases	Issues	Case Disposition	All Compensation and Victims Fund Amount
04-20-9831-8	HUD	Columbus	Muscogee	Georgia	12/09/19	03/18/20	Disability	Discriminatory terms, conditions, privileges, or services and facilities; Otherwise deny or make housing unavailable; Discriminatory acts under Section 818 (coercion, Etc.)	No cause determination	\$0