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Appendix

REACHING RIVERBANKS
MARKET OVERVIEW, HOUSING NEEDS
ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS



bae urban economics

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

Prepared for The Central Midlands Council of Governments

May 31, 2024 *Rev. September 5, 2024*



bae urban economics

May 31, 2024

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

Dear Mr. Poole:

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

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

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

Sincerely,



Mary Burkholder
Principal

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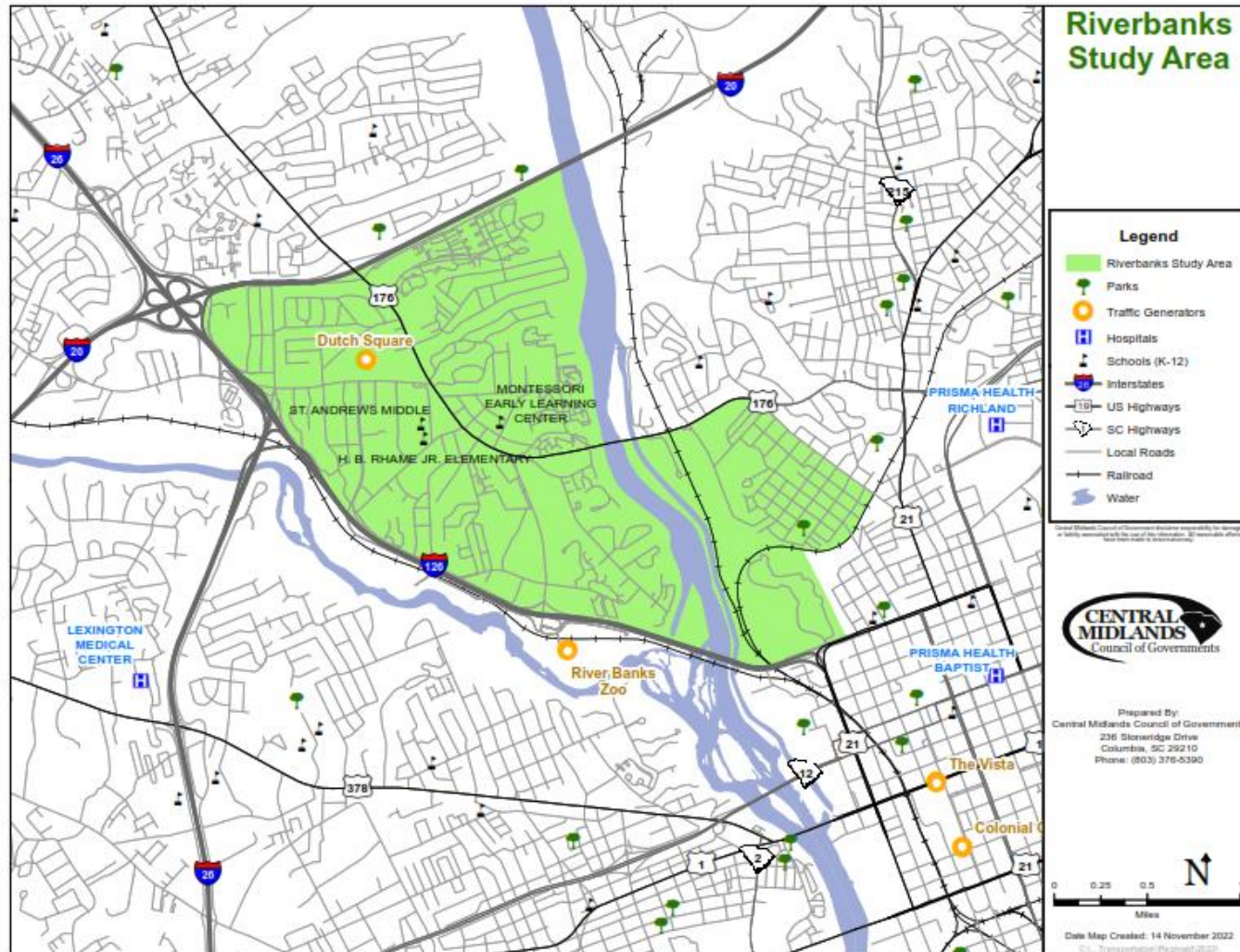
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INTRODUCTION

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

Figure 1: Riverbanks Study Area Map



Sources: Central Midlands Council of Governments, 2023.

Data Sources

BAE used the following data sources to complete the analysis:

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

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC TRENDS

Demographic Trends

Population and Households

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

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

Table 1: Population and Households, 2010 and 2023

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

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

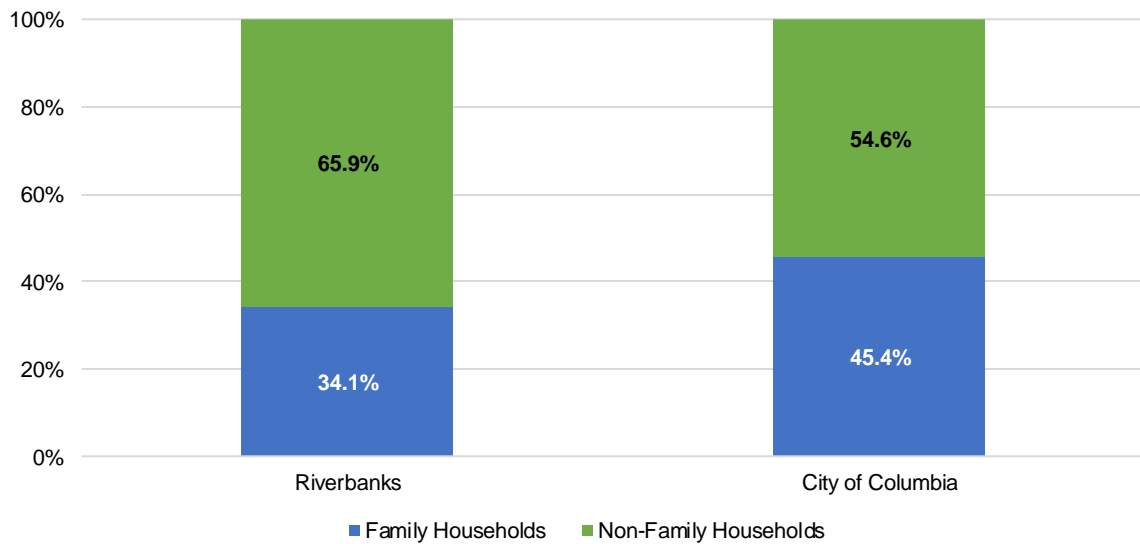
Average Household Size	2010	2023
Columbia	2.19	2.08

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

Household Composition

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

Figure 2: Distribution of Households by Type, 2023



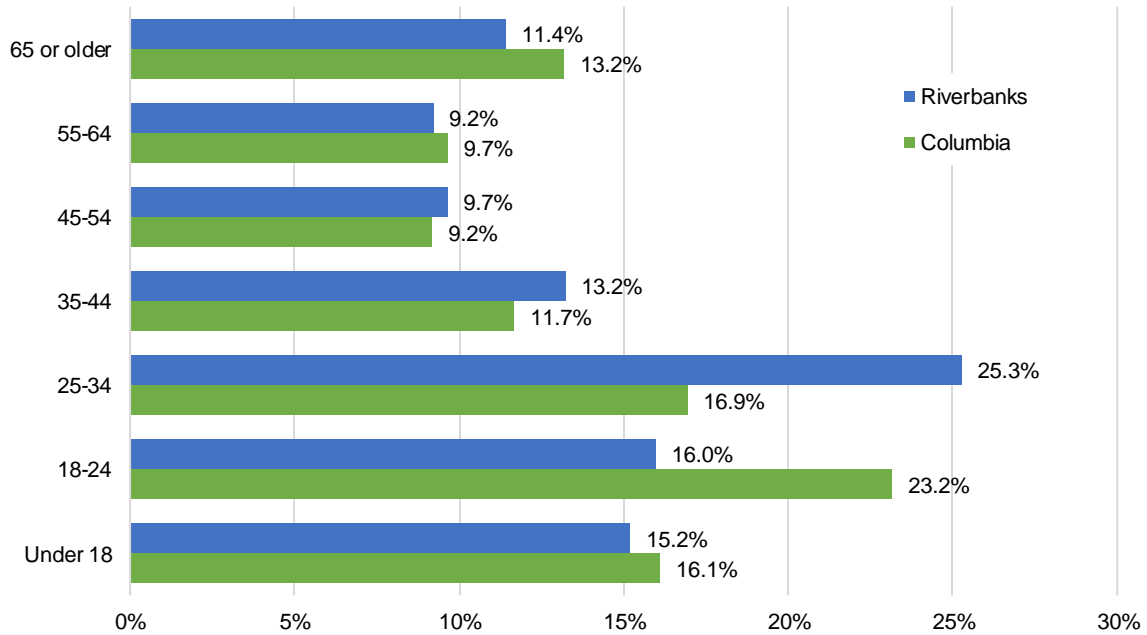
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Age Distribution

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

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

Figure 3: Age Distribution, 2023

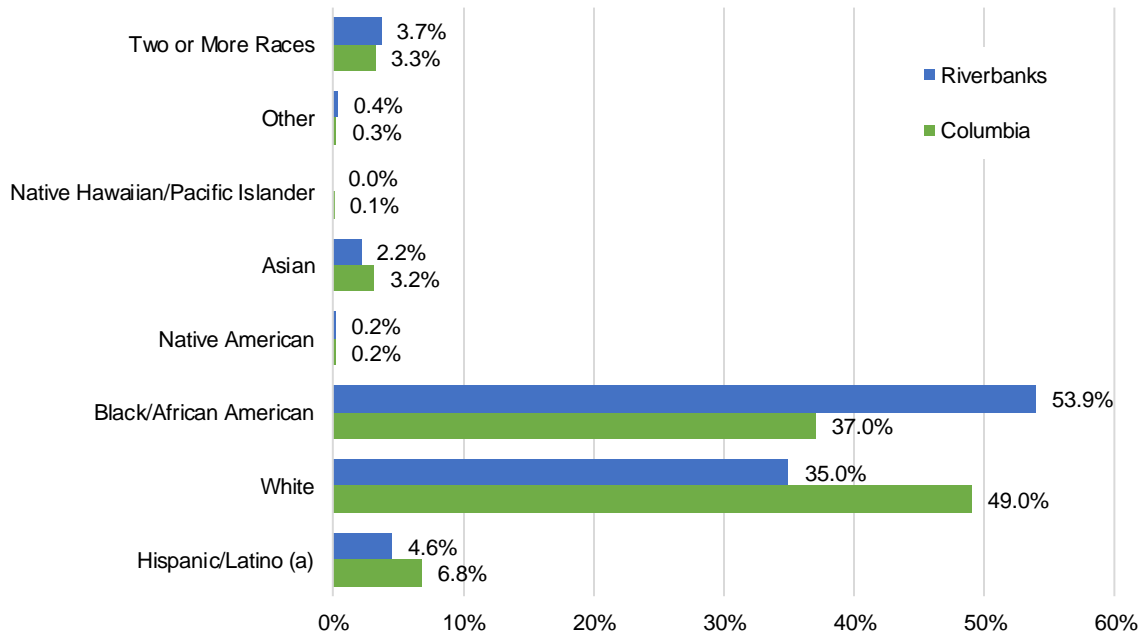


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024

Race and Ethnicity

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

Figure 4: Race and Ethnicity, 2023



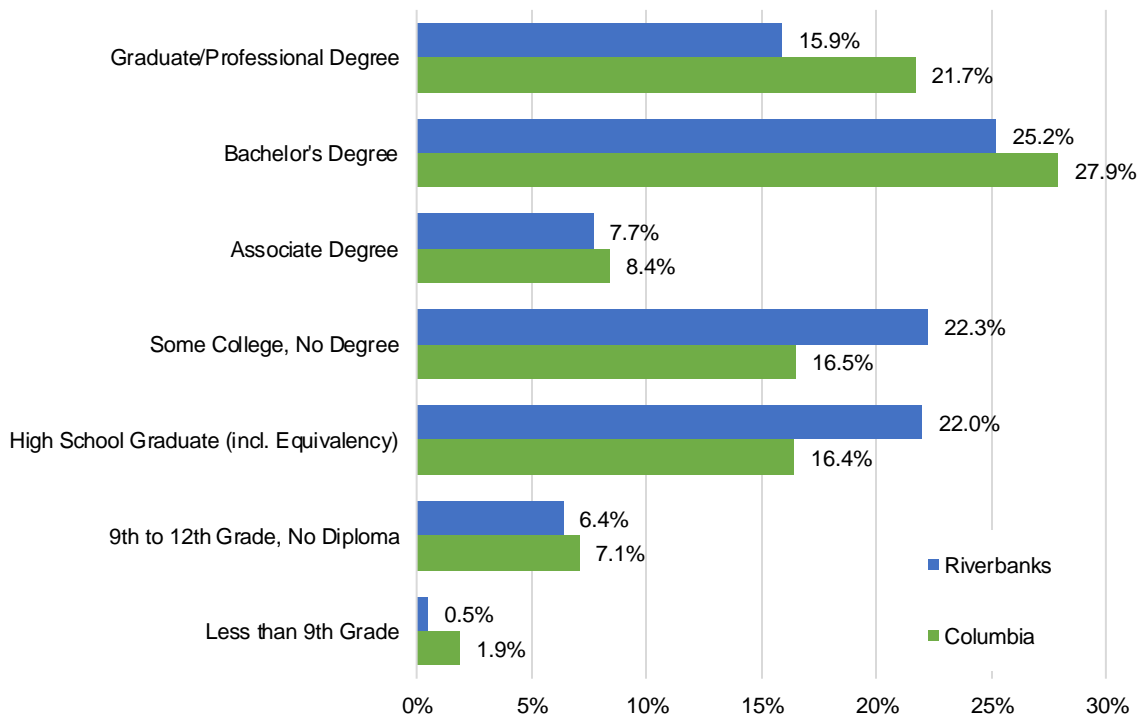
Note:
(a) Includes all races for those of Hispanic/Latino background.

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

Educational Attainment

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

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

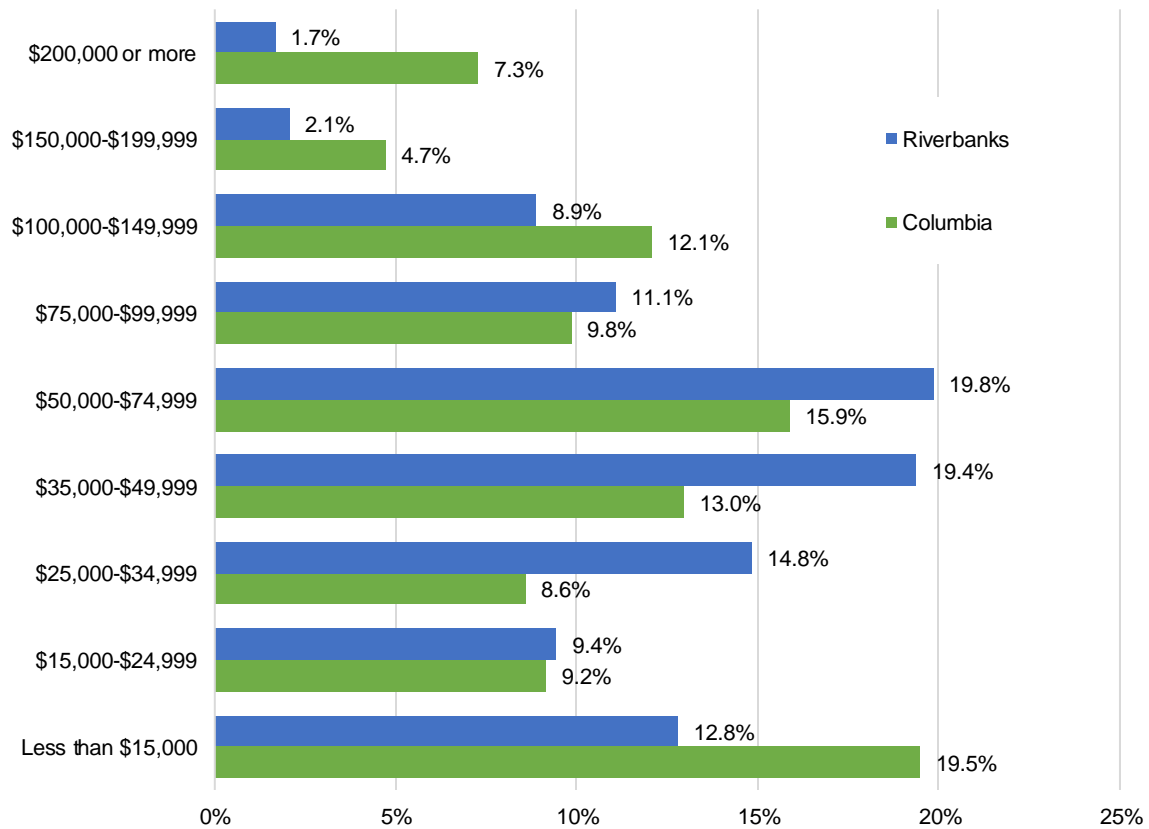


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Household Income

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

Figure 6: Household Income, 2023



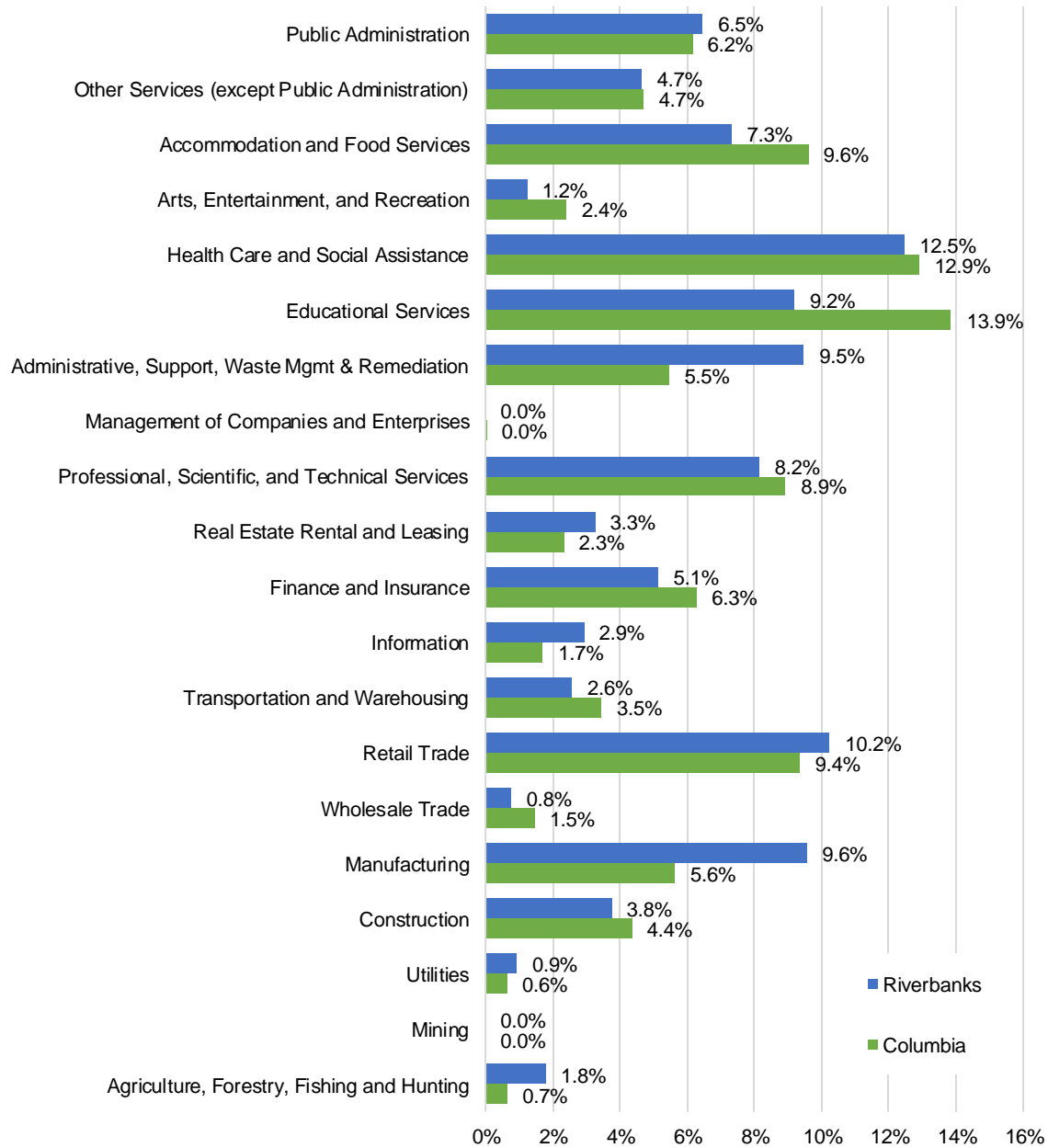
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Economic Trends

Resident Employment

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

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

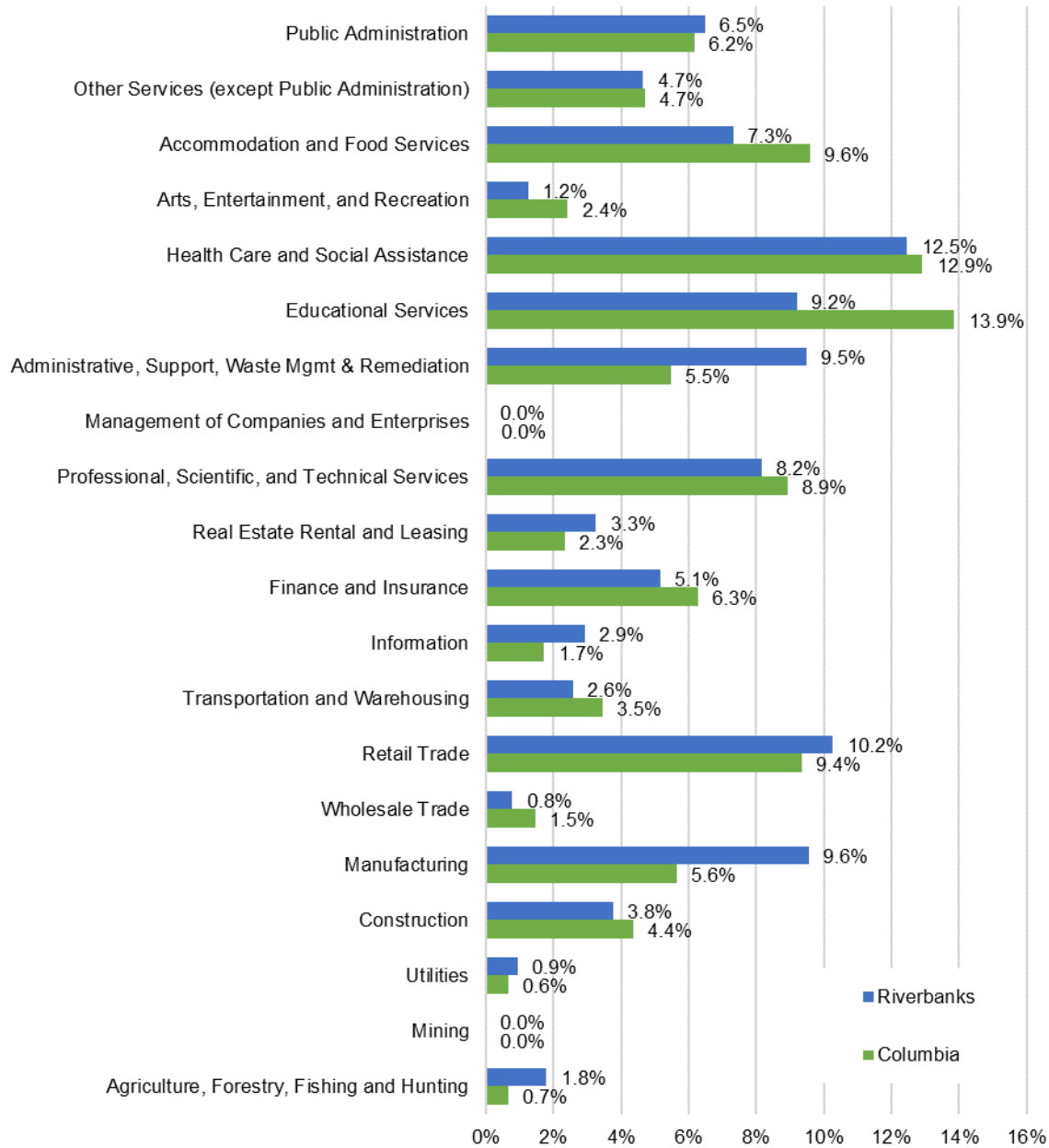


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Jobs

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

Figure 8: Jobs by Industry, 2023



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

Primary Employers

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

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

Table 2: Primary Private Employers, Columbia, 2024

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

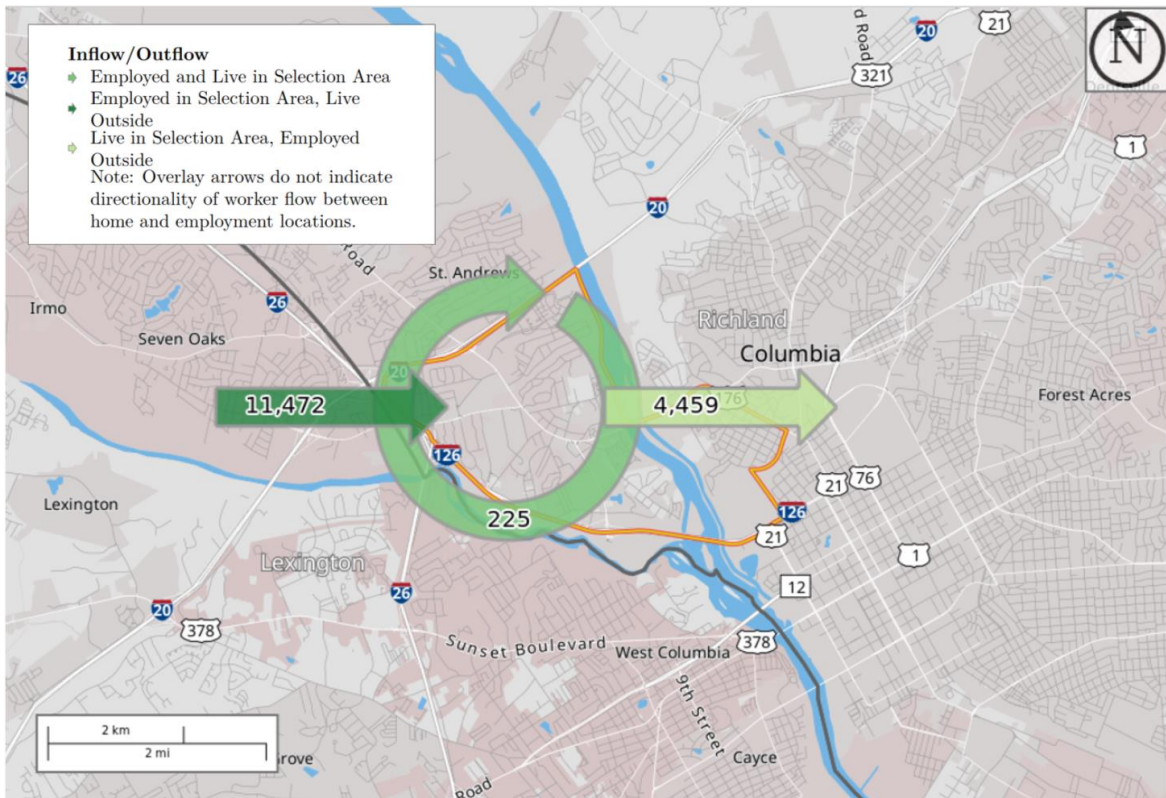
Source: Central South Carolina Alliance, 2024.

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

Commute Patterns

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

Figure 9: Commute Flows, Riverbanks Study Area, 2021



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

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

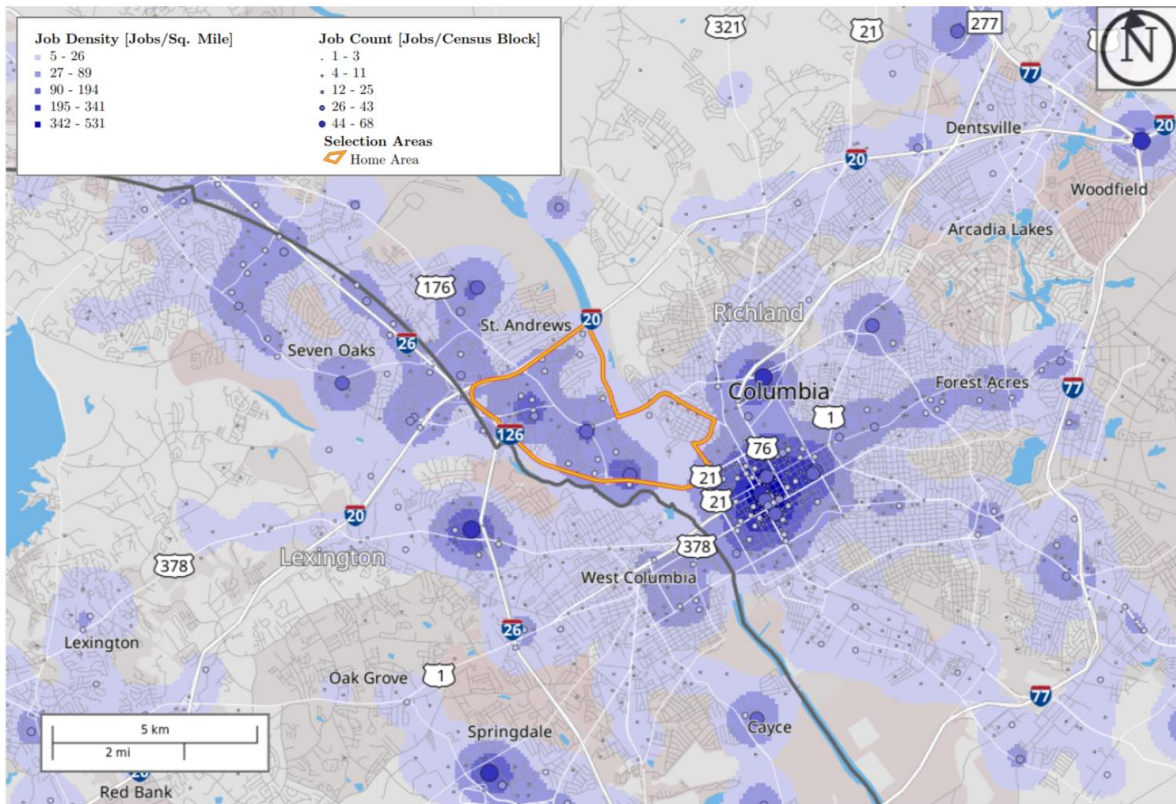
Table 3: Commute Destinations, Riverbanks Study Area, 2021

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

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

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

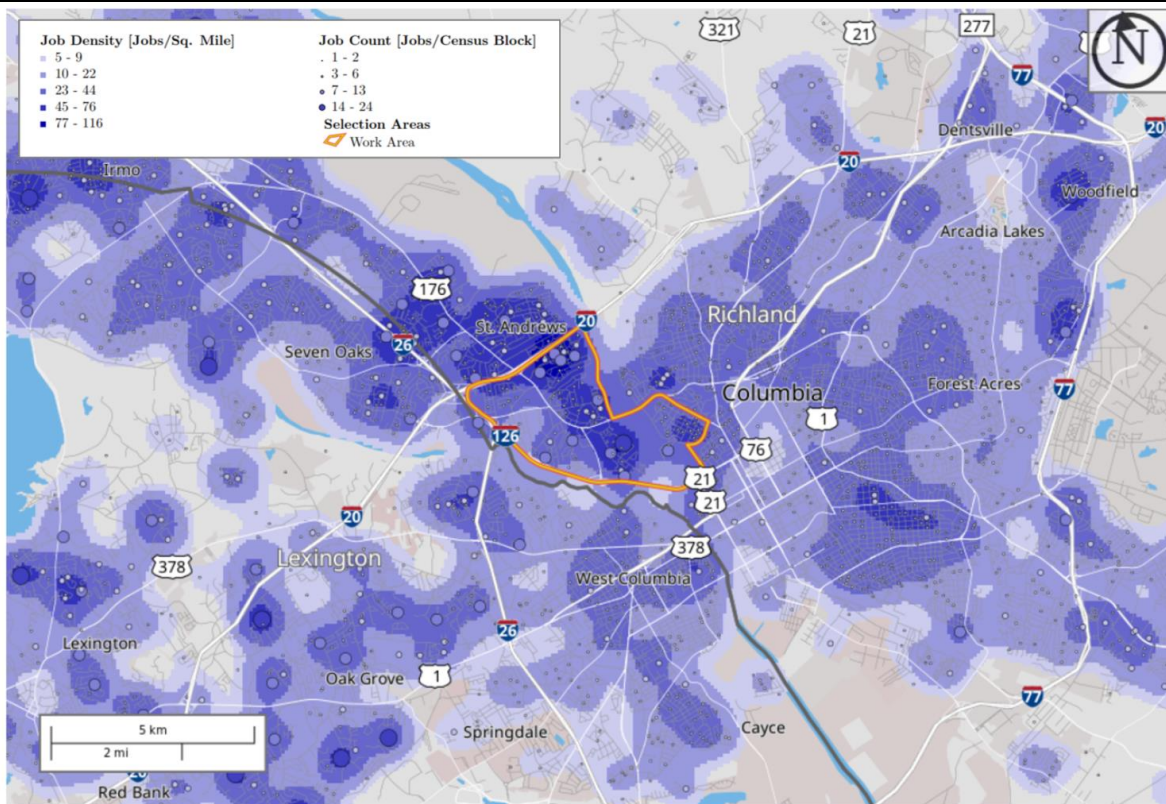
Figure 10: Employed Riverbanks Residents' Workplace Destinations, 2021



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

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

Figure 11: Riverbanks Employee's Home Destinations, 2021



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

Targeted Industry Sectors and Development Types

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

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

Industry Sectors

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

1. Health Care and Social Assistance

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

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

2. Finance and Insurance

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

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

Development Types

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

1. Mixed-Use Development – Housing and Retail

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

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

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

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

2. Selective Retail

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

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

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

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

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

3. Enhanced Recreational Tourism Uses

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

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

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

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

4. Office Space for Small Business

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

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

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

HOUSING MARKET CONDITIONS

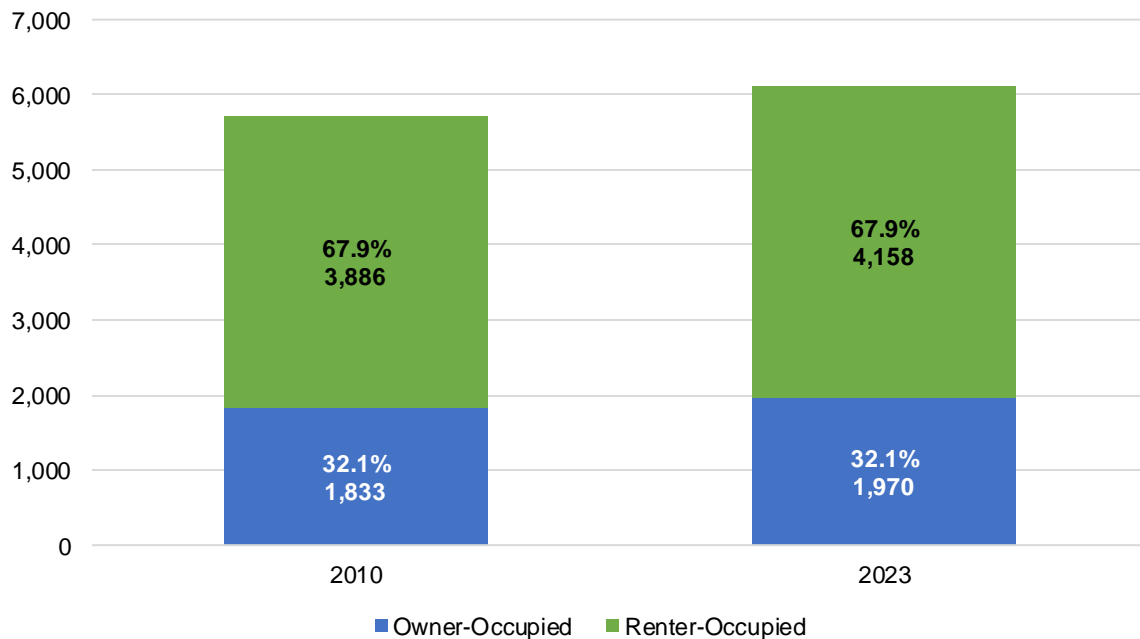
This section of the report is a review of current housing conditions and trends in the study area. Sources for these summaries include U.S. Census, Esri, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), CoStar, and Redfin. The findings of this study help to identify the most prevalent housing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

Housing Characteristics

Housing Tenure

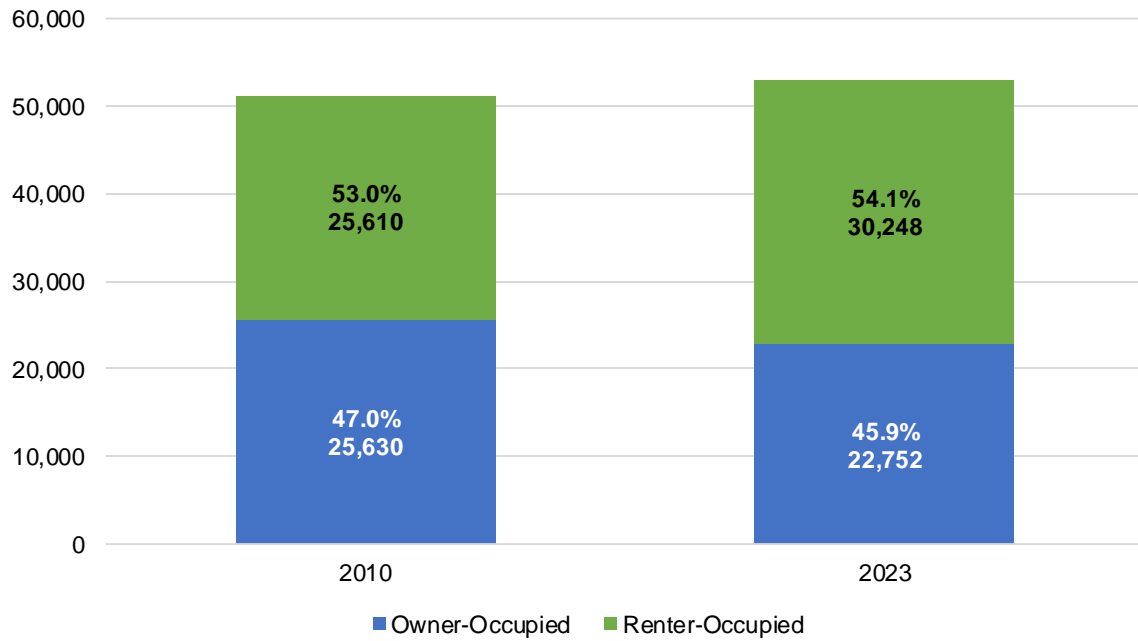
Households in Riverbanks and Columbia are primarily renters. As shown in Figure 12, in 2023, 67.9 percent of all units in the Riverbanks study area are renter-occupied and 32.1 percent are owner-occupied, essentially the same as it was in 2010. While in the City of Columbia, Figure 13 shows 54.1 percent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

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



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

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

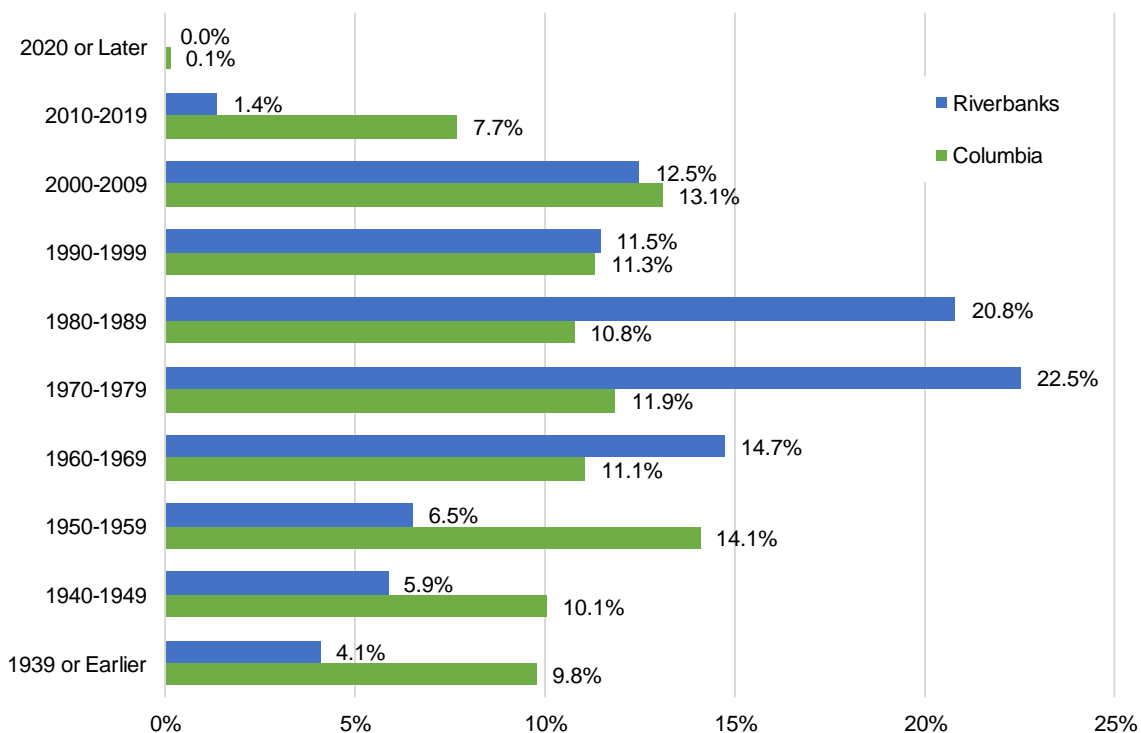


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau via ESRI Business Analyst, 2023; BAE, 2024.

Housing Units and Vacancy

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

Figure 14 Housing Units by Year Built, 2021



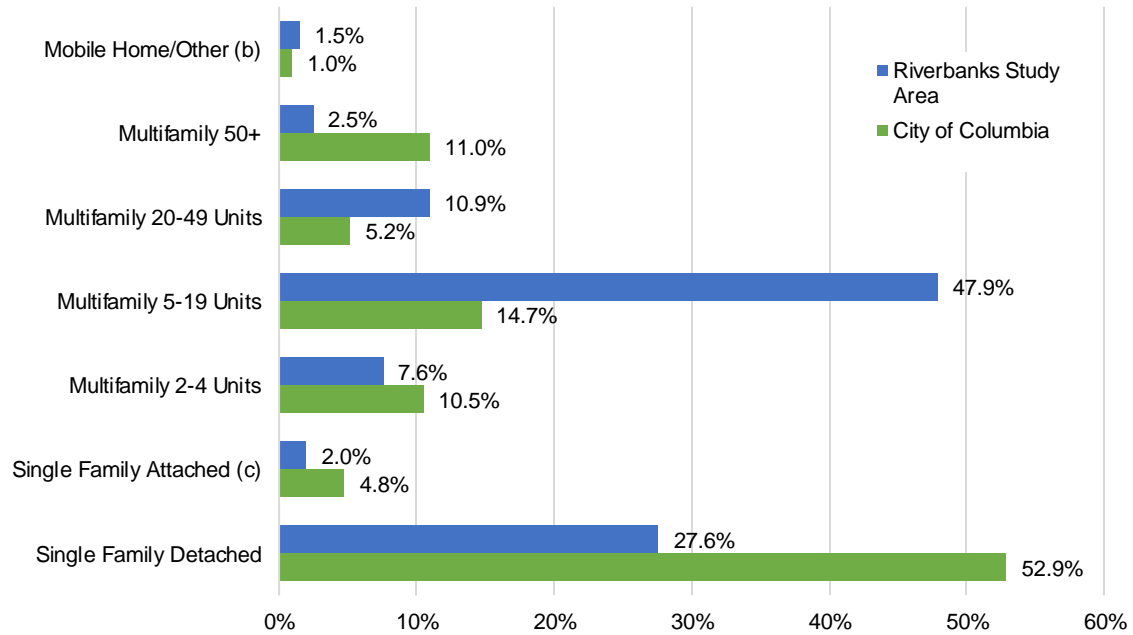
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017-2021 five-year sample period via ESRI Business Analyst 2023; BAE, 2024.

Units in Structure

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

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

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



Notes:

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

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

(c) Includes townhomes and rowhouses.

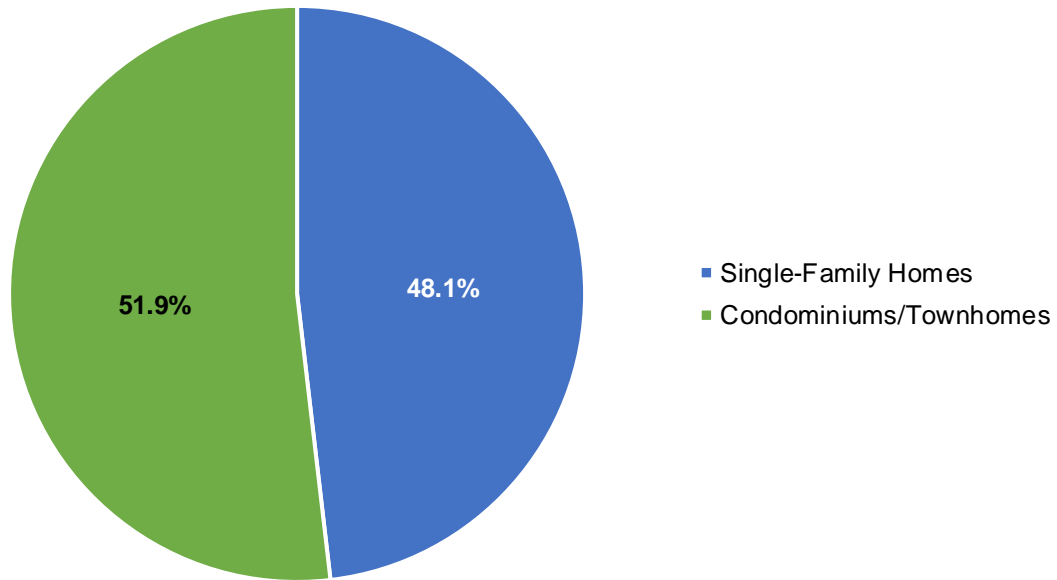
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2016-2020 five-year sample period via ESRI Business Analyst 2023; BAE, 2024.

For-Sale Housing Market

Home Sales by Unit Type

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

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



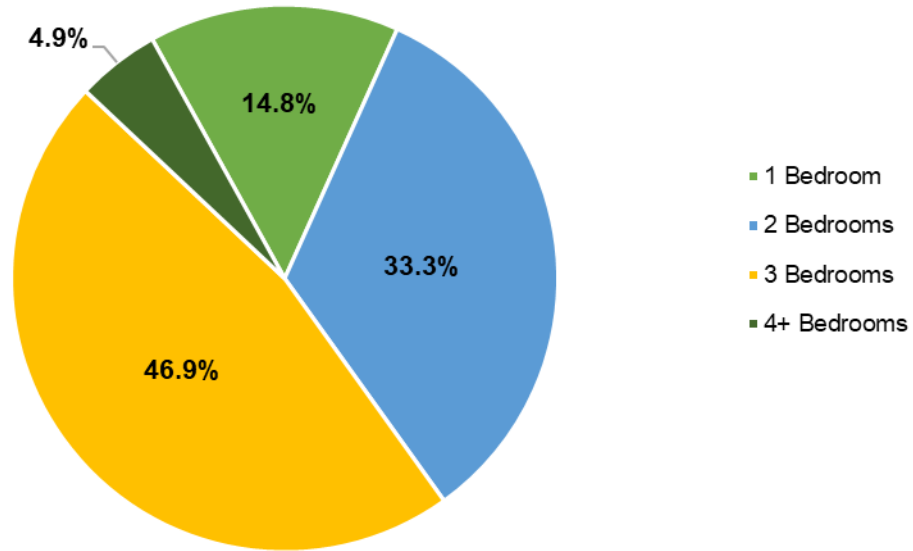
Sources: Redfin; BAE, 2024.

Home Sales by Unit Size

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

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

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

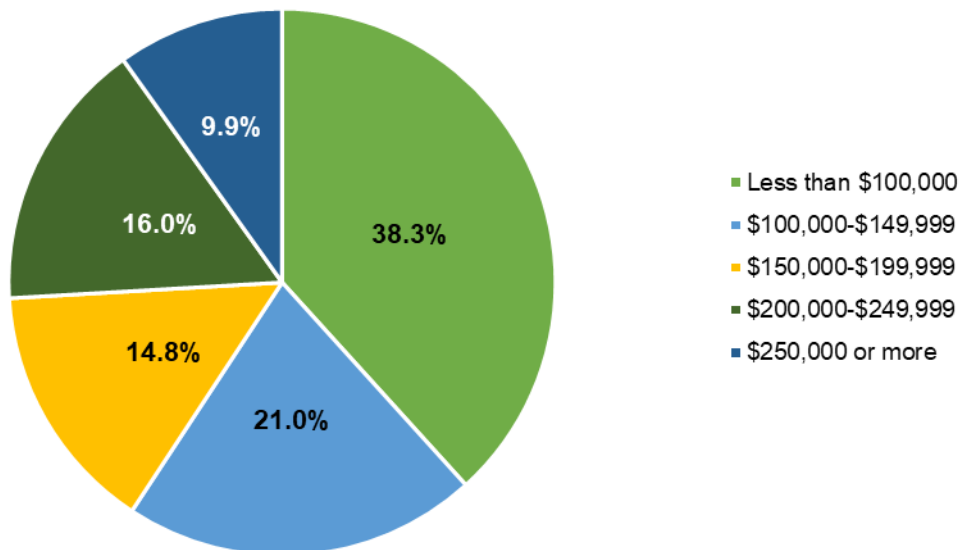


Sources: Redfin; BAE, 2024.

Sale Prices

As shown in Figure 18, 38.3 percent of all home sales in Riverbanks, the largest share, were under \$100,000 and 21.0 percent sold were between \$100,000 and \$149,999. Furthermore, Table 5 shows the median sale price for a single-family home in the Riverbanks study area was \$196,000. The median sale price for condos and townhomes was much lower, at \$75,000.

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



Sources: Redfin; BAE, 2024.

Table 5: Residential Sales, Riverbanks, February 2023 – February 2024

Single-Family Homes						
Sale Price Range	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4+ BR	Total	Percent of Total
Less than \$100,000	0	0	4	0	4	10.3%
\$100,000-\$149,999	0	1	5	0	6	15.4%
\$150,000-\$199,999	0	1	9	0	10	25.6%
\$200,000-\$249,999	0	1	11	1	13	33.3%
\$250,000 or more	0	0	3	3	6	15.4%
Total Units Sold	0	3	32	4	39	100.0%
Percent of Total	0.0%	7.7%	82.1%	10.3%	100.0%	
Median Sale Price	n.a.	\$170,000	\$193,500	\$265,000	\$196,000	
Average Sale Price	n.a.	\$159,667	\$177,969	\$277,000	\$186,719	
Average Unit Size (SF)	n.a.	1,424	1,605	3,108	1,745	
Median Price per SF	n.a.	\$102.20	\$115.14	\$98.19	\$110.01	
Average Price per SF	n.a.	\$113.86	\$111.88	\$92.86	\$110.08	
Condominiums/Townhouses						
Sale Price Range	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4+ BR	Total	Percent of Total
Less than \$100,000	9	14	4	0	27	64.3%
\$100,000-\$149,999	3	7	1	0	11	26.2%
\$150,000-\$199,999	0	2	0	0	2	4.8%
\$200,000-\$249,999	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
\$250,000 or more	0	1	1	0	2	4.8%
Total Units Sold	12	24	6	0	42	100.0%
Percent of Total	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%	
Median Sale Price	\$77,500	\$83,000	\$57,500	n.a.	\$75,000	
Average Sale Price	\$75,742	\$78,329	\$62,750	n.a.	\$74,709	
Average Unit Size (SF)	774	960	1,451	n.a.	953	
Median Price per SF	\$95.25	\$77.16	\$42.06	n.a.	\$77.16	
Average Price per SF	\$99.00	\$81.15	\$43.56	n.a.	\$82.98	

Note:

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

Sources: Redfin; BAE, 2024.

Multifamily Rental Housing Market

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

Unit Sizes

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

Rents

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

Vacancies

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

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

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

Notes:

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

Sources: CoStar; BAE, 2024.

Multifamily Affordable & Senior Units

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

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

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

Sources: CoStar; BAE, 2024.

Key Market Overview Findings

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

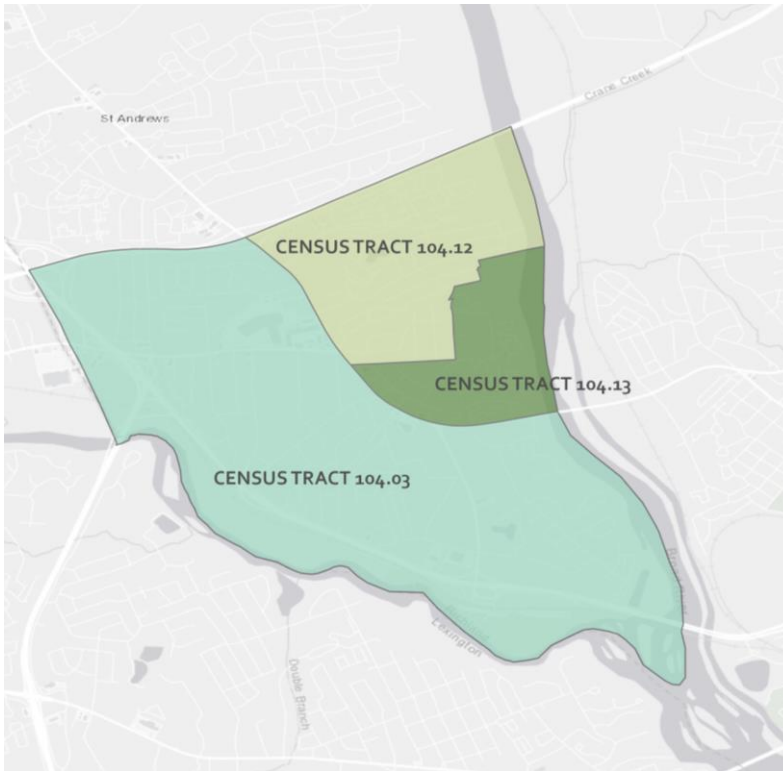
- Population growth and housing information demonstrate the need for additional housing units. The Riverbanks population is growing faster than that of Columbia (8.0 percent versus 3.7 percent), and overall home vacancy rates are relatively low (9.7 percent).
- Demographic, economic, and market information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

HOUSING NEEDS

Housing Affordability

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

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



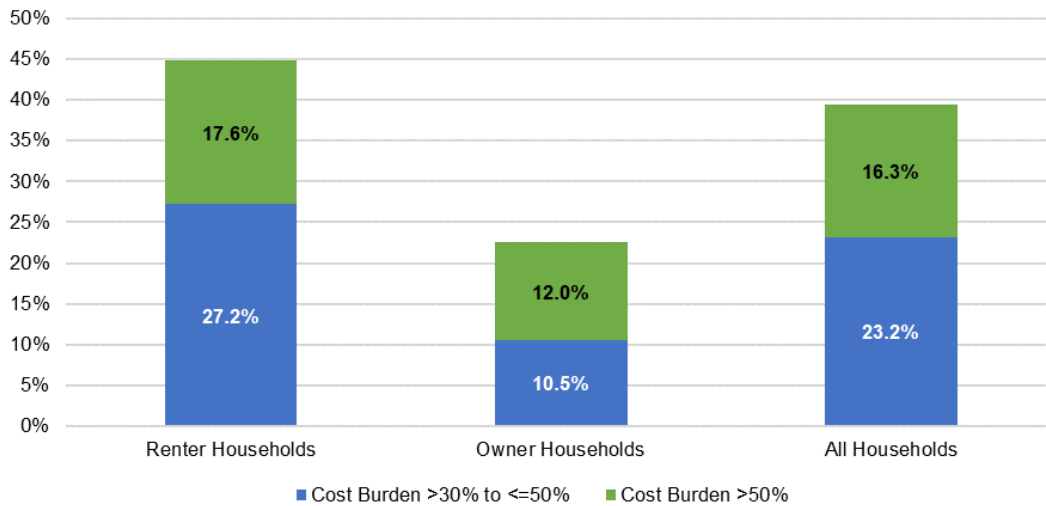
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024.

Housing Affordability by Tenure

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

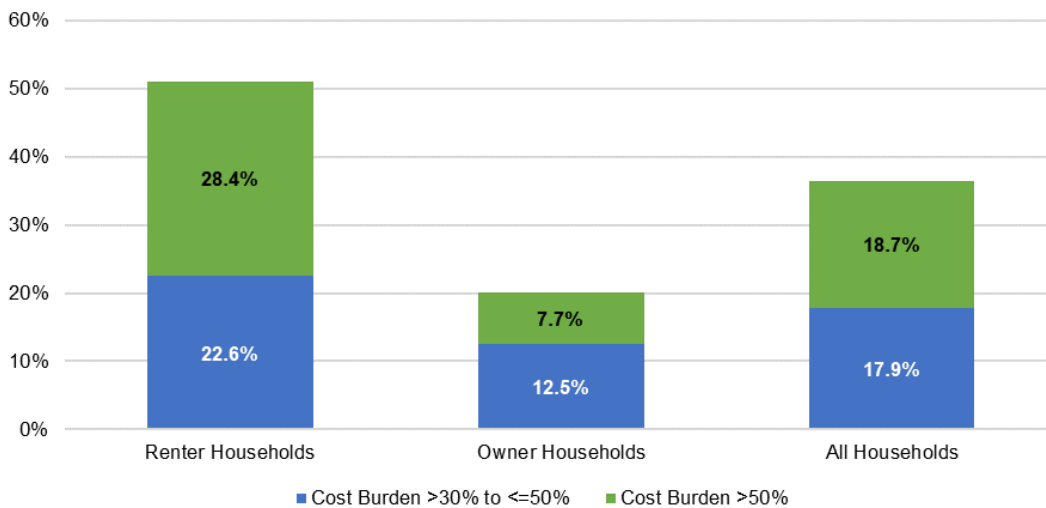
Similarly, Figure 21 shows Columbia households based on the level of housing cost burden among renter, owner, and all households. Approximately 36.5 percent of households in the City of Columbia are cost-burdened, and 18.7 percent are severely cost-burdened. The disparity between renters and owners is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

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



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

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



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

Housing Affordability by Income

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

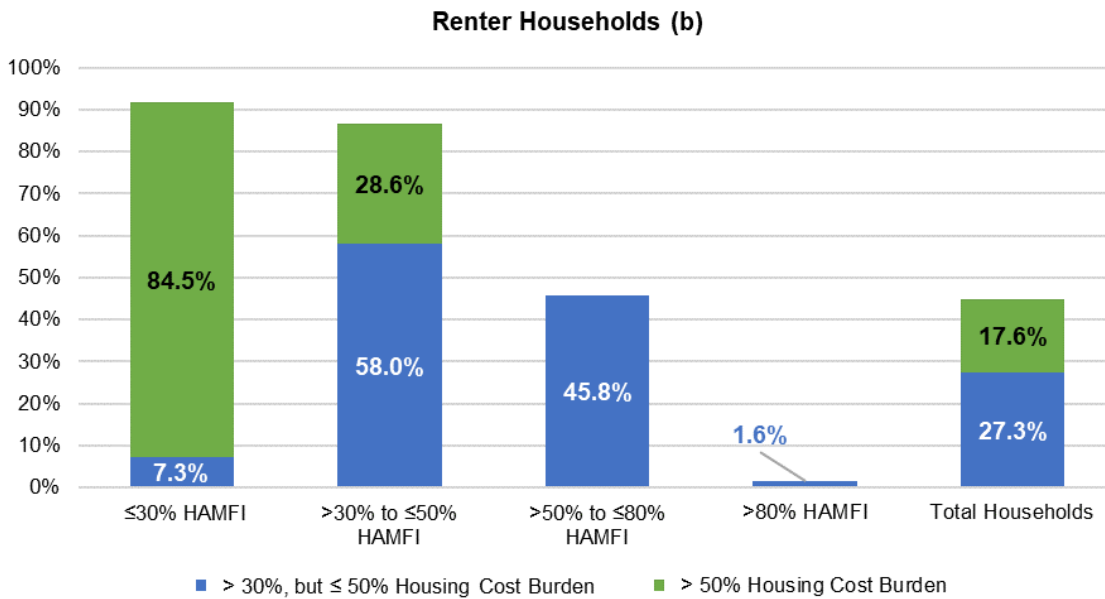
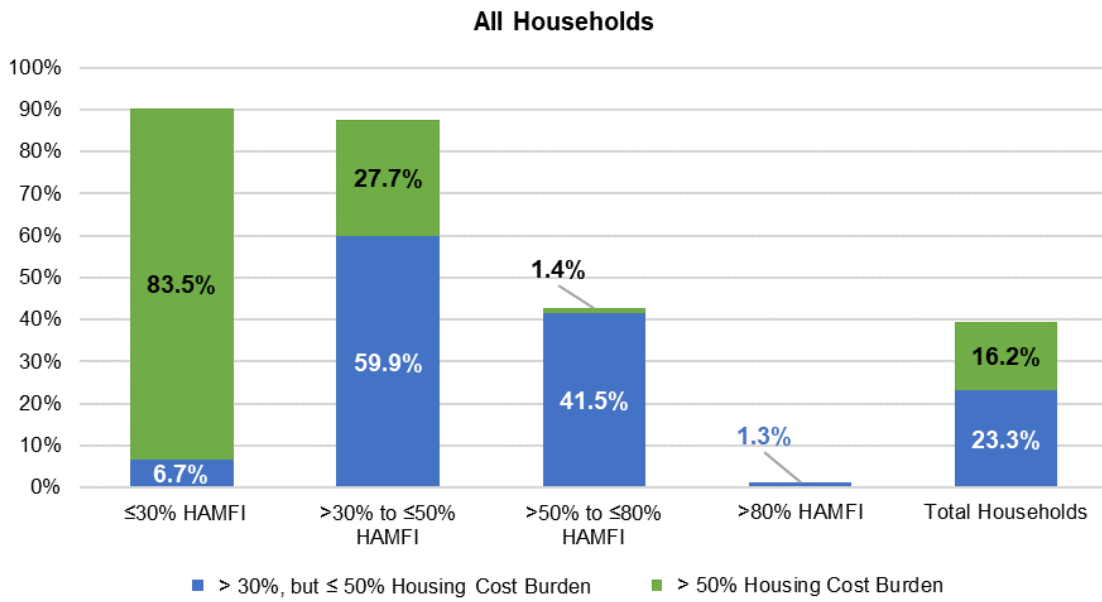
According to the CHAS data, 90.2 percent, 91.8 percent, and 81.7 of all households, renter households, and owner households earning 30 percent or less of the HAMFI, respectively, are housing cost-burdened. Most of these low-income households are severely cost-burdened.

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

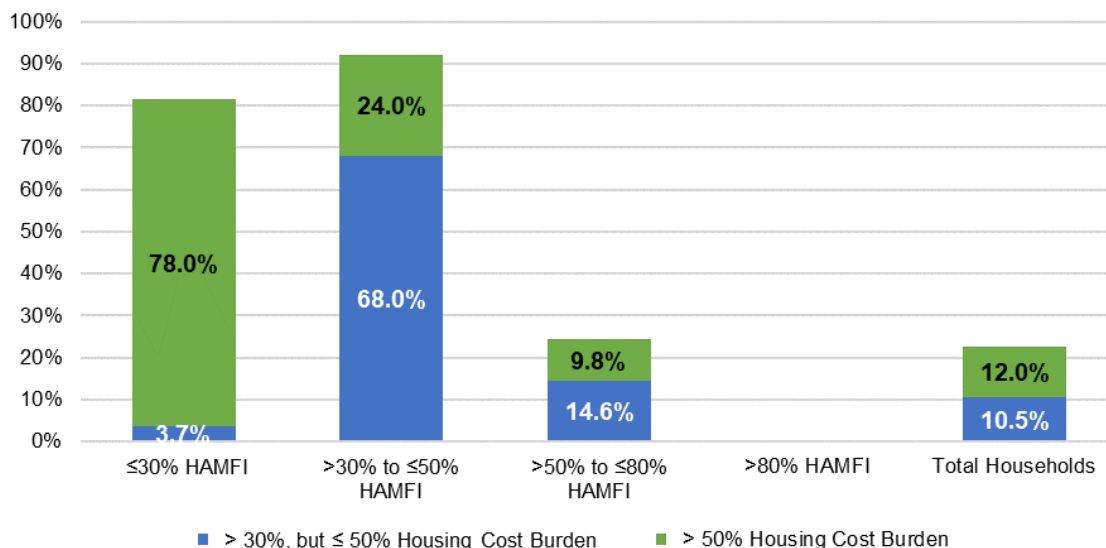
Although an issue, the cost burden rates among lower income households do not indicate severe cost burden issues for the area. In most housing markets, households earning up to 50 percent of the HAMFI are typically cost-burdened, and Riverbanks is not an exception. The notable difference can be seen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

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

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



Owner Households (c)



Notes:

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

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

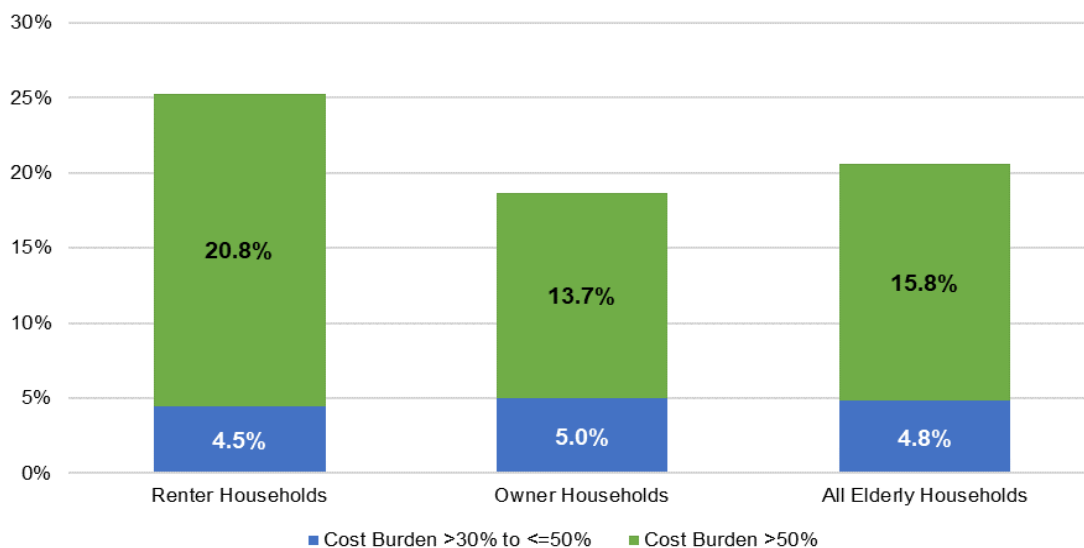
(c) Owner households include those with and without a mortgage. Housing costs represent the sum of payments for mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, or similar debts on the property (including payments for the first mortgage, second mortgages, home equity loans, and other junior mortgages);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

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

Housing Affordability for Small Family and Elderly Households

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

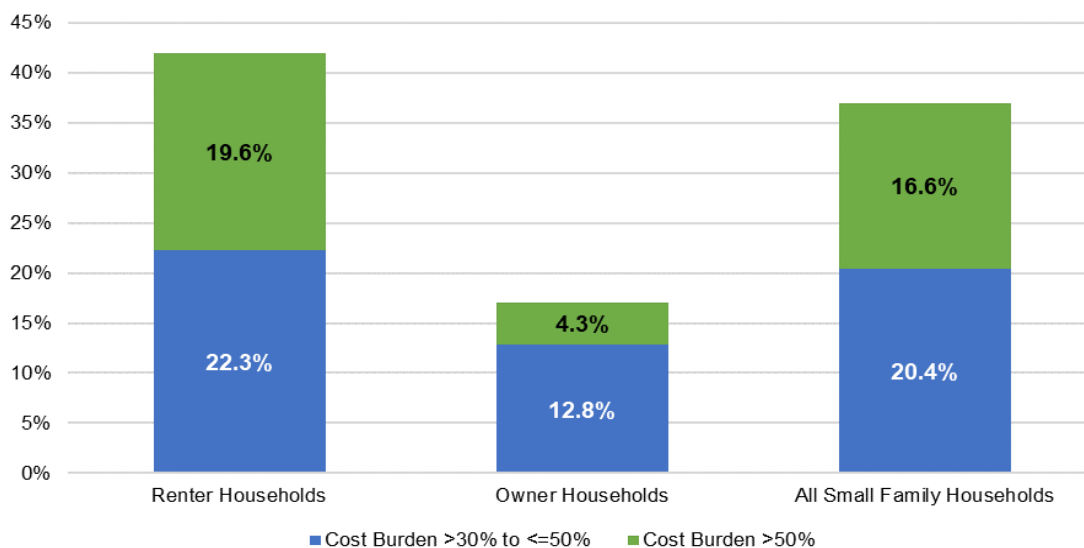
Figure 23: Cost-Burdened Elderly Households, Riverbanks Study Area, 2020



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

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

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



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

Job-Resident Employment Gap

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

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

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

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

Needs Assessment

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

Structural Vacancy

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

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

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

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

Current and Future Needs

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

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

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

Table 10: Riverbanks Study Area Housing Needs Summary Table

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Housing in the Pipeline

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

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

Key Findings - Housing Needs Assessment

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Market and Economic Development

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Encourage Selective Retail Particularly Experiential or Restaurants with Entertainment

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

5. Preserve Office Space in the Riverbanks Study Area

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

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

6. Improve Transportation Options for Riverbanks Residents

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

7. Create More Housing in the Riverbanks Study Area

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

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

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

8. To Prevent Displacement, Implement Housing Preservation Strategies

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

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

9. To Prevent Displacement, Expand Housing Production Capacity

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

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

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

