



## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2024



DECEMBER 2024

**PCAV** PLANNERS LLC





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*The City of Columbia offers its sincerest gratitude to Mr. John Brancaglione and the PGAV PLANNERS Project Team for their dedicated efforts in preparation of this Plan.*

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## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

A Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for making the community a better place in which to live, work, relax, and play. It is intended to look forward 15- to 20-years. It communicates to residents, developers, and others what land use patterns and types of development are desired by the community in particular areas of the City.

The most recent "Comprehensive Plan of the City of Columbia" was adopted in 2005. Now nearly 20 years later, the City has grown and has undergone significant changes in development patterns, access to the regional highway network, and demographic makeup. A planned new interchange connection with I-255 at the City's northern edge will provide an opportunity for further growth. To the south, the development patterns of both Columbia and Waterloo, its southern neighbor, continue to grow toward each other.

Comprehensive community planning has a vital role in maintaining and improving the quality of life for all Columbia residents. With this knowledge in mind, the City's Plan Commission in conjunction with the Mayor and City Council wanted to undertake a review of the City's demographic, economic, and land use changes over time and wants to anticipate and direct the City's future growth and development. This [2024 Comprehensive Plan - Looking to the Future](#) represents the results of that effort. The process to update the

### How to Use this Plan

*This Comprehensive Plan is created with an intent to guide the City's future development and growth. It is a living document, and as such, should have periodic review of land use development activities and developer requests to ensure that the City's vision is aligned with changing real estate market conditions and evolving community desires. While comprehensive planning attempts to look 20 years into the future, economic and demographic influences on any city in a "metro" environment change rapidly.*

*This Comprehensive Plan does not complete the City's planning of the development of our community but continues the planning process. Working together, elected officials, City staff, residents, business owners and all community stakeholders can ensure that Columbia can be a highly desirable place in which to raise a family in the St. Louis region.*

City's Comprehensive Plan was designed to be inclusive. All meetings of the Plan Commission were public meetings. In addition, significant public and stakeholder engagement opportunities and events were carried out so that the community could share their thoughts and visions for the City.

## SECTION 2 – COMMUNITY PROFILE

### GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Columbia sits in the wooded bluffs and Mississippi River plains of southern Illinois within the Greater St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Columbia's primary thoroughfares are Illinois Route 3/Admiral Parkway and Interstate 255, which connect the community to the nearby Mississippi River to the east and downtown St. Louis, about 14 miles north.

Located in Monroe County with a small portion in St. Clair County, Columbia is surrounded by unincorporated land from both counties. The closest communities to Columbia are Dupo (to the north), Waterloo (to the south), and Millstadt (to the east).

On March 27, 1927, the village of Columbia residents voted to establish the City of Columbia. This action created an Aldermanic-City form of government, comprised of two alderpersons per ward elected for four-year terms. The City of Columbia, as a non-home rule community, can only adopt policies expressly authorized by state law.

### A BRIEF HISTORY

Columbia has a long history of inhabitants that may extend to the end of the Ice Age, over 12,000 years ago. Materials such as stone arrowheads, fragments of other stone tools, and broken pieces of pottery indicate evidence of early occupation in Columbia. Perhaps the most evident proof was the earthen



mounds that early natives constructed. In the eighth and ninth centuries, natives built large mounds of various types (ceremonial, crops, and burial) throughout the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys. Two small mounds remain in Columbia, located by Fish and Bixby Lakes. This has provided the City and environs with a rich archaeological history.

Later, in the mid-seventeenth century, the Illinois tribe emigrated from the area around the western shores of Lake Erie into what eventually became the State of Illinois. Other tribes that once inhabited the region were the Kaskaskia, Peoria, Cahokia, and Michigamme tribes.

This general region, officially known as the Illinois Territory in 1809, was first settled by Europeans in the late seventeenth century. In 1673, French explorers, traders, and missionaries



traveled along the Mississippi River and claimed land surrounding the river as French territory. At that time, the French called Columbia and the surrounding area "L'Aigle" or "The Eagle" and established a military presence in 1720. However, France ceded the Illinois Territory to the British in 1765 following Europe's Seven Year War.

The British occupied the region for a short time before George Rogers Clark captured Kaskaskia (which eventually became the capital city of the Illinois Territory) from the British during the Revolutionary War in 1778. Clark and his men passed through Columbia on what became known as the Kaskaskia-Cahokia Trail. Many brought their families from the East Coast back to the Columbia area in the 1790s.

The area's oldest permanent American settlements were Whiteside Station and Piggot's Fort. The settlement structures, fortified with timber, withstood attacks from Native Americans agitated by their British allies. Piggot's Fort was constructed in 1780 in the American Bottoms west of Columbia. Meanwhile, Whiteside Station was built between Columbia and Waterloo in 1793 for former soldier William Whiteside.

Monroe County was established in 1816, and the Illinois Territory became a state two years later. Known as Eagle Precinct until 1875, the original town of Columbia was laid out on the high ground in 1820, and a post office was installed in 1822.

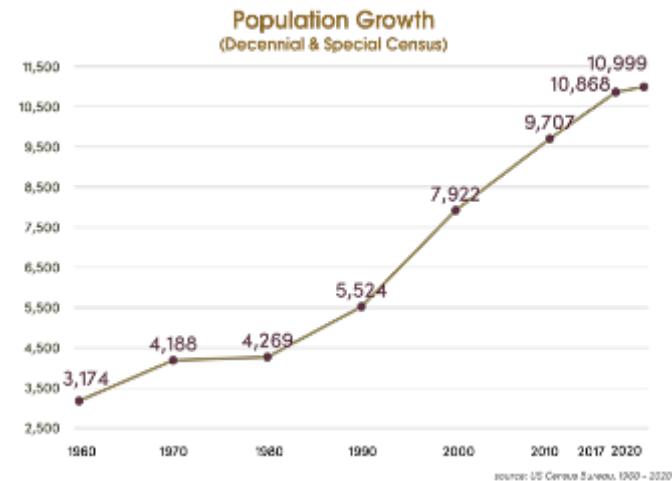
An influx of German immigrants arrived in Columbia beginning

in the mid-1830s. Southern Illinois and the Midwest region became popular destinations for German settlers leaving the East Coast and Germany. In 1859, the settlement of Columbia received its town charter. Twenty years later, in 1879, Columbia had grown to nearly 1,400 residents, according to the census. Eagle Precinct formally changed its name to Columbia Township in 1875, and Columbia became a village in 1903 and a city in 1927. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the city has expanded to include nearly 11,000 residents and continues to grow.

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

### COLUMBIA IS GROWING

Columbia's population has increased by over thirteen percent since 2010 to almost 11,000, according to the Census Bureau





2020 data. Columbia's growth over the decade is among the greatest in the St. Louis region matching that of St. Charles, Lincoln, and Warren Counties in Missouri which demonstrate similar growth. The only other city in "Metro East" to experience Columbia's growth was Edwardsville (25%), thought to be attributed to with its university influence (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). The table below shows the population of the City, Monroe County, the St. Louis

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and the State of Illinois. This data is based on the most recent American Community Survey Census data and projections by ESRI to 2029. This shows a continued growth trend for the City, a slower growth trend for the County, no growth for the MSA, and a decline for the State. The City is projected to continue to add households, but household size remains steady at 2.43 persons per household.

The split in male to female components of the population is predicted to reverse. In 2020, females outnumbered males, but that trend is predicted to have

reversed for 2024 and remains the same by 2029. This suggests that the typical slightly longer life expectancy for females is reversing to favor males, but the amount of change seems insignificant.

This situation may also represent advancements in medical technology that have generally given longer life

### Population and Household Trends

	Columbia, IL	Monroe County	St. Louis MSA	Illinois
<b>Population Totals</b>				
2010 Total Population	9,700	32,900	2,787,700	12,830,600
2020 Total Population	11,000	35,000	2,820,300	12,812,500
2024 Total Population	11,300	35,400	2,824,500	12,545,000
2029 Total Population (Est.)	11,400	35,500	2,820,100	12,310,600
<b>Population Change</b>				
Annual Pop. Change 2010 - 2024	1.1%	0.5%	0.1%	-0.2%
Annual Pop. Change (Est.) 2024 - 2029	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	-0.4%
<b>Household Totals</b>				
2010 Households	3,800	12,600	1,109,700	4,837,000
2020 Total Households	4,300	13,800	1,149,800	4,998,400
2024 Households	4,500	14,100	1,163,200	5,007,300
2029 Households (Est.)	4,700	14,500	1,180,000	5,052,900
<b>Household Size</b>				
2029 Average Household Size (Est.)	2.43	2.45	2.39	2.44
<b>Housing Units Needed</b>				
Additional Residents by 2029 (Est.)	100	100	-4,400	-234,400
Housing Units Needed (Est.)	40	40	-1,840	-96,210

Source: U.S. Census, ESRI, 2024.

### Columbia Population by Sex

2020 Population	%
Males	5,448
Females	5,565
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,013</b>

2024 Population	%
Males	5,709
Females	5,543
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,252</b>

2029 Population	%
Males	5,792
Females	5,657
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,449</b>

Source: Esri forecasts for 2024 and 2029. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.



expectancy to the population in general.

## COLUMBIA IS GETTING OLDER

Nearly 51 percent of Columbia's population is between 25 and 64 years old. Columbia's median age has been increasing over time and is expected to be 43 years of age by 2029. The City's median age will then exceed that of the MSA and the State. The County median age will be older than that of the City by one year (44). Eighteen- and one-half percent (18.5%) of Columbia's population is aged 65 or older with a significant percentage of that group entering retirement in the coming years.

Population by Age				
	Columbia, IL	Monroe County, IL	St. Louis MO-IL, MSA	Illinois
<b>Median Age Trends</b>				
2010 Median Age	40	41	38	37
2020 Median Age	41	43	40	39
2024 Median Age	41	43	40	39
2029 Median Age (Est.)	43	44	41	41
<b>2024 Population by Age Cohort</b>				
Children (0 - 18 Years)	23.7%	22.2%	21.1%	20.8%
Young Adults (18 - 24 Years)	7.1%	7.2%	8.9%	9.5%
Adults (25 - 64 Years)	50.7%	49.9%	51.0%	52.0%
Seniors (65+ Years)	18.5%	20.7%	19.0%	17.7%

Source: U.S. Census, ESRI, 2024.

Currently, 7.1% of the City's population is made up of young adults ages 18-24 years. This is below that of Monroe County and the MSA but higher than the State. However, the number of children ages 0-18 makes up nearly 24 percent of the population. This cohort is greater than all the other comparison locations. Therefore, the young adult component of the City population is likely to experience significant growth, especially if the City continues to attract families with younger children.

## GENERATIONAL MAKEUP

To look at the future population it is important to understand the generational makeup of the current population. Based on McCrindle Research and the 2024 ESRI population Estimate (11,300) for the City, the data beginning on the next page looks at the cohort groups by demographic name. Demographers and marketing organizations have given these names to these population groups. They may be familiar since reference to these age groups often appear in various media forms. The backgrounds and characteristics of these groups represent generational changes that have shaped each of these population segments. They also represent what is or maybe important to each of these sectors.

This is not meant to provide a comprehensive picture of the future population. However, it is useful in understanding how these groups are distributed among the City's current population.

The population figures are approximate due to generation range comparison with ACS age breakdown.



### BUILDERS (1924-1945) A.K.A The Silent Generation

#### Columbia Population: 985

- wealthiest generation
- fastest growing age demographic is 85+
- coming of age during post-war happiness
- focused on careers rather than activism
- seen and not heard
- youngest of generations to marry and have children
- social marker: World War II (1939-1945)
- marketing: print (traditional)



### BABY BOOMERS (1946-1964)

#### Columbia Population: 2,327

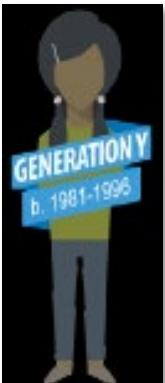
- grew up during dramatic social change
- biggest spenders (70%) of consumer goods & services
- pushing up rental costs
- desire age-in-place options
- enjoy walkable, urban areas
- spend more time providing for their families
- amount may strain Medicare
- social marker: moon landing (1969)
- marketing: broadcast (mass)



### GENERATION X (1965-1980) A.K.A Latchkey Generation

#### Columbia Population: 2,343

- founders of 55% of start-ups
- 82% are homeowners
- generate 31% of U.S. income
- greatest purchasing power
- 25% are primary financial support for 1 Millennial child
- 23% of workforce in 2030
- more time on social media than Millennials
- highest education attainment level to-date
- social marker: stock market crash (1987)
- marketing: direct (targeted)



### GENERATION Y (1981-1996) A.K.A Millennials

#### Columbia Population: 2,254

- high student debt, difficulty building wealth
- half rent / half own homes
- most educated generation to-date
- 32% of workforce in 2030
- most diverse to-date (Gen X predominantly white)
- \$1.3 trillion in buying power
- postponing marriage & kids
- seeking smaller homes/condos with proximity to amenities & services
- spreading urban lifestyles to the suburbs
- social marker: September 11 (2001)
- marketing: online (linked, hyper-connectivity)



## GENERATION Z (1997-2010) A.K.A New Silent Generation

### Columbia Population: 1,823

- largest generation, will be 40% of U.S. consumers, dominant trend influencers
- never been without internet
- will be most educated, alternate education means
- more likely to save, concerned about debt
- 34% of workforce in 2030
- want job security
- socially & ethically conscious
- social marker: global financial crisis (2008)
- marketing: digital (social)



## GENERATION ALPHA (born after 2010)

### Columbia Population: 1,568

- technology fully integrated
- will be the wealthiest & most formally educated generation
- 11% of workforce in 2030
- will live longer but have more health problems due to sedentary lifestyles
- will live with parents longer, have children later in life
- social marker: COVID-19 (2020)
- marketing: in situ (real-time)

This data shows that the largest cohorts are somewhat evenly distributed among the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y groups. The Generation Z and Generation Alpha

groups are also closely aligned in terms of their population numbers.

However, the earlier age groups of the Baby Boomers (those born between 1945 and 1955) are in their 70s and approaching their 80s. These are the groups that will begin to want or need other housing types and need more services. As previously noted, the City is getting older.

If the City is to grow from within, the Generations Y and Z cohorts need to create the families that will increase the Alpha cohort. Family size has been trending downward with the average 2024 household size being 2.49 based on the latest Census data and ESRI forecasts with an average family size of 3.03. This suggests that Columbia's future growth will continue to be dependent on in-migration from other parts of the St. Louis region (which has been a significant contributor to its past growth) or will occur if new business or industrial employment is created in the area.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Household Income is important to the health of a community since it reflects the economic well-being of the resident population. The table below shows the household income for the City, Monroe County, the St. Louis MSA, and Illinois.



### Household Income

	Columbia, IL	Monroe County, IL	St. Louis MO-IL, MSA	Illinois
<b>2024 Households by Income Range</b>				
Less than \$25,000	8.7%	10.3%	14.2%	14.8%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	9.5%	9.7%	16.9%	16.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	11.2%	12.4%	16.3%	15.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.4%	12.4%	12.7%	12.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	23.6%	25.5%	18.7%	18.3%
\$150,000 or more	34.7%	29.8%	21.2%	22.7%
<b>Per Capita Income Trends</b>				
2024 Per Capita Income	\$56,918	\$52,744	\$45,092	\$45,843
2029 Per Capita Income (Est.)	\$64,882	\$60,573	\$52,512	\$53,740
Annual Increase (Est.) 2024 - 2029	2.7%	2.8%	3.1%	3.2%
<b>Household Income Trends</b>				
2024 Median Household Income	\$112,666	\$106,903	\$79,002	\$81,015
2029 Median Household Income (Est.)	\$124,618	\$115,551	\$92,073	\$92,541
Annual Increase (Est.) 2024 - 2029	2.0%	1.6%	3.1%	2.7%

Source: U.S. Census, ESRI, 2024.

As the table indicates, both the per capita income and the median income levels for the City exceed all other geographies. Per capita and household incomes are projected to increase between 2024 and 2029 by slightly lower percentages than some of the comparative geographies.

### COLUMBIA IS A BALANCE

Community input and stakeholder discussions revealed that Columbia represents a balancing act between old and new, small-town feel and growth, and community roots and heritage.

Columbia's residents strongly value what many consider to be the community's defining qualities and characteristics. However, in most cases, these residents also recognize that fast-paced demographic, economic, social, and industry shifts will inevitably impact the community. The Comprehensive Plan aims to strike a balance so that future changes continue to maintain today's strengths.

### POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections take into consideration growth patterns that are based on past trends and make assumptions about what may happen if these trends continue. The projections typically look 20 to 25 years into the future. These projections represent a standard comprehensive plan element; but several notations should be made.

The City of Columbia is part of the St. Louis metropolitan area that as a region has been characterized by slow growth for decades. In-migration to a metro region from other locales is driven by job growth and metro St. Louis has not seen net growth. The new jobs that have been created by various businesses and industries have largely offset job losses from those businesses and industries that have left. That means that most of the communities that have grown in the metro area have been the result of movement within the region. Acquiring reasonably accurate data about Columbia's population growth in terms of the origin of those who moved into the City is not possible. However, it is a safe assumption that growth of 13%

between the 2010 and 2020 census was largely the result of persons that were already living in the St. Louis region.

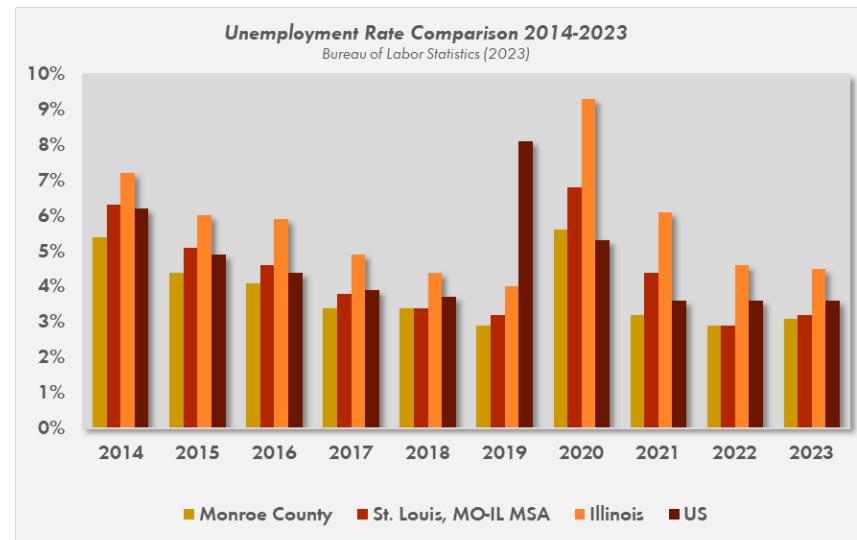
Therefore, in thinking about these projections, it should be noted that future population growth will most likely be driven by similar conditions. Also, if a sizable business or industry moves into the Columbia area along the I-255 corridor any one of these project scenarios could be skewed.

Looking at the population data presented previously in this section it can be noted that the population of the City increased by 1.1% per year between 2010 and 2024. The current Census/ESRI estimate is that the 2024 population of the City is 11,300 and is expected to increase to 11,400 by 2029. This suggests a lowering annual trend of about 0.2% per year. If this rate of growth is projected out over the next 20 years Columbia population will have grown to approximately 11,840 residents or approximately 540 more residents than the 2024 population.

However, based on the City's number of building permits issued and subdivisions in process this estimate would seem to be low. If the 2010-2024 rate of growth of the City were to continue, the 2030 population would be approximately 12,000 and by 2040 would have grown to approximately 13,500.

Urban planners and demographers strive to project population particularly as a component of the comprehensive planning process. Looking beyond a 20-year period for any city is not productive because there are too many factors that influence population growth. Projections are even more difficult in a

metropolitan area like the St. Louis MSA where the overall growth pattern as a region has been static for decades.



#### 2024 Employed Population 16 Years Old + by Industry

<b>Total</b>	<b>6,293</b>
Agriculture/Mining	2.3%
Construction	6.0%
Manufacturing	8.6%
Wholesale Trade	2.7%
Retail Trade	8.2%
Transportation/Utilities	4.6%
Information	1.4%
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	10.2%
Services	51.9%
Public Administration	4.2%

Source: Esri forecasts for 2024 and 2029. U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010 decennial Census data converted by Esri into 2020 geography.



**Where Columbia Residents Leave For Work by County**

County (Top Ten)		# of Workforce	% of Workforce
1	St. Louis County, MO	1,561	26.40%
2	Monroe County, IL	1,065	18.01%
3	St. Clair County, IL	887	15.00%
4	St. Louis City, MO	849	14.36%
5	Madison County, IL	344	5.82%
6	Cook County, IL	162	2.74%
7	Jefferson County, MO	130	2.20%
8	St. Charles County, MO	123	2.08%
9	Randolph County, IL	74	1.25%
10	Sangamon County, IL	72	1.22%
All Other Locations		645	10.91%
TOTAL		5,912	100%

**Where Columbia Workforce Lives by County**

County (Top Ten)		# of Workforce	% of Workforce
1	Monroe County, IL	1,434	36.29%
2	St. Clair County, IL	858	21.72%
3	Cook County, IL	343	8.68%
4	St. Louis County, MO	283	7.16%
5	Madison County, IL	267	6.76%
6	Jefferson County, MO	152	3.85%
7	Randolph County, IL	91	2.30%
8	St. Louis City, MO	82	2.08%
9	St. Charles County, MO	52	1.32%
10	Clinton County, IL	20	0.51%
All Other Locations		369	9.34%
TOTAL		3,951	100%

Beginning in 2020 various events have impacted real estate markets, consumer spending, and migration. These have included the COVID pandemic, inflation, and a rise in interest rates. Even as unemployment has stayed low post-pandemic, these other factors have impacted migration patterns.

Columbia's growth has been largely the result of in-migration from other parts of the St. Louis MSA. The City's housing choices, living environment, and quality schools have been a significant influence in attracting new residents and fueling the City's housing development. This pattern may have slowed temporarily but may accelerate to the same pattern of 1% annual growth that occurred over the 2010-2020 decade, particularly if the national economy stabilizes or takes a trend that is viewed favorable by the general population. The potential growth that would evolve from the continuation of the City's growth rate in the last decade was discussed on the previous page.

## WORKFORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The tables to the left are based on the U.S. Census Bureau maps the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), describing geographic patterns of jobs by their employment locations and residential locations, and the connection between. The tables that follow are based on this data. According to 2022 ACS On the Map data, 79.9% of those employed in Columbia live outside the City representing a daily inflow of 3,155 persons. Of



those persons who live in Columbia, 5,116 (86.5%) commute to work outside the City.

The data from the tables on the previous page showing where the persons that work in Columbia live and where persons go to work indicates that the nearly 58% of the City's workforce lives in Monroe and St. Clair Counties. The table also indicates that 40.8% of Columbia's residents leave to work in either St. Louis City or St. Louis County. Seventy-three percent (73%) of residents over the age of 16 participate in the workforce. Note that the data is the result of the location of the business. For example, Cook County (the Chicago area) shows up because of people who live in Cook County and are providing some remote work for businesses in the City. Conversely, 162 residents of the City are not commuting to Cook County. Essentially, the "work from home" trend that accelerated following the COVID pandemic affects this data.

According to ESRI forecasts based on data from the Census, 6,293 persons are employed among the civilian employed population age 16 years and older.

As the data in the table on upper right shows, 43% of employment is concentrated in the Services categories (including educational, health care, social assistance, professional, scientific, management and & administrative, and waste management services).

Historic unemployment data could not be found for the City of Columbia but data from 2014 through 2023 for Monroe

County, the St. Louis MSA, the State of Illinois, and the US is displayed in the chart below. As the chart indicates, Monroe County has historically had the lowest unemployment rate among all the sectors shown.

## COMMUNITY VISION

As noted previously, as part of an extensive public engagement process in developing this Comprehensive Plan, a vision for the future of the City evolved.

How should City residents and businesses, the St. Louis regional community, and outsiders view the community in 25 years...

- Columbia, Illinois, is:
  - Growing at a manageable rate.
  - Residents and businesses believe the City is complete and sustainable as a community and that it meets their needs.
  - Represents an important balance between its:
    - Heritage.
    - Welcoming, inclusive spirit.
    - Safe small-town feel.
    - Attractiveness as a regional destination, as a place to live, and as a place to both operate and locate a business.
    - Social and physical connectivity, quality neighborhoods, and a variety of housing choices.
    - Support of local businesses.

- Recognized need for economic sustainability, maintaining natural environment, and desires responsible growth and development.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As the vision statement and the public engagement input that supports it suggested, there is consensus and desire for Columbia to become a balanced community that meets the needs of its residents and businesses. As a community that is part of a large metro area, Columbia cannot divorce itself from its role as a "bedroom community".

The employment base residing in parts of St. Louis City and County will always be attractive to people with a range of skilled, highly skilled, and highly educated talents. In this context, the City's location provides easy and relatively timely access to those job locations that are in the St. Louis City and County core of the region. This factor has undoubtedly contributed to the City's growth. This by no means implies that the City should not participate in regional economic development efforts and should not promote its target industrial or commercial development opportunities to those entities or that it should not conduct its own economic development initiatives.

Residents want their children to be able to return to Columbia to live and work. To achieve that goal, the City needs to offer the "live, relax, and play" components (social gathering places, bars and restaurants, sports facilities, reasonable access to services and retail commercial entities). This will help to develop a core of

the younger population who are passionate about and want to live in the City. While job creation is an important component of this vision, having affordable housing options to attract and support young professionals and new families is of equal importance.

## REAL ESTATE MARKET TRENDS AFFECTING LAND USE

The consideration of future development opportunities as part of the comprehensive planning process too often ignores real estate market trends. Therefore, it is important to look at the regional market for various real estate types before a plan for future land uses considerations begins. The following discussion looks at current and possible future trends by reviewing data from the major real estate brokerage entities in the St. Louis region and national trends.

Residents indicated a range of amenities, whether shopping for men's clothing or home repair items, or more opportunities for youth sports and recreation – suggesting the need to ensure Columbia attracts commercial and recreational growth that aligns with anticipated increases in population and market demand.

A complete community intends to fulfill the basic needs of all residents and support the ability to live, work, and play. It focuses on the idea of keeping long-time residents in the community as their needs change, having housing (supported by

social, shopping, and recreational amenities) that is attractive to younger singles and families where the housing choices can grow with them. This planning concept addresses issues of density, housing mix, transportation, and land use to improve residents' lives.

It is hard to predict what will happen over the next 25 years. However, working toward a complete and sustainable community during that time will inevitably strengthen Columbia's resiliency and desirability as a place to live, work and play. This will also strengthen the City's desirability within the metro region.

## HOUSING

Housing markets nationally have been changing for the past 10 years. The desire for unit types such as row houses, town houses, and zero-lot line attached single-family units has now spread to the St. Louis region although this demand has been evolving in other metro areas for 10 years.

While condominium style ownership has always had appeal to empty nesters and professionals without children, high-amenity multi-family living demand has been increasing as well. A larger segment of the population is active, does not want to deal with housing maintenance of any kind; nor does it view home ownership with the same investment benefit as it has in the past. Others want housing options that allow them to transition from four-bedroom single-family residences on large lots to something that might be more appropriately sized for empty nesters and with less maintenance. A sector of the "seniors" market wants

housing that is age restricted. What all these trends suggest, and resident input has shown, is the need to ensure Columbia offers housing options for all life stages and market desires.



## RETAIL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The landscape of development for retail and service businesses has changed dramatically in the view of many people. However, what is occurring today is really a function of factors that started during the Great Recession. A consistent urban planning and development goal focuses on attracting retail, restaurant, drinking, and entertainment businesses that generate sales taxes. This source of revenue has become the life blood of many municipalities and state governments.

Changes in how people shop for goods and services have been occurring for nearly 20 years. US retail space was, and still is, overbuilt. The US has, for many years, had more retail square footage per capita than any other developed nation. How did we get here?

The overbuilding was spurred largely by liberal bank and institutional financing for retail development that accelerated in the late 1990's and early 2000's. This was further fueled by competition among cities in metro environments that handed out sizable financial incentives for retail developments to locate in one place versus another. Many of the metro markets like St. Louis were not rapidly growing populations, so when a new retailer located in a market, they could only survive by stealing market share from others selling the same merchandise. This ultimately meant some would fail.

The advent of online shopping (beginning with Amazon) has accelerated on an annual basis. The COVID pandemic made more people aware of what they could buy using that method. Among retailers, the "old line" department stores have been the most impacted because they were slowest to embrace the online trend or to recognize that their website had to be user-friendly. As the anchors for enclosed malls, the department stores generated the traffic for many of the other mall retailers who then fell like dominoes as department stores closed.

The mall as a "gathering place" has been fading for years- in part as a result of demographic changes and preferences. The

department store bankruptcies and store closures have had a cascading effect on the relevancy of mall properties as they were originally conceived. The most successful re-creation of mall properties has focused on mixed-use scenarios combining multi-family residential, office, retail, entertainment, restaurant, and in some cases institutional uses, in a sort of "town-center" environment. To date, seven of the St. Louis regional malls have closed and redevelopment in one of these scenarios involved a variety of residential development types with two other mall redevelopment plans in the process with similar elements.

It should also be noted that restaurants are really part of the retail sector, and they were, and still are, overbuilt as dining preferences have changed. Retail closures in both malls and open-air shopping centers have been occurring at an increasing rate.

In the current post-COVID environment, people have made it clear that they do not want to purchase certain items online. They want to see and feel some things before they buy. Retailers, some formerly online only, have developed/occupied smaller store formats that, in some instances, will begin to be more like "showrooms" and not everything will be stocked at the store. Target and Macy's were the first with these developments. Consumers see their options and touch the merchandise, and the selected merchandise will be sent home or delivered to the store. This has driven the re-occupancy of some of the better retail locations and helped some of the remaining malls to regain shoppers.

What is undeniably clear is that the retail landscape has changed, and the outcome of the change is not yet complete. In the past, cities, particularly in metro environments, have competed fiercely for retail development. However, the current conditions and future trends suggest that retailers may make decisions that are based less on what government financial incentives they can get and more on market reality. Therefore, municipal chasing of retail uses may be futile. Today developers and retailers now have greater cost constraints to remain profitable and building new shopping centers now must cope with higher construction and financing costs.

Any new sales tax-generating development in Columbia will be the result of one of three factors or a combination thereof.

- Continued population growth of the City and the adjacent communities.
- Population declines in St. Louis County and the aged existing retail properties in the South County area.
- Industrial development that occurs in the areas adjacent to the northeast or southern sectors of the City.

## INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

In the St. Louis region, industrial development has been predominantly driven by the logistics and technology sectors. However, the technology sector development (including research and development) has largely been in clusters in St. Louis City and County near the major medical centers and the companies

involved with plant research. Manufacturing industries have had no significant growth in the St. Louis region for decades.



Conversion of former General American Insurance campus to apartments

Industries driven by office workers such as various types of banking, data processing, law, computer/information technology, and insurance have transitioned key components to work-from-home individuals. The regional office market, like much of the U.S., has significant vacancy. Some major office complexes are being converted to residential uses because they cannot be leased for office use.

Market projections from the commercial brokers indicate that new office construction is likely to fall into two sectors, build-to-suit for companies that need to consolidate multiple locations and medical office spaces. This latter category has been the

predominant new construction in the St. Louis region for several years.

Some businesses have found that allowing employees to work from home has had beneficial results in terms of lowering their office space requirements. Other businesses have become frustrated with this work environment and are requiring their employees to come to the office. This has met with some resistance (particularly from employees with children where finding day care can be difficult along with its cost). This is likely to result in employee turnover to some degree where businesses are making this demand. At the same time some studies have indicated that some employees want to come back to the office and find that they miss the social interactions that are common to the office environment.

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## SECTION 3 – EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Making decisions about future land use and development must begin with cataloging and understanding the current land uses, physical and environmental constraints that impact development patterns, and other information that gives a picture of current development patterns.

### EXISTING LAND USE

The map on the following page entitled "Existing Land Use" shows the existing land use patterns currently existing in and adjacent to the City. As might be found in any community that is part of a larger metro area, it shows a pattern of suburban style development dominated by single-family residential development.

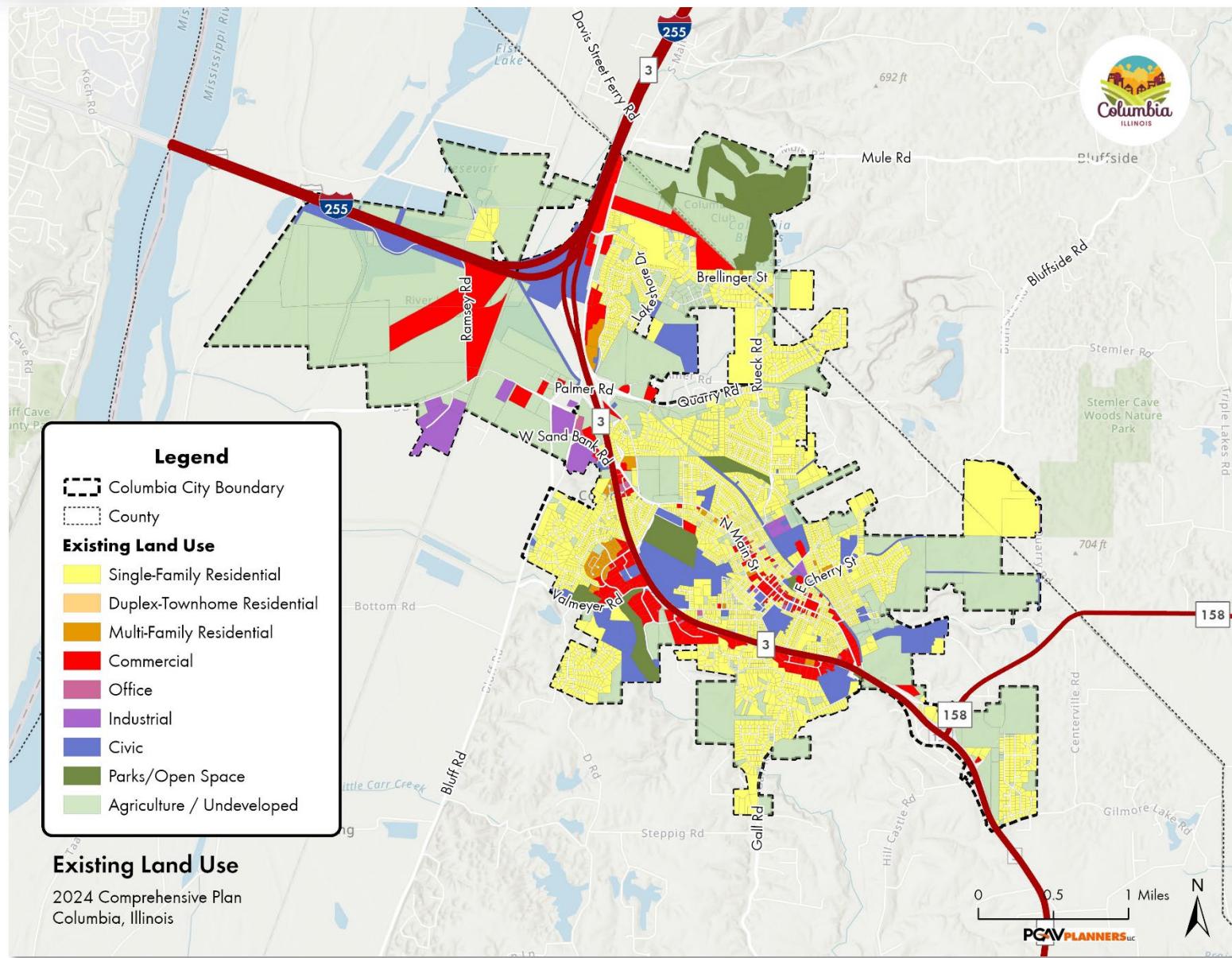
However, Columbia also has a traditional "grid" development pattern at its core along Main Street which also served as Illinois Route 3. This meant travelers on the route had to go through the City which was the commerce center of the community. With the beginning of construction of I-255 and the relocation of Route 3 to create the connection with I-255 in the 1970's, the commercial heart of the City began to relocate along new Route 3. Therefore, Main Street began a decline and loss of businesses. The City has nurtured this core of buildings and helped property owners, and the business community create a quaint downtown. City Hall is in this area along with an array of

restaurants, bars, and shops. As noted above, Main Street was the commercial heart of the City and many of the public and semi-public uses (schools, churches, post office, etc.) were adjacent as well. As the City has grown along with its population, relocated Route 3 is home to a new commercial core with grocery stores, offices, retail and service businesses, and a hotel and conference center.

The older section of Route 3 in the vicinity of its connection with I-255 has grown as well with new commercial development, as well as recreation facilities and two large automobile dealerships. This northern area has significant commercial development potential with available land. However, to achieve this development, significant infrastructure improvements will be needed in the form of water and sewer extensions and roadway improvements.

In March of 2024 the City established an Illinois Business District establishing new sales taxes for retail, service, and hotel businesses that can be used to support the costs of these improvements. New businesses can access these funds upon approval by the City to cover certain site and infrastructure costs derived from their sales tax generation.

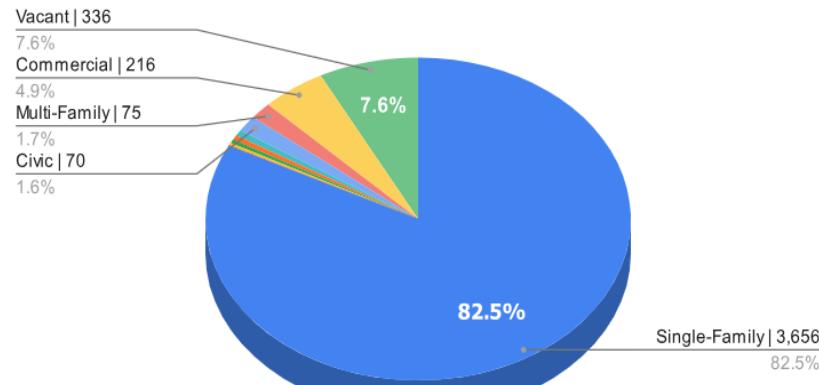
The newer residential areas of the City are clustered around both the old and new commercial core areas. The newer housing is easily identifiable on the Existing Land Use map because of the curvilinear, suburban-style development layouts.



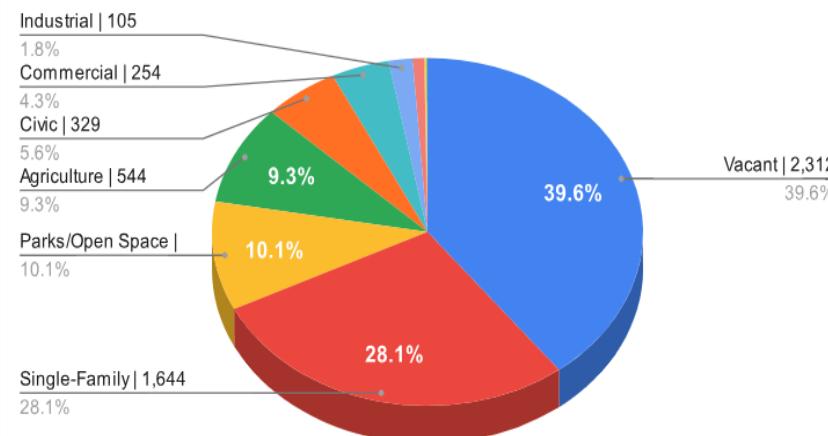
Columbia encompasses approximately nine square miles of land, of which nearly 60 percent is currently developed. About 40 percent of Columbia's acreage remains undeveloped, vacant land. Although designated as vacant, it is important to note that most of that land is impacted by floodplains, floodways, and sinkholes. However, Columbia has the opportunity to expand as needed.

Columbia's current land use includes 5,842 acres and 4,430 parcels. Single-Family Residential accounts for the greatest land use category at over 82 percent. Most of Columbia's commercial development lies along Main Street, Illinois Route 3/Admiral Parkway, and Old Route 3. Single-lot and small strip development comprise most of Columbia's commercial development, with the downtown Main Street area as the exception.

**% of Land Area in Parcels (4,430 Total)**



**% of Land Area in Acres (5,842 Total)**



According to City permit records, residential and commercial development remained relatively constant between 2019 and 2020. However, commercial development experienced a slight decrease in permits in 2021. This decrease was likely a result of the COVID-19 pandemic impacts. Conversely, the increase in residential construction permits demonstrates Columbia's desirability as a place to live.



## DEVELOPMENT IMPEDIMENTS

### KARST TOPOGRAPHY

A large quarry is located on the northeastern edge of the City outside the City limits. The eastern edge of the City begins an edge of increasing elevation of topography. Soil in these areas is underlain with rock formations which create underground caverns that carry stormwater. This soil condition is known as karst topography.

Karst is a topography formed from the dissolution of soluble carbonate rocks. These include dolomite, limestone, and gypsum. Such an area is also characterized by features like depression fields above and drainage systems with sinkholes and caves underground. Subterranean drainage often limits surface water ponding since rainfall will percolate through the surface. Karst features may occur only at subsurface levels and can be totally invisible above ground.

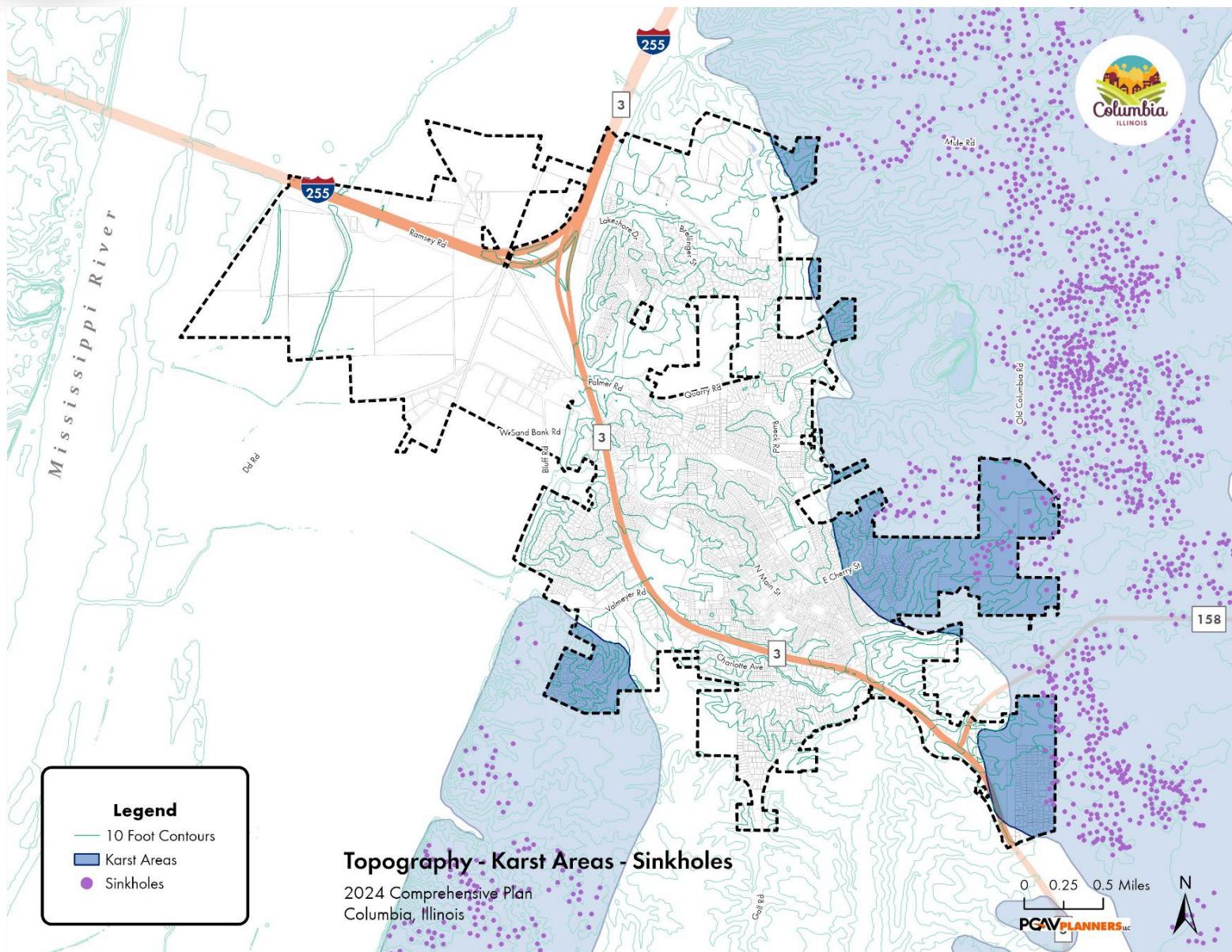
The Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) has extensive data on State geology and areas that are undermined or contain Karst topography and sinkholes. The map on the following page entitled **Topography, Karst Areas, Sinkholes** shows Columbia area topography, areas identified by ISGS as containing Karst topography characteristics, and known sinkholes in the vicinity of Columbia.

Areas that contain sinkholes are susceptible to aquifer contamination and may also lack the stability required for certain land-uses. Sinkholes visible at the ground surface are one of the

major indicators of karst terrains. As the map indicates, the entire eastern edge of the City shows this condition, and it extends north to Centerville and south to the north edge of the Waterloo area. Often, in the development process of these areas, it is common practice for the sinkholes to be filled. This carries a risk that the underground water system will be affected, and, if proper fill is not used, the aquifers fed by the larger underground drainage systems will be affected and potentially contaminated.

The map indicates development in this part of the City is not advisable unless the property to be developed is the subject of a professional geotechnical investigation before development construction of any kind. Also, it is essential for the City to review its development code restrictions for development in these areas. It may be advisable for the City to retain a geotechnical engineer to review the current code requirements and provide suggested revisions for development in the City's many karst areas.

Another development-related concern common to many parts of Illinois is undermining. This relates to limestone mining to produce gravel or concrete or coal mining which is prevalent throughout Illinois but particularly in the southern half of the state. Review of ISGS data and mapping for Monroe County shows the only concern for this condition to be to the southwest in the Valmeyer area where caves left behind from limestone mining are prevalent.





### FLOODPLAIN AREAS

Parts of Columbia both within and adjacent to the City boundary and west of Route 3 in the northern part of the community are designated floodplains by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The map on the following page entitled **Floodplain** shows the FEMA designated areas in and around the City. This map uses the most recognized terminology, "Floodway", "100-year", and "500-year", for the various zone designations. In each of these cases it means that there is 1% chance (or one in 100 or 500 chance) of a flood of that magnitude occurring in any given year. FEMA now defines the flood zones more finitely but for the purposes of this Comprehensive Plan and the typical reader of this document, the more common definitions are used.

Within the Floodway, generally no development can occur except, for example, park and recreation facilities, and farming. However, even in this case no vertical construction can occur that takes land surface out of the floodway.

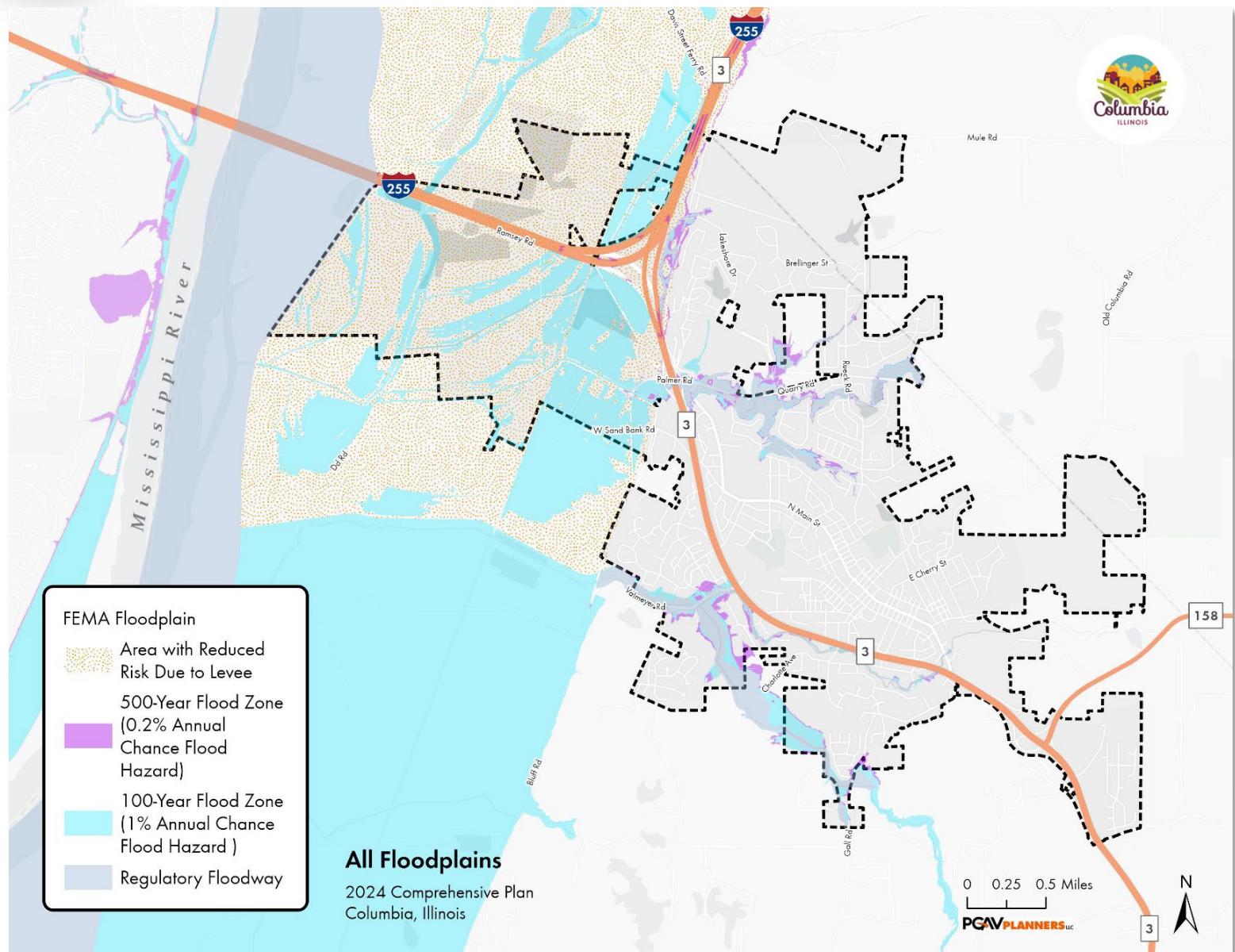
Development can occur in the 100-year flood zone but is subject to creating an offset in pavement or building area that can detain or retain the runoff created by the development. This is usually manifested by the creation of a large detention basin that can hold site runoff during a storm and release the water slowly. In developments such as industrial parks with multiple buildings, there is a system of such detention facilities that operate in tandem for the entire development area.

A 500-year flood zone is considered an area of moderate flood hazard, usually the area between the limits of the 100- year and 500-year floods. Within this area there may be floodplains of lesser hazards, such as areas protected by levees from a 100-year flood, or shallow flooding areas with average depths of less than one foot or drainage areas less than 1 square mile. Development is less restricted in the areas, but cities or area agencies typically require stormwater detention.

More recently, cities have modified development codes to require any building and paved areas to be one to two feet above the designated 500-year flood elevation. The same standards for stormwater detention and controlled runoff from development also would apply.

Over the last 20 years, the St. Louis region has seen more frequent localized flooding events that have exceeded both 100-year and 500-year levels. These situations have been relatively localized but the number of areas of localized flooding have been increasing.

A portion of the floodplain area within the City west of Route 3 is protected by the Metro East Levee System. The Metro East Levee System consists of five levees located in Madison, St. Clair and Monroe Counties in Illinois with a total length of the five levees at 75.8 miles. Within this levee system, the Prairie du Pont and Fish Lake Levees are those in the Columbia area.



Before 2018, these levees were in potential failure condition. According to data from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, St. Louis District data, "The levees were authorized to a height equal to 54 feet on the St. Louis gage. The Metro East Levees do not have a height issue. They are at the authorized height. Underseepage is the major issue with this system. Sandboils have developed along the levees, indicative of significant underseepage problems, which increases risk of failure."

The Corps addressed the problem through rehabilitation of the levees and provision of additional protection. In April of 2022, FEMA recertified the levees for 100-year protection. That makes development in the area again possible subject to some of the development requirements discussed above.

### **FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPEDIMENTS**

Development impediments can also be financial in nature. These are related to development costs where, if the developer were to pass these costs on to the end user, the ability to market the property or development becomes noncompetitive with other properties in the area or the region. These costs are usually related to public improvements such as roadway/signalization, extension of water or sewer lines, site grading issues, or repurposing buildings. These costs are often those that the City might otherwise have to incur. It is likely that, to attract significant development to these locations, the City may need to consider financing incentives authorized under State law such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Business District designations.

The City has used both tools to induce development projects in other areas of the City. Some of the biggest development impediment costs are discussed below.

### **Floodplain Development Costs**

An example of this relates to properties that have floodplain restrictions. As noted previously, it is possible to develop property in such locations. However, in addition to providing normal roadway and infrastructure elements, there are substantial costs associated with the stormwater handling and detention needs. Also, floodplain soils typically require added foundation and flooring pier costs. It should be noted that industrial and commercial development behind a 100-year levee is still not enough protection for some users. All the major developments in floodplains in the St. Louis region (Earth City, Chesterfield Valley, Hollywood Casino &



Amphitheater are behind 500-year levees. The developments in

each of those locations also have interior stormwater control and pumping stations that pump accumulating stormwater over the levee back into the river,

Large retail commercial and industrial companies are reluctant to build within 100-year flood plains unless building and parking footprints can be elevated above the 500-year level. They would also require that access roads to major thoroughfares be at similar elevations so that their access cannot be cut off during a flood. This makes development in these locations very costly.

### ***Soil Condition Impediments***

Another case represents the areas with Karst topography. Certain uses can be developed in these locations (subject to prior soil testing) but foundation design and construction become more extensive and therefore costly.

Development over undermined areas present another added cost factor. The shopping center that includes Dierbergs market and Target in Shiloh and a nearby Drury Inn in O'Fallon both incurred significant development costs for the foundations necessary to build in that location that were assisted with TIF and Business District funding from each City.

Lastly, development in areas with rocky soil conditions increases all the costs associated with site preparation, building construction, and underground utility (particularly water and sewer lines) construction. The Gravois Bluffs and Dierbergs developments in south St. Louis County in the late 1990's are an



Gravois Bluffs commercial and industrial development

example of this situation. Development costs associated with the rocky soil conditions and required road improvements exceeded \$40 million. Developing the two adjacent sites required moving or disposing of approximately 9 million cubic yards of rock. Each of these locations was marketed for commercial development for more than 20 years but these development costs were too great. Missouri TIF and Transportation Development District funding created by the City of Fenton enabled this development.

These financial impediments examples are provided as a reminder that while the Comprehensive Plan can envision development locations that are both beneficial to the residents and the City with prime locations for market consideration, other factors can stand in the way unless cost issues can be resolved. These factors can affect both large- and small-scale development.

## SECTION 4 – HOUSING

### NEIGHBORHOODS & HOUSING

#### CONTEXT

Neighborhoods often serve as a primary factor in attracting and retaining residents when choosing where to live. Charming, inclusive, and community-minded neighborhoods offering various housing options contribute to vibrant communities and provide a high quality of life.

Offering a variety of housing types and prices increases diversity. Providing different housing options ensures communities offer homes to residents as the population grows, ages, and changes. In addition, providing attainable housing (more affordable for more people) ensures communities can offer options.

Attainable housing choice benefits those individuals who often struggle to live where they work, remain in their community as they age, or raise a family where they grew up. These groups often include:

- younger generations,
- teachers and first responders
- entry-level positions, and support workers,
- retirees and empty nesters,
- young families.

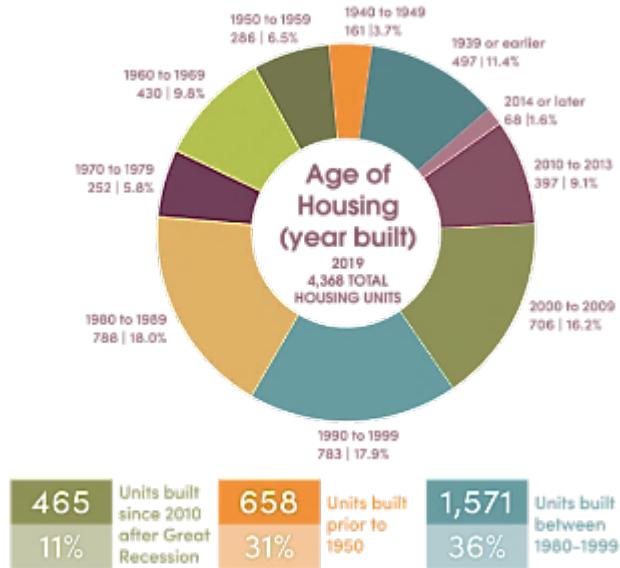
#### INSIGHT

#### NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

Columbia's housing stock consists of nearly 37 percent of homes built 40 or more years ago, before 1980. The majority (52.1 percent) developed in the 30 years between 1980 to 2010, with only 10.7 percent constructed after 2010 and the Great Recession.

Most of Columbia's oldest neighborhoods are within a half-mile radius of Main Street. Although close to the downtown core, many older neighborhood streets lack sidewalks, curbs, and beautifying streetscaping. Many newer single-family subdivisions

#### AGE OF HOUSING (BY YEAR BUILT)





are in the northern part of Columbia, along Quarry Road and Rueck Road.

## HOUSING UNITS

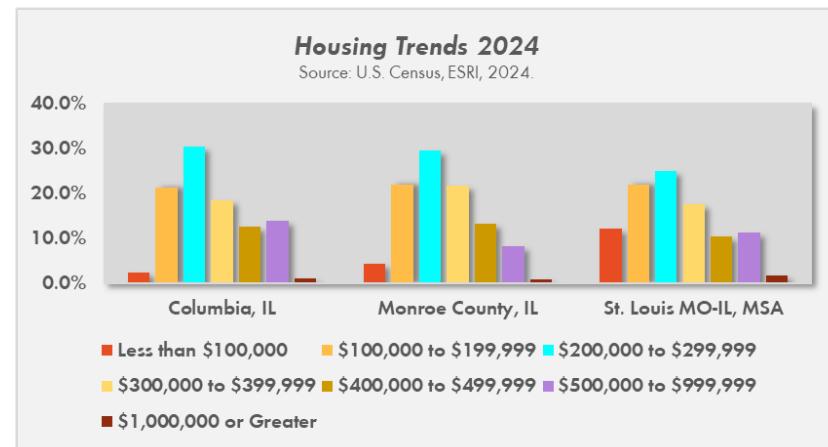
According to 2023 Census and ESRI data Columbia's housing units have grown in number and increased in value. Median value is the highest in the comparison shown below.

### Housing Trends

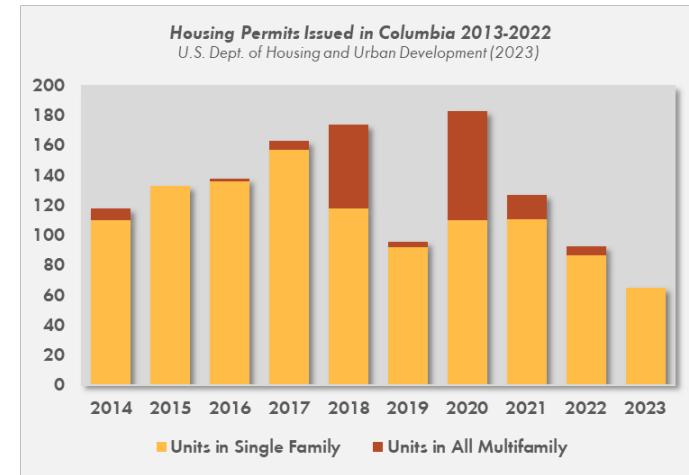
	Columbia, IL	Monroe County, IL	St. Louis MO-IL, MSA	Illinois
<b>Occupancy</b>				
Owner-Occupied	77.0%	78.6%	62.5%	60.3%
Renter-Occupied	17.5%	15.6%	28.4%	31.0%
<b>Housing Unit Vacancy</b>				
Total Housing Units	4,743	14,978	1,279,606	5,482,242
Vacant Housing Units	261	869	116,444	476,955
<b>Median Housing Value</b>				
2024 Median Home Value	285,524	279,646	264,189	274,127
2029 Median Home Value (Est.)	327,256	316,605	319,563	308,598
Annual Increase (Est.) 2024 - 2029	2.8%	2.5%	3.9%	2.4%
<b>Housing Value by Range</b>				
Less than \$100,000	2.4%	4.4%	12.1%	12.0%
\$100,000 to \$199,999	21.2%	22.0%	21.9%	20.4%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	30.5%	29.6%	25.0%	23.9%
\$300,000 to \$399,999	18.4%	21.7%	17.5%	18.8%
\$400,000 to \$499,999	12.5%	13.3%	10.4%	10.3%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	14.0%	8.3%	11.2%	12.4%
\$1,000,000 or Greater	1.0%	0.8%	1.8%	2.3%

Source: U.S. Census, ESRI, 2024.

Total housing units are shown to be 4,743 units with 77% owner-occupied.



According to Department of Housing and Urban Development data from 2013 - 2022 housing permits have favored single-family structures.





According to the 2024 Census/ESRI data, Columbia's household size is 2.43 persons. The household size is the average ratio of the total household population to the number of occupied households. The U.S. Census Bureau counts any individual living in a dwelling unit as a household member, regardless of relationship. Therefore, individuals do not have to be related (families).

### VACANCY

According to the most recent Census/ESRI data, Columbia has a housing vacancy rate of 5.5%, which is comparable to Monroe County's 5.8 percent vacancy rate. In many ways, this vacancy rate does not readily attract more population and households since there are relatively few housing units to re-occupy. For example, if Columbia added 500 more residents at the 2024 ACS household size of 2.43, this would require at least 206 housing units which account for all currently vacant units (261 according to the 2024 data shown on the table on the previous page. This scenario would leave very few vacant housing units to absorb normal market operations. Most importantly, it would also present immediate demand for new housing units.

### HOUSING VALUE

As shown on the Housing Trends table on page 26, median home values are expected to increase by 2.8% between 2024 and 2029. The 2010 and 2019 American Community Surveys (ACS) previously showed that Columbia experienced a decrease in housing units valued between \$50,000 to \$99,999.

Conversely, the units priced between \$100,000 and \$299,999 grew by over 36 percent. Homes between the \$300,000 and \$499,999 range grew over 100 percent. The data shown in the Housing Trends 2024 chart on the following page show the demand for units in the \$500,000 to \$999,999 range continuing to grow. This unit price sector plus the \$400,000 to \$499,999 outpace the St. Louis MSA corresponding sectors.

### ATTAINABLE HOUSING

According to community engagement respondents to the housing survey, the top 5 housing needs to support Columbia now and in the future are:

1. Housing that allows seniors to age in place
2. Large single-family homes
3. Housing options for first-time home buyers
4. Attainable housing (More affordable for more people)
5. Age Restricted Communities

Despite growth in housing units, Columbia's high median home values (\$285,524 in 2024) and the percentage of cost-burdened residents suggest housing attainability is a challenge. Almost two out of three Columbia households (66 percent as of 2021) are cost-burdened, meaning they pay more than 30 percent of their income on basic housing costs (rent, mortgage, taxes, insurance, and utilities). In addition, with inflation rising



faster than wage growth, many homeowners and renters struggle to keep up with the demand of housing costs.

Columbia's housing attainability especially becomes an issue for essential workforces like teachers and public safety officers, individuals on fixed incomes or with disabilities, and younger generations with the added weight of high student loan debt.

Senior living facilities in Columbia are higher than the national average at \$5,700 per month. This statistic may contribute to the growing trend of seniors wanting to age in their own homes. In addition, housing maintenance expenses can often cause a burden to elderly residents on fixed incomes and those residents with lower incomes.

### SENIOR LIVING FACILITIES

AVERAGE COST OF ASSISTED LIVING

COLUMBIA \$5,700/mo  
NATIONAL \$4,000/mo

1 Memory Assisted Living Facility  
*Reflections at Garden Place*

1 Independent & Assisted Living Facility  
*Garden Place Senior Living*

source: senioradvice.com

contribute to high building costs.

Nationally, construction costs continue to increase as labor and material expenses soar. In addition to rising land costs, these expenses impact housing affordability as many developers and home builders across the nation cannot build new homes for less than \$300,000. Brick and other materials popular in Columbia

**Community engagement respondents said that they want housing in Columbia that:**

- **Attracts families**
- **Accommodates all life stages and generations**
- **Attracts business owners and start-ups**

### HOUSING TRENDS AND FORESIGHT

As discussed briefly in Section 2, the types of housing have changed significantly in the last 10 years and have done so at an accelerating pace. This has been the result of several factors:

- The rising cost of single-family housing and more recently, interest rates, has taken some buyers out of that market. This has also taken some "move up" buyers out of the market. These people are staying in the house they already own, investing in upgrades and improvements, thereby decreasing the rate of new construction, and limiting the number of existing homes on the market.
- Older empty-nester adults and professionals without children have many more activities and interests they would rather pursue outside of maintaining a single-family house and

yard. This has driven up the market for maintenance-free housing such as condominiums and luxury apartments.

- The role of the single-family house as guaranteed growth investment has less value to higher-income persons. These individuals are also interested in luxury apartments or other types of rental units where all the maintenance is the responsibility of the landlord.
- The demand for single family housing units on large lots has also been declining, especially among small families or those without children. Again, less yard area to maintain.
- Age-restricted senior living developments are in higher demand as well. This is a desire for healthy and mobile seniors to reside in developments with others their own age.

Studying these market trends and looking at what types of housing are being built in other parts of the St. Louis area core counties reveals a diversity of housing types that are directed at these markets. In some instances, an entire development will offer a mix of unit types. The best of these developments is based on a carefully thought-out plan of the layout so that the unit types are clustered and not intermixed. The graphic to the right shows the layout of the housing development that occupies half the former Crestwood Plaza shopping center site. The greater density row house and townhouse units are closer to the main street and the

commercial frontage while the larger more traditional single-family units are at the back overlooking a creek.

The takeaway from this example is that:

- There are no large lots.
- The unit types are segregated.
- The overall neighborhood is connected by sidewalks that connect to adjacent shopping and connect to the Great Rivers Greenway trail system at the northeast corner of the area.
- The pre-construction sale and deposit system sold all the units out in one weekend.

*Eastern half of former Crestwood Plaza Shopping Center site with 3 types of housing units on 25 acres, (sold out in 2023) units still being completed.*





This development is an example of market demand being met with the types of units ideal for the market trends that demographic data and market experts say are likely to extend into the future.

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## SECTION 5 – ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

### CONTEXT

#### ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Land use designation considers the analysis of the physical environment, which encompasses both natural and human-made features. Understanding the physical environment helps guide decision-making related to development in specific locations within the community, as natural and human-made features present constraints or opportunities.

Natural environment resources include:

- air, water, and soil health,
- open and natural spaces,
- wildlife habitats, and
- our overall ecosystems.

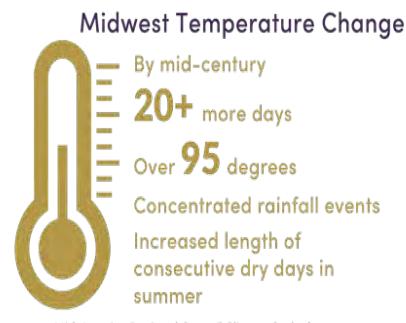
Protecting the natural environment is important for human health and well-being, as well as the health of our plant and animal populations and long-term climate. Striking a balance between new development and the protection of natural resources is essential to being a resilient community. We are beginning to see an increased frequency of extreme weather events such as flooding, drought, and extreme heat threatening infrastructure, human safety, biodiversity, water supply, and economic viability. Mitigating changing weather patterns is necessary to ensure a

safe and sustainable community for all. Moreover, understanding the community's natural resources and constraints helps determine the best use of land for the future.

#### REGIONAL FORECAST

The Midwest region expects to experience more than 20 additional days with temperatures over 95 degrees by mid-century. Additionally, the area anticipates increased concentrated rainfall events that are further apart in frequency, resulting in extended periods of consecutive dry days in the summer months. According to the Weather Channel's Climate Distribution Index, the St. Louis region ranks 17th in the list of top 25 U.S. cities expected to be most impacted by climate change in the future.

#### CLIMATE OUTLOOK



Weather Channel report ranks  
**St. Louis Region 17th** in the  
**Top 25** list of U.S. cities to be  
most impacted by climate change

source: The Weather Channel Climate Distribution Index

#### LAND USE

Land use refers to the activity and function of a parcel of land. Activities and functions range from residential to commercial and industrial to parks. Zoning ordinances are the primary tool

guiding land use decisions related to development. They regulate and define how the land can be used and developed (e.g., building height, setbacks, lot coverage, parking requirements, transitions, buffers, etc.).

### **Principles**

Supplemental and related to the environmental analysis, land use principles and planning best practices also guide decision-making related to parcel designation and location.

**Access:** Residents should have ready access to essential services, opportunities, amenities, variety, and other community members.

**Choice:** Providing people with more choices in housing options, amenities, jobs, and recreation opportunities improves the overall quality of life.

**Compact Development:** Compact development patterns supports reduced infrastructure needs.

**Compatibility:** Compatibility refers to proposed uses that are the same or complementary to their surroundings in terms of scale, traffic, and operational impact. Effective land use planning minimizes conflict or incompatibility between adjacent uses.

**Connection:** Connecting services, people, and places improves quality of life. Connection relates to transportation infrastructure (e.g., trails, sidewalks, streets, regional transit) and technology infrastructure (e.g., broadband availability).

**Intensity:** The intensity of development impacts demand on infrastructure and City services. The least intense development is park space, with the most intense being regional commercial and industrial park development.

**Placemaking:** Placemaking creates identity, encourages community gathering for an enhanced sense of belonging, improves quality of life for residents, attracts visitors, and encourages a concentration of multiple activities and amenities.

**Proximity:** Things must be close.

**Service Efficiency:** Efficient land use patterns and annexation policies maximize the City's ability to provide high-quality, cost-effective services such as water, sewer, and public safety to residents and businesses. Land use patterns with greater density also make school busing, mail delivery, and delivery of other services more efficient.

**Transportation Planning:** Land use patterns connect to street typology. Their relationship guides infrastructure investment decisions to ensure adequate service for future land uses. Subdivision street patterns that limit access to a single point, create emergency services access constraints.



### ECOSYSTEM

Columbia sits in the northern Ozarkian River Bluffs and Middle Mississippi Alluvial Plains. This region is partly glaciated with bluffs and ravines along the Mississippi River and well-developed karst, resulting in numerous caves, sinkholes, sinkhole ponds, and springs.

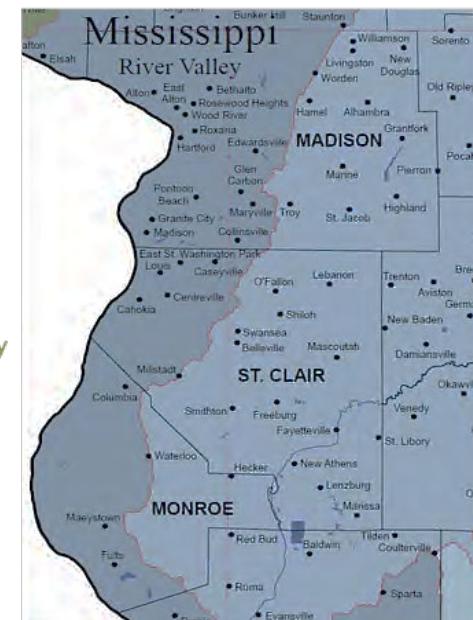
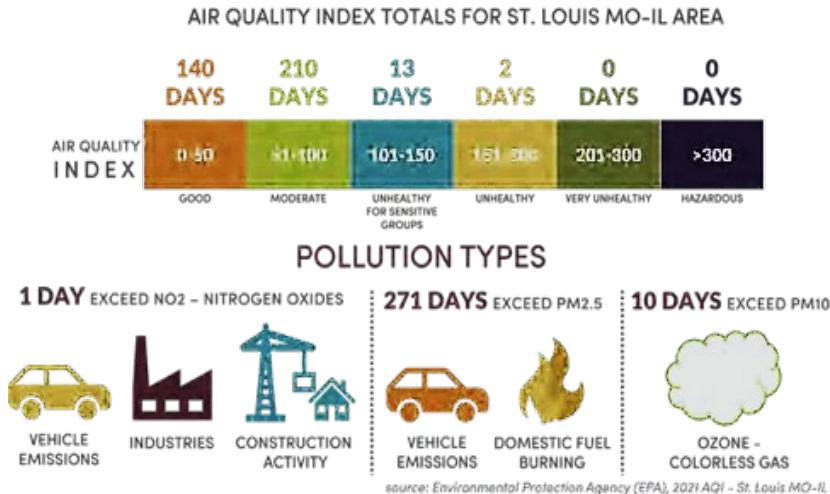
Outside of the urban land use in Columbia, this region's land use and land cover is cropland with corn, soybeans, and wheat. As the landscape shifts into the river bluffs, the ground cover changes to steep slopes and wooded areas. Preserving natural space can serve as an economic driver by attracting visitors and sustaining residents by enhancing the overall quality of life.

### Air Quality

The Environmental Protection Agency's Air Quality Index (AQI) shows that the St. Louis MO-IL Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) enjoys high to moderate-quality air. In 2020, the region experienced only thirteen days of air quality rated "unhealthy for sensitive groups." According to the EPA, most greenhouse gas emissions in the metropolitan area derive primarily from passenger vehicles, industry and construction, domestic fuel burning, and ozone gas.

### Water Resources

Columbia sits within one primary watershed – the Mississippi River watershed. In addition, Columbia's primary waterways further delineate the community's sub-watersheds.





- Hill Lake Creek runs through the western side of Columbia, west of Interstate 255 and, Illinois Route 3/Admiral Parkway.
- Palmer Creek runs through the northeastern part of Columbia, capturing many newer developments in the north along Quarry Road before meeting Hill Lake Creek in the west.
- Carr Creek runs from the southwest near the Mississippi River to the southeastern edge of Columbia.
- Wilson Creek runs along Centerville Road and Illinois Route 3/Admiral Parkway before meeting Carr Creek in the west.

### **Floodplains and Floodways**

Floodplains are generally discussed in Section 2 regarding development impediments. A flood plain map for the City and surrounding areas is provided in that Section based on the latest Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapping. The majority of Columbia's 100-year floodplain identified by the FEMA sits along Carr Creek, Hill Lake Creek, Palmer Creek, and the non-residential land to the west of Bluff Road. Most of the 500-year floodplain exists along current streams. The floodway, or area that is part of the stream's waterway and is the first to fill with water from excessive rain, corresponds to Columbia's creeks and low points. Current floodways are primarily located along the Mississippi River on land adjacent to Columbia, along Carr

Creek, Meadow Ridge Park, Admiral Trost Park, Palmer Creek, and Creekside Park.

The City of Columbia works to ensure the floodplain and floodway areas do not contain many structures. Most of Columbia's mapped floodplain and floodways occupy park and recreation, vacant, agricultural, or industrial parcels. New Flood Insurance Risk Maps (FIRM) have added a number of homes to a flood hazard zone, which will require any of those properties with federally backed mortgages to have flood insurance. Additionally, many finance companies and banks now require flood insurance on mortgages in a flood hazard zone.

### ***Karst Topography***

As a significant development impediment, Section 2 of this Plan document has a discussion of Karst Topography and a map that displays the known area where this soil condition exists.

### ***Water Quality***

Columbia residents and businesses receive their drinking water from Illinois American Water Company. Protecting the water quality in local creeks supports the overall health of the regional waterways. Healthy waterways directly impact Illinois American Water's ability to provide healthy drinking water. Also, healthy waterways protect ecosystems for the region's aquatic species, particularly those endangered.

Stormwater management serves as a primary way communities can work to protect water quality. Stormwater can cause flooding, property damage, and introduce unwanted pollutants



into the water ecosystem if not properly managed. As a result, cities often enforce a stream setback ordinance that helps protect stream banks' integrity. This ordinance increases the buffer between development and waterways to reduce the amount of runoff reaching the water. Currently, Columbia does not have a stream setback ordinance, but creation of such an ordinance is recommended to reduce urban runoff.

In 2018, the EPA identified a 6.4-mile stretch of the Mississippi River South Central as an impaired water body for fish consumption. Urban runoff and other environmental factors introduced higher- than-normal levels of mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) into the water. This impairment may not directly impact Columbia or its residents. However, it remains crucial for the community to reduce urban runoff to mitigate future issues for local and downstream bodies of water.

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WATER BODY	YEAR	SIZE	IMPAIRED WATER USE	POLLUTANT	SOURCE	TMQI PRIORITY SCHEDULE
Mississippi River South Central	2018	6.4 miles	Fish Consumption	Mercury & Polychlorinated biphenyls	Non-Point	Medium



## SECTION 6 – PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

### PUBLIC HEALTH

Healthy habits are crucial to sustaining a healthy life and increasing residents' overall quality of life. Access (physical, financial, and language) to a variety of facilities that provide health care, including mental and physical health, is crucial in maintaining and improving the health of a community.

Health care is critical to being healthy and often a large barrier for people. Barriers to accessing sufficient healthcare include lack of insurance, lack of providers and specialists, low awareness of available programs and services, limited transportation to reach healthcare providers, and social stigmas surrounding mental healthcare. The stigma around mental health has declined recently as awareness and discussion surrounding it has risen. Awareness leads to a better understanding of symptoms and mental health care needs. While this is crucial in increasing care for mental health challenges, increasing physical access to care is paramount.

### SAFETY SERVICES

In addition to health, public safety plays a significant role in a community's overall quality of life. This includes the perception of safety as well as the actual statistics. Safe cities attract new residents, development, and give businesses the confidence to invest in the community. Conversely, people who do not feel safe

in their community are less likely to get involved or participate in physical and social activities, which impacts a community's overall health and well-being.

### HEALTHCARE

There are four regional healthcare facilities located close to Columbia. Although Columbia does not have a full-service hospital within the city, other hospitals nearby include Memorial Hospital, Touchette Regional Hospital, HSHS St. Elizabeth in Illinois, and Mercy Hospital South in Missouri. Additionally, Columbia residents can readily access the specialized medical services in the major regional hospitals of St. Louis.

According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Columbia reports a preventable hospitalization rate of 61.6 percent, slightly higher than the national median for U.S. neighborhoods of 48.5 percent. This data suggests health care providers in Columbia effectively treat patients through outpatient care.

## 7

### LOCAL AND REGIONAL HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

SSM Health Medical Group  
BJC Medical Group, Specialty Care & Convenient Care  
Medwin Primary Care LLC  
St Elizabeth's Hospital Physical Therapy  
St. Clair Pediatrics  
Monclair Family Practice  
Mercy Clinic Primary Care

Health insurance is a crucial barrier to accessing healthcare as the cost of care is higher than ever. About 97 percent of Columbia residents have health insurance, according to the American Community Survey 2019 estimates. This percentage is higher than the state of Illinois.

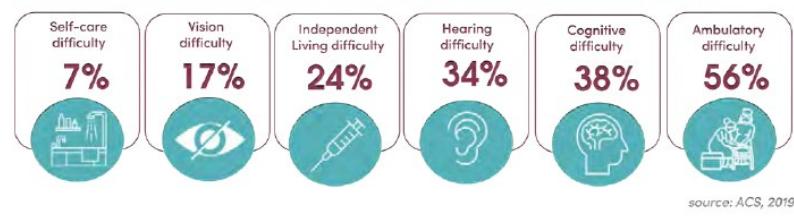
#### HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

	Population With Health Insurance	Population With No Health Insurance	Population Less than 19 with No Health Insurance
<b>Columbia</b>	<b>97.3%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>Illinois</b>	<b>90.7%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>

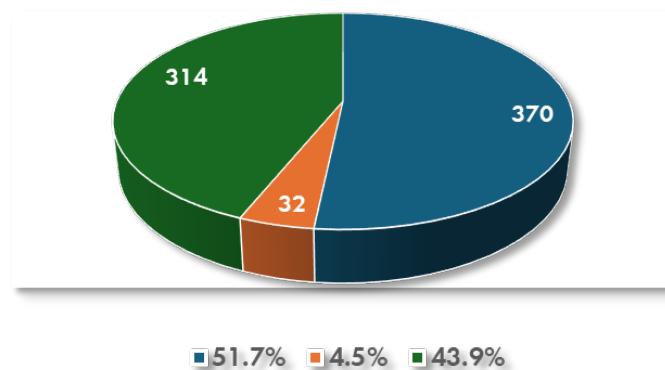
#### DISABILITIES

Over 700 Columbia residents live with a disability, accounting for nearly six percent of the total population. Disabilities are experienced almost equally among those 18-64 years old (44 percent) and those above 65 years old (52 percent). The most

#### DISABILITY TYPES OF PEOPLE LIVING IN COLUMBIA



#### PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



common disability in Columbia is ambulatory (or mobility) difficulty. These figures reflect the aging population of Columbia.

#### SAFETY SERVICES

The City of Columbia operates a Police Department, and an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Department. Fire protection in the City is provided by the Columbia Fire Protection District. All three public safety services are housed at the Public Safety Complex located on North Main Street. Safety ranks as the second greatest strength of Columbia. This ranking indicates a very positive perception of law enforcement within the community. Community engagement respondents ranked safety as a top three strength for living in the City.

#### Police – Crime Rates & Calls for Service

Columbia residents and businesses enjoy a very safe community. The Police Department's approach to public safety is community-



oriented to meet the needs of all residents and ensure a high quality of life. According to the Illinois State Police, Columbia consistently reports low violent and property crime rates.

### **Police – Staffing & Training**

The Columbia Police Department consists of 22 sworn officers who serve and protect the community. Additional staff includes an Administrative Assistant, and a Records Clerk, who help maintain police department operations.

For the size of the community, the department has an adequately sized staff. However, attracting and retaining quality staff remains a challenge for Columbia's public safety team, a common theme nationally. Pay, benefits, and national scrutiny of police add to this challenge. The department aims to have 25 sworn officers to maintain high public safety levels.

In addition, the Columbia Police Department employs six full-time telecommunicators. The 911 call center, housed in the Columbia Police Department, operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week with two telecommunicators on duty a majority of the time. Telecommunicators are responsible for answering calls for service and dispatching all emergency units in the city, fire district, and ambulance district. The communications call center receives approximately 12,000 calls for service each year. The lack of mental health services across the country results in law enforcement officers serving as the first responders to most crises. Currently, the police and EMS Departments have met the internal

goal of having all officers Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) certified. This certification trains officers to better respond to mental health-related calls and de-escalation techniques.

### **Police – Facilities & Equipment**

Currently, the Public Safety Complex houses all emergency services in Columbia, including police, fire, and EMS. The Police Department maintains a variety of emergency and nonemergency vehicles and equipment to serve the community's public safety needs. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of community engagement respondents said they feel "very safe" or "safe" during the day; Eighty-eight percent (88%) responded similarly regarding the nighttime hours.

Public safety technology is ever-changing. The department maintains standards for equipment. However, new cellular telephone extraction software, additional IT support, and new cars are needed. Police cruisers average 1,500 miles per month. The current public safety building has been found to be inadequate for current department needs due to the age and configuration of the building. These factors also hinder the Department's ability to fully integrate modern IT systems and meet operational demands. A large modernized public safety facility/police station is required as the community continues to grow.

### **Police - Partnerships**

The Columbia Police Department partners with other local, state, and federal agencies. Department personnel are attached to the



Drug Enforcement Agency, Metro East Auto Theft Task Force, and Metropolitan Enforcement Group of Southwestern Illinois. It fosters a strong relationship with the Columbia Community Unit School District #4 by providing a dedicated School Resource Officer and maintains active communication with all public and private schools in the City. Officers lead an annual Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program through the school system that teaches students decision making skills for safe and healthy living. Additionally, each summer, the Columbia Police Department hosts 2 weeklong sessions of its popular Safety Town Program. Safety Town, open to kindergarteners and first graders, teaches children skills to stay safe in a variety of areas, covering topics ranging from internet safety to stranger danger.

### **EMS – Staffing**

Columbia's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has seven full-time employees, including an EMS chief and six paramedics. Private hospitals and emergency services are paying more for paramedics, which creates a challenge for retaining quality employees. In addition, there are 15 to 20 part-time personnel. The department would like to hire three more full-time employees to maintain high levels of service corresponding with the higher levels of demand.

### **EMS – Coverage & Partnerships**

Columbia's EMS has mutual aid agreements with Monroe County, Millstadt, and Dupo. These agreements ensure that coverage and services are met when Columbia cannot provide adequate response by partnering with surrounding communities.

This also means Columbia EMS offers reciprocal assistance to those agencies as needed.

Columbia EMS personnel also have partnered with Columbia Community School District #4 and Southwestern Illinois College to offer an Emergency Medical Responder course for high school students. Additional community programs include CPR and babysitting classes, a new Lock Box program for residents with special health care needs, child safety seat installations, and the Annual Public Safety Open House.

### **EMS – Facilities & Equipment**

As demand and the community have grown, the need for up-to-date equipment has also increased. EMS personnel currently utilize a 2005 FEMA-surplus mobile home for living quarters. Replacement of the EMS facility is among the highest priorities for the City.

Aside from the EMS facility, the next most critical update, the department needs to replace its 2006 ambulance with a new unit to complete the implementation of its six-year rotation plan for vehicles. Columbia EMS has 3 Ambulances with 2 active at all times and 1 Advanced life support Command Vehicle. Annual calls for service range between 1,500 to 1,600.

### **Fire – Staffing**

The Columbia Fire Protection District has a 42-member department. The Fire Chief administers plans, and directs all aspects of the fire department, including staffing, training, fire suppression, HAZMAT, and rescue operations. The 1st Assistant



Chief covers training for the district, while the 2nd Assistant Chief is responsible for equipment maintenance and repairs. The four Captains are responsible for HAZMAT, fire prevention, equipment testing, and technical rescue. Volunteer firefighters are paid-on-call, with two staffing the station three days per week.

### **Fire – Programs & Services**

The fire department offers a variety of community programs and services. Some programs include public education for fire safety and protection, smoke detector installation programs for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities and offers scholarship opportunities for high school seniors residing within the fire district. The fire department hosts two fish fries every year to bring the community together. These events coincide with Good Friday, and the community's end-of-summer festival, Columbia Days.

### **Fire – Coverage & Partnerships**

In 2011, Columbia established a rural fire protection district covering 82 square miles. The fire station, located at the Columbia Public Safety Complex, is convenient for firefighters to assemble and dispatch quickly. Coverage and response times average 6 minutes and 23 seconds, which exceeds national requirements of 8 minutes and 51 seconds.

The Columbia Fire District operates as a separate fire protection entity with its own taxing authority, which supports the funding of equipment and personnel. The Columbia Fire District maintains a City ISO rating of 3 on a scale of 1 to 10, with ten being the

worst. The rural ISO rating is 9 due to the large district size and indirect rural roads. Strong ISO ratings help ensure lower homeowner insurance rates due to their measure of a lower risk of severe fire damage to property.

In addition, the Fire Department has mutual aid agreements with all fire departments within Monroe and St. Clair Counties, along with the Mehlville (Mo.) and City of St. Louis Fire Departments when Columbia's Fire Department needs assistance. It also requires Columbia to provide fire services to neighboring communities as needed. Mutual agreements ensure that coverage and services are met by surrounding communities.

### **Fire – Facilities & Equipment**

The department maintains high standards for equipment, including trucks. Like the Columbia Police and EMS Departments, the fire department's facilities need updating.

2	Pumper trucks
1	Aerial truck
1	Tanker truck
1	Brush truck
2	Rescue boats
2	Command vehicles
1	Drone

source: City of Columbia, 2022



## SECTION 7 – ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

### GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

The ability for any community to grow and develop depends on many factors, including internal and external influences. Some of these can be controlled by a city and others are the result of decisions by other governmental entities and the private sector. Physical location plays a major role in a city's desirability as a place to live that includes:

- proximity to employment nodes,
- access to highways,
- availability of shopping choices;
- access to parks and recreation facilities,
- relation to cultural and entertainment choices, and
- the overall impression that the community presents as a place to live.

When choosing a place to live people generally seek out an environment which matches their demographic and most closely matches the other factors noted above. When a city is located within a metropolitan area, its unique characteristics become even more important and diversity factors within the community become more important. A growing community typically means it is attractive and comfortable for retirees, seniors, older adults, families (with older children as well as toddlers), and young

people just starting their careers in the workforce. Columbia's future growth and development will be influenced by how it can continue to satisfy the desirability factors.

The City's continued growth will also be influenced by its ability to have developable land within its boundaries that is suitable for varying housing types, commercial development (including shopping, restaurants, bars/entertainment venues), industrial and office development, and park and recreation facilities of varying types. Growing these uses also means that City services and infrastructure requirements will grow.

As this plan is being developed and adopted, economic factors (development and infrastructure costs, market demand for certain land use types, and borrowing rates) represent growth and development challenges. Some of these factors are predicted to ease somewhat but are likely to influence development, and associated population growth, at least for the first 10-year horizon period of this Comprehensive Plan.

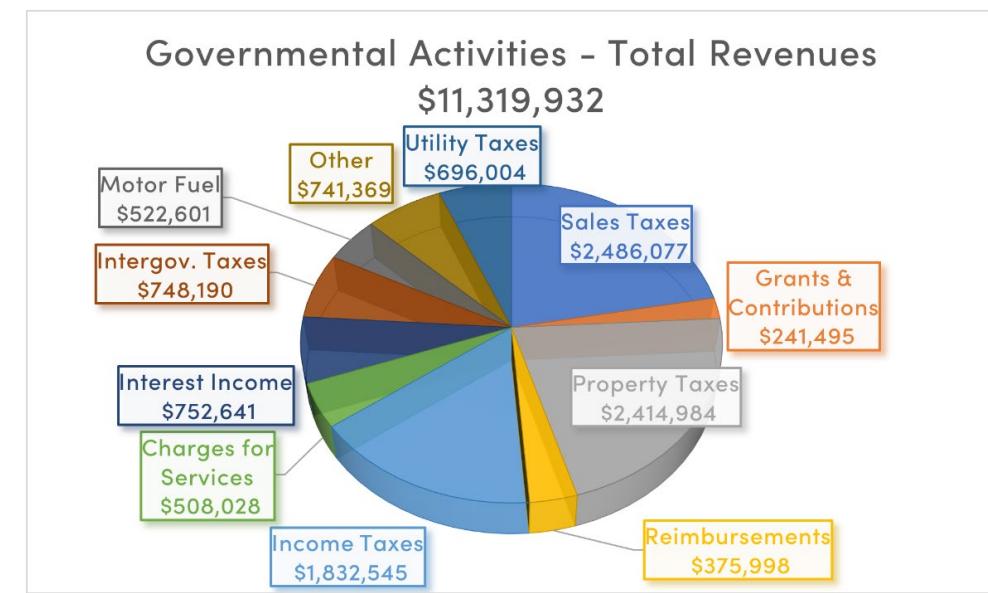
The City has already recognized that to grow the Route 3 corridor to the north, it needed to adopt an Illinois Business District Plan for that location and adopt the additional 1% sales taxes provided for within that area to both assist development projects and provide the supporting infrastructure.



## CITY REVENUE RELATIONSHIPS TO LAND USE

Existing land uses are a significant driver of municipal revenues. The chart to the right shows the City's annual revenues for the 2024 budget year as shown in its audit report. Three revenue sources (property, sales, and income taxes) generate 59.5%, or more than half of the City's annual revenues. And 43.3% of the revenues come from the property and sales taxes which are directly land use related. As development occurs in the portion of the Route 3 corridor that generates the additional Business District sales taxes, that tax source will grow but is likely to be offset by expenditures related to the development in that area.

Density of land use has a direct relationship to revenue production as well as population growth. Looking first at population growth, the chart below shows these relationships.



What the chart demonstrates is something that city managers and urban planners have known for years. Lower density development produces less population growth while higher density development produces greater population growth. But as

LAND USES	Acres	Property Value	Population Growth
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>			
Low Density Residential	50	\$5,000	375
Medium Density Residential	20	\$2,500	300
High Density Residential	10	\$1,500	300
<b>ALL OTHER</b>			
Nonresidential	30	\$3,900	0
Parks/Open Space	12	\$0	0
Civic/Institutional	10	\$0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>\$12,900</b>	<b>975</b>

LAND USES	Acres	Property Value	Population Growth
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>			
Low Density Residential	35	\$3,500	263
Medium Density Residential	20	\$2,500	300
High Density Residential	20	\$3,000	600
<b>ALL OTHER</b>			
Nonresidential	35	\$4,550	0
Parks/Open Space	12	\$0	0
Civic/Institutional	10	\$0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>\$13,550</b>	<b>1163</b>

the tables demonstrate, higher density development patterns grow both population and revenue. However, the public engagement process in Columbia provided clear sentiment for retaining the community's "small town" atmosphere and continuing to offer quality single-family detached housing. That sentiment also indicated that increasing housing density should not be a goal. To complement that opinion, future land use decisions must seek a balance between promoting land use growth that retains the small town feeling and seeking revenue growth.

It is likely that housing development in the City will continue to increase because Columbia has been "discovered" by people who lived elsewhere in the St. Louis region and moved to Columbia for its ambiance and appeal as a place to live. However, controlled growth will create jobs and provide goods and services for both new and existing residents and allow the City to provide the municipal services that the residents have come to expect.

### MAXIMIZING REVENUE THROUGH LAND USE

The city budget is one of the most important policies set by elected officials. Land use planning policies have the greatest influence on city revenues and expenditures. Therefore, looking at fiscal impact data is a tool that can help evaluate the potential financial outcome of cumulative future land use and development

decisions. The productivity of property is dependent on the efficiency of layout and type.

In the example below, three lot types for single-family have varying levels of productivity. Despite the larger lot (top right) having the highest market rate, it has a lower assessed value per acre (VPA) than more modest houses on smaller lots (bottom).



More modest housing provides a more productive development pattern from a revenue standpoint.

Another residential productivity example is shown on the next page. In this instance, the Brellinger subdivision built on a one lot per acre basis (8 lots on 8.75 acres) generates City property taxes per acre of approximately \$1,553. The Columbia Lakes multi-family development occupies a site of about the same size

(8.43 acres). It generates City property taxes of \$2,886.26 per acre.

	2020 Real Estate Taxes TOTAL	Taxes/Acre TOTAL	2020 RE Taxes CITY PORTION	Taxes/Acre CITY PORTION
8 Brellinger Lots 8.75 acres	\$89,652.70	\$10,246.02	\$13,590.57	\$1,553.21
Columbia Lakes Apartments 8.43 acres	\$180,668.22	\$21,431.58	\$24,331.14	\$2,886.26

Similar fiscal impacts result from commercial development. In the example below of typical suburban pad development for a fast-food use on 0.72 acres generates property tax revenues of approximately \$6,692 per acres. The other example shows a typical downtown area where 0.76 acres produces \$15,940 on about the same size site sector of this type of development. This

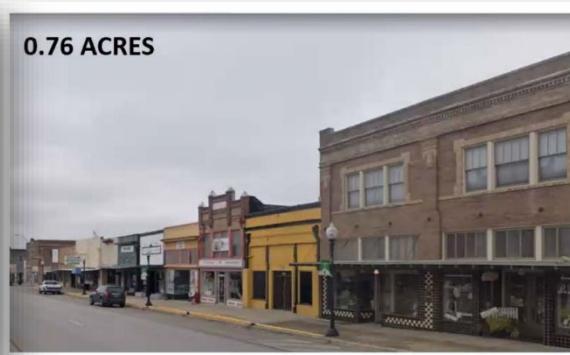
also demonstrates what has always been known. Low-density residential development rarely supports the municipal cost of services when things like road maintenance, trash services, and police protection are taken into consideration. This kind of financial modeling can help to assess financial outcomes of land use decisions.

But financial outcomes are not the only factor in land use decisions that are important. A balance of land use is generally desirable to

meet both community and market demand. Also, where commercial uses are concerned, residents often will express a desire for certain types of retail, restaurant, or service uses. While city planning and economic development staff can attempt to promote those uses through outreach to and relationships with commercial real estate brokers, local and regional market factors

that relate to the particular business control their local decision making. Therefore, land use planning cannot ignore market reality.

Columbia sits within a metro area where competing commercial development of many types is within relatively close proximity. Unless steady population growth is occurring





within a radius of 5 to 10 miles, many retail and service businesses will be reluctant to secure a location. However, the location of certain industries or businesses with medium to high employment ratios, can fuel both residential and commercial development interest.

The fiscal modeling scenarios discussed previously can be useful tools when development proposals are presented to the City. However, these examples focus on property taxes and land use density. Retail, restaurant, hotel, entertainment, and some recreation businesses generate sales taxes. Therefore, while some of these uses on individual sites may represent relatively low property tax generators per acre, the sales tax production will have far greater fiscal value to the City. At the same time, these businesses often bring greater traffic impacts and visitor concentrations which can drive up policing costs. Promoting residential density should be a consideration when thinking about creating a mix of housing types that target the City's demographics and create housing types that satisfy current and anticipated housing needs.

To flourish in the future, like all desirable cities, Columbia needs to grow. During the community engagement process, residents clearly indicated that they do not want that growth to materially affect the character of the City. Columbia is, and is likely to always be, a suburban community that is rooted in its heritage and character. Development proposals and land use considerations should not be predicated on maximizing property

tax revenues by promoting land use density. More importantly, does the land use proposed:

- Fit with the character of the surrounding area,
- Provide a benefit to the community,
- Satisfy a need,
- Have minimal environment impact,
- Have reasonable impact/demand on public services,
- Support manageable growth goals and objectives.

### **NATIONAL ECONOMIC TRENDS FOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

A variety of factors have impacted retail development trends. The first of these was the Great Recession of 2008. Development lending to both developers and retailers beginning in the late 1990's was given generously if a market analysis indicated demand. This gave us a proliferation of retail businesses in metro St. Louis often with multiple parties opening stores selling the same merchandise (soft goods, electronics, and chain restaurants). However, in every metro area without significant population growth, the businesses market demand really assumed that they could poach the business from someone else. This began an avalanche of closures.

The rise of online shopping kept gaining momentum particularly for some retail goods that caught the retailers by surprise. When the Covid pandemic occurred this further reduced in-store sales and those without a good online presence suffered. Prior to the Wayfair decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, these online



retailers did not have to collect and remit sales taxes on purchases. Today, “brick and mortar” retailing is not what it once was and is not predicted to grow to its previous levels. This does not mean that Columbia cannot grow its retail commercial (and related sales tax generating uses) base, but it will be dependent on other growth and economic factors.

### OTHER ECONOMIC FACTORS

When considering other economic development opportunities, a key consideration is whether there is potential to expand the community’s base for sale tax-generating businesses. Columbia is bookended by competition from a huge retail node in south St. Louis County to the west. This includes all the big-box retailers (Target, Walmart, Sam’s Club, Costco, Home Depot and South County shopping center) and many other retail businesses along with both chain and well-known St. Louis unique restaurant establishments. All these businesses are minutes away from Columbia via I-255. The retail nodes in Waterloo to the south include other retailers (including Walmart) and restaurants. Therefore, whatever retail growth occurs in Columbia will likely be uses that want to leave the aging South County commercial environment and hope to attract customers from the north in the Dupo and Cahokia Heights areas. While Columbia’s growth is expected to continue, it is not likely to be enough to fuel a new market for many uses that generate sales taxes

Columbia is a relatively affluent community, with spending levels supporting this statement. The results of an Esri Business Analyst

report show spending based on the City’s Esri geography based on census definition. The table on the next page shows residents estimated annual spending for 2023 and projected growth for 2028. The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent on a product or service by all households in an area. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals. This data is Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This data was compiled May 22, 2024.

For a community of about 11,300 residents this data demonstrates significant patterns. The table reflects the primary spending categories, and to reduce the table size, does not show all the subcategories’ data. In viewing this data, it is helpful to have some Esri notes to this data. These are included below.

**Apparel Products and Services** includes shoe repair and other shoe services, apparel laundry and dry cleaning, alteration, repair and tailoring of apparel, clothing rental and storage, and watch and jewelry repair.

**Entertainment and Recreation** includes

- Membership Fees for social, recreational, and health clubs.



- Audio items within this category includes satellite radio service, radios, stereos, sound components, equipment and accessories, digital audio players, records, CDs, audio tapes, streaming/downloaded audio, musical instruments and accessories, and rental and repair of musical instruments.
- Toys and Games within this category includes toys, games, arts and crafts, tricycles, playground equipment, arcade games, online entertainment and games, and stamp and coin collecting.
- Recreational Vehicles & Fees includes docking and landing fees for boats and planes, payments on boats, trailers, campers and RVs, rental of boats, trailers, campers and RVs, and camp fees.
- Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment includes exercise equipment and gear, game tables, bicycles, camping equipment, hunting and fishing equipment, winter sports equipment, water sports equipment, other sports equipment, and rental/repair of sports/recreation/exercise equipment.
- Photo Equipment and Supplies includes film, film processing, photographic equipment, rental and repair of photo equipment, and photographer fees.

**esri® Retail Demand Outlook**

Columbia City, IL  
Columbia City, IL (1715833)  
Geography: Place

Prepared by Esri

Top Tapestry Segments	Perce	Demographic	2023	2028
			Population	11,272
Workday Drive (4A)	38.1%	Population	11,272	11,474
Green Acres (6A)	22.5%	Households	4,475	4,633
Parks and Rec (5C)	21.0%	Families	3,183	3,288
Middleburg (4C)	14.2%	Median Age	40.9	41.8
Savvy Suburbanites (1D)	4.3%	Median Household	\$99,267	\$107,609
			2023	2028
		Consumer Spending	Forecasted Demand	Projected Spending Growth
<b>Apparel and Services</b>		\$11,699,113	\$13,382,928	\$1,683,815
<b>Computer</b>		\$1,576,883	\$1,804,395	\$227,512
<b>Entertainment &amp; Recreation</b>		\$32,014,417	\$36,615,180	\$4,600,763
<b>Food</b>		\$91,213,946	\$104,300,652	\$13,086,706
<b>Alcoholic Beverages</b>		\$3,693,697	\$4,223,215	\$529,518
<b>Financial</b>		\$1,190,929,666	\$1,361,058,562	\$170,128,896
<b>Health</b>		\$3,461,192	\$3,955,064	\$493,872
<b>Household Furnishings and Equipment</b>		\$9,934,181	\$11,367,560	\$1,433,379
<b>Household Operations</b>		\$12,387,706	\$14,171,516	\$1,783,810
<b>Personal Care Products (18)</b>		\$2,919,933	\$3,340,006	\$420,073
<b>School Books and Supplies (19)</b>		\$713,200	\$816,661	\$103,461
<b>Smoking Products</b>		\$2,048,524	\$2,337,156	\$288,632
<b>Transportation</b>		\$36,584,697	\$41,862,962	\$5,278,265
<b>Travel</b>		\$10,272,023	\$11,755,891	\$1,483,868

- Reading includes digital book readers, books, magazine and newspaper subscriptions, and single copies of magazines and newspapers.
- Catered Affairs includes expenses associated with live entertainment and rental of party supplies.

In the **Food** category, Snacks and Other Food at Home includes candy, chewing gum, sugar, artificial sweeteners, jam, jelly, preserves, margarine, fats and oils, salad dressing, nondairy



cream and milk, peanut butter, frozen prepared food, potato chips and other snacks, nuts, salt, spices, seasonings, olives, pickles, relishes, sauces, gravy, other condiments, soup, prepared salad, prepared dessert, baby food, miscellaneous prepared food, and nonalcoholic beverages.

The **Financial** category is unique in that it does not represent "spending" in the conventional sense. It includes the value of stocks/bonds/Mutual Funds, value of retirement plans, value of other financial assets, vehicle loan amounts excluding interest, and the value of credit card debt.

The **Health** category includes:

- Mortgage Payment and Basics which includes mortgage interest, mortgage principal, property taxes, homeowners' insurance, and ground rent on owned dwellings.
- Maintenance and Remodeling Materials include supplies, tools, and equipment for painting and wallpapering; plumbing supplies and equipment; electrical, heating, and AC supplies; materials for roofing and gutters; materials for plaster, paneling, and siding; materials for patio, fence, and brick work; landscaping materials; and insulation materials for owned homes.

**Household Furnishings and Equipment** includes:

- Household Textiles includes bathroom linens, bedroom linens, kitchen linens, dining room linens, other linens, curtains, draperies, slipcovers and decorative pillows.

- Major Appliances includes dishwashers, disposals, refrigerators, freezers, washers, dryers, stoves, ovens, microwaves, window air conditioners, electric floor cleaning equipment, sewing machines, and miscellaneous appliances
- Houseware includes flatware, dishes, cups glasses, serving pieces, nonelectric cookware, and tableware.
- Lawn and Garden includes lawn and garden supplies, equipment and care service, indoor plants, fresh flowers, and repair/rental of lawn and garden equipment.
- Housekeeping Supplies includes soaps and laundry detergents, cleaning products, toilet tissue, paper towels, napkins, paper/plastic/foil products, stationery, giftwrap supplies, postage, and delivery services.

**Personal Care Products** includes hair care products, nonelectric articles for hair, wigs, hairpieces, oral hygiene products, shaving needs, perfume, cosmetics, skincare, bath products, nail products, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, adult diapers, other miscellaneous care products and personal care appliances.

**School Books and Supplies** includes schoolbooks and supplies for college, elementary school, high school, vocational/technical school, preschool and other schools.

### WHERE COLUMBIA RESIDENTS SPENDING OCCURS

The Esri data above indicates Columbia residents' spending patterns. To see where that spending occurs, Placer AI data was retrieved for various locations where the City's residents are



likely to be shopping. This data is based on the presence of mobile phones and the origin of those phones. Several locations were searched. In South St. Louis County the following locations were analyzed:

- Costco Wholesale at Lindbergh and I-55
- The Walmart supercenter at I-255 and Telegraph Road
- The Sam's Club at Lemay Ferry just south of Lindbergh
- South County Shopping Center

In Illinois the following locations were analyzed:

- The retail node at Fairview Heights that includes St. Clair Square
- The Columbia retail nodes along Main Street and Route 3
- The commercial development in Waterloo including the Walmart supercenter

The visitation data at each location is based on total annual visits at each location and the percentage of those visits that reflect a Columbia zip code.

- **Costco:**

<b>Columbia, IL Visits</b>	<b>191,571</b>
Total Visits	5,854,560
Percentage of Total Visitation	3.3%

- **South County Center:**

<b>Columbia, IL Visits</b>	<b>154,381</b>
Total Visits	5,063,512
Percentage of Total Visitation	3%

- **Fairview Heights:**

<b>Columbia IL Visits</b>	<b>53,925</b>
Total Visitation	23,627,395
Percentage of Total Visitation	0.2%

- **St. Louis County Sam's Club and Adjacent Retail:**

<b>Columbia, IL Visits</b>	<b>38,823</b>
Total Visits	1,478,762
Percentage of Total Visitation	2.60%

- **Walmart – I-255 & Telegraph**

<b>Columbia, IL Visits</b>	<b>70,667</b>
Total Visits	2,912,608
Percentage of Total Visitation	2.4%

- **Walmart – Waterloo (Retail Node)**

<b>Columbia IL, Visits</b>	<b>210,150</b>
Total Visits	1,978,966
Percentage of Total Visitation	10.6%

- **Columbia – Main Street Corridor**

<b>Columbia, IL Visits</b>	<b>377,610</b>
Total Visits	1,138,539
Percentage of Total Visitation	33.2%

- **Columbia - Schnucks Retail Node**

<b>Columbia, IL Visits</b>	<b>619,372</b>
Total Visits	1,623,054
Percentage of Total Visitation	38.2%



This data provides some revealing information about where the City's residents are spending their money for retail goods, services, and eating and drinking establishments. For visits to Walmart, they are patronizing the Waterloo location more often. Trips to the St. Louis County location are probably only occurring if they are doing other shopping nearby.

Visits to the Schnucks retail node on Route 3 account for nearly 40% of all visits. The Main Street corridor (about 33% of the visits) is more oriented to eating and drinking establishments. The visits to this area suggest that the area is attracting people from outside the City. This is certainly true for the popular bars and restaurants that are located in the Main Street Historic area. These establishments attract patrons from locations outside the City including south St. Louis County. However, it should be noted that visits to City Hall are undoubtedly skewing these numbers to some extent.

The visits to St. Louis County locations (Costco and South County Center, and Sam's) represent significant numbers of Columbia residents, it suggests the less frequent shopping trips that are normally for the retailers at these locations.

The Saint Louis County locations are also being visited for certain purchases, likely made by Columbia residents on their way to or from work or while doing other activities, business, or shopping in the Missouri sector of the metro area. Beer, cigarettes, liquor, and gasoline taxes are significantly lower in St. Louis County. Other data has shown that residents of "metro-east" will choose

to make those purchases in Missouri when and where convenient.

The Fairview Heights area is clearly not a significant shopping location for Columbia residents. Compared to all the other locations it is not as convenient and does not provide any goods, services, or eating and drinking establishments that, for the most part, are not also in the primary Columbia market area (generally a 5-to-7-mile radius).

### **REGIONAL TRENDS FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Industrial development within the St. Louis region has largely focused on two sectors, warehouse/logistics and science/technology. The region's central location in the U.S. and its linkage to the cross-country highway systems has fueled continuing growth of warehouse and distribution facilities. This type of development has been, in part, driven by the growth in online sales. The major players in the online arena have recognized the need to establish warehouses particularly for products that are regularly ordered by consumers. This allows for quicker local delivery. These uses are not employment intensive compared to other kinds of industrial development. They typically do not generate the same levels of property taxes in terms of building square footage.

Growth in development related to manufacturing in St. Louis has been very low for many years. The region was heavily dependent on automobile assembly with each of the major domestic manufacturers having plant facilities in the metro area.



This also created a need for related supplier manufacturing. Except for the General Motors assembly plant in Wentzville, the rest of this sector has left the region. Both the Chrysler and Ford plants were demolished and are primarily being redeveloped for warehousing and logistics uses. What remains of the former General Motors plant in north St. Louis is also in warehousing use.

Science and technology development is heavily concentrated in niches that are associated with the Cortex development in the City of St. Louis, the 39 North biotech area in Creve Coeur, the Pfizer facilities in Chesterfield, some locations in St. Charles County. This is not to say that new development of this type will not locate outside the nodes; however, these areas have shown that they attract other uses in this category.

At present, the City has some limitations that impact industrial development in the areas that are the present prime locations. These are the areas presently being farmed west of Route 3 and north of I-255 and the areas south of the I-255/Route 3 interchange. All these land areas (both within and adjacent to the City's boundaries) are partially within 100-year flood plain areas. In addition, the entirety of these areas is within an area designated by FEMA as one with reduced risk and protected by levees. As discussed in Section 2 of this Plan, the levees involved are certified for 100-year protection from the Mississippi River but 100-year floodplain areas from local creeks and drainageway are within these areas.

As discussed in Section 2, development in these types of environments is costly due to requirements for handling stormwater runoff. In addition, major corporations and the developers they typically work with have become adverse to building in areas not protected by 500-year levees such as those that protect other major development areas in the region adjacent to the major river systems. Also, fully realizing these locations both in and adjacent to the City require the desire of the property owners to market and sell the properties for industrial use. Expanding the City's industrial opportunities may require annexation to fully provide an economic benefit from tax sources. Lastly, providing public utilities to these locations will also be costly and roadway infrastructure will need to support heavy truck traffic.

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## SECTION 8- FUTURE LAND USE

### EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

#### RECENT DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Existing development patterns are represented by the existing land uses shown on the map in Section 2 of this Plan. That map shows that there is limited expansion for development within the City's current boundaries. Residential development has some room for expansion in various pockets with the largest area being in the southeastern sector of the City in areas north and south of the Route 3/Route 158 intersection.

Recently the Columbia Golf Club, at the northern limits of the City on the east side of Route 3, proposed to eliminate one of its 18-hole courses to create a development that will feature commercial development on the Route 3 frontage and residential development behind that area to the east will border the 18-hole course that will remain and part of the overall development program. Additional commercial development is expected to occur west of Route 3 in the vicinity of the Palmer Road area. City staff have indicated that as this Plan is being written, subdivisions comprising construction of 350 homes are in process.

Looking at the north and south sides of I-255 west of Route 3 suggests that there are significant land areas within the City limits that are available for development. Much of this land is in agricultural production at any given time. However, the land

areas on the south side of I-255 have some recreational uses that could be expanded and further developed. Discussions of this idea have occurred. Active sports facilities, especially those that promote league play and tournaments, would promote supporting retail, food and drink, and service uses (and possibly lodging uses), particularly near the Palmer Road intersection.

#### FUTURE LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

##### *Commercial and Industrial Development*

These large areas west of I-255 that are within the City are desirable locations for industrial/logistics development but have development impediments related to potential flooding. While these areas are protected by 100-year levees certified by the U.S. Army, Corp of Engineers (COE) they have internal drainageways that represents an internal flood hazard and have floodplain designations. Although levee-protected, other factors also impact the development of this part of the City.

Where national commercial and industrial developers are concerned, development behind a 100-year levee is generally not desirable. These users want 500-year protection. In some instances, if a location is excellent from both a market and highway access standpoint, it might be considered. A major part of such consideration will be development cost. The building, principal parking areas, and roadway access will need to be built at least a foot above 500-year elevation. Creating that "platform" will also entail creating detention areas on site that will hold equivalent water runoff capacity and holding areas in



the event of flooding. This increases the overall cost of development dramatically.

As noted previously in this Plan, other municipalities in cooperation with landowners in the St. Louis region have reclaimed floodplain areas, by raising existing levees to 500-year levels. Both the Chesterfield Monarch Levee and the Maryland Heights Howard Bend levees started as 100-year levees essentially to protect farmland from recurrent flooding. That is the present status of the Prairie DuPont and Fish Lake Levees.

An example of the impact of these added costs involved the Earth City levee. The developer had to build the levee, the I-70 interchange, and initial internal road access and had to do so prior to being able to sell property. Since no public assistance was provided to help with these costs, the developer went bankrupt. Of course, the national developer community watched this scenario unfold. Thus, it is notable that no other major commercial or industrial development has occurred in the St. Louis region behind a levee of less than 500-year level. In addition, all those developments have had multiple forms of public assistance to cover the costs described above.

It should be apparent that development in low-lying areas that are floodplains, even when located behind levees, is a costly scenario. And one more factor is equally important. Development in such areas is subject to both FEMA and COE regulations and

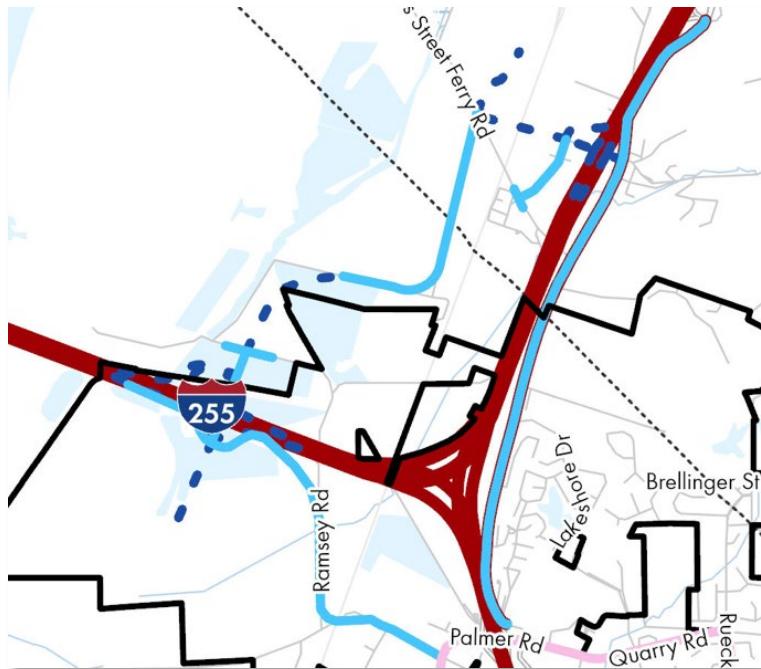
approvals that may create added development costs and extend development timelines.

#### ***Needed Roadway Improvements for Commercial and Industrial Development***

Lastly, the commercial and/or industrial development potential of the land on either side of I-255 needs improved access to the highway. Two interchanges were previously proposed and approved. One on the westbound section generally in the location of the Levee Road overpass known as the Fish Lake interchange. Another was proposed generally at Imbs Station and Davis Street Ferry Roads in Dupo to the north. This project is approved for construction and has State funding approval. However, in late 2023 archaeological investigations resulted in a discovery that has slowed the process and funding for this interchange has fallen short. This is a \$33 million dollar project.

Construction of interchanges at either of these locations benefits the land areas in Columbia for commercial and industrial development purposes. However, the Fish Lake interchange has greater benefits and development potential for Columbia and has the same potential for industrial development in Dupo. The map on the next page shows the location for each of these interchanges. The Imbs Station interchange requires acquisition of more properties with existing development. While the Fish Lake interchange involves largely agricultural land. In addition, the design of the Fish Lake interchange was completed and previously approved by IDOT. The plan designs would simply

have to be updated to reflect current IDOT and Federal standards.



As the map above shows the Fish Lake interchange can achieve the same connections to the Dupo roadway network and access to northbound I-255 at Imbs Station Road at an existing overpass of I-255. Also, either one of these solutions means that the internal road network in Dupo will involve an at grade railroad crossing, one of which is in existence and is recognized in the Imbs Station/Davis Street Ferry interchange design. The Fish Lake interchange also creates greater opportunity to expand

commercial development in the southwest sector of the I-255/Route 3 interchange.

### Residential Development

Within the current City boundaries, residential development opportunities are limited because relatively little land is left. Recent residential development unit types are also diversifying with newer offerings that include multi-family apartments, town homes, and condominium choices. Today and into the foreseeable future envisioned by this Plan, unit type diversity will continue to be driving the housing market. Both the younger and older population want a high-quality unit but are not interested in large lots and overly large floor areas. This is true for both buyers and renters. Also, more retirees do not want to own their housing units for a variety of reasons. However, they also want high-quality unit design and amenities.

It should be noted that future residential development should not mix unit type or style within a neighborhood. Within a planned residential development that proposes various unit types, higher density development components (rowhouse, townhouse, attached units) should have separate street access from a single-family neighborhood.

Since the City is filling its existing residential areas within its boundaries, where does it look for more residentially suitable land? Earlier data has shown that expansion to the east is not suitable due to dense areas of Karst topography. The following discussion in this section looks at how residential growth can



occur and the opportunities for additional commercial and industrial development can expand as well.

## COLUMBIA'S GROWTH AREA

Columbia is hemmed in on the north by Dupo's boundaries. On the east by Karst topography and on the west by land that is predominantly in floodplain topography. These conditions mean it must engage with landowners to the south to encourage annexation to the City.

Land areas south of the interchange with IL Route 158 are for the most part not constrained by development issues. However, annexation of properties south of the current City limits will also need to be able to deliver all or the usual City services. This means that the ability to provide water, storm and sanitary sewers, and new roadways and improvements to existing roads will need to be provided. What roads will remain under Monroe County control and maintenance will need to be negotiated.

At the same time, it must provide a financial and/or services proposition to those owners that shows why they should incur the added City taxes. According to 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Supplemental data, Monroe County has a median housing value of \$290,200. Based on Tax Year 2023 data, annexation to the City of Columbia would result in less than a 5% increase in property taxes, or \$265.00.

Being part of Columbia will provide them with better services and greater land value, with minimal financial impact due to

added City taxes. Undoubtedly, the City has entered into pre-annexation agreements with property owners in the past that involve predetermined land uses that will increase land value following annexation. Property presently zoned for agricultural use can be annexed without a zoning change until the actual development occurs and thus avoid any change in valuation for tax purposes.

Waterloo's boundaries extend north to properties south of Hanover Road which runs east/west connecting with Route 3.

A priority for the City in securing its growth area is the extension of public utilities (primarily water and sanitary sewer) along the Illinois Route 3 corridor to Hanover Road.

## LAND USE CONTROL BOUNDARY

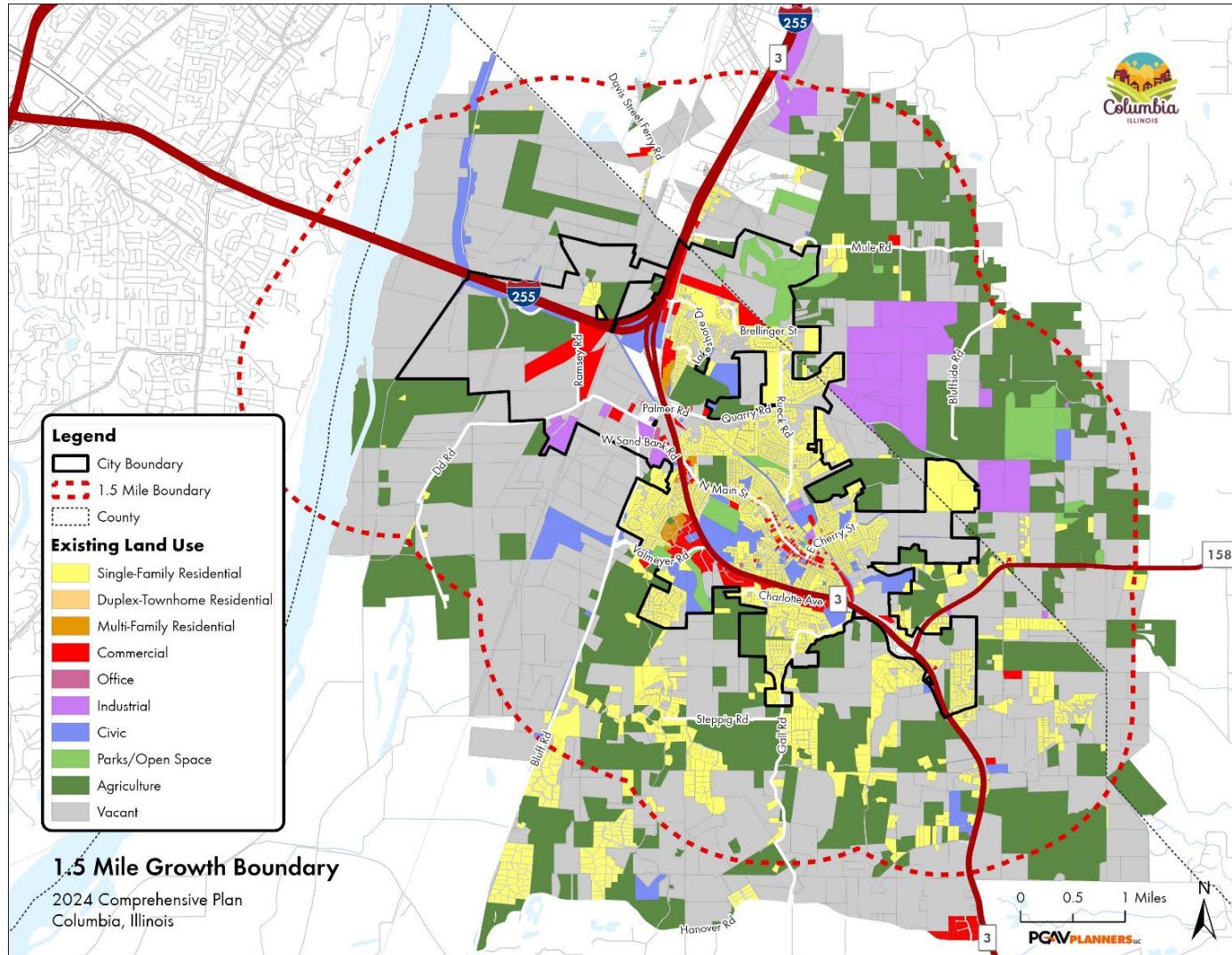
In Illinois, cities with zoning regulations can control land development patterns within 1.5 miles of their existing boundaries. The map on the following page shows the City's 1.5-mile boundary. The language of 65 ILCS 5/11-13-1 reads as follows:

*"The powers enumerated may be exercised within the corporate limits or within contiguous territory not more than one and one-half miles beyond the corporate limits and not included within any municipality. However, if any municipality adopts a plan pursuant to Division 12 of Article 11 which plan includes in its provisions a provision that the plan applies to such contiguous territory not more than one and one-half miles beyond the*



corporate limits and not included in any municipality, then no other municipality shall adopt a plan that shall apply to any

territory included within the territory provided in the plan first so adopted by another municipality. No municipality shall exercise





*any power set forth in this Division 13 outside the corporate limits thereof, if the county in which such municipality is situated has adopted "An Act in relation to county zoning", approved June 12, 1935, as amended."*

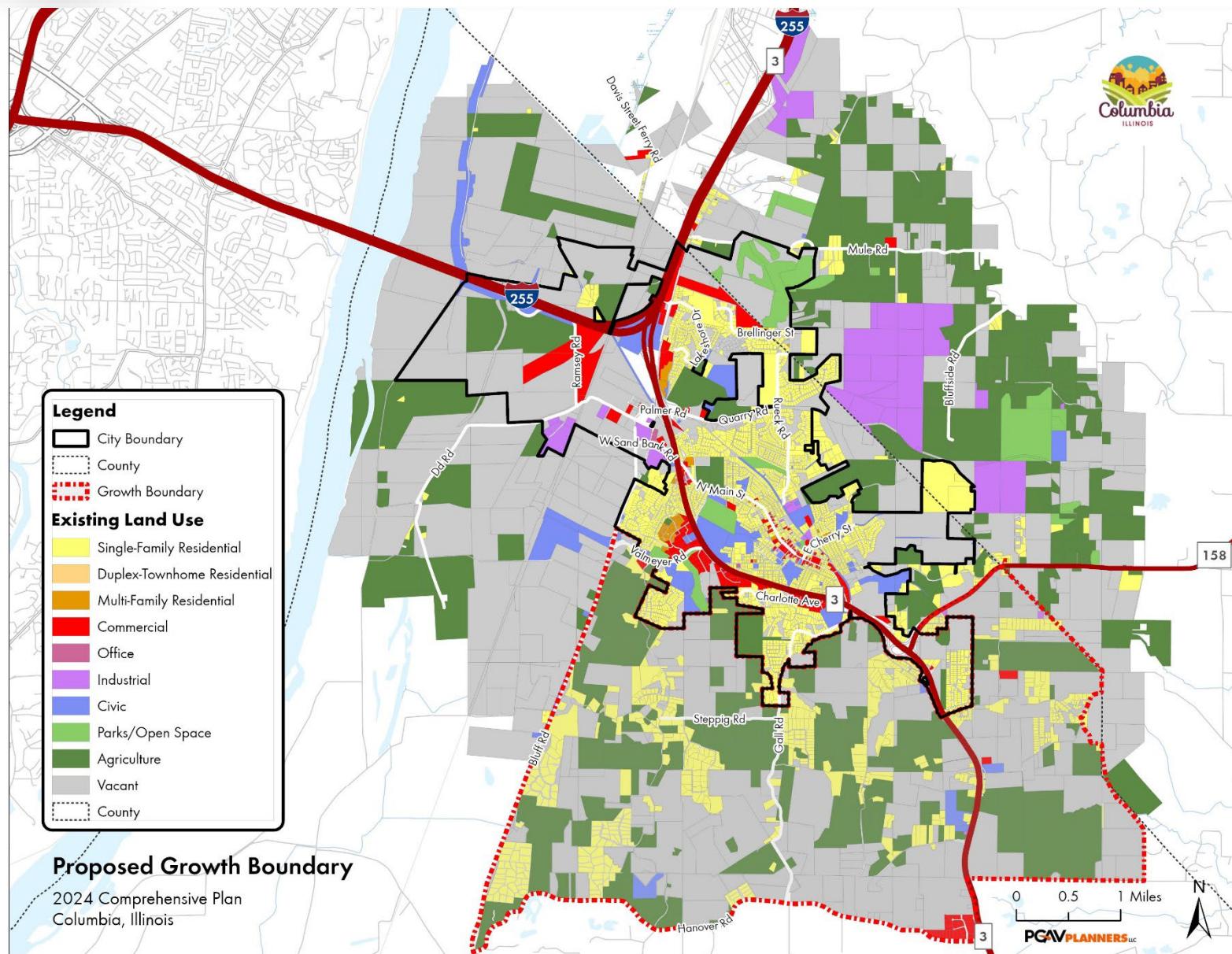
State law allows Columbia to control subdivisions within its unincorporated 1.5-mile area. However, since Monroe and St. Clair Counties have established zoning controls the City has no zoning authority in the unincorporated areas of either St. Clair or Monroe County. Waterloo has a zoning code as well. Its corporate limits are south of Columbia's boundaries; however, its 1.5-mile area overlaps with Columbia's. Although each municipality has a comprehensive plan, these boundaries and control abilities really do not apply in either case (other than as they may relate to subdivision of property as noted previously).

It is recognized that the City has limited growth potential to the north and east of its current boundaries. After analyzing the land areas adjacent to the City's existing boundaries, it is apparent that the City's logical growth area for future consideration is to the south. This is an area generally bounded by Bluff Road on the west, Hanover Road/Klohr Toen Lane on the south, and Gilmore Lake Road/Triple Lakes Road on the east then connecting back to the existing City boundary along Route 158 and the St. Clair County line. This would make most of this area stay within the boundaries of the Columbia Community Unit 4 School District and within Monroe County. A small portion along the southern edge would be within the Waterloo Community Unit 5 School District.

The map on the following page shows the most advantageous area for future community growth in terms of development factors, public services, and location desirability. It includes properties that are not subject to flooding, topographically suitable for all types of development, generally free of karst areas, and allows Columbia to grow toward Waterloo. This is also where both cities can achieve economic benefit through potential commercial and industrial use and, at the same time, provide areas for new housing development.

Columbia should work with Waterloo to establish an annexation and growth boundary agreement. When looking at the potential for development, the City's policy should be to pursue annexations that are adjacent to the existing City boundaries. Illinois annexation law requires contiguity and prohibits annexations that use long right-of-way for connection. At the same time the City must consider the costs of providing services when annexing properties.

Water and storm and sanitary sewer extensions are particularly costly as are roadway improvements that may be required as growth develops. Housing development in the growth area will impact the school district bussing requirements. As the growth in the area occurs, fire protection and ambulance services may need to consider the need for new stations. The City may also need to use development support tools like the Business District recently created for the northern Route 3 corridor to jumpstart the growth of the area.





The map on the preceding page showing the proposed southern growth area encompasses about 9,622 acres (including land dedicated to existing uses and roadway rights-of-way) and equals about 15 square miles. If ultimately fully developed this area could double the City's population and more than double its area (currently approximately 10.5 square miles or 6,720 acres).

The Land areas fronting the major roadways (Routes 3 and 158) should generally be preserved for commercial and industrial uses. Multi-family development can be incorporated with commercial uses as part of a planned development within these frontage areas. However single-family development should be behind these uses and well buffered from adjacent commercial or industrial development.

It should be noted that, as shown on the map in Section 2 identifying karst topography and sinkholes, areas south of Route 158 and east of Route 3 at the north end of the growth area contain significant concentrations of these conditions; therefore, development density in those areas is not advisable. Land within the growth area south of this location along either side of Route 3 is suitable for development of nearly all types.

## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

### PURPOSE AND USE

One of the principal intents of a comprehensive plan is to create a future land use plan to act as a guide for zoning decisions and

to provide direction for economic development goals and objectives. This component of the comprehensive plan takes the form of a map that suggests ideal land uses for vacant land, underutilized properties, and in some cases, may suggest redevelopment for certain areas of existing land use. It also suggests potential land uses for areas within the city's 1.5-mile control area and any targeted growth areas that have been identified.

Creation of this map uses the city's existing land uses as a starting point. The future land use plan provides a direction for:

- Land use decisions based on developer requests.
- A vision that can be shared in discussions with existing property owners and residents already within city boundaries.
- A basis for discussions with property owners in areas the city may want to annex.
- A tool for economic development promotion particularly to showcase industrial or commercial development opportunities.

Like many other aspects of the comprehensive plan, the Future Land Use Plan recommendations are intended to be a guide for the plan commission and the city council in decision making. The future land uses designated on the map are not intended to have a direct correlation with existing zoning designations. In fact, to achieve the recommendations of the future land use plan, rezoning may need to take place. Also, the proposed land use



designations are not intended to indicate development based on specific properties.

Lastly, it should be noted that the future land use plan is based on data collected, analyzed, and discussed in the comprehensive plan. This data tries to look ahead regarding key community growth components such as demographic and economic trends in the community and regional context. It also tries to recognize current and expected future trends in real estate markets. While a comprehensive plan is expected to represent a 20-year look into the future, today 20-year predictions of anything, including community growth and real estate markets, represent speculation. Columbia's location on the ring of the metro St. Louis region coupled with its desirability has already made it one of the fastest growing cities in the region. Thus, it is expected that the Plan Commission and the City Council will need to review the recommendations of the future land use plan on a more frequent basis.

### **FUTURE LAND USE MAP USE DESIGNATIONS**

The map on the following page represents the Future Land Use Plan for the City of Columbia and the southern growth area discussed earlier in this Section. The land use designations discussed below and following the map correspond to those in the map legend and on the map itself. The descriptions provide the land use intention for the legend name and the areas designated.

#### **Single-Family Residential**

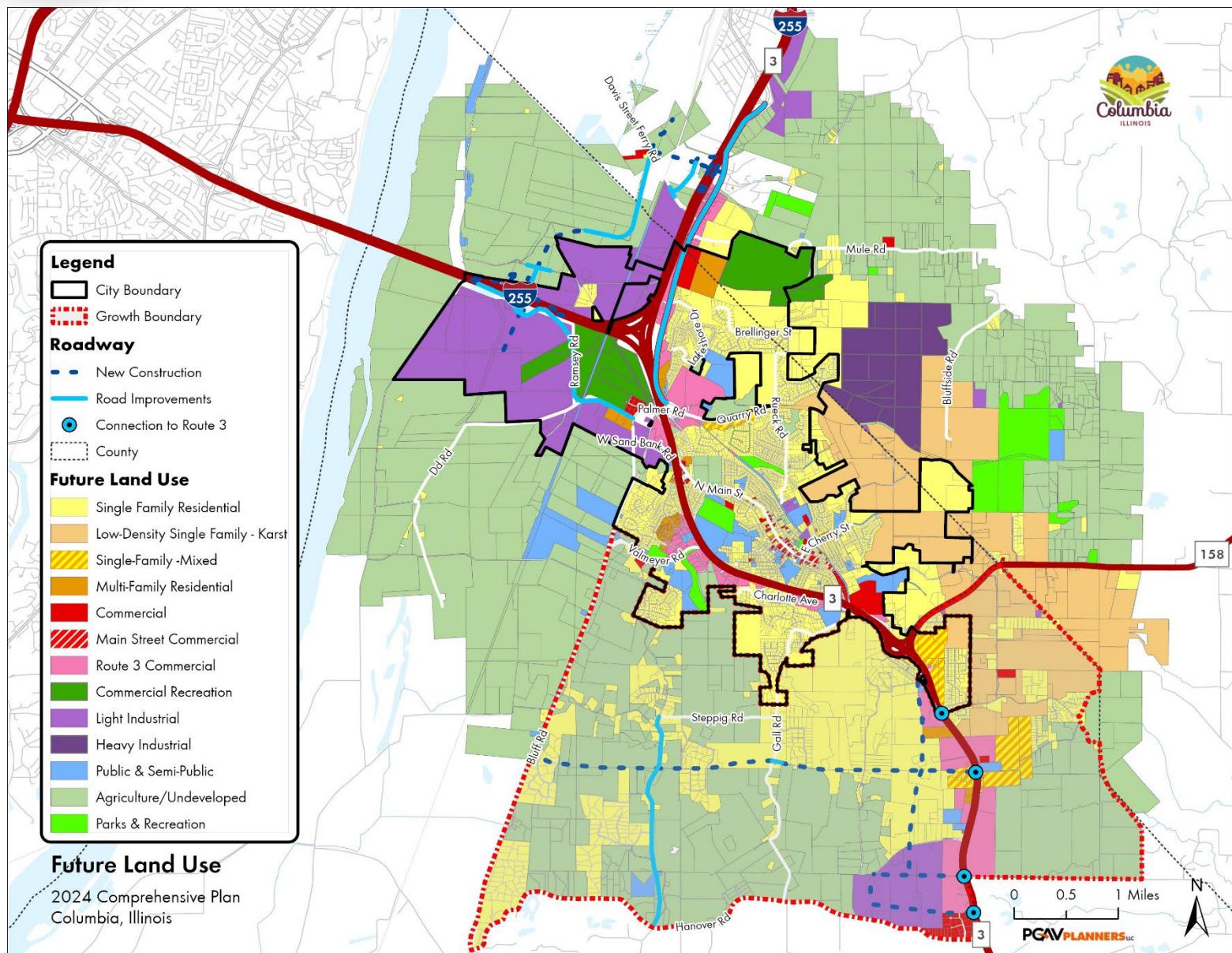
Single-family residential use primarily indicates existing single-family developments but also includes new development of this type. This designation is also intended to represent a subdivision layout that is typical of many of the City's more recent single-family subdivisions.

#### **Multi-Family Residential**

Multi-family residential including senior living/assisted living units indicates both existing and proposed development. It may also include multi-family buildings with ground floor commercial uses subject to a site/development plan and may be part of a larger planned development with commercial uses.

#### **Main Street Commercial**

Existing commercial development along the historic Main Street segment of the City is uniquely designated. This is an area and collection of properties and buildings that represent the founding of the City and should be preserved as a unique district. There is a Main Street District Plan that was completed in 2014. This plan should be reviewed to determine what goals and objectives have been achieved and what changes and updates to the plan are needed. This district has the opportunity to have greater attraction and spawn new businesses in the historic structures. Architectural standards for reuse of existing buildings should seek to preserve the character of the area.





### **Commercial**

This designation indicates existing and potential commercial development (primarily located along Route 3 and the I-255 interchange) and includes office, service, food and beverage, lodging, franchise auto dealerships, gas & convenience stores, and similar uses. Subject to an overall development plan, this category may also include multi-family development with ground floor retail facing the street, or multi-family uses integrated within the overall development so long as the multi-family uses have separate vehicular entry points along a designated roadway not part of internal circulation for adjacent commercial uses or between segments of a commercial development.

### **Commercial Recreation**

This category includes certain existing developments that are not owned by the City or County and charge a fee for the use of the facilities such as golf courses, shooting ranges, outdoor and/or indoor sports facilities such as soccer fields and baseball fields.

### **Parks and Recreation**

This includes parks and recreation facilities owned by the City, Monroe County, or other not-for-profit entities where the predominant use of the facilities is open to the public and free of charge or subject to a reasonable use fee.

### **Agricultural/Undeveloped**

This is existing land expected to continue as agricultural use or to

remain undeveloped due to potential flooding or topography challenges

### **Light Industrial**

Indicates existing land uses currently in industrial use and areas proposed for this use include manufacturing and assembly, office/warehouse, logistics, and office parks.

### **Heavy Industrial**

This represents existing locations that represent industrial operations that produce noise, dust, or other emissions, manufacture hazardous materials, and/or create heavy truck traffic (such as logistics operations) are part of this designation.

### **Public & Semi-Public**

These are properties owned and occupied by the City, the State, or other government entities, libraries, schools, churches, or other not-for-profit entities.

### **Low-Density Single-Family Residential – Karst**

These areas have Karst topography that might support low-density single-family residential development but should be subject to investigation by a professional engineer before development is approved.

### **Single-Family Residential - Mixed**

This represents unified single-family residential development based on a site plan containing multiple types of single-family



residential units (traditional units, townhomes, villas) at varying density based on an approved site plan. May be carried out by multiple developers as part of a single plan.

### **Route 3 Commercial**

Existing commercial development along Route 3 and potential commercial development along the roadway sector in the southern growth area is what this designation represents. It may include shopping centers, free-standing development on individual lots, and big-box stores.

### **ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS**

As development occurs both within the City boundaries and within the proposed southern growth area, certain roadway upgrades, new roadway construction, and potential traffic signalization is expected to be needed. The Future Land Use Plan map shows these anticipated needs according to various categories. Where new roadways are concerned, the locations of these indicators on the map are not intended to be precise since future development timing and location cannot be accurately predicted.

These locations are intended to recognize that opening a particular area for development will require road access and roadways that are sized to accommodate continuing future development. However, careful review of these proposed roadways will reveal that in most instances they are intended to connect to the existing road network.

Roadway improvements will be dependent on the type of development and expected traffic generation. In addition, the City's subdivision standards for roadway construction will apply. Route 3 is a State highway. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) controls this route and determines its maintenance, and improvement needs and controls access.

### **Roadway Upgrade**

These are roads that are expected to need upgrades to ensure safe traffic flow. This might include widening, addition of turning lanes, installation of roundabouts, and/or signalization. Examples of this include"

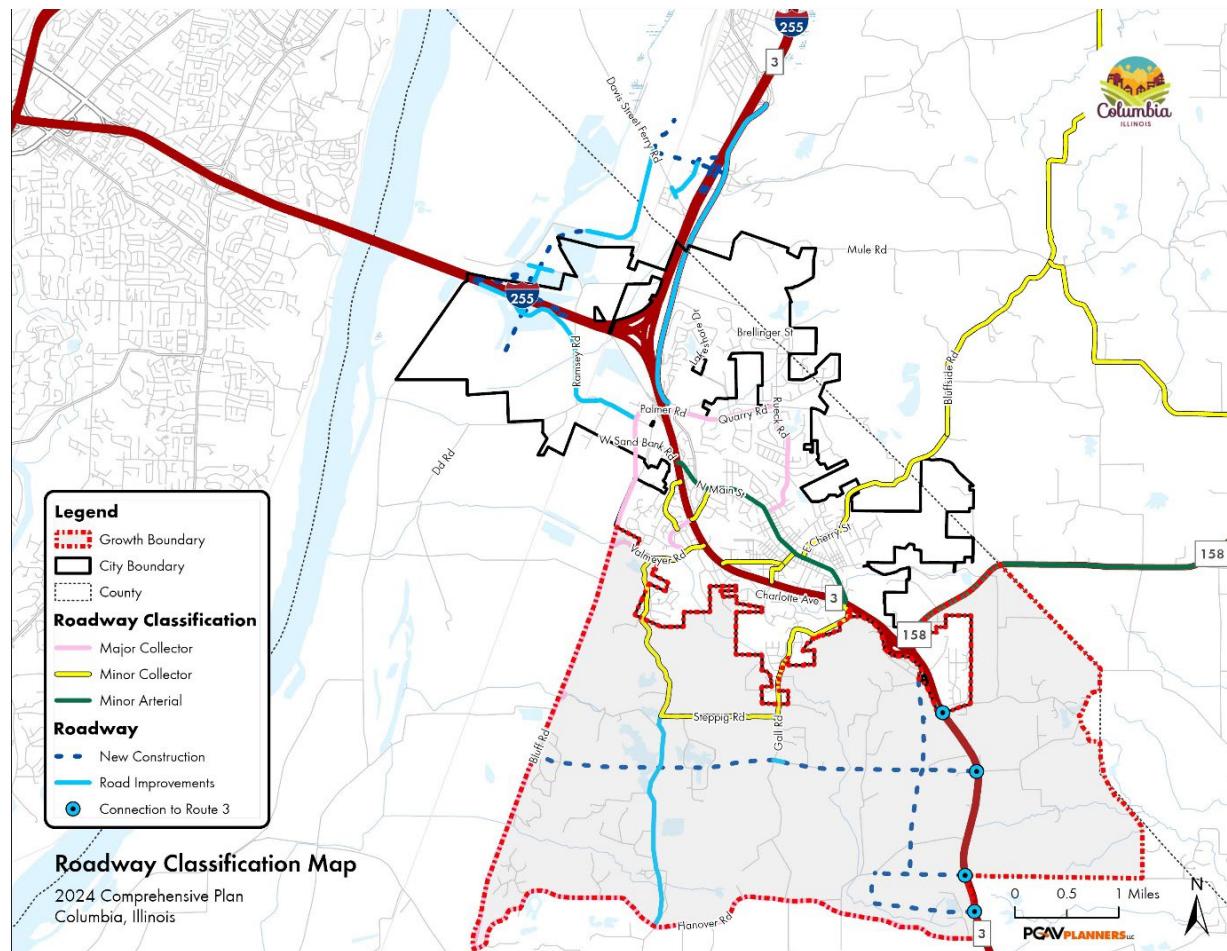
- Additional commercial and residential development in the Route 3 sector north of the I-255 interchange will increase traffic. New access to I-255 once either the Fish Lake or Davis Street Ferry/Imbs Station interchanges are completed will increase traffic as well.
- If industrial development occurs in the area north and west of the I-255 interchange and absent the construction of either of the interchanges note above, the Fish Lake Road overpass and roadway may need to be improved to handle heavy truck traffic.
- The area south of I-255 and west of Route 3 may need internal roadway improvements to handle additional traffic. This could occur if the commercial sports facilities in the area

are expanded and commercial development near Route 3 expands.

- The streetscape improvements presently existent along the historic section of Main Street should be extended to both the north and south to Main Street's northern and southern intersections with Route 3. This will further the revitalization of the location of the City's original "downtown" and its historic "roots" Providing additional opportunities to enhance pedestrian accommodations further act as an attraction to draw visitors into the area.

### New Roadway Construction

In certain situations, new roadways may need to be constructed. New collector and local streets will be needed to serve residential subdivisions or business and industrial parks, particularly in the proposed southern growth area.



Some new developments will require the construction of new roadways. The suggested roadways shown are intended to indicate major collector roadways that would be needed to serve a larger area. The secondary road network within the area



would connect to these. As development occurs and traffic increases, several locations where the proposed major collector streets intersect with Route 3 in the southern growth area are likely to need traffic lights and the associated signalization. Widening of existing intersections may be required and turning lanes installed.

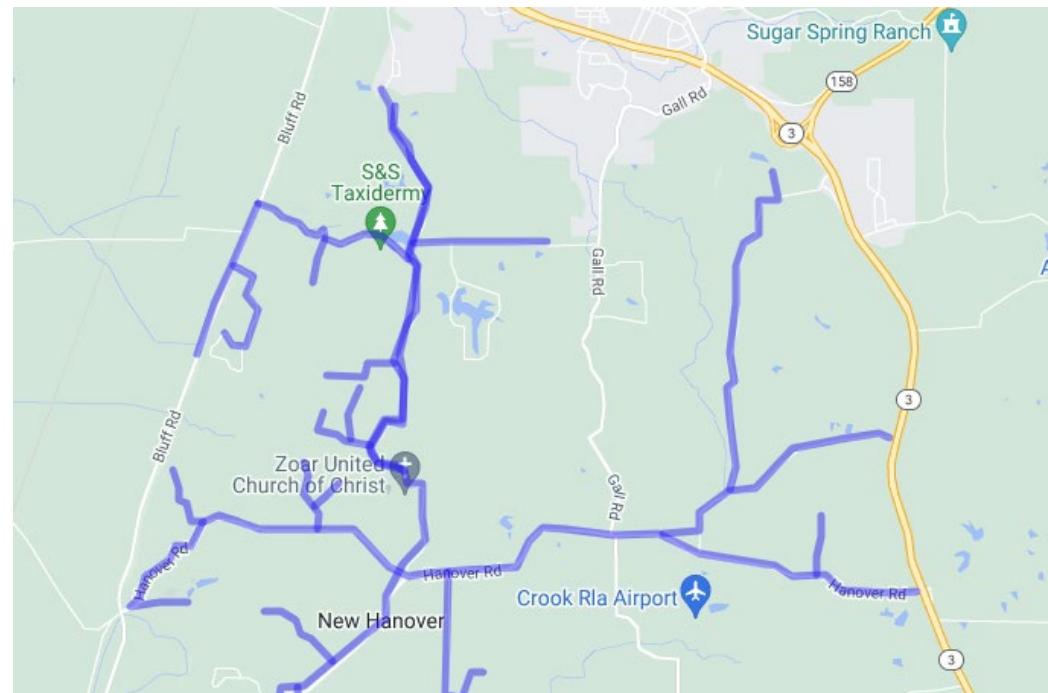
The map below shows the existing roadway classifications and the potential primary new roadway construction suggested by the Future Land Use Plan. Along Route 3 suggested access points to Route 3 are also noted with the blue circle symbols. As would be expected, the most intense development will likely occur along this roadway which already carries significant AM and PM peak period traffic. IDOT data from 2022 shows that Route 3 between Columbia and Waterloo carries an average annual daily traffic of approximately 23,000 vehicles. In anticipation of future development along the Route 3 corridor, IDOT is considering the use of frontage roads connected by overpasses to eliminate the need for signalized intersections on Route 3.

## OTHER PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT NEEDS

### Water and Storm and Sanitary Sewer Services

The City staff, administration, Mayor, and Council should begin the process of analyzing the impact that growth and development contemplated by the Future Land Use Plan will have on other public

utility needs. Water service is one of the critical needs for development and growth. The map on the right shows that the Fountain Water District serves much of the Growth Area west of Route 3. The City is moving forward with the acquisition of the Fountain Water District's transmission mains, which will become part of the City of Columbia distribution system. The City plans to install a 12" transmission line from Route 158 and Centerville Road to Hill Castle Court. This will enable the City to connect to the Fountain Water District transmission lines and provide the City with the ability to furnish water to the district's northern quadrant.





Illinois American Water Company serves the area on east side of Route 3 and south of Route 158. The City is investigating the potential to also serve this area as well. The City plans to connect to the Illinois American Water line on the eastern side of the Route 3 corridor and extend water service west at Hanover Road. Along with the northern connection at Centerville Road, this will provide service to both sides of Route 3 and provide for the expansion of the water system to the east and west.

Ideally, the City will also work to extend public water service to developed areas within the Columbia School District. Strong interest has been shown by residents living along Columbia-Quarry Road, Stemler Road, and Triple Lakes Road to connect to the City's water system. Residents in these unserved areas currently purchase water which is hauled to cisterns on their property.

In addition to water service, there will be other public service needs such as sanitary and storm sewer needs, stormwater detention requirements, police and fire services (not just personnel and vehicles but buildings as well). Therefore, an annexation and growth plan should include an analysis of these needs when deciding an annexation strategy along with potential costs of public services, tax revenues that may be accrued, and how these costs might be financed. For example, as a benefit to property owners the City proposes to extend sanitary sewer service along the Route 3 alignment from EE Road to Hanover Road. While this is designed to attract certain property owners early on, it will offer a significant benefit to the

adjoining property owners and provide an incentive to annex to the City.

Sanitary sewer extensions are planned for areas adjacent to Centerville Road, which will enhance development potential of this area.

Common practice has some of these costs paid by the development entities (i.e., water and sewer extensions, streets, and traffic signalization). However, economic factors like construction and financing costs will likely result in requests for municipal assistance. For virtually any type of development, the City should first determine the long-term economic benefit of such assistance to the City's revenues and to the community at large.

### **Parks and Recreation**

In conjunction with the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan, a Parks and Recreation Plan was developed as a freestanding but related planning document. The Parks and Recreation Plan is organized into three sections:

- Parks and Recreation (a general overview and introduction to the plan contents).
- Strategies and Local Action Recommendations (relating to both programs and facilities with goals and strategies for improvements, funding, and collaboration opportunities)
- Parks and Recreation Capital Improvements Plan (specific recommendations and needs by park facility).



As development occurs in the Growth Area depicted by the Future Land Use Plan, the need for additional parks and recreation facilities will need to be determined and the Parks and Recreation Plan will need to be updated.

The **Parks and Recreation Plan** can be found on the City's website at [www.columbiall.gov](http://www.columbiall.gov).

The City should also ensure the Explore Columbia plan, approved in 2013, is reviewed to ensure the need for additional trails and pedestrian/bicyclist amenities is addressed to include development in the Growth Area.

Some municipalities have enacted parks impact fees that are linked to residential development. The fee may be charged in several ways but is typically based on the number of residential units to be built. This goes into a special fund that is intended to be used for development of new parks and recreation facilities when the targeted area grows to a predetermined population. In some instances, the funds can be used to expand or upgrade existing facilities to add capacity because of growth. It should be noted that this practice has been legally challenged and in other instances has caused developers to move their focus to other locations without the fees. This cost is typically passed on to the home buyer or occupant (via rent) which can make the development location uncompetitive in the market.

### ANNEXATION STRATEGIES

The most important factor to consider in the City's future development is the need for the City's growth to be organic. It should grow outward from the existing City limits. This not only reduces development costs, but it also helps to create boundaries that are the most consolidated and reduces service costs. In pursuing annexations, the City should approach those property owners already adjacent to the existing boundaries.

Initially, pursuing the corridor along Route 3 will yield the biggest revenue benefit. This corridor is where the highest revenues can be generated from commercial uses that might be attracted to the area. In addition, there is an opportunity to create an industrial park of significant size along this corridor. However, logistics or other uses with high heavy-truck operations should be discouraged. This will only increase the heavy truck traffic though the City's principal commercial corridor along Veterans Parkway.

Initial growth along the Route 3 corridor with its commercial potential will be greatly enhanced if economic development tools such as Tax Increment Financing and the Business District Law can be used as funding mechanisms to induce development and support the available revenue needed for public improvements.

Low-density residential development should grow from the east and west sides of Route 3 behind fronting commercial or industrial development (so long as there is sufficient buffer). The public service costs for the typical single-family subdivision are generally not returned in tax revenues. This does not mean that



the City should not support larger-lot single-family development that is still attractive to many people. It should not encourage spot subdivision development within the growth area that will increase the cost of services resulting from a more remote location.

Higher density residential development can be interspersed along the corridor or be combined with commercial uses in a mixed-use development.

#### ***Annexation Agreements***

Typically, annexation strategies begin with determining what city services (particularly water and sewer services and police and fire protection) can be extended to an area as an enticement to annex and receive better and more responsive services. Note that this may require an upfront cost on the part of the City.

Therefore, there should be a property owner that wants to annex contingent upon receiving these services, even if that property cannot make an immediate connect to current City boundaries.

What may be the most important factor in any annexation strategy is a requirement that to get those better services a pre-annexation agreement is required. This scenario is based on the idea that once other property is annexed that made a connection to the current city limits, the adjacent property that benefitted from expanded city services before connection could be made should also be annexed per the terms of the pre-annexation agreement.

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## SECTION 9 – IMPLEMENTATION

### KEY RESULTS AND OBJECTIVES

Implementation of a comprehensive plan is intended to be based on the evolution of the City's demographic and economic makeup, development patterns, land uses that have occurred over the years since the last comprehensive plan was developed. This data and analysis create a basis for determining the potential further growth and development of the community. The preceding sections of this Comprehensive Plan lead to the direction for the City's future as generally exemplified by the Future Land Use Plan discussed in the previous Section. To achieve the development and growth envisioned by that Plan, some key results (or what might otherwise be described as goals) should be identified along with the objectives that should be followed to achieve those key results or goals. These are outlined as follows in this Section.

#### KEY RESULT: DEVELOPMENT DIRECTION

##### Objectives:

- While the City will (and in fact must) grow, always consider the residents' desire to maintain a small-town atmosphere that preserves neighborhoods, continues to provide excellent services, and maintains an identity as a great place to live, work, and play.

- Where location and property size are appropriate, promote mixed-use development that combines residential, commercial, services, and leisure activity facilities.
- Transition land use patterns and intensity to ensure uses are compatible and complementary.
- Encourage development of housing types that appeal to market demand (townhouses, rowhouses, villas, upscale multi-family, age-restricted senior living).
- Preserve and enhance Main Street as a vibrant commercial and historic center.
- Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive or productive lands, including green space, waterways, floodplains, sinkholes, steep slopes, and other geographically unstable areas.
- Work with IDOT and local landowners to promote reconsideration of the Fish Lake interchange as the best option to create industrial and commercial development in both Columbia and Dupo.

#### KEY RESULT: SMART GROWTH

##### Objectives:

- Pursue annexations in the southern Growth Area with initial concentration on areas along and adjacent to the Route 3 corridor.

- Analyze annexations from a service cost/revenue perspective first and then consider secondary benefits to the community (i.e., job creation that generates new residents, added shopping opportunities that have a customer reach beyond Columbia, health facility services not presently in the area, etc.).
- Do not offer City water and sewer service (or any other services that may be applicable) to properties outside City boundaries without commitment to annexation.
- Prioritize infill development in Columbia's Downtown, Main Street corridor, and in existing residential neighborhoods, ensuring compatibility.
- Emphasize stormwater control and management for all new development and increase integrated design methods.
- Prioritize development of underutilized or underperforming parcels of land already within the City's boundaries.
- Locate industrial development with significant logistics operations in the developable areas adjacent to I-255.
- Promote planned urban growth to minimize sprawl through regulating residential densities, protecting environmentally sensitive areas, avoiding areas with significant karst soils and sinkholes, and encouraging development in appropriate areas.

- Prioritize development in areas with existing infrastructure.

## KEY RESULT: ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

### Objectives:

- Locate business, commercial, and industrial uses near highway interchanges or other major transportation facilities and access.
- Promote the locations that are suitable and attractive for business, commercial, and industrial uses.
- Engage in discussions with the property owners and metro area commercial real estate brokers and what incentives are available (existing or potential).
- Make sure that regional economic development officials that represent the State have the appropriate data regarding industrial locations.
- For desirable development that has cost constraints (site challenges, public improvement costs, etc.) consider using State incentive tools to support the development.
- When considering the provisions of financial incentives to any development be careful to avoid incentivizing development that negatively impacts existing businesses.
- Require developers to demonstrate an economic "but for" which demonstrates the need for financial assistance.



## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Comprehensive Plan guides the City of Columbia's City Council and Plan Commission in the decision-making processes related to community growth to achieve the overall vision and goals as outlined in the document. The strategies, local actions, and policies serve as implementation tools and techniques available to the City's elected officials and staff. The City has existing tools available to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, including zoning and subdivision ordinances. All proposed development should conform with the Comprehensive Plan and other development regulations to ensure alignment with the community vision for Columbia's 20-year outlook.

## REVIEW & MONITORING

The City of Columbia's City Council should review the Comprehensive Plan **annually**, prior to the initiation of the budget process. The annual review should include:

- Measuring the City's progress in achieving the Comprehensive Plan goals.
- Reviewing zoning changes and development approvals that occurred over the prior year relative to the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

To ensure that the Comprehensive Plan remains an effective guide for decision-makers, the City of Columbia should conduct periodic evaluations of the goals and policies. These evaluations

should be conducted every **three (3) to five (5) years**, depending on the rate of change in the community, and should consider the following:

- Progress in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.
- Changes in community needs and other conditions that form the basis of the Comprehensive Plan (e.g., population, housing demand, etc.).
- Fiscal conditions and the ability to finance public investments recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.
- Changes in state or federal laws that impact the City's implementation tools.

The Historic Main Street District Plan was adopted at the end of 2014. Both the Plan Commission and the Main Street organization should also conduct a review of this Plan. This area is an integral and important part of the City's land use fabric, and the Parks and Recreation Plan should be considered an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan.

## ALIGNMENT

The City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Budget serve as implementation tools that have linkages to the Comprehensive Plan. Alignment between the existing City planning efforts and processes helps ensure progress in achieving the community vision. In addition, goals and strategies established in the Comprehensive Plan often help set the priorities for investment in facilities and infrastructure over the next several years.



Subsequent planning initiatives (e.g., area master plans and development plans/proposals for larger projects, transportation studies, infrastructure improvement plans, etc.) that were initiated prior to adoption of the Comprehensive Plan should be analyzed for alignment with the Plan. Any of these items that are under current consideration should be reviewed for impact or alignment with Plan implementation.

### **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)**

The City of Columbia should continue preparing, adopting, and maintaining a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) annually to prioritize and direct resource allocation for appropriate projects. The CIP includes projects such as streets, water, wastewater, draining, parks, and public facilities. This annual document should consist of a one-year capital improvements budget, financing plan, and schedule for high-priority projects. The CIP should coordinate closely with the Comprehensive Plan since land development and infrastructure availability are interrelated.

### **LAND USE AMENDMENTS**

The Future Land Use Plan map guides public and private development and other land use decisions and should be evaluated related to community growth and changing market conditions over time. Amendments can be made, as necessary, to the Future Land Use Map at least one per year as part of the review process outlined above. If amendments involve significant changes to land use or infrastructure recommendations, the

accompanying text should describe the need for changes and any impact on other plan elements. Limiting opportunities to amend the Future Land Use Map reduces the potential for incremental land use changes resulting in unintended policy shifts.

### **ZONING ORDINANCE REVIEW**

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the policy direction for future development decisions and growth management. Therefore, the City's land use decisions must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for adequate implementation. The standards and provisions of the City's zoning and subdivision regulations serve as the primary tools for ensuring consistent implementation of the land use policies. Zoning ordinances regulate and define how land can be used and developed, placing restrictions on the type of land use, including building height, setbacks, lot coverage, parking minimums or maximums, and other requirements. Also, in Columbia, there are significant areas of karst topography where any development should be required to have a geotechnical investigation before development is approved. This will avoid construction that has settlement problems and provide some protection for the City if the property owner pursues litigation for settlement damages.

The City of Columbia should revise zoning regulations (if appropriate), including the corresponding zoning map, following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The zoning map should be updated at least annually to reflect any changes resulting



from development that involved zoning changes or property that was annexed (particularly if it was the result of an annexation agreement). The goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan should be reflected in any revised land development regulations.

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

The coordination of plans and regulations among governmental agencies plays a critical role in shaping the future of Columbia. A regional approach to planning can prevent disputes and costly problems associated with providing roads and public utilities. Expansion of water and sewer systems to serve projected growth will require coordination and negotiation with other providers. Joining planning of development patterns and improvement standards for areas immediately adjacent to Columbia, especially within the respective planning area, offers benefits for cost-effective service provision and orderly, sustainable community growth.

The City of Columbia should strengthen formal and informal channels of communication with both Monroe and St. Clair County, particularly as it concerns development in unincorporated areas surrounding the community and make them aware of the City's growth and annexation intentions. As noted previously in the discussion of the Future Land Use Plan map, Columbia's future growth potential is primarily to the south of the present City limits. This overlaps with Waterloo's 1.5 miles boundary. Establishing a formal intergovernmental should be an immediate priority upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

### ANNEXATION

The Future Land Use Plan identifies the Growth Area and indicates that pursuing initial annexations along the Route 3 corridor should be a priority. The Mayor, City Council, and City staff should review the properties that are critical to achieving the City's growth and begin discussions with the property owners. Review of these future annexation opportunities is critical to ensure changes in jurisdictional boundaries will tangibly benefit the community. Considerations include:

- Maintaining or improving best practice levels for City services.
- Evaluating proposed boundaries to minimize irregular geographies with confusing service areas.
- Clearly defining jurisdictional responsibility for maintaining streets and rights-of-way with Monroe or St. Clair County and any township with roadway responsibility and establishing agreements to define how development along a shared street will be designed, reviewed, and approved; and
- Evaluating financial implications (e.g., tax impact) on existing residents and businesses.

### COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP

The Comprehensive Plan intends to enhance coordination, partnership, support, and encouragement throughout the Columbia community. In addition to official policies and internal municipal departments and boards, the City of Columbia must also identify and pursue partnerships with other local community



organizations, regional economic development organizations, private businesses, and other governmental agencies, such as the local school district, to implement the Comprehensive Plan's community vision. Encouraging external partners to reference and utilize the City's Comprehensive Plan will increase implementation effectiveness and leverage resources for achieving local and regional planning goals.

Potential partner agencies and organizations include:

- Columbia Chamber of Commerce
- Columbia Fire Protection District
- Columbia Unit School District #4
- Development Community (Residential & Commercial)
- Historic Main Street Columbia Association
- Metro East Park & Recreation District
- Monroe County Economic Development Corporation
- Monroe County Heritage Foundation
- Monroe County Historical Society
- Private Schools
- Real Estate Agencies and Independent Realtors
- St. Clair County Economic Development Department

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is essential for an effective planning process to continue stakeholder engagement and communication during the implementing, updating, and amending of the Comprehensive

Plan. Regular engagement ensures that the public remains aware of and involved in ongoing proposals and decisions.

### FUNDING IDENTIFICATION & STRATEGIES

The City of Columbia will research and identify funding resources, as necessary, to ensure successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Identifying available funding sources helps influence the annual budget planning process and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). These resources may include City funds, private investment dollars and those that may be provided by external funding sources including federal, state, or county agencies such as:

- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA)
- Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)
- Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA)
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Metro East Park & Recreation District
- Monroe County, Illinois
- St. Clair County, Illinois

Other sources of funding may also be used by the Library, Police Department, and the Fire and Emergency Medical Services entities.

Funding strategies may include a variety of tools and methods such as:



- General Revenue and Obligation Bonds
- Illinois Business District Law
- Revolving Loan Fund
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Special Service Area Financing
- Special Assessment Financing

### INITIAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The following strategies serve as recommendations to initiate the implementation process upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Engage in pre-annexation agreements with key property owners along the Route 3 corridor to Hanover Road to achieve connection to the southern City boundary.
- Consider implementation of an intergovernmental annexation boundary agreement with Waterloo.
- Identify key properties to achieve an initial southern annexation strategy and the accompanying public service needs and associated costs.
- Engage key property owners to acquire annexation agreements for development based on the Comprehensive Plan goals.
- Review the existing City of Columbia Zoning Ordinance and identify any updates to the regulations and zoning map to align with the Comprehensive Plan land use policies.
- Engage in discussions with developers to gain an understanding of their development interests.

- Engage in discussions with local real estate brokers and regional commercial and industrial brokers to make them aware of development opportunities identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Continue to work with FEMA regarding ongoing updates to the floodplain and floodway mapping to ensure development and future land use planning align accordingly.
- Engage in discussions with the levee districts that border the City's western boundary to determine the potential for upgrading the levees to 500-year protection.
- Review entry signage from other communities and consider creating high quality entry signage at the City's major entry points that establishes community recognition and "brand" for City residents and the people passing through. This should include signage that directs people to the City's historic Main Street area to allow its businesses and restaurants to attract additional customers.
- Review the Historic Main Street Plan to determine:
  - The goals and objectives have been achieved.
  - Development and preservation strategies that have worked.
  - What still needs to be accomplished.
  - The funding or other impediments that remain in order to continue implementation of the Historic Main Street Plan.
  - Update the plan to extend the existing streetscape improvements to the north and south to intersect with Route 3.