

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic



MUNICIPAL COURT

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

Plan for Jury Trials

How will the jury pool safely assemble, how will jury selection occur, and how will jurors physically be seated (distanced) in the courtroom?

- City of Columbia (CoC) Municipal Court Courtrooms are equipped with plexiglass barriers surrounding the Judge's bench, the courtroom clerk, and the witness stand.

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Plexiglass barriers

- CoC will summons 125 potential jurors. John Stuart, Court Administrator, and Chief Administrative Judge Jess Mangum will enclose a letter with each summons explaining the jury process during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- At the exterior of the building, signs instruct jurors to return to their car if they are sick or experiencing any COVID symptoms. Additional signs explain other COVID requirements, such as mask requirements (see pictures below).



Signage on exterior of CoC Municipal Court

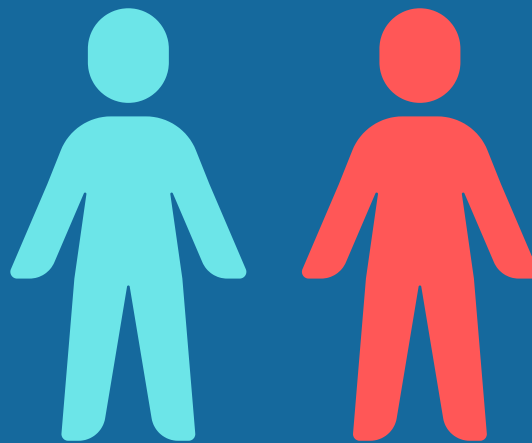
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- As jurors enter the building, CoC police officers, bailiffs and courthouse staff will provide masks to anyone who does not have one. Jurors will have temperatures taken via thermos-scan machines prior to entering the main lobby. If a juror registers a temperature above 100.3, the juror will be allowed to sit isolated for several minutes to “cool off” and then have their temperature taken again. If the temperature is normal, the juror will proceed through the metal detectors. If the temperature is still elevated, the juror will not be allowed in the building and will be rescheduled for jury service.



Thermoscan Machine at entrance

If temperature is normal, juror may proceed to metal detectors



If temperature is over 100.3
Juror sent to cool off; no change results in jury duty **rescheuled**

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- Bailiffs will direct jurors to Courtrooms 2 or Courtroom 4. Bailiffs will seat jurors on every other pew and six (6) feet apart. The courtroom pews are measured and each seat is marked approximately six (6) feet from the next seat.



Courtroom pews

- A judge will qualify the jurors and dismiss those jurors unqualified or who have exemptions. The “qualified” jurors will remain in the courtroom(s) until a jury panel is selected.
- CoC’s Court Administrator will measure out the distance between the seats and the jury box and will add chairs at the left side of the jury to ensure social distancing requirements. In the alternative, jurors may be allowed to sit in the pews during the trial to ensure social distancing.
- Attorneys at counsel tables will also wear masks and practice social distancing.
- Potential witnesses will be separated in other available rooms in the courthouse and will be called one at a time. Witnesses will be required to fill out a Witness COVID Questionnaire before they will be allowed in the Courtroom. Witness examination will take place in a normal fashion with Court permission required each time a witness is approached. After each witness testifies, the witness chair will be cleaned.
- Maintenance will clean the courtroom every day prior to the day’s proceeding.

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- During breaks from trial, the jury will remain in the courtroom. The judge and all parties will move to another courtroom, jury deliberation room, or other appropriate area. Also, pre-packed snacks and drinks will be provided to jurors during breaks.
- Visitors and attendees will be limited to two (2) for each victim and defendant. Bailiffs and CoC officers will instruct each attendee where to sit to ensure everyone is practicing social distancing.
- CoC will provide box lunches to the jurors. This will keep jurors safer and in a controlled area. Either the courtroom or two (2) deliberation rooms will house the jurors during lunch until trial resumes.
- After jury charges, the jurors will remain in the courtroom to deliberate. All other parties and court staff will exit the courtroom.

Availability of protective equipment (masks, gloves, etc.)

- CoC has secured numerous masks, glove, wipes, hand sanitizer and other PPE. Gloves will be used by anyone handling exhibits and will be provided by the court administrator. Motion-activated hand sanitizing stations will also be set up in each courtroom (see picture).



Hands-free hand sanitizing station

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Frequency of cleaning and sanitizing areas with moderate to heavy activity

- The courtrooms and deliberation rooms will be sanitized twice daily – once during the lunch break and once at the end of the day. Also, wipes will be available to wipe down glass, seats, desks and any other communal surface.

Provisions for the handling of exhibits

- Gloves must be worn while handling exhibits, including during jury deliberations. When the jury is given the exhibits, a fresh box of gloves will be provided.

Ingress and egress of individuals in the courtroom (lawyers, witnesses, bailiffs, law enforcement, members of the public)

- Bailiffs and CoC court officers will escort attorneys, witnesses, members of the public, and others into the courtrooms. Each courtroom has one door designated solely for entrance and another door at a different location in the courtroom designated for exit.

Achievements

- The municipal court has also implemented the use of video conferencing software. This has allowed us to safely continue to hold court sessions virtually throughout the pandemic. We have held virtual traffic, criminal, and homeless court, as well as preliminary hearings.
- The municipal court created a COVID safety played before every court session for all attendees and available on our website: <https://www.columbiasc.net/municipal-court>.



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OFFICE OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

Office of Business
Opportunities
COVID-19 Operational
Impacts



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Accomplishments

- Small Business Stabilization Forgivable Loan Program
 - Working across departmental lines, the City of Columbia awarded Small Business Stabilization Forgivable (SBSF) Loans to 323 small businesses located within the corporate limits of the City of Columbia. In an effort to expediate this funding to our small businesses at the start of the pandemic, these awards were made in less than three months. The total SBSF investment in our small businesses was \$1,400,000.

- Workshops & Trainings
 - The Office of Business Opportunities has held 45 events in the past year, either through partnerships or independently. Our ability to leverage resources with our partner agencies has increased due to the virtual environment. Coordination and collaboration of these events has been simplified over the past 12 months.

Chart 1: Events/Trainings Held

Held Events: Host(s)/Panelist(s)	Title	Date
Fran Marshall (DHEC), Sharon Dumit and Anthony Wilks (OSHA), Will Green, Gregory Garrett, Mzz GG (OBO)	Reopening Responsibly (Barbers and Cosmetologists)	June 15, 2020
Anthony and Hamilton Grant (OBO)	Back to Basics	June 17, 2020
OBO	Mayor's Minority Business Advisory Council	June 18, 2020
Sharon Dumit and Anthony Wilks (OSHA), Kiki Cyrus, Will Gillespie, Delilah Jenkins (OBO)	Reopening Responsibly (Restaurants)	June 30, 2020

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Sharon Dumit and Anthony Wilks (OSHA), Mackenzie Fontaine, Tzima Brown (OBO)	Reopening Responsibly (Retailers)	July 28, 2020
Ernest Cromartie, Harold Singletary (In collaboration w/MBDA)	Understanding Business Structures	August 12, 2020
Sharon Dumit and Anthony Wilks (OSHA), Lasenta, Frank Mitchell, GH Smith, Smoaks Construction (OBO)	Construction Industry Response to COVID	August 20, 2020
Rick Wade(US Chamber), (Hosted in collaboration w/Benedict College Women's Business Center, Richland Library)	Leveraging Technology with Rick Wade	August 26, 2020
Hosted by NAMC/OBO	What's Next for Minority Contractors	September 8, 2020
OBO	Mayor's Minority Business Advisory Council	September 22, 2020
OBO	Mentor Protégé Program Annual Meeting	September 29, 2020 and October 1, 2020



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Staff and SBDC	Resilient Columbia CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund Information Session	October 1, 2020
Host(s): BWBC, SBA, and OBO	WSOB Certification Process	October 27, 2020
USDOT MSA SBTRC/(OBO Partnered & Participated as a Panelist)	ACCESS 2020 Webinar	October 30, 2020
OBO	<i>2020 Minority Business Opportunity Conference Virtual Workshop</i>	November 17, 2020
OBO/BWBC/SBDC/SCORE	Money Smart Series <i>Session 1: Starting Your Business During A Pandemic - the Right Way!</i>	Session 1: November 18, 2020



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	<i>Session 2: Business Organization and Cash Flow Management</i>	Session 2: December 2, 2020
OBO/SBDC/BWBC	Resilient Columbia CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund Information Session – Financial Documentation	November 19, 2020
USC McNair Institute for Entrepreneurism and Free Enterprise (OBO Virtual Vendor)	McNair Entrepreneurship Showcase	November 20, 2020
Carolina Virginia Minority Supplier Diversity Council (OBO Member)	re-Emerge	December 2, 2020 & December 3, 2020
OBO/BWBC/SBDC/SCORE	Money Smart Series <i>Session 3: Sustaining Your Business During COVID</i>	Session 3: December 16, 2020
OBO/BWBC	<i>Session 4: The COVID Recovery Mentality</i>	Session 4: December 10, 2020



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OBO	Holiday Market (Recorded)	December 16, 2020
OBO/BWBC	The COVID Recovery Mentality	Session 2: January 8, 2021
OBO	Mayor's Minority Business Advisory Council	January 13, 2021
Optus, MBDA, SBA	Preparing Your PPP Application (Working on Title)	January 26, 2021
In partnership w/MBDA	PPP Update Webinar	February 2, 2021
OBO, SBA, SBDC, and BCWBC	PPP Update Webinar	February 3, 2021
OBO & Midlands Technical College	Fast Trac Sessions (Every Tuesday)	February 9, 2021 – April 3, 2021
OBO, BC WBC	Developing a Crisis Resilient Business Leader	February 9, 2021



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OBO	NxLevel Sessions (Every Thursday)	February 11, 2021 - April 15, 2021
OBO	Carolinas-Virginia Minority Supplier Diversity Council RING Mtg. (City of Columbia OBO Presenting Partner)	February 23, 2021
USC Business Incubator, Columbia Chamber of Commerce, BC WBC, Grow with Google, OBO	Reach Customers Online with Google During and After COVID	March 11, 2021
SBA, OBO < Richland County, SC Division of Small and Minority Business Contracts and Certifications	Resource Partner Day	March 17, 2021
OBO; Grant Business Enterprise	What You Need to Know to Access PPP Round II	March 18, 2021
OBO; Grant Business Enterprise	What You Need to Know to Access EIDL	March 24, 2021
MTC	Social and Behavioral Services Course - Shockproof Panel Discussion	March 30, 2021
MBAC	Mayor's Minority Business Advisory Council	April 1, 2021
OBO, SBA, and SCORE	End of Tax Season	April 8, 2021



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Woodland Hills' Business, Education, Training, & Relationship Meeting	OBO Representative Guest Speaker	April 14, 2021
Women Behind the Vision Graduation, Professional Leadership Fall Cohort	OBO Representative Keynote Speaker	April 17, 2021
SBA & OBO	SBA Restaurant Revitalization Webinar – First Webinar in the Country to Utilize the Application Portal Demonstration	April 22, 2021
OBO	Money Facts Webinar	April 29, 2021
OBO & SBDC	Navigating the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant	May 4, 2021

Commercial Non-Discrimination and Columbia Disadvantage Business Enterprise (CDBE) Utilization Policy

- OBO has worked across departments – Legal, Department of Procurement & Contracts Procurement, and Columbia Water to review our CDBE program.
- Recommendations by staff to strengthen the program include revisiting our methodology used in calculating our CDBE percentages placed on projects, separating the compliance review from the procurement process, and increasing the pool of CDBEs/DBEs utilized by bidders to meet the CDBE percentage placed on projects.
- Suggested revisions to the Commercial Non-Discrimination and CDBE Utilization Policy were presented and adopted by City Council on Tuesday, March 16th.
- The CDBE guidelines have been revised to align with the new policy. The revisions are currently being reviewed internally for official launch in May 2021.

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City of Columbia's Minority Opportunities Directory of City Departments and Community Partners

The City of Columbia's Minority Business Opportunity Conference is an annual conference designed to introduce vendors to the products and services purchased by the City of Columbia and our partner agencies. Due to the pandemic, the event was held virtually in November during Global Entrepreneurship Week. Private sector representatives from the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC and Dominion Energy informed attendees on how to do business with their prospective companies.

Since the face-to-face interaction between vendors and procurement representatives was not possible this year, OBO developed an electronic Minority Opportunities Directory of City of Columbia Departments and Community Partners to lists the products and services purchased by each and the procurement contact person. The resource was so well received by small business owners it will now be a standing OBO community resource.

Commercial Retention and Redevelopment (CRR) Program

FY19/20 – External and Internal Improvements (\$15,000 for external improvements and \$10,000 for internal improvements):

- House of Styles
- Mary's Salon
- Morgan Morris Realty
- Harden & Gervais, LLC
- The Sunrise Artisan Bath & Body
- Sunrise Suites



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City-Wide MWBE Utilization

The city-wide Minority and Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) Utilization goal was increased from 10% to 15% in September 2019. Happy to report, that even during this crisis, the City of Columbia met this goal in FY19/20 at 15.04%.

Newly Capitalized Economic Development Administration (EDA) CARES Act Grant Application

The City of Columbia was awarded an EDA grant in the amount of \$2,926,000 last year. The award included \$2,666,000 to capitalize a new Revolving Loan Fund, The Resilient Columbia CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund, and \$260,000 for associated administrative expenses. The launch date for the Resilient Columbia CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund was October 1, 2020. To date, the City has awarded \$2,407,985 to assist our small businesses in responding to the economic injury caused by the pandemic.

The CRLF Committee will meet in the coming weeks to make review additional requests for the remaining \$258,015.

The Resilient Columbia CARES Act Loan program has provided immediate assistance to local businesses located within the corporate limits of the City of Columbia.

Through this program, the capital has served as a relief during the crisis to businesses within various industries. The funding has provided businesses with the opportunity to make the necessary changes, purchases, and adjustments to respond to the negative impact of the pandemic. These funds have not only impacted the businesses, but also the surrounding communities.

With the pandemic disproportionately affecting minority communities due to underlying conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity, this funding will allow several healthcare facilities to open in two of our most vulnerable communities to provide preventive services as well as access to affordable care in the midst of the pandemic.



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COLUMBIA

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Chart 2: Resilient Columbia CARES Act Loan Recipients to Date

	CRLF Comm. Approval	Business Name	Type of Business	Applicant's Gender/Race	Council District	Amt
1	11/6/2020	Ivy Health Solutions, LLC	Healthcare	Minority Female	1	\$176,000
2	11/6/2020	Tolleson Limited Company	Civil Engineering	Non-Minority Male	2	\$200,000
3	11/6/2020	NOMA Bistro, LLC	Restaurant	Minority Male	1	\$150,000
4	11/14/2020	Rainwalk Technology	Insurance Company	Non-Minority Male	2	\$100,000
5	11/14/2020	Uptown Gifts on Main, LLC	Retail - Gift Shop	Non-Minority Female	2	\$60,000
6	11/14/2020	Cher-Rish Boutique	Retail - Clothing	Minority Female	2	\$59,339
7	12/4/2020	Comfort Care International	Healthcare	Minority Female	3	\$100,000
8	12/4/2020	HSV Restaurant, LLC	Restaurant	Non-Minority Male	2	\$200,000
9	12/4/2020	Capital Cleaning Solutions, LLC	Mobile Auto Cleaning Service	Minority Male	1	\$59,477
10	12/4/2020	Clare Morris	Marketing Firm	Non-Minority Female	3	\$25,000
11	12/4/2020	Toliver's Mane Event Barber Shop	Barbershop	Minority Male	1	\$151,500
12	12/4/2020	The Salon by PINK	Hair Salon	Minority Female	3	\$45,000
13	1/14/2021	Congaree River Properties	Healthcare/Retail	Minority Male	2	\$200,000
14	1/14/2021	Farmer's Construction	Construction	Minority Male	2	\$100,000
15	1/14/2021	Carolina Hair Studios	Hair Salon	Minority Female	2	\$50,000
16	1/14/2021	Marbella's Crowning Glory Hats	Retail	Minority Female	3	\$20,000
17	1/14/2021	Katherine's Heavenly Cleaning	Cleaning Service	Minority Female	3	\$22,000
18	2/17/2021	Grant's Extreme Clean	Trash Bin Sanitation	Minority Male	2	\$80,000

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			Business/Enviro Friendly			
19	2/17/2021	A Healing Touch	Chiropractic	Minority Female	2	\$140,000
20	2/17/2021	CMB Services	Commercial Construction	Minority Male	2	\$115,000
21	2/17/2021	Laish Property Management	Cleaning Services	Minority Male	3	\$50,000
22	2/17/2021	Sunrise Artisan Bath a& Body	Bath and Body Care	Minority Female	3	\$50,000
23	3/24/2021	Lexurious Transport	Trucking Company	Minority Male	1	\$85,000
24	3/24/2021	Kleen Kare Laundry & Dry Cleaners	Dry Cleaning Services	Minority Male	1	\$50,000
25	3/24/2021	Evans Counseling and Consulting	Counseling Services	Minority Female	2	\$35,000
26	3/24/2021	Azalea Coffee Bar	Coffee Services	Non-Minority Female	3	\$45,669
27	3/24/2021	Holiday's Barber Shop	Barber Shop	Minority Male	2	\$39,000
Total of Loans Made						\$2,407,985.00
Remaining						\$258,015.00
Total EDA Award						\$2,666,000



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Reflections from OBO Team Members

"We should definitely offer a virtual component to future in-person events. It offers increased participation and the recordings can be viewed at a later date. Many of our small businesses find it difficult to step away from their daily responsibilities to attend a training, but can set aside an hour to tune in to a webinar. We've had some attendees working while listening to webinar....

City leadership has handled their workforce impeccably. Through your actions you have demonstrated that your employees are your most valuable asset and over the past twelve months, I have felt overwhelmingly appreciated. I am confident that my work product is a reflection of the support I have received from leadership. Thank you!"

Ayesha Driggers, OBO Program Manager

"I am assuming that the City saved money in the electricity and water bills while non-essential personnel worked remotely. Additionally, individual office supply orders with our P-Card seems to be a more appropriate and preferred ordering option because the turnaround time is more efficient.

Being able to see and spend time with my family while working was priceless."

Tonya Porter Deberry, OBO Grants Coordinator



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Reflections from OBO Team Members

"Learning to operate in unimagined ways has provided operational growth for businesses to succeed. The virtual platform positioned some businesses to survive and thrive. The level of productivity has astounded and raised the expectations in some organizations.

It was great to hear the feedback from the Mayor Benjamin as he acknowledged the productivity throughout various departments of the City of Columbia, especially our office.

The unified communication solution has provided employees all access to important avenues to learn new alternative ways to communicate effectively. The use of video conferencing has reached a new wave for businesses to still be relevant without in person face to face communication. Next, embracing the need to pivot to unfamiliar digital platforms to conduct business online was a great shift. This opportunity kept communication open and allowed us to adapt when there is an unpredictable, sudden, unexpected transformation in the workplace.

Working remotely has been an amazing opportunity for me. I am so grateful to the City of Columbia that I still have a job.

In some ways the pandemic disrupted our normal busy daily schedules and restructured a slower pace that created more time to love, reflect, cherish family, and friends."

LaTonya Germany, OBO Program Compliance Specialist



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Reflections from OBO Team Members

"When the Covid-19 was announced last year, I thought that this would be a temporary setback to our everyday work lives. The most initial inconveniences were not having access to the working equipment we used everyday and took for granted things like a copier, scanner, and access to the t-drive access. I think that I also took for granted the importance and the ease of personal interaction with "Team OBO".

Working from home also came with interruptions from the grandkids, all day long. The next to youngest just could not grasp the concept that I am working from home. His statement was "when you're home, you're not supposed to be working!"

As for the advantages...It also provided for the need to be more disciplined, proving that I could be just as productive in an environment that was not thought of as a primary work place. I believe that I learned I do have the ability to be flexible after spending all of my life in a traditional work environment. I also found that I could communicate via other methods rather than face to face (This however is not a preferred method).

All in all, this year has taught me that I was able to adjust on the fly and that I was as we all had to be: Resilient!

My take going forward is that we can adjust according to our needs."

Bret Whiting, OBO Loan Officer



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Reflections from OBO Team Members

"This past year working remotely has been different, but not too bad. I can honestly say that I am happy to be working with such a great team because we pulled together and continued to make things happen in our department for our small businesses. With great leadership, we kept businesses open with the SBSF and CARES Act funds. We recognized needs in our small business community, which lead to us continuing to provide trainings through zoom/webinars. While we miss our face-to-face trainings, virtual webinars allowed us to save money on the cost of venues and food, but still allowed us to connect with our business owners in a different way. Our department stayed busy and keep our main focus (helping our small business) through this entire year.

OBO showed up for each other as well. I personally checked on people to make sure they are ok. These are difficult times and mental health is important. Some of us live alone and not being able to see family and friends on a regular can take a toll on you. But our staff meetings bring us together. Even if it is for a quick check in to say hi or for our director to lay eyes on us, it makes a difference. We are a strong group and we showed that we can keep moving, even in somewhat difficult circumstances."

Carla Echilberger, OBO Administrative Specialist

"The biggest takeaway for me this year was the creation of the Minority Business Opportunities Directory. I feel that having the information in a document that we can share with the public is very helpful in informing our small business community on the goods and services our City departments and our community partners are seeking. Also, I feel that we should continue using it as a resource."

Kalenna Ginyard, OBO Program Compliance Coordinator



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PARKS AND RECREATION

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

A total of 43 staff were impacted by COVID-19 that required quarantine or self-isolation.

- 12 Rangers
- 18 Parks Division
- 10 Recreation Division
- 3 Administration Division



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March 2020

- Since the City has been on a modified schedule due to the Pandemic, the department's Building and Maintenance, Park Rangers and Building and Grounds Maintenance staff has continued to work and maintain the greenways, recreation site grounds and recreation facilities.
- Began working with Global Partners for Fathers and Families, LLC in seeking grant funding.

April 2020

- Completed the installation of Lorick Park Playground, E.B. Sessions Playground, and Fairwold Park Playground utilizing Community Development Block Grant funding.

May 2020

- Completed the construction of the Owen's Field Pump Track utilizing funding from SC Parks, Recreation and Tourism.

June 2020

- Awarded a \$494,681.00 Community Development Block Grant for Phase 1 of the T.S. Martin Park.
- Renovations and Hyatt Park Improvements.



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July 2020

- Received a PARD grant to install ballfield lights at All-Star Field for \$128,000.00 with a 20% match.
- Distributed 15,559 masks to the community during the Mask Up Columbia Campaign.
- Offered 11 Virtual Activities that focused on fitness, arts and crafts, gardening tips, and line dancing.

August 2020

- Distributed 12,000 free meals for families and youth 18 years of age and under in partnership with the Francis Burns United Methodist Church.
- Distributed 500 back packs and school supplies in partnership with First Choice by Select Health.
- Assisted Parking Division with monitoring Parking Garages in collaboration with CPD for 5 weeks.



November 2020

- Began renovation of the Ensor Keenan House.

December 2020

- Completed construction of Marshall Park Playground.
- Applied for Community Development Block Grant funding for Phase 2-T.S. Martin Park Renovations.

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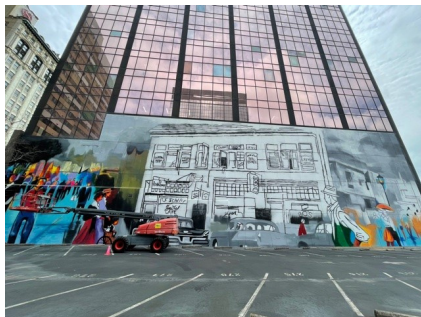
January 2021

- Offered 9 Virtual Activities that focused on fitness, arts and crafts, gardening tips, literacy, chess and ballet.
- Attained \$36,000.00 in grant funding to provide Virtual Mentoring and a Literacy Improvement Program for youth who attend Richland School District One.



March 2021

- Began providing supervision and support to local artists who are creating artistic murals that depict African American history, heritage and culture at locations within the city's park system and 1401 Main Street.
- Began construction on Hyatt Park improvements which include: daylighting a stream, a new playground structure, terrace seating, gateways, and a splash pad.
- Awarded a \$229,134.00 Community Development Block Grant for Phase 2 of the T.S. Martin Park Renovations.



April 2021

- Conducted Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies at Marshall Park Playground, E.B. Sessions Playground, Lorick Park Playground, Fairwold Playground and Owen's Field Pump Track.
- Completed installation of 5 Baseball Field Lights at All-Star's Baseball Field.



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PARKING SERVICES

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19



Upon the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020, Columbia's Parking Service Division was quick to react as one of the first Cities to suspend parking operations in support of social distancing as well as the anticipated economic impact to our local businesses & community. This suspension included gates being raised at City Parking Facilities, complimentary on-street parking, and monthly parking discounts requests. While Parking Enforcement Detail relaxed parking enforcement to help cope with parking availability and administrative concerns.

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The City of Columbia and Parking Services also provided bagged meters for restaurants that were offering take-out to encourage short-term parking for patrons supporting local businesses with convenient parking.



During May of 2020, Parking Services began to observe an increase in public on-street parking and the duration of parking deterring the turnover of vehicles parking resulting in concerns for local downtown businesses. As an auxiliary operation, Parking Services announced that Parking Operations and Parking Enforcement would resume on June 1st, 2020 and full towing operations would begin July 1st, 2020.



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Parking Operations were reestablished beginning May 18th, 2020

Enforcement of paid and timed parking was reinstated beginning the following dates and procedures:

April 27th, 2020 checking street and deck levels

May 18th, 2020 issuing warnings

June 1st, 2020 issuing regular citations

July 1st, 2020 towing procedures

Collections of public parking revenue were reinstated beginning the following dates:

March 17th, 2020 Implementation of 48 take out 15 minutes' spaces- red bagged meters

April 30th, 2020 on-street

May 28th, 2020 parking pay stations in decks and lots

June 30th, 2020 Implementation of 48 take-out 15 minutes' spaces- converted into signs (loading zones on Main St.)



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Monthly Parking Discounts Were Issued beginning May 18th, 2020 until August 1st, 2020

Parking Services committed to working with our business community to overcome this unprecedented situation and provided parking discounts to hotel partnerships and monthly parkers who were affected by the stay-at-home orders and adapting business operations to sustain their business and employees during the height of the pandemic.

March 29th, 2020 Hotel partnerships that have hotel guest parking, valet, or employee in our facilities received monthly parking discounts at 100% March, April, May and 50% discount in June. May 31st, 2020 Parking Services provided 100% discount to the Aloft and Hyatt Hotel for June 2020.

April 2nd, 2020 parking services emailed discount request memo to receive monthly parking discount for April & May 50% or 100% due to the work from home order and or other necessary public health measures that were determined by local and state officials.



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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

Project/Permit Review During COVID 19

The Department, but most especially, the Development Center was faced with a daunting task on how to change processes to accommodate permitting customers in the middle of a pandemic; as we closed the doors to in-person business. An on-line permitting portal had recently been launched and staff quickly ramped up its capabilities to switch to all digital submissions.

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

- Staff was placed on a modified schedule to lessen the possibility of the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- Pre-application meetings went from in-person to conference calls, zoom meetings and meetings on teams.
- Customers who were not computer savvy, were encouraged to submit applications and supporting documents to be dropped in the Washington Street drop box or to mail in their request.
- Permits were extended due to the pandemic because many job sites were or had shut down.
- Permitting fees payments were transitioned to making payments on-line.
- Inspections continued without pause utilizing methods to ensure the safety of the public and staff.

Planning and Development Services staff made every effort to make this transition as easy as possible for customers and staff. The changes implemented to address COVID have proved to be of lasting benefit in that they streamlined our processes and made many of our services easier to access.

By the Numbers (March 1, 2020 to March 30, 2021)

Total Number of Building Permits Issued: **5,306**

Residential New Construction Building Permits: **641**

Commercial Building Permits: **309**

Acres Annexed with majority being "donut holes": **270**

Major Subdivisions reviewed containing 1526 lots on 431 acres: **20**

Multi-family units processed through site plan review*: **1288**

*Applications for subdivisions and commercial group developments can now be submitted electronically!

Certificate of Design Approvals, percentage in house vs. DDRC review

·Urban Design: 75 total CDAs issued, 97% issued at staff level

·Historic Preservation: 228 total CDAs issued, 81% issued at staff level

·4 buildings were designated as Individual Landmarks

701 Fig Street

ü 1813 Main Street

ü 1601 Hampton Street

ü 2531 Gervais Street

Bailey Bills Projects Certified: **33**



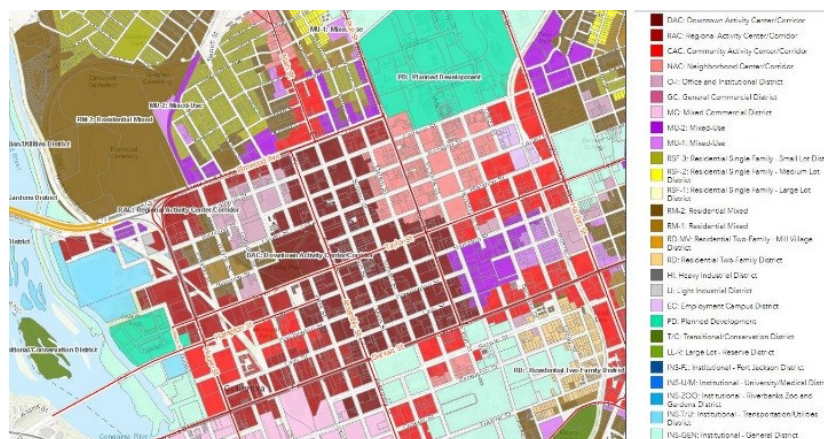
Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Notable Developments Reviewed/Inspected

- 600 Gervais, 8-story, 276 unit multi-family residential apartments
- 1401 Assembly, 17-story, 247 units Private student dormitory
- 1209-1211 Gadsden Street, mixed-use redevelopment/ Bailey Bill
- 1801 Assembly, mixed-use redevelopment w/ 88 apartments/ Bailey Bill
- 1043 Huger, 5-story, 130 room hotel
- 1224 Huger, redevelopment to office space/ Bailey Bill
- 1219 Assembly, redevelopment of Armory to 34-room hotel/ Bailey Bill
- 3452 N Main, 53,000 Sf office building
- 1000 Lady 4 story, 144 room Cambria Suites hotel

New Zoning/Land Development Ordinance and Map

The new zoning and land development code, known as the Unified Development Ordinance was completed and text adopted August 2019. This is the first comprehensive rewrite of the regulations that govern the growth and development of Columbia since the late 1970s. The code is intended to address four main goals: create a user-friendly code, implement Plan Columbia/Columbia Compass, add context-sensitive regulations to promote “infill” development, and incorporate sustainable development. In late 2019 staff embarked on the second major component of the project: assign a new zoning district to each of over 46,000 parcels. The draft maps were completed and published in February 2020 and public meetings scheduled for mid-March, which were cancelled due to COVID. Virtual meetings to review the maps were held in September 2020 and the City Council Public Hearing in January 2021. Due to the conditions of COVID, Council wanted to ensure that there was opportunity for additional education and feedback and delayed first reading, permitting staff time to hold one-on-one meetings with the public and attend neighborhood meetings. The new code and map will be effective August 30, 2021.

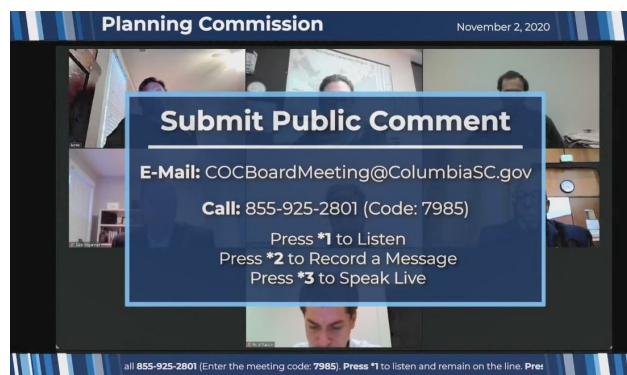


Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Boards & Commissions

With the Planning & Development Services Department's continued mission to create opportunities for meaningful public input and community engagement around planning and land use decisions, the Department's pandemic response prioritized these outcomes. For those development decisions which require land use board or commission review, ensuring that process - and the public input process regarding those applications - continued uninterrupted, has been a key part of COVID response. PDS partnered with the City's Public, Media Relations, and Marketing Department and Information Technology Department to quickly pivot towards virtual meetings with opportunities for applicant participation and presenting, as well as public participation via telephone and email during meetings. Though all April 2020 meetings were cancelled as the City developed its virtual meeting platforms and protocols, in May 2020 land use Boards and Commissions resumed meeting, and have not skipped a beat since, allowing permitting and public input processes to move forward in a streamlined and easily accessible fashion.

A board and commission-specific email allowed members of the public to easily provide public comment for pending public meeting matters, without having to track down the correct staff. This re-tooling of the public meeting process will also help frame the conversation regarding how the City can provide increased accessibility and engagement opportunities moving forward.

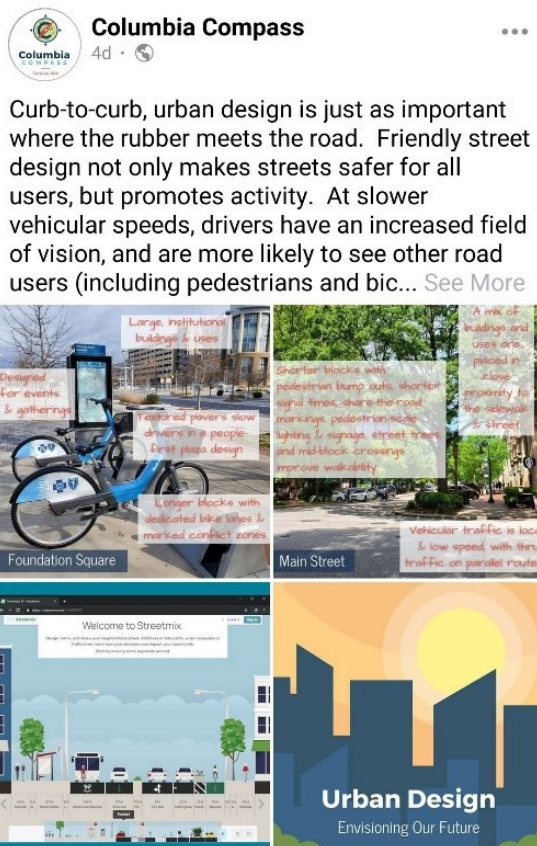


Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Outreach

Working within the confines of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Planning & Development Services Department redoubled their education and outreach efforts, working to provide citizens with a way to engage in planning city-wide from the safety of their homes. Division-wide shared inboxes were created for ease of access, ensuring that customers would be able to quickly and efficiently receive answers to questions and requests. These shared inboxes have resulted in increased efficiency and decreased response time, and will continue to be a benefit to all users in a post-pandemic world.

Public information meetings shifted to online platforms, allowing users to engage in discourse via Zoom, YouTube, and over the phone using the Public Input program. In addition to Board, Commission, and Committee meetings, informational sessions were held on Columbia Compass, the City's Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Regulations Rewrite, the Downtown Historic Resources Survey, the histories of local preservation districts, and more. A historic preservation playlist on the City's YouTube channel was also created, creating an easy way for interested parties to access information about the City's preservation programs and efforts.



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

The Planning Division utilized social media platforms and targeted e-newsletters to expand virtual engagement efforts during the City's pandemic response. The @ColaCompass presence on Facebook and Instagram (previously Facebook and Twitter), helped planners retool quickly to host virtual celebrations in May of 2020 for Bike Month and Historic Preservation Month. With the cessation of many in-person activities in 2020, staff also hosted a highlight of Park(ing) Days Past on social media in September 2020, and National Community Planning Month-related topics on social media in October 2020. Mailchimp-based newsletters for historic preservation, Columbia Compass, and Walk Bike Columbia continued to offer ways for staff to engage with the public, and provide information about local and regional programs and efforts, as well as opportunities for comment and engagement

4:08

←

Columbia Compass is now City policy!

In case you missed it, City Council adopted Columbia Compass as the City's comprehensive plan on Tuesday by unanimous vote! We are so thankful for your participation and input throughout the planning process - your voices have helped make this a plan we can all be proud of, and one we look forward to implementing!

Wondering what's next for us? The above infographic should help explain where we go from here. Be sure to stay tuned to our social media and emails for updates as we move forward!

[Take me to the adopted plan!](#)

Help us spread the word!

Please tell your friends, family neighbors, and coworkers about Columbia Compass: Envision 2036. The plan is only the first step, and only when we

||| ○ <

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WHALEY STREET PROTECTION AREA

PLAY ALL

Historic Preservation

12 videos • 89 views • Last updated on Mar 17, 2021

City of Columbia [SUBSCRIBE](#)

- Whaley Street Protection Area | A Brief History
- Granby Architectural Conservation District | A Brief History
- Melrose Heights/Oak Lawn Architectural Conservation District | A Brief History
- Wales Garden Architectural Conservation District | A Brief History
- The Bailey Bill Tax Abatement | Part B and Final Certification (Part 3)
- The Bailey Bill Tax Abatement | The Application Process (Part 2)

Instagram

colacompass

72 posts 154 followers 46 following

Columbia Compass
Government Website
The comprehensive plan for the City of Columbia, SC. Follow us for all things planning, updates on plan implementation, and more! #columbiacompass linktr.ee/ColaCompass

101 Join Us! Engage #ICYMI Land Use NaturalRes... CulturalRes...

POSTS IGTV SAVED TAGGED



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Columbia Compass

Columbia Compass: Envision 2036, the 10-year update to the City's comprehensive plan, kicked off in the Fall of 2018, wrapping up in 2020. During the planning process, over 6,200 points of engagement occurred, not inclusive of water bill mailers sent in mid-2019, and regular social media posts and e-newsletter mailings. Planning Commission reviewed and recommended approval of the draft plan in March 2020, and City Council took up approval in July 2020, adopting Columbia Compass officially after second reading August 2020. Though final in-person public meetings occurred in January and February 2020, with the use of new technology (zoom and PublicInput), City staff was able to host two additional public informational meetings online in June 2020.

In February 2021, Columbia Compass: Envision 2036 received an honorable mention from the American Planning Association - South Carolina Chapter (SCAPA) in the category of 2020 Outstanding Planning Project – Innovative Use of Technology. This award recognized the efforts of Planning Division staff to expand upon typical engagement and outreach strategies to increase accessibility, improve demographic reach, and build a broader base of public engagement throughout the planning process. The adoption of Columbia Compass as City policy is only the beginning, as City staff across departments and divisions, as well as community partners, work to implement the recommendations of the plan. The Planning Division has continued to provide regular updates on the planning process and implementation efforts, as well as expand planning-based education and outreach efforts, through social media platforms (@ColaCompass) and the distribution of regular e-newsletters.



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Downtown Historic Resources Survey

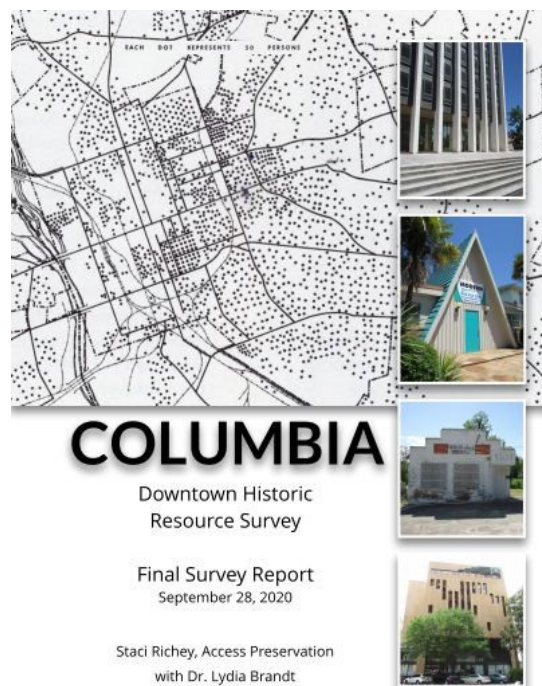
Historic survey of downtown Columbia started in April 2020 and concluded in September 2020. The survey area is bounded by Elmwood Avenue and Calhoun Street on the north, Congaree River on the west, Blossom Street on the south, and Harden Street on the east. The consultants surveyed 721 properties resources within 2.8 square miles of Columbia's downtown.

The purpose was to conduct a survey of historic resources located in downtown Columbia, updating the 1993 survey by John Bryan, Ph.D., with special attention to Modern buildings built from 1945-1975. The project's deliverables included an historic context for the development of Columbia's built environment and recommendations for resources' eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places and for local designation by the City of Columbia.

Survey recommendations included a list of properties that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. These properties must meet certain criteria but also be at least 50 years old and retain most of the seven aspects of integrity used by the Department of the Interior: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

- Recommended individual listings include 11 commercial buildings, 3 institutional resources, 1 parking structure, 3 residential buildings, and 1 recreational building.
- The survey also recommended four districts for listing in the National Register

While anything recommended for the NRHP would also be considered for inclusion as a local landmark or local historic districts, there are a few resources that are recommended only at the local level. This includes recommendations for 13 Individual Landmarks and 3 local historic districts.

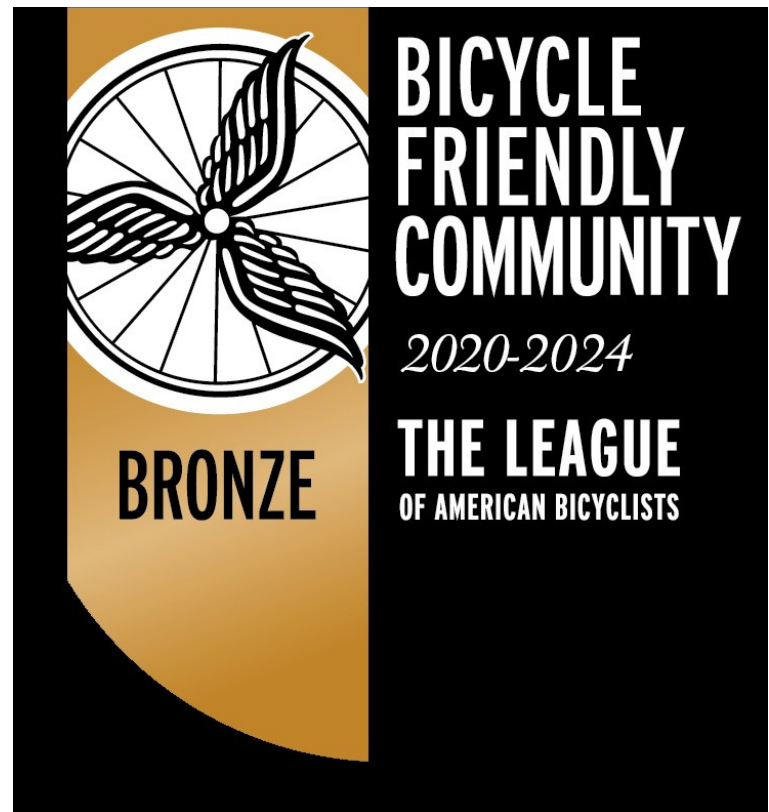


Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Bike Friendly

Communities (BFC) Award

The City of Columbia was re-designated as a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community in December of 2020. This designation followed a rigorous re-application process undertaken by Planning Division staff and supported by community partners. The City of Columbia has been designated as a bronze-level community since 2008; the designation is a four-year designation. Columbia is one of 485 Bicycle Friendly Communities, as designated by the League of American Bicyclists. The program provides a roadmap to making biking better for communities of all shapes and sizes. While the award process considers very visible elements such as bike infrastructure, other essential elements include efforts around adult and youth bike education, encouragement through events like Bike to Work Day, evaluation mechanisms, and enforcement all through the lens of equity. The rigorous application process is an educational tool in itself, and includes an opportunity for local bicyclists and active transportation advocates to provide input on their experiences and perceptions of bicycling in their community.



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Walk Friendly Communities (WFC) Award

The City of Columbia was initially designated as a Bronze-level Walk Friendly Community in 2015, with application information gathered as part of the Walk Bike Columbia Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. Planning Division staff worked diligently to gather detailed information for re-application in 2020, and has been awarded a re-designation as of May 2021. As with the Bike Friendly Community designation, the application process and subsequent feedback from the reviewers at The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center helps staff, policy makers, and advocates understand more about Columbia's progress and what programs, policies, and projects can best benefit the City, through an objective comparison with the efforts of our peer communities.



AARP Community Challenge Grant

The importance of public space and people being able to come together no matter the circumstances, is what makes cities great. The pandemic highlighted the importance of having safe, socially distanced outdoor spaces to come together. A "Parklet" is a public space for people, designed to occupy an on-street parking space. Through a grant from AARP Livable Communities and a partnership with One Columbia for Arts and Culture, the Planning Division spearheaded Columbia's first parklet. The effort was truly a partnership, with multiple City departments and outside groups providing support and resources, with a public art piece by Frankie Zombie incorporated into the space. The parklet is intended to be a pilot project to gauge interest for future installations and will be open to the public by early May 2021



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic



PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTS

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

The Department of Procurement and Contracts' mission is to provide excellent customer service while promoting fair and open competition in the procurement of goods and services necessary to support all operations within the City of Columbia. The Department strives for Diversity and Inclusion throughout all facets of the procurement and contracting process. One of the Department's primary objectives is to identify and eliminate any barriers in participating in the procurement and contracting process.

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic



**Procurement & Contracts' Staff Photo
October 2019**

Over the last year, the department utilized additional virtual and automated means to deliver services to our internal and external customers. Some examples include, but were not limited to conducting pre-solicitation, pre-proposal, pre-bid, bid openings, pre-construction and numerous other meetings with our valued business partners. By providing alternative ways of service delivery, our vendors, contractors and consultants realized increased opportunities to participate in the procurement process. Consequently, the virtual communication offerings opened up a wide array of efficiency opportunities for our contractors. One example is the minimized travel time for face-to-face meetings resulting in more time for our business partners to focus on their core objectives while also participating virtually in the solicitation process.

The Department processed over 4,725 purchase orders totaling approximately \$168 million and 74 contracts during the period March 2020-March 2021. Due to the pandemic, this was a decrease of approximately 25% from prior years. Although the City, including the Department of Procurement and Contracts, transitioned to a modified work environment, the City continued to provide timely services to our customers.

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic



**City of Columbia COVID 19
Fulfillment Center**

In an effort to address the safety and health needs of our city as we experienced an unprecedented pandemic, the Department opened a City of Columbia COVID 19 Fulfillment Center. This Center provided City departments and employees with a one-stop center to expedite the placing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) orders and a location for the distribution of items needed in an expedited manner. The Fulfillment Center continues to operate and also provide delivery options for City departments.

The Department of Procurement and Contracts also partnered with the Office of Business Opportunities on numerous outreach efforts. Many of the co-sponsored events focused on training and assisting potential bidders and contractors to successfully navigate through the City's procurement and contracting processes. The attendees were also encouraged to register through the online bidding module so they are immediately notified when bids are released that are aligned with their companies' offerings.

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic



Procurement Training Event January 2020



CITY OF COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

Request for Proposal (RFP)

City of Columbia Disparity Study II

RFP008-20-21-KDD

Issuance Date: November 13, 2020

Non-Mandatory (Highly Recommended) Pre-Proposal Meeting:
To be held virtually via Zoom
November 19, 2020 at 4:00 P.M. (ET)

Deadline for Submitting Questions:
November 24, 2020 at 10:00 A.M. (ET)

Questions and Responses to *Request for Proposal* must be submitted to:
<https://columbiasc.ionwave.net>

Response Deadline: **December 22, 2020 at 10:00 A.M. (ET)**

Send Hard and Digital Copies to:

Attention: **RFP008-20-21-KDD**
City of Columbia Disparity Study II
1800 Main Street – Second Floor,
Columbia, S.C. 29201

Attention: *Kent Davis*, Procurement Manager

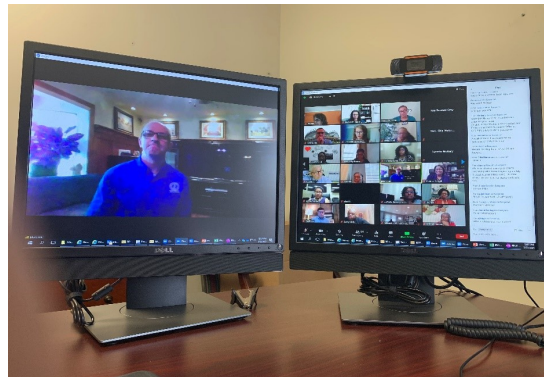
Richland County's Office of Small Business Development hosted a procurement workshop with representatives from the City's Department of Procurement and Contracts and other representatives from SCDOT, Prism Health, the US Army, Richland County and various state government procurement offices. The event was a great opportunity for vendors and contractors to network and receive information on how to further seek procurement bidding and contracting opportunities. A similar event was held in 2020 and was also attended by the City's procurement department.



We Are Columbia

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

In November 2020, the Department released a solicitation seeking a contractor to provide an update to the 2006 Disparity Study. The initial procurement process was successfully conducted thanks to the support of the Executive Management Team, the Office of Business Opportunities and many other city departments. The updated Disparity Study is now underway and is scheduled to be completed within the next 24 months.



Virtual Procurement & Contracts Training hosted in March 2021

In March 2021, the Annual Procurement and Contracts training was hosted by the Department and conducted virtually. The training was attended by over 130 city staff members and included various topics to include a review of the requisitioning process through IFAS (Integrated Financial Accounting System), the electronic bidding system (bid), legal aspects of contracting, compliance and diversity related programs and objectives, safety and risk management, etc. The IFAS Contract Management Module (CMM) was also introduced during the training. Once the CMM module is fully implemented, it will provide a streamlined automated process for tracking and monitoring contracts. The module shall also include a seamless and integrated system with citywide financial data and payment information. The module will also provide the City with tools to capture contract information from the initiation phase through the end of the contract life cycle.



**Internal Department Training
March is Procurement Month recognition
March 12, 2020 – pre-COVID**

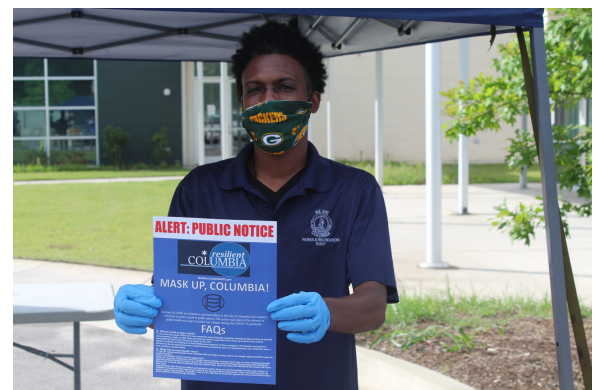
Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic



PUBLIC RELATIONS, MEDIA, AND MARKETING

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic required the City of Columbia's Public Relations, Media and Marketing Department to act quickly and efficiently to disseminate vital information to city residents. Working in tandem with several departments across the city, the Public Relations Department adapted to new working conditions to not only keep staff safe, but also to relay key information that would keep the public safe as well.



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

In March of 2020, Public Relations staff began working from home, utilizing cell phones, laptops, and other essential equipment provided by the city. For occasions and events requiring staff to be present in-person, face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and other PPE gear were procured and provided. In staff offices, face masks were required and air purifiers were installed.

The Public Relations Department ideated and helped facilitate messaging for departments citywide. This process included water bill inserts, flyers, decals, social media posts, videos, press releases, and more. The dissemination of this material was key in keeping the public informed of both the city's modified operations and key safety precautions from sources like the CDC and DHEC.



Livestreamed Meetings

The usual responsibility of livestreaming meetings for City Council, Boards and Commissions, and others had to be adapted following the transition to working from home. With the help of the city's IT Department, Public Relations staff were able to facilitate and broadcast these essential meetings for public viewing without ever missing a beat. Members from City Council and the various boards and commissions were able to utilize Zoom video calls from the safety of their own homes while Public Relations staff broadcast the meetings to their thousands of online followers. Through this process, Public Relations has also assisted all City departments with virtual meetings, workshops and webinars.

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Development of Resilient Columbia Microsite

The Public Relations Department was excited to announce its new microsite, Resilient Columbia. Under the direction of the Mayor, City Council and the City Manager, staff in multiple City departments worked with local businesses to ensure that information on public safety and public health were a priority as our City leadership opens up our local economy as businesses follow state and local guidelines. Features of the website include, information about business resources for City departments, Resilient Columbia Economic Recovery Task Force meetings and presentations, COVID-19 mobile testing clinics, information on vaccination locations, and the Sustainability Plan. The City of Columbia also compiled a Resilient Columbia Business FAQ's document that may be helpful in assisting small business owners working to reopen their businesses during the pandemic. Additional communications tools were developed, including a #ResilientColumbia social media campaign, public service announcements featuring City leaders, as well as social distancing signage and sidewalk decals. The Resilient Columbia website serves as the online hub for economic recovery information, business resources and COVID-19 safety guidelines. For more information regarding Resilient Columbia business resources and information, please visit <https://resilient.columbiasc.gov>

In addition, the Public Relations Department also developed their own microsite that serves as the communications hub for city information and Public Relations materials. Communication tools include special projects happening within the City, public announcements featuring City leaders and staff, our City publications to stay updated with COVID-19 updates, latest news, photos from recent events and more.

For more information regarding Public Relations information, please visit <https://publicrelations.columbiasc.gov/>



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

More Ways to Access Public Relations Coverage and Content

In an effort to provide more access to City of Columbia information, the City of Columbia's Public Relations, Media & Marketing Department has launched channels on Roku and Amazon Fire TV. As video viewership continues to trend towards streaming devices and on-demand applications, the City of Columbia wants to ensure citizens have the ability to gain access to essential information through streaming services. On both Roku and Amazon Fire TV, audiences are able to watch video content that includes: City news, City events, City information, City Council meetings and other public meetings, public service announcements, and emergency information (including the City of Columbia's response to COVID-19).

Turning Events Virtual

It was important for the City to still find safe ways to honor and celebrate their traditional events. This meant conducting events virtually. Despite COVID-19 forcing social distancing and other safety precautions, the Public Relations Department was still able to help the City celebrate and honor events such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the Mayor's Walk Against Domestic Violence, National Wear Red Day, Together We Can Read Day, and many others.



Ways to Watch

-  @Spectrum, Channel 1301
-  City of Columbia SC
-  City of Columbia SC
-  ColumbiaSCGovernment
-  @CityofColumbia
-  @CityofColumbia

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Events Adjusted by COVID-19



National Wear Red Day



Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

Mayor's Walk Against Domestic Violence



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Hometown Heroes

Due to COVID-19, all non-essential workers were asked to stay at home and practice social distancing. The Public Relations Department created the video series "Hometown Heroes" to highlight the city's essential employees who continued to work to ensure the needs of Columbia residents were met. Departments included in the Hometown Heroes series were Fleet Services, CRC 911 Communications Center, Support Services, Planning & Development, Parks & Recreation, Columbia Water, Information Technology, and Solid Waste.

To view the Hometown Heroes series, visit <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLioqf45WacQH2eBcZR3K7BZR3gqcR0ly>



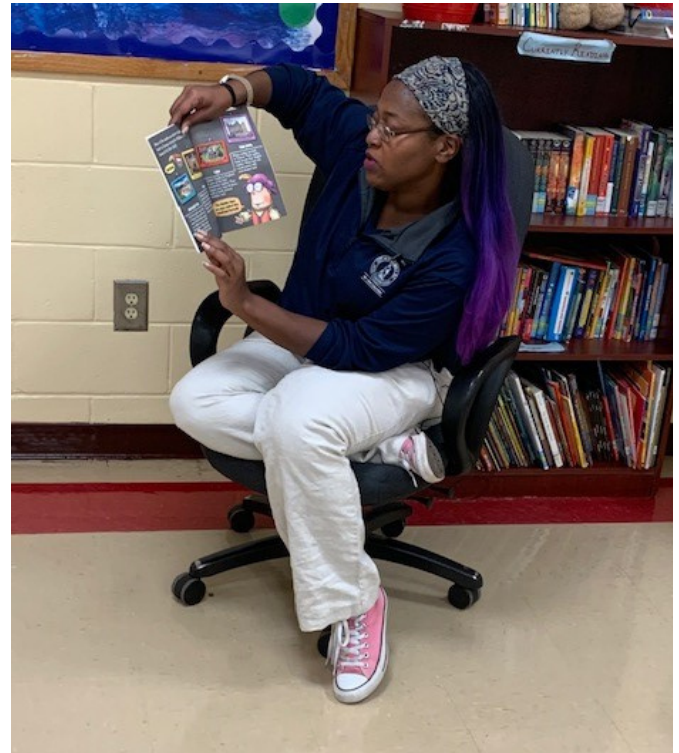
Parks & Recreation Virtual Programming

The Parks & Recreation Department worked together with the Public Relations, Media & Marketing Department to develop and create a series of videos that give citizens access to virtual training opportunities to help with wellness and recreational activities during the pandemic. These videos cover a wide range of topics, including golf tips, couponing advice, and even art projects. Each video is presented by an employee of the Parks & Recreation Department and was produced adhering to strict COVID-19 precautions. The goal of the series was to ensure that during a time when public parks were closed, the community was still provided a level of service that allowed for continuous engagement of activities that support their physical, mental and social well-being.

To view the video series, visit <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLioqf45WacQG93s3WtQoDdoIYW2R4-m7u>

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Parks and Recreation Virtual Programming



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Mask Distribution Events

Public Relations staff were crucial in the promotion of events that helped to distribute masks to the public, and were on hand on-site to provide coverage of the event in addition to helping in the distribution of masks and other COVID-19 safety materials.



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

COVID-19 Drive-Thru Testing Sites

The Public Relations Department continuously updated the public on information regarding COVID-19 testing sites. Social media posts, graphics, and videos were utilized throughout the pandemic to spread the word on locations and times for the various free testing locations across the City.



Vaccination Education Campaign

Once vaccinations became widely available, it was crucial to get the word out and educate the public on the importance of getting vaccinated. The Public Relations Department created and implemented a citywide vaccination education campaign to raise awareness. This involved social media campaigns, microsite updates, public outreach, cooperation and partnerships across multiple City departments, leaders, and outside organizations, and the production of materials to be distributed via handouts and water bill inserts.



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Zoom Operations

Due to social distancing needs and focusing on minimizing the spread of COVID-19 virus, the City of Columbia needed some changes in operations to continue holding meetings and informational workshops for City staff, constituents and the public. After researching various programs online and their effectiveness, the City of Columbia's Public Relations, Media & Marketing department purchased a Zoom Business license. This purchase and subsequent use of the program was vital for the City, as it allowed our management and staff, to stay on track with their goals on providing services to the public. Not only was it vital for our operations as a City, but it also was vital for the health and safety of our employees and their families to stay socially distant and to help minimize the spread of the Coronavirus.

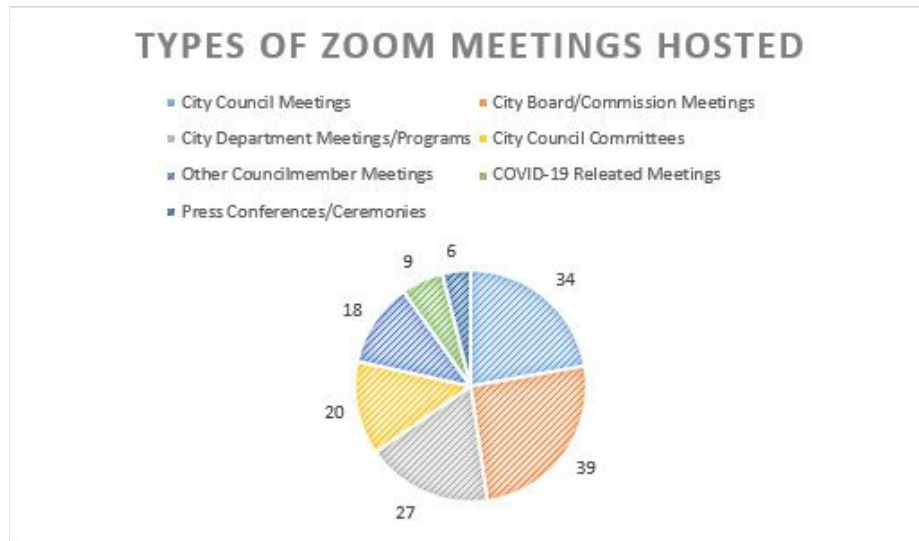
The purchase of the Zoom Business license allowed the City of Columbia to host meetings with an unlimited time frame, in various meeting formats, which was necessary for lengthy municipal meetings. The two types of meetings the City was able to host were "Zoom Meetings" and "Zoom Webinars."

The "Zoom Meetings" have been used to host private meetings with staff, constituents and departmental program attendees. This format was also used for the City's municipal meetings like City Council and City Board/Commissions meetings to allow relevant presenters and applications to join the meeting, but allowing the public to view & participate on other platforms like YouTube and Public Input.

The "Zoom Webinar" have been used mostly by our City department's to host informational workshops like the Office of Business Opportunities' annual Minority Business Opportunity Conference and several other similar events that are normally held in-person at facilities in the City of Columbia. The "Zoom Webinar" feature allowed the public to join directly into the webinar and interact with our staff to ask any questions or to express their concerns regarding matters at hand.

The City's Public Relations, Media and Marketing department was responsible and setting up all of these meetings and distributing out all relevant meeting information to our staff members. Since our first virtual City Council meeting on March 17, 2020, the department has set-up & hosted 153 Zoom meetings or webinars. As hinted on earlier, these meetings consisted of City Council meetings, City Board/Commission meetings, COVID-19/Affordable Housing Task Force meetings, departmental trainings/informational programs, as well as press conferences and special ceremonies. Below is breakdown of the types of meetings that were held since the operational shutdown.

Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic



With the purchase of the business license, the City was also able to allow City Departments and staff to host their own private meetings with their own staff, constituents and the public. These meetings were essential for the City of Columbia to keep on track with our City-wide goals for Envision Columbia and for our departments to continue to provide the public with training/informational opportunities they've become accustomed to. Since the beginning of our operational shutdown, City staff has hosted a total of 581 of these meetings. Below is graph charting the total amount of meetings per month. One thing to take notice of is the slow start in the number of these meetings, but as staff began to get more comfortable with the Zoom platform the number of meetings were more consistent.



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

Obtaining a Zoom business license was not only vital to hold meetings with unlimited hosting time, but also to host hundreds of people at one given time. This was to replicate meetings and programs that would normally be held in person at City Hall, another City building or conferences at the Columbia Convention Center. Below is a look at three most attended meetings that were either private or public.

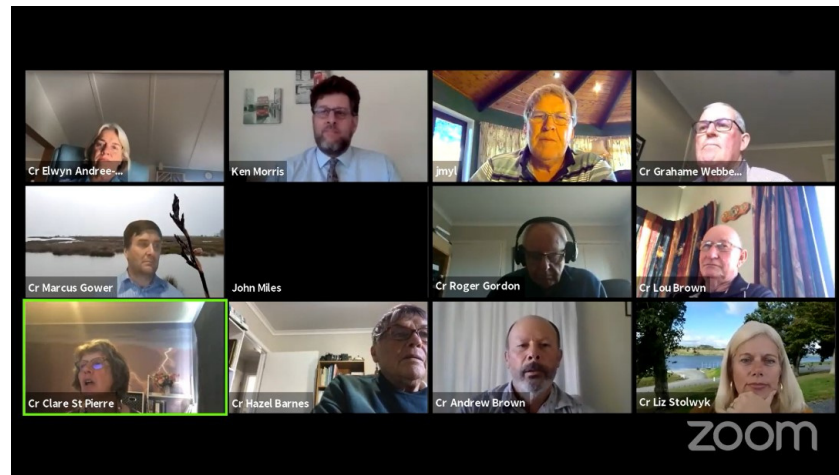
Most Attended Zoom Meetings <i>Since March 2020</i>		
Date	Meeting Title	# of Attendees
11/17/20	2020 Virtual Minority Business Opportunity Conference	335
4/22/21	SBA Restaurant Revitalization Fund Webinar	284
10/1/20	City of Columbia Resilient Columbia CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund Webinar	180

In addition to hosting the Zoom meetings/webinars operating the Zoom platform, has also assisted our live streaming efforts for the City of Columbia. By having a hosting platform in place, the Public Relations, Media & Marketing department was able to transform a live streamed meeting directly from Zoom into fully integrated live stream program featuring music, graphics, informational tickers and the ability to switch views instantly. Below is the look of meeting that is streamed directly from Zoom to YouTube compared to our product at the City of Columbia.



Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

(The look of a meeting that is directly live streamed to YouTube from Zoom)



(The look of the City's meetings that is live streamed modifying the Zoom Screen)



The City of Columbia's Public Relations, Media & Marketing department will continue to use these modified operations for live streamed meetings until it is safe to resume normal operations. After the City resumes to its previous operations this format will still be able to be used for meetings, trainings and webinars held by City Council and our City of Columbia departments.

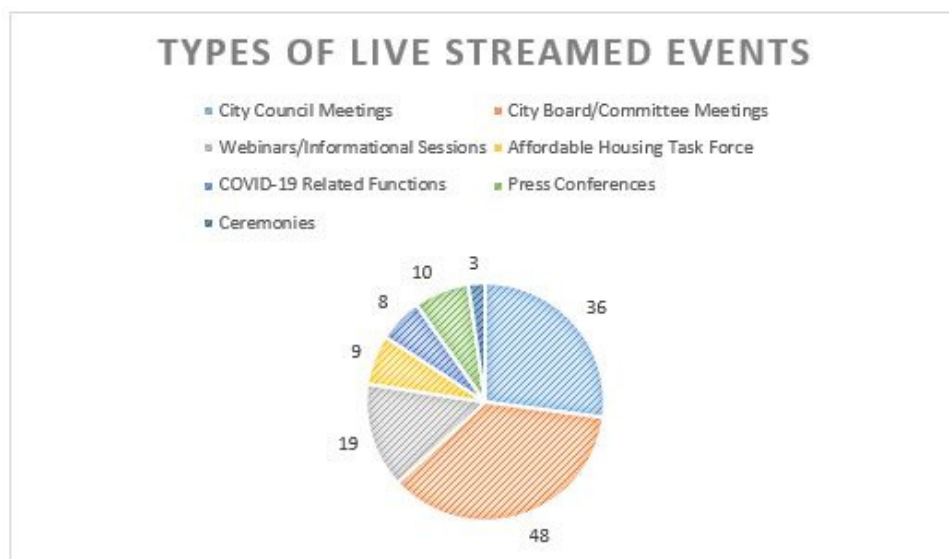
Resilient Columbia: Maintaining Service Delivery During the Pandemic

YouTube Operations

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced everyone to make changes in their daily lives and that was also the case for the Public Relations, Media & Marketing department at the City of Columbia. To maintain normal municipal meetings and interactive City functions, the department utilized its YouTube platform to bring the public these events virtually.

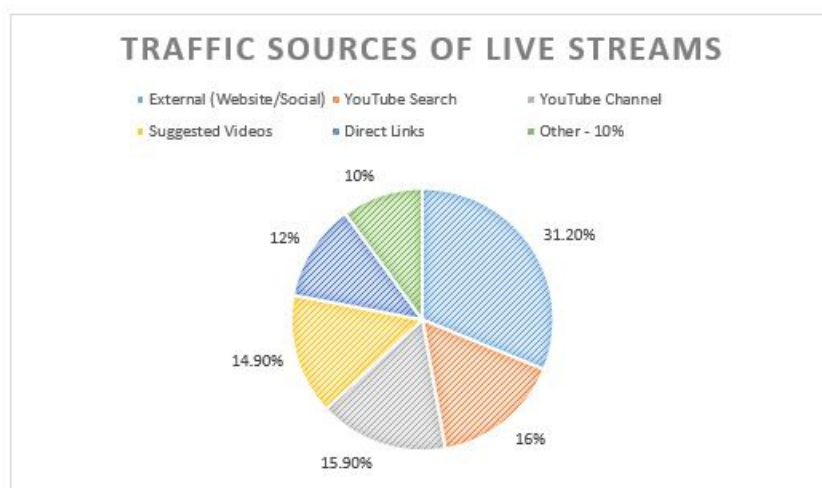
One of the most significant changes to our City operations, was the streaming our municipal meetings including City Council, Planning & Development Boards & Commissions, as well as Council Committee meetings. Instead of hosting these meetings at their normal location fully equipped with cameras, microphones, video switcher, projector screen, etc., the department purchased a Zoom Business license. This license allowed the City to host Zoom meetings with up to 300 participants and Zoom webinars with up to 1000 participants. With the addition of video encoding and live streaming software, these meetings were available on YouTube for the public to view in the comfort of their own homes during the pandemic.

Since our first virtual City Council meeting on March 17, 2020, the Public Relations, Media & Marketing department has hosted a total of 133 municipal meetings and city events. Along with our own City departments, the City was able to partner with a number of different organizations for these live streams including local community organizations, South Carolina state departments, non-profit organizations, Prisma Health and many others. Below is a breakdown the types of meetings/events that were live streamed by the department from 3/17/20 to 4/30/21.



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Even though the Public Relations, Media & Marketing were live streaming these videos to our YouTube channel (ColumbiaSCGovernment), the public still needed to be informed about these new procedures and how to access the live streams. The live stream links were mainly provided to the public through our social media platforms (Facebook/Twitter) and our City of Columbia website, as a ticker on the top of the page. These outlets were the majority of our traffic sources on our YouTube channel garnering 31.2% of the viewership. Below is breakdown of how the public accessed our live streams.



As the department was pushing the public to our YouTube channel for these virtual events and meetings, we noticed a huge increase in our analytics including viewership, watch time, subscribers to YouTube channel, and impressions. For reference, "impressions" refer to the amount of times these videos we shown to the public as possible videos to watch on the YouTube platform. When comparing data from our first virtual City Council meeting on March 17, 2020 - April 30, 2021 to January 1, 2018 - March 16, 2020, the department noticed the following increases in data...

- Viewership went from 60,700 to 77,600 (about a 30% increase)
- Watch time went from 4,600 hours to 12,700 hours (almost 3 times the 2-year amount)
- New YouTube subscribers went from 313 to 661 (more than double the 2-year amount)
- Impressions went from 559,300 to 868,700 (about a 55% increase)

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The average viewership of our City Council meetings during these modified operations is 580 views with immense viewership on our March 26, 2020 (7,793 views) and June 23, 2020 (5,668 views) council meetings. The most viewed non-meeting we had during this period was Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin's announcement that he would not seek re-election in 2021; 2,289 views.

During these modified operations, the Public Relations, Media & Marketing department also created an additional YouTube channel for the public. The additional channel serves as a back-up to allow simultaneous live streams of City of Columbia meetings/events.

These actions made by the department to efficiently host live stream meetings have also made the City of Columbia a leader across the state, as we've had many contacts from other municipal governments/local organizations on how we set-up this process. Throughout these modified operations the Public Relations, Media & Marketing department continues to adapt to changing social climates and are looking at new ways to improve our live streams to enhance our viewers experience.



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PUBLIC WORKS

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

The Public Works Department is made up of the divisions listed below. During the year of the COVID-19 Pandemic, each Division of Public Works met challenges head on and made adjustments during the year as needed. This started in April 2020 with outdoor temperature checks for each employee prior to entering our building. This has since been moved inside and is handled by each division daily. Our essential Division's worked hard to educate our personnel on sanitizing daily high touch areas and wearing masks both in common areas and vehicles. This year did not go without challenges including the social distance a minimum of 6 feet. Most of our operations work in close proximity to each other so we continued to work with each division on protecting our employees with constant changes.

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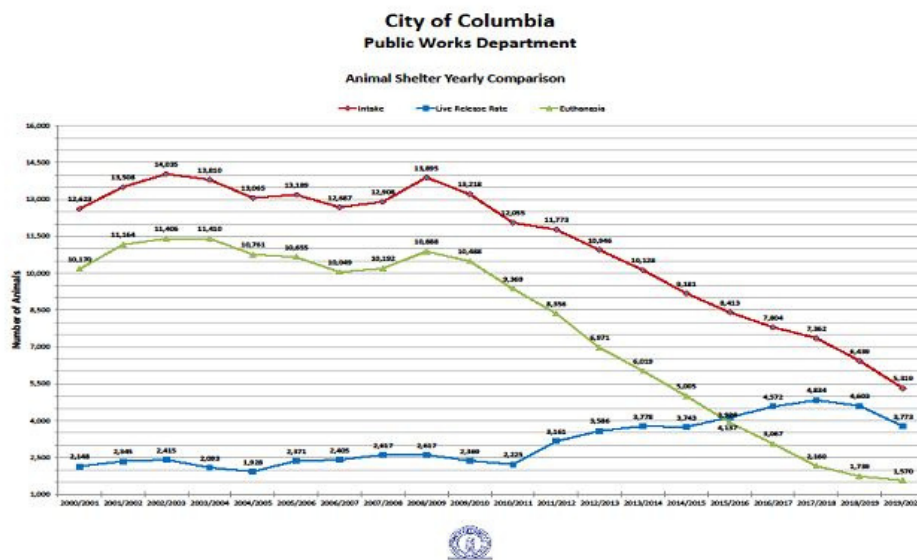
Using Social Distancing protocols, the Public Works Department supported a Drive Through Holiday Luncheon. This luncheon was a bright spot in a year of challenges with staff across several city Departments coming together to say a special thanks to our employees.



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Animal Control

- When the pandemic hit, Animal Services split staff into two separate teams and staggered work days. This was done to reduce exposure to each other and if one team became sick, the other team could cover work needs. During this time, we also mostly only had our ACO's running emergency calls.
- This worked until the Summer workload required that all staff members come back to work full time to cover the needs of the animals in our care and needs of the public. We also began running more calls for service on the road.
- Throughout this time, we only let a limited number of the public in our facility at one time so all of us could follow guide lines for social distancing. At this time with reduced numbers of COVID-19 cases state and nationwide, we have been able to increase the number of citizens coming in by a few more people at once.
- Throughout much of COVID-19 with more citizens being home and there being so many unknowns, it was great to see so many people adopt and foster pets since they had the time at home to care for pets. This kept our shelter population pretty low for chunks of time. It also has made our industry take some new looks at how animal welfare may move forward in the future. This has created some positive insight into the possibility of more community participation in helping homeless animals.
- Fostering still continues to be strong as well as adoptions. This has helped our positive trends continue. Intake continues to decrease and our live release rate remains strong over-all. The graph below shows our number through July of 2020 and we expect this to show even greater progress this year.



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Forestry & Beautification

- Early in the pandemic, the division staggered shifts to make sure staff was available to maintain the gateways, medians and landscape areas within the right-of-way. Due to the amount of maintenance needed the division returned to full duty in June.
- Planted 500 trees in the City right-of-way
- Every year for the celebration of Arbor Day, Forestry holds an event at a local school educating the students about the importance and values of trees. This year was different with the pandemic but in great fashion the Division made a video with the help of Public Information and posted it to YouTube on how to plant a tree. Due to this effort the City of Columbia was once again named a Tree City USA, 42 consecutive years making us the longest in the state.
- The division planted a wildflower spot at the corner of Elmwood and Main. The seeds were dwarf sunflowers and zinnias and quickly became a hotspot for photos. The Mayor labeled this a symbol of hope.
- The Exxon Parking Lot was completed by multiple Public Works Division's, Forestry designed the landscaping. Once ready, crews went in and installed irrigation, plant material and mulch.



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Street Division

- Street Division modified employee's schedules working two weeks on and two weeks off, next we modified employees work schedules by splitting the division in two shifts, 7:00 to 3:30 and 8:00 to 4:30 to avoid time clock crowding.
- An early challenge was the demolition and construction of the Exxon Parking Lot. Street Division lead the effort to remove the existing two layers of parking lots, establish the new grade, curb and gutter work and backfilled the area once the concrete lot was poured.
- Early in 2021 the Division was challenged once again with building another parking lot on Candi Lane. The City learned early on that additional parking was needed. Street staff brought in 5,640 cubic yards of dirt compacted it for the base. With the help of Engineering, we have now secured asphalt millings for the surface. This project should be finished in early May.



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Solid Waste

- With our residents staying home, waste normally generated at schools and places of employment shifted to our residential service. With families staying safe and staying home this presented an unprecedented challenge in many ways. There was a 23% increase in household garbage tonnages, 19% increase in recycling tonnages and a 27% tonnage in the yard trash collection operation. Both garbage and recycling maintained the division's success of servicing each customer on their service day. The trash collection operation fell several days behind due to concerns on keeping a safe workforce and electing not to work overtime.
- Crews that had multiple people were split up when riding in the cabs. Two people were allowed in the cab at one time. The third person was picked up by a supervisor when the crews were headed to the route, headed to the landfill and headed back to Public Works at the end of the day. This helped limit exposure and increase social distancing measures.
- Morning check-ins were switched up. Employees punched in, filled out paperwork and headed directly to their respective truck. Once in the truck, supervisors would give instructions over the radio system. Typically, employees would sit in the bay area before the day started, chatted with co-workers and prepared for the day ahead.
- More than 500 masks were secured from SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) at no cost to the City. These reusable masks were handed out to employees as needed.
- The Solid Waste Division saw an unprecedented increase in garbage, recycling and yard trash tonnages during the early stages of the pandemic.
- Office staff rotated schedules to maintain social distancing guidelines within the office setting while still providing excellent customer service and satisfaction.
- After each day, a "Spray Squad" sanitizes each vehicle in the fleet. Sanitizer is sprayed in the cab of the truck hitting the steering wheel, radio, control buttons and door handles. The office, bay area, time clocks and ice machines are also sprayed at their touchpoints.



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Sustainability

- Designed and distributed special issues of Speaking Sustainability e-newsletter devoted to COVID April, May, June 2020, featuring actions to take for the planet, saving energy during the lockdown, new solid waste collection protocols, Resilient Columbia, etc.
- Featured pandemic-related articles in several issues of Green@Work concerning special things to do to be green/save money, new recycling and garbage protocol and service updates.
- Designed an "Actions to take for the planet" Power Point presentation, presented to two Rotary Clubs via Zoom.
- Worked with our CPAC committee on meeting our new Zoom business opportunities.

Traffic Engineering Division

- Early in the pandemic, the division staggered shifts to make sure staff was available to maintain the City's traffic signals and control devices. Due to the amount of maintenance needed the division returned to full duty in June.
- The Division was busy early on making and installing signage in various City Buildings related to Covid Protocols.
- Traffic took an opportunity with the reduced traffic to repaint several areas to include;
- Rosewood Dr. from Assembly to Devine St.
- Gervais St. from Huger St. to Assembly St
- Blossom Street from Kilbourne Rd. to Harden St
- Repainted curbs in Earlewood Park, Lorick Park, Owens Field Park, Martin Luther King Park and Drew Wellness Center
- Partnered again with SCDOT and the American Disabilities Association (ADA) to aid them with their projects and request of new Audible Pedestrian buttons at approved SCDOT locations. This project has assisted ADA trainers in effort to have a safer environment while training new students.
- Completed phase 1 and 2 of the SCDOT/City of Columbia COLO project. COLO project is a strategic partnership with SCDOT to update our communication network utilizing different modes of communication design such as the new installation of fiber optic cabling, networking equipment, traffic signal equipment, the installation of high definition cameras and battery back-up systems through-out our shared partnership corridors.
- The planning, implementation and installing of the electrical and lights for the Exxon parking lot in Five Points.
- Built the electrical service for All-Star baseball field.
- Traffic continued to be festive and installed 280 holiday decorations in several main corridors around the City.

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SUPPORT SERVICES AND FLEET SERVICES

WORKING THROUGH COVID-19

Support Services remained fully operational during the pandemic and completed 2,004 work orders during the pandemic from March 2020 through March 2021. Support Services installed approximately 150 Plexiglas barriers in offices and common areas.



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Support Services installed an entire signage package for social distancing and reminding individuals of the CDC recommendations for stopping the spread of COVID-19. Support Services oversaw the daily janitorial services at our facilities. Support Services supervised the weekly and biweekly preventative cleaning at our facilities that were performed by outside vendors and city staff.



Support Services coordinated with our vendors for heavy cleaning and fogging of areas where employees tested positive of COVID-19 and was involved with the purchase of 1401 Main Street. Support Services manages the maintenance of the facility and is working with the City's Architect during the design phases.



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Fleet Services remained fully operational during the pandemic and completed 10,988 work orders during the pandemic from March 2020 through March 2021.



Mayor and City Council Members



Steve Benjamin
Mayor



Sam Davis
Councilman, District I



Tamekia Issac-Devine
Councilwoman At-Large



Howard E. Duvall, Jr.
Councilman At-Large



Edward H. McDowell, Jr.
Councilman, District II



Daniel J. Rickenmann
Councilman, District IV



Will Brennan
Councilman, District III

During 2020, despite the pandemic, the City of Columbia persevered and continued to serve a bustling community that continued to thrive.

As we move into the future, we look forward to continuing our growth and achieving our vision.



We Are Columbia

PUBLIC RELATIONS, MEDIA & MARKETING

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