

The results are in!

Find out what Columbia residents believe should change to secure a better future for everyone.

Change.org and Mayor Rickenmann
teamed up to ask a simple question:

“What would **positive
change** look like in the
City of Columbia?”



We wanted to start a **conversation** that crosses boundaries.

Get thousands of people to share their ideas, and vote on the ideas of others.

Identify their **common interests**, despite differences on other issues.

Bring 100 people together for a conversation about those resonant issues.



Housing not for the students downtown or ones who can afford. We need more low income living in downtown Columbia and our seniors.

Greenways need to connect around Columbia, allowing people to walk, run and bike between isolated developed areas currently accessible by car and limited parking.

Rent control, and implement programs that favor tenants instead of landlords. Many landlords are not held accountable for providing the services obligated to a tenant by the SC Code of Laws.

In Phase 1, we received

696 IDEAS

from over **1.8K residents.**

Saint
desired. We
ions and

Try to attra
store to mo
within wall
Street resic
bus depot t

Funding and volunteer resources for homeowners who are cited or ticketed for ordinance violations. Not everyone can afford the many repairs that the enforcement officers insist on.

Add public restrooms and access to clean water stations throughout the city - convenient for tourists/shoppers, increases dignity for the homeless and creates jobs for maintenance...

Clean up vacant lots in low-income neighborhoods in the city. This will lead to less pests and bugs, safer neighborhoods, and better visual appeal so that those lots may be built upon.

Dedicated organizations around Columbia helped to spread the word.

Many thanks to our partners throughout the community!



COLUMBIA
WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL



CENTRAL CAROLINA
Community
Foundation



RICHLAND
LIBRARY
access freely.®



Through our combined efforts,* our online platform engaged residents across the entire city.

64% of participants were from neighborhoods further from the heart of the city.

NORTH, NE, AND SOUTHEAST

DOWNTOWN, SHANDON, ETC

BLACK (39%)

WHITE (48%)

OTHER (13%)

18-24 25-39 40-64 (51%)

65+ (33%)

*social media ads, flyers, mailing lists, etc

HOUSING

(44 ideas)

TRANSPORTATION

(39 ideas)

PEDESTRIAN ISSUES

(34 ideas)

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

(29 ideas)

...INFRASTRUCTURE, RECREATION, THE ENVIRONMENT,
TRAFFIC, AND MORE

The ideas reflected a
comprehensive vision of
what Columbia needs to

thrive.



*not to scale

Not everyone has the same priorities...

Our analysis identified **three groups** with different voting patterns:

The Pragmatists

Generally more hesitant to vote for big changes.

Unique priorities: homelessness, parking

The Good-Lifers

Most enthusiastic about change across the board – low pass rates, high agreement.

Unique priorities: bike and pedestrian issues, beautification

The Urbanists

Often in favor of ideas related to urban development and green transportation.

Unique priorities: housing, transportation, trash & recycling.

Unifying Ideas

These are the ideas that were popular across all groups, regardless of other differences.*

Ensure that we're providing opportunities for local businesses to flourish and not just large chains. **(99% SUPPORT)**

#1

*Scores reflect the minimum support across the groups; rankings account for pass/rates.

**Duplicates not included in this list.

2. Implement a comprehensive and realistic plan to repair and update the aged, derelict infrastructure of the City water/sewer delivery systems and road repair/replacement require agency coordination that has not been happening. **(99%)****
3. Greenways need to connect around Columbia, allowing people to walk, run and bike between isolated developed areas currently accessible by car and limited parking **(95%)****
4. Expand the Comet system to Lexington county so disabled/elderly/or any residents without cars can have accessible transportation to Columbia, and give the Comet more frequent stops. **(93%)**
5. Encourage shops to return to Main Street. **(96%)**
6. Update and upgrade bus stops to include coverage and benches for those waiting for public transportation. **(97%)**
7. We need more trees; not just any trees - plant nut & fruit-producing trees to minorly address food deserts & lessen the impact on allergens. **(91%)**
8. Beautify Columbia's entry points, not just the newly designed and installed Welcome to Columbia sign but with attractive landscape features and **FIXED UP ROADS AND BRIDGES. (99%)****
9. Build a safe, wide, well lit sidewalk/path connecting Main Street, Finley Park, and the canal Riverwalk park, with completely revamped pedestrian crossings at Huger and Assembly to make them safer. **(97%)**
10. Repair food deserts by ensuring public transport from areas without grocery stores within a 10 min walk. Incentivize local grocers to open and operate in areas with low populations and no whole food resources. **(94%)**

Resonant Issues

Based on the unifying ideas, we found **specific topics** that were backed up by other statements:

Small Business Corridors: Support small, local businesses in fulfilling neighborhood needs.

Affordable Housing: Make housing accessible to seniors and people with lower incomes.

Pedestrian Safety: More and safer sidewalks to connect the city.

Riverfront Development: Business and recreation on the Congaree.

Food Deserts: Make healthy food easier to access.

Better Infrastructure: Improve Columbia's roads, bridges, utilities, etc.

Parks: Funding and activating green spaces for everyone's benefit, especially youth.

Housing

Be inclusive with the housing that is being built and ensure that it is open to and affordable for all; whether USC students or working people or seniors. Housing must be available and affordable for everyone.

90% ✓

Rent caps! No one's rent should increase more than \$25 a month. People cannot afford these 100+ a month yearly increases when leases renew.

91% ✓

We don't need any more luxury apartments or student apartments. Build more market-rate and attainable housing instead.

91% ✓

Sidewalks

Create more/expand existing pedestrian pathways (especially in high traffic areas around Rosewood/USC) to allow safer foot travel. Fund more accessible public transit that reaches ALL areas of the city!!

98% ✓

Create a few key bicycle/pedestrian overpasses so the flow can move more safely and quickly across Gervais, Huger and connect the parks.

98% ✓

Make the city more walking friendly and less motorized by creating larger and more pavements for pedestrians to walk between neighborhoods and strip malls. The stores in Harbison are extremely unsafe for pedestrians walking between stores

91% ✓

Riverfront

Downtown riverfront needs to be developed, with a natural setting, but also as a destination. Shops, restaurants further back, but with ample parking, benches and restrooms. The whole city would benefit.

92% ✓

Develop a Riverside District that enhances public access, supports local businesses, and creates a vibrant destination for residents and visitors along the river.

91% ✓

Bring businesses/development to the river-similar to Greenville, Chicago, Pittsburgh, etc. We have three gorgeous rivers that are underrepresented.

91% ✓

Food Deserts

Repair food deserts by ensuring public transport from areas without grocery stores within a 10 min walk. Incentivize local grocers to open and operate in underserved areas.

94% ✓

Try to attract another grocery store to move in downtown within walking distance of Main Street residents.

95% ✓

Have a local grocery store from local farmers (Publix is too expensive).

91% ✓

Infrastructure

Fix the potholes in the roads in a timely manner!

99% ✓

Bury power lines and mast arm traffic signals wherever possible, but especially in the main tourism corridors - Devine Street, Gervais Street, Assembly, etc...

93% ✓

Modernize Columbia's infrastructure by coordinating road work, utilities, and resurfacing to reduce repeat construction and wasted dollars.

97% ✓

Parks

Fix up the playgrounds that are already there. Make it more inclusive for younger children. Add swing sets to some of these parks. I shouldn't have to pay \$4 so she can play outside safely.

100% ✓

More green spaces! More parks. More areas for people to be outside and active, with places for them to cool off during the summer.

93% ✓

Evaluate quality/distribution of parks & green spaces in the city with resident input; list short-term/long-term goals to make sure every resident has easy access to a park; leverage local dollars with other funding sources to implement.

88% ✓

Of everything we heard,

Business Revitalization

emerged as the topic to talk about next.

- **RELEVANT**

All groups consistently responded to this topic more than others, and tended to agree with the proposals (around supporting small businesses, addressing gaps in neighborhoods, etc).

- **ACTIONABLE**

The city has more direct control over policies and programs to support businesses development via the Office of Business Opportunity, Economic Development, and others.

- **COMPLEX**

There are important tradeoffs to consider regarding where and how “revitalization” happens, how to sustain a stable and supportive small business presence, and more.

NEXT UP:

Columbia Civic Dialogue

We'll gather a sample of residents from all over the city to talk about the chosen topic, [Business Revitalization in Columbia](#).

If you are interested in participating in the live dialogue, sign up at ideasforchange.org/columbia.