

CHAPTER 2: POPULATION



INTRODUCTION

The population chapter examines population trends and describes the demographic composition of Horry County residents. Population growth and composition influences land use decisions, determines housing and infrastructure needs, and impacts the local economy. As Horry County's population continues to grow, an increased demand for public safety, community services, and facilities will also increase, as well as the desire for cultural resources along with access to natural spaces. Studying a community's population is fundamental to any comprehensive plan. Horry County will need to continue to monitor the permanent and short-term population into the future to inform decision-making.

POPULATION GROWTH

According to 2015 population estimates, Horry County has approximately 309,199 permanent residents. The County has experienced rapid growth since the 1970s, adding over 250,000 permanent residents since that time. In just the last 15 years, there has seen an influx of over 100,000 residents. The County has one of the highest population growth rates in the State and is now the fourth most populous county in South Carolina, behind Greenville, Richland, and Charleston counties respectively.

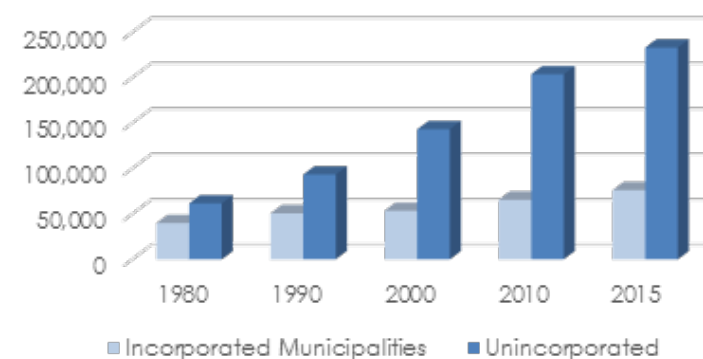
The 2015 total population estimate reflects a 14.8% increase or 39,908 more people since 2010. This reflects growth that occurred even during a major economic downturn. These numbers are only expected to escalate. The population is projected to grow to 584,500 by 2040. While the projections were refined by the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments and Horry County Planning and Zoning, population growth is occurring faster than anticipated. It is important to note that the 2020 population projections are already being surpassed that were developed in 2017 by the South

Carolina Budget and Control Board. Note that these population numbers and projections do not account for seasonal population, including snowbirds that live in the area for the cooler months and tourist and seasonal work population during the summer months. These estimates will need to be revisited after the release of the 2020 Census.

MUNICIPAL GROWTH

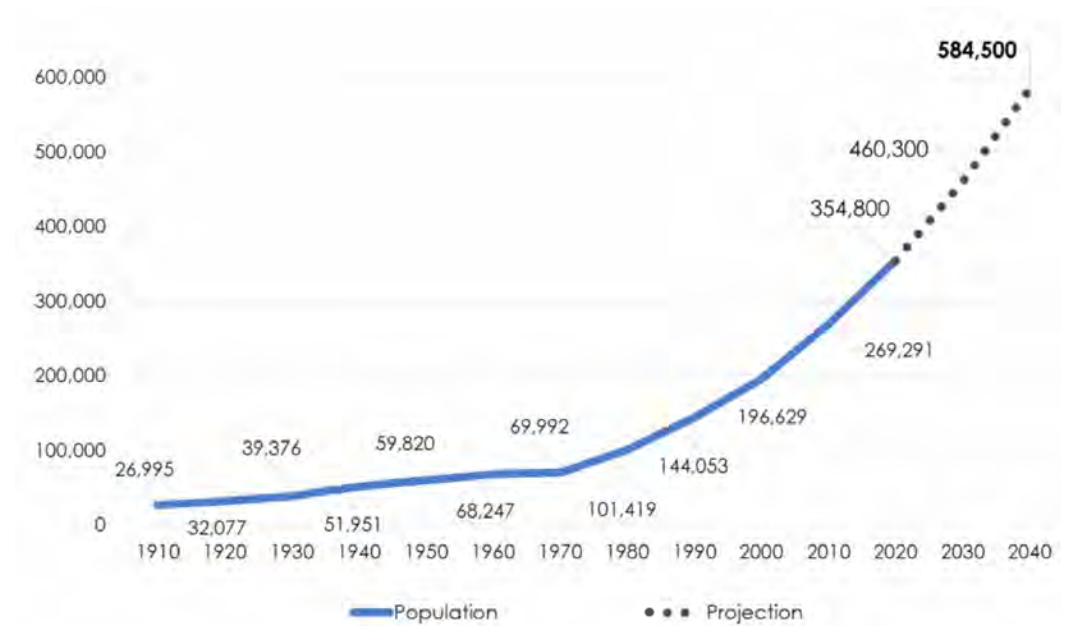
Over the last three decades, all municipalities, with the exceptions of Atlantic Beach, Aynor, and Surfside Beach, have gained population; however, unincorporated areas have accounted for most of the growth in recent years. As of 2015, there were 76,118 people that lived in area municipalities, while 233,081 lived in unincorporated Horry County, making up 75.7% of the total County population.

Incorporated vs. Unincorporated Population Growth, 1980-2015



Source: American Community Survey, 2011- 2015

Population Growth in Horry County, 1910-2040



Sources: Historic population – Census. Projections - SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office and Research, and Horry County Planning & Zoning.

Municipal Population Growth, 1980-2015

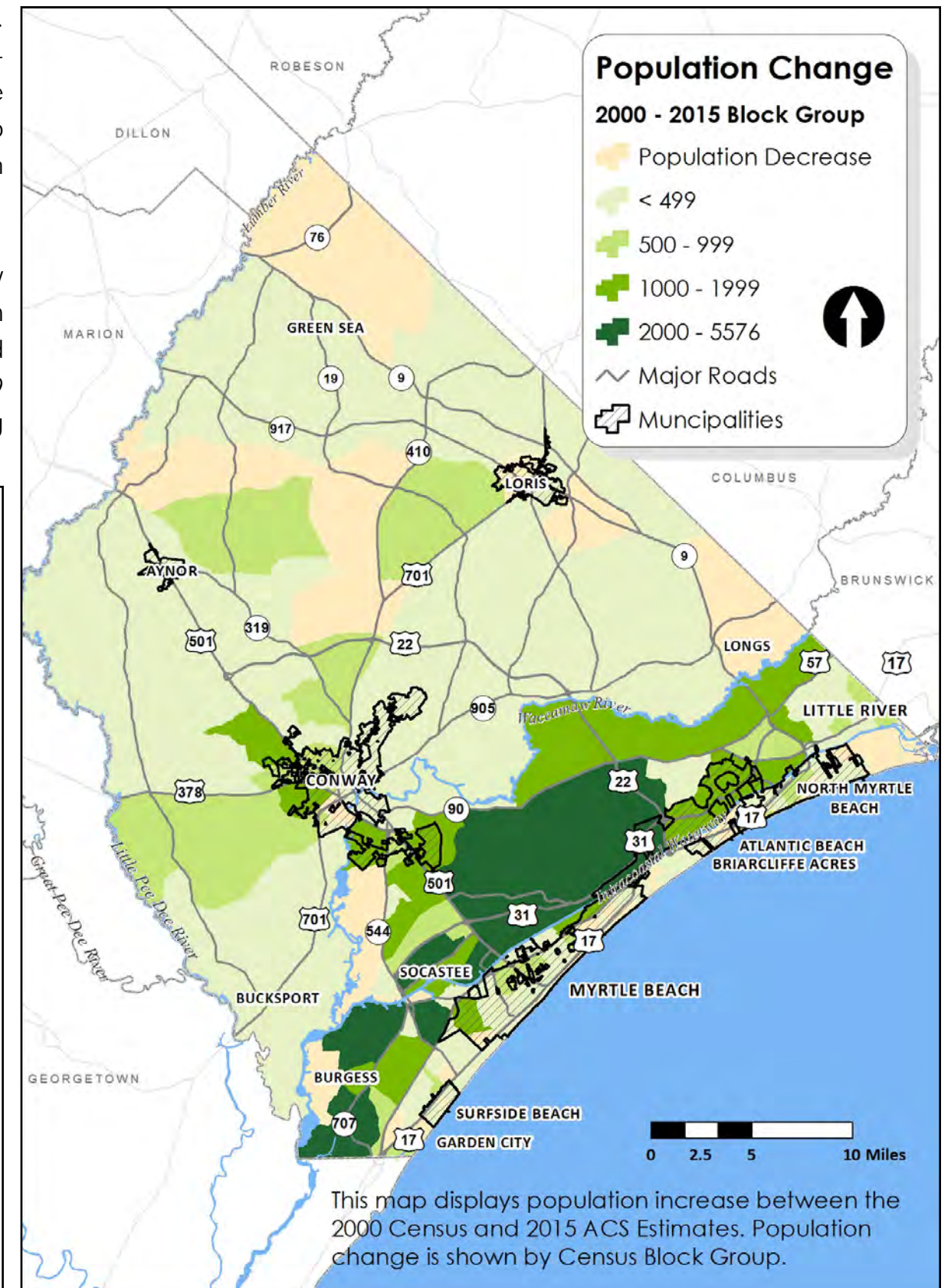
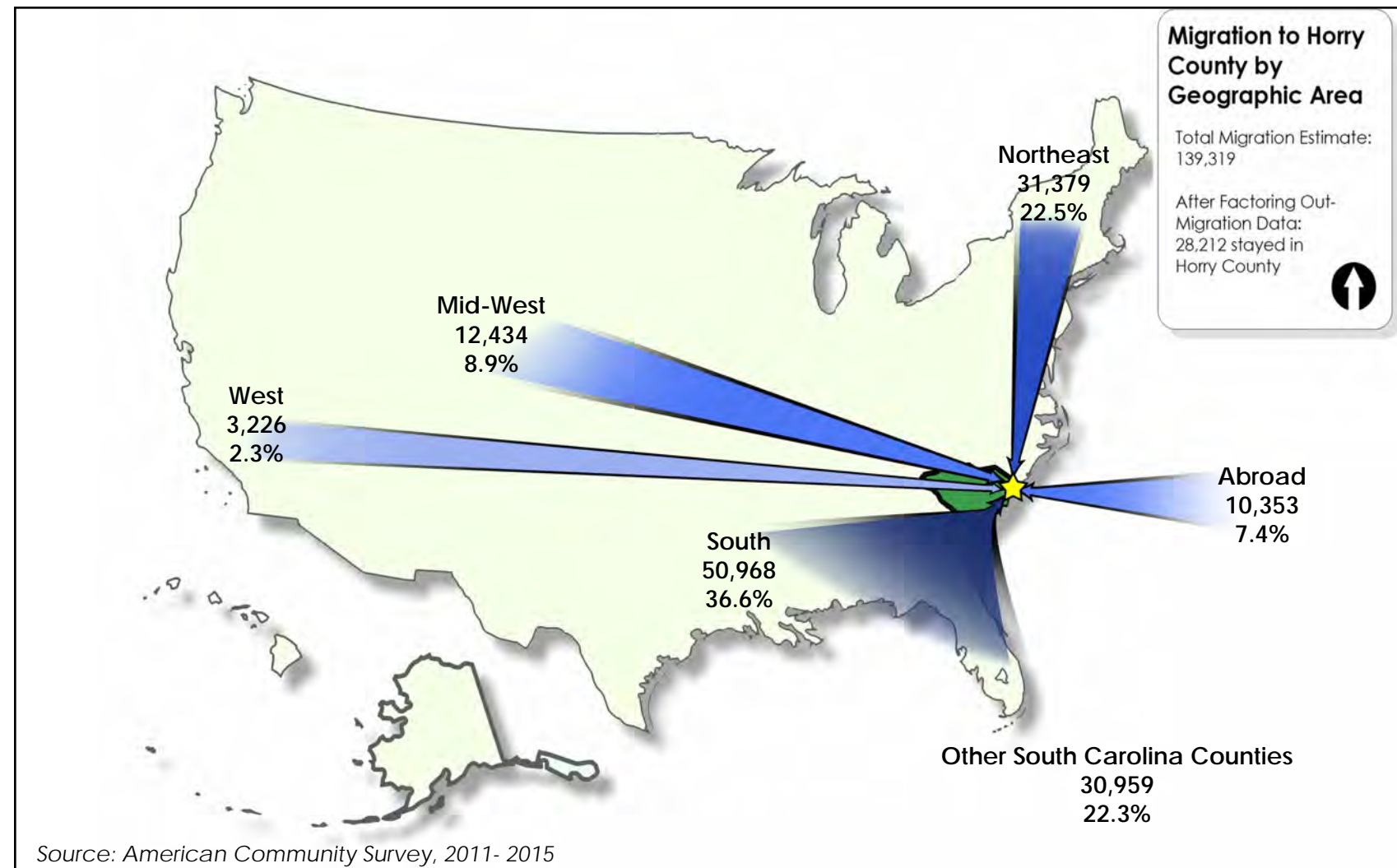
Municipalities	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
Atlantic Beach	289	446	351	334	384
Aynor	643	470	587	560	667
Briarcliffe Acres	338	552	470	457	529
Conway	10,240	9,819	11,788	17,103	21,053
Loris	2,193	2,067	2,079	2,396	2,591
Myrtle Beach	19,702	24,846	22,759	27,109	31,035
North Myrtle Beach	3,960	8,636	10,974	13,752	15,579
Surfside	2,522	3,845	4,425	3,837	4,280
Municipal Population	39,887	50,683	53,433	65,548	76,118
Unincorporated Population	61,532	93,370	143,196	203,743	233,081
Total Population	101,419	144,053	196,629	269,291	309,199
Municipal Population as Percent of County	39.3%	35.2%	27.2%	24.3%	24.4%

US Census 1980-2010; American Community Survey 2015 Estimates (ID #B01003)

POPULATION CHANGE

Historically, Horry County's population has primarily resided along the beach front and near area waterways. Since the 2000 Census, Horry County's population has grown further away from the beach, along major highway corridors. Burgess, Socastee, Forestbrook, and Carolina Forest have seen the most growth. Conway, Little River, and the Hwy 90 corridor have also seen considerable population growth. These areas are expected to see an increase in development into the future, as many new subdivisions have been preliminarily approved in these growth areas, but remain to be constructed.

Population growth from 2011-2015 was mainly being driven by individuals that were relocating to Horry County from neighboring Southern States (50,968 people), other counties in South Carolina (30,959 people), and from the Northeast (31,379 people). Since 2010, an estimated 139,319 people moved to Horry County. It is estimated that for domestic migration roughly 36 out of every 1,000 residents and for international migration roughly 369 out of every 1000 residents remain in Horry County (US Census Bureau, migration rates calculated by Governing July 2017).

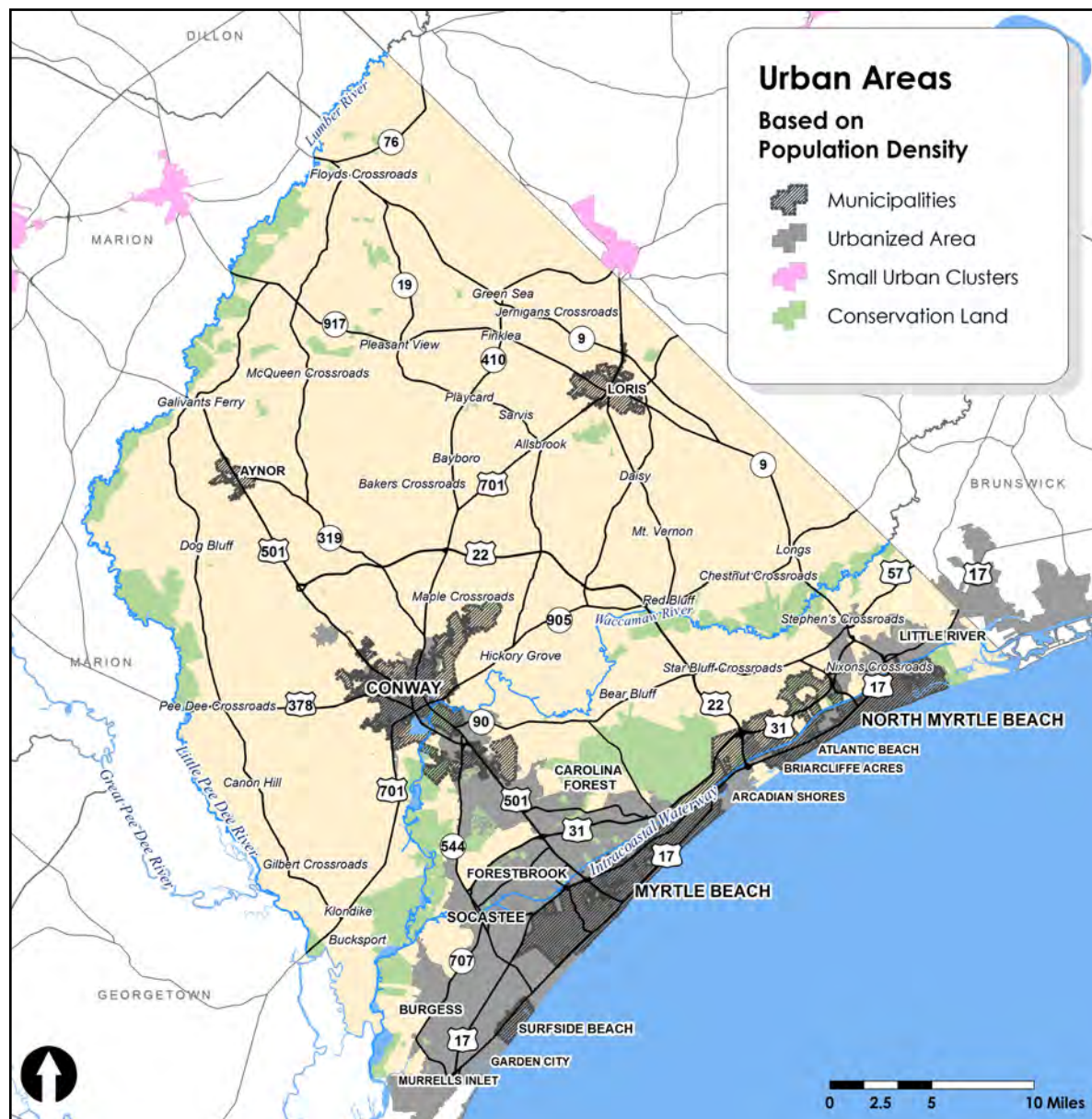




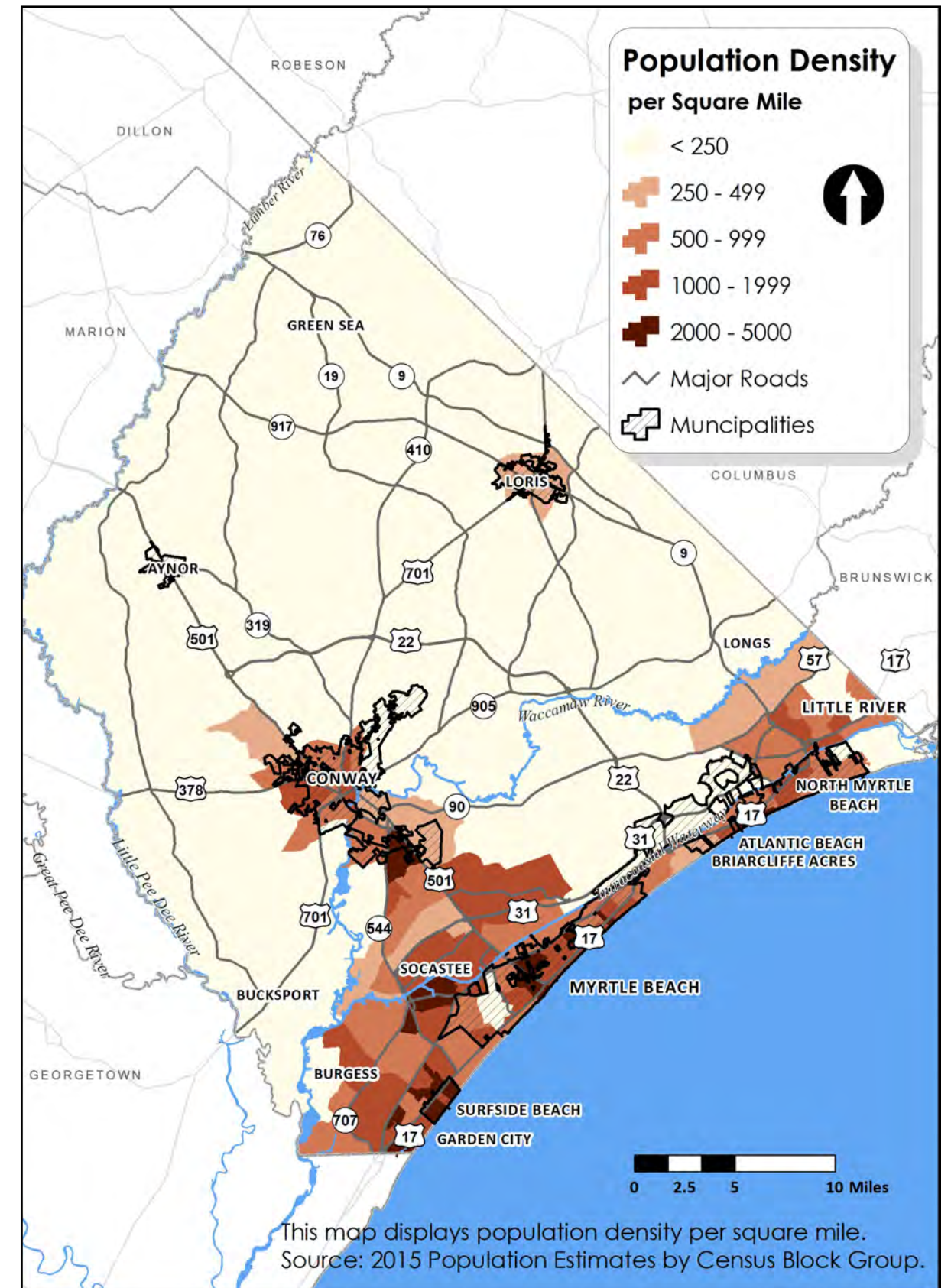
POPULATION DENSITY

New residents are largely moving into the areas east of the Waccamaw River to be close to the beach. This is due, in part, to those area's proximity to job centers, housing opportunities, and zoning regulations.

The map below delineates areas of high population density and urban land use resulting in a representation of the "urban footprint." There are two types of urban areas: 1- urbanized areas that contain 50,000 or more people; and 2- small urban clusters that contain at least 2,500 people, but fewer than 50,000 people.



Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015



This map displays population density per square mile. Source: 2015 Population Estimates by Census Block Group.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

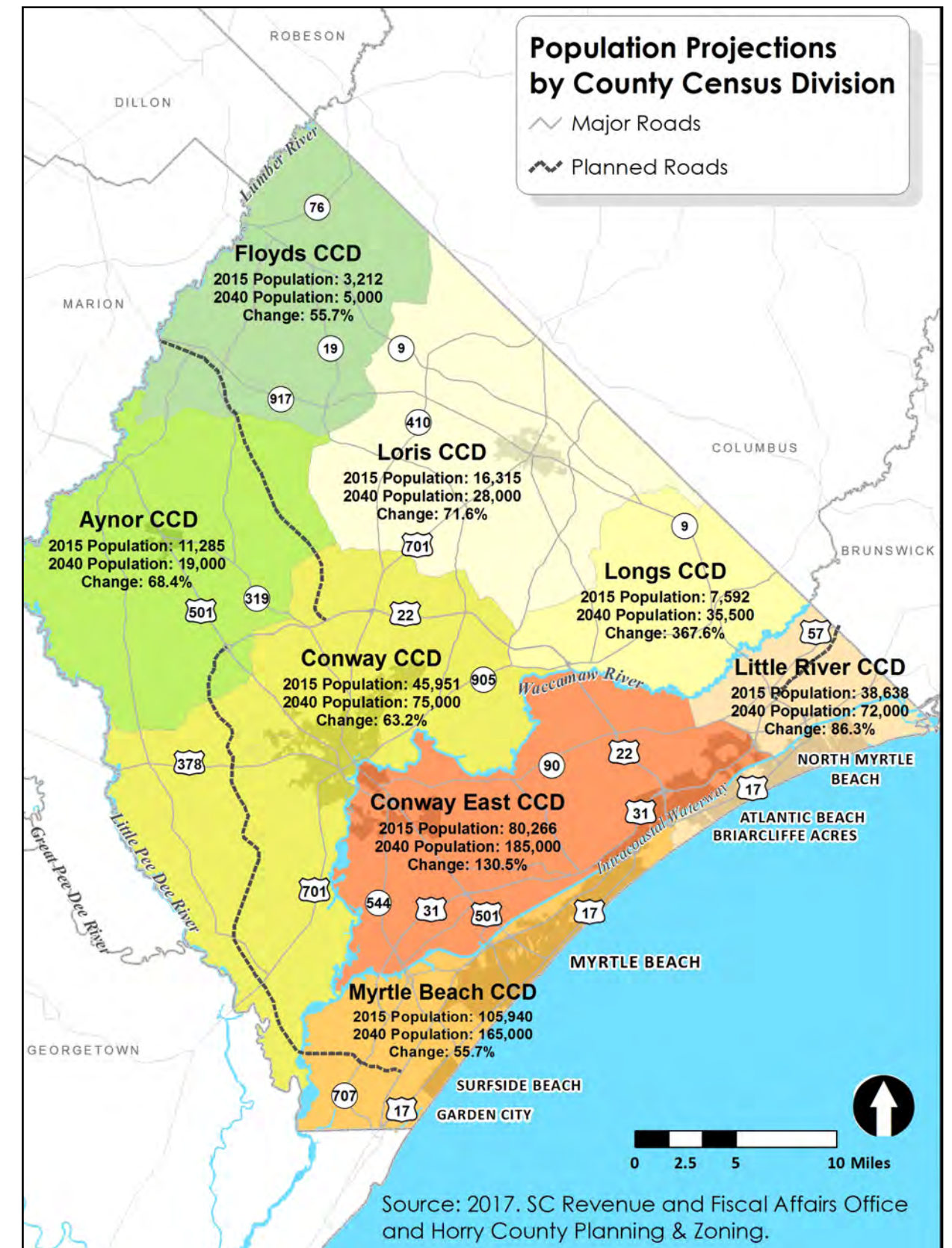
Population projections enable the County to take present action to accommodate future conditions. Projections can help determine the demand for future facilities and services. Making plans in a rapidly changing, high growth area such as Horry County is difficult. Population projections through 2035 were derived from the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office. The 2040 projections and distribution of growth throughout the County was further refined by Horry County Planning and Zoning. Estimates show that the Myrtle Beach CCD (County Census Division) and Floyds CCD will grow the least, both with 55.7% increases (or roughly 59,060 and 1,788 people respectively). The Conway CCD will grow the second least with a 63.2% increase (or roughly 29,049 people). The highest population growth rates are projected to be Conway East CCD with 130.5% (or roughly 104,734 more people) and the Longs CCD with a 367.6% increase (or roughly 27,908 more people). By far, the greatest number of residents will live in Conway East and Myrtle Beach CCDs, accounting for roughly 60% of the population by 2040.

These estimates were developed in 2017 and will need to be revisited when the 2020 Census data is available. If seasonal population is included, these numbers easily reach over 1/2 million on any given day during peak tourist season.

Population Projections, 1970-2040

County Census Division	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015	Anticipated Growth After 2015					
							2020	2030	2040	Total Increase	% Growth	Annual Growth Rate
Aynor	5,634	7,190	6,844	8,908	10,052	11,285	13,000	16,000	19,000	7,715	68.4%	2.73%
Conway	18,665	23,868	26,881	33,575	39,715	45,951	50,300	61,000	75,000	29,049	63.2%	2.53%
Conway East	3,419	8,546	17,552	31,639	65,364	80,266	100,000	143,000	185,000	104,734	130.5%	5.22%
Floyds Crossroads	3,420	3,771	2,964	3,195	3,301	3,212	3,500	4,300	5,000	1,788	55.7%	2.23%
Little River	4,960	8,781	17,988	26,315	33,652	38,638	43,000	55,000	72,000	33,362	86.3%	3.45%
Longs	2,788	3,299	3,371	5,625	6,645	7,592	13,000	22,000	35,500	27,908	367.6%	14.70%
Loris	9,895	11,137	11,290	13,785	15,878	16,315	19,000	23,000	28,000	11,685	71.6%	2.86%
Myrtle Beach	21,211	34,827	58,410	73,587	94,684	105,940	113,000	136,000	165,000	59,060	55.7%	2.23%
Total	69,992	101,419	145,300	196,629	269,291	309,199	354,800	460,300	584,500	275,301	89.0%	3.56%

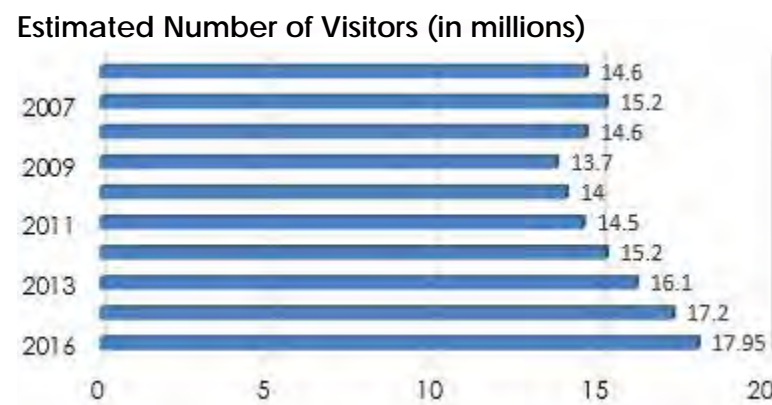
Source: 2017, SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office and Horry County Planning & Zoning. Numbers highlighted in yellow were provided by the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, while 2040 projections and the breakdown by County Census Division, shown in orange, were developed by Horry County Planning & Zoning.





SEASONAL POPULATION

According to the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, approximately 17.95 million tourists visited the Grand Strand area in 2016. The chart below illustrates that 2016 was an all-time high for the number of visitors to the Myrtle Beach area with numbers steadily increasing since 2009. Also noted from the graph is the decrease in visitors following the recession in 2008. It is important to note that these numbers include visitors for the entire Strand (including the South Strand, which includes parts of Georgetown County), not just those who visited Horry County (Myrtle Beach 2016 Economic Impact Study, 2017).



Source: D.K. Shifflet & Associates for Statistical Abstract for the the Myrtle Beach Area, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce

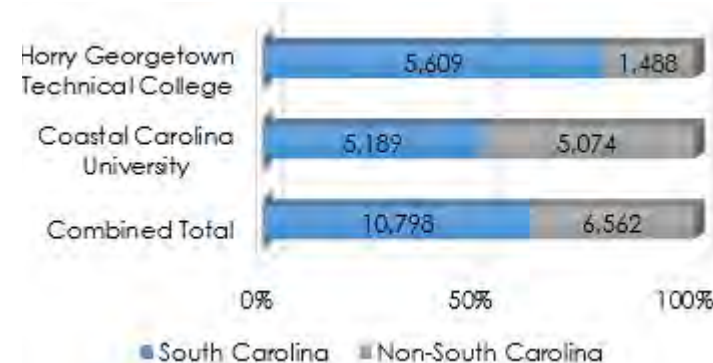
Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce survey shows that most visitors originate from within a one day car drive. North Carolina alone provides 15% of visitors, while 55% come from New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia (Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce Conversion Study, 2013). The primary travel party type to Myrtle Beach is families at 61% and the average length of stay along the Grand Strand was six days for leisure travelers and three days for business travelers. Further, approximately 85% of visitors were under the age of 65, with 50% between the ages of 35 and 54.

Horry County's Solid Waste Authority (SWA) calculates the equivalent full-time tourist population for a six day stay to be roughly 96.51% of the resident population (Horry County Solid Waste Management Plan, 2018). Using the same calculation method, the full-time tourist population in 2040 will be roughly 564,100 people. Adding the projected full-time tourist population to the full-time resident population projection for 2040 shows a population of roughly 1.15 million people.

ACADEMIC STUDENT POPULATION

In addition to the tourists that visit the area each year, Coastal Carolina University (CCU) and Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) have been experiencing a growing student population. The traditional academic year starts at the end of August and continues until the beginning of May. For academic year 2016-2017, CCU and HGTC had a combined total enrollment of 19,828 students.

Student Enrollment in Horry County by Geographic Origin



Source: Coastal Carolina University, 2016

Typically, students reside in Horry County during the academic year. Of all undergraduate students (9,747) at CCU during fall semester 2016, 49% were out-of-state residents. Of all graduate students (732) at CCU, 21% were out-of-state residents (CCU, 2016). Comparatively, 16.6% of HGTC's students are not originally from South Carolina (HGTC, 2016).

CCU will continue to have an impact on Horry County. Their Master Plan indicates a target enrollment of 12,500 students in 2021. Coastal Carolina Alumni data indicates that the number of CCU graduates with valid County addresses, who graduated between 2000 and 2017, is 6,622.

HGTC has three locations: Georgetown, Conway, and Myrtle Beach. With a combined offering of over 80 associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs, HGTC is the fourth largest of 16 technical colleges in South Carolina.

POPULATION GROWTH FINDINGS

Between 2000 and 2015, the population of Horry County has grown more than twice the growth rate of South Carolina. Population projections anticipate that this high growth rate is expected to continue over next several decades. By 2040, Horry County is projected to add yet another 275,000 people to its current population, nearly doubling in year round residents.

As population density increases in urban and suburban areas, services and facilities will need to expand to meet growing demand. Horry County will also need to continue to address the needs of seasonal and academic student populations.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population composition is an important part of the this chapter because it takes into account special populations with unique needs. Sex, race, ethnicity, age, household composition, education, income and poverty together help describe residents.

AGE AND SEX

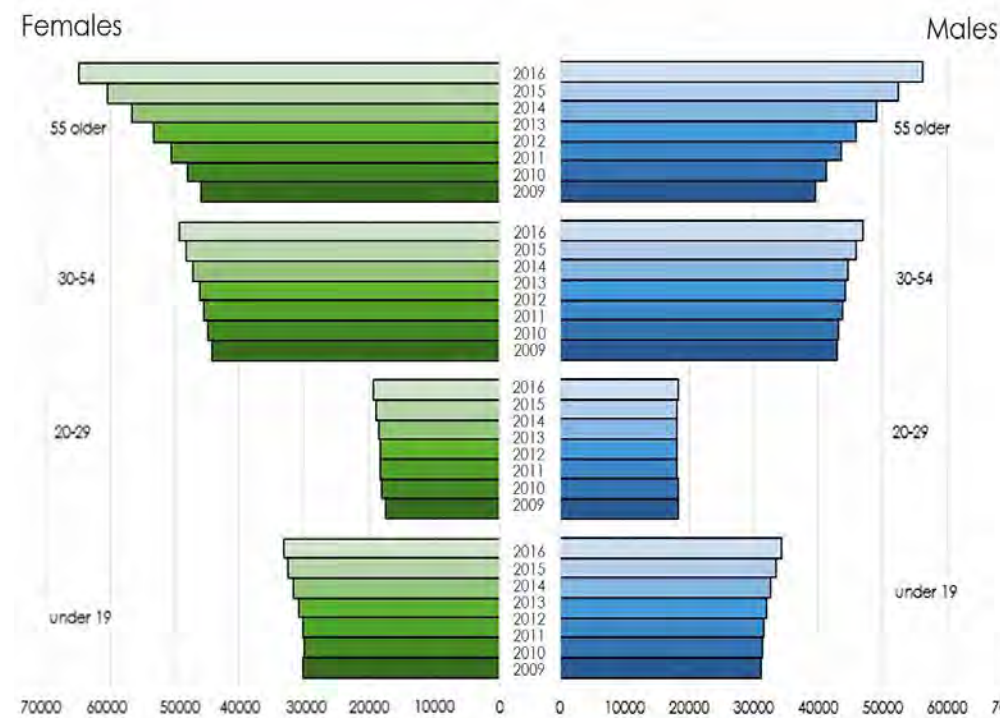
Consistent with the National trend, baby boomers make up

a large portion of the population. Using the 2016 population estimates published by The United States Census Bureau, the proportion of people ages 55 and older in Horry County is roughly 37%, compared to the South Carolina average of 28.9% and the national average of 27%. Similarly to the national average, Horry County has roughly 2% more females age 55 and older compared to males. Interestingly, the death rate is higher than the birth rate in Horry County. For every four births there are roughly five deaths.

Interestingly, Horry County's population of 20-29 year olds has remained relatively stagnant. This could be due to the fluctuation of student population, the desire for college age young adults to move elsewhere for higher education, and the Census' difficulty in capturing college students unless local to Horry County. In addition, the sharp contrast in population between 20-29 year olds and 30-54 year olds could be due to people moving back to the area after completing college or influx of non-locals moving into the area.

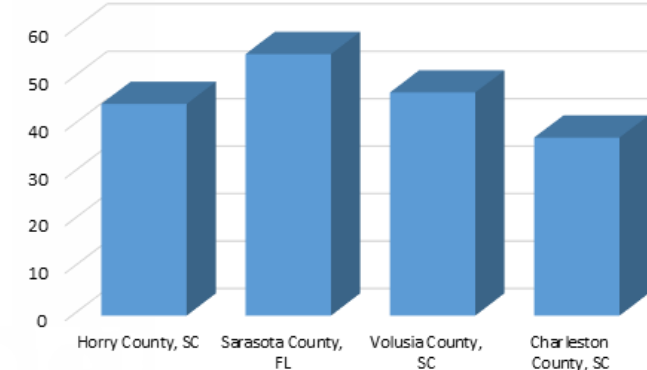
In 2011, the County's ages 55 and older population exceeded its ages 30 to 54 population. Compared to other high tourist and retirement destinations, Horry County's median age is slightly lower than Florida destinations and slightly higher than other South Carolina destinations. The map to the right illustrates the elderly population density which accounts for people ages 65 years and older. These areas are consistent with development trends (see Land Use Chapter). Many retirees live in these areas due to their proximity to tourist amenities, service facilities, and the beach.

Change in Age and Sex Composition from 2010 to 2016

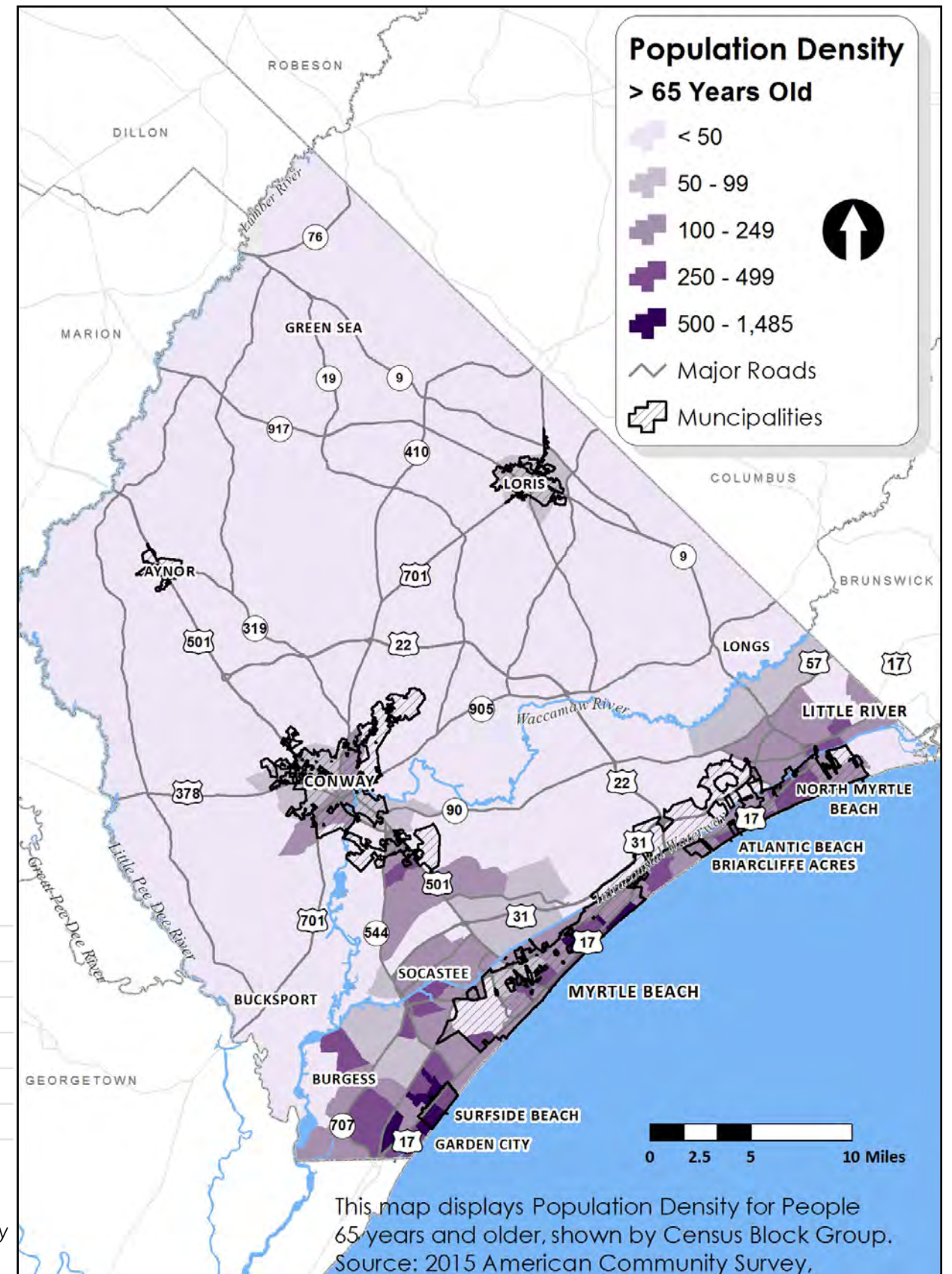


Source: American Community Survey, 2010 - 2016

Median Age Comparison to Other Tourist and Retirement Destinations



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey



This map displays Population Density for People 65 years and older, shown by Census Block Group. Source: 2015 American Community Survey.



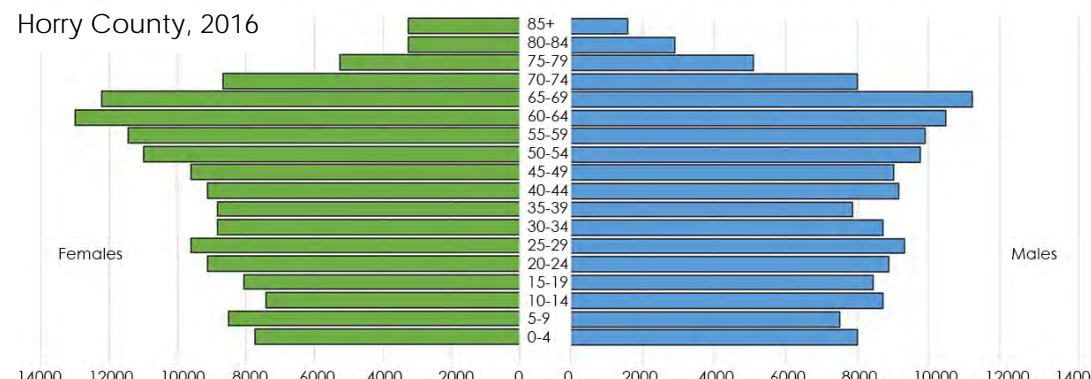
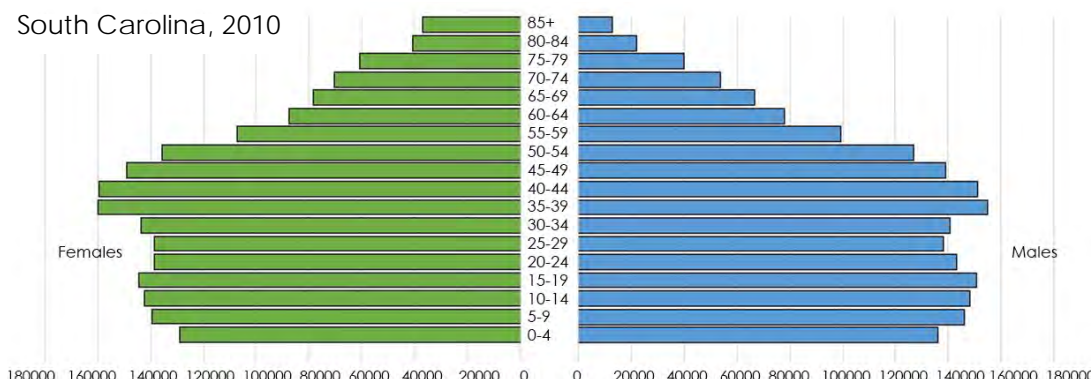
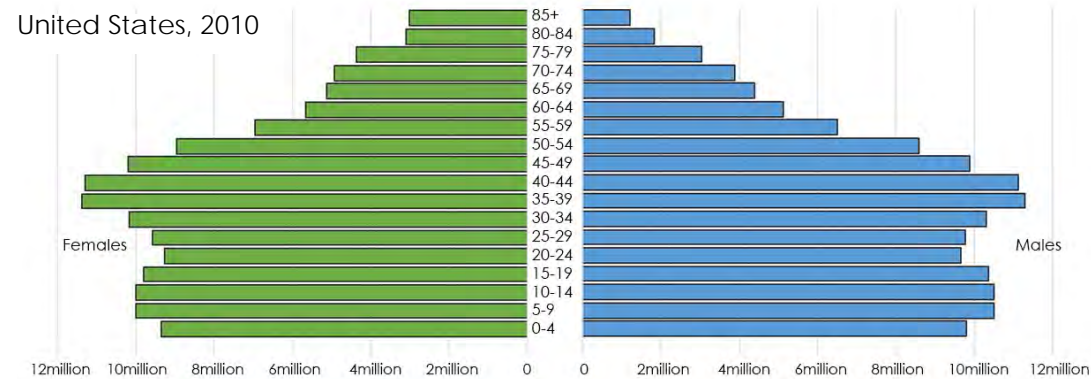
Age Distribution in Horry County, 2010 to 2015

Age	0 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 54	55 +	Total
2010	61,650	35,927	87,404	85,538	270,519
2011	61,626	36,483	88,059	89,258	275,426
2012	62,018	36,555	89,273	94,123	281,969
2013	63,074	36,557	90,451	99,228	289,310
2014	64,425	36,885	91,809	105,676	298,795
2015	66,006	37,173	94,003	112,689	309,871

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

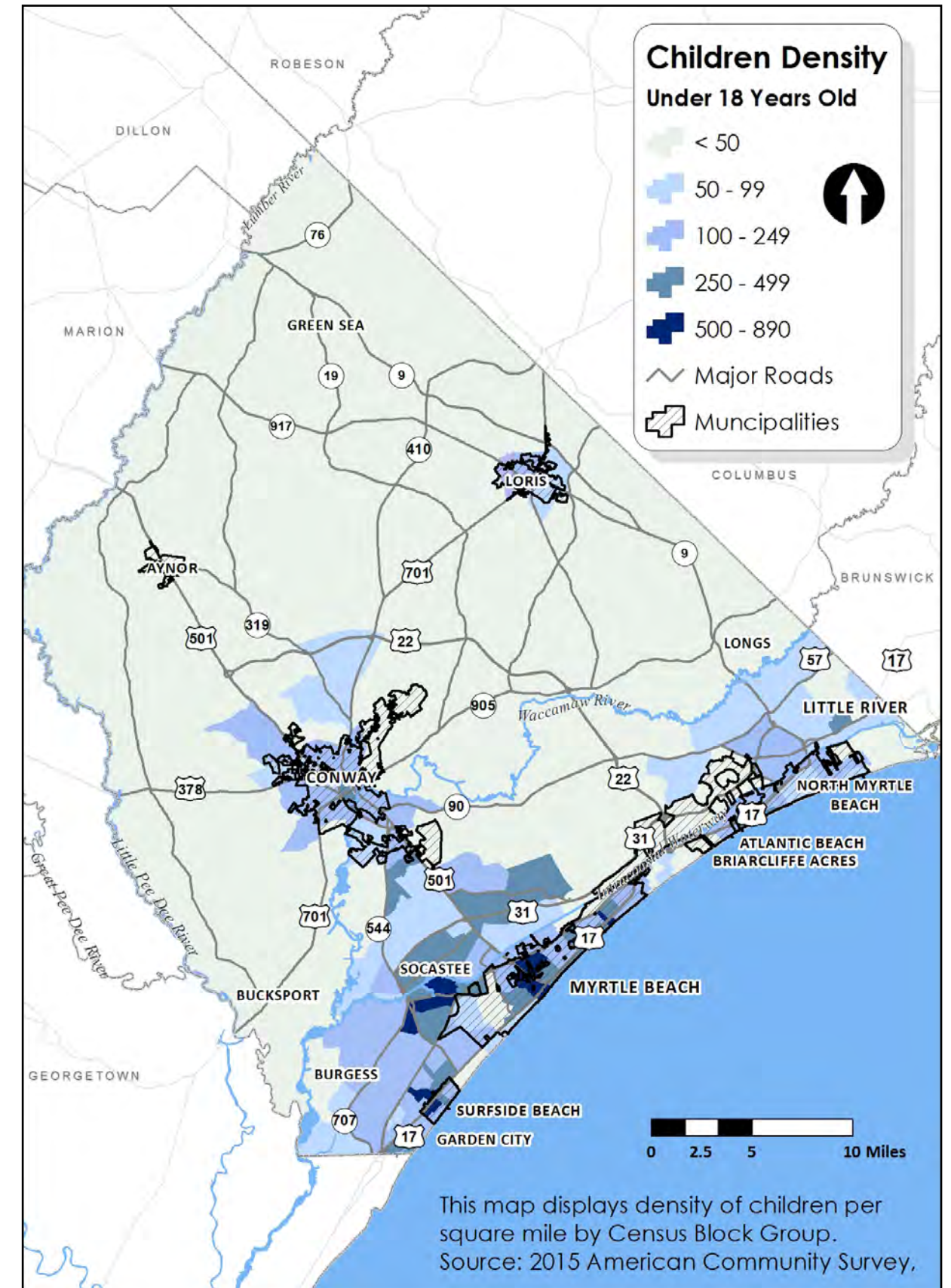
The map to the right illustrates the density of children under the age of 18. Mapping density such as this helps determine where services (such as schools and playgrounds) are needed. A notable trend, male children ages 19 and under outnumber female children. This is consistent to the national average. Areas that have higher children densities are also consistent with development trends (see Land Use Chapter). These areas are in greater demand and can place a higher demand on services and facilities. These statistics help Horry County predict and supply needed services for children, families, and seniors.

Population Composition by Age and Sex



According to estimations based on average life expectancy, the overall population of the "Baby Boomer" generation, born roughly between 1945-1965, will greatly diminish between 2033 and 2048. While this will potentially impact the State and country significantly, it is expected to have less of an impact on Horry County. This is mostly due to the continued probability that Horry County will remain a retirement destination for future generations.

Source: American Community Survey, 2010-2016



This map displays density of children per square mile by Census Block Group. Source: 2015 American Community Survey.

RACE

Horry County's racial diversity remained relatively the same between 1990 and 2015, with minor fluctuations in composition. The white population percentage has been slowly decreasing (note that the population is rising, but the percentage is decreasing), but remains close to 80%. Similarly, the Black or African American population percentage has been steadily decreasing from approximately 17% to roughly 13%. Hispanic or Latino populations have been steadily increasing from under 1% in 1990 to 6.1% in 2015. Starting with the Census in 2000, respondents for the first time were given the choice of selecting one or more race categories to indicate their racial identities. Persons who responded to the category "Two or More Races" have slowly increased from 2,105 persons, or 1.1% of the population in 2000, to 4,574 persons or 1.5% of the Horry County populace in 2015. Some of the decrease in White and Black or African American identified races could be attributed to the inclusion of the "Two or More Races" and "Other" categories as well as the increase in "Hispanic or Latino" category.

The map to the right illustrates areas of high minority population density. In other words, areas where minority populations live in close proximity to each other. The highest density minority populations can be found primarily in the City of Conway, the City of Myrtle Beach, and in Socastee. Other dense minority populations can be found in Burgess, Carolina Forest, the area surrounding Conway, Longs, Loris, and North Myrtle Beach.

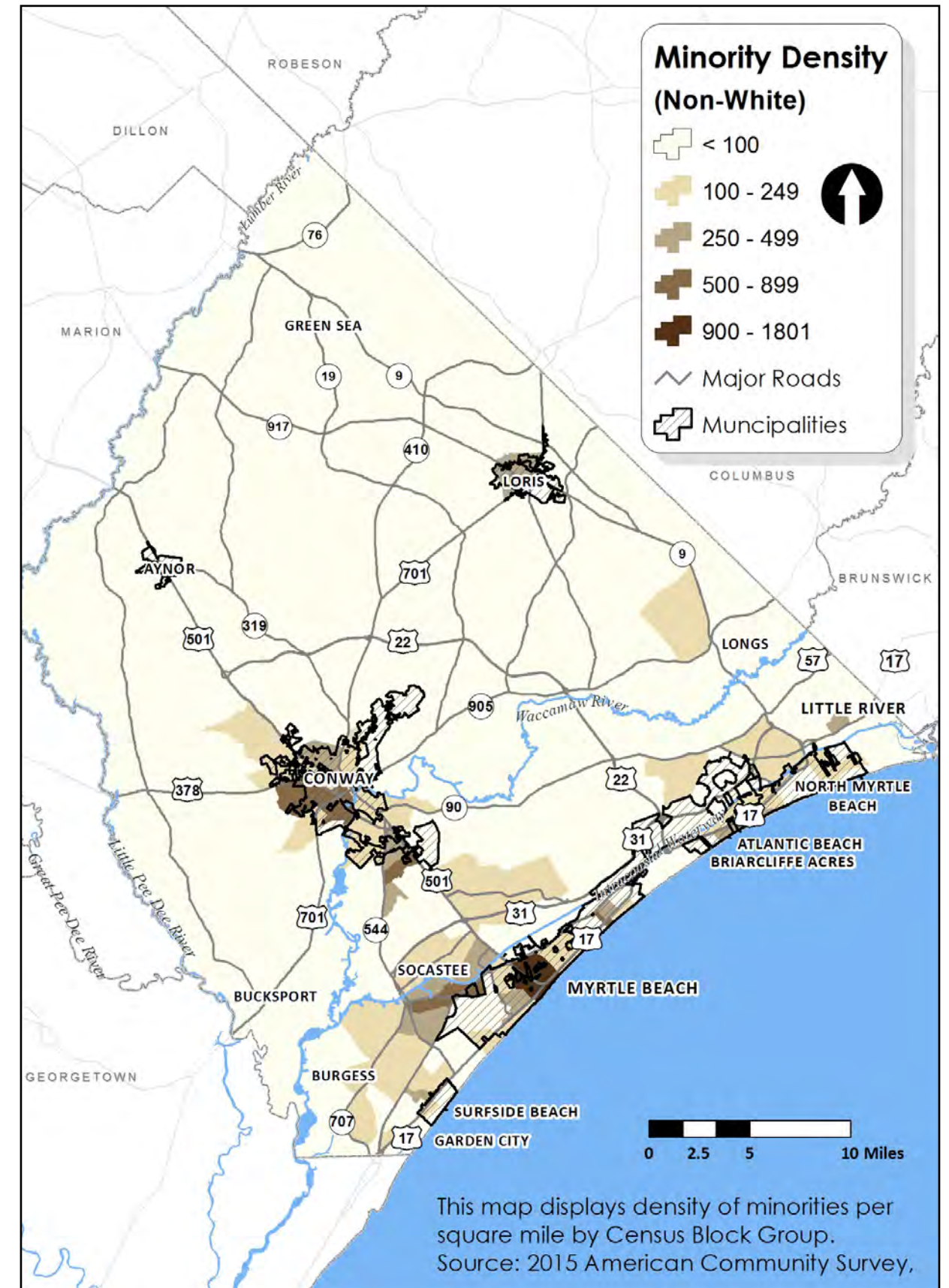
Racial Composition of Horry County, 1990 to 2015

Race	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%	2015	%
White	117,098	81.3	159,363	81.1	200,920	79.8	223,819	77.0
Black or African American	25,160	17.5	30,468	15.5	35,510	13.7	39,099	13.4
Hispanic or Latino	1,259	0.9	5,057	2.6	14,430	5.6	17,639	6.1
Other	1,507	1.03	4,693	2.4	4,685	1.8	5,757	1.9
Two or More Races	N/A	N/A	2,105	1.1	2,722	2.0	4,574	1.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey and Demographic Estimates 1990 - 2015

HOUSEHOLDS

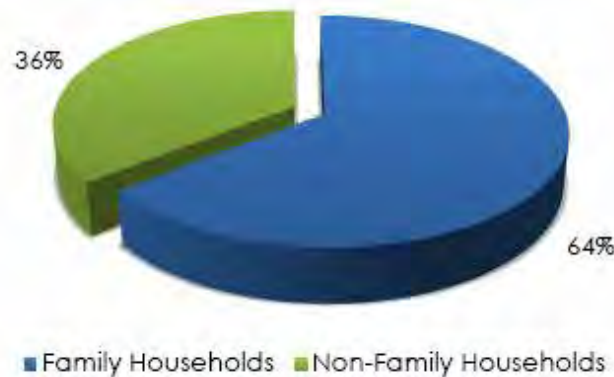
The U.S. Census Bureau defines a "Family Household" as a category that has at least one member related to the householder either by birth, marriage, or adoption. Contrary, "Non-Family Households" consist of people either living alone or households in which members do not have any natural or marital kinship to the householder.





The household composition of South Carolina compared to the neighboring states of North Carolina and Georgia is consistent across the various categories. South Carolina has fewer total housing units than the other two states, at 1,815,094, with Georgia and North Carolina both over three million total housing units. In the category of "with children under 18," South Carolina (30.7%) is slightly below North Carolina (31.5%) and Georgia (34.8%).

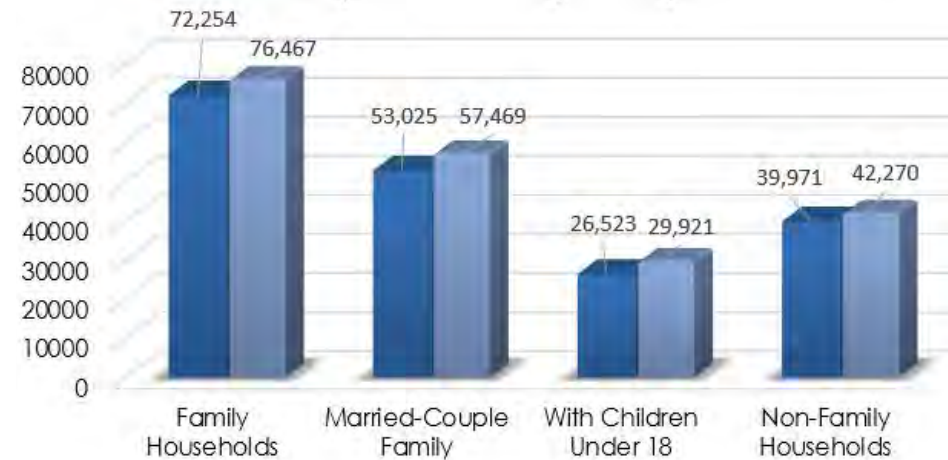
Percentage of Family and Non-Family Households, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

South Carolina, and specifically Horry County, also have household compositions consistent with national averages. In 2015, 64.4 %, or 76,467 Horry County residents were living within family households, while 35.6% (42,270) were living in non-family households either alone or with partners of any unmarried relationship. Over the last forty-five years, the number of traditional family households has been steadily declining. Married couple (husband-wife) households have been losing their overall share at a parallel rate. The U.S. estimate for family households is 66.8%, compared to the Horry County estimate for family households of 64.4%. Horry County is just over the national average of 33.2% for non-family households at 35.6% (ACS, 2011-2015). The chart on the top right illustrates the household composition of Horry County in 2010 and 2015 respectively.

Household Composition of Horry County, 2010 and 2015



Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015, Occupancy Characteristics

The average household size grew from 2.37 to 2.43 between 2010 and 2016, a strong indication that family sizes and non-traditional households are growing in our area (see chart below). Little River and the Myrtle Beach CCDs average less than 2.3 people per household, while all other areas of the County on average range from 2.53 to 2.72 people per household. This is reflective of where retirees live versus families with children. The overall County average household size is 2.37.

Household Size According to CCD

	Average	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Aynor CCD	2.72	2.7	2.76
Conway CCD	2.66	2.58	2.85
Conway East CCD	2.6	2.49	2.84
Floyds Crossroads CCD	2.53	2.53	2.53
Little River CCD	2.11	2.1	2.15
Longs CCD	2.53	2.36	3.22
Loris CCD	2.59	2.51	2.87
Myrtle Beach CCD	2.3	2.21	2.48

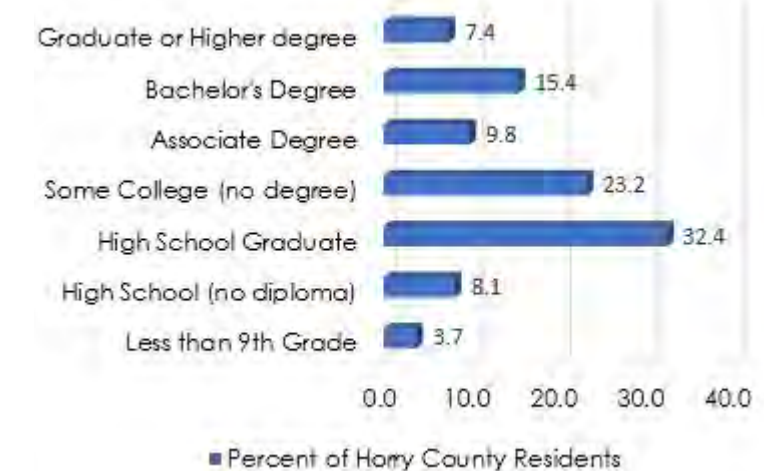
Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

EDUCATION

In comparison to national education attainment numbers, Horry County fares better in high school attainment but low in educational attainment for 25 years and older with at least a Bachelor's degree. As illustrated previously, the population of 20-29 year olds in Horry County has remained consistent while other age brackets have steadily increased. Much of this consistency could be due to students graduating high school and moving away to find work or to seek higher education.

The chart below describes the educational attainment of Horry County. Over roughly 88.5% of Horry County residents 25 years and older have received at least a high school diploma or its equivalent compared to the national average of 86.7%. In comparison, 22.8% of the population of 25 years and over possessed a bachelor's degree or higher in 2015, compared to the national average of 29.8%.

Educational Attainment in Horry County, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015, Educational Attainment

Horry County reported in 2016 that they had a 81.1% graduation rate. The graduation rate is based on the percentage of students enrolled in 9th grade four years earlier, meaning roughly 18.9% of students drop out, were held back, moved

away, or failed to complete the full diploma after 4 years. In 2016, Horry County Schools officials reported that 78% of those that graduated planned to attend college.

INCOME

This section analyzes income on a county and regional level. The greater Grand Strand and Pee Dee regions expand over state and county boundaries and also include Brunswick and Columbus counties in North Carolina. Income levels in Horry County have increased substantially from 1989 to 2015. While this seems optimistic, in reality most of this increase is due to inflation. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics consumer price index, the dollar experienced an average inflation rate of 2.41% per year. Prices in 2015 are 81.3% higher than prices in 1990. In other words, \$24,959 in the year 1990 is equivalent in purchasing power to \$45,261.72 in 2015, a difference of \$20,302.72 over 25 years. This means that the purchasing power of the median income has actually decreased by 4.4%.

In 2015, the median household income in Horry County was \$43,299, slightly lower than the state average of \$45,483. Although Horry County has been gaining overall population, the median incomes of households still remain below the state average.

Regional Household Income Comparison

County	1989	1999	2009	2015
Dillon	18,365	26,630	27,588	28,938
Florence	24,264	35,144	41,142	42,080
Georgetown	23,981	35,312	42,283	42,835
Horry	24,959	36,470	42,642	43,299
Marion	17,825	26,526	29,626	29,874
Williamsburg	18,409	24,214	25,948	28,297
South Carolina	26,256	37,082	43,572	45,483
Brunswick, NC	23,480	35,880	44,321	46,859
Columbus, NC	18,468	26,805	32,283	39,949
North Carolina	N/A	46,335	45,069	46,868

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

A more precise way of analyzing and comparing local with regional and state income patterns is on a per capita basis. Whereas the "Median Household Income" represents a middle value that results in two evenly distributed income groups, one below and one above the median value per household, the "Per Capita Income" reflects the average obtained by dividing the entire income of Horry County by its total population. Consequently, within a more diverse society it represents a more suitable variable.

In both 1999 (\$19,949) and 2009 (\$24,790), Horry County had the highest per capita income in the six-county area of northeastern South Carolina; however in 2015 (\$24,094), Horry County had the third highest. The County's per capita income dropped by \$696 from 2009 to 2015, placing it below the state's per capita income of \$24,604. Some of this change can be attributed to the economic downturn during that same time period. With much of the economy and jobs reliant on the housing and tourism industries in Horry County, the downturn had a significant impact on housing prices and production, as well as tourism (see section on Seasonal Population) thereby resulting in lower income and fewer jobs in those industries.

Regional Household Per Capita Income

County	1989	1999	2009	2015
Dillon	8,077	13,272	14,074	14,736
Florence	11,007	17,876	21,538	22,877
Georgetown	11,084	19,805	24,147	25,216
Horry	12,385	19,949	24,790	24,094
Marion	8,185	13,878	15,892	17,553
Williamsburg	7,632	12,794	14,636	16,344
South Carolina	11,897	18,795	23,196	24,604
Brunswick, NC	11,688	19,857	25,993	27,586
Columbus, NC	9,134	14,415	18,189	19,814
North Carolina	N/A	20,307	24,547	25,920

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015, Median Household Income

Median Household Income Distribution, 2015



Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

Income distribution is reflected in the pie chart above. Amongst all household income brackets in 2015, those between \$35,000 and \$74,999, the group considered Middle to Upper Middle Class, were most represented at 37.2%. Yet, 39.7% of households in Horry County made less than \$35,000, and 14.1% made less than \$14,999 per year in 2015. 4.4% of households made incomes of more than \$150,000 in 2015.

Another element of income to note is the pay disparity between sexes. The chart below illustrates the average incomes of both sexes for various educational attainment levels in Horry County. It is important to note that while no data on racial income disparities is available for Horry County, nationally, and in South Carolina, there are income disparities between races.

Median Earnings Based on Educational Attainment and Sex

Educational Attainment	Males	Females
Less than High School	20,453	14,883
High School Graduate	26,926	18,932
Some College or Associates Degree	30,738	23,911
Bachelor's Degree	43,300	35,497
Graduate or Professional Degree	54,253	47,182

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015



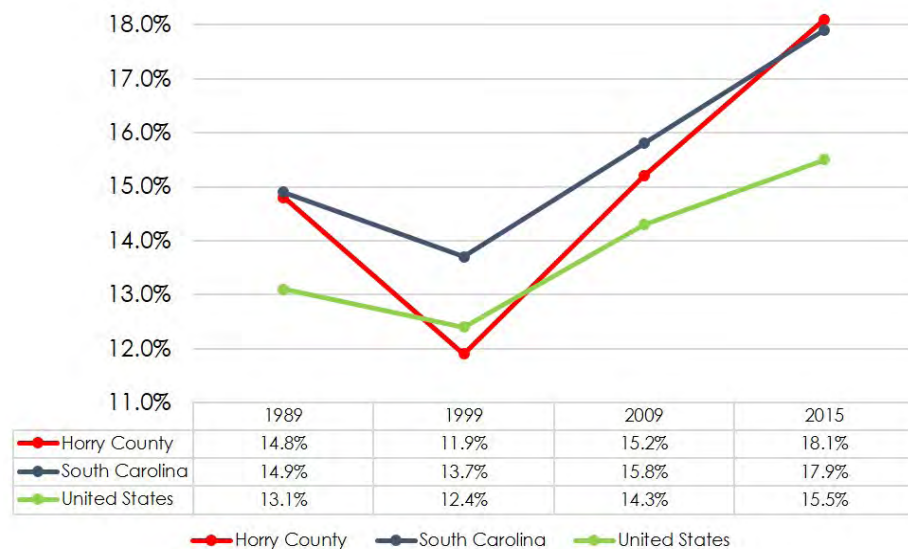
POVERTY

The percent of the population living below the poverty level in the United States is 15.5%. South Carolina (17.9%) and Horry County (18.1%) both have higher poverty rates than the national average. South Carolina is ranked 15th in the US for the highest percentage of the population below the poverty level, and Horry County is ranked 34th in South Carolina for percentage of population below the poverty level. In 2015, the official poverty threshold for a family of four in South Carolina was \$24,250.

The number of all people living below the poverty level in Horry County in 2015 was 51,988 persons or 18.1% of the overall population. The relative percentage of people living below the poverty level in Horry County is the least within all the surrounding counties except Brunswick County, North Carolina with a smaller value of 16.3%. Horry County's Poverty Level is just over the percent of the population below poverty level for South Carolina (17.9%) and North Carolina (17.4%).

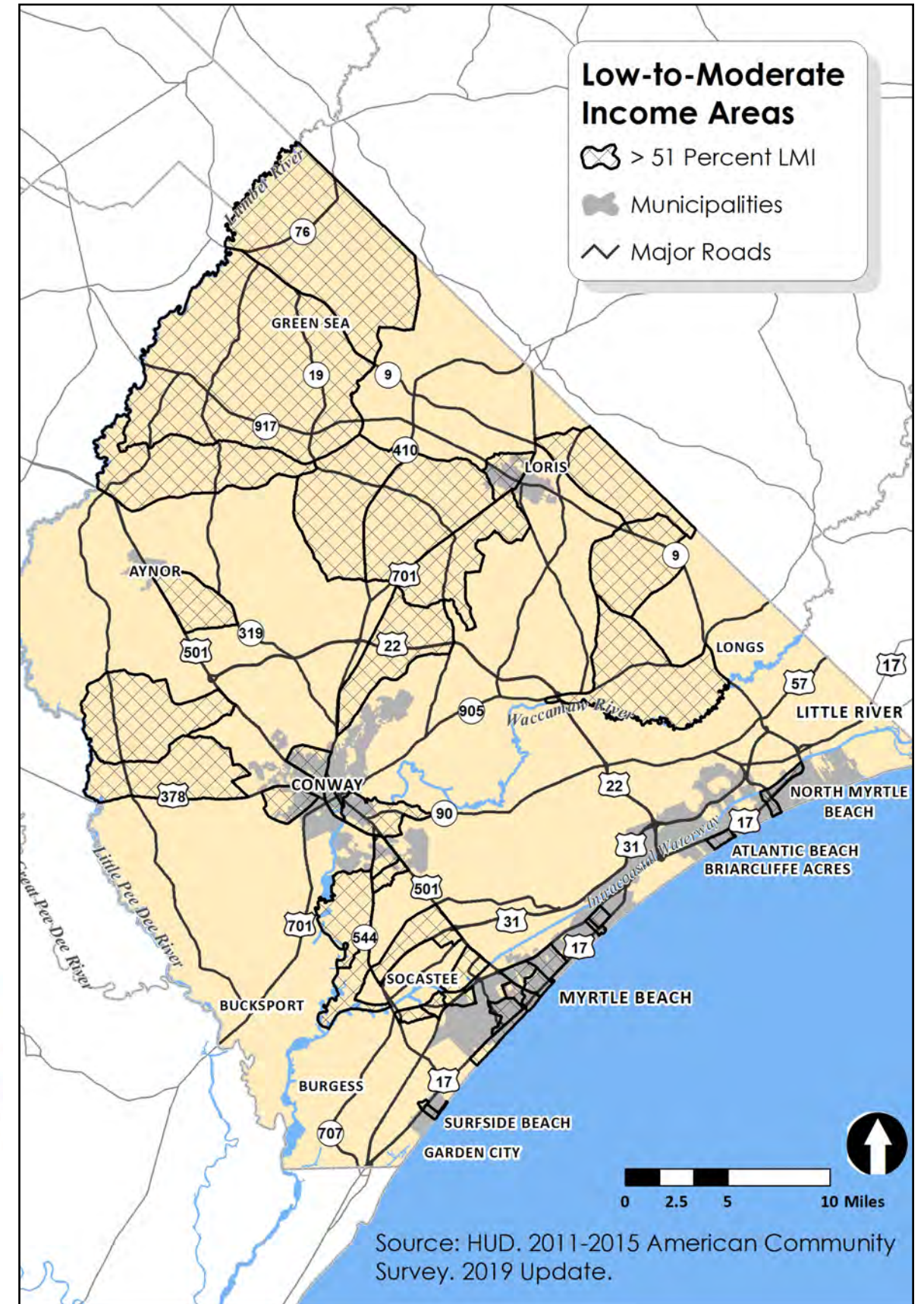
6.3% of Horry County residents below the poverty level worked full-time, year-round in the past 12 months, 41.5% worked less than full-time, year-round in the past 12 months, and 36.9% did not work. As the amount of residents below poverty level increases, in particular the number of residents unemployed below the poverty level, the amount of expendable money by residents decreases. Thus leading to negative economic impacts for the County. It is important to note that many social services allocated by the state allow families to qualify even if they do not fall below the poverty level. For example, in order for the children of a family of four to qualify for full Medicaid the family must make less than \$32,319. Poverty is not solely an urban issue. This largely impacts rural communities with limited access to jobs. This fact is well illustrated in the map to the right, which shows large low to moderate income areas throughout rural Horry County, Socastee, and within the cities of Conway and Loris.

Percent of Population Below Poverty Level for Horry County and South Carolina, 1989-2015



18.1%
of Horry County Residents
live below the Poverty Level

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

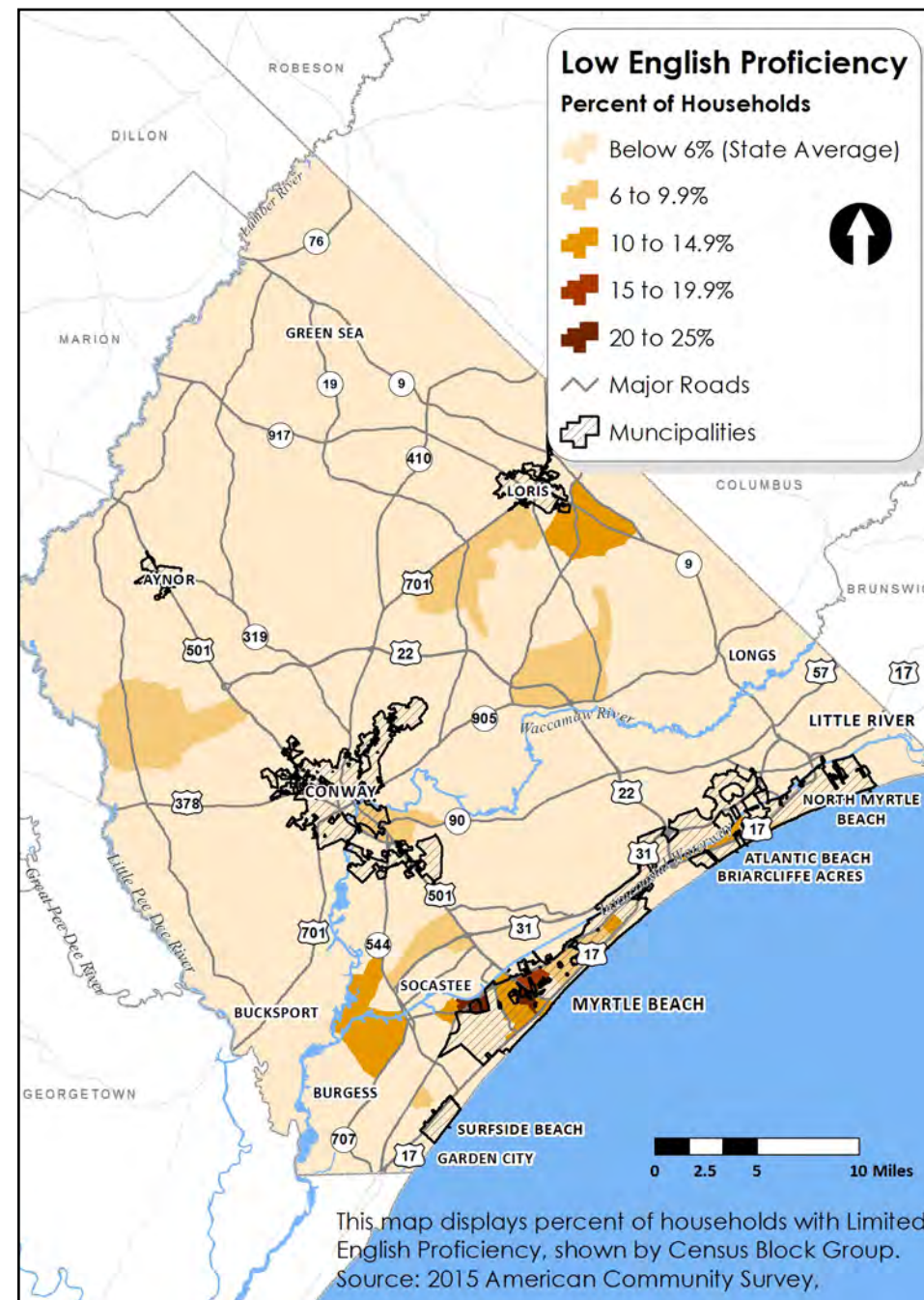


ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

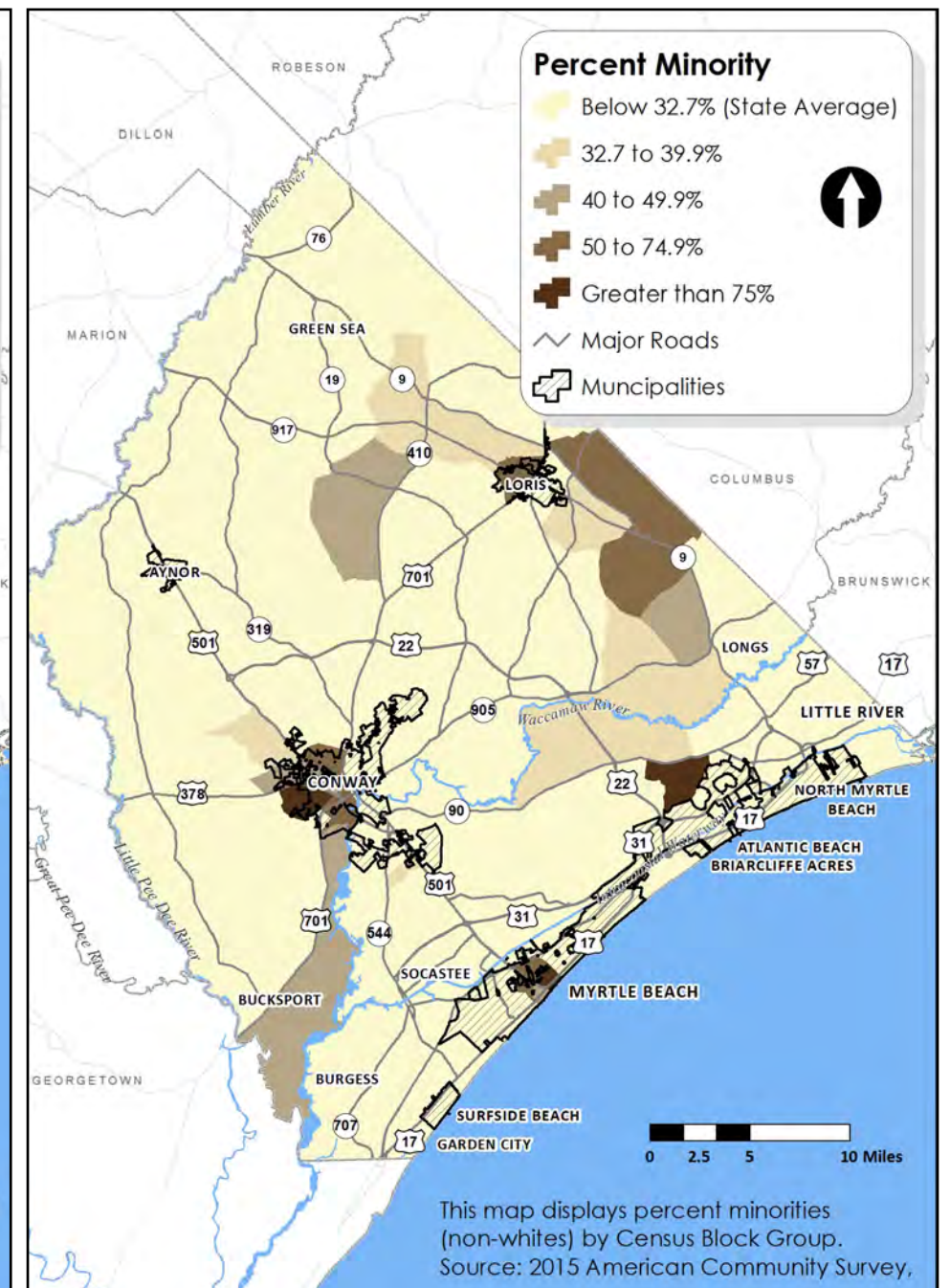
One of the most important elements of analyzing population data is recognizing trends and overlaps. In order to prevent discriminatory negative public health, or environmental effects on vulnerable and minority populations, Horry County must first determine where these populations are concentrated and where these discriminatory impacts are likely to exist. It is important to note that these areas are not framed in negative terms and should not be considered an obstacle for potential growth. Minority and vulnerable populations want vibrant businesses that add to their economic base without harming their individual health and well-being. In addition, they have similar needs in terms of community character and quality of life standards.

Looking at the following maps, it is obvious that there is a correlation between the percent minority map (to the far right) and the low-to-moderate income map (previous page). The areas highlighted are places that have greater percentages of minorities than the state average. Knowing where low-to-moderate income areas are can help with prioritizing public program, housing, and infrastructure improvements. It is also an important qualifying factor for many grant applications.

Limited English proficiency (map to the middle right) refers to anyone above the age of 5 who reported speaking English less than “very well,” as classified by the U.S. Census Bureau. Nationwide, the Limited English population represented 8% of the total U.S. population ages 5 and older. In South Carolina, this number is less than 6% of the population. In Horry County, it was less than 2.2% of all households (2,514 households) in 2015. Despite these numbers being low, there are areas of the County that have a greater percentage of households with low English proficiency than state averages.



Horry County Planning and Zoning utilizes the EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSCREEN) to review rezoning cases (<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>). While this tool informs staff of population and environmental concerns based off of national averages, Planning and Zoning staff also work to identify when areas exceed state



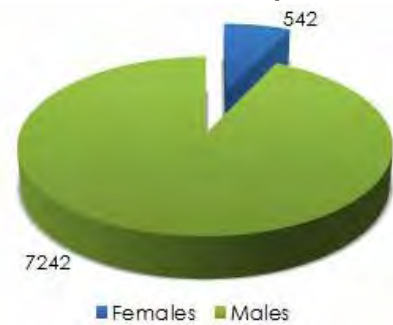
percentages. The trends in this population data need to be continually analyzed and monitored by staff. Findings should be taken into account for rezonings, potential residential development, mining, outdoor shooting or other public nuisance activities, and economic development.



VETERANS

Horry County is the home to roughly 27,341 veterans according to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. This accounts for roughly 25,435 males and 1,906 females. Horry County Veterans Affairs reports that only 7,784 veterans in the County receive Veteran Benefits, of those roughly 93% are male.

Veteran Benefits by Sex



Source: American Community Survey 2012-2016

The highest number of veterans served in the Vietnam era and the second highest in the Gulf War, roughly 12,153 and 4,017 respectively. When compared to similar southern tourist and retirement destinations, Horry County has statistically more veterans than other SC destinations, but fewer than FL destinations.

Number of Veteran Residents Comparison



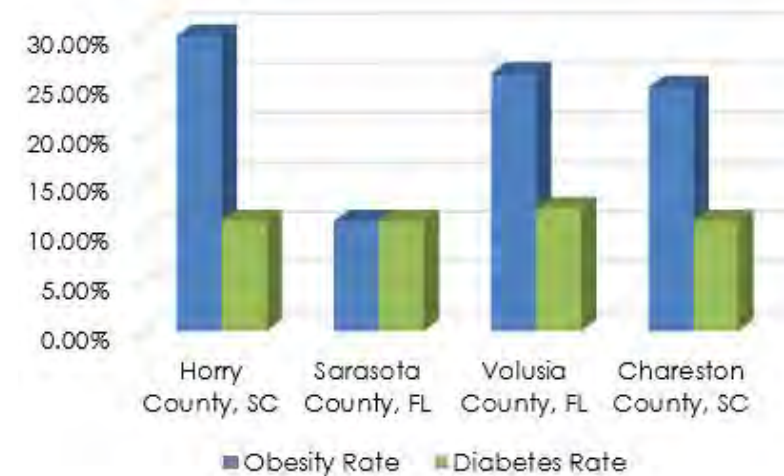
Source: American Community Survey 2012-2016

HEALTH

Obesity

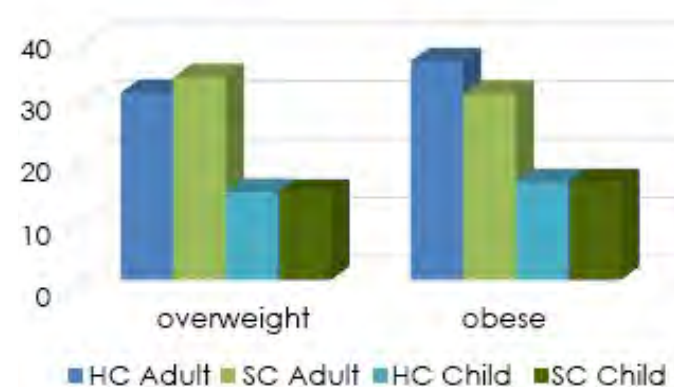
In 2013, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control found that on average 32% of adults (age 18 and older) in Horry County were overweight, while 37.4% were obese. Comparatively, the SC averages were 34.7% and 31.8% respectively. This means that while Horry County has fewer adults who are overweight, there are approximately 3% more obese compared to the entire state. Children's overweight and obese percentages were comparable to state averages.

Obesity and Diabetes Rate Comparisons



Source: American Community Survey 2012-2016

Percentage of Overweight and Obese Residents in Horry County and South Carolina



Source: South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, 2013 Horry County Obesity Fact Sheet

The availability of parks and access to natural spaces has been proven to have a positive influence on physical and mental health. Community design with the availability of open spaces and recreation areas strongly influence people's level of physical activity, which directly correlates to weight. Individuals that live in walkable communities spend more time doing physical activities than those that live in neighborhoods that are not walkable.

In addition, living close to parks and other recreational facilities consistently correlates to higher activity levels for adults and youth, resulting in lower obesity rates (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2016). Designing walkable communities with access to outdoor spaces is important to consider with future development, as the rates of obesity have risen dramatically since the 1970s. Providing access to recreation and natural spaces will have a positive influence on the physical health of residents and visitors of the County.

Mental Health

While there are many physical health benefits of living near and utilizing recreational assets, the mental health benefits of spending time in nature does not always require the same physical activity. Scenic views, such as the beach or waterways, are known to have restorative and mental health benefits (Lothian, 2010). For so many people, this is why they vacation at the beach and eventually retire here. Numerous studies document the positive impacts that recreation can have on mental health, from reducing depression and relieving stress, to improving quality of life in a variety of ways, to helping people to feel better about both their surroundings and themselves. Increased happiness and respect for the natural environment can also result in an increased sense of community pride.

Disability

In 2015, there were 47,339 people, or 16.4% of the total population, in Horry County with a disability. This is compared to 12.4% in the US and 14.4% in South Carolina. The majority of residents with a disability are 65 years of age and older (75.5%). This can be explained by the increase in the elderly population in the County over the past 25 years. Further, 31.7% of veterans in Horry County are with a disability.

Employment Status by Disability Status



Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

The chart above illustrates the employment status of the Horry County population with a disability. Of the disabled population, 16,413 or 35% were not in the labor force as of 2015. As the number of residents not in the labor force increases, the amount of money expendable by residents decreases and the amount expended on social services increases.

Nationwide, 1 in every 59 children has been identified with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Nearly one-fifth of all Americans – more than 56 million men, women, and children -- have a physical, sensory or intellectual disability and 38.3 million have a severe disability (US Census, 2010). People with disabilities constitute the nation's largest minority group. There are over 4,000 individuals with Autism and intellectual

disabilities in Horry County (Medicaid Secondary Data Study Conducted by SOS and Dr. Stephen Firsing of CCU).

CONCLUSIONS

Continued monitoring of population trends is necessary. This information should be utilized to inform public service needs. It can also be used to evaluate impact of government decisions on specific communities.

Analyzing the latest demographic data by age groups, it becomes apparent that Horry County's population is growing with the most increase happening during retirement ages. This fact, combined with population projections, indicates that the County will need to take a special focus on providing services. While still providing for the needs of school-age children, Horry County must position itself to provide physical and social support to older residents. The aging population will seek recreational and human service facilities that are readily accessible from their homes; many may desire smaller housing units close to shopping and community services with fewer lawn maintenance needs.

As areas between the Waccamaw River and coast become more densely populated, it will become increasingly important to monitor and predict the needs of residents in the Burgess, Forestbrook, Socastee, Carolina Forest, and Little River areas. Safety services, parks and recreational services and facilities, housing, and land use will all need to reflect the growing and changing needs of these populations. As household demographics change, so will their housing needs.

In addition, as population continues to steadily rise, it will become ever-more important for Horry County officials and staff to continually improve development and zoning regu-

lations to reflect increasing needs of long term residents as well as seasonal and academic populations.

Horry County should coordinate with Coastal Carolina University and Horry Georgetown Technical College to encourage and promote long-term retention of young professional and post high school educated populations. In addition, addressing and mitigating the potential causes of income gaps between males, females and races should be of priority.

Continuing to monitor and improve environmental justice issues is also critical in Horry County. Planning and Zoning staff must continue to work to identify when areas exceed state percentages and take this information into account for rezonings and potential development.

Decisions made by the County government will need to reflect the changing needs of this more diverse and growing population, particularly those needs regarding income, age and ethnicity.