

Chapter 3.5 Population Element

3.5.1: OVERVIEW

Purpose and Intent

Analysis of historic, current, and future population trends included in this Element identifies the changing needs and preferences of residents of the County. This information is intended to help shape the Future Land Use Plan, and identify future service needs of the population which can be addressed through the Comprehensive Plan.

3.5.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

As part of the 2008 *Comprehensive Plan Update*, Miley, Gallo, and Associates prepared a *Demand Analysis* that addressed population and growth forecasts, municipal boundaries and annexations in regards to population, and growth variables. The *Demand Analysis* was an adequate substitution for the lack of available, current U.S. Census Bureau data at the time and was also helpful in planning for future years. The findings of the *Demand Analysis* included:

- Based on an assumed annual growth rate of 1.7 percent, Charleston County could expect a population

of 425,000 residents by 2020 (approximately 85,000 new residents).

- Based on the municipal population capture analysis, 70 percent of new residents, or 60,000 people, were expected to live in the incorporated areas of the County, and 30 percent of new residents, or 25,000 people, were expected to live in the unincorporated areas. Municipalities were expected to grow annually by 1.54 percent, while unincorporated areas would grow at a higher annual rate, 2.24 percent. If annexation activity increased significantly, the estimates would shift accordingly.
- The expected population growth was anticipated to stimulate the housing demand in Charleston County, resulting in the need for approximately 42,000 new housing units by 2020 - 30,000 new units in municipalities and 12,000 new units in unincorporated areas.
- Assuming no change in housing preferences, 70 percent of the new units (30,000 units) were expected to be single-family residences.
- Although Charleston County's annual employment growth rate was projected to be 1.9 percent, the ma-

majority of the demand for new commercial square footage was expected to likely occur within the municipalities.

Since the adoption of the *Comprehensive Plan Update* in 2008, changing conditions have greatly impacted the nation and made the findings of the *Demand Analysis* somewhat outdated. In late 2008, some financial institutions collapsed, and the housing market was drastically affected as home foreclosure and eviction rates skyrocketed. Unemployment rates and poverty levels increased due to prolonged uncertainty in the market. The effects of the financial crisis affected all groups of people, as evidenced by the data available in this Element. After six long years, in 2014, the economy is slowly recovering.

In addition, the release of the 2010 Decennial Census data and 2007-2011 Five-Year Estimates from the American Community Survey indicate large shifts in racial diversity and age trends at local, state, and national levels that need to be examined to better accommodate and plan for the needs and impacts of our current and future residents.

Population Estimates, Trends, and Forecasts

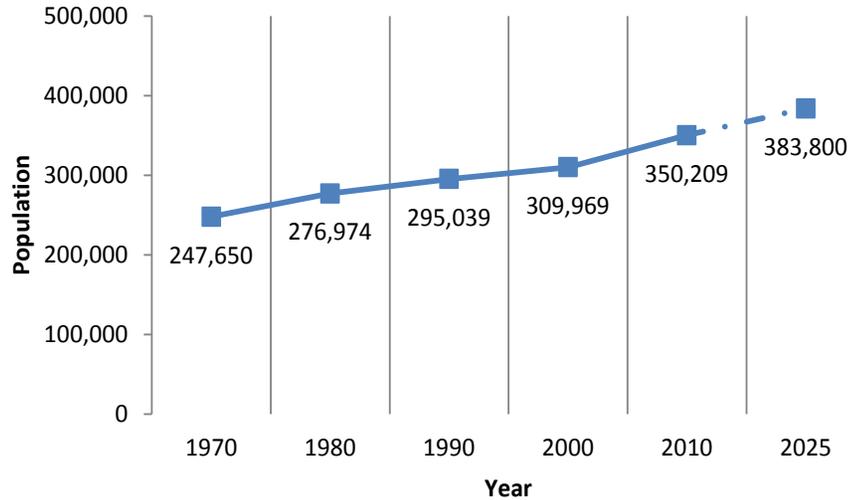
Of all the regions in the United States, the South has consistently seen the most growth in recent decades. By 2030, over half of the American population (approximately 52 percent) is expected to live in the South, according to the U.S. Census Bureau population projections. *Figure 3.5.1: Countywide Population Trends and Projections* illustrates the County’s growing population. From 2000 to 2010, the population increased by 13 percent (40,240 new residents). From 2010 to 2025, the County’s population is projected to increase by 9.6 percent to 383,800 residents (33,591 new residents). Similar to Charleston County, Berkeley and Dorchester Counties’ populations have continued to increase and are projected to increase into 2025, as demonstrated in *Figure 3.5.2: Tri-County Populations, 1990-2025*.

Municipal Capture Rates

Since the 1970s, municipalities within Charleston County have experienced not only natural population growth but also substantial growth from the expansion of municipal boundaries by annexation.

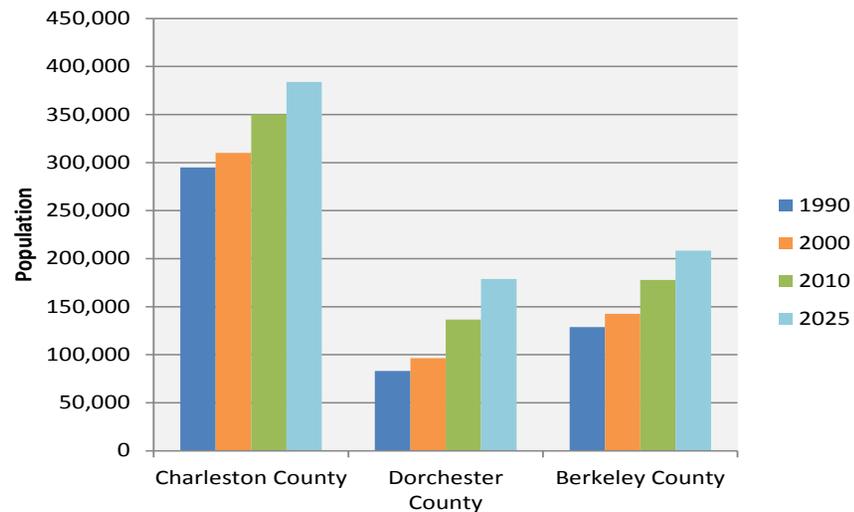
Figure 3.5.3: Charleston County Land Area demonstrates the proportions of unincorporated and incorporated land in the County. As evidenced, 68 percent of the County’s land area (approximately 715 square miles) is unincorporated, and the majority of the unincorporated portion is located in the Rural Area. *Figure 3.5.4: Municipal Growth* indicates the growth of municipalities as a result of annexation in recent years. The Cities of Charleston and North Charleston, as well as the Town of Mount Pleasant are illustrated as they are the largest municipalities in the County with more vigorous annexation policies. Historical data implies annexation activity peaked in the 1990s with incorporated/unincorporated capture ratios of 298 / - 198 per-

FIGURE 3.5.1: COUNTYWIDE POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS, 1970-2025



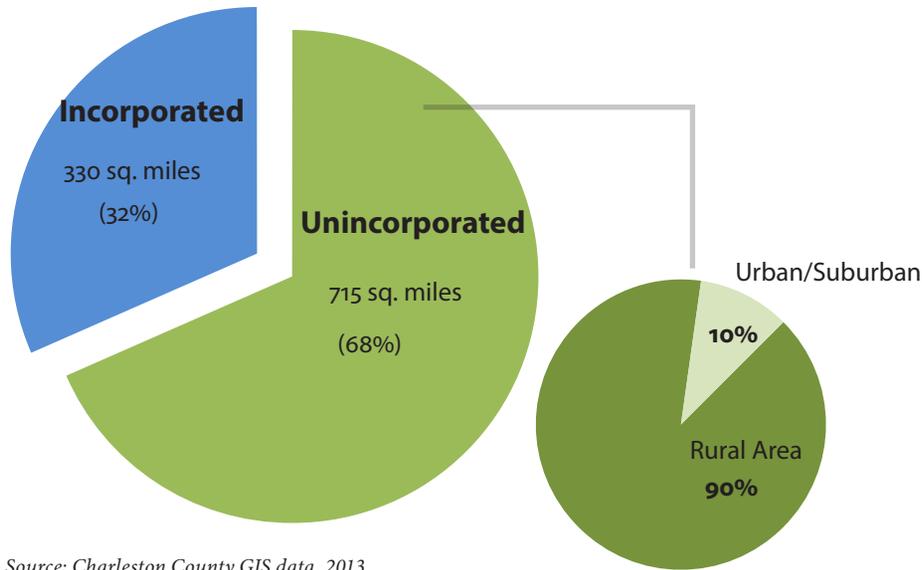
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010; BCDCOG via South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics, 2012. Note: 2025 projection provided by BCDCOG utilizing data from the South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics.

FIGURE 3.5.2: TRI-COUNTY POPULATIONS, 1990-2025



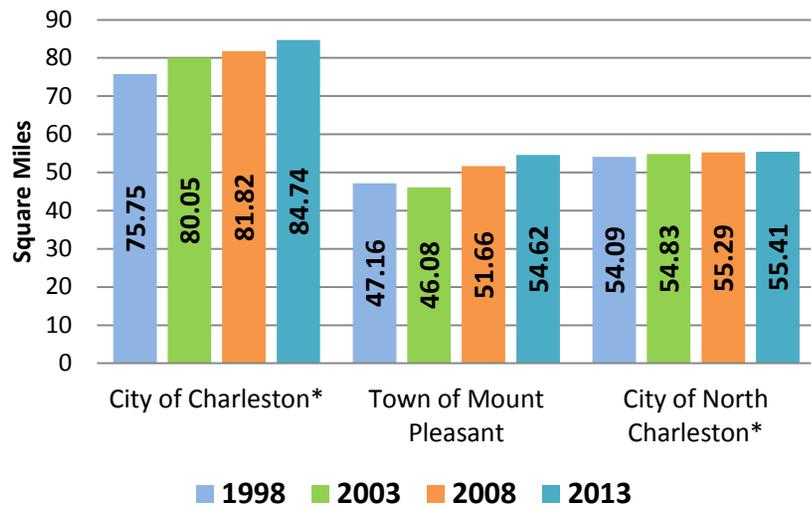
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010; BCDCOG via South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics, 2012. Note: 2025 projection provided by BCDCOG utilizing data from the South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics.

FIGURE 3.5.3: CHARLESTON COUNTY LAND AREA, 2013



Source: Charleston County GIS data, 2013

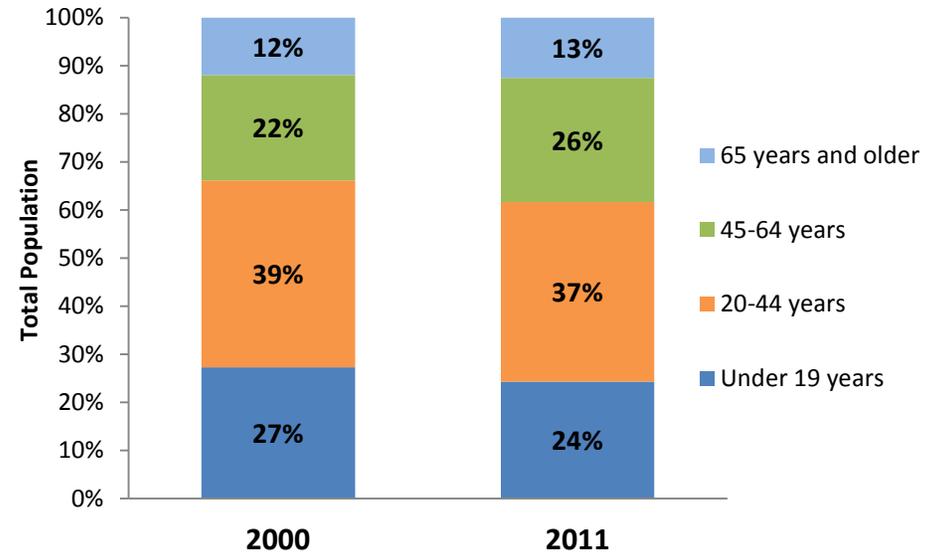
FIGURE 3.5.4: MUNICIPAL GROWTH OF LARGEST THREE MUNICIPALITIES



Source: Charleston County GIS data, 2013

*Note: Municipal size is reflective of portions of jurisdictions located within Charleston County only.

FIGURE 3.5.5: CHARLESTON COUNTY AGE PROFILE



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011

cent (1990 – 2000). From 2000 to 2007, the capture ratio dramatically declined to 66/34 percent indicating population growth via annexation slowed considerably. Accordingly, net population gains resulted in the unincorporated areas of the County. It is important to note the ratio for 2000 through 2007 is based on the actual municipal boundaries in place during 2007, a distinct advantage of a spatial projection model. Based on the uploaded 2007 boundary files, the ESRI model predicted the capture ratio to settle at 70/30 percent during 2007 to 2012. This projection was fairly accurate, as actual municipal boundaries in place in January 2014 indicate a capture ratio of approximately 68/32 percent, as illustrated in *Figure 3.5.3*.

Population Composition

Recent Census Bureau data revealed that the United States population is diversifying in many ways. Racial and ethnic groups are increasing; generational gaps are more prominent; and lifestyle changes are resulting in more heterogeneous households. The County’s population continues to diversify as well, and the shifting demographics will affect County policies and change the provision of services. The following sections illustrate the County’s changing population.

Age Distribution

Charleston County’s population is aging, a trend also seen in other parts of the country, as illustrated in *Figure 3.5.5: Charleston County Age Profile*. From 2000 to 2011, the per-

centage of residents age 45 years and older increased from 34 percent in 2000 to 39 percent in 2011 (by 28,391 residents). To plan for an increasing proportion of older residents, the County should be aware of changing transportation and housing needs. Access to public transportation and housing that is affordable to those on a fixed income and close to services will be crucial to serving this age group.

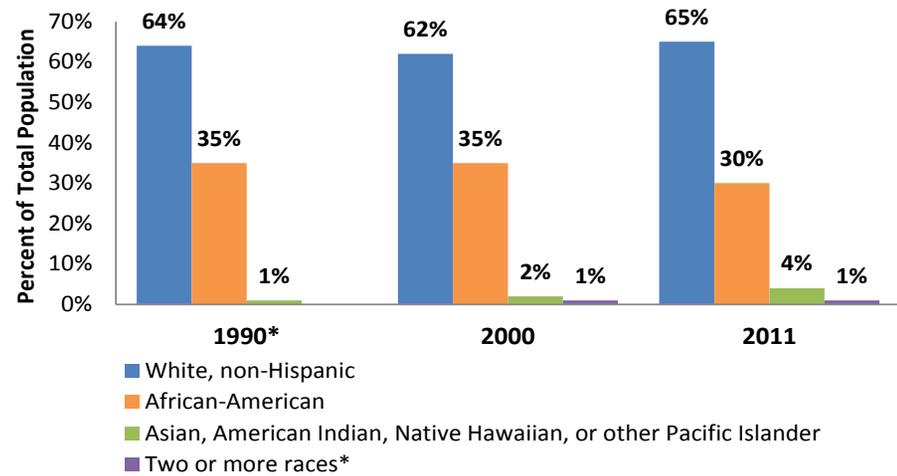
In 2011, 37 percent (129,402 residents) of the County’s population was between the ages of 20 and 44 years. This younger group, mostly Millennials (those born between the early 1980s and early 2000s) and Generation Xers (those born between the early 1960s and early 1980s), contains more college-educated residents. Charleston County’s growth in knowledge-based industries will continue to draw younger generations to the Lowcountry. Lifestyle preferences are distinct among younger residents, as many prefer dense urban and suburban settings with opportunities for walkable communities and public transportation, which has implications for land use planning. Younger generations also prefer to communicate in different ways. The County should identify new mechanisms (such as social media outlets and innovative community workshops) to engage its younger population in the community planning process.

In 2011, 24 percent (84,110 residents) of the County’s population was under the age of 19. Educational and employment opportunities should continue to be available for the County’s youth, as the County strives to retain its young residents.

Racial Composition

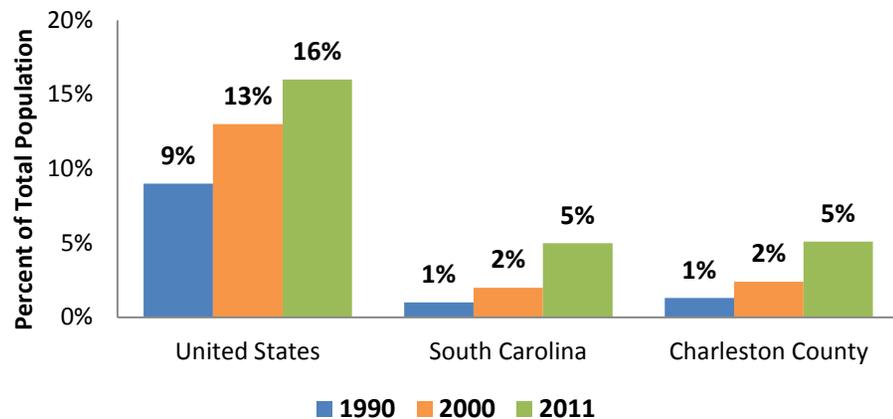
Between 1990 and 2000, the total population in all race categories in Charleston County increased. *Figure 3.5.6* displays the historic racial composition of the County. From 2000 to 2011, the African-American population decreased five percent, while the Asian, American Indian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander population increased two percent. Surprisingly, the White population increased three percent from 2000 to 2011, which does not parallel national trends. *Figure 3.5.7* depicts the increases in the Hispanic population. Minority populations, specifically the Hispanic population, are expected to increase more rapidly in future years due to higher birth rates among this group and declining birth rates among the White population. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2043 there will actually be no majority race in the United

FIGURE 3.5.6: CHARLESTON COUNTY RACIAL PROFILE, 1990-2011



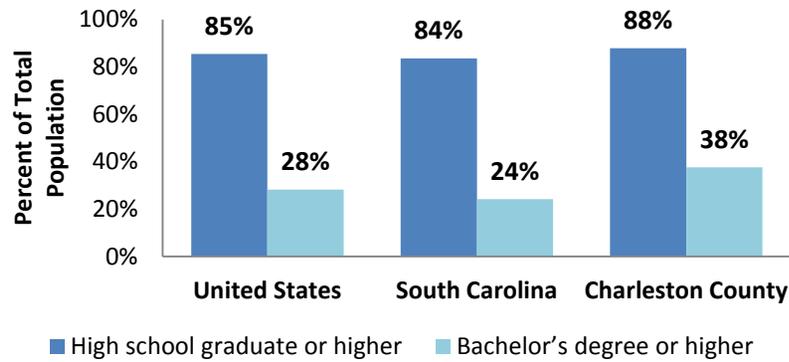
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011
 *Note: Identification as multiracial was not an option for citizens during the 1990 Decennial Census.

FIGURE 3.5.7: HISPANIC POPULATION IN CHARLESTON COUNTY, 1990-2011



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011

FIGURE 3.5.8: CHARLESTON COUNTY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2011



Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011

States. The older population will continue to be predominately non-Hispanic white; however, the under-18 population is projected to be approximately 33 percent non-Hispanic white, resulting in a non-majority population.

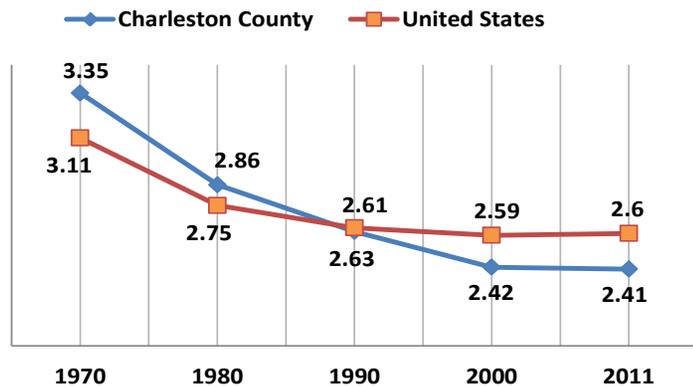
Gender

Between 1970 and 1990, there was a 1.7 percent increase in the percentage of females who compose the total County population and a corresponding increase in the percentage of males. In 2011 females outnumbered males in the County, comprising approximately 52 percent of the population.

Education

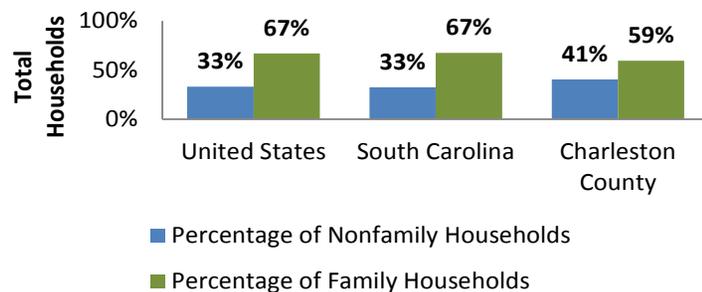
The Charleston County population has generally achieved a higher level of education when compared to other counties in South Carolina. In 2011, approximately 12 percent of the population in the County over 25 years of age was not a high school graduate while approximately 38 percent of the population in the County over 25 years of age held a bachelor's degree or higher, as illustrated in Figure 3.5.8. The larger population of educated residents could be attributed to the influx of new residents drawn to knowledge-based career opportunities as well as the many higher educational institutions that are located in region. A significant proportion of the County's population is actively working towards meeting educational goals. In 2013, the total enrollment for all higher education institutions in the region was over 40,000 students. In addition, in 2013, the Charleston County School District enrolled just over 43,000 students in public schools. For more enrollment figures, please see Table 3.8.1 in the Community Facilities Element.

FIGURE 3.5.9: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE, 1970-2011



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2000; American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011

FIGURE 3.5.10: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, 2011

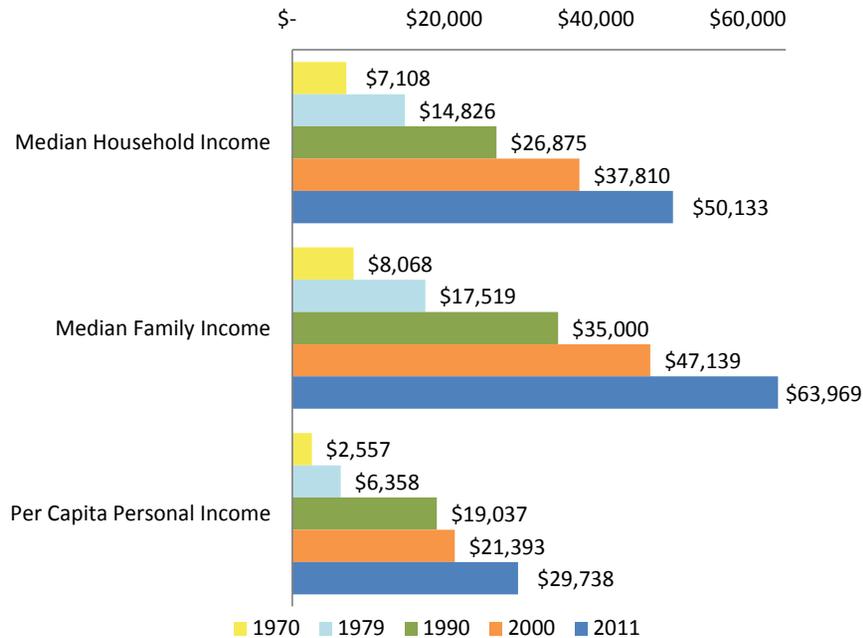


Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011

Household Size & Composition

Figures 3.5.9 and 3.5.10 illustrate the continued trends of decreasing household sizes and changing household composition in Charleston County. In 2011, the average household size had decreased to 2.41 persons per household from 2.42 persons per household in 2000. Family households (defined as a married couple or single parent and at least one child) comprised approximately 59 percent of the total households. The remaining 41 percent were non-family households, defined as single-person households or households of multiple unrelated individuals. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that by 2025, single-person households will equal family households nationally, and by 2050, they will exceed the number of family households. Changing household sizes will have long-term implications on housing unit size, type, and location. Smaller, more energy-efficient homes may be more preferential.

FIGURE 3.5.11: CHARLESTON COUNTY INCOME CHARACTERISTICS, 1970-2011

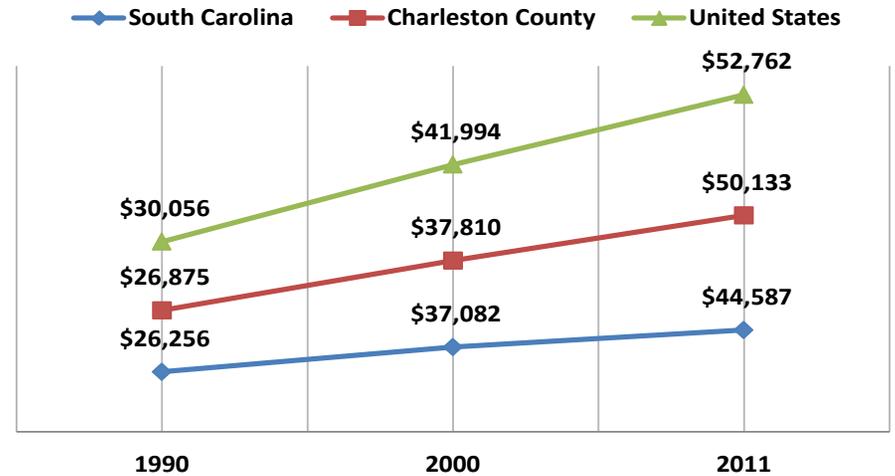


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970, 1979, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011. Note: Household income includes the incomes of everyone in the household 15 years and older. Family income includes the income of all members of a family 15 years and older. Per capita personal income is the mean money received over 12 months for every individual over 15 years of age in an area. These figures have not been adjusted for inflation.

Income Levels

Since 2008, the local economy has been recovering from one of the worst recessions in recent years when unemployment rates increased nationwide, and the housing and financial markets collapsed. Charleston County experienced a slowing of the local economy; however, employment growth remained somewhat steady compared to other parts of the state and nation, as illustrated in the Economic Development Element. To better understand the income levels of the County’s residents, Figure 3.5.11 illustrates the Median Household Income, Median Family Income, and Per Capita Personal Income. Figures have not been adjusted for inflation. Figure 3.5.12 illustrates the inflation-adjusted figures for change in Median Household Income from 1990 to 2011.

FIGURE 3.5.12: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1990-2011



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011. Note: Figures have not been adjusted for inflation. Table 3.5.1 below indicates the median household income for Charleston County adjusted for inflation and shown in 2011 dollars.

TABLE 3.5.1: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, CHARLESTON COUNTY, 1990-2011

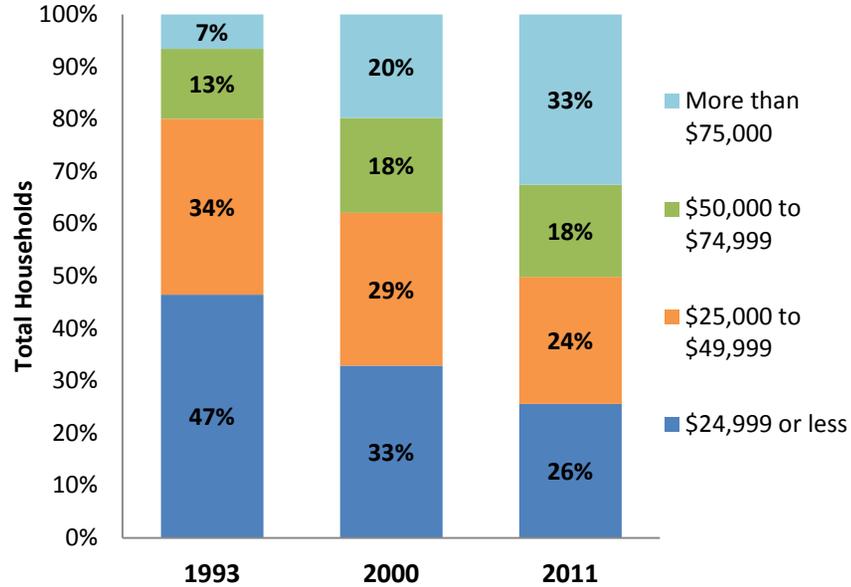
| | 1990 | 2000 | 2011 |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Median Household Income | \$ 26,875 | \$ 37,810 | \$ 50,133 |
| Inflation Adjusted (2011) | \$ 46,253 | \$ 49,253 | \$ 50,133 |

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000; American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011

Poverty Levels

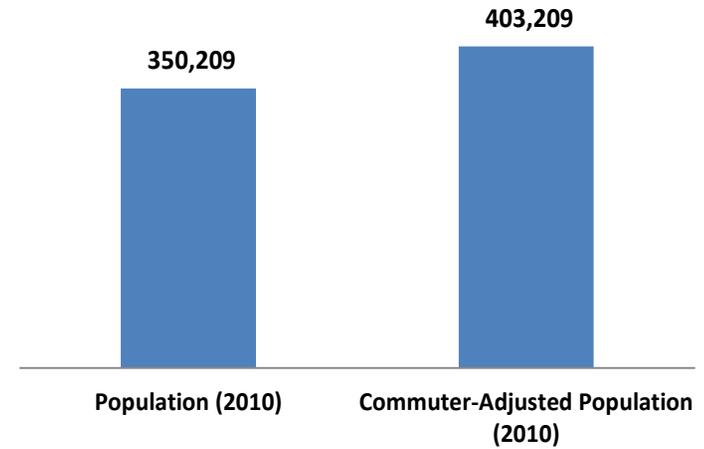
In 2013, the poverty guideline for a family of three was \$19,530, as determined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Based on the 2011 poverty guideline for a family of three (\$18,530), nearly 12 percent of families in Charleston County (approximately 9,762 families) had incomes below the poverty level. Nearly 17 percent of all people in Charleston County (approximately 58,293 people) had incomes below the poverty level. The majority of the poorest residents in Charleston County live in the unincorporated areas of the County. Figure 3.5.13 illustrates the income ranges of households in the County in 1993, 2000, and 2011 and indicates that wages are growing in the County. The Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA) reported in the 2013 Economic Scorecard that the region’s wages grew 11.5 percent from 2005

FIGURE 3.5.13: DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME, CHARLESTON COUNTY, 1993-2011



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 1993, 2000; American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011

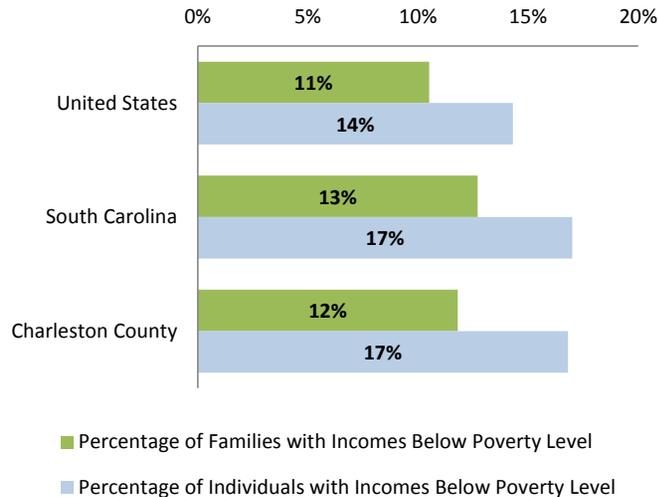
FIGURE 3.5.15: COMMUTER-ADJUSTED POPULATION, 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

to 2012; however, the region's wages are only 85 percent of the national average wage, making it difficult for the County's residents to afford to rent or buy homes. *Figure 3.5.14: Poverty Levels by Geographic Area* compares the percentage of individuals and families with incomes below the poverty level in Charleston County to both the state and nation. As illustrated, Charleston County has slightly fewer families with incomes below poverty level than South Carolina as a whole; however, poverty levels are higher for all individuals in Charleston County than the United States.

FIGURE 3.5.14: POVERTY LEVELS BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA, 2011



Source: American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, 2007-2011

Commuter-Adjusted Population

Because the County not only serves residents, but also visitors (both daily commuters and tourists), it is crucial to understand the commuter-adjusted population. As a major employment center for the region, Charleston County's daytime population increased by about 53,000 people or approximately 16 percent in 2010, as depicted in *Figure 3.5.15: Commuter-Adjusted Population*. This important statistic is useful for transportation planning, emergency planning, and other policy-making. A large commuting population also indicates that many residents do not live near employment centers, resulting in high transportation costs and overburdened transportation infrastructure.

3.5.3: POPULATION ELEMENT GOAL

A socioeconomically diverse and growing population will be accommodated by Charleston County in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner with particular attention to low to moderate income residents.



Population Element Needs

Population Element needs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Monitoring population and cultural shifts and national trends;
- Developing policies to meet the needs of the County's population; and
- Encouraging diversity within communities.

3.5.4: POPULATION ELEMENT STRATEGIES AND TIME FRAMES

The County should undertake the following strategic actions in support of the Vision and Goals of this Plan. These implementation strategies will be reviewed a minimum of every five years and updated every ten years from the date of adoption of this Plan.

- P 1. Monitor population growth trends and demographic shifts as indicators of population change and use this information to guide future updates to the *Comprehensive Plan*.
- P 2. Develop land use strategies and implementation measures that address the needs of the population.
- P 3. Support a diverse population through land development regulations which accommodate a range of housing, transportation, and employment opportunities.
- P 4. Continue to monitor and evaluate population, cultural shifts, and national trends for their potential impacts on land use and development patterns.
- P 5. Adopt innovative planning and zoning techniques such as Form-Based Zoning and Multiple Use Overlay Zoning District regulations that encourage diverse communities and respect culture and history.
- P 6.. Identify new mechanisms (such as social media outlets and innovative community workshops) to engage the County's younger population in the community planning process.