INTRODUCTION
The population element 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 and community services and facilities will also increase, as well as the desire for cultural resources and access to natural spaces. These issues will be examined in the Public Safety and Community Facilities Elements. Studying a community’s population is fundamental to any comprehensive plan, and 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 2016 population estimates, Horry County has approximately 322,342 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, Horry County has seen an influx of over 100,000 residents. Horry 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 2016 total population estimate is 322,342, which reflects a 19% increase or 53,051 more people since 2010. This reflects growth that occurred even during a major economic downturn. These numbers are only expected to escalate as the population is projected to grow to 423,270 by 2040. It is important to note that the 2020 population projections are already being surpassed and that population growth is occurring faster than anticipated. These estimates will need to be revisited after the release of the 2020 Census. 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.

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, 71,053 people lived in area municipalities, while 219,677 lived in unincorporated Horry County, making up 75.7% of the total County population. 2016 Census estimates continue this trend with 79,791 residents in area municipalities and 242,551 in unincorporated Horry County.

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Beach</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aynor</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>592</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carolina County</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>493</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conway</td>
<td>10,240</td>
<td>11,519</td>
<td>12,788</td>
<td>17,103</td>
<td>19,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loris</td>
<td>2,178</td>
<td>2,367</td>
<td>2,079</td>
<td>2,394</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion Beach</td>
<td>19,763</td>
<td>20,486</td>
<td>22,769</td>
<td>27,189</td>
<td>29,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Myrtle Beach</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>6,325</td>
<td>10,774</td>
<td>13,924</td>
<td>14,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfside</td>
<td>2,552</td>
<td>3,346</td>
<td>4,426</td>
<td>5,389</td>
<td>5,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Population</td>
<td>39,847</td>
<td>40,183</td>
<td>53,053</td>
<td>60,548</td>
<td>71,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total County population</td>
<td>101,149</td>
<td>144,250</td>
<td>196,629</td>
<td>241,291</td>
<td>270,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of County</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015

Population Element 1
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, while Conway, Little River, and the Hwy 90 corridor have also seen some considerable population growth. These same 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 is mainly being driven by individuals that are 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 from other parts of South Carolina, other U.S. States and abroad. Migration and death rate data are not provided.

Migration to Horry County by Geographic Area

- Northeast: 31,379
- South: 50,968
- Mid-West: 12,434
- Abroad: 10,353
- Other South Carolina counties: 30,959

TOTAL MIGRATION ESTIMATE: 139,319

Source: American Community Survey, 2011-2015
POPULATION DENSITY
In 2015, the number of Horry County residents that lived in a different house in the United States one year prior was 45,129 (14% of total population). Just over half of the population that lived in a different house the year prior (45,129) lived in a different house in Horry County (24,742), while 4,726 lived in a different county in South Carolina. These residents are largely moving into the beach front incorporated areas and the areas east of the Waccamaw River. This is due in part to those area’s proximity to job centers (see the Economic Element), housing opportunities (see Housing Element), and zoning regulations (see Land Use Element).

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- urban clusters that contain at least 2,500 people, but fewer than 50,000 people.
POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections enable the County to take present action to accommodate future conditions. Projections can help determine the level of demand for future facilities and services. Making plans in a rapidly changing, high growth area such as Horry County is difficult. Population projections were derived from the South Carolina Budget and Control Board. The distribution of the anticipated growth was further refined by the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments and Horry County Planning and Zoning. Estimates show that the area around Loris will see the second least population growth with roughly 21% (79,794 people) and Aynor will see the least growth at 14% (roughly 1,404 people). Myrtle Beach and Little River see moderate growth of 44.9% (roughly 42,583) and 43.7% (roughly 14,714) respectively. The highest percentage population growth will happen in the Conway East census area (which includes the Forestbrook and Carolina Forest communities) which will see a growth of 122.1% (roughly 79,794 people).

These estimates were developed in 2015 and will need to be revisited when the 2020 Census data is available. Note that these population numbers and projections do not account for seasonal population, including snowbirds that live in the area for the cooler months.
SEASONAL POPULATION

According to the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, approximately 17.95 million tourists visited the Grand Strand area in 2016. As you can see in the chart below, 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 Myrtle Beach Area, Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce

Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce survey further show that most visitors originate from within a one day car drive. North Carolina alone provides 15% of our 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 a majority, 50%, between the ages of 35 and 54.

ACADEMIC STUDENT POPULATION

In addition to the tourists that visit the area each year, Coastal Carolina University together with Horry-Georgetown Technical College has been experiencing a growing student population. The traditional academic year starts at the end of August and continues until the beginning of May. In the fall of 2016, Coastal Carolina had a total enrollment of 10,479 and for the academic year 2016-2017, Horry-Georgetown Technical College had a student body of 9,349. That results in a combined total enrollment for both the university and the college of 19,828 students.

Of all graduate students (732) at Coastal Carolina University, 21% were out-of-state residents (CCU, 2016). Comparatively, 16.6% of Horry-Georgetown Technical College’s students are not originally from South Carolina (HGTC, 2016).

Coastal Carolina University 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 Coastal Carolina graduates with valid addresses, who graduate between 2000 and 2017, is 6,622.

POPULATION GROWTH FINDINGS

Between 2000 and 2015 the population of Horry County has grown more than twice the growth rate of the State of South Carolina. Population projections anticipate that this high growth rate is expected to continue into over next several decades. By 2040, Horry County is projected to add yet another 100,000 people to its current population.

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 Population Element because it takes into account special populations with unique needs. Sex, race and ethnicity, age, household composition, education, income and poverty together represent most of these special populations.

**AGE AND SEX**

Consistent with the National trend, the overall population of Horry County is growing older. 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 which is 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.

In 2011 Horry County’s ages 55 and older population exceeded its ages 30 to 54 population. This exemplifies the National phenomenon of the significant “baby-boom” generation becoming older and retiring in warmer climates, including Horry County. 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 Element) and many retirees live in these areas due to their proximity to tourist amenities, service facilities, and the beach.

### Age Distribution in Horry County from 2010 to 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>0 - 19</th>
<th>20 - 29</th>
<th>30 - 54</th>
<th>55+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>61,650</td>
<td>35,927</td>
<td>87,404</td>
<td>38,538</td>
<td>270,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>61,626</td>
<td>36,483</td>
<td>88,059</td>
<td>39,258</td>
<td>275,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>62,018</td>
<td>36,555</td>
<td>89,273</td>
<td>41,123</td>
<td>281,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>63,074</td>
<td>36,557</td>
<td>90,451</td>
<td>49,228</td>
<td>289,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>64,425</td>
<td>36,885</td>
<td>91,809</td>
<td>105,676</td>
<td>298,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>66,006</td>
<td>37,173</td>
<td>94,003</td>
<td>112,689</td>
<td>309,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>67,505</td>
<td>37,731</td>
<td>96,133</td>
<td>120,973</td>
<td>322,342</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

![Age Distribution by Percentage](image)

In 2011 Horry County’s ages 55 and older population exceeded its ages 30 to 54 population. This exemplifies the National phenomenon of the significant “baby-boom” generation becoming older and retiring in warmer climates, including Horry County. 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 Element) and many retirees live in these areas due to their proximity to tourist amenities, service facilities, and the beach.
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 out number female children. This is consistent to the National Average. Areas that have higher children densities are also consistent with development trends (see Land Use Element). These areas are in higher demand and can place a higher demand on services and facilities. With over 52 public schools, in addition to a number of private and charter schools, these statistics help Horry County predict and supply needed services for children and families.

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.

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

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

Horry County’s racial diversity has remained relatively the same between 1990 and 2016, with minor fluctuations in composition. The white population percentage has been steadily 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. Higher density minority populations can be found along the 501 corridor in Myrtle Beach and Conway, in addition to Socastee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>117,078</td>
<td>159,363</td>
<td>200,920</td>
<td>223,819</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>81.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>23,160</td>
<td>30,468</td>
<td>35,510</td>
<td>39,099</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>1,259</td>
<td>5,057</td>
<td>14,430</td>
<td>17,639</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,507</td>
<td>4,693</td>
<td>4,685</td>
<td>5,757</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2,105</td>
<td>2,722</td>
<td>4,574</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey and Demographic Estimates
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. Conversely, “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. The greatest difference is in the category of “with children under 18,” as South Carolina (30.7%) is slightly below North Carolina (31.5%) and Georgia (34.8%).

South Carolina, and specifically Horry County, also has a household composition consistent with the national averages. 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).

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. In contrast, the percentage of non-family households has been steadily increasing from 13.4% in 1970 to 35.6% in 2015.

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. The chart to the left illustrates the Household Composition of Horry County in 2010 and 2015 respectively.

EDUCATION

In comparison to National education attainment numbers, Horry County fares better in high school attainment but lower in academic 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 stagnant while other age brackets have steadily increased. Much of this stagnance 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 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%. Further, 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%.

Horry County Schools reported in 2010 that they had a 68.6% graduation rate. The graduation rate is based on the percentage of students enrolled in 9th grade four years earlier, meaning roughly 31.4% of students drop out, were held back, 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 a two or four year college or university.
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 actually means that the purchasing power of the median income has actually decreased by 4.4%.

**Regional Per Capita Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dillon</td>
<td>9,077</td>
<td>13,272</td>
<td>14,074</td>
<td>14,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence</td>
<td>11,007</td>
<td>17,676</td>
<td>21,530</td>
<td>22,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>11,094</td>
<td>19,600</td>
<td>24,147</td>
<td>25,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horry</td>
<td>12,256</td>
<td>17,949</td>
<td>24,716</td>
<td>24,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>9,555</td>
<td>15,079</td>
<td>15,092</td>
<td>17,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>7,632</td>
<td>12,794</td>
<td>14,636</td>
<td>16,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>11,097</td>
<td>10,795</td>
<td>23,196</td>
<td>24,604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

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 per capita income. 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 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.

Another element of income to note is the pay gaps between sexes. The chart below illustrates the average incomes for both sexes for various educational attainment levels in Horry County. It is important to note that while no data is available for Horry County on racial income gaps, nationally an income gap in that category does exist.

**Median Household Income Distribution, 2015**

The income distribution is reflected in the pie chart above. Amongst all household income brackets in 2015, incomes between $35,000 and $44,999, the group considered Middle to Upper Middle Class, were most represented, at 37.2 percent. Yet, 39.7 percent of households in Horry County made less than $35,000, and 14 percent made less than $15,000 per year in 2015. 4.4 percent of households made incomes of more than $150,000 in 2015.

**Regional Median Household Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dillon</td>
<td>9,077</td>
<td>13,272</td>
<td>14,074</td>
<td>14,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florence</td>
<td>11,007</td>
<td>17,676</td>
<td>21,530</td>
<td>22,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td>11,094</td>
<td>19,600</td>
<td>24,147</td>
<td>25,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horry</td>
<td>12,256</td>
<td>17,949</td>
<td>24,716</td>
<td>24,094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marion</td>
<td>9,555</td>
<td>15,079</td>
<td>15,092</td>
<td>17,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg</td>
<td>7,632</td>
<td>12,794</td>
<td>14,636</td>
<td>16,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>11,097</td>
<td>10,795</td>
<td>23,196</td>
<td>24,604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

The median household income in Horry County of $43,299 in 2015, is slightly lower than the State average of $45,483 in 2015, but remains the highest in the region. Although Horry County has been gaining overall population, the median incomes of households still remain below the state average.

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.
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 United States for the highest percentage of the population below the poverty level, and Horry County is ranked 34th in the state of South Carolina for the highest percentage of the 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. Only neighboring Brunswick County, North Carolina has a smaller value with 16.3%. Horry County’s Poverty Level is amongst the lowest in the region, and 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, and particularly the amount of residents unemployed below the poverty level, increases, 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. It largely impacts rural communities with limited access to jobs.

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015, Low-to-Moderate Income, HUD
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

One of the most important elements of analyzing population data is recognizing trends and overlaps. In order to prevent discriminatory or 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 obstacles 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 areas that are greater than the state average. Knowing where low-to-moderate income areas are can help with prioritizing public programs and infrastructure improvements. It is also 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 is 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 as well. The continuing trends in this population data need to be continually analyzed and monitored by staff and taken into account for rezonings, potential development, and economic development.
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 S.C. 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 the state averages.

The availability of parks and access to natural spaces has proven to have a positive influence on the physical and mental health of their users. Community design and 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.

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. The majority of Horry County 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 Horry County over the past twenty-five years, as more retired individuals migrate to warmer climates such as Horry County. Further, 31.7% of veterans in Horry County are with a disability.

The chart below 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 discussed in the Poverty section, 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.

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015

![Percentage of Over-Weight and Obese in Horry County and South Carolina](Percentage_of_Over-Weight_and_Obese_in_Horry_County_and_South_Colina.png)

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

\begin{quote}
Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to the body and soul.
- John Muir.
\end{quote}
CONCLUSION
Analyzing the latest demographic data by age groups, it becomes apparent that Horry County’s population is not only growing, but growing older. This fact, combined with population projections, indicates that Horry County will need to take 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.

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

Coordination 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 and females 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 county government will need to reflect the changing needs of this more diverse and growing population, particularly those needs regarding income, age and ethnicity.
GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
Horry County needs to continue to work on understanding the composition and implications of a diverse, growing, and changing population.

Goal 1: Continue to update and maintain the population element as new data becomes available.

Goal 2: Continue to analyze what kind of implications assessed population data has had and will have on the economic development of Horry County.

Implementation Strategies:
• Collaborate with the U.S. Census Bureau, the South Carolina Budget and Control Board, Office of Statistics and Research and other sources in receiving and analyzing the most up-to-date demographic data
• Work with the GIS department to maintain an accurate digital depiction of both current population and population forecasts.
• Coordinate with local governments, the Chambers of Commerce, state agencies and other infrastructure providers to better understand the numbers, composition, and influences of the seasonal tourist population in Horry County
• Work with Coastal Carolina University and its Offices for Institutional Research, Assessment and Analysis as well as Alumni Affairs to get a better grasp and understanding on how many college graduates stay or leave Horry County to seek and find professional work.
• As new major road projects are built out within Horry County, revisit population projections to accurately reflect the changing environment in different areas of the County (continuously).