

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR

2018

Popular Annual
Financial Report
For Year Ended December 31, 2018

Your Tax Dollars in "America's Opportunity City"



Dear Readers:

The City of Columbus has a tradition of public-private partnerships known as the Columbus Way. Through these partnerships, the City is working toward reducing infant mortality, building community centers, increasing affordable housing, expanding public recreational space, and utilizing technology to build an integrated smart transportation system.

Columbus has a long history of establishing strong financial policies, which has led to years of financial stability. The City takes pride in its timely financial reporting and transparency.

This Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) is a reflection of our effort to keep you informed about how your tax dollars are being spent. This non-technical report summarizes the financial activities of the City's funds as reported in the 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The CAFR, located on our website at www.columbus.gov, is a detailed audited financial report including a full disclosure of all material events.

We hope you find this condensed financial summary easy to read and that you come away better understanding how the City's programs are funded and managed.

Megan N. Kilgore
Columbus City Auditor



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Overview of Government

Columbus was founded in 1812 and created specifically to be the capital city due to its central location in the state of Ohio. Today, it covers approximately 225 square miles.

The City is administered by a Mayor, a seven-member City Council, the City Auditor, and the City Attorney. These officials are all elected to four-year terms on an at-large basis. The Mayor and four Council members are elected in an odd numbered year. Three Council members, the City Auditor, and the City Attorney are elected in the following odd numbered year. The City Charter provides for appointments and elections of successors to these officials if they should, for any reason, vacate their office.

A charter amendment to change the total number of City Council members from seven to nine, and to change City Council structure from at-large to by place, was approved by voters on May 8, 2018. Such changes take effect in 2023.

The Recreation and Parks Director, the Health Commissioner, and the Civil Service Executive Director are appointed by, and report to, independent commissions. The City Treasurer and City Clerk to the Council are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, City Council. All other departments' directors are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the Mayor.

Columbus City Council

Since 2018, City Council has been led by President Shannon G. Hardin, who was elected to the post by fellow council members.

City Council meets in the City Hall council chambers on Mondays at 5pm.

City Council Members Include:

- Shannon G. Hardin, President
- Elizabeth C. Brown, President Pro Tempore
- Mitchell J. Brown
- Rob A. Dorans
- Shayla D. Favor
- Emmanuel V. Remy
- Priscilla R. Tyson



City Auditor Megan Kilgore

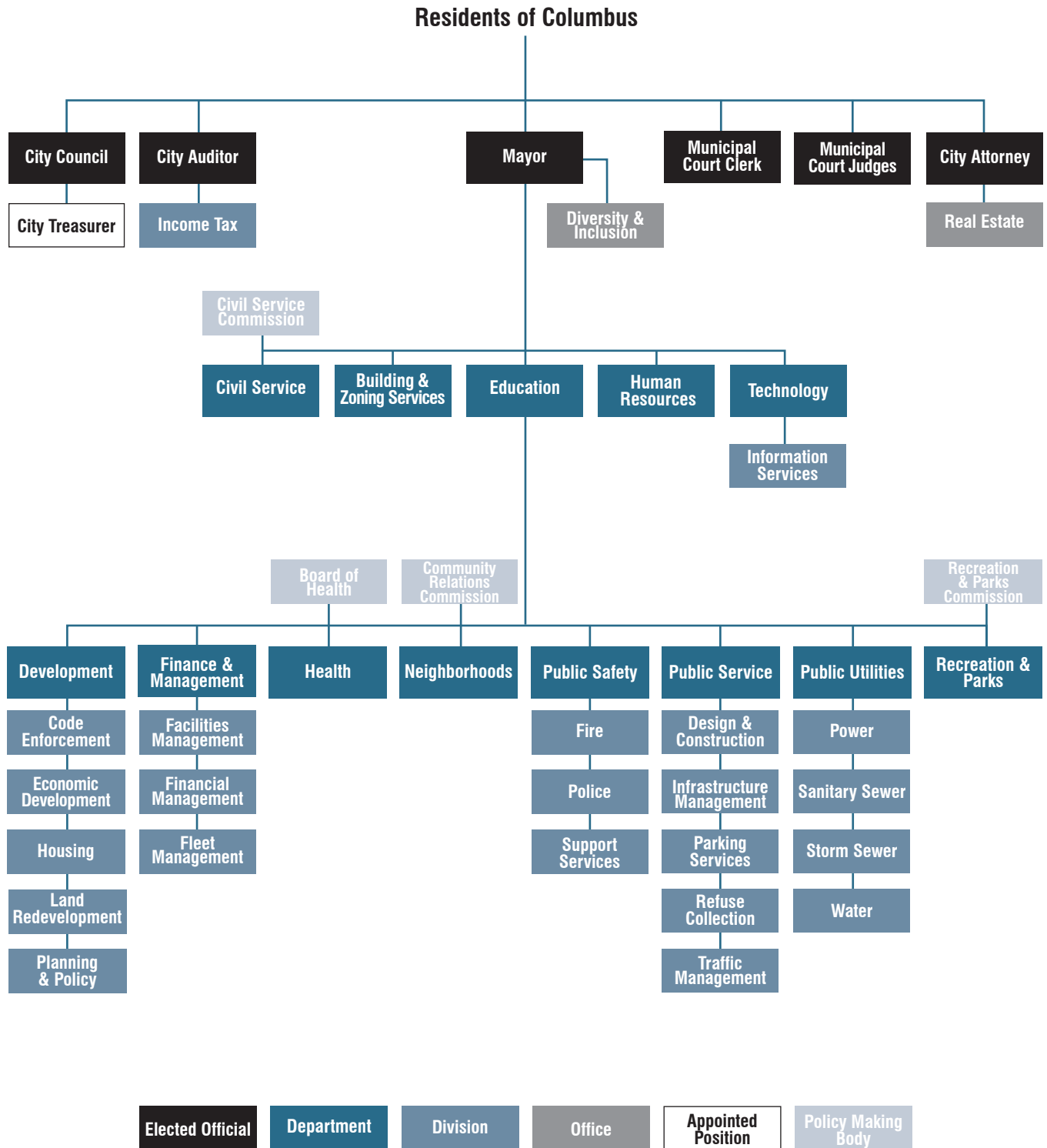


Mayor Andrew J. Ginther



City Attorney Zach Klein

Organizational Structure

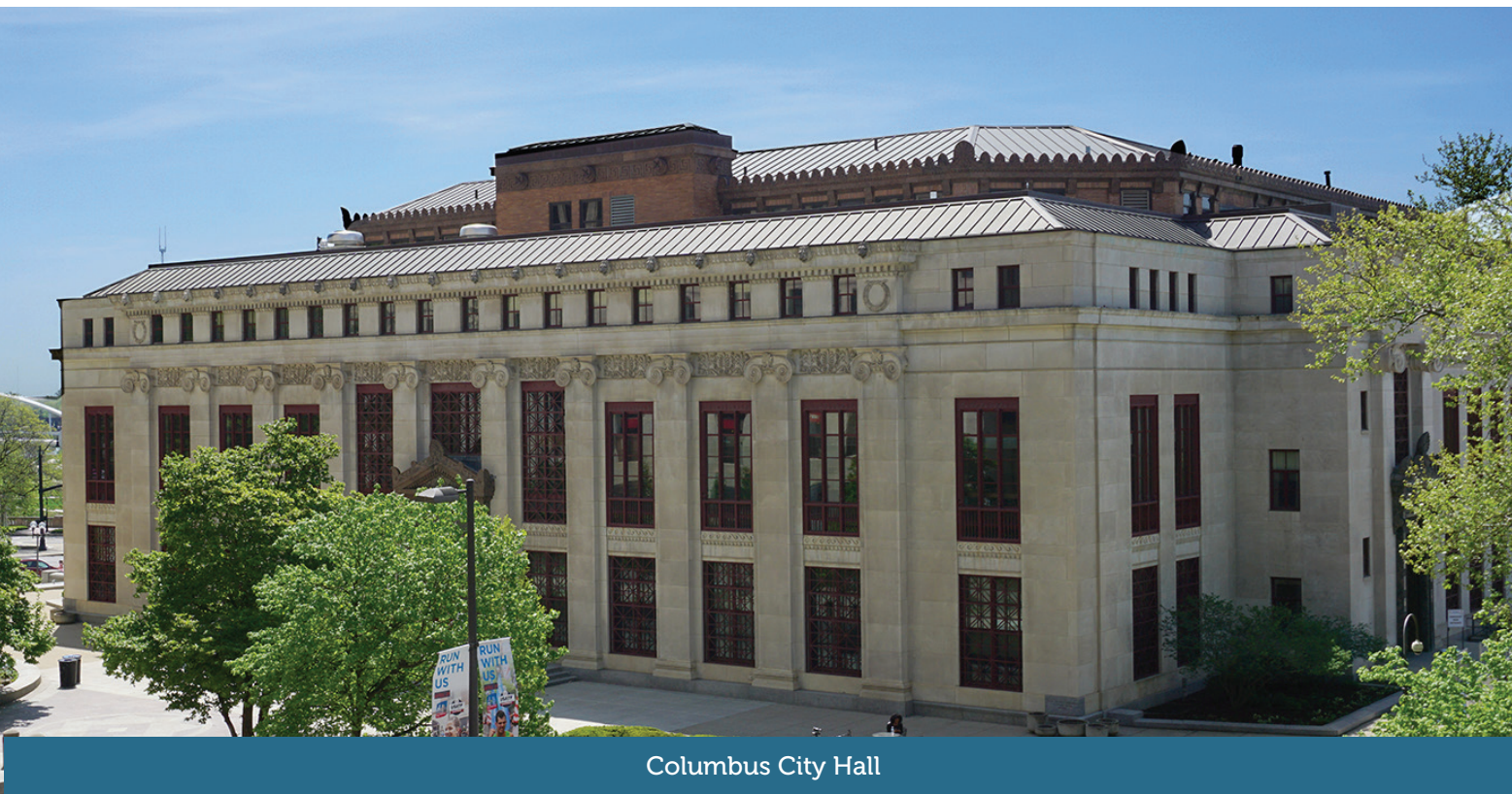


City Services by the Numbers

| | | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|----------------------|--|---------|---------|---------------------|
| Police | Substations | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| Fire | Stations | 32 | 33 | 33 |
| Public Service | Streets (miles) | 2,727 | 2,731 | 2,745 |
| | Land Area (square miles) | 224.461 | 224.585 | 225.005 |
| | % Potholes Service Requests Closed Within 3 Days | 92% | 91% | 92% |
| Recreation and Parks | Parks Acreage | 14,490 | 14,623 | 13,582 ¹ |
| | Parks | 439 | 447 | 380 ¹ |
| | Playgrounds | 148 | 149 | 173 |
| | Community Centers | 30 | 29 | 29 |
| Water | Water Mains (miles) | 2,521 | 2,526 | 2,524 |
| | Maximum Daily Capacity (millions of gallons) | 213 | 255 | 255 |
| | Water Treatment Plants | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Sewer | Sanitary Sewers (miles) | 4,184 | 4,298 | 4,254 |
| | Wastewater Treatment Plants | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Development | # of Homes Rehabbed or Repaired | 820 | 1,086 | 1,066 |
| Health | # of Inspections Conducted at Retail Food Establishments | 16,829 | 16,504 | 15,983 |

Source: 2018 Various City Departments

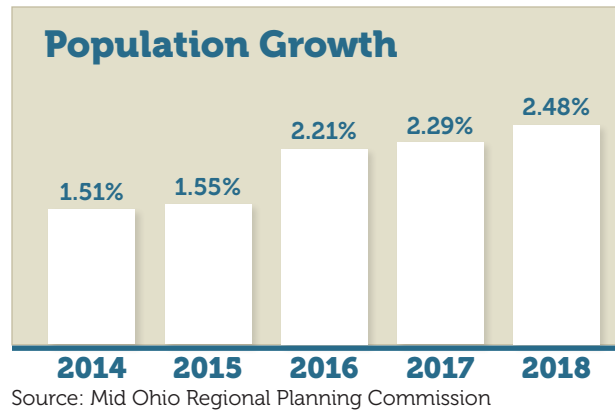
¹ Acreage and Parks were revised in 2018 to better align with national standards



Columbus City Hall

Economy

While some cities in Ohio have seen populations decline, Columbus has seen consistent population growth. The current population is estimated at 902,674, making Columbus the 14th largest city in the United States. Much of the growth is attributed to immigration, which contributes to the City's richness in diversity.



2018 Top 10 Employers in the Greater Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area

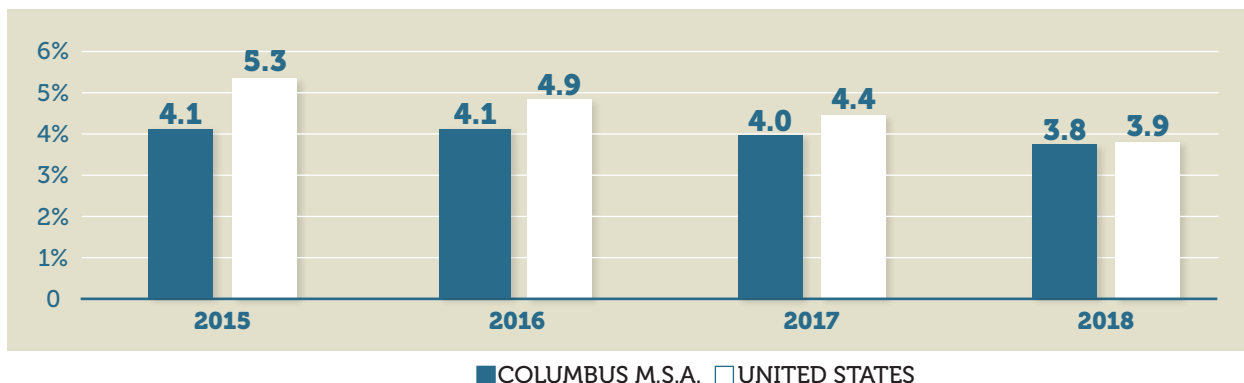
| Employer | Type of Business | Employees | % of Total City M.S.A. Employment |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Ohio State University | Government/Education | 32,111 | 2.97% |
| OhioHealth | Healthcare | 26,599 | 2.46% |
| Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. | Retail Trade | 26,000 | 2.40% |
| State of Ohio | Government | 24,955 | 2.31% |
| JPMorgan Chase & Co. | Finance | 18,701 | 1.73% |
| Nationwide | Insurance | 13,455 | 1.24% |
| Nationwide Children's Hospital | Healthcare | 12,023 | 1.11% |
| Kroger Co. | Retail Trade | 11,206 | 1.04% |
| City of Columbus | Government | 8,873 | 0.82% |
| Mount Carmel Health System | Healthcare | 8,708 | 0.80% |

Source: "Largest Employers: Ranked by Number of Central Ohio Employees", Business First of Columbus

Employment in the Greater Columbus Area is service oriented. Three of the top 10 employers are government or government oriented, which has provided a stable economy. Other top industries include healthcare, finance, insurance and retail. Due to a con-

centration of government and healthcare, Columbus' unemployment rate holds steady over periods of economic instability. During recent periods of national economic growth, the national unemployment rate has decreased while Columbus' rate has remained fairly flat.

Unemployment Rates



Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Bureau of Labor Market Information

The City's Net Position

The Net Position of the City is equal to City assets and deferred outflows offset by City liabilities and deferred inflows. Net position is the difference between what the City owns and what the City owes. Positive net position indicates a measure of financial stability. The City's net position decreased from \$2.65B in 2017 to \$1.75B in 2018, the components of which are listed below. The decrease is primarily the result of implementing an accounting standard

requiring the City to record its share of net Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability.

The City participates in two statewide multi-employer public retirement plans. The City's share of those collective pension and OPEB net liabilities is \$2.36B, which is the sole reason for the negative \$1.33B unrestricted net position.

Total Net Position



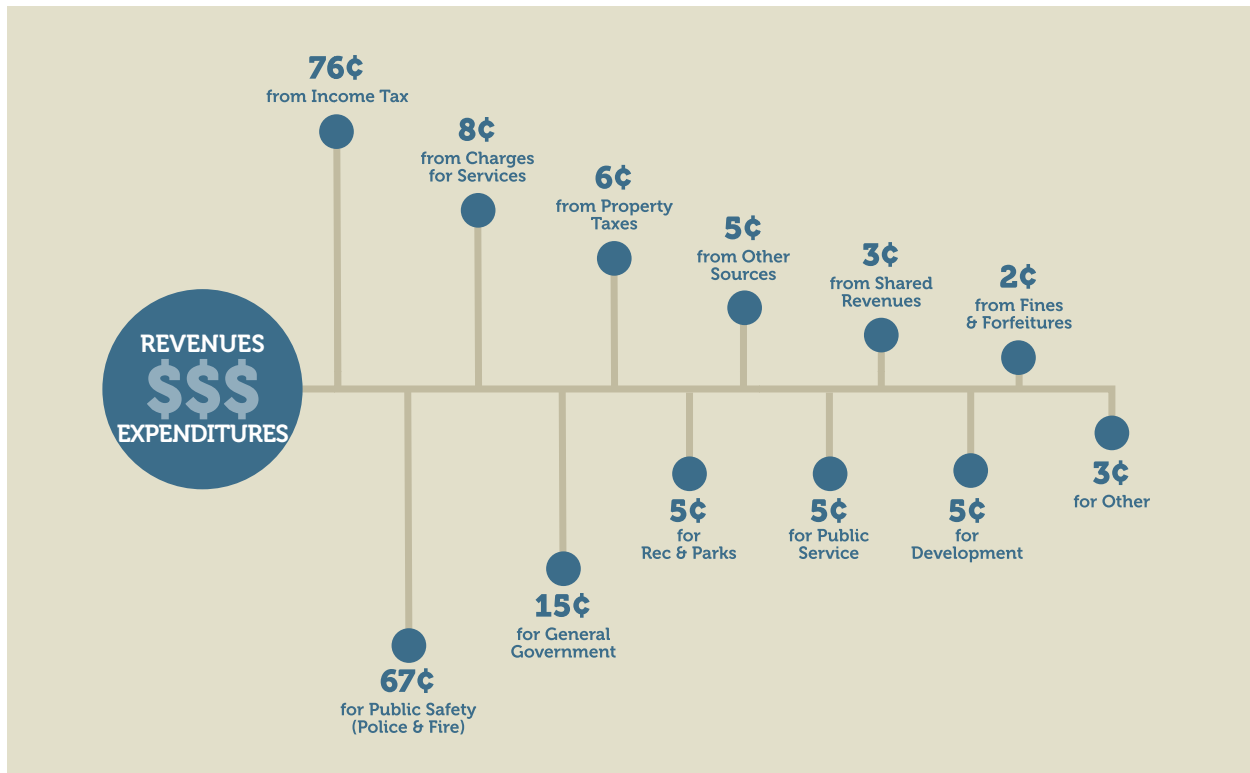
Revenue and Expenses

The City's financial activities in total are made up of two broad classifications: governmental and business-type activities. Additionally, there are two main sources of revenue for the City: program revenues and general revenues. Program revenues include charges for services and general revenues

include income taxes, property taxes, and other revenues that are not generated through programming. Revenue for the City in 2018 totaled \$2.09B, an increase of \$33.44M or 1.63% compared to 2017. Expenses for the City totaled \$2.05B in 2018, an increase of \$96.36M or 4.92% compared to 2017.



General Fund



6

The General Fund is the main operating fund for the City. The table above demonstrates relative source and use of each dollar in the General Fund.

Funding for the City’s General Fund and services provided to residents comes from many sources. In 2018, the City’s General Fund revenues totaled \$883.2M. The majority, or nearly 76%, of total General Fund revenues was generated from income taxes. General government operations are also funded from property taxes, charges for services, fines,

investment earnings and other revenue streams.

The City provides a full range of services through its General Fund operations such as police and fire protection, recreational activities, health services, refuse collection, development, and other amenities. In 2018, General Fund expenditures totaled \$921.5M. While the majority of general government operations are funded by general fund revenues, \$33.3M were funded by transfers from other governmental funds.

“Rainy Day” Balance 10 Year Trend (in millions of dollars)

| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-----------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Rainy Day | \$15.0 | 22.7 | 32.9 | 39.8 | 56.1 | 64.1 | 66.7 | 69.5 | 73.9 | 76.2 |

Columbus is committed to its sound fiscal policies, one of which is setting aside dollars for a Rainy Day “reserve”. As of December 31, 2018, \$76.2M of the General Fund \$144.5M

fund balance has been set aside. The City is on track to reach its \$80M target by the end of 2020.

Income Tax

The City's largest funding source is income tax revenue generated from a 2.5% income tax rate. Income taxes are paid first to the municipality where an individual works and then where they live. The City provides 100% credit up to 2.5% for taxes paid to the municipality where residents work.

Over the past 20 years the City's reliance on income tax has increased, a trend that the

City Auditor monitors closely. The increase is due to:

- ★ Increase in income tax rate from 2.0% to 2.5% in 2009.
- ★ Elimination of the Ohio Estate Tax in 2013.
- ★ Reduction in Local Government Funds received from the State of Ohio.
- ★ Elimination of Personal Property Tax

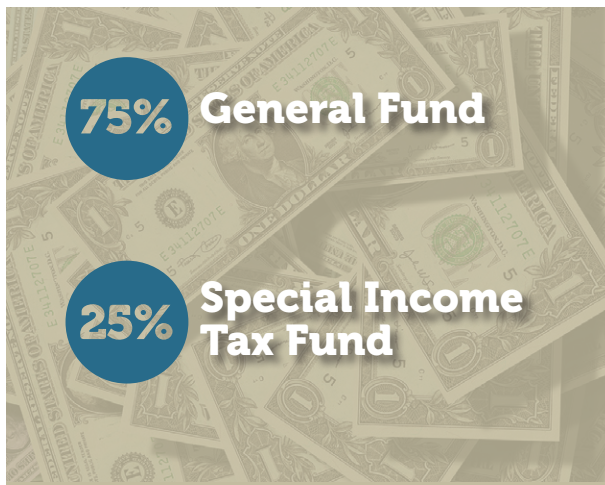
Where the Money Comes From



2018 Income Tax collected

Withholding – 83.7%
 Individual Accounts not from Withholding – 5.2%
 Business Accounts – 11.1%

Where the Money Goes



During 2018 the governmental funds recognized \$888.8M in income tax revenue. The General Fund is the primary operating fund of the City, accounting for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund.

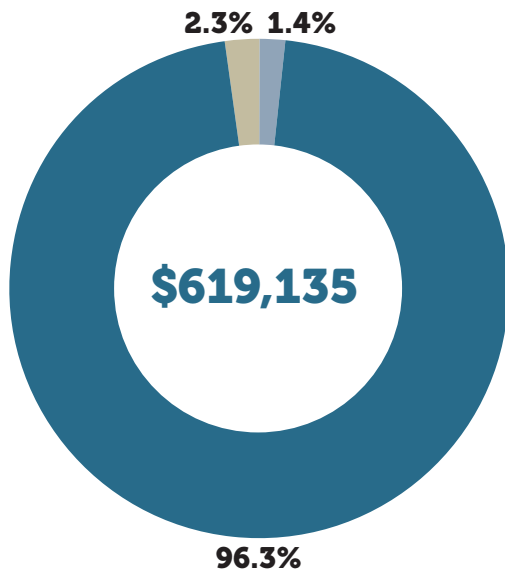
The Special Income Tax debt service fund is used to account for the accumulation of resources for and the payment of general obligation debt: principal, interest and related expenditures. The City issues debt to fund capital improvements and pays down the governmental debt using 25% of the income tax proceeds set aside for debt service.

Income Tax as a Percentage of Total General Fund Revenue

| | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2018 |
|----------------------------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| Income tax | 61.8% | 63.4 | 70.8 | 77.3 | 75.4 |
| Property tax | 7.6 | 8.3 | 7.6 | 5.4 | 5.8 |
| Shared revenues | 12.1 | 10.2 | 7.2 | 3.8 | 3.2 |
| Other | 18.5 | 18.1 | 14.4 | 13.5 | 15.6 |
| Total General Fund Revenue | 100% | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Public Utilities & Parking Garages

Where the money comes from

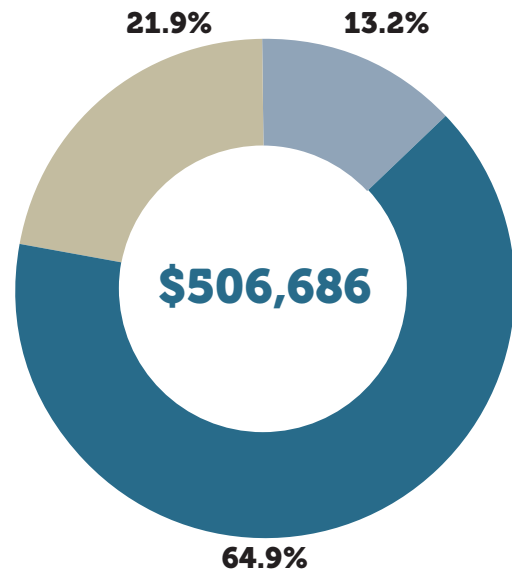


Revenue

(in thousands of dollars)

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Charges for service | \$596,057 |
| Investment income | 14,296 |
| Other general revenue | 8,782 |

Where the money goes



Expense

(in thousands of dollars)

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Operations and maintenance | \$328,800 |
| Depreciation expense | 110,875 |
| Interest expense | 67,011 |

Columbus maintains four separate public utilities: Water, Sanitary Sewer, Storm Sewer, and Electricity. User rates are approved annually to cover the cost of services and maintain the City's capital improvement plan.

The water division is responsible for water treatment and distribution through three water treatment plants. In addition, the water division manages a capital improvement plan to ensure adequate water supply as Columbus grows in population.

The sewer division is responsible for wastewater collection and treatment through two wastewater treatment plants. The sewer division also manages a capital improvement program to upgrade infrastructure and solve neighborhood flooding issues.

Columbus recently completed the Olentangy-Scioto-Interceptor-Sewer Augmentation Relief Sewer (OARS) tunnel, the largest capital



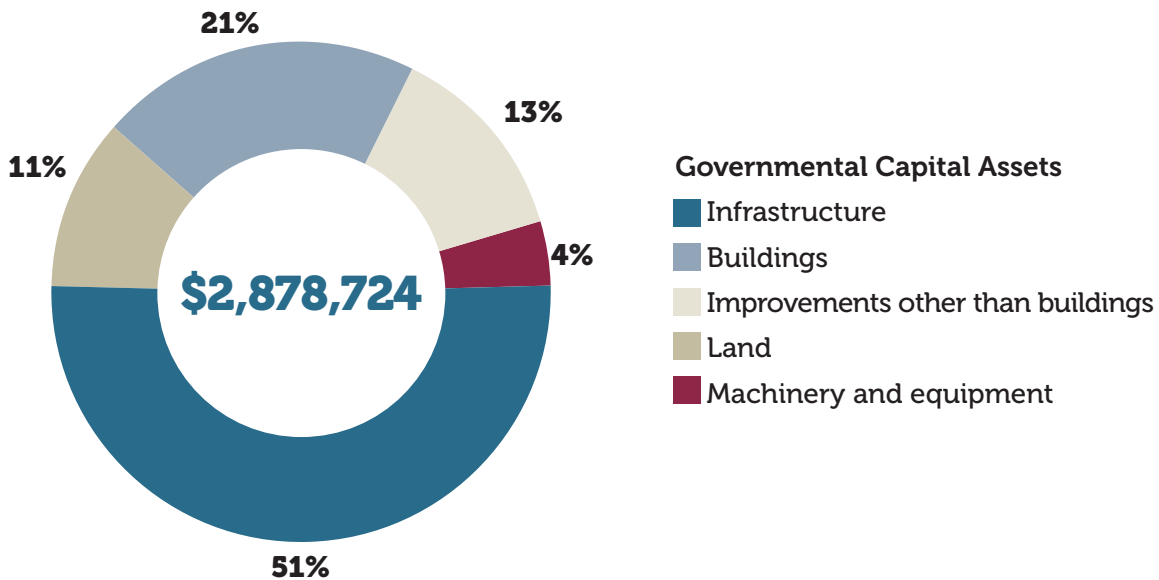
Parsons Avenue Water Treatment Plant

project in the City's history. The OARS tunnel captures and stores combined sewer overflows in the downtown area for treatment, diverting over a billion gallons of overflow annually and ensuring a cleaner Scioto River.

The numbers above also include the Garage Fund, consisting of the City's two downtown parking garages.

Capital Assets

Governmental Capital Assets (in thousands of dollars)



The City's capital assets are grouped by governmental activities and business-type activities.

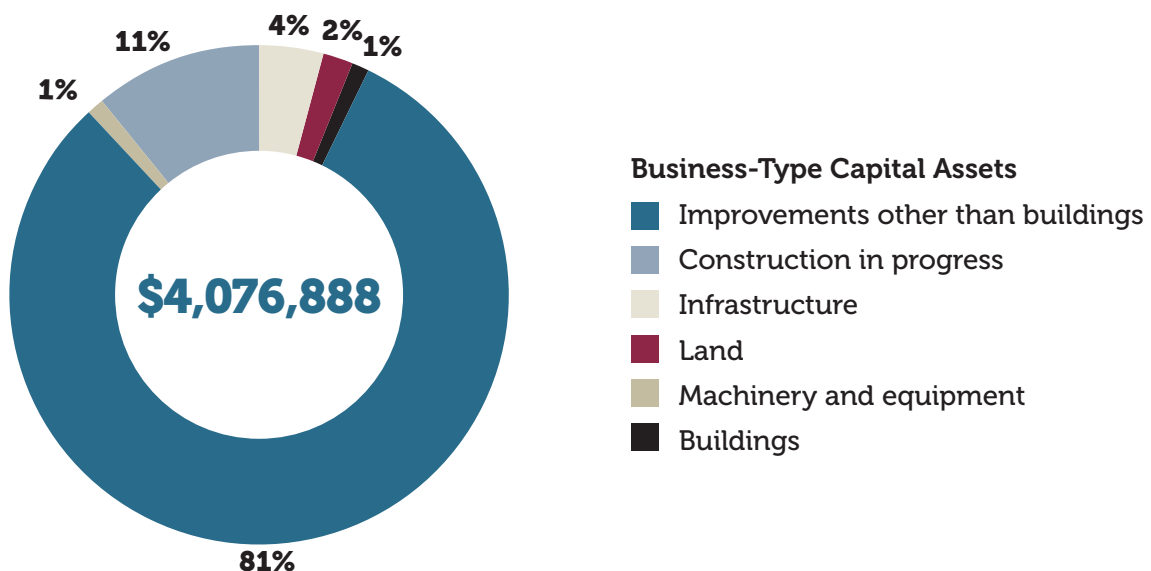
The governmental capital assets consist primarily of infrastructure, which are mainly roadways, curbs and sidewalks.

Business-type capital assets consist mainly of improvements other than buildings, which

are water and sewer treatment plants, water and sewer lines, and reservoirs.

Annually, City Council authorizes the Capital Improvement Budget (CIB), which serves as the basis for all budgeting and spending related to capital projects throughout the City for the ensuing year. The CIB provides a breakdown of the various capital projects by department and by source of funding.

Business-Type Capital Assets (in thousands of dollars)

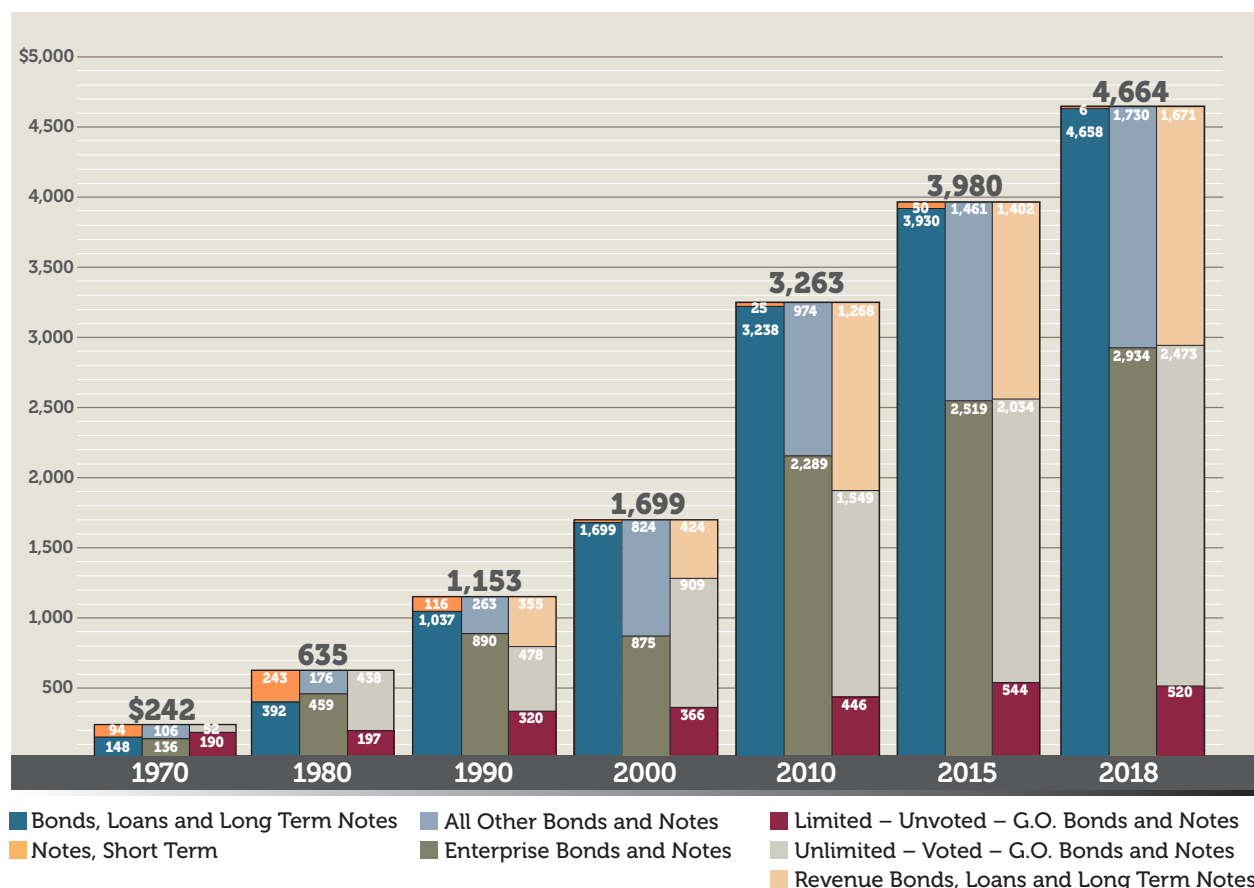


Debt

| Debt and Other Financial Obligations Portfolio (in thousands of dollars) | Fixed Rate | Variable Rate | Total Outstanding Principal |
|---|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| General Obligation Bonds | \$2,943,465 | \$32,000 | \$2,975,465 |
| Assessment Bonds | 144 | — | 144 |
| Sanitary Sewer Revenue Obligation Bonds | 355,360 | 51,855 | 407,215 |
| TIF Revenue Notes | 4,011 | — | 4,011 |
| TIF Revenue Bonds | 1,509 | — | 1,509 |
| State Infrastructure Bank Loan | 7,590 | — | 7,590 |
| Ohio Public Works Commission Loans | 3,947 | — | 3,947 |
| Lease Revenue Bonds | 65,970 | — | 65,970 |
| Ohio Water Development Authority Revenue Loans- Water | 234,295 | — | 234,295 |
| Ohio Water Development Authority Revenue Loans- Sanitary Sewer | 958,320 | — | 958,320 |
| General Obligation Notes | 6,000 | — | 6,000 |
| | \$4,580,611 | \$83,855 | \$4,664,466 |

City of Columbus, Ohio Outstanding Bonds and Notes (in millions of dollars)

10



Municipal Bond Rating

Columbus is proud of its AAA bond ratings, the highest and most sought after long-term credit rating. AAA bond ratings help the City secure lower interest rates on its debt. These ratings are attributed to a history of strong fiscal policies and financial performance, due in part to commitments to the following:

- ★ 10 year forecasting practices
- ★ Commitment to a rainy day reserve
- ★ Strong cash balances
- ★ Adherence to debt management policies
- ★ Rapid debt amortization

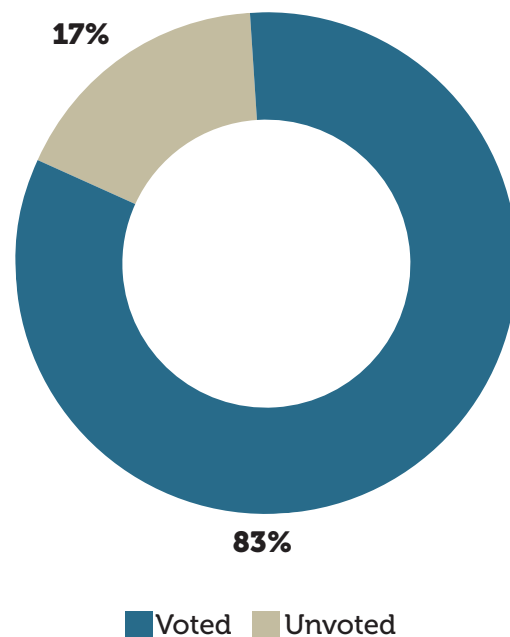
| Municipal Bond Rating | Moody's Investor Services | Standard & Poor's | Fitch |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| General Obligation (GO) Bonds | Aaa | AAA | AAA |
| 2006 Sanitary Sewer System Adjustable Rate GO Bonds | Aaa/VMIG1 | AAA/A-1+ | AAA/F1+ |
| 2008 Sanitary Sewer System Adjustable Rate Revenue Bonds (Series 2008B) | Aa1/VMIG1 | AA+/A-1+ | AA/F1+ |
| 2014 Sanitary Sewer System Fixed Rate Revenue Refunding Bonds | Aa1 | AA+ | AA |
| 2015 Sanitary Sewer System Fixed Rate Revenue Refunding Bonds | Aa1 | AA+ | (Not Rated) |

Capital Improvement Program

Each year the City updates its Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which is a six-year planning document for future capital projects throughout the City. The CIP is funded mainly by the issuance of debt in the form of general obligation bonds, both voted and unvoted. Voted debt is authorized by a popular vote of Columbus residents. Voter approval provides the City with the ability to levy an ad valorem property tax to service the debt, which provides assurance to investors that their investment in the City is secure. However, the City has never exercised its taxing authority for this purpose and does not intend to do so.

83% of the general obligation debt issued to fund the City's Capital Improvement Program is voted debt. From 1956 through 2018, the City has sought voter approval 96 times to issue debt for various purposes, and the voters have given their approval 90 times. In May of 2019 the voters approved five more issues increasing voter approvals to 95 approvals of 101 ballot issues.

General Obligation Debt



Paying the City's Debt

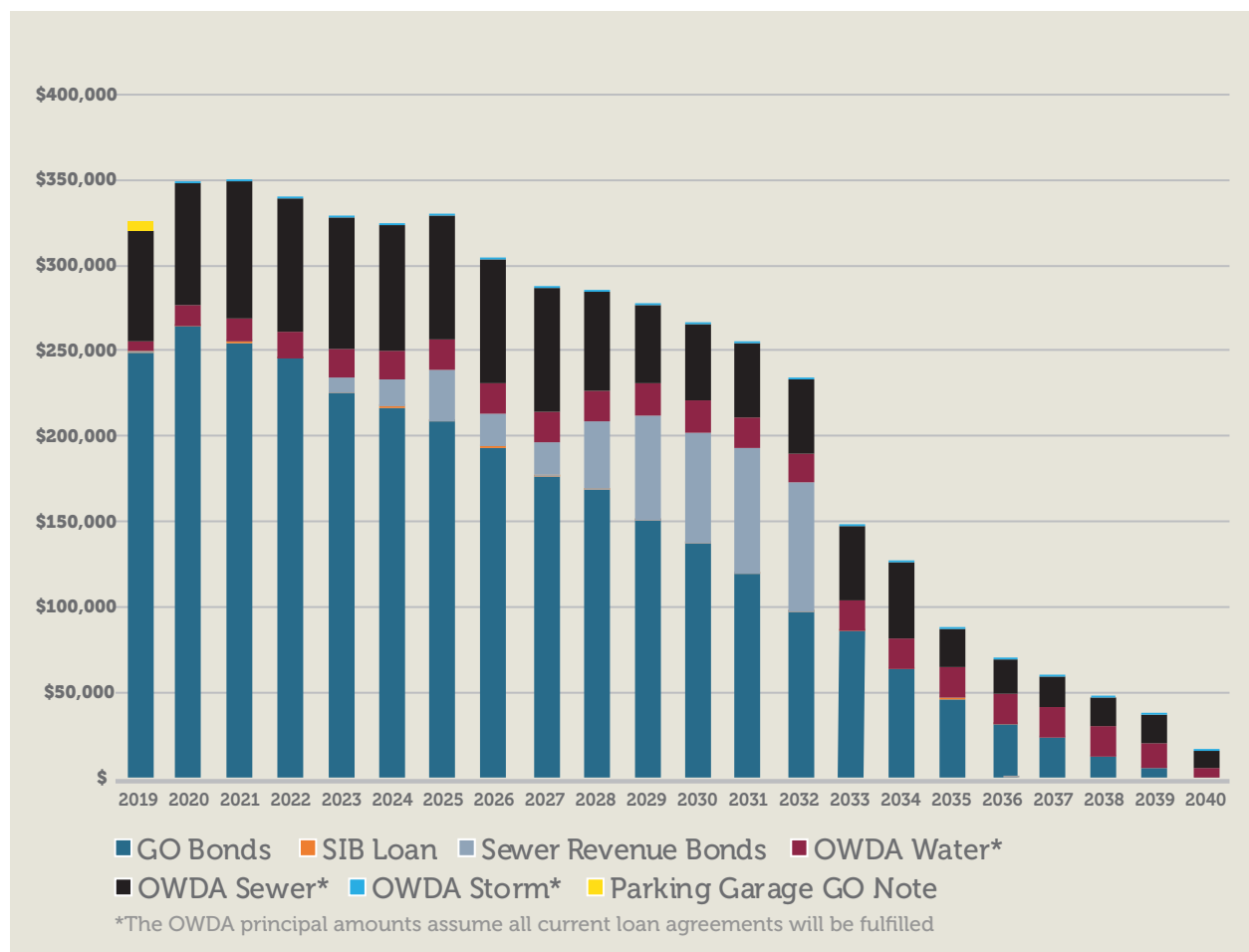
As noted earlier, the City deposits 25 percent of the 2.5% income tax into the Special Income Tax fund to service debt, primarily for the general government projects. Public utilities fund their debt payments through assessed user charges (primarily water and sewer bills).

While Columbus' per capita debt is on the higher end of cities our size, Columbus has a history of rapidly paying down its debt. In fact, 80% of the City's Governmental Obligation debt is paid off within 10 years.

| Purpose | % Paid off within 10 years |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Sanitary Sewer | 64.20% |
| Storm Sewer | 76.02% |
| Water | 66.24% |
| Electricity | 75.94% |
| Non-Enterprise | 80.02% |

Annual Principal Paydown (in thousands of dollars)

Excluding Component Unit and TIF Bonds and Notes



Strategic Priorities and Budgeting

The City's 2018 budget focused on the following strategic priorities to ensure all residents in every part of the City have the opportunity to thrive.



Public Safety and Health - Public Safety is the biggest General Fund investment we make in our city every year because every person in every neighborhood deserves to be safe. Over the past year, we have employed new approaches to policing that empower our neighborhoods, invest in our officers, and bring the full resources of our city to bear to make our neighborhoods safer and healthier.



Neighborhoods - The fabric of Columbus is created by vibrant, distinctive neighborhoods. We focus on our opportunity neighborhoods—Franklinton, Hilltop, Linden, Near East, Northland, Near South, Southeast, and Northeast—by building on their greatest assets; the people who reside in our neighborhoods.



Economic Development - The administration works to advance economic opportunity and shared prosperity through public investment and public policies that help to create jobs, increase median wages, improve access to affordable housing, and strengthen neighborhood infrastructure.



Early Childhood and Education - Every child in every Columbus neighborhood deserves the opportunity to thrive. The CelebrateOne initiative is committed to reducing infant mortality. Early Start Columbus focuses efforts on preparing and supporting students and families.



Diversity and Inclusion - The administration is committed to fostering a culture of inclusion so that our workforce and suppliers reflect the rich diversity that makes up Columbus. Our work includes mobilizing resources to expand opportunities, promoting strong recruitment strategies, and delivering business development education.



Smart Columbus - We are moving toward the future of Columbus with enhancements in technology and mobility that will make living in our city better, and will serve as a model for the connected cities of the future.



Operational Efficiencies - The administration is committed to a comprehensive review of city operations to identify inefficiencies and reinvest savings in critical city services and programs. We remain committed to collaborating and building partnerships for responsive, transparent, and effective governance.

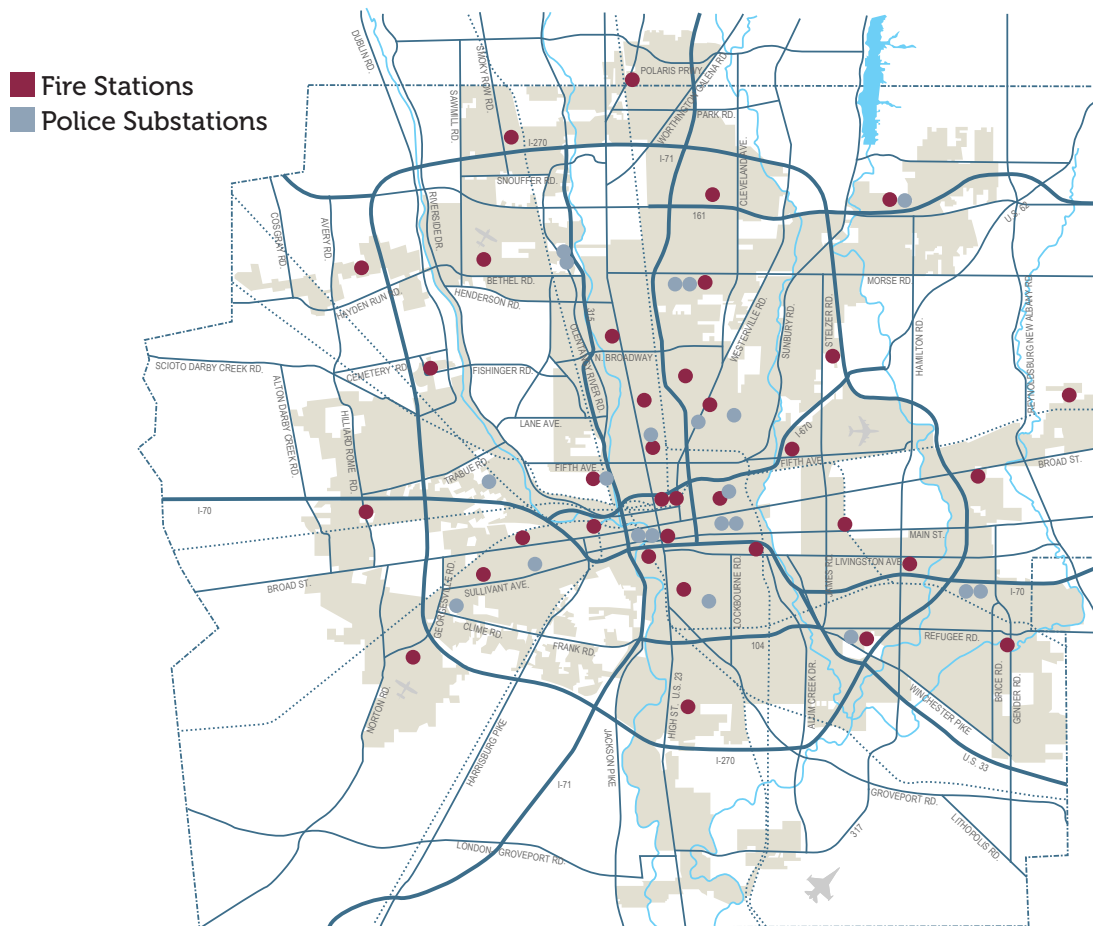


Public Safety

67% of the 2018 General Fund Budget was Spent on Public Safety!

The Department of Public Safety includes the Division of Police and the Division of Fire. In 2018, the City of Columbus spent 67% of its General Fund budget on Public Safety to

operate 17 police substations (with 1,902 employees) and 33 fire stations (with 1,547 employees).



Division of Police

In the past year, the Division of Police achieved many milestones. Internet purchase exchange zones were created, the first gunshot detection systems were installed, and more body cameras were issued to officers.

- 583** New Body Cameras
- 73** New Police Officers
- 60** New SUV Police Interceptors

Division of Fire

The Fire Division grew in size in 2018 as it faced a growing population and an opioid crisis. To meet these growing needs, the Division of Fire broke ground on a new station, Fire Station #35, on Waggoner Road.

- 80** New Fire Fighters
- 235** New Knox Boxes (Rapid Access Systems)

Public Health

Columbus Public Health (CPH) protects the health and improves the lives of all Columbus residents through more than 40 programs and diverse services such as restaurant inspections, STI testing and treatment, women’s health and wellness services, newborn home visiting, immunizations and more. CPH also is working to address the opiate epidemic, reduce infant deaths, prepare for and respond to emergencies, prevent the spread of disease, address the social determinants of health, lower disparities to achieve health equity, reduce chronic diseases, and increase access to affordable health care.

Infant Mortality

More Franklin County babies lived to celebrate their first birthdays and the infant mortality rate continued to drop across all populations.

- ★ 776 safe sleep ambassadors trained
- ★ 1,648 cribs distributed
- ★ 7,477 prenatal, newborn, and child home visits

Harm Reduction Program

Columbus Public Health is leading a multi-faceted community response to the opiate epidemic by educating residents on the dangers of opiates and available resources; providing comprehensive harm reduction

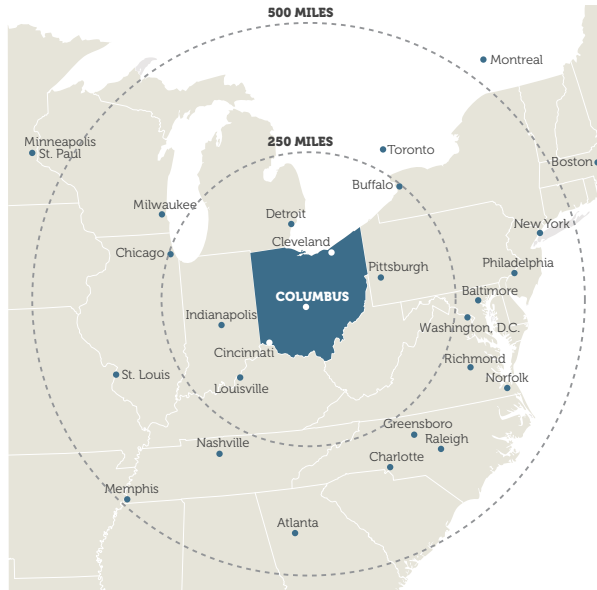


programs that include access to syringes, treatment, naloxone, fentanyl testing strips and infectious disease testing; and advocating for expanded and coordinated treatment services.



What Drives Economic Development in Columbus?

What Makes Columbus "America's Opportunity City"?



Columbus is within a 1 hour flight or 1 day drive (500 miles) of:
41% of the U.S. population
80% of corporate HQ's
43% of U.S. Manufacturing
29% of the Canadian population



#1
Up and coming high tech city



#4
Best city for jobs and housing



#11
Best city for single young professionals

Affordable Housing

The City has adopted new policies to make housing more affordable for residents of Columbus. In 2016, the Department of Development commissioned the first first-ever study to better understand the City's use of residential and business incentives. In conjunction with the recommendations from the study and community meetings with residents and other stakeholders, a new residential incentive policy supporting the development of affordable housing was enacted in 2018 by City Council.

Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIFs)

A TIF is one economic development tool the City uses to help businesses. Property taxes are frozen when a TIF is created. Local governments continue to receive their property tax revenue on the base value while the incremental revenue on the appreciated property is allocated toward the project funded by the TIF.

Visit columbus.gov/development to learn more about doing business in Columbus

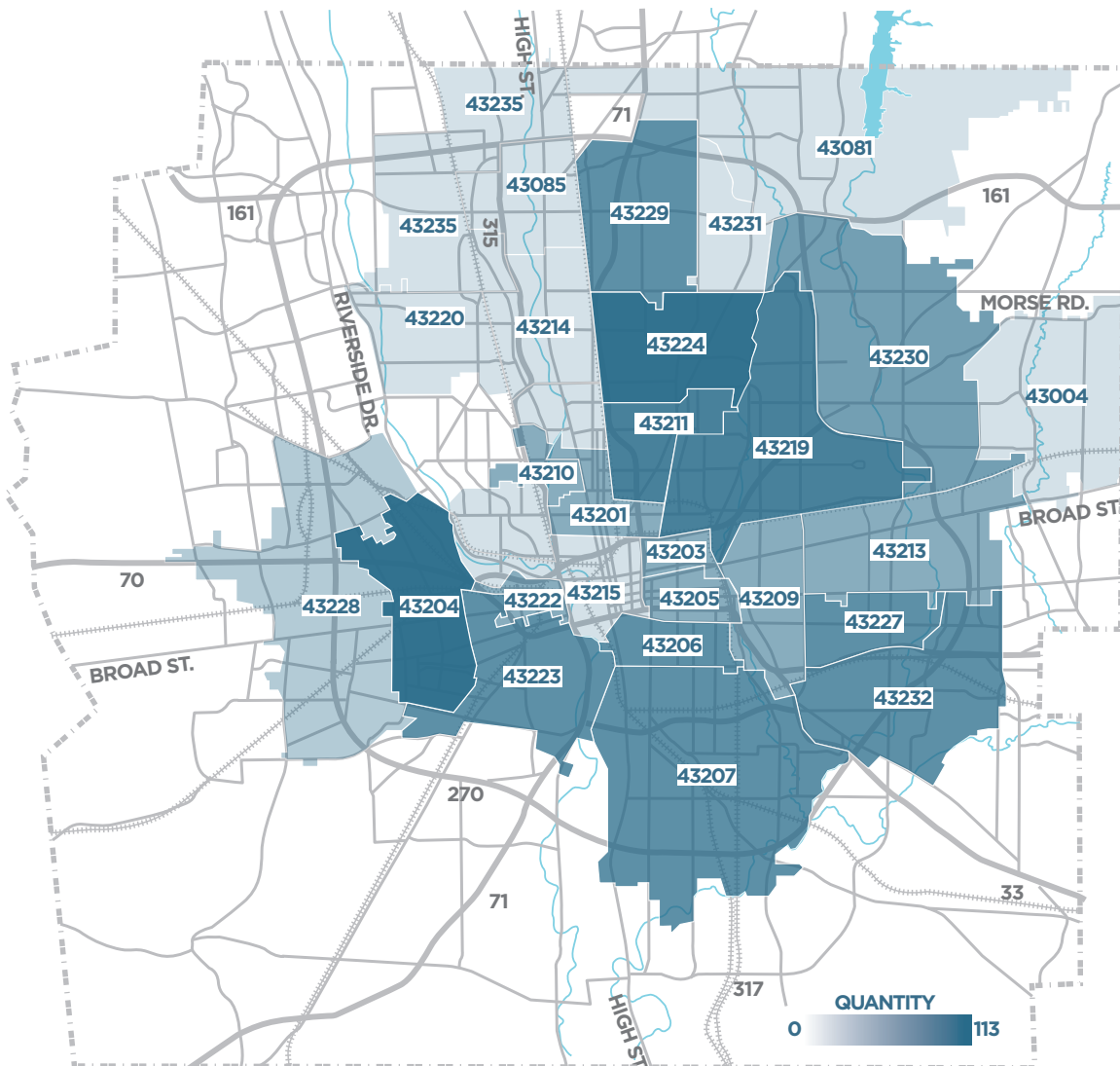
Early Start Columbus

One of the City's goals is universal access to a high quality pre-kindergarten education for every 4-year-old in Columbus.



This is an equitable way to ensure that all of our children are well prepared when they start school and can succeed academically and in life. Children who participate in high quality pre-kindergarten programs significantly improve their early literacy, language and math skills. An investment in early childhood development helps prevent achievement gaps, reduces the need for special education, increases the likelihood of healthier lifestyles, lowers the crime rate and reduces overall social costs.

Administered by the City of Columbus Department of Education, Early Start offers free or reduced tuition for qualifying families to enroll their children in high quality pre-kindergarten in community-based centers and in pre-kindergarten in Columbus City Schools. In 2018, Early Start Columbus partnered with 28 providers to serve 1,090 students with financial assistance to attend high quality pre-kindergarten. Children served were enrolled in 85 locations concentrated in the ZIP codes noted below. The darker colors represent the ZIP codes with a higher concentration of assistance received.



Diversity & Inclusion

"One of my first official acts when I took office nearly four years ago was to form the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Columbus has been on a path to becoming America's Opportunity City, but I knew that to reach that goal we must first become America's Equal Opportunity City."

— Mayor Andrew J. Ginther —



Diversity of Columbus by the Numbers



#3

Top cities for black-owned small businesses

Source: NFIB



#2

Largest Somali refugee population in the U.S.

Source: 2015 CRIS Report



#15

Largest LGBTQ population in the U.S.

Source: Gallup



873

Refugee owned businesses

Source: 2015 CRIS Report



100/100

Municipal Equality Index score from the Human Rights Campaign

Source: HRC Municipal Equality Index



41.8%

Of refugees have graduated or are enrolled in a college

Source: 2015 CRIS Report



Festival Latino in Downtown Columbus

What is SMART Columbus?

As the winner of the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) first-ever Smart City Challenge, Columbus was awarded \$50 million in grant funding and the designation as America's Smart City. We are "becoming smart" by embracing the reinvention of transportation to accelerate human progress. And with it, taking on the coveted job of teaching cities as they evolve similarly around the world.



human operator is on board in case of an emergency. The goal is to use self-driving shuttles to close transportation gaps to reach public transportation, affordable housing, healthy food, childcare, recreation and education.

IKE: Interactive Kiosk Experience

Another SMART Columbus accomplishment in 2018 was the installation of the first of many IKEs. IKE is a touch screen kiosk that gives residents and visitors information on the City. It can help with tasks such as finding a hotel, restaurant, or landmark. It can also help people find a job, rehabilitation center, or homeless shelter. SMART Columbus plans on adding 40 more IKEs throughout the city.

Columbus was awarded \$50 million in the form of two grants: \$40 million from the USDOT and \$10 million from the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. These dollars provide the seed funding for Smart Columbus — a region-wide Smart City initiative co-led by the City of Columbus and the Columbus Partnership.

Autonomous Shuttles

In 2018, autonomous shuttles came to Columbus. These six passenger shuttles run on a loop taking passengers to several stops through the downtown area. The shuttles are free and run every day of the week. A

Visit smart.columbus.gov
to learn more about
SMART Columbus



Awards

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) represents public finance officials



throughout the United States and Canada. The GFOA has established several highly regarded professional recognition programs to encourage and assist state and local governments of all types and sizes to improve the quality of their financial management and to recognize their achievement.

Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting –

The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting (PAFR) is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports. In order to receive an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, a government unit must publish a PAFR, whose contents conform to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability, and reader appeal. An Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is valid for a period of one year only. We believe that our first PAFR report for 2018 conforms to the PAFR requirements, and we are submitting it to the GFOA to determine its eligibility for an award.

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting –

The GFOA awarded the Certification of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the City of Columbus for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2017. This was the 39th consecutive year that the City received this prestigious award. In order to be awarded a certificate of achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized CAFR. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal regulations. A certificate is valid for a period of one year only. We believe that the current CAFR continues to meet the program's requirements and we have submitted it to the GFOA to determine its eligibility for another certificate.

Distinguished Budget Presentation Award –

The GFOA presented a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to the City of Columbus for its Annual Budget for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2019. This was the 4th consecutive year that the city has received this prestigious award. In order to receive this award, a governmental unit must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, as an operations guide, as a financial plan, and as a communication device. This award is valid for a period of one year only.





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The Columbus City Auditor is committed to providing clean and transparent reporting of the City's financial activities. We hope this report has been helpful in providing a brief overview of the City and its finances. Questions concerning any of the information provided in this report or requests for additional financial information should be addressed to:

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