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CHAPTER Chapter 2: POPULATION ELEMENT

HOW WE GROW

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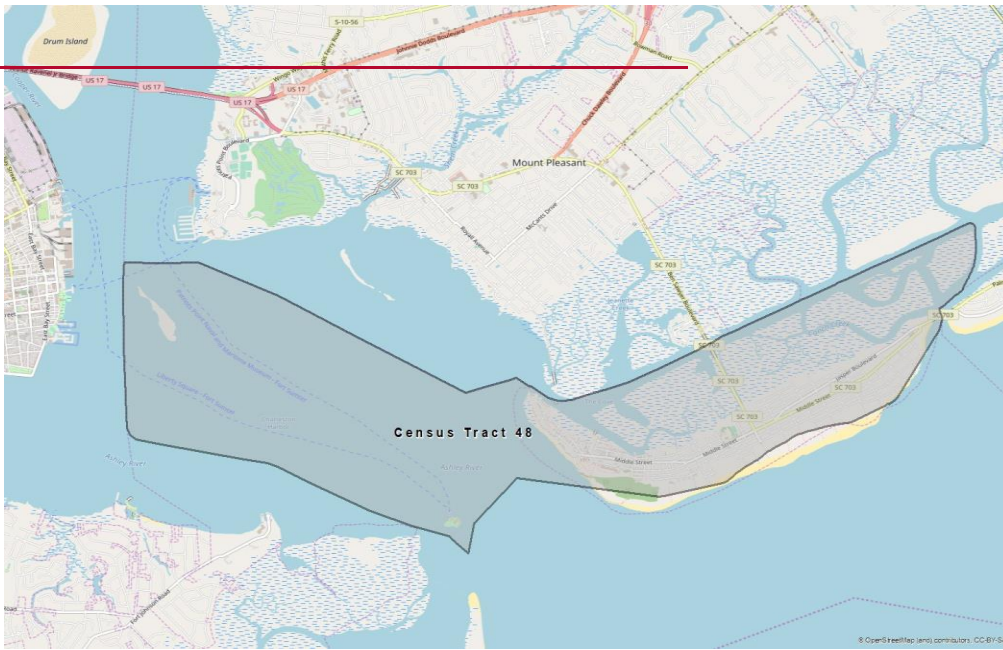
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The Population Element provides an important key that

The Population Element unlocks an understanding of historical and projected growth on Sullivan's Island. Without understanding demographics, the Town of Sullivan's Island would not be able to create initiatives or policies that are effective for the citizenry. Knowing who the constituents are will help the Town **efficiently analyze issues and** effectively provide services and **efficiently analyze issues that need to be addressed** for the community.

The information **Information** for the existing Population Element was obtained through the United States Census Bureau, the Town of Sullivan's Island, and the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG). **In 2017, the** Unless otherwise stated, data referenced throughout this update is from the Decennial Census, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates (2010, 2015, & 2020) or Esri's Business Analyst Tool (2023 & 2028). The Town of Sullivan's Island consists of Census Tract 48 (Figure 2.1).

FIGURE 2.4



HISTORY

History



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Sullivan's Island has seen a steady population growth pattern since the 1920s barring a few generations that encompassed a war and a natural disaster. As seen in Figure 2.2) There, there was a surge in population explosion in the 1940s between 1930 and 1940 due to the increased use of the military facilities located on Sullivan's Island during around World War II. However, by the 1950s, the population declined as returned to pre-war levels after Fort Moultrie was closed and the military population was relocated. Since 1980, the population of Sullivan's Island has fluctuated between about 1,600 and 2,000 residents with events like Hurricane Hugo in 1989 and the war. The population finally levelled off to its pre-World War II levels in 2008 recession preceding the 1970s. Then, 1990 and 2010 decennial censuses respectively likely impacting population counts. Figure 2.2 shows the population of Sullivan's Island increased from 1,791 in 2010 to 2,177 in 2020, a 21% increase overall (or +386 people), leading to the largest population on the island grew steadily until 1989, when Hurricane Hugo hit the South Carolina coast and caused another sharp drop in population. After Hugo, the population returned to its previous pattern of gradual growth island since the military's presence in the 1940's.

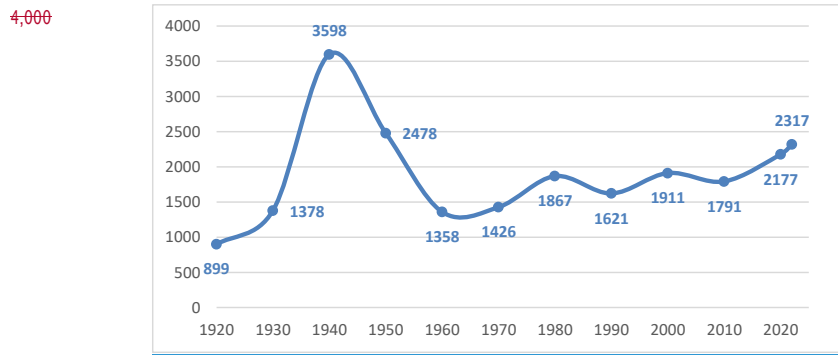
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FIGURE 2.2: HISTORICAL POPULATION TREND Historical Population Trends



Projections

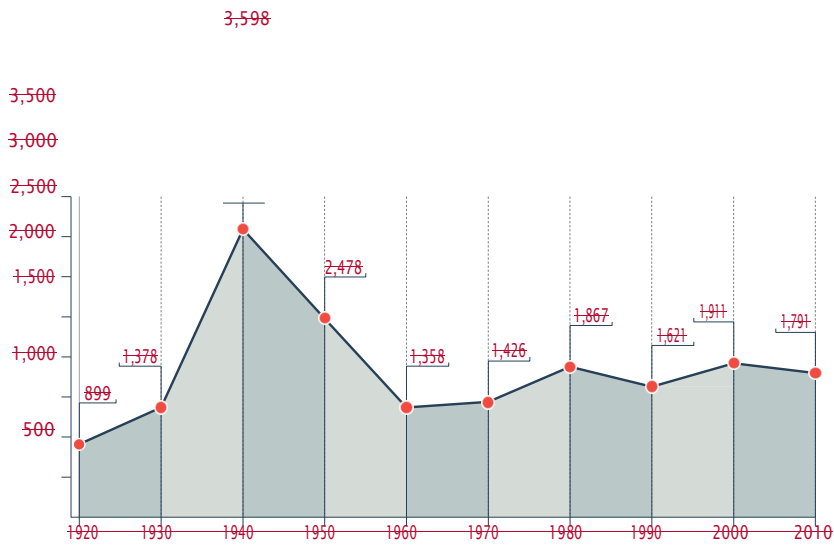
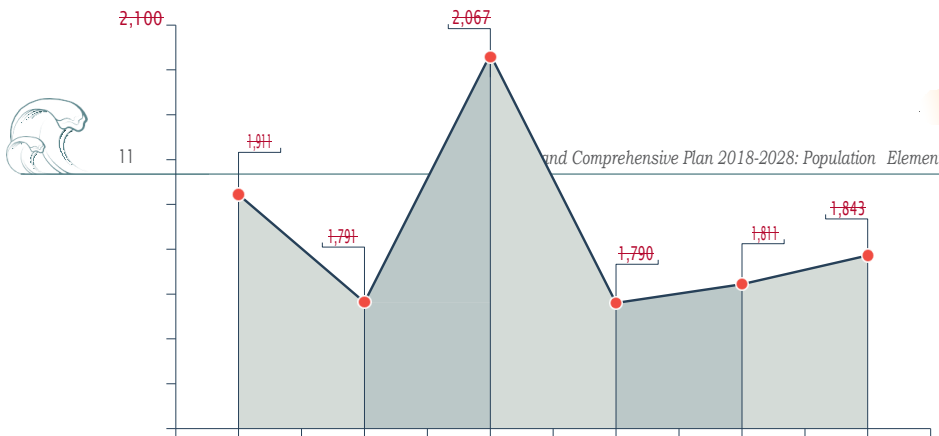


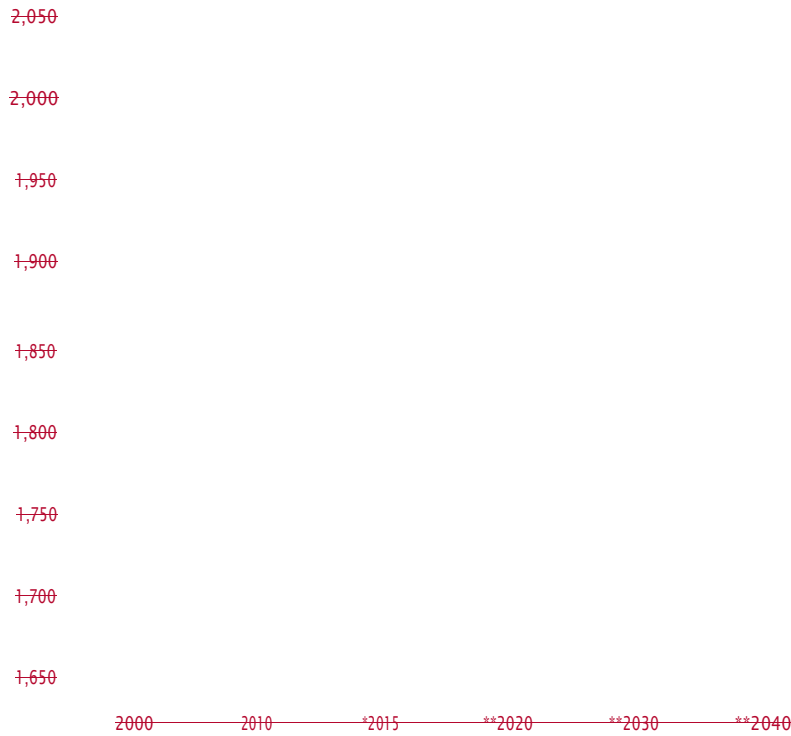
FIGURE 2.3: POPULATION PROJECTION



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PROJECTIONS

Figure 2.3 shows that during the 2010 Census, Sullivan's Island's population dropped to 1,791 from the previous decennial census. This estimate was a 6.3% decline from the 2000 Census, which estimated the population at 1,911. Since 2010, the Town has grown by 15.4% to 2,067 people, according the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. The 2015 ACS data uses a different methodology than the decennial Census, so a more conservative estimate was used by BCDCOG to project 2020, 2030, and 2040 estimates. BCDCOG provided estimates for [of Sullivan's Island](#) 2020, 2030, and 2040, which are created by the region's travel demand model. The travel demand model is a forecasting

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Age Group	2010	2015	2022	2010-2015 Change (Points)	2015-2022 Change (Points)	2010-2022 Change (Points)
Under 5	1.5%	6.0%	3.8%	4.5%	-2.2%	2.3%
5 to 9	10.0%	3.6%	3.1%	-6.4%	-0.5%	-6.9%
10 to 14	5.6%	6.6%	6.2%	1.0%	-0.4%	0.6%
15 to 19	5.2%	7.3%	8.2%	2.1%	0.9%	3.0%
20 to 24	3.8%	3.7%	2.4%	-0.1%	-1.3%	-1.4%
25 to 29	3.2%	6.0%	3.4%	2.8%	-2.6%	0.2%
30 to 34	7.7%	3.6%	1.8%	-4.1%	-1.8%	-5.9%
35 to 39	4.3%	3.9%	7.7%	-0.4%	3.8%	3.4%
40 to 44	7.6%	3.7%	3.3%	-3.9%	-0.4%	-4.3%
45 to 49	6.6%	9.1%	9.0%	2.5%	-0.1%	2.4%
50 to 54	11.1%	8.8%	6.9%	-2.3%	-1.9%	-4.2%
55 to 59	8.1%	11.6%	7.9%	3.5%	-3.7%	-0.2%
60 to 64	12.4%	9.3%	11.1%	-3.1%	1.8%	-1.3%
65 to 69	2.1%	6.2%	11.3%	4.1%	5.1%	9.2%
70 to 74	5.6%	4.2%	6.5%	-1.4%	2.3%	0.9%
75 to 79	2.6%	2.5%	4.4%	-0.1%	1.9%	1.8%
80 to 84	1.5%	0.8%	1.1%	-0.7%	0.3%	-0.4%
85+	1.0%	3.1%	2.1%	2.1%	-1.0%	1.1%

Another demographic change observed, the male-to-female ratio was approximately 50:50 (101.7 males per 100 females) in 2022. However, this ratio drops to only 38:62 (62.4 males per 100 females) when looking only at residents ages 65 and over. This indicates that of the older population, a majority of them are females.

Race & Ethnicity

2022 estimates show that the vast majority of the Town residents identified as White alone, which totals approximately 98% of the total population. Comparatively, in 2010, the second largest group was estimated to be Black or African-Americans, which comprised of 0.7% whereas in 2022, the second largest group was estimated to be Asian alone, which accounted for about 1% of the total population. The remainder of the population was a smaller fractional combination of other races, based for the benefit of the citizens. The median age on Sullivan's Island has remained relatively the same from 2010 to 2015, only increasing about 1% from 47.1 in 2010 to 48 in 2015 (Table 2.2). This composition was not drastically different from previously recorded decades. In addition to the racial composition of the Town, estimates of the ethnicity of residents was also reported. The percent of Sullivan's Island residents that identified as having a Hispanic or Latino Origin, regardless of race, increased from 0% in 2010 to 1.6% in 2022.

Households

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, households may include families or they may include individuals who live by themselves. Families are counted as those who are related and live with each other. From 2010 to 2022, estimates show that the total number of households grew by 5.4%, while the number of families grew at roughly triple that pace at 17.6%. The average household size in 2022 was estimated at 2.74 people per household compared to 2.55 people per household in 2010, which suggests families are not only increasing in quantity but in family size as well.

as those who are related and live with each other. From 2010 to 2015, the total households grew by 5.6%, while families grew at roughly double that pace at 11.8%. The average household size is now 2.56 people per household;



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which confirms the higher growth rate for families, and can be confirmed again by examining Table 2.3 (see page 13), where children under 5 years of age have increased by approximately 81% between 2010 and 2015.

TABLE 2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFO 2000, 2010, & 2015

	2000	2010	*2015	2000-2010 %CHANGE	2010-2015 %CHANGE
Population	1,911	1,791	2,067	-6.3%	15.4%
Median Age	40.9	47.1	48	15.2%	1.9%
Total Households	797	765	808	-4.0%	5.6%
Family Households	484	482	539	-0.4%	11.8%
Average Household Size	2.4	2.34	2.56	-2.5%	9.4%



RACE

The ACS 2015 5-year estimate shows that the majority of the Town residents are white, which totals approximately 98% of the population. The second largest group is African Americans, which comprise .5% of the Town's residents [Educational Attainment](#)

~~The remainder of the population was a smaller fractional combination of other races. This composition is not drastically different from previously recorded decades.~~

AGE

The largest age group on Sullivan's Island for both females and males is the bracket containing those who are "45 to 54" years old (Table 2.3 / Figure 2.4):

There was no change from either the 2000 or 2010 Censuses as they both showed this particular age group as the largest population as well (Table 2.3). Generally, this type of shaped pyramid is considered a "stationary" population. This means that the population is not growing, but does have a very high quality of life. However, the "Under 5 Years" age group has experienced a considerable spike in 2015 compared to 2000 and 2010. This data potentially illustrates that the number of families are regenerating and that there is room for the population to continue to grow. The increase in the "under 5 years" age group is also thought to be attributed to the recently constructed Sullivan's Island Elementary School located at the heart of the Island. The "45 to 54" year-old population should be monitored over the next few decades to ensure the pyramid does not change into a "constrictive" pyramid. In fact, many people on the island expressed concerns for a lack of opportunity for seniors during public comment periods. The National Aging in Place Council (NAIPC) is an excellent resource for learning about building communities that are amiable to an aging population.² With that said, "Aging In Place" is an important concept that needs to be evaluated as people 45 years and older represent 56% of the population. If most of the population is closer to 55 than 45, then a potential shift towards the constrictive pyramid may occur. If that happens, it will be important for Sullivan's Island and its residents to be prepared for the shift.

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1. —Population Education (2016). "What are the different types of population pyramids?" <https://www.populationeducation.org/content/what-are-different-types-population-pyramids>

2. —Age In Place (N.D.). <http://www.ageinplace.org/>

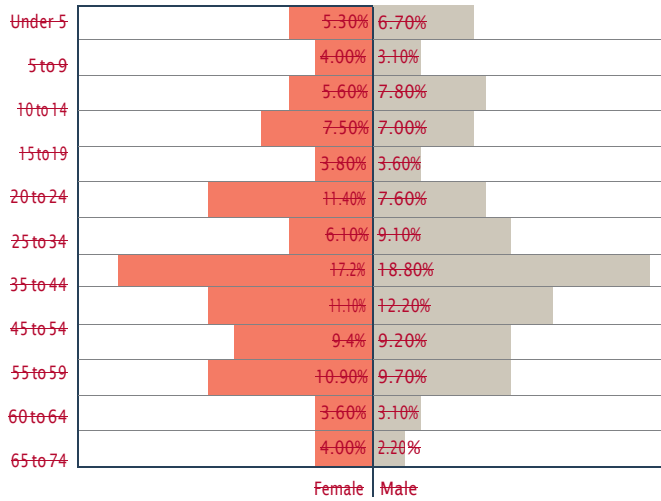


TABLE 2.3: POPULATION BY AGE GROUP 2000, 2010, & 2015

AGE GROUP	2000	2010	*2015	2000-2010 %CHANGE	2010-2015 %CHANGE
Under 5 Years	87	68	123	-21.8%	81.2%
5 to 9 Years	145	126	74	-13.1%	-41.3%
10 to 14 Years	155	115	137	-25.8%	19.3%
15 to 19 Years	95	106	150	11.6%	41.7%
20 to 24 Years	72	80	77	11.1%	-4.3%
25 to 34 Years	228	152	199	-33.3%	30.9%
35 to 44 Years	327	196	155	-40.1%	-20.9%
45 to 54 Years	373	316	371	-15.3%	17.4%
55 to 59 Years	144	197	240	36.8%	21.8%
60 to 64 Years	76	172	192	126.3%	11.6%
65 to 74 Years	103	168	214	63.1%	27.4%
75 to 84 Years	73	60	70	-17.8%	16.7%
85 Years and Over	33	35	65	6.1%	85.7%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey

FIGURE 2.4 POPULATION PYRAMID



75 to 84
85 and over

Source: US Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey.



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EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

With some of the highest-valued land per acre in the BCDCOG region, incomes needed to purchase and maintain properties on Sullivan's Island are greater than other areas within the region.³ As a result, the education levels, at least over the past 30 years, have remained high for the Town. This is to be expected as higher education levels are positively correlated with higher incomes.

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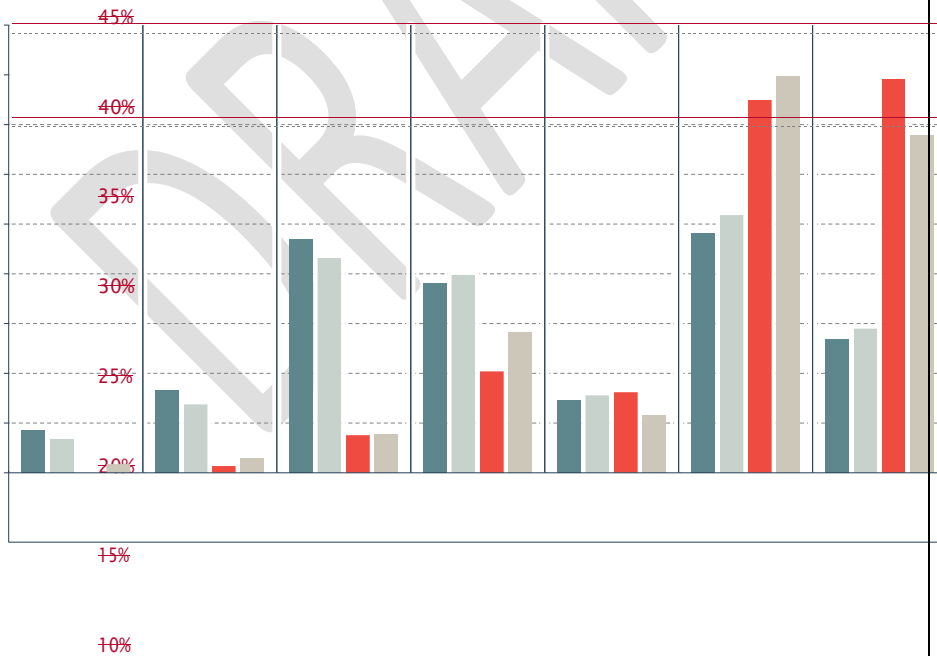
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Figure 2.5 shows residents with "some college, no degree" to "Less than 9th-grade" educations are lower than Charleston County's averages, which further highlights Sullivan's well-educated population. This is further evidenced by that fact that residents of Sullivan's Island have much higher percentages in both those with "Bachelor's degrees" and "Graduate or professional degrees."

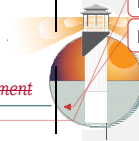
³Urban 3: "The Value of Placemaking: The Cost and Impact of Development Patterns on the Tri-County Region." https://issuu.com/scbiz/docs/the_value_of_placemaking

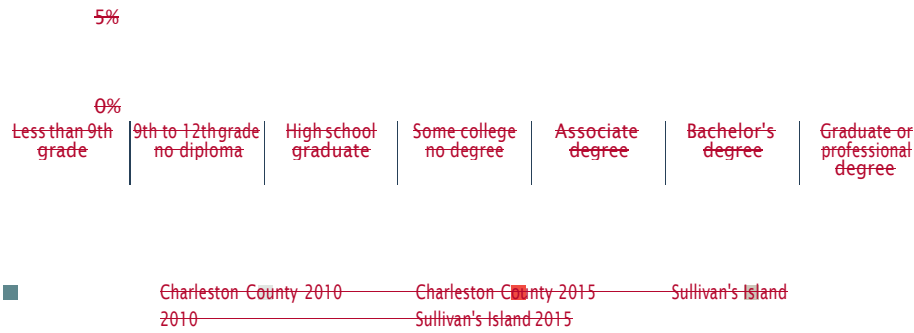
FIGURE 2.5: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (2010-2015)



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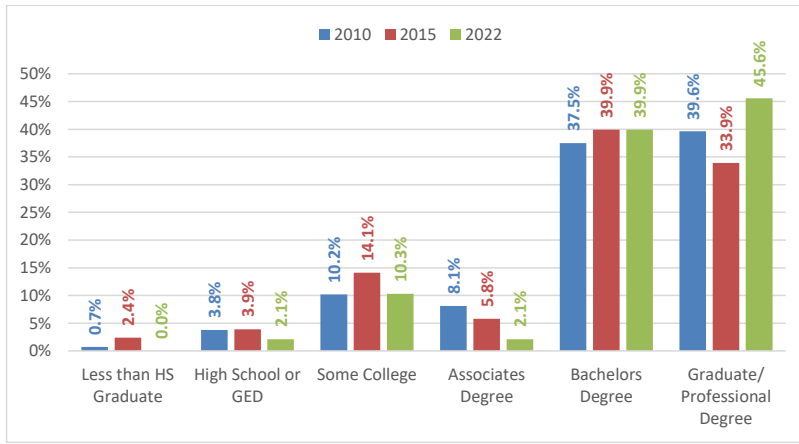
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Source: US Bureau of the Census, American Community Survey. In 2022, over 85% of residents in Sullivan’s Island had attained a bachelor’s degree or higher. This was an 8-point increase since 2010. In comparison, the population (ages 25+) of Sullivan’s island was more educated than IOP (72%), Folly Beach (44%), and Charleston County (48%) with bachelor degrees, however, was only slightly less educated than Kiawah (87%). Furthermore, Figure 2.5 shows the change in educational attainment among Sullivan’s Island residents between 2010, 2015, and 2022. Although estimates show that the percent of people attaining a bachelor’s degree leveled off between 2015 and 2022, this was likely due to residents simply continuing on to attain a graduate or professional degree as that educational group experienced a 12-point increase between 2015 and 2022.

Figure 2.5: Change in Educational Attainment



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