

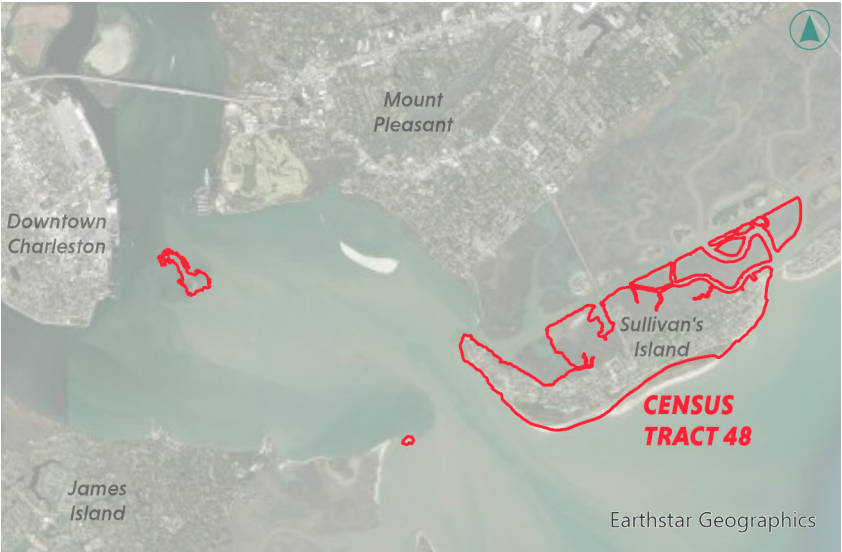
CHAPTER 2: POPULATION ELEMENT

HOW WE GROW

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 effectively provide services and efficiently analyze issues that need to be addressed for the community.

Information for the 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). Unless otherwise stated, data referenced throughout this update is from the Decennial Census, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2010, 2015, 2020, 2022), or Esri’s Business Analyst tool (2023 and 2028). The Town of Sullivan’s Island consists of Census Tract 48 (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Census Tract 48



HISTORY

Sullivan’s Island has seen a steady population growth pattern since the 1920s. As seen in Figure 2.2, there was a surge in population between 1930 and 1940 due to the increased use of the military facilities located on Sullivan’s Island around World War II. However, by the 1960s, the population returned to pre-war levels after Fort Moultrie closed and the military population 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 2008 recession preceding the 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 since the military’s presence in the 1940’s.

Figure 2.2: Historical Population Trends

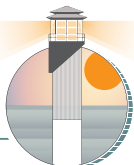
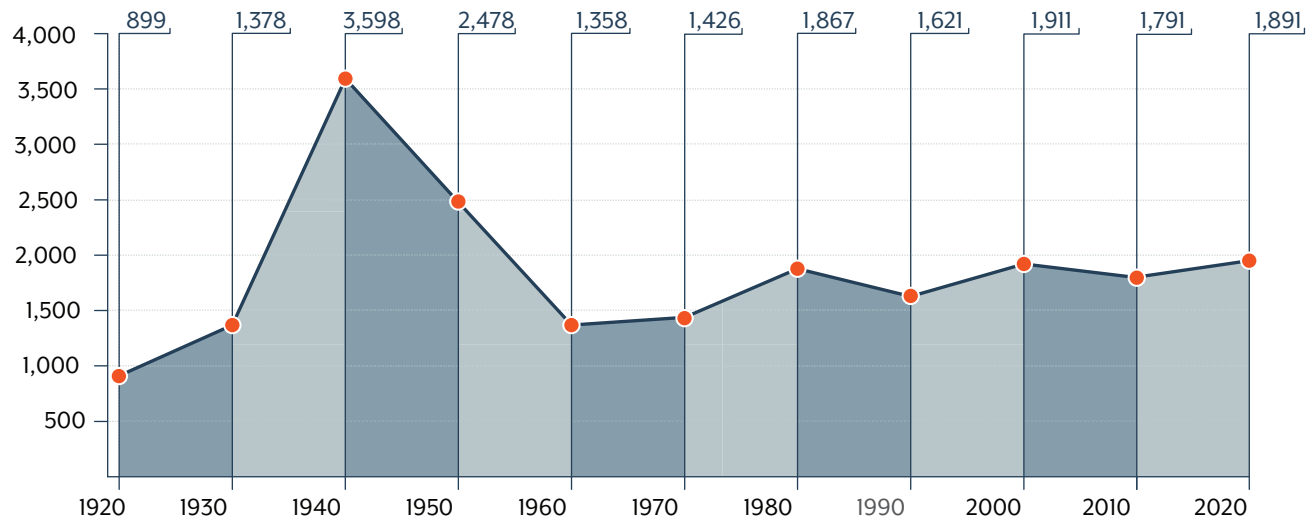
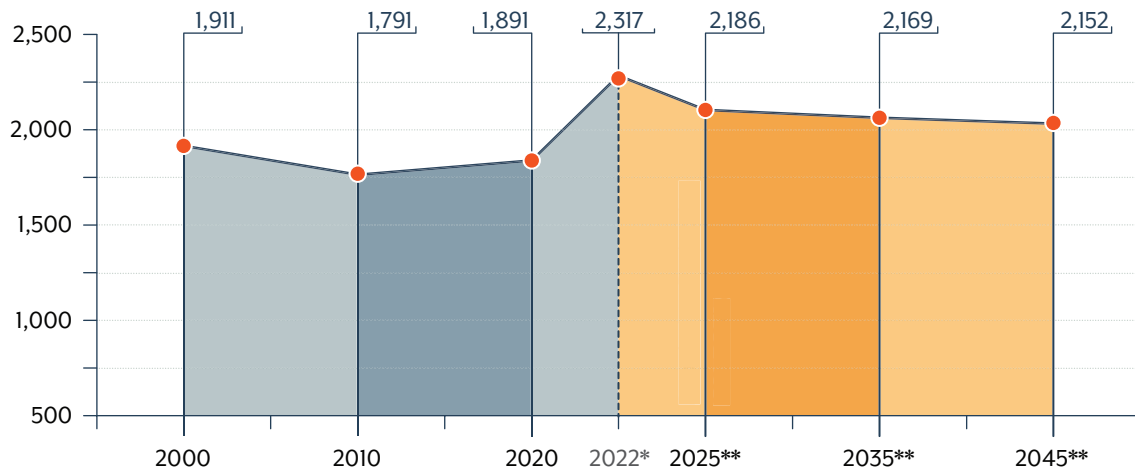


Figure 2.3: Population Projections



*Estimated Population by ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Population Projection by BCDCOG's TDM

Table 2.1: Population Trend/Projection for the Town of Sullivan's Island (1920-2045)

YEAR	POP.	NET POPULATION CHANGE	
		NUMBER	%
1920	899	-	-
1930	1,378	479	53.3%
1940	3,598	2,220	161.1%
1950	2,478	-1,120	-31.1%
1960	1,358	-1,120	-45.2%
1970	1,426	68	5.0%
1980	1,867	441	30.9%
1990	1,621	-246	-13.2%
2000	1,911	290	17.9%
2010	1,791	-120	-6.3%
2020	1,891	100	5.6%
2022*	2,317	426	22.5%
2025**	2,186	-131	-5.7%
2035**	2,169	-17	-0.8%
2045**	2,152	-17	-0.8%

*Estimated Population by ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Population Projection by BCDCOG's TDM

PROJECTIONS

Figure 2.3 shows that the population of Sullivan's Island is projected to remain steady between 2,100 and 2,200 people over the next 20+ years. These projections are widely supported as reasonable considering the limited availability of developable land on the island, local laws established to prevent subdivisions, and zoning regulations that support single-family-oriented development. Projections for the Town's future population were generated by the BCDCOG using the region's travel demand model tool.

Table 2.1 shows the historical population trend for Sullivan's Island using the US Decennial Census, ACS Estimates, and BCDCOG projections for the years 2025, 2035, and 2045. This details the net population change in Sullivan's Island as a whole number and a percent.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Age & Sex

It is important for the Town to understand who resides on the island so that policies and programs can effectively benefit the citizens. Since 2010, residents of Sullivan's Island have aged quite a bit. This is reflected by the median age rising from 45.6 years in 2010 to 51.7 years in 2022. This increase can likely be explained by the number of residents ages 65 and over doubling between 2010 (12.8%) and 2022 (25.4%), as illustrated in Figure 2.4. If this trend continues, the Town will have to add or adjust existing services, resources, and amenities in the future that are targeted for an older population.

Table 2.2 shows the detailed change in age groups between 2010, 2015, and 2022, highlighting the significant increase in Older Adults, specifically those ages 65 to 69, and the gradual decrease in Young- and Middle-Aged Adults. Other notable shifts between 2010 and 2022 were in the 5 to 9, 30 to 34, 40 to 44, and 50 to 54 age groups.

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, majority of them are females.

Figure 2.4: Population by Age Groups: 2010, 2015, 2022

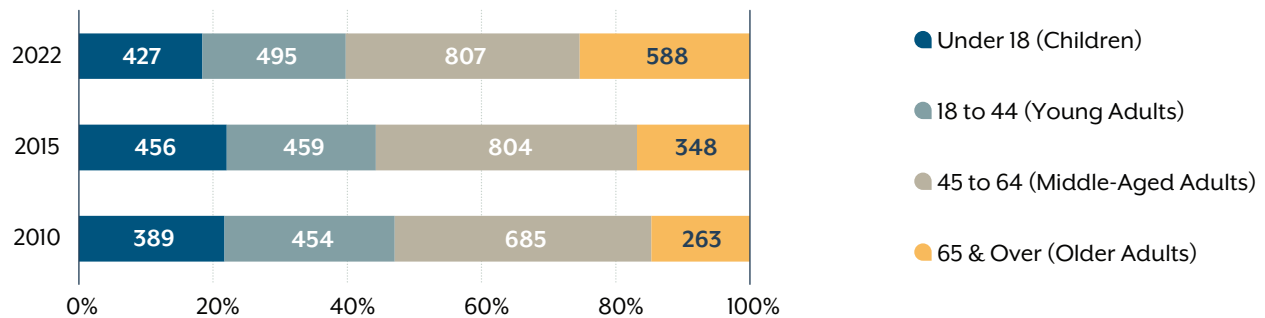


Table 2.2: Change in Population by Age Group 2010, 2015, 2022

AGE GROUP	2010	2015	2022	2010-15: % CHANGE	2015-22: % CHANGE	2010-22: % CHANGE
Under 5	68	123	87	80.9%	-29.3%	27.9%
5 to 9	126	74	71	-41.3%	-4.1%	-43.7%
10 to 14	115	137	144	19.1%	5.1%	25.2%
15 to 19	106	150	190	41.5%	26.7%	79.2%
20 to 24	80	77	56	-3.8%	-27.3%	-30.0%
25 to 34	152	199	119	30.9%	-40.2%	-21.7%
35 to 44	196	155	255	-20.9%	64.5%	30.1%
45 to 54	316	371	367	17.4%	-1.1%	16.1%
55 to 59	197	240	183	21.8%	-23.8%	-7.1%
60 to 64	172	192	257	11.6%	33.9%	49.4%
65 to 74	168	214	413	27.4%	93.0%	145.8%
75 to 84	60	70	127	16.7%	81.4%	111.7%
85 & Over	35	65	48	85.7%	-26.2%	37.1%



Race and 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. 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.

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. 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.

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.

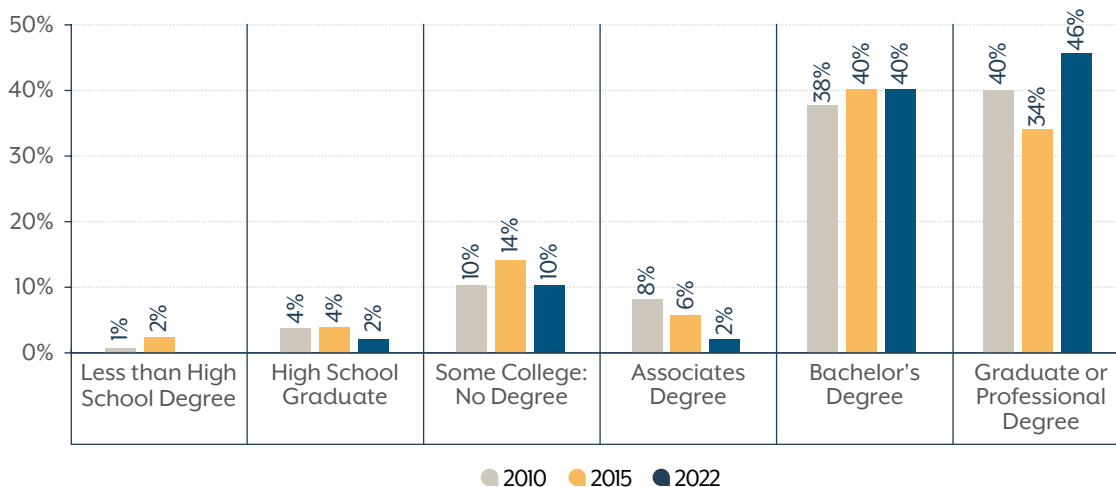


Figure 2.5: Highest Level of Education Attained (2010-2022)

