

= Columbia , Missouri =

Columbia / k??l?mbi? / is a city in and the county seat of Boone County , Missouri , United States . Founded in 1820 as the county seat and home to the University of Missouri , it had a 2015 estimated population of 119 @, @ 108 , and it is the principal city of the Columbia Metropolitan Area , the state 's fourth most populous metropolitan area . As a midwestern college town , the city has a reputation for progressive politics , public art , and powerful journalism . The tripartite establishment of Stephens College (1833) , the University of Missouri (1839) , and Columbia College (1851) has long made the city a center of education , culture , and athletic competition . These three schools surround Downtown Columbia on the east , south , and north ; at the center is the Avenue of the Columns , which connects Francis Quadrangle and Jesse Hall to the Boone County Courthouse and the City Hall . Originally an agricultural town , the cultivation of the mind is Columbia 's chief economic concern today . Never a major center of manufacturing , the city also depends on healthcare , insurance , and technology businesses . Several companies , such as Shelter Insurance , Carfax , and Slackers CDs and Games , were founded in the city . Cultural institutions include the State Historical Society of Missouri , the Museum of Art and Archaeology , and the annual True / False Film Festival . The Missouri Tigers , the state 's only major athletic program , play football at Faurot Field and basketball at Mizzou Arena as members of the Southeastern Conference (SEC) .

The city is built upon the forested hills and rolling prairies of Mid @-@ Missouri , near the Missouri River valley , where the Ozark Mountains begin to transform into plains and savanna ; limestone forms bluffs and glades while rain carves caves and springs which water the Hinkson , Roche Perche , and Petite Bonne Femme creeks . Surrounding the city , Rock Bridge Memorial State Park , Mark Twain National Forest , and Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge all form a greenbelt preserving sensitive and rare environments . The first humans were nomadic hunters who entered the area at least twelve thousand years ago . Later , woodland tribes lived in villages along waterways and built mounds in high places . The Osage and Missouri nations were expelled by the exploration of French traders and the rapid settlement of American pioneers . The latter arrived by the Boone 's Lick Trail and hailed from the slave @-@ owning culture of the Upland South , especially Virginia , Kentucky , and Tennessee , giving Boonslick the name " Little Dixie " during the American Civil War . German , Irish , and other European immigrants soon joined . The modern populace is unusually diverse , over eight percent foreign @-@ born . While White and Black remain the largest ethnicities , Asians are now the third @-@ largest group . Today 's Columbians are remarkably highly educated and culturally midwestern , though traces of their Southern past remain . The city has been called the " Athens of Missouri " or a reference to its classic beauty and educational emphasis , but is more commonly called " CoMo " .

= = History = =

The Columbia area was once part of the Mississippian culture and home to the Mound Builders . When European explorers arrived , the area was populated by the Osage and Missouri Indians . In 1678 , La Salle claimed all of Missouri for France . The Lewis and Clark Expedition passed by the area on the Missouri River in early June 1804 . In 1806 , two sons of Daniel Boone established a salt lick 40 miles (64 km) northwest of Columbia. giving the area its early name : Boonslick . The Boone 's Lick Trail wound from St. Charles to the lick in present @-@ day Howard County . In 1818 , a group of settlers , incorporated under the Smithton Land Company , purchased over 2 @, @ 000 acres (8 @. @ 1 km2) and established the village of Smithton less than a mile from current day downtown Columbia . In 1821 , the settlers moved , because of lack of water , across the Flat Branch to the plateau between the Flat Branch and Hinkson creeks in what is now the downtown district . They renamed the settlement Columbia ? a poetic personification of the United States .

The roots of Columbia 's three economic foundations ? education , medicine , and insurance ? can be traced back to incorporation in 1821 . Original plans for the town set aside land for a state university . In 1833 , Columbia Baptist Female College opened , which later became Stephens

College . Columbia College (distinct from today 's) , later to become the University of Missouri , was founded in 1839 . When the state legislature decided to establish a state university , Columbia raised three times as much money as any other competing city and James S. Rollins donated the land that is today the Francis Quadrangle . Soon other educational institutions were founded in Columbia such as Christian Female College , the first college for women west of the Mississippi , which later became the current Columbia College . The city benefited from being a stagecoach stop of the Santa Fe and Oregon trails , and later from the Missouri @-@ Kansas @-@ Texas Railroad . In 1822 the first hospital was set up by William Jewell . In 1830 , the first newspaper began ; in 1832 , the first theater in the state was opened ; and in 1835 , the state 's first agricultural fair was held . By 1839 , the population (13 @,@ 000) and wealth of Boone County was exceeded in Missouri only by that of St. Louis County , which at that time included the City of St. Louis .

Columbia 's infrastructure was relatively untouched by the Civil War . Missouri , as a slave state , had Southern sympathies , but remained in the Union . The majority of the city was pro @-@ Union , however , the surrounding agricultural areas of Boone County and the rest of central Missouri were decidedly pro @-@ Confederate . Because of this , the University of Missouri became a base from which Union troops operated . No battles were fought within the city because the presence of Union troops dissuaded Confederate guerrillas from attacking , though several major battles occurred nearby at Boonville and Centralia . After the Civil War , race relations in Columbia followed the Southern pattern ; a black man , George Burke , was lynched in 1889 .

In 1963 , Columbia become home to the headquarters of both the University of Missouri System , which today serves over 71 @,@ 000 students , and the Columbia College system , which today serves about 25 @,@ 000 students . The insurance industry also became important to the local economy as several companies established headquarters in Columbia , including Shelter Insurance , Missouri Employers Mutual , and Columbia Insurance Group . State Farm Insurance has a regional office in Columbia . In addition , the now defunct Silvey Insurance was once a large local employer . Columbia became a transportation crossroads when U.S. Route 63 and U.S. Route 40 (which became present @-@ day Interstate 70) were routed through the city . Soon after the city opened the Columbia Regional Airport . The latter 20th century saw tremendous growth , and by 2000 the population was nearly 85 @,@ 000 in the city proper .

In early 2006 , Columbia embarked on a plan to manage the continued growth as the city passed 100 @,@ 000 population . The city continues to grow , especially east around the newly opened Battle High School . The downtown district has maintained its status as a cultural center and is undergoing significant development in both residential and commercial sectors . The University of Missouri , which has tremendous economic impact on the city , experienced record enrollment in 2006 and is undertaking significant construction .

== Geography ==

Columbia , located in northern mid @-@ Missouri , is 120 miles (190 km) away from both St. Louis and Kansas City , and 29 miles (47 km) north of the state capital Jefferson City . The city is near the Missouri River between the Ozark Plateau and the Northern Plains . Trees are mainly oak , maple , and hickory ; common understory trees include eastern redbud , serviceberry , and flowering dogwood . Riparian areas are forested with mainly American sycamore . Much of the residential area of the city is planted with large native shade trees . In Autumn , the changing color of the trees is notable . Most species here are typical of the Eastern Woodland .

According to the United States Census Bureau , the city has a total area of 63 @.@ 5 square miles (164 @.@ 46 km²) , of which , 63 @.@ 08 square miles (163 @.@ 38 km²) is land and 0 @.@ 42 square miles (1 @.@ 09 km²) is water .

== Topography ==

The city generally slopes from the highest point in the Northeast to the lowest point in the Southwest towards the Missouri River . Prominent tributaries of the river are Perche Creek , Hinkson

Creek , and Flat Branch Creek . Along these and other creeks in the area can be found large valleys , cliffs , and cave systems such as that in Rock Bridge State Park just south of the city . These creeks are largely responsible for numerous stream valleys giving Columbia hilly terrain similar to the Ozarks while also having prairie flatland typical of northern Missouri . Columbia also operates several greenbelts with trails and parks throughout town .

== Animal life ==

Large mammals found in the city includes urbanized coyotes and numerous whitetail deer . Eastern gray squirrel , and other rodents are abundant , as well as cottontail rabbits and the nocturnal opossum and raccoon . Large bird species are abundant in parks and include the Canada goose , mallard duck , as well as shorebirds , including the great egret and great blue heron . Turkeys are also common in wooded areas and can occasionally be seen on the MKT recreation trail . Populations of bald eagles are found by the Missouri River . The city is on the Mississippi Flyway , used by migrating birds , and has a large variety of small bird species , common to the eastern U.S. The Eurasian tree sparrow , an introduced species , is limited in North America to the counties surrounding St. Louis . Columbia has large areas of forested and open land and many of these areas are home to wildlife .

Frogs are commonly found in the springtime , especially after extensive wet periods . Common species include the American toad and species of chorus frogs , commonly called " spring peepers " that are found in nearly every pond . Some years have outbreaks of cicadas or ladybugs . Mosquitos and houseflies are common insect nuisances ; because of this , windows are nearly universally fitted with screens , and " screened @-@ in " porches are common in homes of the area .

== Climate ==

Columbia has a climate marked by sharp seasonal contrasts in temperature , falling between a humid continental and humid subtropical climate (Köppen Dfa / Cfa , respectively) , and is located in USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 6a . The monthly daily average temperature ranges from 29 @. 7 ° F (? 1 @. 3 ° C) in January to 77 @. 3 ° F (25 @. 2 ° C) in July , while the high reaches or exceeds 90 ° F (32 ° C) on an average 32 days per year , 100 ° F (38 ° C) on 2 @. 0 days , while 4 @. 0 nights of sub @- 0 ° F (? 18 ° C) lows can be expected . Precipitation tends to be greatest and most frequent in the latter half of spring , when severe weather is also most common . Snow averages 18 @. 0 inches (46 cm) per season , mostly from December to March , with occasional November accumulation and falls in April being rarer ; historically seasonal snow accumulation has ranged from 3 @. 4 in (8 @. 6 cm) in 2005 ? 06 to 54 @. 9 in (139 cm) in 1977 ? 78 . Extreme temperatures have ranged from ? 26 ° F (? 32 ° C) on February 12 , 1899 to 113 ° F (45 ° C) on July 12 and 14 , 1954 . Readings of ? 10 ° F (? 23 ° C) or 105 ° F (41 ° C) are uncommon , the last occurrences being January 7 , 2014 and July 31 , 2012 .

== Cityscape ==

Columbia 's most commonly recognizable architectural attributes reside downtown and within the university campuses . Widely used icons of the city are the University of Missouri 's Jesse Hall and the neo @- gothic Memorial Union . The David R. Francis Quadrangle is an example of Thomas Jefferson 's academic village concept . There are four historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places within the city : Downtown Columbia , East Campus Neighborhood , Francis Quadrangle , and North Ninth Street Historic District . The downtown skyline is relatively low and is dominated by the 10 @- story Tiger Hotel , and the 15 @- story Paquin Tower .

Downtown Columbia is an area of approximately one square mile surrounded by the University of Missouri on the south , Stephens College to the east and Columbia College on the north . The area serves as Columbia 's financial and business district and is the topic of a large initiative to draw tourism , which includes plans to capitalize on the area 's historic architecture , and Bohemian

characteristics .

The city 's historic residential core lies in a ring around downtown , extending especially to the west along Broadway , and south into the East Campus neighborhoods . The city government recognizes 63 neighborhood associations . The city 's most dense commercial areas are primarily located along Interstate 70 , U.S. Route 63 , Stadium Boulevard , Grindstone Parkway , and the downtown area .

= = Demographics = =

= = = 2010 census = = =

As of the census of 2010 , there were 108 @, @ 500 people , 43 @, @ 065 households , and 21 @, @ 418 families residing in the city . The population density was 1 @, @ 720 @. @ 0 inhabitants per square mile (664 @. @ 1 / km²) . There were 46 @, @ 758 housing units at an average density of 741 @. @ 2 per square mile (286 @. @ 2 / km²) . The racial makeup of the city was 79 @. @ 0 % White , 11 @. @ 3 % African American , 0 @. @ 3 % Native American , 5 @. @ 2 % Asian , 0 @. @ 1 % Pacific Islander , 1 @. @ 1 % from other races , and 3 @. @ 1 % from two or more races . Hispanic or Latino of any race were 3 @. @ 4 % of the population .

There were 43 @, @ 065 households of which 26 @. @ 1 % had children under the age of 18 living with them , 35 @. @ 6 % were married couples living together , 10 @. @ 6 % had a female householder with no husband present , 3 @. @ 5 % had a male householder with no wife present , and 50 @. @ 3 % were non @- @ families . 32 @. @ 0 % of all households were made up of individuals and 6 @. @ 6 % had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older . The average household size was 2 @. @ 32 and the average family size was 2 @. @ 94 .

In the city the population was spread out with 18 @. @ 8 % of residents under the age of 18 ; 27 @. @ 3 % between the ages of 18 and 24 ; 26 @. @ 7 % from 25 to 44 ; 18 @. @ 6 % from 45 to 64 ; and 8 @. @ 5 % who were 65 years of age or older . The median age in the city was 26 @. @ 8 years . The gender makeup of the city was 48 @. @ 3 % male and 51 @. @ 7 % female .

= = = 2000 census = = =

As of the census of 2000 , there were 84 @, @ 531 people , 33 @, @ 689 households , and 17 @, @ 282 families residing in the city . The population density was 1 @, @ 592 @. @ 8 people per square mile (615 @. @ 0 / km²) . There were 35 @, @ 916 housing units at an average density of 676 @. @ 8 per square mile (261 @. @ 3 / km²) . The racial makeup of the city was 81 @. @ 54 % White , 10 @. @ 85 % Black or African American , 0 @. @ 39 % Native American , 4 @. @ 30 % Asian , 0 @. @ 04 % Pacific Islander , 0 @. @ 81 % from other races , and 2 @. @ 07 % from two or more races . Hispanic or Latino of any race were 2 @. @ 05 % of the population .

There were 33 @, @ 689 households out of which 26 @. @ 1 % had children under the age of 18 living with them , 38 @. @ 2 % were married couples living together , 10 @. @ 3 % had a female householder with no husband present , and 48 @. @ 7 % were non @- @ families . 33 @. @ 1 % of all households were made up of individuals and 6 @. @ 5 % had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older . The average household size was 2 @. @ 26 and the average family size was 2 @. @ 92 .

In the city the population was spread out with 19 @. @ 7 % under the age of 18 , 26 @. @ 7 % from 18 to 24 , 28 @. @ 7 % from 25 to 44 , 16 @. @ 2 % from 45 to 64 , and 8 @. @ 6 % who were 65 years of age or older . The median age was 27 years . For every 100 females , there were 91 @. @ 8 males . For every 100 females age 18 and over , there were 89 @. @ 1 males .

The median income for a household in the city was \$ 33 @, @ 729 , and the median income for a family was \$ 52 @, @ 288 . Males had a median income of \$ 34 @, @ 710 versus \$ 26 @, @ 694 for females . The per capita income for the city was \$ 19 @, @ 507 . About 9 @. @ 4 % of families and 19 @. @ 2 % of the population were below the poverty line , including 14 @. @ 8 % of those under age 18 and 5 @. @ 2 % of those age 65 or over .

== Economy ==

Columbia 's economy is historically dominated by education , healthcare , and the insurance industry . Jobs in government are also common , either in Columbia or a half @-@ hour south in Jefferson City . Commutes into the city are also common and in 2000 , the city had a day time population of 106 @,@ 487 . The Columbia Regional Airport and the Missouri River Port of Rocheport connect the region with trade and transportation . The University of Missouri is by far the city 's largest employer .

The economy of Columbia 's metro area is slightly larger than that of the Bahamas . With a Gross Metropolitan Product of \$ 5 @.@ 84 billion in 2004 , Columbia 's economy makes up 2 @.@ 9 % of the Gross State Product of Missouri . Insurance corporations headquartered in Columbia include Shelter Insurance , and the Columbia Insurance Group . Other organizations include MFA Incorporated , the Missouri State High School Activities Association , and MFA Oil . Companies such as Socket , Datastorm Technologies , Inc . (no longer existent) , Slackers CDs and Games , Carfax , and MBS Textbook Exchange were founded in Columbia .

== Top employers ==

According to Columbia 's 2012 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report , the top employers in the city are :

== Culture ==

The Missouri Theatre Center for the Arts and Jesse Auditorium are Columbia 's largest fine arts venues . Ragtag Cinema annually hosts the well @-@ known True / False Film Festival . In 2008 , filmmaker Todd Sklar completed Box Elder , which was filmed entirely in and around Columbia and the University of Missouri . The University of Missouri 's Museum of Art and Archaeology displays 14 @,@ 000 works of art and archaeological objects in five galleries for no charge to the public . Libraries include the Columbia Public Library , the University of Missouri Libraries , with over three million volumes in Ellis Library , and the State Historical Society of Missouri . The " We Always Swing " Jazz Series and the Roots N Blues N BBQ Festival bring some of the country 's finest Jazz and Blues to Columbia and Central Missouri . One of the last remaining traditional arcades in the country , Gunther 's Games , is a popular destination for gamers .

Columbia has a flourishing and progressive music scene thanks in large part to many acts that come out of the University . The indie band White Rabbits was formed while the members were students at the University of Missouri before moving to Brooklyn to record and gain a higher profile . Musical artists from Columbia have been compiled by Painfully Midwestern Records with the ComoMusic Anthology series , and the " Das Kompilation " release . Although the hip genre continues to give Columbia some music recognition , it is their progressive psychedelic @-@ heavy metal music scene that has garnered some attention lately . There are also local punk and hip @-@ hop scenes that are gaining momentum locally . Country music singer @-@ songwriter Brett James is also a native of Columbia . The song " Whiskey Bottle , " by Uncle Tupelo , is rumored to be about the city of Columbia as it makes specific reference to a sign which used to be displayed on a Columbia tackle shop sign which read , " Liquor , Guns , and Ammo . " The sign is now displayed at the downtown location of Shakespeare 's Pizza .

== Sports ==

The University of Missouri 's sports teams , the Missouri Tigers , play a significant role in the city 's sports culture . Faurot Field at Memorial Stadium capacity 71 @,@ 168 , is host to both home football games and concerts . The Harnes Center and Mizzou Arena are two other large sport and event venues , the latter being the home arena for Mizzou 's basketball team . Taylor Stadium is

host to their baseball team and was the regional host for the 2007 NCAA Baseball Championship . Columbia College has several men and women collegiate sports teams as well . In 2007 , Columbia hosted the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Volleyball National Championship , which the Lady Cougars participated in .

Columbia also hosts the Show @-@ Me State Games , a non @-@ profit program of the Missouri Governor 's Council on Physical Fitness and Health . They are the largest state games in the United States . These games consist of 26 ? 28 @,@ 000 Missouri amateur athletes (35 @,@ 000 total) of all ages and ability levels who compete in the Olympic @-@ style sports festival during July and August every year . It recently made ESPN 's list of " 101 Things All Sports Fans Must Experience Before They Die " .

Situated midway between St. Louis and Kansas City , Columbians will often have allegiances to the professional sports teams housed there , such as the St. Louis Cardinals , the Kansas City Royals , the Kansas City Chiefs , and the St. Louis Blues .

The NRA Bianchi Cup is held in Columbia every year . It is among the most lucrative of all the shooting sports championships .

= = = Media = = =

The city has two daily newspapers : the Columbia Missourian in the morning and the Columbia Daily Tribune in the afternoon . The Missourian is directed by professional editors and staffed by Missouri School of Journalism students who do reporting , design , copy editing , information graphics , photography and multimedia . The Missourian is associated with the Spanish @-@ English bilingual publication Adelante ! and Vox magazine . With a daily circulation of nearly 20 @,@ 000 , the Daily Tribune is the most widely read newspaper in central Missouri . The University of Missouri has the independent but official student newspaper called The Maneater , which is printed bi @-@ weekly . The now @-@ defunct Prysms Weekly was also published in Columbia . In Fall 2009 , KCOU News launched full operations out of KCOU 88.1FM on the MU Campus . The entirely student @-@ run news organization airs a daily newscast , " The Pulse " , weekdays from 4 : 30 to 5 : 30 p.m.

The city has 14 radio stations and 4 television channels .

= = Government and politics = =

The City of Columbia 's current government was established by a home rule charter adopted by voters on November 11 , 1974 , which established a Council @-@ manager government that invested power in the City Council . The City Council is made up of seven members ? six elected by each of Columbia 's six wards , plus an at @-@ large council member , the Mayor , who is elected by all city voters . The mayor currently receives a \$ 9 @,@ 000 annual stipend and the six remaining council members receive a \$ 6 @,@ 000 annual stipend . They are elected to staggered three @-@ year terms . The Mayor , in addition to being a voting member of the City Council , is recognized as the head of city government for ceremonial purposes . Chief executive authority is invested in a city manager , who oversees the day @-@ to @-@ day operations of government .

Columbia is the county seat of Boone County , and the county court and government center are located there . The City is located in Missouri 's 4th congressional district . The 19th Missouri State Senate district covers all of Boone County . There are five Missouri House of Representatives districts (9 , 21 , 23 , 24 , 25) in the city . Columbia is home to a plethora of attorneys and serves as a legal hub and testing grounds for many new laws and grassroots efforts . The principal law enforcement agency is the Columbia Police Department , with the Columbia Fire Department providing fire protection . The University of Missouri Police Department patrols areas on and around the MU campus and has jurisdiction throughout the city and Boone County . The Public Service Joint Communications Center coordinates efforts between the two organizations as well as the Boone County Fire Protection District which operates Urban Search and Rescue Missouri Task Force 1 .

The population generally supports progressive causes such as the extensive city recycling programs and the decriminalization of cannabis both for medical and recreational use at the municipal level (though the scope of latter of the two cannabis ordinances has since been restricted) . The city is also one of only four in the state to offer medical benefits to same @-@ sex partners of city employees . The new health plan also extends health benefits to unmarried heterosexual domestic partners of city employees . On October 10 , 2006 , the City Council approved an ordinance to prohibit smoking in public places , including restaurants and bars . The ordinance was passed with protest , and several amendments to the ordinance reflect this . Today 's Columbians are unusually highly educated ; over half of citizens possess at least a bachelor 's degree , while over a quarter hold a graduate degree , making it the thirteenth most highly educated municipality in the United States .

= = Education = =

Columbia and much of the surrounding area lies within The Columbia Public School District . The district enrolls over 17 @, @ 000 students and had a revenue of nearly \$ 200 million for the 2007 ? 2008 school year . It is above the state average in attendance percentage and in graduation rate . The city operates four public high schools which cover grades 9 ? 12 : David H. Hickman High School , Rock Bridge High School , Muriel Battle High School , and Frederick Douglass High School . Rock Bridge is one of two Missouri high schools to receive a silver medal by U.S. News & World Report , putting it in the top 3 % of all high schools in the nation . Hickman has been on Newsweek magazine 's list of top 1 @, @ 300 schools in the country for the past three years and has more named presidential scholars than any other public high school in the United States . There are also several private high schools including : Christian Fellowship School , Columbia Independent School , Heritage Academy , Christian Chapel Academy , and the newly constructed Father Augustine Tolton Regional Catholic High School .

The city has three institutions of higher education : the University of Missouri , Stephens College , and Columbia College all of which surround Downtown Columbia . The city is the headquarters of the University of Missouri System , which also operates campuses in St. Louis , Kansas City , and Rolla . The University of Missouri was founded in 1839 as the first state university west of the Mississippi River . Stephens College prepares students to become leaders and innovators in a rapidly changing world , and engages lifelong learners in an educational experience characterized by intellectual rigor , creative expression and professional practice as well as offering innovative , career @-@ focused programs sound in the liberal arts with focuses on creative arts and sciences . Columbia College offers day and evening classes on its Columbia Campus , extension courses through its 34 nationwide campuses , and ties with U.S. military bases (including Guantanamo Bay , Cuba) , and online courses .

= = Infrastructure = =

= = = Transportation = = =

The Columbia Transit provides public bus and para @-@ transit service , and is owned and operated by the city . In 2008 , 1 @, @ 414 @, @ 400 passengers boarded along the system 's six fixed routes and nine University of Missouri shuttle routes , and 27 @, @ 000 boarded the Para @-@ transit service . The system is constantly experiencing growth in service and technology . A \$ 3 @. @ 5 million project to renovate and expand the Wabash Station , a rail depot built in 1910 and converted into the city 's transit center in the mid @-@ 1980s , was completed in summer of 2007 . In 2007 , a Transit Master Plan was created to address the future transit needs of the city and county with a comprehensive plan to add infrastructure in three key phases . The five to 15 @-@ year plan intends to add service along the southwest , southeast and northeast sections of Columbia and develop alternative transportation models for Boone County . Fares are \$ 1 @. @ 50

for adults , and \$.75 for children 5 ? 11 , for students with valid I.D , for handicapped / Medicare recipients , and for senior citizens age 65 and up . Columbia Transit offers FASTPass electronic fare cards and issues electronic transfers for accuracy and convenience . Para @-@ transit fares are \$ 2 @.@ 00 for a one @-@ way trip , and the service area includes all of Columbia . Buses operate Monday through Saturday , from 6 : 25am to 6 : 25pm Monday @-@ Wednesday , 6 : 25am to 10 : 25pm Thursday and Friday , and from 1 : 00am to 7 : 30pm on Saturday . Buses do not operate on Sunday .

The city 's former mayor , Darwin Hindman , is largely in favor of a non @-@ motorized transportation system , and can often be seen riding his bicycle around the city . Columbia is also known for its MKT Trail , a spur of the Katy Trail State Park , which allows foot and bike traffic across the city , and , conceivably , the state . It consists of a soft gravel surface , excellent for running and biking . Columbia also is preparing to embark on construction of several new bike paths and street bike lanes thanks to a \$ 25 million grant from the federal government . The city is also served by American Air Lines at the Columbia Regional Airport , the only commercial airport in mid @-@ Missouri .

I @-@ 70 (concurrent with US 40) and US 63 are the two main freeways used for travel to and from Columbia . Within the city , there are also three state highways : Routes 763 (Rangeline St & College Ave) , 163 (Providence Rd) , and 740 (Stadium Blvd) .

Rail service is provided by the city @-@ owned Columbia Terminal (COLT) Railroad , which runs from the north side of Columbia to Centralia and a connection to the Norfolk Southern Railway .

= = = Health systems = = =

Health care is a big part of Columbia 's economy , with nearly one in six people working in a health @-@ care related profession and a physician density that is about three times the United States average . Columbia 's hospitals and supporting facilities are a large referral center for the state , and medical related trips to the city are common . There are three hospital systems within the city and five hospitals with a total of 1 @,@ 105 beds .

The University of Missouri Health Care operates three hospitals in Columbia : the University of Missouri Hospital , the University of Missouri Women 's and Children 's Hospital (formerly Columbia Regional Hospital) , and the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center . Boone Hospital Center is administered by BJC Healthcare and operates several clinics as well as outpatient locations . The Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans ' Hospital , located next to University Hospital , is administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs .

There are also a large number of medically @-@ related industries in Columbia . The University of Missouri School of Medicine uses university @-@ owned facilities as teaching hospitals . The University of Missouri Research Reactor Center is the largest research reactor in the United States and produces radioisotopes used in nuclear medicine . The center serves as the sole supplier of the active ingredients in two U.S. Food and Drug Administration @-@ approved radiopharmaceuticals and produces Fluorine @-@ 18 used in PET imaging with its cyclotron .

= = Sister cities = =

In accordance with the Columbia Sister Cities Program , which operates in conjunction with Sister Cities International Columbia has been paired with five international sister cities in an attempt to foster cross @-@ cultural understanding :