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## NEWS

# A Decade of Data Tells a Story of How Charlottesville's

## Neighborhoods Are Changing

By Erin O'Hare and Evan Mitchell

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Charlottesville is changing.

Some of it is easy to see, with the constant construction of luxury offices and apartments and the hard-won redevelopment of public and low-income housing communities. Older homes are being renovated anew, and new neighbors are arriving every day. But many of the changes aren't as visible as orange detour signs, backhoes, or moving trucks.

Over the past decade, the percentage of Black residents has shrunk, even as Charlottesville's population overall has become slightly more racially and ethnically diverse. Overall, city residents are older and richer than they were. And the city is an increasingly expensive place to live. As [new data shows, the rich are getting richer while the poor are getting pushed out.](#)

Using data sets from the U.S. Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Project and the Charlottesville Open Data Portal, we've put numbers to some of these harder-to-see — or entirely invisible — shifts. These data provide a granular look at the city's shifting demographics as a whole since 2009, and by neighborhood since 2013. Some data go back to 1945.

What these data do not tell are the longer stories of the [Monacan Indian Nation](#), whose people have lived here long before the creation of the city of Charlottesville or the collection of this kind of data. Nor do the data tell the stories of the enslaved and later freed laborers who quite literally made the city and were sometimes not even considered full people to be counted in the Census, which was first conducted in [1790](#). ([The Descendants of Enslaved Communities at UVA](#), [and the Holsinger Studio Portrait Project](#), among other initiatives, are telling those stories.)

Over the next few months, Charlottesville Tomorrow will release a series of stories, one about each of Charlottesville's 19 neighborhoods. The city's Neighborhood Development Services department uses these 19 planning areas for internal project purposes, and they've served as our guide as well. Through history and a variety of data visualizations, including interactive and animated graphs, the stories will illustrate some of how Charlottesville has changed over the years. We hope that our communities will use the reports to better understand our past and present for the sake of the future. We're calling this project "Changing Charlottesville."

The series will also introduce an interactive dashboard so you can explore as much of the data as you'd like, digging into maps with the city's bike lanes or how much it costs to rent a three bedroom apartment, for example. Some of what the data shows is striking to see laid out in graphs and numbers. While neighborhoods like 10th and Page and Ridge Street have seen extraordinary changes in the past decade, others, like Lewis Mountain, have not. Still others, like Fifeville and Belmont, experienced seismic shifts a generation or two ago, and the data show what's happened since.

We're sharing this information as the city undergoes a major rezoning effort, one that seeks to increase both density and affordability throughout the city. A new zoning ordinance will alter what will be possible and where in the [future. Here's a bit about where the rezoning stands now.](#)

Bookmark this page [and subscribe to our free emails to get updates as](#) we add neighborhoods and data features to this project.

## How we created the Changing Charlottesville dashboard

Each story in the series examines some of what the data show about changes in Charlottesville's population and housing. The analysis of that data is informed by local history, original reporting by Charlottesville Tomorrow, the newsroom's story archive, and

reporting by area news outlets that have been around longer than we have. (We'll share a list of sources when we release the full dashboard this fall.) While the stories focus on what is unique to each neighborhood, readers will be able to use interactive tools for self guided learning and research.

Changing Charlottesville is a collaboration between Charlottesville Tomorrow and graduate students in the University of Virginia's School of Data Science. Each year, SDS graduate students carry out a capstone project with an organization outside of the university. Organizations suggest a problem that students, who serve as a consulting team, tackle with their data science expertise.

A group of four students, Evan Mitchell, Malvika Kuncham, Xinlun Cheng and Spencer Bozsik, and one faculty advisor, Jonathan Kropko, accepted Charlottesville Tomorrow's project submission in 2021: a look at housing affordability and changing demographics throughout the city. Over the course of the academic year, from fall to spring 2022, the students researched, cleaned and combined public data sets in order to effectively represent the impacts of the housing crisis through visualizations. Siri Russell, associate dean of diversity, equity and inclusion in the School of Data Science also served as an advisor on the initial project.

Charlottesville Tomorrow reporter Erin O'Hare and Evan Mitchell, have since collaborated on this series of stories, translating and contextualizing the data so that anyone can understand it. The series is edited by Angilee Shah, with data review by Jonathan Kropko, and comes alive with images by Andrew Shurtleff and design work by Ashley Harper.