PRIME NORTH CHARLESTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

BRIGHT IDEAS, BOLD ACTION

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 5-YEAR REVIEW



PLAN ADOPTED
AUGUST, 2025

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

City of North Charleston Council Members:

Mayor Reginald L. Burgess

District 1 - Mike A. Brown
District 2 - Rhonda Jerome
District 3 - Dr. Stephanie Ganaway-Pasley
District 4 - Dr. Charmaine Palmer-Roberts
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Planning Commissioners:

Sharon Reed, Chair
Samuel Bellamy, Vice-Chair
Sammie Douan
Mitchell Fife
Robert Flagler
Maggie Griesman
Charles Monteith
Corey Van Hannegeyn

We wish to also acknowledge the public and various community groups for their contributions to this five-year review of the PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan.

Note: Unless otherwise stated, data in all figures, tables, and referenced in text is from the US Census/ American Community Survey (ACS).

BCDCOG
BERKELEY-CHARLESTON-DORCHESTER COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

This five-year review of the PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan was prepared with the assistance of the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG).

NORTH CHARLESTON CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting of August 28, 2025

DATE: July 14, 2025

ITEM TITLE: An Ordinance to Adopt the Five-Year Review of the PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan and to Adopt a Resiliency Element as Part of the Comprehensive Plan

SUBMITTED BY: Planning Commission

CONTACT PERSON: Tim Macholl, Planning and Zoning Director, (843) 740-2572

SUMMARY EXPLANATION:
Beginning in the fall of 2024, the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG), staff and the Planning Commission initiated the five-year review of the PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2020. Four public sessions were held along with an online survey, generating over 100 responses and input to integrate and incorporate into the plan. Utilizing the data, public responses and stakeholder input, the Five-Year Review of PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan was drafted and prepared for consideration.

The Five-Year Review of the PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan provides an update of the City as a sustainable and resilient community based on four guiding principles established in the 2020 plan:

- Livability and Quality of Life;
- Sustainable Growth and Resiliency;
- Economic Opportunity; and
- Mobility and Connectivity.

Also included in the Review is the addition of a Resiliency element of the PRIME plan, a requirement established by state law after the plan's 2020 adoption. Input received on the draft Five-Year Review can be found in the Addendum of the Five-Year Review plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:
Approval.

BOARD, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:
On June 9, 2025, the Planning Commission held a working session to review the draft Five-Year Review. On July 14, 2025, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the Resolution to Recommend to City Council the Adoption of the Five-Year Review of the Comprehensive Plan and the Resiliency element (5-1-0).

COUNCIL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:
On August 21, 2025 the Public Safety Committee voted unanimously by voice vote to recommend approval of this Ordinance as presented. (8-0-0)

COUNCIL ACTION:
On August 28, 2025 City Council voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve the Ordinance as presented. (7-0-0)

Exhibits
___ Resolution _X_ Ordinance ___ Contract ___ Minutes _X_ Plan/Map ___ Transfer of Funds _X_ Other

ORDINANCE #2025-031

AN ORDINANCE
TO ADOPT THE FIVE-YEAR REVIEW OF THE PRIME NORTH CHARLESTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND TO ADOPT A RESILIENCY ELEMENT AS PART OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Whereas, the City of North Charleston Planning Commission found it necessary and appropriate, in accord with the SC Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act, to conduct a ten-year update of the City of North Charleston Comprehensive Plan to meet changing conditions in 2020; and

Whereas, the City of North Charleston adopted the PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan, hereinafter referred to as "the Comprehensive Plan" to provide a coordinated and comprehensive plan of long-term goals, objectives, and priorities to guide future development of North Charleston for the next twenty years; and

Whereas, the PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan addresses all of the planning elements required by Chapter 29 of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 as follows: population, housing, economic development, cultural and natural resources, community facilities, land use, transportation, and priority investment areas; and

Whereas, the Five-Year Review of the PRIME plan was conducted over the last ___ months, including the drafting of a Resiliency element, in keeping with a recent change in State law; and

Whereas, a public hearing was held August 21, 2025, to consider public comments on the plan during a meeting of the Mayor Council.

Now, therefore, be it ordained by the City of North Charleston Mayor and Council that, having met the requirements of the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, the PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review, the Resiliency Element, and associated appendices be hereby adopted.

Be it further ordained that the PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan shall be utilized by City Council, the North Charleston Planning Commission, and all City of North Charleston departments, agencies, and officials as the official guide in making decisions concerning growth and development within the City of North Charleston.

THE WITHIN ORDINANCE SHALL BE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY UPON ITS RATIFICATION BY CITY COUNCIL.

Ordained by City Council this 28th day of August, in the Year of Our Lord, 2025, in the 249th year of Independence of the United States of America.

Reginald L. Burgess, Mayor
REGINALD L. BURGESS, MAYOR

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

LEGAL COUNSEL

ATTEST:

C Fields
COURTNAY FIELDS, MUNICIPAL CLERK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRIME NORTH CHARLESTON | 5-YEAR REVIEW 1
- Introduction 1
- Planning Process 1
- 5-Year Review 3

LIVABILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE 4
- Community Facilities 4
- Growing Neighborhoods 4
- Housing Affordability 5

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND RESILIENCY 7
- Sustainable Growth 7
- Community Resilience 8

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY 9
- Economic Resiliency 9
- Economic Vitality 10

MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY 12
- Lowcountry Rapid Transit 12

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 14
- Future Land Use Discussion 14
  - Map 1: Future Land Use Map 16
- Updated Action Plan 17
- Priority Investments 33

EXISTING CONDITION ADDENDUMS 35

POPULATION ADDENDUM 37
- Map 2: North Charleston General Location 37
- Population Trends 38
- Demographics 40

HOUSING ADDENDUM 43
Housing Supply 43
Map 3: Concentration of Building Permits, 2020-2024 44
Housing Costs and Affordability 46
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADDENDUM 51
Labor Force 52
Occupation Analysis 53
Income and Poverty 54
Business and Industry Analysis 55
NATURAL RESOURCES ADDENDUM 61
Climate 61
Hydrology 62
Map 4: Watersheds, Major Rivers, and their Tributaries 62
Map 5: FEMA Floodplains 63
Map 6: Location of Wetlands by Wetland Types 64
Protected Lands 66
Map 7: Protected Lands by Ownership Type 66
Green Infrastructure 67
Map 8: Habitat Cores by Score Ranking 68
Map 9: Habitat Cores Risk of Development 68
RESILIENCY ELEMENT 69
Current Plans, Tools, and Ordinances 69
Map 10: FEMA Flood Zones and Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) 70
Vulnerabilities 71
Map 11A: Socioeconomic Status Ranking (SVI Theme 1) 72
Map 11B: Household Characteristics Ranking (SVI Theme 2) 72
Map 11C: Racial & Ethnic Minority Status Ranking (SVI Theme 3) 72
Map 11D: Housing Type/Transportation Ranking (SVI Theme 4) 72
Map 12: Combined Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) Ranking 73
Map 13: Location of FEMA's Community Disaster Resilience Zones (CDRZ) 73
Potential Hazards and their Impacts 74
Map 14: Areas Impacted by Sea Level Rise 75

CULTURAL RESOURCES ADDENDUM 78
Historic Districts 78
Map 15: Historic District Locations 78
Historic Structures and Neighborhoods 79
Cultural and Entertainment Venues 79
COMMUNITY FACILITIES ADDENDUM 80
Municipal Facilities 80
Public Safety 80
Map 16: Public Safety Facility Locations 81
Educational Institutions 82
Map 17: Educational Institution Locations 82
Parks and Recreation 84
Map 18: Location of Libraries, Parks, Recreation, Community, and Senior Center Facilities 85
Community and Senior Centers 86
TRANSPORTATION ADDENDUM 87
Transportation Coordination 87
Transportation Trends 88
Existing Transportation Network 89
Map 19: FHWA Roadway Functional Classification 91
Map 20: 2023 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Counts 92
Map 21: Level of Service, 2019 (Base Year) 93
Map 22: Level of Service, 2022 (Forcasted Year) 93
Map 23: Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) Corridor General Alignment and Station Locations 94
Map 24: Location of Strategic Freight Corridors, Railyards, and Port Terminals 96
Planned and Approved Transportation Projects 99
LAND USE ADDENDUM 102
Existing Land Use Patterns 102
Map 25: Existing Land Use Categories 103
Neighborhood Planning 104
TOD Policies 104
Commercial Patterns 104
APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INPUT MATRIX A1

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PRIME NORTH CHARLESTON | 5-YEAR REVIEW

A 5-Year Comprehensive Plan Review

INTRODUCTION

PRIME North Charleston is the most comprehensive and inclusive planning document that has been adopted by the City of North Charleston to date. In accordance with the State Code (SC Code §6-29-310 through §6-29-1200), PRIME North Charleston, adopted in June 2020, was a full ten-year update to the city's comprehensive plan.

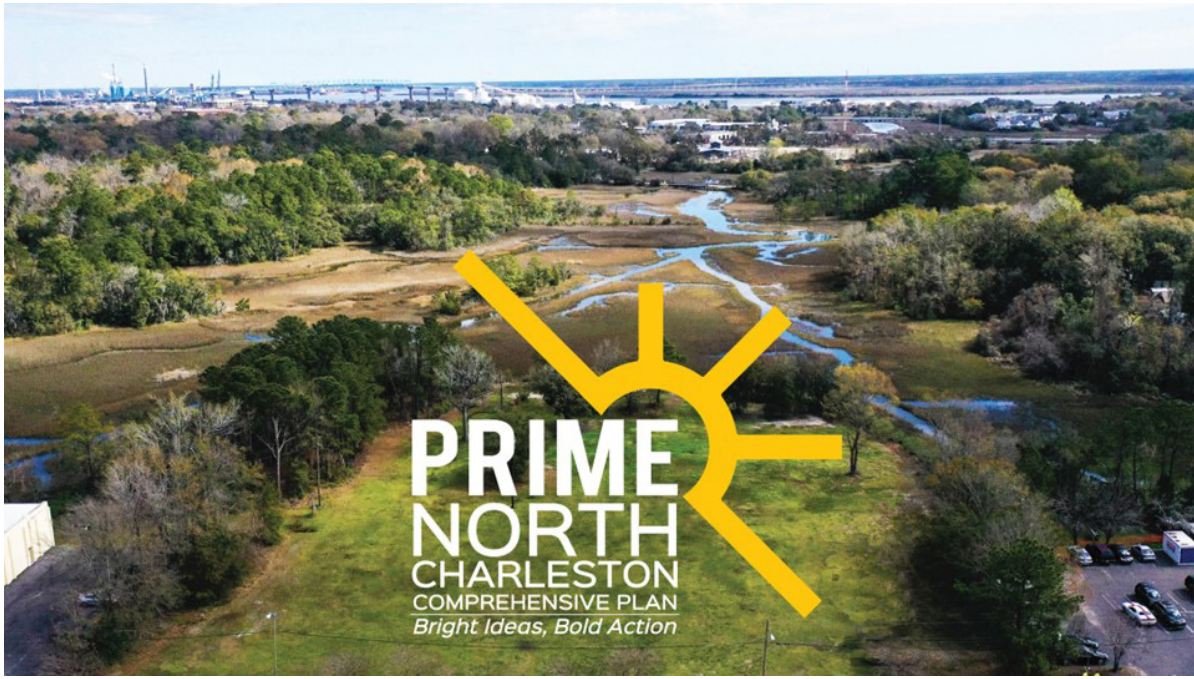
Now in 2025, PRIME North Charleston is due for its five-year review, as required by SC State Code. This five-year review is intended to build upon the vision, goals, and strategies outlined in PRIME North Charleston, provide updated demographic and socioeconomic data, and reevaluate priorities and recommendations for the next ten to twenty years.

Note: From this point forward, PRIME North Charleston will be referred to as PRIME NCHS while the five-year review will be referred to as the 5-YR Review.

PLANNING PROCESS

Similar to PRIME NCHS, the 5-YR Review was developed through collaborative efforts involving citizens, the City of North Charleston Planning Commission, and city leaders. The five-year review process began in the summer of 2024 with city staff coordinating with local officials and the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) in kickstarting the comprehensive planning process through a series of meetings and public engagement opportunities.

The entire planning process included check-in meetings with the Planning Commission and two rounds of public engagement, the first being in the Fall of 2024 and the second in the Spring of 2025. North Charleston Planning Commission provided a recommendation for approval by City Council in June 2025 followed by City Council adopting the 5-YR Review in August 2025.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Each round of public engagement consisted of two public open houses in different areas of the city, a total of four public open house events. All open house events were a walkthrough format which allowed participants to read the information, ask questions, and participate at their own pace.

Round 1 – Fall 2024

The first round of open houses was held on October 29, 2024, at the Gethsemani Community Center and on November 13, 2024, at the Northwoods Community Center. These meetings focused on assessing the community's sentiments on the priorities of the 2020 plan while introducing potentially new or expanded priorities. There were eight stations at each event that covered a wide range of topics including: the current vision and guiding principles; infill development; neighborhood visioning; community resilience; and land use. In total, between 50 to 60 people attended the two events.

Round 2 – Spring 2025

The second round of open houses was held on February 26, 2025, at the Wescott Park Clubhouse and on March 27, 2025, at North Charleston City Hall. This round was focused on presenting the findings of the five-year review process, particularly the updated action plan. The boards at these events were intended to be more informational and less interactive than the Fall boards while still allowing for attendees to ask questions and provide feedback if desired. There were between 40 and 50 people who attended the two events.

The 5-YR Review draft document was made available to the Planning Commission, City Council, and the Public on May 8, 2025. Comments submitted and staff responses are included as Appendix A.









5-YEAR REVIEW

Since the adoption of PRIME NCHS in 2020, the city has made great progress implementing some of the identified strategies and recommendations. The Action Plan, which is located in the Implementation Chapter, details completed actions made to further the goals and vision of the community established by PRIME NCHS. This 5-YR Review includes updates to existing conditions using updated Census data to analyze demographic and socioeconomic trends. It also highlights various projects and planning efforts, such as the renovations of Park Circle, the purchase of 440 acres for future passive park space in Ingleside, and the zoning overlays for the creation of mixed-use corridors, among others.

As detailed at the end of each of the four guiding principles established in the 2020 plan, the 5-YR Review process documents the individual actions taken to implement the goals of the guiding principles as well as highlights opportunities and initiatives to fulfill the goals of the plan. The implementation plan enumerates additional activity that the city can focus on during the remaining five years to ensure it remains PRIME(D) for the future.



LIVABILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE





There are various aspects of a community that influence livability and quality of life, such as safety, housing affordability, economic stability, local amenities, and neighborhood character. The City of North Charleston remains a highly desirable community due to its central location, relative affordability, and quality public services and facilities. It is important that existing city assets, services, and infrastructure be maintained and, if necessary, improved to meet this growing demand.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Expanding public services, such as public safety and recreation, is essential for improving quality of life while maintaining a high level of livability. The recent openings of several recreation and cultural facilities are major accomplishments for the city and will greatly improve the safety, health, and quality of life for residents, particularly children, for years to come. Further investment in neighborhood parks, community centers, and senior centers are needed to ensure equitable access to parks, recreation, and public spaces.

Based on the results of the Neighborhood Visioning exercise conducted at the Fall open houses, residents would prioritize investment in additional parks and community centers, as well as additional bike/pedestrian infrastructure. Most of the newer master planned communities have private open spaces and amenities for neighborhood residents. The city should continue to pursue any grants or funding opportunities to help fund community facility projects throughout the city.

GROWING NEIGHBORHOODS

Many of the older neighborhoods in North Charleston, such as Park Circle, Whipper Barony, and Union Heights, have witnessed an increase in infill and redevelopment projects in recent years. While redevelopment efforts are encouraged, maintaining and enhancing the character of these neighborhoods by supporting local organizations, reinvesting in local parks and community centers, improving neighborhood identity through signage, and enhancing land use patterns and densities is vital for ensuring neighborhood stability. Developing neighborhood or small area plans will allow for a more granular assessment of the community and are ideal for identifying the unique character and specific needs within a neighborhood.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

One of the biggest concerns among residents of the BCD region is housing affordability. Between 2020 and 2023 – or since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic – housing costs in the region increased by 17 percent for homeowners with a mortgage and by 20 percent for renters. The City of North Charleston experienced a 14 percent change in housing costs for homeowners with a mortgage and a 26 percent increase for renters during the same three-year period.

This recent surge in housing costs impacts the livability and quality of life across all demographic and socioeconomic groups in the region.

HOUSING FOR ALL

The region's recent growth rate has made housing affordability a top priority for most jurisdictions, including the City of North Charleston. In 2023, Charleston County completed Housing Our Future, a comprehensive plan for addressing housing and affordability. The plan identifies key issues and offers a toolkit of strategies to intentionally address and provide housing opportunities for all. While established for Charleston County as a whole, the goals and strategies outlined in the plan (**Figure 1**) can be extrapolated to North Charleston and retrofitted to address the specific needs of the city.

Figure 1: Goals and Recommended Strategies from Charleston County's Housing Our Future Plan

Goals & Recommended Strategies

Strategic Goal 1	Strategic Goal 2	Strategic Goal 3	Strategic Goal 4	Strategic Goal 5
Expand capacity of the local housing ecosystem	**Reduce barriers to adding needed housing supply**	**Invest in creation & preservation of attainable housing**	**Support housing stability & security**	**Increase equitable access to homeownership**
Establish an affordable housing trust fund to support priority activities	Continue to refine the Zoning & Land Regulations Development Ordinance (ZLDR) to maximize housing development opportunities	Establish new gap financing sources to increase the production of affordable and moderate-income housing	Create landlord incentive programs to help tenants overcome barriers to quality housing	Expand available down payment assistance and education programs
Provide capacity building and technical assistance resources to nonprofit and emerging housing developers	Collaborate with municipal partners to align zoning and other land use regulations	Utilize and bank land to support affordable and mixed-income housing development	Provide assistance to voucher holders searching for housing	Expand home repair resources for seniors and low-income homeowners
Cultivate partnerships with major employers to invest in housing	Accelerate permitting processes for housing development	Explore creation of a public development partner	Proactively advance affordable housing preservation priorities	Explore property tax relief for low-income homeowners
Strengthen the region's building trades workforce	Create incentives to bring vacant units back online	Continue to explore and support housing authority coordination	Provide emergency rental assistance resources	Facilitate establishment and expansion of community land trusts and other shared-equity models (such as limited equity housing cooperatives)
Sustain capacity within the County to advance key priorities	Continue to invest brownfield assessment and remediation	Explore using TIF and tax abatement to support affordable and moderate-income housing	Coordinate access to counsel for renters facing eviction	
Support and coordinate advocacy on state legislative issues		Review assessment policies for affordable housing	Explore policy protections to improve stability for renters	

Housing For All goes beyond home prices and includes unit types as well. Creating age-in-place communities, which often include a wider range of residential units, is another step for providing housing opportunities for all and improving livability. Typically, denser unit types, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, apartments, and condos, are both more affordable for first-time home buyers and beginner families as well as more attractive to retirees and empty nesters.

LCRT CORRIDOR AND TOD STUDY

Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCDCOG) continues to plan and evaluate the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) corridor along Rivers Avenue and University Boulevard to encourage sound development practices that will expand affordable housing opportunities and support ridership along the transit corridor. Phase II of the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) study was released in 2024. This study includes several reports and recommendations for housing and infrastructure related needs along the LCRT corridor, including specific zoning policies for transit-oriented development and funding programs to address affordability and anti-displacement strategies.

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

A Missing Middle Housing Scan and Barriers to Missing Middle Housing study was commissioned by Charleston Trident Association of Realtors (CTAR) and completed in 2024. The missing middle housing study defines missing middle as house-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods. The study assesses areas surrounding the LCRT stations to identify regulatory barriers and potential opportunities for missing middle housing developments.

Some of the identified benefits to "middle housing" include providing more housing options, promoting access to transit, fostering a sense of community, promoting sustainability, and providing local equity-building opportunities. These benefits have the potential to improve all aspects of the community, strengthening neighborhood stability, livability, and sustainability.

The risk of displacement and gentrification directly correlates with the ability to provide housing for all. Identifying and implementing strategies from various housing plans to address affordability and displacement remains a key action item for the next five years.

The Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) is a 21-mile rapid bus transit system that will connect different neighborhoods, employment centers, entertainment destinations, and transportation hubs in the region. Of the 20 planned LCRT stations, 12 of them are located within the City of North Charleston.

"Solutions to this housing and affordability gap will need to explore new types of housing that offer a broader range of price points and unit sizes. To understand if the existing housing stock is meeting the current housing needs, this report first assessed the range of existing housing types. While there are a number of existing MMH types located within the most historic and walkable areas of Charleston and North Charleston, the dominate type is single-family detached houses. Secondarily, there is a growing amount of units in buildings with 20 or more units. These two types do not match up with the shifting housing preferences and demographics of the people living and working in the region today."

- Excerpt from the 2024 Missing Middle Housing Study

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND RESILIENCY

One of the major challenges that the BCD region has faced since the turn of the century is how to balance growth with sustainability. North Charleston, like many municipalities in the region, has been under increased pressure to accommodate the region's surge in population, often at the expense of proper long-range planning efforts, adequate infrastructure, affordable housing options, and the natural environment.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

As the city quickly approaches build-out, there will likely be a natural shift in focus away from new large-scale master planned communities and toward infill and redevelopment in existing neighborhoods. The development of the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) corridor, more than half of which lies within North Charleston, will serve as a major catalyst for growth and development in the surrounding neighborhoods.

According to the LCRT 2024 Market Briefing Book, which is one of several reports released as part of Phase II of the TOD Study, the LCRT corridor is forecasted to add roughly 16,700 housing units between 2020 and 2045, a majority of which will be multi-family units. Incorporating TOD policies that encourage a mixture of uses, densities, and transportation modes centered around a transit station should be a top priority for the city in the coming years. The city also has the opportunity to incorporate Complete Street policies during the redevelopment of these station areas by developing a Complete Streets Plan.

Encouraging future growth in areas with existing services and infrastructure is key for sustainable growth so long as there is available capacity to accommodate both existing and future development needs. Certain regulations or zoning techniques should be evaluated to limit the amount of development, if any at all, on septic systems when utility hookup is available. The city should continue to pursue funding toward the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites, particularly those located along the LCRT corridor.

With future growth expected along the LCRT corridor, proactive planning for utility, service, and infrastructure improvements through a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is essential. Prioritizing the development of various long-range plans relating to housing affordability, capital improvements, land use/land management, micromobility, stormwater, green infrastructure, etc., is imperative to ensure the city is growing in a sustainable manner.

There have been several programs, plans, and studies released in recent years that include the City of North Charleston, or portions thereof, including:

- *Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*
- *Charleston County's Housing Our Future Plan*
- *BCDCOG's TOD Phase I and II Study*
- *CTAR's Missing Middle Housing Study*
- *Statewide (& BCDCOG) Green Infrastructure Plan*

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Incorporating sustainable growth practices, conserving natural resources, and implementing mitigation policies will gradually strengthen community resilience in North Charleston. The city's inventory of natural resources, which consists of wetlands, floodplains, streams, riparian buffers, and forestlands, creates a sizable "green infrastructure" network. These resources provide numerous critical ecological functions, such as stormwater management, erosion control, water/air filtration, nutrient cycling, and wildlife habitat.

Preserving large areas of land with an abundance of on-site natural resources is an important component for hazard mitigation as many neighborhoods within North Charleston rely on those features for stormwater management and flood control. The city's purchases of 213 acres along the Ashley River, 19 acres along I-526/Filbin Creek, 26 acres along Noisette Creek, and the 440 acres at Ingleside Plantation are but a few examples of high functioning areas with high environmental sensitivity that have been preserved through the Charleston County Greenbelt Program.

The City of North Charleston should continue to participate in various mitigation programs, plans and committees, such as FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), FEMA's Community Rating System program, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) program, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rating System, Charleston County's Continuity of Operations Plan, and the Charleston County Resiliency Advisory Committee, to further enhance community resilience.

The city should continue pursuing to become an All-American City by implementing some of the recommendations outlined by the All-American City 2025 Project. These recommendations focus on neighborhood-based climate resilience projects, community engagement, and efforts to raise climate change awareness.





ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

North Charleston's strategic location has allowed the city to remain one of the largest employment hubs in the state. The city's proximity and accessibility to numerous key transportation modes, including Interstates 26 and 526 which are part of the National Highway Freight Network, the Port of Charleston, Charleston International Airport, and CSX and Norfolk Southern Railyards, increases the city's competitiveness in attracting certain businesses and industries into the area.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

Creating an economic environment that provides opportunities for residents of all income levels to live, work, and play improves the sustainability and resiliency of the community. For North Charleston, this includes four primary components: economic diversity, investment in the workforce, housing diversity/affordability, and access to transportation.

It is important to maintain a wide range of jobs at various income levels and across different industries to reduce the potential impacts from a recession. This was proven effective in recent years as the City of North Charleston continues to thrive despite the nationwide impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As discussed in the Economic Development Addendum, an Industry Shift Share Analysis and Location Quotient of North Charleston identified key employment and emerging industries that are major contributors to the city's economic base. Those industries include Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Health Care, Accommodations & Food Services, Transportation & Warehousing, and Wholesale Trade industries. Some of the largest employers in the region, including Boeing SC, Trident Medical Center, Mercedes-Benz Vans LLC, and Bosch, belong to one of those key industries.

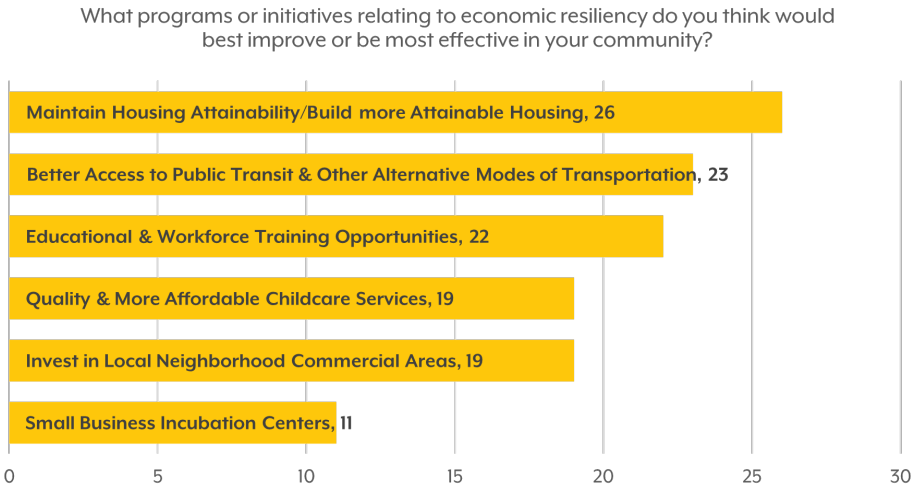
As discussed in the Livability and Quality of Life chapter, one of the biggest concerns among residents is housing affordability. In 2023, approximately 16 percent of people in North Charleston were living below the poverty line while 40 percent of households were considered to be living in unaffordable housing situations. Investments in workforce development, education, and training will likely lead to higher earning households, thus mitigating the impacts of rising housing costs. Improving the capacity of the local workforce is one of the most effective and long-lasting ways to strengthen the economic resilience of a community.

In 2023, the city is home to nearly 5,900 businesses and approximately 96,000 jobs, marking increases of 4.0 percent and 1.4 percent, respectively, since 2018. This growth is likely to continue as numerous investments by new and current businesses are announced each year, including Ingevity's establishment of a new corporate headquarters in Park Circle, adding 100 new jobs (2018), Cummins Turbo Technologies' $10.7 million expansion, creating 252 jobs (2021), and Boeing South Carolina's announcement of a $1 billion expansion projected to add 500 jobs (2024).

Maintaining a diverse housing stock across a broad affordability range is essential for providing attainable housing options to the widest range of people. This includes allowing a mixture of residential densities within neighborhoods, provided the design and siting remain consistent with the neighborhood's existing character. Incorporating Missing Middle Housing and TOD policies and regulations along the LCRT corridor will significantly expand the local housing stock.

A core pillar of creating a 'Live, Work, Play' environment is providing easy access to the general needs of the residents within the community. While this includes access to jobs and housing, easy access to various modes of transportation is also an important need for residents, particularly those older and/or of lower income. Approximately one-third of participants at the Fall Open Houses indicated that "Better Access to Public Transit and Other Alternative Modes of Transportation" would best improve or be most effective in improving economic resiliency in their communities (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2: Results from Fall Public Participation Boards



ECONOMIC VITALITY

Maintaining a growing yet sustainable economy often requires both public and private investment across all aspects of the community, including neighborhoods, public services and infrastructure, local amenities, and the workforce. A key component for attracting outside investment is ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is in place to accommodate current and future growth. This includes roadway and parking improvements, bike/pedestrian safety infrastructure, broadband services, public utilities, and stormwater management infrastructure.

Many residential and commercial areas in North Charleston, particularly in the older and lower income areas, experience some form of urban blight or disinvestment. Pursuing grants and reinvesting in existing neighborhoods with small-scale projects, such as facade improvements, streetscaping, wayfinding/branding signs, public safety enhancements, and park upgrades will help heighten the aesthetics and desirability of the neighborhoods.

Recently, there has been a rise in investment in local natural, cultural, and recreation assets. The city should utilize the recently opened recreational facilities, such as the Athletic Center, Aquatic Center, and Sports Complex, as economic drivers, as they have the potential to draw visitors to the area, benefiting local businesses and accommodations providers. The opening of a permanent artisan space in the Park Circle Community Center and an art museum on East Montague will expand the community's cultural output and should be leveraged and/or more utilized in the future.

INVESTING IN INNOVATION

One Region Roadmap, which is a strategic economic growth plan for the BCD Region, identifies certain industries including Aerospace, Automotive, Life Sciences, Information Technology (IT), and Logistics as major and/or emerging industries in the region. Establishing an Innovation Overlay district to capitalize on these emerging industries would enhance the economic resilience by diversifying the city's economic portfolio. This district could be established as an overlay to specifically target growing employment centers, such as higher education campuses, medical institutions, and high tech/office parks and promote specific uses, like research and development, advanced manufacturing, business incubators, biotech, software development, and other similar uses. An innovation district could provide incentives for job creation, limited specific uses, such as general manufacturing, and provide a clear vision of a place focused on emerging technologies.

FREIGHT EXPANSION

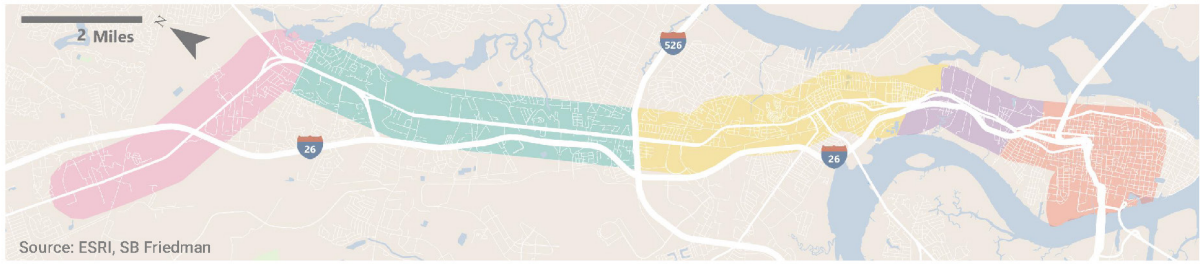
The SC Ports Authority recently purchased the former WestRock papermill site adjacent to the North Charleston Terminal with plans to expand the terminal. This, along with the Hugh K. Leatherman Terminal, will greatly expand the port capacity in North Charleston for the next decade and beyond. In addition, the Naval Base Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) is currently in development and will enhance the productivity and efficiency of freight movement through the Leatherman terminal. These expansions will attract manufacturing, assembly, transportation, and other related industries and businesses to the North Charleston area.

LCRT CORRIDOR

Along with opportunities to build on the momentum of the port and rail expansions, the public investment of approximately $700 million in the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) bus system will generate millions of dollars in private investment along and near the LCRT corridor. According to the LCRT 2024 Market Briefing Book, the LCRT corridor captured 12% of the total regional development that occurred since 2015, including 32% of regional office development, 28% of hospitality development, and 16% of multi-family residential development.

Demand for additional retail, hospitality, office, and other related uses is expected to continue rising as approximately 11,000 additional residential units are forecasted in North Charleston, with 16,700 units total projected for the LCRT corridor by 2045 (**Figure 3**). Continued support, collaboration, and planning to enable sound development along the LCRT corridor is imperative to the economic vitality of the city.

Figure 3: Projected Growth along the LCRT Corridor



	Northern Segment	Upper North Charleston	Lower North Charleson	The Neck	The Peninsula	Total Demand
Residential	1,700	1,700	3,400	4,200	5,700	16,700 UNITS
Retail	200,000	480,000	200,000	290,000	410,000	1.6M SF
Office	540,000	130,000	540,000	810,000	680,000	2.7M SF
Hospitality	170	170	500	660	2600	4,100 KEYS

MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

North Charleston's transportation network is one of the most influential aspects of the community and is a primary driver for economic growth and development. As the region continues to increase in population, traffic congestion causes delays and is a hindrance to mobility and connectivity. The average commute for North Charleston residents has steadily increased, rising from 22.6 minutes in 2010 to 23.1 minutes in 2017, and reaching 24.5 minutes in 2023.

Forecasts from the BCDCOG's Travel Demand Model, which includes numerous future transportation projects such as the Lowcountry Rapid Transit system, forecast that the majority of major roads in and through North Charleston will become overcapacity by 2045. Ensuring adequate infrastructure, particularly roadway capacity, is essential for supporting current and future growth while maintaining a highly mobile, well-connected community.

The expansion of the Port of Charleston will also likely lead to an increase in traffic congestion due to a rise in truck/freight traffic. The city should continue to collaborate with the Ports Authority, SCDOT, Charleston County, and the BCDCOG in the planning and implementation of different road and highway projects around the city, including the 526 Lowcountry Corridor, Palmetto Commerce Interchange, and the various projects related to the Navy Base and Hugh K. Leatherman Terminal, as well as develop plans that identify needed improvements and future projects that support connectivity and safety improvements for the community.

LOWCOUNTRY RAPID TRANSIT (LCRT)

LCRT is South Carolina's largest investment in public transit to date and will directly impact on how citizens of both the city and region move around the tri-county area. CARTA's Route 10 is currently the most utilized bus route and connects the Rivers Avenue corridor to downtown Charleston. The new bus rapid transit system is projected to serve more than 7,600 daily riders, many of whom are expected to be citizens of North Charleston.

As previously mentioned, the transit line can accommodate projected population growth with implementation of TOD design policies. Current and future city residents will rely upon the LCRT to provide transportation to employment centers, recreation, and retail destinations, thus planning and implementing coordinated access along with redevelopment opportunities will maximize accessibility and utilization of the transit line.

Both Phases of the TOD Studies identified potential routes and improvements to connect the transit corridor to the surrounding areas along Rivers Avenue. TOD Phase II identified several new connections, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared lanes, within a half mile of the LCRT transit stations. As of March 2025, there are approximately 20 miles of sidewalks and mixed-use paths that will be constructed along the LCRT corridor within the City of North Charleston alone.

Collaboration and coordination with various partners to assist in funding and evaluating different multi-modal and connectivity improvements is necessary. The City's recent grant award to create a Safety Action Plan to evaluate and rank transportation safety improvements will assist in identifying future needs. The city should continue to evaluate the need for a new Transportation Department to focus on coordinating projects, monitoring existing transportation-related infrastructure and facilities, and assisting in implementing local and regional transportation plans.



COMPLETE STREETS

Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing and building streets and communities that allows all people — regardless of age, ability, income, race or ethnicity — to safely, comfortably, and conveniently access homes, entertainment centers, schools, shops, health facilities, and other destinations by foot, bicycle, public transportation, car, or truck. While complete streets are imperative to the functionality of the LCRT system, they are also identified as a priority throughout the city. Identifying beneficial and practical improvements to provide multi-modal transportation options will further increase the quality of life for residents. A Complete Streets Plan will assist in identifying and prioritizing improvements to connect the city's neighborhoods with schools, recreation opportunities, employment centers, and other neighborhoods.

Improvements identified in future plans should be coordinated with future development opportunities, capital improvement planning, and other future transportation projects to ensure implementation of multi-modal connections is prioritized.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

FUTURE LAND USE DISCUSSION

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is a framework for many of the goals and policies in PRIME NCHS to be achieved. The city implements the vision of the FLUM and its associated land use categories through rezonings, policies, and land use planning efforts. Since the adoption of PRIME NCHS, the city has reviewed and recommended rezonings to implement the future land use vision. Zoning amendments, including overlay districts, design standards, and use categories have been tied to the future land use designations to ensure consistency between the plan and policy decisions.

As the city continues to accommodate growth in a manner that enhances the quality of life for all residents, the future land use designations provide the ability to incorporate the mixing of uses, direct growth to areas with existing resources, and encourage conservation of open spaces. To further support the development of mixed-use centers oriented around transit connections, an update to the FLUM and new zoning provisions are needed to incorporate Transit-Oriented Centers. **Map 1** identifies mixed-use nodes, each a half-mile in radius, surrounding the transit stations along the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) transit line.

FUTURE LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

Suburban Residential (SR)

The Suburban Residential designation is applied to areas where the city intends to sustain lower-density neighborhoods. The principal use of land within these designated areas is low-density, single-family residential development with large yards and open space. Multi-family development and commercial uses in proximity to designated Mixed-Use Corridor future land use areas are compatible within the SR designated areas as well.

Appropriate land uses include single-family residential detached housing, manufactured homes, open space, civic and recreation facilities, and mixed-uses depending on the surrounding uses.

Traditional Neighborhood (TN)

The Traditional Neighborhood designation is applied to areas of the city to provide for and/or sustain higher-density neighborhoods with smaller lots and a mix of housing types. Principal use of land in this designation is mixed residential typical of urban neighborhoods, including single-family residential development on smaller lots, attached residential structures such as duplexes and townhomes, and small-scale multi-family development. Where opportunities for infill and redevelopment exist, new communities should strive to include walkable neighborhood units within the development, in addition to appropriately scaled commercial uses. More intensive commercial and multi-family uses are appropriate in proximity to Mixed-Use Corridors.

Appropriate uses include single-family residential detached housing, manufactured homes, single-family attached units, multi-family residential structures, neighborhood-oriented commercial and/or mixed-use structures, and civic and recreation facilities. The appropriateness of these uses on an individual site is contingent upon the location and surrounding land uses.

Mixed-Use (MU)

The Mixed-Use designation is established to sustain a mixture of commercial and residential land uses located within close proximity to one another. Uses may be combined within a parcel and/or stacked within a structure. New development in the Mixed-Use areas should be designed to be compact, incorporating a system of open space including interconnected trails or sidewalks that provide access to parks, recreation, and open space areas as well as commercial services.

Appropriate uses include office, retail, multi-family, and light industry (manufacturing and assembly).

Mixed-Use Corridor (MUC)

The Mixed-Use Corridor designation is to provide for commercial, retail, office and higher density housing adjacent to principal transportation corridors throughout the city. These areas are intended to promote the development of mixed-uses that will enhance access to a wider range of services for nearby neighborhoods. Appropriate uses include office, retail, multi-family and light industry (manufacturing and assembly).

Mixed-Use Node (MUN)

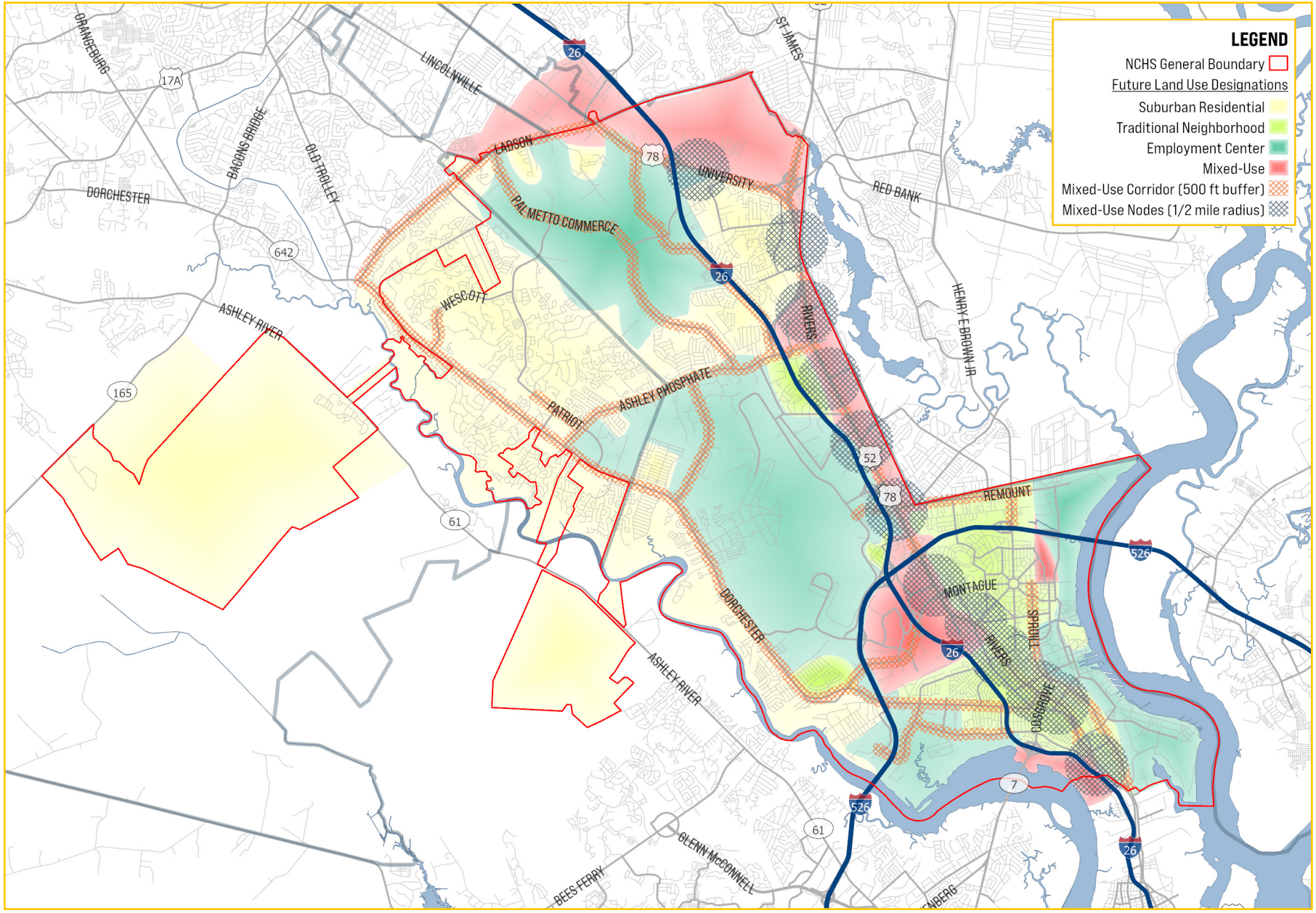
These Mixed Use Nodes, which are a half-mile in radius, have been identified by various plans and studies and used as the primary target area for future mixed-use development. Transit-Orientied Development (TOD) is encouraged in these locations to create compact, walkable, mixed-use distinct centers within a short walk from transit stations.

Employment Center (EC)

The Employment Center designation is for large-scale office and industrial uses developed for a major employer or cluster of employers with a mix of supporting or ancillary uses, such as restaurants, hotels and limited-service retail. Employment Center areas create a commerce-focused environment and generally benefit from proximity to one another, with ease of access to supportive services and residential areas to relieve congestion.

Appropriate land uses include office, light industry (manufacturing and assembly), ancillary retail/services for employees, commercial services, accommodations and public/institutional uses. Multi-family uses may also be compatible depending on the surrounding land uses and when sufficiently set back from industrial uses. Within the Employment Center designation, heavier industrial uses are also appropriate where in close proximity to freight and rail corridors, provided there is adequate separation from residential uses.

» MAP 1 *Future Land Use Map*



UPDATED ACTION PLAN

The updated Action Plan includes "Progress" reports to highlight the work that the city has done over the past five years as well as "Action Updates" and new Action items which are intended to provide new or more detailed actions for the city to pursue in the coming five years. A 5-Year Review Notes column was also added to provide any other details, comments, or notes needed to aid in the decision-making process.

Livability and Quality of Life (LQ)

As the City grows, ensure a high quality of life city-wide by enhancing and connecting existing communities and building well-designed neighborhoods, encouraging infill and redevelopment and providing accessible gathering places throughout the city.

LQ GOAL 1:
Promote the stability and maintenance of established residential neighborhoods

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
LQ-1A	Continue to support neighborhood organizations		Ongoing	Continuous meetings with various community leaders and groups
LQ-1B	Fill the vacant "Property Maintenance Inspector" position to address housing issues, including but not limited to, board ups, tear downs, and blight removal and continue investment in building and code enforcement	*	Short term	
LQ-1C	Encourage continuation of the landlord registration program		Ongoing	
LQ-1D	Identify resources to assist in funding infrastructure improvements in older neighborhoods		Short-term	
	ACTION UPDATE: *Target funding sources specific to upgrading public services, parks, and other community facilities, such as SCPRT's Parks and Recreation Development (PARD) and Outdoor Recreation Legacy Program (ORLP) grants and HUD's CDBG program*			
LQ-1E	Establish standards to encourage preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing, and encourage reuse of existing, vacant housing (by, for example, allowing re-establishment of legally constructed duplexes, etc. and/or multiple independent units on a single lot regardless of zoning with sufficient proof of legal establishment)	*	Short-term	Continual review necessary for preservation and rehabilitation standards
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment added to permit the reuse of existing and vacant housing to encourage investment in existing neighborhoods*			
LQ-1F	Support implementation of housing initiatives outlined in the 2010 Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities (LAMC) Plan		Ongoing	Coordinate with LAMC/ CCRAB

LQ GOAL 2:
Foster a sense of security and community pride in neighborhoods and public spaces

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
LQ-2A	Continue police outreach efforts and programming that improve communications between neighborhoods and police and foster neighborhood pride, such as RECAP, roll calls, and CAPS.		Ongoing	Resource officers assist in schools and new positions created for collaboration with school district
LQ-2B	Support after-school and other programs which provide youth with constructive activities.		Ongoing	
	PROGRESS: *Working to expand the after-school program to include three additional facilities.*			
LQ-2C	Work with neighborhoods to identify infrastructure needs, including lighting and pedestrian improvements.	*	Short-term	
	ACTION UPDATE*: Continue to identify and pursue funding sources for utility, safety, and infrastructure improvements, such as HUD's CDBG program and SC RIA grants*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Initiate a city-wide Bike, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan to improve neighborhood connectivity, enhance safety, and provide transportation alternatives*			
LQ-2D	Evaluate crime prevention techniques that can be achieved through environmental design, such as lighting design, landscaping, increasing pedestrian traffic, and street design		Mid-term	
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment added that requires additional site lighting*			
LQ-2E	Continue and enhance the City's investment in code enforcement		Ongoing	Focus on specific priorities along corridors to assist with redevelopment efforts

LQ GOAL 3:
Support investment in sustainable neighborhoods, including expansion of homeownership opportunities, affordable housing, and infill development

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
LQ-3A	Identify appropriate areas for infill development of affordable housing and amend regulations to incentivize the development	*	Short-term	
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment added to spur more opportunities for infill development and incentivize affordable housing along the LCRT route*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Incorporate Missing Middle Housing recommendations to ensure bulk, scale, and design of infill development is complementary with character of existing development*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Modify regulations to prioritize connectivity for all infill and redevelopment projects*			
LQ-3B	Accommodate and incentivize higher-density housing in appropriate areas to increase the potential for additional supply, through use of accessory dwelling units, allowing attached housing in traditionally detached single-family areas, and other applicable incentives	*	Short-term	Continue to evaluate and amend regulations for additional incentives for affordable housing
	PROGRESS: *Newly created Rivers Avenue Overlays incentivize affordable housing options*			
	PROGRESS: *Adopted an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Ordinance*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Review TOD density and zoning techniques and implement appropriate incentives and/or regulations to direct growth along transit corridors*			
LQ-3C	Collaborate with housing interests, including the North Charleston Housing Authority and regional housing groups, to find incentives and resources to increase homeownership, financial literacy and ownership retention		Ongoing	Continue participation in the Regional Housing Coalition
LQ-3D	**Create age-in-place communities by modifying existing provisions to allow for a wider range of residential unit types in established neighborhoods**		**Long-term**	***NEW***
LQ-3E	**Implement the goals and recommendations outlined in various plans to curb rise in lack of affordable housing, including but not limited to, Charleston County "Housing For All" , BCDCOG's TOD, Phase I, II & Future Phase III; and Missing Middle**		**Mid-term**	***NEW***
LQ-3F	**Develop a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to modernize and streamline the city's development process, with a focus on removing obstacles to housing production**	*	**Short-term**	***NEW***
LQ-3G	**Create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to facilitate the development of affordable housing**		**Short-term**	***NEW***

LQ GOAL 4: *Enhance the character, design, and identity of neighborhoods and corridors*				
	ACTION	**PRIORITY**	**TIMEFRAME**	**5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES**
LQ-4A	Establish gateways and districts and develop a cohesive branding program for each gateway, district, major commercial node and/or corridor including, but not limited to, wayfinding, gateway planning, and neighborhood branding		Mid-term	
LQ-4B	Develop and prioritize a list of improvements to public spaces, including streets and parks, which can serve to enhance visual character and improve the pedestrian environment	*	Mid-term	Incorporate this list into a Capital Improvement Plan and dedicate funding towards the implementation of these improvements
	PROGRESS: *Streetscape plans in design for Spruill Avenue; East Montague Avenue; and Reynolds Avenue*			
LQ-4C	Continue to work with neighborhoods on the installation and maintenance of neighborhood identification signs		Ongoing	
LQ-4D	Update the Zoning Regulations to have a consistent sign code throughout the City, with branding for commercial corridors	*	Short-term	
LQ-4E	Encourage use of design guidelines or performance requirements for new development, including but not limited to, minimum requirements and materials, as appropriate, and consider establishment of a commercial corridor design review board	*	Short-term	
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendments added to establish Upper 52-78, Rivers Avenue South and revisions to Olde Village Business Overlays*			
LQ-4F	Invest public funding in signage, streetscape improvements, etc. to spur private capital		Ongoing/ Short-term	
LQ-4G	Establish small area/neighborhood plans for traditional neighborhoods where fragmented land uses exist to develop a framework for future development, redevelopment, and public investment		Mid-term	Continue evaluation of neighborhood plans and incorporation of TOD design principles in appropriate areas
	PROGRESS: *Created a new zoning district - Navy Base Redevelopment District (NBRD)*			
	PROGRESS: *Committment for funding and coordination in Phase III of the TOD Study, to produce three neighborhood framework plans*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Identify neighborhoods with high redevelopment potential, such as those adjacent to future LCRT stations, and identify anti-displacement strategies to preserve neighborhood character*			
LQ-4H	**Utilize neighborhood plans and cultural resource surveys to document, protect, and enhance the character of older neighborhoods**		**Mid-term**	***NEW***

Sustainable Growth and Resiliency (SG)

Balanace growth impacts with the needs of the environment to ensure sustainability and resiliency.

SG GOAL 1:
Maintain a balance between the natural and built environment to alleviate the effects of growth on the natural environment and quality of life

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
SG-1A	Study and revise residential zoning districts to accommodate growth where there are existing resources and infrastructure, especially along transportation corridors, including development of vacant lots, assessing nonconforming provisions to encourage reuse and redevelopment, and incentivizing opportunities for redevelopment	*	Short-term	
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment revised standards for non-conforming use provisions and lot sizes in Traditional Neighborhood and Mixed-Use areas*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Evaluate zoning techniques that encourage growth where there is existing and adequate public infrastructure to accommodate future development, including standards for development on septic systems*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Reengage the staff Resiliency Working Group and provide professional development to integrate resiliency goals across departments*			
SG-1B	Continue collaborative efforts to identify and plan for redevelopment of brownfields, including grant funding to mitigate costs that potentially impede redevelopment of brownfields/gray fields		Ongoing	Utilize COG's Brownfield Assessment plan along with SC BEST program funding for assistance
SG-1C	Revise Zoning regulations to include incentives for greater conservation of green spaces, increase requirements for accessible open spaces within new developments, and reduce permitted impervious lot coverage in certain districts	*	Short-term	Continue evaluation of zoning techniques
	PROGRESS: *Created West Ashley Overlay ordinance and zoning amendment revised provisions for open space*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Create a Parks and Open Space Master Plan*			
SG-1D	Update development regulations to strengthen stormwater management (SWM) requirements, limit fill in flood zones, provide consistent riparian buffers, mitigate impacts of flooding, re-evaluate tree canopy and preservation requirements and develop standards to allow pervious sidewalks and roadways and other methodologies to better utilize infrastructure in multi-faceted ways.	*	Short-term	Continue evaluation and coordination of regulations to incorporate best development practices
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment for consistent buffer regulations; revised Tree Ordinance*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Develop Stormwater, Floodplain Management, and Urban Forestry Plans to inventory the natural resources within the city and to identify areas with high vulnerability to hazards*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Identify priority projects, best practices, and conservation initiatives to provide flood mitigation, wetland, habitat, and water quality protection*			

SG-1E	Re-evaluate Disaster Plan to ensure streamlined permitting requirements for post-disaster construction and incorporate regulations to accommodate temporary housing post-disaster		Ongoing	Continue evaluation of Hazard Mitigation techniques
SG-1F	**Continue to participate in various federal programs, such as FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program, FEMA's Community Rating System, and the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rating System, and maintain and/or improve the city's current rating**		**Ongoing**	***NEW***
SG-1G	**Participate in local, regional, or select committees, commissions, study groups, etc. that work to enhance the sustainability and resiliency of the region (Ex. Charleston County Resiliency Advsiory Committee)**		**Ongoing/ Short-term**	***NEW***
SG-1H	**Create a Resiliency and Sustainability Master Plan and incorporate the strategies and recommendations outlined for the city in the Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan**		**Medium-term**	***NEW***

SG GOAL 2:
Enhance natural resources as green infrastructure to build resiliency and protect water quality by minimizing impacts of stormwater and nuisance flooding

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
SG-2A	Develop and adopt a Green Infrastructure Plan for the City that addresses SWM requirements, encourages Low-Impact Development standards, limits fill in flood zones, and expands buffers to mitigate impacts of flooding		Mid-term	Review recommendations from the BCD Region Green Infrastructure Plan; coordinate efforts with Zoning Re-Write
	ACTION UPDATE: *Prioritize the conservation of the few remaining large tracts of undisturbed land, thereby protecting the on-site ecological resources and functions*			
SG-2B	Work with various partners to identify, maintain, and conserve larger tracts of natural resources while requiring accessible open spaces within new developments		Ongoing	Continue working with Charleston County Greenbelt program and other funding sources like SCPRT's ORLP grant
	PROGRESS: *Purchased 440 acres at Ingleside Plantation, 213 acres along the Ashley River, 19 acres along I-526/Filbin Creek, and 26 acres along Noisette Creek through Charleston County Greenbelt Program*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Create a Master Plan for Ingleside Plantation and Preserve*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Develop a public access plan for Noisette Preserve and Filbin Creek*			
SG-2C	Continue protecting scenic corridors and natural viewsheds along the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, through use of a consistent citywide wetland/riparian buffer, while allowing for stormwater facility and utility penetrations where appropriate	*	Short-term	
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment added to standarize wetland buffer requirements*			
SG-2D	Revise parking requirements and provide for reductions as an incentive to encourage larger open spaces, less impervious surface, and densities of development	*	Short-term	Continue evaluating regulations to incentivize less impervious surfaces and compact development
SG-2E	Encourage eco-friendly and neo-traditional development design to promote low-impact design, energy efficiency, and reduce sprawl	*	Ongoing/ Short-term	Continue evaluation of planning techniques to encourage low impact design
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment added to revise standards for traditional development*			
SG-2F	**Implement the policies and recommendations from the All American City 2025 Project wherever feasible**		**Mid-term**	***NEW***

SG GOAL 3:
Use the future land use map to serve as the framework for sustainable land uses and development patterns, including mixed-use, dense development

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
SG-3A	Reduce use of Planned Developments by establishing multi-layered, mixed use zoning districts to implement land use designations on the Future Land Use Map	*	Short-term	Continue to refine zoning regulations to address common variations requested within PDDs.
SG-3B	Evaluate areas to accommodate mixed use nodes/corridors and mixed-use pedestrian-oriented communities through use of overlay zoning that incorporate transit-oriented development guidelines and use of performance or form-based codes, conditional uses, and/or special exceptions	*	Short-term	Review Transit Supportive Code recommendations for TOD Development; continue evaluation of best practices and implementation of zoning techniques
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment added to incorporate standards along Rivers Avenue/US 52/US 78 mixed-use corridors*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Incorporate TOD design principles along transit corridors*			
SG-3C	Refine policies and land development regulations to consider requirements for pedestrian accessibility and connectivity within new developments in accordance with Complete Street design principles	*	Short-term	Additional amendments and policies should be included to address connectivity and accessibility
	PROGRESS: *Subdivision Ordinance Amendment added to enhance neighborhood connectivity*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Develop a Complete Streets Plan that incorporates Walk/Bike facility recommendations and implement applicable policy recommendations*			
SG-3D	Adopt an "Official Map" that displays potential future roads, parks, and public facilities in with S.C. Code Section 6-29-340(B)(2)(c)	*	Short-term	An Official Map will assist with implementing neighborhood and corridor visioning

SG GOAL 4:
Enable the provision of facilities and infrastructure to meet the needs of the existing and future population through coordination of land use planning with the availability of related infrastructure

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
SG-4A	Create and adopt a Facilities Master Plan/Capital Improvements Plan that addresses both the existing inventory of publicly-owned assets and future needed capital improvements	*	Short-term	Continue identifying short, medium, and long term capital improvements needs and goals to incorporate into a CIP
	***ACTION UPDATE**: Assess city-owned assets and develop a comprehensive Asset Management Plan*			
SG-4B	Continue to work with neighboring jurisdictions and applicable agencies to coordinate land development approvals with availability of infrastructure and reduce duplication of services		Ongoing	Consider policies restricting development on septic areas within sewer service areas
SG-4C	Develop an Annexation Policy for evaluation of potential annexations, associated impacts of concern, and reasonable geographic connectivity as well as planning for provision of services and infrastructure	*	Short-term	
	***ACTION UPDATE:** Evaluate the potential for establishing density and design standards for development on septic systems*			
SG-4D	Continue to seek grants and consider alternative revenue sources to fund infrastructure improvements		Ongoing	
	***ACTION UPDATE:** Continue to identify and pursue funding sources for utility, safety, and infrastructure improvements, such as HUD's CDBG program and SC RIA grants*			
SG-4E	Continue utilizing existing revenue sources, such as the City's sidewalk bank funding or tree mitigation bank, to fund infrastructure improvements, such as pedestrian connectivity between communities and park areas and streetscaping		Ongoing	
SG-4F	Continue use of TIFs and other public funding to spur private capital investment		Ongoing	
	***ACTION UPDATE**: Create a strategy to deploy TIF funds to execute projects identified in the Capital Improvement Plan*			

Economic Opportunity (EO)

Expand a vibrant and diversified economic climate that provides a range of employment opportunities, retains existing businesses and attracts new busiensses.

EO GOAL 1:
Encourage economic activity that capitalizes on north charleston's locational advantages and economic assets

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
EO-1A	Continue to encourage the revitalization of North Charleston's commercial corridors and nodes by improving public infrastructure		Ongoing	City-wide Plans, including TOD, WalkBike BCD, a Safety Action Plan, a Complete Streets Plan, and CIP will assist in prioritizing and coordinating revitalization efforts along corridors
	ACTION UPDATE: *Consider strategic opportunities for blight remediation and façade improvements*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Create plans for specific nodes to develop thriving commercial districts*			
EO-1B	Continue coordinating with the SC Ports Authority, Palmetto Railways, and the Department of Transportation in long range planning, including intermodal infrastructure advances and improvements, to support the City's role in the maritime industry		Ongoing	
EO-1C	Capitalize on opportunities for additional port-related investment, including recruitment of import-export firms		Long-term	
EO-1D	Coordinate long range planning with universities, colleges, and medical institutions to attract spinoff investment in research and development and provide opportunities for training		Long-term	
	ACTION UPDATE: *Create an Innovation Overlay district and apply it to areas surrounding higher educational facilities, medical campuses, and high-tech centers*			
EO-1E	Support and promote North Charleston as a business and cultural center of the region through continued marketing and recruitment activities		Ongoing	
	PROGRESS: *A new Small Business Enterprise Development Department was established to facilitate business growth*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Develop and implement a wayfinding system to highlight local businesses, attractions, and economic assets*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Explore opportunities to update and potentially replace the existing Coliseum to maintain competitiveness*			

EO-1F	Develop a plan to ensure the vitality of the former Navy Base, capitalizing on its potential as an economic catalyst, including defining the southern base area for port supportive activities and creating a small area master plan for the northern area of the base to guide and direct public and private investment to implement the vision for a future downtown North Charleston	*	Short-term	Continue collaboration with Ports for expansion and activities associated with operations to ensure vitality of community
	PROGRESS: *Created a new zoning district - Navy Base Redevelolpment District- to support the redevelopment efforts and activities*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Create a redevelopment plan for Olmstead Park*			
EO-1G	Continue support of airport expansion and supporting industries		Ongoing	
EO-1H	Position the City to be competitive in future federal and state economic incentives and programs, such as brownfield funding, opportunity zones, and small business incubation		Ongoing	

EO GOAL 2:
Locate intensive commercial and/or industrial uses where supportive infrastructure exists and impacts on neighborhoods can be mitigated

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
EO-2A	Develop a program of incentives to foster infill development of commercial and employment uses along transportation corridors that are easily accessible to residents, employees, and customers		Ongoing	Continue evaluation of zoning techniques to encourage development along transportation corridors
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendments added to allow for flex-uses to encourage the re-use of buildings along commercial corridors*			
EO-2B	Enhance economic viability of commercial corridors in accordance with the Future Land Use Map	*	Short-term	
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment added to incorporate Mixed-Use Corridors*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Support the LCRT project and related public investments to spur private investment that will improve access to housing, reduce blight, and provide transportation alternatives to decrease traffic congestion*			
EO-2C	Invest in existing infrastructure to attract and retain businesses		Ongoing	
	ACTION UPDATE: *Ensure adequate public facilities and infrastructure is in place to accommodate both existing and future development, including public services, road infrastructure and utility capacity*			
EO-2D	Evaluate the impact of city processes on doing business, including permitting, business licensing, and other requirements, and modify where appropriate to support business investment		Ongoing	

EO GOAL 3:
Attract businesses that will provide increased opportunities for North Charleston citizen's to work within the city, thereby creating a strong local employment base

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
EO-3A	Continue to support and work with the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, the Charleston Regional Development Alliance, the counties' economic development departments, and other regional business organizations to retain existing businesses and recruit new employment opportunities		Ongoing	
EO-3B	Work with Charleston County School District, Dorchester School District Two, Trident Technical College, Charleston Southern University, Ready SC and the State Department of Education to improve education and development of a skilled labor force		Ongoing	
	PROGRESS: *The Children and Family Services Coordinator and Children and Family Services Liaison positions were created in 2024 to work with families, educators, and employers to meet this objective.*			
EO-3C	Identify and adopt incentives for small businesses and work with partners to create "incubator" spaces or business districts for new commerce		Ongoing	
EO-3D	**Invest in city-wide blight remediation through code enforcement, façade improvements, streetscaping, wayfinding/branding signs, etc., to enhance neighborhood and commercial desirability**		**Mid-term**	***NEW***
EO-3E	**Maintain a diverse housing stock at a wide affordability range to minimize workforce leakage to adjacent communities**		**Short-term**	***NEW***

EO GOAL 4:
Utilize north charleston's cultural and recreational assets as a generator for the local economy

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
EO-4A	Identify funding sources to continue providing support for local arts organizations and establish a permanent cultural arts center/art gallery/museum to celebrate the City's diverse history and promote the arts	*	Mid-Term	
	PROGRESS: *A permanent cultural arts and artisan space was established in Park Circle Community Center and at an art museum on East Montague Avenue*			
EO-4B	Integrate public arts at all future bus rapid transit stations for branding and display purposes		Mid-Term	
	ACTION UPDATE: *Collaborate with CARTA to incorporate branding along the LCRT Corridor*			
EO-4C	Conduct and maintain an updated Historical and Architectural Survey		Mid-Term	
	ACTION UPDATE*: Pursue historic designations for Reynolds Avenue Business District and Liberty Hill Neighborhood*			
EO-4D	Expand farmer's market to other areas within the City		Short-term	
EO-4E	**Utilize the City's state of the art recreational facilities to generate economic activity by hosting local, regional, and state tournaments, events, and programs**		**Mid-term**	***NEW***

Mobility and Connectivity (MO)

Connect residents and visitors with employment, shopping, educational institutions, and activity centers through safe and efficient multi-modal regional transportation systems.

MO GOAL 1:
Promote a safe and reliable multi-modal transportation system

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
MO-1A	Support and promote use of transit for improved mobility within the City, including the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) and CARTA's traditional bus system		Ongoing	
	ACTION UPDATE: *Support the LCRT project and related public investments to spur private investment that will improve access to housing, reduce blight, and provide transportation alternatives to decrease traffic congestion*			
MO-1B	Collaborate with DOT and CHATS to prioritize safety improvements based on accident data, and utilize congestion management techniques such as traffic demand and management modeling, signal timing, access management and other technological advances to optimize operations		Ongoing	Safety Action Plan will provide recommendations and priorities of safety improvements
	PROGRESS: *Received a Safe Streets 4 All grant to complete a Safety Action Plan*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Utilizing funding secured from the federal Safe Streets for All Grant Program, create a city-wide Safety Action Plan to identify transportation enhancements and best practices to ensure safe streets for residents*			
MO-1C	Work with CHATS to implement prioritized transportation improvements in the CHATS 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan		Ongoing	
	PROGRESS: *Colloboration with CHATS to incorporate applicable grant opportunities to further develop LRTP projects, including updating priorities for 2045 plan*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Continue to collaborate with regional partners to address growing traffic challenges while leveraging the Transportation Sales Tax Program and other federal grant opportunities to pay for these improvements*			
MO-1D	Coordinate with CARTA on enhancement of current and future transit service and facilities		Ongoing	Incorporate CARTA into site design and review process
	ACTION UPDATE: *Review and consider adoption of Bus Shelter Guidelines and incorporate into design review process*			
MO-1E	Require traffic impact analyses based on expected peak-hour trips for each development and establish a policy for traffic impacts and multi-modal connectivity	*	Short-term	Continue evaluation and coordination of connectivity opportunities
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendments added that requires City to facilitate Traffic Impact Analyses for projects meeting specified trip-county thresholds*			

MO-1F	Establish a traffic and transportation department and/or position to coordinate with various entities sponsoring $3.4 billion in road projects under construction in the City over the next ten years	*	Short-term	
	ACTION UPDATE: *Evaluate the need for establishing a new Transportation Department to focus on coordinating projects, monitor existing transporation related facilities and infrastructure, including stormwater drains, sidewalks, multi-use paths, safety equipment, etc. and assist in implementation of transportation plans*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Develop a Street Network and Connectivity Plan*			
MO-1G	Continue seeking state and federal funds to improve and expand the existing transit network		Ongoing	
	PROGRESS: *Received the Railroad Crossing Elimination Planning Grant Award; planning and engineering studies to begin for Durant/Rivers Avenue overpass*			

MO GOAL 2:
Encourage connectivity of neighborhoods and increased mobility options while increasing safety measures

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
MO-2A	Adopt policies that support development of Complete Streets and evaluate regulations for design standards to require interconnectivity of roads, sidewalks, and bike lanes		Short-term	Continue coordination with BCDCOG to evaluate opportunities to complete multi-modal improvements and connectivity plans
	ACTION UPDATE: *Develop a Complete Streets Plan and implement the policies*			
MO-2B	Provide safe connections to transit corridors through the use of sidewalks, multi-use paths, crosswalks, etc.		Ongoing	
	ACTION UPDATE: *Adopt TOD design principles and recommendations for connectivity improvements along transit corridors*			
MO-2C	Prioritize safety improvements near schools, bus stops, and commercial corridors, including opportunities for Safe Routes to Schools grants		Ongoing	
	PROGRESS: *Received a Safe Streets 4 All grant to complete a Safety Action Plan*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Utilizing funding secured from the federal Safe Streets for All Grant Program, create a city-wide Safety Action Plan to identify transportation enhancements and best practices to ensure safe streets for residents*			
MO-2D	Pursue opportunities for making non-vehicular improvements and connections across the City, including, but not limited to, reuse of former rail lines' right-of-way for trails		Ongoing/ Long-term	
	ACTION UPDATE: *Explore the numerous resources, guides, and databases provided by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy for developing a network of non-vehicular corridors*			
	ACTION UPDATE*: Create a Master Plan for the proposed Azalea Trail and Northbridge Park*			
MO-2E	Coordinate with the State Ports Authority, CSX, Norfolk Southern, and Palmetto Railways (Department of Commerce), and trucking associations on development of facilities/ improvements to mitigate impacts of freight on neighborhoods/traffic flows		Ongoing	
	PROGRESS: *Roadway, Connector, and Overpass improvements for the Hugh Leathermen Terminal are in final phases*			
MO-2F	Annually update and continually enforce truck routing plan, including through the posting of truck prohibitions and police monitoring and enforcement		Short- term	
MO-2G	Evaluate and implement traffic calming strategies such as pedestrian bump outs, speed bumps, lowering neighborhood street speed limits, and stop signs where appropriate in conjunction with transportation improvements or spot efforts to protect residential areas from impacts of inappropriate volumes of through-traffic and/or excessive speed		Ongoing	
MO-2H	Improve access to neighborhoods and employment centers with traffic signage and signal enhancements, as well as roadway condition and intersection improvements		Ongoing	

MO GOAL 3:
Encourage land use patterns designed to support transit, including compact, walkable, mixed-use developments

	ACTION	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	5-YEAR REVIEW NOTES
MO-3A	Develop and adopt regulations, including overlay districts and design standards, to facilitate transit corridors and incentivize redevelopment along principal corridors, including reduction in required parking	*	Short-term	
	PROGRESS: *Zoning Amendment added to incentivize and reduce parking for mixed uses as well as zero lot line areas*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Adopt TOD design principles and recommendations for connectivity improvements along transit corridors*			
MO-3B	Evaluate principal corridors for opportunities and develop streetscape plans for safety as well as aesthetic and functional improvements, including lighting, crosswalks, sidewalks, improved pavement quality, wayfinding signage, etc.	*	Short-term	Continue reviewing and implementing aesthetic and functional improvements that will create character and value for the community
	PROGRESS: *Designs completed for several corridors to implement streetscaping and road diets*			
MO-3C	Implement projects identified in the Walk/Bike BCD plan, including those that address safety and connectivity issues		Ongoing	
	ACTION UPDATE: *Utilize funding sources such as CHATS Transportation Alternatives Program, SCPRC Grants, etc to assist in implementation of mobility and connectivity strategies*			
MO-3D	In coordination with development of the Capital Improvements Plan, identify streets to take over from SCDOT for maintenance and fund streetscape improvements to catalyze reinvestment		Ongoing	
MO-3E	Revise subdivision regulations as needed to require connectivity between neighborhoods and to abutting commercial centers	*	Short-term	
	PROGRESS: *Subdivision Ordinance Amendment added to enhance neighborhood connectivity*			
	ACTION UPDATE: *Modify regulations to prioritize connectivity for all infill and redevelopment projects*			

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN	UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE	ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN	SAFETY ACTION PLAN	BIKE, PEDESTRIAN, & TRAIL MASTER PLAN	NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS	PARKS & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN	STORMWATER & FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PLAN	RESILIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY MASTER PLAN	GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN	URBAN FROESTRY PLAN	PARKS & FACILITIES MAINTENANCE PLAN	STREET NETWORK & CONNECTIVITY PLAN	TOD STATION AREAS MASTER PLAN
CITY-WIDE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) TO ADDRESS FUNDING OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS	X	X	X		X							X		
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS	X	X		X	X								X	X
CITY'S ORDINANCES TO INCENTIVIZE COMPATIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT		X				X		X						X
NATURAL RESILIENCY INITIATIVES		X					X	X	X	X	X	X		
NEIGHBORHOOD VISIONING AND BRANDING PROGRAM		X			X	X	X					X		X

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS

The priority investments identified in PRIME NCHS focused on improving the functionality of the city and quality of life for residents. A priority for the City of North Charleston over the next five-to-ten years is to develop various planning documents and ordinances that help guide future investment city-wide as well as in specific neighborhoods.

The five priority investments identified in PRIME NCHS are listed in the table above along with a list of numerous plans that the city can develop and implement that work to achieve one or multiple priority investments.

Note: Investment efforts made by the city to achieve the priority investments should not be limited to the plans and ordinances listed in the table above. Those listed are intended to be top priority but the city should continue to be flexible in how it fulfills priority investments in the future.

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PRIME NORTH CHARLESTON
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

BRIGHT IDEAS, BOLD ACTION

EXISTING CONDITION ADDENDUMS



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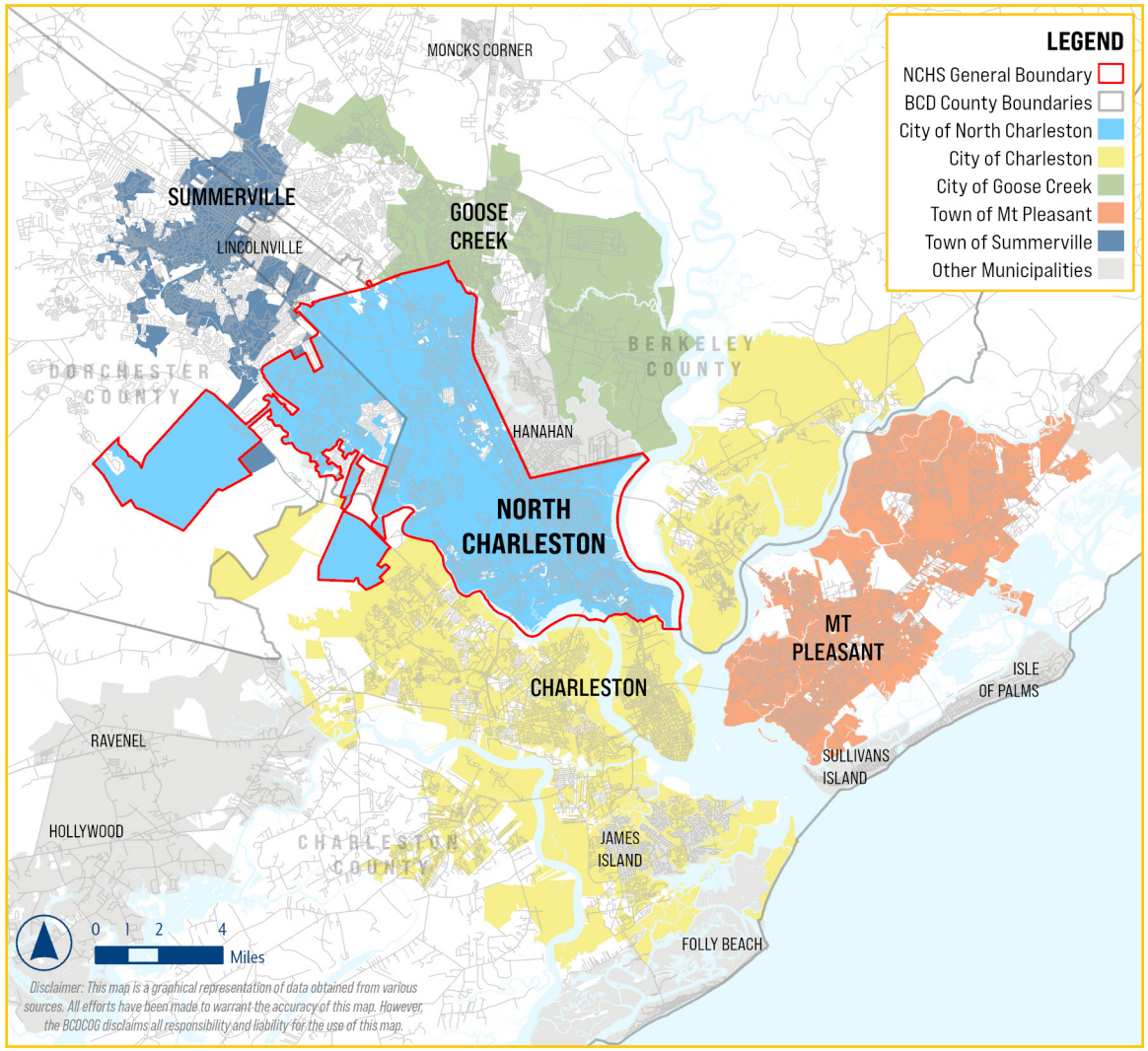
POPULATION ADDENDUM

5-Year Update Overview

The City of North Charleston continues to be one of the largest municipalities in the State of South Carolina with an estimated population of 117,460 people in 2023. North Charleston is also one of the largest cities of the Charleston-North Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which consists of all of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties, later referred to as the BCD Region or the Region. Other major municipalities in the region include the City of Charleston (most populous municipality in the state), the Town of Mount Pleasant, the Town of Summerville, and the City of Goose Creek (**Map 2**).

Between 2017 and 2023, the population of North Charleston has continued to grow and diversify. The city's total population increased from about 108,000 in 2017 to over 117,000 in 2023, an increase of about 9%, or by roughly 9,000 people. The median age of residents increased by 2.1 years which suggests that residents are likely aging in place and that many of those new residents were likely older in age. The population is also becoming more educated as the percentage of residents having attained a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 6 points between 2017 and 2023. The racial and ethnic makeup of the populace experienced significant changes during this review period. White and Black racial groups declined in population between 2017 and 2023 while Asian, Some Other Race, and Two or More Races experienced significant growth, increasing by 85%, 324%, and 129% respectively.

» MAP 2 *North Charleston General Location*



These shifts in population can impact other elements of the community, such as housing trends, income, employment, community facilities, commuter patterns, traffic volumes, public transit, and land use patterns. The following discussions highlight some of the changes throughout the 5-year review timeframe.

POPULATION TRENDS

As seen in **Figure 4**, the population of North Charleston grew from 79,641 in 2000 to 117,460 in 2023, a 47% overall increase, by about 38,000 people. A majority of this growth occurred between 2000 and 2010, averaging a 2.2% annual growth rate compared to 1.6% between 2010 and 2017 and 1.4% between 2017 and 2023. These growth trends impact future population projections which are discussed later in the Addendum. Other municipalities, namely Mt. Pleasant and Summerville, nearly doubled in population during the same period yet still have less population than North Charleston.

REGIONAL TRENDS

The metro area experienced a 49% increase in population from about 550,000 people in 2000 to about 818,000 people in 2023. During this time, most of the urban areas, like North Charleston, grew alongside the region with the city consistently accounting for 14-15% of the region's total population since 2000.

As seen in **Figure 5**, about two-thirds of the region's total growth between 2000 and 2023 occurred in the five most populous municipalities in the region, North Charleston included. Although Berkeley County has been among the fastest growing counties in the state in recent years, the municipalities that experienced the largest increase in population between 2000 and 2023 were almost entirely in Charleston County.

Figure 4: Historic Population Trends

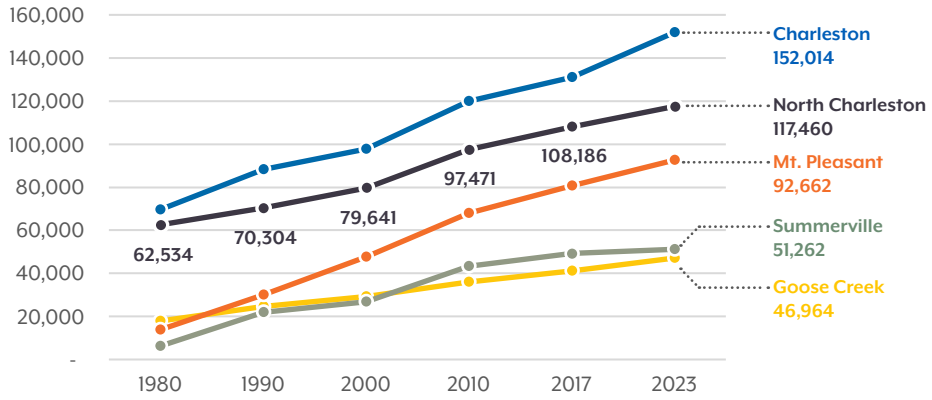
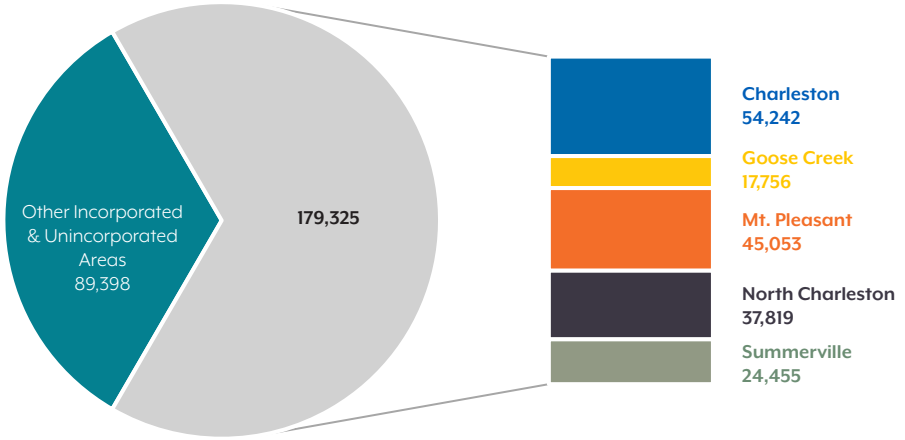


Figure 5: 2000-2023 Regional Population Growth by Jurisdiction



FUTURE PROJECTIONS

Between 2017 and 2023, the population of North Charleston increased by just over 9,000 people, averaging a 1.4% annual population growth rate over that six-year period. This was a slightly slower growth rate than the 1.7% annual rate between 2012 and 2017 that the existing Population Element identified. **Figure 6** compares the population projections from the existing element to this updated forecast. It was projected that North Charleston would have over 116,00 residents by 2020 which was not actually reached until 2022/2023.

The projections illustrated in **Figure 6** assume that the city will grow at a constant rate when in reality, population growth is influenced by numerous different factors, like the economy, housing trends, education, utilities, infrastructure, etc. **Figure 7** shows a range of population projection scenarios based on the 1.4% average rate. Between 2023 and 2045, the middle or average growth scenario, which is the same scenario illustrated in **Figure 6**, projects the city's total population could reach roughly 159,000 by 2045, a 35% total increase. Regional planning and infrastructure projects, such as the development of the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) bus line and incorporation of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) practices, as well as the annexation and development of the Watson Hill tract increases the likelihood that the city's population will follow a higher-than-average projection scenario.

Figure 6: Population Projection Comparison

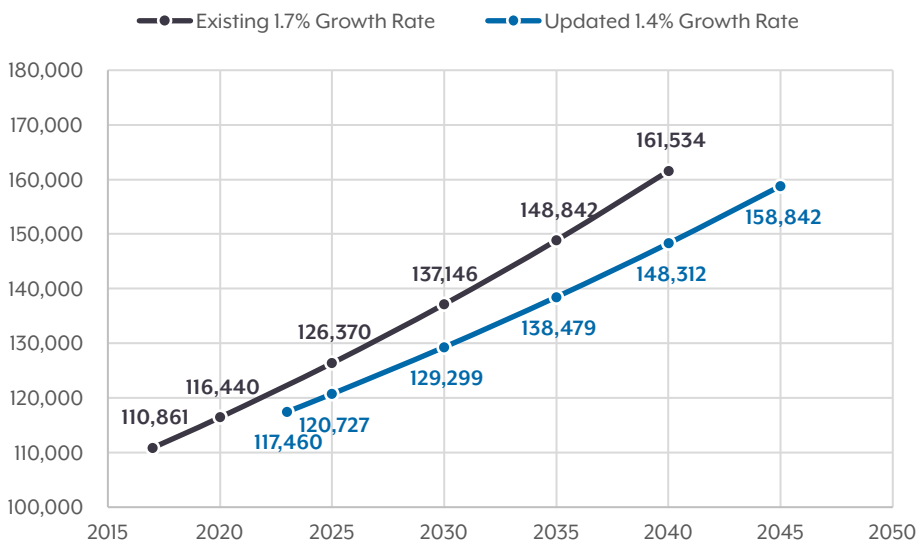
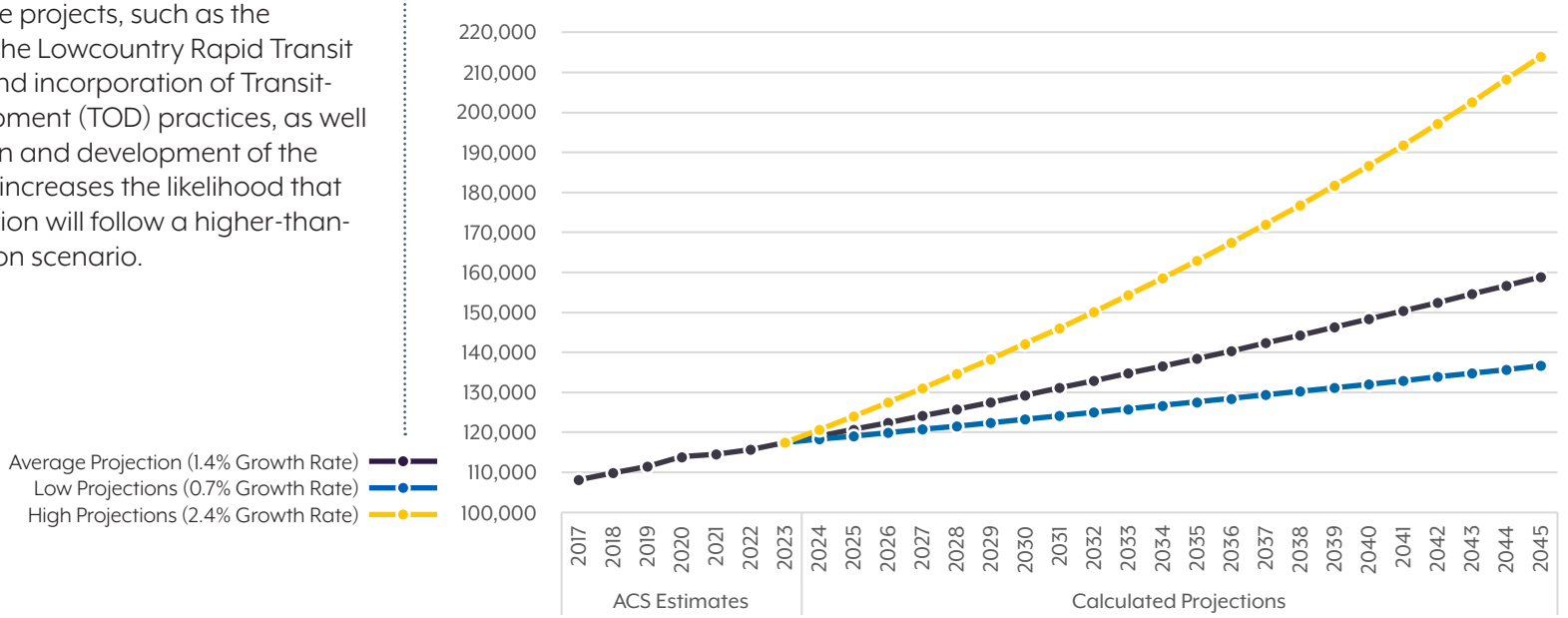


Figure 7: Population Projection Growth Scenarios



DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE DISTRIBUTION

The demographics or characteristics of a population are important factors that influence the wants and needs of a community. In 2023, the median age in North Charleston was 34.6 years old, compared to 32.5 years old in 2017, a 2.1-year increase and a 4.1-year increase since 2010, when the median age was 30.5 years old. The city's median age remains lower when compared to Charleston County (39.0), the BCD region (38.1), and South Carolina (40.1).

In 2023, residents between the ages of 18 and 34 accounted for the largest portion of the population at about 28%. Children under the age of 18 accounted for nearly one-fourth (23%) of the city's total population while older adults accounted for about 12% of the population (**Figure 8**).

Figure 9 compares the age distribution of city residents between 2010, 2017 and 2023. The most notable changes were the continuous decline in people under 5, people ages 20–24, and people ages 45-49 while most of the older adult age groups either continuously increased or remained steady during the same timeframe. These shifts help explain the 4.1-year increase in median age between 2010 and 2022. There are many contributing factors that can impact or cause shifts in the age distribution of a community, such as cost of living, income and wages, housing unit types, proximity to higher education, proximity to health and medical centers, access to transit services, among others. It is important to recognize these factors and the age distribution of the community to provide appropriate services and amenities related to the population.

Figure 8: 2023 Age Categories

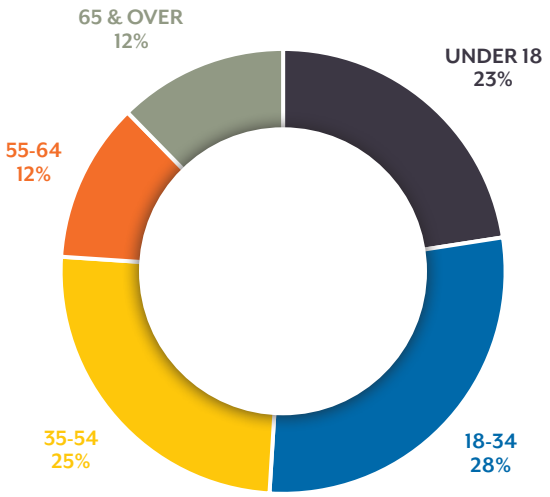
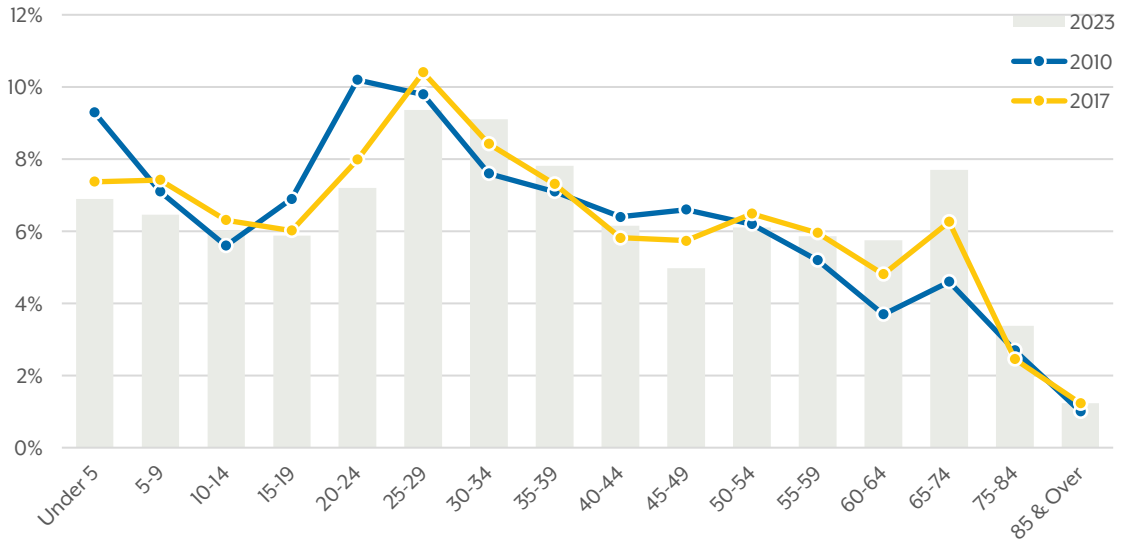


Figure 9: Change in Age Distribution



DIVERSITY

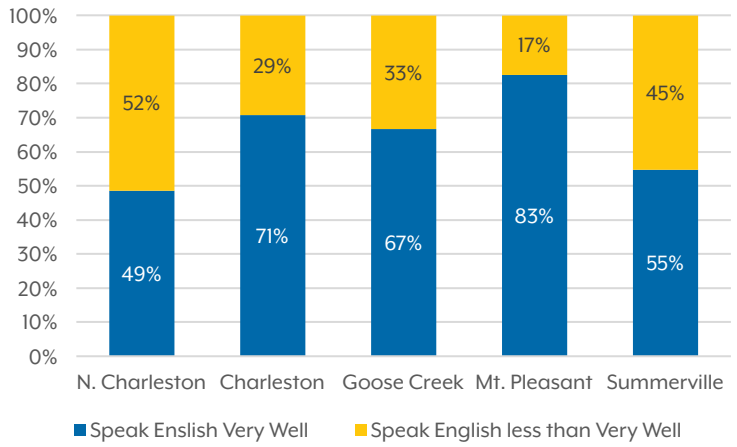
Black or African American was the largest racial group in North Charleston in 2000, 2010, 2017, and continues to be so in 2023, representing 42% of the city's total population. As seen in **Table 1**, while the number of people identifying as White or Black or African American increased between 2000 and 2023, the proportion of each racial group actually declined. Conversely, residents identifying as any of the other race categories increased by sizable margins both numerically and proportionally between 2000 and 2023. A major shift in ethnicity of the population was the increase in people identifying as Hispanic or Latino, increasing from 4% in 2000 to 13% in 2023. This 9-point increase is equivalent to nearly 12,000 more people identifying as Hispanic or Latino in 2023 than in 2000, a 376% total increase.

Table 1: Racial and Ethnic Composition

	2000		2010		2017		2023		2000-2023	
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	*Change*	*% Change*
Total	79,641		97,471		108,186		117,460		37,819	47.5%
Race										
White	35,651	44.8%	40,514	41.6%	49,005	45.3%	45,877	39.1%	10,226	28.7%
Black or African American	39,348	49.4%	45,964	47.2%	51,117	47.2%	49,610	42.2%	10,262	26.1%
Asian	1,263	1.6%	1,897	1.9%	2,220	2.1%	4,112	3.5%	2,849	225.6%
Some Other Race	1,841	2.3%	6,677	6.9%	2,311	2.1%	9,789	8.3%	7,948	431.7%
Two or More Races	1,538	1.9%	2,419	2.5%	3,533	3.3%	8,072	6.9%	6,534	424.8%
Ethnicity										
Hispanic or Latino (of any Race)	3,163	4.0%	10,617	10.9%	11,270	10.4%	15,065	12.8%	11,902	376.3%

Considering the increase in Hispanic or Latino population, it is important to identify the potential language barrier between community members, public officials, city staff, etc. In 2023, 16% of people (over the age of 5) speak a language other than English at home, a majority of which (11%) speak Spanish. **Figure 10** illustrates the potential language barrier for the 16% of the population, with just over half identifying as speaking English less than well. Additional resources will be needed to accommodate this growing demographic and bridge the gap between residents proficient and not proficient in English.

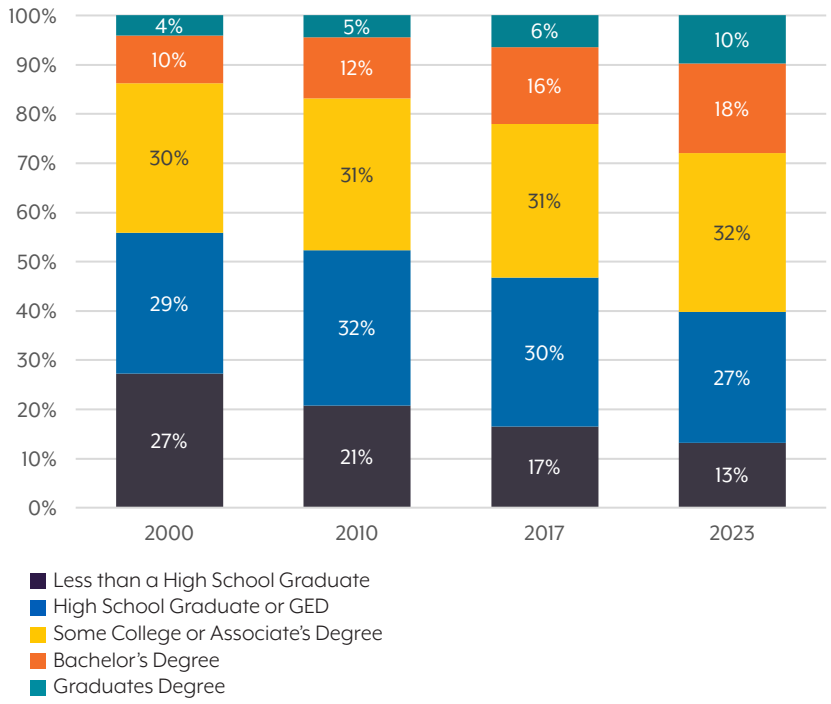
Figure 10: Potential Language Barriers - Proficiency in Speaking English



EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

Since 2000, residents of North Charleston have become more educated, with 28% of the population having attained a bachelor's degree or higher in 2023, as illustrated in **Figure 11**. Despite this trend, nearly 11,000 people in 2023, or about 13% of the city's population (ages 25 and over), still remain without at least a high school diploma or GED. The City of North Charleston continues to have a diverse population that also has a lower educational attainment than the BCD region and State of South Carolina in 2023, as was the case in 2010 and 2017.

Figure 11: Change in Educational Attainment





HOUSING ADDENDUM

5-Year Update Overview

The housing stock in North Charleston has expanded to include an additional 7,200 units between 2017 and 2023 with about half of those units being single-family detached type units. Forty-nine percent (49%) of the city's total housing stock in 2023 were single-family detached units, with developments like Watson Hill and Windsor Hill likely increasing that majority even further in the future. Home vacancy rates remain over 10% of the city's total housing stock while homeownership is on the rise with owner-occupied units increasing from 44% of the total occupied housing units in 2017 to 49% in 2023.

Affordability and the cost of housing underwent the most significant change between 2017 and 2023. The median monthly housing costs in North Charleston increased by 20% for homeowners (with a mortgage) and by 43% for renters. These increases coincide with the 76% increase in median home sales price reported by the Charleston Trident Realtors Association (CTAR) between 2017 and 2023 and the 45% increase in median monthly rent reported by Zillow between 2017 and 2024. Despite these increases, the percentage of households paying over 30% of their monthly income towards housing costs decreased from 45% in 2017 to 40% in 2023, indicating that housing costs are slowly becoming more "affordable" to a greater number of households.

HOUSING SUPPLY

The City of North Charleston's housing stock remains diverse in age, type, occupancy, and value. The total number of housing units in North Charleston increased by 58% from 33,649 in 2000 to 53,133 in 2023, a difference of just over 19,000 units (approximately 7,200 units between 2017 and 2023). As seen in **Table 2**, a majority of those additional units were single-family detached (+11,000 units), which continues to be the largest housing unit type in the city as of 2023.

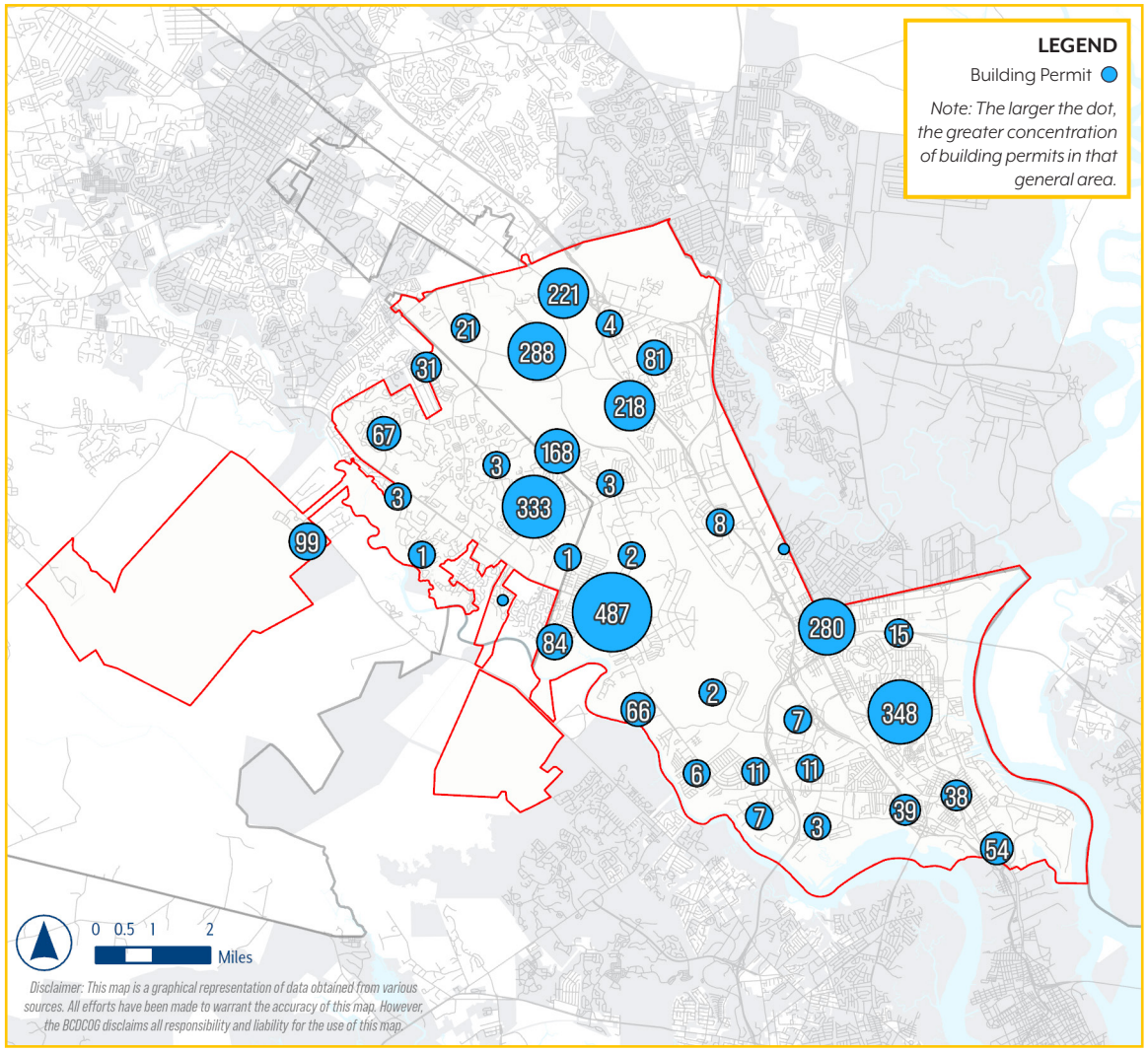
Table 2: Distribution of Housing Units by Unit Type

	2000	2010	2017	2023	% OF CURRENT INVENTORY	PERCENT CHANGE OF TOTAL UNITS			
						2000-2010	2010-2017	2017-2023	2000-2023
Total	33,649	41,519	45,893	53,133	100%	23.4%	10.5%	15.8%	57.9%
Single-Family Detached	15,316	20,217	22,445	26,088	49.1%	32.0%	11.0%	16.2%	70.3%
Single-Family Attached	2,191	2,055	3,393	3,904	7.3%	-6.2%	65.1%	15.1%	78.2%
Multi-Family	10,600	14,665	15,693	19,471	36.6%	38.3%	7.0%	24.1%	83.7%
2-4 Units	4,181	4,775	4,519	4,396	8.3%	14.2%	-5.4%	-2.7%	5.1%
5-9 Units	3,768	5,170	4,689	5,329	10.0%	37.2%	-9.3%	13.6%	41.4%
10+ Units	2,651	4720	6,485	9,746	18.3%	78.0%	37.4%	50.3%	267.6%
Mobile Home	5,514	4,573	4,355	3,628	6.8%	-17.1%	-4.8%	-16.7%	-34.2%
Other (Boat, RV, Van)	28	9	7	42	0.1%	-67.9%	-22.2%	500.0%	50.0%

Multi-family units also increased by just under 9,000 units with structures consisting of 10 or more units experiencing the most significant change, increasing by 268% overall and averaging 308 new units constructed each year. Multi-family units accounted for about 36% of the city's total housing stock in 2023, a slight increase since 2010 and 2017 when multi-family units accounted for 35% and 34% respectively. Mobile homes decreased by 34%, or by nearly 2,000 units in this same timeframe.

According to building permit data compiled between 2020 and 2024, there were just under 2,000 residential building permits issued throughout the city. **Map 3** illustrates the concentration of these permits, indicating higher growth areas, such as Watson Hill, Windsor Hill, Mixson, and Crescent Pointe. While some permits were issued for minor home improvements/ repairs, additions, utility work, etc., a vast majority of them were issued for the construction of new residential buildings including new single-family detached homes, townhomes, and multi-family unit apartments.

» MAP 3 *Concentration of Building Permits, 2020-2024*



Data Source: BCDCOG Building Permit Database, 2020-2024

The City of North Charleston, like the City of Charleston, has a sizeable inventory of older homes with just over half of the city's housing stock being constructed before 2000 (**Figure 12**). The distribution of newer and older homes is likely to change over the next several years as new developments finish building, adding hundreds of newly constructed single-family homes to the city's housing supply. As noted in **Figure 12**, the median construction year of housing units in North Charleston was 1995 in 2023. Given city and regional growth trends, it is likely that the city's median construction year will surpass the year 2000 by the end of the decade.

As homes in the city continue to age, a large share of the city's housing stock will fall within the age range when major home maintenance projects, such as roof repair or replacement, foundation repair, and other improvements become necessary. In 2023, less than 2% of all housing units lacked either complete plumbing facilities and/or kitchen facilities, most of which were reported as unoccupied or vacant units. As the city's housing stock ages, resources for existing homeowners and renters is needed to assist with mitigating the increases in maintenance needs and ensure the number of unhabitable or inadequate housing units remains minimal.

OCCUPANCY AND TENURE

Housing occupancy and tenure is one of many indicators of a thriving and desirable community. With supply and demand being a driving force behind the housing market, maintaining a healthy home vacancy and homeownership rate is crucial in creating a sustainable and resilient community. A healthy home vacancy rate typically ranges anywhere from 5-8% . As seen in **Figure 13**, roughly 11% of the city's total housing units were identified as vacant in 2023. This was slightly higher than other major municipalities in the region besides the City of Charleston.

Figure 12: Age of Housing Structure (Year Constructed)

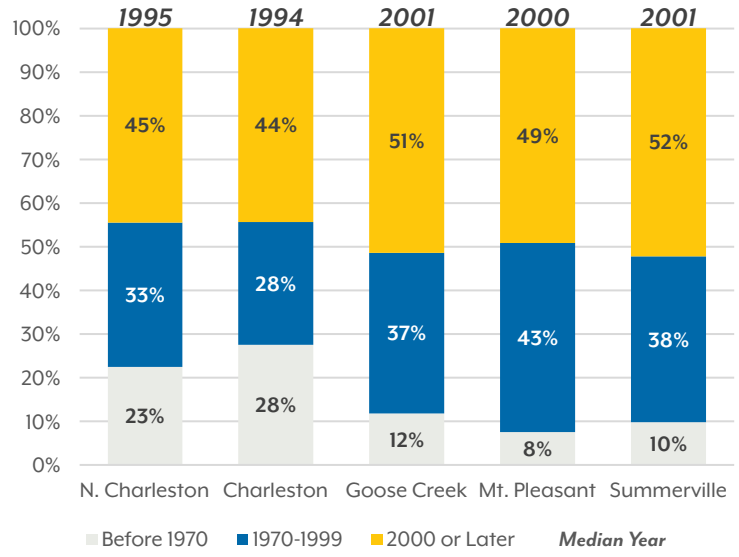
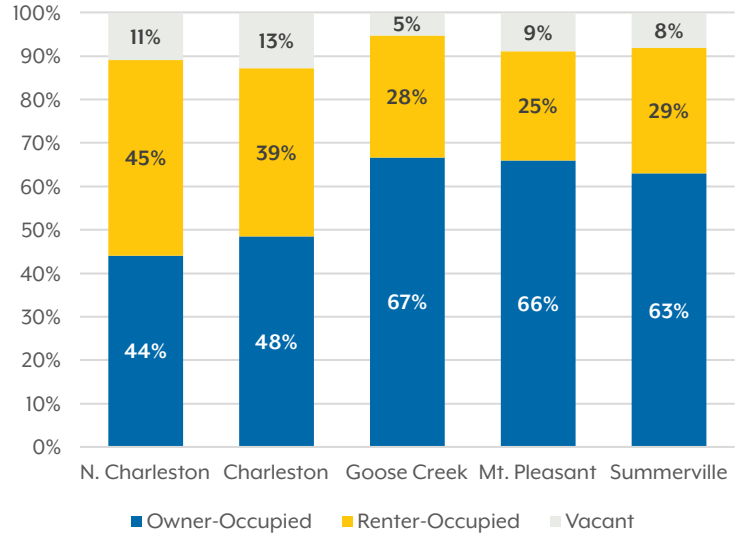


Figure 13: 2023 Housing Occupancy and Tenure



The remaining 89% of units are classified by housing tenure as either owner-occupied or renter-occupied. **Figure 14** shows a more equal split between owner-occupied and renter-occupied units in North Charleston in 2023 as opposed to in 2017 when there were over 4,000 more renter-occupied units than owner-occupied units. This shift suggests that homeownership rates have increased since 2017 which, as seen in **Figure 14**, had a larger discrepancy in housing tenure than 2023. Having a lower owner-occupancy rate (homeownership) is common among dense and highly populated urban areas, such as North Charleston and Charleston, compared to more suburban or rural areas, like Goose Creek, Mt. Pleasant, and Summerville, as noted previously in **Figure 13**.

Of the 5,600 units reported as vacant (about 11% of the city's total units), just under half were identified to be 'for rent' as opposed to 'for sale' or 'for seasonal, recreation, or occasional use' while another large portion were classified as 'other vacant' (**Figure 15**). Given the recent surge in the number of multi-family housing units, which are more likely to be renter-occupied than owner-occupied, this large portion of 'for rent' vacant units could be indicative of the housing affordability concern growing in the community and facing many neighborhoods as many residents may not be able to afford high rent prices.

HOUSING COSTS AND AFFORDABILITY

Housing affordability has become a growing concern as the cost of housing continues to rise for homeowners and renters alike. Some of the most common monthly housing costs for a household can include a mortgage or rent, utilities, taxes, insurance, home repairs/maintenance, and HOA fees. There are several factors that can influence local housing costs, such as supply and demand, changes in interest rates, inflation, insurance, and local taxes. Between 2017 and 2023, the median monthly housing costs in North Charleston increased by 20% for homeowners with a mortgage and by 43% for renters. As seen in **Figure 16**, housing costs for renters increased at a more consistent rate than owner costs. The recent increases, particularly between 2020 and 2023, coincide with national interest rate hikes which had considerable impacts on housing costs in North Charleston, the region and nationwide.

Figure 14: Change in Housing Tenure

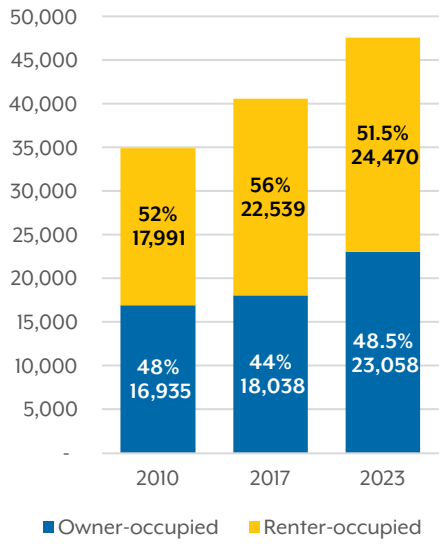


Figure 15: 2023 Vacancy Status

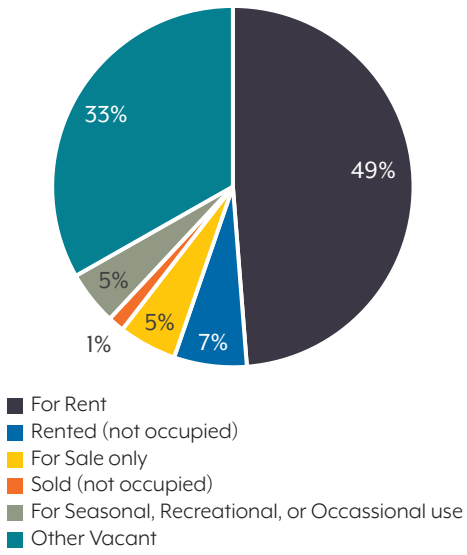
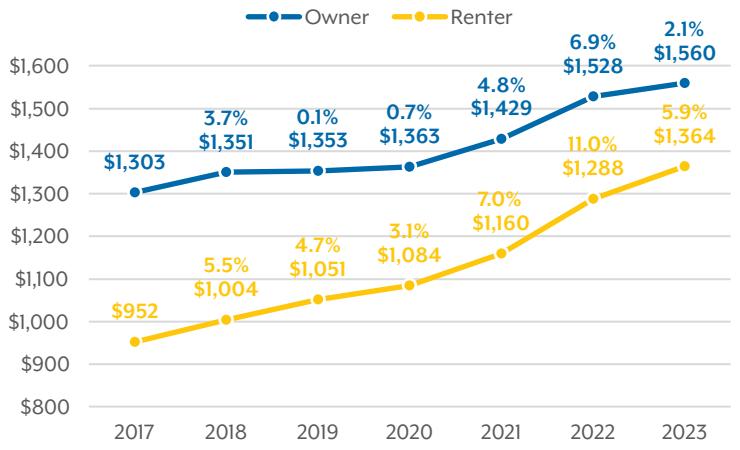


Figure 16: Change in Monthly Housing Costs

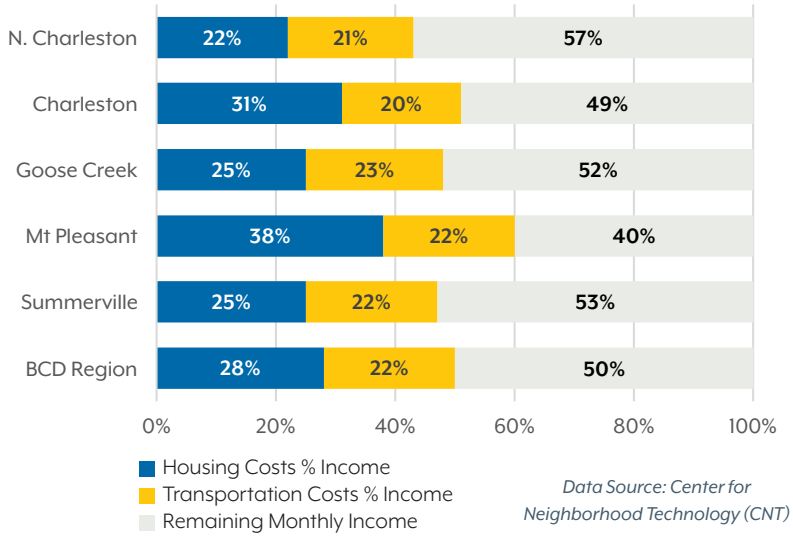


Transportation costs are another monthly expense closely associated with housing costs that can impact the affordability of an area. The Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) reports that North Charleston households pay on average 43% of their monthly income for both housing (22%) and transportation costs (21%). As seen in **Figure 17**, this is the lowest among other larger municipalities in the region. CNT also reports that North Charleston households pay an average of $13,211 for transportation costs annually and travel an average of roughly 17,600 miles per year.

HOME VALUE AND SALES PRICE

Since 2017, both the median home value and median sales price of (owner-occupied) homes in North Charleston have increased by about 70-80%. The median home value, which is calculated using the home's appraised value, increased by 72% from $155,900 in 2017 to $267,700 in 2023. The median sales price, which is often used as the more accurate assessment of the local housing affordability, reports on the perceived value of the home (aka what a buyer is willing to pay).

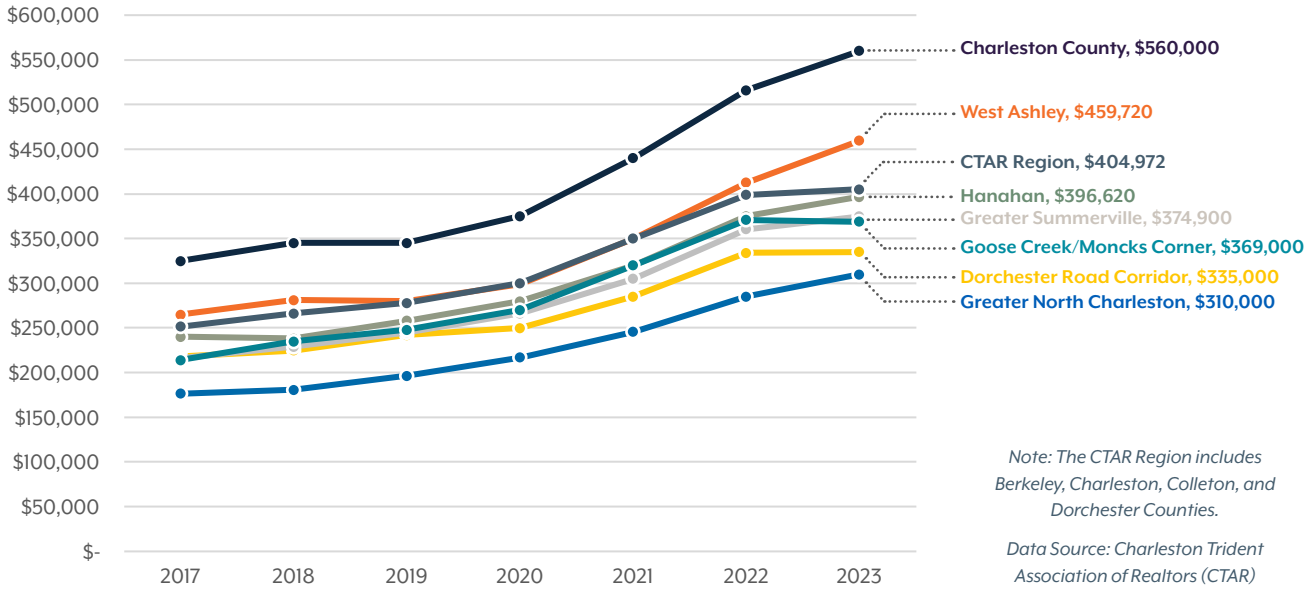
Figure 17: Housing & Transportation Costs as a Percent of Household Income



Data Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT)

Figure 18: Historic Median Sales Price

Figure 18 illustrates the steady increase in the median sales price of a home in the Greater North Charleston area between 2017 and 2023. While the City's median sales price increased 76% between 2017 and 2023, North Charleston remained about 50-60% of Charleston County's median sales price and about 70% of the CTAR region . Compared to the region, the City of North Charleston remains one of the more affordable places to purchase a home in the urbanized area.



Note: The CTAR Region includes Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, and Dorchester Counties.

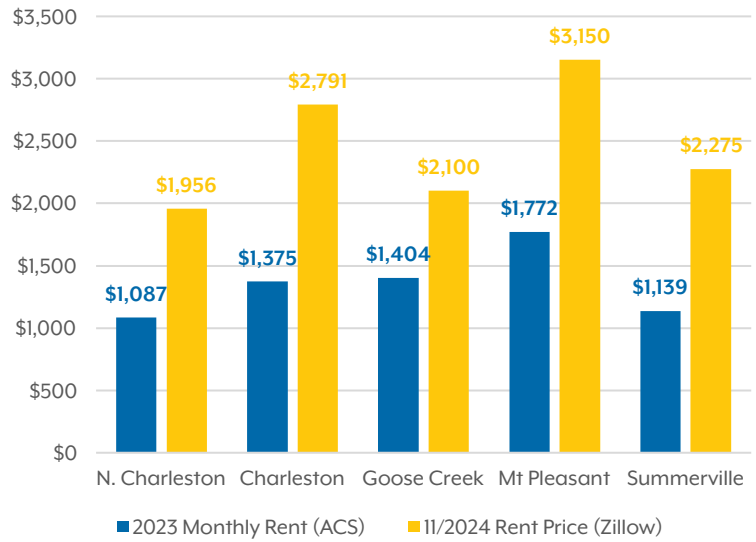
Data Source: Charleston Trident Association of Realtors (CTAR)

MONTHLY RENT

As previously illustrated in **Figure 16**, renter costs are often more volatile than owner costs as rental units typically have a higher turnover and, in most cases, are subject to annual changes in rent price. The median monthly rent, which is included in a renter's total monthly housing costs, in North Charleston was $1,173 in 2023, a 57% increase since 2017 and an 85% increase since 2010.

As seen in **Figure 19**, monthly rent prices continue to increase, according to reports from Zillow in November 2024. Similar to median sales price, the median rent price calculated by Zillow provides a more accurate estimate of rental prices and future housing affordability for renters. The prices Zillow reports are calculated based on current or recent listings whereas the Census reports on currently occupied rental units. The difference between monthly rent (ACS) and rent prices (Zillow) shown in **Figure 19** suggests that a majority of rental units currently or recently listed on Zillow are priced way over what most current renters are reportedly paying. While there are numerous factors that impact the listed renting price, the increasing demand for "luxury" rental apartments in the region has likely impacted Zillow's report and will continue to do so in the future.

Figure 19: Comparison of Monthly Rent Prices

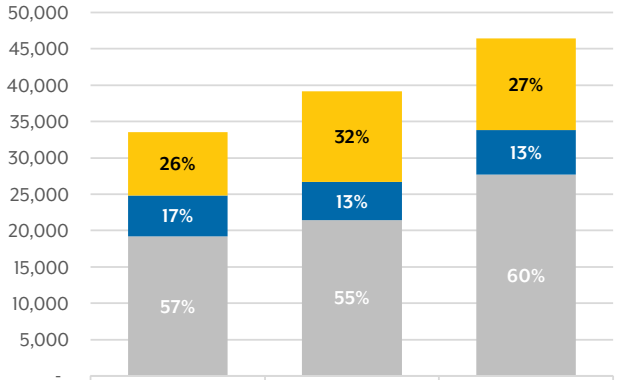


HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The affordability of a home is directly correlated to the income of a household, meaning that a home can be considered both affordable and unaffordable depending on the income of the homeowner or renter. According to HUD, a housing unit is considered "affordable" if the monthly housing costs do not exceed 30% of a household's combined monthly income.

Housing tenure can play an important role when assessing housing affordability as the income and housing costs of owner- and renter-type households can be quite different. In 2023, 40% of all households in North Charleston were considered "cost burdened" as their monthly housing costs exceeded the 30% affordability threshold, a majority of which were renter-type households (**Figure 20**). **Table 3** compares the affordability of homeowners and renters in North Charleston to other larger municipalities in the region and the region as a whole.

Figure 20: Change in Housing Affordability



	2010	2017	2023
Cost Burdened Renters	8,726	12,504	12,572
Cost Burdened Homeowners	5,620	5,205	6,173
Affordable	19,195	21,454	27,663

North Charleston had among the lowest median owner and renter costs by comparison, which suggests that the city is more affordable than most other larger municipalities at a regional scale. However, on a local scale, the cost-to-income ratio indicates that North Charleston homeowners comparatively pay a higher percentage of their income than homeowners in other municipalities. The 76% rise in median home sales price compared to only a 40% rise in MHI for owner-type households between 2017 and 2023 likely contributed to this shift.

Renters, on the other hand, have among the lowest cost-to-income ratio comparatively – despite the 43% increase in renter costs between 2017 and 2023. This indicates that it is more affordable for renters in North Charleston than renters in the City of Charleston or Mount Pleasant, for example. Yet, as outlined in **Table 3**, over half (53%) of all renter-type households were considered to be cost burdened in 2023 which by comparison, was the second highest only slightly following the City of Goose Creek.

Table 3: Comparison of Housing Affordability by Tenure

	OWNER-TYPE HOUSEHOLDS				
	MHI	*Monthly Income (MHI/12)*	*Housing Costs*	*Cost-to-Income Ratio*	*% of Owners Cost Burdened*
N. Charleston	$80,062	$6,672	$1,560	23.4%	27.1%
Charleston	$127,276	$10,606	$2,209	20.8%	22.4%
Goose Creek	$91,654	$7,638	$1,541	20.2%	16.9%
Mt Pleasant	$147,343	$12,279	$2,631	21.4%	21.6%
Summerville	$93,727	$7,811	$1,637	21.0%	20.9%
BCD Region	$79,882	$6,657	$1,834	27.6%	21.6%

	RENTER-TYPE HOUSEHOLDS				
	MHI	*Monthly Income (MHI/12)*	*Renter Costs*	*Cost-to-Income Ratio*	*% of Renters Cost Burdened*
N. Charleston	$52,135	$4,345	$1,364	31.4%	53.2%
Charleston	$61,103	$5,092	$1,632	32.1%	52.4%
Goose Creek	$66,439	$5,537	$1,611	29.1%	45.7%
Mt Pleasant	$64,219	$5,352	$2,026	37.9%	53.6%
Summerville	$49,630	$4,136	$1,414	34.2%	50.9%
BCD Region	$42,174	$3,515	$1,488	42.3%	51.6%

Data Source: ACS and manual calculations

Based on the 2023 median home sales price of $310,000, which is approximately a $2,800 monthly payment, an owner-type household would need to make over $112,000 to be considered living in an affordable housing situation, which is 140% of the owner-type MHI in 2023 ($80,000).

Based on Zillow's median rent price of $1,950 in November 2024, renter-type households would need to make at least $78,000 to be considered living in an affordable housing situation; 150% of the MHI of renters ($52,000).

Although the City of North Charleston continues to have a more diverse housing stock compared to other municipalities in the region, there are still large discrepancies in housing affordability. **Figure 21** and **Figure 22** compare the number of owner- and renter-type households by income to the number of housing units considered "affordable" using HUD's 30% threshold. The large differences in these numbers, particularly in the high and low extremes, forces homeowners and renters to either seek housing over or under what is considered affordable for their income level. This exerts additional pressure on an already highly competitive middle-income housing market. Therefore, not only is it important to maintain a wide range of housing unit types, like single-family and multi-family, but also a wide affordability range to accommodate residents of all income levels.

Figure 21: Number of Owner-Type Households by Income & Housing Unit Inventory

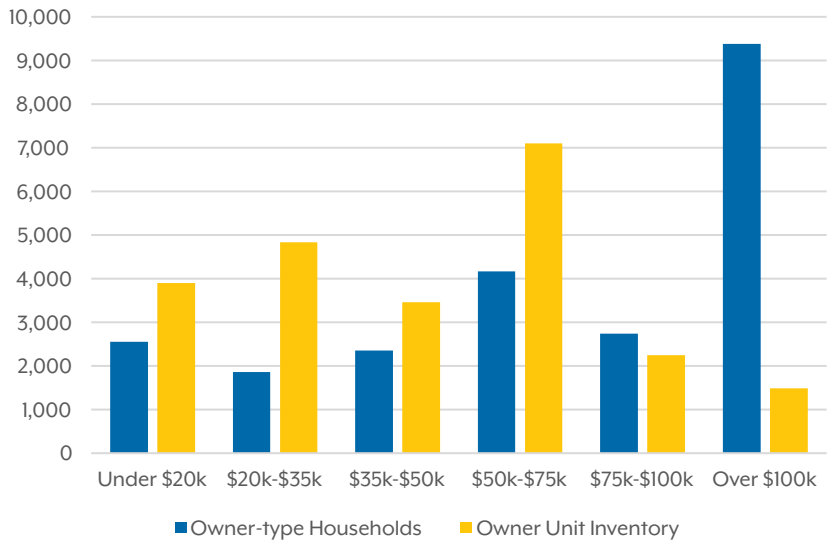
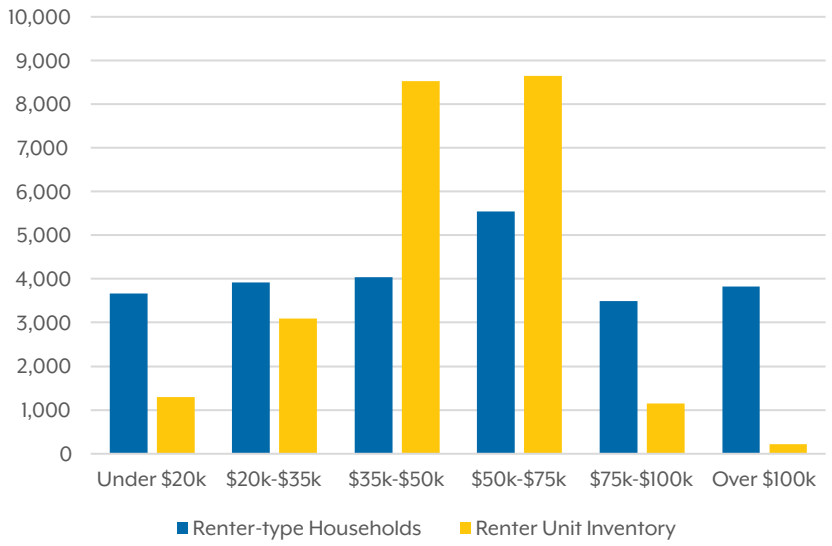


Figure 22: Number of Renter-Type Households by Income & Housing Unit Inventory



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADDENDUM

5-Year Update Overview

The City of North Charleston continues to serve as a vital economic engine for South Carolina, is home to nearly 5,900 businesses and approximately 96,000 jobs as of 2023 – an increase of 200 businesses since 2018. Notable developments include Ingevity's establishment of a new corporate headquarters in Park Circle (2018), Cummins Turbo Technologies' $10.7 million expansion, creating 252 jobs (2021), and Boeing South Carolina's announcement of a $1 billion expansion projected to add 500 jobs (2024). The local labor force, which includes both residents who commute within and out of the city for work, grew by 15% from 56,000 in 2017 to 64,500 in 2023. The percentage of residents participating in the labor force has increased as well with 69% of people ages 16+ participating in the labor force in 2023 compared to 67% in 2017.

The income of households in North Charleston has increased across the board as the median household income has increased from about $40,000 in 2017 to almost $63,000 in 2023, a 57% increase. This shift in income levels has also impacted poverty levels in a positive way. The percentage of people living below the poverty level decreased by over 7 points from 23% in 2017 to 16% in 2023 while the percentage of children (under 18 years old) decreased by over 12 points from 36% in 2017 to 24% in 2023. This Addendum will expand upon the 2018 Industry Analysis by providing a Shift Share Analysis and Location Quotient. These analyses will highlight which industries have been the most competitive between 2018 and 2023, identify any concentrations of industries, and outline potential emerging industries.



LABOR FORCE

As the population of North Charleston continues to increase, the available labor force (population ages 16 and older) increases almost proportionately. **Table 4** shows that the number of people in North Charleston available to participate in the labor force increased by 29%, or by about 21,000 people, from 72,197 in 2010 to 93,206 in 2023. About 69% of the people available were actively participating in the labor force, known as the participation rate. The 1.5-point shift in participation rate from 67.7% in 2010 to 69.2% in 2023 indicates that the number of people actively participating in the labor force is increasing both numerically and proportionally. Approximately 30% of the population aged 16+ are not participating in the labor force likely accounting for those that are still in school, retired, disabled, stay-at-home parents, etc.

Table 4: Labor Force Characteristics

	2010	2017	2023	2010-2023 CHANGE		2017-2023 CHANGE	
				Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*
Population 16+	72,197	84,348	93,206	21,009	29.1%	8,858	10.5%
In Labor Force	48,847	56,273	64,482	15,635	32.0%	8,209	14.6%
Civilian Labor Force	46,491	54,279	61,340	14,849	31.9%	7,061	13.0%
Civilian Employed	41,542	50,403	58,697	17,155	41.3%	8,294	16.5%
Civilian Unemployed	4,949	3,876	2,643	-2,306	-46.6%	-1,233	-31.8%
Armed Forces	2,356	1,994	3,142	786	33.4%	1,148	57.6%
Not in Labor Force	23,350	28,075	28,724	5,374	23.0%	649	2.3%
Population Rate *(= Labor Force/Population 16+)*	67.7%	66.7%	69.2%				
Unemployment Rate *(= Civilian Unemployed/Civilian Labor Force)*	10.6%	7.1%	4.3%				

Labor force participation rate is an important economic measure that can indicate the health and resiliency of the local economy. Since 2010, the city's labor force participation rate has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 66%-70%, as shown in **Figure 23**. The stability of the labor force after the 2008-09 economic recession and more recent impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate the resiliency of the city's economy and labor force compared to the impacts of major nationwide economic trends. **Figure 23** also compares the labor force participation rate in North Charleston to the BCD Region and State of South Carolina.

Note: Areas with smaller populations are more likely to experience greater fluctuations than areas with larger populations due to the size of change needed being proportionally different.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate of a community is an important indicator of the strength and vitality of the local economy. The unemployment rate in North Charleston was 4.3% in 2023, a decrease by 9-points since its peak at 13.3% in 2012 (**Figure 24**). As shown previously in **Table 4**, the number of people (16+) unemployed between 2010 and 2023 was nearly cut in half (-47%), hence the significant drop in the unemployment rate. Like the participation rate, data trends show that the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic did not affect the unemployment rate in North Charleston or the region as much as other areas nationally reported.

OCCUPATION ANALYSIS

Analyzing the occupational trends of the labor force is crucial for understanding the growth potential and economic resilience of North Charleston. These trends can provide insight on the skill set of the labor force and help direct workforce development programs, education, training, and infrastructure investments throughout the community. In 2023, Management, Business, Science, and Arts-related occupations remain the largest occupational class in North Charleston, increasing by 11-points between 2010 and 2023 and by 7-points between 2017 and 2023 (**Figure 25**). Shifts in occupation, such as this, can impact local employment opportunities, income levels, business recruitment and industry competitiveness. Maintaining a labor force with a diverse skill set is also important for strengthening the economic resilience of the community.

Figure 23: Change in Participation Rate

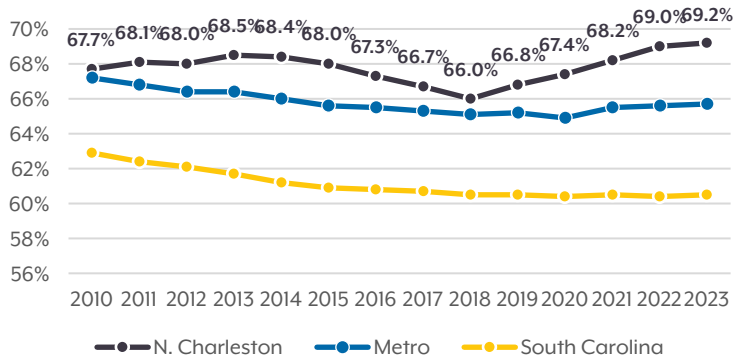


Figure 24: Change in Unemployment Rate

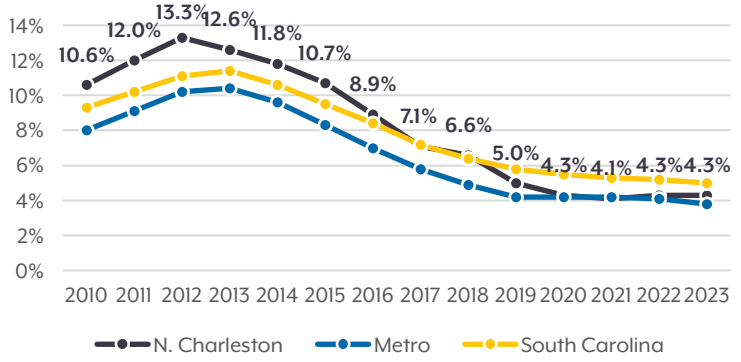
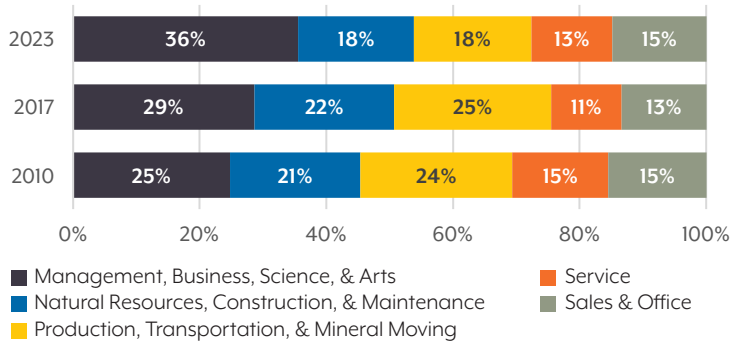


Figure 25: Occuptional Class of the Labor Force



INCOME AND POVERTY

Household income is a commonly used measurement that assesses the combined income/earnings of all individuals (16+) in each household, whether the earnings are from hourly wages, an annual salary, commission, fixed income sources, such as social security, pensions, disability, and/or retirement savings, private investments, etc. As illustrated in **Figure 26**, the median household income (MHI) in North Charleston has consistently been lower than other major municipalities in the region. Despite a 57% increase in MHI between 2017 and 2023, the largest increase comparatively, the City of North Charleston continues to have the lowest MHI and remains well below (approximately 25%) the MHI of the Metro area.

Figure 27 shows the change in the distribution of household income by income brackets between 2017 and 2023. This provides an in-depth look at the shift in household income that ultimately resulted in the 57% increase in overall MHI. Concurrent shifts in the number of households earning under $25,000 in annual income and over $100,000 heavily contributed to the increase in MHI between 2017 and 2023. However, while there was growth in the income, the Housing Addendum discusses that housing costs in North Charleston also increased. As a result, 40% of households in 2023 continue to be cost burdened by monthly housing costs.

Figure 26: Change in Median Household Income Comparison

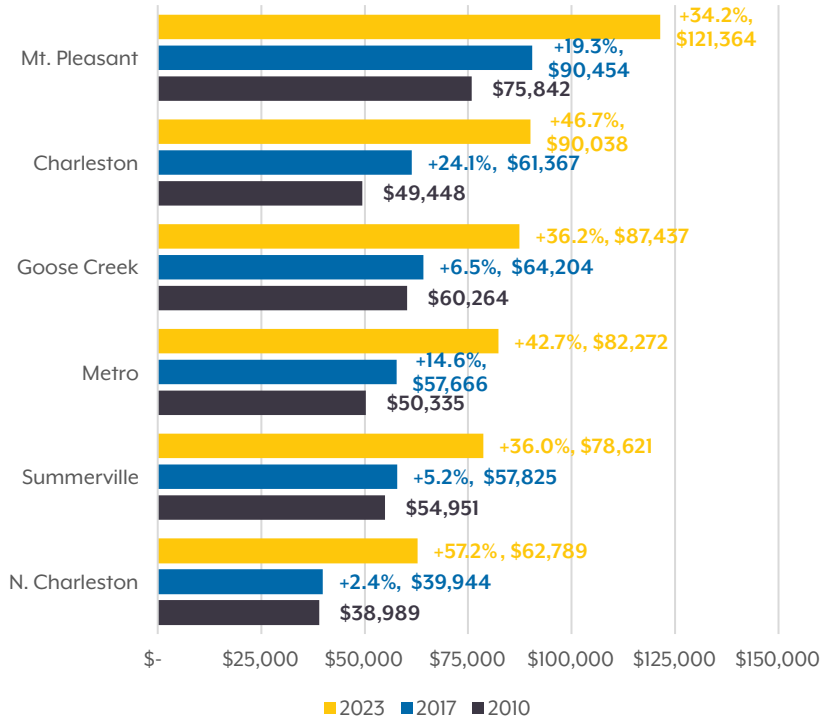
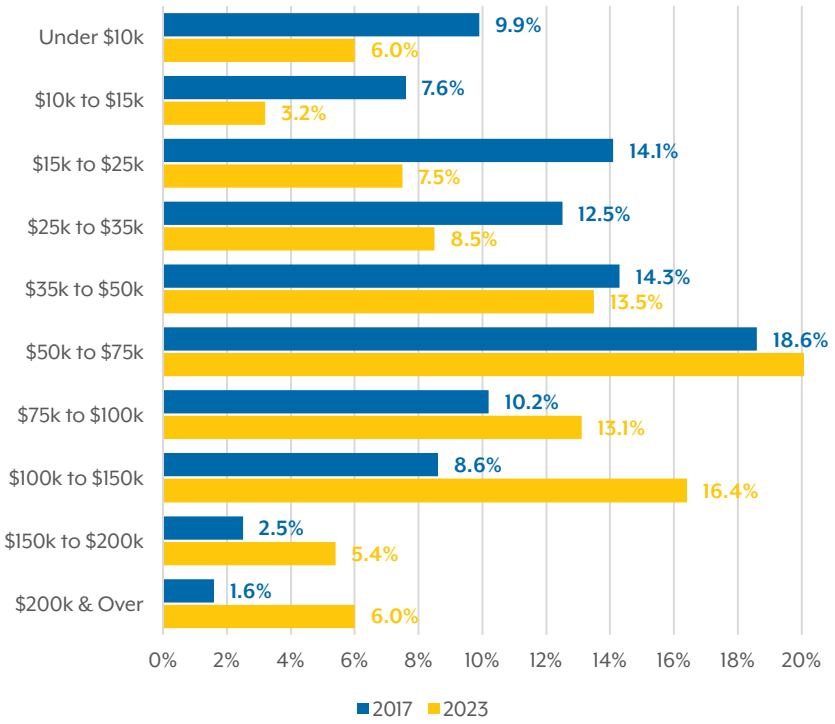


Figure 27: Household Income Distribution by Income Brackets



POVERTY

The threshold for a household or family to be considered living below the poverty level varies depending on the size and income of the household or family. Between 2017 and 2023, the number of people living below the poverty level decreased from about 23,500 people (23% of the total population) to just under 18,000 people (16% of the total population). Although 16% of the total population continued to live below the poverty level in 2023, the city has made great strides since 1989 and 2010, when 33% and 23% of the population were living in poverty, respectively.

Figure 28 compares the percentage of people living below the poverty level by various characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, educational attainment, employment status, and language spoken at home. As **Figure 28** depicts, certain demographic groups and people of a lower socioeconomic status are more likely to be living in poverty. Therefore, areas within North Charleston that have high concentrations of minorities or low-income households are more susceptible to poverty-related causations, such as blight, crime, and a lack of private investment.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

The City of North Charleston continues to be a major economic and employment hub for not just the region but for all of South Carolina. According to Esri's Business Analyst tool, there were an estimated 5,888 businesses located in North Charleston in 2023, employing just over 96,000 people. This was a 4% increase in the total number of businesses and a 1.4% increase in the total number of employees in North Charleston since 2018.

Figure 29 compares North Charleston's portion of businesses, employees, and population in context of regional totals which showcases how important the city's economic contributions are to the larger regional economy, with over a quarter of the employees and 21% of the businesses being in North Charleston. In addition, North Charleston remains the state leader in annual retail sales due to the economic contributions from the two large shopping centers located in the city, Centre Point and Northwoods Mall as well as the numerous retailers along Rivers Avenue and Dorchester Road along with smaller neighborhood commercial areas, such as East Montague and Spruill Avenues.

Figure 28: Poverty Status by Different Socioeconomic Characteristics

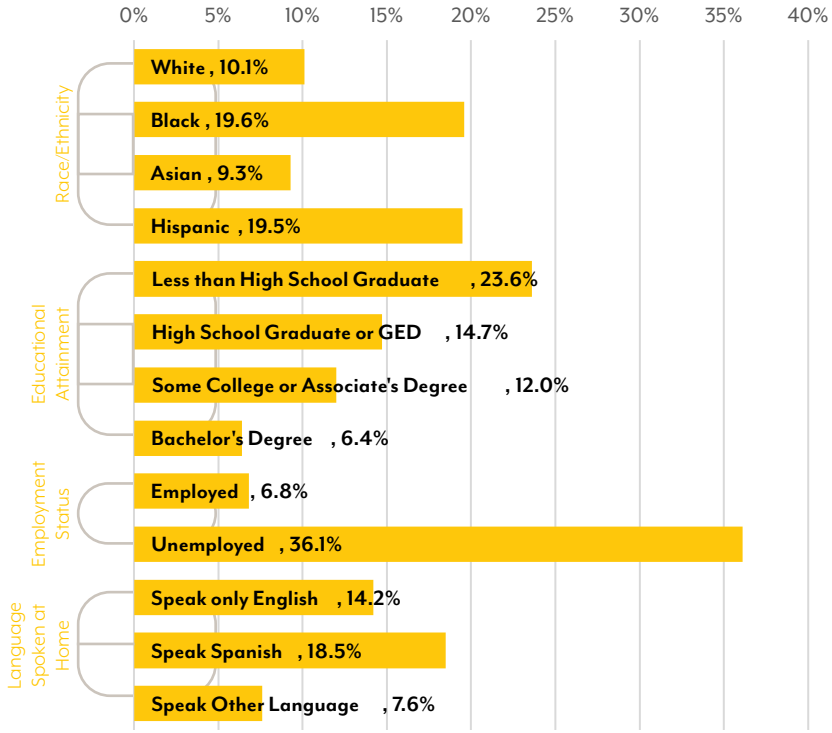
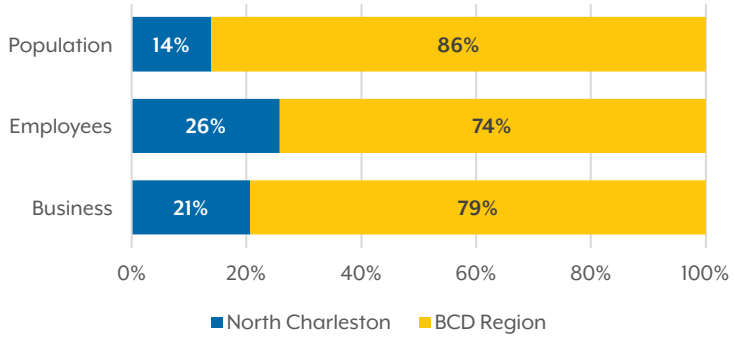


Figure 29: North Charleston's Portion of Regional Totals



Manufacturing, Health Care, and Accommodation & Food Services are also major contributors to the local economy (**Table 5**). Given North Charleston's multiple well performing industries, the City is less vulnerable to economic recessions and hardships. Identifying the industries that form the economic base of a community is crucial in maintaining a productive and resilient local economy. These industries can include those that employ the largest number of people, those with the largest number or highest concentration of businesses, those that outperform national trends or are highly competitive, or a combination thereof. **Table 5** groups the nearly 6,000 businesses in North Charleston and their 96,000 employees into different industry classes using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). This simplification of businesses and employment allows for a more detailed comparative analysis over time and across different geographic areas.

Table 5: Number of Businesses and their Employees by Industry Classification

NAICS CODES	INDUSTRIES	2017		2023				% CHANGE	
		Businesses	*Employees*	*Businesses*		*Employees*		*Businesses*	*Employees*
11	Ag., Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	0.1%	0.2%	7	0.1%	214	0.2%	133.3%	22.3%
21	Mining, Quarrying, & Oil/Gas Extraction	0.1%	0.0%	10	0.2%	125	0.1%	100.0%	220.5%
22	Utilities	0.1%	0.1%	1	0.0%	4	0.0%	-66.7%	-96.9%
23	Construction	6.6%	6.3%	389	6.6%	6,036	6.3%	4.0%	1.9%
31-33	Manufacturing	4.0%	16.4%	225	3.8%	15,489	16.1%	-0.9%	-0.4%
42	Wholesale Trade	5.0%	4.3%	294	5.0%	4,054	4.2%	3.2%	-0.3%
44-45	Retail Trade	15.2%	11.6%	861	14.6%	11,470	11.9%	-0.1%	4.0%
48-49	Transportation & Warehousing	4.4%	4.0%	241	4.1%	5,702	5.9%	-3.2%	51.2%
51	Information	2.3%	2.0%	103	1.7%	1,282	1.3%	-20.2%	-33.8%
52	Finance & Insurance	4.3%	2.1%	216	3.7%	2,143	2.2%	-12.2%	8.2%
53	Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	6.0%	2.2%	323	5.5%	2,320	2.4%	-5.0%	13.4%
54	Prof., Sci. & Tech Services	8.6%	6.3%	514	8.7%	6,039	6.3%	5.1%	1.1%
55	Mgmt. of Companies & Enterprises	0.1%	0.0%	7	0.1%	25	0.0%	0.0%	-37.5%
56	Admin., Support & Waste Mgmt. Services	4.3%	5.6%	246	4.2%	4,636	4.8%	1.7%	-12.4%
61	Educational Services	2.2%	6.3%	126	2.1%	5,782	6.0%	1.6%	-2.4%
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	7.7%	10.2%	500	8.5%	9,491	9.9%	14.7%	-2.0%
71	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1.6%	1.3%	107	1.8%	1,227	1.3%	17.6%	1.7%
72	Accommodation & Food Services	8.2%	9.6%	464	7.9%	8,387	8.7%	-0.4%	-7.5%
81	Other Services (except Public Admin.)	11.5%	4.3%	668	11.3%	4,425	4.6%	2.9%	8.1%
92	Public Administration	3.7%	7.0%	195	3.3%	6,702	7.0%	-5.8%	1.2%
	Unclassified Establishments	4.0%	0.2%	391	6.6%	520	0.5%	71.5%	160.0%
	Total	5,662	94,764	5,888	100%	96,073	100%	4.0%	1.4%

Data Source: Esri's Business Analyst Tool

SHIFT-SHARE ANALYSIS

A shift-share analysis is an economic tool used to measure the performance and competitiveness of an industry compared to a larger area. **Table 5** shows that the number of employees in North Charleston increased by 1.4% between 2018 and 2023, or by around 1,000 people. A shift-share analysis breaks down the change in employment of each industry by what portions are attributed to national, industry, and regional trends. Those industries with a positive regional shift indicate that the City of North Charleston outperformed national and industrial trends

Table 6 reveals that the Transportation & Warehousing industry in North Charleston far outperformed national and industrial trends, receiving the largest regional shift of all economic industries. The increase in new warehouses in Ingleside and along the Ashley Phosphate and Cross County corridors likely contributed to much of this growth. **Table 6** also reveals that many of North Charleston's largest economic industries including Manufacturing, Health Care & Social Assistance, and Accommodation & Food Services, underperformed national and industrial trends. This suggests that while these industries continue to be major contributors to the local economy, they were not as competitive in drawing additional employment to North Charleston between 2018 and 2023.



INGLESIDE INDUSTRIAL AREA ALONG PALMETTO COMMERCE PARKWAY AND WEBER BOULEVARD

Table 6: 2018-2023 Industry Shift Share Analysis

NAICS CODES	INDUSTRIES	EMPLOYMENT			SHIFT SHARE		
		2018	*2023*	*Change (2018-2023)*	*National Share*	*Industry Mix*	*Regional Shift*
11	Ag., Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	175	214	39	8	-9	40
21	Mining, Quarrying, & Oil/Gas Extraction	39	125	86	2	-54	138
22	Utilities	130	4	-126	6	0	-132
23	Construction	5,924	6,036	112	255	20	-163
31-33	Manufacturing	15,546	15,489	-57	668	-12	-713
42	Wholesale Trade	4,067	4,054	-13	175	1	-188
44-45	Retail Trade	11,034	11,470	436	474	-188	149
48-49	Transportation & Warehousing	3,772	5,702	1930	162	12	1,756
51	Information	1,938	1,282	-656	83	54	-794
52	Finance & Insurance	1,981	2,143	162	85	6	71
53	Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	2,046	2,320	274	88	67	119
54	Prof., Sci. & Tech Services	5,975	6,039	64	257	348	-540
55	Mgmt. of Companies & Enterprises	40	25	-15	2	42	-58
56	Admin., Support & Waste Mgmt. Services	5,295	4,636	-659	228	-1	-886
61	Educational Services	5,924	5,782	-142	255	0	-397
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	9,687	9,491	-196	416	32	-644
71	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1,206	1,227	21	52	12	-43
72	Accommodation & Food Services	9,066	8,387	-679	390	-41	-1,027
81	Other Services (except Public Admin.)	4,095	4,425	330	176	-90	244
92	Public Administration	6,624	6,702	78	285	-48	-159
	Unclassified Establishments	200	520	320	9	-59	370
	Total	94,764	96,073	1,309	4,072	95	-2,858

LOCATION QUOTIENT

A location quotient (LQ) is an analysis that compares an industry's share of different economic measures, like number of businesses or employment, between a smaller and larger geographic area to determine if the local economy has any specializations or concentrations of certain industries. High concentrations of similar or related industries can be very influential in attracting and retaining businesses and can often lead to certain economic benefits, such as reduced transportation and production costs, knowledge/technology/equipment sharing, and access to specialized labor pools.

Commonly shown as a decimal, an LQ of 1.00 indicates that the local industry has a similar concentration compared to the larger geography, whether that be the region or state, whereas an LQ above or below 1.00 indicates a higher or lower concentration. **Table 7** shows both the LQ of North Charleston businesses and employment by industry compared to the region and state. Although the LQ results are slightly different between the two, the industries with high concentrations of businesses and employment in North Charleston are nearly identical.

The following industries were highly concentrated in both businesses and employment in North Charleston in 2023 when compared to the larger geographic areas:

- Mining, Quarrying, & Oil/Gas Extraction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade
- Transportation & Warehousing
- Admin., Support & Waste Mgmt. Services

ECONOMIC BASE AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES

For a city as economically diverse as North Charleston, there are so many industries that could be classified as the "economic base" of the city. Some of the main industries identified in the different business and industry analyses include Manufacturing, Retail Sales, Health Care, and Accommodations & Food Services while Transportation & Warehousing and Wholesale Trade appear to be key emerging industries.

All indicators point towards a local economy with a diverse and expanding labor pool, competitive business environment, and leader in economic output and productivity. Plans for the Port of Charleston's continued expansion will likely attract more Manufacturing, Transportation & Warehousing, and Wholesale Trade businesses in the future. As the region's population continues to grow, additional service-based businesses and industries, such as Retail Trade, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Health Care, Education, and Accommodation & Food Services will likely expand to meet the growing demand.

Table 7: 2023 North Charleston Business and Employment Location Quotient

NAICS CODES	INDUSTRIES	% OF BUSINESSES (2023)			BCD LQ	SC LQ	% OF EMPLOYEES (2023)			BCD LQ	SC LQ
		NCHS	BCD	SC			NCHS	BCD	SC		
11	Ag., Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%	0.46	0.21	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	1.20	0.48
21	Mining, Quarrying, & Oil/Gas Extraction	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	2.70	2.23	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	2.77	1.35
22	Utilities	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.12	0.08	0.0%	0.6%	0.5%	0.01	0.01
23	Construction	6.6%	7.3%	6.8%	0.90	0.97	6.3%	4.7%	4.3%	1.34	1.46
31-33	Manufacturing	3.8%	2.5%	3.1%	1.51	1.22	16.1%	7.1%	10.1%	2.27	1.60
42	Wholesale Trade	5.0%	2.7%	3.0%	1.84	1.64	4.2%	2.5%	3.6%	1.68	1.16
44-45	Retail Trade	14.6%	13.3%	14.6%	1.10	1.00	11.9%	12.0%	12.9%	0.99	0.93
48-49	Transportation & Warehousing	4.1%	2.5%	2.1%	1.62	1.95	5.9%	2.9%	2.0%	2.06	3.04
51	Information	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.06	1.09	1.3%	2.3%	2.0%	0.58	0.67
52	Finance & Insurance	3.7%	4.9%	5.4%	0.75	0.68	2.2%	2.6%	3.0%	0.85	0.75
53	Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	5.5%	6.0%	5.4%	0.92	1.02	2.4%	3.4%	2.7%	0.71	0.90
54	Prof., Sci. & Tech Services	8.7%	10.0%	7.8%	0.87	1.11	6.3%	9.6%	7.1%	0.65	0.88
55	Mgmt. of Companies & Enterprises	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.85	0.81	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.59	0.18
56	Admin., Support & Waste Mgmt. Services	4.2%	3.8%	3.3%	1.11	1.26	4.8%	2.9%	2.4%	1.68	2.04
61	Educational Services	2.1%	2.3%	2.5%	0.94	0.86	6.0%	6.3%	7.6%	0.96	0.80
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	8.5%	9.1%	9.2%	0.93	0.93	9.9%	15.0%	14.2%	0.66	0.70
71	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1.8%	2.5%	2.2%	0.71	0.84	1.3%	2.2%	1.8%	0.59	0.72
72	Accommodation & Food Services	7.9%	8.4%	8.1%	0.94	0.97	8.7%	11.8%	11.0%	0.74	0.79
81	Other Services (except Public Admin.)	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.09	1.14	4.6%	7.2%	6.7%	0.64	0.68
92	Public Administration	6.6%	7.2%	7.0%	0.91	0.94	7.0%	6.1%	7.1%	1.15	0.98
	Unclassified Establishments	11.3%	12.0%	14.4%	0.94	0.79	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.83	1.14

NATURAL RESOURCES ADDENDUM

5-Year Update Overview

The City of North Charleston is a highly urbanized area with very few large contiguous areas of undisturbed natural resources remaining. While some natural resources, like rivers, streams, and soils, are unlikely to significantly move or change shape over time, other resources, such as wetlands, forestlands, and wildlife habitats, are subject to change, often because of development. The South Carolina Statewide Green Infrastructure Plan (SC GIP) identifies development as one of the top risks to large areas of natural resources in the North Charleston area, an example being the ongoing conversion of forestlands to suburban development.

As the city continues to grow and expand, conservation efforts to protect those diverse and highly productive natural areas are critical for maintaining a sustainable urban and rural environment. The City's recent purchase of the 440-acre Ingleside Plantation tract through Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission's Greenbelt Program is one such effort that will have a major impact on the surrounding areas. This Addendum will review most sections in the current Natural Resources Element and include a new Green Infrastructure section which will highlight the importance of land use planning in relation to natural resources.

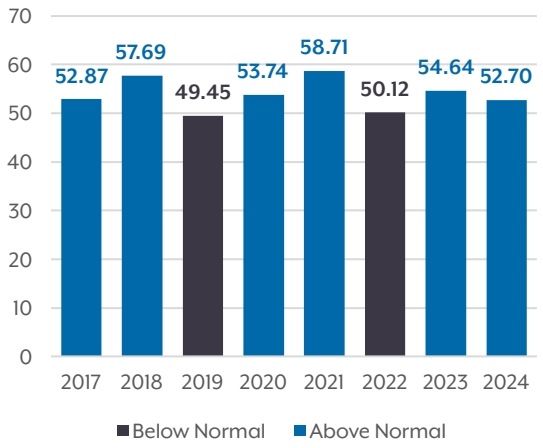
Note: PRIME NCHS was not yet required to incorporate a Resiliency Element as part of the update, thus several resiliency-related topics were included in the Natural Resources Element. This addendum to the Natural Resources Element will focus on the resources in the North Charleston area and provide some of the framework for those resiliency-related topics which will be discussed in greater detail in the new Resiliency Element (page 69), following this chapter.

CLIMATE

North Charleston has a "temperate to subtropical" climate with temperatures typically ranging from 42°F to 90°F. The month of July is generally considered to be not only the hottest month of the year, but also have the highest levels of humidity.

Precipitation is a common occurrence in North Charleston as there is a chance for rain year-round. The month of August reportedly experiences the most rainfall, with an average accumulation of 5.2 inches. According to the National Weather Service, North Charleston has received above normal rainfall six of the past eight years (**Figure 30**). The climate and weather patterns that occur in North Charleston can play a pivotal role in the severity and overall impacts of a tropical system in the community. The Resiliency Element following this chapter identifies the areas and groups of people most vulnerable to the impacts caused by weather-related events.

Figure 30: Historic Rainfall Totals

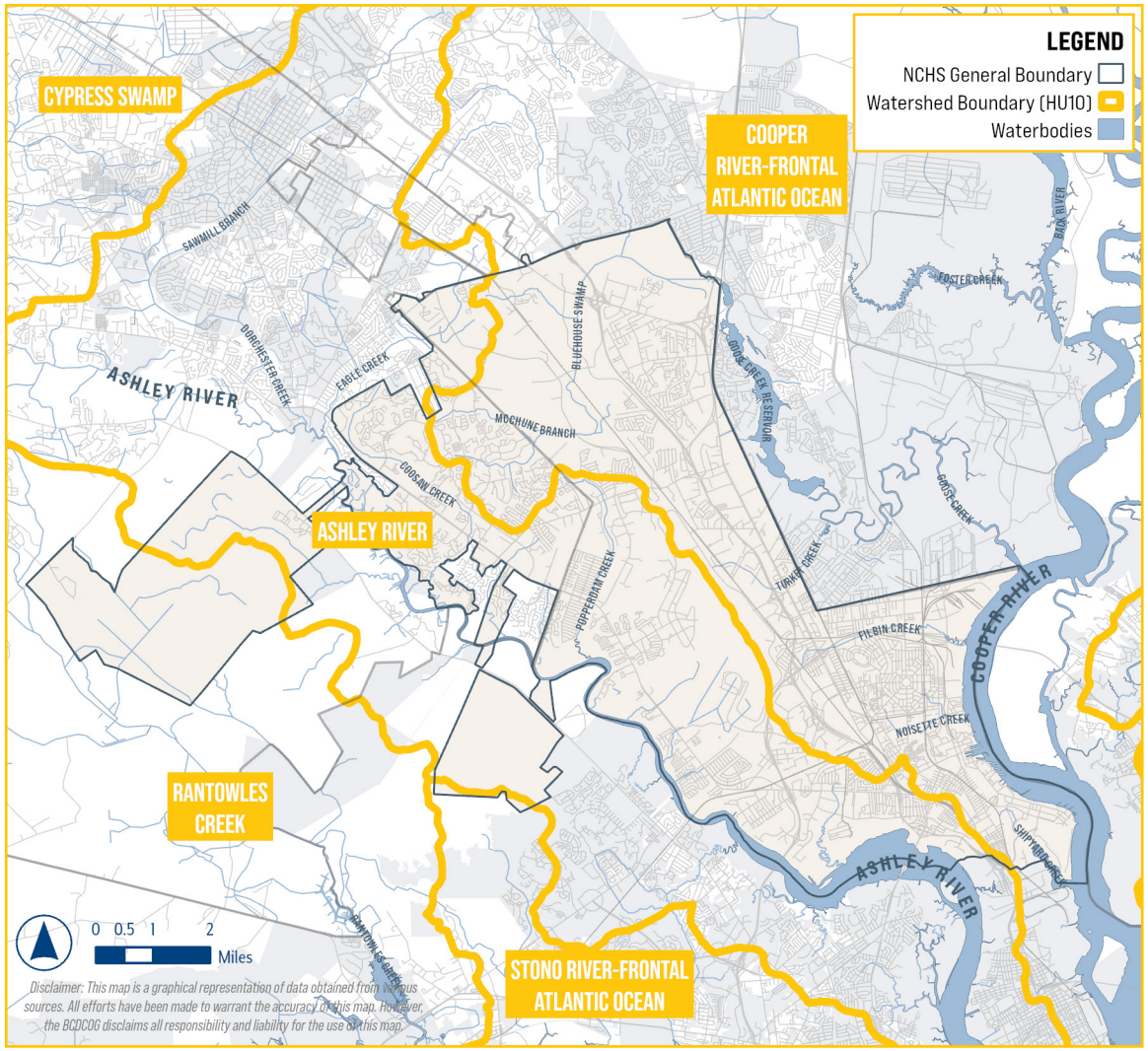


Data Source: National Weather Service, 2017-2024

HYDROLOGY

The core area of North Charleston is located in the Ashley River and Cooper River Watersheds while a portion of the Watson Hill tract falls within the Rantowles Creek Watershed. The Ashley and Cooper Rivers continue to play pivotal roles in the economic, social, and ecological output of North Charleston. The City of North Charleston has nearly 23 miles of shoreline across both the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. As seen on **Map 4**, smaller tributaries, such as Coosaw Creek, Eagle Creek, Popperdam Creek, and Nosiette Creek continue to meander through the more urban areas of the city, providing essential stormwater management and flood mitigation.

» MAP 4 *Watersheds, Major Rivers, and their Tributaries*

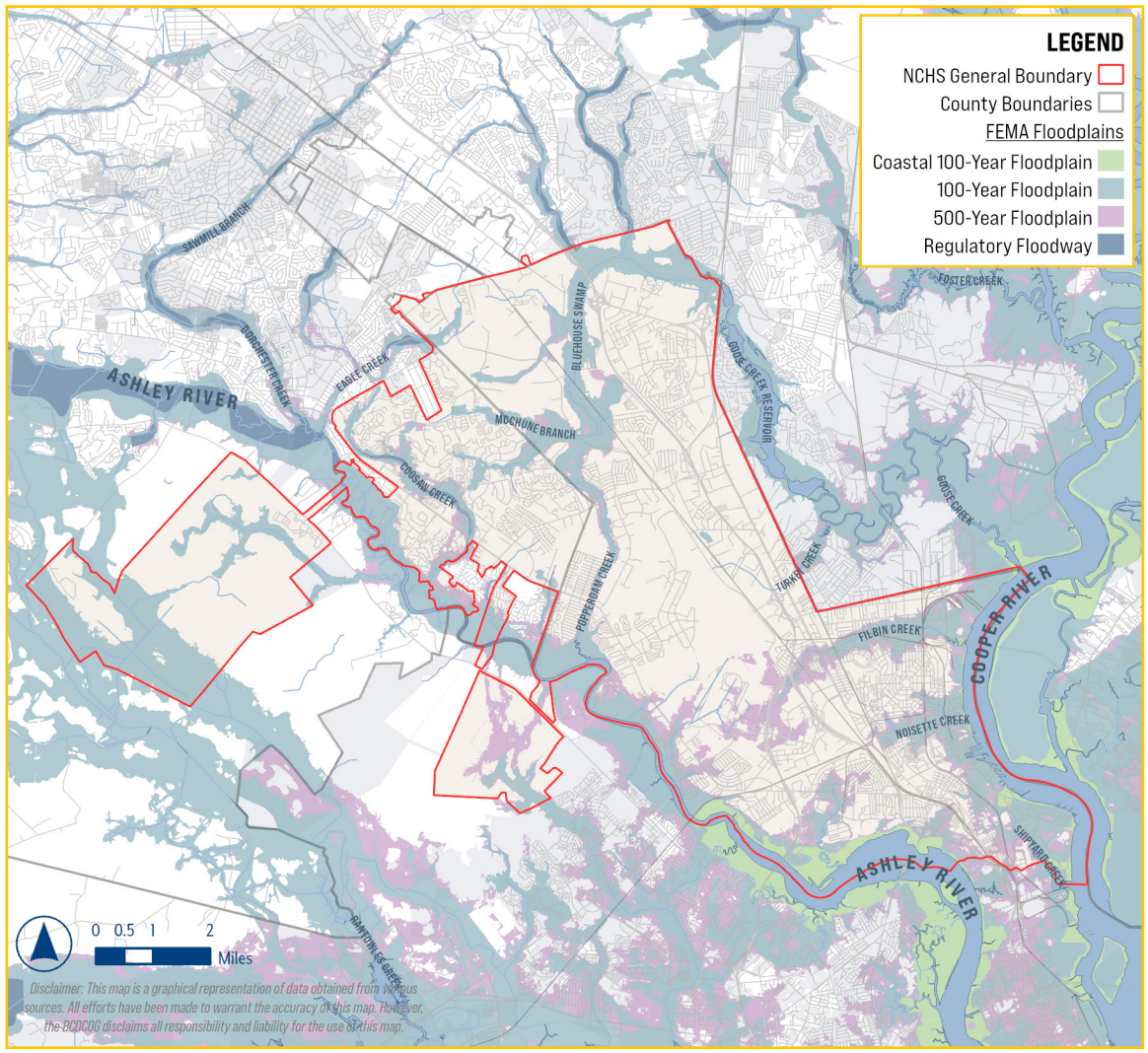


FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are essential to the effectiveness of a watershed to capture, store, filter, and channel water through an area. Most of the floodplains located in and around North Charleston are in close proximity to either the Ashley or Cooper Rivers or their tributaries. **Map 5** shows that nearly one-fourth (23%) of all land area in North Charleston is within the 100-year floodplain while another 7% is within the 500-year floodplain. These areas, particularly those within the 100-year floodplain, are more vulnerable to flooding and the impacts associated with flood damage.

The Resiliency Element outlines the city's participation in various flood-related programs, such as FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program and Community Rating System, as well as the potential impacts of flooding and the most vulnerable areas of the city.

» MAP 5 *FEMA Floodplains*



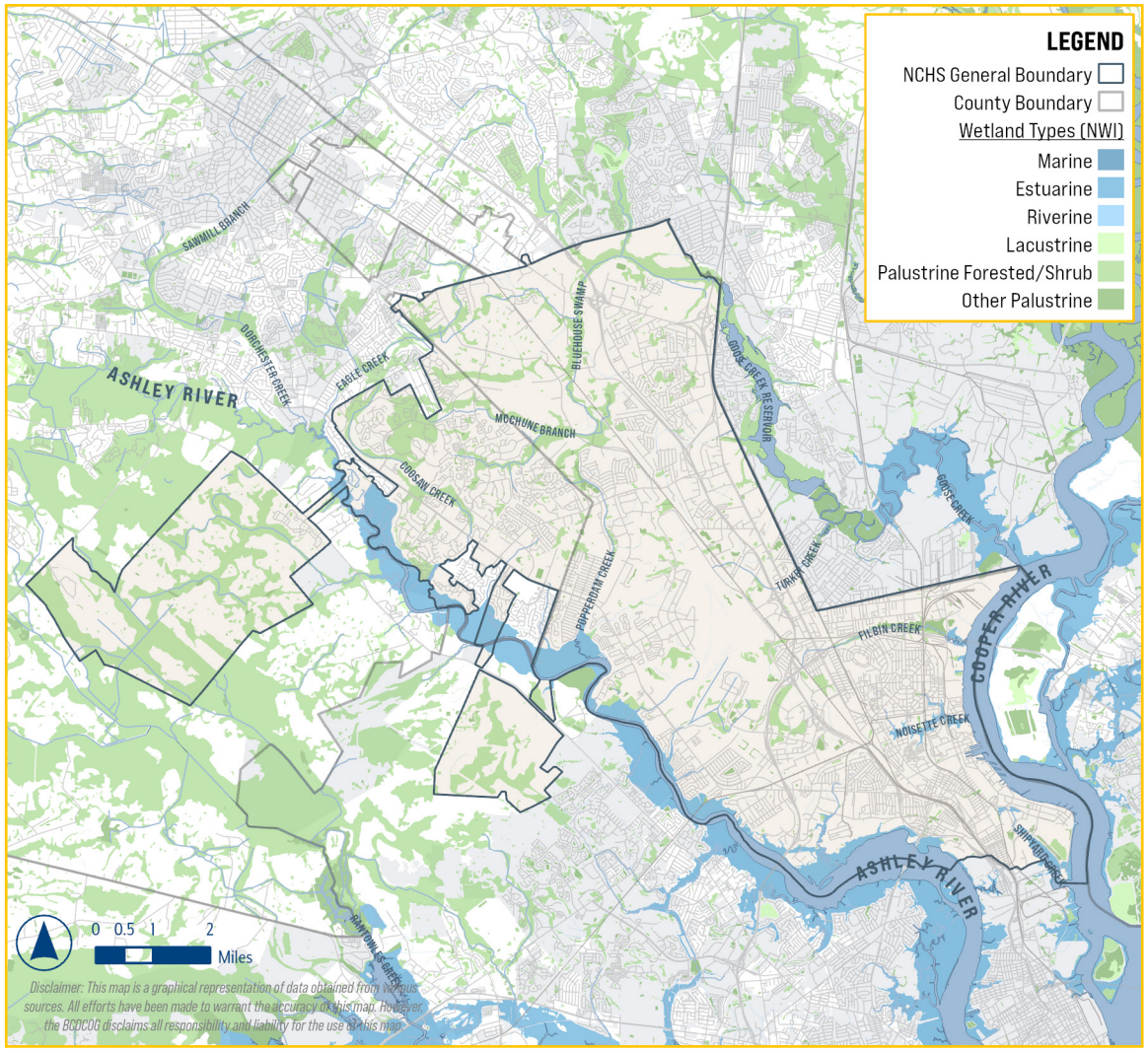


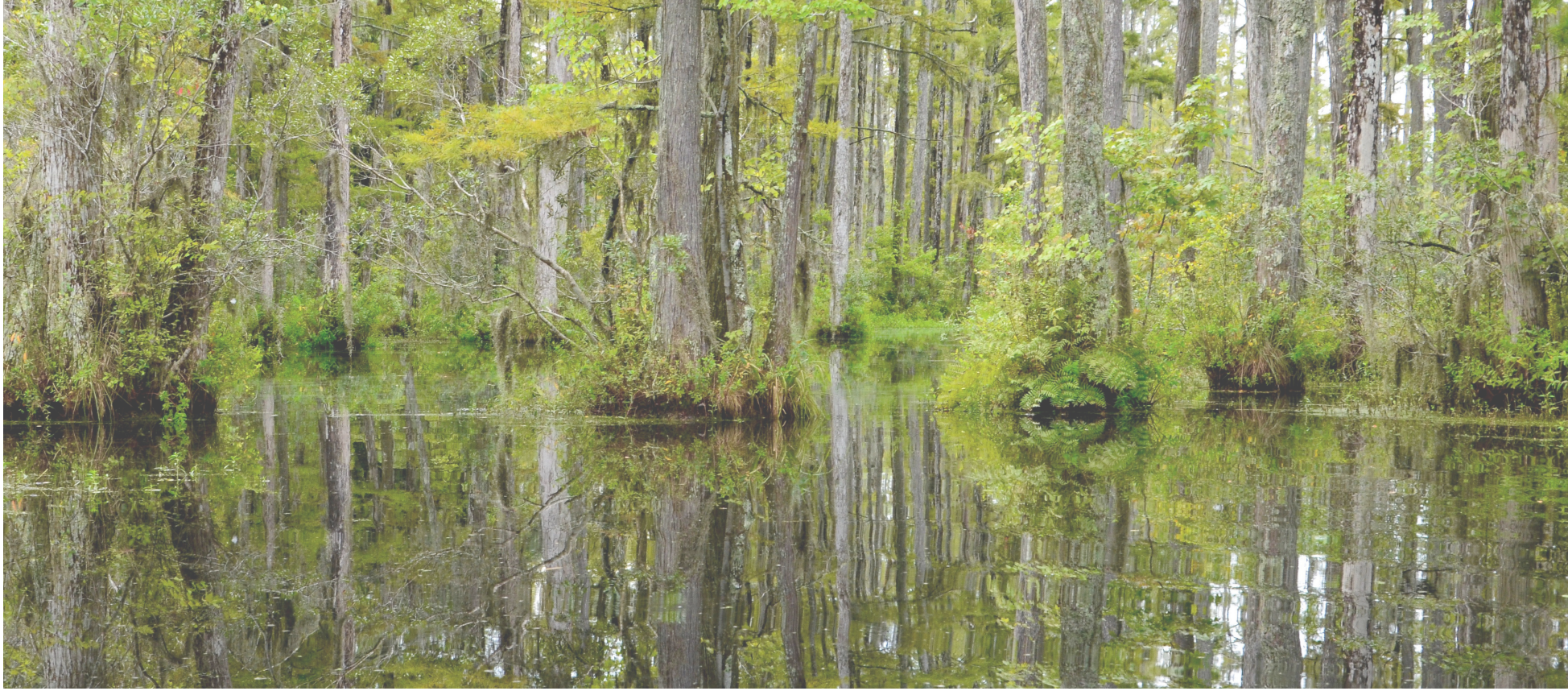
WETLANDS

Wetlands are typically defined by the near constant presence of water and how that influences the biological, physical, chemical, and ecological characteristics of the area. The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) classifies wetlands based on several factors, including types of vegetation, salinity levels, presence of water, etc. Regardless of type, wetlands are highly productive natural features that provide a series of functions based on the needs and conditions of the surrounding environment. Some of those functions include stormwater management, flood mitigation, erosion control, shoreline stabilization, carbon cycling, water filtration, and habitat for wildlife species including many rare, threatened, and endangered species.

Wetlands are often depicted as a character defining feature of the Lowcountry, however, are uncommon in North Charleston's urban core. Despite there being only a few large adjoining areas of wetlands in North Charleston south of Ashley Phosphate Road, **Map 6** shows that still about 20% of the city's total land area, or about 16 square miles, are covered by some type of wetland.

» MAP 6 *Location of Wetlands by Wetland Types*





Most of the wetlands surrounding the Ashley and Cooper Rivers are riverine-type wetlands whereas most of the remaining wetlands in and around North Charleston are classified as palustrine-type wetlands. Even along the tributaries with expansive floodplain areas, like Filbin and Popperdam Creeks, wetlands are limited to primarily along the creek or are even non-existent entirely. The Bluehouse Swamp is another notable area with large amounts of wetlands, some of which are included in Wannamaker Park (and thus protected) while other portions along Ingleside Boulevard were recently protected through Charleston County's Greenbelt program.

West of the Ashley River, the Watson Hill tract and surrounding area has an abundance of wetlands, particularly palustrine-type wetlands. Many of these wetland areas are along small streams and tributaries of the Ashley River and Rantowles Creek and are currently under some form of protection. It is important to maintain and conserve large contiguous areas of palustrine-type wetlands within a watershed, such as those in the Watson Hill area, as they naturally filter stormwater, recharge groundwater stores, and improve overall water quality.

WATER QUALITY

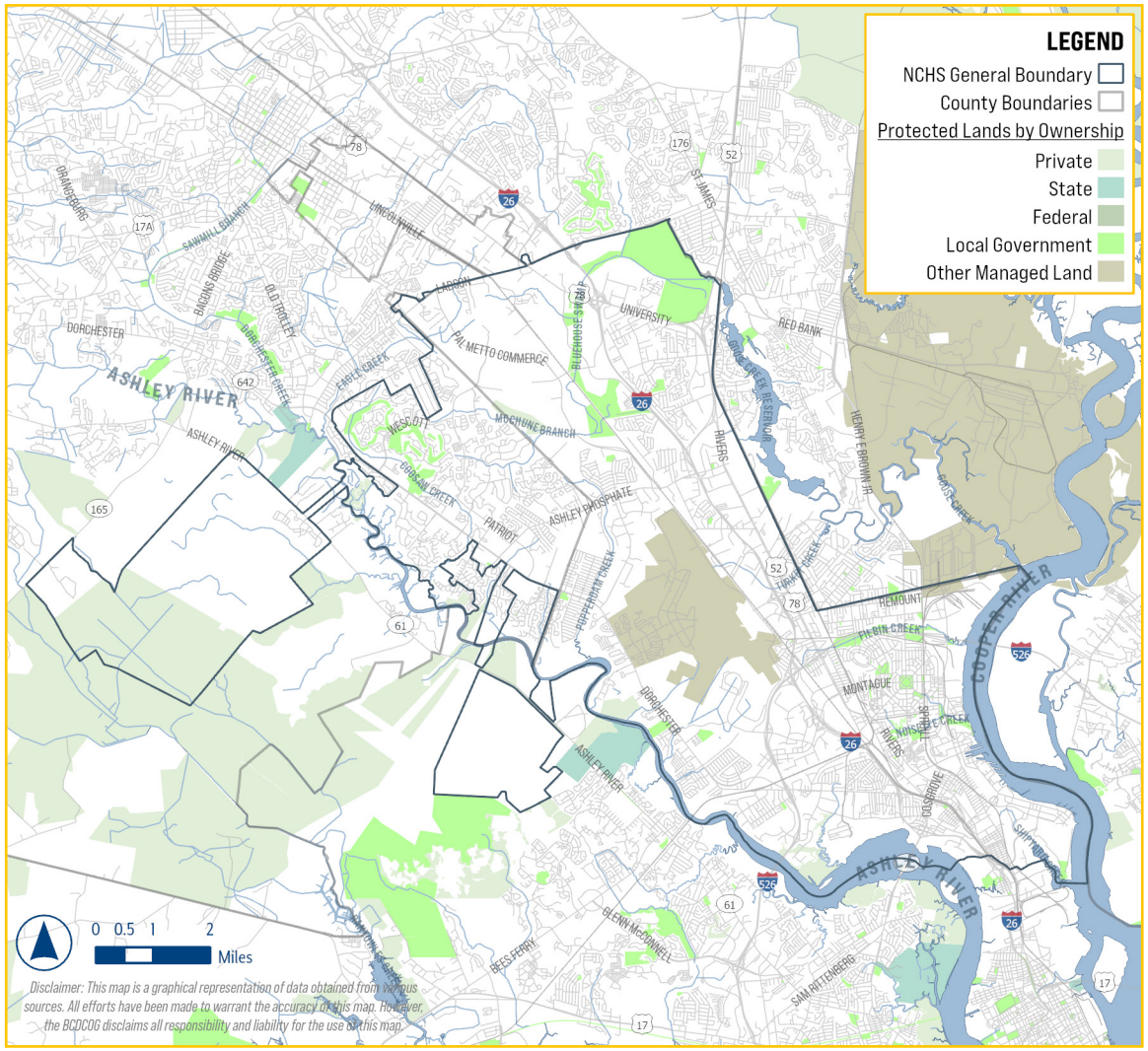
There are three Public Water Supply Source Water Protection Areas in the region, however, none of them overlap the city. The SC Department of Environmental Services (formerly DHEC) continues to monitor surface water through the numerous water quality monitoring stations located along the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. The current 208 Water Quality Management Plan, which was adopted back in 2011, continues to serve as a guiding document for local decision-makers when addressing issues regarding water quality. The City of North Charleston continues to be a participant of the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) program. The regulations associated with the MS4 program help manage stormwater runoff and mitigate water pollution.

PROTECTED LANDS

Roughly 8,750 acres of land, or 16 percent of land in North Charleston, is designated as protected or conserved land by The Nature Conservancy South Carolina. It is important to note that this includes 3,150 acres of military installations consisting of Joint Base Charleston and a small portion of the Naval Weapons Station. **Map 7** shows that the remaining 5,600 acres of land is protected/conserved either by local government agencies, such as the City of North Charleston or the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission, or by private conservation groups, such as Ducks Unlimited, East Edisto Conservancy, Lowcountry Land Trust, and Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust. Apart from the military installations, the Watson Hill tract, across the Ashley River, in Dorchester County continues to be the largest tract of protected or conserved land within North Charleston.

Most of the protected land owned and managed by the City of North Charleston remains undeveloped. These areas are likely intended to remain undeveloped due to the abundance of on-site natural resources such as floodplains, wetlands, and forested areas, or in some cases, by deed restrictions placed on the property as a condition of the funding source. For example, tracts purchased using Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission's (CCPRC) Greenbelt Program have limited permitted uses on properties. Some of the recent land purchases through the Greenbelt program include Ingleside Plantation which preserves over 440 acres of land, including portions of the Bluehouse Swamp, Noisette Preserve, and 213 acres along the banks of the Ashley River.

» MAP 7 *Protected Lands by Ownership Type*



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

A thriving ecosystem relies on the overlap and interconnectedness of different natural resources to remain sustainable. However, these connections are threatened by suburbanization as most urban areas in South Carolina continue to sprawl out into areas once covered by forests or wetlands. The State of South Carolina recognized this threat of suburbanization, thus commissioning a statewide inventory of natural resources, or "green infrastructure," to help inform local decision makers on the relationship between land-uses and natural resources. In 2023, the South Carolina Statewide Green Infrastructure Plan (SC GIP) was released along with green infrastructure plans for each of the ten Council of Governments in the state. These plans often serve as a starting point for most municipalities and counties in developing and adopting their own local green infrastructure plans.

BCD REGION GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The BCD Region has an abundance of natural resources that contribute to the ecological output and character of the region. These resources are all part of the larger green infrastructure network, forming habitat cores, corridors, and fragments. The BCD Region Green Infrastructure Plan (BCD GIP) is one of the ten regional green infrastructure plans that, in collaboration with numerous local and regional stakeholders, identifies and ranks the green infrastructure network in the region.

According to the BCD GIP, habitat cores are defined as intact areas of the landscape that provide adequate habitat to support native species. Habitat cores are ranked based on numerous ecological metrics (**Figure 31**), most of which are discussed in the Natural Resources Element and/or Addendum. Areas that don't quite meet the criteria to be considered a habitat core or are separated from a larger habitat core, may be considered a core fragment.

The City of North Charleston, being one of the denser, more urbanized areas of the region, naturally has very few intact habitat cores and several core fragments. As seen on **Map 8**, most of the habitat cores located within the urban core of North Charleston are along Palmetto Commerce Parkway and Ingleside Boulevard. Wannamaker Park, which includes portions of Blue House Swamp, and the southern portion of Joint Base Charleston/Charleston International Airport are also considered habitat cores. Most areas west of and along the Ashley River have a higher habitat score which indicates that these tracts of land have an abundance of ecological metrics (natural resources). Despite most of the area surrounding the Ashley River being among the higher-ranking habitat cores, the area is not listed as a Statewide or Local habitat corridor.

Figure 31: Habitat Core Ecological Metrics

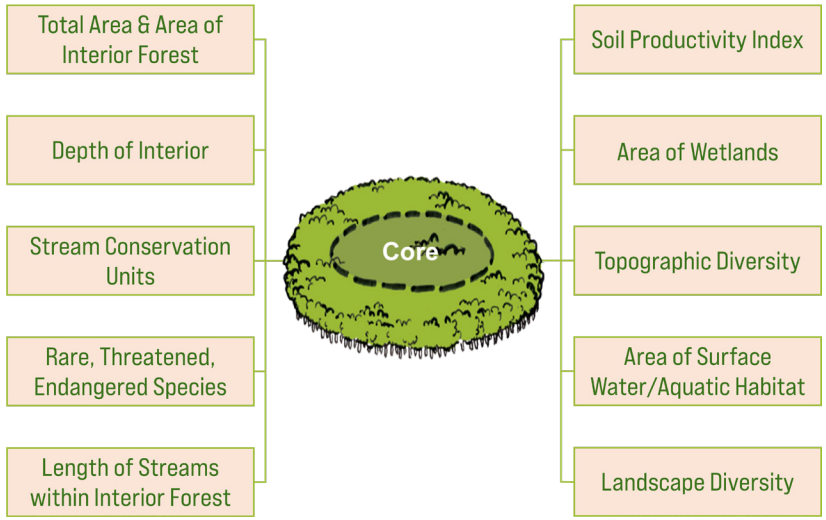
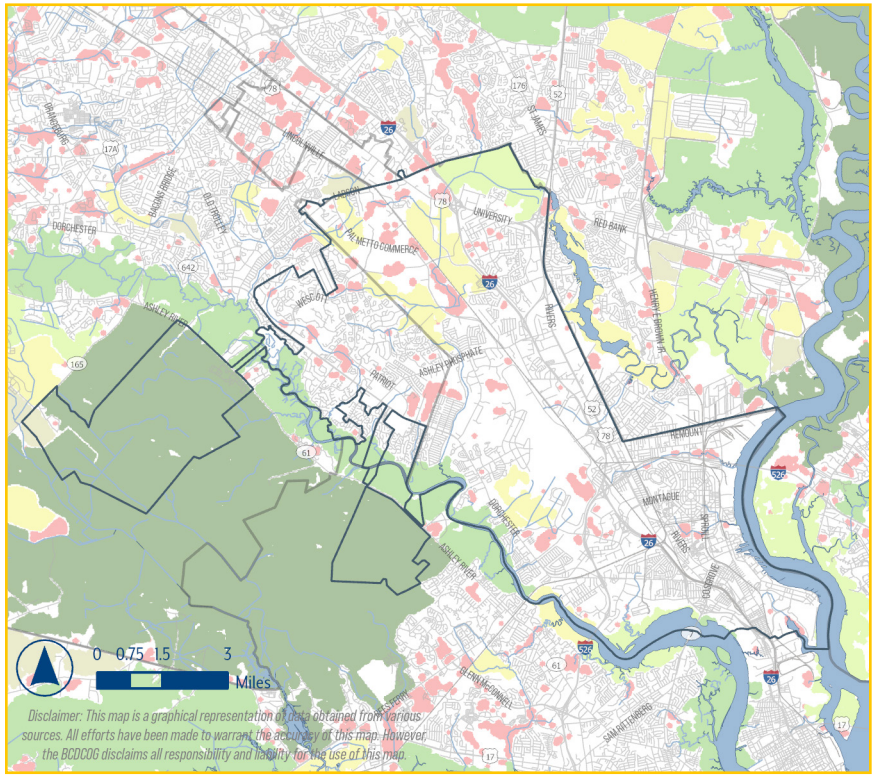


Figure Source: BCD Region Green Infrastructure Plan

RISK OF DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Suburbanization is one of the top threats to green infrastructure, particularly in and around urban areas, like North Charleston. As seen on **Map 9**, the habitat cores within the urban core of North Charleston are at the most risk of development. It is important to note that recent developments, such as the growth along Palmetto Commerce Parkway and Watson Hill, were not fully taken into consideration during the development of the SC GIP in 2021/2022. Areas identified as high scoring habitat cores should be top priority for future conservation efforts. Developing a local green infrastructure plan is crucial for identifying those areas of local historic, cultural and natural significance to help focus growth and development toward low-impact areas, preserving habitat and ecological assets along the way.

» MAP 8 *Habitat Cores by Score Ranking*

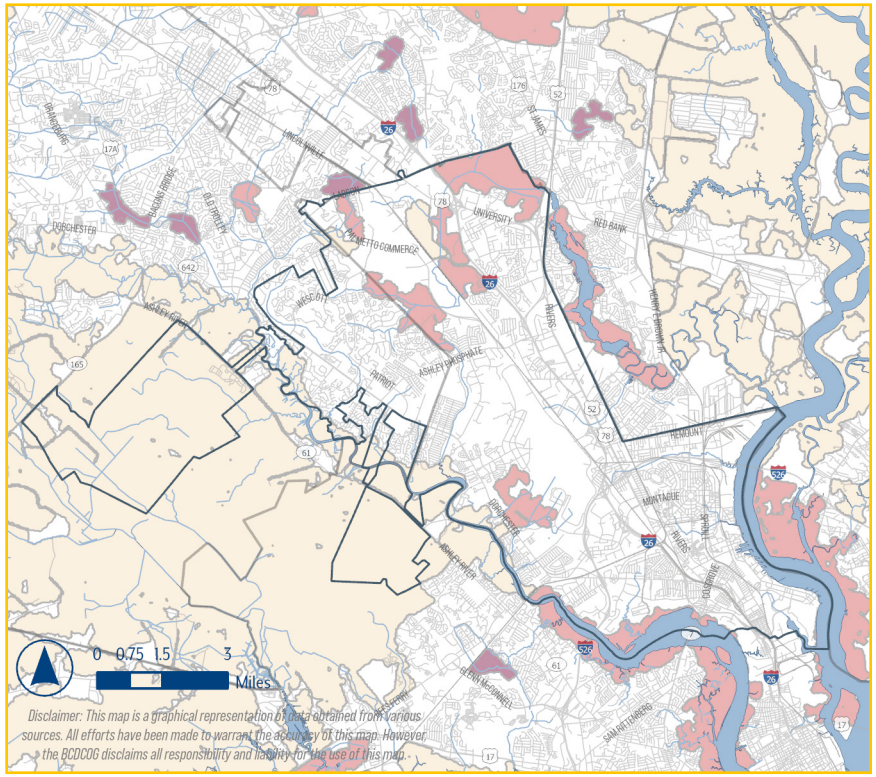


LEGEND

Habitat Core Scores

- 1 (Lowest)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Highest)
- Forest Fragment

» MAP 9 *Habitat Cores Risk of Development*



LEGEND

Risk of Development Score

- 1 (Low Risk)
- 2 (Medium Risk)
- 3 (High Risk)

RESILIENCY ELEMENT

In accordance with the 2020 amendment to the State Planning Act, a Resiliency Element is now one of ten required elements to be included in all comprehensive plans. The term "resiliency" can be used in relation to a wide range of topics, including environmental resiliency, social resiliency, economic resiliency, etc. FEMA defines resiliency as the ability of a community to prepare for anticipated natural hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions. This element will focus on the vulnerability and potential impacts that different natural hazards and disasters, such as flooding, hurricanes, and sea level rise, may have on different areas and peoples of North Charleston.

Note: The 2020 PRIME North Charleston comprehensive plan included many topics related to resiliency in the existing conditions (particularly the Natural Resources Element). This [new] element will expand upon those discussions and include other natural hazards prone to the North Charleston area.

CURRENT PLANS, TOOLS, AND ORDINANCES

CHARLESTON REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is a guiding tool for policymakers and local officials that identifies the different hazards of the region and helps inform them of the potential impacts and vulnerabilities to their community. This document is essential for local and regional resiliency planning and provides the framework for cross-jurisdictional hazard mitigation efforts.

The HMP includes hazard mitigation actions for each of the studied jurisdictions, including North Charleston. The hazard mitigation actions are broken down into six priority types: Preventive Activities, Public Information, Property Protection, Natural & Beneficial Functions of Floodplains/Resource Preservation, Emergency Services, and Structure Projects.

Some of the actions identified in the HMP specific to North Charleston include:

- Improve the City's Community Rating System rating to a Class 4 or 5 (Accomplished)
- Work with SC Sea Grant Consortium on the Filbin Creek Study (Accomplished)
- Seek funding to retrofit, demolish, or relocate repetitively flooded properties (Ongoing)
- Acquire several properties along Filbin and Noisette Creeks using Charleston County Greenbelt funds (Accomplished)
- Purchase additional wetlands property in Bluehouse Swamp, aka Ingleside Plantation (Accomplished)

CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES

Flood (Chapter 5, Article 5)

Chapter 5, Article 5 is commonly referred to as the "Floodplain Ordinance" in North Charleston's City Code. The primary purpose of the floodplain regulations are to "protect human life and health, minimize property damage, and encourage appropriate construction practices to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions." The provisions included in this ordinance meet and exceed the necessary requirements for the city to participate in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program.

Amended in 2019, the Floodplain Ordinance now requires structures to be elevated a minimum of two-feet above the base flood elevation in delinated floodplain areas.

FEMA Tools and Regulations

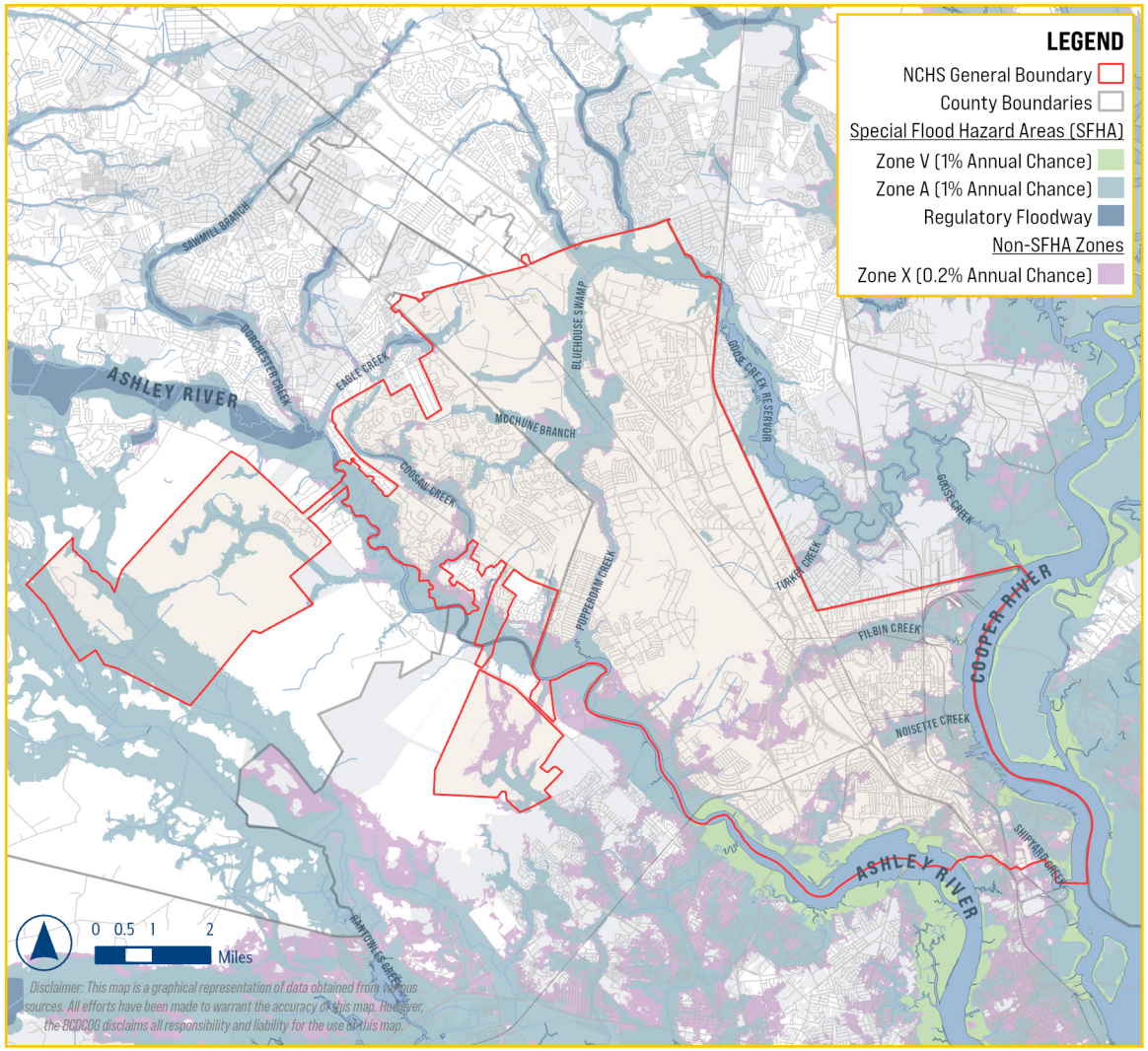
National Flood Insurance Program

The City of North Charleston has been a participant in FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) for many years. As part of the program, FEMA designates certain (potential) high risk areas as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA). As seen in **Map 10**, Zone A and V include all areas within the 100-year floodplain while Zone X includes all areas within the 500-year floodplain (see **Map 5** in the Natural Resources Addendum for reference). Property owners that are located within SFHA Zone A or V are required by federal law to purchase flood insurance with it being optional (but highly recommended) for property owners located within SFHA Zone X.

COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM

The City of North Charleston also participates in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) which is a voluntary incentive program to encourage communities to implement floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum requirements of the NFIP. Flood insurance premiums are then discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community's efforts. North Charleston's current CRS rating, as of 2025, is a 5 of 10 (with 1 being the best) which grants city residents a 25% discount in flood insurance premiums through FEMA. This is a recent upgrade from the CRS 7 Rating held in previous years. The City of Charleston, Town of Mount Pleasant, and Charleston County are also participants in the CRS program, having a rating of 6 (20% discount), 6 (20% discount), and 2 (40% discount), respectively.

» **MAP 10** *FEMA Flood Zones and Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA)*



VULNERABILITIES

The location of North Charleston plays a crucial role when assessing the city's vulnerabilities and risk level to different hazards. Communities located more inland are often shielded from many of the direct impacts from coastal hazards, like storm surge and sea level rise, but may be more vulnerable to tornadoes and winter storms events. North Charleston's more inland location, and yet 23 miles of riverbanks along two major rivers, causes some areas to be more vulnerable to certain hazards than others and vice versa.

Table 8 outlines the HMP's priority ranking of each vulnerability type by the different hazards. Hurricanes, flooding, tornadoes, and winter weather were a few of the lowest average ranking hazards (aka had the highest priority level). Some of the hazards listed, like hurricanes and winter weather, are large enough in scale to impact the entire city or region while others, like flooding and sea level rise, are prone to impact certain areas more than others. This element will identify some of the major/top priority hazards that may occur in North Charleston and the area(s) most vulnerable.

Table 8: North Charleston Physical Vulnerabilities

	NORTH CHARLESTON VULNERABILITIES				CITY OF CHARLESTON AVERAGE	TOWN OF MT. PLEASANT AVERAGE
Hazards and Disasters	*Buildings*	*Infrastructure*	*Critical Facilities*	*Average*		
Hurricanes	2	1	2	1.67	1.67	2.00
Flooding	3	1	3	2.33	1.67	3.00
Tornadoes	3	2	2	2.33	2.67	1.33
Winter Weather	3	2	2	2.33	4.67	4.00
Earthquakes	3	2	3	2.67	1.67	1.33
Dam Failure	4	3	2	3.00	3.67	3.33
Hazardous Material/Incidents	3	3	3	3.00	2.33	3.00
Sea Level Rise	3	3	3	3.00	2.00	1.00
Terrorist Incidents	4	3	2	3.00	2.33	2.00
Tsunami	3	3	3	3.00	3.00	1.67
Wildfire	3	3	3	3.00	3.67	3.67
Drought	5	5	2	4.00	4.33	5.00

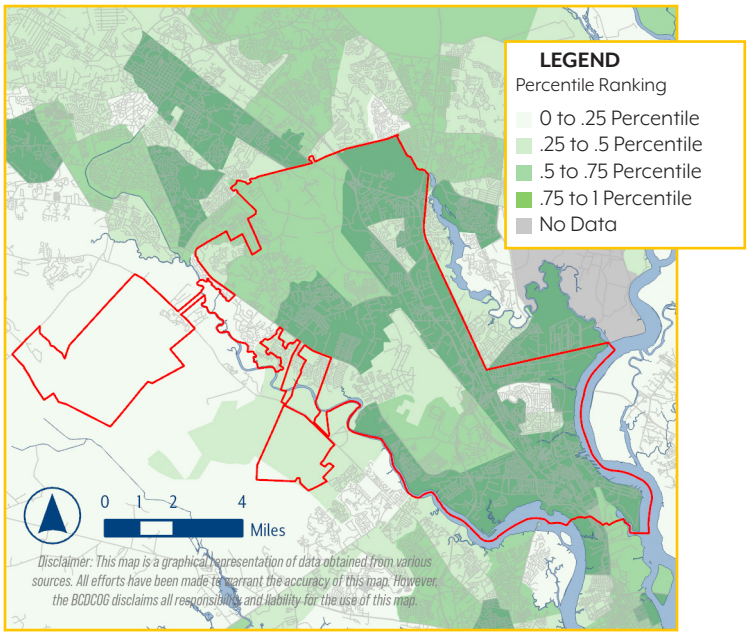
Rankings are from 1 (Highest Priority) to 5 (Lowest Priority)

Data Source: Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

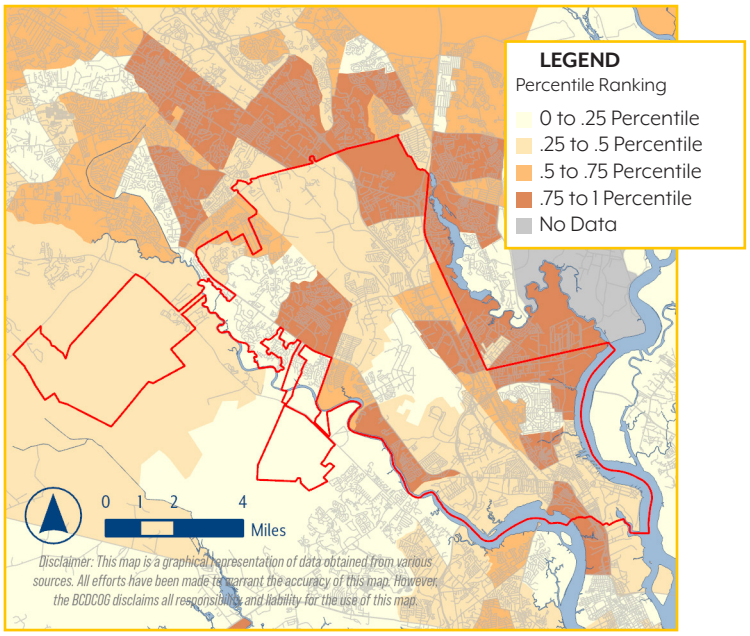
SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

The vulnerability of a community goes beyond its physical location, natural features, and environmental conditions to include the social vulnerability of the people as well. FEMA defines social vulnerability as the susceptibility of social groups to the adverse impacts of natural hazards, including disproportionate death, injury, loss, or disruption of livelihood. **Maps 11A-D** show the Social Vulnerability Index (reported by the CDC) by four different themes as a percentile ranking in the state while **Map 12** shows the combined Social Vulnerability Index of the North Charleston area.

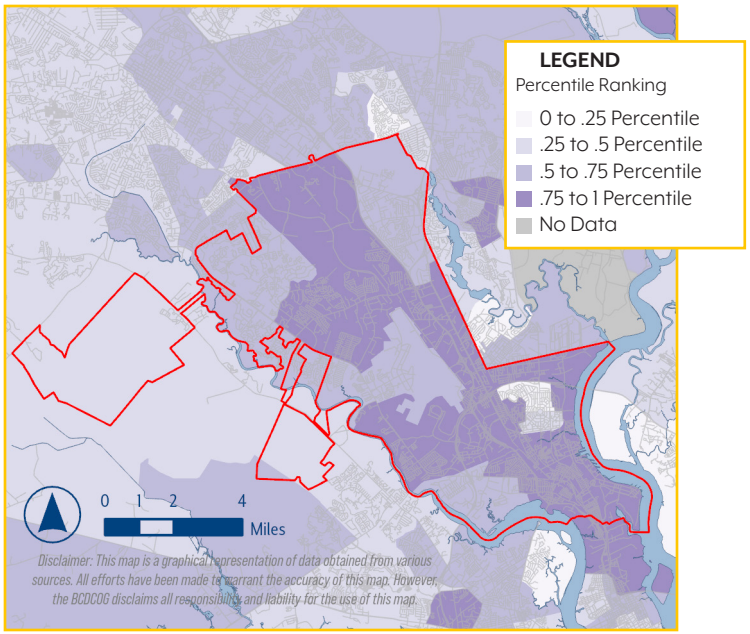
» MAP 11A *Socioeconomic Status Ranking*



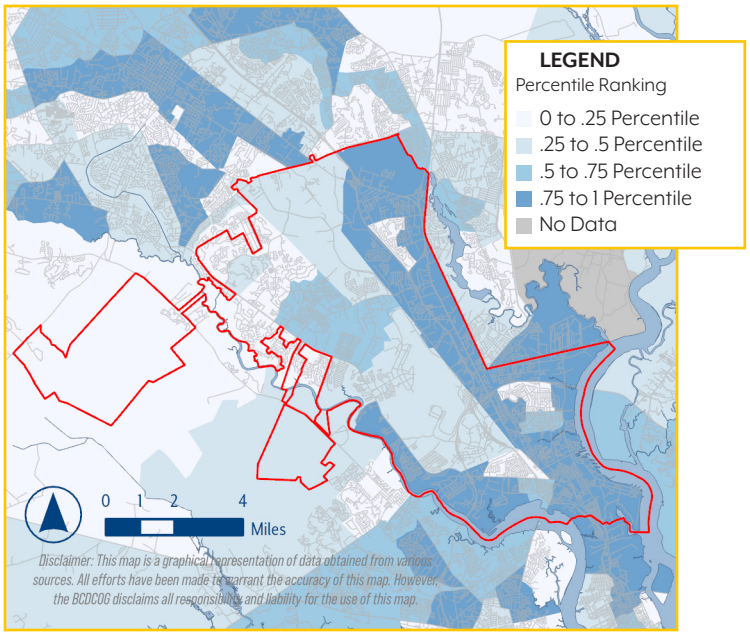
» MAP 11B *Household Characteristics Ranking*



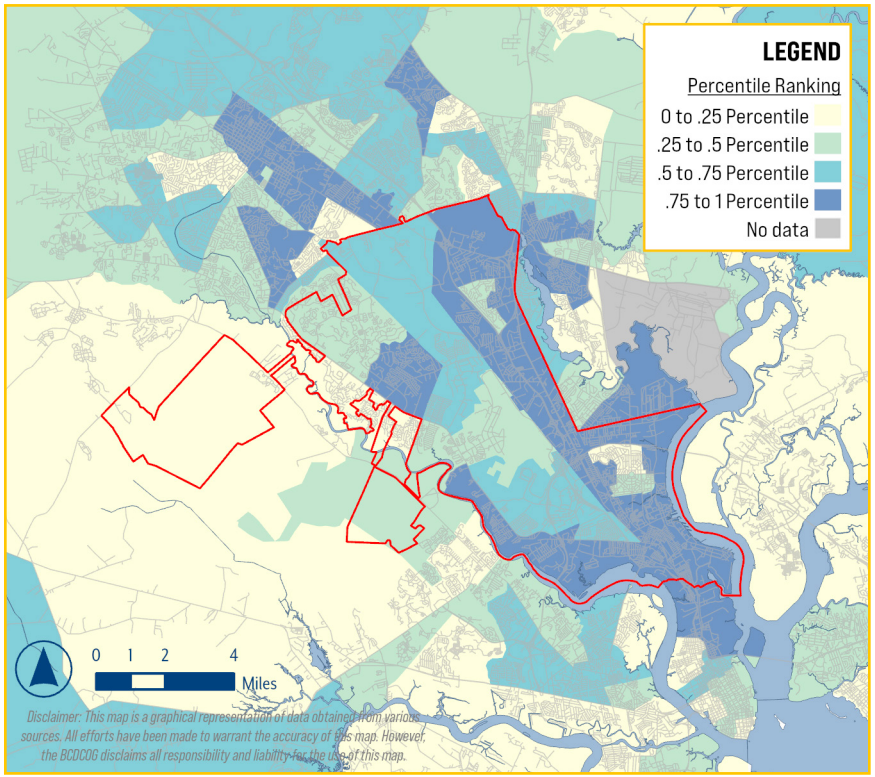
» MAP 11C *Racial & Ethnic Minority Status Ranking*



» MAP 11D *Housing Type/Transportation Ranking*

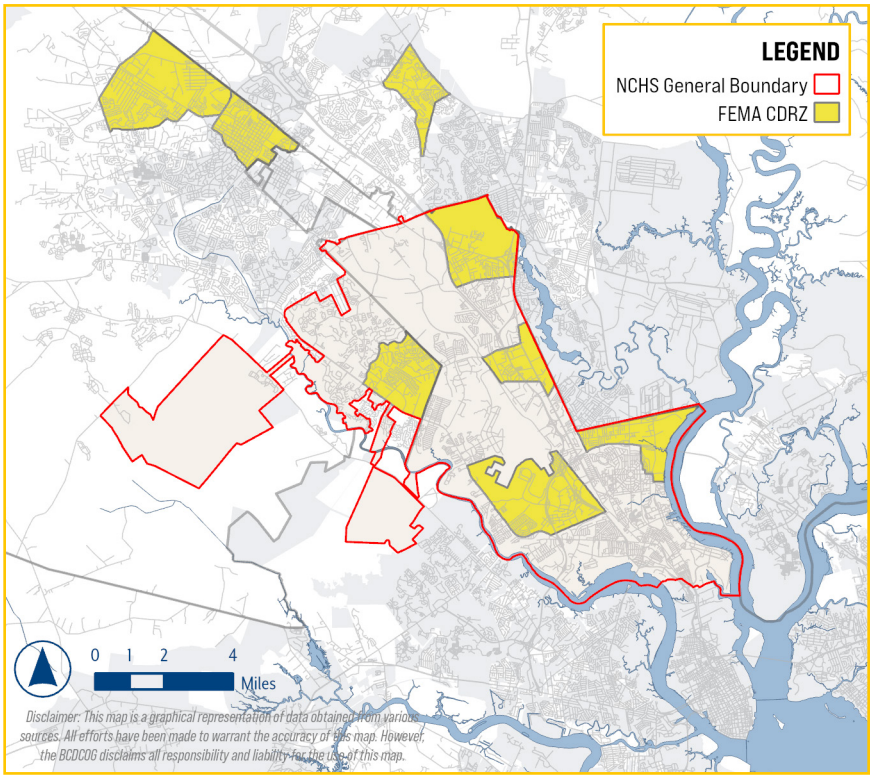


» MAP 12 *Combined Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) Ranking*



As illustrated in **Map 12**, many of the older neighborhoods in North Charleston, such as Chicora-Cherokee, Dorchester Terrace, Charleston Farms and Midland Park, fall within the highest vulnerability percentile. Nearly all census tracts along the Ashley or Cooper Rivers were also within the highest vulnerability percentile, further suggesting that areas within a floodplain/SFHA are the most vulnerable in the city.

» MAP 13 *Location of FEMA's Community Disaster Resilience Zones (CDRZ)*



Community Disaster Resilience Zones

As part of the 2022 Community Disaster Resilience Zones (CDRZ) Act, FEMA identified census tracts that are most at risk from the effects of natural hazards. As seen on **Map 13**, there were 8 CDRZ identified in the region with 5 of them being within the City of North Charleston. The purpose of this designation is to focus financial and technical assistance from public, private, and philanthropic agencies and organizations for the planning and implementation of resilience projects. This will help strengthen the resilience of those communities by helping reduce the impact of climate change and other natural hazards in the area.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND THEIR IMPACTS

A hazard or disaster may impact residents of a community at any time, and potentially, with little or no warning. The term "hazard" is often broadly used to describe any weather-related, geological, environmental, or manmade event that can adversely impact a community. The Charleston County HMP outlines several hazards that can occur within the County or region, the most common being hurricanes and flooding. Despite the diversity in how these hazards are created, the potential impacts to the community are fairly similar. Damage to property and infrastructure, such as homes, utility poles/lines/pipes, roadways, and bridges, is possible during nearly all hazard events. Other common impacts to a community can include damage to the natural environment and ecosystems, disruption of supply chains and the economy, and even physical or health-related injury to residents.

The following sections provide a brief synopsis of the hazards that pose the highest risk to North Charleston or impact the city in a specific way. Not all hazards identified in the HMP are discussed below. For more information on those hazards included and not included below, please see the Charleston County HMP.

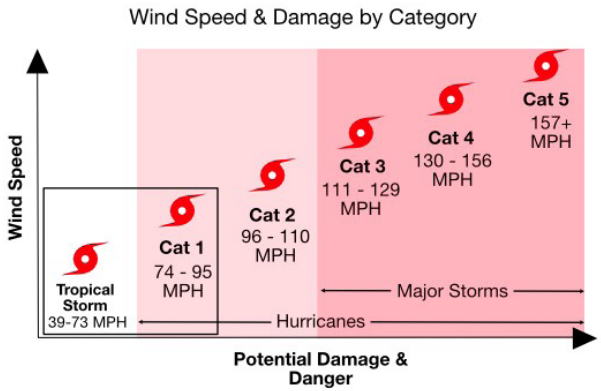
HURRICANES

According to the HMP's priority rankings, hurricanes were among the highest priority hazards, if not the highest, in nearly all jurisdictions in Charleston County. Tropical storms and hurricanes are different categories of tropical cyclones based on wind speed (**Figure 32**) and are widely considered to be the most damaging and costly natural disaster to occur in North Charleston. Hurricanes typically bring heavy precipitation, high-speed winds, and storm surge with tornadoes/waterspouts possible along the fringes of the storm system.

The most common hurricane-related hazards to occur in North Charleston are high-speed winds and urban flooding. This can cause damage to property, infrastructure, and the environment as well as disrupt supply chains and later impact recovery efforts. Low-income communities are often impacted the most as many households may be financially or physically constrained from repairing their home from any damage.

The Atlantic Hurricane season spans June through November with September and October being the peak months for storm activity. Since 2000, there have been five Category 1 or higher hurricanes that tracked within 50 miles of North Charleston. They include Charley (2004), Gaston (2004), Matthew (2016), Isaias (2020), and Ian (2022). Other storms, like Florence (2018), Idalia (2023), and Helene (2024) were once major hurricanes (Cat 3 or higher) at landfall but were reduced to tropical storms by the time they impacted North Charleston.

Figure 32: Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale



FLOODING

Flooding is both a naturally occurring process and a manmade hazard. There are three primary factors that influences the area impacted and severity of a flood: the flood source (i.e., heavy rainfall, high tides, storm surge); the surrounding environmental and weather conditions (i.e., topography, rainfall intensity and duration, land cover, ground saturation levels, soil characteristics); and the capacity of stormwater infrastructure. Flooding, whether by intense rainfall, rising river and sea levels, or storm surge, is always a top concern during a tropical storm or hurricane.

Urban and riverine flooding are the two most common floods to occur in North Charleston, the other being tidal flooding. Both urban and riverine flooding are primarily caused by heavy rainfall that overwhelms and eventually overflows a stormwater management system, river, or stream, causing a flood. Areas located within a floodplain and/or Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) are the most vulnerable to urban and riverine flooding in North Charleston. This includes properties along the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, Popperdam Creek, Noisette Creek, Filbin Creek, and McChune Branch. Urban flooding can occur well beyond the banks of a stream or river, making most neighborhoods in North Charleston vulnerable to flood damage, although, areas most susceptible to urban flooding include any low-lying areas, wetlands, roadways, and places with large amounts of impervious surfaces.

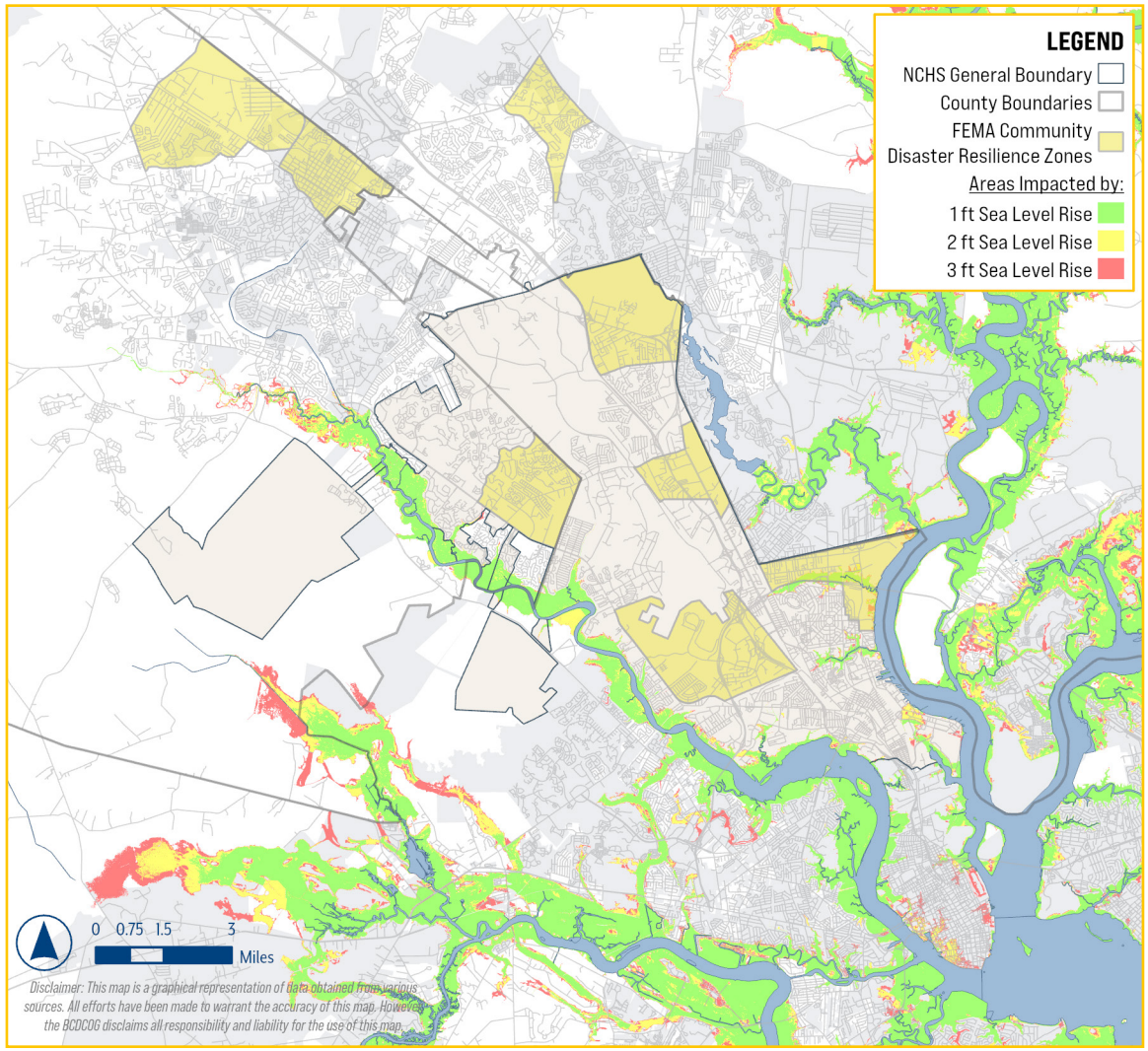
SEA LEVEL RISE

North Charleston's location several miles inland shields most areas of the city from the direct impacts of sea level rise. As seen in **Map 14**, areas along the Ashley River, Filbin Creek, and Noisette Creek would be impacted the most by a 1-foot (green), 2-foot (yellow), and 3-foot (red) sea level rise scenario. Most of the areas potentially inundated by sea level rise are within the 100-year floodplain. An increased rate of subsidence due to the continued growth and development in North Charleston can further alter the areas impacted by sea level rise.

TORNADOES

Tornadoes are another natural hazard related to storms and rotating winds that can cause immense damage in a relatively short period of time. Wind speeds of a tornado can reach up to 300 mph and are the driving force behind most of the damage done to a community. Tornadoes are often generated by intense thunderstorms but, under the right circumstances, can occur on the fringes of a tropical storm or hurricane. The most recent tornado(s) to impact the region was in September 2024 from Hurricane Helene, fortunately no tornado-related damage was reported in North Charleston.

» MAP 14 *Areas Impacted by Sea Level Rise*



WINTER STORMS AND FREEZING TEMPERATURES

During the winter months of December through February, winter-related weather events, such as winter storms and freezing temperatures, are possible in the North Charleston area. Winter storms, which often bring freezing temperatures, snow, sleet or hail, are uncommon in the region. Because of this infrequency, the City of North Charleston, like most cities in the southeast, is not equipped to properly and safely respond to a winter storm and the hazards it can cause.

Freezing temperatures, on the other hand, are more common than a winter storm event as the North Charleston area has a high probability of temperatures dropping below freezing at least once a winter season. Like most hazards, low-income communities, the elderly, and homeless people are most vulnerable to both winter storms and freezing temperatures. The impacts caused by either event can affect the physical property and infrastructure of the community, utilities, the environment, and the health and safety of residents.

EARTHQUAKES

Earthquakes are naturally occurring seismic events that can be felt across large geographic areas and cause varying degrees of damage to property and infrastructure. North Charleston lies within one of the most active seismic areas in the Eastern United States, yet most earthquakes that occur in the region are weaker and go unnoticed by the vast majority of people. In 2023, the USGS updated their 2018 National Seismic Hazard Model which downgraded the region's seismic hazard potential from the highest hazard (**Figure 33**) to a medium hazard (**Figure 34**), matching other parts of South Carolina.

Figure 33: USGS National Seismic Hazard Model, 2018

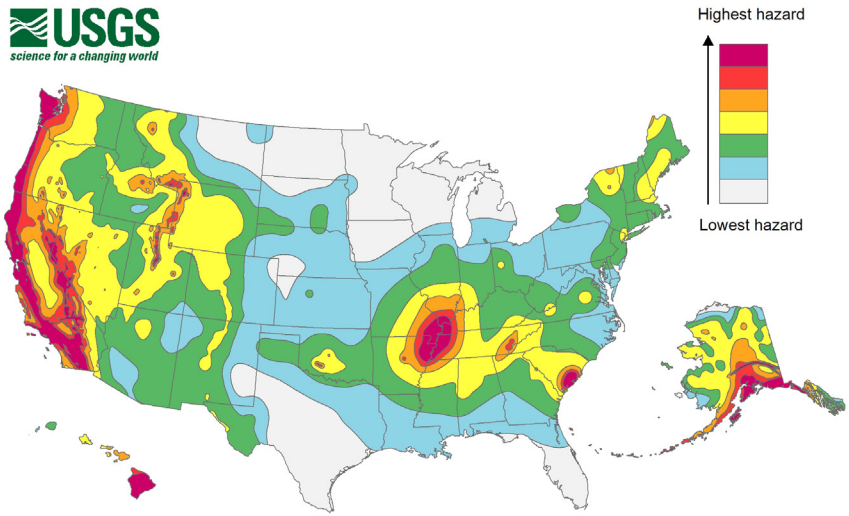
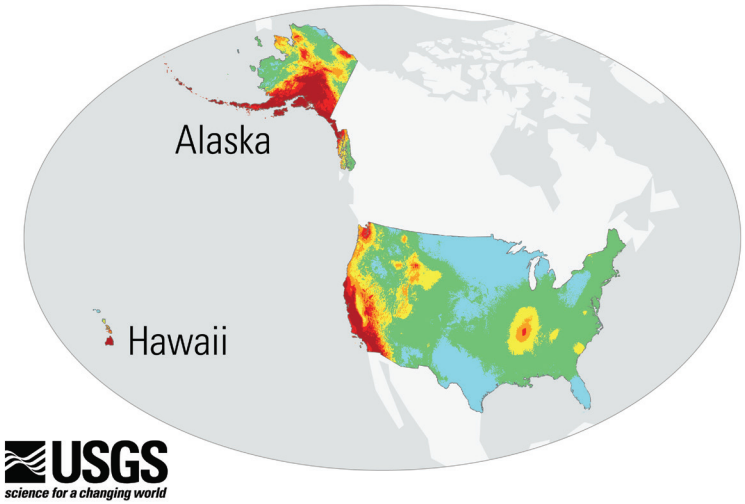


Figure 34: USGS National Hazard Seismic Model, 2023



The suddenness of an earthquake is one of the greatest risks as a seismic event is not bound by seasons or weather conditions and can occur at any time, on any day of the year. Liquefication is also another major risk factor in the North Charleson area given the low-lying landscape and environmental conditions. Liquefication is a phenomenon in which loosely packed, waterlogged sediments at or near the ground surface lose their strength in response to the intense ground shaking. This can compromise the stability of buildings, bridges, overpasses, utility lines/poles, and other permanent structures, causing damage and in some cases, total collapse.

In 2012, SCDNR and SCEMD published a geologic hazards map showing areas within South Carolina most vulnerable to liquefication (link below). Most of the North Charleston area is identified as having a High Potential for Liquefaction.

https://www.dnr.sc.gov/geology/pdfs/GGMS5.pdf

HAZARDOUS WASTE AND MATERIALS

Another manmade hazard includes the mismanagement of hazardous waste or materials. The City of North Charleston hosts hundreds of businesses that produce hazardous waste or materials which is defined by the EPA as having properties that make it dangerous or capable of having harmful effect on human health or the environment. Some of these waste or materials include aerosols, batteries, dry cleaners, electronics, motor oil, paint, ink, pesticides, and pharmaceutical waste. The EPA requires all facilities or businesses that generate hazardous waste or materials (generators) to register with the EPA and have a mitigation plan in the event of a spill, leak or mismanagement in general.

Areas along major highways and railroads are also vulnerable to the mismanagement of hazardous waste or materials. As discussed in the Transportation Addendum, there are approximately 26 miles of roadways in North Charleston identified by the National Highway Freight Network as important freight corridors. This network, along with the roughly 56 miles of railroad within the city, extends the vulnerability beyond the generators. The impacts of a spill or leak are largely dependent on the state of matter (i.e., solid, liquid, or gas), stability or extent of danger (i.e., explosive, combustible, radioactive, etc.), and the location.



CULTURAL RESOURCES ADDENDUM

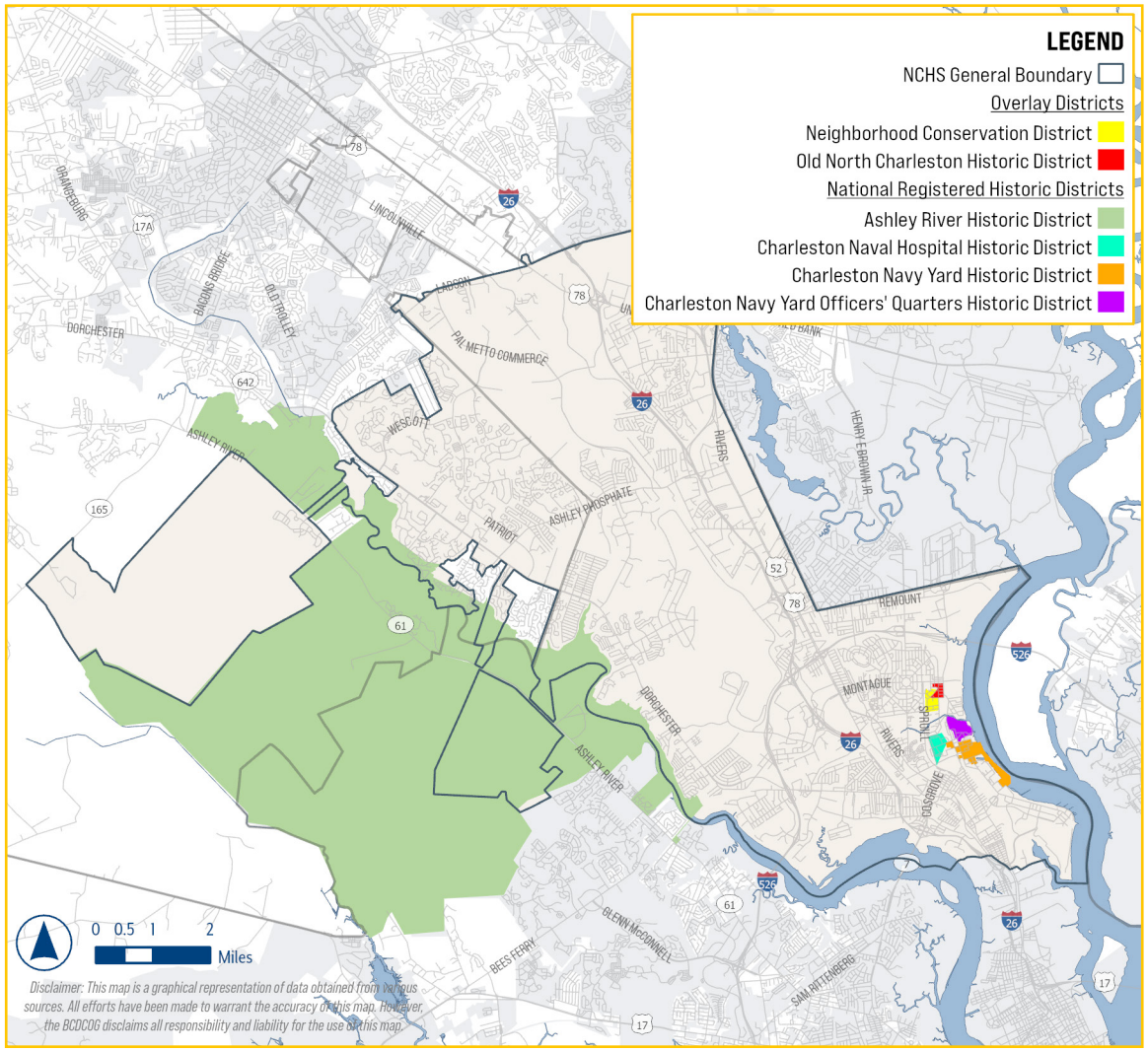
5-Year Update Overview

Most of the cultural and historic resources in North Charleston have different conservation and protection measures in place to preserve the history and cultural heritage of the area. Recent efforts by the neighborhood to add the Liberty Hill neighborhood, established over 150 years ago and is the first black freeman's neighborhood in North Charleston, to the National Register of Historic Places has been the only significant change in cultural and historic resources since 2020. As of 2024, the Liberty Hill neighborhood is not yet listed on the National Register but continues to support several buildings, sites, and places that contribute to the cultural and historic significance of the neighborhood. This addendum will highlight some of the main topics discussed in the 2020 Cultural and Historic Element.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

There are several historic districts within the City of North Charleston that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They include the Charleston Navy Yard Historic District, Charleston Navy Hospital Historic District, Charleston Navy Year Officers' Quarters Historic District, and the Ashley River Historic District, the latter of which is only partially within the city limits. **Map 15** shows the location of these disticts.

» MAP 15 *Historic District Locations*



To further preserve the historic character and integrity of other areas in North Charleston, the city has identified several zoning overlay districts which include the Olde North Charleston Neighborhood Historic District, Olde North Charleston Neighborhood Conservation District, and the Ashley River Scenic District, as seen on **Map 15**. Development in these areas is under a greater degree of scrutiny as the zoning overlay districts often come with additional conditions or even restrictions for development.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

A historical survey was conducted in 1995 and identified 38 properties that were eventually designated as historic sites by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). A majority of the neighborhoods surveyed were located south of I-526 along Rivers Avenue, Rhett Avenue, Montague Avenue, and Spruill Avenue.

CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

The numerous cultural and entertainment venues in and around North Charleson continue to host different events throughout the year. Some of the larger venues, such as the North Charleston Coliseum and Performing Arts Center, Charleston Area Convention Center, Riverfront Park, and Park Circle, host a wide range of event types including sporting events, concerts, trade shows, and community festivals. Additionally, there are several private businesses or entities that host smaller events, like concerts and farmers markets, that are available for people to attend, although tickets or an entry fee may be required.





COMMUNITY FACILITIES ADDENDUM

5-Year Update Overview

Several major community facilities have been constructed or re-developed since the 2020 plan. The North Charleston Recreation Department had four major grand openings of park and recreation facilities, including the North Charleston Athletic Center in 2019, the North Charleston Aquatic Center in 2020, the redevelopment of Park Circle in 2023, and the North Charleston Sports Complex in 2024. Other notable changes include the opening of the Carner Avenue Community Center, Watson Hill Fire Station #3, the Dorchester County Library – North Charleston Branch, and the purchase of the 440-acre Ingleside Park.

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

North Charleston City Hall, located at 2500 City Hall Lane, remains the center where most municipal services provided by the city, such as the Office of the Mayor, City Council, Municipal Court, Police Department, Economic Development, Human Resources, Parks and Recreation, and Planning and Zoning. The North Charleston Public Works building, located at 5800 Casper Padgett Way, houses the Public Works Department which is divided into three divisions: Maintenance, Sanitation, and Equipment Maintenance. The newly constructed Park Circle Community Center houses the Cultural Arts Department while Riverfront Park Quarters G houses the Office of Tourism and maintenance services for Riverfront Park and its facilities.

For more information on how the municipal government in North Charleston is divided or find contact information for the City of North Charleston, please go to the city's website (https://www.northcharleston.org/).

PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety is an essential service provided by local government agencies. There are several aspects of public safety, including law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical services (EMS), and emergency management/preparedness. The North Charleston Police and Fire Departments are both broken up into different divisions, each with a specific set of duties and responsibilities to ensure the safety and well-being of residents.

In 2024, the North Charleston Police Department earned its national re-accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies for the 17th consecutive year. According to the City's website, the Police Department employs over 340 sworn officers and 85 civilian employees.

The North Charleston Fire Department maintains an ISO Class 1 rating. According to the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, the North Charleston Fire Department had 286 personnel responding to approximately 24,000 emergency incidents annually. The city took over the Ashley River Fire Department station, located along Dorchester Road, redesignating the station as Fire Station #8. With the recent opening of Fire Station #14, located at 4475 Ashley River Road near Watson Hill, the North Charleston Fire Department now operates from 13 total stations located in all corners of the city.

COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

Charleston County Sheriff's Office, located at 3691 Leeds Avenue, provides additional law enforcement services and protection, often working in conjunction with the city's Police Department. Emergency dispatch for both the North Charleston Police and Fire Departments occurs through the Charleston County Consolidated 9-1-1 Center and the Dorchester County E911 Dispatch Center. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are provided by Charleston and Dorchester Counties. The Charleston County Emergency Operations Center, located at 8500 Palmetto Commerce Parkway, serves as the center of operations for City, County, State, and Federal partners during disaster events, such as a hurricane.

Map 16 shows the numerous public safety facilities located throughout the city.

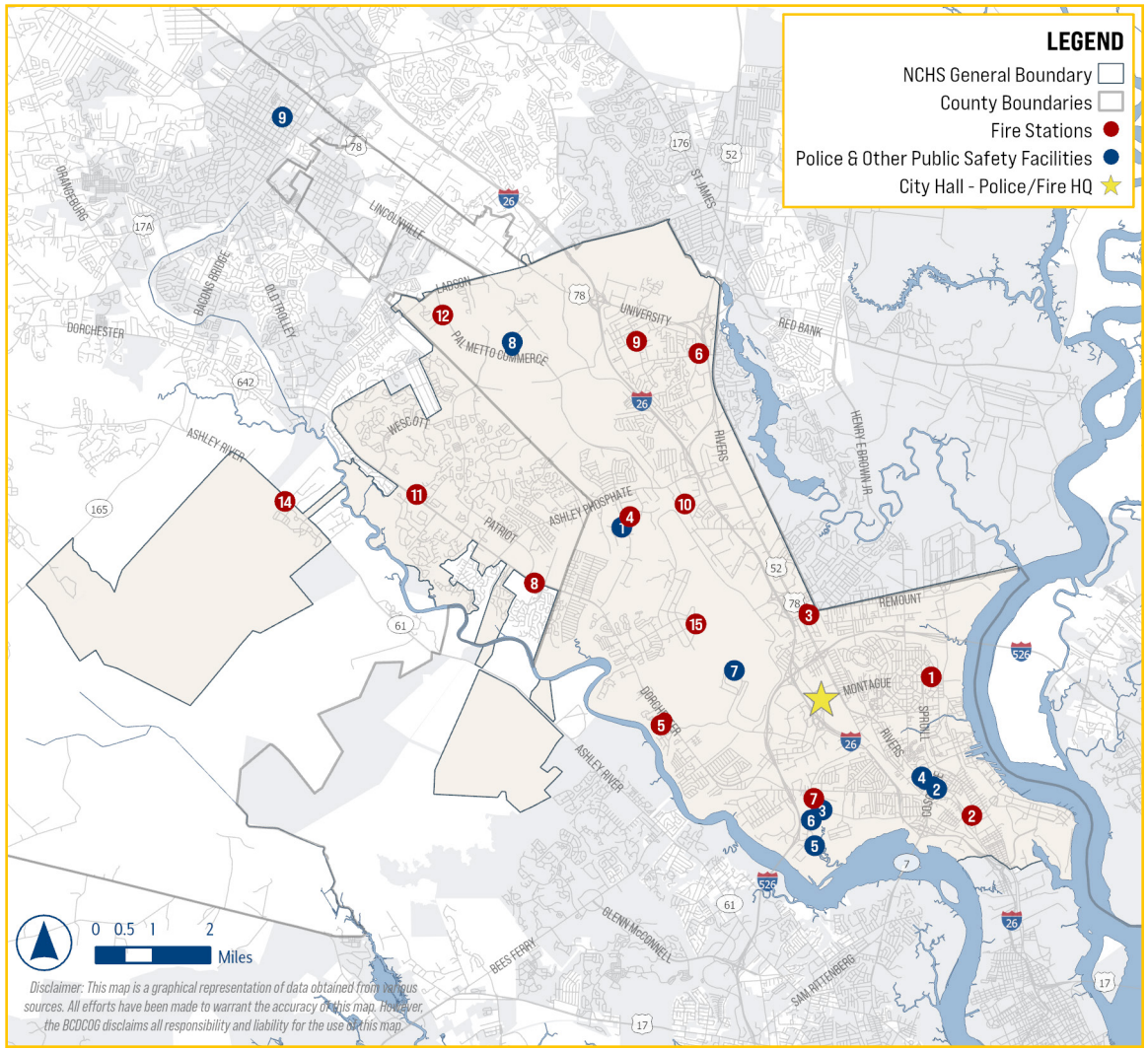
LAW ENFORCEMENT FACILITIES

1	North Charleston Police Dept. North Bureau
2	North Charleston Police Dept. South Bureau
3	Charleston Co. Sheriff's Office
4	Charleston Co. Sheriff's Admin. Office
5	Charleston Co.Sheriff's North District
6	Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center
7	Charleston Aviation Authority Airport Police
8	Charleston Co. Emergency Operations Center
9	Dorchester Co. Consolidated Dispatch Center

FIRE & EMS FACILITIES

1	N. Charleston Station 1
2	N. Charleston Station 2
3	N. Charleston Station 3
4	N. Charleston Station 4
5	N. Charleston Station 5
6	N. Charleston Station 6
7	N. Charleston Station 7
8	Ashley River Fire Dept.
9	N. Charleston Station 9
10	N. Charleston Station 10
11	N. Charleston Station 11
12	N. Charleston Station 12
13	N. Charleston Station 14
14	N. Charleston Station 15
15	Charleston Air Force Base

» MAP 16 *Public Safety Facility Locations*



EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

There are a wide range of educational facilities located within North Charleston, including primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions. All public primary and secondary education facilities that serve North Charleston residents are part of either Charleston County School District (CCSD) or Dorchester School District Two (DSD2). **Table 9** shows the enrollment and school rating of all public schools for the 2023-24 school year while **Map 17** shows their location.

Two major athletic facility projects, including upgrading Fort Dorchester High Schools stadium and the new CCSD Shared Stadium, located at 3659 W Montague Ave near the I-526/Dorchester Road interchange, were recently completed in North Charleston. Beech Hill Elementary and East Edisto Middle are two newer schools west of the Ashley River in Dorchester County to accommodate the county's growing population in that area.

There are currently two post-secondary schools located in North Charleston – Charleston Southern University (CSU), a 4-year private liberal arts university and Trident Technical College (TTC), an accredited 2-year technical college. CSU reported having nearly 3,900 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in 2024 while TTC reported having around 7,850 full-time equivalent students. Both post-secondary education campuses can be found on **Map 17**.

» MAP 17 *Educational Institution Locations*

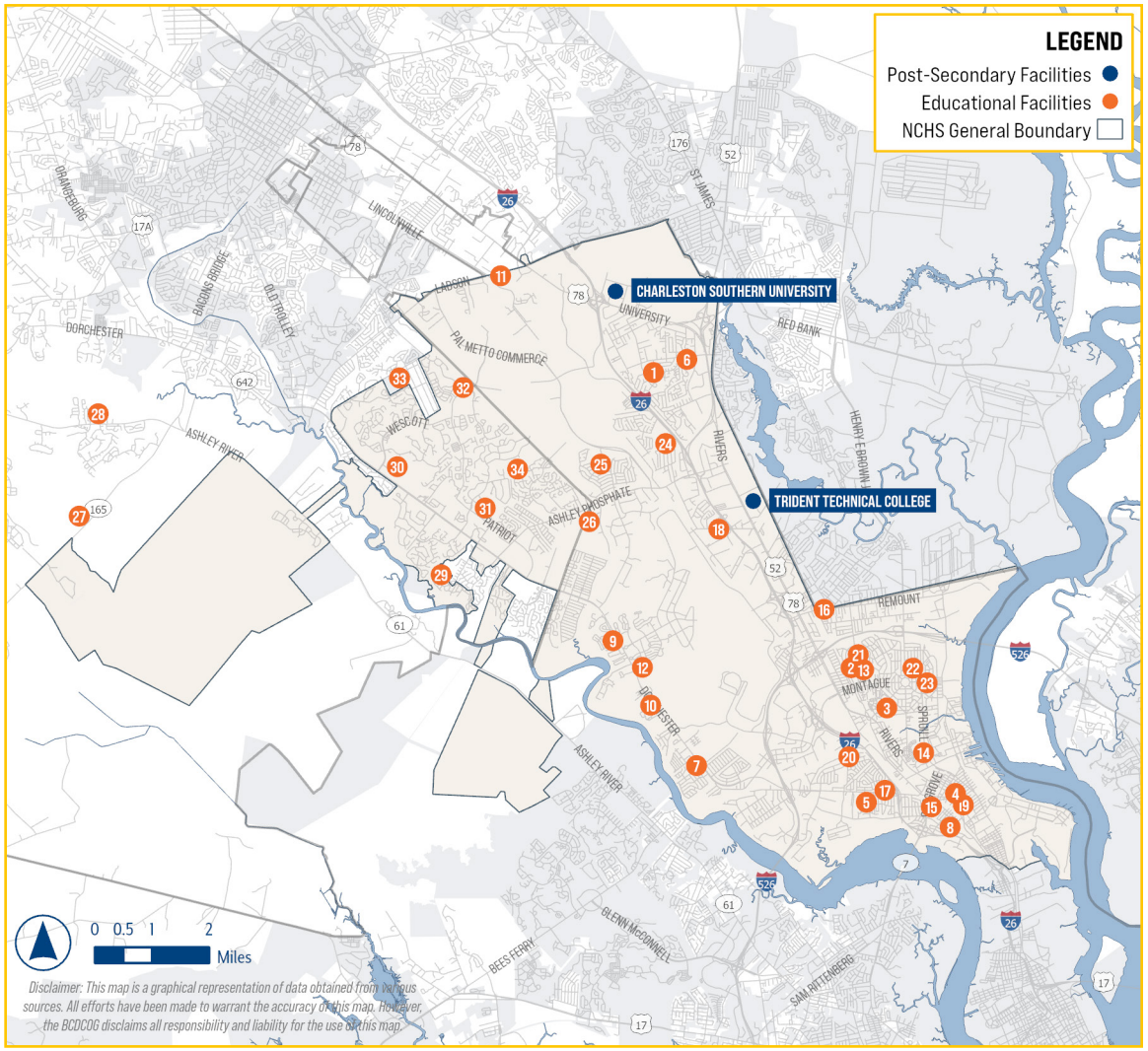


Table 9: List of Schools that serve North Charleston Students, 2023-24 School Year

Map Labels	Charleston County School District	Grades	Enrollment	School Rating
1	A C Corcoran ES	PK-5	716	Below Average
2	Academic Magnet HS	9-12	718	Excellent
	Charleston School of the Arts	6-12	1069	Excellent
3	Allegro Charter School of Music	6-12	216	Good
4	Chicora ES	1-5	318	Average
5	Daniel Jenkins Creative Learning Center	-	-	-
6	Deer Park MS	6-8	300	Average
7	Goodwin ES	PK-5	424	Average
8	Greg Mathis Charter HS	9-12	61	Unsatisfactory
9	Hunley Park ES	PK-5	430	Good
10	Jerry Zucker School of Science	6-8	501	Average
11	Ladson ES	PK-5	893	Below Average
12	Lambs ES	PK-5	506	Average
13	Liberty Hill Academy	-	-	-
14	Malcolm C Hursey (ES+MS)	PK-8	475	Average
15	Mary Ford Early Learning & Family Center	PK-K	259	-
16	Matilda F Dunston PS	PK-5	491	Below Average
17	Meeting Street @Burns (ES+MS)	PK-8	1153	Below Average
18	Midland Park PS	PK-K	376	-
19	Military Magnet Academy	6-12	400	Good-Average
20	Morningside MS	6-8	555	Average
21	North Charleston Creative Arts ES	PK-5	403	Unsatisfactory
22	North Charleston ES	PK-5	307	Good
23	North Charleston HS	9-12	785	Below Average
24	Northwoods MS	6-8	677	Below Average
	Pinehurst ES	1-5	690	Average
25	Pepperhill ES	PK-5	439	Average
26	R B Stall HS	9-12	2024	Below Average

Map Labels	Dorchester School District Two	Grades	Enrollment	School Rating
27	Ashley Ridge HS	9-12	2735	Excellent
28	Beech Hill ES	PK-5	1209	Excellent
	East Edisto MS	6-8	942	Good
29	Eagle Nest ES	PK-5	681	Average
	River Oaks MS	6-8	801	Below Average
30	Fort Dorchester ES	PK-5	860	Good
31	Fort Dorchester HS	9-12	2301	Excellent
32	Joseph R Pye ES	PK-5	835	Excellent
33	Oakbrook ES	PK-5	659	Average
	Oakbrook MS	6-8	943	Good
34	Windsor Hill Arts Infused ES	PK-5	658	Good

LIBRARIES

The Charleston and Dorchester County Library Systems serve the residents of North Charleston. Since 2020, there have been two newly constructed libraries in North Charleston. The R. Keith Summey North Charleston Library, located at 3503 Rivers Avenue and operated by Charleston County Library System, opened in 2023, replacing the old Cooper River Memorial Library. Also opening in 2023, the newly constructed Dorchester County Library – North Charleston Branch, located adjacent to Fort Dorchester High School at 8620 Patriot Boulevard, is the first Dorchester County Library System branch to be located within city limits.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The City of North Charleston's Recreation Department provides numerous programs and activities to residents and oversees nearly forty different parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, community centers and senior centers throughout the city. Many of the parks and recreation facilities are adjacent to another community facility, although not necessarily owned or maintained by the city, such as a school, library, or community center, and work in conjunction with those facilities to provide the widest possible range of services to residents. **Map 18** shows the location of all parks, open spaces, athletics fields, and other recreational facilities in North Charleston, including many highly frequented parks such as Wannamaker Park, Park Circle, and Riverfront Park.

Most recent projects to expand parks and recreation services throughout the city include the following:

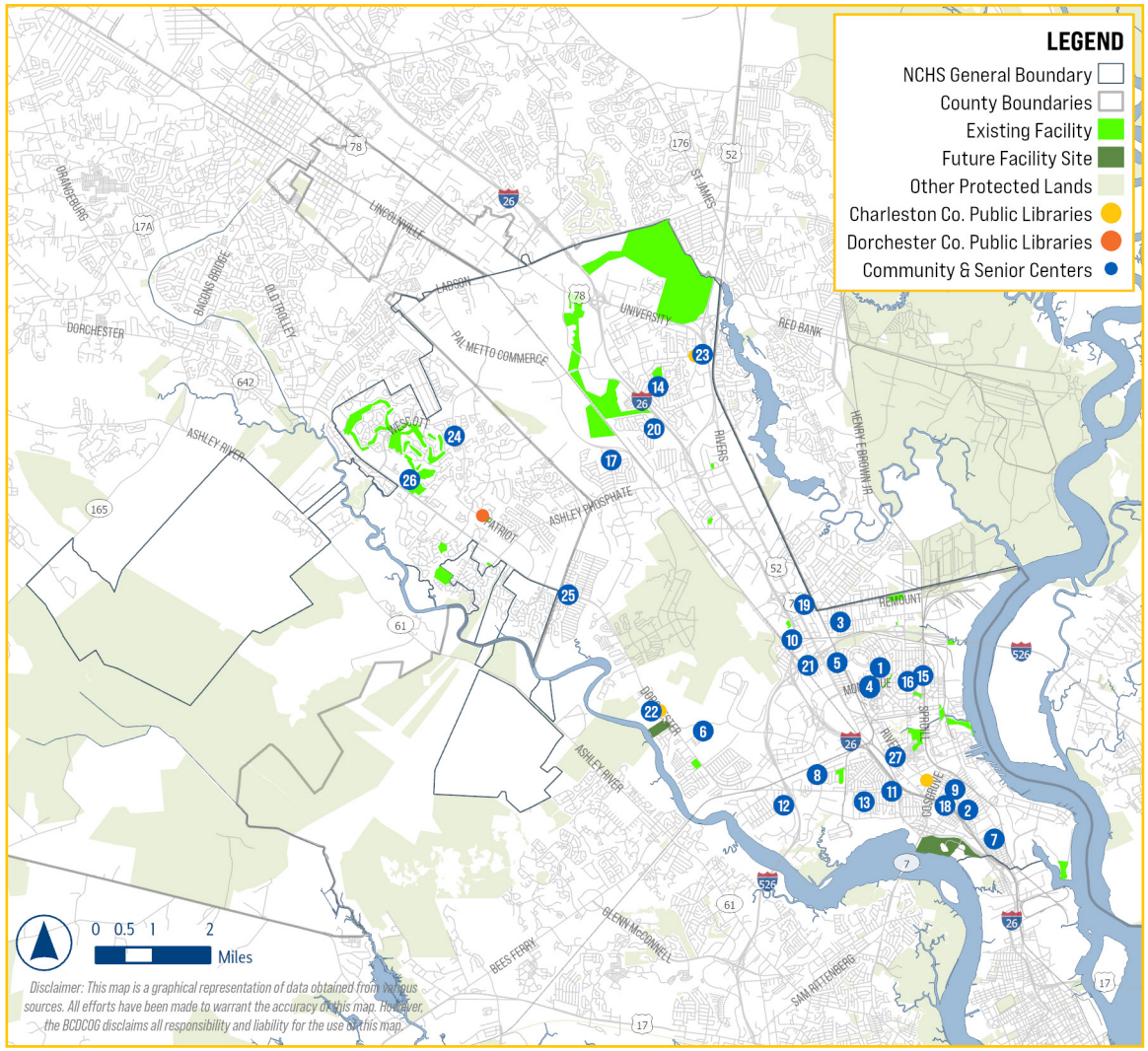
- North Charleston Athletic Center (2019), which includes 3 full size gymnasiums
- North Charleston Aquatic Center (2020), which features an Olympic sized pool
- Park Circle Community Center and Playground (2023), which features an amphitheater, farmers market, Cultural Arts Department, artist' studios, and the World's largest inclusive playground.
- North Charleston Sports Complex (2024), which replaced the Danny Jones sports complex with an indoor pool, basketball court, etc.







» MAP 18 *Location of Libraries, Parks, Recreation, Community, and Senior Center Facilities*



Major Parks & Recreation facilities include:

- North Charletson Athletic Center
- North Charleston Aquatic Center
- North Charleston Sports Complex
- Wannamaker County Park
- Collins Park
- Kapstone Park
- Northwoods Park
- Park Circle
- Wescott Park
- Riverfront Park

COMMUNITY & SENIOR CENTERS

1	Armory Park Community Center
2	Carner Avenue Senior Center
3	Charleston Farms Community Center
4	Felix Pinckney Communtiy Center
	Liberty Hill Senior Center
5	Ferndale Community Center
6	Gary McJunkin Community Center
7	Gethsemani Community Center
8	Green Grove Community Center
9	Gussie Greene Community Center
10	Highland Terrace/Liberty Park Community Center
11	Jeanene Batten Community Center
12	Miner Crosby Community Center
13	Murray Hill Community Center
14	Northwood Community Center
15	Park Circle Ceramics
16	Park Circle Community Building
17	Pepperhill Park Community Center
18	Perry-Webb Community Center
19	Persephone-Moultrie Community Center
20	Raymond "Buck" Miller Community Center
21	Russelldale Community Center
22	Senior Center at Dorchester Road
23	Senior Center at Northwood
24	The Farms Community Center
25	Thomas Evans Community Center
26	Wescott Park Community Center
27	Whipper Barony Community Center

The City of North Charleston continues to make use of Greenbelt funding through the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (CCPRC). Since 2020, roughly 700 acres of land have been purchased and preserved through the Greenbelt program, including the purchases of 26 acres along Noisette Creek, 213 acres along the Ashley River, and Ingleside Park, a 440-acre contiguous park that spans from the Colony North neighborhood to University Boulevard (US 78) that includes much of the historic Ingleside Plantation and Bluehouse Swamp.

Map 18 depicts most of the existing and future parks and recreation facilities, as the numerous pocket parks, and HOA maintained parks are not included. According to CCPRC's long-range plan, there are several parks planned for development in North Charleston, several of which are planned for along the Ashley River.

COMMUNITY AND SENIOR CENTERS

The City of North Charleston's Recreation Department oversees over a dozen community and senior centers throughout the city. As seen on Map 18, most of the community centers are located in the older neighborhoods of North Charleston, like Charleston Farms, Park Circle, and Charleston Heights, as many of the newer neighborhoods/developments have private community centers run by the local HOA's (or equivalent entities). Two community centers have opened since 2020, Carner Avenue Community Center and the redeveloped Park Circle Community Center, both of which enhance the level and quality of recreational service provided to residents.





TRANSPORTATION ADDENDUM

5-Year Update Overview

As the city nears build-out, most transportation improvements are focused on increasing capacity and reducing traffic congestion on existing roads. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) count data shows that most of the major roadways in North Charleston have experienced an increase in traffic volume between 2017 and 2023. Travel time to work for North Charleston commuters has increased from 21.8 minutes in 2000, to 23.1 minutes in 2017 and now to 24.5 minutes in 2023 (**Figure 35**). Travel demand model projections show that by 2045, nearly all the primary commuter routes, in, out, and through North Charleston will be at or over capacity.

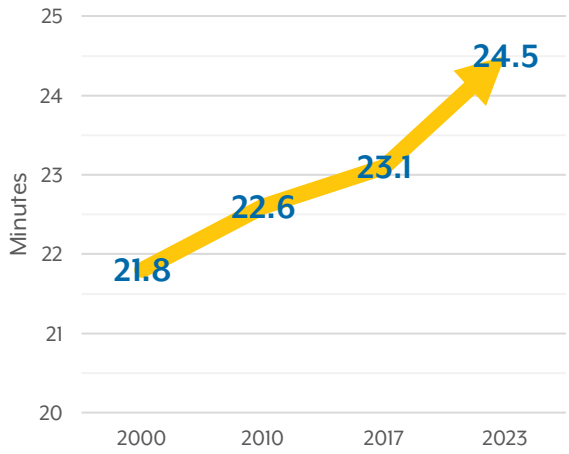
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION

Coordinating between local, regional, and state agencies is essential to the transportation planning process. People, goods, and services rely on the connectivity that a transportation network provides, making intergovernmental coordination essential to the efficiency and functionality of the transportation network. The Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS) is the region's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for carrying out the urban transportation planning process.

One of the primary responsibilities of CHATS, through the BCDCOG, is creating the region's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) which identifies and ranks transportation projects and improvements throughout the CHATS area. The BCDCOG also maintains the region's Travel Demand Model (TDM) to help forecast potential future transportation-related needs and improvements based on a series of inputs, such as committed development, population growth forecasts, commuter trends, and committed transportation projects.

The BCDCOG's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) identifies several transportation improvement projects in North Charleston to help alleviate traffic congestion along major corridors, such as the Airport Connector Road, Palmetto Commerce Interchange, and I-526 Lowcountry Corridor. Following the opening of the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) Corridor projected for 2029, traffic patterns in North Charleston will inevitably change to reflect the accessibility that this corridor provides for residents and commuters. The city's connections to vital freight and military corridors often provide an obstacle for implementing transportation improvements while also providing an opportunity to continue capitalizing on the potential economic growth and development of the region.

Figure 35: Change in Median Travel Time to Work



TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

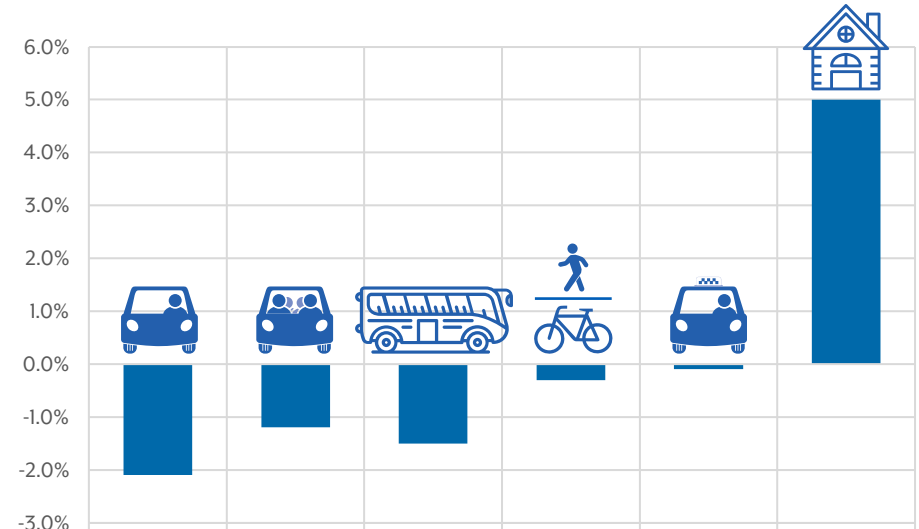
The means of transportation used by North Charleston workers is a key factor in planning transportation and infrastructure projects. **Figure 36** shows that the percentage of North Charleston workers who worked from home doubled, rising from 3.4% in 2017 to 8.4% in 2023 while all other means of transportation declined proportionally. This is a common trend following the COVID-19 pandemic as teleworking/working from home has become available to a larger number of workers nationwide.

As mentioned above, major transportation or infrastructure-related projects can alter commuter trends. After the completion of the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) bus line and incorporation of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) practices, it is expected that alternative means of transportation, like public transit, walking, and biking, will increase in the future. Additionally, recent expansions in broadband infrastructure have enabled more households to work remotely than ever before, the COVID-19 pandemic serving as a catalyst for this growing trend. It is important for jurisdictions to recognize the impacts that projects, like those mentioned, may have on commuter trends and adapt planning and future projects accordingly to meet the changing needs of residents and commuters.

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK

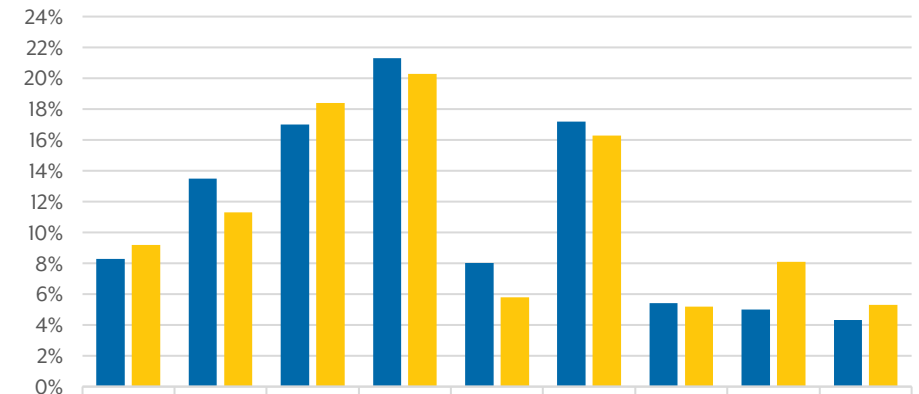
Travel time is influenced by various factors including distance, traffic congestion, time of day, and mode of transportation. The mean travel time to work for North Charleston commuters increased from 23.1 minutes in 2017 to 24.5 minutes in 2023, as shown previously in **Figure 35**. Although alternative modes of transportation may curve traffic volumes slightly, this trend will likely continue as the region continues to grow in population, thus generating more traffic volume and congestion. **Figure 37** details the change in travel time by different time increments between 2017 and 2023.

Figure 36: Means of Transportation to Work



	Drove Alone	Carpooled	Public Transit	Walked/ Biked	Other	Worked From Home
Change	-2.1%	-1.2%	-1.5%	-0.3%	-0.1%	5.0%
2017	78.7%	11.6%	3.3%	1.8%	1.3%	3.4%
2022	76.6%	10.4%	1.8%	1.5%	1.2%	8.4%

Figure 37: Travel Time to Work

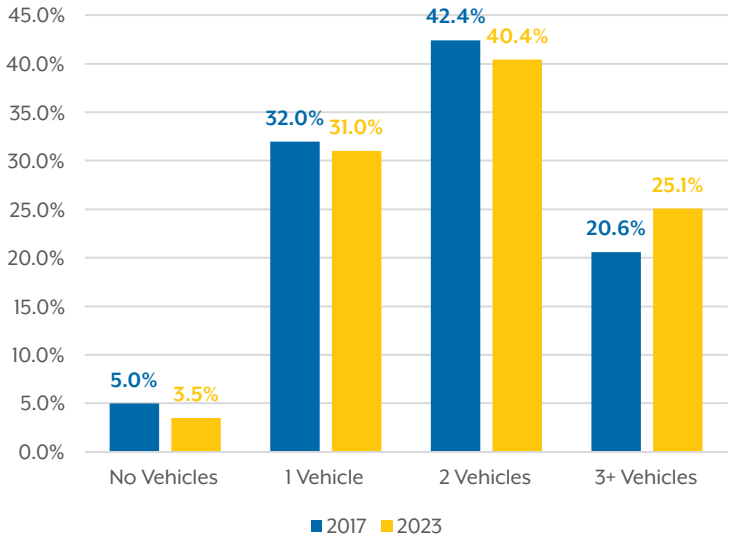


	Less than 10 min.	10-14 min.	15-19 min.	20-24 min.	25-29 min.	30-34 min.	34-44 min.	45-59 min.	60+ min.
2017	8.3%	13.5%	17.0%	21.3%	8.0%	17.2%	5.4%	5.0%	4.3%
2023	9.2%	11.3%	18.4%	20.3%	5.8%	16.3%	5.2%	8.1%	5.3%

VEHICLE AVAILABILITY

Vehicle availability is a household measurement used to assess the potential mobility of an area. As mentioned in the Resiliency Element, households with little-to-no access to vehicles is one of many factors when assessing Social Vulnerability. As seen in **Figure 38**, the percentage of households in North Charleston with no access to a vehicle decreased by nearly two points between 2017 and 2023. The percentage of households with no access to vehicles is similar to the percentage of workers who used public transit, walked, or biked to work in 2023 (**Figure 36**), however, these two measurements are not directly correlated. Expanding infrastructure and services of alternative modes of transportation in areas with high percentages of households with little-to-no access to vehicles is essential for improving the city's Social Vulnerability Index in the future.

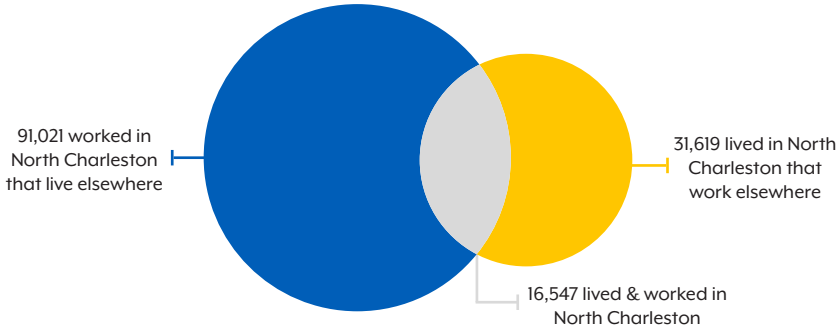
Figure 38: Household Vehicle Availability



COMMUTER INFLOW AND OUTFLOW

Understanding the travel patterns of the workers who live and/or work in North Charleston is essential for all future transportation planning efforts. **Figures 39, 40, & 41** illustrate the inflow, outflow, and internal circulation of commuters in North Charleston in 2022. Roughly 85% of workers employed in North Charleston live outside the city while only 66% of residents work elsewhere. These commuter patterns continue to support the idea that North Charleston is a major economic and employment hub for the region, drawing twice as many workers into the city for work as those who leave.

Figure 39: 2022 Inflow, Outflow, & Internal Circulation of Commuters



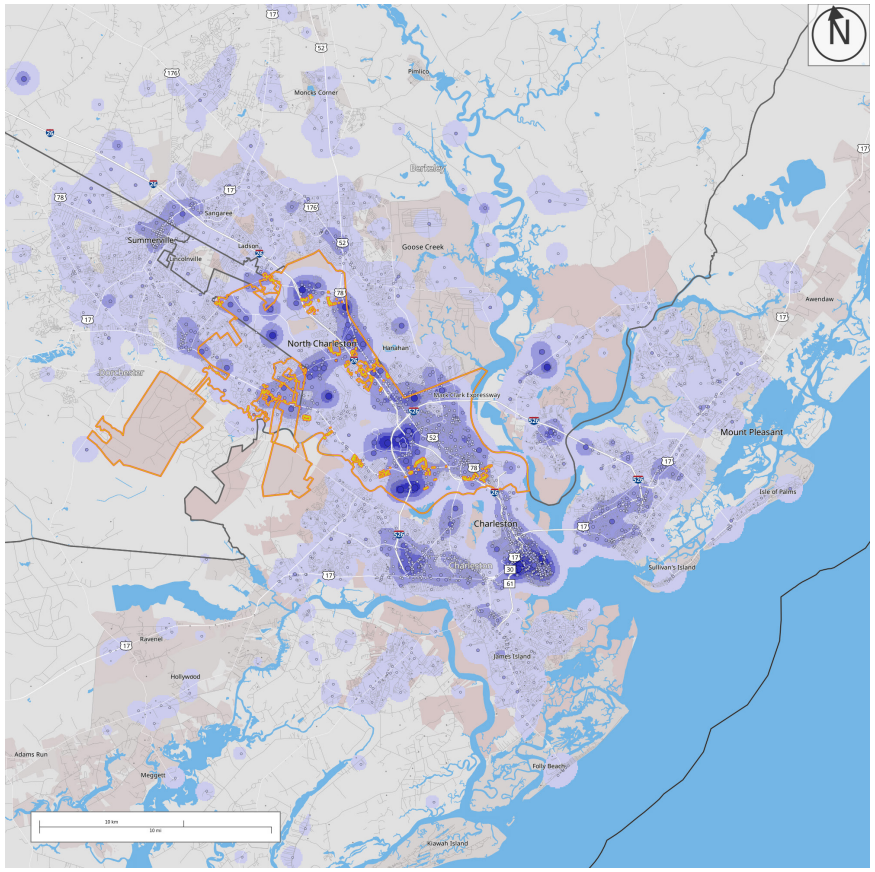
EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

ROADS

North Charleston's extensive road network is one of the city's biggest assets for growth and economic development. The local roadway network, which is comprised of roads under state, county, municipal, and private ownership, is the primary method of transportation of people and goods in the region. The City of North Charleston coordinates with SCDOT, Charleston County, and private entities on ensuring adequate road and right-of-way maintenance, stormwater management infrastructure, safety improvements, and other necessary roadway projects.

With the Ashley and Cooper Rivers acting as barriers, traffic flow north and south through North Charleston is primarily centered along a few key corridors, such as I-26 and I-526, US 52, also known as Rivers Avenue, US 78/ University Boulevard, Cosgrove Avenue, and Dorchester Road. As growth continues to occur, these and many other roads are fast approaching or even exceeding capacity and subsequently, in need of improvements to safely move all modes of users around the city.

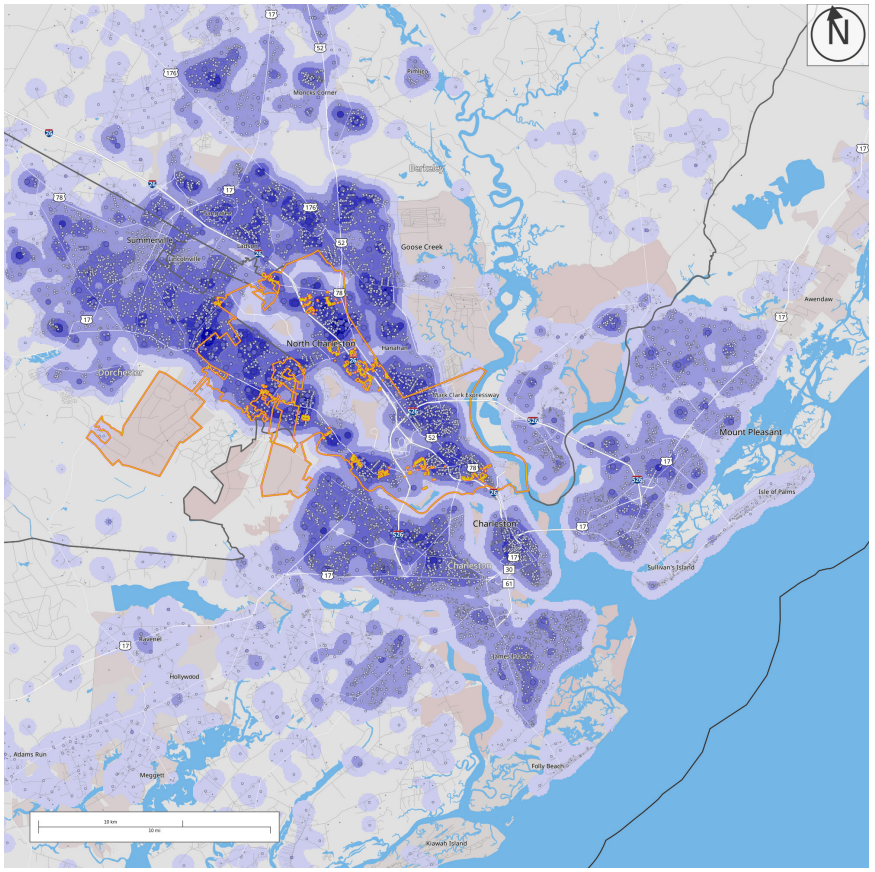
Figure 40: Where Residents Work (Destinations)



Top 10 Destinations of North Charleston Residents

1. Summerville - 16.8%
2. Goose Creek-Hanahan - 16.5%
3. North Charleston (internal) - 13.0%
4. West Ashley - 7.7%
5. Mt. Pleasant - 5.8%
6. Moncks Corner - 3.1%
7. James Island - 2.6%
8. Charleston Central - 1.9%
9. Wando (Cainhoy Peninsula) - 1.6%
10. Johns Island - 1.5%
11. All Other Locations - 29.5%

Figure 41: Where Workers Live (Origins)



Top 10 Origins of North Charleston Workers

1. North Charleston (internal) - 33.0%
2. Charleston Central - 11.9%
3. West Ashley - 7.7%
4. Summerville - 7.5%
5. Mt. Pleasant - 7.4%
6. Goose Creek-Hanahan - 6.4%
7. Wando (Cainhoy Peninsula) - 3.2%
8. Greenville - 2.0%
9. Columbia - 1.8%
10. James Island - 1.7%
11. All Other Locations - 17.7%

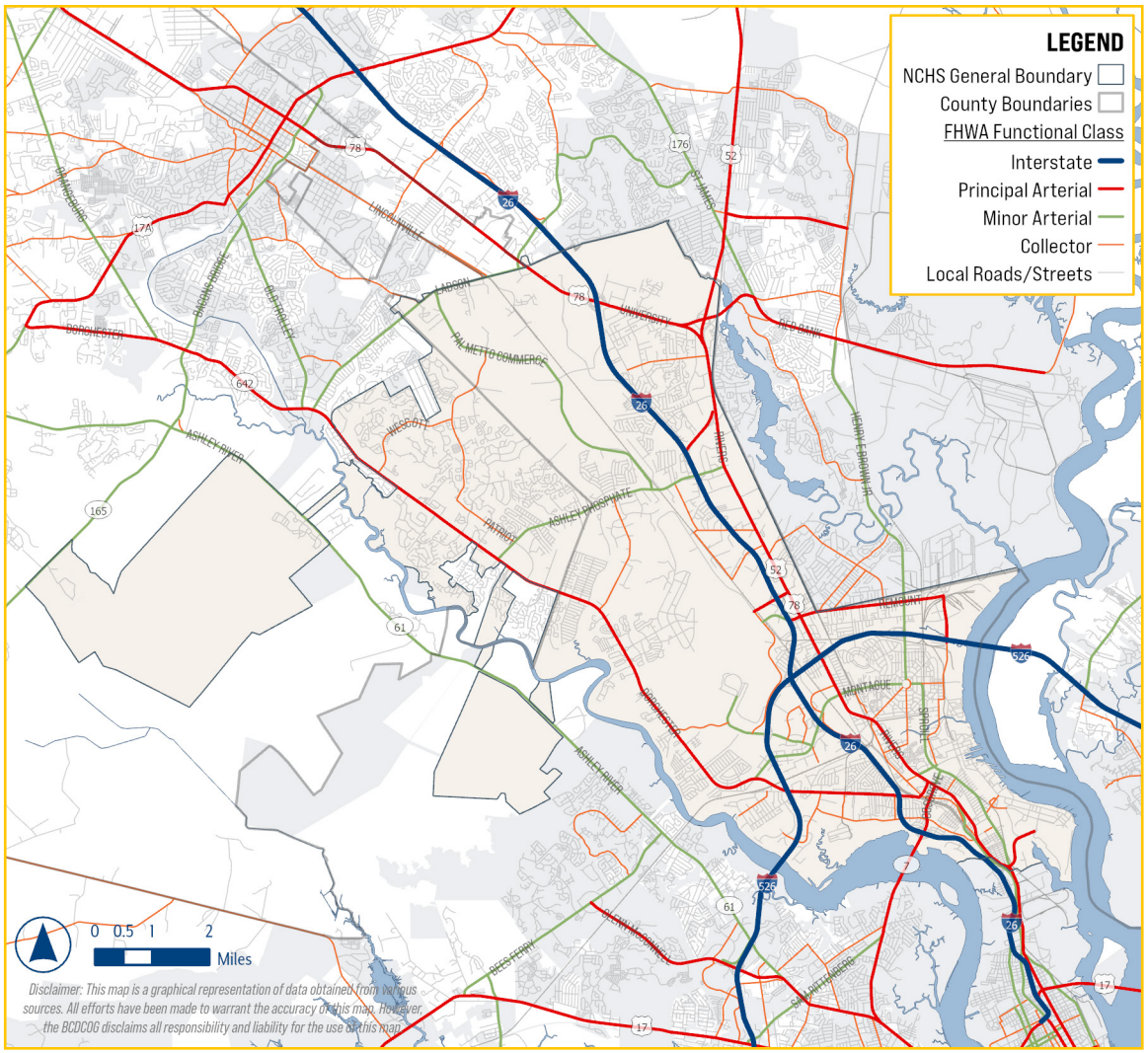
Functional Classification

There are two primary factors that influence the functional class of a roadway: mobility and accessibility. All roads are classified by FHWA into a street hierarchy based on types of trips, trip purpose, traffic volume, roadway capacity, etc. which often impacts the level of mobility and/or accessibility of the roadway. This classification system helps local jurisdictions identify major transportation corridors, prioritize traffic improvements, and plan for new infrastructure. As seen on **Map 19**, North Charleston's roadway network consists mostly of local roads, however, there are a few high-volume roadways such as Cosgrove Avenue, Dorchester Road, Remount Road, US 52/Rivers Avenue, Spruill Avenue, and US 78/University Boulevard that are classified as principal arterials, the highest functional classification besides Interstates. FHWA is currently reevaluating the roadways in the region as part of their decennial reevaluation requirements.

Strategic Highway Network

Due to the various military and defense installations in the region, certain roadways are included in the National Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) and must be classified as principal arterial, regardless of mobility and accessibility. Roadways including Aviation Avenue, Red Bank Road, Remount Road, University Boulevard, and parts of Virginia Avenue are identified as strategic connectors to STRAHNET interstates, which include I-26, I-526, and US 17. These connectors provide a direct connection between the military and defense installations in the region, including Joint Base Charleston, North Charleston Port Terminal, and the Naval Weapons Station, and STRAHNET Interstates.

» MAP 19 *FHWA Roadway Functional Classification*

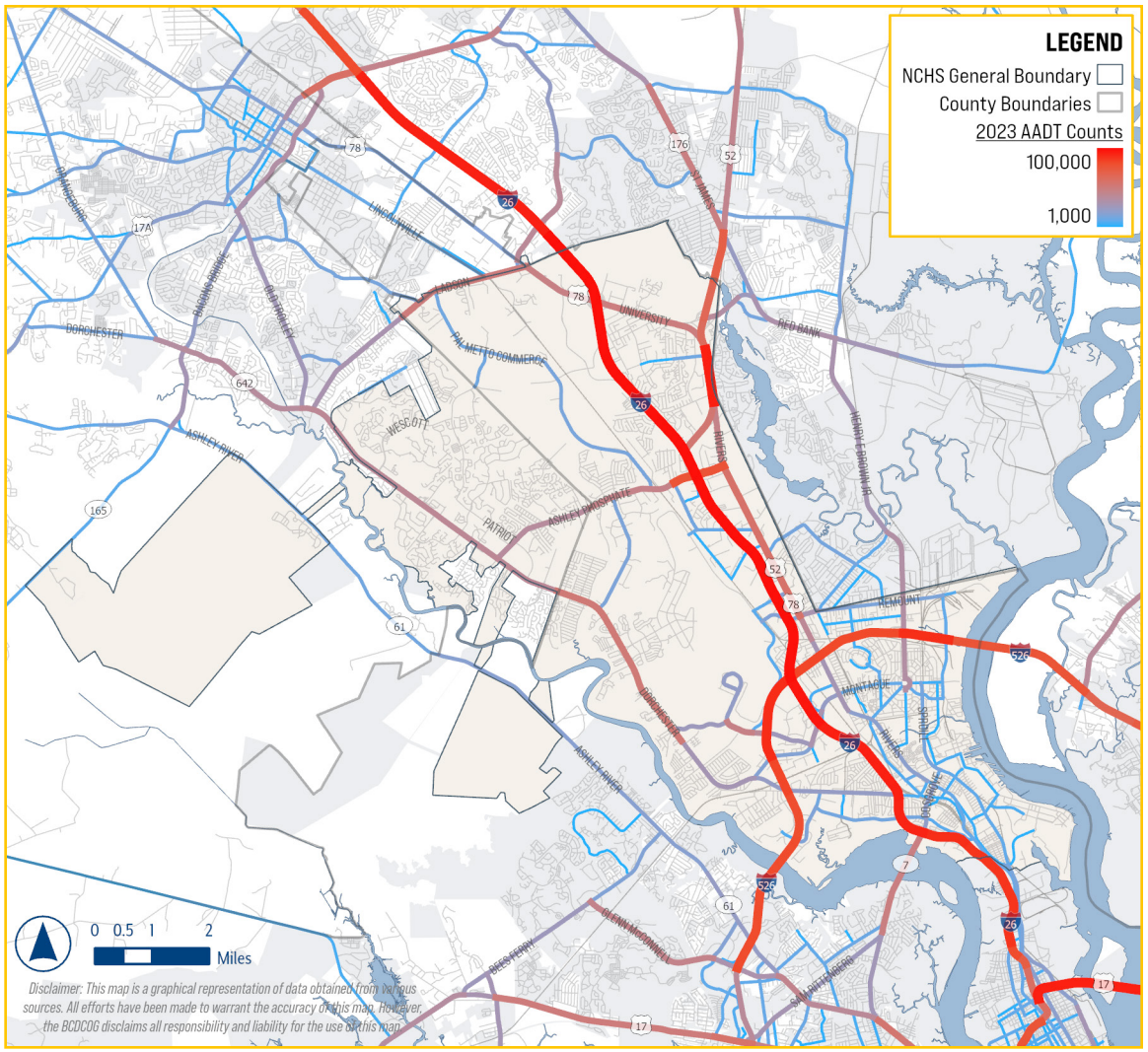


Traffic Volumes

According to SCDOT annual average daily traffic (AADT) counts, Interstates 26 and 526 through North Charleston were among the most traveled roadways in the entire state in 2023 with I-26 reaching as much as 170,000 counts along some portions of the interstate while I-526 had roughly 90,000 counts along some portions. **Map 20** shows which roadways experienced the highest 2023 traffic counts, providing insight on the connectivity and traffic flow between residential neighborhoods and commercial centers. Ashley Phosphate Road, Dorchester Road, Ladson Road, and Rivers Avenue are some of the most traveled non-interstate roadways, not only in North Charleston, but also the region.

Between 2017 and 2023, many of the roadways in the more suburban areas of North Charleston, Goose Creek, and Summerville increased in traffic counts by upwards of 5,000 vehicles: including roadways such as (portions of) I-26, US 17A, Rivers Avenue/US 52, University Boulevard/US 78, St. James Avenue/ US 176, Ashley Phosphate Road, and Ladson Road. However, portions of both I-26 and I-526 experienced a decline in traffic counts in other parts of the city, namely near the I-26/I-526 interchange and in the neck area, with a decrease of 5-10% during the same timeframe.

» MAP 20 *2023 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Counts*

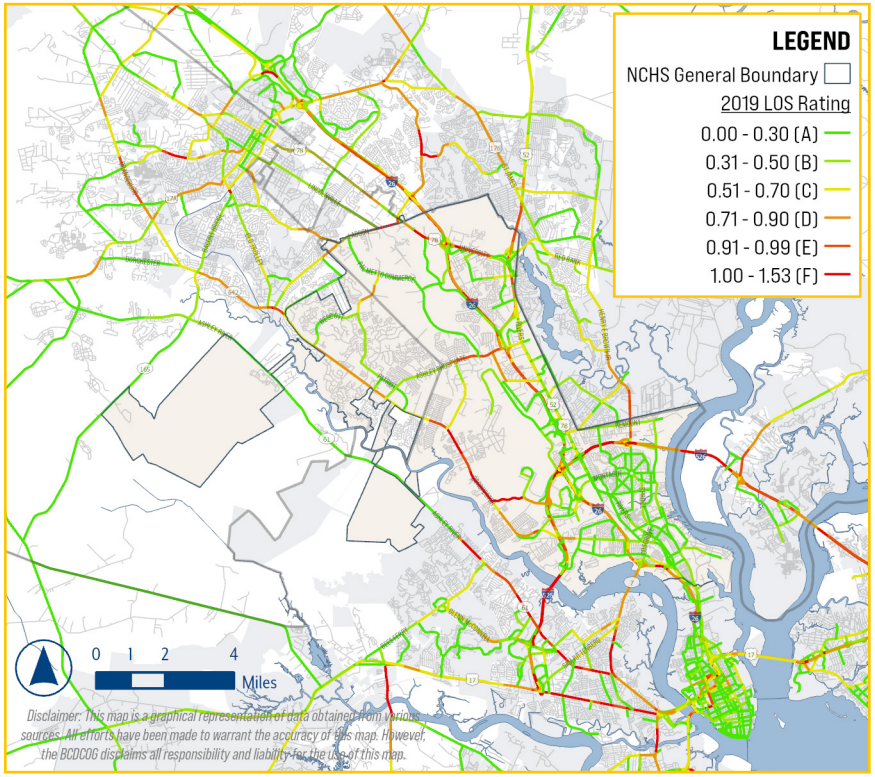


Sizable changes in traffic volume, like those mentioned previously, can be the result of numerous factors such as population growth, roadway improvements, new/alternative routes, travel time/traffic congestion, etc. Recent and future efforts by local jurisdictions, regional and state agencies to invest in transportation infrastructure, roadway improvements and alternative modes of transportation will help mitigate the growing traffic volumes and congestion.

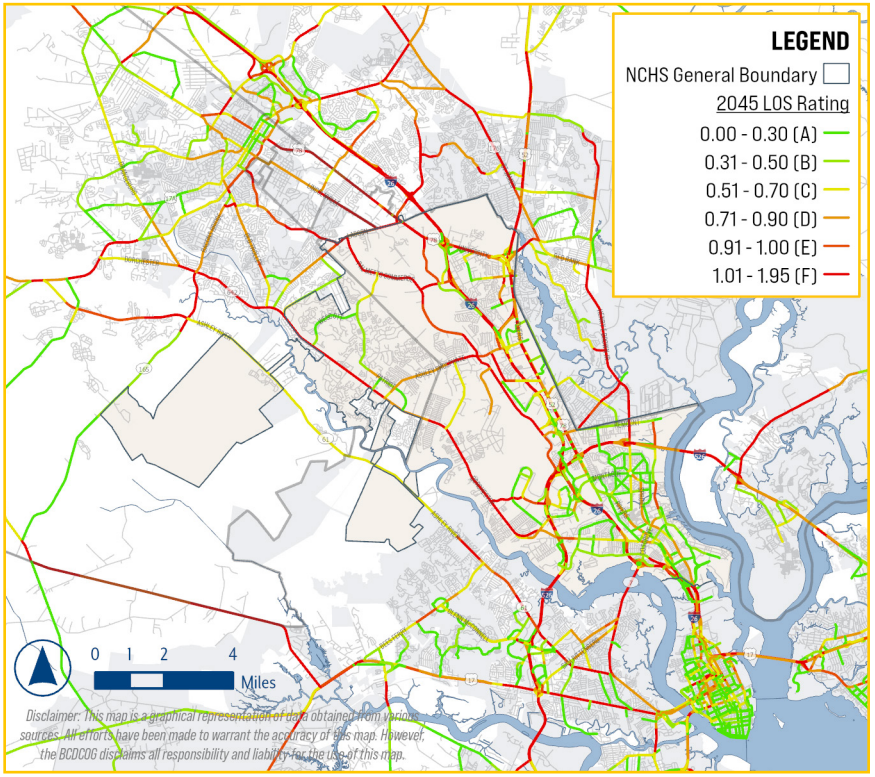
Level of Service

Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure used to describe roadway congestion levels and often expressed as a grade between "A" for excellent and "F" for failing. Since 2020, the BCDCOG has updated its travel demand model using more recent data and including the entire region rather than just the urbanized area. **Map 21** and **Map 22** show the level of service in 2019 (the base year) and 2045 (the forecasted year). Some roadways, such as Aviation Avenue, Palmetto Commerce Parkway, Patriot Boulevard, and Rivers Avenue, have decreased LOS from acceptable grades of A, B, or C to grades E or F. Most roads that had a LOS grade of E or F in 2019 did not improve by 2045, such as Cosgrove Avenue, Dorchester Road, Interstates 26 and 526, and Michaux Parkway.

» MAP 21 *Level of Service, 2019 (Base Year)*



» MAP 22 *Level of Service, 2045 (Forecasted Year)*

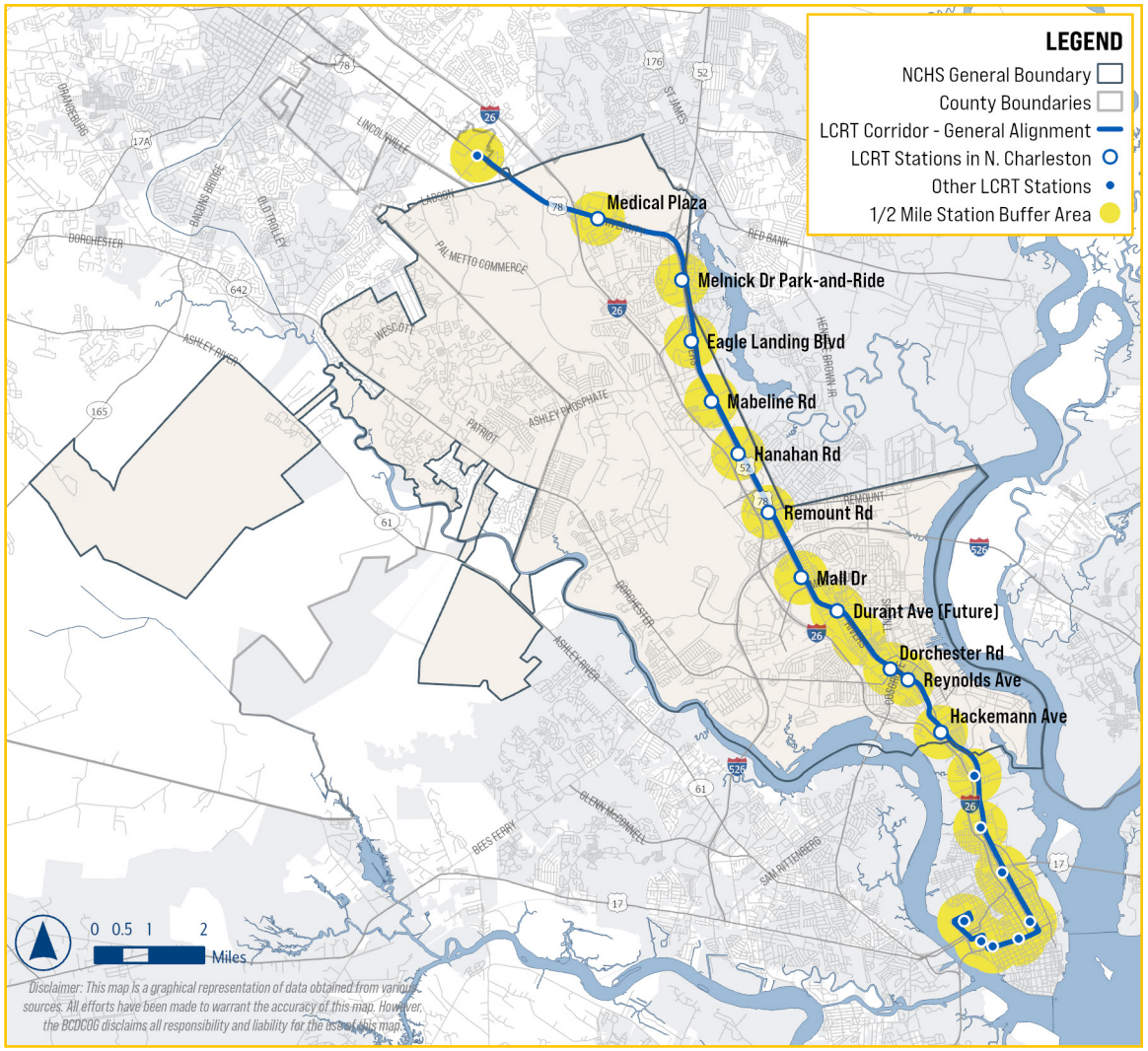


PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

There are currently two public transportation agencies that operate in North Charleston: CARTA, which primarily serves the urban areas of the region, and TriCounty Link (TCL) which primarily serves the rural areas of the region. Between the two agencies, there are numerous transit routes operating in the region, many of which operate within the City of North Charleston, providing transportation needs and alternatives to a wide range of people. CARTA provides connections to several key places within the region, many of which are located in North Charleston, such as the Charleston International Airport, Tanger Outlets, Trident Medical Center, Northwoods Mall, Joint Base Charleston, North Charleston Transit Center/Amtrak Station, and the SuperStop transit facility located at the intersection of Rivers Avenue and Cosgrove Avenue.

In addition, the future Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) system, which is projected to open late 2029, is a 21-mile dedicated bus rapid transit system along the US 78/US 52 corridor, traveling from the Ladson Fairgrounds to the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). As seen on **Map 23**, there are ten planned stations in the City of North Charleston.

» MAP 23 *Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) Corridor General Alignment and Station Locations*



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, are crucial for improving the mobility, connectivity, safety, and functionality within the community. Besides sidewalks, most pathways in North Charleston are used for recreational purposes, such as exercising or leisurely walking and biking, with the recently opened Noisette Bridge serving as a prime example. Multi-use paths are common amenities in both active and passive parks and can also be used to provide alternative connections to different parts of a neighborhood or to adjacent neighborhoods. Some of the recent, ongoing, or proposed projects in North Charleston include the Azalea Trail, Better Northbridge (which aims to improve pedestrian mobility along the Cosgrove Bridge), the Azalea Drive road diet and bicycle lanes, and the completion of the Noisette Bridge, which will connect to the future Noisette Preserve boardwalk.

North Charleston's existing transportation infrastructure, such as the interstates, highways, and major roadways, create obstacles and safety concerns for many bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects. Adopted in 2017, the WalkBike BCD plan provides strategies and recommendations on how to improve and connect pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure at the regional level. Some of the proposed policies and programs relevant to North Charleston include:

- Regional pedestrian and bicycle count program
- Regional wayfinding program
- Regional coordination of safe routes to school program
- Prioritizing access to transit

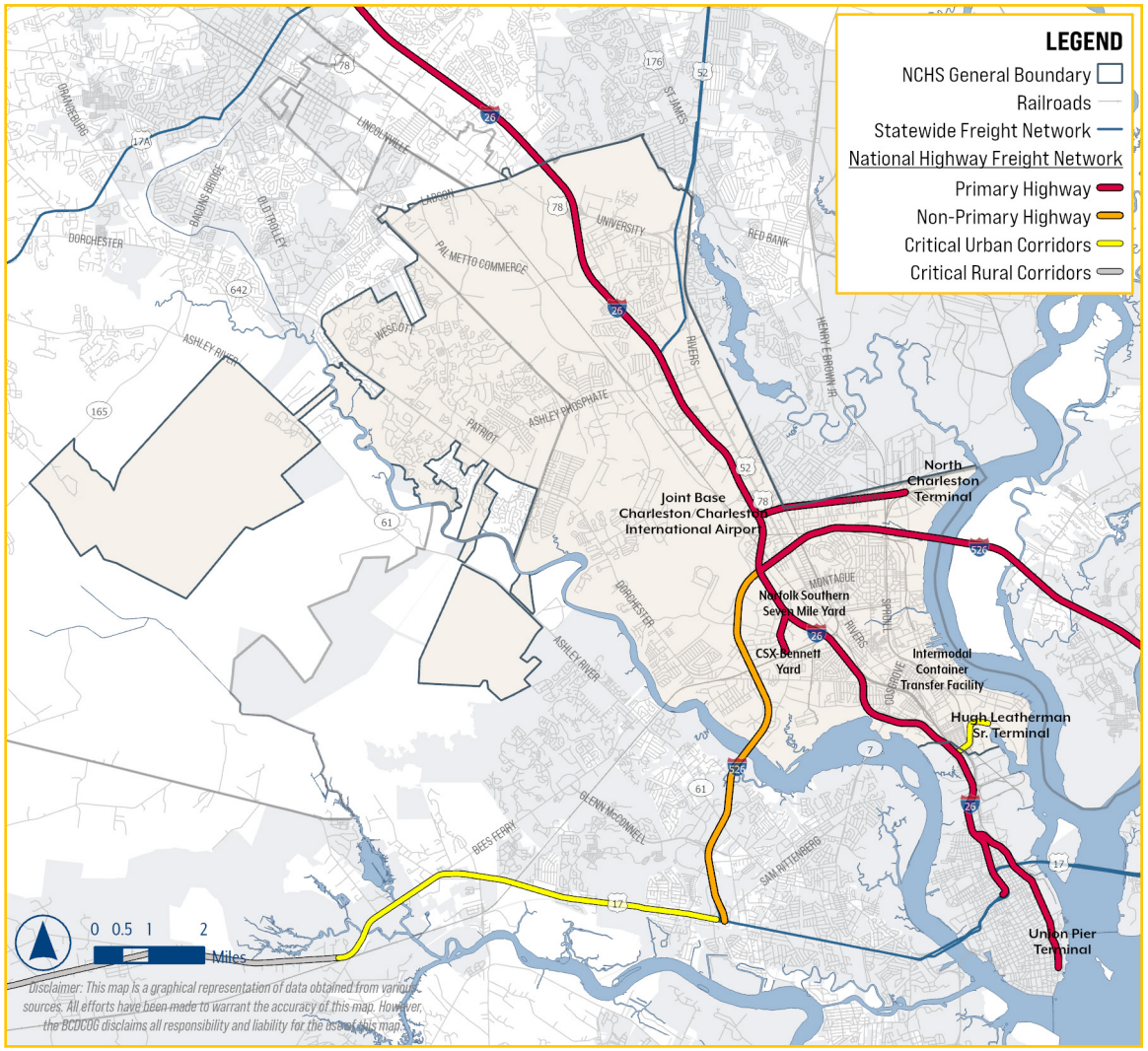


FREIGHT NETWORK

South Carolina is becoming increasingly more competitive in freight and container transportation on the East Coast. The South Carolina Ports Authority (SCPA) has invested over $2 billion in capital and infrastructure investments in recent years with plans to invest an additional $2.5 billion over the next decade. North Charleston has been the target of much of this investment with the 2021 opening of the Hugh K. Leatherman Terminal, the future 2025 Navy Base Intermodal Container Transfer Facility, and the recently announced purchase of the former WestRock paper mill site adjacent to the North Charleston Terminal.

The movement of freight in North Charleston is heavily reliant on the area's extensive road and rail infrastructure. The National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) and the Statewide Freight Network (SFN) identify the roadways that are critical to the movement of goods and services through the nation and state. These roadways include interstates, highways, and other essential road corridors that connect various freight terminals and generators, such as major seaports, airports, inland ports, rail/intermodal yards, and industrial parks. North Charleston's strategic location has led to several freight terminals locating within the city, all of which are connected by a series of road and rail corridors, as seen on Map 24.

» MAP 24 *Location of Strategic Freight Corridors, Railyards, and Port Terminals*



There are approximately 26 miles of roadways in North Charleston that are a part of the NFHN, all of which are part of the 27 miles of roadways included in the SFN. Roads identified as part of either the NHFN or SFN are often eligible for specific funding for road maintenance and improvements.

Given the concentration of heavy commercial and industrial uses within the city, road safety, congestion, and access management relating to truck traffic has become a growing concern. Roadways, such as Ashley Phosphate Road, Azalea Drive, Cross County Road, Dorchester Road, Leeds Avenue, and Palmetto Commerce Parkway, all support freight traffic on a daily basis. These roadways are included in the region's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and are often subject to concerns regarding improving incident management practices and integrating more intelligent transportation solutions. While any roadway can be subject to a hazardous waste spill, roads identified as part of the NFHN, SFN, and those mentioned above, are more susceptible to an incident and associated impacts, as discussed in the Resiliency Element.



Photo Source: SC Ports Authority presentation to SC Senate Transportation Committee, May 2024

Rail Facilities

The City of North Charleston is the center for most rail traffic in the region, having more miles of rail lines within the city limits (roughly 56 miles) than any other municipality in the region. CSX Transportation (CSX) and Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) are the two primary railroad operators in the region, handling mostly freight and container movement. Each railroad operator has a railyard/intermodal facility located in North Charleston, CSX's Bennett Yard/Ashley Junction Intermodal Yard and Norfolk Southern's 7-Mile Intermodal Yard. Palmetto Railways (formerly South Carolina Public Railways) is a regional railroad operator with one of their three divisions operating in North Charleston, providing terminal switching short-haul services.

The Navy Base Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) is under development and is expected to be completed in 2025. SCPA partnered with CSX, Norfolk Southern, and Palmetto Railways for this project, which will enhance the productivity and efficiency of freight movement through the Leatherman Terminal.

The CSX rail lines connecting Charleston to Florence, SC and Savannah, GA are both part of the National Strategic Rail Corridor Network (STRACNET). These rail lines connect the Port of Charleston to the broader national network of rail corridors and, like STRAHNET, are vital for military and defense mobility. A small connector line, also owned by CSX, is identified as a STRACNET connector, providing direct access between the Port of Charleston and Joint Base Charleston/Naval Weapons Station.

Passenger rail services are also available through Amtrak at the Gaynor Avenue North Charleston Transit Center station.

SEAPORT FACILITIES

The Port of Charleston is consistently ranked among the most productive ports in the nation and primarily handles international imports and exports with their top trading partners being from Northeast Asia, Northern Europe, and Southeast Asia. Most commodities are transported to and from the port terminals via truck (roads) and rail along the designated freight network corridors. In 2022, the Port of Charleston was ranked 8th in the nation for total value of goods handled, importing over $70 million in goods while exporting nearly $27 million.

Following the Phase I opening of the Hugh K. Leatherman Terminal in 2021, the South Carolina Ports Authority now operates five port terminals in the region, two of which are located in North Charleston, as shown in **Map 24**. Several of the road infrastructure projects have also been completed around the Leatherman Terminal. Future phases will be primarily focused on developing the Navy Base Intermodal Container Transfer Facility.



The Charleston Harbor Deepening Project, which was completed in 2022, deepened the harbor from 45-feet to 52-feet, allowing the biggest vessels to call on the port at any time of the day regardless of tides. This increases the port's competitiveness and provides the necessary capacity to accommodate rising future freight needs in the southeast.

In March 2024, SC Ports announced the purchase of the former WestRock paper mill site adjacent to the North Charleston Terminal in North Charleston. The roughly 280-acre industrial site will expand the North Charleston Terminal and, along with some upgrades and modernization to the existing terminal, will greatly increase port capacity and productivity.

AIRPORT FACILITIES

Charleston International Airport (CHS), located within the City of North Charleston, is owned and operated by the Charleston County Aviation Authority and is the primary airport that serves the region. CHS is under a joint use agreement with the U.S. Air Force and Joint Base Charleston which owns, maintains, and operates the shared runways, taxiways, and navigational facilities. In 2023, there were over six million passengers that traveled through CHS (includes enplaned + deplaned), a 38% increase since 2018. Boeing South Carolina operates a major manufacturing and delivery site on roughly 730 acres adjacent to the airport campus. In 2024, Boeing South Carolina announced a $1 billion expansion to their facility and operations, expecting to add 500 new jobs.

PLANNED AND APPROVED TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

The BCDCOG serves as the MPO for the CHATS urbanized area. All federal funds in the urban areas of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties are administered through the CHATS Policy Committee. BCDCOG continues to maintain the CHATS LRTP annually and updated every five years. The 2045 LRTP provides a list of regionally significant transportation projects and ranks them based on state and federal criteria to come up with a list of fiscally constrained projects that would be eligible for federal funding. **Figure 42** lists the top 10 projects with two identified in the City of North Charleston, totaling approximately $80 million.

Figure 42: Top 10 Fiscally Constrained Projects identified in the CHATS 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Table 6-5: Ranked Candidate Projects

ID	Location	Project Category	Delimits	Length (Miles)	Cost in Y2024 $$ (1000s)	SCORES BY EVALUATION CRITERIA											Weighted Score	RANK
						Congestion Relief	Existing Infrastructure	Transit	Freight Mobility	Financial Viability	Safety	Environment Impact	Land Use	Economic Development	Walking/ Bicycling	Evacuation Route		
					WEIGHT =	20%	10%	10%	10%	10%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	4%	100%	
L-87	US-78 & Ladson Road / Ancrum Road	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$4,917	5.76	10.00	10.00	6.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	4.08	6.08	0.91	10.00	7.519	1
L-17	US-17A & US-176	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$6,146	8.33	10.00	7.00	5.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	2.72	4.72	1.00	10.00	7.448	2
L-138	Rivers Avenue Overpass at Durant	Railroad Overpass	Durant Avenue to Aragon Street	0.13	$76,500	5.84	10.00	10.00	7.00	7.86	5.00	7.14	4.90	6.90	4.23	10.00	7.104	3
L-118	Dorchester Road & Ladson Road	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$2,459	7.06	5.00	9.00	6.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	3.85	3.85	0.50	10.00	6.982	4
L-79	US-17 / Savannah Highway & Avondale Avenue	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$3,688	3.43	10.00	8.00	7.00	10.00	7.78	10.00	4.59	6.59	1.33	10.00	6.870	5
L-86b	US-17 & West Oak Forest Drive	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$1,844	3.43	10.00	8.00	7.00	10.00	5.56	10.00	4.45	9.45	1.00	10.00	6.864	6
L-86a	US-17 & Farmfield Avenue	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$1,844	3.43	10.00	8.00	7.00	10.00	5.56	10.00	4.32	9.32	1.00	10.00	6.845	7
L-80	US-17 / Savannah Highway & Carolina Bay Drive	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$3,688	5.10	10.00	8.00	7.00	10.00	6.67	10.00	3.68	3.68	1.00	10.00	6.829	8
L-119	Dorchester Road & Old Trolley Road	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$6,146	6.31	5.00	9.00	6.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	3.72	3.72	0.58	10.00	6.817	9
L-71	Rivers Avenue & Greenridge Road	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$3,688	6.85	3.00	10.00	3.00	10.00	7.78	10.00	4.18	6.18	4.82	10.00	6.806	10
L-07	US-17A / North Main Street	Corridor Study	I-26 Interchange to Berlin Myers Parkway (Eastbound Only)	0.77	$10,701	3.79	3.00	7.00	7.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	4.17	6.17	8.79	10.00	6.710	11
L-68	Remount Road & Rhett Avenue	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$4,917	8.77	5.00	3.00	8.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	4.41	4.41	1.00	10.00	6.631	12
L-83	US-17 & Shelmore Boulevard	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$1,844	5.05	3.00	8.00	7.00	10.00	8.89	10.00	4.89	6.89	1.38	10.00	6.629	13
L-72	Rivers Avenue & Remount Road	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$6,146	5.92	3.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	6.67	8.00	3.72	3.72	1.49	10.00	6.468	14
L-84	US-17 & Stinson Drive / Dupont Road	Intersection Improvement	-	-	$1,844	5.10	3.00	8.00	7.00	10.00	7.78	10.00	4.06	6.06	1.09	10.00	6.417	15
L-110	Montague Avenue	Capacity Enhancement	International Boulevard to I-26 Interchange	0.50	$12,293	3.17	3.00	7.00	7.00	10.00	7.50	9.71	4.98	4.98	10.00	10.00	6.409	16

SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS

The 2020 Transportation Element included a list of several significant transportation related projects or studies planned for the coming years. These projects and studies will be implemented in multiple phases over several years. Some projects are in the early-to-mid stages of development, like the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT), while others are in the final stages of development, like the Airport Connector Road. Below is a progress report on each project since 2020.

Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT)

The LCRT is a 21-mile dedicated bus rapid transit system along the US 78/US 52 corridor, running from the Ladson Fairgrounds/Exchange Park to MUSC with 9 stations in the City of North Charleston and plans to extend to Summerville in the future. The projected completion date is in late 2029.

Airport Connector Road

Development of the Airport Connector Road is poised to begin in 2026 and is expected to be completed in 2028. This will provide a new direct access road from Dorchester Road and Montague Avenue to Charleston International Airport.

Palmetto Commerce Parkway – Phase III

Design and permitting continues on the final phase of the Palmetto Commerce Parkway, however, construction is on hold. This new three-mile stretch of roadway will extend Palmetto Commerce Parkway from Ashley Phosphate Road to Aviation Avenue.

Palmetto Commerce Interchange

Construction on the urban design interchange, located between US 78 and Ashley Phosphate Road began in August of 2023. The Project provides a multi-use path, that will connect from Ingleside Boulevard to Salamander Road, and the interchange provides direct access to Palmetto Commerce Boulevard via I-26. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2026.

I-526 West

The primary focus of the I-526 West project is on widening I-526 and increasing capacity and improving operations at the I-26/I-526 interchange widening. Interstate improvements are anticipated to be constructed from 2029-2039.

I-526 East

In 2022, SCDOT completed a Planning and Environmental Linkage study which identified potential improvements, like the I-526/Long Point Road Interchange. SCDOT received a $195 million grant from the US DOT in 2024 to help fund the Long Point Road Interchange Project. Based on the November 2024 project schedule, construction is to begin in 2026.

Table 10: Planned Transportation Improvements with Committed Funding

PROJECT	SPONSOR	EST. START DATE	EST. COMPLETION DATE	EST. BUDGET	FUNDING SOURCE(S)
I-526 widening (Lowcountry Corridor West - Virginia Avenue to Paul Cantrell Blvd in West Ashley)	SCDOT	2029	2040	$2.95 billion	National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) funds
Lowcountry Rapid Transit line (Rivers & University)	BCDCOG	2027	2029	$625 million	Charletson Co. Transportation Sales Tax, Federal Transit Admin. Capital Investment Grant
Port Access Road/Local Port Access Road (Stomboli extension)	SCDOT	Completed (2024)			Fed. Earmark/SC Ports Authority, SCDOT
ICTF Improvements (NB roads & track, Cosgrove-McMillan)	SPRC/DOC	Ongoing			
Palmetto Commerce Pkwy/I-26 Interchange (Weber Dr)	Charleston Co.	2023	2026	$60 million	Charleston Co. Transportation Sales Tax, SC Dept. of Commerce
Palmetto Commerce Pkwy Phase 3	Charleston Co.	On-Hold			
Airport Connector Road	Charleston Co.	2026	2030	$211 million	
Dorchester Road widening (Michaux Pkwy to Charleston/ Dorchester county line)	Charleston Co.	2028	2032	$90 million	Charleston Co. Transportation Sales Tax
US 78/College Park Rd/Ladson Rd Intersection Improvements	Charleston Co.	2027	2029	$47.2 million	Charleston Co. Transportation Sales Tax
			Total:	**$4 billion**	

LAND USE ADDENDUM

5-Year Update Overview

Land use patterns have remained relatively the same since the 2020 Plan. The city continues to witness the conversion of greenfields to urban development, including residential neighborhoods, commercial spaces, warehouses, and other commercial-industrial uses. Urban blight has become a growing concern in many of North Charleston's older neighborhoods as older homes often require more maintenance, housing costs outgrow household income, and low desirability dissuades investment in the community. As the City of North Charleston approaches build out, proactive land-use planning efforts will be key for maintaining a sustainable community for the future.

Table 11 shows the breakdown of existing land use categories based on Charleston County Tax Assessor's data, Dorchester County Zoning, and limited ground truthing efforts.

EXISTING LAND USE PATTERNS

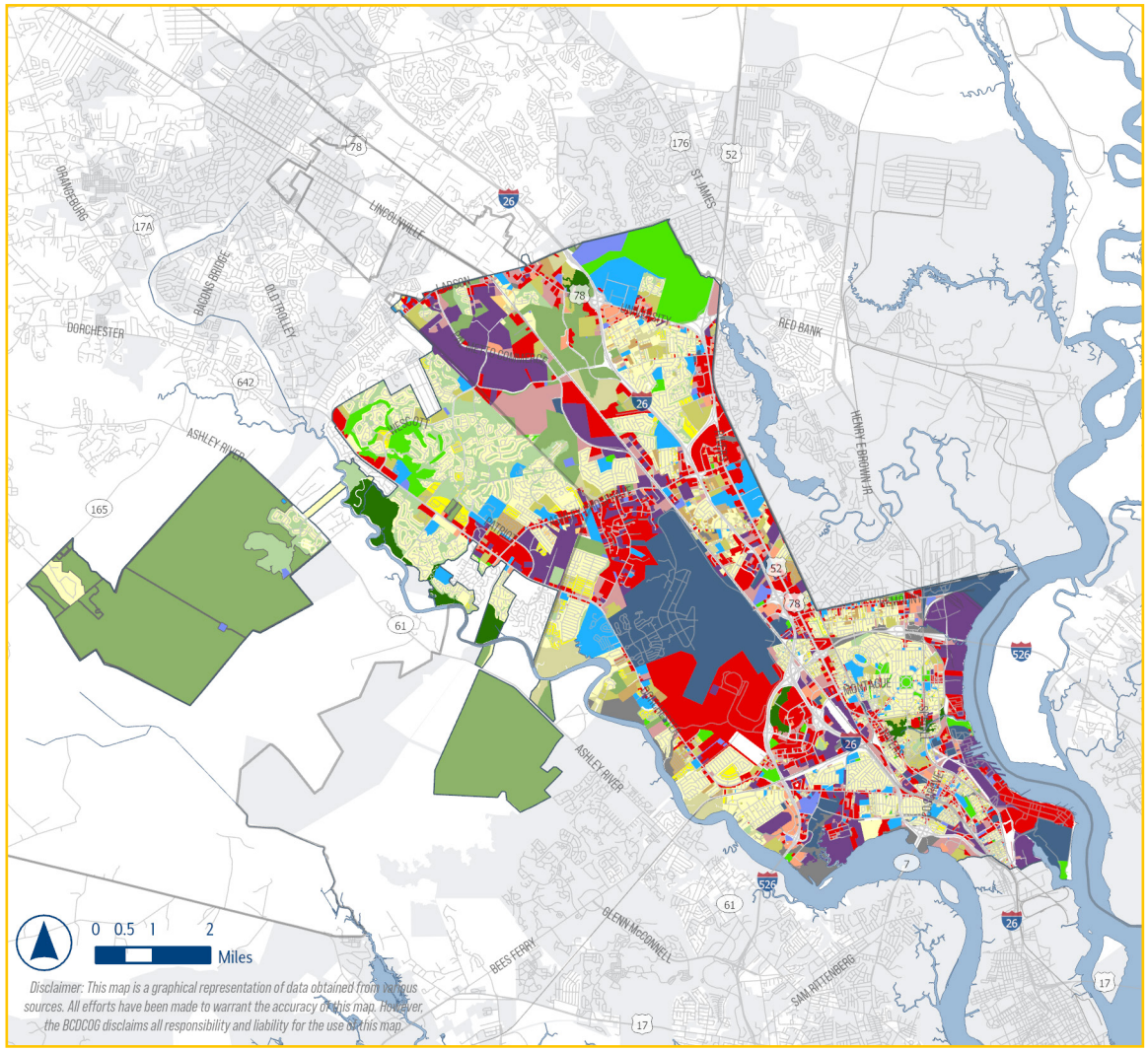
The City of North Charleston serves as a prime example of how land use patterns have evolved over the decades. Residential neighborhoods in particular have shifted from prioritizing the function of the neighborhood to the form. As seen on **Map 25**, the historic core of the city, generally inside of I-526, consists of numerous small, highly connected neighborhoods, most of which follow the more traditional street grid pattern. Examples of these older neighborhoods include Charleston Farms, Chicora-Cherokee, Liberty Hill, Park Circle, Russelldale, and Union Heights. These neighborhoods often feature a more diverse mix of uses and densities compared to newer suburban style developments. The mixture of uses and densities helps keep these neighborhoods more affordable to the widest range of people.

Most of the newer neighborhoods in North Charleston, such as Coosaw Creek, Wescott Plantation, and McKewn, are large-scale homogenous master planned communities. As mentioned previously, a majority of the new construction was for single-family residential dwellings, which most of the newer neighborhoods were developed with, and this land use continues to be the most prevalent in the city.

Table 11: Breakdown of Existing Land Use Categories

EXISTING LAND USE CATEGORIES	ACRES	% OF TOTAL
Conservation	808.84	1.8%
Agriculture	10,295.04	22.3%
Single-Family Detached	6,732.84	14.6%
Single-Family Attached	609.76	1.3%
Multi-Family	1,422.25	3.1%
Mobile Home Residential	90.14	0.2%
Mobile Home Park	557.91	1.2%
HOA Areas	2,300.55	5.0%
Office Commercial	581.27	1.3%
General Commercial	6,399.54	13.9%
Industrial	4,055.28	8.8%
Utilities	453.40	1.0%
Institutional	2,016.03	4.4%
Park/Open Space	1,791.05	3.9%
Government/Military	4,039.80	8.7%
Undeveloped *	884.10	1.9%
Vacant Residential *	1,302.80	2.8%
Vacant Commercial *	1,854.60	4.0%
Total	46,195.2	100.0%

** Charleston County Parcels Only*



LEGEND

- Conservation
- Agriculture
- Single-Family Detached
- Single-Family Attached
- Multi-Family
- Mobile Home Residential
- Mobile Home Park
- HOA Areas
- Office Commercial
- General Commercial
- Industrial
- Utilities
- Institutional
- Park/Open Space
- Government/Military
- Undeveloped *
- Vacant Residential *
- Vacant Commercial *

* Charleston County Parcels Only

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

As the City of North Charleston approaches build out, future development will likely consist of infill and redevelopment projects. While these efforts should be encouraged, creating neighborhood or small area plans is crucial for maintaining the existing character of the neighborhood. Older neighborhoods in particular are more vulnerable to infill and redevelopment projects as they often have more urban blight, are typically more affordable, and tend to have less use restrictions beyond zoning regulations. In contrast, most of the newer neighborhoods, being master-planned communities, have established covenants and restrictions enforced through a Homeowner's Association (HOA), that provides additional restrictions on permitted uses beyond zoning.

TOD POLICIES

Through the incorporation of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) strategies, the Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT) will likely have the greatest impact on land use patterns in North Charleston since the construction of the Naval Base. TOD is a planning and development strategy that creates mixed-use, walkable communities centered around high-quality public transportation systems. By integrating land use and transportation planning, TOD promotes sustainable urban growth and enhances residents' quality of life. TOD policies encourage land use patterns focused on mixed development, walkability, and a 'Live, Work, Play' lifestyle, providing a framework for areas surrounding the transit stops.

Phase I of the TOD Study completed by the BCDCOG in 2022, identified 3 different place-types that encompass a ½ mile radii around the transit stations in North Charleston. The place-types provide a recommendation of the mix of commercial and residential land uses, along with intensity and form of development. The TOD Phase II study, completed in 2024, further refined the place-types and recommendations for the mix of uses based on additional community engagement and an updated market demand analysis. Incorporation of the recommendations and best practices of TOD provides an opportunity for the city to accommodate and direct future population growth along a transit corridor.

COMMERCIAL PATTERNS

Commercial land use patterns in North Charleston reflect the importance of proximity and accessibility for a business. Most consumer- and service-oriented commercial uses are located along highly traveled roadways, such as Ashley Phosphate Road, Dorchester Road and Rivers Avenue. The large employment centers are typically located in areas with easy access to transportation corridors or nearby town amenities, such as Boeing/CHS Airport, Joint Base Charleston employment centers, near or along Aviation and International Boulevard or Faber Place Office Complex, and adjacent to Leeds Avenue. Higher intensity commercial uses, including warehousing and even light industrial, are concentrated along specific corridors, such as Cross County Road, Palmetto Commerce Parkway, and Weber Boulevard. Proximity to Interstates, US Highways, ports and rail facilities are important for the quick and efficient movement of goods.

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INPUT MATRIX

The following matrix is a compilation of public comments and staff responses received throughout the planning process.

COMMENT NO.	DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT	STAFF RESPONSE	COMP PLAN 5-YR REVIEW PAGE(S)
1	3/27/2025	The PRIME plan included a chart of transportation projects with estimated start and completion dates. Please include an updated chart in the Review.	This will be included in the final draft.	101 (see also Page 27 of 2020 Plan)
2	5/12/2025	The city should create a North Charleston Historic Preservation Commission (NCHPC) that will have the authority to review architectural changes for only locally designated districts and landmarks. As noted in the comp plan, neighborhoods like Liberty Hill, will benefit from this type of type of zoning that applies to entire neighborhoods or other areas that include many historic properties. This zoning provides controls on the appearance of existing and proposed buildings. The historic district zoning can help to improve property values by stabilizing and enhancing the neighborhood's character, and it benefits property owners by protecting them from inappropriate changes by other owners that might destroy the special qualities of the neighborhood. By not locally listing these historic assets, the City loses an opportunity to guide redevelopment and rehabilitation with design regulations.	Staff agrees that historic preservation measures are needed for the City's older neighborhoods. Action EO-4C is proposed for revision to add pursuing historic designations for Reynolds Avenue and the Liberty Hill neighborhood. Neighborhood representatives have also been investigating a potential National Register of Historic Places nomination.	14, 28
3	5/12/2025	Effective stormwater management in low-income areas is essential for public health, safety, and sustainable development. The city has a lengthy listing of deferred infrastructure improvements in its low-income areas that should be prioritized for funding in the city's comp plan, stormwater management plan, flood plan, capital improvement plan, and FEMA grant priorities. For decades, the lack of infrastructure investment and historic neglect has decreased property values, impeded climate resilience, and long-term sustainability. The city should deprioritize funding for the cleanup and redevelopment of future brownfield sites and prioritize funding for existing drainage and infrastructure improvements particularly those located along the LCRT corridor.	The City is currently developing a capital improvements plan to identify needed projects and funding sources and to establish priorities among those projects. The City has completed a stormwater study of Chicora/Cherokee which projects a $17 million fix is needed. Grant staff has been pursuing various federal and state funding for drainage improvements as well as small-scale flood mitigation projects. The LCRT project will include stormwater improvements along the corridor as well.	7, 18, 25

COMMENT NO.	DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT	STAFF RESPONSE	COMP PLAN 5-YR REVIEW PAGE(S)
4	5/12/2025	It is well documented that Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) such as the LCRT will contribute to gentrification by increasing property values that will make adjacent properties, and transit stops more attractive to developers and higher-income residents. Existing residents (especially those living in the southern end of the city) may face higher rents and property taxes, leading to displacement if the city does not implement protections and new businesses targeting wealthier demographics may replace local, minority and community-focused stores.	LCRT has received a $1.2 million grant to develop a strategic affordable housing plan for the corridor (Phase III of the transit-oriented development study), to include zoning and policy recommendations. This initiative is set to kick off in fall of this year. New Action LQ-3D is proposed to address the implementation of the goals and recommendations of that study, as well as the Missing Middle study.	5-6, 16, 19
		The Comprehensive Plan (comp plan) should include in its Action Plan a discussion of the above LCRT impacts and analysis of efforts to mitigate gentrification to include: 1. Housing Affordability - adopting inclusionary Zoning by maintaining a percentage of new housing to be affordable, rent control, and community land trusts 2. Tenant Protections - implementing rent control or eviction protections for long-term residents and right-to-counsel initiatives 3. Anti-Speculation Taxes and Vacancy Fees to discourage proprty speculation and long-term vacancies that drive up housing prices (tax owners of unoccupied properties or rapid property flips) 4. Equitable Transit-Oriented Development - to ensure TOD investments also benefit low-income communities, the city should prioritize public owned land and new bonded-funded purchases should be prioritized for affordable housing, local/small business development, and improved local services near new transit lines	Unfortunately, mandatory inclusionary zoning is not currently authorized in South Carolina law. The City adopted Sections 5-17 and 5-18 of the Zoning Regulations in 2021 to provide some design and use restrictions along the LCRT corridor. These sections waive the minimum lot-area requirement for multi-family units for projects within which 20 percent or more of the residential units are dedicated to affordable housing for households at or below 80 percent of the area median income for a period of 20 years (Section 5-18(E)(9) and 5-19(E)(9)). It is anticipated that Phase III of the transit-oriented development study will include additional recommendations as to zoning and housing policies. Tenant protections, anti-speculation taxes, and vacancy fees need further study. The City is currently evaluating its property holdings to determine if excess parcels could be redirected to affordable housing or economic development.	

COMMENT NO.	DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT	STAFF RESPONSE	COMP PLAN 5-YR REVIEW PAGE(S)
5	5/12/2025	To bridge the LCRT infrastructure gap in transportation disadvantaged communities, the comp plan should identify targested infrastructure improvements and investments. Infrastructure investments and mitigation measures should be planned to mitigate the increased traffic to support first-mile/last-mile connectivity. Provisions should be made for multiple transportation options with a focus on equitable accessibility throughout the entire city, including vehicular, public transit, passenger rail, bicycling and walking. Connectivity between destinations is crucial to integrating all the resources (neighborhoods, parks, shopping and entertainment areas) the city has to offer. To claim a "complete street" in a "walkable" city, streets should have minimum sidewalks widths so two people can pass comfortably. To maximize neighborhood cohesion, all complete street improvements should occur within the existing right-of-way and road diets are preferable. "*Collaboration and coordination with various partners to assist in funding and evaluating different multi-modal and connectivity improvements is necessary.*" Bicycle and pedestrian mobility are of particular importance in the transportation disadvantaged areas of the city. The comp plan should begin the pedestrian planning effort to result in a Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Master Plan. From a quality of life and level of service perspective, the way pedestrian improvements are currently funded within the more affluent council districts, is not an equitable, efficient, safe and effective way of prioritizing and implementing investments. A Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan will be a useful first step. As the City updates its Zoning Ordinance, attention should be paid towards further integrating sidewalks, multi-use paths, and bike lane requirements into development standards.	Mobility and Connectivity Goal 2 is to encourage connectivity of neighborhoods and increased mobility options while increasing safety measures. Actions identified in this Goal include development of a Complete Streets policy, providing more or safer pedestrian accommodations, and pursuing traffic-calming measures. The City is exploring the creation and implementation of a city-wide bike/ped plan. The planned Unified Development Ordinance, which will replace the Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, and Road Code with comprehensive land development regulations, will also incorporate pedestrian and bicycle considerations.	12, 19, 22, 24, 26, 29, 31
		Safety Action Plan Grant Award (SS4A). FHWA requires states and regional planning agencies to "conduct a quantitative data analysis of Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs) fatal and serious injury crashes to determine "high-risk areas that considers the demographics of the locations of fatalities and serious injuries, including race, ethnicity, income, and age". The Safety Action Plan can serve as a data-driven framework for prioritizing locations for investigating pedestrian safety improvements and the catalyst for the subsequent Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Master Plan.	The City was awarded a SS4A grant in 2024. Although the grant was briefly paused in early 2025, it has recently been reinstated, and the City will be proceeding to contract for a comprehensive safety action plan in the coming months.	

COMMENT NO.	DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT	STAFF RESPONSE	COMP PLAN 5-YR REVIEW PAGE(S)
6	5/12/2025	The comp plan notes that the city should utilize the recently opened recreational facilities, such as the Athletic Center, Aquatic Center, and Sports Complex, in addition to the LCRT as economic drivers. However, jobs associated with the tourism industry - like those in hospitality, retail, and service industries - tend to offer lower wages compared to many other sectors in the BCDCOG planning area. This is often due to their seasonal nature, high turnover rates, and lower skill requirements. Housing demand will drive costs, which can outpace the wages earned by these workers. This will add to the city's income disparity where many of the city's service workers struggle to afford housing in the very community they serve. North Charleston's brand identity has been "the Hub of the Lowcountry". The city should build upon that identity and embrace its significant role in the transportation industry. One solution is implementation of the LAMC Redevelopment Plan which is an amendment The city's comp plan. The plan calls for the development of a maritime training center and workforce development programs to create local construction jobs for LCRT infrastructure projects. The LAMC Model Block also serves a blueprint for the development of affordable housing.	The City has created the Small Business Enterprise Development Department to ensure the participation of small businesses in the competitive process of public procurement and to provide training and development opportunities to support small businesses' growth. It is anticipated that the LCRT, when operational, will employ approximately 80 employees. CARTA will market those created jobs to residents in the LCRT corridor as the start of operations approaches.	20, 26
7	5/12/2025	All traditional neighborhoods (historic in nature due to the origin date) should have the Traditional Neighborhood designation in an effort to minimize gentrification.	It is proposed to update the future land use designation for Highland Terrace and Ferndale from "Mixed-Use" to "Traditional Neighborhood Development."	16
8	5/15/2025	Very good! Comprehensive is right.	Thank you.	N/A
9	5/19/2025	The LCRT project needs to be scrapped, it is a failed project in the making, CARTA needs new leadership with fresh ideas to improve the financial standings of a money pit. More focus need to be placed on our infrastructure, we are seeing growth in both economic and citizen growth but fail to react accordingly to keep up with the growth, noise abatement is a must, we the people should have a say where our money goes, we are fed up with "Old North Charleston" get the benefits of our tax dollars. Mayor Burgess, it is time to against the grain and take care of the citizens in your city	LCRT and CARTA observations have been forwarded to CARTA. With regard to infrastructure, the City is currently working on a capital improvements plan to align and prioritize needed projects throughout the City.	25
10	5/19/2025	• Prioritize walking routes to the future LCRT stops • Prioritize neighborhood-scale drainage and transportation projects, especially in older neighborhoods.	Actions EO-2B and MO-1A call for supporting public and private investment in infrastructure needed to facilitate access to and use of the LCRT. Drainage studies and funding applications are ongoing for proposed projects in Chicora, Union Heights, and Accabee, among others.	6, 7, 12, 27, 29, 103

COMMENT NO.	DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT	STAFF RESPONSE	COMP PLAN 5-YR REVIEW PAGE(S)
11	5/20/2025	I like this plan, I think it moves the city towards a modern and appropriate plan for growth and redevelopment. I really like the multiple mentions of opportunities to reduce parking minimums. I would like some reconsideration on minimum lot sizes for homes in existing neighborhoods and some policies to encourage more brownstone type homes to address affordability.	Consistent with Action MO-3A, staff is currently evaluating the parking standards in Section 4-10 and anticipates proposing an amendment by the end of 2025. Minimum lot sizes for R-1-zoned lots and for R-2- and R-3-zoned lots proposed for single-family development within Traditional Neighborhood and Mixed-Use designations have been reduced in recent years from 6000 square feet to 4500 square feet. It is anticipated that the lot sizes will be further adjusted in the proposed Unified Development Ordinance (see comment #6).	32
12	5/22/2025	The city needs to enact the formula business ordinance in its unique commercial districts. Parts of district 8 need much better traffic enforcement. We need to eliminate single-family zoning.	It is anticipated that provisions for the City's commercial corridors as well as new or revised zoning districts/uses will be included in the planned Unified Development Ordinance (see comment #6).	20
13	5/31/2025	I skimmed the transportation section. This is a very good collection of data and the planning department should be proud of themselves. Some of the projections are very harrowing — there is expected to be mass gridlock throughout the region by 2045 (page 93) yet the currently underway road projects will not be able to address most of these points of gridlock (pages 99 and 100). In fact, some of the listed projects have been in planning for over a decade now. I understand this 5-year review is meant for data collection more than it is active recommendations, but I hope to see the mixed-use corridors (page 16) be coupled with mass transit projects, similar to Lowcountry Rapid Transit and Rivers Ave. The BCDCOG's Regional Transit Framework Plan is a great start to that planning process. Some of their proposed transit corridors are also in the CHATS Long-Range Transportation Plan.	Significant transportation projects are planned on a regional scale, typically spearheaded by the BCDCOG or the SCDOT. The City is a stakeholder on these projects and staff's advocacy for North Charleston is ongoing. The Mixed-Use Corridors along Rivers Avenue and Highway 78 are proposed for expansion to include "Mixed-Use Nodes" around the future LCRT station areas. Additionally, the BCDCOG is conducting a transit-oriented development study which will encompass the Mixed-Use Corridor along Rivers Avenue and Highway 78.	99-100 16
14	6/3/2025	There are only two mentions of climate change in that document. Get real. Now that summey is gone climate change needs to be central to planning of the city. You also need to get serious about developing a 21st century economy. That means stop relying so heavily on groups that can pick up and leave like Boeing and Cummins. You need a real strategy to grow the innovation economy, which includes working with CCSD and c of c on a workforce. That will also lift people out of poverty.	The Resiliency Element is new to the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Review. Additional study of climate risks is needed. Action SG-1H is proposed to recommend that a Resiliency and Sustainability Master Plan be developed. Economic resiliency is discussed in the review and continues to be a key component of the Comprehensive Plan.	22, 69-75 9

COMMENT NO.	DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT	STAFF RESPONSE	COMP PLAN 5-YR REVIEW PAGE(S)
15	6/4/2025	The Key Goals of the Comprehensive Plan [should be]: (1) Livability & Equity (housing, neighborhoods); (2) Economic Growth (ports, manufacturing, small biz); (3) Sustainability (green infrastructure, flood resilience); and (4) Mobility (transit, Complete Streets, LCRT)	After extensive public input during the creation of the 2020 PRIME North Charleston Comprehensive Plan, the Vision and Guiding Principles identified were (1) Livability and Quality of Life, (2) Sustainable Growth and Resiliency, (3) Economic Opportunity, and (4) Mobility and Connectivity. A five-year review of the 2020 action items along with additonal new action are provided in the Updated Action Plan section of the Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review.	17-32 (see also Page 4 of 2020 Plan)
16	6/4/2025	Current Status of the Comprehensive Plan: (1) Adopted in 2020, but relies on pre-2020 data (2017 ACS American Community Survey, outdated projections); and (2) It needs updates to reflect post-pandemic realities.	The census data was updated from the 2017 ACS to the 2023 ACS with the five-year review and is discussed in the Population Addendum.	37-50
17	6/4/2025	Vision: (1) It covers housing, jobs, the environment, and equity together; and (2) Aligns with state/federal planning mandates.	Rather than establishing a new vision or direction, the five-year review looks back to the 2020 PRIME plan, incorporating newer data and reporting progress and/or making refinements.	N/A
18	6/4/2025	Community-Driven: Built on 1,000+ resident surveys and neighborhood workshops. (Not enough community public open houses)	In addition to the kick-off presentations by the BCDCOG at City Council's Public Safety Committee (9/19/2024) and at Planning Commission (10/14/2024), four public open houses were conducted to gather community input (10/29/2024, 11/13/2024, 2/26/2025, and 3/27/2025). Based on that input, the draft five-year Comprehensive Plan Review was prepared and presented to the Planning Commission 5/12/2025. Based on the recommendations from the Commission, an online outreach campaign was launched, the comments from which are provided herein.	2
19	6/4/2025	Economic Anchors: Leverages ports, Boeing, and Opportunity Zones.	Coordination with economic anchors is onging and robust.	N/A
20	6/4/2025	Sustainability Commitments: Green infrastructure, transit-oriented development (TOD).	The City is exploring a Unified Development Ordinance which could include green infrastructure and TOD requirements.	67
21	6/4/2025	Transportation Innovation: Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT), safer bike/ped routes.	The City is exploring the creation and implementation of a city-wide bike/ped plan that would include last-mile improvements to the future LCRT corridor.	89, 99
22	6/4/2025	Critical Data Gap: 2017 Plan Data vs. 2023 Reality	The census data was updated from the 2017 ACS to the 2023 ACS with the five-year review.	37-50
23	6/4/2025	Critical Data Gap: Population - 111,000 (2017) vs. 130,000+ (2023 est.)	The City's total popluation increased from about 108,000 in 2017 to over 117,000 in 2023, an increase of about 9%, or by roughly 9,000 people. The five-year review accounts for this population change in its analysis.	37-42

COMMENT NO.	DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT	STAFF RESPONSE	COMP PLAN 5-YR REVIEW PAGE(S)
24	6/4/2025	Critical Data Gap: Home Prices - $155,900 median vs. $400,000+ median	The 2017 median home value in the City was $155,900, while the 2023 median home value was $310,000.	43, 46-47 (see also Pages 10 & A-24 of 2020 Plan)
25	6/4/2025	Critical Data Gap: Jobs - Pre-COVID labor market vs. Hybrid work, port expansion	The percentage of North Charleston workers who worked from home doubled, rising from 3.4% in 2017 to 8.4% in 2023. This is a common trend following the COVID-19 pandemic as teleworking/ working from home has become available to a larger number of workers nationwide.	88
26	6/4/2025	Critical Data Gap: Climate Risks - Older flood models vs. 2023 NOAA sea-level rise	Additional study of climate risks is needed. Action SG-1H is proposed to recommend that a Resiliency and Sustainability Master Plan be developed.	22, 69-77
27	6/4/2025	Policies based on 2017 data are misaligned with today's needs.	The Action Plan in the five-year review has been updated based on the 2023 data discussed in the Addenda.	17-33, 37-103
28	6/4/2025	Affordability Crisis: 2017 strategies can't address 2023 rent/home prices.	Additional actions have been proposed within LQ Goal 3 to address housing needs.	19, 48
29	6/4/2025	Displacement Threats: Redevelopment may push out long-term residents.	LCRT has received a $1.2 million grant to develop a strategic affordable housing plan for the corridor (Phase III of the transit-oriented development study), to include zoning and policy recommendations. This initiative is set to kick off in fall of this year. New Action LQ-3D is proposed to address the implementation of the goals and recommendations of that study, as well as the Missing Middle study.	N/A
30	6/4/2025	Climate Vulnerabilities: Stormwater systems aren't sized for 2023 flood risks.	The City is pursuing grant funding for stormwater infrastructure improvements in older neighborhoods. Action SG-1D addresses stormwater planning and projects.	21
31	6/4/2025	Transportation Delays: LCRT and road projects lagging behind growth.	Comment will be referred to CARTA. Infrastructure planning is ongoing between the city and other governmental agencies.	87
32	6/4/2025	Data Overhaul: (1) Integrate **2020 Census** and **2023 ACS** data; and (2) Possibly partner with USC/Clemson for real-time modeling?	The five-year review utilizes 2020 census and 2023 ACS data.	37-41
33	6/4/2025	Housing Emergency: Fast-track **ADUs, rent stabilization studies, and affordable housing funds	City Council approved the accessory dwelling unit ordinance in January 2025 (Planning Commission recommended approval December 2024). Rent stabilization requires further study. A recommendation to create an affordable housing trust fund has been proposed as action LQ-3G.	19

COMMENT NO.	DATE RECEIVED	COMMENT	STAFF RESPONSE	COMP PLAN 5-YR REVIEW PAGE(S)
34	6/4/2025	Climate Resilience: Update flood maps, and require elevated construction in risk zones	The newest FEMA flood maps were adopted in 2021. The City currently requires buildings' finished floor elevations to be 2' above base flood elevation ("freeboard") for construction in special flood hazard areas. This requirement will be added to the "City Code of Ordinances" section on page 69.	69
35	6/4/2025	Transportation Accountability: Public dashboard for LCRT/road project timelines.	The LCRT timeline can be found online at the bottom of this page: https://lowcountryrapidtransit.com/about/.	12
36	6/4/2025	Equity Safeguards: Community Benefits Agreements for Redevelopment	The City will consider such agreements when deemed appropriate.	N/A
37	6/4/2025	Short-Term (2024): (1) Publish an interim data update to guide decisions; and (2) Host neighborhood forums to validate priorities.	The purpose of the five-year review of the 2020 PRIME plan is to publish the updated data regarding population, housing, and economics; to review the goals to see what has been accomplished or needs adjustment; and to provide an update to the Planning Commission, City Council, and the public on the progress made to address the actions identified in the comprehensive plan. Public outreach was conducted during the review process to gather input directly from the public via public meetings and an online survey.	N/A
38	6/4/2025	Long-Term (2025–????): Formal plan revision with 2024 data and new equity/climate tools.	This is the formal five-year review of the 2020 Prime North Charleston comprehensive plan.	37-41
39	6/4/2025	Why It Matters to Update North Charleston's Plan: The PRIME Plan (2020) relied on 2017 ACS data, which is now 7 years old.	The five-year review utilizes 2023 ACS data.	37-41
40	6/4/2025	2022–2023 ACS data** would show: (1) Updated housing affordability crisis (rents, home prices); (2) Post-COVID employment shifts (remote work, port jobs); and (3) Changes in racial/ethnic demographics.	The census data was updated from the 2017 ACS to the 2023 ACS with the five-year review.	37-60
41	6/5/2025	Better Coordination Between City Departments: Carrying out big projects like improving public transit (LCRT), stormwater systems, and affordable housing will require strong teamwork between city departments and other agencies. Without that, things can slow down or get stuck.	CARTA is the lead on the LCRT project. The City is deeply involved in the overall process and continues to coordinate on the plans to implement the LCRT. All City departments coordinate reviews of proposed development to facilitate the fast, efficient, and accurate permitting of all projects. Additionally, City staff reviews and coordinates City projects through an interdepartmental committee.	N/A
42	6/5/2025	Focus on What's Most Doable and Important: It might help to rank action items by how big their impact is and how realistic they are. For example, updating zoning rules near LCRT stations seems like a smart short-term move, while some longer-term redevelopment plans might take more time and carry more risks.	The Updated Action Plan flags the critical items in the "Priority" column, while also noting the implementation timing in the "Timeframe" column.	17-20 (LQ) 21-24 (SG) 25-28 (EO) 29-31 (MO)

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43	6/5/2025	Stronger Support for Affordable Housing: If keeping housing affordable is a top goal, the city should consider stronger tools like setting aside a portion of new housing as affordable (inclusionary zoning), helping displaced residents return to their neighborhoods, or adding protections for renters.	Affordable housing is listed as a Priority Investment. The Housing Addendum reviews all aspects of housing, including supply, occupancy and tenure, costs and affordability, values and sales prices, and rents. Inclusionary zoning is not currently enabled in the State of South Carolina.	33, 43-50
44	6/5/2025	Plan for Upkeep of New Facilities: The plan includes building or improving parks, centers, and other public places, which is great. But it would also help to include a plan for how these facilities will be maintained and paid for in the long run.	The City has allocated funding for addressing deferred maintenance of City facilities. Planning has started for a Capital improvement Plan as noted as Priority Investment #1.	13, 20, 32-33
45	6/7/2025	I live in Dorchester Terrace. I'd like to see that homes with deferred maintenance owned by older residents are being identified appropriately and they are being made aware of any Community funds or resources to help with improvement and maintenance. Keeping people in their homes is important part of ensuring a balanced and diverse neighborhood. I also believe "home" is very important to our mental health wellness and development. Rental property is important part of having affordable mixed housing available for everyone. Operating rental property is a business and we should not allow the poor conditions of many these homes to hurt the investment of owner occupied properties. Plus not exhibiting any sense of pride of ownership is a hardship for children. Landlords need to be accountable and held to a better standard than they've been allowed. They need to maintain the exterior the home so they appear to be livable, especially if they are allowing people to live in them. Thank you	Actions LQ-1B and -1C call for enforcement of housing standards as well as registration of rental units with the City to facilitate communication regarding property standards.	5, 17
46	6/8/2025	None of this matters unless the city leaders can get crime and corruption under control! Our city government had three people accused of felonies serving actively on council. Crime is rampant with very little city notice. Lots of hype for grants but nothing for crime control. Officer Commancho (sp) is quiet. What is our mayor and chief doing for reducing crime? 4700 block of Old Park had multiple crimes as does most of NC.	The North Charleston Police Department employs over 340 sworn officers, while the Charleston County Sheriff's Office, located on Leeds Avenue, provides additional law enforcement services and protection. Also, LQ Goal 2 includes several actions to support crime reduction.	18, 80-81

PRIME NORTH CHARLESTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN **5-YEAR REVIEW**

Bright Ideas, Bold Action