

# PLANNING, PRESERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY

## 2024 YEAR-END REPORT

CITY OF CHARLESTON

Penny Ashby Lee Batchelder Craig Bennett Mollie Conner Lawrence Courtney Amanda Cox  
Alison Craig Rachel Fore Travis Galli Genita Hanna Ana Harp Mandi Herring John Lambert Jimmy Lefebvre  
Alicia Lewis David Meeks Christopher Morgan Philip Overcash Frankie Pinto Eric Pohlman Jason Rowe  
Eric Schultz Chloe Stuber Robert Summerfield Brad Thomas Elianna Toppercer Christina Walsh BD Wortham-Galvin

# DEPARTMENT MISSION

**To improve the built environment and quality of life for all people in the City of Charleston.**

---

## CORE FUNCTIONS

- Use the Comprehensive Plan as a guiding document for a more resilient and equitable future
- Restore, protect, and preserve historic neighborhoods
- Facilitate construction of new neighborhoods that are compact and include a mix of uses
- Facilitate projects, programs and policies that create affordability in housing and transportation options
- Cultivate healthy and diverse commercial districts
- Consider equity and environmental quality in all our actions
- Advocate for excellence in design
- Collaborate across departments to solve complex problems
- Offer excellent, courteous, and professional service

## ORGANIZATION

### DIVISIONS (# staff):

- Administration (4)
- Planning (7)
- Preservation & Urban Design (8)
- Zoning (9)

### BOARDS & COMMISSIONS:

- Board of Architectural Review - Large (BAR-L)
- Board of Architectural Review - Small (BAR-S)
- Board of Zoning Appeals - Site Design (BZA-SD)
- Board of Zoning Appeals - Zoning (BZA-Z)
- Design Review Board (DRB)
- Planning Commission (PC)
- Technical Review Committee (TRC)

# 2024 FOCUS AREAS

To address the current needs of our changing city, the department will focus on three areas of improvement for Charleston:

### WATERPROOF

**CHALLENGE:** Increasing frequency and severity of flood events.

**VISION:** A waterproof city that can grow and adapt to changing climate conditions.

### INCLUSIVE

**CHALLENGE:** Declining demographic diversity of the city.

**VISION:** An inclusive and equitable city open to people of varied backgrounds and incomes; diversity in population, types of residences, and businesses.

### BALANCED

**CHALLENGE:** Disconnected neighborhoods and commercial centers; livability issues.

**VISION:** A balanced city of complete neighborhoods with a mix of uses, services, and residences, connected together with a range of transportation options.

These focus areas align with the Mayor's goals for the City of Charleston: smart growth and prosperous preservation, finding flooding and infrastructure solutions, finding traffic solutions, ensuring the safety of all citizens, and putting residents first.

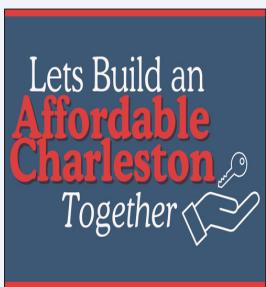
# 2024 KEY INITIATIVES

## WATERPROOF



- Present to City Council a Comprehensive Plan amendment, the “Waterfront District”, that will help guide resilient waterfront redevelopment on the Peninsula.  
*(continue in 2025)*
- Initiate phase two of the Zoning Ordinance rewrite and develop a draft of the updated elevation-based code to present to citizens and stakeholders for input.  
*(continue in 2025)*
- Collaborate with preservation leaders, consultants, and citizens to develop climate resilience guidelines for historic properties.

## INCLUSIVE



- Streamline the review process for Affordable Housing projects by creating a Priority Status program, waiving permit fees, and spearheading other improvements.
- Implement a multi-faceted community driven initiative to document, honor, and protect historic African American Settlement Communities.
- Present the community-led Peninsula Plan (updated Downtown Plan) to City Council for adoption. *(continue in 2025)*

## BALANCED



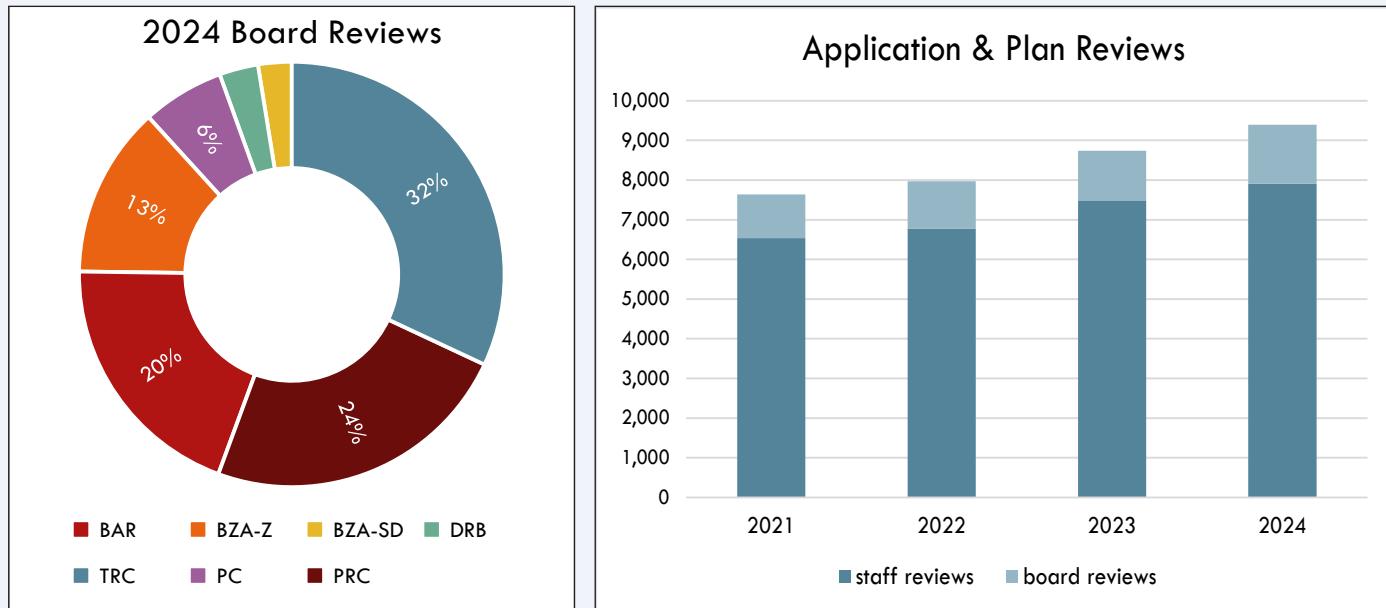
- Facilitate new ideas for Sumar Street mixed-use redevelopment plans and assist with implementation.
- Update the City's architectural inventory of historic buildings. *(continue in 2025)*
- Establish the Upper Peninsula Mobility Fund Committee to implement and fund the City's multi-modal transportation objectives and projects. *(continue in 2025)*
- Initiate the process to prepare engineered design drawings and multi-jurisdictional coordination for ReThink Sam Rittenberg.

## COLLABORATIVE



- Establish a “Planners’ Night In” to share information about City processes and plans.
- Develop a “BAR 101” program with information and resources to help citizens maintain their historic properties and navigate the City’s review processes.
- Improve the plan review process by utilizing an online submittal system that is automated and efficient for applicants and staff. *(continue in 2025)*

# BY THE NUMBERS



	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change
<b>Application &amp; Plan Reviews</b>					
staff reviews	6,533	6,777	7,484	7,907	<span style="color: green;">+</span>
board reviews	1,107	1,195	1,258	1,489	<span style="color: green;">+</span>
<b>Board Reviews</b>					
BAR	318	342	361	292	<span style="color: red;">-</span>
BZA-Z	189	170	200	194	<span style="color: red;">-</span>
BZA-SD	53	53	44	38	<span style="color: red;">-</span>
DRB	53	47	56	44	<span style="color: red;">-</span>
TRC	389	445	464	476	<span style="color: green;">+</span>
PC	105	138	133	93	<span style="color: red;">-</span>
PRC	322	316	288	352	<span style="color: green;">+</span>
<b>Growth</b>					
single-family lots created	425	235	330	9	<span style="color: red;">-</span>
single-family/duplex house plans appvd	1,083	526	462	336	<span style="color: red;">-</span>
multi-family units approved at TRC	1,305	432	975	383	<span style="color: red;">-</span>
affordable/workforce housing units appvd	164	161	8	186	<span style="color: green;">+</span>
properties annexed (comm & residential)	49	57	95	51	<span style="color: red;">-</span>
<b>Outreach &amp; Engagement</b>					
engagement events	107	57	93	78	<span style="color: red;">-</span>