



# PLANNING, PRESERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY 2021 YEAR-END REPORT

CITY OF CHARLESTON

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# DEPARTMENT MISSION

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

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## CORE FUNCTIONS

*To accomplish our mission, we will always perform our core functions at the highest level.*

- Use the Comprehensive Plan as a guiding document for a more resilient and equitable future
- 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
- Restore, protect, and preserve historic neighborhoods
- Cultivate healthy and diverse commercial districts
- Advocate for excellence in design
- Consider environmental quality in all of our actions
- Collaborate across departments to solve complex problems
- Offer excellent, courteous, and professional service

## ORGANIZATION

### DIVISIONS (# staff):

Administration (4)  
Business & Neighborhood Services (5)  
Civic Design Center (2)  
Planning (5)  
Preservation & Urban Design (5)  
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)  
Minority Business Enterprise Advisory Board  
Planning Commission (PC)  
Technical Review Committee (TRC)  
West Ashley Revitalization Commission (WARC)

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# 2021 FOCUS AREAS

*To address the current needs of our rapidly 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

## BALANCED

**CHALLENGE:** Separated uses, disconnected neighborhoods and commercial centers

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

# 2021 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



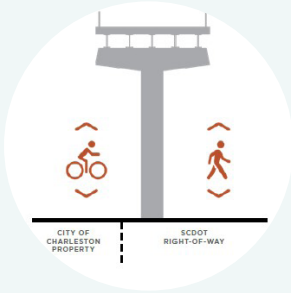
## WATERPROOF

- ✓ Adopted Comprehensive Plan (City Plan) data driven recommendations related to watersheds, topography, flooding, and sea level rise in order to direct future sustainable growth to places which minimize flooding impacts
- ✓ Adopted the conservation subdivision ordinance
- ✓ Extensively evaluated and documented community conversations around the USACE 3x3 Peninsula Flood Risk Management Study



## INCLUSIVE

- ✓ Adopted City Plan data driven recommendations related to housing supply and needs in order to shape policies and opportunities for housing at all income levels
- ✓ Evaluated and updated "Fee In Lieu Of" option for MU/WH zoning districts to encourage more affordable units on site and raise adequate funds to build lost units
- ✓ Established M&WBE Business Development Lab webinars and secured a location for a future M&WBE Entrepreneurial Resource Center
- ✓ Conducted design studies and identify opportunities to improve public housing



## BALANCED

- ✓ Worked with stakeholders to present the King Street Business Improvement District plan to City Council for approval
- ✓ Created the Johns Island Municipal Improvement District
- ✓ Developed design guidelines for the Lowcountry Lowline
- ✓ Adopted the historic cemeteries and unmarked burial grounds protection ordinance
- ✓ Led TIF funding prioritization for Cooper River Bridge Area



## TRANSPARENT

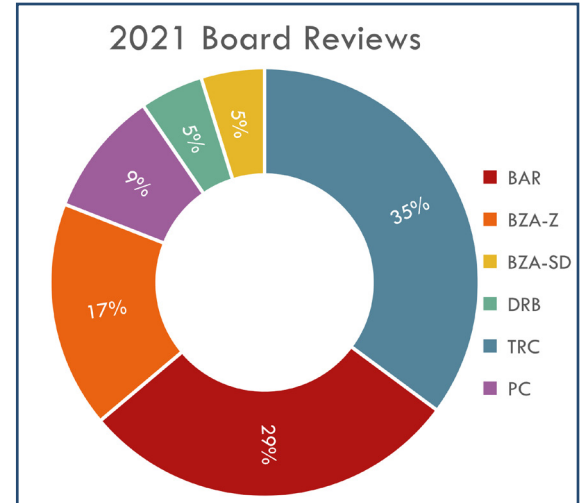
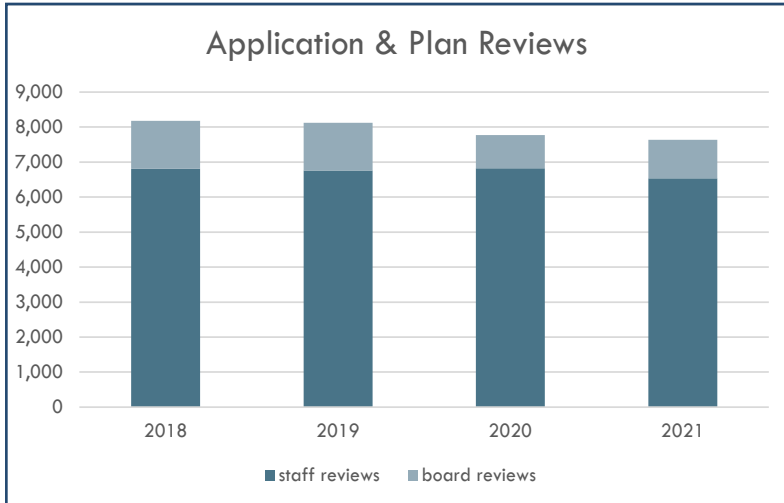
- ✓ Created new outreach strategies to update citizens on City Plan implementation
- ✓ Improved M&WBE procurement process and programming
- ✓ Wrote policies and standards for solar panels in the historic district
- ✓ Implemented FOIA management improvements
- ✓ Improved information and resources available on department webpages



## EFFICIENT

- ✓ Conducted legal training sessions for Boards and Commissions
- ✓ Eliminated minimum parking requirements in the Central Business District
- ✓ Led cross sector collaboration that implemented and improved street sweeping program
- ✓ Updated the TRC manual, checklists, and reduce review times
- ✓ Transitioned restaurants from COVID-19 emergency measures by updating sidewalk cafe dining ordinances and facilitated review process

# BY THE NUMBERS



|   | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  | Change |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| <b>Application &amp; Plan Reviews</b>     |       |       |       |       |        |
| staff reviews                             | 6,811 | 6,762 | 6,827 | 6,533 | -      |
| board reviews                             | 1,371 | 1,360 | 948   | 1,107 | +      |
| <b>Board Reviews</b>                      |       |       |       |       |        |
| BAR                                       | 424   | 438   | 283   | 318   | +      |
| BZA-Z                                     | 212   | 181   | 131   | 189   | +      |
| BZA-SD                                    | 85    | 84    | 47    | 53    | +      |
| DRB                                       | 104   | 134   | 62    | 53    | -      |
| TRC                                       | 403   | 411   | 337   | 389   | +      |
| PC  | 143   | 112   | 88    | 105   | +      |
| <b>Growth</b>                             |       |       |       |       |        |
| single-family lots created                | 963   | 550   | 351   | 425   | +      |
| single-family/duplex house plans approved | 1,202 | 974   | 1,082 | 1,083 | +      |
| multi-family units approved at TRC        | 1,325 | 521   | 1,953 | 1,305 | -      |
| properties annexed (comm & res)           | 39    | 29    | 26    | 49    | +      |
| <b>Outreach &amp; Engagement</b>          |       |       |       |       |        |
| engagement events                         | 80    | 88    | 105   | 107   | +      |
| workshop attendees                        | 109   | 556   | 246   | 1,372 | +      |
| MWBE certifications (new)                 | 64    | 78    | 102   | 100   | -      |
| newsletter subscribers                    | 4,353 | 6,374 | 6,653 | 7,927 | +      |
| <b>Design Projects</b>                    |       |       |       |       |        |
| city design projects                      | 28    | 13    | 22    | 29    | +      |

