

PLANNING, PRESERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY

2023

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.

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
- 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
- Advocate for excellence in design
- Consider equity and environmental quality in all of our actions
- Collaborate across departments to solve complex problems
- Offer excellent, courteous, and professional service

ORGANIZATION

SEVEN DIVISIONS (# staff):

- Administration (4)
- Business & Neighborhood Services (5)
- Civic Design Center (2.5)
- Entrepreneurial Resource Center (3)
- Planning (7)
- Preservation & Urban Design (7)
- 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)

2023 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; livability issues.

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

2023 KEY INITIATIVES



WATERPROOF

- Provide analyses and urban design support for the Peninsula Perimeter Surge Structure in the Army Corps of Engineers' planning, engineering, and design phase.
- Launch community engagement efforts for new Downtown Plan/Peninsula Plan.
- Initiate phase one of rewriting the Zoning Ordinance. Analyze the existing code and engage stakeholders to create a new elevation-based zoning code.
- Identify and recommend improvements to the Hagood Avenue area related to flooding, drainage, housing, heat, and mobility.



INCLUSIVE

- Begin construction outfit for the Entrepreneurial Resource Center and hire staff support the future center and minority and women owned businesses.
- Implement and expand an official Affordable Housing Concierge Program by hiring a full-time Affordable Housing Coordinator that will lead efforts to streamline review processes and update development policies.
- Kick-off a multi-faceted community driven initiative to document, honor, and protect historic African American Settlement Communities.
- Assist in developing the Rosemont Bridgeview resilience plan.
- Implement diversity, equity, and inclusion recommendations from the Commission on Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation.



BALANCED

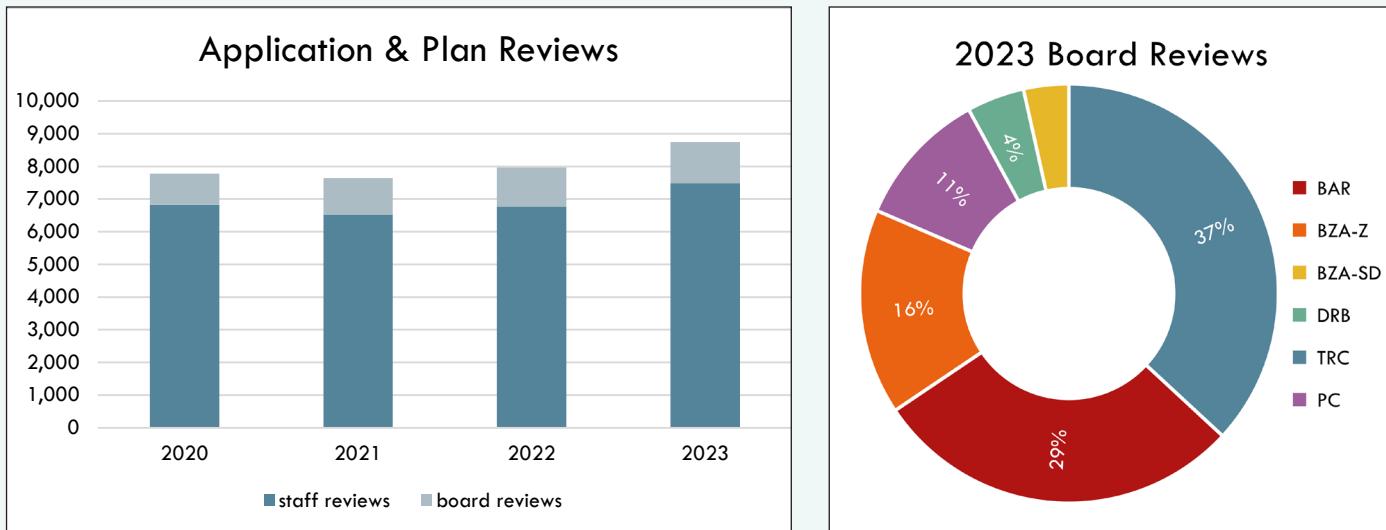
- Design bicycle infrastructure accommodations for the Bee Street corridor including access to the future Ashley River Crossing Bike and Pedestrian Bridge.
- Support and evaluate first year implementation of the King Street BID.
- Provide planning and design support for the Lowcountry Rapid Transit 60% design documents.
- Develop initiatives to promote West Ashley businesses such as interactive maps that identify small and local businesses within close proximity to neighborhoods and work centers.
- Create rental registration for residential properties in areas with livability challenges.



COLLABORATIVE

- Implement an overall communications strategy, "Plan Charleston," for department work and citizen engagement.
- Establish a "Planners' Night In" to share information about City processes and plans.
- Onboard a Mobility Planner to work collaboratively with other City departments and the community to implement the City's multi-modal transportation objectives.
- Publish Board of Architectural Review General Guidelines, a resource booklet that provides guidance to citizens and applicants for the renovation and rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- Launch a Civic Engagement Academy.

BY THE NUMBERS



	2020	2021	2022	2023	Change
Application & Plan Reviews					
staff reviews	6,827	6,533	6,777	7,484	+
board reviews	948	1,107	1,195	1,258	+
Board Reviews					
BAR	283	318	342	361	+
BZA-Z	131	189	170	200	+
BZA-SD	47	53	53	44	-
DRB	62	53	47	56	+
TRC	337	389	445	464	+
PC	88	105	138	133	-
Growth					
single-family lots created	351	425	235	330	+
single-family/duplex house plans approved	1,082	1,083	526	462	-
multi-family units approved at TRC	1,953	1,305	432	975	+
properties annexed (comm & res)	26	49	57	95	+
Outreach & Engagement					
engagement events	105	107	57	103	+
workshop attendees	246	1,372	1,207	1,689	+
MWBE certifications (new)	102	100	79	114	+
newsletter subscribers	6,653	7,927	7,995	6,914	-
Design Projects					
city design projects	22	29	36	25	-