

PLANNING, PRESERVATION & SUSTAINABILITY

2024 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

- 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.

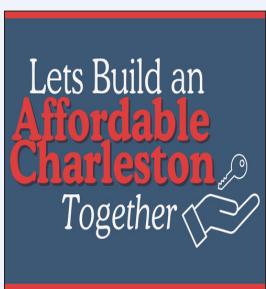
2024 KEY INITIATIVES

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



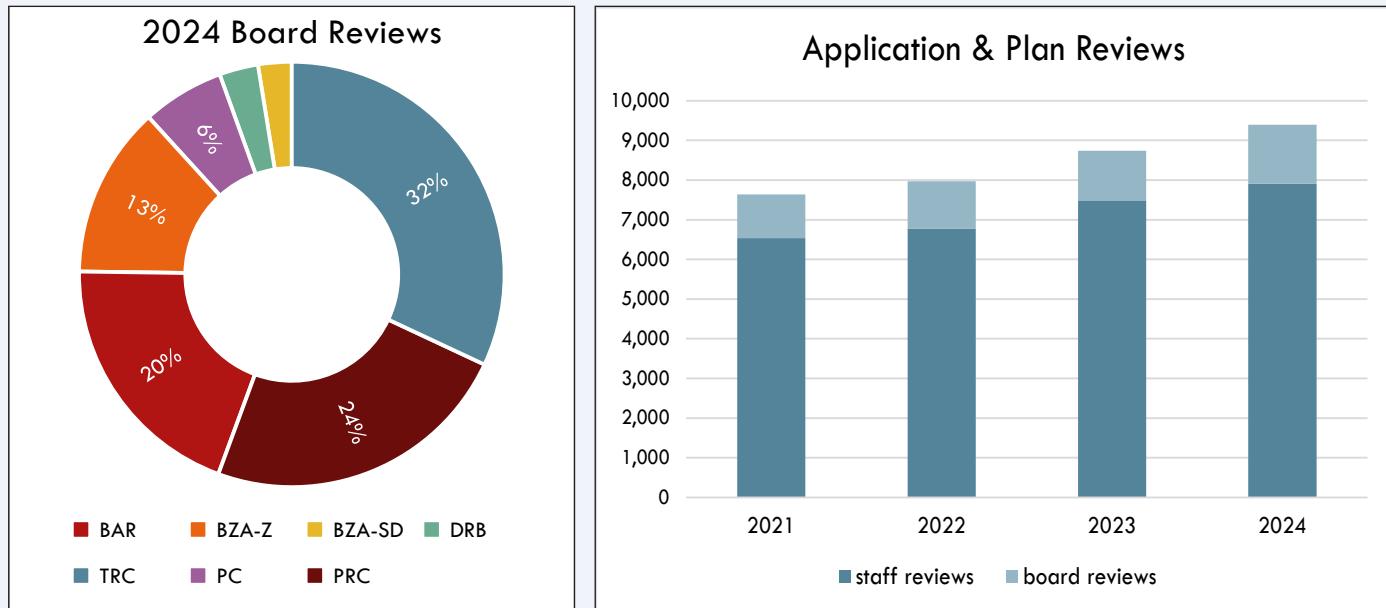
- Facilitate new ideas for Sumar Street mixed-use redevelopment plans and assist with implementation.
- Update the City's architectural inventory of historic buildings. *(continue in 2025)*
- Establish the Upper Peninsula Mobility Fund Committee to implement and fund the City's multi-modal transportation 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
Application & Plan Reviews					
staff reviews	6,533	6,777	7,484	7,907	+
board reviews	1,107	1,195	1,258	1,489	+
Board Reviews					
BAR	318	342	361	292	-
BZA-Z	189	170	200	194	-
BZA-SD	53	53	44	38	-
DRB	53	47	56	44	-
TRC	389	445	464	476	+
PC	105	138	133	93	-
PRC	322	316	288	352	+
Growth					
single-family lots created	425	235	330	9	-
single-family/duplex house plans appvd	1,083	526	462	336	-
multi-family units approved at TRC	1,305	432	975	383	-
affordable/workforce housing units appvd	164	161	8	186	+
properties annexed (comm & residential)	49	57	95	51	-
Outreach & Engagement					
engagement events	107	57	93	78	-