

A stylized map of Charleston, South Carolina, is the background of the report cover. The map is filled with various geometric shapes like triangles, squares, and rectangles in shades of blue, green, yellow, red, and grey. Some areas have horizontal stripes. The title text is overlaid on the map.

# 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.

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## 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)

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# 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.

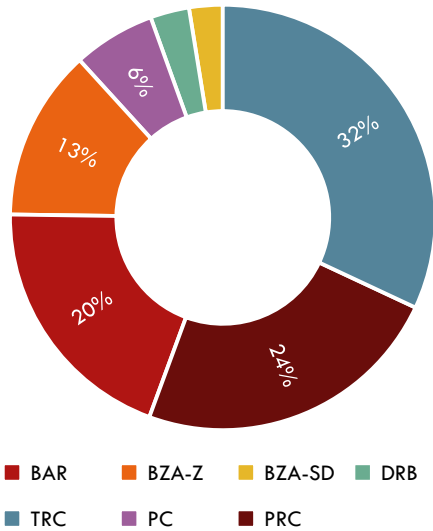
## COLLABORATIVE



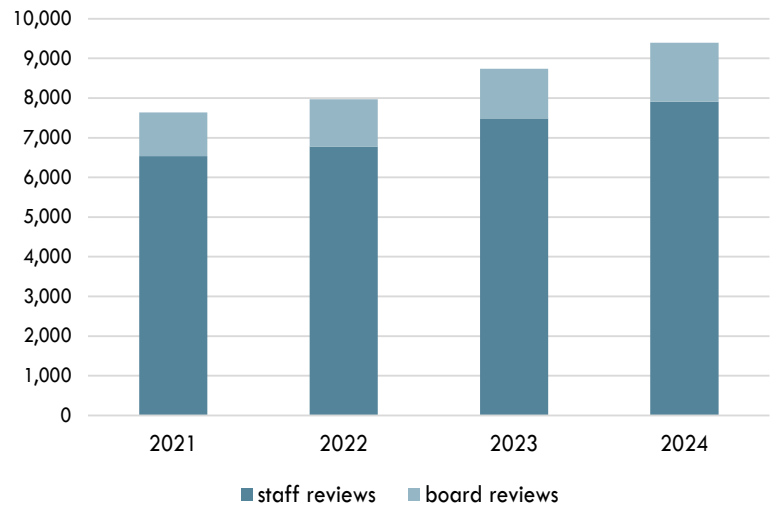
- ☐ Establish a “Planners’ Night In” to share information about City processes and plans.
- ☒ Develop a “BAR 101” program with information and resources to help citizens maintain their historic properties and navigate the City’s review processes.
- ☒ Improve the plan review process by utilizing an online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

# BY THE NUMBERS

2024 Board Reviews



Application & Plan Reviews



|  | 2021  | 2022  | 2023  | 2024  | Change |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| <b>Application &amp; Plan Reviews</b>    |       |       |       |       |        |
| staff reviews                            | 6,533 | 6,777 | 7,484 | 7,907 | +      |
| board reviews                            | 1,107 | 1,195 | 1,258 | 1,489 | +      |
| <b>Board Reviews</b>                     |       |       |       |       |        |
| 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   | +      |
| <b>Growth</b>                            |       |       |       |       |        |
| 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    | -      |
| <b>Outreach &amp; Engagement</b>         |       |       |       |       |        |
| engagement events                        | 107   | 57    | 93    | 78    | -      |