

## **Post & Courier**

### **CHARLESTON COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FIVE-YEAR REVIEW**

Charleston County Council will hold a public hearing on the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review at **6:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 13, 2024**, in Council Chambers (second floor of the Lonnie Hamilton, III, Public Services Building, located at: 4045 Bridge View Drive, North Charleston, SC 29405).

The Charleston County Planning Commission adopted a resolution completing the Five-Year Review of the Comprehensive Plan on December 11, 2023. The findings of their review have been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan as proposed amendments. The proposed amendments and a summary report of the public workshops and feedback can be obtained on-line at the Charleston County Website: <https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/zoning-planning/comp-plan.php> or by contacting the Charleston County Zoning and Planning Department at (843) 202-7200. The meeting will be livestreamed at: <https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/county-council/cctv.php>. Public comments may be made in person or written public comments may be emailed to [CCPC@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:CCPC@charlestoncounty.org) or mailed to the address listed above by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 9, 2024.

This Public Notice is in accordance with Section 6-29-530 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina.

Kristen L. Salisbury  
Clerk of Council

## Case History: Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review

Planning Commission Meetings: January 2022 – January 8, 2024

Public Hearing: February 13, 2024

Planning and Public Works Committee Meeting: February 22 and March 21, 2024

First Reading: March 26, 2024

Second Reading: April 9, 2024

Third Reading: April 18, 2024

### **HISTORY: JANUARY 2022 THROUGH FEBRUARY 13, 2023**

**January – November 2022:** Initial review and update of Plan by staff; Identified revisions and worked with other departments/agencies; Provided updates to Planning Commission as needed (all meetings noticed as required).

**November 2022 – January 2023:** Community Survey (247 virtual responses and 1 written response).

### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING: February 13, 2023**

**Meeting Summary:** Zoning and Planning staff presented the results from the community survey conducted from November 2022 – January 2023. Overall, 247 responses were received from residents around the County. Staff reviewed proposed amendments based on the results of the community survey for the following sections: 1) Introduction and Background, 2) Part 4: Definitions, Index of Resources, Appendix A, Implementation Toolbox, 3) Economic Development Element, 4) Natural Resources Element, 5) Cultural Resources Element, and 6) Community Facilities Element. The Planning Commission accepted the proposed amendments, with two additions to the Natural Resources Element (NR20 and NR21). The Planning Commission voted, 8-0, for staff to continue to review survey comments and provide suggestions on how to incorporate the comments into the Comprehensive Plan.

**Public Input:** All public comments received are included in the Public Comment Summary Report.

**Speakers:** No one spoke regarding the Comprehensive Plan.

**Notifications:** 448 notifications were sent to individuals on the Comprehensive Plan Interested Parties list on January 27, 2023. Additionally, this meeting was noticed in the Post & Courier on January 27, 2023.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING: March 13, 2023**

**Meeting Summary:** Staff reviewed proposed amendments based on the results of the community survey for the following sections: 1) Transportation Element and 2) Energy and Sustainability Element. The Planning Commission voted, 7-0, to approve the proposed amendments for the Transportation Element. The Planning Commission voted, 6-1, to approve the proposed amendments for the Energy and Sustainability Element (Commissioner Jones dissented).

**Public Input:** All public comments received are included in the Public Comment Summary Report.

**Speakers:** No one spoke regarding the Comprehensive Plan.

**Notifications:** 448 notifications were sent to individuals on the Comprehensive Plan Interested Parties list on February 24, 2023. Additionally, this meeting was noticed in the Post & Courier on February 24, 2023.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING: April 10, 2023**

**Meeting Summary:** Staff reviewed proposed amendments based on the results of the community survey for the following sections: 1) Land Use Element, 2) Population Element, 3) Housing Element, 4) Priority Investment, Implementation, and Coordination Element and 5) Resilience Element. The Planning Commission voted, 7-0, to approve the initial amendments to the Plan based on the public survey comments. They also voted, 7-0, for the Commission to breakout into subcommittees to review public comments and proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan following the public workshops.

**Public Input:** 144 letters and emails were received for the April 10, 2023 meeting. All public comments received are included in the Public Comment Summary Report and were addressed in staff’s proposed amendments and presented to the Planning Commission.

**Speakers:** Two people spoke regarding the Comprehensive Plan.

**Notifications:** 448 notifications were sent to individuals on the Comprehensive Plan Interested Parties list on March 24, 2023. Additionally, this meeting was noticed in the Post & Courier on March 24, 2023.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS: June - November 2023**

**Meeting Summary:** Staff presented monthly updates on the progress of the Comprehensive Plan including the public workshops held from June through August 2023 (six in-person workshops and one virtual workshop). At the June 12 meeting, Planning Commission voted, 8-0, to create three subcommittees to review the input from the public workshops and propose Comprehensive Plan amendments to address the comments. The Commission also voted to assign Commission members to each subcommittee.

**Public Input:** 173 letters and emails were received for the June 12 through November 13, 2023 meetings. All public comments received are included in the Public Comment Summary Report and were included and addressed with the public workshop comments.

**Speakers:** One person spoke regarding the Comprehensive Plan at the September 11, October 9, and November 13, 2023 meetings. There were no speakers at the June 12, July 10, or August 14 meetings.

**Notifications:** Notifications were sent to individuals on the Comprehensive Plan Interested Parties list and all meetings were noticed as required. Additionally, these meetings were noticed with advertisements in the Post & Courier fifteen days prior to the meeting date.

**PUBLIC WORKSHOPS: JUNE – AUGUST 2023**

Six in-person workshops and one online public workshop were held in the Summer of 2023, from June through August, to gather input on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan through the Five-Year Update process.

**JOHNS ISLAND PUBLIC WORKSHOP: June 7, 2023**

**Workshop Summary:** The first Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop Meeting was held at Berkeley Electric (1135 Main Road, Johns Island) from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm on June 7, 2023. There were 46 attendees and we received 7 comment cards.

**JAMES ISLAND PUBLIC WORKSHOP: June 14, 2023**

**Workshop Summary:** The second Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop Meeting was held at the Baxter-Patrick Library (1858 South Grimball Road, James Island) from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm on June 14, 2023. There were 31 attendees, and 10 comment cards were returned.

**MOUNT PLEASANT PUBLIC WORKSHOP: June 28, 2023**

**Workshop Summary:** The Wando Library (1400 Carolina Park Blvd., Mt. Pleasant) was the site of the third Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop Meeting from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm on June 28, 2023. There were 16 attendees, and 3 comment cards were returned.

**WEST ASHLEY PUBLIC WORKSHOP: July 12, 2023**

**Workshop Summary:** The Bees Ferry Library (3035 Sanders Road, West Ashley) is where the fourth Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop Meeting was held from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm on July 12, 2023. There were 6 attendees, and 2 comment cards were returned.

**NORTH CHARLESTON PUBLIC WORKSHOP: July 26, 2023**

**Workshop Summary:** The fifth Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop Meeting was held at the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce building (4922 O'Hear Avenue, North Charleston) from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm on July 26, 2023. There were 10 attendees, and 2 comment cards were returned.

**EDISTO ISLAND PUBLIC WORKSHOP: August 28, 2023**

**Workshop Summary:** The sixth and final Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop Meeting was held at Jane Edwards Elementary School (1960 Jane Edwards Road, Edisto Island) from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm on August 28, 2023. There were 45 attendees, and 5 comment cards were returned.

**ONLINE PUBLIC WORKSHOP: June 5, 2023 - August 30, 2023**

**Online Workshop Summary:** The Online Public Workshop was available to citizens who were unable to attend any of the other Public Workshops. It was open for the entirety of the Public Workshop process, from June 5 through August 30, 2023. At the website, the public was able to review the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, as well as leave any comments. Through this format, 13 visitors left a total of 89 comments.

**PLANNING COMMISSION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Planning Commission was broken down into three subcommittees for the purpose of reviewing the feedback received from the public workshops and making recommendations to the Planning Commission on how best to address the public input received. The agendas were posted in advance of the meetings and no members of the public attended or spoke.

**RESILIENCE, HOUSING, CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS SUBCOMMITTEE**

The Resilience, Housing, Cultural Resources, and Economic Development Subcommittee met on September 26 and November 1, 2023. The recommendations of this subcommittee can be found in the attached spreadsheets.

**LAND USE, POPULATION, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENTS SUBCOMMITTEE**

The Land Use, Population, Natural Resources, and Community Facilities Subcommittee met on September 25 and October 16, 2023. The recommendations of this subcommittee can be found in the attached spreadsheets.

**ENERGY, PRIORITY INVESTMENT, AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS SUBCOMMITTEE**

The Energy, Priority Investment, and Transportation Subcommittee met on October 3 and October 31, 2023. The recommendations of this subcommittee can be found in the attached spreadsheets.

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING: December 11, 2023**

**Meeting Summary:** Staff presented the recommendations from the subcommittees regarding the final draft Plan. The Commission recommended approval of the draft Plan as follows:

On the motion of Vice Chair Paulatos, seconded by Susan Cox, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Table of Contents, Introduction, Appendix, and Vision Statement.

On the motion of Commissioner Morris, seconded by Commissioner Logan Davis, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Land Use Element with a condition to amend Land Use Strategy 4 to include “flood elevation”.

On the motion of Chair Floyd, seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Commission voted, 8-1, to recommend approval to amend Table 3.1.1, Future Land Use Residential Densities, to remove the bonus densities in the Wadmalaw Island Agricultural Preservation, Agricultural Preservation, and Rural Agriculture Future Land Use Categories. Commissioner Logan Davis dissented.

On the motion of Commissioner Kent, seconded by Vice Chair Paulatos, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Economic Development Element with a condition to remove “Work with existing industries to increase the average hourly wages and salaries in the region” from Economic Development Strategy 9.

On the motion of Commissioner Kent, seconded by Vice Chair Paulatos, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Natural Resources Element.

On the motion of Commissioner Kent, seconded by Vice Chair Paulatos, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Cultural Resources Element.

On the motion of Vice Chair Paulatos, seconded by Commissioner MacConnell, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Population Element.

On the motion of Commissioner Morris, seconded by Vice Chair MacConnell, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Housing Element.

Commissioner MacConnell put forward a motion to approve the Transportation Element, which was seconded by Commissioner Morris. Commissioner Jones put forward a motion to amend the original motion to change dollar figures to rounded figures, which was seconded by Commissioner Morris. The Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Transportation Element with a condition to change dollar figures to rounded figures.

On the motion of Commissioner MacConnell, seconded by Vice Chair Paulatos, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Community Facilities Element.

On the motion of Commissioner MacConnell, seconded by Vice Chair Paulatos, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Priority Investment, Implementation, and Coordination Element including the proposed amendments to the Annual Work Plan.

On the motion of Commissioner MacConnell, seconded by Commissioner Logan Davis, the Commission voted, 7-2, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Energy and Sustainability Element. Commissioner Jones and Commissioner Marlena Davis dissented.

On the motion of Commissioner MacConnell, seconded by Vice Chair Paulatos, the Commission voted, 9-0, to recommend approval for the proposed amendments to the Resilience Element with the inclusion of a sea level rise map.

The Commission also voted, 7-2, for Commissioners Jones and Cox to draft a proposed foreword to be incorporated into Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review to be considered at the January 8, 2024 Commission meeting (Commissioners Morris and L. Davis dissented).

**Public Input:** Three letters and emails were received for the December 11, 2023 meetings. All public comments received are included in the Public Comment Summary Report and were addressed in the proposed amendments presented to the Commission.

**Speakers:** Three people spoke regarding the Comprehensive Plan.

**Notifications:** 475 notifications were sent to individuals on the Comprehensive Plan Interested Parties list on November 17, 2023. Additionally, this meeting was noticed in the Post & Courier on November 17, 2023.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING: January 8, 2024**

**Meeting Summary:** The Planning Commission discussed the draft version of the foreword to the Comprehensive Plan presented by Commissioner Jones. On the motion of Commissioner Morris, seconded by Commissioner Cox, the Commission voted, 8-1, with Commissioner Jones dissenting, to not include any foreword in the Comprehensive Plan document.

**Public Input:** One letter was received for the January 8, 2024 meeting. All public comments received are included in the Public Comment Summary Report.

**Speakers:** No one spoke regarding the Comprehensive Plan.

**Notifications:** 475 notifications were sent to individuals on the Comprehensive Plan Interested Parties list on December 22, 2023. Additionally, this meeting was noticed in the Post & Courier on December 22, 2023.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING: February 13, 2024**

**Notifications:** 475 notifications were sent to individuals on the Comprehensive Plan Interested Parties list on January 12, 2024. Additionally, this meeting was noticed in the Post & Courier on January 12, 2024.

**Public Input:**

- As of February 9, 2024, seven letters containing comments regarding flooding issues and resilience were received.
- On Feb. 13, 2024, a petition with 55 signatures was received. The petition states *“I support the aspects of the Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review specifically placing emphasis on the protection of the unique Lowcountry character and African American settlement communities. I support the Comprehensive Plan Goals: Land Use Element, Cultural Resources Element, and Housing Element. These are especially*

*important when addressing subdivisions. I am concerned about what the county uses as a basis to determine smart growth.”*

- Four people spoke at the public hearing:
  - Two spoke with general comments;
  - One spoke in support; and
  - One requested the removal of the Energy Element from the Plan.

**PLANNING AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING: February 22, 2024**

**Meeting Summary:** The Planning and Public Works Committee of County Council discussed the draft version of the Comprehensive Plan. On the motion of Councilman Pryor, seconded by Councilman Middleton, the Committee voted, 7-0, to defer the draft Comprehensive Plan document to the Planning and Public Works Committee meeting on March 7, 2024.

This item was later moved to the March 21, 2024 Planning and Public Works Committee meeting.

**PLANNING AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING: March 21, 2024**

## Public Workshops

Six in-person workshops and one online public workshop were held in the Summer of 2023, from June through August, to gather input on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan through the Five-Year Update process.

### **JOHNS ISLAND PUBLIC WORKSHOP: June 7, 2023**

Workshop Summary: The first Comprehensive Plan Public Workshop Meeting was held at Berkeley Electric (1135 Main Road, Johns Island) from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm on June 7, 2023. There were 46 attendees and we received 7 comment cards.

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Comprehensive Plan, as well as leave any comments. Through this format, 13 visitors left a total of 89 comments.

## Planning Commission Subcommittee Meetings

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### **RESILIENCE, HOUSING, CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS SUBCOMMITTEE**

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# Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review

County Council Public Hearing – February 13, 2024

Planning and Public Works Committee Meeting – February 22, 2024

First Reading – February 27, 2024

Second Reading – March 12, 2024

Third Reading – March 26, 2024

# Overview

The Charleston County *Comprehensive Plan* (the Plan) is the future vision for preservation and development in Charleston County for the next five to ten years. The Plan establishes strategies for the County to pursue to maintain and enhance its high quality, unique landscapes with a focus on strategies that the County government can directly influence and achieve.

The comprehensive planning process identified a series of overarching themes that serve as the primary guidance for the recommended strategies and implementation initiatives, including:

1. All future Plan updates and reviews should **stay the course** and build on the past success of the Plan.
2. **Rural preservation** is very important. The Plan needs to place emphasis on the protection of the unique Lowcountry character.
3. **Fiscal responsibility** is essential to success for the County. New development needs to generate revenue equal to the cost of providing new services and infrastructure so that existing residents and businesses do not pay a disproportionate share of the cost of growth.
4. The broad nature of comprehensive planning is important for a successful future, however, there are areas in the County where more **detailed land use study and planning** will be necessary.
5. It is vitally important that the County recognize its ability to manage its destiny and **establish working relationships and/or formal agreements with other jurisdictions and agencies** that contribute to the quality of life.
6. The Plan places an emphasis for **growth to occur within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) where public infrastructure and services exist.**

# History of the Plan

**1994** | South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act passed; Expanded scope and substance of the comprehensive plan's contents; Required 9 elements

**1999\*** | Charleston County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan on April 20, 1999

**2003** | The first Five-Year Review was adopted on November 18, 2003

**2008\*** | The first Ten-Year Update was adopted on November 18, 2008

**2013** | Second Five-Year Review was adopted on January 6, 2015

**2018** | Second Ten-Year Update was adopted on October 9, 2018

**2023** | Five-Year Review recommended by Planning Commission to County Council on December 11, 2023

\*The 1999 and 2008 Plans were facilitated by the use of a consultant. All other Plans have been done in-house.

# History to Date

**January – November 2022** | Initial review of Plan; Identified revisions and worked with other departments/agencies; Provided updates to Planning Commission as needed

**November 2022 – January 2023** | Community Survey (247 virtual responses and 1 written response)

**February - April 2023** | Incorporated public input comments into draft Plan; Reviewed proposed amendments with the Planning Commission over the course of 3 meetings; Planning Commission made a recommendation on the initial draft Plan for review/comment at public workshops

**May 2023** | Finalized Initial Draft Plan; Posted Initial Draft Plan online for public review; Prepared for and advertised public workshops

**June – August 2023** | Hosted 6 public workshops and an online workshop (received 168 email responses, 89 virtual responses, and 42 written responses)

## History to Date (cont'd.)

**September 2023** | Reviewed/organized all public input gathered through August 30, 2023 for Planning Commission Subcommittee review and recommendation

**September - November 2023** | Planning Commission Subcommittees met to review and make recommendations to address public input; Subcommittee recommendations incorporated into Final Draft Plan for Planning Commission review and recommendation

**December 11, 2023** | Planning Commission reviewed the Subcommittee recommendations and public input and made their final recommendation regarding the Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review



# **Public Input Survey**

**November 2022 – January 2023**

# Summary of Public Input Survey and Input Received through April 2023

- The major themes from the comments were:
  - Protecting our cultural and natural resources;
  - Updating the definition of Open Space;
  - Adding a Rural Johns Island Overlay District;
  - Updating the ZLDR in reference to tree and forest protection; and
  - Disallowing certain densities on Johns Island in Rural Agriculture and Rural Residential zoning districts, including Planned Developments.
- In addition to the feedback received during the survey, public input was submitted in the form of emails and letters.
  - 148 letters/emails were received prior to the April 10, 2023 meeting and were sent to the Planning Commission. These are included in the Public Comment Summary Report.





# **Initial Planning Commission Recommendation**

**February 13 - April 10, 2023**

# Initial Planning Commission Recommendation

- Staff reviewed each public comment and made recommendations to the Planning Commission regarding where and how they could be addressed in the Plan during the Commission's initial review of the draft Plan at their February 13, March 13, and April 10, 2023 meetings.
- April 10, 2023: Planning Commission voted 7–0 to recommend taking the proposed amendments to the public workshops for review/comment. The amendments recommended for approval included:
  - Rewriting the Vision Statement to make it more concise;
  - Updating the Element Goals;
  - Amending and adding Element Strategies;
  - Adding items to the Annual Work Program; and
  - Updating the definition of Open Space.

A light gray outline map of the state of Maryland is centered on the page. The text is overlaid on the map.

# **Public Workshops**

**June - August 2023**

# Public Input Gathering Campaign

**Comprehensive Plan Review**  
Guiding the Future for a Lasting Lowcountry.

We invite you to help shape WHERE and HOW growth in Charleston County should take place! The public workshop dates, times and locations are listed below. (Please note these are drop-in style workshops)

**Upcoming Public Workshops**  
Come share your ideas concerning: Population, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, housing, land use, transportation, priority investment energy and sustainability and resilience!

**Envision It!**  
Share your ideas at one of the public workshops near you to create a foundation for the Comprehensive Plan.

**Plan It!**  
After the workshops, the ideas received will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan for Planning Commission and County Council to review.

**Do It!**  
Once the Comprehensive Plan Update is adopted, implementation steps will begin to turn the public's vision into reality.

**Enjoy It!**  
Enjoy the community you envisioned through this process!

**Can't attend a workshop?**  
Submit your ideas on the project webpage starting Monday, June 5.  
<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/zoning-planning/comp-plan.php>  
Note: The online workshop will close on Wednesday, August 30.

**Have Questions?**  
Visit the project webpage at <https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/zoning-planning/comp-plan.php> or contact the Zoning & Planning Department at (843) 202-7207 or [meustace@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:meustace@charlestoncounty.org).

**Workshop Schedule:**

- Berkeley Electric Cooperative (Johns Island Community Room)**  
1135 Main Road, Johns Island  
Wednesday, June 7, 2023  
5:30pm - 7:30pm
- Baxter - Patrick James Island Library (Community Room A)**  
1858 South Grimball Road, Charleston  
Wednesday, June 14, 2023  
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
- Wando Mount Pleasant Library (Community Room A)**  
1400 Carolina Park Blvd., Mount Pleasant  
Wednesday, June 28, 2023  
5:30pm - 7:30pm
- Bees Ferry West Ashley Library (Community Room A)**  
3035 Sanders Road, Charleston  
Wednesday, July 12, 2023  
5:30pm - 7:30pm
- Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce (Second Floor Boardroom)**  
4922 OHear Avenue, North Charleston  
Wednesday, July 26, 2023  
5:30pm - 7:30pm
- Jane Edwards Elementary (Cafeteria)**  
1960 Jane Edwards Road, Edisto Island  
Monday, August 28, 2023  
5:30pm - 7:30pm

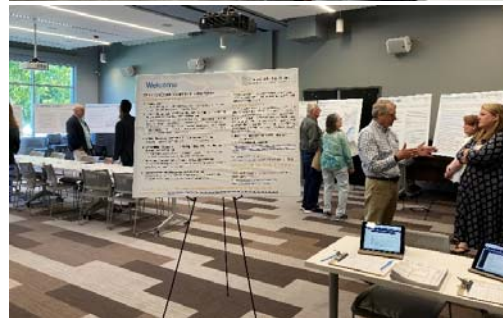
**HELP SHAPE YOUR COUNTY**  
Guiding the future for a lasting Lowcountry

- Notifications/Marketing the Workshops:
- May 16: First ad ran in *Post & Courier*
- May 16: Email notification to members of Board of Zoning Appeals, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, and County Council
- May 19: Nearly 1,250 emails sent
  - Interested parties (ZLDR/Comp Plan and all email lists)
- May 31: County Facebook page notification
- May 31: Press release sent
- June 12: "Charleston County Connects" podcast episode on County Facebook page
- News coverage from WCBD News2 and WCSC Live 5 News
- July 5: Second ad ran in *Post & Courier*

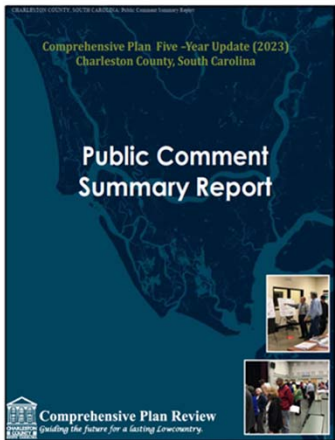
# Public Workshops

168 email responses, 89 virtual responses and 42 written responses

Workshop Location	Number of Attendees*
Johns Island (June 7)	46
James Island (June 14)	31
Mt. Pleasant (June 28)	16
West Ashley (July 12)	6
N. Charleston (July 26)	10
Edisto Island (August 28)	45
Online/Virtual (June 7 – Aug. 31)	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>167 attendees</b>
<i>*Based on number of people who signed in</i>	



# Main Themes: Public Comments



- Increase open space, clustering, and other requirements necessary to achieve higher densities (92)
- Create safe bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, etc. (78)
- Codify/strengthen the Urban Growth Boundary and concentrate growth in the Urban/Suburban Area where infrastructure exists (75)
- Add Seabrook and Kiawah Islands to list of municipalities to work with in order to strengthen the UGB location (72)
- Preserve the Rural Area and natural resources (70)
- Add “fresh and saltwater wetlands” to areas to protect in Natural Resources Element Goal (70)
- Safeguard rural residential and agricultural communities (70)

**Comments**

Please state your comments on the proposed Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update. To help us best understand your comments, please indicate the specific element you are addressing, if possible.

Element: Comments:	Element: Comments:	Element: Comments:
Element: Comments:	Element: Comments:	Element: Comments:

Please share any additional comments here.

See manual table for additional comments.



# **Planning Commission Subcommittees**

**September - November 2023**

# Planning Commission Subcommittees

- The Planning Commission voted to create three Subcommittees to review and make recommendations regarding how to address the public workshop comments in the draft Plan:
  - **The Land Use, Population, Natural Resources, and Community Facilities Subcommittee** included Chair Floyd, and Commissioners Morris and L. Davis. The committee met on September 25 and October 16, 2023.
  - **The Resilience, Housing, Cultural Resources, and Economic Development Subcommittee** included Vice Chair Paulatos and Commissioners MacConnell and M. Davis (Chair Floyd was an ad hoc member). Resilience Officer Karen Green also attended. They met on September 26 and November 1, 2023.
  - **The Energy, Priority Investment, and Transportation Subcommittee** included Commissioners Prause, Kent, and Jones (Chair Floyd was an ad hoc member). Arielle Gerstein, Sustainability Coordinator, also attended. This committee met on October 3 and October 31, 2023.
- Each Subcommittee meeting was publicly noticed as required by law; however, no members of the public attended any of the meetings.





# **Planning Commission Final Recommendation**

**December 11, 2023**

# Planning Commission Recommendation – December 11, 2023

- The Planning Commission discussed the Subcommittee recommendations and voted unanimously\* to recommend approval of the draft Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review (\*the Energy Element was recommended for approval by a vote of 7 to 2; Commissioners Jones and M. Davis dissented).
- The Commission’s recommendation included a few amendments not proposed by the Subcommittees, which are listed below and have been incorporated into the draft Plan:
  - Amend Land Use Element Strategy 4 to include “flood elevation” as a consideration for land use patterns;
  - Amend Table 3.1.1, Future Land Use Residential Densities, to remove the bonus densities in the Wadmalaw Island Agricultural Preservation, Agricultural Preservation, and Rural Agriculture Future Land Use Categories (vote: 8-1; Commissioner L. Davis dissented);
  - Amend Economic Development Element Strategy 9 to remove “Work with existing industries to increase the average hourly wages and salaries in the region” from the beginning of the strategy; and
  - Amend the Transportation Element to change dollar figures to rounded figures.

# Planning Commission Recommendation – December 11, 2023 (cont'd)

- The Commission also voted, 7-2, for Commissioners Jones and Cox to draft a proposed foreword to be incorporated into Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review (Commissioners Morris and L. Davis dissented). The foreword was to be considered at the January 8, 2024 Planning Commission meeting.
- At the January 8 Planning Commission meeting, a draft foreword was presented. The Commission voted, 7-1, to not include any foreword in the Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review (Commissioner Jones dissented).

# Planning Commission Recommendations

## Table of Contents

- Add an Acronym Table.

## Part 1: Introduction and Background

- Chapter 1.1, Introduction; Plan Structure; Part 3: Comprehensive Plan Elements:
  - Add “*And Sustainability*” to the title of Chapter 3.10, Energy Element.
  - Add “*Chapter 3.11, Resilience Element*” along with a description of the Resilience Element.
- Chapter 1.2, Planning Background: Update to describe the draft Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review process and update other information as necessary.

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Part 2: Vision

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

- Revise the Vision Statement as shown below:

~~*Our vision for the future of Charleston County is tempered by its history. Charleston County is characterized by its natural scenic beauty, active waterways and port, extensive history, truly diverse culture, and vibrant business climate. However, our greatest asset is our people. All of these attributes contribute to its accelerating growth and development. As this growth continues, it is essential that the people embrace a vision for the County which respects the natural environment and traditional lifestyles and allows for responsible growth and quality development, with an emphasis on regional cooperation. While striving to enhance our quality of life, a balance must be maintained between fostering growth and development and preserving our natural and cultural resources, without compromising traditional values and settlement patterns, and always respecting the rights of the individual, including private property rights.*~~

~~*Historically an agrarian community, expanses of land remain in some form of agricultural use. We should make every effort to support these activities for cultural, economic, and scenic reasons. This is in keeping with the vision of Thomas Heyward, Jr., a Charleston signer of the Declaration of Independence who said “. . . Agriculture is the parent of commerce; and both together form the great sources from which the wants of individuals are supplied. . .”*~~

~~*Beaches, waterways, natural beauty, and historic resources encourage recreational activities and tourism. These features contribute to the quality of life; therefore, the County should ensure that they are not lost.*~~

~~*The economic base of the County is shifting; as a community we should encourage diversification and growth. Regionally, major employers are the port, tourism, the medical industry, the government and military, agriculture, and increasingly manufacturing, specifically high-tech manufacturing. As we support these economic activities and quality growth, coordination and cooperation among the various governmental entities must occur resulting in improved service delivery, high quality development, and unity. This healthy vibrant community must look to the past, consider the present, and plan for the future in order to remain a superior place to live, work, and play.*~~

*Charleston County will promote and protect the quality of life for all residents by preserving and protecting our natural, cultural, and historical resources, prioritizing resilience and sustainability, ensuring that existing and future development is coordinated with transportation and other community facilities on the local and regional level, addressing housing affordability issues, and maintaining the location of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).*

## Part 3: Comprehensive Plan Elements

### Notes:

- *The Overview, Purpose and Intent, and Background and Inventory of Existing Conditions for each Plan Element were updated to reflect current conditions.*
- *All maps were updated to show current municipal boundaries as of March 14, 2023.*
- *No changes are proposed for the Future Land Use Map.*
- *Ongoing strategies were amended to begin with “Continue to...”.*

# Chapter 3.1: Land Use Element

- ~~Revise Element Goal to: Accommodate growth that respects the unique character of the County, promotes economic opportunity, respects private property rights, and is coordinated with the provision of community facilities, but protects cultural and natural resources.~~ *Protect our cultural and natural resources, and rural residential and agricultural communities while accommodating smart growth that respects the unique character and landscape of the County, promotes sustainable economic opportunity, fosters resilience, respects private property rights and is tightly coordinated with transportation infrastructure planning and with the provision of other community facilities.*
- **Add Element Need:** *Adapting land use planning and zoning regulations to water systems.*
- **Amend Strategy 4** to: Continue to coordinate *radial (grid system)* land use patterns with *flood elevation*, transportation, housing, employment and retail development to encourage compact growth in already developed areas *that are not susceptible to flooding*, and infill existing vacant sites inside the UGB requiring pedestrian connectivity between communities and local amenities, and ensuring that the infrastructure required to support development, including public transportation systems, is in place prior to development approvals.
- **Revise Strategy 5** to: Reinforce the location of the UGB and establish criteria to change its location through coordination with *all municipalities* and service providers.
- **Amend Strategy 15** to: Continue to encourage and support *safe* pedestrian and bikeway linkages.
- **Add Strategy 20:** *Investigate the feasibility of limiting development in areas prone to flooding.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Chapter 3.1: Land Use Element (cont'd.)

- Under 3.1.4 Future Land Use Plan Approach, revise first sentence to: The approach to future land use includes a multi-tiered effort that incorporates recommendations for growth management, treatment of major planning efforts, specific land uses and densities within the Future Land Use Plan, and development quality and character through a series of guidelines for the Rural and Urban/Suburban Areas of the County *adhering to the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)*.
- Add section on historic African American communities under Section 3.1.7.B, Urban/Suburban Cultural Community Protection to: This future land use designation is intended to protect and promote the culture and unique development patterns of existing communities and sustain their strong sense of community. *Charleston County's historic African American communities date back to post the Civil War era when black freedmen and women began establishing their own political and economic independence. These communities, many of which are located in the county's unincorporated areas, have seen significant changes to their built environments as a result of demolition, redevelopment, or destruction from natural disasters. Due to this, a large portion of the late 19th- and early 20th-century historic fabric has had to be replaced. This includes homes, businesses, churches, institutional buildings (such schoolhouses and lodges), sheds used for agriculture, and other structures. Even though some of these communities have unofficial beginnings, their parcels' linear size, shape, and cadastral patterns are frequently visually striking and, in certain situations, may be the most significant features. It is these patterns of development that should be protected.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.



# Chapter 3.1: Land Use Element (cont'd.)

- Under 3.1.7 Future Land Use Recommendations, revise Table 3.1.1, Future Land Use Residential Densities, to remove the bonus densities from the AG-8, AG-10, and AG-15 zoning districts in the Rural Area. Corresponding changes were made to the language for these Future Land Use Category descriptions in Sec. 3.1.7.A.

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized purple font.

Future Land Use Categories		Residential Density Guidelines
The Rural Area	Conservation Management	Consistent with the Natural Resource Management (NRM) District contained in the <i>Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance</i>
	Resource Management	1 dwelling per 25 acres
	Wadmalaw Island Agricultural Preservation	1 dwelling per 15 acres <del>to 1 dwelling per 7 acres*</del>
	Agricultural Preservation	1 dwelling per 10 acres <del>to 1 dwelling per 5 acres</del> <del>1 dwelling per 10 acres on Edisto Island</del>
	Rural Agriculture	1 dwelling per 8 acres <del>to 1 dwelling per 4 acres</del>
	Rural Residential	1 dwelling per 3 acres to 1 dwelling per acre
	Agricultural Residential	1 dwelling per 5 acres to 1 dwelling per acre
	Rural Cultural Community Protection	1 dwelling per 25 acres to 1 dwelling per acre Not permitted on Wadmalaw or Edisto Islands
Form-Based Zoning Districts	All Future Land Use Categories	See <a href="#">CHAPTER 3.1.7.C, Form-Based Zoning District Developments of County Significance</a>
Urban/Suburban Area	Urban/Suburban Cultural Community Protection	1 to 4 dwellings per acre
	Urban/Suburban Mixed Use	4 or more dwellings per acre

\* The area of a parcel in the Wadmalaw Agricultural Preservation designation within 1,000 feet of the OCRM Critical Line has a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit per 3 acres.

## Chapter 3.1: Land Use Element (cont'd.)

- Add 3.1.7.D, **Overlay Zoning Districts**, to provide a description and introduction for the overlay zoning district maps included in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Update the formatting of all overlay zoning maps (and all maps in the Plan) to be more readable and user friendly.

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.2: Economic Development Element

- Add Element Need: *Encouraging connected, equitable strategies to help foster economic success for all businesses.*
- Add Strategy 2: *Continue to encourage and support Charleston County Economic Development's Strategic Plan and its core business recruitment and expansion programs, industrial and office product development, workforce development, and foster a robust innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.*
- Amend Strategy 5: Continue to encourage agri-tourism, *ecotourism*, and other employment opportunities in the Rural Area.
- Add Strategy 9: *Encourage the recruitment of businesses and industries that pay the wages necessary to afford housing, and train residents to obtain higher paying jobs through coordination with the Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA), SCWorks – Trident, and local Economic Development Departments.*
- Add Strategy 10: *Support multi-county industrial parks, tax increment financing districts, and other economic development tools to provide funding for development of affordable and workforce housing.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.3: Natural Resources Element

- **Revise Element Goal** to: To preserve, enhance, and revitalize natural resources, such as rivers, creeks, *fresh and saltwater* wetlands, aquatic and wildlife habitat, beaches and dunes, groundwater, forests, farmland soils, and air quality and take actions to mitigate potential negative impacts of growth and development.
- **Amend Strategy 9:** Support local agricultural and timber operations through tax relief initiatives, ~~and explore adopting a Voluntary Agricultural and Forestal Areas (VAFA) program.~~
- **Amend Strategy 12** to: Continue to encourage sustainable landscaping that includes attractive environments that are in balance with the local climate and *more efficient* ~~minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides, while at the same time conserving water.~~

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.3: Natural Resources Element

- **Add Strategy 20:** *Encourage local, sustainable agriculture through regulatory incentives, tax relief initiatives, partnerships with other agencies to provide education and technical support, and other programs and initiatives.*
- **Add Strategy 21:** *Create a county-wide approach to reducing light pollution by working with adjacent jurisdictions to implement policies that limit light pollution, promote energy conservation, and regulate outdoor lighting fixtures, and educate residents regarding the benefits of such changes.*
- **Add Strategy 22:** *Improve connections to the water by way of additional public boat landings and docks to promote individual, commercial, and recreational transportation opportunities.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.4: Cultural Resources Element

- Amend Strategy 3: ~~Continue to~~ *Work with communities along the Gullah Geechee Corridor to establish ways to preserve the unique settlement patterns and community character, including historic property/district designations, community plans and overlay zoning districts.*
- Amend Strategy 9: ~~Continue to~~ *Utilize coordinate with residents, adjacent jurisdictions, outside agencies, nonprofit organizations, and others with expertise in historic preservation to implement* planning, ~~and zoning,~~ *and other* techniques to protect historic communities and neighborhoods and other areas of cultural significance.
- Amend Strategy 12: ~~Continue to~~ *implement the recommendations identified in the 2016 Charleston County Historic Resources Survey Update., including applying to become a Certified Local Government.*
- Add Strategy 14: *Coordinate with jurisdictions to pursue grant funding to complete a comprehensive study of historic land/places located in the unincorporated and incorporated areas of Charleston County.*
- Add Strategy 15: *Create a publicly accessible repository of all cultural and historic surveys completed by the County and for development projects within the County.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Chapter 3.5: Population Element

- Amend Element Goal to: A *Charleston County will strive to accommodate a socioeconomically diverse and growing population* ~~will be accommodated by Charleston County~~ in an environmentally and fiscally sustainable manner with particular attention to ~~low to moderate income~~ residents *who earn less than 120% of the Area Median Income.*
- Amend Strategy 1 to: *Continue to* ~~M~~monitor population growth trends and demographic shifts to guide future updates to the Comprehensive Plan *and to ensure the needs of the current population are being met.*
- Amend Strategy 3 to: *Continue to* support a diverse population through land development regulations that accommodate a range of *mixed housing types and sizes*, transportation, and employment opportunities.
- Add Strategy 6: *Identify and implement initiatives to retain residents and employees including, but not limited to, ensuring diverse housing options that are affordable to residents and providing training and other workforce development opportunities.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.6: Housing Element

- Amend Element Goal: ~~Quality housing that is affordable will be encouraged~~ *Charleston County will prioritize the development of quality, diverse housing with efficient transit connectivity that is affordable* for people of all ages, incomes, and physical abilities *with special emphasis for those earning less than 120% of the Area Median Income.*
- Revise Strategy 4 to: ~~Support existing communities by maintaining the existing housing stock and ensuring that infill development preserves and enhances the character of communities~~ *Support the stabilization of existing, naturally occurring affordable housing stock through a revolving loan fund and other similar programs.*
- Amend Strategy 7 to: Continue to encourage provision of housing that is affordable to all residents and meets the needs of the diversifying population *by allowing alternative housing types (e.g., duplex, tri-plex, fourplex, townhouse) by right in the Urban/Suburban Area.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.



## Chapter 3.6: Housing Element (cont'd)

- Add Strategy 10: *Implement the recommendations of the Charleston County Housing our Future Plan.*
- Add Strategy 11 to: *Support State legislation to allow jurisdictions to require the inclusion of affordable and workforce housing in developments.*
- Add Strategy 12: *Identify and implement partnerships and initiatives that provide financial incentives for the development of affordable and workforce housing.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Chapter 3.7: Transportation Element

- Under 3.7.2 Background and Inventory of Existing Conditions, revise the third sentence to: In 2004, Charleston County voters approved a half-cent sales tax on purchases made within the County for 25 years, or until \$1.3 billion is collected *to help address the challenging issues of lagging infrastructure compared to the pace of growth in the County.*
- Under 3.7.2 CARTA, add sentence to the end of the paragraph: *The 2006 Half-Cent Sales Tax allocates 18%, or almost \$235 billion, to Transit for spending from FY2005 to FY2030. Of that money, almost \$233 billion goes to CARTA. The 2016 Half-Cent Sales Tax allocates 29%, or \$609 billion, to Transit for spending from FY2017 to FY2042. Of that figure, almost \$381 billion goes to CARTA.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.7: Transportation Element (cont'd.)

- Under 3.7.2, 2006 Half-Cent Sales Tax Program, add new section after list of bonded projects: *The county began considering options for the clogged section of Maybank Highway at Johns Island's northeastern border more than 15 years ago. An early proposal to just widen the road to five lanes was rejected as being excessively unattractive, primarily due to the large number of grand oaks that would be required to be removed. As an alternative, the "pitchfork" design was proposed, with the Paul J. Gelegotis Bridge designed as the handle, and the three proposed connections to River Road - including the current section of Maybank - designed as the tines. However, the only work completed to date has been the addition of a westbound lane to Maybank; while this project helped reduce traffic in the late afternoon, there is still major traffic congestion. As of November 2022, Charleston County Council awarded a \$4.3 million construction contract to construct the Northern Pitchfork. The Northern Pitchfork was funded through the half cent sales tax in lieu of widening Maybank to 4 or 5 lanes several years ago. There is no funding source or work currently being done on the Southern Pitchfork because the Northern Pitchfork used up all the funds set aside to widen Maybank.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.7: Transportation Element (cont'd.)

- Under 3.7.2 Charleston Harbor Deepening: Remove the language describing the history of the funding for the project.
- Amend Element Goal: A *public* transportation system that is coordinated with land use patterns and community character *through a high level of interaction with the community, and includes a diversity of transit options, prioritizes pedestrian infrastructure, and is accessible and efficient for all residents.* The level of service should support economic development and a high quality of life *for all income levels.*
- Amend Strategy 2: *Continue to* ~~Coordinate~~ with *residents, community groups,* municipalities, surrounding counties and SCDOT on all major projects.
- Amend Strategy 7: ~~Coordinate~~ *Base land use strategies, development decisions, and growth management policies on existing and planned transportation infrastructure and levels of service.* ~~planning with growth management and land use strategies.~~

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.7: Transportation Element (cont'd.)

- Amend Strategy 15: ~~Encourage~~ *Prioritize pedestrian infrastructure by requiring that* pedestrian and bike access be incorporated ~~on~~ *in* all *existing and planned* public roadways, including bridges, and ~~explore~~ *exploring* potential funding sources for additional pedestrian and bike access projects.
- Amend Strategy 17: Coordinate with CARTA, *adjacent jurisdictions, and residents* ~~to ensure bus routes are consistent with land use and development patterns, to serve the maximum number of people~~ *to improve the efficiency of the bus system, enhance bus stops, and implement incentives and regulations that reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles including, but not limited to, improving and enhancing the public transportation system, reducing parking availability in targeted areas, and improving pedestrian infrastructure.*
- Add Strategy 21: *Coordinate transportation plans and projects with adjacent counties and municipalities in Charleston County.*
- Add Strategy 22: *Create an Official Map showing federal and locally funded roads, along with planned road projects and CARTA projects.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.8: Community Facilities Element

- Amend CF11: ~~Continue to coordinate with the~~ Encourage Charleston County School District to ~~coordinate their facilities planning with~~ *regarding* land use planning *and development approvals*.
- Amend CF13: *Continue to* Provide parks, recreational facilities, and services in coordination with the Charleston County Greenbelt Program and the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission, *ensuring accessibility to residents of all ages and socioeconomic statuses*.
- Add CF 15: *Identify community facility needs in the Rural Area and implement ways to address those needs*.

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.9: Priority Investment, Implementation, and Coordination Element

- Amend Element Needs #1: Interjurisdictional coordination *including reinforcing the location of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) through a mutually agreed-to process and criteria for amending the Urban Growth Boundary;*
- Amend Element Goal: Public infrastructure and planning projects ~~will~~ *shall* be prioritized *and implemented* through *active and open* coordination with *the community as well as with* adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.
- Amend Strategy 4: Address specific planning issues involving Charleston County so that:
  - Land use plans, overlay zoning districts, and architectural standards are consistent among adjacent jurisdictions;
  - The goals and strategies contained in the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Housing Needs Assessment *and Charleston County Housing Our Future Plan* are implemented; and
  - *Transportation plans and projects are coordinated* ~~There are transportation alternatives~~ among jurisdictions.

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.9: Priority Investment, Implementation, and Coordination Element (cont'd)

- Amend Strategy 6: Reinforce the location of the Urban Growth Boundary (*UGB*) and establish criteria to change its location through coordination with the Cities of Charleston and North Charleston, the Towns of Mount Pleasant, *Kiawah Island and Seabrook Island*, and service providers.
- Amend Strategy 11: Continue coordinating with SCDOT and BCDCOG to support transportation *planning in Charleston County* that is consistent with the goals of the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan, focused on the following:...
- Amend Strategy 14: 4. *Continue to* Address *resilience and* sustainability in the Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance.

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.



# Chapter 3.9: Annual Work Plan Additions

- Add the following items to the Annual Work Plan:
  - Reinforce the location of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).
  - Review the land uses and zoning allowed on Johns Island to prioritize agriculture, silviculture, equestrian, and other agriculturally related uses.
  - Review and amend the Comprehensive Plan and the ZLDR, as applicable, to increase open space, clustering, and other requirements necessary to achieve higher densities through the Planned Development process, refine the open space as it relates to Planned Developments, and remove the conservation subdivision provisions of the ZLDR as they relate to the AG-8 zoning district.
  - Review and amend the Comprehensive Plan and ZLDR to prohibit clear cutting of properties and incentivize the retention of swaths of trees.
  - Create an Official Map showing federal and locally funded roads, along with planned road projects and CARTA projects.

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Chapter 3.10: Energy and Sustainability Element

- Add “and Sustainability” to the Element title.
- Amend the Element Goal: Promote *Charleston County will emphasize and invest in the* use of alternative energy sources and energy conservation measures ~~*and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions*~~ that benefit our communities *and reflect our responsibility to steward our natural resources with future generations in mind.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Chapter 3.10: Energy and Sustainability Element

- Under 3.10.1: Overview, after the section on Fluorinated Gases, strike everything up to the paragraph beginning “Thinking about resource consumption...”. This section discusses greenhouse gas emissions and temperature increases and the negative effect they have on the climate.

~~From 2000 to 2010, annual greenhouse gas emissions grew by 2.2 percent compared to 1.3 percent between 1970 and 2000. Total greenhouse gas emissions from human activities were the highest in human history between 2000 and 2010. According to the IPCC, between preindustrial times and the present, the Earth's average temperature has increased 1.8-degrees Fahrenheit. This increase in temperature is changing the Earth's climate in many ways, including:~~

- ~~• *More frequent and extreme weather events such as hurricanes and flooding;*~~
- ~~• *Worsening precipitation, causing more rain in traditionally rainy climates and less rain in traditionally dry climates;*~~
- ~~• *Rising sea levels due to glaciers melting and an increase in ocean temperatures; and*~~
- ~~• *Changing ecosystems and natural habitats, which pose a threat to plants and wildlife.*~~

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Chapter 3.10: Energy and Sustainability Element

(cont'd.)

The section shown below is also proposed to be deleted - it discusses the impacts greenhouse gas emissions and climate system changes have on human health.

~~Greenhouse gas emissions and changes in the climate system also have a significant impact on human health. Examples include:~~

- ~~• Temperature extremes, especially heat exposure, can lead to increased mortality rates, particularly in vulnerable populations;~~
- ~~• Warmer temperatures allow insects like mosquitos to thrive, increasing the spreading of certain vector-borne diseases like dengue fever, Zika, and Lyme disease;~~
- ~~• Increased runoff from flooding can contribute to viral and bacterial water contamination from combined sewer overflows, and increased rainfall can impact recreational water and drinking water sources by introducing more pathogens and toxic algal blooms;~~
- ~~• Climate changes are projected to affect food security by threatening food safety, i.e., increased exposure to pathogens and toxins and also disrupting food availability which, in turn, increases food prices; and~~
- ~~• Individuals who experience a traumatic weather event, like a household flood, are at a higher risk for mental health issues due to this instability;~~

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.10: Energy and Sustainability Element (cont'd.)

The section shown below is also proposed to be deleted. This paragraph states that while greenhouse gas emissions are an important part of sustainability, sustainability should include consideration of the effects of policies and projects on people and the environment.

~~*While greenhouse gas emissions is a significant component of sustainability because of its link to climate change, it is not the only important piece. Sustainability is about balancing social equity, economic viability, and environmental preservation. This means that when thinking about policy and projects, the effects on people and the environment should be considered.*~~

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.10: Energy and Sustainability Element (cont'd.)

- Amend Element Needs Statement #3: Educating the public *and County employees* on *the importance of greenhouse gas emission reduction by using* alternative energy sources and *through* energy conservation; and
- Add Strategy 1: *Coordinate energy reduction and sustainability-related efforts within the County and across jurisdictional boundaries.*
  - *Action Item: Develop a Climate Action Plan the purposes of which include: setting a greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal; establishing a timeframe to meet that established goal; and listing activities that will be implemented to accomplish this goal. Form multiple stakeholder workgroups focused around topic areas like buildings, transportation, and waste management that include members from the 16 municipalities located geographically within Charleston County to help develop the Plan.*
  - *Action Item: Work with other jurisdictions on joint programs and activities as applicable, i.e., educational events, public charging stations for Charleston County residents, etc.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.10: Energy and Sustainability Element (cont'd.)

- **Add Strategy 2:** *Identify energy reduction programs and activities the Charleston County government can implement to reduce the County's greenhouse gas emissions.*
  - *Action Item: Incorporate energy-reducing projects in the annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for existing and new buildings. This includes conducting an energy and water usage audit for all major County facilities to establish a baseline of energy and water use in order to recommend necessary reductions.*
  - *Action Item: Support departments who are interested in electric vehicles for fleet replacement.*
  - *Action Item: Develop a Sustainable Purchasing Policy that focuses on environmental considerations in Charleston County government purchasing along with the traditional concerns of price, performance, and availability.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.10: Energy and Sustainability Element (cont'd.)

- **Add Strategy 3:** *Identify activities to reduce landfill emissions from the Bees Ferry Landfill.*
  - *Action Item: Promote and educate about the importance of recycling to Charleston County employees and residents through the Green Liaisons program and additional outreach efforts.*
  - *Action Item: Promote composting by providing Charleston County residents more access to drop-off composting and education about at-home composting.*
  - *Action Item: Explore opportunities for landfill gas capture projects.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.



## Chapter 3.10: Energy and Sustainability Element (cont'd.)

- **Amend Strategy 8:** Amend the Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance to encourage local renewable energy generation and green building design, and provide standards for solar collectors, *solar farms*, and wind generators ~~as accessory uses~~.
- **Add Strategy 12:** *Coordinate with CARTA and adjacent jurisdictions to develop a more energy efficient mass transit system.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Chapter 3.11: Resilience Element

- Add Sea Level Rise maps showing the current area Mean Higher High Water Level and the areas of the county that would be affected by a sea level rise of one foot, two feet, and three feet (four maps in total).
- Revise the first two sentences of the Resilience Element Purpose and Intent to read, “The primary purpose of the Resilience Element is to *establish resiliency strategies and actions and identify resources that can aid in strengthening our resilience. The Resilience Element provides the long-range plan needed to coordinate these ongoing efforts.*”
- Revise Element Goal: Charleston County will prioritize resilience, *including resilience to stormwater events and rising sea levels and protection of natural defenses such as wetlands, woodlands, and floodplains*, in all County plans, policies, and regulations *to ensure the long-term survival of the community.*
- Revise Element Needs Statement #5: *Continuing to review* ~~Review~~ and consolidate resilience-related efforts detailed in other Elements of this Plan during *subsequent reviews and updates* ~~the next five-year update~~, which may include, but not be limited to, advanced study and audit of existing facilities and programs.

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

## Chapter 3.11: Resilience Element (cont'd)

- Add Action Items to Resilience Element Strategy 1:
  - *Utilize the knowledge gained from the COVID-19 Pandemic to maintain and enhance resilience towards health-related disasters.*
  - *Investigate the feasibility of elevation-based zoning to limit development in areas prone to flooding and identify areas more appropriate for increased density based on flood zones.*
- Update all other Action Items to reflect current conditions.
- **Revise Strategy 2:** Develop, adopt, and implement a Drainage Master Plan and sea level rise strategies that are coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions *through the All-Hazards Vulnerability and Risk Assessment.*

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Part 4: Additional Resources & References

- Definitions
  - Amend definition for “Open Space”  
*Any parcel of land or portion thereof, exclusive of imperious surfaces, set aside, dedicated, designated, or reserved for either public or private use or enjoyment or for the use and enjoyment of owners, occupants, and/or their guests of land adjoining or neighboring such open space. ~~water feature, essentially unimproved (net of impervious surfaces) and set aside, dedicated, designated, or reserved for either public or private use or enjoyment or for the use and enjoyment of owners, occupants, and/or their guests of land adjoining or neighboring such open space.~~*

## Appendix A: Implementation Toolbox

- No changes proposed.

Planning Commission recommendations shown in strikethrough text and italicized *purple* font.

# Notifications for Planning Commission Meetings

- Beginning in January 2023, a Comprehensive Plan update was provided at each meeting.
- Email notifications were sent to the Comp Plan/ZLDR Interested Parties lists and noticed per the ZLDR requirements. In addition, ads ran in the *Post and Courier* 15 days prior to the meetings. All Planning Commission Subcommittee meetings were noticed as required.
- **December 11, 2023** - 471 email notifications were sent to the Comp Plan/ZLDR Interested Parties list on November 17, 2023; Ad in the *Post and Courier* ran on November 17, 2023.
- **January 8, 2024** - 475 email notifications were sent to the Comp Plan/ZLDR Interested Parties list on December 22, 2023; Ad in the *Post and Courier* ran on December 22, 2023.

# Notifications for February 13, 2024 Public Hearing

- 475 email notifications were sent to the Comp Plan/ZLDR Interested Parties list on January 12, 2024; Ad in the *Post and Courier* ran on January 12, 2024.

# Public Input Since the Dec. 11, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting

- Feb. 13 Public Hearing:
  - Seven letters containing comments regarding flooding issues and resilience were received.
  - One petition with 55 signatures was received. The petition states *“I support the aspects of the Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review specifically placing emphasis on the protection of the unique Lowcountry character and African American settlement communities. I support the Comprehensive Plan Goals: Land Use Element, Cultural Resources Element, and Housing Element. These are especially important when addressing subdivisions. I am concerned about what the county uses as a basis to determine smart growth.”*
  - Four people spoke at the public hearing:
    - Two spoke with general comments;
    - One spoke in support; and
    - One requested the removal of the Energy Element from the Plan.

Cindy M. Floyd, Chair  
Pete M. Paulatos, Vice-Chair  
Susan Cox  
Logan S. Davis  
Marlena Davis  
Warwick Jones  
David Kent  
Adam MacConnell  
Luke Morris



843.202.7200  
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Lonnie Hamilton, III  
Public Services Building  
4045 Bridge View Drive  
North Charleston, SC 29405-7464

December 11, 2023

Mr. Herbert Ravenel Sass, III, Chair  
Charleston County Council  
Lonnie Hamilton III Public Services Building  
4045 Bridge View Drive  
North Charleston, SC 29405

RE: Charleston County Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review  
Recommendation and Resolution from the Charleston County Planning Commission

Dear Mr. Sass:

State Law mandates that comprehensive plans must be reviewed at least once every five years and updated every ten years. As directed by County Council, the Charleston County Planning Commission began the Five-Year Review of the *Charleston County Comprehensive Plan* ("Plan") on February 13, 2023. The objectives of the Five-Year Review were to:

- Review and update the vision statement, as well as the background information, goals, needs, and strategies of each element with staff from applicable departments/organizations/agencies;
- Update the Plan based on land use and demographic changes since the Ten-Year Update (completed in 2018);
- Incorporate sustainability into the Energy Element; and
- Review and update the Annual Work Program.

An online public survey was available from November 17, 2022 to January 3, 2023. At the February 13, March 13, and April 10, 2023 Planning Commission meetings, Planning Commission reviewed the public comments from the online survey and revisions to the Plan.

Because the Plan should reflect the community's vision for the County, six public workshops and one online workshop were held from June to August 2023 to gather public input. The recommended changes to the Plan were presented at these workshops, as well as published online. Citizens provided comments on the Plan by attending workshops, mailing or emailing comments, or submitting online feedback. All comments received to date have been compiled in the *Public Comment Summary Report*, which is included in the attached public hearing packet.

To review the eleven Plan elements efficiently and comprehensively, the Planning Commission formed subcommittees comprised of three commissioners tasked to review three or four different elements. The subcommittees worked with Planning staff from September to November of 2023 to propose amendments to the Plan elements; once amendments were finalized, they were sent back to the subcommittees, then reviewed by the entire Planning Commission.

At the December 11 Planning Commission meeting, Planning Commission reviewed the public comments and revisions to the Plan, adopted a resolution completing the Five-Year Review, and made a recommendation to Council to adopt the recommended Plan amendments to implement the Update.

Attached you will find the Planning Commission's Resolution completing the Five-Year Review (see "Attachment A"); the draft amendments to implement the Planning Commission's recommendations for the *Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review* (see "Attachment B"); and the *Public Comment Summary Report* (see "Attachment C"). The recommended revisions found in Attachment B comprise the complete recommendation of the Planning Commission.

The enclosed final draft of the *Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review* strengthens the current *Comprehensive Plan* by addressing current issues and trends and public input. The major themes of the draft Review are:

1. Review and update the vision statement.
2. Incorporate Sustainability into the Energy Element.
3. Updates to the Background Information, Goals, Needs, and Strategies of all eleven Elements:
  - Ensure goals, needs, and strategies are not redundant and are still relevant with today's issues and trends; and
  - Incorporate new goals, needs, and strategies where appropriate to reflect the changing community and its needs and desires.
4. Updates to the Annual Work Program:
  - Add a new table titled, "Priority Recommendations 2023-2028" which includes projects not completed from the 2018 program and adds the following new projects:
    - Reinforce the location of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB);
    - Review land uses and zoning allowed on Johns Island to prioritize agricultural and agriculturally related uses;
    - Review and amend the Comprehensive Plan and the ZLDR, as applicable, to increase open space, clustering, and other requirements necessary to achieve higher densities through the Planned Development process, refine the open space as it relates to Planned Developments, and remove the conservation subdivision provisions of the ZLDR as they relate to the AG-8 zoning district;
    - Review/amend the Comprehensive Plan and ZLDR to prohibit clear cutting of properties and incentivize the retention of swaths of trees; and
    - Create an Official Map showing federal and locally funded roads, along with planned road projects and CARTA projects.

On behalf of the membership of the Planning Commission, I am pleased to present this material to County Council for their consideration and adoption.

Sincerely,



Cindy M. Floyd, Chair  
Charleston County Planning Commission

cc: County Council Members  
Planning Commission Members  
Bill Tuten, County Administrator  
Walt Smalls, Chief Deputy Administrator for General Services  
Joel Evans, PLA, AICP, Zoning/Planning Department Director  
File



**RESOLUTION**  
**CHARLESTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGARDING**  
**CHARLESTON COUNTY FIVE-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW**

**WHEREAS**, Charleston County Council adopted the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan Ordinance No. 1095, effective April 20, 1999, with subsequent amendments and additions made thereto, (“the Comprehensive Plan”) in compliance with Title 6, Chapter 29, South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, Articles 1, 3, 5, and 7, Sections 6-29-310, et seq., 6-29-510 et seq., 6-29-710 et seq., and 6-29-110 et seq., of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended, (“the Planning Act”); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Planning Act, County Council adopted the following: Ordinance No. 1274, effective November 18, 2003, with subsequent amendments and additions made thereto, upon the five-year review of the Comprehensive Plan; Ordinance No. 1567, effective November 18, 2008, with subsequent amendments and additions made thereto, at the ten-year update of the Comprehensive Plan; Ordinance No. 1835, effective January 6, 2015, with subsequent amendments and additions made thereto, at the five-year review of the Comprehensive Plan; and Ordinance No. 2034, effective October 9, 2018, with subsequent amendments and additions made thereto, at the ten-year update of the Comprehensive Plan; and

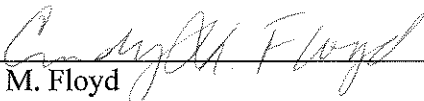
**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the Planning Act, which states “the local planning commission shall review the comprehensive plan or elements of it as often as necessary, but not less than once every five years, to determine whether changes in the amount, kind, or direction of development of the area or other reasons make it desirable to make additions or amendments to the plan.” County Council directed the Charleston County Planning Commission (the “Planning Commission”) to undertake the five-year review of the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission began the five-year review of the Comprehensive Plan on February 13, 2023, and completed the review on December 11, 2023, having reviewed the Comprehensive Plan in its entirety, including each of the eleven elements outlined therein, and gathered thorough, extensive public comments on the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission will implement the findings of the five-year review through amendments to both the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance, which will be completed as part of the Annual Work Program.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, on the basis of the foregoing authorizations and for the purposes set forth above, the Charleston County Planning Commission completed the five-year review of the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan pursuant to the Planning Act on December 11, 2023, and will implement the findings of the five-year review through amendments to both the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance, which will be completed as part of the Annual Work Program.

CHARLESTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Cindy M. Floyd  
Chairman of the Planning Commission

December 11, 2023

## **Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review Draft Public Hearing – February 13, 2024**

The Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review Draft document is available at this link:  
(<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/zoning-planning/comp-plan.php>).

The following legend applies to the entirety of the draft document.

### Legend

Blue text	Changes made by staff
Green text	Changes from public input received
Purple text	Changes from Planning Commission Subcommittees
<del>Strikethrough text</del>	Text proposed to be deleted

The Public Comment Summary Report is also available at this link:  
(<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/zoning-planning/comp-plan.php>).

**From:** Fred Palm <[fredpalm1@gmail.com](mailto:fredpalm1@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 27, 2024 5:46 PM  
**To:** Planning <[Planning@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:Planning@charlestoncounty.org)>  
**Subject:** Comprehensive plan review

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Honorable Members of the Charleston County Planning Commission,

The urgency for the City of Charleston highlighted in this editorial is equally applicable to the entire county: We all get swamped with the same high water, at the same tide, sharing the the same surge height, at the same time.

Where to put the future water is step 1 so the planning to stay here begins. Where the water will go is defined by the existing and knowable through NOAA models. There is no mystery here. Just inaction, whistling past the flooded grave yard.

Please specify in the comprehensive plan where the water goes. This should not be a government secret.

Fred Palm  
January 27, 2024

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[https://www.postandcourier.com/opinion/editorials/update-charleston-sc-zoning-for-climate-change/article\\_d4ee198e-bba7-11ee-9253-17f503ee81d2.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/opinion/editorials/update-charleston-sc-zoning-for-climate-change/article_d4ee198e-bba7-11ee-9253-17f503ee81d2.html)

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**From:** Fred Palm <[fredpalm1@gmail.com](mailto:fredpalm1@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 26, 2024 9:51 AM

**To:** Planning <[Planning@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:Planning@charlestoncounty.org)>

**Subject:** Study Reveals Compounding Risks of Atmospheric River Storms - News

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Honorable Members of the Charleston County Planning Commission,

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Past is not future on many of these measures that the county council does not inform itself about, or through the county planning commission.

The floatable raft is a quick infrastructure project. It can be installed rapidly, advisable to have available at many planned unit developments added to the landscape since the last washing of our landscape, and available at an affordable price for many individual homeowners. About the cost of an annual flood insurance premium.

Question: Is this current state of county flood policy what referendum voters have in mind when it comes to charleston county flood protection focused on imagined assets that still leaves their homes out?

How can a proposed climate plan to be unveiled someday soon, intended to protect assets we have not put in place, will never put in place- displaced by the +\$2.4 billion for 526 that strangles the capital investment program needed to stay here, simply delete the current housing assets generating the tax revenues.

Land to be set aside for solar farms when the county planners and elected officials cannot even say in the comprehensive plan where all the additional water is to go.

Here is a suggestion. Install floating solar panels where the water goes. it is a BOGO.

Regards,  
Fred Palm

<https://news.clas.ufl.edu/atmospheric-river-storms-damage/>

**From:** [Planning](#)  
**To:** [CCPC](#); [Joel Evans](#); [Andrea Melocik](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Study Reveals Compounding Risks of Atmospheric River Storms - News  
**Date:** Friday, January 26, 2024 10:10:27 AM

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**From:** Fred Palm <fredpalm1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 26, 2024 9:51 AM  
**To:** Planning <Planning@charlestoncounty.org>  
**Subject:** Study Reveals Compounding Risks of Atmospheric River Storms - News

**CAUTION: This email originated outside of Charleston County. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders or suspicious emails. If you are not sure, please contact IT helpdesk.**

Honorable Members of the Charleston County Planning Commission,

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Regards,  
Fred Palm

<https://news.clas.ufl.edu/atmospheric-river-storms-damage/>

**From:** [Fred Palm](#)  
**To:** [CCPC](#); [Brantley Moody](#); [Honorable Henry Darby](#); [Herb R. Sass](#); [Jenny C. Honeycutt](#); [Honorable Larry Kobrovsky](#); [Kylon J. Middleton](#); [Robert L. Wehrman](#); [Teddie Pryor](#); [Joe Boykin](#)  
**Cc:** [Clare Fieseler](#); [Honorable Joe Bustos](#); [Honorable Thomas Alexander](#); [Jonah Chester](#); [Toby Cox](#)  
**Subject:** Rising Waters: You spoke. We listened.  
**Date:** Tuesday, January 30, 2024 3:15:07 PM

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Honorable Members of the Charleston County Council and County Planners,

Make a wild-haired guess about why the community is turning out in overflow numbers to learn about individual, neighborhood and community flooding in our county.

Give up the current assumption that your constituents are fools. Don't understand climate based communication. Unconcerned about the cost of risk-based flood insurance.

Easily snookered with a massive county council spending plan lacking full disclosure to provide +\$2.2 billion for 526 having zero economic benefits where the council proponents do not answer the reasonable questions and concerns expressed in fact accomplishes road shows. A \$5 billion road program that's has not even been modeled for its congestion impact.

The 526-Five give the voters just a single \$5 billion referendum question, built on the council majority's hubris - take it or leave it. A plan decorated like a Christmas tree with the stuff we really want and need. Instead, kowtowing to the unidentified 526 backers.

Yet at its heart lies another deceit of the county council to sneak it by the voters, as the majority twice attempted within the past year. Disdain expressed in the lack of full disclosure.

Aided by a complicit planning commission who refuses to see the water in the comprehensive plan that all the folks showing up in overflow numbers at P&C community discussions see quite clearly. How is it that residents understand but officials and the planners they appoint do not? The conspiracy to ignore future flood risk is afoot.

The legitimate community process has broken down and the ram-rod approval of the comprehensive plan amounts to another disservice that will evolve into another threat to the community. This one internal to it.

Shame, shame on all of us.

Fred Palm  
January 30, 2024

**Subject: Rising Waters: You spoke. We listened.**

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By Clare Fieseler & Jonah Chester

## **You spoke. We listened.**

**My name's Jonah Chester and I'm a reporter with the Rising Waters Lab. I'm writing the top section of this week's newsletter. Here's why:**

This past Wednesday, Jan. 24, the Rising Waters team held a community meet-and-greet event. It's the first in a series of community engagement events my colleague Toby Cox and I will be hosting over the coming year, as we try to gather community input on what flooding and rising waters-related issues you'd like to see more coverage of.

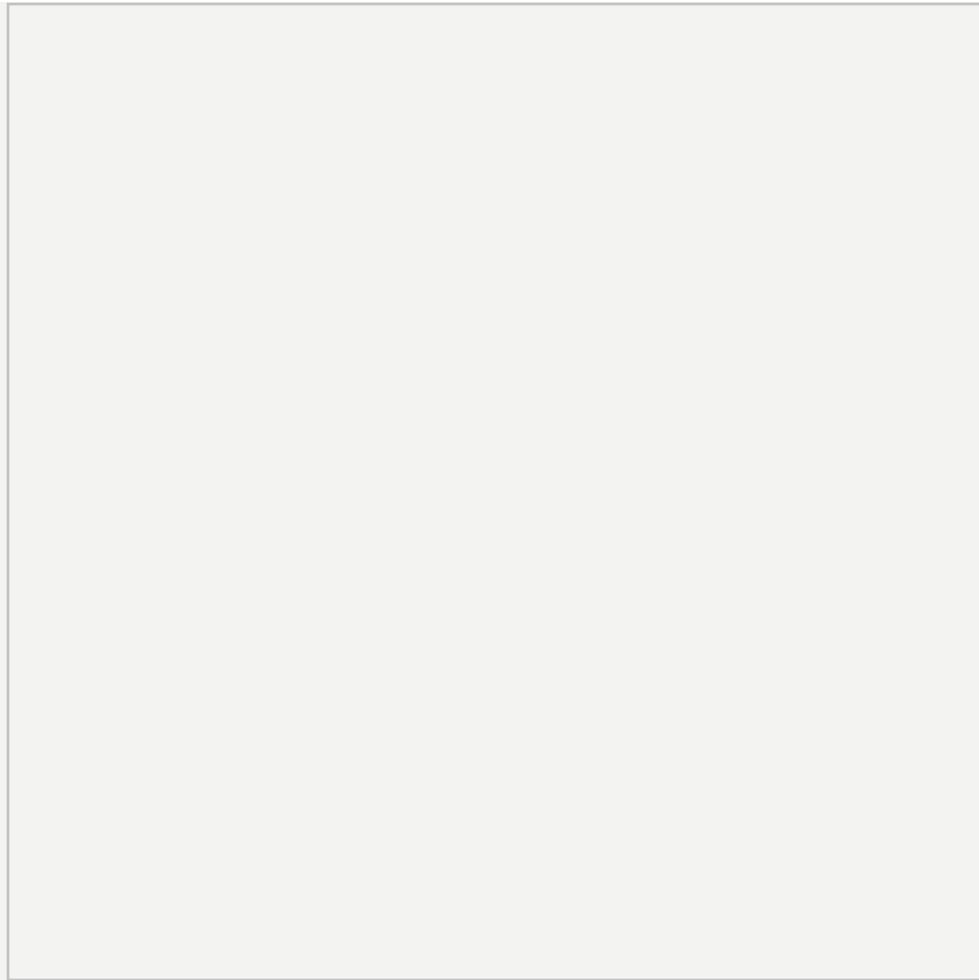


**The newsroom event filled up pretty quickly, so don't worry if you wanted to attend but weren't able to snag a spot. We'll be hosting more events in 2024.**

The team would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended. We had a great crowd with a diverse range of experiences: from long-time Charlestonians who've seen flooding become a pressing issue in recent decades to folks who work in the conservation, environmental law and government sectors.

**There's one thing that came out of our discussions that Toby's already hard at work on.**

Some of the folks who attended mentioned that they'd like more notice on upcoming public meetings for hot-button flooding issues, like Charleston's proposed [\\$1.3 billion sea wall](#) or the [Union Pier redevelopment](#), as well as other types of events our rising waters readers might be interested in.

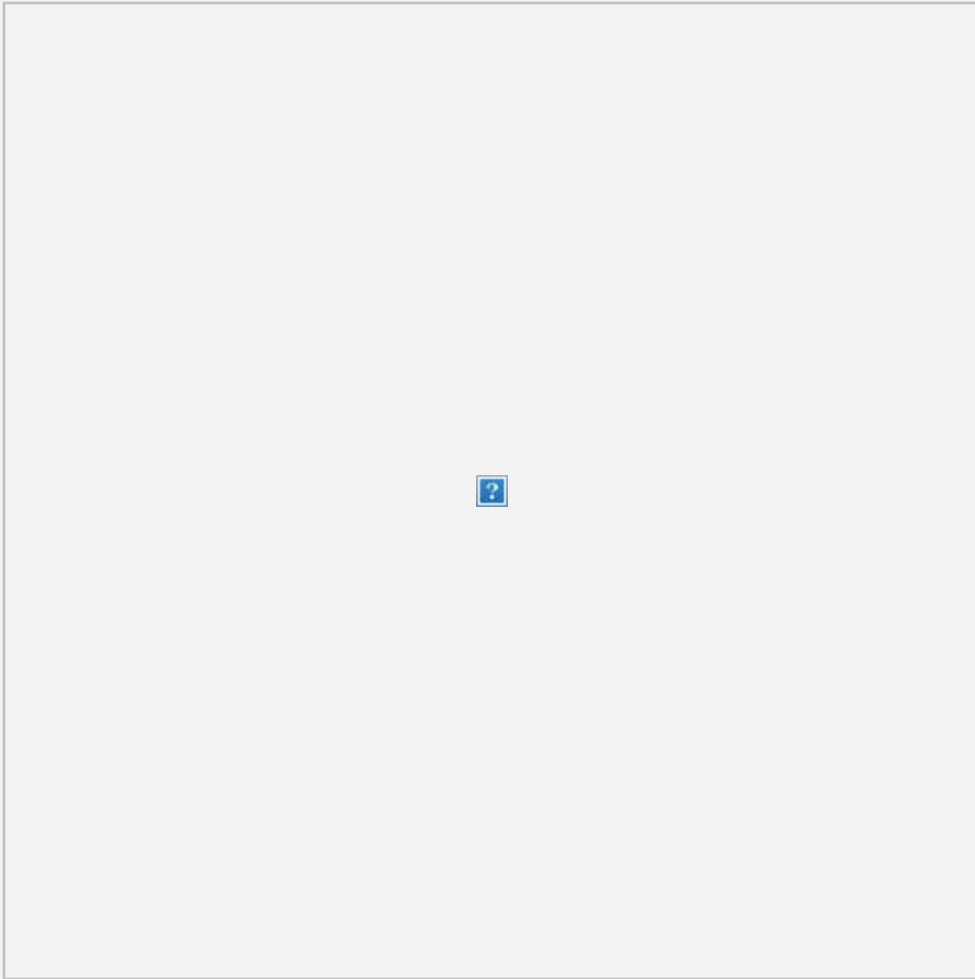


In response to that feedback, the Rising Waters Lab will be launching a new Rising Waters Community Calendar that will be embedded onto our [homepage](#). The calendar will be a one-stop-shop for public events and meetings hosted by Charleston's city government, neighborhood organizations and conservation groups.

**Starting in February, we'll also include a "week-ahead" rundown of S.C. meetings and events in this newsletter.**

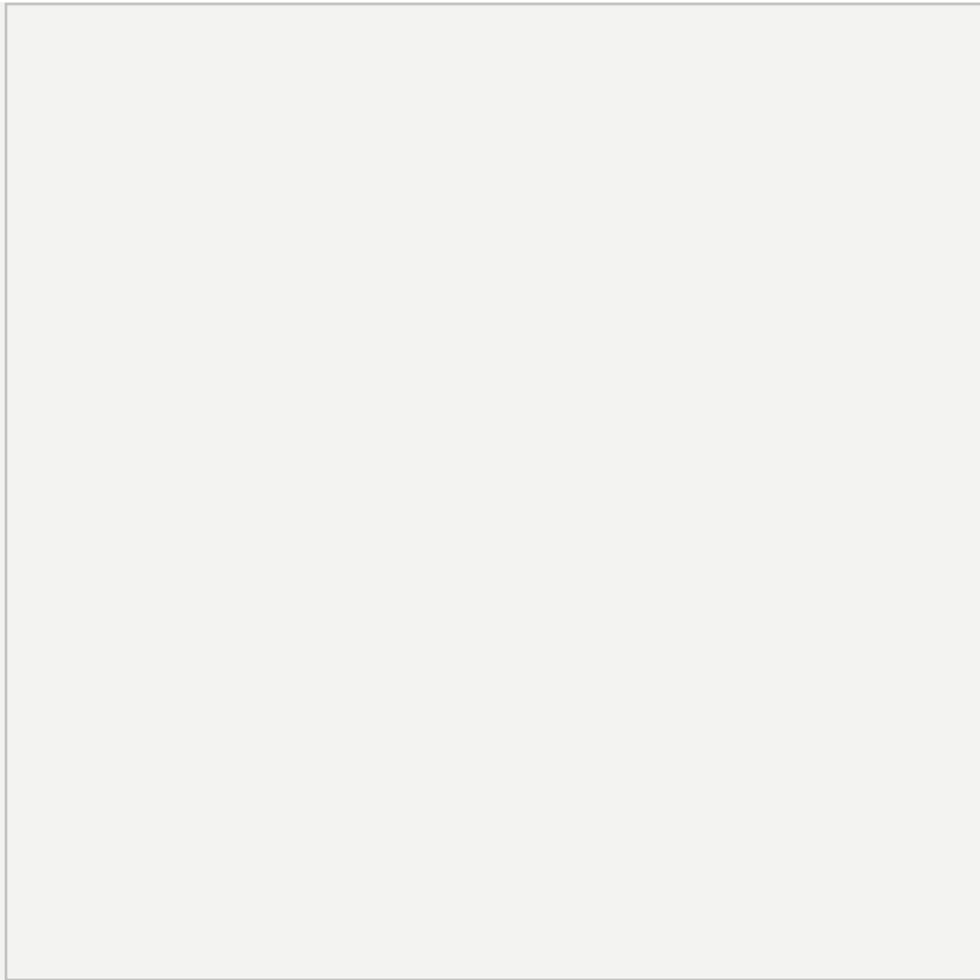
If you're someone who works in local government or the conservation space, please fire an email with your upcoming event to either Clare ([cfieseler@postandcourier.com](mailto:cfieseler@postandcourier.com)), Toby ([tcox@postandcourier.com](mailto:tcox@postandcourier.com)) or I ([jchester@postandcourier.com](mailto:jchester@postandcourier.com)).

**The calendar is still in the works, but we'll be sure to update y'all as soon as it's live. Now onto this week's news.**



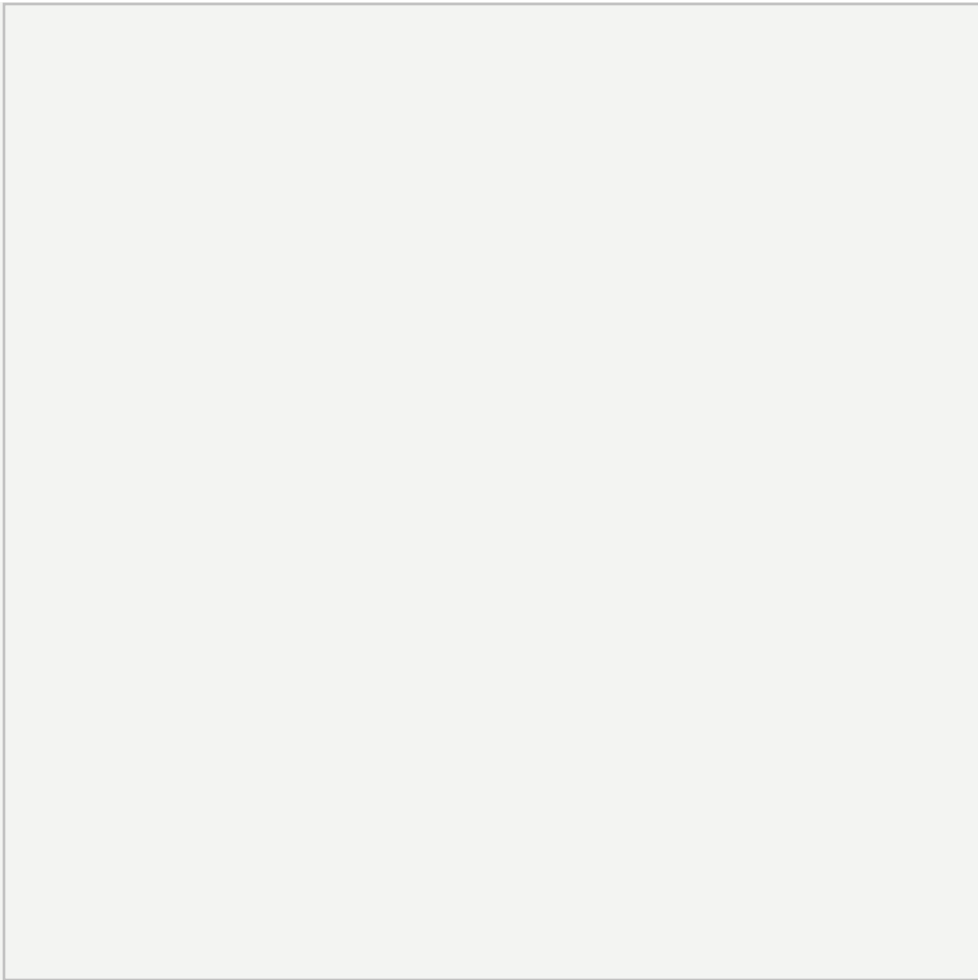
Readers of The Post and Courier gather on the patio of the newsroom on Jan. 24, 2024 for a meet-and-greet event hosted by the Rising Waters Lab. -Jonah Chester/Staff

## **SOUTH CAROLINA STORIES**



**[Rising waters Q&A: Readers ask for updates on the city's seawall project](#)**

This month, readers asked us about updates on the seawall project, including how it would affect adjacent communities and its timeline. Here's what we found out. [\(Read Toby's latest Q&A installment\)](#)



### **[Last haul? Shrimpers brace for end of working waterfront](#)**

Georgetown's shrimpers face an uncertain future once the Cannon Street docks close. City redevelopment plans don't include a working waterfront. ([Read Janet's reporting on shrimping](#))

### [Soaring hurricane and flood insurance in SC? There's a tax credit for that](#)

Columnist David Slade reminds readers that some S.C. home owners with high insurance costs could save up to \$1,250 this tax season.

[\(Read David's column on insurance\)](#)

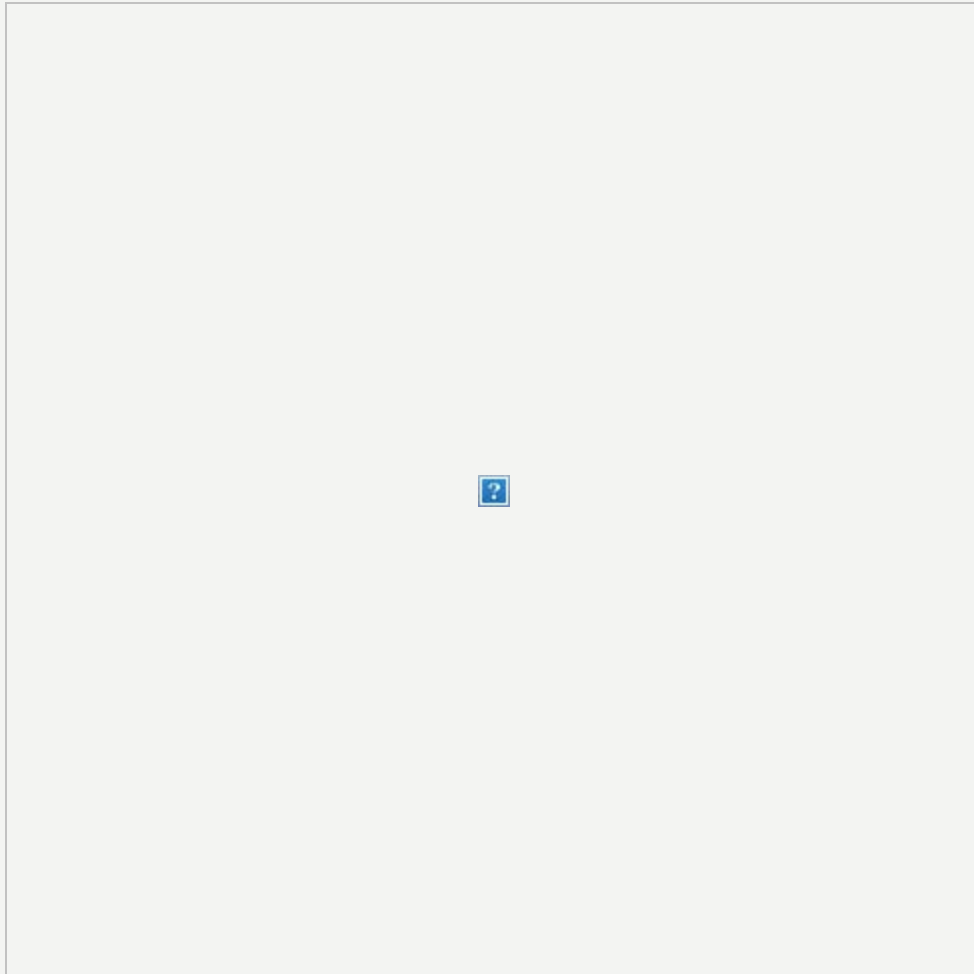
## **AROUND THE SOUTH**

There's been a lot of news about electric vehicles across the region this week. Here are three that caught my eye:

- [Federal funding could launch the construction of new fast chargers in a coastal North Carolina community where they've been largely absent](#) (Wilmington Star News, Wilmington, N.C.)

- [A Georgia school district bucks trend and opts not to apply for electric buses, citing range concerns and charging times](#) (Columbus Ledger-Enquirer, Columbus, Ga.)
- [South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster's fight against workers' attempts to unionize could affect the state's growing EV and battery manufacturing industry](#) (Associated Press)

## WIND POWER & WHALES



A newborn right whale calf, seen here swimming with her mother “Juno” on Nov. 28, 2023, in South Carolina’s waters. Photo taken under NOAA permit #26919. CMARI/Provided

On Jan. 25, two federal agencies [announced a new plan](#) to better harmonize two major environmental goals of the Biden

Administration: the recovery of North Atlantic right whales and expanding offshore wind power.

This is good news for a renewable energy sector that has been mired in [confusion and misinformation](#) over its impact on marine life. The new strategy outlines numerous new initiatives that fall under four categories:

- mitigation and decision-support tools
- research and monitoring
- collaboration
- communication and outreach

**But the government's new whale conservation strategy comes at a grave time for right whales, which have been falling victims to other threats: boats and fishing gear.**

Earlier this month, [we reported on a whale calf](#) that had been severely injured by a boat and seen swimming in South Carolina's waters. NOAA has since confirmed that the boat was 35 to 57 feet in length, which means the vessel was not subject to the current boat-slowng rule meant to protect whales.

News reports indicate that [the calf is still alive](#). It was last seen swimming in Florida waters.

Yesterday, a [dead right whale washed ashore](#) on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. One source reported that the whale was entangled in fishing line.

Kim Elmslie, campaign director at Oceana in Canada had this to say about this latest news:

"January has started and ended with tragedy for critically endangered North Atlantic right whales. A female right whale calf found dead, right on the heels of news of another calf struck by a small boat at the beginning of the month, underscores the urgent need for continued, strong and mandatory protection to safeguard



these whales from entanglements in fishing gear and ship strikes."

Thanks for reading. See you next week.

Clare & Jonah

Reporters

The Post and Courier

[cfieseler@postandcourier.com](mailto:cfieseler@postandcourier.com) | [jchester@postandcourier.com](mailto:jchester@postandcourier.com)



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**From:** [Fred Palm](#)  
**To:** [ANDY BRACK](#); [Autumn Phillips](#); [Clare Fieseler](#); [Herb Frazier](#); [Jonah Chester](#); [Rick Nelson](#); [Toby Cox](#)  
**Cc:** [CCPC](#); [Brantley Moody](#); [Honorable Henry Darby](#); [Herb R. Sass](#); [Jenny C. Honeycutt](#); [Honorable Joe Bustos](#); [Honorable Larry Kobrovsky](#); [Honorable Nikki Setzler](#); [Kylon J. Middleton](#); [Robert L. Wehrman](#); [Teddie Pryor](#); [Honorable Thomas Alexander](#); [Joe Boykin](#)  
**Subject:** Same high water, same surge, same tides, same river crest  
**Date:** Friday, February 02, 2024 9:31:50 AM

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Members of the Fourth Estate,

Going Dutch: An approach to flood control flows into Charleston (Charleston City Paper) provides a focus on the City of Charleston because there is something decided, to see, take note of, assume, write about, show, point to, hope for. Evidence of meaningful flood policy and related actions that flow from a single critical decision.

Critical Decision: Deciding to let the water go where it wants to (living with the water) and acknowledging more high water will be upon us moderated by putting in place what is needed to address more of it.

Inundations on a time fuse, that the world knows will be at hand perhaps before adequate infrastructure can be put in place, especially outside the City of Charleston. The majority on the county council safely cannot be troubled to even think about or act on the easily knowable inundation information.

Evidently Charleston County residents outside the City of Charleston, principally Mount Pleasant and North Charleston, don't live in this same shared wet coastal space that is ignored by the fourth estate giving the county council another free accountability ticket. The residents of Mount Pleasant and North Charleston and the remainder of the small incorporated towns and unincorporated places nested along 100 miles of coastline go under at the same time as the City of Charleston. All together. What-me-worry county.

All of this legitimized by the county planning commission who simply cannot see the water to bring itself to answer the fundamental question in the root comprehensive plan: Where does all the additional water go?

You would think that county flooding is not the case given the media coverage. A reporting bias distorting the thinking of the current cohort of elected county officials and those they appoint; to act in our interest.

Examination of the nine districts of the county shows they all flood in different parts, some at very low heights of inundation, with many tax paying planned unit developments unprotected. Must be someone else's future problem. Certainly not the 526-Five with more important things to do.

Folks who report this stuff and send out the crews don't venture far from home base. They need to be productive; make good use of their time. PSC covers the entire state so it has lots to report. If the water level is dangerous, roads flooded, cut off from rapid escape routes using

poor or undocumented roads, then keep staff out of harms way.

As a result the Charleston County Council is permitted to focus in on going shopping to support the retail economy and its free riding backers passing the \$5.4 billion risk filled tab onto the county taxpayers.

The choice between shopping and dry shoes is already made by the 526-Five. The unspoken flood protection plan is to nip and tuck the fat (water) away. This is the same make-it-up-as-we-go-along that is the way this council conducts the use of the prior half-cent sales tax authorizations. Some will be taken care of. That does not need to be made explicit.

That there is no future in county planning as it is not needed to dole out money from the pot to compliant council members. Nascent ideas lacking systemic underpinnings works best for the 526-Five majority control of the boondoggle.

It is the stark legitimized absence of the future that will take lives and diminish the value of flooded or high-risk housing.

In response to the threat the 526-Five offer some green space, some mass transit, the unaffordable Mark Clark Extension (526), and other roads sprinkled in all the election districts without evidence. Highway engineers are excellent at predicting future traffic volume. For the single \$5.4 billion question simulating the impact of spending the bulk of the \$5.4 billion on congestion relief is not done. So who knows what the result is? The 526-Five don't do high water and they are not transportation engineers. But filled with hubris and guile to believe that buying this bridge is going to work well for residents.

The 526-Five referendum offer is for one humongous ball of wax entangling the entire proposal with uncertainty about what will done, when and some part eventually made made real. String 'em along with not enough money, in an absent budget, hidden behind the disclosure curtain in the proposed question. The same decision process that brought us here will continue as the council uses the make it up as we go along model. Residents can go shopping on clogged roads. That is good enough. At least for the 526-Five.

The 526-Five have failed to disclose how close to \$1 billion of the face amount of \$5.4 billion will be used to roll up future annual tax collections into the big pot of money they need for 526 to escape the folks on James and Johns Island, and the related 526 infrastructure outside the study area that yields \$2.2 billion, the working number for 526. Pay all the additional expenses placed on the county taxpayers created by having the county pay 100% of the 526 project risk costs conditioned by the \$420 million state funding loan approval. Another state failure created by the use of an grossly inefficient financing program.

Get Real: Break up the single \$5.4 billion question into functional pots of money isolating 526 as its own item, so the voters can say yes or no to any or all of this, and accept the consequences as adults. Trickery should not be how we spend \$5.4 billion for thirty years. Give the voters much more credit than the 526-Five gives.

Fred Palm  
February 2, 2024

<https://charlestoncitypaper.com/2024/02/02/going-dutch-an-approach-to-flood-control-flows-into-charleston/>

**From:** [Fred Palm](#)  
**To:** [CCPC](#)  
**Cc:** [Brantley Moody](#); [Honorable Henry Darby](#); [Herb R. Sass](#); [Jenny C. Honeycutt](#); [Honorable Joe Bustos](#); [Honorable Larry Kobrovsky](#); [Honorable Mayor Will Haynie](#); [Kylon J. Middleton](#); [Robert L. Wehrman](#); [Teddie Pryor](#); [Honorable Thomas Alexander](#); [Joe Boykin](#)  
**Subject:** See where the water will go even more clearly, but that does not matter now  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 31, 2024 8:07:55 AM

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Honorable Commissioners,

We all know we have too much water, more will be coming. It will follow the existing land contouring, land cover attributes, and the existing improvements placed upon it. All knowable and easily shown on your screen. Knowable future conditions if we choose to see them. That is a responsibility.

Despite the precision of adding detailed land cover recently made available thereby commissioning even more detailed studies, delaying the acknowledgement that serious macro action is required, continued silence is not a valid comprehensive plan. In effect casting the comprehensive plan you will ratify as inauthentic fiction.

Fritting away another half decade of the critical opportunity, added to the lost past decade of denial or selective inattention, having more detailed information to massage will not change the outlines where the added water will flow in the existing landscape; nor the future conclusions of those that follow in your steps. The outline of the die is cast.

Most needed is the primary location based broad decision so the follow on adaptation planning that can begin in earnest in a future valid direction. For all public and private sector actors this is essential information. It is being denied. The inward movement is underway. No county council investment will stem this tide unless effective companion action is launched. And that timing matters greatly.

Rise up to the needed decision as surely the future high water will. Specify broadly the first cut of water capture that is where the water will go naturally and unimpeded. Later the expansion, contraction, and engineering influences can be factored in to the outline.

The major addition of planned unit developments that is a significant portion of the tax base are at risk. The folks who will be paying the \$5.4 billion for the proposed road program sponsored by the county council majority.

Memorialize in the comprehensive plan where the added water is to be stored as altering that flow is precluded by the current county council majority diverting funding into unraised roads. Except for what needs to be the sky high 526 if it is to survive historic future high water surges.

Fred Palm  
February 1, 2024

<https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/biden-harris-administration-shares-new-land-cover-data-to-help-communities-understand-coastal-change>

**From:** [Fred Palm](#)  
**To:** [CCPC](#)  
**Cc:** [Herb R. Sass](#); [Honorable Joseph Boykin](#); [Honorable Henry Darby](#); [Jenny C. Honeycutt](#); [Honorable Larry Kobrovsky](#); [Kylon J. Middleton](#); [Brantley Moody](#); [Teddie Pryor](#); [Robert L. Wehrman](#); [Honorable Thomas Alexander](#); [Honorable Nikki Setzler](#); [Honorable Joe Bustos](#); [Honorable Mayor-Elect William Cogswell](#); [Honorable Mayor-Elect Reggie Burgess](#); [Honorable Mayor Will Haynie](#)  
**Subject:** Up to our ears in county smarts  
**Date:** Sunday, December 24, 2023 10:34:41 AM

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Honorable Members of the Charleston County Planning Commission.

We will know smart when we see it is the assumption of our county comprehensive plan, so there is no need to define or operationalize its meaning.

Since the county "planners" are bent on ignoring the surge inundation water that will be under our feet from compound flooding (where sea level rise is one threat), the county council hell-bent on locking existing residents into the existing retail economy footprint with a +\$2.2 billion investment in a local street, footed by the county taxpayers, while the underlying shift of economic investment is to dry land, leaving residents unprotected in the mud flats, let's have a comprehensive plan that ignores the need to redefine the existing and future development.

Let's assume we do not understand the more profound shifts for another five years clouded by in-migration and the need to satisfy the dominant retail interests. The critical need to adapt, channel, and preserve the many parts of the overall economy (besides the retail sector) to address the core vulnerability is unrecognized and unaddressed. Later, for the technical constraining stuff.

Let's ignore a comprehensive plan that requires integrating infrastructure decisions, future surge flood impacts, and the future permitted or encouraged development, offering up and leaving the state legislated element structure as the sufficient end product defining comprehensive.

The needed haze is to render the core plan, by definition, incomprehensive to staff, residents, and investors. They don't need predictable, derivable policies. Growth is the goal, and we will know smart when we encounter it. The fakery is as if the two county houses (appointers and appointed) are not linked inexorably at their hips in common policy.

For added measure to effect flexible county policy, let's have the county council prepare a strategic plan independent of the comprehensive plan. Two guiding ships for residents, staff,



investors, and the media where either plan has sufficient contradictions and ambiguity to justify almost any conclusion made by the county council. Two fundamental methods for deriving county policies and decisions, each with its own framing values, to better the odds that what the council decides is smart. The council, by definition, is smart and tautological.

For a county that cannot even define in the most modest of ways where the future inundation water goes, as the reality of flood insurance becomes unobserved, unpurchasable, or unaffordable, with surge water that will barrel at us like a freight train in the night, remains as it has for the past decade and one half, governance still incapable of charting a way through the thicket of dead-end roads and more than enough data unconsulted. Institutionally, it cannot bring itself to say that what worked in the past will be our dead, wet end in the future.

For planners, failing to act in the face of indisputable evidence is a grievous professional sin that will haunt future generations by their errs and is made well validated by our current conditions. So, residents get sacrificed again on the county planners' and councils' altars for five more years.

This council and its appointed "planners" are so smart they can drive the county without valid isomorphic mappings of reality. We are in Hubris County, not Charleston County. Smart is not in our middle name. A place that by definition, whatever results will be smart.

In conclusion, define the missing policy link in the county's comprehensive plan- where the compound inundation water will go and the uses of the remaining land follow. Then, the county will be better able to deliver on its stated goal: Protect our cultural and natural resources and rural residential and agricultural communities while accommodating smart (*an undefined term*) growth that respects the unique character and landscape of the county, promotes sustainable economic opportunity, fosters resilience, and is tightly coordinated with transportation infrastructure planning and with the provision of other community facilities.

County planners: Is the City of Charleston on Venus and Charleston County on Mars? Two separate worlds. The land typologies of the county's cities of Charleston, North Charleston, and Mount Pleasant, where 90% of the taxpayers call home, are the same, and they flood equally and at the same time.

**Hicks: Charleston has only 2 options: A future or 'Waterworld'**

December 24, 2023

The National Weather Service offers a detailed scientific explanation of why Charleston looked like "Waterworld" last Sunday.

A low-pressure system developed over the Gulf of Mexico, crossed Florida and strengthened as it moved up the coast. This "anomalous" nor'easter, packing winds up to 60 mph, hit the city at high tide, creating a

storm surge that “reached a preliminary value of 9.86 feet mean lower low water.”

Dale Morris can explain that in plain English: “The harbor was higher than the land.”

Yep, that’s pretty much the problem. And it will continue to get worse, the city’s chief resilience officer says, unless we do something ... pronto.

Now, there are really only two solutions. But to understand that binary choice, it helps to look at the complicated circumstances at play. All of which were on display as Charleston flooded on Dec. 17.

### **All about sea level rise**

Like it or not, it’s accepted science that ocean levels will rise about 14 inches in the next 27 years.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Geological Survey, Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA and even NASA all say the sort of flooding we saw last weekend will happen regularly in Charleston — six to 12 times a year — by 2050.

Basically, Morris says, just add 14 inches to our regular full moon high tide levels, and well, “Waterworld.”

“That’s just math,” Morris says.

### **Just look at the trend**

The National Weather Service records all coastal flooding events for Charleston going back a century. The Top 10 worst years for flooding are ... the last 10 years.

And it’s not even close.

Charleston didn’t see double-digit flooding events until 1962, when there were 11. Two decades passed before the city again flooded that many times in a single year.

But in the past decade, the city hasn’t seen a single year where it flooded fewer than 42 times. The current record is 2019, with 89 flooding events.

But 2023 is at 82 (or 84, the numbers are still being crunched). So, Sunday might’ve set a record for storm surge not related to a tropical weather system, but that’s not an outlier. It’s a preview.

“That was the fourth-highest surge ever, and it wasn’t even a tropical storm,” Morris says. “It’s scary, right?”

### **Pumps turned off**

The city, with much financial assistance from the state and the feds, has spent hundreds of millions digging deep-shaft drainage tunnels and installing huge pumps to keep water off the peninsula.

So why weren’t we using them Sunday?

Well, those systems drain downtown of rain and runoff by collecting it in those tunnels and pumping it into

the harbor. Which does absolutely no good when the water flooding the city is coming from the harbor.

As Morris says, there's not a pump big enough to pump the Atlantic Ocean, so all the city would do is burn out the bearings on those multimillion-dollar pumps as it moved water from one side of The Battery to the other.

That means all the equipment in the world won't keep downtown dry if the ocean freely pours onto the peninsula. The only way to save Charleston is to keep it out.

### **Charleston needs an edge**

As the seas continue to rise, flooding in Charleston will become more frequent, stretch farther inland ... and do exponentially more damage.

"If we didn't like what happened Sunday, then the status quo is unacceptable and we have to raise the edge of the peninsula," Morris says.

Since we can't build up the peninsula higher than rising seas, we simply have to keep the ocean out.

The only option is building some sort of barrier, like a sea wall, and the Army Corps of Engineers has offered to pay 65% of the cost.

Alas, the idea is unpopular because many folks imagine a monstrosity that would block views and destroy Charleston's charm. But Morris and the consultants think that really looks more like an extension of The Battery, with some natural barriers here and there.

Without that, Charleston will soon flood so often, and suffer so much damage, that people will start to move away. Real estate value will collapse, and the Crosstown and Market and Water streets will revert to their natural states ... as tributaries.

"Without an edge, the peninsula is unmanageable and unsustainable," Morris says. "That's about the only option, unless the other option is retreat."

There you have Charleston's two options: A future, with some sort of barrier, or retreat. There is no middle ground.

It's already underwater.

Merry Christmas,  
Fred Palm  
December 24, 2023

# Comments for Charleston County Council Meeting – Feb. 13, 2024

Hello, Charleston County Council.

Below are my comments for the subject meeting:

- I support the Ten Mile rezoning from R-4 and UR to S-3 **without** parcel exemptions.
- I oppose the Amendments to the Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance that remove tree protection and remove public input.
- I support aspects of the Comprehensive Plan Five-Year Review specifically placing emphasis on the protection of the unique Lowcountry character and African American settlement communities. I support the Comprehensive Plan Goals: Land Use Element, Cultural Resources Element, and Housing Element. These are especially important when addressing subdivisions. I am concerned about what the county uses as a basis to determine smart growth.
- I oppose the proposed amendments to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Preservation Related ZLDR Ordinance.

Regards,

Printed Name	Signature	Address
Benny Robinson	Benny Robinson	
CHARLES P. SINGHIA	Charles P. Singhia	
Rose Marie S. Koning	Rose Marie S. Koning	
LaShonda Middleton	LaShonda Middleton	
Lucille Mitchell	Lucille Mitchell	
Betty S. James	Betty S. James	
Carmen L. James	Carmen L. James	
Laurine Walter	Laurine Walter	
<del>Patrice Edwards Jones</del>	<del>Patrice Edwards Jones</del>	
Patrice Edwards Jones	Patrice Edwards Jones	
SABRINA GENKIUS	Sabrina Genkius	
<del>CAROL ANN NESBITT</del> CAROL ANN NESBITT	Carolee Nesbitt	

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Regards,

Printed Name	Signature	Address
Izetta C. Swinton	Izetta C. Swinton	
Kevin J Brown	Kevin J Brown	
John Howard	John Howard	
Debra Brown	Debra Brown	
Jermain Gilliard	Jermain Gilliard	
Bernard Robinson	Bernard Robinson	
George Manigault	George Manigault	
Lucille Mitchell	Lucille Mitchell	
Charles Singleton	Charles Singleton	
Peggy Jenkins	Peggy Jenkins	
Danyelah Singleton	Danyelah Singleton	
Inez Singleton	Inez Singleton	
Jean Pritchney	Jean Pritchney	

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Regards,

Printed Name	Signature	Address
Jeanette P. Singleton	<i>Jeanette P. Singleton</i>	
Peggie Hutchinson	<i>Peggie Hutchinson</i>	
Barbara Hilliard	<i>Barbara Hilliard</i>	
Peggy Jenkins	<i>Peggy Jenkins</i>	
Leo Jenkins	<i>Leo Jenkins</i>	
Nathaniel Hilliard	<i>Nathaniel Hilliard</i>	
Jermaine Gilliard	<i>Jermaine Gilliard</i>	
Leo Jenkins	<i>Leo Jenkins</i>	
Alifay Edwards	<i>Alifay Edwards</i>	
Charnette Singleton	<i>Charnette Singleton</i>	
Carolyn Wright	<i>Carolyn Wright</i>	
Louis Wright	<i>Louis Wright</i>	
Bridget White	<i>Bridget White</i>	

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Regards,

Printed Name	Signature
Rose Marie Brown	Rose Marie Brown
Leslie Brown	Leslie Brown
Victor J Hendrix	Victor J Hendrix
Shawn Brown	Shawn Brown



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Regards,

Printed Name	Signature	Address
Pauline Wright	Pauline Wright	
Janie W Matthews	Janie W Matthews	
Elizabeth W. Coleman	Elizabeth Coleman	
Felicia J. WRIGHT	Felicia J. Wright	
Mary L. Quarles	Mary L. Quarles	
Dana M. Coleman	Dana M. Coleman	
Shonda J. Coleman	Shonda Coleman	
Carla Pinckney	Carla Pinckney	
Lou Ester Pinckney	Lou Ester Pinckney	
Tara Pinckney	Tara Pinckney	
Tonya Misuraca	Tonya Misuraca	
Loumeray Wright	Loumeray Wright	
Desmond Howard	Desmond Howard	

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