

Chapter 3.4 Cultural Resources Element

3.4.1: OVERVIEW

Charleston County encompasses an area richly endowed with a history that is revealed to its residents through a legacy of historic properties, scenic roadways, and historic rural landscapes. In recent years, citizens, as well as many historic preservation professionals, have increasingly raised concerns that these resources are threatened by the changing character of the community. Public-private partnerships, such as recent efforts to preserve the Morris Island Light House, are important in the effort to protect the County's cultural resources. Today, there is a recognized need for more public awareness of the importance of history and natural beauty to the quality of life in Charleston County, appreciated by both residents and visitors. In this sense, recognition and appreciation of the County's historic legacy is not just an issue of historic preservation, but is a key contributor to the local economy. It is at the heart of the vision for Charleston County which calls for preservation of rural community character, cultural resources, and traditional lifestyles.

Purpose and Intent

The purpose and intent of the Cultural Resources Element is to protect and preserve the County's significant historic and archaeological resources and cultural heritage, to recognize and increase public awareness of the historic character of Charleston County and the efforts to preserve that heritage and the associated economic benefits, and to promote mechanisms for public and private partnerships to preserve and protect historic and/or culturally significant heritage, properties, or landscapes.

3.4.2: BACKGROUND AND INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

There is a strong preservation community composed of a number of organizations that have made a commitment to preserve cultural and historic resources in the County. Much of the responsibility for protecting cultural resources lies outside the purview of Charleston County Government. Some of the agencies involved in the protection of cultural resources include:

- The State Historic Preservation Office;
- The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management;
- The Edisto Island Open Land Trust;
- The East Cooper and Mount Pleasant Preservation Society;
- The Mount Pleasant Open Space Foundation;
- The Lowcountry Open Land Trust;
- The South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology;
- The National Trust for Historic Preservation;
- The Trust for Public Land;
- The Preservation Society of Charleston;
- The Historic Charleston Foundation; and
- The Edisto Island Historic Preservation Society.

Charleston County has incorporated regulations to protect cultural resources through the *Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance* and coordinates with other agencies responsible for protecting these resources. However, the County is not solely responsible for their protection.

Historic and Architectural Resource Inventories in Charleston County

Between 1989 and 1992, two historical and architectural surveys were conducted to identify historical and cultural resources in parts of Charleston County. In 1989, a historical survey, funded by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Charleston County Government, and the City of Charleston, was conducted on James Island and Johns Island. A total of 85.5 square miles was surveyed, and 330 sites were identified. 201 sites were located on James Island and 129 sites were located on Johns Island. In 1992, Charleston County Council organized a public-private partnership to conduct an additional historic and architectural survey designed to include surveys of areas not previously surveyed, and to consolidate findings of prior studies that had looked at specific sites within

those areas. Concurrent with the 1992 historical and architectural survey, the County partnered to conduct an archeological inventory of Charleston County. The South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) granted funding for both projects, with matching funds provided by the Charleston County Council, the City of Charleston, the Historic Charleston Foundation, and the municipalities of Ravenel, Seabrook Island, and Kiawah Island. In order to raise public awareness, foster public support of preservation, and reach consensus as to how best to protect historic resources, the survey sponsors incorporated broad-based community participation throughout the survey process. These surveys remain the most recent historical and archaeological surveys produced by Charleston County; however, the County is pursuing a federal historic preservation grant to fund an update to the historical and architectural survey, as the 1992 survey is now over 20 years old.

Based on the results of both the 1989 and 1992 surveys, approximately 1,170 historic and architectural sites have been surveyed within Charleston County, exclusive of the City of North Charleston, the Town of Mount Pleasant, and the City of Charleston (except for

James Island areas within the City which are included in the 1,170 total).¹ Surveyed sites include properties built prior to 1942 whose level of significance is considered to be local as well as those that are nationally significant. A few sites that retain little integrity or setting are included in the surveys pending assessment of their level of importance with regard to local history.

Table 3.4.1: Type Distribution of Historic and Architectural Sites in Charleston County presents a summary of the type distribution of the surveyed sites within Charleston County. These indicate that almost two-thirds of the historic sites are residences, including houses, slave cabins and tenant or employee cottages. Cemeteries compose the second most common site type, including approximately 12 percent of the total. Approximately three-quarters of the sites surveyed contained structures built between 1878 and 1940. Few structures survive that were built before 1800.

The surveyed sites are spread throughout Charleston County (*Table 3.4.2*). Approximately one-half of the sites are located on Edisto Island, Wadmalaw Island, James Island, and Johns Island. Approximately 15 percent are within the vicinities of Hollywood, Meggett

¹ *Preservation Consultants 1988, 1989, 1992.*



and Ravenel. The incorporated area of McClellanville has the highest concentration of sites, with 87 sites located within the corporate limits, composing 11 percent of the countywide total sites surveyed.

Of the surveyed sites identified in the 1992 survey in Charleston County, 133 sites located within the unincorporated areas of Charleston County are either nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, considered eligible for the National Register, or classified as potential historic districts. One-half of these sites are located on Edisto Island. These 133 sites include the more significant historic properties in the County. Additional sites are likely to meet criteria for inclusion on the National Register, but were not included in the survey due to the lack of resources needed to compile documentation required for review by the State Historic Preservation Office.

In 2014, the County utilized improved mapping technology to spatially display many of the 1992 survey sites. Not all sites can be mapped due to some survey cards lacking accurate parcel identification numbers. Some parcels also no longer exist due to subdivisions; therefore, only 623 of the sites (81 percent of the total sites included in the 1992 survey) can be mapped. Of the 623 sites, 412 sites (66 percent) are located in unincorporated Charleston County, as shown on *Map 3.4.1*.



National Register of Historic Places

Listing a property in the National Register recognizes that it is of significance to the Country, the State, and the local community. It qualifies property owners for certain federal tax benefits and federal assistance for historic preservation (when funds are available). It also mandates consideration of potential impacts on the historic properties that result from federal or federally-assisted projects. As of 2014, 183 National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listings (including 167 sites and 16 historic districts) exist in Charleston County (including incorporated and unincorporated areas). *Map 3.4.2* indicates the NRHP sites located in unincorporated Charleston County as of 2008. In 2013, one of the unincorporated NRHP sites, Point of Pines Plantation Slave Cabin on Edisto Island, was delisted from the National Register of Historic Places when it was dismantled and sent to Washington, D.C. The slave cabin will be reassembled and featured in the future National Museum of African American History and Culture in the nation's capital.

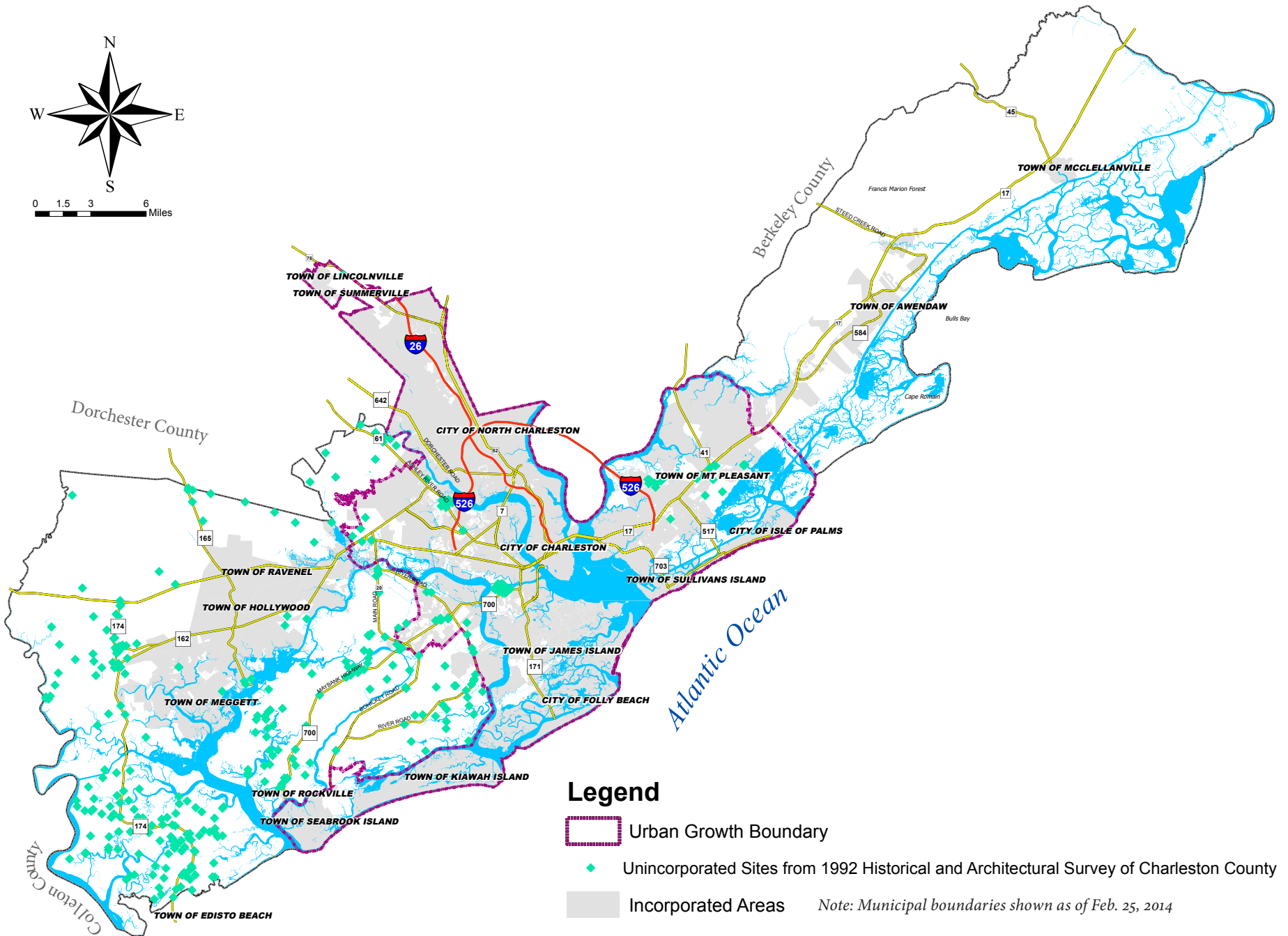
TABLE 3.4.1. TYPE DISTRIBUTION OF HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL SITES IN CHARLESTON COUNTY

Type	Number of Sites	Percent Total
Residences	753	64.4%
Cemeteries	135	11.5%
Roads and Landings	36	3.1%
Church Buildings	37	3.2%
Stores and Commercial Buildings	36	3.1%
Barns, Stables and Agricultural Outbuildings	28	2.5%
Railroad Lines and Structures	19	1.6%
Domestic Outbuildings	28	2.5%
Designed Landscapes	20	1.7%
Ruins and Building Sites	16	1.4%
Schools	14	1.2%
Bridges and Bridge Sites	11	0.9%
Canals	7	0.6%
Pecan Orchards and Groves	7	0.6%
Windmills	3	0.3%
Oyster Factories	3	0.3%
Cotton Gins	4	0.3%
Fire Towers	3	0.3%
Other	17	1.4%
Total	1,170	100.0%

Note: Exclusive of the City of Charleston, the Town of Mount Pleasant, and the City of Charleston (except for James Island, which is included in the numbers shown)

Source: Preservation Consultants 1988, 1989 and 1992

MAP 3.4.1: UNINCORPORATED SITES ON THE 1992 CHARLESTON COUNTY HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY



MAP 3.4.2: UNINCORPORATED SITES ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, 2008

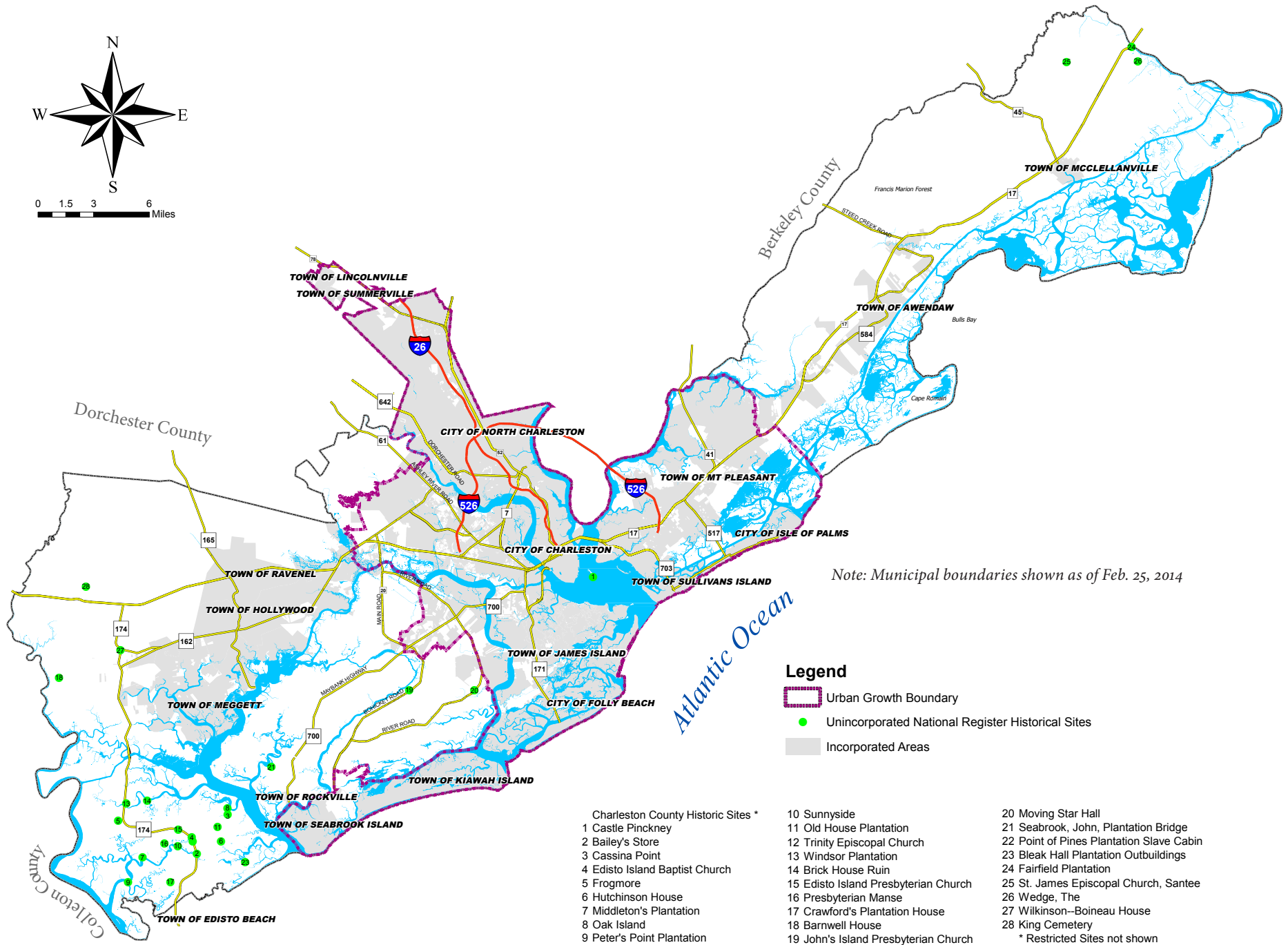


TABLE 3.4.2: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL SITES IN CHARLESTON COUNTY

Area	Number of Sites		Percentage of Countywide Total
	Incorporated	Unincorporated	
McClellanville and Vicinity	87	41	10.9%
Awendaw and Vicinity	2	18	1.7%
Mt. Pleasant and Vicinity	2	75	6.6%
Lincolnton and Vicinity	2	1	0.2%
Highway 61 Corridor	-	43	3.7%
Ravenel and Vicinity	29	22	4.4%
Charleston Area	-	5	0.4%
Hollywood and Vicinity	19	20	3.3%
Meggett and Vicinity	45	33	6.7%
Adams Run/Osborne and Vicinity	-	76	6.5%
Edisto Island	-	151	12.9%
James Island/Johns Island	(not determined)	330 (total)	28.2%
Kiawah Island	2	-	0.2%
Wadmalaw Island	-	167	14.3%

Note: Exclusive of the City of North Charleston, the Town of Mount Pleasant, and the City of Charleston (except for James Island which is included in the numbers shown)

Source: Preservation Consultants 1988, 1989 and 1992

Historic Preservation Committee

In April 2014, the Charleston County Planning Commission established a Historic Preservation Committee to assist in updating the *Zoning and Land Development Regulations Ordinance* to better enhance and protect the County's natural resources. The Committee will also assist planning staff with drafting the grant application to receive a federal historic preservation grant to update the County's Historic and Architectural Survey. If a grant is awarded, the Committee will be instrumental in administering the grant. The Historic Preservation Committee was formed to carry out the strategies set forth in this Element and identify new ways to promote historic preservation in the unincorporated parts of Charleston County.



3.4.3: CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT GOAL

Cultural, historic and archaeological resources, unique settlement patterns of traditional Lowcountry communities (such as historically African-American communities and family settlements), and traditional activities (such as Sweetgrass Basket Making) should be preserved and protected from potential negative impacts of growth and development.

Cultural Resources Element Needs

Cultural Resources Element needs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Preserving the County's significant historic and archaeological resources and cultural heritage;
- Increasing public awareness of the historic character of the County; and
- Promoting public and private partnerships to preserve and protect cultural resources.

3.4.4: CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT STRATEGIES AND TIME FRAMES

Charleston County should take the following actions to promote and protect cultural resources in the County. These implementation strategies will be reviewed a minimum of every five years and updated every ten years from the date of adoption of this Plan.

- CR 1. Continue to promote historic preservation in Charleston County and enhance the County's historic preservation ordinance.
- CR 2. Pursue grant opportunities to update the historical/architectural survey for Charleston County, with emphasis on areas not previously surveyed, and promote continued preservation of local historic sites and structures,

including applying for federal historic preservation grants, as administered by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.

- CR 3. Support policies, incentives, and plans that encourage historic preservation and protection of cultural and archaeological resources such as the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor.
- CR 4. Maintain a database of archaeological resources, heritage corridors, and historic properties, roads, and landscapes.
- CR 5. Require a historic and archaeological survey for all Planned Development and Form-Based Zoning District requests.
- CR 6. Monitor inventories and studies conducted by other agencies which identify new or recently discovered historic or cultural resources.
- CR 7. Protect rural historic landscapes from development that may be out of character with their inherent rural attributes.
- CR 8. Maintain and update development standards that preserve scenic and historic roadways and vistas.
- CR 9. Utilize planning and zoning techniques to protect historic communities and neighborhoods and other areas of cultural significance.
- CR 10. Consider possible tax relief initiatives to owners who rehabilitate historically significant property.
- CR 11. Encourage adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of older buildings that complement historic development patterns.
- CR 12. Adopt innovative planning and zoning techniques such as Form-Based Zoning District regulations to promote and protect cultural and archaeological resources.
- CR 13. Explore options to create a local program to protect locally significant historic and cultural resources.

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