



City of North Charleston Comprehensive Plan Update 2015



City of North Charleston
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City of North Charleston Comprehensive Plan Update 2015



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CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

The City of North Charleston, incorporated in 1972, is situated in the center of the Charleston-North Charleston Metropolitan Area, on the central coast of South Carolina. This region consists of three counties – Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester. North Charleston lies primarily in Charleston County, with approximately one quarter of the city's land mass extending into Dorchester County and a few small properties in Berkeley County. North Charleston extends from the 'Neck' of the Charleston Peninsula northward between the Cooper River and Ashley River. In addition to the City of Charleston, North Charleston is also adjacent to the cities of Hanahan, Goose Creek, and Summerville, as well as unincorporated portions of all three of the region's counties.

North Charleston's central location in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Region makes the city a regional hub for transportation, retail and commerce. Within the City of North Charleston are: Joint Base Charleston; Charleston International Airport; two port terminals (a third terminal is being developed); Norfolk-Southern and CSX rail lines; and the interchange of two interstate highways – Interstates 26 and 526. North Charleston continually leads the state in retail sales, boasting two regional malls within its borders. The city is also a major center for hotels and accommodations. Charleston Southern University, Trident Technical College, and several other colleges are based in North Charleston, and help to incubate a growing business and technology sector, including the Boeing South Carolina complex.

The major industry and commerce of North Charleston is located in an area with numerous natural resources. The Ashley River forms much of the city's western boundary, and is a National Scenic River that provides recreational opportunities as well as scenic natural and historical viewpoints. The Cooper River forms the deepwater harbor for Charleston's multiple seaport terminals in addition to its significant recreational and ecological importance. Additionally, there are numerous tidal creeks,

wetlands, and forested areas in North Charleston that are vital to protecting ecological habitats, water and air quality essential to the city and the community's quality of life.

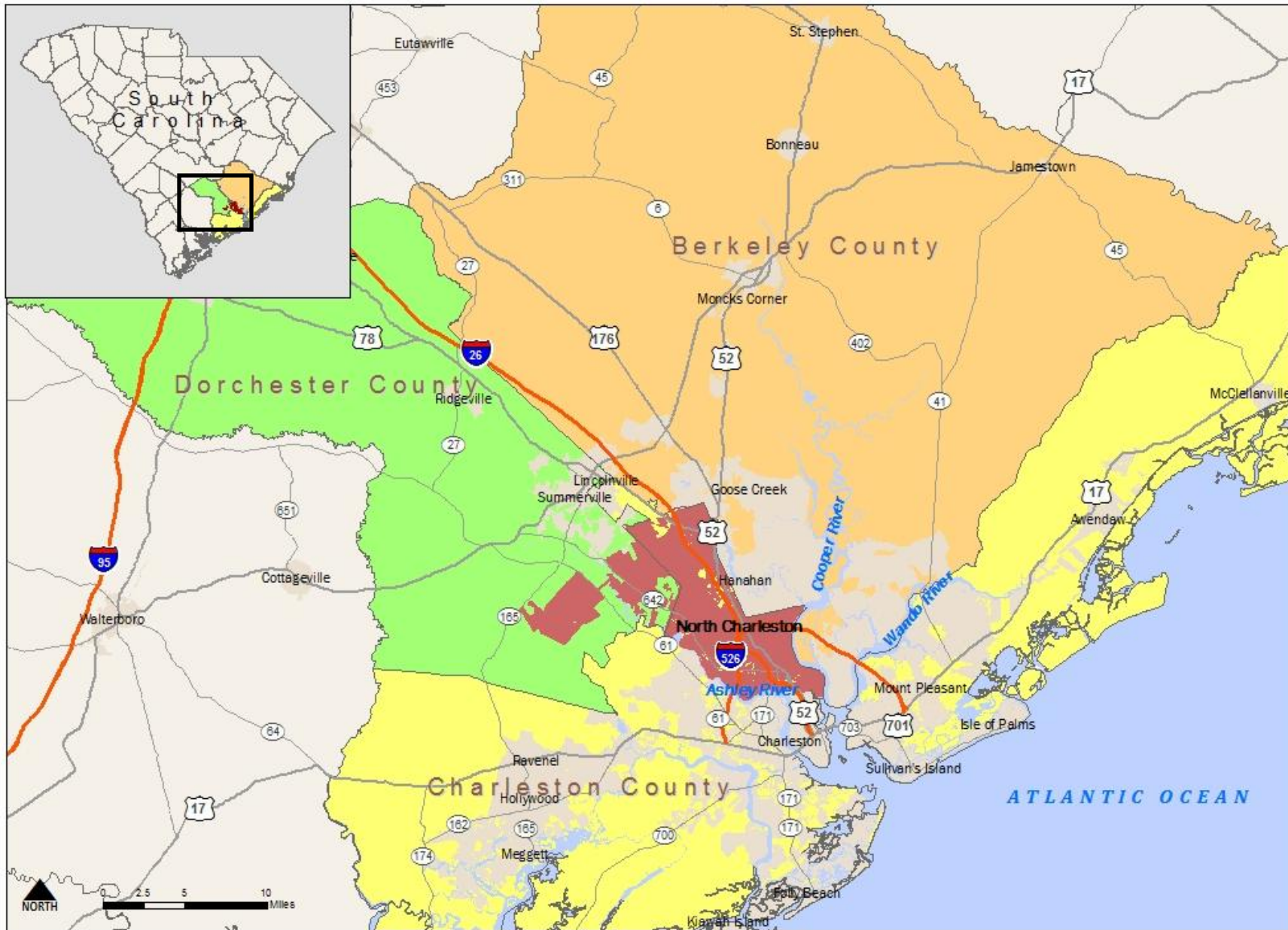
A comprehensive plan inventories and assesses existing conditions in the community, determines future needs, and sets goals, policies, and implementation strategies for the future. It also provides the Future Land Use Map from which zoning and development decisions are based. This Comprehensive Plan will help guide North Charleston in its arrangement of land uses, transportation systems, and support facilities to maintain and continue the City's importance as a strong, regional economic leader. It also helps to address and retain support for the key natural resources and cultural assets that characterize the City.

In addition, this plan will help the city meet housing, public service and facility needs as it continues to grow and develop. Equally important, it will set guidelines and strategies for redeveloping older areas of the city that declined in population and investment over the years, and ensure that new development respects the natural environment and does not overburden the transportation system or public services. Finally, this plan aims to help North Charleston grow and develop in a sustainable fashion, meeting the needs of current generations while ensuring the opportunity for future generations to enjoy the same resources and quality of life. North Charleston has already begun to establish itself as a sustainable community, and this document builds upon those ideals to help ensure the long-term viability of North Charleston as a great city.

The Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, part of the South Carolina Code of Laws, grants local governments the authority to undertake planning and to adopt zoning and land development regulations. The North Charleston Planning Commission, appointed by the City Council, is the

authority in charge of overseeing the preparation and revision of the Comprehensive Plan and any updates. The City Council adopts the Comprehensive Plan by ordinance, but only after the Planning Commission has recommended the plan. The first Comprehensive Plan for the City of North Charleston under South Carolina State standards was adopted in 1996.

MAP 1.1: STATE AND REGIONAL LOCATION



A full update of the Comprehensive Plan was conducted in 2008. This iteration of the Comprehensive Plan retains many of the basic elements of the 2008 Plan and incorporates a partial update conducted in 2015. This partial update integrates updated data into the 2008 Comprehensive Plan to form one seamless document.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan involved a thorough public participation process that began with a public kickoff to the planning process in May 2007, and included twelve public workshops held in three sessions in June, July and September. Additionally, a survey was made available on the city's website (with hardcopies made available at the workshops) to seek additional input from citizens on the strengths, weaknesses, issues, and future opportunities of North Charleston. The public input process was instrumental in forming the goals, policies and recommendations made throughout this document. Hard data and information are key to analyzing a city's current conditions and future needs, but public participation provides a valuable and necessary complement that provides a real, human perspective that cannot be garnered from maps and data alone. The public participation plan and results of the public survey are provided in the appendix to the 2008 Plan.

The 2015 partial update to the Comprehensive Plan focused on providing updated demographics and community indicators for population, housing, and economic development, along with a revised future land use plan and implementation program. The majority of community goals and policies are carried over from the 2008 Plan.

1.1 - PLANNING AREAS

North Charleston is a large and diverse city and varies in both physical characteristics and local issues in different areas of the city. Land use patterns and social demographics may vary from the older, more urbanized sections of the city compared to more newly built areas that are still developing in traditional suburban patterns. To effectively plan for the city's diverse neighborhoods

and districts, the 1996 Comprehensive Development Plan divided the city into planning areas for the purpose of examining each area in closer detail. The four planning areas in both the 2008 and 2015 updates are essentially identical to Planning Areas 1-4 from the 1996 Comprehensive Development Plan. The four areas are as follows:

Planning Area 1: This area is the portion of North Charleston located east of Interstate 26 and south of Ashley Phosphate Road. The borders that define this area are Ashley Phosphate Road, the City of Hanahan, the Cooper River, Interstate 26, and the southern city limits. Trident Technical College, City Hall, North Charleston's two seaports, Riverfront Park, Olde North Charleston, and Park Circle are included in Planning Area 1. This area is also home to redevelopment at the former U.S. Navy Base, including Clemson University's Restoration Institute, the US Navy's SPAWAR facilities, and the new port facilities.

Planning Area 2: The borders of this area are Interstate 26, Ashley Phosphate Road, Dorchester County boundaries, and the Ashley River. Joint Base Charleston, Charleston International Airport, Boeing South Carolina, Tanger Outlet Mall, Charleston County's Bridgeview Complex and the North Charleston Coliseum and Performing Arts Center are all located in Area 2.

Planning Area 3: This area is the Upper Dorchester Corridor, consisting of all areas of North Charleston within Dorchester County, including the Watson Hill tract located across the Ashley River. Planning Area 3 is primarily a residential area – within this area are Wescott Plantation, the North Charleston Public Golf Course, Whitehall, Cedar Grove, and Coosaw Creek.

Planning Area 4: Planning Area 4 is made up of the city's areas that are north of Ashley Phosphate Road and within Charleston County. Trident Regional Medical Center, Palmetto Commerce Park, Charleston Southern University, Northwoods Mall, Wannamaker County Park, and the Ingleside Plantation development are all located within Planning Area 4.

MAP 1.2: PLANNING AREAS

