



Comprehensive Plan Update

Guiding the future for a lasting Lowcountry.

Charleston County News Release

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Public Hearing Scheduled for Charleston County Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Hearing scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 7, at 5:30 p.m.

Charleston County Council will hold a public hearing on the update of the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan on Tuesday, Oct. 7 at 5:30 p.m. The hearing will be held in Charleston County Council Chambers located on the second floor of the Lonnie Hamilton III, Public Services Building (4045 Bridge View Drive in North Charleston). This public hearing allows for additional public comment to be given to County Council prior to their adoption of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

The Comprehensive Plan Update is the result of the state mandated 10-year update cycle, the need for the County to conform to new state statutes (*The Priority Investment Act*) that require additional elements in the Comprehensive Plan, and a response to changing economic and growth trends.

The Charleston County Comprehensive Plan Update process began with a kickoff meeting held in September 2007. The Charleston County Planning Commission directed the update process and was assisted by a team of consultants who evaluated trends and aided in the drafting of the document. The update process includes four key phases with a public participation element between each phase: (1) data collection and analysis; (2) policy development; (3) draft plan document; and (4) adoption.

The County held three rounds of public workshops during the update process. Each round consisted of four workshops, one in each of the four planning areas in the County. The workshops were held October 29-30, 2007; February 25-26, 2008; and July 14-15, 2008. An additional workshop was held in November 2007 with the Charleston County Citizens Academy. A total of 725 people attended the series of public workshops to share their ideas for how the Comprehensive Plan should guide key decisions for the future of Charleston County.

The results of each round of public workshops were documented in reports and were shared with the Charleston County Planning Commission and Charleston County Council. These public comments were a significant aspect in the update of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition to the four rounds of public workshops, the Planning Commission held 13 workshop meetings to discuss and review the results of the public workshops and to review the draft updated plan. Charleston County is currently in the adoption phase of the update process, which includes a public hearing, a recommendation from the Planning and Public Works Committee of County Council, and three readings by County Council.

The draft Comprehensive Plan Update and reports summarizing the workshop process and the public input received at each workshop are available on Charleston County's Web site: www.charlestoncounty.org (click on the Comprehensive Plan Update link located in the "Program Information" section at the bottom of the home page).

What is the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan?

- Charleston County's Comprehensive Plan expresses the County's intent for where and how future growth and development should occur. The plan also identifies parts of the County that may or may not be appropriate for certain types of growth, given the Lowcountry's unique character and natural conditions.

When did the planning process begin?

- The Comprehensive Plan Update process formally began with an overview for the Charleston County Planning Commission on September 17, 2007. The overview included information on the events and meetings that will take place during the 12 to 14 month process.

There were three rounds of public workshops

- Workshop Series 1 was held on October 29 and 30, 2007, and included brainstorming ideas for the future. Charleston County's Citizens' Academy members also participated in this workshop series on November 26, 2007.
- Workshop Series 2 was held on February 25 and 26, 2008, and focused on preparing a conceptual development framework.
- Workshop Series 3 was held on July 14 and 15, 2008, and focused on the draft Plan and the associated recommendations.

Why does the Comprehensive Plan need to be updated?

- Title 6, Chapter 29 of the South Carolina Code of Laws requires that the Comprehensive Plan be reviewed at least once every five years and updated at least once every ten years.

Who is involved in the update process?

- The Public
- Stakeholders
- Charleston County Council
- Charleston County Planning Commission
- Charleston County Planning Staff
- Consultant Team for Charleston County (McBride Dale Clarion/ACP-Visioning & Planning, Ltd./Miley Gallo & Associates)

How does the process work?

- This entire process will take approximately 14 months and involve extensive public participation.
- The update process began with a kickoff meeting held on September 17, 2007.
- Three rounds of public participation workshops were held in each of the following planning areas during this process:
 - East Cooper Area
 - Central/Urban Area, including North Charleston, Charleston, West Ashley and James Island
 - Johns Island and Wadmalaw Island, including Kiawah Island and Seabrook Island
 - West County/Edisto Island

BACKGROUND:

The primary purpose of the Comprehensive Plan Update is to guide public decision-making that will affect the quality of life in Charleston County for the next 10 years. In 1994, the South Carolina General Assembly passed the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act that required counties and municipalities to adopt a comprehensive plan if they were going to have zoning and land development ordinances (S.C. Code Sections 6-29-310 through 6-29-1200). The act was amended last year to expand the number of planning elements to be included in the comprehensive plan from seven to nine. The nine elements that are addressed in this 10-year update of the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan are:

1. Population
2. Economy
3. Natural Resources
4. Cultural Resources
5. Housing
6. Community Facilities
7. Land use
8. Transportation
9. Priority Investment

Visit the Charleston County Web site at www.charlestoncounty.org and click on the link to the Comprehensive Plan Update located at the bottom of the page for the draft Comprehensive Plan Update, public meeting notices, agendas, presentations, reports summarizing the public workshops, and up-to-date news and information about the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan Update.