

# Charleston City Plan Public Input Report Fall 2020

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## Cultural Resources

### Survey Responses

**Which of the following are most important for improving overall quality of life for the Charleston community?**

- 1. Effective drainage and flood management**
- 2. Clean environment (air, water, soil, etc.)**
- 3. Preservation of cultural history and racial diversity**
4. Preservation of historic buildings and landmarks
- 5. Having multiple options for housing types and price levels**
6. Equitable access to nature (including water), parks and recreational facilities
- 7. Having multiple options for transportation**
8. Quality architecture and design
9. Equitable access to nearby quality schools
10. Living close to work
11. Equitable access to art, culture and public spaces

*Bolded reflects top 5 prioritized across all underrepresented categories.*

**What do you like most about living in Charleston?**

- Beautiful, Charming, Friendly, Unique, Vibrant, Active, Historic, Diverse
- Convenience, location, “close to...”
- Water: access to beaches and waterways for recreation and/or fishing, crabbing, etc.
- The natural environment (green space, trees, marshes) and outdoor activities
- History
- Food
- Arts, Culture & the Outdoors: recreation/plenty to do
- The people
- Sense of community
- Family, roots, home
- Gullah-Geechee history/culture
- Architecture and built environment
- Big city amenities, small town feel
- Ability to walk and/or bike everywhere
- Diversity (racial/ethnic)
- Slow and relaxed pace/lifestyle
- Educational opportunities
- Affordable?

- Mixture of urban, rural and natural surroundings
- Weather (warm, year-round growing season)

### Listening Session Findings

- *Citywide:*
  - The community deeply values the history and culture of the city, and there are concerns about the loss of the region's Gullah-Geechee culture and history due to development and decreasing affordability. Residents would like to see efforts to protect these communities as valued assets to the city.
- *Cainhoy:*
  - The most beloved qualities of Wando and Daniel Island are the country environment, connection with the land and nature, and sense of community.
  - This area is rich in cultural and natural resources: historic settlement communities,
  - Jack Primus Settlement/Wando-Huger Area With expansion on the Cainhoy Peninsula and large tracts of land available for development, the City's Planning and Sustainability department recognizes the need to reach out to the historic Jack Primus settlement community. The Keith School Museum, on Clements Ferry Road, at the front of what is now The Peninsula neighborhood, is a historic one-room, wooden building founded by Edward Keith with help from the Jack Primus community to educate the children of former slaves in the area. Reaching out to Vernelle Dickerson with the museum and Fred Lincoln of the Wando-Huger Community Development Corporation, and Sybil Mitchell, the conversation started with a reminder that Wando and Huger are recognized places versus Cainhoy, which is more of a regional reference.
  - We live in a really unique community of 300 acres- all of our families came from the Cainhoy Plantation - which is the land being slated for development. There is a cemetery on that land which must be preserved - conserving the land surrounding that graveyard within the 9000 acres. All of our history and America's history is here. Very important for the traditional community not to be pushed out. We cannot be pushed out by taxation and drastic changes in property values. Property adjacent to our community needs to mirror the housing - large houses in our area. We have good schools but we lack any type of recreation - even just playgrounds and sidewalks. We want to be included versus excluded from the plan. Our area is the only area which provides affordable housing - even if it is a mobile home, it is paid for and cared for. The City needs to honor that. Recreation and quality of life improvements which retain the rural characteristics of the community are important. We have spoken about not developing around the big borrow pit and making certain it is available for the enjoyment of all. We see that as a big benefit for our community.
  - **\*\*The plan should include all historical preservation of local sights, as they have on Daniel Island. A sense of history runs deep in the Charleston area.**
  - Greenspace that showcases cultural resources and farmers market - opportunities to get the community together.

- CM Delcioppo: A lot of people don't realize is how much history is in the Cainhoy Peninsula. That I feel very much needs to inform the built environment. Everybody knows the BAR downtown on the peninsula. And what we're seeing is some very prominent historical, cultural resources, historical markers coming under threat. If we didn't have the advocates we do, what would happen with those resources? Because they're unknown, not as common like battery and rainbow row. Cemetery with revolutionary war soldiers buried. Freedman's blacksmith shop.
- *Peninsula:*
  - The peninsula is loved by tourists and residents alike for its historic buildings and scenic views of the harbor. It also has a diversity of unique residential communities, a vibrant commercial center, and a rich arts, culture and food scene. It is a place for activity and connection.
  - Art and cultural options - different styles of events that are reflective of the different people within our community - people see themselves.
  - Charleston in all of its uniqueness is that it's native Gullah Geechee population has lost their social and cultural places. They are moving away and not by choice; take into consideration that population when doing afford. Housing. The cultural impact that was generated
- *Johns Island:*
  - Johns Island is a rural community. It's important to residents to maintain their connection with both its rich history - where "every place has a story"; and beautiful nature - where "life can't be stopped." The island's heritage and environment should be protected and preserved.
  - To maintain the rural and agricultural character of the island, land conservation should be prioritized. Preserving and restoring ecosystems can also be used to protect against current and future flooding.
  - River Road with the family farms and progressive club has a lot of cultural integrity which needs to be maintained and the UGB isn't helping there.
  - Returning to the roots of the island is a huge value, combining what is shared above. Preserving the culture and history of enslaved families that built on the land before. The topography has always been there.
  - Environment and culture, topography of the land. Access to the water. Came from an area similar to JI in the past with farmers. Farmers are a valuable asset. We need to remember the people who have built the island. They are the crown jewel. We can't forget them.
  - Part of the draw is the cultural part and the variety is important. The islands have the Gullah Geechee cultures that are important to the island's living. We need to make sure we do not overlook the island culture as the area is expanded and built.
- *Charla:*
  - Living in the city fo 20 years, doing events, all of the years we have always been welcome as a culture, even though from different countries, always felt very welcomed, planned events for 15 years for cinco de mayo festivals, through music and food we can share and feel welcome and that's a blessing. Tools like this that help us participate in being part of the future is very important, so very happy to be here.

- Something that catches my attention, cities in other states where hispanic presence is notable in certain areas, whether because of type of business or how colorful some neighborhoods are, like NY there is a Chinatown, Italian neighborhood, etc. What I love about Charleston is, I don't feel like it feels multicultural. One of the possibilities to grow as human beings, growing and nurturing, to be multicultural. I think AA are in certain areas, and hispanic in certain areas, is this considered? About mixing, and not segregating neighborhoods?
- Community spaces, for culture. This space to share our ideas and thinking about the future is really important, being included is important for us.
- *West Ashley*
  - West Ashley is prized for its community-oriented suburban neighborhoods, assortments of parks and recreation facilities, and the wealth of amenities and services available for its residents. Its diversity and affordability attract people from all backgrounds and lifestyles.
  - diversity of building types, versus monoculture buildings all looking the same. Local mom and pop stores versus big box stores
- *James Island:*
  - Residents of James Island celebrated the small town feel, made up of an eclectic mix of diverse and tight-knit communities. There was also a shared love of the connection with the natural landscape, especially the old trees, surrounding marshes and water.
  - Lived in Down Cut/Cross Cut (JI County Park)/Cut Bridge and now Ferguson Village, better part of life. I love that we are a close community that lives and works together. It's hard to see what is happening to our community. The flooding has been a battle for over 30 years. Did a walk through with neighbors - they still feel community, but feel left behind. Proper drainage, sidewalks, community center for children - we need these, never had before. I moved back to Charleston because this is MY community. Family lived on and owned the Dill community? Slave relatives created this for us, we don't want to lose it. We just want to see more improvements. Don't plan on leaving. This was once an underdeveloped community. John Meyer (?) sold to the African American community. How do we preserve the Black community. We'd like to keep it a part of the JI footprint. Just like with Folly Road assessment. It was one of the oldest Black communities.

## Community Submissions

### *Preservation Society of Charleston/Coastal Conservation League Community-led meeting notes*

- Need to recognize preservation needs for historic areas outside of downtown or it will be lost – needs to be expanded outside of peninsula – areas like Maryville, etc. have just as much significance
- Agree we do need to recognize areas outside of downtown
- Phillips Community – needs designation – important for Council to hear from residents this is important
- Communities in neck of Charleston, just outside of USACE wall that need help
- In addition to more recognizable communities, there are scattered properties that used to be concentrated but now being picked off for infill (James and Johns Island) – African American settlement community history – we need to at least recognize these properties, and consider them in context of redevelopment – work with Center of Heirs Properties
- Would hate to see the character of Avondale be diminished by large scale developments that are popping up around the city. Don't want the next house that comes up for sale to be changed to be completely out of character for the neighborhood.
- Would like way to educate residents of neighborhood
- Upper Peninsula neighborhoods review demolition but nothing else. Don't want character changed but don't want regulations – neighborhood conservation districts is a tool
- Historic gems in West Ashley
- Need to incorporate options and expand education on what can be done to promote preservation
- Most people don't understand what areas are protected by the City; Johns Island, West Ashley, Cainhoy—ignoring citizen input, need to bind City to protect
- Protections we have in place are not always proving adequate to protect existing resources. As we think about expanding, also consider: what are other tools we can bring forward?  
Zoning/historic preservation tools
- Tapestry of Charleston worthy of respect (entire Charleston area), City could do a better job of listening to residents in all areas; what is appropriate in one area may not be in another. Approval should take into consideration context with laser-eye. All areas need to be embraced/supported in retaining fabric of our city
- Broader awareness of distinct character/value = greater voice in protecting resources. Living on the peninsula, less aware of what's going on elsewhere. Knowledge is power.
- Size of development can be irrelevant
- History is a big part of why we have such a robust tourist industry - we can't have a historic city without preserving our history
- One of the major threats to historic preservation for the city of Charleston is the cruise ship industry. There is no other historic city in America that has cruise ship parking in a historic district - usually put out with historic shipping issues - economically it's a net negative - costs the city a lot more than the city receives - its all the ports - how is the City benefiting from this?

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- Need to do more to preserve Gullah culture and African American heritage - putting more into the culture that made Charleston what it is - protection of heirs properties and understanding of how they work.
- There are real gems throughout west Ashley that should be protected - incorporate options and expand education on what can be done to provoke preservation in those areas - many people don't know -

### *Historic Charleston Foundation*

- Conserve and protect natural and cultural resources on and off peninsula. These features
- are important to the aesthetics of the city and provide crucial flood risk mitigation.
  
- Maintain the commitment to the city's Preservation Plan. Preservation of cultural and historic assets is what make Charleston unique and is an integral part of Charleston's DNA. Charleston's history should continue to inform planning and development.
  
- Landscape scale preservation efforts on Johns island and the Cainhoy Peninsula should continue.
  
- The City Plan should address the need for an archaeological ordinance and prioritize areas of the city where archaeology would be required before development or redevelopment of a site could be commenced. The peninsula and areas of the city located in the Ashley River Historic District should be priorities.
  
- Cultural resource opportunities abound in Charleston, yet we can be more inclusive.
- Support policies, incentives and plans that are inclusive and share the history of everyone who has lived and labored in Charleston.

### *AIA community led meeting:*

- Growth in private sector to balance house and hotels with public aspects. The parks and arts have not grown in tandem with the housing and hotels. How do we work to a balance between the two?
- Design for the local context; design for charleston, local typologies
- Updating preservation plan, linking these plans. Specifically with Dutch Dialogues, lifting houses, guidebooks for how to raise a house, things like that are helpful.
- Looking out and looking west, west ashley james island johns island, getting a cohesive identity of the city, pushing back against the notion that the peninsula is Charleston, important goal for this plan, to help with community identity, creating buy-in, looking at



flooding and sea level rise, we're seeing stormwater impacts throughout the city, we're seeing ordinances to address that, comprehensive and more global focus will be a success

- Sat on the commercial corridor DRB, really struggled with the character of some of these other areas of the City, city portions of jurisdiction, area character appraisal studies, larger than just the architectural aesthetic, the way people move through those areas, connections with other types of transportation, size of growth, city has started that process, focusing on that in the next 10 years, and one place where AIA could help

*Center for Heirs Property led community meeting:*

- Feedback on current preservation efforts:
  - flooding protections
  - The approval process is very complicated and difficult to navigate, especially when other committees are involved (not just BAR) How do people know if they're not looking for it? How is the information communicated to affected communities?
  - Is there an unequal impact of the regulations, especially in the way that violations get reported? (thinking especially in gentrifying neighborhoods) Response: the most common situation is neighbors reporting developers
- What does preservation look like:
  - Peninsula: affordable
  - Ferguson Village: new construction to remain within same area, sidewalks, underground drainage, no 6-ft security fences, keep ditches clean, affordable

## Natural Resources

### Survey Results

**Which of the following are most important for improving overall quality of life for the Charleston community?**

- 12. Effective drainage and flood management**
- 13. Clean environment (air, water, soil, etc.)**
- 14. Preservation of cultural history and racial diversity**
15. Preservation of historic buildings and landmarks
- 16. Having multiple options for housing types and price levels**
17. Equitable access to nature (including water), parks and recreational facilities
- 18. Having multiple options for transportation**
19. Quality architecture and design
20. Equitable access to nearby quality schools
21. Living close to work
22. Equitable access to art, culture and public spaces

*Bolded reflects top 5 prioritized across all underrepresented categories.*

Other field

Common themes:

- All are of equal importance!
- Equitable beach access (parking, bike/ped)
- Equitable access to fresh and affordable food, more urban gardens
- Better cleaning and maintenance of public spaces outside of tourism areas
- Preservation of natural ecosystems and wildlife

**What people like most (common themes):**

- Beautiful, Charming, Friendly, Unique, Vibrant, Active, Historic, Diverse
- Water: access to beaches and waterways for recreation and/or fishing, crabbing, etc.
- The natural environment (green space, trees, marshes) and outdoor activities
- Mixture of urban, rural and natural surroundings
- Weather (warm, year-round growing season)

What is most challenging (common themes):

- Flooding
- Hurricanes
- Weather (heat & humidity)
- Bugs!
- Trash/litter

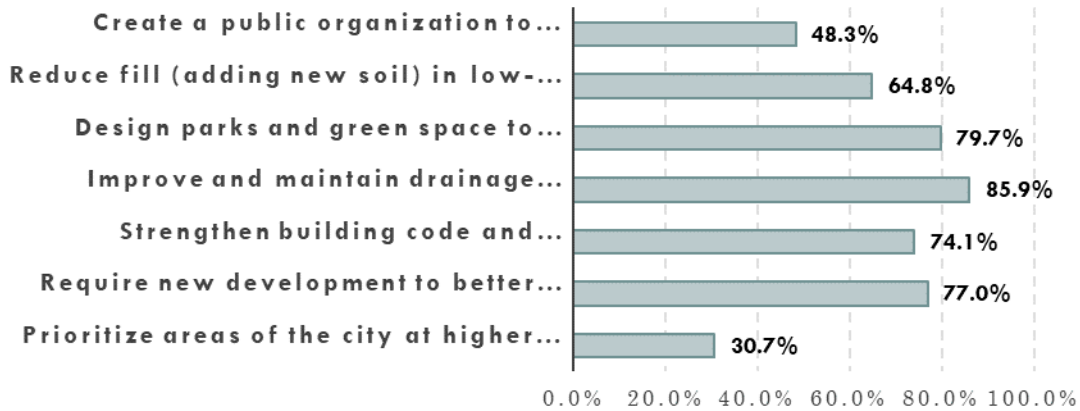
**Preserved Land Locations:**

- Overall:
  - Public water access (along all shorelines citywide) – not just views, but interaction with (recreation, fishing, crabbing)
  - More kayak launches (separate from boat ramps)
  - Beach access (free parking and shuttles)
  - Require more preserved open space for all new development citywide, especially development hot spots
  - Wetlands & marsh (preserve and restore)
  - Safe bike/ped routes to access green/blue space
  - Citywide equitable distribution of green/blue space (everyone within walking distance)
  - More passive recreation with priority on preservation/conservation
- Specific locations:
  - Upper Peninsula & the Neck
  - East Bay waterfront
  - Maybank Corridor
  - Church Creek Area
  - Ashley River Bridge
  - Between Savannah Hwy and Ashley River Rd
  - Downtown public dock/boat ramp
  - Cainhoy/Clements Ferry Rd, Point Hope
  - Drum Island

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- Near public housing
- Bottom of Daniel Island

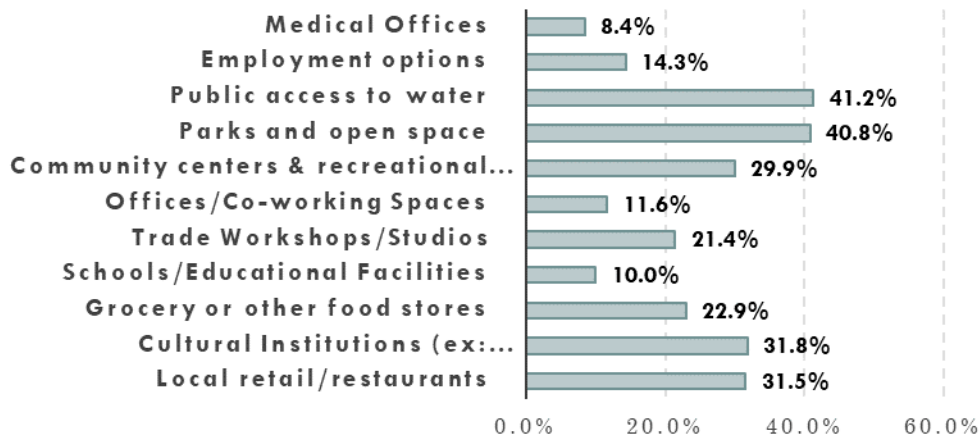
The recent Dutch Dialogues study adopted by City Council recommended a variety of strategies to decrease impacts of flooding and better manage water. Which of the following strategies would you support?



Other field:

- Artificial reefs and other natural barriers
- Plant trees and vegetation
- Protect low-lying areas from future development
- Build/restore canals
- Strengthen wetland protection and wetland buffer requirements
- Expand incentives/require LID (permeable surfaces and rain harvesting) and green infrastructure
- Purchase undeveloped land to convert to green infrastructure

**Which of the following does your neighborhood lack that you wish you had nearby? Check all that apply.**



*The following were selected at even higher percentages by respondents in these under-represented categories: Black/African American: employment options and offices; Lower-income: employment options, offices, trade workshops, parks, community centers and cultural institutions; Tenants: employment options, offices, trade workshops, grocery stores and cultural institutions; Youth: employment options, parks, community centers, grocery stores and cultural institutions*

Other field:

29407: inner west ashley

- **Access to water (swimming)**
- **Dog park**

29412: james island

- **Recreation facilities**
- **Public pool**

29414: outer west ashley

- **Public pool**
- **Public water access**

29455: johns island

- **Public pool**

### Listening Session Findings

- Citywide
  - People feel a strong connection to the natural landscape. Residents want to see increased access citywide to clean and healthy green space and water.

- The natural landscape can be a resource in both improving quality of life for residents and mitigating flooding. Residents would like to see our valuable ecosystems preserved and restored as our city faces increasing flooding challenges with sea level rise and worsening storms.
- West Ashley
  - To improve existing parks and recreation options, West Ashley residents would also like to have access to a public pool and more free access to the shoreline.
- Cainhoy
  - This area is rich in cultural and natural resources: historic settlement communities, the Francis Marion National Forest, longleaf pine forests and wetlands. These are important to protect and reflect in future development.
  - Daniel Island successfully achieved a connected community with ample access to parks, recreation and green space. These amenities are needed in the upper part of Cainhoy Peninsula, especially free access to water.
  - Opportunities for fishing, crabbing, connection to living off of land/water.
- Peninsula
- James Island
  - There was also a shared love of the connection with the natural landscape, especially the old trees, surrounding marshes and water.
  - It is critical to ensure that new development is done in a way that preserves open space, protects the natural ecosystem and improves flooding.
  - People love the proximity of James Island to both downtown and the beach, but getting to either can prove challenging - and unsafe - if you don't have a car. This is also true for traveling around the island - especially to existing parks and recreation areas.
- Johns Island
  - to maintain the rural and agricultural character of the island, land conservation should be prioritized. Preserving and restoring ecosystems can also be used to protect against current and future flooding.
  - There are few parks and places for recreation on Johns Island. Residents would like to have more athletic fields, a public pool, and more places for the community to gather — all that are safely accessible on foot or on bike.

## Community Submissions

### *Historic Charleston Foundation*

- Charleston has made great strides in land conservation and has promoted compact development patterns that minimize consumption of land. This effort should continue as part of the Charleston City Plan, as land conservation and density are important components of a resilient Charleston. Land conservation, forest and agricultural land preservation allows for natural absorption of water to prevent stormwater and storm surge flooding.
- Do not allow development in risky surge, intertidal or overland drainage zones and put future and current residents at risk.
- Protect and enforce the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Limiting urban expansion beyond the boundary is important to protecting the natural resources that make Charleston beautiful and unique. The UGB also ensures the protection of lands for natural water absorption.

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- Embrace current park spaces and protect the greenbelt surrounding the city. These spaces should be integrated as part of the city's water infiltration and storage strategy.
- Much of the city is at or very near sea level. The city's Sea Level Rise Strategy projects 2-3 feet of sea level rise over the next 50 years. It is critical that the Charleston City Plan include a city-wide water plan. As recommended in the Dutch Dialogues Charleston Final Report, this water plan should provide a comprehensive assessment of flood risk, storage, infiltration and drainage performance and set forth water assignments per drainage basin. Further, the water plan should identify preferred land use needed to achieve water assignments. The water plan should also make a groundwater assessment.
- Water does not respect jurisdictional boundaries. Better coordination between County and neighboring municipalities, as well as state agencies will be necessary in developing the water plan and preserving natural resources.
- Encourage and further incentivize the adoption of conservation easements.

### *CAJM-led community meeting:*

- More green spaces in other parts of Charleston. Downtown has a lot of great spaces.
- Johns Island, James island need green spaces.
- The parks and public facilities in African-American communities didn't start from the same place as the ones in white neighborhoods, and they are not equitable

### *Charleston Climate Coalition led community meeting:*

- Environmental justice issues
  - Pursue this by ensuring wide range of stakeholders involved in discussing how to come to the best solution
  - Knock on doors and reach out to community members
  - Engage and empower community leaders, specifically in underserved areas, to reach out to their communities to discuss the issues of environmental issues

### *Coastal Conservation League and Preservation Society of Charleston led community meeting:*

- Johns Island: more parks! Center of the island has one small park, need more (ball fields, etc.) extreme growth challenging schools
- Cainho expressed the same issue during their session
- Need to codify UGB—land inside is precious
- Ex: Hwy 61—land that was once a shopping center = park, fire station, stormwater management
- Land inside UGB is more expensive but often more valuable to community at large
- Would vote for large open space (b or d). In the City, parks get attention from neighborhoods where they are located; culturally significant sites can get attention too but we are vulnerable with our undeveloped land—harder to coalesce public concern on empty land that's ripe for development
- Applaud addition of parks/green space. Pruning of trees by Dominion needs regulation. Stunned by over-pruning; going to impact look/feel of City
- Should be planting more trees; Dutch Dialogues report was very specific about large canopies (dispersing rainwater)

- Funds could be used for development of water/rain gardens in urban areas that would mitigate flooding
- City project: Trees to offset water (determining how much water trees hold—how to use trees to manage stormwater)
- Fortify urban growth boundary
- Protecting land that are low elevations for resilience purposes like around burden creek on Johns Island
- Strategic opportunities to address flooding through acquisition of vulnerable land
- Uhaul property on King Street to reinvigorate urban corridor
- Easements and use of land into parks, even pocket parks in neighborhoods in urban areas
- Main greenbelt purpose is not for flood dollars – encourage applicants to seek funding for land threatened by transportation/ growth, with flooding mitigation as a benefit

## Economic Development

### Survey Results

**Which of the following are most important for improving overall quality of life for the Charleston community?**

- 23. Effective drainage and flood management**
- 24. Clean environment (air, water, soil, etc.)**
- 25. Preservation of cultural history and racial diversity**
26. Preservation of historic buildings and landmarks
- 27. Having multiple options for housing types and price levels**
28. Equitable access to nature (including water), parks and recreational facilities
- 29. Having multiple options for transportation**
30. Quality architecture and design
31. Equitable access to nearby quality schools
32. Living close to work
33. Equitable access to art, culture and public spaces

*Bolded reflects top 5 prioritized across all underrepresented categories.*

### **QUALITY OF LIFE (OTHER FIELD)**

Common themes:

- All are of equal importance!
- Ending structural racism/racial inequalities
- Residents over tourists (in context of economic development too, i.e. diversifying economy)
- Equitable access to high quality jobs and livable wages
- Climate change mitigation and infrastructure to support clean energy
- Variety of local businesses (supporting black and other minority ownership) throughout the city, affordable commercial space
- Services, amenities, housing, healthcare for aging population

**What people like most (common themes):**

- Food
- Arts, Culture & the Outdoors: recreation/plenty to do
- Big city amenities, small town feel

**What is most challenging (common themes):**

- Traffic/Commute & mobility
- Parking
- Tourism
- Segregation and racism
- Racial and Income inequality/inequity
- Unaffordable/high cost of living
- Low wages/lack of job opportunities
- Cost of running small/local business
- Access to fresh food and grocery stores

**The following make it difficult for respondents to obtain a job in their preferred field, or to advance in their current field:**

1. acceptable pay rate **(58%)**
2. limited job openings **(53%)**
3. affordable office and/or commercial space **(26%)**
4. child or other family care **(17%)**
5. access to reliable transportation **(14%)**
6. access to business start-up loans **(10%)**
7. no classes and/or training offered locally **(8%)**
8. access to continuing education loans **(4%)**

*The percentage of 'lack of access to loans' (both for business start-up and continuing education) was **double** for Black/African-American respondents; and 'lack of access to reliable transportation' was **double** for youth and lower-income respondents.*

Other field:

Themes:

- Wages very low compared to cost of living
- Commute distance/reliable transportation
- Age discrimination
- Local regulations
- Finding employees (lack of affordable housing and transit)
- Internet Access
- Diversity in job opportunities/careers

Other submissions:



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- Internships not enough experience for entry level
- Cannabis testing
- COVID
- parking on peninsula

**Respondents reported being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the following ways;**

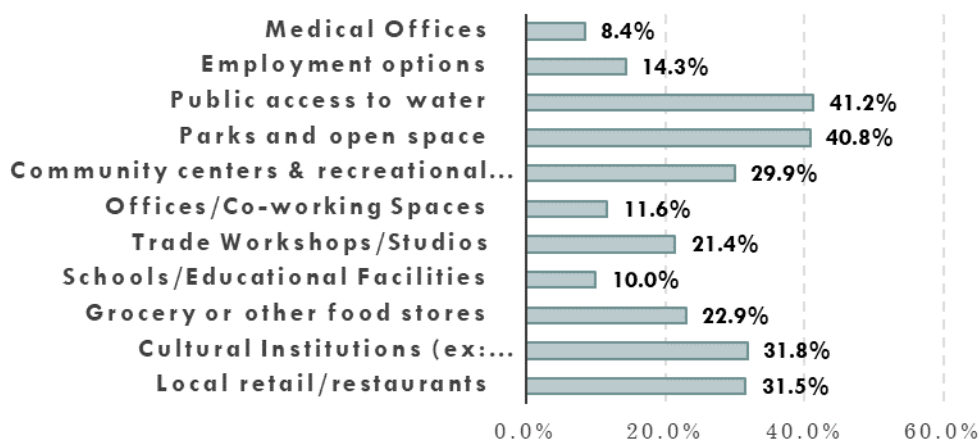
- lost income (39%)
- changed work location/commute (39%)
- children’s education (23%)
- lost a job (13%)
- lost housing or at risk (2%)

*There was a 3-5 times higher percentage of Black/African-American respondents, lower-income respondents, youth and tenants that reported losing housing or being at risk of losing housing; and roughly double the percentage of lower-income respondents, youth and tenants that reported losing a job.*

Other field:

- Isolation (esp. seniors)
- Hurt business
- Childcare challenges
- Mental health
- Stopped continuing education

**Which of the following does your neighborhood lack that you wish you had nearby? Check all that apply.**



*The following were selected at even higher percentages by respondents in these under-represented categories: Black/African American: employment options and offices; Lower-income: employment*

*options, offices, trade workshops, parks, community centers and cultural institutions; Tenants: employment options, offices, trade workshops, grocery stores and cultural institutions; Youth: employment options, parks, community centers, grocery stores and cultural institutions*

Other Field:

29401: south of calhoun

- **local stores/corner stores**
- **grocery stores**

29403: midtown

- **Grocery store**
- **Restaurants**

29455: johns island

- **Grocery stores**
- **Restaurants**

### Listening Session Findings

- Citywide
  - There is a lot of interest in having more mom and pop local businesses in all areas of the city, and a recognition that the availability of affordable commercial space is a key criteria to make this possible.
- West Ashley
  - Residents wanted to see planning improvements to economic infrastructure leading to diverse business development and growth in the area.
- Peninsula
  - Residents would like to see the future of the peninsula have more grocery stores, local corner stores, quality public schools, free parking for residents, and public bathrooms.
  - There is a belief that building codes and zoning regulations are not small business friendly and often have economic barriers that impact local businesses disproportionately. Some businesses located in communities that are still inequitable have stricter standards than others. Residents expressed a desire for small business friendly zoning regulations which allow for a more close knit community feel.
- Johns Island
  - The new development along the main corridors has brought more amenities closer to residents. Residents want to live closer to grocery stores and restaurants. To maximize the benefits of these places, they should maintain a diversity of local businesses and prioritize affordability and connectivity.

### Community Submissions

*Email:*

- Concerning tourists. I don't think SPA has the city's interests at heart. We don't need the pollution that comes with a cruise line. A cruise line is just not Charleston. We should get off that East coast route. They have Miami and Miami loves them. We don't need this extra

pollution of the harbour and the expense of building a new terminal just for the cruise line. In our new normal future, will the cruise industry really add that much to our tax base? They aren't even paying a head tax now.

- See letter from Roy Owens saved in folder

*AIA-led community meeting:*

- In light of pandemic, economically, charleston emphasis on tourism as an economic generator for the city, city plan might also focus on other types of economic generator for the city, other types of industry aside from tourism, architects benefit from tourism indirectly, but I don't think that's sustainable. Need other types of economic generators.
- Biggest growth in jobs was in hospitality, cost of living and quality of life, what is all that built on industry wise, seeing a lot of growth, boeing moving more manufacturing here, going to continue growth in that area, certainly more than just the historic district and tourism, definitely not something we want to lose either, critical part of the place, why people want to come here and be here
- Nomo down, diverse mix of uses is difficult to support, due to parking, transportation biggest issue, getting office spaces back, trying to not surrender downtown to a fully tourism based economy in the commercial district. Amount of commercially zoned properties, STR most profitable, not incentivizing office space
- NOMO and north, that area could be planned to grow with the mixed use and different industries up there, height limitations could be taller, ravenel bridge nice dividing line, and then historic district would still remain South, that would help grow the commercial district and allow for other industries, more office buildings

*CAJM-led community meeting:*

- For much of the research that we've done, affordable housing is for the people who are cleaning the hotels who can't possibly live downtown. Tension - build a city dependent on tourist dollars, not sure how dependent, but we do not build a city that works toward people who serve those tourists when they are here. I would prefer for the tourists to go someplace else, but there are people whose job is to serve them and the city turns their back on them. Uber drivers, restaurant workers.
- Businesses go out of businesses or give up lunch because they don't have enough staff. I'm hearing families share concerns - kids go off to college and they come back and they're teachers or social workers and they can't live in Mt Pleasant because there is no affordable housing. So many 'professional' people can't afford to live in certain places near family and friends.
- I can't name a major West Ashley employer. We need to diversify our income base. Tech hubs. Different types of small businesses. Zoning that allows multi use/mixed use.

*Charleston Climate Coalition led community meeting*

- Sustainability can be a tourist attraction - we should make an economic case for this. Change the tourism narrative. There is a strong economic argument for avoiding climate change - preventative measures will save us money.
- Opportunity to maintain business and tourist economy by leading the east coast in climate change policy

- Opportunity to create green jobs
- Future cost savings. The amount of money we spend on natural disasters could be saved if we tackle climate change and help ensure the sea levels do not continue to rise.

*Lowcountry Local First led community meeting*

- If you had to do it over again, would you locate your business in the same area/neighborhood, why or why not? What do you like or not like about your business location?
  - Things seem like they have been cleaned up since 2012 but Issues still there of homelessness, parking not available and the expense for paying for parking when available. Neighborhoods experiencing changes at different times within the city. More walking traffic in some areas but not in other areas. There is a disparity between the halves and the halves not. Some areas of the city like Daniel Island are spending many of dollars on lighting the volvo stadium but that same money isnt getting equally spread. We have a saturation of market of restaurants.
  - I have one restaurant, Purlieu, that is in a great small neighborhood on the Westside Downtown but we deal with flooding about 5 - 10 times a year that slows us down. Other then that it's a wonderful area to have a restaurant. Cru Café is near the Market. Love being there. I wouldn't change anything. Both areas have there benefits and some negatives.
  - I don't think any location is free from some negative impact(mainly flooding but dealing with the tourist can be problemsome). Reducing that potential negative impact is the goal. (from chat)
  - Direct impact from prices from renting because rents are higher and it gets past down for users to use venues. Not sure how the city continues to be named #1 in the US with the many issues that exist. More people coming into town and have witnessed many challenges ... location where I am on SI and IOP are certainly different but better than being downtown.
  - new to the area also have a headquarters in Tampa. Lives in Mt. Pleasant, roads, water need improvement. Video production business, that could be anywhere. Terri asked about hiring and what the challenges are, parking is an issue, affordable housing is an issue. They can work virtually but they hire locally.
  - employees would like to have more dining choices near their office. But the area where Greystar is convenient.
  - price point for office is very high.
  - mobile business but very tied into Charleston, which is a great part of their success – tight knit community; Michael has been very helpful with providing spaces for them; others offer financial services, mentorship; they feel very connected now; Being downtown has definitely benefited them. She wishes the north peninsula area were more bike- and ped-friendly. The weather is conducive for being on foot.
  - West Ashley; He would definitely locate in WA again. It's on Wallace School Rd by Creative Arts Elementary; Allows their business to grow strategically over the past 8 years
  - Spring St since 2010; He's seen the neighborhood change with short-term rentals but he wouldn't change location; Permitting / license process was cumbersome; Their second

location in MtP was seamless process so he has shared input with Zoning dept with ways to improve and be more receptive; We have work to do with fostering business owners from the start. But once his biz was open downtown there have been no issues; Wants to rethink ATAX and how it's reinvested back into community.

- Health clinic on King St; West Ashley, getting 50% revenue, but everyone knows profit is in last 10% of revenue. Tourist traffic is important – locals are 60% at King St location. North Charleston Location too. Next 4 will be up in suburbs, Carnes Crossroads, Ladson, 80% of people touch 526 in their workday.
  - Been downtown for 10 years. Started French Quarter, then King St, now French Quarter again. Space, cost, parking, flooding are biggest problems. Employees don't want to come to work when it rains really hard, but want to be downtown because would love the pulse if moved. Late night became a problematic when on Upper King – vomit in parking lot, drink people, so for safety of employees, moved back to French Quarter.
  - on the call because they recently moved here to work for a private investment firm that own several properties in the area – have not been turned into businesses yet though most are zoned commercial; really here to hear from other businesses to get a feel for the area
  - business consulting firms previously owned King of Pops and other food companies – just moved office from Charleston/Local Works to Park Circle – moved because Local Works moved due to flooding; don't have those issues in new location; had different offices around town, would go back downtown for walkability – but prevented right now due to parking concerns – involved with a variety of companies around town
  - Solutions for the Greater Good – no store front – work with nonprofits in the region; been here since 2012; was philanthropy director for Historic Charleston Foundation – very involved in these conversation for a long time; care about Charleston and region and want to make sure we are making the right steps going forward
  - she is in landscape architecture so her customers do not access her office the way people come to Ted's shop
  - a lot of what they're hearing from clients is they don't want to build in the city anymore because it is too expensive and too timely, so they are moving to other counties and to north Charleston
  - Harris Teeter not local friendly at all
  - an upside to development downtown is free parking because parking always an issue
  - with walgreens being out, it has hurt the center where he is
  - one of the biggest issues is the cost of doing business downtown -- i don't know if the city can do a whole lot regarding the economic of it, but it feels like if you're going to try to keep the character of charleston you have to make it more affordable -- tax breaks? incentives for developers to help small businesses to survive?
  - we've been in S Windemere for 30 years but for 100 years my buddy had a building downtown on Broad St, once or twice we thought about going down there but after a hurricane or king tide, we realized, based on that and the spiking rents, there's no reason to move our operations downtown.
- How can the city help your business thrive (especially aspects of the physical environment)?

## Charleston City Plan Public Input Collected Fall 2020: Organized by Plan Element

- Parking meters should not be required past retail business hours. Having people pay meters to 10pm is not good
- Parking is an interesting issue: Free parking for employees is an easy thing to do, City can do more to actually lesson parking - make it more walkable , more sidewalks, less parking , utilize outdoor space
- Issue that we are seeing that we wish are more spaces allowed for more safe social distancing spaces to host more in person spaces. I want to bring more in person events but it is challenging to find spaces that allow
- The popularity and success of the of the Charleston restaurant scene is a blessing and a curse.
- is it better to have a great location with parking etc or to have great internet access?
- Need better internet access so need to improve that infrastructure.
- city is a desirable place to live and people continue to move here.
- compared to other areas Charlotte, DC, Atlanta Charleston isn't expensive
- mentioned that we need to consider zoning changes to include light industrial particularly on the Peninsula and bring in businesses that are not located at Tanger outlet mall or elsewhere or we won't attract locals as well as tourist to our downtown. While the pandemic may be a short-lived crisis the aftermath could linger for some time.
- Up to 40% of retail is closing but e-commerce is taking a significant amount of sales.
- WA revitalization process that's happening should consider business owners' input more; Need to redesign many areas to be scaled for bike/ped. Knowing what we do NOT want to become is very important to know before starting any project / development growth.
- Safe pathways and walking. Accessibility, parking is important. Doing testing for Covid including College of Charleston. Doing drive through testing, never thought he would do that. Would like medical parking – pull in spot for downtown location. Visibility and parking – like it for parking lot, but do not want to have trees in front of new building. Challenge when have big trees where they can't trim a sign, need visibility. Nice to have a middle turn lane on roads.
- Charleston and SC are a big part of our culture, but our net is much wider – entire South for distribution. Availability and accessibility of parking. Took 10 years to get parking. Price of parking goes up every year. Traffic and construction make it hard to get to work sometimes. Likes that it's walkable, historic, show off to visitors, about food and culture and history, so this is where they need to be.
- work with several companies around town – have to pop in to different places – hard to find parking that works for that which makes it hard to get around; has figured out how to get around flooding over the years; continuing to streamline process for working with City – taxes, licensing, etc. – lots of red tape – understanding the process is a job in itself; how can we help companies understand what they are getting into – education efforts; Charleston is a very entrepreneurial town; make sure they know if it is worth it or not; how can the city work with other jurisdictions to make sure policies aren't conflicting; everybody should have the same rules – right now it is impossible to do without breaking someone's rules

- agree on parking and flooding; more and more difficult to find reasonable parking on the peninsula; never had to go through for a proposal process like what she just had to go through for the RFP for fundraising services with City procurement – quite daunting and cost money and energy; never needed a business license before; was confusing because multiple municipalities are involved – ended up in Mt. Pleasant; process was very difficult to navigate; anything we can do to help businesses operate and help them navigate the process – certainly is not easy; COVID – many direct service nonprofits may not survive this – need help navigating stimulus and other relief – never figured out how to get help as a sole proprietor; if they fail, it will come back on city and community and create voids
- good to know she’s going into something with roadblocks and red tape; determining what to do with properties and already running into some of that with renovations and permitting; preparing to run into issues and how to help tenants
- talked about new business license procedures to take effect in January to make application standard across the state but the fees will remain different in various jurisdictions
- What does your staff need in order to thrive and have a good work/life balance (especially aspects of the physical environment)?
  - *Most responses were about affordable housing and/or better transportation and were moved to the housing and transportation element documents.*
  - Child care
  - Education
  - Walk to dining
  - best practices for onboarding employees is a question she has. It’s very difficult to meet virtually with new team members and onboard them well right now. She wants tips for how to be transparent and be a strong leader. Retention has been tough. Cost of living is a challenge for younger team members transitioning out of school and looking for work.
  - She has lost several employees leave for ATL – better cost of living. Even in Columbia it’s better. More affordable living, better transit. If she could better address these concerns at the start when onboarding, it may help.
  - our team is mostly made up of artists, which is a different culture. If we be around other like-minded artisan-based and creative businesses, it’s a win/win for us. It makes the culture of Chs thrive.
  - Staff has great work-life balance at the magazine. Staff given opportunity to work from home, so makes quality of life better – esp during Covid. Crazy just before they go to press, work late nights. Used to be hard to find the people that had the experience they need, but now easier. The Talent pool has increased, so that had increased wages.
  - Our minimum wage starts at \$15/hour and up. We don’t want that legislated, we want it through the market. We provide lunch every day. We do profit sharing. We provide good benefits
- Other points made:
  - Wanting better communication from the city to business owners with what is going on. (statement from Chloe - city is working on improving this)
  - More feedback will be gathered

- The county vs city regulations (understanding which is from the city vs which is from the county) a lot about convenience and parking -- all around the group

## Transportation

### Survey Responses

**Which of the following are most important for improving overall quality of life for the Charleston community?**

- 34. Effective drainage and flood management**
- 35. Clean environment (air, water, soil, etc.)**
- 36. Preservation of cultural history and racial diversity**
- 37. Preservation of historic buildings and landmarks
- 38. Having multiple options for housing types and price levels**
- 39. Equitable access to nature (including water), parks and recreational facilities
- 40. Having multiple options for transportation**
- 41. Quality architecture and design
- 42. Equitable access to nearby quality schools
- 43. Living close to work
- 44. Equitable access to art, culture and public spaces

*Bolded reflects top 5 prioritized across all underrepresented categories.*

Other field themes:

- All are of equal importance!
- Equitable beach access (parking, bike/ped)
- Improve/relieve traffic congestion
- Better road maintenance & infrastructure
- More bike/ped options citywide
- More/better transit options citywide

**What people like most (common themes):**

- Beautiful, Charming, Friendly, Unique, Vibrant, Active, Historic, Diverse
- Convenience, location, "close to..."

**What is most challenging (common themes):**

- Traffic/Commute & mobility
- Parking
- Insufficient/outdated infrastructure (roads, bridges, sidewalks & drainage)
- Lack of transit options
- Unsafe roads
- Bike and pedestrian safety



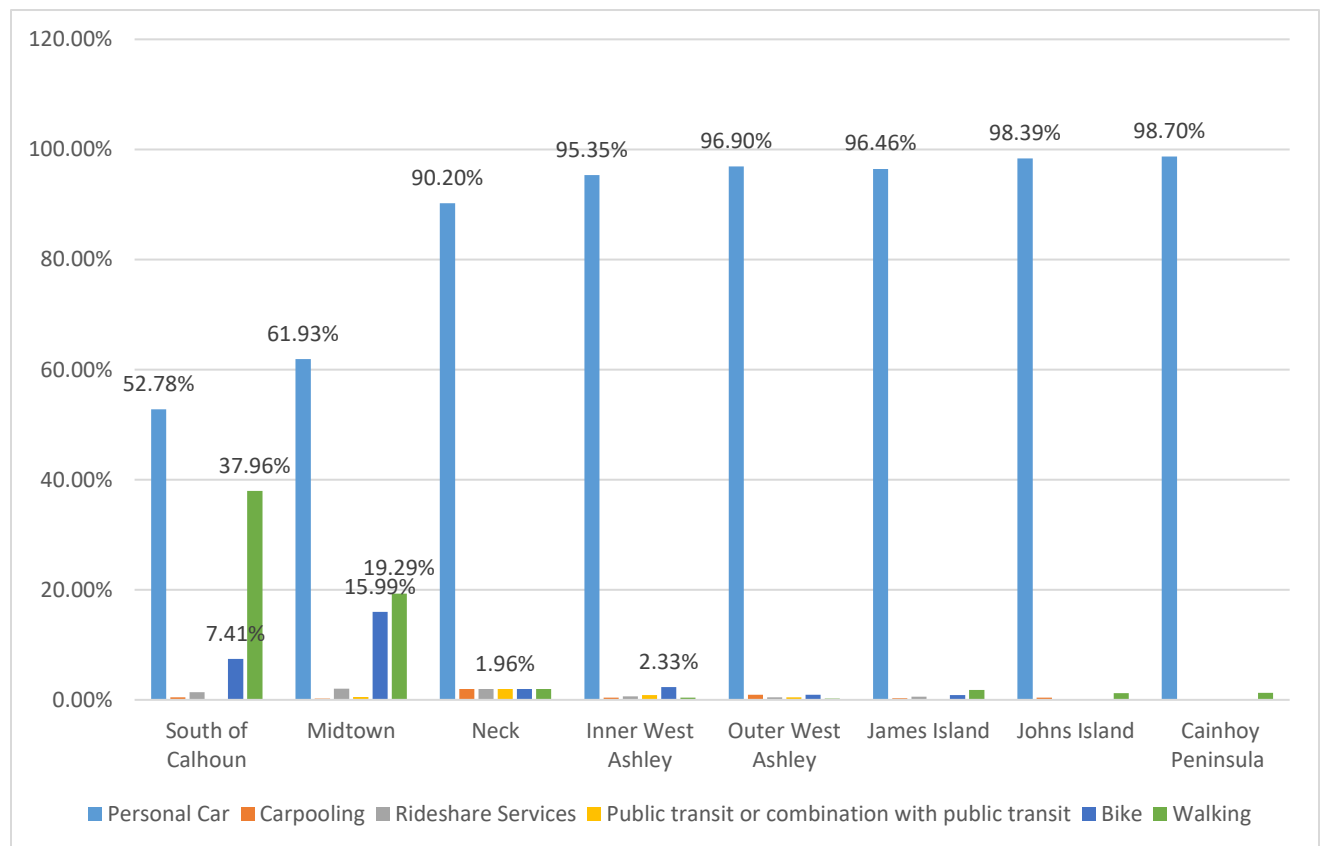
**Questions 14-16 Citywide**

87% of respondents use a personal car as their primary mode of transportation; followed by 7% who walk, and 4% who bike. *The percentage using alternative modes of transportation was 21 points higher for youth, 13 points higher for tenants, and 6 points higher for lower-income respondents. 4% of Black/African-American respondents use a rideshare service as their primary mode of transportation and 3.4% of youth carpool.*

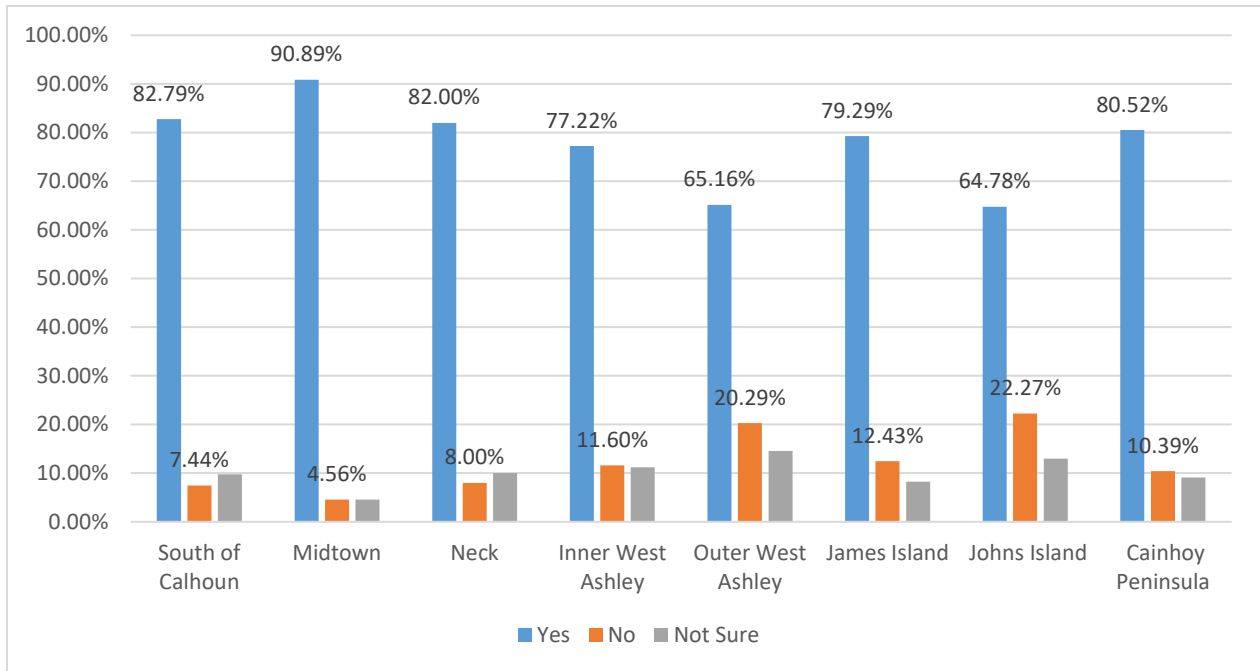
76% responded they would walk or bike to places they go often, if they had a safe and convenient way to do so. *Among all under-represented groups - with the exception of Black/African-American respondents - a higher percentage answered 'Yes.'*

46% responded they would use a water taxi daily, weekly or monthly if it were offered as a public transportation option. *This percentage increased to over 50% for respondents in all under-represented categories. 12% of youth responded 'Daily' (3 times higher than overall).*

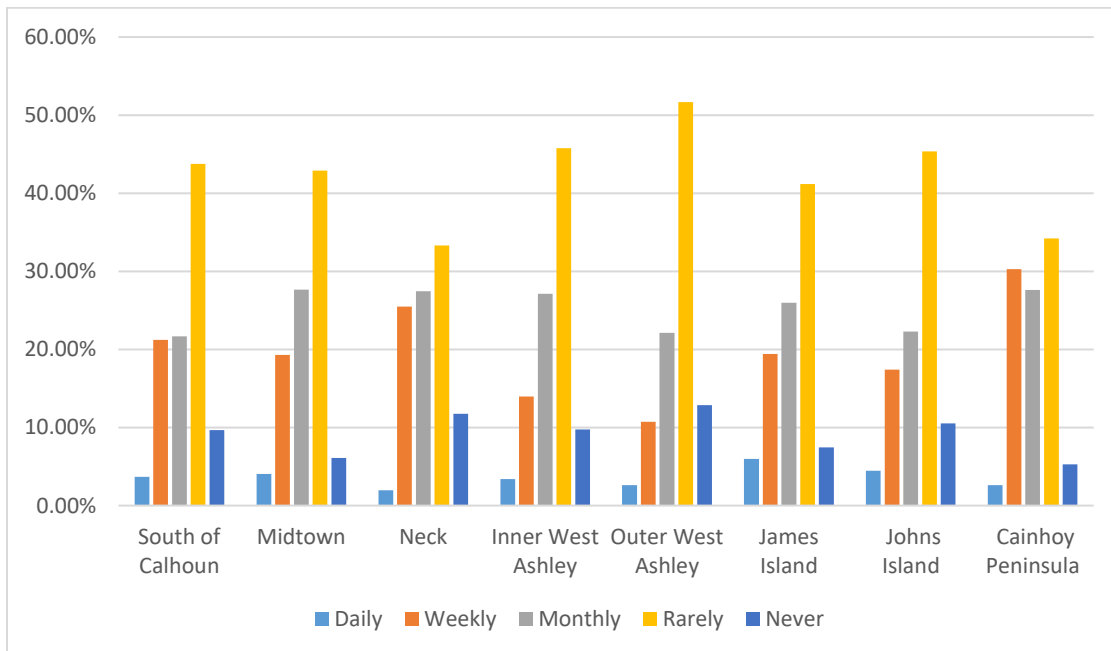
**Which do you use most often to travel around the city?**



**If you had a safe and convenient way to bike or walk to places that you go to often, would you do so?**



**If Charleston were to have a water ferry or water taxi as a public transportation option, how often would you use it?**



## Water Taxi Locations

### Overall:

- For daily use: prioritize commuters & connections with major job centers
- For occasional/seasonal use: increase access to recreation, shopping, beaches and downtown
- Connect all areas of the city and region
- Multiple stations around perimeter of Peninsula
- Only feasible if in connection with existing infrastructure:
  - Transit
  - Bike/ped
  - Park-and-rides
  - Bridges
  - Marinas/boat landings

### Peninsula & Downtown:

- Aquarium
- Waterfront Park
- City Marina
- Brittlebank Park/Lockwood/WestEdge
- Cruise ship terminal
- Laurel Island
- Magnolia
- Morrison Dr/Huger/Nomo
- Coast Guard station

### Ravenel bridge/Cigar factory

- Butterfly Lakes/Citadel/Wagener Terrace

### West Ashley:

- Cosgrove/Northbridge Park
- Maryville/Bikeway
- Ripley's Point/Greenway/new ped. Bridge
- Old Bees Ferry launch
- Limehouse Bridge

### North Charleston:

- Park Circle/Old Navy Yard
- Ashley River Marina/Leeds Ave

### Cainhoy Peninsula:

- Daniel Island
- Clements Ferry
- Wando Bridge

James Island:

- Demetre Park
- Ft. Johnson/DNR
- Wappoo Cut/Plymouth Park
- Stono River Bridge

Johns Island:

- Limehouse Bridge
- Stono River Bridge
- JI Airport

Mt. Pleasant:

- Shem Creek
- Patriots Point
- Wando Bridge

**The following make it difficult for respondents to obtain a job in their preferred field, or to advance in their current field:**

1. acceptable pay rate **(58%)**
2. limited job openings **(53%)**
3. affordable office and/or commercial space **(26%)**
4. child or other family care **(17%)**
5. access to reliable transportation **(14%)**
6. access to business start-up loans **(10%)**
7. no classes and/or training offered locally **(8%)**
8. access to continuing education loans **(4%)**

*The percentage of 'lack of access to loans' (both for business start-up and continuing education) was **double** for Black/African-American respondents; and 'lack of access to reliable transportation' was **double** for youth and lower-income respondents.*

Other field themes:

- Commute distance/reliable transportation
- Finding employees (lack of affordable housing and transit)
- parking on peninsula

**Which of the following does your neighborhood lack that you wish you had nearby? Check all that apply. (Other field)**

29401: south of calhoun

- **more pedestrian-friendly streets**
- **sidewalk maintenance and lighting**

29403: midtown

- **Sidewalk management, bike/ped infrastructure**
- **more pedestrian-friendly streets and bridges**
- **parking**

29405: the neck

- Connectivity with these amenities nearby

29407: inner west ashley

- **Sidewalks/Crosswalks**
- **Safe biking/walking connectivity**
- **Transit**

29412: james island

- **Bike/ped**
- **Transit**

29414: outer west ashley

- **Bike/ped**
- **Safer, calmer roads**

29455: johns island

- **Bike/ped**

## Listening Session Findings

Citywide:

- The street networks and drainage infrastructure span multiple jurisdictions, which makes it difficult to respond to issues and make improvements. Residents would like to see increased collaboration and coordination among the many jurisdictions to make the necessary investments and improvements in a timely and efficient manner.
- People want more options to get places without needing to drive. A more connected city - via safe walkable and bikeable streets and greenways; and a quality transit system - would reduce traffic, get people active, and improve overall quality of life.
- West Ashley
  - Even though it has everything, it is hard for many to get from one place to another, with the exception of more walkable neighborhoods like Avondale and Byrnes Downs. The roads are not only busy, but they lack sidewalks and safe crosswalks, and create a lot of noise for nearby residential areas.
  - have multiple transportation options (walking, biking, transit) to get to all West Ashley has to offer, and a thriving local business economy.

- Cainhoy
  - With the increased development and Clements Ferry Rd expansion, attention to bike and pedestrian safety and connectivity between the various communities is paramount. Residents would like more connectivity through linear trails, safe pedestrian-friendly streets, and water taxis/ferries.
  - Truck traffic on Clements Ferry is an issue - trucks losing cargo/freight, need designated lanes.
- Peninsula
  - The street network of the peninsula, aside from being regularly flooded, is also unsafe in many places for bikers and pedestrians. Improvements to streets should prioritize transit, pedestrians and cyclists and support increased connection.
  - Traffic and managing the number of people living here needs more attention. Residents expressed concern that current traffic patterns will take away from the appeal of certain neighborhoods. The hope is that the plan will mitigate any negative impacts.
- James Island
  - People love the proximity of James Island to both downtown and the beach, but getting to either can prove challenging - and unsafe - if you don't have a car. This is also true for traveling around the island - especially to existing parks and recreation areas. Better transit service and safe pathways for bikes and pedestrian are needed and could help relieve the worsening traffic.
  - Residents expressed love for the proximity to the beach and Downtown, however poor planning and challenges of getting around hinder access. City and town conflicts. No curbs or sidewalks on major roads to ensure safe livability. Trees hangover the sidewalks and roads. There are definite challenges with livability. There was expressed a need for coordination between the city, county and town to create a common plan, and not a disjointed one. Then start looking at drainage, ease of getting around particularly for low-income communities Money was invested in Harborview. Nothing done to Riverland Road. Extremely dangerous to be on. It's scenic, but dangerous for walking and biking. It requires that residents have a vehicle to get around.
  - The inefficient transportation system impacts traffic as well. Residents put on the table that people that work Downtown could take express transportation to eliminate traffic. We have to continue to develop neighborhoods where you live, work and play. The standards in the core is attempting to do this, and hopefully will be a prototype. When you look at it, they are already building 100 units around the corner.
- Johns Island
  - Connectivity to other parts of the city is necessary.
  - New development is straining out-dated infrastructure (roads and stormwater management). The lack of sidewalks and increase in traffic poses dangerous conditions for bikers and pedestrians. Investments in infrastructure are needed to support existing and future development and to increase safe connectivity.

## Community Submissions

### *E-mail:*

- Need light rail transportation, city is well established but, so are many cities in Europe Need many more bike paths in and around city, again like Europe Too many cars in and around city. Traffic will choke growth eventually or we will become like Mexico City
- How long will it take to get shelters in place for all the bus stops? I was noticing several are needed on Rivers Hwy. We need to increase our buses for our citizens before work starts on the Low Line and the Rapid Transit Line. Feeder lines can be increased now for peoples' benefit. We shouldn't wait 15+ years for the Rapid Transit line to be finished. Increasing frequency on our local routes will help our citizens now. North Charleston is exploding with growth and more availability should be planned in tandem with this growth. Why are we using city buses for an airport express route? I used to travel to SF a lot in the late 80's and early 90's. I would ride an airport VAN to my hotel. Why can't the airport supply their own mode of transportation? These buses that are transporting tourists could be used to increase frequency on underserved routes.

### *AIA-led community meeting:*

- Challenges as transportation. Bus transit is going to be necessary in the future. Traveling by car from West Ashley to Mount Pleasant, it would take forever in the evenings. Has been issue for awhile but will return after COVID.
- Getting people to live and work closer together. But also ties into how to businesses staff themselves, with the need to reduce transit time.
- Zoning has a large part to play and how you zone around the transportation elements. The new Low Line and Rapid Transit system to provide a shift from single family based system. How do we do density and to it well while not leaving people behind.
- Cainhoy and Johns Island - how to deal with traffic/cars
- Ferry and transit (city behind on this)
- Look hard at transportation with this new plan (equal to resilience) - parking requirements, infrastructure, think differently about subsidies, costs and benefits
- Mobility and parking; how users get to the building
- Budgets for implementation, order of magnitude (example: BRT is most affordable but not most aesthetically pleasing. LRT cost is prohibitive, but could at charm and more effective). We are afraid to spend a lot of money, fear of being too grand.
- Limits to funding
- How can we be more effective and add value?
- Automobile centric political context (challenge to BRT/LRT)
- A lot of the growth is in the outer areas, people commuting into the city, creating a lot of the challenges that you're talking about for transportation and other planning areas.
- Linkages.
- Disconnect between rapid transit is proposing the growth corridor, and the areas they're looking at for growth, better ways to look at how that will work, density and population will be a huge factor. Rapid transit is about linking downtown up to Summerville. This corridor goes north-south, and the City Plan is looking at growth corridors in other directions.

*CAJM-led community meeting:*

- Cosgrove bridge- particular hotspot and need bike/ped infrastructure- connection to N. CHS not in a car
- Only 1 bus that serves the community- not enough thought as to the quality of life for residents that already live there- need more connections. People wait 45-1hr for transit.
- Coordination. Transportation and affordable housing, and I mean really affordable. Not housing for teachers, policemen, I'm talking about the folks that are really poor and need affordable housing for them. And also transportation, for example Mt. Pleasant, closed Hominy Grill, people who work there can't get there because transportation sucks. When they look at this big complex plan, how they balance and coordinate affordable housing and transportation routes.
- Transportation - my fantasy is that we have affordable housing, we have a bus stop, shelter for people to wait for buses, buses that are on a regular schedule, doesn't take an hour to get from point a to point b, transportation is atrocious, not just Charleston but Charleston area, a big priority for people to have jobs.
- Transportation-improve our feeder routes before working on the rapid line and low line. We drop local needs first. We need more frequency. Quit using buses for airport transport.
- Dense build, apartments above retail shops, with buses there is no need for a car.
- If I have to get off the peninsula I will use rideshare. Renting a car there is no place to park.
- Fewer cars on the street. Terrified to park any place because they are off limits for one reason or another. Needs to be more friendlier to driving a vehicle.
- Accessibility-some type of transportation hub in key places.
- Safe places to walk and bike
- Why aren't there bike paths and pedestrian walkways on all bridges?
- There aren't consistent modes of transportation for people who don't have cars
- Biking downtown is very dangerous! People are hurt and killed all the time. We need bike lanes!
- James Island:
  - Having to have a car to get around
  - Small bike path, but it's not long enough to use to get to work
  - Harborview Road - Would love a pedestrian/bike pathway
- West Ashley:
  - The Greenway is great! But it only gets you to parts of the city
  - More accessible public transportation! Not just adding bus routes, but an expanded light rail –
- People who live downtown would like to not have to use cars at all
- More public transit out on James Island (only one major bus stop and the bus only comes once an hour)
- Incentives to not use their cars and to use public transportation
- Pedestrian/non-motorized-only zones!

*Charleston Climate Coalition led community meeting:*

- Recognizing that our bus system is run by the county and not the city, we have been unable to find the wherewithal to really get behind mass transit. Is about both pollution and equity.
- Sustainable transportation



## Charleston City Plan Public Input Collected Fall 2020: Organized by Plan Element

- Increase public transportation such as the Lowcountry Rapid Transit
- Make biking more accessible and safe
- Increase pedestrian safety for walkability
- Ensuring all City fleet vehicles are electric, ranging from buses to police cars
- Charleston can convert streets for bicycle and pedestrian traffic and completely eliminate parking on these streets. Transition to electric transport and there needs to be more charging stations

### *Coastal Conservation League and Preservation Society of Charleston led community meeting:*

- The progress forward towards the direction of multi-modal transit is being stopped at state level – state controlled transit, state controlled roads.
- Complete streets and necessary safety and shuttles all getting blocked at state level – City needs to keep banging away at every opportunity to get State into the 21st century in terms of transportation planning
- Risk of ruining Charleston by putting in too many highways – need to shore up “Venice” and look to how other cities have handled it like New Orleans
- Mass transit – one problem is you get dropped off on one side of a major highway and picked up on the other side without safe way to cross that highway
- Johns Island doesn’t have any public transit – Maybank needs something
- No real bus stops, just people standing on the side of the road.
- Real shelters will attract more users.
- Figure out how to create agreement with SCDOT to help expedite these types of conversations – needs to be a partner
- Wayfinding is important – need a citywide wayfinding system (signs and graphics to lead people around the city via transit options)
- Would support interconnections between existing neighborhoods to avoid main roads like HarborView and 17
- No current standard Carta bus routes to Johns Island - that will be essential for workers to get to other places in the city James Island downtown
- Issues of transportation and affordable housing are very linked issues
- Lack of safety getting from one side of our major highways to the other is a big issue - Maybank Highway needs public transit - need to be investing more in our bus shelters around the area.

### *Lowcountry Local First led community meeting*

- i have staff that drive from mt pleasant, summerville, and james island
- As a patron of local businesses excited about a more connectivity community in West Ashley
- water taxi where he is coming from where he lives in Mount Pleasant to work downtown.
- If transportation is an issue and the trend for part-time remote work continues as a trend then that combined with alternative forms of transportation and affordable housing will take more cars off the road.
- more walkable – downtown but also in West Ashley – very dangerous. Making these improvements will support business as a whole. Greenway efforts should be a priority.

- Access to lowline, biking, and the things to have connectivity is important. If we aren't able to make downtown like that just make it more accessible. We are losing out to our workforce not being able to live close to where they work .
- To the last question I think if we can bridge the gap of all the Downtown Burrows it would be a benefit to all. Definitely rent control would be a huge help to keep our employees working downtown. Parking, High rents, fuel, travel times when not living downtown makes it extremely difficult to staff our companies. Staffing is and will be a major issue moving forward especially after the unemployment laws that were implemented the last 8 months.
- My business works from home now and will transition to working virtually from now on and will be leasing our space. Moving to virtual from now on...also anything to help with traffic
- Thinking of ATL and the long commute – we don't want to be that. Walking a few blocks makes everything so much easier.
- Do we finish 526 at some point? Do we do some other things to make it easy, we've eliminated 30% of traffic b/c of working from home.
- LCRT was designed to be a better way of transportation between downtown & Summerville – was supposed to be high tech and is now just a bus – what happened (CM Jackson – had to value engineer; work with existing infrastructure like traffic lights – will improve overall commute time – hang up seems to be how in it comes into downtown)
- a lot of this should be addressed by business owner; transportation options need to be better – LCRT or light rail; need to help people get around – we're at a breaking point; when will those things be usable; how do we get people to use what is already there like CARTA and make it even better

## Housing

### Survey Findings

**Which of the following are most important for improving overall quality of life for the Charleston community?**

- 45. Effective drainage and flood management**
- 46. Clean environment (air, water, soil, etc.)**
- 47. Preservation of cultural history and racial diversity**
- 48. Preservation of historic buildings and landmarks
- 49. Having multiple options for housing types and price levels**
- 50. Equitable access to nature (including water), parks and recreational facilities
- 51. Having multiple options for transportation**
- 52. Quality architecture and design
- 53. Equitable access to nearby quality schools
- 54. Living close to work
- 55. Equitable access to art, culture and public spaces

*Bolded reflects top 5 prioritized across all underrepresented categories.*

**QUALITY OF LIFE (OTHER FIELD)**

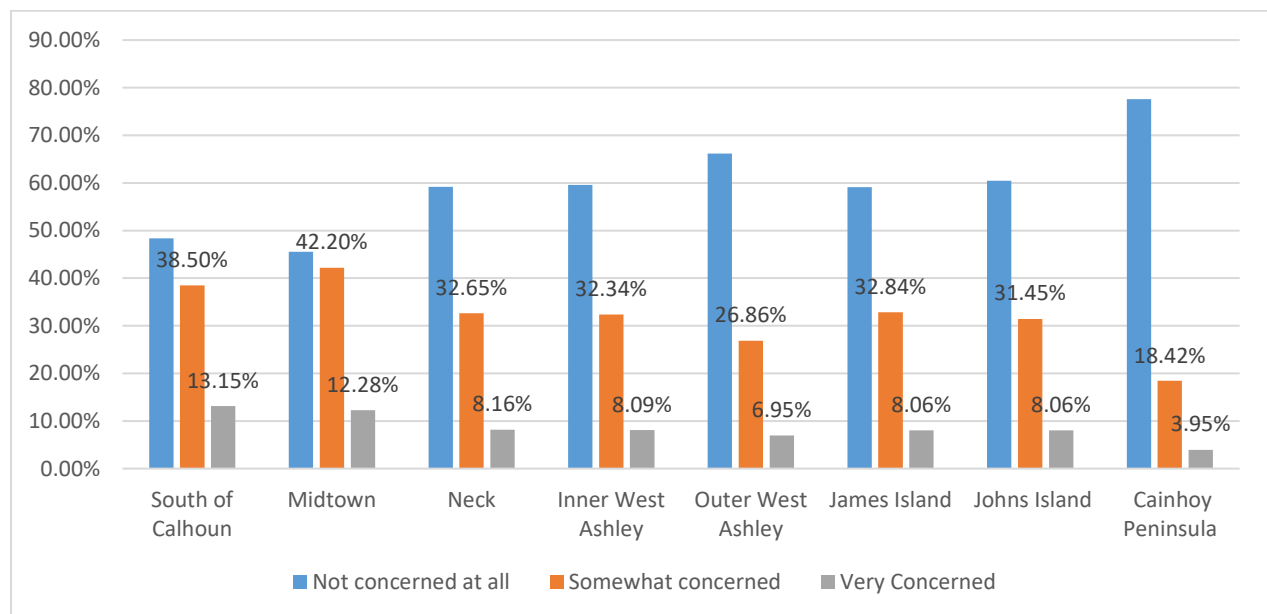
Common themes:

- All are of equal importance!
- Affordable cost of living (not just housing)
- Consistent/predictable entitlement and approval standards/processes
- House and support the homeless
- Services, amenities, housing, healthcare for aging population

Controversial themes:

- Solutions for affordable housing: cap rents vs. build more housing
- Regulatory environment (free market vs. moratoriums)

**Are you concerned about being able to stay in your current housing?**



*This percentage was more than 10 points higher among Black/African-American and Upper Peninsula respondents; and more than 20 points higher among lower-income respondents, youth and tenants*

**Reason for concern:**

Column1	Very	%	Somewhat	%2
Flooding/SLR/Hurricanes	63	30%	223	32%
Cost of Living vs. Income	39	18%	137	20%
Escalating rent prices (including subsidy expiration)	37	18%	68	10%
Escalating homeownership costs (mortgage, taxes, insurance and utilities)	27	13%	128	18%

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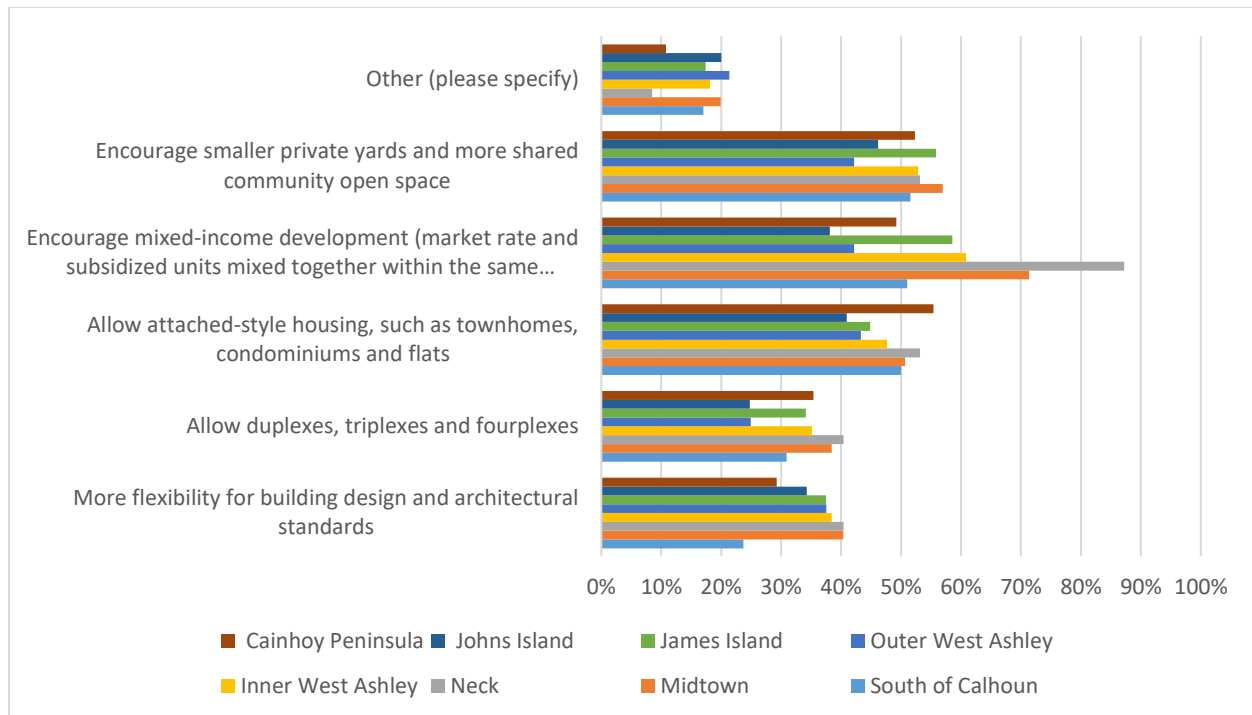
Neighborhood/Environment (infrastructure, noise, litter/pollution, tourists, college students, short-term rentals, crime, parking, social/cultural changes)	23	11%	70	10%
Mobility (traffic, proximity to work and other amenities, safe bike/pedestrian options)	17	8%	42	6%
Aging & Ability (fixed-income, accessibility, maintenance)	9	4%	30	4%
Job/income insecurity	7	3%	62	9%
Can't afford to move (downgrade or upgrade)	6	3%	9	1%
Can't afford to buy	6	3%	5	1%
Flood insurance	5	2%	18	3%
Poor living conditions (disrepair, landlord relationship)	4	2%	7	1%
526 extension	4	2%	4	1%
Landlord selling	3	1%	5	1%
Cost of home maintenance	2	1%	10	1%
Poor schools	1	0%	8	1%

Not at all:

- Financially secure/job security
- Moved away/live somewhere else more affordable
- Bought when it was more affordable (but can't afford to move)
- High and dry
- Home paid off/Debt free
- ...but worried about my neighbors

**The following tools have been used in other cities to increase the amount of stable housing for all income levels. Which of the following would you support in your community? Check all that apply.**

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*Among Black/ African-American respondents, lower-income respondents, youth, tenants and upper peninsula residents, there was more support for all tools; with the exception that only 38% of Black/African-American respondents were in support of smaller private yards and more shared community open space.*

### Other field:

- Community benefits agreements
- Get rid of fee-in-lieu
- Mandatory inclusionary zoning
- Repair/maintenance of existing low-income housing
- Tiny homes
- Effectively get rid of max lot coverage, setbacks, etc. Building codes cover all public safety concerns
- Convert/retrofit existing vacant buildings
- Housing above commercial
- Increase densities
- Give more design standard flexibility
- Improve public transportation options
- More attached housing and condos (for homeownership)
- Support upward mobility and class integration throughout city
- Require vacant building owners to convert to housing
- Property tax freezes for long-time residents

### What is most challenging (common themes):

- Segregation and racism

- Racial and Income inequality/inequity
- Unaffordable/high cost of living
- Gentrification, loss of diversity, lack of representation
- Rapid growth & development
- Homelessness

**Respondents reported being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the following ways;**

- lost income (39%)
- changed work location/commute (39%)
- children's education (23%)
- lost a job (13%)
- lost housing or at risk (2%)

*There was a 3-5 times higher percentage of Black/African-American respondents, lower-income respondents, youth and tenants that reported losing housing or being at risk of losing housing; and roughly double the percentage of lower-income respondents, youth and tenants that reported losing a job.*

### Housing Lab Findings

- Problem definition:
  - gentrification and displacement cause people to lost their physical and cultural sense of place
  - cost of home maintenance, especially for elderly residents
  - high eviction rates
  - housing barriers beyond cost
  - can't afford to move, stuck in substandard housing
  - absentee landlords
  - neighborhoods becoming consumer destinations
  - rising property taxes, rising land values (increased profit motive), will get worse with sea level rise implications
  - flood insurance costs and flood damage
- Recommendations:
  - gentrification and displacement cause people to lost their physical and cultural sense of place
  - cost of home maintenance, especially for elderly residents
  - high eviction rates
  - housing barriers beyond cost
  - can't afford to move, stuck in substandard housing
  - absentee landlords
  - neighborhoods becoming consumer destinations
  - rising property taxes, rising land values (increased profit motive), will get worse with sea level rise implications
  - flood insurance costs and flood damage

## Listening Session Findings

- Citywide
  - Many people expressed a love for the diversity of their communities and concerns about the loss of that diversity as housing becomes increasingly unattainable for most. There was a resounding call for there to be a mixture of housing that meets the needs of all income levels, life stages and household size; and for more housing to be located close to where people work.
- West Ashley
  - The community recognizes that the old shopping centers that line the main thoroughfares provide great opportunities for redevelopment. Residents would like to see the future of West Ashley provide a mixture of housing for all income levels, have more places to connect with each other, have multiple transportation options (walking, biking, transit) to get to all West Ashley has to offer, and a thriving local business economy.
- Cainhoy
  - In settlement communities, people live in mobile homes. If that's what people can afford, people should be able to live in mobile homes.
- Peninsula
  - Residents would like to see equal attention and services provided to all neighborhoods on the peninsula; and feel that there should be a better balance between quality of life for residents and accommodating tourists.

## Community Submissions

### *Historic Charleston Foundation*

- Identify ideal locations for new affordable housing stock along future rapid transit corridors and other public transportation routes, adjacent to job centers and essential services such as groceries and not be in low-lying, flood-prone areas.
- With neighborhood diversity in mind, encourage development of new affordable housing in mixed use and mixed income developments. Pursue more public-private affordable housing development ventures to capture the expertise, efficiency and incentives available to the private sector. Further embrace the Palmetto Community Land Trust and "bank" any feasible city lands for future housing opportunities.
- Recommend implementation of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program to better leverage private investment in development and rehabilitation of affordable housing.
- Demonstrating the city's commitment to preservation and enforcement of its own preservation ordinance, embrace the recommendations of the Demo by Neglect Taskforce, including the use of eminent domain on willful violators to rehabilitate as a source of affordable housing stock.
- Consider incentives to reactivate vacant real estate on the upper floors along King and Broad Streets as housing, such as relaxed parking requirements and expedited permitting.
- Hire additional staff in the Planning & Preservation Department to speed along the permitting, Board of Architectural Review (BAR), and entitlement processes. New staff should also be dedicated to BAR enforcement.

## Charleston City Plan Public Input Collected Fall 2020: Organized by Plan Element

- Explore legislative opportunities to identify new or expanded revenue sources for affordable housing, including inclusionary zoning.
- Encourage the development of walkable neighborhoods that have a mix of housing types, retail, parks, workplaces and gathering places.
- Preservation is essential to what makes Charleston unique, though preservation materials and architectural requirements can be costly. In order to stimulate preservation and prevent gentrification of neighborhoods, the city must support policies, incentives and plans to assist disadvantaged homeowners in maintaining their historic homes.
- Preserve existing affordable housing units by exploring opportunities with the private sector to extend affordability amortization periods.
- Carefully evaluate the success of current funding strategies for affordable housing (tax increment finance districts, fee in lieu, etc.) through the lens of providing long-term, sustainable affordable housing.

### *AIA-led community meeting*

- Supporting ADUs for different homes in the area.
- Fees are adding to the cost of constructions, by adding time and resubmittal fees. Having to resubmit or the unknown of the outcome of meeting adding costs. (ex: 20K for kitchen addition added to historic home; may 2019 submittal)
- For fees, if it costs more look to Seabrook ARC for the fees. Its a one charge system not based on each submittal. It helps to scope out the review for the project.
- Single family homes in downtown second homes
- Visualization - example is "Imagine the Wall" to ask "what if" and provide visualizations to people to make decisions. Example of leverage arch/design community.
- Creativity - ability to think outside the box, goes back to visualization, be sales people for new ideas

### *CAJM-led community meeting:*

- Public safety- a city is safest when everyone has affordable housing and don't have to move/be evicted- need as much affordable housing as possible so that people can live closer to their jobs- transportation comes into play, more reliability means that people can maintain jobs, all of which have been shown to decrease crime.
- City plan needs to protect communities from "people that look like me"- Child needed good school, attracted to neighborhood for improved quality of life- but was part of neighborhood "wave"
- How can city plan account for gentrification and create "gentrification free zones"
- Coordination. Transportation and affordable housing, and I mean really affordable. Not housing for teachers, policemen, I'm talking about the folks that are really poor and need affordable housing for them. And also transportation, for example Mt. Pleasant, closed Hominy Grill, people who work there can't get there because transportation sucks. When they look at this big complex plan, how they balance and coordinate affordable housing and transportation routes.
- For much of the research that we've done, affordable housing is for the people who are cleaning the hotels who can't possibly live downtown. Tension - build a city dependent on tourist dollars,



not sure how dependent, but we do not build a city that works toward people who serve those tourists when they are here. I would prefer for the tourists to go someplace else, but there are people whose job is to serve them and the city turns their back on them. Uber drivers, restaurant workers.

- In our work on housing, and maybe transportation, what we hear from Charleston's leadership, don't ask us for more, North Charleston says we won't be first, everyone gets it but nobody is willing to step up and be a real leader. Real lead that acknowledges that we are thousands of units short. Not just a Charleston problem. The extent to which the municipalities are an obstacle, that something that needs to be solved. Too much in-fighting. Everyone is looking to somebody else to do it.
- One thing, no more hotels. No more apartment buildings for college kids. The apartment buildings for students, students don't even live there. The great recession slowed things down, which was great, with respect to over-building.
- Power of developers. You would think city would be in better position, to someone who wants to build a hotel, this is exactly what we want. Still seems desperate for investment dollars. Why don't we demand what we want out of them? You shouldn't be able to build a hotel if you can't house the key people that are working in that hotel.
- Fewer hotels and more affordable housing in the peninsula area.
- Dense build, apartments above retail shops, with buses there is no need for a car
- Workforce housing, affordable housing-not group everyone together in one spot. Spread out. Diverse income levels living together in the same buildings, neighborhoods. Integrate the affordable housing in our neighborhoods.
- The condition of the public housing units. In extreme disrepair.
- Address the small things of picking up trash.
- Stop with the single family dwellings. Increase housing density. Allow apartments to be built.
- Raise the fines for those development companies that don't build affordable units. Should be equal to the amount a unit would cost.
- Incentives for landlords to keep housing affordable.
- Housing needs to be accessible - it's too expensive, cheaper options aren't as close to public transit, affordable housing should be the only housing that is built (stricter zoning laws)

*Charleston Climate Coalition led community meeting:*

- Affordable housing land trusts that create smarter affordable houses along transit corridors - need to think ahead and pull multiple community planning levers at the same time.

*Coastal Conservation League and Preservation Society of Charleston led community meeting:*

- Downtown: housing authority must abide by Comp Plan; preserve existing affordable housing
- Downtown/French Quarter: Don't seem to have affordable housing; concerned City is intent on allowing new hotels (prioritizing this type of development over affordable housing)
- Planning Commission—required to approve? (Not necessarily; important to understand recommendation of approval vs. final approval)
- Specific improvements? Education on the process (TRC, stormwater management, etc. years of review, complex process many don't understand)

- Downtown: Transportation contributing to the issue of affordable housing; we shouldn't think of affordable housing in isolation. We need reliable transportation downtown.
- Bridgeview – City lost their lease on low-income housing? Would be a great disservice
- Berkeley County resident, Cain Bay: astounded by amount of traffic and housing development in Nexton/Cain Bay
- James Island: workforce housing limitations, having to live way out
- 1-year resident, downtown, horse barn converted, on battery – daughter in hospitality looking for work – cost of living space a major concern – accessible housing hard to find for people running tourism industry
- Not enough housing for workforce
- Thinking about communities we want to nurture – diversity comes along with different incomes and ages – need to set policies that enable that to happen – otherwise will be a pretty sterile place
- Begins with policy, setting zoning to incentivize the type of development we want – people who come into entry level can't afford to live close to jobs
- Requiring components of new development to create affordable housing or could pay a fee in lieu towards an affordable housing fund – becoming more common.
- Rapid increase in housing values is a big challenge in the upper peninsula. Puts stress on neighborhood and businesses
- Incongruous to build new affordable housing while letting existing units deteriorate
- One strategy was to do individual units instead of single complexes – makes maintenance a challenge
- Non-traditional building technologies and materials
- IN long borough affordable housing not truly affordable - need to see better options
- If the County affordable housing ballot passes, how will that help address the issue in the City?
- Why does the city not mandate affordable housing?
- Rapid increase in housing values - big challenge particularly on peninsula putting a stress on neighborhoods and businesses
- Desire to build new affordable housing without a plan in place to address maintenance of existing affordable housing. Maintaining/rehabbing existing stock should come first.

*Lowcountry Local First led community meeting:*

- part of the work we do now is subdivisions, commercial development, multi family developments -- so it would help if the city would allow more density, allow mixed uses, make it easier to get around the standard code so that we can do smaller lot sizes
- storm retention draining and flooding is a huge issue, and the time that it is taking to get through the development process is costing HLA and the developer (the client) money
- there has to be more affordable living in the market, and i dont know what he answer is
- wonders whether the price point of apartments will come down because of the spike in inventory on the peninsula
- i would support smart density

- one of chs's problems is that we are a great place and we all want to stop people from coming, but then that hurts our business too -- so affordable housing would be great for the city to keep working on
- the industry most impacted by affordability is F&B
- Affordable housing is key , transparency is important how are they spending this money? We need to see more results before asking for money. Now 25% of my employees leave downtown and the others dont. None of this process is public and it is a problem
- Affordable housing
- Chs is a tough market for hiring staff. Affordable housing is crucial piece that affects several things downstream. This would alleviate traffic concerns, parking, so many things. Some of his team lives in Summerville and he pays them a premium because labor is at a shortage and they have to drive so far. This solution would make for happier employees.
- Different tiers of affordable housing – low, mid, and workforce housing. IT would be awesome to partner with LLF, Chamber, CCSD, hospitals, fire dept, police dept – so create workforce housing unit – 60-70 units – mixed use with retail on bottom, funded by the City with private investors - where young talent can find a place affordably and connect immediately with others.
- Similar to accessibility for patients and customers, need affordable housing and density is part of that equation – density is needed in certain areas to make that happen. Need to redesign areas like Citadel Mall to provide accessibility and affordability. Mayor Riley always had a 50 year plan – I love that planning ahead. Virtual work is changing the way work happens. Help with cost of living
- affordable housing! Can't have some much of their income going to housing; adding to traffic and road system that people have to go that far out; also need livable wage; supports affordable housing initiatives on the ballot; hope all of these efforts will help get us out of this crisis;

## Land Use

### Survey Responses

**Which of the following are most important for improving overall quality of life for the Charleston community?**

- 56. Effective drainage and flood management**
- 57. Clean environment (air, water, soil, etc.)**
- 58. Preservation of cultural history and racial diversity**
- 59. Preservation of historic buildings and landmarks
- 60. Having multiple options for housing types and price levels**
- 61. Equitable access to nature (including water), parks and recreational facilities
- 62. Having multiple options for transportation**
- 63. Quality architecture and design
- 64. Equitable access to nearby quality schools
- 65. Living close to work
- 66. Equitable access to art, culture and public spaces

*Bolded reflects top 5 prioritized across all underrepresented categories.*

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### Other field themes:

- All are of equal importance!
- Residents over tourists (in context of economic development too, i.e. diversifying economy)
- Consistent/predictable entitlement and approval standards/processes
- Preservation of natural ecosystems and wildlife

### Controversial themes:

- Regulatory environment (free market vs. moratoriums)

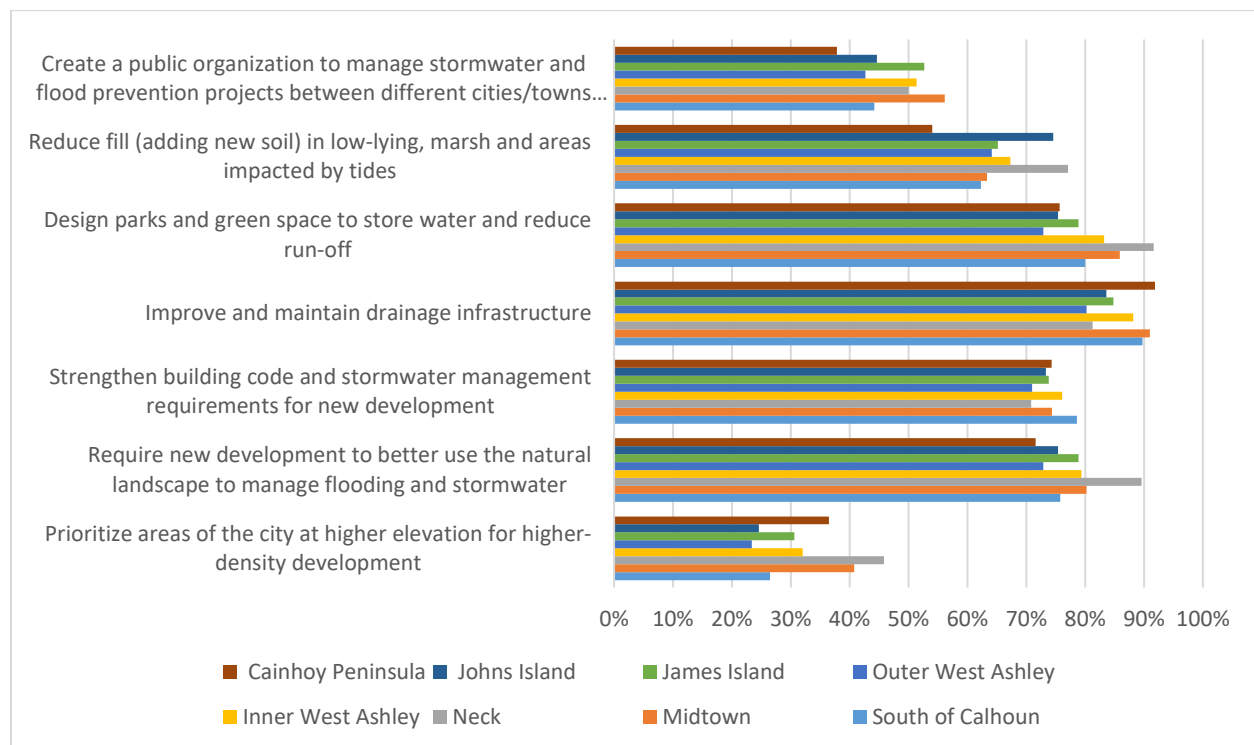
### What people like most (common themes):

- Architecture and built environment
- Mixture of urban, rural and natural surroundings

### What is most challenging (common themes):

- Rapid growth & development

The recent Dutch Dialogues study adopted by City Council recommended a variety of strategies to decrease impacts of flooding and better manage water. Which of the following strategies would you support?



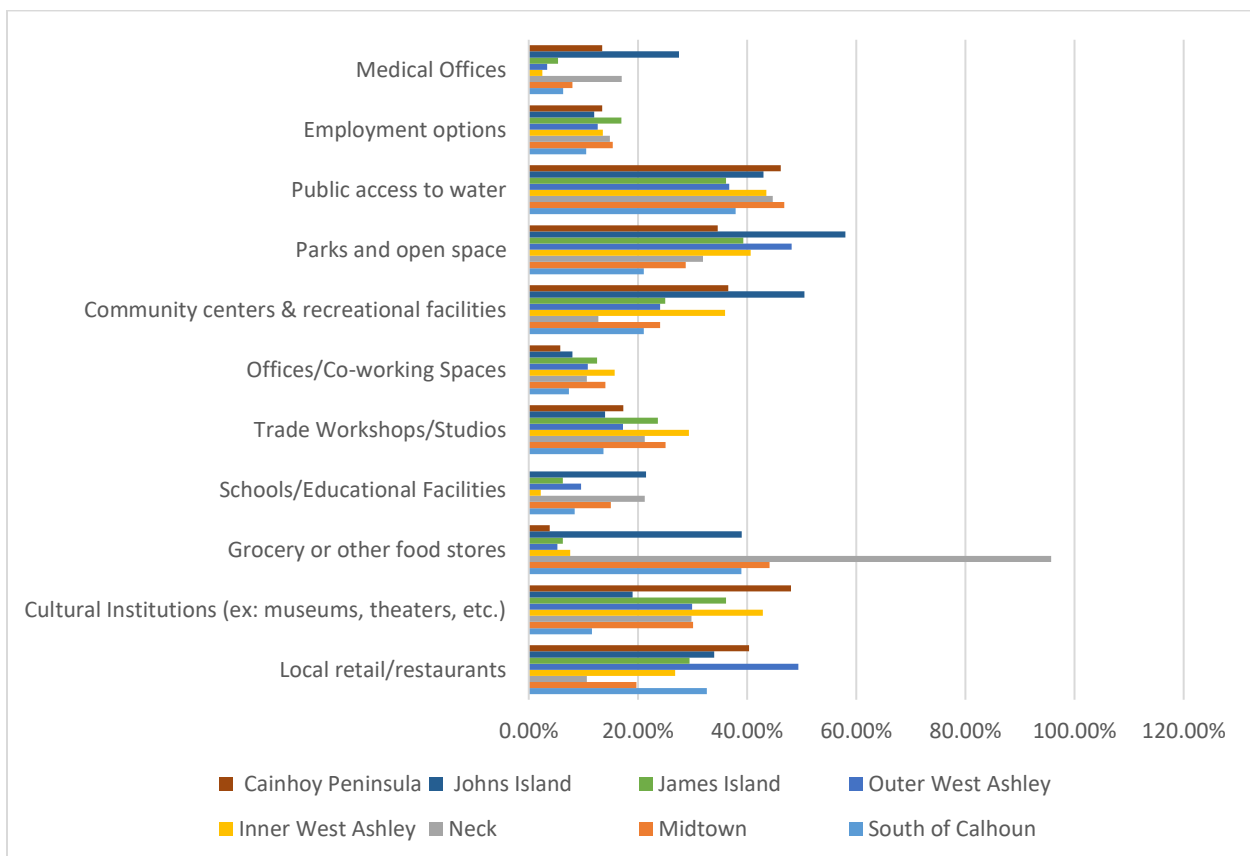
### Other field:

- Protect low-lying areas from future development
- Strengthen wetland protection and wetland buffer requirements

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- Require more pervious surface
- Protect/restore pre-development hydrology, including Gadsden Creek
- Expand incentives/require LID (permeable surfaces and rain harvesting) and green infrastructure
- Streamline elevation approval in historic district
- Prioritize most impacted and historically disadvantaged communities; and develop strategies with input from those residents and include mitigation measures to prevent displacement
- Moratorium
- Reduce/eliminate fill
- Mitigate additional cost burden of heightened regulations to prevent impact on affordability
- Managed retreat

**Which of the following does your neighborhood lack that you wish you had nearby? Check all that apply.**



Other field:

29401: south of calhoun

- **local stores/corner stores**
- **grocery stores**

29403: midtown

- **Grocery store**

- **Restaurants**

29455: Johns Island

- **Grocery stores**
- **Restaurants**

## Listening Session Findings

- **Citywide**
  - The Urban Growth Boundary is important and should be protected. Residents feel that establishing a type of buffer would help to better manage the edges and create a smoother transition between the rural and suburban areas.
  - The natural landscape can be a resource in both improving quality of life for residents and mitigating flooding. Residents would like to see our valuable ecosystems preserved and restored as our city faces increasing flooding challenges with sea level rise and worsening storms.
- **Cainhoy**
  - There is a disconnect between life inside and outside of planned developments seen in conversations about historical perspectives, zoning, “safety”, and access to recreation/trails
- **Peninsula**
  - Residents would like to see the future of the peninsula have more grocery stores, local corner stores, quality public schools, free parking for residents, and public bathrooms.
- **Johns Island**
  - To maintain the rural and agricultural character of the island, land conservation should be prioritized. Preserving and restoring ecosystems can also be used to protect against current and future flooding.
  - The new development along the main corridors has brought more amenities closer to residents. Residents want to live closer to grocery stores and restaurants. To maximize the benefits of these places, they should maintain a diversity of local businesses and prioritize affordability and connectivity.

## Community Submissions

### *Historic Charleston Foundation*

- Reexamine the five areas of the city identified in the Century V plan and consider expanding that to reflect the study areas of the Dutch Dialogues Charleston, adding in James Island and the Cainhoy Peninsula.
- With the reality of sea level rise and increasing storm frequency and strength, the City Plan should restrict growth in low-lying areas and encourage it at higher elevations. This can be accomplished through smart growth practices, a transfer of development rights program, green and sustainable building practices and incentives, zoning changes, and entitlement adjustments.

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- Zoning regulations should reflect not just the current but also the projected water levels. The city should adopt a plan for elevation-based zoning, as described in the Dutch Dialogues Charleston Final Report.
- “Fill and build” practices should be avoided. Site preparation practices typically scrape and harm the organic soil layer and replace it with fill material, which prohibits absorption of intensive rainfalls and contributes to ponding and run off. Retaining this organic top layer and soil ensures that sites in which fill material is used are in equilibrium with existing soils. Site preparation should be “water neutral” meaning that water drainage and infiltrations are equal to pre-development conditions.
- The City Plan should encourage and identify locations for infill and redevelopment to conserve and protect existing marsh, wetland, and coastal forests through revisions to land use planning and protocols. Development regulations should make infill and redevelopment as seamless and easy as possible.
- Land use and zoning decisions, in the context of development, should be made using tidal and flood risk information and the city-wide water plan.
- Promote conservation development to replace the cluster development currently in the city zoning code.

### *AIA-led community meeting:*

- Helping to facilitate a more regional plan beyond the borders of City annexation. Each area of the region has their own plans and zoning, AIA could help build towards the cohesion.
- Working with adjacent muni’s and continuing the thread across the lines for regs. Zoning and how they tie into citywide efforts. Approved heights in areas tend to not line up with what is expected for the city character.
- Zoning - wind speed changing, seismic, etc. (Codes are outdated, such as 2003 wind maps in North Charleston.)
- Infuse inspiration into projects around the city. Facilitate diverse design, urban feel outside of the peninsula, walkability and views. Help communities rethink their neighborhoods, while keeping the unique “Charleston” feel. Better represent citizens in dialogues with the city.
- Looking to different sources of inspiration in design vs. “Lowcountry Feel”. Keep an open mind. Creativity and open mindedness. Ideas of materiality. Providing a framework is helpful, do not create a “checklist”. King st. is diverse, avoiding a monolithic design paradigm.
- I support an overlay/more restrictions on lower properties. i.e. GB in elevation 11 being easier to build than GB in elevation 7. Others agreed. Good idea.
- Appreciated flood risk map put map, one of the remaining challenges is the parcels left are low. Not high ground left and people are developing what is left, low ground. Elevation 7 means you instinctively know that isn’t right for our region to be developed. As land becomes more scarce- this is a huge challenge for us. Can there be a mechanism for developers to give back to the community- grass spaces, parks, sw mgmt.
- Just because I can meet FEMA requirements, should I? Sites shouldn’t be built near wetlands, they need space to breathe.
- Staff are writing design policies, more engagement with design professionals within city, we get them after they’ve been cooked, missed opportunity to engage, to understand all aspects for how they may affect architecture within the city,

*CAJM-led community meeting:*

- Better zoning-with dense builds
- Stop building without the infrastructure

*Coastal Conservation League and Preservation Society of Charleston led community meeting:*

- City is not standing up to developers, should require to provide mitigation for flooding – especially when rezoning to build on floodplains – need to establish plan where this doesn't happen with every development – reduce concrete and impervious surfaces
- Flooding is a major issue, especially for new residents, we have to think about king tides, and if people can travel with ease to where they need to go - appointments, etc – how can we improve the underlying infrastructure?
- Flooding impacts to daily life and routines – not a lot of natural areas on waterfront for residents to enjoy, would like to enjoy the entire loop around peninsula – important for quality of life, and quality of ecosystems
- Thanks to the City/James Island for doing Flood Study, but wish we could do more to address the flooding problems – seems document was produced and put on the shelf
- Cleveland OH: cooperative ownership of businesses; transitioning from current system to creating enterprises that address issues from roots (Evergreen Foundation)—encourage City to look at Cleveland, Berkeley, CA, etc. (how can we fundamentally reconfigure our local economy to supply jobs/build resilience?)
- Education of the citizenry on how development approvals work: there is a disconnect between approval of development, density/land use—how those issues are addressed in approvals and how we can step up our review/mediation of problems
- Downtown: neighbors question development going on in their neighborhoods
- City doesn't seem to be focusing on resilient land-use planning; stronger ordinances. Need to take a hard look at land use esp. related to water.
- Flooding main issue: communication between City and residents—how are projects funded and when? Tremendous need to mitigate threat. City needs to do more to keep residents updated and engaged.
- Kudos to P&C on flooding series
- Oversight on use of TIF funds; Laurel Island PUD
- Elevation based zoning aspect of Dutch Dialogues (DD) is critical on Johns Island and cainhoy
- Need to be doing what the DD team told us to do in their final report.
- Army Corps needs to follow DD recs as well for their proposed Seawall project.
- Would like to see the city take a science-based biological approach to address flooding. Need to work with nature more and not so much against it with hard infrastructure approaches.
- Less structural solutions, more biological solutions
- Need to look at resilience specifically in terms of climate change and flooding - those kinds of issues. Especially since the city and other places are going in and buying homes and using tax money to do that- can we still allow development in low lying areas and filling floodplains and wetlands in new developments that don't belong there - those should be conserved to avoid future harm.



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- Permanently harden the Urban Growth Boundary line around the City. Do not allow it to change or move.
- Prioritize green spaces and trees
- Increase true mixed use development - all high prices, need affordability, true mixed housing if a builder builds a luxury building make it income contingent
- High rise development, large, residential, expensive, 8-12 story development = out of character with Charleston
- Moved to Charleston recently (Downtown); if we wanted to live in a large, high-rise area, would've stayed in the NE (x2)
- Major issue is City is not holding line against impermeable surfaces (permeable materials should be required; drainage planning; contribute to the cost of flood control)
- Johns Island: needs elevation based zoning; areas should stay agricultural; 400-500 house developments inappropriate in low-lying areas; drainage should be aggregate
- Doesn't seem to be a comprehensive review of impacts of large developments on flooding, traffic, etc. = degradation of quality of life in City
- Flooding and traffic issues are dealt with by TRC which is not a public process—difficult for residents to understand impacts (esp. flooding; ex: Jasper has exacerbated flooding—Gadsden St becomes a lake) Need to do better, more transparent process for flooding and traffic patterns
- “Missing middle” people who are living in smaller footprints, amenable to their lifestyles, walkable, clustering houses around greenspaces, retirees, families – city should entice private development like this – studied on market basis, very popular concept – create development that would stand the test of time – affordable
- Citadel Mall is essentially dead, PUD to repurpose into mixed use
- New urbanism – creating environmentally friendly, walkable neighborhoods, given lifestyle demands of current day
- We've gone through rapid shifts with people working from home/anywhere – how do we create spaces where people can work, grow – great community spaces?
- Currently too many apartments, slow down on that development – when building that big, developers should make sure flooding is mitigated/not exacerbated – Broad and Lockwood has been compromised by Jasper
- Don't hear about major developments until they are about to happen, and no chance to make a change – left out of the loop, need better communication with the populous
- Johns Island – County in process of doing Maybank Overlay with City to follow – Town and Country approach of nodes of development with more rural areas in between – don't want Maybank to look suburban like other areas.
- James Island – traffic is a big issue – when building developments with huge parking decks, how will traffic flow work (like roundabouts) , how many cars coming in and how and how will people move around the island to keep James Island feel?
- Don't want big apartments everywhere
- Johns Island should maintain more of the rural farm aspect of the island with farming encouraged and filling in less with housing
- West Ashley – like many different types of housing in area of Avondale that is within walking distance to different types of commercial uses – truly mixed-use communities

- New communities need to be more like old communities like Avondale
- Need to incentivize good new development
- Tired of hotels and big box apartments and losing character
- Is it possible to add canals to the peninsula, even if it takes away streets.
- Best communities pre-date zoning. Sometimes zoning produces results we don't want to see. Sometimes eliminating regulations or restricting regulations can create creativity
- Good new developments like Ion were very controversial because people didn't like a new development approach that was different than what was around
- How do we create spaces where people can work and grow and create community spaces that support that
- Too many apartments
- Needs to be better communication to residents about major developments
- Need a comprehensive review of all impacts of development
- Flooding and traffic issues are dealt with TRC which is not public enough - difficult for residents to even understand how the impacts are going to be
- Jasper development as an example has constant flooding issues even though it got a clean bill of health

*Lowcountry Local First led community meeting:*

- Planning and density – need to not be bad words. Need urban growth boundary where we're infilling and supporting with infrastructure and public transit.
- Density – shared spaces for recreation so can live in a smaller space, and enjoy public amenities, shared spaces that bring people together for entertainment.

## Resiliency

### Survey Responses

**Which of the following are most important for improving overall quality of life for the Charleston community?**

- 67. Effective drainage and flood management**
- 68. Clean environment (air, water, soil, etc.)**
- 69. Preservation of cultural history and racial diversity**
- 70. Preservation of historic buildings and landmarks
- 71. Having multiple options for housing types and price levels**
- 72. Equitable access to nature (including water), parks and recreational facilities
- 73. Having multiple options for transportation**
- 74. Quality architecture and design
- 75. Equitable access to nearby quality schools
- 76. Living close to work
- 77. Equitable access to art, culture and public spaces

*Bolded reflects top 5 prioritized across all underrepresented categories.*

Other field themes:

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- All are of equal importance!
- Ending structural racism/racial inequalities
- Affordable cost of living (not just housing)
- Residents over tourists (in context of economic development too, i.e. diversifying economy)
- Infrastructure before growth
- Climate change mitigation and infrastructure to support clean energy
- Equitable access to fresh and affordable food, more urban gardens
- Preservation of natural ecosystems and wildlife

### Controversial themes:

- Public safety (more policing vs. community resources/support)

### What people like most (common themes):

- Beautiful, Charming, Friendly, Unique, Vibrant, Active, Historic, Diverse
- Convenience, location, “close to...”
- Water: access to beaches and waterways for recreation and/or fishing, crabbing, etc.
- The natural environment (green space, trees, marshes) and outdoor activities
- History
- Food
- Arts, Culture & the Outdoors: recreation/plenty to do
- The people
- Sense of community
- Family, roots, home
- Gullah-Geechee history/culture
- Architecture and built environment
- Big city amenities, small town feel
- Ability to walk and/or bike everywhere
- Diversity (racial/ethnic)
- Slow and relaxed pace/lifestyle
- Educational opportunities
- Affordable?
- Mixture of urban, rural and natural surroundings
- Weather (warm, year-round growing season)

### What is most challenging (common themes):

- Flooding
- Hurricanes
- Traffic/Commute & mobility
- Parking
- Tourism
- Insufficient/outdated infrastructure (roads, bridges, sidewalks & drainage)
- Lack of transit options

- Unsafe roads
- Bike and pedestrian safety
- Segregation and racism
- Racial and Income inequality/inequity
- Unaffordable/high cost of living
- Gentrification, loss of diversity, lack of representation
- Rapid growth & development
- Low wages/lack of job opportunities
- Crime/violence
- Lack of quality/variety in public schools and educational disparities
- Weather (heat & humidity)
- Bugs!
- Trash/litter
- Noise (students & construction)
- Cost of running small/local business
- Poor relationship with city leadership/the City's poor communication and engagement with residents (including lack of communication in Spanish)
- Access to fresh food and grocery stores
- Homelessness
- Disparities in city services and amenities
- Painful history

#### **Q20-22 Citywide Summary**

**20%** responded their home or property has been damaged by flooding in the past.

*This percentage was **3-5 points higher** among youth, tenants and lower-income respondents.*

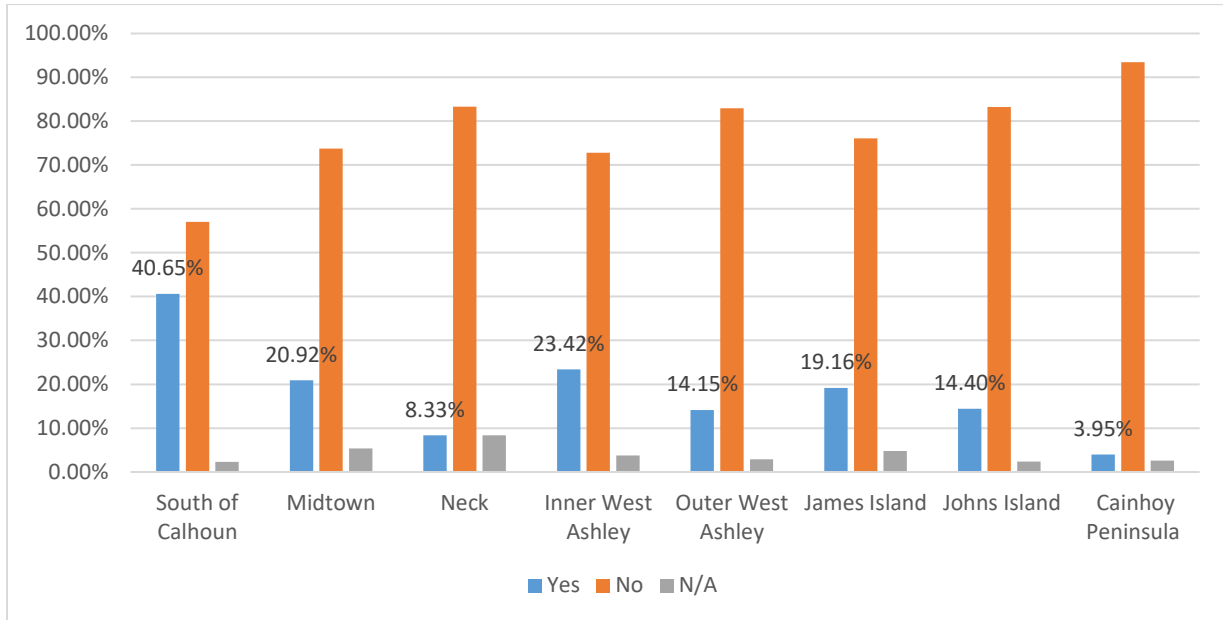
**78%** responded they are somewhat or very concerned about their home or property being impacted by flooding in the future.

Responses were roughly split **40/40** between those who have and haven't taken actions to protect their home from flood damage (**15%** not applicable).

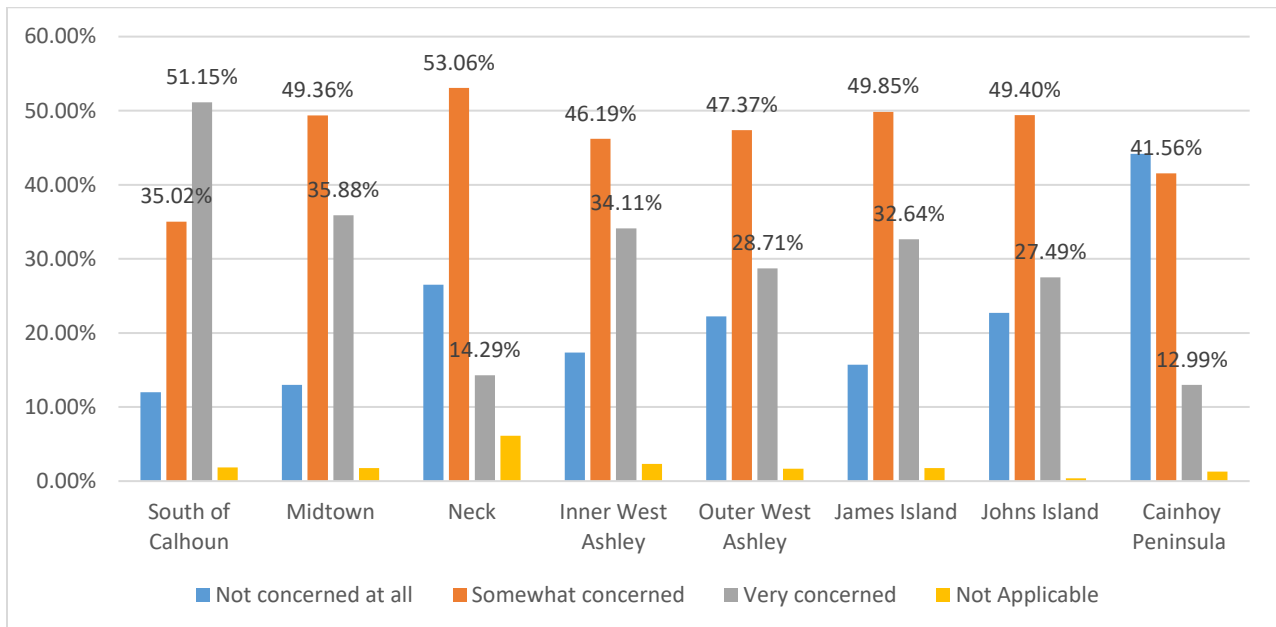
*The percentage of those who have taken actions was **10 points lower** among youth and tenants.*

*The percentage of 'Not Applicable' was roughly **double** for Black/African-American respondents, lower-income respondents, youth and tenants*

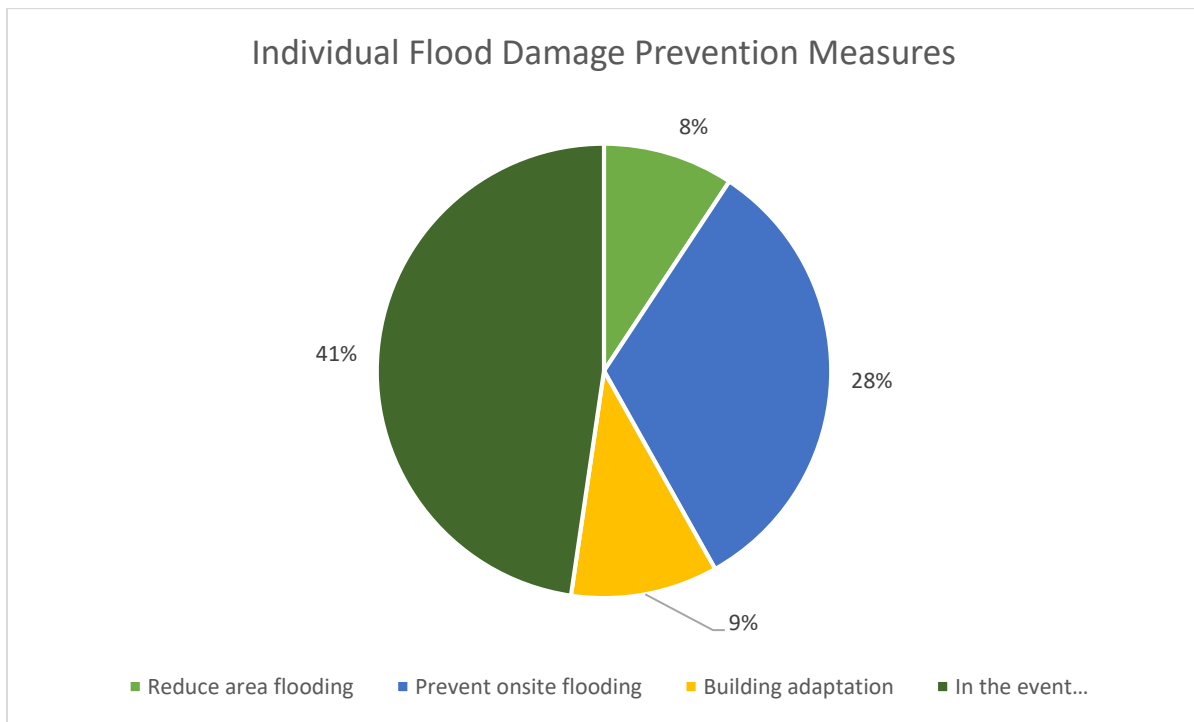
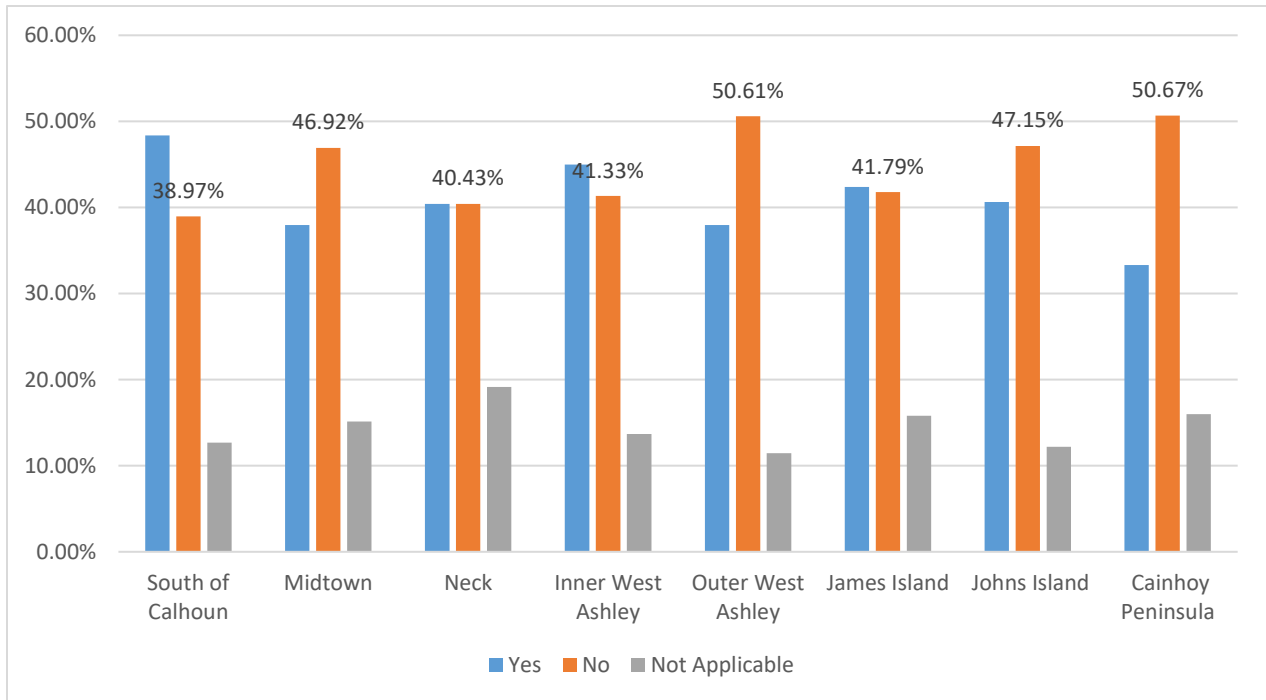
**Has your home or property been damaged by flooding in the past?**



**How concerned are you about your home or property being impacted by flooding in the future?**



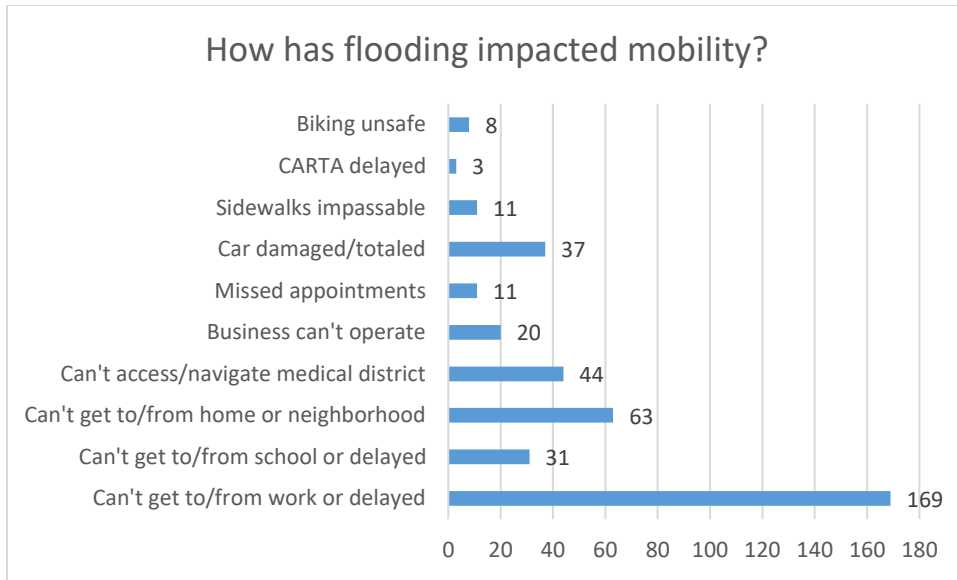
**Have you taken any actions to protect your home from flood damage recently or in the past?**



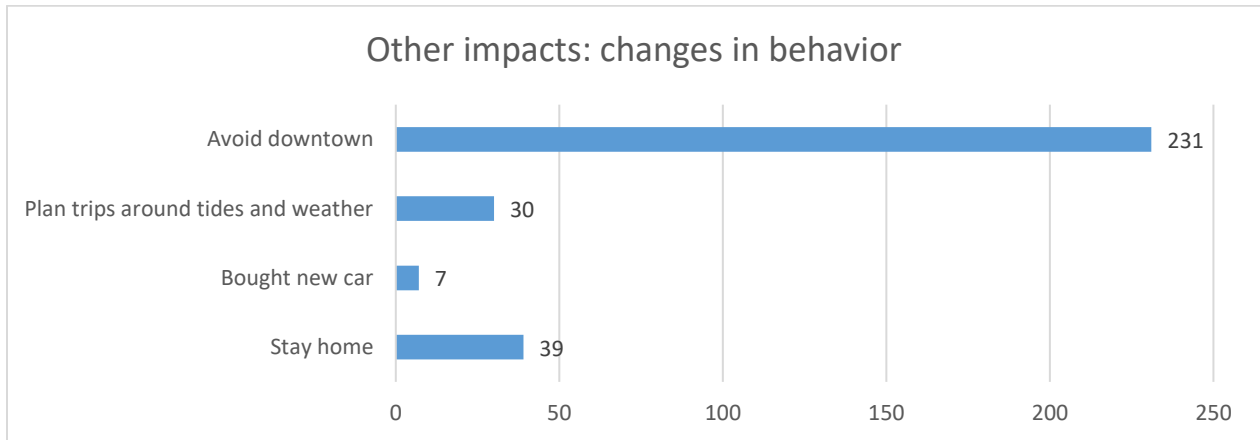
Slow & Store (reduce area flooding)	Green infrastructure (swales, rain gardens, trees)
	reduced impervious surface
	rain barrels
Redirect (prevent onsite flooding)	Clearing ditch/drain
	Gutters
	regrading lot
	installed/improved drainage systems (including french drains)
	sump pump
	wall/berm
Building Adaptation	Permanent doorway protection
	Crawlspace
	relocated HVAC/utilities/appliances
	elevated home
	rebuilt
	flood insurance
In the event (temporary/reactionary)	sandbags
	temporarily move personal items/car

**12 people (2%) said they moved.**

<b>People who have not taken actions to protect their home/personal property cited the following reasons:</b>
Time Money On slab/can't elevate Unsure of options Lack of control over cause of flooding Built elevated home Purchased home outside of flood zone Not currently affected by flooding Live on second floor Live on high ground Recently moved in I rent/am not owner



Other: restricted access to grocery stores, shopping, restaurants, church, visiting family; regularly experiencing fear and anxiety



**Streets/Intersections mentioned**

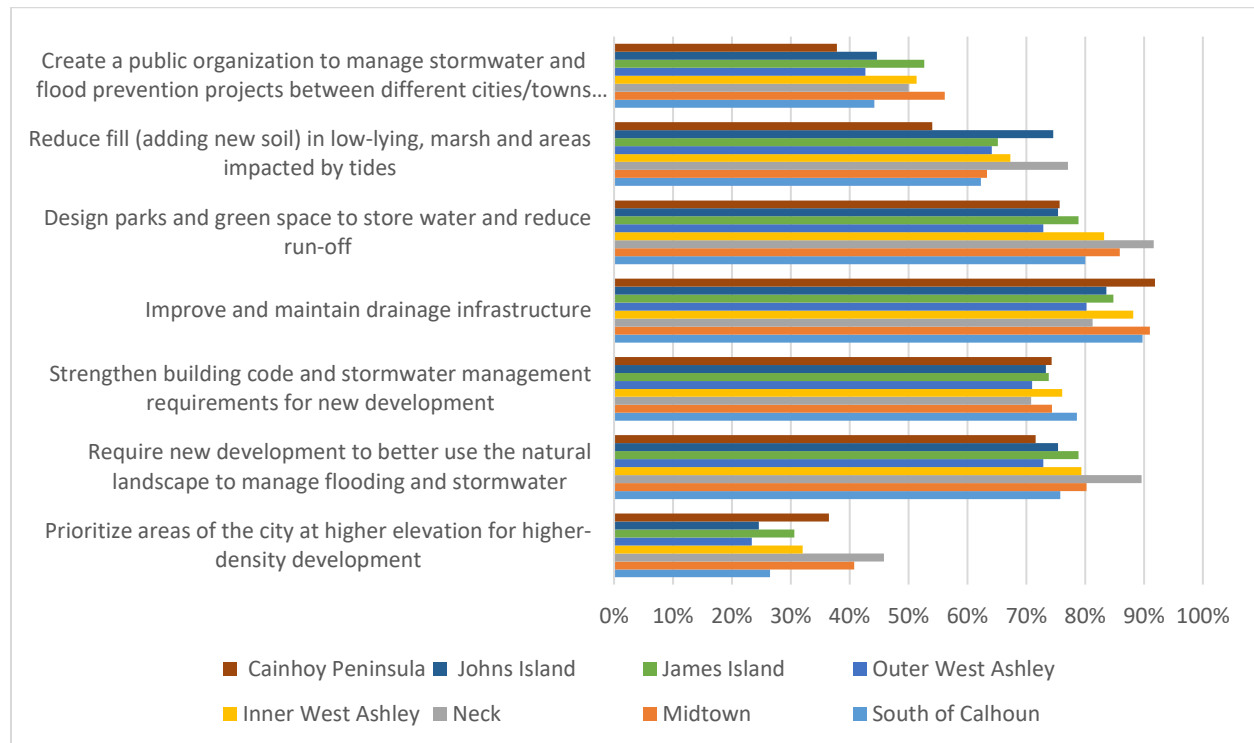
Crosstown	34
Coming St	1
East Bay/Morrison	12
Ashley St	2
Lockwood and Broad St	21
Calhoun	8
Wappoo	1
Market	4
Hwy 61	2
Bees Ferry	4
Johns Island Maybank	1
Central Park Rd	2



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Fishburne/Lockwood	5
Upper Meeting	5
Upper King	4
Spruill Ave	2
Rebellion Rd	1
Main Rd	5
Bee St	1
Limehouse bridge	1
Simons St	1
Isabella St	1
King and Huger	2
Romney and Morris	1
Coming St	2
River Rd	1
Concord and Washington	1
America St	1

**The recent Dutch Dialogues study adopted by City Council recommended a variety of strategies to decrease impacts of flooding and better manage water. Which of the following strategies would you support?**



Other field:

- Green architecture
- Artificial reefs and other natural barriers
- Sea walls/dikes – or not
- Plant trees and vegetation
- Protect low-lying areas from future development
- Build/restore canals
- Strengthen wetland protection and wetland buffer requirements
- Require more pervious surface
- Protect/restore pre-development hydrology, including Gadsden Creek
- Expand incentives/require LID (permeable surfaces and rain harvesting) and green infrastructure
- Streamline elevation approval in historic district
- Prioritize most impacted and historically disadvantaged communities; and develop strategies with input from those residents and include mitigation measures to prevent displacement
- Purchase undeveloped land to convert to green infrastructure
- Ban clear cutting
- Combine drainage solutions with other amenities like bike/ped infrastructure and road improvements
- Moratorium
- Reduce/eliminate fill

- Property tax incentives for homeowners who use water retention strategies
- Mitigate additional cost burden of heightened regulations to prevent impact on affordability
- Managed retreat

### Listening Session Findings

- *Citywide:*
  - Flooding is a persistent and worsening problem throughout the city. It is important to improve regular maintenance of existing drainage infrastructure and ditches in addition to pursuing projects to improve infrastructure.
  - The natural landscape can be a resource in both improving quality of life for residents and mitigating flooding. Residents would like to see our valuable ecosystems preserved and restored as our city faces increasing flooding challenges with sea level rise and worsening storms.
  - The street networks and drainage infrastructure span multiple jurisdictions, which makes it difficult to respond to issues and make improvements. Residents would like to see increased collaboration and coordination among the many jurisdictions to make the necessary investments and improvements in a timely and efficient manner.
  - Evidence of current investment and improvements is mostly seen around new development. Residents would like to see more investments and improvements directed toward older communities, where they are more likely to have out-dated infrastructure and fewer amenities.
- *Peninsula*
  - Flooding is a problem as old as the peninsula and continues to make life challenging for residents and visitors. The plans for continued improvements to drainage and infrastructure, and other flooding solutions being considered, will be paramount to the future of the peninsula community and its ability to thrive.
  - Residents would like to see equal attention and services provided to all neighborhoods on the peninsula; and feel that there should be a better balance between quality of life for residents and accommodating tourists.
- *James Island*
  - Flooding that regularly enters homes and damages property plagues residents and is getting worse. It is critical to ensure that new development is done in a way that preserves open space, protects the natural ecosystem and improves flooding.
  - The complications of overlapping jurisdictional boundaries have made progress slow and some communities caught in between have felt neglected. It is important for the County, City and the Town of James Island to work together to make sure that all communities are well taken care of.
- *Johns Island*
  - New development is straining out-dated infrastructure (roads and stormwater management). The lack of sidewalks and increase in traffic poses dangerous conditions for bikers and pedestrians. Investments in infrastructure are needed to support existing and future development and to increase safe connectivity.
  - Preserving and restoring ecosystems can also be used to protect against current and future flooding.

## Community Submissions:

### *Historic Charleston Foundation*

- Charleston is low-lying, has fragile infrastructure, and an increasing flood threat. We must learn how to better live with and plan for water. Resiliency planning must start with water goals of slow, store, drain.
- Nature-based strategies should be pursued for city capital projects and encouraged for private development projects that restore and improve the natural protective and adaptive processes of barrier islands, coastal marshes, wetlands and intertidal ecosystems that reduce storm surge impacts and allow for long-term sea level rise adaptation.
- Overland drainage should not be compromised further, and these channels should be maintained. High ground is critical for infiltrating stormwater, and low-lying areas provide space for water storage.
- Bioswales, infiltration ponds, and restoration of former creek beds should be encouraged. The City Plan should include a recommendation that the city examine its building standards relative to wind and flood risk and build upon those standards to mitigate loss.
- Public properties (streets, parks, schools, buildings, etc.) should be a part of the city water management plan. Public spaces must include requirements to infiltrate and store stormwater and this requirement should be embedded in the city's maintenance and improvement plans and future infrastructure projects. More trees should be planted to further mitigate stormwater.
- Embrace how water systems functioned before development. Align future development to the natural functions of the water basin systems.
- Embrace and incentivize the use of green infrastructure to help slow and store stormwater within Charleston's built environment.

### *AIA-led community meeting:*

- Water and surge protection for the area, and finding creative ways to retain water beyond the retention pond. Most recent flooding events impact the transit in the City by the Crosstown to be flooded and raising times over hour. We can leverage the growth of the city to help with traffic and food and culture. An interconnected water plan would be great, for example Boston Water mitigation planning (Olmstead) The Fens. A Civic scale to achieve the comprehensive view of how to handle waters not on just lot by lot basis.
- Provide pro-bono architectural consultation, to help protect flood protection. Similar to the BAR Association offerings. It can help to keep people in homes by providing services that otherwise are too expensive.
- Innovation that pertains to next level of sustainability are more costly, how do you fund things now that will benefit us later? Other cities trying to fund large scale to micro scale, step the funding back for large ideas. Multi-tier budgets need to be looked at.
- Sea wall shows how a crisis can be turned into an opportunity ("Imagine the Wall" and design for water/ecology) Charleston blessed by growth. Can be used to incentivize resilience in development and leverage transit. Get right infrastructure in as it happens.
- PPPs - way to achieve resilience. Need partnerships to address new challenges. "Imagine the Wall" and similar ideas need to be given more consideration

- Resistance to developing responsibly, balance of affordability, how to apply rules across big system, how can projects pay true cost of development. Stormwater example - project has to pay burden (too high?). City pressured to relax restrictions and strengthen others. Challenges related to climate change.
- Data needed? Reflection of last 10-20 years to see where we've been. Metric to see what has/hasn't worked. (Data collection a challenge?) Past 10-20 yrs not reflective of what we are seeing today (climate change)
- Would love to see regulations on how much you can pave a site. Kiawah has lot coverage mandates, includes paved or gravel area. It would be hard on us, but we need it. Regulations for paved areas. Our golden egg is the lower elevation. If developers exceed minimum zoning requirements for parking- require pervious to offset that.
- Keep supporting elevating structures and adapting them-Hang on to low cost ideas- bring those to forefront. i.e. handling landscaping is easy and cheap- trees, rain gardens. Architecture: specifying materials not dangerous to the environment, overhangs, etc.
- A more clear assessment from City stormwater would allow us to take a look at their work and see the larger impacts.
- Architects may not know if they are working in a serious flooding area- get involved with other groups.
- The Guidelines for elevating historic structures are great- happy to be part of discussions like that in the future. It was a good "meet in the middle" process
- Multi-functional infrastructure: Example: Amphitheater that doubled as retention pond. Make ideas a functional asset- easier to sell to developers- especially if it is "part of their story".
- Challenges with the follow through. Interest in resilience, layering in resilience, doesn't really respect city limits, cross jurisdictions, requires cooperation with multiple entities. Might require, is this some way to get some synergy and alignment across the different jurisdictions (approvals processes), managing growth and impact of growth

*CAJM-led community meeting:*

- Johns Island- stormwater concerns, "rubber stamp" development
- Uncoordinated jurisdictional work- need more coordination with different jurisdictions to solve issues like traffic and flooding.
- Heard something - total weight of the buildings is probably speeding up subsidence of the land. Approach, build sustainable and sturdy, tons of steel, putting a lot of weight on top of Charleston. Do we really want all of this building?

*Charleston Climate Coalition led community meeting:*

- Marsh rehabilitation is the most efficient way to slow down storms and capture carbon. Focus on natural preservation - we should ban building on marshes.
- Seawall is not a great idea. The wall is not a climate solution. A wall protects property - it is a mitigation effort that is related to climate change but it is not a solution. We want to prioritize holistic mitigation efforts rather than walls and barricades that have the protected and unprotected but still leave some unprotected - does not deal with the sources. Seawall is a downtown issue. Marsh sequestration won't solve flooding downtown, so then how do we do this?

- Rampant development without looking at the ability of the land to handle the change and structures. Incentivizing green building techniques is very important - early opportunity to build that stuff in. Make it more convenient for people to get out of their cars. Be more careful with development in marsh lands. Incentivizing efficient buildings - energy etc. Food waste, circular economy, working more locally in whatever avenues we can. Food waste, composting. For example, why do we transport our yard debris out to Bees Ferry rather than local regional composting sites, allowing Mother nature to build ground. How can we keep our resources - localize things. Community gardens etc. Raise awareness - education around what is going on in our community. Tapping in to our local agriculture, farmers etc. Long standing local farmers might reach a new demographic - tap into our strong restaurant community, farm to table. Climate solutions that look at climate and equity together. Public transit is a great example of this - it provides both access to communities and a climate solution. Mitigation efforts that respond to climate - for example green infrastructure w/ an equity lens - putting it in neighborhoods who are lacking it. Example, restoring Gadsden Creek with these technologies. Identifying positive feedback loops, by addressing one issue while addressing another - prioritize these types of solutions.
- Sea level rise impact that we see daily
- Increase in extreme weather events including tropical storms, rain bombs, hurricanes and heat
- Increase in length in summer season and the negative effects on wildlife
- Increase in vector borne diseases
- Increase in water pathogen diseases such as flesh eating bacteria
- Water acidity levels rising
- We are one of the most negatively impacted cities the country by climate change, thus we should be a trailblazer in climate change mitigation
- Social justice issues
- Water quality issues
- Sustainable building- better zoning and design standards for buildings
- Solar power
- Green roofs
- Expulsion of heat islands
- Innovation for more sustainable and affordable housing that are well equipped to sustain extreme weather events
- Low Impact Development
- Consider LEED standards for all new city buildings
- Weatherize buildings
- Use tax and other incentives to motivate all stakeholders
- Energy efficiency throughout the city
- Remove barriers to install solar panels
- Work on a city wide grid of solar energy or other types of renewable energy
- Carbon neutral goal
- Denial of climate change and inaction
- City plan from a few years ago mentioned sea level rising but never addressed climate change
- Trying to put a “bandage” over the city’s rising sea levels and storms through building a sea wall or installing pumps. All reactionary. There is nothing proactive at stopping this at its root.

- Not installing a living shoreline or living wall
- Weak public transportation system
- Food waste problems
- NOT consider climate would be to make the same mistakes as we've always made.
- Climate affects everything from food, to where we grow it, to nutrients and who can live there.
- At certain point the peninsula won't be livable. Sea level rising much faster than expected. Mitigation is paramount; adaptation will be more critical.. Will require tough decisions. Preserve wetlands and natural carbon sinks.
- City has exciting opportunity to tackle low hanging fruits - electric fleet, food waste mgt, electrifying city cars to reduce carbon emissions and serve as an example.
- The City of Charleston is so vulnerable, on many fronts. That just makes it more urgent than ever to really act on a lot of fronts. If we had started working on the Green Plan 10 years ago, we'd be in a better position now. Now things are changing much faster and we have less time to make the needed changes.
- Don't keep making the same mistakes. We've known about wetland filling and flooding problems for decades. How do we go forward ?
- Every new development without consideration of climate is a step in the wrong direction. Must incorporate holistic climate planning.
- City is behind the curve in planning for the climate. We need to be implementing plans to promote low-impact design stds and green infrastructure. Comp plan update must be firmer in requiring such policies and practices.
- Hazard mitigation team - doesn't take into account impervious surfaces. How do we make informed policy if we are eco-illiterate? What are patterns? What are the causes & effects? What harm can be done? Problems with stormwater retention ponds.
- We have science. Marsh migration & sea level rise, etc. - plan policies based on science. Be willing to make changes based on science. Ch Sea Level Rise policy and Dutch Dialogs are full of good information.
- Comp Plan will req ordinances for implementation. We can call for immediate follow up of ordinance to incorporate Dutch Dialog and Comp Plan.
- Concern that comp plan doesn't include stormwater mgt regulations. Must get all these ideas in comp plan for future reference.
- Social justice issues - not attended to right now. Future generations rely on our current decisions for their well-being.
- Env Justice: Climate change will disproportionately affect many citizens. Need for weatherization - mold problems in low income households downtown. Housing often doesn't accommodate flooding, heat, energy bills & efficiency.
- Dutch Dialogs team addressed social issues: "Way we choose to look at problem determines what we do. What is context in each flooding place? What are opportunities we have to improve quality of life for all? Everything is being done for Charleston - who IS Charleston?" Who will we spend our money on? Who benefits? Is our mission to be a tourist destination? Whose history is being celebrated and whose is being erased? How do we raise everyone up as we make climate resilient plan. Return to idea of environmental commons. Many low income communities have been cut off from green space. All communities should have safe access to green space. Low line project will open up many areas on East side. West Side needs attention. How do we combat greed for the benefit of common good.

- Charleston has a bad & long-standing inequality issue despite the myth of Charleston. We have opportunity via climate crisis to radically change our systems and shift the balance of income and racial equality. Make conscious effort in climate infrastructure to promote equity.
- Need to include health in planning - climate related disease, access to health care, etc.
- Env racism, gentrification, etc. - how can we make progress on policies that have already been made? WA greenway is good. But how can the City address areas that have been forgotten?
- Promote more community gardens and food forests for community benefit, carbon and heat sinks.
- Edible landscaping - easy and inexpensive permaculture approach. Bioswales, rain gardens. Look at City Parks and Stormwater and Flood Plan depts and get them communicating on green infrastructure and green jobs for the community to improve the City and provide access to healthy food.
- Warmer water increases sea level rise, more salt water intrusion - need raised beds to ensure fresh water source. City only has narrow central ridge of high ground. Sea level simulators show difficulty of getting off peninsula in high water conditions. Need disaster planning and education about evac routes.
- Failure to change mind in face of new information - knowingly going with bad plans.
- City has to be willing to leave money on the table re development - must consider climate consequences, more restrictions in place.
- City fails to understand scientific dimensions, cause and effect. Many govt agencies have pointed out dire environmental consequences of unfettered development. Service areas?
- Decarbonization of building materials must be considered (ie, concrete and steel) to reduce carbon emissions.
- Unintended consequences of not asking scientists about development policies. We know better than using stormwater retention ponds to control flooding.
- The city needs to be a model, and it's falling short of that. Concerned about energy advisors, their plan for their own buildings. Need to critically look at their own practices for their own facilities and model what they want the City Plan to reflect.
- How can we get on front end to protect land use and zoning?
- We are the main victims of climate change. This is urgent because this city will have to be relocated in the next century, if climate predictions are true. There is a disproportionate effect on marginalized communities as well, so impacts of the climate crisis are felt harder. In addition, we have vulnerable ecosystems, such as salt water marshes, that would devastate this community if erased.
- There are numerous improvements this city can make, some of them being: making housing more energy efficient, especially in marginalized communities, Cleaning up and closing down dirty power, raising building standards, improving transportation such as biking and walking paths, converting dead places/heat islands into places that capture energy, green tourism options, urban agriculture and composting, etc.
- This city has a history of ignoring communal recommendations of improvements that would mitigate climate change. Money and corporate power is prioritized over the needs of the people, such as historic district restrictions and the role developers play in deciding the future of the land.
- Creating incentives for existing buildings to be more energy efficient. Have standard charging requirements for electric vehicles and have them become universal. As there is a lawsuit against fossil fuel we need to demonstrate that we are doing everything on our part to help. Most significant is pursuing public transportation options and reopening water ways. We have paved



over our waterways which is one of the reasons Charleston struggles with flooding. Create a public marketing campaign to explain why these solutions are so important. Solidifying an emission plan. Program has been adopted that finances retrofit buildings.

- Sea level rise and increased weather events, impact on wildlife, etc. + social justice issues and economic issues are a big deal, need to develop a plan to be trail blazers in US and stop climate change at the root, create a lot of green jobs. Need to pursue sustainable buildings, transportation, energy efficiency (renewal energy grid), env justice. Weakness, city has repeatedly denied climate change and been inactive and tried to use band aids rather than getting to the root of the problem, serious food waste and poor public transportation.
- Main victims of climate change and the city will need to be relocated in next century and most marginalized communities are most impacted and many species are on the map to be extinct. Making housing more energy efficient and affordable, closing down dirty power, raising standards for building, green tourism, walking bike paths, etc.

## Other

### Summary

Consistent through all methods of input, the following themes emerged:

- Maintenance of existing infrastructure; and infrastructure before development
- More transparency and better communication from City of Charleston
- Improved and ongoing engagement
- Healthcare and quality schools are just as important to quality of life
- Safety is a major concern and people have different definitions of safety
- Racial disparities need to be addressed
- Services and improvements should be distributed equitably
- The people and sense of community are important to quality of life, and people want more spaces for community and connection
- More coordination between departments and between jurisdictions to address community challenges

### Survey Responses

#### **QUALITY OF LIFE (OTHER FIELD)**

Common themes:

- All are of equal importance!
- Ending structural racism/racial inequalities
- Equitable access to healthcare (physical and mental)
- Follow-through, transparency, better communication and consistent engagement from City staff and elected officials (feeling heard and understanding what's being done in response)
- Better cleaning and maintenance of public spaces outside of tourism areas
- Services, amenities, housing, healthcare for aging population

Controversial themes:

- Public safety (more policing vs. community resources/support)

**What people like most (common themes):**

- Beautiful, Charming, Friendly, Unique, Vibrant, Active, Historic, Diverse
- Convenience, location, “close to...”
- Water: access to beaches and waterways for recreation and/or fishing, crabbing, etc.
- The natural environment (green space, trees, marshes) and outdoor activities
- History
- Food
- Arts, Culture & the Outdoors: recreation/plenty to do
- The people
- Sense of community
- Family, roots, home
- Gullah-Geechee history/culture
- Architecture and built environment
- Big city amenities, small town feel
- Ability to walk and/or bike everywhere
- Diversity (racial/ethnic)
- Slow and relaxed pace/lifestyle
- Educational opportunities
- Affordable?
- Mixture of urban, rural and natural surroundings
- Weather (warm, year-round growing season)

**What is most challenging (common themes):**

- Flooding
- Hurricanes
- Traffic/Commute & mobility
- Parking
- Tourism
- Insufficient/outdated infrastructure (roads, bridges, sidewalks & drainage)
- Lack of transit options
- Unsafe roads
- Bike and pedestrian safety
- Segregation and racism
- Racial and Income inequality/inequity
- Unaffordable/high cost of living
- Gentrification, loss of diversity, lack of representation
- Rapid growth & development
- Low wages/lack of job opportunities
- Crime/violence
- Lack of quality/variety in public schools and educational disparities
- Weather (heat & humidity)
- Bugs!

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- Trash/litter
- Noise (students & construction)
- Cost of running small/local business
- Poor relationship with city leadership/the City's poor communication and engagement with residents (including lack of communication in Spanish)
- Access to fresh food and grocery stores
- Homelessness
- Disparities in city services and amenities
- Painful history

### **Q27: NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES – OTHER**

29401: south of calhoun

- **public bathrooms**
- **sidewalk maintenance and lighting**

29403: midtown

- **Quality public school**
- **Sidewalk management**
- **Police**
- **public bathrooms**

29405: the neck

- Quality schools

29407: inner west ashley

- **Drainage**

29455: johns island

- **Quality public schools**

### **Q29: ANYTHING ELSE?**

- Infrastructure before development
- Better maintenance of existing infrastructure/public spaces
- Increased/improved communication, transparency, and ongoing engagement with public
- Better communicate plan implementation timelines (manage expectations)
- Racial justice/racism
- Political divisions
- Crime/safety

### [Listening Session Findings](#)

Residents loved the connections and feel of older existing communities and neighborhoods, they also expressed a desire for the plan to recognize that older communities' need the same level of support

given to new communities. Residents desired for the plan to knit together all communities and neighborhoods so that the diverse fabric of the city can be enjoyed by all. There was a concern that some residents felt that the city seems to neglect the needs of certain (older) communities, this in turn causes the existing problems to become worse. Residents would like more avenues for responsive communication.

Safety and quality schools are both significant for quality of life. Safety in terms of crime was mentioned, but just as much if not more often, safety was about being safe from flooding, having access to a clean environment, and being able to walk and move around the community safe from vehicular traffic.

## Community Submissions

### CAJM:

- Charleston has inequities- many areas around the city are beautified, but others are not- need the city to take the lead to improve the facilities in those communities.
- Good at physical things, buildings, giant hotels, but not good at the people things. We forgot 0- the human things are the only things that really matter.
- I live downtown, recently moved from CE to north of Hampton Park, almost shocking to me how much lovelier it is, because I don't live in a neighborhood that regularly floods, and if my car wasn't parked in the driveway it might get flooded. Was surrounded by CofC students, but the trash, the noise, the airbnbs, bachelorette parties, living 3 blocks off King St, tasked to live in an urban street tourist corridor, serving college students or airbnb people. Much nicer in Wagener Terrace. Here I was lucky enough to live in this great place, and it really wasn't that great. No trees or parks in CE.
- This silo is land use, 10-year plan. Everything is a silo and doesn't work well together really. Talk but not do. Divided up between at least three cities and a county, don't talk often and directly, don't do much together, except North Charleston. We have built this thing to be impossible to work. Jacksonville, FL incorporated the entire county, --- those are the kind of changes that might make all of these things work.
- There is no sense of a village where people can care for one another and walk to local shops.
- More walkable areas. Want to create a sense of community.
- Spend equal amounts of money in low income neighborhoods on green space and beautifying as what is spent downtown and in white wealthy neighborhoods.
- More public, communal spaces where people of all different backgrounds are interacting with each other and building a sense of community with one another (for example, a bus to the beach)
- When cities create these community spaces/services, they often end up in white neighborhoods, and then Black folks don't have access. How can the plan make sure that we design public spaces that are actually accessible to EVERYONE?
- Ways to make the physical infrastructure around schools in not-so-good neighborhoods safer?
- Black neighborhoods shouldn't have to fight to keep road expansions out of their neighborhoods

### Charleston Climate Coalition

Develop ways for all communities to have equal access to information and input to concerns and solution options.