



Executive Summary



Mount Pleasant SC
Comprehensive Plan 2018-2028



Introduction

For the past forty years, the Town of Mount Pleasant has been in a position that many communities would consider enviable. It is situated in a beautiful coastal environment with world-famous neighbors, expanding employment, and tourism opportunities. With top-notch support services and infrastructure, outdoor recreational activities, and – historically – vacant land suitable for new development, this growing community has had extremely good fortune.

Today, the Town is highly-regarded within the Charleston metropolitan area as home to the best schools in the region, a thriving recreation program, low property taxes, numerous convenient retail areas, and highly sought-after residential neighborhoods. Continuous changes have transformed what was once a small village into the 4th-largest municipality in the state of South Carolina.

In many ways, however, these blessings have produced side effects that represent the flip side of the coin. Increased traffic and congestion are evident on our streets and roads. New types and forms of development have emerged and deciding what type of development is appropriate in certain locations is often contentious. Natural areas have been lost or negatively affected and flooding has increased. Town government is being stretched thin as the provision of public services and support facilities is stressed to meet demands. Keeping up with new growth has become increasingly difficult and expensive.

2018 Comprehensive Plan Update

As a result, citizens and community leaders face challenges and difficult decisions every day as they work to manage past growth and development decisions while striving to protect the future character and quality of life of this community. One way to deal with such situations is to slow down, take stock of the situation, and plan ahead. By evaluating current conditions, studying

Notable Features of the New Plan

Certain aspects of this Comprehensive Plan are worth pointing out, as they represent an intentional shift or focus on specific themes.

- Land Use & Transportation plans written concurrently to ensure close coordination
- Focus on community-building opportunities (mixed-use hubs, Mount Pleasant Way, Cultural Core)
- Recognition of interconnectedness of various components of the Plan
- Provision of infrastructure (beyond roadways) to meet community goals
- Shift in approach for commercial corridors, focusing on specific redevelopment areas instead of widespread linear patterns
- Consideration of fiscal implications of land development patterns as it affects future service provision.
- Focus on protecting character of development and defining transitions to neighboring areas
- Preservation and maintenance of character of existing neighborhoods
- Creation of options and alternatives for a changing community (transportation, housing, employment)
- Intentional focus on improved transportation connections

historical trends and future needs, and asking residents and business representatives to share their opinions and aspirations, a new guidance system can be crafted and put in place. In other words, a long-range planning effort to prepare a new, more-relevant plan can pay major dividends.

Thus, in the summer of 2017, the Town of Mount Pleasant recognized this need and began a process of updating its Comprehensive Plan ahead of schedule. This long-range policy document is intended to serve as a “touchstone” to guide public and private decisions and investments for the next two decades. Starting with the appointment of a demographically-diverse citizens committee by the Planning Commission, the 40-member Plan Forum was “front & center” as the group worked together with a team of staff and consultants to prepare this new Plan. Throughout this 18-month process, we hosted Open House meetings and provided online survey opportunities to gain insight from local citizens about their current concerns and future desires for their community. They identified many issues that they wanted addressed in the planning process - traffic, infrastructure, development, growth, tree protection, housing, the sense of community, recreation facilities, stormwater, and parks – to name but a few. They also indicated the types of places, features, and community amenities they longed for.

This loss of a sense of community was a strong undercurrent of many comments received throughout the Town of Mount Pleasant’s 2018 comprehensive planning process. The desire to re-capture a small-town community spirit, while meeting the daily needs of our citizens and business community is at the heart of many of the resulting Comprehensive Plan’s goals and recommendations.

The Vision

Against this backdrop, the Plan Forum developed a *Vision Statement* to guide development of the Comprehensive Plan. This Vision draws upon four key themes and reads as follows:

The Town of Mount Pleasant will be a sustainable and resilient community. . .

. . . where the built environment honors the town’s coastal village heritage, while recognizing that different parts of Town have their own unique character;

. . . where the natural features and historic coastal character of Mount Pleasant can be found in every aspect of daily life, and the

friendly, small-Town feel is embraced and strengthened through interaction with each other and the environment;

. . . that adapts to evolving conditions while enhancing and maintaining the high standards and quality of life that residents expect; and

. . .that is supported by a reliable, sustainable and accessible 21st Century transportation system with multiple travel options which safely connect our communities, businesses, and cultural areas.

Our Goals

To support the Vision, the Plan Forum assembled a series of goals to provide general direction and guidance to Town policies, ordinances and programs. These goal statements, organized by those four themes, are as follows:

Quality of the Built Environment/Place

- Balance the rate of development with the provision of public infrastructure, so that the demands of growth are met in as timely a manner as possible.
- Draw businesses to Town to create higher-paying employment opportunities and diversify the tax base.
- Identify and develop the unique characteristics of each residential, commercial and mixed-use area of Town.
- Provide a variety of housing types to meet the needs of the town's changing demographics, while also providing affordable housing for residents of all incomes.

Quality of Life/Community Character

- Ensure that residents and visitors know they are in Mount Pleasant by the coastal style and scale of development, protection of existing trees, and provision of abundant wooded buffers and landscaping.
- Create a system of interconnected, protected open spaces to provide opportunities to interact with nature, as well as to accommodate multi-use trails, wildlife corridors, and low-impact drainage strategies that enhance the natural hydrologic characteristics of the area.
- Recognize the importance of historic sites, natural areas and scenic views by proactively facilitating permanent protection for key properties that enhance the character of the town.

- Diversify recreational opportunities to provide an outlet and foster community engagement among all segments of the Mount Pleasant population.
- Identify community common areas and promote community events to build trust and town-wide relationships among residents.
- Champion locally-owned businesses, especially traditional industries and local historic cultures, to bolster their competitiveness in a changing economic environment and to ensure sustainability.
- Enhance, elevate, and protect the surviving local historic communities and expand local appreciation and understanding through comprehensive outreach and educational efforts.

Safe & Efficient Mobility

- Implement modern safety features into new and existing transportation facilities, and establish support programs involving education, enforcement and emergency response so that user safety is a foundational and overarching objective in transportation system design and operation.
- Provide a highly connected road network designed to respond to changing demand and utilizing innovative technology.
- Integrate bike and pedestrian facilities and programs into the Town's road network, linking various destinations within the planning area.
- Build a world-class, family-friendly bicycle and pedestrian connector path that links the Town's citizens and visitors to natural, cultural and historic resources and provides travel, exercise, recreational and educational opportunities.
- Coordinate transportation and land use planning by aligning the Mobility Plan recommendations with comprehensive plan goals to proactively manage congestion and travel demand.
- Create inviting transit opportunities that serve the needs of residents, tourists, and the work force.
- Move port-related traffic efficiently to minimize the impact to local roadways and communities.

Taking the Long View

- Ensure adequate long-term revenue to support the financial health of the Town through fiscally sustainable practices.

- Provide services and infrastructure required to support anticipated future conditions in the town.
- Protect the integrity of the natural environment for its value as habitat, floodplain and water quality management, buffers, and recreation.
- Enhance the Town’s ability to anticipate, mitigate and adapt to changing conditions to better withstand and rapidly recover from large-scale emergencies and disasters.

Future Initiatives

While these Goal statements reflect cross-cutting, town-wide priorities and give general guidance, the Plan Forum also dug deeper to address seven major issues for the Town to focus on in the coming years. Through targeted attention and a commitment of resources for handling these specific issues, significant progress toward multiple plan goals can be achieved simultaneously. Beyond the following summary, the complete Plan document presents specific recommendations and associated action items, detailing specific steps the Town should undertake to carry out the plan.

The Urban Corridor Overlay District

The Urban Corridor Overlay District was established following recommendations of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan to foster an active pedestrian-oriented commercial environment with a variety of uses, activities and scales. Over time, concerns have been raised that the effect would be to overwhelm Johnnie Dodds Boulevard, Coleman Boulevard and Chuck Dawley Boulevard, the three major corridors that create a major roadway loop in the older part of town.

This Plan recommends modifications to Town codes that would include the designation of various types of focal points or “hubs” only in specific areas of Town that would be a focus of pedestrian-oriented development, as opposed to creating imposing linear strips along these arterial roadways. The redevelopment hubs would concentrate appropriate mixed-use development in specific areas where the infrastructure is in place and current development patterns suggest redevelopment potential for older commercial centers. Mixed-use development can be beneficial due to the potential for a reduction in automobile trips, employment and housing opportunities, improved transit options, and creation of civic spaces for use by the surrounding community.

Housing Diversity & Affordability

Another key issue in the Town is the lack of diversity in the housing stock – in terms of both price and housing style. This affects younger adults looking for their first home, workers in various sectors in the economy, and the increasing number of seniors looking for opportunities to down-size within their existing community.

Thus, the Plan supports the idea of providing “lifecycle housing” to better meet the needs of residents at all points in their lifecycle. In addition, they stressed a need to find opportunities to provide “workforce housing” to support local employers and provide housing opportunities that would also minimize traffic congestion through shortened commutes and strengthened transit options.

Settlement Communities

Historic African-American settlement communities are found throughout Mount Pleasant and could be considered a case-study of the tremendous change that has occurred in the Mount Pleasant area in recent decades. These communities have deep roots in Mount Pleasant and have managed to maintain their sense of community in the face of encroaching development.

Although many of them are not actually located within the Town limits, the Forum recognized their importance and made recommendations to support these communities. This future initiative will involve working with Charleston County and residents and landowners in the communities themselves to identify local needs and goals, and opportunities to sustain the collective lifestyle of each unique neighborhood.

Cultural Core

The identification of the area referred to as the Cultural Core came out of discussions about the plight of settlement communities and other historic and natural areas within Mount Pleasant, as well as identification of the need for a cultural or community center. This core of Mount Pleasant includes a range of special sites including Boone Hall; the Charles Pinckney National Historic Site; Christ Church; the Palmetto Fort fortification line; the Six Mile, Seven Mile, and Hamlin settlement communities; and Hamlin Farms.

Much of the area has resisted the growth pressures of recent years and exhibits the historic ownership and land patterns. This area provides is an unequalled opportunity to create a cultural center for Mt Pleasant that builds upon its history, to provide cultural opportunities for future generations.

Mount Pleasant Way

Repeated comments about traffic, the inadequacy of local bicycle and pedestrian facilities, divisions between parts of town, and needed recreation opportunities for all ages were pulled together in the concept known as the “Mount Pleasant Way.” This dedicated bicycle/pedestrian facility was conceived to address all these needs by linking the town together with a linear park. This flagship project will provide opportunities for residents and businesses throughout the Town and should be a step toward creating a stronger social network for all residents.

Financial Health/Resilience

The recent years of robust growth have provided a significant benefit to property owners in the town in the form of increased revenues which have supported Town services. A slowing of the

growth rate, then, can be anticipated to have an impact on the Town's available revenues – and potentially its ability to serve its citizens. By strengthening the employment base, concentrating new development at mixed-use hubs where infrastructure exists, revising town ordinances related to impact fees, and considering the fiscal impact of potential future new development in the approval process, the Town could see a positive shift in its revenue stream that could improve its sustainability in the long run.

Open Space Network

The loss of “open space” was at the forefront of many citizens' minds when they responded to surveys during this planning process. Undeveloped open spaces can serve vital purposes within the Town – from purely aesthetic visual respites, to providing storm-water management benefits and protection of natural habitat. Instead of relying on as-yet-undeveloped private land to serve the Town's open space needs, the plan recommends that we should take a proactive stance to build upon our recreational “green spaces” to create a protected open space network designed intentionally to meet various public, environmental, and social needs in the community.

Community Character

Ultimately, the various goals and recommendations of this Plan will have an impact on land uses and ways in which future development takes place in the Town. To begin to understand the implications of this, it is important to be aware of the current state of the Town and its resources to see how everything works together. In the Comprehensive Plan, we discuss the area's working parts as either Network Plans or District Plans. The Network Plans are thematic; the District Plans are geographic.

Network Plans

❖ Green Network

The “green network” is an assemblage of the various properties in the suburban area that are maintained as recreation and/or natural open spaces. These may be publicly or privately-owned and are not necessarily designated for permanent open space protection. While these properties may not all be in pristine natural condition, they could serve as building blocks for a larger open space network designated by the Town.

❖ Community Facilities Network

These properties include many of the public spaces within the Town that are generally open to public use. These could be schools, recreation facilities, fire stations, churches, hospitals, etc. By having a clear understanding of where these properties are and their relationship to one another, weaknesses in the system or opportunities for coordination can be more easily identified. There is a clear need to ensure that these properties are appropriately located and designed, in consideration of future service needs and resilience planning.

❖ *Water & Sewer Utilities Network*

Water and sewer service throughout the Mount Pleasant area is provided by Mount Pleasant Waterworks (MPW). Coordination between the town and MPW is important to ensure adequate and timely capacity of these important components of local infrastructure.

❖ *Hazard Profile*

With this Plan, there has been a great deal of interest and concern regarding long-term preparedness and resilience in many aspects of Town life. The first-time inclusion of a Hazard Profile in this Plan is a result of that concern. Areas with vulnerability to known hazards (primarily stormwater) have been identified and mapped to aid in preparation of emergency plans. The recommendation to develop resilience strategies is yet another way in which this Plan is working to establish plans proactively to be prepared for the inevitable changes that the future may bring.

❖ *Water Management Network*

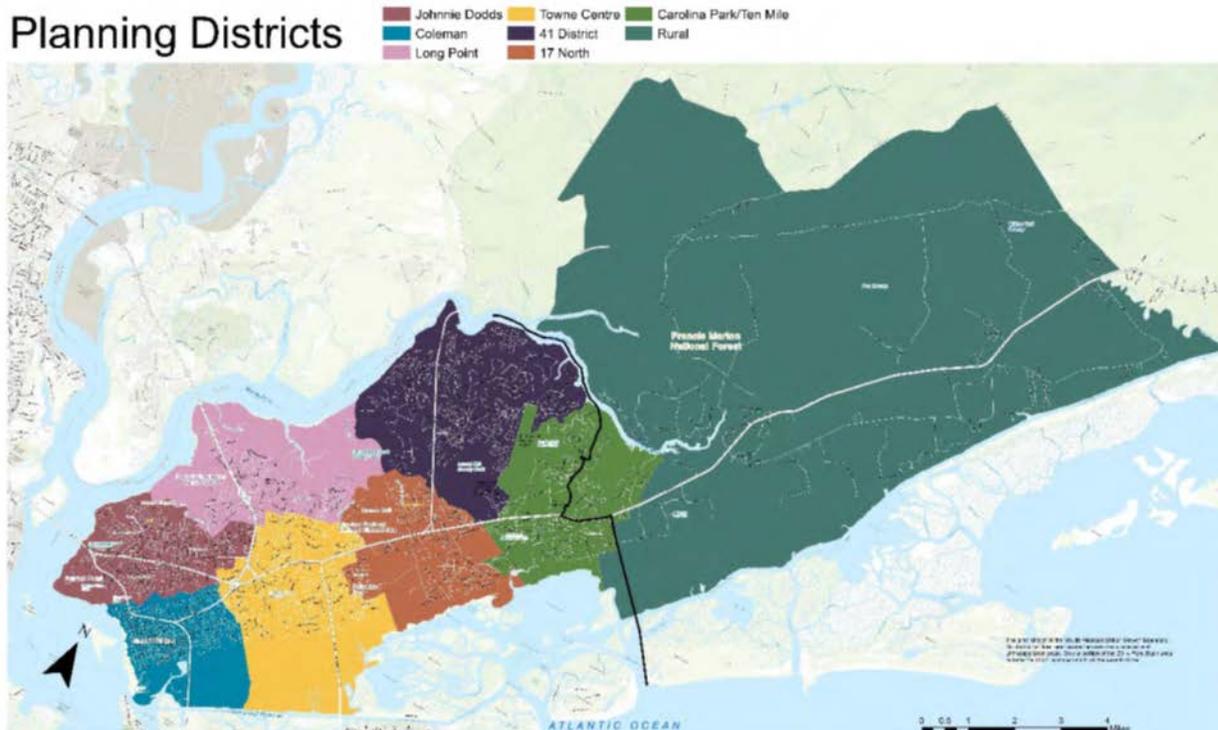
Recent concerns about stormwater management and sea level rise prompted the inclusion of this network in the new Plan. The Town has had a focus on stormwater management since 1996 but increasing interest in planning for resilience has drawn attention to this program. The two components of this water management network relate to drainage and flooding conditions, along with water quality concerns. The Plan recommends better coordination with other local entities, as well as possible improvements to regulations and design criteria to best manage the functionality of the overall drainage system.

❖ *Character Areas*

To gain a broad understanding of the ways that different parts of Town interact, character areas have been defined to identify parts of town that have similar character and function. Character areas provide context on how our neighborhoods, activity centers, and open spaces fit together to create the identity and community character we associate with Mount Pleasant. Protecting that character is vitally important as this Plan anticipates that redevelopment and infill will be more prevalent in the coming years.

District Plans

Planning Districts



❖ *Johnnie Dodds District*

The Johnnie Dodds District is centered on Highway 17 from the Bridges to I-526, and includes the Mathis Ferry Road corridor, as well as Patriots Point and Coleman Boulevard to Shem Creek. Within this District, recommendations focus on appropriate ways to address development and redevelopment along commercial corridors and at major gateway and hub locations (the Houston Northcutt hub and Patriots Point waterfront gateway, specifically). This might include identifying possible future roadway connections to improve traffic flow. Management of the Shem Creek area is also a focus, protecting its iconic nature, public access and water quality.

❖ *Coleman District*

The Coleman District surrounds Coleman, Chuck Dawley and Ben Sawyer Boulevards, from Shem Creek to Bowman Road. Within this area, the protection of Shem Creek and new design guidelines for Ben Sawyer are a focus. Also important is the scale of development along Coleman Boulevard, where the area around Sea Island Shopping Center is discussed as a potential redevelopment hub. Concerns about the impact of parking related to commercial development were discussed, while overdevelopment in the area south of Coleman prompted a recommendation to consider enlarging the Historic District.

❖ *Towne Centre District*

The Towne Centre District stretches along Highway 17 from Bowman Road to the foot of Long Point Road, and from Whipple and Long Point to the neighborhoods along Rifle Range Road. As might be expected, the need to define appropriate commercial development is paramount,

along with a focus on defining a redevelopment hub to improve the quality of development surrounding the I-526-US17 interchange. Roadway connections and improvements are particularly important, especially in the area of the new Lucy Beckham High School. Reflecting the number of recent commercial rezonings in the area, the portion of the Four Mile Community between US-17 and Hungryneck Boulevard has been recommended for commercial uses in this draft.

❖ *Long Point District*

The Long Point District surrounds Long Point Road from the Wando Port to Boone Hall Creek. Clearly, the effect of the Port and its traffic weighs heavily in this district, with recommendations for roadway connections and improvements, but the potential for economic development uses nearby could prove a benefit. Protection for the Snowden community is another objective within this District, as is the designation of the Belle Hall Commercial area as a redevelopment hub.

❖ *Route 17 North District*

This District includes the Highway 17 and Rifle Range corridors from roughly Six Mile Road to Porcher's Bluff Road. It is within this district that the recommendations related to the Cultural Core would fall, along with those to protect several settlement communities. There is also a strong focus on completing roadway projects in this area that create parallel facilities and interconnections to improve traffic flow. Planning for the Town's future Rifle Range Park, and the possibility of a future cultural center are also recommendations. The lands surrounding the SC 41/US 17 interchange should be considered as a redevelopment hub in conjunction with future roadway improvements.

❖ *Highway 41 District*

The Highway 41 District covers the SC 41 corridor, including all the neighborhoods that access the highway. The mid-term widening of 41 will obviously have a bearing on activity in this area, but a focus of this plan is to improve opportunities for interconnections and local business development in this area. The Republic Tract on the Wando River is designated as a proposed hub, in hopes of guiding the future development of that property in accordance with the needs of the surrounding area and the gateway nature of this entrance to the town. Again, the plan recommends working with the Phillips community to protect the integrity of this historic area.

❖ *Carolina Park / Ten Mile District*

This District covers everything along Highway 17 from Charleston National and the Park West entrance to Sewee Preserve and Wando Farms. This district is the focus of a great deal of new development, but also includes the transition to the designated rural areas north of the identified urban growth boundary line. Implementing this transition through any future development plans is an important recommendation in this area, including careful planning for any development in the Ten Mile community.

❖ *The Rural District*

This District covers everything from Sewee Preserve and Wando Farms north along Highway 17 to Steed Creek Road. This includes the areas along Guerin’s Bridge Road, Paradise Island, Cat Island, the Francis Marion National Forest up to the Berkley County line, and unincorporated areas surrounding the Town of Awendaw. Recommendations in the plan are to maintain the rural nature of this area with extremely low densities, and support for agriculture and forestry throughout the area.

Mobility Plan

As identified in public opinion throughout this planning process, the overarching issue in Mount Pleasant is traffic. To address these concerns, the Town has undertaken the creation of a new mobility plan as part of this comprehensive planning process. This Town of Mount Pleasant 2040 Mobility Plan establishes the long-range vision for the multimodal transportation system connecting the Town and presents the transportation policies, programs and improvements that are needed to help move people and goods safely and conveniently around the community.

This integrated land use and transportation planning effort provides the unique opportunity to ensure that land use and transportation goals, objectives and strategies are not only consistent with each other but also supportive and coordinated to better realize desired future outcomes. The coordination of land use and transportation with priority investment planning is one of the key associations that needs to be considered for local governments to meet the demands of future growth.

This Mobility Plan reaches beyond the typical intersection and roadway widening projects to identify opportunities to improve the efficiency and safety of the overall transportation network, to include bicycles, pedestrians, technology, and transit options.

❖ **Mount Pleasant Way**

As discussed above, the Mount Pleasant Way is conceived as a linear park that is conceptualized as both a transportation system as well as a recreation and education resource. The Mount Pleasant Way is not a typical infrastructure project recommendation. It will be a series of gradual improvements, based upon a future planning study to formalize the route, connections, and specifications of the actual design.

❖ Transit

As the population and number of vehicles on the road continue to increase, transit will be an integral part in providing mobility in Mount Pleasant. While the Town itself is not a transit provider, it has an important role to play in helping to create viable and successful mobility alternatives. As a mode, transit is dependent on supportive land uses. Areas of concentrated populations or activity are ideal for transit stops as they provide the potential ridership levels necessary for successful transit. In contrast, low density areas are not supportive of transit as the cost-benefit ratio is much lower due to limited ridership. The land use plan completed as part of the companion comprehensive plan plays an important role in identifying and supporting areas of the Town suitable for transit service.

The hubs proposed in the land use plan would be ideal starting locations for initiating transit service as they allow for a mix of uses that would benefit from having park and ride lots or bus rapid transit stops. Areas with a variety of uses are beneficial for transit service because people are moving in and out for multiple reasons, whether they live, work, or shop in those locations. The hub locations identified in the land use plan are in the Houston Northcutt, I-526, Belle Hall, SC 41 and US 17, the Republic Tract, Carolina Park Business Industrial center, and Old Town areas.

❖ Roadway Connectivity

Increasing roadway connectivity is a strategy that seeks to improve the efficiency of the local roadway network by increasing the number of potential routes a motorist may take. Connectivity relates to the density of intersections and how direct paths are between places. A well-connected transportation network reduces the distances traveled to reach destinations, increases the options for routes of travel, and can facilitate walking and bicycling. Well-connected, multimodal networks are characterized by seamless bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, direct routing, accessibility, few dead-ends, and few physical barriers. Increased levels of connectivity are associated with higher levels of physical activity and reductions in congestion due to increased options.

❖ Technology

In a continued effort to be proactive in planning and design, this Plan considers the impacts of new vehicle technologies that are currently under development. In the last few years, the automobile and technology industry have undergone dramatic innovations in vehicle technology, smart infrastructure advancement, and shared mobility concepts. These trends are anticipated to continue. Several major automakers are working towards fully autonomous vehicles (AVs) available to the public within the next decade. While current opinion suggests the anticipated increase in autonomous and connected vehicles will enhance safety and efficiency; changes in mode, ridesharing, parking, and number of vehicle trips are not fully understood. Adapting to the use of coming technologies may open opportunities to revise existing ordinance and development standards to make more efficient use of land.

Action Steps

No plan can be complete or carried out without defined actions to pursue. Throughout this plan, an extensive array of implementation steps has been identified to enable us to reach our collective future. Over 150 individual actions were identified in the Action Work Plan to begin implementation of the numerous recommendations of the Plan.

Priority Actions were identified to help set the near-term work plan for the Town. These items were selected due to their impact on the Future Initiatives and overall goals of the Plan and organized by the timeframe by which they should be undertaken.

Immediate Efforts

Time Frame: Ongoing – related to established Town processes

- Establish a plan implementation committee, monitor plan implementation, and actively update the matrix and plan as needed.
- Utilize the recommendations of this comprehensive plan to develop and rank annual capital improvement priorities.
- Identify and evaluate projects throughout all sectors of Town government needed to maintain established levels of service and include these within the town's annual budgeting processes.
- Collaborate with Charleston County, Mount Pleasant Waterworks, and surrounding municipal partners to ensure planning priorities and policies are aligned across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Actively explore opportunities to work with landowners to permanently protect lands and valuable corridors (through conservation easements or other methods) for expansion of the open space network in the Town.

Short-term Efforts

Timeframe: Start in the next six months and complete within twenty-four months

- Initiate a wholesale revision of Town ordinances to simplify, streamline, and clarify Town Codes, while also implementing recommendations of this comprehensive plan.
- Undertake creating a Special Area Plan of the cultural core. This study should identify opportunities within this area that would simultaneously protect the essential character of the core, promote local history, and create economic and other opportunities to strengthen the community.
- Initiate and complete the hubs Special Area Plan, and revise zoning ordinances and land development regulations to define and develop standards for the development of hubs.
- Prepare the *Mount Pleasant Way* bicycle and pedestrian feasibility study, including an evaluation of the feasibility of a bike share program, and conduct preliminary engineering and cost estimation.

- Study revenue sources, development patterns, and market conditions to determine the Town’s overall financial health and resilience of the community and to identify challenges and opportunities for assuring long-term financial resilience.

Mid-term Efforts

Timeframe: Start within eighteen months and complete within five years

- Create a comprehensive parks, recreation, and open space master plan identifying future recreation projects, as well as open space to be protected as natural areas.
- Conduct or update special area or functional plans where needed (as identified in the District Plan discussions).
- Begin planning and funding processes for a new community center focused on arts and culture.
- Begin relocating or retrofitting public facilities and infrastructure in accordance with the mobility and resilience focused recommendations of this Plan.
- Review the plan recommendations and create an updated annual work plan.
- Collaborate with the local communities, Mount Pleasant Waterworks, and Charleston County to develop special area plans for each settlement community, to include consideration of historic designation.
- Prepare a resilience strategy that includes (at a minimum) an inventory of potential hazards, an assessment of the vulnerability of community systems, and a plan for mitigation and community preparedness.

Long-Range Efforts

Timeframe: Varies by project, typically more than three years from adoption of the plan.

- Revisit plan policies and assess for effectiveness.
- Continue making lower priority capital improvements, as funding allows.
- Prepare for five-year update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Maintaining the Plan

To ensure that implementation of the Plan stays on track, it must be reviewed, monitored, and updated as conditions evolve. This must involve not only the elected and appointed officials responsible for implementing the comprehensive plan, but citizens of the community. A wide range of perspectives is essential to developing creative and realistic programs that will guide the Town successfully through both present and future challenges.

This Plan also recommends the creation of an Implementation Committee to assist in oversight and prioritization of Plan recommendations for implementation. The Plan deliberately integrates land use, transportation and mobility, facilities, and resource

preservation strategies in a consistent manner based on our vision statement. The Plan is only as effective as its implementation, so if the goals are to be achieved, it is important to enforce the recommendations of the Plan in the way they have been written or to consider and address the broad impacts an amendment may have on other parts of the plan and the community.

Summary

There is no doubt that this new Plan is different from past plans. This is the very first plan where – out of necessity – the focus is not on continued outward growth and expansion. The urban growth boundary has been retained in its current location - large tracts of developable land no longer exist. Use of infill and redevelopment sites is becoming more common. Major demographic and technological changes are occurring at rapid rates, often creating friction and conflicts. Unincorporated lands are spread throughout the town’s planning jurisdiction, complicating service provision and establishment of consistent development patterns.

Given the situation and pace of change, it’s no surprise that competing interests and community values highlight a sense of division and a disconnect when trying to reconcile the Mount Pleasant of the past with what the future might hold. Some would argue that the battle has been lost. They point to carpool lines and traffic, new commercial properties, and big box stores, without small, local shops. They question new buildings which are out of character with certain parts of town. They lament the loss of locations where the shrimp boats and tomato farms used to be. They long to keep things the way they are. Or were.

Yet others see opportunity and the next challenge of managing future change as a natural step in the town’s history. Where older existing places can be re-envisioned and strengthened through redevelopment to create new, exciting gathering spots for people of all ages and incomes. Where new ideas can take existing assets and make them the envy of other communities. Where more choices in housing types and costs, transportation options, and employment opportunities can effectively balance the old with the new.

Mount Pleasant is indeed at an important junction in its history. How this community – and its leaders – faces this reality and responds to the challenge will be a telling, watershed moment.