

# PRIORITY INVESTMENTS



## ENABLING LEGISLATION

In 2007 the General Assembly passed the Priority Investment Act. The Act includes several amendments to the 1994 Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act, including a requirement for comprehensive plans to include a Priority Investment Element that:

*“... analyzes the likely federal, state, and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities during the next ten years, and recommends the projects for expenditure of those funds during the next ten years for needed public infrastructure and facilities such as water, sewer, roads, and schools.”*

The Priority Investment section complements the more extensive Goals and Strategies in the Action Plan that follows within this document. While it is important that all initiatives listed in the Action Plan are addressed, the following specific initiatives have been identified as investment priorities to move the City towards its longer term goals. Those priorities are listed below and discussed in detail on subsequent pages.



## PRIORITY INVESTMENT AREAS

- City-wide Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to address funding of infrastructure and public facility improvements
- Regional transportation improvements
- City’s ordinances to incentivize compatible and affordable housing development
- Natural resiliency initiatives
- Neighborhood visioning and branding program

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

There are several areas of public improvements that need to be addressed in the short-term (1-3 years), ranging from upgraded sidewalks and street lighting to construction of new community centers and libraries. A Capital Improvement Plan aims to recognize and resolve deficiencies in existing infrastructure and facilities as well as to anticipate and meet future demand for capital facilities. The CIP is a multi-year schedule that lays out a series of municipal projects and their associated costs. Over the period considered by the CIP, it shows how the City should plan to expand or renovate its facilities and services to meet the demands of existing or new population and businesses. The City of North Charleston can benefit from a CIP to coordinate the financing and timing of capital improvements in a way that maximizes the return to the public.

A CIP is an advisory document that can serve a number of purposes:

1. Guide the staff and City Council in the annual budgeting process
2. Contribute to consistency in the city's real property tax rate
3. Coordinate various municipal improvements
4. Inform residents, business owners, and developers of planned improvements, perhaps spurring private investment
5. Provide a necessary legal basis for developing and administering an impact fee system.

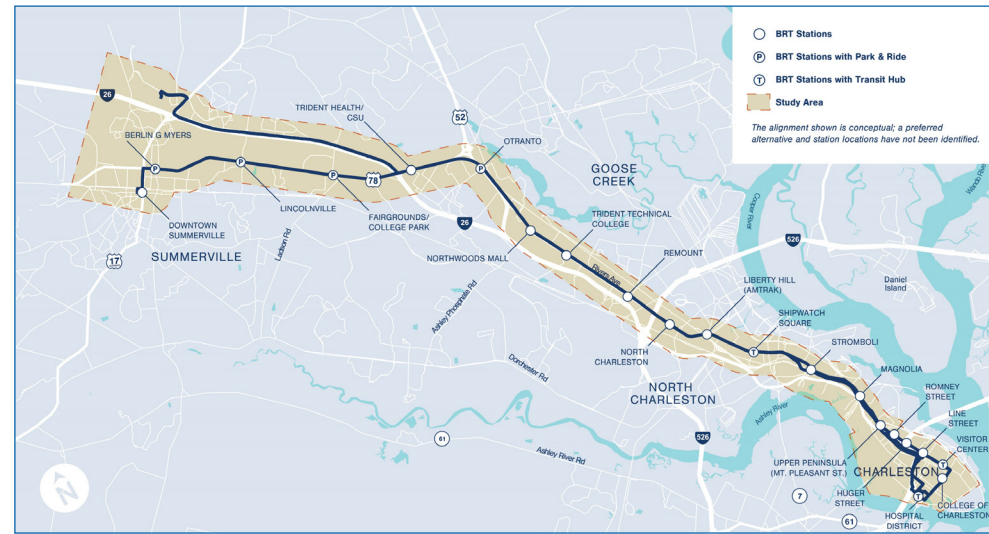
Development of a CIP can be accomplished with the use of existing Staff resources, with possible costs related to legal review.

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

As a member of the Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS), North Charleston participates in the development of the CHATS Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester region. The LRTP identifies road construction and upgrade projects to be undertaken using a variety of funding sources, including but not limited to, County Transportation Sales Tax (TST) and CTC (gas tax) Funds as well as federal funds allocated through CHATS.

The 2040 CHATS Long-Range Transportation Plan identifies a number of projects with committed funding to be implemented in North Charleston, particularly interstate and port related improvements. See page 29 for the planned transportation improvements table.

The proposed Lowcountry Rapid Transit (LCRT bus rapid transit) system alignment along US 78 and US 52 offers the opportunity to transform the City's most active corridors. Certain segments or nodes around future system stations



are **prime** for re-investment with Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). The LCRT related Transit Oriented Development (TOD) study has identified residential and non-residential market projections for the corridor that will be used to identify those future station locations. (See page 40 for description of Transit-Oriented Development)

## UPDATE CITY ZONING AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

The City has outgrown its zoning and subdivision regulations. In many cases, vacant and underdeveloped parcels within the City where infrastructure already exists cannot be redeveloped with structures that are compatible with the rest of the neighborhood due to current zoning requirements. These neighborhoods provide the most substantial opportunities for accommodating growth within the City's existing boundary by making the most efficient use of land and protecting the City's natural resources, while also contributing to reinvestment in older areas of the City.

A number of other key objectives of this Plan can also be realized with immediate updates of the City's zoning and subdivision regulations: creation of an urban corridor with mixed-use and transit-oriented developments along the proposed Lowcountry Rapid Transit line, as well as diverse and affordable housing types throughout the City. Immediate updates will enable investors to take advantage of the City's south end designation as an Opportunity Zone. These updates can be accomplished with existing City staff resources.

## RESILIENCY INITIATIVES

Several City departments are leading initiatives and projects to respond to and mitigate physical impacts of natural events, such as street closures and property damage due to flooding, traffic delays and business interruptions. A collaborative approach is needed to ensure that resources, infrastructure improvements and regulations work in concert with one another to proactively mitigate impacts and improve the resiliency of those facilities that may be affected by additional developments and climate change in the future. Recommendations proposed by a City Flood-Wise Action Committee include a group of strategies that will improve the City's National Flood Insurance Program Community-Rating and reduction in damages will have a direct financial benefit to the City, property owners and residents.

Resiliency strategies should be incorporated in updated zoning and land development regulations, particularly in the development and adoption of regulations that foster low-impact developments and natural stormwater management facilities. The City's investment in local policies and strategies for implementation should not be limited to physical impacts, but also consider economic benefits for businesses.

## NEIGHBORHOOD VISIONING

Change is inevitable. As the City evolves in the next twenty years, its character will change. This change is a given based on market-forces and the projected growth of the region. Neighborhoods can proactively plan how those influences will be accommodated such that their unique character is retained.

To set (or reset) the dialogue about growth, the City can establish a neighborhood visioning initiative that starts with identifying an outcome of equitable development for each community. This initiative should include, but not be limited to discussions of infrastructure challenges, redevelopment opportunities, and sustainability. Each neighborhood's identity and vision should be celebrated and "branded" through a city-wide program of signage and interconnectivity

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS: SHORT TERM *		RESPONSIBLE PARTY/AGENCY	ESTIMATED COST
1	Develop a City-wide Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to include an “official map” and program of identified infrastructure and facility needs and funding	City Planning/ Administration	\$100,000
2	Implement planned and scheduled transportation improvements, including cyclist/ pedestrian facilities and implementation of Complete Street policies	City Staff/CHATS	\$10-500,000
3	Update zoning and subdivision ordinances to enable realization of City’s goals and vision	City Staff/ Planning Commission	\$10,000-\$50,000
4	Establish, expand and implement programs and initiatives to enhance natural and economic resiliency	City Planning/ Administration	\$10,000-\$50,000
5	Establish neighborhood improvement initiatives: property maintenance enforcement, visioning and branding initiatives	City Planning/ Code Enforcement	\$10,000-\$50,000

\* Available resources for these investments include existing City Staff and applicable grants from sources such as CHATS Complete Street program

PRIORITY INVESTMENTS: MID-TERM *		RESPONSIBLE PARTY/AGENCY	ESTIMATED COST
1	Establish vision for the City’s urban corridors with walkable hubs of mixed-uses	City Planning	\$10,000-\$50,000
2	Adopt policies and programs to foster affordable housing	City Planning/ Administration	\$0-\$50,000
3	Establish a centralized, permanent cultural arts center	City Cultural Arts/Administration	\$250,000-\$1,000,000
4	Create and adopt a Green Infrastructure Plan that incorporates a network of open spaces and natural resources to be protected	City Planning/ Planning Commission	\$10,000-\$50,000

\* Available resources for these investments include existing City Staff and applicable grants from sources such as CHATS, SC Arts Commission, and SC Forestry Commission

NON-MOTORIST PRIORITY PROJECTS *		FROM	TO	ESTIMATED COST
A	Park Circle (Traffic Circle) - Road Diet/Cycle Track	W. Montague	E. Montague	\$8M
B	Riverfront Park - Pedestrian Bridge & Noisette Creek Greenway	Riverfront Park	Rivers Ave	\$7M
C	Spruill Ave - Streetscaping & Improved Bike Lanes (SCPA/NC)	Park Circle	Pittsburgh Ave	\$6M
D	Reynolds Ave/Rexton Ave - Streetscaping & Improved Bike/Ped Facilities & Pedestrian Mall	Rivers Ave	Spruill Ave	\$1M
E	Ashley Riverfront - Hiker/Biker Trail	Leeds Ave	South of North Bridge	\$5M

\* Available resources for these investments include the City, CHATS Transportation Alternatives and Complete Streets programs, and TIF district bonds where applicable