

2019-2029 Town of Mount Pleasant Comprehensive Plan



Mount Pleasant SC

Comprehensive Plan 2019-2029



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019-2029 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Plan was designed from the beginning to be representative of the wishes of the Town of Mount Pleasant's citizens. To accomplish this, Town Council appointed a body of 41 residents, known as the Plan Forum, to create this Plan. The Plan Forum met beginning on September 19, 2017 until making their recommendation to the Planning Commission on December 4, 2018.

Plan Forum:

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After receipt of the initial draft from the Plan Forum, the Planning Commission met in a series of special meetings to review, revise, and augment the work of the Plan Forum before sending their recommended draft to Town Council for their consideration on February 20, 2019.

Planning Commission:

Joseph Wren, Roy Neal, Rodly Millet, Kathy Smith, George Gates, Tripp Cuttino, Peter Lehman, DeAudre Gregg, John McNeill

Town Council reviewed, held a Public Hearing, and made modifications to the original Plan, adopting the Plan by ordinance on October 13, 2020.

Town Council:

Will Haynie (Mayor), Howard Chapman, Brenda Corley, Laura Hyatt, Kathy Landing, Tom O'Rourke, Jake Rambo, Gary Santos, and Guang Ming Whitley

None of this could have been accomplished without the support of our consultant Team which provided guidance, perspective, and technical support throughout this process.

Consultant Team:

McBride Dale Clarion (Land Use) – Greg Dale, Emily Crow

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Thank you to all who participated in this planning process for the benefit of the Mount Pleasant community.

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Throughout the Plan, you will see the following symbols. These are being used to indicate which of the nine required Plan elements the various sections of the Plan relate to. The background data for these elements is in the Data and Resources Section at the end of the Plan

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

 Population	 Housing	 Economics
 Community Facilities	 Natural Resources	 Cultural Resources
 Land Use	 Transportation	 Priority Investment



1 INTRODUCTION



Mount Pleasant SC

Comprehensive Plan 2019-2029



1.1 PURPOSE








In the state of South Carolina, all jurisdictions with zoning and land development regulations are required to prepare comprehensive plans to ensure that they are addressing the full range of community issues in their decision-making processes. These plans are updated every 10 years to ensure that they remain relevant and reflect the values of the community.

This 2018 Comprehensive Plan (the Plan) is intended to guide land use development, community projects, and capital improvement decisions in the Mount Pleasant planning area over the next decade.

1.2 REQUIRED PLAN ELEMENTS

Comprehensive plans must cover a number of "elements," including an inventory of existing conditions, a statement of needs and goals, and implementation strategies related to each.

The required elements of a comprehensive plan include:

• Population 	• Economic Development 
• Natural Resources 	• Cultural Resources 
• Community Facilities 	• Housing 
• Land Use 	• Transportation 
• Priority Investment 	

Often, comprehensive plans are organized by the various required elements. This plan, however, is organized around established goals, objectives and major issues identified through the public engagement process. This includes an overview of the issues and the strategies developed to achieve these. The background data collected around each of these required elements is included in supplemental information to this Plan, and the various recommendations are linked by these symbols to the elements they address.

1.3 HOW TO USE THE PLAN

A comprehensive plan is used to help guide capital improvement planning and local government programming as well as land use decision-making. This includes decisions about how land is used, preserved, or developed. This also includes public facility investments related to those planned land uses or developments to support a desired quality of life or levels of service for public services.

The comprehensive plan is the sum of many parts. Frequently, the focus is on the land use component of The Plan, but this is only a portion of the document. A substantial public engagement and public volunteer effort went into forming The Plan vision, goals, recommendations and action

items. These are perhaps more important in guiding the future development of the town, as these can address qualitative issues beyond the scope of an individual land use. It has been clearly spoken throughout this process that the citizens of Mount Pleasant are greatly concerned about the qualitative aspects of development, and about the need for the Town to be proactive in protecting local quality of life.

To these ends, it is important that land use, capital decisions and programming utilize all parts of the comprehensive plan to help in the prioritizing, designing, and evaluating of projects of all types. Any given project may meet some of the Plan goals and recommendations but not others. In such cases, it will be up to Council to decide whether or not a project, *on balance*, meets the intent of the comprehensive plan.

1.4 PLANNING PROCESS

The current planning process was initiated in the summer of 2017 as an effort to prepare both a new comprehensive plan for Mount Pleasant, and a new Long-Range Transportation Plan, referred to as the Mobility Plan. This was ahead of schedule for the update of the comprehensive plan, but in response to the growing concerns for the rate of development and the increase in traffic congestion in the town, Town leadership made the decision to support this integrated planning effort. The Planning Commission and Town Council felt very strongly that these plans needed to be the product of the residents of the Town.

The planning area, as illustrated in **Figure 1-1**, includes the Town of Mount Pleasant and unincorporated areas of Charleston County.

Figure 1-1: The Planning Area



In August of 2017, the Planning Commission met to select a working group of Mount Pleasant area residents to serve on the **Plan Forum**. The intent of the Planning Commission was to have "the collection of individuals serving on the Plan Forum be representative of the Mount Pleasant community in terms of demographics, professional background, and geographic area of residence."

To initiate this process, the Town placed an open solicitation, a call for applicants, to collect applications from interested citizens to participate on the Plan Forum. To accomplish this, they went to great lengths to blind-select a body that was representative of the Mount Pleasant community out of a pool of 275 applicants who responded to the solicitation. The Planning Commission selected a Forum of 34 residents, to which Town Council added another seven, for a body of 41. (Two of whom ultimately had to step down for personal reasons early in the process.)

The Plan Forum members met for the first time in September 2017 and participated in an exercise to identify the strengths and challenges of Mount Pleasant, as well as areas of opportunity and transportation hotspots. This was done verbally, as well as graphically on maps. This initial Plan Forum meeting was followed by a Public Open House in October 2017 addressing the same topics. This Open House drew 138 attendees, with an additional 933 residents responding to an online survey (**Figure 1-2**).

Figure 1-2: Public Feedback: Areas of Opportunity



The results from these initial meetings were tabulated and reviewed. To assist the planning team in organizing and addressing the concerns of the community and apply them to the required planning elements, the comments were categorized and grouped into four themes:

1. Quality of the Built Environment/Place
2. Quality of Life/Community Character
3. Safe & Efficient Mobility
4. Taking the Long View (long-term sustainability & resilience)

These themes were then used as cornerstones for establishing the framework of The Plan, reinforcing the intent of the Town to root The Plan in citizen feedback. The Plan Forum members reorganized themselves into four subcommittees to then focus their work on each of these identified themes. The subcommittees met multiple times between the Plan Forum meeting on December 5, 2017, and the second Public Open House on January 30, 2018. In these work sessions, the subcommittees drafted goals, objectives and initial recommendations related to their specific themes. These goals and objectives were presented to the public for their feedback at the January 30, 2018 Open House. Approximately 275 people attended this second Open House, and about 1,000 survey responses were received in the weeks following.

Through discussion of the various themes, along with the consideration of feedback from the Open Houses, the planning team identified several recurrent topics that drew concern or support. The Plan Forum subcommittees then shifted their focus to delve into the specifics of these issues.

The **Community Issues** identified for further discussion and review were:

- The Urban Corridor Overlay District
- Housing Diversity & Affordability
- Settlement Communities
- The Cultural Core
- The *Mount Pleasant Way* bicycle and pedestrian network
- Financial Health/Resilience
- Open Space Network

The Plan Forum began discussing some of these issues at their Plan Forum meeting on March 6, 2018. Discussions continued in the subcommittees and resulted in a summary document of the recommendations of each group, which were presented to the Plan Forum at their meeting on May 1, 2018.

In addition to the Plan Forum subcommittee work on the goals and Community Issues, the Plan Forum also began studying land use information at their meeting in March 2018. What was apparent to the Plan Forum was the relatively small amount of developable land available in the portion of the Planning Area within the Urban Growth Boundary line. This information, along with the desire of the public and the Plan Forum to allow different sections of the Town to develop or redevelop with their own localized character, led to the creation of **District Plans** for various parts of Town.

These District Plans, along with draft recommendations for the Mobility Plan, were presented to both the Plan Forum and the public at separate meetings on June 5, 2018 – to the Plan Forum in the afternoon, and to the public at an Open House that evening. About 125 members of the public attended this meeting, and 596 responded to online surveys over the following month. The comments and feedback gathered from this round of input were used to refine the District Plans and the various other recommendations.

The information produced from this broad and inclusive public process has formed the basis of this comprehensive plan. All information from the Plan Forum and Open Houses is on file in the Planning Department.

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