

# A. Introduction

Neighborhoods are the heart and soul of Charleston. They are diverse and dynamic places with unique characteristics, recognized by both residents and the community at large. Each has a strong identity that helps define Charleston as a desirable place to live and invest. A neighborhood includes not just houses, but schools, parks, and businesses that all contribute to make each neighborhood unique.

Healthy neighborhoods do not come about by accident; maintaining healthy sustainable neighborhoods takes conscious, proactive decisions by non-profit organizations, community leaders, government, private sector partners, institutions, and the public. By examining current trends and character patterns, we can plan for a Charleston that builds upon neighborhood strengths and enhances them for future generations.

Charleston’s neighborhoods are a key asset: each one is special, with a character that its residents wish to protect and enhance. Having this diversity is important because a resident can choose to live in Charleston, yet move from one neighborhood to another as their or their family’s needs change over time. Public workshop participants overwhelmingly supported Charleston’s strong neighborhood identities and broad consensus was reached to preserve and enhance Charleston’s quality of life and livability through a vision for its neighborhoods, highlighted at right.

The differences between Charleston’s neighborhoods are a unique strength; however, to remain vital they must continue to accommodate residents at varying stages of life and income levels. Some neighborhoods must realize that in order to prosper, they must adapt to remain appealing places to live. This chapter addresses the challenges Charleston’s neighborhoods face and what can be done to support their unique character and ensure long-term viability.

While some of Charleston’s neighborhoods formally identify themselves as neighborhoods, other areas of the city are loosely classified as neighborhoods for the sake of this chapter’s analysis and recommendations, as depicted in the map at right. Each neighborhood has a section with specific recommendations, and overall citywide goals are listed below.

## Overall Neighborhood Goals

- Rehabilitate and maintain the existing housing stock and continue to enforce existing housing, rental, and maintenance codes to ensure neighborhoods remain strong and vital
- Emphasize home stewardship to promote home and property upkeep among renters, homeowners, and landlords
- Continue beautification effort to emphasize neighborhood character and eliminate blight
- Promote appropriate and compatible infill development
- Adopt reuse strategies for vacant and underutilized properties and buildings
- Ensure traffic in neighborhoods are at appropriate speeds to make it comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Provide housing to match the varied needs and income levels of the present and future population with particular attention to housing in and near the downtown for college students and young professionals and a variety of housing choices to meet the changing needs as seniors age
- Continue to build neighborhood identity through community organizing and physical improvements

Provide **safe, walkable, vibrant neighborhoods** with **distinct identities**, and **strong connections** between commercial districts, residences, and green spaces

