

CHARLESTON

HOME OF EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



Comprehensive Plan Update 2020



Approved by City Council, May 2020

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Preface



Tour de Charleston (2018)

City of Charleston Comprehensive Plan Update 2020

Preface

This **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2020** extends from and expands on the successes of the 1996 Charleston Tomorrow Strategic Plan, the 1999 Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update. By charting new pathways for growth, the document embraces the aspirations of key stakeholder groups and establishes a collaborative framework that will enable the City of Charleston to leverage emerging opportunities, enhance local markets, and creatively respond to known and unknown challenges in the future.

Like the previous plans, the document is organized around familiar themes that resonate with our diverse community and articulates a shared vision for the city that continues to evolve. The **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2020** recognizes the importance of infrastructure, the natural environment, economic competitiveness, and cultivating an inclusive culture to enhance the overall sustainability of the community. Further, the plan intentionally forwards the concept of "New Ruralism" to create an attractive and thriving city that celebrates our history, the arts, culture, education, and the region's natural amenities to advance economic growth and improve the overall livability of the city.

In 2020, the City of Charleston was ranked 9th in the United States, of the "10 Best "Hidden Gem" College Towns in the United States" by the College Gazette¹. According to the report, the evaluation considers "size, academic programs, reputation and rankings, cost, campus life, culture, and, of course, location". The ranking is based on college towns "with the best student life, culture, and activity in combination with reputable local colleges and universities". "These hidden gems represent some of the finest cities one could study in at the undergraduate or, in some case, the graduate level". According to the report, Eastern Illinois University ranks 8th on the U.S. News and World Report's list of top public schools in the Midwest. The goal of this list "is to highlight cities that, although beloved by their residents and students, are rising in reputation throughout the country for their excellence as quality college towns". The **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE 2020** captures the essence of the City of Charleston and its plans to continue rising into the future.

¹ February 5, 2020; 10 Best "Hidden Gem" College Towns in the U.S., by College Gazette.

Introduction

The *Comprehensive Plan* of the City of Charleston serves as a general framework for the future development and planning of the City of Charleston. This document establishes the existing conditions while outlining the goals and objectives to provide recommendations for future planning and development. The *2020 Comprehensive Plan Update* is the combined efforts of the City to reexamine issues related to changes in the community that have occurred since the *1996 Charleston Tomorrow, the 1999 Comprehensive Plan and 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update*.

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to stand on its own while complementing the existing planning materials, which include:

- *Charleston Gruen Plan 1968*²
- *Charleston Tomorrow 1996*³
- *Comprehensive Plan 1999*⁴
- *Comprehensive Plan Update 2009*⁵

This document serves as a decision-making tool for long-range planning, setting recommended guidelines, and improving communications.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is a collaborative process whereby the Community of Charleston can establish a unified vision for community future growth development. This document is divided into distinct, yet interrelated sections. This plan includes background information on the essential cultural, demographic, economic, environmental, historic, physical, and social elements of the community, the vision of the community, and the collection of goals, policies and strategies that will be used to realize that vision.

Whereas this document incorporates the components of a traditional comprehensive plan, it also recommends a strategy for implementation.

The implementation strategy contains:

- Identification of the steps necessary for implementation of the recommendations: these will include both short and long term action steps and obstacles that may hinder implementation.
- An action plan will be developed as an outline for implementation.
- Benchmarks / Status Updates to staff and City Council that will measure the outcomes and the progress toward executing the implementation strategy.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies a clear and compelling vision for the future of the City, through specific policies, strategies and recommendations for implementing those strategies. Furthermore, it is hoped these improvements and changes can provide an effective guide and vision to ensure the future character and image while and protecting the health, safety and welfare of the community.

² February, 1968; *Charleston General Plan*, Prepared by Victor Gruen Associates

³ November, 1996: *Charleston Tomorrow*, Prepared by The *Charleston Tomorrow* Steering Committee

⁴ December 1999: *Comprehensive Plan*, Prepared by Pflum, Klausmeier & Gehrum, Consultants, Inc.

⁵ December 2009: *Comprehensive Plan Update*, Prepared by City of Charleston

Preface

Vision Statement

The development of the Comprehensive Plan embodies the foundation of the Vision Statement of *Charleston Tomorrow* which was updated for this document as follows:



***“A CULTURALLY RICH COMMUNITY,
CHARACTERIZED BY A SAFE
ENVIRONMENT, WITH ACTIVE CITIZENS,
COMMITTED TO EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS, A GROWING AND DIVERSE
TAX BASE, AND A COLLABORATIVE LOCAL
ECONOMY THAT PROVIDES
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CITIZENS,
RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.”***

This plan enables the city to fulfill this vision by exploring and providing guidance for issues currently facing Charleston such as economic development, planning / land use issues, housing, historical preservation, transportation (circulation and access), infrastructure and facilities, parks and recreation, aesthetics and beautification.

More specifically, this plan explores each of these issues as they pertain to precise geographic segments of the city such as: neighborhoods (established and new), commercial and industrial corridors and public spaces.

Planning Efforts

The *Comprehensive Plan Update* concerns the changes and refinements from previous plans that are necessary to guide the future development of the City. The City's original plan was prepared in 1968, which is often referred to as the Victor Gruen Plan.

In 1996, a report called "Charleston Tomorrow: Building a Bright Future for the City of Charleston Community" was adopted by the Charleston City Council. This initiative was organized as part of a state program called the "Competitive Community Initiative." People representing a variety of organizations in Charleston were brought together by the Charleston Tomorrow Steering Committee to identify and rank in order of importance Charleston's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as part of self-examination. From this, a vision of desired future of the community identified and an action plan was formed to guide various planning committees towards this vision. Among the initiatives identified was the need for a new "Comprehensive Plan".

In 1999, a Comprehensive Plan was prepared to represent the overall development of the City of Charleston, drawing on and updating existing plans and policies, as well as creating new ones. In 1998 the planning firm, Pflum, Klaumeier, and Gehrum Consultants, Inc, was selected to help prepare the strategic comprehensive plans for Coles County, the City of Mattoon, and the City of Charleston. With their help, the City of Mattoon adopted *Mattoon, All Aboard!* as their strategic plan in 2000. As noted in their vision statement Mattoon is dedicated to "Encourage cooperation among governments, industries, institutions, and citizens to achieve excellence in all civic endeavors."⁶

In March of 2000, Coles County adopted their strategic plan: *Coles County Strategic Plan*. Coles County is committed to "cooperate with its cities and town to become a stronger regional hub for education, health, commerce, industry, agriculture, and tourism while maintaining and enhancing the cultural and aesthetic qualities of our communities and rural area."⁷In addition, Eastern Illinois University, a large part of Charleston's community, prepared an update in 1998 of its *Campus Master Plan*⁸.

In 2009, the City adopted a complete update of both its 1999 Comprehensive Plan along with the City's Official Zoning Map. Since 2009, the City has amended the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update from time to time as needed. This includes an amendment in 2018 to incorporate the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian plan into the 2009 Comprehensive Plan Update.

This 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update process sought to actively engage the community throughout the entire plan process. This included meetings and presentations with numerous committees, stakeholders, agencies, and other organizations and individuals in order to engage in a transparent and public process. Since the adoption of Charleston Tomorrow and its Comprehensive Plans, City staff have been actively implementing, tracking and reporting on the status of the goals and objectives from all its plan documents to the City Council. Status reports and achievements from past planning documents are included in this update. Benchmarking and implementation will continue to be a major component of this plan update.

⁶ February 2000: *Mattoon, All Aboard!*. Prepared by Pflum, Klausmeier, and Gehrum Consultants, Inc.

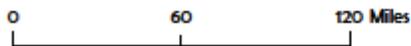
⁷ March 2000: *Coles County Strategic Plan*. Prepared by Pflum, Klausmeier, and Gehrum Consultants

⁸ November 1998: *Eastern Illinois University Master Plan*, Prepared by Sizemore Floyd Conroy Architects

Preface

In accordance with general planning guidelines (as detailed by Martin Landers, AICP; Plan Tools LLC), this 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update incorporates these “Top Ten” Planning Principles as follows:





Preface

Community Profile



Charleston City Hall

Community Profile



Historical Perspective

The following describes the history, demographics, and physical characteristics of the City of Charleston. This information provides the background, which is essential toward understanding the goals and objectives, policies, and recommendations for future use presented in the following sections. Tables and charts present information on population, housing, employment and existing land use, which provide supporting documentation for the conclusions reached in the assessment of the community.

A number of significant events in the history of Charleston and Coles County have contributed to the deeply rooted characteristics of the community. These characteristics and the historic contexts in which they evolved contribute to the opportunities and constraints that must be examined in the preparation of Charleston's new Comprehensive Plan.

From the time of its designation as county seat of the newly organized Coles County in 1831, Charleston has acted as a natural center of government and commerce for the predominantly rural and agricultural region that extends beyond Coles County. Charleston is rich in Abraham Lincoln history and the City actively embraces this part of its history. The City of Charleston is a Looking for Lincoln "Gateway Community" and is part of the US National Park Service's "Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area".

Bolstered by its agricultural traditions and the acquisition of rail service in the nineteenth century, Charleston weathered the economic depressions of the 1870s and 1930s. In between these events, Charleston was selected as the site for the Eastern Illinois Normal School (1895), which is now known as Eastern Illinois University.

Despite its status as a City, Charleston has seen limited absolute growth since the late 1940s. Post-World War II urbanization in the Midwest, and the United States as a whole, left Charleston at a relative commercial and industrial disadvantage. Culturally and economically, Charleston remains closely aligned with the presence and vitality of the Eastern Illinois University campus. At the time of the preparation of the Charleston General Plan in the late 1960s, regional population and economic growth were optimistic.

The City has a designated local historic district encompassing much of 6th Street and 7th Street; along with four local historic landmarks. In addition, there are currently nine Charleston sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As the updated Comprehensive Plan is articulated from the shared vision and goals of the citizens of Charleston, an honest and uncompromising examination of the past contributes to a realistic assessment of its future.

*Lincoln Douglas
Debate Museum*



*Charleston
Courthouse, 1864*



*Eastern Illinois
University's
Old Main Under
Construction, 1897*



*Eastern Illinois University's
Old Main, 1989*



Community Profile

General Population



Coles County Courthouse in Charleston



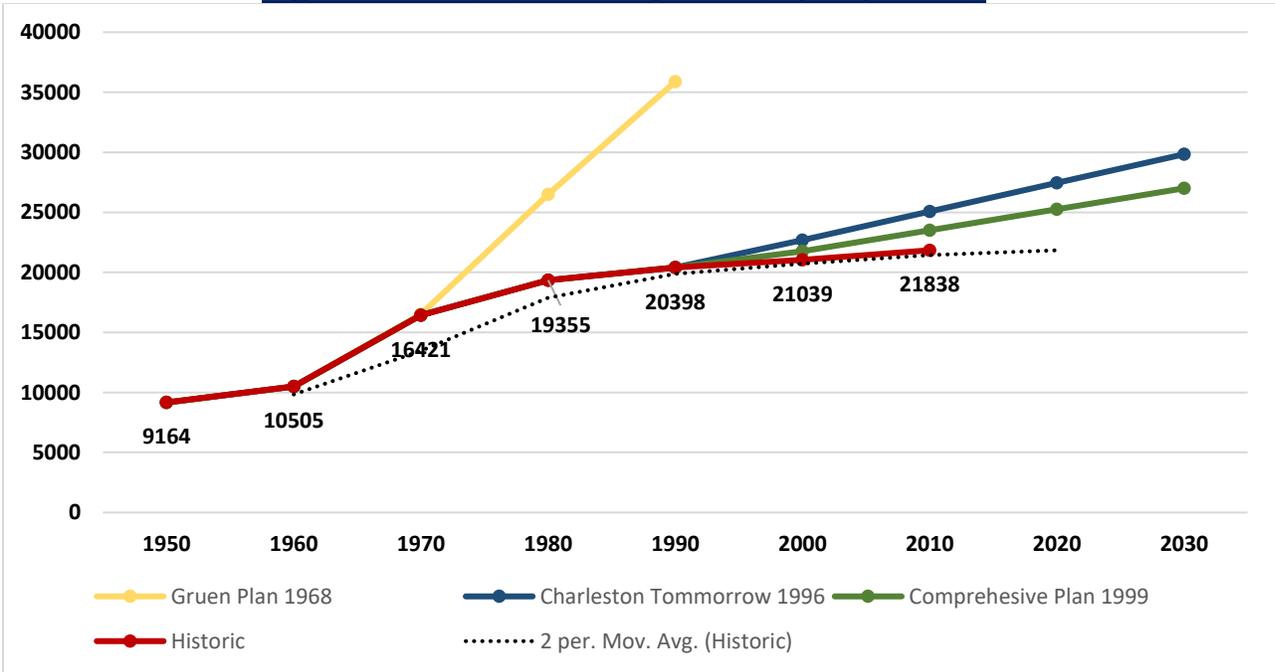
Eastern Illinois University's Old Main

As was noted in the 1968 Charleston General Plan, in the U.S. Census of Population and Housing before 1950, resident students at Eastern Illinois University were not included in the population of Charleston unless otherwise members of households in the City. For this reason the examination of historic population and housing in Charleston will begin with figures available from the US Census of 1950.

As shown by *Figure 1*, Charleston experienced very little growth from 1950 to 1960. A primary factor for the absence of growth during this decade was the accelerated industrialization throughout the Midwest, which drew population from rural areas to those urban areas offering concentrations of potential employment. In sharp contrast, the following decade from 1960 to 1970 shows significant growth for Charleston as a whole. A significant portion of this growth must be attributed to increased enrollment at EIU; since, this decade experienced the first wave of the “baby-boomer” generation graduating from high school and enrolling in college.

The tendency of the recent past to affect estimates and projections of future growth is also clearly shown in *Figure 1*. When population projections were prepared for Charleston’s General Plan in the late 1960s, the impacts of accelerated growth in Charleston and at EIU were immediate and quantifiable. The projections were also based on the expectations – never realized – that a large reservoir would be constructed which would stimulate tourism and economic development.

Figure 1: Historic and Projected City Population



Community Profile

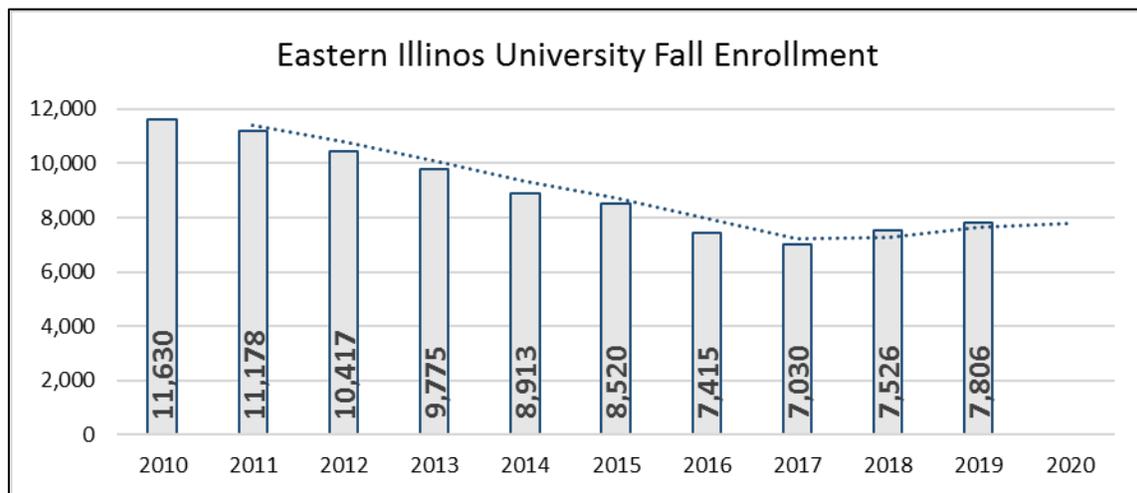
This growth trend, which continued into the 1970s, affected the Victor Gruen Plan projection for population in Charleston to the degree that nearly 40,000 persons were expected by 1990 (published as 35,880 in 1987). This projection proved inaccurate.

Projections showed a much different future for Charleston within the Comprehensive Plan period (2000 to 2030). *Charleston Tomorrow* in *Figure 1* is the population projection made in 1996 by the Coles County Regional Planning Commission on behalf of the Charleston Tomorrow community initiative. By this projection Charleston would increase to approximately 30,000 persons by the year 2030, including EIU student residents.

The absence of growth in the component of Charleston's population, without other significant external development, will further suppress expectations for future growth. *The Comprehensive Plan 1999* in *Figure 1* was based upon 1980 and 1990 Census population and on 1980-98 building permit data for the City of Charleston. By this projection Charleston would increase to approximately 27,000 persons by the year 2030, including EIU student residents.⁹

From *The Comprehensive Plan 1999* to the 2009 plan update, the enrollment of EIU increased by almost over 2,000 students. The 2007 fall enrollment for Eastern Illinois University was approximately 12,500 students. However, looking more recently, from 2010, the fall enrollment numbers at Eastern Illinois University declined until the fall of 2018 as shown in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2: Historic EIU Fall Enrollment



⁹ December 1999: Comprehensive Plan, Prepared by Pflum, Klausmeier & Gehrum, Consultants, Inc.

Community Profile



Kiwanis Amphitheater

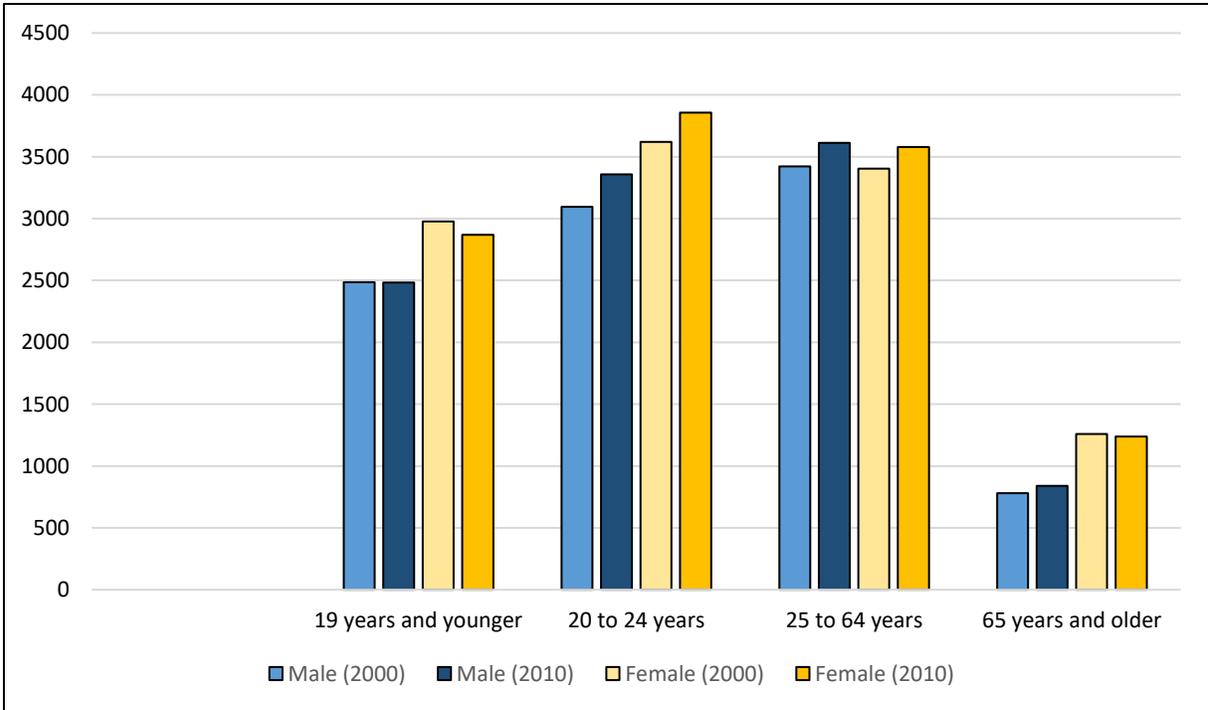


This decline can be attributed to many factors, including conditions in the State of Illinois. However, in 2019, EIU fall enrollment increased over 3.7% from the previous year. Because the EIU population is included in the City’s overall population figures, enrollment must be considered in this analysis. In order to increase population figures, it will be critical for the City to be a partner in the student and faculty recruitment and retention efforts of EIU.

As seen in *Figure 3*, the highest concentration of residents in a particular age range is by far the twenty to twenty-four year olds, thus highlighting the college age population. This five year age range made up about 33% (7,214 people) of the City’s overall population (2010). It is important to take the 20-24 age group into special consideration when planning for the future of the City of Charleston.

In addition, in 2010, the City’s 65 years and older age group represented about 9.5% of the City’s population, which is a slight increase from year 2000. As the nation’s average age continues to increase, development and amenities in the City need to be aware of this increase in order to help guide decisions and policies.

Figure 3: 2010 US Census - Age Groups and Sex



Community Profile

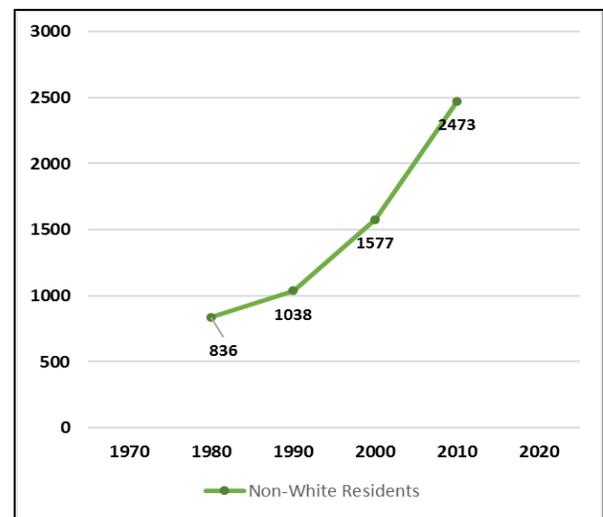
An Inclusive & Diverse Community

As the data demonstrate, Charleston is the most diverse community in Coles County and the City seeks to foster and create an inclusive and welcoming community for all residents and visitors. Home to Eastern Illinois University, the City actively cultivates a sense of community that values different points of views and collaboratively constructs a New Ruralism that embraces and reflects the city's, region's and state's growing economic growth, innovation, and overall quality of life are inherently linked to ensuring every member of the community thrives.

Since 2000, diversity in Charleston's population has rapidly increased. *Figure 4* reflects the U.S. Census underrepresented groups in the City of Charleston since 1980. The figure shows a 195% increase of this population from 1980 to 2010 in the City.

Specifically, overall diversity across all under-represented populations has increased 82%. Similarly, EIU has experienced more diverse enrollments. In Fall 2018, 36.8% of EIU's student population were from non-majority communities and that figure is a 194% increase over 2000. In addition to domestic diversity, the campus has seen a 158% increase in international students between 2000 and 2018 with enrollments over 400 degree seeking students in recent years. In tandem, the data illustrate that the City's demography is dynamic and increasing diversity will position Charleston to meet the labor force needs and reflect values of 21st Century businesses.¹⁰

Figure 4: US Census Population of Underrepresented Groups



Year	Under-Represented Groups in the City
2017	13.70%
2010	11.30%
2000	7.50%

U.S. Census (2000, 2010), American Community Survey (2017)



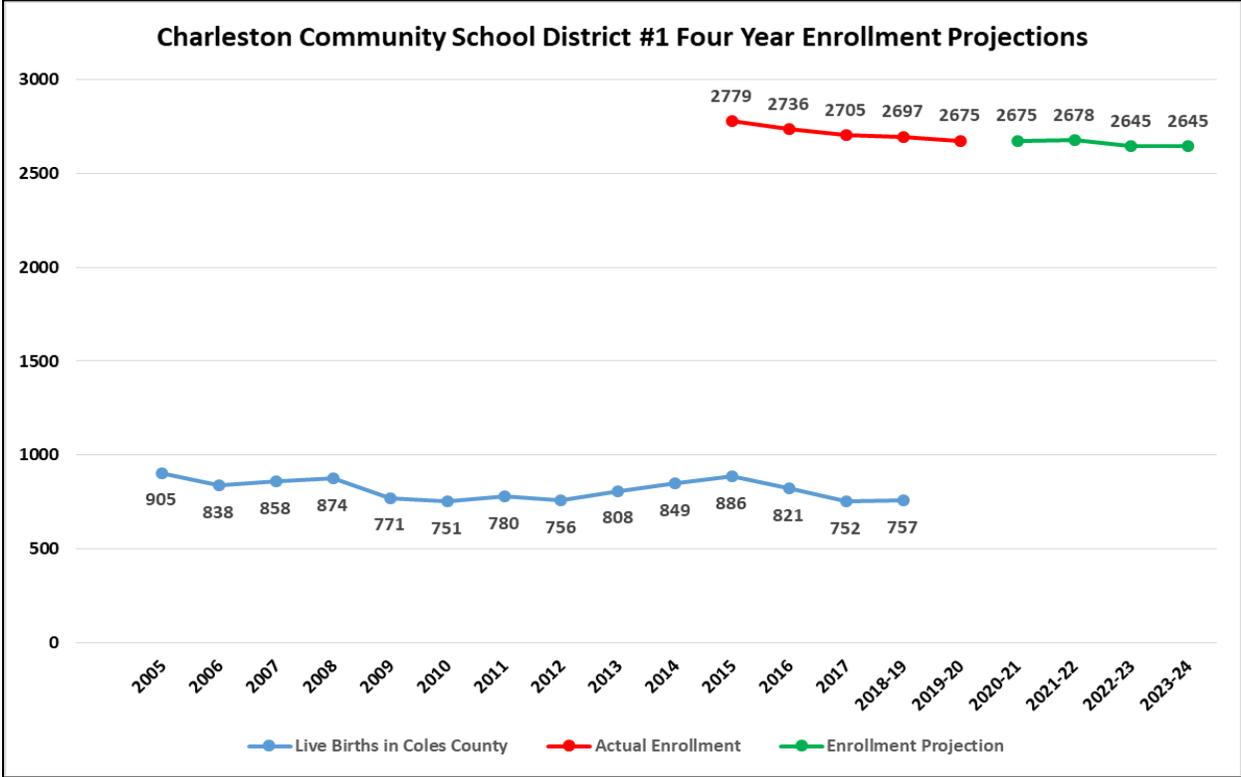
¹⁰ March 2019 EIU Data Sources: Office of International Student & Scholars, Admissions & Division of Enrollment Management, Office of Institutional Research & Budget.

Community Profile

Charleston Community Unit School District #1

The Charleston Community Unit School District #1 provides four-year enrollment projections to the school board and administrative teams in order to develop policy initiatives throughout the District. *Figure 5* shows the actual school enrollment from school year 2014-2020. In addition, enrollment projections for 2021-2024 are shown below.¹¹

Figure 5: Charleston Community Unit School District #1 Four-Year Enrollment Projections



Charleston Community Unit School District #1 data from 2019¹²:

- Since 2015, the percentage of underrepresented students in the school district has increased about 6% (16% non-white students).
- The number of students who were eligible to receive free and reduced-price lunches, live in substitute care, or whose families received public aid in 2018 was about 45% (State’s average was 50% in 2019).
- About 1.8% of the District’s students do not have permanent or adequate homes.
- The “dropout rate” in 2019 for District students was about 7%.
- Student mobility rates for the District was about 12% while the State’s average was about 7%. The mobility rate reflects students who transfer in or out of school during the school year.
- The 4 year “graduation rate” was 84% (State’s average was 86%).

¹¹ Charleston Community Unit School District #1 Enrollment Projections (2021-2024)

¹² Charleston Community Unit School District #1 Report Card (2015-2019)

Housing

As with population, any examination of housing in Charleston must consider the relationship of the EIU campus to the City as a whole. Since 1970, student enrollment at EIU has represented at least 40% of the total population of Charleston. In 1990 before EIU's decision to curb the growth of the campus population, student enrollment represented approximately 45% of Charleston's population.



7th Street House

In addition to the projected 10,259 student population, EIU's 1999 *Master Plan* specified a static estimate of 1,839 combined faculty and staff throughout a planning period that extended to the year 2014.

In 2018, as stated earlier, the EIU student enrollment was 7,526. It is still EIU's short term goal to enroll 9,000 students to the university. In 2018, there were 1,250 employees at EIU which is about 600 positions less than projected in 1999.



It must be observed that EIU faculty, staff, and student equivalent to at least 18 years old are potential participants in Charleston's housing market.

The presence of the University population makes Charleston's housing profile much different from a typical semi-rural mid-western community of 20,000 people. There are high percentages of nontraditional households, great demand for rental housing units, and growing occupancy in-group quarters.



In-Fill development on
N 4th Street
Habitat for Humanity

This has exerted pressure on the housing market in Charleston to provide or maintain a supply of housing units only part of which consists of single family detached homes. Much of the EIU oriented housing demand is for relatively short-term occupancy. The demand for rental housing and nonstandard tenure would logically be greatest in proximity to the campus.

Infill development is a key strategy for residential revitalization programs in the City. According to a recent City survey, there are approximately 259 vacant one and two family residential zoned lots that could be available for infill development. These lots have City utilities available and are ready for new construction projects. In 2016, the City began a trial program to incentivize new home building in the City by waiving building permit fees on new single-family residential developments.



Brooklyn Heights
Apartments

Table 1 displays annual summaries of total permits issued in Charleston for years 1980 through 2018. *Table 2* displays the annual new housing units since 1990 through 2018. This data is also displayed graphically in *Figure 4*.

Community Profile

Table 1: Type & Number of Total Permits Issued – City of Charleston

YEAR	SINGLE FAMILY	DUPLEX	APARTMENTS		ACCESS BLDGS	COMM New and Remodel	INDUST.	RES ADDITION REMODEL	OTHER	TOTAL PROJECTS	TOTAL PERMITS
			BLDGS	UNITS							
1980	34	4	5	20	21	20	0	26	77	187	
1981	29	2	1	6	18	10	0	30	68	158	
1982	47	3	5	26	17	9	0	27	55	163	
1983	38	1	4	22	27	10	0	51	58	190	
1984	31	3	1	40	26	25	0	45	72	203	
1985	18	0	4	50	20	17	0	81	77	217	
1986	28	2	3	51	20	8	0	81	81	223	
1987	35	4	2	28	20	8	1	64	83	217	
1988	35	2	3	16	26	9	1	48	96	220	
1989	31	6	0	0	24	6	2	52	87	208	
1990	37	8	2	16	38	9	1	33	77	205	
1991	40	5	1	6	24	10	2	22	81	185	
1992	34	13	1	6	27	9	2	34	90	210	
1993	57	6	2	8	26	11	1	34	77	214	
1994	61	9	3	49	26	11	3	24	80	217	
1995	39	8	2	19	25	15	3	30	103	225	
1996	36	9	6	47	18	13	3	36	121	242	
1997	22	13	3	89	27	14	3	30	130	242	
1998	38	3	5	84	21	9	3	27	114	220	
1999	18	4	4	60	22	7	1	25	152	233	
2000	20	6	4	56	17	10	0	25	133	215	
2001	13	3	2	58	7	16	3	15	103	220	
2002	12	0	1	8	9	16	1	27	106	192	
2003	16	2	2	39	18	6	1	21	88	164	
2004	13	2	8	128	10	7	1	17	63	121	
2005	24	0	7	99	6	10	1	18	117	185	
2006	28	5	5	56	14	4	1	32	69	155	
2007	21	7	5	36	27	9	2	28	30	129	
2008	17	5	9	48	8	9	0	30	119	197	
2009	9	3	4	21	7	12	0	15	105	176	
2010	7	0	3	110	5	9	0	16	132	172	
2011	3	0	1	8	6	11	0	15	127	171	
2012	6	1	2	13	10	17	1	39	79	168	
2013	10	0	2	13	16	19	0	29	167	256	421
2014	9	0	0	0	11	22	1	23	183	249	358
2015	4	0	2	77	6	15	2	26	185	238	328
2016	3	0	0	0	15	21	0	27	179	245	349
2017	4	0	0	0	9	16	0	28	157	214	288
2018	3	0	0	0	7	21	0	17	231	279	345
2019	1	0	0	0	15	24	0	22	195	257	326
TOTAL	931	139	114	1413	696	504	40	1270	4347	8182	
AVG	23	3	3	35	17	13	1	32	109	210	298

* Beginning in 2013, the City modified its permit tracking processes, as reflected in the shaded area, where the total projects are tracked independently from the number of permits issued.

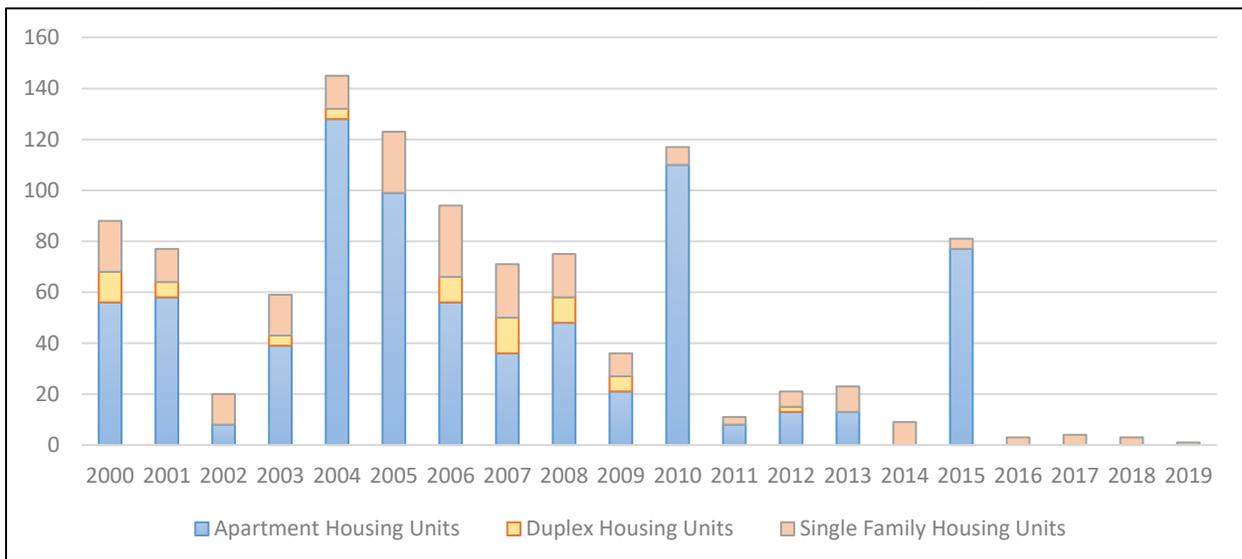
Community Profile

As shown by *Table 2* and *Figure 6*, an average of 53 housing units were permitted annually in Charleston in the 20 years from 2000-2019. The current ten-year average from 2010-2019 is 27 housing units built per year.

Table 2: Annual Permitted New Housing Units

	SINGLE FAMILY UNITS	DUPLEX UNITS	APARTMENT UNITS	TOTAL UNITS
2000	20	12	56	88
2001	13	6	58	77
2002	12	0	8	20
2003	16	4	39	59
2004	13	4	128	145
2005	24	0	99	123
2006	28	10	56	94
2007	21	14	36	71
2008	17	10	48	75
2009	9	6	21	36
2010	7	0	110	117
2011	3	0	8	11
2012	6	2	13	21
2013	10	0	13	23
2014	9	0	0	9
2015	4	0	77	81
2016	3	0	0	3
2017	4	0	0	4
2018	3	0	0	3
2019	1	0	0	1
Average	11	4	40	53 units avg

Figure 6: Annual Permitted New Housing Units



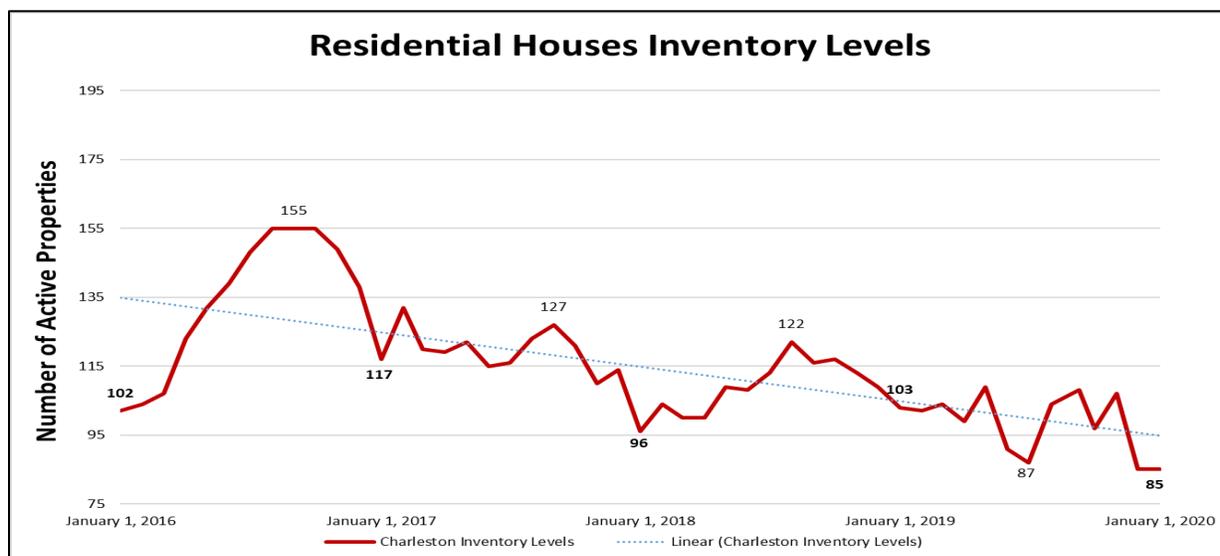
Community Profile

The City's **Community and Residential Revitalization Plan** (including for one- and two-family residences) is included in the Housing Section in this 2020 Comprehensive Plan update and provides additional statistics and summaries regarding the City's housing profile.

The following is excerpted from Michael Staton (Managing Broker Coldwell Banker Classic Real Estate (2/6/2020)¹³:

- **Closed Units-** Following 2018's sub-par performance, Charleston rebounded closing 231 units in 2019, a 20.3% increase YOY. This placed 2019 well above the 20-year average (212), and median (213) for closed units.
- **Avg/Med Sale Price-** Up by nearly \$1000 YOY to \$118,444, 2019 ranks as having the 3rd highest average sale price in the last 20 years. Conversely, the median sale price fell 2.4% from 2018. Settling at \$101,000, 2019 had the lowest median sale price since 2015 at \$100,000.
- **\$ per sq. ft.-** After two years in a row of declines, Charleston's average price per sq. ft. rebounded to \$62.30, a gain of 5.5% YOY. While the overall median sale price fell, the median price per sq. ft. increased drastically (9.3%), finishing the year at \$64.74.
- **Inventory-** With only 85 active units on the market on January 1st, Charleston is well below normal to start the year. Since 2016, Charleston has averaged 97.6 homes on the market with a median of 102 for January. In the last 85 months, there have only been two other times inventory has been this low, December 2019 and February of 2014 at 85 units each.
- **Pending Units-** Breaking a 10-month stretch of having more than 20 units under contract, Charleston's 16 pending units on January 1st represents a MOM decline of 5 units from December.
- **Foreclosures-** Accounting for only 5.2% of all sales in 2019, the 11 units were not only the fewest sold but also constituted the smallest percentage of overall sales, in the past five years
- **Absorption Rates-** With inventory at record lows combined with an above-average number of sales over the last 12 months, the absorption rates for the overall market are under the industry standard of a 6-month supply for a balanced market. Not only are the overall market rates indicating a seller's market in all four time periods, but so are the rates for 6 of the 13 price ranges. Additionally, two other price ranges had 3 of 4 time periods with less than a six-month supply, both only narrowly missing the mark in the projections.

Figure 7: Residential Houses Inventory Levels



¹³ Coldwell Banker Classic Real Estate 2019 Year End Housing Market Report for Charleston and Mattoon (attached as Exhibit)

Community Profile

Additional information from the annual Coldwell Banker provided Housing Report¹⁴ shows the sales history for the City since 2010: is:

- 2010: 160 Sales (\$114,910 Average Sales Price)
- 2011: 169 Sales (\$115,089 Average Sales Price)
- 2012: 213 Sales (\$115,537 Average Sales Price)
- 2013: 211 Sales (\$118,943 Average Sales Price)
- 2014: 199 Sales (\$114,126 Average Sales Price)
- 2015: 212 Sales (\$115,347 Average Sales Price)
- 2016: 211 Sales (\$124,724 Average Sales Price)
- 2017: 233 Sales (\$116,868 Average Sales Price)
- 2018: 192 Sales (\$117,483 Average Sales Price)
- 2019: 231 Sales (\$118,444 Average Sales Price)

Of the 231 closed units in 2019, a breakdown of the average price range is as follows:

Table 3: Average Home Sales Price Range

Price Range	2019 Total	20 - Year Average
Under \$40,000	26	23
\$40,000 - \$59,999	21	24
\$60,000 - \$79,999	34	35
\$80,000 - \$99,999	32	29
\$100,000 - \$124,999	29	30
\$125,000 - \$149,999	29	23
\$150,000 - \$174,999	16	14
\$175,000 - \$199,999	14	10
\$200,000 - \$224,999	7	7
\$225,000 - \$249,999	9	5
\$250,000 - \$274,999	2	3
\$275,000 - \$299,999	6	2
\$300,000+	6	4

The last 6 months of pending sales in 2019 was 147 units. With 85 active property listings (January 1, 2020), the City's housing market is general considered a seller's market.

¹⁴ Coldwell Banker Classic Real Estate 2019 Year End Housing Market Report for Charleston and Mattoon (attached as Exhibit)

Community Profile

Economic Base



EIU Clock Tower

The Cities of Charleston and Mattoon together comprise the urbanized portion of Coles County in which the majority of concentrated employment is situated. Since the locations of the two cities are in proximity, employers can easily draw from the labor force in either city and/or the surrounding County.

Employer location and employment type are, however, economically important to a community as well as to individual employers and employees. In this respect, Charleston competes with Mattoon as well as with other communities in the region for the employers offering the most desirable job opportunities.

As the Charleston Comprehensive Plan is developed, economic issues for employer, employee, and community perspectives will have important influence on numerous other topics. A stable housing stock and neighborhoods, quality education, excellent infrastructure, regional employers and cultural amenities are foundations to Charleston's economic base.



Business at University Avenue and Lincoln Avenue

In 2017, the Eastern Illinois University Impact Study was created and is attached to this document. According to the study, EIU adds \$461.8 million in economic output to the region annually. Every 1,000 students who attend EIU add \$8.6 million to the Coles County economy and EIU support more than 10% of the jobs in Coles County¹⁵.

As stated earlier, EIU's faculty and staff are the equivalent of 1,250 employees. Sarah Bush Lincoln's employment of 2,447 which represents that largest employment base. These 2 employers are the largest two employers in the Charleston area.

Table 4 list the major employers in the Charleston area and are listed by number of employees. *Figure 8* displays the disposition of Coles County's workforce by employment category. *Figure 9 and Figure 10* detail the historic and current unemployment rates for Coles County as shown on the following pages.

Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches founded in Charleston in 1983 Store #001



¹⁵ Eastern Illinois University Impact Study 2017 (attached as Exhibit)

Community Profile

Table 4: Top Employers in the Charleston Area, 2019¹⁶

Employer	Employees
Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center	2,447
Eastern Illinois University	1,250
Consolidated Communications	358
Charleston Community Unit School #1	300
Wal-Mart	250
Spherion Call Center	221
Coles County	180
City of Charleston	143
Vesuvius U.S.A	121
J.J. Collins Sons, Inc.	105
Charleston Transitional Facility	100
Safety Storage	75
Hi-Cone Division	63
Lester Building Systems, LLC	60
Adams Memorials	40
Gavina Graphics	36

Figure 8: Charleston Area Top Employers by Occupation

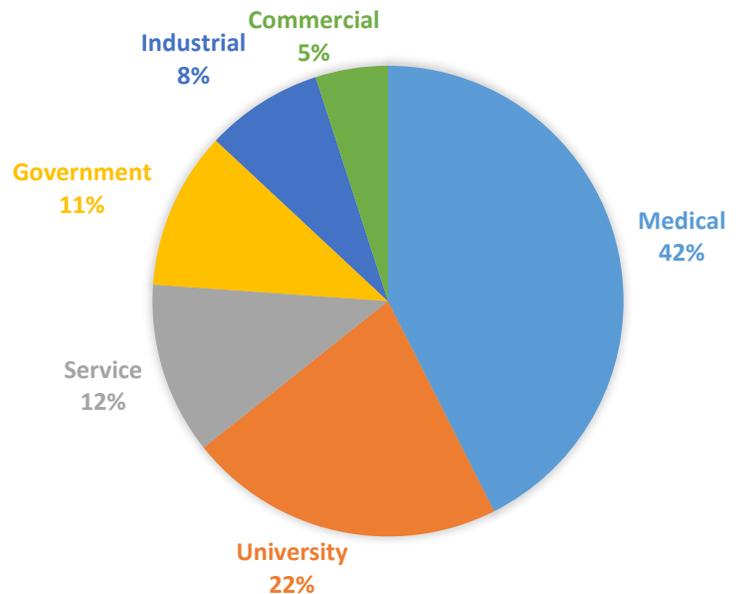
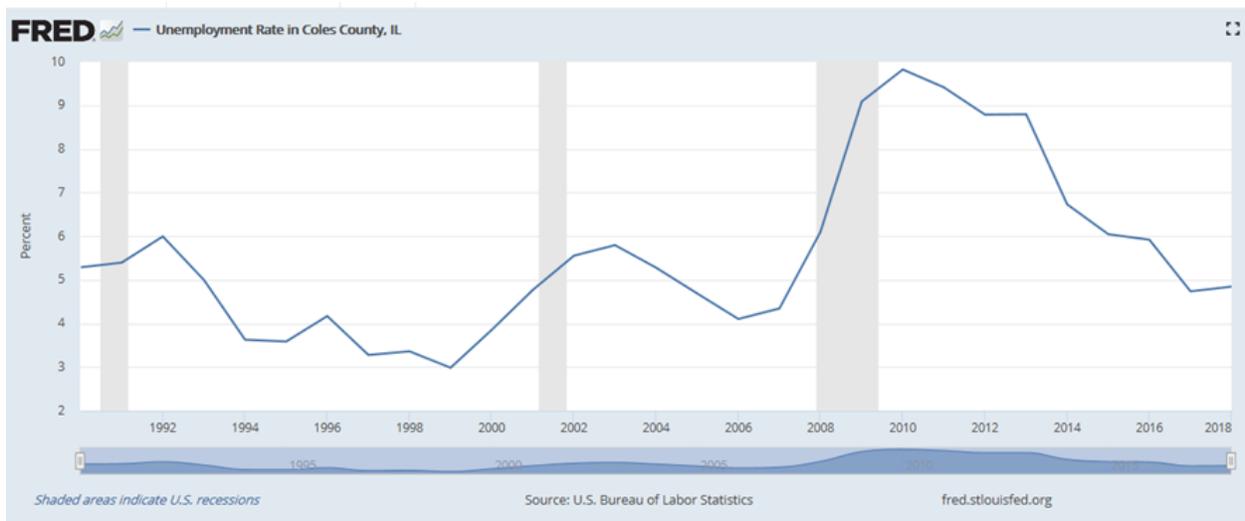


Figure 9: Coles County Historical Unemployment Rates¹⁷



¹⁶ Coles Together Employment Data (updated 01/23/2019)

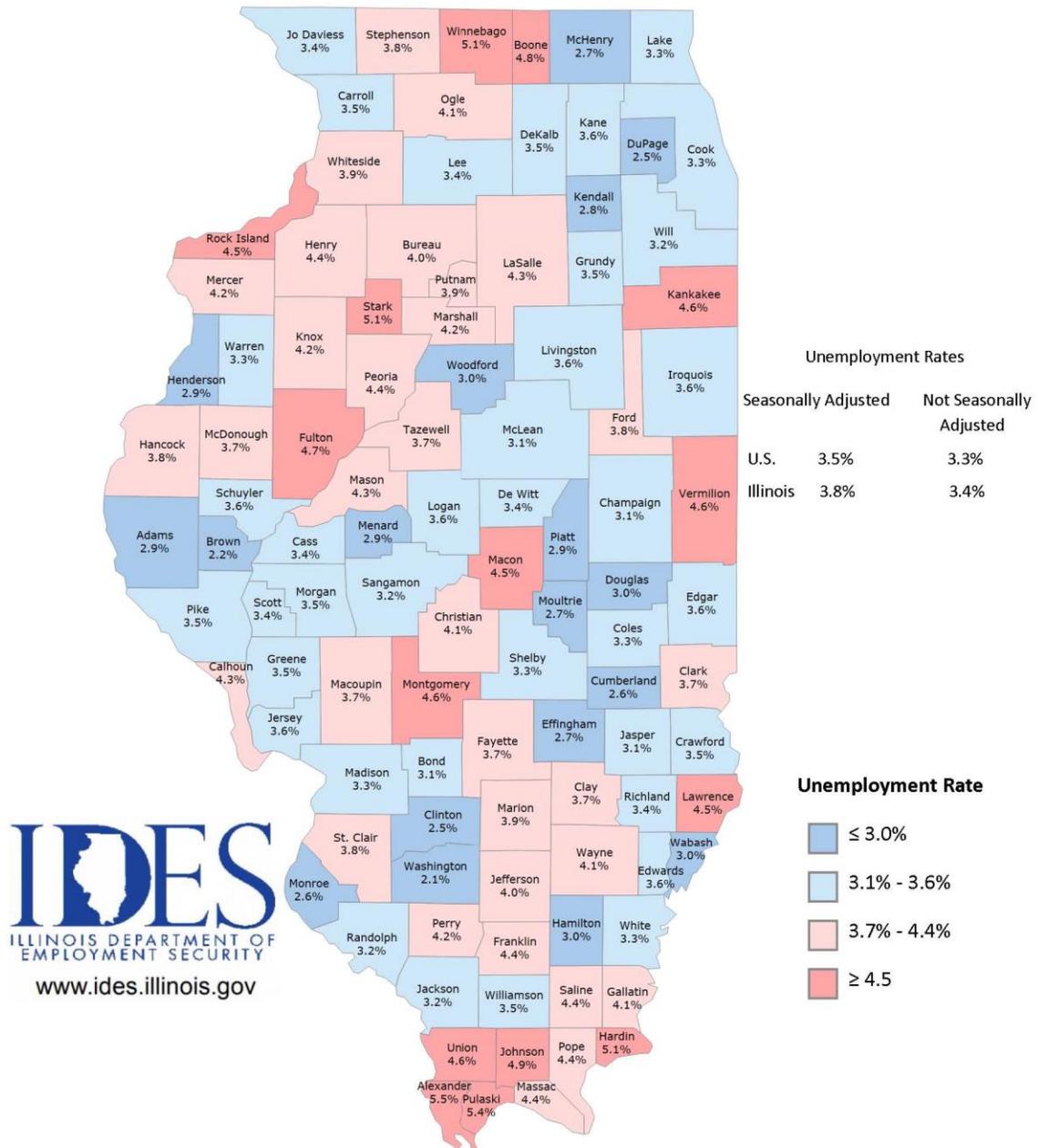
¹⁷ Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Economic Data (updated 01/03/2020)

Community Profile

Figure 10: Illinois Counties Unemployment Rate¹⁸

Illinois Unemployment Rate by County November 2019 – Not Seasonally Adjusted

IL Dept. of Employment Security, Economic Information & Analysis Division



¹⁸ Illinois Department of Employment Security (November 2019)

Community Profile

According to the US Census Bureau American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates (2013-2017), the median household income of the City of Charleston is \$29,968. It is important to remember that the students of Eastern Illinois University are counted in the City's overall population along with their overall demographic characteristics including household income. As a comparison, the City of Mattoon's median household income was reported as \$38,373 and the State of Illinois' median household income was \$61,229. Understanding the inclusion of EIU student income data with the City's median household income is important when recruiting new retail, service and industrial development projects.

The City's trade area (10-minute drive) is also important to understand when considering recruitment efforts. Trade area economic and demographic data of the City's trade area¹⁹ includes:

- Daytime population: 37,536
- Average Age 33.7
- Median Household Income: \$32,934
- Number of Households: 9,464

From a survey done in early 2019, the City has approximately 45 commercial and light industrial spaces (approximately 37 properties) that are partially or completely vacant. This equals about 230,000 square feet of commercial and light industrial space available; or about 5,000 square feet per space. It is important to note that a few of these spaces may be beyond repair and not able to be redeveloped. There are also six sites in the City that are currently listed by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency as "Brownfield Sites".

In addition, the heavy industrial building formerly known as the "Trailmobile" building is also vacant and represents about 400,000 square feet of heavy industrial space. This is the only major heavy industrial building space available in the City.

The City understands the need to be proactive to encourage economic development projects. As such, the City of Charleston has three local commercial / industrial economic development incentive programs including:

1. The Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District;
2. The Business and Industrial Development Incentive Program;
3. The Coles County Enterprise Zone.

The City also qualifies for at least two Federal economic development programs including the New Market Tax Credit Program and the Opportunity Zone Program. All of these programs can be key tools for the City to actively recruit development and redevelopment projects in the City.

In addition, creating a robust tourism related economy is critical to a destination city like Charleston. According to the Illinois Office of Tourism, in 2018 Coles County generated \$55.6 million in travel expenditures (up 2.3% from 2017 (*2017: \$54.37 million, up 4.4% from 2016*)); and Coles County brought in \$1.25 million in local tax revenue in 2018 (increase of .8% from 2017 (*2017: \$1.24 million, up 4.6% from 2016*)²⁰). The increase over the past two years are significant. Expanding the City's industrial, commercial, and agricultural and tourism bases to compliment the expanding service sector will be the key to the City's economic development expansion in the future.

¹⁹ Retail Strategies Market Guide for City of Charleston (2016)

²⁰ Journal Gazette / Times Courier Newspaper (July 19, 2018; and August 8, 2019)

Community Profile

The City of Charleston's Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) determines the overall value of the property in the City. The assessed valuation is an important factor in determining property taxes and municipal bonding. *Figure 11* shows the City EAV showed a 4.76% increase (\$8.65 million EAV) over the 10 year from 2009-2018 (about .53% annual increase / \$961,447 a year).

Figure 11: City of Charleston Total EAV

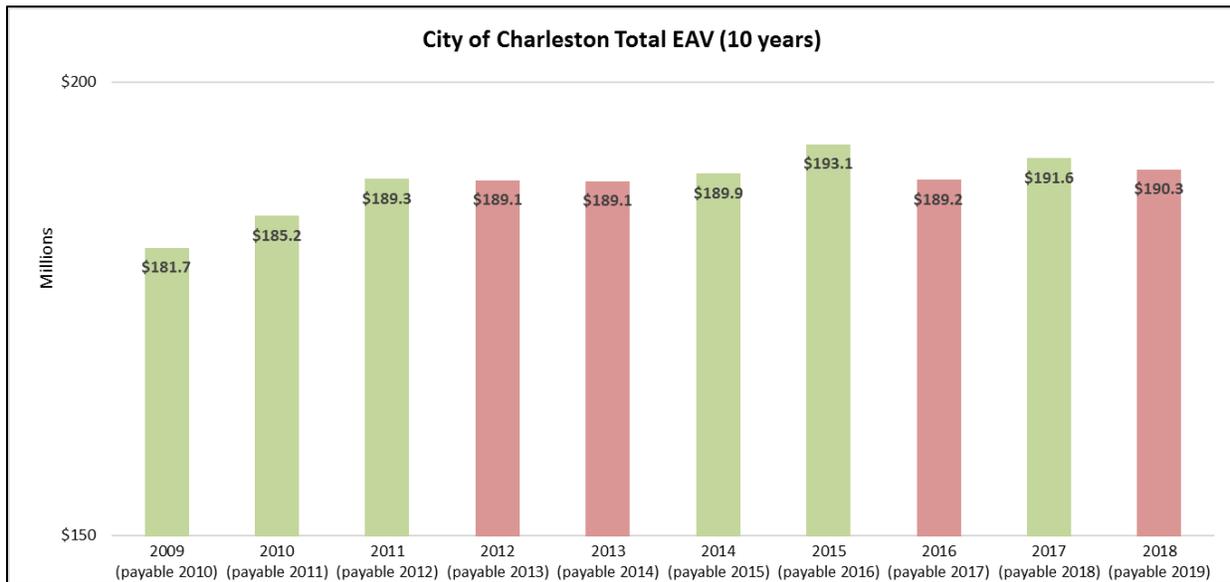
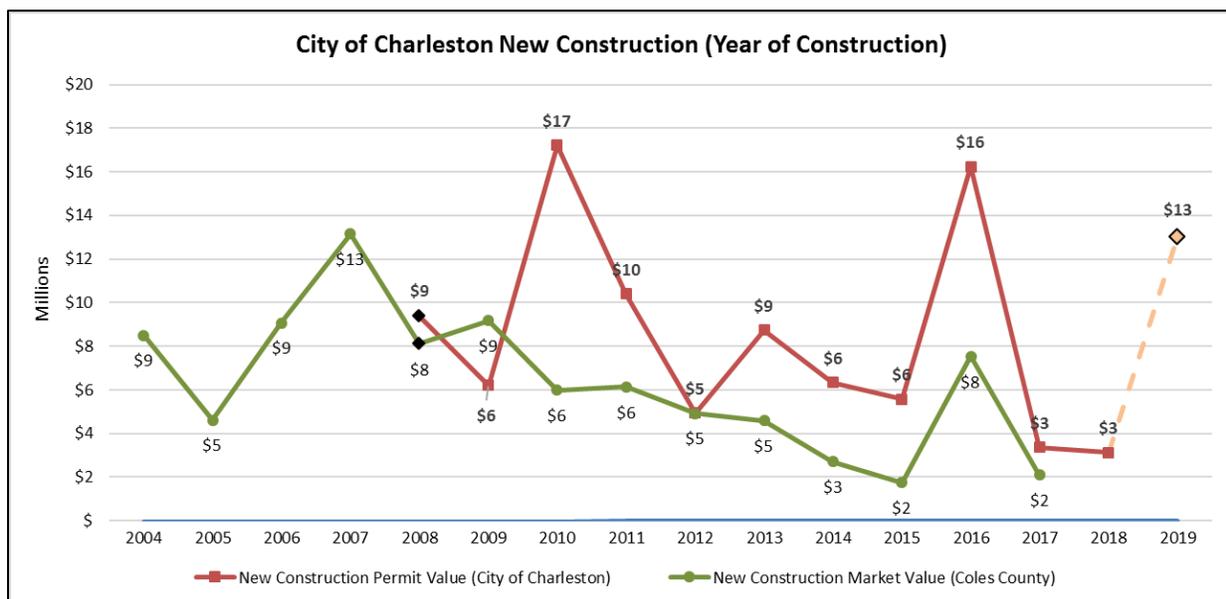


Figure 12 shows the value of new construction in the City since 2004. The City's average construction permit value is about \$6.9 million annually (investment in the City) over the past 5 years (2014-2018). From 2013-2017, (5 years) approximately \$3.7 million of fair market value was added to the City's tax rolls each year.

Figure 12: New Construction Value



Current Land Use

The variety and spatial organization of existing land uses in Charleston and the surrounding rural area are categorically generalized to provide a reasonable compromise between clarity and level of detail. Land use categories have been adapted from inventories conducted by the City of Charleston in 2019. *Table 5* displays the acreage of each land use category in the corporate limits.

Table 5: 2019 Current Land Use – Corporate Limits

Description	Acres	% of Total
Vacant Land	219	3.6%
One Unit / Single Family Residential	1,504	24.4%
Two Units / Two Family-Duplex Residential	116	1.9%
3-8 Unit Residential Apartments	79	1.3%
9+ Unit Residential Apartments	92	1.5%
Mobile Home Residential	59	1.0%
Commercial	327	5.3%
Industry (e.g. Manufacturing & Distribution)	327	5.3%
Open Space / Recreation / Green Space	954	15.5%
Side Channel Reservoir (Lake Charleston)	328	5.3%
Institutional (e.g. Government, Non-Profit)	399	6.5%
Transportation (RR), Utilities, City Parking	46	0.7%
University (Eastern Illinois University)	323	5.3%
Agricultural	583	9.5%
Right of Way (roads, alleys, right of way)	792	12.9%
Total Acres	6,148	100%
Corporate Limits Square Miles	9.6	

Annexations continue to be a critical element and a priority to the development of the City. Annexing property allows the City to grow and provides areas for future development. In addition, through annexations, the City can provide municipal services to nearby properties in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the environment and community. Since 2007, the corporate limits of Charleston increased from approximately 5952 acres to approximately 6148 acres in 2019. This equates to approximately 196 acres of land added to the City over the past 12 years.

Land use categories have been updated from inventories conducted by the City of Charleston in 2019. The following maps are illustrated on the pages 33, 35 and 37:

- City of Charleston Current Land Use Map (2019)
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Land Use Map (2019) detailing:
 - The Current Corporate Limits*
 - Current IEPA Facilities Planning Area Boundary*
 - The Extraterritorial Zoning / Subdivision Jurisdiction*
- City of Charleston Influence Areas within City Limits

Community Profile

Community Profile

(Map of Existing Land Use)

Community Profile

Community Profile

(Map Charleston Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Existing Land Use)

Community Profile

Community Profile

(Map City of Charleston Influence Areas)

Community Profile

As part of this planning process, a Self-Assessment (pages 39-40) of the City's strengths and opportunities was completed. This Self-Assessment process also included identifying future Planning Policy Focus Tasks (page 41-42). The results of this Self-Assessment Analysis are as follows:

Self-Assessment Analysis

Charleston is:

- **A Livable Community** (Offerings in the City include cultural programs and diverse arts through the City and Eastern Illinois University. Charleston is environmentally diligent and an active community with an adopted Bike and Pedestrian Plan and is a walkable community with an abundance of City parks and open space including: Lake Charleston and its trails, outdoor recreation, close to Fox Ridge State Park and the Grand Prairie Friends connection to the City's outdoor trail system. Charleston is a historically rich community with various Lincoln Historic sites, historic district along with its historic downtown. Charleston is a conscientious community with a strong volunteerism base, low cost of living, a strong social services / service organization network with quality senior programs and a low crime rate.)
- **Centrally Located Geographic Position** (Critical transportation links, close to regional airport, Amtrak station nearby, industrial rail, and close proximity to international airports and interstates.)
- **Strong Education and Public School System / Stabilized and Increased Enrollment, New Curriculum and Programs at EIU** (Strong K-12 public school system and secondary schools including Eastern Illinois University in Charleston and Lake Land College nearby. Several K-8 programs are available in the community.)
- **Stable and Affordable Housing Market** (Minimal blight issues and not an overall depressed housing market with affordable housing, senior living and nursing homes facilities, group homes and accessible options.)
- **Strong Municipal Government** (Financially stable, strong bond rating, highly trained and educated staff with a strong customer service mindset that offers progressive incentive packages including Tax Increment Financing, Enterprise Zone and industrial / commercial and residential incentive programs. Relationships with community based foundations and local governments are strong and continuing to grow.)
- **High Quality Public Services** (Updated water treatment plant (advanced ozone) and sanitary sewer treatment plant with capacity to grow and expand, quality water and sewer infrastructure throughout City, gas and electric services, high speed internet and communication systems. City has highly trained and skilled Fire Department and Police Department and maintains its City fleet and equipment. The City offers a municipal pool, affordable water and sewer rates, and an engaged Building and Development Services Department.)

Community Profile

Self-Assessment Analysis

- **Major Regional Hospital Nearby / Continued Growth and Expansion SBLHC** (SBLHC continues to expand its facilities and employment base which has a positive impact on the City's economy and housing market. In addition, Carle Clinic is also expanding in the region which gives the area several options for medical service.)
- **Economic Opportunities** (Administration of the Coles County Enterprise Zone and other incentive programs to attract a diverse economic base, improve transportation and public infrastructure, expand outdoor recreation and tourism offerings, annexations, lessen regulation burdens, solid daytime population and available land for redevelopment projects. Charleston is home to several nationally known "start-ups".)

Planning Policy Focus Tasks

- **Create new branding and a niche for the City** (Explore the concept of “New Ruralism” or “Progressive Ruralism” as a model to create a new brand for the City. Related but independent concepts should be considered as part of the “Ruralism” umbrella. As one part of the “Ruralism” theme, expand and grow the City’s art offerings and link art programs from EIU to the city square (create clear connection between: Tarble Arts Center, Doudna Fine Arts Center, Charleston Community Theater, Charleston Alley Theater, Charleston Library, Booth Library, Sister City outdoor sculptures and sculpture by library). Expand the community’s access to EIU and create a strong link between the city residents and EIU through: art, education, programming, community based research / leaning and student focused community projects. City needs to continue to expand and grow its recreation and outdoor recreation opportunities; and establish planning policies that complement the City’s rural identity and rich history by expanding events and festivals in the City to encourage participation from all demographics from young professionals to senior age groups.)
- **Strive for a More Diverse Economic Base** (Need to expand manufacturing / industrial base; need to expand retail and restaurant offerings and overnight tourism / recreation offerings. City is a destination town and located in “doughnut hole” of retail (competing with large Cities that are directly on the Interstate). City needs to capitalize on its strongly positioned agricultural economy. Evaluate and determine action steps to address business vacancies in the City, including those along Lincoln Avenue as this is the first impression of the City and includes developing and implementing a “Master Plan” for Lincoln Avenue. Create additional offerings and amenities for all community residents. Explore ways to increase the broadband technology network throughout the City to be an asset for residents and businesses.)
- **Limited overnight lodging and lack of convention center** (Continue to study the need for additional overnight lodging and convention center opportunities in the City. The City completed a hotel needs study in 2011 and this study should be completed again.)
- **Community Center** (City residents have expressed a desire for a community center and expanded outdoor athletic activities. The City needs to continue to explore the needs and possibilities of building these amenities in the City. It will be key to identify partners in this endeavor, including local institutions, private groups, foundations and public entities.)
- **City Population / EIU Enrollment and Population** (People leaving State for education and work could have effect housing, economy and the city’s governmental functions. Investigate services, amenities, programs (e.g. TIF), offerings and incentives that will encourage people to live in the City limits and offer amenities to help with recruitment and retention of students and faculty of EIU. The City needs to be a partner to determine how to create new employment opportunities to retain EIU graduates in the City and minimize outmigration.)

Community Profile

Planning Policy Focus Tasks

- **Unfunded State Mandates** (More regulations and decreasing grant program opportunities to make up revenue shortfalls; reducing the City's control over local decisions. State leadership needs to be committed to be a positive partner with local governments and higher education.)
- **Threats to City Government** (Rising pension costs and challenges to the City's investments and revenue along with revenue cuts and fees imposed by Springfield. Negative effects from other governmental functions/decisions and groups on the City (i.e. increased calls for service, ambulance services, level of property taxes, retail competition), etc. Continue to understand and address the national drug epidemic and its effect on the community. It will be critical for the City to continue to grow both its external and internal relationships with for example: EIU, Mattoon, SBLHC, Lakeland College and the city's residents and businesses. Expand City and Chamber social media presence and websites including improvements for ease to new businesses looking to locate in Charleston. Annexations in the City need to be carefully analyzed so we don't create an over burden on City services.)
- **Changing Demographics** (Including changing habits and its effect on retail and the city generally. According to the US Census, the City has a median income that includes EIU students and must be taken into account during economic development recruitment activities.)
- **Transportation and Infrastructure** (Road and sidewalk network needs to be continually evaluated and improved as part of the City's Capital improvements Plan. Expanding the City's alternative modes of travel will be critical.)
- **Code Enforcement** (Code enforcement must remain active in order to maintain a stable housing stock and stable neighborhoods. City needs to continue to explore the feasibility of a rental inspection program. A review of the City's sign ordinance to determine what requirements may be beneficial to encourage monument signs in commercial areas and reducing signage in student rental neighborhoods. Review in-fill development incentives and programs to enhance the Central Business District mixed use properties; while also encouraging mixed use developments near the campus as part of a walkable community strategy. A study of the programs and regulatory options afforded by the Home Rule designation may need to be considered by the City.
- **Develop strong primary and secondary education offerings** (Expand on technical education and training for the middle school and high school aged students. K-12 programs should be connected with programming at EIU and Lakeland College and continue to build on these relationships. Partner with Charleston schools to support Competency Based Learning.)

New Ruralism

Communities like Charleston are experiencing a rural resurgence that is attracting visitors and is showcasing why Charleston is a great place to call home. The City hopes this rural resurgence will be a catalyst for new development and a new migration of residents to the City. Charleston must expand offerings in the community and develop new strategies and policies to continue to make Charleston the place for people to live and prosper.

Charleston will continue to grow through strong leadership by making itself more resilient through: volunteerism, empowerment, ingenuity, creativity, cooperation, entrepreneurship, local ownership and self-sufficiency; and according to, Jo Anne Carr, director of planning and economic development town of Jaffrey, New Hampshire suggests: “*New Ruralism is driven by “community leadership, volunteerism and creative financing.”*”²¹

New Ruralism can be defined as the preservation and enhancement of rural areas as places that are indispensable to the economic, environmental and cultural vitality of cities²².

New Ruralism is about rural communities finding new ways and sustainable approaches to create economic opportunities, provide livable wage jobs, improve access to local foods, offer better aging in place options, expand access to social service, improve access to transportation, grow the local economy and provide for a number of other basic needs. It is about communities finding creative ways to adapt to and succeed within today’s economy without compromising local value and culture²³.

The **American Planning Association** offers the following “Guiding Principles” to *New Ruralism*:

New Ruralism celebrates creative innovation to sustain healthy social, economic and natural systems into the future. The approach should aim to be sustainable which means these principles must come from within the community and be supported by creative local public policies that are established for long term success.

These *New Ruralism* principles are designed to help foster an improved quality of life, strive for livable wage jobs, while considering livable community needs and encouraging the growth of the local and regional economy. The *New Ruralism* model encourages a healthy and thriving community through growth principles that address social inclusion, economic development, environmental protection and conservation, while expanding the historic fabric and the working landscape enterprise.

²¹ American Society of Landscape Architects / The Dirt: Uniting the Built & Natural Environments. New Ruralism; Solutions for Struggling Small Towns (6/14/2017 Jared Green) Peg Hough, planner and environmental advocate

²² New Ruralism “Revitalizing Regional Agriculture and Local Food Systems” (Sibella Kraus, Director SAGE UC Berkeley 9/11/2007)

²³ APA Small Town and Rural Planning (Summer 2017)

Community Profile

Based on these principles, New Ruralism attributes for Charleston might include:

1. Individual Advancement

- Foster grassroots activity
- Volunteerism
- Citizen empowerment
- Fostering creative spirit
- Fostering self-sufficient individuals and communities

2. Local Sustainability

- Fostering entrepreneurship, ingenuity, flexibility
- Consider use of Co-operatives for new businesses
- Reliance on local food and renewable energy fuel
- Local ownership
- Integrated infrastructure
- Creating “closed-loop” systems
- Promoting long-term sustainability

3. Community Enhancement and Place-Making

- Protecting the historic fabric of the City
- Connection to natural amenities
- Creating vital gathering spaces
- Celebration via community service, music, art, dance, theater and promoting sharing, pride of place, trust, a fun place to be!



18th Street Fall Festival



2018 Cyclocross at
Kiwanis Park

Community Profile

While there is much more the City can do to promote the *New Ruralism* model, the City of Charleston began taking strides toward *New Ruralism* principles through the following few examples:

- Development of Lake Charleston and the Lake Charleston Trail System and connecting the Lake Charleston area to the City

This project was financed through the local Charleston Area Charitable Foundation and built by City crews. Local volunteers have expanded the trail system offerings with programs like “Butterfly Hotspots”, native pollinator and native tree/shrub plantings, routine maintenance, trail building, etc.

- Volunteer events and community projects are organized in the City through local church groups, public/private partnerships with local organizations and companies, and the EIU Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteerism. The 2017 Governor’s Hometown Award (Environmental Stewardship through local Involvement and volunteerism at Lake Charleston) provides specific details on this project’s volunteer and civic involvement.
- Improvements to the Woodyard Conservation Area and the development of the Grand Prairie Friends Conservation Area south of Lake Charleston and connecting lake Charleston to these conservation areas. Over 1,000 acres of land are currently set aside in Warbler Ridge Conservation Area south of Charleston as part of the Grand Prairie Friends network. In addition, currently, over 30% of the space inside the City (excluding EIU’s open space) is used as open space, recreation, green space and/or agricultural activities.
- Community and Cultural Festivals and Events including: the semi-annual 18th Street “block party” festival, Musefest, Whiteside Gardens (Douglas Hart Nature Center and EIU), EIU Celebration, local art displays at EIU and City Hall, local theaters and productions on the square and at EIU and creation of the Friends of the Will Rogers Theater; the annual Red White and Blue Days and Christmas in the Heart of Charleston; the annual Tour de Charleston bike race, tournaments and other athletic events are community based events drawing hundreds of people to the City each year.
- Local Food projects including local farmer’s markets at the City square and on 18th Street; community gardens established at EIU and the Coles County Health Department (and new community greenhouse).
- Renewable Energy and Sustainability projects including: East Central Illinois solar “Group Buy” partnership with Lake Land College and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association MERA, exploring solar energy at city facilities (Waste Water Treatment Plant, Water Treatment Plant other city facilities) and renewable projects at EIU. The City is working toward converting unused urban spaces for native plating and pollinator projects.

Community Profile

- Promoting the historic fabric through the creation of a local historic district, local landmarks, historic tours and National Register designations and work through the City's Historic Preservation Commission. The City is a Gateway Community for the "Looking for Lincoln" project and is part of the US National Park Services' "Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area" as the City activity promotes its rich Abraham Lincoln in Charleston history.
- Expanding alternate modes of travel in the City including improved pedestrian and biking options and linkages to city parks and facilities and linking EIU to the City's bike system. For example the City through active citizen involvement, developed, adopted and began implementing its Bicycle Plan.
- "Shop Local" programs have been established through the local Chamber of Commerce. In addition, local groups have started "For Charleston" programs that encourage local involvement and frequenting local businesses. Public incentive programs were designed and implemented to encourage local investment throughout the City.

As seen in these few examples, the concept of *New Ruralism* is built into the City of Charleston's growth and programs. *New Ruralism* is an always expanding and evolving model that the City of Charleston should embrace, as part of a holistic approach to community development.

*Downtown Farmer's
Market*



Economic Development



*Dirty's Bar and Grill
Charleston, Illinois*

Policy Area – Economic Development

Policy Area



*Machinery Management Service
Charleston, Illinois*

Economic Development

The City of Charleston and its participants are dedicated to the ongoing economic development efforts of the City. The City's most recent Unified Development Code was adopted in 2003 (zoning map updated in 2009), which provided a better structure for expansion and future development projects.

The participants include, but are not limited to:

- **City of Charleston**
- **Eastern Illinois University and Lake Land College**
- **Charleston Area Chamber of Commerce**
- **Charleston Property Owners and Developers**
- **Coles Together**
- **Coles County Community Development Corporation and Foundations**
- **Community Leaders and Business Owners**

Goal 1

Actively promote the retention, expansion, development and re-development of businesses and industries in Charleston to enhance the economic well-being of the community using new and creative solutions.

Recommendations

Support and work with Coles Together and the Charleston Chamber of Commerce.

Coles Together and the Charleston Chamber of Commerce have been working with the City of Charleston for many years and they have the expertise and resources to help the City of Charleston reach its economic development goals. Where possible, the City needs to provide technical, financial, and political support. The continued support of Coles Together and the Charleston Chamber of Commerce by Charleston officials and businesses prove to be a great asset, increasing desired results in proportion to monetary investments. Cooperation should be given on an ongoing basis to resolve all critical issues that affect the economic vitality of the City, the county, and the region. The City needs to continue to support the "Coles Alliance" that was established in 2003 (Resolution 03-R-60) to foster better communication and consistency with the Cities of Charleston & Mattoon, Coles Together and the two cities' Chamber of Commerce.

Promote the Charleston Square / Central Business District as a location for financial, insurance, legal, real estate, public / government center, retail and other office establishments. Encourage the growth of new retail and other commercial spaces downtown.

With a central location near the downtown, the library, the Coles County Courthouse, and City offices, the Central Business District should be preserved and enhanced to become a stronger civic and commercial focal point. Using the Downtown TIF District continues to be an asset to the redevelopment of the City's Square.



*Coles County
Courthouse in
Charleston*

Policy Area

Noteworthy are the multi-story and mixed-use buildings in this district. This feature should be attractive to businesses that may be sole-proprietor which could benefit from owners having space above their shops and offices. One example could be an artist who may live and have a studio upstairs and a gallery in the ground floor.

Encourage niche marketing in the Central Business District to reduce competition with regional shopping centers and create a separate market downtown.



Charleston Central Business District

To complement commercial corridors outside of the downtown, the area needs to define a niche. These stores should serve as a different marketing area than other shopping centers located in Charleston. Besides being of service to the customers who already work downtown, the specialty stores should also tap into tourism by providing a specialty niche not found in the larger “big-box” stores. Over the past several years, new antique shops and other unique retail spaces have been developed downtown. In addition to antique shops; local bakeries, meat markets, community cultural events, brew pubs and other specialty stores should be considered and encouraged. After assessing the economic advantages, community leaders and business owners should come together and decide on a niche or several niches on which the Central Business District should capitalize. This can be developed through use of a uniform marketing program for the downtown area.

Encourage mixed-use development.



The upper floors of buildings facing the Courthouse are not being used to the full extent. The use for residences or offices should be encouraged to take advantage of the architectural characteristics of the buildings and to add vitality to the downtown area. Redeveloping second floor residential spaces downtown will encourage residents to live there. This will help to occupy otherwise unused spaces above commercial structures, and at the same time take advantage of the unique architecture available only in the downtown to encourage adaptive reuse of spaces. Also, the convenience to shop and work is another advantage residents can enjoy when there are opportunities to live downtown. Cooperation between City and private sector should continue to provide funds and incentives to encourage development of downtown spaces.

Mixed use developments should also be considered throughout the City, including in and around the University Influence Area near Eastern Illinois University. Updates to the City’s Unified Development Code and Official Zoning Map should be evaluated and adopted, if appropriate, to accommodate new mixed use developments near campus. These mixed use developments encourage bicycle and pedestrian use near campus and allow the City to maximize development projects in this area.

Maintain regular updates and expand web pages for the City of Charleston (www.charlestonillinois.org) and enhance the use of social media in the City.

Economic Development

In order for City residents and businesses to keep up to date, the Charleston web site should be continually updated and expanded. The site should be expanded to encourage business developments using modern marketing techniques. Links to all Charleston businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and Coles Together should be active. By using this technology, current and prospective businesses can have a “one-stop” online location for community incentives, marketing and demographic details critical for future investment.

The general public also has access to public documents, such as this updated plan, through the site. In addition to providing important information, the website should also incorporate community involvement and volunteering opportunities. The website should serve as a connection between the Charleston residents and the University population. Currently, the Building and Development Services Department is the City’s central source of information for incoming business and this work needs to continue and remain current.

The City also needs to find creative ways to increase local participation in the City’s economy. One option would be to consider a social media and marketing partnership with EIU. The City could use EIU students, faculty and residents to create a new marketing and outreach program (as part of “lifelong learning” activities) to reach both EIU students and community members to encourage stronger local participation. The City should create a city specific “web application” to create a “one-stop” digital location for mobile devices to showcase the City’s activities and economic development programs.

Strive for a more diverse economic base and expand tourism as a contributor to the city’s overall economy.

The City needs to coordinate with Coles Together to actively recruit, market and offer programs to help expand its manufacturing and industrial base. The City needs to coordinate with the Charleston Chamber of Commerce to actively recruit, market and offer programs to help expand its commercial and retail base; along with adding tourism and recreation events (including overnight events). Charleston is a destination town and providing programs and support to business and local entrepreneurs (perhaps through local business co-ops, incubator programs, etc.) will be critical to expand the local economic base. The City needs to reconsider renewed partnerships with outside retail and hotel consultants along with actively attending related trade shows and events in order to better understand the current retail climate and retail development needs to promote and market the City of Charleston.

As stated as part of the City’s Community Profile, along with detailed goals and recommendations in the Parks and Recreation section, tourism must be expanded as part of the City’s overall economy base. One example is the ongoing partnership with the Charleston Chamber of Commerce with the annual “Tour de Charleston” bicycle event in the City.

The City also needs to capitalize on its strongly positioned agricultural economy. The city can encourage local agricultural consumption strategies, including exploring and utilizing agricultural opportunities including but not limited to Rural Development’s agricultural based grant programs. These programs can help support local seasonal and year round farmer’s markets, community gardens and encourage local retail establishments to offer locally grown agricultural products, which may help create a stronger local “farm to table” system.

Policy Area

Develop and adopt a Master Plan for the City’s commercial and industrial corridors and the Central Business District.

As a first step, the City needs to work with a planning consultant to develop and “Master Plan” for Lincoln Avenue. This plan will include a detailed evaluation and action steps needed to create a beautification and redevelopment plan for Lincoln Avenue as the City’s main gateway to the EIU campus. At a minimum, the plan should address beautification of Lincoln Avenue through improvements such as: landscape and streetscape plans, updated signage guidance, public infrastructure improvements including road, sidewalk, bike routes, street lighting, signals, public and private utilities, way-finding signage, etc; along with planning redevelopment strategies for business vacancies along Lincoln Avenue. The plan will also need to consider and coordinate public incentive programs like Business Districts, Tax Increment Financing, and the Enterprise Zone.

In addition to preparing a Master Plan for Lincoln Avenue and as part of the overall planning efforts, engaging with outside consultants will be important to prepare a new strategy for all of the City’s commercial sectors including the Central Business District, the Madison Avenue / State Street corridor and the Route 130 corridor for example. The Central Business District Master Plan should include design elements that would expand the “feel” of the courthouse square into the larger Central Business District area as shown on page 37 and 54.

The City needs to also determine a land use and development strategy along County Road 1000N (Enterprise Parkway), the future industrial corridor north of the City. Currently, the City has adopted and enforces the Corridor District along the Route 16 Highway as a primarily commercial and light industrial corridor. The same process should be developed for the future “industrial” corridor along Enterprise Parkway. For example, with the development of Enterprise Parkway, transportation for large vehicles will have easier access to the industrial sector north of the City of Charleston which connects to Interstate 57. Updated zoning text amendments and zoning map amendments will help to develop this corridor in coordination with other industrial districts. A zoning review should be strategically planned and located where industrial development is desired. Working with Coles Together, the City of Mattoon and Coles County will be critical in this effort.

Enforce the City’s IEPA Facilities Plan Area for new developments.

Enforce the City’s approved IEPA Facilities Plan boundary as this area details where the City intends to expand its infrastructure for development located outside of the City. Currently, the Coles County Health Department will not permit new septic tank permits in instances where the City’s sanitary sewer infrastructure is within 300’ of the development. The City needs to actively protect this IEPA Facilities Plan area with the intention to serve these areas with its infrastructure and services including but not limited to: police, fire, sanitary sewer and water distribution systems (further details are located in the Infrastructure and Facilities section). The City can use this designated IEPA Facilities Plan area to offer infrastructure incentives to developers in order to encourage developments and annexations to the City. Annexations of property adjacent to the City and in the IEPA Facilities Plan area will continue to be a priority for the City as a part of the expansion of the City’s economic and community base.

Economic Development

Evaluate strategies related to High-Speed Internet Access Network (Broadband) in the City.

Explore the feasibility of a citywide network that would provide broadband point to point and wireless internet access for municipal, commercial, and residential use. Evaluate and study the idea of a City provided high speed public internet network by testing this technology in small segments of the City. The City is in the process of creating new telecommunications infrastructure in the four quadrants of the City using existing and new towers along with the City's water tower. The City should explore using this infrastructure for public broadband access if feasible. This could provide an attractive incentive to commercial and industrial development. It could also provide residential broadband and city-wide Wi-Fi coverage. Infrastructure that is deployed could also be offered / leased to providers (such as new 5G wireless providers) wishing to expand coverage within the city without paying to put up their own infrastructure.

The network rollout could use a combination of wireless and fiber backhaul to accommodate hundreds of access points and local nodes for point to point links. A version of the backhaul network needed is currently being developed using mostly wireless point to point links over both unlicensed and licensed wireless frequencies. One option for widespread access point deployment is using mesh networking to minimize cost. Mesh networking with wireless access points uses wireless channels within the access points themselves to "hop" through access points to connect the next access point. Using current technologies, wireless point to point backhaul for high bandwidth is more limited than fiber rollout. Currently fiber optic bundles can support nearly unlimited bandwidth needs, but at a higher installation and infrastructure cost²⁴.

In addition, work with private providers to encourage new high-speed broadband installation in the City. Providing high-speed network and technology will allow the City to be on the cutting edge of business and industrial recruitment efforts.

Goal 2

Promote new business growth by providing attractive business incentive packages with quality infrastructure and business support.

Recommendations

Explore, develop and implement incentive programs to encourage the development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of commercial, industrial and residential areas including but not limited to: Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts, Federal National Register of Historic Places, Business Districts, Charleston Business & Industrial Development Incentive Programs, Opportunity Zones, New Market Tax Credit Program and the Coles County Enterprise Zone.

²⁴ Mark Harris, Coles County and City of Charleston Information Systems (February 13, 2019)

Policy Area

- **Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF)**

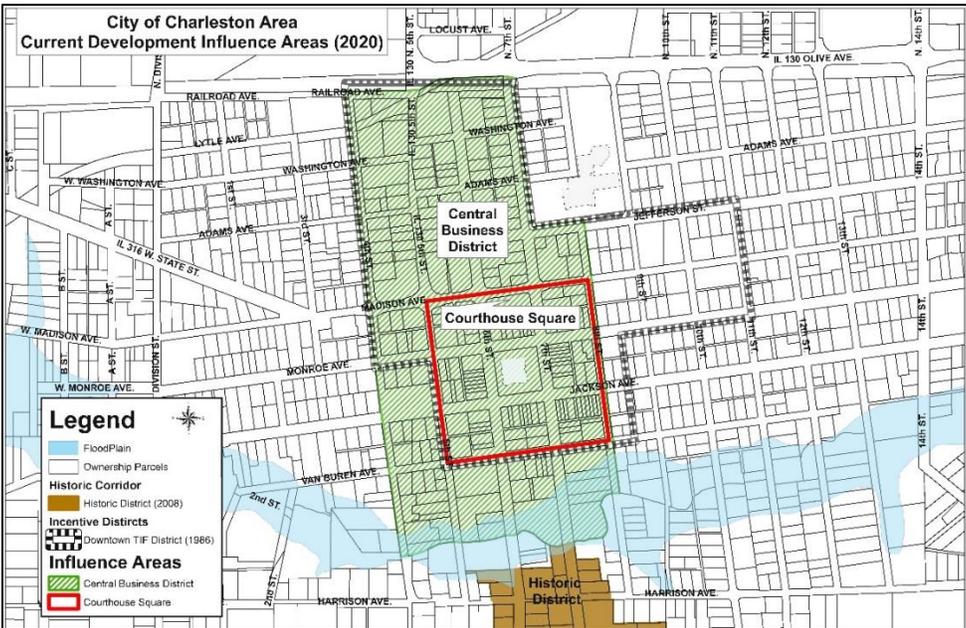
On December 20, 1986, the City established its “Downtown TIF District” which is generally bound between Van Buren Avenue, Railroad Avenue, 4th Street and 11th Street and includes the “Courthouse Square”; which are both part of the City’s larger Central Business District (see page 54 for illustration). This TIF district was set to expire in 2010, but in late 2010 the city requested and was approved for a 12 year end date extension. This extension set the new end date for TIF obligations to December 31, 2022 (35 years total). Approximately \$70,000 a year is currently budgeted for TIF projects in its “downtown” and the City will continue to implement both public and private redevelopment projects. The city should explore the implementation of additional TIF Districts in strategic locations of the City, including determining if another end date extension or if a new “Downtown TIF District” is appropriate. These financing tools can be used in various ways around the city. In addition to providing needed revenue, TIF districts can be used to help provide other incentives for developers to locate in the city.



2015 / 2016 TIF Redevelopment Project 619-623 Monroe Avenue

The City should also explore the Federal National Register of Historic Places listing for the “Courthouse Square” and surrounding blocks. The National Register designation opens up access to specific incentive programs, including State and Federal Tax Credits for owners rehabilitating income producing properties. Investigate additional incentive programs for rehabilitating historic resources in the downtown area. The “Courthouse Square” area incorporates “New Ruralism” themes, and these same design elements should be encouraged beyond the “Courthouse Square” and into and beyond the larger Central Business District boundaries (as shown below) in order expand the courthouse square “feel” into this larger area.

Figure 13: Downtown TIF District



Economic Development

- **Business Districts (BD)**

The City does not currently have a designated Business District in the City. Within a Business District, the City may levy an additional retailer's occupation tax, service occupation tax and hotel operator's occupation tax of up to 1.0% to generate revenues which can then be used to pay for a wide variety of "business district project costs"²⁵. A Business District is created to impose an additional sales tax or hotel tax in certain blighted areas of a community²⁶. Creation of a Business District should be evaluated in strategic locations of the City, especially along Lincoln Avenue as part of a future Master Plan for Lincoln Avenue.

- **Charleston Business and Industrial Development Incentive Program**

In 2017, the City Council adopted Ordinance 17-O-16 that created the Incentives for Business and Industrial Development program in the City. Resolution 17-R-46 created the language to implement the program. The program is established to encourage new job creation in the City and the development or redevelopment of new retail / non-retail business and expanding existing businesses. Originating from City Council and staff discussions in 2015, following feedback received from local and regional retail events, it became clear the City needed to consider business development incentive programs as a tool to help spur business growth in Charleston. Additionally, this business incentive program was designed to encourage existing vacant properties in Charleston to redevelop their vacant properties into new business opportunities. This will help improve the City's commercial corridors and will add to the tax base and overall growth in the City.

The program offers qualifying businesses the following possible incentives: 1.) a refund of the City's share of Sales Tax collected; 2.) a refund of the City's share of Sales Tax paid for construction materials; 3.) a pro-rated refund of the City's share of Property Tax collected for 2 years; and 4.) a pro-rated discount on building permit fees collected.

The City will administer this program and will continue to encourage redevelopment agreements within the scope of this program and continue to use this program as a part of its overall incentive program package.

- **New Market Tax Credit**

The City of Charleston has areas in the City that are considered "severely distressed" which qualifies these areas under the Federal New Market Tax Credit program. Created in 2000 as part of the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act, this program permits individuals and corporate taxpayers to receive a credit against federal income taxes for making "Qualified Equity Investments" (QEIs) in qualified community development entities. These investments are expected to result in the creation of jobs and material improvement in the lives of residents of low-income communities²⁷. See Figure 13 on the next page for the New market Tax Credit Boundary for Coles County.

²⁵ "The Basics of Business Districts" Economic Development Resources (2017)

²⁶ "Business District Establishment" Moran Economic Development (2017)

²⁷ "New Market Tax Credit" Internal Revenue Service (August 2, 2018)

Economic Development

Work with Coles Together to administer the current Coles County Enterprise Zone with City Staff support.

The first Coles County Enterprise Zone (EZ) was approved in 1990 and expired on December 31, 1999. The EZ boundaries and benefits packages were reviewed and updated in 2018 to better fit the needs of the continually expanding Industrial and Commercial Districts. To encourage industrial and commercial growth, the EZ provides the needed incentives for expansion and/or new business developments and re-development projects.

In 2018, Coles Together submitted an application for the new Coles County EZ, which revised the Enterprise Zone boundaries and benefits to better encourage industrial, manufacturing, retail, service and commercial development and redevelopment. The new Coles County EZ was approved on January 1, 2020 for 15 years; and if the program is successful, the City and Coles Together should plan to apply for an end date extension to December 31, 2035. A copy of the new EZ map (Charleston portion) is included for reference at the end of this section.

EZ BENEFITS:

- Sales Tax Exemption on Building Materials
- State Tax Credits for Investment
- State Tax Credit for Increased Employment
- Exemption in Utility and Excise Taxes for qualified projects
- Waiver of Building Permit Fees for Industrial, Manufacturing and Logistics/Distribution Center Projects
- Property Tax Abatement

Property Tax Abatements for increases in land values and improvements to real property upon which new construction, improvements, renovation or rehabilitation has been completed for the following:

1.) Industrial, Manufacturing and Logistics/Distribution Center Projects

10 year property tax abatement – 100%

Enterprises where manufacturing or assembling of good takes place; or where warehousing and distribution enterprise engaged in the storage and/or packaging of goods and/or information and the transfer or transportation of products from a point of origin to a point of consumption.

2.) Retail / Service / Commercial Projects

3 year property tax abatement – 100% (year 1) - 75% (year 2) - 50% (year 3)

Enterprises in the business of selling products or services to the general public or wholesale customers as well as restaurants, hotels/motels, assisted living and related concerns, and enterprises that are research oriented and/or provide professional services (some exclusions apply).

NOTE: If the property is in a TIF District and EZ, then abatement of property tax does not apply for the EZ.

Policy Area

Utilize the City, the Tourism Department, the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, the Charleston Historic Preservation Commission and Downtown Merchant groups to better assist downtown businesses.

In the past, the Main Street Program approach was based on four elements: Economic Restructuring, Organization, Promotion, and Design. First, *Economic Restructuring* aids in recruiting new businesses and helps current businesses become more competitive. *Organization* is the element, which calls for cooperation among government offices, merchants, banks, and residents. *Promotions* capitalize on the area's unique heritage to design graphics, festivals, or sales events that show residents what is happening downtown. Finally, *design* is the physical component concerned with providing an attractive environment through historic preservation.

While the Main Street Program is no longer a viable option, the merits of the program should add an element for aiding in business recruitment and retention; furthermore, programs should actively promote cooperation between merchants, government, and residents. The City, Downtown Merchant groups, the Chamber of Commerce and the Charleston Historic Preservation Commission should be active and positive participants in downtown redevelopment projects, including promoting the Central Business District as a tourism destination.

Encourage educational institutions to provide lifelong learning activities, in order to improve the workforce and the general quality of life and create programs to encourage citizen involvement.

While some lifelong learning activities exist in and around the community, additional learning opportunities should be explored and encouraged. In order for citizens to take advantage of these programs, they must be informed about the programs that are offered at institutions such as Charleston High School, Eastern Illinois University, and Lake Land College. These programs should be advertised through the City of Charleston website. An increased public knowledge of these programs will raise the attendance and demand for these programs.

Expand partnerships and communication links between Charleston Community Schools, Eastern Illinois University, Lake Land College, along with local leaders and businesses and industry to assist in curriculum expansion and education of a workforce tailored to Charleston business and industry.

Working together, these institutions can create programs for students to explore career opportunities both inside and outside the City. Creating this link could help generate better job placement in the City of Charleston after graduation. Support the partnership consortium [Charleston Schools *Competency Based Learning Initiative* (CBL)] that communicates the needs of the business community to the educational community. The City needs to be a partner with Coles Together, the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, Lake Land College and EIU in promoting an expansion of technical education and training for middle school and high school aged students. K-12 programs should be connected with programming at EIU and Lakeland College and continue to build on these relationships.

Economic Development



Maintain a high-quality educational system with facilities, equipment, and curriculum to provide world-class education and preparation for workforce.

Charleston is fortunate to have a quality school system, as this may have much influence on the way the community is perceived by onlookers. Young families often rank educational opportunities among their highest concerns when deciding where to relocate. It is important that constant efforts to upgrade educational resources and programs are continually supported. As was mentioned previously, a partnership consortium between the City, public and private groups, the business community and the educational institutions can help to coordinate these efforts.

Create a visitor information / commercial village near the campus.

It has been observed that, in some cases, EIU students do not always spend their money in Charleston for goods and services. One way to capitalize on this market is to create a commercial village within walking distance of the campus. It would include a visitor center with information about the campus and the City, which could also include commercial spaces such as bookstores, music stores, restaurants, fast food establishments, and nightclubs/nightlife. Student discounts could be given at these stores to attract student business.

As stated earlier, the development of a “Master Plan” for Lincoln Avenue may include the feasibility of this commercial village or other businesses near EIU’s campus.

Policy Area

Rehabilitate distressed commercial and industrial structures when economically feasible. City should consider acquisition and demolition where rehabilitation is not feasible.

Rehabilitation can help to achieve many of the City's goals, including historic preservation and neighborhood revitalization. Rehabilitation of existing commercial and industrial structures may be undertaken by the business owners or by developers if provided the necessary support and / or incentives through the City.

A good example of the possible re-use of an existing structure would be improvements to the downtown Will Rogers Theater. This theater is a local historic landmark and on the National Register of Historic Places. If improved, the theater would clearly be a tremendous economic asset to the City. If feasible, the City needs to consider using TIF funds as part of a larger redevelopment project for the theater.

In some cases, commercial and industrial buildings may be blighted and beyond re-use. The City needs to keep an inventory of these structures and address issues where possible. The City needs to explore creative ways to acquire and / or demolish structures when required and where feasible. Acquisition could be done through property owners or through the Coles County tax sale for example. Demolition might be coordinated through grant programs (i.e. IEPA, US EPA), or by using TIF funds or other revenue sources. The acquisition and demolition option may create new commercial spaces for redevelopment while addressing blighted commercial structures near neighborhoods in order to help with stabilization efforts.

Review and update the Unified Development Code (if applicable) to encourage economic development growth in harmony with the health, safety and welfare of the community.

The City's Unified Development Code was adopted in 2003 and several text amendments have been adopted over the past 15+ years. The purpose of the UDC is to: promote public health, safety, comfort and general welfare; conserve and protect property values; protect private property rights; promote orderly development and use of land and natural resources; protect the quality and quantity of prime agricultural land; facilitate safe and economical provision of streets, water, wastewater disposal, school, parks and other public requirements; and regulate the density of population, the location and use of building, structures and land for trade, industry, residence or other purposes. In the short term, the City needs to review the following UDC sections: sign regulations, non-conforming situations and landscape regulations in order to encourage economic development in balance with community benefit.

Make efforts to shrink the gender pay gap in the community.

In 2020, the City of Charleston was recognized for reducing the gender pay gap from 26.75% in 2010, to 22.33% on 2018²⁹. This gender pay gap change of -4.43% ranked Charleston #261 in the country, and #4 in the State of Illinois. While improvements have been made, through education and resources, the City needs to continue to strive to reduce this pay gap even further in the future.

²⁹ "Here's Where the Gender Pay Gap Has been Shrinking the Fastest Over the Last Decade" Mike Brown; Personal Finance, Reports (February 4, 2020)

Economic Development



EZ Map

Policy Area

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Housing

Policy Area – Housing

Policy Areas

The City of Charleston is dedicated to maintaining the existing integrity and stability of its existing housing inventory, while encouraging well-planned developments and new dwelling units, which provide a balanced and positive addition to the neighborhoods of the City of Charleston.

The participants include, but are not limited to:

- **City of Charleston**
Charleston Historic Preservation Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning
- **Coles County Regional Planning & Development Commission**
- **Eastern Illinois University**
- **Charleston Property Owners**
- **Developers, Construction Trades and Non-Profit Groups**
- **Local, State and Federal Organizations and Programs**

Goal 1

Maintain and encourage long term neighborhood stability by preserving and protecting the value and integrity of existing neighborhoods.

Recommendations

Work in partnership with the Coles County Regional Planning Commission to assist with housing rehabilitation and revitalization activities and financing.

Continuing the City's partnership with the existing Coles County Regional Planning and Development Commission (CCRP & DC) would serve to enhance the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the City. Partner with individuals, public agencies, and private organizations to address neighborhood stabilization efforts. Community support is important in the success in this endeavor. An active rehabilitation program can help provide safe and affordable housing options throughout the City's neighborhoods.

Enhance neighborhood amenities.

Neighborhoods are the basic building blocks of the community. Strong neighborhood amenities reflect pride and commitment in a community. These are also the amenities that may persuade a family to choose to live in Charleston when relocating. The amenities may include sidewalks, parks, greenways, walkability, and bicycling.



Encourage formation of neighborhood gatherings.

Charleston's neighborhoods are essential to the vitality of the city. Neighborhoods need to have access and linkages to important services and resources in order to maintain Charleston as a livable community. Neighborhood gatherings and activities would allow residents to network and communicate with each other. Neighborhood groups could organize social events, festivals, and volunteer days; and disseminate information to facilitate communication between residents and local government offices. These groups would also empower residents to directly participate in the neighborhood planning efforts.



Encourage residential structures be preserved.

Preservation and rehabilitation of existing residential structures should be encouraged as part of an overall housing strategy. This is especially important when considering structures that are of a historic nature. Through this work, Charleston's rich heritage can be preserved.

Take an active role in encouraging redevelopment of vacant and blighted properties in the City.

Abandoned buildings and/or blighted/vacant properties in the city should be encouraged for redevelopment, demolition, and/or acquisition in order to help maintain a healthy housing stock in the City. Addressing blighted and vacant housing and commercial structures near established neighborhoods can help with ongoing preservation efforts. The City should consider, where appropriate, the acquisition and demolition of blighted structures and/or vacant lots, which then could be transferred to developers and/or non-profit organizations to help facilitate new housing construction.



Maintain the University Influence Area in order to encourage new off-campus housing clusters with convenient access to University facilities.

In 2009, the City established its University Influence Area as a part of the official zoning map which was created to assist in creating off-campus housing for students near the EIU campus. The University Influence Area should help fit the needs of students for future development that is in proximity to University facilities. In order to reduce neighborhood conflicts and to create spaces close to campus, the City should review and amend, as appropriate, its current zoning regulations in order encourage new multi-family and multi-occupancy housing clusters (including apartments, fraternities, sororities and other student group quarters) near campus.

The City needs to review and update its Unified Development Code to encourage mixed-use developments and planned unit developments beyond the City's Central Business District (downtown). Promoting and allowing mixed-use developments in the University Influence Area is a logical place to expand these efforts.

Maintain the Residential Transition Area in order to encourage a diverse and growing economy while maintaining the aesthetics of the community and to protect the value and integrity of existing neighborhoods.

In 2009, the City established its Residential Transition Area as part of the official zoning map which was created to help create a transition between high-density residential and commercial developments and low-density residential uses in order to balance a growing economy with neighborhood preservation. Monitor with BZAP, real estate appraisal companies, realtors and community residents to determine effectiveness of the Residential Transition Area.

Policy Areas

Goal 2

Preserve existing housing stock by code enforcement, zoning regulations and preservation activities.

Recommendations

Evaluate and modify the City codes to reflect current housing patterns and conditions.

Housing patterns and conditions are evolving and code enforcement needs to stay current with these changing conditions. Evaluation and regular enforcement of property maintenance codes, building codes and zoning regulations can help maintain existing housing stock and provide safe housing for residents. Items to consider could include:

- Discouragement of the conversion of single-family homes with the intention of making multiple apartments.
- Implementation of consistent code enforcement and clear communication with developers.
- Improvement of student housing conditions.
- Preservation and improvement of housing units in mixed use areas including TIF districts.
- Protection of existing neighborhoods through buffer zones and containment of commercial activity.
- Maintenance of residential areas on perimeters of school grounds.
- Concentration of development in least environmentally sensitive areas.

Enforce the ICC Property Maintenance Code for existing dwelling units.

The quality of life in any community is largely reflected by the quality of its dwelling unit inventory. If residential units are poorly maintained, it is less likely to attract new residents to the City. Charleston needs to enforce its adopted ICC Property Maintenance Codes and Building Codes to ensure that the housing stock is well maintained and presents a healthy, high-quality image of Charleston's community. The City should monitor and consider a city-wide rental property inspection program if state and local laws permit and if the community supports such a program. Creating a rental inspection program may require the City to become a "Home Rule" community which should be explored further to determine if this is the best course of action for the City and its residents.



Goal 3

Encourage new housing construction in the City through creative and proactive programs.

Recommendations

Review, expand and implement a variety of programs to encourage in-fill development in the City in order to best utilize existing infrastructure and City services.

In-fill housing development projects should be encouraged throughout the City. The City needs to be proactive and review, expand and implement a variety of programs, including incentive programs, in order to encourage new single family housing construction and to encourage in-fill development of existing vacant lots in the City. In-fill development will help with neighborhood stabilization and will encourage other related private and public rehabilitation improvements.

Cooperate with Coles County agencies to enforce programs that encourage housing developments to locate near the City where they can enjoy the full complement of City services.

New housing developments outside the Charleston City limits should be located adjacent to the corporate limits and annexed so that the residents may enjoy the full range of services and resources that the City has to offer. The City and Coles County need to partner in programs that encourage housing projects to locate near public water and sanitary sewer infrastructure systems. These developments should occur inside the City's IEPA Planning Facilities boundaries in order to connect to the City's existing sanitary sewer infrastructure. The City needs to proactively encourage housing developments to annex in the City, which can be done through local incentive programs including, but not limited to, extending city infrastructure to new developments where practical as part of pre-annexation agreements.

Encourage well-planned developments with amenities such as open spaces, woodlands, trails and other green space.

When determining where to relocate, new residents often look for unique City amenities as deciding factors in the decision about where to live. Storm water retention areas and drainage courses help to prevent flooding problems and woodlands and can offer new open spaces that will contribute to the recreational opportunities of the community. Coordinating these natural green spaces with housing development can be beneficial to both the development and to entice future residents to the City.

Explore and implement programs and amenities that encourage people and families to live in Charleston.

The City needs to understand and consider programs that encourage people to choose Charleston as a place to live and work. These programs can include offering new City amenities, events, festivals, programs and employment opportunities. The city needs to be a partner with Eastern Illinois University and the business community to encourage and expand incentives that

Policy Areas

will help reduce the outmigration of students and faculty away from the City of Charleston. In addition, the City supports incentives offered by EIU that offer moving expenses for new faculty that live in Coles County. It is critical for the City and EIU to offer services, amenities, programs and incentives that will help with the recruitment and retention of students, staff and faculty of EIU. For example, the City needs to expand its outdoor recreation and trail offerings to continue to give people “more to do” in Charleston. The City also needs to annually review its single family building permit fees to determine if incentives can help spur new single family home construction in the City. The City needs to conduct regular surveys of all of its residents and businesses (and non-residents that work in Charleston) to understand how the City can encourage migration and new residents into the City.

Goal 4

Develop strategies for achieving and maintaining a balance between the types of housing needed at a given time.

Recommendations

Continually monitor the availability, conditions and status of housing in the City, along with changing market conditions in order to develop strategies for achieving and maintaining a balance between the availability and the need for Charleston’s dwelling units.

Developers, non-profit organizations, and local, state and federal governments all have a part to play in addressing housing needs in the City. The City’s **Community Housing and Revitalization Plan** (including for one- and two-family residences) is located on the following pages and it should be reviewed and updated periodically to adjust for current market conditions. The specific goals and objectives of the **Community Housing and Revitalization Plan** should be carried out by City staff and partners. The following goals of the **Community Housing and Revitalization Plan** should address all dwelling units in the City and includes:

- **Continue to monitor the impact that abandoned and blighted properties have on the community**
- **Balance code enforcement activities that include property maintenance inspections and visual blight enforcement with programs that stabilize, persevere and enhance neighborhood quality**
- **Redevelop vacant lots to encourage in-fill development by City working with partners like Habitat for Humanity and/or local developers to encourage building of new single family homes**
- **Offer programs to encourage the development of new single family homes**
- **Evaluate, inventory and maintain public infrastructure and public services in all areas of the City including primarily residential districts**

The City’s Community Housing and Revitalization Plan is detailed on pages 69-82:

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

The purpose of this Community Housing Revitalization Plan is to understand and address the City's residential conditions and to minimize negative impacts related to the City's overall housing inventory. This plan was developed from the City's Building and Development Department 5 Year Plan in conjunction with the goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Goals and Recommendations

Community Housing Revitalization Plan Goal: Continue to monitor the impact that abandoned and blighted properties have on the community

- Maintain a Foreclosure Registry
- Maintain a Residentially Zoned Vacant Lot Registry
- Maintain an Abandoned Residential Property Registry
- Maintain a City Owned Vacant/Abandoned Residential Properties Registry

Community Housing Revitalization Plan Goal: Balance code enforcement activities that include property maintenance inspections and visual blight enforcement with programs that stabilize, persevere and enhance neighborhood quality

Staff should acquire and maintain ICC Property Maintenance Code and Housing Inspector Certifications and continue to perform inspections and enforcement throughout residential neighborhoods.

City staff should continue grant writing and grant management efforts (internally and/or utilize services of Coles County Regional Planning Commission) in order to continue to acquire Federal and State grants (for example programs like: DCEO CDBG, IHDA, Rural Development) for housing revitalization and rehabilitation efforts including but not limited to:

1.) Housing rehabilitation; and

2.) Remediation of Abandoned Properties: abandoned and dilapidated properties' expenses including cutting neglected weeds or grass, trimming of trees or bushes and removal of nuisance bushes, extermination of pests or prevention of the ingress of pests, removal of garbage, debris and graffiti, boarding up, closing off, or locking windows or entrances, or otherwise making the interior of a building inaccessible to the general public, surrounding part or all of a property with a fence or wall, or otherwise making all/part of the property inaccessible to the general public, demolition of abandoned residential property, and rehabilitation to address building safety.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan Goal: Redevelop vacant lots to encourage in-fill development by City working with partners like Habitat for Humanity and/or local developers to encourage building of new single-family homes

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

The City should encourage abandoned properties to be rehabilitated or demolished where feasible and the City should consider acquiring vacant lots where practical. The City can acquire these properties directly from the property owner or from the Coles County Tax Agent as part of the annual tax auction process.

Following acquisition, the City should first work with local partners and developers to sell the property in order encourage building of new single-family homes on the existing in-fill lots. This is critical as the City's infrastructure already exists and no new utilities will typically be required. New single-family homes will also help stabilize the neighborhoods and should increase local property values.

If short term redevelopment is not a feasible option, the City should consider redeveloping the vacant lots for public use programs such as: community gardens, nature trails, or creating new pollinator habitat plots for example.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan Goal: Offer programs to encourage the development of new single-family homes

Beginning in 2016, the City began offering a local incentive program for new single-family residential home construction. This program includes no building permit fees for new single-family home construction. With the waiver of single-family home permits and streamlining the permit process, building new homes in the City should be more attractive to local developers.

This permit waiver program is reviewed each year to determine if it should continue. The City should also consider additional local incentive programs (such as incentives for single family home exterior rehabilitation) in order to help encourage the construction of new homes and to stabilize exiting housing inventory.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan Goal: Evaluate, inventory and maintain public infrastructure and public services in all areas of the City including primarily residential districts

Expand the City's Community Policing efforts in residential neighborhoods including areas with higher crime rates and abandoned and vacant properties which will allocate police officers to particular areas so that they become familiar with the residents.

Maintain a public infrastructure inventory and capital plan that includes residential areas in order to allocate resources to support residential districts. This includes applicable improvements to road networks, sidewalk systems, water and sewer systems and other infrastructure especially in the central and northern sections of the City.

Goals and objectives for this Community Housing Revitalization Plan were coordinated with related goals and recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan and are provided on pages 71-72:

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND PART 1

Housing Related Goals and Recommendations from the 2020 Comprehensive Plan

1. 2020 Comprehensive Plan Goal: Maintain and encourage long term neighborhood stability by preserving and protecting the value and integrity of existing neighborhoods.

Work in partnership with the Coles County Regional Planning Commission to assist with housing rehabilitation and revitalization activities and financing.

- Enhance neighborhood amenities
- Encourage formation of neighborhood gatherings
- Encourage residential structures to be preserved
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and blighted properties in the City
- Maintain the University Influence Area in order to encourage new off-campus housing clusters with convenient access to University facilities
- Maintain the Residential Transition Area in order to encourage a diverse and growing economy while maintaining the aesthetics of the community and to protect the value and integrity of existing neighborhoods

2. 2020 Comprehensive Plan Goal: Preserving existing housing stock by code enforcement, zoning regulations and preservation activities.

Continue to evaluate and modify City codes to reflect current housing patterns and conditions.

Enforce the ICC Property Maintenance Code for existing dwelling units.

3. 2020 Comprehensive Plan Goal: Encourage new housing construction in the City through creative and proactive programs.

Encourage in-fill development in the City in order to best utilize existing infrastructure and City services.

Encourage Coles County to enforce programs that encourage housing developments to locate near the City where they can enjoy the full complement of City services.

Encourage well-planned developments with amenities such as open spaces, woodlands, trails and other green space.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

Explore and implement programs and amenities that encourage people and families to live in Charleston.

4. 2020 Comprehensive Plan Goal: Enhance the city park system and develop additional linkages and trails between and within parks, facilities and open spaces/green spaces/recreational areas and neighborhoods.

Develop a greenway system to link parks and facilities, schools, neighborhoods and Lake Charleston.

5. 2020 Comprehensive Plan Goal: Develop strategies for achieving and maintaining a balance between the types of housing needed at a given time.

Continually monitor the availability, conditions and status of housing in the City, along with changing market conditions in order to develop strategies for achieving and maintaining a balance between the availability and the need for Charleston's dwelling units.

Housing related goals and objectives for this Community Housing Revitalization Plan were also developed from the City's Building and Development Department's 5-year strategic plan and are provided on pages 73-76:

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND PART 2

Housing Related Goals and Recommendations from the Building and Development Services 5 Year Strategic Plan

1. Enforce City Code requirements.

As reflected in the comprehensive plan “A code without enforcement is ambiguous and severely damages the perceptions of the City.” City will continue to train, learn and implement new policies as they are developed.

2. Streamline property maintenance inspections and response procedures.

Continue to make inspections, use fewer man-hours and be more thorough and use new technology to help advance inspections (software, IPADs, GIS, etc).

3. Continue with single-family owner-occupied grants.

Continue to find and apply for low-income housing grant for homeowners each year. Continue to develop neighborhood utilizing all available resources.

Since 1994, the City of Charleston’s various housing rehabilitation grant programs have allocated approximately \$4.55 million in the city and rehabilitated 148 homes.

2014: Applied for new IHDA grant in December 2011. We received funding in 2012-2013 in the amount of \$240,000 to rehabilitate eight homes. The 2011 funded IHDA grant was fully utilized and was closed out in 2014.

2015: In December 2013, the City (through Coles County Regional Planning) applied for and was awarded a construction grant of \$80,000 to rehabilitate two houses in the city. Staff will continue to apply for housing rehabilitation grants as often as possible, but IHDA has requested the City not submit IHDA SFOOR applications for a few years because so many SFOOR grants have been awarded to the City over the past several years.

After several attempts, on April 1, 2015, the City was awarded a CDAP Housing Rehabilitation grant in the amount of \$400,000 to rehabilitate nine homes in the northeast target area of the City. Work began in early 2016 and was completed in 2017.

2016: City applied for a new DCEO/CDBG housing grant in September 2016. This grant was for \$450,000 to rehabilitate 10 homes over two years. This grant application was not funded by DCEO.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

2018: For the twenty-fifth year, the City applied for and was awarded a new DCEO/CDBG housing grant in November 2018. This grant will be for \$500,000 to rehabilitate 10 homes beginning in 2020. We do anticipate the state and federal government cutting back on these programs, but will continue to apply for housing programs as often as possible. Charleston currently has a waiting list of over 50 pre-applications so there is an obvious need for this program to continue in the city.

4. Use a method called sidewalk inspections to encourage maintenance of homes and structures.

Use the existing property maintenance code to encourage painting, gutter repair and the like that can be seen from the sidewalk. This could increase the curb appeal of our neighborhoods. This can work for commercial areas also.

We have been using this method for visual blight and trash. In 2009, we began to complete more sidewalk inspections for property maintenance compliance with some success. We will continue to do more exterior inspections each year.

5. Develop guidelines and policies that will encourage preservation of existing structures in areas of new development.

This program is of particular importance in areas where structures have historic significance. HPC will be assisting in the historic areas.

6. Develop a program to acquire and/or control blighted, vacant or available properties in targeted areas.

This program would encourage redevelopment in target areas including the Central Business District. These programs are intended to address vacant and blighted properties in the city.

2014: Demolition continued in 2014 with 8 structures demolished by private owners. The City continue to condemn property considered unsafe. The process of city demolitions and filing liens must be reviewed. The City is currently in a position to lose considerable demolition liens and related costs because of delinquent tax sales and lack of foreclosures in due time.

The City acquired old demolished property at 1120 Van Buren and 2651 Douglas Drive and completed demolition of all Lake Island Tract structures.

2015: The City identified properties that could be candidates for demolition in 2015, including the former Lincoln School building. The city is reviewing the EPA Brownfield program to assist in the demolition of the former school building, anticipated to cost over

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

\$500,000. The City is working with the Illinois EPA and U.S. EPA to coordinate this effort. As environmental issues are identified, a plan of action will be developed to address them.

2016: During the 2015-17 State of Illinois budget crisis, the Illinois EPA Brownfield Program was temporarily suspended and the program's future seemed uncertain. The City worked with US EPA to ask for consideration of immediate federal action, but the request was rejected by the U.S. EPA. Future funding programs to address the former Lincoln School are uncertain at this time. In addition to this site, the City is considering demolition action of four properties and execution will be dependent on funding.

2017: In 2017 the City demolished four single family residences on the north side of Charleston and the City acquired three of these vacant properties following demolition.

2018: In 2018 the City acquired approximately .63 acres of land adjacent to the public library for the purpose of expanding its native habitat / pollinator project. This acquisition will help ensure appropriate development near public resources along 4th Street between the library and Kiwanis Park.

2019: In 2019, the City was awarded an IHDA APP grant for \$55,000 to reimburse the City for demolitions done in 2017. The grant also allows for the demolition of two additional dilapidated homes along with the exterior clean-up of an additional property. Demolition work to begin in 2020. There are several additional blighted properties that are being considered for various degrees of remediation action.

7. Eliminate City ownership of unneeded and unnecessary property.

As these properties are identified we will take steps to place them back on the tax roll by offering to private owners.

2017: The City demolished four single family residences in the City and acquired three of the properties as part of this process. The City will continue to work with local developers and agencies to try to transfer ownership of these properties for new development.

8. Charleston Trail System (Outdoor Recreation Amenities).

Beginning in 2016, the Building and Development Services Department began to take an active role in the development of the recreation trails around the City of Charleston. This work began with securing an IDOT/ITEP grant in 2016. In 2017, the department wrote a grant for the IDNR Recreation Trail Program and helped coordinate the Governor's Hometown Award process. The Department plans to continue its role with the trail system development including: grant writing and administration, plan development and implementation, acting as a community liaison, establishing partnerships, coordinating volunteer days, media activities, public hearings and dissemination of information.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

Native Habitat Restoration Projects

*EIU/EIU Earthwise
Charleston Library
Ameren
Pheasants Forever*

In 2017, the City began coordinating habitat restoration efforts in partnership with Pheasants Forever to identify suitable areas for native habitat restoration projects along the Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail and Lake Charleston levee trail head and pavilion area.

2018: The partnerships for native habitat and pollinator restoration project have grown significantly. The City started this project at the new Lake Charleston pavilion site and the Charleston Carnegie Library with much success. The program is now expanding to additional sites at Woodyard Conservation area, Lake Charleston, the library and the Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail. We have earmarked around 20 acres of public land to be used for this pollinator project which will continue into 2019 and beyond. In 2018 the City was presented with the Environmental Stewardship Award by the local chapter of Pheasants Forever which was submitted to the National Chapter for consideration.

The pollinator program will be expanded to City owned vacant lots in order to reuse the lots in the City's inventory as a community benefit/project.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

SUPPORTING BACKGROUND PART 3

City of Charleston Detailed Housing Profile

2010 US Census Data

Population: 21,838

Housing Units: 8,641

Occupied Housing Units: 7,927 (91.7%)

Vacant Housing Units: 714 (8.3%)

Owner-Occupied Housing Units: 3,443 (43.4%) (8,160 people)

Rental-Occupied Housing Units: 4,484 (56.6%) (9,630 people)

City Construction Data

New Single-Family Home Construction

The 10-year average is 5 new single-family homes constructed

2010: 7 new single-family homes constructed

2011: 3 new single-family homes constructed

2012: 6 new single-family homes constructed

2013: 10 new single-family homes constructed

2014: 9 new single-family homes constructed

2015: 4 new single-family homes constructed

Waiver of permit fees for new single-family home construction

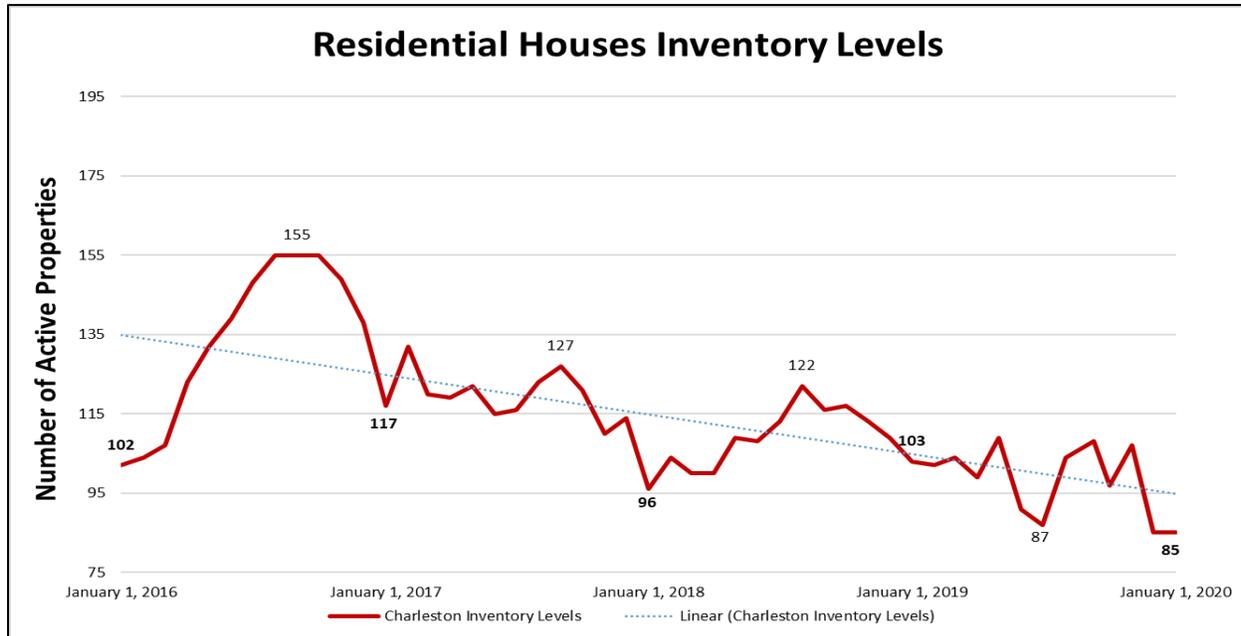
2016: 3 new single-family homes constructed

2017: 4 new single-family homes constructed

2018: 3 new single-family homes constructed

2019: 1 new single-family home constructed

Community Housing Revitalization Plan



231 Homes sold past 12 months (January 2019 – December 2019) 85 Homes in Inventory (January 1, 2020)

As detailed from Mike Staton, Managing Broker Coldwell Banker Classic Real Estate (Charleston, IL):

- **Closed Units-** Following 2018's sub-par performance, Charleston rebounded closing 231 units in 2019, a 20.3% increase YOY. This placed 2019 well above the 20-year average (212), and median (213) for closed units.
- **Avg/Med Sale Price-** Up by nearly \$1000 YOY to \$118,444, 2019 ranks as having the 3rd highest average sale price in the last 20 years. Conversely, the median sale price fell 2.4% from 2018. Settling at \$101,000, 2019 had the lowest median sale price since 2015 at \$100,000.
- **\$ per sq. ft.-** After two years in a row of declines, Charleston's average price per sq. ft. rebounded to \$62.30, a gain of 5.5% YOY. While the overall median sale price fell, the median price per sq. ft. increased drastically (9.3%), finishing the year at \$64.74.
- **Inventory-** With only 85 active units on the market on January 1st, Charleston is well below normal to start the year. Since 2016, Charleston has averaged 97.6 homes on the market with a median of 102 for January. In the last 85 months, there have only been two other times inventory has been this low, December 2019 and February of 2014 at 85 units each.
- **Pending Units-** Breaking a 10-month stretch of having more than 20 units under contract, Charleston's 16 pending units on January 1st represents a MOM decline of 5 units from December.
- **Foreclosures-** Accounting for only 5.2% of all sales in 2019, the 11 units were not only the fewest sold but also constituted the smallest percentage of overall sales, in the past five years
- **Absorption Rates-** With inventory at record lows combined with an above-average number of sales over the last 12 months, the absorption rates for the overall market are under the industry standard of a 6-month supply for a balanced market. Not only are the overall market rates indicating a seller's market in all four time periods, but so are the rates for 6 of the 13 price ranges. Additionally, two other price ranges had 3 of 4 time periods with less than a six-month supply, both only narrowly missing the mark in the projections.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

2018: Vacant Residential (R-1 and R-2) Zoned Lots = 259

2018: Abandoned Residential Properties = 34

According to the Illinois Housing Development Authority, “Abandoned Residential Property” shall mean real estate that:

A. Either:

1. Is not occupied by any mortgagor or lawful occupant as a principal residence; **or**
2. Contains an incomplete structure if the real estate is zoned for residential development, when the structure is empty or otherwise uninhabited and is in need of maintenance, repair or securing.

B. With respect to which, either:

1. Two or more of the following conditions must be shown to exist in order for a property to be eligible:

- a) construction was initiated and was discontinued prior to completion leaving a building unsuitable for occupancy, and no construction has taken place in 6 months;
- b) multiple windows on the property are boarded up, closed off or smashed through, broken off or unhinged, or multiple window panes are broken and unrepaired;
- c) doors on the property are smashed through, broken off, unhinged, or continuously unlocked;
- d) the property has been stripped of copper or other materials, or interior fixtures to the property have been removed;
- e) gas, electric or water services to the entire property have been terminated;
- f) one or more written statements of the mortgagor or the mortgagor’s personal representative or assigns, including documents of conveyance, indicate a clear intent to abandon the property;
- g) law enforcement officials have received at least one report of trespassing or vandalism or other illegal acts being committed at the property in the last 6 months;
- h) the property has been declared unfit for occupancy and ordered to remain vacant and unoccupied under an order issued by a municipality or county authority or a court of competent jurisdiction;
- i) the local police, fire or code enforcement authority has requested the owner or other interested or authorized party to secure or winterize the property due to the local authority declaring the property to be an imminent danger to the health, safety and welfare of the public;
- j) the property is open and unprotected and in reasonable danger of significant damage due to exposure to the elements, vandalism or freezing; or
- k) other evidence indicates a clear intent to abandon the property; or

2. The real estate is zoned for residential development and is a vacant lot that is in need of maintenance, repair, and securing.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

JURISDICTIONAL DATA	2016	2017	2018
Number of foreclosures	12	7	11
Number of residential vacant lots/parcels	259	260	259
Number of abandoned residential properties	40	35	34
Percentage of vacant/abandoned 1-6 unit residential properties	15.44%	13.46%	13.13%
Number of vacant and/or abandoned residential properties owned by jurisdiction	4	7	7
Amount that the jurisdiction has expended on maintaining and demolishing abandoned residential properties	\$25,830.54	\$43,470.49	\$1,830.50

Coles County Tax Deed Auction

2018: 1 Single Family Residential Home in Charleston for tax deed auction
414 N 11th Street

2018: 2 Single Family Residential Lots available for tax deed auction
332 N 7th Street
516 N 6th Street

Property Maintenance and Visual Blight

2019: 27 formal property maintenance inspections were performed

- 301 property maintenance inspections past 8 years (38 per year average)
- 54 property maintenance files remain open

Residential Demolitions

- 2 residential structures were demolished in 2019
- 60 residential demolitions in past 10 years (6 per year)
- 79 accessory structures demolished in past 10 years (8 per year)

Mowing

- Average 50 tall grass and weed letters per year for delinquent properties

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

Need

- **Increased crime and vandalism surrounding abandoned residential properties**

According to the Charleston Police Chief, in 2018, there were 22 calls for service related to 7 abandoned properties in the City. Since 2016, total calls for service for abandoned properties was 59. These calls for service included: Illegal and open burning, city ordinance violations, abandoned vehicles, illegal parking, fire, vehicle theft, theft, and suspicious person. After abandoned homes are demolished, the calls for service at these locations were decreased to zero calls.

- **Decrease/increase in home values (EAV) year over year**

In 2019, according to Robert Becker, MAI, SRA, for the last 10 years, Charleston has averaged a 1% EAV increase per year.

- **Declining property values resulting from proximity to abandoned residential properties**

Additionally, according to Robert Becker, MAI, SRA, in 2019, the need to address abandoned properties can be seen in the following examples:

1.) One residential property in Charleston sold for \$29,000 with an adjacent abandoned house. The city demolished the house and put the land up for sale. The adjacent owner purchased the land and has maintained since. The same house sold after the demolition for \$41,000. The two sales were four years apart. Considering the 1% per year appreciation, an increase up to 33% could be attributed to the adjacent abandoned house.

2.) A property sold across the street from an abandoned house. The property sold for \$33.14/GLA (Gross Living Area) the neighborhood median sale price per GLA is \$39.83, a discount of 17% for the adverse location; and

3.) A property in the same neighborhood sold for \$26.50/GLA or 50% under the median of the neighborhood.

Community Housing Revitalization Plan

Specific areas within jurisdiction most affected by foreclosures and abandoned properties

According to the HUD Community Planning Development 2014 data (US Census American Community Survey), the City of Charleston's overall Low-to-Moderate (LMI) income level is 58.78%. Because of the City's overall LMI and existing conditions, housing revitalization efforts need to be considered city-wide. City-wide demolition, mowing and related costs represent approximately 10% of the Building and Development budget.

According to the same data, the most northern section block groups of the City of Charleston have a "low to moderate" income level of 80.70% LMI (Census Tract 5, Block Group 3) and 72.65% (Census Tract 5, Block Group 4). This area of the City is also designated under the Federal "New Market Tax Credit Program" as "severely distressed;" and designated under the Federal "Opportunity Zone Program" as "qualified" which encourages long-term private capital investment in America's low-income urban and rural communities.

Most of the City's abandoned properties are currently in the most northern portion of the City and this is where a significant amount of the City's efforts is focused. Foreclosures over the past 3 years are also prevalent in the north half of the City. Nine abandoned residential structures have been demolished over the past three years in the northern portion of the City (both by the City and by the property owners). Because of the high concentration of high LMI residents, and the current conditions, these northern sections of the City are a priority for revitalization efforts.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure throughout the City is generally in good condition. However, pockets of town do show signs of age that is common with older infrastructure conditions. This includes areas of substandard sidewalks located in the central and northern sections of the City. Substandard infrastructure should be prioritized for maintenance, improvements and/or replacement where applicable, as good infrastructure is the foundation for stabilizing residential neighborhoods.

Experience managing and writing grants

As stated earlier, since 1994, the City of Charleston's various housing rehabilitation grant programs have allocated approximately \$5.05 million that rehabilitated 160 homes. This includes several programs from both the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA). The City continues to utilize the services of Coles County Regional Planning Commission to write, administer and inspect housing rehabilitation related grant programs.

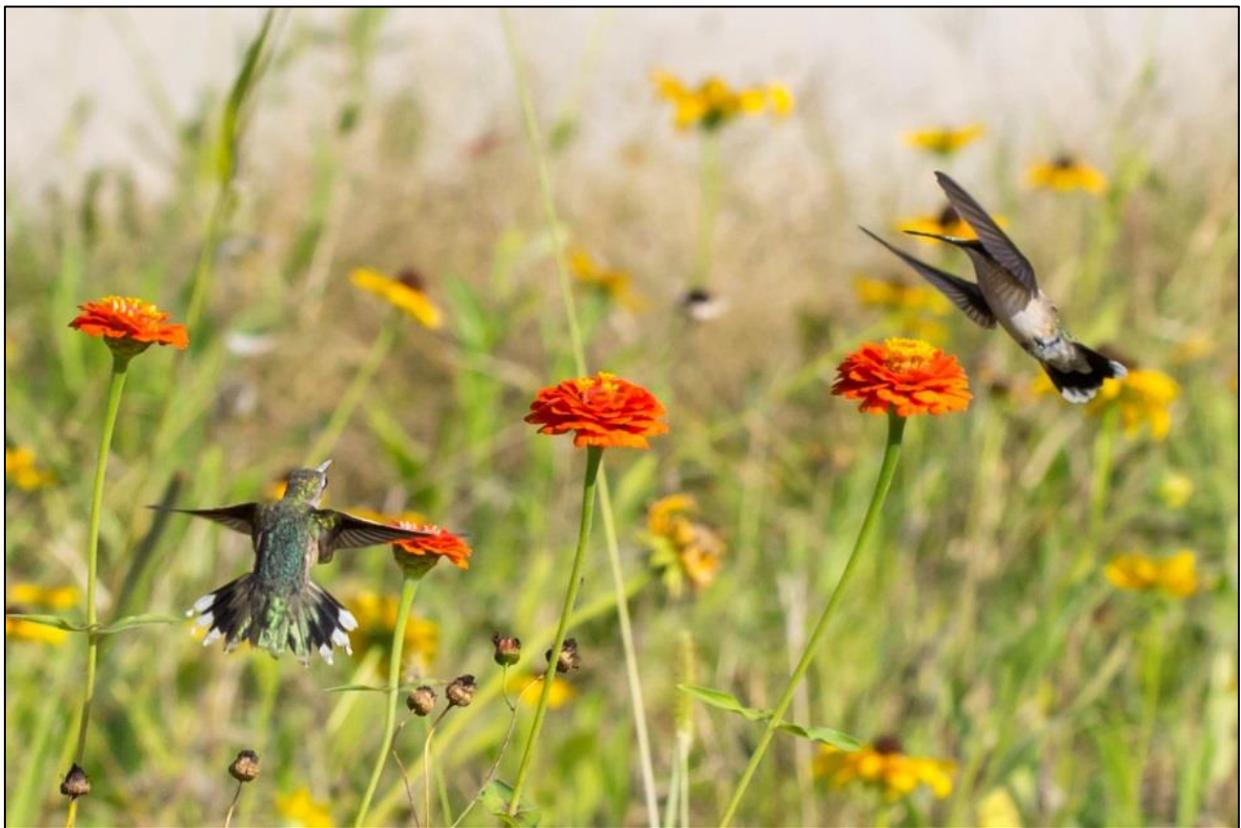
Parks, Recreation and Natural Amenities



Charleston Rotary Pool Swim Meet

Policy Area – Parks, Recreation and Natural Amenities

Policy Areas



*Lake Charleston Pavilion Butterfly “Hotspot”
Photo: Paul Switzer*

Parks, Recreation and Natural Amenities

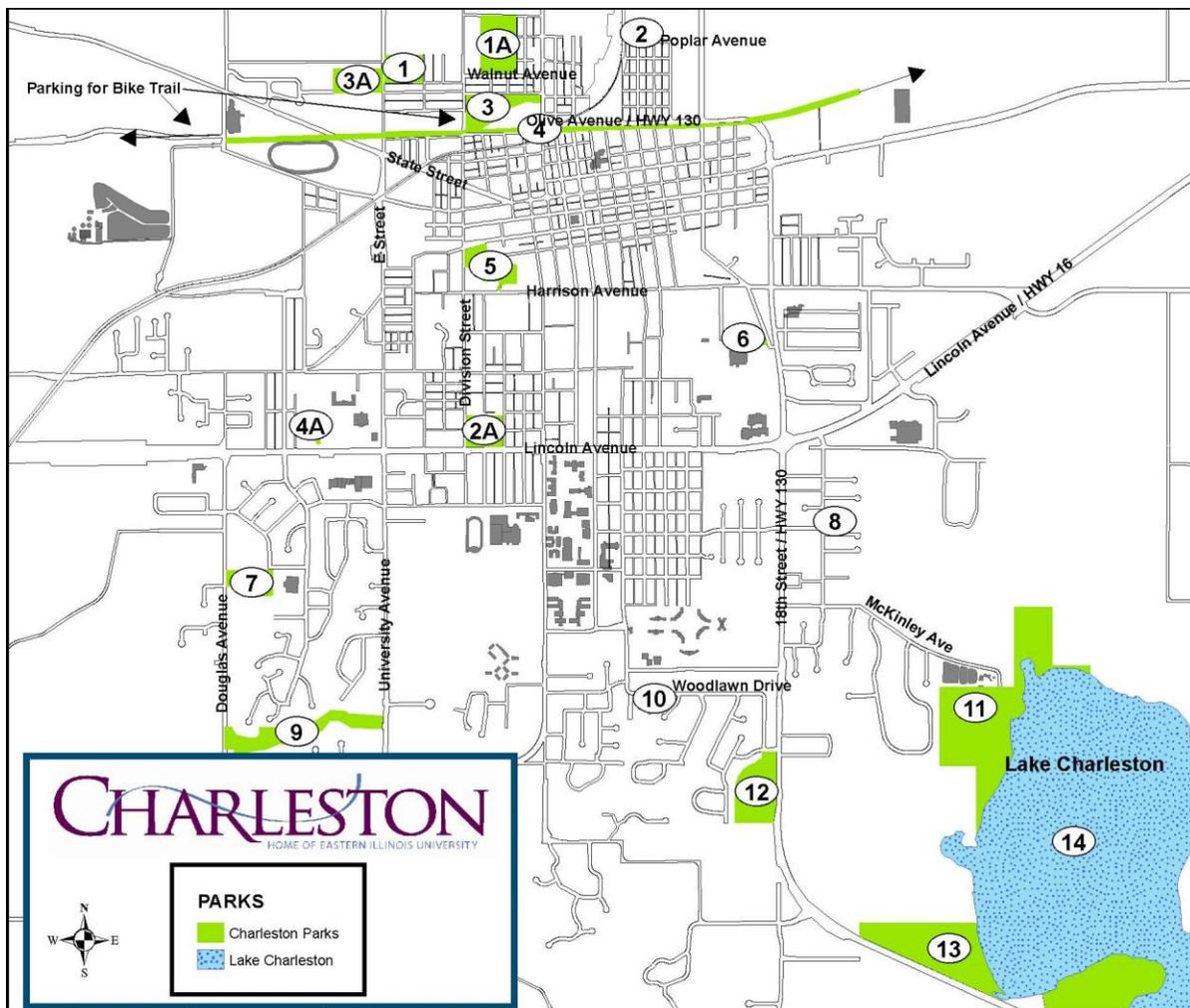
The Charleston Parks and Recreation Department is dedicated in maintaining a superior system of greenways, parks and recreational facilities through supporting planning.

The participants include, but are not limited to:

- **City of Charleston**
Charleston Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Tourism Board, Tree Commission
- **Charleston Township Park Board**
- **Charleston Property Owners**
- **Coles County Arts Council**
- **Eastern Illinois University**
- **Local, State and Federal Organizations, Programs and Foundations**

The City of Charleston has 18 parks and facilities in the City which includes 14 city owned parks and facilities and 4 township owned parks. Most of the 14 city parks have been established over the last 50 years. Figure 15 illustrates the locations of these facilities in the City and Table 6 on the next page details these facilities. These facilities represent over 800 acres of related parks and facilities in the City of Charleston.

Figure 16 and Table 6 (next page): Parks and Facilities in the City of Charleston



Policy Areas

City of Charleston Parks & Facilities	Basketball	Softball/ Baseball	Soccer	Restroom Facilities	Playground Equipment	Shelter / Pavilion	Fishing / Boating	Hiking / Bike Trail	Acres
1. Ne-Co Fields 301 N E Street		X		X	X				5
2. Woods Park N 11 th & Poplar					X	X			1
3. North Park Vine & Division <i>Batting Cages</i> <i>Skate Park</i>	X	X		X	X	X			10
4. Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail <i>Bike Trail</i>								X	12 miles
5. Kiwanis Park Division & Jackson <i>Amphitheatre</i>		X	X	X	X	X			8
6. Rotary Community Aquatic Center 18 th & 17 th St <i>Swimming Pool</i>				X					4
7. Lafferty Park S Douglas Dr <i>Interactive Sundial</i>								X	7
8. VFW Park 20 th St at VFW	X			X	X	X			1
9. Reasor Park Lover's Lane <i>Wildflower Prairie Area</i>								X	16
10. Heritage Woods 9 th & Woodlawn					X	X			.5
11. Lakeview Park East McKinley Ave <i>Mountain Bike Trails</i>								X	60
12. Sister City Park South 18 th Street <i>Inline Hockey Rink</i> <i>Sand Volleyball</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	16
13. Woodyard Area 6050 Hwy 130 <i>Hiking Trails</i> <i>Mountain Bike Trails</i> <i>Butterfly Habitat</i>				X		X		X	206
14. Lake Charleston South Hwy 130 <i>Fishing Pier / Kayaks</i> <i>Hiking Trails</i> <i>Mountain Bike Trails</i> <i>Butterfly Habitat</i>				X	X	X	X	X	440
Charleston Township Parks & Facilities									
1A. Baker Field Division & Walnut		X		X					13
2A. Morton Park Lincoln & Division <i>Volleyball / Horseshoe</i>		X		X	X	X			10
3A. JFL Complex 320 N E Street <i>3 Football Fields</i>				X					10
4A. Charleston Dog Park 653 W Lincoln Ave									1

Parks, Recreation and Natural Amenities

Goal 1

Enhance the city park system by developing additional connectivity between and within parks, facilities, open spaces/green spaces/recreational areas and neighborhoods.

Recommendations

Continue to coordinate with the Charleston Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to plan, build, operate and maintain a system of greenways, parks, recreational, natural and cultural facilities.

The Charleston Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will continue to plan the future of the recreational facilities in Charleston and to advise on projects and plans that are being undertaken. The Advisory Board needs to continue coordinating projects with the Charleston Township Park District Board in order to maintain a cohesive system in the City. These systems need to evaluate safety and comfort by considering emergency lights/phones, benches, markers, stretching stops, shelters and restrooms where appropriate.

Enhance, maintain and promote use of the Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail corridor for recreational use and events.

Charleston's rail/trail corridor (Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail) is a valuable recreational resource, which makes use of the old railroad corridor that connects Charleston with Mattoon. This trail not only provides recreational opportunities for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists, but also for cross-country skiers and equestrians. It also creates a physical link to nearby Mattoon, major employment facilities (e.g. Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center) and the Amtrak Station for non-vehicular traffic. To increase use, this trail should be improved from rock to pavement and kept maintained to attract new users and host new events. The trail should be further developed with such amenities as shelters and new trails segments and should be landscaped with native habitat and pollinators to augment existing plant species. The trail should be promoted and advertised as a recreational amenity so that new users will be attracted. A Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail Beautification Development Plan was developed and attached to this document to help create cohesive development of additional offerings along the trail.



*Charleston's
Lincoln Prairie
Grass Trail*



Reasor Park



Sister City Park



*Lafferty Nature
Study Center*

Policy Areas

Develop a greenway system to link parks and facilities, schools, neighborhoods and Lake Charleston.



*Rotary Pool
Renovations 2006*



The creation of a greenway system should be explored within the City of Charleston. The greenway can help to create connections between the numerous neighborhood parks, existing Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail, the downtown area, the Rotary Pool, the Historic District, the local schools, Lake Charleston and Eastern Illinois University. This will create a circuit around the City that would establish definite economic, transportation, social, civic, recreational, educational, and environmental benefits. Using the Town Branch Creek for portions of the greenway should be encouraged. Signage and facilities should be provided along the greenway. This can be done in stages as funding is identified. Some possible funding sources may include: *The Land and Water Conservation Fund, The Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program, The Recreational Trails Program Fund* and the *Open Space Land and Development*, as well as other state funded programs.

Develop additional bicycle and pedestrian linkages between parks and facilities with other major land uses to encourage physical activity and alternative modes of travel throughout Charleston.

Along with the greenway, other pedestrian and bicycle connections should be made within the city. Some parks do not have any connection to nearby neighborhoods and subdivisions. This creates a barrier to children who might otherwise make use of these facilities. These neighborhoods should be identified and linked to the nearby playgrounds and parks to facilitate their use. Also, businesses with nearby parks and recreation areas would benefit by being connected to these areas for the use by employees on lunch breaks and after work.

The City adopted its Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (attached) and the goals and objectives outlined in the plan should be implemented on an annual basis.



*Rotary Pool
Photo: JG/TC
Newspaper*

Parks, Recreation and Natural Amenities

Goal 2

Provide diverse opportunities to meet the needs of Charleston citizens, with the help of the community, through creative public/private partnerships and volunteers [see the 2017 Lake Charleston Trails “Governor’s Hometown Award” narrative on pages 99-110 as a case study of a successful community-based project.]

Recommendations

Maintain and improve existing park facilities.

The existing park facilities in Charleston should be maintained and creatively improved. Playground equipment should be updated and regular maintenance should be continued. The community can help with park tasks by rallying volunteer groups to help with maintenance and regular cleanup activities and consider an “adopt-a-park” program. They can also help with fund-raising activities for new equipment and other facilities.

Preserve and redefine natural amenities on campus. EIU has many features that can be coordinated with the City.

The University should be assisted in the preservation and expansion of natural amenities and historic quadrangles on campus. Connections and coordination between EIU and the community will continue to be critically important. These spaces can be incorporated into the proposed greenway system and bike plan in accordance with EIU’s *Master Plan*.

Create new public open spaces, trails, amenities and additional waterfront access around Lake Charleston.

Charleston has a great recreational resource that lies just southeast of the City: Lake Charleston. While already a scenic and aesthetically pleasing amenity, efforts should be made to create new public spaces, recreational facilities, trails, and additional waterfront access points to the lake; in addition to exploring the idea of offering camp sites at the lake. This would make it more accessible and inviting to those who enjoy the natural environment and amenities surrounding the lake area. This project will need the assistance of volunteers and coordination will be required as part of public/private joint partnerships. The 10-Year Lake Charleston Capital Improvements Plan Summary is detailed on the following pages and should be implemented as part of overall improvements. The 2014 Lake Charleston Master Plan (attached) should also be used as a general guide toward development of areas around the lake including the “Lake Island Tract”. While these plans can serve as a general model, construction impediments will require the City to construct improvements where feasible and where best served in the environment. The City is currently working with IDNR to “map” the lake which will allow the City to better manage erosion and silting concerns. Environmental management practices should also be considered before and along the river.



Downtown Murals



*North Park
Skate Park*



*Sister City Park In-
Line Hockey Rink
and Pickleball Court*

Policy Areas

10 Year Lake Charleston Capital Improvements Plan Summary

The City's 10 Year Lake Charleston Capital Improvement Project Plan includes its partnership with Charleston Area Charitable Foundation on the following projects:

1. Sister City Property Purchase – Complete
2. Cox's Cove Boardwalks – Complete
3. Sister City Trailhead – Complete
4. Levee Paving – Complete
5. Lake Island Tract (LIT) Pavilion – Complete
6. Lake Sanitary Sewer – Complete
7. LIT Upper Loop Connector Trail – Complete
8. Traffic Safety Beacons at LIT entrance – In progress. IDOT permits secured, conduit borings and beacon equipment installation is underway. Will be complete by 2019.
9. Enhancements to existing trails – Ongoing. This project included emergency responder location posts, maps, signage, markers and adding rock to problematic areas.
10. LIT Playground – Complete.
11. Lake Boat Dock – In progress. This project is on hold due to the subsequent award of the Dam A improvements (next page). Planned to be completed by summer 2020.
12. LIT Lighting – 30% complete. Design is complete, conduit is in the ground, lights have been ordered. Completed by summer 2019
13. LIT Electrical Upgrades – Complete
14. Purchase additional acres around the Lake and construct addition trails – Ongoing
15. LIT Surveillance System – 50% complete. The pavilion video system is active. Additional cameras will be installed with the LIT lighting project and Dam A reconstruction. Poles have been set and conduits installed for the microwave communication system. Ongoing project with cameras added as amenities are constructed.
16. Rip-Rap on South Side of Lake – This is a 50/50 matching grant contingent on the award of an IEPA grant. The IEPA grant has been submitted and we are waiting for an award notification. No estimated completion date.
17. Dam A Reconstruction – 5% complete. This project is in the engineering phase. Estimated completion fall of 2020.
18. Installed six signs identifying invasive species with Embarrass Volunteer Stewards



Lake Charleston Pavilion



Lake Charleston Playground

Parks, Recreation and Natural Amenities

Lake Charleston Improvements Plan

Dam A Reconstruction Concept Sketch



Policy Areas

Redevelop the former wastewater treatment plant site as native planting and pollinator habitat.

A potentially valuable environmental area is the City’s former wastewater treatment plant on the west side of town, at the south end of F Street. This site poses limitations on future development, so adding a native habitat area could be one option for the site. This site is adjacent to the Town Branch Creek and a butterfly corridor could be created here linking this site to other Butterfly Hotspots at the Charleston Carnegie Library and throughout the City. Working with homeowners along the Town Branch on beautification efforts will add to the project.

Enhance and expand parks, facilities, events and other recreational and tourism offerings in order to expand tourism as a contributor to the city’s overall economy.

Hosting recreation and outdoor related events (especially overnight events) in Charleston is one way to enhance tourism and recreation to become a larger part of the City’s economy. The City should target additional overnight events, including a new annual “Butterfly Festival” in order to help diversify and bolster its economy and to showcase the City.

Through volunteers, the City needs to be a partner in hosting new tours of its amenities (natural, historic, athletic, etc.). These efforts will draw more people to the City adding to its economic base. The City should expand volunteer efforts to involve all aspects of the community including EIU, local service groups and local organizations, and the City’s youth in order for them to become more involved with the community.



Create and link new cultural and natural experiences in the City using existing parks and facilities as a foundation; and assist in the expansion of these experiences with other groups and private property owners’ efforts.



Photos: Paul Switzer

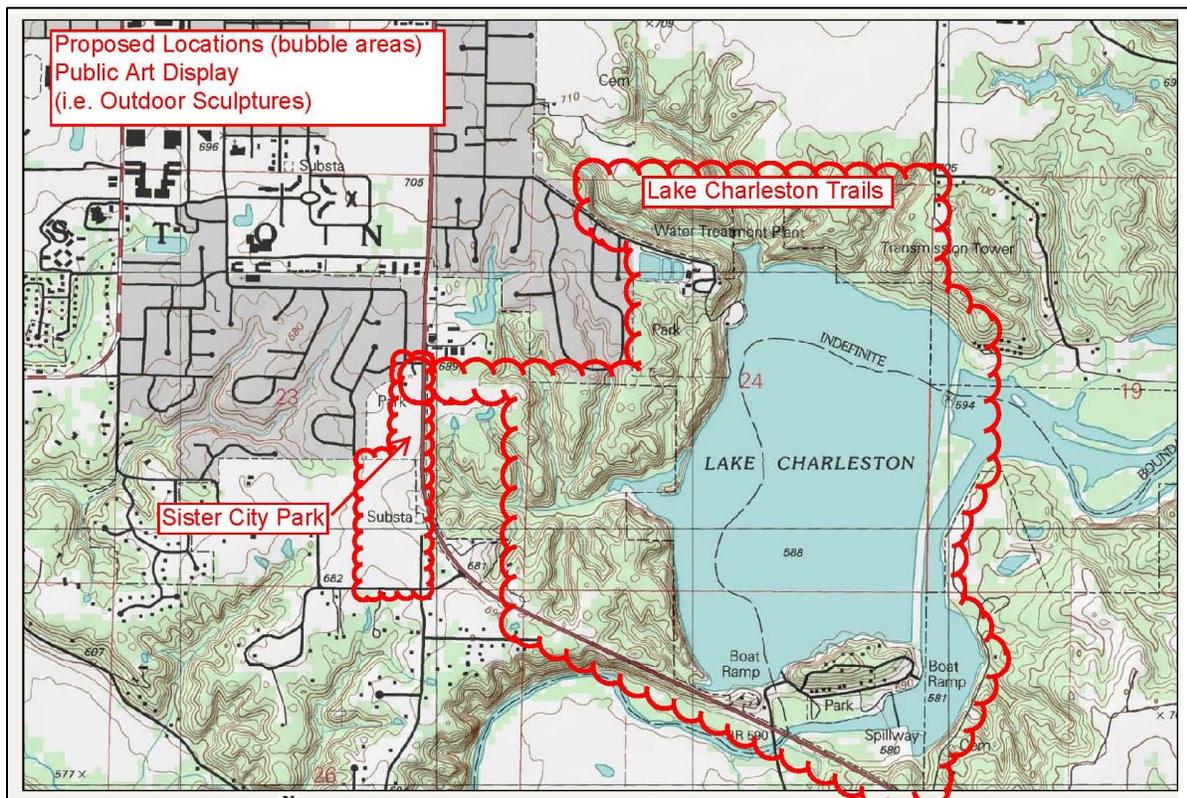
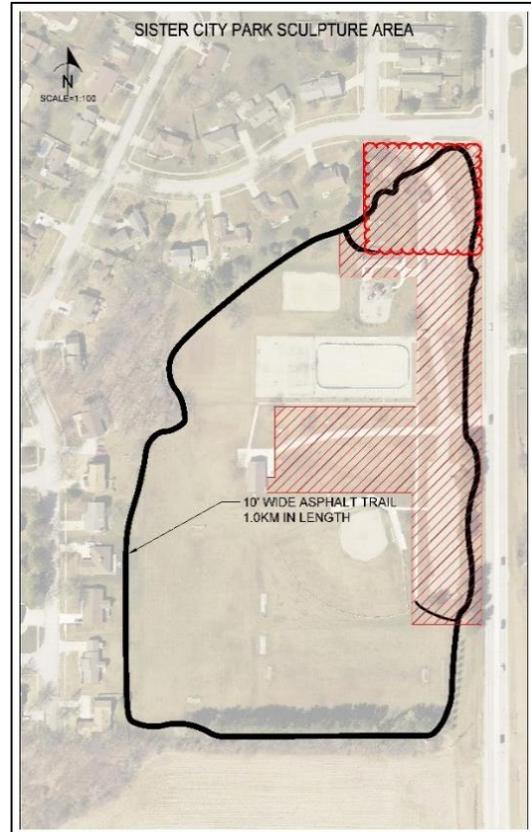
In order to enhance the natural environment and to maintain the historic natural environment, the City (and the City’s Tree Commission) should continue coordinated planting of native trees and shrubs throughout the City where practical; along with coordinating these efforts with EIU. The City and EIU are both Tree City USA partners and coordinated efforts will expand programs in the City. City groups (like the Embarrass Volunteer Stewards) should also be encouraged to continue work on the removal of invasive species in order to help local forest areas thrive as they did in the past. Native planting and invasive removal programs will be especially important around the Lake Charleston area in order to reclaim these areas as White Oak and Hickory forests.

The City should continue building and setting aside land for native habitat and pollinator projects and coordinating with groups like the Urban Butterfly Initiative (see details on pages 111-112) by creating new “Butterfly Hotspots” on public owned land as part of the “Butterfly Capital of Illinois” and by implementing the “Mayor’s Monarch Pledge” action items. The City should encourage coordination with EIU, private property owners, schools, governments and other groups to expand the program, including programs along the Town Branch Creek. Projects like these add to the natural experiences and also act as connections between the City, EIU and the community.

Parks, Recreation and Natural Amenities

The City and Eastern Illinois University should also create new links through an expansion of local arts and cultural programs including linking downtown art and theater productions (e.g. the Charleston Community Theater) with EIU's art and cultural centers. The City should work on efforts to link and expand the community's theaters, concerts, fairs, farmer's markets, events, outdoor sculpture gardens (that are sensitive to the natural environment), arts and other community programs.

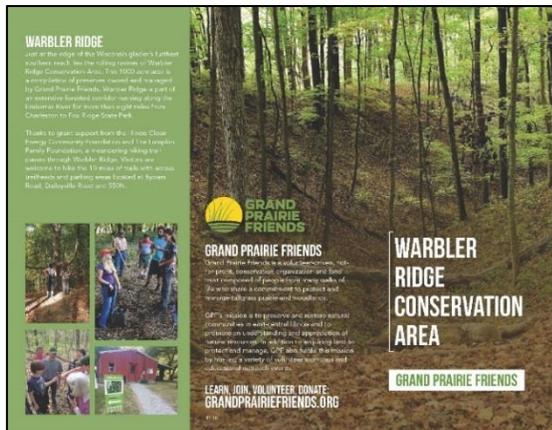
The figures shown on this page illustrate locations for a proposed outdoor sculpture walk and future sculpture competitions at Lake Charleston and Sister City Park. These competitions will allow the City to show sculptures "on-loan" from artists. Using the proposed pedestrian and bicycle path routes, these sculpture walks should be linked with the outdoor sculptures near the Tarble Arts Center and the Doudna Fine Arts Center on the EIU campus. Also, using the pedestrian and bicycle path routes, EIU's fine art culture can be linked to the City's downtown district. These paths will allow the Lake Charleston area to create a natural and cultural link with Sister City Park, EIU, the Historic District, downtown, Kiwanis Park and the Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail.



Policy Areas

Enhance local conservation areas and link these areas to existing parks and facilities.

The Woodyard Conservation Area includes over 200 acres of land located in the southern portion of the City near Lake Charleston. This area has been a part of the City for years and walking and hiking trails can be found throughout the area. The City has also converted most of the turf grass once located at the entrance into native pollinator habitat as part of the overall conservation efforts.



In addition, the Grand Prairie Friends conservation group has acquired over 1,000 acres of new conservation area south of Lake Charleston called the Warbler Ridge Conservation Area.

The City should coordinate its recreational and environmental efforts with Grand Prairie Friends in order to link these conservation areas together. Additional hiking, walking and biking trails should be planned and coordinated to link Fox Ridge State Park and Warbler Ridge with the City's existing trail system at Lake Charleston. Trail connection plans are incorporated in the City's adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

WARBLER RIDGE CONSERVATION AREA

HOURS: SUNRISE TO SUNSET

- Access sunrise to sunset only, year-round
- Pack out trash, no receptacles on-site
- Park at designated trailhead parking or responsible roadside area
- Respect property boundaries including neighboring private lands

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES:

Visitors engaged in prohibited activities will be prosecuted.

• Bikes	• Trotlines/ Bank Poles
• Guns	• Unleashed Pets
• Snowmobiles	• Hunting/ Trapping
• Motor Vehicles/ ATV	• Camping
• Horses	• Seining
• Alcohol	• Geocaching
• Fireworks	• Dumping/ Littering
• Fires	• Collecting/ Harvesting

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Restrooms and Potable Water Not Available On-Site

ENJOY YOUR STAY

Taking Only Photographs and Leaving Only Footprints

LEARN, JOIN, VOLUNTEER, DONATE:
GRANDPRAIRIEFRIENDS.ORG

Parks, Recreation and Natural Amenities

Build a Multifunctional Community Center Complex.

Residents of Charleston expressed a need for a space for people to gather. Currently, there are a limited number of places for group gatherings or community activities. This should be a space that everyone can use, but specific target groups should include youth and senior citizens. A community center would give the children of Charleston a place to go after school and on weekends. Seniors who need a space to gather locally and participate in various activities could also share the community center. It will be critical to examine and form partnerships in this endeavor with institutions, private entities, foundations, and public bodies in order to create this new space in the community. A final location for the community center will be determined as part of a community assessment process; however possible locations are shown on the “Concept Plans” on the following pages.

Create new playing fields and recreational areas in proximity to housing clusters.

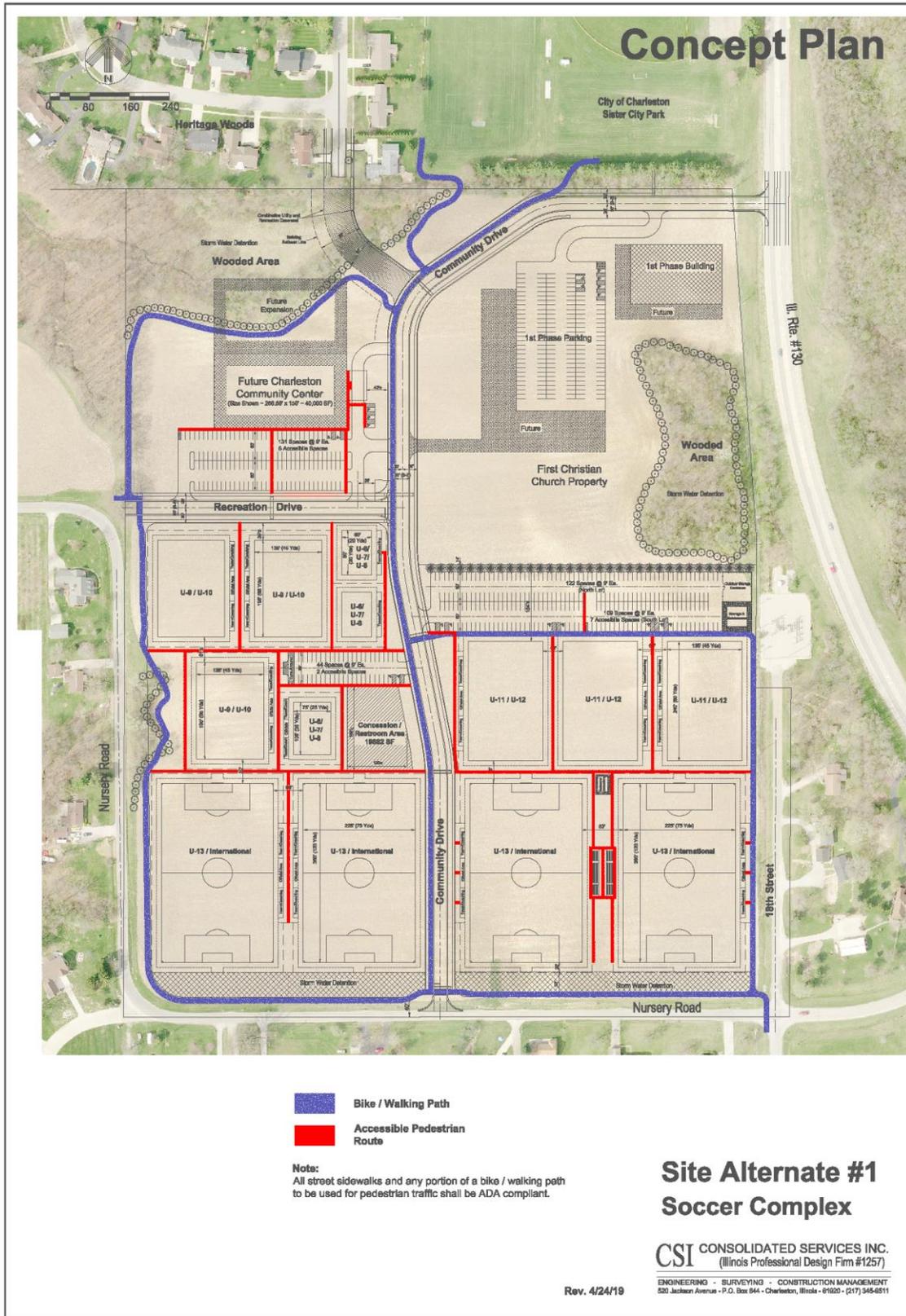
In some cases, existing playing fields and recreational areas in Charleston are located too far from housing clusters to encourage use. Additionally, as the population of Charleston continues to increase, the need for recreational areas increases as well. As stated earlier, recreation and tourism also offer the community additional economic development possibilities. Hosting additional overnight and multi-day events must be a focus in this effort.

New outdoor athletic fields should be created as part of the City’s purchase of additional land south of Sister City Park. In order to host additional multi-day tournaments, these fields need to be available both day and night by providing field lighting for evening/night time events. The City has created “Concept Plans” for these outdoor athletic fields and the plans provided in this section. It is important to note, other visions may be implemented, but these plans show how the site could be used in the future.

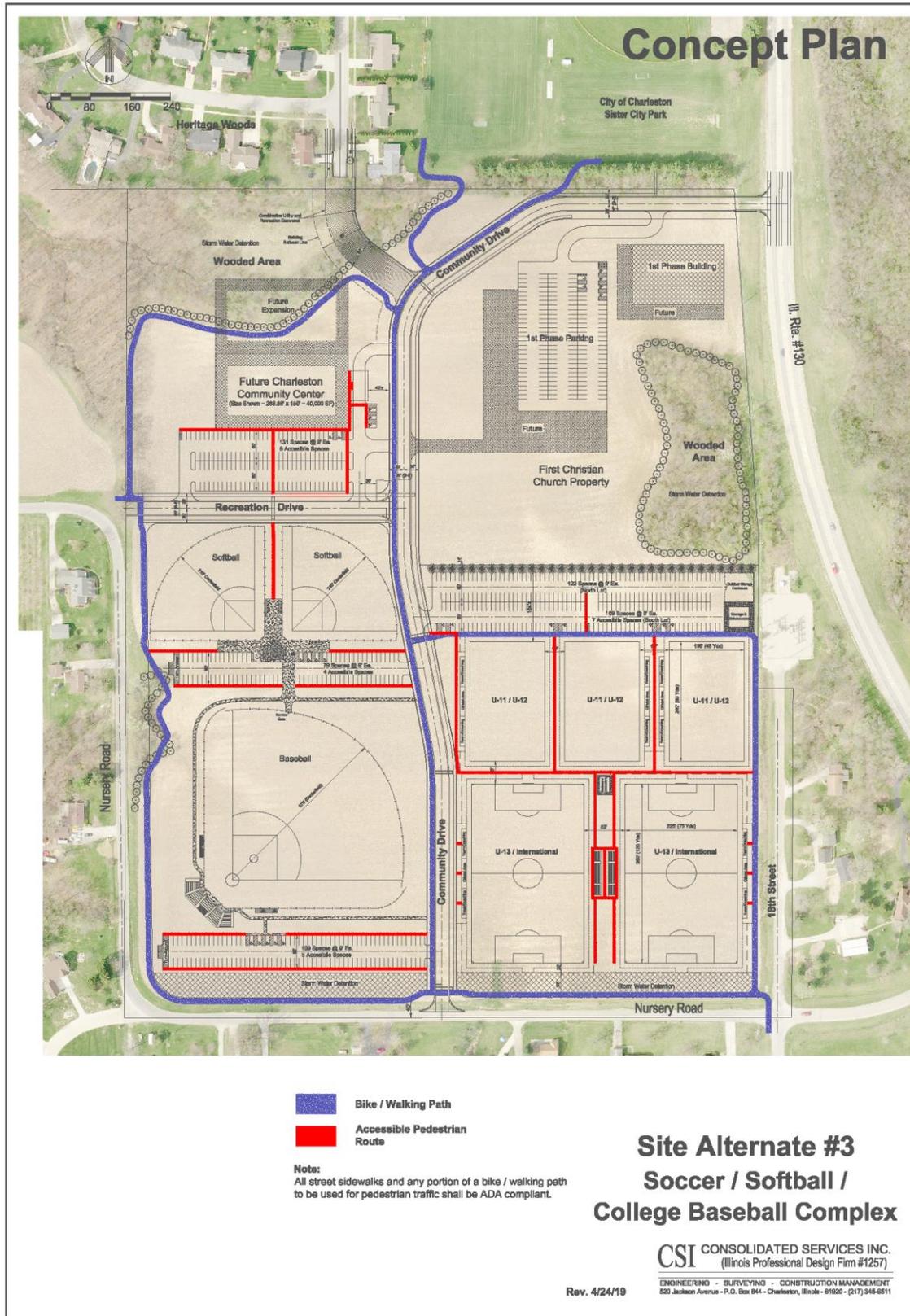


Sister City Park Soccer Tournament

Policy Areas



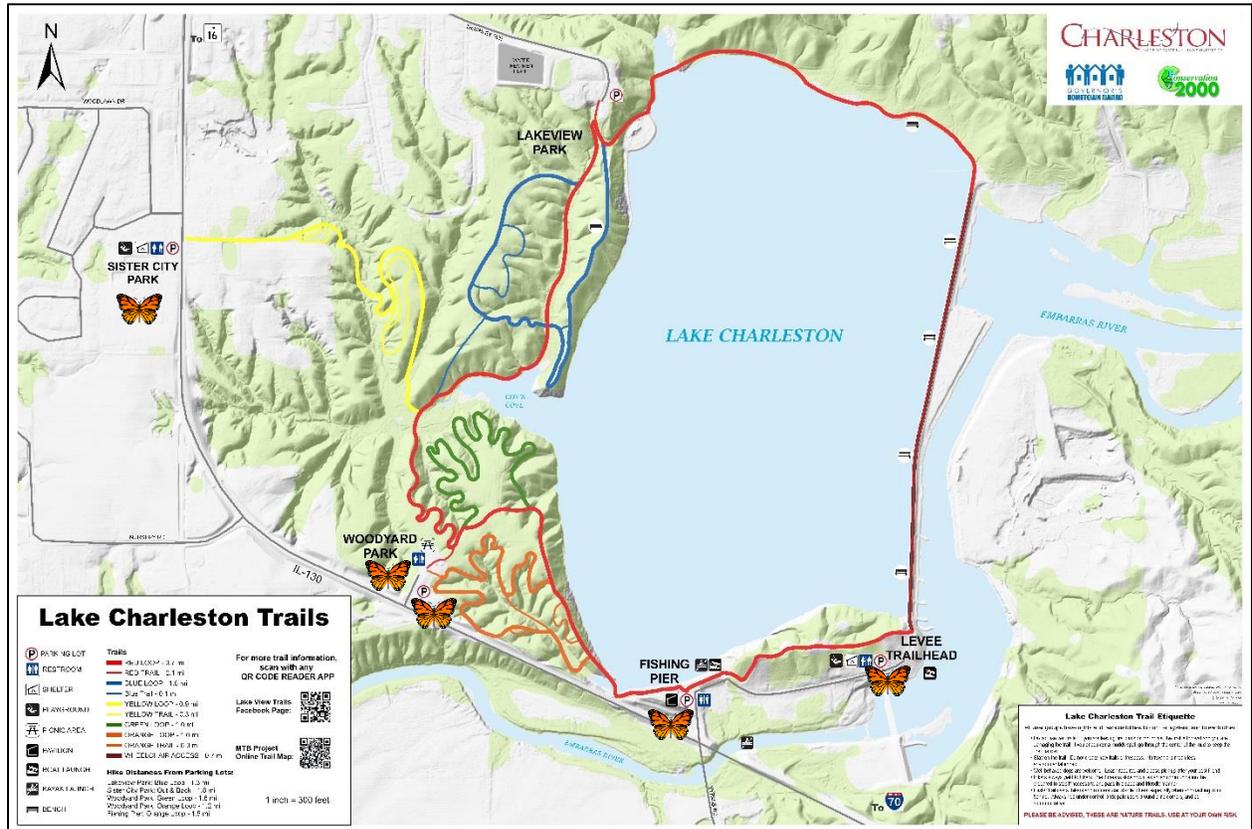
Policy Areas



2017 Governor's Hometown Award

Lake Charleston Trail System

Project Winner 2017 Governor's Hometown Award (Environmental Stewardship)



Excerpts from the narrative on pages 99-110 were submitted for the 2017 Governor's Hometown Award application as is provided as an example of a successful community-based project:

The 2017 Governor's Hometown Award formally recognized the generous outpouring of local commitment, community support and the volunteer efforts made toward the development of the Lake Charleston Trail System Improvement Project. Charleston's overall trail system includes: 1. Lake Charleston Trail System; 2. Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail; 3. Urban bike lanes in the City; and 4. Future connection with the Grand Prairie Friends Trail System. This award highlighted the improvement efforts specifically for the Lake Charleston Trail System during the three years from 2014 - 2016. With this award, the City was able to recognize those who have contributed to Charleston's quality of life through a project that has strong volunteer support, met a need, and made a definitive impact on the community.



2017 Governor's Hometown Award



In late 2013, a group of local bicycle advocates met to brainstorm ideas on how best to improve the Lake Charleston trail system. In early 2014, the trail system consisted of approximately two miles of single-track trails around the Lake Charleston area. With the support of the City of Charleston, volunteers and private partnerships, in 2014 a team of volunteers and public works personnel began the painstaking work of improving existing trails and hand building additional single-track trails around Lake Charleston. This trail work was done with close counsel of the International Mountain Bicycling Association. These trails were hand built with every effort to maximize sustainability and minimize impact.



From 2014 – 2016, the Lake Charleston Trail system accomplishments included the improvement of two miles of existing trails and adding an additional 7 miles of new trails; for a total of nine miles of quality trails around Lake Charleston.



Staff and volunteers understood the importance of sustainable trail building and wherever possible, incorporated specific methods (as outlined by the International Mountain Bicycling Association) in trail building and design in order to ensure that sensible trail building techniques were used. This included appropriate design standards by adding cross slopes and grade reversals in the trails in order to shed water and limit longitudinal grades to eliminate erosion thus reducing future maintenance. In addition, a large portion of the trails are single track trails that were hand built in order to protect nature and to be sensitive to the environment.



The City plans on adding more trails to its existing network, so the construction of new trails is a continual project. The accomplishment of creating nine miles of quality hiking, biking and walking trails is just the start to developing trails that we hope will become a regional draw to East Central Illinois.

Environmental Stewardship



Photos: Volunteer Work at Lake Charleston Trails

The City believes the Lake Charleston Trail project is a good example of environmental stewardship. A large portion of the nine-mile trail system was hand constructed as a single-track nature trail through an expansive ecosystem of woodlands and lake surroundings. Lake Charleston is a gem in East Central Illinois that has amazing elevation changes including high ridges and deep ravines. Prior to construction of the trail improvements, volunteers and City Staff worked with the International Mountain Bicycling Association, Trek Bicycles, the United States Forest Service and Trails for Illinois, to become educated in state-of-the-art sustainable trail design that was implemented in the construction of the single-track trails. The Lake Charleston Trails are public lands that are situated within a unique topological feature in Illinois and owned by the City of Charleston. The area possesses tremendous inherent natural beauty.

2017 Governor's Hometown Award

In 2016, in conjunction with the trail project and with guidance from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources through the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission, the City of Charleston began a native plant restoration project along portions of the Lake Charleston trails. Plots of invasive plants and woody growth have been removed from the Lake Island Tract hillside and along certain river edges in order to replace those areas with native plantings and flowers. These native species will be spotlighted as part of the City's environmental stewardship efforts along the trail system. These projects are ongoing.

In regards to environmental education, Eastern Illinois University uses the Lake Charleston trail system as a home base to its Earth Day community educational event. In addition to this event the Lake Charleston Trail System is home to ongoing student research projects and education studies including but not limited to Geographic Information Studies and biological sciences. Bird watching and butterfly observation groups continue to use the Lake area and its trails to give walks and talks. We believe additional educational groups, training, and trail access will expose more people to the incredible Lake Charleston asset.

Volunteer Efforts

Volunteer efforts that developed the Charleston Trail System are beyond measure. Examples of volunteer groups include: Eastern Illinois University, the local Fraternal Order of Police, Boy Scouts, EIU Fraternities and Sororities, EIU R.O.T.C., church groups, private partnerships including "Bike n' Hike", and our local bicycling community. Examples of local commitment and community support is evident from the backing from the City of Charleston, the Charleston Area Charitable Foundation and the Lumpkin Family Foundation. During the overall trail development process, we received letters of support from: Eastern Illinois University, Coles County Council on Aging, Charleston School District, Charleston Historic Preservation Commission, Charleston Township Park Board, Lake Land College, Charleston Parks and Recreation Board, Charleston Junior Football League, Charleston Baseball Association, Mattoon YMCA (with "Girls on the Run") and the Coles County Board.

Woodyard Butterfly "Hotspot"



Project Planning

The ongoing development of the Charleston Trail System is consistent with local planning efforts and Comprehensive Plan documents. Following the adoption of the Coles County Recreation Plan, Charleston's planning efforts continued in 1996 with the development of the "Charleston Tomorrow Strategic Plan" which was a product of local input and investment. In 1996, the Charleston Tomorrow Plan goals were to "encourage use of bike trails" and "develop walk / run/ bike tours" throughout the City. In 1999 (and in its update of 2009), the Charleston Comprehensive Plan was developed which specifically included the development of pedestrian and bicycle paths incorporated as part of the plan's Capital Improvement Plan. The Charleston Comprehensive Plan also stated its goals were to develop pedestrian linkages between parks and other major land uses to encourage physical activity and alternative modes of travel throughout Charleston. Trail plans were incorporated into the planning process in order to capture the work of the Charleston Trail System and the trail system will be integrated into the Capital Improvements Plan moving forward.

2017 Governor's Hometown Award

The need for a project like this was larger than the traditional comprehensive planning process. The City has faced many challenges and its residents understood the need for community-based projects to rally around. As part of that community conversation, the City needed to address many important policy questions it faces including:

- 1.) Strengthening its strategic partnerships for community benefit by offering a variety of amenities in the City making Charleston a more attractive place to do business and live; and
- 2.) Expanding the City's economic development base through additional tourism efforts and offering new cultural, natural, historical and recreational elements; and
- 3.) Expanding the City's partnerships with Eastern Illinois University in recruitment and retention of students and faculty which will have a positive impact on our local economy, the region and the State. Many organizations and volunteers heard the call and residents worked together to develop the city's bike trail system for the purpose of community benefit, economic development and to market as a recruitment and retention tool for Eastern Illinois University.

The "need" that supported the Lake Charleston Trail System Improvement Project was simple:

NEED: Offer more amenities in Charleston in order to foster community benefit and to offer a variety of outdoor recreation activities.

The Lake Charleston Trail System is a key amenity offered in the City of Charleston. The Lake Charleston trails were underutilized and barely maintained. It was evident that the trails were unknown and rarely used by the community. Local advocates identified the need of an improved trail system around Lake Charleston in order to foster community benefit and to promote outdoor recreation activities.

Adding new trails to the City's trail system also meets long term community needs as identified in its planning documents and policies. As noted earlier, the Charleston Tomorrow Plan stated as its goals to "encourage use of bike trails" throughout the City. The Charleston Comprehensive Plan specifically included the development of pedestrian and bicycle paths which were incorporated as part of the plan's Capital Improvement Plan.

To begin addressing this need, local advocates, volunteers, city staff and community organizations came together to partner together toward the goal: *Improve the Lake Charleston Trail System.*

GOAL: Improve the Lake Charleston Trail System

To meet the need of improving and expanding amenities in the City, residents got to work to reconstruct and improve two miles of existing trails near Lake Charleston to create quality trails for a growing mountain biking community. However, to remain consistent with the city's comprehensive plan and public feedback, it was quickly realized new users of the trail should include hikers, walkers and users of all ages and abilities. It was determined that additional trails were needed around Lake Charleston. With this project, a total of nine miles of trails around Lake Charleston were improved for community benefit.

In summary, the goals of the current trail system development project were refined as the project progressed as follows:

2017 Governor's Hometown Award

- 1.) Reconstruct two miles of existing trails at Lake Charleston for the purpose of reviving these trails for a growing mountain biking population.
- 2.) Build seven miles of new trails at Lake Charleston to serve more users, including trail elements that will serve the older and younger population including those with accessibility needs.
- 3.) Develop a community project that offers a variety of amenities which will bring community pride to its residents.



Lake Charleston Levee Trail

Step 1 - Goal: Improve the Lake Charleston Trail System by developing nine miles of quality trails at Lake Charleston.

Step 2 - Time: Complete nine miles of improvements at Lake Charleston in two years.

Step 3 - Document: Development of trails is part of and was incorporated into the City's Comprehensive Plan documents.

Step 4 - Price: The City of Charleston committed its personnel and equipment to the project and charitable organizations helped with the financing. Improvement work was completed using City staff and volunteers.

Step 5 - Think about goal every day: Since 2013, the Charleston Trail System Improvement project has been received by the community positively. The City has held several public hearings regarding trail development and the City Council has supported various resolutions over many trail projects. The trail project has given the community a sense of pride and has been described as "the best thing to happen in Charleston" for years.

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS



The goals of the original nine-mile trail improvement project were met and the trail system improvement project is on-going.

Trail use has increased from dozens of users per week to hundreds of users on the weekends. We have evidence that users of the trails have come from at least 30 states and that the trails have become a tourist draw for Charleston and East Central Illinois.

- Two miles of existing trails were reconstructed at Lake Charleston and used by a growing mountain biking population. The mountain biking community holds weekly rides at the Lake Charleston trails and bicyclists can be found on the trail daily.
- Seven miles of new trails at Lake Charleston were constructed and sections were built to serve all users. This includes trail elements that will serve both older and younger populations including those with accessibility needs. This includes building two paved portions of the trails that is accessible for people with mobility limitations and those that use the trails for medical rehabilitation and therapy.
- A community project was put in motion that offers a variety of amenities and offers a sense of community pride to its residents. This is evident through the extensive social media campaign that has been a part of this project from the start. Users are able to share comments, pictures and reactions to the trails through a dedicated Facebook page which is used heavily by the community.



Lake Charleston Trails

2017 Governor's Hometown Award

February 2014 through September 2016	Lake Charleston Trail Improvements (Includes 3 years of On-Going Trail Building)
February 2014	Charleston Officials meet with local advocacy groups to discuss trail building at Lake Charleston
February – April 2014	Training on sustainable trail building
March 30, 2014	Began Trail Building
April 2, 2014	Lakeview volunteer trail building day
April 19, 2014	Volunteer trail building day
April 26, 2014	EIU Panther Service Day volunteer lake day
June 23, 2014	Began rerouting existing trails
June 24, 2014	Volunteer erosion control day
August 22-23, 2014	EIU Jumpstart volunteer lake day
November 22, 2014	Bike and Hike hosts BBQ for trail builders
April 25, 2015	EIU Panther Service Day volunteer lake day
May 2, 2015	Formal Opening of Lake Charleston Trails
July 2015 – August 2015	Began public relations campaign including filming of WEIU documentary and speaking at University of Illinois Extension on the trails.
August 22, 2015	EIU JumpStart volunteer lake day
April 9, 2016	Fraternal Order of Police volunteer lake day
April 23, 2016	EIU Panther Service Day volunteer lake day
August 20, 2016	EIU JumpStart volunteer lake day
September 2016	Lake Charleston 9 miles of trail improvements substantially complete

RESOURCES

The efforts of the volunteers were critical to the success of this project. Without the support of volunteers, this project would not have been done. The volunteer efforts clearly began with the vision of local advocates and the City's Public Works Department. Volunteers understood the need for improvements to the Lake Charleston Trail System and began discussions with City Staff in order to make those improvements a reality. The team mobilized a grassroots effort recruiting additional volunteers and the team began the hard work of trail building and trail improvements.

The City of Charleston partnered with local volunteers to complete the following tasks:

- **Improve Existing Trails and Build New Trails**

Using hand tools, shovels and their backs, City workers and volunteers improved the existing trails and cut miles of new trails around Lake Charleston.

- **Community Support**

The community has supported this project in various ways this support continues. Volunteers have attended several City Council meetings and public hearings to show their support for the Charleston Trail System improvements. Community BBQs were held at Lake Charleston and advocates made themselves available for newspaper and TV appearances. Supporters worked with the local WEIU TV in a feature role in a documentary called "Our Town Charleston". Volunteers provided professional quality videos and photos that were available at no charge to the members of the media and community. The community took efforts to promote its own

2017 Governor's Hometown Award

financial well-being by holding fund raising efforts for tools used in the project. Similarly advocates took it upon themselves to provide trail tours to the "Lifelong Learning" senior group. Community members continue to be vocal advocates for the project by reaching out to local leaders to show they are eager for more projects.

- **Marketing and Outreach**

In April 2013, volunteers established a Facebook Page for the trails around Lake Charleston. The social media platform became a way to share pictures, comments, and a call for volunteers as the trail improvement project was underway. Trail openings coincided with local business events, where maps were distributed and discussed, thus capturing a large amount of interest to the trail system. There are many examples of marketing and outreach related to this project. Supporters have promoted the hometown trail building efforts at Illinois Park Conferences, the University of Illinois and the RIDE Illinois Annual Meeting, which are attended by trail builders from other states. Groups have traveled to neighboring cities to present and promote the Lake Charleston Trails and distribute maps. Advocates have partnered with TREK Bicycles Inc. who have designated a local advocate. TREK Advocates lead women's mountain bike clinic and bike rides at Lake Charleston and has helped secure trail related financing in order to broaden the marketing outreach efforts. Social media efforts were coordinated across multiple platforms including Facebook, MTB project.com, Instagram and Snapchat and hashtags dedicated to the project were established. Several professional level photography sessions took place at the Lake Charleston Trails to illustrate the trail structure. A trail advocate was appointed by the Mayor to the Tourism Board and is also on the Charleston Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. Partnerships have been established with Trails for Illinois, AmeriCorps Corporation for National and Community Service and Grand Prairie Friends which has resulted in exposure to other organizations that would have been impossible to obtain otherwise. Finally, in 2018 the City presented information in the trails and the project at the Illinois Parks and Recreation Conference and the RIDE Illinois annual conference, both in Chicago.

- **Maintain Trails**

Now that nine miles of trails are complete, City staff and volunteers continue the work to maintain the trail system. This includes cutting away fallen trees, repairing trail damage and other maintenance work as needed. Local organizations like the Fraternal Order of Police, local churches, Boy and Girl Scouts and EIU coordinate volunteer tree planting, maintenance and trash pick-up days around the lake which has been crucial to the continued positive feedback for the trails.

The majority of the original core of volunteers came from the local bicycle community, local residents, and Eastern Illinois University. One outcome was that many volunteer groups found us and offered their assistance, making this project a true community effort.

The existing trails began with a small volunteer base that were highly motivated and receptive to working with the City on future development plans. Simultaneously our local bicycle community embraced the need for new trails and the community galvanized around the project providing significant volunteer hours. Local advocates reached out to various EIU programs and groups thus further bolstering the numbers. The EIU Civic Engagement and Volunteerism saw the efforts of the project and became a leader in providing EIU student volunteers to join the effort.

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Project Commitments

As excitement and community energy grew with the trail project, the City partnered with a local community foundation and local organizations for the continued development of the trails. Today, this partnership continues. To date, the City of Charleston and the Charleston Area Charitable Foundation has made financial commitments to a number of capital projects which is critical to the ongoing support toward this project.

First, the community got involved as volunteers helped trail build and improve the existing trails. Volunteers came out on weekends, weekdays and nights working to improve the trail system. EIU students came out in big numbers for trail building, trail maintenance and other trail related work. In addition, the local Fraternal Order of Police have held coordinated Lake Charleston maintenance and trash pick-ups days along the trails as well.

Second, community members attended City Council meetings and showed their support of the City's efforts to improve the trail network. The local support continues with social media postings, and community outreach to continue the work that was started.

Lastly, the Charleston Area Charitable Foundation gave financial support to developing new trails, new trail heads, and trail improvements throughout the Lake Charleston trail system.

The Charleston City Council has also showed tremendous support for this project. The Charleston City Council has approved Resolutions of Support for both this project specifically and for the overall Charleston Trail System work in general. Public Hearings were held prior to the Council's consideration of these Resolutions and the City Council heard an outpouring of support for related trail projects. A Letter of Support and Resolution 17-R-55 for the Governor's Hometown Award is showed unanimous City Council support for this project.

Charleston used its personnel, labor and equipment toward the development of these trails in partnership with local volunteers. In addition to using its own forced account labor and equipment, Charleston's Public Works Department staff, Building and Development (Planning) Department staff and the Parks and Recreation staff have been directly involved with the development of these trails. In order to maintain the trails, Charleston has created a full-time position dedicated to the Lake Charleston trails and whose responsibility is the general maintenance of the Lake Charleston trail system.

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RESULTS AND IMPACT

Beneficiaries of this project



Sister City Trailhead

Prior to the work done on the trail system, the Lake Charleston Trails saw a handful of users throughout the week. Now, we estimate the trails are used by hundreds of people every weekend and these estimates will be documented with trail counters as they are installed. In addition to local users, we have documented visitors of the trails from 30 different states and 2 countries.

This project is proving itself to be a local and regional draw for residents in East Central Illinois and beyond. The community, including Eastern Illinois University will directly benefit from this project as EIU can use this amenity as a recruiting tool for incoming students and faculty.



Lake Charleston Red Barn

1. Eastern Illinois University Users

One of the greatest results of the Charleston Trail System is offering new amenities to EIU students and faculty. As more EIU students enjoy the trails, new friendships and contacts are made between the town's full time residents and the EIU community, which is critical to healthy "town / gown" relationships. In addition to regular use, EIU has taken advantage of the Lake Charleston Trails in many ways as follows for example:



Lake Charleston

- **Eastern Illinois University's annual Take the Lake Event.** Beginning in 2015, EIU has hosted the Take the Lake event at Lake Charleston for the EIU student body. The purpose of the event is to help EIU students become aware of and enjoy the City's amenities. In 2015 over 100 students participated and in 2016, over 200 students came to the event. The Take the Lake event is a partnership for various departments on the campus of EIU and the City of Charleston. EIU expects the event to draw even more students as Take the Lake continues today.

- **Army ROTC Training**

- **EIU Athletics Training**

- **EIU Earth Science Fest (April 22, 2017).** Students and faculty from EIU, Lake Land College and Charleston Schools provided family friendly science activities and demonstrations. Activities included nature walks, chemistry, physics, anthropology, astronomy and many other science activities (excerpted from *Journal Gazette – Times Courier* article from April 20, 2017).



2017 Governor's Hometown Award

2. Community Cohesion

Offering an amenity that creates community cohesion had been another positive result of the Lake Charleston Trail system. The trail has hosted several local weddings and receptions, and allows the users to come together as a community. The trail system allows people to meet new neighbors along the trail where conversations are common place. The trail offers recreation activities for all ages, and from all places.

3. Sculpture Garden

In 2017, the City was approached to start a sculpture garden at Sister City Park. Sister City Park is a trail head to the Lake Charleston Trail system and is located in a high traffic area. Three outdoor sculptures were donated to the City and a fourth sculpture was given to the City "on-loan" and were all installed at Sister City Park. Additional sculptures and related activities are planned including a future sculpture walk and competition that will offer new cultural amenities that the City was lacking.



Sister City Sculpture Garden

4. Momentum to Build Additional Trails. The partnerships and coordination created by the Lake Charleston Trail project led to hopes for additional trails in the area. A specific example is the creation of several miles of new single track trail south of Lake Charleston as part of the Grand Prairie Friends efforts. The plan is to link the trails at Lake Charleston with amenities to the south of Charleston. Acquiring additional acres and expanding the trail system will be critically important to the development of the overall trail system and experience.

5. Organizational Involvement. As the Lake Charleston Trail project grew in scope and due to the overwhelming positive response, more organizations expressed interest in becoming involved with financing different aspects of the Charleston Trail System. Examples include:

- The Realtor's Association financed a bench and shelter along the trails;
- The Lumpkin Family Foundation financed the costs related to consolidating, modernizing and updating bike plans for the City of Charleston;
- The Interurban Roundtable was created to look at creative ways to improve additional trail systems in Charleston and Mattoon;
- Kiwanis Club and Rotary Club hosted presentations on the trail systems and offered their support to future projects and grant opportunities.

Long term impacts on the community

1. Outdoor Recreation Activities. Expanding the city bike and pedestrian trail system will give its residents additional outdoor recreation options. As stated in the City's planning policies, this project will "encourage use of bike trails" and "develop walk/run/bike tours" throughout the City and provides pedestrian linkages between parks and other major land uses to encourage physical activity and alternative modes of travel throughout Charleston. This community amenity will be a tremendous asset to be used by EIU students, faculty and all community residents.

2017 Governor's Hometown Award

- 2. Economic Development Tool.** Expanding our tourism and recreational offerings like new trail linkages and new recreation amenities will assist in the creation and retention of travel related jobs in the region; as well as positioning our community as more attractive to new future business. In 2017, domestic travel delivers provided \$1.24M in local tax revenue to Coles County and we expect this project to add to this travel impact.
- 3. Recruitment and Retention Tool.** Increasing EIU's enrollment will have a direct impact on jobs created and retained in Charleston and the region. We hope by partnering with EIU in recruitment efforts through projects like these, it will help create and retain critical jobs in the region. Every 1,000 EIU students brings in over \$8.6M to the local economy, so offering amenities like this to draw students and faculty to Charleston will have a tremendous positive impact to the community.
- 4. Local and Regional Draw.** Bringing additional people to Charleston will have a positive impact on the community and we are seeing this come to fruition. For example, from 2017 to 2019, over 200 bikers annually competed in the "Tour de Charleston" bike road race in Charleston. This included over 100 riders from outside of Coles County representing 49 different cities and three states. In 2019, the Grand Illinois Bike Tour came to Charleston with over 240 participants over two nights. This is proof the biking community is hungry for new biking amenities and is willing to travel to Charleston to meet this need.
- 5. Health and Happiness.** Projects like these will have positive impacts on people's health, happiness and general welfare, especially with trail segments that are accessible and available for medical rehabilitation exercises. Studies have clearly shown that trails offer great medical benefit to communities with trails available.
- 6. Environmental Awareness and Education.** As stated earlier, the trails will be a showcase for environmental awareness and will be used for educational activities. For example, on April 22, 2017, EIU held a "Science Fest" at Lake Charleston which included conservation talks by the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District, a bird walk, solar power demonstration, creating terrariums, microscopic biology, mosquitos, ethnomusicology, sun spots, fishing, pollinators, prescribed burns, a nature walk, hunting, tree identification, minerals, a mushroom walk, chickadees and fish science. Participants in the event included the EIU Biology Department, Physics Department, Sociology Department, Geology/Geography Department.

Ongoing Efforts

The work done at Lake Charleston is reflected in the City's comprehensive plan. The City also worked with RIDE Illinois to develop a master bicycle and pedestrian plan which links all of the individual trail components together. The City Planner, Public Works Director, Director of Parks and Recreation and Tourism Director will be responsible to continue the work that was started.



Continuing the development of the Charleston Trail System will be critical in order to maintain the positive momentum the City has experienced over the past few years. The City has rallied around this project and we hope to grow this into a destination for years to come.

Urban Butterfly Initiative

Beginning in 2018, the City of Charleston partnered with the Urban Butterfly Initiative and several local organizations including the Charleston Carnegie Public Library and Eastern Illinois University to “transform urban green spaces into beautiful, butterfly-friendly habitats”.



According to the Urban Butterfly Initiative (UBI) literature³⁰:

The UBI is a community service organization that serves as the coordination and design nexus for public and private partners who seek to increase biodiversity, beauty, and scientific awareness in their communities. UBI helps to create beautiful spaces that are low cost, low maintenance, and attract butterflies to city parks, green ways, and other public areas.

Although native plants are emphasized, UBI’s general design theme is not “wild looking”, but instead UBI establishes attractive, ecologically-sound landscapes that inspire visitors and integrate educational opportunities. UBI modifies existing urban green spaces to make them more ecologically functional, while also generating the benefits of urban beautification, tourism, education and science.

UBI uses butterflies as ambassadors to nature, providing an approachable, fascinating, and beautiful link between people and the environment.

The Three Facets of UBI

Biodiversity & Conservation: *By providing habitat to support populations of butterflies and other animals, UBI projects will help make our communities part of the solution for stemming the loss of biodiversity.*

Engagement & Education:

Butterflies are beautiful, charismatic, and harmless creatures, making them a great “gateway animal: to encourage people of all ages to care about, and be interested in, the natural world. And because their caterpillars feed on plants, butterflies offer a great model to demonstrate the importance of diverse food webs to a healthy, functioning ecosystem.



Lake Charleston Butterfly “Hotspot” Photo: Paul Switzer

Science and Research: *The butterfly “hotspots” UBI creates will provide opportunities for scientific studies on butterfly populations as well as studies investigating the role nature plays in the well-being of people and their communities.*

³⁰ Urban Butterfly Initiative (UBI) Dr. Paul Switzer, PhD. Director UBI, Butterfly pictures by Paul Switzer

Urban Butterfly Initiative

In 2018, the City of Charleston and the UBI created the following “butterfly hotspots” in the city:



- Lake Charleston Pavilion Butterfly Hotspot
- Charleston Library Butterfly Hotspot
- Lake Charleston Red Barn Butterfly Hotspot
- Woodyard Conservation Area Butterfly Hotspot
- EIU Secret Garden Butterfly Hotspot

In addition, the following UBI Butterfly Hotspots were created in the area:

- Fox Ridge Cabin Pond Butterfly Hotspot
- Fox Ridge Possum Holler Butterfly Hotspot

In 2019 – 2020, the City of Charleston and UBI also have plans to create new butterfly and pollinator habitat along the Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail.

By the end of 2020, there will be approximately 20 acres of new butterfly and pollinator habitat in the corporate limits of the City of Charleston. Local butterfly observation tours are provided and groups throughout Illinois visit Charleston in an effort to observe and document the butterfly populations in and around the City. In 2018, there were 37 different butterfly species found at these Charleston hotspots. The UBI has posted these observations on the iNaturalist web site for community tracking and benefit.



Lake Charleston Butterfly Guided Tour

As stated earlier, the City of Charleston was awarded the “Habitat Stewardship Award” by the local chapter of Pheasants Forever for progress made toward pollinator projects in partnership with UBI, EIU, Pheasants Forever and Ameren Illinois. The City has plans to be designated the butterfly capital of Illinois. Continued efforts should be made part of sustainable development practices that cross over a number of segments of community benefit including urban beautification, tourism and economic development, education and science.



*Charleston Library Butterfly “Hotspot”
Photo: Paul Switzer*



Charleston Tree Commission

The City of Charleston for 16 years has been recognized as a Tree City USA. A nationwide movement, the Tree City USA program provides the frameworks necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees. More than 3,400 communities have made the commitment to becoming a Tree City USA. Charleston is among a small number of Illinois communities. Tree City USA status is achieved by meeting four core standards of sound urban forestry management: maintaining a tree board or department, having a community tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry and celebrating Arbor Day.

Each year the Charleston Tree Commission works with various groups which have included: school science classes, boy scouts, Eastern Illinois University students, the Coles County Habitat for Humanity, the Association for the Preservation of Historic Coles County, and others to plant trees in public spaces. The Tree Commission offered community education workshops about appropriate tree selection, tree care and pruning, and the infestation of the emerald ash borer. Tree Commission members carried out a city-wide inventory of tree species, particularly in public areas, mapping them with GPS. This tool supports sound management of the greenspace by city departments. In addition, the Tree Commission is charged with providing regular, ongoing advice and feedback to the Superintendent of Parks and Facilities Maintenance and other city departments regarding public tree plantings and management of potentially problem trees on city property. Over the years, the Tree Commission succeeded in identifying and listing local trees for the State of Illinois Tree of Merit designation.

The Charleston Tree Commission has coordinated efforts with Eastern Illinois University in support of its listing in the Tree Campus USA program. This program recognizes college and university campuses that manage effectively their campus trees, develop connections with the Community beyond campus borders to foster healthy, urban forests and strive to engage their student populations in service-learning projects.

During 2019 and ensuing years, the Tree Commission will work with city departments and community groups to retain the city's designation as a Tree City. As described within Goal 2, the Tree Commission will update and enhance the delivery of community education programs and continue to work with a cross-section of community groups to plant trees in public spaces.



Policy Areas

Historic Preservation



Queen Anne House, c. 1896 (6th & 7th Streets Historic District)

Policy Area – Historic Preservation

Policy Areas

Historic Preservation

The City of Charleston is committed to the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic structures and of the areas that are significant to Charleston's heritage. In the fall of 2004, a Historic Preservation Ordinance was passed and in 2005, the Historic Preservation Commission was established. In January 2007, Certified Local Government (CLG) status was granted by the state. In February 2008, an ordinance granting Charleston's first Historic District designation to areas of 6th and 7th Streets was approved by the City Council.



Gothic Revival Cottage, c. 1870

Over the last ten years highlights of the Commission's activities include public programming, partnerships with CASA and EIU's Academy of Lifelong Learning, continuation of surveys, landmark designations, and completion of successful grant applications. As a Certified Local Government, members of the Commission are required to attend professional development activities each year.

The participants include, but are not limited to:

- **City of Charleston**
Charleston Historic Preservation Commission (Historic District and Landmarks)
- **Coles County**
Historic Preservation Advisory Council
- **Charleston Township Park Board**
- **Neighborhood Associations and Charleston Property Owners**
- **Eastern Illinois University**
- **Local, State and Federal Organizations, Programs and Foundations**

Goal 1

Educate local property owners, residents, and city officials about the benefits and ethics of historic preservation.

Historic Preservation is the practice of conserving old and historic buildings, structures, and landscapes, also known collectively as historic resources. Preserving the past in physical form allows our city to preserve its sense of place, both in its unique and its commonplace attributes. Property owners and communities, alike, benefit from the economic and social stability that preservation practices yield. Income-producing properties listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places may be eligible for Federal Income Tax Credits, when rehabilitated in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Policy Areas

Recommendations

- Meet on a monthly basis to fulfill the expectations of the City Ordinance under which it was created
- Hold public educational events and programs
- Reach out to owners of historic properties, both those designated as local landmarks or within designated districts, and those that have not received a designation
- Continue to apply for Certified Local Government grant money when available and appropriate to support education efforts
- Maintain the Historic Preservation Commission website at charlestonillinoisihpc.org

Goal 2

Identify historic resources (buildings, structures, and landscapes) throughout the city.

The Historic Preservation Commission has completed surveys of multiple areas throughout the city. Since 2009, the Commission has approved Landmark designations for 1002 7th St, 838 7th St., and for the Will Rogers Theater and Commercial Block (705-715 Monroe Ave.). In keeping with the National Register of Historic Places guidelines, properties, sites, or collections of buildings under 50 years old are generally not considered eligible for Landmark or District Designation.

Recommendations

- Survey more areas of the city built prior to 1979. Properties built, created, or erected before 1979 will become eligible for consideration of local landmark or district designation over the life of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan.
- Pursue listing of Charleston's Historic Courthouse Square on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Continue to apply for Certified Local Government grant money when available and appropriate to support survey and listing activities.



First Presbyterian Church, Classical Revival, 1909

Historic Preservation

Goal 3

Facilitate the restoration, renovation, and adaptive reuse of historic structures in the city.

The Historic Preservation Commission was instrumental in the multi-year effort (2009-2014) to preserve the old Charleston Post Office, ensuring that it was available for adaptive reuse and thereby remains as a vital element in Charleston's historic streetscape. Historic Preservation does not seek to freeze or prevent development, but only to ensure that our historic neighborhoods and streetscapes maintain their visual continuity and unique sense of place. Adaptive reuse provides a community with an alternative to demolition. The process takes buildings that are significant to our community and turns them into new businesses or dwellings while maintaining their historic attributes.



*Fetchers/Old Charleston Post Office,
Neoclassical, 1917*

Recommendations

- Continue to be available as a resource for owners or prospective owners of historic properties seeking to preserve, rehabilitate, or adaptively reuse a building, site, or structure.
- Facilitate applications for grants or tax credits available to designated historic properties.
- Oversee Certificates of Appropriateness. The Charleston Historic Preservation Ordinance requires that owners of locally designated properties submit a COA under certain circumstances, thus ensuring the continued integrity of the structure, building, or district.



*Bacon Auto Body/Mid-century
Modern Commercial, 1961 (former
Phillips 66 Gas Station)*

Policy Areas

Goal 4

Foster cooperation among all entities involved directly or indirectly with the City's historic infrastructure, buildings, and historic material culture.

Recommendations

- Encourage cooperation between private, nonprofit, and public sectors in the preservation and adaptive reuse of structures. Those entities may include, but are not limited to: Charleston City Council, Charleston Department of Building and Development Services, Charleston Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning, Coles County Regional Planning and Development Commission's Historic Preservation Advisory Council, Association for the Preservation of Historic Coles County, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Landmarks Illinois, and various offices and departments at Eastern Illinois University.
- List Charleston's Historic Courthouse Square on the National Register of Historic Places. A National Register listing could be a great asset to historic preservation efforts in Charleston. National Register listing comes with NO restrictions whatsoever on listed properties, and with no additional layer of oversight on the part of any government entity. Property owners may continue to maintain, use, sell, or demolish listed properties as they see fit. The primary benefit of listing Charleston's Square is a marketing one. National Register designation indicates to travelers and residents alike that Charleston has historic resources worth visiting and preserving. Income-producing property owners who undertake qualified rehabilitations of their properties may be eligible for Federal Income Tax Credits.



Scherer Block Building, Queen Anne Commercial, 1900 (Courthouse Square)

Aesthetics and Beautification



Lake Charleston Red Barn Photo: Paul Switzer

Policy Area – Aesthetics and Beautification

Policy Areas

The City of Charleston and the following key stakeholders are dedicated to maintain, enhance, and promote the natural and aesthetic qualities of Charleston through the following recommendations.

The participants include, but are not limited to:

- **City of Charleston**
Charleston Historic Preservation Commission and the Urban Butterfly Initiative
- **Charleston Property Owners**
- **Eastern Illinois University**
- **Local, State and Federal Organizations, Programs and Foundations**

Goal 1

Maintain, enhance, and promote the natural and aesthetic qualities of Charleston through encouragement of quality development and beautification efforts by the City and its residents.

Recommendations

Restore and repair stone curbs along street edges.

One of the many aesthetically pleasing qualities of Charleston is the use of historic limestone curbs along the streets in some areas of town. These curbs are falling into disrepair and if possible be restored to their original state. These curbs should be maintained on an ongoing basis and many remaining limestone curbs are in poor condition but they will be preserved as long as possible. In many cases, curb reconstruction would involve removal of the stone curb and new slip formed curb and gutter.

Create new gateway features at the four major approaches to the city.

The gateways are the first thing visitors or through traffic see when entering the community and the last vision as they leave. This gateway should represent a welcoming atmosphere. Charleston should construct new entrance signs at the four major approaches to the city. These areas should be landscaped and well kept and made part of the butterfly habitat of the City.

Other areas of the City should have gateways and way-finding signage as well, large enough to help visitors and residents navigate the City and adding to the overall aesthetics and character of Charleston. Some of these areas include:



Aesthetics and Beautification

- Major entrances to Eastern Illinois University campus
- Existing neighborhoods
- Central Business District
- Historic District Corridor
- Trailheads and Bike Routes

Currently, City entrance signs are not allowed on IDOT right of way and requests have been denied by IDOT many times. The City should consider purchasing a small area adjacent to the IDOT at City entrances so new signage can be located on City owned property.



Encourage owners to clean and beautify areas in front of and behind their businesses.

The owners of commercial buildings should be encouraged to clean up and improve these areas in order to contribute to the overall aesthetic character of Charleston. Businesses in the Central Business District should be encouraged to address torn and/or unclean awnings and snow removal ordinances could be considered as well. This can be done through the combination of incentive programs and enforcement mechanisms.

Organize and coordinate volunteer days.

Volunteer programs are critical to a community's success and are an integral theme of "New Ruralism". Volunteer cleanup and work programs help alleviate the problem of visual blight and improve the overall look of the City. These can be organized by neighborhoods, non-profit organizations, church groups and community service workers. Volunteer work days are also coordinated with EIU, including Panther Service Day.



Policy Areas



Encourage property owners, renters and neighborhoods to monitor and improve aesthetics in their areas.

By encouraging Charleston’s residents to be proactive in the improvement of the quality of their neighborhoods, the overall aesthetic quality of the city can be improved and the individuals can make a difference. Special attention should be given to the beautification along the Town Branch Creek through public / private partnerships.

Enhance and promote Adopt-a-Corner beautification project.

Already in place is a beautification project called “Adopt-a-Corner.” This project encourages citizens to help in maintaining and beautifying small pieces of public property within the city. This project should be further promoted and groups should be encouraged to take part in these efforts to enhance community character and beauty and to coordinate these efforts with the City’s butterfly habitat restoration project.

Beautify commercial strip along Lincoln Avenue & 18th Street.

Currently, the commercial strip along Lincoln Avenue and 18th Street has no uniformity and needs aesthetic improvements. Standards are needed to help bring some uniformity to this area creating a pleasing look to the eye. Landscaping standards, signage standards, flower and tree plantings, uniform signage, and installation and upkeep of sidewalks are examples of changes that can be done. Developing master plans for these commercial corridors will be critical to this effort.

Beautify areas of the City through the development of trailheads and butterfly “hotspots” incorporating native plants and flowers.



As detailed earlier in the Parks, Recreation, and Natural Amenities section of this plan, the city is actively developing its walking and bicycle network throughout the City. At these trailhead locations and in its parks, the City should continue to restore areas, where feasible, from turf grasses to native prairie restoration plots. This restoration includes hardscape features that should be planned accordingly throughout the entire City in order to maintain a consistent theme.

Develop and maintain attractive public-school campuses.

Public schools are a great source of pride for a community. These areas should be kept at their highest level of maintenance. In addition, they should be well landscaped and maintain a high-priority of beautification efforts. Coordination with the school districts and Eastern Illinois University is crucial to the success of this development.

Aesthetics and Beautification

Goal 2

Create a unified Central Business District character that will be aesthetically pleasing to Charleston residents and visitors.

Recommendations

Continue to implement design guidelines for the Courthouse Square.

Continuing to improve the streetscape and beautification projects in the courthouse square will create a more aesthetically pleasing environment for residents and visitors. These improvements include encouragement of “color elements” such as banners, hanging baskets, etc., use of historic lighting and street furniture, sidewalks, landscaping and upkeep of building facades. Where feasible, styles of architecture should be consistent with the adopted design guidelines to maintain uniformity with existing structures. These efforts will help create an attractive appearance in the downtown area.

Crews continue to replace trees (when they die) around the perimeter and side streets of the square. The trees around the square should be removed and replaced in the very near future. The roots have, and will continue to, cause damage to the sidewalks and decorative lighting structures around the square. In consultation with the Tree Commission, the City needs to develop a formal tree replacement plan for downtown and determine if these are eligible TIF costs. A different species/type of tree should be selected that are more suited for this environment in the future.

Consistent beautification efforts should also be extended into the Central Business District beyond the Courthouse Square. Improving the appearance of the gateways to the downtown area would create a better impression of the City.

Some of the issues identified include:

- Maintenance and replacement of street trees
- Maintain/add/replace benches and trash receptacles around the square
- Maintain/add/replace historic lights around the square and into the Central Business District
- Improvement of buildings in the downtown area which includes improvements to the front and back of buildings



Policy Areas



Charleston Carnegie Library Butterfly Hotspot Photo: Paul Switzer

Public Infrastructure and Facilities

Policy Area – Infrastructure and Facilities

Policy Areas

The Public Works Department is in charge of the City's infrastructure streets and utilities. The City strives to maintain and improve its infrastructure in order to preserve and enhance the system into the future. As one highlight of the City's efforts, on May 2005, the construction of the new Charleston Water Treatment Plant was completed. Today, the water treatment plant continues to produce the highest water quality and is one of the few plants in the State of Illinois using ozone technology, making it a state-of-the art facility.

The participants include, but are not limited to:

- **City of Charleston**
Charleston Public Works Department / Utilities and Streets
- **Coles County**
Regional Planning and Development Commission
- **Eastern Illinois University**
- **Charleston Township**
- **Local Business and Charleston Residents**
- **Charleston Schools**
- **Local, State and Federal Organizations, Programs, Foundations**

Goal 1

Enhance the functionality and long-term stability of the city's infrastructure.

Recommendations

Enforce the Urban Service Area.

According to the topography of Charleston and the surrounding area, an Urban Service Area is illustrated in this plan. This boundary will determine the outer limits that city services should be provided. This area is the territory within which it anticipates urbanized development will be concentrated in the next ten to fifteen years. In those portions located outside the urban services area, it is expected that residential development will be limited in density and extent, while industrial and commercial development will be confined to the vicinity of the city. Therefore, extending costs of these services would decrease, and it will help to prevent urban sprawl development. The cooperation of Coles County is needed to help extend municipal services and facilities in a cost-effective manner in coordination with new development. This will help in achieving the goal of extending municipal services and facilities in a cost-effective manner in coordination with new development. The City should actively ensure that development within the Urban Service Area is provided public services, where feasible, from the City of Charleston. Pre-Annexation Agreements and Development Agreements should be some of the tools used to coordinate services in the City's Urban Service Area.

Enforce the IEPA Facilities Plan Area.

A water and sewer plan should be adopted to effectively enforce the urban service area and the IEPA Facilities Plan Area. The water and sewer plan could help predict future demand estimates of city water and sewer, coordinating with nearby communities and organizations to maximize efficiency of existing systems and to plan for future needs. The City should actively ensure that

Infrastructure and Facilities

development within the IEPA Facilities Plan Area is provided services, where feasible, from the City of Charleston. Pre-Annexation Agreements and Development Agreements should be some of the tools used to enforce the City's IEPA Facilities Plan Area.

The City should encourage, where feasible, all development within the Urban Service Area and IEPA Facilities Plan Area to be connected to water and sewer service. By encouraging the use of municipal water and sewer service will help to eliminate the use of private septic systems and wells, thus making the future demand for these services more predictable.

Require sidewalks in new developments where an urban right-of-way cross section is constructed.

Sidewalks are important in building a sense of community, while encouraging pedestrian activity. Developers should be given two years to build out or complete the approved sidewalk system in the development using construction bonds as insurance. Sidewalks should be required where urban subdivision right-of-way cross sections are constructed as approved by the Public Works Director.

The Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning and the Public Works Director may recommend and the City Council may approve on a case-by-case basis, rural right-of-way cross section details for streets, sidewalks and other public right of way amenities. Rural cross section details may be used within the Urban Service Area and the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction. Features of the rural right-of-way cross section may include, eliminating the requirement for sidewalks, allowing open ditches and allowances for alternative street pavement design.



Implement a systematic program of infrastructure repair and maintenance.

A long-term plan for infrastructure repair and maintenance should be implemented to maximize the usefulness and efficiency of infrastructure systems. This should be drafted and implemented by the Public Works Department while working in conjunction with various neighborhood groups and citizens.

The City has developed a Capacity, Management, Operations and Maintenance (CMOM) program for sanitary sewer infrastructure. This program calls for the inspection and cleaning of 15 miles of sanitary sewer mains and 230 manholes; in addition to street sweeping 2,600 miles of streets annually. The City should also continue to capture and add to its sanitary sewer video library as part of these efforts. These video clips should be incorporated into the City's Geographic Information System and updated on a regular basis. All of these efforts should be part of the long-term planning efforts.

The City's annual maintenance plans for its water system includes activities such as annual exercising of water valves and inspecting fire hydrants. The City's plan includes the replacement

Policy Areas

of substandard hydrants and valves on an alternating annual basis. These infrastructure plans should be updated and implemented on a regular basis.

Beginning in 2004, the City created its “Street and Sidewalk Conditional Rating Survey” (CRS). The survey assessed and inventoried sidewalks, gutters, drainage and pavement condition and surface roughness to create an inventory rating for each street segment in the City. This inventory rating was combined with Average Daily Traffic to prioritize street work. The highest priority street segments are addressed first while working through the CRS list. The City should keep this survey and inventory up-to-date and continue to fix the highest priority street segments first as time and funds allow.

In 2009, the City created and continues to maintain, a separate Sidewalk Condition Survey that assessed the state of sidewalks throughout the City. The City has taken a “worst first” approach to addressing sidewalks. In 2018, the City was awarded the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Revolving Loan Fund Closeout grant to address over 4 miles of substandard sidewalk which should replace most of the substandard sidewalk sections in the City. The City should continue to replace substandard sidewalk and update the Sidewalk Condition Survey on a regular basis to reflect changing conditions and work plans.



Targeted Sidewalk Improvement Project 2019-2021

Where public infrastructure and facilities have reached the end of their useful life, the City should develop and design projects, specifications and plans for infrastructure replacement. There are several State and Federal agencies that can assist with funding these efforts including but not limited to: USDA Rural Development, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s CDBG and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and US Environmental Protection Agency.

Infrastructure and Facilities

In order to minimize public inconvenience, the City should coordinate its infrastructure maintenance and construction projects with neighborhoods and developers. This should be done as part of the aforementioned infrastructure repair and maintenance program.

Coordinate public infrastructure investments with commercial and residential development efforts.

Since existing infrastructure can increase the attractiveness for the location and expansion of business and residential developments, infrastructure improvement efforts should be strategically planned and located where development and re-development efforts are desired. These “shovel ready sites” can drastically reduce the owner’s cost of building in these areas. The City needs to work with the Illinois Department of Transportation in an attempt to loosen restrictions related to access control along State Highways. This is especially evident with access control requirements along Lincoln Avenue. Allowing well-planned access points along Lincoln Avenue will help encourage redevelopment and economic development activities in these commercial corridors.

Develop public infrastructure improvements to ensure safety in school areas.

The areas around the schools should be safe. Reinforcements to the existing infrastructure can help ensure the protection of the children. Examples include, clearly delineating crosswalks and maintaining and improving sidewalks, thus linking schools to nearby neighborhoods. Areas around schools and parking should be well lit during night hours. The City should coordinate these efforts with Charleston Community Unit School District 1 and explore State and Federal Programs including the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) and the Safe Routes to Schools program to help ensure safety in school areas.

Coordinate City and EIU infrastructure improvements.

The coordination of city services and EIU services could strengthen both systems. This coordination and efficiency should minimize inconvenience and expenses. In recent years, EIU was proactive in its storm water separation efforts with the City. This included removing gutters, and storm drains from the City’s sanitary sewer system, thus reducing the amount of discharge that was entering the City waste water treatment system. Encourage, through communication and coordination with EIU, the importance of properly detaining storm runoff and coordination of all infrastructure activities with the City.

Future development at EIU must be coordinated with the City to understand how projects will impact existing infrastructure and how those impacts will be managed by the City. This partnership must include planning and addressing impacts to the existing street network and storm water / utility management systems.

Update and Incorporate the City’s Capital Asset Management Plan.

The City’s Capital Asset Management Plan (CAMP) allows city officials to review water and sewer rates and utility management capabilities into the future. The CAMP analysis has been a tool for the City since 2006 and is continually updated and presented to decision makers and stake holders. The CAMP analysis reflects: personnel, capital spending, commodities, and contractual services that are developed as part of the public works department’s 5-year plan. The CAMP provides a quantitative and mathematical explanation of the City’s current and future water and

Policy Areas

sewer rates which allows city leaders to project the system’s needs 20 years in the future. This CAMP analysis should continue to be used and updated annually and include provisions for the City’s water and sewer rate adjustments.

Implement the City’s Transition Plan for Persons with Disabilities.

In 2012, the City engaged the services of a third-party firm for the purposes of developing a transition plan in regards to making City owned facilities more accessible. The report provided a step-by-step approach to help the City of Charleston address the deficits in the specific site reports. Recommendations were made to accomplish the goal of making City programs in City facilities more accessible to people with disabilities. These recommendations were founded in response to the 2010 Federal Standards for Accessible Design. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 USC 12131) prohibits the more than 89,000 units of state and local government, such as the City of Charleston, from discrimination on the basis of disability in the delivery of programs and services. The definition of programs and services is broad and includes public parks and City operations, such as the many opportunities made available for the enjoyment of its residents. The City should also consider and implement the 2018 Illinois Accessibility Code as part of these overall efforts

Improve Communications, Resource Monitoring Capabilities and Technology.

Utilize City property and facilities to improve communications links and resource monitoring capabilities throughout the City.

In 2016, the City entered a Land Lease Agreement with a third party to construct a telecommunications tower at the former Waste Water Treatment Plant site, which gives the City access to this tower for its own equipment.

In 2018, the City entered an Intergovernmental Agreement with Coles County, Eastern Illinois University, City of Mattoon, and Lakeland College for the purpose of the operation of the “GovTC” consortium to develop and share telecommunications equipment and services throughout the County. GovTC also plans to construct a telecommunications tower on City owned property at 815 Adkins Drive, which gives the City access to this tower for its own equipment.

Finally, in 2020 the City plans to construct its own communications tower at the Water Treatment Plant.

With these improvements, the City will be able to create a connected and triangulated coverage system that will improve communications and resource monitoring capabilities throughout the City. In the future, the City should explore the possibility of using its infrastructure for other city-wide high-speed internet options throughout the city.



Triangulated Communication Coverage Plan

Infrastructure and Facilities

Technology advancements come in many forms, and include: employee communications, tablets, computers, GPS, GIS, CAD, software, hardware and equipment. The City should study and consider other advanced communications services using City infrastructure. Understanding and evolving with technology will keep the City at the forefront which will benefit City functions for its residents and future developments.

Goal 2

Promote environmentally conscience alternatives for waste water management processes, recycling and renewable resources strategies.

Recommendations

Consider nutrient removal and disinfection methods for waste water treatment alternatives.

Nutrient removal is the process of removing phosphorus from the waste water stream that is typically caused by fertilizers and some in-home beauty products for example. In regards to nutrient removal, the City has explored non-point source nutrient removal where high levels of nutrients are mediated at the origin of the run-off (e.g. agricultural fields). After a lengthy review and study, it has been determined that a point-source method for nutrient removal (at the waste water treatment plant) is more cost effective and will better treat effluent before entering the local creeks. Nutrient removal measures will be a major benefit to the local eco-system as these unwanted nutrients will be removed during the treatment process before entering the environment. The City should continue to explore and plan for additional nutrient removal efforts if feasible.

In regards to disinfection, in 2019 the City constructed a UV disinfection system at the waste water treatment plant as part of its efforts to better treat effluent before it enters the local streams and tributaries making it safer for the environment. Future disinfection improvements should also be considered for excess treatment periods that are caused by high inflow and infiltration material that bypasses the main treatment facility during high flow events.

Encourage constructive use of wastewater and water treatment bi-products to help conserve water, encourage development and preserve the natural environment.

The City should consider all options when managing waste water effluent and other treatment bi-products. There are options to provide incentives for economic development and agricultural benefit while being a good steward of the natural environment. For example, the City's effluent can serve as economic incentives to cool industrial buildings. Currently the City offers its waste water treatment sludge to area farmers as a fertilizer alternative. The City should explore all options when managing its waste water effluent and water treatment bi-products.

Policy Areas

Enhance and expand the city’s recycling programs and educate the citizens on the importance of recycling.

The City has attempted and encouraged curbside recycling services from private service providers. This program was not successful but future attempts should be studied and implemented if feasible. The City participates in its own recycling efforts at its public facilities and should continue with these programs.

A curbside recycling program is the most effective way to encourage recycling since drop off and buyback programs require more citizen effort. Residents should be provided with recycling containers to collect newspapers, glass bottles and jars, tin and aluminum, plastic bottles and bags, mixed waste paper (cardboard, phone books, magazines, junk mail, office paper, brown bags), and used motor oil and filters. While providing the means to start is a challenge, participation hinges on the knowledge and benefits of the community operation. Marketing strategies, mass mailings and public workshops can help to distribute information.

The City should review, evaluate and consider an overall waste hauler service plan that would reduce wear on city streets and improve efficiency of these services. The plan may consider action items such as “service provider zones” throughout the City and/or coordinate and minimize scheduled pick-up days as part of this strategy.

Consider Renewable Energy Solutions for City Facilities.

The City has studied solar energy programs for its facilities including at the waste water treatment plant and the water treatment plant. At this time the language drafted for model power purchase agreements are not a good option for the City. The City should continue to study the benefits of solar and other renewable energy options at its plants and facilities and should stay current with renewable energy funding options and programs in the future.

Goal 3

Promote demand-side management strategies.

Recommendations

Encourage the use of energy-efficient building materials and water saving devices.

By using energy efficient technologies to decrease the demand, residents can save on water bills as well as additional capital that would have otherwise been used in creating new water and wastewater treatment facilities. Developers and homeowners should be encouraged to utilize water efficient showerheads and toilets when seeking building permits in accordance with current building codes. Residents should be educated on the benefits of water and energy conservation. Marketing strategies, mass mailings and public workshops can help to distribute information.

Continually enforce the storm water management ordinance.

A storm water management ordinance, included in the Unified Development Code, should be enforced by both city and county officials, in order to control the impact of development on runoff,

Infrastructure and Facilities

groundwater recharge, and overall water quality. This ordinance includes the delineation of the Lake Charleston watershed and guidelines to assist developers in choosing appropriate storm water management techniques for development. The approximate boundary of the Lake Charleston watershed can be found on both the Current Land Use Map and the Future Land Use Map in this plan. Year-round ponds, temporary retention basins or constructed wetlands, can provide open space, wildlife habitat, and recreational activities. Other techniques include use of porous pavements or grass strips to slow runoff and increase the recharge of groundwater.

Goal 4

Create a unified Central Business District of institutional, governmental and civic related buildings and public facilities.

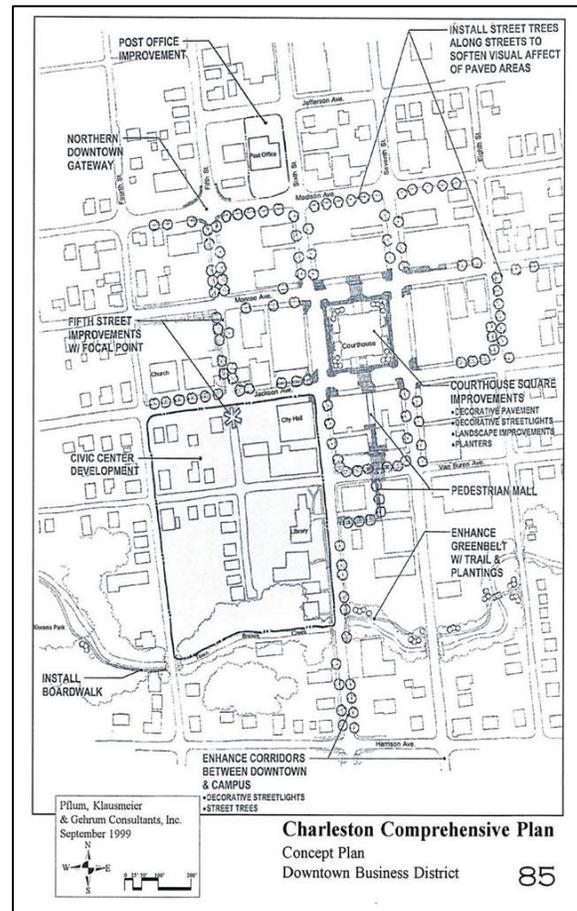
Recommendations

Retain, expand and support all public buildings such as the library, the County Courthouse and City Hall within Central Business District.

The Central Business District should be a central source of civic pride with strong public services and facilities.

The Central Business District should be promoted as the preferred location for financial, insurance, legal, real estate and other office establishments. With a central location near the downtown, the Civic Business District can be preserved and enhanced to become a stronger civic focal point for the City of Charleston. Public facilities like the Coles County Courthouse, City Hall, the Charleston Carnegie Public Library and other government offices, parks, walking access, bike routes and trails should be maintained, preserved enhanced and supported.

Focus for the City's Central Business District should not be limited to just the service and public sector. The City should strongly encourage and assist with the development of a growing tourism, service and retail base and food service establishments so all economic sectors can complement each other in the Central Business District.



Policy Areas

Transportation

The City of Charleston is dedicated to providing an efficient and safe transportation system through effective planning.

Goal 1

Provide for an efficient transportation system for the City of Charleston through the use of effective transportation planning principles.

Recommendations

Coordinate transportation system improvements based on the Public Works Department's 5 Year Plan which is consistent with IDOT's Functional Classification System.

The provision of an adequate transportation system is of critical importance to the economic stability of the community. The City and IDOT share the same Functional Classification System (FCS) and the City uses this FCS to develop its 5 Year Work Plan. The purpose of the FCS is to provide the basis of the transportation system and standards, which provides the foundation upon which a transportation system is created and maintained. The FCS designates roadways as to their function within the overall transportation system. It also indicates appropriate minimum cross sections for roadways and it establishes locations where roadways should be provided in the future. The FCS provides the legal basis for the acquisition and preservation of right-of-way and complements this plan by providing access for future land uses.

Some of the FCS features include and planning recommendations include:

- Right-of-way dedication by new developments where applicable.
- Extension of adequate transportation system into developing areas.
- Establishing safe and efficient traffic and pedestrian patterns in school areas.
- Evaluating new access points to the transportation system.
- Consolidation of existing driveways and evaluating new driveway access points to improve capacity and safety of roadways and balance with economic development efforts.
- Improvement of access to the Industrial Influence Area.
- Development of an east / west thoroughfare along south edge of the EIU campus.
- Retention of rail services.
- Promote and enhance multimodal transportation options.

Continue to beautify parking lots through effective planning and landscaping.

The City's Unified Development Code requires landscaping and buffer yards in certain circumstances. Developed landscape areas should be strategically located to soften parking areas in order to provide a more natural looking environment.

Infrastructure and Facilities



Example of Bump Outs

Install enhanced streetscape features that improve safety and movement of pedestrians and vehicles.

Features can be added to existing streets to improve overall safety and movement of pedestrians as well as vehicles. These include installing brick pavers that indicate crosswalks at intersections and the use of “bump-outs.” “Bump-outs” could be six-foot extensions of the sidewalks that create a sense of narrowing roads, effectively slowing traffic, while there are no actual changes to the road width. This also creates an opportunity for green space in these areas. These methods should be considered by the City of Charleston, focusing on the downtown and commercial corridors first.

Develop a “Master Plan” for Lincoln Avenue improvements.

In 2020, the State of Illinois is planning to start construction on a major pavement resurfacing project of Lincoln Avenue. The overall project will also consider upgrades and aesthetic improvements to the street lights and intersection signals along Lincoln Avenue. In the “Economic Development” Policy Section of this plan, it is recommended to develop a Master Plan for Lincoln Avenue. The aforementioned improvements must be part of that plan. In addition, the plan should include a study of other projects including, but not limited to: buried power lines, signage, and landscape / median improvements in order to enhance the aesthesis and functionality of Lincoln Avenue.

Discourage through-traffic from using neighborhood streets.

Through-traffic can be discouraged from using neighborhood streets by using street diversions. Diversions include streets that are discontinuous or have jogs in their alignment. It is desirable that all streets designated as local streets include diversions at some point so that the residents along the streets are not subjected to the inconveniences and hazards of high traffic volumes. Continuous pedestrian flow and bike traffic must be provided for while ensuring vehicle/pedestrian conflicts can be minimized especially in the vicinity of a school or park. These diversions, properly designed and located within a residential neighborhood, may effectively reduce through-traffic of the neighborhood, thus improving its environment.

Consolidate campus-parking areas.

According to the EIU Master Plan, several new parking areas are to be constructed, while eliminating some of the current parking areas. This should be supported so that the university is encouraged to make the most efficient use of their existing land.

Goal 2

Create diverse opportunities for alternative modes of transportation.

Policy Areas

Recommendations

Implement the City's adopted Bicycle Plan for Bicyclists and Pedestrians.

On May 1, 2018, in coordination with Eastern Illinois University and other local organizations, the City completed and adopted its Bicycle Plan for the City. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board was created and charged with the implementation of the plan. The Bicycle Plan establishes a framework that connects and circulates local bikeway systems with schools, parks, libraries and public spaces and in many instances the same network can also be shared with pedestrians to promote walkability as an alternative mode of transportation.

Walkability is especially critical to make sure pedestrians can access nearby services safely and conveniently. Increasing density near existing infrastructure by encouraging in-fill development, planned unit developments and commercial redevelopment projects will be a key component in creating successful alternative modes of transportation projects for bicyclists, walkers and public transportation.

The City's Bicycle Plan is included with this Comprehensive Plan and some of the highlights are as follows:

Engineering (create safe and convenient places to ride and park)

- Adopted 2018 Bicycle Plan and first wave of wayfinding signs were erected

FUTURE: Update bike striping in the City, create bikeways and new shared side paths for pedestrians and bicyclists and continue to install additional wayfinding signs.

Education (giving people of all ages and abilities the skills and confidence to ride)

- Bicycle Safety Quiz implemented as part of CHS Drivers education class
- Bicycle Safety Quiz and Bike Law Cards handouts are available at City Hall

Encouragement (creating a strong bike culture that welcomes and celebrates bicycling)

- Updated Trail Maps for Lake Charleston trails
- Promote and Host Annual Bicycle Events (Tour de Charleston, Grand Illinois Bike Tour in 2019)
- Become Certified Bicycle Friendly Community by League of American Bicyclists
- City Council Proclaim National Bike to Work

FUTURE: Create City bike map, hold Bike to School / Work Day, Advertise

Enforcement (ensuring safe roads for all users)

- City Council approved Ordinance 18-O-8 repealed certain bicycle restrictions

FUTURE: PD to offer "bike safety kits", promote Bike Safety Quiz, educate bike law enforcement with bikers and motorists

Evaluation and Planning (planning for bicycling as a safe and viable transportation option)

- Implemented Bicycle Plan
- Appointed City Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
- Created Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee – meet regularly to implement plans

Infrastructure and Facilities

As part of these efforts, the City should make it a goal to be designated a Certified Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of Bicycle Friendly America. To this end the City has completed the following:

- Adopt Comprehensive Bike Plan
- Appoint Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator
- Create Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Commission
- Implement 2 Education Recommendations
- Implement 1 Enforcement Recommendation
- Proclaim “Bike to Work Day (month)”

The City has the following tasks yet to complete:

- Adopt “Complete Streets” Policy (bicycle / pedestrian road design)
- Adopt Bike Parking Ordinance
- Implement High-Priority Segments (bike lane sections)

Pursue public transportation services.

The City of Charleston has two local public transportation options with Dial-A-Ride and the EIU Panther Express. In addition, the school district transports students in standard buses. The increased numbers of total and older residents within the city and county will bring demands for some form of public transportation, the City and partner organizations need to study current and future transport resources and services available to residents.

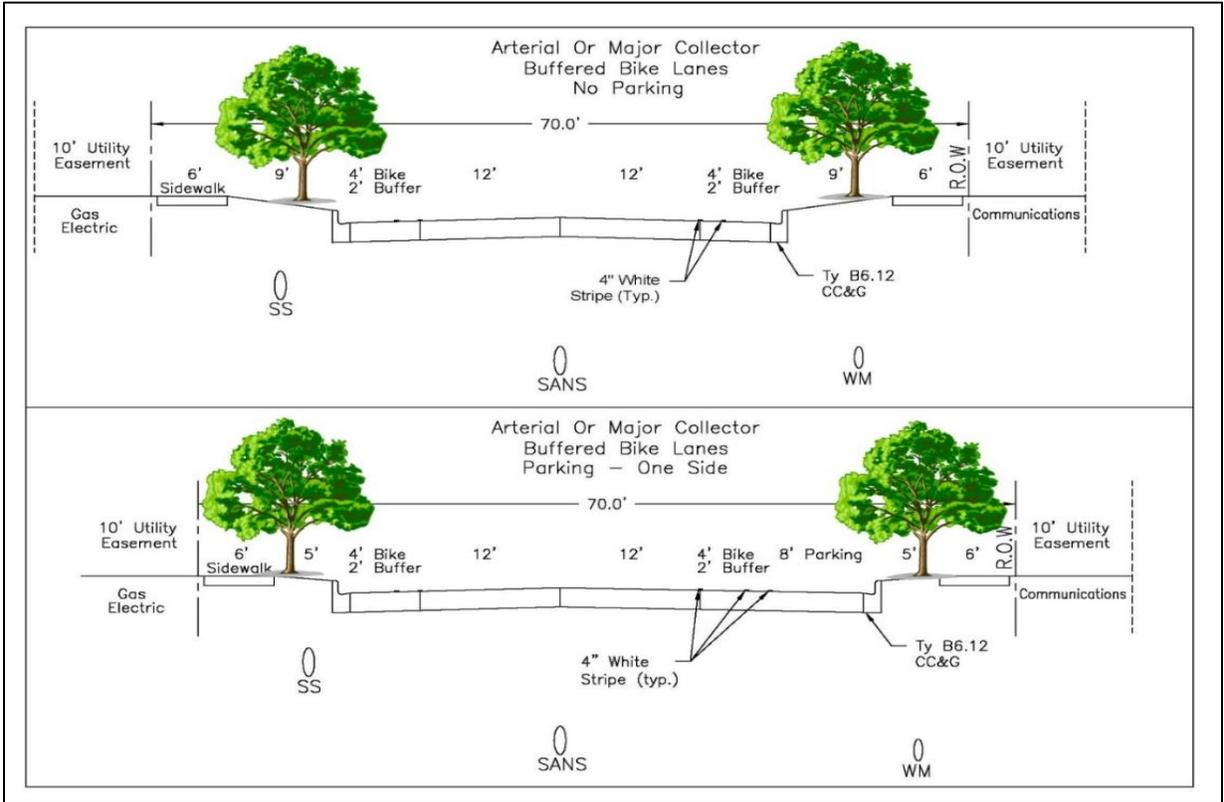
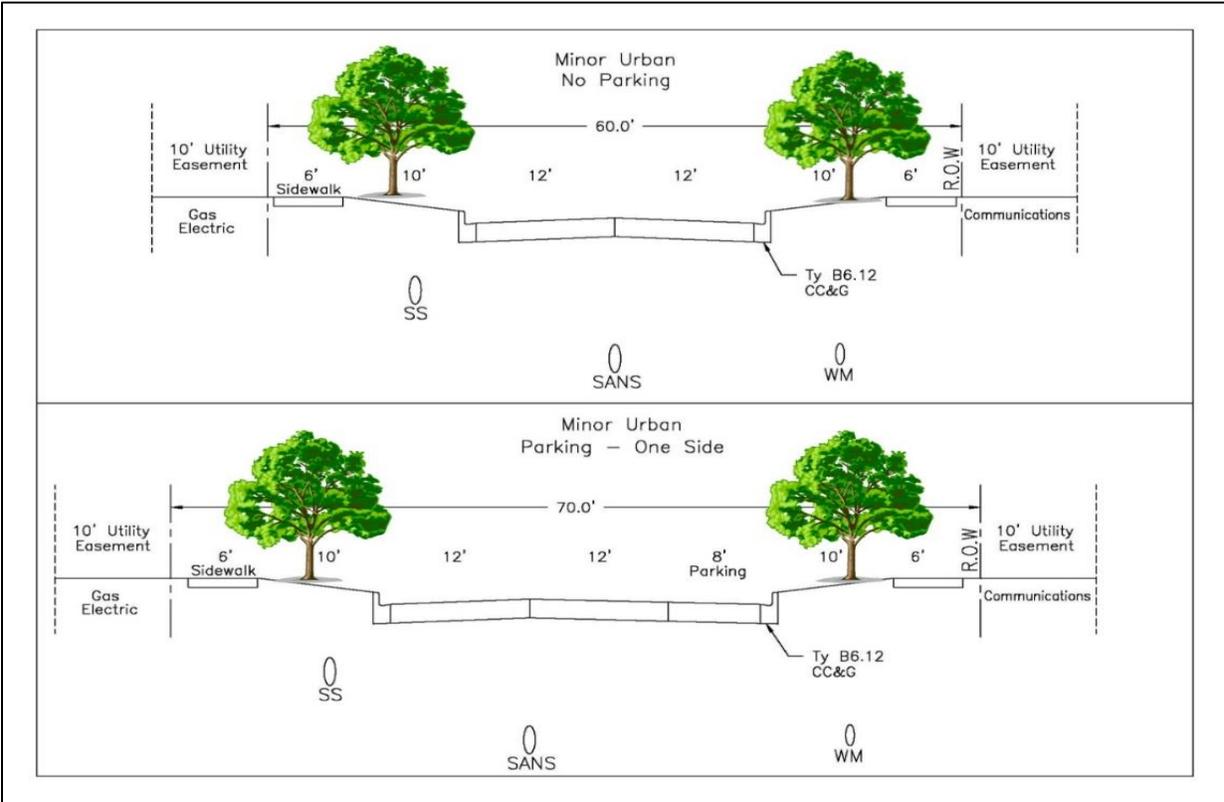
Since 2013, the Dial-A-Ride Zip Line stops at the City’s Downtown Park Bus Stop and transports over 2,500 trips a year. 15-20 students also use this location each day as part of the EIU Panther Express. Additional bus stops in the City should be evaluated and constructed as needed to meet the demands of the residents.

In addition, in 2020, the City has plans to pave the Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail which will connect EIU to the Amtrak Train Station in Mattoon. These improvements will allow EIU students and residents without vehicles, access to public transportation far beyond the region.



Policy Areas

COMPLETE STREETS TYPICAL CROSS SECTION



Planning and Land Use

Policy Area – Planning and Land Use

Policy Areas

Planning and Land Use

Efficient planning and land use development has served as a foundation for the growth of the City, while effectively using existing land for the highest and best use. Planning and Land Use regulations provide for the public health, safety and welfare of the City. Throughout the planning processes started with the 1996 Charleston Tomorrow Plan, there has been much progress in reaching goals and recommendations developed in these planning documents. To reach some of these land use goals, in March 2003, the City adopted the City's Unified Development Code (UDC) which has been amended over time, and serves as the City's regulatory instrument in regards to land use planning and development in the City.

The participants include, but are not limited to:

- **City of Charleston**
Charleston Department of Building and Development Services
- **Coles County**
Regional Planning and Development Commission
- **Eastern Illinois University**
- **Local Business and Charleston Residents**
- **Local, State and Federal Organizations, Programs, Foundations**
- **Coles Together Economic Development Partnership**

Goal 1

Coordinate planning and development efforts among local governments, Eastern Illinois University and organizations.

Recommendations

Foster effective communication with local governments, EIU and organizations.

Relationships between public and private entities, as well as nearby communities, have been established and continue to be strengthened. For example, the Corridor Development zoning district along Highway 16 illustrates coordination between Charleston and Mattoon. This shared effort can also be modeled for development guidelines along County Road 1000N. Strengthening relationships between local governments, schools, EIU, local citizen groups and local businesses will allow the planning process to be coordinated and will incorporate the strengths of all organizations. Partnerships with these groups will promote more efficient communication to facilitate coordinated planning efforts.

Goal 2

Evaluate zoning, subdivision, and other ordinance related issues.

Recommendations

Continually review and amend the City's Unified Development Code as necessary.

Policy Areas

The City's Unified Development Code (UDC) was adopted in 2003 which replaced the City's zoning ordinance. The UDC should be reviewed and amended as appropriate to include development practices that stay up-to-date with best practices. For example, expanding and encouraging non-traditional zoning districts like planned unit developments may allow for additional managed growth in the City. Additional considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- Protection of established neighborhoods and historically designated areas from intrusion by non-compatible uses.
- Phasing out of non-compatible uses where appropriate and reviewing regulations concerning non-conforming situations.
- Encouragement of preservation of local farmland.
- Consideration's for nonresidential and residential development in planned areas
- Maintain the City's University influence Area and Residential Transition Area as detailed in the Housing Section of this Plan.

Since the adoption of the Unified Development Code (UDC) in 2003, approximately 50 applications for various variances have been requested (about 3 per year). Some sections of the UDC have been amended over time while other sections may need further study including but not limited to:

- Non-conforming Situations including Expansion, Improvement, Restoration, Maintenance.
- Required parking spaces (e.g. restaurants, multi-family, etc) and parking surface requirements.
- Signage (sign separation, off-premises signs, temporary signs, size).
- Density and dimensional standards for the R-3 Multi-Family Residential Zoning District (study floor-area-ratio FAR as an option) / maximum building coverage in all districts.
- Redefine residential uses including: Boarding Houses, Fraternities / Sororities, Group Homes and Multi-Occupancy Dwellings. Establish zoning districts and possible overlay districts and appropriate locations for these specific uses.
- Agricultural Use definitions and Performance Standards – including allowable agricultural uses in residential districts.
- Development Standards, Performance Standards and Permitted Uses in the Government District.
- Permitted uses including uses in the Industrial Zoning Districts (e.g. daycare, offices, etc.).
- Districts and Performance Standards for self-storage (indoor and outdoor).
- Outdoor storage of goods for commercial uses and screening requirements.
- Landscape requirements – trees, shrubs, and bufferyards.
- Setback requirements for additions to non-conforming situations.
- Requirements for the Corridor Development District (approval process, landscape, etc.).
- Maximum size of accessory structures / accessory structure in the front yard.
- Fence standards, front yard / side street fence requirements; fence by driveways.

Continually review and amend the Official Zoning Map as appropriate.

The City's Official Zoning Map was last updated on a city-wide scale as part of a comprehensive process in November 2009. In accordance with the ongoing review of the City's UDC, the City's Official Zoning Map should be reviewed and amended as appropriate to ensure the support and implementation of the goals and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The Official

Planning and Land Use

Zoning map should also reflect other adopted plans and policies, including the UDC and any other city regulations and guidelines. Although they are not limited to, Official Zoning Map amendments should be based on the following:

- The proposed changes are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- There is a community need for and benefit from the proposed change.
- The proposed changes consistent with the character of the affected area.
- Proposed zoning is compatible with the zoning and land uses with the properties nearby.
- The proposed zoning is suitable for the development of the uses authorized for the zoning classification and local infrastructure.

Continue to enforce extraterritorial jurisdiction for planning and zoning beyond corporate limits.

Planning and zoning issues that take place outside of, but near city limits can pose certain challenges. The State of Illinois allows municipalities to enforce development regulations in its extraterritorial jurisdiction (1.5-mile zoning and subdivision jurisdiction) to ensure orderly development practices. Currently, Charleston enforces the extraterritorial jurisdiction which allows the city to plan for community growth. Where appropriate, the City should actively annex areas that are contiguous to the City's corporate limits. Careful studies of revenues and costs should take place before annexation occurs. The City should use the UDC to enforce the IEPA Facilities Area and the Urban Service Area and encourage annexations in these areas as detailed in this plan.

Continually monitor and review the sign regulations, established as part of the Unified Development Code, to control clutter and create aesthetically pleasing thoroughfares.

As a part of the UDC, the establishment of the sign regulations allows the city to protect the visual quality and the character of the community. The sign regulations are molded to address specific local concerns and issues. Charleston should continually review and update the sign regulations to address these issues. Some of these issues include, but are not limited to:

- To ensure that signs are designed, constructed, installed and maintained so that the public safety and traffic safety are improved and not compromised.
- To allow and promote positive conditions for sign communications while at the same time avoiding nuisances to nearby properties and enhancing the aesthetic environment.
- To reflect and support the desired character and development patterns of the various zoning districts.
- To allow for adequate and effective signs in commercial and industrial zones to attract sources of economic development; while preventing signs from dominating the appearance of the area.
- To ensure that the constitutionally guaranteed right of free speech is protected.
- Enabling the fair and consistent enforcement of these sign restrictions.

Policy Areas

Consistently review the landscape regulations, established as a part of the Unified Development Code, to ensure Charleston’s future development will contribute to a high quality of life for its residents.

The purpose of landscape regulations is to establish minimum standards for the provision, installation, and maintenance of landscape plantings to achieve a healthy, beautiful, and safe community for both public and private property. The continual monitoring of the landscaping regulations will help to improve the appearance of all areas through the incorporation of open space into development in ways, which harmonize and enhance both the natural and man-made environment.

Along with improving environmental quality by recognizing the numerous beneficial effects of landscaping on the environment, such as improving air and water quality, reducing air, heat, noise, and chemical pollution, and promoting energy conservation through the creation of shade, reducing heat gain in or on buildings. Land values are also maintained and increased through use of required landscaping.

Goal 3

Foster efficient and productive use of existing land and other resources.

Recommendations

Coordinate new development with extension of city services, infrastructure, and facilities.

One of the recommendations detailed in the Infrastructure and Facilities section of this plan is to coordinate public infrastructure investments with commercial and residential development efforts. Since existing infrastructure can increase the attractiveness for the location and expansion of business and residential developments, infrastructure improvement efforts should be strategically planned and located where development and re-development efforts are desired. These “shovel ready sites” can drastically reduce the owner’s cost of building in these areas.

Encourage obsolete commercial sites to be redeveloped and for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

There are some commercial sites in Charleston that are ready for comprehensive redevelopment efforts. The city should encourage certain sites to be redeveloped to ensure the most productive and efficient use of these spaces. As detailed earlier, the City can be partner in this activity through stream-lined development practices and exploring incentive programs to assist and encourage redevelopment projects.

One of the recommendations detailed in the Economic Development section of this plan is to rehabilitate distressed commercial and industrial structures when economically feasible. In addition, the Housing Section’s first goal is to maintain and encourage long term neighborhood stability by preserving and protecting the value and integrity of existing neighborhoods. Land use planning and regulations should reflect and encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings where appropriate.

Planning and Land Use

Assemble and redevelop parcels of marginally used land for civic purposes around the Central Business District.

The area around the Courthouse Square and the Central Business District that is not used or is used only marginally could be used for civic purposes such as expanding government offices, building new facilities, building parks, and adaptive reuse of existing structures. Land use planning and regulations should reflect and encourage the acquisition and use of land for civic purposes in the Central Business District, where appropriate.

Consider issues created by urban sprawl development.

Infill development of industrial, commercial, and residential lands should be encouraged in the City. The City of Charleston should take great care when considering development and annexations that are on the fringes of the City's corporate limits as detailed earlier in this plan.

Accommodate industrial and commercial development in well-planned areas where infrastructure and public services are available.

One of the most important factors in locating industry or commercial activity is adequate access to transportation and other public infrastructure. Areas that are most suitable for industrial or commercial development should be zoned appropriately to permit these uses. Moreover, companies, which are searching for a place to locate, need to be aware of where potential sites are located. By utilizing Charleston's Geographic Information System (GIS) and other technology, the City can be a partner in this effort. The City needs to maintain and continually expand the capabilities of its already built GIS.

Encourage efficient and productive use of existing land areas designated for educational purposes.

Land that is designated for educational purposes is limited in Charleston and great care should be taken to maximize efficient and productive use of this land. Planning for future needs such as for EIU and the Charleston Community Unit District #1 should be undertaken far in advance to ensure efficient use of property.

Considerations need to be considered regarding the impact of Eastern Illinois University's land use plans for the future. Whether or not the University plans to expand, and where the expansion will take place, will directly affect the City. Coordinating efforts between EIU and the City are better served through awareness of each organization's plans. EIU's Master Plan (2002 map on page 155) needs to be coordinated with the City's Future Land Use Map and overall planning efforts.

Implement Performance Standards of the Residential Transition Area.

The purpose of the Residential Transition Area overlay district is to ensure that the development and use of land provides for an appropriate transition from higher intensity development to single-family residential development with consideration for intensity of adjacent developments. Authorized uses, development standards and performance standards should be enforced in the Residential Transition Area to ensure developments are cohesive within the neighborhoods they are located.

Policy Areas

Implement Performance Standards of the University Influence Area.

The purpose of the University Influence Area overlay district is to allow for unique development standards for properties located in and around the campus of Eastern Illinois University. These considerations may include parking relief, mixed use developments, and density flexibility for the areas that serve the EIU community. The City can encourage mixed use development through the use of incentive programs including, but not limited to: Enterprise Zone Program, the New Market Tax Credit Program or the City's Business and Industrial Development Incentive Program. New incentive programs like a TIF District should be considered in this area as well to help encourage new commercial and redevelopment projects.

Implement Performance Standards of the Flood Hazard Overlay District.

Development within the Flood Hazard overlay district shall be in conformance with the City's Unified Development Code. The standards shall be applied in combination with the underlying zoning district classification. The Future Land Use Map shows the approximate boundary of the Flood Hazard Area, but the exact location of the flood hazard boundaries for each parcel shall be indicated on the flood insurance rate map (FIRM) for the area in which the particular parcel is located. The City should evaluate and consider purchasing parcels in the Flood Hazard Areas for additional open green space. This would allow for establishing drainage management practices which can also help alleviate loss to private properties during flood events.

Implement Performance Standards of the Government Overlay District.

The purpose of the Government overlay district is to ensure that the development and use of land is consistent with governmental purposes. All governmental uses authorized and permitted shall be allowed and all governmental property should be classified as being in the government Overlay District. If governmental land is transferred to private ownership, the zoning classification of the land shall be automatically reclassified as the most restrictive adjacent zoning district. Currently, the Government Overlay District is found scattered throughout the City on many government owned properties (e.g. Eastern Illinois University's campus, several Charleston owned properties and the Coles County Airport) and specific development standards and performance standards need to be established for this zoning district.

Planning and Land Use

Future Land Use Maps

The Future Land Use Maps reflect the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan as it relates to the principles established for each of the Policy Areas. It should be noted that the plan sets aside more areas for residential and commercial usage than the market may demand. The purpose of this is to allow a certain degree of flexibility in the market place.

Based on population trends, it is expected that the majority of the planning area will remain largely rural in character for the foreseeable future

Future land use needs are based on physical characteristics and the overall vision of the community. For comparison, maps and tables of Charleston's current land use inventory can be found in the Community Profile Section of the plan. The Land Use Classifications are defined as follows:

Table 7: Land Use Classes Defined

Low-Density Residential	Single-family homes, less than four dwelling units per acre.
Medium-Density Residential	Primarily 1-2 family dwellings, such as duplexes, attached or detached, four to eight dwelling units per acre.
High-Density Residential	Multifamily apartment buildings, more than eight dwelling units per acre.
Mobile Home Park	Mobile homes or other concentrated manufactured dwellings.
Mixed Use District	A mixture of uses ranging from residential, retail, offices, and government. These areas include the Central Business District and near the University
Neighborhood Commercial	Small retail uses and private stores, professional office uses, and personal service uses, low to moderate traffic near neighborhoods.
Regional Commercial	Major commercial uses, strip and in door malls, areas of high commercial traffic.
Business	Light industrial uses, business parks and include the Corridor Development District.
Light Industrial	Heavy commercial uses and light industrial uses.
Heavy Industrial	Heavy industrial uses (e.g. manufacturing, fabricating, processing, distribution).
Recreation/ Green Space	Public recreational areas and open spaces.
Institutional	Areas owned and managed by local government that is located outside the Civic Business District. Along with public schools and churches.
University	Areas owned and operated by Eastern Illinois University.
Reservoir	The Side Channel Reservoir also known as "Lake Charleston"

NOTE: While Agricultural Land Uses are not specifically defined and shown on the Future Land Use Map, several areas inside the City are currently being used for farmland which will continue into the foreseeable future. The Future Land Use Map shows how these farmlands could be developed in the future defined through "higher" and "best-use" purposes.

Policy Areas

This table shows approximate future land use areas by acre and is illustrated by the Future Land Use Map on page 151 (acreage includes road right of way that serves the specific land use designated on the chart).

Table 8: Future Land Use

Description	Acres	% Of Total
Low Density Residential	1768	28.76%
Medium Density Residential	394	6.41%
High Density Residential	286	4.65%
Mobile Home Residential	65	1.06%
Mixed Use	46	0.75%
Neighborhood Commercial	54	0.88%
Regional Commercial	441	7.17%
Business	392	6.37%
Light Industry	220	3.58%
Heavy Industry	360	5.85%
Recreation and Green Space	1002	16.30%
Institutional (Gov, School, Church, etc.)	442	7.19%
University	346	5.63%
Reservoir	332	5.40%
Corporate Boundary 9.6 Square Miles (6148 acres)		

The Charleston Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Future Land Use Influence Area Map is provided on page 153. This map illustrates future development outside the City of Charleston and is broken into four main parts: Industrial Influence (red hatched areas), Commercial Influence (blue hatched areas), Airport Influence (green hatched areas) and Agriculture and Residential Influence areas (areas not hatched outside the city limits). The purpose of this map is to generally illustrate how areas may be developed in the 1.5-mile extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction; and how these influence areas coincide with the Urban Service Area, the IEPA Facilities Planning Area and the designated floodplain areas.

Planning and Land Use

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Policy Areas

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Planning and Land Use

FUTURE LAND USE MAP 1.5 MILE

Policy Areas

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Planning and Land Use

EIU Map

Policy Areas

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Public Safety



Red, White and Blue Days

Policy Area – Public Safety

Policy Areas



Fire Protection and EMS Services

The Charleston Fire Department (CFD) is dedicated to providing quality fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) (CFD's EMS began in 1973) to the community while identifying improvements needed to help plan for the future increase of services for the community.

CFD Mission Statement:

“The mission of the Charleston Fire Department is to provide an all hazards approach to prevention, education, preparedness, and emergency response to the residents, students, and visitors of our community with a commitment to excellence.”

The CFD has two fire stations in the City with a 35-member department which includes: Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, three Captains, six Lieutenants and 24 firefighters. All members of CFD are licensed by the Illinois Department of Public Health as paramedics.



Fire Station #1

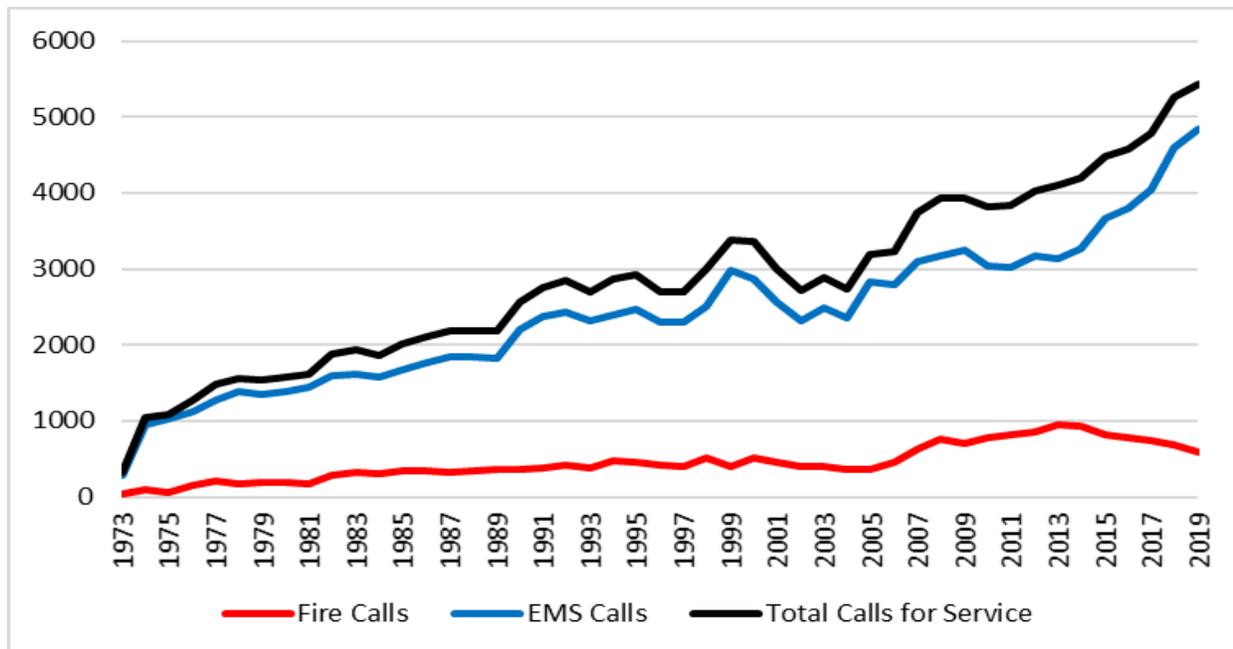


Fire Station #2

Equipment includes five advanced life support transport ambulances, one 100' platform ladder truck, one front line pumper engine, one reserve pumper engine and one front line rescue pumper engine. City of Charleston has a state-of-the-art training facility where live fire training, technical rescue and hazmat training is conducted and offered to fire departments across the region.

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating is one indicator of how well our fire department can protect our community and put out fires. ISO ratings are used to help set homeowners insurance rates on a scale of 1-10; with 1 being the best possible rating. The CFD currently has an ISO rating of 2.

Figure 17: Fire Department Calls for Service



Policy Areas

Goal 1

Study existing facilities and equipment and plan for improvements where feasible.

Recommendations

Evaluate current facilities, plan and budget for improvements, expansions and additions in order to continue to provide quality services to the community.

Preliminary concept plans have been developed for building additions at both Fire Station 1 (10th Street and Madison Avenue) and Fire Station 2 (1510 A Street). These additions must include upgrades to comply with the American’s with Disabilities Act requirements in addition to creating additional space for the public and for the department. Both fire stations are located within neighborhood settings and improvements to these facilities must take into consideration complementing existing neighborhoods during the planning phases.

Additional storage facilities are needed at the training facility and these improvements should be planned and budgeted when possible.



Ongoing maintenance and repairs of the CFD’s existing facilities needs to remain a priority in order to address the necessary upkeep to the existing fire stations.

Evaluate current equipment and plan and budget for new equipment in order to continue to provide quality services to the community.

In order to continue to provide the highest quality fire and EMS services to the community, the department’s equipment must be kept up-to-date and replaced when feasible. The City should maintain its equipment inventory and fleet plan and budget for replacement of equipment (e.g. SCBA equipment) and its rescue equipment when funding allows.

Additional equipment purchases need to be carefully considered and budgeted in order to supplement the CFD’s facilities and current equipment inventory. For example, the purchase of new generators to support the CFD will be important to the functionality of the department. It will also be important to study the department’s radio communications coverage and make improvements to the

system. Using the current and future telecommunications tower infrastructure in the City may present an opportunity to make improvements where necessary.

In order to minimize the use of local funds and to maximize equipment inventory, the CFD needs to continue to explore and utilize consortiums, agreements, partnerships, grant programs and other equipment acquisition opportunities like the Federal Excess Property Program for example.

Goal 2

Evaluate and plan to provide the highest level of fire protection and emergency medical services to the community.

Fire

For communities the size of Charleston, typically the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards are seen as a guide for general Fire Department operations. The NFPA includes guidelines to effective responses for career fire departments and advises staffing and response times for Engine and Ladder Companies.

The Charleston city limits continues to expand and emergency services protection needs to be maintained throughout the City. Annexations are part of the City’s growth plan, and emergency services need to be considered as part of these expansion plans. With additional recent expansion plans to the west by Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center and to the north along County Road 1000N, there may be a need to consider facilities improvement and additions in order to maintain ISO ratings and NFPA response times.

Emergency Medical Services

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) accounts for approximately 89% of all Charleston Fire Department Responses. The trend with EMS has been a steady increase in call volume since the inception in 1973. In 2019 CFD responded to 4835 EMS calls.

All personnel are trained to the Emergency Medical Technician Paramedic level and licensed by IDPH in Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Care system.



Table 9: Fire Department Calls for Service and Personnel

	Fire Calls	EMS Call	EMS % of Calls	Total Calls	Total Personnel
1973	46	280	86%	326	23
1980	194	1388	88%	1582	32
1990	356	2212	86%	2568	33
2000	504	2865	85%	3369	32
2010	778	3039	80%	3817	32
2019	598	4835	89%	5433	35

Policy Areas

Recommendations

Evaluate current staffing to ensure the City meets the service demand of the community.

Part of providing the highest level of fire protection and emergency medical services to the community includes having a well-trained and a well-staffed fire department. The City needs to continually evaluate the current staffing to ensure continued high levels of service. The City should continue to recruit paramedics and retain IDPH licensed personnel.

Ensure that the highest public safety service is maintained throughout all parts of the City. Evaluate equipment needs to ensure high quality service and facility locations to ensure adequate response times.

The City and CFD strives to maintain the City's ISO current rating of 2, which will be done through the highest levels of training, equipment and personnel. This ISO rating shows the City is prepared and can provide the highest public safety service. The City needs to evaluate and plan for replacement of the department fire engines, ladder truck, and evaluate the need for additional ambulances in the future.

In regards to Emergency Medical Service (EMS), the Fire Department needs to continue to provide high quality advanced life support ambulance service to the citizens of Charleston and surrounding areas. This also includes providing non emergent transfers from hospital to hospital. The City needs to evaluate, plan, and budget for ambulance replacement in accordance to the fleet plan, and plan and budget for upgrading medical equipment such as cardiac monitors and power cots. As part of its overall EMS services, the CFD should continue to provide the highest quality ambulance billing service for the City and other contracted communities. Increasing the use of advanced technology (e.g. EMS patient reporting with IPADS) will keep the CFD as a leading provider of public service in the area.

The City needs to monitor and if needed, expand coverage of critical services to all parts of the City including the Highway 16 corridor and the northern industrial corridor. Options could be to consider partnering with other entities on a "Special Use District" and/or an Emergency Operations Center in the corridor that could house Fire, EMS, EMA, and State of Illinois assets.

Actively partner with all City departments and external entities in order to provide relationships needed to ensure quality public service to the community.

The CFD needs to continue to work and collaborate with all City departments from pre-fire to post-fire event coordination. For example, the CFD will continue to work with the Public Works Department in order to maintain and test the City's fire hydrant infrastructure. The CFD also needs to continue to work with the City's Building Department on property maintenance events, plan reviews and evaluating and updating building and fire codes when appropriate. As part of these relationships, the Fire Department should also continue to maintain all AED's, First Aid Kits and other emergency kits at all city facilities and vehicles. This includes offering emergency kits in partnership with the Police Department as part of first responder life-saving efforts.

In addition, the CFD needs to maintain its external partnerships including but not limited to: EIU, the City of Mattoon, local Fire Protection Districts, SBLHC and Coles County.

Continue a strong public education program for the community.

The CFD has a strong presence in the school system and does regular fire safety presentations and open houses for the community. The CFD should continue the smoke and carbon monoxide detector installation program in the City, which is also done in coordination with Eastern Illinois University's annual "Good Neighbors" program. The CFD also offers fire station tours and community relationship programs through events and festivals including the annual Red, White and Blue Days at Morton Park. Continuing strong community relationships is critical to the success of the CFD.



Goal 3

Maintain highly trained Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services personnel.

Recommendations

Continue regular trainings exercise and additional training opportunities

The CFD offers weekly department training programs for all shifts. Currently, training is provided as follows: the first week of the month is fire related training; the second week of the month is training for Hazmat; the third week of the month is training for technical rescue; and the fourth week of the month is training for EMS. Regular training offers the personnel the most up-to-date exercises. The CFD personnel also offers training to City personnel through programs like CPR classes and these programs should continue.



Policy Areas

The City has its own state-of-the-art training facilities and these facilities should be used for different training opportunities. The CFD should also continue to utilize training opportunities from the Illinois Fire Service Institute and the Fire Marshal's Office and continue joint training exercises with other departments and law enforcement. Local Fire Departments and Fire Protection Districts should be encouraged to continue to utilize the City's training facility for collaborative training opportunities. Through Mutual Aid with the City of Mattoon and with the formation of Rapid Intervention Team (R.I.T.), regional training partnerships are now realized.



Goal 4

Maintain an active role in Emergency Management activities.

Emergency Management

Fire Departments have taken a larger role within the communities in an “All Hazards” approach to incident management. County Emergency Management Agencies are relying more on Fire Services to help in the mitigations of weather and other related emergencies. Training in the National Incident Management System is necessary for all members of the Fire Services. To prepare for potential issues, the CFD has maintained a high level of Incident Management Training for all key personnel. The City offers a Command Post, which has many assets to manage a large-scale disaster at the local or county level and the Command Post should be maintained and upgraded as practical.

Recommendations

- Continually review and update the city Emergency Operations Plan
- Maintain the City's outdoor warning siren system, evaluate coverage and plan improvements if required
- Evaluate, plan, and budget to add additional outdoor warning sirens in the Highway corridor and other locations if needed.
- Maintain membership in the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System
- Actively participate in the Coles County LEPC
- Evaluate need for a reverse 911 system or other public notification system
- Develop and collaborate on an emergency response (mapping) plan for the current and future trail system

Goal 5

Maintain Specialized Teams that would be an asset to the residents of the City.

Specialized Teams

The CFD is part of Division 26 Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) and currently hosts the MABAS Statewide Deployable Hazmat and Technical Rescue teams. These Teams are expected to provide protection to the 14 counties which account for over 6500 square miles.

Recommendations

- Continue to evaluate and replace equipment as needed
- Look into the feasibility of combining teams with other MABAS Divisions



Policy Areas

Police Protection Services

The Charleston Police Department (CPD) is dedicated to protecting life and property in the City of Charleston.

CPD Mission Statement:

“It is our mission and duty to protect life and property in our community. We will treat everyone with whom we come into contact with dignity and respect, while recognizing and appreciating the diversity among the members of our community. We will strive to be innovative, to work in concert with our citizens, and to use all available resources both effectively and efficiently to address crime, the causes of crime, and the fear of crime in our community.”



CPD will recognize that we are accountable to our community and CPD will be aware of direct impacts to the quality of life of our citizens. We will apply the law fairly and ethically, emphasizing quality in everything we say and do. We will recognize that the noble profession of policing involves more than enforcement of the law. It involves a spirit of public service, a promise of honesty and integrity, and a responsibility to maintain the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution, and a commitment to personal and professional excellence.

Table 10: Crime Statistics

Index Crimes*	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Murder	0	1	0	0	2	0	0
Sexual Assault	11	20	17	12	21	14	21
Robbery (armed / strong armed)	5	7	12	16	6	6	5
Aggravated Assault / Battery	34	37	47	52	50	88	65
Burglary (all types)	111	171	139	108	101	75	43
Home Invasion	6	7	3	5	1	3	2
Theft (all types)	211	241	211	272	269	329	230
Motor Vehicle Theft	9	4	13	11	19	8	12
Arson	1	1	1	1	5	1	3
Totals	388	489	443	477	474	524	381

*** Index Crimes are reported to the FBI as part of the Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics**

Other Areas of Interest	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Domestic Battery	138	151	164	179	199	185	193
Agg. Domestic Battery reports	9	5	10	5	6	6	5
City Poss. Of Drug Paraphernalia	24	44	35	35	50	77	43
City Possession of Cannabis	26	37	36	31	49	84	62
Methamphetamine Arrests	4	7	16	7	15	44	86
Calls for Service	13,215	14,007	14,041	14,838	13,407	14,366	18,460

Public Safety

City Ordinance	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Selling Alcohol w/o License	2	0	0	2	1	0	0
Gift or Sale of Alcohol to Minor	3	10	5	5	0	0	0
Minor in a Licensed Premise	11	23	11	9	10	4	4
Misrepresentation of age by Minor	2	9	3	2	1	0	0
Purchase/Acceptance of Alcohol	77	136	95	61	42	41	37
Minor Possession of Alcohol	28	34	26	12	10	18	11
Possession of False ID	13	38	16	26	18	9	7
Illegal Transportation	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
Public Possession of Alcohol	36	122	79	60	22	47	47
Possession of Keg w/o Permit	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Obscene Conduct	14	19	13	25	18	19	16
Disturbing the Peace	11	29	13	11	10	10	4
Totals	197	420	262	214	133	149	126

SAFE CITY RANKINGS

In 2015, the City of Charleston ranked #2 as the safest places in Illinois for “midsized cities” by “ValuePenguin” using FBI Crime Report data. The City was listed at #16 as the Safest City in Illinois.

In 2016, Charleston was ranked in the Top 10 Safest College Towns in America; and in 2017, the City of Charleston ranked as #27 of the 50 safest cities in Illinois and #2 in the safest college towns in America by “Safewise”.

In 2019, the City of Charleston was named in the “Best College Towns in America” list by “The Center Square” and published in “News-Press Now.com. Charleston, home of Eastern Illinois University was the highest-ranked Illinois town on the list; and ranked 19th overall out of 415 towns and cities and fourth on the list of “Best Small Cities” in America.

Goal 1

Study existing facilities and equipment and plan for improvements where feasible.



Currently, the police department is located in a space downtown. In the future, two options exist that could provide a larger space for the Charleston Police. The first option is to locate within a new city administration building in the Central Business District. Another option may be to consider a separate Public Safety Building in the city that would also house the fire activities. In 2020, the City plans to remodel the current facility to comply with ADA requirements and general updates and the City should execute these required improvements.

Policy Areas

The Charleston Police Department (CPD) currently has a 50-yard target range, which limits the types of firearms training that can be completed at the facility. One option is to eventually extend the range to 100 yards. This would allow for longer and better rifle training for officers of the Charleston Police Department as well as neighboring agencies.

The range facility also houses the CPD vehicle impound lot where vehicles are stored until sold for drug related and general crimes.

The City of Charleston is currently participating in an interagency cooperative telecommunications project called GovTC. With GovTC, the current LEADS system and internet service will be implemented with the tower to improve speed of those services. With GovTC, the CPD is planning to change over to a simulcast radio system thus improving communications throughout the city.

Additional equipment needs for consideration include:

- Digital radios
- Squad car camera and body camera maintenance and digital storage
- Upgrade and maintain fleet tasers
- Upgrade and maintain firearms
- Additional fencing and cameras for the impound yard
- Simulcast Radio System / continue and expand GovTC functions
- Upgrade internet service / continue and expand GovTC functions
- Upgrade additional video feeds
- Upgrade LEADS service
- Explore cooperative agreements with CRT for vehicle upgrades

Goal 2

Evaluate and plan to provide the highest level of police protection and crime prevention to the community.

Actively partner with all City departments and external entities in order to provide relationships needed to ensure quality public service to the community.

The CPD needs to continue to work and collaborate with all City departments. For example, the CPD also needs to continue to work with the City's Building Department on property maintenance and visual blight issues in the City. As part of these relationships, the Police Department should also continue to maintain all AED's, First Aid Kits and other emergency kits at all city facilities and vehicles. This includes offering emergency kits in partnership with the Fire Department as part of first responder life-saving efforts.

In addition, the CPD needs to maintain its external partnerships including but not limited to: City of Mattoon Police Department, Eastern Illinois University, Coles County Sheriff's Office, Illinois State Police, IDNR, East Central Illinois Task Force.

Continue a strong public education program for the community.

The CPD has a strong presence in the school system and adding a dedicated school resource officer needs to be considered. The CPD should continue participating in Eastern Illinois University's annual "Good Neighbors" program. The CPD should expand its community policing efforts and other community relationship programs through events and festivals including the annual Red, White and Blue Days at Morton Park. Other programs should be expanded including an active Neighborhood Watch Program and the Citizens Police Academy. Continuing strong community relationships is critical to the success of the CPD.



Goal 3

Maintain highly trained police department personnel.

Recommendations

Continue regular trainings exercise and additional training opportunities

The CPD averages 3,061 hours of total training annually. The CPD continues to strive to be one of the leaders in the law enforcement community in training and some CPD officers are instructors. The following are some of the trainings CPD specializes in:

- Firearms
- Defensive Tactics
- K9
- Sniper
- ALICE
- DUI Enforcement
- Crime Scene Processing
- Juvenile
- Taser

Policy Areas

The CPD officers are trained in Cultural Competency programs that discuss how changing demographics affect police services, understanding cultural differences within each agency, eliminate discriminatory practices and understanding generational differences. First responder training includes language skills, non-verbal communication of different cultures, LGBT awareness, understating community perception, implicit bias and cultural conflict recognition. Community policing techniques are also included to teach overcoming bias against police, building trust and legitimacy with diverse communities, problem solving and bridging gaps between police and community and the history of racial profiling.

Cultural Diversity training was provided by the East Central Illinois Mobile Law Enforcement Training Team MTU #13 where the curriculum included:

- Cross-Cultural communication skills for law enforcement
- Identifying values that represent a tolerant life outlook
- Examining personal perceptions of diverse populations
- Understanding personal value system and how they relate to diversity
- Understanding how diversity affects law enforcement
- Recognize the importance of challenging inappropriate behavior
- Identify the impact of racist and discrimination on people
- Role of diversity in proofing criminal suspects

This course provided the following learning objectives:

- To be able to identity specific customs and habits of major ethnic groups
- To be able to identify the roadblocks to tolerance
- To be able to understand the police culture and its effect upon tolerance
- To be able to recognize opportunities to increase the dialogue between groups
- To understand the impact of intolerance upon an organization
- To be able to enhance relationships between groups
- To be able to develop an individualized program for stress reduction

The CPD will continue to seek out the most advanced training for our current law enforcement leaders within the department. Sergeants will attend leadership courses through the Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board's Executive Institute, while Lieutenants will be encouraged to attend the FBI National Academy and Northwestern's School of Public Safety's Staff and Command. This will ensure a smooth transition for police administration in the future.

Goal 4

Maintain an active role in Emergency Management activities.

Emergency Management



Fire Departments and Police Departments have taken a larger role within the communities in an “All Hazards” approach to incident management. County Emergency Management Agencies are relying more on Fire Services and Police Department to help in the mitigations of weather and other related emergencies. Training in the National Incident Management System is necessary for all members of the Police Services. The City offers a Command Post, which has many assets to manage a large-scale disaster at the local or county level and the Command Post should be maintained and upgraded as practical. CPD and CFD

will continue to maintain our current practice of a unified command structure during critical incidents and disasters. CPD officers will continue to jointly train with fire personnel in areas such as active shooter, mass casualty, and natural disaster drills.

Goal 5

Maintain Specialized Teams that would be an asset to the residents of the City.

Specialized Teams

- The CPD is part of East Central Illinois Drug Task Force
- The CPD maintains a 24/7 Crime Scene Unit for major crime scenes
- The CPD currently has 5 bicycle officers for special events and patrol functions
- The CPD has two full-service Police Canine Units
- The CPD has a certified Internet Crimes Against Children Investigator and the CPD has a Chaplain that is available to residents if requested



Recommendations

- Continue to evaluate and replace equipment as needed
- Continue to train and certify officers in these areas when current officers are promoted or retire

Policy Areas

CFD, CPD and Eastern Illinois University

The CFD and the CPD will continue to work with, cooperate and collaborate with, and maintain its long-lasting partnership with Eastern Illinois University.

The Charleston Fire Department provides fire protection services and emergency medical services to EIU's campus and off-campus residents. CPD and the University Police Department (UPD) provide joint police protection services during heavy call volumes and have worked together with joint patrols.

CFD works with EIU to assist resident hall assistants in annual fire training exercises and offers ongoing training to EIU faculty and staff. CFD coordinates internship and practicum opportunities for students in nursing, fire training, emergency management along with ride along programs. City officials, including with CFD and CPD make presentations to EIU classes and are available to the EIU media outlets to relay information and stories. The City has worked with EIU's Geography Department to help develop computer mapping and GIS information to assist with public safety needs in the City and during events. The City of Charleston also provides staff, officials and public safety personnel as part of the annual "Good Neighbors Program" to welcome off-campus students back to Charleston each fall semester.

EIU permits Charleston to train at its facilities including: confined space training exercises at the EIU power plant and steam tunnels along with rappelling training from its buildings. CFD also coordinates with EIU during annual testing and training with its fire suppression facilities. Training exercises include active shooter drills with CFD and CPD. In 2013, EIU and CFD conducted a high-rise drill that involved numerous local fire departments and volunteer fire organizations. In 2012, EIU hosted a state wide drill that included numerous public safety agencies throughout the region.

The CFD and CPD conduct educational programs with EIU including demonstrating fire sprinkler "side by side" demonstrations during EIU family weekend football tailgate. CFD provides ambulances on standby during home EIU football games and Charleston offers its public safety command trailer for major incidents.

EIU and CFD perform monthly warning siren testing and city officials are part of the EIU Alert System which provides real time information during public safety events on and close to campus. For larger events, EIU's safety officer prepares Incident Action Plans as part of emergency preparedness which includes response information for both CFD and CPD.

Recent communications upgrades at EIU to allow (UPD) to have "radio interoperability" with Charleston to allow for better shared radio communications. As previously detailed, EIU and Charleston are part of a 5-entity intergovernmental cooperation agreement called "GovTC" to install upgraded communications facilities across the County; and EIU allows additional shared communication facilities to be located on buildings and structures on campus.

Public Safety recommendations with EIU include continuing its on-going partnership, sharing assets, sharing communication and continue the strong on-going relationship between the City of Charleston and Eastern Illinois University in all areas including: response, incident management, education, training, facilities and equipment. Monthly meetings ensure continued open communication with CPD, CFD and UPD and this positive relationship will continue into the future.

Detail Sections and Implementation

Policy Areas

Implementation Plan

This Comprehensive Plan for the City of Charleston embodies ideas and concepts, policies, and directions, rather than ridged specifications. Future needs have been examined in terms of population, housing, economy, physical and natural features, land use and infrastructure. Policies have been developed for each of these topics to guide the city in reaching and accomplishing needs and goals.

Leadership and legislation must exist in Charleston to make the Comprehensive Plan a success. Adoption of this Comprehensive Plan 2020 Update by the City Council assures the policies embodied in this plan are followed. After the City Council adopts the Comprehensive Plan, the Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning and City officials have the responsibility of implementing the policies outlined in the Plan. After revisions are made to the existing ordinances, the Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning should continue to keep the proposals in this Comprehensive Plan up to date. The Steering Committee that guided the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan should continue to monitor the implementation and application of its policies.

Since 1996, citizens of Charleston had the opportunity for input in the planning process. Implementation of this Comprehensive Plan will make necessary cooperation between organizations such as the Charleston Area Chamber of Commerce, Coles County, the City of Mattoon, Eastern Illinois University, Lake Land College, Coles Together, private business groups, residents, developers and local volunteers.

It is the responsibility of the City Council to identify financial resources and to budget funds to carry out the policies of this Plan. Proper planning would help assure that the city grows according to its ability to fund essential services and infrastructure. New and innovative methods of financing public improvements and services should be studied and implemented as appropriate to stabilize the burden paid by the existing community.

Status of Previous Planning Efforts

Over the years, many of the actions and recommendations identified in the strategic planning effort *Charleston Tomorrow (1996)* have been realized. In order to avoid any overlap in planning efforts, the actions that have been achieved, and remain open, were taken into account during the process of developing this 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update.

In addition, the goals and recommendations of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Comprehensive Plan have also been incorporated, where practical, in this 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update.

All past efforts are detailed in the following Capital Improvements Plan and Community Development Work Plan.

Policy Areas

Capital Improvements Plan and Community Development Work Plan

The development of a Capital Improvements Plan and Community Development Work Plan helps assure the City grows according to its ability to fund essential services and infrastructure that is consistent with this planning document. This Capital Improvements Plan and Community Development Work Plan identifies individual projects, plan of action, progress summary and associated costs. The following workplan allows for transparency and accountability to City residents and stakeholders. This detail is important as future improvements must be made to accommodate growth and development in the community. The following detail is a summary of capital improvements and community development tasks that pertain to recommendations made in this plan. To compliment this plan, City officials develop department specific 5-Year Work Plans that are revised annually.