

Dear Charleston County Leadership,

We are writing to **present a unified set of transportation and infrastructure priorities for Charleston's Upper Peninsula, developed collaboratively** by the North Central, Wagener Terrace, Hampton Park Terrace, and Westside Neighborhood Associations (Appendix A). Together, these communities comprise the **peninsula's primary residential core, representing more than half of its permanent population according to** American Community Survey (2023) estimates, with actual year-round residency likely higher due to the area's predominantly renter-occupied housing and large graduate and student populations.

Transportation data clearly demonstrate why the Upper Peninsula warrants focused investment. **Only 56% of Upper Peninsula residents commute by car, compared to approximately 75% citywide. In contrast, 13% walk to work (vs. 4.2% citywide) and 6% bicycle (vs. 1.5% citywide). These shifts are accelerating: walking commutes in the Upper Peninsula increased year over year by approximately 5.7%, while car commuting declined by approximately 4.3%—a pattern not reflected citywide, where commute modes have remained largely static (ACS 2023).** These trends underscore the Upper Peninsula's role as a dense, walkable, and increasingly multimodal district, where transportation investments deliver outsized safety, mobility, and quality-of-life returns.

The Upper Peninsula is also well-positioned to maximize Transportation Sales Tax (TST) funding because this transition is already underway. Community-led initiatives—such as the James Simons Montessori School “bike bus,” supported by parent chaperones—demonstrate strong local participation and demand. This momentum is reinforced through **active collaboration with the City of Charleston Department of Traffic and Transportation, Charleston Moves, and urban streetscaping initiatives**, ensuring County investment in the Upper Peninsula builds on existing efforts, delivers near-term results, and produces durable, high-return improvements.

Building a Safer, More Resilient Upper Peninsula

*Investing in Charleston's Upper Peninsula—long underserved yet now rapidly growing and home to the majority of the peninsula's permanent residents—through **data-driven, resident-led transportation and infrastructure improvements** that enhance safety, strengthen climate resilience, expand walking and bicycling networks, beautify public spaces, and better connect neighborhoods. These priorities are grounded in **current mobility data, documented flooding and safety conditions, and lived resident experience**, and reflect a coordinated community effort to proactively shape growth, protect vulnerable users, and ensure the Upper Peninsula remains a safe, accessible, and livable place as demand continues to increase.*

Priorities in Common

Across Upper Peninsula neighborhoods, residents consistently identified the following needs as high priorities:

1. **Pedestrian Safety: Main North–South Arteries Serving Residential and Emerging Upper Peninsula Destinations**

What: Enhanced pedestrian crossings on Rutledge Ave., Ashley Ave., Coming St., King St., and Meeting St.

Install highly visible, signalized, and traffic-calming crosswalks along the peninsula's primary north-south corridors, particularly near schools and along routes connecting residential neighborhoods to the Lowline and the rapidly emerging Upper Peninsula area.

Why this matters: These streets function as the main north–south arteries carrying through-traffic while also serving a predominantly residential population and an increasingly active tourism and hospitality district; enhanced pedestrian infrastructure is critical to slow vehicle speeds, improve safety, and support safe access for residents, workers, and visitors as pedestrian volumes continue to grow.

2. **Flood Mitigation (Appendix B)**

What: Prioritize targeted drainage, green infrastructure, and streetscape interventions at intersections and corridors that repeatedly flood during routine rain events.

Why this matters: Chronic flooding does more than inconvenience residents—it cuts off access to homes, schools, and medical facilities; damages infrastructure; and discourages walking and biking. Addressing repeat problem locations delivers immediate, visible improvements and supports long-term climate resilience.

3. **Huger St. Sidewalk & Streetscape Completion: The Upper Peninsula's Main East-West Artery**

What: Complete missing or substandard sidewalks and add pedestrian-scale lighting, landscaping, and traffic-calming design elements along Huger St.

Why this matters: Huger St. is a major connector between neighborhoods, employment centers, and downtown destinations, yet current conditions discourage walking. Safe, continuous sidewalks and streetscape upgrades will improve access, safety, and neighborhood cohesion.

4. **Utility Undergrounding and Urban Tree Canopy Expansion**

What: Plant street trees and underground overhead power lines as part of coordinated streetscape improvements.

Why this matters:

- *Reduces heat and improves comfort:* Tree canopy lowers surface and air temperatures, making sidewalks and bike routes safer and more usable year-round.
- *Supports flood mitigation:* Trees intercept rainfall and absorb stormwater, reducing runoff and localized flooding.
- *Improves safety and mobility:* Expanded canopy and fewer utility pole conflicts allow for wider sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and better visibility at intersections.
- *Increases storm resilience:* Underground utilities are less vulnerable to wind and flooding, reducing outages and emergency street closures.
- *Enhances long-term streetscape quality:* Fewer visual obstructions and healthier streets increase neighborhood value and overall quality of life.

5. **Connected Bike and Pedestrian Network**

What: Invest in a continuous, protected bicycle and pedestrian network that enables residents and visitors to safely navigate the Charleston Peninsula without relying on automobiles. At a minimum, fully fund and implement the Charleston Moves Bike Network, which is well-researched and ready for implementation (Appendix C).

Why this matters: A connected network reduces traffic congestion, improves public safety and health, expands access for residents without vehicles, and supports sustainable growth as pedestrian and visitor activity continues to increase.

Neighborhood Specific Priorities

In addition to the shared priorities above, residents of the Upper Peninsula neighborhood highlighted several location-specific safety and infrastructure concerns:

North Central

- **Upper King Street / “Fabulous” Ellen Bright Hall corridor** road improvements and beautification/tree canopy installations
- **Romney Street exit ramp (T-stop) safety improvements**, where repeated stop-sign violations have resulted in vehicles running into homes on the opposite side of the street

- **Rutledge Avenue exit safety improvements**, where high-speed merging creates dangerous conditions for neighborhood traffic
- **Mt. Pleasant, King, Morrison, and Meeting Street junction pedestrian safety improvements**, which is currently a high-risk area for people walking and biking
- **Increased Investment in Pothole Fixes**, Longer-Term or More Frequent Solutions

Hampton Park Terrace

- **The intersection of Ashley Ave. and Congress St.** needs more attention than just a yield sign because of the odd bend that has resulted in many severe wrecks and would benefit from improvements such as corner bulbs.
- The aforementioned undergrounding of wiring would markedly improve pedestrian and cyclist experiences because it would enable the development of a full tree canopy, but because Hampton Park Terrace is a National Register Historic District, we are equally worried about the visual impact of aboveground transformers in many front yards instead of transformers placed **fully underground** (as was done 50+ years ago South of Broad but which Dominion Power says is too expensive)
- Having a **CARTA bus line run through Hampton Park Terrace** would help make the system more useful. Currently, the nearest stop to any route to further downtown is a 10-15 walk.

Wagener Terrace –Specific Priorities

- **Grove and Rutledge Intersection improvements**
- **Rutledge and Courtland Intersection Improvements**
- **Improved Community Access to Waterways within Wagener Terrace.**
 - There used to be several public docks and landings in the neighborhood and we would like to restore and improve upon those precedents. Areas of focus consist of:
 - Longborough Dock
 - The walk along 10th avenue
 - Public right of way at 9th avenue
 - Corner of 3rd avenue
 - End of St Margaret street
 - Public right of way at the end of Grove street
- **Nature based Solutions** for localized flooding, specifically at Gordon street and along Rutledge avenue.

Westside Neighborhood - Specific Priorities

- **Pedestrian Safety**
 - Septima P. Clark Parkway
High-speed highway infrastructure bisects Westside and creates unsafe

conditions for residents accessing schools, hospitals, and neighborhood destinations.

- *Coming Street*
Site of a 2016 pedestrian fatality; traffic speeds and limited pedestrian visibility remain unresolved.
- *President Street*
Primary pedestrian and vehicular access to MUSC Ashley River Tower and Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital, with heavy daily foot traffic and limited crossing protections.
- *Ashley Avenue*
Ashley Avenue crosses directly over Septima P. Clark Parkway with highway on- and off-ramps that deliver high-speed traffic into Westside and MUSC-bound pedestrian areas.
- *Rutledge Avenue*
Rutledge Avenue crosses over Septima P. Clark Parkway one block east of Ashley, funneling fast-moving Crosstown traffic directly into residential and restaurant-heavy neighborhoods.

o Westside King Street Corridor (Engle to Congress)

Dense restaurant, gym, and nightlife activity create constant pedestrian crossings without adequate safety infrastructure.

- *Race Street & King Street*
Critical pedestrian crossing serving seven restaurants and three gyms; extremely high foot traffic with no enhanced pedestrian controls.
- *Congress Street & King Street*
Crossing used by residents of a large senior living facility and restaurant patrons; current conditions do not reflect the vulnerability of users.
- *Engle Street & King Street*
Crosswalk was approved and funded following a pedestrian fatality but remains unbuilt due to lack of bids, leaving a known hazard unaddressed.

o Sumter Street Crossings

These crossings are predominantly used by attendees of schools, event venues, churches, and residents/tourists seeking access to the restaurant district of King Street in Westside.

- *Sumter St. & Ashley Ave.*
Primary school crossing for Simmons-Pinckney Middle and Burke High School students; poor sightlines and frequent high-risk collisions.
- *Sumter St. & Rutledge Ave.*
Severe visibility issues and confusing vehicle movements pose a danger to pedestrians and drivers, compounded by large event venues/places of

whorship (Nehemiah Lodge - Masonic Temple, Citadel Football Stadium, Salem Baptist Missionary Church) nearby.

- **Traffic Calming**

- o Ashley Avenue

- High speeds persist due to one-way design; the corridor was excluded from the two-way conversion, requiring streetscaping, lane narrowing, and visual speed-reduction measures to slow traffic.

- o Rutledge Avenue

- Major access route for the Upper Peninsula into Elliotborough/Cannonborough; excluded from two-way conversion and now functions as a fast arterial through residential areas.

- o Coming Street

- Residential corridor with through-traffic speeding; streetscaping and traffic-calming design are needed to discourage cut-through driving.

- o Fishburne Street

- High-speed connector near the Crosstown; design encourages acceleration rather than neighborhood-scale travel.

Recommended Traffic-Calming Tools

Street trees, curb extensions, raised crosswalks, narrower travel lanes, and pedestrian-oriented lighting to visually and physically reduce speeds.

- **Flood Mitigation & Access Impacts**

- o Hagood Avenue & Lockwood Drive

- Severe flooding regularly blocks access to a subset of Westside homes, cutting off residents during storms and limiting emergency access.

- o Ashley Avenue & Sumter Street

- Flooding at this intersection compounds pedestrian and school safety risks and disrupts daily neighborhood mobility.

- o Nunan Street & Ashley Avenue

- Recurrent flooding creates access and safety issues for nearby residents and contributes to broader drainage system strain.

We appreciate Charleston County's continued engagement with neighborhood associations and its willingness to consider resident-driven priorities. We look forward to working collaboratively to advance projects that improve safety, resilience, and livability for the Upper Peninsula and the broader Charleston community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

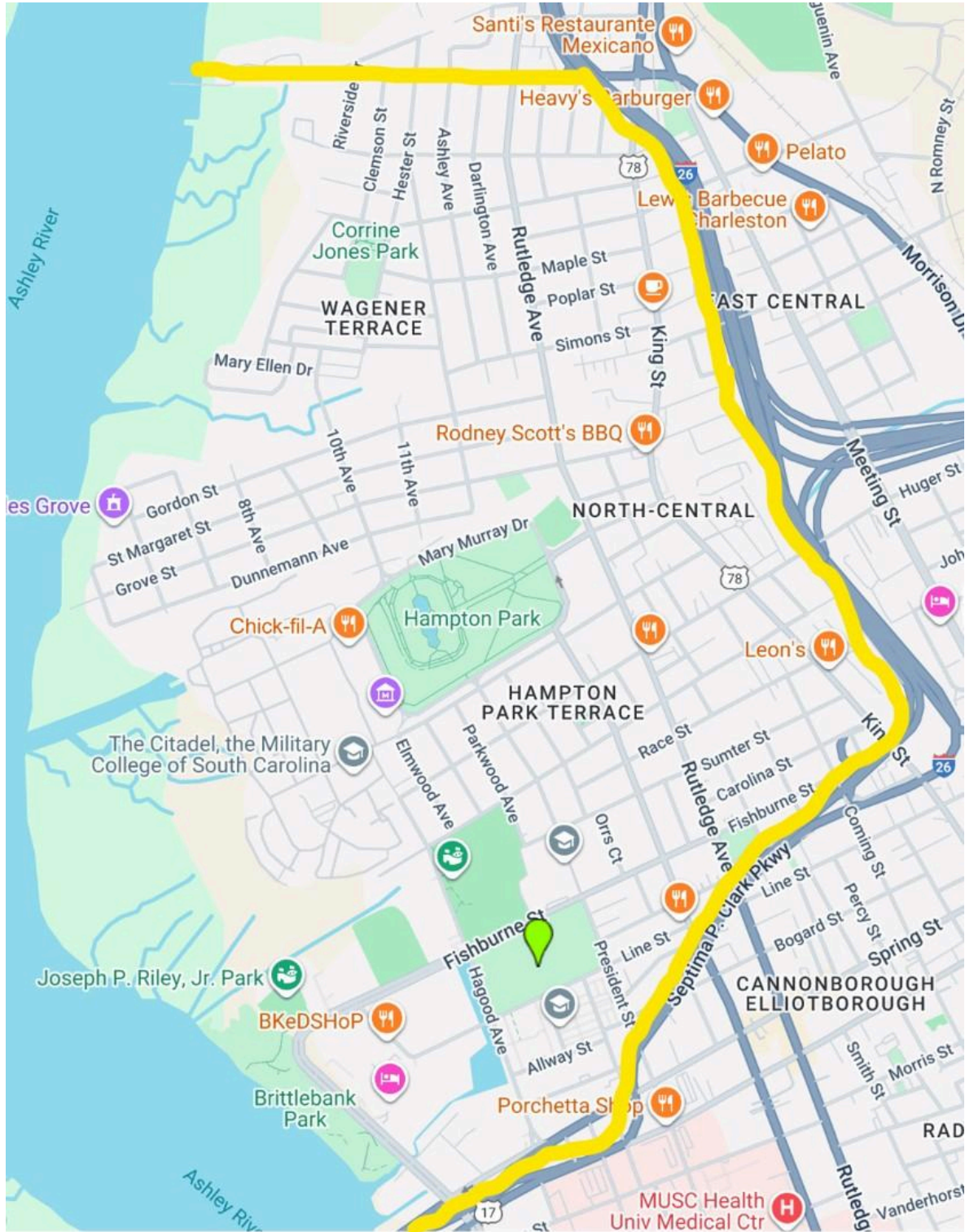
Stephen Rosenberg
President, North Central Neighborhood Association

Sarah Spangler
President, Westside Neighborhood Association

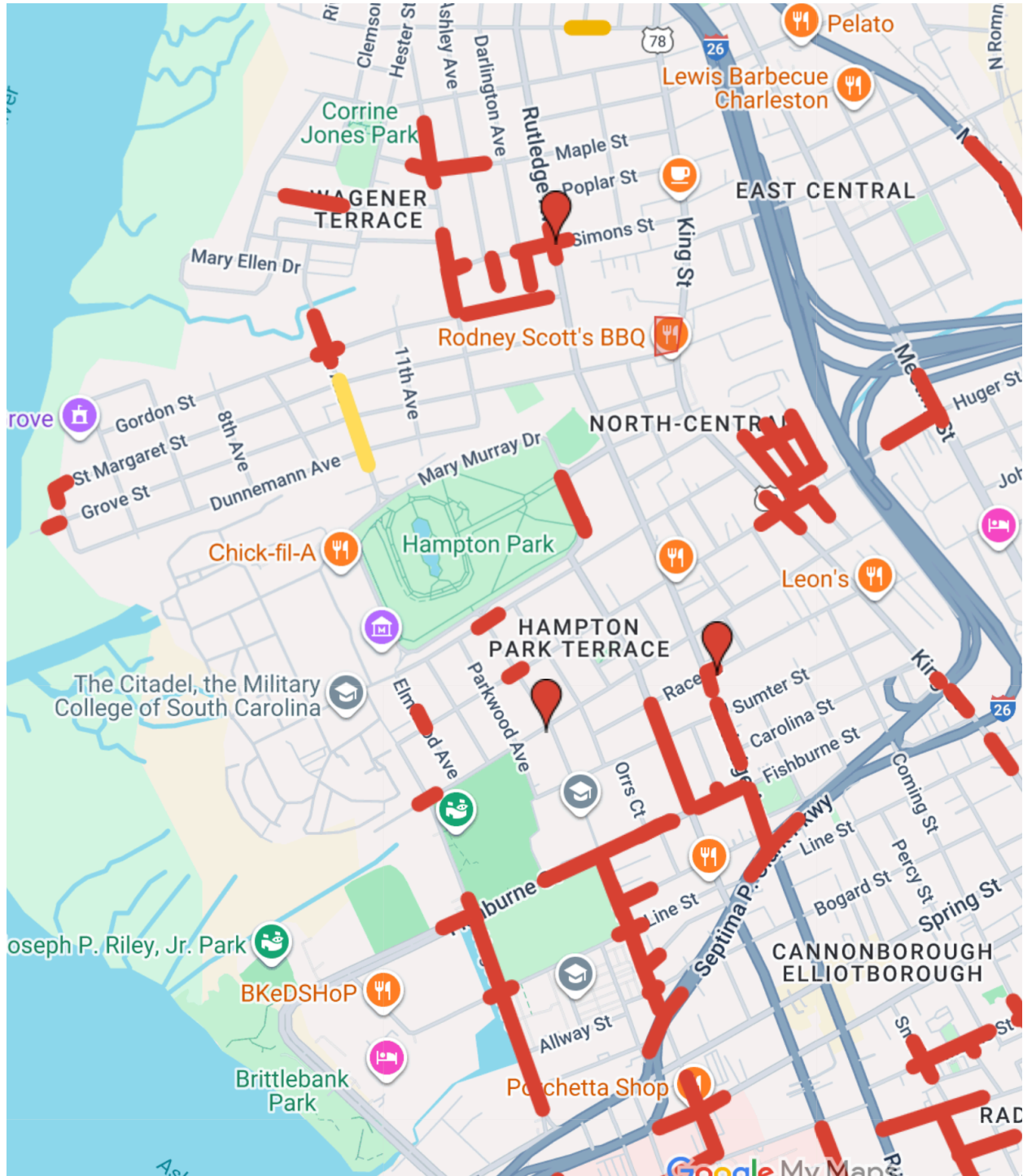
Jarrett Nicholson
President, Wagener Terrace Neighborhood Association

Kevin Eberle
President, Hampton Park Terrace Neighborhood Association

Appendix A
Upper Peninsula Neighborhoods Map



Appendix B
Frequently Flooded/Impassable Upper Peninsula Intersections and Roadways
Source: Marshall Walker Real Estate (August 4, 2024)



Appendix C
Potential City of Charleston TST Priority Bike/Ped Projects: Charleston Peninsula
Source: Charleston Moves

