

**1998 TOURISM MANAGEMENT
PLAN UPDATE**

City of Charleston

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Tourism Management Plan

1998 UPDATE

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I. Executive Summary

Charleston is a leader in managing tourism in a historic setting. The City has a comprehensive package of tourism management regulations that have evolved over the last two decades in response to the dynamic tourism industry. This update to the 1994 Tourism Management Plan recommends numerous adjustments to these regulations to provide relief for downtown residents while not compromising the success of the tourism industry.

Beginning with the 1997 tourism management forum and throughout the planning process, community participation was remarkable. Downtown residents and tourism industry representatives were eager to work together to discover solutions to mitigate the negative impacts of perceived increasing tourism activity. The resulting solutions reflect a much greater understanding of others' concerns based on this foundation of shared knowledge.

The issues addressed in this update are categorized much as they were in the 1994 Tourism Management Plan: Long Range Planning, Tourism Ordinance Enforcement and City Image, Tourist Related Vehicles and Transportation. The one major difference during this update was the addition of a thorough review of the tourism ordinance enforcement system.

Long range planning reaffirms the 1994 strategy with clarification of residents' desire to retain their reprieve in the visitation cycle. It is preferred that all months of the year not be as active as peak months. The committee emphasized that other economic development options must be expanded--the city should not rely primarily on the tourism industry. The role of the Tourism Commission should be strengthened to include a more proactive agenda by overseeing the implementation of this plan and by hosting the annual February Tourism Management Forum. The commission also should work closer with the director of Neighborhood Services to coordinate neighborhood issues promptly.

Enforcement of tourism management ordinances involves a complex set of regulations. The current Division of Tourism Management staffing and support equipment does not facilitate an adequate level of enforcement. Given the detailed ordinances and immense size of the area to be monitored for tourism ordinance compliance, additional resources are needed along with an improved enforcement system. This plan recommends that the tourism enforcement officers (TEO's) be moved into the Police Department where an effective system is already in place for parking enforcement officers (PEO's) to supervise, hire, fire, etc. The training for TEO's will still be provided through the Department of Traffic and Transportation and Division of Tourism Management. This action will increase the efficiency of the management of tourism ordinances and enable the tourism office to monitor violations and trends and to work closely with the Tourism Commission on a proactive agenda.

Numerous recommendations were made concerning the image of the city as it relates to tourism. Examples of changes recommended include a carefully developed procedure to increase visitors' awareness of public restroom locations. New tourism related noise on commercial boats should be addressed through strict noise ordinance enforcement. Various means of improving the appearance of the Charleston gateways are also recommended.

The committee stressed the need for a comprehensive downtown traffic and parking study and recommended ways of improving the DASH system. Strategies to improve the use of parking structures were also noted as ways to reduce the parking on neighborhood streets. Regulations and a monitoring system should be developed for the increasingly popular walking tours.

Finally, small and large tour bus activity, tour guide regulations and animal drawn carriage activities were also reviewed. To mitigate the negative impacts from tour buses on the neighborhoods, a reduction in the number of large buses permitted to tour per hour is recommended. The small bus cap is reduced 28 percent and carriage routes are refined to eliminate the heavy use of particular streets. The permitted hours of operation for all commercial tour activities should be reduced to relieve downtown rush-hour traffic congestion and to reduce the presence of tours in the residential areas.

II. The Planning Process

May 29, 1997, the City of Charleston, Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, College of Charleston, Historic Charleston Foundation, National Trust for Historic Preservation and Preservation Society of Charleston co-sponsored an all day tourism management forum which over two hundred persons attended. The forum was the result of increasing concerns related to tourism in the historic district. The ultimate goal of the forum was to continue the dialogue of defining issues and opportunities and to assess the impact of tourism on the residential quality of life. The issues raised at the forum covered congestion caused by touring vehicles, enforcement of tourism management ordinances and the continued debate of knowing when enough tourism is enough--can we define our capacity for tourism?

As a result of the tourism management forum, the City established a thirty-three member committee which was given the task of updating the 1994 Tourism Management Plan and addressing the concerns expressed at the forum. This special Tourism Management Advisory Committee consisted of the fourteen-member Tourism Commission and nineteen additional appointments including downtown residents, business owners, members of the tourism industry, City Council members and City staff. The committee began meeting in September 1997 and concluded their tasks in February 1998.

Three subcommittees were established to address issues in an organized fashion: 1) Tourism Management Ordinance Enforcement and City Image, 2) Transportation and 3) Tourist Related Vehicles. Each subcommittee met several times monthly in advertised public meetings. Additional citizen participation was strongly encouraged. As recommendations were developed by the subcommittees, reports were given at the full Tourism Management Advisory Committee meetings where additional public suggestions were encouraged and final recommendations were crafted.

Once all the subcommittee matters were acted upon by the full committee, the long range planning issues were discussed. The committee was charged with reviewing and revising the 1994 plan's long range planning policies. Not surprisingly, these three year old policies were primarily still on target--only minor changes were recommended.

The following sections are reports of the subcommittees. Their task was to review the 1994 plan and, where appropriate, offer updates. In the case of the Tourist Related Vehicles Subcommittee, the focus had changed significantly from primarily carriage industry issues in 1994 to include other modes of tourist transportation in 1997.

The implementation of this plan falls first to City Council for adoption as the official policy document for tourism management. The Tourism Commission will have the responsibility of working with City staff to prioritize action steps. New ordinances and amendments drafted as directed by the commission will return to City Council for a

public review and adoption process. As with all City planning processes, the public participation process is an ongoing one. The hope is that new ordinances will be drafted and put in place before the peak fall 1998 tourism season. After a few months of testing the changes, another forum will be held in February 1999. This extensive public participation strategy indicates a community committed to developing solutions in an inclusive process which balances the needs and concerns of all participants.

III. Tourism Industry Trends

A common perception of some downtown residents is that tourism activity has increased dramatically since the 1994 Tourism Management Plan was developed. However, City maintained touring data indicates modest tourism industry growth. The 1998 Visitor Accommodation Study documents the growth of this sector of the tourism industry--since 1994 peninsula accommodations rooms have increased 13 percent. Paralleling this growth, the central business district has undergone steady revitalization with redevelopment momentum pushing north of Calhoun Street. Undoubtedly, downtown is feeling the side-effects of a strong economy. Tourism is but one component of a multi-faceted, thriving downtown.

Large tour bus (motorcoach) activity has decreased over the last few years just as it has nationally. Motorcoach tour permits issued by the Office of Tourism Management last increased in 1995 when there was a 21 percent upswing over the 1994 activity. Since then, motorcoach tour activity has declined 16 and 18 percent in 1996 and 1997, respectively.

There are currently twenty-six certified small buses: buses 25 feet or less in length, approved by the Tourism Commission for touring in Charleston. This is a 24 percent reduction over 1996's thirty-seven buses. Some of the recent declines in tour bus activity may be most likely attributed to the increasing popularity of walking tours.

The City does not have historical data on walking tours. The increase in walking tour companies and self-guided walking tours indicates steady growth. To monitor this activity in the future, the Business License Office has developed a new reporting system.

The establishment of the gate and medallion system for carriages has enabled the City to better monitor the activity of the carriage industry. In 1995 28,991 tours were conducted. In 1996 a 6 percent increase in the number of tours occurred followed by a 10 percent increase in 1997.

IV. Long Range Planning

At the outset of the 1994 Tourism Management Plan, the Tourism Management Advisory Committee defined four primary goals which directed their work and final recommendations. The 1998 planning process began by reviewing these goals to determine any needed changes in these underlying principles. As noted below, the four 1994 goals were reiterated with one modification, which is a point of clarification and shown in **bold text**.

A. Goals

1. To preserve Charleston and its uniqueness, **specifically its cultural and architectural heritage**
2. To manage tourism for the benefit of residents, industry and tourists
3. To encourage economic diversity
4. To preserve the quality of residential neighborhoods

The 1998 planning process concluded by reviewing the 1994 long range planning objectives which were designed to meet the plan's goals. All changes are indicated with new text in bold type and deleted text crossed-out.

B. Objectives

1. To understand and mitigate negative tourism impacts
2. To promote a "diverse product mix"
3. To plan for a thoughtful integration of future waterfront development with existing city fabric
4. To anticipate change; to identify and plan for potential tourism related threats to Charleston's character

To direct the City in its expenditure of limited resources and to recommend that energies and funds be focused on attracting and maintaining industries that generate growth and give the highest value added impact

C. Objective 1: Understand and mitigate negative tourism impacts

1. The committee suggests that the most important charge of all parties involved in tourism management, planning and promotion should be the maintenance of a healthy balance between tourists and residents **all year round**. With that charge, the committee has outlined a program designed:

— a. ~~encourage greater tourism business in the slowest months,~~

- a. to discourage any significant increase in tourist numbers during peak months, and
- b. to diffuse downtown tourism that has an impact year-round by developing a wider radius of tourist destinations.

This program, in concert with a host of actions recommended by the other three subcommittees, should help assure the desired resident-to-tourist balance. By spreading the tourists out (in time and geographic area) and by mitigating tourism's negative impacts, we are, in a sense, "controlling the levies" through which the streams of tourists travel. We need, also, to examine the "flow."

In tackling the issue of "flow"--the volume of tourists who visit the city-- the committee has explored the idea of a comfort index (or carrying capacity). A comfort index is defined as the "number of people who can use a site without an unacceptable decline in the quality of experience gained by visitors and without an unacceptable adverse impact on the society, economy, and culture of that city." Defining the optimal number of tourists or linking what feels right to hard data is difficult, if not impossible. Criteria necessary for establishing the optimal number must include the qualitative as well as the quantitative. While a technical study might be able to measure traffic and sewer impacts, for example, it might not be able to adequately measure visual and cultural impacts.

The committee is reluctant to set a particular optimal number of tourists. The committee agrees, however, that a 12-month calendar of peak volumes (every month with the intensity of April or May) would be unacceptable to residents of Charleston. The committee suggests, also that such volumes would ultimately compromise the tourist's experience of Charleston. With this in mind the committee offers the following suggestions.

- a. The City, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) and all other entities involved in management and promotion of tourism should adopt as a central goal the maintenance of a healthy resident-to-tourist balance.
- b. Maintaining an accurate tourist count is a necessary component of balanced tourism planning. The CVB, with the Center for Business Research, should develop a methodology for estimating tourist traffic on a regular basis. Total tourist volumes should be calculated monthly and should be calculated for the downtown area as well as for the Charleston metropolitan area. If, in the future, the resident-to-tourist balance was to become unbalanced toward the tourist, the collected data--numbers of tourists by month and by year--could aid in restructuring promotional

patterns and adopting regulatory mechanisms to restore a more harmonious balance.

2. Because of the need to preserve and enhance our residential areas, all city transit and tourist related development activities must include careful consideration of possible negative impacts on those areas.
3. The committee has examined the long-term mission and composition of the Tourism Commission. The committee finds that the Tourism Commission is a valuable and necessary component of future tourism planning efforts. However, the following problems are associated with the operation of the commission.
 - a. A quorum is sometimes not met. (This can translate into costly delays for the affected parties)
 - b. Assimilation of new members is difficult.
 - c. The new ethics legislation has rendered obsolete the required composition of the Tourism Commission.
 - d. The commission has spent many hours "micro-managing" the industry. Numerous subcommittee meetings to formulate solutions to problems, combined with regular meetings, exact undue time and energy from commission members.
 - e. The Tourism Commission is larger than the typical planning board or commission: the large size may impede maximum efficacy.

So that the development of tourism be the product of thoughtful planning, the mission and composition of the Tourism Commission should be redefined, as follows:

- a. The Tourism Commission's mission should be expanded to include responsibility for long range and strategic tourism planning, beginning with the implementation of the recommendations of this planning effort. A tighter set of vehicle regulations should allow the commission more time for long range planning. These regulations should be drawn up by the Tourism Advisory Committee and written explicitly into the tourism ordinance. The commission should keep apprised of decisions, however, through a monthly written report from the tourism director.

The responsibilities of the Tourism Commission, then, would be as follows:

- 1) to facilitate the implementation of the plan recommendations;

- 2) to anticipate future threats and opportunities **through the annual Tourism Management Forum to be held in February of each year;**
- 3) to explore new policies as needed and request research necessary to evaluate suggested policies;
- 4) to serve as an advisory and "sounding" board for tourism director and **annual Tourism Management Forum; and**
- 5) to monitor the decisions of the Division of Tourism Management staff to ensure their consistency with long-term tourism planning goals.

- b. **Orientation sessions for newly appointed commission members will be conducted.** In order that the commission make the most informed and objective decisions possible and that new members are quickly assimilated into the commission process, ~~the City should conduct a mandatory annual orientation session for the commission.~~ the orientation session should include: 1) a review of all pertinent ordinances, 2) a review of past tourism planning efforts and 3) an explanation by the City's legal staff as to their responsibilities and the powers of the Tourism Commission.
- c. ~~Changes should be made to the existing composition of the Tourism Commission as outlined in the ordinance.~~ The present ordinance specifies the following composition of the **fourteen-member** commission.
the mayor (1);
City Council member (1);
resident representatives (3);
individual with knowledge of business, commerce and urban economics (1);
other (5); and
ex-officio members (3) (These ex-officio members are non-voting members per the ordinance which states that no person may serve as a member of the Tourism Commission if any business with which that person is associated is regulated by the Commission.)

8. There is a need for better integration of tourism and economic development with the arts.
 - a. Because of the central importance of the arts in maintaining a vital community, the CVB, the City's Office of Cultural Affairs and the Charleston Area Arts Council should develop a strategy for packaging and promoting the arts. As part of this effort, these groups should consider the development of a permanent visual arts center with studio and exhibit space, possibly on upper King Street
 - b. The City should continue to require that a certain percentage of its accommodation tax moneys that go to the CVB be used for marketing of Charleston as an arts destination.
 - c. Future planning efforts should include arts organizers.
9. Ethnic tours should be promoted as a way to further diversify product mix. Also, special interest tours should be developed. For example, a Civil War tour could include a visit to archeological sites. Current efforts to develop a Heritage Corridor Tour are encouraged. This would be a self-guided tour that would link various historic sites along the state's roadways.
10. The development of new educational facilities such as an exploratorium, maritime museum, railroad museum, etc., is encouraged. Such facilities would be positive additions to the city's inventory of tourist destinations and resident educational opportunities. However, the creation of such facilities should not occur through public sector initiative; instead, such facilities should be born of private and public partnership. The Cooper River waterfront would be an ideal location for these facilities.

E. Objective 3: Plan for a thoughtful integration of future waterfront development within the existing city fabric

1. A formal planning process for the Cooper River waterfront corridor (bordered by the waterfront, East Bay Street, Waterfront Park and Charlotte Street) should be undertaken immediately. **(This was accomplished with the Union Pier Plan.)**
2. Future waterfront development should be mixed use-with an emphasis on residential, recreational and educational uses. Commercial development should be limited to encourage residents and tourists to patronize the city's existing commercial areas. Plans should include continuous public waterfront access and public park space with athletic fields.

3. The accommodations district, as currently defined by the Zoning Ordinance, accomplishes the following: a) strengthens the existing commercial corridor; b) keeps tourism-related development and transit lines together and c) minimizes the impact on residential neighborhoods. ~~There is no need to expand the accommodation zone to waterfront properties or existing residential areas.~~

F. Objective 4: Anticipate change; to identify and plan for potential tourism related threats to Charleston's existing character

1. The City's legal and planning staffs should investigate the extent of the City's jurisdiction concerning air and water regulations. City staff should draft regulations that would control recreational activities to minimize negative impacts on the city. More specifically, the City should explore ways to control the noise and speed of water craft.
2. Casinos should be prohibited from locating not only in the city of Charleston but also in the Charleston metropolitan area. The City should work with surrounding jurisdictions to strengthen prohibitive regulations. The negative impacts of casinos outweigh any potential revenue-producing impacts.

G. Objective 5: Direct the City in its expenditure of limited resources and to recommend that energies and funds be focused on attracting and maintaining industries that generate growth and give the highest value added impact

The committee cites the following negative aspects of a tourism economy: 1) the tourism industry generally supports lower paying jobs, 2) owners of historic homes bear the burden, 3) economic/social dislocation occurs when tourist visitation dwindles and 4) the tourism industry is vulnerable to disaster-related disruptions.

1. The City ~~should continue to promote tourism;~~ it should not rely entirely on tourism, ~~however~~. Instead, the City should pursue a more diverse economic mix and seek new and emerging industries. These industries could include pharmaceuticals, automobiles and automobile parts, telecommunications and film-making.
2. The following recommendation of Charleston 2000 should be implemented: "the creation of a mayor's task force on the economy to successfully address economic issues. A central objective would be to address the economic needs and to facilitate cooperation between public and private entities to formulate a comprehensive economic investment strategy." This task force should work closely with the City's Department of Economic Development in coordination and implementation of a progressive, city-wide economic development strategy.

V. Tourism Ordinance Enforcement and City Image

A. Tourism Ordinance Enforcement

1. Reorganization

Currently two full-time and four part-time tourism enforcement officers (TEO's) enforce a comprehensive set of ordinances which are summarized in the Enforcement Matrix in Appendix A. Two additional full-time TEO's were approved in 1998. The TEO's are required to be self-motivated individuals due to the independent nature of their job.

The ordinances enforced by the TEO's apply to the historic district--a 1.8-square mile area. Mobility and communication with the tourism office are critical for effective enforcement. Often citizens call the tourism office about an alleged violation they are witnessing. The officer must be able to respond immediately and see the infraction in order to issue a ticket and thereby capitalize on the opportunity to educate the violator.

On average, TEO's are paid around \$6 an hour and work 364 days a year, no matter the weather. Four TEO's work part-time and, therefore, do not receive the comprehensive employee benefit package. TEO's currently have one cushman mobile unit and one moped. However these will be replaced by three small pickup trucks in 1998. The shared radios are old and inoperable most of the time. Communication is further hampered by utilizing the Police Department dispatcher. The outcome is that TEO's are ill-equipped to successfully perform their job and have little incentives to do well.

The tourism enforcement officers should be reorganized to become part of the Police Department's Parking Enforcement Division. Guidelines for their responsibilities and upgraded criteria for hiring should be revised using the same hiring system as for parking enforcement officers (PEO's). The TEO's should also receive the same benefits as the PEO's. This reorganization will integrate TEO's with PEO's. Both TEO's and PEO's will be supervised by the Police Department and trained by the Department of Traffic and Transportation and Division of Tourism Management. The tourism office would no longer have the administrative responsibilities it presently has--hiring, firing, etc. of TEO's. The tourism office will continue to monitor tourism related offenses and the Parking Division will continue to monitor parking offenses. The Tourism Commission will continue to hear cases on tourism offenses relating to carriage companies. However, all municipal summons (violations of municipal ordinances) will continue to be handled by the municipal court. The parking administrator will continue to hear cases regarding parking violations.

2. Standardized Citation System

All citations will be coordinated by the Traffic and Transportation's Parking Division creating a standardized citation system. Parking and tourism related offenses will be recorded on a standardized ticket. They will be distinguished from one another when entered on the computer database. Parking and tourism related offense analyses can be accomplished easily and efficiently.

3. Reporting Violations

The City should create an acronym hotline such as "577-TOUR" to make it simple for the public to report tourist related vehicle offenses

B. Sanitation

1. Horse Excreta

The 1994 plan recommendation to develop a clean-up system has been established. It is generally working well, with the exception that occasionally a length of time that may pass before cleanup occurs. The committee recommends that all carriages be equipped with radios and be required to report accidents immediately.

2. Uniform Garbage Containers

This matter is being addressed by the City's new program (see page 30, 1994 Tourism Management Plan).

3. Cleaning Market Area Streets

This matter is being addressed (see page 30, 1994 Tourism Management Plan).

4. Restaurants

The committee discussed the many issues related to downtown restaurants' refuse. Downtown restaurants cannot accommodate large dumpsters given the space limitations of historic buildings. When a new restaurant is built or when a restaurant opens in an existing building, the City requires refrigerated storage space and compactors and outdoor refuse areas where practical.

The City provides early morning trash collection seven days a week in the central business district. This program was established in the 1980's to reduce the

amount of time garbage sits on the sidewalk. To address the grease and grime on sidewalks as a result of dragging trash out to the curb, the City is exploring the acquisition of a mobile sidewalk power washing machine. Additionally, the City has an ordinance prohibiting dirty sidewalks but it does not specify how sidewalks are to be cleaned. The City has two sanitation inspectors for the peninsula who when necessary take offenders to Municipal Environmental Court. Violators are fined a maximum of \$500.

In addition to the City's sanitation inspectors, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) employs inspectors for restaurants. These inspectors are charged with ensuring that restaurants meet State and Federal health laws. Due to the consequences of these violations, DHEC has the authority to shutdown offenders.

The committee recommends:

- a. As part of the annual business license permit process, the City should require an adequate garbage disposal plan for restaurants and all other businesses to ensure that refuse is being properly handled.
- b. The Sanitation Division of the Department of Public Service should coordinate with DHEC on resolving habitual offenders' issues.
- c. The City should require all restaurants to power wash or steam clean their sidewalks on an as-needed basis where soiled by trash and grease.
- d. The City should continue the education program to make all downtown restaurants aware of Carolina By-Products' interest in purchasing their excess grease.
- e. The City should publish a list of violators and increase fines.

5. Additional Market Area Mobile Sweeper

Implemented (See page 30, 1994 Tourism Management Plan.)

6. Neighborhood Association Trash Schedule Education

This matter is being addressed through the City of Charleston's Town and Gown Committee (see page 30, 1994 Tourism Management Plan).

7. City Sanitation Regulation Education Program

Ongoing (See page 30, 1994 Tourism Management Plan.)

C. Public Restrooms

As stated in the 1994 Tourism Management Plan, there is a perception that downtown suffers from a shortage of public restrooms. To address this problem, a new package of solutions is offered.

1. Signage

It appears that there is a lack of coordination in existing publications by the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce and the City on locations of existing restrooms. It also appears that there is no consistent identification in the publications indicating when a facility is located in a public parking garage.

The committee recommends:

- a. The Chamber and the City Transit Office should coordinate immediately all published maps so that they show all of the same locations. Those should include restrooms located in the City and County parking garages and they should use the same numeration or annotation.
- b. The Board of Architectural Review, Central Business District Revitalization Commission and any other appropriate city committee having responsibility for exterior signage should approve an internationally recognized restroom sign. This should be located in conspicuous locations throughout the city identifying all existing public restrooms. It is recommended that this action be taken in the immediate future and that those signs be manufactured and installed by February 28, 1998. Locations will include restrooms themselves and bus waiting stations throughout the lower city.

2. Location

The committee identified three areas of concern: 1) the Market Street area, 2) south of Broad Street area, and 3) the commercial King Street area. The committee makes the following specific recommendations.

a. Market Street Area

The City and County should coordinate to make certain that male and female restrooms are provided in the Cumberland Street garage addition being constructed on the corner of Cumberland and Church Streets. We recognize that there are already two restrooms in the existing garage but believe that more are needed. The old pump house building located on

the corner of Concord and Market Streets is another possible location for a public restroom.

b. King Street Corridor

We recommend that restrooms not be provided in the King and Queen garage to be constructed behind the King and Queen building and that the restrooms in Marion Square Park be rejuvenated. Further, we recommend that the City encourage restrooms be constructed in the parking garage to be built on the Kerrison's parking lot.

c. South of Broad

It is believed that any restroom below Broad Street must have the support of the Charlestowne Neighborhood Association. If Charlestowne Neighborhood Association approves, it is recommended that restrooms in the bandstand at White Point Gardens be re-evaluated. If this option fails, our second choice would be to modify the north end of Hazel Parker playground to accommodate visitor restrooms. The restrooms at White Point Gardens as well as those at Hazel Parker would charge a fee and require an attendant.

3. Hours of Operation

The committee specifically recommends that all restrooms below Broad Street require an attendant and close no later than 6 p.m. It is recommended that the hours of operation be approved by the respective neighborhood associations. The hours of operation for restrooms in County and City facilities should be the same as the parking attendant.

4. Maintenance Fee and Attendant

The committee specifically recommends that any facilities that require an attendant charge 25¢ for use. The 25¢ would specifically be used to offset the cost of the attendant and the upkeep of the facility and is subject to being increased.

5. Construction Costs

- a. The committee recommends that all future parking garages be required to have male and female restrooms strategically located near the ticket office and the cost be factored into the general cost of the project.
- b. The committee recommends that freestanding facilities or modification of existing buildings such as White Point Gardens bandstand, Hazel Parker

playground or Moultrie playground be covered by funds derived from the Accommodations Tax. (This was approved with the understanding that reopening the bandstand has been studied, and it appears to be infeasible at this time: a freestanding restroom will probably be needed)

- c. Several other locations were identified as possible future restrooms: 1) Moultrie Playground, 2) Brittlebank Park, 3) the new National Park Service Fort Sumter Tour Boat facility to be located at the end of Calhoun Street, and 4) the old pump house located at the intersection of Concord and Market Streets.

D. Directional Signage

Many issues raised in the 1994 plan are still relevant and are addressed in the previous section on public restrooms or in the following gateway section.

E. Commercial Signage

Downtown business signs are governed by the sign ordinance which establishes basic limitations. Additionally, signs in the Old City District are regulated by type and appearance by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR). The City's Architecture and Preservation staff handles the majority of sign applications in the Old City District for the BAR. In working with applicants, staff uses the Design Guidelines for Signs in Appendix B. The committee finds that current sign regulations and Design Guidelines for Signs provide adequate control.

F. Encroachment Ordinance

Since the 1994 Tourism Management Plan was adopted, numerous encroachment ordinances have been enacted. Sandwich board signs in the public right of way are prohibited effective January 1, 1998. The use of public sidewalks for the extension of restaurant space is prohibited. The use of individuals distributing information to the public on the sidewalk in order to promote a business--pamphleteering--has been addressed through the litter ordinance.

Additional encroachments, such as benches, planters, flags, etc., are regulated through an ordinance which sets standards based on safety and the Americans with Disabilities Act's minimum sidewalk width. Newspaper boxes are being dealt with separately through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the publishers and the City.

The MOU is a self-imposed regulation of newsracks by the publishers. The City and publishers are working on a draft MOU.

There is growing concern about the large crowds hanging out on sidewalks, typically associated with bars and clubs. These crowds of loitering persons appear threatening to visitors and residents. This issue is under the jurisdiction of the Police Department through an ordinance prohibiting loitering.

The committee recommends:

1. The present responsibility of tourism enforcement officers to enforce encroachment laws should be reconsidered. This request is made considering the complexity of tourism ordinance enforcement efforts alone (see Appendix A).
2. The City should regulate the number, location and design criteria of all newsracks and boxes in the public domain on the peninsula.
3. The City should acknowledge the loitering issue and step up measures to prevent such.

G. Market Area Issues

The problems associated with the success of the Market area in the 1994 Tourism Management Plan have been addressed by this plan and the Market Area Study (1997):

1. the area was downzoned from Light Industrial and General Business to Commercial Transitional, Limited Business and General Business;
2. a streetscaping plan is being developed;
3. a Business Improvement District is being developed to further improve the area;
4. the noise ordinance was enacted with an 11 p.m. curfew for amplified noise and midnight total noise curfew; and
5. parking concerns are addressed in the Transportation Chapter.

H. Street Vendors

The City has regulations for the various street vendors operating in Charleston.

1. Moving Street Vendors

Moving street vendors are permitted to sell their wares if they continue to move and stop only for the transaction of business. Violations typically occur when vendors stop for longer than a transaction and often setup camp near a permitted hot-dog vendor. (One who has purchased the right to use a specific location for business.) The committee recommends that enforcement be increased to address these violations.

2. Permanent Sidewalk Vendors

The City has established several locations where goods may be sold on the sidewalk. There have been recent violations where vendors have setup in un-designated areas. Considering these violations, the committee recommends that the City continue to monitor this situation and enforce current regulations.

3. Franchised Vendors

Licensed hot-dog vendors are sold the right to use specific locations for their business through an annual bidding process. Vendors are not allowed to leave anything in the space over night. Often not all spaces are purchased. When this occurs, these un-purchased spaces are available to any licensed vendor on a first-come, first-serve basis. To be the first vendor on the scene in the morning, violators have been parking their vending machine in the space over night. The committee recommends that enforcement by the Business License Office be increased.

I. Historic Preservation

The committee agrees with the findings of the 1994 plan which states: "The leading tourist attraction of the city of Charleston is its well-preserved collection of historic buildings. It is incumbent upon the city residents and City government to continue their preservation efforts. However, we must closely examine the costs to the residents of this continued preservation effort. Ever-increasing property taxes and repair costs bring the cost-to-benefit equation into question for the owners of the historic buildings. Although the tourist pays for secondary services provided by the commercial tourism industry, it is the property owner--the owner of the historic house and garden--who pays for the primary historic attractions. "

It is recommended that a committee be established to examine the cost-to-benefit equation of tourism and explore ways to reduce the financial burden on the downtown homeowner. The committee should include City staff, a tax expert, an urban planner,

representatives from downtown neighborhoods and business and preservation groups. This committee should be established immediately.

J. Waterfront Development

The Union Pier Master Plan, as adopted by City Council, is a very comprehensive plan which emphasizes residential development and recreational and open space, including public access to the Cooper River waterfront. Commercial development is intended to complement the existing central business district. The plan, as adopted, permits opportunities for residential buildings of a taller nature--an incentive for developing residential uses, and an attempt to soften the impact of the massive and incompatible Dockside condominium tower.

The committee is greatly concerned with the Union Pier Master Plan provision that residential buildings may exceed the 65 feet maximum height. (Fifty feet habitable space and fifteen feet for mechanical units and roof structures currently is permitted.) The committee recommends that additional study be done in the future.

K. Casino Gambling

The committee reaffirms the 1994 plan recommendation: "Commercial casino gambling should not be allowed in the city of Charleston. Casino gambling would threaten the balance that is so crucial to the residential quality of life and detract from the uniqueness of Charleston."

L. Gateways

The committee recognizes that the gateways into the city make an immediate impression on visitors and should be enhanced and maintained. The City defines these gateways and identifies the conceptual need for improving them in the comprehensive plan Charleston 2000. It is the City's Department of Parks that designs, maintains and manages construction of these gateways. Given the size of the city, a large number of beautification efforts are needed and planned for throughout the city. These projects have been prioritized and are implemented throughout the entire city and not within one particular area. Given funding and resource limitations, the City is constantly seeking additional funding sources. Its efforts are coordinated with local non-profit organizations, the South Carolina Department of Transportation and other community groups to initiate and implement beautification projects.

The committee recommends the following:

1. Upon updating the Charleston 2000 plan, the City should update the gateway master plan and identify the status of all components of the plan. The update should include a map, which identifies all gateways and all areas where beautification efforts are being undertaken. The committee also recommends that emphasis be placed on improving the aesthetics of the gateways of I-26, particularly the Lee Street area, US Highway 17 and East Bay Street.
2. The City should improve maintenance efforts of its gateways by:
 - a. identifying additional funding sources, such as the Accommodations Tax, and increasing financial resources;
 - b. enforcing vandalism and litter ordinances;
 - c. identifying, and replacing when necessary, plant materials that are incompatible with certain environmental forces, such as flooding and salt water; and,
 - d. continuing to coordinate beautification efforts with community groups and to establish partnerships with neighborhoods, businesses and schools to develop a community-based maintenance program similar to the "Adopt-a-Highway" program. The City should continue utilizing the services of chain gangs to maintain its gateways.
3. City should enhance its directional signage in the gateways, by proceeding with its proposed way-finding program (a unified informational and directional signage program to improve the visitor's ability to find parking and popular destinations).

M. Tourism-Related Noise

The 1994 Tourism Management Study focused on noise issues in the Market area. In response to these issues a city-wide noise ordinance was enacted prohibiting unnecessary noises that disturb the peace. Outdoor amplified music heard from a public street or right of way is prohibited after 11 p.m. and before 7 a.m. It is also unlawful for anyone to play non-amplified music after midnight and before 7 a.m.

Even with these ordinances, noise violations--loud motorcycles or vehicle stereos--are still very much an issue in neighborhoods. The committee recommends that the City strictly enforce the noise ordinances in residential areas.

Residents living near the many waterways in the city of Charleston are increasingly experiencing a new noise phenomenon: noise originating from commercial boats. The committee recommends that the City continue strict enforcement of the noise ordinance including waterways and other areas policed by the City.

VI. Tourist Related Vehicles

A. Legal Considerations

Before recommendations were developed concerning tourist related vehicles, the committee was provided background information concerning the extent of the City's regulatory authority.

1. The City cannot legally regulate the amount of transportation occurring on public streets beyond specifying what route must be taken. Currently, the City requires transportation permits for all large buses traveling south of Calhoun Street taking visitors to a destination as long as they are not touring while in route. The permit issued has a prescribed route to which the driver must adhere. The City cannot regulate the number of such permits given. We can continue to require a permit, specify the route and charge a fee for the permit.
2. Walking tours are considered to be a group of persons utilizing public sidewalks for a tour conducted by a licensed guide leading them and stopping periodically to commentate.
3. Visitors disembarking a bus and walking to a property for a tour on that property only are not considered a walking tour. The City cannot legally regulate this type of transportation. We can regulate walking tours, but cannot regulate walking groups simply moving from point A to point B.
4. All tour activities, whether they are commercial or nonprofit, must be treated equally under the laws. Regulations must apply to all tours and cannot exclude certain groups.
5. The City cannot designate a day where no tourist activity can take place.

B. Comprehensive Tour Vehicles Recommendations

Some committee recommendations apply to all tourist related vehicles or general tourism management. These recommendations acknowledge that tourism issues are interconnected and must be considered comprehensively.

1. Reducing the number of hours that tourism activity takes place during the day is a viable option for reducing the presence of tours in residential areas and relieving traffic downtown during rush hours. The current tourism ordinance sets the hours of tourism from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. within residential districts. During daylight savings time, animal-drawn vehicles only may conduct tours from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. within residential districts. Tours conducted after the designated cut-off time are to be limited solely to the commercial district or free zone.

Change the current hours of commercial touring activity in residential districts to be consistent across all activities: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during Eastern standard time, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. during daylight savings time.

2. The City should request funeral homes and morticians notify the Office of Tourism Management when funerals are scheduled to ensure rerouting of applicable tours.

C. Tour Guides and Education

Many tourism problems may be better managed by educating guides as to what they could do to minimize some of the negative aspects of tours in the downtown area. Guides should be aware of potential problems, be able to control large tour groups, and act as ambassadors for the city of Charleston. The City should provide tour guides with the opportunity for proper training and background. Currently, all tour guides who operate in Charleston must hold a tour guide license. A guide must pass written and oral exams and pay registration and business license fees. A temporary guide must be sponsored by a tour company who has an approved script which the temporary guide must use in the conduct of his or her tour, and the individual must pass an exam for a nonrenewable license. It is valid until the next regularly scheduled exam (given quarterly), unless he or she acquired the license two weeks before the next scheduled exam. The subcommittee makes these recommendations for all tour guides:

1. better educate the tour guides about neighborhoods, residential needs, city history, tourism ordinance and common courtesies through an "urban etiquette" course;
2. enhance and update testing for tour guides;
3. study the possibility of requiring potential tour guides to take courses from professors at institutions of higher learning before they take the written and oral exams and seek assistance from institutions of higher learning in developing a new, more objective oral examination;
4. change recertification period to three years instead of five years;
5. enhance the week-long continuing education program to include a mandatory course on current information, including the tourism management ordinance;
6. require tour guides to visit all sites on the exam, before they take the exam, and are allowed certification;
7. study the possibility of increasing business license fees to deter inactive guides (currently, the fee is determined by income);

8. continue the program for temporary guides; and
9. develop a mandatory course for all guides--new and licensed guides--to inform them of changes to ordinances and include instructions on courtesy.

D. Large Tour Buses

Large tour buses or motorcoaches are more than 35 feet in length. A special permit is required for touring and only the perimeter route may be used--see Map 1. Touring on a large bus must be conducted by a registered guide. The City limits the number of touring permits issued to: eight large buses between the hours of 8 a.m. and noon, and between the hours of 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. and; four large buses between the hours of noon and 2 p.m., and between the hours of 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. A special permit is required for point-to-point transportation south of Calhoun Street. This permit stipulates the route to be driven as well as the loading, unloading and parking areas to be used.

Loading and unloading passengers and parking for large buses is restricted to a dozen sites. Map 1 shows designated loading, unloading and parking areas.

The discussion of large tour buses focused on recommendations devised by staff with the revisions from subcommittee members and guides. Several recommendations were developed which were then presented to the subcommittee and discussed with the audience.

Subcommittee members and tour industry representatives engaged in discussions covering many points about the recommendations or general tourism. Several points of discussion follow.

1. Some downtown residents would like to see large buses eliminated altogether and the Visitor Reception and Transportation Center (VRTC) used to distribute visitors via smaller modes of transportation.
2. Some guides believe the current routes are already the result of compromise and should not be altered until after the comprehensive 1998 traffic study.
3. Concerns were expressed that some recommendations would be too limiting and might suggest that the City does not want tourists.
4. Residents stated that they encourage tourism, but it should be properly managed to preserve what the visitor comes to see in the first place.
5. Of concern is the distance elderly or handicapped visitors could have to walk to certain attractions or to the nearest pick-up spots--the Battery to the nearest pick-up spot on Meeting Street.

6. Several guides suggested that adding more tour bus stops throughout the city might alleviate some of the congestion we currently experience--stops at Colonial Lake and St. Johns Cathedral, for example.

Committee recommendations.

1. To reduce the obtrusive presence of large buses downtown, the number of buses allowed per hour could be reduced. To spread out the buses in the downtown area, residents and tour guides have agreed on implementing two zones into which buses are alternately dispersed.

Reduce the number of buses per hour allowed on the current perimeter route from eight to six between the hours of 8 a.m. and noon and 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Keep current regulation that only four buses are allowed between noon and 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.) In addition, split the tour routes for large buses into two areas: area one below Calhoun Street and area two above Calhoun Street. The Division of Tourism Management would alternately schedule the six permits per hour so that three will begin their tour in area one and three will begin in area two.

2. Large tour bus loading and unloading zones are an area of dispute between residents and tour guides. There are relatively few zones placed in strategic locations to maximize touring opportunity and minimize both vehicle and pedestrian traffic congestion. Not all residents, downtown workers, and motorists agree with the current placement of these loading and unloading zones. The challenge is to locate areas where there is relatively little traffic and few residential properties, but still convenient enough so as not to burden the tourist trade.

Tour bus loading zones will be used as follows (items "a" to "d" are existing zones which are recommended to be used for specific destinations; item "e" is a recommended new loading zone location):

- a. the Murray Boulevard at King Street (near the Battery) loading zone will serve the Edmondston-Alston House and Calhoun Mansion. The City should consider enlarging this stop a few feet in length to improve maneuverability and ensure that two buses can park safely;
- b. the Exchange Building loading zone will serve the Waterfront Park, the Exchange Building and the Old Slave Mart Museum. The City should consider enlarging this stop;
- c. the Broad and Church Streets loading zone will serve the Dock Street Theatre and Heyward Washington House;
- d. the Meeting Street at Fire Proof Building loading zone will serve the Nathaniel Russell House and Four Corners of Law; and

- e. the City bus stop on Ashley Avenue at Bull Street should be signed for large tour bus loading to provide access to the Avery Institute. The City should also investigate moving the large tour bus loading zone to the nearby Cannon Park.
3. Currently, no permits are required for school, church and government related buses to tour in Charleston. However, these buses are regulated under the large tour bus category--adhere to approved streets, loading and unloading zones, parking spaces, etc. These buses are not counted in the number of tours per hour or per day, and a system to keep track of them should be developed. To achieve consistency in regulating all tour buses, the City would need to require school and church related tour buses to obtain permits and follow prescribed routes.

In keeping with past City policy to encourage educational visits to Charleston, the number of school and church related buses will not be regulated. School or church buses must obtain complementary permits (except charter buses) prescribing their routes and the designated loading and unloading and parking locations to which they are to adhere. When on a charter bus with a registered guide, school and church tour groups should be counted in the total number of tour permits allowed per hour.

4. Large bus parking spaces are essential for most bus tours that drop off passengers for an extended amount of time. Buses typically drop off passengers, schedule a pick-up time and location near the drop-off point and then park in approved parking spaces (sometimes in remote areas). There is currently a shortage of large bus parking spaces in the downtown area. Previously utilized spaces at the Ports Authority and at the City Marina are no longer available. Buses are sometimes forced to drive around, thus creating more traffic. To prevent problems associated with inadequate parking for large buses, the following is recommended.

The City should continue to provide parking for large buses such as the eight to nine spaces in the VRTC garage and planned Aquarium garage. Additional spaces should be identified through signage on Anson Street next to the Gaillard Municipal Auditorium and on Washington Street. Short term sites include the vacant parcel in front of the Waterfront Park. During peak seasons extra space may be available for several buses along Horizon Street behind the City Police headquarters. Finally, the City should reevaluate taxi cab use of Concord Street at the foot of Market Street. This use has removed convenient large bus loading and unloading.

E. Small Tour Buses

Tour buses under 25 feet in length are classified as small tour buses. There are currently twenty-six small tour buses operating in the city of Charleston. These small buses have all received their certificate of appropriateness. This ensures they meet the size, design, color and logo standards established by the Tourism Commission. These buses are allowed to operate on all streets in the historic district, except brick, Belgium block and cobblestone streets and any public way designated as an alley, lane or court. Each small bus having regularly scheduled tours must have the route approved by the tourism office. Each tour must utilize all six tour zones and spend equal amounts of time in each zone. See Map 2 for tour bus zones. They are not allowed to pull over for descriptive purposes. Rather they are required to maintain the flow of traffic. Small buses may use designated passenger loading and unloading zones. The City cannot regulate point-to-point transportation. There is a cap of fifty buses which may operate in the city. After fifty is reached, a lottery system would need to be established.

While reviewing the issues associated with small buses, the following concerns were expressed. Some of these concerns required assistance from the City's legal staff and are noted as such.

1. There are too many near-empty, small buses touring. Can the City regulate the ridership capacity of small buses?

Response: Legal will continue to research this question; however, economics serve to self-regulate this. Some guides of buses with only a couple of patrons find it is not cost-effective to carry a small number of passengers. They will often not conduct the tour; instead the guide will send the patrons to tour on another bus in an effort to occupy more seats on one vehicle. This activity among the guides of small buses is not required but is a common practice.

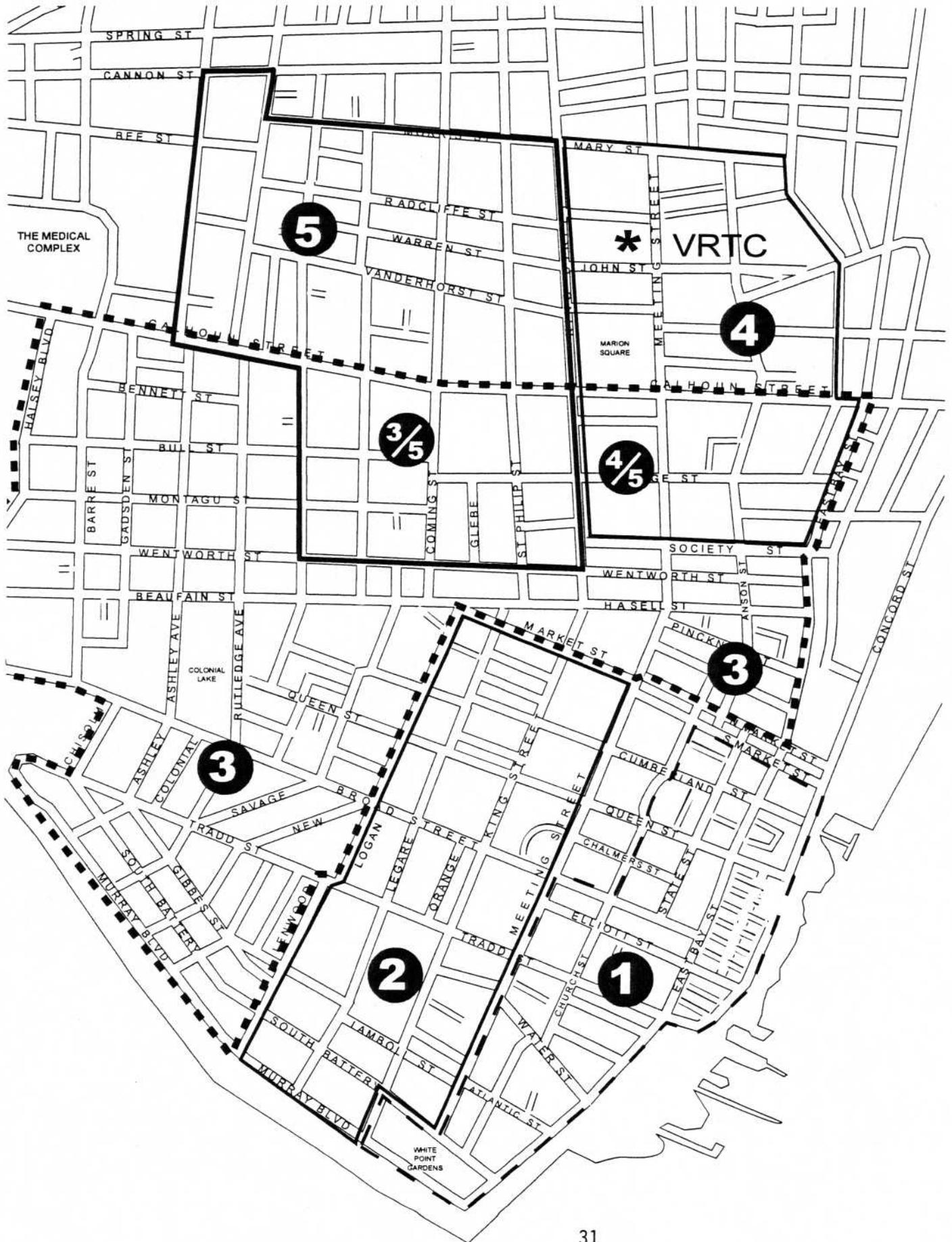
2. Small buses drive too slowly--they do not maintain the flow of traffic but rather are hindrances to traffic flow.

Response: The proposal to designate areas where small buses may briefly pull over is designed to alleviate this problem.

3. Small buses pull over for descriptive purposes where not allowed.

Response: The subcommittee has addressed these concerns by proposing the designation of informal pull over zones (described in more detail on following pages). This will allow small buses to pull into the right-of-way, out of the flow of traffic, and allow the tour bus guide to stop within that designated space for descriptive purposes.

BUS TOUR ZONES MAP - 2



4. There are too many small buses in the neighborhoods. Can the City restrict small buses from streets based on the request of residents?

Response: The ban of small buses from certain public streets cannot be arbitrary, but must be based on the facts and recommendations presented within the planned comprehensive downtown traffic and parking study.

5. There are too many small buses touring on the streets. If a cap on the number of small buses allowed is legal, how much, if any, growth should be allowed?

Response: Legal staff feels that the subcommittee can request a cap on the number of small buses operating at any given time. They cannot propose a cap for the total number of small buses certified to tour. The proposed routing system for small buses will ultimately serve as a "cap" on the number of small buses operating. It would regulate the number of buses allowed to tour in a particular zone at a certain time.

Small tour bus industry representatives developed numerous recommendations aimed at relieving pressures felt by the residents from small tour bus activity. Industry representatives reviewed the many regulations concerning small buses and expressed their belief that they are already heavily regulated. They realize there are problems that may be alleviated by working with the residents and the City. The following recommendations are the result of an industry proposal which was reviewed and modified.

1. Remove from the ordinance the category of buses "longer than 25 feet but not longer than 35 feet" (charter buses) as a certified vehicle. Currently, there are no charter buses operating in Charleston, and non-certified buses, no matter what the size, must obtain touring permits and adhere to the perimeter routes. This proactive measure will ensure that charter buses would fall under the large bus category.
2. The present cap should be reduced 28 percent from fifty buses to thirty-six buses total. After the total thirty-six is reached, a lottery system would need to be established. The Traffic and Transportation study a few years ago showed that fifty buses was not unreasonable given the flexibility of routes and mobility of equipment. The large growth in the walking tour business has led to a decrease in the number of small buses. At the beginning of each year, the tourism office will work with each small bus company to coordinate their routes. This will ensure that no more than six buses are in one zone at a given time. The proposal described below demonstrates how this system will work.

Proposed Routing for Bus Company 'X' with Six Small Buses: This proposal, developed by Kathryn G. Rentiers, demonstrates how a company with six buses can evenly distribute their activity between the six zones so that only one bus is in a zone at any given point in time. The

table below shows the order of zone touring for the six buses. Each of these six routes is specifically described and mapped in Appendix C.

typical hour tour	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6
9-9:10	zone 6	zone 5	zone 4	zone 3	zone 2	zone 1
9:10-9:20	zone 5	zone 4	zone 3	zone 2	zone 1	zone 6
9:20-9:30	zone 4	zone 3	zone 2	zone 1	zone 6	zone 5
9:30-9:40	zone 3	zone 2	zone 1	zone 6	zone 5	zone 4
9:40-9:50	zone 2	zone 1	zone 6	zone 5	zone 4	zone 3
9:50-10	zone 1	zone 6	zone 5	zone 4	zone 3	zone 2

3. Establish, but do not sign, pull-over zones on the streets to facilitate faster movement in sensitive areas. These pull-overs, located primarily in commercial areas, are intended to relieve traffic in the neighborhoods by permitting more touring time in the commercial areas. These pull-overs are intended to be used briefly to allow for tour descriptions and to let traffic pass. Those identified for consideration by the City include: (see Map 3)
 - a. west side of Elizabeth St. at the end of Wragg Mall;
 - b. north side of John Street in front of the museum;
 - c. west of Meeting Street by Marion Square;
 - d. west side of King Street near the Francis Marion parking garage;
 - e. east side of Coming Street near Saint Luke and Saint Paul (not in front of the church);
 - f. north side of Wentworth--just past the Centenary Church; and
 - g. east side of Ashley Avenue by Colonial Lake opposite Moultrie playground.

4. Edmondston-Alston House (located on East Battery) representatives proposed adding a small bus loading and unloading zone on the east side of East Battery just south of Atlantic Street. There are steps here leading up to the battery and there already is room for passengers to embark and disembark easily.

Edmondston-Alston House representatives stated that the proposal has been studied by themselves and that the Department of Traffic and Transportation agree it is feasible. Since all other museum homes have a similar zone, some tour bus representatives support the proposal and agree that it is fair.

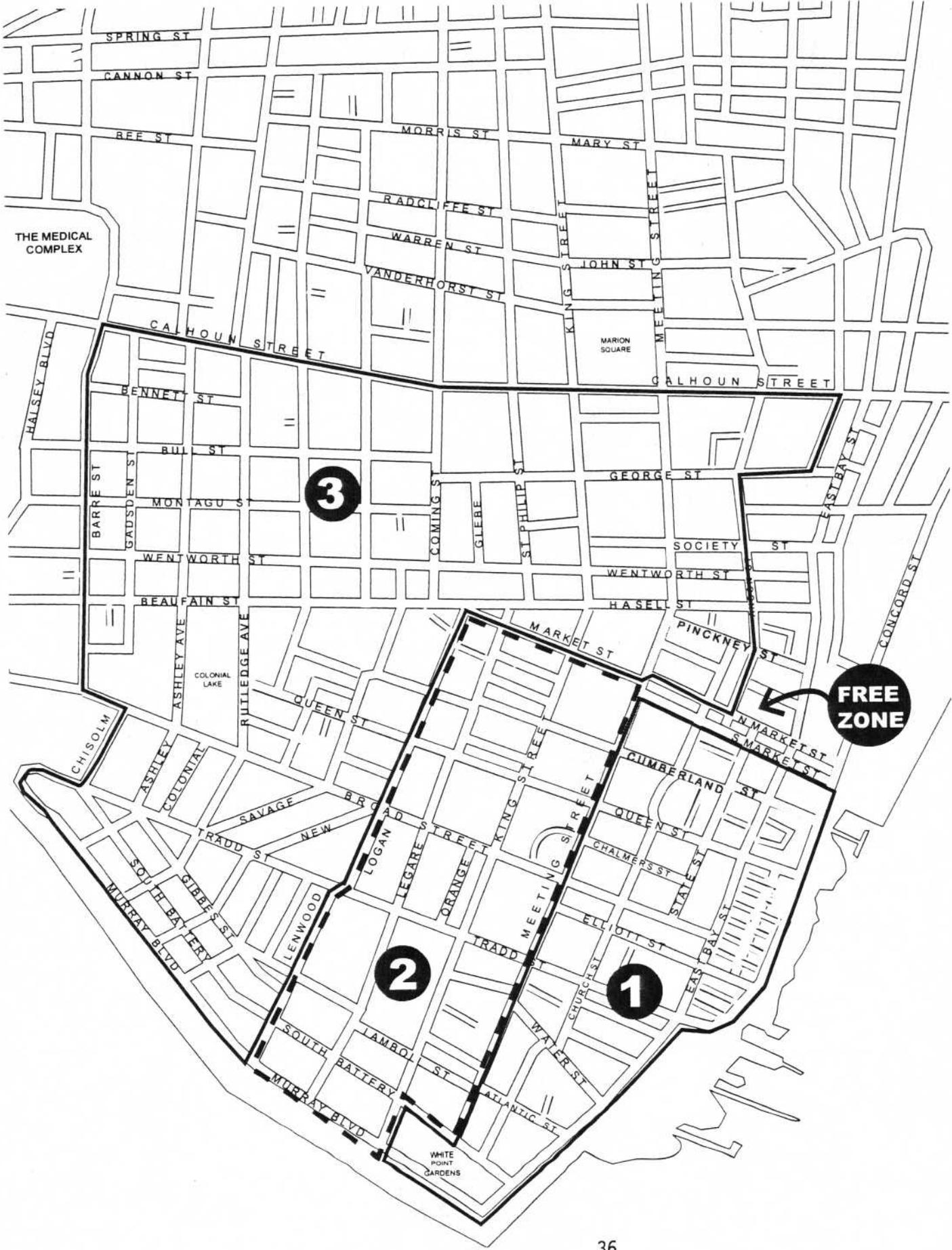
Concern was expressed about the zone being on the eastern side of the street due to the safety of visitors crossing the street. The Edmondston-Alston House representatives took this concern into consideration and revised their request. This became a proposal for a passenger loading and unloading zone in front of the Edmondston-Alston House, on the west side of E. Battery. Some subcommittee members still feel that, although the location of the zone is more acceptable, there should be no loading and unloading zone allowed at all. The residents of Charlestowne Neighborhood Association discussed the proposal at a neighborhood meeting and adamantly opposed the addition of a passenger loading and unloading zone. The management of the Edmondston-Alston House stated that loading and unloading activity has been occurring directly in front for the past twenty-five years without any complaints. Only recently has the City begun to issue tickets for this activity.

The committee recommends that the neighborhood and the Department of Traffic and Transportation study this issue and make a recommendation to the Tourism Commission at their regular April meeting. The Tourism Commission recommendation will be forwarded to City Council for action. In the meantime, the City should continue to permit the operation of the non-conforming loading and unloading activity in front of the Edmondston-Alston House.

5. The design of small buses is always improving--technological advances result in quieter, cleaner-running buses. The standards for new small bus certification should strive to meet the latest technological improvements.

The committee recommends that the City investigate the possibilities in tour bus specifications such as smaller engines, roof exhaust and engine padding and insulation. New buses should meet minimum specifications for reducing noise, vibration and emissions.

CARRIAGE TOUR ZONES MAP - 4



F. Carriages

Carriages are regulated in a different fashion than other tour vehicles. Currently, a medallion-lottery system is utilized to disperse the carriages throughout three zones (see Map 4). With each tour departure, the gatekeeper utilizes a bingo machine to randomly determine the zone in which the carriage guide is to conduct the tour. The appropriate medallion displaying the tour zone is then shown to the guide and hung on the rear of the carriage in plain view.

No more than twenty carriages are permitted to tour at any one time. Of those twenty carriages, six are permitted in zone one, six are permitted in zone two, and eight are permitted in zone three (four of these must utilize a different route to enter zone 3).

Carriage operators have seventy-five minutes in which to conduct their tour and return the medallion to the gatekeeper.

Carriages are permitted to pull over for descriptive purposes and are required to pull over to let traffic pass, when possible. Also, animal diapering apparatuses are required for all animals.

The tourism ordinance states:

"Animal-drawn vehicles may operate on all streets or public ways in the district, except the following:

- (a) The bricked portion of Church Street, from Water Street to South Battery, and all cobblestone and Belgium block streets;
- (b) any public way designated as an alley, lane or court (excluding St. Michael's Alley which may be used through Friday from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., excepting legal holidays and Horlbeck Alley which may be used Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and during regular touring hours on weekends and on legal holidays);
- (c) The following streets:
 - (1) Atlantic Street;
 - (2) Price's Alley;
 - (3) Rope Maker's Lane;
 - (4) Bedons Alley;
 - (5) Ladson Street;
 - (6) Big Lamboll Street;
 - (7) Water Street (from Church to Meeting Streets),
 - (8) Church Street (from Tradd to Water Streets), and

- (9) Broad Street (West of State Street) from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excepting legal holidays;
 - (10) Meeting Street (North of Broad Street) from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excepting legal holidays.
- (d) On such streets or at such times as are restricted for such use by the department of traffic and transportation with the approval of the city council committee on traffic and transportation and so designated in the office of the commission."

Discussion between residents and carriage industry representatives included important points. Some of these discussion points follow.

1. There are often too many carriages on the streets which cause traffic congestion with the "wagon-train effect" such as on Meeting and Logan Streets where tour zones overlap (see Map 4).
2. The constant presence of carriages diminishes the quality of life of some residential neighborhoods. Unsightly and odorous equine excrement and guide etiquette are some specific concerns of residents.
3. The industry has gone through major compromises and changes in the past few years, including the medallion system which works very well.
4. The industry is already heavily regulated, and in some aspects, is more regulated than other tour vehicles.
5. Carriages have less impact on neighborhoods than buses and walking tours and are more appropriate to the historical nature of the downtown area.
6. A large part of the carriage industry patronage comes at the end of the day (early evening) and a reduction in hours of operation for carriages would be a significant burden.
7. Suggesting lights for carriages and reflective devices for animals is prompted by safety concerns.

The committee recommends:

1. Emphasize the 1994 recommendation (page 43 of the Tourism Management Plan) that the City should implement a regular review or inspection of nighttime carriage illumination or lights to include the following:

- a. the Department of Traffic and Transportation should determine an appropriate lighting intensity (front and rear) and inspect all certified carriages' nighttime lighting on an annual basis to ensure it is adequate;
 - b. the Division of Tourism Management regulations should be strengthened to require that carriage animals wear reflective hoof bands; and
 - c. the Police Department should be reminded of the need to enforce nighttime carriage animal lighting and/or carriage illumination regulations
2. To quickly resolve animal diaper accidents, carriage guides should be equipped with radios to call clean-up crews to remove equine excrement from the streets in a timely fashion.
 3. The City should investigate the possibility of an addendum to its contract with Equine Sanitation Services Company (ESS) which would stipulate that ESS be in operation at all times the gate is open for carriage tours.
 4. Carriage driver training should be improved and a test of carriage driving skills and proper equine management be developed to improve the awareness and safety of all drivers. The carriage companies should develop and administer this test. The Division of Tourism Management could assist the carriage companies with the development of the test.
 5. The following recommended six routes are the result of a proposal developed by Tony Youmans of Olde Towne Carriage Company to reduce the carriage impact on Meeting, King, Tradd and Legare Streets. These streets are included in more than one tour zone (see Map 4). The routes disperse the carriages throughout the zones (see Appendix D). Carriage routes could be reduced as follows: Tradd Street, six to three; King Street, six to three; Legare Street, six to three; and Meeting Street northbound from South Battery, twelve to nine.

Zones 3 and 3A have several possible routes--the routes listed are the more typical routes. Carriage drivers must be able to retain the ability of altering their routes if unexpected street blockages occur (City of Charleston tree trimming, Anson Construction Co., street repair, etc.).

Zone "1" When leaving the gate, the carriages will begin at the corner of Church Street and N. Market Street. They will turn south on Church Street, take a left onto S. Market Street to State Street, turn right onto State Street and proceed south to Broad Street. The carriages will then take a left onto Broad Street and travel to East Bay Street, where they will turn right. They will then proceed to South Battery Street, where they will turn right, and travel to Meeting Street. Taking a right onto Meeting Street, the carriages will head north and take a right onto Tradd Street. They will then proceed to Church Street, where they will turn

left and head north back to the city market. This alternative will reduce the number of carriages from six per hour to three per hour.

Zone "1 Reverse" Carriages to begin at the corner of Church Street and N. Market Street, where they will then travel south on Church Street to Cumberland Street. Taking a right onto Cumberland Street, the carriages will head west to Meeting Street. Taking a left onto Meeting Street, the Carriages will head south to South Battery. They will then turn left onto South Battery and proceed to East Battery, where they will turn left. Proceeding north to Elliott Street, the carriages will take a left and travel to Church Street. Turning right onto Church Street, they will proceed north, returning to the city market. Again, there will be three carriages per hour.

Zone "2 King Street" Carriages will begin at the corner of Church Street and N. Market Street and proceed south on Church Street to Cumberland Street, where they will turn right. They will take Cumberland Street to Meeting Street, where they will turn left on Meeting Street and travel south to Queen Street. At Queen Street, the carriages will turn right and head west to King Street. The carriages will take a left onto King Street and head south to South Battery, where they will turn left and head towards Meeting Street. At Meeting Street, they will turn left and travel north to Cumberland Street, where they will turn right, heading toward Church Street. After taking a left onto Church Street, the carriages will head north, back to the city market. This route will allow for three carriages per hour.

Zone "2 Legare Street" The carriages will begin their tour at the corner of Church and N. Market Streets and proceed south on Church Street to Cumberland Street. They will turn right onto Cumberland Street and head towards Meeting Street, where they will take a left turn towards Queen Street. They will take a right at Queen Street and head west to Legare Street. After turning left onto Legare Street, the carriages will head to South Battery Street, where they will take a left to Meeting Street. Turning left onto Meeting Street, they will head north to Cumberland Street and turn right onto Cumberland Street. Arriving at Church Street, the carriages will turn left and head north, back to the city market. Number of carriages per hour: three. To avoid the Meeting and Broad Street intersection between 4:30 and 6 p.m., they will return to the Market via Logan Street to Beaufain Street. As much as possible, companies should encourage drivers to use this route rather than always using Meeting Street to return to the Market.

Zone "3" The carriages will begin in the city market and proceed north to Anson Street, where they will take a left onto George Street. They will then travel to Glebe Street, where they will turn left, heading towards Wentworth Street. At Wentworth Street, the carriages will take a right and proceed to Coming Street, where they will turn right. At Montagu Street, they will turn left, heading towards

Rutledge Avenue, where they will take another left and travel down Rutledge Avenue to Queen Street, take a left, and head to Franklin Street, where they will take another left. On Franklin, they will head towards Magazine Street and take a right onto Magazine Street to Logan Street. At Logan Street, they will take a left and proceed to Beaufain Street, where they will take a right and head back to the city market. The number of carriages per hour in this zone totals four. No carriages will use Wentworth Street from Coming to Lockwood between 4:30 and 6 p.m..

Zone "3A" Beginning at the corner of Church Street and N. Market Street, the carriages will turn south onto Church Street and travel to Cumberland Street, where they will turn right. From Cumberland Street, they will proceed to Archdale Street, turn left and head to Queen Street. At Queen Street, they will take a right to Franklin Street. At Franklin Street, they will turn left and head to Savage Street. From Savage Street, they will travel to Rutledge Avenue, turn left and head south to Murray Boulevard. Turning left onto Murray Boulevard, the carriages will head to Lenwood Street, turn left onto Lenwood Street and proceed to Tradd Street. From Tradd Street, they will head toward Logan Street and from Logan to Beaufain Street. Turning right onto Beaufain Street, they will proceed back to the city market. The number of carriages per hour will total four. And from 2 to 3 p.m., Zone "3A" would be rerouted to Anson Street, where the carriages would turn left onto Wentworth Street to allow for no carriage congestion that would impact the traffic flow from drivers picking-up school children on Archdale Street.

6. The Department of Traffic and Transportation should immediately study congestion around First Baptist Church School to determine if the carriages need to further alter their routes during the afternoon school closing time.
7. The City should increase efforts to enforce the illegal U-turns by carriages in neighborhoods and especially on Hasell Street.

VII. Transportation

A. Comprehensive Traffic and Parking Study of Downtown

All tourist related transportation issues are interrelated and have significant effects on residents and businesses in the downtown area. Traffic congestion and parking are identified as the major problems. A comprehensive downtown study would provide a basis for actions to solve current problems of concern to residents, merchants and tourists. This study should also address (in conjunction with the 1999 Zoning Ordinance update) the issues of variances and special exceptions related to parking and loading and unloading zones.

Before the completion of the study, there are simple steps residents can take that may help relieve congestion especially around sensitive areas such as schools. By becoming aware of school opening and closing hours, residents can avoid these areas.

The committee encourages the City to fund a comprehensive downtown traffic and parking study. They also request the City's neighborhood services coordinator provide each neighborhood association with the hours of afternoon school closing times--when to avoid the school pick-up area.

B. Residential Parking Districts

Commercial area destination parking for visitors and locals often spills into residential districts. Residents of the Ansonborough and Dock Street neighborhoods have expressed concern that commercial district patrons are parking in neighborhoods. This is a problem in many parts of the downtown area as evidenced by the Town and Gown Committee, which has also studied this issue.

Reinforce the 1994 recommendation to vigorously enforce residential parking hours, as requested by neighborhoods, with the potential to switch to 24-hour, seven days per week enforcement in the most impacted neighborhoods.

C. DASH

The committee feels the DASH system is not being utilized to its potential. It has limited routes and inconvenient ticketing. Riding DASH needs to become more convenient regarding routes, stops and ticketing. At present, transferring on public transportation is costly and inefficient. Because of union rules, drivers do not handle money and exact

change is needed. Also, one ride costs 75¢ and it does not allow for a transfer to another shuttle, but riders can transfer to a metro bus at some points.

There needs to be more education of the public (students, residents, downtown employees and visitors) in the usefulness of DASH in the downtown area to reduce traffic and parking problems. Incentives to ride DASH need to be developed and advertised.

1. Increase awareness and ridership of the DASH bus system through education efforts. Concentrate these efforts on the local population and continue these efforts with the student population.
2. Promote the use of DASH for visitors with:
 - a. a new package that includes VRTC movie ticket, all-day parking and an all-day DASH pass selling for \$7 (\$10 value) at the VRTC;
 - b. an increased amount of free parking at the VRTC (currently 1 hour) included in purchase of DASH pass;
 - c. reduced price of parking to encourage park-and-ride downtown for second-time visitors (reduce daily VRTC garage rate from \$6 to \$2.40-\$3.60 based on monthly garage rate); and
 - d. interstate signage with reference to a radio station where visitors can find directions to the VRTC and other information.
3. Expand bus routes offered by the DASH system, including the following:
 - a. The Department of Traffic and Transportation and Regional Transit Authority, with the assistance of the downtown neighborhood associations, should study the potential for extending DASH routes to South Battery and eliminating the large public buses from the route;
 - b. extend DASH Gateway Loop route to include the new Marriott Hotel at Lockwood Drive; and
 - c. revert Meeting to King Streets route back to its original route to include the Exchange Building and Waterfront Park area. (See bottom of page 49 and map on page 51 in the 1994 Tourism Management Plan.)
4. Expand the hours of operation of DASH.
5. Suggest a more efficient and less expensive method of changing buses (and forward this recommendation to the RTA).

6. Consider the possibility of replacing larger City transit buses with the smaller DASH buses, especially in the lower peninsula area.

D. Alternative Transportation

As part of a growing metropolitan area Charleston needs to look more at public transportation as a means to reduce traffic and parking problems in the downtown area. Cooperation with other jurisdictions and the study of potential transportation alternatives is important for plans to improve public transportation. Also, educating the public to the alternatives is essential to developing mass transit plans. Educate the public about the potential of the Futrex intermodal system, a monorail system from North Charleston and the airport to North Charleston hotels and downtown Charleston.

E. Pedestrian Friendly City

Concern for pedestrian safety and the desire to maintain the walkability of the Charleston downtown area are important issues for tourists and residents. There are key street intersections where pedestrian safety is of particular concern. Obstacles on sidewalks such as sandwich board signs and newspaper boxes are also a concern for the person on foot. The streetscape plan would bury power lines, thus removing power poles, and rebuild sidewalks to provide safer walking corridors on major pedestrian streets.

1. Continue the 1994 recommendation to explore ways of increasing safety at key intersections--East Bay-Market Streets, East Bay-Vendue Range, Market Streets-Meeting, Meeting-Ann, Calhoun-King, Calhoun-St. Philip and Calhoun-Coming.
2. As stated in the 1994 plan, sandwich board signs crowd the sidewalks and should be controlled. A citywide ban of these boards on public sidewalks became effective January 1, 1998.
3. Endorse the King Street and Market Streets streetscape plans that are currently being devised.

Market Area

- a. Reiterate the 1994 recommendation to strictly enforce the ordinance prohibiting meter-feeding in the Market area.
- b. Endorse the Market area streetscape plan that is currently being devised, and request that parking be eliminated along the Market sheds.

F. Parking Garages

Garages are well utilized during working hours on weekdays. However, fewer people use garage parking in the evening and on weekends. More night-time use of garages might alleviate some of the spill-over parking in the residential districts surrounding the commercial district. The Market area is of particular interest for encouraging more garage use rather than parking on the streets. There are concerns about safety for garage patrons during the evenings.

1. Reiterate the 1994 recommendation of designating the Cumberland Street garage as night-time Market area and theater patron parking.
2. Reiterate the 1994 recommendation of having the Market area footpatrol regularly patrol area garages and parking lots.
3. Encourage the Downtown Business Association (DBA) to aggressively promote the Cumberland Street garage free night-time parking program.
4. Continue to look into the 1994 recommendation of working with DBA to encourage more participation in the Parking Validation Program.

G. Tour Bus Parking

There are not enough large bus parking spaces in the downtown area. The City is working on locating and acquiring more spaces to meet parking demand. Currently, most available parking is along Concord Street near the market. Large bus patrons often gather near the Customs House while awaiting their bus. An attractive waiting area, with seating, in the Concord-Market area for large bus patrons waiting to be picked up by their bus, which had to park elsewhere, needs to be developed.

H. Walking Tours

Walking tour groups have recently become a concern for residents and motorists. The groups are often too large to fit on narrow sidewalks and spill into streets, causing safety concerns. Large groups also tend to impede use of the sidewalks by other pedestrians. There is a distinction between walking tour groups and those groups from large tour buses (which may reach numbers as high as fifty-two adults or sixty school children). Groups walking to and from a destination associated with a large bus tour must have the bus company escort assist in directing visitors. Many issues related to walking tours may be minimized if guides would remind visitors of the importance of common courtesy--following directional signs, letting others pass, etc.

1. Limit the size of walking tour groups to twenty people. Each student classroom group must be accompanied by one guide, one teacher and two additional adults.
2. Require one guide per twenty people disembarking from large tour buses. Large groups must be divided and take different walking routes. There must be at least one guide per coach and the escort could be utilized to meet the requirements of number 1 when walking to a location for a tour on private property.
3. The Tourism Commission, in conjunction with the community, should develop a statement on urban etiquette that guides must deliver at the beginning of their tours. Tourism management staff should develop a mandatory program for all guides to meet and review this statement.
4. Prohibit the use of amplification devices on any walking tours.
5. Develop a method for tour companies and independent guides to register with the City the number of tours they give (and the number of people in them). The City would then be able make a thorough analysis and annual report on the impact of walking tours downtown. Business License and Division of Tourism Management offices should concurrently develop a form that guides are required to complete that distinguishes the types of tours they give.

I. Tourism Management Fees

The committee discussed the City's fees for different touring vehicles. The committee began an evaluation of the various fees paid by the different touring vehicles and tour guides. They then determined that it was beyond the scope of their expertise to fully understand and evaluate all the issues. (See the following list of City fees.) The committee acknowledged that the recommendation to reduce the hours of operation--which will result in a 12 percent loss of business for the carriage companies--will have a substantial impact on the industry. Increasing the fees at this time may be unfair. The committee also discussed that the motorcoaches' fees seem inadequate compared to other tour operators. The committee is concerned about the honor system process of collecting the 50¢ tour fee. There is currently no way to determine the number of tourists on walking tours and no certain measurement of the money that should be collected.

The committee recommends that:

1. under the Tourism Commission a thorough evaluation of all fees and costs, which gives special attention to motorcoaches, should be undertaken in an effort to determine if the fees are equitably distributed;

2. a listing of all fees--city, county and state--be published, in an effort to inform the public of the costs the tourism industry is paying to operate; and
3. a better auditing system for ensuring accurate collection of the 50¢ tour fee should be developed.

Current fees

Carriages	
Annual fee for company to operate one carriage in the loading zone	\$17,500.00
Fee charged per tour billed monthly	\$3.00 per tour
Small Buses	
Annual fee per vehicle	\$300.00
Annual fee per passenger seat	\$ 25.00
Large Buses (motorcoaches)	
Transportation/tour permit fee per vehicle, per day	\$14.00
Walking Tours	Unknown
Tour Fee (50¢ fee on each tour ticket sold)	50¢
Tour Guides	
Temporary exam fee	\$30.00
Registered exam fee	\$50.00
Recertification fee	\$40.00

J. Other Recommendations

There is concern over air pollution resulting from overall traffic congestion. While the city cannot enforce emission standards for all vehicles, it can control its vehicles and licensed touring vehicles in the downtown area.

Investigate some means of minimizing exhaust fumes by requiring annual tour and transportation vehicle inspections.

APPENDICES

SCOPE OF ENFORCEMENT

CATEGORY	NUMBER AUTHORIZED	NUMBER APPROVED	ORDINANCE CODE NUMBER	ENFORCE CODE	HOURS OF OPERATION Sec. 29-236	ZONES OF OPERATION	LICENSE B - Business D - Driver G - Guide	SIZE LIMITATIONS
Walking Tours	N/A	N/A		✓	✓	1 - 6	B & G	N/A
Peddlers	N/A	228	Chap.17 Sections 106; 107; 108	✓	N/A	N/A	B	N/A
Carriages								
Touring	20	77	Chap. 29 Articles III, V & VI Chap. 29; Sec. 235-237 & 240	✓	✓	1 - 3	B, D, & G	✓
Transporting during Gate hours	inclusive in	inclusive in	Code does not speak specifically to transportation.		N/A	N/A	B & D	✓
Transporting after Gate hours	N/A	N/A	See above ↑	N/A	N/A	N/A	B & D	N/A
Motor Vehicles - Touring			Chap. 29; Article IV					
Private Passenger	N/A	3	Sec. 93-108	✓	✓	1 - 6	B, D, & G	✓
Small Bus	50	28	Sec. 109-124 ; 185-190; and 235-240	✓	✓	1 - 6	B, D, & G	✓
Charter	inclusive in	0	Sec. 125-140; 185-190; and 235-240	✓	✓	Charter	B, D, & G	✓
Large/Extra Large	8/8-12 & 2-4:30 4/12-2 & 4:30-6	Varies daily # of permits issued	Sec. 141-172; 235-237; and 239	✓	✓	Perimeter	Permit / Guide	✓
School / Church / RV	N/A	N/A	Sec. 173-184	✓	✓	size dictates	Guide	✓
Motor Vehicles - Transporting			Chap. 29; Article IV					
Private Passenger	N/A	N/A			N/A	N/A	D	✓
Small Bus	N/A	N/A			N/A	N/A	B & D	✓
Charter	N/A	N/A			N/A	Not Residential	B & D	✓
Large/Extra Large	N/A	N/A	Sec. 146 & 160		N/A	Not Residential	Permit	✓
School / Church / RV	N/A	N/A			N/A	size dictates	N/A	✓
Rickshaws	15	10	Chap. 29; Article VII; Sec. 261-290	✓	✓	1 - 6	D	✓
Encroachments			Chap. 28; Article III; Sec. 36-42	As requested	N/A	City-wide	Permit	N/A

Commercial District Signs

As existing mercantile businesses evolve and create new stores, an opportunity is also created to improve the visual quality and character of efficient advertising signs in the Commercial/Central Business District.

Current Regulations Pertaining to Signs

1. **Permitted Signs** - Currently the following sign types are options permitted on commercial establishments. Specific uses and locations are reviewed and approved by the Board of Architectural Review:

Right Angle Sign

Facade Sign

Awning Sign

Window Sign

Sandwich Board (located on private property)

[See ordinance enclosed definitions and enclosed drawings for graphic interpretations]

2. **Prohibited Signs** - Specifically prohibited by ordinance or denied in the past by the BAR:

Free standing / Pedestal Sign

Off Premise Sign

Portable Sign

Roof Mounted Sign

Snipe Sign

Sandblasted Relief Sign [prohibited by BAR Policy dated 2/8/84]

Sandwich Board Sign

3. **Exempt Signs** - Those signs that are exempt from the regulations:

Fluttering Sign: Flags, pennants, banners, ribbons, balloons, other aerial devices

Political Sign: On private property

Official Notices: Court, public agency or officer

Historic Plaques

Traffic, Directional, Warning or Public Information Signs

Design Guidelines for Signs

A. Limitations on the number and combination of sign types:

1. No more than two (2) sign types per building
2. Exemptions to A.1 - Buildings having a second elevation containing a display bay or access.
3. Inappropriate sign combinations include
 - a. Sandwich board and free standing sign
 - b. Facade and right-angle sign
 - c. Sandwich board and awning sign
 - d. Free standing and right angle sign
 - e. Awning and right angle sign

B. Right Angle Signs - *The BAR has established a policy of not approving right angle signs on King Street.*

1. Right angle signs may not extend lower than nine (9) feet above the ground surface
2. Right angle signs may not extend beyond the sill of second story windows
3. Right angle sign projections are limited to ninety (90) degrees
4. Right-angle signs should be placed next to the building and may project no more than one-third (1/3) of the sidewalk width and in no case more than four (4) feet from the face of the building
5. A minimum of fifty (50) feet shall be maintained between right-angle signs.

C. Facade Signs

1. Facade signs are limited by current regulations to fifteen (15) per cent of the total facade area. The BAR may restrict signs to less than the allowed based upon the architectural design, location and physical features of the building facade.

D. Awning Signs

1. Awning valances are limited to no more than one (1) foot and largest letter size to not more than eight inches in vertical height
2. Awnings may identify name of establishment and the code required street number. No graphic, logotype or corporate identification to located on sloping or curved surface of

- awnings.
3. All awnings should be made of opaque material, i.e. canvas. No lettering, logotype or corporate symbol shall be illuminated from within the awning.
- E. **Sandwich Board Signs**
1. All sandwich boards shall be prohibited from placement in the public right of way
- F. **Directory Signs**
1. In buildings which have more than one tenant occupying space for commercial use, use of directory signs shall be encouraged to identify multiple tenants. Signs for multi-tenant buildings shall be evaluated and approved in concert with all existing or proposed signs for the building.
- G. **Window Signs**
1. Window signs are limited to no more than 10 per cent of the aggregate ground floor display window area.
- H. **Neon Signs**
1. Generally neon has been discouraged within the Old City District. However, the BAR has permitted the use of documented historic neon signs indicating the name and type of business establishment. New neon signs in areas deemed appropriate by the BAR have been approved by the BAR in the recent past and should continue to be approved on a case by case basis.
 2. Product advertisements and "open" signs should be prohibited in all circumstances.



***** Visitors Reception & Transportation Center

APPENDIX C - 2





★ Visitors Reception & Transportation Center

APPENDIX C - 4



***** Visitors
Reception &
Transportation
Center



***** Visitors
Reception &
Transportation
Center

APPENDIX C - 6



***** Visitors
Reception &
Transportation
Center

APPENDIX D - 1 Reverse



APPENDIX D - 2 Legare



APPENDIX D - 3a



END