Chapter IX. TOWN AND GOWN ELEMENT

*An overview of this Chapter can be found in *Chapter 1 – Introduction and Executive Summaries*.

A. OVERVIEW

Communities that have an institution of higher education are very special places. These communities, often referred to as "the town," are presented with tremendous opportunities with the influx of young people each fall to begin or resume studies at colleges and universities, referred to as "the gown." A buzz of excitement and energy surrounds this unique relationship in these town-gown settings, as the community calendar explodes and energy flows with the beginning of each semester. Town residents enjoy the arts and athletic venues associated with colleges and universities. In fact, the allure of retiring in an environment of academic growth is a growing attraction to many baby boomers.

A community's personality can be intertwined so tightly with the local college that in some cases it is difficult to determine where the college and town lines separate. This is very apparent in Clemson where a first-time visitor would be hard-challenged to indicate on a map where the University ends and the City of Clemson begins.

In addition to the benefits, towns that host institutions of higher learning often face unique challenges. An influx of college students in neighborhoods and downtown areas presents issues associated with alcohol use, noise, traffic, housing, and parking. Often these challenges can grow into conflict and special remediation techniques are required to alleviate strained relations between students, local homeowners, city officials, and higher education officials.

Coordination is the ideal level of collaboration to strive for in the town-gown relationship. Coordination among students, university staff, permanent town residents, town leaders, and local government should be ongoing and in-depth. This includes the sharing of information and resources and regular meaningful communication. Towns engaging in these practices with higher education institutions are those most successful in minimizing conflicts such as student misbehavior, erosion of single-family neighborhoods, and the effects of campus expansion and development on local infrastructure.

Communication with other neighboring and nearby colleges and universities, including Tri-County Technical College and Southern Wesleyan University, is also important for the City of Clemson. Students at these postsecondary institutions may also live in the City but are unaware or less familiar with the City of Clemson housing and rental standards. Extending communication efforts to these nearby postsecondary institutions can help remedy many concerns and maintain open and positive interactions with all higher education institutions that impact the City and its residents and businesses.

An accurate analysis of the causes of conflict and the basis for enduring solutions requires an understanding of the history and culture of the University and its students, faculty, and staff – as well as the City and its residents and staff – within the context of the physical aspects of the broader shared community.

MAP IX-1. CLEMSON CITY AND CLEMSON UNIVERSITY LANDS
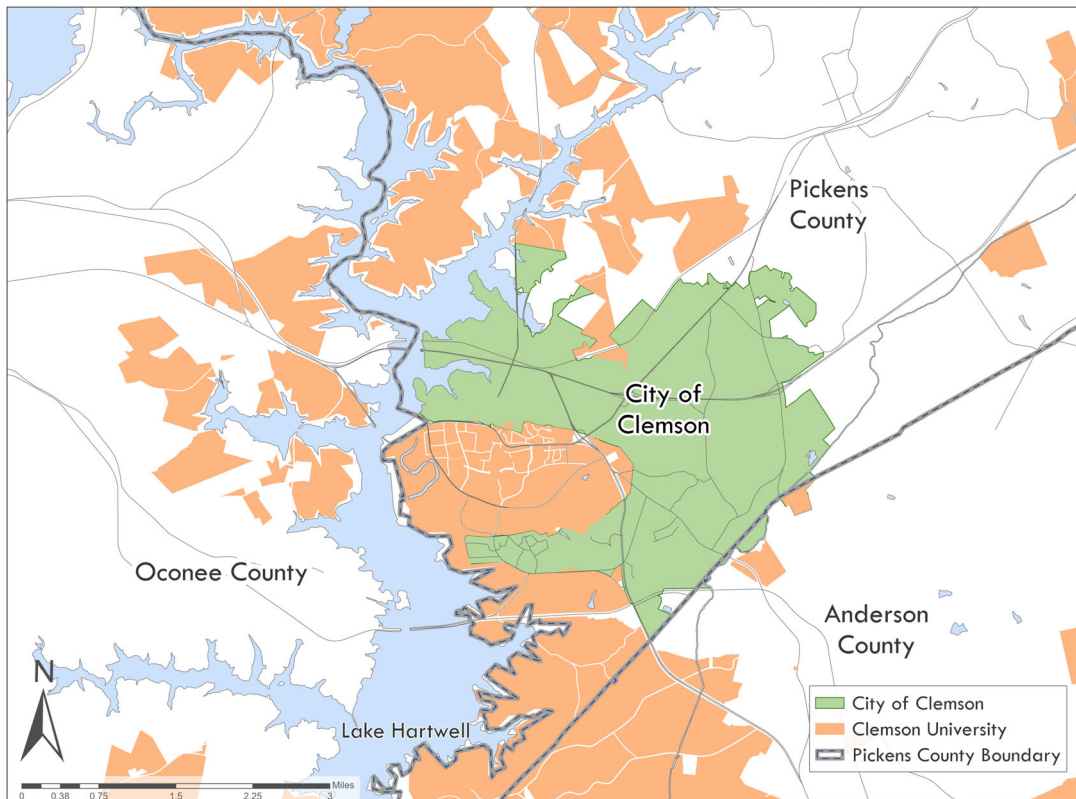
Source: City of Clemson Planning and Codes Administration, 2019

B. JOINT CITY UNIVERSITY ADVISORY BOARD

The town-gown relationship of the City of Clemson and Clemson University was ranked as the nation's best by the Princeton Review for seven consecutive years. The Clemson ranking dropped as low as ninth nationally between 2016 and 2018, before returning to the top spot in 2019. However, relations between the City and University are currently strained.

The positive relationship and national recognition are attributed in large part to a strong town-gown committee called the Joint City/University Advisory Board (JCUAB). The Board membership is comprised of an equal number of City employees and key University representatives. Executive members of the University and the City serve along with police leadership, meeting monthly to enhance their relationship and proactively address issues that may arise.

The JCUAB is perhaps the most significant catalyst for fostering the town-gown relationship over the next decade. Many of the goals, objectives, and strategies proposed in the Comprehensive Plan originated with the JCUAB. One significant outcome of the JCUAB was a creative inquiry project led by Jeff Martin (Director of the Madren Center at Clemson University) and Crossie Cox (Clemson City Council), along with a group of Clemson Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management (PRTM) students. The results of this 2013 research provided tremendous support and direction to the development of the Town and Gown element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The full report, entitled "A Study of Town/Gown Relationships Enhancers/Inhibitors for Success," is available in the Planning and Codes Department.

However, the purpose and efficacy of the JCUAB warrant a renewed focus as more recent changes in leadership and decreased engagement have diminished the Board's effectiveness and ability to address significant issues. In order for both the City and University to thrive, concerted efforts should be made to improve the relationship between the two and leverage the involvement of upper-level representatives.

The JCUAB has been an important programming agent in developing events that bring the City and University communities together. For example, the annual Clemson Regatta was held at the University's Lake Hartwell facilities for years. The event attracted more than 300 members of the community to meet and row with the University's women's crew team to raise funds for local charities. Unfortunately, the popular event ended in 2018 when the University repurposed the land used for this event.

FIGURE IX-1. CLEMSON 2012 REGATTA WINNERS

Source: City of Clemson, 2014

More recent issues that have tested the relationship involve campus expansion plans and facilities siting. Clemson University engaged the public and invited input through collaborative sessions related to the Douthit Hills housing project, which added 1,600 bedrooms to the University on a development site that abuts a well-established Clemson neighborhood. These outreach efforts ended with positive results for both parties.

In 2017, a proposed Clemson University Steam Plant that was originally proposed for a site only 100 feet from an older, established neighborhood just off the Clemson Campus exposed a long

simmering concern with the University regarding the need to coordinate and communicate with City residents. Intervention by local state legislative representatives and legal filings by the City of Clemson were required to ensure that the facility was sited at a more suitable location.

In 2018, additional concerns regarding the siting of new electrical switchyards on the Clemson University campus further challenged strained relations and highlighted the lack of open and transparent communications with City residents. Although additional communications initiated by Duke Energy and Clemson University mitigated the issue, earlier transparency and open communications could have mitigated or avoided the unnecessary turmoil.

Despite these recent land use conflicts, collaboration on other projects has produced positive returns as detailed below.

- Clemson Area Transit (CAT) is a successful joint venture between the University and the City that benefitted all members of the community. During football game days the population of Clemson swells from 14,000 to as many as 120,000 people, bringing substantial revenue into the community. A tremendous amount of coordination is required between the City and University to make these game days safe and positive for all. However, in recent years the University withdrew its funding for CAT, instead investing in a competing transit system designed to solely serve University students and employees.

- The University and City share a fire and rescue service, resulting in enhanced services, cost savings, and public safety. This relationship is one of the most successful joint ventures between the City and the University.

- Many members of the Clemson University faculty bring their expertise to bear on civic matters by volunteering and serving on City boards, committees, and commissions.

- The City recycles residential yard waste, providing most of the mulch for the University grounds. This program reduces yard waste in the City and enhances campus beautification efforts.

These joint efforts are detailed in *Section D*.

C. INTERNATIONAL TOWN-GOWN ASSOCIATION

The Joint Clemson City/University Advisory Board (JCUAB) launched the non-profit International Town-Gown Association (ITGA) in 2008. After two years of research, the JCUAB created the ITGA as a formal network of resources to assist civic leaders, university officials, faculty, neighborhood residents, and students to collaborate on common services, programs, academic research, and citizen issues. The ITGA's initial focus was on sharing examples of how colleges and communities can work together to collectively raise revenues and lower expenses.

Former Clemson University President James F. Barker and City of Clemson Mayor Larry W. Abernathy served as the founding organizers of the non-profit. In a letter to prospective founding

members, President Barker and Mayor Abernathy stated, "We have affirmed a need to bring the leaders of colleges and universities together with community leaders to engage their staff, faculty, volunteers, citizens, and students to work together in a more collaborative effort in addressing problems and creating opportunities specific to issues of college towns. Increasing operating costs, shrinking budgets and higher living and educational demands from students and citizens make partnering for a common good more important now than ever."

The first ITGA Board of Directors was appointed in September 2008, along with the non-profit's first Executive Director. The University of Colorado-Boulder, the City of Boulder, and California Polytechnic State University joined Clemson University and the City of Clemson as the founding partners of the ITGA. Today, ITGA is a membership-based organization serving as the primary information resource for common issues between institutions of higher learning and the cities in which they reside. Membership has grown to nearly 200 universities, colleges, towns, and cities across the United States and Canada. The ITGA web site (www.itga.org) describes the resources and member benefits of the organization.

In an environment of municipal spending and taxation limits, state budget cuts, and concerns about rising tuition, many cities and universities are seeking ways to share the costs of services and programs and achieve greater economies of scale. As recognition of the benefits of positive town-gown relations grows, colleges and communities need a resource for contact information, program assistance, and examples of how successful cross-jurisdictional partnerships and shared leadership between colleges and communities can lead to solutions to common problems.

FIGURE IX-2. PRESIDENT CLEMENTS AND MAYOR J.C. COOK. III

Source: City of Clemson, 2014

In 2014, the City of Clemson and Clemson University hosted the tenth annual ITGA conference at the University's Madren Center. The event was filled with informative presentations and many extracurricular activities and was well attended, with more than 200 participants from town-gown institutions and cities from across the country.

FIGURE IX-3. ITGA CONFERENCE ATTENDEES CELEBRATING IN THE PRESIDENT'S BOX AT HOWARD MEMORIAL STADIUM

Source: City of Clemson, 2014

However, since the founding of the Joint Clemson City/University Advisory Board, leadership transitions at both the City and University have changed the nature of the town-gown relationship. These personnel changes, along with accompanying shifts in leadership styles and administrative focus, can affect the meaningful, consistent level of communication and comradery that characterized the initial Board formation. Efforts to steer the relationship back to a more personal level will require the dedicated effort of both parties. The addition of smaller working groups is one strategy that would reposition the Board to effectively address specific issues and achieve measurable goals. In its current configuration, the JCUAB has not reached its promising potential for the unification of town and gown.

D. CITY OF CLEMSON AND CLEMSON UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Outside of the formal JCUAB and ITGA relationships, the City and Clemson University work together on a daily basis to provide essential services to City residents and students on campus. The City has forged a partnership with Clemson University to provide fire service and public transportation to the community. The City provides fire trucks and contracts with the University for fire protection. This arrangement saves the City money while providing the University with additional funding for increased full-time staff. The University also partners with the City to run Clemson Area Transit (CAT). Through a partnership program, CAT is able to leverage student transportation fees as a local match for federal transportation funding.

The City of Clemson also contracts with Clemson University and the neighboring Town of Central to provide holding services at their 48-hour jail detention facility. The contract with the other entities offsets operational costs for the City, while helping Central and the University avoid the

costs of building and staffing a jail. Clemson University also began using the City of Clemson Courtroom for trials in 2019.

The City of Clemson partnered with Clemson University to upgrade portions of the Littlejohn Coliseum in 2008, followed with funding assistance for rehabilitation efforts at the South Carolina Botanical Gardens in 2013. The Littlejohn Coliseum upgrades included a new curtain system that allows for a greater number and variety of events. The funds directed to the Gardens assisted with post-flooding restoration of large portions of the garden. The City also provides the Gardens with free mulch collected through the City's brush and yard waste removal service.

The partnership between the City and the University extends beyond programming and funding to include land leases and shared facilities for sporting and community events. The City leases land from the University for the Old Stone Church Park for $1 annually. In return, the City offers the use of various public athletic facilities to Clemson University club-level sports teams.

The City, University, and other partners join forces each fall to manage the issues that arise when more than 120,000 visitors flood the Clemson area for highly popular collegiate football games at the famed Death Valley stadium. Public safety and emergency response personnel begin planning months in advance to coordinate emergency teams comprised of City, University, County police, fire, State troopers, sheriffs, and other emergency services staff, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Homeland Security. These groups not only identify and monitor all activities happening in Upstate South Carolina each football weekend, but simultaneously assess weather and wind patterns, evacuation routes, hospital capacities, air and train traffic, and any other factors that may influence the safety of event attendees.

Similar coordination of emergency personnel is required for other town and gown events throughout the year. These include the annual *First Friday* parade that draws thousands of people to Downtown Clemson and Bowman Field, as well as the popular *Welcome Back* for students sponsored by local businesses at the start of each fall semester.

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FIGURE IX-4. HOWARD MEMORIAL STADIUM AND DEATH VALLEY

Source: City of Clemson, 2014

FIGURE IX-5. CAT BUS ON LOCKDOWN DURING A FOOTBALL WEEKEND

Source: City of Clemson, 2014

E. SUMMARY FINDINGS

The relationship between the City of Clemson and Clemson University is a continuously evolving partnership in which both parties strive to create a healthy, safe, and attractive environment for both students and residents. Although two distinct entities, the City and the University share a mutual goal of leveraging resources and working together as one. There are many opportunities presented by the proximity of Clemson University to the City. Conversely, there are unique challenges posed by having such a large percentage of the City population comprised of young and transient students. The partnership forged through the shared commitment of working together and continued recognition as one of the nation's top-ranked town-gown relationships is proof that it is possible for both the City and University to advance their respective missions through collaboration.

F. ISSUES AND TRENDS

The key finding of the 2014 Town and Gown Committee was that the relationship between the City of Clemson and Clemson University was positive and mutually beneficial at the time. The Committee did identify additional opportunities with specific recommendations for improving the town-gown relationship. The primary areas of need and opportunities include:

1. Continue to build upon the existing town-gown relationship.

2. Increase communication, openness, and transparency between the City and University.

3. The City and University should partner to build projects that are bigger and better together than they would be if done separately.

4. Maintain open communications regarding transportation and work together to build the best possible transportation and parking network.

In addition to addressing some of the challenges presented by the sharing of space by a university and town, it is important to explore maximizing some of the opportunities which such circumstances present. Developing a more coordinated calendar of events, establishing mentoring programs, and developing events that bring the students and residents together in a fun and interactive environment are all objectives for the decade ahead.

The Town and Gown Comprehensive Plan Update Committee concluded that the previous five years have resulted in a slow decline of relations due in part to a lack of communication and by large measure to a significant increase in University enrollment without a commensurate increase in on-campus housing. This has resulted in the addition of more than 4,000 new off-campus student housing beds in the City since 2014. These large new housing complexes bring stark visual changes in community character and pose land use compatibility challenges with surrounding traditional residential areas. Such University policies, along with funding cuts to CAT while adding more commuter parking spaces, have fueled traffic increases. These rapid changes have been unsettling to the community, with traffic congestion recently cited in a citywide survey as the number one concern of Clemson citizens. Beginning in 2018 and continuing into 2019, the

University underwent a major infrastructure project that required the partial and at times complete closure of S.C. Highway 93. The highway segment was renamed Walter T. Cox Boulevard by the University after taking control of the road from the SCDOT. The negative impact this closure had on citizens and downtown merchants further strained the town-gown relationship.

Primary town-gown issues and trends continue to revolve around improving and maintaining a high degree of openness and transparency as the City and University collaboratively address the concerns of student and resident housing, parking, transit, and student-resident relations.

G. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Town and Gown Element Vision

"The complete and open sharing and exchange of information between The City of Clemson and Clemson University to allow decisions on planning proposals or projects to use City and/or University resources of manpower, facilities, monies, and knowledge to the fullest potential and to continually increase the viability of the City and University growth along with the quality of life for residents, students, and University personnel."

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion	Status
Goal IX.1. Increase communication, openness, and transparency.			
Objective IX.1.1. Foster open communication, understanding, tolerance, and support for students, both academically and personally.			
Strategy IX.1.1.1. Establish a mentoring program for residents and students, to include student mentoring on being a good neighbor, and organize a "Get to Know Your Neighbor" day during move-in week.	Clemson University Rental Management Companies Area Realtors Public Safety Departments	Short term	
Strategy IX.1.1.2. Establish an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) type program for both residents and students to learn skills outside the traditional classroom setting.	Clemson University City Rental Program Staff	Short term	
Strategy IX.1.1.3. Create student-resident dialogue forums, including opportunities with fraternities, sororities, and other service organizations.	Clemson University City Rental Program Staff	Short term	
Strategy IX.1.1.4. Communicate with students and let them know they are needed and encouraged to be involved in the community through a City presence at the annual "Volunteer Fair" and awareness of local "causes" and outlets for student involvement.	Planning and Codes	Ongoing	

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion	Status
Strategy IX.1.1.5. Continue to look for opportunities to support and host events and festivals such as *Spring Scene* that can be attended by students, faculty, and residents, while exploring new events such as a joint CU/City fest that would span Downtown and Bowman Field, bringing in merchants from outside the Downtown and showcasing student organizations.	Clemson University Various City Departments	Ongoing	
Objective IX.1.2. Increase communication and transparency between Clemson University departments and City departments.			
Strategy IX.1.2.1. Identify key stakeholders and contact information for agencies and individuals and encourage the addition of an ex-officio member of City staff on the CU Planning Board and vice-versa.	Planning and Codes Clemson University	Short term	
Strategy IX.1.2.2. Encourage transparency for enrollment and housing projections, with regular updates to the town-gown Data Spreadsheet.	Clemson University	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.1.2.3. Provide annual numbers of on-campus residents.	Clemson University	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.1.2.4. Inform the City in advance of all plans to develop on-campus housing and other major facility and infrastructure projects.	Clemson University	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.1.2.5. Should the University choose to increase undergraduate enrollment, consider a policy requirement that freshman live on-campus and offer older students the opportunity to live on campus as well.	Clemson University	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.1.2.6. Have a City staff member provide a brief presentation on issues of common interest at quarterly University Trustee meetings.	Clemson University City Administration	Short-term	
Strategy IX.1.2.7. Develop a City-University calendar that advertises major events.	Clemson University City Administration	Short-term	
Objective IX.1.3. Increase or foster open communications for residents with City and University.			
Strategy IX.1.3.1. Make reports and data shared between City and University available to residents.	Clemson University City Administration	Short-term	

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion	Status
Strategy IX.1.3.2. Establish regular channels of communication between residents and the University.	Clemson University City Administration	Short-term	
Strategy IX.1.3.3. Establish neighborhood council representation with the Clemson Community Coalition.	City Administration	Short-term	
Goal IX.2. Have the City and Clemson University partner to build projects together that are bigger and better than those which could be accomplished individually.			
Objective IX.2.1. Evaluate the opportunities for cost sharing, land sharing, and asset sharing and automatically incorporate these considerations into the planning process.			
Strategy IX.2.1.1. Establish a list of joint projects that have already been built or otherwise completed.	Planning and Codes	Short-term	
Strategy IX.2.1.2. Identify key stakeholders in each aspect of physical development projects.	Clemson University Planning and Codes	Ongoing	
Objective IX.2.2. Create channels of communication between various departments and agencies.			
Strategy IX.2.2.1. Regularly share project information at Joint City-University Advisory Board (JCUAB) meetings and other venues.	JCUAB Clemson University City Administration	Ongoing	
Goal IX.3. Promote and build the Clemson University-City of Clemson town-gown relationship.			
Objective IX.3.1. Foster a positive relationship between Clemson University and the City of Clemson.			
Strategy IX.3.1.1. Secure commitments from the Mayor and President of Clemson University for participation in regular meetings.	Mayor President	Immediate	
Strategy IX.3.1.2. Encourage continued participation in the joint City-University exchange program, visit other universities and towns on a regular basis, and attend the annual ITGA conference.	JCUAB	Ongoing	

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion	Status
Strategy IX.3.1.3. Seek external opportunities to improve collaboration between JCUAB, Clemson University, and the City.	JCUAB	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.3.1.4. Evaluate and improve the mechanisms of the JCUAB to result in meaningful coordination of ideas and action.	JCUAB	Ongoing	
Objective IX.3.2. Cultivate close working relationships between staff in City departments and University counterparts.			
Strategy IX.3.2.1. Establish a list of similar departments within the City and Clemson University.	JCUAB Planning and Codes	Short-term	
Strategy IX.3.2.2. Host bi-annual workshops for each department pairing.	Identified Departments	Short-term	
Objective IX.3.3. Update residents and students on the status of the town-gown relationship.			
Strategy IX.3.3.1. Assign a group of rotating writers (students, faculty, city staff, and residents) to address issues relating to town-gown relationships in the *Community Connections* and *Clemson World* publications.	City Administration Clemson University	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.3.3.2. Explore the option of adding a jointly paid communication position that serves the University, the City, and citizens to address issues related to town-gown relationships in relevant publications.	City Administration Clemson University	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.3.3.3. Update the City and University websites to identify opportunities for residents and students to help build the town-gown relationship by working together.	JCUAB	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.3.3.4. Celebrate the diversity that the University brings to the City and host events to help better understand, assimilate, and embrace that diversity and energy.	JCUAB	Ongoing	
Objective IX.3.4. Include local business owners and residents in the town-gown relationship.			
Strategy IX.3.4.1. Establish a business incubator program/model to increase entrepreneurial opportunities and internships for residents, faculty, and students alike.	Chamber of Commerce JCUAB	Long-term	

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion	Status
Strategy IX.3.4.2. Utilize creative inquiry classes through Clemson University to help create business incubators with City, University, and local entrepreneurs.	JCUAB	Mid-term	
Strategy IX.3.4.3. Add a member of the City Chamber of Commerce or other business leader to the JCUAB.	JCUAB	Short-term	Done
Goal IX.4. Work together to provide open communications on transportation issues and to form the best transportation network possible.			
Objective IX.4.1. Support the health and growth of the Clemson Area Transit Bus program.			
Strategy IX.4.1.1. Explore ways to increase student, faculty, and resident usage of Clemson Area Transit (CAT).	Clemson Area Transit City Administration Clemson University	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.4.1.2. Encourage alternate transit options for all new housing developments.	Planning and Codes Clemson Area Transit	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.4.1.3. Require bus stops to be included for any development with more than 100 students.	CAT	Mid-term	
Strategy IX.4.1.4. Work with the University to locate routes and stops to encourage higher CAT ridership.	Clemson Area Transit Clemson University	Ongoing	
Objective IX.4.2. Provide adequate and appropriate parking.			
Strategy IX.4.2.1. Ensure that Downtown parking and College Avenue, including side streets, are available for Downtown establishments.	Clemson University City Administration	Long-term	
Strategy IX.4.2.2. Explore establishing Downtown parking restrictions to encourage use of alternate transit modes.	City Administration Clemson University	Short-term	
Objective IX.4.3. Promote a more complete and effective citywide bikeway and pedestrian system.			
Strategy IX.4.3.1. Work with the University to create a seamless bikeway and pedestrian network.	Clemson University Planning and Codes	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.4.3.2. Work with the University to enforce biking rules on and off campus.	Campus Police City Police	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.4.3.3. Work with the University to create bicycle wayfinding signs in the City and on campus.	Clemson University Public Works	Mid-term	
Strategy IX.4.3.4. Work with the University to establish safe bikeway and pedestrian paths near Sikes Hall and Downtown.	Clemson University Public Works	Mid-term	

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Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion	Status
Strategy IX.4.3.5. Continue to encourage on-bus bike racks and on and off campus bicycle parking facilities.	Clemson Area Transit	Ongoing	
Strategy IX.4.3.6. Support the University in its *Bicycle and Pedestrian Friendly University* certification effort.	Clemson University City Administration	Ongoing	