

CITY OF CLEMSON STRATEGIC DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Preliminary Proposal

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in Representation of the **Planning Commission for Consideration by City Council**

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VISION **Place-based rather than developer-driven growth for the Clemson community**, aiming to preserve and celebrate the unique character of this University City while providing a clear vision for attractive, strategic, and desirable future physical building and development efforts.

STRATEGY Fund a third-party expert urban design and planning consulting firm to conduct a City of Clemson Strategic Downtown Master Plan, bid appropriately through a thoughtful request for qualifications (RFQ) and request for proposal (RFP) process.

- GOALS**
- Create a physical mapped and designed vision for our downtown that is thoughtful, place-based, and serves as a solid guide in all downtown area development.
 - Show builders, developers, and investors the look, feel, and specific strategic locations where growth and infill are appropriate in our community.
 - Proactively accommodate the various populations in need of downtown housing and amenities within our community for the foreseeable future in a way that preserves, supplements, and improves the physical character of our downtown area.
 - Plan for site and building elements such as greenspace, plazas, water features, architectural features, and other physical attractions to create a downtown that appeals to both campus and community populations.
 - Thoughtfully and preemptively plan for impacts of planned growth and development on nearby residential communities; pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic; infrastructure; and the neighboring university campus.
 - Limit housing development to meet, and not exceed, the needs of the overall community in a way that takes advantage of existing infrastructure and encourages redevelopment of aging or other medium to high density existing facilities.
 - Capitalize on Clemson's downtown lakeside location through design and planning efforts that proactively celebrate and connect to this defining feature.
 - Focus the many goals from the Comprehensive Plan into a few overarching guiding principles in an approachable, legible format that can be translated into the built environment in a powerful and impactful way.

- OUTCOMES**
- Clear communication of vision for growth and development through 3-dimensional maps; before and after imagery; diagrams displaying desirable building/streetscape character for the downtown area; and other contemporary design and planning visualization tools to fully understand proposed strategies for the future of our downtown area.
 - Prepare and include the community at large in upcoming changes in the built environment through a planned and intentional approach in lieu of ‘putting out fires,’ ‘review from development to development’, or ‘fill in the blanks’ strategies that can occur when guided predominantly by a zoning map, comprehensive plan, and conventional zoning and building codes, effectually clarifying the decision-making course for our community’s design and planning process.
 - Outline for a strategic approach to managing growth and change in the built environment in a way that can be phased and sought out as deemed appropriate by local decision-making stakeholders rather than out-of-town developers and investors.
 - Future zoning amendments, such as the addition of specific downtown districts, after adoption of proposed Strategic Downtown Master Plan which embody place-based planning efforts and form-based codes for a unique and special Clemson.

PRECEDENCE A review of numerous University Cities reveals recent master planning efforts that provide specific guidance for growth and development with the spirit and uniqueness of each place in mind. The City of Clemson has not undergone this effort, which is a natural and arguably critical next step following Comprehensive Plan Update. The following precedent examples are available online:

City of Auburn Downtown Master Plan, 2014, Auburn, Alabama [\$125,000]
Downtown Strategic Plan, 2019, Blacksburg, Virginia [\$170,000]

SIGNIFICANCE Undertaking a City of Clemson Strategic Downtown Master Plan during this critical time of growth provides a timely and proactive approach to meeting the changing needs of the overall Clemson community while still enhancing and preserving the special character of the City of Clemson. The resulting plan will guide downtown design and planning efforts for a tomorrow we can all be proud of.

PLAN EXTENTS Initially proposed extents are loosely based on higher density zoning extents in the Clemson Zoning Map within the City of Clemson downtown area. Efforts could be extended to additional strategic areas, or to encompass all areas within the City of Clemson.

