

## CHAPTER II. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

A Comprehensive Plan is only as good as the quality of the public involvement utilized in its development. The Planning Commission has created a series of options for public participation and input throughout the year-long Comprehensive Planning process to reflect the broadest cross section of community interests and concerns. To ensure that residents were provided opportunities to be involved in the planning process in a manner that fits their schedules and interests, some of the opportunities required active participation and attendance at scheduled meetings, while others required less time.

### A. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEES

The *Clemson 2024 Comprehensive Plan* document is organized around ten elements, nine required, and one additional element unique to Clemson. A committee was formed to guide the development of each of the elements. These committees were chaired by Planning Commission members and were charged with reviewing background data and existing conditions and developing an element draft that included a vision, goals, objectives, and strategies. The element committees met four to eight times in a six to ten week period to accomplish these tasks.

### B. CITIZEN OPTION SURVEY

From December 2013 to January 2014, the City of Clemson distributed a citywide survey to gather data about past commercial and residential development, transportation needs, consumer patterns, and various city services. The survey was available online and in hard copy format. Residents were notified of the survey through newspaper articles, City of Clemson Water and Sewer Service utility bills, notice hangars on residential trash bins, citywide email blasts, and the distribution of information leaflets at various locations around the City. A total of 385 respondents completed the surveys, which were then compiled and analyzed. The survey results were presented to City Council in March 2014. Survey results were also distributed to the Comprehensive Plan element committees to provide the broad-based opinions of Clemson residents on a wide range of issues. Survey questions and results are included in Appendix A.

### C. VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

Planning and Codes Administration Staff requested assistance from Clemson University students enrolled in a course entitled *Sociology 459/659 - The Community* to administer a

Visual Preference Survey. Nine students developed an online visual preference survey that included different examples of the built environment, including housing, commercial, signage, and street patterns. The results of this survey were available to the Land Use Committee as part of the background data that was provided for their review.

#### D. PUBLIC HEARINGS

For residents who were unable to participate in the element committees or other public forums, two public hearings were scheduled. The first formal public hearing was held by the Planning Commission after the completion of the draft Comprehensive Plan by the element committees and review by the Planning Commission.

Upon receiving a formal recommendation from the Planning Commission and prior to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the City Council held a formal public hearing to receive further public input.

#### E. OVERVIEW

Located in the Upstate of South Carolina, the City of Clemson has experienced significant changes over the last thirty years. During that time, the City's population doubled in size, business corridors expanded along the City's primary arterial roadways, the number of residential dwellings rose sharply, and significant investment was made in public improvement projects designed to enhance the City's appearance and overall quality of life. The impetus for much of these changes can be attributed to two primary sources: the rapid growth during the last several decades that typified most of Upstate and the advancement of Clemson University as a nationally known research institution.

Despite these changes, Clemson has retained much of the small college town atmosphere for which it has always been known. Originally named Calhoun, the town was settled in 1872 along the railroad at a stop that served the local agricultural community, most notably the Fort Hill Plantation. The land around the rail line, still locally known as Calhoun, contains some of the oldest structures in the City. With the establishment of Clemson College in 1889, the center of town began a gradual shift away from the railroad toward the college. New businesses and several churches developed along routes that are now known as College Avenue and Old Greenville Highway, establishing a new 'downtown' for the emerging town and forging a permanent link between the City and the college. Neighborhoods slowly emerged near the new commercial center, providing housing in large part for the faculty and staff of the College.

The town was formally incorporated as the Town of Calhoun in 1937, but was renamed the City of Clemson in 1943 to eliminate confusion with Calhoun Falls and to officially recognize the “town-gown” partnership. Along with the College’s growth in the post-World War II era, due in large part to the “GI Bill,” the new City continued to expand. The college town became a lakefront community in 1963 with the completion of Lake Hartwell by the US Army Corps of Engineers, enhancing both the natural beauty of the area while greatly expanding recreational opportunities. The 1960s also saw the construction of US Highway 123, providing the City with a direct a connection to the emerging Greenville/Interstate 85 corridor.

As the City looks to its future, several significant opportunities and challenges must be considered. This document seeks to analyze these factors and offers appropriate strategies to address each one. Chief among these issues is the obligation to promote and protect the quality of life in Clemson. Clemson is first and foremost a university town. Effective partnerships between the City and Clemson University must be strengthened and enhanced as the future of both is interconnected in many ways. As the only lakefront municipality on Lake Hartwell, preservation of that resource is vital and must be considered as part of an overall commitment to protecting the City’s natural resources. The City must also contend with the lack of significant undeveloped land area within its current corporate limits. This factor, coupled with obstacles to future expansion, will continue to impact land costs in the City. Escalating land costs will have a serious impact on housing costs in the City and will also impact the types of available dwellings. As the Upstate of South Carolina and Clemson University continue to grow, the City will also continue to grow and change accordingly. Strategies must be developed to allow the City to effectively manage and respond to growth as it occurs both within and outside of its boundaries.