

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, March 09, 2026
6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

The City of Clemson Planning Commission met in open session in the Council Chambers in City Hall, 1250 Tiger Boulevard, Clemson, SC.

Members present: Herb Tyler (Chair), Greg Rice (Vice-Chair), Tanya Hyatt, Bryan Yoder, Tiffany Franks, and John Crolley

Members absent: Benji Cumbie

Staff present: Nathan Woods, Assistant City Administrator and Planning & Development Director; Art Holbrooks, City Planner; Jacob Peabody, Zoning & Codes Administrator; Kelly Roach, Recording Secretary.

The meeting was livestreamed and recorded on YouTube.

1. Call to Order:

Mr. Tyler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and then introduced the Commission members and staff present.

2. Public Session (4:38)

Mr. Tyler opened up the Public Session and called for comments related to items not on the agenda. He also noted that there had been no written comments received for items not on the agenda.

Mr. Rupert McGinty, 206 N. Clemson Ave, Clemson. Mr. McGinty requested additional lots be included in the proposed Neighborhood Conservation Overlay.

Ms. Karen Frady, 218 Pine Street, Clemson. Ms. Frady expressed concerns with the City relying on developers to fix infrastructure.

Mr. Bob Fennell, 421 Sky View Dr, Clemson. Mr. Fennell stated worries regarding traffic backups from the proposed new Seven Brews drive-thru coffee shop being located at the intersection of Hwy 93 and Sky View Drive. Mr. Tyler responded to Mr. Fennell, recommending he contact the Planning and Development Office.

Mr. Tyler called for additional comments; there were none. He then confirmed that there had been no public comments received through the internet portal, and the Public Session was closed.

3. Adoption of Minutes (11:11)

a. February 9, 2026 – Regular Meeting

Mr. Tyler called for proposed edits to the draft minutes. Ms. Franks noted that on page 6 under Item #9, the word ‘address’ should be ‘addressed’; and, Mr. Rice noted that page 4 under Item 5, Mr. Cumbie’s name was spelled incorrectly.

Mr. Tyler called for a motion; Ms. Franks made a motion to approve the minutes as amended; Mr. Rice seconded the motion. Mr. Tyler called for discussion; there was none. Mr. Tyler called for a vote by a show of hands; there was no opposition. The motion was unanimously approved by a 6-0 vote.

4. Informational Briefing: Mr. Nathan Woods (12:24)

Mr. Tyler recognized Mr. Woods who presented the Commission an overview of land use planning in the City of Clemson. (See Attachment #1). Following the presentation, Mr. Tyler called for comments or questions from the commissioners; there were none.

5. Planned Development Public Session (31:54)

a. PUD-000526-2026 Proposed Planned Development (201 Pine Street)

Mr. Tyler called for updates from staff; there were none. He then recognized the development team.

Ms. Alison Mills, Vice President of CRG, presented. She introduced Mr. Michael Hanley and Mr. Mike Burley, architects with Lamar Johnson Collaborative; and Mr. Zach Britian with the 53 Group. Also present were Mr. J.D. Smith and Mr. Sam Williams with CRG. (See Attachment #2)

Ms. Mills provided an overview of some of the changes made from the original planned development application. Among those listed were:

- The building is now three stories along Hedgerow Lane.
- The original bed count has decreased from 725 to 555.
- 205 residential parking spaces, and 31 public parking spaces.
- 12,500 square feet of public space.
- 1,750 feet of waterline improvements.
- 2,400 linear feet of sidewalk improvements.

Mr. Tyler then opened the session for public input, noting that no written comments had been received prior to the deadline. He said, however, that two sets of comments submitted after the deadline would be read at the next meeting.

Mr. Mike Sum, 200 Pine Street, Clemson. Mr. Sum expressed his concerns sidewalk widths and traffic.

Ms. Karen Frady, 218 Pine Street, Clemson. Ms. Frady noted problems with parking and infrastructure.

Ms. Lynne Fairey, 220 Strawberry Lane, Clemson. Ms. Fairey said she worried about traffic and the projected bedcount.

Ms. Larissa Heimlich, 101 Folger Street, Clemson. Ms. Heimlich also addressed problems with traffic.

Ms. Gay Eitenmiller, 137 Honeycomb Ln, Central. Ms. Eitenmiller stated concerns with traffic and unoccupied beds.

Mr. Rupert McGinty, 206 N. Clemson Avenue, Clemson. Mr. McGinty addressed the “dismantling” of residential neighborhoods and problems with set-backs.

Mr. Judy Fairey, 218 Strawberry Lane, Clemson. Ms. Fairey stated her worries about the University taking over the town.

Mr. Chris Enloe, 204 Pine Street, Clemson. Mr. Enloe stated that he was mostly in favor of the development, but felt the proposal required more parking for the retail space, and additional buffering for the dumpster area.

Mr. Bob Healey, 140 Folger Street, Clemson. Mr. Healey expressed his concerns with the upgrades to sidewalks and waterlines added to make the project more palatable, and said he felt the renderings are not reality.

Mr. Tyler called for any additional comments; there were none. The public comment session was closed.

Mr. Tyler then recapped the comments for the developers. Among the topics noted were:

- Traffic, and enforcement of traffic rules.
- Safety of children in the neighborhood.
- Concerns about no grocery stores within walking distance.
- Impacts on businesses during construction.

Mr. Tyler called for questions or comments from the commissioners. Among the topics addressed were:

- Street lighting.
- Pet waste stations.

Mr. Tyler called for any additional comments; there were none. The Planned Development Public Session was closed.

6. Action Items (1:16:36)

a. Hotel Canopy Standards

Mr. Peabody noted that there had been no changes to the proposed amendment since the last meeting, and reminded the Commission that the change would be specific to hotels.

Mr. Charlie Metcalf, Assistant General Manager for the Shepherd Hotel, introduced himself and Ms. Vicky Wick, General Manager. (See Attachment #3)

Mr. Tyler called for public comments; there were none. Mr. Tyler then called for comments from the commissioners. Some of the topics addressed are as follows:

- Use of the event space.
- Value to the community.
- Lighting.
- Safety inspections.
- Definition of event.

Mr. Tyler called for any additional comments; there were none.

Mr. Tyler called for a motion; Mr. Rice made a motion to send a positive recommendation on the draft Hotel Canopy Standards to City Council; Ms. Franks seconded the motion. Mr. Tyler called for discussion; brief discussion on safety inspections followed. Mr. Tyler called for additional discussion; there was none.

Mr. Tyler called for a roll-call vote; the results were:

Ms. Hyatt – yes
Mr. Rice – yes
Mr. Yoder – yes
Ms. Franks – yes
Mr. Crolley – yes
Mr. Tyler – yes

The motion was unanimously approved by a 6-0 vote.

b. RZNE-000529-2026 Proposed Map Amendment (Elm Street Lot)

Mr. Peabody briefed the Commission on the proposed rezoning, noting that if approved the zoning would change from Office Professional District to RM-4 Multi-family Residential District, which the applicant feels would allow for better utilization of the property.

Mr. Russ Herbert, applicant, represented the property owner. He stated that there were no specific plans for the property.

Mr. Tyler called for comments from the public; there were none.

Mr. Tyler called for questions or comments from the Commissioners; there were none.

Mr. Tyler called for a motion. Ms. Hyatt made a motion to send a positive recommendation City Council on RZNE-000529-2026 Proposed Map Amendment (Elm Street Lot); Mr. Rice seconded the motion. Mr. Tyler called for discussion; brief discussion followed.

Mr. Tyler called for a roll-call vote; the results were:

Ms. Hyatt – yes
Mr. Rice – yes
Mr. Yoder – yes
Ms. Franks – yes
Mr. Crolley – yes
Mr. Tyler – yes

The motion was unanimously approved by a 6-0 vote.

Mr. Tyler called a brief recess prior to moving ahead with the agenda; the meeting was called back to order. (1:49:37)

c. 2026-R-02 Proposed Text Amendment (Mixed Use High-Density Development)

Mr. Woods introduced the item and presented an overview on the history of height standards in the City. (See Attachment #4). Following the presentation, Mr. Peabody highlighted changes made in the proposal since the matter was discussed at the previous meeting.

Mr. Tyler then called for comments from the Commission. Among the topics addressed were:

- Contributions from developers to the City in exchange for additional height.
- Tracking of funds received.
- Verification of square footage values.
- Impact fees.
- Impacts on long-term neighborhood stability.
- Reasoning behind reducing parking but adding parking garages in CP-1 District.

Mr. Tyler called for additional comments; there were none. He then called for comments from the public.

Ms. Lynne Fairey, 220 Strawberry Lane, Clemson. Ms. Fairey asked to clarify the height proposals, and noted concerns regarding residential development and the lack of rental restrictions.

Mr. Rick Ware, 100 Holiday West, Clemson. Mr. Ware expressed views on traffic and suggested the proposed \$10 per sq. ft. value should be higher.

Mr. Bob Fennell, 421 Sky View Drive, Clemson. Mr. Fennell expressed his concerns with Clemson's natural environment. Mr. Woods responded to Mr. Fennell by explaining that the proposal would help preserve undeveloped space.

Ms. Judy Fairey, 218 Strawberry Lane, Clemson. Ms. Fairey stated she was okay with adding stories to existing structures, but she did not want to build new high rises.

Mr. Tyler called for additional comments; there were none.

Mr. Tyler called for a motion. Mr. Rice made a motion to send a positive recommendation to City Council on 2026-R-02 Proposed Text Amendment (Mixed Use High-Density Development) with the exception of permitting parking garages in the CP-1 District; Ms. Hyatt seconded the motion. Mr. Tyler called for discussion; there was none.

Mr. Tyler called for a vote by a show of hands; there was no opposition. The motion was unanimously approved by a 6-0 vote.

7. Advisory Items (3:04:43) - None

8. Discussion Items (3:04:44)

a. Middle Housing Standards

Mr. Peabody briefed the Commission, stating that the proposed amendment would expand where townhomes, patio homes, duplexes, and quadplex homes could be developed in the City. He noted that the occupancy was proposed to remain at 2, and that the ordinance would limit the retail stores allowed in neighborhoods to areas on arterial roads and primary collectors. (See Draft Published with March 9, 2026 Meeting Agenda) Discussion followed.

Mr. Tyler called for additional comments; there was none. Mr. Tyler asked commissioners to send any additional comments/questions that may come to mind to staff as soon as possible.

9. Staff Reports (3:12:46) – None.

10. Other Items (3:13:21)

- a. Planning Commission Representation at Council Meetings - none
- b. Future Workshops and Other Events- Mr. Tyler noted that the developers for the proposed planned development at 1310 Tiger Boulevard had scheduled the public meeting they had discussed.

11. Adjourn (3:14:24)

Mr. Tyler made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Rice seconded the motion. Mr. Tyler called for a vote by a show of hands; there was no opposition. The motion was unanimously approved by a 6 - 0 vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Roach, Recording Secretary

These minutes are in draft format and subject to change until approval by the City of Clemson Planning Commission.

Attachment #1

N. Woods' Informational Briefing Slides

PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH 06, 2026

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LAND USE IN CLEMSON

PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH 06, 2026

Friction in our Public Discourse

A Natural Hesitancy Toward Change

A Significant Knowledge Gap regarding Past Plans

The Alignment Gap

PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH 06, 2026

The timeline shows a sequence of planning milestones: 1971 Land Development Plan, 1977 Land Use Plan, 1994 Comprehensive Plan Drafted, 1996 Comprehensive Plan, 2004 Comprehensive Plan Drafted, 2014 Comprehensive Plan Drafted, 2019 Comprehensive Plan Drafted, 2020 Comprehensive Plan Drafted, 2023 Comprehensive Plan Drafted, and 2045 Comprehensive Plan Drafted. Key events include updates to the 1971 plan in 1977 and 1994, and the approval of the 2023 plan.

Timeline

PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH 06, 2026

1971

High Density Areas are proposed in several parts of the city in order to give residents a choice of locations conveniently related to the University as well as being served by major transportation routes. **These are the areas east and west of the College Avenue commercial area; in the triangle formed by highways 123, 93, and 76, an area which is in transition from single-family to high density residential and commercial development;**

PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH 06, 2026

1971

Commercial Areas: Clemson's original downtown commercial area, on College Avenue, **is not expected to expand in the future into the central business district of the city.**

Rather than one main shopping and business area, Clemson will have several commercial areas of nearly equal importance. **The old College Avenue area will contain clothing stores, restaurants and other businesses primarily oriented to students, while shopping centers along Highways 93 and 76 will primarily serve the general commercial needs of other segments of Clemson's population.**

PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH 06, 2026

1983

"Well planned and located higher density developments are a **vital ingredient for interesting, attractive and functional** neighborhoods and communities. They provide a range of housing choice and, when designed appropriately, a higher density development can provide neighborhood stability."

"In most cases, the logical location for higher density residential development will be in the vicinity of shopping centers, community service centers, **areas influenced by university housing needs**, the older village sector of Clemson, and existing residential nodes of higher density."



PLANNING COMMISSION

MARCH 06, 2020

1989

- **Multi-family housing** demand will be generated **largely as a function of student population** and particularly as a function of student population **above and beyond dormitory capacity on campus.** (32)
- Land use projections incorporate an increase of approximately **500 additional multi-household acres**, a 220 percent increase over present acreage. As the demand for multi-household dwellings increases, **the City may want to consider rezoning some of the RM-1 parcels to a category allowing more residential development options.** (60)

PLANNING COMMISSION

MARCH 06, 2020

1994

- The Problem(s):**
The bulk of multi-family housing starts in recent years has been driving by **increased enrollment at the university without commensurate increase in on-campus housing stock.** (63)
- The city has in fact been **accommodating the lion's share of housing requirements associated with rapid university enrollment increases accompanied by a relatively stable on-campus housing stock.** (64)
- The Solution(s):**
- **Node-Based Growth:** Orient intensive development to **major arterial intersections** where infrastructure already exists.
 - **Transit Alignment:** Link adjacent neighborhoods via **mass transit, pedestrian, and bicycle corridors.**
 - **The Downtown Extension:** **Transition former residential-offices on College Avenue** into a street-front extension of the downtown core.

PLANNING COMMISSION

MARCH 06, 2020

1998

The Strip Development Pattern

The most obvious place to begin accessing the intensity of development is **College Avenue.** The redevelopment of **College Avenue**, from the edge of downtown to the intersection with **Highway 123** will be one of the greatest challenges facing **Clemson** in the next 15 years. Preventing the strip development pattern that has occurred along other commercial corridors and taking advantage of this area's proximity to the lake, university and housing should become the guiding principle. The extension of the compact downtown development pattern along **College Avenue** has the potential to make it the commercial, cultural and social heart of **Clemson.**

City plans call for increasing the intensity of development along **College Avenue, Koenig Trail and Highway 123,** including mixed use and residential developments, particularly on **College Avenue and Koenig Trail** will allow more vibrant and resilient to be made without the loss of character of shopping, the university and nightlife. New parking, landscaping and design guidelines will demonstrate the city's leadership in defining the redevelopment objective in these areas. The proposed **Storage Trail** is a public or privately designed to enhance the city's historic sense as the cultural heart of the city and ease the perception of the city as a historic community.

PLANNING COMMISSION

MARCH 06, 2020

2014

- The Strategic Shift:** Moving from outward sprawl to vertical infill and redevelopment.
- **Market Reality:** 13,000+ students living off-campus; the city chose to shape that demand rather than resist it.
- Smart Growth Principles:**
- **Verticality:** Building up, not out, to preserve the city's perimeter.
 - **Strategic Proximity:** Concentrating intensity where infrastructure already exists.
 - **Retail Follows Density:** Mixed-use developments provide the "heads and beds" required for diverse local business.

PLANNING COMMISSION

MARCH 06, 2020

2019

- **The 2019 Consensus:** Even with input from vocal development opponents, the 2019 Plan reaffirmed the mandate for vertical, high-density growth in the core.
- **Collective Cognitive Dissonance:** The friction today is not a misunderstanding of the plan—it is the plan becoming a physical reality.
- **Consistency:** The buildings we see today look exactly like the strategy we codified years ago.

CLEMSONNEXT

The Diagnostic Shift: Traffic and housing issues are symptoms; the lack of core density is the cause.

Strategic Findings: "Shutting down" development is not a realistic or sustainable solution.

The Three Pillars:

- **Inclusivity:** Who can afford to live here?
- **Resiliency:** Can our economy adapt?
- **Place:** Does our architecture support high quality of life?

The Path Forward: Focus density in the core to reduce road pressure and protect neighborhoods.

2026

- **Targeted Growth:** Prioritizing Downtown and the emerging Uptown district as the City's primary "Intensification Areas."
- **Economic Stability:** Strengthening the urban heart by providing the density and foot traffic required for local businesses to thrive.
- **Strategic Housing:** High-density student housing is focused here to minimize car dependency and keep students close to campus.
- **Urban Diversity:** Integrating a mix of building types, including student-oriented apartments and mixed-use condos for long-term residents.

2026

- **Strategic Selection:** Designating "Student Housing Prioritization" zones based on University proximity.
- **Maximizing Opportunity:** Identifying "opportunity sites" where current density does not match the location's potential.
- **Vertical Efficiency:** Replacing aging, low-density structures (e.g., two-story complexes) with high-intensity residential uses.
- **Neighborhood Defense:** Utilizing the existing infrastructure of the core to capture demand before it spills into low-density neighborhoods.

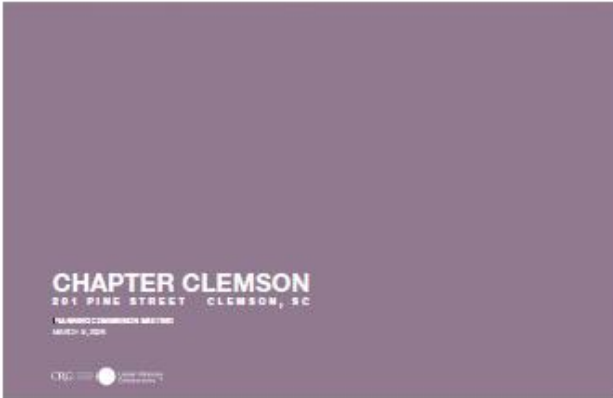
55

- **A 55-Year Commitment:** Our strategy is not a modern anomaly; it is a half-century promise of a mixed-use core.
- **The Moving Goalpost:** Objections shift from density to height to "bed counts," but the underlying hurdle is a natural aversion to change.
- **The Risk of Reactive Governance:** Pivoting based on the loudest voices—rather than vetted data—perpetuates the symptoms of traffic and housing shortages.
- **The Ask:** Modernize our zoning code to match our long-standing vision.
- **The Legacy:** Honoring the leaders of 1971 and protecting the residents of 2071.

THANK YOU

Attachment #2

PUD-000526-2026 201 Pine Street Presentation Slides



WHAT WE HEARD...

L001

During our Planning Commission meeting on November 10th, 2023, the main discussion centered around the following topics:

- Building Massing - Along Hedgerow Lane
- Building Density - Number of Beds & Cars
- Site Location - Proximity to SC-93



CLEMSON CLEMSON
PLANNING

SITE LOCATION - RESEARCH

L001



CLEMSON CLEMSON
PLANNING

SITE LOCATION - RESEARCH - SITE A

L001



CLEMSON CLEMSON
PLANNING

SITE LOCATION - RESEARCH - SITE B

L001



CLEMSON CLEMSON
PLANNING

WHAT HAS CHANGED...

VIEW AT CORNER OF HEDGEROW LANE AND PINE STREET - PROPOSED L307

WHAT HAS CHANGED:

- REDUCED HEIGHT ALONG HEDGEROW LANE:
FROM 7 TO 3 LEVELS
- REDUCED BEDS:
FROM 725 TO 555 BEDS
- REDUCED RESIDENT PARKING:
FROM 322 TO 205 SPACES
- PARKING GARAGE IS FULLY ENCLOSED:
NO CAR LIGHTS OR NOISE EXPOSURE TO NEIGHBORHOOD

CM PETER CLERKIN
6/14/2018

EAST ELEVATION (PINE STREET AT HEDGEROW LANE) - ORIGINAL

L307



CM PETER CLERKIN
6/14/2018

EAST ELEVATION (PINE STREET AT HEDGEROW LANE) - PROPOSED

L307



CM PETER CLERKIN
6/14/2018

EAST ELEVATION (PINE STREET AT HEDGEROW LANE) - CONTEXT DIAGRAM

L307



CM PETER CLERKIN
6/14/2018



CM PETER CLERKIN
6/14/2018



VIEW FROM HICKORY LANE AND PINE ST. CLIENT

DAVID CLARKSON
ARCHITECT



VIEW FROM HICKORY LANE TO EAST

DAVID CLARKSON
ARCHITECT



VIEW OF BUILDING ON CLIMBING WALK

DAVID CLARKSON
ARCHITECT



VIEW OF CORNER AT PINE ST AND CLIMBING WALK

DAVID CLARKSON
ARCHITECT



VIEW OF RESIDENTIAL ENTRY

DAVID CLARKSON
ARCHITECT



VIEW FROM COURTYARD - LOOKING SOUTH

DAVID CLARKSON
ARCHITECT



PUBLIC PLAZA & PARK SPACES

DM P151 CLIMBON
2.14.2018

PUBLIC OPEN SPACES BENEFIT

L307

The project features over 12,500 square-feet of dedicated public open spaces. These spaces include an inviting garden plaza with flexible lawn space for outdoor dining and programmed events, a covered landscaped terrace, and a dedicated lay-by lane.



DM P151 CLIMBON
2.14.2018

COMMUNITY BENEFIT ALIGNMENT

L307

The project features over \$2.5 million in initiatives that improve pedestrian and utility-related supportive systems for a successful development and community benefit.



DM P151 CLIMBON
2.14.2018

WHAT WE'RE IMPROVING...

L307

OFF-SITE IMPROVEMENTS

We are proposing upgrading the existing cast iron water line to a new 30" steel line along Clemson Avenue from our site all the way to Whitcomb Street, as well as along Pine Street from Hedgerow Lane to Clemson Avenue.



DM P151 CLIMBON
2.14.2018

WHAT WE'RE IMPROVING...

L307

ENHANCED PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & CONNECTIVITY

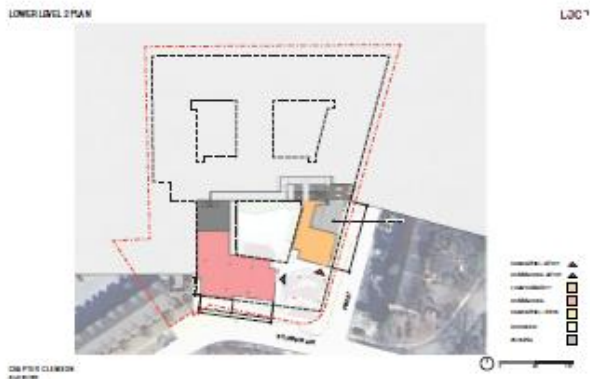
We are proposing widening the existing sidewalks to 10-foot wide and making crosswalk improvements along Clemson Avenue from our site all the way to Hillcrest Avenue, with lane realignment and curb and gutter along both sides of the street.



DM P151 CLIMBON
2.14.2018



APPENDIX



Attachment #3

Draft Hotel Canopy Standards
 Planning Commission -
 03-09-2026

This proposed text amendment stems from a request by the Shepherd Hotel's management team to amend City Code to allow for the installation of a canopy that would provide shelter/shade during roof top events, thereby facilitating increased utilization of the space. Currently, any increase in structure height of the hotel, including the installation of a roof top canopy, would result in violating district height limitations. Additionally, Code contains no standards aimed at ensuring roof top canopies are designed, installed, and maintained in a safe and proper manner. As drafted, this proposed amendment addresses these issues by:

- a) defining what constitutes a canopy;
- b) establishing roof top canopies exceeding height limits as a conditional accessory use for *only* hotels located the C District;
- c) requiring approval by the BAR, who will approve heights and setbacks, and *may* impose conditions to mitigate visual impacts and improve the aesthetics of the project;
- d) mandating professional structural design and installation, and requiring an engineering analysis for existing roofs;
- e) setting limits on time of use of walls, as well as enabling the documentation of wind speed;
- f) requiring a safety plan be posted on site;
- g) and, for duly approved canopies meeting all standards, providing relief from the height limitations.

CODE OF ORDINANCES

CHAPTER 19 ZONING (1)

Sec. 19-107. Definitions.

Canopy means an overhead roof structure, typically consisting of a fabric or metal covering attached to a supporting frame, intended to provide shade or shelter from weather conditions (such as sun, hail, snow and rain). A canopy does not have permanent walls, but may be configured to allow for the use of walls needed to provide additional shelter and/or screening on a temporary basis. A canopy mounted on top of a roof can be an accessory use provided it meets the Conditional Use Standards for Roof Top Canopy.

ARTICLE IV. NON-RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS AND DISTRICT REGULATIONS

Table 19-403. Accessory Uses for Non-residential Districts											
P = Permitted Use C = Conditional Use SE = Special Exception A=Accessory Dash (-) = Use not Permitted											
USE CATEGORY	NAICS Code	C	CM	CP-1	CP-2	CP-3	OP	RIL	OR	M	C/SE Reference
A. ACCESSORY USES AND/OR STRUCTURES											
...											See Sec. 19-405 J.
Home Occupations		C	C	-	C	-	-	-	-	-	
Roof Top Canopy Exceeding Height Limits		C	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Sec. 19-405. Standards for conditional use and special exceptions for non-residential districts.

J. ACCESSORY USES AND STRUCTURES IN NON-RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

10. Roof Top Canopy

a. Conditional Use Standards

1. Shall be limited to Hotels only.
2. Design, placement, and anchorage of the canopy must be certified by an appropriately South Carolina licensed engineer and be approved by the City Building Official. Plans submitted for roof top canopies proposed to be installed on existing buildings must be accompanied by an engineering analysis of the structure's capability of supporting the intended use and anticipated occupancy limits.
3. Walls are only allowed to be used during events, and shall be installed no earlier than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of the event, and must be removed no later than twenty-four (24) hours after the end of the event.
4. The canopy design, appearance, and installation location must be approved by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR); collapsible and certified glass or isinglass (or similar product) folding systems (which may have a permanent component in the canopy design) and collapsible insulated panel roofing structures are permitted.
5. Canopy height and setbacks from the edge of buildings will be determined by the BAR, who may impose whatever conditions are deemed appropriate to mitigate visual impacts of the structure and/or create an aesthetically better project; canopy height is permitted up to 8' clear height (under support system) on the perimeter of the canopy at the outer edges of the building provided glass or isinglass (or similar product) is used.
6. A weather station capable of accurately measuring and recording roof top wind speeds must be permanently installed prior to the use of any approved canopy, which will meet current building requirements for wind loads.
7. A sign detailing an approved safety plan for the canopy area and surroundings must be posted in a highly-visible place on the roof top. The safety plan will include what measures must be taken a different wind speeds as determined by the certifying engineer.

ARTICLE VI. GENERAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS

DIVISION 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 19-603. Exceptions to maximum structure height.

Unless otherwise noted, the district regulation height limitations shall not apply to chimneys, church spires, flag poles, antennas, utility or communications towers, non-habitable architectural features, or necessary mechanical features not occupying more than one-tenth (1/10) of the roof area, provided they shall not exceed 30 percent of the district standard.

District regulation height limitations shall not apply to Roof Top Canopies that meet Conditional Use Standards.

(Ord. No. CC-2014-05, § 1, 8-18-14; Ord. No. CC-2015-31, 8-17-15; Ord. No CC-2026-XX, X-X-X)

Attachment #4

The Evolution of Height in Clemson: Context, Conflict, & Clarity

March 2024



Context

March 2024

General Commercial

Foundation

General Commercial (C) District Zoning came about as part of our original 1970's zoning code. The prescribed maximum height is 65' feet dependent on location.

Boundary

College Avenue from Hwy 93 to First Baptist/U Centre

Adjacent PDs

114 Earle



Commercial Mixed-Use (CM)

Evolution

Commercial Mixed-Use was enacted in August of 2014. It was designed to create a vibrant, walkable core by mixing uses vertically. The prescribed maximum height is 65' feet dependent on various factors.

Boundary

College Avenue from the end of the C district to roughly the Wall Street and Walgreens parcel areas, and along 93 closest to the University

Adjacent PDs

Sunset at Valley Walk, Moda, The HUB, and the Rambler



Conflict

March 2023

Campus View 2015

80 feet tall

U Centre 2017

75 feet tall

The Earle 2017

95 feet tall

Development Wave 2015-2017



Voiced Concerns

Loss of "Old Clemson" and the rise of a modern "Town Center" feel

Real Issue

Student housing saturation of Clemson's Downtown Core

Reaction

Height became a scapegoat to slow development

Understanding Opposition

**Height Reduction
December
2021**

Feature	Original Standard	"Temporary" Amendment
Max Height	60 Feet	3 Stories
Measurement	Linear Feet	Stories (Redefined)
Intended Life	Permanent	180 Days - DEC '21 (Start) - JUN '22 (End) - MAR '26 (Still Active)
Current Status	Obsolete	Still in Effect

The Strategy

Move away from "one-size-fits-all" zoning toward site-specific evaluation.

The ClemsonNEXT Mandate

Transitioned all multi-family developments to the Planned Development (PD) process.

The Vertical Result

MODA (2023) - 63'
The HUB (2024) - 84'
The Rambler (2025) - 96'
*at their tallest point

Planned Development (PD)

The Mismatch: Policy vs. Reality

The Regulatory Gap:

There is a direct conflict between our vision and our law. Our past and current Comprehensive Plans mandate dense, vertical growth, yet the Zoning Code remains tethered to a 3-story limit.

The Market Reality:

3 stories are insufficient to generate a return on investment (ROI) given the high cost of land in the Downtown Core. Furthermore, low-density development cannot provide the "rooftops" necessary to sustain a vibrant commercial corridor.

The Regulatory Necessity:

Consequently, the Planned Development (PD) process has become a necessity rather than an option. Developers propose PDs more often than not for the sole purpose of achieving the height required to make these projects—and the City's vision—viable.

Problems Continued: The Persistence of Growth

- Clemson enacted some of the highest Development Impact Fees in South Carolina.
- The Result: While these fees ensure growth "pays its own way," they have not served as a deterrent to development.

Political Shifts vs. Market Demand

- Significant turnover on City Council and Planning Commission since the 2015-2017 wave.
- The Result: Despite platforms focused on height reduction and moratoriums, the fundamental demand for downtown density remains constant.

Administrative Turnover vs. Policy Continuity

- Ongoing turnover in Administrative and Planning staff has occurred.
- The Result: Personnel changes haven't eased concerns or slowed proposals, proving that the pressure for growth is structural, not administrative.

Problems Continued: The Persistence of Growth

The Displacement Effect

Restricting multifamily growth doesn't stop demand; it simply pushes development outside Clemson's borders.

The Transit Paradox

Displaced residents still commute to the University and the service sector, guaranteeing maximum traffic and exacerbating regional congestion.

Ad Hoc & Unsystematic Growth

- Current Friction: Relying on the PD process alone has led to:
- Inconsistent buffers between commercial and residential zones.
- Unpredictable building step-backs and step-downs.
- Arbitrary and inconsistent parking requirements.

The Consequences of Restriction

The Anxiety Loop

- **Citizens:** Anxious about what might be approved in their backyard.
- **Developers:** Anxious about the viability of projects without clear goalsposts.
- **Officials:** Anxious about the political fallout of every new proposal.
- **City Staff:** Caught in the crossfire of a reactive, rather than proactive, process.

The Information Vacuum

- When the code is ambiguous, misinformation and conspiracy theories take root.
- Without a "by-right" standard, every project feels like a "backroom deal" to the public, even when it isn't.

The Trust Gap

- All parties operate under the assumption that the "other side" is incompetent or biased.
- The Result: A breakdown in the civic collaboration required to build a great city.

The High Cost of Ambiguity

A Cycle of Mutual Frustration

- When the process is unpredictable, anger becomes the default response for all stakeholders.

The Trust Deficit

- Constant conflict erodes the community's trust in the public process and the City's vision.

Decision Paralysis

- Intense public anger leads to "defensive planning"—making decisions to avoid backlash rather than to achieve long-term strategic goals.

The Cost of the Status Quo

- This cycle doesn't stop height; it only ensures that every new building is born out of a "battle" rather than a shared plan.

The Breaking Point

Clarity

March 2024

Bufferyard Standards

Transition Buffers: Fixed requirements to protect neighborhood edges without halting growth.

- Passed by Council on **10.06.2025**

Mixed-Use Development that abuts R-20 or R-12 zoned parcels now requires a **30' buffer**.

- *If the proposed building is greater than 3 stories the buffer is increased to 40'*

Codifying the Standards

- **Height:** Establishing a predictable, by-right "ceiling" that acknowledges market reality.
- **Buffers:** Respecting the buffers established in October 2025.
- **Standardized Parking:** Replacing arbitrary requirements with data-driven, downtown-specific quotas.
- **The Public Realm:** Integrating the Downtown Streetscape standards directly into the development code.
- **Architectural Step-backs:** Mandating step-backs for structures that abut residential to ensure human-scale design at the street level.

Geography of Clarity

The Preservation Zone (*College Ave: 93 to Keith*)

- **Standard:** Maintained at 2 stories.
- **Goal:** Protect the historic, human-scale character of Clemson's primary downtown block.

The Transition Zone (*Strode to Strode*)

- **Standard:** 3-story baseline.
- **Incentive:** Up to 5 stories for projects that meet certain criteria.

The Growth Corridors (*Keith St. to 123 & Hwy 93*)

- **Standard:** revert to the original 5-story baseline.
- **Strategic Density:** Flexibility to reach 7 stories by adhering to the city's rigorous development framework.

Strategic Height Tiers

- **The Technical Sweet Spot:** 7 stories aligns with the most efficient modern construction methods (5-over-2).
- **Use Diversification:** Unlocks non-student housing uses, such as boutique hotels and professional offices.
- **Market-Driven Density:** Reflects the actual economic equilibrium of Downtown Clemson.

Development Bonus

If a developer wishes to exceed 5 stories, they will contribute to the City of Clemson in the amount of **\$10.00 a square foot** for community improvements.

Development Bonus

Example: MODA 68,000 sq. ft. per floor

Set height at 3 stories maximum,

Then for 2 additional floors the formula looks like:

$(\$10.00 \times 68,000 \text{ sq. ft.}) \times 2 = \mathbf{\$1,360,000}$

A Cohesive Path Forward

Intentionality Over Reaction

- We are replacing the “Boogeyman” of unpredictable height with a permanent regulatory framework. Height, when strategically placed and clearly defined, is not the enemy—ambiguity is.

Prioritizing Integrity

- We are baking zoning buffers and standardized step-backs into our code to ensure that density respects the scale of its surroundings.

Enhancing Downtown Vibrancy

- We are choosing smart, systematic planning over the ad hoc negotiations of the past. This ensures Clemson remains a vibrant, walkable, town for decades to come.