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South Carolina State Eyes Major Dorm Expansion to Tackle Housing Shortage

July 20, 2025

— Categories: Real Estate



South Carolina State University is planning a major expansion of its student housing in response to a growing accommodation crisis on campus. Trustees are set to vote on key funding resolutions that could pave the way for constructing new residence halls and major renovations to existing facilities.

The centerpiece of the university's housing initiative is a proposed 500-bed dormitory on Mitchell Field, scheduled for completion by August 2027. This new facility would be a

significant step toward easing the pressure from high enrollment and limited bed availability, an issue that's plagued the university for years.

Housing Push

To finance the new projects, trustees are considering applying to the federal Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Capital Financing Program, which offers low-cost loans for infrastructure improvements. The Board of Trustees is expected to vote on whether to borrow \$50 million through the program to fund the new residence hall. Additionally, they will decide to increase the renovation budget for Truth Hall from \$15 million to \$25 million.

Truth Hall, one of the campus's older dormitories, is slated to receive significant upgrades that would bring 384 beds back online. Another 24 beds have already been added through recent work at the Queens Village apartment complex, with further improvements underway.

Ken Davis, the university's Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Operations, said the proposed developments would offer much-needed relief for students seeking on-campus housing.

"It's a good problem to have that we've got a lot of young people interested in South Carolina State," Davis stated. "It's going to give us some relief on the housing side to get 1,000 beds that'll come online in the next two years."

The student housing crisis is not new for South Carolina State University, located in Orangeburg. Students have dealt with overcrowded residence halls and limited off-campus options for years, and that pressure has only grown as enrollment rises.

Stephon Edwards, a 2006 alumnus and now superintendent for Paragon Builders, one of the contractors working on the Queens Village project, reflected on the long-standing issue.

"Housing was tight back then," Edwards recalled. "It's good to see that they're bringing new housing to the university because we definitely need it."

Last year, the university was forced to cap enrollment and create a waitlist for campus housing due to overwhelming demand. This summer, officials even offered a \$1,000 incentive to upperclassmen who secured off-campus housing in an effort to free up space for incoming students. That program remains active for juniors and seniors.

This fall, the university expects to serve around 3,300 students. However, current housing facilities, including on-campus dorms and affiliated off-site accommodations, can only serve about 2,220 students. That leaves over a thousand students potentially without immediate access to university-provided housing.

University leaders hope that these new investments and incentives will help South Carolina State address the immediate shortage and set a solid foundation for the future.