



PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

**March 14, 2017
5:30 P.M.**

**Oconee County Administrative Offices
Council Chambers
415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC**

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes:
 - December 13, 2016
3. Discussion Regarding Scenic Highway Committee Ordinance [upon Council approval to send to this committee]
4. Corridor Planning Discussion
5. Dilapidated / Uninhabited Buildings Discussion
6. Technology Incubator Discussion
7. Unfinished Business
5. New Business [to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up for discussion, if required]
6. Adjourn

There will not be a scheduled opportunity for public to comment at this meeting.
Council members will discuss recommendations from the Administrator at this meeting.
If time permits at the end of the meeting [and at the Committee Chair's discretion] the Committee may take questions from the public.

[This agenda is not inclusive of all issues which the Committee may bring up for discussion at this meeting.]

**Assisted Listening Devices [ALD] are available to accommodate the special needs
of citizens attending meetings held in Council Chambers.
ALD requests should be made to the Clerk to Council at least 30 minutes prior to the meeting start time.**

Oconee County Council

Oconee County
Administrative Offices
415 South Pine Street
Walhalla, SC 29691

Phone: 864-364-5136
Fax: 864 718-10246

E-mail:
[***.com](mailto:***@ococounty.com)

Edda Cammick
District I

Wayne McCall
District II

Paul Cain
District III

Julian Davis
District IV

J. Glenn Hart
District V



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The Oconee County Council will meet in 2017 on the first and the third Tuesday of each month [excluding July & August which will meet only on the third Tuesday of the month] at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Oconee County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, South Carolina unless otherwise advertised.

Oconee County Council will also hold a Planning Retreat in February 2017 [TBD] in Council Chambers to establish short and long term goals.

Additionally, Council will meet on January 2, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at which point they will establish their 2018 council and committee meeting schedules.

Additional Council meetings, workshops and/or committee meetings may be added throughout the year as needed.

Oconee County Council Committees will meet in 2017 on the following dates/times in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, South Carolina unless otherwise advertised.

The Law Enforcement, Public Safety, Health & Welfare Committee and the Transportation Committee at 5:30 p.m. on the following dates: January 10, April 11, July 11 and October 10, 2017.

The Real Estate, Facilities & Land Management Committee and the Budget, Finance & Administration Committee at 5:30 p.m. on the following dates: February 14, May 9, August 8 and November 14, 2017.

The Planning & Economic Development Committee at 5:30 p.m. on the following dates: March 14, June 13, September 12 and December 12, 2017.

Clemson researches costs of congestion

GRE 12:06 a.m. ET Dec. 25, 2013



(Photo: John Spink, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, via AP)

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If you think traffic seems worse this Christmas than in other years, a Clemson University professor says you are right.

Civil engineering professor Jimmy Martin II said traffic increases nationwide have vastly outpaced the number of new highway miles over the past 20 to 25 years.

Lost productivity because of traffic congestion costs the nation about \$80 billion a year, he said.

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Traffic demands will grow even more across the country and especially along the Interstate 85 corridor, he said.

The area will within the next two decades become a single Piedmont-Atlantic Mega-Region stretching from Birmingham, Ala. to Raleigh, N.C., he said.

About 12 percent of the U.S. population lives along the corridor, the nation's fastest growing region, Martin said.

So South Carolina has some of the nation's most urgent needs to keep up with infrastructure, said Martin, chairman of the Glenn Department of Civil Engineering.

"We will need significant infrastructure investments to accommodate this growth and accelerate progress," he said.

"But we must use a sustainable approach that balances not only the economic aspects, but that also preserves the beauty and character of our region and protects the environment."

AAA Carolinas says a record 1.322 million South Carolinians are traveling at least 50 miles over this Christmas and New Year's holiday season. More than 90 percent will drive to their destination, according to AAA.

They are traveling on roads that have fallen behind on maintenance.

Clemson's civil engineering researchers are trying to find ways to develop sustainably, Martin said. Solutions could range from investing in high-speed rail to new roadway designs, he said.

Martin said sustainable development increases and accelerates economic progress because it optimizes resources, leads to greater efficiencies and raises overall quality of living standards.

That stimulates additional economic investment and growth, he said.

A good example of how to grow is the inland port in Greer, he said. The inland port connects the I-85 corridor to the Port of Charleston and is expected to alleviate truck traffic on Interstate 26.

"We have to look at not only the impact of that, but also predict what will happen in 10 or 20 years and look at different alternatives," Martin said.

The number of miles traveled nationwide doubled from 1980 to 2006, while the number of highway miles increased 4.5 percent, he said

Demand will double again nationwide by 2040, but it will be even greater along I-85, Martin said.

With its airport and international companies, the Greenville area is at the heart of the quickly growing region, he said.

"We need to show leadership because we're in the center," Martin said.

Woodruff Road's congestion a headache for many

GRE 12:06 a.m. ET Feb. 19, 2014

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Few stories engender the kind of visceral reaction from readers as did our coverage yesterday of Woodruff Road traffic congestion.

Dozens of readers posted more than 100 comments on *The Greenville News* Facebook page when we asked whether the Woodruff Road traffic problems would keep people from shopping at stores along the thoroughfare.

Like many who posted comments, Shelly Spivey said she enjoys shopping at Costco and Trader Joe's, and like more than one, she said she tries to "avoid Woodruff Rd like the plague."

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"There are many stores I love to shop in over there," she wrote, "but the traffic is so bad and the drivers are so impossibly rude it's just not worth the headache."

Shelley Hudson Robbins cited Trader Joe's, REI, Whole Foods and World Market as among her favorites, adding, "But they aren't worth the traffic frustration to me."

A number of readers, like Ken Vaughn, questioned why businesses didn't choose to locate on Laurens or Haywood roads.

"With each new business on Woodruff the traffic gets worse and there is no room to add lanes," Vaughn wrote. "I cannot understand the mindset that sees Laurens Rd and Augusta Rd and 153 but still thinks: 'Oh, I'll just continue to clutter up Woodruff Rd.' This is small-town thinking at its worst."

And Elizabeth Brockman wrote, "Laurens Road has plenty of areas for development yet we keep allowing more and more to open on Woodruff where traffic is already a nightmare. I avoid that side of Woodruff almost completely as it is already a mess, now another huge store will congest it more and I will keep away from the area even more."

Some readers offered their own tips and suggestions, such as expanding the network of back roads to divert traffic and avoiding the road on weekends and between 4:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays.

Others weren't so forthcoming with their tips. "I only go down Woodruff on certain days at certain times.....not sharing those days and times here though," Anna Geddings Chandler wrote in her comment punctuated with a smiley face.

Erica Grant wrote that she confines her Woodruff Road travel to early morning and late at night.

“I think major poor planning on the city’s part as far as traffic goes. The only way to fix it is to make it pedestrian friendly so people can park and walk back and forth across it,” she wrote.

Eric R. Roberts asked, “Who thought it was a good idea to put Cabela’s on Woodruff? Do they not realize the nightmare that is going to create beyond the current nightmare?!?! Traffic will be backed down the freeway for miles! Someone needs to step up to the plate to fix this mess! Gas tax, sales tax, etc.... I don’t care what it takes, get the money to fix this issue!”

Those who are accustomed to traffic in larger metropolitan areas weighed in by drawing comparisons and suggesting that new stores and growth bring traffic.

“I lived in the DC area for 17 years and Woodruff Road is nothing,” wrote Ronald Dunlap. “If you want growth then traffic will come with it.”

And some posts took on an air of resignation.

“Just build it and they will come,” Curt Dahlberg wrote. “How they get there is someone else’s problem. Ours.

February 24, 2017 1:26 PM

New fix proposed for one of Lexington's most congested roads

1 of 2

THE STATE File photograph

By Tim Flach

tflach@thestate.com

LEXINGTON COUNTY, SC

Lexington officials have a new way to fix one of the town's most congested intersections, located near River Bluff High School.

The plan would divert traffic headed east off Corley Mill Road to a new route crossing over I-20 that comes out on a side road near West Columbia.

Frustrated that the state and federal officials aren't helping pay to ease congestion and safety problems on roads, the town decided to take care of this intersection's problem itself.

"We're the little guys stepping up," Lexington Mayor Steve MacDougall said Friday. "Nobody is helping us."

An easier trip through the intersection can't come soon enough for motorists.

"We've all been waiting for a complete fix," said Seth Krisnow, who commutes to work from his home off Corley Mill.

Others call relief overdue after other ideas were shelved.

"It was obvious to the untrained eye that roads there were going to be a nightmare with a school that was going to be a magnet for families," said Phil Williams, who travels there from his home on Lake Murray.

The estimated \$10 million project would be paid for by pledging future property tax growth that might come from at least one new subdivision planned nearby plus the expected retail growth that would follow.

“It’s imaginative, but it makes the most sense for the future,” MacDougall said.

The road is designed to ease a bottleneck on the east edge of the rapidly growing town where Corley Mill meets U.S. 378, a block west of I-20. It’s an intersection that town officials said 57,000 vehicles travel through daily.

Congestion has worsened since River Bluff High opened in 2013, adding traffic associated with 1,500 students to that from neighborhoods along Corley Mill.

If everything goes well, the route could be in use as soon as 2022, officials said.

Town officials plan to pay for the new route through a method known as tax increment financing. A “TIF district” would encompass a largely undeveloped 260-acre area near the high school that’s expected to bloom into homes and shops.

Town officials plan to borrow to build the road and pay off the loan over 20 years with property tax growth in that area.

The road would join \$7.5 million in other improvements slated at the intersection. Those are being paid for by a town tax of two pennies on the dollar on restaurant meals, take-out food and some snacks.

Town officials will need help to make their plan happen.

Crossing I-20 to link to Davega Road requires agreement from state transportation officials, who have been briefed on the idea. “We wouldn’t move forward unless we felt good about that conversation,” MacDougall said.

The location for the span across I-20 remains to be determined.

Lexington 1 school officials and Lexington County Council also must sign off on the step since it would cost each revenue from future development. But those officials have offered to contribute to a fix.

Tim Flach: [803-771-8483](tel:803-771-8483)

Read more here: <http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article134752189.html#storylink=cpy>

<http://www.independentmail.com/story/news/2017/03/03/pickens-county-may-not-hear-road-money-until-late-2017/98705862/>

Pickens County may not hear about road money until late 2017

Mike Eads

Updated 6:43 p.m. ET March 3, 2017

It may be the near the end of the year before Pickens County officials learn how much state money may be available for two big road projects being promoted by the county's legislative delegation.

State Rep. Neal Collins, R-Easley, said the delegation formally applied this week to the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank for up to \$90 million. The money would pay for road work to ease heavy morning and evening rush hour traffic along U.S. 123 by widening S.C. 183 and linking S.C. 153 to that state road where it intersects with S.C. 135. The proposal would require a county match between \$10 million and \$30 million, should it be approved.

"There is no formal timeline for approval," Collins said. "We're hoping to find out the competition next week and see what we're up against."

A fully-funded plan would run S.C. 153 north and west to link with S.C. 183 and S.C. 135. The path of the extension wouldn't be determined until the money is approved and engineering work is completed. It's not yet known which, if any, current county roads would be incorporated or how much land would have to be bought for the new route.

S.C. 183 would also become a divided, four-lane highway from the Greenville County line west to S.C. 135. That two-lane stretch of road now handles 12,200 vehicles per day. That traffic count could more than double over the next two decades, Keith Brockington, transportation planning manager for the

Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study, told Pickens County Council members last month.

Continue reading below

The infrastructure bank relies on state tax dollars to finance bond issues, and funding for the bank itself is up in the air. Legislators are unlikely to approve the state's budget until late May or early June, and it could take several months after that before Pickens County hears if the work will be partly or fully funded, or possibly not funded at all, Collins said.

Collins said there it's also possible that Charleston County may have to give up over \$400 million previously approved by the bank to extend Interstate 526 if doesn't come up with a \$350 million match for that project.

Gov. Henry McMaster installed new leadership for the bank this week, replacing Chairman Vince Graham with Spartanburg lawyer John White Jr.; however, Collins said he doesn't expect that move to affect application reviews and approvals.

Follow Mike Eads on Twitter @MikeEads_AIM.

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<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/2017/03/03/fixing-woodruff-road-one-piece-time/98530380/>

Fixing Woodruff Road, one piece at a time

Eric Connor

Updated 2:34 p.m. ET March 6, 2017

The pace of improvement along Woodruff Road appears about as brisk as the traffic that doesn't move on it during the holidays — but, piece by piece, efforts are being made with both long and short-range goals in mind.

By the end of the year, the first of those efforts — a new road connecting Woodruff Industrial Lane to Verdae Boulevard — could offer some relief.

The problem has been years in the making and is interconnected with the growth of Greenville beyond the infamous, gridlocked commercial corridor.

It extends to interstates 85 and 385, where the second-largest road project ever in the state of South Carolina promises to provide significant relief to Woodruff Road. It involves the major retail shopping centers, which in the early days of Woodruff's unplanned development explosion weren't designed to be interconnected. And, nearby, the large-scale vision to turn Verdae Boulevard into the lifeline of a new, major city sector demands a solution.

The \$55 million Woodruff Road parallel bypass is the game-changer, but it's no sooner than five years from beginning, and the impact of the state's current dramatic interchange project on Woodruff traffic is still off in the distance.

But in the meantime, the near-term fix is a new, \$3.7 million project that will link a collection of dead-end streets to create a small bypass of Woodruff Road to Verdae Boulevard.

The proposed connector would link three dead-end streets to relieve traffic on Woodruff Road.

City of Greenville

The private sector is contributing the majority of the funding, about \$2.1 million in money and land to link Woodruff Industrial Lane behind the Target superstore to Green Heron Road and Ketron Court to Verdae.

The government will chip in \$1.2 million, split three ways between the city, county and state road funds controlled locally.

The city hopes to get the remaining \$400,000 from other businesses along Woodruff Road, City Engineer Dwayne Cooper said. They already have \$200,000 committed.

"We're talking to a lot of different folks to make it happen," Cooper said.

Mayor Knox White said he wants to see the connector completed before Christmas, a wish that Cooper said is difficult but not impossible because of the local nature of the partnership and funding.

The first spark of the idea of a smaller-scale connector emerged after the defeat of the penny sales tax for roads in November 2014, said Hank McCullough, senior manager of intergovernmental relations for Piedmont Natural Gas Co.

The big Woodruff parallel bypass was one of the top-level items to sell the tax to voters, which was soundly defeated in the county but had a reasonable chance of passing if it applied only to the city.

The gas company has had an operations facility on Woodruff Industrial behind the Target store since the mid-1980s and didn't expect to be in its current gridlocked predicament, McCollough said.

The company told the city that it wanted to extend a private roadway to Verdae so its crews could freely respond to calls, and the city indicated it wanted to be involved, first in managing the project then in committing funds, McCollough said.

"We have only one way in and one way out, and that presents an issue for us when we have to get trucks out in a hurry," he said. "It's not a fix-all, but it's a step in the right direction."

Piedmont and Verdae Properties have committed to spend \$1.6 million. Verdae also pledged \$500,000 of property it owns in the path of the proposed road.

The connector would be two lanes and would provide direct access from Verdae Boulevard to key destinations like Magnolia Park and Costco by virtue of only crossing Woodruff Road, which Cooper said suffers one of the highest accident rates in Greenville County. Traffic on the new route would be managed by two roundabouts.

"It's going to be a basic two-lane connector," Cooper said. "Then in the future we can add on."

The city expects the connector could cut traffic on Woodruff Road by 20 percent.

The reduction in traffic would be a welcome improvement to businesses and drivers.

Maigen Taylor, a stylist at the Great Clips across from Target, counts as both.

The workers at Great Clips don't bother traveling anywhere during their 30-minute lunch break, Taylor said, because "by the time we get out, it's time to come back, just because of the traffic."

The city has already done work to keep cars off Woodruff Road. Last summer, the city spent \$300,000 to move a sewer line and pave a two-lane road connecting Market Point Drive and Carolina Point Parkway, which, among other things, creates more flexibility for motorists to enter the Shops at Greenridge.

The work set to be done on the new connector to Verdae isn't the only effort under way.

The city is also preparing a major sidewalk project along Woodruff Road that will bring with it a system to prevent left turns at one of the most-perilous sections of the road.

The project, expected to begin this summer, involves installing sidewalks to extend from where they exist at the Shops at Greenridge on to Roper Mountain Road, Cooper said.

While doing that work, the city will install a concrete barrier on Woodruff Road from I-85 to Woodruff Industrial that will prevent left-hand turns into the shopping center that includes Trader Joe's and Academy Sports.

The city already puts up temporary barriers during the holidays to prevent left turns along the same stretch but will now make that system permanent.

The area is particularly dangerous, Cooper said, as people trying to turn left into Trader Joe's rely on drivers in two lanes of traffic on Woodruff to hold and let them turn. But what often happens, he said, is that drivers don't account for a third lane that is bound for the I-85 on-ramp to Atlanta.

The turn is fine when traffic is light, but the cars speeding by in the third lane during congested times is dangerous, he said.

"That's where we're experiencing very high crash rates," he said.

The city has been working with private property owners to allow for connections in parking lots between shopping centers that weren't required when projects were developed as the explosion of growth outpaced government guidelines to manage the change.

Continue reading below

The larger-scale Woodruff Road bypass is still years away.

An environmental study will take more than a year, after which an exact route will be chosen, and funding doesn't kick in until 2021, with more funding needed in 2022, Cooper said.

Absent the bypass, the future of Woodruff Road turns to work the state Department of Transportation is doing on the interstates, which includes a dramatic re-arrangement of how traffic flows at the interchanges, including Woodruff.

The change will include towering flyover bridges, which can be seen in the large columns emerging from the ground and the first bridge deck being poured for the Woodruff on-ramp to I-385 next to the Sam's Club.

The flyovers, among 11 total being worked on, will allow motorists to bypass the current weaving among traffic trying to enter or exit at another connection — such as how traffic on I-385 from Woodruff heading north must merge in and out with cars trying to get on to I-85 to Spartanburg.

"When you ride down the road and you come into this interchange, I envision you'll be like, 'Oh, my God, this is what I've seen in Atlanta or somewhere big,'" said Jack Valetti, a DOT engineer who is overseeing the \$231 million project.

When it began last year, the project to transform the interchange and widen the interstates to relieve congestion was the second-largest since the state built the Ravenel Bridge over the Cooper River in Charleston.

Bigger now is the \$436 million effort to widen I-85 on a 26-mile stretch in Spartanburg to the North Carolina state line in Cherokee County, Valetti said.

Ultimately, the 85/385 project will result in an "adaptive" traffic signal system on Woodruff Road over the 4-mile stretch from the Costo at Ketron Court to State 14, Valetti said. The system records information and allows the signals to adjust to traffic needs on the spot.

"All those signals are going to be reconfigured with an adaptive transportation system — which is the cute word for they're going to be all tied together and communicate with one another," he said.

The intersections on Woodruff from I-385 to Greenridge will be redesigned, creating better flow and more turn lanes.

Also, in August, the DOT will re-open the Salters Road bridge that it has been working on that serves as another connection point with Woodruff Road and CU-ICAR, Cooper said.

The interchange project will help in other areas, too, particularly at rush hour, Valetti said.

I-385 will be widened with three lanes on either side from Bridges Road to downtown Greenville. I-85 will be widened to four lanes in each direction from the interchange to Pelham Road.

The Pelham Road area will include the crucial step of eliminating the afternoon rush hour bottleneck that happens when a right lane ends just before the Pelham exit, Valetti said. That fix will come toward the end of the project in 2019, later in the process because of construction staging, he said.

The interstates' connection with the interchange will include lanes separate from traffic not entering and exiting, known as "collector-distributor lanes."

The interstate project is on schedule for completion in May 2019.

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Originally Published 3:03 p.m. ET March 3, 2017

Updated 2:34 p.m. ET March 6, 2017

March 7, 2017 2:15 PM

Sick of being stuck in traffic? York County wants to make a plan to fix the problems

County officials hope to create a Thoroughfare Plan that will identify and correct road problems and congestion. Herald file photo

By David Thackham

dthackham@heraldonline.com

YORK

Officials say they are moving to brainstorm, create and enact a road map that will allow York County to solve area transportation problems.

The first step became official at Monday night's York County Council meeting, where council members voted to enter contract negotiations with Columbia-based consulting service Kimley Horn and Associates to help create a "Thoroughfare Plan," to help identify and correct transportation issues.

Local experts will work the service to help the county study its local roads, identify major deficiencies and seek opportunities for congestion management.

The Thoroughfare Plan will complement and implement features from the York Forward 2035 Comprehensive Plan, according to Audra Miller, Planning and Development Services Director.

"One of the goals is to be more proactive to help create better roads and better connections," said Miller. "This Thoroughfare Plan should complement the 2035 plan by identifying the areas that are potentially future connections."

The York Forward plan, adopted last year by the County Council, sets the groundwork for how York County plans to manage the county's rapid growth, while preserving the area's character.

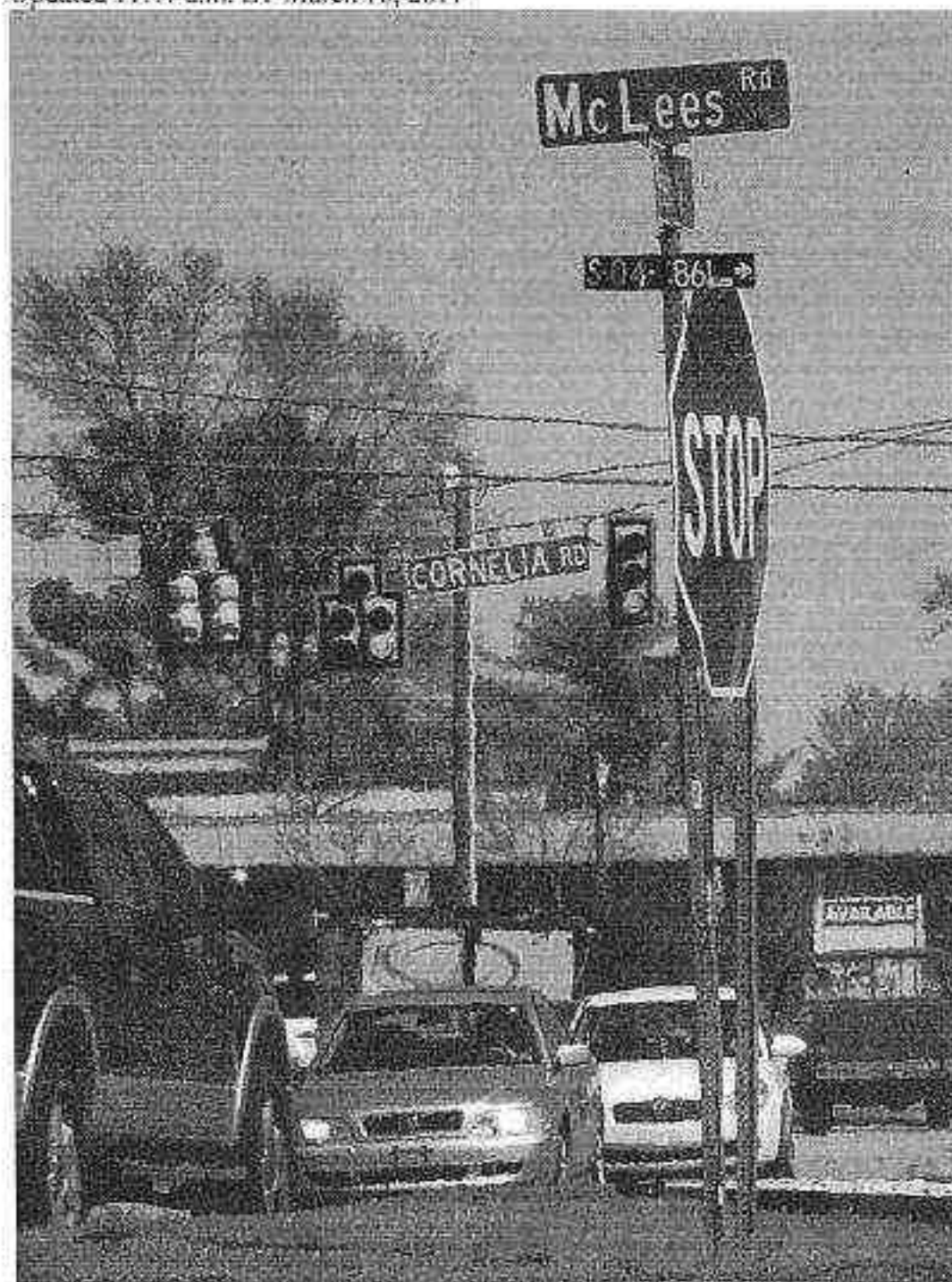
The Thoroughfare Plan will mainly deal with areas not already covered by the Rock Hill-Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS), according to Miller. RFATS covers Rock Hill, Fort Mill and Lake Wylie.

David Thackham: [803-329-4066](tel:803-329-4066), [@dthackham](https://www.instagram.com/dthackham)

Read more here: <http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article136947513.html#storylink=cpy>

East-West Parkway helps, but S.C. 81 traffic a growing hassle

Abe Hardesty, abe.hardesty@independentmail.com Published 7:07 a.m. ET March 10, 2017 | Updated 11:47 a.m. ET March 10, 2017



(Photo: Ken Rainard/Independent Mail)

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Forty months after its debut, the East-West Parkway enjoys a honeymoon with Anderson motorists.

"I think it's the best thing ever," said Kristy Burton, a northside Anderson resident who uses the parkway every day. "I love it. I never drive down (S.C.) 81 any more."

Like Burton, Pam McConnell drives the parkway often, using it as a primary route from the AnMed Health North Campus area to Concord Baptist Church via Concord Road, one of only three interchanges on the 3-mile corridor.

"It's an easy drive, and I think it helped the traffic on this road," she said, pointing to the Reed Road near its intersection with Concord — an area of increasing congestion when it was a primary connector for traffic moving from the Greenville Street area to Clemson Boulevard. "It doesn't seem to get backed up there as much. At least it hasn't so far."

Those were the objectives when the parkway was completed in November 2013. That ribbon-cutting ended 20 years of planning, property purchases, and debate. It was hoped that it would lure traffic away from Concord, Brown, Reed Road, and parts of East Greenville Street, and the early numbers indicate a success.



An ambulance drives by cars after noon along Greenville Street and Boulevard on Wednesday in Anderson. (Photo: Ken Ruinard/Independent Mail)

By 2015, (the DOT's most recent data), daily traffic in the second full year of the 3-mile parkway had reached more than 11,000 vehicles — more than a third of the daily total on Clemson Boulevard, the city's busiest road.

"I think it's a good number, more than I expected," said longtime Anderson commercial developer Bill Epstein. "It's probably 2,000 (vehicles) a day more than that now, and I think it will continue to do a little better every year."

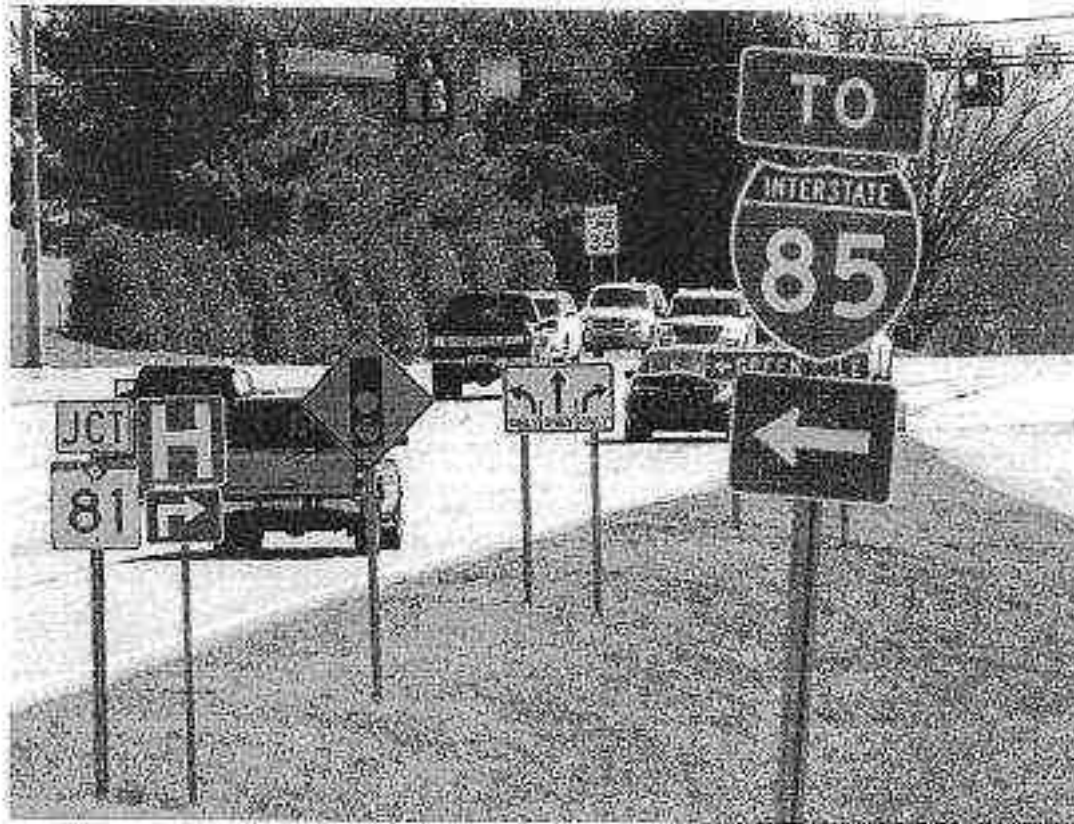
Maurice McKenzie, planning director for the city of Anderson, said he considered anything above 10,000 vehicles a day to be evidence "of an immediate impact."

"When you see that 11,000 drivers are using it, right out of the gate, it tells you that there was an obvious need," said McKenzie, who recalls discussions about a potential east-west corridor when he joined the staff in 1992.

Because changes in driving habits tend to be gradual, he expects a steady increase in the parkway traffic. "For a while, drivers tend to stay on the path they're used to," McKenzie said.

Todd Anderson, traffic analyst at the DOT office in Columbia, cites "a delayed use unless the new route saves a large amount of time. For example, if a new route saves drivers 50% of their previous drive time, then the word will get out and people will start using it very quickly. However, if the saving is maybe only 15% then it will take longer for people to break their traditional route and start using a different route."

Both McKenzie and Anderson point to marked reductions in the traffic on those smaller roads that had become unplanned links between Anderson's two busiest roads as the best barometer of the parkway's impact. The traffic on Brown Road, 3,600 vehicles a day before the parkway opened, had dropped to 2,000 vehicles per day in 2015. The daily count at Kings Road fell by more than 10 percent, from 10,100 to 8,800, in the parkway's first two years. And Reed Road, which carried 12,200 vehicles a day in 2013, hosted only 8,800 in 2015.



Cars drive along the East West Parkway on Wednesday at noon, toward Greenville Street in Anderson. (Photo: Ken Rainard/Independent Mail)

But while the parkway has relieved traffic congestion on the small roads west of Greenville Street, there are no indications it will help drivers on the west side of that road. The five miles of commercial endeavors that have surrounded the area make left turns increasingly difficult on the road from the parkway area to North Main Street.

In all the areas near McCants Middle School, for example, traffic increased markedly between 2013 and 2015. Between McLees Road and East Calhoun Street, traffic increased 30 percent (from 4,700 daily vehicles to 6,400), even though the enrollment at nearby McCants Middle School grew by only 41 students. Traffic on Marchbanks increased by 20 percent in the same two years.

Traffic near the Rantowles-East Greenville Street intersection reached 25,900 vehicles per day in 2015, 1,500 a day more than in 2013. Other than Interstate 85, the area of S.C. 81 between McCants and Boulevard is the third-busiest traffic area in the county behind Clemson Boulevard and S.C. 153 in Powdersville, which serve 30-32,000 drivers a day.

The numbers aren't surprising to Connie Bennett, a McCants-area resident who has learned to avoid Greenville Street during the morning commute and at lunchtime.

"Eighty-one is getting terrible, traffic-wise," she said Thursday. "I've been here 14 years, and I can't believe the changes."

"The (East-West) Parkway helped a lot, and I drive it a lot, in terms of getting to Clemson Boulevard," Bennett said. "But it seems like they keep building more businesses here on 81."

"I think the connector helped," said Anderson Fire Department spokesman Travis Poole, "but they've added a lot of businesses to Greenville Street. For fire trucks, it's a tough area to maneuver through. The lanes there seem narrow."

In the past two years, 22 new business licenses have been acquired on East Greenville Street, according to city records.

Anderson County EMS Director Scott Stoller said ambulance drivers consider the area to be one of the area's most difficult spots to drive.

"Eighty-one is getting bad, especially the area from Boulevard through Caters Lake. I knew when I had to work through traffic on 81, I dreaded it," he said Friday.

The number of entrances on S.C. 81 is more troublesome than the volume of traffic, Stoller said.

"You have multiple entrances, it seems like one for every business ... those people are thinking about their day as the pull into traffic; they're not thinking about how hard it is to stop a 4-ton ambulance with two or more people in the back, or a 15-ton firetruck."

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