



## OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 S. Pine St. Room 212 | Walhalla, SC 29691  
864.638.4218  
OconeeSC.com

### COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mike Johnson, Chairman, At-Large      David Nix, Vice Chair, District 2  
Teresa Spicer, District 1                      Brit Adams, District 3  
Joshua Owens, District 4                      Gary Gaulin, District 5  
Mickey Haney, At-Large

### AGENDA

6:00 pm, Monday, November 18, 2024  
Council Chambers - Oconee County 415 S Pine St, Walhalla SC 29691

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of minutes from November 4, 2024
5. Public Comment for *Non-Agenda Items* (4 minutes per person)
6. Commission Member Comments
7. Update regarding 5-Year County Comprehensive Plan Update
  - a. Public comment
  - b. Discussion/ vote
8. Discussion regarding the Scenic Highway Ordinance and potential changes or amendments.
  - a. Public Comment
  - b. Discussion/ vote
9. Adjourn



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### STAFF

James Coley  
Elise Dunaway

### MEDIA

Lauren Pierce

### MINUTES

6:00 pm, Monday, November 4, 2024  
Council Chambers - Oconee County 415 S. Pine St, Walhalla SC 29691

1. Call to Order – Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
2. Invocation was led by Mr. Nix.
3. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Gaulin.
4. Approval of minutes from October 7, 2024 – Mr. Gaulin made a motion to approve the minutes; Seconded by Mr. Nix.  
Mr. Johnson made a motion to amend the minutes to include in item 8 to specify Count Council directed the commission to review the ordinance, as well as, who pays for the traffic study, who selects the engineer, and whether the county has the potential of being stuck with the bill in seconded by Mr. Nix. Approved unanimously.  
Mr. Gaulin made a motion to approve the amended minutes. Mr. Johnson seconded. Approved unanimously.
5. Public Comment for Non-Agenda Items (4 minutes per person):  
Ms. Sarina Richardson expressed her concern regarding increased growth and the road and right-of-way standards.
6. Commission Member Comments:  
Mr. Gaulin made a comment regarding feeling good about Oconee County.
7. Staff Comments:  
Mr. Coley reminded the members that if their term is up to complete the application for reappointment and turn it into the Clerk of Council.  
Mr. Coley also reminded the members to please respond to the email about a FIOA request.  
Mr. Coley notified the members he will be out of the office for the December 16, 2024 meeting.

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Mr. Nix made a motion to remove the December 16, 2024 from the schedule. Seconded by Mr. Owens. Approved Unanimously.

8. Discussion regarding County Emergency Services with Director Scott Krein.
  - a. Public comment NA
  - b. Discussion/ vote  
Mr. Krein discussed disaster remediation and future planning as a result of Hurricane Helene.
  
9. Discussion regarding Scenic Highway Proposal, HWY 130 sponsor KOBA.
  - a. Public Comment  
Mr. Perry Smith expressed his opinion regarding the proposed scenic highway, growth, and property rights.
  
  - b. Discussion/ vote  
Mr. Phil Soper addressed the members regarding the scenic highway proposal. Mr. Soper discussed the changes that were made to the application.  
  
Mr. Gaulin made a motion that the public input is not read into the record because it is already in the backup material. Seconded by Mrs. Spicer. Motion withdrawn.  
  
Mr. Coley read the citizen comments received via email.  
  
Mr. Gaulin made a motion to recommend approval of the KOBA scenic highway designation to County Council. Seconded by Mrs. Spicer. Motion failed. 1/6 Mr. Johnson, Mr. Haney, Mr. Owens, Mrs. Spicer, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Nix opposed.
  
10. Adjourn – the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

# Proposal to Facilitate Oconee County's Comprehensive Plan 5-Year Review

October 31, 2024





## INTRODUCTION

This proposal lays out a scope of services, time-frame, and fee proposed by the Appalachian Council of Governments for an update to the Oconee County's Comprehensive Plan. The proposal specifies services to be performed by the COG, as well as responsibilities of the County. This work program includes all steps necessary for updating each component of the project. The final product will include recommended changes to the Comprehensive Plan's Goals and Strategies. In addition, changes to the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Regulations may be recommended if needed to support the policy directives of the Comprehensive Plan.

## COMPONENTS

### Comprehensive Plan Update

The Comprehensive Plan expresses a community's goals for its future. The plan provides a framework for developing a community's growth and development policies and serves as a guide when making decisions related to development and the expenditure of public funds. The plan, along with the ordinances that implement it, ensures the orderly growth and development of the community. Benefits of the planning process include:

- protecting property values
- maintaining the public health, safety, and quality of life
- controlling traffic congestion
- establish framework for quality economic development consistent with community goals
- programming utilities and public services to be available when needed
- maximizing the public's investment in infrastructure

The updated plan document will include the most current economic and demographic information, analysis of existing conditions, issue identification, and a statement of goals and strategies to guide future development.

## **SCOPE OF STUDY**

The update process will include both technical functions, such as data collection and analysis, and policy development through discussions with community leaders. These efforts will include opportunities for input from the public, elected officials, and the Planning Commission at different stages. The process will be interactive. Staff from the Appalachian Council of Governments will work primarily with the County's Planning Commission to develop the Comprehensive Plan Update. Community meetings will allow public input and reaction. Ultimately, recommendations will be submitted to County Council for refinement and adoption.

### **Comprehensive Plan Update Process**

The Comprehensive Plan Update process will focus on identifying the strategic issues facing the Oconee County in the next 5 to 10 years. The work will include data collection and analysis to support discussions and issue identification followed by goals and policy development to address the strategic issues identified in the process. The production of the goals and policies will require considerable discussion and communication among various interest groups, as well as between citizens and local officials. The following provides an outline and detail of the major tasks involved with the project:

#### **1. Preliminary Review and Analysis**

Community data compiled by ACOG staff will be used to establish existing conditions, identify trends since Plan adoption, and create a narrative of the state of the community. Staff will review previous plans and policy documents to better understand the current policy goals of the community. Analysis will focus on existing land use patterns, infrastructure capacity, community facilities, cultural resources, and areas of environmental significance.

#### **2. Development of Issues, Goals and Policies**

ACOG staff will lead the Planning Commission in discussions to identify issues through analysis of data, public input, and discussions with staff, Planning Commission, and the Council. ACOG staff will work with the Planning Commission to evaluate progress towards established goals and address issues and identify alternative policies and strategies to achieve goals. Through Planning Commission discussions, goals and strategies will be updated to best meet the needs of the County and recommended to Council for adoption.

### **3. Public Input on Issues**

ACOG staff will lead a public input process, as needed, to solicit opinions from the community's residents to identify priorities in different areas. Focus groups, online surveys, or public meetings may be scheduled depending on the needs of the planning process. Comments will be compiled and presented to the Planning Commission for use in refining the documents as appropriate.

### **4. Development of Recommendations**

Recommendations will be developed to best describe specific actions to be taken as part of the update, assign responsibilities for tasks, and establish a time-frame for implementation. This includes potentially updating the Future Land Use Map to visually represent development goals and policies.

### **5. Compilation of Draft Plan Update**

The material developed through each of the preceding steps will be compiled into draft text and map documents. The Draft Plan Update will be presented to the Planning Commission and County Council in an informal work session. The Plan Update will serve as an addendum to the 2020 Comprehensive Plan to reflect the 5-year trends and updates to goals and strategies.

### **6. Adoption of Plan Update**

Adoption of the document requires Planning Commission recommendation and submission to County Council for adoption. ACOG staff will be responsible for compiling the draft plan update for submission to Council and providing any additional information needed for Council to review and refine the document.



## **SCHEDULE**

Due to the interactive nature of the process, time frames are only an estimate. The anticipated timeline for completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update is 6 months. As the draft recommendations are submitted to the Planning Commission, their review of the material may result in extended discussions that could extend the time frame. Additional time may be required to ensure that the Planning Commission and County Council are provided adequate time for considering issues and to accommodate any additional public input that may be required for the plan and ordinance to be successfully implemented.

The table below outlines the anticipated time requirement for each component. Time frames for some components will overlap so the total time frame is shorter than the sum of all elements added together.

### **Comprehensive Plan Update**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>
1. Project initiation	2 weeks
2. Preliminary Review and Analysis	6 weeks
3. Compilation of Draft Comprehensive Plan Update	10 weeks
4. Review of Draft Plan Update	4 weeks
5. Revision of Draft Plan, Recommendations to Other Ordinances if needed	4 weeks
Total	6 months

## **COST ESTIMATE**

Fees for services provided by the Appalachian Council of Governments are based on the estimated time required to complete a project. Should project expenses be less than estimated, the cost to the client will be adjusted accordingly. In no case will the total fee exceed the estimated cost for the scope of services included in this work program. The total cost for the proposed Comprehensive Plan Update is \$ 7,500.00.

ARTICLE III.<sup>10</sup> - A PROGRAM TO DESIGNATE OCONEE COUNTY'S SCENIC HIGHWAYS; ESTABLISHED*Footnotes:*

--- (3) ---

**Editor's note**— Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), adopted Sept. 19, 2017, amended art. III in its entirety to read as herein set out. Former art. III, §§ 26-151—26-157, pertained to similar subject matter, and derived from Ord. No. 2007-21, §§ I—V, App. A, App. B, adopted Oct. 21, 2008.

## Sec. 26-151. - Oconee County scenic highways.

Highways located within Oconee County, South Carolina and found to be of special value to the citizens may be designated as scenic highways pursuant to the rules, regulations, and criteria set forth below.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)

## Sec. 26-152. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning.

*Highway* means all those roads, streets and highways within the federal, state or Oconee County highway system.

*Intrinsic qualities* means those significant tangible and intangible resources found within a scenic corridor that are known to be distinct within the region. "Intrinsic qualities" include:

- (1) *Scenic*: The composition of features that are regionally representative, associative or inspirational. These features are memorable, distinct, visually impressive, and continuous across the view.
- (2) *Historic*: Landscapes and structures that educate and stir an appreciation for the legacy of Oconee County's past.
- (3) *Cultural*: Activities or objects that represent unique and distinctive expressions of community life, customs or traditional ways and identify a place, region or culture.
- (4) *Recreational*: Passive and active leisure activities directly dependent on the scenic qualities of the area and usually associated with outdoor recreation as we seek to refresh and renew our spirits.
- (5) *Natural*: Relatively undisturbed and visually pleasing natural areas and/or ecologically sensitive landscapes representing natural occurrences including landforms, water, vegetation and wildlife characteristics.
- (6)

<sup>11</sup>  
*Archaeological*: Sites, artifacts or structures recognized by the scientific or academic communities as being representative of past human life and activities.

*Scenic highway* means a highway or segment of a highway receiving a designation as such pursuant to the provisions contained in this article and based on it deserving such recognition due to scenic vistas, cultural or historical significance, or other criteria specified by county council. All scenic highways shall be divided into two route categories:

- (1) Highways with limited development visible from the highway, yet still retaining special characteristics worthy of preservation, shall be designated a category I scenic highway.
- (2) Highways with little or no development visible from the highway lying outside primary growth areas, shall be designated a category II scenic highway.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)

#### Sec. 26-153. - Designation process.

- (a) Applications shall be submitted in writing to the planning department by a sponsoring agency.
- (b) Upon receipt of an application for the designation of a highway as a scenic highway, the planning director, or their designee, shall forward the application to the staff liaison for the planning commission, who shall then place review of the application on the next appropriate planning commission agenda.
- (c) The planning commission shall review applications for compliance with the criteria for designating a scenic highway established in this article (see [section 26-156](#), appendix B). Upon completion of the review, the planning commission shall by vote determine a recommendation regarding the designation of the subject highway. The planning commission's recommendation shall be forwarded to county council. In the event county council determines the proposed highway merits designation as a scenic highway, it shall so indicate its decision by ordinance.
- (d) Any highway proposed for designation as a scenic highway that is rejected for designation by county council, may not be proposed again for a period of one year from the date of publication of the decision.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017; Ord. No. 2019-10, § 1(Exh. A), 3-5-2019)

#### Sec. 26-154. - Regulations.

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person other than the owner, owner's agent, or other individual with the full knowledge and consent of the owner of a property situated along the right-of-way of a designated and properly identified scenic highway to dig, pull up, gather, remove, cut, maim, break, or injure in any way a public or private property, to include any injury done by fires intentionally set, and to include any injury done to any wild, cultivated, or ornamental plants, shrubs, and trees. These provisions shall not apply where the acts hereby prohibited are done by

or under<sup>12</sup> the instructions of county or state authorities lawfully in charge of such public roads, highways or lands, or by a utility in the lawful pursuit of installation or maintenance of their facilities. Violation of this provision of this article shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.00.

- (b) The sponsoring organization or group submitting an application to the county for designation of a highway as a scenic highway shall be responsible for the removal of trash along the portion of the highway so designated as a scenic highway no fewer than three times each year. Permits and/or required notifications related to any and all activities inside a right-of-way shall be the responsibility of the sponsoring organization or group. Any individual taking part in trash removal duties, or any other activities related to the standards of this article, shall comply with any and all standards and practices utilized by the entity responsible for maintenance of the highway.
- (c) A member of the county staff shall be designated by the county administrator to review the status of all county designated scenic highways every two years. In the event it is determined that a route fails to meet the criteria established in this article, a report shall be made to the planning commission, which shall recommend a course of action to county council. Such recommendations include, but are not limited to, reclassification to a lower category and/or redesignation.
- (d) Regulations contained in this section shall apply equally to both category I and category II scenic highways; however, category II scenic highways shall receive preference in the pursuit of funding to be utilized in maintaining and enhancing the intrinsic values leading to their designation.
- (e) All county rules and regulations concerning scenic highways shall apply immediately to a nominated highway until a determination is made as to whether or not the highway shall be designated a scenic highway. A determination of this issue must be made within six months of the county receiving an application.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)

Sec. 26-155. - Appendix A.

A scenic highway corridor management plan shall include the following components:

- (1) A detailed description of the section of the highway to be designated, including two or more of the intrinsic qualities as defined in this article; a specification as to how the highway in question fits the criteria; an identification of any problem areas that may impact the scenic highway designation.
- (2) A marked map clearly indicating the section of the highway the applicant is proposing for designation.
- (3) Photographs or videos of areas which the applicant considers to be of intrinsic value or significance.
- (4) Letters of support from citizens, businesses, civic groups, and other organizations.

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- (5) A maintenance plan outlining proposed litter collection activities.
- (6) Any additional proposed actions intended to enhance and maintain the highway if awarded designated.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)

Sec. 26-156. - Appendix B.

Criteria for designating a highway as a scenic highway.

- (a) The planning commission shall consider the following in determining whether a highway should be designated as a scenic highway.
  - (1) Intrinsic qualities (as defined by this article).
  - (2) Additional amenities and support (such as but not limited to):
    - a. Hospitality features.
    - b. Length of route.
    - c. General support for proposed route.
    - d. Financial commitment.
    - e. Role in regional/statewide strategy.
    - f. Protective easements, zoning overlays, or other land use restrictions.
  - (3) Features negatively impacting the scenic qualities of the highway, (such as but not limited to):
    - a. Junkyards/litter.
    - b. Dilapidated/unattractive structures.
    - c. Excessive advertising.
    - d. Heavy traffic uses.
    - e. Mining/lumbering scars.
    - f. Heavy industry.
    - g. Parallel and visible utilities along highway.
    - h. Landfills/other pollutants visible from route.
  - (4) Feasibility of maintenance plan and responsibilities.

(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017)

**James Coley**

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**From:** Mickey Haney <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 14, 2024 6:40 AM  
**To:** James Coley  
**Subject:** Scenic Highway proposed amendment

**1. 26-153. - Designation process.**

(a)

Applications shall be submitted in writing to the planning department by a sponsoring agency, property owner, or group of property owners of a parcel or parcels with a combined ownership of property that adjoins the petition highway. No parcel may be included within the scenic highway petition that is not contiguous to at least one other parcel that is included in the scenic highway petition. Contiguous properties are those properties that are adjacent to one another and share the highway named in the scenic highway petition.

(b)

Reserved

(c)

All persons owning a legal interest in the subject(s) must sign the petition for the scenic highway designation.

(d)

Upon receipt of an application for the designation of a highway as a scenic highway, the planning director, or their designee, shall forward the application to the staff liaison for the planning commission, who shall then place review of the application on the next appropriate planning commission agenda.

(e)

The planning commission shall review applications for compliance with the criteria for designating a scenic highway established in this article (see [section 26-156](#), appendix B). Upon completion of the review, the planning commission shall by vote determine a recommendation regarding the designation of the subject highway. The planning commission's recommendation shall be forwarded to county council. In the event county council determines the proposed highway merits designation as a scenic highway, it shall so indicate its decision by ordinance.

(f)

Any highway proposed for designation as a scenic highway that is rejected for designation by county council, may not be proposed again for a period of one year from the date of publication of the decision.  
(Ord. No. 2017-22, § 1(Exh. A), 9-19-2017; Ord. No. 2019-10, § 1(Exh. A), 3-5-2019)

This is similar verbiage that is used in section 38–8.5 small area zoning.