Agreement for S.C. 133 project OK'd

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — One more formality leading up to the S.C. 133 (College Avenue) road widening and bridge replacement project that begins next year has been achieved as Clemson City Council recently approved an agreement with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) regarding the relocation of utility lines.

'The city is responsible for relocating any utilities that exist within the scope of the project.'

Rick Cotton
Clemson city administrator

The Municipal State Highway Project Agreement is required by the SCDOT for all projects that occur within the corporate limits of a municipality. This particular project consists of the long-awaited replacement of the Norfolk Southern Railroad bridge structure and reconstructed intersection of Tiger Boulevard on U.S. Highway 123 and S.C. Highway 133 at College Avenue.

"The city is responsible

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for relocating any utilities that exist within the scope of the project," said Clemson City Administrator Rick Cotton. "The city does have a water line and sewer line within the project scope that (City Engineer) Kent (Guthrie) is working on to relocate prior to the SCDOT construction project. We hope to begin the bidding process soon."

Terms of the one-page agreement call for the city to assist the SCDOT in "causing all water, sewer and gas pipes, manholes, or fire hydrants, and all power or telephone lines or poles located within the existing right-of-way to be relocated at the utility company's expense, except where the utility can demonstrate a prior right of occupancy."

The contract also stipulates that the SCDOT is not liable for damages to property or injuries to persons "as a consequence of the placing, maintenance, or removal of any utilities by the City or its contractors."

Cotton said the project does not include any highway abandonment or transfer of lane miles to the city of Clemson.

Officials say the project is a system upgrade that will greatly improve traffic flow at the intersection of S.C. Highway 133 and U.S. Highway 123. The existing railroad bridge will be removed and a temporary bridge installed for trains to use as well as an additional track for future light rail capabilities.

In addition, the project will also consist of widening S.C. Highway 133 to add two lanes.

Last year, the city learned it would receive $6.14 million in federal stimulus money to go with the $4.5 million the city had already budgeted for the project. While the actual cost of the project is estimated at $8 million, the remaining $2.5 million will be applied to the Sheep Farm Road project in Oconee County.

Cotton said plans call for project bids to be received in March, with a bid award set for the following month. Construction is set to begin in June and take approximately 18 months to complete.

greg@dailyjm.com | (864) 882-2375

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JESSICA NELMS | STAFF

Replacement of the Norfolk Southern Railroad bridge and reconstructed intersection of Tiger Boulevard on U.S. Highway 123 and S.C. Highway 133 at College Avenue will begin next spring.