Clemson to consider overpass options

Status of work on railroad bridge over State 133 also on agenda

By Terry Cregar
STAFF WRITER
tcregar@greenvillenews.com

CLEMSON – The City Council is expected to receive updates on two high-profile traffic projects when it meets Monday night.

One of the projects involves pedestrian safety concerns at a highway overpass near Clemson Elementary School and the other major changes at the city's busiest intersection.

Last month, Kent Guthrie, the city's engineer, briefed the council on options for improving pedestrian safety at the Berkeley Drive overpass at U.S. 123.

The overpass is within walking distance of Clemson Elementary, but there currently is no room for pedestrians to cross using the overpass. Instead, walkers are forced to the edge of traffic lanes.

For the past year, the city has been considering several options for improving safety on the overpass. City officials have held talks on the issue with the state Department of Transportation.

One of those options would be to attach a pedestrian bridge to the existing vehicle bridge on Berkeley Drive at a cost of $550,000. Another, more expensive option, would involve construction of a new vehicle bridge that would include bicycle lanes and sidewalks. That work would cost an estimated $2 million, Guthrie said.

A third option, which the council is expected to discuss Monday night, involves widening the pavement on the approach to the bridge and adding new sidewalks along Berkeley Drive from the school to the bridge.

Cost for completing the third option has been estimated at $80,000, Guthrie has said.

Because funding for the first and second options isn't currently available, city staff has been pursuing the third option.



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Councilman J.C. Cook III said the third option, while not ideal, is the best in the short term given the high costs involved with the other options.

"It's not the best scenario, but at least we're making it safer to get to the bridge," Cook said. "I can't see us getting $2 million for a new bridge."

Also Monday night, the council is scheduled to get an update on the status of construction of a new railroad bridge over State 133. That work is expected to include reconstruction of the State 133-U.S. 123 intersection.

The state DOT has approved the $11 million project, but construction has been temporarily delayed while the contractor investigates a new technique to install the bridge supports that could create less impact and noise, city officials have said.

Monday night's council meeting has been moved from City Hall across U.S. 123 to the Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce board room. The move is necessary due to expansion work at City Hall. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m.