LOCAL NEWS

Easley moves ahead with walk-, bikeways plan

Firm hired to develop master design

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A master plan is in the works as part of Easley's push to become more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly.

Easley City Council has unanimously voted to award a $71,000 contract to Alta Planning and Design to develop a bicycle and pedestrian master plan.

"We were very impressed with what they brought to us, their willingness to really get involved," City Councilman Chris Mann said. "They had the experience we were looking for. They've done this for cities large and small."

Mann said Alta also offered to write two grant proposals for the city as part of the package and said they could help the city get needed money to implement items in a finished master plan.

City Administrator Fox Simons said Easley received 12 proposals for the contract, which is being funded through a $60,000 grant from the Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study that requires a $12,000 match from the city.

He said the master plan will look at a variety of issues, including bike lanes and sidewalks, needed education efforts and funding opportunities to help implement the plan.

Work on the master plan can start immediately, according to Simons, and he said he thinks the plan could be completed in early 2010.

Implementing the plan will be a long-term project, Simons said.

Mann said city officials have to find ways to "do everything and pay for everything" and said the city could look at public-private partnerships.

He said the master plan will include gathering public input to see what residents want.

"There is quite a large population of cyclists out there," Mann said. "It's making sure people are aware that cyclists are out there and sharing the road with them."