

PAUL BROWN

Stan Smith is a daily user of bike lanes to pedal the two miles to his job at Clemson University. Clemson and Central are connected through cycling lanes, and other cities are pursuing a similar effort.

Pickens cities to peddle linked trails to cyclists

Municipalities hope connecting lanes prove draw for tourism

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PICKENS — Three Pickens County municipalities are banding together to connect their communities with bike lanes and trails and attract cyclists and tourism in the process.

Pickens City Council has approved a resolution in support of PELCOR, or the Pickens-Easley-Liberty Corridor, a "proposed loop and series of bicycle-friendly trails, roads, parks and riding destinations," according to the resolution.

Pickens City Administrator Katherine Brackett said the effort involves Pickens, Easley and Liberty connecting through bike trails and off-road trails and using their "strength in numbers to attract tourists."

"We'll be able to attract a larger and different group of individuals if we can offer a whole day or a whole weekend's worth of outdoor recreation by visiting the three towns," she said.

Liberty Mayor Brian Deese and Easley City Administrator Fox Simons said their respective city councils are expected to vote on the PELCOR resolution in September.

Brackett said Pickens will approach the county to possibly gain access to county land that would be needed to complete the trail system.

She said the city could also work with Upstate SORBA, or Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association, and Ride Garden LLC, a company out of Greenville.

Brackett said the goal is to eventually connect the three areas through bike lanes and trails and also promote separate projects in each municipality.

Based on when funding becomes available, trials and bike lanes could be built from Pickens to Liberty along U.S. 178; from Liberty to Easley along State 93; and from Easley to Pickens along State 8, Brackett said.

She said the link eventually could be extended to Greenville, perhaps connecting to the Swamp Rabbit Trail.

The efforts are designed to better market the whole region and attract cyclists and tourism, Brackett said, and could have an economic impact and bring in money to the area.

"We think we could probably recruit real big groups or hold bike racing-like real tournaments," she said. "It makes for a full-day event if we can all link together and use each others' strengths."

Brackett said no funding is set aside now for the project but said money could come from grants, hospitality tax or other areas.

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