Pickens sees development potential on annexed land

Adding parcels along U.S. 178 will also aid police, city official says

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PICKENS — The city of Pickens has annexed four more parcels of land along a stretch of U.S. 178, a move that city officials say should help with police jurisdiction and development.

The vote to annex the additional property comes after Pickens City Council recently gave final approval to annex nine other parcels along U.S. 178 north of Pickens, including the future site of Pickens High School, a few homes and vacant lots.

The four new pieces of property, which are vacant, were annexed earlier this week on final reading, according to City Administrator Katherine Brackett.

"That just helps us with police jurisdiction," Brackett has said. "It's really a public safety issue if there are holes in our annexations (with questions over jurisdiction)."

The 13 parcels along U.S. 178 have been brought into the city over a course of almost two months.

City Councilman Connie Bowers has said the new properties help create "a pathway to the new high school, giving us access pretty much all the way up to the high school."

The new Pickens High is slated to open in August 2011.

Bowers has said a planned sewer line, which will service the high school, could help open up the area for some development as well.

According to Brackett, the city has plans to put in sewer and water lines along U.S. 178. Work on the sewer line will probably start within two weeks.

She said the addition of water and sewer along U.S. 178 could lead to commercial development in that area.

"Those properties all increase their commercial value having sewer run there," Brackett said. "I think there's a large potential for restaurants and stores to want to locate there."

Another parcel along U.S. 178 has received preliminary approval for annexation that should have a public hearing and its final reading Nov. 16, Brackett said.

She said there are also about two pieces of property the city hopes to annex on the opposite side of U.S. 178 to help with police jurisdiction at the intersection with Blue Ridge Drive.

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