Pickens sets goal of linking transit

Group working on 2030 plan also calls for moving air quality monitor

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PICKENS — A group formed to work on a long-range plan for Pickens County edged closer to completing that effort Tuesday night by agreeing on draft goals in areas ranging from transportation to natural resources.

The draft plan, which will eventually become the county's 2030 comprehensive plan, calls for a possible implementation, if feasible, of a public transportation system that would connect municipal areas of the county, colleges and neighboring county centers.

The plan also calls for the relocation of an air quality monitor from its current location near Lake Hartwell south of Clemson near the Anderson County line to a more central site in the county.

Dennis Chastain, who serves on the 57-member advisory committee, said the monitor's current location is hurting the county's economy.

"We're unfairly getting bad air quality reports simply because of the location of our monitor," Chastain said.

He said the county can lose federal funding if it has non-attainment on air quality several years in a row.

Dennis Reinart, who is also on the advisory committee, said if the county isn't in attainment on air quality, industry and jobs won't come to Pickens County.

The committee, which has 57 members including residents, developers business owners and conservationists, is working with the Pickens County Planning Commission and county staff on the draft of the plan.

Pickens County Council must vote on the plan.

Committee members reworked a draft goal that recommends developing general countywide land-use categories, deleting a section that included the consideration of zoning.

Chastain said it's one thing to identify what's in areas of the county, but he wants to avoid interpreting that as "a first step toward zoning or something else."

"If you want to preserve the rural character of Pickens county, first of all you've got to know where it is," he said.

An open house is planned for April 29 at the Hampton Memorial Library in Easley, according to Brink. The event, from 4-6 p.m. will be a drop-in, where residents can review the draft plan and make comments.

He said a public reference room is also open at the county administration building.