

Clemson bridge replacement project nearing completion

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — After more than a decade, the bridge replacement project at the intersection of U.S. Highway 123 and S.C. Highway 133 in Clemson is nearing completion.

Joe Laws, South Carolina Department of Transportation's resident construction engineer for the Pickens area, said the

project has several finishing touches remaining.

"Norfolk Southern is currently building the new track adjacent to the new platform built,"

Laws said. "Thrift Development will have a small section of concrete to pour once the new railway is

built, and on the same day Norfolk Southern is

switching from its current alignment to its new alignment." Laws said those tasks, along with

Thrift's painting of the bridge, are scheduled for



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SEE BRIDGE, PAGE A5



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The replacement of a railroad bridge near the intersection of U.S. Highway 123 and S.C. Highway 133 in Clemson is nearing an end after more than a decade.

FROM PAGE A1

completion in March.

In the 10 years since the project was first announced, work has been hampered by numerous delays. However, the project has shown visible signs of progress in recent years — including demolition of the center pier of the old bridge and paving over the area where the pier was formerly located. The drilled shafts for the bridge have been completed and the drilling rig removed.

In November 2017, the SCDOT completed road paving at the intersection as asphalt work followed milling of the area.

Clemson city administrator Rick Cotton told city council last year the bridge project was down to inspection and "prob-

ably some punch-list stuff."

State Rep. Gary Clary, who represents the Clemson area, said installation of the second track is "a Norfolk Southern issue" and "above the area of the way traffic goes." While the painting has to take place, he added, "It doesn't seem like that's going to be an extraordinary project that is going to take too long."

"That's what I'm hopeful of, to bring this now almost 10-year project to conclusion," Clary said. "When it was announced in 2009, it was supposedly a shovel-ready project, and it's unfortunate it's taken this long."

While the project has showed signs of making strides, one area where there has been no positive change is CAT bus having to take Amtrak riders to

Greenville rather than via the train depot on the site of the Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce.

"We still have many confused and frustrated Amtrak customers seeking help from chamber staff," chamber president David Lane said. "Deadlines keep shifting, so it's hard to rely on a completion date for the project."

CAT general manager Keith Moody said he has heard nothing about how much longer the bus service will have to take passengers to Greenville to hop aboard Amtrak trains.

"(Norfolk Southern officials) haven't said anything yet about when it'll end," Moody said.

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