

# Planners discuss Highway 123 corridor

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WALHALLA — The Oconee County Planning Commission began discussions Monday night on the 4.5-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 123 between the cities of Seneca and Clemson in an effort to ease traffic congestion and make access to businesses easier and safer.

Commissioners voted to create a steering committee that will include members of the planning commission and representatives from Seneca, Clemson, the South Carolina Department of Transportation, Clemson University, local businesses and more. It will also invite members of Oconee County Council and landowners to participate in

the studying and planning process for three to five meetings to direct the changes that will eventually come to the eastern side of the county.

County zoning administrator Adam Chapman said Clemson University is the biggest landholder on the route, though the more than 200 landowners will be notified of the upcoming meetings. Con-

sultants will be in town in mid-March, Chapman said, to bring backup material and data on the corridor.

Highway 123, also known as Clemson Boulevard for that particular stretch in Oconee County, cuts through county council districts 3 and 5.

The efforts of the com-

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mittee will not be duplicated in the county's comprehensive plan process, Chapman said, as some of the data and ideas can be used in both plans.

As for the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, the commission also spent time Monday editing and clarifying the strategies and goals for the future of the county. Members went nearly line-by-line to make sure the goals, objective and strategies were attainable and able to be implemented with the accountable agencies.

"I like this stuff in black and white because it's a reminder," planning commission member

Mike Johnson said.

Members stressed including every population in every corner of the county and utilizing connections with schools, municipalities, hospitals and nonprofits to accomplish the goals set in the plan.

But the meeting provided just the first round of edits and a good, hard look at the road map the commission is drawing for the next decade of the county's journey.

"This isn't the last time we'll look at this," Chapman said. "We can certainly revisit it over time."

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FILE

The Hartwell Village shopping center has brought added traffic to the U.S. Highway 123 corridor between Clemson and Seneca, and Oconee County officials have begun the process of trying to ease congestion and make access to businesses easier and safer along the highway.