

RED LOCKS TO PUT ON (E-Y-R)
Top Guns Mini-Storage, Salem
Beginning on June 14, 2019
Ending on June 14, 2019

The road ahead



SAVANNAH BLAKE | THE JOURNAL

With the public voicing concerns about CATbus stops and too many curb cuts without turning lanes, many ideas from the U.S. Highway 123 Corridor Study were presented to the Oconee County Planning Commission Monday night.

Highway 123 corridor plan heading to county council

BY CAITLIN HERRINGTON
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — After a discussion of priorities and feasibility, the Oconee County Planning Commission unanimously voted to send the U.S. Highway 123 Corridor Study as it was presented Monday night to the full council.

The study, presented by Kat Maines of Alta Planning and Design, offers several policy and infrastructure projects that could be implemented to relieve some of the vehicle traffic on the 5-mile section of Highway 123 between Seneca and Clemson.

Several members of the



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Oconee County Planning Commission member Stacy Lyles told Alta Planning and Design senior planner Kat Maines on Monday that proposals in the U.S. Highway 123 Corridor Plan would need to be prioritized, adding, for example, that a pedestrian tunnel under the railroad at the red light at Hartwell Village would only make foot traffic more dangerous without the proper sidewalks in place.

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public spoke about the project, noting the bridges across Lake Hartwell into Clemson will present congestion issues even if authorities widen the corridor to 20 lanes and that the state has some regulations in place already for limiting curb cuts. The commission wanted to be sure council saw the final version of the study and had an opportunity to offer feedback on it before moving forward with creating a hierarchy of recommended projects.

Maines said many of the recommendations presented in the study had to be mindful of restrictions along the corridor — namely topography and the parallel railroad. Many of the projects would also be “opportunistic,” she said, working to increase pedestrian traffic as development continues in Oconee County.

“Oconee County relies heavily on bridges for regional connectivity because it’s almost completely surrounded by water,” Maines said. “The Highway 123 bridge across Lake Hartwell to Clemson currently lacks accommodations for people on foot or bike.”

That connectivity to Clemson would potentially relieve congestion on the roadway itself, she

said, especially considering the shopping and new student housing options on Oconee’s eastern side.

“Clemson needs to be just as excited about this as anybody, because it’s going to lighten their traffic,” commissioner Mike Johnson said. “This is 5 miles of our entire county, but it impacts them greatly.”

Many of the projects link together, and commission member Stacy Lyles told Maines she was looking for a bit of a priority order for which should come first. A pedestrian tunnel under the railroad would only make foot traffic more dangerous without the proper sidewalks in place, she said.



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Alta Planning and Design senior planner Kat Maines, left, speaks with property owners and other concerned residents about the U.S. Highway 123 corridor between Seneca and Clemson at a March meeting.

The proposed utility easement greenway project would likely see people using the tunnel as well, commissioner Alex Vassey said, so the projects aren’t quite isolated.

“It all kind of ties together, but I don’t think you can do one without doing at least part of the others,” Vassey said.

Before presenting the sidewalks, multi-modal paths and larger greenway-type projects, Maines said she was “really overwhelmed with all of the great input” from the community during the planning process.

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