

Officials working on infrastructure for Dockside project

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — Infrastructure changes near Dockside, a proposed mixed-use, multi-story student housing and commercial project on Tiger Boulevard, are being studied.

"The plan is a full four-way signalized intersection, with the developer responsible for the cost," said Brent Little, president of Fountain Residential Partners. "The Holiday (Avenue) component will be expanded to three lanes with one in and one right out and one left out."

While a traffic study has taken place and provided to the city by Dockside as part of its submittals, Little said neither the study nor discussions with the South Carolina Department of Transportation included a current widening of U.S. Highway 123 just in front of the property. However, Little added, "The right of way is certainly there for the state to expand when and if they decide to do so."

The developer said the intersection must undergo a full design and permitting with the city and state DOT.

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"There is no disagreement with these agencies on what will happen there," he said.

Dockside has been criticized by Holiday Avenue residents, who are concerned about increased traffic, noise and accessibility as a result of the massive nature of the project. City Planning and Codes director Todd Steadman said he has heard that the DOT's inclination is to add a traffic signal, and perhaps a turn lane, at the intersection of U.S. Highway 123 and Holiday Avenue.

But Steadman pointed out "nothing definitive has been presented by the DOT."

"The final outcome of what will occur and who pays for it will be determined by the DOT based on what is actually approved and/or submitted for a building permit," Steadman said. "We are a little ahead of the game on that one since the project has not yet been approved. But conversations have been taking place."

While he said the final outcome is "up in the air," Steadman said DOT has indicated "if nothing else, a signal will be added at the intersection of Holiday Avenue and 123."

Little said that although he has heard people say the exit from Subway to Holiday Avenue most likely should have never been built since it was too close to the intersection, he added, "It may be over-blown. I don't know how

many times they have or will have cars backed up through their drive thru."

Elaine Masceri, coordinator of the Build a Better Clemson citizens group, said talk of a traffic signal, the widening of U.S. Highway 123 and a bypass of Clemson has been discussed by the developer and/or city council since the beginning of the process. But Masceri said she has learned a bypass is not a viable option due to the cost involved.

"Until there is a clear vision for what we want Clemson to look like, not today, not tomorrow, but 10 years from today, then there can't be a viable plan," Masceri said.

"Simply, there can be no plan without a vision under any responsible body and there can't be a vision without the proper studies being done for long-range development."

Masceri added that it isn't even definite if the DOT would allow a traffic signal at Holiday East/West, with the question of traffic backup to the bridge that is already a concern and could be even a greater concern. The group also is discussing seeking a variance to not allow a sidewalk to extend to the back of the property and, therefore, curtail students and or apartment residents from accessing the properties of the Holiday Avenue homeowners.

No word was given as to when the DOT would present a final version of the plan.