

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

## AGENDA

6:00 pm, Monday July 1st, 2019

Council Chambers - Oconee County administrative complex

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation by County Council Chaplain
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Public Comment for *Non-Agenda Items* (3 minutes per person)
5. Approval of minutes from 06172019
6. Staff update
7. Sign ordinance discussion
8. Comprehensive Plan
  - a. Public Comment (3 minutes per person)
  - b. Public Outreach update
  - c. Executive Summary update
  - d. Transportation element review
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Adjourn

Anyone wishing to submit written comments to the Planning Commission can send their comments to the Planning Department by mail or by emailing them to the email address below. Please Note: If you would like to receive a copy of the agenda via email please contact our office, or email us at [achapman@oconeesc.com](mailto:achapman@oconeesc.com).

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



TEL (864) 638-4218 FAX (864) 638-4168

## Minutes

6:00 pm, Monday, June 17, 2019

Council Chambers - Oconee County administrative complex

## Members Present

Gwen McPhail

Alex Vassey

Mike Johnson

Frankie Pearson

Mike Smith

Stacy Lyles

## Staff Present

Bill Huggins

Vivian Kompier

## Media Present

Caitlin Harrington - The Journal

1. **Call to Order - Mr. Pearson called the meeting to order at 5:59pm**
2. **Invocation by Stacy Lyles**
3. **Pledge of Allegiance**
4. **Public Comment for Non-Agenda Items (3 minutes per person)**  
Mr. Barnett reminded the commission that the Constitution keeps you out of trouble. He also stated that he believes the Corridor Plan will lead to zoning.
5. **Approval of minutes from 06032019**  
Mrs. McPhail made a motion to approve, Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The vote was 6-0 in favor to approve.
6. **Directive from Planning & Economic Development – skipped for more information.**
7. **Planning Commission mid-year report –**  
**Accomplishments:**
  - 1) Review Population, Housing, Natural Resources, and Cultural Resources Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - 2) Highway 123 Corridor Study.
  - 3) Successful Outreach meetings.
  - 4) 600+ surveys returned.
  - 5) Cooperation from media in getting information out.
  - 6) Sign ordinance.
  - 7) Text Amendments.
  - 8) Separation of Community Development and Planning Departments.
  - 9) Added the Agricultural Element to the Comprehensive Plan.

**Future Expectations:**

- 1) To do a traffic study on the Keowee School/South Cove intersection.

**Goals:**

- 1) Complete Comprehensive Plan by the November deadline.
- 2) 123 Corridor Plan to County Council.
- 3) Added Executive Summary to the Comprehensive Plan.

**Needs:**

- 1) More input from Council, Administration, and citizens.
- 2) To know how much the County is growing. (An update of the development applications)

**6. Comprehensive Plan 2030****a. Public Comment – Mr. Markovich pointed out:**

- 7-1 mentions that Oconee County was created in 1868, but that is incorrect, there were no counties, there were districts and Oconee was created from the Pickens District.
- 7-3 All jurisdictions must have (needs to be may have) planning commission.
- 7-3 The duty of the Planning Commission that tends to get overlooked is that all planning elements must be an expression and planning commission recommendations to the appropriate governing bodies with regard to the wise and efficient use of public funds. Also to consider is the physical impact of the property owners.
- 7-4 Mr. Markovich states that outside of water service area you're in a section of property that's being developed by a developer and the developer pays for those water lines and that cost gets built in. Also, Water treatment is primarily provided by 4 plants (not 2). Westminster and Pioneer need to be added.
- Table 7-2, Testi is spelled Tesi.
- 7-6 Developer pays it's not an extra cost. It is incorporated in the land price. Also slope has nothing to do with septic tanks.

**b. Public Outreach –**

- July 9, 2019 – 6pm - Mountain Rest Community Club, Verner Mill Rd. (near the Junction of Hwys 28 and 107) Mountain Rest, SC
- July 11, 2019 – 6pm - Salem Community Center/Town Hall, 5 Park Ave A, Salem, SC
- July 18, 2019 – 6pm - Westminster Depot, Main Street, Westminster, SC
- July 25, 2019 – 6pm - Fair Oak Youth Center, 150 Schoolhouse Rd. Westminster, SC

**c. Executive Summary –** Mr. Smith said the committee is working on a vision statement and rearranged some of the topics to get a better flow. They will also be outlining topics. This committee meets 30 minutes before the Planning Commission meeting and encourages anyone to sit in.

**d. Community Facilities element –**

- Ms. Lyles pointed out that on Table 7-8, Station 21 is not listed.
- There was discussion about adding a dropout rate or completion rate for County schools, maybe per high school.

- 7.1.1.1 – Mr. Smith made a motion to ask Alta to reword this to add “expand service and encourage collaboration to share their resources.” Mr. Vassey seconded and approved 6/0.
- 7.1.2.5 – Mr. Johnson made a motion to remove this Strategy, seconded by Ms. Lyles, Approved 6/0.
- 7.1.2.5 – Mr. Smith made a motion to add the Strategy “Encourage septic tank and leach field education” with Oconee County and SCDHEC as the Accountable Agencies. Seconded by Ms. McPhail. Approved 6/0.
- 7.1.3.2 – Mr. Smith made a motion to remove this strategy and make it the objective, with how and when being the Strategy. Mr. Smith seconded, Approved 6/0.
- 7.2.1 – Ms. McPhail made a motion to change the wording to Seek local, state, federal, and community funding... Mr. Johnson seconded, approved by all.
- 7.2.1.3 – Ms. Lyles made a motion to remove the words “and the location of schools” Mr. Johnson seconded, approved by all.
- 7.2.2.1 & 7.2.2.2 – A motion was made by Ms. McPhail, seconded by Ms. Lyles and approved by all to remove these two strategies.
- 7.2.2.3 – Ms. McPhail made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith and approved by all to add Municipalities to the Accountable Agency.
- 7.2.3.3 – Mr. Vassey made a motion to remove this Strategy, seconded by Ms. McPhail and approved by all.
- Add 7.2.3.8 – Ms. McPhail made a motion to add “Communicate frequently with the citizens of Oconee County about emergency plans.” with Oconee County as the Accountable Agency. Mr. Pearson seconded, approved 6/0.

**9. Old Business – None**

**10. New Business – None**

**11. Adjourn-** The meeting was adjourned at 7:27pm.



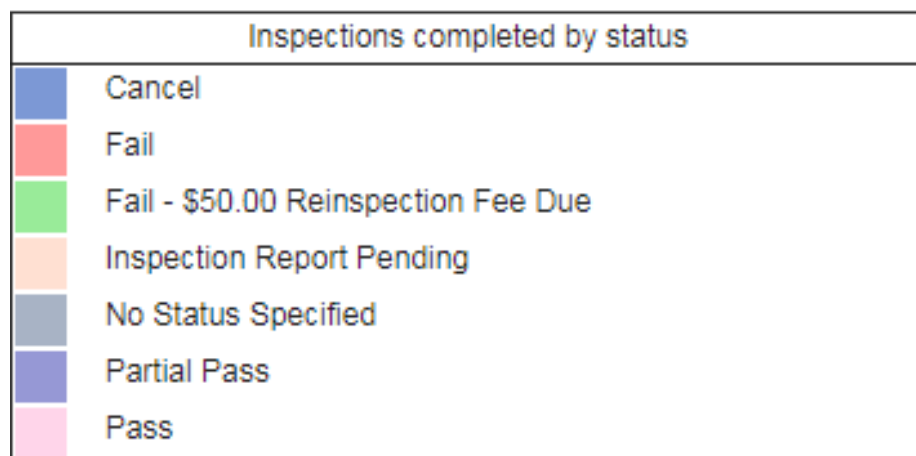
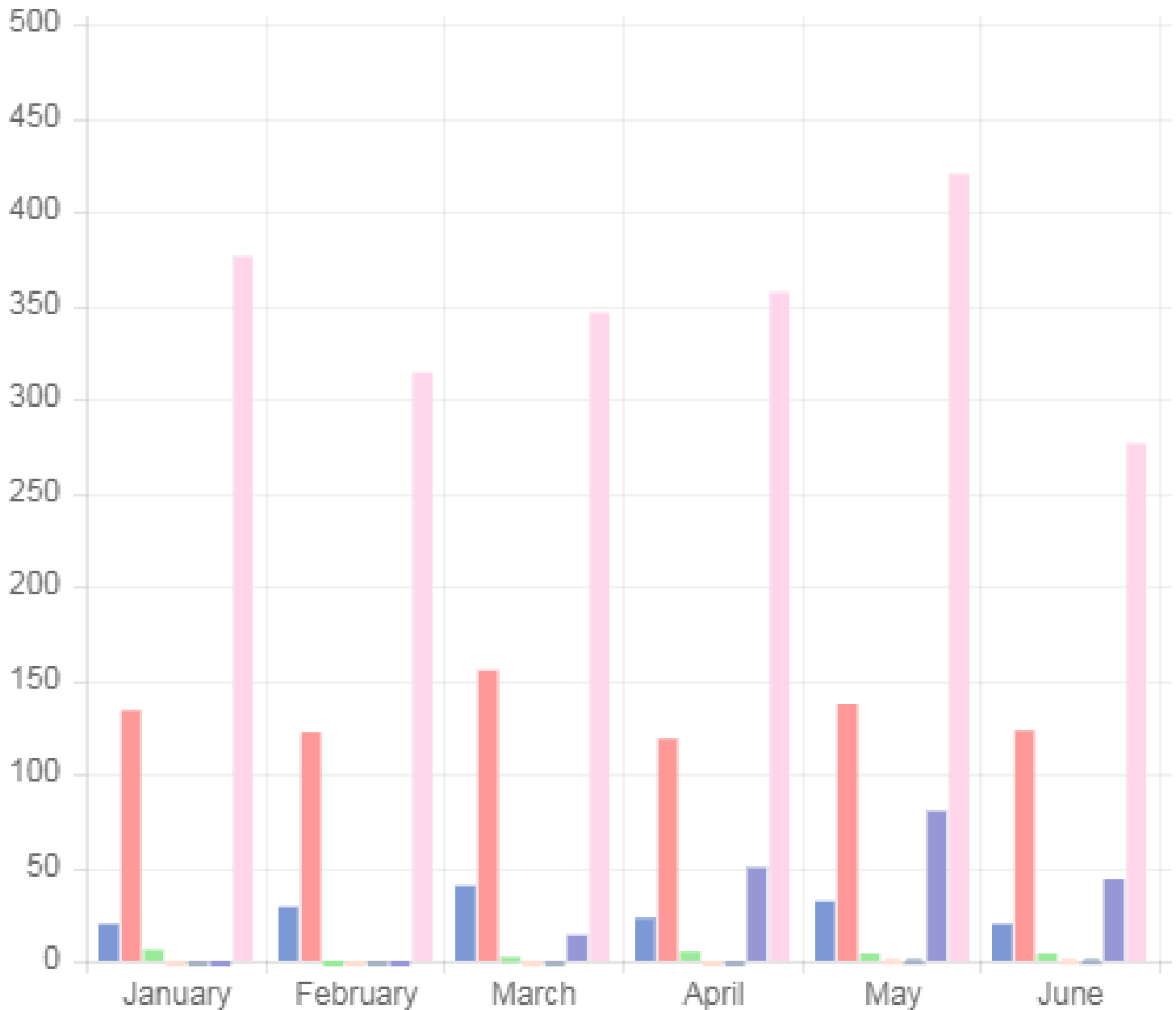
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# Inspections completed by status

Year:

2019





# YOUR OCONEE

Planning for the Future

The Comprehensive Plan is a state-mandated, 10-year plan for Oconee County. Your Oconee County government wants your input, on how the County should grow over the next 10-years.

The County has scheduled meetings in addition to the regular scheduled Planning Commission meetings. If you would like to be involved in planning how the County grows over the next 10-years please come and participate.

**9-July • 6 p.m.**

**Mountain Rest Community Club**

*Verner Mill Rd. (near the Junction of  
Hwys 28 and 107) Mountain Rest, SC*

**11-July • 6 p.m.**

**Salem Community Center/Town Hall**

*5 Park Ave A, Salem, SC*

**18-July • 6 p.m.**

**Westminster Depot**

*Main Street, Westminster, SC*

**25-July • 6 p.m.**

**Fair Oak Youth Center,**

*150 Schoolhouse Rd., Westminster, SC*

**For additional information contact:  
[planninginfo@oconeesc.com](mailto:planninginfo@oconeesc.com) or 864-364-5109**



The transportation-land use connection influences both land use and transportation planning. While the most significant role that transportation plays in land development is in providing access, transportation facilities serve as a critical element of the built environment, creating both connections and barriers. For instance, a high-volume, four-lane highway may connect key areas of a community for vehicular travel, but safety concerns can deter pedestrians who need to cross the highway to get to resources on the other side. Traffic congestion on a thoroughfare can also be a barrier, causing motorists to seek alternative routes through residential areas. An understanding of these relationships is critical to solving and even preventing transportation related problems such as congestion, higher energy consumption, impaired air quality, threats to public health and safety, and decreased access to services and employment.

Debate on the relationship between transportation and land use typically hinges on whether the transportation network should be planned to accommodate anticipated land uses and growth, or should the transportation network evolve organically to accommodate traffic generated by the location of land uses and subsequent growth patterns. Ideally, transportation networks should be planned to anticipate and accommodate future needs. However, funding for costly transportation infrastructure is limited, particularly at the local level, with resources focused on alleviating immediate problems such as congestion, road maintenance, and safety issues caused by increased traffic volume.

A transportation system is defined as any means used to move people and products. While roads comprise the majority of most transportation systems, they are not the only viable component. Effective transportation systems are broad, multi-modal networks that include options such as rail, air, shipping, public transit, cyclists, and pedestrians. The Transportation Element provides an analysis of transportation systems serving Oconee County including existing roads, planned or proposed major road improvements and new road construction, existing and proposed transit projects, and proposed and existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and projects.

## **A. ROAD NETWORK**

According to the *2017-2022 South Carolina Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)*, projected demand for travel in the State will continue to rise due to economic growth, as well as increases in the number of resident drivers and driving activity. While travel volume is generally highest on the Interstates, federal, and state highways and many local roads also experience traffic congestion and road wear associated with increased motor vehicle travel. An examination of the local road network will enable Oconee County to work with regional partners to plan for transportation needs for the coming decade, particularly as they relate to future land use.



## 1. Local Road Funding

The State of South Carolina's "C Program" is a partnership between SCDOT and the State's counties to fund location transportation projects and improvements to State, county, and city roads. Program funds, known as C-Funds, are derived from a 2.9925 cents per gallon user tax on gasoline sales. The tax is allocated to each of the 46 counties based on population, land area, and rural road mileage. The allocation per gallon will increase by 0.3325 cent per gallon each fiscal year through 2021, when it will reach a total of 3.99 cents per gallon. As part of the program, each county has a *County Transportation Committee (CTC)* with members appointed by the county legislative delegation. The three-member Oconee County Transportation Committee is responsible for the formation of a county transportation plan, and is empowered with the authority to select and approve projects to be funded utilizing C-Funds.

C-Funds may be used for construction, improvements, or maintenance on the State highway system; local paving or improvements to county roads; street and traffic signs; and other road and bridge projects. Resurfacing, sidewalk construction, and drainage improvements may also be paid for with C-Funds. By law, counties must spend at least 25 percent of C-Fund allocations on construction, improvements, and maintenance related to the state highway system, with the remaining 75% available for local transportation system projects. The FY 2018-2019 C-Fund apportionment for Oconee County was \$1,951,600 (*SCDOT, 2019*).

## 2. Road Naming and Addressing

The Oconee County Addressing Office administers the assignment of addresses, the naming of subdivisions, and road naming and renaming countywide per the requirements of the County's *Road Naming and Addressing Policy*. Road names and subdivision names must be submitted and approved by the Addressing Office before preliminary and final plat approval for all new developments.

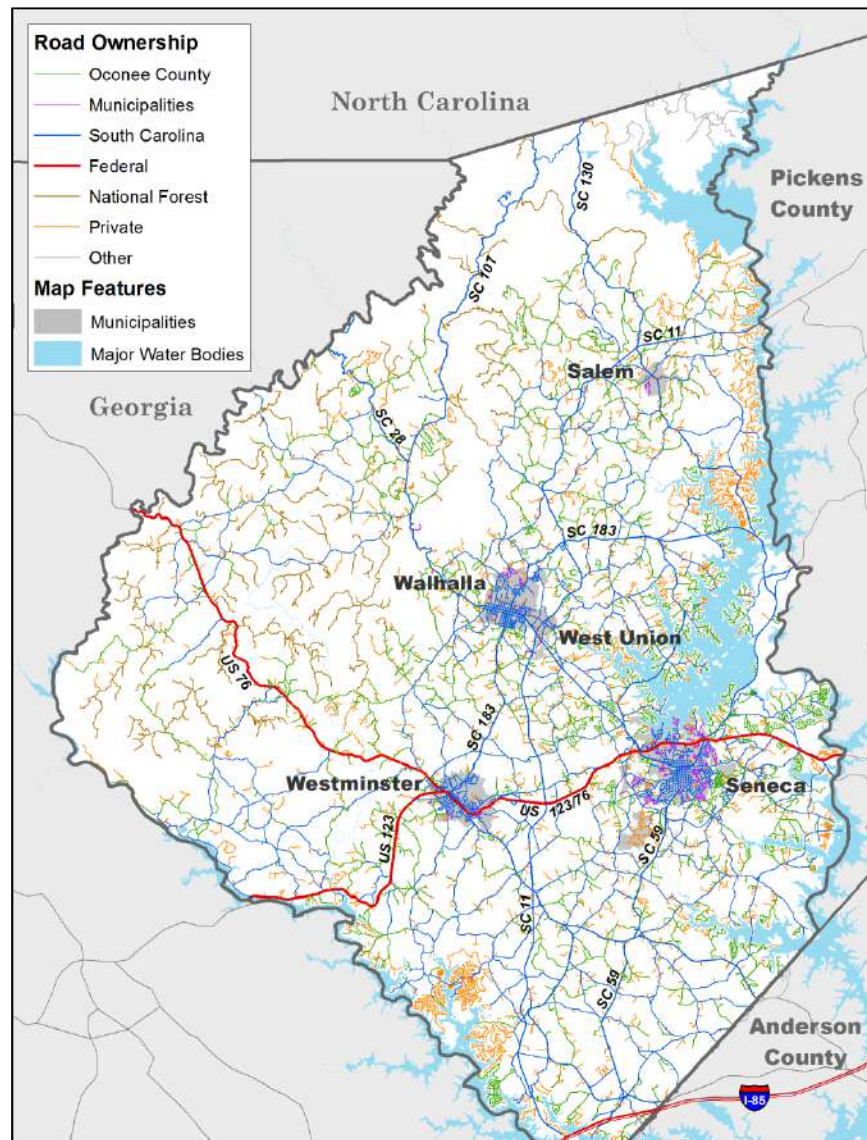
## 3. Road Network

There are more than 2,419 miles of roads within Oconee County. The County owns and maintains 659 of these road miles. The State of South Carolina maintains 830.9 miles of roads in the County that include 8.7 miles of Interstate 85, 44.2 miles of U.S. Highways, and 778 miles of primary and secondary State roads. The U.S. Forest Service maintains 189.5 miles of roads in the Sumter National Forest. Nearly 27.6 miles of road are maintained by municipalities, including 20.89 miles in Seneca, 4.21 miles in Walhalla, and 1.3 miles in Westminster. Less than one mile of road is maintained in both Salem and West Union. The remainder of roads in the County are privately owned and maintained. Several large residential developments own and maintain their road systems, including Foxwood Hills, Keowee Key, and Chickasaw Point. Map 9-1 illustrates road ownership in Oconee County.



The County’s Roads and Bridges Department has 35 employees divided into several different crews. The Arbor Crew trims and removes trees from rights-of-way, the Mowing Crew mows the rights-of-way, the Construction Crew builds new roads and upgrades existing roads, and the Asphalt Crew repairs potholes and patches and paves new and existing roads. The Pipe Crew installs and repairs culverts, the Maintenance Crew maintains the County’s gravel roads, and the Sign Crew installs and maintains street name and traffic signs.

Map 9-1. County Road Ownership, 2018



Source: Oconee County GIS Department, 2018

**4. Road Paving**

Maintaining dirt roads can be costly, while the return on investment for paving can take a number of years. However, the paving of dirt roads provides many benefits to residents as well



as local governments. Paving seals the road surface from rainfall, preventing erosion and protecting the base and sub-grade materials. It also eliminates dust, makes vehicular travel much smoother, and accommodates a wider range of vehicles such as tractor-trailers.

The life of a road, regardless of the surface, is affected by the number of vehicles and the weight of the vehicles using it. Generally, the more vehicles using a road, the faster it will deteriorate. For unpaved roads, heavy use can result in potholes, pronounced ruts, and washboarding that require more frequent road maintenance including scraping and resurfacing.

There are currently 705.5 miles of unpaved roads in Oconee County, representing 29.2% of the County’s total road miles. Oconee County owns and maintains 157.3 miles of these unpaved roads that comprise 23.9% of the road miles owned and maintained by the County. More than 48% of unpaved roads (339 miles) in the County are privately owned and maintained and 24.8% (174.7 miles) are in the Sumter National Forest and maintained by the U.S. Forest Service.

All new roads submitted for acceptance into the County public road system must be paved. Private unpaved roads are allowed in new developments, but must be constructed to County standards and must remain privately maintained.

## B. FUNCTIONAL ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Streets and roads serve two primary functions – to provide mobility and facilitate access to land. Optimally, the transportation network balances these two functions. On higher capacity roads such as interstates mobility is the primary function, while the primary function of local roads is to provide residential access. Between these two extremes, the level of mobility and access to land vary depending on the function of the network.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) defines functional classification as the process by which streets and highways are grouped according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Transportation planners and engineers classify roads based on FHWA and State criteria that consider the type of road and traffic volume. Streets and highways are grouped in four categories: freeways, arterials, collectors, and local roads (Table 9-1). The *Functional Classification Map* for Oconee County roads is shown in Map 9-2.

**Table 9-1. Functional Road Classifications**

Classification	Functional Purpose
Interstates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-lane divided roadways with no traffic signals to interrupt traffic flow</li> </ul>
Arterials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance</li> <li><i>Major arterials</i> are connected networks of continuous routes that serve corridor movements and high percentage of area population</li> <li><i>Minor arterials</i> form a network linking cities and larger towns as part of an integrated network, including arterials not classified as major and placing emphasis on land access</li> </ul>



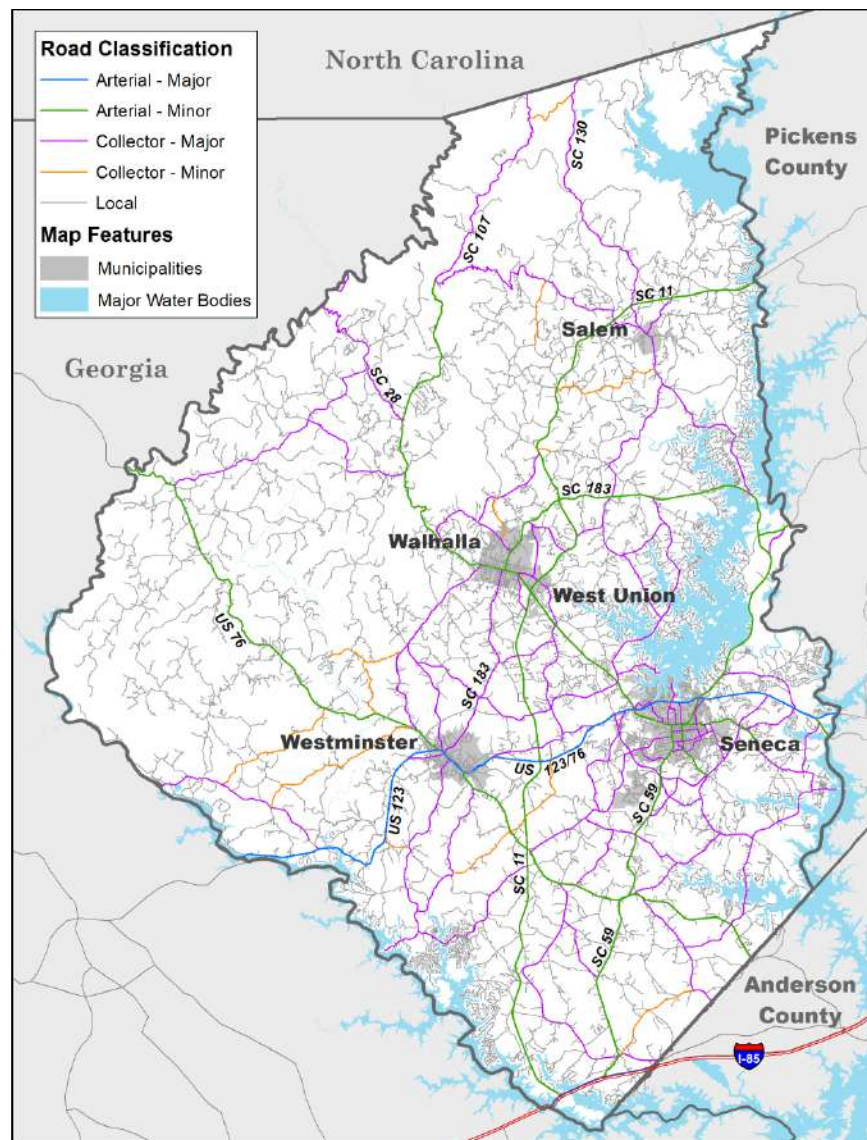


Table 9-1. Functional Road Classifications, *continued*

Classification	Functional Purpose
Collectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials, provides both access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial areas</li> <li>▪ <i>Major collectors</i> serve the more important travel corridors within a county</li> <li>▪ <i>Minor collectors</i> penetrate neighborhoods, distributing trips from arterial roads and collecting traffic from local streets</li> </ul>

Source: Federal Highway Administration, 2019

Map 9-2. Functional Road Classifications, 2018



Source: Oconee County GIS Department, 2018



### C. TRAFFIC COUNTS

Recent SCDOT traffic counts for the most traveled road segments in Oconee County are listed in Table 9-2 and illustrated in Map 9-3. The counts represent estimated 24-hour, two-way annual average daily traffic (AADT) and reflect seasonal and daily adjustments. Segments of Interstate 85 are the most traveled routes in the County, with AADT counts that range from 42,600 to 45,500. Traffic counts on segments of U.S. Highway 76 are also comparatively high, ranging from 11,200 to 26,300 on the Highway’s busiest segments. Segments of S.C. Highway 28 also posted high AADTs in 2017.

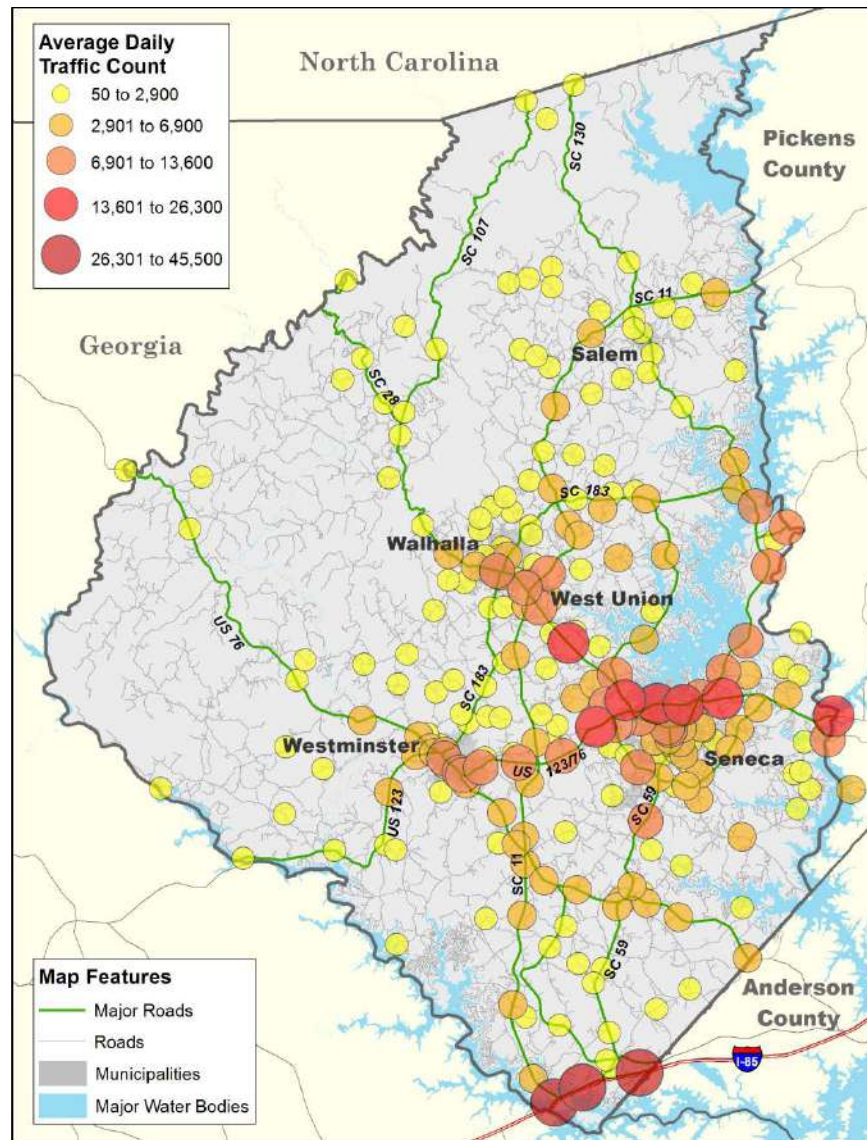
**Table 9-2. Oconee County Road Segments with Highest Average Daily Traffic Count (AADT), 2017**

Route	Station Number	Route Location	2017 AADT
I- 85	2261	State Line - Georgia to S.C. Hwy.11	45,500
	2263	S.C. Hwy. 11 to S.C. 59 (W. Fairplay Blvd.)	43,800
	2265	S.C. Hwy 59 (W. Fairplay Blvd.) to Old Dobbins Bridge Road (Anderson)	42,600
U.S. Hwy. 76	127	S.C. Hwy. 28 (Blue Ridge Blvd.) to N. Walnut Street	26,300
	129	N. Walnut Street to S.C. Hwy. 130 (Rochester Hwy.)	24,100
	133	Wells Hwy. to Pickens County Line	22,300
	131	S.C. Hwy. 130 (Rochester Hwy.) to Wells Hwy.	19,400
	125	Richland Road to S.C. Hwy. 28 (Blue Ridge Blvd.)	17,600
	123	S.C. Hwy. 11 to Richland Road	12,300
	115	Lucky Street to S.C. Hwy. 24 (West Oak Hwy.)	11,200
S.C. Hwy. 28	153	U.S. Hwy. 76 (U.S. Hwy.123 Bypass) to S.C. Hwy 188 (Keowee School Road)	20,200
	155	S.C. Hwy 188 (Keowee School Rd.) to Poplar Springs Road	16,200
	157	Poplar Springs Road to S.C. Hwy. 11	13,600
	159	S.C. Hwy. 11 to Poplar Springs Road	11,200
Wells Hwy.	389	U.S. Hwy. 76 (Sandifer Blvd.) to W. South 4th Street	12,200
	391	W. South 4 <sup>th</sup> Street to S.C. Hwy. 59 (S. Oak St.)	10,900
Sheep Farm Rd.	556	Bountyland Road to U.S. Hwy.76 (Sandifer Blvd.)	10,600
S.C. Hwy. 11	118	S.C. Hwy. 28 (Blue Ridge Blvd.) to W. Main Street	10,600
S.C. Hwy. 130	203	U.S. Hwy. 76 (Clemson Blvd.) to Old Clemson Hwy.	10,000
S.C. Hwy. 59	135	Earlestead Drive to U.S. Hwy. 76 (U.S. Hwy.123 Bypass)	10,000

Source: SCDOT, Average Daily Traffic Counts for Oconee County, 2017



Map 9-3. Average Daily Traffic Counts, 2017



Source: SCDOT, Average Daily Traffic Counts for Oconee County, 2017

### D. ROADWAY SAFETY

Traffic collisions are responsible for billions of dollars in economic losses in South Carolina each year in the form of property damage, medical costs, and lost productivity. Data compiled by the Office of Highway Safety of the S.C. Department of Public Safety (SCDPS) indicates a traffic collision occurs in the State every 3.7 minutes, with an injury due to a traffic crash occurring every 13.3 minutes. Every 9.5 hours one or more persons die in South Carolina due to injuries sustained in a traffic crash (*S.C. Traffic Collision Fact Book, 2017*).





There are 78,981 registered vehicles in Oconee County (*S.C. Traffic Collision Fact Book, 2017*). Among South Carolina's 46 counties, Oconee County ranked 24<sup>th</sup> highest in number of traffic collisions. The County ranked 25<sup>th</sup> highest in collisions resulting in injury and 21<sup>st</sup> highest in fatalities caused by traffic accidents in 2017. While only 1.4% of crashes resulted in fatalities, injuries were reported in more than one-third (37.5%) of collisions in the County.

There were 19 deaths as a result of traffic collisions in the County in 2017 – nine on State primary roads, five on secondary roads, three on U.S. primary roads and one each on I-85 and a county road (Table 9-3). Collisions were prevalent on S.C. primary roads and secondary roads in Oconee County, with a high number also reported on U.S. primary roads. Higher percentages indicate that collisions are more likely to occur on state primary roads in Oconee County than on such roads statewide.

**Table 9-3. Collisions by Route Type, 2017**

Road Type	Collision Type						Persons	
	Fatal		Injury		Total Collisions*		Killed	Injured
	#	%	#	#	%	#		
<b>Oconee County</b>								
Interstate	1	5.9%	4	1.2%	36	2.6%	1	6
U.S. Primary	3	17.6%	79	22.8%	321	23.5%	3	133
S.C. Primary	7	41.2%	108	31.2%	451	33.0%	9	151
Secondary	5	29.4%	134	38.7%	458	33.5%	5	188
County	1	5.9%	21	6.1%	97	7.1%	1	34
Ramp	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.0%	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>99.8%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>512</b>
<b>South Carolina</b>								
Interstate	96	10.4%	3,533	9.0%	16,428	11.6%	104	5,454
U.S. Primary	258	27.9%	11,071	28.1%	37,465	26.4%	277	17,713
S.C. Primary	233	25.2%	9,324	23.6%	31,910	22.5%	257	14,544
Secondary	292	31.6%	12,569	31.8%	42,850	30.2%	304	18,743
County	45	4.9%	2,865	7.3%	12,627	8.9%	46	3,974
Ramp	1	0.1%	104	0.3%	594	0.4%	1	138
<b>Totals</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>39,466</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>141,874</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>60,566</b>

\* Property Damage Only collisions are included in totals but are not listed separately  
 Source: S.C. Department of Public Safety, *South Carolina Traffic Collision Fact Book, 2017*

In 2018, the Oconee County Community Development Department prepared a *Roadway Collision and Fatality Research* report for the Oconee County Planning Commission that provides a statistical baseline. The report examines collision data from 2012 through 2017 and provides additional information that can be used in corridor planning, while examining approaches for mitigation of the causes of collisions such as driving too fast for conditions and driving under the influence. The companion report *County Wide Citation Data 2013-2017, Highway 76/123 Traffic Data 2006-2016* released in 2018 provides average annual daily trips





and citation information including top routes, days and times of issuance, and ticketed offences related to leading collision causes.

### E. COMMUTING PATTERNS

More than 71% of Oconee County workers aged 16 and over both live and work in the County, while nearly one-in-four commute outside of the County to work (Table 9-4). Among those that live in a town or city, only 4.1% or 7,137 workers, also work in the same town or city – a much lower percentage than statewide and nationwide at 16.2% and 31.5%, respectively.

Mean travel time to work for Oconee County workers is 24.7 minutes, similar to the commute time for workers statewide at 24.1 minutes, but slightly lower than commuters throughout the nation at 26.1 minutes (Table 9-4). Nearly one-third (31.1%) of Oconee County workers have a commute time of less than 15 minutes to work – a higher percentage than workers throughout South Carolina and the United States. Eight percent of County workers drive an hour or more to work.

**Table 9-4. Journey to Work, 2016**

<b>Workers 16 and Older</b>	<b>Oconee County</b>	<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Place of Work</b>			
Worked in Town or City of Residence	4.1%	16.2%	31.5%
Worked in County of Residence	71.1%	70.6%	72.4%
Worked Outside County of Residence	24.5%	24.1%	23.9%
Worked Outside State of Residence	4.4%	5.3%	3.7%
<b>Means of Transport to Work</b>			
Car, Truck or Van – Drove Alone	84.2%	82.8%	76.4%
Car, Truck or Van – Carpooled	10.0%	9.3%	9.3%
Public Transportation	0.7%	0.6%	5.1%
Walked	0.8%	2.2%	2.8%
Bicycle	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%
Other Means - Taxi, Motorcycle, etc.	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%
Worked at Home	3.3%	3.6%	4.6%
<b>Travel Time to Work</b>			
14 minutes or less	31.1%	27.3%	26.7%
15 - 29 minutes	39.0%	39.5%	36.3%
30 to 59 minutes	21.6%	27.5%	28.4%
60 or more minutes	8.1%	5.6%	8.7%
<b>Mean Travel Time to Work (minutes)</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>26.1</b>

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey*

Personal vehicles are the primary travel mode for most Oconee County residents. Only 1.5% of County workers bike, walk, or travel to work on public transportation. Among workers living in



Oconee County, 84.2% drive solo to work, while 10% participate in carpools. Only 3.3% of County workforce works at home, which is slightly lower than the statewide percentage of 3.6% and the national rate of 4.6%.

Geographic data on worker commuting patterns is provided in Table 9-5. Of the 7,870 Oconee County residents who travel outside the County for work, more than 45% commute to Pickens County employers, followed by workers commuting to Anderson (22.9%) and Greenville Counties (13.1%). These outgoing commuters offer a potential labor pool for new and expanding industries and businesses as additional or better job opportunities are created closer to home.

Nearly 6,580 workers from surrounding counties and nearby states travel to employers in Oconee County. Pickens County residents lead the influx of in-commuters at 42.4%, followed closely by workers from Anderson County at 31.3%. Table 9-5 lists the top counties of origin for workers commuting into Oconee County, as well as the destination of local commuters.

**Table 9-5. Top 10 Counties - Workers Commuting into/from Oconee County**

<u>Top 10 - Commuters into County</u>		<u>Top 10 - Commuters out of County</u>	
County of Residence	Commuters	County of Employment	Commuters
Pickens County, SC	2,786	Pickens County, SC	3,553
Anderson County, SC	2,061	Anderson County, SC	1,802
Greenville County, SC	491	Greenville County, SC	1,034
Stephens County, GA	183	Stephens County, GA	213
Spartanburg County, SC	101	Jackson County, NC	168
Franklin County, GA	84	Spartanburg County, SC	137
Jasper County, SC	74	Fulton County, GA	77
Abbeville County, SC	73	Rutherford County, NC	67
Hart County, GA	64	Bartholomew County, IN	61
<u>Tarrant County, TX</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>Cobb County, GA</u>	<u>59</u>
<b><u>Total all commuting into County</u></b>	<b><u>6,578</u></b>	<b><u>Total all commuting out of County</u></b>	<b><u>7,870</u></b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

## F. TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

### 1. Statewide Transportation Planning

The South Carolina *Department of Transportation Reform Bill (Act 114)* is intended to encourage sound infrastructure investment decisions made within the context of the statewide planning process. Specifically, *Act 114* requires SCDOT to establish a priority list of projects to be undertaken through the *Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)* and in consultation with metropolitan planning organizations using the following criteria:

- 1) Financial viability including a life-cycle analysis of estimated maintenance and repair costs over the expected life of the project;



- 2) Public safety;
- 3) Potential for economic development;
- 4) Traffic volume and congestion;
- 5) Truck traffic;
- 6) Pavement quality index;
- 7) Environmental impact;
- 8) Alternative transportation solutions; and
- 9) Consistency with local land use plans.

The 2017–2022 STIP is the State’s six-year transportation improvement plan for all projects and program areas that receive federal funding, including paving, bridges, upgrades, freight, safety, congestion mitigation, air quality, transportation alternatives, railroad crossings, planning, State Infrastructure Bank payments, preventative maintenance and operations, and public transportation. The STIP only includes projects for which there is committed funding available.

Planning for sound infrastructure is also a primary goal of the *South Carolina Priority Investment Act of 2007*. The *Priority Investment Act* amends *Section 6-29-1130* of the *South Carolina Code of Laws* and requires that local government comprehensive plans include a separate Transportation Element. The Act requires that the Transportation Element be developed in coordination with the Land Use element to ensure transportation efficiency for existing and planned development. The Act also requires comprehensive plans to include a Priority Investment Element, which must include an analysis of likely Federal, State and local funds available for public infrastructure and facilities, including transportation systems. The Priority Investment Element must also recommend projects for expenditure of these funds over the next ten years, with recommendations coordinated with adjacent and relevant jurisdictions and agencies.

## 2. Regional Transportation Planning

Transportation planning for Oconee County is provided by the ***Appalachian Council of Governments*** (ACOG). ACOG is responsible for conducting the rural transportation planning process for its six-county region in partnership with SCDOT. The primary responsibilities of all designated transportation planning agencies are to: 1) develop a *Long Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP), which is, at a minimum, a 25-year transportation vision for the metropolitan area; 2) develop a *Transportation Improvement Program* (TIP), which is the agreed-upon list of specific projects for which federal funds are anticipated; and 3) develop a *Rural Planning Work Program* (RPWP), which identifies in a single document the annual transportation planning activities that are to be undertaken in support of the goals, objectives, and actions established in the LRTP.

Input on transportation projects is provided through the ACOG public participation plan and by the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), which includes a representative from each county represented by ACOG, including Oconee County. The committee meets quarterly



or as needed to review project status, evaluate proposed modifications to the STIP, update the long-range plan and funding priorities, comment on rural functional classification changes, receive input on the rural work programs, and coordinate special studies. The RTAC forwards recommendations for program changes and project prioritization to the Policy Committee (ACOG Board of Directors), which includes six representatives from Oconee County, for final approval.

***a. ACOG Rural Long Range Transportation Plan 2040***

The Rural LRTP defines the regional goals for transportation, establishes existing and future transportation needs, and allocates projected revenue to transportation programs and projects that address these needs. The *ACOG Rural Long Range Transportation Plan 2040*, adopted in 2016, identifies a number of transportation improvement projects in Oconee County. Five intersection improvement projects are considered “fiscally constrained” with funding dependent on Guideshare program allocations. The regional LRTP also lists potential projects in Oconee County for which funding has not been identified. Included are six intersection improvement projects, three access management projects, four bridge improvement projects, eight road segments where the condition of the pavement is rated as “poor” and are in need of improvement, and two priority traffic signalization projects.

***b. ACOG 2017-2022 Rural Transportation Improvement Program***

The 2017-2022 *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)* for the ACOG region is a six-year program of transportation capital projects that includes a seven-year estimate of transit capital and maintenance requirements. While the TIP is updated as needed, and biennially at a minimum, amendments must go through a rigorous review by ACOG staff, the RTAC, and the public. The Plan must be financially constrained, meaning that the amount of funding programmed must not exceed the amount of available estimated funding. Specifically, the TIP identifies transportation improvement projects recommended for advancement during the program years that receive Federal Highway Administration or Federal Transit Administration funds and identifies the criteria and process for prioritization of projects in the TIP and any changes from past TIPs. The TIP also creates an implementation timeline for projects and includes realistic estimates of total costs and revenue for the program period.

The projects proposed by the TIP for each Council of Government (COG) or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) are evaluated and incorporated into the Statewide TIP by the SCDOT Commission. The 2017-2022 TIP for the Appalachian COG region was adopted in June 2016. Oconee County projects included in the TIP, including regional prioritization, are listed in Table 9-6. The funding source for all of these projects is the Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant program, with funding allocated by the SCDOT through the Guideshare program.



**Table 8-6. ACOG 2017-2022 TIP Oconee County Guideshare Projects**

Priority	Project Description	Budgeted Funds
<i>Intersection Improvements</i>		
1	U.S. Hwy. 123 (Clemson Blvd.) @ Davis Creek Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$300,000 in FY 2017 for planning, \$250,000 in FY 2018 for ROW acquisition, \$1 million in FY 2019 for construction</li> </ul>
6	S.C. 24 (West Oak Hwy.) @ S.C. Hwy. 182 (Oakway Road)/Oak Creek Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$500,000 in FY 2018 for planning, \$350,000 in FY 2020 for ROW acquisition, \$1.8 million in FY 2021 for construction</li> </ul>
8	S.C. Hwy. 59 @ S.C. Hwy. 182/S.C. 243	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$1 million in FY 2019 for planning, \$1 million in FY 2021 for ROW acquisition, \$2.5 million in FY 2022 for construction</li> </ul>
9	JP Stevens Road @ W. Cherry Road JP Stevens Road @ Martin Creek Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$500,000 in FY 2020 for planning, \$250,000 in 2022 for ROW acquisition</li> </ul>

Source: ACOG 2017-2022 Transportation Improvement Program, 2019

**c. ACOG 2020-2021 Rural Planning Work Program**

The *Rural Planning Work Program* (RPWP) identifies work program tasks and presents budget allocations for planning activities to be undertaken in the rural areas of the ACOG region. Tasks identified in the RPWP include planning for transportation projects in the rural portions of the region, coordination of human service transit activities, and coordination of projects with other regional transportation partners. The RPWP is updated annually and documents major transportation planning and related activities for the coming two fiscal years. The most recent RPWP for the Appalachian COG region was adopted in March 2019. The total two-year budget for the 2020-2021 RWTP is \$212,500, of which \$170,000 is expected to be provided by the SCDOT and \$42,500 by local match funding.

**G. TRANSPORTATION FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

Securing funding for needed transportation improvements is a top priority for South Carolina communities. Communities must seek alternative funding resources for much needed transportation projects including road maintenance, paving, bridge repair, transit, sidewalks, greenbelts, connecting trails, and traffic mitigation. The following sections discuss options available to local governments in the Palmetto State.

**1. SCDOT Transportation Alternative Program**

Oconee County and its municipalities are eligible for transportation enhancement funding under the *Transportation Alternative Program* (TAP), formerly known as the Transportation Enhancement Project Program, administered by SCDOT. TAP projects are federally-funded,



community-based projects that provide opportunities for local governments to pursue non-traditional transportation related activities such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities and pedestrian streetscaping projects that might not otherwise be possible.

The TAP grant program provides funding on a reimbursement basis as part of the Federal-aid Highway Program funded through the FAST initiative. Costs are eligible for reimbursement only after a project has been approved by the State Department of Transportation or a Metropolitan Planning Organization and the FHWA division office. Eligible project areas authorized in FAST for the Transportation Alternatives Program and the SCDOT Commission include pedestrian and bicycle facilities and streetscaping projects. Eligible costs include preliminary and final engineering work such as project development, environmental work, cost estimates, construction plans, utility relocations, construction engineering, construction costs, and right-of-way acquisition. TAP funds generally account for 80% of the total project cost, with local governments required to provide a 20% match.

Available SCDOT program funding is provided in two population-based divisions. Urbanized areas with a population of more than 200,000, also known as a Transportation Management Area (TMA), are eligible to compete for a share of more than \$2.9 million designated for urbanized areas of the State. Areas of the State with a population greater than 5,000 other than urban areas have a designated funding pool of more than \$1.8 million. The SCDOT has also designated \$2.6 million for areas with a population of less than 5,000. Oconee County and the City of Seneca, with populations of 73,375 and 8,228, respectively, are currently eligible in the second category, while the County's other municipalities are eligible under the third category.

Projects proposed by governmental bodies located in areas outside of Transportation Management Areas, such as Oconee County and its municipalities, are considered under the statewide program, with distribution of funds determined by the SCDOT Commission. Such projects are limited to a maximum of \$400,000.

## **2. One Percent (Penny) Sales Tax**

*Section 4-37-30* of the *South Carolina Code of Laws* empowers counties to levy, by ordinance, a special sales and use tax as a source of revenue for highways, roads, streets, bridges, mass transit systems, greenbelts, and other transportation-related facilities including, but not limited to, drainage relating to highways, roads, streets, bridges, and other transportation-related projects. The one percent tax equates to an additional penny on every dollar spent. The public must approve the tax through a referendum. The key advantage to such a tax is that out-of-county workers and residents and tourists who shop in the receiving county also contribute to the tax revenues through their purchases, helping to offset the costs of roads and other facilities.

Under the legislation, counties that implement a one cent sales tax must share the proceeds with their municipalities using a formula based on population and must specify a period of time





to collect a set amount of money for the identified projects (not to exceed 25 years or the length of payment for the specified projects). Implementing counties must appoint a commission to consider proposals for funding capital projects and formulate the referendum question for public vote. In addition to funding transportation facilities, revenue from the one cent tax may also be used for civic, educational, and cultural facilities; water and sewer projects; flood control and storm water projects; and dredging, dewatering, and constructing spoil sites.

A number of South Carolina counties have implemented a one percent sales tax to address capital projects and transportation needs in recent years. Voters in other counties have rejected one percent tax plans, including in Oconee County where voters most recently rejected a proposed one percent sales tax in 2014.

### 3. Exactions

An exaction is a form of land use regulation that requires a developer to donate something for the public good in exchange for the right to develop property. By sharing the cost with new residents, exactions aid in protecting the community from the costs of providing additional infrastructure associated with growth. Exactions provide a way for jurisdictions to pass a portion of the cost of public facilities on to a developer at the time the development begins, rather than later through the collection of tax revenues or service charges from new residents. Exactions are formal cost-sharing agreements between the developer and the local government to fund the additional community infrastructure needed to serve the new development.

Several types of exactions may be used by local governments for transportation facilities. A **dedication** requires that a developer donate land or facilities for public use. For example, a developer may be required to dedicate land for use as a trail or greenway for the residents of the development and connection to existing or future facilities outside of the development. A **fee-in-lieu** requires the developer to pay a fee instead of providing a public facility on-site. For example, the developer can choose to pay a fee rather than dedicate land for an on-site greenway or trail. This type of exaction provides greater flexibility to local governments to place facilities where they are most needed and appropriate. **Impact fees** are scheduled charges applied to new development to generate revenue for the construction or expansion of capital facilities located off-site of the new development, but that benefit the contributing development.

The *1999 South Carolina Development Impact Fee Act (SC Code § 6-1-910, et seq.)* allows counties and municipalities to impose by ordinance a requirement for payment of development impact fees by a land developer as a condition of development approval. The Act defines a development impact fee as “a payment of money imposed as a condition of development to pay for a proportionate share of the cost of system improvements needed to serve the people utilizing the improvements.” System improvements are capital improvements to public facilities which are designed to provide service to a defined service area. Public facilities include water,

wastewater, solid waste and stormwater services, roads, public safety, street lighting, capital equipment, and parks and recreation. Impact fee amounts must be based on actual improvement costs or reasonable estimates of the costs. The process for adopting an impact fee ordinance begins with a resolution by council that directs the planning commission to conduct the necessary studies and recommend an ordinance developed in accordance with the *Impact Fee Act*. The Act requires detailed calculations to determine impact fees, maximum impact fees, and the developer's proportionate share.

Several court cases have provided guidance in establishing exactions that are reasonable and defensible. First, there must be an "essential nexus," or reasonable connection, between the infrastructure need and the new development (*Nollan v. California Coastal Commission, 1987*). Essential nexus extends to the establishment of a reasonable connection between the expenditure of the fee collected and the benefits received by the development. Second, there must be a "rough proportionality" in both the nature and extent of the exaction and the impact of the proposed development (*Dolan v. Tigard, 2005*).

## H. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Affordable and reliable transportation is a necessity for all residents. However, the lower incomes and limited mobility experienced by many special needs populations can magnify the importance of affordable and reliable transit options to maintain employment, receive support services, and access health care and other needed support programs.

Public transit is provided in a number of ways in South Carolina communities. **Fixed-route transit service** uses passenger vehicles operating on fixed routes and schedules. **Route deviation services** operate as conventional fixed-route bus services that allow buses to deviate from the route alignment to serve destinations within a prescribed distance of the route. Passengers use the service by calling to request a pickup, or by telling the bus operator if they need to be taken off-route. A **demand response service** is a transit mode that includes passenger cars, vans, or small buses that operate in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who dispatches a vehicle to pick up the passengers and transport them to their destinations. The vehicles generally do not operate over a fixed-route or on a fixed schedule and may be dispatched to pick up several passengers at different pick-up points before taking them to their respective destinations.

### 1. Clemson Area Transit

**Clemson Area Transit** (CAT) provides public transportation in Oconee County. The fare-free service is provided by Clemson University, the City of Clemson, the Town of Central, the Town of Pendleton, the City of Seneca, SCDOT, and the Federal Transit Administration (*Clemson Area Transit, 2019*). The **CATbus** system includes three routes that provide service along U.S. Highway 123 to destinations in the City of Seneca (Map 9-4). The *Seneca Business* and *Residential* routes operate Monday through Friday from 6:20 a.m. to 6:20 p.m. and the *Seneca*



Express runs Monday through Friday from 5:45 a.m. to 6:25 p.m. In addition to the Seneca routes, the CAT system provides service to destinations in the City of Clemson, Clemson University, Tri-County Technical College, Southern Wesleyan University, the Towns of Central and Pendleton, and Anderson County.

CATbus service in Oconee County is provided through an intergovernmental agreement between the Cities of Clemson and Seneca. Similar agreements are also in place between Clemson and Tri-County Technical College, Southern Wesleyan University, and the Towns of Central and Pendleton.

CAT operates an all-electric bus fleet, including four zero-emission transit buses and charging stations at Norton Thompson Park and at Oconee Memorial Hospital that serve the Seneca area. The City of Seneca was recently awarded a \$1.45 million *Low or No Emission Bus Program* grant from the Federal Transit Administration to purchase two additional electric buses that will enable expansion of bus service in Oconee County. Discussions are underway on new or expanded routes to be served by these new buses.

All CAT buses are equipped to accommodate persons with disabilities. The system also operates a fixed-route deviation service within three-quarters of a mile of its fixed-routes with curb-to-curb service for persons with disabilities. Requests for this service must be made 24 hours in advance.

Map 9-4. CAT Bus Routes in Oconee County



Source: Clemson Area Transit, 2019

2. Senior Solutions



**Senior Solutions** provides transportation options for Oconee County seniors and their spouses under age 60 and for dependents with disabilities. Pick-up and delivery services are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to non-emergency medical appointments, the Oconee Senior Center, and daily errands such as trips to the grocery store and pharmacy. Handicap-accessible vehicles are available as needed. Reservations for Senior Solutions transportation services must be made three days in advance by calling the agency's Oconee County Transportation Office.

## I. BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN

Well-designed systems of walkways and trails can provide residents with safe, inexpensive transportation alternatives to access jobs, education, and services. Alternative modes of travel can also help to improve air quality and reduce energy use. According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey, 246 Oconee County residents reported walking to work and 299 reported traveling to work by taxi, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means.

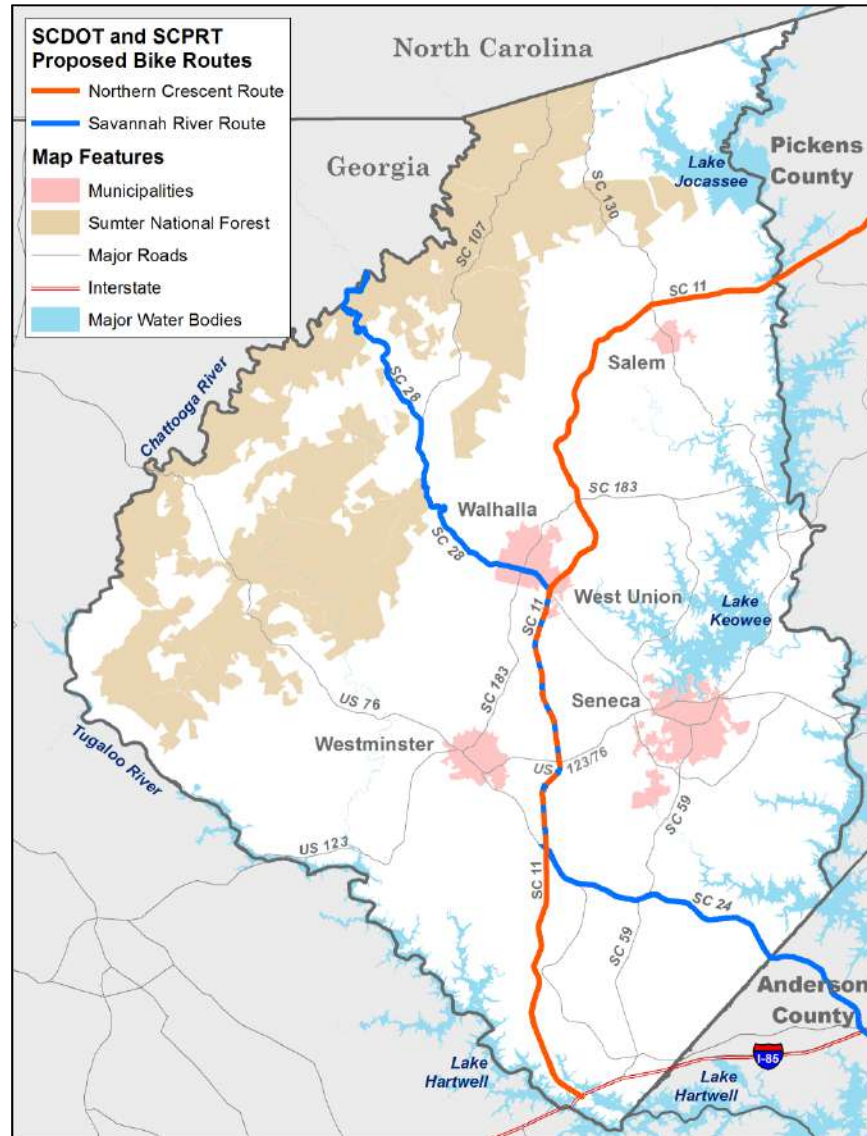
Information provided by SCDHEC lists multiple benefits of cycling or walking to destinations. In addition to reduced (or no) transportation cost, health benefits include a reduced risk of cancer, diabetes, stroke, and heart attack, along with weight loss and control (*Benefits of Alternative Transportation, 2010*). The sedentary lifestyle of Americans is largely attributed to the fact that "walking and cycling have been replaced by automobile travel for all but the shortest distances" (*Journal of the American Medical Association, October 1999*).

As detailed in the Natural Resources Element, there are nearly 193 miles of trails in Oconee County. Most of these trails provide access to parks or natural resources such as water bodies or scenic views or opportunities for hiking or mountain biking. However, very few outside of the County's municipalities provide linkages between residential areas and destinations such as work, shopping, entertainment, recreation, or other residential areas. Dedicated bike lanes are also very limited in the County, with cyclists generally competing with motorized vehicles when traveling public roads. However, there is an increasing interest in providing travel options in Oconee County. The Oconee County *Highway 123 Corridor Study and Plan* currently under development will include pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjacent and regional amenities and services with features such as sidewalks, street furniture, lighting, and cross walks intended to make the corridor a more friendly, safe, and inviting environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

The S.C. Departments of Transportation and Parks, Recreation and Tourism have jointly proposed two bicycle touring routes through Oconee County (Map 9-5). However, these routes are not currently designed for bicycle touring and may not include bike lanes. In Oconee County, the *Savannah River Route* follows S.C. Highway 28 from the northern Georgia border through Mountain Rest to Walhalla, then south along S.C. Highway 11 to I-85. The entire 286-mile route generally parallels the course of the Savannah River from the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the coastal community of Beaufort. The Northern Crescent Route begins at

the Pickens County border and follows S.C. Highway 11 west through the Salem and Tamassee areas, then south to West Union before heading east on S.C. Highway 24 to I-85. The entire 360-mile route runs just south of the North Carolina border to the City of North Myrtle Beach.

Map 9-5. SCDOT and SCPRT Proposed Bicycle Routes in Oconee County



Source: SCDOT, 2019

## J. AIRPORTS

Aviation services for Oconee County and the surrounding area are available at the **Oconee County Regional Airport** (CEU) on Airport Road in Seneca (Map 9-6). The Airport is owned and operated by Oconee County. CEU has a 5,000 feet by 100 feet paved runway with a precision



GPS instrument approach and a non-precision GPS instrument approach. The Airport is home to 75 aircraft, with the ability to host up to 75 transient aircraft with ramp and tie-down spaces. It is home to the Clemson University Flight Department and Clemson Flying Club and is popular with hobby flyers, Clemson football fans flying in for games, and with corporate executives traveling to nearby facilities. Available services include aircraft maintenance, rental car services, fueling services, pilot lounge, WIFI, full kitchen, conference room, and weather and flight planning room.

The **Greenville-Spartanburg Airport** (GSP) is located approximately 60 miles and an hour west of Seneca and Walhalla. GSP serves more than 2.3 million passengers and ships 60,000 tons of cargo annually through six major passenger carriers and numerous freight carriers (*Greenville-Spartanburg Airport, 2019*). GSP offers an average of 50 non-stop flights to 19 destinations and is the site of a 120,000 square foot FedEx facility. Air operations are conducted on an 11,001 feet x 150 feet runway. The GSP terminal has 322,446 square feet of space, including third level jet bridge boarding and 13 departure gates. Listed as one of the nation's top 100 commercial service airports, GSP continues to expand to meet growing demand. Recent expansion and renovation of the terminal increased capacity to 4 million passengers per year and completion of a new cargo terminal is expected in mid-2019 (*Upstate Business Journal, 2019*).

The **Hartsville-Jackson Atlanta International Airport** (ATL) is approximately 124 miles and a two hour drive from Seneca and Walhalla. ATL is the busiest and most efficient airport in the world, offering nonstop service to more than 150 domestic and 75 international destinations. The terminal complex is more than 6.8 million square feet in size, with seven concourses that include 152 domestic and 40 international gates. Air operations are conducted on five runways with lengths that range from 9,000 feet to 12,390 feet. The Airport is a primary hub for Delta Air Lines and a focus location for many other carriers, serving an average of 275,000 passengers daily. ATL is also a major cargo hub, with three cargo complexes with total space equaling 1.3 million square feet and an adjoining Foreign Trade Zone to reduce operating costs associated with international trade.

## K. RAIL AND SHIPPING

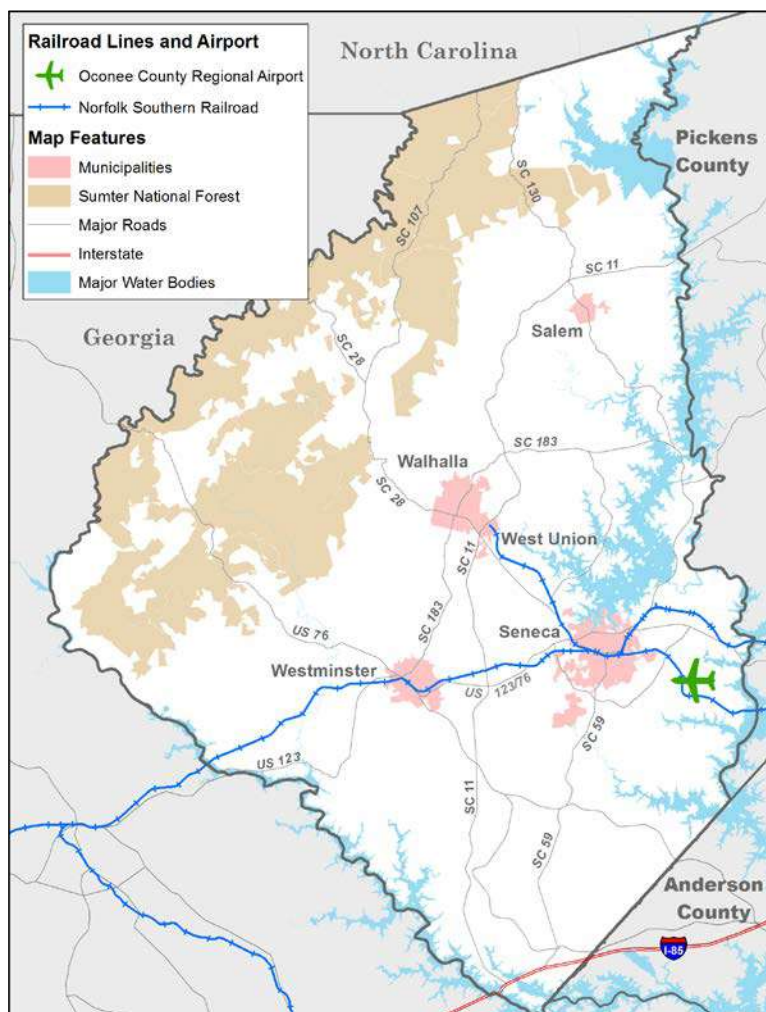
In today's global economy, commercial transportation is critical to a region's potential for business and industrial development. Time sensitive transportation services are increasingly important to gaining a competitive advantage in manufacturing and service-based industries. Transportation options for the mass transport of passengers are also growing in importance, as travelers seek alternatives to individual automobile travel, whether for short commutes or long trips. Convenient and efficient connectivity to areas nationwide and overseas is attractive to businesses and industries. This option is an incentive for economic development and also contributes to the quality of life for area residents.

### 1. Railroads



The **Norfolk Southern Railway** provides freight rail service in Oconee County. As shown in Map 9-6, the Norfolk Southern rail line bisects the County from east to west, traveling through Westminster and Seneca, with a spur also running north to Walhalla. Norfolk Southern is the second largest carrier in South Carolina, with 679 miles of rail that account for 30% of the State’s rail system (*S.C. Statewide Rail Plan, 2014*). The railroad operates a total of 21,500 route miles in 22 states, connecting Oconee County to Greenville, Columbia, Greer, Spartanburg, and Charleston in South Carolina; Augusta and Atlanta in Georgia; and Charlotte, North Carolina and beyond. Access to Amtrak passenger rail service is available nearby in the City of Clemson.

**Map 9-6. Railroad Lines and Airport**



Source: SCDOT, 2019

Railroad safety is an important issue in transportation planning. There have been only two railway accidents reported in Oconee County in the past decade (*FRA Office of Safety, 2019*). In 2016, a freight train struck a vehicle at a crossing near Seneca, with no injuries reported. An Amtrak passenger train struck a large tree near Seneca in 2017, with no injuries reported.

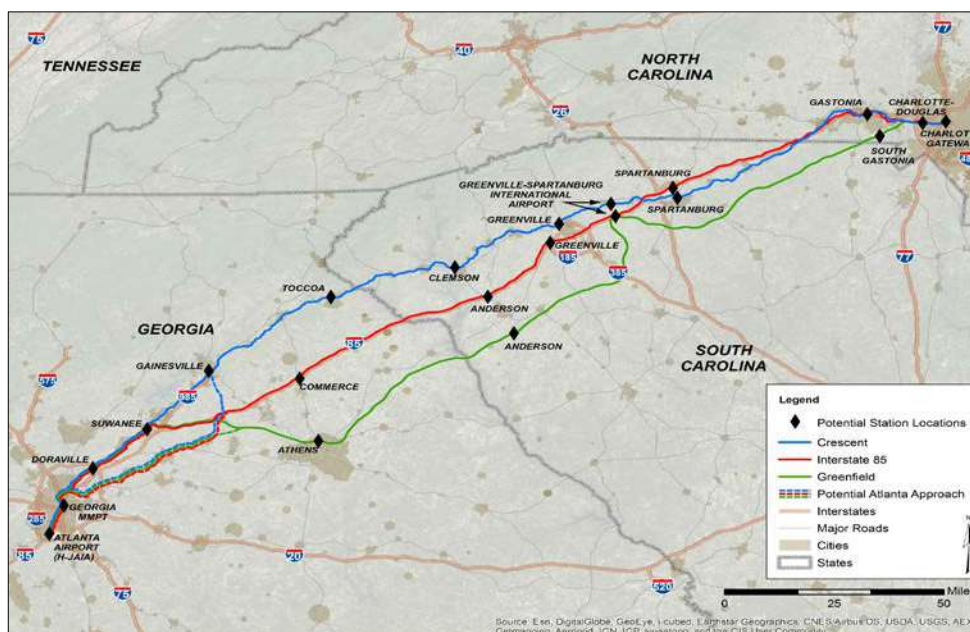
**a. High Speed Rail**



The *Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan* is a study to improve passenger rail service between the cities of Atlanta, Georgia and Charlotte, North Carolina (*Georgia Department of Transportation, 2019*). The Plan is part of the Southeast High Speed Rail corridor (SEHSR) passenger rail initiative by the Federal Railroad Administration. The corridor extends to four major sections – Atlanta to Charlotte, Charlotte to Raleigh, Raleigh to Richmond, and Richmond to Washington, D.C.

As illustrated in Map 9-7, the SEHSR Corridor Investment Plan identified three alternatives for the Atlanta to Charlotte Passenger Rail Corridor. Two of the alternatives, the Crescent and Interstate 85, are proposed to travel directly through Oconee County, with a stop in Clemson proposed for the Crescent alternative and one in Anderson for the I-85 option. The Crescent alternative would share use with the Norfolk Southern rail line, while the I-85 alternative would predominantly use the I-85 right-of-way. The Crescent alternative would share use with the Norfolk Southern rail line, while the I-85 alternative would predominantly use the I-85 right-of-way. The first tier of the planning process has been completed, with the I-85 alternative ranking highest among the six reviewed, followed closely by the Crescent option. During the second phase (tier II) of the project, analysis will include greater detail on potential environmental impacts for the three alternatives.

**Map 9-7. Atlanta to Charlotte Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan Route Alternatives**



Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, 2019

## 2. Trucking

Truck transport “is a cornerstone to the national freight transportation system,” with trucks transporting 70% of all the tonnage in the United States to and from rail, water and air transportation hubs and providing direct service between destinations for the transport of goods and materials (*South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan, 2017*). Lower operating costs and a



higher level of service customization can make shipping by truck a cost effective and attractive alternative to shipping by rail or air. Truck movements in South Carolina totaled 300.6 million tons valued at \$506.2 billion in 2011. Primary freight corridors include the State's five interstates, with major U.S. and State highways also accommodating significant freight flows.

Oconee County's strategic location along I-85 provides attractive intermodal freight network access for existing and prospective industries. The section of I-85 within Oconee County was used to transport between 25 and 50 million tons of freight in 2011. The portion of U.S. Highway 123 from Pickens County to Westminster was used to transport from one to five million tons of freight and as much as 1 million tons of freight was transported on other major federal and state roads in Oconee County including U.S. Highway 76 and S.C. Highways 107 and 76 during 2011.

### 3. Ports

The South Carolina Legislature established the *South Carolina Ports Authority (SCPA)* in 1942. SCPA facilities handled 2.3 million containers at its seaport terminals in Charleston and Georgetown and the inland port in Greer in 2018, a 6.4% increase in volume from the previous year (*SCPA, 2019*). The SCPA and the State of South Carolina and other agencies and partners are investing \$2.4 billion in port-related infrastructure in the coming decade.

Port service for Oconee County is available within five hours southeast (255 miles) through the Port of Charleston – one of the busiest container ports along the Southeast and Gulf coasts and the fastest growing major port in the nation. The Port consistently ranks among the top ten container ports nationwide and ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in dollar value of goods handled in 2017.

The infrastructure plan for Charleston includes construction of the new 286-acre Hugh H. Leatherman, Sr. container terminal, with completion of a significant portion of the anticipated work in 2021. While the Port currently has the deepest channels in the region, dredging is underway by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to deepen the Charleston Harbor channel from 45 feet to 52 feet, a move that will make the Port even more attractive to freight carriers as the deepest port on the eastern coast.

South Carolina's first Inland Port opened in 2013 less than an hour east of Oconee County in Greer. The Inland ports extend the Port of Charleston's reach by providing an inland area connected by rail from which goods could be distributed to the Southeast. Norfolk Southern serves the inland port through its main rail line and the facility is positioned along the Interstate 85 corridor between Charlotte and Atlanta, where Norfolk Southern operates additional rail yards. Rail service maximizes tonnage moved per gallon of fuel for importers and exporters, helping them save costs and lower their carbon footprint. The Port serviced 13 top shipping container lines and 117,812 containers in FY 2017-2018 – a growth rate of 28.5% over the previous fiscal year (*S.C. Ports Authority, 2019*). The Greer Inland Port adds an additional benefit – access to empty containers – for regional shippers, who can send trucks to Greer for



the containers they need to move their goods. The Greer Inland Port recently received a \$25 million grant to expand terminal capacity and allow for additional storage and processing tracks. The SCPA opened a second inland port in Dillon in April 2018. This facility is served by CSX railroad.

**Note: GOIS are coded for ease of review**

- **Black text is directly from the current comprehensive plan**
- **Blue text was developed per input from focus group meetings**
- **Red text was developed by consultants to address issues in background data and to add/tweak language as needed**
- **Time frames in yellow cells should be added by staff and PC**

**L. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The goals, objectives and strategies for implementation (GOIS) table summarizes the actions that will be undertaken in the coming decade to achieve to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the Transportation Element.

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion
<b>Goal 9.1. Plan the location and development of transportation infrastructure to accommodate present and future needs.</b>		
<b>Objective 9.1.1. Develop and implement plans to guide decision-making on transportation issues.</b>		
Strategy 9.1.1.1. Continue regional coordination with the Appalachian COG, municipalities and neighboring counties, and other public and private agencies in matters related to transportation, transit planning, and prioritization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• ACOG</li> <li>• Neighboring Counties</li> <li>• Related Public and Private Organizations</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.1.1.2. Commission studies for transportation corridors to examine conditions, seek multi-modal options, increase safety, optimize travel times and access to residential, commercial, recreation, and other essential services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> <li>• ACOG</li> <li>• SCDOT</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.1.1.3. Implement commissioned and in-house studies, in-part or completely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>	
<b>Goal 9.2. Upgrade and maintain the County road system in a manner that meets the needs of the growing population and provides safe and efficient routes through the County.</b>		
<b>Objective 9.2.1. Meet current and future need for quality transportation facilities throughout the County.</b>		
Strategy 9.2.1.1. Acquire and allocate C-funds and leverage in-kind resources to maintain and enhance the County road network and supporting infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• SCDOT</li> <li>• County Transportation Committee</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.2.1.2. Develop ongoing systematic road maintenance and upgrade program based on steady revenue sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>	XXXX
Strategy 9.2.1.3. Maintain a priority road upgrade list that addresses existing traffic "bottlenecks" and other traffic issues and reasonably anticipates issues expected to emerge in the coming decade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.2.1.4. Explore and adopt appropriate traffic management tools and techniques available through land use regulation that utilize concepts such as limiting the number of curb cuts in high traffic areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> </ul>	XXXX
Strategy 9.2.1.5. Prioritize evaluation of all roads within identified potential primary-development areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• Municipalities</li> </ul>	On-going





Strategy 9.2.1.6. Continue to require developers to provide traffic studies to determine if a road must be upgraded to safely handle increased traffic loads and to cover the cost of such road upgrades.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.2.1.7. Enhance communication with local and State departments of transportation on current and proposed projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.2.1.8. Upgrade County roads that were built prior to current standards and align roads that pose safety hazards , if feasible:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>	On-going
<b>Goal 9.3. Provide a safe, efficient, and accessible multi-modal transportation system.</b>		
<b>Objective 9.3.1. Provide and maintain a safe, efficient, and interconnected roadway network.</b>		
Strategy 9.3.1.1. Encourage connected street systems within new developments and between new and existing developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.3.1.2. Explore incentives or requirements that increase the connectivity of local, connector, and arterial components of the County's roadway network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Developers</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.3.1.3. <del>Seek funding to install an electric vehicle charging station near I-85. Examine the need and feasibility of providing alternative-fuel stations at relevant County owned properties.</del>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>ACOG</li> </ul>	XXXX

Goals/Objectives/Strategies	Accountable Agencies	Time Frame for Completion
<b>Objective 9.3.2. Provide and maintain adequate, safe, and accessible trails, sidewalks and bicycle lanes in appropriate areas to promote alternative modes of travel by residents and visitors and to promote ecotourism opportunities.</b>		
Strategy 9.3.2.1. Provide and encourage pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between existing and planned residential, parks and recreation areas, trails, public facilities, and commercial and industrial uses that will enable alternative transportation opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Developers</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Trail and Park Providers</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.3.2.2. Develop standards that encourage developers to incorporate sidewalks and bicycle trails and lanes into residential developments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>	XXXX
Strategy 9.3.2.3. Seek funding opportunities to create nature trails, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and other facilities designed to make communities more walkable, reduce vehicular traffic, and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>SCPRT</li> <li>Community Partners</li> </ul>	On-going
<b>Objective 9.3.3. Continue to evaluate and fund public transportation in urbanizing areas of Oconee County, expanding as needed to provide for ongoing growth and development.</b>		
Strategy 9.3.3.1. Promote and assist in the establishment of commuter parking lots to encourage ride sharing and decrease traffic congestion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.3.3.2. Continue to partner with Clemson Area Transit to provide existing service levels, while exploring opportunities to expand modes of public transportation such as van services and other non-traditional forms of mass transit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Clemson Area Transit</li> <li>Community Partners</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.3.3.3. Seek and secure methods of expanding public transportation in remote areas for clients of facilities such as SCDSS, hospitals, medical complexes, government facilities, and parks and recreation facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Clemson Area Transit</li> <li>Community Partners</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.3.3.4. Evaluate environmental and economic impacts and explore efforts to establish high-speed rail through the County, including rail stops in Clemson, SC and Toccoa, Georgia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Neighboring Counties</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.3.3.5. Seek and establish appropriate methods of mass transit that will promote and enhance tourism such as water taxis, tour boats, and other modes that allow tourists and residents to enjoy natural resources without substantial traffic increases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit Oconee SC</li> <li>Parks, Recreation and Tourism Commission</li> <li>Oconee County</li> </ul>	On-going
Strategy 9.3.3.6. Support municipalities in their efforts to establish public transportation, while seeking options to expand service into unincorporated areas of the County as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oconee County</li> <li>Clemson Area Transit</li> <li>Municipalities</li> <li>Community Partners</li> </ul>	On-going



<p><u>Strategy 9.3.3.7. Identify locations for new bus stops and add as needed, with clear identification of bus stops for pedestrians, motorists, and bus drivers. Work with public transportation providers to increase their rideshare and coverage to impact as many potential riders as possible.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oconee County</li> <li>• City of Seneca</li> <li>• Clemson Area Transit</li> </ul>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><b>Goal 9.4. Provide a state-of-the-art regional airport for residents, businesses and industries, and visitors to the County and region.</b></p>		
<p><b>Objective 9.4.1. Continue upgrades to the Oconee County Regional Airport in a manner that serves existing clientele and establishes the facility as one of the premier small airports in the nation.</b></p>		
<p><u>Strategy 9.2.4.2. Complete planned upgrades, including relocation of roads, strengthening of runway, and other necessary improvements as funding becomes available.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aeronautics Commission</li> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>	<p>XXXX</p>
<p><u>Strategy 9.2.4.3. Construct additional hanger space as needed to accommodate anticipated demand.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aeronautics Commission</li> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 9.2.4.4. Develop an on-going capital improvements program aimed at upgrading the Airport facilities to attract use by additional employers and potential occupants of the business parks in the County.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aeronautics Commission</li> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 9.2.4.5. Seek and establish ways to utilize the Airport to foster partnerships with Clemson University in areas such as hanger lease agreements and facility use agreements.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aeronautics Commission</li> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 9.2.4.6. Identify Federal and State funds for investment in airport enhancements.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aeronautics Commission</li> <li>• Oconee County</li> </ul>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><u>Strategy 9.2.4.7. Seek public/private partnerships to fund airport operations and expansions.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Aeronautics Commission</u></li> <li>• <u>Oconee County</u></li> </ul>	<p><u>On-going</u></p>
<p></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p></p>

