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## Meeting agenda March 15, 2021

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1. Call to order
2. Invocation
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Public comment for non-agenda items  
(4-minutes per person)
5. Commission member comment
6. Approval of minutes: 03/01/2021
7. Entertainment & Recreation – Guest speakers
8. Housing challenges in Oconee County report
9. 2010-2020 Oconee County collision report
10. Planning Commission schedule amendment
11. Planning Commission meeting time discussion
12. Staff comments
13. Adjourn

## Oconee County Planning Commission

### When & Where

5PM

Monday March 15th, 2021

Council Chambers

415 South Pine Street

Walhalla, S.C.

### Alternative participation

**YouTube:** "YourOconee"

**Zoom:** 888-475-4499 or 877-853-5257 and entering meeting ID # 828 4377 0168

**Radio:** F.M. 92.3 (within 500' of Council Chambers)

### Staff contact

846-638-4218

[planninginfo@oconeesc.com](mailto:planninginfo@oconeesc.com)

### LIMITED IN-PERSON

### ATTENDANCE

### PERMITTED

Due to the Novel Coronavirus pandemic and the ongoing state of emergency, in-person attendance at this Commission meeting by members of the general public will be limited. Attendance will be limited to twenty percent of the stated maximum occupancy, which equates to thirty-four (34) persons (including Council members, other elected officials, and staff). Attendees will be required to sit in designated seats, appropriately spaced. In-person attendance will be allowed on a "first-come" basis.

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

## **LIMITED IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE PERMITTED**

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*Additionally, to ensure the meeting otherwise remains open to the public, we will continue to broadcast it live on the County's YouTube channel, which can be found via the County's website at [Oconeesc.com](http://Oconeesc.com). Further, the public may call in and listen by dialing **888-475-4499 OR 877-853-5257** and entering meeting ID # **828 4377 0168**. And, individuals parked in close proximity to Council Chambers may listen to the meeting on FM 92.3.*

## **Minutes**

5:00 pm- Thursday, March 1, 2021

Council Chambers - Oconee County Administrative Complex

### **Members Present**

Frankie Pearson  
Mike Smith  
Dave Nix  
Alex Vassey  
Mike Johnson  
Gary Gaulin  
Pat Williams

### **Staff Present**

Adam Chapman  
Vivian Kompier

### **Media Present**

Lauren Pierce

1. Call to Order – Mr. Smith called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.
2. Invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Public Comment for non-agenda items – None
5. Commission member comment – Mr. Smith asked the Commission members to please save the list of the 2021 to do list for future reference. We will work through these strategies and priorities that we've set we will have to replace them.
6. Approval of minutes: 02/01/2021 – Mr. Johnson made a motion to accept the minutes with two changes. 1) #8 to read Mr. Pearson made a motion to send a letter to the Sheriff through County Council" 2) Mr. Gaulin changing the wording from recusing to abstained. Mr. Pearson seconded and was approved 7/0.
- ~~7. Public Hearing for ordinance 2021-06  
"AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 32 OF THE OCONEE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES, IN CERTAIN LIMITED REGARDS AND PARTICULARS ONLY, REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TRAFFIC CORRIDOR DESIGN STANDARDS, AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO."  
(Recalled by County Council on 2/16/2021)~~
8. Housing discussion – Guest speakers: David Gully & Brad Kisker.

Mr. Gully explained that there a few obstacles that come up when thinking about workforce or starter housing and they are regulations, sewer and topography.

Mr. Kisker mentioned that developers can't seem to come here to develop because the income is too low.

Mr. Smith made a motion to direct staff to collect the information received and develop a report.

Seconded by Mr. Gaulin and approved 7/0.

9. I-85 Overlay discussion – Mr. Gaulin made a motion to ask staff to:

- 1) Further identify safety/traffic issues, as they relate to the overall duties and interests of the Oconee County Planning Commission, including the identification of and contact information for stakeholders.
- 2) Research broad strategies of possible solutions.
- 3) Identify solution in tight of ways and outside of right of ways.
- 4) Update/report essential findings with valuable details and recommendations to the Oconee County Planning Commission within an acceptable time frame.

Mr. Nix seconded the motion and was approved 7/0.

10. Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 5:45pm.

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

## Challenges to Affordable and Attainable housing in Oconee County

*The Oconee County Planning Commission requested speakers from various entities that operate housing related businesses to speak during Commission meetings. The Oconee County Planning Commission sincerely thanks the following individuals for sharing their knowledge and time with the Commission:*

*Lauren Richardson, Our Daily Rest*

*Jon Goyert, Oconee County Habitat for Humanity*

*David Gully, Oconee County Home Builder's Association*

*Brad Kisker, Oconee County Home Builder's Association*

*Chris Eleazer, Oconee Joint Regional Sewer Authority*

**Abstract:** The primary limitations for construction of new developments that provide Affordable and Attainable housing in Oconee County are the topographical constraints, lower than average median household income, and the availability of critical infrastructure services. Regardless of the fluctuations in the market for real estate, labor, and building materials the ability of developers to make any density driven housing project financially viable is directly correlated to the ability of the market to bear the rental or mortgage costs, costs associated with site preparation and the availability of critical infrastructure.

**Issue:** The lack of housing in the County that is both Affordable and Attainable as well as located in areas with fundamental amenities such as shopping, jobs, and schools is a primary contributing factor for sprawl and the cycle-of-poverty that many of our citizens are stuck in. Home owners County wide pay an average of 21.1% of income on mortgages. Renters, County wide pay an average of 31.5% on rent. Approximately 1,904 home owners (8.5% of all homeowners) and 1,975 renters (23.7% of all renters) spend more than 50% of household income on housing costs. (Source: U.S. Census 2018 American Community Survey)

### **Definitions:**

*Affordable housing:* Less than 30% of income spent on housing  
(Source: Department of Housing & Urban Development)

*Attainable housing:* Nonsubsidized, for-sale housing that is affordable to households with incomes between 80 and 120 percent of the area median income (AMI).  
(Source: Urban & Land Institute / Brookings Institute)

**Examples:** Using the definitions for Affordable and Attainable, the data in Table 1 indicates AMI across different Census tracts in the County and what Affordable and Attainable housing costs should look like in these areas. Countywide, the AMI is \$46,056 with a range of \$30,919-\$60,632 per year.

Table 1

Area Median Income (AMI)	Affordable rent or mortgage	Attainable housing cost (purchase price)
\$30,000	\$750/month, \$9,000/year	\$24,000-36,000
\$46,056	\$1,151/month, \$13,816/year	\$36,844-55,267
\$60,000	\$1,500/month, \$18,000/year	\$48,000-72,000

**Housing:** The availability of housing stock in Oconee County has plummeted recently in reaction to the attraction of the area for retirees from other states, proliferation of short-term rental properties, increase of property values, costs of building materials, and high-demand / short-supply of home builders.

Housing issues mean different things to different people. The growing number of homeless in Oconee County have a unique perspective on what a house means to them. A house to a homeless person is another chance at life and another chance to hope. A reduction in rental or mortgage costs to those almost 4,000 families that spend more than 50% of their income on housing means a chance to better themselves and their families, be more than a paycheck away from financial hardship, and raise themselves out of the cycle-of-poverty. A reduction in rent or mortgage for those who are not “burdened” by excessive housing costs creates opportunities to invest and distribute their disposable incomes around the County and region.

While there is not one individual factor to pin all housing issues for all housing types on, when focusing on Affordable and Attainable housing in the County a lower AMI, topography, and the availability of critical infrastructure are major constraints.

The AMI is an indicator to developers how they can price their product on the market. If that market price does not support their financial goals, they won’t build. Oconee County has very little in the way of land-use and density restrictions when compared with other jurisdictions. Approximately 88% of the County is Control-Free District which has no usage or density limitations. Where the local government provides very few hurdles, mother nature does. The elevation in the County ranges 554’ above mean sea level (MSL) to 2,064’ MSL. Topography for a developer is a major consideration for construction. Costs associated with grading, filling, storm water planning, design and build of infrastructure are all amplified as the grade of a property increases. In order to build with economies of scale, developers need to put as many dwellings on a piece of property as they can. Certain infrastructure is required to make Affordable and Attainable housing viable, including sewer. A lack of wide-reaching sewer service is good in certain regards. The density becomes focused on the cities instead of sprawling out. This helps keep the rural areas rural and the cost of roads, police, fire, and emergency services lower. The

creation of Affordable and Attainable housing in rural portions of the County is hampered by the lack of a robust sewer system.

**Next steps:** As the three main constraints – AMI, topography, and infrastructure– have been identified the next step is creating an action plan to address these items. The state of South Carolina’s AMI is \$56,227 while Oconee County’s AMI is \$46,056. Working on goals to raise the AMI to meet or exceed the state average through economic development and other methods would address the issue. While the County can do little about its topography, addressing any governmental constraints or regulations related to topography could be of benefit to developers and the County. When looking at infrastructure such as sewer, creating a long term plan to not just run sewer anywhere but to strategically place the sewer and regulate the land-use in places that sewer serves could address both sprawl and Affordable and Attainable housing.



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## Roadway collisions, injuries, and fatalities in Oconee County 2010-2020

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Data source : S.C. Department of Public Safety

Maps : Oconee County G.I.S.

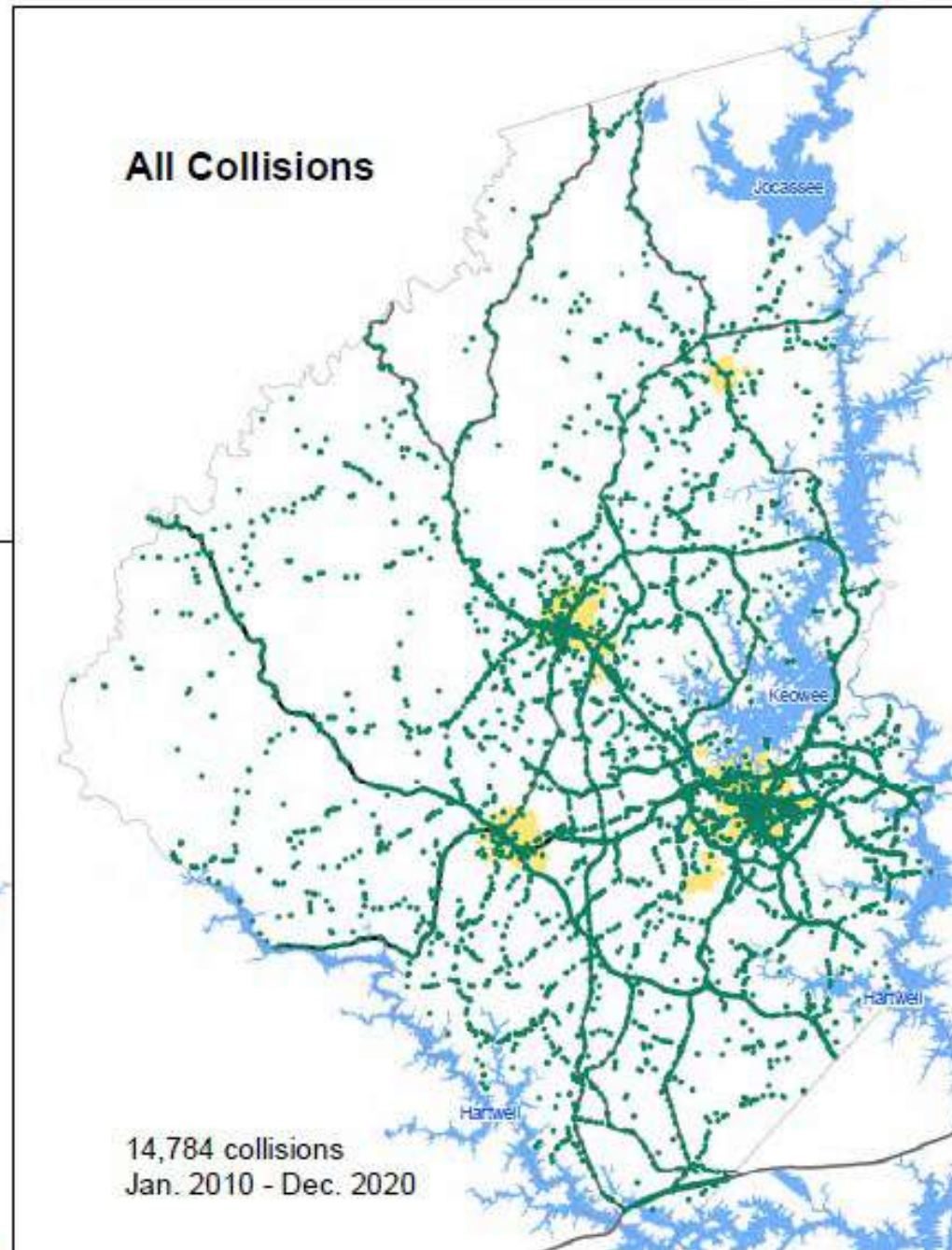
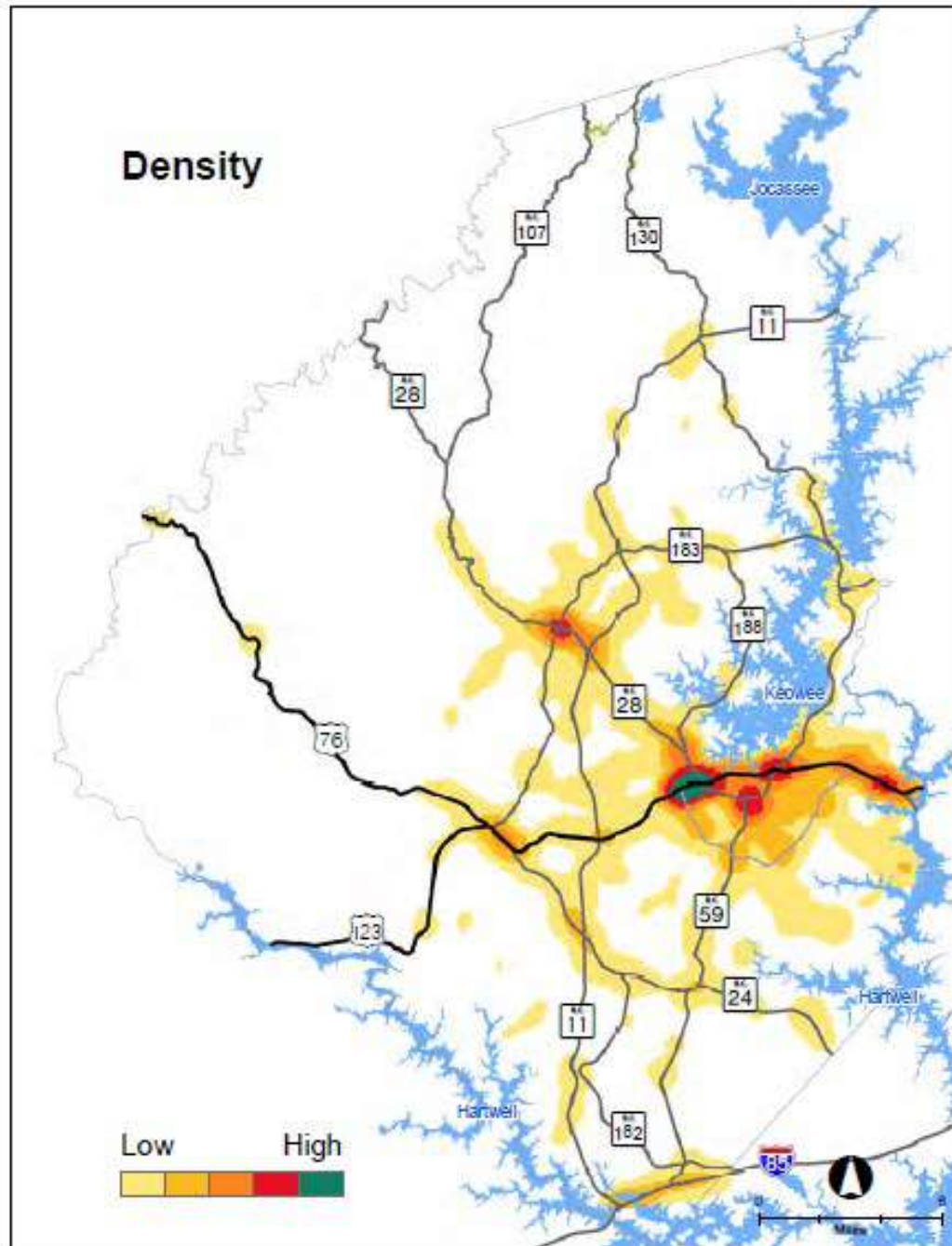
# Oconee County

## 2010-2020 Collision mapping

Data source : S.C. Department of Public Safety



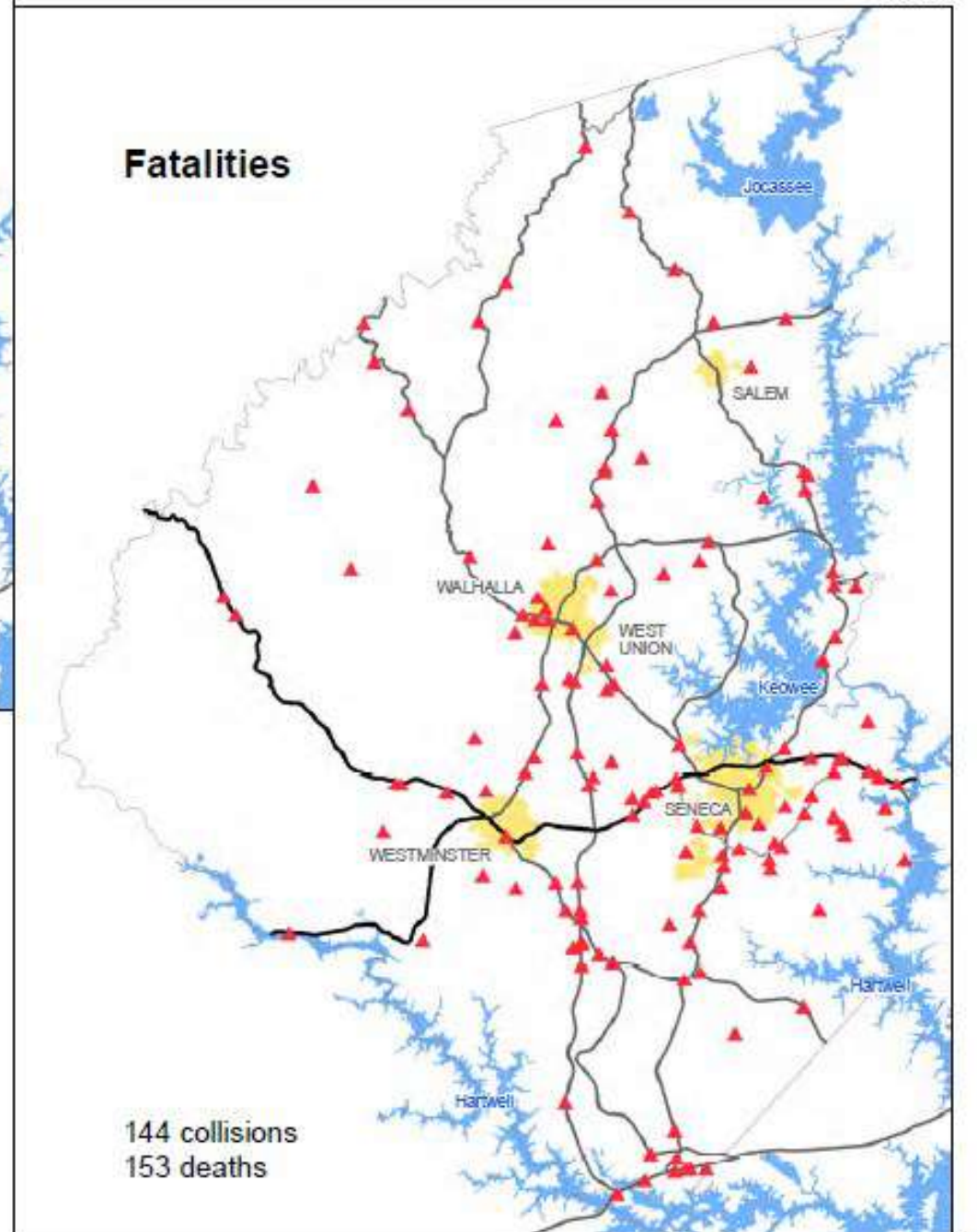
OCSGIS  
Feb 2021



Day of Week	Count	%
Sunday	1,454	9.8%
Monday	2,157	14.6%
Tuesday	2,270	15.3%
Wednesday	2,156	14.6%
Thursday	2,344	15.9%
Friday	2,532	17.1%
Saturday	1,871	12.7%

Time of Day	Count	%
midnight - 6 am	1,188	8.0%
6 am - noon	3,914	26.5%
noon - 6 pm	6,674	45.1%
6 pm - midnight	3,008	20.4%





# Primary contributing factors for collisions



2010-2020

## 5,733 collisions with injuries

Primary contributing factor by percent

Driving too fast for conditions	34%
Failure to yield right of way	22%
Driving under the influence	9%

## 144 fatal collisions

Primary contributing factor by percent

Driving under the influence	27%
Driving too fast for conditions	23%
Wrong side/ Wrong way	11%

## 14,784 Total collisions

Primary contributing factor by percent

Driving too fast for conditions	36%
Failure to yield right of way	19%
Driving under the influence	6%



## Per collision cost analysis average

(Source: US Dept. of Transportation 2015)

Property, medical, and lost productivity costs

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Death/fatal injury cost \$9,400,000

Incapacitating/serious injury cost \$650,000

Non-capacitating injury cost \$130,000

Possible injury/complaint of injury cost \$68,000

Property Damage Only cost \$6,500



## Per collision cost analysis average applied to Oconee County 2010-2020

(Source: US Dept. of Transportation 2015)

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Death/fatal injury cost  $\$9,400,000 \times 144 = \$1,353,600,000$

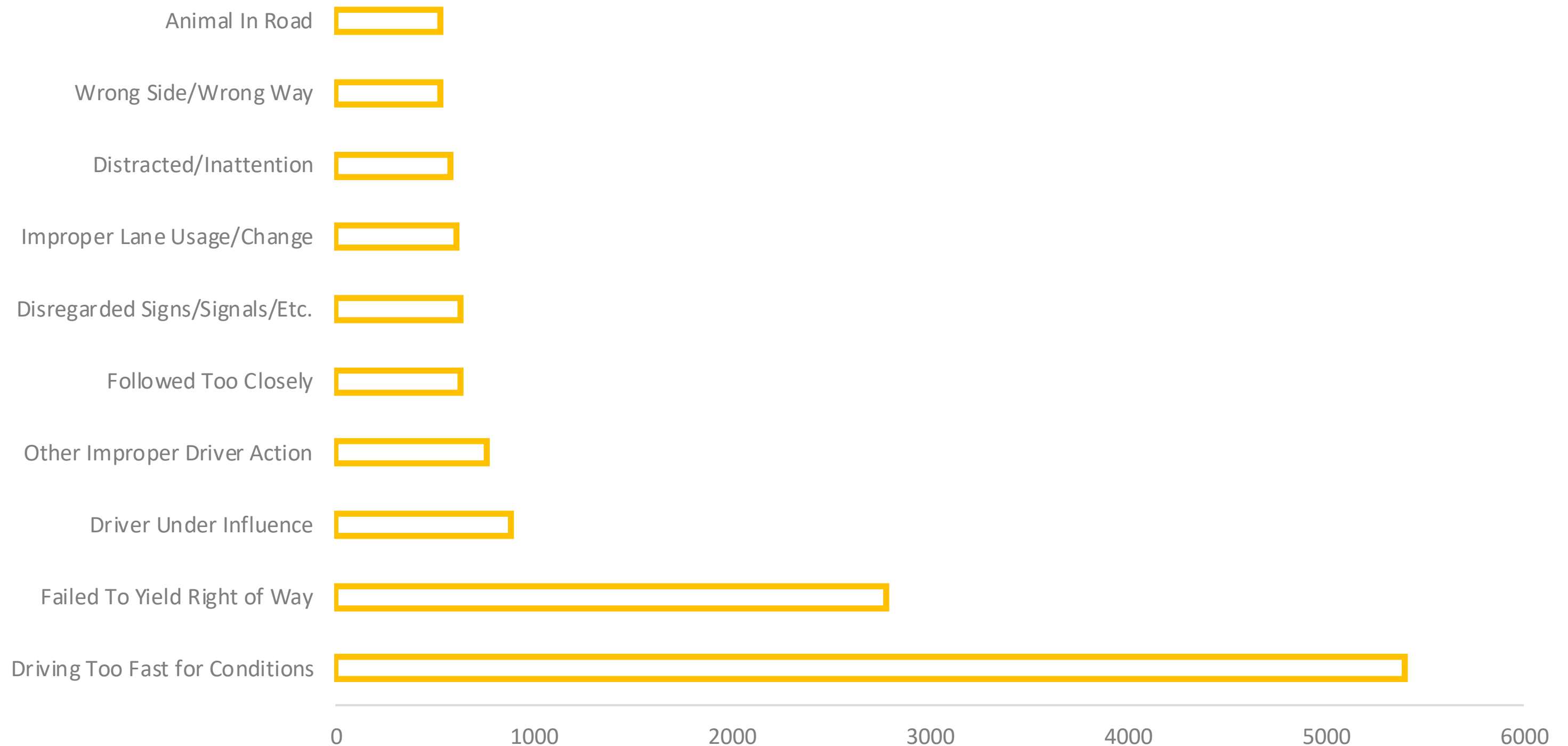
Incapacitating/serious injury cost  $\$650,000 \times 5,733 = \$3,726,450,000$

Property Damage Only cost  $\$6,500 \times 8,907 = \$57,895,500$

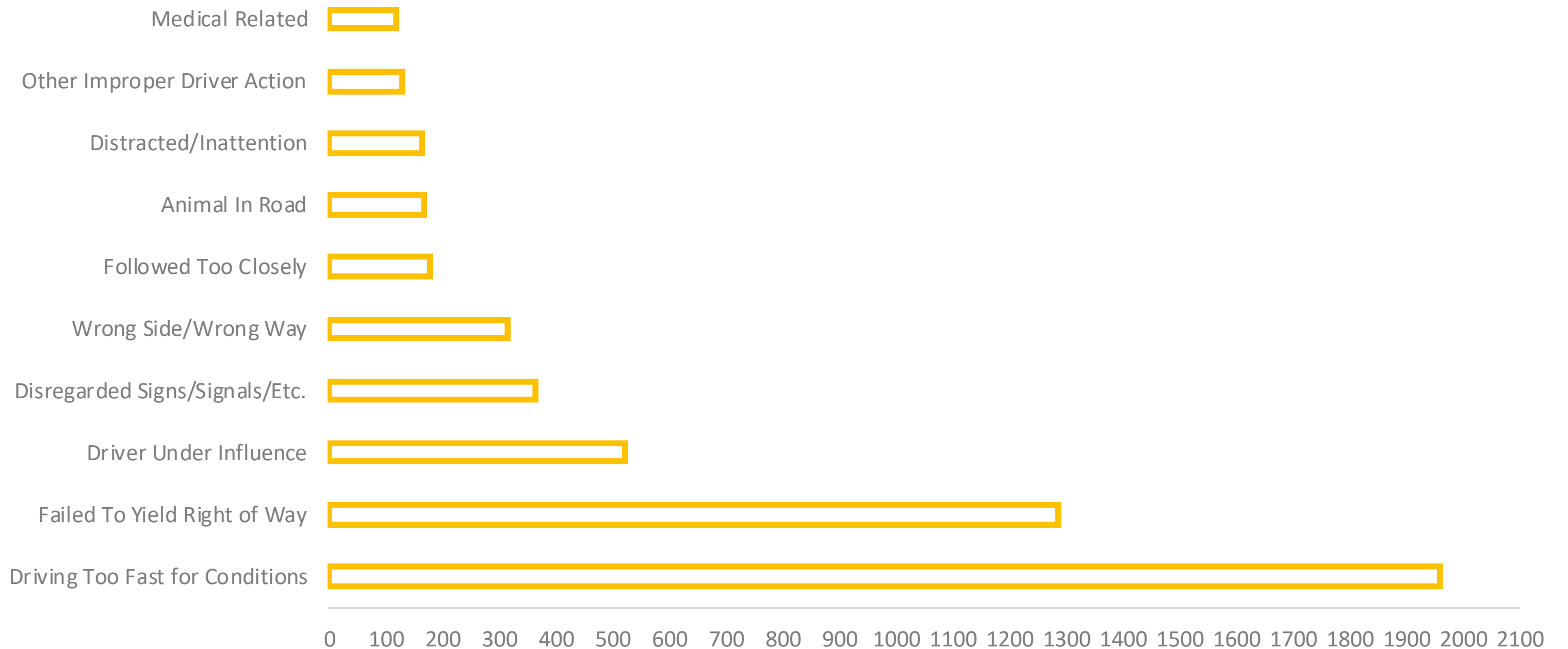
**$\$5,137,945,500$  over 10-years in property, medical, and lost productivity costs**



# 10 most frequent primary contributing factors for all collisions in Oconee County 2010-2020

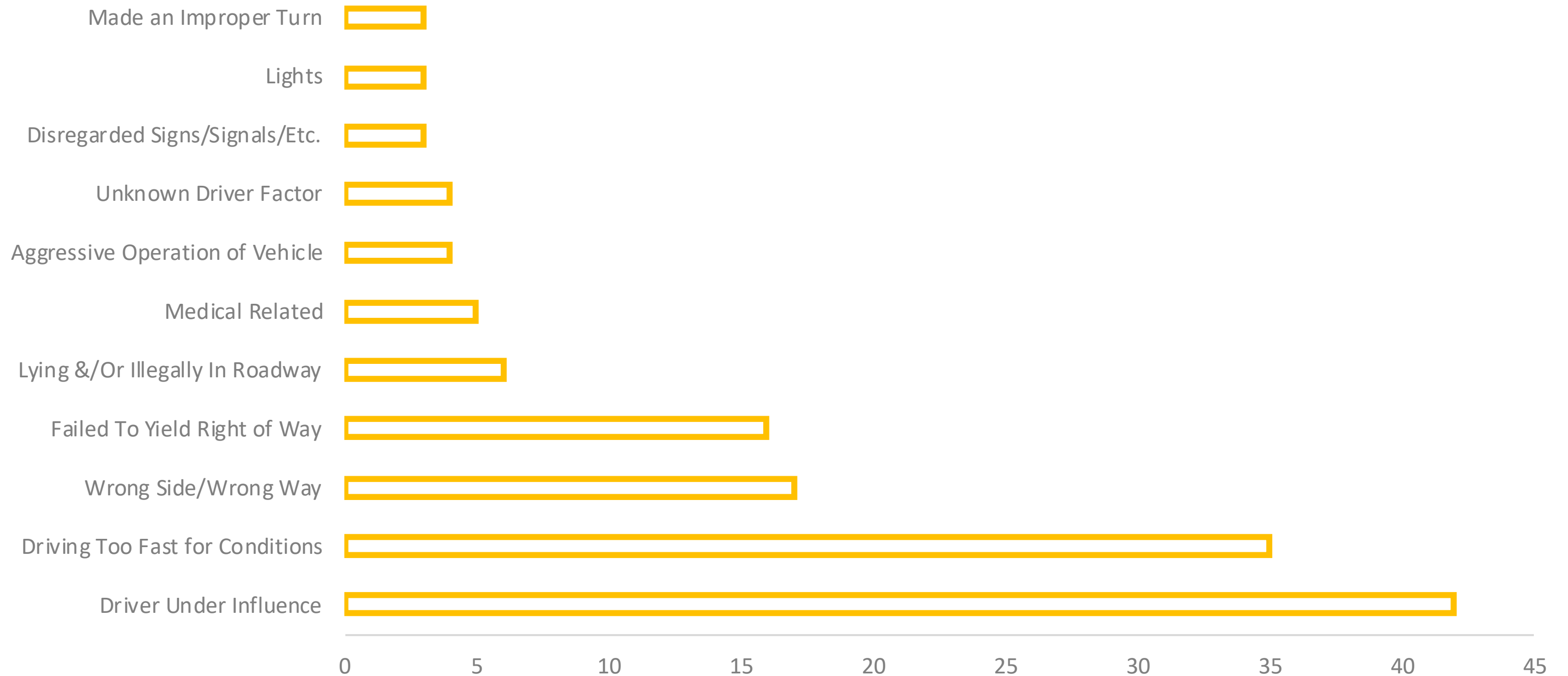


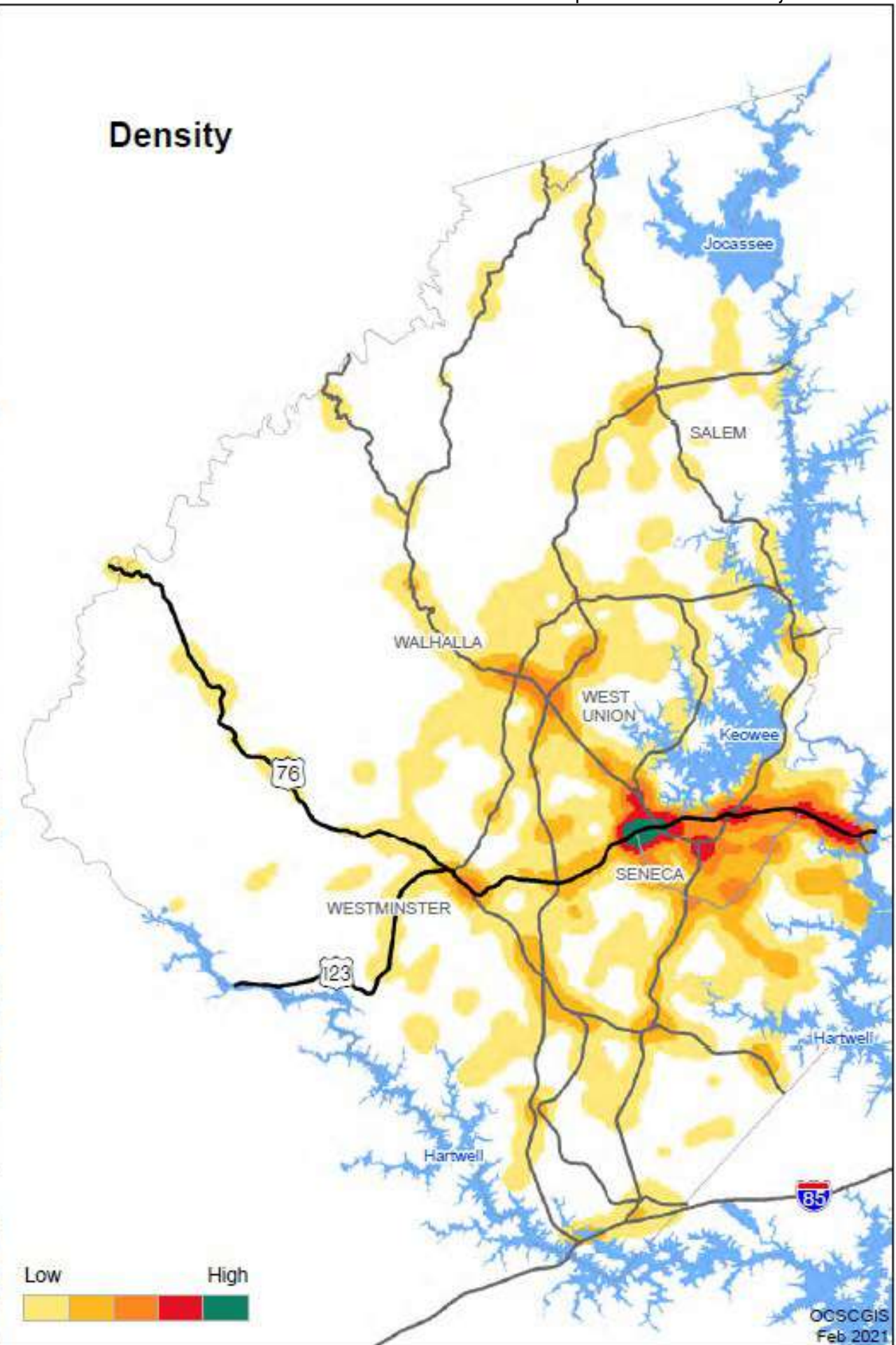
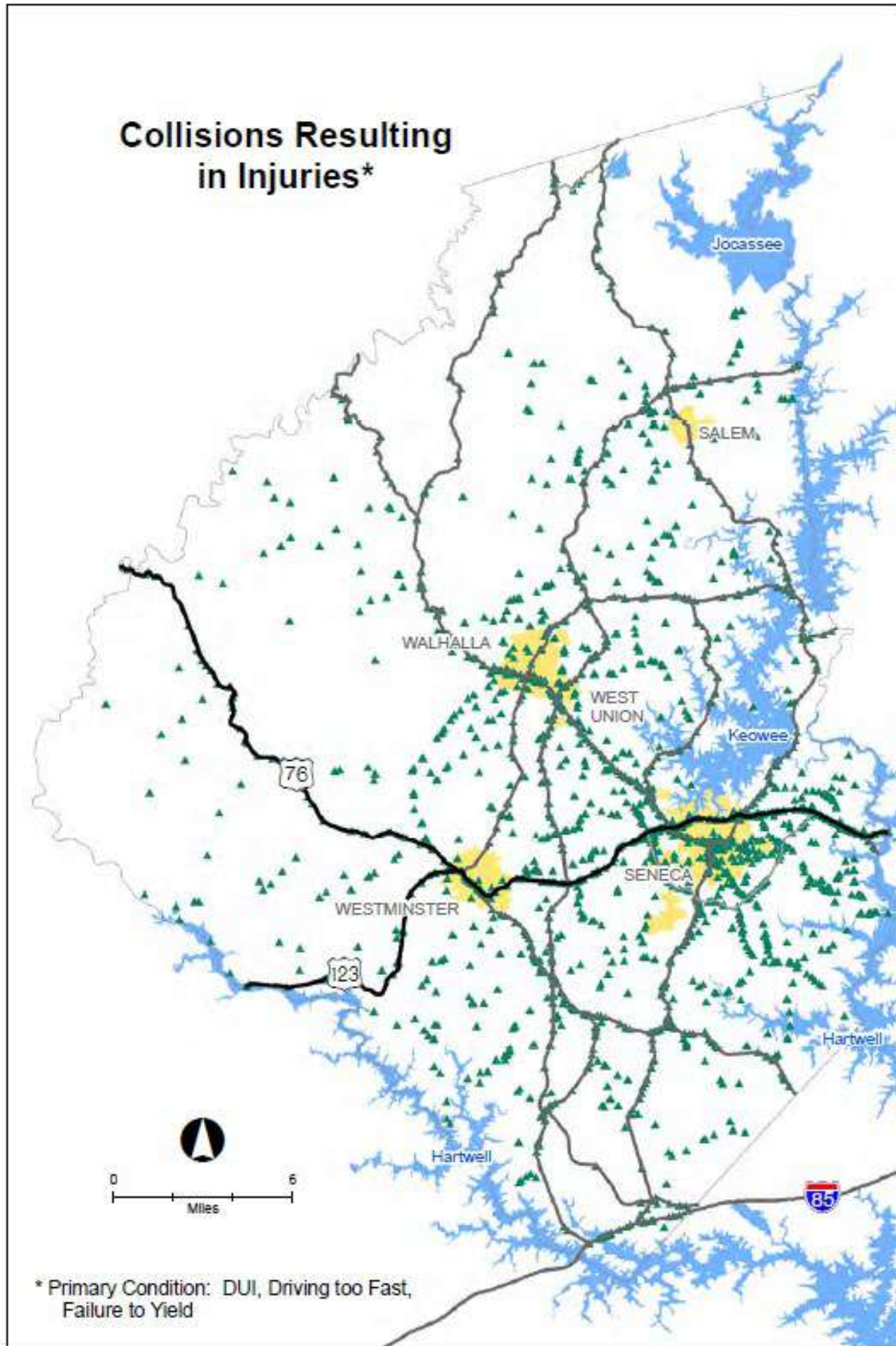
# 10 most frequent primary contributing factors for non-fatal injury collisions in Oconee County 2010-2020





# 10 most frequent primary contributing factors for fatal collisions in Oconee County 2010-2020





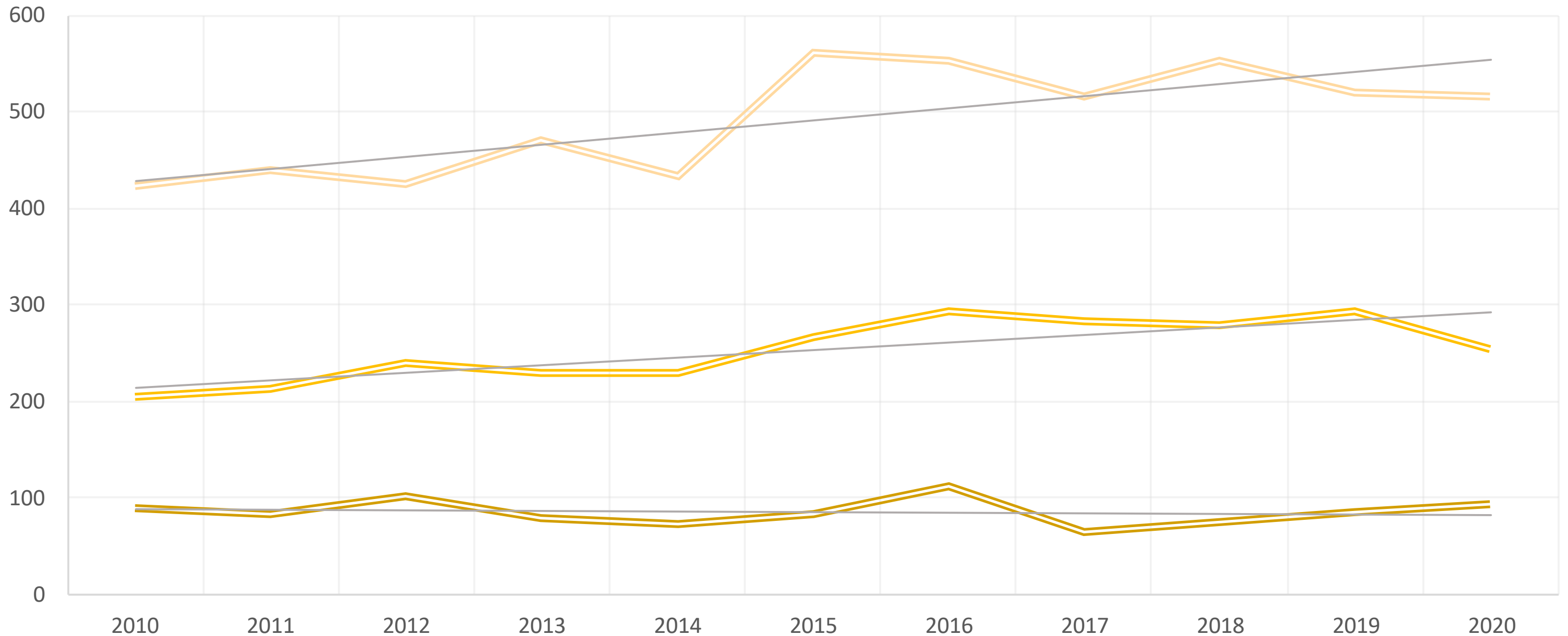
\* Primary Condition: DUI, Driving too Fast, Failure to Yield





# THREE MOST FREQUENT CAUSES FOR ALL COLLISIONS IN OCONEE COUNTY 2010-2020

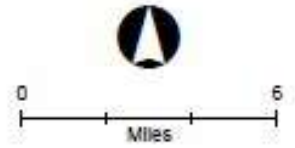
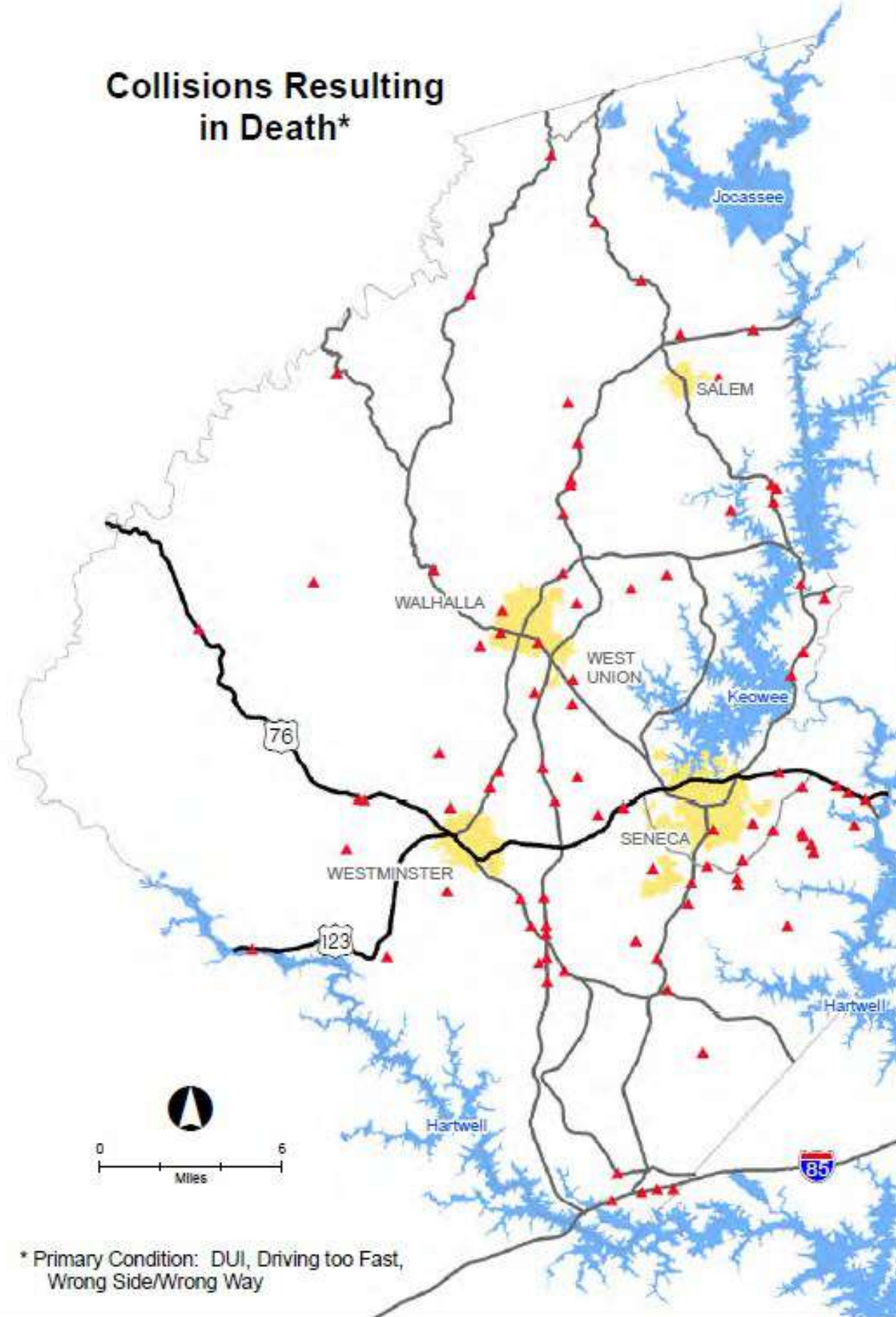
Driving Too Fast for Conditions      Failed To Yield Right of Way      Driver Under Influence





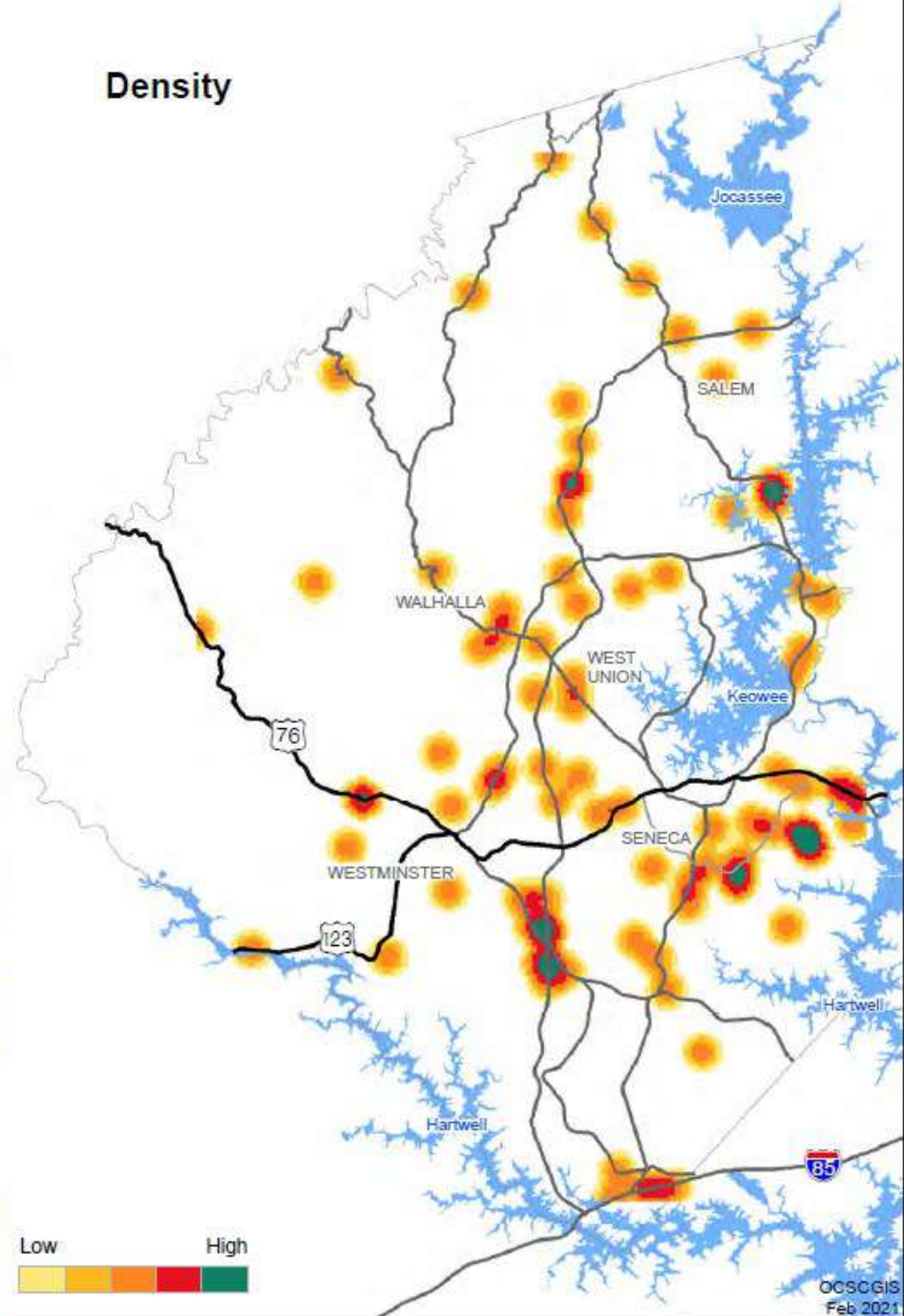


### Collisions Resulting in Death\*



\* Primary Condition: DUI, Driving too Fast, Wrong Side/Wrong Way

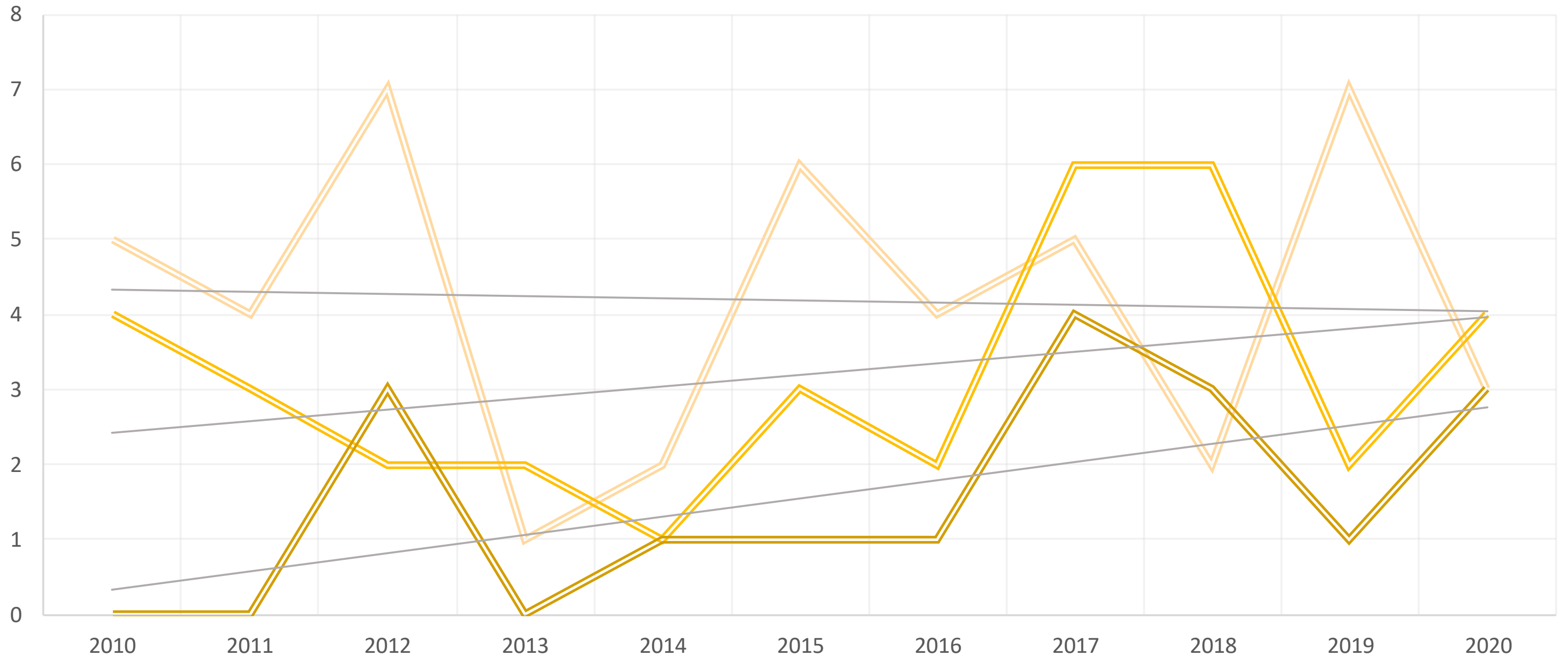
### Density





# THREE MOST FREQUENT CAUSES FOR ALL FATAL-COLLISIONS IN OCONEE COUNTY 2010-2020

Driver Under Influence      Driving Too Fast for Conditions      Wrong side / Wrong way



## SCDOT identified challenges and programs in progress



### SCDOT identified challenges

- Staff retention, manpower and funding for state and local law enforcement strain ability to adequately enforce current traffic safety laws. Lack of manpower also impacts the extent to which law enforcement and transportation agencies coordinate safety initiatives.
- An increased amount of tourist travel is creating safety challenges for areas that attract tourist.
- Need to research and study the impact of legislative changes to South Carolina laws, specifically those regarding DUI.

### SCDOT Programs in process

- Rural Road Safety Program – implementing strategies of keeping a vehicle on the roadway and provide conditions for a safe recovery with the goal of reducing injury severity of collisions. SCDOT is addressing approximately 100 miles of SC roadways annually.
- Fixes include adding rumble strips, removing fixed objects in clear zones, vegetation control, adding brighter pavement markings, guardrails, warning signs at curves, using higher friction pavement, and eliminating vertical drop-offs.
- Law Enforcement DUI Challenge – participating agencies are awarded plaques for lower DUI collision statistics in their jurisdictions
- Dial \*47 to contact South Carolina State Patrol to report suspected impaired driver
- South Carolina participates in multi-state week-long, high-visibility speed enforcement and awareness campaign called Operation Southern Shield.

# Within the right-of-way suggestions for addressing the top three primary contributing factors for all collisions

## Strategies to Reduce Impaired Driving

- Deterrence: enact, publicize, enforce, and adjudicate laws prohibiting impaired driving so that people choose not to drive impaired
- Prevention: reduce drinking and drug use and keep impaired drivers from driving
- Communications and outreach: inform the public of the dangers of impaired driving and establish positive social norms that make driving while impaired unacceptable
- Alcohol and drug treatment: reduce alcohol dependency or addiction among drivers

### Strategy Suggestions

- Enforce laws
- Publicized Sobriety Checkpoints / High-visibility Saturation Patrols (large number of law enforcement officers patrolling a specific area looking for impaired drivers)
- DRE – A drug recognition expert or drug recognition evaluator (DRE) is a police officer trained to recognize impairment in drivers under the influence of drugs other than, or in addition to, alcohol.
- Court monitoring – volunteers observe, track and report on DWI court or administrative hearing activities. Provides data on how many cases are dismissed or pled down to lesser offenses, how many result in convictions, what sanctions are imposed and how these result compare to different judges and different courts. Research shows that court monitoring programs helped increase DUI arrests, decrease plea agreements, and increase guilty pleas.
- DWI Courts – reduces recidivism, expensive
- Responsible Beverage Service
- Mass-Media Campaigns

## Strategies to Reduce driving to fast for conditions

- Reduce speeding through enforcement activities
- Apply road design measures to obtain appropriate speeds
- Set speed limits that are safe and reasonable
- Increase public awareness of driving risks at unsafe speeds

### Strategy suggestions

- Speed trailers on most dangerous roads
- Media campaigns
- Photo Enforcement System – South Carolina law banning the use of red light cameras and speed cameras was signed in 2010. Alabama, Maryland and Tennessee have all seen decrease in fatal accidents involving speed after implementing photo enforcement program. Researchers believe that cameras could reduce speed involved collisions in South Carolina by 12% and fatal crashes decreased by 19%

## Strategies to Reduce failure to yield right-of-way

- Identify collision prone intersections and roadways
- Identify common problems at collision prone intersections and engineer solutions
- Education on yielding right-of-way



## Outside of the right-of-way suggestions for addressing collisions

- Traffic impact studies for all new development in high impact areas
- Required infrastructure upgrades ( turn lane, stop signs, etc.)
- Limit curb-cuts
- Shared access
- Land-use regulations in high impact areas addressing specific usage of high traffic causing businesses, such as:
  - Student-housing
  - Gas stations
  - Drive-through dining
  - Big box stores





### **Broad objectives for improving road-safety**

**Enforcement** of the current regulations and updating laws

**Education** of the public continually and consistently from an early age

**Engineering** roadways and intersections to minimize conflict points