

# OCONEE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

415 South Pine Street - Walhalla, SC



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

## **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.*

*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.*

## **PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY PROHIBITED**

*During this election season, please remain aware that engaging in partisan political activity during a County Commission meeting is prohibited. Oconee Code of Ordinances Section 2-61. “Partisan political activities” are those activities that are directed at the success or failure of a political party, candidate for political office, or political group.*

## **Minutes**

5:00 pm- Monday, February 1, 2021

Council Chambers - Oconee County Administrative Complex

### **Members Present**

Frankie Pearson  
Mike Smith  
Dave Nix  
Alex Vassey  
Mike Johnson

### **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 – Mr. Kenneth Terry Jackson made a presentation about the Speedway gas station (presentation attached).
5. Commission member comment – Mr. Smith mentioned that the 2020 Comprehensive Plan should be their main focus, it’s part of the Commissioners duties to come up with a priority list for this year. Mr. Smith would like them to be on a first name basis, conduct meetings with no interruptions. Homework will be assigned occasionally, please do and submit.
6. Approval of minutes: 01/21/2021 – Mr. Pearson made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Vassey and approved 5/0.
7. 2021-06 Design standards information (Public hearing March 1, 2021) - Mr. Chapman updated the Commission on this ordinance. Mr. Smith made a motion that the Planning Department research

additional cost estimates for incorporating design for building design standards vs the cost without design one and two in building costs for those design standards. Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Smith to clarify and much discussion followed. Mr. Smith withdrew his motion.

8. Impact Fees Update – Mr. Chapman explained that we are trying to find a company that will do the Capital Improvement Plan and Impact Fees are just one of the parts of it. We are also waiting for the 2020 Census numbers to come out, which should be by the end of April.
9. Planning Commission Goals, objectives, and strategies for implementation for 2021 – Mr. Smith gave a presentation (attached). Discussion followed and Mr. Smith asked the Commissioners to do homework and turn it in by Friday. All agreed.
10. Planning Commission chairman term limits – Research was done and other counties do not have term limits.
11. Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 5:51pm.

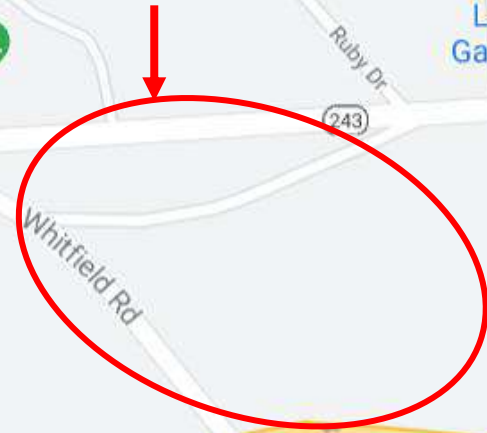
Anyone wishing to submit written comments to the Planning Commission can send their comments to the Planning Department by mail or by emailing them to the email address below. Please Note: If you would like to receive a copy of the agenda via email please contact our office, or email us at [achapman@oconeesc.com](mailto:achapman@oconeesc.com).

STRONG recommendation to the Oconee Co. Planning Commission to go on public record for no further advancement on ANY development on Whitfield Rd. @ I85 interchange until specific---and approved funded---road improvements have been 1<sup>st</sup> put in place.

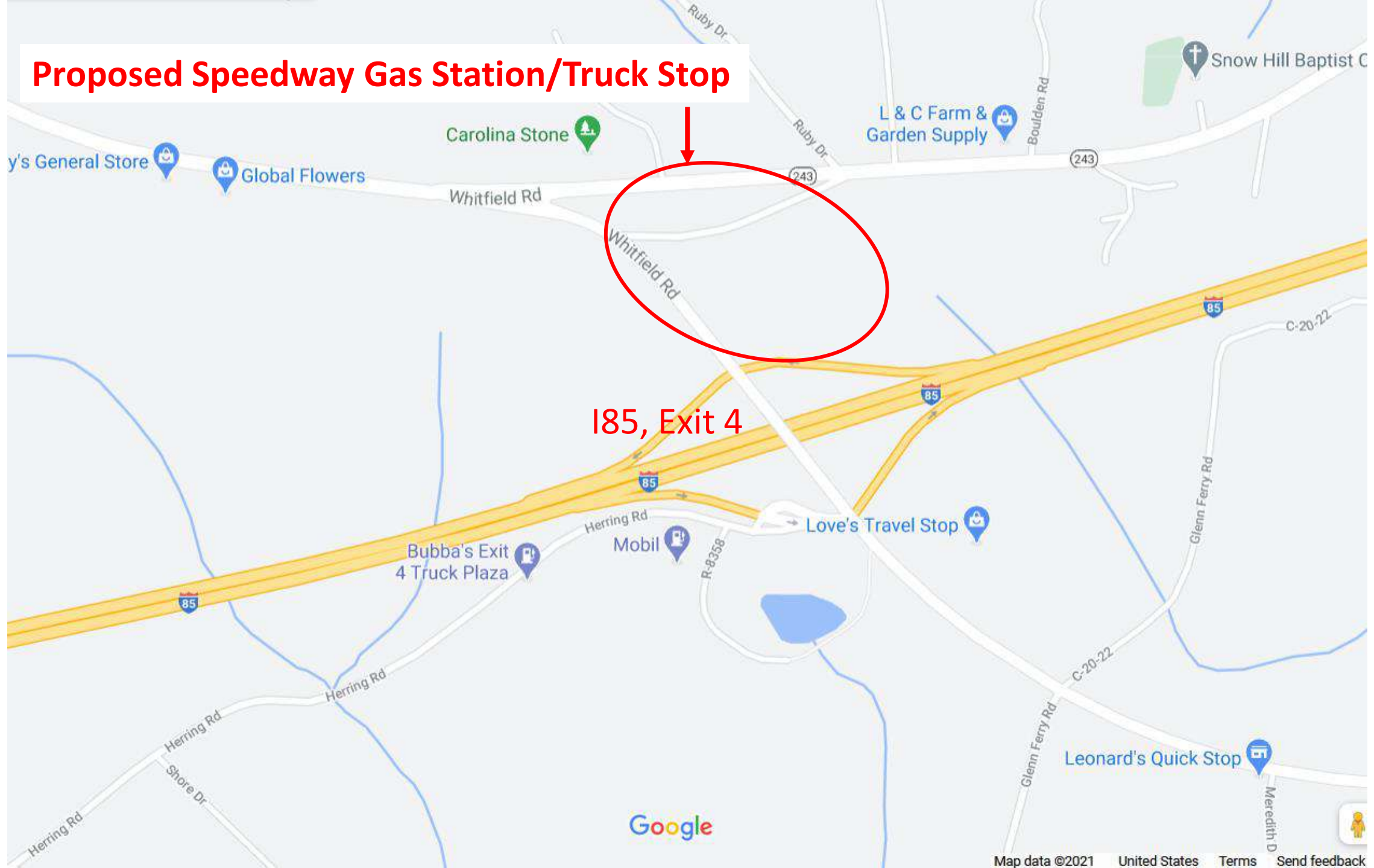
It is already known that something is in the works for a proposed Speedway station because of sign zoning deviations.

Nothing further should be permitted until the road situation is addressed.

# Proposed Speedway Gas Station/Truck Stop





I85, Exit 4

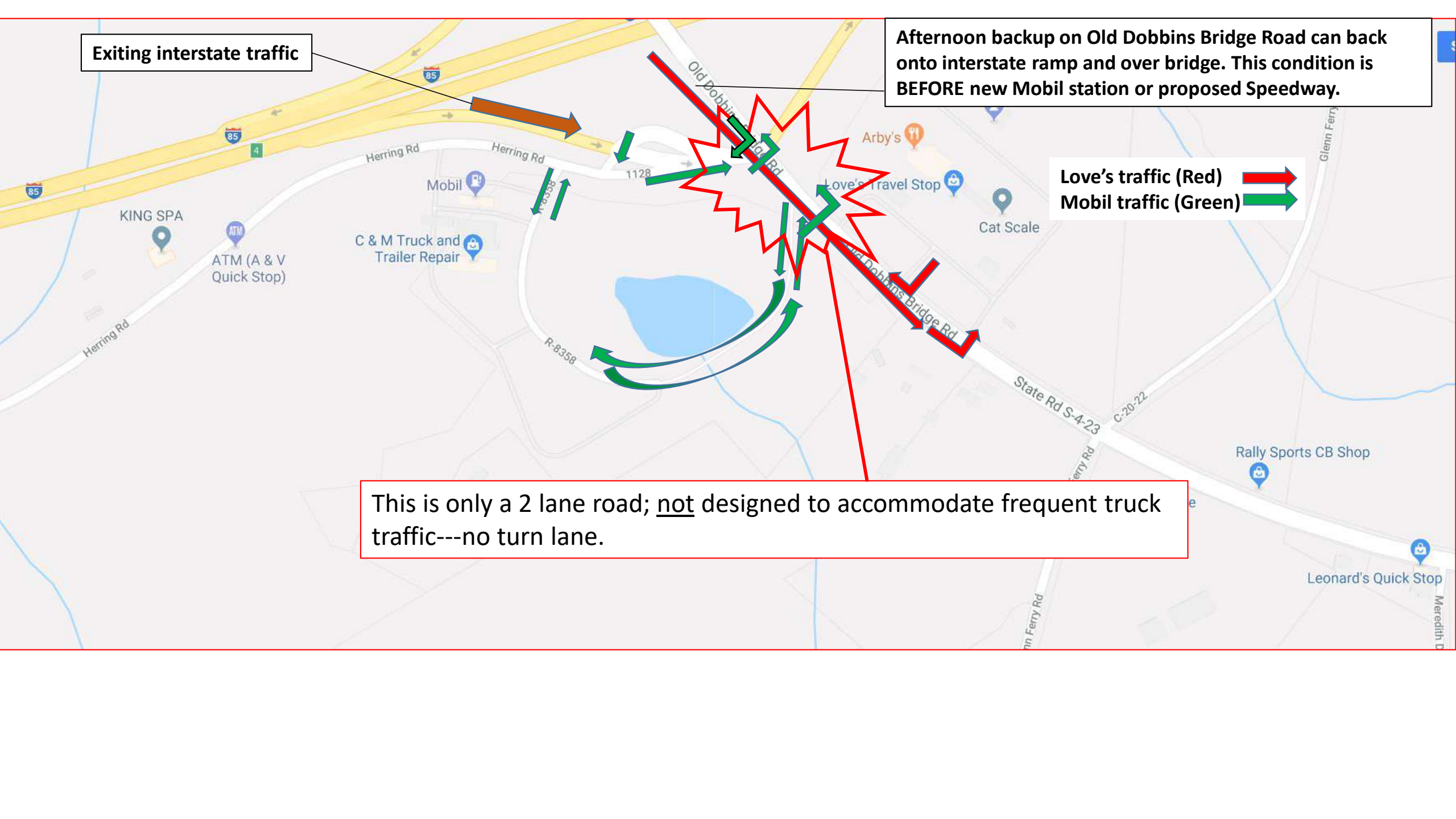


Exiting interstate traffic

Afternoon backup on Old Dobbins Bridge Road can back onto interstate ramp and over bridge. This condition is BEFORE new Mobil station or proposed Speedway.

Love's traffic (Red)   
Mobil traffic (Green) 

This is only a 2 lane road; not designed to accommodate frequent truck traffic---no turn lane.





Entry/exit points to the Love's Truckstop and gas station

Entry/exit point to the new Mobil Station.



'Typical' evening backup traffic.

Note traffic trying to enter the clogged Love's parking lot.

Also note that traffic is backed up all the way to the I85N exit ramp.

Truck entry/exit point to the new Mobil Station. Cars have to enter/exit with these lanes (shared w/ I85 NB exit ramp)



State Rd S-4-23 traffic is backed up onto the I85N exit ramp.



Jan '21----'Repaired' since most recent incident. Has been like this approx. 1 month. At least 2 of these the past year. This is across from Loves, just after the Mobil Truck entrance.





This is the backed up I85N exit ramp because of backup of traffic on Old Dobbins Bridge Road / Whitfield Rd. trying to get into Love's parking lot. Note that the new Mobil station is essentially empty. So it can, and will, get worse. And no Speedway yet.



A truck trying to get onto the road from the Mobil Station.....

**This is a safety concern, not just a nuisance.**

**The 27 Jan Zoning Appeal Board regarding the proposed Speedway sign variations had many comments and concerns, initiated by the Board members, regarding SAFETY with respect to the signs. This factored into their consideration of the zoning variance request. Surely traffic and roads (like above picture) have more impact to safety than gas station signs and must be considered prior to approving whatever is requested by the proposed Speedway.**

- 26 Feb 19, 6:30PM significant traffic issues also, not just lunch or ~5:00 rush hour.





Feb '19:  
Car hauler still has back of  
his trailer blocking Old  
Dobbins Bridge Road  
opposing traffic lane. And  
he'll be there for a while.

**Safety.....**





Jan '21:  
Still a problem....

Drivers get frustrated with the wait and illegally move into the oncoming lane.

It is not uncommon to see cars take a more 'risky' prolonged drive down the oncoming lane to get around all trucks stopped on SC 4-23.

This is the situation that has evolved because of the inability of the road to handle the excessive traffic. Planning Commission cannot allow this to get worse.





Still a problem....

This from Wednesday,  
27 Jan '21 ~8:00 PM



Jan '21:  
Related...also illegal night  
time parking. This is on I85  
Northbound ramp.



**NO  
PARKING  
Sign**



**Most stations like the proposed Speedway are on roads already sufficient for this type of station. Why should Fairplay be different?**

Whitfield Road, looking towards Loves:



Whitfield Road, looking towards proposed Speedway:



Narrow bridge condition, no traffic signals, no turning lanes, small paved areas to sides of road. Turning lanes and acceleration lanes could have most positive impact to reducing traffic issues.



Other similar I85 interchanges with large fuel stations are on this and next few slides.....

I85, Exit 21:



Wider roads, better overall visibility, better road surface, turn signals, turning lanes.....

185, Exit 35, facing South:



185, Exit 35, facing North:



Slightly more businesses on the north side only, but overall comparable to Exit 4. Yet wider roads, better overall visibility, turn signals, turning lanes.....



Georgia, I85, Exit 177. More commercial, but yet still substantially better road/traffic conditions:



Georgia, I85, Exit 166:

Pilot Travel Center



These intersections were not 'cherry picked' for this presentation.



Georgia, I85, Exit 160:



**Oconee Industry and Technology Park, 29 Jan 2021, 10:50AM**



Significantly less traffic, and yet much better road surface, wider lanes, turning lane.



It's not just the Speedway proposed development at this location. One of these days....



**Oconee Manufacturing Park, Whitfield Road & Exit 4 @ I-85,**  
Fairplay, SC, 29643

FOR SALE  
**65 ac**

SALE PRICE  
**Contact Broker for Pricing**



SHARE

- Trey Pennington**  
Lic: 68011
- Justin Hirsch**
- Jeff Benedict**  
Lic: 101762

DOWNLOAD PDF BROCHURE

CONTACT FOR DETAILS →

Speedway site



**SC DOT communication (Benjamin Olson, Jan 2021):**

- **Traffic impact study has been started by developer.**
- **Oconee Co. Planning can request this study.**

**Public comment:**

- **Traffic impact study should be considered prior to any permit approvals, etc.**
- **Understand this study has been completed.**
- **I would strongly question the validity of any traffic study that shows no significant issues with anything new added to the I85/Exit 4 interchange. It's bad, as shown on the pictures, prior to anything else. Also bad compared to other I85 comparable interchanges, as also shown on the pictures.**

I have sent notes to Reps. Hill and Sandifer in addition to DOT.



**Also please address the following, outside of this meeting:**

- **How do we prevent further development at this intersection without sufficient road and interchange changes? Not objecting to development....it just needs to be proactively managed.**
- **Who is responsible for funding the required road improvements?**
- **How are impacted neighbors aware of what is going on?**
- **Who do we bring this concern?**
- **Traffic impact study may suggest no significant impact to Whitfield Rd. This MUST be challenged.**
- **Do variances and appeals have to be requested for the Speedway?**
- **How can impacted neighbors have a voice in the reviews and decisions? We want to be proactive. What else can we do?**
- **How / when do we revisit this?-----Will there be a zoning or deviation meeting to approve the Speedway (and/or the eventual proposed industrial park)?**



(19) 9.2.1.4 Limit number of curb cuts in high traffic areas.

(10) 5.1.2.4 Explore purchase and reuse of Utica Mill site.

(5) 9.3.2.2 Sidewalks, bike trails, lanes in residential developments.

(17) 9.3.2.4 Provide and maintain adequate safe and accessible trails.

5.1.1.2 Enhance visual character of county

(21) 3.1.1.3 Ensure compatibility between existing ag and new residential

6.3.4.4/6.3.2.3 Explore and promote best practices to protect waterways in ag and developing areas.

## 2020 PLANNING COMMISSION PRIORITY LIST

1. Housing
2. Age-in Place
3. Skills local employers need taught by our school system
4. Keep keeping up roads
5. Access to local healthy food
6. RV park ordinance
7. Multifamily housing ordinance
8. Community/Group development standards
9. Junkyard Ordinance
10. Riparian Protections
11. Option for sidewalks in public ROW

## MY SUGGESTIONS

1. Community/group development standards
2. Multifamily housing ordinance
3. Riparian Protections
4. Junkyard Ordinance