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Council looks at patterns in growth for next 20 years

From staff reports

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Spartanburg County Council will hear projections about how this area will grow in the next two decades and the latest recommendations on how to deal with jail overcrowding at its meeting today.

Most of the discussion happens during the work session and committee meetings, which begin at 2 p.m. The actual meeting, where formal action is taken, happens at 5:30 p.m. All meetings are in the County Council Chambers in the administration building on Church Street.

Early on, council will hear from Jeff Allen of Clemson University's Strom Thurmond Institute on growth projections - and recommendations on how to deal with that growth.

Allen referred to a study released by the nonprofit group Upstate Forever group during a brief media blitz in February. The study predicted that eight Upstate counties will lose up to 1.5 million acres to development by 2030 unless new policies are put in place. It said that the current rate of growth means that about 86 acres - roughly the footprint of Haywood Mall in Greenville - would be developed each day.

Recommendations on managing growth include putting more emphasis on redevelopment projects, in-fill development - developing cleared land in already-urban areas - and countywide zoning.

Later, council will hear the latest plans for expanding the Spartanburg County Detention Facility.

Council has struggled with different options - the most costly being \$47 million - to deal with jail overcrowding. So far, the biggest option still would leave the jail a few hundred beds shy of what it would need to keep up with the anticipated influx of new inmates.

Jail Director Larry Powers has said regularly that 1,500 beds would be needed to keep up with the expected population increase over the next decade.

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