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Greer's leading the way on traffic studies
Developers soon may be required to quantify potential traffic before developments begin

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Greer is heading down the right road in considering changes to its zoning rules that would, among other things, require developers to conduct a traffic study early in the planning process so the city and residents can better understand how much traffic new development will generate.

The proposed ordinance change was approved on first reading, and gets its second reading on Dec. 11. Among the changes it would make, according to a Greenville News report, are encouraging mixed-use developments on smaller parcels, requiring step-by-step approval of planned developments, and requiring traffic studies at the front-end of development proposals.

This is an important proposal for several reasons.

First, Greer is among the fastest growing communities in South Carolina. New development there is adding to traffic in the eastern portion of Greenville County seemingly every day.

Advertisement Second, it sets a good example for Greenville County, which would do well to consider requiring traffic studies on new developments, particularly in already-overburdened areas.

Finally, the Upstate has a traffic problem, and all of us benefit from whatever steps are taken to ensure traffic doesn't become any worse than it has to be. Greenville County transportation planner John Gardner said in a recent Greenville News report that about 10 miles of road in the Upstate are considered congested, but that 100 miles of roads will be categorized that way in a little more than 20 years.

And those problems are exacerbated by a lack of available funding to make lasting fixes. That makes advance planning essential.

Greer is to be commended for taking steps to have more control over the rapid development within its boundaries, and for turning an eye toward the potential impacts -- especially on traffic -- of those developments.

The importance of this ordinance was well stated in a recent Greenville News report. Said Angela Viney, director of sustainable communities for Upstate Forever: "I think it's sort of a ray of sunshine to know that a municipality is actually considering what impact this development will have on the amount of vehicles that will be on the road."

More municipalities should do this.

One need only drive Wade Hampton Boulevard through Greer to get a picture of the growth. And there are other rapidly growing areas in that growing city, such as South Buncombe Road, where Greenville Hospital System is building its new Greer Memorial Hospital and much supporting development also is taking place or proposed. Getting in front of the potential traffic implications of this growth is smart and essential.

Growth and development in this area is inevitable given the attractiveness of not only Greer but the entire Upstate. Given that inevitability, planning is essential. Greer's proposed approach is a proactive effort that all of Greenville County could emulate.
