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New stoplights planned for two spots in Horry County

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Two new stoplights are planned for busy intersections in Horry County.

The city of Conway is working with the developers of the Wild Wing subdivision to install a light at U.S. 501 and Wild Wing Boulevard, while the S.C. Department of Transportation plans to install a light at George Bishop Parkway and Clay Pond Road.

"There is a lot of traffic because of all the people coming and going from the Wild Wing development, and across [U.S. 501], there is Burning Ridge subdivision," said Conway city administrator Bill Graham.

He said the Wild Wing developers agreed to pay about \$489,000 of the estimated \$850,000 cost for the new light, while the Horry County Transportation Committee has agreed to fund up to \$361,000 for the project.

"They see the public benefit," he said of the committee members. "We have had quite a few accidents there." The city is administering the committee funds, and Graham said engineering is still being completed.

Castles Engineering is developing plans for the project, and engineer John Poston said the signal was designed a couple of years ago, but the funding hadn't come together right away.

Most of it is in place now, he said, and want to get the project done this fall – between Labor Day and Dec. 15, when the DOT's winter paving restriction is put in place through spring.

"We're pushing really, really hard, but as with any project, all the pieces have to fall in place," Poston said. "We're feeling hopeful about it."

That will make seven stop lights on U.S. 501 between the Intracoastal Waterway and the turnoff to downtown Conway.

Road work will have to be done at Wild Wing Boulevard and Burning Ridge Road, including left-turn lanes, which makes it a more expensive project than the \$75,000 light planned for the intersection at George Bishop and Clay Pond Road.

Traffic volume has increased in the past couple of years since the bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway was built on George Bishop Parkway.

"We looked at it and the combination of accidents and traffic volume made us believe there's a need for a signal there," said transportation department traffic engineer Michael Bethea. He said early mornings between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. and late afternoons are extremely busy.

The DOT gets calls all the time from people suggesting speed limit changes and signals, and this was one of those cases. A resident called about changing the speed limit, and Bethea said that's what got his agency looking at the intersection.

Work could start after Labor Day and DOT hopes to finish in October. Work can take a short few weeks or be stretched out depending on underground utilities and whether anything has to be moved to accommodate the traffic signal's poles, Bethea said.

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