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1395 Georgia Ave  
Macon, Georgia 31201  
June 20, 2001

Project: Forest Hill Rd, Macon, Ga  
Mr. Harvey Kepler,  
State Environmental-Location Engineer  
Mr. Larry D. Kuepfer, P.E., Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration.

Gentlemen:

Please excuse the hand written notes (I've printed them hoping to make them more readable!). Ten days from a public hearing on the Draft EA doesn't give one much time to study the technical document, analyze the project plans and make studied observations unless one is retired, understands all the acronyms, technical terms, etc, etc., and I struggle with all the above plus I'm not at retirement age yet. That's my first complaint, 10 days is not enough to get the comments included in the Draft EA assessment.

My others follow in no certain order. While speaking with one of the GaDOT officials at the Springdale Elementary hearing on the project he casually mentioned that the FONZI would not reflect the question I asked him. I promptly, and with much sarcasm in my voice, asked what FONZI?? How could he (or the GaDOT) assume there would be a FONZI when the Public Hearing was not even over!!! I really would like an answer for that.

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Also, Mr. Bob Fountain, Bibb County Engineer, stated privately that Forest Hill rd widening (adds no capacity?) was needed because a Wal-Mart was taking and wanting to purchase property at Forest Hill and Northside! Please, when is the Cadot & Mearns - Bibb County Road Improvement program ~~is~~ charged with building roads at taxpayer expense for private companies?! I really would like an answer to that one. The original intent of the project was a segment of the Northwest Parkway project to carry traffic to the (Macon) Colonial Mall, which by the way is in the opposite direction from the proposed location of ~~the~~ the Wal-Mart.

The area at the East End of Forest Hill rd is already built up to the map. ~~at~~ The East end of Forest Hill practically dead ends to the Riverside Drive / Arkwright Road / I-75 corridor. (No mention was made in the draft EA on the proposed improvements to the interchange of I-75, Arkwright, Riverside Drive)! These are being designed with the purpose of improving safety & traffic flow. Bibb County has lost population for the last 10 years, according to the 2000 census, yet the software program (TPT?) used by the planners predicted an annual growth of 4-5% per year! Don't the results of a model on planning software program reflect in the outcome, the results of the information put into the program at the outset or beginning? I submit the statistical evidence available does not support the

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The theoretical outcome proposed by the Draft E.A. It just doesn't make sense.

The accident rate on Forest Hill Rd project is negligible. The ~~accidents that do occur~~ It's precisely because the design speed of the road is about what the posted speed is, widening to highway width, (the Interstate lanes on I-15 thru at least are only 60-8 feet wide) will only increase speed beyond that posted and with neither ability or manpower to enforce it, will only result in more serious injuries. Why redesign a whole road, when improving the intersections by creative design and ITS (Intelligent Transportation System) traffic lights, etc., will correct over 90% of the accidents. The technology is available to do it. In fact, a ~~world~~ renowned Urban Planner/Designer, and a Professional Engineer by training, Mr. Walter Kulash from Orlando, Florida, has already designed such a system for Forest Hill Rd and it's citizens and neighbors, 2 years ago. ~~It~~ This plan was not mentioned in the Draft E.A., yet it was approved by the neighborhood.

The neighborhood: This neighborhood has a great deal of elderly residents living on the road itself. I asked a commercial real estate appraiser at the public meeting what would be his opinion of the property along both side of Forest Hill Rd if this project is approved as shown at the meeting. His response was it would ~~be~~ go commercial. That is not what our 25 year Land-use

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plan calls for, but as a practical matter that is what will happen. Property values will go down because the residents will be forced to move because of <sup>a lack of</sup> safety ~~injuries~~ speed  $\rightarrow$  injuries, no one will want to buy ~~the~~ residential property on a fast moving highway, or then the commercial speculators would buy the property for 1/2 price.

Noise: Another reason residents will be forced to move. The Draft EA clearly states noise levels will be above ~~the~~ the limits set by FHWA, but their comment in the Draft EA says, they are not required to fix the problem they will create, because it can't be fixed! I do believe a creative design of the road will eliminate that problem, and enable the residents to stay in the neighborhood & those neighborhoods connecting to it, to continue to thrive.

There is a creek that comes within 15 feet of the edge of Forest Hill rd, probably closer if you measure right of way distance. The creek is in front of Dr. Peter Holliday's home on Forest Hill rd, and in the early 80's overflowed & completely washed out (took out a whole section of asphalt from one side to the other) of Forest Hill rd. This creek is not mentioned in the Draft EA & worse yet, was not shown on the map available for public display at the Springdale Elementary Forest Hill road Public Meeting. I would think that would be a very important piece of information



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for consideration, who would pay for the repairs if it happened again, the taxpayers?

Further, The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) of the MATS MPO for Bibb County, east portion of Jones County did not approve <sup>(voted No)</sup> the 3 year TIP of which this project was a part. Worse, the map given to them at the time of the vote, did not show the whole project, only the 3 lane part from Wimbish to Kearsy side. (It didn't show the 4 lane part of the project from Wimbish to Vineville). The CAC also did not approve (voted No) the 2005 Transportation Plan put before them ~~at~~ earlier this year.

I mean, aren't we first supposed to have a system design before we do segments of projects. Shouldn't they all, taken as a whole, make sense? They don't. Forest Hill is projected as a ~~four~~ <sup>five</sup> lane emptying into Vineville Avenue & Park St. ~~SHIPO~~ SHIPO (State Historic Preservation office) has already stated that Park Street has historical resources that need to be protected. Are they going to violate ~~that~~ that on Run 5 lanes into two lanes?

Nobody at Go Dot or Bibb County will say what the plans are for Vineville Ave. This project will impact Vineville greatly. How can one be designed without knowing the impact of ~~and~~ of the other?

Mr. <sup>So</sup> Palko of Go Dot, was quoted in our local paper, in an article by Christopher Schwarzen, and later

Schwarzen, that Bibb County will lose State funds if we (Bibb County) doesn't get it's roads built before we go into no one designated non-attainment. I think it's Federal money we lose and only if the SIP doesn't conform to the 3 year TIP action an official determination of non-attainment. If the air is that bad already, and it most certainly is, (we have failed the one-hour & the 8 hour standard), then is the push to build all these wide lane, additional ~~lane~~ lanes roads, a rush to violate the intent of the law but not actually the law itself?

The neighborhood has time & time again voiced their desire to maintain Forest Hill as a residential community. It surprises me to learn that it falls on deaf ears.

Within the road building community, but even of our elected officials, get a ~~not~~ full hearing with considerations for their own streets at the expense of those citizens they were elected to represent. Mr. Calder Clay (County Commissioner) has his street cut-de-sac'd & approves the <sup>overall</sup> project. Rep. Robert Rechenst lives on an off <sup>Norfolk</sup> ~~West~~ <sup>Minster</sup> Dr at the intersection of Wimberly Forest Hill Rd, asks for & receives a redesign of that intersection & effectively wiping out the beautifully cared property of Clayd Hall, a citizen ~~who~~ lives on the corner impacted by the design. Is that the way the system works? Why weren't the average citizen's desires considered?

Forest Hill is mis-classified in the Draft EA.

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Forest Hill is mis classified (as are a lot of our streets in Dibbs county) as an arterial. An arterial to what! It is, and should be classified as such + should remain, a collector. No more no less!

Our MPO has stated that a project design team would be used on all controversial road projects. This was not done on this project and there were 225 (minimum) people in attendance at the Sprigdale / Forest Hill public meeting. I asked a WMAZ-TV reporter toward the end of the meeting (he had been there the whole time), what he thought about the project / meeting. His response? "I've looked for somebody, other than the 'badges', who supports this project to interview, but I haven't been able to find anybody". Pretty powerful statement from an unbiased observer!

I forgot to mention earlier in my comments about the cut-de-sacs of the Prado, Odorlock Drive area, + Dunny Drive, that emergency (fire, ambulance, police) services will be greatly hampered in quick response time by these cut-de-sacs. It's vastly unfair to put some neighborhoods at risk to satisfy the demands of a few.

I don't believe the neighborhood(s) would object to a modified, creative design with an impartial Urban Planner on the design team, that would improve safety with better low impact designs of the problem intersections or dangerous curves. How do we accomplish that here? MR. Kravash had the design and it was not included for consideration.

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This project is part of the Macon-Bibb County Road Improvement Program funded by vote with a SPLOST. How is it that Ga Dot does the public meeting, it doesn't come through the channels of the Macon-Bibb Road Improvement Program, and all of a sudden, it's not the Macon-Bibb RIP project anymore. It is now a Ga Dot project!!

committee

We don't want highways in our neighborhoods. The people in Macon-Bibb County plead with you to give us good, creative, smart designs for our tax dollars. Business as usual in this county has cost us population & tax dollars.

Please, let's do this one right. Give us an opportunity to work with you, not against you, that is all we respectfully ask.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter, it's ideas, comments, and particularly it's genuineness.

Sincerely

Keeheath

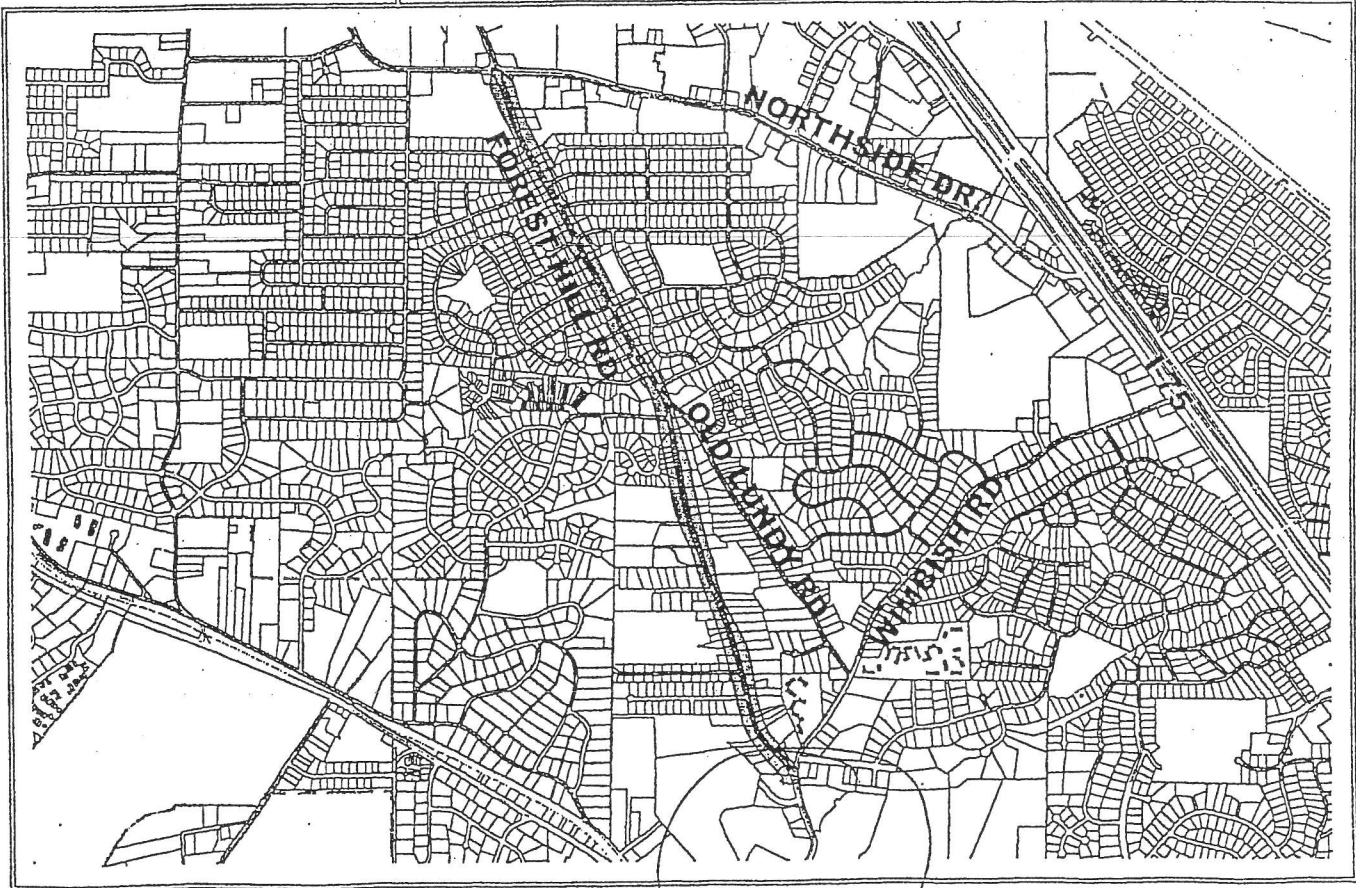
Exhibit 1

Submitted to CAC of MATS  
 Only segment of this project submitted

PROJECT NAME:	FOREST HILL ROAD	PROJECT#:	STP-3213(3)
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:	Widen Forest Hill Rd. from two lanes to three lanes from Wimbish Rd. to Northside Dr.	P.I. NOS:	351130
		TIP#:	MCN - 25
		COUNTY:	BIBB
LENGTH (MI):	1.81	# OF LANES - EXISTING:	2
TRAFFIC VOLUMES (ADT):	10,938 (1999)		16,000 (2025)
LOCAL RD. #:		ST./US #	
COMMENTS/REMARKS:	Recommended sidewalks for this project.		
		PLANNED:	3
		FUNDING:	Q 20

PROJECT PHASE	\$ SOURCE	FY 05	FY 06	FY 07	TOTAL
PRELIMINARY ENGR. (000'S)	AUTH.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
RIGHT-OF-WAY (000'S)		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
CONSTRUCTION (000'S)	FED./ST.	\$0	\$3,542	\$0	\$3,542
PROJECT COST (000'S)		\$0	\$3,542	\$0	\$3,542
FEDERAL COST (000'S)		\$0	\$2,834	\$0	\$2,834
STATE COST (000'S)		\$0	\$708	\$0	\$708
LOCAL COST (000'S)		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
DOT DISTRICT:	3	CONGRESSIONAL DIST:	8	RDC:	MG
Fund 1 For PI 1:		Fund 2 For PI 2:		Fund 3 For PI 3:	

PROJECT LOCATION



2 Vineville Ave

**From:** Jonathan.Cox@dot.state.ga.us  
**To:** David <FHWA> Grachen  
**Date:** 6/27/01 7:41AM  
**Subject:** RE: Forest Hills Road prokject--Macon

David;

Actually I will not be at work on Tuesday. I am in the middle of moving. I will go ahead and put it on the agenda and I will ask Todd Hill and Melissa Moreland to be here (since they are actually doing all of the work). I will ask Parks to sit in with me.

As far as all of the comments from the Public Hearing, we are still getting them in the mail, I got the package from Mr. Chapel yesterday, and I am not expecting to see the court reporter's until next week or so (she had a full table most of the night).

From what I gathered at the public hearing, most comments were against the project for the following two reasons: 1. They did not think that Forest Hill Road had the traffic counts to be widened and 2. They just simply did not want Forest Hill Road widened because of their homes.

I ask Genetha Rice-Singleton (designer) to be there on Tuesday and Mr. Palladi may attend (he has attended most meetings for this project).

Do you want a copy of the comments that I have received so far?

Thanks

JC

-----Original Message-----

From: David Grachen [mailto:David.Grachen@fhwa.dot.gov]  
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2001 4:56 PM  
To: gary.langford@dot.state.ga.us  
Cc: Jonathan.Cox@dot.state.ga.us; Marcus Wilner;  
thill@moreland-altobelli.com  
Subject: Re: Forest Hills Road prokject--Macon

Gary,

See the attached message from Tom Scholl in Macon. As I have gotten several letters recently from CAUTION MACON regarding the proposed project, I have asked Jonathan to put this project on the agenda for discussion at the July 3rd monthly meeting. I would appreciate you reviewing this e-mail and discussing this issue also on the 3rd. If you cannot attend the meeting I would appreciate you reviewing his comments and sending me a response that I could review and pass along.

DG  
6/26



>>> tomscholl 06/26/01 01:30PM >>>

I identified a number of concerns in my response to the EA, however one concern has me mystified: The projected traffic volumes.

The last year an actual count was taken, according to P&Z who publish GDOTs local volume counts, was 1998; most 1999 figures are estimates. When I examine the three places in the project area where counts were recorded for 1998 and five years earlier I find negative growth on all three count sites. When I go back to 1990 I find either negative growth or very minimal growth. Growth is flat since 1990. Then I looked at the EAs projected volumes from 2024. The EA listed volumes on places not monitored by GDOT. Since I had no history to compare the additional places these predictions were meaningless to me. However when I compared the EAs projected volumes in the places where GDOT recorded volumes in 1998, I found that the EA projects 4% annual growth for Forest Hills Road through the year 2024!!! What in the world could possibly explain this kind of (nearly impossible) growth on a road which is already 95% developed? Is the road being designed to accommodate a growth which is extremely unlikely? The EA is silent about why such growth is projected. I would be interested in knowing in the recorded annals of FHwy history if any roadway in a residential area in a town like Macon ever sustained 4% annual growth for 26 straight years?

I know that projected traffic volumes are often a product of computer programs like TP Plus. In the interest of accountability and full public disclosure, would it not be a good idea for EAs and EISs to reveal in a clear and understandable format all assumptions and sources of data fed into the program. Clearly because the computer says so should not be an acceptable standard.

**From:** David Grachen  
**To:** Wilner, Marcus  
**Date:** 6/25/01 3:31PM  
**Subject:** Re: Questions from Lee Martin

Marcus,

Here is my reply to your (Lee's) questions. I inserted my responses after the questions listed below and tried to keep it somewhat brief. However, some of the answers are complex. Feel free to edit this response as you like and pass it along to Lee or have him call me directly for a more in-depth discussion.

If you have any further questions, or if I can explain any of these responses further, let me know.

DG  
6/25

>>> Marcus Wilner 06/15/01 12:56PM >>>  
David,

I got a call from Lee Martin in Macon today. He had some general questions about noise levels and specific questions about the Forest Hill project that I was hoping you could address.

1) Basically, he hasn't seen the EA for the project, but says that it was mentioned at a public meeting that the EA says that the noise levels are above the "Federal standards" for the project. GDOT stated that since they can't fix the problem, it's OK for high noise level.

**RESPONSE:**

The GDOT has a noise policy that we have approved back in 1998. It is a public document and can be provided. Our noise regulations are in 23 CFR 772. They can be accessed via the FHWA website. In short, noise impacts are measured. If there is an noise impact, noise abatement must be considered to mitigate the impact. For noise abatement to be constructed, it must be determined to be reasonable (through a formula that considers the cost of wall versus the number of impacted and benefitted receivers) and must provide an adequate noise reduction (greater than 5 dBA). Compared to other States, Georgia's noise policy has a low threshold for determining reasonableness (ie, we build more walls).

For the Forest Hill Road project the EA indicates that there were 39 impacted receivers. 14 on the portion from Vineville to Wimbush, Unit (1), and 25 on the portion from Wimbush to Northside, Unit (3). 7 of the 14 on Unit (1) are impacted under the existing situation, as are 6 of the 25 on Unit (3). The driveway openings that would be required for the noise walls render them ineffective, therefore noise abatement was determined to not be reasonable on this project.

2) Apparently, there is a creek in the project area that was responsible for washing out F. Hill Road in the 80's. This creek was not addressed in the EA. Why?

**RESPONSE:**

The EA identifies 3 stream crossings in the document S1, S2, and S3. S1 and S2 are two crossings of an unnamed, intermittent tributary to Sabbath Creek. The S1 crossing is on Forest Hill. The S2 crossing is on the same tributary on re-aligned Old Lundy Road. The S3 crossing is on Forest Road and is a crossing of the perennial stream Sabbath Creek. There is a map in the document showing the creek locations. Since I cannot tell if the creek Lee is referring to is in

addition to these three, please request further information from him regarding its location and I will request GDOT investigate it.

3) The EA presents only 2 choices - the no-build and the alternative planned by GDOT. He asked "Shouldn't other alternatives be addressed? When is the appropriate time for them to suggest design alternatives?"

**RESPONSE:**

As was discussed in regards to the Houston Road project, an EA may be prepared for one or more build alternatives and compare/contrast that against the no-build alternate. Depending on the complexity of the project, sometimes our EAs consider numerous alternatives. However, there is no requirement like there is in an EIS to evaluate the full spectrum of reasonable alternatives.

For the Forest Hill project, the document cites that a 4-lane median section all the way from Vineville to Northside was the previous GDOT concept. It is/was my understanding that the 3-lane typical section came from the locals/Moreland-Altobelli in response to community input. Therefore, I am uncertain about the basis for the opposition/source of recent controversy regarding the letters we have recently received on the project. I have asked GDOT to give me a briefing on the PIM and discuss the issues in more detail at our 7/3/01 monthly meeting. Let me know if you want to attend.

Do you have any involvement with this project and if so, can you address his concerns? I'll be out next week Mon.-Wed., but I left it with him that I would respond to him the week of the 25th. Jessie is also working on an ITS question he had.

I'll follow-up with you next week.

Thanks,  
Marcus

CC: Cox, Jonathan

**From:** teeth@macon.mindspring.com  
**To:** hubsmtg.gwhub("joe.palladi@dot.state.ga.us")  
**Date:** 6/29/01 11:39AM  
**Subject:** FOI request for Forest Hill Road and Western Loop

Dear Mr Palladi,

This is a request under FOI.

Public information the GaDOT has gathered is needed by the affected citizens. Specifically:

- 1- A [one] copy of the 3 [15 foot long - rolled] Property ROW Maps used at the EA meeting at Springdale School in Macon on Monday 6-11-01.
- 2- All Written Comments collected on, at and after that meeting:
- 3- Conceptual Maps of the "Western Loop"
- 4- Contract with Moreland Altobelli for design of these two projects.
- 5- All Written Comments collected on, at and after the "Western Loop" meeting held Thursday, June 28.

50-100 Macon residents are planning to meet on the evening of Tuesday, July 10.

Meeting Place - will be announced next week.

I am offering the GaDOT a deposit for the safe return of these documents. We would need to pick up this information no later than Monday, July 9.

And/or Mr Joe Johnson at Moreland Altobelli has implied he would bring them to a meeting. And/or the citizens could meet at any of your local offices large enough to accommodate our group. If we meet at DOT offices, we will need electric power, adequate lighting, seating, tables, projection capabilities, walls for taping maps and charts. We will bring our own refreshments and clean-up after the meeting.

Thank-you in advance for your cooperation,  
- Lindsay Holliday

B cc to CautionM

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Marie and Lindsay Holliday  
(h) (478) 742-8699 3091 Ridge Ave. 31204  
(o) 746-5695 360 Spring Street Macon, GA 31201  
Homepage: <http://www.hollidaydental.com>

**CC:** Larry <FHWA> Dreihaupt

Cox, Jonathan

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From: Williams, Rich  
Sent: Monday, July 02, 2001 2:38 PM  
To: Cox, Jonathan  
Subject: FW: Forest Hill Road - Macon, GA

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FYI

-----Original Message-----  
From: Keeper, Harvey  
Sent: Friday, June 22, 2001 2:48 PM  
To: Williams, Rich  
Subject: FW: Forest Hill Road - Macon, GA

FYI

-----Original Message-----  
From: Ben Byrd [mailto:benbyrd@home.com]  
Sent: Thursday, June 21, 2001 9:37 PM  
To: keeper,harvey  
Subject: Forest Hill Road - Macon, GA

Dear Mr. Keeper-

I grew up on Forest Hill Road and though I no longer live there, I visit my family 3 or 4 times a year. I fail to see the need to expand the lanes based on the amount of traffic on the road. I pull out onto Forest Hill Road at all hours of the day and evening and there is never so much traffic that it takes even a minute to get a clear spot in traffic. The problem I see is the speed with which the few cars driving on the road are traveling. The other day (Sunday, June 17) I was driving from Northside Drive towards Old Lundy Drive. I drove the whole way to my parent's driveway with a gray-haired lady on my bumper. I was driving the speed limit. A traffic light at the Old Lundy area would greatly increase the safety of the road. I hope you will seriously consider my information. Thank you.

Mary Holliday Byrd (615)352-5187  
106 Westover Drive, Nashville TN 37205

Comments re: Forest Hill Road, Bibb County, Georgia  
STP-3213(1) and STP-3213(3)/BRMLB-3213(5),  
P.I. Nos. 350520 and 351130/351135

Public Hearing, Monday, June 11, 2001, Springdale Elementary School, Macon, GA

I oppose the Forest Hill Road projects cited above, and find the Environmental Assessment for those projects sorely lacking in scope and accuracy.

1. Significant impacts from the proposed project extend beyond the narrowly defined limits of the project; the Environmental Assessment should include and address those impacts:
  - a) A historic neighborhood on Park Street will be significantly impacted by the induced traffic from the project and improvements required on Park Street subsequent to its completion.
  - b) A new "Northwest Parkway" is required to handle induced traffic that proceeds west from the project, impacting several quiet neighborhoods and agricultural areas.
  - c) Significant increases in traffic are projected for Wimbish Road and Old Lundy Road, the result of induced traffic from the project.
  - d) Historic properties and districts on and adjacent to Vineville, Hardeman/Georgia Avenue/Mulberry Street and Forsyth Avenue/Cotton Street will be significantly impacted by the increased traffic from the project and future improvements and widening required on the Vineville corridor subsequent to its completion. A substantial portion of the induced traffic would otherwise utilize Riverside Drive and I-75/I-16, sparing those districts and neighborhoods.
  - e) Increased traffic will be induced through Tom Hill Sr., which is currently congested due to commercial frontage and access.
  - f) Future projects are already anticipated for several of the areas cited above; feasible design alternatives for those projects will be severely limited by the increased traffic volume resulting from the Forest Hill Road improvements. Responsible planning dictates that both planning and environmental assessment be undertaken in a comprehensive rather than segmented manner.
  
2. On page 46 of the Environmental Assessment it is stated that "there would be no major adverse impacts to neighborhoods, services and/or community facilities as a result of project implementation." This statement is plainly false:
  - a) The EA itself identifies 39 residential properties fronting on Forest Hill Drive where noise levels of 74dBA are projected for the design year; no mitigation measures are "reasonable or feasible."
  - b) The termination of access from Forest Hill Road to Overlook Avenue, The Prado, Drury Drive (all of which will be cul-de-sac'd) seriously degrades access and emergency services to those neighborhoods and to the greater Overlook area. The nearest fire station is located on Forsyth Road at Ridge; the distance from that station to properties in the Overlook area will be increased by a minimum of 1.5 miles of circuitous local streets; the distance from a secondary station on Northside Drive will be likewise increased. Police and ambulance vehicles will be denied a choice of direct routes into the greater Overlook area. Local traffic will be forced through a limited number of local streets, substantially increasing traffic loads and speeds on those streets.
  - c) The nature of the neighborhoods served by Forest Hill Road will change when they become isolated enclaves rather than a larger coherent neighborhood anchored by the Forest Hill Road residential area.
  - d) The proposed improvements will marginalize residential properties adjacent to Forest Hills Road. Pressure will ensue for conversion of frontage properties from marginal residential to even more marginal commercial/office, completely destroying the residential quality of the immediate and greater area (Vineville provides an infamous local example of this process).



## **Traffic Volumes:**

The EA lists traffic volumes for six sites. The DOT only takes yearly volumes for three sites in the project area publishes them on the internet along with the date of the count. The EA should identify their source of this traffic count information since it contains more data than the DOT provides.

When comparing the volumes that the DOT monitors, the EA numbers are exaggerated. When the actual count is in error, it casts serious doubt on their forecasted volumes.

The historic DOT traffic volumes since 1990 reveal that the volumes go up and down each year; and when considering the decade the volumes have mostly remained the same. The up and down volume changes can easily be explained by differences in weather conditions on the day the count was taken. The area is completely developed and increases to the traffic will only be due to new construction of the road. If there is nothing built, the EA predicts the highest count on Forest Hills Road will be 16,200. If the road is built, as is proposed, the EA predicts this count will rise to 28,400! The 16,200 figure is not that high a count when comparing it to a two lane road like West Paces Ferry Road in Atlanta, which easily carries 30,000 cars a day because it has good intersection design.

## **Accidents:**

The EA makes safety claims about the road which are unjustified when comparing these claims to the DOT accident data for the road. The EA appears to overstate the number of accidents for 1997 and 1998 by circa 20%. The 1999 numbers compare well with the DOT figures and are not excessive for similar roads. (Witness the EA's own figures showing the inflated accident numbers are still only 1.1 and 1.3 times the statewide rate for 1997 and 1998, respectively.) However, in each of these years 50-60% of the accidents in the project area could be addressed by attending to 4 or 5 intersections.

The EA points out that in two of the years considered there was a fatality. This is too small a statistic to draw any significant conclusions, but the DOT describes the cause of both fatalities as "other." (Not "rear end" which the EA says needs to be addressed..) Thus, it is unclear road design would even address the causes of these fatalities. It is improper, given the data offered and that available from the DOT, to use the fatalities as a justification for the proposed design or construction of the road. Proper attention to the limited number of intersections would be an efficient, practical, and reasonable solution to meet safety concerns on Forest Hills Road.

Accidents increased on the project area of Forest Hills Road by 40-50% in 1999 (62) from the forties in 1997 and 1998. The EA's inaccurate totals for 1997 and 1998 disguised this problem. The design of the road was unaltered. Why the increase? Are the 1999 figures in error? (The 62 total does not include the accident increase totals cited in the following paragraph.) The EA does not address this significant result; it definitely should.

In 1997 and 1998 there were a total of 3 accidents at the intersection of Forest Hills Road and Northside Drive. Since the road program's intersection work and tremendous widening of both roads at this intersection, 1999 DOT data shows 9 accidents at the intersection—three times the prior two year's joint totals! Perhaps our engineers should reexamine their assumption that widening = safety. Studies show widening encourages excessive speed.

## **Alternatives:**

Unfortunately, a road with well designed intersections is not considered as an alternative. Adding additional lanes and making each one 12 to 14 feet wide is the only remedy considered. These neighborhood unfriendly

solutions need to yield to creative and competent designs engineers are offering to other cities. There are win/win solutions to Forest Hills Road and most of our other roads but our engineers appear unable to discover them.

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Exhibit 2

# Widening of Forest Hill Road Public Meeting Monday June 11, 2001 4 - 7 p.m. at Springdale Elementary School

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GaDOT) is holding a public meeting about the widening of Forest Hill Road. They have only two proposals on the table: a "no build" which would leave things as they are, or the over-built 4 lanes with a median section. Street closures are also a part of this plan. **This is the only opportunity for neighborhoods to demand that other less intrusive proposals be advanced and considered by GaDOT.**

## Who Should Be Concerned?

Residents of the neighborhoods served by Forest Hill Road, Old Lundy Road, Wimbish Road, Park Street, Ridge Avenue, the "Northwest Parkway", and Vineville Avenue and the streets that connect to them.

If this project is approved, traffic will increase significantly in all of these neighborhoods, and will greatly increase the future possibility of widening other streets in these areas.

## What Is Proposed?

**Wimbish to Vineville:** Four 12-foot lanes separated by a 15-foot grassed median (100' right-of-way). This is similar to the section of Eisenhower Pkwy by the mall, or imagine Zebulon Rd. with a 15' grass median instead of the turning lane.

**Northside to Wimbish:** Three lanes, two 13-foot travel lanes separated by a 14-foot "suicide" lane (70' right-of-way). Sidewalks and curb and gutter are included in the rights-of-way for both sections.

Right now Forest Hill functions as a road that collects traffic from local neighborhoods. In road design terminology this is called a residential collector road. The proposed project will change the classification of this neighborhood road into what is called an arterial road. Arterials serve to funnel large amounts of traffic moving at high rates of speed to a remote destination; the next classification is an interstate! This over-wide, over-built road will pass through a number of established and thriving neighborhoods (it should be noted that the lane width on the interstates through downtown Atlanta is only 10.8 feet!) Arterials also increase traffic in surrounding neighborhoods. This is called "induced traffic."

Over-built proposals like this are the products of obsolete thinking. GaDOT's planning and design department has a nation-wide reputation for being backward and outdated. There are much more creative and efficient ways to move traffic and protect neighborhoods than those proposed for this project.

## Will This Project Increase Safety?

A resounding NO! Study after study shows that the safest roads are those that require adherence to the speed limit by their design. It may seem to be illogical, but the safest roads are our beautiful tree-lined, curving roads. Widening roads only urges drivers to increase the speed at which they travel, and increases the **severity** of injuries in an accident.

Improvements along this road are necessary to improve safety, but these should be compatible with the needs of the neighborhood. None of these kinds of solutions are offered in the proposal from GaDOT. We should demand that GaDOT go back to the drawing board and submit to us a safer, neighborhood-friendly design.

This project will also throw more traffic onto side streets creating new and dangerous conditions on roads that are now safe. None of these broader impacts have been studied by the officials.

Access by emergency services (ambulance, fire, and police) to Overlook Avenue, The Prado, Drury Drive, and the greater Overlook area will be seriously compromised by proposed road closures and cul-de-sacs.

Exhibit 2a

## What Are The Impacts?

is project will drastically change the residential character of the long established neighborhoods in the area. In addition to the dangers associated with living along a wide road with high volumes of speeding traffic, the 39 properties fronting Forest Hill will experience noise levels that are in excess of legally allowed federal limits. This project does not include any plans to bring noise levels into compliance with these federal standards!

Implementation of this project will result in a domino effect of negative impacts to all surrounding neighborhoods. In addition to Forest Hill Road, all connecting roads will experience an increase in traffic volume, speed, and noise. Traffic will also increase on Vineville, and this will expand these same damaging impacts to the neighborhoods along this corridor.

The residential character of Forest Hill Road will be compromised. As we have seen along Vineville Avenue, once a road becomes an arterial the properties that line it become commercial.

This project is a waste of our tax dollars. There are alternatives that will solve the minor problems on Forest Hill Road that are far less expensive and will not destroy our neighborhoods. Macon's neighborhoods are one of our greatest assets. Why should we pay to destroy them?

## Are There Alternatives?

Yes! If turn lanes are added where necessary then Forest Hill remains a residential collector road. Through traffic will then be encouraged to use Northside to Riverside/I-75. Interchange improvements such as the addition of dedicated right, left, and thru lanes from Ridge to Vineville would substantially alleviate congestion at that point. Sidewalks/bike lanes would provide non-vehicular alternatives, support future expansion of Macon's transit system, preserve our neighborhoods, and add to our quality of life.

## Where Are We In The Process?

The meeting on 6/11/01 is being held to receive comments on a document called the Environmental Assessment(EA). If this document is approved, and it will be unless there is significant objection from the neighborhoods, then the GaDOT's "preferred alternative" will be built. **This is the only opportunity for neighborhoods to demand that other less intrusive proposals be advanced and considered by GaDOT.**

## What You Can Do

Attend the meeting. Call your neighbors and ask them to go. At the meeting, make your comments **in writing or to the court reporter**. This is absolutely vital. **Oral comments are not a part of the official record.** Keep a copy of your written comments.

If you do not like this plan say **NO**, and demand that GaDOT return to Macon with a less intrusive proposal. Ask your neighborhood ambassador (they are wearing a yellow ribbon) if you need help cutting through GaDOT's propaganda and technical jargon. Remember, they are in the business of building roads, **NOT** preserving your neighborhood!

In addition to making comments at the meeting, please express your concerns in writing to:

Harvey D. Keepler, State Environmental /Location Engineer, Georgia Department of Transportation, 3993 Aviation Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30336

Larry R. Dreihaup, P.E., Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, Atlanta Federal Center, 61 Forsyth St., SW, Suite 17T100, Atlanta, GA 30303.