

Residents were right about Forest Hill Road all along

By LINDSAY HOLLIDAY

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The residents were right in the beginning, and that hasn't changed. Evidence continues to build that supports their collective vision for Forest Hill Road. We have read all the hundreds of official residents' comments from 2001, 2006 and 2011. The residents seem prescient about the following issues:

- **Walkability and safety:** "Safe routes to schools" is a Federal Highway Administration initiative (kids obesity), adopted by the Macon Area Transportation Study that would favor the residents' designs for Forest Hill.

- **Livability:** AARP recently awarded Macon an Age-Friendly Community designation that assumes road designs similar to the residents' designs for the road.

- **Traffic calming:** A key part of the residents' design for Forest Hill that is fundamental to the above criteria.

- **Tree canopy:** The Macon Tree Commission and proposed ordinances all favor the residents' plans for Forest Hill.

- **Roundabouts:** The Georgia Department of Transportation didn't build a roundabout in 2001, and it ridiculed the residents who promoted them. Now with dozens of roundabouts in planning, GDOT criteria for roundabouts fits all the critical intersections along Forest Hill.

Macon and Bibb County, needs to know

the truth about GDOT vs. residents' plans:

- Have the residents offered a true compromise? Yes. 2008.

- Has GDOT offered compromises? No. Never. None.

- Are the residents offering modern designs that will save taxpayers money? Yes. Ones that are energy efficient and propose self-enforcement of traffic speeds.

- Are the residents against widening the roadway? No. The resident plan is twice as wide as the road is now.

Maconites overwhelmingly opposed GDOT's plans in 2001, and formally offered a compromise in 2008. This compromise offered in mediation was rejected by GDOT.

The Forest Hill Road neighbors spent about \$10,000 and many hundreds of man-hours to bring an internationally acclaimed urban road design expert, Rick Chellman, to the 2008 mediation where we developed and promoted a road plan that is much larger than the current Forest Hill Road, and it is almost as large as the GDOT design.

The GDOT plan was bad in 2001, and it looks even worse in 2012, given new information available to the public.

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