

The mayor's road

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to Spyros Dermatas' letter in The Telegraph on Good Friday. While it is true that Forest Hill Road is "Not the mayor's road" in the sense that the mayor did not personally pay for this mess, it is also true that the FHR project was stalled and the Georgia Department of Transportation did not plan to proceed until the mayor wrote them an official letter on July 6, 2009.

In another letter on July 22, 2010, the mayor asked U.S. Rep. Jim Marshall to back off and avoid any official inquiries that "would delay the project's implementation." The mayor and Bibb County Commission Chairman Sam Hart wrote to Marshall, "We trust the project will be allowed to go forward as planned."

Both letters are web posted and their tone suggests the project was on life support and would have died without active promotion by the mayor. As far as safety of the road design, several attorneys and road design experts who are not beholden to GDOT have stated that "clearly, GDOT is not using the safest designs"

GDOT's current plan is too wide and too fast for an established residential neighborhood. Civic planners know from experience that putting unnecessary thoroughfares in our neighborhoods leads to both sprawl and blight.

However, it is not too late to change the final striping plan to make the road safer. We can always change the striping after GDOT is finished, but it is much cheaper to change the plan now. A safer striping plan has been presented to the mayor. It is not too late for the mayor to exert wise leadership here and change a lemon into lemonade. Then the mayor might proudly claim FHR as his.

— Lindsay D. Holliday
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FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 2014

THE TELEGRAPH

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