

members no longer have access to the base. Is he aware of what the Navy League does to support the sea services on the base? I think

With great interest and some surprise I have been reading the social media comments, newspaper articles and op-eds about

resources and general care. Many are just young adults who share in our wonder of the island. We have made lifelong friends due to the

ship with the National Park Service that allows visitors to walk on private property

See **LETTERS**, page 5A

Traveling a road of opportunity

Last month I shared a walk along our beautiful waterfront that is slated for major improvements in our master plan. This month I wanted to look at another area of the city highlighting three other key elements in the plan. The first is a focus on health with an emphasis on aging-in-place services. The second element is ensuring connectivity within and between communities as well as connecting with nature. The third is implementing the kind of zoning ordinances necessary to enhance residential quality of life for our citizens.

Admittedly, this was more of a drive than a walk but I wanted to look at the growing medical complex that is anchored by our hospital. Many Georgia communities do not have the luxury of close access to hospital services so we consider ours a significant boost to our economy as well as a critical benefit to our citizens. Along Lakeshore Drive we find a number of specialty practices and health-related businesses that begin to form a health care complex. Coming back to Kings Bay Road and turning north onto Winding Road, medical offices and facilities continue to spring up within this complex. New expanded aging-in-place options are adding to the concentration of health services in this corridor and is a step in the right direction.



John Morrissey

Guest columnist

Crossing Kings Bay Road, Winding Road commences and here is the relatively new Village at Winding Road, a 52-unit senior apartment community with a gathering center, fitness center, walking paths and green space. A second complex is already planned adjacent to this village. Residents in both will be able to walk or bike to the medical complex and have access to shopping just up the road. Both of these developments focus on independent living, connectivity and smart zoning ordinances as we look at the right way to complete residential infill.

We travel a bit enjoying undeveloped countryside until Winding Road crosses Colerain Road. The widening of Colerain Road, a project in the works for more than 20 years, is a hurricane evacuation route addition that is sorely needed. This major artery is a state transportation project with the city giving attention to bike

and walking trails as a part of the construction, connecting neighborhoods and linking to the planned greenways within Camden County.

The next section of Winding Road includes undeveloped land on both sides so the new zoning ordinances proposed in the master plan are critical to ensuring how new residential or commercial development integrate within St. Marys. There have been public hearings on these proposals and input is still being accepted.

Growing residential development is the next stop with the small Lake Bridge community bustling with build-out of its 127 home lots. Next door is the entrance to Winding River with its clubhouse and resort-style pool. Carefully designed to be a residential community with sidewalks, open space, a soccer field and a wide range of housing options, we continue to see active construction with a variety of home sizes. Children who live here have access to a cut through to walk or bike to Sugarmill Elementary School right across the street. Options are being considered to connect the greenway from Colerain Road via Winding Road to Charlie Smith Sr. Highway and its proposed tabby trail.

You next pass by the Methodist boys home on the right, an important social lifeline to those in need. Earlier built-out residential neighborhoods down the

road include many longtime residents but also a high number of rental properties to accommodate those in the military without transportation who can walk to work as Winding Road reaches the base at Charlie Smith Sr. Highway.

One of the things that struck me on this drive down one of the city's longest streets is how important health services are, how neighborhood connectivity can improve our quality of life and how managed growth is a requirement for our future. We have some great examples along this road. As we grow, the need for housing for all income levels continues, but future plans should include connectivity, greenway connections, easy access to goods and services and a way to remain in touch with our great natural resources. There is currently limited commercial enterprise on large sections of this road but as residential density increases, there will be a demand for planned retail and service commerce.

There are many distinctly different neighborhoods that comprise our great city, each with its own character and assets. If you haven't been out and about lately, I'd encourage you to take a drive or a walk to check them out.

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