

Some questions asked:

Citizens often ask me about major projects in process in the city. One project in particular has an impact on the daily lives of many of St. Marys and Camden County residents. The ongoing construction on Colerain Avenue to convert to four lanes is a state project managed by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Citizens using the Winding Way road to access homes, school or work continue to express concern there is no traffic light at that intersection and worry about safety issues. St. Marys city officials have brought that issue before high level GDOT officials in Atlanta and the Region on a regular basis. St. Marys has no oversight authority but we continue efforts to positively influence GDOT reviews of the criteria necessary to allow a traffic light to be installed at the intersection. Persistence has become our motto in dealing with GDOT and that will not change. We remain confident that a well organized campaign by our citizens coupled with our ability to provide facts and figures regarding safety needs and traffic growth will eventually prevail.

Another area of interest is when the Park Service Ferry dock will be re-opened to make it easier for Cumberland Island visitors to depart from the central location rather than the temporary city loaned dock space near the Gateway property. We work closely with the Park Superintendent because we both know how vital Cumberland Island visitors and tours are to our local economy. Superintendent Gary Ingram is continuing his efforts to have federal dollars available to rebuild their dock. He is hopeful it will be within the next year 2020. St. Marys will continue to provide our dock to the National Park Service and Lang's Ferry Service to help maintain regular ferry trips to Cumberland. In the meantime we will need to reconfigure our phasing plans for building out the new planned docking space for short term boaters. This effort was launched with our winning of the \$1.2 million dollar boating infrastructure grant, our engineers are already working on the design alternatives. Our commitment to the Park Service and Lang's for ongoing ferry service to the Island is paramount. To counter rumors, the city does not charge the Park Service nor Lang's a rental fee for the dock. The business is too critical to downtown merchants and the Park Service for us to take any other approach.

Speaking of the downtown area, the St. Marys Street improvement project is moving along on schedule. The necessary street closure and detours for the last couple of weeks have been well managed and local businesses have collaborated and cooperated in continuing to find creative ways to keep bringing customers in while the improvements are underway. The repair of the downtown boat ramp was impacted by subsurface anomalies that required additional engineering and design work. Fortunately, we have access to expert world class marine engineers who were able to find a solution that was compatible with the project design and our insurance carrier guaranteeing there will be no additional cost to the city to implement the revised solution. It will delay the opening of the

boat ramps to September of 2019 with close timing to the St. Marys Street project completion.

Moving on to the midtown area, the new Verizon building construction is underway and will add yet another business to the central part of our city. With the recent expansion of Bealls and the growing foot traffic from the Veterans Health Clinic that serves both South Georgia and North Florida veterans, the shopping plaza is becoming a more vibrant area. Centrally located, its revival is important to the new housing developments underway in the area. Those are all on track with appropriate permitting and I will report more when construction is underway.

Construction is always viewed as a move forward and that is a positive for the citizens of St. Marys. We should all compliment all the merchants, residents and visitors who are graciously making their way around construction improvements. A better St. Marys is in the works.