



DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Finding

Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center • 305 Research Drive, Athens, Georgia 30605-2795 • 706.369.5650 • Fax 706.369.5792 • www.negrdc.org

TO: Affected Local Governments and Other Interested Parties
FROM: James R. Dove, Executive Director *JRD*
DATE: November 12, 2008

The Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (RDC) has completed its review of the following Development of Regional Impact (DRI). The Northeast Georgia RDC reviewed the proposed project with regard to conflicts with regional plans, goals, and policies and the impacts it might have on the activities, plans, goals, and policies of other local jurisdictions and state, federal, and other agencies. The finding does not address whether the DRI is or is not in the best interest of the local government.

DRI ID Number: 1958
Name of Proposed Project: Meadowlands
Submitting Local Government: Oconee County

Finding: After review of information submitted by the host government and comments received from affected agencies, the Northeast Georgia RDC finds that the development is in the best interest of the Region and therefore the State.

Additional Comments:

The Committee noted the following aspects of the development that contributed to this finding:

- The conservation and utilization of on-site natural features to protect water quality as well as the implementation of alternatives to conventional stormwater best management practices such as pervious paving materials, bioretention strips, and raingardens in addition to traditional structural BMP's.
- The significant replacement of tree canopy through replanting as identified on the site plan.

The review produced the following concerns:

- The estimated traffic impacts have the potential to greatly exceed the road network's ability to accommodate the additional traffic volumes and will likely decrease the level of service of several intersections as identified in the Traffic Impact Analysis, specifically the intersection of U.S. Highway 78 and Dials Mill Road.

Should the project be pursued, the following recommendations are made:

- The developer should coordinate closely with Oconee County and the Georgia Department of Transportation to implement all improvements discussed in the traffic study. All intersections within proximity to the project site should be monitored to ensure that these intersections are signalized, when warrant criteria are met.
- Every attempt should be made to reduce the amount of impervious surface and/or increase the use of pervious pavement, particularly in the parking areas likely to be less in demand. Less impervious pavement can be achieved by maximizing shared parking between establishments, thereby reducing the square footage of parking area, or building multi-story structures thus accommodating more than one establishment in single-establishment footprints.
- It is essential that the developer conform to regulations outlined in local ordinances, the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act, and NPDES Permit for Construction Activities throughout the development phases to ensure minimal impact on the surrounding areas. Conservation practices should be utilized to minimize soil erosion during all phases of land-disturbing activity.
- The project should be phased concurrent with the ability of supportive infrastructure to accommodate the additional growth.



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Request for Comments

Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center : 305 Research Drive, Athens, Georgia 30605-2795 : 706.369.5650 :

Fax 706.369.5792 : www.negplanning.org

DRI Number:	DRI #1958 Meadowlands, Oconee County
Name of commenting organization:	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Department:	Planning Department
Address:	120 W. Dougherty Street
Telephone:	706.613.3515
Email address:	leahstewart@co.clarke.ga.us
Date:	November 06, 2008

November 6, 2008

Jim Moneyhun
Northeast Georgia RDC
305 Research Drive
Athens, GA
30605-2795

Mr. Moneyhun,

The proposed mixed use development consisting of 425,212 square feet of commercial space and a 233,341 square foot continuing care retirement community located on 110.55 acres in Oconee County (Project ID DRI-#1958), as proposed, would not have a measurable impact on Athens-Clarke County's water quality, transportation infrastructure, solid waste management services, natural or historic resources, or other community facilities or services.

However, as part of this DRI review, Planning Staff offer the following comments: If the project plans to use water available from the Bear Creek Reservoir, the amount of water used should not exceed the amount allotted to the jurisdictions in which the proposed project is to be located. Also the applicant indicates that the percentage of impervious surface at build-out is expected to be 36.63% and that bioretention strips, rain gardens, pervious paving, as well as structural BMP's will be employed to address water quality. The

applicant should also include practices to provide stream channel protection and other requirements indicated in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual as well as local requirements for Compliance with NPDES Stormwater Phase II regulations for post construction run-off.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding the enclosed materials, please contact Brad Griffin, Planning Director, or myself at (706) 613-3515.

Leah Graham Stewart
Long Range Planner



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DRI Number:	DRI #1958 Meadowlands, Oconee County
Name of commenting organization:	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Department:	Historic Preservation Division
Address:	34 Peachtree Street NW, Suite 1600
Telephone:	404-651-6452
Email address:	Melina.Vasquez@dnr.state.ga.us
Date:	November 06, 2008

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has reviewed the information submitted concerning the proposed project in Oconee County, Georgia. Our comments are offered to assist the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center in assessing the potential impacts of the proposed project as it pertains to the Georgia Planning Act.

Regarding historic structures that may be located in the area, we recommend a survey be conducted by a qualified historian to identify historic structures located within the project's area of potential effects.

Regarding archaeological resources, due to the size and topographic setting of the subject property, we recommend that an intensive (Phase I) archaeological survey be conducted by a qualified archaeologist.

We offer these comments now as technical assistance; however HPD looks forward to reviewing this project under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act if at some stage in the development federal funding, permitting or licensing becomes required, or under the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA) if state funds are utilized.

If we may be of further assistance, or for more information on compliance requirements for Section 106 or GEPA, please contact Michelle Volkema at (404) 651-6546.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Wildlife Resources Division

Nongame Conservation Section
2065 U.S. Highway 278, S.E., Social Circle, Georgia 30025-4743
(770) 918 6411

November 7, 2008

Jim Moneyhun
Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center
305 Research Drive
Athens, GA 30605-2795

Subject: Known occurrences of natural communities, plants and animals of highest priority conservation status on or near DRI # 1958, Meadowlands Mixed-Use Development, Oconee County, Georgia

Dear Mr. Moneyhun:

This is in response to your request of October 20 2008. According to our records, within a three-mile radius of the project site there are the following Natural Heritage Database occurrences:

GA *Cyprinella xaenura* (Altamaha Shiner) approx. 3.0 mi. SW of site in the Apalachee River
Apalachee River [High Priority Stream] approx. 2.5 mi. SW of site

* Entries above preceded by "US" indicates species with federal status in Georgia (Protected or Candidate). Species that are federally protected in Georgia are also state protected; "GA" indicates Georgia protected species.

Recommendations:

We have no records of species of concern within the property boundary. However, this could be due to a lack of survey information at this site. There is a record of a species of concern within three miles of the project area and the potential for species of concern at this site. We recommend completing surveys for species of concern before this project begins.

We advocate green growth community planning that focuses on leaving open space in newly developed residential areas. These subdivisions are designed to protect natural habitats by clustering development and minimizing infrastructure, such as paved surfaces and utilities. Development should occur away from sensitive environmental resources, such as streams, wetlands and critical wildlife habitat. Undisturbed buffers of at least 100 feet should be left surrounding any streams or wetlands at the site. Open space should be protected by use of a conservation easement or other legal agreement. The open space may be used for recreation, wildlife habitat and stormwater control. We recommend these cluster developments that set aside as much land as possible to remain in a natural state. This will allow for the conservation of wildlife and natural resources as well as recreation opportunities for residents of the planned development and surrounding communities. For more information on Green Growth Guidelines visit GA DNR Coastal Resources Division website at <http://crd.dnr.state.ga.us/content/displaycontent.asp?txtDocument=969>.

Please be aware that this project occurs near the Apalachee River, a high priority waterbody or within a high priority watershed. As part of an effort to develop a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy for the state of Georgia, the Wildlife Resources division has developed and mapped a list of streams that are important to the protection or restoration of rare aquatic species and aquatic communities. High priority waters and their surrounding watersheds are a high priority for a broad array of conservation activities, but do not receive any additional legal protections. We now have GIS ESRI shapefiles of GA high priority waters available on our website

(<http://www.georgiawildlife.com/content/displaycontent.asp?txtDocument=89&txtPage=13>).

Please contact the Georgia Natural Heritage Program if you would like additional information on high priority waters.

Data Available on the Nongame Conservation Section Website

By visiting the Nongame Conservation Section Website you can view the highest priority species and natural community information by Quarter Quad, County and HUC8 Watershed. To access this information, please visit our GA Rare Species and Natural Community Information page at:

<http://georgiawildlife.dnr.state.ga.us/content/displaycontent.asp?txtDocument=89>

An ESRI shape file of our highest priority species and natural community data by quarter quad and county is also available. It can be downloaded from:

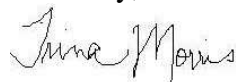
<http://georgiawildlife.dnr.state.ga.us/assets/documents/gnhp/gnhpds.zip>

Disclaimer:

Please keep in mind the limitations of our database. The data collected by the Nongame Conservation Section comes from a variety of sources, including museum and herbarium records, literature, and reports from individuals and organizations, as well as field surveys by our staff biologists. In most cases the information is not the result of a recent on-site survey by our staff. Many areas of Georgia have never been surveyed thoroughly. Therefore, the Nongame Conservation Section can only occasionally provide definitive information on the presence or absence of rare species on a given site. Our files are updated constantly as new information is received. **Thus, information provided by our program represents the existing data in our files at the time of the request and should not be considered a final statement on the species or area under consideration.**

If you know of populations of highest priority species that are not in our database, please fill out the appropriate data collection form and send it to our office. Forms can be obtained through our web site (<http://www.georgiawildlife.com>) or by contacting our office. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Katrina Morris
Environmental Review Coordinator