



# 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:** July 25, 2007

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: 1441  
Name of Proposed Project: Kingston at Lake Oconee  
Submitting Local Government: Morgan 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 review produced the following concerns:**

- Traffic impacts resulting from this project potentially exceed the road network's ability to accommodate the anticipated additional traffic volumes.
- Potential access management issues resulting from the limited number of access points coupled with the length and lack of inter-connectivity of the internal streets adversely impacts emergency response times.
- The potential effect of stormwater runoff and the subsequent impact on water quality specifically due to the project's proximity to Little Sugar Creek, which is on the state's 305(b)/303(d) list for Fecal Coliform violations.
- The possible location of historically significant resources within or near the proposed project site.
- The cumulative impacts of solid waste generation on the available capacity of regional landfills, specifically the diminishing capacity of Oak Grove, one of the receiving landfills.
- The adverse impacts on the capacities of the local school system, police, fire and emergency services resulting from the proposed project.
- The failure of this project to provide affordable housing.

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

- The developer should coordinate closely with Morgan County, Putnam County, and the Georgia Department of Transportation to implement all improvements discussed in the traffic study to address the potential traffic impacts.
- The developer should address the project layout to mitigate potential access management issues.
- A qualified archaeologist should conduct an archaeological survey prior to any ground disturbing activities.
- The project should be phased concurrent with the ability of supportive infrastructure to accommodate the additional growth.
- The developer should work with the affected school system to identify a phasing schedule minimizing strains on the available school capacity.
- Every effort must be made to comply with all local, state, and federal environmental regulations throughout the development phase to ensure minimal impact on the surrounding areas.



## MORGAN COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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### **Request for Comments RE: DRI-#1441, Morgan County** **Submitted July 9, 2007**

Within the last 24 months, Morgan County Planning and Development staff has worked with Synergy Realty and their partners, Old Mill Realty, as they reviewed and revised the site plan for the proposed project. We have proposed that this project be linked to a development agreement, due to the size and multi-jurisdictional nature of the project. In addition to concerns addressed by the RDC and other commenting agencies, at minimum, we feel the following items need to be addressed by the developer.

1. **Access to the site.** Presently, access to the site is limited. Of the multiple routes to the site, all of them have their disadvantages for a project this size. Staff has expressed concerns about access to the site repeatedly, and the traffic impact analysis submitted by the developer with their application shows significant detriment to the LOS of several of our county intersections. As of the date of this memorandum, the developers have not proposed any improvements. Additionally, the revised concept plan submitted with the rezoning action shows that the new main entrance to the project is proposed to be on Kingston Road. Heretofore, the main entrance had been proposed off of Marshall Road at North Sugar Creek in Putnam County. Staff submits the following main areas of concern in regard to transportation as a result of this project.
  - a. *I-20 to Highway 441 South (Exit 114) to Cochran Road to Kingston Road:* As one of the most direct routes to this site, staff anticipate that a number of motorists coming from the metro-Atlanta community will use this route to get to the project and to the City of Madison. Cochran Road, though recently resurfaced, will not be sufficient to handle the traffic to this project over time. It is an old road – probably dating to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – running mostly through low density agricultural areas. The sub-surface preparation of the road may be unsuitable to prevent tearing of the asphalt over time due to traffic from this project. Additionally, staff has concerns about safety given the minimum distance of pavement and right-of-way, as well as sharp s-curves.
  - b. *I-20 to Seven Islands Road (Exit 121) to Cedar Grove Road to Kingston Road:* The developer has indicated that they anticipate that this will be the preferred route to get to the project by individuals coming from the metro-Atlanta community. Seven Islands Road is sufficient to accommodate the traffic created by this project, but Cedar Grove Road is not. Along some portions of the road, Cedar Grove Road has less than 18' feet of pavement and limited right-of-way, in addition to sharp s-curves. Staff has concerns about safety given these conditions.
  - c. *I-20 to Highway 441 North (Exit 114) to Highway 441 Bypass to Bethany Road to Kingston Road:* If the main project entrance will be located in Morgan County, Bethany Road is probably most suited to handle the traffic generated by this project. It has sufficient paved surface and right-of-way width to safely accommodate car traffic as well plan for potential widening in the future. There is no way to force traffic from this project to utilize this route, and given the fact that it requires an individual to navigate through the strip commercial development of Highway 441 between I-20 and the Madison bypass, it may prove to be an undesirable route for the average motorist in terms of convenience of access.
  - d. *I-20 to Highway 44 South (Exit 130 in Greene County) to Harmony Road (in Putnam County) to Parks Mill Road (in Putnam County) to North Sugar Creek Road at Marshall Road (in Putnam County):* This route was assumed to be best access to the project when the main entrance was located on Marshall Road at North Sugar Creek. It routes traffic down Highway 44, where DOT has already acknowledged the need for improvements due to the rapidly expanding Lake Oconee region. It goes through two major shopping/ retail complexes, and multiple smaller complexes, that have been developed to serve the needs of Lake Oconee residents. Improvements to Harmony Road have been anticipated due to the substantial level of growth along that road. The

weakness of this route is with North Sugar Creek and Marshall Road. The developer has indicated that they do not plan to improve Marshall Road, which runs along the border of the property in Morgan and Putnam counties. Marshall Road is approximately 11 feet wide, and it is neither paved nor substantially improved for stormwater run-off. Marshall Road needs to be paved to county standards for the entire length of the road to its terminal points at Lake Oconee and Little Road in Putnam County. The developers should also work with Putnam County to improve the shoulders on North Sugar Creek Road, including but not limiting contributing to any fees for right-of-way acquisitions to facilitate suitable grading and improvement of ditches.

2. **Project Entrances.** In accordance with the Morgan County Development Regulations §3.10.3, three project entrances, as proposed, can only accommodate 449 lots. This section requires an additional entrance for every additional 250 lots. Based on the estimate of 1801 residential lots, at minimum this project should have at least 8 points of access. We are willing to work with the developers to identify additional points for entrance into the project that may only be used for emergency purposes, however it is not acceptable to plan a project of this size with only three points of access. Additionally, the developers should plan to install dedicated center turn lanes, as well as acceleration and deceleration lanes into the project at their entrance identified on Kingston Road, and any future public entrance that may be located within Morgan County's jurisdiction. We would also strongly suggest that Putnam County consider a similar requirement for project entrances in their jurisdiction. Given the concerns expressed by staff in Section 1 regarding access to the site, the staff will also suggest that the entrances at Kingston Road and North Sugar Creek Road/ Marshall Road be installed and open at the same time before the first certificate of occupancy is issued to provide options of traffic to access state and federal highways, as well as commercial/ retail centers.
3. **Impact to public school system.** Staff expects the developers to fully cooperate with the Morgan County Board of Education and the Putnam County Board of Education to mitigate potential impacts on the school system as a condition of the proposed development agreement. The developer's traffic impact analysis has identified 682 single family detached housing units will be built in the project; this number alone could have a tremendous impact to the school system if those residences introduce children into the system. Additionally, staff feels it unwise to assume that without any type of mechanism to control occupancy of their residential units, that 1,135 units should be discounted as "recreational," and therefore bear no impact on the public school system. At minimum, the development should be planned so that no neighborhoods straddle the county lines, creating confusion about which school system children will need to attend, and the developer has been made aware that school buses will not travel on private roads in Morgan County. The concept plan submitted with the application indicates a school bus stop on Kingston Road in Morgan County, but no such provision has been indicated in Putnam County.
4. **Fire and Emergency Services protection.** Staff has consistently reiterated our concerns regarding the ability to serve the needs of the proposed project in regard to fire protection and emergency services. The concept plan indicates a space for a firehouse located at the project entrance on Kingston Road, however, the rezoning narrative provides no additional information in regard to addressing our concerns. Specifically, it is unknown if it is the intention of the developer to construct a fully-functional firehouse with all necessary equipment, or if they simply propose to set the land aside. Staff expects the exact requirements of providing fire and emergency service protection to this development to be addressed in the proposed development agreement.
5. **Multi-Jurisdictional Approval.** Staff has expressed concerns to the developer regarding the project encompassing multiple jurisdictions. Staff will not recommend that approval for the rezoning be given until the Putnam County Board of Commissioners have reviewed the rezoning request and are prepared to give rezoning approval to the portion of the project that is located in their jurisdiction. Staff is assuming that all permitting and inspections will be handled based on the jurisdiction the improvement is located in (i.e. Morgan County will permit and inspect only those structures located in Morgan County). Any areas where there may be a conflict in standards, such as road design, stormwater detention standards, right-of-ways, etc, Morgan County shall assume that their requirements shall govern the portions of the property included in Morgan County unless otherwise approved in a development agreement by the Morgan County and Putnam County Board of Commissioners.

6. **Concept Plan.** The staff will recommend that rezoning of the project be tied to the concept plan and application materials submitted at the time of the rezoning application. Any changes to the concept plan, including but not limited to density, phasing of the project, or layout of internal amenities must be approved by the Morgan County Board of Commissioners for the portion of the project located in our jurisdiction as well as all project entrances.
7. **Viewshed Protection.** Staff has expressed concerns regarding the impact that this project will have on the rural vistas in proximity to this site. Additionally, property owners have expressed concerns that the areas designated as “Lake Club” and “Neighborhood 16” will be visible from the right of way along Cedar Grove Road. Staff expect the proposed development agreement to address mitigation of the visual impact to these areas along Cedar Grove Road and Kingston Road.
8. **Agricultural Operations.** Staff has expressed concerns regarding the impact that this project will have on the existing agricultural operations in proximity to this site. Specifically, though this site has limited frontage on Lake Oconee and it proposes to emulate a pattern of resort-style development seen in other counties, it is located in an area that has historically been largely agrarian in nature. The parcel borders land that is currently utilized for the pasturing of cattle, as well as confined animal feeding structures for poultry along Kingston Road. Staff propose that an agricultural use notice and waiver, similar to the language proposed under Article 5 of the Morgan County Zoning Ordinance, be included in the development agreement, and a mechanism established to include said language on all real estate transfers internal to the project.
9. **Historic and Cultural Resources.** The Cultural Resource Assessment submitted in conjunction with this previous application for rezoning identified 26 documented archaeological sites and 2 sites of architectural significance in proximity to this project. Staff expects the developers to fully cooperate in mitigating any effects on these resources, as well as documenting and mitigating the impacts on any additional resources discovered as the project develops as a condition of the proposed development agreement.
10. **Lake Club Site and Improvements to Lake Oconee.** Staff has consistently reiterated our concerns that the project site is located on a small part of Lake Oconee that has limited frontage and shallow depth. Specifically, we have repeated our concerns that the portion of the lake where this project is located may have barely two-feet of water, and is located in a swampy cove. We have expressed concerns that development should have limited impact on the natural environment of this cove, and we have also suggested that the limited access to Lake Oconee may result in a considerable amount of recreational use and boat traffic in an area that is ill-suited for it. The developers have indicated that they have negotiated permits with the Army Corps of Engineers, Georgia EPD, and Georgia Power to reengineer the lake around their property, including dredging and constructing new dams to mitigate swampy areas. Staff will require that written proof of any such permits or agreements be included in the proposed development agreement.
11. **Solid Waste Management.** Presently Morgan County does not have a county-wide system of curb-side garbage collection. Individuals are responsible for transporting waste to dumpsters, and county staff hauls solid waste from the dumpsters to a transfer station. The developer has indicated that they plan to have curb-side garbage collection internal to their project which will be provided by a private collection service. The method of solid waste disposal needs to be specified in the proposed development agreement. Additionally, the county may request that a dumpster site be constructed at the entrance on Kingston Road to address additional concerns of residents in the area.
12. **Housing.** Staff has expressed two primary concerns to the developers of this project in regard to housing needs in the county.
  - a. Morgan County has articulated a need to provide housing that meets the needs of a variety of incomes. In recent months, emphasis has been placed creating housing opportunities for workforce families. The information submitted at the time of the DRI Review does not suggest whether we can expect a workforce housing component to be included in this project. Given the large number of residential units proposed, as well as the diversity of housing types proposed, Staff would like the developer to elucidate if their proposal would include housing targeted at the median household income for Morgan County families.
  - b. Morgan County has expressed concern that the overall plan of the project is untenable in this area, and that elements of the concept plan may not be realized, thus stranding the residents of the

community and Morgan County with a half-built project. Staff has repeatedly informed the developer that their projected build out date of 2015 to be untenable. To ameliorate these concerns, as well as others expressed in regard to impacts on transportation, school systems, and emergency services, staff may recommend that the project be phased, and that the number of building permits be limited to what we think we can reasonably accommodate.

As always, staff is available to discuss or elaborate upon any of these concerns.

Respectfully submitted.



# DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

## Request for Comments

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Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center : 305 Research Drive, Athens, Georgia 30605-2795 : 706.369.5650 :  
Fax 706.369.5792 : [www.negplanning.org](http://www.negplanning.org)

DRI Number:	DRI #1441 Kingston at Lake Oconee
Name of commenting organization:	Middle Georgia RDC
Department:	Planning
Address:	175-C Emery Highway
Telephone:	(478) 751-6160
Email address:	<a href="mailto:pclark@mgrdc.org">pclark@mgrdc.org</a>
Date:	July 11, 2007

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The Harmony Village DRI-#1398 I believe is within the two-mile radius of this proposed development. The Harmony Village development consists of 3200 units, 90,000 sq. ft of commercial space, a 250-unit hotel, a semi-private golf course and an upscale restaurant. It will be located south of Harmony Road near the intersections of Parks Mill and Joseph Roads in Putnam County.

The Preliminary Summary report shows the 24-hour,2-way AADT as 10,166. The traffic analysis report provided with this report identifies the impacts to various intersections, but does not examine the impact of the traffic coming from this development on the surrounding road network. Many of the roads serving this development were designed to carry rural traffic,not the amount expected from this development. The traffic analysis should be revised to examine these impacts, particularly in light to the Harmony Village DRI and other recent DRIs in Putnam County, such as, Harmony Cove-#1313; Lake Oconee-Harmony Road-#1334; and Misty Groves Subdivision-#1346.

Another issue is wastewater treatment. The report indicates the development will tie into the Putnam County system. Putnam County does not operate a wastewater system in this area. You may be referring to the Piedmont Water Company's system. There is also no indication of who will be financing the 3.5 mile sewer main extension.

The final issue will be the impact to schools and the police/fire services in the area. I will let the various school systems address the impact to their respective systems. There should be a closer look on how this development will impact police and fire services from Putnam and Morgan Counties, and what improvement

need to be made to insure adequate level of service to this development.



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DRI Number:	DRI #1441 Kingston at Lake Oconee
Name of commenting organization:	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Department:	Planning Department
Address:	120 W. Dougherty Street
Telephone:	706-613-3515
Email address:	<a href="mailto:leahstewart@co.clarke.ga.us">leahstewart@co.clarke.ga.us</a>
Date:	July 19, 2007

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July 19, 2007

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

Mr. Moneyhun,

Per your request, please find enclosed a completed "Developments of Regional Impact: Comments from Affected Parties" Form prepared by the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department. Comments included on the form were made regarding the proposed residential, commercial and recreational development in the Morgan/Putnam County (Project ID DRI-1441).

In general, the aforementioned project, 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.

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

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 23, 2007  
TO: Jim Moneyhun, NERDC  
CC: Bob Landau, County Commissioner  
FROM: Sharyn Darlington, Director  
RE: DRI # 1441 – Kingston at Lake Oconee

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Approximately one-third of the above referenced project will be located in Putnam County. There will be a significant impact on our county, particularly with respect to the increased traffic and the need to upgrade several of the adjacent roads. As the result of documents we have received and reviewed to date, the following are our main concerns:

Roads: There are two ingress/egress points for this project located in Putnam County. We agree with Morgan County statements in 1. d. of their report. The traffic generated by this project will have the greatest impact on the following roads:

- North Sugar Creek Road: This road, which is 1.06 miles long and runs between Marshall Rd and Park's Mill Rd, has a 40 foot r.o.w. and it appears that the shoulders will need repair to support such level of increased traffic; in addition a new left turn lane from Park's Mill will be required.
- Marshall Road: This road, which 2.12 miles long, has a 40-foot r.o.w. and is unpaved. As this road will probably become the most traveled access to and from this project it will have to be widened and paved from the entrance to the project at the intersection of N. Sugar Creek to Little's Rd.
- Little's Road: This road is 2.41 miles and has a 100-foot r.o.w. While the road appears to be in good repair, the total impact to this road has not yet been evaluated.
- Park's Mill Road: Park's Mill Road is 2.89 miles and has a 100-foot r.o.w. from Harmony Road to N. Sugar Creek Rd. The road is in good repair, but will require a right and left turn lanes at the intersection of Harmony Road.

We understand that a weekend traffic impact study, which Putnam County has requested, is almost completed.

Schools: New schools are being located on Hwy 441 opposite the entrance to Rock Eagle. The Board of Education, having received a copy of the D.R.I., will respond directly with respect to the impact on the school system.

EMS: We have several concerns regarding provision for fire and other emergency services, which must be addressed by Morgan County, Putnam County, and the developer. Included in this will be the future status of the existing fire station located on Park's Mill Rd, which is shared with Morgan County. This issue must be resolved before development begins.

Solid Waste: Putnam County agrees with Morgan County that private collection service must be required.

Multi-Jurisdictional Approval: Putnam County agrees that there should be a development agreement between counties and the developer.