



# 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:** January 9, 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: 1650  
Name of Proposed Project: Sapphire Properties  
Submitting Local Government: Jackson 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 not the best interest of the Region and therefore the State.

### Additional Comments:

#### The reasons for this finding are as follows:

- The proposed development conflicts with Jackson County's Future Land Use map.
- Due to project's location within the Sandy Creek Small Watershed and a significant groundwater recharge area, the Review Committee expressed concern with several issues related to water quality:
  - The use of onsite septic systems
  - The amount of impervious surface and potential effects of stormwater runoff
- The current configuration of the development is not feasible, as GDOT has indicated that access points will not be granted along U.S. Highway 441.
- The cumulative effects of development and the potential adverse impacts on the capacities of local supportive infrastructure particularly water, wastewater, and solid waste service.

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

- If approved, Jackson County's must amend its Future Land Use with regards to the intensity of the proposed development.
- The project should be phased concurrent with the ability of supportive infrastructure to accommodate the additional growth.
- The developer should address the project layout to mitigate stormwater management issues. The project should implement Best Management Practices for stormwater management controls as found in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual ([www.georgiastormwater.com](http://www.georgiastormwater.com)) to minimize the potential adverse impacts on local and regional water quality.
- 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.

DRI Review Committee Members

Tom Mayers, John Middleton, Beverly Montgomery, Mary Quinn,  
Bob Thomas

Date approved by NEGRDC Board of Directors

Chairperson's Signature



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## 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 #1650 Sapphire Properties, Jackson County
Name of commenting organization:	Jackson County Water & Sewerage Authority
Department:	Engineering
Address:	Post Office Box 869, Jefferson, GA 30549
Telephone:	7063671741, ext 227
Email address:	<a href="mailto:falke@jcwsa.com">falke@jcwsa.com</a>
Date:	December 21, 2007

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Engineering reviewed only the estimated water requirement, which was agreed with. The Authority has no capacity to treat sewage in that area.

F.C. Alke, PE  
Chief Engineer



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Fax 706.369.5792 : [www.negplanning.org](http://www.negplanning.org)

DRI Number:	DRI #1650 Sapphire Properties, Jackson County
Name of commenting organization:	Department of Natural Resources
Department:	Historic Preservation Division
Address:	34 Peachtree St, NW, Ste 1600
Telephone:	404-651-6452
Email address:	<a href="mailto:Melina.Vasquez@dnr.state.ga.us">Melina.Vasquez@dnr.state.ga.us</a>
Date:	December 26, 2007

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The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has reviewed the information submitted concerning the proposed project in Jackson 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.



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Fax 706.369.5792 : [www.negplanning.org](http://www.negplanning.org)

DRI Number:	DRI #1650 Sapphire Properties, Jackson County
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:	December 28, 2007

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December 28, 2007

Mr. Moneyhun,

In general, the proposed mixed-use development in Jackson County (Project ID DRI-1650, as proposed, would not have a measurable impact on Athens-Clarke County's transportation infrastructure, solid waste management services, natural or historic resources, or other community facilities or services.

However, the aforementioned project, as proposed, could have a measurable impact on Athens-Clarke County's water quality. Jackson County is not regulated under the state's NPDES Stormwater Phase II rules which require jurisdictions to minimize pollutants in stormwater runoff from development. Given that this site will contribute runoff to our watershed, we suggest that the development be required to comply with all the recommendation specified in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual. At a minimum, the site should provide water quality treatment and stream channel protection volumes for the increase in stormwater through applicable best management practices listed in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual .

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

Thanks,  
Leah Graham Stewart



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Fax 706.369.5792 : [www.negplanning.org](http://www.negplanning.org)

DRI Number:	DRI #1650 Sapphire Properties, Jackson County
Name of commenting organization:	GDOT
Department:	Gainesville-District 1 Preconstruction Office
Address:	2505 Athens Hwy. SE, Gainesville, Ga. 30507
Telephone:	770-532-5520
Email address:	<a href="mailto:robert.mahoney@dot.state.ga.us">robert.mahoney@dot.state.ga.us</a>
Date:	December 31, 2007

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Under GDOT Project# EDS 441(31) Jackson County, which is the widening of SR 15/US 441 to a four lane facility, GDOT acquired access rights along with the real property necessary to construct the new SR 15/US 441 in the area of this proposed development. Based on the acquisition of these access rights in our Right of Way negotiations, it is GDOT's intention to deny breaks in access in the new alignment areas of this roadway. It is requested that this development plan be revisited with access points for this DRI be made to the open access County road system; i.e. Ed Bennett Road and/or Old US 441. Both of this facilities are currently owned and maintained by Jackson County.

# 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

January 2, 2008

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

**Subject: Known Occurrences of Conservation Areas and Special Concern Animals and Plants On or Near DRI # 1650 Sapphire Properties, Jackson County, Georgia**

Dear Mr. Moneyhun:

This is in response to your request of December 14, 2008. According to our records, within a three-mile radius of the project site there is the following Natural Heritage Database occurrence:

Sandy Creek Park [Athens-Clarke County] approx. 2.5 mi. SE 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. A lack of survey information for this area may explain the absence of rare species occurrences. We recommend completing surveys for species of concern before this project is begun. Please also consider the following recommendations when carrying out the project.

We advocate 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 Conservation Subdivisions visit The River Basin Center Website at [http://www.rivercenter.uga.edu/service/tools/cons\\_subdivisions.htm](http://www.rivercenter.uga.edu/service/tools/cons_subdivisions.htm).

## **New Data Available on the Nongame Conservation Section Website**

We have recently updated the Nongame Conservation Section Website!!! You can view the updated rare 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 updated ESRI shape file of our rare species and natural community data by quarter quad and county is also available. It can be downloaded from:

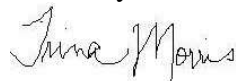
<http://georgiawildlife.dnr.state.ga.us/assets/documents/gnhp/gnhpds.zip>

### **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 special concern 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