

JEKYLL
ISLAND
MASTER PLAN UPDATE

APPENDIX D

Comments on the Draft Master Plan Update



Carl Vinson
Institute of Government
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



Monday, October 11, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Marge Muth

Address

101 e mc nab rd, Apt 121
Pompano beach, Florida, 33060

Email Address

mmmccasket@yahoo.com

Message

I would like to see plans. Havs been spending money and loving it in Jekyll Island for 32 plus yrs. PLEASE DONT SELL IT OFF.

Just my opinion .If I lived there I would like to be on committee.

Marge Muth

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name jim elzer

Address 304 old plantation road
jekyll island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address jimmelzer745@aol.com

Message

Question #1 - Any reason why the JI decision makers don't actually live here? Jekyll Island Authority 2021
Legislative Oversight Committee
Senator Blake Tillery, Chairperson, Vidalia, Georgia
Representative Jon Burns, Vice-Chair, Newington, Georgia
Senator Clint Dixon, Buford, Georgia
Representative Matt Hatchett, Dublin, Georgia
Senator Billy Hickman, Statesboro, Georgia
Representation Don Hogan, St. Simons Island, Georgia
JIA Board of Directors
Joseph B. Wilkinson, Jr., Chairperson, St. Simons Island, Georgia
Robert "Bob" W. Krueger, Hawkinsville, Georgia
William "Bill" H. Gross, Kingsland, Georgia
Hugh "Trip" Tollison, Savannah, Georgia
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Joy Burch-Meeks, Screven, Georgia
Dr. L.C. "Buster" Evans, Bolingbroke, Georgia
Mark Williams, Atlanta, Georgia
Glen Willard, Richmond Hill, Georgia
Dale Atkins, Baxley, Georgia

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name jim elzer

Address 304 old plantation road
jekyll island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address jimmelzer745@aol.com

Message

Question # 2 The golf course Master plan states "The current layout has, according to the Golf Course Master Plan, far surpassed its life expectancy." . Apparently the writers have never experienced Donald Ross, A.W. Tillinghast or any other of a hundred courses that were designed and put in place long before the current Jekyll Island courses which leads me to believe that the evaluator is unqualified to make this statement. Having grown up on these type of venues virtually all of our National Championships are currently played on these courses with minor renovations and they have easily outlived their life expectancy according to the writer's standards. Having said that, take a walk onto any tee aside from the starting holes on both sides and turn around and look back at how far you can go with a backhoe and every hole could be lengthened substantially for College and Professional championships at a fraction of the cost. Problem solved, millions saved

Thursday, September 23, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Cathy Miller

Address

430 Riverview Dr
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address

mjekyll2@gmail.com

Message

I was very pleased to see the addition of the acknowledgement of pickleball and the growing popularity for it that exists all over this country. Hoping that plans will include a number of new, hard surfaced courts. Thank you

Saturday, September 25, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Karyn Cochran

Address

11 Nelson Lane
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address

kunzelka@msn.com

Message

So excited to read that Pickleball is to be considered a priority for inclusion in recreational facility development!!

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

James Ramsden

Address

383 Smith Road
Lake Ronkonkoma, New York, 11779

Email Address

lanirose17@hotmail.com

Message

Please stop developing this island. It drastically is losing its character minute by minute. Stop the endless push to eliminate the Championship Course, also known as Oleander. It is by far the best course and the most beautiful course. (Which is why you want to develop it!) This is not St. Simons nor Hilton Head, please stop chasing their clientele. For the sake of us all, please go back to the inept authority you used to be.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name	Susan Williams
Address	40 LANIER RD JEKYLL ISLAND, Georgia, 31527
Email Address	gapeachbk@gmail.com

Message

Its difficult to imagine input from residents is considered , taking into account the building of Home 2 Suites - an embarrassing, in your face addition that adds nothing to the beauty of Jekyll. So, I submit my concerns hoping someone actually does listen and act on decisions with wisdom not just deep pockets. Jekyll is a small island. It can only handle so much traffic, people, structures and amenities. It is small. My thoughts are simple - leave well enough alone. Jekyll is managed beautifully - always immaculate - problems addressed in a timely manner - a gem for all. It is simply not possible to keep expanding in space that isn't available - nor securing people to work and maintain more structural ventures. Jekyll is special because it is - what it is - an amazing, wonderful, unique little island. NOT MORE buildings, traffic issues, and a constant shortage of staffing for these ventures. People come here because of this unique beauty and setting. Not because it is a mini St Simons Island.

Sunday, October 10, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name	Ernie McDaniel
Address	3048 Sandy Circle Macon, Georgia, 31216
Email Address	TalIdeafman@msn.com

Message

Please. No more development on Jekyll Island. Building The Moorings by the Marina was a very bad idea. We do not need another overdeveloped resort. It would be the ruin of the of the island as well as tourism. The charm and attraction of Jekyll Island is the serenity of the undeveloped spaces, the golf courses, beaches and animal habitats. My wife and I are regular visitors to the island and we would like to continue doing so. Please appoint people to the JIA who actually knows something about land planning and land management. Thank you.

Monday, October 11, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Patricia kuster

Address

P.O. Box 481
Goldston, North Carolina, 27252

Email Address

patriciakuster85@yahoo.com

Message

Leave Jekyll Island the way it is. Leave well enough alone

Monday, October 11, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name	Michelle Zupan
Address	4510 Shawnee Drive Augusta, Georgia, 30907
Email Address	zupan1169@gmail.com

Message

I moved to Georgia almost 17 years ago. Not long after, I discovered the amazing hidden gem of Georgia - Jekyll Island. I've been around the world and Jekyll remains as one of my favorite beaches anywhere. Why? Because it is NOT like any other beaches. The island is NOT overdeveloped. So, I was disheartened to learn that the Master Plan Update does nothing to address the potential for future overdevelopment of the island. PLEASE, don't let Jekyll become another Hilton Head, or worse, Tybee. Please protect this true gem forever.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name David B. and Gayle Whitney Manley

Address 4390 Flippen Trail
Peachtree Corners, Georgia, 30092-3902

Email Address dbmanleypc@gmail.com

Message

We are writing regarding Jekyll Island Authority Board's present draft of Jekyll Island's Master Plan Update (MPU) that we believe requires amendment, and we believe that a moratorium on development of the Island be made, because (1) the MPU fails to take into account the opinions of Georgia visitors and owners of Jekyll Island regarding the impact of overdeveloping the island, (2) the MPU does not include any plan for controlling development of the island in the future, which was recommended in the 2018 Jekyll Island Carrying Capacity and Infrastructure Study, and (3) the MPU does not address proposals for residential and commercial development of the golf courses in the Jekyll Island Golf Course Master Plan so the golf courses become financially self-sustaining.

The Legislative Oversight Committee must require amendment of the MPU since it does not provide sufficient guidance for the Jekyll Island Authority to protect operate and maintain Jekyll Island, specially concerning development and redevelopment of the island. The Master Plan must be amended to address the main concerns of Jekyll Island's users and residents. Jekyll Island is a Georgia gem and failure of the MPU to address development is obvious, egregious, and greatly detrimental to Jekyll's future.

Monday, October 11, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Cam Simpson

Address

2118 princeton Avenue
Camp hill, Pennsylvania, 17011

Email Address

Cg225@aol.com

Message

Please do not build any more hotels.
Most of us can't afford them.
The island must be protected for nature and its beauty

Monday, October 11, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Donnie Powell

Address 1556 Sweetwater Drive
Warner Robins, Georgia, 31088

Email Address dd66rsb@cox.net

Message

10/11/2021–Please Stop development on Jekyll. If you do not, step by step it will become another high rise mess like Panama City or other cities run by money hungry people who do not care about preserving nature for its own precious life and beauty as well as for future generations. Jekyll has been developed enough.

On our/your watch, you could be responsible for preserving or damaging this unique Georgia God-given gift. Please act now to stop development on Jekyll Island.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Joan Lardin

Address 984 Ormewood Ter.
Atlanta, Georgia, 30316

Email Address jodin50@att.net

Message

You have already allowed Jekyll to be priced out of range of most average Georgians. I can't afford most of the hotels now, which was not the intention of the original Jekyll legislation, at the time of its creation as a state park.

PLEASE show some restraint and concern for the coming generations. Jekyll is still, against all odds and developer greed, a natural wonderland that shouldn't end up a textbook example of overdevelopment, suburban sprawl from one end to the other, and a soulless plastic resort destination.

Also, this real estate bubble will burst, and you will be left with acres of PVC jungle. The last recession wiped out the Reynolds, and the next will wipe out everyone who greedily lusts to profiteer off this lovely island.

The millionaires who built on the leeward side were enlightened and wise enough to realize that it was inevitable that a hurricane would eventually knock down anything on the windward beach side. You are whistling past the graveyard by allowing all this depressing development along the beach and on the golf courses, that sooner or later will be doomed to be flattened, flooded and washed out to sea. You will be selling uninformed people real estate that you know is subject to the whims of extreme weather and climate change. Jekyll is a barrier island. It was meant to absorb violent and unpredictable weather and protect the coast; it should not be a developers' playground.

Who wants to visit a high-priced tourist trap where once a pristine and beautiful state park was? Not me.

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Al Tate

Address

958 N. Beachview Drive
Jekyll Is, Georgia, 31527

Email Address

altate1122@gmail.com

Message

See Attached Comments for the Draft Master Plan

Update/Users/altate/Library/Containers/com.apple.mail/Data/Library/Mail Downloads/5D1FB5CF-6B9A-4430-9B04-3AB64194FD20/Master Plan Draft Comments 10:12:21.pages

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name AI Tate

Address 958 N Beachview Dr
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address altate1122@gmail.com

Message

Note, I am resending these comments because I'm not sure my first attempt was successful.
AI

Master Plan Draft Update Comments
by AI Tate 10/12/2021

After reviewing the Master Plan Draft, I offer the following Comments:

During the next 5 years Jekyll Island will be running up against its capacity limits as detailed in our Capacity Study and witnessed by those of us experiencing wait times at the ticket gate, increasing traffic on the multi-use trails, full parking areas, crowded beaches, and long waits to find a place to eat.

Our mandate from state government to be self sustaining for operations and maintenance makes funding/financial security a never ending priority and preoccupation for JIA and the JIA Board. Increasing commercial and residential development have been and continue to be the chosen means for raising revenue. Jekyll is a small island and this answer to our financial health is rapidly coming to a dead end. Now, Jekyll's enhanced new developments/amenities and aggressive international marketing campaign have opened a fire hose of increased visitation that we are losing our ability to cope with. Also, as we have witnessed from previous developments, structures all require maintenance and heavy usage along with the salt particles in our ocean air increase maintenance costs of just about everything. As the new wears off of these new facilities, visitors lose interest and find other places to visit. That then triggers a new round of development to attract them back.

So, I believe there are two important considerations we must address in this master plan. We must move away from building more and more hotels/motels, condominiums, etc. and find more creative ways to create visitor interest that will be less harmful to our natural environment, less expensive to maintain, and more easily sustainable over time. Now that we have this great increase of visitor traffic to Jekyll we need to figure out how to slow and manage it before it does irreparable harm to the character of our island; including our natural assets and the unique charm that attracts all of us and makes Jekyll such a special place. The Master Plan Draft Update does attempt to address this issue, but mostly through the means of manipulating costs at the entrance gate.

How can these concerns be addressed?

I am convinced that the answer to the first consideration is suggested on page 4 of the draft under "Our Values". Guiding principles include "preservation, education, conservation. The Sea Turtle Center points the way. It embodies all of these principles and is very popular for our visitors. Jekyll has a number of other natural assets that could also attract visitors if they were adequately showcased for visitors. Also, moving in this direction is very timely. The loss of biodiversity and climate change are two of the most (likely THE MOST) significant issues that confront our future. Jekyll Island has an amazing diversity of life and other natural assets (like the marshes, estuary waters, and the beach) to show the world. There is easy access to people of all ages throughout the island and to the island from I-95 and US 17. However, except for the Turtle Center, and the beach, there is no development or marketing of these assets for ecotourism. In fact much of the Conservation efforts are directed toward restricting or otherwise limiting visitor experiences with Jekyll's nature attributes. Many of these limitations are necessary: we certainly should not feed the alligators or walk all over the dunes, especially during nesting time for the plovers. But we could put remote critter cams out to permit the public to observe eagle nests, alligator nests, plover nests, osprey nests, pileated woodpecker nests, or roosting/nesting herons, wood storks, roseate spoonbills, etc. and place viewing monitors in the Convention Center, and contract for feeds in the lobby of any hotel that wanted one. Then, as is done with Gatorology, we could have conservation naturalists offer programs at these hotels to educate visitors about the various species as they witness them feeding their young, etc. I have offered a number of other ideas for developing our ecotourism and educational opportunities for Biodiversity on Jekyll that can be found on the website of The Initiative to Protect Jekyll Island, IPJI.

Another thing that should be done immediately is to provide adequate directional and informational signage for some of Jekyll's natural assets. For example, Tidelands Nature Center should be included on the causeway sign that directs traffic to Summer Waves; Horton Pond and Nature Trail should have a sign (in addition to the small concrete monument at N Beachview).

The second issue of how to limit visitor increase will be much more of a challenge and there will be complaints no matter what scheme is tried to deal with it. The issue is discussed in some detail under the "Economic Sustainability" section on Page 10. I offer the following thoughts: Jekyll is supposed to be an affordable park for all Georgians, yet the costs of everything on Jekyll have steadily been rising for a long time. These cost increases are a strong negative pressure on ordinary folks but do provide needed revenue and obviously don't significantly deter those who can afford to pay. So, manipulating the gate costs to restrict/control access will exacerbate this problem and serve to further discourage visitors of ordinary means. A more measured approach for managing gate entrance is suggested on page 10 but not very well developed. That is to offer advanced on-line purchase of entrance tickets at the regular price and a variable higher price at the gate. The on line price could be manipulated for special events, both in varying the time of on-line purchase (2-3 days up to a week in advance) and minor price increases. Then the price at the gate, as suggested in the Draft, could be significantly raised if needed. This would at least offer a way to avoid the appearance of price gouging and allow visitors of less means an opportunity to come to JI special events. Of course, anything like this must be well advertised and published in advance.

Another idea could be tried on the Jekyll website: The traffic backup at the entrance gate is no longer limited to special events but can occur at surprising times for unanticipated reasons. It would be useful to have traffic backup alerts posted when a backup at the gate begins and then clears so we can check the website, (or better yet have alerts sent to our phones). The data for gate delays should be collated and analyzed to better understand causes. This idea could be expanded to provide public notifications for crowded parking lots, beach reports, and restaurant wait times. Our visitors would appreciate this information.

On a different note, (ref. p. 27) regarding the multi-use bike trails: as bike and pedestrian traffic increases there are several things that should be considered.

Additional bike racks are needed in multiple locations.

Better informational/directional signage should be added to direct bikers unfamiliar with Jekyll. The turn out from N Beachview to the beach is often missed or ignored by bikers wanting to go to Capt. Wiley Rd or Tortuga Jacks. A group of lost bikers stopped me at Trebuzio's and wanted to know how to get back

to the bike rental place. Some “rules of the road” signs for bikers and walkers (especially dog walkers) on N Beachview and other heavily traveled bike trails would be helpful.

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name	Candace Allison
Address	1892 Ravenwood Way NE Atlanta, Georgia, 30329
Email Address	candace.m.allison@gmail.com

Message

Hello! My name is Candace and I am writing to you today with my concerns about the updates to the Master Plan. I hope that you will consider my request (and the requests of many Georgia citizens) to amend the following items in the Master Plan. The Master Plan Update must specify future uses of the developed acreage and resolve the density challenges so many Georgians are concerned about, clarify how JIA will use the plan to guide its future physical development and be held accountable for its future, and commit to preserving the golf courses as open space that will not be developed for lodging, residential subdivisions, or commercial development. Jekyll Island is one of Georgia's greatest natural treasures. Please preserve and protect it for the humans and wildlife that call it home and will call it home in the future.

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name	Ellen McCann
Address	1262 Amalfi Pl Escondido, California, 92027
Email Address	ellenmccann63@hotmail.com

Message

The Master Plan Update must specify future uses of the developed acreage and resolve the density challenges so many Georgians are concerned about.

The Master Plan Update should clarify how JIA will use the plan to guide its future physical development and be held accountable for its future.

The Master Plan Update should commit to preserving the golf courses as open space that will not be developed for lodging, residential subdivisions, or commercial development.

I'm not sure why you ask for comments if you don't honestly use them to influence your decision. Leaders have a real problem with asking for comment and then doing exactly as they please. LISTEN TO US.

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Max Brown

Address

2742 Laurel Ridge Dr.
Decatur, Georgia, 30033

Email Address

maxhbrown@bellsouth.net

Message

Please say no to the plan to add a senior living complex on the south end of Jekyll.

I am a senior, who will need a different living space but not south Jekyll. No, not more dwellings, not more cars and not more concrete – less green space is simply wrong.

My wife and I just returned from a wonderful long weekend there on Jekyll and we recognize the urgent need to define the use of this unique Georgia facility, to establish limits and then stick to them.

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Patricia Wright

Address

82 VILLAGE GREEN CIRCLE
SAVANNAH, Georgia, 31411-1500

Email Address

prwright82@gmail.com

Message

Please commit to: (1)specifying future uses of the developed acreage and resolving density issues. (2)clarifying how JIA will use the plan to guide its future physical development AND be held accountable for its future. (3)preserving the golf courses as open space that will not be developed for lodging, residential subdivisions, or commercial development!!

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Address

Georgia

Message

I love coming to Jekyll whenever I can. Please keep the natural beauty of the island in mind as you continue to refine the plan. I had a few thoughts, in no particular order, after reading the Draft Master Plan Update that I'd like you to consider:

- Regarding the gate backups: charging more for point-of-purchase, while a good idea, will not "eliminate this issue" (p 10). Answering the question "how many visitors is too many; that is, what is the maximum number of attendees before the event experience is diminished by the crowds?" on p 11 is a good first step. If people come to Jekyll for the nature experience, the constant traffic and crowds can be very disappointing. Does the JIA have an answer to this question? If not, why, and do you plan to come up with one within the next year? If so, what is it, how was the number arrived at, and how do you plan to shape policy to keep the visitor numbers at or below that level? Shuttling people on and off the island may help traffic, but it will not necessarily reduce the number of bodies competing to eat, shop, and play in a limited area, nor will it ensure that Jekyll retains its natural feel. Address the "what is our target max number of visitors" problem first, and then the gate backup issue will be easier to manage, since it is directly related to crowd numbers.
- Regarding the additional programming that should be considered: consider something like the Ranger Talks offered at National Parks. Topics could include a specific type of sea turtle, a family who had a house in the historic district, a particular shell/creature/weird-looking-thing encountered at the beach, the restoration process for parts of Hollybourne, the changing Driftwood Beach topography, etc. Also, please don't advertise such educational opportunities with alcohol ("wine walks", "cocktail evenings" [p 16]) unless you want people to come only if they plan to drink.
- It would be great to bring live theater back to the amphitheater, but not at the expense of crowding the island more.
- Please don't, as part of fixing the golf course problem, put homes/buildings/facilities on the current golf course land. That will just continue to make Jekyll more developed and less of an enjoyable natural space, and make the island a little less appealing to many. (Note many responses in Appendices B and C - the island experience is being harmed already.)
- There is a recommendation to add pickleball and croquet opportunities (p 28). Please note that "pool" was mentioned almost as many times as "pickle" in Appendix C comments (53 to 56, if I counted correctly). An indoor pool, if you must continue building things, would be a great amenity. I don't know why it wasn't listed in the public input summary at the end of Appendix C, even though a great many comments asked for one.
- Note that in that summary in Appendix C, starting at p 334, people are overwhelmingly concerned with overdevelopment of the island. Please read the comments and listen to what people are saying. Please stop permitting the construction of new hotels and neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Alisa Haber

Address

962 N Beachview Drive
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address

ahaber18@gmail.com

Message

The update does not take into consideration that with increased visitation, we need increased safety protections. There needs to be more dedicated enforcement of traffic and conservation. More people means more dogs, and more dog owners refusing to follow the ordinance requiring their dogs be leashed. More people means more cars, and drivers openly flouting the speed limit. Unleashed dogs and speeding cars pose a danger to both people and wildlife.

The update is vague about the golf master plan which itself is unsettled. The proposal to use golf land for shops and housing is an outrageous contradiction to the concept of maintaining conservation and reducing development.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name	Natacha Cone
Address	52 Water Oak Way Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527
Email Address	natachaherlant@yahoo.com

Message

As full time residents of Jekyll Island, we decided to live here full time precisely because of the promise of low development and low density. It is concerning to us how much growth we have seen in just the past few years. Often now, we feel like the island has been taken over by tourists and we can't even go out to eat or just go to the market anymore because restaurants are so crowded and the lines are so long, which is very disappointing. We would like to see no more large hotels built and rather let any additional development be to support the current home owners and visitors by adding more restaurants to make everyone's experience more relaxing and enjoyable.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Jane F. Fulcher

Address 235 West Monteano
Sea Island, Georgia, 31561

Email Address stuttersfa@aol.com

Message

We hope that the Jekyll Master Plan update will be revised .Many of us have serious concerns about over-development.

The Jekyll Island Authority (JIA) has side-stepped the fundamental question about development limits, which is critical to protecting Jekyll's character.

The key to the ambiguous language of the proposed plan update is the status of the island's golf courses and the golf-course master plan, not yet approved.

Without golf-course issues being resolved, JIA appears to be unwilling to set limits on development.

A critically important financial fact is that although Jekyll's maintenance and daily operations must be covered by JIA revenues, major capital-improvement projects typically have been funded by the state and should be funded by the state in this case as well.

When Georgia has a \$6 billion budget-surplus, the estimated \$18 million that's required for golf-course modernization could easily be covered using state funds, not by sacrificing Jekyll's natural beauty with more development.

A nine-hole course, if used for commercial and residential development to generate income needed to pay for modernizing the remaining golf-courses, would damage Jekyll's character irreparably.

Similar concerns have been expressed in thousands of public comments submitted in JIA's online-survey about the master plan.

Jekyll Island State Park is treasured by many citizens throughout our state and beyond. We count on you to protect and defend it.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name	Pamela Pyle
Address	540 Old Plantation Road Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527
Email Address	jsb2353ppj@comcast.net

Message

The Master Plan does not address the capacity study for appropriate long term sustainability of the beauty and conservation appropriate for a state park. Communities out west that are facing droughts and raging fires have been forced to look at future development and resource limitations. Given the fact that some of those communities are looking to ensure no development occurs unless resources like water are available for 100 years in the future before green lighting building, they act as the "canary in the coal mine" for other areas considering development. Given predictions on the rising seas, Jekyll Island must also reconsider that the mandates for conservation areas and developed areas should be for a smaller island in the future. If we plan for the island in 100 years, we are good stewards of the resources and would not face trying to undo developed properties to align with the laws on conservation for Jekyll Island 2121.

Thursday, October 14, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Jill Brown

Address

622 Old Plantation Rd
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address

3cjill@gmail.com

Message

I as a resident who would like to see more specificity as it becomes known. I think that as decisions are made as far as dates and exact locations that are going to be possibly changed--e.g. parts of the golf course taken to be turned into residences or something else...then the residents can be assured that they will be able to have input before those decisions are "in stone". Transparency is the key and I think we all want pretty much the same thing...to have a say about one of our best Georgia State Parks, as well as the place where we live.

Aaron Carone
6 Hyde Avenue
Jekyll Island, Georgia 31527
912-266-1195

October 14, 2021

The Honorable Blake Tillery
Chairperson, Jekyll Island-State Park Oversight Committee
Blake.tillery@senate.ga.gov

The Honorable Jon Burns
Vice-Chair, Jekyll Island-State Park Oversight Committee
Jon.burns@house.ga.gov

The Honorable Clint Dixon
Clint.dixon@senate.ga.gov

The Honorable Billy Hickman
Billy.hickman@senate.ga.gov

The Honorable Matt Hatchett
Matt.hatchett@house.ga.gov

The Honorable Don Hogan
Don.hogan@house.ga.gov

cc: jhooks@jekyllisland.com and laelkins@uga.edu

RE: Proposed Amendment to the Jekyll Island 2014 Master Plan

Jekyll Island Legislative Oversight Committee Members:

Having recently been a member of the Stakeholder Committee to update the Jekyll Island Master Plan, I recommend that you do not move forward with adopting it in the current form. While much of the plan is well written and thought out, it is missing the key component of substance that the Stakeholder Committee recommended, and a high level of public input reiterated. The update to the Master Plan does not address island capacity or closing the loophole for redevelopment to

ensure consistent land uses remain. This needs to be addressed before the update is adopted.

Jekyll Island has been my home since the age of 18 in 1995. I presently am raising a teenager on the island, and my family has three generations of full-time residents with ownership interest in three homes on the island. I work in real estate on the Asset Management Team in the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations of the United States Department of State, and formerly for CBRE on their hotel consulting group. It was my pleasure to serve the State of Georgia and residents of Jekyll Island as a Steering Committee Member for the 2014 Master Plan and help negotiate the lot lease renewals in 2010. My unique qualifications, and residency, allow me to see Jekyll Island's delicate balance of nature and tourism through a different lens than most.

Jones Hooks has been a great steward of Jekyll Island. The University of Georgia is a wonderful partner in planning initiatives. However, the draft of the current Master Plan update fails to address the most critical issue facing the island today, capacity and redevelopment of "developed" land. Further, public input has been limited and not utilized to the degree it was with the 2014 Master Plan process.

The island experience should be judged on the busiest nights-fill nights. When all hotels and rental properties are full the island has reached maximum capacity. Fill nights are indicative of the experience a visitor or resident will experience if additional development occurs. In 2021 we have had the ability to see this, with record island visitation and hotel occupancy (please reference Master Plan update draft Appendix A). Restaurants were on two to three hour waits, traffic coming on the island was backed up for miles, and the bike paths were packed. COVID has provided a bump for drive in traffic, which now has found the island attractive. As other parts of the east coast continue to develop there are fewer unique low-density "Jekyll like" places, making Jekyll exponentially more attractive. This has garnered attention from the likes of Southern Living and Money Magazine, leading to even more fill nights and capacity concerns.

Do you want to protect the unique character of the island, or do you want to allow it to overdevelop? We are at an inflection point. The 2018 Jekyll Island Carrying Capacity & Infrastructure Assessment stated that practical capacity would be reached in 2021 or 2022, yet it is not a focal concern of the Master Plan update. A wise Atlanta developer once told me that you cannot pave your way out of a traffic problem. The more roads you build the more cars will use them. The same is true of hotels and housing, along with parking spaces on the island. New housing units

effectively function as new hotel rooms, but at much larger floor area. With the advent of Airbnb and VRBO there are fewer residents on the island over the past 25 years, yet we have more housing. The more parking spaces you build the more cars you will see.

While a fixed amount of 20-acres is slated for unrestricted future residential and commercial development, redevelopment of existing land is not governed. There is a loophole that allows for wide swaths of land that is already considered “developed” to be redeveloped with dense residential and commercial uses, like the golf courses and other recreation areas. Please close this loophole.

The Stakeholder Committee unanimously agreed that the Master Plan update should address this. Maps showing commercial, residential, natural, and recreation uses are available. These should be added to the Master Plan update (color coded) and future redevelopment of land on Jekyll Island should adhere to the prior use category. This is akin to zoning in any other municipality or county. On the JIA website it has just this in the advertisement one sees for the category “Master Plan”, <https://www.jekyllisland.com/jekyll-island-authority/master-plan/>, which clearly indicates that this has and can be done (see below). I understand that the JIA does not want to be limited in what they can do in the future, but Jones Hooks and the current Jekyll Island Authority Board will not be here forever. The time to act is now.



[Home](#) » [Jekyll Island Authority](#) » [Important Documents](#) » Jekyll Island Master Plan

Jekyll Island Master Plan

Glynn County zoning does not account for Jekyll Island other than to state that it is “G-Government”. Municode states ordinances, which can be altered by the Jekyll

Island Authority at will. There is no check and balance for land use on the island. Further, the citizens of Jekyll Island have no vote or say in the future of the island. The island is not an incorporated area, we do not elect members of the Jekyll Island Authority Board, and no Board Member is a full-time resident of the island.

Please consider revising the update of the Master Plan to consider capacity, while closing the redevelopment loophole. It must address land use categories for any future redevelopment of land on the island. The island experience will be drastically altered otherwise.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Carone', with a stylized, flowing script.

Aaron Carone
912-266-1195

This letter represents the opinion of Aaron Carone not that of the US Department of State and should not be construed as such.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Susan Inman

Address 403 G St
Brunswick, Georgia, 31520

Email Address susan@onehundredmiles.org

Message

Jekyll Island Public Comment meeting: Master Plan Update 2021
14 Oct 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.
I am Susan Inman, Coastal Advocate with One Hundred Miles.

OHM is a conservation advocacy organization, and we have many members who live here on Jekyll and most of our members visit the State Park regularly and feel passionately that Jekyll must remain as it was established - "The peoples island"

I Commend JIA for committing to the increase in acres for undeveloped lands in the Master Plan Update. It is wise to preserve the natural feel of the island, as they saw in their reading of the public survey results. This is a highly valued feature of Jekyll by those who live here and those who visit.

Also, as you read the public comments written into the survey by 5417 people, you discovered that Overdevelopment and Overcrowding are the 2 top comments submitted.

- "Do not overdevelop"
- "Don't build anymore!!!!"
- "Don't change or add anything it's perfect"
- "Don't get the island too crowded. Leave it laid back"

OHM staff along with the staff of the Center for a Sustainable Coast and the founders of Initiative to Protect Jekyll Island reviewed those comments. In our review, we discovered that roughly 40% of people who wrote in their own comments were quite worried of the development on the island.

We understand that the Master Plan Update was not going to be as robust as the 2014 Master Plan, but we feel that the Master Plan Update should still include:

- The Master Plan Update must specify future uses of the developed acreage and resolve the density challenges so many Georgians are concerned about. Georgia Code Title 12. Conservation and Natural Resources § 12-3-243.1
- The Master Plan Update should clarify how JIA will use the plan to guide its future physical development and be held accountable for its future.

- The Master Plan Update should commit to preserving the golf courses as open space that will not be developed for lodging, residential subdivisions, or commercial development.

As a reminder: the 2018 study of carrying capacity on Jekyll warns that the island will reach functional capacity by 2021—which is now. The Master Plan update references this critical study but fails to recommend any actions to address the primary issue: Jekyll is being loved to death.

- We need a plan to keep it the People's Island.
- A plan that will establish essential growth controls over the type and density of development, rather just a series of general "recommendations."

Thank you for this important opportunity for me and the public to comment tonight.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Steve Smith

Address

14 Glynn Avenue
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address

smitty7511@gmail.com

Message

The Jekyll Island proposed Golf master plan would be a boon to developers but it is a boondoggle for everyone else.

The JIA proposes to close golf holes and golf courses based on the claim that the golf complex is losing money. The master plan proposes to build a new 18 hole course and revamp some of the existing golf areas. The plan proposes to use up to 26 acres of the land that was part of the golf course complex to be leased to developers who would build a hotel, a restaurant, 20 golf cabins, 100 Sr. living units, 38 single family homes and a shopping center.

Builders and developers will do well.

Golfers will get less golf for more money. Visitors and residents of Jekyll Island will see less of the natural beauty they love and instead will see more buildings, more parking lots and more people

Is the golf course really losing all the money the JIA claims? The numbers the JIA uses are old ones from 2017. Since the pandemic golf income has surged. The old numbers included the losses from the restaurant which is now leased out to Tribuzios. No indirect financial benefits of golf on the island are credited to golf in this JIA accounting claim that golf loses huge amounts of money annually. The Bleakly financial report which is attached to the Golf Master Plan states that 53% of the payback to the island from golf renovation will come from indirect benefits that include parking pass revenues, sales tax income, housing sales, rental homes, meals, hotel rooms and added island guests. Using accurate current income numbers and crediting as the Bleakly report does these indirect financial benefits from golf on the island the golf complex is doing fine.

This proposed golf master plan was derived in a top down fashion. Input from golfers, local residents, visitors and businesses was minimal. All stakeholders need to be involved in all of the planning stages of any successful golf renovation plan. A citizens advisory group would be a good start in this process.

Needed also is proper market research. The proposed golf master plan assumes, without any concrete evidence, that there will be golfers flocking to Jekyll who are able and willing to pay the premium prices for golf envisaged in this plan. Also assumed is that those golfers who are now members and repeat customers at the golf complex will continue to come after the prices are raised.

The proposed Golf Master Plan must not be adopted, it would be ruinous to golf and to Jekyll Island.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Linda Wunder

Address 314 Old Plantation Rd.
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address lindalwunder@mindspring.com

Message

We need to pay attention to the density of people and traffic on Jekyll.
Glad to see people enjoying our island BUT they come here because it is different, quiet, slower pace and full of fun times with nature. If we keep building we will ruin what we have which is great!
We just got an upgrade on toll booths and it DOESN'T handle the traffic well at all. You can spend a half hour trying to get on the island on weekends and other times. This is worse than SSI. You promote prepaying so cars can use pass lane, then you take away the pass lane at busy times. That is when we need it the most. If a person prepays to make things faster and then when they get here they wait in long line, why would you prepay next time?
You are taking away the incentive to get a pass or prepay!

Friday, October 15, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Ruthmary Williams

Address

628 Old Plantation Rd.
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address

927rwilliams@gmail.com

Message

I attended the public meeting last night (October 14). It was the first I heard about the Independent Living facility. It's my understanding that it's planned to be constructed in an area across from the Turtle Center, making it easy for residents to go to the Historic District. I would like to recommend that area between the Days Inn and the Marriot Hotel be considered for this facility. That area is already classified as developed and the facility residents could easily go to the Jekyll Island Market, restaurants, and stores. (I believe this was the location of the Buccaneer Motel.) I think residents would prefer access to the Beach Village over the Historic District, and this would save (and protect) the green space north of Mosaic and across from the Turtle Center.

Also, is the Baker-Crane Carriage House still being considered as a viable option for the expansion of the Turtle Center?

Respectfully, Ruthmary Williams

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Kathy Nadler

Address

211C Westcliff Circle
Warner Robins, Georgia, 31093

Email Address

beachpeach@cox.net

Message

Please stop all new development on Jekyll Island! Jekyll is a state park intended to preserve natural beauty, history, and wildlife for the people of Georgia to enjoy. Its purpose is NOT for commercial and residential development for profit. Your master plan does not really consider the long-term future consequences of development. Jekyll does not need more traffic, noise, litter and rape of Mother Nature! Jekyll is NOT supposed to be another Hilton Head, Saint Simons or Panama City but a state park! If the golf course issue is not dealt with more specifically it leaves more of the island open for development— Loss of habitat and natural beauty and MORE traffic, litter, more expensive clean-up and repairs after storms. Listen to the people the park is intended to serve. We love Jekyll and want to keep it special like no other state has!!!

Saturday, October 16, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Amy Edgy

Address

5 Brice Ln, Apt. B
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address

aeedgy@gmail.com

Message

The Master Plan Update must specify future uses of the developed acreage and resolve the density challenges so many Georgians are concerned about.

The Master Plan Update should clarify how JIA will use the plan to guide its future physical development and be held accountable for its future.

The Master Plan Update should commit to preserving the golf courses as open space that will not be developed for lodging, residential subdivisions, or commercial development.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name David and Mindy Egan

Address 308 Old Plantation Road, 308 Old Plantation Road
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address degan1@bellsouth.net

Message

Presumably, an update to Jekyll Island State Park's Master Plan (MPU) should deal effectively with the three main documents that have been developed since the completion of the 2014 Master Plan and that could significantly affect the operation, maintenance and character of the state park, the documents being the 2020 Conservation Plan, the 2018 Carrying Capacity and Infrastructure Study and the 2021 final draft of the Golf Course Master Plan. Here's how we score the MPU's handling of these three important documents:

The MPU earns a grade of "A-" for reinforcing the importance of the Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs) specified in the 2020 Conservation Plan, ensuring protection of these natural assets by the Master Plan. The MPU also supports the Conservation Plan's reclassification of priority habitat from the developed to the undeveloped category and designating them as CPAs. Most notable among the reclassified locations is the "Beach Prairie" paralleling Beachview Drive. This spectacular area, states the Conservation Plan, offers "a rare experience of unobstructed ocean views along the beachfront," which is one of Jekyll's natural treasures.

The MPU deserves a grade of "D" for failing to apply and amplify the 2018 Carrying Capacity and Infrastructure Study. This critically important study commissioned by the JIA warned that the island will reach its functional capacity by 2021, meaning now. Given that Jekyll has reached its functional capacity, the MPU should have developed a long-term plan regarding the most pressing concern of Jekyll's visitors and residents – further development and redevelopment of the state park, but it does not. Instead of providing clear goals and objectives for controlling the type and density of the development and redevelopment of Jekyll's land area, the MPU simply refers to the importance of carefully considering further development of the island and makes a series of minor recommendations in that regard, ignoring one of the primary concerns of the public – allowable usage and density of land areas eligible for development or redevelopment.

Despite public concern regarding overdevelopment and warnings from the state park's Carrying Capacity and Infrastructure Study about the impact of further development of the island, the MPU's public survey, which was conducted to provide input for the MPU from Jekyll's visitors and residents, failed to include even one question on the all-important development issue. In the absence of this obvious and much needed topic, our analysis of the comments made by the vast majority of the people who chose to answer the survey's final question, "What else do you want the Jekyll Island Authority to know," shows that concern about the increase in development over the past decade as well as the need to halt

additional development in order to prevent further degradation of the Jekyll experience and the island's unique character was, by far, the dominant response.

The MPU earns a grade of "D" for failing to deal with the controversial proposals offered in the Jekyll Island Golf Course Master Plan (GCMP) regarding commercial and residential redevelopment of part of Jekyll's 63-hole golf course complex as a way to help make the golf courses financially self-sustaining. Included in the GCMP is a proposal to

eliminate one of the golf courses and use part of that acreage for the construction of an assisted living facility, a lodge, cottages and a retail center. Failing to address the highly unpopular commercial and residential development of a segment of the golf course complex, the MPU opens the door for character-altering development of Jekyll Island State Park.

If golf course renovation is to take place, then an option that should have been considered by the MPU and one that is far better than the currently proposed commercial and residential redevelopment within the golf complex, is for the State of Georgia to fund the estimated \$18 million cost of golf course modernization, the reasons being: 1) The State has traditionally covered the cost of major capital improvement projects within Jekyll Island State Park, including the initial construction of Jekyll's golf course complex as well as a new convention center, a rebuilt 4-H Center ("Camp Jekyll") and restoration of the island's rock revetment. The previous major renovation of part of the golf course complex – the \$3 million modernization of the Pine Lakes course in 2002 – was also paid for by the state; 2) The State currently has a more than \$6 billion budget surplus, just a fraction of 1 percent of which would be more than enough to pay for the proposed modernization of the golf course complex; 3) State funding of the proposed changes would allow the golf course complex to remain separate from Jekyll's built environment, retaining the unique natural look and appeal of the island's renowned golf courses. Furthermore, leaving the golf course complex development-free and in its natural condition would be consistent with the Jekyll Island Capacity Study's main concern as well as with the island's Conservation Plan.

Given our concerns stated above, we believe that there should be a moratorium on all development within Jekyll Island until the JIA establishes clear goals and objectives for controlling the type and density of development and redevelopment of Jekyll's land area. The need for a viable, long-term plan dealing with further development of the island was ignored by the MPU, allowing the JIA continue to make case by case, unrestricted decisions regarding projects proposed by developers seeking to build and profit at the expense of Jekyll's character.

David and Mindy Egan
Jekyll Island residents

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Jenae McSwain

Address

1210 George St
Brunswick , Georgia, 31520

Email Address

jrlong2275@outlook.com

Message

Jekyll Island is headed in the wrong direction in terms of overcrowding and development. Please preserve the golf course and do not attempt to circumvent the language defining what spaces can be used for development. Please clearly define how development will be controlled in the long term plan and please preserve the beautiful, natural character of the island. Jekyll belongs to the people and it should maintain its wild and beautiful character.

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name	Lana Raby
Address	4088 Beaver Oak CT Duluth, Georgia, 30096
Email Address	lanaraby@yahoo.com

Message

As a frequent visitor to Jekyll Island, what makes it BETTER and distinctive from other islands is that it is not as developed as its neighbors, but that is always under threat. I am concerned about some items on the amendment to the Master Plan. First, the Master Plan Update must specify future uses of the developed acreage and resolve the density challenges so many Georgians are concerned about. Secondly, the Master Plan Update should clarify how JIA will use the plan to guide its future physical development and be held accountable for its future. Lastly, the Master Plan Update should commit to preserving the golf courses as open space that will not be developed for lodging, residential subdivisions, or commercial development. I hope that you take my concerns, as well as other Georgians who want to protect this special area, under serious consideration. Thank you.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Karrie Sheehan

Address 135 eagle brook lane
Buda, Texas, 78610

Email Address karrie27284@yahoo.com

Message

To whom it may concern,

My family has been visiting Jekyll island since the 60's and we have seen some favorable and less favorable changes over time. What draws us and many others here is the natural landscapes, wildlife, and tranquility. It is an opportunity to escape the consistent distractions of city living in a concrete jungle.

I fully understand the delicate balance between preserving the natural setting and allowing for increased revenue from commercial/residential development. My question is where does it end? When is enough enough? I am not arguing against residential and commercial development, but rather a more sensible approach. For example, golf is a huge source of revenue for Jekyll island. There is already an existing course that could be updated. There are exciting historic structures and businesses that could be updated to accommodate more tourism. Why the need to overcrowd and overdevelop when we could preserve the existing beauty and give it reverence.

Folks travel to Jekyll island for the opportunity to experience natural beauty and peace. Please consider this future first before attempting to dismantle what our wonderful planet has provided us. We all have an opportunity to do something different here. We have an opportunity to live in harmony with our beloved island.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name JON STEVENSON

Address 823 N Riverview Dr
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address stj2531@gmail.com

Message

I am deeply concerned about the future of Jekyll Island with regard to the emphasis on additional development. There is no doubt that the island had fallen into disrepair and significant updating was required. Unfortunately things have gone from revitalization to overdevelopment in a few short years. The Master Plan refers to the capacity study in several places and the recommendations in it are frequently touted in public meetings but nowhere do they address the finding that the island would be at full capacity by 2021. One only has to see the comments on FaceBook during the past summer to realize that this is true. Visitors complained about long lines at the gate, lack of hotel rooms, high priced lodging, and long waits at restaurants. These issues can be addressed with more development but not without impacting the character of the island which the JIA is supposed to protect.

The proposed Golf Master Plan is of particular concern. Reducing the number of golf holes may be necessary but replacing them with condos, assisted living and retail space will forever change the character of Jekyll Island. The JIA justifies the golf course required update by the fact that the courses lose money. Unfortunately without an independent outside audit we can have no confidence in their figures. The JIA operates almost like a private business and as such should be subject to an independent audit. The JIA touts the fact that they are audited by the state but this is a cursory review only and in no way resembles a real audit.

It is interesting that the NGF analysis stated that if nothing was done to the courses losses would increase to \$800k, with renovation the loss would be \$500k and reducing the number of holes to 45 would result in losses of \$150k. According to the FY 2021 year end statement golf losses were \$474k which is under what they estimated even with renovation. Therefore the NGF analysis is flawed. Golf revenue is up and expenses are below what the JIA had budgeted.

The design group proposes paying for the recommended changes with income generated by development as well as income derived from hotel and restaurant taxes from golfers. Unfortunately they do not consider this last benefit when looking at current golf operations. They should not have it both ways.

I understand that JIA employees and their families play golf for free. I have asked for but not received for the number of free rounds of golf are played each year. I understand the need for employee perks but I believe everyone should pay something especially when an enterprise is losing money. When you make something free it has no value.

The JIA is by statute required to cover its operating costs which it currently does very easily as evidenced by the financials which show surpluses every year, even during the COVID. This years \$30.4 million dollar budget is an indicator that revenues have grown considerably over the last few years and is well above inflation. No more development is required to sustain the island. An immediate moratorium on development should be implemented and the JIA should be instructed to begin concentrating on sustaining what we have. Jekyll island is supposed to be for the average citizen of Georgia and the JIA seems to have forgotten that.

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Craig Patterson

Address

9 Hyde Ave.
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address

cjpdlp@bellsouth.net

Message

I feel the Master Plan Update should be postponed for one year until the Golf Master Plan has been completed. Due to the potentially significant economic and environmental impact of the decisions made regarding the Golf Master Plan, those decisions should be reflected within the 5 year Master Plan Update.

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Bob Middleton

Address Villas By The Sea, Condo 386 1175 N. Beachview Dr.
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address bobmiddleton@bellsouth.net

Message

My wife & I have been residents of Jekyll Island for the past few years, both of us having visited the Island for the first time when we were young children. I will soon be 78 years old & she will be 74. We love the outdoors, and we get out & walk almost every day, weather permitting.

My comment involves the bike path / sidewalk. There has always been a very eclectic group of users of the bike path: pedestrians, bicycles of all sizes from tots to seniors, recumbents, adult tricycles, surreys with 4 or 5 people peddling, bicycles pulling small trailers containing children, bicycles pulling trailers containing pets, etc. I think you get the idea—much congestion of all sizes.

For walkers, like ourselves, the above presents somewhat of a danger. Some of these approach from behind, peddling fast, with no bells on the handlebars to ring a warning. They're upon you before you know they're there and holler out something such as "passing on the right" or "passing on the left", or sometimes just "passing". Many times, we have been almost hit when trying to get out of the way. I say all this to impress upon you how dangerous it can be for pedestrians, even with the wonderful improvement in path-width recently made by the JIA.

Now a new mechanical menace is becoming more numerous on these same paths—the electric powered bicycle. These range in size, but most are larger & heavier than the traditional bicycle, some with tires the size of motorcycle tires. All can easily travel at speeds much higher than the traditional peddled bikes. All present new dangers to pedestrians, particularly the more elderly ones like me & my wife. If one of these behemoths were to hit us we could easily suffer a broken ankle or leg, a damaged back, or worse!

To head off such injuries as cited above, I feel that the JIA should prohibit these "motorbikes" from using the bike paths & restrict them to the street. I see little difference between allowing these on the bike paths & allowing Red Bugs & golf carts to use the bike paths, which would be an absurd thing to do! In the interest of public safety, I urge the JIA to take a look at this problem. Thank you.

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Kay Hoffman

Address 641 Old Plantation Rd
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address kayehoffman@bellsouth.net

Message

The JIA's Master Plan Amendments quote golf course losses of hundreds of thousands of dollars over the last ten years. These losses are neither tested nor supported by an independent audit, enabling the Authority to present to the public financial statements that may not only be inaccurate, but potentially fraudulent. The Authority states it is fiscally responsible because its numbers are included in the State of Georgia's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. This CAFR, as it relates to the JIA, is completely opaque -- and states the JIA is: "not required to prepare or issue financial statements beyond the information included in this report." By referring the public to obscure, combined numbers in a State report, the Authority consistently fails in its fiduciary duty and is basing the Master Plan Amendments on revenue losses that are a financial house of cards.

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Cynthia Maude

Address 281 Katydid Rd., PO Box 88
Morganton, 30560

Email Address cynthiamaude@tds.net

Message

I am asking the Legislative Oversight Committee to amend the Master Plan Update for Jekyll Island for the following reasons:

- it does not provide enough guidance for the Jekyll Island Authority's operation, maintenance and protection of the Jekyll Island State Park, especially with respect to the further development and redevelopment of the island.

I am asking to impose a moratorium on development.

Jekyll Island is one of Georgia's greatest treasures and I can't overemphasize the importance of protecting the beaches and dunes and sea turtles and ecology of this pristine island. I live in the N. Ga. Mountains but visit Jekyll frequently. Once these ecological treasures are gone and replaced by developments, they can never be replaced for future generations to enjoy and protect. Please remember future generations and preserve and protect Jekyll Island for their sakes.

Cynthia Maude
Morganton, Ga 30560
706 634-7748

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Cheryl Peavyhouse Peavyhouse

Address 6 Albright Lane, 6 Albright Lane
Jekyll Island, Georgia, 31527

Email Address cjpeavyhouse@yahoo.com

Message

I attended the meeting on 10/14/2021. I thought the update information was helpful. Talking with the board members brought an issue to light. I thought the housing on the golf course was "Assisted Living" as it is described on the plan. After a discussion, the board members said it was really to be "Independent Living" housing. There is huge difference. Jones Hooks said they were already discussing changing the wording.

I certainly hope and pray that Jekyll is still our Jekyll when the plan is discussed and voted on. Please let it still be a State Park and not St Simons or Hilton Head. We already have enough hotels and cars. We need nature, birds, alligators, turtles, fishing, swimming and time outside in OUR NATURE.

Monday, October 18, 2021

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name

Megan Hauser

Email Address

megan.marie.hauser@gmail.com

Message

I hope that JIA works on developing existing areas, rather than destroying natural areas for new development; the natural areas are so important to the experience of visiting Jekyll Island. The plan mentions ongoing changes to the campground; more dedicated tent camping would be wonderful, in areas that are not completely surrounded by RV camping.

Comments on the 2021 Jekyll Island Master Plan Update DRAFT

In reviewing the September 2021 Master Plan Draft and the additional underlying studies upon which it is based (the 2020 Conservation Plan, the Carrying Capacity and Infrastructure Assessment Study, the Transportation Feasibility Report, the Master Plan Survey Report and more), it is clear that ALL of them have the objective to maintain the unique balance on Jekyll Island between conservation and development and between nature and humankind.

As a regular visitor to Jekyll for over 50 years and as a current full-time resident, I have personally observed the revitalization and transition to what it is today. My take on the many commenters I've heard on this Plan, as well as the related studies, is that almost everyone agrees that Jekyll is amazing and that all efforts should be taken to preserve its unique charm and natural environment.

This Master Plan explicitly states that: *"Maintaining the unique character of the island, which includes limits on development and carefully managing the boundaries where developed and undeveloped landscapes meet, is the top priority for residents, visitors, and the JIA."* [Draft page 9]. It also affirms the importance of the Jekyll Island Conservation Plan 2020 as the guiding document for the *"conservation and preservation of the island's natural communities and wildlife."* [Draft, page 18]. The Jekyll Island Authority encompasses these goals in its mission and values and incorporates conservation considerations into all of its decision-making. In the context of this Master Plan, I believe that the many accomplishments identified since the 2014 Plan (to which this is the Update) have enhanced the island and protected this balance.

And this is in the face of the reality that Jekyll Island receives no operational appropriations from the State and, by State law, must remain financially self-sufficient. Therefore, the island's annual operating budget of over \$30 million to support the approximately 800 residences and over 2 million visitors a year must be generated here as well. The two largest revenue sources for the Island are Summer Waves (operating only 3+ months per year) and the Campground, both of which are away from the center of the island and have minimal impact on others. In my view JIA has done an excellent job over many years to manage

its fiscal responsibilities and development, and it has ensured that the island retains its natural beauty and accessibility.

As a Master Plan, this document is intended to provide guidance over the next five years to JIA as it develops its operational and work plans. Therefore, it is appropriate that this document not identify specific action items and a check list of things to do and when to do them. The JIA must stay flexible to address changing conditions and priorities and this Plan should provide a framework for evaluating projects and operational changes.

A significant accomplishment of this Master Plan is the explicit designation of three significant sites as “Conservation Priority Areas” or special protection areas, to conserve these most valuable natural assets and protect them from future development. This acreage is recommended to be mapped as “undeveloped” in the Plan. I am very pleased it includes the “Beach Prairie” 8.54 acre area between the Beach Pavillion and the Holiday Inn along the beach, which is one of the rare places where you can have an unobstructed view of the ocean as you bike or drive by.

Another significant accomplishment is the updating and correction of the 2014 Master Plan maps of Jekyll island. These were updated using better imagery, corrected lease lines, and obvious error corrections. These corrections resulted in a reduction of 15.8 acres of “developed” acreage, from 1614.8 to 1,599 acres of developed land. The overall development acreage remains at 60.39 with 40.39 of that available for public health, safety and public recreation and 20 acres available for unrestricted use.

Most of the Master Plan comments and concerns I have heard relate, not so much to what has been done to date but, to worry about upcoming decisions that need to and will be made soon that involve future development and redevelopment. The uncertainty about these unknowns, and the transparency of the decision-making processes that will be used to make the decisions, appear to drive the concerns.

For example, it is well recognized that the golf course operations result in an ongoing annual loss of approximately \$500,000 (or a \$4.3 million JIA subsidization since 2015) and this is not sustainable. The Golf Course Master Plan was developed between 2017 and 2020 with

several recommendations on how to ensure the future financial success of golf on Jekyll. Most realize that decisions about golf course reconfiguration will be tee-ed up and made by JIA as soon as the archeological and other relevant studies are completed—in the near future. However, that process is likely to focus on the question of restrictions (or lack thereof) on *re-development* of golf course acreage. This Master Plan should consider addressing this redevelopment issue, as it pertains to the golf course plans or other redevelopment challenges the JIA will face in the next five years.

In summary, the Master Plan Draft provides a comprehensive framework for the JIA board for their policy considerations and decisions, so that Jekyll can continue to achieve the conservation and development balance desired by all. I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Lennon, Jekyll Island Resident
85 Palmetto Lane, Jekyll Island GA 31527

Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Susan Inman

Address 403 G St
Brunswick, Georgia, 31520

Email Address susan@onehundredmiles.org

Message

On behalf of One Hundred Miles organization.

Dear Jekyll Island Board Members,

One Hundred Miles, a conservation advocacy organization, with many members that live on Jekyll Island and many more that visit the state park regularly and feel passionately about Jekyll remaining as it was establish- 'the people's island'.

We are pleased to see that the JIA Master Plan Update contains several positive additions to the 2014 Master Plan. We appreciate that the Update incorporates the Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs) as outlined in the 2020 Conservation Plan, ensuring protection of these important areas by the Master Plan. We also support that the plan reclassifies priority habitat from developed to undeveloped areas and designates them as CPAs. Most notable of the reclassified locations is the "Beach Prairie" paralleling Beachview Drive. It offers "a rare experience of unobstructed ocean views along the beachfront," which is one of Jekyll's natural treasures.

Unfortunately, the proposed update fails to define "future uses of the land area," as directed by State Code OCGA O.C.G.A 12-3-234. The JIA has ignored the major concern expressed by the public: over-development and over-crowding. The Master Plan should outline how JIA will balance density without diminishing the quality of the environment and experience that Jekyll has always offered.

A 2018 study of carrying capacity on Jekyll warns that the island will reach functional capacity by 2021—which is now. The Master Plan update references this critical study but fails to recommend any actions to address the primary issue: Jekyll is being loved to death.

The Master Plan Update must include:

1. The Master Plan Update must specify future uses of the developed acreage and resolve the density challenges so many Georgians are concerned about.
2. The Master Plan Update should clarify how JIA will use the plan to guide its future physical development and be held accountable for its future.
3. The Master Plan Update should commit to preserving the golf courses as open space that will not be developed for lodging, residential subdivisions, or commercial development.
4. Lastly, the Master Plan Update should direct the JIA to update local ordinances to include a land use

map and narrative descriptions of land use areas that specify capacity and services allowed. We understand the code update is underway, but it should be linked to the master plan. Updating the code in this way is critical to giving JIA the authority to limit and deny development and re-development proposals in areas known to be threatened by coastal hazards like flooding and storm surge, particularly VE Zones and AE Zones. A Jekyll Land Use Map will also serve as a valuable tool in communicating with the public expected future developments and how the JIA will address the capacity concerns expressed in our previous comments.

Thank you in advance for your attention. Again, we ask the Jekyll Island Board Members to object to the proposed update and advise the JIA to implement the solutions we introduced here.

Contact us at any time to discuss these issues. We look forward to working with you and the JIA to ensure the Jekyll Island State Park remains as it has always been intended – a destination where Georgians can enjoy nature, history, and recreational activities.

Sincerely,

Susan Inman

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Public Input - Master Plan Amendments

Name Charles McMillan

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Message

Georgia Conservancy Comment- October, 2021

The presentation in the 2021 Jekyll Island Master Plan Update (master plan update) does an excellent job of reconciling and updating the developed acreage on the island. We realize that the legislation (Georgia Code Title 12. Conservation and Natural Resources § 12-3-243.1) mandates a master plan for Jekyll Island and that the plan centers on the critical issues of development acreage. Such legislation may not be a proper vehicle for managing the myriad of inputs needed for a complex operation such as the Jekyll Island Authority (JIA). Georgia Conservancy is not clear about the presentation and context of the 2021 Master Plan Update.

The 2014 update was comprehensive; however, the presentation in this update is rather general and non-specific. The draft shows little clear priority or a path forward (such as a decision framework) for aspects of island conservation and sustainable management moving forward.

In this draft, the connection between responsibility (staff implementation/ board guidance) and work plans (cap-ex budgets) for the updated master plan seems looser than 2014. It was unclear if work plans or short-term goals are left to other documents or if they would be part of (e.g., incorporated by reference) this master plan update.

One major concern is that the 2014 master plan had short-term goals and a summary of the work plans for each section. This update does not seem to have such an implementation orientation. This tie is even less clear after the presentation given at the public hearing on October 14, 2021. The presentation at that hearing increased the level of concern since it was indicated that one-year plans would be relied upon for development issues.

Future-looking summary documents or a crosswalk analysis between the set of plans JIA has developed over the last five years may help clarify some of the implementation commitments JIA has for the referenced plans.

One additional comment: the tie between ordinances and the master plan is not addressed in the document.

There is also a good tie and context (visitation, weather events) which links the insights from survey

results and the various updated studies (Carrying Capacity, Conservation Plan Update, etc.) that have taken place since the 2014 master plan.

Would you please call I may be of further assistance?



October 18, 2021

VIA POSTAL MAIL and ELECTRONIC MAIL

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Dear Sirs,

Coastal advocacy organizations have collaborated in preparing the following comments to express our shared concern about critical issues affecting the future of Jekyll Island State Park, which the Jekyll Island Authority (JIA) must explicitly address in the 2021 Master Plan Update (MPU), per O.C.G.A 12-3-234.1. In this letter, we also share potential solutions to the weaknesses we have identified in the proposed MPU.

We hope you will use the authority granted to the Jekyll Island State Park Oversight Committee through O.C.G.A. 12-3-243.1c(4) and file an objection to the fatally flawed MPU. By filing an objection to JIA's proposed amendment, the Oversight Committee will have the opportunity to work cooperatively with JIA staff and Board of Directors to amend the MPU to address the clearly articulated concerns of the public and initiate solutions that can meet the needs of Georgians and the many visitors who deeply value our Jekyll Island State Park.

Positive Updates

The MPU contains several positive additions to the 2014 Master Plan, most notably it:

- incorporates the Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs) as outlined in the 2020 Conservation Plan, ensuring protection of these important areas by the Master Plan.
- reclassifies priority habitat from developed to undeveloped areas and designates them as CPAs. Most notable of the reclassified locations is the "Beach Prairie" paralleling Beachview Drive. It offers "a rare experience of unobstructed ocean views along the beachfront," which is one of Jekyll's natural treasures.

These updates to the Master Plan are consistent with the mission statement of the JIA: "...maintaining the delicate balance between nature and humankind."

Weaknesses

Despite the positive additions, the MPU fails to address the most pressing issue affecting Jekyll's future - the increase in the extent and density of residential and commercial development. The JIA staff and

Board often refer to the importance of the 2018 Carrying Capacity and Infrastructure Study commissioned by the JIA for guidance on development. This published study states that without adding any new development, visitation will increase significantly, warning that Jekyll will reach its functional capacity by 2021 – which is now. However, while the JIA professes a determination to maintain Jekyll’s character and uniqueness as a vacation destination, that admirable goal is not reflected in the specifics of the MPU.

Public concern over additional development of Jekyll Island is evident in the MPU survey conducted on behalf of the JIA by the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Surprisingly, the survey failed to include a question on the development issue, but at least its final question asked, “What else would you like us to know?” By far, the dominant response among the 5,417 people who responded to this open-ended question was that further commercial and residential development of the island would degrade Jekyll’s natural character and traditional appeal. Opposition to expanding Jekyll’s built environment was also evident in the comments on proposals under review by the JIA calling for commercial and residential development of part of the island’s 63-hole golf course complex. More than 90% of those comments were critical of such an idea. (See Master Plan Update – Appendix C, 244 pages of responses to Survey Question #15 “What else would you like us to know?”¹)

A significant weakness of the MPU is the failure to set clear goals concerning future development and how the JIA will measure the extent to which they successfully implement their objectives. In effect, there is no provision in the MPU to establish essential growth controls over the type and density of development but rather just a series of general “recommendations.”

Accordingly, our organizations are urging you to object to this plan update, as provided in 12-3-243.1 of the Georgia Code regarding the Jekyll Island State Park Master Plan.

Solutions

To make the MPU more effective, the Oversight Committee must file an objection to the proposed amendment. At that point, the Committee should direct JIA to carry out the following:

- 1) Amend the MPU to include a moratorium on any building within Jekyll Island State Park, except for the Buccaneer Hotel Property, which is slated for redevelopment and already under a lease. The moratorium is essential because Jekyll has already reached its functional capacity, and without intervention will exceed that capacity and significantly diminish the quality of the destination and experiences generations have enjoyed. This is a matter of some urgency due to the recent proposal to convert part of the golf course complex into commercial and residential space.
- 2) Amend the MPU to commit the JIA to develop a detailed Capacity Plan that addresses the issues raised by the 2018 Carrying Capacity and Infrastructure Study. Such a Capacity Plan should delineate the allowable future uses of Jekyll’s land area and include clearly articulated goals and objectives along with a timeline for their implementation and evaluation. We recommend that the Capacity Plan have a life span of twenty years to accommodate the projected growth in

¹ Draft Appendix C - Jekyll Island Master Plan Update Online Survey Results. Responses to Q15 “What else do we need to know?” begin on page 97 of the 344-page document. Available online at: <https://www.jekyllisland.com/jekyllislandwp/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Draft-Appendix-C-of-Jekyll-Island-Master-Plan-Update-1.pdf>

Georgia's population. Further, we recommend that the Capacity Plan address the concerns raised by the 2020 Jekyll Island Conservation Plan and cited in the MPU regarding:

- Land management to minimize fragmentation of wildlife habitat. As stated in the Conservation Plan, "future development or development activities, recreation activities, and roadway improvements have the greatest potential to fragment habitat continuity or result in the loss of natural habitats."²
- Sea level rise; and
- Shoreline erosion, protection, and resiliency.

The development of a Capacity Plan should be assigned to an independent, publicly accountable party, using a process that ensures transparency and offers opportunity for robust involvement of all stakeholders.

- 3) Lastly, amend the MPU to provide clarity and guidance regarding the controversial Golf Course Master Plan, currently under review by the JIA Board. The draft Golf Course Master Plan released for public comment in September 2020, revealed that JIA is contemplating redevelopment of the island's golf course complex. This threat of development within valued open space was met with strong objection from the public.

By failing to address how the golf courses will be managed, the MPU neglects the fact that the JIA proposed converting part of the golf course complex to commercial and residential development, including an assisted living facility, to help finance the needed golf course renovations, estimated to cost \$18 million.³ Allowing residential and/or commercial buildings within Jekyll's golf course complex would be character-altering enterprise for this valued recreational area.

Rather than paving open space golf courses within the State Park to cover the cost of modernizing the courses, the State of Georgia should invest in the needed improvements. JIA cannot foot the bill alone, and State funding for improvements on a State Park are justified in many ways:

- **Tradition:** The State of Georgia has traditionally covered the cost of major capital improvement projects within Jekyll Island State Park, including the initial construction of Jekyll's 63-hole golf course complex, \$50 million for a new convention center and associated facilities, \$17 million for the new 4-H Center ("Camp Jekyll") and, \$8 million for the restoration of the island's rock revetment.
- **Precedent:** The previous major renovation of part of the golf course complex – the \$3 million modernization of the Pine Lakes course in 2002 – was paid for by the State.
- **Opportunity:** The State currently has maxed out its reserve fund at \$4.29 billion (the statutory cap is 15% of the previous year's net revenue) and has an additional \$2.18 billion in uncommitted federal funds available. Just a fraction of 1 percent of these surplus funds

² Jekyll Island Conservation Plan 2020. Pg. 55. Available online: <https://www.jekyllisland.com/jekyll-island-authority/jekyll-island-conservation-plan/>

³ Jekyll Island Authority Proposed Vincent Golf Master Plan. Presented to JIA Board November 10, 2020, by the Bleakly Advisory Group. Available online: <https://www.jekyllisland.com/jekyllislandwp/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Jekyll-Island-Golf-Master-Plan-Financial-Analysis-11102020F.pdf>

would be more than enough to pay for the proposed modernization of the golf course complex.

- **Protection:** State funding of the proposed changes would allow the golf course complex to remain separate from Jekyll's built environment, retaining the unique natural look and appeal of Jekyll's renowned golf courses.

Thank you in advance for your attention. Again, we implore the Oversight Committee to object to the proposed update and advise the JIA to implement the solutions we introduced here.

Contact us at any time to discuss these issues. We look forward to working with you and the JIA to ensure the Jekyll Island State Park remains as it has always been intended – a destination where Georgians can enjoy nature, history, and recreational activities.

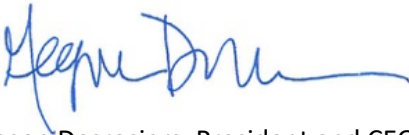
Sincerely,



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Copy: Joseph B. Wilkinson, Jr. - Chairperson, Jekyll Island State Park Authority Board of Directors
C. Jones Hooks - Executive Director, Jekyll Island State Park Authority
Senator Sheila McNeill - Georgia Senate District 3