



Jekyll Island Environmental Assessment Procedure (EAP):

Report summarizing the findings of the EAP Committee considering the redevelopment of the future Holiday Inn Resort property, formerly the Oceanside Inn and Suites

Date of EAP Committee meeting: 10/31/2013

EAP Committee members

Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation, JIA (chair, present)
Kimberly Andrews, Research Coordinator, JIA (present)
Cliff Gawron, Director of Landscape and Planning, JIA (present)
Terry Norton, Director of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, JIA (present)
Karl Burgess, Program Manager, GADNR, Coastal Resources Div. (present)
Jeff Homans, Landscape Architect, Land Design Associates, St. Simons Island (present)
Scott McQuade, CEO, Golden Isles Convention and Visitors Bureau (not present)

Project under consideration

The beachfront commercial property formerly known as the Oceanside Inn and Suites is expected to be redeveloped on the existing structural footprint and rebranded as a Holiday Inn Resort.

Assessment

The members of the EAP Committee are excited about this project and believe that it offers substantial opportunities to capitalize on an improved environmental portfolio for the property. Investments in low-impact development, energy and water conservation, and environmentally conscientious design can generate a range of benefits including improved visitor experiences and reduced operating costs. The Committee finds this project, as outlined in the design-development drawings submitted to us, to be compatible with the Jekyll Island Conservation Plan contingent upon the following requirements. Recommendations are also provided that the Committee believes would be beneficial investments in the property. As this project continues through the approval process according to the Jekyll Island Design Guidelines, the EAP Committee may provide further recommendations as additional information becomes available. The EAP Committee stands ready to consult with the project manager(s) and provide technical guidance in regards to any of the requirements or recommendations outlined below.



Requirements

1. Sustainability Certification

- The EAP requires all eligible redevelopment projects to achieve certification through LEED, Green Globe, or an equivalent certification program. If this is not deemed feasible, written justification must be provided to the JIA.

2. Lighting

- The lighting plans must comply with the Jekyll Island Beach Lighting Ordinance and must be approved by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
- In addition to complying with the specific terms of the ordinance for all individual lighting elements, it is important to remember that the cumulative light produced on the property during sea turtle nesting season must not illuminate the beach.

3. Land-use and structures beyond the lease line

- With the exception of approved crossovers and paths, the landscape shoreward of the lease line may not be maintained for active use. This means that the landscape design plan should not include any turf grass, ornamental plants, or event space beyond the boundaries of the land lease. The landscape design plan should be altered to achieve compatibility with this recommendation. The shoreward area can however be modified to restore a natural dune-scape with native dune plants and topography. This possibility is recommended in the secondary recommendations below and should be allowed for in the scope of the Shore Protection Permit application.
- The beach-access design leading from the event space at the center of the property to the beach should be altered such that a single path leads to the proposed crossover rather than two paths as currently designed. This single path should be constructed following the route of the existing unpaved path.
- Beach crossover structures should be raised above grade and constructed of wood or composite lumber. This design will very likely be required to obtain a shore protection permit and recommended specifications will be provided by DNR Coastal Resources Division regulatory staff.
- Any existing unpaved beach-access paths not to be replaced with boardwalks and crossovers should be restored to a naturally vegetated condition.
- No native plants of any kind may be removed on the land beyond the lease boundaries. Requests to remove non-native plants or trim any native-plant material beyond the lease boundaries must be reviewed by the JIA Director of Landscape and Planning for



consideration on a case-by-case basis. On the shore side of the property these requests will also be subject to the Shore Protection Act and would therefore require review by DNR Coastal Resources Division regulatory staff.

- The proposed re-routing of the pedestrian and bicycle path that is adjacent to the southern end of the property should not interfere with existing ornamental landscape design elements beyond the lease line.

4. Invasive plants

- Included with this document is a list of Priority Invasive Plant Species that have been identified by the Coastal Georgia Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CG-CISMA). Plants on the Priority 1 and Priority 2 lists should not be planted on the property. Plants on the Priority 3 list and watch list may be considered for approval by JIA on a case-by-case basis. These lists expand on the invasive exotic plants identified in the Jekyll Island Design Guidelines. A complete list of all plants proposed to be used in the Holiday Inn Resort landscape should be provided to JIA during the design review process as per the Design Guidelines.

5. Waste management

- A wildlife-proof waste-management system is a critical measure that will reduce operational costs on Jekyll Island. All trash and recycling containers and dumpsters should prevent access by raccoons, feral cats, or other animals. This measure will keep the property cleaner and safer for guests and staff, and eliminate wasted staff-time spent cleaning up trash scattered by animals. JIA and other property managers on the island have been successful using trash and recycling containers with latching doors and heavy lids. Plans for these containers can be provided upon request. Compactors are advised because they are more secure than dumpsters. The Jekyll Island Convention Center and the Jekyll Island Club Hotel have successfully deterred wildlife from waste disposal areas by using compactors provided and serviced by Waste Management. Most dumpster designs are not completely secure, but at a minimum, a dumpster with a locking lid is a necessity.

Recommendations

1. Natural landscape enhancement

- The EAP Committee encourages the manager(s) of this project to include the entire area shoreward of the lease line in the project area for the shore-protection permit. This will allow for the possibility of enhancing the natural dune-scape shoreward of the lease line with native plants and dune topography. A restored dune-scape would improve views



from the hotel, reduce the risk of lighting ordinance infractions and expensive lighting modifications, provide increased storm protection for the property, and enhance bird-watching opportunities for guests.

- Sweet grass or Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) is a preferred plant species for native plant landscapes on Jekyll Island's beach front. We encourage the landscape architects for this project to use this plant anywhere that native grasses are called for in the landscape plan. The showy purple blooms are very attractive to guests and the plant is important culturally and ecologically in the coastal region.
- The orientation of Beachview Road in relation to the hotel currently allows for some illumination of the beachfront side of the hotel from the headlights of northbound traffic on Beachview Road. This could detract from the desired peaceful ambiance of the property's beachfront. To alleviate this and to further restore a natural landscape, trees could be planted more densely at the south end of the property and gradually thinned to the northeast, simulating the natural vegetation gradient between maritime oak forest and dune-plant communities found on Georgia barrier islands.

2. Bio-retention swales

- The storm-water retention swales indicated on the drainage plan between the parking area and Beachview Road should be designed using bio-retention (rain garden) technology and planted with appropriate native plants common to coastal moist soils. This design will require less maintenance than turfed retention swales. Existing native trees within the retention areas should be protected during construction, as per the Jekyll Island Tree Protection Ordinance, and retained on site.