

New Hanover County Planning Department

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Ms. Andrea Kock, Chief
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Environmental Protection and Performance Assessment Directorate
Division of Waste Management and Environmental Protection
Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

Reply To: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION REGARDING LAND USE IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED
GENERAL ELECTRIC-HITACHI GLOBAL LASER ENRICHMENT FACILITY

Dear Ms. Kock:

I too enjoyed meeting with you and the rest of the NRC staff on May 18, 2009. The meeting provided me with a more thorough knowledge of the review process which General Electric-Hitachi must complete before they will be permitted to operate as described in the documents attached to your June 22, 2009 letter. In regards to the letter, I have addressed the issues identified below:

Issue #1: "Staff is requesting that the New Hanover County Planning Department provide information about reasonably foreseeable future local activities that may add, cumulatively, to the impacts to resources affected by the proposed facility"

A new Elementary and Middle School have been constructed in Castle Hayne. The elementary school is scheduled to open its doors to students this fall. The Middle School should follow suit in fall 2010.

Extension of Water and Sewer into north central New Hanover County. Currently much of central New Hanover County lacks the benefits of a public water and sewer system. Despite this fact, the area has seen a fair amount of development which relied on individual or community wells and septic systems. Recently water and sewer in Wilmington and New Hanover County was consolidated and an authority, the Cape Fear Public Utility Authority, was formed to operate the unified system. Although no firm plans exist for the above mentioned expansion there is a great deal of momentum and support in the private development community. The Authority appears to be receptive to partnerships which propose funding to aid in infrastructure expansion. In better times the County participated in planning for innovative financing options to achieve this objective. Regardless of the mechanism which ultimately brings about this expansion we anticipate that within the next 5 years increased water and sewer capacity will be available to serve development in proximate to GE.

Proposed residential Development Projects: As mentioned above, the area surrounding the GE property is anticipated to experience growth. Current projects in the area include Sunset Reach a 53 lot residential subdivisions with a community boating facility, Rose Hill Plantation which is adjacent and to the south of GE with approximately 600 lots and a nursing home, Blue Clay Farms a planned development with 1800 units proposed and Parson's Mill with 300 lots in a residential subdivision.

More Speculative Projects: Speculation associated with the proposed expansion of GE has spurred several legitimate development proposals for the area immediately across Castle Hayne Road from the facility. One project, referred to as Swartville, hopes to take advantage of the GE expansion to lure light industrial, commercial and medium density residential to areas across Hwy 117 from GE. This potential development would occur on approximately 1000 acres of currently undeveloped land. Timing would rely on water and sewer being made available to the area. The timing of GE's expansion plans will also determine how quickly things happen in this area.

Other factors that should be mentioned:

I-140 currently passes to the south of the GE property. Eventually that roadway will Extend across the cape fear river and into Brunswick County. The amount of traffic on the roadway will increase significantly.

Possible **Passenger Rail** utilizing existing CSX rail ROW. This has been in discussion for a long time.

Increased use of the NE Cape Fear River for recreational watercraft. This is happening. We have not measured or studied the increase in usage.

Increased use of the NE Cape Fear River for commercial barge traffic associated with proposed Titan Cement Facility. At this time the proposed cement facility plans to utilize rail and truck for the bulk of their transport. Barges may be used in the future.

Issue #2 in your letter involves the County's Coastal Area Management Plan 2006 Update. The plan is used to guide decision makers as they review development proposals or capital investments that the County may make. As noted, portions of the GE property fall within areas classified as either *aquifer resource protection* (ARP) or *wetland resource protection* (WRP). All of the resource protection sub classifications are intended to provide for the preservation and protection of important natural, historic, scenic, wildlife and recreational resources. The Resource Protection class has been developed in recognition of the fact that New Hanover County, one of the most urbanized counties in the State, still contains numerous areas of environmental or cultural sensitivity which merit protection from urban land uses.

In order to provide better protection for separate resources, sub classifications were developed. The ARP sub class is designed to protect the resource from diminished recharge and contamination of the aquifer by inappropriate land uses. The focus of strategies to protect this Resource Protection subclass is encouraging larger lot development if septic systems are used to prevent cross contamination of wells, extension of water and sewer service to curtail septic system use, prevention of uses that pose risk of spill of hazardous materials, and encouraging development practices that promote sustained recharge.

The WRP subclass is designed primarily to prevent the loss of wetland areas to development. The primary resource protection strategies focus on encouraging preservation of wetlands and wetland functions.

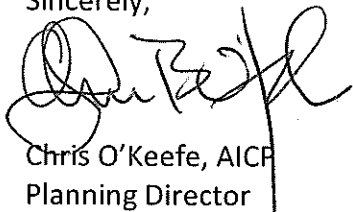
Generally these policy directives are implemented by consideration of how well the resources are accounted for in the development process. According to the Executive Summary of the Environmental Report the impact on the aquifers either from contamination or drawdown would be minimal. The facility plans to contain, treat and or dispose of all of its byproducts in a way that prevents contamination. The report further states that changes in pumping required for the proposed action would not notably impact the supply of water to other users in the area. Therefore the plans for the GLE facility appear to be consistent with our policies for protection of the ARP.

Similarly, the WRP strategies involve the identification and protection to the greatest extent practicable of wetlands. From the Executive Summary it is clear that the plan for development of the GLE facility has accounted for wetland areas and has attempted to avoid them where possible.

Unlike Florida, in North Carolina Land Use Plans do not carry the same authority as Law. This plan serves as a guide for future growth and development. The plan is not a regulatory tool therefore the plan itself does not impose any limitations on the proposed development. Generally, the plan is utilized for projects that require zoning changes or special use permits. The plan is also referred to for consistency determinations by North Carolina's Division of Coastal Management and the Corp of Engineers.

I hope the information in this letter is useful. If you need additional information or if you would like to discuss any of this please do not hesitate to call at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Chris O'Keefe, AICP
Planning Director

cc. Bruce Shell, County Manager
Dave Weaver, Asst. County Manager