



Position Statement of the Georgia Chapter of the American Planning Association on:  
Notice to Change Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Rules

The Georgia Chapter of the American Planning Association (GPA) supports the recommended changes to the Development of Regional Impact Rules being proposed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Planning Rules Task Force. GPA's review and analysis of the draft amendments focused on three specific areas: Intent and purpose of the DRI Process, the regional communication and collaboration impacts, and the flexibility of the administration of the Rules.

Intent and Purpose

When the DRI Rules were adopted over 20 years ago, the intent of the program was to focus on quality growth in planning and execution of major development projects throughout the State of Georgia. It is important to GPA that the draft DRI Rules do not erode the original intent and purpose of the DRI program. GPA's review indicates the draft rules contain provisions that allow for careful consideration and planning for impacts of major development projects on local and regional infrastructure and services. Moreover, the draft Rules enhance the local government opportunity to make reasonable decisions on major development projects in light of present economic times.

Regional Communication and Collaboration

GPA believes the draft DRI Rules will continue to foster and enhance the concept of regional communication and collaboration between neighboring local governments and between local governments and their Regional Commissions (RC). Additionally, the draft Rules now put more emphasis on the Regional Commission's review and analysis of a major development project and eliminate the finding "in" or "not" in the best interest of the State. GPA would like to suggest that in lieu of the elimination of the DRI finding, there should be a summary of impacts included in the process to enable the affected and adjacent jurisdictions to make informed decisions regarding proposed major development projects and their potential impacts.

Flexibility of Administration of the Rules

One of the primary areas of focus for the Planning Rules Task Force was to streamline the program process and upon our review, the draft Rules have reduced the review time line to just 30 days. GPA agrees that the DRI process needed to be streamlined; however, GPA is concerned that this time line will not allow for a comprehensive review of a DRI application by the responsible Regional Commission or local government. Provisions should be included in the draft Rules that would either extend the review time or allow for a pre-review meeting where any potential application issues can be addressed prior to submission.