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FACSIMILE COVER SHEET

DATE: Feb. 17, 2001

TO: Doug Bellomo -

FAX NUMBER: 202-646-4596

FROM: WESTON ADAMS III

MY FAX NUMBER: 803-799-3141

REGARDING: BTC project in Richland County, SC

MESSAGE:

Doug - Enclosed is an article on public  
opposition to the BTC proposed project on  
the Congaree - I am submitting this to be  
included [to the extent possible] in the  
public record, and as information for  
your office -

Chairman, Congaree Task Force -

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING THIS SHEET): 2

THANK YOU.

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# Hurdles frustrate developer

Burroughs & Chapin complains that lack of community support could kill \$1 billion development along Congaree River

Staff 2-1-81 1-A

By SHELLEY HILL  
and SAMMY FRETWELL  
Staff Writers

Burroughs & Chapin's board of directors is increasingly frustrated that its proposed \$1 billion Columbia development has gone nowhere in two years, the company president said Wednesday.

Doug Wendel said the directors haven't given him a deadline but want to see significant progress soon — or find a way out of the project. In the meantime, Wendel's still trying to make the project work.

About 70 percent of the property Burroughs & Chapin acquired two years ago is in a floodway, where development is severely restricted.



Wendel

the end of the tunnel, we have to pursue an exit plan," Wendel said.

The board is frustrated because of how long it's taking federal officials to decide what parts of the property can be developed, three company officials said. It also is concerned about the lack of support from community leaders, Wendel said.

Some local officials have been hesitant to support the project publicly because of worries about flooding and the potential cost to taxpayers.

Columbia Mayor Bob Coble has said development "that close to the city is what we work on every day." But, he said recently, there are

Burroughs & Chapin has been trying to get the flood map redrawn to allow its unprecedented development along the Congaree River.

At some point in time, we have got to make a decision that the route that we are pursuing is taking an indefinite period of time, and unless we can see a light at

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"challenges that have to be examined" and "perhaps they are insurmountable."

Richland County Council member Bernice Scott has been an enthusiastic supporter of Burroughs & Chapin.

"I'm more dedicated to the project now than ever before," she said.

The proposal includes a high-tech park, a hotel and convention center, golf courses, retail villages and homes on the 4,600-acre tract.

Green Diamond is the company's first major foray out of Myrtle Beach, but it has never had the entire board's support, Wendel said. And, he said, the board's patience is wearing thin.

J. Egerton Burroughs, the development company's board chairman, said the project hinges on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's final decision on the Congaree flood map.

"That's what it boils down to in a nutshell," Burroughs said. "We'll have some concrete findings, or a ruling, to make a decision on."

Burroughs said he hopes to hear from FEMA in the next month. But opponents have until Feb. 15 to comment on technical information submitted to FEMA since September, when it released its latest flood map. The agency says it plans to issue a final ruling on the map in April.

Since the company bought the land for \$11 million about two years ago, the Congaree River flood map has changed four times. The latest changes were particularly painful to Burroughs & Chapin.

Both Wendel and local project director Jim Wiseman are still fighting to win support for the Green Diamond development. They took 35 members of a community group on a tour of the property Wednesday.

"We're still here because we're right," Wiseman told the group. "We're still here because we've got the right vision for the property."

But Wiseman said he's also feeling pressure. "We do need to see some rays of sunshine."

He said Wendel is asking him the same question the board is asking Wendel: "What's wrong with Columbia?"

At Wednesday's meeting, Wiseman and Wendel touted that the project has the support of many local officials. But environmentalists and other community activists are opposing the project.

"We would not still be here fighting for this project if we couldn't do it safely," Wendel said. "All we need is the support of the community."

If Burroughs & Chapin and its partners decide not to go forward, they still would have to decide what to do with their investment.

One idea is to purchase the property for land conservation, said Kit Smith, chairwoman of the Richland County Council.

"I've been approached by various people about this," Smith said. Smith would not name the people, but said she's unwilling to seek any land purchase until Burroughs & Chapin makes a decision.

Private groups could make an offer, or the government could set aside funds if the Green Diamond site became a pri-

ority for preservation. State Rep. Chip Campsen, R-Charleston, is pushing a bill in the Legislature to raise \$32 million annually for land preservation statewide.

Hugh Lane, a Charleston banker who supports the bill, was unwilling to say whether such funds could be used on the Burroughs & Chapin site. But the concept of protecting the riverfront land is sound, he said.

"I'm obviously not from Columbia, but that is a pretty critical piece of property and probably needs to be preserved in its agricultural state," he said.

Burroughs said he's unaware of any backup plan the company has for using the property. Wendel has mentioned creating a wetlands mitigation bank or mining operation.

But Burroughs said the company and its partners would consider offers for the land.

"If someone wants to make any proposal to the group, they would have to listen," he said.