



DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Final Report

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission • 305 Research Drive, Athens, Georgia • www.negrc.org

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) has completed its review of the following Development of Regional Impact (DRI). This report contains the NEGRC's assessment of how the proposed project relates to the policies, programs, and projects articulated in the Regional Plan and Regional Resource Plan. Also included is an assessment of likely interjurisdictional impacts resulting from the proposed development, as well as all comments received from identified affected parties and others during the fifteen-day comment period.

The materials presented in this report are purely advisory and under no circumstances should be considered as binding or infringing upon the host jurisdiction's right to determine for itself the appropriateness of development within its boundaries.

Transmittal of this DRI report officially completes the DRI process. The submitting local government may proceed with whatever final official actions it deems appropriate regarding the proposed project, but it is encouraged to take the materials presented in the DRI report into consideration when rendering its decision.

Project I.D.:	DRI #3061
Name of Project:	Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	City of Jefferson

Background

DRI review was initiated by the City of Jefferson's proposed expansion of its wastewater treatment facility. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 2/13/2020-2/28/2020.

Proposed Development

The City of Jefferson is proposing to expand its wastewater treatment facility located along Valentine Industrial Parkway. The proposed project is located between Opossum Creek and Interstate 85 (tax parcel: 091 012) with an access road to Valentine Industrial Parkway. The City of Jefferson owns approximately 300 acres at this site, but this project will only cover an estimated 10 acres within that site. The project will expand the treatment capacity of the facility from 0.355 MGD to 1.0 MGD by "expanding and replacing the existing Land Application wastewater treatment system," with an advanced mechanical water treatment system, installed in accordance with the permit obtained from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. The project will be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in January 2022. Currently, the site forms part of the treatment spray field for the existing system.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as "Transportation, Communication, and Utilities" on the City of Jefferson's 2019 Future Land Use Map (dated 9/23/2019) and borders an area labeled "Park, Recreation, and Conservation." The site is identified as "Developed" on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan Update 2018 Regional Land Use Map (dated 6/7/2018). No Regionally Important Resources are identified within one (1) mile of the proposed site. The Northeast Georgia Regional Plan Update 2018 Conservation and Development Map (dated 7/19/2018)

identifies 205 acres as “Conservation” within one (1) mile of the site. While the site itself is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, abiding by the EPD permit and taking care to minimize construction impacts will be vital to avoid creating adverse impacts on the numerous acres of conservation property adjacent to and within one mile of the site, as well as connected stream networks.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

The applicant stated that the project is unlikely to affect any of the environmental quality factors (water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, historic resources, and other environmentally sensitive resources) identified on the DRI Additional Form, with the exception of water supply watersheds. The applicant stated that Georgia EPD has issued a permit for the expansion with a waste load allocation for this project and the resulting facility will add to the water supply for downstream users without negatively affecting water quality. Opossum Creek is a tributary to the Middle Oconee River, a source of drinking water for communities downstream, including Athens-Clarke County residents. Ongoing monitoring should be performed to ensure the expanded facility does not affect the downstream water supply.

The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) identifies 46 wetlands totaling 520 acres within one mile of the site. A tributary to Opossum Creek flows south across the property. A discharge pipeline will be constructed across this stream, but this will be the only disruption to the existing stream buffer. Treated wastewater will be released into Opossum Creek. Approximately 5% of the 300-acre property will be impervious surface. The applicant states that on-site stormwater management systems will be constructed, but the site plan does not show any of these facilities.

The project will demand an estimated 0.005 MGD of water from the City of Jefferson’s water system. The site is being constructed to receive and process 1.0 MGD of wastewater for the City of Jefferson’s sewer system. No transportation improvements are recommended due to the negligible number of vehicle trips generated by this kind of facility. Only service trucks are expected to serve the property. The applicant estimates the project will generate 144 tons of solid waste annually and states that sufficient landfill capacity is available.

The impacts to the site and the transportation network will likely be minimal. However, downstream watersheds could be severely impacted if this project does not abide by its EPD permit. Careful inspection of the water quality and regular maintenance of the infrastructure will be crucial to ensuring downstream communities are not adversely impacted by poor water quality. Jefferson should assess all development during the approval process to ensure sufficient revenue is generated to pay for the long-term maintenance of this piece of infrastructure.

Comments from Affected Parties

Natural Resources Group, Atlanta Regional Commission

OUT OF REGION DRI

City of Jefferson Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion

City of Jefferson, Jackson County

Natural Resources Group Review Comments

February 17, 2020

The proposed project is located in the Mulberry River watershed and is downstream of the Atlanta Region and the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District jurisdictions. It does not drain into and is not within

any water supply or other watershed in the Region or the Water District. Therefore, the Natural Resources Group has no comments on this DRI.

February 27, 2020

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Re: Development of Regional Impact- City of Jefferson (DRI# 3061)

The Gwinnett County Department of Planning and Development has reviewed the Regional Review Notification (Review) prepared by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission regarding the proposed wastewater treatment facility expansion located in City of Jefferson in Jackson County, Georgia. The proposed development consists of approximately 10 acres located between Opossum Creek and Interstate 85 with an access road to Valentine Industrial Parkway. The site is part of the 300 acres owned by the City of Jefferson at the current location of the wastewater treatment facility.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant proposes to expand the treatment capacity of the facility from 0.355 million gallons per day (MGD) to 1.0 MGD by expanding and replacing the existing Land Application wastewater treatment system with an advanced mechanical water treatment system installed in accordance with the permit obtained from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING PLANS

According to the City of Jefferson 2019 Comprehensive Plan, the site is identified as Transportation/Commercial/Utilities and is bordered by Park/Recreation/Conservation. Additionally, the site is identified as Developed on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan Update 2018 Regional Land Use Map.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The property contains a tributary of Opossum Creek which runs across the property in an approximate east-west alignment. The National Wetland Inventory identifies 46 wetlands totaling 520 acres within one mile of the site. Although a discharge pipeline will be constructed across the stream the buffer will be preserved. It is anticipated that water supply watersheds will be affected by this project. Shown on the submitted plan is the location of the proposed site, wetlands, and conservation areas.

Gwinnett County is committed to the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the water quality in our streams and lakes. The potential impacts of the proposed expansion of the wastewater treatment facility suggest that conditions of zoning should be included requiring full buffers along all waterways meandering along and throughout the subject property.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation

No transportation improvements are recommended as the site will be occasionally visited by service trucks.

Water Supply and Wastewater

According to the Review, the project will demand an estimated 0.005 MGD of water from the City of Jefferson's water system. This construction will allow for the receipt and process of 1.0 MGD of wastewater for the City of Jefferson's sewer system. A new discharge pipeline will be constructed to release treated wastewater back into Opossum Creek.

Stormwater Management

According to the Review, approximately 5% of the 300-acre property will be impervious surface. The site plan does not show where the on-site stormwater management systems will be located nor does it show the location of the discharge pipeline or buffer location.

Gwinnett County recommends that all work at a minimum be in accordance with the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual 2016 Edition. Additionally, the designated Stream Buffer Protection area and Best Stormwater Management Practices should diminish the impacts on stormwater management.

SERVICES

Solid Waste

The applicant estimates the project will generate 144 tons of solid waste annually and states that sufficient landfill capacity is available.

Gwinnett County appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposed development, and sincerely hopes that these comments will be given full consideration as the review process moves forward. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding Gwinnett County's position on this issue.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Reuter", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dan Reuter, Deputy Director
Gwinnett County Department of Planning and Development