

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 #3843
Name of Project:	The Cove at Harbor Club
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	Greene County

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request for rezoning from A1 (Agricultural District) to a Planned Unit Development. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 10/14/22–10/29/22.

Proposed Development

Kolter Acquisition Group, LLC is proposing construction of 1,441 residential units on a 592-acre site in Greene County. The proposed development would be located on three parcels located near Richland Connector and Hutchinson Grove Road (parcel numbers 0740000060, 0740000010, and 074000001A). The proposed units would be a mixture of single-family and villa-styled units ranging from 1,200 square feet to 3,000 square feet. The site would also include a six-acre amenity site near the north end of the development. The proposal includes three separate gated-access roads that would connect to Richland Connector, Hutchinson Grove Road, and Club Drive. The site plan includes 20 stormwater management areas. The proposed street network onsite would necessitate five stream crossings. The site plan also indicates that the section of Hutchinson Grove Road that goes through the site would be abandoned. Currently, the site is largely cleared areas without vegetation. The site plans indicate that there are 17 wetland areas and 11 streams on site with existing riparian buffers. A 100-foot transmission easement runs east to west across the northern section of the site.

The project would be completed in three phases with an estimated completion date in 2034. The site plan indicates that the first phase will consist of 473 units, the second phase will consist of 497 units, and the third phase will consist of 484 units. These totals add to 1,454, which is slightly different than the number of units listed in the initial information form (1,441 units).

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as “Residential” on the county's Future Land Use Map (dated September 2018). The residential land use is described in the plan as “conventional housing applications that include concentrations of efficient density and preserved greenspace.” The proposed development is compatible with the residential future land use designation, as the proposed development is conventional housing and preserves some greenspace onsite.

The site is identified as “Developing” on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Regional Land Use Map (dated 6/7/2018). The Regional Plan recommends development that matches the region’s workforce, prices in the lifecycle cost of infrastructure, creates a sense of place, builds a compact development pattern on existing infrastructure, creates diverse and affordable housing, and complements existing and planned transportation options—especially non-automobile transportation modes. The applicant states that the regional workforce is sufficient to fill the demand created by the proposed project. No information was provided in the application that would enable determination of whether the proposal prices in the lifecycle cost of infrastructure or creates a sense of place. The site plan is relatively compact and is built on existing infrastructure. The site plan also only includes stream crossings that are necessary for proper circulation throughout the site. The site plan shows some variation in lot and building sizes and includes both detached and attached single-family housing, which indicates that the development would have a few different available price points. To provide more housing options that would be affordable at more price levels, the developer could go beyond single-family housing by including some “missing middle housing” such as duplexes, fourplexes, or cottage courts. The site plan does not indicate whether the site will include sidewalks or bicycle amenities within the development. These should be included throughout the site to allow safe non-automotive transportation travel both within the site and to areas surrounding the site. The County and developer should also consider the provision of an additional entrance to the site at the northeast portion of the third phase on Hutchinson Grove Road; all currently proposed entrances are along the western and northern portions of the site, leaving the proposed eastern lots at a significant distance from access points.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

The applicant states that the project is unlikely to affect any of the environmental quality factors identified on the DRI Additional Form, including water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountain and river corridors, floodplains, historic resources, and other environmentally sensitive resources. However, the site plan indicates that there are many wetlands and streams on site. The site plan appears to indicate a 25-foot buffer around all streams, and all wetlands and streams are avoided in the site plan except for five proposed stream crossings.

The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) identifies 6.5 wetland acres onsite and 297 wetland acres are located within one mile of the site. The Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Conservation and Development Map (dated 7/19/2018) identifies the entire site (592 acres) as “Conservation” land, and 5,298 acres of “Conservation” land within one mile of the site. This “Conservation” land includes 590 acres of Regionally Important Resource land onsite and 3,550 acres of RIR land within one mile of the site. This acreage consists partially of the Northeast Georgia Green Infrastructure Network as identified in the Northeast Georgia Resource Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources (dated 8/7/2018). The Northeast Georgia Green Infrastructure Network is intended to serve as a strategically planned and managed network of wilderness, parks, greenways, conservation easements, and working lands with conservation value that benefits wildlife and people, supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, links urban settings to rural ones, and contributes to the health and quality of life for the communities and citizens sharing

this network. The RIR land within one mile of the site also includes Lake Oconee, which is a Regionally Important Resource.

The proposal should be designed to minimize disruption to the existing streams, associated wetlands, and floodplains to avoid future erosion, flooding, and degraded water quality onsite and downstream from the site. Low impact design measures, like bioswales, rain gardens, efficient land use, and other green infrastructure should be incorporated into the project design. Because the site has largely been deforested and there are many wetlands and streams onsite, the developer should prioritize restoring ecological areas onsite, especially in the riparian areas where vegetated buffers are required. This will provide long-term stormwater management benefits for the site, help minimize the flow of sediment and pollutants to Lake Oconee and seek to re-establish biodiversity on the site. At a minimum, the project should be in accordance with the latest edition of the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (Blue Book) and meet all relevant EPD requirements.

The applicant states that the new project would generate 185 enters/45 exits in the AM peak hours and 529 enters/328 exits in the PM peak hours. Thomas and Hutton completed a traffic impact analysis for a previous version of the site plan that included a commercial component of the site and had 1,517 residential units. The commercial component is not included in the submitted application material. The submitted traffic analysis projected 4,589 new daily trips, including 172 enters/449 exits in AM peak hours and 504 enters/302 exits during PM peak hour trips. The applicant states that no transportation improvements would be needed to serve the project. However, the submitted traffic impact analysis states that improvements would be “expected to be needed at the intersections of Richland Connector at SR 44/Lake Oconee Parkway and Club Drive at SR 44/Lake Oconee Parkway.” If the County and developer were to add an additional access along Hutchinson Grove Road, as mentioned previously, then improvements would likely be required on that road.

The project would be served by the Piedmont Water Company water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 0.32 MGD for the water system and a supply of 0.288 MGB for the wastewater system. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity. No water or sewer line extensions are anticipated. An estimated 32% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and 20 stormwater management areas are planned to manage stormwater runoff. The applicant estimates the project would generate 2,350 tons of solid waste annually and that sufficient landfill capacity exists to handle this waste. According to the Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Authority’s *Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Management Plan (2021-2031)*, most municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in Greene County is disposed of in a landfill in Twiggs County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$470,650,000 at build-out in 2034 and generate \$4,100,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$795,016 and generate approximately \$6,926 in tax revenue. Prior to approval, the County should measure the life cycle costs of the infrastructure needed to serve this project to ensure that they would not be committing to more maintenance expenses than the new tax revenue can cover.

Comments from Affected Parties

Greg Boike, Director of Public Administration, Middle Georgia Regional Commission

Similar to on past projects in this area, no specific comments or concerns on this project, provided that the planned improvements to SR-44 continue on schedule to help mitigate impacts from increased traffic.

Alan Hood, Airport Safety Data Program Manager, Georgia Department of Transportation

This planned unit development of single-family and villa-style residential houses is approximately 8.5 miles south west of the Greene County Regional Airport (3J7), and is located outside of any FAA approach or departure surfaces, and airport compatible land use areas, and does not appear to impact the airport.

However, if any construction or construction equipment reaches 200' AGL or more, an FAA Form 7460-1 must be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration. That may be done online at <https://oeaaa.faa.gov>. The FAA must be in receipt of the notification, no later than 120 days prior to construction. The FAA will evaluate the potential impact of the project on protected airspace associated with the airports and advise the proponent if any action is necessary.

Benjamin Dalton, Civil Engineer 3, Georgia Department of Transportation

After District 2 Traffic Operations review of the DRI 3843, we feel that an I.C.E. is needed for the intersections of SR 44 at Richland Connector and SR 44 at Club Drive as it is stated in the traffic impact analysis study. Also, a signal warrant analysis may also be warranted as well to evaluate the best design type configuration for these intersections for optimum traffic flow.