

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 #3854
Name of Project:	Oconee Village
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	City of Greensboro

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request for a permit from the City of Greensboro. The developer has also requested that Parcels 0520000170, 0710000280, 071000028A, and 0710000270 be annexed and rezoned to CPUD (Commercial Planned Use Development). Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 11/2/2022–11/17/2022.

Proposed Development

Forrplaces Oconee, LLC, is proposing construction of an approximately 180-acre mixed-used development in Greensboro and Greene County at the intersection of Interstate 20 (I-20) and Georgia Highway 44 (Lake Oconee Parkway, GA-44). The site is south of I-20 and west of GA-44. The parcel numbers are 0520000170, 0520000190, 0710000270, 710000280, 071000028A, and 0710000300. Parcels 0520000190 and 0710000300 are in Greensboro; the other four parcels are currently in unincorporated Greene County and would be annexed into Greensboro.

Approximately 656,000 square feet of buildings are proposed. Proposed commercial uses include retail, two hotels, restaurants, a gym, and a movie theatre. Proposed residential uses include 259 townhomes, 253 single-family detached homes, and approximately 250 apartments. Additionally, the site plan includes 2,518 parking stalls. Three streams are indicated on the site plan, and there is a fourth area that appears to be a stream, with a bridge crossing and what appears to be a vegetated riparian buffer, but that is not marked or labeled as a stream. Currently, the site is mostly forested. Aerial imagery indicates three existing commercial buildings near GA-44. The applicant has indicated that all portions of the project shown on the attached site plan will be

completed in a single phase, including the portion labeled on the site plan as “future residential,” with an estimated completion date in 2026.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

Parcels 0520000190 and 0710000300 are identified on Greensboro’s Future Land Use Map (dated 8/22/2019) as “Commercial,” which is described in the Greensboro’s Comprehensive Plan as “business and trade areas. Includes retail stores, shopping centers, dining establishments, and office buildings.” CPUD is listed as one of the appropriate zoning classifications for Commercial land use. The proposed project is somewhat compatible with the Comprehensive Plan, as summarized in the table below.

FUTURE LAND USE DESCRIPTION - GREENSBORO	PROPOSED PROJECT’S COMPATIBILITY WITH DESCRIPTION
Business and trade areas; retail stores, shopping centers, dining establishments, and office buildings	<p>The commercial portions of the proposed project are compatible with the Commercial land use description, as they include retail and dining establishments. The proposed hotels and movie theaters are also commercial uses.</p> <p>The overall project would be considered a business and trade area, however, a mix of business and residential uses was not envisioned for these parcels in the land-use plan.</p>
Appropriate zoning classifications	CPUD is listed as an acceptable zoning classification for Commercial land use areas. The CPUD zoning classification in Greensboro allows a mix commercial and residential uses.

Parcels 0520000170, 0710000270, 0710000280 and 071000028A are identified on Greene County’s Future Land Use map (dated 9/2018) as “Commercial Corridor,” which is described in Greene County’s Comprehensive Plan as “property where business and trade are conducted. Includes major retail stores, shopping centers, dining establishments, and office buildings.” The proposed project is somewhat compatible with the Comprehensive Plan, as summarized in the table below.

FUTURE LAND USE DESCRIPTION – GREENE COUNTY	PROPOSED PROJECT’S COMPATIBILITY WITH DESCRIPTION
Property where business and trade are conducted; includes major retail stores, shopping centers, dining establishments, and office buildings	<p>The commercial portions of the proposed project on the parcels located in Greene County are compatible with the Commercial Corridor land use description, as the two proposed buildings in this area are retail or dining establishments.</p> <p>Parcel 0520000170 is not near the other parcels located in Greene County, and the proposed uses on it are entirely residential. The residential uses proposed on this parcel are not compatible with the Commercial Corridor land use description in the Comprehensive Plan. Adjoining parcels within Greene County are also designated as part of the Commercial Corridor.</p>

The site is identified as “Developed” 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 table below summarizes the project’s compatibility with these recommendations.

REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED PROJECT'S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION
Match the region's workforce	The applicant states that the regional work force is sufficient to fill the demand created by the proposed project.
Price in the lifecycle cost of infrastructure	No information was provided with the application that would enable evaluation of this recommendation.
Create a sense of place	<p>These details that might help contribute to a sense of place: most of the commercial buildings front the main highways and interior roads, with most of the parking being located centrally within the commercial buildings. Also, a logical transition from high-intensity to low-intensity uses is shown on the site plan, with multifamily housing and townhomes between the commercial and single-family residential areas.</p> <p>No details were provided with the application that would enable evaluation of whether any building or design elements would contribute to creating a sense of place.</p>
Create diverse and affordable housing	The proposal includes three housing types, including townhomes, single-family detached houses, and apartments. No information was provided with the application that would enable evaluation of whether any affordable housing would be included in the project. The three housing types are likely to be offered at different price points from each other, and the developer could further diversify housing options and affordability by making a range of finish levels available within each of the housing types.
Build a compact development pattern on existing infrastructure	<p>The proposed project would have a mostly compact development pattern on existing infrastructure. The applicant indicates that no sewer or water line extensions would be needed for this project. As a mixed-use development, the proposed project would place residences near retail, dining, and entertainment destinations. Proposed single-family residential lot sizes are well under an acre, and the proposed townhomes and apartment building are even more compact. The roads within the residential area are well-interconnected with each other, and there are multiple road connections between the residential and commercial portions of the site.</p> <p>However, as indicated on the site plan, the amount of parking proposed for the commercial area significantly exceeds the required parking minimums. A more compact pattern for the commercial area could be realized by reducing the proportion of this area dedicated to parking.</p>
Complement existing and planned transportation options	<p>The proposal mostly complements existing transportation infrastructure: the site is located at the intersection of two existing highways, an extension of King Drive is proposed as an entrance to the residential portion of the site, and three of the six proposed entrances to the commercial portion of the site are aligned directly across from existing roads or entrances. The local government and developer could consider whether it would be more beneficial, from a long-term traffic flow and/or safety perspective, to align the northeastern entrance with Meadow Crest Spur instead of with a retail driveway as shown in the current site plan. While the applicant has indicated they will work with GDOT to coordinate access lanes for this project with GDOT's ongoing GA-44 expansion, no specific details related to this coordination were provided.</p> <p>No details on sidewalks or bicycle amenities were provided with the application. It is recommended that sidewalks be included throughout the residential portions of the site and connecting the residential portion of the site with the commercial establishments. In addition, it is recommended that bicycle parking facilities be included next to commercial establishments, which would enable residents to access these nearby commercial amenities via bicycle.</p>

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

Three streams are indicated on the site plan, and there is a fourth area that appears to be a stream, with a bridge crossing and what appears to be a vegetated riparian buffer, but that is not marked or labeled on the site plan as a stream. 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 shows parking lots and roads covering a significant portion of one of the streams and its riparian buffer area, which is concerning and contradicts the applicant's assertion that river corridors and other environmentally sensitive resources would not be affected. The developer would need to apply for a variance from Georgia EPD to be able to build over a stream and its required buffer; alternatively, the developer could modify the site plan to avoid building over the stream and its buffer.

The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) identifies less than one wetland acre onsite and 141 wetland acres within one mile of the site. The Northeast Georgia Regional Plan's Conservation and Development Map (dated 7/19/2018) identifies less than one acre of "Conservation" land onsite and 642 acres of "Conservation" land within one mile of the site. This "Conservation" land includes zero acres of Regionally Important Resource (RIR) land onsite and 323 acres of RIR land within one mile of the site. This acreage is part of the Northeast Georgia Green Infrastructure Network as identified in the Northeast Georgia Resource Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources (dated 8/7/2018). No specific Regionally Important Resource sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site.

The applicant states that an estimated 70% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and that state water buffers, stormwater management wet ponds, and bioswales are proposed to manage stormwater runoff. 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, and other green infrastructure should be incorporated into the project design. At 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.

Lowe Engineers completed a trip generation summary that projects 12,635 new daily trips, including 424 AM peak hour trips and 1,155 PM peak hour trips from the shopping center, hotel, and multifamily housing portions of the development. These numbers likely undercount the total number of new trips, as the trip generation summary does not include the single-family detached residential or townhouse portions of the proposed development. The site plan shows six vehicular entrances to the commercial portion of the site from GA-44 (Lake Oconee Parkway), and an entrance to the residential portion of the site that would be an extension an existing road, King Drive. The site plan also includes 2,518 parking stalls in the commercial portion of the site. The applicant states that there is a current Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) project to expand GA-44, and that the developer will coordinate access lanes needed for this project with GDOT.

The project would be served by the City of Greensboro water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 0.12 MGD for the water system and 0.13 MGD for the wastewater system. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity, and that no water or sewer line extensions are anticipated.

The applicant estimates the project would generate 3,700 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 *Regional Solid Waste Management Plan (2021-2031)*, almost all 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 \$260 million at build-out in 2026 and generate \$2.5 million in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$1.4 million and generate approximately \$14,000 in annual tax revenue. Prior to approval, the City 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

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

This development is located approximately 5.3 miles south west of the Greene County Regional Airport (3J7) and is located outside of any of their FAA surfaces, and compatible land use areas, and does not appear to impact the airport.

However, if the proposed project's vertical construction, or equipment exceeds 200ft above ground level, 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 60 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, District 2 Traffic Operations

- Please provide a traffic study for the proposed development to see the impacts it will have on SR 44.
- Please provide an I.C.E. study for each of the proposed access locations onto SR 44.
- Please work with the proposed GDOT program project to see how the proposed access locations correlate with what the GDOT project is proposing.
- Please work with GDOT to insure the proposed access locations meet GDOT spacing requirements along the proposed frontage with existing adjacent driveways as well as driveways across the road of the proposed development.