

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 #4105
Name of Project:	Lake Oconee Estates & Beach Club
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	Greene County

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer's request for rezoning the property from a mixture of LR1 (Lakeshore Single-Family Residential/Recreation District) and A1 (Agricultural District) to a PUD (Planned Unit Development). Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 12/1/23–12/16/23.

Proposed Development

Lake Oconee Estates & Beach Club, LLC is proposing construction of 328 detached single-family homes on a 264-acre site in unincorporated Greene County. The homes would range from 1,200-2,000 square feet and the typical lot size would be 84' x 182' (15,288 square feet). The proposed project is split into two tracts that are separated by Veazey Connector. A community center would be located at the southern end of the site and would contain a parking area, a swimming pool, and tennis/pickle ball courts. The residential areas are separated into three unconnected sections, and each has one entrance along Veazey Connector.

Currently, the site is almost entirely wooded, and the southern end of the site is adjacent to Lake Oconee. A cemetery is in the southern portion of the site, and Greene County would require for this cemetery to be preserved and protected by a buffer and fencing. Four streams are located on site, and the site plan proposes one stream crossing. There is a wetland area that bisects the eastern and western portions of the site. The southern end of the site borders a floodplain connected to Lake Oconee. The site plan proposes preserving 106 acres of open space (40% of the total site area), and the site plan includes a 25-foot buffer along all adjacent parcels. The site plan also shows the location of Georgia Power's Flood Rights area which includes all lake areas below 439.6' mean sea level.

The parcel number is 091000011B. The project would be completed in two phases with an estimated completion date of October 2026 for the first phase and October 2028 for the second phase. The application does not specify which areas of the site would constitute the first and second phases. However, the site information statistics included in the concept plan seem to indicate that the area south of Veazey Connector would be the first phase and the area north of Veazey Connector would be the second phase. Additional information about each phase is included in the table below.

Phasing Plan Details

	Phase One	Phase Two	Total
Acreage	146 acres	118 acres	264 acres
Number of Units	200 acres	128 acres	328 acres
Acres of Open Space	48 acres	58 acres	106 acres
Location	Assumed to be south of Veazey Connector	Assumed to be north of Veazey Connector	
Completion Date	October 2026	October 2028	

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as part of the “West Greene Community” character area on the County's Character Areas Map (dated 6/13/2023), and areas within 1,500 feet of Veazey Connector are within the “Richland/Veazey Commercial Corridor.” Most of the site is located within 1,500 feet of Veazey Connector. The vision of the “West Greene Community” as described in the Greene County Comprehensive Plan is to “continue to serve as a major area of high-quality residential development as well as limited commercial development along major corridors.” Compatible zoning districts for the West Greene Community character area both inside and outside the Veazey Commercial Corridor are included in the table below.

Compatible Zoning Districts within the West Greene Community Character Area

	Agricultural	Residential	Master Planned Development	Commercial	Industrial
Overall Character Area	None	R1, LR1	PUD	None	None
Inside the Richland/Veazey Commercial Corridor	None	R1, RM	CPUD	B1, B2	None

The proposed site is somewhat compatible with its character area designation. PUD's are not listed as compatible with the West Greene Community character area within the Richland/Veazey Commercial Corridor, but they are compatible outside of the corridor. The proposed site plan follows the guidance presented in the character area narrative by preserving large amounts of open space and channeling site access through a small number of subdivision entrances. The proposed site plan does not include any information about the design or quality of the housing that would be built. The local government should consider requesting additional information about the style of residential development to ensure that the project fulfills the West Greene Community character area's vision to “serve as a major area of high-quality residential development as well as limited commercial development along major corridors.”

The site is identified as “Developing” on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan's Regional Land Use Map (dated 6/15/2023). The Regional Plan recommends development that enhances economic mobility and competitiveness, elevates public health and equity, supports and adds value to existing communities, creates

housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable, includes transportation choices and is well-connected with existing and planned transportation options, and protects natural and historic resources. The table below summarizes the project's compatibility with these recommendations:

Proposed Development's Compatibility with the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan

REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED PROJECT'S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION
Enhances economic mobility and competitiveness	The applicant states that the regional work force is sufficient to meet the demand created for the proposed project.
Elevates public health and equity	The planned community center would positively impact public health for those who have access to the facilities. Any additional natural areas, trails, and access to the lake provided by the developer would provide further opportunities for passive and active recreation. Additionally, making these facilities open to the public would help maximize their potential and improve access to recreational facilities in Greene County.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	Maximizing the amount of green space preserved on site would add value to existing surrounding communities.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	The applicant states that the proposed development would include homes that vary from 1,200-2,000 square feet on approximately 1/3-acre lots. To make the homes more affordable, the developer should consider including housing types such as duplexes, triplexes or cottage courts, which would deliver more affordably-priced homes with a similar neighborhood feel. The developer should also consider mixing the housing types throughout the community to create a mixed-income neighborhood.
Includes transportation choices and is well-connected with existing and planned transportation options	The site plan seems to include sidewalks throughout the proposed development but does not provide any further details. To promote safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, the developer should consider including include traffic calming measures such as chicanes, raised intersections, and speed humps.
Protects natural and historic resources	The proposed site includes multiple wetland and stream areas, and the site plan generally avoids these areas for development. However, site development would negatively impact these waterways by decreasing the amount of naturally vegetated areas, which slow and filter stormwater, and increasing the amount of impervious surfaces. To minimize the impact that the potential development would have on Lake Oconee as well as surrounding wetlands and streams, the developer should maximize the amount of natural vegetation on site that is preserved and should minimize the use of impervious surfaces. The developer should also consider pervious pavement in select locations as an additional way to minimize stormwater runoff.

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. There are several streams onsite, and a wetland is located primarily within areas that would be preserved as open space. Some of the wetland areas and streams appear to overlap with planned lot subdivisions. 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.

The chart below summarizes the number of acres within the site area as well as within a one-mile buffer around the site that contains 1) wetlands, 2) conservation land, 3) regionally important resources, and 4) threatened regionally important resources. Please refer to the footnotes for definitions for each of these terms.

Wetland, Conservation, and Regionally Important Resources			
	AREA TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	PERCENT OF AREA
SITE AREA (264 Acres)	Wetland Acres ¹	10	4%
	“Conservation Land” ²	264	100%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	264	100%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	264	100%
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (4,328 Acres)	Wetland Acres	368	8.5%
	“Conservation Land”	4,288	99.1%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	4,269	98.6%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	4,288	99.1%

The proposed site is within one mile of Lake Oconee, which is considered a Regionally Important Resource in the Northeast Georgia Research Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources (dated 8/7/2018). Lake Oconee and its surrounding areas provide habitat for the Bald Eagle, which is listed as “threatened” by the State of Georgia. The Oglethorpe Oak, also listed as “threatened,” may also be present in the areas surrounding Lake Oconee. Additionally, Morgan and Greene County both use Lake Oconee as a water source. To minimize the impacts of the proposed site on Lake Oconee, its use as a water source, and the species that depend on the lake as a habitat, the developer should take actions to minimize the runoff of pollutants and sediment from the site.

Additionally, the entire site is located within the Northeast Georgia Greene Infrastructure Network. 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.

Marc R. Acampora, PE, LLC completed a traffic impact study that projects 3,250 new daily trips, including 236 AM peak hour trips and 321 PM peak hour trips from the proposed development. The traffic study recommends an eastbound right turn lane to access the Southern Tract West entrance and states that a

¹ Wetland acres are derived from the National Wetland Inventory (NWI)

² “Conservation” land is derived from the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Conservation and Development Map (6/15/2023).

³ Regionally Important Resources were identified as a part of the Northeast Georgia Resource Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources (2/15/2018).

⁴ This area represents the intersection between Conservation areas (identified on the Conservation and Development Map, 6/15/2023), adopted Regionally Important Resources (RIR), and “Developed” and “Developing” Regional Land Use areas (identified on the Regional Land Use Map, 6/15/2023).

westbound left turn lane for this entrance merits consideration but is not required. At the access to the North Tract and the South Tract East entrances, the traffic study recommends that a left and right turn lane should be provided in the eastbound direction.

The project would be served by the Piedmont Water Supply system with an estimated demand of 0.1 MGD. The wastewater disposal needs would be served through an EPD permitted on-site land application system with an estimated sewage flow of 0.1 MGD. The applicant states that the water demand can be covered by existing capacity. The wastewater demand would be covered by the installed on-site land application system.

An estimated 12% of the site would be covered by impervious surfaces. No retention or detention ponds are shown in the site plan. The applicant states that a 50-foot undisturbed buffer and a 75-foot impervious buffer are proposed along all identified state waters and that bioretention and other water quality BMPs would be implemented according to the Georgia Stormwater manual prior to discharge into Lake Oconee.

The applicant estimates the project would generate 300 tons of solid waste annually and that sufficient landfill capacity exists to handle this waste. According to annual tonnage reports from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, 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 \$125,000,000 at build-out in 2028 and generate \$766,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$473,485 and generate approximately \$2,900 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, AICP, Director of Planning and Public Administration, Middle Georgia Regional Commission

This project is relatively modest in scope compared to several other developments, so while there are no specific concerns with this project, this is another development that reiterates the importance of operational improvements on SR-44 between Eatonton and Greensboro. Furthermore, when combined with DRI #3843 from last year, intersection improvements should also be considered for SR-44 at Richland Connector to help ensure safe travel along the SR-44 corridor.

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

This construction of 328 detached single-family homes on a 264-acre tract zoned LR1 (Lakeshore Single-Family Residential/Recreation District) adjacent to Lake Oconee in Greene County is about 7 miles from Greene County Regional Airport (CPP). It is located outside any FAA approach or departure surfaces, and airport compatible land use areas, and does not appear to impact the airport.

If any construction equipment or construction exceeds 200' AGL, an FAA Form 7460-1 must be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration according to the FAA's Notice Criteria Tool found here (<https://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/external/gisTools/gisAction.jsp?action=showNoNoticeRequiredToolForm>). Those submissions for any associated cranes may be done online at <https://oeaaa.faa.gov>. The FAA must be in receipt of the notifications, no later than 120 days prior to construction. The FAA will evaluate the potential impacts of the project on protected airspace associated with the airports and advise the proponent if any action is necessary.