

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 #4127
Name of Project:	Chicken Lyle Road Rezoning
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	Barrow County

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer's request to change the conditions from the original 2006 rezoning decision. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the period of 2/14/2024 – 3/1/2024.

Proposed Development

WIELME, LLC is proposing the construction of 652 units of single-family detached homes on a 216-acre site in unincorporated Barrow County. Each home in the proposed development would include a double-car garage and a driveway. The proposed development would include three different typical lot sizes, which are included in the table below:

Typical Lot Sizes		
Type	Minimum Lot Width	Minimum Lot Area
Type 1	38'	3,800 S.F.
Type 2	40'	3,600 S.F.
Type 3	50'	5,500 S.F.

The proposed development would include two amenity areas and seven pocket parks. These common areas would include 1) a one-acre active play area; 2) two athletic courts; 3) a 1,500 square foot swimming pool; 4) a 600 square foot water play & lounge area; 5) a 2,500 square foot clubhouse; and 6) a one-acre gathering space. 150 guest parking spaces would be constructed adjacent to the amenity areas, and 106 street parallel parking spaces would be constructed adjacent to the pocket parks and amenity areas.

The proposed site plan includes four entrances along Chicken Lyle Road. The site plan shows three traffic-calming circles and one traffic-calming median scattered throughout the proposed development. All streets in the proposed development include a four-foot-wide sidewalk on each side of the road.

Seven streams are located on the site, and the proposed site plan includes two stream crossings. The northern tip of the proposed site is located within a 100-year flood zone. All areas in the flood zone are designated as conservation spaces. The proposed development includes seven stormwater management areas. 72 acres of the site (33% of the total) would be designated as either open space or conservation space. The site plan includes a 10-foot landscaping strip adjacent to Chicken Lyle Road, and all other edges of the proposed site include a permanent 50-foot graded and replanted buffer. Currently, the site is primarily forested.

The affected parcel numbers are XX057 015, XX057 015A, XX057 016, XX057 017. The proposed site is currently zoned R-3 (High Density Residential District). The project would be completed in three phases with an estimated completion date in 2030. All three phases are included in this submission.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as Rural Neighborhood on the county's Future Development Map (dated 10/10/2023). The intent of the Rural Neighborhood character area as described in the Barrow County Comprehensive Plan is to “create a transition between Rural Reserve Areas and development in Suburban Neighborhood areas and to maintain the existing rural character of the county.” Future land uses in this area include low-density detached single-family residential (max 1-dwelling unit per acre) and agriculture/forestry.

The proposed development is not compatible with the Rural Neighborhood Character Area. The proposed development's density is approximately 3 units per acre, which is above the maximum density of 1 unit per acre included in the description. Additionally, the project's required sewer expansion is contrary to the character area's recommendation to discourage sewer expansion to limit development pressure. However, the project aligns with the design principles of limiting development in conservation areas and limiting impervious surfaces, which the applicant states is 30% of the total site land area. Additionally, the south side of Chicken Lyle Road is within the Traditional Neighborhood Character Area, which permits single-family homes, townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and cottage-style homes with a density range of 2-6 dwelling units per acre. The proposed development is just across the street from this character area, so the proposed development would be connected to a similar development pattern.

To better align with the Rural Neighborhood Character Area, the proposed development should attempt to align with the design principles and infrastructure/community facilities sections of the Rural Neighborhood Character Area. The developer should consider including pervious pavement in select areas to limit impervious surfaces and retaining the existing tree canopy onsite to the maximum extent possible. Additionally, the developer should consider making the amenity areas and public parks in the proposed development partially or fully open to the public, which would align with the community facilities section of the character area description.

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 workforce is sufficient to meet the demand created for the proposed project.
Elevates public health and equity	The planned amenity areas and pocket parks would positively impact public health for those who have access to the facilities. Making a portion or all these facilities open to the public would help maximize their potential and improve access to recreational facilities in Barrow County. This would also align with Barrow County's goal set in its 2023 Comprehensive Plan to "invest in a system of parks and recreation facilities."
Supports and adds value to existing communities	No information was provided about the project's architectural design elements. The Regional Plan recommends new development that contributes to the region's character and sense of place, and that uses context-sensitive design principles.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	The applicant states that the proposed development would include homes whose minimum heated area varies from 1,400-1,600 square feet. 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	<p>The proposed site plan includes sidewalks throughout the development as well as traffic-calming infrastructure such as traffic circles and median islands. These features help provide a safe way for pedestrians to navigate the site and slow vehicular traffic.</p> <p>The street network is well-connected within the site. However, there are no proposed street stubs to connect the site to future adjacent developments. The developer should consider including road stubs to each adjacent parcel to facilitate a well-connected, cohesive street network when future development occurs.</p>
Protects natural and historic resources	The proposed site includes multiple stream areas, and the site plan generally avoids these areas for development. Additionally, the site plan proposes to preserve 72 acres of the site as either open space or conservation space. However, site development would negatively impact surrounding waterways by decreasing the amount of naturally vegetated areas, which slows and filters stormwater, and by increasing the amount of impervious surfaces. To minimize the impact that the potential development would have on surrounding streams, the developer should maximize the preservation of existing natural vegetation on site and should consider pervious pavement in select locations as an additional way to minimize stormwater runoff.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

The applicant states that the development is located within or could potentially affect water supply watersheds, wetlands, protected river corridors, and floodplains. The applicant states that the wetlands, protected river corridors, and floodplains are all in permanent passive open space areas and that these resources will be protected through permanent deeded buffers. The applicant states that the project is unlikely to affect groundwater recharge areas, protected mountains, historic resources, and other environmentally sensitive resources.

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 (217 ACRES)	Wetland Acres ¹	6	2.9%
	“Conservation Land” ²	7	3.2%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	0	0.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	7	3.2%
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (3,905 ACRES)	Wetland Acres	236	6.0%
	“Conservation Land”	753	19.3%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	0	0.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	714	18.3%

Lumin8 Transportation Technologies completed a traffic impact study that projects 6,148 new daily trips, including 456 AM peak hour trips and 613 PM peak hour trips from the proposed development. The study states that all the site driveways are projected to operate acceptably under minor street stop control through the Design Year of 2045. However, each of the site driveways should be considered for installing right turn lanes of 225 feet full-length storage for safety considerations and possible future developments in the study area.

The City of Winder would supply water for the project with a daily demand of 0.163 MGD. The Barrow County Water & Sewer Authority would provide sewer services for the project with an estimated daily demand of 0.163 MGD. Gravity sewer is not located adjacent to the proposed project, and the applicant states that it would be the responsibility of the owner/developer to bear the expense to connect the proposed project to the county's gravity sewer line. Approximately 0.44 miles of sewer line would be needed to service the proposed development.

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).

An estimated 30% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and seven stormwater management areas are planned to manage stormwater runoff.

The applicant estimates the project would generate 1,190 tons of solid waste annually and that sufficient landfill capacity exists to handle this waste. According to 2022 annual tonnage reports from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, almost all municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in Barrow County is disposed of in a landfill in Barrow County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$240,000,000 at build-out in 2030 and generate \$3,850,000 in annual local taxes. Estimated annual local tax revenue would include \$3 million in property tax and \$850 thousand in sales tax. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$1,111,111 and generate approximately \$17,824 in combined property and sales 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

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

This construction of 652 detached single-family homes on a 216-acre tract zoned R-3 (High Density Residential District.) in Barrow County is about 5 miles from Barrow County Airport (WDR). 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.