

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 #4260
Name of Project:	RaceTrac, Inc.
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	City of Madison

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request for rezoning and variance. In the zoning application, the developer is requesting the city to rezone 2.57 acres of parcel 026 002 from C3 and R to C4 and for a variance for the property to exceed the maximum lot width under C4 zoning for a combined lot width of 563.46 feet. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 17-day period of 8/30/2024 - 9/16/2024.

Proposed Development

RaceTrac, Inc. is proposing construction of an 8,100 square-foot convenience store, 16 passenger vehicle fuel pumps (8 filling positions), and 12 truck fuel pumps for trucks (6 filling positions) on a 7.5-acre site in the City of Madison. 32 passenger vehicle parking spaces and 28 truck parking spaces would be built to service the site, and a truck scale would be installed adjacent to the truck fuel pumps. The proposed plan shows a small building behind the main convenience store that appears to contain the site’s dumpsters and storage room. The proposed site would have three entrances; one entrance is along US Highway 441, and the other two would be along a new access road at the southern edge of the site.

Currently, the northern half of the proposed site (parcel 046A 019) is paved and operates as an open-air truck storage lot. The remainder of the site (parcels 046A 020 and 046 002) is undeveloped and wooded. The proposed site plan includes a 10’ sign setback, a 25’ landscape setback, and a 75’ building & structure setback along the US Highway 441 right-of-way. The site plan also includes a 10’ landscape side & rear side back and a 15’ building side and rear setback.

The proposed development would occupy 7.5 acres along US Highway 441 south of I-20 in the City of Madison. The parcel numbers include 046A 019, 046A 020, and a portion of 046 002. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in 2026.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as two character areas on the city's Character Areas Map (dated 9/12/2022). Please see below for a description of the two character areas and the site's compatibility with them.

CHARACTER AREA	DESCRIPTION	COMPATIBILITY WITH CHARACTER AREA
Interstate Corridor Subarea	The city's primary commercial corridor and a city and county business and employment destination area.	Mostly compatible. While gas stations are not mentioned as an appropriate land use in this character area, the proposed development's location along a busy roadway near an interstate exit makes it suitable for this location. To better align with this character area, the developer should consider adding a greenspace perimeter, particularly along the street frontage, and creating street stubs to surrounding developments.
Corridor Industrial Subarea	The city's primary industrial corridor that is mostly rural and unlit.	Mostly compatible. While this character area is primarily for industrial land use, the proposed site would serve the surrounding industrial areas.

The site is identified as "Developed" 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 proposed development would contribute to unhealthy air pollution that would impact surrounding areas. However, the development is in a sparsely populated area, so it is unlikely that the proposed development would negatively impact a particular residential area. No information was submitted with the DRI application indicating what precautions will be taken to manage fuel spills or to minimize the release of air pollutants during refueling.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	The area surrounding the proposed development already has several gas stations and convenience stores. While the proposed development does not negatively impact the existing community, it does not add value to the existing community beyond creating jobs.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	Not applicable to this project type.

REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED PROJECT'S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION
Includes transportation choices and is well-connected with existing and planned transportation options	The proposed development has three entrances to facilitate the flow of traffic through the site. The site plan also proposes a walkway from the diesel pump station to the convenience store. However, the site plan does not show a connection to the existing sidewalk along Highway 441. Additionally, while the site plan includes a street stub to the parcel south of the site, it does not include a connection to the motel north of the site which would allow for better circulation between the gas station and the motel.
Protects natural and historic resources	The site application states that the site will install a stormwater management basin to detain stormwater flows to pre-development flow rates and to treat the 1.2" water quality volume. No other information was submitted with this application to indicate if precautions will be taken to manage fuel spills or to minimize the release of air pollutants during refueling. No historic resources will be affected by the proposed project.

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. 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 (7.5 Acres)	Wetland Acres ¹	0	0.0%
	"Conservation Land" ²	0	0.0%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	0	0.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	0	0.0%
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (2,296 Acres)	Wetland Acres	74	3.2%
	"Conservation Land"	481	21.0%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	0	0.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	306	13.3%

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).

Transportation

Heath & Lineback completed a traffic impact study that projects 7,608 new daily trips, including 696 AM peak hour trips and 592 PM peak hour trips from the proposed development.

Water Supply and Wastewater

The project would be served by the City of Madison's water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 0.0032 MGD for each system. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity. No water or sewer line extensions are anticipated.

Stormwater Management

An estimated 60% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and the applicant states that the site's stormwater management measures would be designed to meet local and state requirements. Specifically, the site will install a stormwater management basin to detain stormwater flows to pre-development flow rates and to treat the 1.2" water quality volume. The location of this basin is to be determined and is not shown on the proposed site plan. It will either be an underground system or a detention pond within the property boundary.

Solid Waste

The applicant estimates the project would generate five 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 Morgan County is disposed of in a landfill in Barrow County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

Life Cycle Costs and Revenue

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$2,500,000 at build-out in 2026 and generate \$160,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$333,333 and generate approximately \$21,333 in tax revenue. The largest expected impact on service delivery would be on road maintenance due to an increase in volume surrounding the project. 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 Program Manager, Georgia Department of Transportation

This proposed new RaceTrac gas station is 4 miles from Madison Municipal Airport (52A). It is located outside any FAA approach or departure surfaces, and airport compatible land use areas, and does not appear to impact any 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.

Rachel Borkowski, Civil Engineer 3, Georgia Department of Transportation District 2 – Traffic Operations

Please see attached for comments.

DRI # 4260 City of Madison District 2 comments

- Note that for divisions of parcels of land 5 acres and under must submit for a subdivision of properties.
- An access plan will need to be submitted to the GDOT permitting office and will be subject to the driveway and encroachment manual.
- Sight distance will need to be verified based off AASHTO guidelines.
- The district recommends making the north driveway a commercial 24ft driveway for passenger car use and the southern driveway to be utilized for truck/tractor trailer use.
 - This will aid in the truck traffic from the highway and prevent stacking
- The southern driveway should be squared up 90 degrees with the roadway.
- Provide overlay on your plan sheets of the proposed/active project
Provide a sight plan including all proposed work
 - i.e. deceleration lanes
- The site plans provided contain a discrepancy of the north driveway. Pages 12 and 139 do not present the same information.
- ~~The district recommends shifting the north driveway to meet driveway spacing for 45 mph.~~
- Plan/templates do not account for left turn traffic from interstate.
- Make a note to remove all existing asphalt non utilized driveways.