

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.

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| Project I.D.: | DRI #4254 |
| Name of Project: | Winslow Park |
| Name of Host Jurisdiction: | Athens-Clarke County |

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request for a rezone for a Planned Development in Athens-Clarke County. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 8/16/2024 to 8/31/2024.

Proposed Development

D.R. Horton is proposing construction of 878 residential units on a 207-acre site in Athens-Clarke County. The proposed development would include a variety of housing options, including single-family detached homes, townhouses, and condominiums. The site plan includes four greenspace areas, conservation of a minimum of 15 percent of the total tree canopy on-site, and new plantings on an additional 29.9 percent of the site.

Currently, the site is undeveloped and wooded with a small lake. The parcel number is 044 025 and it is located at 4500 Atlanta Hwy. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in 2028.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as Mixed Density Residential and General Business on the County’s Future Land Use Map (dated 5/2/2023). The Mixed Density Residential land use area is described as “residential areas where higher density residential development is allowed and intended.” The General Business area is described as “commercial areas that serve a variety of needs for the residents of the region. It is intended for small- and large-scale retailing and service uses that are auto-oriented.” The proposed development is compatible with the designated Residential land use, as the developer would create a higher density

residential area. A small section of the proposed development off of Bedgood Road is designated General Business. While the development is not a typical use for General Business, it is still considered a supportive land use that would serve community needs by providing additional housing.

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 following table outlines the proposal’s alignment with these recommendations:

| REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS | PROPOSED PROJECT’S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION |
|---|---|
| Enhances economic mobility and competitiveness | <p>The applicant states that the regional work force is sufficient to meet the demand created by the proposed project.</p> <p>The project would create opportunities for economic development by increasing the housing supply to support a growing workforce population.</p> |
| Elevates public health and equity | <p>The proposed development would include public health benefits for the residents of the neighborhood by including sidewalks throughout and ample street trees. However, minimal public greenspace is included in the preliminary site plan and no public access to the existing small lake or conserved tree canopy areas are included.</p> |
| Supports and adds value to existing communities | <p>The proposed project would provide additional housing units to the community.</p> |
| Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable | <p>The proposal includes 878 new housing units and 3 types of housing. Including a wide variety of housing types will likely result in variation in housing costs and values, creating more equitable and affordable housing options.</p> |
| Includes transportation choices and is well-connected with existing and planned transportation options | <p>The proposed street network is well-connected with 2 access points to the existing road network and 4 street stubs for future road connections to the back of the development. It appears that sidewalks are included throughout the site plan as well, either on main streets or in shared public spaces in areas with townhomes.</p> |

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|--|---|
| Protects natural and historic resources | Approximately 175 acres of tree canopy would be removed as a result of the project. The proposal provides a buffer for the existing lake and streams with a 25-foot State Waters Buffer and a 75-foot ACC Environmental Areas Buffer. The developer will also implement a stormwater management plan in accordance with the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual and all ACC regulations to protect downstream properties and the watershed from flooding. Additionally, the applicant states that approximately 15 percent of the tree canopy will be conserved. |
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Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

Natural Resources

The development would be located within areas containing state wetlands and floodplains. The applicant states that the development will comply with all state and local stormwater regulations, including a 25-foot State Waters Buffer and a 75-foot ACC Environmental Areas Buffer. 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, protected mountain and river corridors, historic resources, and other environmentally sensitive resources. Refer to the attached site plan and project location map for any stream, floodplain, and buffer locations.

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 207 | Wetland Acres ¹ | 14.1 | 6.9% |
| | “Conservation Land” ² | 35 | 17.0% |
| | Regionally Important Resource Land ³ | 0.0 | 0.0% |
| | Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴ | 35.0 | 17.0% |
| 1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE 3929.8 | Wetland Acres | 134.0 | 3.4% |
| | “Conservation Land” | 1,462.5 | 37.2% |
| | Regionally Important Resource Land | 594.8 | 15.1% |
| | Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land | 1,112.6 | 28.3% |

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).

No specific Regionally Important Resource sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site. The Threatened Regionally Important Resource (RIR) 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). 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. While the proposal only minimally reserves undeveloped land, it does include 4 small greenspace areas, conservation of 15 percent of the site's tree canopy, and a buffer for wetlands and the existing lake.

Transportation

W&A Engineering completed a traffic impact study that projects 7,151 new daily trips, including 495 AM peak hour trips and 642 PM peak hour trips from the proposed development. The site plan includes two access points off Atlanta Highway, one through Dakota Drive and one east of the intersection with Dakota Drive and Atlanta Highway. The study recommends preparing a Traffic Engineering Report to determine whether a traffic signal is needed at the site driveway intersection. The study also recommends that the County perform a signal optimization study for the SR 10/US 78/Atlanta Highway corridor from Jennings Mill Road to Cleveland Road once GDOT Project PI 122890 is completed, and to consider sponsoring a project to improve the operations of the Atlanta Hwy/ Monroe Hwy/Tall Tree Road intersection. Refer to the attached traffic study for more details and the site plan for the location of proposed infrastructure.

Water Supply and Wastewater

The project would be served by the Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 0.175 MGD for each system. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity. A water and sewer line extension of less than 1 mile would be required to serve this project.

Stormwater Management

An estimated 55% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces. The applicant states that best management practices will be used per state and local regulations for stormwater management. The site plan indicates 8 "ponds" and 9 small "bio" areas that are interpreted to be for stormwater management. Additionally, the developer will determine whether the lake on the site can provide a portion of the stormwater runoff control. Refer to the site plan for the proposed location of stormwater management infrastructure. 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.

Solid Waste

The applicant estimates the project would generate 150 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 Athens-Clarke County is disposed of in a landfill in within the county. This landfill has an estimated 36 years of remaining capacity. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

Lifecycle Costs and Revenues

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$183,540,000 at build-out in 2028 and generate \$3,450,500 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$886,667 and generate approximately \$16,669 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

Jennifer H. Welte, Assistant Branch Chief, Georgia Environmental Protection Division

EPD' Watershed Protection Branch does not have any comments on this DRI, as it acknowledges an available water supply and E&S development requirements. Please note that the project may also involve permitting by the Corps of Engineers under Sec. 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Jonathan Peevy, P.E., District Traffic Engineer, Georgia Department of Transportation

- Coordination with GDOT is required
 - Driveway/Encroachment permit required for access to US 78/SR 10
 - TE Study required at Driveway to assess impacts
 - May require traffic signal permit/installation at developer expense
- Assess impacts at adjacent signals as discussed in the study (coordination with ACC on US 78/SR 10 corridor)
- Projects involved
 - PI 122890 – SR 10 loop ramp project
 - 0013764 – SR 316 @ McNutt Creek
 - 0007685 – SR 316 @ Dials Mill

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

This proposed construction of 878 residential units on a 207-acre site in Athens-Clarke County is 8 miles from Athens-Ben Epps Airport (AHN). 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.