

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.

---

<b>Project I.D.:</b>	DRI #4420
<b>Name of Project:</b>	RaceTrac Extended Diesel Offer
<b>Name of Host Jurisdiction:</b>	City of Jefferson

---

### Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer's request for a permit. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 3/24/25 to 4/8/2025.

### Proposed Development

RaceTrac, Inc., is proposing to expand an existing gas station facility in the City of Jefferson by adding an 8,100-square-foot travel center, a truck diesel fueling canopy, and underground storage tanks. According to the site plan, the proposed diesel canopy would include 8 truck diesel pumps, and the facility would also include a truck scale. The proposed new 8,100-square-foot travel center building would replace the existing 5,000-square-foot store. The existing petroleum fueling canopy and underground storage tanks would remain. The total area of the two affected parcels is 28 acres; however, only about 7 acres of the site would be occupied by the existing and proposed new facilities. No information was provided about any potential future uses of the rest of the site, nor about whether the remaining undeveloped parcel 092 003B2 would be developed. The proposed development would occupy property at the intersection of Hog Mountain Road and US Hwy 129 in the City of Jefferson, near Interstate 85. The parcel numbers are 092 009B and part of 092 003B2. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in 2026.

### Compatibility with Existing Plans

#### Compatibility with Regional Plan

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

REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED PROJECT'S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION
<b>Enhances economic mobility and competitiveness</b>	The applicant states that the regional workforce is sufficient to meet the demand created for the proposed project.
<b>Elevates public health and equity</b>	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. As the proposed new diesel fueling facility would expand expansion of an existing gas station, be next to an interstate highway where numerous commercial trucks already travel, and not be near any residential areas, no significant impacts on public health or equity would be expected.
<b>Supports and adds value to existing communities</b>	There is an existing diesel truck fueling facility at the same interstate exit as the proposed RaceTrac expansion. So, the proposed RaceTrac expansion would add to the diesel fueling capacity of the area, but it would not add a new service.
<b>Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable</b>	Not applicable to this project type.
<b>Includes transportation choices and is well- connected with existing and planned transportation options</b>	The proposal includes three entrances to facilitate the flow of traffic through the site. The site plan also includes a sidewalk that connects the diesel pump fueling area with the convenience store. However, the site plan does not include any proposed sidewalks along US Hwy 129, nor along Hog Mountain Road; adding sidewalks along both of these roads would facilitate pedestrian travel to and around the RaceTrac facility.
<b>Protects natural and historic resources</b>	No 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.

### Compatibility with Regional Resource Management Plan

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
<b>SITE AREA (28 Acres)</b>	Wetland Acres <sup>1</sup>	-	0.0%
	"Conservation Land" <sup>2</sup>	-	0.0%
	Regionally Important Resource Land <sup>3</sup>	-	0.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land <sup>4</sup>	-	0.0%
<b>1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (2,586 Acres)</b>	Wetland Acres	310.9	12.0%
	"Conservation Land"	988.4	38.2%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	738.6	28.6%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	974.5	37.7%

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). 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. No specific Regionally Important Resource sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site.

### Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

#### Natural Resources and Stormwater Management

The National Wetlands Inventory identifies no streams or wetlands on the site, and no part of the site is within a floodplain. The applicant states that an estimated 68% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces. Based on the information provided with the application, it seems that this likely means 68% of the approximately 5 acres that would be occupied by the proposed diesel extended offer facility, not 68% of the full 28-acre site. The applicant indicated that a detention pond will be used for stormwater management. No surface-level detention pond is shown the site plan, but the site plan does outline an area labeled as "underground detention." 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 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.

<sup>1</sup> Wetland acres are derived from the National Wetland Inventory (NWI)

<sup>2</sup> "Conservation" land is derived from the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan's Conservation and Development Map (6/15/2023).

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

<sup>4</sup> 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

STV Incorporated completed a traffic impact study that projects 2,004 new daily trips, including 182 new AM peak hour trips and 152 new PM peak hour trips from the proposed development. Additionally, the study projects 208 daily pass-by trips, meaning visits to the site from existing traffic on US Hwy 129. The study states that traffic operations within the study area are expected to remain acceptable after the completion of the project, and that no improvements are required at the study intersections. Modifications to existing site driveways along US Hwy 129 and Hog Mountain Road are recommended to accommodate trucks and define turning lanes.

### Water Supply and Wastewater

The project would be served by the City of Jefferson water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of approximately 0.002 MGD for each system. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity and that no water or sewer line extensions are anticipated.

### Solid Waste

The applicant estimates the project would generate 5 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, most municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in Jackson County is disposed of in a landfill in Banks County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

### Lifecycle Costs and Revenues

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$8.5 million at build-out in 2026 and generate \$1 million in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, considering the whole 28-acre site, the project would be worth approximately \$304,000 and generate approximately \$36,000 in tax revenue. Considering only the approximately 7 acres where development is proposed, the project would be worth approximately \$1.2 million per acre and generate approximately \$143,000 per acre in 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 Program Manager, Georgia Department of Transportation*

This proposed construction of 8,100 square feet of commercial (travel center) space, a truck diesel fueling canopy, and underground storage tanks on a 28 - acre tract in Jefferson County is 4.75 miles from the Jefferson County Airport (JCA). It is located outside of the 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.