

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 #4567
Name of Project:	Hub II Athens
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	Athens-Clarke County

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer's request for rezoning. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 11/4/2025 to 11/19/2025.

Proposed Development

Core Spaces is proposing construction of a mixed-use development on a 6.3-acre site in Athens-Clarke County. The proposed development would occupy property surrounded by North Avenue, E. Dougherty Street, N. Jackson Street, and Hoyt Street (parcel numbers are 163D3 L002, 163D3 N001, and the portion of 163D3 D001 that is south of Hoyt St.). Proposed uses include 546 residential units (1,411 bedrooms), 25,544 square feet of commercial space (914,450 square feet of gross floor area) and a 588-space interior parking garage. Based on the site plan submitted, the residential and commercial units and the interior parking garage would be in one large, interconnected building with 3 interior courtyards. The proposal also includes a public parking garage in a separate building and a pedestrian bridge from the public parking garage to Hoyt St. The site currently includes a hotel, a surface parking lot, and two historic buildings: Hoyt House and the Foundry. The existing hotel and surface parking lot would be replaced by the proposed development, and the Foundry would be retained on site and protected by an easement. The Hoyt House is proposed to be relocated offsite, if a suitable location is found in Athens-Clarke County. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in July 2027.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

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
SITE AREA (6.3 Acres)	Wetland Acres ¹		0.0%
	“Conservation Land” ²	6.3	100.0%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	6.3	100.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	6.3	100.0%
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (2,341 Acres)	Wetland Acres	81	3.4%
	“Conservation Land”	1,760	75.2%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	1,752	74.8%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	1,760	75.2%

Most of the Regionally Important Resource acreage is part of the Northeast Georgia Green 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.

Several Regionally Important Resources exist within 1 mile of the site. They include the Lyndon House, Morton Theatre, Church-Waddel-Brumby House, T.R.R. Cobb House, Taylor-Grady House, Oconee River Greenway System, Firefly Trail, and Athens Line. It is important that this site be developed in a manner that does not detract from the regionally important qualities of these nearby resources.

Compatibility with Regional Plan

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.

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).

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	Economic benefits of the proposal would be to add new commercial space near downtown, as well as to create a large amount of new housing next to the new commercial space and near downtown's other employment, entertainment, and dining locations. On the other hand, removing the hotel as proposed would eliminate a source of hotel-motel tax revenue for the local government and would reduce the availability of downtown lodging for visitors who can patronize downtown businesses during their stay. Given the mix and density of commercial and residential uses in the proposed development, and the proposed additional public parking, it is likely that the economic benefits of the project would more than compensate for the loss of the hotel; however, the local government should do its own analysis to determine whether the project would result in a net economic gain.
Elevates public health and equity	Public health and equity impacts are mixed. The proposed development would eliminate the existing parking lot for Lay Park and would add a new public parking garage that would be connected to Hoyt Street, near Lay Park, by a pedestrian bridge. Negative effects on public health and equity would be that the new garage would be further away from the Lay Park recreation center than the existing parking lot, which would reduce accessibility somewhat. Positive effects include that the parking garage would have many more parking spaces than the existing parking lot, potentially enabling more people to access Lay Park by car than was previously possible.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	The project would support and add value to the existing community by adding public parking, increasing connectivity of the street network, adding additional housing in the downtown area, creating new commercial space, and adding a pedestrian bridge to make Lay Park accessible from the proposed parking garage. By replacing an extensive surface parking lot with parking garages, the proposal would also allow for much more efficient use of the available space than the site's existing configuration.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	The proposed project would add 546 new residential units to the downtown area, where demand for housing is high. No information was provided with the DRI application about whether or not a percentage of the residential units would be allocated as affordable housing (as opposed to market rate housing). At market rates, multifamily residential units are usually more affordable than other housing options, but housing prices are typically higher in and near downtown areas than in other areas due to higher demand.
Includes transportation choices and is well- connected with existing and planned transportation options	The proposed development would improve the connectivity of the existing road network by extending Hoyt Street to connect with North Avenue. The proposal also includes a new public parking deck and a pedestrian bridge. The site plan shows sidewalks along the street on all four sides of the development, as well as a pedestrian plaza between the existing Foundry building and the proposed new building. Public transit is available to serve the site via Athens-Clarke County Transit.
Protects natural and historic resources	There are two historic resources on site: the Foundry (a former machine works that was built around 1850 and has since been adapted for use as an entertainment venue), and Hoyt House (a house built in 1829 that now operates as part of the hotel). According to descriptions of the Hoyt House available online, the exterior of the building largely retains its historic features and character, but the interior has been renovated extensively to serve various hotel and restaurant functions over the years. The proposed development would keep the Foundry buildings intact and protect them with an easement and plaza separating them from the new buildings. The developers have proposed to relocate the Hoyt House offsite, but as of the time of DRI application submission, a new site had not yet been identified. In addition, there are several historic and cultural Regionally Important Resources (RIRs) within one mile of the site, as listed under "Compatibility with Regional Resource Management Plan," below. One, the Lyndon House Arts Center, is adjacent to the proposed development, so the new facility would be within the viewshed of visitors to Lyndon House, and both facilities would be visible at the same time. However, as the existing buildings surrounding and visible from the Lyndon House already represent a wide range of scales, massing, and architectural styles, the proposed facility is unlikely to further degrade the historic character of this resource. There are no known vulnerable natural resources on or near the site.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

Natural Resources and Stormwater Management

No known streams or wetlands are present on the site. The applicant states that an estimated 94% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces. The applicant states that stormwater originating from the site would be managed using an underground detention vault with hydrodynamic separators and an up-flo filter. 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 likely to affect historic resources on the site. As noted above, the Hoyt House is proposed to be relocated offsite, and the Foundry buildings would be retained onsite and protected by an easement. The applicant states that water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountains, protected river corridors, floodplains, and other environmentally sensitive resources would not be affected by the proposed development.

Transportation

W&A Engineering completed a traffic study for the proposed project that projects 4,146 new daily trips, including 409 new AM peak hour trips, 236 new midday peak hour trips, and 352 new PM peak hour trips. Three traffic improvements are included in the proposal: (1) realignment of the intersection of Dougherty Street, North Avenue, and Thomas Street; (2) extension of Hoyt Street to connect with North Avenue, and (3) a new vehicular entrance from North Ave to where the public parking garage is proposed. Additionally, the existing parking lot for Lay Park would be removed, a new public parking garage is proposed, and a pedestrian bridge is proposed from the public parking garage to Lay Park. Refer to the traffic study for details about the trip generation analysis and recommended transportation improvements.

Water Supply and Wastewater

The project would be served by the Athens-Clarke County water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 0.2055 MGD for each system. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity, that no water line extension is needed to serve the project, and that the sewer conveyance pipe network would need to be rerouted and upsized. This would include approximately 0.25 miles of upsized and rerouted sanitary sewer pipe, as well as some off-site improvements to increase the diameter and slope of existing sewer lines to increase conveyance capacity.

Solid Waste

The applicant estimates the project would generate 600 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 Athens-Clarke County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

Lifecycle Costs and Revenues

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$170 million at build-out in 2027 and generate \$2.2 million in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$27 million and generate approximately \$350,000 in tax revenue. Prior to approval, the local government 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

None received.