



DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Final Report

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission • 305 Research Drive, Athens, Georgia • www.negr.org

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 #4669
Name of Project:	Madison Fields Subdivision & The Rose Golf Course
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	Madison County

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 5/29/2026 to 6/13/2026.

Proposed Development

The Rose Founders, LLC are proposing the construction of 147 single-family homes and a 280-acre golf course on an approximately 589-acre site in Madison County on property west of the intersection of Sanford Road and Helican Springs Road in Madison County. The parcel number is 0018 039. The residential development would feature 65 cottages on 0.18 – 0.25 acre lots and 82 single-family homes on 1 – 1.6 acre lots. It would also include a pool, pickleball court, and pavilion. The golf course would be separate from the residential development and include a cart barn, maintenance facility, clubhouse, comfort station, and founder’s cottage. The site includes two entrances on Helican Springs Road and a separate entrance to the golf course on Sanford Road. Currently, the southern portion of the site is undeveloped and wooded, and the northern portion of the site is a golf course. The project would be completed in two phases. The golf course is estimated to be completed by 2027, and the residential development is estimated to be complete by 2029.

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
Enhances economic mobility and competitiveness	The golf course would create employment opportunities for the community and likely increase traffic to local businesses. The residential development could also increase economic competitiveness by adding additional housing units.
Elevates public health and equity	The residential portion of the proposed development includes outdoor amenities that would contribute to the health of residents. The proposed development does not appear to positively or negatively contribute to equity or the health of the area’s existing residents.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	The residential development would add 147 housing units to the community. The developer should consider making some amenities publicly accessible to add value to existing communities.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	The proposed development includes two types of housing. No information was available to determine if any of the new units would have varying affordability. To help create a mixed-income and mixed-age community, the developer should consider providing units of differing sizes and ownership types. The developer should also keep accessibility in mind by providing some single-level units that meet universal design principles.
Includes transportation choices and is well-connected with existing and planned transportation options	The residential development has two connections to the existing road network and the golf course has one connection. For the residential development, the traffic study recommends constructing a right turn deceleration lane on Helican Springs Road and installing a properly channelized left and right turn lane to exit the development. The developer should consider adding sidewalks throughout the residential development, as well as additional safety and traffic-calming infrastructure such as crosswalks, speed humps, or traffic chicanes to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
Protects natural and historic resources	The proposed development is located within the Sandy Creek Watershed. East Sandy Creek flows along the site’s northern border, with four streams extending into the golf course and residential development. Sandy Creek flows into the North Oconee River, which supplies water to Athens-Clarke County residents. Clearing a large portion of the existing tree canopy could negatively impact the watershed and nearby creek. The developer should consider maintaining the tree canopy and designate “no-spray” zones near the creek and streams to allow filtration of stormwater runoff from the golf course.

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 (590 Acres)	Wetland Acres ¹	8.6	1.5%
	“Conservation Land” ²	110.5	18.7%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	0	0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	110.5	18.7%
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (5289 Acres)	Wetland Acres	194.9	3.7%
	“Conservation Land”	1,318.3	24.9%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	0	0.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	1,205.8	22.8%

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

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

Natural Resources and Stormwater Management

East Sandy Creek lies along the northern border of the golf course. There is a 50-foot stream buffer around the creek and a 25-foot buffer around the four streams that extend from East Sandy Creek into the site. The applicant states that an estimated 0.74% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces. There are three naturally delineated basins located in the site that will serve as stormwater ponds for the proposed development. 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. However, there are wetlands located on the site and the site is upstream from Sandy Creek Park. The developer should ensure that no or minimal disturbance occurs within the designated wetland areas on the site.

Transportation

Carter Engineering completed a traffic impact study that projects 1,438 new daily trips, including 106 AM peak hour trips and 143 PM peak hour trips from the proposed development. The residential development will have two entrances off Helican Springs Road and the golf course will have one entrance off Sanford Road. Refer to the project’s traffic study for additional information and recommendations.

Water Supply and Wastewater

The project would be served by the Madison County Public Water System and on-site community sewer treatment. The golf course has an estimated daily demand of 13,760 GPD for each system and the residential development has an estimated daily demand of 49,245 GPD for each system. The applicant states that sufficient water supply capacity is available to serve the project, and a 1.2-mile water line extension would be required to serve the project. Sufficient

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).

wastewater treatment capacity is not currently available, but it will be added by the developer. The project is currently waiting for approval from the Madison County Environmental Health and State of Georgia Environmental Protection Division.

Energy Supply

The applicant states that Jackson Electric Membership Cooperation will supply energy for this site, and the project's estimated peak connected electrical load is 1.085 megawatts for the golf course and 2.100 megawatts for the residential development.

Solid Waste

The applicant estimates that the golf course would generate 12.5-18.5 tons of solid waste annually and the residential development would generate 165 tons of solid waste annually. The applicant states 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 Madison 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 \$240,000,000 (\$50,000,000 from the golf course and \$190-210,000,000 from the residential development) at build-out in 2029 and generate \$2,600,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$407,470 and generate approximately \$4,414 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

Bruce Lonnee, Planning Director, Athens-Clarke County Unified Government

With regard to the proposed development's compatibility with the "Developing" designation on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan's Regional Land Use Map, the proposed development has the potential to be at odds with the following Regional Plan recommendation:

- "Protects natural and historic resources."
 - The early stages of development associated with the subject project have produced significant erosion and sedimentation in East Sandy Creek. East Sandy Creek flows into Sandy Creek in Athens-Clarke County which is upstream of the public water intake associated with the Beacham Water Treatment Plant.
 - The scale of this project and the location of the proposed land disturbance remains in close proximity to East Sandy Creek and improved attention to SESC best practices must be ensured