

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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<b>Project I.D.:</b>	DRI #4747
<b>Name of Project:</b>	Covered Bridge Road Mixed-Use Development
<b>Name of Host Jurisdiction:</b>	Barrow County

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### Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request for rezoning the property from AG to R3, as well as their request for a variance, sewer permit, and water 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

Towns Brothers Spalding is proposing the construction of 512 single-family lots, 550 multi-family units, and 350,000 square feet of commercial space on a 345-acre site in unincorporated Barrow County.

The residential portion of the proposed development would encompass 245 acres (71%) of the site. 272 of the single-family lots would be 50 feet wide, and the remaining 240 lots would be 60 feet wide. The single-family detached residential portion of the site would include four pocket parks, a master amenity area, and numerous mulch trails throughout the site. The multi-family portion of the site would be built in two phases, with each phase including 275 units. The multifamily area would include two master amenity areas, a pocket park, and two leasing/clubhouse amenity areas. Some of the multi-family buildings would have retail on the bottom floor.

The commercial area of the site would include 15 buildings for retail, office, and restaurant use. The building sizes vary from a 675-square foot drive-through building to a 150,000-square foot retail building. The commercial area is primarily oriented towards the surrounding roadways and includes a gas station as well as a community park area.

In total, the proposed development would include 4,518 parking spaces. The parking space per area is detailed in the following table:

Area	# Spaces	Parking Density (if Provided)
Single Family Detached Parking <sup>1</sup>	2,048	4 spaces per lot
Multi-family Parking	880	1.6 spaces per dwelling unit
Commercial Parking	1,590	

The proposed site includes two main access points as well as three auxiliary access points to surrounding roads. Two pump stations are included in the site plan, with one located along GA 211 and another located at the eastern edge of the site. Currently, the site is a rural community that includes seven homes, farmland, and forests.

The proposed development would occupy 345 acres in unincorporated Barrow County. The parcel numbers are XX047 076, XX047 076A, XX047 076B, XX047 077, XX047 078, XX047 079, XX047 080, XX047 081, XX047 082, XX047 083, and XX047 084. The applicant states the overall project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in 2032. However, please note that the site plan states the multi-family portion of the site would be completed in two phases.

## 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 proposed development would include approximately 350,000 square feet of commercial space, which would create many job opportunities in the area.
<b>Elevates public health and equity</b>	The proposed parks, amenity areas, and trails included in the site plan would elevate public health for surrounding residents by creating greenspace and recreation areas. The developer should ensure that these areas are easily accessible to both residents of the development and the public so that all can benefit from the proposed amenities. Barrow County recently adopted a Trails Master Plan that indicates a planned paved multi-use path through the site that is not shown on the site plan. The County and developer should discuss the applicability of including this trail segment within the proposal or ensure that the proposed trails connect to the countywide planned trail network to distribute public health and equity benefits.
<b>Supports and adds value to existing communities</b>	The proposed development adds value to the existing community by creating a mixed-use community with diverse housing options, new businesses, and civic spaces.
<b>Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable</b>	The proposed development would create housing options that include single-family detached houses and apartments. Due to the mixed-use nature of the project, residents would live within walking distance of businesses, amenities, and work opportunities. The developer and the County should ensure that the proposed development encourages a stable community that is mixed-aged and mixed-income. This can be done by providing both homeownership and renting options and/or by building homes that have a wide variety of price points.

<sup>1</sup> It is uncertain what is considered in the single-family detached parking (on street parking, driveways, garages, etc.)

REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED PROJECT’S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION
<b>Includes transportation choices and is well- connected with existing and planned transportation options</b>	The proposed development is well integrated into the surrounding road network with five site entrances. The site plan also states that the site is woven together with a comprehensive network of sidewalks, trails, and greenspaces, which would make the site more pedestrian-friendly. While the site is currently isolated from surrounding development, it should consider adding bicycling infrastructure throughout the site. This would allow bicyclists to travel the site safely and could allow future connections to surrounding neighborhoods as well as the nearby Mulberry River Sports Complex. The County should also be aware of potential bicycle and pedestrian connections to the City of Hoschton via Covered Bridge Road/Peachtree Road, as outlined in the Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2025 Update. Also, as noted above, the Barrow County Trails Master Plan also outlines a planned trail segment through the site that should be considered.
<b>Protects natural and historic resources</b>	<p>The proposed site is located directly to the west of the Mulberry River, and directly to the north of the little Mulberry River, both of which are hydrologically connected to the Middle Oconee River downstream. Approximately 20 percent of the site (69 acres) would be left as open space, and the proposed site plan shows 150-foot impervious buffers around surrounding rivers and 50-foot stream buffers around site ponds, streams, and wetlands.</p> <p>Clearing a large portion of the existing tree canopy and disturbing the site could negatively impact the surrounding rivers by increasing stormwater runoff, erosion, and sedimentation. The developer should consider maintaining as much of the existing tree canopy and natural topography of the site as possible. This would help reduce erosion, filter stormwater runoff, and minimize disruptions to the site’s drainage patterns. The developer should also consider installing permeable pavers in off-street parking stalls to reduce stormwater runoff.</p>

### 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.

	AREA TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	PERCENT OF AREA
<b>SITE AREA (364 Acres)</b>	Wetland Acres <sup>2</sup>	30.4	8.8%
	“Conservation Land” <sup>3</sup>	94	27.1%
	Regionally Important Resource Land <sup>4</sup>		0.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land <sup>5</sup>	93	27.0%
<b>1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (4,651 Acres)</b>	Wetland Acres	459	9.9%
	“Conservation Land”	1,134	24.4%
	Regionally Important Resource Land		0.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	862.5	18.5%

<sup>2</sup> Wetland acres are derived from the National Wetland Inventory (NWI)

<sup>3</sup> “Conservation” land is derived from the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Conservation and Development Map (6/15/2023).

<sup>4</sup> Regionally Important Resources were identified as a part of the Northeast Georgia Resource Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources (2/15/2018).

<sup>5</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).

## **Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts**

### **Natural Resources and Stormwater Management**

The site is bordered to the east by the Mulberry River and to the south by the Little Mulberry River. The site plan shows six creeks scattered across the site as well as a pond and wetland area. The applicant states that an estimated 35% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces. The site plan includes a 150-foot impervious surface buffer around adjacent rivers and a 50-foot stream buffer around the site creeks, pond, and wetland. Additionally, the site plan includes 14 stormwater facilities to handle site stormwater. The application also states that bioretention areas, enhanced swales, and other green infrastructure will be provided. 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. 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 impact water supply watersheds, significant groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, and floodplains due to their proximity to or location within the site. While floodplains and wetlands are located on the site, please note that no significant groundwater recharge areas or water supply watersheds, as defined by the Georgia Environmental Planning Criteria, are located on the site.

### **Transportation**

A&R Engineering Inc. completed a traffic impact study that projects 15,195 new daily trips, including 1,112 AM peak hour trips and 1,240 PM peak hour trips from the proposed development. The traffic study recommends adding left and right turn lanes along Covered Bridge Road and SR 211 for entering traffic.

Of note, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) includes the widening of SR 211 in its list of projects in the preconstruction phase ([Project #0020284](#)). However, the widening project is not anticipated to be completed until 2037, which is after when the proposed project would be completed in 2032.

### **Water Supply and Wastewater**

The project would be served by Barrow County's water system and the Town of Braselton's and City of Hoschton's sewer systems. The applicant states that Braselton's discharge location would be at a proposed pump station along Highway 211 north of Freeman Johnson Road, and the City of Hoschton's discharge location would be at Peachtree Road northeast of White Trillium Drive. Both the water and sewer systems would have an estimated daily demand of 0.42 MGD. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity. 1.9 miles of 6" force main would be required to connect to Braselton's proposed pump station, and 2.72 miles of 6" force main would be required to connect to Hoschton's gravity system.

### **Energy Supply**

The applicant states that the proposed project's estimated peak connected electrical load would be 6 Megawatts. Jackson EMC would be the project's energy supply provider.

### **Solid Waste**

The applicant estimates the project would generate 2,600 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 Barrow County is disposed of in a landfill in within the county. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

### **Lifecycle Costs and Revenues**

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$500,000,000 at build-out in 2032 and generate \$6,500,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$1,370,000 and generate approximately \$17,800 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

*Jonathan Peevy, P.E., District Traffic Engineer, Georgia Department of Transportation, District 1 Traffic Operations*

- Mixed Use development will need to coordinate with GDOT D1 as there will be impacts to GDOT project PI 0020284 (Widening of SR 211 from SR 124 to the West Winder Bypass)
- The intersection of SR 53 @ Covered Bridge Rd/Peachtree Rd should be considered for impacts.
- Coordination with GDOT D1 is needed for state route access
  - Development is showing negative impacts to state route intersections which will need improvements
  - ICE was not provided in the study to show proper traffic control recommendations
  - Signal warrant analysis was not provided
  - Roundabout analysis was not provided

*Carolina Mendez, Development Project Manager, City of Winder*

Given that this project location is adjacent to where the Little Mulberry River joins the Mulberry River, a 150' buffer on the Little Mulberry River is also needed as stormwater runoff has a potential to affect water quality for City of Winder Water Systems.