



DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Final Report

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission • 305 Research Drive, Athens, Georgia • www.negrc.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 #3038
Name of Project:	Downtown Re-Development
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	City of Loganville

Background

DRI review was triggered by the developer’s request for permits from the City of Loganville. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 02/17/2020—03/03/2020.

Proposed Development

Connolly Investment and Development is proposing to construct 844 residential units (a portion will be age-restricted); 90,000 sq. ft. of retail, office, restaurant, entertainment, and recreation space; and Loganville’s new city hall, library, and park. The living units are broken down as follows: 600 multi-family, 36 townhomes, and 208 active adult units. 2,058 parking spaces will also be constructed. The proposed development would occupy property within the City of Loganville, totaling 29.2-acres, with frontages on the following streets: Main Street, Covington Street, Church Street, Lucy Street, Fair Street, Floyd Road, Bobby Boss Drive, Pecan Road, Lawrenceville Road, and Atlanta Highway. The total project will take place between Atlanta Highway and Lawrenceville Road, anchored by Main Street. The project will be completed in one phase, with an estimated completion date in 2022. Currently, the sites are a mix of aging, detached, single-family houses, the Loganville City Hall, and vacant lots.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

Loganville’s Comprehensive Plan envisions a “walkable, mixed-use” community, including a re-developed downtown that is friendly to people walking and biking, in order to create a “true work/live/play/shop environment.” The Loganville Future Land Use map (dated 3/23/2017) identifies future land uses for the site as Public/Institutional, Residential, and Commercial. The site is currently a mix of public/institutional uses,

residential, and commercial development and will remain a mixed-use environment if the current project is approved.

The site is identified as “Developed” on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan Update 2018 Regional Land Use Map (dated 6/7/2018). No Regionally Important Resources are identified within one mile of the proposed site.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

The applicant states that the project is unlikely to impact the environmental quality factors identified on the DRI Additional Form, including water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, historic resources, and other environmentally sensitive resources. The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) does not identify any wetlands onsite; 16 wetlands are located within one mile of the site, totaling 36 acres. The Northeast Georgia Regional Plan Update 2018 Conservation and Development Map (dated 7/19/2018) identifies seven sites totaling 30 acres as “Conservation” within one mile of the site. The site plan does not identify any stormwater detention ponds or significant buffers. In order to mitigate the impact on surrounding properties, parking lots should be appropriately buffered and stormwater infrastructure should conform to state and local regulations.

The traffic study, prepared by A&R Engineering (dated February 4, 2020), recommends additional turn lanes at the intersection of Atlanta Highway and Main Street as well as at the intersection of Atlanta Highway and Lawrenceville Highway. According to the study, “GDOT [Georgia Department of Transportation] is considering several options for improvements on SR-20 (Main Street). It is recommended that the state route designation is removed from Main Street, as the downtown Loganville area redevelopment envisions pedestrian friendly roads with on-street parking...that is not conducive to a high capacity state route going through it.” Peak hour trip totals are estimated at 577 afternoon trips and 531 morning trips. Sixteen driveways will be constructed as part of the project.

Successful and attractive downtowns are built on streets that are safe, useful, comfortable, and interesting to people walking and biking. As currently proposed, the project makes no accommodation for people biking and could improve the experience for people walking at various points. The current street network consists of narrow side streets extending from Main Street. These side streets should be designed according to NACTO’s yield-flow street standard to make them safe for all users. As detailed below, the arrangement of parking lots creates significant gaps between residences and the businesses and public spaces they are intended to patronize. Eliminating some of the spaces, rearranging the parking layout, and adding residential units above Buildings F, G, H, and L could create a more attractive downtown environment for people. To reduce the need for residents to drive to work, additional office space could be added within the project as well as designing commercial buildings with the flexibility to convert between various uses based on market demand.

As a state-controlled street, improving Main Street will require permission from GDOT. Since the street will serve primarily local residents and is intended to be a destination for people, business, and public activities, GDOT should consider returning control to the City of Loganville. Several improvements could make the street friendlier to people walking and biking, including realigning Main Street and Lawrenceville Road at a 90 degree angle, building a roundabout at the intersection of Main, Fair, and Church Streets, and adding parking-protected bike lanes to Main Street. Collectively, these improvements would slow vehicle speeds, eliminate points of conflict, and create a safer environment for all users of the street.

Since many of the apartments will front Lawrenceville Road—another state route—steps to make it friendlier to people walking and biking should be taken, including reducing vehicle speeds to 30 mph or less, reducing

lane widths, eliminating deceleration lanes, and adding protected bike lanes in addition to the planned sidewalks.

The project would be served by the City of Loganville's water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 0.25 MGD of water and 0.22 MGD of wastewater. These demands can be covered by existing capacity. No water or sewer line extensions are anticipated.

The site plan shows no stormwater management infrastructure; although, it does show the planting of numerous street trees. Approximately 80% of the site will be covered in impervious surfaces. The applicant states that, "Stormwater management facilities will be utilized to control runoff. Additionally, if required by the local municipality, low-impact BMP's will be used to treat the water quality volumes generated by the site." BMPs that may be used include: bio-retention areas, enhanced swales, and infiltration trenches. While it is expected that the development will adhere to local and state regulations and guidelines, such as the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual, steps should also be taken to minimize the amount of runoff generated by the project.

The dominant impervious feature of the project—2,058 proposed parking spaces—will create the majority of the stormwater runoff, in addition to other potential issues, including lowering the tax value of the land, raising rents, creating dead space between the places where people live, work, and play, as well as restricting the amount of real estate that can be used for value-generating buildings and public spaces. To minimize these problems, the number of parking spaces should be reduced and the remaining parking should be managed to make more efficient use of those spaces. Common parking management strategies include: sharing parking between business, residential, and civic uses; building on-street and decked parking; and metered parking spaces in select areas. Residential parking is often empty during the day, while business and civic parking lots are often empty overnight. Allowing overlap between business, residential, and civic parking reduces the total number of parking spaces needed by encouraging the regular use of all parking spaces available. On-street parking and parking decks can be used to liberate more real estate for buildings, which adds more jobs, residents, and property value to the downtown while also increasing the local tax base. Public parking revenues can be used to finance downtown infrastructure improvements and repay the costs of parking decks. In certain areas, metered parking has been shown to generate increased turnover in parking spaces, allowing more customers to frequent local businesses. If a surface lot must be built, it should be at the edge of the development and behind the buildings, particularly in projects that are attempting to create a central, cohesive, and attractive downtown. The use of public art, landscaping, and proper lighting can also enhance these spaces' appeal and ensure user safety 24-hours a day. In particular, the proposed parking lots intended to serve the L and H buildings and the B and C apartment blocks have the potential to create significant gaps between residences and businesses and public spaces. By right-sizing the parking, this project can reduce the expense of and space devoted to stormwater management while maximizing the real estate available for future downtown development.

The applicant estimates the project will generate 1,750 tons of solid waste annually and that sufficient landfill capacity exists to handle this waste.

The project value at build-out will be approximately \$170,651,735 (\$5,884,542 per acre). The taxable value of this project is \$2.35 million per acre, but the project includes several acres of non-taxable public space. While this project is more likely to be fiscally sustainable than the existing land uses, the City should calculate the ratio of public to private investment to ensure that sufficient tax revenue will be generated by the development to maintain the associated public infrastructure over the life cycles of that infrastructure.

Comments from Affected Parties

Natural Resources Group, Atlanta Regional Commission

OUT OF REGION DRI

Downtown Redevelopment DRI

City of Loganville

Natural Resources Group Review Comments

March 2, 2020

Water Supply Watershed and Stream Buffer Protection

The proposed project is in the City of Loganville in Walton County and is not within the jurisdiction of the Atlanta Regional Commission or of the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. Based on the USGS coverage for the project area, it appears that the southern portion of the proposed project along Atlanta Highway (US 78) is at least partly within the Big Haynes Creek Water Supply watershed, a small (less than 100 square mile) watershed which is a water supply source for both Rockdale County and the City of Conyers, both of which are in the Atlanta Region and the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. The USGS coverage for the project area shows no streams on the project property, but the terrain indicates that a portion of the project site may drain to a headwater of Little Haynes Creek, a Big Haynes tributary.

Under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, all development in a public water supply watershed is subject to the DNR Part 5 Water Supply Watershed Minimum Criteria (Chapter 391-3-16-.01, Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds) unless alternative criteria are developed and adopted by the jurisdiction according to the requirements of the Part 5 criteria and are approved by Georgia EPD and DCA. The minimum criteria affecting any portion in the Big Haynes watershed would be a limit on impervious surface of either 25 percent of the watershed area or the existing amount, whichever is greater. As the property appears to contain no streams and because it appears to be more than seven miles upstream of the Randy Poynter Lake, the water supply reservoir for Rockdale County and the City of Conyers, no other criteria would apply. Part 5 does provide for alternate criteria, which would supersede the minimum criteria upon approval by Georgia EPD and DCA. All impervious surfaces on the Big Haynes portion of the property should meet either the 25% limit for the City or the requirements of any alternate criteria approved by Georgia EPD and DCA.

Storm Water/Water Quality

The final design for stormwater controls on the property should adequately address the impacts of the proposed development on stormwater runoff and downstream water quality. Also, during construction, the project should conform to the relevant state and federal erosion and sedimentation control requirements. After construction, as with all development, water quality will be impacted due to polluted stormwater runoff. The amount of pollutants that will be produced after construction of the proposed development are dependent on the type and intensity of the use and the impervious coverage, which will affect the design of stormwater controls for the project.

To address post-construction stormwater runoff quality, the project should implement stormwater management controls (structural and/or nonstructural) as found in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (www.georgiastormwater.com) and meet the stormwater management quantity and quality criteria outlined in the Manual. Where possible, the project should use the stormwater better site design concepts

included in the Manual. Buffers and stormwater management are especially important because of the water supply reservoir in near proximity downstream.

February 24, 2020

Stephen Jaques, Project Specialist
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission
305 Research Drive
Athens, GA 30605-2795

Re: Development of Regional Impact- Loganville (DRI# 3038)

The Gwinnett County Department of Planning and Development has reviewed the Regional Review Notification (Review) prepared by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission regarding the proposed Mixed Use development located in downtown Loganville (Main Street and surrounding streets) in Walton County, Georgia. The proposed development consists of an approximately 29.2-acre parcel located between Atlanta Highway and Lawrenceville Road, anchored by Main Street. The site is currently developed with existing businesses, residences, churches, and restaurants.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant proposes to develop the site as a mixed-use development that would include approximately 844 residential units; 90,000 square foot of retail, office, restaurant, entertainment, and recreation space; and Loganville's new city hall, library, and park. The proposed development would offer a wide variety of housing options that would include 600 multi-family, 36 townhomes, and 208 active adult units. Parking spaces totaling 2,058 will also be constructed as part of this project.

According to the Official Zoning Map of Gwinnett County, the unincorporated portion of the County along the City Limits of Loganville is residential in character, which includes numerous low density single-family residential developments zoned R100 (Single Family Residence District) and OSC (Open Space Conservation District). Additionally, along Highway 78 there are parcels that are zoned commercial as well. According to the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan Update 2018 Regional Land Use Map the site is identified as Developed.

COMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING PLANS

According to Loganville's Comprehensive Plan Update (Plan), dated 2017, the development site is located within several zonings of residential, commercial and public/institutional. The City of Loganville's Official Zoning Map was updated in 2018. The transition from the residential area of unincorporated Gwinnett County to the more urban and developed downtown area is apparent along the project area boundaries of Highway 78 and Lawrenceville Road. The zoning designations include: R-44 (Single Family Residential), R-16 (Single Family Urban Residential), RM-6 (Multifamily Medium Density Apartments), O&I (Office and Institutional), and CBD (Commercial Central Business District).

The Gwinnett County 2040 Unified Plan Future Development Map classifies the general area as being located within the Community Mixed-Use and Vibrant Communities character areas. The Community Mixed-Use character area has been identified for the Highway 78 corridor. The proposed development promotes connectivity to a park, library, retail, restaurants, and residential space. The inclusion of an amphitheater and park space provides public gathering or recreational space. The project uses existing space to create a flexible design that allows for connectivity throughout the Loganville community.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The applicant does not believe the project will impact water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas and other environmentally sensitive areas. Gwinnett County is committed to the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the water quality in our streams and lakes. The potential impacts of the proposed mixed-use development suggest that conditions of zoning should be included requiring full buffers along all waterways meandering along and throughout the subject property.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation

As indicated in the submitted materials, the proposed development could generate approximately 831 AM peak trips per day and 877 PM peak trips per day. According to the submitted materials, a traffic study indicates that additional turn lanes at the intersection of Atlanta Highway and Main Street as well as the intersection of Atlanta Highway and Lawrenceville Highway would be satisfactory for the proposed development. Additionally, 16 driveways will be constructed as part of this project. Furthermore, a recommendation has been made that the state designation of SR 20 (Main Street) be removed to alleviate vehicular traffic and allow more pedestrian friendly roads.

Water Supply and Wastewater

According to the Review, the City of Loganville will be responsible for the water supply and wastewater treatment. The projections for water supply and wastewater treatment from the proposed mixed-use development on a daily basis is estimated to be approximately 0.25 million gallons per day (MGD) of water and 0.22 MGD of wastewater. These demands can be covered by existing capacity.

Stormwater Management

According to the Review, the impervious surface coverage of proposed mixed-use development would be approximately 80-percent of the total area. There is no stormwater management infrastructure indicated on the site plan but there are numerous street trees proposed within the project area.

Gwinnett County recommends that all work at a minimum be in accordance with the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual 2016 Edition. Additionally, the designated Stream Buffer Protection area and Best Stormwater Management Practices should diminish the impacts on stormwater management.

SERVICES

Solid Waste

The project is anticipated to generate 1,750 tons of solid waste annually and there is sufficient landfill capacity to handle this waste.

Gwinnett County appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposed development, and sincerely hopes that these comments will be given full consideration as the review process moves forward. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding Gwinnett County's position on this issue.

Best regards,



Dan Reuter, Deputy Director
Gwinnett County Department of Planning and Development