

Project Camellia: Investment Done Right

Project Camellia is bringing direct new dollars into Effingham County and growing the tax base that supports County government, public safety, and schools — without asking residents and businesses to foot the bill. OpenAI is responsible for funding its own project infrastructure, helping protect local taxpayers from project related costs.

A Direct Dollar Investment

- **Community investment commitment.** OpenAI has committed \$80 million for community benefits over the life of the project, informed by the community and directed toward locally identified priorities such as education, workforce development, healthcare, housing, public safety, veterans’ services, and support for working families.
- **Stewardship first.** OpenAI will work closely with residents, community organizations, the ECIDA, Effingham County officials, and the Effingham County School District to understand local priorities and identify responsible, transparent investments. That community input will help shape how OpenAI directs the funds to deliver lasting benefits for residents.
- **Land sale proceeds.** The Effingham County Industrial Development Authority received approximately \$350 million from the sale of property to OpenAI for the Project Camellia campus — a direct, one-time infusion managed by the Effingham County Industrial Development Authority.

Growing the Tax Base for the Long Term

- **Larger Local Tax Base** Project Camellia will become the county’s largest taxpayer, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in state and local tax revenue and substantially expanding the county’s non-residential tax base.
- **Funding Local Priorities** After full buildout, expected by 2032, Project Camellia is projected to generate approximately \$57 million annually in local PILOT payments, including approximately \$25 million for Effingham County and \$32 million for the Effingham County School District. The project is also projected to generate approximately \$43.9 million annually in local sales tax revenue through SPLOST, TSPLOST, LOST and ESPLOST. These revenues will support County services, public education, infrastructure, transportation and property tax relief.
- **Project Zero.** The County is pursuing Project Zero, an initiative to reduce or eliminate homestead property taxes through voter-approved funding mechanisms, which could save the average homeowner nearly \$1,000 per year. New revenue from Project Camellia will help support that goal by strengthening the county’s tax base.

How Project Camellia Compares

Effingham County: Doing It Right	Other Places: Did It Wrong
Who Pays for Growth OpenAI is funding its own project infrastructure, and its arrival is bringing direct new dollars into Effingham County — not a bill for existing taxpayers to cover.	Growth on the County's Dime In some communities, the cost of serving new large-scale development falls back on local taxpayers through higher rates or new bonds.
Long-Term Tax Base Project Camellia is estimated to generate hundreds of millions in local tax revenue over time, helping fund County government and public education for the long term.	Stagnant Tax Base Without new investment to expand the tax base, other communities are left to raise rates on taxpayers to fund the same services.
Relief for Homeowners The County is working to use new revenue from Project Camellia to reduce or eliminate homestead property taxes through Project Zero, a voter-approved funding mechanism.	No Relief in Sight Property tax relief for residents is rare when new industrial development arrives elsewhere — homeowners often see no direct benefit.

Jobs and Local Economic Impact

- **Construction and permanent jobs.** The project is expected to create thousands of construction jobs and support more than 1,000 permanent jobs at full buildout.
- **Local business opportunities.** Construction and ongoing operations create opportunities for local businesses and contractors, while diversifying the local economy by attracting investment in one of the nation's fastest-growing industries.

Accountability

ECIDA is committed to transparency about how these resources are used and to protecting the long-term interests of the community. The future Georgia Community Compact will include clear commitments and ways to measure progress, and the project will also undergo an annual independent audit, with the results made public.

Project Camellia strengthens our tax base, invests directly in our community, and puts Effingham County families first — today and for generations to come.
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