

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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|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Project I.D.: | DRI #4158 |
| Name of Project: | 404 Concrete Ready Mix |
| Name of Host Jurisdiction: | Walton County |

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request to rezone the site from B2 (Commercial) to M1 (Industrial). Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 4/11/2024 – 4/26/2024.

Proposed Development

404 Concrete Ready Mix (Norman Kennebrew) is proposing the construction of a concrete plant with 2,877 square feet of manufacturing space and 2,200 square feet of office/warehouse/maintenance space on a 2.2-acre site in unincorporated Walton County. The new maintenance building would be built fronting US-278 and would include a three-bay concrete washout area. The manufacturing area with new concrete equipment would be located behind the maintenance building and would include a concrete mixer, four conveyor belts, an equipment trailer area, and a wall enclosure for the concrete mixer. A fuel area is proposed to the west of the new concrete equipment.

The site has an existing driveway connected to an existing 1,500-square-foot office space. The site plan proposes to build an additional site entrance with an acceleration/deceleration lane in front of the proposed maintenance building. The existing six parking spaces on site would be supplemented by nineteen additional standard parking spaces and four truck parking spaces.

The site plan includes a detention pond along the southwestern edge of the site to handle site stormwater. The site plan also proposes a cascade separator filter and a water quality filter basin connected to the detention pond. The site has an existing septic system that would remain, and the site plan proposes an additional

Presby septic system, a new septic tank, and a new dosing chamber. The site also has existing stormwater infrastructure, which would be supplemented by new stormwater pipeline that would tie into the existing infrastructure.

The site plan appears to propose a 10-foot landscaping setback surrounding the site, a 60-foot front building setback, and a 15-foot side building setback. It appears that an existing 30-foot rear building setback would remain. New trees would be planted around the site's perimeter.

Currently, the site is partially developed. Parcel C1580075H00 (the eastern parcel) has an existing 1,500-square-foot office space with parking and a driveway, which would be retained and utilized in the proposed site. The remaining portions of the site are forested. The proposed development would occupy property totaling 2.2 acres at 2435 Highway 278 in unincorporated Walton County. The parcel numbers are C1580075D00 and C1580075H00. The applicant has proposed combining these parcels. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in June of 2025.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as in the Employment Center character area on the Walton County Character Areas Map (dated 5/31/2022). The Employment Center character area is described in the Walton County Comprehensive Plan as an area intended for large-scale, employment-intensive commercial uses that are designed to provide a compatible mix of commercial development (retail and services), professional offices, and light and heavy industrial uses.

The proposed development is compatible with the Employer Center character area. The desired rezoning (M1) is listed as a compatible zoning district, and the proposed industrial land use is listed as appropriate in this area. While the proposed development is not a large-scale, employment-intensive commercial use, which is the intention of this character area, it would serve the construction of these facilities by providing local access to concrete. However, the proposed site is within proximity to some residential areas, so the developer should consider the implementation measures of this character area to maximize buffers and landscaping around the site to minimize the site's impact on surrounding homes.

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 table on the next page summarizes the project's compatibility with these recommendations.

Proposed Development's Compatibility with the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan

| REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS | PROPOSED PROJECT'S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Enhances economic mobility and competitiveness | The applicant states that the regional workforce is sufficient to meet the demand created by the proposed project. The proposed project would also serve the construction of new commercial and industrial facilities in nearby areas, which would create additional jobs. |
| Elevates public health and equity | The proposed project would not elevate the public health of surrounding areas. Concrete batch plants are known to create dust, particulate matter emissions, and air pollutants such as carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide due to onsite operations and additional truck traffic. Additionally, the proposed development would have the potential to create other concerns such as noise, traffic, and polluted wastewater runoff. Because there are homes with 1,000 feet of the proposed site, the developer should attempt to minimize these negative impacts through buffers, landscaping, and technologies that reduce potential pollution. |
| Supports and adds value to existing communities | The proposed development would have a mixed impact on the existing community. Although it would add value by job creation, it would have the potential to harm the existing community through increased traffic, pollution, and noise (see the <i>Elevates public health and equity</i> section above for more details). |
| Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable | Because of the industrial nature of the project, the proposed development would not directly create additional housing in the area. |
| Includes transportation choices and is well-connected with existing and planned transportation options | The site is located along a state route that has received, and is planned to receive, upgrades to accommodate increased industrial traffic. Due to the industrial nature of the proposed development, walking and bicycling infrastructure would not be necessary. Walton County should be mindful of whether surrounding roads, such as Hancock Road and Willow Springs Church Road, can accommodate future demand. |
| Protects natural and historic resources | The proposed project is located within 0.7 miles of the Little River and 0.25 miles of an area designated by the U.S. Geologic Survey to be "probable areas of thick soils (may be significant recharge areas)." ¹ The proposed site plan includes a cascade separator filter, a water quality filter basin, and a water detention pond to handle site stormwater. The developer should ensure that there is an enhanced level of stormwater retention and air pollution reduction mechanisms on site to protect nearby sensitive resources. |

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

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, as noted above, the proposed development is located within 0.7 miles of the Little River and 0.25 miles of an area designated as "probable areas of thick soils (may be significant recharge areas)." The developer should ensure that an enhanced level of stormwater retention is maintained on site to capture all site pollutants. 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.

¹ This is determined based on the Georgia Department of Community Affairs's "Environmental Planning" web map (<https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=72b56f927f7048ee98a492c15080a90b>)

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 (2.2 Acres) | Wetland Acres ² | 0.0 | 0.0% |
| | “Conservation Land” ³ | 1.0 | 44.4% |
| | Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴ | 1.0 | 44.4% |
| | Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁵ | 1.0 | 44.4% |
| 1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (2,161 Acres) | Wetland Acres | 82.7 | 3.8% |
| | “Conservation Land” | 1,928.1 | 89.2% |
| | Regionally Important Resource Land | 1,405.9 | 65.0% |
| | Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land | 1,928.1 | 89.2% |

A portion of the above Regionally Important Resource Land acreage is part of the Northeast Georgia Green Infrastructure Network as identified in the Northeast Georgia Resource Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources (dated 8/7/2018). 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. Due to the nature of this proposal, it is not expected that the facility will contribute to the Green Infrastructure Network intent. However, the inclusion of a proper vegetative buffer can reduce the projects’ impacts on surrounding natural areas. No specific Regionally Important Resource sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site.

The applicant projects 70 new daily trips from the proposed development, which would include employee travel and additional truck trips. The proposed site plan proposes a new acceleration/deceleration lane for vehicles entering the site.

The project would be served by the Walton County water system with an estimated water demand of 0.00108 MGD. A portion of this water supply would be fulfilled by on-site recycled water. Wastewater would be handled onsite with a septic system and would have an estimated flow of 0.000380 MGD. There is sufficient

² Wetland acres are derived from the National Wetland Inventory (NWI)

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

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

⁵ 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).

water supply capacity to serve the proposed project. An additional 194 linear feet of alternative septic line would be required to service the proposed project.

An estimated 62.5% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces. The applicant states that the project's impact on stormwater management would be mitigated by a detention pond in the southeast area of the site, a 3-bay concrete washout area, and a cascade filter.

The applicant states that the proposed project will produce very little waste and that sufficient landfill capacity exists to handle this waste. According to annual tonnage reports from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, most municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in Walton County is disposed of in a landfill in Barrow County, and most construction and development (C&D) waste is disposed of in a landfill within Walton County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$1.1 million at build-out in 2025 and generate \$150,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$500,000 and generate approximately \$68,182 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

Christopher Hash, D1TO Traffic Operations Supervisor, Georgia Department of Transportation

Please see the attachment on the following page.

