

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 #4628
Name of Project:	Butler Park @ Atlanta Highway
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	Barrow County

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request for rezoning the property from AG to M1 Light Industrial. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 4/3/2026 to 4/18/2026.

Proposed Development

Georgia United Equities, LLC is proposing the construction of 700,000 square feet of industrial space on a 203-acre site in Barrow County. The proposed site would include 29 lots with a combination of office, warehousing, distribution, and manufacturing space. The applicant is also requesting a Special Use Permit to develop an industrial park that includes a concrete plant. According to the applicant’s letter of intent, site improvements would also include:

- Additional parking areas, including EV charging stations and designated fire-truck access routes.
- Heavy-duty concrete and asphalt paving to support truck access and loading operations.
- Enhanced perimeter buffers wherever feasible, with land disturbance limited to the specific needs of each business located within Butler Park.
- Walking trails and picnic areas.

The proposed site is located off Atlanta Highway SE near the City of Statham. Eight proposed lots would be located on the east side of Cash Rd, sixteen lots would be accessible on the west side of Cash Road, and five lots would be located off Bird Hammond Road. The site is currently mostly wooded and farmland. There are two houses currently on the site off Bird Hammond Road that would be demolished. The current parcel numbers of the proposed site are XX115 073, 075, 076, 083, 083A, 083B, and 085. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in February 2027.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

Compatibility with Regional Plan

Most of the site is designated as “Developed” on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Regional Land Use Map (dated 6/15/2023), with a small amount designated as “Developing” and “Rural” in the northern portion of parcel XX115 075. 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	According to the applicant, the proposed site would generate approximately 700-1,000 full-time employees at project buildout, which would benefit the surrounding areas by providing employment opportunities.
Elevates public health and equity	Due to its industrial nature, the proposed development has the potential to negatively impact surrounding areas due to noise, heavy truck traffic, and air pollution. The applicant should maximize buffers to mitigate impacts on surrounding areas. While the proposed development does not directly benefit public health, the site plan does include walking trails and picnic areas, which would benefit employees.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	The proposed development would benefit the existing community by providing employment opportunities.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	The proposed development does not include housing, but the large number of projected employees would likely impact housing availability in surrounding areas. If the proposed project is built, surrounding local governments, including the City of Statham and Barrow County, should seek opportunities to provide additional housing in the surrounding areas.
Includes transportation choices and is well- connected with existing and planned transportation options	The proposed development is located close to the City of Statham, and it is likely that traffic from the proposed development would travel through the city to get to and from SR 316. The intersection of Atlanta Georgia SE and SR 211 is often very congested and does not currently have a traffic light. The addition of this industrial park would likely further exacerbate traffic issues at this intersection. If the proposed development is approved, Barrow County should work with Statham and GDOT to identify a way to alleviate traffic in the area.
Protects natural and historic resources	Building the proposed development would require clearing much of the tree canopy on the site and could potentially disturb surrounding streams. The developer should consider maintaining as much of the existing tree canopy as possible and maintaining the natural topography of the site, especially near the creeks and ponds. This would help reduce erosion, filter stormwater runoff, and minimize disruptions to the site’s drainage patterns.

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
SITE AREA (203 Acres)	Wetland Acres ¹	3	1%
	“Conservation Land” ²	43	21%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	0	0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	40	20%
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (4,147 Acres)	Wetland Acres	71	2%
	“Conservation Land”	1,130	27%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	0	0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	622	15%

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

Natural Resources and Stormwater Management

There are two streams and two ponds within the proposed site. The applicant states that an estimated 30%-50% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces. The site plan does not show the location of any proposed stormwater infrastructure, but the applicant states that the site will incorporate a combination of undisturbed buffers, preserved vegetation, engineered detention/retention basins, low-impact design features, and appropriately designed paving and drainage systems. 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 likely to affect water supply watersheds and significant groundwater recharge areas. Please note that while the project is nearby a water supply watershed noted by GA EPD, there are no known significant recharge areas in east Barrow County. Please see above for the methods in which the applicant proposes to control site runoff and stormwater.

Transportation

The applicant projects that the proposed development would generate 650-850 additional peak-hour vehicle trips per day. The applicant states that a traffic study is currently being conducted to determine additional site impacts and improvement recommendations. No additional information regarding potential traffic impacts was provided for this review.

Water Supply and Wastewater

The project would be served by the Barrow County water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 0.058 MGD for each system. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity. Two miles of additional sewer line would be needed to service the site. If this extension is not feasible, the applicant states that it would build individual, on-site wastewater treatment facilities. This would likely be in the form of septic systems.

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).

Solid Waste

The applicant estimates the project would generate 315-375 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 (EPD), almost all municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in Barrow County is disposed of within the county at the Oak Grove Landfill. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

Energy Supply

The applicant estimates that the project's estimated peak connected electrical load is 10.5-12 megawatts and that the project's estimated daily energy usage would be 150-180 MWh per day. The applicant states Jackson EMC would be the project's energy supply provider and that sufficient energy supply capacity is available to serve the proposed project.

The applicant states that, in addition to standard emergency-use diesel generators, the project anticipates incorporating limited on-site electrical generation facilities to support regular operations. This may include roof-mounted and/or ground-mounted solar photovoltaic arrays designed to offset a portion of the development's electrical demand.

Lifecycle Costs and Revenues

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$95 million at build-out in 2027 and generate \$2 million in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$467,980 and generate approximately \$9,852 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

Madison Dorminey, P.E., Assistant District Traffic Engineer, Georgia Department of Transportation, District 1 Traffic Operations
We need to see the traffic impact study. Not on a State Route but need to see trip gens where the 650-850 peak hour trips are projected to go, as a few state routes nearby.

Projects nearby:

0016351 – 8 @ Jackson Trail Roundabout

0013908 – 316 @ Wall Rd Grade Separation

0010352 - Close McCarty Rd / New Interchange

Alan Hood, Airport Safety Data Program Manager, Georgia Department of Transportation, Aviation Programs

This proposed construction of 700,000 square feet of industrial space on a 204-acre tract in Barrow County is 1.59 miles from the Barrow County Airport (WDR). It is located outside of the FAA approach or departure surfaces, and airport compatible land use areas, and does not appear to impact the airport as long as construction equipment remains under 100' above the ground.

If any construction equipment or construction exceeds 100' AGL, an FAA Form 7460-1 must be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration according to the FAA's Notice Criteria Tool found here

(<https://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/oe3a/main/#/noticePrescreen>). Those submissions for any associated cranes may be done online at <https://oeaaa.faa.gov>. The FAA must be in receipt of the notifications, no later than 120 days prior to construction. The FAA will evaluate the potential impacts of the project on protected airspace associated with the airports and advise the proponent if any action is necessary.

Michael Berry, Manager, Erosion and Sedimentation Unit, Georgia Environmental Protection Division

If the project is within unincorporated Barrow County, the County is responsible for issuing a Land Disturbance Permit in accordance with their erosion and sedimentation ordinance. The County must also ensure that all State waters within the project boundary are identified and determine whether a stream buffer variance is required for the project. If the construction activity disturbs one acre or more, it will require coverage under the NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity. If the project is exempt from GESA, Part IV of the Permit requires the submittal of the Erosion, Sedimentation and Pollution Control Plan to EPD's Watershed Protection Branch. Information

and applicable forms for the stream buffer variance and the NPDES Construction Permit can be found on our website at <http://epd.georgia.gov/>

Should the United States Army Corps of Engineers determine that an individual permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act is required for the project; a Section 401 Water Quality Certification should concurrently be sought from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. For questions pertaining to 401 Water Quality Certification, please contact Dewey Richardson, with the Wetlands Unit at (478) 283-8342.