



# DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

## *Final Report*

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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 #3350
<b>Name of Project:</b>	Project Paradise II
<b>Name of Host Jurisdiction:</b>	Barrow County

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### Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer's request for a rezoning from Barrow County. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 6/28/21 – 7/13/21.

### Proposed Development

Euphoric Development is proposing construction of four warehouses totaling 1,111,000 SF on a 104-acre site (parcel number: XX041 027) along Kilcrease Road near its intersection with GA-316, in Barrow County. Additionally, 176 truck parking spaces, 481 car parking spaces, and three detention ponds would be constructed. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date by December 31, 2022. Currently, the site is entirely wooded and undeveloped.

### Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as part of the 316 Innovation Corridor on the Barrow County Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Map (dated 10/24/18). The 316 Innovation Corridor intends to create employment opportunities oriented around intersections with the highway. Distribution and warehousing are listed as compatible land uses. Formal landscaping, adequate screening from the highway and adjacent residential areas, high quality building and site design, limited clearing and grading, and uniform signage are recommended. Public water, sewer, and sidewalks are also preferred. While the proposed use for the property is consistent with the Plan, aside from a 100-foot mandatory zoning buffer shown on the site plan, there are no illustrations to judge whether the design, landscaping, and screening meet the Plan's intent. Barrow County should verify that the site will meet these objectives prior to approval.

The site is identified as “Developing” on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Regional Land Use Map (dated 6/7/2018). The site is also located in the Rapid Development area on the Areas Requiring Special Attention Map (dated 6/7/2018). The Regional Plan recommends development that matches the region’s workforce, prices in the lifecycle cost of infrastructure, creates a sense of place, builds a compact development pattern on existing infrastructure, creates diverse and affordable housing, and compliments existing and planned transportation options—especially non-automobile transportation modes. Warehouses, by their nature, have trouble meeting some of these recommendations, such as creating a sense of place. However, recommendations like building on existing infrastructure, pricing in the lifecycle costs of infrastructure, matching the region’s workforce, and alignment with transportation options are relevant in assessing whether a warehouse is consistent with the Regional Plan. The proposal fits well into the regional transportation network due to its proximity to the important shipping route of GA-316, and the proposal is relatively compact by warehouse development standards. It remains to be seen whether the proposal can support the lifecycle costs of the adjacent infrastructure, but otherwise, the proposal appears generally consistent with the Regional Plan.

### **Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts**

The applicant states that the project would impact wetlands and floodplains, but is unlikely to affect the other environmental quality factors on the DRI Additional Form, including water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, protected mountain and river corridors, historic resources, and other environmentally sensitive resources.

The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) identifies less than one acre of wetlands onsite and 87 acres of wetlands within one mile of the site. The Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Conservation and Development Map (dated 7/19/2018) identifies 95 acres of “Conservation” land onsite and 1,287 acres of “Conservation” land within one mile of the site. This includes 91 acres of Regionally Important Resource (RIR) land onsite and 981 acres of RIR within one mile. This 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). No Regionally Important Resource sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site. The site plan does not show the existence of these wetlands and floodplains nor any buffers or protection measures that would be used to preserve them. Prior to approval, Barrow County should ensure that these areas are protected.

An estimated 48% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and three retention ponds are planned to manage stormwater runoff. A 100-foot buffer between the site and adjacent residential areas is proposed, but no labels or descriptions indicate how this buffer is to be specifically preserved. The proposal should be designed to minimize disruption to the existing wetlands, and floodplains to avoid future erosion, flooding, and degraded water quality onsite and downstream from the site. Low impact design measures, like bioswales, 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.

No traffic study was submitted by the developer, but the applicant estimates that the project would generate 1,760 daily trips, including 156 AM peak hour trips, and 158 PM peak hour trips. Two entrances are proposed on Kilcrease Road.

The project would be served by the City of Winder’s water system with an estimated demand of 0.017 MGD, and Barrow County’s sewer system would handle 0.016 MGD of wastewater. The applicant states that these

demands can be covered by existing capacity. No water line extension is anticipated, but a 100-foot sewer extension would be required. The applicant estimates the project would generate 1,752 tons of solid waste annually and that sufficient landfill capacity exists to handle this waste. No hazardous waste would be generated.

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$70 million at build-out in 2022 and generate \$836,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$673,077 and generate approximately \$8,038 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**

*Greg Giuffrida, Atlanta Regional Commission (see below)*

# OUT OF REGION DRI

## Project Paradise II Barrow County Natural Resources Group Comments March 5, 2021

While the proposed project is not within either the Atlanta Region or the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District and while neither agency has any regulatory or review authority over this project, we are providing comments because the proposed project site is on the Apalachee River directly across from Gwinnett County.

### **Watershed Protection**

This portion of the Apalachee is not within any water supply watershed in the Region or the Water District, so no Part 5 Water Supply Watershed criteria apply for the District.

### **Stormwater/Water Quality**

The project property is directly across the Apalachee from Gwinnett County. Because of the potential impacts to Gwinnett County land downstream of this project we are providing our standard comments on stormwater and water quality.

The project should adequately address the impacts of the proposed development on stormwater runoff and downstream water quality.

During the planning phase, the stormwater management system (system) should meet the requirements of the local jurisdiction's post-construction (or post-development) stormwater management ordinance. The system should be designed to prevent increased flood damage, streambank channel erosion, habitat degradation and water quality degradation, and enhance and promote the public health, safety and general welfare. The system design should also be in accordance with the applicable sections of the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual ([www.georgiastormwater.com](http://www.georgiastormwater.com)) such as design standards, calculations, formulas, and methods. Where possible, the project should use stormwater better site design practices included in the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual, Volume 2, Section 2.3.