

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 # 3553
Name of Project:	Jackson Farms Industrial Park
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	City of Pendergrass

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request for annexation into the City of Pendergrass with a subsequent rezoning. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 01/20/22 – 02/04/22.

Proposed Development

PDC Atlanta LPV, LLC is proposing construction of four buildings, totaling 1,700,660 SF of industrial warehouse space, on a 262-acre site along US-129 between Point Drive and Allen Bridge Road in unincorporated Jackson County (parcel numbers: 101 008, 101 008A). Additionally, seven detention ponds, 372 truck trailer parking spaces, and an unspecified number of employee parking spaces would be constructed. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in 2023. Currently, the site is wooded and undeveloped. The developer is also requesting the project be annexed into the City of Pendergrass and subsequently rezoned.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is not included in the City of Pendergrass’s Comprehensive Plan because the site is not currently included in the city limits. However, the site is adjacent to the Country Living and Industry Corridor Character Areas in the Comprehensive Plan. The Country Living Character Area is described as supporting, “a mixture of low-density single family residential areas and open space for farming, recreation, and pastures.” Agriculture, residential, and recreation are listed as appropriate land uses. Protecting environmentally critical areas is a priority in this area. The Industry Corridor Character Area is described as: “[running] along the major US-129 transportation network, offering connectivity to I-85 and other transportation arteries. Proximity

to Atlanta and Interstates 85 and 985 make this area ideal for development. It is intended as an employment center, attracting high-end industry. Industrial development is encouraged here, as is warehousing, offices, headquarters, and larger-scale commercial development, as can be supported by local infrastructure.” Commercial, office, and industry are listed as appropriate uses. The parts of the site that border the Country Living Character Area should provide a significant buffer for those properties and any adjacent environmental areas. Otherwise, the project appears consistent with the Pendergrass Comprehensive Plan.

The site is identified as Light Industrial on the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan’s Character Area Map (dated 07/20/2020). The site is also listed as Industrial in the Plan’s Future Land Use Map. The Plan’s industrial land use policies include recommending that industrial development be: confined to relatively level topography; possess adequate water and sewer service; have access to arterial streets; avoid creating excessive noise, odor, light, or hazardous conditions; limit impervious surface coverage to less than 60% of the site; generate high levels of employment; and make use of industrial park and campus designs for the site. The site does have access to water and sewer service, arterial roads, and limits impervious surface coverage to 40%. The application does not specify the level of noise, odor, light, or hazardous conditions that may be generated by the project. These impacts should be clarified and mitigated if necessary, prior to approval. Generally, the proposal appears consistent with the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan.

The site is identified as “Rural” on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Regional Land Use 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. The site’s location makes it nearly impossible to access without a vehicle. The inclusion of a transit stop or two where local providers could connect workers with other destinations could help better align the project with the Regional Plan. The applicant states that the current workforce is suitable for the project. At this time, it is unclear if the project prices in the lifecycle costs of infrastructure, but it is being built on existing water and sewer infrastructure, as recommended by the Plan. Prior to approval, the local government should ensure that it is not committing more resources to maintain infrastructure and provide public services than it receives in tax revenue. The proposal does build on existing infrastructure, but the Regional Plan does not generally recommend this type of development in areas designated as “Rural.”

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. An estimated 40% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and seven retention ponds are planned to manage stormwater runoff.

The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) identifies less than one acre of wetlands onsite and 155 acres of wetlands within one mile of the site. The Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Conservation and Development Map (dated 7/19/2018) identifies less than one acre of “Conservation” land onsite and 901 acres of “Conservation” land within one mile of the site. This acreage includes less than one acre of Regionally Important Resource land, and 189 acres within one mile of the site. No Regionally Important Resource sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site. However, the site plan shows that a creek and its extensive wetland riparian zone forms most of the site’s border. Although no construction is proposed in these areas, the extensive grading required for the project could negatively impact these water resources. Furthermore, the

applicant does not specify that these areas are to be protected. 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.

Kimley-Horn has completed a traffic study that estimates the project would generate 2,732 total daily trips, 229 AM Peak Hour trips, and 232 PM Peak Hour trips. Nine-hundred twenty-six of the total trips would be trucks. One entrance is planned for the site, and the traffic study states that the roadway will continue to operate at an acceptable Level of Service. The study proposes adding a right-turn lane and a left-turn deceleration lane at the entrance. As stated above, including a transit stop for workers is recommended.

The project would be served by the Jackson County water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 0.13 MGD for water and 0.11 MGD for wastewater service. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity. No water or sewer line extensions are anticipated. The applicant estimates the project would generate 2,618 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 \$190 million at build-out in 2023 and generate \$1.5 million in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$725,000 and generate approximately \$5,700 in tax revenue. Prior to approval, the City 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

Barry Edgar, Planner, Jackson County (see below)

DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Comments Form

Project Name: **Jackson Farms Industrial Park**

Project I.D.: **DRI-3553**

Name of Commenting Organization: Jackson County, Georgia

Address: 67 Athens Street, Jefferson, Georgia 30549

Contact Person: Jamie Dove, Public Development Director

Telephone No.: 706-367-5908

Do you believe your jurisdiction will be affected by the proposed development? Yes NO No

Please describe the effects (positive and/or negative) the proposed project could have on your jurisdiction:

****It must be noted that this property has not been annexed into the City of Pendergrass at this time. Jackson County has not received an annexation request.****

Please make sure all stream and river buffers are protected. All riparian buffers should be 75 feet. After

reviewing the "Conceptual Site Layout Plan" enclosed in the DRI Packet it appears that riparian buffers are

being encroached upon multiple times by the grading shown on this plan.

There is a cemetery on the property and this cemetery must be shown on the development plans.

Form Completed By: Barry Edgar

Title: Planner

Signature: _____

Date: 1/25/2022

Mail Comments to: Stephen Jaques
E-mail: sjaques@negrc.org

Comments Due By: **2/4/2022**