

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 # 3627
Name of Project:	Satham Truck Stop
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	City of Satham

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s application to the City of Satham for rezoning, conditional use, and subdivision of property. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 4/5/22–4/20/22.

Proposed Development

Smith Planning Group is proposing construction of a mixed-use development, including a truck stop, three light industrial or warehouse buildings totaling 620,000 square feet, and a six-acre tract set aside for future commercial use. Additionally, the site plan includes five stormwater management ponds, plus one unlabeled feature that appears to be an additional pond. An unspecified number of parking spaces would be constructed. Currently, the site is a vacant 86-acre parcel near the intersection of Bethlehem Road and Doc McLocklin Road, south of State Route (SR) 316, within the City of Satham. The parcel number is ST03 003. The applicant states that the project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in 2023. However, the site plan shows the project would be broken into multiple phases with the light industrial and commercial tracts to be developed at a later time. The first phase would be only the truck stop.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The City of Satham Comprehensive Plan’s Future Land Use Map (dated 6/15/2021) identifies most of the site as Light Industrial with the remainder of the site identified as Highway Business. The Comprehensive Plan describes Light Industrial as, “warehouses, wholesale trade, and light manufacturing,” and Highway Business as, “highway-oriented commercial uses which cater to passer-by highway traffic, such as banks, hotels, shopping centers, convenience stores, restaurants, and open-air businesses.” Tract 1A is listed as Light

Industrial on the Future Land Use Map, but the truck stop would be built under the existing Highway Business zoning. The portion identified as Highway Business on the Future Land Use Map covers the proposed commercial Tract 1B. The warehouse portion of the site, Tract 1C, is listed as Light Industrial on the Future Land Use Map and would need to be rezoned to Light Industrial to allow construction of the warehouses. Tract 3 is listed as Light Industrial on the Future Land Use Map, but the applicant has proposed rezoning it to Highway Business. The only use proposed for Tract 3 on the site plan is stormwater management (an existing detention pond).

This project would provide a combination of Highway Business and Light Industrial uses near the intersection of 316 and Bethlehem Road, which is consistent with the overall vision for this area presented in the Future Land Use Map. The proposed rezoning would help bring a portion of the site into alignment with the Future Land Use Map by rezoning Tract 1C to Light Industrial. However, the proposal differs from the specifics of the Future Land Use Map by proposing Highway Business zoning for Tracts 1A and 3, whereas the Future Land Use Map shows both of these tracts as Light Industrial. It is unclear from the proposal why the developer has requested to rezone Tract 3, since the site plan proposes no new uses for that tract. The proposed construction of a Truck Stop on Tract 1A is inconsistent with the Light Industrial use specified on the Future Land Use Map, but it is an allowable conditional use under the tract's existing Highway Business zoning. The impacts on the community of the truck stop proposed for Tract 1A would be similar to the impacts of a warehouse or other light industrial use, in that both types of development would produce increased heavy truck traffic in the area and a similar scale of development. Overall, the project appears to be mostly consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The site is identified as "Developing" on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan's Regional Land Use Map (dated 6/7/2018), defined as an area that is likely to become urbanized and require provision of new urban services in the next 20 years. 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 applicant states the project can be staffed with the region's existing workforce. This is a mixed-use project combining a truck stop, a potential commercial site, warehouses, and other light-industrial uses. Some transportation efficiencies would be expected after completion of the project's second phase, as trucks servicing the warehouses and industries would be able to refuel at the truck stop. Neither the project plan nor the Future Land Use Map envision this area as incorporating housing or alternative transportation, as development oriented toward vehicular traffic on SR 316 would be appropriate for this location.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

The applicant states that the development is located within or likely to affect a floodplain, as a branch of Barber Creek runs across the northeastern corner of the property, but that no development is proposed in this area. The applicant states that the project is unlikely to affect any of the other environmental quality factors identified on the DRI Additional Form, including water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountain and river corridors, historic resources, and other environmentally sensitive resources. An estimated 75% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces. Stormwater runoff will be addressed through five or six stormwater management ponds on-site. 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 National Wetland Inventory (NWI) identifies zero wetlands onsite, and 166 wetland acres are located within one mile of the site. The Northeast Georgia Regional Plan's Conservation and Development Map (dated 7/19/2018) identifies zero acres of "Conservation" land onsite and 207 acres of "Conservation" land within one mile of the site. This "Conservation" land includes zero acres of Regionally Important Resource (RIR) land onsite and 60 acres of RIR land within one mile of the site. No specific RIR sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site.

A&R Engineering completed a traffic impact study that projects 5,182 new daily trips, including 347 AM peak hour trips and 351 PM peak hour trips from the proposal. The development proposes six site accesses: two full-access driveways on Bethlehem Road, three full-access driveways on Doc McLocklin Road, and one right-in/right-out driveway for cars only on Doc McLocklin Road. The study provides recommendations for site access configurations for each of the six proposed site accesses. Additionally, it notes that a northbound left-turn lane on Bethlehem Road at SR 316 may be needed if GDOT's interchange project at that intersection is not completed prior to 2026. To minimize traffic congestion from the expected increase in daily trips, it is important that this project include multiple site access points and transportation improvements like the deceleration and turning lanes proposed in the traffic study. The City should also contemplate the road maintenance costs associated with increased truck traffic on adjacent local roadways when considering this project.

The project would be served by the City of Statham's water and sewer systems, with an estimated daily demand of 0.0575 MGD for each system. 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 2,131 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 \$23,361,813 at build-out in 2023 and generate \$279,033 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$272,000 and generate approximately \$3,200 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

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

This truck stop is 3.5 miles southeast of the Barrow County Airport (WDR), under the approach and departure surfaces of Runway 31, and near a navigation facility. The building should be studied by the FAA to determine if it has any impact on the instrument procedures for the airport. That may be done online at <https://oeaaa.faa.gov>. The FAA must be in receipt of the notification, no later than 120 days prior to construction. The FAA will evaluate the potential impact of the project on protected airspace associated with the airports and advise the proponent if any action is necessary.