



DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT

Final Report

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission • 305 Research Drive, Athens, Georgia • www.negr.org

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 # 4048
Name of Project:	Greene Gateway Industrial Park
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	City of Greensboro

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request for rezoning the property from Agricultural to Light Industrial and annexing the property into the City of Greensboro. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 8/25/2023 to 9/9/2023.

Proposed Development

Grind Capital Group is proposing construction of 2,662,000 square feet of industrial space on a 367-acre site along South Main Street (SR 44) in unincorporated Greene County, which the developer has requested to be annexed into the City of Greensboro. The proposed site plan includes industrial and manufacturing buildings of various sizes, which are detailed in the table below. Two entrances would service the site; a southern entrance road would travel along the site’s southwest boundary, and a northern entrance road would travel through the middle of the site. Each building would be served by both standard parking spaces and truck parking spaces, and the proposed site contains a total of 1,064 standard parking spaces and 506 truck parking spaces. Five detention/retention ponds would be constructed to handle site stormwater.

Proposed Buildings

Building #	Square Feet
Building 1	221,000
Building 2	470,000
Building 3	500,000
Building 4	1,250,000
Building 5	221,000
Total	2,662,000

Currently, the site is primarily wooded. Site imagery shows portions of the site to be clear-cut. Four streams are located on the proposed site. A main stream flows along the northern site boundary, and two tributary streams join this stream at the northern end of the site. Another tributary stream flows south to north through the site and joins the main stream near the north-western end of the site. One delineated wetland is located on site. The site plan proposes two stream crossings, and the delineated wetland would remain undisturbed. The developer has proposed a 50-foot front buffer, a 20-foot back buffer, a 20-foot eastern buffer, and a 50-foot western buffer. Carson Middle School and Greene County High School are located north of the proposed site, and I-20 flows along the site’s southern boundary. The proposed site is currently surrounded by forested areas along its western and eastern boundaries. The parcel east of the site is included in DRI 4001, which is currently under review and details a proposed 140-unit residential development on a 125-acre site that another developer has requested to be annexed into the City of Greensboro as well.

This proposed development (DRI 4048) would occupy property totaling 367 acres along South Main Street in unincorporated Greene County. The parcel numbers are 0700000750, 0700000750A, 0700000780, and 0710000130. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date of 2026.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as “Greater Greensboro” on Greene County’s Character Areas Map (dated 6/13/2023) and is located along the GA State Route 44 Commercial Policy Corridor (SR 44 CC). The Greater Greensboro Character Area is described as a special activity hub that encourages a variety of housing types, space for retail and other community amenities, and opportunities to expand the employment base. Commercial Policy Corridors are described as areas that should promote retail options to serve the daily needs of nearby residents and higher-density housing products such as townhomes and apartments. Along these corridors, compatible zoning and future land use guidance apply to parcels within a 1,500-foot radius of the centerline of the roadway. The Greene County Comprehensive Plan details appropriate zoning districts for each character area, and the appropriate districts differ depending on whether the parcel is located inside a policy corridor. Appropriate zoning districts for the Greater Greensboro Character Area both outside and inside the SR 44 CC area are detailed in the table below.

Greene County Character Area Compatibility

CHARACTER AREA	APPROPRIATE ZONING DISTRICTS
GREATER GREENSBORO (OUTSIDE OF POLICY CORRIDORS)	Low-Density Residential (R1), Medium-Density Residential District (R2), Multi-Family Residential District (RM)
GREATER GREENSBORO (WITHIN SR 44 CC)	Neighborhood Convenience Commercial District (B1), General Commercial Highway Oriented District (B2), Office-Institutional District

The proposed development is partially compatible with Greene County’s Character Areas Map but conflicts with many aspects of the Greater Greensboro Character Area and the SR 44 CC. The Greater Greensboro Character Area guidance states that employment uses should be prioritized near similarly zoned industrial properties, and the proposed project is appropriately located near other industrial sites in Greensboro’s southern industrial district. However, the proposed industrial land use is not included as an appropriate land use in the Greater Greensboro Character Area outside of policy corridors or within the SR 44 CC. The proposed industrial land use does not contribute to the Character Area’s implementation initiative of establishing the I-20 interchange at Exit 130 as “a unique gateway with visual appeal.” It also does not support the character area guidance of supporting a mix of recreational, cultural/institutional, hospitality, and employment uses to create a vibrant activity center.

If the project parcels are annexed into the City of Greensboro, the proposed site would be partially compatible with surrounding future land use designations in the Greensboro Future Land Use Map (dated 8/22/2019). The project is compatible with the commercial and industrial future land use designations to the west and northwest. However, the proposed facilities could negatively impact residential parcels to the northwest and northeast of the site as well as the school areas designated as “Civic” to the north of the project site. The developer should consider increasing the buffers adjacent to incompatible land uses to minimize negative impacts.

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 developments that contain six characteristics that benefit the region’s people, economy, environment, and communities. The proposed project’s compatibility with these recommendations is summarized below:

Regional Plan Compatibility

REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED PROJECT’S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION
Enhances economic mobility and competitiveness	The applicant states that the regional work force is sufficient to meet the demand created for the proposed project.
Elevates public health and equity	The proposed warehousing facility has the potential to negatively impact the health of adjacent residential areas due to noise and air pollution, especially if there is a large amount of truck traffic at the facility. However, Greensboro’s zoning ordinance prohibits “industrial uses that cause obnoxious noise, vibrations, smoke, gas, fumes, odor, dust, glare, fire hazards or other objectionable environment conditions” in Light Industrial zones. Regardless, the developer should maximize the buffer between the warehouse buildings and the adjacent residential area to minimize impacts on surrounding residential and civic areas.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	Due to their nature, the proposed industrial facilities do little to add to the character of the area beyond providing additional jobs within the county.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	The proposed development does not include any housing. The City should be cognizant of whether there is adequate and affordable housing around the proposed development for potential employees.

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REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED PROJECT'S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION
Includes transportation choices and is well-connected with existing and planned transportation options	<p>The proposed site's only connection to surrounding areas is two entrances along SR 44. The developer should include road stubs in the site plan along the site's western roadway to connect to the undeveloped parcel to the west of the site, which is zoned Light Industrial. This would help improve connectivity in this industrial area.</p> <p>There is no pedestrian- or bicycle-related infrastructure proposed in the site plan. Because there is a high school, middle school, and Boys and Girls Club north of the proposed site and the area south of the site is anticipated to be a future growth area, the City should anticipate increased traffic along SR 44 and an increased need for pedestrian and bicyclist safety infrastructure. The developer should consider building a sidewalk along its border of SR 44 and adding pedestrian & bicyclist safety infrastructure such as crosswalks and crossing beacons at the site entrances.</p>
Protects natural and historic resources	Multiple streams are located on the potential site as well as a 1.5-acre wetland. Stream crossings, site clearing, and construction could disturb the existing stream and wetland conditions, and the proposed impervious surfaces would result in a large amount of stormwater runoff flowing into the site's streams. To slow the flow of stormwater and filter out pollutants, the developer should consider maintaining a riparian zone around all the site streams and maintaining as much of the existing forested areas as possible.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

The applicant states that the development is likely to affect wetlands and floodplains on site but that wetlands would be delineated and approved by the Army Corps of Engineers and that the site's layout would minimize impact to both wetlands and floodplains. The applicant also states that the project is unlikely to affect all other environmental quality factors identified on the DRI Additional Form, including water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, protected mountain and river corridors, historic resources, and other environmentally sensitive resources. Refer to the attached site plan for any stream, floodplain, and buffer locations.

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 (367 Acres)	Wetland Acres ¹	6	2%
	"Conservation Land" ²	75	20%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	-	0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	75	20%

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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).

	AREA TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	PERCENT OF AREA
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (3,813 Acres)	Wetland Acres	3,813	100%
	“Conservation Land”	72	2%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	1,242	33%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	0	0%

No specific Regionally Important Resource sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site. However, the multiple streams that transverse the site are hydrologically connected to Lake Oconee, which is a Regionally Important Resource. Lake Oconee and its surrounding areas act as a haven for the Bald Eagle and the Oglethorpe Oak, both of which are listed as “threatened” by the State of Georgia. Additionally, Morgan and Greene County both use Lake Oconee as a water source. To minimize the impacts of the proposed site on Lake Oconee, its use as a water source, and the species that depend on the lake as a habitat, the developer should take actions to minimize the runoff of pollutants and sediment from the site.

An estimated 40% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and five retention/detention ponds are planned to manage stormwater runoff. The applicant states that the developer would follow the Georgia Stormwater Manual’s Best Management Practices including using buffers and detention basins to mitigate stormwater impacts to adjacent property owners. 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.

A&R Engineering Inc. completed a traffic impact study that projects 6,427 new daily trips, including 877 AM peak hour trips and 848 PM peak hour trips from the proposed development. For the northern site entrance, the study recommends providing a left and right turn lane on South Main Street (SR 44) for entering traffic and installing a traffic signal if warranted by MUTCD. For the southern entrance, the study suggests a right turn lane on South Main Street for entering traffic as well as a stop-sign control on the driveway approach with South Main Street remaining free flowing.

The project would be served by the City of Greensboro’s water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 0.04 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 3,680 tons of solid waste annually and that sufficient landfill capacity exists to handle this waste. According to a 2022 tonnage report from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, most municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in Greene County is disposed of in a landfill in Twiggs County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$200,000,000 at build-out in 2026 and generate \$2,000,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$544,959 and generate approximately \$5,450 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

Greg Boike, Director of Planning and Public Administration, Middle Georgia Regional Commission

Comments from MGRC are that this development would likely lead to more spillover development pressures in Putnam County, especially related to housing. It also is another project that underscores the need for roadway improvements on State Route 44 between Eatonton and Greensboro.

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

This proposed construction of 2,662,000 square feet of industrial space on a 366-acre tract zoned Agricultural currently within unincorporated Greene County is 3.2 miles from Greene County Regional Airport (CPP). It is located outside any FAA approach or departure surfaces, and airport compatible land use areas, and does not appear to impact the airport.

If any construction equipment or construction exceeds 200' 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/external/gisTools/gisAction.jsp?action=showNoNoticeRequiredToolForm>). 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.