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| NEGRC Logo | **DEVELOPMENTS OF REGIONAL IMPACT** |
| ***Final Report*** |
| Northeast Georgia Regional Commission • 305 Research Drive, Athens, Georgia • www.negrc.org | |
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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. | |
| **Project I.D.:** | DRI # 4092 |
| **Name of Project:** | DAB Properties Transfer Station |
| **Name of Host Jurisdiction:** | Walton County |

**Background**

This DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request for a conditional use permit. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 10/30/23–11/14/23.

**Proposed Development**

DAB Properties, LLC., is proposing construction of a 19,000 square-foot waste sorting building and 1,000 square-foot scale station with office on a 10-acre site at 898 Adamson Drive in Walton County. Adamson Drive is adjacent to the site on both the southwest and southeast sides of the site. The parcel number is C1350028A00.

Waste would be sorted in the building and then hauled to a landfill or recycling center. The application notes that the building would be equipped with an odor-neutralizing system. The site plan also includes a septic drain field and stormwater management pond. The site would include a 100-foot buffer on the front (southwest), rear (northeast), and northwest sides of the site and a 50’foot buffer on the southeast side of the site. Each border with Adamson Drive would include a 3-foot vegetated berm and a vehicular entrance. Currently the site is wooded. The project would be completed in one phase, with an estimated completion date in December 2024.

**Compatibility with Existing Plans**

Walton County Comprehensive Plan

The site is identified as “Employment Center” on the county's Character Areas Map (dated 5/31/2022). The proposal is consistent with this character area’s narrative in the Walton County Comprehensive Plan, as summarized in the table below.

**Character Area Compatibility**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Character Area | **Summary of Character Area Narrative** | **Proposed Development’s Compatibility with Character Area** |
| Employment Center | Summary description in Comprehensive Plan:  “larger-scale commercial, including light industry, office, retail, and service”  Appropriate land uses listed for this character area: Commercial, Office, Industry  Zoning compatibility listed: B1, B2, B3, O-I, M1, M2, MUBP, SSBP | A waste transfer station is generally considered a light industrial land use. The compatibility of light industrial land uses is stated directly in the plan as part of both the character area description and the list of appropriate land uses. The list of compatible zoning districts for this character area includes both M1 (light industrial) and M2 (heavy industrial). |

Regional Solid Waste Management Plan

The Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Management Authority’s Regional Solid Waste Management Plan: 2021–2031 (SWMP) identifies three goals for Walton County, one of which is to ensure that the County continues to pursue a 25% reduction in the amount of solid waste received at disposal facilities. The proposed facility might help the County in its pursuit of that goal, if operation of the proposed transfer facility would result in the diversion of recyclables that would otherwise be taken to disposal facilities; however, adding a new transfer facility in Walton County was not specifically identified in the SWMP as a need, goal, or action. Two relevant actions specified in the SWMP’s community work program are for the County to ensure proper land use controls are in place and to review all permit requests for new solid waste handling facilities or expansions to determine their consistency with the SWMP.

Northeast Georgia Regional Plan

The site is identified as “Developed” on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Regional Land Use Map (dated 6/15/2023). 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 proposed plan’s compatibility with the Regional Plan’s recommendations is summarized in the table below.

**Regional Plan Compatibility**

| Regional Plan Recommendations | Proposed Project’s Compatibility with Recommendation |
| --- | --- |
| Enhance economic mobility and competitiveness | Waste management is a necessary component supporting economic activities that generate waste. The applicant states that the regional workforce is sufficient to fill the demand created by the project. |
| Elevate public health and equity | The transfer station operator should continuously monitor operations to ensure that any potential negative impacts on the surrounding community are minimized.  The project site is surrounded by other industrial facilities and parcels zoned for industrial use, so there are no neighboring residential sites or other lower-intensity uses. It is also not located near any lakes, rivers, or streams, and the building would be equipped with an odor-neutralizing system. These factors reduce the potential for negative public health and equity impacts to the community. |
| Support and add value to existing communities | By diverting recyclables from the landfill, waste sorting facilities can help extend the life of existing waste disposal infrastructure. |
| Create housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable | Not applicable for this project type. |
| Include transportation choices and is well-connected with existing and planned transportation options | Due to the nature of this project, heavy trucks hauling waste would make up most of the traffic in and out of this site. Because it is proposed to be built in an already-industrial area, it is likely that the road infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the facility can handle heavy truck traffic. However, when considering this project, the County should also evaluate the planned transport routes from the proposed transfer station to landfill and recycling facilities to determine whether road infrastructure is adequate to handle the increased heavy truck traffic along the entire route. |
| Protect natural and historic resources | No information was included with the application about how the operator plans to address wastewater resulting from waste management operations, such as leakage from waste-hauling vehicles and water used to wash the facility and vehicles. Georgia EPD’s Transfer Station and Collection Guidance (2018) states that “All liquids generated from solid waste, floor cleaning, or vehicle washing operations at the transfer station facility are required to be collected and discharged to a permitted wastewater treatment system or a permitted on-site treatment system.” |

**Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts**

Natural Resources

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.

The table on the next page 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  (10 acres) | Wetland Acres[[1]](#footnote-1) | 0 | 0 |
| “Conservation Land” [[2]](#footnote-2) | 2 | 20 |
| Regionally Important Resource Land[[3]](#footnote-3) | 10 | 100 |
| Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land[[4]](#footnote-4) | 2 | 20 |
| 1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE  (2,353 acres) | Wetland Acres | 60 | 3 |
| “Conservation Land” | 716 | 30 |
| Regionally Important Resource Land | 2,281 | 97 |
| Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land | 715 | 30 |

A portion of the Regionally Important Resource Land 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). The Northeast Georgia Green Infrastructure Network is intended to serve as a strategically planned and managed network of wilderness, parks, greenways, conservation easements, and working lands with conservation value that benefits wildlife and people, supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, links urban settings to rural ones, and contributes to the health and quality of life for the communities and citizens sharing this network. No specific Regionally Important Resource sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site.

Water Supply and Wastewater

The project would be served by the City of Monroe water system, with a daily estimated water demand of 0.0025 MGD. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity and that no water line extension is needed. The project would produce an estimated 0.0004 MGD of sewage, which would be handled by an onsite septic system.

Stormwater

An estimated 64% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and one stormwater management pond is planned to manage stormwater runoff. 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.

Transportation

No traffic study has been completed for this project. The applicant projects that the proposed development will result in approximately four new truck trips per hour. The applicant states that no transportation improvements are needed to serve this project.

Solid Waste

The applicant estimates the project would generate 40,000 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, almost all municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in Walton County is disposed of in a landfill in Barrow County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

Lifecycle Costs and Revenues

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth $3 Million at build-out in 2024 and generate $35,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately $300,000 and generate approximately $3,500 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**

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

This waste sorting building is 1 mile off of the runway of the Cy Nunnally Memorial Airport (D73).  It is outside of the runway protection zone, but is within the approach and departure area.  An FAA Form 7460-1 should be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration via <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.

Enclosed waste-handling facilities that receive garbage behind closed doors; process it via compaction, incineration, or similar manner; and remove all residue by enclosed vehicles generally are compatible with safe airport operations, provided they are constructed and operated properly and are not located on airport property or within the Runway Protection Zone. These facilities should not handle or store putrescible waste outside or in a partially enclosed structure accessible to hazardous wildlife. Trash transfer facilities that are open on one or more sides; or store uncovered quantities of municipal solid waste outside, even if only for a short time; or use semi-trailers that leak or have trash clinging to the outside; or do not control odors by ventilation and filtration systems (odor masking is not acceptable) do not meet the FAA’s definition of fully enclosed trash transfer stations. The FAA considers fully enclosed waste-handling facilities constructed or operated incorrectly incompatible with safe airport operations if they are located closer than 10,000 of an airport.

*Chris Bailey, Assistant City Manager, City of Monroe*

(see attached)

1. Wetland acres are derived from the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Conservation” land is derived from the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Conservation and Development Map (6/15/2023). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Regionally Important Resources were identified as a part of the Northeast Georgia Resource Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources (2/15/2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)