

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 #4438
Name of Project:	Hwy 278 Material Storage
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	Walton County

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer's request for rezoning the property from A1 to M1. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 4/15/2025 to 4/30/2025.

Proposed Development

Danny Cagle is proposing the construction of an 8.74-acre waste handling and recycling facility on a site in Walton County. According to the applicant, the site would be used for recycling concrete, crushing asphalt, grinding and reselling tree debris, and manufacturing/reselling nonmetallic mineral products. The site plan shows that material and equipment storage as well as the crusher and grinders would be located on site. The back portion of the site, adjacent to an existing pond, would be used for site stormwater management.

The site plan shows the following buffers on site:

- A 25' zoning buffer along the eastern edge of the site with a required 6-foot opaque fence,
- A 5-foot variance buffer along the western edge of the site with a 3-foot berm and a 6-foot-tall supplemental planting border, and
- A 25-foot state water buffer around the stream and pond onsite.

The proposed development would occupy property along US Highway 78 in Walton County. The parcel number is C1890002. The proposed site would have one entrance along US Highway 78. Currently, the site is primarily cleared and leveled land with forested areas on the southern and eastern edges of the site. A small pond is in the southern portion of the site. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in April 2026.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

Compatibility with Regional Plan

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 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 following table outlines the proposal’s alignment with these recommendations:

REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED PROJECT’S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION
Enhances 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.
Elevates public health and equity	There are some rural residential properties around the project site, and a senior living facility is located across the highway. The developer should be mindful to minimize aspects of the facility, such as noise and odors, that could negatively impact surrounding residents.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	By diverting recyclables from the landfill, waste sorting facilities can help extend the life of existing waste disposal infrastructure.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	Not applicable for this project type.
Includes transportation choices and is well- connected with existing and planned transportation options	The site’s location along Highway 78 and across the street from existing landfills is ideal for this proposed project.
Protects natural and historic resources	There is a creek and pond located on site, and the project site is within one mile of the Apalachee River. Additionally, the project site is located approximately 1.5 miles from an area the Georgia Environmental Protection Division states is a “probable area of thick soils” and therefore may be a significant water recharge area. Runoff from a waste transfer station can introduce harmful chemicals and pollutants to river systems and could pollute aquifers in the area. The developer should follow the Georgia Environmental Protection Division’s Transfer Station and Collection Guidance (October 2018) to mitigate any effects on environmental resources downstream of the proposed transfer station.

Compatibility with Regional Resource Management Plan

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.

	AREA TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	PERCENT OF AREA
SITE AREA (10.6 Acres)	Wetland Acres ¹	0.2	1.6%
	“Conservation Land” ²	10.6	100.0%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	10.6	100.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	8.6	81.3%
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (2,439 Acres)	Wetland Acres	356	14.6%
	“Conservation Land”	2,247	92.2%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	2,043	83.8%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	1,043	42.8%

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). 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.

The Apalachee River, which is classified as a Regionally Important Resource in the Northeast Georgia Resource Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources, is within one mile of the project site. Therefore, extra measures should be taken by the developer to ensure that low-impact design elements are incorporated into the site plan regarding the storage of materials on-site and stormwater management.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

Natural Resources and Stormwater Management

There is an existing pond in the southern portion of the site, which connects to a stream and an associated 100-year flood zone. The applicant states that an estimated 1% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces. The site plan designates a “stormwater management” area but does not denote what would be in this area. 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 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. However, it should be noted that there is a floodplain, stream, and pond in the southern part of the site.

Transportation

No traffic study was submitted for the proposed development. The applicant estimates that the project would produce 10 new daily trips.

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).

Water Supply and Wastewater

The project would be served by the Walton County Water Authority with an estimated daily demand of 300 gallons for each system. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity and that no water line extensions are anticipated. The application states that there will be no wastewater treatment provider for the site. It is assumed that any wastewater needs for the development will be managed by an on-site septic system.

Solid Waste

The applicant states that the project will not generate any solid waste and that no hazardous waste will be generated by the development.

Lifecycle Costs and Revenues

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$600,000 at build-out in 2026 and generate \$20,000-\$30,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$68,650 and generate approximately \$2,288-\$3,432 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 Aviation Programs

This Proposed construction of waste handling facility on an 8.74 - acre tract zoned A1 in Walton County is 7.66 miles from the Cy Nunnally Memorial Airport (D73). It is located outside of the FAA approach or departure surfaces, and airport compatible land use areas, and does not appear to impact any 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.