

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 #4792
Name of Project:	Oak Grove Sanitary Landfill Expansion
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	Barrow County

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer's request for rezoning, a special use permit, and a Future Land Use Map amendment. Parcels XX052 106 and XX052 115 would be rezoned from AR to AG, and the special use permit would be to allow the solid waste landfill to extend into the expansion area. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 7/16/2026 to 7/31/2026.

Proposed Development

Republic Services of Georgia, Limited Partnership, is proposing a horizontal expansion of the existing Oak Grove Sanitary Landfill in Barrow County, which would incorporate additional land south of the current facility boundary. The proposed development would occupy property at 967 Carl Bethlehem Road in Barrow County, Georgia. The parcel numbers of the existing landfill are XX051 059, XX051 059A, XX052 120, and part of XX052 118. The parcel numbers of the expansion are XX052 106, XX052 113, XX052 114, XX052 115, XX052 116, XX052 116A, XX052 116B, XX052 116C, and the remainder of XX052 118.

The proposed expansion is expected to add approximately 20 years of life to the existing landfill. Details about the proposed expansion are summarized in the table below:

	CURRENT LANDFILL	PROPOSED EXPANSION	TOTAL AFTER EXPANSION
Property Area	220 acres	134 acres	354 acres
Landfill Footprint	103 acres	44 acres	147 acres
Permitted Capacity	+/- 22,345,000 cubic yards	+/- 11,250,000 cubic yards	+/- 33,595,000 cubic yards

According to the site plan, the expansion would also require relocation of an existing landfill gas (LFG) flare and sediment pond that would be displaced by the expanded landfill footprint. The site plan also shows a conceptual extension of an existing access road, a potential site for relocation of the existing gas-to-energy facility, a 500-foot public road buffer, and a 200-foot solid waste buffer. The applicant states that no existing uses would be displaced by the proposal, but aerial imagery and the site plan both show a house on Tract 3 (parcel XX052 114), which is within the 200-foot solid waste buffer so would not be able to be used as a residence. Property tax records indicate the house was purchased by Republic Services of Georgia in 2024. Otherwise, the site is vacant except for the LFG flare, gas plant, sediment basin, and access road that would need to be relocated, as noted above and on the site plan; a Georgia Power easement; and a Colonial Pipeline easement. According to the site plan, none of the proposed site modifications would affect either easement.

Construction of landfill cells and ancillary infrastructure will be completed in phases as the facility is built out. The operator anticipates 3–6 construction events over approximately 15 years, with the first construction event expected in 2029.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

Compatibility with Regional Plan

The site is identified as “Developed” and “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	No new full-time jobs are expected to be created by the expansion; however, as many counties in the area depend on the Oak Grove landfill for municipal solid waste disposal, and the existing landfill is nearing the end of its lifespan, increasing its capacity and lifespan would support economic development throughout the region.
Elevates public health and equity	Sufficient waste disposal capacity can help maintain public health. The existing landfill and proposed expansion both include infrastructure and equipment to mitigate the project’s potential impacts on water quality and air quality. It is important that these measures be carefully installed, maintained, and monitored throughout the life of the landfill, to ensure continued protection of the community.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	The Oak Grove landfill is one of only two municipal solid waste landfills in the region, and the existing landfill is nearing the end of its lifespan. Extending the lifespan of this landfill would support development at a regional scale for the counties that depend on it for solid waste disposal.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	This project would not create any new housing. However, extending the landfill’s lifespan would support the potential for housing development in the counties that depend on it for solid waste disposal.
Includes transportation choices and is well- connected with existing and planned transportation options	The proposed expansion is not expected to increase traffic volumes, as the expansion is not expected to significantly increase the number of employees or the number of truckloads of solid waste disposed of per day.
Protects natural and historic resources	There are no historic resources near the site. Protection of natural resources is addressed under “elevates public health and equity,” above, and under “compatibility with Regional Resource Management Plan,” below.

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 (353.8 Acres)	Wetland Acres ¹	18.0	5.1%
	“Conservation Land” ²	56.6	16.0%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	0.0	0.0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	56.6	16.0%
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (4,569.7 Acres)	Wetland Acres	265.9	5.8%
	“Conservation Land”	1,946.8	42.6%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	165.1	3.6%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	1,752.0	38.3%

There is one Regionally Important Resource within one mile of the site, which is Fort Yargo State Park. As the landfill is near and upstream of Fort Yargo, it presents potential water quality and air quality risks to the park, via leachate runoff or groundwater infiltration, odors, and gases. However, these risks are mitigated by equipment such as LFG flares, liners, and stormwater infrastructure, and more generally through compliance with environmental regulations and the conditions of the landfill’s solid waste, air quality, and stormwater permits. Additionally, these same risks are already present from the existing landfill, so the proposed expansion is unlikely to present any new risks to the park.

Compatibility with Regional Solid Waste Plan

The Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Management Authority’s *Regional Solid Waste Management Plan: 2021–2031* identifies the current Oak Grove landfill as having an estimated lifespan of only 10-years. The plan also notes that it is one of only two municipal solid waste landfills within the Northeast Georgia Region, and that it accepts waste from over 16 counties. Due to the Oak Grove landfill’s limited lifespan, the solid waste plan identifies the need for a collaborative effort to identify an appropriate site for a new regional landfill to replace it. However, by extending the life of the Oak Grove landfill by approximately 20 years, the proposed expansion would also delay the need for identifying a new landfill site.

The project site is within an area identified as “Restrictive” on the regional solid waste plan’s Land Suitability Map (Figure 3.1), which assesses the suitability of land for potential development or expansion of a solid waste handling facility. Restrictive locations are defined by the plan as “potentially suitable for development subject to certain State and Regional environmental restrictions and/or requirements.”

The “Plan Consistency” section of the solid waste management plan (section 3.1.4) states that “No proposed facility or facility expansion will be sited within the ten (10)-county planning area without a letter from the Local Governments Chief Elected Body and the Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Authority stating that the facility is consistent with the Solid Waste Management Plan. In addition, the local County Commission will hold at least one (1) public hearing to gather input to make this determination.”

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).

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

Natural Resources and Stormwater Management

There are wetlands in the expansion area, but according to the site plan, they are located within the 200-foot solid waste buffer and would remain undisturbed. Marbury Creek is within the wetland area and would be protected by a 100-foot stream buffer and a 150-foot impervious surface buffer. The applicant states that an estimated 6% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and that erosion and sediment controls, including stormwater ponds, ditches, and erosion control devices such as silt fence, rip-rap control, vegetative cover, and other temporary and permanent BMPs may be used at the facility. 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. 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

Kimley Horn completed a traffic impact study that projects no new daily trips from the proposed expansion. There is one existing site driveway that provides access to the site, and no changes to this access point are anticipated.

Water Supply and Wastewater

The project would be served by the City of Winder water and sewer systems, and no new water or sewer demand is anticipated from the expansion.

Solid Waste

The applicant estimates the expansion would generate no new solid waste annually. It is a solid waste disposal facility and will extend the ability of the current landfill to accept waste by approximately 20 years. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

Energy Supply

The applicant states that new energy demand will be negligible and that existing electrical transmission infrastructure is sufficient to serve the proposed project. The applicant states that no electricity will be generated on-site; however, the site plan indicates a potential future gas-to-energy conversion facility.

Lifecycle Costs and Revenues

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth approximately \$3 million at build-out (based on the property value of the nine new parcels) and generate approximately \$1.5 million in annual local government revenues, including property taxes and host fees. On a per-acre basis, the expansion would be worth over \$22,000 and generate over \$11,000 in local government 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

Jonathan Peevy, P.E., District Traffic Engineer, Georgia Department of Transportation, District 1 Traffic Operations

See attached "Deliverable Review Comments Form." Revised traffic study may be submitted to jpeevey@dot.ga.gov.

Deliverable Review Comments Form

Project Name:	Oak Grove Sanitary Landfill	Deliverable Review Summary Revise and Resubmit: This Deliverable is being returned to be revised and resubmitted. See the review comments included and refer to any supporting documentation provided. Developer to coordinate, address, and resolve any review comments prior to resubmitting.
Project ID:	DRI #4792	
Project Location	967 Carl Bethlehem Road, Winder, GA	
County	Barrow	
RC Name	Northeast Georgia Regional Commission	Deliverable Review Contents Attached N/A

			GDOT	
Document	Comment Number	Reference	Deliverable Review Comment	Response Comment
Revision 0	001	Page 6: Section 3.0	(Carl-Bethlehem Road): Update with data from actual collected count. 2024 AADT is an estimate and not a collected count.	
Revision 0	002	Page 6: Section 3.0	(Bill Rutledge Road): Speed limit appears to be 35 mph from Patrick Mill Rd to Carl-Bethlehem Rd. Review and revise as needed.	
Revision 0	003	Page 6: Section 3.0	Verify if Patrick Mill Road was renamed as West Winder Bypass. As street signs show West Winder Bypass at Bill Rutledge Rd/Fred Kilcrease Rd intersection	
Revision 0	004	Page 6: Section 3.0	(University Parkway) Update with data from actual collected count. 2024 AADT is an estimate and not a collected count.	
Revision 0	005	Page 7: Section 3.0, Table 1	Recommend using a single uniform peak hour for each peak period.	
Revision 0	006	Page 8: Section 3.0, Figure 3	Include truck percentages.	
Revision 0	007	Page 12: Section 4.2, Figure 4	Add North Arrow to all figures (TYP).	
Revision 0	008	Page 16: Section 4.2	Include any relevant documentation from the concept reports related to the diversion assumptions. Currently, the provided information in Appendix E does not detail the diversions/rerouting.	
Revision 0	009	Page 16: Section 4.2	Specify any other assumptions for heavy vehicle diversion/rerouting.	
Revision 0	010	Page 24: Section 4.2, Figure 13	Include truck percentages.	
Revision 0	011	Page 25: Section 4.3	Explain why the growth rate is applied to the site driveway if there are no additional trips.	
Revision 0	012	Page 26: Section 5.0	Include table of LOS Thresholds for signalized and unsignalized intersections.	
Revision 0	013	Page 27: Section 5.0, Table 2	Keep decimal places consistent.	
Revision 0	014	Page 28: Section 6.0	Review if there are any other nearby site developments that may impact traffic volumes.	
Revision 0	015	Appendix B: Synchro Analysis Reports Intersection 4, Existing 2026 Conditions- AM Peak	Figure 3 indicates dual SBT lanes. Review and revise as needed.	
Revision 0	016	Appendix C: SIDRA Analysis Reports 2 AM Bill Rutledge at Carl-Bethlehem Rd	These do not appear to match volumes on Figure 13 which sum to be: NB - 139 SB - 164 EB - 418 WB - 460	
Revision 0	017	Appendix C: SIDRA Analysis Reports 2 AM Bill Rutledge at Carl-Bethlehem Rd	(Approach Lane Flows) Table appears to be incomplete.	
Revision 0	018	Appendix C: SIDRA Analysis Reports 2 PM Bill Rutledge at Carl-Bethlehem Rd	(Approach Lane Flows) Clarify source of the volumes and why the volumes from Figure 13 were not used.	
Revision 0	019	Appendix E: Programmed Project Fact Sheets Concept Plan, Page 1	Add street names for spatial context (typ).	

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