

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 #4829
Name of Project:	New Salem 85 Logistics Center II
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	City of Jefferson

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer's request for rezoning from R-2 (Medium Density Residential District) to LI (Light Industrial District). Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 9/10/2026 to 9/25/2026.

Proposed Development

CHI/Acquisitions, LP, is proposing construction of approximately 1 million square feet of light industrial/warehouse space on a 144-acre site in the City of Jefferson. The proposed development would occupy property near the intersection of New Salem Church Road and Academy Church Road. The parcel number is 092 019. The project would be completed in one phase, with an estimated completion date in 2028.

According to the site plan, the proposal includes two cross-dock warehouses (approximately 500,000 square feet each), 619 automobile parking spaces, and fewer than 200 trailer parking spaces (105 spaces are identified on the site plan, and there is an unlabeled area that appears to be a third trailer parking lot). Where the site borders neighboring residential or agricultural zones, the site plan indicates there will be a 40-foot zoning buffer. Two vehicular access points are proposed to connect the site with New Salem Church Road, one of which would require an easement through neighboring parcel 092 016. Currently, the site is vacant and wooded.

Compatibility with Existing Plans and Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

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	The applicant estimates that the proposed development would generate approximately 475 new full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) and that the regional workforce is sufficient to meet this demand.
Elevates public health and equity	While the proposed development is within an industrial area in Jefferson, the parcel adjoins some existing residential and agricultural uses in unincorporated Jackson County. The site plan proposes large areas of undeveloped space separating proposed buildings and infrastructure from neighboring residential and agricultural parcels. The proposed separation far exceeds the listed 40-foot zoning buffer, but it is unclear from the site plan whether this undeveloped space is intended to be clear-cut or remain wooded. Maintaining trees and other vegetation in these undeveloped areas would minimize the potential for adverse effects on adjoining residential and agricultural uses.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	This development is in a suitable location, as it is proposed for an existing industrial node in Jefferson. Most of the surrounding land is occupied by other industrial uses (a quarry, concrete companies, and another warehouse). According to the site plan, the warehouses are proposed to be cross dock facilities, which can strengthen regional supply chain efficiency.
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	Two entrances are proposed on the site plan. One entrance would connect the site’s western corner with New Salem Church Road via an easement through adjoining parcel 092 016. This entrance would allow more efficient circulation for trucks, as it would provide them with a shorter distance to access to Interstate 85 via U.S. Highway 129. The second entrance is proposed to connect the south end of the site with New Salem Church Road, near its intersections with Academy Church Road. No traffic study was submitted with the DRI application. If the City has concerns about potential impacts of new truck traffic on the existing road network, then a traffic study is recommended to determine whether any transportation improvements are needed.
Protects natural and historic resources	Two streams are shown on the site plan. Both are surrounded by required stream buffers, and these buffers are not proposed to be disturbed except where an internal road between the two buildings crosses one stream. The proposal also includes a large amount of undeveloped land, with only 36% of the lot projected to be covered by impervious surfaces.

Compatibility with Regional Resource Management Plan

NEGRC evaluated the potential for impacts to wetlands¹, conservation land², regionally important resources³, and threatened regionally important resources⁴ within the site area and within one mile of the site. Please refer to the footnotes for definitions for each of these terms. No concerns were identified during this review. There are no Regionally Important Resources within one mile of the site.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

As noted previously, no traffic study was submitted as part of this DRI application. A traffic study is recommended to assess the potential impacts of this project on other jurisdictions' transportation infrastructure and traffic patterns.

The applicant estimates the project would generate 1,700 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 Jackson County is disposed of in a landfill in Banks County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

No other significant interjurisdictional impacts were identified during this review.

Comments from Affected Parties

Hannah Slater, Public Development Director, Jackson County

The access pattern shown on the submitted plan shall be maintained. No direct commercial or truck access to Academy Church Road shall be permitted within the portion of the roadway maintained by Unincorporated Jackson County without prior review and approval by the Jackson County Road Department.

Jackson County also requests consideration of additional buffering along the boundary adjoining County A-2 (Agricultural Rural Farm District) zoned property. The proposed 40-foot buffer is substantially less than the 120-foot zoning buffer Jackson County would require where LI (Light Industrial) zoning adjoins A-2 property.

¹ 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).

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).