



**Georgia Department of Economic Development
Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development (GRAD)
New Application**



Supporting Document & Submission Guidelines

The review of your application will not begin until all supporting documents for each section are complete and uploaded. Until the application is complete and ready to submit, **DO NOT** click the **SUBMIT** button. You may **SAVE** the application and return as often as you wish.

For all submitted written and graphic exhibits, (memos, letters, reports, opinions, studies, sketches, drawings, maps, photography, etc.) ensure that:

- A. All pages are clearly referenced with the site or park name, county and complete date (month, day and year). Appropriate, suitable headers and footers are best.
- B. All hyperlinks (to hypertext or hypermedia) are "live" and will correctly jump to the proper reference by clicking or tapping.
- C. All section files are to be submitted **ONLY** as Portable Document Format (PDF) files, i.e., no Microsoft Word format, AI, PUB, DXF, DGN, EPS, etc.
- D. PDF files are prepared at a resolution level sufficient for on-screen viewing or printing. All graphic exhibits should be capable of being printed on 11"X17" paper without any loss of clarity or legibility.
- E. All appropriate signatures, professional registrations/credentials, notations, references, citations or sources are shown and are clearly legible.
- F. All letters should be less than sixty (60) days old at the time of submission and be addressed to: Georgia Department of Economic Development; 75 5th Street NW, Suite 1200, Atlanta, GA 30308; Attention: Lindsay Martin.

Standard of Care: Non-Responsive and Non-Performance Submissions

Each property owner, Development Authority or Economic Development Office is expected to exercise a standard of care to submit an application that is executed as expeditiously as possible, is accurate, complete, truthful, and is consistent with a high level of professional skills and care.

- A. Each applicant will be allowed to submit a total of three submissions for each application: one original application and two follow-up submissions.
- B. After two new or renewal application submissions have been completed and the applicant's responses are deemed incompetently prepared, incomplete, inaccurate, misleading, non-responsive or illustrate a low level of professional skills and care, the applicant will be notified of a pause in the process. The pause will be for a minimum of six months so the applicant could decide how to proceed for one final (third) submission.
- C. After the pause, one final (third) submission will be allowed for review. This last submission is subject to these conditions:
 1. All previously submitted materials, attachments, etc. would be purged or erased from the file system. Basic folder structure would be maintained (name, county, acreage).
 2. This last submission would need to meet the current application version in force, regardless of any previous versions used.
 3. All written and graphic exhibits, (memos, letters, reports, opinions, studies, sketches, drawings, maps, photography, consultant evaluations, studies, analyses etc.) must be less than 60 months old.
 4. Neither preference nor prejudice will be given to this final attempt.

NOTE: GDEcD reserves the right to pause, invalidate or void any application or any subsequent submissions if responses are deemed non-responsive or failed to exercise reasonable care and skill.



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Section A: Site Contact Information and Site Details

This section will gather site contact information and data such as:

- Ownership
- Property Website
- Property Address
- Property Description
- Utility Providers
- Acreage

Section B: Site Description

Requirement Overview

Applicants must provide complete written and graphic exhibits to clearly illustrate and explain the geographic shape and extent of the site being considered.

This section relies on thoroughness to describe and illustrate aspects related to the site itself and its surroundings. Existing uses of the site and its vicinity (to the North, East, South, and West) need to be mentioned. Include any natural features (terrain, water bodies, etc.) and surrounding existing facilities (residences, buildings, railroads, roads, highways, existing industries, airports, military installations, etc.). This description should include aspects that may be perceived as problematic or unfavorable for development. Examples of such items may include large areas of flood zones or wetlands, graves or cemeteries on the site; incompatible land uses adjacent to the site (blasting noise, vibrations and dust from quarries, the extent and proximity of residences, schools, hospitals, commercial areas, etc. If necessary, describe any adverse public opposition to the development of the site).

Any inaccuracy or other problem not identified by the applicant at this point, which becomes known as more detailed studies are conducted at a later time, may invalidate the site certification.

Data Required

- A. Provide the street address as used by your 911 services (Police, Fire and EMT). In addition, using the 911 street address provide a latitude and longitude in decimal degree format to an accuracy of five decimal places. For locations within Georgia, this format will look similar to: Latitude: 33.77616; Longitude: -84.38488. These coordinates can be obtained from Google Maps. It is recommended that the point of reference be located at the proposed site entrance.
- B. Provide a clear graphic outline of the boundaries of the site at sufficient scale and detail to define the area of the site (location map).
- C. Provide a USGS 7.5-minute "quad sheet" topographic map (1:24,000 scale) showing the site boundaries and setting of the site relative to local roads, railroads, and other physical features. The area of the site should be defined to the nearest acre. This map should extend at least one mile beyond the boundaries of the site in all directions.
- D. Prepare a detailed written description of the site including key landmarks and physical features (to assist reviewers and visitors to identify the site and its boundaries). For example: "Southeast border of site begins on west side of US Highway 5, 2.3 miles north of its intersection with Smith Road, where a culvert passes under Highway 5". As part of this written description, include a characterization of key site attributes, existing uses of the site and its surroundings (to the north, east, south, and west) including both natural features and constructed or developed facilities. Please include any supporting graphic exhibits.
- E. Provide a recent survey exhibit prepared by a licensed professional. This exhibit may be either a boundary survey or ALTA/ACSM (American Land Title Association/American Congress of Surveying and Mapping) survey.
- F. Furnish all promotional and economic development data available about the site and the community. If this information is available on the Internet, it is acceptable simply to identify the website using hyperlinks.



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Section C: Site Ownership & Terms

NOTE: An updated letter must be submitted every 36 months which describes the ownership, all current uses, and all terms, conditions, and schedules for making the site available to a prospective industrial user. Changes that may occur during the term of certification include and are not limited to:

1. *Land price per acre or methodology used to determine costs to prospect*
2. *Ownership: public, private, percentage of ownership, name, etc.*
3. *Increase or decrease in acres for sale*
4. *Maximums or minimums available*
5. *New limitations on use, leases, covenants*
6. *New easements, rights-of-way or other zones (utility, highway widening or re-routes, aviation runway or height limitations, flood zones, military base expansion) which will impact usability of site.*

Requirement Overview

Applicants must provide a complete description of the ownership of the site, all current uses, and all terms, conditions, and a schedule for making the site available to a prospective industrial user. An example of the simplest and easiest situation might be, "Entire site is owned in fee simple by the Smith County Industrial Development Authority, is currently leased for pasturage under a short-term agreement which is fully cancelable in 30 days, is available for purchase in lots of any size above 5 acres at \$15,000 per acre, and may be sold, developed, and used for any purpose allowed in the M-2 Zoning District of the Smith County Zoning Resolution."

Data Required

- A. Completely describe the ownership of the site. Describe all current uses and any stipulation, which might impact the sale, development, or use of the site by a prospective industrial user (e.g. an owner policy making the land available only a single user). Current uses should include those that are temporary (e.g., short-term lease for agriculture or hunting) and permanent (e.g., industrial facilities or structures already on the site). List and describe all limits, requirements, recorded covenants, conditions, restrictions or stipulations a user would have to comply with to achieve a given level of employment or investment (e.g., a site owned by a railroad may require users to generate a specified amount of rail traffic; a conservation easement for reduced taxation; environmental covenants to protect landowners; wetland or floodplain covenants to enhance water quality; zoning conditions which specify additional controls beyond the zoning classification, etc.). Include copies of all recorded covenants, conditions, restrictions, stipulations or other limits imposed or voluntarily applied.
- B. Submit a binding letter signed by the owner(s) or an authorized representative, committing the availability of the site to industrial prospects valid for at least 36 months (with certain obvious exceptions such as acquisition of some or all of the site by an industry), and setting forth all terms and conditions for sale or lease of the land. The letter must include details of the sales or lease arrangement including any limits on use of the land (as above), any maximum or minimum size of parcels that will be sold, and a schedule for cessation or removal of any existing activities on the site (e.g., seasonal agricultural product; abandoned structures, roads; burial sites, etc.).

Note: A statement of the price of land per acre, binding for at least 36 months is strongly preferred. If there is reasonable cause why a specific price per acre cannot be stated, GDEcD may consider an alternative commitment. Illustrative of an alternative commitment may be for the owner to provide a firm price within 30 days of any inquiry and a clear statement of the means by which that price will be determined, such as by a professional appraisal. Individual parcels within a larger development (e.g., a large industrial park or a site with multiple owners) may have different selling prices and other conditions; this is acceptable from a GRAD certification perspective, but must be specified in the above letter.



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Section D: Topographic Survey & Aerial Photography

Requirement Overview

Topographic features of a site may have major effects on its potential to be developed. Feasibility, cost, impacts on storm water runoff, and so on. Thus, a basic topographic survey is desirable to address many aspects of site development.

Recent aerial photographs will better illustrate conditions on the site, as well as the immediate surroundings.

Data Required

- A. Provide a topographic map of the site by a qualified professional showing basic boundaries and topographic features at two-foot intervals as typically done via aerial survey. If the requirement for a two-foot interval survey is waived, the applicant must provide a graphic exhibit that clearly shows site boundaries, topography, and major physical features, both natural and constructed on a scale sufficiently large to be reviewed in detail. Interpolated contour intervals will be clearly identified and label
- B. Provide aerial photographs of the site, showing site boundaries and sufficient labels for identification.

Section E: Zoning & Planning & Land Use Controls of Site

Requirement Overview

Applicants must provide documentation that industrial use of the site is acceptable under all relevant planning, zoning, and other land use control regulations and policies, and that the municipality and/or county in whose jurisdiction the site is located supports industrial development on and around the site.

Zoning and related local land use planning and regulations are highly desirable, to establish that the site has been legally designated for industrial use, protect the site from encroachment by incompatible uses, and minimize risk of opposition at the time the site is considered by an industrial prospect.

Data Required

- A. Provide a letter signed by appropriate officials of the relevant local government (city or county) stating its support of the development of the site for industrial purposes. In a larger community, include a letter from the Planning Director; in a smaller community, letters from elected officials are acceptable. Letters should include specific data and information such as: the current zoning classification, any imposed conditions, use limitations, private restrictions (i.e., conservation use valuations, environmentally sensitive, restrictive covenants and easements), etc. Provide a copy of all relevant data. The data should include all sections of the regulations that describe the types of uses that are permitted in and excluded from the zoning district in which the site is located. As appropriate, include any recorded covenants, conditions and restrictions (CCR's). Provide a valid MuniCode web page reference.

NOTE: If the applicable local government has no formal land use regulations, letters should describe any public or private measures, such as a comprehensive plan, land use maps, CCR's, etc. which would affect development of the site for industrial purposes. A complete PDF copy is acceptable only if no MuniCode is available.

- B. Should the site have a coterminous border or borders with another county, supply a letter from the respective Development Authority stating support of the development of the site for industrial purposes.
- C. Should site development plans meet or exceed DCA's [Developments of Regional Impacts](#) thresholds, please provide evidence of project consultation or support from all affected parties. Acceptable documentation may include a completed Development of Regional Impact (DRI) process, letters of support from surrounding jurisdictions, or other similar correspondence acknowledging outreach efforts.



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Section F: Site Accessibility

Requirement Overview

It is obviously essential that the site have good access via a road suitable for truck traffic, employee vehicles, etc., to a public road, which is itself appropriate for such traffic. Such access must be in place or must be planned, authorized, and funded such that it can be constructed in time to meet an industrial prospect's schedule for development of the site.

Roads should be of high quality, be capable of bearing large trucks, with moderate grades and curves; have appropriate signals, acceleration/deceleration lanes, and other traffic controls; have no problems with visibility; have minimal potential for traffic congestion; and not pass near residential areas, schools, hospitals, etc.

NOTE: This requirement is not intended to address internal access of the site.

Data Required

- A. If a suitable access road is in place from the site to an industrial quality highway, provide a graphic exhibit showing its layout and key characteristics.
- B. If a suitable road is not in place, provide a complete description of the following: (a) master plan(s), (b) design(s), (c) permitting, (d) funding, and (e) construction. Provide a graphic exhibit showing its concept and all key characteristics.
- C. In both cases, the application must include a letter from the appropriate official in charge of road development describing the access road's level of readiness to support industrial level traffic to and from the site.



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Section G: Rail Service Feasibility

Requirement Overview

Railroad accessibility is highly desirable but not a condition for certification as a GRAD site. If a community wishes for its site to be designated as potentially rail served, the application must include certain data that justifies this ability.

Even if a railroad is nearby, determining the feasibility of rail service is a complicated matter. Feasibility is a function of many considerations that are difficult for any party outside the railroad carrier to assess. Physical considerations include the elevation difference between the site and track; the distance between the site and track, the spur curvature required to reach the site, the grade of the track, etc. The track's current utilization relative to its capacity is also an important consideration. A track may be so heavily used that new industries cannot be accommodated; or so lightly used that it is in danger of being abandoned. Financial considerations range from the cost of constructing new track, switches, grades, etc. to which party will pay these costs. Ultimately, the desire of the railroad carrier to serve a new customer on a physically viable site is largely a function of the expected revenue. The most attractive revenue streams are generated by transporting high-volume and high-value products such as and plastics and chemicals.

The above issues can be addressed only by the railroad. Consequently, the applicant must involve appropriate representatives of the railroad company serving the site.

Data Required

- A. If the applicant is not seeking for the site to be validated as rail-served, please so state in this part of this application.
- B. Otherwise, provide a letter from an appropriate representative of the railroad company stating the company's general desire to provide railroad service and describing all conditions of constructing and operating rail facilities into the site. The letter should set forth all aspects of developing the line (the cost and timing for designing, permitting, and constructing a spur track to the site); the company's policy on who pays for such new construction; a description of the level of service currently provided on the relevant rail line, and any issues related to the financial health of the line.
- C. Furnish a graphic exhibit showing the site and the existing or probable route which a rail spur or siding would take to serve the site. This graphic exhibit should represent reasonable judgment based on personal knowledge or a visit by an appropriate official of the railroad but does not need to be based on serious civil engineering study.



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Section H: Utilities-Energy-Telecom & Public Safety Services

Requirement Overview

Basic utility/energy/telecommunication services must be in place or must be planned, authorized, and funded such that the infrastructure can be constructed in time to meet an industrial prospect's schedule for development of the site. GDEcD has determined that certification standards will not require any given level or volume of any utility or other service, but the GRAD site certification will state the level of each service that is available and the designation may be declined if utility service is weak.

Data Required

- A. The applicant must provide signed letters from the local supplier of the following utilities and services. Each letter should describe the nearest existing infrastructure and overall system capacity available to the site for expected industrial users, including the items noted below:
 - i. **Water:** line size, pressure, source(s), total/excess system capacity.
 - ii. **Sewer:** provider, line size, total/excess system capacity and system type.
 - iii. **Power:** voltage of nearest transmission line and the site's distance from two nearest substations. Include a letter from each power supplier as eligible under Georgia's "customer choice" electric provider law.
 - iv. **Natural Gas:** provider, line size and type, pressure, firm or interruptible source and system capacity.
 - v. **Telecom:** providers, fixed line, wireless network availability, fiber optic cable network and digital switching.
- B. For public safety services, the applicant should provide a brief description of services provided to the site, i.e., law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical or 911 by identifying the jurisdiction or other organization that provides each service. Briefly describe their respective abilities and capacities.

Note: Each letter must also specify the level of service that can be installed in a period of six months from a prospect's decision to develop the site. Detailed engineering studies are not required. However, for data to be considered by the GRAD certification process, the letter must describe how services have been planned, authorized, and funded such that they can be constructed in time to meet an industrial prospect's schedule for development of the site. Provide maps or other graphic exhibits, which show both current and planned utility services.

Section I: Wetlands & Other Water Bodies

Requirement Overview

Federal and State regulations protect and prevent or limit development around many types of ponds, lakes, springs, creeks, streams, branches, rivers, wetlands, and other bodies of water. Coastal areas also have unique regulations. The applicant must arrange for appropriate studies to determine whether development of the candidate site will be affected by the presence of such features.

Data Required

- A. The applicant must provide a report by a qualified professional which delineates all bodies of water subject to Federal and State regulation that includes a graphic exhibit and narrative description. If such bodies are present on the site or are close enough to affect development of the site, the report must provide a preliminary indication of what such impact may be. A Preliminary Jurisdictional Delineation (wetlands) might be acceptable as a submission if no site development activities have taken place. As appropriate, address the extent and types of flood zones.



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Section J: Preliminary Geotechnical Investigation

Requirement Overview

It is important to understand an industrial site's subsurface characteristics including basic soil conditions, the possible presence of rock, the local level of groundwater, and other features.

On the other hand, a comprehensive geotechnical investigation with core borings and other studies can be expensive. Further, such studies need to be very specific to the proposed construction and placement. Some subsurface conditions can vary within a few feet so that data about one location may be quite different from another one nearby.

If adequate geotechnical data is available from other sources, the application does not require new borings. A professional opinion from a qualified geotechnical specialist, based on general knowledge of local conditions, observation of the site, the experience of previous industrial construction nearby, and other readily available information, is acceptable if such grounds exist to justify such an opinion. It is possible that such a limited assessment is not feasible. There may not be sufficient available information (e.g., no examples of industrial construction in the area) or the general observation may reveal conditions which the geotechnical professionals consider suspicious and in need of further investigation. In those cases, a more thorough geotechnical study may be unavoidable. Consultation between the applicant and a geotechnical professional will help determine the best strategy based on development plans.

Data Required

- A. The applicant must provide a letter or report from a qualified geotechnical professional stating a professional opinion that from a soils and subsurface perspective, the site is capable of being developed for industrial uses and describing any conditions or observations related to this conclusion. The opinion may be based on general local data as described above if the geotechnical firm is willing to offer a professional opinion based on such data, without a specific study of the site itself. If the geotechnical firm is not prepared to make such a statement without further study, it will be necessary for an additional study to be completed to a level sufficient for such an opinion to be issued.



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Section K: Phase 1 Environmental Assessment - Unique Conditions & Permitting

Please provide an updated Phase I Environmental Assessment (ESA) report on the site prepared by a qualified environmental consultant.

Under the ASTM Standard, an ESA is valid for 6 months, after which time an update is required. For GRAD certification purposes, an updated Phase I will only be requested every 36 months during renewal. ESAs require frequent updates for a variety of reasons including:

- Development within or adjacent to the GRAD property can change the environmental conditions affecting the site.
- Changes to air, water and/or land environmental legislation or permitting regulations may impact potential development on the site (types, density and proximity)

Requirement Overview

From the perspective of an economic development organization planning a new site, environmental studies are essential and should be some of the first steps completed. Even property previously used for seemingly benign purposes such as agriculture may have problems, such as contamination from pesticides. It is also possible for undeveloped or apparently “clean” (greenfield) property to be impacted by contaminated surface or sub-surface flows from adjacent sources. From the perspective of a potential industrial purchaser, knowing the “environmental history” of a site is also critical.

Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) have evolved to be an essential study when a property changes land use (i.e. agriculture to industrial) or prior to a land purchase. In order for a site to obtain a GRAD certification, a Phase I ESA is required. Other important environmental studies may be needed based on specific site conditions.

GDEcD will accept an ESA that is more than 180 days old. However, the applicant and its qualified environmental consultant must be ready and willing to bring the file up to date quickly upon inquiry by a prospective purchaser. *Note: The GRAD renewal process will require new or current Phase I ESA's and other applicable environmental studies.*

There may also be unique environmental conditions which could impact development of the specific site. For example, the county in which the site is located may be non-attainment for some critical air pollutant, which could limit the site's use or require some industrial facilities to engage in lengthy and expensive additional work to get permitted.

Lastly in an effort to provide a level of predictability and certainty for the development of a GRAD site, all necessary permits or approvals will need to be identified and described.

Data Required

- A. The applicant must provide a Phase I ESA report, prepared by a qualified environmental consultant, on the site. The ESA shall conform to all applicable national and state regulations, laws or standards. This ESA (and any other environmental studies) should include a clear description that the site is capable of being developed for industrial purposes. As necessary, describe any conditions, limits or other observations regarding this conclusion.
- B. If the ESA identifies any other environmental problems and additional studies/assessments were recommended (e.g., Phase II, Phase III, underground storage tanks, vapor intrusion, groundwater contamination, asbestos, lead, etc.), all such studies/assessments need to be submitted.
- C. If the site is listed on Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD) “Georgia Brownfield Properties” list, provide copies of the Compliance Status Report and Corrective Action Plan. Other appropriate studies, reports or evaluations should be included as well.



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- D. The applicant must provide current data about the status of the local area (usually the county in which the site is located) identifying any unique, special permitting requirements or other limits on development resulting from any environmental conditions, regulations, or policies including its attainment/ non-attainment status for all pollutants, and other characteristics, such as proximity to Class I protected areas or other environmentally sensitive areas. For example, at least three Class I areas (associated with haze pollution) exist in GA.
- E. The applicant must provide a list of permits, approvals, and other data which a prospective industry must obtain from local, state, and other regulatory bodies in order to acquire, develop, and use the site for industrial purposes. This should include the permit, the basic data required to apply for it, the issuing agency, the typical schedule for obtaining each permit, and any associated fees. A simple, easy-to-understand chart is desirable.

**Section L: Cultural Resources & Endangered Species Investigation
Requirement Overview**

Cultural resources range from prehistoric natural items (fossils), to archeological or man-made items (from prehistoric to the recent past), to evidence that property might have been used for religious or ceremonial purposes by Native Americans or others. This field has risen in importance due to sensitivity to ethnic and cultural groups, the increased interest in local history and archeological research, and other conditions. Cemeteries, often poorly marked or documented, are widespread. Much of Georgia was historically settled by small farmers whose family members were buried in graves on the farm.

Federal agencies have designated over 1,200 animals and 750 plants as endangered or threatened. These are indigenous flora and fauna, which, for any of many reasons, have become so rare that they are in danger of extinction. Federal law requires that the presence of these organisms be investigated prior to intensive site development.

Defining an adequate study of this type can be challenging since requirements can be imposed by a number of different regulatory agencies. Applicants should thus ensure that the work they commission is by qualified professionals and in accord with the latest requirements. They should also be aware that some studies are time sensitive. For example: some endangered plants are best spotted during the spring when they bloom and some aerial photos are best taken in the winter when there is less foliage to block views of the ground.

Data Required

- A. The applicant must provide a study by a qualified professional documenting appropriate study of a site to determine the presence of cultural resources, any historic or cultural significance of the property, and other similar findings in accord with all current laws, regulations, and standards.
- B. The applicant must provide a study by a qualified professional documenting appropriate study of a site to determine the presence any designated endangered species.
- C. If either of these studies is positive, the applicant must provide a statement from the appropriate professional indicating the likely consequences, which such findings may have on industrial development of the site.