

Overview of ARC Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Review Process

What is a DRI?

- A Development of Regional Impact or DRI is a large-scale and/or specific type of development that is likely to generate impacts beyond the boundaries of the host local government in which it is located.

Background

- The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 (O.C.G.A. 45-12-200, et seq., and 50-8-1, et seq.) authorizes the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish procedures for the review of DRIs to help the state prepare for growth and development in a coordinated, rational manner.
- DCA delegates DRI review management to each Regional Commission (RC) throughout the state.
- Alternative DRI rules for the ARC region were authorized by DCA and approved by the ARC Board in 2012, as a result of revisions to the statewide DCA DRI rules allowing RCs greater flexibility in DRI review management.

Goals

- To foster and/or improve coordination and communication between local governments and relevant agencies with planning responsibilities that may be impacted by a DRI.
- To provide a means of identifying and assessing a DRI's potential impacts on the front end of the local development review process, before conflicts relating to those impacts arise.

Parties Involved

- Host local government and other adjacent or nearby local governments
- Applicant team, e.g., developer, site/civil engineer, transportation consultant, etc.
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA)
- Transit provider if applicable, e.g., Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- Community Improvements Districts (CIDs) if applicable
- ARC and any adjacent or nearby RCs if applicable
- State agencies, e.g., Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), DCA, etc.

Regional Commission Role

- ARC convenes the applicant team, host local government and potentially impacted parties to gather and share project information. ARC then manages a review and comment process in which it:
 - Evaluates the DRI's consistency with regional plans and policies, including The Atlanta Region's Plan and the region's Water Resource Management Plan.
 - Assesses the DRI's potential impacts on transportation infrastructure and operations, natural resources, public facilities, surrounding land uses, economic development and housing.
 - Solicits input from relevant agencies and local governments as a means of coordinating local and regional plans, policies and investments.

Outcome

- With input from neighboring local governments and other potentially affected parties, ARC produces an advisory report that includes ARC's recommendations and all external comments received. It is designed for informational use by the host local government as it moves through its local process, and it is also shared with the other parties in the review. The host local government retains its authority to make the final decision on whether to approve the development.

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Review Criteria and Thresholds

- ARC maintains its own Alternative DRI rules, including review thresholds specific to the 10-county ARC region and dependent on the specific land use and size/scale. See ARC's DRI webpage at <http://atlantaregional.org/developments-of-regional-impact> for more information on the alternative procedures and thresholds.

Compliance

- To maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) status, a local government must submit information on potential DRIs to ARC for review and comment.

Step by Step Procedures

1. An applicant requests an action (e.g., rezoning, special use permit, land disturbance permit, etc.) from a local government.
2. The host local government reviews the *Developments of Regional Impact: Alternative Requirements-Atlanta Regional Commission* (ARC DRI Rules) and determines that the action may meet the definition of a DRI.
3. The host local government informs the applicant of DRI procedure and obtains relevant project information.
4. The host local government contacts ARC to request a pre-review meeting and includes project information.
5. ARC schedules a pre-review meeting, typically on a Monday, and sends notice to the local government, the applicant, any adjacent or potentially affected local government, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and other state or local agencies that may be impacted by the proposed action.
6. ARC holds a joint pre-review meeting with GRTA, the local government, and the applicant, at which time a DRI determination is made and additional information required for the review is identified.
7. After the pre-review meeting, the local government submits the DRI Initial Information Form ("Form 1") through DCA's DRI webpage if they have not already done so (applicants are free to submit this form before this point, and often do so).
8. The applicant submits all required information to ARC and GRTA, including the GRTA required transportation and traffic analysis (see <http://www.grta.org/core-business/developments-of-regional-impact>). If this information is not submitted to both ARC and GRTA within 90 days of the pre-review meeting, the DRI may be withdrawn by ARC.
9. Once all required information has been received by ARC and GRTA, ARC prepares a Preliminary Report, notifies potentially affected local governments and agencies of the review and requests comments on the proposed project within 15 days.
10. ARC staff reviews the proposed project using several tools including the GRTA traffic study, which is reviewed by ARC staff to ensure a comprehensive review of the development is conducted.
11. If problems are noted, ARC staff will attempt to resolve them if time allows, including scheduling additional meetings with affected parties.
12. If no significant problems are noted or if issues are resolved, ARC's Director is authorized to issue a Final Report with any recommendations or additional findings.
13. If significant problems remain, the proposed project is referred to ARC leadership through the ARC Community Resources Committee (CRC) for guidance.
14. Local governments are strongly encouraged to give careful consideration to ARC's recommendations and findings in their decision-making processes.

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Focus of ARC Review

ARC evaluates the following criteria:

- Whether the DRI is consistent with regional, local, or affected agencies' plans
- Whether the DRI impacts short-term work programs of ARC, the host local government, or affected agencies
- Population and jobs that can be accommodated by the DRI and how these relate to forecasts
- Whether the DRI displaces existing development or jobs
- Potential impact(s) of the DRI on:
 - Adjacent local governments
 - Surrounding land uses
 - Existing industries or businesses in the region
 - Wetlands, groundwater recharge areas, water supply, watersheds, protected river corridors, or other environmentally sensitive areas of the region
 - Air quality
 - Nearby historic resources
 - Schools or school systems
 - Government services such as fire, police, EMS, libraries, or other community services
 - Regionally Important Resources
 - Existing and planned road network
- Traffic that will be generated by the DRI
- Capacity of the existing and proposed roads
- Demand management strategies proposed by the developer
- Whether the DRI contributes to patterns of development that will reduce average daily miles traveled
- Whether rapid transit is available nearby
- Amount of wastewater generated by the DRI and relationship to existing or planned capacity
- Existing and planned water demand and supply
- Amount of solid waste generated by the DRI and how it will be handled
- Potential tax revenues generated by the DRI

Other Resources

For more information on DRI reviews in the 10-county ARC region, visit <http://atlantaregional.org/developments-of-regional-impact> or contact Andrew Smith at asmith@atlantaregional.org or 470-378-1645.

For more information on DRI review procedure and background in general, including a list of DRI submissions from around the state, visit <http://www.dca.ga.gov/DRI>.