



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y - S A V A N N A H
METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning the Future - Respecting the Past

To: The Metropolitan Planning Commission
Through: Melanie Wilson, Executive Director and CEO
From: Edward Morrow, Director of Development Services
Anna Brodmerkel-McQuarrie, Planner – Special Projects and Transportation
Date: February 17, 2026
Subject: Special Use Request
Petitioner: Jay Maupin, PE, Agent for Charles Stewart of ABC Waste
Property Owner: Westgate Stewart Property, LLC
Address: 6 Patton Road
Alderman: District 5 – Dr. Estella Shabazz
County Commission: District 5 – Tanya Milton
Property Identification Number: 20708 01011
Petition File No.: 26-000336-ZA

REQUEST: The Petitioner requests approval of a Special Use Permit pursuant to *Section 3.10* of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance to establish a Solid Waste Transfer Station ([Sec. 8.5.13](#)). A solid waste transfer station functions as a logistical hub within a municipal waste management network. These facilities receive refuse from smaller, local collection vehicles. Upon arrival, waste is typically unloaded within a purpose-built industrial structure, where it may undergo initial sorting for specific materials. Per the Petitioner, the proposed 23,600 square foot structure would be specifically designed to contain polluted liquids (leachate). Following sorting, the waste is typically consolidated and compacted before being reloaded onto larger capacity transport vehicles for transfer to a designated processing or disposal location.

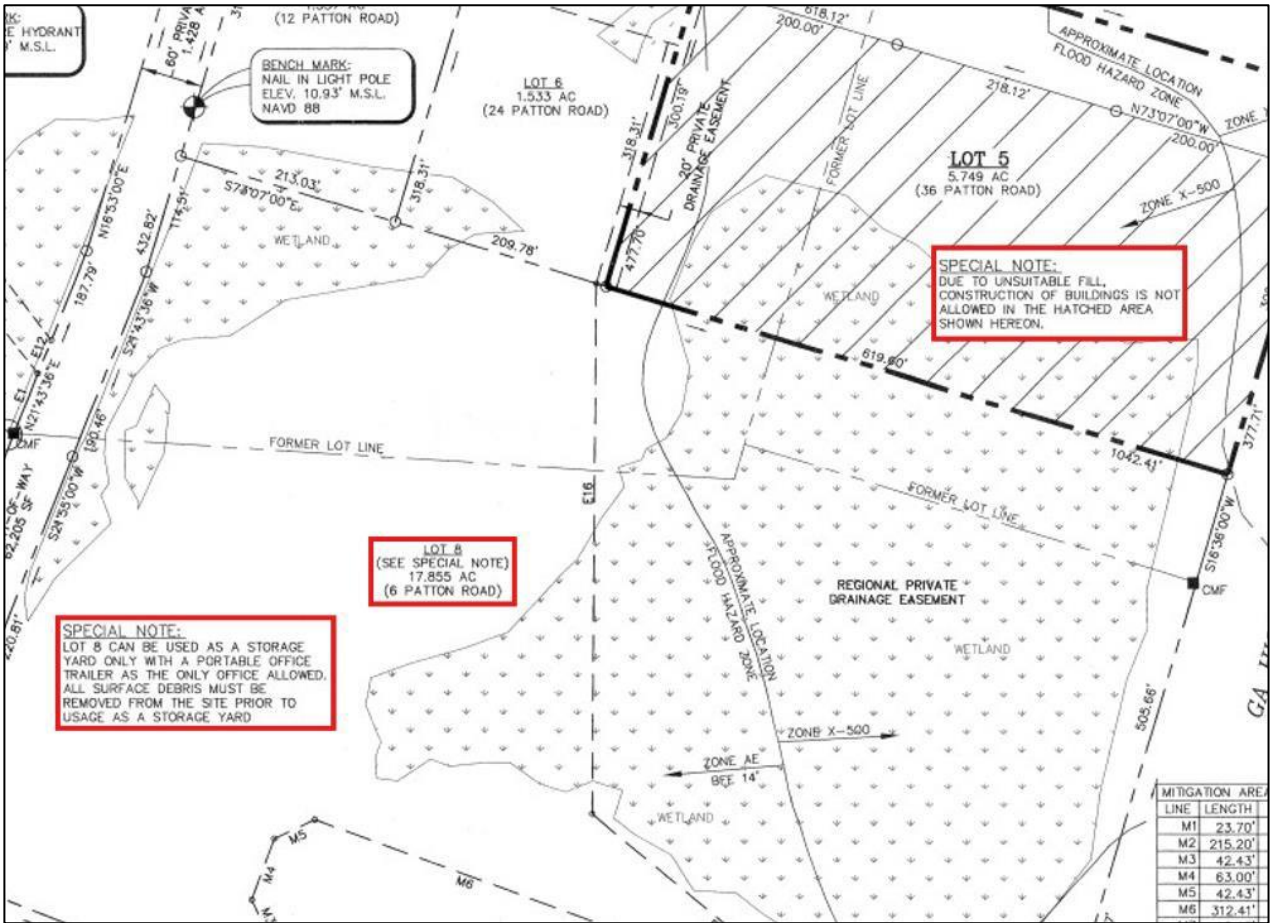
The Special Use process includes initial review by the Planning Commission with final approval by Savannah City Council.

This item was heard originally at the Planning Commission meeting on July 15, 2025 ([24-001297-ZA](#)).

The Petition was continued at the mutual agreement of the Petitioner and Planning Commission on the basis that additional public engagement, particularly with the neighboring Tremont Park Community, should be undertaken.

BACKGROUND: The subject parcel was recorded as part of a 2007 subdivision/re-plat of a portion of the Westgate Subdivision (S-070618-34139-2). This action represented a continuation of the Westgate Office Park/Group Development Plan approved by the MPC on March 2, 2004. The parcels were zoned for light industrial use at the time and no variances were requested.

Per the Staff Report, the purpose of the plat was to create 'lot 5' and to attach a restriction to the use of the subject parcel, 'lot 8,' which would designate the parcel as suitable for outdoor storage use only with the use of a "portable office." The annotation on lot 5 indicates that permanent structures are not to be constructed on the majority of the lot due to unsuitable fill.

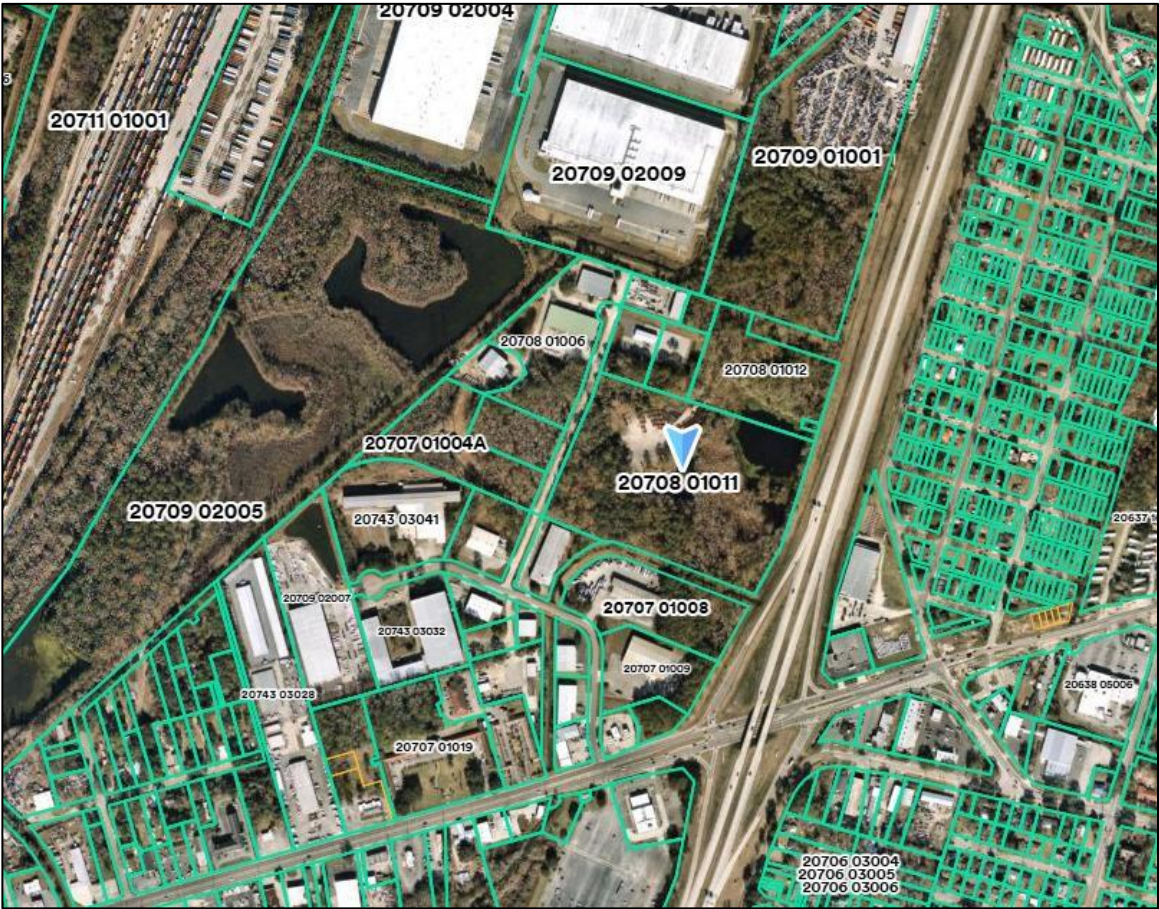


2007 Revised Westgate Subdivision Plat

- Public Notice:** Mailed notice of the Planning Commission meeting was sent to all property owners within 300-feet of the subject property, signs were posted on site and required newspaper advertisements were run. The notice included instructions on how to access the meeting via the internet.
- Existing Development Pattern:**
The land uses and zoning districts surrounding the subject property include:

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
North	Warehouses/Outdoor Storage	I-L

Location	Land Use	Existing Zoning
South	Warehouses/Vehicle Storage	I-L
East	Interstate 516	I-L
West	Vacant	I-L



Aerial image of the subject parcel and surrounding industrial uses

3. General Provisions 3.10.2:

The General Provisions for Special Uses identify the purpose of the process and are as follows:

- Special uses within each zoning district are uses that would not be appropriate generally or without restriction but which, if controlled as to number, area, location, or relation to other uses may be appropriate in a particular zoning district.
- A special use permit shall be required for all special uses (identified with an "S" designation) as set forth in the permitted use table in Sec. 5.4, Principal Use Table or as part of a use condition in Article 8.0, Use Standards.
- Specific use standards may be applicable to the approved special use.
- Any use or activity on the property not specifically permitted by Article 5.0, Base Zoning Districts, or the special use permit as modified, shall be deemed unlawful and subject to Article 12.0.

4. **Review Criteria for Special Use Permits Section 3.10.8:**

When reviewing a Special Use Permit request, the review authority shall consider the following criteria:

- a) Whether the Special Use is consistent with the intent, goals, strategies, policies, guiding principles and programs of the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans;

Staff Comment: The proposed Special Use Permit demonstrates technical consistency with the Industry-Light Future Land Use Map (FLUM) designation, which supports warehousing, logistics, and distribution facilities provided they do not produce noise, odor, or contaminants exceeding ambient levels. Further, the Coastal Regional Commission's Development of Regional Impact (DRI) Final Report concludes that the project is "generally consistent" with both the local Comprehensive Plan and the Regional Plan, noting that the facility supports critical infrastructure needs. Regarding the Savannah GPS Strategic Plan, the proposal aligns with Goal 4 (*Sustainable Environment*) by enhancing municipal waste logistical efficiency and maintaining critical regional capacity for glass recycling, a service the applicant states is at risk without this facility.

However, this finding of consistency is qualified by the requirements of the *Equity Implementation Framework*, which shifts the City's focus from equality of service to equitable outcomes for historically marginalized communities. The proposal warrants scrutiny under the Framework's "*Healthy and Accessible Neighborhoods*" watchpoint, which mandates monitoring pollution exposure in frontline communities. Public testimony in the first hearing from the adjacent Tremont Park neighborhood regarding cumulative industrial burdens indicates that siting a potential nuisance use here may conflict with the City's equity goals ***unless rigorous mitigation is guaranteed***. Additionally, the initial lack of engagement with residential neighbors highlights a critical gap which the Framework now seeks to rectify in the requirement for "*Collaboration with the Community*". Therefore, while the use is consistent with the *land use map*, full consistency with the *Strategic Plan* is contingent upon the strict enforcement of operational conditions, specifically the "clean floor" policy, indoor containment, and aggressive odor and airborne particulate matter avoidance, to ensure the facility does not exacerbate environmental health disparities in the neighboring community.

- b) Whether specific use standards for the special use, if any, as provided in Article 8.0, Use Standards, can be achieved;

Staff Comment: The proposed use is subject to the standards of *Section 8.5.13* (Solid Waste Transfer Station). Based on the 2026 application materials, the Georgia EPD notification, and testimony provided at the July 15, 2025, Planning Commission meeting, the specific use standards appear achievable, subject to the following clarifications and conditions:

1. Compliance with State Law (*Sec. 8.5.13.a*): The applicant has demonstrated compliance with Georgia Department of Natural Resources rules by submitting a "Notification of Permit by Rule Operations" (PBR-025-60TS), confirmed by the Georgia EPD on February 4, 2025. This State permit specifically authorizes the operation of a transfer station for municipal solid waste, C&D, industrial, and inert waste.

Staff Note on Recycling: While the 2026 application describes the use as a **"Recycling & Waste Handling Facility"**, the State Permit-by-Rule for Transfer Stations explicitly prohibits the "processing or sorting of recyclables." Consequently, to remain in compliance with State law as a recycling facility, the should also operate in accordance with Permit-by-Rule requirements for a **materials recovery facility where waste is sorted on-site**.

2. Screening and Location (*Sec. 8.5.13.b.iii*): The Ordinance requires screening as per *Section 9.5*. The applicant states that the facility will be located approximately 500 feet interior to the property line and is surrounded by extensive existing wetlands that will serve as a natural visual buffer. The Coastal Regional Commission's DRI Report confirms the site contains *green infrastructure* which necessitates environmentally sensitive design but does not preclude the use.
3. Prohibited Materials (*Sec. 8.5.13.b.iv*): The Ordinance strictly prohibits hazardous, asbestos, biomedical, and liquid wastes. The applicant has affirmed these prohibitions in their operational testimony and confirmed that prohibited items will be turned away, and that materials handling will be in accordance with all State permit requirements.
4. Operational Standards (Odor and Pest Control): To achieve the performance standards implied by the proximity to the Tremont Park neighborhood and the *Equity Implementation Framework's* goal for healthy neighborhoods, the applicant has committed to a "clean floor" policy where all putrescible (household) waste is removed from the tipping floor by 5:00 PM daily. Strict adherence to this operational standard is required to achieve the nuisance mitigation intended by *Article 8.0* of the Ordinance.

- c) Whether the special use is detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, welfare, function, and appearance of the adjacent uses or general vicinity by reason of any one or more of the following: the number, area, location, height, orientation, intensity (such as traffic, noise, odor, hours of operation), or relation to the neighborhood or other adjacent uses.

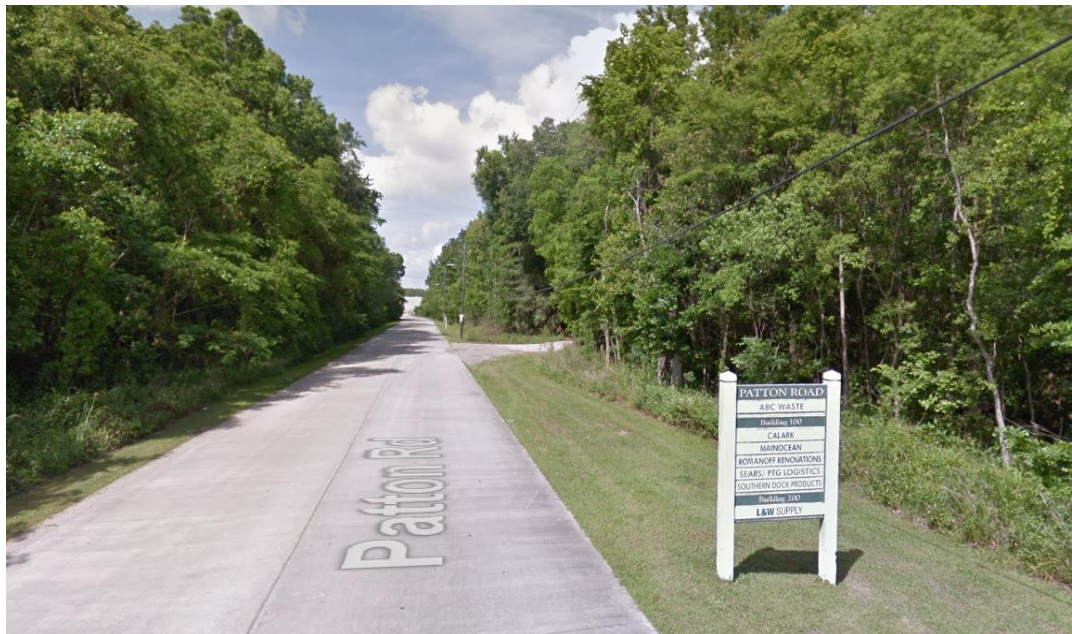
Staff Comment: The proposed use presents significant potential for detriment to the adjacent uses and general vicinity, specifically the residential neighborhood of Tremont Park and adjacent businesses, primarily through the intensity of operations involving waste handling.

Public testimony provided at the July 15, 2025, MPC meeting highlighted strong concerns regarding rotting garbage, vermin, and air quality impacts on the historic Tremont Park community and adjacent businesses. To ensure the use is not detrimental, the facility must strictly adhere to the clean floor policy mandated by the Georgia EPD Permit-by-Rule. The Petitioner's commitment to confining operations entirely within an enclosed concrete building with three walls further mitigates the potential for windblown debris and odor migration.

Regarding traffic and safety, concerns about the difficulty of entering Highway 17 and Ogeechee Road were raised by neighboring businesses. The applicant has proposed a self-imposed traffic mitigation measure requiring their trucks to make right-hand turns only onto Highway 17 during rush hours to avoid crossing traffic and causing congestion. Formalizing this operational protocol is essential to preventing functional detriment to the roadway network.

Finally, the visual and environmental impact is mitigated by the specific location of the building 500 feet interior to the property line where it is surrounded by existing wetlands that utilize the site's natural features to screen the intensity of the use from the right-of-way. Continued maintenance of this natural buffer is critical to protecting the appearance of the vicinity.

Under the Savannah GPS Equity Implementation Framework, the City must ensure that zoning decisions do not disproportionately burden marginalized communities with environmental hazards. Given the proximity to Tremont Park, a community already impacted by industrial uses, a finding of non-detriment is contingent upon the imposition of performance-based conditions such as the prohibition of hazardous waste, strict hours of operation, and mandatory daily floor cleaning that guarantee the facility operates as a clean logistical hub rather than a traditional waste dump.



Patton Road - Entrance to Proposed Solid Waste Handling Facility



Aerial Imagery of 6 Patton Road showing waste-handling containers

- d) Whether the subject property is adequate in shape and size to accommodate the Special Use;

Staff Comment: The proposed development demonstrates a general availability of necessary public infrastructure to support the intended use, though specific constraints regarding stormwater management and traffic circulation require rigorous technical compliance during the permitting phase. The City of Savannah Water Resources Department has confirmed that adequate water and sewer capacity exists to serve the facility's indicated quantities, resolving the fundamental utility requirements for the site. However, the location of the property within a Special Flood Hazard Area and its proximity to sensitive wetlands necessitates heightened scrutiny regarding stormwater controls. The City has indicated that the area is particularly sensitive to drainage issues, meaning the applicant must strictly adhere to a zero-increase standard for stormwater runoff for any development adding significant impervious surface. To mitigate potential contamination risks identified by the Ogeechee Riverkeeper and the Coastal Regional Commission, the facility must employ advanced containment measures to ensure that no waste byproducts or leachate enter the surrounding flood-prone wetlands during high water events.

Regarding transportation infrastructure, the logistical nature of a transfer station places a premium on roadway capacity and safe ingress and egress. While the applicant projects a low volume of three to four trucks per hour, neighboring business owners have raised valid concerns regarding the difficulty of navigating the intersection of Westgate Boulevard and Ogeechee Road/Highway 17.

To address these capacity limitations and prevent dangerous crossing movements, the has proposed a mandatory right-turn-only policy for their fleet during peak rush hours. This operational restriction should be formalized to ensure the facility does not degrade the level of service on the adjacent arterial roadway.

Finally, Public Safety provisions regarding fire protection are critical given the combustible nature of the waste stream. Although the applicant is prohibited from accepting hazardous materials, the potential for accidental inclusion of items like lithium batteries requires that the site layout fully comply with the International Fire Code apparatus access standards cited by the Savannah Fire Department to ensure rapid emergency response capabilities are maintained.

- e) Whether adequate public facilities are available to serve the proposed use, including, but not limited to water; sanitary sewer; stormwater drainage facilities; public safety and emergency facilities; roadway capacity; vehicular ingress and egress; or, that the applicant will provide adequately for such services and for placement in an appropriate location.

Staff Comment: Water and sewer capacity are available; however, adequacy hinges on the detailed management of liquids generated on site, especially daily floor wash-down water and any incidental leachate.

Because the site is within Flood Zone AE and adjacent to wetlands, the project must also meet the zero-increase stormwater standard and ensure no contaminated runoff, wash-down water, or other byproducts are discharged to the storm system or wetlands above permitted limits.

Under the State Permit-by-Rule, contaminated washwater must be sent to an approved treatment system. The petitioner must therefore clarify the holding tank's discharge destination, any pretreatment, and compliance with state and local requirements.

A right-turn-only policy at Highway 17 should be formalized to protect roadway function, and fire access and flows must fully meet applicable fire code standards.

- f) Whether the Special Use will result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any feature determined by the review authority to be of natural, cultural, scenic, or historic importance.

Staff Comment: The subject property contains significant wetland areas and lies within a special flood hazard area designated as Flood Zone AE. However, the Petitioner has provided testimony and documentation indicating that the proposed construction footprint is limited to a previously disturbed borrow pit area utilized for inert landfill activities rather than encroaching upon virgin wetlands. The design intends to utilize the extensive surrounding wetlands as a natural vegetative buffer to screen the industrial operations from the public right-of-way and adjacent properties. While the Ogeechee Riverkeeper and Coastal Regional Commission have identified potential risks regarding stormwater and floodplain management, the applicant has committed to strict adherence to federal and local engineering standards to ensure no net increase in runoff or contamination of these sensitive natural features.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

The Special Use provisions of the Savannah Zoning Ordinance are designed to allow the reviewing authorities to consider the establishment of uses in zoning districts, where the use may be appropriate but should not be allowed by right. The review criteria outlined in *Section 3.10.8* are the standards for considering a special use.

Following is additional information from the GA EPD regarding the siting of Solid Waste Handling Facilities. These additional considerations should inform the conditioning of any approval of the requested use:

[Waste Transfer Stations: A Manual for Decision-Making](#) (via EPA)

Page 11: Environmental Justice Considerations

During the site selection process, steps should be taken to ensure that siting decisions are not imposing a disproportionate burden upon low-income or minority communities.

Overburdening a community with negative impact facilities can create health, environmental, and quality of living concerns. It can also have a negative economic impact by lowering property values and hindering community revitalization plans. These are just a few of the reasons environmental justice concerns need to be addressed when selecting a site for a waste transfer station.

Page 15: Technical Siting Criteria

In general, it is best to avoid siting in these areas. Exclusionary criteria might include areas such as:

- Wetlands and floodplains.
- Endangered and protected flora and fauna habitats.
- Protected sites of historical, archeological, or cultural significance.
- Prime agricultural land.
- Parks and preserves.

Some examples of federal laws defining these areas include the Endangered Species Act; the Migratory Bird Conservation Act; the Coastal Zone Management Act; the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act; the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act; and the National Historic Preservation Act.

Pages 41-43: Environmental Issues

Storm Water Quality

Rainfall and wash-down water flows from roofs, roads, parking lots, and landscaped areas at a transfer station, eventually reaching natural or constructed stormwater drainage systems. Runoff might also percolate into the ground-water system. Keeping surface water free of runoff contamination from waste, mud, and fuel and oil that drips from vehicles is important to maintaining the quality of both the surface and ground water systems. The quality and amount of runoff often is regulated by state, tribal, or local water management authorities. Transfer station development typically results in the addition of new impervious surfaces (i.e., paved surfaces) that increase the total quantity of runoff and can contribute to flooding potential. When runoff contacts waste, it is considered potentially contaminated and is known as "leachate." Transfer station design and operation should ensure that contaminated water is collected separately, then properly managed on site or discharged to the sewer. Most transfer stations send some amount of wastewater to sewer systems. In addition to leachate, wastewater from daily cleaning of the waste handling areas and the facility Petitioner's restrooms and support areas typically are discharged to the sewer.

Local wastewater treatment plants establish guidelines for pretreatment and analysis with which transfer stations must comply when discharging wastewater into the sewer.

Other design and operation measures to consider in managing surface water quality include:

- Complying with all surface water management regulations applicable in the jurisdiction where the station is located. In jurisdictions with well-developed regulations, design and operation measures usually include development of surface water detention facilities (ponds, tanks, or large holding pipes) that limit the runoff rate to the predeveloped rate. In addition, water quality requirements might involve desilting facilities and applying various forms of biofiltration to remove contaminants. Some jurisdictions might require pH adjustment and other forms of pretreatment.
- Locating stations outside local flood zones.
- Minimizing impervious areas and maximizing landscape and vegetative cover areas to reduce total runoff.
- Limiting outside parking of loaded containers or alternatively using rain-tight, leak tight containers. If loaded containers or transfer vehicles are parked or stored outside, providing catch basins connected the sanitary sewer system might be necessary.
- Maintaining all surface water management facilities in good operating condition. This includes periodic cleaning and removal of silt and debris from drainage structures and ponds, as well as removing collected oil from oil-water separators.
- Responding promptly to exterior spills to prevent waste materials from entering the surface water system.
- Cleaning up liquid spills such as oils, paints, and pesticides with absorbent material rather than hosing them into drains. Although transfer stations generally do not accept these liquids, they might find their way into the waste stream in small quantities.
- Using secondary containment around temporary storage areas for HHW, batteries, and suspect materials.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Petitioner's request as presented or with conditions.
2. Deny the Petitioner's request.

RECOMMENDATION:

MPC Staff recommends **denial** of the request to establish a solid waste transfer facility at 6 Patton Road.

However, if the Planning Commission is inclined to support the request, the following Conditions should accompany any such approval:

- 1. The permitted operations must obtain State approval and operate in a manner consistent with the GA Permit-by-Rule requirements for all operations (recycling and/or solid waste handling).*
- 2. Prior to consideration by City Council, a General Development Plan shall be provided demonstrating an engineered system for the capture, conveyance, and treatment of all wash-down water and any other contaminated liquids generated within the transfer building, consistent with GA EPD Permit-by-Rule Condition 5 and City of Savannah stormwater and wastewater requirements. Nature-based or green-infrastructure practices (such as vegetated treatment cells, constructed wetlands, or other bio-/phytoremediation features) may be incorporated where a qualified professional demonstrates they are feasible and capable of meeting all applicable discharge standards, but are not required where direct discharge to a publicly owned treatment works is provided in compliance with permit conditions.*
- 3. Prior to consideration by City Council, a General Operations Plan shall be submitted that: (a) clearly enumerates all materials to be collected and held; (b) describes the design and operation of all containment structures, including the floor drainage and wash-down system and any leachate holding tank; and (c) specifies routine housekeeping practices and standard procedures in the event of spills, leaks, equipment failure, or other emergencies.*

Performance-based conditions should be considered to mitigate concerns related to noise, vibration, particulate matter or dust, and water quality. These may include:

- Limitations on operating hours and noise events
- Stipulation of the manner of containment for various materials
- Mandating muffling and vibration reduction measures
- Mandated covering of loads and vehicle washing procedures
- Ongoing groundwater monitoring