

Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development (GRAD) Site Program Criteria

The **Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development (GRAD)** Site Program has been established by the Georgia Allies to enhance economic development opportunities for the State of Georgia. Many industrial site selection projects are conducted on a rapid schedule. Prospective new industries often decline to consider sites that are not known to be well prepared for development. In response to this need, the Georgia Allies have launched the GRAD Sites pilot program to develop a pool of available industrial sites in the state.

These sites:

- have been submitted by a local community or economic development applicant and selected by the Allies for review;
- have had their applications reviewed by a professional third party, and
- based on that review, have been validated as meeting standards showing that they are at an advanced state of readiness for development and use by prospects.

The Georgia Allies have retained Business Facility Planning Consultants to prepare and implement a program leading to a pool of sites validated to be at a high level of readiness for industrial development.

Below are the elements of the program:

1. **Site Acreage.** To submit a site for consideration, a minimum of 50 acres is required.

2. **Secured Property.** The ability to show that the site is secured by an appropriate organization (community, economic development group, etc.) by either ownership or option; and that if control is by some means other than fee simple ownership, that the purchase price and other key terms are legally established, or at a minimum, that the terms for arriving at a price (i.e., a professional third-party appraisal) have been described.

3. **Zoning.** If the community has zoning, then an industrial zoning designation is an absolute requirement for GRAD application. If the community has no such regulations, then alternative means should be sought to assure that there will be no legal problems developing the site for industrial purposes...possibly a set of protective covenants, or perhaps a binding letter from the appropriate local official assuring that the land may be used for industrial purposes.

4. **Railroad Accessibility.** GRAD applications should include a letter from the railroad company serving the property, setting forth all technical, legal, and financial aspects of having a spur track constructed to the candidate site.

5. Road Accessibility. The GRAD Site should describe all aspects of developing a road of appropriate industrial quality into the site. A letter from either a public or qualified private engineer is required, which should reflect all engineering, permitting, and construction issues. Evidence of collaboration with the Georgia Department of Transportation or other appropriate regulatory agency regarding access to a public highway and any requirements (curb cuts, acceleration/deceleration lanes, signalization, etc.) must be provided.

6. Utilities. Each GRAD site profile includes a detailed statement of existing and planned utilities and services to the site including water, wastewater, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications, and includes both local lines and system-wide capacity. The feasibility, cost, and schedule for construction or expansion of utilities is available.

7. Wetlands and Stream Delineation. This delineation is required by federal law and is addressed in each GRAD site profile.

8. Topographic Survey. This survey is a requirement of the GRAD site program.

9. Geotechnical Investigations. Any geotechnical investigations that have been conducted on the property are noted in the site profile.

10. Environmental Phase 1 Assessment. This is a critical assessment, and is a definitive requirement of the site program. The site profile also specifies other conditions affecting the site's environmental suitability for industry, including the local attainment status with regard to air quality and any changes that have occurred in the past or are being considered for the future. Proximity to special protected areas such as national parks and forests and any other unique local characteristics is also included in the profile.

11. Cultural Resources and Endangered Species Investigation. These assessments are also an absolute requirement for each GRAD site, and are noted in each site profile.

Source: Georgia Allies.