



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
SAVANNAH DISTRICT  
100 WEST OGLETHORPE AVENUE  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31401-3604

May 19, 2021

Regulatory Division  
SAS-2020-00924

**JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**Savannah District/State of Georgia**

The Savannah District has received an application for a Department of the Army Permit, pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1344), as follows:

Application Number: SAS-2020-00924

Applicant: Mr. Christopher Novack  
Georgia Ports Authority (GPA)  
Post Office Box 2406  
Savannah, Georgia 31402

Agent: Mr. Brandon Wall  
Sligh Environmental Consultants, Inc.  
31 Park of Commerce Way, Suite 200B  
Savannah, Georgia 31405

Project Purpose as Proposed by Applicant: The applicant's stated project purpose is "to provide additional container storage capacity at Garden City Terminal in order to reduce congestion and improve operations at the terminal and to accommodate growth in container volumes."

Location of Proposed Work: The project site is located adjacent to GPA's Garden City Terminal (GCT), east of Jimmy DeLoach Parkway, north of Bourne Avenue (Highway 307), and approximately 0.5 mile west of State Route (SR) 25, in Chatham County, Georgia (Latitude 32.1298, Longitude -81.1612). The aquatic resources located on-site drain to the Savannah River, a Traditional Navigable Waterway (TNW).

Description of Work Subject to the Jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: The applicant is proposing to fill 4.766 acres of wetland and 1,383 feet of ditch and excavate 0.573 acre of wetland associated with the expansion of the GCT container yard. According to the applicant, the proposed project will provide an estimated 25,000 TEU increase in the container storage capacity (based on typical stacking heights) to satisfy the need for long dwell container storage on-terminal and to reduce congestion at the berths due to longer dwell times and higher-than-expected volume growth.

Specifically, the applicant states “*the proposed expansion will provide a unique storage facility on-site primarily for long dwell imports and exports. The site is not positioned to serve the immediate loading and unloading operations of vessels at the berths given its distance from the berths. Instead, it will provide relief for the container yards behind the berths by allowing primarily loaded containers that may sit for longer periods of time to be stored elsewhere. The proposed project will also provide relief for distribution centers and will benefit the overall supply chain by providing a staging area for longer-dwell containers. This will free up space at local distribution warehousing facilities. Once export containers are scheduled for shipment, they will be moved to the container yard behind the appropriate berth and await loading onto the ship. For imports, logistics companies can schedule the container to be moved from the dock to the new storage facility where they can be picked up by truck at a later time. This will provide operational flexibility for GPA customers and will provide them with a new service that is currently non-existent on-site.*

*An internal road will connect the existing terminal with this expansion area. The road will cross the former Norfolk Southern Foundation Lead from the International Multimodal Connector facility (aka, Megarail). The new road will access the site from the south and allow internal jockey trucks to move containers back and forth from the docks and elsewhere on-terminal without having to access a public road system. This aspect of the project is vital for two reasons. First, jockey trucks are not licensed or equipped to travel on public roadways. Secondly, so many slow-moving additional trucks on public roads lead to safety concerns for not only workers but also for the general public. On the site, a contiguous container storage yard will be constructed along with equipment to load and unload containers from jockey trucks and tractor-trailer trucks. To provide direct tractor-trailer access, a new truck gate will be constructed off of Highway 307 on the south side of the site. The gate will allow cargo owners to access their containers directly without traveling through the rest of the terminal, and it will reduce congestion at the main GCT Gates 3, 4, and 8 and reduce truck queues outside of these gates. As mentioned, this component of the project provides operational flexibility by allowing trucks to bring containers to the terminal well in advance of them being loaded onto a ship. It also allows containers to be unloaded from the ship and transferred to the facility where they can be picked up at a later date by the owner. The proposed gate will be designed in accordance with other on-terminal gates with the necessary security measures and checkpoints.”*

To offset the loss in aquatic function associated with the above impacts, the applicant has proposed the purchase of 31.68 wetland credits from a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved mitigation bank that services the Lower Savannah watershed (HUC 03060109).

## **BACKGROUND**

Existing Conditions: The project site is an approximately 96.3 acre portion of property previously owned by PCS Nitrogen, Inc. which was purchased by the applicant in December 2019. From the 1950's until the early 2000's, the site contained a rail-served

industrial facility that produced nitrogen fertilizers and feed ingredients. The site was decommissioned in the early 2000's, and most of the manufacturing facilities were removed. The remainder of the office buildings, sheds, and other structures were demolished in 2009. Today, the site contains the remnants of the concrete building pads, roads, and rail that used to exist.

As proposed, the project would expand the GCT. GCT is GPA's dedicated container terminal with the vast majority of cargo coming in and out of the terminal in containers. Both loaded and empty containers arrive and depart from the terminal each day by different modes of transportation including ship, truck, rail, community, and internal strip moves. The terminal has multiple truck gates which service thousands of trucks each day as well as a major multi-modal rail facility just to the east of the project site which services both CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern (NS). The terminal totals approximately 1,345 acres and extends along the Savannah River from Brampton Road north to Grange Road.

On the terminal, the space nearest the berths is the most "valuable." This is where the large container storage yards are located, and they are reserved for containers loaded full of goods and commodities ready for export or import. Loaded containers are typically kept near the wharfs to make loading and unloading ships as fast and efficient as possible. Unloaded containers are also shipped in much the same way as loaded containers: on trains, trucks, and ships but are typically kept farther away from the berths. Likewise, other support services such as offices, warehouses, equipment areas, etc. are sited farther away from the valuable wharf space reserved for loaded containers.

Project History: An aquatic resources delineation review and an approved Jurisdictional Determination are currently being processed by the Corps. According to the agent, the project area contains 45 acres of developed upland, 21.5 acres of mixed hardwood upland, 12.82 acres of wetland, 3.6 acres of NPDES ponds, numerous ditches and 9.84 acres of potentially non-jurisdictional wetland.

This Joint Public Notice announces a request for authorizations from both the Corps and the State of Georgia. The applicant's proposed work may also require local governmental approval.

## **STATE OF GEORGIA**

Water Quality Certification: The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division will review the proposed project for water quality certification, in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Prior to issuance of a Department of the Army permit for a project location in, on, or adjacent to the waters of the State of Georgia, review for Water Quality Certification is required. A reasonable period of time, which shall not exceed one year, is established under the Clean Water Act for the State to act on a request for Water Quality

Certification, after which, issuance of such a Department of the Army permit may proceed. The applicant has requested a pre-certification meeting with Georgia EPD under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The applicant must still request a meeting with EPD at least 30 days prior to any request they make for 401 Water Quality Certification.

State-owned Property and Resources: The applicant may also require assent from the State of Georgia, which may be in the form of a license, easement, lease, permit or other appropriate instrument.

Georgia Coastal Management Program: Prior to the Savannah District Corps of Engineers making a final permit decision on this application, the project must be certified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Coastal Resources Division, to be consistent with applicable provisions of the State of Georgia Coastal Management Program (15 CFR 930). Anyone wishing to comment on Coastal Management Program certification of this project should submit comments in writing within 30 days of the date of this notice to the Federal Consistency Coordinator, Coastal Management Program, Coastal Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, One Conservation Way, Brunswick, Georgia 31523-8600 (Telephone 912-264-7218).

## **U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**

The Savannah District must consider the purpose and the impacts of the applicant's proposed work, prior to a decision on issuance of a Department of the Army permit.

Cultural Resources: Review of the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the Georgia Natural, Archeological and Historic Resources GIS database, indicates that no registered properties or properties listed as eligible for inclusion are located on the project site. However, the applicant has identified that the former NS Foundation Lead (also known as Savannah & Atlanta Railway) is located along the project's eastern boundary and is considered eligible for listing in the NRHP. As proposed, the project would construct a road crossing across this resource. The applicant as indicated that a Phase I cultural and archeological resources assessment and assessment of effects are being prepared and a draft report will be submitted to the Corps and Georgia Department of Natural Resources-Historic Preservation Division for review and comment.

Endangered Species: A preliminary review the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) list of Endangered and Threatened Species (IPaC) indicates the following listed species may occur in the project area: Eastern black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis spp.*); wood stork (*Mycteria Americana*); Eastern Indigo snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*), gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*); frosted flatwoods salamander (*Ambystoma cingulatum*) and pondberry (*Lindera melissafolia*).

Pursuant to Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq.), we request information from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service; or, any other interested party, on whether any species listed or proposed for listing may be present in the area. In addition, we are requesting information from the FWS whether the project is within 2,500 feet of an active wood stork nesting colony.

Public Interest Review: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors, which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

Consideration of Public Comments: The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Native American Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Application of Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines: The proposed activity involves the discharge of dredged or fill material into the waters of the United States. The Savannah District's evaluation of the impact of the activity on the public interest will include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, under the authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act.

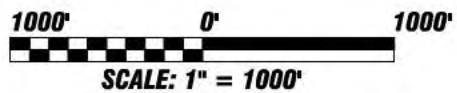
Public Hearing: Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application for a Department of the Army permit. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for requesting a public hearing. The decision whether to hold a public hearing is at the discretion of the District Engineer, or his designated appointee, based on the need for additional substantial information necessary in evaluating the proposed project.

Comment Period: Anyone wishing to comment on this application for a Department of the Army permit should submit comments by email to sarah.e.wise@usace.army.mil. Alternatively, you may submit comments in writing to the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Attention: Sarah E. Wise, 100 West Oglethorpe Avenue, Savannah, Georgia 30401, no later than 30 days from the date of this notice. Please refer to the applicant's name and the application number in your comments.

If you have any further questions concerning this matter, please contact Ms. Sarah E. Wise, Team Lead, Coastal Branch at 912-652-5550.

Enclosures:

1. Wetlands Impact, Storage Development, Garden City Terminal, Sheets 1-10, dated April 20, 2021.



**PLAN VIEW**

**PROPOSED ACTIVITY: ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND STORAGE LOT**

**DATUM: NAVD 88**

**NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION**

**VICINITY MAP**

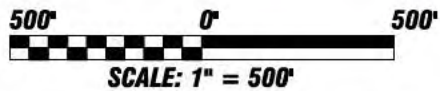
**WEST EXPANSION  
GARDEN CITY TERMINAL  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31407**

**STORAGE DEVELOPMENT  
GARDEN CITY TERMINAL**

**COUNTY OF: CHATHAM STATE: GEORGIA  
APPLICATION BY: GEORGIA PORTS AUTHORITY**

**SHEET 1 of 10**

**DATE: APRIL 28, 2021**



**PLAN VIEW**

**PROPOSED ACTIVITY: ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND STORAGE LOT**

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**EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS**

**WEST EXPANSION  
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**STORAGE DEVELOPMENT  
GARDEN CITY TERMINAL**

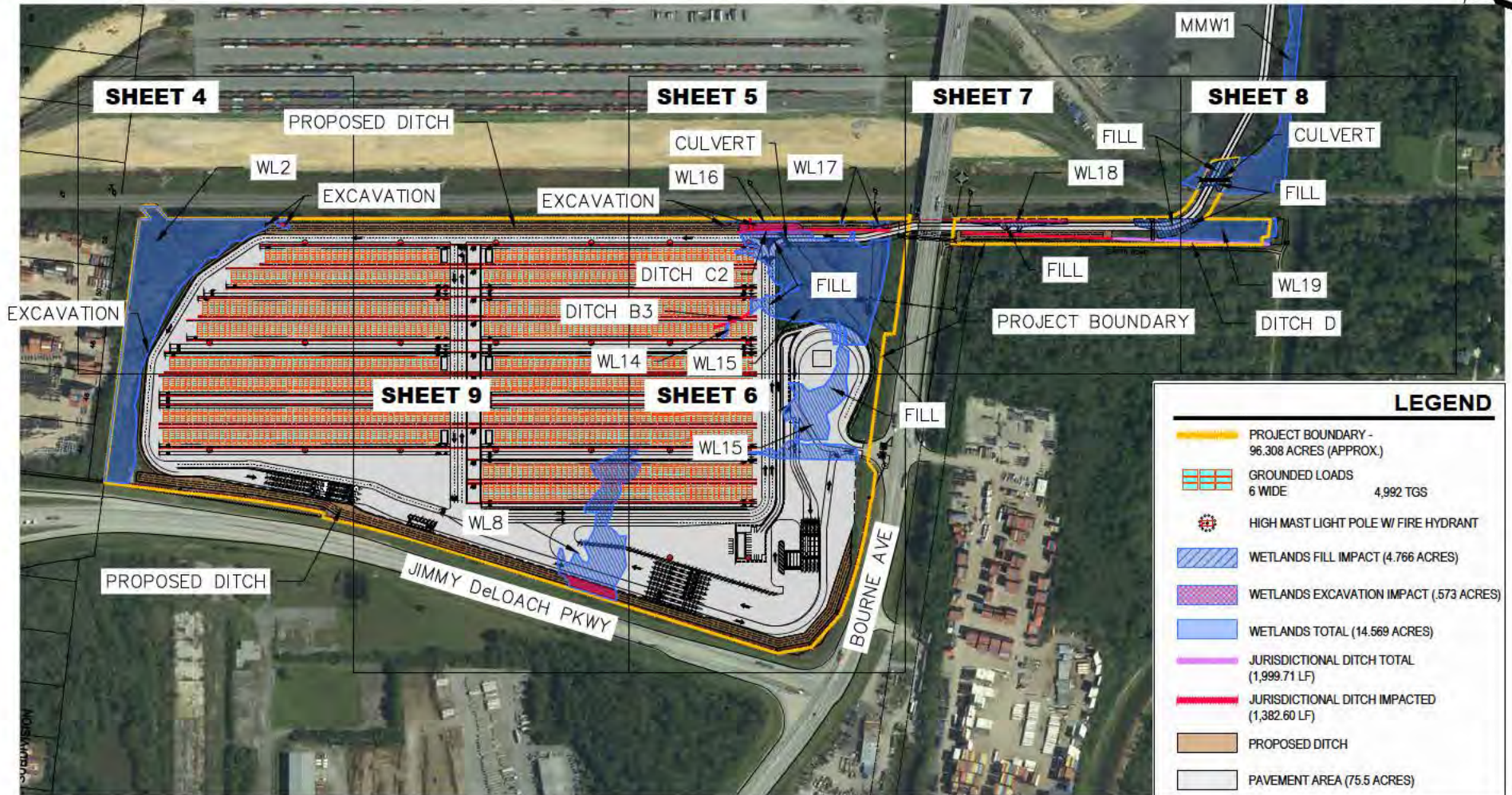
COUNTY OF: CHATHAM STATE: GEORGIA

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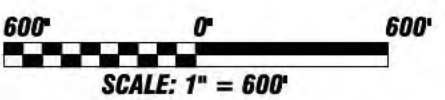
SHEET 2 of 10

DATE: APRIL 28, 2021





LEGEND	
	PROJECT BOUNDARY - 96.308 ACRES (APPROX.)
	GROUNDING LOADS 6 WIDE 4,992 TGS
	HIGH MAST LIGHT POLE W/ FIRE HYDRANT
	WETLANDS FILL IMPACT (4,766 ACRES)
	WETLANDS EXCAVATION IMPACT (.573 ACRES)
	WETLANDS TOTAL (14,569 ACRES)
	JURISDICTIONAL DITCH TOTAL (1,999.71 LF)
	JURISDICTIONAL DITCH IMPACTED (1,382.60 LF)
	PROPOSED DITCH
	PAVEMENT AREA (75.5 ACRES)

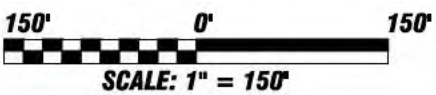
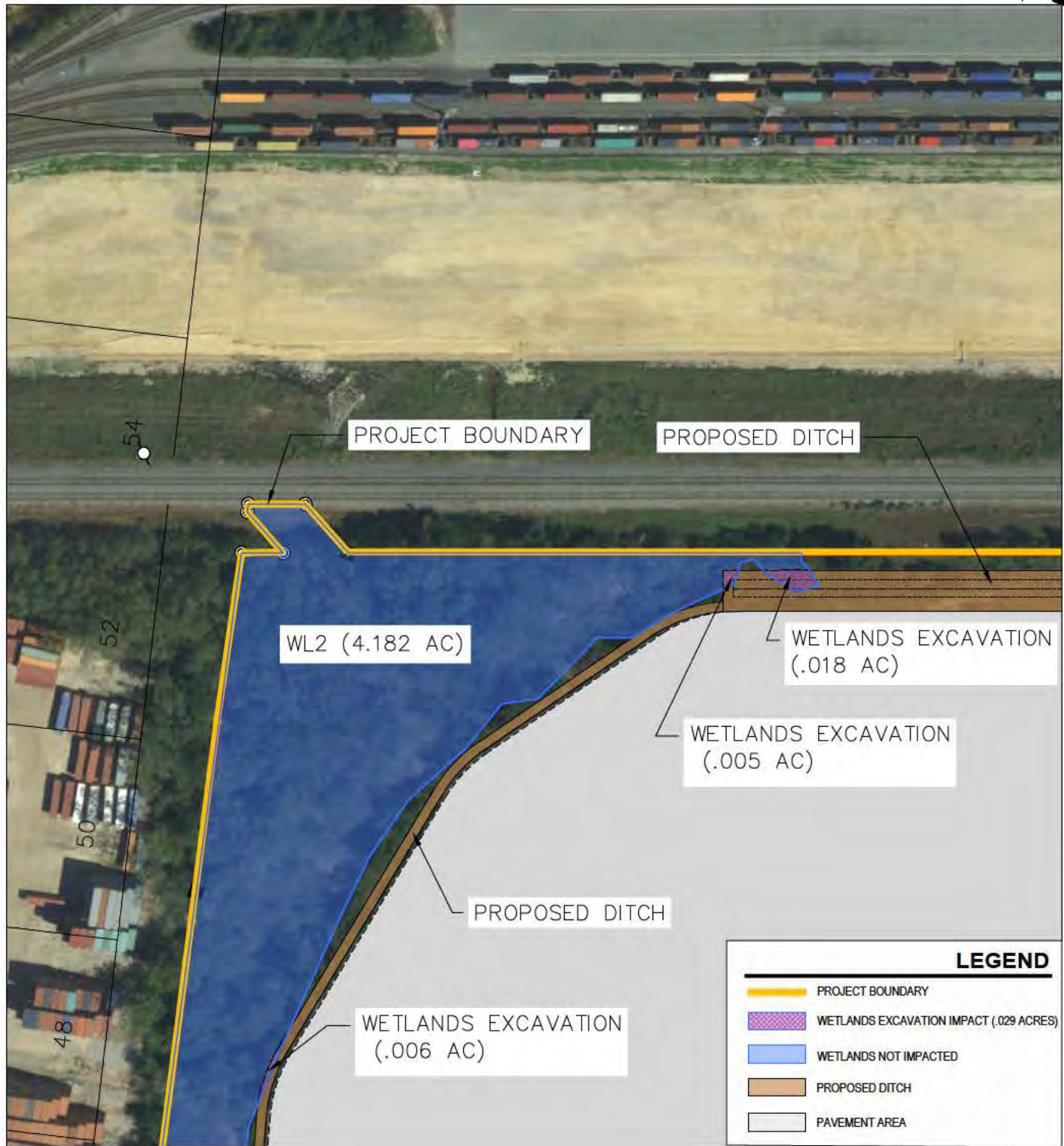


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**PROPOSED SITE CONDITIONS**  
  
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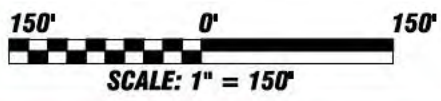
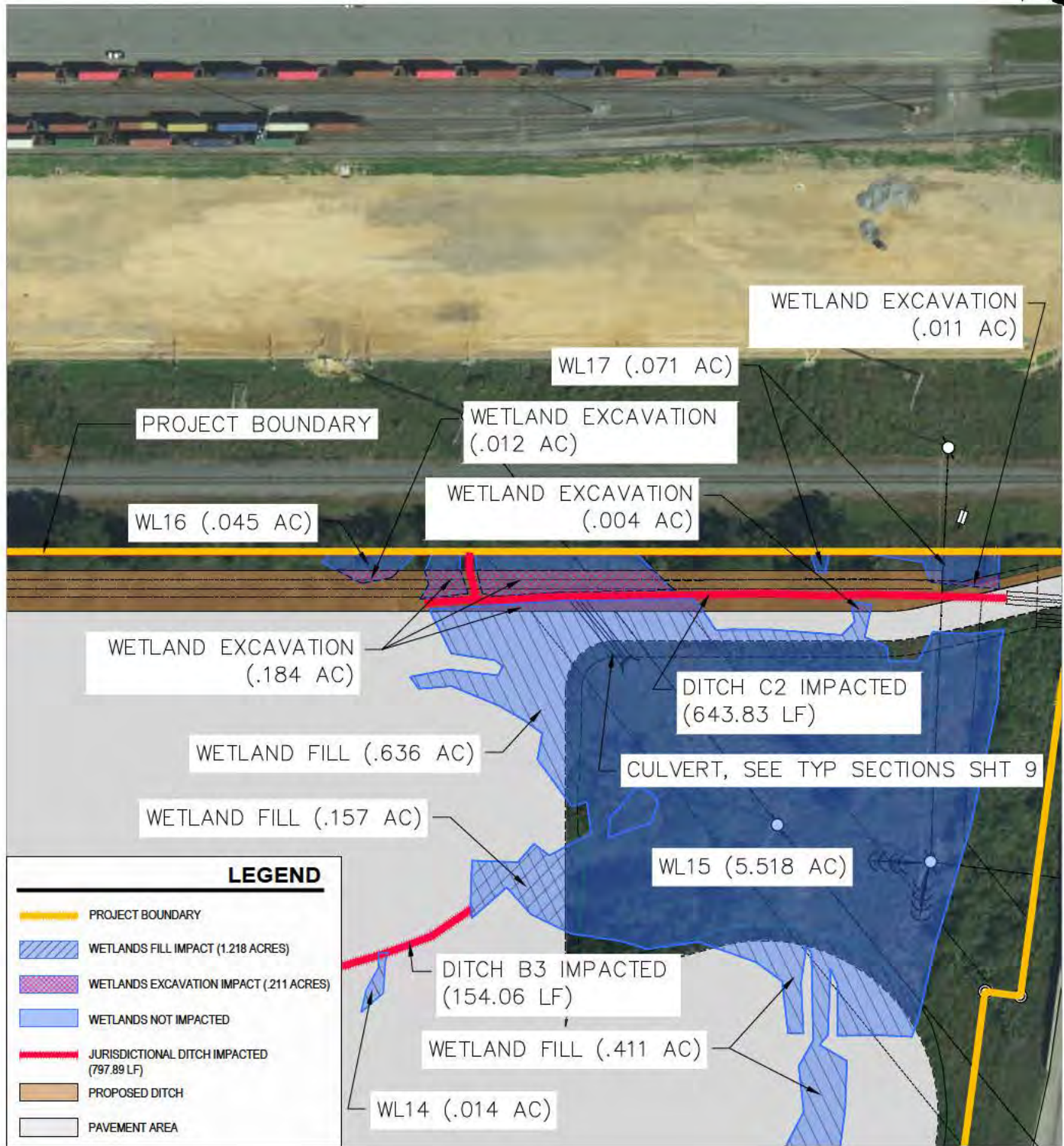
**WETLANDS IMPACT**

**WEST EXPANSION**  
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**STORAGE DEVELOPMENT**  
**GARDEN CITY TERMINAL**

COUNTY OF: CHATHAM STATE: GEORGIA  
 APPLICATION BY: GEORGIA PORTS AUTHORITY

SHEET 4 of 10 DATE: APRIL 28, 2021

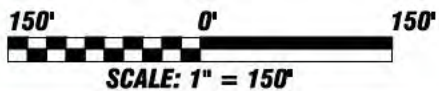
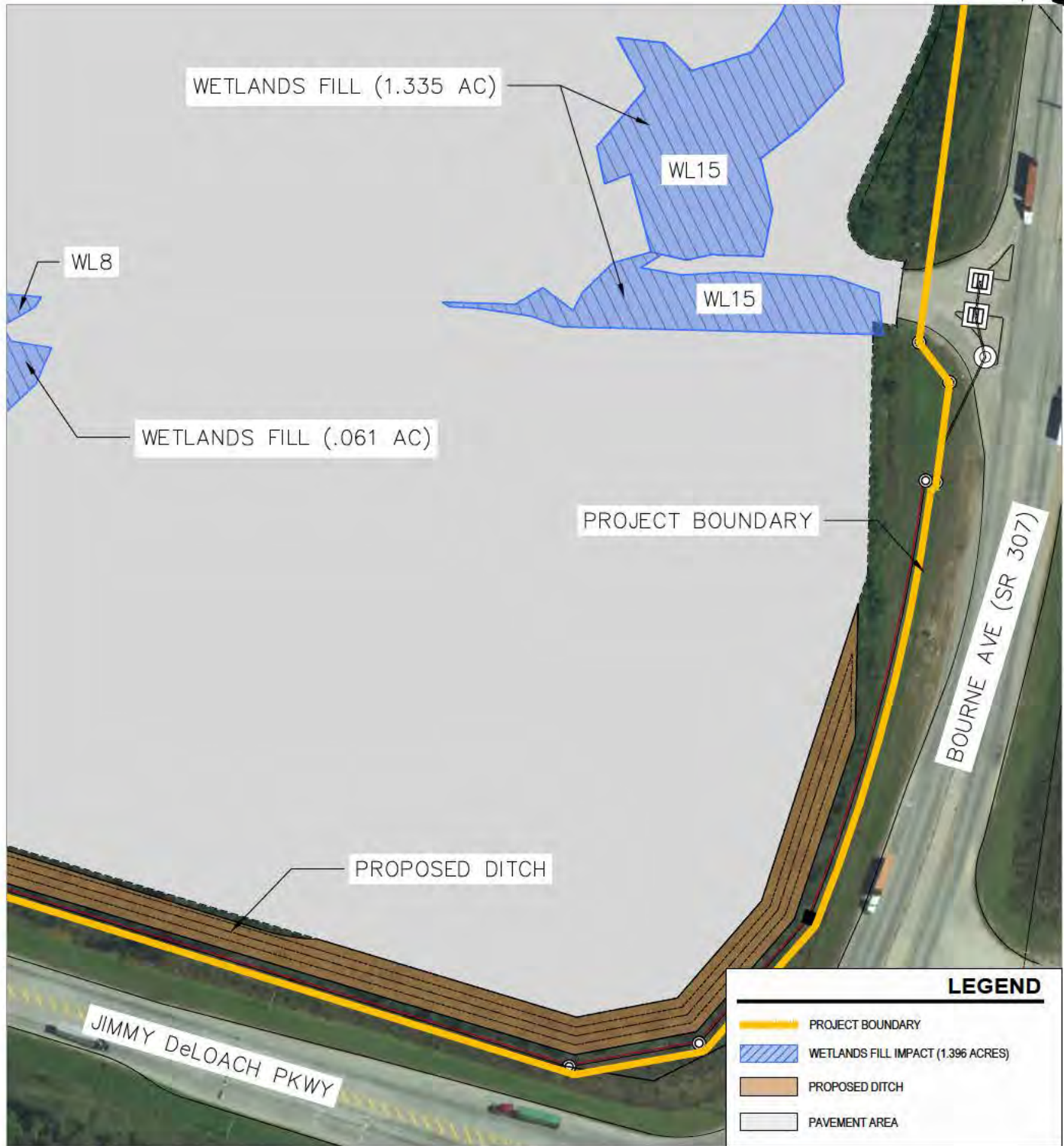


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**WETLANDS IMPACT**  
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 COUNTY OF: CHATHAM STATE: GEORGIA  
 APPLICATION BY: GEORGIA PORTS AUTHORITY  
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**PLAN VIEW**

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**WETLANDS IMPACT**

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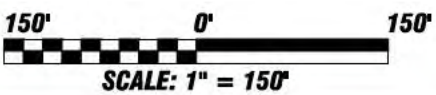
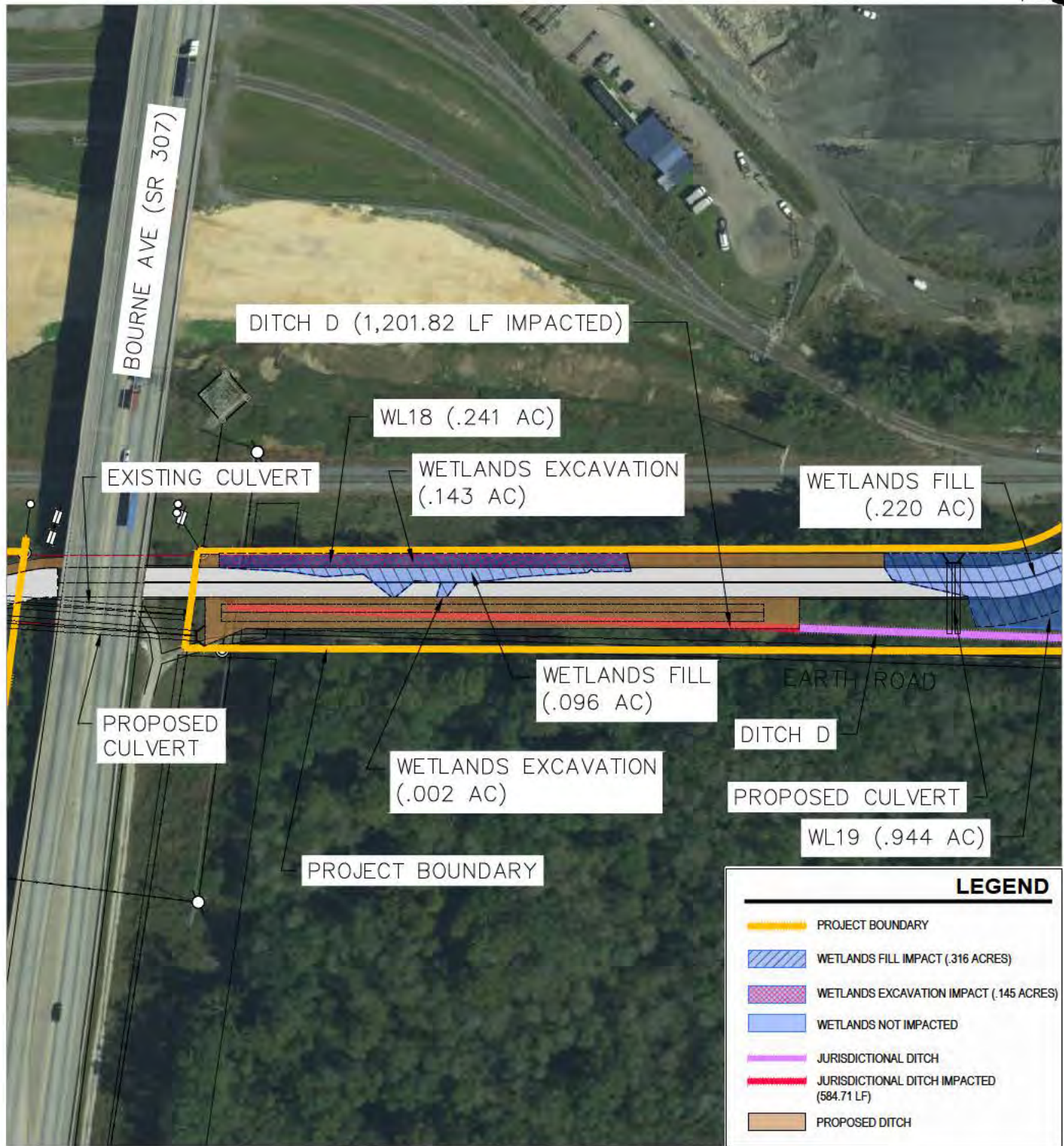
COUNTY OF: CHATHAM

STATE: GEORGIA

APPLICATION BY: GEORGIA PORTS AUTHORITY

SHEET 6 of 10

DATE: APRIL 28, 2021



**PLAN VIEW**

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**WETLANDS IMPACT**  
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**STORAGE DEVELOPMENT**  
**GARDEN CITY TERMINAL**  
 COUNTY OF: CHATHAM STATE: GEORGIA  
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 SHEET 7 of 10 DATE: APRIL 28, 2021



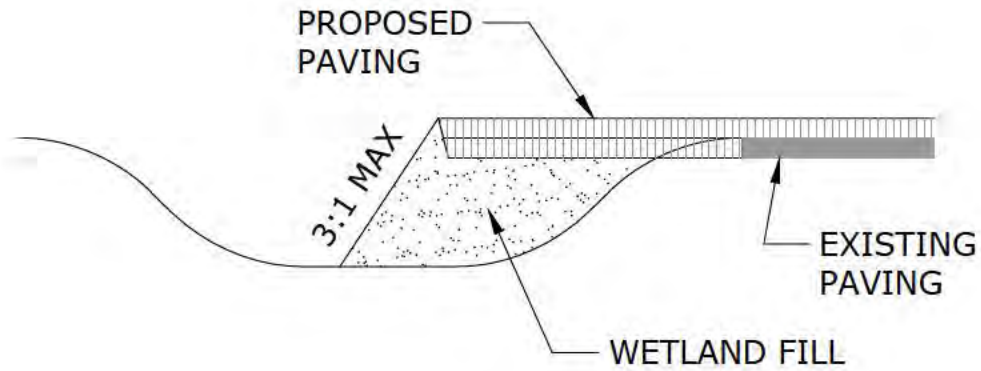
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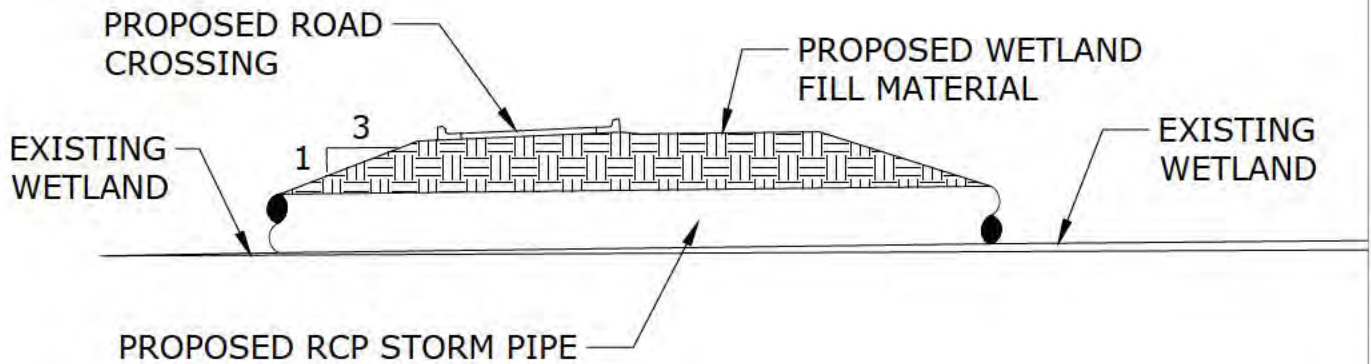
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TYPICAL WETLANDS FILL



TYPICAL CULVERT DETAIL

NOT TO SCALE

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**TYPICAL SECTIONS**

**WEST EXPANSION  
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**STORAGE DEVELOPMENT  
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COUNTY OF: CHATHAM

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SHEET 10 of 10

DATE: APRIL 28, 2021