

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) has completed its review of the following Development of Regional Impact (DRI). This report contains the NEGRC’s assessment of how the proposed project relates to the policies, programs, and projects articulated in the Regional Plan and Regional Resource Plan. Also included is an assessment of likely interjurisdictional impacts resulting from the proposed development, as well as all comments received from identified affected parties and others during the fifteen-day comment period.

The materials presented in this report are purely advisory and under no circumstances should be considered as binding or infringing upon the host jurisdiction’s right to determine for itself the appropriateness of development within its boundaries.

Transmittal of this DRI report officially completes the DRI process. The submitting local government may proceed with whatever final official actions it deems appropriate regarding the proposed project, but it is encouraged to take the materials presented in the DRI report into consideration when rendering its decision.

Project I.D.:	DRI #4001
Name of Project:	Hilltop Acres
Name of Host Jurisdiction:	City of Greensboro

Background

DRI review was initiated following the developer’s request to annex the project site into the City of Greensboro. Potentially affected parties were asked to submit comments on the proposal during the 15-day period of 9/15/23–9/30/23.

The developer has also purchased parcel 070A00420, which contains an existing home on site, and is requesting this parcel to be annexed into the city as well. Parcel 070A00420 is not included in this DRI review, as the developer purchased this parcel as a courtesy to the City to avoid creating a county island, and it would not be included in the proposed development.

Proposed Development

Capstone Land Development is proposing construction of 182 residential units on a 121-acre site in unincorporated Greene County, which the developer is requesting to be annexed into the City of Greensboro. The residential units would include 140 single family detached units ranging in size from 2,000-2,400 square feet and 42 townhome units ranging from 1,500-1,900 square feet. The site plan proposes three site entrances along Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The northernmost and southernmost entrances provide access to all single-family detached units as well as 22 townhomes at the north portion of the site. A central entrance provides separate access to 20 townhome units. The site plan proposes constructing one detention/retention pond to handle site stormwater and a walking path loop that travels along an existing stream on site. The site plan also

seems to propose a parking area to service the walking trail and a community greenspace in the southwestern portion of the site.

Currently, the site is primarily forested with clear-cut areas scattered throughout. An existing utility easement runs along the northern portion of the site. An existing stream flows northwards across the entire site. The site plan proposes building single family detached homes, the parking area, and roadways in the stream area on the southern portion of the site. The site plan also proposes a stream crossing on the northern portion of the site.

This proposed development would occupy property totaling 121 acres on a parcel connected to Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. in unincorporated Greene County. The parcel number is 0880000010. The project would be completed in one phase with an estimated completion date in the spring of 2025.

Note: The area directly west of this site is included in DRI 4048 (review completed on 9/14/23), which details a 2,662,000 square foot industrial development on a 367-acre site.

Compatibility with Existing Plans

The site is identified as “Greater Greensboro” on Greene County’s Character Areas Map (dated 6/13/2023). The Greater Greensboro character area is described in the Greene County Comprehensive Plan as a special activity hub that encourages a variety of housing types, space for retail and other community amenities, and opportunities to expand the employment base. The proposed development is compatible with the Greater Greensboro character area designation as residential (including the proposed single-family detached homes and townhomes) is an appropriate land use within this character area and helps fulfill a component of the area’s vision to “encourage a variety of housing types.”

On the City of Greensboro’s Future Land Use Map (dated 3/2/20) the areas within Greensboro surrounding the site are designated as “Single-Family Residential.” While the proposed site is compatible with these land uses, it should be noted that the area west of the proposed site was included in DRI 4048 and is proposed to be a 2,662,000 square foot industrial facility. If this industrial facility is developed, it could adversely affect residents of the proposed residential development due to air and noise pollution.

The site is identified as “Developing” on the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Regional Land Use Map (dated 6/15/2023). The Regional Plan recommends developments that contain six characteristics that benefit the region’s people, economy, environment, and communities. The proposed project’s compatibility with these recommendations is summarized below:

Regional Plan Compatibility

REGIONAL PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED PROJECT'S COMPATIBILITY WITH RECOMMENDATION
Enhances economic mobility and competitiveness	The applicant states that the regional work force is sufficient to meet the demand created for the proposed project.
Elevates public health and equity	The proposed development promotes public health by providing residents access to a walking trail on site. To further promote equity, the developer should consider mixing the proposed single-family detached homes and townhomes throughout the site. This would create a more mixed-income and mixed-aged community where people of different incomes and at different life-stages are more likely to interact with one another.
Supports and adds value to existing communities	The proposed site area surrounds existing residential clusters located along Armour Circle and Breedgillismith Circle. The City should consider requiring the developer to incorporate additional road connections to the two roads mentioned. This will facilitate better long-term traffic flow in the area, create more connected communities, and allow residents of the existing communities to benefit from the amenities proposed in the development.
Creates housing that is diverse, adequate, equitable, and affordable	The proposed development offers both single-family detached homes and townhomes, which suggests housing will be available at different price points. To create further affordable housing opportunities, the developer should consider incorporating additional forms of "missing-middle" housing into the site design. These types of housing, including duplexes, quadruplexes, and/or cottage courts, would maintain a neighborhood feel within the proposed development and provide more affordable owning and renting opportunities for residents.
Includes transportation choices and is well-connected with existing and planned transportation options	The proposed site plan does not include details on any pedestrian or bicycle safety infrastructure such as crosswalks, stop signs, sidewalks, etc. The developer should be mindful that the proposed site is located south of existing county schools and north of where the County's new elementary school will be located along Meadow Crest Road. The developer should consider installing pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure within the site, and the City should consider installing sidewalks along MLK King Jr. Drive along the project site. This would serve families who choose to walk or bicycle to surrounding schools. Also, as mentioned previously, the City should consider requiring additional road connections to Armour Circle and Breedgillismith Circle to provide a well-connected street network.
Protects natural and historic resources	The site plan proposes building single-family detached homes, a parking area, and roadways in the existing stream area in the southern portion of the site. According to the National Wetland Inventory, this stream is classified as an intermittent riverine, meaning that the stream contains flowing water during part of the year. Developing on top of this intermittent stream would disturb the hydrology of the stream, decrease the capacity of the site to transport water away from the site during rain events, and disturb the ecology of the area. Additionally, development and residents in this area would be at risk of damage associated with seasonal flooding events. It is recommended that the developer revise the site plan so that there is no development within the stream area, that the stream's riparian areas are protected, and that there are adequate culverts and road crossings across the stream.

Potential Interjurisdictional Impacts

The applicant states that the project is unlikely to affect any of the environmental quality factors identified on the DRI Additional Form, including water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, protected mountain and river corridors, floodplains, historic resources, and other environmentally sensitive resources. However, the site plan proposes developing in the existing stream area, which would negatively impact connected streams and the site’s drainage capacity. The proposal should be designed to minimize disruption to the existing streams, associated wetlands, and floodplains to avoid future erosion, flooding, and degraded water quality onsite and downstream from the site. Low impact design measures, like bioswales, rain gardens, and other green infrastructure should be incorporated into the project design. At minimum, the project should be in accordance with the latest edition of the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (Blue Book) and meet all relevant EPD requirements.

The chart below summarizes the number of acres within the site area as well as within a one-mile buffer around the site that contains 1) wetlands, 2) conservation land, 3) regionally important resources, and 4) threatened regionally important resources. Please refer to the footnotes for definitions for each of these terms.

Wetland, Conservation, and Regionally Important Resources

	AREA TYPE	AREA (ACRES)	PERCENT OF AREA
SITE AREA (121 Acres)	Wetland Acres ¹	1.6	1.3%
	“Conservation Land” ²	20.3	16.9%
	Regionally Important Resource Land ³	0	0%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land ⁴	20.3	16.9%
1 MILE BUFFER AROUND SITE (3,609 Acres)	Wetland Acres	52.9	1.5%
	“Conservation Land”	769.7	21.3%
	Regionally Important Resource Land	101.8	2.8%
	Threatened Regionally Important Resource Land	602.0	16.7%

No specific Regionally Important Resource sites are identified within one mile of the proposed site. However, the existing stream on site is hydrologically connected to Lake Oconee, which is a Regionally Important Resource. Lake Oconee and its surrounding areas act as a haven for the Bald Eagle and the Oglethorpe Oak, both of which are listed as “threatened” by the State of Georgia. Additionally, Morgan and Greene County both use Lake Oconee as a water source. To minimize the impacts of the proposed site on Lake Oconee, its use

¹ Wetland acres are derived from the National Wetland Inventory (NWI)

² “Conservation” land is derived from the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan’s Conservation and Development Map (6/15/2023).

³ Regionally Important Resources were identified as a part of the Northeast Georgia Resource Management Plan for Regionally Important Resources (2/15/2018).

⁴ This area represents the intersection between Conservation areas (identified on the Conservation and Development Map, 6/15/2023), adopted Regionally Important Resources (RIR), and “Developed” and “Developing” Regional Land Use areas (identified on the Regional Land Use Map, 6/15/2023).

as a water source, and the species that depend on the lake as a habitat, the developer should take actions to minimize the runoff of pollutants and sediment from the site.

Lowe Engineers completed a traffic impact study that projects 1,720 new daily trips, including 137 AM peak hour trips and 175 PM peak hour trips from the proposed development. The traffic study recommends Martin Luther King Jr. Drive to be improved by installing a single southbound right turn deceleration lane at Armour Circle and Liberty Church Road and by installing a northbound left turn lane at Liberty Church Road. If desired by existing communities, the developer should also build a road connection between Armour Circle and Breedgillsmith Circle that connects to the proposed development to improve traffic flow in the area.

The project would be served by the City of Greensboro's water and sewer systems with an estimated daily demand of 57,000 gallons for each system. The applicant states that these demands can be covered by existing capacity. The applicant states that servicing the site would require a 2,000-foot sewer line extension and a 7,000-foot water line extension.

An estimated 70% of the site would be covered in impervious surfaces, and one retention/detention pond is planned to manage stormwater runoff. Refer to the site plan for the proposed location of stormwater management infrastructure.

The applicant estimates the project would generate 1,500 tons of solid waste annually and that sufficient landfill capacity exists to handle this waste. According to a 2022 tonnage report from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, most municipal solid waste (MSW) generated in Greene County is disposed of in a landfill in Twiggs County. The applicant states that no hazardous waste would be generated.

The applicant estimates that the project would be worth \$50,000,000 at build-out in 2023 and generate \$350,000 in annual local taxes. On a per-acre basis, the project would be worth approximately \$413,223 and generate approximately \$2,893 in tax revenue. Prior to approval, the City should measure the life cycle costs of the infrastructure needed to serve this project to ensure that they would not be committing to more maintenance expenses than the new tax revenue can cover.

Comments from Affected Parties

Alan Hood, Airport Safety Data Program Manager, Georgia Department of Transportation

This proposed 182 residential units on a 121-acre site in unincorporated Greene County is almost 3 miles from Greene County Regional Airport (CPP). It is located outside any FAA approach or departure surfaces, and airport compatible land use areas, and does not appear to impact the airport.

If any construction equipment or construction exceeds 200' AGL, an FAA Form 7460-1 must be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration according to the FAA's Notice Criteria Tool found here (<https://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/external/gisTools/gisAction.jsp?action=showNoNoticeRequiredToolForm>). Those submissions for any associated cranes may be done online at <https://oeaaa.faa.gov>. The FAA must be in receipt of the notifications, no later than 120 days prior to construction. The FAA will evaluate the potential impacts of the project on protected airspace associated with the airports and advise the proponent if any action is necessary.