

# Tribute Preliminary Plat

Consulting Planner's Presentation to  
Hoschton City Council May 9, 2024  
By Jerry Weitz, Consulting Planner

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## Process for Preliminary Plats

- The Hoschton City Council shall not be required convene a public hearing on the matter. This shall not preclude the Hoschton City Council from recognizing and hearing from any member of the public, when in its judgment it may be advantageous to do so.
- The Hoschton City Council shall approve, conditionally approve, or deny the preliminary plat application within thirty-five (35) calendar days from the date it first considers a preliminary plat application at one of its public meetings (Sec. 409 Subdivision Ordinance).

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## Site Description

- 287 acres
- East/SE of Twin Lakes PUD
- Access is onto SR 53
- Indian Creek forms eastern boundary
- Existing lake/pond
- Four homes and church and cemetery
- Site abuts Jackson County's Sell Mill Park



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### Project History

- The subject property (four tracts) was annexed into the city of Hoschton per Ordinance Z-23-03 on September 18, 2023, and zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD) conditional, subject to 21 conditions of approval. (Consulting planner's recommendation was to deny the annexation/zoning application)
- Prior to annexation, Jackson County formally objected to the annexation and zoning, and an annexation arbitration panel was appointed and deliberated with regard to the county's objection. A condition of approval was imposed by the annexation panel requiring the payment of county development impact fees (in addition to city impact fees which will apply).
- The project also underwent a development of regional impact review (#3960) by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.

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### Proposed Plan

- 1,051 residential lots (400 fee simple townhouse) (was 1,055)
- 287 acres including church and cemetery
- 40,000 square feet of retail/ restaurant/ office
- 23.65 acres of public land dedication
- Open space exceeding 20% of site area



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### Decision Criteria for Preliminary Plats

***The basis of the Hoschton City Council's action on a preliminary plat shall be whether the preliminary plat meets the purposes and requirements of this Ordinance and other applicable laws and is consistent with the comprehensive plan" (Sec. 409(e) subdivision ordinance).***

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### Overview of Major Issues

- Mitigation of **public facility impacts**: the project will add 1,055 (1,051 with the revised preliminary plat) housing units and an estimated 2,650 persons, plus a sizable employment increase
- The city does not have **sewer** capacity to serve the development, but has agreed in exchange for payment by Rocklyn Homes of \$6.33 million to program improvements to the city's sewage treatment plant for the PUD. Project requires city to deliver major capital improvements.
- **Future land uses** for sites dedicated to public are not fully decided and therefore the full effects cannot be fully evaluated.
- Proposed use of **state route** right of way as only route for water lines
- **Phasing** (townhouse only in phase 1).
- Operation of the PUD as **one integrated unit** (or sale to others, for instance, to an institutional investor for rental only units).

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### Access (State Route 53)

- The subject property only has one principal means of access, i.e., to/from State Route 53.
- The Twin Lakes Planned Unit Development (2,600 units) has Peachtree Road in addition to SR 53 and is therefore better able to distribute the traffic, whereas all trips for the Tribute PUD will be and from SR 53.
- The subject property is quite possibly a "path of least resistance" in terms of a SR 53 bypass route, if it is decided a bypass will be pursued as state or local policy.
- This was one motivating force for planner's recommendation for a new arterial road (ultimately connecting to Jackson Trail Road)

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### Connectivity and Future Street Planning

- During the annexation and zoning review, consulting planner indicated that the project should be required to provide a connection to Jackson Trail Road (project does not abut Jackson Trail Road) with a through street at an arterial functional classification, but such a condition was not included in the adopted ordinance.
- A condition of zoning (#21) was imposed to require that one of the streets stub to the abutting property, and the preliminary plat shows this street.
- Via preliminary plat reviews, a street will be provided with an 80-foot wide right of way (collector) built to stub to the north property line.

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### Transportation Impacts/Study

- Project will have substantial traffic impacts, not all of which are known at this time (potential school not considered in study).
- Applicant proposes road improvements at several entrances to the development from SR 53, some to be signalized per developer.
- Bill Watkins Road at SR 53 already operates at an unacceptable level of service (LOS) of "F" in the p.m. peak hour.
- A LOS "F" for unsignalized intersections means a vehicle delay of greater than 50 seconds (Table 1, p. 5 of traffic study).
- The westbound approach of SR 53 at Bill Watkins Road will remain LOS "F" with the building of the PUD.
- Delays for the westbound approach will exceed 300 seconds during a.m. and p.m. peak hours.

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### School Impacts

- At the time of annexation and zoning, consulting planner estimated that the impact on county public schools would be approximately 558 additional students.
- With an average desirable class size of 20 students, this would mean an impact of 28 additional classrooms (28,000 square feet of school building space).
- The estimated cost impact on the county school system is \$7,000,000 (just for additional facility space and not including land, and not including operational and maintenance costs for staffing, etc).

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### Public Safety Impacts (Fire, EMS, Police)

- From a public safety perspective, and considering just the residential development, the project will result in the need for a small fire station and one fire vehicle, along with additional space to house 1 or 2 EMS vehicles.
- The proposed development at buildout (now 1,051 units) would have a population of about 889 people in the townhouse component and about 1,758 people in the detached subdivision, creating an additional population of 2,647 people.
- This is a demand for more than five additional police officers.

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### Parks and Recreation

- A per residential unit impact fee (city) will be required and assessed for park and open space land.
- There is significant land proposed to be dedicated to the city for parks and recreation.
- County impact fees for park and open space land also apply via conditions of PUD zoning approval (annexation arbitration outcome).
- Thus, the impact of the Tribute PUD on park and open space land and recreational facilities is expected to be mostly if not entirely mitigated.

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### Water and Sewer Agreement

- Via condition of zoning approval Rocklyn Homes will pay a sewer connection fee in the amount of \$6,330,000 at the rate of \$6,000 per home for 1,055 homes.
- The amount of \$6,330,000 is due prior to issuance of the first residential permit for the project.
- The city agrees to reserve 250,000 gallons per day of sewage capacity (the necessary capacity to serve the 1055-home development) within the phase one expansion to 0.95 mgd expansion and 805 connections within the second phase expansion to 2.0 mgd.

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### Proposed Project Phasing

- The first submission did not include any information on phasing of development in the PUD. The revised application provided a proposed project phasing plan. Staff had several substantial concerns about the first proposed phasing plan.
- The applicant proposes to construct all of the fee-simple townhouse components, as well as the civic spaces (public use dedications), plus an access road leading to the sewage pump station near the southeast property line and the pump station itself, as a part of phase 1. Detached housing would be phase 2.
- At issue is whether the phasing plan is acceptable.

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### Dedications

- The largest of the sites proposed for dedication, 16.05 acres, is required to be dedicated to the city via conditions of zoning approval.
- This parcel, though smaller than a minimum standard size for a school site, was proposed to be dedicated on the basis of trying to mitigate some of the PUD's impact on the county school system.
- The expectation (not a requirement) is that the city council will elect to deed this property to the Jackson County Board of Education (or the most likely use being an elementary school), with conditions.

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### Consulting Planner's Concerns Re: Phasing

- Consulting planner remains concerned that the townhouse portion could get developed in its entirety, and then the detached single-family homes get delayed or do not even get developed and constructed at all in the case of an economic downturn (if that were to occur).
- Also of concern is the potential for the owner/developer to sell off the entire townhouse portion of the Tribute PUD to a build-to-rent institutional investor.

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### Final Points and Conclusions

- First round of plat generated 84 comments from planning.
- Consulting planner spent 1.5 hours going over them. Check of items shows virtually all comments were addressed.
- The recommendation of consulting planner is to approve the preliminary plat, subject to many (32 count) conditions enumerated in the preliminary plat report.

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