

DATE: September 22, 2023

TO: Mayor Tom Reed, City of Chattahoochee Hills
ATTN TO: Mike Morton, Community Development Director, City of Chattahoochee Hills
RE: Development of Regional Impact Review
FROM: Mike Alexander, COO, Atlanta Regional Commission

ARC has completed a preliminary regional review of the following DRI. ARC reviewed the DRI's relationship to regional plans, goals and policies – and impacts it may have on the activities, plans, goals and policies of other local jurisdictions as well as state, federal and other agencies. This preliminary report does not address whether the DRI is or is not in the best interest of the local government.

Name of Proposal: Merrill Park Chattahoochee Hills DRI 4004

Submitting Local Government: Chattahoochee Hills

Date Opened: September 22, 2023

Deadline for Comments: October 7, 2023

Description: A DRI review of a proposal to construct a mixed-use development with 400 single-family homes, 400 townhomes, 1,200 multi-family units, 400 hotel rooms, 475,000 sf of retail space, 225,000 sf of healthcare space, and 200,000 sf of educational space on a 525-acre wooded site at the intersection of Cochran Mill Road and South Fulton Parkway in the City of Chattahoochee Hills.

PRELIMINARY COMMENTS:

Key Comments

The project's retention of approximately 45% of the 525 acre site as natural open space somewhat aligns with Rural Areas policy recommendations set forth in the Atlanta Region's Plan which stress the need to protect rural areas and their character and note: "There is a strong desire from residents and elected officials in these areas to keep them rural...The region is striving to protect these areas by limiting infrastructure investments to targeted areas and allowing no development or only low impact development."

The overall scale of the project, which includes 1,600,000 SF of office space, 2,000 residential units, and close to a million SF of other uses does not align with Rural Area policy recommendations.

The project includes a wide range of housing types which is supportive of regional housing policies.

The project includes a mix of residential, educational, office and commercial, and hospitality uses layout which is supportive of regional land use, multi-modal transportation, and placemaking policies.

The TIS trip generation includes a trip reduction of 45% based on the provision of various mixed-uses that could potentially be accessed with one vehicular trip to a shared parking facility in walking distance of multiple destinations. However, a significant number of the uses shown on the site plan are in single-use nodes/campuses separated from the small mixed-use core by long distances or single access roads. The final site plan will need to show a much more compact and walkable mix of uses accessible by a network of pedestrian connections in order to justify the trip reduction utilized.

The TIS trip generation also includes a 10% alternate mode trip reduction. However, there are no identified external alternate mode connections to the project and the internal alternate mode system is only described as 5-foot wide sidewalks throughout, 10- ft sidewalks in the town center, and some kind of unspecified winding trail crossing under South Fulton Parkway. The final site plan will need to include a much more extensive and developed alternate mode network of sidewalks, bike routes, and multi-use paths to realize the 10% trip reduction and to meet regional multi-modal transportation policies.

The project will generate a total of 22,703 new vehicular trips; a range of modifications of nearby roadways are proposed to help mitigate the traffic impact.

General Comments

The Atlanta Region's Plan, developed by ARC in close coordination with partner local governments, is intended to broadly guide regional development in the 11-county metro region to ensure that required infrastructure and resources are in place to support continued economic development and prosperity. The Plan assigns a relevant growth management category designation to all areas in the region- Rural Areas for this project - and provides accompanying growth policy recommendations which are detailed at the end of these comments.

The project includes a mix of residential, commercial, and hospitality uses in a potentially walkable and compact village layout which is potentially supportive of regional land use, multi-modal transportation, and placemaking policies. The final plan will need much further development to fully meet these goals. The project includes a wide range of housing types which is supportive of regional housing policies.

Transportation and Mobility Comments

ARC's Transportation and Mobility Group comments will be provided in the Final Report.

The project will generate a total of 22,703 new vehicular trips; a range of roadway modifications are proposed to mitigate the traffic impact.

The TIS trip generation includes a trip reduction of 45% based on the provision of various mixed-uses that could potentially be accessed with one vehicular trip to a shared parking facility in walking distance of

multiple destinations. However, a significant number of the uses shown on the site plan are in single-use nodes/campuses separated from the small mixed-use core by long distances or single access roads. The final site plan will need to show a much more compact and walkable mix of uses access by a network of pedestrian connections in order to justify the trip reduction.

The TIS trip generation also includes a 10% alternate mode trip reduction. However, there are no identified external alternate mode connections to the project and the internal alternate mode system is only described 5 foot wide sidewalks throughout, 10 ft sidewalks in the town center, and some kind of unspecified winding trail crossing under South Fulton Parkway. The final site plan will need to include a much more extensive and developed alternate mode network of sidewalks, bike routes, and multi-use paths to realize the 10% reduction and to meet regional multi-modal transportation policies.

Care should be taken to ensure that the constructed development provides an interconnected, functional, clearly marked and comfortable pedestrian experience on all driveways, paths, entrances, and parking areas. To the maximum extent possible, new driveways and intersection corners where pedestrians will cross should be constructed with minimal curb radii to reduce speeds of turning vehicles and decrease crossing distances for pedestrians.

ARC Natural Resource Group Comments

ARC's Natural Resource Group comments will be provided in the Final Report.

Environmental Comments

The project proposes to retain 45% of the 525-acre site – including currently wooded area traversed by streams – as open space which is supportive of regional land use and environmental policies.

The project can further support The Atlanta Region's Plan by incorporating other aspects of regional environmental policy, including green infrastructure and/or low-impact design, e.g., pervious pavers, rain gardens, vegetated swales, etc., in parking areas and site driveways, and as part of any improvements to site frontages.

Unified Growth Management Policy Considerations: Rural Areas

This DRI site is designated Rural Areas which are areas in the region where limited development has taken place or and where development pressure is low. These areas are characterized by sporadic, large single-family lots, agricultural uses, protected lands, and forests. These areas border more central developed and developing areas and represent the limits of the urban service area in the region. There is a strong desire from residents and elected officials in these areas to keep them rural. Increased development threatens existing rural economic uses, such as forestry, agriculture, and tourism.

To maintain economic viability without undesirable development, these areas may be appropriate as “sending” areas in potential Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs. The region is striving to protect

these areas by limiting infrastructure investments to targeted areas and allowing no development or only low impact development. There will be a continued need to maintain existing transportation infrastructure, but care should be taken not to spur unwanted growth by inappropriate expansion of infrastructure capacity.

The overall scale of the project, which includes 1,600,000 SF of office space, 2,000 residential units, and close to a million SF of other uses does not align with Rural Area policy recommendations. The final design of the project could further the intent of the Rural Areas recommendations by organizing development more compactly in mixed-use walkable nodes separated by natural open areas and by utilizing rural character elements in the design of project roads, bridges, fences, and related components.

City of Chattahoochee Hills leadership and staff, along with the applicant team, should collaborate closely to ensure optimal sensitivity to the needs of nearby local governments, neighborhoods, and natural systems.

THE FOLLOWING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND AGENCIES RECEIVED NOTICE OF THIS REVIEW:

ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

GEORGIA CONSERVANCY

GEORGIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

CITY OF UNION CITY

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCE

GEORGIA ENV. FACILITIES AUTHORITY

CITY OF SOUTH FULTON

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CITY OF PALMETTO

For questions, please contact Donald Shockey at (470) 378-1531 or dshockey@atlantaregional.org. This finding will be published to the ARC review website located at <http://atlantaregional.org/plan-reviews>.



Developments of Regional Impact

[DRI Home](#)
[Tier Map](#)
[Apply](#)
[View Submissions](#)
[Login](#)

DRI #4004

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL IMPACT Initial DRI Information

This form is to be completed by the city or county government to provide basic project information that will allow the RDC to determine if the project appears to meet or exceed applicable DRI thresholds. Refer to both the [Rules for the DRI Process](#) and the [DRI Tiers and Thresholds](#) for more information.

Local Government Information

Submitting Local Government: Chattahoochee Hills

Individual completing form: Mike Morton

Telephone: 7704636578

E-mail: mike.morton@chatthillsga.us

*Note: The local government representative completing this form is responsible for the accuracy of the information contained herein. If a project is to be located in more than one jurisdiction and, in total, the project meets or exceeds a DRI threshold, the local government in which the largest portion of the project is to be located is responsible for initiating the DRI review process.

Proposed Project Information

Name of Proposed Project: Merrill Park Chattahoochee Hills

Location (Street Address, GPS Coordinates, or Legal Land Lot Description): Intersection of South Fulton Pkwy and Cochran Mill Rd -- 0 SOUTH FULTON HWY, 0 COCHRAN MILL RD

Brief Description of Project: This project consists of 524.66 ac. The master planned community is a mixed use development that includes various commercial, residential, hospitality and healthcare uses.

Development Type:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> (not selected) | <input type="radio"/> Hotels | <input type="radio"/> Wastewater Treatment Facilities |
| <input type="radio"/> Office | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Mixed Use | <input type="radio"/> Petroleum Storage Facilities |
| <input type="radio"/> Commercial | <input type="radio"/> Airports | <input type="radio"/> Water Supply Intakes/Reservoirs |
| <input type="radio"/> Wholesale & Distribution | <input type="radio"/> Attractions & Recreational Facilities | <input type="radio"/> Intermodal Terminals |
| <input type="radio"/> Hospitals and Health Care Facilities | <input type="radio"/> Post-Secondary Schools | <input type="radio"/> Truck Stops |
| <input type="radio"/> Housing | <input type="radio"/> Waste Handling Facilities | <input type="radio"/> Any other development types |
| <input type="radio"/> Industrial | <input type="radio"/> Quarries, Asphalt & Cement Plants | |

If other development type, describe:

Project Size (# of units, floor area, etc.): 2,000 Residential Units of mixed variety, 400 hotel rooms, 425,000 sf of retail/office/residential,

Developer: WHM Chattahoochee Hills Investment, LLC

Mailing Address: 8000 Caps Ferry Rd

Address 2:

City: Douglasville State: GA Zip: 30135

Telephone: 678-777-7550

Email: hmerrill@merrilltrust.com

Is property owner different from developer/applicant? ☐ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, property owner:

Is the proposed project entirely located within your ☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

local government's jurisdiction?

If no, in what additional jurisdictions is the project located?

Is the current proposal a continuation or expansion of a previous DRI?

(not selected)

Yes

No

If yes, provide the following information:

Project Name:

Project ID:

The initial action being requested of the local government for this project:

Rezoning

Variance

Sewer

Water

Permit

Other

Is this project a phase or part of a larger overall project?

(not selected)

Yes

No

If yes, what percent of the overall project does this project/phase represent?

Estimated Project Completion Dates:

This project/phase: 2035

Overall project: 2035

Back to Top



Developments of Regional Impact

[DRI Home](#)[Tier Map](#)[Apply](#)[View Submissions](#)[Login](#)

DRI #4004

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL IMPACT Additional DRI Information

This form is to be completed by the city or county government to provide information needed by the RDC for its review of the proposed DRI. Refer to both the [Rules for the DRI Process](#) and the [DRI Tiers and Thresholds](#) for more information.

Local Government Information

Submitting Local Government: Chattahoochee Hills
Individual completing form: Mike Morton
Telephone: 7704636578
Email: mike.morton@chatthillsga.us

Project Information

Name of Proposed Project: Merrill Park Chattahoochee Hills
DRI ID Number: 4004
Developer/Applicant: WHM Chattahoochee Hills Investment, LLC
Telephone: 678-777-7550
Email(s): hmerrell@merrilltrust.com

Additional Information Requested

Has the RDC identified any additional information required in order to proceed with the official regional review process? (If no, proceed to Economic Impacts.)
☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, has that additional information been provided to your RDC and, if applicable, GRTA?
☒ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, the official review process can not start until this additional information is provided.

Economic Development

Estimated Value at Build-Out: 2,100,000,000

Estimated annual local tax revenues (i.e., property tax, sales tax) likely to be generated by the proposed development: 26,250,000

Is the regional work force sufficient to fill the demand created by the proposed project?
☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

Will this development displace any existing uses?
☐ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please describe (including number of units, square feet, etc):

Water Supply

Name of water supply provider for this site: City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management

What is the estimated water supply demand to be generated by the project, measured in Millions of Gallons Per Day (MGD)?

1.42 MGD

Is sufficient water supply capacity available to serve the proposed project?

☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

If no, describe any plans to expand the existing water supply capacity:
System improvements will be required.

Is a water line extension required to serve this project?

☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how much additional line (in miles) will be required?
1.3 miles

Wastewater Disposal

Name of wastewater treatment provider for this site:

Fulton County Department of Public Works

What is the estimated sewage flow to be generated by the project, measured in Millions of Gallons Per Day (MGD)?

1.27 MGD

Is sufficient wastewater treatment capacity available to serve this proposed project?

☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

If no, describe any plans to expand existing wastewater treatment capacity: System improvements will be required.

Is a sewer line extension required to serve this project?

☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how much additional line (in miles) will be required? 1.13 miles of forcemain and 2 lift stations.

Land Transportation

How much traffic volume is expected to be generated by the proposed development, in peak hour vehicle trips per day? (If only an alternative measure of volume is available, please provide.)

AM Peak Hour: 1,167 entering, 614 exiting PM Peak Hour: 869 entering, 1,378 exiting 24 Hour: 22,703 two way traffic

Has a traffic study been performed to determine whether or not transportation or access improvements will be needed to serve this project?

☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

Are transportation improvements needed to serve this project?

☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe below: Please see detailed DRI traffic study for breakdown of transportation improvements.

Solid Waste Disposal

How much solid waste is the project expected to generate annually (in tons)?

8619 tons/year

Is sufficient landfill capacity available to serve this proposed project?

☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No

If no, describe any plans to expand existing landfill capacity:

Will any hazardous waste be generated by the development?

☐ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please explain:

Stormwater Management

What percentage of the site is projected to be impervious surface once the

52%

proposed development has
been constructed?

Describe any measures proposed (such as buffers, detention or retention ponds, pervious parking areas) to mitigate the project's impacts on stormwater management: Stream buffers, water quality treatment, and runoff reduction using several different kinds of structural BMP's as per current LIA and GSWCC standards.

Environmental Quality

Is the development located within, or likely to affect any of the following:

1. Water supply watersheds? ☐ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☒ No
2. Significant groundwater recharge areas? ☐ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☒ No
3. Wetlands? ☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No
4. Protected mountains? ☐ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☒ No
5. Protected river corridors? ☐ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☒ No
6. Floodplains? ☐ (not selected) ☒ Yes ☐ No
7. Historic resources? ☐ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☒ No
8. Other environmentally sensitive resources? ☐ (not selected) ☐ Yes ☒ No

If you answered yes to any question above, describe how the identified resource(s) may be affected:
Wetlands, streams and floodplains exist within the development area. There are internal road and utility crossings planned within these areas. However, thoughtful design of the infrastructure and roadways will minimize impacts to these areas.

[Back to Top](#)

[GRTA DRI Page](#) | [ARC DRI Page](#) | [RC Links](#) | [DCA DRI Page](#)

[DRI Site Map](#) | [Contact](#)



