

Gallatin development designed for mass transit

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A first-of-its-kind development is in the works in Gallatin.

A preliminary draft proposal for Greensboro North, a 150-acre, mixed-use project that would be designed around a possible mass transit station off GreenLea Boulevard, was brought to the Gallatin Planning Commission work session Monday.

The proposal is similar in concept to a development in Lebanon called Hamilton Springs and is being designed by the same firm, Lose and Associates. Hamilton Springs has been described as Middle Tennessee's first transit-oriented development, because it is designed around a station on Nashville's heavy-rail commuter train line, the Music City Star.

The Gallatin development is different in that the property owners are preparing to develop the land before the mass transit line around which it hinges has even been established. The developer is Greensboro North LP, a related entity of Gallatin-based development firm Green and Little.

A recently completed study by the Nashville Metropolitan Planning Organization detailed mass transit options for the northeast corridor – stretching from East Nashville to Gallatin – and recommended rapid bus transit along the route with a future transition to light rail. The short-term timeline is to implement rapid bus transit along State Route 386 by 2020.

Greensboro North is described in the draft proposal as a walkable village that would accommodate commercial, mixed-use and housing options with 20 percent of the project's overall size set aside for open space.

The 75-page document presented to planning commissioners Monday outlines a set of standards for street types, parking, building regulations, architecture and landscaping. The developers began working on preliminary plans with the city planning department about one year ago.

The developers have not formally made application with the city to have the property rezoned, but hope to do so after the next Planning Commission work session, said Green and Little President Lee Zoller. The presentation Monday was meant to be a preliminary introduction to the project for planning commissioners.

Development would be first under new zoning district

Greensboro North is being developed under a new type of alternative zoning that allows any mixture of land-use patterns for a particular property with a flexibility not available under standard zoning districts. The specific plan district zoning, as it is called, was approved by the Gallatin City Council in May.

"The SP district allows a developer to come in and say, 'We'd like to do a unique development proposal,' and lets them establish all those standards," said Jim Svoboda, community development coordinator in the Gallatin codes and planning department. "But it also gives the city control to approve those standards on the front end."

Svoboda, who wrote the specific plan district requirements, said he hopes the new zoning will help define development in one of the fastest growing parts of the city, the western side, using better design and planning practices.

"The decisions we make today will affect whether it can support a future transit line," he said.