

STAFF MEMORANDUM

Council Work Session – 03/31/2021



GREENE TRACT

Since it has been over a year since the last Council discussion of the Greene Tract, tonight's discussion will provide a brief history of the Greene Tract and an update to Council.

Over the past year, the mayors of Chapel Hill and Carrboro and the Orange County Commissioners Chair have continued to discuss the Greene Tract with staff. This memorandum includes updates on the Environmental Assessment report completed for the site and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the three jurisdictions. Staff expects to present the MOU to Council for action at their April 7th meeting.

BACKGROUND

The Greene Tract is a 164-acre parcel of which 104 acres is jointly owned by Orange County and the Towns of Carrboro and Chapel Hill. Orange County owns an additional 60 acres that have been designated as the Headwaters Preserve.

Over the past several years, mayors from the Towns of Carrboro and Chapel Hill and the Orange County Commissioners Chair have met to consider preservation and development options for the Greene Tract.

At the [January 22, 2020 Council meeting](#)¹, the Council adopted resolutions providing a process for the three jurisdictions to move forward, initiated an environmental assessment of the property, initiating drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding, and delaying organized public engagement efforts until completion of the MOU. The Town of Carrboro and Orange County adopted similar resolutions in January 2020.

The Greene Tract is within the Chapel Hill's planning jurisdiction. Any development proposal process would require agreement from Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Orange County and would be subject to Chapel Hill's land use management regulations.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In April 2020, the three jurisdictions engaged a consultant to conduct the Greene Tract Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA included the following components:

- Ecological Inventory Mapping
 - Wildlife and natural vegetation
 - Water resources and water quality
 - Geography
 - Topography
 - Geology and geologic formations
 - Soils
 - Land use/land cover
 - Public lands and open space
 - Cultural and historic resources
- Suitability Analysis for Development
- Composite maps (delineating the most sensitive 60 acres and the land most suitable for development)

¹ <https://chapelhill.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4309602&GUID=F9F440F6-543B-4E9B-8274-7D0F412B5440>

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Council Work Session – 03/31/2021

- Wetlands determinations

The final EA was provided to staff over the summer and posted on the Town of Chapel Hill's [Greene Tract webpage](#)².

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The attorneys for the three jurisdictions drafted the attached MOU. The MOU details the process for the three jurisdictions in development of the Greene Tract. The MOU provides details on any cost-sharing opportunities:

Jurisdiction	Share
Chapel Hill	43 percent
Orange County	43 percent
Carrboro	14 percent

The MOU proposes to allocate the site as follows:

- Provide affordable and mixed income housing and other uses on approximately 66 acres of the jointly-owned 104 acres;
- Reserve a school site with public recreation area on approximately 16 acres;
- Preserve approximately 22 acres of environmentally sensitive land on the remaining jointly-owned 104 acres;
- Preserve the Headwaters Preserve on the most environmentally sensitive 60 acres owned by Orange County;

The MOU also proposed to develop a Connectivity Plan for vehicles, bicycles, transit, pedestrians, and utilities and for the three jurisdictions to draft a development framework.

NEXT STEPS

Tonight's meeting is an opportunity for Council to review the Environmental Assessment of the Greene Tract and the attached draft MOU. At the April 7 meeting, Council can anticipate a request for endorsement of the MOU and authorizing the Mayor to sign. The Town of Carrboro and Orange County Commissioners are scheduled to endorse the MOU at each of their meetings scheduled for April 6, 2021.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Staff Presentation
2. Environmental Assessment of Greene Tract
3. Draft Memorandum of Understanding/Interlocal Agreement
4. Greene Tract Update

² [http://chplan.us/Greene Tract](http://chplan.us/Greene_Tract)