

Hutto project to rival Southpark Meadows in size

Mixed use development in works on nearly 500 acres

By [M.B. Taboada](#)

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Developers are planning to transform a swath of land near major roads in Hutto into a hub of retail and residential development that will rival Southpark Meadows in size.

Formerly known as the Hutto 400 tract, the Crossings of Carmel Creek will have nearly 1.5 million square feet of "quality" retail, slightly less than the 1.6 million square feet of retail at Southpark.

Carmel Creek and Brushy Creek run through the 468-acre site, which is near the new Texas 130 toll road, FM 685 and U.S. 79.

Jacksonville, Fla.-based Atlantic Coast Developers LLC, which focuses on mixed-use and retail projects, is creating the project with New York-based Glenmont Capital Management LLC. The developers submitted preliminary framework and zoning documents to the city Thursday. Site plans, however, have not been completed.

"This will be a very quality- oriented development," said Bill Sulzbacher, president of Atlantic Coast. "This is a very significant location with the intersection of the three important road systems. We're in a very active growth corridor, and the quality of the development is very important to us and very important to the city of Hutto."

Developers will seek incentives from the city.

Discussion of incentives had been listed on an agenda for a Monday night council meeting but has been postponed.

Developers worked with city leaders, school board members and Texas Department of Transportation representatives in a four-day meeting in April to create renderings and other documents for the Crossings of Carmel Creek.

"This is a development that will be a showcase . . . on the roadway as people travel through the area," Hutto City Manager Ed Broussard said. The project will be "the first major dense urban development we've had in East Williamson County."

The developers will create a pedestrian-friendly environment, with outdoor shops and lofts and offices atop retail. The developers are keeping options open for dividing some of the land into single-family lots.

Also, developers are hoping to add hotels and a movie theater to the site, creating an entertainment destination in Central Texas. The project also will have a town center element.

The project will be on "the most vital piece of land in Hutto," Matthew Lewis, Hutto director of community development, said in a news release.

Groundbreaking is expected in the next 12 to 14 months, with build out continuing over the next nine or more years.

"By providing street trees and benches and places for people to stroll and linger, we are linking this whole host of uses — retail, hotels, multifamily, and we'd like to see civic uses as well — (to) really create a true destination," said Sean Compton, principal with Austin-based TBG Partners, which is designing the development in conjunction with Atlanta-based architects Phillips Partnership PC.

Atlantic Coast bought the land for an undisclosed amount from Keifer Marshall III and his partners, but Marshall was unable to lock in long-term financing or lure tenants.

Atlantic now is seeking tenants for the project.

"They are going to put Hutto on the map," said Beth Woods, director of Peach Marketing in Austin, which provides public relations for the project.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin