

The Hillmoor Impact:

The real hidden cost of a new development is in what it destroys. Like the impact of a meteor, it wipes out the land's previous use, limits its future use and impacts the surrounding area.

Even small development like Kwik Trip create a financial impact area. It devalued similar businesses in the area by drawing business away from them. The Clark Gas Station being the closest to the impact area went out of business; its building has been demolished and its property is now a waste land. Being a little further away Philip's 66, Marathon and Dell's all sustained damage through loss of business which has devalued their businesses, thus making them less profitable and their continued operation less certain.

However, the success, failure or impact of Kwik Trip did not present a major impact on the City of Lake Geneva; whereas, because of its location and size the proposed housing development on the Hillmoor property with its 35 acre lake will have a major impact on the city, its image, its future and its direction.

Most housing developments in the City of Lake Geneva have gone unfinished with some being complete failures. A prime example of a worst case Lake Geneva Housing Development failure is at the end of La Salle Street and sits on the top of the Edgewood development. At the city's expense, the city put in a costly sewer and water infrastructure, but the land sits vacant without a single house being built on it. The Hillmoor Heights and previous Hillmoor approvals are examples of well-intended housing developments that just died after approval. Even the "more successful ones" have fallen far short of the projected or planned development ending prematurely with unfinished phases and sometimes leaving more empty lots than the ones on which houses were actually built. Unfinished developments with empty lots are all over the city and the surrounding area. Example can be seen on Town Line Road between Cutis Street and Edward's Blvd., Stone Ridge on the top of Center Street, Pond View Estates, Platt Street development and so on.

Considering the city's history of incomplete and unfinished housing developments, plus the fact that the city just recently reapproved a 180 acre housing development on the city's east side, **there is currently no need or justification for an additional 79 acre housing development in the middle of the City of Lake Geneva.** The approval of an additional 79 acre Hillmoor housing development will conflict with the other approved housing developments and it

will almost assuredly result in a half completed or failed development on the city's main entrance.

The 79 acre Hillmoor property is on the gateway entrance to the financial heart of Lake Geneva and it remains as the only large open area near the city's center. Land which once belonged to the City of Lake Geneva **but previous city officials lacking civic foresight gave away**. Rather than considering the approval of a housing development for the Hillmoor property, **the City Council should be contemplating purchasing Hillmoor from the current owners and saving it for the city's future use, which under the public purposes statute the city can accomplish**. There is nothing that the current City Council can do that would have a greater positive impact on the future of the City of Lake Geneva than they can do **by securing the former Hillmoor Golf Course property for the city's future**.

If the city council would let the residents express their views in a referendum vote to the question: "Should the city council approve the 79 acre Housing Development with a 35 acre lake on the Hillmoor Golf Course property?" the answer would be overwhelmingly "NO"; whereas, for the question "Should the City of Lake Geneva Purchase the Hillmoor property?" the answer would be a definite "YES".

A park on the main entrance to Lake Geneva would be enjoyed by residents and tourists and be a benefit to the Down Town Businesses; whereas, a housing development on the city's entrance benefits the developers and realtors, but does not benefit downtown businesses or add enjoyment to tourist or residents. So **even if successful a Hillmoor Housing Development would be a poor short sighted use of the Hillmoor property**, but a housing development on the city's entrance that ends prematurely and unfinished as most in Lake Geneva have ended, would be a real detriment to the City's future.