

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

### *Planned Development - Mixed Use (PD-M) District*

## Woodson Mixed-Use Development

### GENERAL PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The Woodson Mixed-Use Development Plan is intended to guide land-use planning and development of the subject property. The purpose of this Planned Development – Mixed Use (PD-M) District is to facilitate the development of the highest and best use of the property, to strengthen the neighborhood economy, and to promote the general welfare of the community in accordance with the guiding principles of the Midtown Area Plan.

The project is located within the North of Northgate Experience District, which the Midtown Area Plan designates as a gateway between Bryan and College Station that capitalizes on the services and amenities offered by the Union Hill Experience District to the north and Texas A&M University to the south. The proposed project is intended to conform to the aligning principles recommended for this Experience District by the Midtown Area Plan by:

- incorporating the student experience while addressing on-street parking issues,
- improving neighborhood amenities by adding small-format neighborhood commercial development, and
- concentrating higher-density development along the pedestrian corridor of College Main Street to encourage a pedestrian-oriented environment.

This new development will support the walkable environment by locating the proposed buildings close to the street and consolidating off-street parking into a shared parking lot located behind the buildings. Communal greenspace and improved sidewalks that incorporate existing mature oak trees will also be key features of the neighborhood development.

The development plan will incorporate a mix of commercial and residential uses wherein multifamily residential, small-format retail, and office space are blended within the existing neighborhood to enhance the streetscape. These neighborhood commercial facilities will supply daily necessities to the community residents through an easy-to-access development featuring communal plazas.

Additionally, the proposed development will primarily use the city-approved Walk-up pattern buildings as a basis for architectural design to ensure that it remains architecturally compatible the rest of the locality and wider Midtown Area. Development of the proposed site will also adhere to tree preservation best practices in order to maintain a familiar and aesthetically pleasing streetscape.

### SECTION 1: PERMITTED LAND USES

The following range of land uses shall be permitted by right in this PD-M District:

- Midtown Pattern—Walkup two-story (MP-W2)

- Midtown Pattern—Walkup three-story (MP-W3)
- Multifamily dwelling
- Live/Work Units
- Accessory/incidental uses to the main use
- Temporary structures for uses incidental to construction on the premises, which said buildings shall be removed upon the completion or abandonment of construction work.

The following land uses shall be permitted by right when limited to 3,000 square feet or less per building, and only when located on the ground floor within 265 feet of College Main Street:

- Office, professional and general administrative
- Retail stores and shops (retail services)
- Neighborhood services
- Personal service shop or custom personal services
- Fitness center
- Restaurant, cafeteria

## SECTION 2: DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

### LOT AREA, HEIGHT, AND SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

Physical development in the PD-M District shall comply with development standards and limitations of the City of Bryan Code of Ordinances that generally apply to the C-2 Retail District. The following additional standards shall be applicable:

- The minimum front building setback shall be 5 feet.
- The minimum side building setback shall be 5 feet.
- The minimum rear building setback shall be 5 feet.
- The maximum impervious cover shall be limited to 80%.
- The minimum lot depth shall be 100 feet.
- The maximum height of any one building shall be limited to 45 feet OR ~~43~~ stories, whichever is greater.
- Where these PD-M development standards are silent, the standards for C-2 properties shall apply.

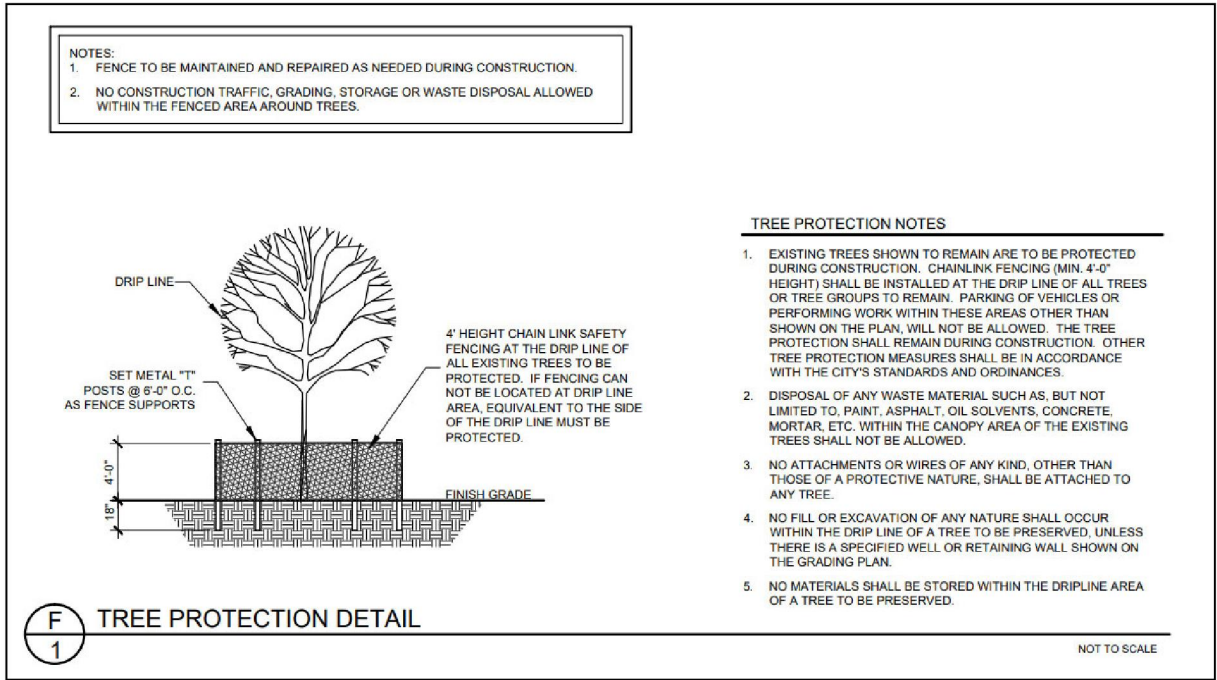
## PARKING REQUIREMENTS

1. The following section provides additional parking requirements that are not included within the City of Bryan's zoning code, Section 62-297.
2. Minimum parking.
  - a. Residential: ~~One~~Three parking spaces per four bedrooms (0.75 parking ratio).
  - b. Non-Residential: One parking space per 375 square feet of gross floor area of commercial space.
3. Parking Reduction. On a site plan, where a developer provides for alternative modes of transportation or is in range of specific existing transportation, the total off-street parking requirement for the project shall be reduced as follows and calculated in the off-street parking analysis on the site plan:
  - a. 2 spaces per each dedicated ride-sharing parking space. Credit will be applied up to a maximum of 2 ride-sharing parking spaces per 25 bedrooms. Ride-sharing parking spaces shall be designated with signs and enforceable by towing.
  - b. 1 space per every 6 bicycle parking spaces. Credit will be applied up to a maximum of 12 bicycle parking spaces. Bicycle parking spaces shall have racks to which bicycles can be locked.
  - c. 1 space per every 6 scooter parking spaces. Credit will be applied up to a maximum of 12 scooter parking spaces.
  - d. 1 space if site is located along a public transit route and within 1,000 feet of a fixed transit stop, measured along sidewalks. Credit will be applied for each fixed transit stop within 1,000 feet of the site.
  - e. 1 space if site is located within 1,000 feet of a public parking lot or garage, measured along sidewalks.
4. When constructed along Woodson Drive, on-street parking spaces shall be located within the existing right-of-way and incorporate improved curb extensions (bulb-outs) that will fully contain parked vehicles beyond the existing curblines and outside the traffic flow of Woodson Drive. These on-street parking spaces shall be counted toward the required parking minimums and subject to the following standards:
  - a. On-street parking shall be prohibited in the following places as described by the Texas Transportation Code:
    - i. In front of a public or private driveway;
    - ii. Within 15 feet of a fire hydrant;
    - iii. Within 20 feet of a crosswalk at a public intersection
    - iv. Within 30 feet on the approach to a flashing signal, stop sign, yield sign, or traffic control signal located at the side of a public roadway;
    - v. Within 50 feet of a railroad crossing;

- vi. Where an official sign prohibits parking.
  - b. On-street parking area design shall comply with the minimum standards set forth in the Parking Area Design section for commercial Parking and Circulation regulations found in the, Land and Site Development Chapter of the Bryan Code of Ordinances, except that 90 degree angled parking is prohibited and the minimum width of the remaining two-way travel lane shall be 20 feet. Parking area design shall be consistent within a block and should be consistent between adjacent blocks.
  - c. Pavement markings shall be required and shall comply with the Striping and marking requirements found in Article VI. – Access and Off-Street Parking, Section 62-297(c).
  - d. Where a bike lane exists or is designated, a bike lane next to parking spaces shall be at least six (6) feet wide, unless there is a marked 18-inch separation between them.
  - e. Only on-street parking spaces located entirely in front of a subject property may be claimed towards the total off-street parking requirements for a project.
5. Parking location. Off-street parking shall not be constructed between a building and the street a building is oriented towards. Off-street parking spaces may be located to the side or to the rear of the adjacent structure.
  6. Driveway width. Minimum driveway width is 23'. Maximum curb cut radius is 20'.

## LANDSCAPING

1. Landscaping.
  - a. Landscaped areas along the front, sides, and rear of the property shall comprise of a minimum of 15% of the total developed area (building site). Preserved existing tree canopy shall count towards the 15% landscaped area requirement Landscaping shall meet the requirements of the Bryan Code of Ordinances “Section 62-429-Landscape Requirements” excluding the requirements outlined in paragraph “B. Parking Areas”.
  - b. Newly installed landscaping shall incorporate the use of an underground irrigation system where necessary. All newly installed landscaping, including trees, shrubs and ground cover, shall be selected from the City of Bryan’s approved list.
  - c. Existing mature trees will be preserved wherever practicable. Mature trees with trunk diameter over four and one-half inches in caliper shall count as 400 square feet towards the landscaped area requirement, with an incremental 100 square feet for each additional one inch in caliper, not to exceed 1,000 square feet, if they are protected during construction according to the tree protection detail below:



2. Street Trees. Tree placement shall be in accordance with the approved Midtown Area Plan as follows:
  - a. One street tree per 30' of lot width is required, round up normally.
  - b. Trees shall be planted in the right-of-way between the curb and the sidewalk. If underground utilities or other conflicts prevent planting in that location, then they shall be planted within 4' to 10' of the sidewalk to provide shade and reduce future maintenance costs.
  - c. Existing trees with a canopy that extends within 10' of the sidewalk edge may be counted towards this requirement and shall be protected during construction according to the tree protection detail.

## SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Pedestrian facilities. A minimum 6-foot wide sidewalk shall be constructed along Woodson Drive in accordance with City standards and subject to the following:
  - a. Sidewalks, where practicable, shall be routed around existing mature trees in order to facilitate preservation of existing treescape, which shall be protected during construction.
  - b. Sidewalks may have changes in elevation at a driveway interface, which meets ADA standards.
  - c. Each principal building shall have a clear and dedicated pedestrian-oriented route from the right-of-way to its primary entrance.
2. Trash and recycling. Containers shall be stored in a designated area to the rear of the buildings. A minimum of 2 dumpsters are required and may be co-located for aggregated service.

1. Signage. Subject to separate approval according to City sign permit procedures, a monument sign shall be allowed on the property to be located within the building setback along College Main Street. The sign shall be a maximum of 10 feet long and a maximum of 6 feet tall measured from the finished ground elevation. Additionally, one wall sign per lease space may be mounted vertically to the building not to exceed one square foot in sign area for each linear foot of that occupancy's building frontage up to a maximum of 30 square feet per lease space and/or 60 square feet per building. Where this PD is silent, the signage must be compliant with all other Retail District (C-2) sign regulations found in Chapter 98 of the Bryan Code of Ordinances. Signage is prohibited for residential uses with the exception of one home occupation sign as allowed per Chapter 98.
3. Screening and Buffers. A wood privacy fence, 6'- 0" in height minimum and fully opaque so as not to allow vehicles headlights to penetrate, shall be provided along the property lines that are adjacent to Residential use. Where practicable, the existing natural vegetation buffer along the rear of the property will be preserved in the area between the site improvements and wood privacy fence to be constructed. The development will not be screened from College Main Street nor from Woodson Drive.
4. Drainage. Drainage design and improvements shall be in accordance with the Bryan/College Station Unified Stormwater Design Guidelines.
  - a. Flood Study. The upper reaches of the FEMA-designated Burton Creek Tributary C watercourse is not adequately mapped. A flood study, extended from existing study limits through the subject property, to establish floodway and floodplain will be required for this development. This study is not required to be approved by FEMA prior to start of construction; however a certificate of occupancy shall not be issued until approval and adoption by FEMA.
  - b. Drainage Report. A Drainage Report that fully documents the plan and facilities for managing storm flow of this development project will be required. This Drainage Report shall identify and address the issues related to development. These include, but are not limited to the attenuation of pre versus post developed flows (detention), erosion due to concentration of flows, and site to site drainage with adjacent properties. This will include the subject property, above-project areas, and along downstream conveyance area.
  - c. Permitting. Coordination and permitting of stormwater matters must be addressed. This is to include any specialized coordination that has occurred or is planned with other entities (local, state, or federal). This may include agencies such as the Texas Commission for Environmental Quality, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Environmental Protection Agency, et al. Mention must be made of any permits, agreements, or understandings that pertain to the project.
  - d. Stormwater Discharge. Where drainage easements and discharge are to drain across neighboring properties, it shall be the responsibility of the project owner/developer to ensure discharges are delivered at substantially the same flow characteristics and same location that existed pre-development. The project owner/developer is also responsible for receiving flows from Borderbrook Phase 1. A private drainage easement will be established for the proposed drainage facilities underneath the parking lot. The City may also require this private drainage easement to extend to the back line of Borderbrook Phase 1, then release the existing 25' public drainage easement. This decision will be made once staff has had the opportunity to review the project design documents. In either case, the 25' public utility easement will be retained by the City.

# WOODSON DEVELOPMENT MIXED USE

## Bryan, Texas

BEING 2.27 Acres consisting of all Lots 13 through 18 of the College Oaks Addition (Volume 177, Page 607, of the Official Public Records), in Brazos County, Texas, said 2.27 Acres being more particularly described by metes and bounds as follows:

BEGINNING at a 5/8 inch Iron Pipe found for the northern southwest corner of this 2.27 Acres, same being the South corner of Lot 2B of the Fazznio Subdivision (Volume 15766, Page 244, Deed Records Brazos County), and on the northeast right-of-way line of College Main Street (right-of-way of 60 feet), same also being the **POINT OF BEGINNING**,

Thence, North 20°28' East, a distance of 133.4 feet to a point,

Thence, North 46°40' East, a distance of 40.0 feet to a point,

Thence, North 45°24' East, a distance of 360.6 feet to a point,

Thence, South 83°47' East, a distance of 215.9 feet to a point,

Thence, South 5°46' West, a distance of 25 feet to a point of a curve to the right with a radius of 415.65 feet,

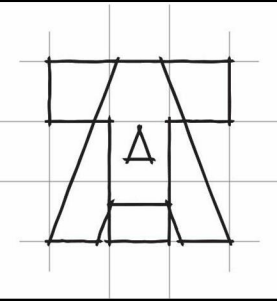
Thence along said curve to the right which has a radius of 415.65 feet, an arc length of 132.2 feet, and a delta angle of 18°14.5' to a point on a curve with a radius of 364.0 feet,

Thence along said curve to left with a radius of 364.0 feet, an arc length of 131.4 feet, and a delta angle of 18°18' to a point,

Thence, South 42°34' West, a distance of 207.8 feet to a point of a curve to the right with a radius of 25',

Thence along said curve to the right which has a radius of 25', an arc length of 39.27' and a delta angle of 90° to a point,

Thence, North 47°46' West, a distance of 110 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING and containing 2.27 acres of land more or less.



**THETFORD ARCHITECTURE, LLC**  
 COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS  
 979-597-6483 | alan@thetfordarchitecture.com

NOT FOR REGULATORY APPROVAL, PERMITTING, OR CONSTRUCTION

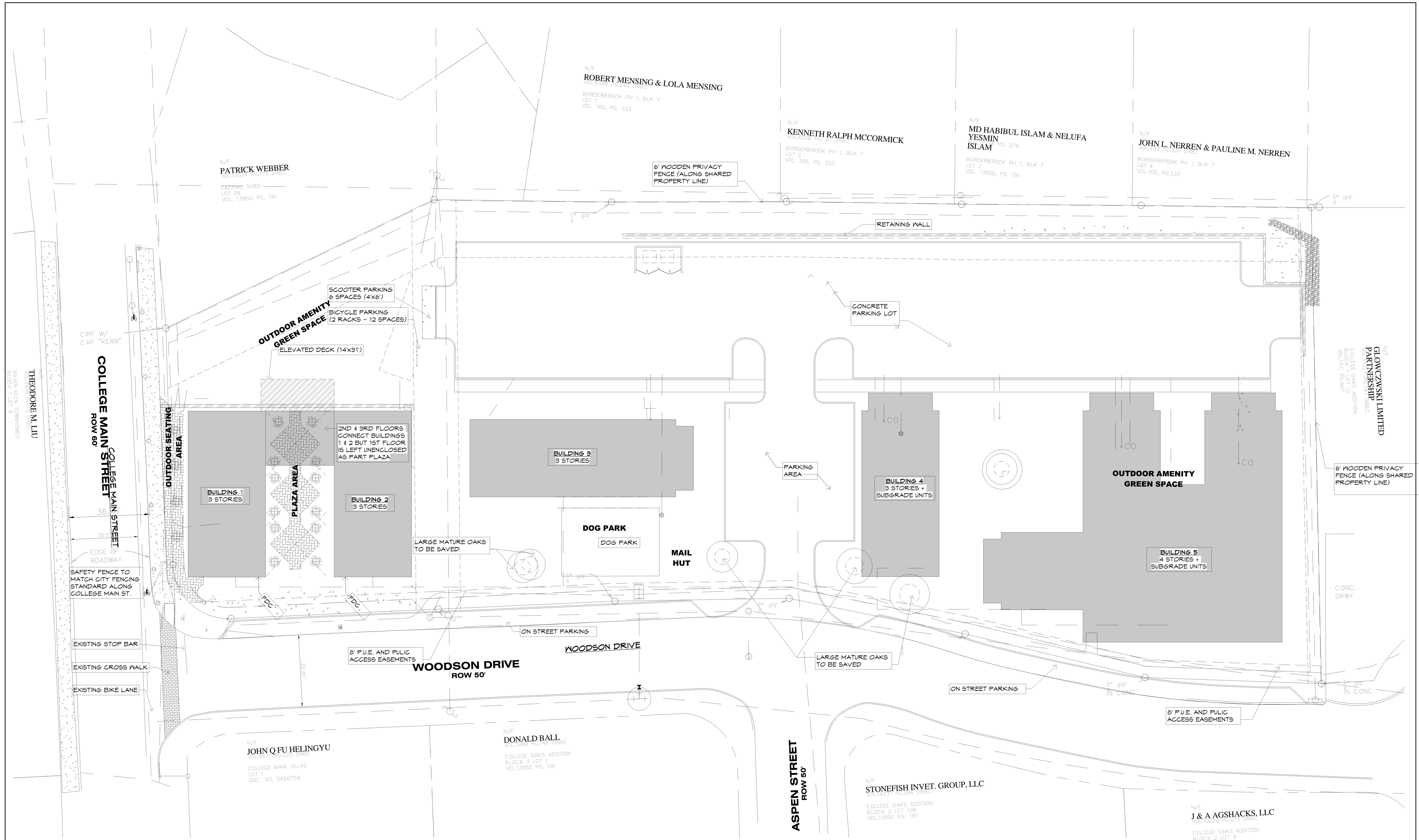
A MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AT  
**VERDE ROW**  
 BRYAN, TEXAS  
 600 WOODSON DRIVE

REVISIONS

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DATE  
24 NOV. 2023

SHEET  
**A1.0**  
1 OF 1



**1 PLANNED DEVELOPMENT - CONCEPT DRAWING**  
 SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"

- CONCEPT PLAN NOTES:**
- SIGNAGE USED TO PREVENT NON-CUSTOMERS FROM PARKING IN ANY ON-STREET PARKING SPACES IS PROHIBITED
  - ALL PROPOSED EASEMENTS ARE CONCEPTUAL IN NATURE AND SUBJECT TO FINALIZED ENGINEERING DESIGN AND APPROVAL BY THE CITY OF BRYAN.
  - CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE AMENITY COURTYARD AND DOG PARK LOCATIONS ARE CONCEPTUAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH FINAL LANDSCAPING & AMENITY DESIGNS.

**WOODSON MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT**  
 500, 502, 504, 600, 602, 604 WOODSON DRIVE, BRYAN, TEXAS

<b>OWNER</b> CZECHMEX PROPERTIES, LLC 4 BRIAN & SONJA KAPAVIK 13492 RESEARCH BLVD. SUITE 120-152 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78750	<b>APPLICANT</b> WOODSON DEVELOPMENT, LLC 4464 LEONARD ROAD BRYAN, TEXAS 77801	<b>ARCHITECT</b> THETFORD ARCHITECTURE 5324 DILLY SHAW TAP RD BRYAN, TEXAS 77808	<b>LEGAL DESCRIPTION</b> LOTS 18-19 COLLEGE OAKS ADDITION 2.210 ACRES
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# Is Pedestrian-to-Campus Still the Future of Development?

July 10, 2019

One of the most crucial questions in today's development market is the question of location. A number of prominent companies have made the ability to be walkable to campus a big issue when it comes to a property's resale value. Other developers, meanwhile, eschew walkable locations in favor of value for tenants.

For a time, a big industry trend was amenity-laced properties located a few miles from campus, selling a lifestyle, and typically an oversized pool, in exchange for a slightly longer campus commute. More recently, a countertrend has emerged, with builders catering to students looking to walk across the street to class. "Beachfront property" is often the preferred term for developers of this mindset.

Is close proximity still the dominant trend? A group of student housing developers and architects debated the topic during a panel discussion at the 11th annual InterFace Student Housing conference, held in April in Austin, Texas.

David Senden, principal of KTG Y Group Architecture + Planning, served as moderator and opened with a simple question: What exactly is urban infill, and what is cottage product?

Todd Gaines, vice president of development at Austin-based Aspen Heights Partners, answered that his definition of urban infill is product that's walkable to campus, noting that going forward there will be very little garden-style product near campuses due to high land costs.

But those acquisition costs are going up even for far-out development, according to Mohamed Mohsen, an associate principal with Niles Bolton Associates.

"Even cottage is starting to get denser," he said. "The lines between the two are starting to get blurred a little bit. Cottage product is now starting to incorporate a slightly more dense type of construction."

Mohsen added that some cottage developments are starting to incorporate small parking garages, something unheard of just a few years ago. A related question to the density debate is amenities. Typically, developments farther from campus include fancier trappings — movie theaters, tanning beds, game rooms, etc. — both because of more available space and to compensate for the inconvenience of the commute. With infill projects, the campus itself is the most important amenity.

David Pierce, a principal with Parallel Co., said the size of the pool is often one of the most noticeable differences between the two.

"The pool is probably the amenity that gets smallest fastest, or even goes away sometimes," said Pierce. "We're building water features where people can sit around on the roof of a building 18 or 20 stories high, or even on top of a parking garage. Priority-

wise there's not a lot of room for golf simulators with infill development. Most of the same amenities are present [as with cottage], they are just smaller and more compact.”

Andrew Wiedner said his company, Core Spaces, included 40,000 square feet of amenities in its first project. Since then, as land and construction prices have spiked, they've been forced to “sharpen the pencil” and evaluate what amenities students are actually using. The result? Fewer movie theaters and more study spaces, and projects that are generally both smaller and smarter.

Landmark Properties Executive Vice President of Development Jason Doornbos says his company initially focused on cottage product and has since moved into more infill projects. Doornbos added that over the last 10 years what's considered a cottage product has changed, typically becoming smaller and denser. At the same time, he agreed that cottage still tends to mean more amenities and a bigger pool, and infill site feature fewer amenities and a smaller pool.

### **Need a Lyft?**

A major shift for all commercial real estate developers, student housing included, has been the advent of rideshare companies Uber and Lyft, plus shared scooters and a growing demand for more walkable and bike-friendly spaces.

Senden asked the group if any of those factors has affected parking ratios at either urban or suburban projects. Wiedner said ridesharing has been “one of the biggest” technology disruptors in recent years, and that his company is passionate about low parking ratios.

“In almost every deal we're pushing the envelope,” he said. “Parking is a killer to your pro forma because it never pencils. You're never getting rents to justify the construction costs of parking.”

Wiedner predicted that some parking structures will be repurposed in the next five or 10 years as fewer people own cars. Younger people in particular are delaying not only getting cars but even driver's licenses. According to the University of Michigan, the percentage of high school seniors with a driver's license dipped from 85.3 percent in 1996 to 71.5 percent in 2015. However, most cities still carry zoning ordinances dictating minimum amounts of parking.

“A lot of times zoning codes require one parking space per bed,” said Mohsen. “We've studied parking decks that can later be converted to units, or where the top half could be converted to a wrap-style product. To a large degree we're having to take into account rideshare. We're designing a lot of projects with dropoff and pickup locations.”

Though not part of the panel, Aptitude Development Principal Jared Hutter said his company recently developed a project serving Syracuse University with zero onsite parking that is 100 percent leased for the coming school year.

“Uber and Lyft are having an impact, but also scooter companies like Lime and Bird,” he says. “When I visit campuses there are scooters all over the place. I think it’s a phenomenal way to get students around.”

But old concerns still linger, with some developers reporting neighborhood concerns about students taking up parking elsewhere if on-site parking isn’t sufficient.

“Students who have cars want the luxury of being able to store the car where they live,” said Doornbos. “They want to drive to a grocery store and back to their apartment with groceries. If we don’t have parking for them, they’ll find somewhere else.”

Doornbos mentioned a deal where the city government wanted 0.5 parking spaces per bed, and his company had to take the unusual step of arguing for more parking.

With the ever-rising cost of college and student loans continuing to make headlines, affordability is a constant question for student housing developers. Panelists were asked about double-occupancy bedrooms and their ability to make projects affordable for students with fewer resources. Pierce said the ideal way is to get beds separated by a partial wall or furniture in order to provide a measure of privacy. Double-occupancy rooms can mean a big savings for students, potentially turning a \$1,200-per-month bed into an \$800-per-month bed.

Double-up bedrooms may also have a place in cottage product. Gaines estimated that at least 5 percent to 10 percent of bedrooms in most projects could be dedicated to double-occupancy rooms. Such a floor plan can be advantageous for a group of friends who want to live together, but come from a variety of financial means.

The size of the project is important when considering how much price differentiation to offer, according to Hutter. A new development with 300 or 400 beds might not need a lot of variation, while a 650-bed project will in order to fully lease. When doubles are paired with singles, builders risk creating potential angst between roommates. Those in doubles may resent the students in singles, and the students in singles may not want to live in a unit that includes doubles. Doornbos said Landmark makes sure there are at least two double-occupancy rooms in units that have them, rather than just one, and that it does not build double occupancy in its cottage product.

### **Location, Location, Location**

So, are developers moving closer to or further from campus? It depends on who you ask. The panel agreed that it’s very much a market-by-market question. In more urban centers, it’s important to be close. But on more spread out campuses, proximity is not as important.

One counter example is the University of Central Florida, which sports nearly 70,000 students and is so spread out that even students living across the street from campus drive. At urban schools, it’s important to be within a quarter mile of the university’s

academic core in order to appeal to students who want or need to walk. Regardless of location, a good way to appeal to students is to build properties with an attractive architectural layout.

“Design definitely sells,” says Mohsen. “Students are savvy these days, they understand and appreciate good design.”

Mohsen also said great design can be a differentiator in a crowded market with lots of properties to choose from. Pierce echoed Mohsen’s thoughts, adding that good design doesn’t always have to be tremendously expensive.

“We demand good design,” he said. “I don’t believe it always has to cost a lot more. Yes there’s a premium to it, but I don’t think you’ve got to break the bank to do good design.”

Gaines added that it’s important for developers who don’t have an architectural background to partner with accomplished architects and designers. A great design can lease a project for years, he says. From the perspective of the resident, leading-edge design can include making sure common areas, and sometimes individual bedrooms, offer plenty of natural light. The term “daylighting” refers to student housing properties with lots of natural sunlight and is considered a plus when it comes to leasing.

Senden asked the panel if daylighting really matters with individual bedrooms, especially for students who may want to sleep late or play video games in their free time. Doornbos acknowledged that buried bedrooms can be very efficient from a design perspective, and that Landmark looks on a market-by-market basis to assess where they have shown to be accepted. Pierce said daylight is important for common areas like living rooms, but not always as much in bedrooms. For students who prefer small windows, a modest discount can be offered compared to a room receiving lots of light. When planning a project, another important aspect is thinking through ahead of time how the all-important leasing tour will be laid out.

“How will you walk them through the building? How will you end up at the amenity deck that overlooks the city skyline?” Mohsen said. “How will you get back? That’s a critical part of the process.”

In the end, the panel agreed that the future is in both high-end urban infill projects and cottage product, depending on which students are being targeted and in which markets the housing is being developed. They also agreed that in either case student housing is much more luxurious than it was just a decade ago, when plastic laminate countertops, stained concrete floors and wood overlay cabinets were standard. Recently renovated projects now feature upgrades of those finishes, with kitchens and bathrooms accounting for most of the touchups.

— *Haisten Willis. This article originally ran in the May/June 2019 issue of Student Housing Business magazine.*

# Student Housing New Construction Challenges

*When built near public transportation, bike storage and minimizing noise become top priorities.*

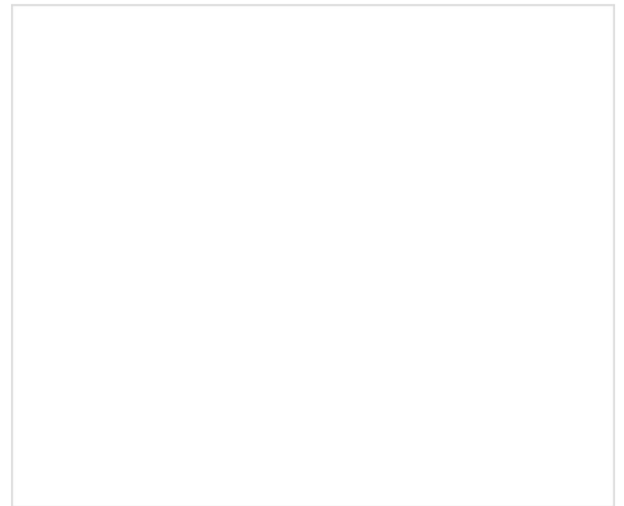
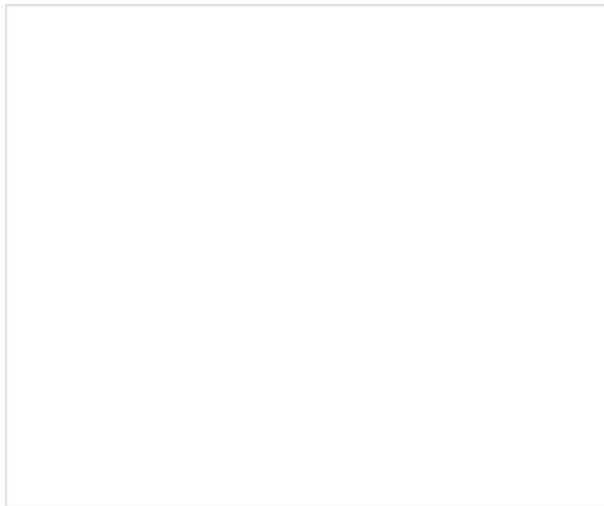
**By Scott Roberson, Contributing Writer**  
**OTHER PARTS OF THIS ARTICLE**

SECURITY

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Pt. 2: This Page

At Northside, there is a public/private element with a large pedestrian corridor known as “the spine” connecting the university campus, student housing, and terminating at what will be a light rail station in the near future. While privacy is still important, a pedestrian boulevard is different than a busy city street and there are opportunities to offer small glimpses through trees or columns into the bustle of the pool area.



On the public side, the spine can be blocked off to set up food trucks, tents, etc., and create a public festival space. Part of the public/private challenge was how to create flexibility for public use and also maintain traffic flow when

the spine is closed, which they were able to navigate very well with thoughtful planning and design. Another challenge was to maintain the privacy of residents whose units fronted the spine. There are stoops along the spine in Phase One and Two with small gates. The gates are not for security, per se, but they do provide definition of boundary and demark this as the resident's territory.

## Accommodating public transit

When public transit enters into the picture, as in the Northside example, there are a host of new design considerations to accommodate both residents and commuters. Mitigating the noise of the train becomes a design consideration when rail is added to the neighborhood. Multiple buildings on a site allow residents to integrate into outdoor circulation paths to walk to public transit. Parking is less of an issue where there is access to public transportation, but there is heavier use of bicycles, mopeds, and scooters, with special parking needs.

Student housing has a unique ratio of parking spaces to occupants because of multiple driving-age adults living together as roommates. Not all students have vehicles, however, so the ratio usually ends up being about 0.75 parking spaces per bed. These anomalies are familiar to many municipalities that have incorporated student housing into zoning in the past and understand that the parking needs are different from typical single- or multi-family developments.

Cities that are less experienced with student housing might try to apply the multi-family approach to it, which results in parking disparities and unused space that could be put to better use. Many Texas cities are designed on the

automobile scale, with larger roads than are common in small towns or older cities designed prior to the advent of the vehicle. In newer developments, there are giant barriers of large roads and longer distances to travel for basics. Public transit is getting better but not quite sufficient to encourage people to give up their vehicles in favor of public transit, so parking and auto traffic are still a prevailing concern.

Northside is situated on university land, separated from the main campus by a large, busy road, but still immediately proximate. The campus is good-sized, yet embodies a pleasant, walkable pedestrian experience. Aware of transportation trends, anticipation of students' unique needs, and appropriate planning amidst zoning requirements were the keys to successful utilization of the space.

When biking to proximate public transport becomes a key part of the community, bike storage is suddenly a real priority — otherwise there will be bikes hauled in and out of buildings, causing additional wear and tear. With the proximity to campus, bikes are very common as an easy mode of transportation to get across campus. Many off-campus housing projects include a bike repair shop, which is a unique and valued amenity.

Providing plenty of secure places for bike storage and access points that are appropriately sized for bikes signals the neighborhood is embracing public transit influences to encourage healthier, more sustainable lifestyles. Such features may seem like small details to developers but are very appealing to a certain demographic and a bike-friendly atmosphere creates a more desirable and responsive community for those tenants' needs.

## Acoustic issues

Whenever a project fronts a rail line, there is a lot of discussion around the amount of sound generated by the rail line and how to mitigate it for residents. In most applications, the solid walls are sufficient to block the periodic noise from the rail line, however the choices for windows, doors, and other penetrations along those facades can make or break a project.

With windows, it's mainly a quality issue, but doors naturally have a gap at the threshold which can be compromised through natural settling of the building or thermal differences. Air blocks on the door, such as gaskets, are also subject to such shifting. Generally, developers are willing and decisive to spend a little extra money on the windows and doors that cut down on nuisance noise. There are also more subtle methods of sound attenuation through the walls, including strategically placing outlets and light switches so that the interior and exterior openings do not inadvertently create pathways for sound to travel through the walls. In addition to the placement, gaskets and fittings can help reduce the amount of sound that can transmit through the wall as well as sound-dampening insulation materials. The biggest impact comes from using higher quality windows.





Doors — even the highest quality — are meant to be openings so they will always be the greatest point of sound infiltration. Some developers go as far as to remove doors from the side of the building closest to the nuisance noise, although that also precludes access to balconies and other outdoor spaces. Typically, an acoustical engineer is engaged to give recommendations so project designers can make informed decisions based on the circumstances and what the budget allows. In some cases, an exemption to the traditional train horn rules may be an option under the right circumstances.

The Northside Project is located just across a major corridor from University of Texas at Dallas and has a unique circulation pattern. There is no vehicular access into the campus past the corridor, which is a defined border for vehicles but permeable by pedestrians and bikers. Providing clear vehicular access to the community itself was important because it is located in an area where people need to drive to restaurants, shopping, and other consumer market needs not available on campus. There is a light rail option coming soon and design of the site included many opportunities for retail space

along the major street and the pedestrian “spine” to dovetail with the rail station and encourage passengers to stay and shop or dine, while still preserving the privacy and security of residents at nearby Northside.

*Scott Roberson is Partner and Studio Director for Architecture Demarest. He can be reached at [SRoberson@architecturedemarest.com](mailto:SRoberson@architecturedemarest.com)*

# High-rise student housing on the rise

Taller buildings dot College Station skyline

ALEX MILLER May 4, 2023 0

1 of 3



The Rev Student Living building at Northgate is scheduled to open in July at 315 College Main in College Station. The 19-floor, student-focused housing building will have 298 units, 802 bedrooms and will be the tallest building in College Station at just under 200 feet.

MEREDITH SEAVER, THE EAGLE

ALEX MILLER

Askyline is forming in College Station along University Drive in the Northgate corridor thanks to an influx of student-focused, high-rise housing developments.

Over the last decade, five high-rise buildings 10 stories or more have been built or are being constructed in the concentrated area on the north side of Texas A&M's campus. Together, they now make up half of the city's 10 tallest buildings, joined by A&M's O&M Building (16 stories), Rudder Tower (14 stories), the Hilton Hotel and Momentum Plaza (both 11 stories), and Kyle Field (10 stories).

"The population within the city continues to increase, enrollment at A&M continues to increase, and we've seen a lot of that growth focus more in the Northgate area," said

Michael Ostrowski, the city of College Station's director for planning and development services.

More of these are on the way. One of those is Rev Northgate, which is scheduled to open in July at 315 College Main. The 19-floor, student-focused housing building will have 298 units, 802 bedrooms and will be the tallest building in College Station at just under 200 feet.

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"Until someone builds one taller," said David Pierce, co-founder and principal of Parallel, Rev Northgate's developer.

At least two taller student-focused, high-rise buildings are in the works in the area Ostrowski said has become the most dense in town.

A development at the corner of Church Avenue and First Street will be approximately 23 stories, Ostrowski said. As of now, Ostrowski said the developer has only received a height variance from the city's zoning board of adjustments. A site plan or building permit have not been submitted or approved.

Up Campus Properties has submitted site plans for a 20-story building over 200 feet tall with 346 units and 874 bedrooms at 101 University Drive near the intersection of Wellborn Road. A name hasn't been finalized, but is being called Nova Northgate for now, according to an Up Campus official. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2024 and be completed for the fall 2026 semester, according to an Up Campus official.

"We anticipate that growth slowing down somewhat, but the demand for pedestrian-to-campus housing in Northgate appears to be increasing," Tyler Ammermann, vice

president of development for Up Campus, said in an email to The Eagle. "High-rises make efficient use of land around the Texas A&M campus in the Northgate District, and allow a growing student enrollment to access all the resources at A&M and Northgate."

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Building in the Northgate area gives students walking distance access to the university's amenities and the entertainment district, Pierce said. He noted Parallel's student-focused housing developments try to be pedestrian to campus. Parallel also has built three high-rise developments in the west campus area at the University of Texas in Austin, which Pierce said is similar to Northgate. Ostrowski said some of the city's development requirements in the Northgate area are targeted to improve accessibility and walkability.

"The trends across the county that also include our regional schools here in Texas are that fewer kids are taking cars to school," Pierce said. "Now in Texas, it's still a majority of kids are bringing their cars, but there are fewer kids bringing their cars to school than in past years. They've also grown up in an era where walking to a coffee shop is highly desirable, walking to campus is highly desirable."

City officials have been plotting the Northgate development for about 20 years, according to Ostrowski.

The high-rise trend started when The Rise opened as an 18-story building along University Drive in 2013 and became the then-tallest building in town. From 2012 to 2017, Ostrowski said around 1,000 units were added to the Northgate area, which equates to around 3,000 bedrooms. Currently, he said there are about 1,300 units, or 3,200 bedrooms, under construction or in the planning stage.

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"Land prices typically will drive up the heights of buildings, so as you need to acquire more land, it gets more expensive," Ostrowski said, "so you can acquire a smaller piece of land and go up and get the same number of units you need."

A&M's enrollment approached 75,000 last fall and Blinn College officials told The Eagle this week its enrollment is climbing again after taking a two year dip. According to A&M's Residence Life page, there are just over 11,000 students living in the university's 37 residence halls.

Parallel is already constructing another high rise development at 401 First Street, Pierce said. This building is only 12 stories, but will have 341 units and 745 bedrooms and expected to open in summer 2024. Pierce noted College Station's student-focused housing market was overbuilt in the mid-2010s, but now the market demand is beginning to peak again.

"We kind of timed this thing so it would be delivering into that and there's ongoing demand for the next few years," Pierce said. "You'll see several new properties under construction over the next few years to meet that demand. At some point, it may outstrip it again, but the school's growing pretty quickly."

# To fight climate change and housing shortage, Austin becomes largest U.S. city to drop parking-spot requirements

Affordable housing advocates, developers and climate activists say rules requiring a minimum amount of parking spaces on new projects drives up construction costs and enables a dependency on vehicles to get around town.

BY **JOSHUA FECHTER** NOV. 2, 2023 UPDATED: 5 PM CENTRAL

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Austin on Thursday became the largest city in the country to stop requiring new developments to have a set amount of parking — a move aimed at both fighting climate change and spurring more housing construction amid the city's affordability crisis.

The Austin City Council voted 8-2 Thursday to wipe out minimum parking requirements for virtually every kind of property citywide. That includes single-family homes, apartment buildings, offices and shopping malls.

Housing advocates, developers and climate activists across the country have increasingly targeted such rules. **They say parking requirements — often referred to as “parking minimums” — drive up housing costs while enabling dependency on cars, a major source of carbon emissions.**

“I think that it's hard for reasonable people to really defend those mandates anymore,” said Tony Jordan, co-founder of Parking Reform Network.

Major cities have scaled back those requirements in recent years while others like Portland and Minneapolis have gotten rid of them altogether. San Jose, which has only a few thousand fewer residents than Austin, did away with the requirements last year.

Austin City Council Member Zohaib “Zo” Qadri, the proposal's author, said keeping those requirements makes no sense as the city faces an affordability crisis and pumps billions of dollars into expanding public transit.

“It gobbles up scarce land. It adds burdensome costs to developments that get passed on to renters and buyers. It makes it harder for small businesses to get off the ground. And it harms walkability and actively works against our public investments in transit, bike lanes, trails and sidewalks,” Qadri said Thursday.

Getting rid of the requirements has its detractors. Neighborhood groups opposed to such reforms tend to worry that parking will spill over onto neighboring streets and clog traffic.

“Although I think that our existing parking requirements do need reform and there are many scenarios where I would relax or eliminate parking requirements, this universal elimination of requirements is a step beyond what I consider to be prudent,” said City Council Member Alison Alter, who voted against the measure. “I’m concerned that there will be unintended consequences in scenarios that create real problems for navigating areas where residential uses abut commercial uses, particularly in areas that have older, narrow streets.”

Getting rid of the requirements doesn’t mean the city is abolishing parking altogether, Qadri said. Developers still can decide how much parking they need, he said. And the city will still require properties to comply with federal law and build accessible parking spaces for people living with disabilities.

“If we truly want to achieve our progressive goals of making Austin a less car-dependent city, we cannot be forcing developers to provide car storage in every single new project that goes up in our city limits,” Qadri said.

Nixing parking minimums is one component of a multi-pronged effort to relax rules that many say get in the way of adding housing in a city where home prices and rents remain stubbornly high. Austin officials are also weighing proposals to allow up to three housing units in most places where single-family homes are allowed and reducing the required amount of land those homes have to sit upon.

Until now, Austin set out requirements for virtually every way people use land: community gardens, art galleries, funeral homes and restaurants. In a state with a high number of drunken driving incidents, Austin — like other major Texas cities — required a certain amount of parking at liquor stores, cocktail lounges and breweries.

For residential properties, those requirements stifle the amount of housing that can be built and lead to higher housing costs for tenants who may not even own a car, critics of the rules say. Austin has required every single-family home to have room to park at least two cars. For apartments, that requirement was one-and-a-half spaces for a one-bedroom apartment plus half a space for every additional bedroom.



Building and maintaining those spaces is expensive, studies show — a cost that ultimately gets passed onto homeowners and renters. Some estimates peg the cost of a parking spot in a typical surface lot at anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000 — while a spot in a structure like a parking garage can cost between \$25,000 to \$65,000.

An estimate by Austin officials projected that “requiring one additional parking space per unit increases rent by up to [\$200 a month]” while also cutting the amount of units developers can build on the land, which leads to tenants bearing a greater share of the land costs via their rent. Cities like Seattle and Buffalo, New York that have at least retooled their parking requirements have seen more housing put on the ground, some studies show.

"Minimum parking requirements increase the cost of housing construction, risking projects tipping from feasibility to infeasibility," said Matthew Murphy, executive director for the NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy.

Austin homebuilder Scott Turner said Thursday's vote gives developers more flexibility in how much housing they can build now that they don't have to abide by city parking standards, though builders will still create parking because there's demand for it. Turner said he likely will build fewer parking spots in exchange for adding more housing units in future projects.

"The underlying economic benefit is both for the potential developer but also for the purchaser," Turner said. "You're not forced to pay for parking you don't need."

Removing parking minimums also encourages more walkable development, helping reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change, supporters told City Council members Thursday.

“We hope the responsible action today by Austin City Council is seen and understood in the halls of the Texas Capitol and City Halls across our state,” said Jay Blazek Crossley, executive director of the nonprofit Farm & City, a transportation and urban planning advocacy group.

Austin isn't the only major Texas city weighing its parking requirements. Dallas City Council members are eyeing ways to reduce their city's requirements but have also asked city staff to examine whether to nix them altogether.