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Aging NW Austin retail buildings receive facelift

Property owners jump-start renovations

By Lyndsey Taylor

Property owners looking to capitalize on an energized development market in Northwest Austin are renovating retail centers and bringing contemporary design to the area.

Retail and industrial buildings constructed in the 1960s and '70s are ideal for renovations because they can be sustainable investments, said Clay Little, owner of NoackLittle Architecture and Interiors, whose firm designed renovations to two industrial buildings in North Austin.

"From an ownership's perspective, you can buy a building that is really an eyesore for the community, and you can put some money into it and turn it into an asset and do it quicker than you can building a new building or tearing down an old one," Little said. "If that is something that you're into, the most sustainable thing you can possibly do is to maintain

what is already existing."

Modernizing properties

Westover Square shopping center, located at 3501 Hyridge Drive near MoPac, was purchased in late summer by a group of local investors. Renovations to the building's exterior began a few months ago with new lighting, wood paneling and a taller facade, said Kim McGregor, property manager for Granite Properties of Texas, which handles the managing and leasing for Westover Square.

The renovations brought more foot traffic into specialty grocery store Hyridge Grocery, Manager Betty Torres-Qussad said. She said the remodel caught the attention of some drivers who never knew the store existed prior to the renovations. Torres-Qussad, whose brother owns the store, said the store was in danger of going out of business when she

REMODELED SHOPPING CENTER

Hyridge Grocery, located in the Westover Square shopping center, received an upgrade this fall. Business signs for the center are being designed.



BEFORE



AFTER



was hired as manager in February, but the renovations and her desire to increase business helped revive Hyridge Grocery.

McGregor said the renovation

resulted in four renewed leases, one newly signed tenant and a negotiation that is underway for one of the last remaining vacant

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Doing business on Burnet Road

New projects underway as city plans transportation upgrades

By Amy Denney

Along one of the busiest corridors in Austin—Burnet Road—business owners and developers are flocking to open up shop or break ground on new projects that will bring

Economist offers sunny forecast for Central Texas region in 2014

Panel discusses Google Fiber, Dell Medical School, employment

By Joe Olivieri

The Greater Austin area will continue to thrive in 2014, according to one economist.

Angelos Angelou delivered his 29th annual economic forecast Dec. 12.

He predicted that Austin would add 57,000 new residents and about 29,000 new



Road

increase here and population supportive of this area," said [Name], co-owner of Heather Scott [Business] on Burnet Road.

North Burnet/Gateway plan

ern part of Burnet Road runs e North Burnet/Gateway 2035 . The 2,300-acre area is bordered oulevard, US 183, Braker Lane, Walnut Creek and is slated for ity development and mobility nts.

Freundl, senior planner in Aus- ing and Development Review t, said most of the focus of exist- ment in North Burnet/Gateway Burnet Road near The Domain. he has heard of other projects soon be submitted to the city. e to see more activity," she said.

h Burnet/Gateway plan is what rich and his wife, Heather, to 5 acres on the southwest corner nd Braker Lane and transform a o repair shop into the new home ail and design business. The lot almost 0.8-acre parcel that the es are taking offers on for devel-

and I looked at this as an oppor- sentially control an acre and a d corner that moving forward 20 now would be a fabulous invest- s as to owning a piece of Austin," said.

odeled store includes two other ots that the Harkoviches have locally owned Waterloo Jewel- opened Dec. 13, and a local fran- my John's Gourmet Sandwiches, ns in early 2014.

ried hard to set ourselves up with y owned entrepreneurs and busi- arkovich said. "This corner will n sort of vibe."

he North Burnet/Gateway plan will roving mobility because there are est streets, Freundl said. One proj- endeavor Real Estate Group—the behind The Domain and devel- ear TopGolf—is assisting with is Esperanza Crossing from TopGolf ramer Lane. This new road will ot-wide sidewalk and street trees e located near the Kramer Metro-

g to affect the area tremendously se [bike and pedestrian] capacity ed and increase dependability."

Projects would address mobility, quality-of-life and storm drain issues and increase pedestrian access, said Carolyn Perez, public information officer with the city's Public Works Department. City staff is working with a consulting firm to design select projects along these corridors.

"We're not going to be able to address all the needs of the corridors," Perez said. "We're looking at where there are safety issues and how to spend the money wisely."

Supervisor Dennis Crabill in the department's project management division said the selected projects would serve as a demonstration of what both corridors would look like with all the needed improvements. The city's bond development program initially indicated it would cost between \$55 million–\$70 million to make all the needed improvements.

The city will have an outreach program to meet with residents, neighborhood groups and stakeholders to receive input on priority projects.

"It's important to us to manage public expectations," Perez said. "Both corridors are badly in need of attention. We're not going to be able to do everything overnight. We'll have to identify future funding sources."

She said the department will look into future funding sources such as another bond program.

Breaking ground

Endeavor has been spearheading development on Burnet Road across from The Domain. It leases property to TopGolf, which opened in May and was one of the first projects to follow the new North Burnet/Gateway regulations.

In late summer, two projects broke ground adjacent to TopGolf. Abutting Burnet Road will be a 135-room Home2 Suites by Hilton hotel that will open in fall 2014.

Just south of TopGolf is The Addison, an apartment complex that will have 390 units and open in December 2014. The site will have more of an urban feel, Endeavor Principal Jason Thumlert said.

Endeavor has also just started marketing three retail pad sites that will be developed along Burnet Road, he said.

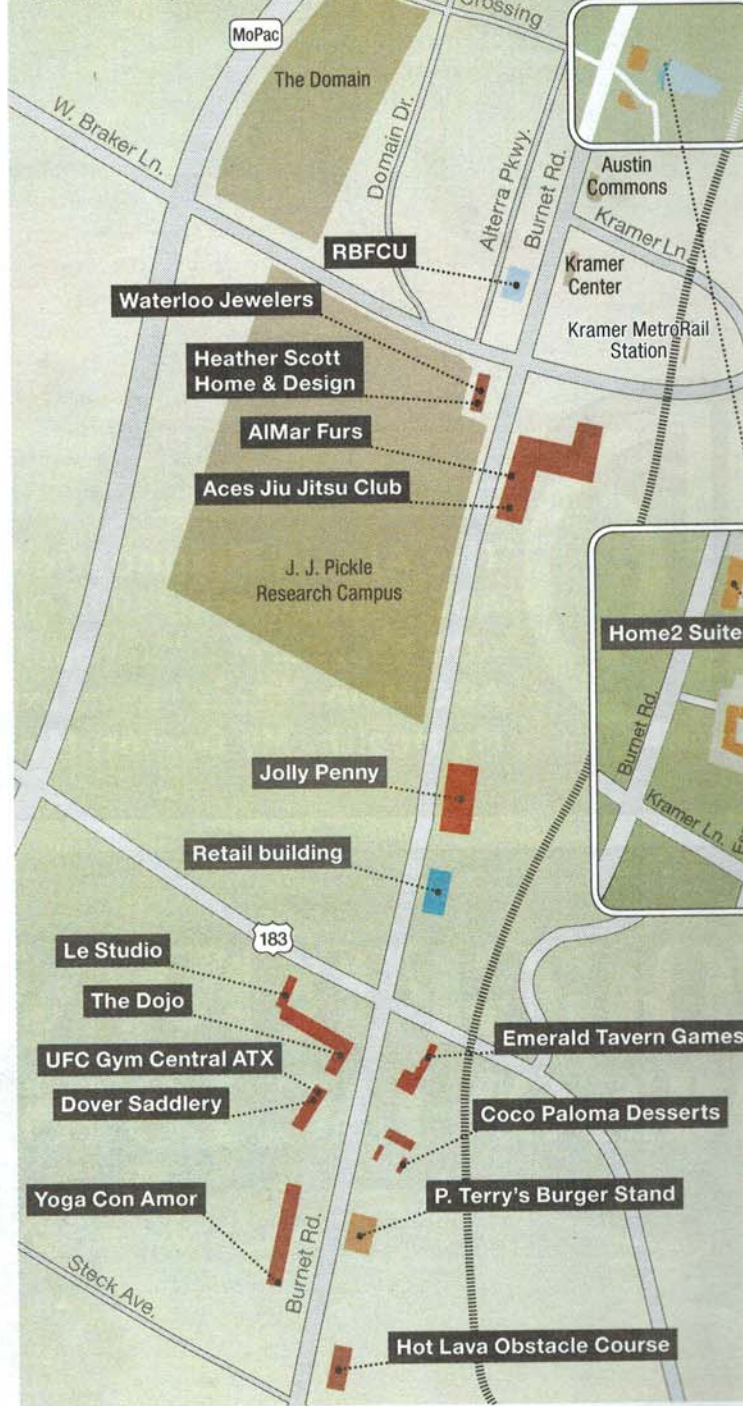
"We think a sit-down casual restaurant with a nice outdoor patio would be a great amenity to the area and could hit a price point that is not currently served in The Domain," Thumlert said.

Because the site is located in the North Burnet/Gateway area, Thumlert said Endeavor was able to attract higher-density projects. The hotel will front Burnet and have access to sidewalks.

"We're glad to have that increased pedes-

BURNET ROAD DEVELOPMENT

Burnet Road north of Steck Avenue is a hotbed of activity with several construction projects underway and numerous new businesses moving in. Construction begins in January on the ninth P. Terry's Burger Stand location. This map does not include ongoing Domain development.



that opened in May. Carr Development completed construction in November on a 3,880-square-foot retail building north of US 183 that will bring more business to the area.

In March, Al Freidin and his wife, Mary-Ann, bought out Koslow's Furs and renamed it AIMar Furs. Freidin said he worked at

TopGolf is a three-complex where player golf balls into targets. The Domain has control of the business, said Br. of operations at the Au. "It's a premier spot,