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GROWTH

Fort Worth suburb aims to transform vacant land into ‘destination’ spot for families

BY ELIZABETH CAMPBELL

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BEDFORD

Bedford officials are taking a bold step forward with plans to turn the city’s largest piece of vacant land into a “destination” with townhomes, outdoor areas and restaurants.

“Bedford Commons is our last remaining tract of land,” said mayor Michael Boyter.

“The city owns and controls all of it. This is our last opportunity for a unique development,” he said.

During the summer, the city council hired the firm [David Pettit Economic Development](#), which helped to shape and develop many projects throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth area including [Mule Alley in the Stockyards](#), [South Point in Mansfield](#), and [Glade Parks and Founders Parc in Euless](#).

Pettit said there isn’t anything like what is being proposed for the Bedford Commons area in northeast Tarrant County.

The concept plan for the land, which is approximately 36 acres, includes 190 town homes where the front yards overlook open green space while parking is behind the buildings, Petit said.

The plan also shows lots of open space for families to gather outdoors with a children’s play area, pavilions and a splash pad. The concept plan also shows an amphitheater with a permanent movie wall and space for restaurants and food trucks.

The boundaries of Bedford Commons are Texas 183 on the south, Bedford Road on the north, Forest Ridge Drive on the west and Central Drive on the east.

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Pettit used the Press Café, which is located at The Trailhead at Clearfork, to show an example of a unique community gathering place with the pop-up farmers market. It is also next to Mellow Johnny's bike shop.

Previously, plans for Bedford Commons included building luxury apartments and the possibility of a new city hall, but the city council and many residents opposed having more apartments, saying Bedford has enough multifamily housing.

Pettit said the city is also looking at plans to create a Tax Increment Financing District or TIF in the Bedford Commons area to fund improvements to the land so that developers can begin projects there.

The council will likely approve the TIF before the end of the year. Pettit estimated that construction could start in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Boyter previously told the Star-Telegram that Bedford was the place to be when he was growing up and said it is time for the city to make a comeback.

"We could not have gotten to the place we are at right now without bringing in a third party," he said.

"We control this land. That makes this project more doable," he said.

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With my guide dog Barbara, I keep tabs on growth, economic development and other issues in Northeast Tarrant cities and other communities near Fort Worth. I've been a reporter at the Star-Telegram for 34 years.