

Column: New apartments will help retain graduates

Chandler Block | Posted: Friday, March 21, 2014 10:00 am

On Tuesday, Arlington City Council approved designs for a new 135-unit multifamily \$20 million apartment complex to be constructed in the downtown area. This apartment is unique in that it isn't reserved for students and is more geared toward the public.

Most of the apartments in the downtown area are reserved for students, and are much newer and updated than the apartments designated for the public. If you are a graduate, or desire to live in the downtown area, your options for rental properties are going to be older, antiquated apartments and townhomes.

This doesn't bring a lot of allure to live in downtown Arlington once you graduate and is a reason many alumni choose to leave the Arlington area once they finish their degree.

Arlington is enclosed on one side by Dallas, which has a growing downtown area, and Fort Worth, which was recently ranked the No. 1 downtown area in the U.S. by www.livability.com. It's no wonder that most students pack up their bags and head out once they finish their studies at UTA, the appeal for the entertainment and nightlife of the rest of the Metroplex is hard to resist.

But Arlington is making strides to change the trend. With the further development of the College Park District, and the introduction of new restaurants, the downtown area is expanding. The old run-down apartments that have been here since the '80s either need to be torn down and replaced or undergo major renovations to improve the structure and amenities.

The approval of the new 404 Border Apartments is a key step by the city council to provide newer rental properties in the downtown Arlington area. Increasing the options for quality, modern apartments will help retain graduates from moving out of Arlington.

One problem with constructing more apartments is the increased parking strain on the downtown area. This problem has many solutions, and the apartments could implement an underground parking garage that wouldn't take up ground-level real estate.

The complexes also could have a select number of spots inside the garage where visitors and guests could park, with elevators and stairwells in place to travel between levels. With a gated entrance and exit, these complexes would resemble the garage used at The Heights on Pecan apartments and would be secure for residents. The introduction of these changes would be beneficial to not only UTA students and alumni, but for the city as well.