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Developers propose \$20 million apartment complex for downtown Arlington

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ARLINGTON — -- Another apartment complex is planned for downtown Arlington, but this time it won't be a crash pad just for college undergrads.

Dodson Development of Arlington and Carleton Residential Properties of Dallas are co-developing a four-story, \$20 million apartment complex on East Border Street near the downtown post office. The 135-unit complex, currently called 404 Border, would be marketed to young professionals, downtown workers and graduate students, faculty and staff at the nearby University of Texas at Arlington.

Developers are counting on factors such as the proximity to numerous offices, restaurants and bars and entertainment venues downtown, the rapidly growing university and the city's new Metro ArlingtonXpress commuter bus service to help make the market-rate complex an attractive housing option.

"We are optimistic there is enough demand in and around downtown and enough people who enjoy the area who would love to live here," developer Ryan Dodson said.

"Our main feature is walkability. Theoretically, someone could work downtown and not need a car."

On Wednesday, the Arlington Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the project. It's on the Arlington City Council agenda for March 18. If approved, Dodson said, construction could begin this summer and be completed within a year.

Lured by UT Arlington's growing enrollment, which now tops 34,000, several private developers in recent years have built or have been approved to build apartment complexes downtown intended for undergraduate students. The two most recent projects are Arlington Lofts, a 169-unit complex planned for 815 W. Abram St., and [Sapphire Inspired Living](#), a complex with about 250 units planned on the university's southeastern edge.

Other private student housing developments, such as Campus Edge apartments and Midtown Urban Student Living, have opened along UTA Boulevard in recent years.

But once students living in those complexes earn their bachelor's degrees, Dodson said, Arlington doesn't have much to offer new young professionals who want upscale apartments with comparable features and amenities that would keep them in the city.

"We are probably losing a lot of these kids to Dallas and Fort Worth and Grapevine because we don't have a lot of good options for them," Dodson said.

404 Border, where the average monthly lease will be \$1,136, is expected to have features such as private garages, balconies, a resort pool and outdoor entertainment area.

Although there was no hand-wringing from neighbors at last week's public hearing, the Arlington school district wrote a letter opposing the complex because of overcrowding at three schools that would be affected — Berry Elementary, Carter Junior High and Arlington High School.

"New multifamily units will strain the capacity of schools serving the area subject to this zoning case," the district wrote.

Creating a variety of housing options, not just student housing, to spur redevelopment is key part of the city's downtown master plan.

"We are looking forward to getting something that is market rate that will bring in graduates and young professionals to the downtown area," said Gincy Thoppil, a city development planning manager.

Housing options would help support businesses that are open long after the 9-5 employees in downtown offices head out on their commute home, Dodson said.

“The general consensus is, for downtown Arlington to continue to grow and be a vital community, it has to have a residential component,” Dodson said. “We have to have more people living down here to support the continued growth of retail and restaurants and the university and city.”

The developers purchased six parcels to assemble the 2.88-acre site for the complex. Three existing buildings will be torn down.

Dodson said he has no plans to seek economic development incentives from the city, which other apartment complex developers have recently done. He said he does plan to seek reimbursement from the downtown tax increment reinvestment zone for significant public infrastructure improvements, including wider sidewalks, burying overhead utilities and landscaping.

Dodson’s other downtown redevelopment projects include Block 300 on East Abram Street, which includes restaurants such as Hooligan’s Pub, Flying Fish and Twisted Root Burger, as well as the Capital Bar, which recently closed.

This includes material from Star-Telegram archives.

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