

Development planned for Lewisville commuter-train station

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By WENDY HUNDLEY / The Dallas Morning News
whundley@dallasnews.com

The A-train commuter railway is more than a year away from rolling into Lewisville, but plans are already in the works for the city's first transit-oriented development.

Hebron 121 Station will be part of a 427-acre city reinvestment zone on the northeast corner of Interstate 35E and the State Highway 121 bypass. The developer is describing it as the largest transit-oriented development in Texas. Huffines Communities Inc. is the primary developer of the project.

"Most [transit-oriented developments] are in more urbanized areas and are on smaller properties," said Elizabeth Trosper, economic development specialist for Lewisville. The city will pay for infrastructure improvements on the vacant land through a 30-year tax-increment financing plan.

"We don't know of any other projects of this size and scope," said Phillip Huffines, co-owner of the Dallas company that is also developing a mixed-use community in Arlington.

Hebron 121 Station is expected to break ground next spring on a 90-acre tract that will eventually include more than 1,700 apartments and 20,000 square feet of commercial space. Huffines said the project will take five to eight years to complete.

At build-out, the project, which could cost \$200 million to \$250 million, is expected to include a sports pavilion, amphitheater and athletic fields.

Lakes, creeks and a large pool will be key elements in the project. The Elm Fork of the Trinity River will form the eastern boundary at the Carrollton border. A bridge, forming the main entrance to the community, will be built across Timber Creek. The creek will be flanked by a boardwalk and hike-and-bike trails.

Lewisville will own and maintain almost 150 acres that will be devoted to hike-and-bike trails, lakes and green space surrounding the project. About 14 acres will be set aside for civic uses that have yet to be determined, Trosper said.

When fully developed, she said, the area could have more than 450,000 square feet of retail and office space. Another developer, Peregrine Development, owns a 25-acre tract at I-35E and the State Highway 121 bypass that will probably be devoted to commercial space.

The project will be built around the Hebron Station, one of five stops along the 21-mile A-train line.

"It will provide housing that will be immediately accessible to transit, retail and major employers," Trosper said.

The Denton County Transportation Authority's commuter line is expected to be completed to Lewisville by December 2010 and eventually reach Denton. A-train passengers will be able to transfer to DART's Green Line in Carrollton and continue to Dallas.

While the Hebron 121 Station project will probably be Lewisville's biggest transit-oriented project, city officials hope similar developments will spring up around the city's other two A-train stations – in Old Town and on the southeast corner of Garden Ridge Boulevard and I-35E.

"Transit-oriented development is going to bring about a change in the way people think about Lewisville," Trosper predicted.