

AT&T lab adding space, jobs in Austin

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AT&T Inc. is growing in Austin with a newly signed lease for 73,000 square feet in the Davis Spring Corporate Center in far Northwest Austin.

The space will be a Mobility Technology Lab, said Kathryn McClelland, a spokeswoman for AT&T, but the company is not yet providing details about what work will be performed there.

AT&T has a testing lab with about 300 employees and contractors in the Arboretum area, said Pat Orman of AT&T corporate real estate.

At that lab, manufacturers submit new wireless devices, including smartphones and tablets, for AT&T to test and certify for use on its network, which is the largest in the U.S.

Orman said the company plans to staff the Davis Spring lab with new local workers, with a couple of exceptions, including someone the company will probably bring in to head up the operation.

McClelland said it's too early to say how many people will work in the new lab.

AT&T Labs' expansion is "great news for Austin," said Dave Porter, senior vice president of economic development at the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce.

"AT&T is a great corporate citizen, and the fact they selected Austin for this major expansion speaks volumes about our talented workforce and the success they have had in Austin," Porter said.

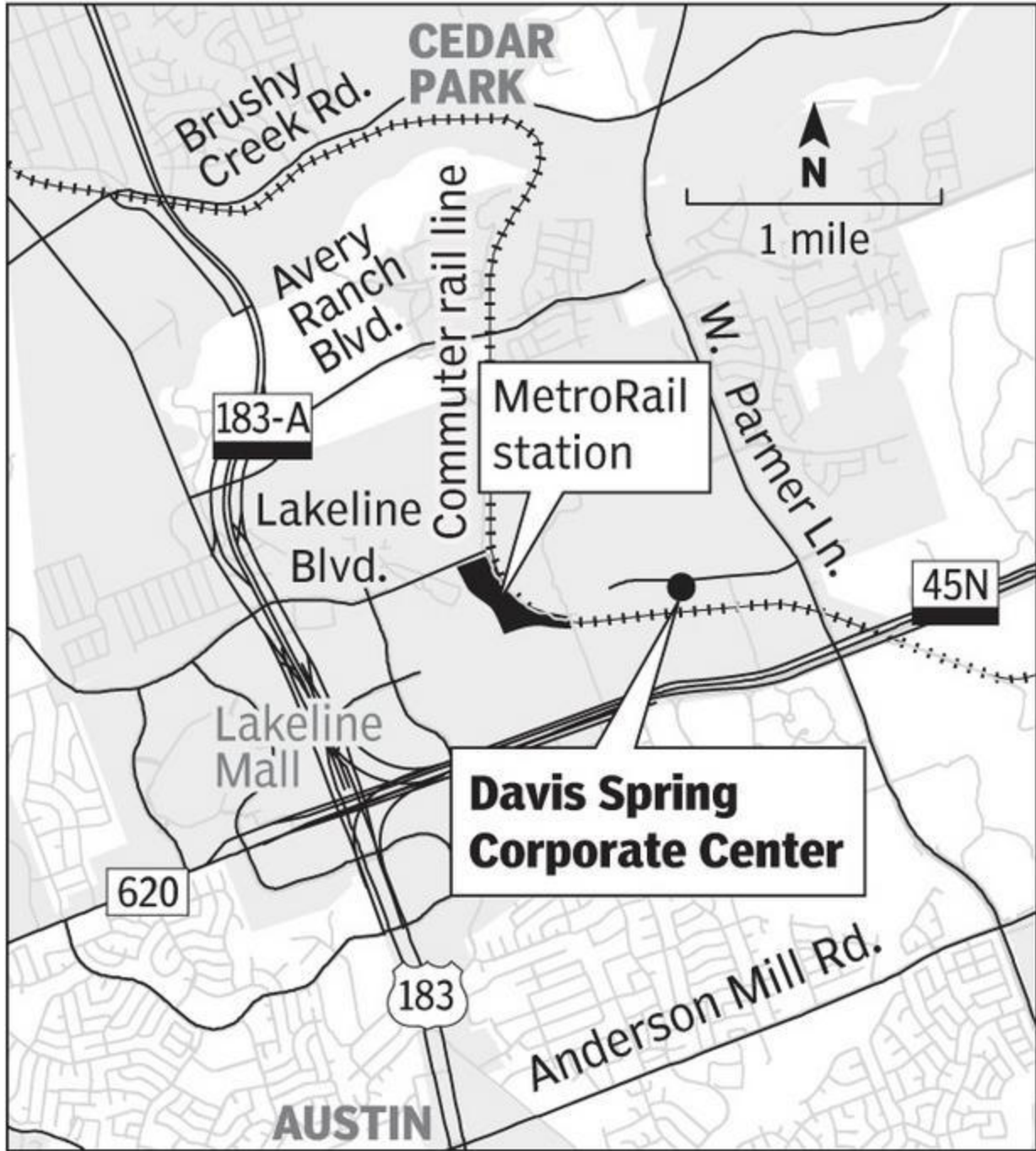
Orman said AT&T will make "a substantial investment in finishing and equipping the space," though she declined to specify an amount.

When AT&T announced its planned \$39 billion buyout of T-Mobile USA last week, one industry analyst said AT&T's Austin testing facilities "are going to be front and center in the industry," because any device not meeting the testing standards will be locked out of a bigger part of the market.

The Davis Spring Corporate Center, at Parmer Lane and Spectrum Drive just north of Texas 45, was developed by HPI Real Estate Inc. It has four one-story buildings, which are suitable for office or industrial use and total 270,000 square feet.

With AT&T's lease in Building 4, the complex is 98 percent leased, making it a success story in a part of the region where other new office buildings have had trouble finding tenants.

Other tenants there include Blizzard Entertainment and Endocare Pharmaceuticals.



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Courtesy of JB Goodwin