

600-acre project set for Georgetown

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A development planned for Georgetown could add up to 2,500 homes to the area and bring a second "old town" to the city.

Goodwater, a 600-acre, mixed-use project slated to be built at the northwest corner of Shell Road and State Highway 195, will be built in gradual phases that are planned to mimic the historic feel of Georgetown's existing town square, says David Singleton, president of Austin-based Southwest Land Services Inc., the project's developer. The development got its name from the Tonkawa Indians' designation of the Georgetown area as the "Land of Good Water" hundreds of years ago, he says.

Singleton, who purchased the land two years ago, declines to say how much he bought the 600 acres for or give the development's projected cost, but says it will not be a subdivision that's thrown up quickly. Rather, Singleton projects Goodwater could take 12 to 15 years to complete, and will rely on custom homebuilders instead of national firms. The plan calls for narrow, tree-lined streets, front stoops and homes elevated slightly above sidewalk level. The largely residential project will also incorporate some retail aspects, Singleton says, that will mostly be neighborhood services.

"We hope to be able to cause people to rethink what we do and how we do it," he says of the project's neotraditional methodology and design. "The way we've always done it is maybe not always the best way. It's a labor of love for all of us involved."

The first phase, which is beginning the entitlement process now, will have about 700 homes and 45,000 square feet of retail in a neighborhood center.

When it's built out, Goodwater will have a 40-acre lake and greenbelt in its center. The lake, which has been carved out of the land's bedrock, will provide some construction materials for the development's roads, Singleton says. Many of the trees that will eventually line the streets will simply be transferred within the property, he adds, so that the effect of leafy, shaded streets will be almost instantaneous.

Singleton says when he first decided to do the project he looked at sites in San Antonio and Austin, but picked Georgetown because of its business climate and already-existing historic downtown.

"I've been doing this since 1982, and it's the most developable piece of dirt I've ever come across," he says of the Georgetown site. "We are distanced from the old town and Georgetown's town square so that we'll become almost a secondary old town."