28-story condo/hotel set for Domain area

New hotel called Twelve would join plans for two others.

By Shonda Novak
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF
Saturday, May 12, 2007

Atlanta-based Novare Group plans to build a 28-story condominium and hotel tower in North Austin, the tallest building outside of downtown, as part of the massive Domain project.

Novare and its Austin development partner, Andrews Urban, plan to break ground on the tower, **Twelve Domain, in the spring of 2008.**

It would be part of a project that is expected to eventually transform 176 acres into 8 million square feet of residences, hotels, offices and stores, including Austin's second Nordstrom.

The project, near North MoPac Boulevard (Loop 1) and Burnet Road, is being developed by Austin-based Endeavor Real Estate Group LLP.

The tower will house about 360 condominiums atop a boutique hotel called Twelve, which Novare developed.

The only existing Twelve hotel is in Atlanta at Atlantic Station, but two more are under construction, a second one in Atlanta at Centennial Park and the other in Charlotte, N.C. The Twelve hotel in Atlanta made Condé Nast's 2006 list of the top hotels worldwide.

Among other features, the rooms at the Twelve hotel in Atlanta have computers, dubbed Ghosts, that act as concierges, allowing guests to make dinner reservations, request valet or housekeeping services in addition to browsing the Internet.

Twelve will join a second hotel planned for Endeavor's project, an **Aloft, a boutique brand of Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.**

The six-story Aloft is being developed as a joint venture between Open Hospitality Partners, a Dallas-based development firm, and Lodgeworks of Wichita, Kan.

Groundbreaking for the Aloft hotel is expected late this year, and it could be open by late 2008, said Mark Masinter, a partner with Open Hospitality.

Conceived by the Starwood team that developed its upscale W brand, the first three Aloft hotels are under construction in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., Lexington, Ky., and the Dallas suburb of Las Colinas. Starwood plans to have 500 Aloft hotels open worldwide by 2012.

The Austin Aloft will be "a fun place to stay," Masinter said, offering business travelers "a boutique (hotel) experience." The hotel, Masinter said, will have a "cool bar," automated check-in services and rooms starting in the mid-$100-a-night range.

The project is just east of the high-end Domain shopping center, whose anchor tenants include Austin's first Neiman Marcus.

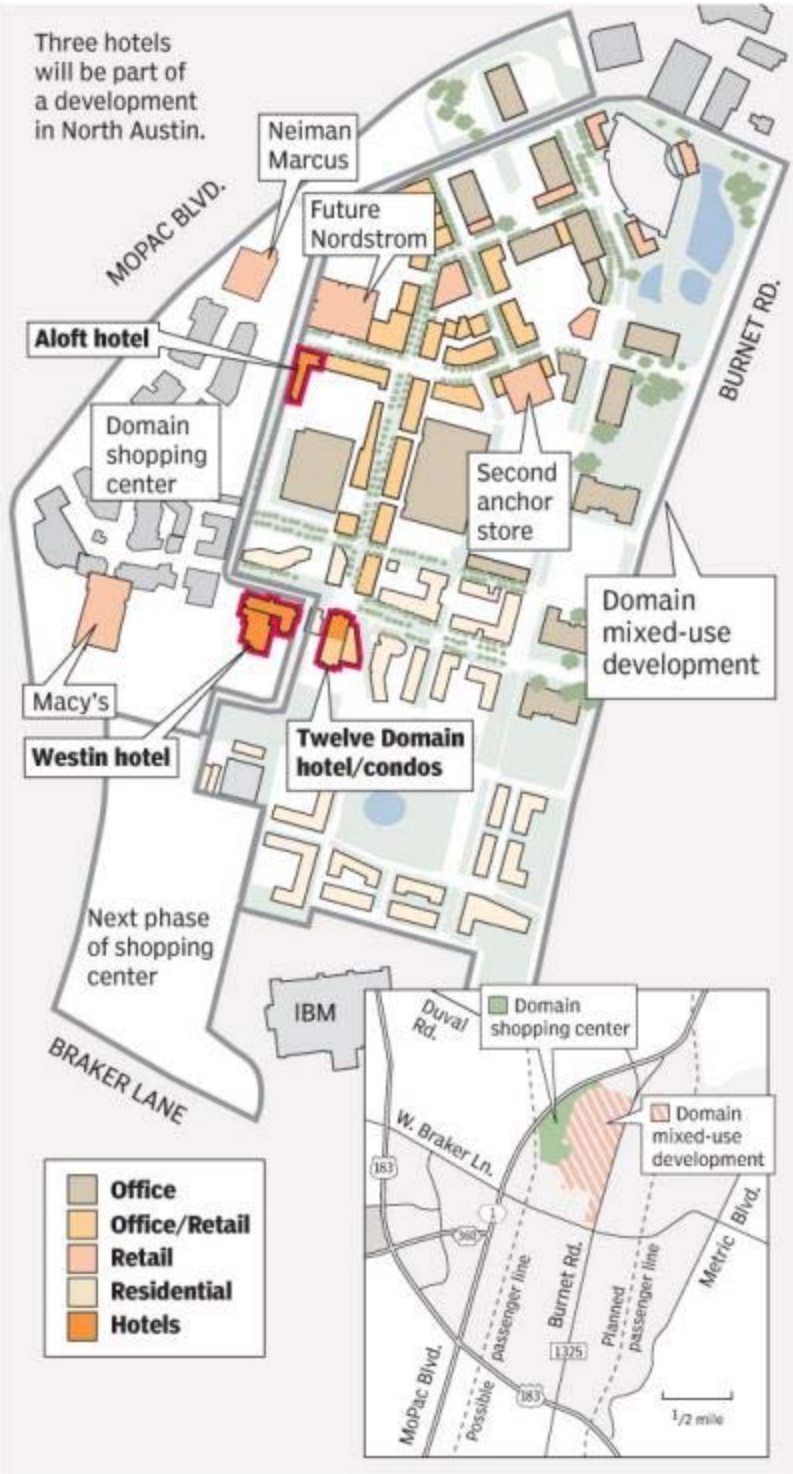
A third hotel, Austin's first Westin, is planned in the next phase of the Domain by Simon Property Group, the nation's largest mall developer.

The Domain was the brainchild of Endeavor, which later brought on Simon as a partner. The outdoor shopping center, the first new regional mall in the area in a dozen years, opened in March with dozens of high-end retailers atop 390 luxury apartments.

Simon plans another retail project just south of the Domain, near its existing Shops at Arbor Walk also along MoPac.

Simon has not said when the Westin will break ground.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin



Mary Coppinger AMERICAN-STATESMAN