

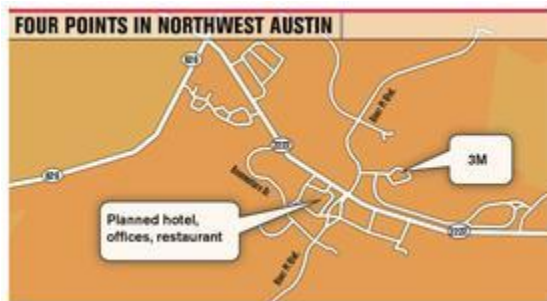
Hotel, offices head to Four Points

Marriott operator to serve area near lake

Premium content from Austin Business Journal by Vicky Garza, Staff Writer

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Construction on 40,000 square feet of medical offices and a hotel in Northwest Austin's Four Points community could start by the end of the year.

River Place Pointe LP owns most of the 23-acre River Place Center, which includes tracts for 125,000 square feet of professional office space, a restaurant and a United Heritage Credit Union that is scheduled to open in December. It has sold some tracts to other developers: Operating River Place LLC, which is building medical office space; and Pacifica Cos., which is building the hotel.

Operating River Place plans to develop River Place Medical and Professional Center, which will consist of two 14,000-square-foot buildings and an 11,000-square-foot building. The center will have space available for purchase and lease for medical specialists, dentists and other health care professionals. Operating River Place expects to break ground in November.

"The growing population, traffic and activity in Four Points is key for us," said **Todd Dailey** and **Kyle Froelich** with Operating River Place.

Especially of interest are the nearby schools and the Steiner Ranch and River Place neighborhoods, Dailey said.

The anchor tenant will be a family medical practice and urgent care clinic headed by Dr. **Michael Vik**. Like his two other locations in Lakeway and Bee Caves, the clinics will be open seven days a week with no appointment necessary.

The practice fills a need for medical services in the area. Four Points doesn't have much in the way of urgent care. The closest clinic is near Lakeline Mall, said **Ray Freer**, chairman of the Four Points Chamber.

"As rooftops continue to expand, the need for more medical services will continue to grow," said **Jeff Coddington**, a partner at Oxford Commercial who was briefed on the development.

Especially of interest to Coddington was the hotel development, which he said fills an unmet need in that sector among out-of-towners conducting business west of town. River Place Center is across the street from a research and development site for 3M and down the road from the 333-acre Four Points Center, which consists of retail, office and residences.

Moreover, there's a lack of lodging in the middle price range, Freer said.

Pacifica Cos., which owns and operates hotels under the Marriott name, bought the lot at the back of the property to build a 125-room Marriott Residence Inn. It's expected to break ground in the fall.

River Place Pointe is in talks with a couple of potential purchasers for the restaurant site. **Jim Gallegos** of Aquila Commercial, the brokerage listing the property, said the River Place neighborhood indicated that it wants a sit-down restaurant.

The owners of River Place Center are exploring many options for the remaining seven acres zoned for offices, such as multifamily and assisted living.

"We have a lot of office space available for lease in the area right now," Freer said.

River Place Center has been in the development process for about five years — slowed by the down economy.

The land had been bought by Aspen Growth Properties Inc., a general partner in River Place Pointe, around 2007 to "protect its front door" because it also owned the office buildings behind the property, said Gallegos, former Aspen senior vice president who now handles assets and entitlements at Aquila Commercial.

In the original site plan submitted about four years ago, River Place Pointe had only asked for a site development permit through a managed growth agreement for five years. After \$1.5 million was spent on infrastructure for the mixed-use development, the economy went down and development slowed.

"We ... have diligently marketed and moved forward with this planned mixed-use development. Due to the market fluctuation, we need additional time to complete our project," Gallegos wrote in River Place Pointe's application asking the city to extend its site plan by five years. The city is expected to authorize the extension later this month.

The owners were fortunate to be able to hold on to the property and wait for a use the neighborhood wanted — a mid-priced hotel, medical offices and a local restaurant — instead of selling the property low, Gallegos said.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin