

**NORTHEAST TARRANT**    OCTOBER 1, 2015

# Mixed-use development planned around North Richland Hills Tex Rail station

BY GENE TRAINOR

*Special to the Star-Telegram*

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS — A mixed-used development aimed at young professionals and akin to the booming West Seventh Street corridor in Fort Worth is in the works for the area near a planned rail station.

Sitting north of the recently completed North Tarrant Express project and running parallel to the Cotton Belt rail line, Iron Horse Village will eventually include 469 high-end apartments, though initially 257 apartments will be built in the first phase, said Robin McCaffrey, an architect and planner who is coordinating the project for Dallas-based developer Dan Smalley.

Called a “transit oriented development,” the estimated \$70 million project will play off a planned station for the TEX Rail commuter rail that will link downtown Fort Worth and Dallas-Fort Worth Airport. The apartment complex will be a few hundred yards from the rail station and within walking distance of shops and restaurants in North Richland Hills, Tarrant County’s third largest city.

“I don’t actually have to own a car if I don’t want to,” McCaffrey said. “Only a few places can offer that capability.”

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## THE DEVELOPMENT WILL SIT NORTH OF THE NORTH TARRANT EXPRESS.

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Iron Horse Village will be part of a 100-acre development plan that will be divided into sections, city planning manager Clayton Comstock said.

Comstock said once the multifamily developments are built, “retail will come naturally.”

Another section is mostly commercial and could feature office buildings up to 10 stories high in an area fronting Loop 820/North Tarrant Express. That area now houses a Sam's Club, WalMart and other big-box retailers. City officials hope that the option to redevelop that section into office towers will prevent businesses from just leaving empty big-box buildings should they ever leave their present site.

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# 257

apartments planned for first phase

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The train station is expected to open in 2018 when the rail line begins service. Other stations are planned for Fort Worth, Grapevine, Haltom City, Dallas/Fort Worth Airport and the Smithfield neighborhood of North Richland Hills, according to the Fort Worth Transportation Authority, which is overseeing TEX Rail.

The first floors of the buildings in Iron Horse Village will be marketed as business space, but the developer may allow tenants to live there, depending on how quickly restaurants, shops and bakeries move in, McCaffrey said. The buildings in that section will be limited to four stories, Comstock said.

"Our style is not going to be some sort of retro image of the 1890s," McCaffrey said. "It's going to be a more contemporary style structure for the younger, more hip market. I think we can offer everything that they're looking for."

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STRUCTURE FOR THE YOUNGER, MORE HIP MARKET.**

Robin McCaffrey, an architect/planner

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Construction is expected to begin in about seven to eight months. The first apartments should be available in spring 2017. McCaffrey said he did not know what rents will be, but they will be at least what is being charged in the HomeTown NRH planned development

off Boulevard 26. Apartment owners there charge monthly rents anywhere between about \$900 for a 628-square-foot loft apartment to about \$3,000 for a 2,400-square-foot, four-bedroom apartment.

The final section, north of the transit area, will be single-family homes, town houses and some businesses, Comstock said. He said he expects single-family homes to dominate in that section of the development.



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