

Convention center, hotel plan unveiled

By ALAN TOMCZAK

A proposed new development near The Rivery shopping center was unveiled Monday afternoon at the City Council work shop.

To be called "The Summit at Rivery Park," the development is planned for 28 acres of land off Rivery Boulevard bordering Rivery Park and will include a large hotel, office building and convention center.

Marlene McMichael, Planning and Zoning board member and government relations specialist in Georgetown said that the site was originally planned for strip-mall type retail centers but that once developers from LedgeStone group saw it they decided to better use its natural beauty of the river and bluff.

The 280- to 420-room, eight to 10 story hotel, which Ms. McMichael compared to the Four Seasons in Austin, will include an attached convention center with space for 1,500 to 2,500 people.

"Right now there is no convention center in Williamson County with a capacity over 500," Ms. McMichael said.

The hotel could have a "huge impact on the city's hotel occupancy tax," Keith Hutchinson, public information officer for Georgetown, said in a meeting at the Sun

on Monday. He estimated that the hotel could double hotel capacity for the city depending on the final number of rooms.

Mr. Hutchinson also identified two aspects of the project that would have a big influence on Georgetown: the amount of Class A office space it will provide and the hotel with attached convention center.

He could not yet say how much revenue the project would bring to Georgetown.

The site will also have an office building up to six stories high with 120,000 to 240,000 square feet of Class A office space, which is defined as upscale executive and appealing to a higher end crowd.

Dan Clark, vice president of development for Austin-based LedgeStone, described Georgetown as being under serviced for

lodging. "There is no high end Class A hotel . . . no convention space . . . the closest is in Round Rock," Mr. Clark said.

"The parks and trail systems are your diamond in the rough," Mr. Clark said. He described the area as being unique and not replicable and that the core of the project would be Rivery Park itself.

"The real benefit of development is the continued work on the park," Mr. Clark said. This would include the removal of invasive species and the incorporation of the old oak trees on the site.

The Summit could set itself apart from Round Rock's hotels through its vicinity to Interstate 35 and ease of access, Mr. Clark said.

The total development is envisioned to be about 650,000 square feet, close in size to the Wolf Ranch shopping center, which is about 750,000 square feet.

Depending on the scale of the project it is expected to be cost about \$80 million to \$100 million, funded through private investment.

LedgeStone is still seeking a flagship chain for the hotel and an anchor tenant for the office building.

One issue that will need to be addressed will be height restric-

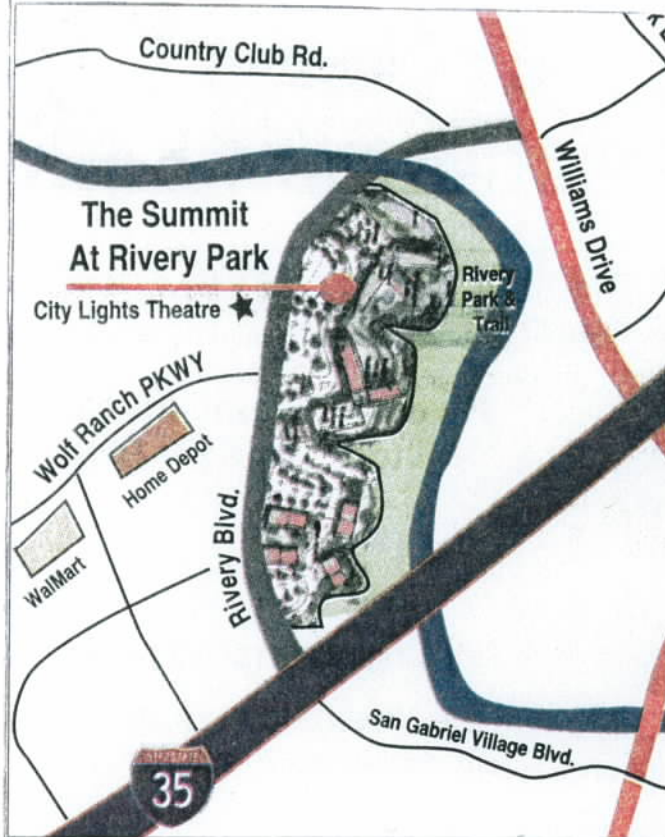
tions for any building on the property.

Mr. Hutchinson said that the development would not have any issues with obstructing the view of the courthouse in downtown because it is on the west side of I-35.

LedgeStone will also seek to have the area zoned separately from the current Rivery Development area.

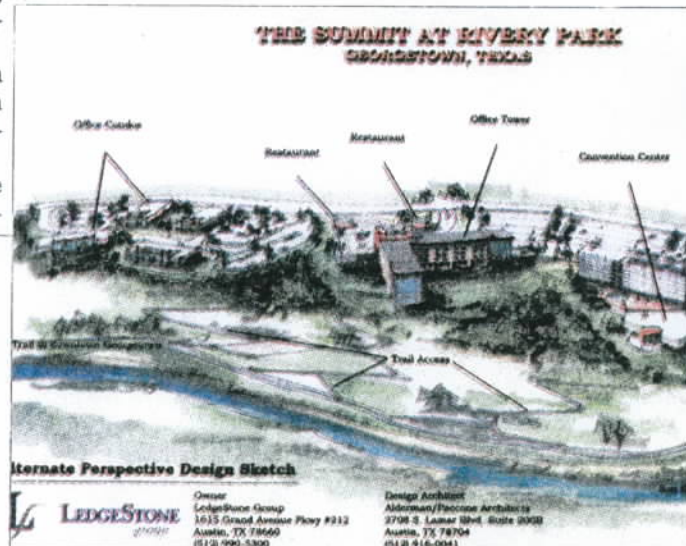
Paul Brandenburg, city manager for Georgetown, said that the west side of town should be looking to go vertical with new building rather than horizontal because of the expense of land and environmental issues such as the preservation of natural areas and water drainage.

Development activities will begin early next year, and the project is expected to take two to three years after work begins.



Compiled by

The location of the proposed Summit at Rivery Park is planned for land off Rivery Boulevard, shown here just off I-35.



A rendering shows the layout off the proposed development of a convention center area in Georgetown. This illustration was provided by the developer.

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