

Espada North under way on South Side

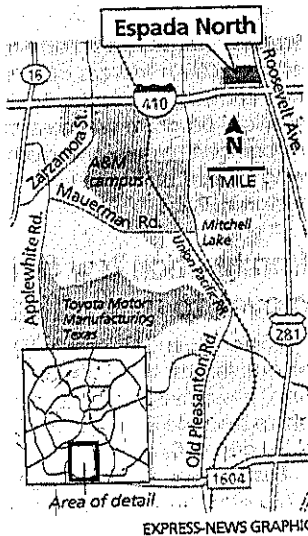
First phase to include Subway, other retail sites.

BY CREIGHTON A. WELCH
cwelch@express-news.net

Why would anyone want to develop a new retail project in this economic climate? And on San Antonio's underserved South Side nonetheless?

"One of these days, there are going to be a hell of a lot of people here," said Jack Walker of Walker Enterprises LLLP.

Walker Enterprises is developing a 120-acre mixed-used project along Loop 410 and Roosevelt Avenue called Espada North. The first phase includes 14,000 square feet of retail space. Though construction is well under way, the developers held a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday.



EXPRESS-NEWS GRAPHIC

Subway has signed a lease, and brokers are working with several other prospective tenants. The first phase likely will draw restaurants and a bank, and future plans could involve a grocery store, movie theater, hotel and apartments.

Though long in the shadow of development in other areas of San Antonio, the South Side is home to several new projects that in the future could turn that part of San Antonio into a popular destination, especially as the North Side fills up.

"It clearly was an area that was going to happen once developers ran out of land up there," Walker said.

Perhaps the most notable addition to South Side is the Texas A&M University-San Antonio campus, which became official on May 23. The campus eventually could have 25,000 students and is part of a larger 2,700-acre mixed-use development along Loop 410.

"This is just the beginning of what this whole South Side expects to gain from A&M," City Councilwoman Jennifer Ramos said.

Aside from Texas A&M, the city of San Antonio has created a tax finance zone and is developing a Roosevelt Corridor Reinvestment Plan, both of which include Espada North and are meant to help spur investment in the area.

And Bexar County recently voted to free up \$182 million to continue work on the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Improvements Project, which will run just east of the Espada North development.

All of these projects are expected to help draw residents and commercial projects to the area, one of the earliest of which is Espada North.



CREIGHTON A. WELCH/cwelch@express-news.net

Espada North, a 120-acre mixed-use development at Loop 410 and Roosevelt Avenue, is officially under way.

"(The South Side) is a jackpot place to be."

CINDY TAYLOR
South San Antonio chamber

"We have known forever that this commercial hub would work," South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce President Cindy Taylor said. "This is a jackpot place to be."

Boulder, Colo.-based Walker Enterprises has partnered with San Antonio's Rohde, Ottmers & Siegel Realty to help develop and lease the project. The two have been assembling and re-



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The first phase of Espada North includes 14,000 square feet of retail and eventually could add a grocery store, movie theater and apartments.

zoning the land for the past eight years.

Stillwater National Bank financed the construction loan for the project.

And San Antonio's Batchelder Construction is the general contractor while Villa Park Architects is the design and architecture firm.