

# Hold on to your (hard) hats!

March 22, 2017



Dirt is being moved at the Legacy Oaks – an assisted living center – construction site on Southeast Parkway, north of Avondale Avenue. Photo by Carla Noah Stutsman

## **Development on the rise in Azle; population could explode**

### **BY CARLA NOAH STUTSMAN**

Strong growth in the city of Azle and along the so-called Northwest Corridor that generally runs along Hwy. 199 has long been predicted.

The time is at hand.

Voters within the boundaries of the Azle Independent School District approved a \$59.5 million bond project to build two new elementary schools – among other improvements – in November 2016 based largely upon anticipated growth in student enrollment.

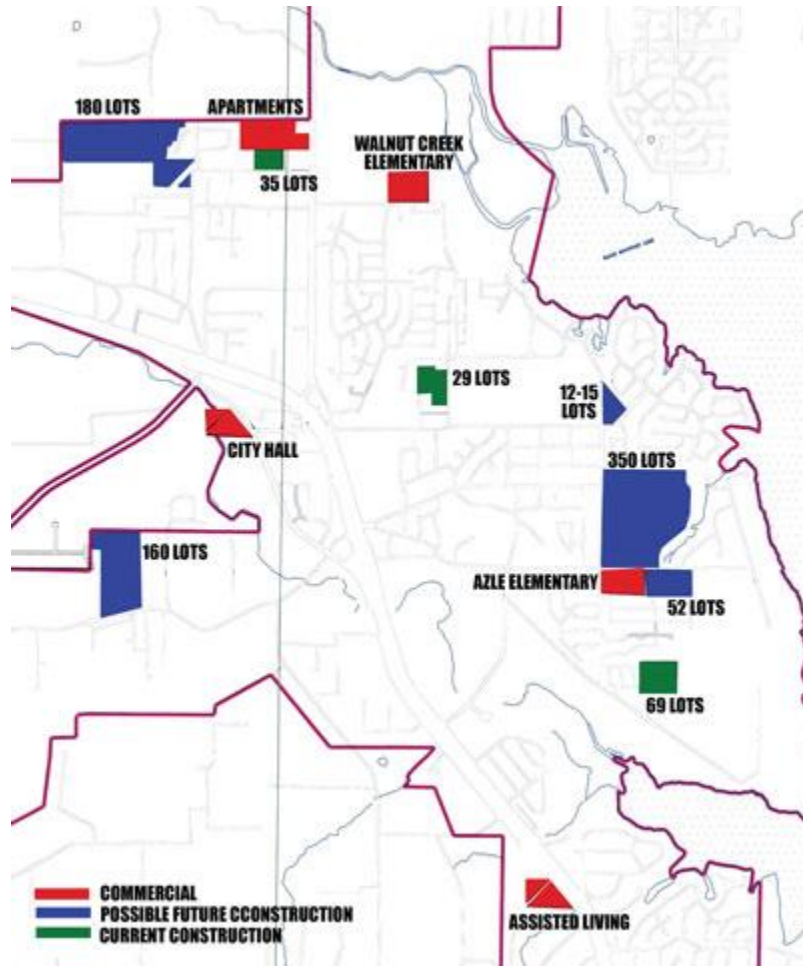
The Azle city council at its March 7 meeting heard an update from Development Services Manager Greg Mitchell about current and potential development in the city. Mitchell told the council the city may not issue as many new home permits during calendar 2017 as it did in 2016 – 17 – because of a current lack of available lots upon which to build.

Historically, the city of Azle issued 52 permits for new residential construction during fiscal year (Oct. 1-Sept. 30) 2012-13; 46 permits in FY 2013-14; 120 permits in FY 2014-15.

During FY year 2015-2016, the city issued 174 permits – that number approximates the number of permits for calendar 2016.

However, several developments are underway now, and there is the potential for as

many as 750 new residential lots coming available inside the city limits over the course of the next year, Mitchell said.



Expansion is coming to Azle; home construction permits have blossomed from previous years.

### Current development

Work has already commenced on the development of 35 lots on Walnut Creek Drive, 29 lots on Kimbrough Road, and 59 lots in Ashwood Park Phase II just off Park Street. Dirt work is ongoing at the Walnut Creek Drive site.

Developers of the Kimbrough Road site have submitted stormwater plans and set up erosion control; clearing of trees has begun.

At Ashwood Park Phase II, D. R. Horton has installed sewer pipe and some of the required stormwater system; installation of the water system is slated for this week, and will be followed by street construction.

Mitchell said he thinks it will be about two-and-a-half months before permits are issued for any homes there.

### **Non-residential building**

More than \$90 million in non-residential development is on the horizon in Azle, as well. That includes the construction of a new Azle Elementary at the corner of Ash Avenue and Lakeside Drive, a new Walnut Creek Elementary on Stribling Drive, and a new city hall and police department in the 500 block of West Main Street.

Site work has already commenced on a 224-unit apartment complex just to the west of Boyd Road and north of Walnut Creek Drive.

Likewise, dirt is turning for an assisted living facility with 197 units in the 1400 block of Southeast Parkway, north of Avondale Avenue.

Construction is well underway on an expansion at the National Bank of Texas on Commerce Street.

In addition, several companies have announced plans to expand.

Those include Integrated Machine Solutions (IMS), on Hwy. 199 at the western edge of Azle, with plans to construct a 6,000-square-foot expansion; Russell Feed & Supply, which plans a 5,000-square-foot expansion; and VWMB Industrial Refrigeration, LLC on Southeast Parkway, which will add 2,320 square feet to its existing facility.

### **Potential development**

Several properties in Azle have drawn interest from developers, who are in various stages of performing due diligence before making final plans.

In plain English, they are projects that may or may not come to fruition, Mitchell said.

“Some of these are properties where we have met with developers, some are under contract and doing due diligence, and some are beyond due diligence and are preparing to submit [plans] to the city,” Mitchell said.

The properties vary in size, from the potential for 12 to 15 lots up to the potential for 350 lots.

The smallest of them is located just inside the entrance to Oak Harbor Estates and is part of the original filing for that subdivision. The project could bring 12 to 15 new homes to the city.

Adjacent to the location of the new Azle Elementary – to the east on Lakeview Drive – developers for Bristol Farm Phase II have submitted a preliminary plat for the development of 52 lots.

Directly across Lakeview Drive from AE’s proposed new location, yet another developer is under contract for a 92-acre tract.

The property’s west boundary is North Ash Avenue, and its north border is the south end of Oak Harbor Estates.

The developer is in the process of performing its due diligence on the property before deciding whether to continue pursuing its purchase.

The location could yield more than 300 lots, Mitchell said.

North of South Stewart Street, directly across from Golden Pond Estates, a developer is under contract for about 150 lots to be developed in three phases.

Finally, another developer is performing due diligence on a acreage northeast of the intersection of Walnut Creek Drive and Redbud Drive, and west of Blue Meadow Drive.

That property has the potential to add as many as 180 lots to the tax rolls in Azle.

## Impact on Azle

Karen Dickson, Azle's municipal development director, said growth in Azle is "organically happening."

With the Walsh Ranch development to Azle's south bringing 50,000 people to the area in the next few years, other developers are naturally looking at locations nearby.

Favorable land prices are also a factor in bringing development to Azle, Dickson said.

She multiplied the number of potential housing units of 1,301 – 421 multi-family units and 880 single-family units – by the average household size in the city – 2.2 people – to reveal a potential population increase of 2,862 in the city.

To illustrate that number, Texas Gazetteer estimates the current population of the city of Springtown at 2,940; Reno's is estimated to be 2,608.

Even if every project in the due diligence stage doesn't bear fruit, all evidence points to one thing: The growth is coming.

<b>Under Construction or Soon to Be</b>	
Apartment complex - 224 units	<b>Total \$90 million Capital Investment (red only)</b>
Assisted Living facility - 197 units	
National Bank of Texas	
Walnut Creek Elementary	
Azle Elementary	
Azle City Hall/Police Department	
<b>Residential Development Under Construction</b>	
<b>199 lots, Summer 2018</b>	
Walnut Creek - 35 lots	<b>1,301 Total Housing Units (green and blue)</b>
Kimbrough Road - 29 lots	
Ashwood Park - 69 lots	
<b>Due Diligence - 747 total lots</b>	
Walnut Creek Dr./Redbud Dr. - 180 lots	<b>421 Multi-Family Units</b>
Oak Harbor - 12-15 lots	
N. Ash Ave. 92 acres - 350 lots	<b>880 Single-Family Units</b>
Bristol Farm Ph. II - 52 lots	
S. Stewart St. - 150 lots	
<b>Upcoming Commercial Expansions</b>	
Russell Feed & Supply - 5,000 sf	
Integrated Machine Solutions - 6,000 sf	
VWMB Industrial Refrigeration - 2,320 sf	