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## West Side rooftops spurring another retail development

San Antonio Business Journal - by [Tricia Lynn Silva](#)

An out-of-town developer has inked a contract to purchase a couple of sites in one of San Antonio's premiere communities.

The buyer is being represented in the deal by real estate veteran Mike Hoover -- who, citing the pending deal, is divulging few details about the group at this time.

What Hoover has confirmed, however, is that his client has put a total of 47 acres of land under contract for purchase. All of the land is located within Alamo Ranch, a new master-planned community in the works on the city's West Side.

In all, Alamo Ranch spans 3,100 acres of land bordered by Loop 1604, State Highway 151 and Culebra Road.

Plans for both tracts are still in the early stages, says Hoover, who is the vice president of real estate firm **D.B. Harrell Management Co.** The early plan, does, however, call for upwards of 140,000 square feet of retail, restaurant, financial institutions and office space, Hoover says.

The deal, which is expected to close during the first quarter of 2007, marks one of the latest land plays at Alamo Ranch, which ranks among the fastest-growing residential sectors in West San Antonio.

### Firm plans

The first tract that Hoover's client has under contract encompasses 18 acres of land at the northwest corner of Culebra Road and FM 1560. Plans for this site call for the prospective owners to develop roughly 60,000 square feet of in-line (attached) retail space. Another 6 to 8 acres could be carved up as pad sites that would accommodate another roughly 15,000 square feet of space -- which could include a mix of restaurants, bank branches, and office space, Hoover says.

Hoover's client has also inked a contract to purchase 29 acres along State Highway 151 and Lone Star Parkway. Here, the developer looks to construct about 50,000 square feet of in-line retail space.

Again, several tracts could also be set aside for office, restaurant and other retail uses.

With both pieces of land, the prospective owner plans to do all of the infrastructure work -- from roads, to utilities to platting the land.

"We're not just buying land and thinking that we could do something with it in the future," Hoover says. "Both of these are planned, mixed-use developments.

"This is a well-thought-out plan, and we'll go to market with those plans," he adds.

Hoover is coordinating the infrastructure work on behalf of the prospective developer.

Lending their expertise to the two projects are San Antonio firms **Pape-Dawson Engineers Inc.** and Villa Park Architecture.

### **Retail multiplier**

With both developments, the aim will be to bring in users that can complement the growing retail on the West and far Northwest Sides, says Hoover -- especially the big retail anchors that occupy the larger centers. Two examples are the projects at Loop 1604 and Culebra: Culebra Market, which includes an **H-E-B** store; and The Shops at Culebra, which is anchored by The **Home Depot**.

A project that Hoover's client will be watching closely is the new behemoth development by Irving, Texas-based **Archon Group**. Also known as Alamo Ranch, this 900,000-square-foot center will be an integral part of creating an identity for the entire Alamo Ranch community.

While no names have been announced for Alamo Ranch to date, retailers like **Target** and **JCPenney** have been mentioned by local real estate industry observers.

Just as important, says Hoover, will be to bring in the uses that can cater to the tens of thousands of houses that are in the works on the West and far Northwest Sides. Over the next five years, the Alamo Ranch development alone is expected to add some 15,000 homes to the landscape.

"This is the most dynamic part of San Antonio," says Stephen Stransky of San Antonio-based **Stransky Properties**. Stransky is representing the sellers in Hoover's pending deals -- a group called 151 Development, which presently owns the 18 acres at Culebra and FM 1560; and **H2W Ltd.**, which owns the 29 acres at Hwy. 151 and Lone Star Parkway. "And it all started with Brad Galo," Stransky says.

Galo is the local businessman who originally assembled the 3,100 acres that make up Alamo Ranch.

Over the past few years, Galo has succeeded in selling off some major acreage to homebuilders like **Pulte Homes** and **DR Horton**.

But this area was booming long before Alamo Ranch, notes Jack Inselmann, who is the vice president of the U.S. Central Division of **Metrostudy** -- a leading provider of housing information. Since 1980, the West Side has accounted for 30 percent of the new-housing market in San Antonio.

And things aren't likely to slow down any time soon.

"You head on to (FM) 1560 from Culebra, all you see are bulldozers," Hoover says. "Two to four years from now, this area is going to look completely different."

### **Alamo Ranch**

What: One of the city's newest master-planned communities

**Where:** Spans 3,100 acres of land bordered by Loop 1604, Culebra Road and State Highway 151

**What's new:** Out-of-town developer has inked a contract to purchase a total of 47 acres within Alamo Ranch for commercial development

**How much:** Early plans call for upwards of 140,000 square feet that could include a mix of retail, restaurant, office development

**Who:** The prospective buyer is being represented by Mike Hoover of D.B. Harrell Management Co.

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