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A RIVER RUNS

WHAT'S NEXT FOR MOORE'S RIVERWALK DISTRICT

THROUGH IT





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THROUGH IT

by Brent Wheelbarger

On the phone is an excited Terry Moore, a land developer in Dallas, Texas. His company has targeted the Moore Riverwalk as the next big growth zone in the region, and he intends to play a large role in making it so. He explains his future plans with a tone that's enthusiastic and contagious, much like the Riverwalk itself. What started as an unsightly drainage ditch between I-35 and Telephone Road has blossomed into a retail magnet unlike anything Moore has ever seen. Just ask the business owners already located there.

a retail magnet ...

Terry Moore, a land developer, describing the potential of the Riverwalk

Doing Business On the River

"I would lose a lot of business if I didn't have eateries and different things within walking distance," says Billie Sadorra, General Manager for LaQuinta Inn. "A lot of people fly in, and if they don't have to rent a car, they don't want to. Just having all of that around is close to half the reason why we get guests here."

These guests spend quite a bit of time walking the waterway, shopping in the stores and eating at the restaurants. Each time a new business opens in the area, it's music to LaQuinta's ears.

"Every business excites me because it just increases my business," says Sadorra. "It's just another

amenity to offer our guests. It's a pleasant area. It's not just stores and parking lots."

Just downstream is a brand new business on the Riverwalk, Fun to Sew Creative Sewing Center. Originally located in Edmond, the company needed to expand into a high growth area. The Riverwalk drew them in. "I think it's conducive to people wanting to come out and walk from store to store. It's almost like a mall but you're enjoying the beauty of the outdoors," says Pam Gosnell, Owner of Fun to Sew. "If you go outside of Oklahoma and into other areas, this is what they're doing. They're developing these charming settings for retail businesses. If we don't do it, then we're behind. It's an excellent thing to do."

A bit further downstream is the new Earl's Rib Palace. According to owner Steve Mason, "We think it's a hotspot. And actually, we have a store in Bricktown that does very well; it's our best store. And we think this store will do better than Bricktown. We are very confident. It's about thirty percent bigger. And then, on the nights that Bricktown is really busy, it's really busy. And then you have some nights where it's not quite as busy. Where as here, I think every night will be at a peak capacity. So this store will beat Bricktown."

Earl's was the first restaurant to open after the Riverwalk was built, allowing it to maximize the location. The restaurant was designed with dining rooms facing the water and stairs connecting to sidewalks along the waterway. In short order, future developers followed suit. Developers like Adam Saxton, who built the new McAlister's Deli and directly behind it, the Moore Town Shopping Center which currently houses Fun To Sew and a Mazio's Italian Eatery.

"The Riverwalk right now brings attention to our project," Says Saxton. "I know the city of Moore has done a lot to promote the





Riverwalk and a lot of people in Moore are aware of it. Over time, as it becomes used more as a park and a walking area and the city really starts to embrace it, I think it will just bring more traffic and more people to that area. I hope the shopping centers and restaurants will benefit from that.”

Lifestyle Centers

Saxton's Moore Town Shopping Center located behind McAlister's Deli may be a preview of things to come along the Riverwalk. Across the country, developers are moving away from the “strip mall” concept and going with more unique storefronts. According to Saxton, “We build our shopping centers in order for them to have a boutique style feel for each tenant. We like the varied storefronts, different use of materials and different colors, so that each tenant can stand-out on its own. We utilize design techniques often

found on lifestyle centers in much larger markets.

We take some of those and apply them to smaller developments in smaller markets like Moore.”

You may have noticed the term “lifestyle center” in Saxton's comment. It's a term we'll be hearing a lot more of in the coming months and years. Lifestyle centers will likely shape the future appearance of the Riverwalk area. According to Deidre Ebrey, Moore's Economic Development Director, “A lifestyle center is an open air shopping area, more like a town square. They are characterized by unique architectural features, lots of landscaping and generally smaller stores. Sometimes they even incorporate parks and water features.”

Looking Into the Crystal Ball

Paying a visit to Deidre Ebrey's office in Moore City Hall is much like looking into the proverbial crystal ball. There is almost always a new site plan on her desk, a new proposal from a developer, an aerial view of the city with new retailers and restaurants scribbled in the blank spaces. Lately, one plan in particular is dominating her attention...that of Terry Moore's Riverwalk lifestyle center. Terry's company has been involved with major projects in San Antonio, Las Colinas and if things go his way, Moore. His plan is to build a lifestyle center at the southernmost part of the Riverwalk, accompanied by restaurants extending out over the water.

According to Terry, “We're going to take advantage of and utilize that river. We're going to take four of our pad sites and push them up to the river as much as the City of Moore will allow us to do. We

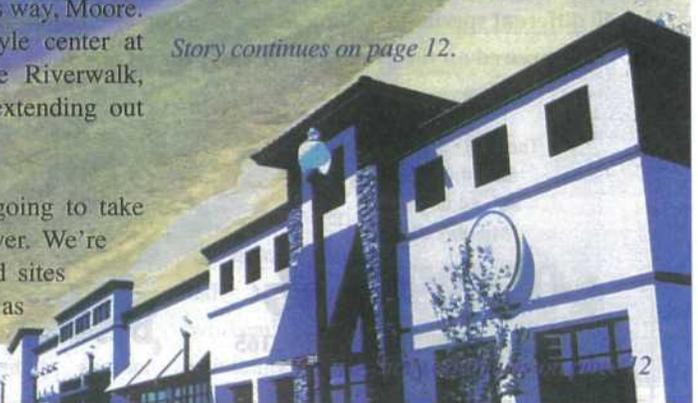
...moving away from the “strip mall” concept...”

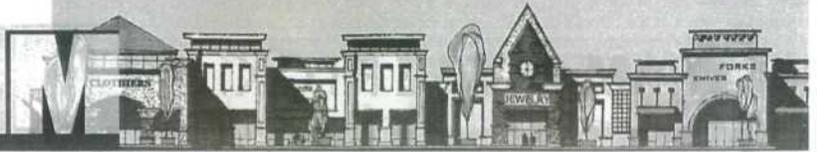
A growing trend of boutique style storefronts will be seen at the Riverwalk; a feature currently visible at Moore Town Shopping Center.

plan to extend the dining areas out over the river. People can come out and sit over the river, relax and hear those Canadian Geese. We're hoping the landscaping and walkways will be extended, and that another bridge will be added to tie it all together. The waterfront pads will have two front doors. There will be one door facing the lifestyle shopping center. Then we'll have a real nice backdoor that will open up onto the deck and a cantilever with staircases that will go down to the Riverwalk sidewalks. You could actually be out walking on the Riverwalk and stop to eat and meet some friends or whatever. We're trying to make it very people oriented.”

The site plan calls for a U shaped lifestyle center to be situated immediately behind the riverfront restaurants. It will connect to the river with its own water features. “We're planning on having a stream that will come through with water,” says Terry. “We're planning to have cobblestone pathways that connect the shopping center to the parking lot to the streams. The stream from the retail center will cascade with waterfalls on down into the main river. At night, we intend to really light it up. We'll make it sexy.”

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In keeping with the lifestyle center dynamic, the shops themselves will have varied storefronts, something like those found in the Moore Town Shopping Center development. Plans call for colorful banners, Victorian style columns and vintage parking lot lights. All this combined with the cobblestone pathways, cascading waterfalls and the riverfront restaurants make for a “can’t fail” development...maybe.

Reality Check

According to Ebrey, nothing is certain. “This isn’t happening yet. This is how the process starts. Developers come in, they get excited about a piece of land and they check with an architect and an engineer to see if it’s even possible. When this is confirmed, then they get more excited. They go out and see how many retailers would be interested in coming there. If they get enough retailers interested, then they’ll go ahead and close the deal. If retailers don’t have any interest whatsoever, then they go on down the road and find another one.”

Terry is already having some interest from retailers. If things continue at the current pace, he foresees starting construction within two to four months and having the facility up and running within a year. Ebrey says this timeline may be a bit optimistic, but not out of the question. “Many times, retailers need a year or more to lock in a site. But if the site’s of enough interest, they will sometimes move that up. In the case of JC Penny’s across the street, they moved their Moore site up on the list of new locations because of their interest in the area. The same could happen here.”

In the meantime, Saxton’s Moore Town development also has plans for expansion, directly adjacent to Shoe Carnival. According to Saxton, “There’s room there to build a 7000 square foot building that will attach and actually share a wall with the Shoe Carnival. That will either be one larger 7000 square foot tenant, or we can break that up into smaller tenants. We’ll break ground on that as soon as the Mazzio’s is up and running and a couple of the other tenants we’re working with get open. The design of that building will be in keeping with the theme of the rest of the shopping center.”

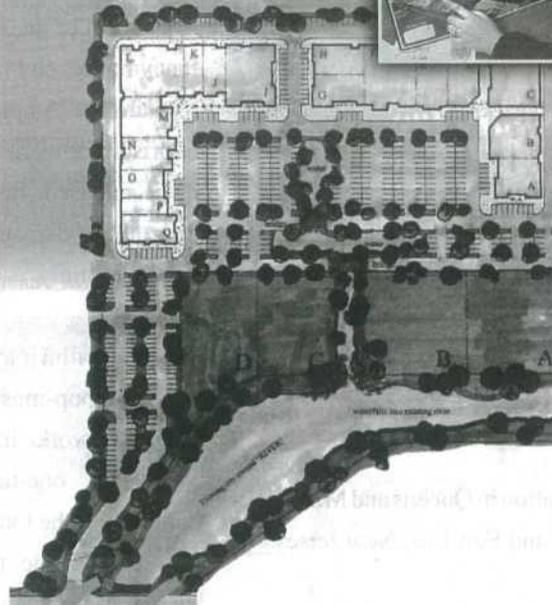
Seeing the Same Vision

Whether Terry Moore’s waterfront lifestyle center comes to pass or not, there is no doubt new developments are on the way for

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Deidre Ebrey
Dir. of Economic Development
showing a site plan
of the Riverwalk District.



It's a breath of fresh air.

Terry Moore is encouraged by how open the City of Moore is to plans for the Riverwalk.

the Riverwalk District. The City’s vision for the area is very much in line with what developers are looking for. According to Terry, “We and the city are seeing the same thing. That’s the beautiful thing about this project. The City of Moore has been outstanding. They welcomed us with open arms. It’s a breath of fresh air. They’re saying, we’re in between a booming Oklahoma City and booming Norman, and we want a part of it.”