

## Denial of Sewer Connection Kills Restaurant Plan

By Dru Murray, Contributing Writer

The Bartonville Town Council last month shot down a revitalization plan for the shuttered Bartonville Store.

Council members rejected a request by a developer to access sewer service at the intersection of McMakin Road and Jeter Road for a proposed restaurant.

Local entrepreneur Rick Hopper of Lantana recently submitted the only bid to purchase Bartonville Store from the Town of Bartonville. The property at the corner of McMakin and Jeter has been vacant since February 2013 and not serviced by sewer.

Hopper was proposing to convert the store into an old-time Western-style restaurant that would serve breakfast and lunch, and be fronted by a hitching post for horses.

No stranger to Bartonville, Hopper owns the old Bartonville Water Corp. building next door to Bartonville Town Hall that serves as the headquarters of his ReadeREST magnetic eyeglass accessory business.

In honoring their promise to keep Bartonville rural, council members Jim Langford, Jim Murphy, Clay Sams, Jeff Traylor and Mayor Pro Tem Jaclyn Carrington disapproved extending sewer service to the intersection on the basis that it may open the barn door for more development.

A large number of residents turned out to express their opposition to the project.

Jeri White spoke for many in her comments about the proposed restaurant, saying, "As a concerned Bartonville resident, I urge you to vote against additional sewer connections in our



Photo by Dru Murray

Rick Hopper speaks with good humor after the Bartonville Town Council rejected sewer service to the old Bartonville Store.

town. Our citizens have voted for you in good faith on a promise to keep Bartonville rural. Additional sewer services will open the door to high-density developers such as Argyle has succumbed to. Please do not be swayed or intimidated by special interest groups who do not have a rural Bartonville in mind. Our town is very desirable and any business lucky enough to locate

# THE CROSS TIMBERS GAZETTE

May 2017



Photo by Dru Murray  
Bartonville Town Council members Jim Langford,  
Jim Murphy, Clay Sams and Jeff Traylor.

here should be willing to honor the town guidelines.”

“We don’t want to be like Argyle,” objected resident Pat Adams.

Before casting her vote, Mayor Pro Tem Jacyn Carrington said, “Most of those in Bartonville are against the project, so I cannot support it.”

Place 4 Council member Jim Murphy said, “Long term, not installing sewer service is a firewall against further development. I have had many conversations with people and their concerns over sewer need to be addressed.”

Though Council member Jim Langford of Place 5 voted against allowing sewer service at the intersection, he warned, “We need to look ahead when Bartonville Town Center Phase II is built out. Now, it’s a fact that those two corners [NW and SE Jeter/McMakin] are the ugliest corners in the town. At some point, we will have to make hard decisions.”

According to Mayor Bill Scherer, the messages he received from Bartonville residents were running two to one against extending sewer service.

“We have to watch this. It takes

one council to change a town,” noted Scherer in response to concerns about the provision of sewer services possibly prompting more development. After the vote, Scherer told Hopper, “We appreciate the proposal.”

In Hopper’s address to the town council, he said, “I am not a developer. I want what’s best for the community. If you don’t like me, it’s because you don’t know me. I want to do something on that corner and make America—I mean Bartonville—great again.”

In answer to the mayor’s question of “What do you want to do?” concerning whether Hopper was willing to follow Bartonville’s sewer plan by using septic on the property, Hopper replied, “I don’t know. I will get back to you.”

Hopper later told The Cross Timbers Gazette that he plans to walk away from the project.

“This was a great learning experience. I have become well educated on Bartonville. It’s a great place, and the townspeople are committed to keeping it that way. Sadly, it’s as great as it will ever be. In the foreseeable future, nothing will change.”

# DENTON RECORD-CHRONICLE

AN EDITION OF THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

LOCAL \ STATE

DENTONRC.COM

Sunday, May 14, 2017

Denton, Texas

## Houston set for \$3B water project

By Dylan Baddour  
Houston Chronicle

HOUSTON (AP) — Any Houstonian who's ever stalled out in a rush-hour gully washer, swatted mosquitoes on a humid summer afternoon or hauled soggy carpet to the curb after a neighborhood flash flood will be forgiven for thinking the supply of water is one thing they needn't worry about.

The *Houston Chronicle* reports indeed, throughout the city's first century, the settlers and entrepreneurs who settled here tapped into generous underground stores of water to flood rice fields or run refineries. In 1939, government scientists reassured residents the local water table should be fine even if average pumpage should reach 50 million gallons daily.

But the decades kept passing, the city kept growing and the wells kept multiplying. Officials watched the level of the water underground steadily drop as daily pumpage at times exceeded 450 million gallons. Regional aquifers were depleted as millions of people and businesses drilled ever deeper.

Subsidence problems were documented, and experts came to recognize the supply could not keep pace with demand.

Now, after decades of public meetings and engineering consultations, environmental-impact studies and design proposals, a solution is in the works on a massive scale: a \$3 billion, three-part chain of infrastructure projects to carry water more than 40 miles westward from the Trinity River and provide a lifeline to the northern region and burgeoning suburbs from Spring to Tomball to Katy.

The undertaking involves moving water 3 miles over a ridge and into a 23-mile canal that will feed Lake Houston.



Melissa Phillip, Houston Chronicle/AP

Jeffrey Benjamin, project director, walks along the shore of Lake Houston near where the new intake structure will be built for the Northeast Houston Water Plant expansion in Humble.

Thanks to a five-fold expansion of the water treatment plant there, the water will be pumped through 17 miles of pipe large enough to drive a car through.

The construction and related work should employ about 2,500 people, according to estimates from the city and the builder of the canal.

"It's the biggest water project in the country right now," said Michael Bloom, a manager at R.G. Miller Engineers. "It's a world-class project, really visible if you're in the water sphere."

Other planners say the local project could be the largest water job underway in the world. It is bigger than any other included in a recent report on infrastructure investment authored by the international engineering firm AECOM for the U.S. Treasury.

That you probably haven't heard about it is no surprise,

said Dave Rexing, a member of the American Water Works Association water utility council and development manager of the water authority serving Las Vegas. Such life-giving endeavors often are under-appreciated, he said, no matter that water "is the basis of life."

"The infrastructure has largely become an unnoticed asset," he said.

But this project, financed by the state of Texas' water fund, is an attention-grabber. Northwest Harris County pumps billions of gallons from underground each year.

As wells have sunk deeper, some hit salty water. Others in nearby Montgomery County stretched for nearly a mile into water that came up hot and smelled like sulfur. Drilling so deep is expensive, but the region currently has no alternate source.

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"There is a finite ability of the Gulf Coast Aquifer to produce water," said Wayne Klotz, president of the Coastal Water Authority. "Nobody has ever determined what would happen if we pumped it so hard that the water pressure sunk below the aquifer, and nobody wants to find out."

The CWA broke ground in March on the canal, dubbed Luce Bayou for the natural waterway beside it, the first of the segments of the system to begin construction.

Lake Houston doesn't have enough water to wean the entire region off groundwater, so the canal will import water from the Trinity to boost its capacity. The river, in turn, is fed by Lake Livingston, which the city has owned water rights to since the 1960s.

Outflows from Lake Livingston will be increased to send water down the new canal. Moving that much water could have environmental consequences along the way to Galveston Bay, although the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has said it expects them to be "minimal."

Other environmental groups are less confident, although none have organized a strong pushback.

"Every time that you change the flow of rivers you're going to have impacts on the bay, but we don't know exactly what those impacts are going to look like," said Paula Paciorek, water resources coordinator for the Galveston Bay Foundation.

Studies already initiated still "need to be completed so that we know what we are up against," she said.

The chain of projects, should they go forward and wrap up on schedule, will fundamentally shift how this region gets its water within 10 years.

"For a couple of decades they've been planning this," said Jeffrey Benjamin, project director for the five-fold expansion of the Northeast Houston Water Purification Plant expansion project.

Mackrena Ramos, senior associate at LAN, an engineering firm that specializes in water infrastructure and is program manager for 11 of the pipeline's 13 segments, said a major challenge has been clearing the pipeline's course through urbanized areas, acquiring real estate and planning to divert other utility lines.

Where possible, work crews will be drilling underneath roadways to build in public rights of way without disrupting traffic, she said.

That pipeline should be completed by 2021. Another 7.5-mile length will carry water to a proposed pumping station on Texas 249. Another 40 miles of 8-foot-wide pipe will carry water farther west into Fort Bend County.

Work on the water treatment plant expansion is set to begin this summer and be completed by 2024.

The Texas Water Development Board has pledged about \$3.2 billion in low-interest loans from the State Water Implementation Fund of Texas to finance the combined projects. Costs will be split between the city of Houston and five regional water authorities in Harris and Fort Bend counties in an effort to meet long-term needs.

# DENTON RECORD-CHRONICLE

AN EDITION OF THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

DENTONRC.COM

VOL. 113, No. 291 / 20 PAGES, 3 SECTIONS SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2017

DENTON, TEXAS

## Aubrey cuts ties with administrator

By Britney Tabor  
Staff Writer

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Matt McCombs is no longer the city administrator in Aubrey, Mayor Janet Meyers confirmed Friday.

A terms-of-separation agreement between McCombs and the city is currently being negotiated, she said.

The *Pilot Point Post-Signal* newspaper reported McCombs' last day was Thursday.

Meyers on Friday declined to comment on when McCombs' employment with Aubrey ended, how long he'd been employed, the grounds for the separation agreement and when it could be completed, and whether it would go before the City Council for approval. She also declined to comment on how soon Aubrey anticipates looking for his replacement.

"I have nothing else to say until negotiations are completed," Meyers wrote in an email Friday.

According to McCombs' page on LinkedIn, he started working for Aubrey as its city administrator in March 2015. Previously, the University of North Texas alumnus was employed nearly four years by the town of Addison and served in several roles, including assistant to the city manager, city secretary, assistant city secretary and a management analyst.

An attempt to reach McCombs for comment Friday was unsuccessful.



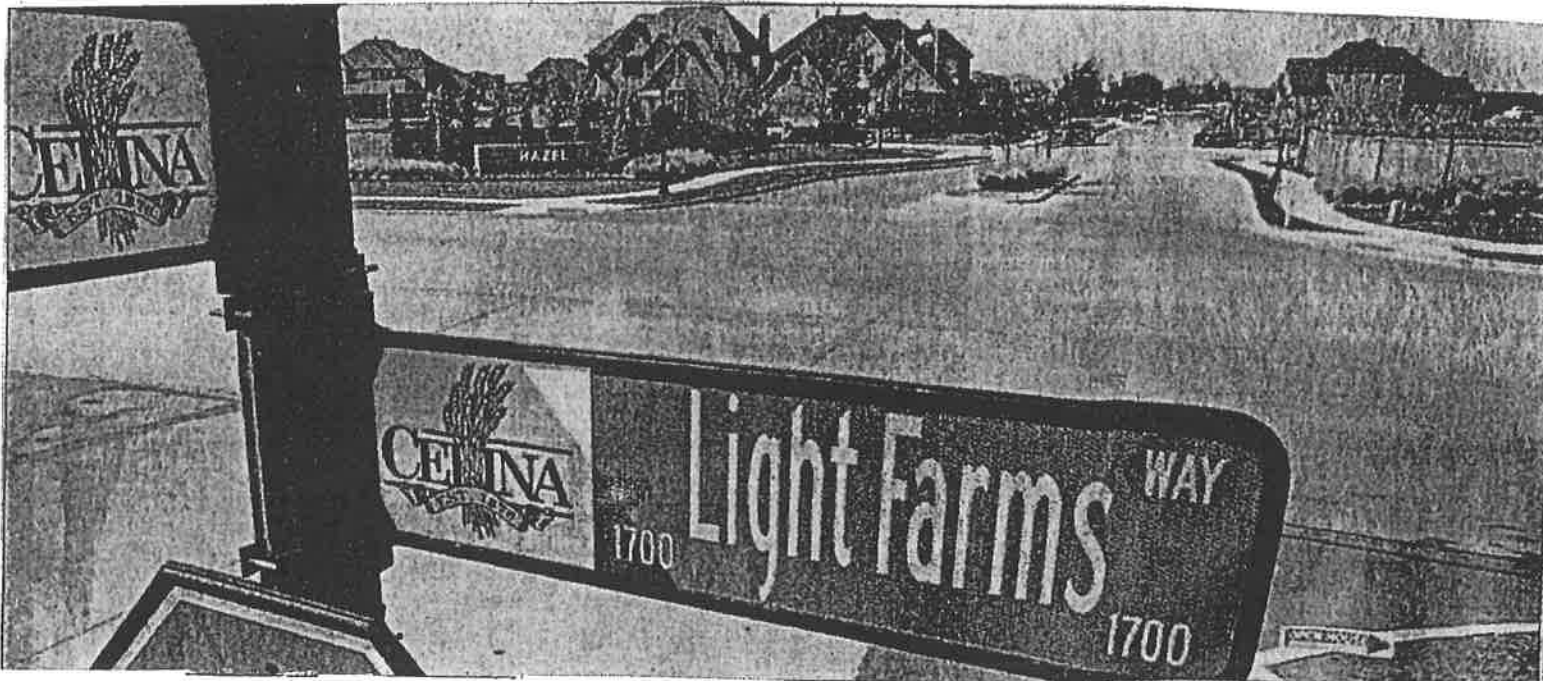
# The Dallas Morning News

Dallasnews.com

Monday, May 15, 2017

## The race for housing

Supply low, prices high as automaker, other companies move in



Photos by Jae S. Lee/Staff Photographer

**Light Farms, a master-planned community** in Celina, has seen a number of Toyota workers move in. The strong demand for housing caused by corporate moves has created one of the biggest home shortages in the Dallas-Fort Worth area in decades.

By **STEVE BROWN**

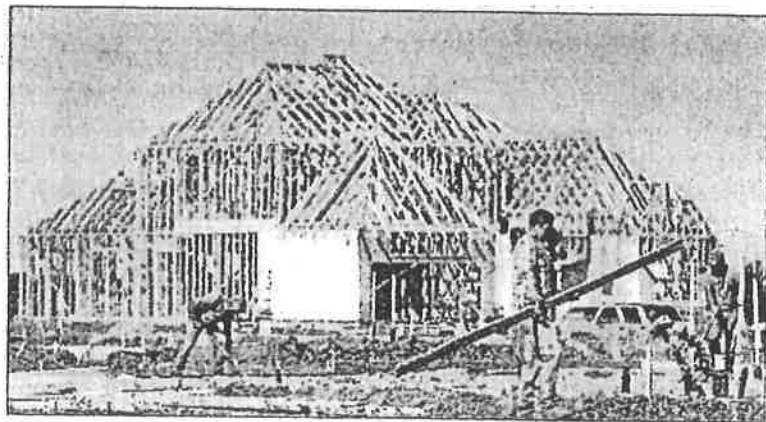
Real Estate Editor  
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If you're having trouble finding a house, blame it on Toyota — and State Farm Insurance, Boeing, Kubota Tractor, McKesson Corp. and dozens more corporations moving tens of thousands of workers to North Texas.

Each year, more than 60,000 people come to the Dallas-Fort Worth area to fill thousands of jobs; Toyota alone is bringing almost 4,000.

That's made the D-FW area one of the hottest home markets in the country, driving up prices to unheard-of levels.

The strong demand for housing has also created one of the biggest home shortages in decades.



**A house under construction** in Light Farms in Celina will probably have an immediate buyer.

It's a tough time to buy, both for the people moving here and long-time residents.

Armin Salehi, who relocated to North Texas with Toyota's headquarters move to Plano, looked

for a house for more than three months.

"It's very difficult with how crazy the market is — very hard to find a pre-owned home not significantly overpriced," said Salehi,

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## Relocations stretching housing market

who started his search late last year. He transferred from Toyota's office outside Cincinnati.

Salehi said he looked at about 50 homes, including one built in 1989 with no updates. "It had nine offers on it," he said. "It was already overpriced."

After banging his head on the pre-owned market, Salehi went with a new townhouse in Carrollton.

"It's a 10-minute commute to my new office in Plano," he said. "I went about \$80,000 over what I was budgeting for. I got a roommate to help ease the pain."

### A bargain for some

While North Texas residents are gasping over the run-up in prices, buyers relocating from the West Coast and the Northeast think the area is a bargain, agents and analysts say.

"With most of California and the bigger East Coast cities, their median prices are well above ours," said Ted Wilson, a principal with Dallas-based Residential Strategies. "They come here and can afford it and put money in their pocket."

"Toyota captures the headlines, and some of their people are coming here with big equities from California."

Wilson said that the "relo business" has been a boon to North Texas housing — particularly the builders. "The builders tell me corporate moves have really bolstered their sales," he said.



Out-of-town buyers often are willing to pay more, a fact that has contributed to the increase in median prices in North Texas. Photos by Jae S. Lee/Staff Photographer

Out-of-towners are snapping up dozens of new houses at the 2,000-acre Windsong Ranch community under construction on U.S. Highway 380 in Prosper, where prices start at about \$350,000.

"We've sold a lot of houses to Toyota people," said project developer Craig Martin of Terra Verde Group. "I have almost 100 Toyota relos. Relocations make up a little over 40 percent of our buyers."

Martin said the largest share of his out-of-town homebuyers is coming from California — about 14 percent. He's also getting homeowners from other parts of Texas, North Carolina, New York and Kentucky.

"There are people moving in from a lot of different places," Martin said. "We track their ZIP codes to see where they are coming from."

Jake Wagner of community developer Republic Property Group said his firm's Phillips Creek Ranch in Frisco and Light Farms in Celina have been a hit with relocating buyers.

"I know we have sold over 100 homes just to Toyota relos" in the two developments, Wagner said. "We encourage

our homebuilders to build a high percentage of speculative homes. The ability to have ample product on the ground is a big factor in attracting relo buyers."

Republic Property has created detailed websites for its communities to make shopping easier for out-of-state house hunters.

"We have invested heavily on the digital side to give a relo buyer in California, Florida, New York or Kentucky a way to really understand the feel and the amenities of the communities," he said.

### Pushing prices higher

One of the reasons homebuilders have been able to raise their median prices about 55 percent in the last five years is that corporate transfer buyers are willing to pay more, said Page Shipp of Metrostudy Inc.

"They are often dealing with buyers who are used to higher prices," Shipp said. "That's one of the reasons they've been able to push prices."

Many of Toyota's California relos still think North Texas home prices are a bargain.



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"It's amazing the amount of home you can get here for the money," said Ryan Abenes, who relocated with Toyota's financial services division. He and his wife bought a new home in the Artesia community in Prosper.

"We avoided any kind of bidding on an older home — a situation a couple of my co-workers got involved in," Abenes said.

They looked at new houses in Frisco and McKinney before deciding on Prosper.

"One of the things important to me was distance to work, and price," he said. "Prosper is a growing community, and my wife and I wanted to be a part of that. They have great schools."

Abenes is originally from the Midwest and lived in a condo in Los Angeles. "Moving out here, I pretty much doubled the square footage for equal or less the price," he said.

### Traffic not a problem

The newcomers aren't put off by the traffic in Dallas' northern suburbs either.

"I heard stories about the traffic Dallas was having with all the construction," Abenes said. "It reminds me of the Midwest — it's nothing like L.A. traffic."

The prospect of a long commute didn't phase Peter Lokken, who relocated with Toyota from Kentucky. He's rented an apartment in Dallas' Uptown neighborhood, more than 20 miles from Toyota's new campus. Lokken said he likes the walkability of Dallas' close-in neighborhoods.

"The proximity to restaurants, bars, grocery stores and recreation is a major selling point for the area, too," he said. "I am very happy with my decision of neighborhood and have actually extended my lease for another year."

Lokken travels weekly for Toyota and isn't chained to a desk at work.

"I'm typically once a week to the office," he said. "Going from Uptown to Plano, the traffic isn't as bad as from the opposite direction."

Most of the corporate homebuyers who work in Plano and Frisco opt for a home in the northern suburbs.

Andrew Blomdal recently relocated from Redondo Beach, Calif., to Anna in north Collin County. He's about 40 minutes from Toyota in Plano.

"Other than our development, it's still fields all around us," Blomdal said. "In the evening, it's quiet. On Friday

nights, you can hear the high school football stadium."

Blomdal said he wanted a new house, and a big garage was a must.

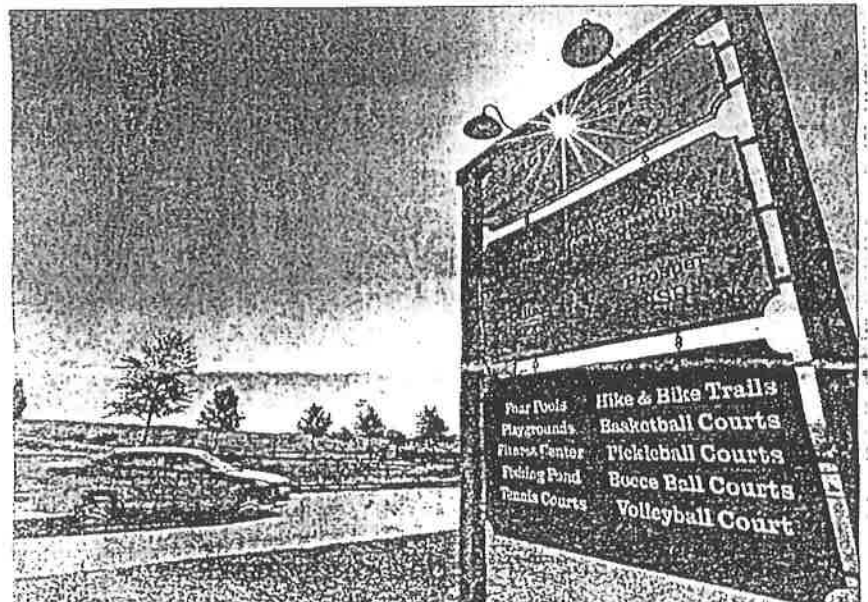
"I've never lived in an area with hail, and I'm concerned about keeping everything covered," he said. "Our youngest won't be in school for a few years. It was mainly about the commute time and garage size."

The family lived in an apartment in California and are first-time homeowners.

"We had talked to a couple of people who had already come out here and got the gist of the market," Blomdal said. "They said whatever you want, you'd better put an offer on it or it will be gone the next day."

For relo buyers who are tight on time, that's part of the appeal of buying a new house.

"You have a very short window to work with the people," said Mary Frances Burleson,



Having ample product on the ground is key to attracting corporate buyers. "We encourage our homebuilders to build a high percentage of speculative homes," one developer says.

# The Dallas Morning News

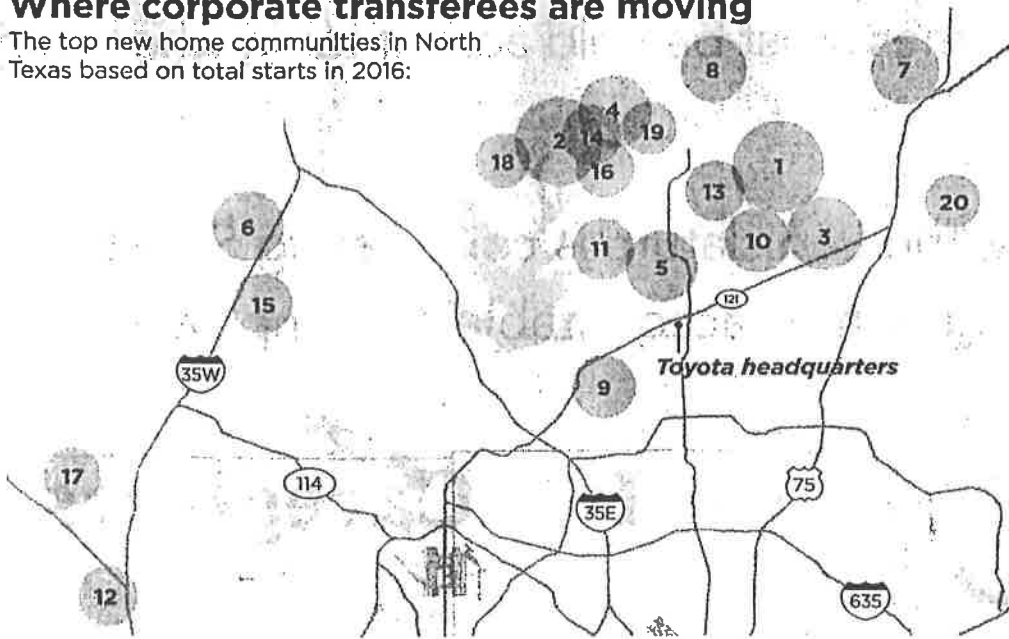
Dallasnews.com

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## Relocations stretching housing market

### Where corporate transferees are moving

The top new home communities in North Texas based on total starts in 2016:



Community	City	Home starts
1. Westridge	McKinney	538
2. Paloma Creek	Little Elm	505
3. Craig Ranch	McKinney	354
4. Artesia	Prosper	347
5. Phillips Creek Ranch	Frisco	334
6. Harvest	Argyle	323
7. Trinity Falls	Weston	297
8. Light Farms	Celina	281
9. Castle Hills	Lewisville	265
10. Richwoods	Frisco	263
11. Frisco Lakes	Frisco	250
12. West Fork Ranch	Fort Worth	239
13. Panther Creek	Frisco	233
14. Savannah	Cross Roads	232
15. Canyon Falls	North Lake	230
16. Frisco Hills	Little Elm	221
17. Sendera Ranch	Fort Worth	216
18. Cross Oak Ranch	Cross Roads	191
19. Windsong Ranch	Prosper	187
20. Abbey Crossing	Princeton	186

SOURCE: Residential Strategies

Michael Hogue/Staff Artist

"We've sold a lot of houses to Toyota people. I have almost 100 Toyota relos. Relocations make up a little over 40 percent of our buyers."

**Craig Martin**  
project developer  
at Terra Verde Group

CEO of Dallas' Ebby Halliday Realtors. "We are educating them about the marketplace, and we have to answer a lot of questions."

Burleson said her firm has classes twice a year to educate its agents on working with corporate move buyers.

"If you go into Collin County — Frisco, McKinney, Prosper — it's a big part of our business," she said. "Corporate America has found us, and they like it."

Twitter: @SteveBrownDMN