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Everything's Waiting for You Downtown Sugar Land Town Square

By Mike Warren

In the 1960s, British pop singer Petula Clark popularized downtown in song. She crooned that “things will be great when you’re downtown...no finer place for sure, downtown...everything’s waiting for you, downtown.”

Forty years later, the residents of Sugar Land might be humming a tune of their own as they visit their very own downtown in the heart of the Fort Bend County.

Opening this fall, the new Sugar Land Town Square will be a true downtown where community activities and commerce meet in an upscale setting that captures the essence of small town America, says Sugarland Properties, Inc., Executive Vice President Steve Ewbank.

“It is a downtown look with an urban style -- a retail shopping look that goes back to the days of storefront shopping,” he says.

Sugar Land Town Square, a \$200 million development, will span 32 acres at the epicenter of the 9,700-acre First Colony development at the intersection of U.S. 59 and Texas 6. Town Square will contain 230,000 square feet of Main Street retail space topped by approximately 600,000 square feet of class-A office space, a 300-room four-star full-service Marriott hotel and 58,000-square-foot conference center, and a 167-unit mid-rise residential building. Also featured will be a new City Hall and a 1.4-acre pedestrian plaza.



The idea of building a Town Square was birthed several years ago when executives from Sugarland Properties visited Reston Town Center near Washington, D.C. That

development is the downtown for Reston, one of the first master-planned communities in the nation.

“We saw a very unique environment that lent itself very well to business and community,” Ewbank says. “It quickly became the gathering spot for the entire Reston community on weekends. We took that concept and thought about applying it to Sugar Land.”

After giving city officials a tour of the Reston development, they agreed – and work began on planning Sugar Land Town Square.

The commercial centerpiece of Sugar Land Town Square is the Marriott hotel, Ewbank says.

“One of the city of Sugar Land’s goals has always been to bring in a hotel with conference center to attract more office users to the city,” he says. “We worked on that for a number of years and were able to attract a quality hotel. The city participated in

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building the conference center with hotel taxes through the Sugar Land Town Square Development Authority.”



The Sugar Land Marriott Hotel will feature state-of-the-art meeting facilities and accommodate convention activities for up to 1,500 guests. The 15,500 square foot Sugar Land Ballroom will be among the largest in the Houston area and is destined to serve as a premier setting for convention business and social events.

Another key component of Town Square will be the City Hall building. The stately structure will feature an early American design and a majestic stairway that will function as a plaza stage.

Incorporating the area's history, the plaza surrounding City Hall will feature clay pavers and granite etched with a map of

Fort Bend County and the original land grants of Stephen F. Austin along the Brazos River. In addition, there will be a statue of Austin on his horse, pulling a packhorse out of the river.

Adding to the downtown feel will be angled parking in front of storefronts. Additional free parking will be available in parking garages.

“The plaza environment will be programmed on the weekends with a variety of events,” Ewbank says. “They might range from a spaghetti dinner for a local Exchange club, to paid entertainment, to a Boy Scout Pinewood Derby. It's just a tremendous amount of opportunity for entertainment.”

Town Square restaurants will include P.F. Chang's, Café Express, Japaniero's Sushi Bar & Latin Fusion Grill and Starbucks. Among the retailers are Bombay & Bombay Kids and Ann Taylor Loft.



Houstonian Lite, a 12,000 square foot state-of-the-art fitness-and-wellness center, is scheduled to open this October. Houstonian Lite will offer the convenience and affordability of a community health club with the luxury, service and amenities of an upscale private club.

“Sugar Land Town Square has been a dream that is a long time in coming,” Ewbank says. “It will be special to get everything open.” ■