

Leander gives final OK to huge project with crystal lagoon dubbed Leander Springs

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Developers have cleared the final zoning hurdle to build a massive project in Leander that is expected to be valued at \$1 billion.

The development, called Leander Springs, marks a major move to add commercial activity to the largely residential suburb north of Austin. Leander Springs will include a 4-acre lagoon, up to 1,600 multifamily units, a hotel and over 1 million square feet of commercial space across nearly 80 acres.

Leander Springs LLC

A rendering of the massive lagoon planned for Leander Springs.



Leander City Council gave final approval on Feb. 4 to rezone the land to a planned unit development with an emphasis on multifamily and commercial zoning. The project is planned at the southwest corner of FM 2243 and the 183A toll road, relatively close to the heart of fast-growing Leander.

This massive project has been the talk of the town since city officials announced the public-private partnership in October. The city approved last summer \$22 million in performance-based tax incentives with developer Leander Springs LLC — which is controlled by Austin-based iLand Development Group — over the course of 15 years. The incentives will be in the form of rebates on the project's property taxes, sales taxes and hotel occupancy taxes.

The project will be completed in phases, with the construction of the lagoon outlined as the first priority. That work is expected to start in the second half of this year, according to a statement from the development team. Development of the entire project is expected to take over 10 years to complete, according to city documents. Officials with the development team did not respond to requests for further information by deadline.

"This is the first step towards a more balanced economy," Leander City Manager Rick Beverlin said. "It's giving us an attraction and mixed-use development that will give us a different balance than the traditional single-family [development]."

Developers have until Dec. 31, 2023, to finish the lagoon, which will be followed by the first phase of multifamily residences. According to documents provided by the developer, Austin-based STG Design has been hired as project architect. A general contractor has not yet been selected.

One concern from several Council members and residents during the process has been how much water the project will require. The city of Leander last year commissioned a long-range water supply study in response to residents pouring into the northwest suburb, which is putting pressure on the city's water supply, according to a Community Impact report. Results of that study have yet to be released, said Mike Neu, public information officer for the city.

In response to those concerns, Council approved a development agreement on Jan. 21 that states the primary water source for the lagoon will be water wells found on the site. It also outlines terms for if the project needed to tap the city's water system.

The manmade lagoon will be the heart of the Leander Springs project. It will mark the first-ever lagoon in Central Texas created by Crystal Lagoons U.S. Corp., joining developments already completed in the Houston and Dallas areas.

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