

# Austin American-Statesman

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## Austin's Stratus Properties plans 475 homes in final section of upscale Barton Creek project



Austin-based Stratus Properties plans to move ahead with a new residential section at its Barton Creek subdivision. The new development will be called Holden Hills, and plans call for 475 homes on 495 acres abutting the Barton Creek Greenbelt. Stratus Properties

**Shonda Novak** |  
Austin American-Statesman

**T**he developer of Austin's Barton Creek subdivision says it plans to move forward with the last residential section of the upscale community in western Travis County.

Stratus Properties said the final residential section, called Holden Hills, will have 475 homes on 495 acres abutting the Barton Creek Greenbelt. The project is expected be

developed in phases in the coming years.

Holden Hills will have a trail system connecting to the Barton Creek preserve, giving residents access to the greenbelt.

The announcement comes as the residential real estate market in the greater Austin area experiences strong demand and rising home prices.

**'Our timing couldn't have been better'**

"Given the relentless growth in Austin, our tim-

ing couldn't have been better." Beau Armstrong, chairman, president and CEO of Stratus, said in a written statement.

The first two phases are expected to be built over the next five years, Armstrong said.

The development will require approvals from the city of Austin and Travis County.

Total development costs — excluding home construction costs — are about \$120 million for land, utility infrastructure and water quality

and detention, Armstrong said.

Home prices are anticipated to range from just under \$1 million for smaller homes, up to several million dollars for homes that overlook the creek and greenbelt.

Stratus, a publicly traded Austin-based company, and its predecessor company have been developing Barton Creek for more than 33 years. The company bought the Barton Creek Country Club and surrounding land in 1988.

Stratus said the devel-

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opment, which is about 10 minutes from downtown Austin off Southwest Parkway, will focus on “sustainability, energy conservation and wellness.”

“Our buyer demographic is very focused on health and wellness and impact on the environment,” Armstrong said. “Holden Hills is premised on sustainable luxury with a particular focus on high-performing building systems to reduce carbon use, non-toxic building materials for a healthier indoor space and proximity to natural amenities like the Barton Creek Greenbelt.”

Armstrong said Holden Hills will focus on renewable energy features, including roof and ground-mounted solar, to minimize the carbon footprint of the new community. Water quality, water conservation, and natural materials also will be incorporated.

Outdoor amenities will include small parks, community garden spaces and

overlooks, Stratus said.

The first homes are expected to be under construction by mid-2022, and available for move in by mid-2023.

The engineering for roads and utilities for the initial phase of Holden Hills has been completed, and Stratus anticipates securing final permits in the second or third quarter of 2021.

Stratus expects to complete site work for the first phase, including the construction of road, utility, drainage and other required infrastructure, about 17 months from obtaining final permits later this year.

Stratus said it expects to begin receiving proceeds from sales in Holden Hills in late 2022 or early 2023.

Currently, 1,243 single family homes and three apartment projects with about 5,000 residents are on the ground in the existing Barton Creek development. There also are three schools, a small retail project and a retirement living facility.

Bill Bunch with the Save Our Springs Alliance, an environmental watchdog group, said there are number of concerns surrounding plans for the new project. The most important, he said, are “setbacks from Barton Creek and creek tributaries, minimizing impervious cover and development on steep slopes, and protecting as much of the native tree canopy as possible. Minimizing water and energy consumption are also important.”

Bunch said additional Stratus land in the Barton Creek area is destined for development, specifically land slated for commercial and multi-family development along Southwest Parkway that has not been built out or approved.

George Cofer, a longtime Austin environmental leader, said he believes Stratus will develop Holden Hills responsibly, given Stratus’ track record with projects including the W Hotel & Residences in downtown Austin, which with its low carbon

footprint is nationally recognized for sustainable development.

“I’ve seen Stratus do quality projects, that’s why I’m optimistic,” Cofer said.

From the conceptual plans he has seen for Holden Hills, Cofer said he expects that it will set “a very high bar in terms of all things green,” with elements “you don’t see in the standard subdivisions.”

With the pandemic, Cofer said, people more than ever want “a lot of green space” and to be out in nature, and focused on health and wellness.

“Everyone in the world is becoming aware of how important that is,” Cofer said. “This is what the market wants.”

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