

probably has no protective value at all.

In New York, the struggle between security and urban life is by no means settled. There have been proposals to exclude cars and street-level retail from much of the World Trade Center site when it's rebuilt, Weisz observes. But New York does have some institutions that are trying to achieve an intelligent balance between security and openness. Weiss lauds the city's Planning Department for advocating "regular streets and regular stores" at the WTC site and for opposing the establishment of a zone that would be off limits to vehicular traffic. The outcome remains to be decided. (For more on security and urbanism, see the Sept. 2004 *New Urban News*.) ♦

## University may anchor San Antonio TND

The Texas A&M University System is negotiating to place a new campus for 25,000 students in the middle of a 2,000-acre traditional neighborhood development (TND) that's been planned for the South Side of San Antonio.

Triple L Management, a Las Vegas-based investment group, has offered to give Texas A&M 400 acres for the campus and 150 acres for an irrigation technology center. If a formal agreement is reached by A&M and the investors, the campus would adjoin a four- to six-story transit village, says Scott Polikov of Gateway Planning Group, which has been planning the TND, called "Verano at City South."

"A lot of times, TNDs go in the prosperous part of town," Polikov says. In this instance, the TND and the university would bring a lift to a section of San Antonio that rarely gets prestigious development. The location also would put Texas A&M-San Antonio along the Union Pacific rail line, with the potential for it to become the southern terminus of the Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail System.

The transit village portion of Verano is anticipated to have 40 to 60 housing units per acre, many of them lofts. Given that intensity of development, it would make sense to design the campus as well with some density, Polikov observes.

### REGENTS CHOOSE VERANO

The university regents announced in February that they had selected the 550 acres as the best site for A&M's expansion in the San Antonio area. Mayor Phil Hardberger said that since Triple L is offering free land, the city should be able to devote \$15 million of municipal funds to providing infrastructure that would serve it.

Before the project can get under way, Triple L and the university need to agree to a series of covenants locking in the campus's relationship to the surrounding TND, Polikov says. The goal, he says, should be "full integration" of the campus into the surrounding development. Beyond the 30- to 40-acre transit village, other parts of Verano would have 7 to 10 units per acre, according to Polikov.

A&M has only 512 full-time students enrolled at its current San Antonio location, but Chancellor Michael McKinney would like to open the new campus quickly — by 2101 if that's possible — and make it a full-blown university/research campus

with an enrollment of 25,000 within 25 years. Dealing with high urban design aspirations may be something of a shock for A&M, whose main campus is in College Station, a city of 82,000 that has paid little attention to pedestrians, aesthetics, and urban character.

Immediately south of Verano is a 2,000-employee Toyota plant that Polikov describes as "the most green manufacturing facility in North America." That has encouraged Triple L and Gateway Planning to reach out to sustainability experts for help in making the TND and the university site environmentally advanced. The city has a unified development code that Polikov indicates is not ideal, but he says city officials have agreed that the SmartCode can be used as an alternative at Verano.

The chief figures in Triple L are Ralph Lampman and Tom Lozzi, large-scale developers in Arizona and Nevada. The *San Antonio Express-News* said other partners are casino owners and executives, including William McBeath, president and CEO of the Bellagio Hotel and Casino on the Las Vegas strip, and William Paulos and William Wortman, co-owners of Millennium Management Group. Since the middle of 2006, the group has paid \$20 million in cash for 1,700 acres and placed another 800 acres under contract. Polikov says the absence of debt means the principals "have the time to do this right." ♦

**A portion of the Verano plan shows the high-density town center adjacent to the transit station, and the Texas A&M campus to the south.**

