

# Civic groups plan high-rise meetings

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A proposed 23-story, mixed-use high-rise project at the corner of Bissonnet and Ashby streets has prompted two area civic groups to call what has been termed "an emergency neighborhood meeting" Thursday night.

The development, which will break ground in spring, is expected to be completed in 2010.

When it opens, it will include about 10,000 square feet of retail space and either 187 condominiums or 231 apartments, according to a news release from the Southampton Civic Club.

"We want an open dialog with our neighbors from the beginning and to supply them with factual information about our project," said Matthew Morgan of West University Place in a letter to the civic club.

Morgan and partner in the venture Kevin Kirton, also of West University Place, showed their plans to representatives of Southampton and the Boulevard Oaks Civic Association on Friday during a two-hour meeting.

Among the main points outlined:

- The first five floors will contain retail space — possibly including a restaurant — and 467 parking spaces;

- The sixth floor will feature a swimming pool, putting green,

## DISCUSSION DETAILS

The Southampton Civic Club and Boulevard Oaks Civic Association will hold a meeting to discuss the project and allow their neighbors to voice their concerns.

When: 7 p.m. Thursday

Where: Poe Elementary School,  
5100 Hazard St.

workout room, party room and spa;

- The upper floors will be residential either renting at about \$2 a square foot or selling at \$375 to \$400 a square foot;

- The front face of the design will be about 55 feet behind the curb on Bissonnet.

A traffic impact analysis conducted in the spring is under review by the city of Houston showed the project is expected to increase traffic by 75 vehicles during morning peak hour and by 163 vehicles during afternoon peak hour.

"The inner city continues to become ever more desirable and thus, increasingly dense — and inevitability that must be accompanied by reasonable development of this sort that encourages residents to rely less on their personal automobiles," Morgan wrote.

The developers have agreed to have their engineer study the need for a traffic signal at Ashby and to pay for it if one is deemed necessary, the Southampton release said.

The primary access to the development will be a two-way driveway on Bissonnet. A second driveway on Ashby will be used for exiting traffic and for access to a loading a delivery area.

The partners' plans for the red brick structure were filed with the Planning and Development Department as Buckhead Investment Partners, Inc., in July. The property had not been platted before and has never been subject to deed restrictions. It did not require a variance.

The project will replace Maryland Manor, which has been at the location since 1961, and in its present configuration rented 67 apartments for \$935, or \$1.08 a square foot.