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Friday, November 6, 2009 | Modified: Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Stretch of N. Lamar seeing new life

Austin Business Journal - by [Kate Harrington](#) ABJ Staff

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It took Tyson Cole nearly three years to find a spot that would work for Uchi's second location, Uchiko. But once the Uchi chef and owner found the site on North Lamar Boulevard, he knew he was in the right place.

Nick Simonite
P. Terry's Burger Stand is one of several merchants recently settling on N. Lamar.
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Uchiko is taking shape at 4200 Lamar, a former Seton Family of Hospitals building under renovation and now owned by a **Cencor Realty Services**-led partnership. The building will also have Tacodeli and Floyd's 99 Barber Shop as tenants.

Cole is not alone in seeing the North Lamar spot as a good site for a business. While it's been an established and strong retail area for years, the stretch of North Lamar from 32nd Street to the Triangle development has recently seen a spate of new restaurants and retail taking advantage of turnover to move in.

Recent newcomers to the area include P. Terry's Burger Stand, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and Get Sum Dim Sum. Among businesses planning to open soon are Uchiko, a **Bank of America** branch, Tacodeli, Floyd's and a Ferrari dealership. Real estate experts say Café Express is also planning to take space in the former La Madeleine, although **C.E. Restaurant Holdings** LLC, which owns Café Express, could not be reached for comment. And **Seton and RehabCare Group Inc.** are scouting sites around the North Lamar area to build a \$45 million Central Texas Rehabilitation Hospital. Cencor and The **Weitzman Group** will also have office space in 4200 Lamar.

Real estate experts say that as suburban retail expansion slows, areas like North Lamar will gain interest from businesses.

"I think that area is maturing, going through its next level," said Eric DeJernett, a senior vice president with CB **Richard Ellis**'s Austin office. "It's an area where you have good jobs. The medical market has held up, so the employment base is good, traffic flows are good, and demographics are good."

That's what helped draw Patrick Terry, owner of P. Terry's, to the building at the intersection of 32nd and Lamar.

The traffic coming from **Seton Medical Center**, a location that draws from West Campus and nearby affluent and underserved neighborhoods, makes it a dynamic area, he said. While he declined to share details about revenue growth, Terry said all three of his locations perform about equally. Uchiko's entrance will likely shape the area in a new way, he said.

"That's a whole new ball game, very upscale," Terry said. "That to me will be the thing to watch. Look what Uchi did for South Lamar. ... If they're able to recreate what they did before, it will be crazy."

Andrew Scroggie, vice president of the Austin commercial retail division of The Weitzman

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Group, said there's nothing triggering the recent business and restaurant openings in the area beyond timing and availability of sites. Restaurant operators who are able have jumped on open sites in that area, he said, because of its strong demographics and traffic. Even with average restaurant sales lagging by 10 to 15 percent, having a location in such a desirable area will bring in ample revenue, Scroggie said.

"It comes back to the general theme that there's still good activity and redevelopment in established trade areas," he said. "If tenants are capitalized, they'll do good deals there."

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Brian Friesen 6 months ago

Looking forward to more of Tyson's great cuisine. I only hope he improves the acoustics and atmosphere of his new place. The "sports bar" feel just doesn't do his food justice.

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