

Downtown Austin homes growing as tall as offices

By Shonda Novak
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Which will be the tallest of them all?

For two years, the Frost Bank Tower, at about 515 feet, has had the distinction of being Austin's tallest building.

But it may soon lose its title in a wave of proposed downtown developments.

Now, Atlanta-based Novare Group Holdings LLC and its local partner, Andrews Urban LLC, say their planned condominium tower at West Third and Nueces streets will rise 44

stories into the sky, four stories higher than originally planned.

Called 360 for its promised views, the 580-foot-tall high-rise — including the lighted glass spire on top — would be Austin's tallest downtown building.

That is, until developer Tom Stacy builds his planned 45-story high-rise at Fifth Street and Congress Avenue, which is set to be at least 705 feet high and include retail, condominiums and either office space or a hotel. Stacy originally planned a 41-story tower.

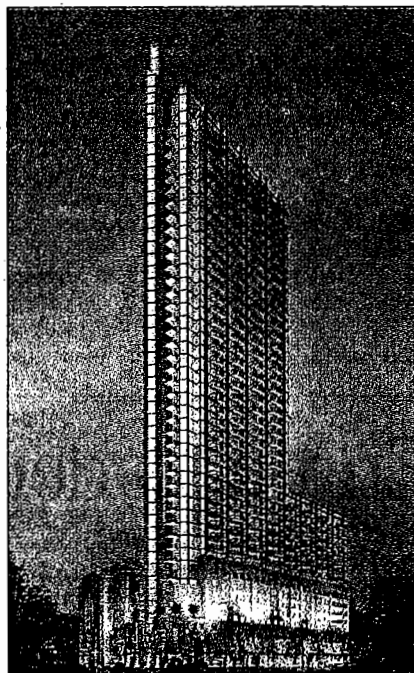
The extra height on Novare's tower did not require a variance

from the city because the overall size of the building didn't change.

It just got slightly taller and slightly thinner, said Taylor Andrews, principal of Andrews Urban.

Set to break ground this spring, the developers expect the first residents to move into the \$200,000 to \$300,000 units at 360 in late 2007. Stacy plans to start construction on a parking garage for his project in late summer, with the tower completed by the end of 2008.

See **TALLER, D2**



The planned condominium tower at West Third and Nueces streets, now called 360, has grown up but not out in its design stage. Originally planned at 40 stories, the skinnier, taller version now will top out at 44 stories. To compare its height with other planned residential towers, see the graphic on **Page D2**.

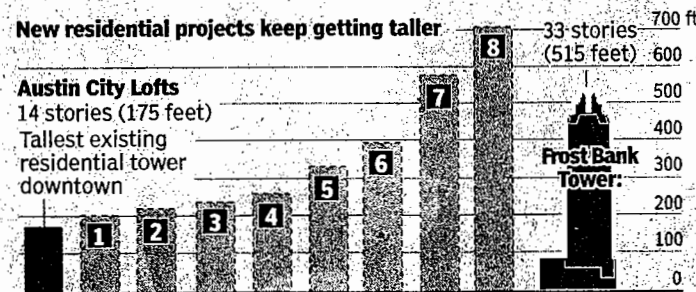
THE PRESTON PARTNERSHIP LLC

Austin American-Statesman **BUSINESS** Thursday, February 2, 2006

BUSINESS

New residential projects keep getting taller

Austin City Lofts
14 stories (175 feet)
Tallest existing residential tower downtown



Planned project	Location	Stories	Height
1 Rick Dupont	210 Barton Springs	18-20	200+ ft.
2 AMLI Phase II	2nd and Guadalupe	18	About 218 ft.
3 Zom Development	805 W. Fifth St.	24	About 264 ft.*
4 The Shore	603 Davis St.	22	About 272 ft.*
5 MetLife	101 Colorado St.	28	335 ft.
6 Spring	Third and Bowie	36	400 ft.
7 360	Third and Nueces	44	580 ft.
8 T. Stacy mixed use	501 Congress Ave.	45	705+ ft.

*Heights approximated, using 11 feet per story.

TALLER: Higher buildings generate new concerns

Continued from D1

Not everyone embraces this increase in the city's height bar.

Betty Baker, who chairs the city's Zoning and Platting Commission, has concerns as varied as whether the city has infrastructure to handle all the proposed projects and fire safety.

But Robert Barnstone, one of the developers for a proposed 36-story high-rise called Spring at West Third and Bowie streets, said the towers will benefit the city by creating a denser downtown.

"When smaller cities like

Charlotte, N.C., boast new residential towers of 55 stories, you begin to realize that Austin needs to grow up," Barnstone said. "Currently, we are one of the least dense cities in the United States, and we pay for that in many ways, starting with traffic, air pollution and high taxes.

Baker acknowledges that tall buildings carry advantages, including creating a more compact city.

They also come with sacrifices, she added. "You're going to walk downtown and never see direct sunshine."