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Homebuilders perk up on news of Amazon's plans in San Marcos

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Word that **Amazon.com** Inc. is building a fulfillment center in San Marcos is good news to [Clark Wilson](#), the founder of [Clark Wilson Builders](#), who recently revealed that his company has [purchased a 673-acre tract near Kyle in Hays County](#).

Wilson could build as many as 2,200 homes on a picturesque stretch of land near FM 150 about a mile west of Kyle — an area blossoming with vineyards, spas and upscale homes. It's also gaining traction for jobs as the Austin-San Antonio corridor matures.

Wilson said he doesn't expect to maximize the entitlements in the new community because there will be a strong emphasis on green belts and making the most of the rolling terrain.

The Amarillo native knows Austin well. He's been here since 1984 and has built homes everywhere from Circle C, in far Southwest Austin, to the northernmost suburbs. [Clark Wilson Builders](#) has communities in Round Rock, Hutto and Leander.

During the past couple of years, homebuilders have lamented the lack of affordable lots in the Austin market, but Wilson said there's some street smarts involved in nabbing a premium parcel like the tract dubbed "Nance Ranch" near Kyle.

He's watched a variety of volume homebuilders pay premium fees for sites across the metro area.

"I think a lot of the high prices were created by a lot of hype," Wilson said.

He spotted the Kyle location and worked out a reasonable deal. Wilson said the property was held by local investors that purchased the land at the bottom of the last recession, around 2010.

"They were much more realistic about the price," Wilson said.

Carter Breed at CBRE Group Inc. was the broker on the deal.

Wilson said his company probably will build between 20 percent and 30 percent of the development, and he'll reach out to his homebuilding associates to handle the balance.

"There's plenty of good custom builders in this market," Wilson said.

Prices will begin in the \$300,000s — with numerous luxury home options for the move-up buyer, whose housing options have been limited in the area until now. The first houses are likely to be available in a year.

Many of the other projects currently underway between Austin and San Marcos are aimed at first-time homebuilders.

One of the busiest builders in Hays County is Canadian homebuilder Brookfield Residential. A company official also was overjoyed to hear the news about Amazon's plans to ultimately add 1,000 jobs in San Marcos.

"We're delighted that Amazon chose to invest in San Marcos. Investments like this will help to continue to drive forward the growth that has and will continue to shape the future of the center of the Austin-San Antonio corridor," said Shaun Cranston, senior vice president in Austin for Brookfield Residential.

Jan Buchholz covers commercial and residential real estate, construction and architecture and retail and restaurants for the Austin Business Journal.