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# Central Texas aviation boom on horizon

Two airports for corporate jets to emerge soon

Austin Business Journal - by [Jacob Dirr](#) ABJ Staff

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Two new general aviation airports are preparing to take flight in Central Texas: a \$30 million project starting construction next month and an ambitious \$150 million project in Bastrop County that hopes to break ground this year.



Submitted Rendering  
 Central Texas Airport (rendered above) is part of a larger proposed project.

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Both projects are heralded as much needed additions to Austin's aviation infrastructure, which is severely

underserved in corporate aviation services, a key feature in big-business attraction and retention.

"Airports are like utilities. They are like power plants," said Bill Gunn, a [Texas Department of Transportation's](#) aviation division planner. "A business airport supports business."

The two new airports — Central Texas Airport and Austin Executive Airport, formerly called Bird's Nest — will have some service and target business overlap, but are not competing head-to-head, sources said.

Even if they were, Gunn said there is enough demand to support both ventures because the closest suitable corporate jet airports — designated as reliever airports for [Austin-Bergstrom International Airport](#) — are in Georgetown and San Marcos.

The Austin area only has two declared reliever airports, while other major metros with more than 1 million people have at least four, he said.

**Big plans in Bastrop**

Central Texas Airport in Bastrop County, planned near the intersection of FM 1704 and 966 about 24 miles east of downtown Austin, is being spearheaded by Jim Carpenter of Carpenter and Associates.

The airport will take up about 600 acres in a larger 1,200-acre development called [Green Corporate Centers](#), which Carpenter said will serve as a showcase for renewable and sustainable energy technology companies supporting the airport.

The entire project could accommodate 4 million to 5 million square feet of industrial and commercial space, Carpenter said.

According to a study published by the Waco-based [Perryman Group](#) paid for by Carpenter, the airport will create more than 4,000 jobs, and the entire development will generate 43,000 jobs in the long term.

Carpenter said the effort is privately funded and that he has had contact with many interested investors, including global ones.

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The entire project would cost \$100 million to \$150 million, Carpenter said, but he declined to disclose how much has been raised so far.

About \$3 million has been spent on the project to date, he said.

The proposed airport has been criticized by Bastrop County residents and local officials, leaving some to question whether it is moving forward.

But Carpenter said the project is definitely moving forward, and there is “not a regulatory or approval process that impedes” it.

The airport, which will have a 7,200-foot runway, has [Federal Aviation Administration](#) approval but is awaiting a local site development permit.

Neither the Bastrop city manager nor the Bastrop County judge could be reached for comment.

Carpenter said the airport’s goal is to attract fleet management companies, which manage corporate jets around the country, to base operations out of Bastrop.

Because the airport will showcase cutting-edge, green-energy management and delivery technology, Central Texas Airport will be attractive to environmentally conscious companies, while having lower utility costs compared to traditional airports, Carpenter said.

The airport’s central location relative to Texas and the East and West coasts is also a big selling point, he said.

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operations out of it, and none at night. How about a modest field just West of Dripping Springs? That's an underserved market if there ever was one. Anyone?

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Please see the website for more information on Central Texas Airport and Green Corporate Centers  
[www.CenTexAirport.com](http://www.CenTexAirport.com)

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