



A NATIVE ADVANTAGE

Cathy Nabours' commercial real estate experience and personal connection to Austin deliver huge benefits to clients.

Photo by
Michelle Nash

There's a famous saying in the South: "Everything is bigger in Texas." And Cathy Nabours knows the Austin real estate boom is no exception.

For over 30 years, Nabours, managing principal at SRS Real Estate Partners, has been an Austin resident herself. In that time, she has developed not only a deep understanding of the area's commercial real estate market, but also a native's keen perspective of the city, an advantage that translates into a major benefit for clients new to the region.

A notoriously hip city, Nabours knows it's partly Austin's "cool factor" driving the

market, but she's insightfully aware that other factors—like the lack of state income tax and an influx of booming industries—are at play.

"We're starting to be considered a core city," says Nabours. With major technology players headquartered locally, in addition to universities, a medical school, and the state Capitol, Austin attracts a well-educated workforce that demands cool places to live and work.

"For a long time, most of the big office users were in the suburbs. That's changed," Nabours explains. "Twenty years ago, we built suburban office communities, housing communities, and shopping centers, and everything was kept separate."

Now, all of that is changing. "It's been interesting to watch the evolution of the types of people moving here. They want to live close to what's happening," says Nabours. "It has created a dynamic market."

Big Changes, Bigger Opportunities

As Austin's population evolves, so do opportunities for investing in mixed-use properties. The demand is especially high for creative office spaces combined with ground-floor retail.

"To recruit and retain the best talent, reps are looking for opportunities. Everyone wants to shop at a cool place, and office tenants want to walk out to lunch at a really great restaurant," Nabours says. "Employers are recognizing that and are aiming to lease space where their employees have amenities nearby."

Helping investors find commercial properties that fit their needs is one of Nabours' strengths. Her connection to the city keeps her tapped into other trends impacting the market that would otherwise go overlooked.

Behind the Boom—and Beyond

Despite the city's hot market, commercial property development in Austin hasn't always been easy. "We have been a relatively sleepy market," recalls Nabours. "The city is designed with barriers. Some of them are perceived barriers that have changed recently." But some are natural, like Lady Bird Lake, which dissects Austin's central business district.

Until recent years, the city was historically reluctant to open its doors to big businesses for fear it would grow too large. The adaptation to mixed-use properties was slow, but as attitudes have shifted, so has the market. With Nabours' help, investors are taking full advantage.

Next up for Nabours, she'll take on the San Antonio market as SRS Real Estate Partners expands. But Austin will remain her focus—and her home.

"People can live anywhere they want, and they choose to live in Austin. That brings positivity," says Nabours. "From my perspective, keep them coming. We live in one of the best cities in the country, and happy people create more happy people."



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