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### Clearing the way for the Cowboys Arlington property owners notified of buyouts, await offers *JEFF MOSIER Fort Worth Bureau*

The message Carlos and Sharon Noble have dreaded for months finally arrived Friday in a hand-delivered white envelope.

The letter inside told them what they already knew: They will have to sell their home on Sweetbriar Drive to make way for the new Dallas Cowboys stadium. "They've kept us in turmoil," Mr. Noble said Friday about the long wait for the letter. "At least now it's official."

He and dozens of other central Arlington residents and property owners received the same letter. Ron Wright, Arlington's mayor pro tem, said that most notices would be delivered on Friday and that letters would be mailed to absentee landlords by Pinnacle Consulting Management Group, a company hired by the city to help with land acquisition.

"By the end of the weekend, every property owner should be notified," Mr. Wright said.

The Arlington City Council approved the list of buyouts Thursday, but they are keeping the map of the stadium site and parking lots secret until all property owners are notified. Mr. Wright said the city would buy mostly residential land for the stadium and leave all but a few commercial properties - primarily along Collins Street - untouched.

The one-page letters brought a mixture of relief and frustration for residents in the area bounded by Collins and Division streets, Randol Mill Road and Johnson Creek. Since Arlington voters approved the \$650 million stadium in November, most of them have known that they would most likely lose their homes.

But, they said, that progress has been slow. Friday's notices tell property owners only that their homes are in the buyout area for the stadium and that they will be contacted by Pinnacle within a few days about an offer for their land.

"This letter doesn't tell me anything I don't know," said Pat Lowe, who has lived in her Crestwood Drive home for 15 years. "I've known they were going to take my home for eight months."

She said she expected to receive this letter in March or April and already have an offer for her house. Ms. Lowe said it's difficult to look for another home if she doesn't know how much she'll be paid.

In November, the City Council approved bonuses for property owners who agreed to move out of their homes or businesses within 90 days of accepting an offer. Renters would have 45 days. Those bonuses, which include moving expenses, range from \$22,500 for homeowners to \$5,250 for renters.

City officials have said they would use eminent domain only as a last resort. However, some property owners have already contacted Glenn Sodd, a nationally known attorney specializing in eminent domain cases, and said they would hire him if they were unhappy with the city's offers.

Mr. Wright said that by the end of Friday, about four or five homeowners would already have offers for their properties. The rest of the offers will be delivered in the next few days as people are notified about the buyouts. Also, he said, Pinnacle Consulting would be delivering notices to apartment residents who will be displaced; by late Friday afternoon, the managers of several complexes said that no letters had been delivered.

Dan McWhirter, another homeowner on Sweetbriar Drive, said he was surprised that he hadn't received a letter by late Friday afternoon. However his neighbors were notified that they would have to move, and Mr. McWhirter said that cinches his fate.

Unlike many of his neighbors, Mr. McWhirter said that he supports the Cowboys' move to his neighborhood and that it will be great for Arlington's future. He said he's ready for the buyout.

"It's time to get it done," he said. "If we're going to have to move, we need to face up to those facts."

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