MALLS

From page B1

cal world where a lightkeeper hands them a lantern that can be used to collect light.

"The demand for this kind of content is just enormous," Ragan said. "We see this as a seeder ... It's just a great magnet it just pulls people in."

As people do more of their day-to-day shopping online, retail centers built around big boxes have to be remade around experiences, he said, so consumers have a reason to leave home and engage with things they can see, feel, taste and touch.

"There's 2 trillion square feet of retail in the U.S. and a lot of that was empty pre-COVID and a lot of it is going to be coming up empty," Ragan said. "We think we've got a lot of opportunities over the next couple years to take some retail and turn it into something special and unique."

Jason Baker, whose Baker Katz owns 30 shopping centers, agreed.

"That's one of the big pivots moving forward, is how you're driving traffic to retail," he said. "And I think experiential is at least part of the path forward."

Marie D. De Jesús / Staff photographer

Seismique's guide Sara Ludwig, 36, is surrounded by projections that change to the beat of music.

Shopping centers designed in the 1980s were built around big boxes where people came to check items off their shopping lists. David Glover, the new chief creative officer at developer MetroNational and former executive director at Universal Studios now charged with reimagining Memorial City Mall's more experience-based future, describes them as "houses of brands" all mashed together with little thought paid to any thread to tie them all together.

Conversely, he said, when you step into a place like Disneyland, you show up knowing "great things are going to happen to you." He calls Disney a branded house, built upon programming, unified design and shared experiences that inspire people to get up out of their chair and visit in person.

"That's what we're doing, is transforming Memorial City into a branded house," Glover said.

The shift comes as companies such as Bed Bath and Beyond find that giant retail spaces have become a burden. At the same time, Seismique creator Steve Kopelman saw the space as a blank slate. And his creation scratches the itch of a generation more interested in experiences than it is things.

"The younger generation, they don't strive to get a Rolex. They strive to see the sun rise at Machu Picchu," he said. "I think we've given them that sunrise."

Seismique has been selling out on weekends at its 30 percent capacity limit, Kopelman said, noting he'll likely start allowing 50 percent of his roughly 1,200-person capacity inside this summer. He said he is confident he'll recoup his more than $7 million capital investment within the company's first two years.

"Even with COVID, we'll do that," he said last week.

Kopelman said he expects about 30 percent of his annual business will come from tourists, once travel resumes.

Wu Property Management, Seismique's landlord, is fielding interest from other virtual reality and entertainment companies looking for space, Rimpela said.

"There's going to be more of that happening. It's just that those concepts are just now coming to fruition," he said.

But consumers can be fickle, so this new type of retailer will have to work to hold their interest, said Venky Shankar, research director of Texas A&M University's Center for Retailing Studies.

"Retail is always cyclical. People get fascinated with some concepts and then after a few years they want different ones," he said. "It's very hard to make any of them stick for any amount of time."

Still, Kopelman expects his concept has staying power. It's a big open box with a big free parking lot, and the way the space is designed guests can go one of four ways. There's no one path to follow.

"They're free to stay here as long as they want," Kopelman said. "There is no wrong way."

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TAXES

From page B1

deployed their added cash to reward shareholders – not to bolster wages or investment.

Government data show that, outside of housing, private sector investment averaged 4 percent annualized growth over the eight quarters of 2018 and 2019 – while the Trump tax regime was in place but before COVID-19. That's little different from the 3.8 percent average of the previous five years and well below the 6.8 percent pace of the 1990s – when tax rates were higher.

Pre-pandemic polls found that only a minority of Americans approved the Trump tax reductions, which also brought down individual marginal rates, as individuals reported little effect on their wallets.

Fighting to keep the Trump tax overhaul in place is bad politics and bad policy, the White House and its allies say. They say the winning argument is the "American Jobs Plan," which they contend will boost U.S. businesses even with the higher taxes – by rebuilding roads and bridges or making a worker with, say, an ailing parent more productive by funding elder care.

"These are all the kinds of things that are going to actually grow the economy," Boushey said.

Biden in his Wednesday speech said the pre-2017 top corporate rate of 35 percent was "too high" and Trump's 21 percent rate too low. "What I am proposing is that we meet in the middle: 28 percent."

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the proposed tax program would prove more effective in addressing incentives for companies to shift profits and investments abroad. She and Biden argued that the plans, including a 15 percent minimum tax on profits reported on financial statements, would make the code more fair.

Biden said that at least 55 of the largest U.S. companies paid no federal corporate income taxes in their most recent fiscal year.

"It's just not fair. It's not fair to the rest of the American taxpayers," the president said. He was citing a study by the left-leaning Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

Republicans warn that reversing the Trump tax cuts will be damaging to the economy. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky has led the charge, calling the president's plan a "Trojan horse" masking "massive tax increases on all the productive parts of our economy."

"At the end of the day, we are going to see slower hiring, less investment in the U.S. and I predict we will see a second wave of U.S. companies inverting or moving their headquarters in the long run," U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady, a Woodlands Republican who led the 2017 tax overhaul efforts in the House, said Tuesday on CNBC.

The Biden team doesn't think those critiques will play well with the public.

Republicans "promised it would pay for itself and that there would be this huge increase in the growth rate, and none of that happened," said Austan Goolsbee, a former chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers under President Barack Obama and now an economics professor at the University of Chicago. "There's this basic feeling that it did not go down in the way they said it would and they are in the uncomfortable position of defending that it did."

Americans had a net-negative view of the 2017 tax cuts in surveys conducted in April 2019, with a Pew Research Center poll showing just 36 percent of Americans said they approved of the law, while 49 percent disapproved. A Gallup poll showed 40 percent approved and 49 percent disapproved. Gallup also found that nearly 7 in 10 Americans believed corporations paid too little in taxes – a figure that's stayed relatively constant in nearly two decades of its polling.

By contrast, just before Biden laid out his plan, a Morning Consult-Politico poll found that 54 percent of registered voters supported federal infrastructure spending financed with tax increases on corporations and the wealthy, while 27 percent preferred the spending without the tax hikes. Independent voters were similarly divided.

Some 32 percent of Republicans said they supported the spending being paired with tax increases.

"It seems to me to be political malpractice for Republicans to jump into bed with these giant corporations that are either paying no taxes or engaged in these outrageous stock buybacks," Democratic pollster Geoff Garin said.

Republican pollster Whit Ayres said that "as a general rule, tax increases on everybody but me are popular, so corporate tax increases are always popular because voters don't perceive themselves as paying that tax even though they do indirectly."

Even so, "you can't look at public opinion to make considered judgments about those economic consequences," Ayres said, reiterating the Republican view that corporate tax increases will drive U.S. business overseas.

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NOTICE

Virtual Public Meeting
FM 2920 Safety Improvements
From I-45 to North Willow Street
Harris County, Texas
CSJs: 2941-02-062, etc.

Given the unique circumstance of the COVID-19 outbreak, along with our commitment to protecting public health during this national emergency, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Houston District is conducting this virtual public meeting to avoid in-person contact.

TxDOT is proposing improvements on Farm-to-Market (FM) 2920 from Interstate (I) 45 to North Willow Street in Harris County, Texas. The virtual meeting will be available on the TxDOT website beginning **Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 4:00 P.M.** To log onto the virtual public meeting, go to **www.txdot.gov**, keyword search "FM 2920 Safety Improvements". The virtual meeting will consist of a pre-recorded presentation by the project team, project exhibits and other information, and an opportunity to comment. If you do not have internet access, you may call (281) 319-6413 to ask questions about the project and access project materials at any time during the project development process. Formal comments may be provided by mail, online, or email as explained below.

The purpose of the virtual public meeting is to present the proposed project to the public and receive comments. The project extends a total of 11.1 miles along FM 2920 from I-45 to North Willow Street in Harris County. The proposed project includes the installation of continuous raised medians and right turn lanes. The continuous raised medians would only be installed from West of SH 99 to West of I-45. The project would take place within the existing right-of-way on FM 2920 and no displacements are anticipated. Maps showing the project location, drawings illustrating the proposed design, and other information regarding the proposed project are available online at **www.txdot.gov**, keyword search "FM 2920 Safety Improvements".

The FM 2920 virtual public meeting will be conducted in English and Spanish. If you need an interpreter or document translator because English or Spanish is not your primary language or you have difficulty communicating effectively in English, one will be provided to you. If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. If you need interpretation or translation services or you are a person with a disability who requires an accommodation to participate in the FM 2920 virtual public meeting, please contact Ms. Sharmeen Rahman at (281) 319-6413 or by email at **Sharmeen.Rahman@txdot.gov** no later than 4:00 p.m., Thursday, April 22, 2021. Please be aware that advance notice is required as some services and accommodations may require time for the Texas Department of Transportation to arrange.

Written comments from the public regarding the proposed project are requested and may be submitted by mail to the TxDOT Houston District Office, Advanced Project Development Directly, P.O. Box 1386, Houston, TX 77251. Written comments may also be submitted by email to **Sharmeen.Rahman@txdot.gov** or online at **www.txdot.gov**, keyword search "FM 2920 Safety Improvements". Please reference CSJ: 2941-02-062, etc. (SW) on all comments. All comments must be postmarked or received by **Wednesday, May 12, 2021** to be included in the public meeting summary report. Responses to comments received will be available online at **www.txdot.gov**, keyword search "FM 2920 Safety Improvements", approximately three months after the close of the comment period.

If you have any general questions or concerns regarding the proposed project or the virtual meeting, please contact Ms. Sharmeen Rahman, TxDOT Project Manager at (281) 319-6413 or by email at **Sharmeen.Rahman@txdot.gov.**

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried-out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated Dec. 9, 2019, and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

CITY OF HOUSTON

Invitation to Propose for the City of Houston Long-Term Disability (LTD) Third–Party Administrative (TPA) Services for City employees, retirees and their eligible dependents, Solicitation **#S63-T29801.**

The online Request for Proposal (RFP) can be found at **www.proposalltech.com**. Proposal Tech is a secure website, which will electronically complete your proposal, pose questions, and submit requests for clarification or additional information. This RFP can also be found on the city's website at **https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/bid_download.aspx** Questions may also be submitted via email to: Benard Hubbard at **Benard.Hubbard@houstontx.gov** .

Any addenda or other information regarding the RFP will be posted to the ProposalTech website. Proposers should check the website daily for information in the forms of formal addenda and Letters of Clarification to the RFP.

A Virtual Pre-Proposal Conference will be held on **Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. CT**. Conference number: +1-936-755-1521, Conference ID: 823 086 430#.

Ten (10) sealed printed copies of proposals responding to the RFP, plus one original signed in blue ink, and eleven (11) electronic copies of the entire technical proposal plus exhibits on NON-PASSWORD PROTECTED flash drives shall be delivered to the Office of City Secretary, 900 Bagby, Rm. P101, Houston, TX 77002.

Proposal deadlines and specific instructions are included on the first page of the RFP. **Proposals are due Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. CT. Proposals will not be accepted after the due date and time.**

All proposals will be required to comply with City Ordinances: No. 78-1538, passed August 9, 1978 referring to Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance, No. 94-1309 relating to participation goals for Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises, No. 2007-534 Pay or Play, requiring contractors to offer their employees a minimum level of health benefits and No. 2011-766 relating to Hire Houston First, allowing the city to consider a vendor's principal place of business in awarding certain contracts. The MWBE goal will be 0% of the total value of the administrative services fee paid to the administrator. The City reserves the right to reject or accept any or all proposals, or any part thereof, deemed to be in the best interest of the City.

National Non-Profit Organization
Request for Proposals
RE: Audit Firms
The National Domestic Violence Hotline, a 501c3 organization serving those impacted by relationship abuse 24/7 via phone, chat, and text and headquartered in Austin, TX, is requesting proposals from Texas-based CPA firms for the preparation of its yearly audited financial statements and related filings beginning with the 2021 fiscal year ending September 30, 2021. To receive a copy of the RFP, please email Lalisha Shahzad at LShahzad@thehotline.org. The submission deadline is May 7, 2021 at 5:00pm CST. BIPOC, women-led, and/or highly underutilized firms are highly encouraged to apply.

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LEGAL NOTICE

BakerRipley, a non-profit human services organization, announces a Request for Proposal (RFP) #21-06 for **Endowment Management Firm**.

The RFP will be posted on our website at **http://www.bakerripley.org/about/vendors** on **April 21, 2021.**

Interested Vendors can submit a proposal for Endowment Management Firm to **cgrant@bakerripley.org.**

The deadline for submitting a proposal is **May 21, 2021 by 10:00 AM (CT)**.

BAKERRIPLEY ENCOURAGES SMALL AND HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES TO APPLY.

LEGAL NOTICE

By and through its Broker of Record, AON, BakerRipley, a non-profit human services organization, announces a Request for Proposal (RFP) #21-05 Health Insurance Benefits in search of prospective and qualified Medical, Pharmacy Coalition, Dental, Vision, Life/ADD, STD, LTD and Voluntary Benefit Insurance carriers.

Interested parties must complete an Intent to Bid (ITB) form in order to respond to the RFP. The ITB form and contact information on where to send the completed form will be posted on the BakerRipley website at **https://www.bakerripley.org/about/vendors** on **April 12, 2021**. The ITB is due by **April 20, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m. CST.** Any carrier who does not submit the ITB by the deadline, will not be allowed to submit a response.

The RFP will be released to those carriers that have submitted an Intent to Bid by the required due date via access to AON's Greater Insight platform. The deadline for submitting a proposal is **May 12, 2021 by 5:00 pm** through AON's Greater Insight platform.

BAKERRIPLEY ENCOURAGES SMALL AND HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES TO APPLY.

LEGAL NOTICE

By and through its Broker of Record, Limestone Commercial, BakerRipley, a non-profit human services organization, announces a Request for Proposal (RFP) #21-06 Head Start and Early Head Start Lease in search of a long-term lease for its community services programs in Harris County, Texas.

Specific Market Location: South of Westpark Tollway, West of S. Rice Blvd., North of Belaire Blvd., and East of Fondren Rd.

Basic requirements include 20,000-40,000 sf., with accessible outdoor area, adequate parking, and brokerage commissions to be included on all transactions will be paid by the selected Landlord upon lease execution.

The RFP will be posted on the BakerRipley website at **https://www.bakerripley.org/about/vendors** on **April 20, 2021.**

Interested parties can submit a proposal to **jean@limestonecommercial.com**. The initial deadline for submitting a proposal is **May 20, 2021.**

BAKERRIPLEY ENCOURAGES SMALL AND HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES TO APPLY.

REQUEST FOR COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS

2020 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NO. 58
CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD Proposal No. 20-04-54788-RFP

The Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District will accept Base Competitive Sealed Proposals until 2:00 P.M. and Alternate Competitive Sealed Proposals until 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, May 6, 2021 at the Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District Facilities, Planning & Construction Office, 11400-B Perry Road, Houston, Texas 77064 for the 2020 Elementary School No. 58 project. A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held on Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 10:00 A.M. at the above location. Proposal Evaluation Criteria are published in the "Instructions to Offerors" section of the proposal documents. Plans and specifications will be released after Monday, April 12, 2021, and are available to general contractors from the following address upon deposit of $250.00 per set: PBK Architects, Inc., 11 Greenway Plaza, 22nd Floor, Houston, Texas 77046, 713-965-0608. The Owner reserves the right to waive any informalities and to reject any or all proposals.

LEGAL NOTICE

BakerRipley, a non-profit human services organization, announces a Request for Proposal (RFP) #21-04 for **Adult Education Courses.**

The RFP will be posted on our website at **http://www.bakerripley.org/about/vendors** on **April 13, 2021.**

Interested Vendors can submit a proposal for Adult Education Courses to **abrown@bakerripley.org.**

The deadline for submitting a proposal is **Tuesday, May 18, 2021 by 10:00 AM (CT).**

BAKERRIPLEY ENCOURAGES SMALL AND HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES TO APPLY.

SCHOOL BUS GPS TRACKING SYSTEM RFP:
INVITATION TO BID
Sealed bids and proposals will be received by IDEA Public Schools at 2115 W Pike Blvd., Weslaco, TX 78596 on or before 5 PM CST, April 16th, 2021 for the following goods: SCHOOL BUS GPS TRACKING SYSTEM. Bids received after this time will not be accepted. Response forms and specifications for the above may be obtained at 2115 W Pike Blvd., Weslaco, TX 78596 or can be viewed at **https://ideapublicschools.org/our-story/finance-budget/.** Bids will be opened April 19th, 2021 at 3 PM.

LEGAL NOTICE

BakerRipley, a non-profit human services organization, announces a Request for Proposal (RFP) #21-03 for **Child Care Training Services.**

The RFP will be posted on our website at **http://www.bakerripley.org/about/vendors** on Tuesday, April 13, 2021.

Interested Vendors can submit a proposal for Child Care Training Services to Niesha Hickman at **nhickman@bakerripley.org**

The deadline for submitting a proposal is **Thursday, May 20, 2021 by 10:00 AM (CST).**

BAKERRIPLEY ENCOURAGES SMALL AND HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES TO APPLY.

The Houston Planning Commission has received an application to allow the replat of or partial replat of Houston Acreage Estates, a subdivision in Harris County, Texas, according to the map or plat thereof recorded in Volume 12, Page 63 of the Map Records of Harris County, Texas., for the purpose of Creating 4 residential lots.The new subdivision name is: HOUSTON ACREAGE ESTATES PARTIAL REPLAT No 4.The Houston Planning Commission will hold a virtual meeting and public hearing on thisreplat on Thursday, April 29, 2021 at 2:30 PM via Microsoft Teams. The video conference will allow for a two-way video/audio communication with the Houston Planning Commission. For information on how to join the meeting or submit comments as a speaker, visit our website: **www.houstonplanning.com** or Call: 832-393-6624. Contact the applicant at 713-680-4075 or the City of Houston Planning Department at (832)393-6600 for any additional information

Stay legal and get noticed by emailing our team at **legals@chron.com** or calling **713.224.6868**

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IDEA Public Schools IFB NOTICE # 01-RFQ-CNP-2021-TX

IDEA Public Schools is issuing a Request for Qualifications for Fresh Produce. Locations, specifications, are included in the RFQ. IDEA encourages HUB certified vendors. # 01-RFQ-CNP-2021-TX must be submitted in writing prior to the due date. RFQ is available at **https://ideapublicschools.org/our-story/finance-budget/.** For questions contact the CNP Procurement Department at (956) 377-8000 or e-mail https://ideapublicschools.org/contact-us.

Significant dates:
Monday, April 12, 2021 – RFQ for Fresh Produce can be picked up at IDEA HQ located at 2115 W Pike Blvd in Weslaco, TX 78596 after 1:00 PM CST, Tel (956) 377-8000 or download file at **https://ideapublicschools.org/our-story/finance-budget/**
Thursday, April 15, 2021 - Pre-bid meeting is scheduled at **3:00 PM CST** via web & phone (see bid for details)
Monday, April 19, 2021 at 3:00 PM CST - Deadline for submitting questions or clarification regarding the RFQ for Fresh Produce
Monday, April 26, 2021 @ 5:00 PM CST - Deadline for submitting RFQ for Fresh Produce

Sealed Proposal Solicitation #HP08-21
Houston-Galveston Area Council
Cooperative Purchasing Program
All Hazards Preparedness, Planning, Consulting and Recovery Services
Pre-Proposal Conference: 04/01/21 @ 9am
Response Deadline: 05/03/21 @ 1pm
Public Opening: 05/03/21 @ 2pm
3555 Timmons Lane, Houston, TX.
Per ADA, reasonable accommodation provided with 24 hour prior notice.
713-993-4554 or www.hgacbuy.org for info.

Tegrity Contractors as Construction Manager at Risk will be accepting proposals from Subcontractors and **Suppliers for Lone Star Atascocita TCPA** . Bid Documents are available through Tegrity Contractors by emailing **admin@tegrity-contractors.com**. All proposals are due at Tegrity's office by 4/23/21 by 5PM

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