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SpaceX appears to be building 1M SF factory in Bastrop County

Rumors of the solar cell factory had been percolating for weeks



Elon Musk's business empire appears to be growing again in Bastrop County.

DAVE CREANEY



By [Justin Sayers](#) – Senior Staff Writer, Austin Business Journal
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A big addition is headed to Elon Musk's growing business empire in Bastrop County.

Space Exploration Technologies Corp. appears to be [deep into the construction](#) of a solar cell factory south of its Starlink construction facility along Farm to Market Road 1209, according to public posts and filings with Bastrop County. It could eclipse more than 1 million square feet.

Rumors of the factory had been percolating for weeks. [SpaceX](#)'s director of solar production, Noah Crowles, posted on social media this month that "SpaceX is constructing one of the world's most advanced solar cell factories in Bastrop," with links to engineering job postings for the site.

Those listings note the company is "standing up one of the largest solar cell manufacturing facilities in the world" as part of the company's quest to build space infrastructure to enable large-scale artificial intelligence data centers in orbit. Those platforms, it notes, require massive amounts of "reliable, high-efficiency" solar power for intensive computing workloads.

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Construction has been spotted along the site for weeks. Bastrop County officials this month confirmed the company has filed for permits for a 1.1 million-square-foot, two-story factory on those land parcels. No other information was immediately available.

For perspective, Barton Creek Square mall offers about that much square footage across its two floors.

SpaceX also on May 26 will be considered by the Bastrop County Commissioners Court for an enterprise zone designation related to a triple jumbo project – meaning that they would be eligible for up to \$3.8 million in refunds in the state sales and use taxes, the maximum under the program, according to a public notice.

Representatives from SpaceX did not respond to a request for comment.

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It is part of the [continued buildout](#) of the campus along the Colorado River about 30 miles east of Austin. Work started back in 2021, when The Boring Co. purchased the first plot. Companies tied to Musk now own nearly 700 acres of land, which is filled with everything from a headquarters for Boring Co. and X (formerly known as Twitter), the SpaceX site, an amenity-rich bodega, housing, a school and more.

What Musk and his companies are up to is hard to track. Details emerge through social media posts, public records requests and the occasional news story. For instance, rumors had been percolating for several months that the University of Austin, an unaccredited university that has operated since 2021 out of the Scarborough Building in downtown Austin, was linking up with Musk's companies and building in Bastrop County. That [came to light in a tweet last year](#).

The ABJ then was able to obtain public records that [detailed that the nearly 18,000-square-foot University of Austin engineering lab](#) was built in conjunction with representatives from Boring Co. and founders of the university.

SpaceX is perhaps the most successful company of Musk's in the area, as the site is a production facility for Starlink hardware. It is believed to employ at least 1,000 people.



The solar cell facility going up next to The Boring Co. campus in Bastrop County on May 11.

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The company's initial factory already sits at 550,000 square feet, according to county officials. They said earlier this year the company was approved for permits to build 1.1 million square feet across two stories along with a communications tower at the north side. That side also includes a 50,000-square-foot parking garage.

Some of the further construction was [previously detailed in a grant](#) awarded by Gov. Greg Abbott to the company in March 2025. The company at the time was said to add 1 million square feet as part of a \$280 million expansion on top of the roughly 550,000 square feet it had.

The \$17.3 million Texas Semiconductor Innovation Fund grant was to be used to expand a SpaceX semiconductor research and advanced packaging facility in

Bastrop and create more than 400 jobs. It will continue to produce Starlink kits and associated parts. Once the expansion is complete, it will have the largest printed circuit board and panel level packaging facility in North America, the announcement said.

Should the building reach an estimated 1.6 million square feet, it would be among the largest facilities in the region. Others in that conversation include Musk's [Tesla Inc. gigafactory](#) in eastern Travis County and [Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd.'s factories](#) in both Austin and Taylor.

Bloomberg reports have also suggested the company has plans to build Project Echo, a private recreation complex on the SpaceX land that would include basketball and pickleball courts, picnic areas and potentially a floating deck for kayaks. It is located in a floodplain and is not believed to have yet gotten off the ground.

Even more could be on the way. SpaceX in January applied for an air permit for what was described as an "aluminum melting and holding facility" at 858 FM 1209, according to filings with the Texas Department of Environmental Quality. That permit remains open. It suggests that SpaceX will attempt to recycle as much aluminum as it can as the material faces high tariff costs.



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Musk is known in the region for partnering with an aluminum aggregator closer to the Tesla gigafactory. But neighbors have been fighting the company, Outlast Earth, over environmental concerns, according to KXAN.

That lack of transparency and the move-fast, fix-it-later attitude has [rankled neighbors](#) – primarily when it comes to increased traffic, wastewater and water impacts to the Colorado River. The company has racked up fines from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. But it has demonstrated steps to remedy violations, including helping fund a wastewater line that is set to come online soon.

With so much more land in their purview and constantly changing plans, the buildout is always ongoing. For instance, the companies several years ago received approval to build housing options adjacent to the Boring Bodega site. A neighborhood called Snailbrook is already expanding with new homes popping up north of the Bodega in recent months.

Recently, two large land parcels totaling more than 300 acres adjacent to Musk's land holdings traded hands. But there are no clear markers among the buyers that link to Musk's companies – as of now.

It all comes in the shadow of [Musk's Terafab](#). Leaders in Grimes County, northwest of Houston, next month are scheduled to consider incentives for SpaceX about a “multi-phase, next-generation, vertically integrated semiconductor manufacturing and advanced computing fabrication facility, proposed to be located at the Gibbons Creek Reservoir,” per the county’s notice.

Musk said the Gibbons Creek Reservoir was one of several sites under consideration for [Terafab](#). A public notice earlier this month estimated the initial

investment for the Terafab project to be \$55 billion. The project has an estimated total capital investment of \$119 billion if additional phases are constructed.

Musk [unveiled an early concept for Terafab in March](#) at Austin's historic and defunct Seaholm Power Plant, with a target of 1 terawatt of compute for the manufacturing plant. That translates to about 100 million to 200 million artificial intelligence chips that will be used to power Musk's products – from his self-driving vehicles to his Optimus humanoid robots to rockets.