



PLAZA SALTILLO DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is planned at Plaza Saltillo?

The 10 acres of Plaza Saltillo will include approximately 800 apartments, at least 18 percent of which will be designated for households that earn on average 50 percent of Austin's median family income (MFI); 110,000 square feet of retail; 140,000 square feet of office space; almost 1.5 acres of open space; and public art. Plaza Saltillo will also feature one of the region's most diverse mobility infrastructure programs, including the established MetroRail station and bus service, plus pedestrian paseos, underground parking, electric vehicle stations, reserved Car2Go spaces, a B-Cycle station and an extension of the Lance Armstrong Bikeway.

What are Capital Metro's goals for the redevelopment of the Plaza Saltillo District?

- Increase transit ridership.
- Create a mix of affordable and market-rate housing.
- Increase multi-modal connectivity, both north-south and east-west.
- Preserve the historic Texaco buildings.
- Work with a proven leader in mixed-use redevelopment.
- Create vibrant public spaces and a thriving mixed-use environment.

What are the community benefits of Plaza Saltillo?

As a part of its request for proposal (RFP) process, Capital Metro asked developers to identify the best possible use of the land. The agency placed a high value on the ability to generate revenue from the Plaza Saltillo District's redevelopment to help fund necessary transit expansion. Capital Metro also strongly encouraged developers to use input gathered from the community over the past several years to design features that benefit the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Endeavor/Columbus development team responded with a mix of uses, multiple mobility infrastructure improvements (including an extension of the Lance Armstrong Bikeway), significant density and public open space that will both serve the local residents and create a transit-accessible destination.

How will redevelopment of this land affect rail service?

There will be no interruption of existing rail services. One of the primary goals of redeveloping the area is to create a true transit-oriented development (TOD) district and increase ridership on both rail and Local bus routes. Turning the Plaza Saltillo District into a mixed-use development can help attract new riders to the area while encouraging new and existing riders to make Plaza Saltillo a destination. Endeavor is developing the land to encourage a balance of daytime and evening ridership.

What community feedback has gone into shaping the Plaza Saltillo District?

The community has been steadily involved for the past decade in helping to shape the Plaza Saltillo District through a number of public involvement and outreach efforts, including but not limited to the East César Chávez Neighborhood Plan, the Saltillo District Redevelopment Plan by ROMA Design Group, the Plaza Saltillo TOD Area Regulating Plan, the Station Area Plan and Imagine Austin. This community input helped shape the vision for the district, which was shared with developers through the RFP process.

The community will have additional opportunities to provide input on a variety of elements — such as public art, streetscapes and public park amenities — in conjunction with the Endeavor team, Capital Metro and the city of Austin. The development team will seek additional ideas on the content of directional and historic signage.

How long have plans to redevelop the Plaza Saltillo District taken to materialize?

Efforts to revitalize the 10-acre site date back to the early 1990s. After serving as Austin’s train depot for decades, the site sat dormant for years until a group named Olé Mexico developed a plan to create a series of plazas in East Austin inspired by and named for traditional Mexican plazas.

Construction to renovate parts of the land were completed in 1997; however, plans for rail at Plaza Saltillo did not materialize until the MetroRail commuter rail line began in 2010, just as the nation entered an economic downturn. With a rebounded economy, new development interest and a transit-oriented development policy in place, Capital Metro and the Endeavor team are ready to move forward.

How will the Plaza Saltillo District be redeveloped with the tracks running through the site?

Capital Metro has realigned the tracks at the Plaza Saltillo District, moving them along 4th Street, thanks to a Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) grant.

How is the site zoned now? Will additional zoning be required? How tall could the buildings in the Plaza Saltillo District be?

Plaza Saltillo is zoned “Transit-Oriented Development-Neighborhood Plan” by the city of Austin (adopted in 2008). At Capital Metro’s request, the Endeavor/Columbus team sought revised zoning to allow for additional height for the proposed office building at I-35 (going from four floor to eight floors). The remaining blocks will have two to four floors of residential over retail.

This additional density on the site allows the development to generate additional revenue for transit services and is in keeping with Imagine Austin principles to create a more compact and connected community. In March 2017, the Austin City Council allowed for the height variance and the Capital Metro board voted unanimously the following month to amend the lease to allow Endeavor to move forward with the eight-floor building.

Are there any Capital View Corridor issues?

A portion of the site lies within an established Capitol View Corridor known as “Pleasant Valley Road at Lakeshore Drive;” however, the development will not interfere with the view corridor.

Is Capital Metro selling or leasing the land?

Capital Metro is leasing the land to Endeavor and will remain the owner.

How will the money gained from redeveloping the Plaza Saltillo District be used?

The revenue generated from the redevelopment of the Plaza Saltillo District will go into Capital Metro’s general operating fund to support any number of necessary transit service improvements.

Does Capital Metro own any other pieces of land along its routes for redevelopment? If so, where? Will they be redeveloped soon?

In addition to the Plaza Saltillo District property, Capital Metro owns land around the MetroRail Leander and Lakeline Stations, as well as at Tech Ridge, where it maintains a Park & Ride station. The agency also owns property along Johnny Morris Road near Loyola, where future rail service to eastern Travis County could someday connect to the MetroRail line. All of these sites have potential for transit-oriented development in time; however, Capital Metro is currently focused on the redevelopment of the Saltillo District.

Why did Capital Metro issue a request for proposals to redevelop the Plaza Saltillo District?

Capital Metro and its consultants have been working together with the community for several years to identify goals and develop a master plan for the redevelopment of the Plaza Saltillo District. The Capital Metro board of directors adopted its TOD policy in August 2013, allowing staff to move forward with issuing an RFP to developers.

How was the winning proposal selected? What criteria did Capital Metro use?

The Capital Metro board of directors selected Endeavor’s proposal based on evaluation criteria that included:

- Potential to increase transit ridership.
- The strength of the developer’s capabilities.
- The developer’s track record of addressing communities’ needs for housing, employment, retail, office and other services in their projects.
- Preliminary proposed land uses and how they conform with Capital Metro’s objectives.
- The financial structure and return to Capital Metro.

What will happen to the existing historic buildings on site?

The former Texaco Depot will be preserved and incorporated into the project’s plans. The original structure of the building commonly referred to as the Pine Street Station will be relocated to another site along the rail line.

How will this development affect the HOPE Farmers Market?

Plaza Saltillo Station, which features MetroRail service and the HOPE Farmers Market, is not a part of the redevelopment plans. These uses should not be affected by the redevelopment of the remaining district. In fact, the new residents of this development will increase the number of customers who support the farmers market, helping to ensure its continued success. With the development, there may also be opportunities to expand the footprint of the farmers market.

Have additional questions or comments? Share them at feedback@capmetro.org.