



PLAZA SALTILLO DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT A BRIEF HISTORY

A site that spent a century serving as Austin’s rail yard is on the cusp of once again becoming a high-profile destination for the entire Austin community. Abandoned in the 1980s, the 10 acres known as the Plaza Saltillo District returned to its roots with the opening in 2010 of Plaza Saltillo Station on the MetroRail Red Line. Now, a developer has the opportunity to transform years of idea gathering and planning by the community and Capital Metro into a vibrant reality. Much has happened to bring the project to this point; here’s an overview of the site’s vibrant history:

- 1992** A group of East Austin business leaders formed a group called Olé Mexico, which sought ways to get tourists and residents from throughout Austin to visit the East Austin neighborhood and its businesses. The abandoned rail yard in the heart of the community was soon proposed as an ideal place to build a community gathering spot that would showcase the area’s vibrant Hispanic culture.
- 1994** Olé Mexico was awarded a nearly \$600,000 federal grant to build a plaza similar to those that exist in many cities in Mexico that would bring people together and serve as a transit hub.
- 1995** Capital Metro purchased the old rail yard as part of a 162-mile rail line with the goal of incorporating the Plaza Saltillo site in its original light-rail service plan.
- 1997** Capital Metro leased an acre of the land to the city of Austin, which helped Olé Mexico build Plaza Saltillo, named after Austin's sister city of Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico. Plans for light rail did not materialize, and the redevelopment of the remaining land in the district was placed on hold.
- 1999** Area residents completed the [East César Chávez Neighborhood Plan](#), which informed much of the Plaza Saltillo vision.
- 2003** Capital Metro and the city of Austin hired ROMA Design Group to develop a master plan for the Plaza Saltillo District with significant community and stakeholder involvement.
- 2006** ROMA Design Group produced the “Saltillo District Redevelopment Plan,” incorporating extensive input from the community and other interested parties.
- 2008** The city of Austin formally adopted the “[Plaza Saltillo TOD Station Area Plan](#).”
- 2009** Implementation began on the Saltillo TOD Station Area Plan and the “Saltillo Regulating Plan.”
- 2010** The MetroRail Red Line began operations with a station at Plaza Saltillo. The commuter rail service breathed new life into the plaza, but the recession prevented Capital Metro from moving forward with the larger redevelopment at the time. Additionally, Imagine Austin identified Plaza Saltillo as an activity center.

- 2011** Capital Metro was awarded a federal grant to realign the rail from the middle of the property to the southern edge of the property.
- 2013** With redevelopment once again booming in the East Austin neighborhood, Capital Metro released a request for proposals (RFP) to the development community in September. Additionally, after many years of community input and conversation and built around the elements in the city-approved Station Development Plan the Capital Metro board approved a [TOD Policy](#) that guides the development of TODs — including Plaza Saltillo — with four goals: (1) increase transit ridership, (2) generate long-term revenue and optimize value of assets, (3) create and promote equitable mixed-use and mixed-income communities around transit and (4) respond to the local community’s vision and values.
- 2014** The Capital Metro board of directors selected the team led by Endeavor Real Estate Group as the winning proposal and instructed Capital Metro staff to negotiate a master development agreement for the property.
- 2015** The Endeavor team began preliminary design plans for the redevelopment of Plaza Saltillo and launched the permitting process with the city of Austin.
- 2016** Capital Metro and Endeavor Real Estate Group entered into a master development agreement and ground lease.
- 2016** Capital Metro completed the re-alignment of the tracks to the southern end of the property along 4th Street thanks to funding from the federal grant.
- 2017** In March, the Austin City Council approved a height variance allowing Endeavor to build a taller office building.
- 2017** In June, Capital Metro, Endeavor and Columbus Realty Partners will break ground on the Plaza Saltillo District redevelopment with a community event that features a flag-planting ceremony, live music and festivities that reflect the character of the local community.