



STATE OF TEXAS CAPITOL COMPLEX PROJECT PHASE II



Texas Capitol Complex Update

March 30, 2023

This newsletter provides updates on the progress of the
Capitol Complex Project

The Texas Facilities Commission Prepares for Phase II

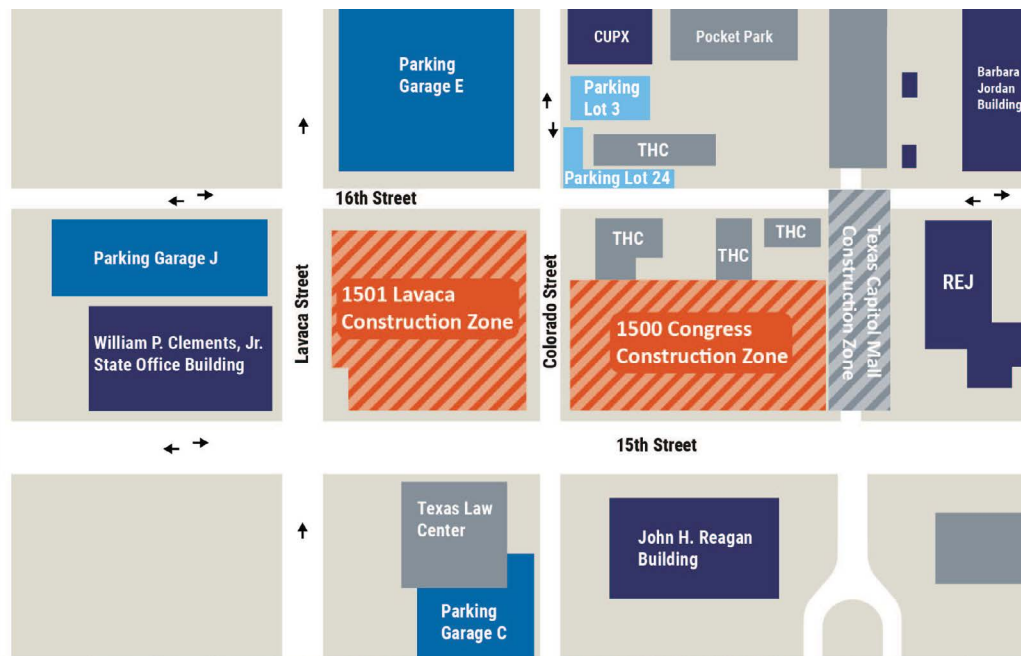


The Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) began the site preparation for Phase II of the transformation of the Capitol Complex on Monday, March 27, 2023.

Construction crews will be removing all interior fixtures of the existing buildings and hauling off the debris.

During this site preparation stage, all sidewalks and adjacent roadways will remain open. There will be some noise from the site from the heavy construction equipment and haulers from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Please watch for construction vehicles entering and leaving the enclosed work sites.

Phase II



On Monday, April 3rd, the crews will begin the demolition of the Lavaca building. In late April, the work will shift to the Congress building and preparation of the sites will continue through May. Excavation of the sites will begin later in the summer.

We invite you to watch the progress of the project from our four roof top construction cameras on the project's website. These cameras feature new technology and allow viewers to zoom in or out and adjust camera perspectives.



View from west



View from northeast



View from southeast



View from south

[View Images from the Construction Cameras](#)

Project Overview



Phase I is dark orange. Phase II is light orange, and Phase III is yellow.



The 2016 Texas Capitol Complex Master Plan envisioned the future of the State's downtown Austin properties for the next century. It proposed three phases of development to accommodate the growth of the State government over the next decades and how to utilize the State's landholdings.

The mandate of the Capitol Complex Project is to centralize all state agencies located in commercial leased spaces throughout Austin into State-owned buildings. With the existing legacy buildings of the Capitol Complex at 98% capacity, the completion of Phase I in 2022 offered some relief to crowded workspaces. The new buildings of Phase I expanded the TFC real estate portfolio and created cost savings from terminating leases and agency consolidations. And already, Phase I of the Capitol Complex is at 94% capacity, as the Texas Facilities Commission begins Phase II. Phase II of the Capitol Complex project will provide additional State office space to reduce the [annual State expense for leased commercial office space](#) in the Austin metropolitan area.

Austin Metro Area



7,500+

Full-time State employees in leased commercial office space



\$37M+

Annual State commercial lease expense

Phase II



The Capitol Complex Project Phase II will redevelop two blocks on the north side of the Capitol grounds. The 1500 block of Congress Avenue (City Block 46) will be the future home of a new State office building and another block of the pedestrian mall. The Gethsemane Lutheran Church and historic buildings along 16th Street will remain.

City Block 39, the 1500 block of Lavaca, formerly the site of the Capitol Complex Child Care Center, will house a second new State office building.

A Look Back: Historical Notes

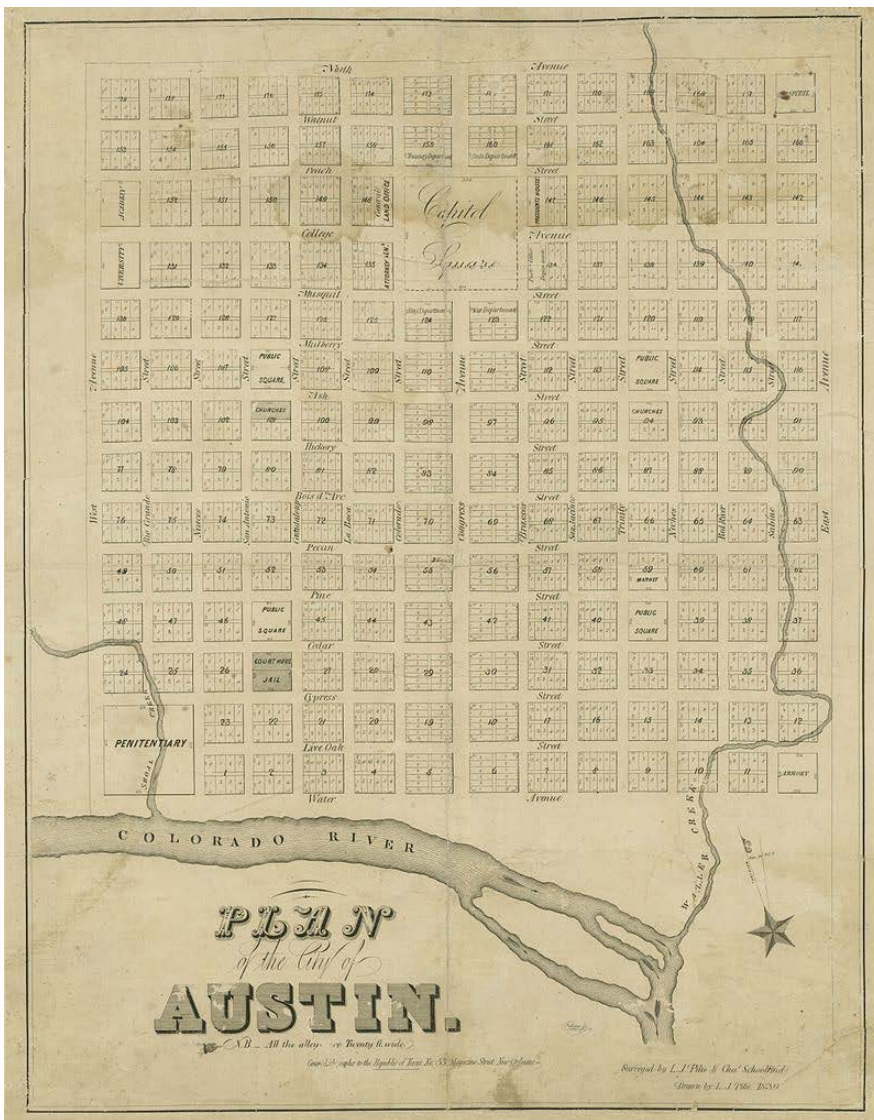
In 1839, the small settlement along the Colorado River called Waterloo, became the capital of the Republic of Texas, and was renamed Austin. The town's planners quickly laid out the new city and the new government's location. The "Capitol Square" was planned on undeveloped land on the north side of the town and near the city's limits at "North Avenue" now known as 15th Street.

City Block 39

The City plans designated City Block 39 as the city block between Lavaca Street and Colorado Street and between 15th and 16th Street.

In 1889, records show a few residences and a grocery store on the Lavaca side of Block 39. Later in the 1930s an auto service station located along Lavaca, and in the 1940s the well-known Gene Johnson Auto Service business took over the site. In 1957, a commercial building was built on this site and became Capitol Motors, and later the Crawford & Gold Auto Painting company. In the 1970s this commercial office building was purchased by the State of Texas and housed the Capitol Complex Child Care Center until last year.

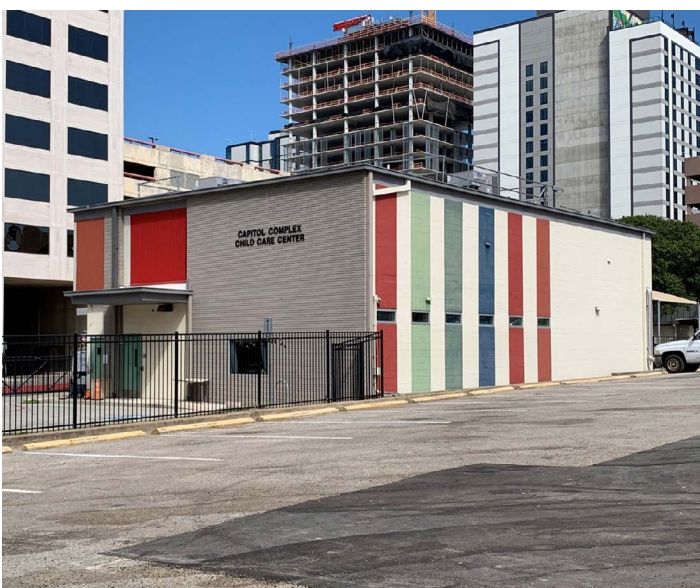
The history of the 15th Street side of Block 39 is primarily residential. The 1880 directories show that Edward and Julia Bock and their four children lived on the corner. The Bock's lived there until their deaths in the 1920s.



Edward Bock Jr. and his wife Pearl Kuss built a house next door, to the east of his parent's home. And Augustus Kuss, father of Pearl Bock, built his home and blacksmith shop on the Colorado side of the block.

Also on the Colorado side, were some smaller wooden homes for working families, which later became apartments. By the 1920s these buildings were replaced with a two-story residence with a detached two car garage. Records from 1927 show that this was the home of Mrs. Clarence Covert, presumably related to the Covert family who lived across the street on City Block 46.

In the 1870s the corner of 15th and Colorado was a grocery store and saloon, with a stable in the back for patrons. In 1894, it became a furniture warehouse and eventually converted to apartments for government workers. By 1964, all the buildings along Colorado Street were demolished, and the area has been used as a parking lot since.



Child Care Center Building

City Block 46

This block is located between Colorado Street and Congress Avenue and 15th and 16th Street.



Carrington-Covert House

The northwest corner of Block 46 at 16th Street and Colorado is occupied by the Carrington-Covert house. In the 1850's Businessman Leonides Davies Carrington commissioned architect-builder John Brandon to build his residence. In 1870, he sold the property. From 1893 to 1898 the building was used as a hospital.

In 1903 the Covert family purchased the home and lived there until 1935. The house was converted into a boarding house until it was purchased by the State of Texas in 1968. It has since been offices for the Texas Historical Commission.

Just to the east of the Carrington-Covert house, are a few notable historic buildings. The Swedish Evangelical Lutheran congregation was established in the mid-1800's in Austin and they built the Gethsemane Church on the corner of Congress Avenue and 16th Street. The builders used salvaged materials from the old Capitol and later materials from the University of Texas Old Main building in the 1930s.

A small one-story house was built behind the church for the pastor. In the 1940's this house and others along 16th Street were demolished to build Luther Hall, a multi-purpose building for the growing congregation. In 1961, the last service at the Gethsemane Church was offered, as the congregation moved to a larger location in North Austin. The church and hall were sold to the State of Texas for \$130,000.

[The Gethsemane Church](#) was added to the National Registry of Historical Places in 1970. Both the church and the hall are managed by the Texas Historical Commission and the church houses the Texas Historical Commission library.

South of the Carrington-Covert house, Block 46 has primarily been residential with Victorian style houses serving as apartments for working class families. In 1938, the first modern high-rise apartments in Austin were built at the corner of 15th and Colorado (1501 Colorado). The five-stories, [Normandie Arms Apartments](#) were popular for their luxurious amenities like air conditioning, an onsite garage, and proximity to the Capitol. In 1965, the State of Texas purchased the property and began using it as office space for the Texas Historical Commission and the Texas Parks and Wildlife department. In 1980 it was demolished to make way for a parking lot.

Perhaps the highest profile lot on the corner of 15th Street and Congress Avenue started off quietly. In 1889, wood-frame homes were built on this corner of 15th Street and Congress. These houses functioned as rental housing for government workers. In 1953, the American Legion built their state headquarters'



The Gethsemane Church

building on this prominent site. The two-story building cost \$200,000 to build, including the property. In the 1960s the building was purchased by the State of Texas and used as the Capital Region District Office for the Texas Department of Public Safety until last year when the agency was moved to the new George H.W. Bush State Office Building.

Construction on City Blocks 46 and 39 will begin in the summer of 2023. These strategic locations will become world-class office buildings for the State government to better serve the people of Texas.

Visit the projet website at
www.TexasCapitolComplex.org

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American Legion State Headquarters