

You are here: [Home](#) / [News](#) / Take a Virtual Construction Tour of the Massive Texas Capitol Complex Project

Take a Virtual Construction Tour of the Massive Texas Capitol Complex Project

JAMES RAMBIN SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

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Image: Page / TFC

If you hadn't noticed the entire north side of the Capitol is a mess right now, let us direct your attention to the **Texas Capitol Complex Project**, a multi-phase master plan now in its first phase of redeveloping the notorious dead zone of state offices and parking lots between **East 15th Street** and **East MLK Jr. Boulevard** — an area charitably known on your Google Map as the “Museum District,” but better understood as a monument to the state's poor perspective on land use during the last century, with very little happening here unless you happened to work in one of the buildings.

1800 Congress Ave
Austin, Texas
[View on Google Maps](#)



Google

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A view of construction underway in the Texas Mall area back in 2019.

But the **Capitol Complex project**, adding two consolidated state office buildings at **1801 and 1601 Congress Avenue** together containing over a **million square feet** along with a six-acre pedestrian mall imagined for the Capitol grounds by state planners **since the 1940s**, hopes to change that — and beneath this new construction is a massive five-level underground parking garage containing more than **3,000 spaces**, which allows for the reclamation of many area surface lots.



Image: TFC



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A central organizing element of the master plan is the creation of the Texas Mall, on Congress Avenue, between 15th Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. This tree-lined, pedestrian-oriented civic event space will serve as a cultural gateway on the north axis of the Capitol, linking a new museum district to the Capitol grounds. The new mall will require the vacation of Congress Avenue and will effectively remove north-south vehicular traffic from the center of the complex. In response, an integral part of the overall plan will be the conversion of 16th,

17th, and 18th Streets from one way to two way traffic. Where these streets currently contain parking on both sides of the street, one side of parking will be removed to create the space for two way traffic.

— **Texas Facilities Commission**

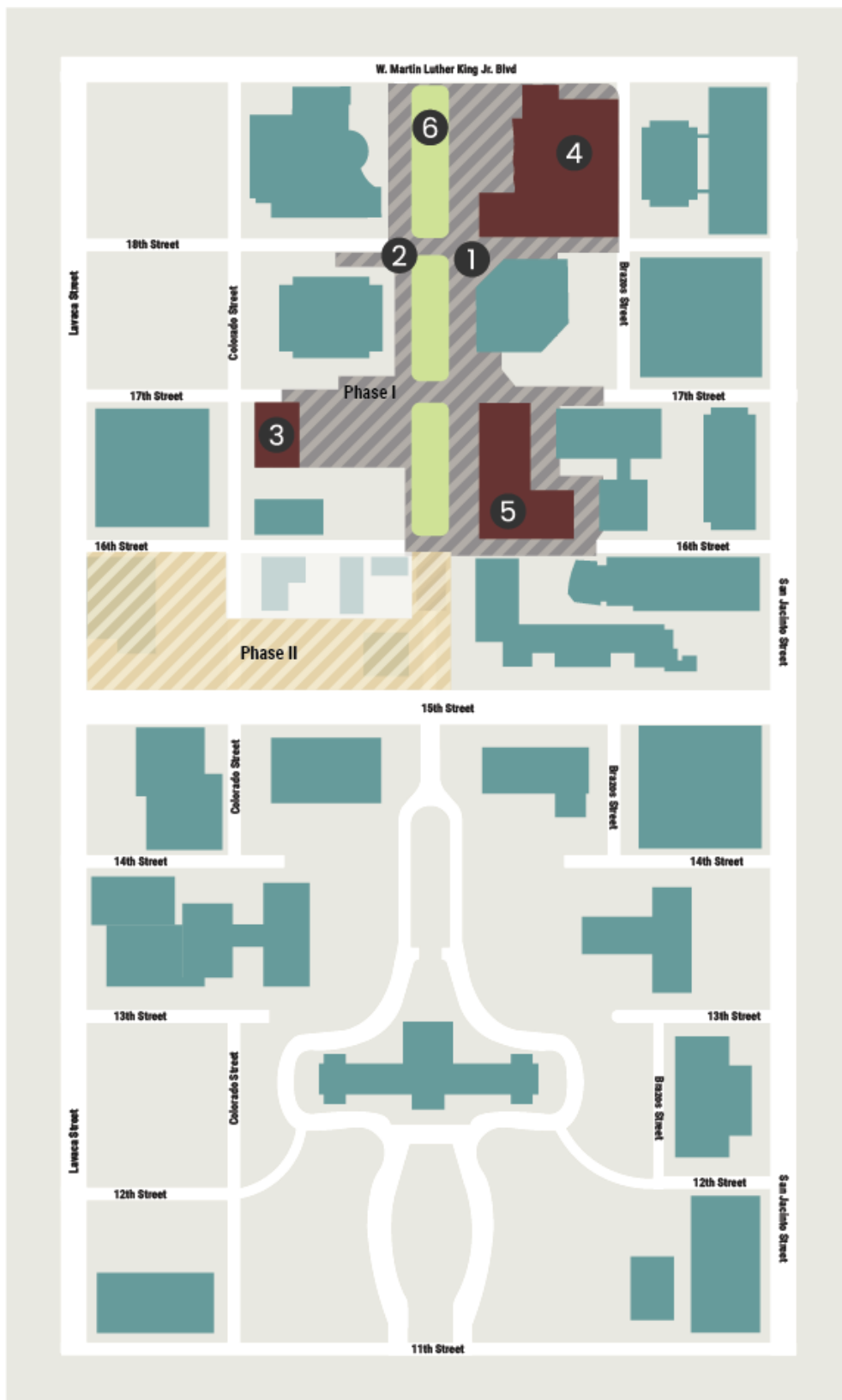
More than three years after the **start of construction** and despite the added challenges of an unforeseen pandemic, the \$581 million first phase of the plan remains on budget and on schedule, thanks to the oversight of the **Texas Facilities Commission** along with a galaxy of design and construction firms including **Page, HKS Architects, Kirksey Architecture, Balfour Beatty Construction, JE Dunn, Flintco**, and many more.

JE Dunn: The Big Dig - Austin, TX



Even in its **first phase alone**, the project is so large and its scope so significant that it's genuinely difficult to summarize it all here — but the TFC has really committed to documenting its progress at every stage with the kind of transparency you wouldn't necessarily expect from a state agency, including **live construction cams, blog updates**, and now a full-fledged **virtual**

construction tour traveling between eight different stops at the site to explain just what's happening here and why.



A map of the project's virtual construction tour — [click to check it out](#). Image: TFC

Thanks to its many visuals from every stage and area of the project, the tour certainly does a much better job laying out everything changing over here than we possibly could in text form before making you glaze over completely — so if you're interested in precisely why the entire region surrounding the Bob Bullock Museum is virtually shut down or otherwise impeded to pedestrians and cars, [you'd better check this out.](#)

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