

East Austin mixed-use project underway at old Arnold Oil site

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By Shonda Novak - American-Statesman Staff

Transwestern Development Co. has started construction on a project that will bring about 446,000 square feet of mixed-use development to the former Arnold Oil Co. site in Central East Austin.

Transwestern and its development partner will build the project on a 4.2-acre site at East Sixth and Comal Streets. Arnold Oil, a distributor of auto supplies, said last year that it had outgrown that location and has moved to Burleson Road.



This rendering shows the apartment/retail building planned for Transwestern Development Co.'s mixed-use project at East Sixth and Comal streets. Credit: Wilder Belshaw ... [Read More](#)

Work will start first on a 94,500-square-foot office building to be called 1645 E. Sixth, and which is due to be completed in January of 2016. The second building, a 346-unit apartment complex called The Arnold, is expected to be finished in July of 2016. The apartment building will include 9,600 square feet of retail space.

The retail and restaurant locations will include Royal Blue Grocery; Blenders and Bowls; Gato Nero, an Italian concept being developed by Violet Crown Management; and another yet-to-be disclosed restaurant, said Josh Delk, an associate vice president with Transwestern in Austin who is leading the development team.

“We are very pleased to get started on this exciting development,” Delk said. “This location is in the center of one of Austin’s most culturally rich and defining neighborhoods, and we are thrilled to be bringing a project of this caliber to the area. The Arnold and accompanying office building will add to the creative energy with its mix of office, multiple housing options and prominent local retail and restaurant offerings.”



Flora Guerra, a server at El Azteca restaurant on East Seventh Street, said the changes happening in East Austin are changing ... [Read More](#)

Transwestern also developed the large apartment project that surrounds the iconic Broken Spoke music venue on South Lamar Boulevard.

The East Austin project means more luxury housing for East Austin; units will have quartz countertops, custom wood cabinets, gourmet prep islands and stainless steel appliances.

Transwestern is not disclosing the cost of the project. It also declined to name its development partner in the

project.

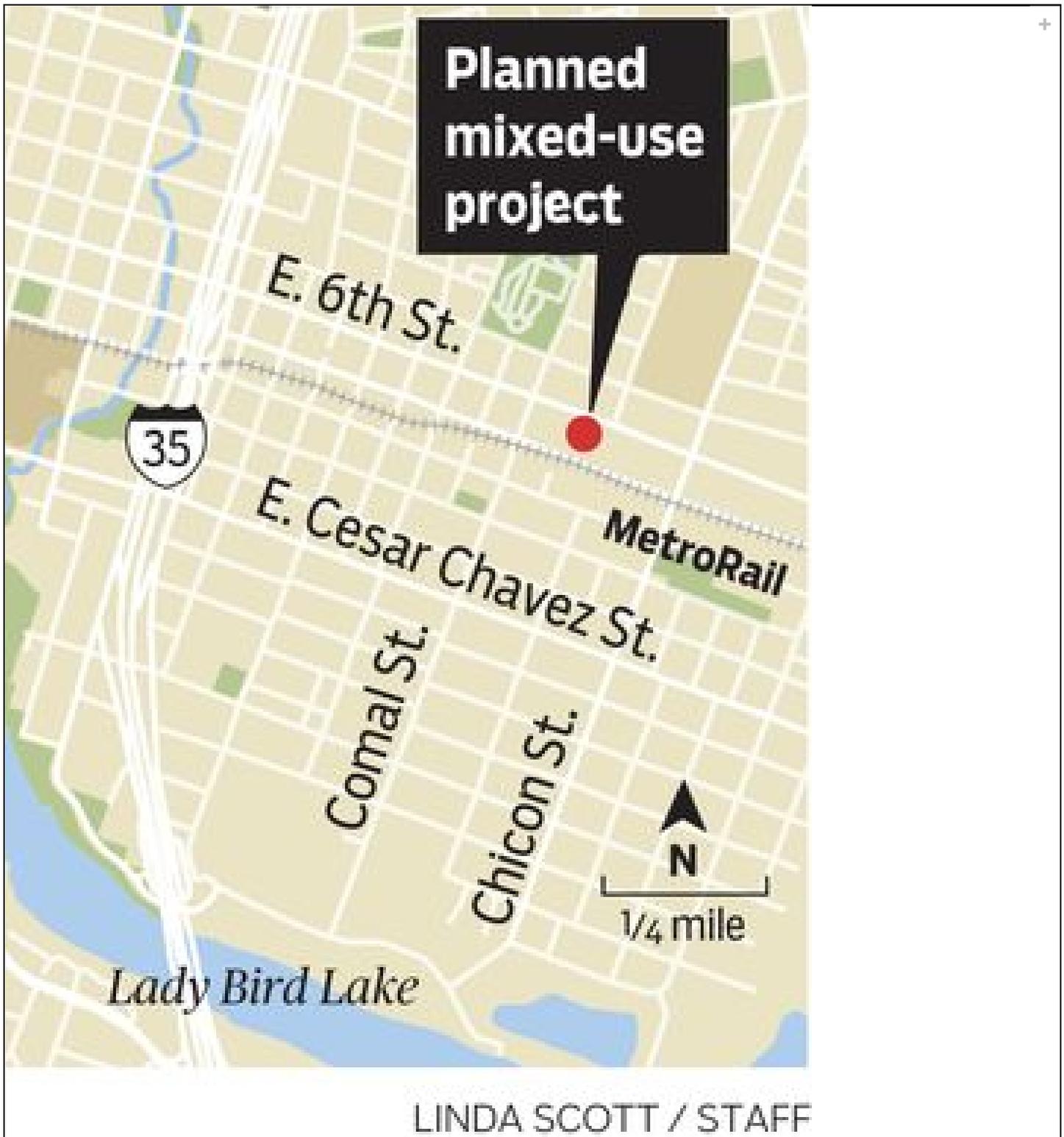


Kirksey Architecture designed the office portion of Transwestern Development Co.'s mixed-use project that will be built in East Austin. Credit: Kirksey Architecture

The new development will be adjacent to the Austin MetroRail's Plaza Saltillo station, an area where more mixed-use development is planned as East Austin continues to gentrify with luxury residences, restaurants and bars. It's a trend that some residents and community activists say is adversely affecting neighborhoods in East Austin, changing their character and bringing unwanted traffic, nightlife and higher property values.

For some residents and activists, Arnold Oil, which had opened its East Austin location in the 1970s, was a reminder of the kind of industrial business that East Austin had seen a disproportionate share of through the decades due to city zoning laws.

Flora Guerra, who grew up in East Austin, is a server at El Azteca, a Mexican restaurant on East Seventh Street, where another apartment project is under construction down the street. Guerra said she has seen the many changes happening since the early 2000s, when developers began to jump across the Interstate 35 divide that long had separated much of Austin from the largely minority East Austin area and started building new residential projects. The gentrification, she said, has brought rising property taxes that have caused some longtime residents to move.



“They feel like they were kicked out of their properties,” she said.

“It’s crazy and it’s sad at the same time,” said Guerra, who moved in 2001 to Kyle with her husband and two children, now 18 and 22.

“All the tradition, customs, all the people moving in are taking away what Austin used to be and the people

who built it,” Guerra said. “It’s all gone, it’s been swept away. It’s just so sad that it’s not what it used to be.”