

Downtown projects by the numbers



Completed **Under construction or about to begin** **Pending**

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Rio Nuevo and downtown revitalization is a story of what's done (quite a bit, actually), what's under construction (not much), what's on the verge of construction (a couple of high-profile housing projects) and the biggest list: Who knows when or if these projects will come to light.

Done

1. The Fox Tucson Theatre reopened Dec. 31, 2005 after a \$13 million restoration to a building that had sat shuttered since 1974. The structure, built in 1930, has hosted 232 events and drawn 70,657 people since its re-opening.
2. The Rialto Theatre, 318 E. Congress St., reopened in April 2005 after undergoing \$3 million in renovations. Since then another \$385,000 went into giving the theater, built in 1919, an air conditioning system for the first time. The theater, owned by the city Rio Nuevo district but privately operated, has put on 250 events, attracting 175,000 people.
3. The Tucson Convention Center built a new box office in 2003. This sounds entirely innocuous, but this project started the 10-year clock on Rio Nuevo's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. That's when Tucson got to keep all the increased sales tax revenue generated in the Rio Nuevo district, which includes downtown and the Broadway corridor to Park Place. So far about \$40 million in TIF revenue has been collected. The Legislature in 2006 added another 12 years to extend the Rio Nuevo TIF district to 2025, which will generate an estimated \$581 million for downtown public projects.
4. El Presidio del Tucson opened in May at the corner of Church Avenue and Washington Street. This is a \$2.8 million reconstruction of one corner of the presidio fortress that established Tucson in the 1770s. This is the first completed facility for Tucson Origins, the rest of which will be built on the West Side, anchored by a rebuilt Mission San Agustín.
5. Academy Lofts opened in the summer of 2006 after Steve Fenton converted an 1886 church school and convent at Sixth Avenue and 15th Street into 25 rental loft units that range from \$825 to \$1,400 and 11 lofts for purchase in a second building priced at \$200,000 to \$325,000.
 - Prices for the 11 loft condos range from \$200,000 to \$325,000
6. Ice House Lofts, 1001 E. 17th St., opened in summer 2005 as a 51-unit loft complex built into a 1920 industrial plant that once housed the Arizona Ice and Storage Co. Developers Warren Michaels and Phil Lipman partnered with architect Rob Paulus and his wife, Randi Dorman, to create one of Rio Nuevo's first completed downtown housing projects, where units sold from about \$100,000 to nearly \$500,000.
7. Armory Park Del Sol has brought 87 homes that start at \$373,000 to the 400 block of South Third Avenue since 1999 that incorporate low water usage, solar water

heaters, solar electric, thermal storage masonry and double-glass argon-filled windows.

8. The \$11.5 million Pennington Street Garage brought a green, Art Deco look and 750 new parking spaces on street level to the corner of Scott Avenue and Pennington Street in late 2005. As an added bonus, Café Poca Cosa moved into the garage's street level in February 2006.

9. The 1907 Historic Depot became a fully functioning building again in 2004 after a two-year, \$7 million reconstruction project on a building that the city acquired in 1998 from Southern Pacific Railroad. The building sat largely unused before then except for the Amtrak station and Southern Arizona Transportation Museum. Since then, Central Bistro, Norris Design, LP&G public relations, Hertz and Mahlia Collection have been added. The depot was considered the first substantial project completed in the Rio Nuevo district.

10 and 11. Franklin Court opened in July 2005 as a nine-home upscale community at Franklin Street and Court Avenue that reflects the historic past of downtown by employing pre-1800s Sonoran row house, 1880s Territorial, and turn-of-the-century modified Craftsman designs. Homes started at \$395,000. Right around the corner, the Court and Meyer development brought six mixed-income homes onto a vacant piece of land, starting at \$237,000. A wall closed the street off from Sixth Street, creating a quiet neighborhood.

12. La Entrada Apartments added 66 luxury apartments to an existing luxury-style rental development at Granada Avenue and Franklin Street with rents starting at \$689 per month. The addition was built on vacant land in 2006.

Under construction

13. The first three homes were finished in June at the Mercado District at Menlo Park near the west end of Congress Street. Master developer Rio Development launched construction on 15 homes in August 2006 on a 14.3-acre site ultimately destined for 99 homes ranging in price from \$350,000 to \$900,000, managing partner Justin Dixon said. Dixon expects 60 to 70 homes to be done in two years. Mercado District is the largest downtown housing development in terms of acreage.

Four builders are bringing different styles to the Mercado District: Innovative Living Design & Development is building 10 custom homes in the Sonoran row and Spanish colonial styles; City Lofts will build three Sonoran row houses; Street Scene Development will build 50 homes in a Mexican Colonial Plaza concept; and Tucson Artisan Builders plans to build 17 detached all-masonry homes. Dixon has not lined up a builder for the remaining 19 homes at the property's south edge.

14. Tucson Origins formally started on-site work June 18 at the Mission San

Agustin site. Until Sept. 20, all work will revolve around removing 112,000 cubic yards of landfill from the mission, visitor center and plaza sites. The first adobe bricks to rebuild the mission should be laid in November.

On the verge of construction

15. The Post lofts awaits a building permit and then its owners will build the 52-unit, six-story condo complex at 20 E. Congress St. Project manager Oscar Turner at Bourn Partners thinks the permit will be delivered in early August and for the project to finish by the end of 2008.

Bourn is in the process of putting buyers under contract, but "we still have a few units left to sell," Turner said. Prices range from the low \$200,000s for a 650 square-foot studio to \$1 million-plus for penthouses exceeding 2,000 square feet.

Bourn is also looking for merchants such as coffee or sandwich shops to fill the four shops on street level that add up to 7,500 square feet. Interested merchants can contact Amanda Signori at Bourn at 323-1005. Bourn acquired the city-owned land for \$100.

16. Depot Plaza — This month, kitchen and bathroom fixtures will be torn out of the former Martin Luther King Jr. Apartments, the first step in their transformation into One North Fifth, a market-rate 96-unit apartment complex that will anchor Depot Plaza. July's demolition work will also entail removing the heavy balcony panels and widening door jams.

Nine months later, in March 2008, One North Fifth should be ready for rental tenants paying in the \$600s for a studio and in the \$700s for a one-bedroom apartment per month, said Ron Schwabe of Peach Properties, the Tucson partner for Williams & Dame of Portland, Ore.

In August, Williams & Dame will break ground on a three-deck underground parking garage behind the MLK. One year later, a five-story tower with 80 to 100 market rate condos will be built atop the garage. Expected completion date is July 2009.

Williams & Dame also plans to build a 10-story condo tower with about 160 units across the street from MLK on the south side of the 200 block of East Congress Street.

Construction is slated for two years out.

Who knows just when construction will start?

17. The 101-unit Presidio Terrace condo project was supposed to start construction this summer but was pushed back six months as developer Peggy Noonan awaited a second appraisal. She believes the high-end housing project on Paseo Redondo west of the Tucson Museum of Art will be ready for residents in 2 1/2 years.

Current designs call for 92 units in a modernistic barrio-style structure that steps up from four stories at Paseo Redondo up to eight stories in back. Prices range from under \$200,000 for a 570-square-foot-studio, an average \$550,000 for a typical 1,600-square-foot unit, up to \$1.1 million.

Noonan has 31 reservations and is taking reservations at 624-7020.

18. Rialto Block — Doug Biggers shoots for a completion date of December 2008 for his retail/restaurant/apartment mix to coincide with the opening of the new Fourth Avenue underpass. He owns the two-story commercial strip, built in 1919, that's attached to the Rialto Theatre at the east end of Congress Street.

19. Plaza Centro is envisioned as a residential-retail-dining eastern gateway to downtown on the 2.25 acres on either side of Toole Avenue where Congress Street, Broadway and Fourth Avenue converge. Jim Campbell has an option on the land where the Greyhound Station once stood and across the street on the parcel between Toole and the railroad tracks. Construction can't start until after the new Fourth Avenue underpass is completed at the end of 2008.

20. 44 Broadway — James LeBeau plans to resume construction in two months on the former federal courthouse annex building at 44 E. Broadway that he is converting into a 30-unit condo complex with 7,000 square feet of retail/restaurant on street level. Condo prices will range from \$350,000 to \$700,000. LeBeau anticipates having the structure ready for tenants in one year. He estimates construction is about 35 percent done.

21. Developer Mike Teufel and El Charro Café CEO Ray Flores Jr. plan to start work to this summer revive the 1904 Santa Rita Hotel into a 66-room boutique hotel, plus 48 rooms that will be sold as condo hotel rooms, where owners can lease rooms back for use as hotel rooms. The team plans to add a second structure at the spot with 99 condominium units, a parking garage and a gourmet supermarket. Teufel and Flores project a 2009 completion date.

22. The city will find out Sept. 1 what developers will propose for a hotel to support the Tucson Convention Center. Initial hints have included a basic hotel, a hotel with retail village and even one proposal with no hotel but an elaborate home-office-retail complex filling much of the parking lot behind the TCC.

That hotel financing package will determine how the TCC renovation and expansion and new arena will proceed. That should be known sometime in October when the city picks a hotel developer, said Rich Singer, TCC's director.

23. Conceptual designs are done for a new Tucson Arena to be located west of the Tucson Convention Center and the west side of Granada Avenue. The project awaits the winning hotel proposal. Singer hopes to start construction in summer 2008 and open in summer 2010.

24. TCC will convert the existing arena into an exhibit hall as soon as the new arena opens, projected for summer 2010. In summer 2008, Singer plans to start work on 35,000 square feet of new TCC meeting rooms.

25. Three developers will vie to determine who will develop the vacant 14.3 acres between Congress Street and Tucson Origins on the West Side. TJ Bednar Homes, the Gadsden Co., and Williams & Dame Development responded to a city request for qualification June 28. Rio Nuevo director Greg Shelko expects to pick a developer in November.