

Seaholm Power Plant



Seaholm Power Plant (named for Austin's fourth city manager)

Austin, TX

The building is a 136,000 square foot iconic structure that has more than 110,000 square feet of useable floor space. The building features a turbine hall that measures 110 by 235 feet with a ceiling that is 65 feet high.

The Seaholm District includes dining, entertainment, and usable space surrounding the Seaholm condo tower.

Project Vision

Efforts were made to maintain and celebrate the existing structure's history while offering convenient public accessibility and a variety of multifaceted gathering spaces. Turbine Hall was preserved and left open to the public and the original broilers, smokestacks, and 75-foot crane were left intact providing a dynamic context for the plaza with opportunities for public art and shade structures. As the City of Austin Seaholm Redevelopment Project Tax Increment Financing Reinvestment Zone No. 18 (2008) explains,

The purpose of the Project, which is to be partially financed through the TIF, is to provide for the redevelopment of the historically significant Seaholm Power Plant and its immediate grounds. The site impairs the City's growth because of deteriorating structures, inadequate street layout, and unsafe conditions.

Renovation Plan

This re-development of the long-dormant power plant offered a unique opportunity to preserve a key piece of Austin's past and unite it with the region's vibrant future. Once renovated, the building will house an event center, office, retail, and restaurant uses. Part of the renovation includes creating a dynamic entrance on the west end of the building.

The renovation plan includes:

- 143,151 sf of office space
- 7.8-acre neighborhood development
 - The two-story low-rise offers over 67,000 sf of mixed-use space including retail, salons and office space surrounding a one-acre public plaza.
 - The 30-story high-rise offers 280 luxury condos over 615,000 sf.
- 48,363 sf of retail shops and restaurants
- multipurpose, amphitheater-like event space ideally suited for concerts, festivals and farmers markets capable of hosting 1,500 to 2,000 patrons
- the design of the space provides a connection to the Lance Armstrong Bikeway and creates an additional pedestrian lane along Cesar Chavez
- the design accommodates a future commuter rail
- interior plaza, situated under the existing power plant framework, offers intimate space for informal meetings
- Three levels of underground parking beneath the plaza

Environmental

The development team targeted Austin Energy Green building Two Star certification as a baseline for the power plant and Austin Energy Three Star for the new construction. The power plant and low-rise are both LEED Gold® and all three buildings in the development received four stars from the Austin Energy Green Building (AEGB) program for sustainability.

According to [Seaholm Power, LLC . Austin . Texas : Project : History \(seaholmdevelopment.com\)](http://seaholmdevelopment.com):

This momentous undertaking was helped substantially by Austin Energy's 9-year, \$13 million remediation to clean up hazardous materials. After that major effort, it was deemed Ready for Reuse, by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality making Seaholm the first facility in the nation to receive such a designation under the federal Toxic Substance Control Act.

The infrastructure uses a rainwater collection system for irrigation, which allows landscaping and cooling without using City water. By repurposing the existing underground intake pipes from adjacent Lady Bird Lake, the plant is supplied with a capacity exceeding 300,000 gallons.

Seaholm Waterfront

The Seaholm Intake facility was once the pump house for the power plant. Plans to repurpose the intake structure and surrounding parkland make up the future Seaholm Waterfront initiative. This project will include a park, trail, and buildings aligning Lady Bird Lake. This adjacent project hopes to “embrace fresh civic purpose and local desires for recreation and public life.”

The Center for Sustainable Development at The University of Texas at Austin provided initial planning and technical assistance to the Seaholm Power, Ltd. team and City of Austin on the rain catchment system, landscaping, and stormwater management.

Austin Parks Foundation (APF), The Trail Foundation (TTF), and the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) hired design firm Studio Gang to lead the study and input of redeveloping the Waterfront.

Phase I will bring the intake into code compliance for a public space while phases II and III will continue to get closer to the end vision for the Seaholm Waterfront.

Timeline

1948 - commissioned to meet the growing electricity needs in Austin, Texas

1950 - 1958 - Power Plant was built in 2 phases

1960 – plant dedicated posthumously to Walter Seaholm, Austin's fourth city manager and a former utility director

1989 - the plant ceased generating power—though it remained an active part of the region's power grid

1996 - remaining 3 generators were shut down

1997 - The city of Austin was looking to demolish the plant but the Seaholm Reuse Planning Committee, made up of interested community representatives, led a public polling process to determine the best use or uses for the power plant structures

1998 - Committee report recommended preserving the facility for a multi-use public attraction developed through a public-private partnership

2020 - ROMA Design Group was commissioned by the City to prepare a Seaholm District Master Plan

2004 - Austin City Council requested proposals for re-development partners and set out a plan to remediate the toxic PCBs and heavy oil deposits that remained

2005 - The Seaholm Redevelopment Team was selected to redevelop the powerplant and surrounding property

2007 – named Texas historic landmark

2008 – Austin City Council approves a Master Development Agreement with Seaholm Power, LLC and a Tax Incentive Financing Reinvestment Zone

2015 – Trader Joes, Under Armour HQ and athenahealth open

2016 – the Seaholm residences and other businesses open

2017 – Studio Gang hired for Seaholm Waterfront Concept Study

PROJECT TEAM

Development Team

Southwest Strategies Group, Inc.
Centro Development LLC
State Street Properties
La Corsha Hospitality Group
Capital Project Management

Design Architects

STG Design
Design Collective, Inc.?

Landscape Architects

TBG Partners

Residential Marketing

Urbanspace Residential

Office // Retail Marketing

Southwest Strategies Group, Inc.

Public Relations

Columbus Communications LLC

Fast Facts

Development

Developer: Seaholm Power, LLC
Web site: <http://www.seaholm.info>
Address: 222 West Avenue . Austin . Texas 78701
Location: The Southwestern edge of downtown Austin, bounded by Caesar Chavez Street, West Avenue, 3rd Street, Seaholm Drive and a rail line
Project uses: Retail, office, residential & restaurants

Space Allocations

Site size: 7.8 acres, including more than 3 acres of "open" space
Seaholm building: 113,063 square feet
Seaholm Plaza: .75 acre outdoor plaza
South Terrace: .5 acre "front yard" overlooking Lady Bird Lake
Office: 143,151 square feet
Residential: 280 units Retail/Restaurant: 48,363 square feet

Residential

Name: Seaholm Residences
Style: Fresh, energetic, vibrant & modern

Management: Urbanspace

Website: seaholmresidences.com

Amenities: Sky deck, pool with lake views, high tech fitness center, business center, resident's club room as well as a dog walking and grooming area

Governance

Public-Private Partnership

Seaholm was made possible by a partnership between Seaholm Power, LLC and the City of Austin. It was the first time the City had entered into an agreement where a key goal was preserving an iconic structure.

Revenues generated from the project will help fund the City's investment in the open spaces and parking. Once the investment is paid back, additional revenue will be dedicated to affordable housing.

Economic Development

The \$130 million re-development will include a mix of office space, condos, retail shops, restaurants, meeting space, outdoor gathering, and event space ideally suited for concerts, festivals, and farmers markets.

The development will be the anchor of a new Seaholm District, forming the southwest quadrant of downtown. It will revitalize the area and serve as an economic catalyst for re-developing City-owned land at the Green Water Treatment plant site, as well as the two Austin Energy tracts that are adjacent to the property. As the City of Austin Seaholm Redevelopment Project Tax Increment Financing Reinvestment Zone No. 18 (2008) notes,

In addition to rehabilitation for the historic power plant, the Project will relocate utilities, provide for new street infrastructure to connect Cesar Chavez Street and Third Street, and provide for the development of an office building and hotel/condo tower. The new street infrastructure will provide access to the office building and hotel/condo tower thereby supporting the economic viability for the Project.

The Project will:

Enhance and contribute to Downtown Austin and the Seaholm District

Complement and enhance Lady Bird Lake, Shoal Creek and Sand Beach Reserve

Incorporate sustainability, green building and alternative energy

Provide a positive economic and financial impact to the City

Enable the development of a central rail transit hub.

Project Financing

As the City of Austin Seaholm Redevelopment Project Tax Increment Financing Reinvestment Zone No. 18 (2008) explains,

To finance the public infrastructure and power plant rehabilitation components of the Project, the City intends to form the TIF in accordance with State law. In a tax increment reinvestment zone, one or more political subdivisions contribute up to 100% of the property tax on the increase in value of real property in the district (tax increment) as generated. Under the terms of the TIF, the City of Austin will contribute 100% of its property tax and sales tax increment. Tax increment revenues so generated may be expended only for purposes described in the project and financing plan for the TIF. The public infrastructure and power plant rehabilitation components of the Project will be primarily funded by the issuance of debt that will be repaid from the tax increment revenues, both property taxes and sales taxes, collected during the 30-year duration of the TIF.

The City of Austin will contribute 100% of its tax increment, both property tax and sales tax, to the TIF. This section describes the financing plan for the TIF and the Project. A. List of Estimated Project Costs of the Zone The total estimated development cost of the Project is \$113.4 million (in July 2008 dollars). The Project will include an office building, hotel/condo tower, plaza, terrace, rehabilitation of the Seaholm Power Plant, and construction of two roadways running north to south on the east and west side of the Seaholm Power Plant site. The following table itemizes the estimated Project and non-Project costs (in millions). The Project is expected to incur bond financing costs but these costs have not been included in the list below.

Table 1: Project and Non-Project Costs (in millions)

Project Costs					
Project Component	Developer Funded	City of Austin			Total Costs
		TIF Funded	Water and Electric Utility CIP Funded	1/4 Cent CIP Funded	
Office Building	14.8				\$ 14.8
Hotel/Condo	63.0				63.0
Power Plant Rehabilitation	19.1	4.5			23.6
Plaza	1.7	2.1			3.8
Street Work		1.5		2.7	4.2
Utility Relocations			4.0		4.0
Totals	\$ 98.6	\$ 8.1	\$ 4.0	\$ 2.7	\$ 113.4

Non-Project Costs	
City-Owned Parking Garage (Anticipated to be funded by revenue bonds)	\$3.8

The City contracted with Economic and Planning Systems, Inc., to conduct a financial feasibility assessment of the Project and to analyze pro forma financial statements for the Project. The financial feasibility assessment indicates that revenues from the Project and the City-owned parking garage will be sufficient to pay for expenses.

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More details can be found here: <http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=123960>

Seaholm Secrets

The coal bins were sealed off before ever being used, since by the time the plant was up and running, fuel oil took the place of coal as fuel for the boilers.

Restaurants located in the Seaholm District:

- ATX Cocina – modern Mexican food with seafood options
- Le Politique – a minimalist French bistro with a sizeable bar
- Boiler 9 Bar + Grill – 4 level wood-fired restaurant that has a rooftop lounge and a basement cocktail bar
- North Italia – upscale Italian specializing in thin crust pizza
- True Food Kitchen – an eco friendly restaurant specializing in healthy food and cocktails
- Flower Child – a boho style health food cafe

Results

LEED Gold® (Power Plant and Low-Rise)

AEGB Four-Star

Seaholm Power Plant Sources

https://www.aiaaustin.org/firm_project/seaholm-power-plant-re-development

<https://www.seaholmdevelopment.com/index.html>

https://savingplaces.org/stories/the-history-behind-one-of-austin-texas-hottest-development-properties-seaholm-power-plant#.X7L_8y0ifmo

<https://landezine-award.com/seaholm-power-plant-redevelopment/>

<https://austinparks.org/seaholm-waterfront-funding/>

<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/seaholm-waterfront>

https://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/hawaiirain/Library/papers/Butler_Kent.pdf

<https://seaholmcondosaustin.com/seaholm-district/>

<https://austin.curbed.com/2017/6/26/15876940/austin-seaholm-redevelopment-intake-photos>

<http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=123960>

<https://studiogang.com/project/seaholm-waterfront-concept-study>

<https://austin.towers.net/the-seaholm-waterfronts-first-phase-is-ready-to-roll-on-lady-bird-lake/>



Photo acknowledgment: [Seaholm Power, LLC . Austin . Texas : Project : History \(seaholmdevelopment.com\)](http://seaholmdevelopment.com)

THE SEAHOLM DISTRICT IN AUSTIN



[Seaholm District in Downtown Austin](#) | [Seaholm Power Plant](#) | [Seaholm Condos](#)
(seaholmcondosaustin.com)



Former Seaholm Intake Facility | City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department