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## **Downtown's decade**

### **City's center gained grand towers for living and working as a new skyline took shape.**

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Saturday, Dec. 26, 2009

Talk about an extreme makeover.

Downtown Austin boomed in the past decade, gaining everything from a new county courthouse to condominium and apartment high-rises with lofty prices, a signature Whole Foods Market grocery store and headquarters, a new City Hall, museums and dozens of ritzy shops.

The city's center grew up — literally — its skyline transformed with new residential skyscrapers both east and west, led by the 56-story Austonian condo tower at Second Street and Congress Avenue.

In all, downtown gained 1 million square feet of top-flight office space, nearly 2,300 apartments and about 2,000 condo units. Dozens of shops and restaurants enliven the Second Street district; movie fans can catch a film at the Alamo Ritz on East Sixth Street, and work has started on a long-delayed new federal courthouse.

As is the case in many places, however, several large projects are on hold, including a Marriott hotel on Congress Avenue. But construction cranes still tower over downtown, and there are signs of more projects to come. Developers have obtained a zoning change for a 276-room Hyatt Place hotel at Third Street and San Jacinto Boulevard. Two others have started the zoning approval process, hoping to be in position when financing flows again.

And the next decade could bring a transformation almost as dramatic as the one that is ending, with the redevelopment of the Seaholm Power Plant and Green Water Treatment sites into a mix of housing, shops, offices, hotels and restaurants.

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**