

New Scottsdale SkySong office tower would be tallest yet



Parker Leavitt, The Republic | azcentral.com 7:06 a.m. MST August 16, 2016



(Photo: SkySong/Special for the Republic)

A new \$42 million office tower planned for Scottsdale's rapidly-growing SkySong complex would be its tallest building yet, rising six stories and 90 feet next to the project's iconic tent-like canopy near Scottsdale and McDowell roads.

Development plans filed late last month show a 150,000-square-foot office building at the northwestern corner of SkySong's shaded central plaza, the hub of the 42-acre redevelopment site in south Scottsdale.

The new tower, called SkySong 6, has enough space to hold 500 to 600 employees, according to SkySong officials. Construction could begin in the first quarter of 2017 and wrap up by the end of the year.

Building designs, subject to approval from the city's Development Review Board, include a reinforced-concrete structure with more glass and metal panels on its facade than the surrounding buildings, according to SkySong. The building will feature a second-story community space with glass walls that open to a balcony with views of the buttes to the west, officials said.

SKYSONG IN SCOTTSDALE: [Groupon opening sales office \(/story/money/business/2015/06/18/groupon-scottsdale-office-skysong/28926997/\)](#) | [Complex lands Starwood hotel \(/story/news/local/scottsdale/2016/07/27/scottsdales-skysong-complex-lands-starwood-hotel/87029446/\)](#) | [4th building under construction \(/story/money/business/tech/2015/09/21/skysong-starts-construction-4th-building/72575840/\)](#) | [SkySong gains 3 new tenants \(/story/news/local/scottsdale/2015/01/16/scottsdales-skysong-gains-new-tenants/21871553/\)](#)

SkySong is a public-private effort by the city, Arizona State University and developer Plaza Cos. to revitalize the former site of Los Arcos Mall, which went dark in the 1990s. SkySong's first two office buildings opened in 2008, followed by a 325-unit apartment complex in 2014 and a third office tower last year.

The first three office buildings are nearly 99 percent leased, and about 1,500 employees currently work at SkySong, officials said. The number of employees is set to rise when a fourth office building opens in September. That building is currently 35 percent leased, according to SkySong.

Zoning change allowed taller buildings



SkySong, the Arizona State University Scottsdale Innovation Center, was the first to add new residential to the corridor. (Photo: The Republic)

The new six-story tower would be the first to take advantage of a zoning change that allows buildings up to 90 feet tall — instead of the previous 60 feet — specifically on the northern half of the property, between McDowell Road and SkySong Boulevard. The ordinance was narrowly approved by the Scottsdale City Council in April 2015.

SkySong officials say taller buildings and greater density allows them to reach the goal of 1.2 million square feet of building space while using more open space for amenities like walkways, patios, water features, fireplace areas, public art and landscaping.

The building heights have proven controversial among some Scottsdale residents, however, including City Councilman David Smith, who was joined by Councilman Guy Phillips and Councilwoman Kathy Littlefield in voting against the voting change last year.

"I have great concern about what a building of that height, particularly at one of the signature intersections of our city ... is going to do in any positive way," Smith said at the 2015 council meeting. "I have no idea how we can construe a 90-foot building is in harmony with anything with the surrounding neighborhood."

Momentum for south Scottsdale



Located at Scottsdale and McDowell roads, SkySong, the ASU Scottsdale Innovation Center, received the 2015 Silver Excellence in Economic Development Award by the International Economic Development Council. (Photo: ASU/Special for The Republic)

South Scottsdale's McDowell Road Corridor — once known as the "Motor Mile" for its array of car dealerships — fell on hard times during the 1990s. Competition from other regional shopping malls put Los Arcos out of business. Auto dealers left for newer locations, and vacancies added up.

A plan to replace Los Arcos with a Phoenix Coyotes hockey arena emerged in 1998 but fell apart amid community opposition and mixed views from the City Council. The partnership for an "ASU Innovation campus" formed in 2004, and the complex has since helped usher in what many see as a new era for the corridor.

South Scottsdale's 85257 ZIP code saw [home prices climb nearly 6 percent in 2015 \(/story/news/local/scottsdale/2016/05/03/5-things-know-scottsdale-home-values/83522018/\)](#), and more businesses are moving into the area, including new restaurants and a hotel planned at SkySong.

Wetta Ventures, the developer that brought Postino and Snooze to Arizona State University's Tempe campus in 2014, is building a 12,000-square-foot retail building with space for three or four restaurants on the west side of SkySong. The anchor restaurant, [described as a "farm-to-table" concept \(/story/news/local/scottsdale/2015/06/09/foodies-wanted-scottsdale-skysong-complex/28713063/\)](#), features a 3,000-square-foot outdoor garden.

SkySong officials in early July told city leaders they've landed a Starwood hotel that will feature [120 rooms and a ground-floor restaurant \(/story/news/local/scottsdale/2016/07/27/scottsdales-skysong-complex-lands-starwood-hotel/87029446/\)](#). Starwood brands include Westin, Sheraton, Aloft and Elements, among others.

The hotel is planned for the southwestern corner of the SkySong complex, near Scottsdale Road and Enterprise Drive.



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[Scottsdale's SkySong complex lands Starwood hotel](#)

[\(http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/scottsdale/2016/07/27/scottsdales-skysong-complex-lands-starwood-hotel/87029446/\)](http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/scottsdale/2016/07/27/scottsdales-skysong-complex-lands-starwood-hotel/87029446/)

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SKYSONG AIDS IN MCDOWELL ROAD REDEVELOPMENT

After the Los Arcos Mall closed in the 1990s, SkySong has been changing the look of the McDowell Road area.

[2005](#)

[2006](#)

[2007](#)

[2008](#)

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