

# DALLAS BUSINESS JOURNAL

How Amazon's HQ2 search helped local developer transform downtown project





By [Ryan Salchert](#) – Staff Writer, Dallas Business Journal  
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Earlier this week, plans were revealed for [One Newpark](#), a 38-story, 825,000-square-foot mixed-use tower in downtown Dallas. Complete with apartments, office space and a hotel, the project will be phase one of a larger 20-acre development called Newpark Dallas, A Smart District.



Before partnering with Lanoha Real Estate Co. on the tower, local developer Hoque Global had different plans for the area. In fall 2017 when Amazon announced its HQ2 search, Hoque Global teamed up with KDC to release plans for a massive mixed-use project in the area, which at the time included three to five million square feet of office space centered around a new city park.

Despite Dallas losing out on the Amazon project, Hoque Global CEO Mike Hoque says the process taught him a lot about what a major company is looking for. Those lessons have gone into the revised plans for Newpark, which now include a one million-square-foot tech education campus with facilities ranging from pre-K through higher education.

"When we were chasing Amazon, we got to see what a big company like that is looking for. For them, it was talent. Where can they get a steady stream of talent from? Once Amazon went away, we knew why they left," said Hoque. "Think about where they went. They went to Crystal City, Virginia, because they could find all the education components they were looking for. They went to Nashville because their downtown was close to five universities. Working with the city and (the Dallas Independent School District), we've been trying to get a school downtown for a long time. To grow south as a city, we have to fix our education, and there's an opportunity to do that in this district."

At full build out, Newpark Dallas will have over a million square feet of office space, 200,000 square feet of urban retail space, thousands of residential units, a four-star hotel managed by Aimbridge Hospitality and the education campus, which it will develop with KDC. An anchor office tenant is already in talks for One Newpark, though Hoque declined to name who they are or how much space they're looking to take. He hopes to break ground on the tower by mid-2021.

During a recent interview with the *Business Journal*, Hoque and Arthur Santa-Maria, vice president at Hoque Global, discussed going back to the drawing board after HQ2, the new education campus and connecting with Lanoha Real Estate for phase one.

### **How soon after HQ2 did you go back to the drawing board with this project?**

**Hoque:** As soon as Amazon went away, we did a big competition between five big architects from around the country to do a master-planned education and technology campus. We took about six months to decide what we really wanted to do, and that was not sitting down. That was identifying which parts should go where and getting ready for the next wave of corporate relocations to North Texas.

After master planning, we had to find the right partner who would be bullish about this project and who would also love Dallas. About a year ago we met Jason (Lanoha, managing partner of Lanoha Real Estate). They reached out to us because they were looking for a project, something notable that could make them part of the community.

### **Tell me more about this education campus and where that idea came from.**

**Santa-Maria:** We've been working closely with DISD and Dallas College. Both groups have plans to do a significant downtown education campus and in both cases, there's still a lot of work to be done. DISD has goals of doing a K-12 school that can be a real anchor to the district. It really says that we're forward thinking, we're world class and we're open for business. Last year, Dallas College passed a bond to do a downtown innovation hub and we're working with them as well. They want to do something significant. It goes back to the plans for Amazon University. That never really went away. Amazon University back then was really Dallas College with universities attached to it.



Arthur Santa-Maria is vice president at Hoque Global.

## **Is there any concern about having a hotel planned within the new tower?**

**Hoque:** If we weren't concerned, we wouldn't be human, but we're going to deliver this project in 28 to 30 months from today. If we don't get some of our hotel business back by then, we have bigger problems than one of my projects. Our hotel partner, Dave Johnson (CEO of Aimbridge), has a lot of experience and he's personally heading this project. When I was with him last week, he said, 'Mike, if I was bullish about doing one hotel project in the country, it's this location.'

*This interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.*

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