



Dallas Smart District

8-Million-Square-Foot Dallas Smart District Also Eyeing Amazon

The 20-acre mixed-use district aims to kick off by 2018.

BY [JULIA BUNCH](#) PUBLISHED IN [BUSINESS & ECONOMY](#) OCTOBER 19, 2017 5:53 PM

Mike Hoque, the restaurateur-turned-real estate developer who transformed Main Street with joints like Dallas Chop House and Dallas Fish Market, has been snapping up land around City Hall for three years. On Wednesday, the day before Amazon's HQ2 RFP was due, Hoque Global and development partner KDC released plans for a forthcoming 20-acre Dallas Smart District. And you bet they funneled their plans to the Dallas Regional Chamber in hopes of wooing the tech giant.

“Everybody was running for Amazon and Steve [Van Amburgh, the CEO of KDC,] and I looked at each other, and we did decide to propose this as one of the options,” Hoque says. “If Amazon decided to be a part of our smart district—and they could be—they could drive a lot of change. But we are not banking on Amazon at all. We started designing this way before anyone began talking about Amazon coming to this city.”

The site, which spans much of Canton Street bookended by the Convention Center and Dallas Farmers Market, will eventually house a 78-story skyscraper (has anyone told Ross Perot, who's planning the *other* [tallest skyscraper in Dallas?](#)), a food hall-style culinary incubator, a boutique hotel with residences, public greenspace, and retail. The development's total office footprint will stand at eight million square feet—the exact number Amazon quotes it will need for HQ2.

KDC, the developer behind major corporate campuses like State Farm and Toyota, will head up the office component. When designing the project with KDC and architect Pelli Clarke Pelli—the designers behind San Francisco's Salesforce Tower, Shanghai's Riverview Plaza, and Dallas' own McKinney & Olive—Hoque took special notice of what Silicon Valley companies want for their employees.

Hoque says, early on, many multifamily developers approached him about putting apartments up on various tracts, but he declined and kept acquiring land, eventually reaching 20 acres. “I thought, ‘Why don’t I create a new city center that will be smart for our future?’”

On his partnership with KDC, Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, and forthcoming hospitality and retail partners, Hoque says, “I wanted proven people who are doing things for now, not building for yesterday.”

On Tuesday, [news broke](#) that Google’s parent company, Alphabet, would build a 12-acre smart district (with a full build-out of 800 acres) on Toronto’s eastern waterfront via its Sidewalk Labs company. The timing of both districts announcing within 24 hours of each other was a total coincidence, Hoque says.

In addition to chasing Amazon for the district’s office component, another Amazon concept could make an appearance in a retail spot. Dallas Smart District plans to house a full-service, 25,000- or 30,000-square-foot grocery store. Hoque is still in discussions for a specific tenant, but says a millennial-focused brand like Whole Foods’ 365 (which now [falls within Amazon’s umbrella](#)) would be ideal.

Hoque Global hopes to break ground on phase one, which includes up to one million square feet of office, the grocery store, food hall, hotel and parks, by the end of 2018. But on the timing of the development, Hoque says, “We are not in a hurry, and we’ll take our time [to find] someone who is thinking about the future.”

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