



Oldest shopping plaza in Scottsdale is demolished

Paulina Pineda Arizona Republic
 USA TODAY NETWORK

Crumbled cement and debris strewn on the ground is all that is left of a portion of Scottsdale's oldest shopping plaza.

Crews began tearing down the iconic pink Pueblo-inspired Papago Plaza as they prepare to break ground on a hotel, residential and retail project on 11 acres on the corner of Scottsdale and McDowell roads.

The nearly 60-year-old plaza has stood mostly vacant in recent years and developers hope the new project is a catalyst for redevelopment in the south Scottsdale corridor, said Lee Mashburn, of Pivot Development, during a ceremony Thursday to mark the beginning of the next phase of Papago Plaza.

Demolition is slated to be completed

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in the next few weeks and construction of the first phase of the project, the retail center, is expected to start later in December.

What's planned for the corner?

The more than \$100 million project includes:

- A 118-room Marriott hotel.
- More than 270 apartment units being developed by Alliance Residential.
- Restaurants and retail shops.
- An Aldi grocery store.

The retail and restaurants will be built around a central plaza with green space, a fountain and possibly a splash pad.

At least one tenant, Wells Fargo, will remain on site but in a new building, and Mashburn said he is in talks with at least one other former tenant, a Greek restaurant, to return.

Mashburn said he hopes to create a

gathering place for families and neighbors.

"We're not developing a strip center," he said. "We're developing a sense of place and I'm proud of that."

Vice Mayor Kathy Littlefield said the development is in line with other redevelopment in the area and could draw even more workers and residents to the growing economic hub in south Scottsdale.

The project complements the office, residential and retail development across the street at SkySong, Arizona State University's innovation center, she said.

"It's an exciting project," she said during the ceremony.

Parts of the original Papago Plaza to be saved

Mashburn said his goal was to remodel the plaza when he first approached the previous owners in 2013.

However, the changing retail landscape and hefty price tag to bring the buildings up to code led his team to instead focus on redeveloping the land, he said.

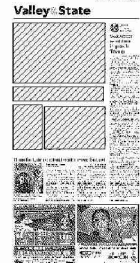
While most of the original Papago Plaza will come down to make way for the new project, the development will bear the Papago Plaza name in honor of the iconic shopping center.

"We have to respect that," he said.

The large kachina on the Papago Plaza sign off McDowell Road will be used in a mural, and some of the building's beams will be incorporated into the new construction.

When will the project be completed

Mashburn said developers plan to pull building permits this month and start construction before the end of the year.





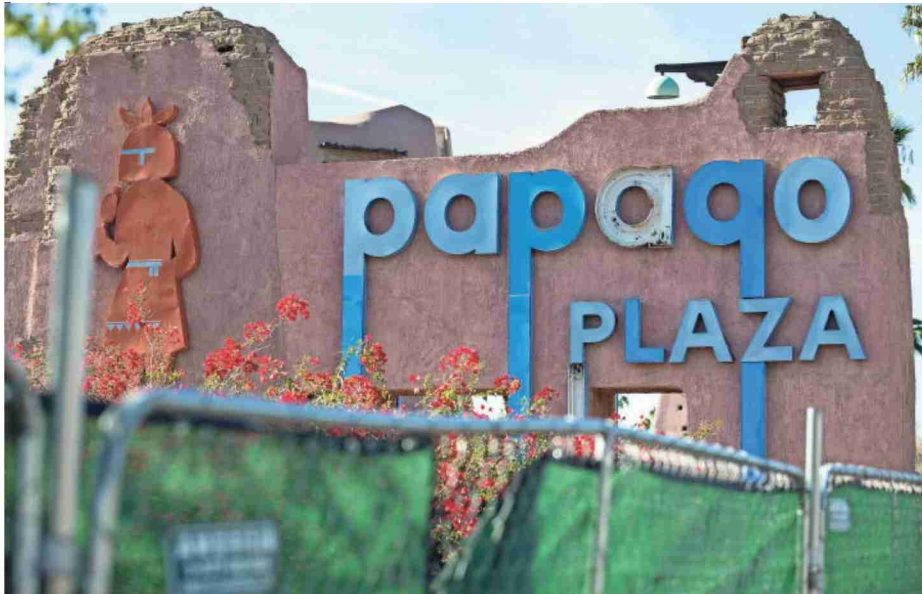
Construction of the first phase of the project, the retail center, is expected to take about 10 months and shopping plaza is slated to open in fall 2020. The grocery store is expected to open in 2021, he said.

The hotel and apartments will follow,

he said.

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Papago Plaza is pictured under demolition on Thursday in Scottsdale.

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The Papago Plaza in Scottsdale is being demolished. Workers tear down parts of the buildings, Thursday. The shopping center, Scottsdale's oldest, is being replaced with a contemporary mixed-use development. TOM TINGLE/THE REPUBLIC