



# STATE OF TEXAS CAPITOL COMPLEX PROJECT PHASE II

## — ★ — Texas Capitol Complex Update

Progress updates on the Capitol Complex Project | **March 18, 2026**



*Left: Performance curtain wall mock-up at material testing facility. Right: Two-story, visual curtain wall mock-up.*

## **Practice Makes Perfect**

The Capitol Complex Project Phase II team uses sophisticated mock-ups to aid the curtain wall installation.

The design of the new State office buildings on 15th Street in downtown Austin includes an intricately patterned curtain wall system that combines Sunset Red granite, Mesabi Black granite, metal, and glass curtain wall. The merging of these materials will visually connect the buildings to the other state facilities in the Capitol Complex. However, installing the unique curtain wall system required extensive planning and precision design,

engineering, and construction techniques. To prepare the project for the curtain wall installation, the project team first constructed two mock-ups. The mock-ups were used during the planning phase to perfect the processes for installing the curtain wall, assess the performance of the exterior against varying weather conditions, and train the construction professionals that would lead the installation.

## Team Collaboration for a Unique Build

Building multiple mock-ups, especially a two-story mock-up, are unusual activities on a construction project. However, the mock-ups were necessary to help the project team understand the connections between the various types of curtain wall materials. Due to the complexity of the curtain wall system, the [HOK](#) design team included a requirement for a mock-up in the project design specifications. In mid-2024, the Phase II Capitol Complex team, including [TFC](#) project managers, the HOK design team, [JE Dunn](#) construction professionals, and curtain wall specialists from [Win-Con Enterprises](#) started the planning process. The team conducted several meetings to determine what elements to include based on the building performance testing needed. Project team members from TFC, HOK, and JE Dunn also met with material testing consultant, [Terracon](#). From this collaborative effort, the team determined that two mockups were required, a performance mock-up for condition testing and a two-story visual mockup to refine the installation process and finalize the visual components.

## The Performance Mock-up: Tests, Tests, and More Tests

The performance mockup was constructed at a material testing site in Carrollton, Texas and comprised a 20-foot-tall by 20-foot-wide curtain wall structure attached to a steel testing lab. The mock-up took two weeks to construct then a sealant was applied that had to cure for twenty-one days. After the sealant cured, the lengthy list of building performance tests began.

The tests included uniform load tests to measure structural performance, air and water penetration tests, thermal cycling for extreme heat and cold cycles, seismic tests for earthquake conditions, etc.



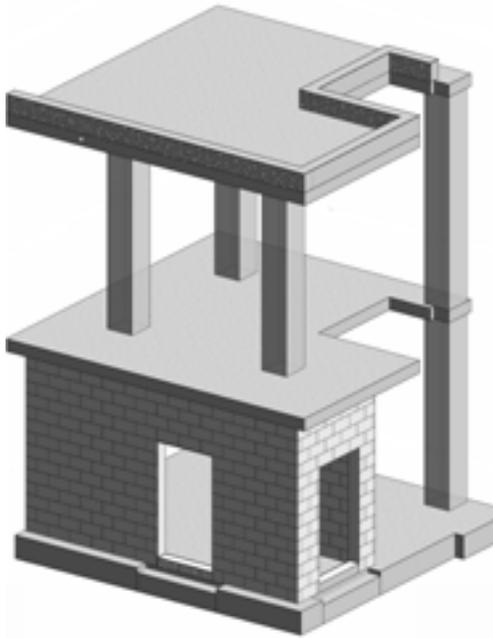
*Water simulating a heavy storm is blown directly at the performance mock-up during water infiltration testing.*

The load testing measured the performance of the joints against uniform load bearing standards. For the water penetration testing, a specially made water dispensing structure with a large industrial fan blew water directly at the building. To simulate thermal cycling, liquid nitrogen tanks were used for extreme cold and industrial field heaters were used for extreme heat. Some of the testing combined both exterior and interior tests in different conditions to ensure that the curtain wall system performed as expected.

The curtain wall system passed every performance test the first time. The testing was completed in April 2025.

## The Visual Mock-up: Refining and Training

The two-story, visual mock-up was constructed adjacent to the Phase II Capital Complex Project site on the project management lot at San Jacinto Boulevard and 15th Street. In addition to the

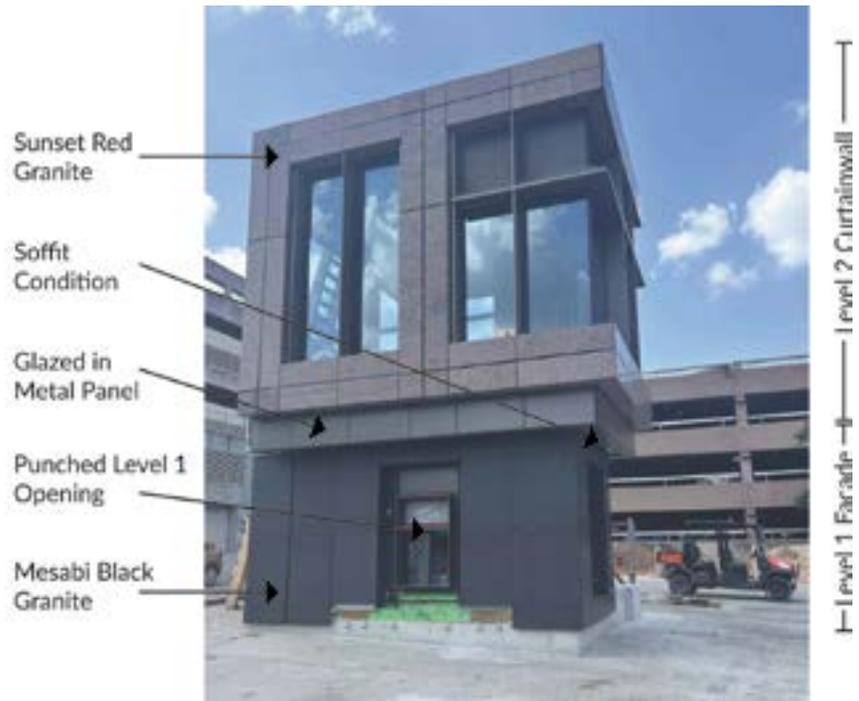


Structural Plan of the visual mock-up.

uniqueness of the two floors, the structure is also incredibly large for a mock-up. The visual mock-up stands just shy of eighteen-by-eighteen square feet and is twenty-three feet high.

The Level 2 curtain wall from the metal base panel to the coping cap on the roof is prefabricated. The prefabrication process for the Level 2 panels is more complex and takes longer to manufacture than the other curtain wall units on the project. Fully assembled, one section of the Level 2 curtain wall weighs an estimated 2,400 pounds. A structural engineer reviewed the design to confirm that the mock-up structure would support the weight of the curtain wall.

The visual mock-up was constructed and tested in sections, which allowed the team to analyze the performance of each component of the building. For example, the windows were installed on a section of the mock-up and then tested. Once the windows passed the condition testing, the metal panels were installed around the windows and the joints sealed. This allowed the team to verify the performance of window installation before adding the aesthetic components of the metal panels and additional weather proofing.



The trade partners constructing the mock-up provided further advice and were critical in establishing the approved installation process. By practicing and adjusting the process on the mock-up, these construction professionals were the best qualified to train the onsite crews and ensure quality control of the installation on the project site.

The construction crew used a 10,000-pound forklift to hoist the curtain wall panels then maneuvered them into place

using a mobile elevating boom lift. The project team strategically oriented the mock-up wall to simulate the daylight conditions of the 1501 Lavaca State Office Building.

Jobsite ladders, built by the project's carpenters, allow access to Level 2 and the roof.



Construction of the mock-up in progress at the San Jacinto Boulevard and 15th Street location.

## From Concept to Reality: Installing the Curtain Wall on Phase II of the Capitol Complex

The curtain wall is currently being installed on the Phase II buildings. Even though the curtain wall panels are prefabricated, the process requires precision.

Eighteen flatbed semi-trucks are required to deliver the prefabricated curtain wall panels to the project site for one floor of the 1501 Lavaca State Office Building. Each delivery is carefully coordinated to mitigate traffic congestion in the downtown area. [Win-Con Enterprises](#) installed an outrigger on the project site to unload the panels from the trucks. The panels are rolled on skids to the respective areas of the site.

The edge of the concrete formwork contains embedded notches, and the prefabricated curtain wall panels have clips on the edges that fit into the notches. The clips and notches must match up, so attention to detail is vital. An installation crew consists of eight people, including a superintendent, foreman, and field leads. The installation team uses rigging

equipment and a crane to hoist the panels up and then the crew guides the panels into place. One level of the 1501 Lavaca State Office Building requires an estimated two hundred thirty curtain wall panels. Each panel is numbered and installed in sequence. The project plans contain a fabrication drawing for each panel which equates to thousands of pages within the construction drawings. The installation team installs each section of curtain wall one panel at a time, using the same process that was refined on the mock-up.

## A Well-Planned Execution and a Beautiful Outcome

The attention to detail, precision installation, and optimal building performance requirements made the mock-ups a necessary part of the project. Without the mock-ups, the team would not have been able to refine the installation process, which would have made the construction process slower with a higher margin of error. Through collaboration and ingenuity, the Phase II project team is creating a unique exterior aesthetic for the newest State office buildings in the Capitol Complex.



*The two-story, visual mock-up at San Jacinto Boulevard and 15th Street with the State Capitol in the background.*



*The 1501 Lavaca State Office Building with Sunset Red granite installed.*

## Construction Project Updates



The Capitol Complex Phase II project has logged **over one million man hours** of work on the project, which remains on time and on budget. [Watch the live construction cameras feeds for daily progress.](#)



### 1501 Lavaca State Office Building

The building is almost fully enclosed with curtain wall. Once the service elevator is completed in May, the materials hoist elevator will be removed, and crews will use the interior service elevators. The tower crane is scheduled for removal in April. Electrical, plumbing, mechanical ductwork and cabling installation continues. Dry wall and ceiling frames are being installed, and interior work has begun in the lower-level bathrooms.



### **1500 Congress State Office Building**

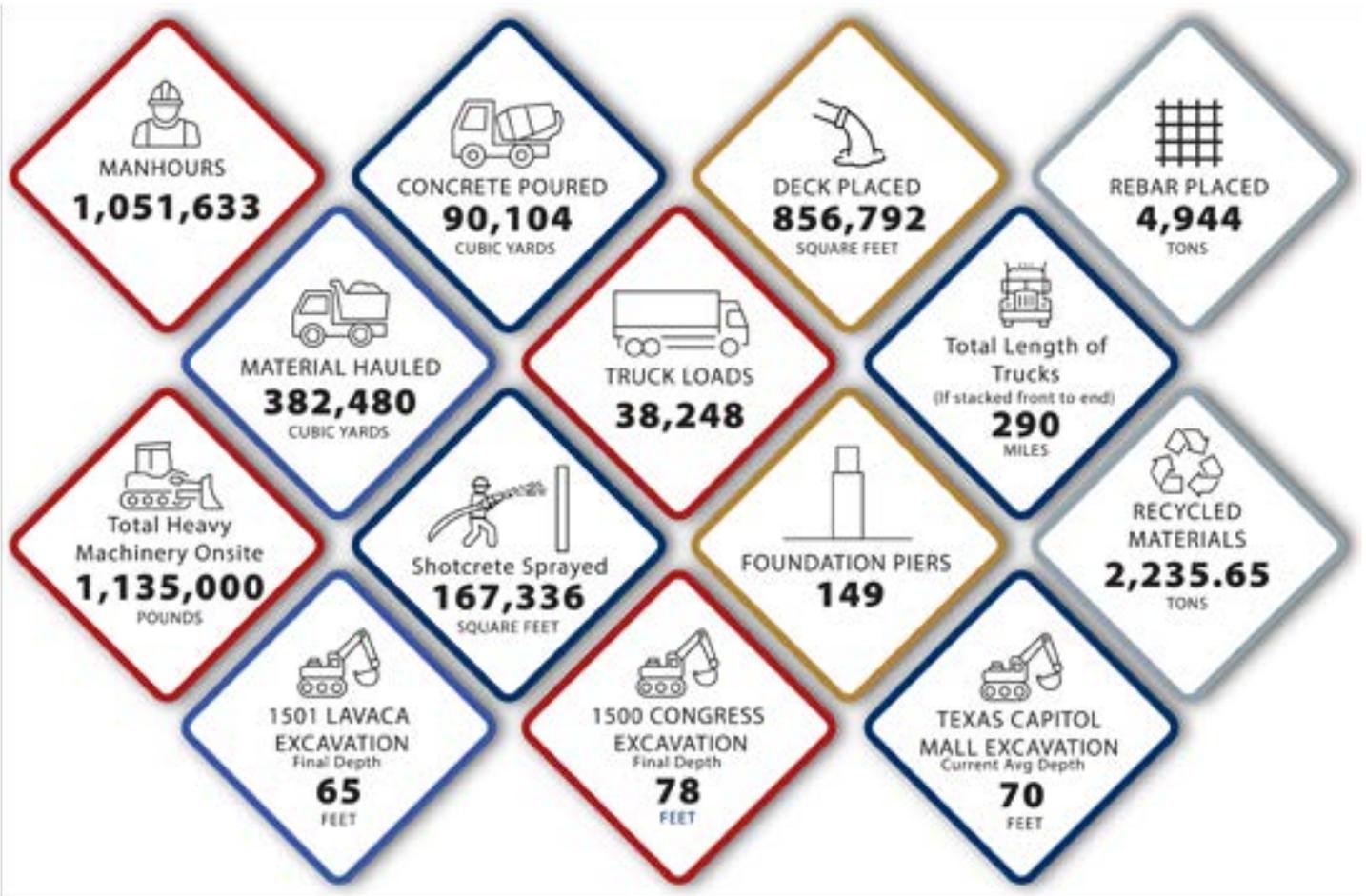
Curtain wall installation is nearing completion on level three of the building. Installation of interior walls and ceiling frames is underway. The next milestone scheduled for this building is the removal of the crane in early May.



### **Texas Capitol Mall Extension**

Sitework and waterproofing continues. Electrical and mechanical systems installations are underway. The portals on the mall have been constructed. Installation of the curtain wall on the structures will begin in April.

# Project Statistics



# Neighborhood News

## Bullock Texas State History Museum

Youth Art Month 2026 - Open now through 3/29/2026

In honor of national Youth Art Month, the Bullock is collaborating with the Texas Art Education Association to display over one hundred original pieces of artwork created by K-12 students on the Third Floor Rotunda. The annual display highlights the creativity and thoughtful, artistic, self-expression of promising students across Texas. The First Lady of Texas also selects entries each year to display at the Governor's Business Office for the coming year. [Homepage - Bullock Texas State History Museum](#)



## Blanton Museum of Art

[Butler Sound Gallery](#)

Spring is the perfect time to experience the Butler Sound Gallery, an immersive art installation on the northside of museum. At the completion of its ground's revitalization project in 2023, the Blanton became the first major museum to create a long-term space dedicated to sound art, thanks to a \$5 million gift from Ernest and Sarah Butler. The park-like space provides an inviting outdoor setting that furthers the museum's goal of bringing art beyond its building walls and into public areas.

Visitors can currently experience ***Landscape Soundings*** by Bill Fontana, a site-specific installation featuring recordings of Central Texas wildlife and geological formations captured across four seasons. The work brings the sounds of the Texas Hill Country into the heart of Austin.



## Texas Capitol Events

### [B - Capitol Events Calendar](#)

If you find yourself near the Texas Capitol during the day, check out the event calendar for concerts in the Capitol rotunda. From school choirs and bands to the University of Texas music performance groups, the rotunda is filled with beautiful music most Fridays and Saturday. Free to the public.



## Waterloo Greenway Park

### [Yoga & Sound - Waterloo Greenway Conservancy](#)

Come spend an evening in the park. Every Monday from March 23 – May 18, except May 4. Start each week with feel-good vibes and mindful movement accompanied by healing sound therapy. Each class features a different style of yoga and live music. All ages and abilities are welcome! Free to the public. (Reservations are recommended.)



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Visit the project website at  
[www.TexasCapitolComplex.org](http://www.TexasCapitolComplex.org)

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