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## Latitude 33 begins projects at airport, Hillcrest



Image courtesy of Latitude 33

A rendering of the UC San Diego Hillcrest Outpatient Pavilion & parking structure that is being developed with help by Latitude 33.

**By Thor Kamban Biberman**

For nearly 30 years, the San Diego-based Latitude 33 Planning & Engineering has been helping produce some of this region's highest profile developments. Now, it's celebrating the groundbreaking of two more.

Two Latitude 33 projects that have just gotten under way include the projected \$3.4 billion new Terminal 1 project at the San Diego International Airport, and the UC San Diego Hillcrest Medical Campus Redevelopment — both developments whose influence will extend far beyond their physical footprints.

The airport project will replace and expand the aging Terminal 1 with 11 new gates, bringing the total to 30. The redevelopment includes roadway improvements, a parking plaza with more than 5,000 stalls, and a ground transportation plaza. Inside the terminal will be new security checkpoints, restaurants, shops, and seating. Latitude 33 is leading the site components, including utilities, grading, and on-grade roadways. The project broke ground on Dec. 13, 2021.

It is a project that will be built out in multiple phases over the next six or more years, and while it is still being determined what the transportation system to the airport will look like, Matt Semic, Latitude 33 president, said his firm is already engineering an accommodation for the transit facility that will be designed and developed for a future date.

Semic said one of the main challenges will be to build the new facility while the old one is still being used. The multiple phases are intended to ensure the existing Terminal 1 will be able to keep operating during construction.



Image courtesy of Latitude 33  
A rendering of the proposed Terminal 1 project at San Diego International Airport.

Other work during this period will include a new administration building for the San Diego Regional Airport Authority, new roadway improvements and a new parking structure.

Latitude 33 noted that when the original Terminal 1 opened in 1967, the facility served 2.5 million passengers. That same facility hosted more than 12 million passengers in 2019.

The UCSD Medical Campus Redevelopment that got under way last month will rebuild roughly 34 acres of the 62-acre site. Estimated to take 15 years and with five major phases, the \$2.5 - \$3 billion project includes inpatient and outpatient medical facilities, a wellness center, more than 1,000 residential units, retail, and other mixed-use amenities, parking, and open space.

Latitude 33 has assisted with master planning the site, including grading, utilities, and water, sewer, and storm drain requirements. Phase 1 of the campus, will include an Outpatient Pavilion and a 1,850-space parking structure, with the redevelopment of the hospital coming later. This will mark the second time the hospital has been redeveloped.

The planning and engineering firm has been hiring lately to handle these and ongoing jobs. Semic concedes that it hasn't been easy to find qualified applicants.

"There's a shortage of skilled labor, and that affects everything else," Semic said.



Photo courtesy of Latitude 33  
Matthew Semic is Latitude 33's lead for design-build, civic, higher education, and health care projects.

Semic said he considers himself very fortunate in that he was not only able to hire, but to hire highly qualified college graduates for Latitude's new positions. This enabled Latitude 33 to expand its staff by 50 percent this year to 60 people. This in turn meant an augmented surveying department that more than doubled from two to five crews. Using state-of-the-art equipment, Latitude 33's surveying services range from specialized Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and locating subsurface utilities, to traditional boundary and topographic surveying services.

"We're able to do a lot more work in-house," Semic added.

The company also promoted four of its leaders to associates including:

\* Justin R. Giles, who has been with Latitude 33 since 2013. Giles has more than 10 years of experience in public works, civic, multi-family residential, commercial, industrial, life science, and mixed-use projects.

\* Kyle Boyce, who has also been with Latitude 33 since 2013 and has more than eight years of experience, excels in project management, civil engineering design, campus masterplans in a phased setting, permit processing, and construction support.

\* Sean D. Drake, who joined Latitude 33 in 2014, has 16 years of experience leading projects to success within many market sectors including federal, municipal/civic, educational, commercial, industrial, and residential.

\* Sean Scaramella has been with Latitude 33 since 2014 and has 16 years of experience in project management, permit processing, engineering design, physical planning, and leading multi-disciplinary projects.

Latitude 33 may have solved its shortage issues, at least for now, but like many in the building industry, but both significantly higher material costs, reliable supply chains continue to be an issue.

When asked about how COVID has impacted the company, Semic said his firm fared better than many given that a lot of his workers were working remotely anyway.

"We didn't have to make many adjustments," Semic said.

Founded in 1993, Latitude 33 Planning and Engineering offers a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to design. The firm provides public sector planning, land use planning, public outreach, entitlement services, civil engineering design, and surveying/mapping to public agencies, developers and property owners. The firm specializes in life sciences, residential, education, healthcare, military, commercial/retail, civic, hospitality, and design-build projects.

Other Latitude 33 projects here have included the Town & Country Hotel & Resort redevelopment, the Portside Pier on the North Embarcadero, the Villas at the Grand Del Mar, and the San Diego County's Sheriff's Department Regional Crime Lab among others.

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