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## **OKLAHOMA STAKES ITS CLAIM TO THE TALLEST BUILDING IN THE U.S.**

The Oklahoma City Council voted this week to clear the way for a 1,907-foot tower, surpassing One World Trade Center in New York.

By Debra Kamin

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New York City could soon lose its claim to the tallest building in the United States.

The Oklahoma City Council on Tuesday gave the green light to plans for a tower that will rise nearly 2,000 feet in Oklahoma's capital city, dethroning One World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan as the nation's highest.

The California architecture studio [AO](#) and the developer Matteson Capital originally proposed Legends Tower, a sleek structure that will house at least one hotel and more than 1,000 luxury apartments, at 1,750 feet — just shy of One World Trade Center's 1,776 feet. But earlier this

year, they revised their plans and asked the City Council to approve a zoning change that would remove all height restrictions on the site, allowing them to build the tower up to 1,907 feet.

The revised height is a nod to 1907, the year the state of Oklahoma was admitted to the union, as One World Trade Center's height is a reference to 1776, the year of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The world's tallest building, at 2,717 feet, is the Burj Khalifa in Dubai. Legends Tower is set to become not only the tallest building in the United States, but the tallest in the entire Western Hemisphere and the sixth tallest in the world.

"This is the moment we have all been waiting for — to see how tall we can get," Councilwoman Nikki Nice said at the City Council meeting on Tuesday, just before the rezoning request came up for a vote. "People have asked me, 'What do you think about this development?' I mean, the sky's the limit."

The vote to remove all height restrictions on the site was not without its detractors. Councilman James Cooper raised concerns about the developer's plans to include about 200 affordable housing units within Legends Tower and two other buildings in the same complex. Matteson Capital has pledged to set those units aside for low-income Oklahomans, and early reports said it would partner on that initiative with an organization called Aspiring Anew Generation.

But many links on the group's website were not clickable, Mr. Cooper said in the meeting, and he had questions that remained unanswered.

"You're going up, but we're trying to take care of folks on the ground," Mr. Cooper said. "I don't have the confidence."

The final vote for the removal of all height restrictions on the site passed 8 to 1, with Mr. Cooper as the sole dissenter. Scot Matteson, the project's developer, said there was no firm partnership with the nonprofit in place. "We do not have a contractual relationship with them," he said, adding that options remained open to work with other groups or even create a new dedicated nonprofit to oversee the site's affordable housing.

On Thursday, the Aspiring Anew Generation website generated a 404 error. Jessica Stanford, founder of Aspiring Anew Generation, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Legends Tower will be part of Boardwalk at Bricktown, a mixed-use development comprising four new buildings. The first phase of its construction will include a hotel and two smaller residential towers; the second phase, which will include the supertall building, is estimated to

begin in two or three years. Rob Budetti, a managing partner of AO, told City Council members on Tuesday that he expected the entire complex to be completed in about five years.