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# PRESS RELEASE

## White Lodging Breaks Ground on the Aloft and Element Hotel Development in Downtown Austin

*Project marks the beginning construction of Starwood's Aloft and Element brands in the City's downtown*

**Merrillville, Ind. (Aug. 24, 2015):** White Lodging Services Corporation today announced the groundbreaking of the dual branded Aloft and Element hotel complex in Austin, Texas. Located at the intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> and Congress, the 32-story development will include the 278-room Aloft Austin Downtown and 144-room Element Austin Downtown. The hotels are both scheduled to open in the early summer of 2017.

"We are excited to be bringing another cool lodging option along with a hip restaurant & bar to the heart of downtown Austin," said Deno Yiankes, President and CEO, Investments & Development, White Lodging. "Starwood's Aloft and Element brands are fresh and unique and we expect this project to continue the activation of North Congress Avenue.

Aloft Austin Downtown and Element Austin Downtown are owned by an affiliate of White Lodging; REI Real Estate, Inc.; and Poe Companies and will be managed by White Lodging. They will be the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> White Lodging managed hotels in the Austin area. White Lodging also developed and manages The Westin Austin at the Domain and The Westin Austin Downtown, which opened in July of this year.

"White Lodging is a terrific partner and we are excited to further expand our relationship with them in downtown Austin with this new-build development," said Allison Reid, Senior Vice President of North America Development, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. "Aloft with its distinct design aesthetic and lively social atmosphere and Element, an industry-leader in the eco-space, offering stylish, sustainable extended stay lodging, will be two great additions to this dynamic and growing market."

Aloft Austin Downtown and Element Austin Downtown will be walking distance to the live music venues, restaurants and shops in the city's renowned 6<sup>th</sup> Street Entertainment District. Also nearby are the Warehouse District, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street District, the Austin Convention Center, the University of Texas - Austin campus and the Texas State Capitol Building. The hotels will share amenities including an oversized 24-hour fitness center and nearly 1,380 square feet of flexible meeting space, ideal for both business meetings and social gatherings.

"White Lodging has more hotels in Austin than anywhere else in the country and we are thrilled that another property of theirs is steadily moving forward and making great progress," said Bob Lander,

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President and CEO of the Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Additional inventory allows us to better accommodate the growing tourism demand in Austin."

#### Aloft Austin Downtown

Aloft Austin Downtown will feature spacious, loft-like rooms with high ceilings, oversized windows, an ultra-comfortable platform bed and large walk-in showers with complimentary Bliss Spa® products. Re:fuel by Aloft SM, a convenient grab-n-go kiosk, will offer an array of sweet, savory and healthy food, snacks and drinks available 24 hours a day, while the hotel's signature W XYZ® bar will offer the perfect spot to enjoy a refreshing cocktail and catch up-and-coming music acts with Live At Aloft Hotels. The property will feature an open air second-floor terrace that will overlook Congress Avenue. Fast and free wi-fi will be available throughout the hotel.

#### Element Austin Downtown

Element Austin Downtown will boast light-filled studios as well as one bedroom suites and feature fluid design of modular furniture, swiveling flat-screen televisions, large desks with open shelving and custom-designed closets. Bathrooms will be spa-inspired, with an invigorating rain shower and dual-flush toilet. Rooms will also offer fully equipped kitchens and the signature Heavenly® Bed. Guests can stay on the move with the Element brand's bikes to borrow program and enjoy fun and free extras including complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the hotel, the signature RISE breakfast, RELAX evening reception, and salon bar carts stocked with premium wines and beers, soft drinks and snacks, available after hours.

#### About White Lodging Services Corporation

White Lodging Services Corporation was established in 1985 and is headquartered in Merrillville, Ind. White Lodging is a fully integrated hotel ownership, development and operations company – a recognized leader that has defined and cultivated the ability to achieve consistent, sustainable growth among mid-to large-scale hotels across the country. Its current portfolio consists of more than 161 hotels in 20 states and encompasses representation of numerous leading brands including Starwood Hotels and Resorts. For more information about White Lodging, please visit [www.whitelodging.com](http://www.whitelodging.com).

#### About Aloft Hotels

Aloft Hotels offer a buzzing social scene for the early adopter. With over 100 hotels in 15 countries around the world, Aloft is different by design and offers a fresh approach to the traditional staid hotel landscape for today and tomorrow's 'always on' evolving global traveler. To learn more, visit [www.alofthotels.com/experience](http://www.alofthotels.com/experience). Stay connected to Aloft on facebook.com/AloftHotels and Twitter @AloftHotels

#### About Element Hotels

Element® Hotels offers extended stay comfort for those who are passionate about the planet and their own wellbeing. Stylish and sustainable throughout, Element's bright design defies convention, bathing guest rooms and public spaces in natural light. It's extended stay reimagined. To date, there are 18 Element Hotels worldwide, with 16 in North America, one in Europe, one in Asia Pacific with new domestic and international hotels in development. To learn more, visit [www.elementhotels.com/experience](http://www.elementhotels.com/experience). Stay Connected to Element on facebook.com/ElementHotels.