

DUS News Digest
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April 20, 2012

By Ken Schroepfel, Denver Infill Blog

Coming soon to a Millennium Bridge near you... 16 Chestnut!

16 Chestnut is East-West Partners' proposed office tower at 16th Street and Chestnut Place that will anchor the fourth and final corner to Denver's Millennium Bridge.

Way back in 2000, when Denver's Central Platte Valley was just beginning its transition from industrial wasteland to hip urban neighborhood, the Millennium Bridge's dramatic 200-foot tall mast stood alone as a symbol of the area's potential as Downtown's newest urban district. Shortly thereafter, the Park Place and Promenade Lofts buildings joined the bridge as neighbors on its western corners, and now the DaVita building is wrapping up construction at the third corner. Once 16 Chestnut is built, the Millennium Bridge's destiny as an iconic public space embraced by contemporary development will be complete. From an urban morphological perspective, the bridge will go from being the *figure* surrounded by open *ground* to being, in a way, the *ground* surrounded by many *figures* (that's for my planner/architect geek friends!). Whatever your perspective, this is an exciting milestone for the Union Station area.

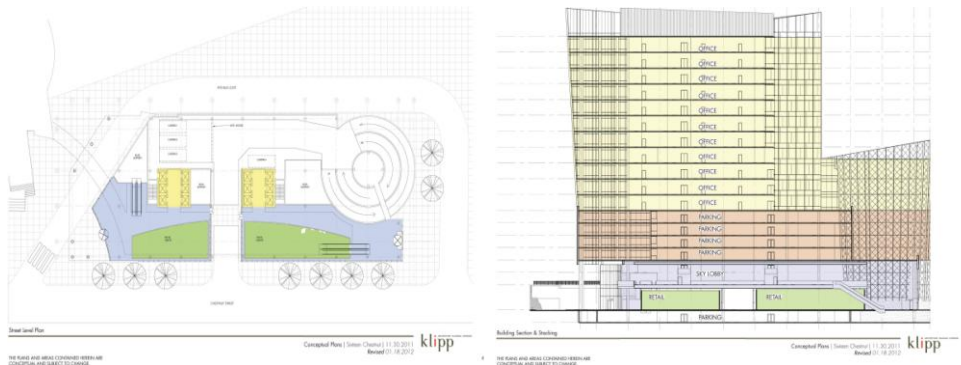
Here's the scoop on 16 Chestnut:

It's a 320,000 square foot, 18-story, 240-foot-high office tower located on the rectangular parcel bounded by 16th Street/Millennium Bridge, Chestnut Place, and 17th Street. The site is surrounded by the new Mall Shuttle loop at the Union Station light rail station. Here are two views of the site:



The development is currently in the concept design stage. Therefore, please note that all of the following images, provided courtesy of East-West Partners and their design partner klipp architecture, are very preliminary in nature and subject to change. Nevertheless, these renderings do give you a general sense of the mass and scale of the proposed building.

The general building program includes a level of underground parking, ground floor retail and entry, a second-level lobby that includes a cool walkway that spans across the mall shuttle lane and connects to the Millennium Bridge (a pedestrian bridge to a pedestrian bridge!), a few more levels of parking, and about a dozen or so floors of office space. Here's a conceptual ground-floor site plan and building section/stacking plan—again, very much subject to change:

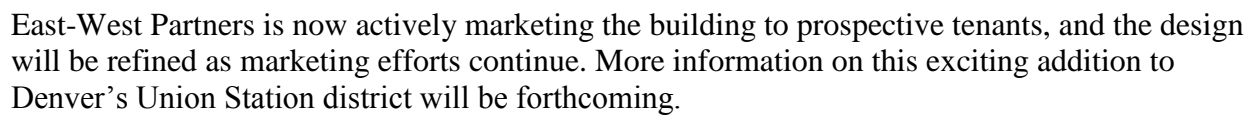


Finally, how about a couple of building concept renderings:

First, the view from 17th and Chestnut, showing the building's unique helical parking garage ramps:



Please scroll down to the next page to continue reading.



April 23rd, 2012

By David Pendered, Saporta Report

Denver, a role model for metro Atlanta's proposed transportation sales tax, is running into some problems with its own transit construction program.

A funding shortfall prompted Denver's transit leaders to privatize almost a third of the region's planned 122-mile transit system, plus work on 15 stations including the hub – Denver Union Station. National media stories in recent weeks have addressed current funding woes and construction delays.



Denver Union Station is being upgraded through a public private partnership after FasTracks ran low on funds. Credit: FasTracks

These sorts of issues are just part of the territory when it comes to building one of the nation's most ambitious transportation projects, a spokeswoman for Denver's FasTracks said Monday. But they do bear attention as metro Atlanta voters consider creating a 1 percent sales tax to pay for road and transit improvements.

A delegation from Denver visited Atlanta in May 2011 to advise local officials on how to craft a sales tax campaign and project list. Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper – Denver's mayor when voters approved the tax – predicted metro Atlanta voters will approve the proposed sales tax by a 55-45 margin.

That was a year ago.

Now, Denver's transit leaders are shying away from their own need to ask voters for more money to finish the job on time. In metro Atlanta, a campaign that's just lately become visible intends to appeal to likely voters to vote on July 31 for a 1 percent sales tax for transportation.

In Denver, projected costs to meet the promised completion date of 2024 have increased from \$4.7 billion to \$7.8 billion. The sum includes the \$2.1 billion portion being built through a public private partnership that's backed by \$398 million in tax-exempt bonds.

The bonds received the lowest investment grade rating from Moody's Investors Service, which cited a heavy reliance on grant funding. The rating was "stable" because of the deep resources, both financial and operational, of Denver's partners, Moody's wrote in an analysis.

[Click here to read about the public private partnership.](#)

Nonetheless, escalating cost was a key reason "Governing" magazine this month cited the project as one of five major public works projects facing "serious challenges." Denver's project was among those the magazine called the "Five in Limbo."

[Click here to read the story.](#)

In Atlanta, the campaign message may eventually be that the proposed transportation sales tax will end – by state law – whenever it raises its targeted sum, or in a decade, whichever comes first.

However, scant mention has been made so far of the likelihood of an effort extend the tax beyond 2024. Yet a call to extend the sales tax is almost a foregone conclusion because more money will be needed to build projects that receive money only for planning in the first round of the proposed tax, according to some of the elected officials who served on the Atlanta Regional Roundtable, which assembled the tax-and-construction package.

In Denver, FasTracks officials have said the tax rate must be doubled to finish the transit system on time. The vote in 2004 was to implement a 0.4 percent sales tax, and the proposal would take the rate to 0.8 percent.

Without the tax hike, two additional decades will pass before the system is complete, Denver transit officials have said. The plan in 2004 was to finish in 20 years; the current tax rate is projected to see the job done in 2042.

However, voter support for Denver's FasTracks program is deemed to be so low that a proposal to double the sales tax to pay for the program was deferred last year and likely will be pushed off this year.

"We keep hearing that this is not a good year to go for a tax increase," FasTracks spokeswoman, Pauletta Tonilas, said Monday.

"The Regional Transportation District makes the decision, but it has an awful lot of regional partners who gauge the temperament of voters, and they feel the indications are this is not a favorable year for a tax increase."

About David Pendered

David Pendered, Managing Editor, is an Atlanta journalist with nearly 30 years experience reporting on the region's urban affairs, from Atlanta City Hall to the state Capitol. Since 2008, he has written for print and digital publications, and advised on media and governmental affairs. Previously, he spent more than 26 years with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and won awards for his coverage of schools and urban development. David graduated from North Carolina State University and was a Western Knight Center Fellow. David was born in Pennsylvania, grew up in North Carolina and is engaged to a fifth-generation Atlantan.

Denver Union Station Project Authority announces summer guided tours

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April 25, 2012

By Staff, La Voz

The Denver Union Station Project Authority (DUSPA) will conduct free guided tours of the Denver Union Station redevelopment site this summer. The tours will be held at 4:30 p.m., starting on Thursday, May 10, 2012, and continuing on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month through July. The one-hour tour will start inside the Great Train Hall at the historic station, 1701 Wynkoop Street. Parking in and around the station is very limited. Public transportation is recommended. Participation is limited to 35 people per tour. To reserve your spot, visit www.denverunionstation.org.

April 26, 2012

By Ken Schroepel, Denver Infill Blog

It seems everyone is anticipating the groundbreaking of the proposed 20th & Chestnut project by the Nichols Partnership in Downtown Denver's booming Union Station district, which will not only give Downtown its first full-service grocery store, but also put that store within two blocks of the region's largest multi-modal transit hub. Here's a quick progress report on the project and two slightly updated renderings, courtesy of Nichols Partnership project manager Dan Schuetz.

The first image is a view of the project's 20th and Chestnut corner; the second image, the 19th and Chestnut corner:



The development's groundbreaking was rescheduled from March to June, due to some final tweaks to the building design. Now, the project's entire ground floor will have 28-foot ceiling heights. The consequence of this is quite exciting. The interior ground-floor parking area reserved for grocery store customers will now feel much more spacious with a ceiling that high. Also—and this is the really cool part—with a 28-foot floor-to-ceiling height, this has allowed the Nichols Partnership to add an L-shaped mezzanine level to the grocery store, increasing the store's overall size. Sweet!

April 26, 2012

By Ken Schroepfel, Denver Infill Blog

Colorado-based East West Partners is teaming up with Georgia-based Wood Partners to develop the 280-unit Alta City House apartment project in Downtown Denver's hot Union Station district.

The Alta City House project at 18th and Chestnut Place will be conveniently located next to the new Union Station light rail platforms and the 18th Street Pedestrian Bridge. Here's a GoogleEarth view with the site identified:



If all goes as planned, the project will break ground later this summer and be completed by Fall 2013. For a lot more detail on the project, I'll direct you to John Rebchook's Inside Real Estate News blog, where he recently did a nice report on the project.

Finally, we love big color renderings here at DenverInfill, so here's a view of the project's 18th & Chestnut corner. While the design has been tweaked since this image was produced, it's close enough for now to give you an idea of the project's overall character (image courtesy of East West Partners). As always, click/zoom to enlarge.



This is an exciting project that will add more people living in Downtown, which leads to more and better retail in Downtown, which leads to more people living in Downtown, which leads to...