

business

Wewatta project planned

A mixed-use development is set to be built just north of Union Station. The \$175 million project will include a hotel and shops.

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A Colorado Springs developer is planning a \$175 million project that will include offices, shops, restaurants and a boutique hotel in the Central Platte Valley.

Sunshine Development Co., headed by Jannie Richardson, paid Trillium Corp. \$16 million for 1.83 acres at 1601 Wewatta St., just north of Union Station. Denver's 125-year-old train depot is being redeveloped and will serve as a hub for transit connecting all parts of the metro region.

Sunshine's plans include a 450,000-square-foot office building, up to 70,000 square feet of shops and restaurants and a 150-room boutique hotel. The project will be 14 stories.

"This is 100 percent location," said Marilee Utter, president of Citiventure Inc., who is serving as an adviser on the project. "It's a

beautiful corner. It's a gateway site, and it deserves top-drawer design."

Richardson said she is working with a tenant that would occupy at least 400,000 square feet of the office space. She declined to name the firm.

She also said she has lined up two five-star restaurants that will take a total of 27,000 square feet of the retail space.

Construction should begin by the first quarter of 2009.

Tami Door, president and chief executive of Downtown Denver Partnership Inc., said she is excited about the prospect of more retail, in addition to the restaurants planned for the project.

"The more concentration of retail we have downtown the better," she said.

But with Opus, Hines and Trammell Crow Co. each developing office buildings nearby, some question the need for more office space.

"There's getting to be a lot of office space," said Randy Nichols, president of the Nichols Partnership, which is developing a \$130 million project that will be anchored by a 55,000-square-foot grocery store in the Central Platte Valley. "And retail is going to be a bit of a tough sell until the whole transportation center gets up and going."

Sunshine is expected to form a joint venture with a national development firm on the complex, which will be designed to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design gold standards.

Sunshine has hired Portland, Ore.-based Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects to design the project in conjunction with the Denver firm Shear Adkins. The Portland firm designed the recently completed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency building in Lower Downtown.

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