

# Rocky Mountain News

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## 'Real work can begin'

Continuum, East West get Union Station nod, chance to shape future

By John Rebchook, Rocky Mountain News  
November 16, 2006

Now that East West and Continuum Partners have been chosen to negotiate terms as the master developer of the \$1 billion Union Station transit hub, they face the daunting task of creating a world-class project that will shape the region's future well into the century.

"The real work can now begin," Harry Frampton, managing partner of East West Partners, said Wednesday at a news conference on the west end of Union Station. Negotiations to finalize financial terms of the project will start immediately, with construction to begin after a contract is signed.

The team, which now calls itself the Union Station Neighborhood Co., was chosen by a committee of four public entities to tackle what has been called the "mother of all transit-oriented developments."

The plan calls for about 1.8 million square feet of offices, residential, retail and hotel space.

"This is the single biggest and most exciting of all the projects we've ever tackled," Frampton said.

Union Station Neighborhood was chosen over a proposal by Union Station Partners, headed by Cherokee Denver, because it is less expensive and considered less risky.

The difference in cost comes from the location of light-rail lines in the two proposals. Union Station Neighborhood calls for above-grade light-rail lines near the Consolidated Main Line train tracks in the Central Platte Valley. Union Station Partners opted for the more expensive alternative of burying light rail lines behind the train station.

RTD, the city and county of Denver, the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Denver Regional Council of Governments selected the winner.

Officials praised East West and Continuum for their track records developing high-quality projects. East West has developed about 75 projects, including the Riverfront Park neighborhood. Continuum's developments include the \$750 million Belmar, Lakewood's downtown.

Mayor John Hickenlooper called the selection a historic moment.

"Really, it is a great beginning," he said at the news conference attended by about 100 people. He said the plan can be a "national model" that will bring a "world-class" transit solution to Denver.

It will take about six months to finalize an agreement with Union Station Neighborhood, said Cal Marsella, head of the Regional Transportation District. The development could be completed in nine years, faster than most people expected, he said.

Ferd Belz, who heads Cherokee Denver and the Union Station Partners project, said he wishes his rival the best.

"This is a landmark day for Denver," Belz said. "I think it is a good thing for the city and the region to get a Union Station redevelopment plan under way. It is really going to be the hub of FasTracks. Obviously, I believe our plan was superior, but then, we're probably biased."

Union Station Partners' plan called for two large buildings behind Union Station.

Mark Falcone, head of Continuum Partners, while not directly commenting on his rival's plan, said it is not tall buildings, but great streets, that define a city.

"This is all about the streets," Falcone said of his team's plan. "Everyone has to get away from the notion that they are designing for the sky. We have sort of this skyline envy in Denver. To hell with the skyline focus. Look around. LoDo has great streets, and that is what we're going to build on."

Mark Smith, president of East West Partners, said that the team members have been careful not to assign any special use - for example, a



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News

2006: Union Station Neighborhood Co. is making plans to develop the land near Union Station, shown Wednesday, into a world-class transit hub revolving around light-rail lines. The plan calls for about 1.8 million square feet of offices, residential, retail and hotel space.

grocery store - for any specific site.

"We want to have a lot of neighborhood input to see what they want," Smith said.

Jennifer Schaufele, executive director of DRCOG, noted that Peter Park, the city's planning director, once described the Union Station redevelopment as the "mother of all transit-oriented developments."

Park made the comment about 18 months ago at a meeting of about 100 developers, contractors, architects and others interested in the deal.

Eleven teams initially threw their hats into the ring. At the end, only two faced off as all the others bowed out or were eliminated.

John Huggins, economic development director for Denver who played a role in choosing the winner, described where the various entities are in the process by quoting Winston Churchill during the Battle of Britain: "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

## Union Station development plan

- Redevelopment of public spaces in front of historic Union Station
- Revitalization of train room in Union Station to include market and other retail space
- Creation of new "wing buildings" containing commercial and residential space on either side of Union Station
- Creation of a new 17th Street Transit Plaza from Union Station to the new light-rail station
- Construction of two 23-story buildings containing office and residential space to the west of Union Station
- Development of retail locations at the base of buildings along the new public plaza

## The team:

### SKIDMORE OWINGS & MERRILL, ARCHITECTURE/PLANNING

- Projects: San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, Calif.; Time Warner Center, New York ; Freedom Tower, New York

### KIEWIT, CONSTRUCTION/ENGINEERING

- Projects: Benicia-Martinez Bridge, San Francisco Bay ; T-REX, Denver ; Bunker Hill Bridge, Boston

### DMJM HARRIS, CONSTRUCTION/ENGINEERING

- Project: Hoboken, N.J. Terminal

### CONTINUUM PARTNERS, DEVELOPMENT

- Projects: Belmar, Lakewood ; Bradburn, Louisville ; 16 Market, Denver

### EAST WEST PARTNERS, DEVELOPMENT

- Projects: Riverfront Park, Denver; Vilar Center, Beaver Creek ; One Vendue, Charleston, S.C.

## The players:

- **Harry Frampton**, managing partner at East West Partners
- **Mike Reininger**, partner at East West Partners Denver
- **Mark Falcone**, CEO of Continuum Partners
- **Tom Gougeon**, chief development officer, principal of Continuum Partners

- **Frank Cannon**, development director of Continuum Partners

- **Marilyn Taylor**, partner at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill

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