

# Rocky Mountain News

To print this page, select **File** then **Print** from your browser

URL: [http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/real\\_estate/article/0,1299,DRMN\\_414\\_3666800,00.html](http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/real_estate/article/0,1299,DRMN_414_3666800,00.html)

## High-rises planned for 14th Street parking lots

### Property sold near convention center

By John Rebchook, Rocky Mountain News

April 1, 2005

Veteran developers Charlie Woolley and Wally Hultin on Thursday purchased two half-blocks across from the Colorado Convention Center, where at least three high-rise buildings valued at about \$260 million are planned.

Woolley, president of the St. Charles Town Co., and Hultin, principal of Byers Street Properties, paid \$16.75 million, or about \$167 per square foot, for the 100,000 square feet of parking lots between California and Champa streets.

#### Advertisement

Development plans call for a hotel, retail and high-rise condominiums and apartments on four parcels.

The land is zoned for 1.7 million square feet. The first phase will include three of the four parcels and about 800,000 square feet, Woolley said. The fourth parcel, if developed, could add 180,000 square feet, bringing the total to just under 1 million square feet, he said.

Woolley and Hultin immediately sold one of the parcels to the Nichols Partnership, which developed Clayton Lanes in Cherry Creek. The development includes a J.W. Marriott Hotel, the headquarters for Janus Capital Group, retail, restaurants and expensive condominiums. Nichols Partnership, headed by Randy Nichols, is expected to develop a high-rise on its parcel at Champa and 14th streets, although details are being worked out.

Next to Nichols' parcel, Woolley and Hultin plan a 30-story, mixed-use building with 250,000 to 350,000 square feet of apartments and condominiums at 14th and Stout streets. The building could include retail on the ground floor, some parking and offices, Woolley said.

A parking garage built in the 1940s would provide parking for that building, as well as for a new extended-stay hotel. Whiteco, a privately held Indiana-based company, plans to build a 27-story, 250-room hotel in front of the garage, Woolley said.

Next to the hotel and across from the 1,100-room Hyatt Regency hotel under construction, another investor, Denver-based Bahman Shafa, bought a 22,000-square-foot surface parking lot, which he may develop at a later date. Three years ago, Shafa opened an outdoor market during the summer months near Coors Field.

The new development, together with other public and private ventures along 14th Street, amount to about \$1.3 billion in projects either under construction or on the drawing board, promising to change the dowdy image of that corridor.

"We are beginning to see our way that it is truly feasible to do something like this," Woolley said.

Tom Clark, vice president of the Metro Denver Economic Corp., said the new developments will help energize the underutilized 14th Street corridor.

"What a statement about downtown," Clark said on Wednesday. "Right now, 14th Street is sort of forbidding to walk down. It feels like a cold cavern. These, and all of the other developments, will really open it up."

Developer Bill Mosher, CEO of the nonprofit authority that owns the Hyatt Regency, said that 14th Street, "should be stronger than it is," and the new developments will help give it the type of cachet now associated with the 16th Street Mall.

"It makes a lot of sense when you consider that Larimer Square sort of anchors it at one end, and you have the whole convention center complex, the Denver Performing Arts Center and the Hilton (Garden Inn) planned just up the street,"



Barry Gutierrez © News

Charlie Woolley, president of St. Charles Town Co., stands Tuesday atop one of the company's properties, the Motor Hotel Garage at 1420 Stout St. Woolley and developer Wally Hultin paid \$16.75 million for land near the convention center.

Mosher said. Stonebridge Cos. plans a \$35 million, 12-story Hilton Garden Inn at 14th and Stout.

The Woolley/Hultin deal is just what the city needs to help breathe life into 14th Street, said John Huggins, economic development director for Denver.

"This is more than an infill development," Huggins said. "It appears that a new neighborhood is coming. These private deals are showing that the public investments we made downtown are finally bearing fruit."

Huggins said he is not worried about overbuilding.

"I think that it is really a question of timing and overall phasing," Huggins said. "The lending markets are a lot more disciplined now than they were in the past."

Woolley said he expects the Whiteco hotel to be the first under way, with a construction start in about eight months. Nichols is expected to break ground on his building in about a year.

Woolley has not chosen an architect for his building.

"We've never built a high-rise before," said Woolley, who has bought and renovated a number of historical buildings and is redeveloping the Lowenstein Theatre on East Colfax Avenue.

"We're studying high-rise structures built in the 1930s, '40s and on up," Woolley said. "We personally want to make some kind of a statement. This 14th Street corridor is bringing a whole new landscape for downtown."

Woolley said the new developments will complement the proposed 50-story Four Seasons hotel and high-end condos at 14th and Arapahoe streets. Hotel Teatro's Jeff Selby and Michael Brenneman couldn't be reached Thursday, but they had been aware Woolley was planning to buy the blocks when they unveiled their Four Seasons deal last November. At that time, Selby said he thought Woolley's deal wouldn't compete with the Four Seasons.

[rebchookj@RockyMountainNews.com](mailto:rebchookj@RockyMountainNews.com) or 303-892-5207

Copyright 2005, Rocky Mountain News. All Rights Reserved.