

business

Sooper stalemate in Platte Valley

A project to put a grocery store near Coors Field stalls because it's paired with housing that's barred until 2011.

By Margaret Jackson
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 03/24/2008 06:08:08 AM MDT



The future of little more than three acres of land surrounded by new housing between the South Platte River and downtown Denver hangs on a deed-restriction dispute. (Karl Gehring, *The Denver Post*)

Developer Randy Nichols' plans to bring a King Soopers to the burgeoning Central Platte Valley neighborhood could be in jeopardy because his plans call for housing to be built along with the store.

A deed restriction on the property prevents the construction of housing until 2011.

"We want to bring a grocery store downtown, and timing is of the essence," said Bill Pruder, chief financial officer of the Nichols Partnership. "Grocery stores don't just sit around and wait."

Pruder said the residential component needs to be built in conjunction with the commercial piece for it to work financially.

Nichols purchased the 3.2-acre site between 19th and 20th and Chestnut and Wewatta streets from Trillium Corp. In addition to the 70,000 square feet of retail space that includes a King Soopers, Nichols' plan is for about 300 apartments and 100 for-sale units.

The restriction prohibiting residential development on the property until 2011 was put in place under the deal East West Partners cut with Trillium when it paid \$50 million for most of the land in the Central Platte Valley seven years ago, said Mark Smith, head of East West Partners.

"They knew it when they bought it," Smith said. "It's something that everybody who bought property down there knew about."

It's the same site on which Denver developer Jim Loftus wanted to build two apartment towers and a King Soopers in 2002. Smith refused to give his consent, and the deal fell apart.

"Over the last seven years, we've been investing huge amounts of money, and we

don't have any intention of doing anything different," Smith said. "It was a big deal for us to get our financial partners to invest that kind of money long-term in a bunch of railroad tracks and old warehouses. They didn't want to make that kind of investment and hold the land all these years. They made their decisions based on the restriction."

As the neighborhood has grown to include a bustling mix of homes, shops and restaurants, many have expressed dismay that it lacks a full-service grocery store to serve its residents.

Smith said he's confident a grocery store will be built in the Central Platte Valley.

"It may or may not be at that location, and there are stores other than King Soopers," he said.

Margaret Jackson: 303-954-1473 or
mjackson@denverpost.com