BUSINESS

DaVita considering LoDo site for corporate headquarters

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A development team on Thursday will present the Lower Downtown Design Review Board with a conceptual plan for a building being considered for the corporate headquarters of kidney-dialysis giant DaVita.

Denver-based ShearsAdkins Architects and Grand American Inc. of Santa Monica, Calif., are seeking approval of a seven-story, 150,000-square-foot office building with the ability to expand at the northeast corner of 19th and Wazee streets.

"We are going to design review because there is a company interested in a build-to-suit," said Chris Shears of ShearsAdkins, who declined to name the company. "We are starting the process of mass, form and scale just to get a head start."

In a letter to the design-review board, Shears wrote that Grand American had been "approached by a Fortune 500 tenant considering this location for a build-to-suit corporate headquarters."

DaVita ranks No. 433 in the Fortune 500. The company is relocating from California to metro Denver.

DaVita spokesman Brad Chase declined to confirm that the company has zeroed in on the LoDo site.

"We're still in negotiations and looking at our options," he said. "Progress has been made, but a decision has not been made as yet."

The company is also considering space in the vacant building at 1900 16th St. and the Gates Corp. building at 1551 Wewatta St. DaVita also is looking at three other sites where it could put its own building: a pad at 2000 16th St. and the parcels to the north and south of Union Station.

Grand American owns the entire block between 18th and 19th streets and Wazee and Blake streets. It wants to redevelop the property on the Wazee side with office, residential and retail space. It is asking the design-review board to allow it to develop the block in phases because this is a bad time to build a residential project, according to the letter sent to the board.

"I understand that there is some community support from the LoDo District to consider allowing an exception to build the office portion separate from the residential portion," said Dee Chirafisi, a member of the design-review board. "I am thrilled to know that this user is considering Lower Downtown as one of their choices for their headquarters."

About 800 of DaVita's 32,000 employees work in Colorado. The company has not determined whether it will relocate employees, Chase said.

"I think a lot of the growth will be organic," he said. "Over time, new positions may be created in Denver."

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