

Gart to renovate Pavilions, fill vacating Virgin Megastore space

by Zach Blom

The construction beginning this week at the Denver Pavilions isn't just a renovation. According to Mark Sidell, the president of Gart Properties, the retail center's owner, it's a re-imagining.

"The renovations will create what we like to call a 'place-making effect,'" said Sidell. "As soon as you see it, you'll know you've arrived."

Set for completion at the end of October, the \$25 million face-lift will improve customer access and mobility, retail visibility and overall ambiance at the center, which is located on two blocks of the 16th Street Mall between Welton and Tremont streets. Plans include:

- New energy-efficient escalators with lighted weather canopies for better customer access from the mall.

- Improvements to the Glenarm Street crossing, including valet service and a new pedestrian crosswalk with planted medians, colored pavement and enhanced lighting under the bridge and on the street.

- Upgrades to all four elevators to allow each one to reach all five levels.

- Courtyard seating, lighting, paver surface and landscaping improvements that Sidell says will "turn [them] into outdoor living rooms."



After renovations, the courtyards at the Denver Pavilions will feature improvements in seating, lighting, paver surfacing and landscaping to provide a "place-making effect," according to Gart Properties President Mark Sidell.

- Large LED signs along 16th Street that identifies each retailer.

- General lighting, landscaping, paint scheme and way-finding upgrades.

"Our overarching goal here is to better serve the customers and to maximize the customer experience," Sidell remarked of the renovations. "We want to enliven this space and invite people to stay awhile."

One way Gart Properties intends to attract customers is with a hot new tenant in the Virgin Megastore unit, which will become available when the music retailer closes its doors as part of a nationwide shutdown this month. "That is one of, if not the, best retail spaces on the 16th Street Mall," said Sidell, adding that another tenant may fill the space soon. "We are in conversa-

tions with another user and we expect to announce shortly that they will occupy a portion of the Virgin Megastore space." He said the best portion of that space, the end cap, still is available for lease and that Gart is gearing toward a fresh, exciting tenant that will add to the mix, much like Virgin did 10 years ago when the Pavilions opened.

Funding for the renovations came from the original financing Gart used in its recent purchase of the retail center, in a partnership with ING Clarion, for \$94.5 million. Semple Brown Design is the architect on the project, and CommArts designed the environmental graphics and way-finding signage. Buchanan Yonushewski Group, the contractor, started preliminary work last week.▲