

# BUILDING DIALOGUE

Development

Construction

Architecture

Engineering

Interior Design

SkyHouse Denver

Keeping it 'Lean' \ PAGE 106









# Bellevue Station: The Community of Tomorrow Takes Shape Today

**A**s bus and light-rail stations pop up along the Denver metro and regional corridors, demand among the city's burgeoning population for affordable, mixed-use environments centered on transit is soaring. Yet it takes vision to create a sustainable development framework for the future with the right mix and scale of retail, office, residential and public open space components.

For the 51-acre Bellevue Station development – formerly the Mountain View golf course – now anchored to RTD's light-rail stop on its southeast line, Denver-based urban design and landscape architecture firm Civitas provided the essential masterplan for Front Range Land and Development's mixed-use transit hub taking shape at Interstate 25 and Bellevue Avenue.

Because the Bellevue Station site represents the last parcel of the pioneering Bansbach family farm, the family's development company, Front Range Land and Development, is deeply committed to leaving a lasting legacy. For well over a decade, we have worked with Front Range Land and Development to imagine a place that would live in the hearts and minds of the greater community as the urban center of the Denver Tech Center and as the southern gateway to the city and county of Denver. Even before conceiving the development masterplan, we helped to define Denver's first transit-oriented development zone district. Known as T-MU-30, the zoning was written to “support transit ridership” and allow denser, urban-scaled development proximate to mass transit, along with a compatible mix of uses – all within a pedestrian-friendly environment. Aptly, Bellevue Station became the pioneer project for the TOD zone district. To complete the planning process, we authored a “General Development Plan” for the site that covers the specific heights and densities for buildings, stipulates street sections, setbacks and sizes, prescribes landscape types, and provides architectural guidelines and infrastructure requirements.

Instrumental over its more than 30-year history in the design of such Denver jewels as Larimer Square, Commons Park and Stapleton's



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OPENING ART:  
Civitas

*The street level is activated with retail and restaurants that appeal not only residents and office tenants, but also the neighboring community.*

ABOVE:

*The rendering depicts the overall plan for the One Bellevue Station community developing in the Denver Tech Center.*

*Master Plan by Civitas. Architectural implementation drawings in collaboration with ZGF Architects.*

redevelopment, Civitas is no stranger to reshaping and giving form to environments, often drawing upon the history of the place to inform its future. Bellevue Station, set in the traditionally suburban patterns of the surrounding tech center, is different in that it subverts this auto-centric history. Instead, with an emphasis on vitality and walkability, the master-plan – as specified in the GDP – is laid out on a grid of short blocks with a hierarchy of interconnected streets and public spaces and an efficient vertical and horizontal mix of uses. To relate to the tech center's midrise scale, higher-density developments, including a hotel, are planned near the light-rail station adjacent to the I-25 corridor. Building heights step down to the west to optimize light and views.

At Bellevue Station's core is Newport Street, a pedestrian-friendly "Main Street" that links to Layton Avenue and the light-rail platform. Drawing on its experience re-casting historic Larimer Street into one of Denver's most vibrant "people places," we applied many of those same street-activating design principles along Newport, including active storefronts, wide sidewalks to accommodate outdoor cafés, a leafy canopy of street trees, pedestrian lights and a selection of site furnishings and building materials that are calibrated for human scale and experience.

With a complete open space master plan in place outlining approaches for lively streetscapes and public spaces, Bellevue Station is on track to become a dynamic mixed-use center and destination for shopping, entertainment and high-density living with direct access to transit. A harbinger of Denver's transit-based evolution, Civitas' carefully planned TOD at Bellevue Station – one of more than a half-dozen TODs the firm is involved with around the metro area and in other parts of the U.S. – will set the stage for a true urban pedestrian environment with a renewed sense of place. \\\