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Updated plans revealed for 30-story office tower in downtown Denver

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The developer behind a planned 30-story office tower in downtown Denver is betting that potential tenants will emerge from the coronavirus pandemic with a new appreciation for fresh air and touchless technology — and the company has been busy updating its latest plans to anticipate the requirements of a post-Covid world.

In January, Chicago-based Riverside Investment and Development Company, along with architecture firm Goettsch Partners, submitted a concept plan calling for an office tower to be built on a 1.26-acre lot at 1901 Arapahoe St. Riverside is under contract for the site, which is valued at roughly \$27.5 million, according to current owner Paradise Land Co.

The project, which has since been named 1900 Lawrence, will feature roughly 700,000 square feet of rentable space, according to [Tony Scacco](#), an executive vice president at Riverside. The city approved the concept plan in April, Scacco said.

By that point, the coronavirus pandemic was already raising new questions over how offices will function in the future. Riverside had been in conversations with several anchor-type tenants prior to the outbreak in Colorado, said [Drew Nieman](#), an executive vice president at the company. Those discussions slowed through stay-at-home orders, although he noted that activity has recently picked back up.

In the interim, Riverside, which owns nearly 4 million square feet of real estate in Chicago, has interviewed roughly 60 of its current tenants, nearly all of whom have national footprints. The goal of the conversations was to determine the features that tenants will be looking for in their future office spaces.

"With multiple assets in different phases of the process, we decided to take a step back and really try to evaluate, based on discussions with tenant clients, what behaviors and priorities they are expressing, and what behaviors are likely to be with us long term," Scacco said. "Once we queried our tenants, that allowed us to think more deliberately about building planning and perhaps a renewed emphasis on how the building infrastructure impacts the day-to-day health of the occupants."

The basic structure of the building will still match what Riverside proposed in January, Scacco said. But Riverside is now planning changes to the building's interior based on its conversations with tenants and additional research.

Those changes start with making sure the building maintains strict standards for air quality. Riverside plans to install a secondary air purification system, on top of an air filtration system, to remove virtually all pollutants and airborne particulates from the airstream. Scacco said the filtration system will match those used in general health-care facilities.

Riverside is targeting minimum fresh-air rates that exceed local code minimums by more than 330%, Scacco said.

"When it comes to combatting the airborne transmission of pathogens, obviously there's no panacea," Scacco said. "We just think that it's good practice, really, to try to take every mitigating step we can to reduce the risk to the greatest extent possible."

The company is also planning to incorporate sensors around the building that will measure 10 different factors relating to air quality. Tenants will be able to access an app that shows the air quality at any time, and will be given their own sensors that they can place throughout their space.



RENDERING BY GOETTSCH PARTNERS

A rendering of a 30-story office tower proposed in downtown Denver.

"The trust and the feeling of safety is such an essential component of people feeling good about coming into the office every day," Scacco said. "That is a change in behavior that might last for a while here."

Such changes won't come cheaply. Nieman acknowledged that incorporating such plans from the start will be less expensive than retrofitting a building once it's complete. But Scacco noted that at one of the company's buildings in Chicago that was completed in 2017, Riverside is spending several million dollars to make similar updates.

Riverside also plans to include destination-dispatch elevators that efficiently group passengers together based on destination and are designed to reduce wait times. The company's research indicates that at its existing buildings, destination-dispatch elevators could move 100% of daily arrivals in groups of no more than four, with no impact on wait times compared to a conventional elevator system.

And those elevators will be part of a touch-free environment at the building, Scacco said.

Other aspects of the building that were designed prior to the coronavirus may also work in Riverside's favor. In conversations with its tenants, the company found an increased desire for access to outdoor spaces and natural light. The building will be equipped with 14 private terraces for tenants.

At 1900 Lawrence, Riverside is also pursuing a LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council and a platinum certification from the WELL Building Institute.

James Roupp, Michael Crane and Julie Rhoades of JLL are handling leasing for the building.

Riverside hopes to begin construction in early 2021, Scacco said. The company is targeting a delivery date in the second quarter of 2023, according to the project's website.

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