

SoBro is set to realize goal of 24 hour city

Downtown district becomes area to live, work and play



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Past Perfect Restaurant owner Shawn Courtney chose his location at 122 Third Ave. S. at the base of the Shelby Avenue pedestrian bridge because it was close to Broadway.

"I'm from Chicago, and we knew things were happening here," said Courtney, who made the decision two years ago. "We knew the (Schermerhorn) symphony center was coming. So we kind of became the neighborhood bar without a neighborhood. But the neighborhood is coming."

SoBro, the area south of Broadway in downtown Nashville, includes several new projects:

- The Encore, an \$80 million project at Third Avenue and Demonbreun Street, behind the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, will bring residential and retail space when it opens in spring 2008.
- The Pinnacle at Symphony Place, between Second and Third avenues, will be a \$110 million, 29-story office tower. The anchor tenant will be the Nashville law firm Bass Berry & Simms, and the Pinnacle also will be home to Pinnacle Financial Partners. The building, with 20,000

square feet of street-level retail space, is expected to open in the first quarter of 2010.

- Rolling Mill Hill, along First Avenue, south of Broadway, will have more than 170 residential units in five buildings.

This development is reusing old buildings, such as the former Metro General Hospital facility and the nurses' building. The General Hospital facility will become The Art Deco Building and will contain 24 units. The nurses' building is becoming The Victorian with 12 units. Another building on the property is also being renovated and is becoming The Powerhouse, with nine units.

The three refurbished buildings are expected to be completed by late 2008.

Two new buildings, with expected completion in 2009, will be a six-story, 36-unit building called The Metro, and a 10-story, 92-unit called The District.

Strong interest in area

Interest in the neighborhood has been strong. At the end of September, The Encore was 80 percent sold. Rolling Mill Hill was 65 percent sold.

"I think the most exciting thing in SoBro is The Pinnacle," said Phil Ryan, executive director, Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency. "It will probably be one of the nicest high-rises in all of downtown. It will rise about 420 feet into the air and more than 2,000 folks will call it their workplace."

Traffic will increase, and there will also be a significant increase in pedestrian traffic.

"All this added to the new residents in The Encore, we will start seeing a city fully alive for 24 hours a day, and that is what we want," Ryan said.

Retail tenants in the two SoBro buildings haven't been announced, but The Pinnacle is expected to have a document printing and scanning business and a casual but high-end restaurant that's open for breakfast and lunch, according to Dick Fleming of Cushman and Wakefield, the building's leasing agent.

"And, the coup de grace, we see this building as being a great opportunity to bring a great white-tablecloth restaurant, somewhere in the 7,000-square-foot range," Fleming said. "We are right across from the Schermerhorn Symphony Center. There are about 250 nights a year when there are events there. Their patrons will be able to park in The Pinnacle parking lot. Hopefully, they will have lunch and dinner here."

Restaurants are there

There is already an abundance of eating establishments on Broadway, and a few already existing scattered among the buildings, old and new, in SoBro. They include Sole Mio Restaurant, 311 Third Ave. S., and Fiesta Mexicana, 416 Fourth Ave. S.

Live music is offered at The Rutledge, 410 Fourth Ave. S., along with lunch and dinner. There also is live music at The Place, 217 Second Ave. S. Both of these establishments open in the late afternoon and stay open late.

And there is Past Perfect.

"Sometimes, it is tough to get people downtown," but that should change soon enough, owner Courtney said.