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More Housing Pops Up Near New Light Rail Stations



Jim Benemann (http://cbs4denver.com/bios/local_bio_115004037.html)
Reporting

(CBS4) DENVER Apartment complexes have sprung up seemingly overnight around the Lincoln Avenue light rail stop as developers have been turning the area around stations into new urban areas, densely populated by young singles and even empty nesters.

Bill Sirois, the RTD manager of Transit Oriented Development said that many people like the convenience of a "car-free" lifestyle.

"We're starting to see people having access to transit on their checklist when they're going out and looking for places to rent," Sirois said. "People really like the idea of being able to live here, get on the train, go into LoDo for dinner, go out to a bar, and never have to worry about getting into a car."

Developments are also appearing all along the southeast route of the new light rail line. At Hampden Ave., there's signs that point out how easy it is to get downtown.

At Louisiana and Pearl, a development that burned when it was nearly finished, has risen from the ashes and is almost finished again.

Light rail is also attracting commercial development. At Hampden, you can eat fish tacos or ice cream on your way to and from downtown. Stores are moving in next to light rail stations in hopes people who walk will also spend their dollars.

"If they can get the people coming off the transit that pass by, that's gravy for them," Sirois said.

Some commuters will drive to light rail at Lincoln and park in a multi-story garage, but for Michael McClure and his brother Evan, they don't plan to see the inside of the garage.

They can walk to the light rail station from their new pad at Amlri Apartments in about seven minutes. Both of them plan to commute directly to Metropolitan State College and their jobs downtown. They said they expect big savings on gas and will have less stress on the ride home during the weekends.

"Party factor? Well, you go downtown, party, come back by light rail," Mike said. "You don't even have to worry about the cops."

The two brothers are counting the days until light rail opens on Nov. 17. On that day, they plan to be the first of what will surely be many suburban pioneers riding light rail to a new lifestyle.

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