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Proposal would bring restaurant, office space near Poudre River

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A rendering of an aerial view of a building proposed for 418 Linden St., next to the Poudre River in downtown Fort Collins. Encompass Technologies has proposed the building, which would include office space for the company, apartments and a restaurant. It would be in Block 1 of the River District, a reference to the original plat of Fort Collins. / Courtesy RB+B Architects



Written by Kevin Duggan

The lure of the Poudre River may bring new development to the oldest part of Fort Collins.

Software developer Encompass Technologies has proposed a four-story building overlooking the river that would include office space for the company, 12 apartments, a restaurant and underground parking.

The design for the building at 418 Linden St. calls for it to be terraced, with the height increasing the farther it stretches from the river bank, said Jonathan O'Neil, founding partner with Encompass. The building's landscaping would tie back to the river through grassy areas, low-lying shrubs, trees and rocks, he said.

The site, which formerly housed a concrete batch plant, is paved over. Heaps of sand and concrete cover the steep embankment leading down to the river.

"We think this project will be an enhancement



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A four-story, terraced building has been proposed for 418 Linden St., next to the Poudre River in downtown Fort Collins. Encompass Technologies has proposed the building, which would include office space for the company, apartments and a restaurant. It would be in Block 1 of the River District, a reference to the original plat of Fort Collins. / By Kevin Duggan

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to the river and that whole part of town," O'Neil said.

The proposal is undergoing the first round of scrutiny in the city's development review process. But it's already generating controversy.

Environmental group Save the Poudre has raised several concerns about the project, including the proposed building's proximity to the river and its potential ecological impacts.

In a letter to the Downtown Development Authority, which heard a presentation on the proposal last week, Save the Poudre director Gary Wockner stated the river's wildlife corridor "would be irrevocably negatively

impacted, destroying any potential for a more healthy ecological buffer on both sides of the river."

The river bank is owned by the city of Fort Collins. O'Neil said the company would work with the city and its effort to restore the river as the project is developed.

"We want to bring the river landscape back on to the site ... and give it a more natural look," he said. "I'd argue that we would be creating more habitat."

The site next to the bridge that carries Linden Street across the Poudre is known as Block 1, an acknowledgment of its designation in the original plat of the city. It's in the fledgling River District, a largely industrial area city planners expect will eventually redevelop and attract a variety of commercial uses, including restaurants and art galleries.

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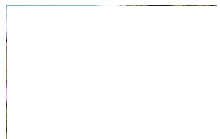
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