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## BUSINESS

# Fitzsimons growth fueling retail development

By **Margaret Jackson**  
The Denver Post

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When it comes to feeding students, doctors and other workers on the Fitzsimons campus, a small retail center at East Colfax Avenue and Interstate 225 is practically the only game in town — but it may not stay that way much longer.

While there are a few restaurants within driving distance of the campus, The Shops at Fitzsimons is currently the only shopping center that employees on the campus' eastern edge can walk to if they've grown tired of on-site cafeteria food.

"We come to this corner often," said Mark Fincher, a dental student on the campus who was having lunch on a recent afternoon at the Spicy Pickle with his wife, Marie, an employee of University Hospital.

There's just one vacancy in the 20,500-square-foot center. Tenants include Anthony's Pizza & Pasta, Chipotle Mexican Grill, Spicy Pickle, Noodles & Co., Caribou Coffee, Curves, FedEx Kinko's and IronStone Bank.

"All those little places just draw a great number of people during the day," said property manager Brenda Soper of AmCap Properties Inc. "Where we suffer is at night and during the weekends. When light rail goes through, it will be right next to the station. It will always be a perfect little place to stop off."

Spicy Pickle manager Skip Weber said the shopping center is busier during the middle of the week than it is earlier in the week.

"It's hard to find a parking spot," he said.

But the center might eventually find itself facing competition from some new neighbors. Construction of two developments across from the Fitzsimons campus are close to starting.

Bush Development is planning a spring groundbreaking on its 4.5-acre site at the southeast corner of East Colfax Avenue and Peoria Street. The project will include a First Bank, 7-Eleven and Qdoba Mexican Grill.

Separately, developer Andrew Klein, who has teamed up with Corporex Colorado, said he expects to break ground this month on a 176,000- square-foot office

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Dental student Mark Fincher and his wife, Marie, from CU Hospital, lunch at the Spicy Pickle in The Shops at Fitzsimons. (Joe Amon, The Denver Post )

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building and a 153-room Spring Hill Suites hotel.

"Children's Hospital is going to occupy a big portion of the office building, and there's more than enough activity to justify a hotel," Klein said.

When fully developed, the 32-acre Fitzsimons Village will include hotels, offices, shops and housing.

Neither project probably would be happening if it weren't for the redevelopment of the Fitzsimons campus.

"The area was very appealing to us due to the amount of redevelopment across the street on the campus," said Troy Smith, vice president of development for Bush.

Klein started buying mobile-home parks across from the campus in 1999, when the University of Colorado Hospital was under construction.

"We could see it was a good investment opportunity," Klein said.

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