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Brookfield's New West Side Development Banks on Big Appetite for Dining

Charles Passy, The Wall Street Journal, 12.10.2018

For all the attention that has been paid to Hudson Yards as a major future dining destination on Manhattan's far West Side, it turns out the development may face some competition from its neighbor to the east, Manhattan West.

This past week, Brookfield Properties, the developer of the \$4.5 billion Manhattan West project, and Union Square Hospitality Group, the prominent New York-based restaurant company headed by Danny Meyer, announced plans for a dining spot at the mixed-use complex.

Brookfield and USHG officials wouldn't go into detail about the concept, cuisine or design, except to say that the new place will serve as the "anchor restaurant" for Manhattan West, which runs from 31st to 33rd Streets and Ninth to 10th Avenues. The development, including the USHG restaurant, is expected to open in 2020.

The restaurant will be joined by a host of other dining options, Brookfield officials said. Also in the works: a 20,000-square-foot food hall (or "market hall"), with two full-service restaurants and six purveyors.

Additionally, a restaurant is slated to be part of the Pendry Hotel, the 164-room lodging planned for the development.

All this is in addition to a previously announced 60,000-square-foot Whole Foods location at Manhattan West. And Brookfield officials said more food options are a possibility, including offerings that could be part of retailers on the site, meaning in-store dining.

"Food has always been a main component of what we're trying to achieve here," said Michael Goldban, who is head of retail leasing for Brookfield's office division.

Brookfield officials said it is too early to discuss what operators will be at the food hall or the Pendry. At the hall, Mr. Goldban said, the goal is to create "a really vibrant experience," not unlike what Brookfield developed with its Hudson Eats concept at Brookfield Place in lower Manhattan, where the dining options include Black Seed Bagel, Blue Ribbon Sushi and cupcake shop Sprinkles.

When it comes to numbers, Manhattan West can't compete with Hudson Yards, which is being developed by Related Companies and Oxford Properties Group.

That complex is larger, running from 30th to 34th Streets and 10th to 12th Avenues. It incorporates a heady array of restaurants from such marquee culinary names as Thomas Keller, David Chang and Michael Lomonaco, plus a Spanish-themed food hall and market from José Andrés.

A number of fast-casual spots and other food purveyors are also part of the mix at Hudson Yards, where the retail section, dubbed the Shops & Restaurants, is slated to open in March 2019.

Still, Manhattan West's food program could have an impact on Hudson Yards' business, said Jason Kaplan, owner of JK Consulting, a New York-based restaurant-consulting firm.

"It will cut into it. They're not that far apart," he said, referring to the geographic proximity of the two developments.

But some industry professionals said that Manhattan West and Hudson Eats could benefit each other by drawing foodies to the neighborhood in general.

A spokeswoman for Hudson Yards developer Related Companies seconded that view. This "further cements the far West Side as a culinary destination," she said in a statement.

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