

Henderson casino owner sets sights on new downtown hotel

Written by Administrator
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When casino chain Boyd Gaming Corp. sold the Eldorado in late 2020, it said the small gambling den was a “non-core asset” and “very modest part” of its overall business.

The new owner renovated and renamed the 1960s-era downtown Henderson casino — and now he’s set to build a hotel with it.

Developer Joe DeSimone has filed plans with the city of Henderson to construct a six-story, Atwell Suites-branded hotel in the parking lot of The Pass, as the casino is now known.

He aims to break ground on the 90-room, roughly \$20 million project in September or October, he told me this week.

The hotel is slated to feature a pool and a wine bar, he said, noting the casino already has a parking garage.

His proposal marks yet another new venture for Water Street, a once-sleepy corridor that city officials have long sought to revitalize and now boasts restaurants, breweries, an ice rink and increased foot traffic.

DeSimone, founder of Henderson real estate firm First Federal Realty DeSimone, said that he sees more activity along Water Street every week and that competition for hotel rooms is virtually nonexistent nearby.

The nearest big hotel, Station Casinos’ Fiesta Henderson, has been closed since the onset of the pandemic, with still no word on its future.

DeSimone, who [acquired](#) the former Eldorado for an undisclosed price, also said he regularly sees improvements in business at [The Pass](#), 140 S. Water St., and

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added weekends are “very strong.”

Ground-up [real estate projects](#) in the Water Street area have, for the most part, been relatively small over the years. Moreover, plenty of ideas have come and gone, TSK Architects owner Windom Kimsey, whose firm is on Water Street, previously told me.

But some bigger developments have taken shape lately — most notably Lifeguard Arena, the practice rink for the Silver Knights minor-league hockey team, and a seven-story mixed-use project across the street, [The Watermark](#), which is slated to open in the third quarter this year.

Both are near The Pass.

Strada Development Group co-founder Tom Wucherer, whose firm is behind The Watermark, said Friday that more construction at that end of downtown will bring even more people.

“It helps everybody,” he said.

A decade ago, downtown Henderson was a quiet place. As DeSimone noted, it had city government operations and banks but little excitement.

Today, he said, there’s a “world of difference.”

“Ten years ago, I don’t think anyone would consider putting a wine bar on Water Street,” DeSimone said.

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