

New York City Officials, Developers to Break Ground on \$15 Billion Mini-City Hudson Yards

A new skyline in a waterfront neighborhood with apartments 75 stories high. An observation deck shaped like a spaceship jutting out from an office tower taller than the Empire State Building. A 5-acre plaza with a sculpture as large as Lady Liberty.

On Tuesday, city officials and developers will break ground on Hudson Yards, a \$15 billion 15-structure mini-city on Manhattan's West Side that will create more office space than exists in Portland, Ore.

"This will shift the heart of the city to the Far West Side," said Stephen Ross, whose Related Companies partnered with Oxford Properties Group to develop the site bounded by 30th St., Tenth Ave., 33rd St. and the West Side Highway.

"If you look at where all the young people are today, where they want to be, where all the money is going, it's the West Side of Manhattan," Ross, the Related chairman, added. "The yards will be the epicenter of all that."

The groundbreaking ends years of deal-making between developers and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which owns the rail yard and will lease the development rights for 99 years for more than \$1 billion.

The 26-acre site, to be built on platforms over the rail facility, will be the largest private real estate development in the history of New York. The 7 subway line is being extended to reach the middle of the site.

Coach, the fashion company, has purchased 750,000 of the 1.7 million square feet of the first office tower for an international headquarters. Related reports more than 80% of that building already committed. Ross said he is close to signing several tenants to another structure that will be higher than the Empire State Building.

New York-based Kohn Pedersen Fox designed both commercial towers.

For New Yorkers trying to wiggle out of a recession, Hudson Yards could mean thousands of jobs and hundreds of units of affordable housing.

"Developing Manhattan's final frontier is the next major step in our city's ongoing economic revival," Mayor Bloomberg said. "The Hudson Yards project — whose construction will create at least 23,000 jobs and whose existence will support thousands more — is a testament to our city's economic strength."

Urban experts see Hudson Yards as a means for New York to stay competitive with Shanghai, London and Paris as a key 21st century city.

"This city needs to prove it can continue to innovate," said Mitchell Moss, a New York University urban policy professor. "Who would figure out how to build a new neighborhood on railroad yards? People overlook that it brings a new class of buildings that are the most technologically and environmentally advanced. That's key to attracting major companies, events and people."

The first phase will include four mixed-use commercial, residential, and retail structures, a cultural center and a five-star hotel.

Each building will have a theme. The fashion-focused smaller office tower will connect to the taller commerce-oriented structure through a shopping complex. A third oval building designed by David Childs of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill will house a hotel, offices and residences.

A fourth structure by High Line architect Diller Scofidio + Renfro will be a rental and condo building attached to a city cultural and events center. An 80,000-square-foot retail store devoted to participatory sports such as cycling and

kayaking will anchor the Childs mixed-use structure closest to the Hudson River.

“It will be the Apple Store of sports and wellness,” said Related Hudson Yards President Jay Cross, a world-class sailor who went to the Olympics for his native Canada.

Related hopes an outdoor “piazza” draws crowds from the five boroughs. Designed by Nelson Byrd Woltz, the firm that completed the 9/11 Memorial in Shanksville, Pa., it will feature art and other programming.

“I see a plaza that will be one of the most important public spaces of the 21st century with one of the world’s greatest sculptures,” said Ross. “Everyone coming from midtown, up the West Side Highway and High Line will see it as they approach.”

Ross also fired back at skeptics who say Related won’t complete Hudson Yards on time — or at all.

“Everyone said the same thing when we were building Time Warner Center, and now it’s the most successful shopping center in the United States,” he said, referring to the glistening twin towers on Columbus Circle.

“We have announcements to make soon about new tenants in both commercial buildings. The rents and condominium prices are the highest in the city on the West Side around the Yards. We’re not even going to initially take a profit on the commercial side. We’ll get this built.”

The first phase is expected to be complete by 2017, starting with the tower housing Coach in 2015, Ross said.

Watch the video from the press conference and read the original article on [NY Daily News](#).