



Last updated: November 14, 2007 08:51am

\$6B Union Park Site Enters LEED Pilot Program

By Daniel D. Williams



Union Park

LAS VEGAS-Beyond the flashy neon of the Strip and the cash it creates, the surrounding area could see another shade of green in its future. Union Park, a \$6-billion, 11-million-sf project under way Downtown, has been accepted into the U. Green Building's LEED for neighborhood development pilot program.

According to the latest USGBC numbers, Union Park is one of 238 registered pilot projects nationally, but the only one in Nevada. The program uses a rating system integrating smart growth, urbanism and green building design. It is a collaboration of the USGBC, the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) and the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

The 61-acre master plan is repositioning a former brownfield on land owned by the city. The site is located east of Interstate 15 and is adjacent to the Union Park rail yards. The project "is playing a central role in the revitalization of Downtown Las Vegas and by embracing environmentally sound development practices, is forging new ground for green neighborhood development in our valley," says Scott Adams, director of the Office of Business Development for the City of Las Vegas.

The city retained Newland Communities in 2005 to serve as development manager. The site will be anchored by two key public facilities: the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute (60,000 sf) designed by architect Frank Gehry; and the Smith Center for the Performing Arts (207,000 sf; 2,050 seats), designed by architect David M. Schwarz.

Other projects include the Charlie Palmer Hotel, a 400-room boutique hotel and condominium; the

World Jewelry Center, a one-million-sf exhibition tower for the jewelry industry; and a medical office and hotel campus adjacent to the Brain Institute. Being built in phases, Union Park is set to complete its build-out in 2018.

As for the pilot program, it is set for an evaluation next year, with a revised rating by the USGBC and an approval process by CNU and NRDC.