

## Denver Post Business

# Retailer to quadruple space in Pavilions

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[The Denver Post](#)

Posted: 04/02/2009 12:30:00 AM MDT



At top left is the Welton Street side of the Pavilions as it looks today. At top right is the shopping center as envisioned after Forever 21's expansion is completed. (Eric Lutzens, The Denver Post)

Courtney Sweet was used to shopping in three-level department-store-style Forever 21 stores before moving back to Denver from New York six weeks ago.

The 24-year-old will not have to wait long to experience a similar store at the Denver Pavilions downtown.

The Los Angeles-based retailer and the Pavilions are gearing up for an expansion that will quadruple the size of the center's existing Forever 21 store. The expansion will add a new dimension to the Pavilions, blowing out a wall on the Pavilions' Welton Street side to create a glass storefront and a new entry.

"It creates permeability to the Denver Pavilions from Welton Street," said Mark Sidell, president of Gart Properties, which with ING Clarion Partners purchased the Denver Pavilions last year. "It demonstrates confidence in the future of the Denver Pavilions that one of the country's hottest retailers is making a significant investment in their flagship store."

The new store will have Forever 21's full assortment of women's apparel, menswear, jewelry and accessories, said Larry Meyer, executive vice president of Forever 21.

"We've done well there, and we believe the project will enhance the location," Meyer said. "We've been in a general mode of expanding our stores to provide a better and bigger assortment to customers."

The company is trending toward larger stores similar to, but not quite as large as, those of East Coast retailer H&M, said retail expert Mary Beth Jenkins, president of the Laramie Co.

"Forever 21 has figured out how to be that larger- format store in lifestyle centers and malls and downtowns," Jenkins said.

The expanded Pavilions store will open early in 2010. The expansion is part of Gart Properties' \$25 million renovation and remerchandising of the Pavilions.

"The benefit is a strong street presence along Welton where there has never been direct access into the project," Jenkins said. "That the owners are committed to capital improvements



Jessica Oleksy, above, shops at Forever 21 in the Denver Pavilions on Wednesday. (Eric Lutzens, The Denver Post)

during this time makes a strong statement about the project."

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