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Harbor East Tru Hotel on pace for fall construction start

By: Adam Bednar Daily Record Business Writer April 13, 2018

A proposed Harbor East hotel aimed at millennials remains on track to break ground in October.

Baltimore's first Tru Hotel brand building is expected to cost roughly \$20 million. Work on the eight-story building with 140 rooms at 415 S. Central Ave. should begin this fall, barring delays from infrastructure work in the area.

"It could shift a little off the Central Avenue improvements," Austin Haynes, senior vice president-development at Indiana-based Holladay Properties, said.

The hotel is aimed at budget-conscious younger travelers. A previous report put the cost of rooms at \$99 a night, which Haynes said wasn't entirely accurate.

"I can tell you it won't be \$99 a night," Haynes said.

The project is one of the first to be reviewed by the recently formed Urban Design and Architectural Advisory Panel. The group replaces the former Urban Design and Architectural Review Panel in an effort by Mayor Catherine Pugh's administration to streamline the city's development process.

Major changes to the advisory panel, which were announced last month, include appointing new members, appointing a chair and changing design reviews to more of a roundtable discussion. Previously developers joking referred to board presentations as "American Idol" for architecture.

The Tru Hotel project was initially reviewed by the old panel and one of the first to be probed by the new group. Haynes said he had no problems with the previous panel's work and has been happy with Baltimore's review process.

"The city's actually been great to deal with. I didn't have any problem with the process," Haynes said.

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