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DIA hotel to be a Westin

Denver Business Journal - by [Noelle Leavitt](#) Denver Business Journal

Westin Hotels & Resorts has been selected to build and operate a much-anticipated \$200 million, 500-room hotel at **Denver International Airport**.

Westin Hotels is owned by publicly traded Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc. (NYSE: HOT) of White Plains, NY, which operates hotel brands such as Sheraton, Westin, W, St. Regis and Aloft.

"They picked Starwood Hotels & Resorts, and the brand is Westin," said Mark Tobin of Englewood-based Hospitality Real Estate Counselors Inc., and a consultant on the project. "The developer is **Mortenson**."

The hotel will be paid for through tax-exempt revenue bonds, but details surrounding the financing are still being discussed, Tobin said.

"A Westin Hotel at DIA will strengthen its standing as a world-class airport, and enhance our capacity to accommodate both business and leisure travelers," Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper said in a statement. "This hotel fulfills a vision that began with the construction of DIA."

The airport opened in 1995.

The DIA Westin will be located at the southeast corner of the Jeppesen Terminal, and include 26,000 square feet of meeting and conference space. Other amenities will include restaurants, health club, swimming pool and parking garage.

It's not certain when ground will break for the project.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts was up against Hyatt Hotels & Resorts to operate the DIA hotel.

Denver International Airport put out a request for proposals for a terminal hotel last April. Plans for such a hotel have lingered since 1998.

The Westin hotel chain initially signed on to finance and build a \$125 million hotel at the DIA terminal in '98, but a slumping economy in the wake of 9/11 ended those plans.

"We are thrilled that Westin has been chosen as a brand," said Tom Curley, Starwood's area managing director for Westin in Colorado. "DIA is a terrific market, and we believe Westin is the right brand for positioning at the airport."

The Westin brand is no stranger to operating a terminal hotel, one being the \$80 million, 401-room hotel in Detroit called Westin Detroit Metropolitan Airport, which opened in 2003. The hotel is owned by Wayne County in Michigan.

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