

## Old Town adding Ingredient

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### Document Text

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The 100-year-old building at the corner of Mountain and South College avenues that has served as the town grocery store, hardware store, bank and drug store will now house a new fast-casual restaurant.

Ingredient, part of an independently owned chain of five stores in Kansas and Missouri, plans to open its first Colorado restaurant in the old City Drug building by summer.

The restaurant, which uses the phonetic spelling, bills itself as a gourmet, fast-casual restaurant similar to a Panera-type of establishment.

As its name implies, the restaurant focuses on fresh ingredients, customizable salads with about 80 different choices, homemade dressings, brick-oven pizzas, wraps and desserts, all made from scratch.

It plans an outdoor patio that wraps around the building from College to Mountain avenues and the iBar, a coffee/wine/beer and dessert bar, chef and co-founder Steve Kerner said.

Kerner and Ed Nelson opened the first Ingredient in Lawrence, Kan., a city they said is comparable to Fort Collins.

The two chose Fort Collins over Denver or Boulder for its first Colorado location because of its healthy lifestyle, college market and "great community surrounding it," Kerner said in a telephone interview. "They're both health-conscious, on-the-go communities in tune with what they're eating and the sources they come from."

As a bonus, the restaurant does not allow tipping. Instead, its menus ask customers to "give a few dollars to charity ... say Hello to a stranger ... pet a dog ... perform a random act of kindness ... put a quarter in a parking meter you see is expired or do something nice for yourself."

Building owner Les Kaplan plans to seek a facade grant from the Downtown Development Authority to help restore the building's exterior to the way it looked when it housed the town bank in the 1920s.

The building has been vacant since City Drug relocated to 209 N. College Ave. in September and the Bohemian Foundation moved into its new digs late last year.

Kaplan said he had hoped to attract a retail tenant to the location to "contribute to a more balanced mix of uses" in Old Town, but no retailers were interested.

"The fact is that retail in general is pretty much in the tank," he said. "There was no category of retail that was remotely interested in the corner."

Of the half dozen potential tenants that contacted him, Kaplan said all were restaurants, including two national chains, one of which wanted Kaplan to pony up almost \$1 million to renovate the interior and exterior.

"Financing is so difficult for restaurants these days they want the landlord to be the bank."

Neither Kaplan nor Kerner would disclose how much each will pay for final renovations, but Kaplan said Ingredient was making a "significant investment" in the property.

"I would much rather have this restaurant in this space than a medical marijuana or secondhand retail store," Kaplan said. "I wanted something of quality, something that was distinctive that would be an addition to downtown. This restaurant does that."

Ingredient will occupy 6,000 square feet of the building's first floor.

The Bohemian Foundation's former offices on the first and second floors are still for lease, Kaplan said.

Old Town changes

The following restaurants have announced plans to open in Old Town:

- > Big Al's: Mountain Avenue; burgers, fries and hot dogs; expected to open in mid-March
- > Ingredient: 101 S. College Ave.; salads, sandwiches, pizza, dessert; expected to open in early summer
- > Moe's Original BBQ: 181 N. College Ave.; opened Thursday
- > Nordy's: 151 N. College Ave.; barbecue; expected to open in spring
- > Snooze: Mountain Avenue; breakfast and lunch; expected to open in March or April

[www.ingredientrestaurant.com](http://www.ingredientrestaurant.com)

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**Abstract** (Document Summary)

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