

## Downtown High-Rise Is Ready For Takeoff

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TAMPA — Donald Trump's plan for luxurious condominiums might be the talk of the town, but it's the 32-story SkyPoint development that is on track to break ground soon.

If all goes as planned, construction will begin in April — making it the first residential high-rise in downtown's central business district.



Gregory Minder, of Novare-Intown Tampa Development LLC, said Wednesday that the company is close to obtaining the project's \$80 million in financing and plans to open a marketing office March 5.

Intowngroup, of Tampa, is working with the Atlanta-based Novare Group to build the condominiums. Minder said he hopes to attract 25- to 40-year-old professionals looking to live in an urban environment. Many of these units, he said, will offer an alternative for those who cannot afford the high-end homes planned for the area.

"The top end of our product is where some others begin," Minder said.

Company officials have kept the details quiet until now, but there has been increasing speculation about what is planned for the downtown site, which is surrounded by a plywood fence. The Tampa Electric parking structure was demolished last month, and the property is being prepped for construction.

The 381 units, at 777 Ashley Drive, will be one- and two-bedrooms, priced from about \$170,000 to more than \$400,000, Minder said. The building, which will be directly across the street from the proposed Tampa Museum of Art, will play off the cultural environment planned for the area.

Residents will be able to view and choose their favorite paintings from a virtual gallery in the lobby. The selections will be encoded in their access key. By swiping the key at the front door, plasma screens in the lobby will display their art.

When the key is swiped to enter the elevator, which will take residents to their floor only, the television in the elevator will change to the station of their choice. The selections will remain for five minutes before the next resident's selections appear.

"The same technology that makes this a safe building is used to make it fun," Minder said.

The units will range from 745 to 1,310 square feet. The average condominium will be 900 square feet but won't feel small, Minder said, because of 10-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling glass windows.

A pair of two-story penthouses are planned for the top of the building.

SkyPoint amenities will include a 24-hour concierge, a covered parking garage, a pool, fitness center and a common kitchen for entertaining. The interior of the units will feature wood floors and granite countertops.

The ground floor will feature 10,000 square feet of storefront and restaurant space.

SkyPoint is one of four high-rise condominium projects planned for the downtown business district. In nearby areas, 24 condominium projects of varying sizes are either in construction or proposed for the Channel District, Harbour Island and Bayshore Boulevard.

The majority of the units at SkyPoint will range from \$200,000 to more than \$400,000. By contrast, units at the planned 52-story Trump Tower Tampa start at \$700,000 and run to more than \$6 million.

Intowngroup also is involved in the Meridian condominium development under construction in the Channel District. The Novare Group has done projects similar to SkyPoint in Atlanta, Charlotte, N.C., and Atlanta, the company said.

Minder said a model unit will be built inside the marketing center in the Colonial Bank building at 400 N. Tampa St. so buyers can see what they are purchasing. Condominium developments typically take reservations on units before construction begins, but Minder said his company will do contract sales only.

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