

# MULTI-HOUSING NEWS

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## Mid-rise buildings emphasize location, cost efficiency and style

Markets in Phoenix, Las Vegas, Dallas and southern California have seen a high demand for mid-rise residential properties, according to Greg Faulkner, president of **Humphreys & Partners Architects LP**. The three main aspects of building a successful mid-rise development, architects say, is finding a centralized location, constructing a wood-frame building and providing stylish amenities to attract new buyers and renters. "It's a big trend right now," Faulkner adds. "We're seeing this all over the country."

Constructing internal wood-frame structures for four-story buildings is more cost-efficient than using steel or concrete frames. Mid-rise properties, designed with below-grade parking, allow architects to situate 120 units per acre and use various floorplans and unit types, maximizing the amount of given space, according to Faulkner. Multifamily architects, meanwhile, are exploring design features to accommodate residents' lifestyles. The mid-rise achieves a scale that allows for a closer sense of a community.

All of these aspects are showcased in the four-story, wood-framed Delano in Las Colinas, Texas, which will offer 258 apartments. Designed by Dallas-based Humphreys & Partners, the \$30-million development is the first Lone Star state project of **Legacy Partners Residential Development Inc.**, based in Foster City, Calif. The scale of the 4.3-acre site allowed for a spacious layout of floorplans. One- and two-bedroom units will average 1,044 square feet, and rents will range between \$964 and \$2,420 per month.

Delano will be located near a planned light-rail station in the Las Colinas Urban Center. Due to its central location, between Dallas and Fort Worth, and its proximity to DFW Airport, Las Colinas has become a viable option for corporate and business relocation. A mix of young professionals, older professionals and empty nesters are driving the high demand for rental apartments in the area to be closer to their employment, while enjoying the attractions and nightlife of Las Colinas and nearby downtown Dallas.

An Art Deco building inspired by the high-end landmarks in Miami, Delano was designed with a variety of upscale, modern components. The exterior is highlighted with a bright color palette, comprised of pastels, such as green, yellow, orange and white. The firm included a five-level parking structure, with private accesses to air-conditioned interior corridors. "It's a really unique architectural style for the Texas market," says Faulkner. "It sets itself apart from other buildings in this market."

Amenities aimed to entice occupants include a clubhouse, pool, courtyard, fitness facility, business center and leasing office. The general contractor, **Andres Construction Co.** of Dallas, began construction last May, and Delano will be completed this spring.

Another mid-rise project reaping the benefits of similar attributes is Sotelo, a 172-unit condominium community in Tempe, Ariz., located immediately southeast of Phoenix. Developed by **Trammel Crow Residential**, Sotelo is juxtaposed against 1,200 acres of Sonoran Desert landscape and a vibrant downtown dis-

trict. Sotelo is designed for buyers interested in living in an affordable, gated community that offers an urban and outdoor lifestyle. The units, which measure between 794 and 1,953 square feet, range from \$285,000 to \$550,000.

Situated on 6.8 acres of land just north of the Arizona State University (ASU) main campus, the location of Sotelo has attracted interest from students of ASU, young professionals, empty nesters and middle-class families. Sotelo is also expected to create interest because of its close proximity to new businesses and a planned light-rail transit system, bound to downtown Phoenix, in 2008.

Just over a mile away is the Mill Avenue District in downtown Tempe, which offers an assortment of bars, clubs, live music, shopping, coffee shops and museums as well. The property is also located behind Papago Park, home to the Desert Botanical Garden, lakeside picnic areas, golf courses, baseball and softball fields and the Phoenix Zoo. The hilly desert landscape is ideal for hiking, jogging and biking activities.

Designed by Phoenix-based **Todd & Associates**, the development is divided into six four-story buildings, which incorporate a stepped façade and varied roof elements to minimize the building mass. Fourth-floor penthouse units are oriented to maximize views of the surrounding desert setting and distant mountain vistas. The firm created a color palette, consisting of subdued brown and tan as well as vibrant reds and greens to reflect the desert landscape.

The generously sized plot of land allowed Todd & Associates to lower the scale of the buildings to create a smaller footprint on the site and provide subterranean parking to prevent a heat-island effect. Terraced retaining walls provide vehicular access to the below-grade parking. "You don't find this at other mid-rises here," observes James Favata, project director at Todd & Associates. "The residents will not have to walk to their cars outside the buildings in the hot summer."

Sotelo's loft-inspired architecture creates modern living spaces with open floorplans bathed in natural light. The layout features 9-ft.-high ceilings, gas fireplace, private patio, granite kitchen countertops, cultured marble vanities, wood cabinets in kitchens and baths and ceramic tile in entry, kitchens and bathrooms. Construction of Sotelo is scheduled to begin this month and is expected to be completed in mid- to late-2008. **MHN**



Art Deco buildings in Miami inspired the design of Delano (above), an apartment community in Las Colinas, Texas. The aesthetic of Sotelo (right), a condo community in Tempe, Ariz., was influenced by the surrounding desert landscape.