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# Cityville Block 121 open to residents on Birmingham's Southside

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Michael Tomberlin -- The Birmingham News

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The \$35 million Cityville Block 121 is one of the largest developments to be completed in the metro area this year, taking up an entire city block between First and Second Avenues South and between 20th Street and Richard Arrington Jr. Boulevard. (The Birmingham News / Linda Stelter)

Residents of Cityville Block 121, an ambitious \$35 million development sprawling for an entire block in Southside, began moving in this month.

More than 90 apartments in the 255-unit development are leased or close to being claimed, and owners say they believe interest in the project is on the rise now that construction is complete.

It is the kind of initial response that developers Corporate Realty Development and Dallas-based Inland

American Communities Group hoped for when they broke ground on the massive project 16 months ago.

Cityville takes up an entire city block between 20th Street and Richard Arrington Jr. Boulevard and First and Second Avenues South.

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John Allums, executive vice president and managing director of Inland American Communities, said his firm saw Birmingham as ripe for a project like Cityville Block 121.

"When we surveyed the market, there had been a lot of loft conversion in the downtown area, but there was not a lot of real conventional apartment development," Allums said. "With employment in downtown, employment at the medical center and the large student population, we felt like Birmingham was ripe for a more conventional type of product with the same sort of amenities you would expect in the suburbs."

Those amenities include a swimming pool, clubhouse, Internet cafe, fitness center, controlled-access parking, walk-in closets, gourmet kitchens, granite countertops, garden bathtubs and designer finishes.

Monthly rents range from \$695 to \$1,825. Apartments include 52 studios, 118 one-bedroom, one-bath units, and 77 two-bedroom, two-bath flats, while the loft apartments are made up of six one-bed, one-bath and a pair of two-bed, two-bath units.

The development also has 21,000 square feet of retail space along 20th Street. Robert Simon, president of Corporate Realty, said tenants will be announced soon.

"We have contracts on some of the space, and we're continuing to look at our tenant mix to make sure we deliver the best mix to the market," Simon said.

He said the project's retail and restaurant component needs to complement the residential as well as provide a connection between UAB and the Railroad Park opening next month.

"When the property fully ramps up, we will have a destination-oriented community where once was blight," Simon said.

Simon said the city of Birmingham and Operation New Birmingham helped make the project a reality.

"Cityville represents a case book study on public-private partnerships," he said.

Birmingham Mayor William Bell said the project is an important one because it pushes downtown residential growth beyond a milestone.

"This mixed-use project is a major addition to Birmingham's city center residential community, which now exceeds 4,000," he said. "Cityville Block 121 is a significant step forward in achieving our goal of a vibrant, walkable city center."

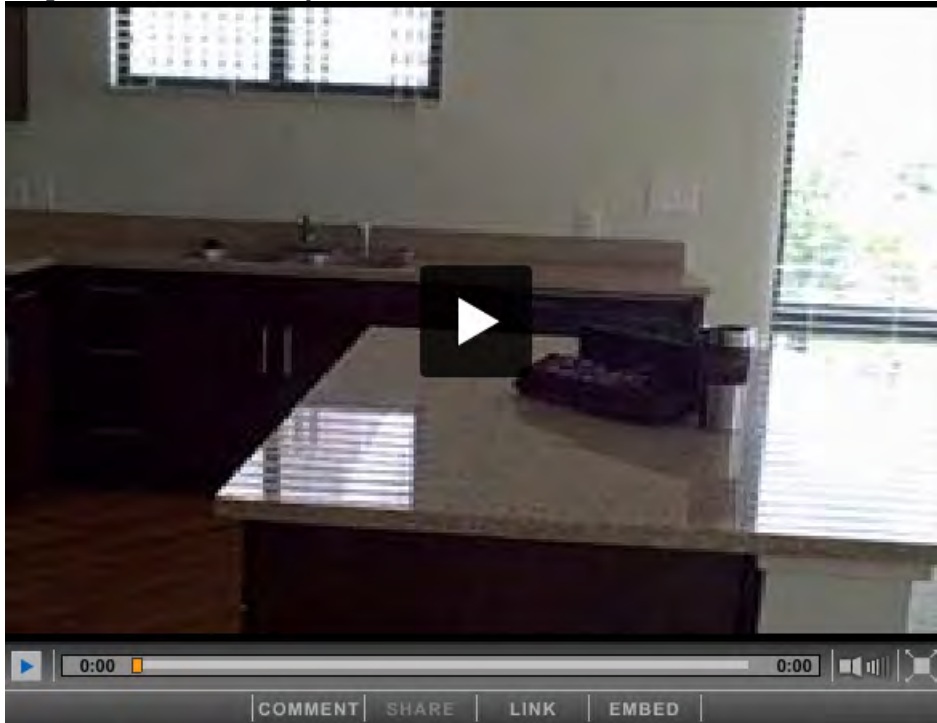
Birmingham's Schoel Engineering Co. is the project's civil engineer and Golden & Associates Construction acted as general contractor. Atlanta's Niles Bolton & Associates was architect. Birmingham-based BBVA Compass financed the project.

Allums said Inland does similar developments all over the country. He said he is pleased with how the Birmingham development has turned out.

"We found a great location and a great development partner in a city that wanted to make it happen," he said.

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### Cityville Block 121 Apartments



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