



MEMORIAL CITY

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IN THE NEWS

Exclusive: 25-story apartment tower breaks ground in new Memorial City mixed-use project

BY JEFF JEFFREY SEPT 1, 2019

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Construction crews have broken ground on a new mixed-use development in west Houston, which will boast a 25-story apartment tower and a nine-story office building.

The new 4-acre project is at the southwest corner of Bunker Hill Road and Interstate 10 and is owner MetroNational's latest addition to Memorial City, a 265-acre mixed-used development that contains 9 million square feet of developed real estate.

The 332,231-square-foot multifamily tower, which is to be called The McKinley Memorial City, will be located at 9757 Katy Freeway. The tower will offer 278 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartment units. The building's top two floors will be dedicated to deluxe penthouse units.

About half of the tower's apartments will have two bedrooms, which MetroNational President Jason Johnson said was part of a play to court prospective tenants who are looking to downsize but who still want to have space where they can host guests.

"It's a bit of a gamble to go with 50 percent two-bedrooms," Johnson said. "We decided to listen to the local market, which has quickly absorbed studios, one-bedrooms and penthouse units. But there aren't too many two-bedroom units in the area, so we thought there was an opportunity there."

Johnson said The McKinley will be the tallest multifamily tower west of Uptown Houston. Every unit in the tower will come with quartz countertops, gas ranges and stainless-steel appliances.



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On the tower's amenity deck, residents can expect to find a resort-style rooftop pool with cabanas, as well as a wave bar, golf simulator, movie theater, chef's kitchen, fitness center, dog park, bike storage, resident lounge and a wine bar with wine lockers.

The McKinley's street level will also include 4,500 square feet of retail and restaurant space. The architecture and interiors were designed by Houston-based Ziegler Cooper Architects. Anslow Bryant is serving as general contractor. The project's fee developer is Slate Real Estate Development.

The development's office building, at 9753 Katy Freeway, will offer 190,000 square feet of Class A space, with each of the nine floors having about 21,000 square feet of leasable space.

The first floor of the office building will include retail and restaurant space, a two-level lobby with public Wi-Fi and seating, and conference rooms. A skybridge on the second level will connect the building to a gated parking garage.

The office building is expected to receive LEED Silver certification.

Construction is already underway on the multifamily tower, but the office portion will not break ground until early 2020. Both the multifamily tower and the office building are scheduled to be completed by summer 2021.

Johnson declined to comment on how much the development will cost. But he said the aim is to deliver a product that hasn't sacrificed amenities to save money.

At this stage, Johnson said, MetroNational is funding the project. But the company is in the process of securing a construction loan.

"That's one of the benefits of having controlled the land for decades," Johnson said. "We were able to spend a lot less to develop the project than we might have otherwise." Johnson said plans for The McKinley came about after MetroNational saw Memorial City's residential market continued to demand apartment units, despite several new projects in the area.

Johnson said leasing at The McAdams, a midrise apartment complex adjacent to Memorial City Mall, has been strong. The McAdams recently unveiled its amenities level, which features an open-air terrace with an infinity edge pool, lounge seating, private cabanas, fire pit, and outdoor kitchen and bar areas.

Residents began moving into the project, at 12000 Barry knoll Lane, in March.

"We realized that if we were going to continue pitching Memorial City and its ability to offer a live-work-play environment, we needed to have more people living here full time," Johnson said.

Houston-based MetroNational has a number of other projects underway in Memorial City.