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Affordable-housing project A34 opens in Lincoln Heights



The three-building community is surrounded by more than 1.5 acres of landscaped green space that's open to the public.

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Story Highlights

- A 468-unit affordable housing project has wrapped construction in L.A.'s Lincoln Heights.
- The development includes 256 income-restricted units and public green spaces.
- A34 includes community amenities, local artwork and upcoming retail space.

After four years of development, a new affordable-housing project is opening soon in L.A.'s Lincoln Heights.

The Max Collaborative, in partnership with The Pinyon Group, is behind A34, a 468-unit apartment community. Leasing has begun at the project, at 131 W. Avenue 34, with studios, one- and two-bedroom units available.

The three-building community is surrounded by more than 1.5 acres of landscaped green space open to the public. Additionally, 10,000 square feet of community-facing retail is set to open within the next year.

Kevin Ratner, co-founder and managing partner of The Max Collaborative, said the firm bought the property in 2021, attracted to the site for its proximity to public transit and its size. The site is 5 acres.



Leasing has begun at A34, with studios, one- and two-bedroom units available.

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The makeup of the property allowed the developers to build low-rise buildings, which lowered the cost of construction and allowed The Max Collaborative to rents low while delivering the returns it needed in order to attract investors, Ratner said.

Of the 468 units, more than 190 are reserved for moderate-income households and 66 are designated for low-income individuals.

Ratner said the need for affordable housing in L.A. is “insatiable.” When the group opened leasing for the income-restricted apartments, which is being handled by [Greystar](#), A34 received more than 4,000 applications.

“That need is extreme,” Ratner told L.A. Business First. “There's lots of places in the country I haven't developed, but I don't know that it's like that anywhere else in terms of the need. It's really staggering.”

Despite Ratner currently living in Los Angeles, A34 is the first L.A. project by The Max Collaborative, which was founded by Ratner and his brother and named for their grandfather. Ratner completed several projects in L.A. while working for his late grandfather's company, Cleveland-based Forest City.

L.A.'s enclaves have extremely different tastes, rent structures, needs and opportunities, Ratner said. When The Max Collaborative started searching for real estate, the firm looked all over the city and L.A. County before settling on the Lincoln Heights site. Ratner said he sees major growth happening on L.A.'s Eastside.



When The Max Collaborative started searching for property, the firm looked across the city and L.A. County before settling on Lincoln Heights.

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"The Eastside, to me, is where all of the growth is happening in L.A.," he said. "It's where a lot of younger people are moving. All the cool restaurants are popping up on the Eastside. Almost all the development that I did was either in downtown or in Chinatown."

Much of the city is zoned for single-family, low-rise homes, Ratner added, which creates opportunity for developers "willing to engage in the battle of trying to develop here in L.A."

When construction began in 2022, the project – like many others in the U.S. – was hit by supply constraints. Lumber prices for the project went from \$5 million to \$12 million, Ratner said.

"Everything was so volatile. Week to week, prices would go up and come down," he said. "You couldn't get supplies or appliances. Companies stopped making models of refrigerators and all kinds of other things."



Image: KFA Architects and Dalian Tianyue Image Digital Technology

A34 includes community amenities such as resident coworking areas, a ground-level pool, electric-vehicle charging stations, lounges and barbecues.

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A34 includes community amenities such as resident coworking areas, a ground-level pool, gym, electric-vehicle charging stations, lounges and barbecues. The developers also planted more than 200 trees around the project, with a paseo of green space open to residents and the public.

The developers worked with art-focused interiors firm The Feel to curate an art program featuring local artists at the property. A34 features 55 pieces of art from 20 local artists, with four murals, paintings, drawings, photography, textiles and ceramics displayed around the project. KFA Architects was the project's architect.

In addition to housing and green space, the project will include three retail pavilions. Ratner said a barber shop has signed a lease at A34 and is set to open by the end of the year. The developers are in talks with coffee shops, bookstores, restaurants and fitness studios interested in leasing the remaining space. Industry Partners is handling retail leasing at A34.

“The commitment to public accessibility and the permeability of the project, and being close to art and public transit – all of those things are very important to us,” Ratner said. “Hopefully they’ll resonate with the community.”



Units include stainless-steel appliances.

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