



Small-town feel:
The first residences at Vinings West could be available as soon as the end of 2005.

Pacific Group plans Pleasantville in Vinings

By Ryan Mahoney
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Atlanta developer **The Pacific Group** is returning to the Vinings area with plans for an estimated \$300 million mixed-use town center development modeled after a New England seacoast town.

Known for its Enclave at Vinings and Chattahoochee Bluffs projects, Pacific Group's latest development in southeast Cobb County will combine 100,000 square feet of retail with 1,000 townhomes and condominiums.

The nearly 50-acre project at Atlanta Road and Interstate 285, dubbed Vinings West, will be Pacific's largest undertaking. Partner Woody Snell said financing has been arranged through undisclosed banks and individual investors.

Pacific has not yet named a builder, although the company frequently works with **Ashton Woods Homes**. The **Preston Partnership LLC** and **Sprinkle Design Conservancy Inc.** are the architects.

The company already has assembled 47 parcels necessary for Vinings West. Groundbreaking is set for March or April 2005, pending approval this fall by the Atlanta Regional Commission, with the first residences tentatively available by the end of 2005.

Vinings West was inspired by a development in Charlotte, N.C., called Birkdale Village, which in 2003 was voted the nation's best mixed-use development by the **National Association of Home Builders**.

That community features 320 luxury apartments and more than 60 retailers and restaurants, all overlooking a town square. Birkdale Village also includes 55,000 square feet of office space, a 16-screen movie theater and other amenities.

"It's like Pleasantville," said Jud Little, president of the apartments division at **Crosland Inc.**, the lead developer of Birkdale Village.

Pacific aims to follow a similar model. Although retail will play a smaller role in Vinings West, Snell said several potential tenants from national chains to local professionals have expressed interest. There will be three outparcels for restaurants or banks.

About half of the project's 1,000 residences initially will be configured as leased units to expedite absorption and financing. Pacific eventually expects to convert all of them to for-sale units.

There are six basic options, including mid-rise condos in the high \$100,000s to the mid \$200,000s, townhomes from the mid \$300,000s to the mid \$400,000s, and a few detached single-family homes priced up to \$700,000.

Cobb County commissioner Joe Thompson toured Birkdale Village with Pacific officials and several others in August and was impressed by what he saw.

"It projects a small-town community in a large county in a large metro area," Thompson said. "These mixed-use concepts make people feel good, even people that never lived in a small town."

Thompson praised Pacific for redeveloping an area occupied by a handful of run-down houses and businesses and for working closely with representatives from neighboring communities.

Tony Waybright is just one community member who meets regularly to discuss developments such as Vinings West.

"Our No. 1 issue is density," Waybright said. "They're coming in with a number of residential units per acre much higher than anything that's been put into that section of Cobb."

Waybright said his group would like Pacific to quantify the amount of green space they'll put in and is lobbying for a library in the 8,300-square-foot indoor community area. A county services center is another possibility. Vinings West also will get a tie-in with the Silver Comet Trail.

Wood Partners Inc. is another Atlanta residential developer that has branched out to include retail in mixed-use projects. Director of development Mark Randall said demand is overwhelming for Vinings West's mix of homes and shops and its proximity to the metro's second-largest office submarket.

"There's 20 million square feet of office space in the Cumberland/Galleria market, and there aren't a lot of affordable options out there," Randall said.

"We really view our site as the gateway to Vinings," Snell said. "It's a cross between Vinings Jubilee, Smyrna Market Village and what we saw up there in North Carolina."

Pacific was founded in 1985 by Canadians Harold Cunliffe and Michael Kilgallon. The company develops about 1,000 lots a year and has about 10 active projects.

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