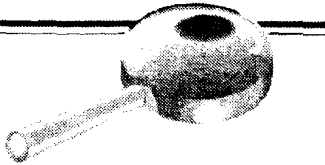


## Behind the Headlines...



# Developers Say Project is Vision for the Future

By Kate Bolen

Buckhead Investment Partners Inc. developers Matthew Morgan and Kevin Kirton are moving forward with the Ashby high-rise project despite city officials' and neighbors' vehement oppositions.

"Densification is inevitable. Many leading edge cities like Chicago, San Francisco and Vancouver are light years ahead of Houston. We have to go there to be a great city," Morgan said.

He also said Houston is in need of high density, pedestrian-friendly lifestyle projects because it will cut down on traffic congestion. Those who commute from places like the Woodlands and Sugarland will have more living options in town.

"People can live closer to where they work as well as cultural and entertainment centers. They will rely less upon cars and it will relieve stress on suburban infrastructures," Kirton said.

Morgan said they submitted a foundation permit application July 30. The city then sent out the first round of comments addressing the

project which Morgan and Kirton plan to respond to within the next few days.

"We continue to follow the rules, ordinances and regulations that developers must follow," Morgan said.

Kirton said he hopes the city does the same and applies the current set of ordinances to the project.

Morgan said there has been quite a bit of misinformation floating around the community. The first is the looming caricature printed on signs that he said misrepresents the project, as well as his and Kirton's intentions, and makes it appear "monstrous" which he says is unfair.

"The only things that are missing are babies between its teeth," Morgan said.

Traffic issues are also being misconstrued and will not generate the problems many neighbors are fretting over, Morgan said.

Kirton said high-rises generate the lowest amount of impact on traffic.

In a traffic study they commissioned, which was not required of them in order to apply for a permit, approximately 27 vehicles will be entering the building and 48 will be leaving during the morning rush hour.

Kirton said the shared lifestyle of those who live in the building does not call for everyone to rush in and out at the same time. Many of these residents can even work in

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the office space on the sixth floor.

So how do they feel about the impact their project will have on the surrounding communities of Southampton and Boulevard Oaks?

Kirton said the exact same thing happened in River Oaks when plans for the Huntington and Inwood Manor were announced.

He said neighbors started a "ruckus" but once the buildings were erected, they eventually became part of the community and the neighborhood was unharmed.

As for Maryland Manor Apartments residents, they plan to honor all leases, the majority of which end in January or February, 2008.

They are also considering leasing on a month-by-month basis to lease holders until all other leases end. They also plan to aid residents in relocating.

"No one is getting kicked out," said Morgan.

Morgan said they have been receiving a fair amount of letters, phone calls and e-mails from citizens speaking out against the project, which they expected.

Morgan said they try to respond to these as often as they can and are more than happy to meet with residents in order to clear up any misunderstandings about the project.