

# Franklin Summit Ready for Growth

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FRANKLIN—Franklin Summit, a condominium development on College Drive, is an exercise in patience.

Sitting atop some of the highest ground in the city, construction of the project began in February 2009 with the clearing of the wooded site. Wet weather slowed its progress in June, as did the discovery of very old human remains in July.

But despite the setbacks, the first of 25 planned buildings at the site was completed last fall.

Now real estate agents who are working to sell the six completed units, as well as the project's builder, are anticipating that it will really begin to take off.

“Since the weather has come around a little bit and acted more like spring, traffic has significantly improved,” said Brian Rowe, a partner in Franklin Summit, the Suffolk-based development group that is building the project. “We’ve had good traffic since we opened, except during the bad-weather weekends obviously.”

Rowe added, “Specifically in the past two or three weeks we’ve seen some really encouraging traffic. We have quite a few interested parties, and a couple of people are close to writing contracts. So we’re encouraged.”

According to Coldwell Banker real estate agent Micah Dillon, each two-story building will contain six units. The two units in the middle of every building will have a two-story floor plan, while the four remaining units on the ends will be either for the top or bottom floors.

“The units are priced between \$160,000 and \$199,000,” Dillon said Tuesday. “They’re very reasonably priced, and the builder has done a great job. Most of the things that we would consider a nicer quality they have done installed as standard.”

Dillon said that if three of the six units in a building are sold, an additional building will be started. The project plan indicated that the buildings would begin along Summit Path and then wrap around along the front and toward the north end of the property along another street called Summit View Lane.

Buildings would then be added along the final two streets in the complex, Summit Watch Court and Summit Grove Terrace, before heading back to the south again at the project's beginning. Rowe said the concept of starting the next new building was more of an in-house deadline than anything else. He said he anticipates building the next of the 25 buildings very soon.

“I think we would hopefully start another building in the next 60 to 90 days,” Rowe said. “With the activity that we’ve had, we feel pretty good that we’ll be writing some contracts any day now.”



*Photo by Charlie Passut*  
Coldwell Banker agent Micah Dillon shows one of the model units at the Franklin Summit condominium complex on Tuesday.

Asked if he was concerned about the local economy, Rowe said, “No more than anybody else would have in the current environment. When we started the project the (International Paper Co. mill) closing announcement hadn’t occurred yet. But there had always been a rumor of it.”

Said Dillon: “We really thought we were going to get a lot more activity. Whether it’s International Paper (or not), I don’t know. February was one of the harshest winters we’ve had in years. We had snow every weekend in February. We’re really hoping that with spring, people will start to come out.”

Dillon said the project’s target market is first-time homebuyers, perhaps with one child, and also baby boomers. Rowe concurred, adding that professionals are also in the target market.

“We knew going into this that Franklin and Southampton County needed quality, affordable housing that at the same time required zero maintenance,” Rowe said. “We feel that’s where the market is. This project wasn’t necessarily just designated to target (IP mill) employees to begin with. This was more for police, fire and rescue, teachers and seniors. It’s a community designed for Franklin with or without the mill. We have a lot of faith in Franklin.”