

Vertical  
living  
on the

# R I S E

## Skyscraper projects rebound after recession slowdown



For a long time, the Phoenix area seemed to grow only horizontally, spreading out in low-rise subdivisions across the Valley of the Sun with a condo building here and there. But now, "vertical living" in towers may be on the upswing.

Some of the tallest condo projects finished so far have been built in downtown Phoenix — the 22-story Summit at Copper Square next to Chase Field, with 165 units and 34 stories, or nearby 44 Monroe, with 202 units. Compared with other bigger cities, our high-rises almost look short. In New York City, there's the new 432 Park Avenue with 88 stories and 104 condos, supposedly the tallest residential tower in the Western Hemisphere.

We have taller buildings with condos around town, in the Biltmore and on the Esplanade, for example. But for the most part, since the 1940s, "Land has been so cheap in the desert, that it's been far easier to sprawl outward to grow instead of by stacking housing units on top of one another," architect Don Ryden says.

Many new, taller sky-scraping residential projects have been in the works since before the recession started, Realtors say. Some were delayed or put on hold until the economy revved up. During the slowdown, some high-rise condos sold slowly and many units ended up being rented out as apartments. The West Sixth complex in Tempe, for example, was first proposed as a condo property, but ended up luxury rental apartments for ASU students. It has two towers, one with 30 floors and one with 22.

See ROSIE, Page 2H



There are 22 stories at the Summit at Copper Square next door to Chase Field.

SUMMIT AT COPPER SQUARE



# Rosie

Continued from Page 1H

But recently, Ryden says, Phoenix planners and developers have figured out freeways and sprawl are not the only way to find space for new housing. The building of the light-rail system and the arrival of sports arenas and new entertainment and cultural venues downtown have made the busiest spots in the city desirable as living places. Stacking housing units on top of each other is getting popular again. We're not exactly Manhattan yet, but living vertically is definitely a trend.

What Phoenix residents are making this housing choice?

They include Millennials and empty nesters.

"They can be mature people who are downsizing or young professionals who want to be close to their jobs," says Polly Mitchell, in sales with Geoffrey Edmunds Realty, which recently sold about 70 condos in the Summit at Copper Square. "They're people who don't want to drive to work; they want to walk. There are single people and married people. There are a few families in Copper Square. And almost everybody has a dog."

Copper Square has an outdoor swimming pool, huge fitness center, three elevators and one covered parking spot for every unit. Very popular with residents is the on-site concierge service at the entrance. The building is like a gated community; everyone has to check in at the front door. Packages can be dropped off with the concierge.

## Thinking about high-rise living?

Here are issues you'll face:

**Transportation** — Although you do get parking, it's often only enough for one car. You can, however, rent or "buy" spots in nearby parking lots.

**HOAs and fees** — You probably will have a homeowner's association and monthly fees for maintaining the property and making capital improvements. These expenses can be hefty but often include water, electricity, trash and parking. Sometimes fees are based on the size of the unit, with owners of smaller units paying less than penthouse residents. Where there are HOAs, conflicts can be brewing from time to time, but these associations can speed up maintenance and help maintain the value of your investment.

**Recreation and amenities** — Although you can expect to find a swimming pool and fitness center, some buildings also have community club rooms and organize events and activities for residents.

**Views** — Due to the height of these buildings, there are opportunities for great views of mountains and/or cityscapes. Because of our intense desert sun, the direction your condo faces may be important—especially in newer units that often have a whole wall of windows. Facing north rather than west is generally more popular with



High-rise living can include amenities like the well-appointed lobby at the Summit at Copper Square.

PHOTOS BY SUMMIT AT COPPER SQUARE

buyers and often costs more.

**Shopping and restaurants** — Although the downtown, for example, has had an increase in dining spots, you might not find all food options in walking distance. There are no old-fashioned grocery stores in downtown Phoenix like there are on the Upper West Side in New York.

**Noise and traffic** — Most high-end units have premium insulation to muffle noises. Because residential units do not usually start on the bottom floors, there's probably little chance of experiencing heavy street noise. But in Copper Square, for example, you see airplanes flying back and forth to Sky Harbor. You probably can't hear them in your condo, but you will when you're out on the balcony or when you open the windows. But many residents tend to view the ballpark, the airport and planes as part of the downtown excitement.

**Resale value** — When high-rise condo projects first opened in the boom years, some buyers paid big-ticket prices for units. Some of those early buyers have yet to recoup their investment. But prices are going up and buying now can still get you bargains.

**Maintenance** — If you buy a condo, there are no trees or bushes to prune, no air-conditioner to maintain, no exterior painting to do and no pool to clean.

**Next week:** New regulations for America's water heaters and what they mean for your home.

For more do-it-yourself tips, go to [rosieonthehouse.com](http://rosieonthehouse.com). An Arizona homebuilding and remodeling industry expert for 25 years, Rosie Romero is the host of the syndicated "Rosie on the House" radio program heard in Phoenix from 7 to 11 a.m. Saturdays on KTAR-FM (92.3). Call 888-767-4348.



The pool overlooks the top of Chase Field, an attraction for baseball fans.



Expect luxury materials like granite countertops in high-rise condos.