



South Florida developers are putting the 'urban' in suburban living

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A rendering of Pines City Center by Terra Group

The high cost of prime downtown real estate has priced many South Florida home buyers out of the market. As developers turn to the region's suburban enclaves to build new, more affordable projects, many are asking themselves why they can't bring downtown living to the outskirts.

"People want connectivity among neighborhoods, but they also want neighborhoods to have several components," said David Martin, president of real estate development firm [Terra Group](#). "Residents want to live in communities where there are good schools, parks, retail, walkability and culture and we're finding that you don't necessarily have to go downtown to find it."

Martin, along with several major real estate developers like [Related Development](#) and [Codina Partners](#), are working on the growing need for more affordable real estate options that are close to work and close to great schools. While still offering that urban feel so many residents crave.

Steve Patterson said that's exactly why Related Development is building [CityPlace Doral](#) as a prime foodie destination and retail experience. "Doral doesn't have a lot of experiential retail destinations, and by that I mean a place where you don't necessarily go to pick up things you can buy on the internet," said Patterson, who serves as president and CEO of Related Development. "We're building CityPlace Doral as a mixed-use complex with apartments and lofts, a movie bistro, entertainment center, comedy club, and a Fresh Market, along with two dozen restaurants serving food from all over the world, from sit-down fine dining to fast casual."

CityPlace Doral is certainly a departure for Related Development, who tends to focus on building in more urban locations. "We have a bias to urban development because those areas are typically serving a higher-earning population," said Patterson. "But Doral is an interesting place because its close to everything – it's close to the airport."

Despite their historically small-town feel, Martin said there's definitely a trend among South Florida developers for building out urban centers farther west. "When you look at a lot of cities and their suburbs, you realize that places like Pembroke Pines and Doral are accessible to so many neighborhoods and experiences," he said.

And while these developments may not have the towering skyscrapers and big city feel of Brickell or Miami Beach, their affordability – coupled with exciting new restaurants and amenities – should drive potential residents to think twice. Patterson said: "People who think Doral is average need to go back to Doral."