



# Denver Developers Break Ground on Senior Living Project That Aims To Address COVID Risks

Confluent, MorningStar Hope the Project ‘Sets a Modern Standard for the Industry as a Whole,’ One Executive Says



A rendering depicts the Morningstar at Observatory Park senior housing complex in Denver. (MorningStar and Confluent)

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A partnership between two national senior housing developers is hoping new technology and careful designs can make their planned assisted living property one that's equipped to meet the challenges of a contagious virus and an uncertain economy.

Denver-based developers Confluent Senior Living and MorningStar Senior Living said they have designed an 81-unit senior housing complex at [2100 S. Josephine St.](#) in Denver's University Park area with a slew of upgrades in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The plans include touchless appliances and light switches, and an HVAC system that releases ionized particles into the air in an effort to neutralize any airborne pathogens.

“Infusing new technologies and designs into this community sets a modern standard for the industry as a whole,” Matt Turner, managing partner at MorningStar Senior Living, said in a statement.

The project, which broke ground this month and is scheduled to complete next summer, is one of dozens of senior living facilities underway that hope to meet the astronomical demand for senior housing, while also addressing the challenge of catering to older adults in the wake of the coronavirus.

While any development that relies on in-person interaction amid the pandemic could pose a risk of transmission, building new senior living facilities faces specific challenges given that older people are at a higher risk of contracting the coronavirus. Last year, outbreaks surged in senior living facilities that were built before the risks of a novel disease spreading globally were part of developmental planning.

Now, the industry is trying to balance how to prepare for the higher risk of the coronavirus spreading in senior living facilities with the rising demand for the property type.

For every senior over the age of 80, there are 7 adult children age 45 to 64, according to the [Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2021](#) report, published by PwC and the Urban Land Institute. By 2030, that ratio is expected to shrink to 4 adult children for every senior, and by 2050, it's projected to become 3 to 1.

“The existence of fewer caregivers suggests that community-based congregate settings will be needed more than ever,” the report states. “Furthermore, the long-awaited surge in baby boomers as residents of senior housing is that much closer, with the oldest baby boomer born in 1946 to be age 83 (typical age of a resident to move into senior housing) in 2029.”

MorningStar at Observatory Park is meant to include a vast array of technology that aims to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Some of that technology includes antimicrobial countertops, far-UVC light systems that disinfect the air with ultraviolet light, electrostatic sprayers and more.

The property is designed with 58 assisted living units and 23 memory care suites. Plans call for a courtyard, outdoor dining area, spa, wellness center and rooftop terrace with skyline views. An underground parking garage with 47 spaces is also planned.

## **For the Record**

Baltimore-based Hord Coplan Macht is the architect on the project. Eden Prairie, Minnesota-based Shaw Construction is the contractor. Mesa, Arizona-based Thoma-Holec Design is the interior designer.