

# Public housing's new look

Park 16 complex opens, featuring an upbeat design along with 'green' features

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Markina Sanders feels at home in 16 Park, the newest complex of affordable apartments in Indianapolis, which officially opened Thursday with environmentally friendly features and an upbeat design that shatter the old stereotypes of public housing.

The mother of four young sons said she feels safe and can take pride in their new townhome at 16th Street and Park Avenue on the Near Northside. It is a few big steps from their former apartment in Caravelle Commons, which will be torn down to make way for the new buildings.

A ceremony Thursday marked the opening of 16 Park's first phase, which contains 29 apartments and two-story townhomes.

The Indianapolis Housing Agency is developing the new buildings, which will eventually have 155 units.

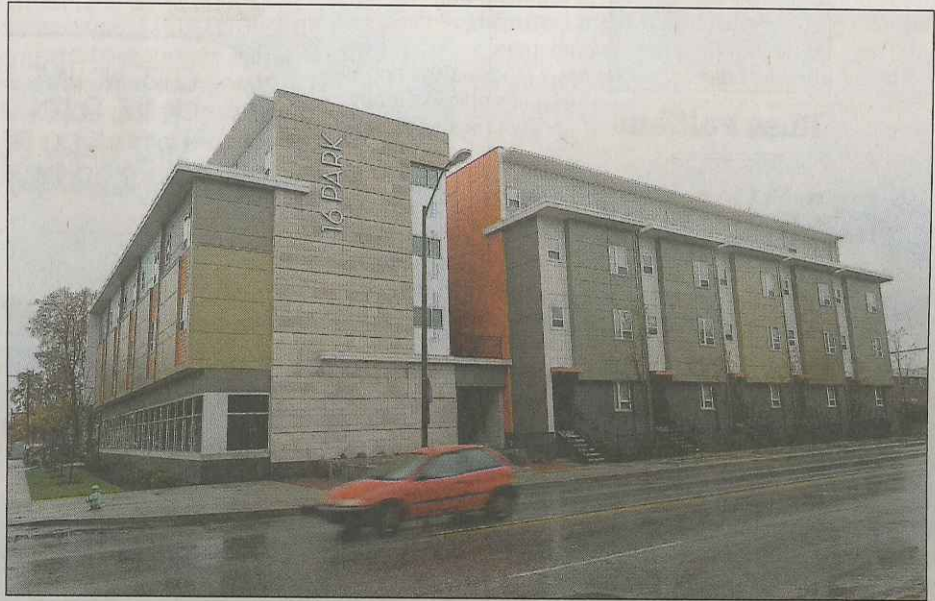
Construction is expected to cost \$34 million, which is part of a \$123 million capital campaign by the city Housing Agency to make improvements in public housing.

IHA aims to improve affordable housing by building 400 new units, revitalizing 1,324 more and upgrading the living spaces of 3,000 residents, according to Bruce R. Baird, the agency's executive director.

In the first few days since tenants were accepted into the first-phase buildings of 16 Park, 17 have made the move from nearby Caravelle Commons. Twenty-two units are leased, and there is a waiting list for the available spaces. The list is open for more names.

Construction is visible on the 8-acre site for the next phase of buildings, scheduled to open next spring.

Eventually, the area will flourish with 11 new buildings tied to urban amenities that include the green space of MLK Park, shopping at a Kroger supermarket



MATT KRYGER / THE STAR

The first of 11 planned buildings in the 16 Park complex opened Thursday. The public housing complex is part of a \$123 million capital campaign by the city Housing Agency to make improvements in public housing.



**+ PHOTOS:** Go to [IndyStar.com/](http://IndyStar.com/) photos to see more pictures from the opening.

next door, new small businesses and a branch library, all within a few blocks. Two IndyGo bus routes are nearby.

"This is all new; it is not your grandmother's type of public housing," said Rufus "Bud" Myers, executive director of the Housing Agency, "though we will have plenty of grandmothers living here."

The complex, designed by architect David Franklin, incorporates features of environmentally certifiable structures, such as energy-saving appliances and heating and air-conditioning systems.

Most striking is that the roof of the covered parking garage is one of the largest residential "green" roofs in the city. The roof boasts a courtyard of walkways, areas for seating and gathering and large planting beds. Rainwater is

channeled through the planting beds and away from the building.

The floor plans of the apartments are drawn in one- or two-story configurations with one to four bedrooms. They come wired for cable television. That might seem like a luxury for low-income tenants, housing officials said, but modern life requires access to the Internet. Residents pay for the cable, heat and electric utilities.

Rents range from \$363 to \$948 a month. However, few tenants will pay that much if they qualify for federal housing subsidies.

Indianapolis property management firm Flaherty and Collins has been hired to lease and operate 16 Park. The leasing office is next door to the first-phase apartment building at 1621 N. Park Ave. For more information, call (317) 923-5822.

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