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Expect more East Valley development – about 700 acres worth

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The Southeast Valley has been growing rapidly as of late: downtown Gilbert has suddenly become a restaurant hotspot, and real estate experts have said that parts of Mesa and Queen Creek will be the next big markets.

Larry Ortega, an executive vice president for Colliers International and longtime real estate dealmaker, recently said downtown Mesa could have a bright future ahead for development.

“There’s not so many people chasing deals there,” Ortega said at a recent Phoenix Business Journal roundtable on infill development.

Now southeast Mesa, specifically near the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, could see some major development — about 700 acres worth.

The Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority has had plans to develop the 700 acres of land it has northeast of the airport since 2012. But on March 21, the Federal Aviation Administration gave the green light for that development, issuing its Finding of No Significant Impact and Record of Decision for the Environmental Assessment for the Northeast Area Development Plan.

“We would like to thank our partners at the FAA for their commitment to this important project and their continued support of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport,” said J. Brian O’Neill, executive director/CEO of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority. “We look forward to engaging both public and private sectors to transform this incredible asset.”

Until now, the site has been nothing but dirt, due to the FAA restrictions. But now, the PMGAA plans to get commercial and office development along Ellsworth Road, which has an estimated 40,000 cars passing through the area each day.

Along with commercial and office development, PMGAA is tentatively planning to add a new terminal on the site. There are no immediate plans to add the terminal, since the regional airport's current terminal has a capacity of 2.5 million passengers, and according to current projections, the airport will take in about 1.4 million this year.

But according to the 2012 master plan, boarding passengers are expected to exceed at least 2.2 million in 20 years, though projections are that passengers could go well past 7.2 million in that time.



An Allegiant Air McDonnell Douglas MD-83 sitting on the tarmac at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

“Unlocking the northeast side of the airport for development is great news for Gateway Airport and the East Valley,” said Mesa Mayor John Giles, current chair of the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority Board. “The opportunity for high-wage job creation in this area will benefit the entire region and strengthens the airport’s role as an economic driver.”

The airport has been boosting up its presence recently, the most notable of which was its first-ever international flight. Phoenix-Mesa Gateway has been consistently breaking its passenger records as well.

There are currently more than 50 companies located within the airport’s boundaries, employing over 2,500 people.

Steven Totten

Reporter

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