

Big housing project under way in Gilbert

David Woodfill, Tribune -- March 4, 2010 - 6:15PM

One of the most substantial housing projects in years is under way in Gilbert.

Construction has started on roads, pipelines and other needs for Adora Trails, a 587-acre development planned near Val Vista Drive and Riggs Road.

"We are under way," said Jason Meyers, land resources director for Scottsdale-based Taylor Morrison Homes. Meyers said the company will start building models as early as July, with production on the first of 1,871 homes in September. The company expects to start closings December 1.

"It's probably been at least three years since a large project has come in before the Planning Commission of this size," said Gilbert senior planner Al Ward. "It's almost a square mile."

Homes were planned at the location as far back as 2002 but never got off the ground.

"We're happy to see activity here," Ward said. "It is a good sign."

Over the years, the land has had several owners.

Ward said the original developer chose the name Mountainwood. Tempe-based Vanderbilt Farms purchased the land in 2006 and renamed it Adora Trails.

Greg Davis, a consultant on the project, said Gilbert is one of the places where a recovery in the market is most likely to occur first.

"They have the infrastructure. They have the community amenities that draw families," he said.

With home prices more affordable than during the market's peak, Gilbert will be attractive to people, especially first-time homebuyers who were once shopping in Pinal County and other fringes of the Valley, Meyers said.

The Planning Commission discussed a rezoning request and preliminary plat amendment for the site during a study session Wednesday night. The plan is going to go again to the April 7 Planning Commission and tentatively will be on the April 20 Town Council agenda.

Meyers said the construction schedule will depend on market demand.

"At the current pace, this could be a 10- to 12-year project," he said.

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