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\$4 billion Goodyear project proposed

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Five landowners, many with long-standing ties to the Valley, have come together to build a vision for a 1,216-acre, \$4 billion commercial development in Goodyear.

The project will link the city's proposed large-scale retail, higher education and civic projects. Dubbed CrossPointe, the venture was announced this week. It includes a mix of midrise office buildings (creating what will be the West Valley's first city skyline) and flex-industrial space that will be accessed from Bullard Avenue.

Bullard will be widened into a major arterial west of Litchfield Road, and within the next two years, will have an off-ramp from Interstate 10. Plans call for turning it into a palm tree-lined parkway reminiscent of Los Angeles' Wilshire Boulevard.

The major players making the presentation to the Goodyear City Council this week were Cornwell Corp. of Scottsdale, EJM of Los Angeles, and Claremont Capital and Kohnen Investments, both of Phoenix.

Another partner is Sun MP, which sold nearby Estrella Mountain Ranch in one of the state's largest residential deals of 2005. Sun MP is run by powerhouse businessmen Bill Pope and Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim owner Arte Moreno. A smaller landowner is Cardinal Capital, a Phoenix family investment group.

Goodyear officials couldn't be happier with the collaborative effort.

"We're stepping out now. This will be more than an industrial complex; this will be an employment center," said Corri Spiegel, senior development manager for Goodyear. She estimates that at full buildout, the CrossPointe project will house between 15,000 and 20,000 workers. The Goodyear employment corridor as a whole is expected to attract 50,000 employees.

The announcement puts the icing on what has been a very good year for the city.

In recent months, Phoenix-based shopping center developer Westcor announced plans to build a 300-acre retail, office and hospitality center called Market at Estrella Falls. The project is north of I-10, between Litchfield and Bullard.

The CrossPointe project is south of I-10, with similar east-west boundaries. CrossPointe will connect to the planned civic center and the new Cactus League baseball stadium and future spring training home for the Cleveland Indians.

"This is going to be a core area that will allow people to live out there and work out there," said Paul Holland, a southwest Valley commercial brokerage specialist and vice president with Colliers International.

Holland said he was impressed that several large landowners collectively paid a design firm -- SWA Group of Laguna Beach, Calif. -- to develop a comprehensive plan, taking into account other retail and civic plans already in progress. The plan also addresses extensive transportation infrastructure including I-10, the proposed Loop 303, County Route 85, the proposed I-10 reliever freeway and the Phoenix Goodyear Airport.

The airport is in the midst of a major master-planning process that could put it in the same league as the Scottsdale Airpark.

"If everybody puts their egos out the door, they can come together and put some good stuff on the drawing board," Holland said.

Spiegel said that from the City Council's perspective, that is precisely what has happened.

"There was really a show of support," Spiegel said of the presentation developers made April 2. "It all went really well. This is the first time the council had seen the developers working together."

Eric Cornwell, director of development for Cornwell Corp., started the ball rolling. His father, Richard Cornwell, has been a major developer at the Scottsdale Airpark for 30 years. Now, the company hopes to play a similar role with the 200-plus acres it owns northwest of the Goodyear Airport.

"We initially contacted the other landowners about 18 months ago. Some of us were really hands-on with it," Cornwell said.

Together the group hired SWA Group to come up with a master plan. That planning company has evolved from its original landscape architecture roots to handle several projects in the Valley, including Arizona Center and Bank One Ballpark (now Chase Field) in downtown Phoenix and the

Hyatt Gainey Ranch in Scottsdale. In addition to the Goodyear project, SWA is working on One Scottsdale, an upscale mixed-use project near Loop 101 and Scottsdale Road.

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"All of us threw a name into the ring, and I'm happy to say (SWA) was our choice," Cornwell said.

Now that the preliminary plan has received positive reviews, the city will be working on three phases of implementation: zoning, assessing the existing infrastructure and filling in the gaps, and figuring out how to finance the private-public partnership.

"Our goal is to spend the next year working on the paper side. The goal is to start road construction and other improvements in the second and third quarters of 2008. By next summer, you'll see something physical happening," Spiegel said.

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City of Goodyear: www.goodyearaz.gov

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