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## Desert Creek will be a Buckeye gateway

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In just a few years, travelers on Interstate 10 will know exactly when they have hit Buckeye.

What is now mostly open land on the town's western border will become Desert Creek, a master-planned community that could house 25,000 people.

The Town Council recently approved Desert Creek's master plan, and the developers, Washington state's Pacific West Development, are moving forward with their vision for the community, at 323rd Avenue and I-10.

The project is west of Sun Valley Parkway and developers will have to build a freeway interchange to access the community.

Town officials say Desert Creek will mark the town's western boundary and alert travelers they are in Buckeye. It's also another part of the town's development puzzle.

Buckeye officials are looking at projects each day that could become part of the more than 600 miles of planning area. Desert Creek developers plan to start construction in two to three years.

"It was envisioned that we would fill most of our planning area with these master-planned communities," said Bob Bushfield, Buckeye's community development director. "We must be up to 32 or 33 community master plans approved by now. They range in size from Douglass Ranch to some that are 660 acres."

Desert Creek's developers say the community, near the Hassayampa River, will be different because of the amenities and lifestyle they plan to offer, such as walking nature trails and areas for horseback riding.

"The strength of these amenities is going to be an enormous draw for people looking to live somewhere that is walkable and blends with the Sonoran Desert," said Carolyn Oberholtzer, an attorney who is working with Desert Creek's developers. "Because the project is at the westernmost edge of Buckeye, it's going to be a significant gateway into the town."

Buckeye staff has included some stipulations, which are different from other communities approved in the past, for Desert Creek.

For example, a garage can take up no more than 50 percent of the front elevation of a property.

Buckeye Planner Adam Zaklikowski said the town wants to eliminate the garage dominance seen throughout parts of Buckeye and in the Valley.

In addition, officials had Desert Creek developers set aside a chunk of the project for commercial opportunities. Some options include the possibility of biotech or chip manufacturing facilities.

Plan stipulations also will ensure that Desert Creek is consistently identified as part of Buckeye. Street signs and kiosks will be the same style as in other parts of Buckeye. And all advertising for the community will include the name Buckeye.

"We wanted to make sure that this community is integrated into Buckeye visually," Zaklikowski said. "I think these standards we worked on with the developer to achieve aesthetically will set this apart from other subdivisions around the area."