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'Main Street' economic engine for spring training

By Elizabeth Jackman

A 166-acre development named "Main Street" will become to a new 15,000-seat baseball stadium expected to open in February 2009, what Westgate City Center is to Jobing.com Arena and University of Phoenix Stadium.

"It will create the same economic engine and generate income to help support the baseball stadium that will be home for the Dodgers and White Sox spring training," said attorney Nick Wood, who represents the developer, Rightpath Limited Development Group, during a presentation at last week's Glendale Planning Commission meeting.

The commission gave unanimous approval to rezone the property west of Loop 101 to the New River and from Glendale Avenue to Bethany Home Road from Agricultural (A-1) to Planned Area Development (PAD).

The baseball stadium, which will have two major league practice fields per team, four minor league practice fields per team, 42,000-square-foot team clubhouses, workout fields and parking for 5,000 vehicles, will be situated west of Loop 101 between Camelback Road and Glendale Avenue, reaching the Phoenix and Glendale borders.

Cost of the stadium would be "a preliminary \$80 million," according to City Attorney Craig Tindall.

Wood said the Main Street development, 9900 W. Maryland Ave., fulfills all five of the goals of the city's General Plan adopted in June 2002.

"Number one goal is a 'strong employment base,'" Wood said. "With four million square feet of retail/office space and a 1,000-room resort hotel, at full-buildout, it will create between 8,000 to 9,000 jobs."

The second goal, "expanding major retail opportunities in Glendale and surrounding area," is met because the interest generated will make it a place everyone wants to be, Wood

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said.

Number three goal is, "provide open space to enhance the quality of life."

"This development will have an urban center core, a place where people live, work and play, everything will be convenient and a short distance," Wood said. "There will be a central park feature, a significant amount of open space, pedestrian malls and interactive trails. There will be lots of water features and treed areas, it is quite charming."

Wood points to the architecture of the development in fulfilling goal number four to, "encourage high quality development that supports new employment and enhances the character of the area."

"There are lots of variations of architecture along the freeway, it is intense but not overbearing, it is appealing. Anytime you build above four stories, you must use steel and concrete, it isn't cheap. It is expensive and high quality by default," Wood said. "And goal five, 'encourage master plan development districts with character and amenities,' we have everything a resident of this community needs in their daily life."

Wood compared Main Street to such upscale developments as the Biltmore and Desert Ridge.

"When I moved here in 1985 from Wisconsin, there were 1.7 million people in the Valley. In 2007 there are 4 million and in 13 years in 2020 there will be 6 million," Wood said. "We have to plan in order to accommodate all these people moving here in a finite area."

Wood described it as wonderful and exciting, with no losers, just winners.

"It has everything you need to help facilitate bringing baseball to the sports mecca Glendale has created," Wood said.

Main Street will now go before Glendale City Council June 26 for final approval.

Reach the reporter at ejackman@star-times.com, or

 (623) 8... .

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