

Vote pending on Marana retail projects

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Arizona Daily Star

Tucson, Arizona | Published: 01.03.2008

The Marana Town Council is set to vote next week on plans that would contribute to the town's growing retail presence along Interstate 10.

The council will vote Tuesday on a specific plan for The Shops at Tangerine and I-10 Motorplex at Tangerine.

The two projects, being developed by Westcor, call for rezoning 281 acres on the northwest side of I-10 and the almost-completed Tangerine Farms Road extension.

Westcor — a Phoenix-based retail developer that also built La Encantada in the Foothills — plans to use 166 acres for what it's calling a combination power center/regional mall, company spokeswoman Karen Maurer said.

Though no official tenants have been announced, Maurer said The Shops at Tangerine could be similar to what Westcor has built at I-10 and Florence Boulevard in Casa Grande, known as The Promenade at Casa Grande.

"It's a wide variety: department stores, a movie theater," Maurer said of that project. Of the Marana development he said, "It pretty much will cover the wide spectrum of retailers. It's really probably the latest evolution of retail formats."

The other 115 acres would be developed into an autoplex similar to the Tucson Auto Mall just west of the Tucson Mall.

"There are possibly some hotel uses, but that is undecided right now," Mitch Stallard, Westcor's vice president of development, told the council during a presentation at its Dec. 18 meeting. "We are not asking for any uses that aren't already allowed in the town."

The I-10/Tangerine area is considered by town officials to be a major commercial spot, though it wouldn't be Marana's only one.

The town last month approved a development agreement for Marana Spectrum, a 170-acre development slated for the east side of I-10 at the future Twin Peaks Road interchange.

Marana also has a major commercial corridor in the extreme southeast corner of town along I-10 between North Cortaro Road and West Orange Grove Road, an area that includes Arizona Pavilions at I-10 and Cortaro.

If the plan is approved, Westcor and town officials will move forward on putting together a development agreement, which is likely to include tax rebate incentives in exchange for Westcor paying upfront for public improvements to the area.

"We will certainly be willing to step forward and pay our fair share of the cost of impact to the area," Stallard said.

Westcor and owners of other large parcels around I-10 and Tangerine already agreed in late September to foot the bill in advance for about \$40 million in traffic improvements to the area, including moving the I-10/Tangerine Road interchange 2,575 feet to the north and building a series of loop roads around the area to improve traffic flow.

Fernando Prol, Marana's traffic engineering director, said Westcor has already completed a preliminary planning traffic study for the I-10/Tangerine area, and the developer is working with an engineer on a more detailed study that would look not only at future traffic impact at Tangerine but also on freeway interchanges to the north and south.

"We want to get an idea of what the impact of this project will be," Prol said. "We're looking at a very significant impact, but we'll assure that the roadway infrastructure ... will be in place to accommodate the traffic."