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EAST VALLEY • SCOTTSDALE

September 22, 2009

Rockefeller Group plans project in Gilbert

By David Woodfill
 Tribune



The Rockefeller Group Development Corp. has requested a zoning change from the Gilbert Planning Commission before it begins construction of the Gilbert Crossroads near the intersection of Lindsay and Germann roads.

Tribune

The same developer who wants to build a hotel, conference center and office project that could soar up to 160-feet high in Chandler is tackling another project in Gilbert.

Rockefeller Group Development Corp., which is owned by Japan-based Mitsubishi Estate Co., won the blessing of Chandler's Planning and Zoning Commission earlier this month when it voted to recommend a zoning change that will allow the firm to build more than 100 feet higher than currently allowable at its site at Chandler Boulevard and Loop 101.

Now the firm has a site plan and zoning change request before town officials for its Rockefeller Group Gilbert Crossroads near Lindsay and Germann roads.

Mark Singerman, Rockefeller regional director, said that doesn't mean construction is imminent.

"We have not prepared any construction drawings," he said. "All that we are doing is essentially getting the site entitled and processing a site plan."

The purpose is to have everything in order when the firm is ready to break ground, he said.

Singerman said the project's buildings will be designed according to the demands of the market, and there is no schedule for construction.

The project consists of six buildings - three for offices and three for light industrial purposes - ranging from one to three stories. Plans call for taller buildings along Germann Road and single story buildings closer to the residential area along the south side of the site.

It totals 477,000 square feet, which is roughly half the size of a regional shopping mall.

"It's very nice architecture, it's nice site design and it's going to be a good quality project," said Al ...
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Ward, a senior planner in Gilbert's Planning and Development Services Department. "It's going to be a benefit for Gilbert."

Ward said the Planning Commission takes up the zoning change request Oct. 7, followed by the Town Council on Oct. 20.

The Design Review Board will vote on the project Nov. 12, he added.

The proposed project is in an area of Gilbert where the town has hundreds of acres designated for employment centers. According to Gilbert's Web site, there's already 364,000 square feet of office and industrial development near the intersection of Lindsay and Germann.

Ward said Crossroads is the type of development that will facilitate the key industries Gilbert is interested in attracting. The town is making a push to land bioscience, aerospace and aviation, clean and renewable energy and high-tech manufacturing jobs.

"A business park can accommodate medical offices, it can accommodate financial institutions. I don't mean a bank. I mean more of an Edward Jones or those kinds of things," Ward said.

Rockefeller Group Development Corp., which built Manhattan's Rockefeller Center, has plans for several major warehouse and office developments in Arizona in addition to Chandler 101 and Gilbert Crossroads.

"We have six sites in Arizona in total," Singerman said.

They include Rockefeller Group North Gateway at Warner and Recker roads in Gilbert and Rockefeller Group Chandler Crossroads at Gilbert and Queen Creek roads in Chandler,

Singerman said there's no way to know which of those projects will start first.

"It's all, at this point, going to be market driven," he said.

Bob Kamrath, a Phoenix real estate expert, said the Rockefeller and Mitsubishi names carry a good deal of credibility with prospective large tenants.

"It would mean that they're probably going to follow through once they break ground. They're not going to go broke like some people do halfway through the project, and that they'll probably still be there to honor their commitments, which is always a concern of especially major users who sign really long-term leases.



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