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SWC Power Road & San Tan Freeway

GILBERT, ARIZONA

PREPARED BY:

Tom Woods, Executive Vice President
 Brian Woods, Vice President

COLLIERS INTERNATIONAL
 2390 E. Camelback Rd, Suite 100
 Phoenix, AZ 85016

Another project of:





GILBERT GATEWAY TOWNE CENTER

SWC Loop 202 Freeway & Power Road
Gilbert, Arizona

PROJECT

DESCRIPTION:

Gilbert Gateway Towne Center is an 80-acre retail development with approximately 800,000 square feet of leasable space. The project is strategically located at the southwest corner of the Loop 202 Freeway and Power Road adjacent to the Williams Gateway Airport and Arizona State University East.

The shopping center consists of two phases. Phase I is anchored by a Super Target on 50 acres at the northwest corner of Power Road and Ray Road. Other tenants include Ross, Michaels, Pier 1 Imports, PetSmart, Cost Plus and Bank of America. Phase II is anchored by Wal-Mart Supercenter, Staples, and additional retailers situated on 30 acres at the southwest corner of Power Road and Ray Road.

DEMOGRAPHICS **(2011 ESTIMATES):**

	<u>1 Mile</u>	<u>3 Miles</u>	<u>5 Miles</u>
Population:	1,715	59,277	190,324
Average HH Income:	\$85,894	\$85,317	\$83,557
Median HH Income:	\$71,313	\$76,216	\$70,373

HOUSING/POPULATION **GROWTH:**

An analysis of Metropolitan Phoenix reveals that the Southeast Valley is one of the areas with the available land and infrastructure to support the continued growth expected for Metropolitan Phoenix; consequently, the area surrounding the project is exploding with new residential development. Most of this growth is concentrated along the Power Road corridor north and south of the project with Morrison Ranch (6,000 units) one mile to the north and Power Ranch (7,400 units) two miles to the south.

The Gilbert Gateway Towne Center trade area contains 165 active and planned residential projects. These projects represent 116,000 new units or more than 370,000 additional people within the trade area. The total number of new units will grow over time since a significant amount of land in the trade area is currently not planned.

EMPLOYMENT:

Williams Gateway Airport has been one of the fastest-growing employment areas in metro Phoenix over the past five years. The Williams Gateway complex and the Gilbert Gateway Area employs about 16,000 people. Total employment within a two-mile radius of the project should exceed 22,000 by 2015.

GILBERT GATEWAY TOWNE CENTER

SWC Loop 202 Freeway & Power Road
Gilbert, Arizona

Williams Gateway Airport serves as a reliever airport to Sky Harbor and possesses more than 3,000 acres with over 1,000 acres available for commercial development. More than 25 companies including Boeing are now located in the airport's industrial airpark.

TRANSPORTATION:

The transportation system serving the site has undergone dramatic changes. Construction of the Loop 202 to Power Road is complete. Power Road and Ray Road are each under development to become six-lane arterial roads. Power Road provides direct access to the residential communities north and south of the shopping center while Ray Road provides easy access for the residents immediately to the West. Ray Road will also serve as a connection to the master planned community under development at the former General Motors Proving Ground just east of the shopping center.

One of the unique advantages of this site is the location with respect to the freeway and the residential developments. Not only is the project easily accessed from the full diamond interchange on the 202 Freeway at Power Road, but Power Road is the only access point to the Loop 202 between Higley and Hawes Roads (a distance of four miles). The elevated diamond interchange is highly utilized by the nearby residents driving to other destinations in Metropolitan Phoenix and the exposure and visibility of the development benefits as a result.

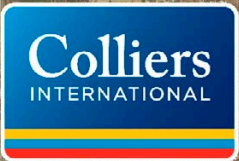
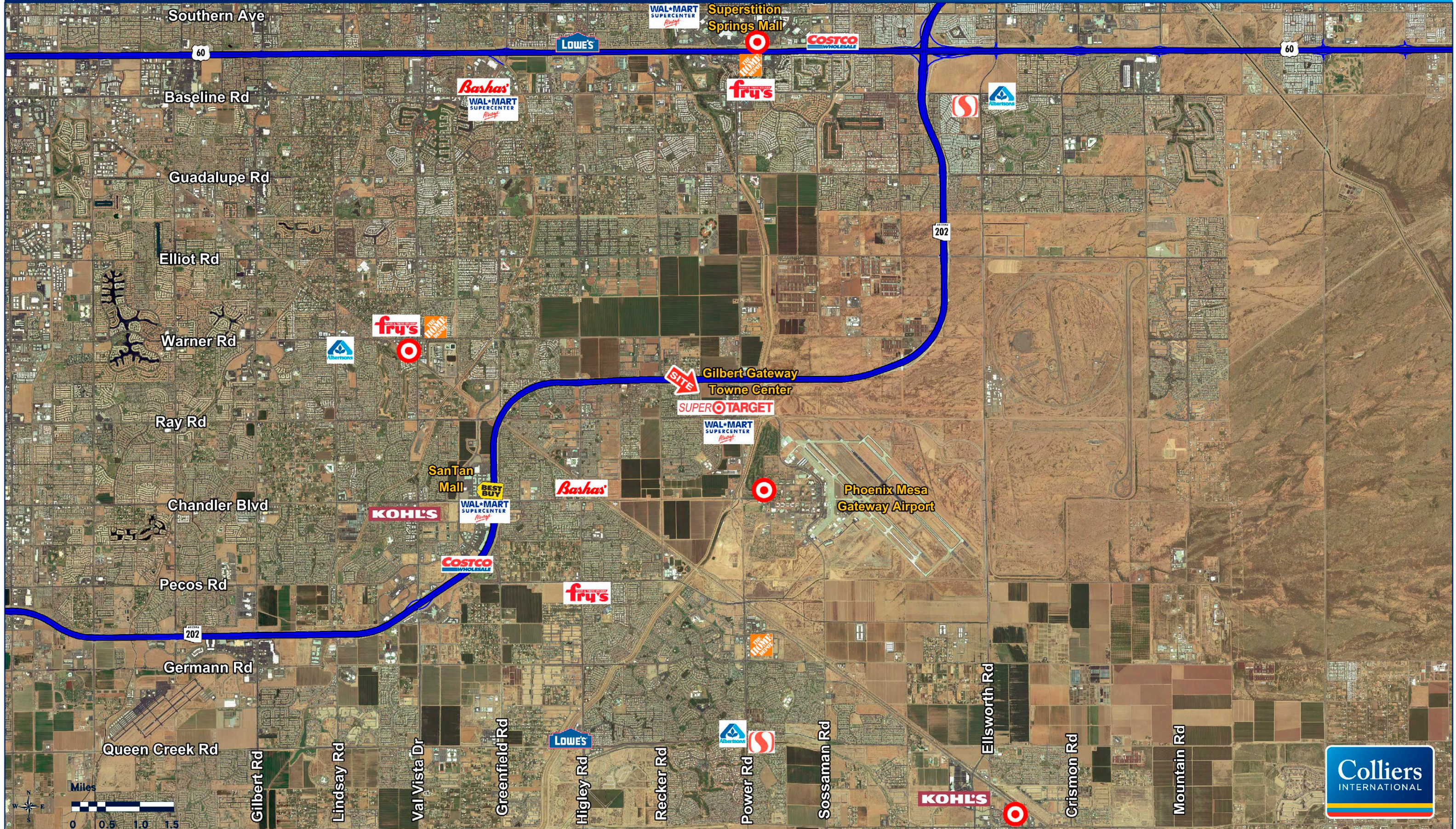
The project is a five to ten minute drive from most of the residential developments in the area via major arterial or collector streets.

COMMENTS:

- ◆ The project is situated on the only interchange on the Loop 202 for four miles
- ◆ Opened March 2005
- ◆ 20,000 students are expected to attend ASU East by 2015

Power Road & Ray Road

Gilbert, Arizona





SITE DATA

SITE A

GROSS SITE AREA: 2,444,319 S.F. (56.11 ACRES)
 NET SITE AREA: 2,252,552 S.F. (51.71 ACRES)

TOTAL LEASABLE AREA: 455,481 S.F.

TOTAL PARKING RATIO: 5.16/1000

SITE B

GROSS SITE AREA: 1,430,424 S.F. (32.84 ACRES)
 NET SITE AREA: 1,259,984 S.F. (28.93 ACRES)

TOTAL LEASABLE AREA: 264,929 S.F.

TOTAL PARKING RATIO: 4.78/1000

Gilbert Gateway
 Towne Center

S.W.C. POWER RD. & RAY RD.
 GILBERT, ARIZONA



	1 mi Ring	3 mi Ring	5 mi Ring
2000 Total Population	457	26,449	97,325
2011 Total Population	1,715	59,277	190,324
2016 Total Population	1,995	68,465	218,657
2000 Group Quarters Population	0	94	271
2011 Group Quarters Population	0	287	337
2016 Group Quarters Population	0	305	355
2000 Pop in Family Households	421	24,566	87,613
2000 Pop in Non-Family Households	36	1,789	9,441
2000 Total Households	126	8,457	34,352
2011 Total Households	502	19,116	66,052
2016 Total Households	583	22,064	75,640
2000 HOUSEHOLDS			
2000 Households 1 Person	15	982	5,854
2000 Households 2 Persons	44	2,947	12,717
2000 Households 3 Persons	27	1,488	5,349
2000 Households 4 Persons	24	1,658	5,751
2000 Households 5 Persons	10	827	2,785
2000 Households 6 Persons	5	355	1,204
2000 Households 7+ Persons	3	199	691
2011 HOUSEHOLDS			
2011 Households 1 Person	87	2,884	12,384
2011 Households 2 Persons	139	5,433	20,231
2011 Households 3 Persons	119	4,130	11,941
2011 Households 4 Persons	78	3,721	11,977
2011 Households 5 Persons	36	1,476	5,320
2011 Households 6 Persons	31	988	2,892
2011 Households 7+ Persons	12	484	1,307
2016 HOUSEHOLDS			
2016 Households 1 Person	99	3,303	13,985
2016 Households 2 Persons	157	6,129	22,587
2016 Households 3 Persons	146	5,030	14,535
2016 Households 4 Persons	90	4,229	13,696
2016 Households 5 Persons	42	1,708	6,114
2016 Households 6 Persons	35	1,114	3,254
2016 Households 7+ Persons	14	550	1,469
2000 RACE AND ETHNICITY			
2000 White Population Alone	389	23,429	86,605
2000 Black Population Alone	11	528	1,784
2000 American Indian/Alaska Native Alone	2	205	615
2000 Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	13	572	2,064
2000 Other Population (Incl 2+ Races)	42	1,714	6,256



	1 mi Ring	3 mi Ring	5 mi Ring
2000 Hispanic Population	71	2,787	10,117
2000 Non-Hispanic Population	386	23,662	87,208
2011 RACE AND ETHNICITY			
2011 White Population	1,342	48,587	158,014
2011 Black Population	77	1,987	5,982
2011 American Indian/Alaska Native	14	555	1,670
2011 Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	97	3,165	9,023
2011 Other Population (Incl 2+ Races)	184	4,982	15,635
2011 Hispanic Population	314	8,899	28,965
2011 Non-Hispanic Population	1,401	50,378	161,359
2016 RACE AND ETHNICITY			
2016 White Population	1,539	55,443	179,117
2016 Black Population	91	2,335	7,069
2016 American Indian/Alaska Native	18	668	2,047
2016 Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	108	3,504	10,010
2016 Other Population (Incl 2+ Races)	240	6,517	20,414
2016 Hispanic Population	430	12,204	39,403
2016 Non-Hispanic Population	1,565	56,261	179,254
2000 POPULATION BY AGE			
2000 Age 0-5	68	3,324	10,879
2000 Age 6-13	57	3,917	13,105
2000 Age 14-17	19	1,512	5,173
2000 Age 18-20	9	764	2,725
2000 Age 21-24	22	1,018	3,457
2000 Age 25-29	58	2,073	7,278
2000 Age 30-34	63	2,703	8,661
2000 Age 35-39	41	2,493	8,621
2000 Age 40-44	25	1,936	6,944
2000 Age 45-49	22	1,397	5,209
2000 Age 50-54	22	1,116	4,332
2000 Age 55-59	15	834	3,370
2000 Age 60-64	10	726	3,009
2000 Age 65-69	10	770	3,388
2000 Age 70-74	7	811	3,928
2000 Age 75-79	6	618	3,676
2000 Age 80-84	3	300	2,268
2000 Age 85+	2	138	1,303
2000 Median Age Total Population	28.7	30.1	32.5
2000 Median Age Adult Population	34.7	38.6	41.4
2011 POPULATION BY AGE			
2011 Age 0-5	288	8,871	25,944
2011 Age 6-13	222	8,603	26,682
2011 Age 14-17	73	3,101	10,209



	1 mi Ring	3 mi Ring	5 mi Ring
2011 Age 18-20	35	1,735	5,589
2011 Age 21-24	81	3,130	8,832
2011 Age 25-29	217	5,827	17,000
2011 Age 30-34	223	6,265	17,827
2011 Age 35-39	128	4,593	14,666
2011 Age 40-44	81	3,633	11,944
2011 Age 45-49	91	3,154	10,584
2011 Age 50-54	87	2,593	9,094
2011 Age 55-59	66	2,107	7,331
2011 Age 60-64	40	1,688	6,228
2011 Age 65-69	31	1,260	5,085
2011 Age 70-74	17	991	4,384
2011 Age 75-79	16	826	4,006
2011 Age 80-84	10	484	2,783
2011 Age 85+	9	417	2,136
2011 Median Age Total Population	27.6	27.6	29.3
2011 Median Age Adult Population	34.4	36.6	38.9
2016 POPULATION BY AGE			
2016 Age 0-5	337	10,237	30,029
2016 Age 6-13	259	10,032	30,940
2016 Age 14-17	86	3,599	11,788
2016 Age 18-20	42	1,998	6,461
2016 Age 21-24	95	3,583	10,217
2016 Age 25-29	252	6,730	19,708
2016 Age 30-34	262	7,258	20,672
2016 Age 35-39	148	5,259	16,769
2016 Age 40-44	92	4,132	13,498
2016 Age 45-49	103	3,566	11,937
2016 Age 50-54	100	2,987	10,374
2016 Age 55-59	75	2,429	8,400
2016 Age 60-64	47	1,948	7,080
2016 Age 65-69	38	1,511	5,899
2016 Age 70-74	20	1,175	4,974
2016 Age 75-79	18	963	4,461
2016 Age 80-84	12	577	3,077
2016 Age 85+	11	482	2,373
2016 Median Age Total Population	27.6	27.6	29.0
2016 Median Age Adult Population	34.2	36.6	38.7
2000 MALE POPULATION BY AGE			
2000 Male Age 0-17	77	4,441	14,998
2000 Male Age 19-44	107	5,440	18,548
2000 Male Age 45-64	23	1,291	5,072
2000 Male Age 65-84	12	1,188	5,980
2000 Male Age 85+	1	53	517
2000 Median Age Male Pop	28.5	30.0	31.8



	1 mi Ring	3 mi Ring	5 mi Ring
2000 Median Age Adult Male Pop	34.9	38.5	40.9
2000 FEMALE POPULATION BY AGE			
2000 Female Age 0-17	68	4,312	14,159
2000 Female Age 18-44	110	5,544	19,137
2000 Female Age 45-64	35	2,092	8,282
2000 Female Age 65-84	13	1,310	7,282
2000 Female Age 85+	1	85	786
2000 Median Age Female Pop	28.8	30.2	33.1
2000 Median Age Adult Female Pop	34.4	38.7	42.0
HOUSING			
2000 Owner Occupied Housing Units	107	7,436	30,369
2000 Renter Occupied Housing Units	4	756	3,881
2000 Vacant Housing Units	18	1,325	6,619

	1 mi Ring	3 mi Ring	5 mi Ring
POPULATION			
2000 Total Population	457	26,449	97,325
2011 Total Population	1,715	59,277	190,324
2016 Total Population	1,995	68,465	218,657
HOUSEHOLDS			
2000 Total Households	126	8,457	34,352
2011 Total Households	502	19,116	66,052
2016 Total Households	583	22,064	75,640
2000 Family Households	106	7,142	26,922
2000 Group Quarters Population	0	94	271
2011 Group Quarters Population	0	287	337
2016 Group Quarters Population	0	305	355
2000 Per Capita Income	\$18,799	\$21,726	\$23,269
2000 Average Household Income	\$73,604	\$69,200	\$66,119
2000 Median Household Income	\$69,285	\$63,546	\$58,222
2000 HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION			
2000 Household Income < \$10,000	4	212	1,031
2000 Household Income \$10,000-\$14,999	0	154	953
2000 Household Income \$15,000-\$19,999	1	220	1,363
2000 Household Income \$20,000-\$24,999	1	253	1,508
2000 Household Income \$25,000-\$29,999	3	297	1,675
2000 Household Income \$30,000-\$34,999	6	446	1,926
2000 Household Income \$35,000-\$39,999	4	384	1,781
2000 Household Income \$40,000-\$44,999	5	423	1,830
2000 Household Income \$45,000-\$49,999	6	550	2,019
2000 Household Income \$50,000-\$59,999	16	910	3,716
2000 Household Income \$60,000-\$74,999	21	1,370	5,366
2000 Household Income \$75,000-\$99,999	29	1,711	5,757
2000 Household Income \$100,000-\$124,999	12	805	2,793
2000 Household Income \$125,000-\$149,999	6	276	1,112
2000 Household Income \$150,000-\$199,999	1	202	792
2000 Household Income \$200,000+	3	133	661
2011 Per Capita Income	\$25,169	\$27,513	\$28,998
2011 Average Household Income	\$85,894	\$85,317	\$83,557
2011 Median Household Income	\$71,313	\$76,216	\$70,373
2011 HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION			

2011 Household Income < \$10,000	17	560	1,899
2011 Household Income \$10,000-\$14,999	1	174	1,234
2011 Household Income \$15,000-\$19,999	0	231	1,774
2011 Household Income \$20,000-\$24,999	2	513	2,170
2011 Household Income \$25,000-\$29,999	6	349	2,087
2011 Household Income \$30,000-\$34,999	19	1,143	3,497
2011 Household Income \$35,000-\$39,999	13	732	2,869
2011 Household Income \$40,000-\$44,999	25	838	2,855
2011 Household Income \$45,000-\$49,999	39	1,028	3,004
2011 Household Income \$50,000-\$59,999	84	1,718	5,899
2011 Household Income \$60,000-\$74,999	59	2,079	8,297
2011 Household Income \$75,000-\$99,999	124	3,996	12,432
2011 Household Income \$100,000-\$124,999	85	2,632	8,076
2011 Household Income \$125,000-\$149,999	14	1,338	4,208
2011 Household Income \$150,000-\$199,999	8	994	2,942
2011 Household Income \$200,000+	6	793	2,809
2016 Per Capita Income	\$24,623	\$27,691	\$29,370
2016 Average Household Income	\$84,220	\$85,926	\$84,901
2016 Median Household Income	\$67,302	\$71,486	\$67,417

2016 HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION

2016 Household Income < \$10,000	23	630	2,116
2016 Household Income \$10,000-\$14,999	1	176	1,329
2016 Household Income \$15,000-\$19,999	1	230	1,924
2016 Household Income \$20,000-\$24,999	2	561	2,392
2016 Household Income \$25,000-\$29,999	7	429	2,447
2016 Household Income \$30,000-\$34,999	25	1,356	4,182
2016 Household Income \$35,000-\$39,999	19	1,025	3,708
2016 Household Income \$40,000-\$44,999	33	1,142	3,619
2016 Household Income \$45,000-\$49,999	45	1,222	3,649
2016 Household Income \$50,000-\$59,999	99	2,091	7,374
2016 Household Income \$60,000-\$74,999	76	2,833	10,273
2016 Household Income \$75,000-\$99,999	137	4,271	13,673
2016 Household Income \$100,000-\$124,999	89	2,603	8,343
2016 Household Income \$125,000-\$149,999	16	1,528	4,637
2016 Household Income \$150,000-\$199,999	5	1,106	3,097
2016 Household Income \$200,000+	6	861	2,877

2000 FAMILY INCOME DISTRIBUTION

2000 Family Income < \$10,000	3	157	493
2000 Family Income \$10,000-\$14,999	0	78	348
2000 Family Income \$15,000-\$19,999	1	140	804
2000 Family Income \$20,000-\$24,999	0	195	1,002
2000 Family Income \$25,000-\$29,999	2	202	992
2000 Family Income \$30,000-\$34,999	4	356	1,433
2000 Family Income \$35,000-\$39,999	4	308	1,435

2000 Family Income \$40,000-\$44,999	4	307	1,468
2000 Family Income \$45,000-\$49,999	5	470	1,710
2000 Family Income \$50,000-\$59,999	13	824	3,205
2000 Family Income \$60,000-\$74,999	19	1,254	4,490
2000 Family Income \$75,000-\$99,999	29	1,583	4,960
2000 Family Income \$100,000-\$124,999	11	781	2,516
2000 Family Income \$125,000-\$149,999	4	213	931
2000 Family Income \$150,000-\$199,999	1	164	673
2000 Family Income \$200,000+	3	127	612
2000 Median Family Income	\$71,687	\$66,487	\$62,158



First Solar Mesa construction site photo blog: The next big PV production fab rises from the desert

http://www.pv-tech.org/chip_shots_blog/12945

By Tom Cheyney - 23 September 2011

With its framework structure erect and the first walls attached, the shell of what will be one of the largest PV manufacturing plants in the US is quickly rising from the desert floor in Mesa, AZ, east of Phoenix. The freeway-close First Solar production center will join the company's mothership factory complex in Perrysburg, OH, as a second domestic site once it comes online next year. During a visit to—and exciting Bobcat ride around—the project this week, I found out that construction activities are in full swing, as the accompanying photos attest.

The contractor team, led by global engineering and construction firm M+W Group, is building the nearly million-square-foot, \$300 million facility for First Solar near the corner of East Elliot and South Signal Butte roads on about 130 acres of what used to be the GM/Mesa Proving Grounds, now owned by DMB.

Just off the perimeter of the parcel, the chewed-up asphalt remains of a former test track bear witness to the site's former life, although the rumbling sounds now produced there emanate from earth movers, cranes, water trucks, and other construction machinery.

Onsite sources told me that the initial facilities equipment, such as piping, air compressors, and the like, will start to show up by late October. The building itself should be weather-tight by December, with the first production gear rolling up in late February and March. M+W expects to fulfill its contractual purview and be off the site by the end of May.

Once the tools are installed by First Solar's equipment team, the first part of the ramp-up will begin, with production expected to kick off in the third quarter of 2012.

Although designed to accommodate as many as 10 production lines, the thin-film company will start with a complement of four cadmium-telluride moduling lines, currently rated to produce a total capacity of just under 250MW, in one segment of what will at first be a partially fitted-out structure.

That number, however, is based on the firm's most recent reported run rate, which is a notoriously fleeting target-metric. Almost every quarter for the past several years, First Solar has continually improved its manufacturing productivity and will undoubtedly reach an even higher throughput level when the fab begins producing modules.

Based on the latest historical year-to-year improvement trends, the initial capacity/run-rate figure is more likely to around 65MW or so per line, for a total of 260MW.

Whether the company eventually installs the half-dozen additional production lines at Mesa will depend on demand and other market conditions. If it were to do so in, say, Q2 or Q3 2013, the total capacity for the 10-line factory, calculating for probable run-rate improvements, would be approaching 700MW.

In addition to the main building, ground-mounted PV test arrays will be positioned on separate locations in the northeast, south, and southeast sides of the property. There will also be a ~3MW CdTe rooftop system providing some of the electricity for manufacturing and administrative operations, similar to the one installed at the Perrysburg site.

About 150 workers affiliated with the various contractors and subcontractors are onsite now, but that number will grow to at least 400 when construction begins on the guts of the building and the equipment starts to arrive. When the plant becomes operational, First Solar estimates that it will employ 600 full-time manufacturing associates there.

Once the new factory's production line begins processing glass in earnest, it will feed the increasingly voracious appetite for modules of the company's 2.6GW North American project pipeline, with most locations within several hours' to a half-day's tractor-trailer truck drive from Mesa.

As I observed first-hand earlier in the week, the construction of one of those Utility-scale (note the capital "U") power plants—the massive and impressive 290MW (AC) Agua Caliente project near Dateland in Yuma County, AZ—is well under way and should see the first few blocks of modules (made in the company's existing fabs) coming online and sending energy to the grid by late 2011/early 2012.

(Editor's note: If you are reading this post on a mobile device, may I suggest you check out our complete PV-Tech site in order to view the accompanying photos.)

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Confidence in Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport grows

Oct. 3, 2011 12:00 AM
The Arizona Republic

Two major announcements on Sept. 26 show how much confidence outsiders have in the growing Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

- The Federal Aviation Administration unexpectedly offered \$6 million to construct an additional two gates at the western terminal, bringing the total to 10 by 2013. This will increase capacity beyond the planned 1.2 million passengers, though by how much is not yet certain.

That's in addition to the \$9.75 million the airport received in March to grow the terminal from six to eight gates, a project that also commenced on Sept. 26.

The steady and generous flow of money is significant, because the feds aren't exactly flush with cash these days. Federal aviation officials are obviously convinced that Gateway could easily fill the two extra gates.

- Allegiant Air announced service to Las Vegas, the airport's most requested destination. The carrier felt it had enough customers in Mesa to deviate from its focus on small cold-weather destinations and offer flights that directly compete with what's being offered at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

Unlike most of Allegiant's flights, which run one or two days a week, these will be offered six days a week, creating steadier action at the airport. The flights also will serve an international airport, not a reliever, giving

the airline and the airport wider exposure.

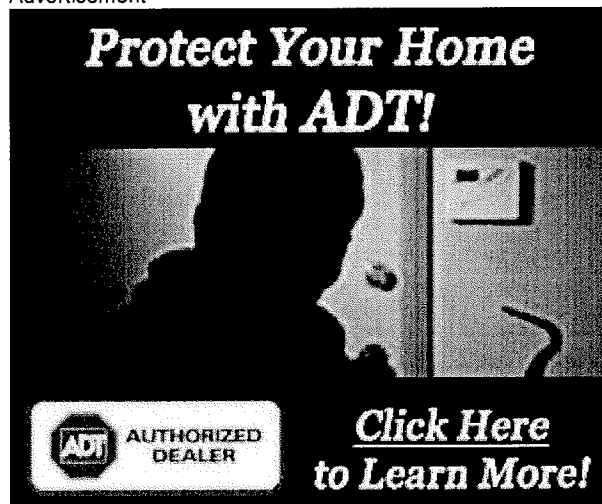
If the experiment is successful, it will provide even more evidence that Gateway has what it takes to serve major destinations and truly become a reliever for Sky Harbor.

That's important for the region economically. Offering more diverse stops and more room to handle those flights will boost passenger traffic and bolster the case for other airlines to take a chance on Gateway, which, in turn, will make the area more attractive for jet-setting business types and help attract jobs to the massive employment center that surrounds the airport.

Already, passenger counts have far outpaced forecasts. The airport's 2009 master plan predicted the western terminal would reach 850,000 annual boardings by 2017. But a recent study says the airport is on track to reach that milestone by 2014.

The study addressed how and when a larger terminal should be built east of the runways. The site is crucial to the airport's economic future because it would have better freeway access and the room necessary to handle 5

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million to 10 million boardings annually.

The study estimates that a 300,000-square-foot terminal with 14 gates would be needed once passenger traffic exceeds 1.5 million boardings annually. It also lays out basic plans to grow the terminal over decades to 1.4 million square feet and 60 gates.

That's three times the number of gates at Los Angeles Ontario International Airport, which has been used as a model for Gateway's growth.

Make no mistake: The two extra gates likely bought the western terminal some time, so construction on the east side is still years away. It's doubtful that passenger counts will be high enough to justify the work until the airport can snag at least a second carrier.

But it will take years to plan and fund the new terminal, which initially carries an estimated \$258 million price tag. Though Mesa has extended Ray and Hawes roads to the site and is speeding construction on Arizona 24, the freeway that will skirt the airport, much more work remains.

Given the confidence that is building in Gateway, work on these ideas can't come too soon. - Friday

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Mesa leases research lab at ex-site of Williams Air Force Base

by **Gary Nelson** - Jun. 24, 2011 12:00 AM
The Arizona Republic

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In early 2009, Mesa and several partners introduced, amid considerable fanfare, something called the Arizona Aerospace Institute.

It was supposed to be an entity bringing together the state's diverse multibillion-dollar aerospace industry for research, collaboration and promotion. But at that point it was more of an idea than a reality, although Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and its neighbor, the Polytechnic campus of Arizona State University, would be cornerstones of the effort.

Now, however, a true catalyst may finally be in hand in the form of a Cold War relic that has been sitting at Mesa's doorstep since 1969.

Mesa signed a lease Thursday for the Air Force Research Lab, which, like Gateway and ASU Polytechnic, occupies part of what was Williams Air Force Base until it closed in 1993. The lab is the last vestige of military activity at the old base, and there is no public information on exactly what kind of research has been going on there.

"This is an incredibly important day for the city of Mesa, for the East Valley and for the state of Arizona," said John Regni, a retired Air Force general now with Science Foundation Arizona.

Working with McLean, Va.-based Alion Science and Technology Corp., Mesa hopes to lease the 10 buildings to firms conducting aerospace and defense research.

A key to that hope was retaining the compound's top-secret security clearance, which would have expired had Mesa not signed the lease before the Air Force closes shop Sept. 15. One of the buildings even has an interior copper sheathing designed to fend off high-tech espionage attempts.

Resurrecting the security clearance, Mayor Scott Smith said, would have been difficult, if not impossible, rendering the complex all but useless for the type of work Mesa envisions.

Because of its security status, Regni said, "We're going to have a lot more hard research going on there that will attract more business, more defense contractors."

Smith has made aerospace a foundation of Mesa's economic-development strategy, along with education, health care and tourism.

But he said the impact of Thursday's deal will extend far beyond city borders.

"We did not do this simply for Mesa," he said. "This is not a Mesa deal. This is truly an Arizona deal."

The aim, he said, is "a center for aerospace excellence, for aerospace research, homeland-security research that is required to have the highest level of security."

Mitzi Montoya, dean of the Polytechnic campus, said several researchers have decided to stay in Mesa instead of transferring to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base when the lab moves to Ohio in September.

She said the facility "could be the epicenter of not just a regional or a state opportunity to grow and drive economic development, but nationally."

Polytechnic plans to work actively with companies using the lab as part of its strategy to produce graduates ready for the 21st century's intense global competition.

Mesa's acquiring the lab was anything but a slam dunk, despite the city having known since 2005 that it would close.

Brian Campbell, a member of Mesa's Economic Development Advisory Board, said the Veterans Administration wasted five years before finally telling the city in late 2009 that it didn't want to take over the lab.

The less than 18 months between the start of Mesa's effort to acquire the lab and Thursday's ceremony, Campbell said, was "the federal equivalent of a nanosecond."

Smith said working with numerous civilian and military bureaucracies was daunting.

"We lost count - even within the Pentagon - of how many agencies we were dealing with," Smith said. The effort involved winning support from the secretary of the Air Force and help from Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.





When the city realized what was at stake should the lab close, Smith said, "We determined that we were not going to lose. We were not going to allow this to leave Mesa."

City Manager Chris Brady said, "There was a lot of skepticism about whether the city of Mesa could pull this off."

The lab now becomes a key ingredient in Mesa's ambitions to turn the Gateway area into a lucrative employment center in coming decades.

Already this year, Able Engineering & Component Services has agreed to move its aircraft-maintenance operations and several hundred jobs from Phoenix to a bigger facility at Gateway, and Tempe-based First Solar Inc. has begun construction of a major solar-panel plant on the former site of the General Motors Desert Proving Ground.

The lease Mesa signed Thursday with the Air Force is for two years, with three one-year extensions possible. It will end, however, when the Air Force actually conveys ownership to the city, something that is expected well before the lease expires.

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Growth, job creation motivate Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport

by Art Thomason - Sept. 26, 2011 10:02 AM
The Arizona Republic

As it continues expansion and job creation Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport looms as a beacon of hope in a metropolitan area plagued with high unemployment.

The airport's governing board is likely to fan growth flames again today with approval of projects essential to fueling additional aircraft and luring more airlines.

After their meeting, airport officials will gather with business and government leaders at a virtual groundbreaking of the latest passenger terminal addition to focus on Gateway's promise for the immediate future, the expansion of passenger service and facilities to accommodate it.

The former Air Force Base-turned-reliever airport covers most of the ground on a 4,000-plus acre- campus that includes aerospace employers, aircraft services by some of the top names in general aviation, next-century research in a former Air Force Lab and higher education facilities, including Arizona State University Polytechnic.

Together, they represent what Scot Rigby, Mesa's Gateway project manager, calls a catalyst for high-paying jobs, creation and development of new technologies, and a major hub for the state's transportation needs.

"The airport is one of the few engines running on all cylinders in the entire state," he said. "It's 100 percent go, go, go, build, build, build while everybody else seems to be saying stop."

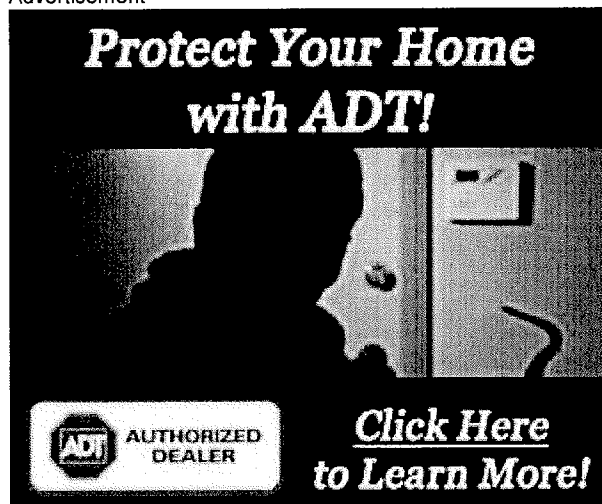
Proposals to expand the airport's fuel-storage capacity by 100,000 gallons and strengthen Gateway efforts to land at another airline are more building blocks for future commercial development on and off the airport, he said.

The nearly \$1.8 million fuel farm project would be constructed by Nesbitt Contracting Co. Inc. of Tempe and managed by Dibble Engineering of Phoenix.

The Federal Aviation Administration's Military Airports Program would pay for 95 percent of the costs. The remainder would be shared by Arizona Department of Transportation grant airport authority funds

The expansion would proceed even as plans are under way to remove aviation fuel that polluted the soil and groundwater from old underground tanks on the site when it was Williams Air Force Base.

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Scientists estimate that up to 2 million gallons of aviation fuel leaked from the tanks between 1942, about a year after construction of the base began to train pilots for World War II, and 1990.

The site has undergone a series of restoration attempts over the years, and between 1997 and 2003 more than 2 million pounds of petroleum hydrocarbons, the equivalent of 343,000 gallons, were extracted, according to records.

The site poses no danger to a deepwater aquifer that provides drinking water in the area, and it is a mile from the nearest well, according to Jay Harbin, a geologist and project manager for URS Corp., a San Francisco-based engineering- and technical-services organization that has conducted testing at the site.

Mead & Hunt, a Madison, Wis.-based firm that specializes in airport services such as airline recruiting, would continue to woo additional carriers to Gateway under a \$60,000 contract extension.

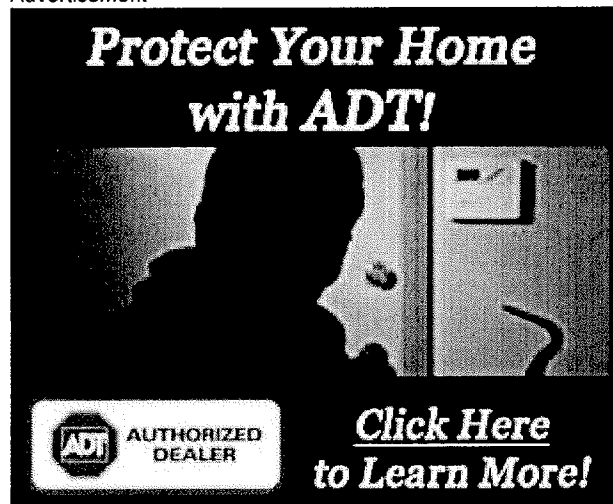
Since 2009, the company has produced marketing brochures with vital airport statistics, demographics and other analysis for one-on-one meetings with airlines, Casey Denny, the airport's deputy director, said in a memo to the governing board.

The firm has helped facilitate meetings with 29 airlines since that time, Denny said.

"It's great that we have Allegiant Air (the airport's only airline) but at the same time, the Valley and the region want more than a single carrier," Rigby said. "This has been a key issue for (Mesa) Mayor Scott Smith to get access from Gateway to hubs such as Dallas and Los Angeles."

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