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Smart investments in the West Valley's transportation and infrastructure, overall development and increasingly desirable quality of life have made the region a growing powerhouse

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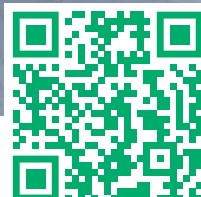
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HEALTHY OUTLOOK

West Valley becomes a hot spot for attracting major new healthcare facilities

By KYLE BACKER

The West Valley, much like the rest of Metro Phoenix is in the middle of a growth spurt. And, just like a sudden burst of height during high school causes soreness, the rapid pace of development on the west side comes with some aches and pains. As the region expands, more residents have found themselves living significant distances from the clusters of healthcare

infrastructure. For example, a Buckeye resident must drive their child some 40 miles to receive top-notch medical care at Phoenix Children's Hospital's main facility on Thomas Road.

Luckily, finding a healthcare professional to treat medical issues — from mundane to acute — is becoming easier in the municipalities that populate the western reaches of the nation's 10th

largest metropolitan area, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Last year, Phoenix Children's Hospital announced three new facilities in the West Valley representing a nearly \$200 million investment that will generate 650 new permanent jobs — the Arrowhead Campus in Glendale, the Southwest Campus in Avondale and Phoenix Children's Sports Medicine Clinic in Avondale.





JAKE DINNEN



HANS DRIESSNACK



SINTRA HOFFMAN



KARA MCNAMARA



AMY PERRY

Banner Health is also expanding its presence in the region. During the 2022 WESTMARC Healthcare Summit, Amy Perry, president and chief operating officer of Banner Health, talked about the organization building a new hospital in Buckeye.

“We expect to open in the fall of 2024 with approximately 120 beds, imaging, surgery, labor and delivery, intensive care [and an] emergency room,” she says. “We are going to spend about \$400 million over the next five years, and over \$1 billion when fully built out in 10 years. It’s going to create more than 600 jobs over the next five years and more than 2,000 when fully built out.”

This infusion of new facilities will increase the quality of life for residents, along with supporting a core sector in the region. “Healthcare is a leading industry in the West Valley, with 36% of all healthcare workers in Maricopa County living here,” says Sintra Hoffman, president and CEO of WESTMARC. “Healthcare follows numbers, and our population today is 1.7 million residents. There’s such a demand for healthcare — we’re all getting older and taking care of aging parents.”

While also expanding their footprint, healthcare organizations are contending with changing trends in the field, some present prior to the pandemic, and others a direct result of it.

Healthy market

A building boom is underway in Metro Phoenix. Malls from a bygone era, such as Metrocenter and Paradise Valley Mall, are being reconstituted into mixed-use urban villages. West of the White Tanks, the master-planned community Douglas Ranch will house 300,000 residents in 100,000 homes once completed. In Queen Creek, LG is spending approximately \$1.4 billion on the first cylindrical-type battery manufacturing plant in North America.

Jake Dinnen, senior vice president of development for Pacific Medical Buildings, says at the 2022 WESTMARC Healthcare Summit that across the board, the Phoenix market is on fire. “The growth is just

COMING SOON: An artist’s rendering of Phoenix Children’s Hospital – Arrowhead Campus, a \$135 million project that broke ground in 2021 in Glendale.



unbelievable. Trying to keep up through providing supplies and healthcare services is a challenge for all healthcare providers,” he notes. “There’s so much demand for medical [space]. Projects we did four years ago cost \$100 per square foot to build. Today it’s \$180 or \$190, and we all know healthcare providers aren’t making more money now than they were four years ago.”

Beyond rising costs, an added complication in ensuring the whole Valley has adequate healthcare facilities stems from the way Metro Phoenix has spread out development, according to Hans Driessnack, CEO of Abrazo West Campus. Other large cities, he says, traditionally operate with a hub-and-spoke model where there are a few large hospitals in the downtown area, with smaller hospitals that surround the outlying suburb areas that send high acuity patients to the centrally located facilities.

“Phoenix has developed pockets of healthcare,” Driessnack says. “Spreading out that way has created advantages and disadvantages overall for healthcare delivery, but for the West Valley, it’s a chance to continue to see advanced levels

of care being delivered there. If we were constantly sending everyone downtown for anything high acuity, that would be a detriment as we [develop] farther west. It ends up benefiting us as a city to have more access to higher-level care in a closer proximity to the communities where people live.”

A trend Driessnack has observed in the healthcare system — and accelerated by the pandemic — is a push for more outpatient facilities. He notes that hospitals used to be the center hub to get all types of care, whether it be elective, outpatient or inpatient.

“If you wanted an X-ray or a CT, the hospital is where you went. But in just the last five years, the number of freestanding imaging centers have come up; [physical therapy], [occupation therapy] and speech [therapy] have moved into the outpatient environment; ambulatory surgery centers are popping up all over the place.

“Although the payers love this because it’s a cheaper area of care,” Driessnack continues, “it’s been disjointed. The next stage of this trend is going to be unifying those outpatient areas into healthcare

systems — not absorbed, but partnered with. That way there’s continuity of handoff in between those environments.”

Another trend Kara McNamara, vice president of sales at Corporate Interior Systems, has encountered is an evolution of how healthcare facilities are designed. She worked on the HonorHealth Sonoran Crossing Medical Center and notes it was ahead of the curve.

“What we ended up doing there now has been accelerated and replicated since the pandemic,” McNamara explains at the 2022 WESTMARC Healthcare Summit. “Instead of lining up rows and rows of seats next to each other, we’re planning neighborhoods and paths for families to be in the waiting room together. There are individual spaces, so people that are not part of a family can separate.”

The goal, according to McNamara, is to create as much flexibility as possible under one roof, which using prefabricated construction materials helps to achieve. She also stresses the importance of creating a soothing environment.

“The pandemic created so much anxiety for people,” McNamara says. “Bringing

MEETING A NEED: Banner Health is building a four-story, 330,000-square-foot hospital on the northwest corner of Verrado Way and the I-10 freeway.





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COMING ALONG:

In April, Adolfson & Peterson Construction topped out Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Peoria. This marks the official midpoint of the construction process and a key project milestone.



biophilia into the building, even creating exterior spaces for people to wait indoors and outdoors, and simply putting beautiful art in the space and having beautiful landscapes provides calm and helps people have shorter stays, use less medication, have less anxiety and less pain.”

Digital care

With well over two years having passed since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health crisis, highlighting the impact it had on the adoption of technology seems somewhat passé. Still, the opportunities provided by expanding digital care options for patients shouldn’t be understated.

“[The pandemic] forever changed how we’re going to do our business,” Perry says. “One of the most significant advancements in our industry is the work in the digital sector.”

She adds that the industry had been slowly expanding telehealth options, which was supercharged by the coronavirus since it was the best way to connect with patients as hospital beds filled up. Folks like Perry’s 80-year-old mother — who

didn’t have a smartphone — had to figure out how to navigate an online care environment using technology she was unfamiliar with. Despite the challenges, digital natives and newcomers alike flocked to telehealth services, which Perry notes experienced tremendous growth, with Banner recording an 8,000% increase in online visits.

“The biggest thing we all found is we can provide health care effectively, differently. And we really have to look at what is next. How are we going to innovate? How are we going to connect with people in a different, more convenient way?” Perry posits. “85% of our consumers are saying they don’t want to come into a medical office and take time out of their day unless they have to.”

Restructuring how healthcare is delivered will help reduce the time spent in a facility, such as having laboratory services show up at a patient’s door. Moreover, using telehealth services can lessen the workload for healthcare professionals administering bedside care — a welcome addition for a sector wrought with burnout.

“Not only do [digital solutions] impact

how we care for our consumers and how we connect with our workforce, but there’s so many ways that digital is going to change healthcare, hopefully a lot in automation,” Perry says. “We have to look at everything we do. Could this be automated? Do we need a person to do this? Or is there a way to change the process?”

Banner currently uses automation to identify patients who are at high risk using the organization’s electronic health record. “We have a deterioration index that’s built into our health record that will alert our care team,” Perry explains. “If there’s something between the nurse’s notes, the physician’s notes, the lab work and the vitals that are spelling out potential deterioration — get in front of it. Those machine learning algorithms are the future.”

Another potential vector for innovation Perry mentions is the smartphone. As facial recognition software gets better, she says it can determine a person’s pulse oximetry and other biometrics.

“That’s the kind of technology that will keep people well and will ultimately make healthcare more affordable,” she concludes. “That’s what we all need to fight for.” **AB**



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CLEAR DAYS: ClearSky Health is building a new 30-bed, inpatient rehabilitation hospital in Avondale and is expected to treat about 650 patients annually.

12 West Valley healthcare projects to watch

Here are 12 newly completed and upcoming West Valley healthcare projects:

ABRAZO HEALTH BUCKEYE MEDICAL CAMPUS: Announced early Jan. 2022, a new Abrazo Health medical campus will occupy 27 acres near the southwest corner of 1-10 and Verrado Way in Buckeye.

APRICUS HEALTH IMAGING CENTER: Located at Avondale’s AKOS Medical Campus, patients have access to a host of state-of-the-art imaging services, bone density testing and more.

APRICUS HEALTH SURGERY CENTER OF AVONDALE: The 10,320 square-foot center will offer three operating rooms, two procedure rooms and 16 patient care bays.

APRICUS HEALTH SURGERY CENTER OF SURPRISE: This joint venture with Peak Heart & Vascular will include three operating rooms, one catheterization laboratory and 13 patient care bays.

BANNER HEALTH HOSPITAL IN BUCKEYE: The four-story, 330,000-square-foot hospital will be located on the

northwest corner of Verrado Way and the I-10 freeway.

CLEARSKY REHABILITATION HOSPITAL OF AVONDALE: This 43,000-square-foot medical facility will house 30 patient beds, providing specialized rehabilitative care to individuals living with disabling injuries or illnesses.

HONORHEALTH COMPLETE CARE IN SURPRISE: The new location is a dual care retail model that provides convenient access to a full-service Emergency Room and Urgent Care under one roof.

IRONWOOD CANCER & RESEARCH CENTERS IN GOODYEAR: Ironwood announced the upcoming groundbreaking of its newest healthcare facility in Goodyear.

PHOENIX CHILDREN’S ARROWHEAD CAMPUS: This three-story pediatric hospital will offer inpatient care, an emergency department, a surgery center and a multi-specialty clinic. It will open in 2024.

PHOENIX CHILDREN’S AVONDALE CAMPUS: This multi-specialty clinic will offer care in high-need specialties including psychiatry, psychology and developmental pediatrics.

PHOENIX CHILDREN’S SPORTS PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC (TWO LOCATIONS): The first of two Phoenix Children’s sports physical therapy clinics in the West Valley opened in January in Avondale.

REUNION REHABILITATION HOSPITAL: This inpatient rehabilitation care center will cater to people with debilitating illnesses and injuries such as stroke and brain injury.



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TALENT POOL

West Valley makes a concerted effort to build the skilled workforce needed to fuel the region's economic growth

By KYLE BACKER

Arizona, like many other states in the U.S., is facing a labor shortage across many industries. The struggle to meet today's workforce demand has near term implications such as longer wait times in the service sector, reduced capacity for manufacturing companies, lengthier project timelines for developers and overall increased costs. But the consequences of an inadequate labor pool will also be felt in the future.

"The war for talent is absolutely real. When we look at the weighting and criteria we have on a project, it's easy to see 70-80% of the decision based on the [current] supply and the future pipeline of labor," says David Hickey, managing director of Hickey & Associates, at WESTMARC's Economic Development Summit in May. "If you don't have the people to do the job, and you're not going to in the future, then that location is certainly not going to work. We've seen countless projects in the past that have unfortunately met that fate, and now it is more competitive than ever."

Rebekah Morris, president and founder of AZBEX, explains at WESTMARC's Economic Development Summit that Arizona's construction industry has experienced whiplash in terms of activity over the last 15 or so years. In 2006, the state reached its peak level of construction dollars being spent, totaling \$21.67 billion. A few years later in 2010, the industry saw its nadir at \$8.44 billion.

"We're now sitting at \$18.1 billion," Morris notes. "There was nearly 20% year-over-year growth in construction activity from 2016 to the end of 2020. [It] nearly doubled."

The difficulty of keeping such a pace, Morris says, is borne out in the data — 2021 only saw a 2.03% increase in growth. For the hot streak in the Grand Canyon State to continue, a concerted effort is being made to build that talent pipeline in the West Valley that will not only help the region weather the great resignation, but fortify efforts to attract businesses from multiple industries.

West Valley workforce

Phoenix Metro's western region has undergone a metamorphosis in recent decades, transforming from an area with an agricultural emphasis to one where industrial developers compete for the last remaining bits of land along the Loop 303 corridor. With those changes, so too have the





needs of employers and the opportunities available to workers.

At the height of construction activity in Arizona — 2006 — there were 240,000 jobs across the state compared to 111,000 in 2011, according to Morris. “We’re at 182,600 jobs statewide as of March 2022,” she says. “We’re still 24% off of our [peak levels of] activity, about 22% off of our revenue [and] about 24% off of our employment numbers.”

Morris notes that employers in the construction industry are grappling with vacancies. She mentions three conversations she’d had with employers that illustrate the issue: an architecture firm with a headcount of 28 when it needs 40; a roofing subcontractor with 65 workers in the field that has enough business to support 100; and a precast manufacturer that has 150 people on staff but wants to be closer to 275 to keep up with its workload.

“We have \$4 billion worth of projects that we think the demand is there for. We know these projects are real — they have the design firm, the contractor, the plans,” Morris says. “Everything is in place, but they’re not moving forward because the market is constrained. We need workers at all levels, the less-skilled, highly skilled, even management and technical professionals.”

Despite a shortage of workers, Hickey sees the West Valley continuing to have great potential for expansion.

“In the morning, you see more brake lights than headlights. Those are the types of markets we look for,” he says. “Where is that next location where people are having to travel further away [for work] but has a talent pipeline out into the future? That’s where you might find that future workforce development. It’s an incredible opportunity for the West Valley for the coming years and well into the future.”

Build it and they will come

During WESTMARC’s Economic Development Summit, Randy Gibb, incoming provost of Grand Canyon University (GCU), announced a workforce development partnership with Rosendin Electric. Starting in September, at least 40 students will embark on a fully funded, pre-apprenticeship program that consists of four college courses.



RANDY GIBB



DAVID HICKEY



REBEKAH MORRIS



CJ WILLIAMS

“Along with the entire construction industry, [Rosendin Electric] is in need of more electricians. These are commercial industrial electricians that build massive projects such as data centers, professional sports stadiums, arenas, high tech office complexes and solar energy systems,” Gibb explains. “After one semester, students will begin their apprenticeship to become a journeyman electrician. This is a three-to-four-year paid apprenticeship fully supported by the electrical industry.”

This is just one of many efforts being led by West Valley institutions to address the need for more workers. ARIZONA@WORK is a statewide workforce development network that assists employers in recruiting, developing and retaining talent. CJ Williams, assistant director of the workforce development division within Maricopa County Human Services, explains at WESTMARC’s Economic Development Summit that constant communication between stakeholders is essential for building resilient talent pipelines.

“There are a lot of one-off efforts in this space with positive intentions, but it’s less efficient than if we were to truly all come together and rally around some of the workforce development efforts that are out there,” he says. “Organizations like WESTMARC and what they’re doing with West Valley Pipeline is critical. It’s a good approach, but there are no trophies for figuring out the best model. We all just need to work together and articulate what those pipelines look like.”

Awareness of career paths and the credentials needed to work in a particular occupation is often the first step.

“When we’re talking about the K-12 system, career literacy starts at the elementary level. We need to get ahead of that because if you talk to a high school

senior about advanced manufacturing, they don’t necessarily know what a day in the life of that career would look like,” Williams continues. “I don’t think it’s coincidence that historically, a lot of youth travel in their parent’s footsteps and enter into similar careers. We need to build that same understanding and literacy around all career pathways.”

West-MEC, for example, is a public career and technical education district that offers certification courses for high school students in the West Valley. Juniors and seniors enrolled in a West-MEC program can earn certifications in various trades — such as welding, HVAC, electrical and construction — along with training in health sciences, technology, manufacturing, automotive and more. Adult learners can enroll in a smaller selection of programs designed to accommodate typical work schedules.

While technical know-how is needed, companies look for qualities in workers that are harder to quantify. “What we hear from employers is, ‘Bring them to us hungry to learn, with the ability to communicate, manage their time, prioritize tasks and think critically. We’ll equip them with the technical skills and teach them how to do business our way,’” Williams explains.

Morris notes that the companies that have their own career development and training plans play an important part in the pipeline, which thrives on an accumulation of efforts from many.

“Those [employers] are the ones that recruit, hire, train and retain workers as best they can. The Rosendin partnership is them saying, ‘Let’s go find a bunch of people that probably need jobs and need a career path,’ and GCU is a perfect partner for that,” she concludes. “There is no single magic bullet.” **AB**



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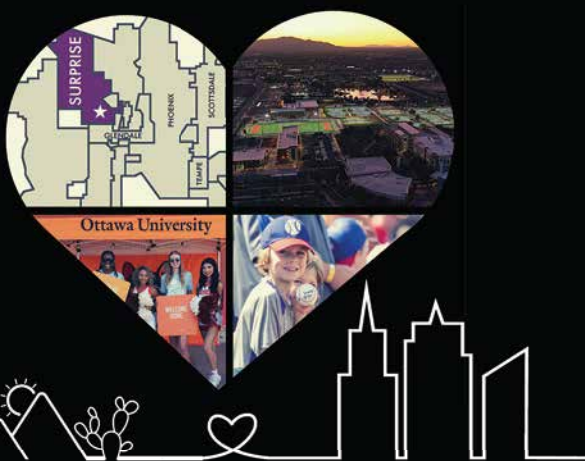
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ALL ROADS LEAD WEST

There's much more than meets the eye when it comes to the West Valley's growing transportation and infrastructure.

By ERIN THORBURN

If you're a fan of books and miniatures, you've likely heard of a "book nook." Resembling an average hardbound book, these bookshelf ornaments contain small-scale, intricate scenes meant to draw the eye such as a tiny village containing a softly lit cafe; or a Harry Potter scene of Diagon Alley lined with magic shops. The West Valley's transportation and infrastructure system is its own kind of book nook for the region. Smart investments and foresight have made the West Valley's highways, byways and roads a focal point of economic development. The Loop 303, State Route 30 and other projects are fueling the region's and state's growth at alarming rates — and there always seems to be more than meets the eye.

Investing in the future

Arizona's transportation and infrastructure evolution, particularly in Metro Phoenix, hasn't always been a smooth road (pun intended). In fact, opposition to constructing the Papago Freeway — now Interstate 10 — remained strong from the 1960s to the late 1970s. It wasn't until 1985 when Proposition 300 passed that expanding local transportation systems gained momentum.

According to a story on the history of Proposition 300 published by the Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC), Prop 300's approved, foundational half-cent sales tax was essential in formulating Loop 101 and 202, State Route 51, as well as the I-10 and US-60 expansions.



ERIC ANDERSON



SINTRIA HOFFMAN

"There has been a tremendous amount of regional investment into the development of the West Valley's transportation system," says Eric Anderson, executive director of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). In addition to Prop 300, Anderson cites Proposition 400 as another pivotal legislative win for transportation expansion, bringing the Loop 303 (Estrella Freeway) and Northern Parkway to fruition and delivering significant improvements to I-10, I-17, State Route 85, and US 60/Grand Avenue.

"Couple those investments with the available commercial land, intermodal connectivity with major freight lines, and accessibility to I-8 (via State Route 85), I-10, and I-17," he says, "and the West Valley is well positioned to locate businesses."

Building up the scene

With scarce developable land remaining throughout Metro Phoenix, hotspots like the Loops 303 and 101 in the West Valley are prime locations for new and growing businesses.



ECONOMIC CATALYST: Arizona Loop 303 is the outer loop of the Phoenix Metro area, serving as a bypass of the West Valley. The 36-mile route connects Interstate 10 at Goodyear with I-17 in northern reaches of Phoenix and its completion has sparked economic development in the West Valley.





“Construction within the GMFTZ (Greater Maricopa Foreign Trade Zone) will yield an estimated 33,852 jobs, \$1.7B in wages, \$4.8B in economic output, and \$319.3M in state and local tax revenues over the 14-year construction period.” — 2021 GMFTZ updated study

“Loop 303 has certainly been a gold mine for our region and state,” says Sintra Hoffman, president and CEO of WESTMARC. “It’s close to California ports of entry, located in a foreign trade zone — Greater Maricopa Foreign Trade Zone (GMFTZ) — and has limited land-use opportunities from I-10 to Northern Parkway, due to Luke AFB accident potential zone restrictions.”

According to an updated 2021 GMFTZ study (originally created by Elliot Pollock in 2016), “Construction within the GMFTZ will yield an estimated 33,852 jobs, \$1.7B in wages, \$4.8B in economic output, and \$319.3M in state and local tax revenues over the 14-year construction period.”

For individual businesses housed near foreign trade zones (or sub-zones) state real and personal property tax perks are available up to a 72.9% reduction, according to Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA).

Because of the benefits derived from GMFTZ, as well as the logistics-friendly positioning of Loop 303, companies such as Microsoft, Boeing, Daimler, Sub-Zero and REI are just some of the global organizations that have settled there.

“State Route 85 is another similar hotspot that is attracting investments due to its connectivity with California and Mexico,” Hoffman says. “This makes SR 85 a prime spot for industrial companies to locate. Arizona is only one-truck day travel from the west coast, making this region increasingly attractive for companies. Similarly, this region has a workforce to support these companies.”

And where Loop 303 and SR 85 commercial land hubs are known for their industrial value and presence, Loop 101 has made a name for itself as a premier entertainment corridor.

Hoffman points to Loop 101 anchor Westgate as the region’s downtown staple for over a decade. Not only is Westgate

Entertainment District one of the largest mixed-use, urban developments in the country, its combination of shopping, dining, entertainment, sports events and additional venues makes it an economic generating mecca.

“Today, we’ve seen a tremendous investment by the Tohono O’odham Nation in Desert Diamond West Valley Casino and Entertainment,” Hoffman notes. “This facility is truly entertainment because in addition to gambling nightlife, we now have five additional restaurants including Nineteen 86 Steakhouse.”

In addition to attracting businesses, the growing infrastructure surrounding Loop 101 and its corresponding connections to the I-10 help entice headliners and major events with the 2023 Super Bowl at State Farm Stadium as a perfect example.

“Just a couple of months later in 2023,” Hoffman says, “we’ll have the state’s largest hotel – the VAI Resort.”

The new desert oasis is set to offer guests 1,200 luxury hotel suites and rooms, a 360-degree concert stage, 13 fine-dining options, sand beaches and more.

New kids on the block

While Loops 303 and 101 continue to amass commercial development, more areas are prepping for action.

“We’re starting to see more and more commercial activity around Northern Parkway,” Anderson says, “which I expect will continue over the next several years.”

According to Anderson, the Southwest Valley is another area of transportation-related invigoration, with companies starting to locate around the I-10 and SR 85. “I also expect to see development around the future State Route 30 corridor increase,” he says.

Adds Hoffman, “On the surface, SR 30 appears to be a West Valley service transportation project. However, when

you step back and look at the trade route from the international ports of entry in California traveling east for product delivery, you’ll only see one option – Interstate 10.

Whether those projects land in the West Valley, East Valley or Pinal County, the traffic all comes through the I-10,” she says. “Therefore SR 30 truly is a statewide solution to growing Arizona’s economy.”

Ultimately, SR 30 will connect to I-17, Loop 202, and back onto I-10. Because of the growth occurring throughout this entire region, Hoffman stresses that “it’s vital to build SR 30 as soon as possible.”

For projects like SR 30, progress hinges on legislative approval for a ballot initiative in November 2022 to extend Proposition 400, the dedicated half-cent sales tax funding transportation investments.

While a decision hangs in the balance for the Prop 400 extension, advancements are still being made under the original Prop 400 program. “Construction will soon start on two new interchanges along the Loop 303 (Estrella Freeway) at 51st and 43rd avenues serving the new Taiwanese Semiconductor Manufacturing Company facility and other business,” Anderson says.

Construction of Northern Parkway between Loop 303 (Estrella Freeway) and Loop 101 (Agua Fria Freeway) will also continue, with widening and interchange improvements along the Loop 101 (Agua Fria Freeway) beginning construction in the next few years. Last, according to Anderson, “more than \$300 million has been allocated for the construction of the southern extension of Loop 303 (Estrella Freeway) that will ultimately connect into the planned State Route 30 corridor.”

Anderson concludes, “With a successful vote this fall, we could be looking at breaking ground on portions of SR 30 as soon as the calendar year 2024.” **AB**



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MULTIFAMILY FACT CHECK

Are more people swapping picket fences for apartments? Here's what is in store for multifamily growth in the West Valley

By ERIN THORBURN

National trends demonstrate a boom in the multifamily market. In 2020, the country observed a 50% increase in multifamily-unit growth compared with 2019, according to a recent Forbes article. An additional forecast published by LinkedIn predicts the best-performing multi-family markets — which include Phoenix — to successfully expand rent growth by 12% or more between 2022 and 2023. With inflation rates and supply chain issues leading to sky-high housing prices, the need for more affordable housing options has increased. And, for many, multifamily housing fits the bill (quite literally). But, as much as multifamily development is seemingly on the rise — and in demand — in most markets, how does the West Valley measure up?

“As one of the fastest-growing areas in the country, demand for housing, in general, will remain strong [in the West Valley] and that includes multifamily rental options and more affordable housing

options,” says Shelby JM Duplessis, president of land development for The Empire Group of Companies.

Demand, challenges and reality checks

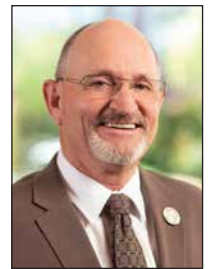
Despite the need for reasonably-priced housing, Duplessis explains that bringing units to market comes with its own set of hurdles.

“The development of multifamily projects is facing many of the same challenges we are seeing with any construction project,” she says. “We are still experiencing supply chain issues and due to staffing challenges and backlogs with the municipalities, it is taking longer to get permits. We have quite a bit in the works and a number of projects we expected to be farther along on by now.”

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Census Bureau, supply-chain issues are “causing construction delays, overall housing starts decreased 4.1% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.64



**SHELBY JM
DUPLESSIS**

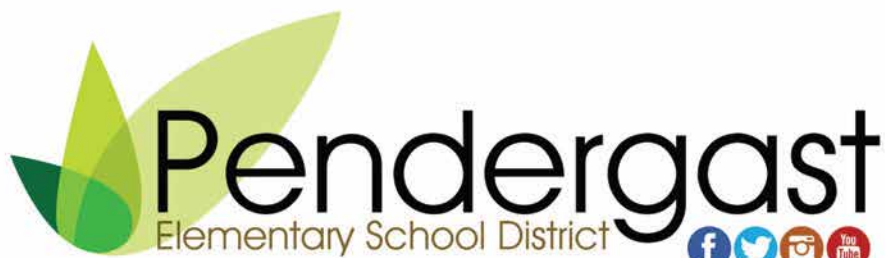


RAY MALNAR

million units.” Even despite the delays in the entirety of the housing-construction cycle, nationally there are still 758,000 multifamily units under construction, a 14% gain, according to the report.

The West Valley seems to mirror the national trends in terms of supply-chain-related delays halting housing build-out progress. But as for permit and zoning issues stifling multifamily development, the topic has become one of debate.

“It has been suggested that our housing shortage has been caused by too strict of zoning laws and long-term city growth plans,” says Ray Malnar, Glendale City Council member. “Simply stated, it is



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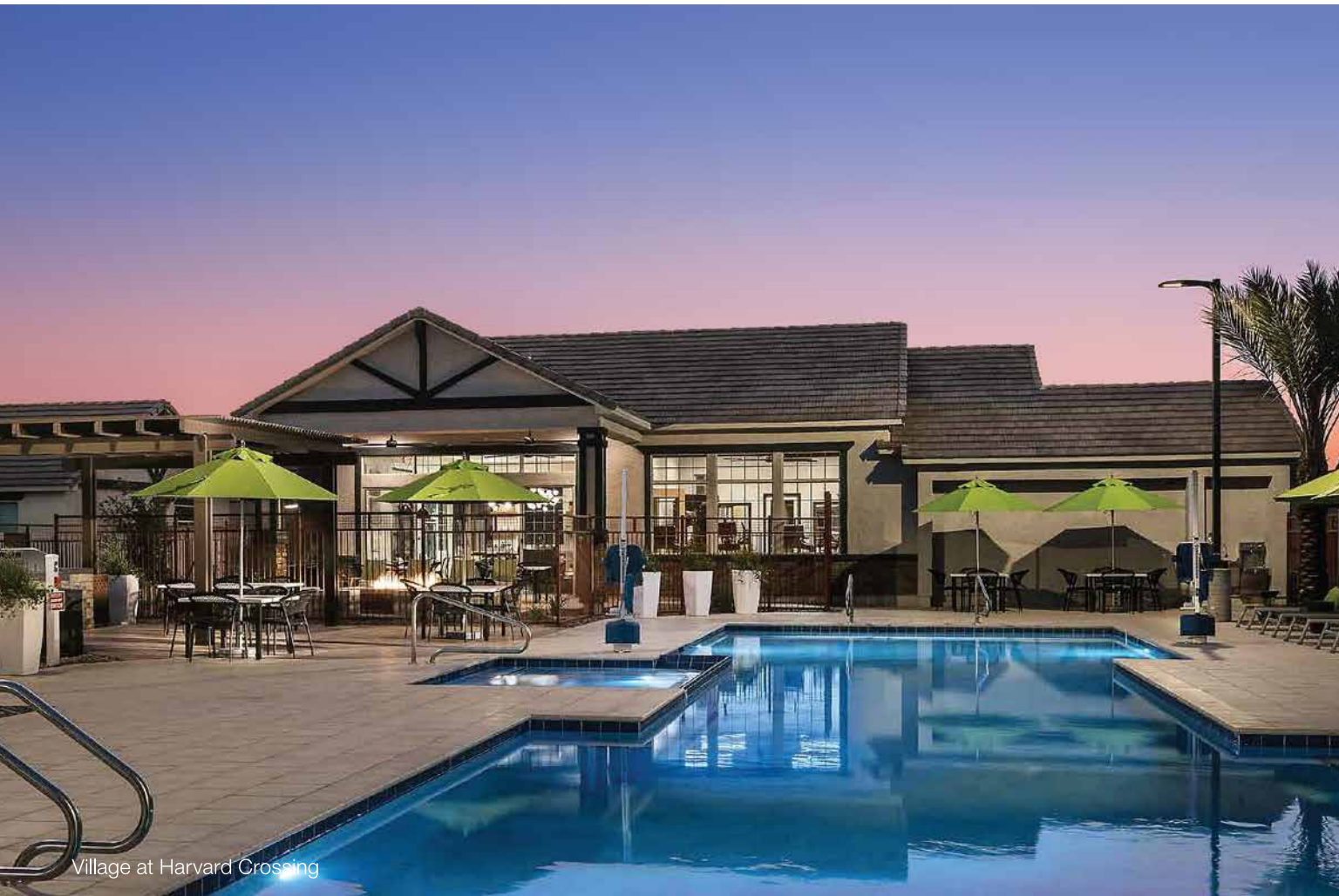
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Village at Harvard Crossing

believed that if developers could have built anything they wanted anywhere over the past 20 years, there would not be a housing shortage, suggesting city planning and zoning requirements should be diminished.”

But, Malnar, along with other municipal West Valley leaders, disagrees with this assessment.

“There has been a lag in building multifamily only when compared to the explosive growth in demand that has occurred,” Malnar says. “Multifamily developments in Glendale are way beyond prior years. There has been no aggressive action by council to deny multifamily projects, and this happens only when a project is out of balance to the surrounding areas.”

Malnar goes on to note that it’s the continued quality of life for West Valley residents that remains a top priority. “The best way to remove challenges for future

multifamily projects is for developers to incorporate more quality-of-life issues for both current and new residents in their plans,” he says.

Keeping housing options open

Even with what feels like a slower adoption of multifamily, both Duplessis and Malnar foresee continued growth while home prices remain high and the West Valley continues to add to its robust skilled workforce pipeline and mushrooming population.

“As the price of homes continues to remain strong and rise, we anticipate more people looking for rental options,” Duplessis says. “Single-family home communities offer a nice choice to those looking to live in a home and neighborhood, without the responsibility or expense involved in owning a home.”

To help accommodate the rental market, The Empire Group of Companies has

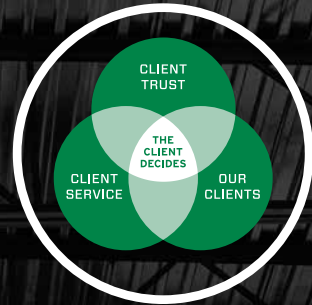
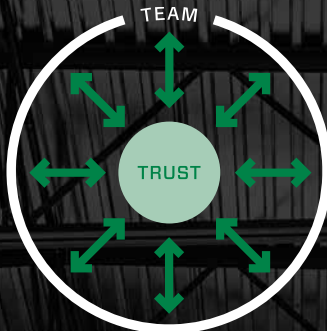
several West Valley-based multifamily projects including the company’s first six build-for-rent communities: Village at Harvard Crossing, Village at Olive Marketplace, Village at Pioneer Park, Village at Camelback Park, Village at The BLVD and Village at Paseo de Lucens.

“We are currently in escrow on more land in the West Valley as well for several other communities,” Duplessis says.

In Glendale, Malnar says that as of the time of this writing, there are 680 newly completed multifamily units, 3,566 under construction and 2,224 in plan review for a total of 6,470 units. “Compare that to 1,626 permitted for the years 2014-2020 or 464 average per year,” he says.

In closing, Duplessis notes “We see a growing trend and a strong desire for people to live, work and play in the community. To help fulfill demand, we will continue to build and provide options for our current and future West Valley residents.” **AB**

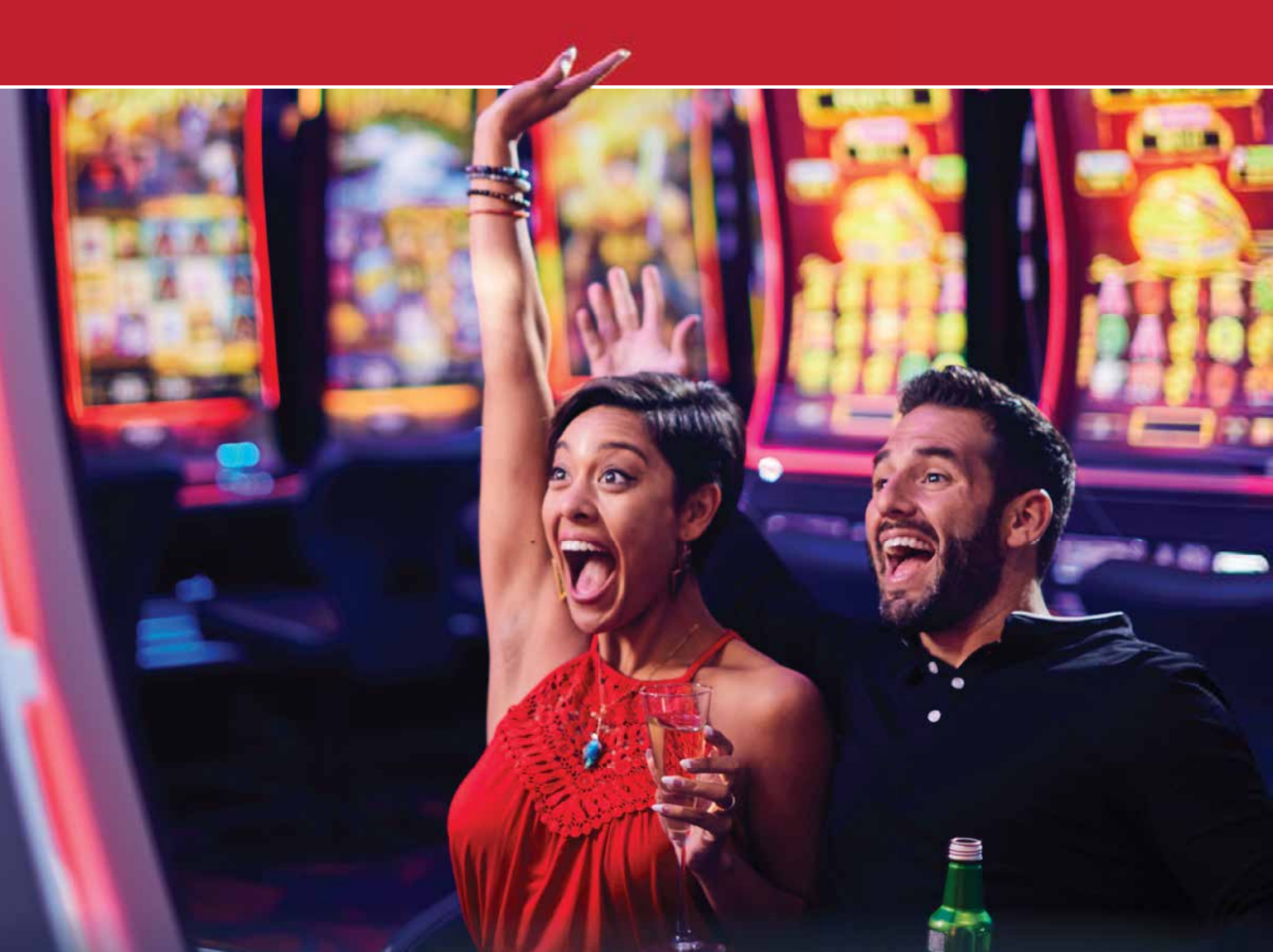
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