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Where does Lake Havasu City grow from here?

City could run out of land to develop in ‘six to eight years’

By Michael Zogg

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Home construction is plentiful all over town. Whether it's large scale or individual lot infill development, residents and visit have to travel far to see homes being built.

Michael Zogg/Today's News-Herald

Lake Havasu City has been growing fairly quickly throughout its 60 year history, but with the city surrounded by state and federal lands that growth has some limits – and Havasu may already be approaching them.

“We have about 2,500 single family residential sites – all together – in this town,” said Mychal Gorden, of Desert Land Group. “That includes all the original infill sites, and all the finished sites within The Refuge, Sailing Hawks, Riviera, and any other development.”

Gorden estimated that existing developments still have another 2,200 to 2,500 additional lots that are still unfinished. That leaves the city and surrounding area with roughly 5,000 vacant lots – not all of which are available for purchase or easily built upon.

“At this pace, we will probably see the city run out of land within six to eight years,” Gorden said. “You really won’t see too many vacant sites, and if you see them it is because people don’t want things built on them.”

Eric Gedalje, CEO of the Janecek Gedalje Group, said large developments are already adding homes in all directions, with Havasu Riviera to the south, The Foothills to the east, and developments like North Pointe, Viewpoint, and Sailing Hawks to the north.

“It is going to be really interesting to see, in the next two to two and a half years, where we develop to create new inventory for our buyers,” Gedalje said. “It is going to be challenging.”

Justin Janecek, with Janecek Homes, said he expects the next step will be for purchases of various parcels of property owned by the city, left over from when Havasu incorporated and took over operation of the Irrigation and Drainage District in the late 1960s.

“The city is starting to open up some land that is coming available to local buyers,” he said. “That hasn’t happened in a while.”

But even if the city sells off all of the property it isn’t currently using, or planning to use, that will only sustain the demand for residential growth for so long.

Although city officials have estimated that Havasu’s water allocation will allow for a maximum population of 90,000 to 100,000, Desert Land Group’s Luke Still estimated that the amount of residential land currently available would likely only house about 70,000. Still said he expects developers will eventually turn their eyes to Arizona State Trust Land as the only option for expansion.

But part of the reason so much state land is still available around town is because it can be

challenging and costly to develop. Still said such land generally takes longer to develop because it doesn't have infrastructure already in place. Additionally, there is an application process that prospective buyers have to go through in order for the State Land Department to agree to put the property up for sale. When it does, the property is put up for auction which can drive up the cost.

"It is a difficult process, and it will happen," Still said. "That will be the next way for Lake Havasu to get land."

Michael Zogg

Reporter