

Local Business

City hires developer for airport's acres

Business park will be mix of office, industrial spaces

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The city has hired a St. Louis company to develop 57 acres next to the airport into a business park.

The Corpus Christi International Airport Business Centre doesn't have a tenant yet, but a local real estate broker hopes to see construction in as little as 60 days.

The site, north of International Drive along State Highway 44, in front of the airport, will be a mix of office and industrial space.

It's off a state highway, near a rail line and a few miles from Interstate Highway 37.

Matt Cravey, the broker on the project, is in negotiations with a company in the oilfield service who is interested in property at the site. If all goes well, Cravey said, construction could start in about 60 days.

"We're pretty far along. Sixty days is not unreasonable," he said. "We've also had some interest from hotels and others. People think you have to be airport-related and that's not true. This a great site for any business that can be in a high-class business park."

The project's developer hopes to attract regional and national customers, said Steve Kozarits, national director of development for Scannell Properties.

"There are those that would benefit from the center's proximity to the airport and access to the whole Corpus Christi region," Kozarits said. "Industry, in general, tends to locate at or near airports because the airport brings executives to and fro and has the good, updated infrastructure such as rails, roads and highways."

The city has built roads and improved drainage and lighting at the site in preparation for the center, said Amy Gazin, an airport spokeswoman. Hiring a developer to find tenants is not uncommon and done in order to attract the highest-level customers, she added.

"This is a great opportunity for the city and airport and we certainly want to go to the best," Gazin said. "We thought it was in our best interest that we get someone who has the knowledge about airport business centers. (Scannell) has that forte."

Scannell will lease the land from the airport for a \$1 for the first nine months as it acquires tenants. After that nine-month period, Scannell will lease the property for \$20,000 a year. Any tenants to the center would pay rent to Scannell on any building that goes up on that property, Gazin said.

Scannell, based in St. Louis, was established in 1990 and has developed property in 23 states, including the Reno-Tahoe International Airport and the Vero Beach Airport in Florida. It has managed more than \$250 million worth of commercial real estate development projects in the past five years, according to the company's Web site.

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