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Tohono O'odham update west-side casino plan

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The Tohono O'odham Nation has released renderings of what its proposed west-side casino would look like if it overcomes efforts by city of Glendale and state lawmakers to block its development.

West Valley Resort, a tribal arm, says its updated plan calls for phase one to encompass 220,000 square feet on 54 acres at Northern and 95th avenues. The first phase would include 54,750 square feet of gaming space, a sports bar, food court, 400-seat buffet, 150-seat 24-hour cafe and events center. The initial phase does not include a hotel component, which would will be built as part of the second phase.

The city of Glendale and some state lawmakers are suing the U.S. Interior Department to stop the tribe's plans for the parcel, which sits on county land just north of University of Phoenix Stadium. The federal government approved a request from the tribe to include the land as part of its reservation. A court date on that suit is slated for Feb. 17.

What do you think about the tribe's plan? Take our quick poll (runs through 8 a.m. Jan. 20).

“Public support for our project has been overwhelming and we are determined to move forward with this project, despite opponents' efforts to delay,” said O'odham Chairman Ned Norris Jr. “These renderings are an example of the work that is being done right now so that we can be ready to start construction as soon as possible.”

The tribe says the casino and resort would host 1.2 million visitors annually and create 6,000 construction jobs and 3,000 permanent casino jobs.

But the preview of what the project might look like hasn't budged the city of Glendale's position, said spokeswoman Julie Frisoni. Glendale cites the location across from Kellis High School and worries about its impact on the surrounding area, including Westgate City Center and Jobing.com Arena.

“The issue of the Tohono O'odham tribe creating a reservation within Glendale's boundaries, has nothing to do with the design of a resort. It is a state's rights issue. Glendale continues to assert that (the tribe's) plan violates federal statutes, state's rights and is not in the best interest of the city of Glendale, our residents, and the state of Arizona,” Frisoni said. “Voters were very clear when they approved Proposition 202,

which limited the number of tribal casinos in our state and restricted the spread of gaming within the metropolitan area. Despite voter approval, the Tohono O’odham’s continue to work to undermine this agreement,” she said.

The tribe’s updated plan moves the casino and other phase one elements away from the high school and off a strip of land Glendale contends is a city parcel. The tribe has not given a date when construction might start since it depends on court rulings.

West Valley Resort: www.westvalleyopportunity.com.

City of Glendale: www.glendaleaz.com.



Rendering of proposed casino on the west side of Phoenix.



Front of the proposed casino, which is opposed by the city of Glendale.