GILBERT NEWS

Downtown becoming more vibrant

By Jim Torgeson

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Lots of things are happening in the Heritage District.

Both the SoCal Fish Taco Shop and Joyride Taco House just opened in downtown Gilbert. Another coffee option is in process and the Heritage Marketplace project will begin construction late this summer. In addition, the parking garage by Heritage Marketplace will break ground soon.

The farmers market every Saturday morning is all hustle and bustle while the gourmet food trucks add a bit of flavor downtown. There are a couple of new buildings in process which will add more restaurants and office space as well as eclectic shopping spots.

What does this mean for you?
It means a more vibrant, exciting downtown with more options, more people and more things to do. The saying goes "people go where people go." It will be even more appar-

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ent as spaces fill up and are built in the downtown. Public art, more bus stops, more pedestrians, more special events and further focus on economic development will increase the desirability of downtown living also.

Our community is steadily getting more involved in downtown happenings. Have you noticed the walking tour that a Gilbert Leadership class created or the mural on the American Legion building? There is not much in the way of unoccupied store frontage today, but it is in the works and at a great stage for planning a small-business ven-

ture

The Economic Development staff and the Redevelopment Commission are currently working with Arizona State University and it's Master's of Real Estate and Development program to take the district to a whole new level.

The program will help us plan and market much of the area (especially the town-owned land) and maximize its desirability to both developers and residents. Currently, hopes are for multistory buildings that will include loft living, offices and services for residents.

Although Gilbert is considered classically suburbia, the goal is to create a quasi-urban feel in the district that harkens back to the day of mixed uses that flourished above businesses while maintaining a contemporary vibrancy.

Live, work and play in downtown Gilbert.

Jim Torgeson is vice chairman of the Gilbert Redevelopment Commission.