

MANVEL ON THE MOVE

By **MICHAEL FREEMAN** michael.freeman@thefacts.com | **Posted: Monday, January 13, 2014 2:00 am**

MANVEL — With multiple large residential developments in the works and several retailers interested in setting up shop soon, city officials expect Manvel to explode in size.

Some estimates predict a 775 percent boom over the next two decades.

Just as Pearland saw a 142 percent increase in population from 2000 to 2010, Manvel city officials believe their town is next as Houstonians drive down Highway 288, looking to settle down outside the metropolis.

“Once the infrastructure is in, it’s going to go like a tsunami,” Manvel Mayor Delores Martin said.

WAVE OF DEVELOPMENT

About 10,000 lots are in the process of being developed within 10 subdivisions in the city limits, which could accommodate as many as 30,000 people over the next five to eight years, Manvel City Manager Kyle Jung said. And while that represents major growth for the city of about 7,100, most of the growth will happen in its extraterritorial jurisdiction.

One of the largest developments in the works is the Pomona planned community. The 2,100-lot development on more than 1,000 acres will feature homes, a recreation center, spaces for schools, walking trails, fishing lakes and two roundabouts. The developers hope people will begin moving in during the first quarter of 2015, city officials said. The expansive development, located between CR 48 and Highway 288, should accommodate home hunters as Pearland subdivisions are filling up.

“It’s overflowing,” Martin said. “Shadow Creek is full. Southfork is full. It’s coming this way. That’s why Pomona is in the right spot. They’re ready to bloom.”

Across the highway from Pomona, along CR 101, developers are building 800 homes in the Sedona Lakes subdivision. The first three sections of the development have been built; a fourth is being built now, and City Council could approve construction of two more sections within the next two months.

“They can’t build them fast enough,” Martin said. “Everybody wants houses.”

Including people calling the extraterritorial jurisdiction home, about 20,000 people live in or around Manvel, Martin said.

Developers are building another 650 homes in the Lakeland subdivision just north of Manvel High School. Adjacent to that development, Bluewater Lakes will feature 300 homes. A 200-home gated community called Newport Lakeside Estates is planned for the southeastern corner of CR 58 and CR 48.

“As the number of rooftops continues to expand exponentially, the commercial is going to follow it.”

Jung said.

RESIDENCES FUEL RETAIL

As developments take off around Manvel, city officials have received interest in commercial developments, including a grocery store.

Manvel does not have a grocery store now, so residents have resorted to driving to Alvin or Pearland. The closest store the city has to a grocery store is a Dollar General, Martin said.

“Obviously, that would help the citizens if we have a grocery store,” Jung said. “It would also help the city because we’ll have improved assessed value as well as sales tax that would come in.”

Kroger Signature and H-E-B store officials have both shown interest in building in Manvel, city officials said. But neither wants to build until the city installs water and sewer lines near the corner of Highway 6 and Highway 288.

The city has invested \$1.8 million to extend lines over a mile from the 19400 block of Highway 6 to Highway 288. So far, the city has secured easements west all the way to Iowa Lane, but still needs four more to make it to Highway 288, Jung said.

City officials are hoping a decision on the grocery store could be made after the lines are put in, which should happen later this year. “It’s something everybody wants here,” Martin said. “We need the infrastructure first.”

The city is also looking at developing sandpits around the Highway 6-Highway 288 intersection to serve as off-site detention for commercial endeavors. That intersection should be a “gold mine” for retailers, especially with the potential construction of toll roads along Highway 288, Martin said. Talks of an outlet mall going in near there have also been circulating, she said.

Road expansion will direct more drivers through the area, city officials said. County officials also plan to expand CR 48 from two lanes to four from Highway 6 to Broadway in Pearland.

PLANNING FOR WHAT’S NEXT

Infrastructure within the planned developments will be up to the developers to handle. However, they will still have to abide by many of the city’s standards, city officials said.

Manvel officials are reviewing and updating the city’s comprehensive plan, to keep it up with the times. They’ve also adopted a thoroughfare plan and water model and are looking at a master drainage plan.

“When development does come here, they’re not driving the bus, we are,” Martin said. “These are very valuable tools.”

It also helps when the city annexes the developments into the city limits. It’s not a matter of if, but when that will happen, Jung said. Some developers have a deal with the city that annexation won’t happen until the development is finished. For developments like Sedona Lakes and Pomona, that might be a decade from now, Jung said.

But with those new residents, the city will have to prepare to support them with its services. For example, Jung anticipates the police department will need to double in size over the next five years.

“We’re going to have to grow in order to meet the challenges an additional 10,000 or 20,000 or 25,000 people will bring,” Jung said. “You’re not just talking more police on the streets; you’re talking parks and trails and all the other amenities.”

Limiting factors such as water availability from the drought might keep Manvel’s boom from reaching more than 150,000 people in the near future, but the city could still double, triple or quadruple in size in the coming years, Jung said. While city officials come across challenges daily, they see Manvel’s future as bright.

“Our goal this year is to look to the future and plan for it,” Martin said.