

NEW MEXICO NEWS

## Former Santa Fe art college campus in Midtown poised for major revival

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[SANTA FE, N.M.](#) (KRQE) –After years of planning, City of Santa Fe project leaders now say they’re poised to move faster toward transforming the heart of the city into a community hub with new housing, entertainment, film production, and tech makers’ space.

Closed since 2018, the former Santa Fe Art and Design College in Midtown is now churning toward a new future. As new signs go up, a new state land swap is giving Santa Fe control of a key southern campus entrance at Siringo Rd. and Yucca St. Today, the five tracts included in the swap are 19.53 empty acres, but city leaders said that owning the property unlocks the next phase of development.

“It’s so exciting to see us take on this entry point and have a straight point of entry off of Yucca into the site, as well as fully expand and have control as the city to see what happens here,” said Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Deputy Director Carly Venditti.

Another 7.9 acre parcel further north, also now under city control, is where project leaders hope to see at least 1,100 apartments, with 30% of those required to be designated affordable, alongside community and commercial development. The parcel is on the historic “Bruns Army Hospital” site from World War II.

“Around this area, we see a lot of single-family homes, but we want to provide an opportunity for a variety of housing types at different income levels so it’s accessible to folks that already

live and work here in Santa Fe,” Venditti said.

Crews are already working on the south end of the campus, with the “Aspect Media Village” project, a 23-acre mixed-use site centered around the region’s largest film studio. The development also consists of office space, tech makers’ spaces, retail, restaurants, residential housing, and a number of performing arts groups.

Aspect Media Village’s new ArtHouse Apartments are right down the street from the city’s newly acquired land at the southern entrance. A reservation campaign is set to come out in April and an expected completion ready-date is set for early July. Phillip Gesue, a principal at PE Real Estate Holding LLC and Aspect Media developer, said the land swap is a great thing for the city. “It probably had relatively little value, but as a component of a revitalized Midtown, it’s very valuable, and it can contribute a lot to the economic development of Santa Fe,” Gesue said.

“Putting the planning and disposition of that in the hands of the city allows the city to do something in a more coordinated fashion.”

Gesue discussed why he chose Santa Fe Midtown for his project, highlighting the city’s beauty, diverse community, love for the arts, and great climate. “I looked at it as a really fantastic place to live, work, and play. I think that the location is really about the very best location you could have, because it’s central to everything,” he said. “And in, you know, in the greatest city in this part of the world.”

But housing, entertainment, and film production are only part of the equation. The “New Mexico Innovation Hub” has already brought in high-tech start-ups, including two fusion energy companies, the New Mexico Consortium, and Santa Fe Community College’s machinist learning lab.

NM Innovation Hub CEO & Founder David Perez describes his development goals as creating a center of gravity for advanced technology companies to set up shop. Technology, he hopes, has the potential to improve the climate and the world.

“We need to stop our brain drain in New Mexico,” said Perez, describing how talent sprouted from the national labs and universities tend to start their companies out of the state. “We want to create opportunities for our young people, our best and brightest to stay in New Mexico and build their careers.”

Perez also plans to develop a five-acre live-work campus with office space, labs, industrial space, and up to 45 townhomes. “We truly have momentum now,” said Perez. “We have really great momentum. And our new mayor, Mayor Garcia, is very much behind the Midtown project, and I see that he’s really putting energy into moving everything forward.”

Over the next few days, two of the first new businesses are opening on campus, including the “Tender Fire Kitchen” restaurant opening tonight and the “Sky Cinema” café and bar having its first screening on Sunday.

The next step in the land swap process is to get it finalized by the Board of Finance. The city said asbestos remediation on the newly acquired land could begin soon, along with cultural artifact surveys.