

LONG BEACH

Developers break ground on final Douglas Park project

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The last piece of Long Beach's Douglas Park business complex is expected to open early next year, after officials ceremonially broke ground on the Airway Office Park project on June 22 — more than a decade after work began to redevelop the 260-acre area.

The developers said construction was expected to begin in earnest later that day.

The 3.7-acre Airway Office Park development, adjacent to the Long Beach Airport, will include dual two-story buildings. Combined, the structures will offer more than 60,000 square-feet of office space and amenities.

Work began on the Douglas Park business complex more than 10 years ago, with Long Beach officials and private developers viewing the undeveloped land, which once operated as a Boeing aviation field, as a prime opportunity to create another economic hub in the city.

Several other business developments already operate in Douglas Park, including the Long Beach Exchange, the Terminal and Virgin Orbit's headquarters. It's also home to Mercedes-Benz USA's West Coast headquarters.

Airway Office Park has been designed with the changing workforce in mind, said Richard Lewis, who leads Urbana Development, which is building the project.

The project has been designed as a "campus," Lewis said, with 4,671-square feet of shared amenities — including patios and balconies.

"If you think about the old office environment, that's not the environment that people want to work in post-COVID," Lewis said in an interview after the groundbreaking ceremony. "Employees today know how to use technology and they're just as productive outside as they are sitting at a desk — so why not take advantage of what California has to offer?"

To that end, Lewis said, the building has been designed to ensure its future tenants



BRITTANY MURRAY — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Officials have a ceremonial groundbreaking for the Urbana Development, LLC, "Airway Office Park" project at Douglas Park in Long Beach on June 22.

ants access to a strong internet connection, even when working in the outdoor green spaces. Inside, the windows will be operable — providing additional sources of fresh air and ventilation.

"Employers are having trouble attracting employees and keeping them," Lewis said. "If you've got an office en-

vironment that your employees like to come to, it feels like you value them and are willing to invest in what the space looks like."

The Airway Office Park marks Urbana's third development in Douglas Park. The company also built The Terminal, another large creative office space, and the 38,000

square-foot Douglas Park Medical office.

"I believe we had the first two buildings sold out before we broke ground," Lewis said of the Terminal development, which was also designed with employees in mind. "That spoke to the need and desire for that type of environment — and we're looking to build on that with the Airway Office Park project."

This final piece of the Douglas Park development is a "watershed moment" for Long Beach, Vice Mayor Rex Richardson said during the groundbreaking.

"We have to acknowledge what the whole picture looks like — we're talking about 10,000 jobs in Long Beach," Richardson said. "These are good quality jobs — the types of jobs you want to attract to a city like Long Beach."

Jeremy Harris, president of the Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, said he's looking forward to helping Urbana eventually lease out the new office buildings.

"We're certainly in the business of helping our businesses expand," Harris said, "and we're looking forward to welcoming those folks that don't know this is here in Long Beach."

Construction on the Airway Office Park is expected to continue throughout the year, with the base building scheduled for completion in March.

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