

Martins says Arena will be magical

Jerry Greene | FROM THE CHEAP SEATS
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Once upon a time, there was a novel, a film and a Broadway musical called A Tree Grows in Brooklyn. (Google it if you need verification.) And we have the start of the same kind of far-reaching phenomena here with "An Arena Grows in Orlando."

If you don't believe me, go to OrlandoEventsCenter.com and watch it grow.

OK, there hasn't been much aboveground work yet, but the site has fascinating drawings and a lot of information. It also has an [EarthCam](#) system that allows you to view the construction. And it includes a streamed time-lapse movie from start to eventual finish. Granted, when I look at it now, all I see is one small building and four trees disappearing.

Orlando Magic COO Alex Martins sees so much more.

"I see the future," he said Monday. "And that [EarthCam](#) is going to allow all of us to see that future rise out of the ground."

Sure, the Magic are going to benefit greatly from the construction of a "super arena" in downtown Orlando. But Martins believes what's happening goes far beyond that, starting with the groundbreaking ceremonies last week.

"This will benefit the Parramore area and all of downtown, perhaps far more than any of us know," he said. "It's happened in Nashville, Columbus [Ohio], Memphis and Charlotte.

"Nobody went into downtown Nashville 10 years ago, but now people plan long-weekend visits there [after the now-named Sommet Center was built]. In Columbus, the Nationwide Arena was built [in 2000] upon the former site of a penitentiary. The impact was amazing there and will be here."

There's also the jobs either created or extended by the massive project of building the arena and an arts center downtown, plus refurbishing the Citrus Bowl. All that involves an estimated 10,000 workers -- and, to my knowledge, none of the work is being sent overseas.

And when the arena is done, it will be huge. Martins says we won't know what we've been missing until we see it. Imagine, if nothing else, no waiting in line to go to the restroom. Oh, and I offered a really good idea: Media recliners.

"First time I've heard that one," said Martins.

I'm sure he will give the idea all the consideration it deserves.