Las Vegas entertainment destination breaks ground

Dive Brief:

- Construction has started on AREA15, a Las Vegas retail, art and entertainment center that promises to offer "immersive" experiences, along with music, art, gaming, sci-fi, comic-con and other events, according to Commercial Property Executive.

- The 126,000-square-foot project, located near but not on the famous Las Vegas Strip, is a collaboration between developer Fisher Brothers and creative firm Bvenile Studios, both based in New York, and will include 68,000 square feet of leasable ground floor space, 58,000 square feet of mezzanines and a 40,000-square-foot indoor-outdoor event area that can accommodate up to 3,000 people. It is expected to be the site of music festivals, corporate events and e-sport tournaments. The anchor tenant, a multimedia production company called Meow Wolf, creates immersive and interactive experiences.

- AREA15 officials first announced the development in January despite purchasing the land in 2005 for $50 million. Fisher Brothers partner Winston Fisher said the project will define a new retail model.

Dive Insight:

Some developers in the retail sector are responding to a perceived demand for more experience-based shopping venues. One of the leaders in this movement is Triple Five, the company behind the Minneapolis-area Mall of America, which has seen more than 500 million visitors since opening in 1992, according to the company’s website. The 4.2-million-square-foot Mall of America drives business to its more than 500 retail establishments by including an indoor amusement park and other entertainment options.

Triple Five is hoping to recreate that success in two other developments – American Dream Meadowlands in East Rutherford, New Jersey and American Dream Miami.

The 3-million-square-foot Meadowlands venue is scheduled to open in spring of 2019. The developer said 55% of the mall’s space will be set aside for entertainment and recreational opportunities like a water park, amusement park, ski slope, aquarium, ice rink and a Cirque Du Soleil theater. The rest of the venue will host what Triple Five said will be unique retail stores.

The American Dream Miami is still in the preliminary planning stages. Despite promising an economic boon for construction companies and support for businesses and Miami-Dade County, the project at once received pushback from locals who warned that such a huge development, which also included hotels and office space, would stress local infrastructure and emergency services. The latest salvo has been from local retailers that have lobbied the Miami-Dade County Commission to forego any tax breaks or other incentives to bring the mall to the area on the grounds that it will give Triple Five an unfair advantage.