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Al Maktoum Airport: *what the AED 128 billion expansion means for Dubai South*

Where the world's largest airport project stands in 2026, and why it is moving property prices around it.

Image: Dubai Media Office

In April 2024, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum approved an **AED 128 billion** plan to turn **Al Maktoum International Airport (DWC)** in Dubai South into the largest airport in the world. When it is finished, every flight that uses Dubai International (DXB) today, including the Emirates hub, will move to DWC. Two and a half years later, construction is well underway, contracts are being awarded and the first phase is scheduled for 2032. Here are the facts, and what they mean if you are buying property in Dubai South.

The project *in numbers*

AED 128B APPROVED INVESTMENT (APRIL 2024)	**260M** PASSENGERS A YEAR AT FULL CAPACITY	**5** PARALLEL RUNWAYS
400+ AIRCRAFT GATES	**70 km²** FIVE TIMES THE SIZE OF DXB	**12M tonnes** AIR CARGO A YEAR
2032 FIRST PHASE OPENS	**1 million** PEOPLE EXPECTED TO NEED HOUSING AROUND IT	

Sources: Dubai Media Office / Gulf News (April 2024), The National (June 2026), AGBI (August 2026).

Where construction *stands in 2026*

In June 2026, Dubai Aviation Engineering Projects gave its latest progress update:

- **AED 13 billion** of contracts are already under execution, and around **AED 55 billion** more are due to be awarded by the end of 2026, including the Western Passenger Terminal and the fourth concourse.
- More than **17,000 concrete piles** are in place and over **45 million cubic metres** of earth have been excavated.
- About **9,000 workers** are on site today, rising to around **120,000** at peak construction.
- Work on the **second runway** is part of the current phase.
- In August 2026, a consortium of **L&T and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries** won the contract for the airport's automated people mover, due for completion in **December 2031**, ahead of the 2032 opening.

The finished airport is planned with two passenger terminals, seven concourses and more than 430 aircraft stands.

Why Dubai *needs it*

Dubai International is already the world's busiest airport for international passengers, and it is running out of room:

DXB passengers in 2025	**95.2 million** (a record, up 3.1% on 2024)
2026 forecast	**99.5 million**
Network	291 destinations in 110 countries, served by 108 international airlines
DWC at full capacity	**260 million** passengers, almost three times DXB's 2025 traffic

DXB sits in the middle of the city with no space left to grow. DWC was designed with room for five runways from the start, which is why the government chose to move the whole operation there rather than expand DXB.

What it has done to *Dubai South property*

The effect on the surrounding market has been clear. Dubai Land Department sales data for Dubai South shows how transactions and prices changed after the 2024 announcement:

YEAR	SALES TRANSACTIONS	MEDIAN PRICE PER SQ FT
2022	2,086	AED 650
2023	2,988	AED 878
2024 (airport plan approved)	7,778	AED 1,377
2025	9,989	AED 1,559
2026 (to October)	**14,492**	**AED 1,653**

Source: Dubai Land Department transaction data, all property types, primary and resale. 2026 covers January to October.

In ten months of 2026, Dubai South has already recorded more sales than in the whole of 2025, and the median price per square foot is up about **88% since 2023**.

What this means *for buyers*

- **Think in years, not months.** The first phase opens in 2032 and full capacity comes later. The biggest gains in Dubai South are likely to follow the airport's milestones.
- **Location inside Dubai South matters.** Homes close to the airport, Expo City Dubai and its Metro station, and the main roads (Emirates Road, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Road, Al Maktoum Road) should hold their value best.
- **Watch the supply.** Many developers are launching here. Choose projects from developers with a strong delivery record, and compare payment plans and handover dates.
- **Rental demand will follow the jobs.** Airlines, logistics, cargo and aviation companies will bring tens of thousands of workers who need homes nearby.

Projects *to consider*



Golf Edge – Emaar South

Emaar · apartments by the golf course



Golf Point – Emaar South

Emaar · apartments by the golf course

Read our full **Dubai South community guide** for prices, rents and yields across the area.

Thinking about *Dubai South?*

Ask for the latest launches, prices and payment plans near the new airport.

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Sources

- Gulf News, "Dubai embarks on world's largest airport project at Al Maktoum International", 28 April 2024
- The National, "Dubai's Al Maktoum airport expansion on track for 2032 launch with Dh55bn of contracts to be awarded this year", 15 June 2026
- AGBI, "Dubai awards Al Maktoum airport passenger system contract", August 2026
- Gulf News, "Dubai Airport records 95.2m fliers last year, inches closer to 100m in 2026", February 2026
- Dubai Land Department transaction data for Dubai South, October 2026

This article is for information only and is not investment advice. Figures come from the sources listed and may change.
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