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Town Council approves Sahuarita Farms plan



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The Sahuarita Town Council has signed off on a plan to eventually turn roughly 7,000 acres of pecan groves into a master-planned community.

The unanimous decision Monday night by the council gives Farmers Investment Co. the rights to develop its property in accordance with the specific plan, in exchange for financing by the developer for public improvements and infrastructure.

It could take decades before the plan is fully realized, as FICO owner **Dick Walden** says he doesn't expect any development on the properties, stretching 14 miles from Pima Mine Road to Continental Road, to begin within the next 10 years.

The Walden family says the long-term development plan will guide the development of FICO's farmland as it transitions to other uses over the next 40 to 50 years.

"This has been our family's home for more than 65 years and will continue to be," Walden said in a

written statement. "It is important that we leave the best legacy possible for our children, our employees and our community. I know that the Sahuarita Farms Land/River Plan provides the foundation for a bright future for the town of Sahuarita."

The proposed master-planned Sahuarita Farms community would have 1,900 acres set aside for homes, 1,100 acres for businesses and another 2,400 acres for planned mixed-use projects.

FICO first submitted the Sahuarita Farms plan to the town in 2011.

Town Manager **L. Kelly Udall** said he is enthusiastic about the proposal.

In a news release, he said he looks forward to when Sahuarita Farms becomes "a vibrant part of the community that will celebrate the river, create a sustainable community, build safe, healthy neighborhoods, provide quality education for all ages and honor the heritage of the FICO property."