

# Green Valley News

## **IN MY VIEW: Sahuarita looking at how it will grow**

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By Gil Lusk

The Sahuarita Town Council, on Dec. 11, 2012, directed town staff to proceed with the process of creating a Conceptual Plan for the future growth and development of Sahuarita. Final details are now being worked out by the Council and staff.

Have you ever thought about how Sahuarita should grow? Should it remain a bedroom community for those who work in Tucson or should it expand to the east and provide opportunities for light industry and good-paying jobs right here in Sahuarita? We have such a good start with our schools, churches, commercial businesses and the overall design of the town that it would be a shame not to continue our progress.

Plans by the Walden family (FICO) fully support the expansion of a unique town among the pecan orchards and along the Santa Cruz river corridor with well-planned commercial and residential space that will add value and character to Sahuarita. Should Sahuarita stop there?

To answer that and many other questions will require a Conceptual Plan for the future of Sahuarita, a plan that will lead to the further expansion of our town through establishment of a new town boundary to the east. The plan will also lead to future annexation of state lands in budgeted phases, lands that can support light industry; industry in support of new technology and energy forms; industry that can bring business and jobs to you and to your children.

The Conceptual Plan will be undertaken by the Town beginning in 2013, a process that might last for as long as two years, a process that will include a minimum of four public meetings a year to allow your review and input into the concepts being discussed. The process will include two groups working on the Conceptual Plan: a Work Group and an Advisory Group. The Advisory Group made up of key development and investor groups who, it is hoped, will invest in the town's future.

The Work Group will be made up of town personnel along with key members from conservation and planning organizations such as the Sonoran Institute, the University of Arizona and The Planning Center in Tucson. This group will work to create a Conceptual Plan for a future Sahuarita that is a model town for those living in semi-arid desert communities, limited by water yet fully capable of being supported by new energy sources. A town that embraces its open space, its cultural history and values, its diversity of population and its creation of living spaces unique to the desert and the values that have brought us to Sahuarita today. It should not be a Xeroxed copy of a city or town but

a Village supporting future technologies and conservation. It will build on the values already present in Sahuarita represented by Rancho Sahuarita, FICO, Quail Creek and others; by a community of energized youths and highly professional seniors working together toward a common vision.

The Arizona State Land commissioner and her assistants have received a full briefing on this vision from members of the Town Council and have expressed their strong support and interest in our approach — critical needs when we take the Conceptual Plan to the State Land Commission in two years for approval of a new town boundary and Annexation Plan.

It will not be easy. It will take time and funding over the first two years of planning, and then perhaps decades to achieve. But without a solid foundation how can we build upon the Sahuarita of today and make it the Sahuarita of tomorrow?

I hope that we can visualize that future together!

Gil Lusk is a member of the Sahuarita Town Council.