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# Green Valley News

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## Weather

Warm, partly sunny, high 98. Partly cloudy night, low 74. **More weather, A4.**

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# Town manager: FICO plan OK, but tie up loose ends

**By Dan Shearer**

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The Sahuarita Town Council will consider approving the Sahuarita Farms development agreement this month, but it won't come with the town manager's blessing. At least not yet.

Town Manager Kelly Udall said he is enthusiastic about the project that will develop 5,645 acres of pecan orchards over the next 50 years but wants to see a handful of unresolved issues taken care of before the council gives a thumbs-up to FICO's Specific Plan Application on Aug. 24.

"It's 98 percent there," Udall said last week.

The development agreement lays out rights, responsibilities and literally

hundreds of details of the project that is expected to roll out in six phases over several decades, much of it along the Santa Cruz River. It also, according to an Aug. 3 memo from Udall to the council, is intended "to provide the Town with a comfort level that the development will 'pay for itself,' and that the developer(s) and not the Town or its current residents, will be responsible for the infrastructure necessitated by the project."

The project includes an additional 1,100 acres in Green Valley under the name Continental Farms that comes under Pima County jurisdiction.

The county last year approved a rezoning ordinance, removing a major hurdle for the Green Valley

portion of the project east of Interstate 19 and southwest of Whitehouse Canyon Road spanning both sides of Continental Road.

FICO spokesman David Steele said Tuesday that both sides are working to get the issues ironed out on the Sahuariat portion before the council vote.

Udall's memo said town staff and FICO are "very close to agreeing in total" on the development agreement but recommended it all be settled before the council adopts the plan.

Among the areas agreed on:

- FICO will pay for river improvements other than recreational amenities outside of trails and open space. The town could eventually become in-

involved financially, however.

- FICO would be responsible for the maintenance of the River Park improvements.

- The town will not charge FICO development fees, sometimes called "impact fees," for 15 years. The town doesn't currently charge such fees but has similar no-fee agreements with Rancho Sahuarita and Quail Creek that stretch far into the future.

- FICO will pay for infrastructure on its property and a share of infrastructure for nearby property.

- FICO will build 14 athletic fields and give them to the town.

- FICO may continue to farm undeveloped property.

- FICO would donate

land for public use such as police substations, a public works yard or a public transit station.

## **NO AGREEMENT**

Udall noted four areas where there still is no agreement:

- The proposal would require the town to return land to FICO that was dedicated for a wastewater treatment facility if the town rezones any of FICO's property because that land was not removed from the flood plain. The town wants this provision deleted.

- The proposal requires the town to get FICO's permission "to do certain things with land that FICO dedicated to the Town, such as sell it, trade it, or use it for uses

that are not primarily public uses." Udall wrote that the deed restriction "could be read to prevent a recreation center operated by the YMCA or another private entity."

- The proposal allows FICO to transfer responsibility of maintenance of River Park improvements (the main river channel and upper terraces) to another government entity without the town's consent. Udall said the town could lose control over land if this moves forward.

- The town and FICO are still working on "mutually agreeable language" regarding improvements to interstate traffic interchanges, such as Interstate 19 and Sahuarita Road.