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SPOTLIGHT TOP STORY

Section of Anderson farm sold to residential developer in Maricopa

By KATIE SAWYER Staff Writer May 6, 2021 Updated May 7, 2021



A rendering of the entrance to a new residential master planned community that will be built on land long farmed by the Anderson family.

The Land Agency

MARICOPA — After nearly 70 years of farming, the Anderson family has sold a plot of land at Bowlin and Hartman roads to Lennar Homes to make way for a future residential development.

The move happened quietly in late April. The Land Agency, known for brokering deals for developments like Tortosa and Maricopa Meadows, sold 20 acres in the northwest corner of the Anderson plot for \$800,000 to Lennar Homes, which will turn the land into a new residential community.

The themed residential master planned community will be called Anderson Farms, keeping the namesake of a family who has operated the farm since 1954.

In Phase 1A, Lennar is planning on building around 80 single-family homes on lots of 5,000-6,000 square feet each, with space for additional phases in the same quadrant of land. On the north side of the quadrant is a space that is currently home to an electrical unit. However, in the future it could become a commercial space for a gas station or business.

The Anderson Farms community will sit in line with the existing Sorrento Road, and early schematics show how the road might connect to the new community across Hartman Road.

While Phase 1A is the only parcel that has been purchased thus far, Lennar Homes has the intention of purchasing the entire property that spans from Hartman and Bowlin to Farrell and Murphy roads, according to The Land Agency representative Howard Weinstein. At the end of the day, the 600-acre plot once dedicated to farming could become the site of around 2,000 new residential homes.

“This is gonna be 100% fresh, brand-new with today's building standards, today's architecture themes,” Weinstein said. “What's also nice is, it's one home builder — Lennar — which happens to be the second largest home builder in the United States. ... They have a whole host of offerings that they'll be able to give the consumer and I just think it'll be something new and fresh that Maricopa hasn't seen for a while.”

Weinstein said there may also be other types of residential properties that balance out site, such as apartments, build-to-rent properties or higher-density housing.

“It's really someplace that people will want to live,” Weinstein said. “It's a great area to want to live, but it's not ideal for businesses to operate.”

According to Weinstein, this new development is more in line with the area's needs and reflects trends in the area. The community's second district high school, for instance, will be located adjacent to this future residential area, near Farrell and Murphy roads.

Last year, the Anderson family was involved in a dispute over the location of a second high school in the Maricopa Unified School District. Kelly Anderson, the current owner and operator of the farm, initially refused to sign a pesticide covenant that halted the process of procuring land for the second high school, which immediately neighbors the Anderson property.

The Andersons had also offered a parcel of their land for the second high school, but it ultimately was not chosen. Torri Anderson, Anderson's wife, is a school board member.

Kelly and Torri Anderson were unavailable for comment.

Discussions between Anderson Farms and The Land Agency began in 2017, and Weinstein said it took several years to solve development issues and find the right time to enter the market.

"We were still recovering from a pretty significant 10-year housing recession — Maricopa was hit particularly hard," Weinstein said. "Fast-forward from 2017 to 2021, the script is flipped and I would say today Maricopa is in the top two or three housing markets within the entire Phoenix metropolitan area. ... Home builders, candidly, are having a hard time keeping up with demand from new home buyers."

Though much of Maricopa remains rural, Weinstein sees parallels between Maricopa and other growing Phoenix cities.

"I would say Maricopa has a lot of similarities to Gilbert or Chandler, and it took Gilbert and Chandler many, many, many years to develop," Weinstein said. "If you think of Maricopa the same way, it didn't have its first house built until 2002. So here we are 20 years later, and finally, the north part of Maricopa is starting to fill in."

With the first 20-acre parcel sold and likely more to come, the plot of land once occupied by fields of wheat and flowers will soon become new housing to accommodate projected city growth.