



October 14, 2014

The Honorable Priscilla Taylor, Mayor
and Commissioners
Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners
301 N. Olive Ave.
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

RE: Minto West Ag Enclave Project

Dear Mayor Taylor and Commissioners:

1000 Friends of Florida is writing on behalf of our members to reiterate our ongoing objections to the proposed Minto West project in light of questions we raised initially in our August 23, 2014, letter to you. Attached is an additional set of questions and issues that remain unaddressed. In our opinion this project will not, and cannot, fit into the rural area surrounding it.

It will have economic, quality of life and environmental impacts that citizens and taxpayers will be facing for some time to come. When one also considers the additional impacts from other projects in this area, including Avenir in Palm Beach Gardens which just submitted its plans for 4,760 homes that will also impact the area's roadway network, it makes no sense to approve Minto West.

The Planning Commission got it right twice in recommending a denial of this proposal, and instead recognized that what has already been approved for this site, 2,996 residential units and 235,000 square feet of non-residential space, would be a much better fit for the surrounding neighborhoods.

Serious, unresolved issues remain involving road costs, ongoing traffic congestion, drainage, water quality, consistency with Everglades restoration, and taxpayer impacts. Since the County has the legal authority and discretion to deny Minto West as proposed, why would it even consider any approval until these major issues are resolved?

Sufficient documentation and comments from the public, surrounding local governments, interested parties, including the Indian Trails Improvement District and ALERT, are already in the record that justify a NO vote. We respectfully request that the County deny the Minto West project as proposed. This action would be consistent with your comprehensive plan. It would also respect the reasonable desires of your constituents in the area to protect a rural lifestyle, personal economic investments, and a quality of life that cannot be found elsewhere in southeast Florida.

Sincerely,

Charles G. Pattison, FAICP
Policy Director

Enclosure



Taking money out of taxpayers' pockets to subsidize Minto West, and destroy a quality of life

Roads – a minimum of \$110,000,000 public costs after the developer pays \$60 Million, all of which will bring an increase of 29,024 trips/day to area roads.

Question – with numerous 4, 6 and even 8 lanes needed, how does this fit within a rural community? Where does the money come from to fill the already existing funding gap of more than \$1 Billion for needed transportation improvements even if no additional development is approved?

More empty commercial spaces – already more than 1,000,000 square feet of non-residential space, and less than 20% of this is even built – the vast majority remains approved but unbuilt .

Question – how does adding another 2,200,000 square feet that is being requested possibly work when many existing sites remain vacant? What impact will this have on existing businesses in Royal Palm Beach, Wellington or even West Palm Beach?

Water -- undetermined and unresolved, especially regarding what an extension of State Road 7 and/or Roebuck Road would do to West Palm Beach's drinking water supply at Grassy Waters Reserve.

Question – can West Palm Beach risk taking any chance to its drinking water source?

Drainage – undetermined and unresolved

Question – the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) calls for drainage discharges to flow south, not east and north as proposed. What assurances can be given at this time that such a change would be approved?

Schools – three area schools are projected that would serve Minto West will be overcapacity by 2017:

Golden Groves 108%; Western Pines 117%; Seminole Ridge 112%

Question – the developer has told the School Board it will not pay to increase student capacities at these area schools and instead offered to provide an elementary school site. Who should pay for such improvements – you or the developer? It could cost as much as \$30,000,000 to build such a school, which does not include the cost of administrative personnel and teachers.

Quality of Life – how does a 50% increase in residential units and an almost 800% increase in non-residential square footage fit within a rural community, its character and lifestyle?

Acreage Neighborhood Plan conflicts – inconsistent with road patterns and land use classifications

Question - how does adding 29,024 NEW trips each day as a result of this project affect your daily life? Does adding 20,000 residents to this area sound like rural development?

Roads and Taxes:

- Only 27% of roads paid by impact fees (according to Minto documents)
- \$177 million deficit for roads (according to County staff)

Question – who is going to pay for all of this? How many 4, 6 and 8 lane roads does it take to ruin a rural lifestyle?

ULDC

- Minto West not required to build any Parks, schools or Fire Stations

Jobs:

- No assurances that Minto West tenants will generate high paying jobs
- Minto West has not provided names of any job-creating tenants

Domino effect:

- Avenir, GL Homes (North, South and AP), Block, Iota Carol, Lenard-Fleming and Highland Dunes are watching – if approved, will continue a spiral of increased taxes begun by Minto West

Question – is it really likely that if Minto West gets approved, other area projects seeking density or intensity increases won't also be granted? How will the county and its taxpayers deal with the additional road, drainage and other infrastructure that will be required by the pending or proposed developments in this area?