

We have covered the Hi Hat Ranch proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment and the request to move the Countryside Line. The remaining item to send messages to the County Commissioners is on the Development of Critical Concern, the Master Development Plan and Development Order.

These are the plans for how the Villages will be developed.

The following are the comments sent to the Planning Commission. They need to be sent to the BOCC as well and as always addressed to each one individually.

As always, pick all or some of these pints and send them to the BOCC;

Mike Moran, mmoran@scgov.net; Al Maio, amaio@scgov.net; Nancy Detert, ncdetert@scgov.net;

Christian Ziegler, cziegler@scgov.net and Ron Cutsinger, rcutsinger@scgov.net send copies to

Tdary@scgov.net, jhunt@scgov.net and planner@scgov.net.

RE; HI HAT RANCH DOCC and MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Applicant, Hi Hat Ranch has provided you with a plethora of information.

Unfortunately, one critical piece of information is missing and many of the guarantees hinge upon that information.

While many maps were provided, the map showing where the Villages are going to be located is not clear at all. There may be 3 or 4 Villages, but one could not find a map that so indicates the locations.

Much of the information provided is relative to the timing of the Villages, specifically infrastructure, discussing the incremental development of utilities

The Applicant has indicated that the first Village would be located at the Hi Hat Ranch offices. This location is akin to a hole in the doughnut. The road to the offices is located on Fruitville Road, 2.1 miles from the Ranch's western boundary. It would be safe to say this would most likely be the same distance from Bee Ridge Road. This would necessitate running utilities' lines either from the Bee Ridge Road facilities or from the extension of utilities out to the Hamlet known as Lakepark Estates. This would be 'leaping' over lands where it would make more planning sense to begin the Villages and then move easterly.

Therefore, the responses provided discussing these phasing approaches is meritless.

**The MDP MUST show the location of at least the first Village**

#### WATER QUALITY

The Applicant has provided information on monitoring and testing the SURFACE water quality, but is offering nothing for ground water protection.

The Applicant has several wells for the agricultural operation. You and your Staff have been provided with the Ranch's Water Use Permit showing the depth of the bore holes and the depth of the casings.. The Applicant is purporting to use these ag wells as back up wells for lawn irrigation, if the backup lakes and storm water ponds fail and that is only after the reclaimed water is not available.

**The agricultural wells MUST NOT be used as the third way to water lawns.** Existing legal users that are in the Hi Hat Ranch area only have their domestic wells to meet ALL their needs.

Many of the wells on Hi Hat are drilled deep and cased shallow, allowing upward migration of poor-quality water, when then moves laterally into domestic wells. The minutes from the Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board [SWFWMD] meeting and well construction records from Sarasota Health Department have previously been provided to you and County Staff.

The Ranch is located in the SWFWMD's Southern Use Water Caution Area (SWUCA) where ground water withdrawals are not only causing upward migration of poor-quality water but also saltwater intrusion. The proper plugging and abandonment of these wells would help the existing legal domestic well users and the Florida Aquifer and the Arcadian Aquifer.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Applicant stated that the aggregate mining will continue, not only for financial reasons, but because the development will need the fill.

There are NO NATURAL LAKES on the property. While ultimately, they will provide nice lake front property, this changes the whole ecosystem. Species that are currently not on the property will be drawn to the large water source. These may include predator species that would kill existing species. The flora and fauna would change as well and again the existing flora and fauna support a myriad of species which may not be able to utilize the deep water.

**Recognition MUST be given to the potential species changes and plans MUST be provided to show how this change would be mitigated.**

The Applicant states they will create new wetlands by scraping off the top soil and importing the appropriate wetland soils. Healthy, thriving wetlands need a hydrological regime.

The Applicant did not provide data and information on sites where this type of creation was successful not data showing how many have failed. There wasn't any information provided to show how the hydrological needs of the wetlands would be met. In phosphate mining, as an example, wetlands the mitigate are held to a hydrological regime that is artificially maintained by the phosphate company until they are released as 'successful' by DEP.

**The Applicant must show how they are going to accomplish this wetland scrape land and create a new wetland scheme.**

## TRAFFIC

During the Workshop and then in a smaller meeting, the Applicant lamented the ugliness of the approach to the Mai Entrance to the Villages from extending Bee Ridge Road, forcing residents to pass the County's Water Treatment Plant, the Hazardous Waste Collection Facility, the Animal Shelter and Rothenbach Park. He stated the roadway in this area would have to be realigned and that the Applicant would have to build a bridge across Cow Pen Slough.

An alternative road, with a beautiful country (at least for now) view would be to use the existing road leading into the Ranch from Fruitville Road. This would add additional congestion to an already over taxed, constrained scenic road.

Again, this is why at least **the first Village should be located on the western boundary of the Ranch and should so be indicated on the map.**

**DO NOT ADOPT THE MASTER PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT ORDER FOR HI HAT RANCH UNTIL THESE ISSUES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED.**