

McKinlay Memo - District 6 Update

Commissioner Melissa McKinlay <district6+pbcgov.org@ccsend.com>

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To: Updates <updates@gladesinitiative.org>



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Remembering 9/11

This Sunday marks the 21st anniversary of 9/11. Let us remember the acts of courage and bravery by our first responders and honor the memory of those lost that tragic day. Our prayers will never stop being sent on behalf of the thousands of grieving families.

We will never forget.

Response to PB Post Article on the Housing Crisis

Andrew Marra's August 25th article blames County Commissioners for Palm Beach County's housing crisis. However, this article neglects numerous other factors that have led to the present, untenable situation.

One of the largest is the deliberate raiding of the Sadowski Trust Fund by the Florida

Legislature. The Sadowski Fund was created as a dedicated revenue source to help affordable housing projects get built. But over the years the Legislature has siphoned off over \$2 billion from it to fund other government operations and corporate tax cuts. This has been a significant contributor to the statewide housing crisis.

Global events have also played a tremendous role. The Great Recession led to a massive construction downturn which took years to rebound. The COVID-19 pandemic caused supply-chain and demographic upheavals, both drastically increasing the cost of construction and spurring people to move to Florida, particularly South Florida, at incredible rates that have thrown the supply and demand for housing even more off balance.

There are other factors as well. One is that while the County Commission has approved numerous workforce housing units, many are never built--we cannot force a private business to put the shovel in the ground. Adding to the frustration, many workforce housing proposals face significant neighbor opposition, not wanting the units "in their backyard." Even the Palm Beach Post has opposed efforts to create this housing by calling for the rejection of the proposed Ag Reserve swap, which would generate 277 workforce housing units in a much-needed area of the County.

Add to this struggle the alarming increase in which otherwise affordable rentals are being used for short term rentals on platforms like AirBnB and for recovery residences, both options which the County has limited control to regulate due to state and federal law restrictions.

Most Commission decisions concerning workforce housing were made before 2014 when I came into office. Since day one, I have been a proponent of workforce housing. I fall into the income requirements and am experiencing the pain of rent increases. But for the Post to place blame squarely on the shoulders of the Commission is unfair. County government cannot fix this problem alone. And all of these factors above got us where we are today.

Western Roads Update

Here is the latest update on the various road projects underway in the Acreage-region:

- Beginning south along Seminole Pratt Whitney Road all the way north to the intersection with Northlake Blvd, Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd is being widened to 4 lanes and the intersection at Northlake Blvd is being expanded. The contract has been awarded to Ranger Construction and they were given a Notice to Proceed to begin work on February 15, 2022. The project has been under construction since then. Ranger Construction has installed silt fence (environmental erosion control) along the corridor. They began construction by clearing lots where proposed ponds will be located at various locations through the project. Ranger Construction's underground contractor has begun installing storm drainage along east bound Northlake Blvd. adjacent to the Seminole Pratt Whitney intersection. Construction should be completed by Fall 2024.

- From that point eastward on Northlake Blvd, the 6-laning of the Northlake Blvd segment to west of Coconut Blvd is being done by the County under agreement with Avenir. The segment is expected to be bid towards the end of calendar year 2022; however, issues with wetland preservation are currently holding this project up.
- The segment from west of Coconut Blvd to the Avenir Entrance (east of Coconut Blvd) has been bid by Avenir, and will begin construction when the final permit is issued by Land Development (close to being issued but one drainage comment remains to be addressed.)
- The segment from Avenir's entrance (east of Coconut Blvd) to the west side of SR 7 has also been bid. Avenir is scheduling the pre-construction meeting and will schedule their construction start date soon.
- The construction at Avenir's main entrance is already completed.
- As a side note, the scope of work for the study to evaluate the R/W impacts for the potential 8-laning of Northlake Blvd is currently being worked on and negotiated with the consultant. A new study schedule will be provided at a later date. The Avenir development is not conditioned to participate in this study.

ATV Park Update

The RFP for development and operation of the ATV Park is currently advertised, and the County is soliciting proposals until November 21st. For more information, visit [here](#).

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