Martin County 2070: Challenges and Opportunities

Timothy L. Hernandez, AICP, Principal
New Urban Communities
Founded in 1998 by Kevin Rickard (Custom Home Builder/General contractor and Tim Hernandez (Land Developer/Urban Planner).

Major emphasis on community and architectural design.

Focus on infill, redevelopment, mixed use and master planned traditional neighborhood development, synthesizing production and custom home building techniques.

Goals are to create timeless, sustainable communities.

Numerous developments throughout South Florida, including Miramar, Fort Lauderdale, Wilton Manors, Pompano Beach, Delray Beach, Lantana, Jupiter and Stuart, containing over 1000 residential units and 150,000 sf of commercial space.

Newest developments include The Village at Wilton Manors, Pompano Beach Fishing Village, Azul and Prosperity Village.
Top Five things heard at P&Z and City Commission Meetings

5. “I won’t be able to get out of my neighborhood!”
4. “You’re putting ten pounds of *#!$ in a five pound bag!
3. “People will be looking down into my back yard.”
2. “Where will all these people park?”
1. “Can’t you just make it a park?”
How we typically respond…

• We cut project density wherever possible to mollify vocal residents making it nearly impossible to implement convenient transit system.

• We created a road concurrency system that was designed to increase road capacity and speed.

• We sacrificed interconnectivity for privacy and security.

• We created counties with a precious few walkable places of any consequence (Stuart, Jensen Beach).

• In so doing, we have wasted **SO MUCH LAND!**
The result...hidden costs for all of us

- Gridlocked arterials.
- Lack of affordably priced housing close to employment centers and no convenient way to travel between the two.
- Rapid consumption of agricultural land.
- Environmental Degradation.
- Inefficient delivery of public facilities and services
- A built environment with a shelf life of less than fifty years in many parts of South Florida.
Our saving grace…this is Florida!

• The very lack of density, intensity and historically significant buildings present opportunities to reshape our communities one block or parcel at a time.
• What many view as “built out” is far from it.
• Shopping Malls, Churches, even low rise apartment complexes are examples of underutilized land.
• Even single family homes on large lots provide opportunities to add granny flats.
• We are not talking high rise…we can achieve surprising densities/intensities in 2-3 stories.
Delray Beach
30 du/ac
Delray Beach
23 du/ac
Delray Beach
23 du/ac + 48,000 sf of commercial
Jupiter
13.5 du/ac + 93,000 sf of commercial
Suggestions going forward…

• Think about where to concentrate the density: on transportation corridors, near employment nodes and near shopping and dining districts, mixing uses where possible.
• Educate residents on the benefits of density and redevelopment (increased tax base, support for struggling retail, less land consumption, utilization of existing infrastructure, etc.)
• Prioritize public investment that facilitates and supports compact development.
• Revamp impact fee structure to reward infill and redevelopment and eliminate subsidies to low density sprawl.
• Consider implementing form based codes, minimum densities and maximum parking requirements. LDRs are far too quantitative and insufficiently qualitative.