

Redland Citizens Association, Inc.

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- General Area Improvement
- Zoning
- Tax Control
- Conservation
- Public Safety
- Agriculture
- Pollution Control

January 21, 1998

Mr. Roman Gastesi
Director, Miami-Dade Regional Service Center
1550 Madruga Avenue Suite 412
Coral Gables, FL 33146

Dear Mr. Gastesi:

While the specific goals and objectives of the Redland Citizens Association, the Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association and the Dade County Farm Bureau may at times have different perspectives, the three organizations embrace many common elements regarding the fostering of agriculture in South Dade. It is in this light that we wish to formally record our joint position, as well as our reasons, on the proposed Greenway Network.

We certainly do not object to the concept of the Greenway nor with the majority of Trails that make up the Network. As published in the Greenway Master Plan Book ("Master Plan Book"), the Network is comprised of ten trails, totaling 194 miles. We are addressing only portions of three Trails, accounting for less than 15 percent of the total.

We are concerned with the three Trails - Mowry (C-103), Princeton (C-102), and Krome Avenue - which traverse through the Redland. Outside of the Redland, the Farm Bureau also notes its additional concern about other Trails which run through row crop agricultural areas. Of the seven criteria that were used for corridor selection of where the Trails would run, none explicitly involved recognition of an active farming community. We find ourselves in a position to object to these three Trails, as they run through the last remaining active agricultural area in Dade County. These Trails appear to introduce unacceptable levels of risk to property owners, Trail users and general commuters.

There are heavy-use agricultural stretches along these three Trails where unimpeded ingress/egress of farming equipment is essential. To encourage increased casual uses in these areas by pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and others will naturally promote increased safety risks in these areas. Crop spraying and irrigation are just two obvious examples of routine activities that are no doubt contradictory to the passive enjoyment of the area. Further, these types of agribusiness jobs can not be relegated to prescribed, scheduled time periods to accommodate the use of the Trails that have been designed to cut through these farming/nursery corridors.

By formalizing and encouraging additional traffic in the Redland, the possibility of increased agricultural theft and trespassing seems as predictable as does the additional exposure associated with vandalism, litter, and inadvertent property damage. Also not adequately addressed is the property owner's liability in the event a trail user should wander onto private property and accidentally get injured.

While it would appear that the question of property rights and property values has been examined, we do not feel that the potential for the abuse of these rights has been addressed by adequate public input. As a material consideration, property owners who wish to sell their property will need to disclose the existence of the Greenway if it runs adjacent to, or very near, their real estate. Because of the manner in which most of this property is used, and its location in relation to the rest of Dade County, we feel there is a very real possibility that the Greenway could have a depressing effect on the property values along these three Trails.

Portions of these three Trails are located in isolated and obscure areas. Questions arise as to law enforcement response times to alleged infractions of crime as well as medical emergencies. While it is stated in the Master Plan Book that these Trails offer a type of self-policing/neighborhood-watch effect, there has also been recognized a supplemental need for a "Trail Authority." As citizens and tax payers, we would question the "Trail Authority's" duties, scope of responsibilities and funding requirements.

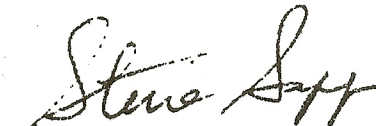
Our remaining specific concerns with the three Trails have to do with the longer term development of unforeseen circumstances. With respect to the proposal's inclusion of vending establishments, for instance, there may well be no problem with allowing such activity in the more urban/suburban residential and commercial corridors. It would seem inappropriate, nevertheless, to promote commercial vending along the trails in the farming areas. Additionally, how is it proposed that such vending activities be controlled from ballooning into the temporary roadside enterprises that dot much of Dade County now?

Once rural land-use is altered away from agricultural purposes, it tends to be altered permanently. It should not be forgotten that the public has long had access to the passive enjoyment of the Redland. We feel that the potential costs outweigh the public benefits by institutionalizing the added, casual traffic this project intends for the Mowry, Princeton and Krome Trails. And it is because of these very real issues that we felt our three organizations should attempt to delineate our joint concerns at this time.

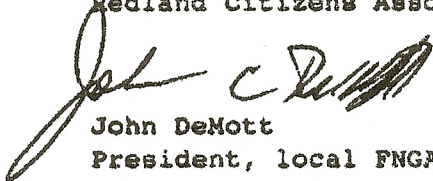
Most sincerely,



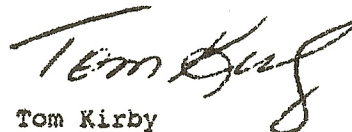
Sidney Robinson
for the Board of Directors,
Redland Citizens Association



Steve Sapp
President, Dade County Farm Bureau



John DeMott
President, local FNCA



Tom Kirby
Exec. Dir., Dade County Farm Bureau

cc: Honorable Alex Penelas, Mayor; Board of County Commissioners;
Mr. Guillermo Olmedillo