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## Local perspectives

### LAUDERDALE LAKES

#### CITY IS READY FOR REBIRTH

As Broward County nears build-out in the west, developers are casting their eyes east again to redevelop settled areas. Coveted locations range from coastal cities to centrally located suburbs. At least one central city, Lauderdale Lakes, is primed and ready for redevelopment.

The city is about to transform the corners around one of the busiest intersections in Broward, Oakland Park Boulevard and State Road 7. Aging, underutilized strip malls and isolated businesses in this area are slated to become a hub of activity. The city's master plan, adopted in February 2004 after a series of workshops, is the blueprint for this and other projects.

The northwest corner of the intersection will contain a public green, ground-floor shops, eateries and a new county library. Backing all this will be 400 residential units priced around \$200,000, and tiered parking. The idea is to give this older suburb a downtown area where people can park and walk to a variety of activities.

Across the street, on the southeast side of the boulevard, Wal-Mart is building a new store. These two developments are sure to attract more mixed-use projects.

Lauderdale Lakes' master plan is committed to redevelopment that retains what J. Gary Rogers, the city's economic redevelopment administrator, calls "attainable housing," homes that working families can afford despite Broward's \$300,000-plus median price for a house today. The city is committed to encouraging a population that is diverse economically and ethnically with housing priced for all markets.

With its zoning, master plan, land-use changes and Community Redevelopment Agency, Lauderdale Lakes has laid groundwork for developers' eastward shift. Other cities along the SR-7 corridor can expect similar redevelopment. To make the most of it and to attract sustainable mixed-use projects that enhance quality of life, the central cities should get as prepared as Lauderdale Lakes is for the renaissance.

### SOUTHWEST RANCHES

#### ROAD CLOSURE IS UNCIVIC AND UNCIVIL

In an uncivic, uncivil move, the town is permitting a couple living on Hancock Road to shut down that street every Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. all summer to hold weekly block parties. But the purpose isn't neighborly; the street closure is to prevent members of the Abundant Living Ministries church in Pembroke Pines from using the road to get to Sunday services.

The folks along Hancock Road complain that the road is clogged with church traffic on Sundays, shattering the rustic quiet. The weekly block parties supposedly are a prod to speed negotiations between the church, Southwest Ranches and Pembroke Pines to resolve the traffic problem. One solution would be to build a bridge to connect the church with Sheridan Street as an alternate route. The delay is over who will pay the bridge's \$200,000 cost.

There's something downright nasty about a town sanctioning the closure of a public street for punitive reasons. Town officials ought to be ashamed. They should rescind approval of the weekly parties and offer to pony up a healthy share of the bridge's cost -- or else tell Hancock Road residents to live with traffic as do other law-abiding residents.