



## Broward accepts Lauderdale Lakes plan to develop a downtown center

August 30, 2005, 3:30 PM EDT

More than a year ago, a Community Redevelopment Agency director offered his vision for creating a modern downtown in downtownless Lauderdale Lakes.

On Tuesday, that idea grew a little closer to reality when the Broward County Commission accepted Lauderdale Lakes' plans to develop a downtown center with new housing and business areas.

Plagued with visual blight, poor landscaping, big setbacks with asphalt deserts, it's the kind of city that Gary Rogers, director of the Lauderdale Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency has said he loves to get his hands on.

The agency has identified a node at the corner of State Road 7 and Oakland Park Boulevard where it plans to build a central focus.

"We hope to create a downtown in a formerly suburban setting and give the city some convenience so you can walk out your door and get what you want. It's the whole movement of getting back to the city," Rogers said in a February 2004 interview.. "People want to live in downtowns, look at Fort Lauderdale building lofts in the middle of downtown. You can interact and mingle, live the way we used to live."

Plans are being made to recycle the aging single-floor shopping center buildings and construct a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly downtown

In other action on Tuesday, the County Commission:

- Rejected Pompano Beach's plans to redevelopment eastern parts of the city until officials undertake further studies to address residents' concerns.
- Approved an agreement with the state for a \$500,000 grant to build a new branch library in Lauderdale Lakes.
- Approved a settlement with Pier Point Developers penalizing the company \$43,895 for removing 89 trees on property it was developing in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea without the proper permit.
- Delayed a decision on whether to hire KPMG to conduct annual audits of the four constitutional officers and the Housing Finance Authority. The delay came as a result of KPMG's recent agreements to pay a \$456 million fine to settle allegations it sold illegal tax shelters and \$22 million to settle charges it improperly audited Xerox.
- Set a public hearing for 2 p.m. Sept. 13 at the Governmental Center to set taxi rates for the upcoming year.

*Staff Writer Jerry Libonati contributed to this report.*

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