

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	20 <u>06</u>	20 <u>07</u>	20 <u>08</u>	20 <u>09</u>	20 <u>10</u>
Capital Expenditures	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Operating Costs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
External Revenues	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Program Income (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
In-Kind Match (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
NET FISCAL IMPACT	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
# ADDITIONAL FTE POSITIONS (Cumulative)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Is Item Included In Current Budget? Yes _____ No _____

Budget Account No.: Fund _____ Department _____ Unit _____ Object _____
 Program _____

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this workshop item. Fiscal impacts and funding sources for any specific Board direction would be analyzed at the time those action items are brought to the Board for action.

C. Departmental Fiscal Review: Brenda J. Corner

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

<p><u>Elizabeth Blaw</u> 9-15-06 9/14/06 OFMB</p>	<p>N/A</p> <hr/> <p>Contract Dev. and Control</p>
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B. Legal Sufficiency:

Paul F. Jones 9/15/06
 Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review:

 Department Director

Mecca Farms Site
1919 Total Acres
Alternative Land Use Scenarios

	No Development	Limited Development	Traditional Town Development
	This alternative assumes no residential, commercial, or industrial use of the property. This alternative retains the property for various public uses.	This alternative illustrates the maximum development potential of the property 1) under the existing concurrency approval equivalency for County and DRI traffic purposes 2) under the existing future land use designation and zoning, and 3) without the triggering the extension of PGA Blvd. It represents a PIPD equivalent to Phase I.	This alternative includes a compact residential community, in the form of a traditional town, with sufficient non-residential to meet residents' needs and provide some balancing of surrounding area.
Flow way:	Included	Included on balance of property	Included on balance of property
Special Recreation Use Park:	Special recreation use park could be included	Not included: Park size would exceed recreation acreage allowed under this alternative	Special recreation use park could be included in development area or on balance of property
Leasable Agricultural Open Space	Could be included	Could be included on balance of property	Could be included on balance of property
Density/Intensity:	No residential, commercial, or industrial development of the property	Overall Density: .27 du/ac Development Area: 137 acres Residential: 638 units Residential Density: 5 du/ac Workforce Housing: 128 of the 638 units (additional units possible with development order amendment) Retail: 100,000 sq ft Industrial: 1 million sq ft Recreation: 36 acres	Overall Density: .83 du/ac (consistent w/Sector Plan) Development Area: 800 acres Residential: 2500 units Residential Density: 2 du/ac Workforce Housing: 875 of the 2500 units (approximately half of the 875 would be through the Workforce Housing Program and the balance through conditions placed on the development) Retail: 250,000 sq. ft. Office: 250,000 sq. ft. (retail & office in TMDs and village centers) Light Industrial: 250,000 sq ft (in MUPD) Recreation: 240 acres
Required Changes	Abandon all requested uses/waiver Amend land use and rezone Special recreation use park subject to ULDC requirements (as a government service)	Retain EDC land use Retain PIPD Zoning Amend Development Order	Revise Tier to Urban/Suburban Amend land use and rezone May require additional Plan and Code changes

**Mecca Farms
Alternative Site Uses Report**

**for
Palm Beach County
Board of County Commissioners
September 19th, 2006 Workshop**

**Prepared by
Planning Division
Planning, Zoning and Building Department**

Executive Summary

Following the relocation of The Scripps Research Institute project to the Abacoa/Briger site, Comprehensive Plan amendments required an evaluation of appropriate uses for the 1919-acre Mecca property.

Assessment

Staff evaluated existing conditions, issues, and previous proposals for the site:

Some features included as part of the existing (Biotechnology Research Park) approval for the site should be included in any alternative pursued for the site. These include the flow-way to connect the L-8 and C-18 basins, and the planned Corbett Area Access/Trailhead. Additional uses could also be incorporated under most alternatives, including a provision for leasable agricultural open space and a Special Recreation Park.

Other options that appear not to be viable include the transfer of development rights from the property (the site is not a designated sending area), a wetlands mitigation bank (likely to have a net negative cost to the County) and the use of the site for a large water storage area (due to the site's physical characteristics).

Development Alternatives

Based on the assessment, staff outlined three alternatives incorporating the viable elements listed above and representing a range of densities and intensities. The alternatives are summarized in a matrix at the end of the report.

The **No Development Alternative** would make the property available for a special recreation park, leaseable agricultural open space, or other public uses in addition to the flow-way.

The **Limited Development Alternative** would allow for residential and non-residential development on approximately 137 acres of the property, and would result in about 638 residential units (with 20% of those being workforce housing), 100,000 sq. ft. of commercial, and 1,000,000 sq. ft. of industrial space. This is the estimated amount that could be developed under the existing concurrency approval for County and DRI traffic purposes and without triggering the extension of PGA Boulevard west to the site.

The **Traditional Town Development Alternative** applies the concept of a residential community with integrated non-residential uses to meet the needs of the residents and to help balance the surrounding land uses. This alternative could include 2500 dwelling units, with 875 or about 35% of those units as workforce housing. It would also include 250,000 sq ft of each of the following: retail, office and industrial. The land use mix, along with a pedestrian-oriented design, is intended to reduce traffic impacts in and around the development. The viability of this concept is unknown, as no TTDs have been developed in Palm Beach County. This alternative would require a land use amendment and rezoning, as well as new concurrency approvals.

Conclusions and Recommendation

- The Mecca site provides a unique opportunity to promote a development pattern that furthers the County's goal of livable communities.

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- However, the Mecca site's location, size, and status as one of several remaining large undeveloped parcels in the north-central Palm Beach County area compel the evaluation of any alternative within a broader context. Issues such as land use balancing, restoration of environmental functions, and traffic systems can only be addressed effectively through an area-wide approach. This is especially critical with development proposals already submitted or in process for most of the parcels.
 - The Sector Plan process, which originally included the Mecca site, can provide that framework. The Sector Plan was adopted by the Board in August 2005 and found not in compliance by the State. Staff is working with DCA to resolve the identified issues and prepare a compliance agreement and remedial plan amendment for Board adoption.
 - Staff recommends that the Board direct staff to work with DCA to include the Mecca site within the Sector Plan analysis. The remedial plan amendment could include provisions to eliminate the Scientific Community Overlay and to redraw the boundaries of the Sector Plan Area to include the Mecca site, so that the recommended alternative of a Traditional Town Development can be evaluated in the context of the entire area.

INTRODUCTION

To accommodate the anticipated siting of The Scripps Research Institute on the former Mecca Farms property, the Palm Beach County Biotechnical Research Park Development of Regional Impact (DRI) was approved in 2004 for the project site. In conjunction with the DRI, the Board of County Commissioners approved several amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, and subsequently, a development order and rezoning was approved for the project.

Following the relocation of The Scripps Research Institute project to the Abacoa/Briger site, the Comprehensive Plan required an evaluation of appropriate uses for the Mecca property. Staff reviewed existing conditions and issues, as well as features and uses previously considered for the site, to determine applicability to future development alternatives. This report summarizes that assessment and conclusions.

DATA AND ISSUE SUMMARY

Size and Location

The Mecca Farms parcel totals 1919 acres in size. It is located east of Seminole Pratt Whitney Road extended, about one mile north of Northlake Boulevard. It is surrounded by the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area to the west, low-density residential (The Acreage) to the south, the Hungryland Slough Natural Area to the north, and the Vavrus property in Palm Beach Gardens to the east. The 4763-acre Vavrus parcel is the subject of a DRI application for Exploration Pointe in the City of Palm Beach Gardens which as currently proposed includes nearly 10,000 dwelling units and 4,000,000 square feet of non-residential uses. This DRI is currently undergoing sufficiency review.

Existing Designations

In 2004, the Board of County Commissioners approved a series of inter-related amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to implement the Biotechnology Research Park DRI.

Scientific Community Overlay

The Scientific Community Overlay was established for the Mecca site, and was intended to promote a sustainable community by requiring an integrated mix of uses that provide common support and promote economic development while preserving and enhancing natural resources. The overlay required design standards to minimize traffic impacts and encourage transportation alternatives, to ensure functional integration of uses, and to provide for a mixed-use town center to serve as the core of the community.

Limited Urban Service Area Designation

The Comprehensive Plan amendments adopted by the Board also established a Limited Urban Service Area (LUSA) for the Mecca site, and removed it from the Rural Tier. The LUSA concept allows for a full complement of urban levels of service necessary to support uses in a LUSA, while discouraging urban levels of service for residential uses in areas that lie between the Urban Service Area and a LUSA. According to the Comprehensive Plan, a LUSA designation must consider the need for the proposed facilities, the furthering of policy goals, the relative advantages of the LUSA area over possible sites within the Urban Service Area; and the extent to which the designation would allow for significant public benefits, such as major economic development or environmental benefits. A LUSA is not required to have an underlying Tier designation.

Future Land Use Designation

The Board amended the future land use designation from RR-10 to Economic Development Center/Low Residential 2 (EDC/2), and set minimum and maximum intensities and densities as a condition of approval:

Use	Intensity/Density	
	Min.	Max.
Research and Development	8,000,000 sq. ft.	10,500,000 sq. ft.
Retail	330,000 sq. ft.	440,000 sq. ft.
Utility ¹	--	392,040 sq. ft., not to exceed 20 acres ³
Educational	1,587,762 sq. ft.	2,117,016 sq. ft., not to exceed 2500 elementary/secondary students and 2000 college/university students ³
Recreation/Community Facility ²	100,000 sq. ft.	487,872 sq. ft. ³
Clinic/hospital	--	529,254 sq. ft., not to exceed 300 beds ³
Residential	2000 units	2000 units, not including any units requested from TDR or Workforce Housing programs ^{4, 5}

1. Includes any building space which may be required to provide utilities, such as potable water, wastewater, electric, telephone, cable television and other utility services.
 2. Could include a range of community facility uses, including, but not limited to, the following: community centers, fire stations, sheriff substations, libraries and recreational structures.
 3. The maximum square footages for these uses were derived by using the acreage allocated to them on the site master plan, then applying the maximum floor area ratio allowed in the appropriate pod under either the Comprehensive Plan or the ULDC (whichever is more restrictive).
 4. Additional units should be added if an adequate number of residential units is not available to provide a sustainable mix of uses internally to this project and/or in close proximity to the project.
 5. If the project utilizes either the TDR and/or Workforce Housing Program, the increased density shall be in accordance with the land use conversion matrix contained in DRI Traffic Condition # 67, dated October 5, 2004.
 6. To ensure the basic character of the project is not altered, land uses may be exchanged based on the land use conversion matrix contained in DRI Traffic Condition # 67, dated October 5, 2004; however, no land use may exceed the maximum in the table above and no land use may fall below the minimum as specified in the table above.

Other Applicable Plan and Code Provisions

North County Airport Prohibited Land Use Area 5-Mile Runway Buffer Zone

The Mecca site is also subject to the North County Airport Prohibited Land Use Area 5-Mile Runway Buffer Zone. This Unified Land Development Code provision precludes placement of any educational facilities within the area that extends outward from the end of each runway for a distance of five miles, with a width equal to half the length of the runway.

Transfer of Development Rights

The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program established in the Comprehensive Plan was also amended to designate the Scientific Community Overlay area as a TDR receiving area, for up to 2 units per acre.

Workforce Housing

The recently adopted Workforce Housing policies of the Comprehensive Plan also include provisions establishing the Scientific Community Overlay as one of several areas

eligible for density bonuses in order to promote the development of affordable housing units. Bonuses are maximized when the eligible development is near mass transit, near employment centers, and helps to offset concentrations of very low and low-income households.

Other Relevant Studies/Plans

Western Northlake Corridor Land Use Study

This study, a joint effort of Palm Beach County and the Cities of Palm Beach Gardens and West Palm Beach, was adopted in 1998 to provide guidance for appropriate land uses within the western Northlake Boulevard Corridor area. Though the Study Area included the Mecca Site, the Study did not include specific recommendations for the Site. An effort begun in 2005 to update the study, and later placed on hold, did not address the future of the Mecca site post-Scripps.

Central Western Communities Sector Plan

In 1999, Palm Beach County became the first in the State to undertake the optional sector plan process created by the State legislature the year prior. The Sector Plan process is intended to result in a framework for managing growth and planning for the buildout of a region, while also providing for detailed planning for specific areas within the region. The County undertook the Sector Plan process for the Central Western Communities area, which initially included the Mecca site. The Mecca site was removed from the Sector Plan area at the adoption of the Sector Plan amendments. After a comprehensive process, the Sector Plan process was completed and the Board adopted amendments to the Comprehensive Plan in August 2005 adopting the Sector Plan overlay and associated policies. These amendments were found not in compliance by the Department of Community Affairs, and County staff has been working to resolve the identified issues.

City of Palm Beach Gardens Future Annexation Area

The Mecca site is within the City of Palm Beach Gardens Future Annexation area as depicted on Map H of the Future Land Use Element of the Palm Beach Gardens Comprehensive Plan. The Palm Beach Gardens Comprehensive Plan does not, however, include any discussion regarding the desired future use of the site.

Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council Regional Settlement Plan

In 2004, the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council (TCRPC) prepared a conceptual Regional Settlement Plan for the north central area of Palm Beach County, a 420 square mile area that includes the Mecca site. The intent of the plan was to provide guidance in accommodating future growth in compact, sustainable communities while preserving open space and establishing vital water management systems. For the Mecca site, the plan proposed a development area of 1225 acres comprising 7 or more neighborhoods. The plan was forwarded to the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners by the TCRPC with recommendations for its implementation.

Elements and Features

In addition to existing conditions, staff examined several elements and features that were proposed as part of the Biotechnology Research Park:

Flow way

The Master Development Plan for the Mecca site under the Biotechnology Research Park DRI included a natural areas feature, alternatively referred to as a flow way. The purpose of the flow way, approximately 250 acres along the west and north boundaries of the site, was to serve several functions, including to provide a buffer to surrounding areas, provide habitat and wetland vegetation replacement for the project, serve as a cleansing marsh for outfall from the project, and provide for a future L-8/C-18 Canal Basins interconnect. This interconnect would further the goals of the North Palm Beach County Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program by providing a means to deliver water from the L-8 basin to the Loxahatchee Slough and River during the dry season, and deliver excess water from the Slough to the L-8 basin for storage during the rainy season.

Trailhead/Corbett Wildlife Area Access

This feature was also proposed as part of the Master Development Plan for the Biotechnology Research Park DRI, and consisted of a small area for parking and other facilities to serve users of equestrian and hiking trails on and in proximity to the Mecca site. The trailhead was proposed at the northwest corner of the Mecca site, at the Corbett Wildlife Area access.

Roadway System

The Biotechnology Research Park DRI approval required a number of transportation-related changes to the Comprehensive Plan, including revision of the 2020 Map and the Thoroughfare Identification Map (TIM). Among these were adding the segment of PGA Boulevard from Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road to Beeline Highway with 260 feet of right-of-way in the TIM Map and as a 4 and 6-lane facility in the 2020 Map, and increasing the number of lanes from 4 to 6 in the 2020 Map for Seminole Pratt-Whitney from Indiantown Road to the Beeline Highway and from PGA Boulevard to Orange Boulevard. Land available for any development alternative would be reduced by the amount necessary for the rights-of-way for these roads. The DRI approval required construction of Seminole-Pratt Whitney Road between Northlake Boulevard and Beeline Highway early in Phase 1 (prior to 2007). The planned alignment of Seminole-Pratt Whitney Road through the Mecca site is east of existing roadbed and proposed flow-way. The existing approval also required construction of PGA Boulevard between Seminole-Pratt Whitney Road and Beeline Highway prior to commencement of Phase 2 (prior to 2011). The extension of PGA Boulevard west to the Mecca site would traverse the Loxahatchee Slough. Because of environmental impacts associated with the construction of these roads, construction costs can be expected to be substantial and construction timing of these facilities is unpredictable. However, staff is trying to do a more detailed analysis to see if a CRALLS on Northlake Boulevard can accommodate the traffic without requiring the construction of the PGA Boulevard.

Staff also examined several elements that have been suggested for the Mecca site subsequent to the Scripps relocation:

Special Recreation Use Park

The Mecca site has also been suggested as an appropriate location for a special recreation use park, which could accommodate facilities that are active resource-based recreational uses typically considered "nuisances" due to noise or other impacts. The Facilities Development and Operations Department has indicated, preliminarily, that a park of approximately 100-250 acres in size could accommodate several recreational

uses such as an all-terrain vehicle track, paintball course, an archery range, and areas for remote-controlled planes or boats.

Wetland Mitigation Bank

This concept would consist of using a sizeable portion of the site to establish a wetland mitigation bank or regional off-site mitigation area. In a 2005 benefit/cost analysis, ERM concluded that such a use would likely result in a net negative cost to the County, but would provide significant environmental benefits and would provide an in-house mitigation area for County engineering and other projects.

Water Storage Feature

The use of the Mecca site as a massive water storage area has been suggested and input has been sought from both the County Water Resources Manager and from the South Florida Water Management District staff. To date, the South Florida Water Management District has not formally responded, but the County Water Resources Manager, Ken Todd, reported that District staff has previously indicated that water storage needs would be addressed by reservoirs at 20 Mile Bend. The storage capacity of those reservoirs, coupled with the design and natural characteristics of the material at the site, make for a superior storage capability than could be accomplished on the Mecca site. The Mecca site would require above ground reservoirs, with a significant amount of capacity lost to the containment structure as well as to evaporation.

Leasable Agricultural Open Space

This concept would entail the County retaining ownership of the portion of the site not used for development or other elements, and making this land available for lease for agricultural uses including nurseries. This concept would require buffers or other protections to guard against environmental and other impacts occurring on the development or conservation areas in the vicinity. With the land remaining in County ownership, it would be available for long-term conversion to accommodate an employment center or similar use that furthered the County's economic development goals.

ASSESSMENT

The Mecca site is uniquely situated: while it is adjacent to conservation lands on two sides, it also abuts a planned major roadway, a rural residential area, and a large parcel which is the subject of a major development proposal. Because of its location at this interface, the Mecca site lends itself to a range of development options.

The existing designations for the site, as a LUSA with EDC/2 future land use and subject to the Scientific Community Overlay, are very specific to the uses that were anticipated on the site as the Biotechnology Research Park. They have very limited applicability to any alternative scenarios. Substantial amendment of these provisions in turn has implications for traffic concurrency.

While many uses proposed under the Biotechnology Research Park Master Development Plan no longer have applicability, some of the elements of that Plan should be considered under other alternatives. These include the flow-way to connect the L-8 and C-18 basins, and the planned Corbett Area Access/Trailhead, as well as the inclusion of Workforce Housing. Additional uses have been suggested for the Mecca site which could be

incorporated under most alternatives, including a Leasable Agricultural Open Space area and a Special Recreation Use Park.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

Based on this assessment, staff outlined three alternatives incorporating these elements and representing a range of densities and intensities.

The **No Development Alternative** would make the property available for public uses such as the Leasable Agricultural Open Space element or the Special Recreation Use Park, in addition to the flow-way.

The **Limited Development Alternative** would allow for residential and non-residential development on approximately 137 acres of the property, and would result in about 638 residential units, 100,000 sq. ft. of commercial, and 1,000,000 sq. ft. of industrial space. This is the estimated amount that could be developed under the existing concurrency approval for County and DRI traffic purposes and without triggering the extension of PGA Boulevard west to the site. The 638 units represent the maximum, utilizing the equivalent of the highest density (HR18) category of the Comprehensive Plan. The 638 units could include up to 128 units, or 20%, of affordable housing. Additional affordable units could be possible through amendment of the development order. The balance of the property would be available for the various desired public uses.

The **Traditional Town Development Alternative** applies the concept of a residential community with integrated non-residential uses to meet the needs of the residents and to help balance the surrounding land uses. The land use mix, along with a pedestrian-oriented design, is intended to reduce traffic impacts in and around the development; many of these principles were also to have been incorporated into the Biotechnology Research Park at the Mecca site. This alternative as proposed would result in a development area of about 800 acres. This alternative would include 2500 units, including 1625 market-rate units and 875 workforce housing units. (Of the 875 workforce housing units, about half would be obtained through the Workforce Housing Program, with the balance to be obtained through a condition placed on the development.) This alternative would also include 250,000 square feet of retail and the same amount of office uses in a Traditional Marketplace and village centers, and 250,000 square feet of light industrial. The balance of the site would be available for the various desired public uses. The viability of the TTD concept is also unknown, as no TTDs have been developed in Palm Beach County. The TTD concept is generally consistent with the Regional Settlement Plan proposed by the TCRPC, though at a substantially smaller scale. This alternative would require locating the property in the Urban/Suburban Tier, a land use amendment and rezoning, new concurrency approvals, and the capacity associated with an extension of PGA Boulevard, either through construction of this segment or a Constrained Roadway at a Lower Level of Service designation for Northlake Boulevard.

The alternatives are summarized in a matrix at the end of this report.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

At nearly 2000 acres, the Mecca site represents one of the few remaining large undeveloped parcels in this area of the County that is not under a conservation designation. As such, and with the property in County ownership, it provides a unique opportunity to promote a development pattern that furthers the County's goal of livable communities: communities with an efficient balance and integration of land uses, that together provide for an appropriate range of activities, minimize urban sprawl, preserve and enhance natural features, and engender a sense of place and community.

However, while the Mecca site allows for this opportunity, its location, size, and status as one of several remaining large undeveloped parcels in the north-central Palm Beach County area compel the evaluation of any alternative within a broader context. Whatever the future development pattern for Mecca, it will clearly affect, and be affected by, the future development of the other remaining large undeveloped parcels in the area. While no one parcel's development will likely set the pattern for the rest, all will contribute impacts whose cumulative effect should be understood and managed. Issues such as land use balancing, restoration of environmental functions, and traffic solutions can only be addressed effectively through an area-wide approach. This is especially critical with development proposals already submitted or in process for most of the parcels.

This area-wide approach was the rationale behind the Sector Plan adopted by the County in 2005, as well as in the broad-brush Regional Settlement Plan effort of the TCRPC. The Sector Plan process, which originally included the Mecca site, can provide the framework necessary to evaluate the Mecca site in the larger context. The Sector Plan was adopted by the Board in August 2005 and found not in compliance by the State. Staff is working with DCA to resolve the identified issues and prepare a compliance agreement and remedial plan amendment for Board adoption.

Staff recommends that the Board direct staff to work with DCA to include the Mecca site within the Sector Plan analysis. The remedial plan amendment could include provisions to eliminate the Scientific Community Overlay and to redraw the boundaries of the Sector Plan Area to include the Mecca site, so that the recommended alternative of a Traditional Town Development can be evaluated in the context of the entire area.