

WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON WITH PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT ON ST. PETE BEACH?

The issue is not about hotels vs. condos - or about tourism at all. These are arguments being thrown out by the big developers just to confuse the issue. It is all about building more condos. And it is all about big money for a few developers.

In spite of the recent downturn in sales, condos are still the biggest short term money-maker for developers. And they will never stop trying to build (or convert) as many units as they can get away with. The issue is about how many more condos.

The St. Pete Times reported on April 11, 2007 that the TradeWinds Resort on St. Pete Beach has converted "288 of its 724 hotel rooms" to condos (Neighborhood Times, p. 4). For sake of argument, if the average price of the 288 condos sold by the TradeWinds were to be \$200,000 the gross revenue from sales would be \$57,600,000.

Converting hotel rooms wouldn't be the issue if it was only converting existing hotels to condos or condo-hotels. That is already happening and is not likely to stop soon.

Simply converting hotel rooms won't stress the infrastructure significantly. What is really onerous is the demand by developers that they increase the number of condo-hotel units by almost 5,000. And in order to fit them into the existing area, they want to change the rules to allow hotels or condo-hotels to triple their density and quadruple their height (from the current 5 story limit to as much as 20 stories or more).

The existing 1998 Comprehensive Plan already permits extensive growth and redevelopment and also allows for exceptions to be granted for proposed projects that are of value to the Community. For example, an application could be made right now to build a 'signature hotel' on the beach. However, the big developers and their supporters propose:

- Increasing by about 5,000, the number of allowed living units on St. Pete Beach, almost doubling the number. (If the 5,000 units were sold, say at an average price of \$400,000 per condo that represents \$4 billion total sales revenues.)
- Permitting unlimited increases maximum building height from 5 stories to 20 or more stories as proposed in the "Save our Little Village" (SOLV) Petition 2 on file at City Hall (Read Policy 1.2.2 on the 5th and 6th pages from the end of the petition.)
- Increasing the density allowed for hotels or condo-hotels from 30 units per acre to 80 or more units per acre as proposed in the "Save our Little Village" (SOLV) PAC's Petitions (Read Page 1 of Petition 3 and the two "Density" paragraphs on Page 36 of Petition 1).
- Rezoning single family residential and commercial areas to permit 7 story condo projects with 24 units per acre in almost all areas of the City which is permitted under the Division 43 Ordinance which the voters failed to repeal last November.

In order to sell their development package, the big developers have claimed they are supporting tourism and business when, in reality, they are simply trying to build more condos. The major tactic being used is to redefine hotels as condo-hotels thereby allowing them to use the allowed hotel density rather than the allowed condo density.

Developers have already filed to rezone business and residential areas to allow high-rise condos in Dolphin Village and else where in the city.

The SOLV petitions are just the redevelopment plan that has already been rejected twice in a new guise; condos in the clothing of hotel rooms. If the developers get the SOLV petitions signed they will be on the way to getting what they want. It's all about condos and it's all about more condos - for them.

PLEASE DON'T SIGN THE "SOLV" PETITIONS THAT GIVE THE DEVELOPERS EVERYTHING THEY WANT!

To Help Protect St. Pete Beach, Please Send Your Donations to:
Citizens for Responsible Growth (CRG)
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If you have questions, please call Jim Anderson at 360-0963
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