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DEVELOPMENT

ISSUE: The fate of a "new town" rests with the Palm Beach County Commission.

It's not often that county officials get the chance to help craft sensible development on a huge parcel of undeveloped land.

The "new town" proposal for the Callery-Judge Grove in Loxahatchee offers the Palm Beach County Commission a rare opportunity to so. In the great void that passes for county oversight of growth and development, the Callery-Judge proposal comes across as simply reasonable. Lacking a viable alternative, commissioners should approve the plan.

Granted, the undertaking is huge. The property is a 4,000-acre site that would stretch from the Intra-coastal to the Florida Turnpike, and the proposal calls for the development of 10,000 new homes, roughly three times the number called for in the county's sector plan.

The project includes a business center that offers economic development prospects, retail and job opportunities that currently don't exist in the area. It also has room for a college campus and new public schools. Callery-Judge will help pay for the schools.

The proposal calls for widening sections of Seminole Pratt Whitney Road and Northlake, Okeecho-bee and Southern boulevards to help mitigate traffic congestion. It also includes 600 acres for marshes to help the environment by moving water in the area.

The proposal isn't perfect, but the county would be better off working with Callery-Judge than pinning its hopes on a flawed sector development plan that fails to address the effect of new development.

Given the project's size, it's understandable why residents who moved to this part of the county to get away from sprawl might be concerned. But, give Callery-Judge credit for doing many things right, including incorporating the concerns of its neighbors to make the new town as unintrusive as possible.

County commissioners have the chance to join in the process and establish a model for future development. They should take advantage of this opportunity by approving the Callery-Judge plan.

**BOTTOM LINE: Callery-Judge plan should be
a model for growth and development.**