

Florida Growth Management Laws Become a Reality - Concrete Examples of What This Means to Miami and South Florida

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Now that the Florida Legislature has overhauled state laws that controlled and curtailed the activities of land developers in Florida - laws that await the Governor's approval, and which for the most part will become effective almost immediately upon his signature since they are budgetary in nature - Floridians are coming to grips with what this may mean for their local communities.

In the Miami-Dade and South Florida areas, environmentalists have pushed for law after law designed to block urban growth in order to protect perceived dangers to nearby wetlands, farmlands, and the Everglades. With the 2011 legislation, things will change.

Now, the state will not be the entity blocking real estate development - those controls have been turned over to local communities and left to federal oversight. The Florida Legislature hopes that this freedom to move will help real estate markets, commercial and residential, both in development and in later transactions, all with the goal of salvaging the depressed Florida economy.

What's appearing on the horizon? New development, new jobs, an economic boost - hopefully

Already, the [Miami Herald](#) is reporting about the revival of a plan for a "suburban town" to be built west of Homestead, based upon 2008 plans that got shelved after the economy went south and state powers-that-be challenged the need for the development. Lennar, one of the country's largest homebuilders, is attached to this project. One example.

In an [interview given to Jennifer LeClaire at GlobeStreet.com](#) yesterday, [Terry Stiles](#), Chief Executive Officer of the [Stiles Corp.](#), provided his input on what will be happening in South Florida now that the Growth Management Laws have been changed.

According to developer Terry Stiles, among other things:

1. Stiles Corp. is [very interested in the Miami-Dade County area](#) right now; the company is investing over \$120 million here in office, retail, and mixed-use projects.
2. As we've discussed earlier, right now there is an intersection of low construction costs and bottom-dollar property, so it's a good time for developers and investors to grab up good deals. Stiles agrees with this viewpoint, and believes that [multifamily projects are particularly "hot"](#) right now.
3. The other target for Stiles is [grocery-anchored retail shopping centers](#), he's very focused on the viability of these projects in South Florida right now.
4. Stiles also opines that land use in Florida is [more "redevelopment" than development of raw land](#), since there is not that much pristine, raw land left in the state.

Florida Growth Management Laws Overhaul Will Not Wreck the Environment

Stiles provides another example of how important regulation is in the real estate industry, because redevelopment changes must be approved by the various agencies in charge of land use. The more that agencies are involved, the more time and money must be committed to the project.

Consider this: the outcry by environmentalists about the dangers of urban sprawl escalating with the Florida Growth Management Law Overhaul seems to be missing the mark here, and Stiles is making a good point.

Redevelopment Isn't Increasing Sprawl

It's not sprawl to redevelop land that has already been developed. It's making the best use of land that has already been developed for use by humans -- and maximizing that use for current needs. Which means more jobs, short term and long term, and more money flowing into our area, short term and long term.

Sure, the *Miami Herald* has provided one example of farmland that may be replaced by homes; however, that's not going to be the majority of development projects that will spring up as a result of the actions that the Florida Legislature (and presumably, Governor Scott) took this month.

The economy of Miami-Dade and South Florida looks a lot brighter now that this Overhaul has been done. At least, it's looking brighter to people like Terry Stiles, and that's a good thing.