

Dear City Council,

In November city residents will vote on a referendum to lease about 58 acres of property currently being used as the Landings golf course to be developed for light industrial use.

With just a few weeks before the plan goes to voters, the Environmental Advisory Board got a chance to weigh in on it.

It is our board's contention that the environmental impact of developing the swath of green space is a detriment, not a benefit to the residents of Clearwater. The land is more important to be saved for the benefit of current and future residents to enjoy rather than to be paved and developed as a light industrial complex.

While the city has what is considered adequate green space (more than 14 acres for each resident), that does not take into account Green Print, the city's sustainability plan, which prioritizes saving and adding green space.

What makes Clearwater bright and beautiful is its diversity of parks and green space. Saving such a large expanse of land and using it as a park has much better environmental impact.

Not to ignore economics, however, the Gladys Douglas Hackworth property in Dunedin, smaller at around 44 acres but perhaps more valuable for never being developed, went under contract for nearly \$12 million to potentially be developed as a housing development. The city will get \$2.3 million initially from the developer and hopes to collect \$9.7 million over 10 years, granted that's after it takes 7 years to develop the nine building complex. Is that really a value to residents? Currently the city gets about \$1,000 a month for the lease of the property.

Pinellas County is built out. It's the most densely populated in the state. There are still more than 1,000 people daily moving to Florida. There is untold value in saving and preserving large pieces of green space.

Other environmental concerns include traffic. With the thousands of jobs promised by the developer, that adds that many more drivers on the roads. That is if the spaces are ever rented. With no tenants mentioned, the proposed development could sit unused, like many other commercial and industrial properties for many years.

If this change is not approved in November, the Environmental Advisory Board would like the city council to consider a permanent change to improve the green space at the park. Instead of it currently operating as a golf course the city could increase its stock of green space and convert it to a passive park for the benefit of all residents.

By changing the use from a golf course to a passive park, it would reduce the use of harmful chemicals used to treat the greens. Saving undeveloped swaths of green space in the state's

most densely populated county is a much better environmental impact than what is currently proposed to Clearwater voters.

Should the city lease nearly 60 acres of green space currently being used as the Landings golf course to be developed into a light industrial complex? The Environmental Advisory Board says no.