

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Commission on Disability Issues

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Katy Sorenson
Commissioner Miami-Dade County
District 8
10710 SW 211 Street, Suite 204
Miami, FL 33165

Dear Commissioner:

Your office has been involved in the new traditional neighborhood that is proposed for Naranja Lakes in South Dade. Many of the aspects of the traditional neighborhood would be ideal for people who are elderly and people who have disabilities. Both groups make up a significant portion of our Miami-Dade Population and are growing as the baby boomers are coming of age. Requirements for certain features of accessibility and adaptability of single-family home entrances are included in the Traditional Neighborhood Ordinance. However, the only access required inside the homes is one bedroom door and one bathroom door with a minimum width of 29" in clear width. There is no requirements for clear space that would allow a person using a wheelchair to turn into those doorways, and there is no requirement that the interior of the bathrooms be in any way usable by persons using wheelchairs. The Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines apply to multi-family dwellings of four or more units that are on the ground floor or are served by an elevator. Townhouses are covered, unless they have interior stairs to a second floor. It appears as though the traditional neighborhood will be made up mostly of single-family homes and of townhouses with interior stairs. The Commission on Disabilities Issues, (CODI), is concerned that the result will be a neighborhood that will not provide housing opportunities to those who could most benefit from it. That would not reasonably meet the housing needs of this community. That would also significantly limit the marketability of the development. CODI hereby requests that at the time of the design presentation to the Commission, the developers include in their presentation information on the number of units where people who use wheelchairs or

walkers, and people who cannot climb stairs, could live after making only minor modifications.

As you know, finding accessible housing is extremely difficult. Finding accessible housing that is affordable is even more difficult. As Chairperson of CODI, I am making this request so that providing accessible housing within this traditional neighborhood can be addressed in the early stages, not as an after thought when it is already too late. The Miami-Dade County Commission needs to send a clear message, not only to the developer of this project but to all developers, that Miami-Dade County is serious about providing accessible housing.

Sincerely,

Barbara Gratzke
Chairperson-CODI