

Friends of the Santa Cruz River P.O. Box 4275 Tubac, AZ 85646



Santa Cruz County Planning and Zoning Commission
2150 N. Congress
Nogales, AZ 85621

November 4, 2007

To the Commission:

We are concerned about First United Realty's development proposal's potential impact on Sopori Wash's riparian habitat, as well as its location in a major east-west wildlife corridor. But primarily, **we urge you to deny this major amendment** because the proposal's possible benefits to the county in no way override the Comprehensive Plan's primacy in its protection of our county's resources.

- Contrary to what spokesmen suggested in a recent public study session, the proposed development does not, at this time, have an Assured Water Supply. Even if the Arizona Department of Water Resources does eventually grant an AWS, the water required to service over four times the densities allowed under current zoning will inevitably have a major impact on the Sopori watershed's riparian resources. Even with the best water conservation techniques, a development of over 13,000 residents (very conservatively estimated) will use a great deal more water than one of 3,000 residents.
- The County should respect and protect our Character Areas' unique and irreplaceable attributes. Once lost, the open spaces, rural character, wildlife corridors, and living river of our County's "gateway" cannot be re-created, and the long-term economic as well as community and ecological values of such unique assets will evaporate.
- Developers need to hear from our elected and appointed officials that you and the Board of Supervisors are serious about upholding the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives, which give the best protection our county has to our most highly valued natural and cultural assets. Unless there are demonstrated, compelling net benefits to the County (per the goals laid out in the Comp Plan) from allowing a major amendment for a particular development, the Plan as it is written deserves your strong and vigorous support.

This proposal clearly violates major goals of the Comprehensive Plan, and so should be denied.

FOSCR's mission is to protect the upper Santa Cruz River and its valuable riparian ecosystem for current and future generations. The river and its major tributaries play many vital roles for us all, including improving water quality, recharging groundwater, reducing peak flood flows and erosion, and sustaining stream flow. Additionally, the Santa Cruz River and other riparian areas in our region support the highest biological diversity of any habitats in the Southwest. These living riparian resources are key features that residents of this county value and want to see protected.

Assuring that the river continues to support these resources and its other functions will provide lasting benefits, both quality-of-life and economic, to our entire County.

Sincerely,

Sherry Sass
President, Friends of the Santa Cruz River