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Sarasota County development's size reduced

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SARASOTA COUNTY -- Developer Billy Springer has scaled down the plan for the Palmer Place subdivision, cutting it from 1,488 homes to 600.

County commissioners and neighbors balked at the project's original size, even though the county earlier had indicated a big development in the area would be OK, so long as half of the homes were affordable.

But the sheer size of the project -- at 744 lower-priced homes it would have been the single biggest affordable housing project in the state -- raised concerns about traffic impacts, future school construction and impacts on the semi-rural area. The project is slated for more than 400 acres east of Interstate 75 off Palmer Boulevard.

Springer is expected to ask commissioners on Wednesday to delay a decision on the project while it is redrawn.

Among the changes, according to a letter from Springer's attorney, is cutting the number of homes, setting aside 35 acres for a future school and delaying occupancy in the subdivision until Palmer Boulevard is widened.

The scaled-back project "is more in tune" with the densities of other subdivisions in the area, said John Pecilunas, president of the Laurel Meadows Association, whose members live immediately west and south of the Palmer Place property.

But neighbors will reserve judgment until Springer submits details on the redrawn project in early February.
