



An artist's rendering of the proposed Madden Research Loop.

COURTESY RENDERING

BOOM

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calling it Madden Research Loop. The development was strategically planned in close proximity to the airport, Florida Gulf Coast University and Interstate-75 to lure medical researchers, pharmaceutical companies and other biotech industries said Steve Brown, Madden's vice president of project development.

"Normally, you pay someone to do it for you and they're doing it," said Lee County Commissioner Tammy Hall. "It's really exciting. It's a great way to utilize that property out there."

Madden has partnered with the Lee County Port Authority — the Lee County Commission oversees the Authority — to lease land at the former site of airport terminal and support facilities.

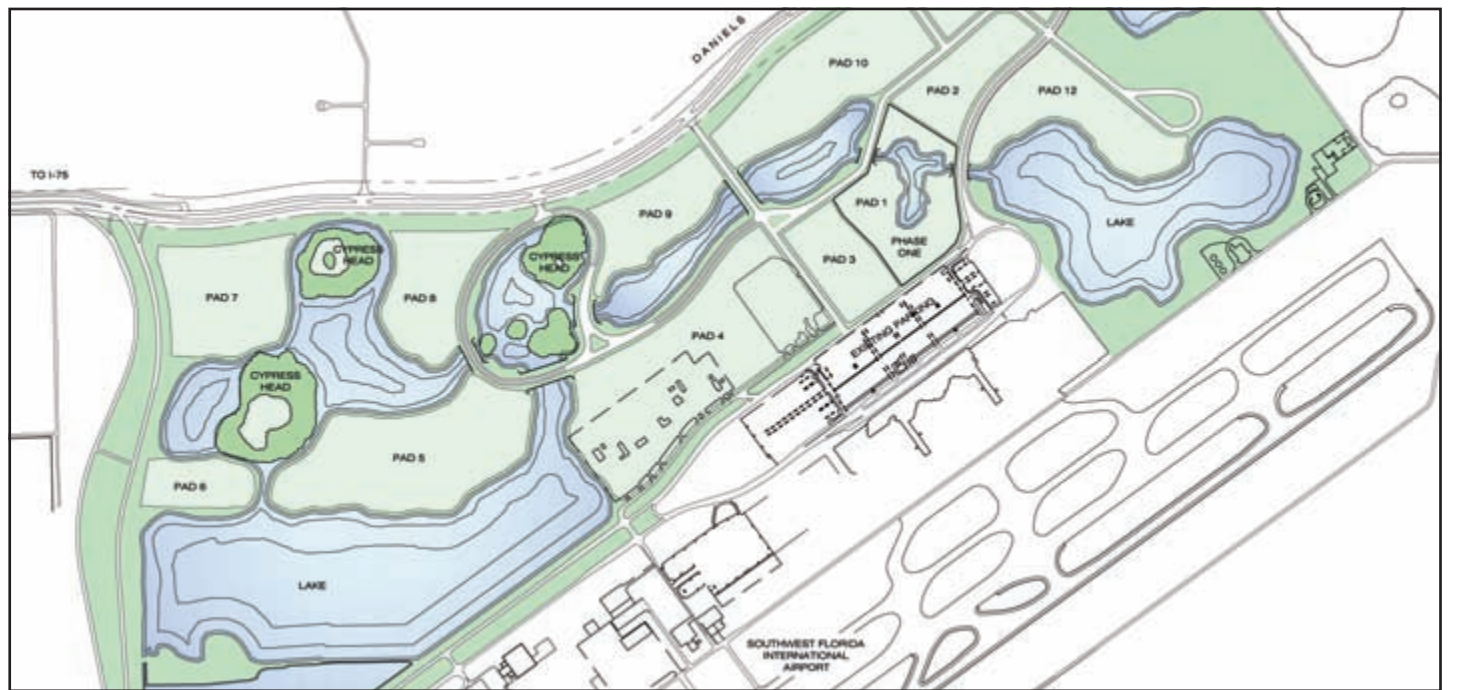
The agreement includes 25 acres of land owned by the Port Authority on which Madden will build 275,000 square feet of Class A office space: four buildings and a parking garage set around a lake at the north end of the airport's runway. There, scientists or executives visiting the site could land their jets and walk to work. The park will also include public nature trails and art, one of Madden's signatures.

"It's a very attractive location for research, for both U.S. and global medical device companies and pharmaceutical companies," said William Knab, chairman, Southwest Florida Chapter of BioFlorida. "When you look at areas like San Diego or the Boston area, this is exactly how they started — industry, academia, and location...I think when you add that number of highly educated professional people to the community it's gotta have positive effects all the way around. Their demands, from the school systems to everything else, will have higher standards and push the community to higher standards."



Brown

Brown said tenants at the park will



COURTESY RENDERING PARKER/MUDGETT/SMITH ARCHITECTS

Madden Research Loop on land at the old terminal at Southwest Florida International Airport.

enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship with local education and health care providers, and even others from around the region and the state.

"It's not a Lee County Project, it's a regional project," he said. "We do think this is a state project at the end of the day. We get the feeling that this part of the state has been neglected for too long."

The puzzle pieces

Ultimately it was Lee County's already solid base of growth, with an airport and schools like FGCU and Edison College, that sealed the deal for Madden, said Brown.

"That University is going to be a tremendous asset to the companies that come in here."

And vice versa, said Janusz Zalewski, Professor of computer science at FGCU.

"We'd have a much better opportunity to work on some interesting projects if that place really takes off," he said. "For me and for the faculty it would be a great way to connect to some potentially cutting edge research."

Commissioner Hall agreed.

"Now we can justify training biochemists because there's a job for them in this area," she said. "The goal is not

to have 75 percent of your economy in the Construction Industry. We want to see the opportunity for people to graduate from College and be able to have a job."

That's a point Lee County Commissioner Ray Judah underlined, calling the development's ramifications "monumental."

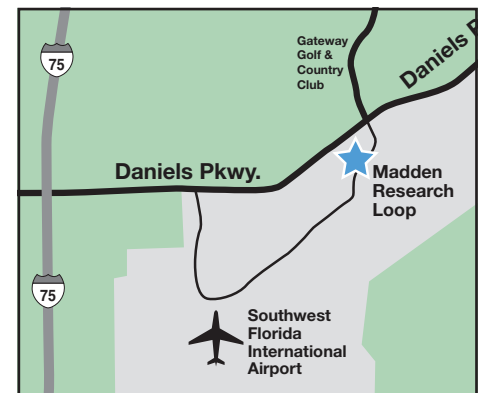
"Relying solely on agriculture, tourism and construction can be a very tenuous and vulnerable situation," he said. "Obviously the downturn in the housing market has demonstrated that fact. If one of the three legs to the stool propping up our economy falters, it hurts the entire economic base, so the Madden group really is a critical anchor in our efforts to broaden, deepen and diversify (the economy)."

Jennifer Berg, spokesperson for Lee County Office of Economic Development, agreed.

"It fits perfectly with our mission and the types of businesses we want to attract," she said. "They're bringing dollars into the local community but they're not dependant on the cycles of the local community."

The plan

Madden Research Loop will only take up a small portion of the Skyplex



FLORIDA WEEKLY MAP

Commercial Center on which it will sit.

Skyplex will continue to be 750 acres of undeveloped Port Authority land, until Gulf Coast Technology breaks ground on its 25-acre parcel in about six months. They have the option of leasing up to 140 acres more, but agreed to give the county ample room to do as they wish with the land.

That's because Brown is betting that future developments on the site will be of a similar quality to Madden Research Loop.

"We don't want to be the only development here but we want to set the standard," Brown said.

They are leading the way by using