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## TAMPA BAY Business Journal

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# \$600M Infinitus energy park clears a hurdle

Tampa Bay Business Journal - by [Margaret Cashill](#) Staff Writer

**TAMPA** — The 750-acre Infinitus Renewable Energy Park is one step closer to fruition as a giant alternative and renewable energy research and production center in eastern Hillsborough County.

This week, the Hillsborough County zoning hearing master announced its recommendation of a plan presented by **Imperium Development Inc.**, the project's Fort Lauderdale-based development partner.

The recommendation comes with no conditions and deletions, said Kyle Mowitz, president of Imperium.

The next step is a final hearing Oct. 12 before the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners.

"We have outside forces not under our control — approvals and permits —but we are on track as far as our schedule," Mowitz said.

If all goes according to plan, the park would break ground in December and open in late 2013 with industrial, manufacturing, research and educational uses on up to 750 acres.

Imperium has the 3,000-acre former phosphate mine site fully under contract from previous owners Turkey Creek Preserve LLC and University Millennium Park LLC, Mowitz said.

Development costs for the first phase of the plan are \$600 million.

### Job plant

Infinitus Renewable Energy Park could create economic development while producing energy, supporters said. What's more, it could yield more than 1,000 jobs during construction as well as 600 permanent jobs.

"There are environmental benefits, ecological benefits and economic benefits," Mowitz said of the project, first reported by the *Business Journal* in February. "There are just a host of benefits to the model that are great for the area."

Amid the excitement over the jobs and economic impact at a time when many companies are struggling to pay the rent, some wonder what will happen when a former phosphate mine in a rural area becomes a large-scale energy park.

Financing is secured for the development, but Mowitz said he won't disclose equity partners until the permitting process is complete near the end of the year.

### Process moving forward

Meanwhile, along with the latest zoning approvals, the project's land use plan is moving along.

The site's "energy industrial park" land use category is an entirely new designation and intended to provide for the specific park.

Following a final adoption hearing for the land use plan Sept. 2, last week the **Hillsborough County Planning Commission** prepared a packet to send to the Department of Community Affairs for review. The land use plan would become effective around the end of November or early December if approved.

"It's an interesting hybrid," said Krista Kelly, executive planner for the Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission, of the land use plan. "There are agricultural features and urban features. This allows it to do both in one area."

The land use category was created for optimal use of the former phosphate mine, said Bruce Kaschyk, senior VP and Tampa division manager of the **Genesis Group**, the park's planners and engineers.

"It's never been done. That's what made it challenging," Kaschyk said. "We had to create and craft a brand new category."

The hope with a development the size of Infinitus, given its location outside an urban service boundary, is that it maintains its focus on renewable energy and does not become a typical mixed-use development, said Nicole Kibert, an environmental sustainability attorney with **Carlton Fields**. The excitement over potential jobs versus concern over the park's location outside the urban service boundary may be where "rubber meets the road," she said.

Much of the site's allure, Kaschyk said, is its proximity to both urban and rural areas.

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The park is convenient to the working centers of Tampa and Brandon but also near University of South Florida Polytechnic in Lakeland and the Plant City campus of the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences as well as local agricultural communities.

“We’re hoping it will become a national attraction and bring renewable energy research and technologies and companies involved in manufacturing,” Kaschyk said.

#### **Stimulus candidate**

Infinitus Renewable Energy Park qualifies for funding set aside for renewable energy under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The stimulus funding would come in the form of a 30 percent cash grant or an investment tax credit for 10 years, Mowitz said.

Exactly how much the park would receive remains to be determined.

The website [www.energy.gov/recovery](http://www.energy.gov/recovery) offers further information about the stimulus bill's green applications, including funding for energy efficient technologies, carbon capture and storage, and modernizing the electric grid.

#### **INFO**

Infinitus Renewable Energy Park Energy technologies

- Biomass power
- Aquaculture
- Solar
- Advanced biofuels

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