

**My Word: Ray Bradick**

## Amendment 4 would stop growth

Scott Maxwell's column on Wednesday's *Orlando Sentinel* was an eloquent pitch for the Hometown Democracy amendment, which will appear on the 2010 ballot as Amendment 4. Unfortunately, his column was based on a flawed premise.

Like many supporters of the initiative, Maxwell paint the issue as a fight pitting Florida voters against the evil, deep-pocketed real-estate developers.

But what about Florida's architect, engineers, designers, construction workers, surveyor, electricians, plumbers, health-care workers, teachers and others who will see the state's recession worsen should this amendment be passed? What about the high-school and college students who are training for the jobs that will remain unfilled? What about the small business owners who depend on economic growth to survive?

This amendment affects not just developers; it affects us all.

Nearly every day, we read about the impact of the medical city in east Orange County. The economic stimulus provided by the Burnham Institute and others that have chosen to locate there would not have been possible if not for the developer of the Lake Nona community and the governmental decisions that have allowed that development to move forward.

Such developments create jobs, transform economies and create opportunities for small businesses to succeed and grow.

As CEO of a professional civil engineering and planning company that has represented both governments and private developers for nearly 40 years in Florida, I've seen firsthand the detail and planning that goes into development decisions. I've worked with government staff and technical experts who diligently review comprehensive-plan amendments to judge whether changes are warranted. I have witnessed the countless hours of exhaustive research that are spent on every decision.

Should this amendment pass, all that planning, judgment and research go out the window, to be replaced by emotion, rumor and parochial interests. Every voter would be expected to act as engineer, economist and technician, while being bombarded with campaign mailers that boil complicated real-estate decisions into short sound bites. Can voters be expected to do the research necessary, culling through hundreds of pages of documentation for each of what could be dozens of amendments, while setting aside NIMBY concerns and focusing on the greaser good?

Hometown Democracy does not represent "sensible growth," as Maxwell and other supporters suggest. It represents a stop to all growth, including the growth of our economy. *All* economies are dependent on growth, and sensible growth requires good, professional judgment.



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