



Amendment 4: *Bad for Hometowns, Worse for Democracy*

Amendment 4—a statewide “Vote on Everything” initiative—is a grave threat to Florida’s future. This proposed re-write of the Florida Constitution will imperil Florida’s economy and unique quality-of-life.

The amendment subverts a well-established and democratic planning process while threatening Florida’s prospects for economic recovery. With the “Vote on Everything” amendment, citizens—not the representatives they elected—are forced to regularly decide *hundreds* of technical land-use planning issues at the ballot box.

Much is at stake for all Floridians:

- **The disruption** to local communities and the daily lives of Floridians will be extraordinary. Cities and counties will be required to hold elections for each proposed comprehensive plan change – not just major projects, but even minor technical details. It will not be unusual for the voters to face 200 to 300 comprehensive plan changes every year. In the last four years alone, this amendment would have required an average of over 10,000 additional local referenda *per year* in Florida. If Amendment 4 had been law in 2006, the residents of Carrabelle, a small Franklin County town, would have voted 617 times!
- **The disorder** will further disenfranchise Florida's electorate. Voters will be deluged with highly technical background materials prepared by local government planning staff. The legalese of proposed comprehensive plan changes, often puzzling for expert engineers and attorneys, will further dampen voter turnout. Lines at voting booths will grow as Floridians attempt the virtual impossibility of voting on hundreds of separate and often confusing ballot questions.
- **The cost** will be astronomical. Every city and county in Florida will be burdened with the time and cost of holding additional elections to vote on proposed changes to comprehensive land use plans. Each of these elections will be costly, and local taxpayers will have to pay the bills.
- **The result** will be a system that is far worse, not better. That’s why respected environmental leaders refuse to support the amendment. They know this proposal will transform every planning decision into a political campaign, thereby encouraging sprawl and making smarter growth impossible.

The “Vote on Everything” amendment has been a disaster in St. Pete Beach—the small Pinellas County town that adopted a local version of this proposal in 2006. Since then, residents have suffered through endless litigation and economic shutdown that has turned their small community into a battleground for out-of-town lawyers and special interest groups.

Now, this amendment threatens to go state-wide. Amendment 4 will appear on the 2010 ballot. A diverse group of community leaders organized *Floridians for Smarter Growth* to fight them. History proves that a strong, well-coordinated grassroots effort is the key to success and although this proposal will not be on the ballot until 2010, we must organize for victory now.