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Editor's Note

4 Crying Out Loud

Riverside is a great neighborhood! According to the American Planning Association, it's one of the Ten Best in the country. How shall we celebrate? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Let's not build any more neighborhoods like it. Instead, let's transform rural tracts of land into soulless, treeless cul de sacs. Let's not do so because we can afford the infrastructure — the schools, roads and wastewater treatment plants that the new development will require. Let's do it because rural land is cheaper to buy, and therefore more profitable for developers to develop.

2. Let's allow existing neighborhoods to decay. Rather than encouraging businesses and residents to stay put, let's encourage them to leave behind vacant properties and move out to shiny new suburbs. And let's make sure that we don't provide any public transportation to the new, remote developments, ensuring that everyone has lengthy commutes on the region's already-clogged highways.

3. Let's guarantee that elected officials ignore the wishes of residents who'd prefer not

their communities should look is "too complicated" for average voters, so they should just stick to their knitting and not worry their pretty little heads about development any more!

6. Let's assign specious costs to the amendment — \$34 billion sounds good — even though every credible economist agrees that estimate is overblown political theater.

7. Let's state, without a shred of evidence, that Amendment 4 will "shut down" development and bring growth to a standstill. Let's ignore the fact that the backlog of properly zoned land currently out there is large enough to allow developers to keep developing for literally hundreds of years without a single land use change. (That's 996 years of capacity in Jackson County, 212 years in St. Lucie County and 162 years in Charlotte County, according to a Sept. 27 New York Times story.)

8. Let's argue that Amendment 4 would "cause Florida's economy to permanently collapse" (actual quote from the "Vote No on 4" website), overlooking the fact that the economy collapsed quite nicely on its own during the

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to see their community upended by an inappropriate land-use change. This one sounds difficult, but really, it's as easy as allowing local officials broad discretion in altering the land-use maps, and simultaneously having them fund their election campaigns with donations from developers. Simple!

4. Let's use the thousands of abandoned developments and unsold homes as a reason to justify rolling back existing land-use regulations, as gubernatorial candidate Rick Scott has proposed (<http://bit.ly/bkVUIR>) — because, clearly, any regulations that might limit the construction of thousands of new unnecessary homes are burdensome and unfair.

5. Let's convince the state's residents to vote "No" on Amendment 4, also known as Hometown Democracy, via a slick campaign funded by — what else? — millions of dollars from developers. Let's claim that deciding how

development boom, and that adding to the glut of existing homes isn't likely to help.

9. Let's put our trust in the same developer-financed lawmakers who've been in charge all along. In the last three years, despite some 300,000 housing units sitting empty around the state, local governments have approved 550,000 residential units and 1.4 billion square feet of commercial space. We're pretty sure we can rely on these officials to manage growth wisely.

10. Let's continue to fetishize Riverside/Avondale as a great place to live, without emulating any of the qualities that make it great. As a spokesperson for the American Planning Association noted, "This is what can happen with good planning." That, friends, is exactly what we've got to avoid. □

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