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Five of the amendments would require a supermajority of at least four of five City Commissioners for approval of the following categories of major land-use changes:    ·     the sale of city property;  ·     the rezoning of parks and public land;  ·     a rezoning of residential to non-residential, or a rezoning of lakefront property from residential to commercial, mixed-use, medium or high-density residential;  ·     a comprehensive plan amendment or rezoning that increases residential density or commercial intensity by more than 25 percent;  ·     a development order that authorizes development within wetlands.    The sixth amendment would require an additional public hearing and vote when a significant change is made during the City Commission’s consideration of a comprehensive plan amendment or rezoning. | |      |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | From our founding in 1986, 1000 Friends of Florida has worked to promote sound public policy on growth and development at the state and local levels to protect our environment and quality of life, the pillars of Florida’s appeal and prosperity. In a state growing as rapidly as Florida, it is critical for citizens to have a meaningful say in the future of their communities. Our state must have a visionary and workable planning process that engages an informed and active citizenry.    Since we released our [**Citizens Planning Bill of Rights**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001tRtbWMeIhLYNRbeZD7pu93dH-GogswUZ4etZwu9VAwpZd744KdqJShsQFrEfWPY0DfEAS1rcwd2VyDD1DgBjeOa8-P4ZPPDo3LNsEEc62D7EXeEvcdGtQIh30nY1GvRRKXeAx0ysjw6s-5XEtjG_YG5CJUT_l4T61ZMvZLYtrFI=&c=nuiAqznfo9wHfRfJqk5hwHSR1HUCfG04n-aAA0JXcdYtkpeGAqPg3g==&ch=0omJAY2ukCF6plIcXNlSl8bREQTWtzK6_VQYkXaVk-B2LH6qJdgpIw==)more than a decade ago, 1000 Friends has advocated requiring supermajority support among local officeholders for proposed land-use changes that directly affect a community’s unique sense of place, including the density, intensity and location of new development. As we pointed out, “Changes to such important policies should have the highest level of support and require the consent of more than a simple majority of elected officials.”    Last year, we reaffirmed our support for supermajority votes to enact land-use changes when we drafted and circulated a [**model property rights element**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001tRtbWMeIhLYNRbeZD7pu93dH-GogswUZ4etZwu9VAwpZd744KdqJStYQ7yghoUuh0XD8v_lOPcGse-YE1sp4e7MqQ_PqOdqyqjnUEBlpgD7WkjmIhdI9F_0f_sq64VpDBzAS6dYZE3uw5XfBCiWlkPZy3D40_GAM&c=nuiAqznfo9wHfRfJqk5hwHSR1HUCfG04n-aAA0JXcdYtkpeGAqPg3g==&ch=0omJAY2ukCF6plIcXNlSl8bREQTWtzK6_VQYkXaVk-B2LH6qJdgpIw==)for local governments throughout Florida to consider as they complied with a legislative mandate to amend their comprehensive plans. Our model element included a provision calling on local governments to require majority-plus-one approval for comprehensive plan amendments and rezonings.    In the model element, we also adopted another provision from our Citizens Planning Bill of Rights, calling on local governments to postpone final decisions on land-use proposals if they are changed, to allow officeholders and the public sufficient time to evaluate those changes. The additional time would spare them from being subjected to a shell game of last-minute changes.  The proposed amendments to Winter Park’s Charter track closely with the provisions of our model property rights element. They would require proposed land-use changes in five key categories to win four of five votes from Commissioners, rather than the current three votes, to earn approval. They would ensure that any late changes in proposed comprehensive plan amendments or rezonings can be thoroughly examined and debated by Commissioners and their constituents.    We believe these amendments will subject land-use decisions with permanent impacts on the city’s character and environment to the higher level of discussion, scrutiny and public support they deserve. We believe they will help maintain the city’s property values and quality of life. We urge Winter Park citizens to VOTE YES on all six amendments to the city’s charter on the March 8 election ballot.     |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Paul Owens, President 1000 Friends of Florida | | | | | | | |