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Land use

Responding to another survey on managing growth, Spartanburg County residents have not changed their opinions on land-use restrictions. They want managing how the county grows to be among Spartanburg County Council's top priorities.

And they understand the benefits of growth management. They realize that planning growth can not only protect their property values but also reduce costs for infrastructure such as roads and utilities that become necessary when ground is broken for a new business, subdivision or factory.

Fifty-four percent of residents who responded to Upstate Forever's recent survey want growth management to be a top concern of government. An even larger number of residents surveyed - 78 percent - agree that controlling growth can lower the cost of services. Protecting property values, however, is the biggest reason residents - 82 percent - support a plan that would better control what goes next door.

County Council members should pay attention.

Spartanburg County is in one of the fastest-growing regions in the country, yet resistance to meaningful land-use controls continues to allow the county to grow in a haphazard way.

Land is being developed without a strong plan that would protect the investment people have in their homes. Residential subdivisions are allowed to spring up where roads are inadequate to handle the greater traffic volume. And under the county's weak land-use ordinance, variances are granted to developers who don't want to be told how they can use their property.

Commercial developments have been allowed to locate next to residential subdivisions with too little consideration for people who live there. Large tracts of land adjacent to neighborhoods established long ago are cleared, leaving residents to worry about whether the closeness will have a negative impact on their property values and whether there will be unwanted noise. They worry that neighborhood streets may not be able to safely handle the additional traffic.

It is obvious to residents that the county's land-use ordinance isn't working. They have responded so in survey after survey.

People in Spartanburg County want growth, but the headaches that continue to come with the lack of zoning have them again asking their leaders in government to give them better protection from unchanneled growth.

Will county officials listen?

It is time for County Council to give the proper response, committing to a plan that channels growth to where it is least disruptive.

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