

Press Release

Contact: Dolores Trandel, Village Clerk
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12 P.M., April 15, 20010

Re: McHenry County 2030 Plan

1. Current categorization as “estate” has a negative impact on County land use and development/growth policies on Barrington Hills and its jurisdictional planning area.

a. The estate land use category does not sufficiently represent or protect the adopted land use policies of Barrington Hills as reflected in its comprehensive plan. We suggest a separate rural community or conservation community designation to reflect the unique character of Barrington Hills and similar communities, or a clarification and expansion of the estate category which fits the land use of Bull Valley and Barrington Hills that includes the farmettes described under the agricultural category. Parcels should be defined as those of up to 20 acres.

b. County policies to encourage density increases within low density areas and within existing municipalities both threatens the ability of Barrington Hills to maintain its low density character, and commitment of its private citizens to continue to support environmental stewardship efforts.

i. This policy to encourage density increase in the estate category is in conflict with recognition of the high quality water recharge area which includes Barrington Hills. Higher density will reduce recharge areas and negatively impact water quality.

c. Private conservation efforts should be encouraged as an alternative to the newer approach to conservation design that require public or common ownership of preservation areas.

Common ownership often does not guarantee long term quality preservation as is often demonstrated by private ownership efforts.

2. Choosing only one model for future development (conservation design) is short-sighted and ignores the county's own history and alternative approaches to conservation that have been in existence for over 50 years.

a. The 2030 plan should respect existing patterns of development and promote balanced growth to provide options for all types of communities – from rural-agricultural, estate and urban communities.

b. Communities similar to Barrington Hills have served to both preserve much of the County's high quality environmental areas, and are an important part of the County's history through their commitment to conservation that supports and nurtures the equestrian lifestyle. These communities provide a high quality of life for their residents, and those seeking a break from urban living. A low density area is advantageous to the adjacent residents from more densely populated areas who benefit from the increased capacity for water recharge; reduced draw down of the groundwater resources; air quality improvement from the air cleaning or scrubbing capabilities provided by the abundant plant life; and scenic views.

i. This type of private stewardship of nature and history offered by low density development is not valued and is marginalized in the plan as currently written.

ii. Moreover, the conservation design model currently described in the plan does not allow for McHenry County residents to have a multi-acre parcel for organic farming, raising lamas, horsekeeping or other hobbies which require a larger property, as in the conservation design model selected, the open space is commonly owned and to be preserved; not used for individual pursuits.

c. The lack of opportunities for communities like Barrington Hills and Bull Valley to be established, and the County's growth policy to encourage higher densities in existing

communities will not only limit future conservation-minded people to seek to locate in McHenry and preserve its character and history, but will have a direct detrimental impact on the ability of Barrington Hills, and other similar communities, to maintain their character, history and quality of life.

d. The County should amend proposed planning policies to assist communities in preserving their desired vision and purpose established by their residents. The comprehensive plans of existing communities should govern both the develop of lands within their borders and the unincorporated territories subject to boundary agreements, and in areas where joint land use planning is consistent

3. The equestrian heritage of the county is ignored by the 2030 Plan

a. The document uses the term equestrian only twice. For a county which has been known for its large population of horses, this is insufficient mention.

b. There is no acknowledgement that people seek out McHenry County as a place to come to to establish equine therapy barns, horse rescue operations, and commercial show/boarder barns and for trail riding.

c. There is no acknowledgement that people seek out McHenry County as a place to come to to establish a small farm to keep their own small number of horses; and to pursue activities such as trail riding and equestrian sports.

d. This plan entirely misses a great opportunity to foster growth of the equine industry, by specifically providing for the expansion of horsekeeping in the county. The farmettes in turn support the larger parcels under the agricultural designation by increasing their customer base (for hay etc) and also maintain the eco-sensitive and predominantly rural character of our county.

4. The periodic assessment of the success of the plan should be more frequent and include community involvement

- a. Waiting until 2015 for the first review of the plan is a time frame which is too far out.
- b. County plan needs a “sensitivity” analysis to fully understand implication on all communities.
- c. Implementation – as has been done in Kane County for years, County planning process should be continued and further refined through closer study of sub-regions through the creation of community partnerships of municipalities that share similar interests, and/or geographic areas. Only then will the County Plan be truly reflective of the aspirations, visions, and goals of all its citizens.

This analysis and these remarks were created with the assistance of the consultant firm which our Plan Commission utilizes, Teska Associates of Evanston, Illinois.

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Trustee, Village of Barrington Hills
McHenry County Resident
Equestrienne

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