

Article Last Updated: 10/23/2005 01:28 AM

## Foes fear regulations would block retail projects

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REDLANDS On Nov. 8, voters will decide whether 18 pages of slow-growth regulations amount to a protection of Redlands' unique charm or an inflexible deterrent to the economic development that could ultimately preserve and complement that charm.

Measure P was filed with the city by slow-growth group the Redlands Association with the intent of strengthening growth regulations in 1997's Measure U.

Proponents say that the initiative would limit traffic congestion, protect property values, retain the rural character of the canyons, increase downtown's viability and open up the appeals process.

But opponents worry that the tightening of regulations will eliminate the ability of future city leaders to make decisions that keep up with the times and will discourage positive development needed to retain funding for essential city services.

The group Redlanders for Responsible Growth Management supports the measure.

Opponents of the measure include all five City Council members, the Redlands Police Officers' Association, the Redlands Professional Firefighters, the Redlands Teachers' Association and the Redlands Chamber of Commerce.

This summer, the City Council contracted with the Redlands Chamber of Commerce to commission an in-depth report on how the initiative could affect the city's finances, if it passes. The \$25,000 report by the Claremont-based Rose Institute of State and Local Government concluded that Measure P could increase the projected 2006-07 deficit by nearly \$2.4 million.

Proponents, who have objected to the report, say the measure will not hinder development.

Some of the most significant concerns center around regulations that would require the city to annex property before providing city services such as water and sewer.

Under a 2001 voter-approved agreement called Measure N, the city is getting 90 percent of the sales tax revenue from developments in the "doughnut hole" the 1,100-acre area of land in that is controlled by the county but surrounded by land within the city as long as the city provides services such as water, sewer, police and fire protection. So far, city officials say developments like Citrus Plaza are generating significant revenue.

Property tax still goes to the county, but after 20 years, the city will get 100 percent of the sales tax revenue.

Opponents say that Measure P will invalidate the agreement and generate lawsuits. Proponents say developments like Citrus Plaza have a "vested right" and will not be impacted. They also worry that regulations like building height requirements and a fee-less appeals process will drive positive developers out of town and diminish the city's ability to redevelop downtown as a vibrant entertainment and shopping haven.

Proponents say the initiative increases the area downtown that could be exempt from developers' fees if approved by the council.

Some of the other provisions of the initiative would:

Prohibit development that is inconsistent with covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&R) at existing developments.

Allow a group of 20 registered Redlands voters to appeal any city decision related to the General Plan without a payment of fees.

Prohibit reclassification of local residential streets and limit traffic volumes to 500 vehicle trips per day.

Prohibits redesignation of urban reserve properties to land-use densities greater than estate residential.

Establishes resource preservation land classification to restrict density in hillside areas to 2.5 units per acre.

Prohibit non-government projects that degrade water resources.

Require unanimous approval and findings for redesignation of property within 300 feet of residences to non-residential use.

Require unanimous approval of annexation agreements for residential development outside the city sphere and planning areas.

Redefine project exemptions from socioeconomic, noise and traffic studies.

Establish an appeals process for city actions.

Limit buildings to three stories with some exemptions.

Limit new residential structures to two stories or 35 feet.

Limit annually the approval of new multi-family homes.

Designate portions of 11 streets as scenic drives.

Prohibit reclassification of local and residential collector streets without voter approval.

Preserve recreational, equestrian and animal uses in residential areas.

Encourage retention of specimen oak trees and require findings for development affecting oak trees.

If the measure passes, a development moratorium could be an option to allow city staff to analyze the implications of the initiative, Community Development Director Jeff Shaw said.

Some requirements, like the enforcement of private CC&R's, could require the city to hire a consultant to analyze the way the city would enforce the regulation, then hire an additional employee to handle the implementation of that standard alone, Shaw said.

Citizens can read the full text of the ordinance in the city clerk's office, 35 Cajon St.

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