



November 4, 2025

Re: Proposed Ballot Measure Downtown Parking Lots

Dear Mayor Combs, Vice Mayor Nash, and Councilmembers Taylor, Schmidt, and Wise,

Thank you for your service to Menlo Park. Menlo Together and Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County appreciates that the ballot measure before you is vague, with conditions and exemptions that may be unachievable; It could halt any improvements to downtown parking plazas whatsoever.

Menlo Together is a group of Menlo Park and Peninsula residents who envision a city that is integrated and diverse, multi-generational, and environmentally sustainable. Our core values are: *equity, sustainability, inclusion, health, and racial and economic justice*. We come together around these core values because they are necessary to the health and strength of our community.

Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County works with communities and their leaders to create and preserve quality affordable homes.

We are writing to urge the City Council to commission a study, as allowed by Election Code 9212, to understand the full impacts that this vague ballot measure would have on our city. Proponents are not trained planners or economists, they are not elected by the community, and many do not even live in Menlo Park. So it is essential that the city fully understand the potential impacts this measure would have on Menlo Park residents now and in the future.

The Election Code provision allows cities to complete such a report. While the election code has specific sections that are required, the city can also add (within reason) other issues that may have a significant impact on the city's ability to function. Menlo Together

and Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County would like to see the following topics studied in addition to what is required:

1. How would the measure affect the city's ability to comply with state housing laws, including production of affordable housing and affirmatively furthering fair housing. Put another way, Menlo Park currently has a compliant housing element. If this measure passed, what would Menlo Park need to do to stay in compliance and prevent additional builder's remedy proposals in the current housing element cycle;
2. How would the measure affect the city's ability to add new homes and modern parking and transportation management strategies downtown?
3. Are there examples of other nearby cities that have added new homes and modern parking and transportation management strategies to their downtowns, and do we know how that has changed vacancy rates of retail spaces and sales tax?
4. How would the measure affect employers' ability to attract and retain workers, especially workers that are employed with local retailers, pre-school teachers, health aides, and other low income employees;
5. How would the measure affect Menlo Park's climate and environmental justice goals? For example, through its impact on people driving to or through Menlo Park for work because they cannot afford to live here;
6. How would the measure affect racial and economic equity;
7. What would be the potential legal costs to the city if the city found that the measure was in conflict with state law or unenforceable, given Section 10 of the ballot measure, which would indemnify the proponents for legal expenses and losses incurred against "any judgement against the constitutionality, statutory permissibility, or implementation of this Ordinance, in whole or in part, if any court of law"?

This list is not comprehensive or exhaustive. We recognize that the city has limited resources, but it is essential that we have a strong understanding of some of the most measurable impacts this law could have on our community.

Sincerely,

Menlo Together and Housing Leadership Council