



Friends of Los Altos, Inc. (FOLA)

A non-profit, non-partisan, volunteer-run organization

The Issues Are Complicated, but the Answers Are Simple

- **YES on Measure D**
- **Eng for District 2**
- **Eisenberg for Water District**
- **District 4 do not cast a vote**

Measure D Recommendations

The short truth about Measure D without reading the end of this article

- ***Measure D does NOT remove Downtown parking***
*“If the Ballot Measure is adopted, the existing surface-lot configuration of the Plazas would remain in place unless voters approve a change. **Parking-related conditions affecting Downtown visitation would remain at approximately current levels.**”*
—City of Los Altos, Elections Code §9212 Report
- ***Measure D does NOT require residential neighborhoods to be rezoned***
“Could the initiative require the city to upzone other areas? ... The initiative, at passing itself, does not require this.”
—City Manager Gabe Engeland, LACC City July 2026 meeting transcript
- ***Measure D does NOT trigger Builder’s Remedy, the developer zoning bypass***
“Measure D does not put the city into Builder’s Remedy.”
—City Manager Gabe Engeland, Sept 8 City Council meeting transcript
- ***Measure D does NOT automatically make the City’s state-certified Housing Element noncompliant or decertify the plan.***
The state *“has not stated that adoption of Measure D would result in loss of the City’s Housing Element compliance.”*
—City of Los Altos, Measure D FAQ at [LosAltosca.gov](https://www.LosAltosca.gov)

We realize there is a great deal of confusion among those following Measure D, especially for those tracking the online discussions about the measure.

Please read our analysis and recommendation. Even if you don't agree with our recommendation, please take the time to read this article as the outcome of this measure will have a dramatic impact on your town

Our bottom line: while we think ballot measures generally aren't a good thing, voting YES on Measure D is a far better alternative than leaving the fate of our parking plazas to the City Council alone to decide.

Many of the attacks on YES on Measure D are factually wrong. We know that because the opponents continue to contradict what the City Manager has publicly stated to be correct and what the City's own website and supporting documents say.

We endeavor to clarify the issues and present the facts, which convince us that a YES vote is right for our City. If you agree with our conclusions, please inform two friends and feel free to forward this article on to them.

If you want the parking plazas to:

- Remain unchanged, or not
- Become housing, or not
- Include a park, or not
- Be replaced by a parking garage, or not

Then vote YES for Measure D.

Measure D allows you to have a say in what happens to the parking plazas. It prohibits sale or lease of the 10 City owned parking plazas unless approved by voters. There is an exclusion of two parking plazas (7 and 8) which the City has already declared as "surplus land" in preparation for affordable housing per Section 1H of the Housing Element.

And while there will be some work needed to "review and analyze" Measure D for a potential amendment to the Housing Element, the City has affirmed that doing so will not automatically trigger Builder's Remedy nor require rezoning single-family residential neighborhoods for high-density housing.

The opponents claim there will be huge damage if Measure D passes from a loss of parking (actually categorically not true) and a redo of the housing element. But they fail to admit they are strong proponents of the park, parking garage, and performing arts center which may also require amending the housing element. This strikes us as hypocritical.

We are deeply disappointed that all of our Council members are against Measure D and, in our view, are parroting the arguments made by the NO on D campaign. This is problematic because many of the arguments used by the NO campaign run contrary to the information and answers being supplied by the City. This raises questions as to whether our City Council is acting responsibly and in the best interests of the community.

YIMBY Law, a non-profit advocacy group, not a law firm, threatens everyone, according to people in the know. The reality is that if Measure D passes it does not result in Builder's Remedy, and it does not violate California Law- at least there is no precedent. And no law has been stated as grounds for violation by YIMBY.

Housing Elements have a 15-30% margin of surplus sites identified because it's expected that not every site in the Housing Element will be ultimately appropriate for housing.

Always "Follow the Money" when deciding how to vote on ballot measures (and for which candidates to vote for or against). "Golden State Voices United" which is a Super PAC and IEC (Independent Expenditure Committee) has been helping to fund the "No on D" campaign. The #1 contributor is the California Apartment Association which has contributed \$45,000, so far, to Golden State Voices United. Please consider who will profit if Measure D fails, and who will lose out if Measure D passes.

The campaign against Measure D is unfortunately laced with misstatements and just plain lies. They are trying to confuse voters into allowing our downtown parking plazas to be remade for the benefit of real estate investors and developers.

Some additional considerations

Numerous residents have told us they are confused as to what Measure D does or does not do. Others who initially supported it, now tell us they are concerned about many of the "consequences" of Measure D passage that opponents have raised. Please read out recommendations. If you have concerns about Builder's Remedy, read our analysis of that issue at this link: <https://friendsoflosaltos.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/builders-remedy-bogeyman.261008.pdf>

Most of all we ask you to trust your gut. Most residents intuitively understand the value of our parking plazas and the importance to the community. They understand that residents should have a say in our most iconic community asset.

Some residents believe these matters are best left to City Council. In general, we agree, but for the following reason we would come out differently on Measure D. For city government to work properly requires a City Council to do three things: listen to the community, represent the community in any decisions, and make decisions in the best interest of the overall community. Unfortunately, our City Council is failing in the first two, which makes the third impossible. Still believe the City Council should make the decision? Then please read our article on trust found here: <https://friendsoflosaltos.org/do-you-trust-the-los-altos-city-council-to-do-the-right-thing/>

Why vote for Measure D?

It's our downtown. The parking lots are an iconic asset valued by residents, visitors and downtown merchants. It provides the convenient parking that makes Los Altos a destination.

It's about housing. We need to keep our parking plazas unencumbered should we, in the worst case, need them for additional housing.

It will have no effect on our existing parking supply. Measure D exempts Plazas 7 and 8 which the City has already committed for housing. So, parking depends upon what they do with those projects and has nothing to do with Measure D. Opponents are not telling you the truth when they say Measure D will cause a "loss" of 200+ parking places.

It's about probabilities, not possibilities. The housing element has to be reviewed and the voter approval requirement added. But there is currently excess capacity included in the existing Housing Element.

It's about trust. Our City Council has not had the community's best interest when making a number of important decisions, including their decision to give away our fire station building and land without sharing any justification with the community.

We have never seen the level of misinformation and fear mongering by both the NO on D campaign and our current City Council members. Accusations by the NO campaign about Draeger's interest in getting Measure D passed so that it can avail itself of Builder's Remedy is inaccurate and unfounded. Those accusations are also ironic given it is been proffered by local developers who have, for years, advocated for the City to reduce parking requirements and for the City, instead of them, to pay for more parking.

We find it notable that the Daily Post has supported Menlo Park's downtown initiative, which is similar to but more restrictive than Measure D, as it actually prohibits housing on parking plazas. The Post's rationale for supporting the measure in Menlo Park tracks many of the same arguments made by the YES on Measure D group. The link to the article is here: <https://padailypost.com/2026/10/03/daily-post-editorial-vote-yes-on-p-to-save-downtown/>

Local Election Recommendations

Here is our take on local elected officials.

We currently have a majority on City Council that is of the same opinion on virtually every issue and, in our view, treats residents with disdain and disrespect.

District 2

In District 2, we have the choice between Lynette Lee Eng and Anky van Deursen. The simple answer, in our view, is van Deursen would simply be another voice for the Council majority. She has raised money from numerous people, including two incumbent Los Altos council members and several legislators in Sacramento and Mountain View. The community deserves a voice that puts Los Altos residents first.

Lynette Lee Eng has been an advocate for transparency, is an independent thinker who addresses issues in a fair and thoughtful manner, and treats residents with respect. We not only should want her, we need her on Council.

District 4

Larry Lang already has an at-large council seat whose term expires in two more years. Voting for him gives him a district seat that runs for four years. While Larry Lang is running unopposed for District 4, his statements regarding Measure D are, in our view, indicative of someone who puts ideology ahead of facts. He has been a willing chorus to a City Council that consistently ignores the public, and he is, at times, disrespectful to residents who speak at Council meetings.

Did we also mention that Lang's win would mean the City either spends \$50,000–\$100,000 for a special election for the seat he is “vacating,” or the community gets stuck with a Council appointee who will represent the Council, not the community? His actions fail to show concern for City finances and what, in our view, would be ethical conduct.

We think the City deserves better and would encourage voters to simply not vote for him or write in someone—anyone—else.

County Water Board

Pete Dailey is running against incumbent Rebecca Eisenberg for the Santa Clara County Water District.

Eisenberg has been a “controversial” officeholder, with numerous articles discussing her treatment of District employees and poor relations with fellow board members. Based on extensive conversations with her, our conclusion is most, if not all, those accusations are baseless. Many were levied by the former CEO, who was terminated.

Eisenberg is clearly committed to improving the management of the District and the water that reaches our households. She has been instrumental in routing out incompetent management at the district, ultimately resulting in a new CEO. She played a key role in stopping the Pacheco Reserve project, which otherwise would have cost each of us through higher water costs. We think these are significant and important accomplishments. She also understands the key responsibilities of the Water District in providing clean, affordable water and protecting the public from flooding.

Pete makes a big deal of his chairmanship of the Water Commission. In fact, the Water Commission is made up of local elected officials who largely review and advise on the annual operations plan for the Water District. The real heavy lifting happens by the Water District Board of Directors.

Pete Dailey has garnered a reputation for his arrogant and abusive behavior at Los Altos City Council meetings. On that basis alone, we think he is not well suited to public office. And while he might fit better with the existing Water Board members than Eisenberg, we haven't seen any

real evidence of his interest in or proposals for improving the Water District in its primary responsibility. Frankly the core mission of the Water District should be providing adequate water for the County, addressing subsidence and preventing flooding. Pete's interest in housing and other non-core issues may be laudable, but we need someone laser focused on the critical job the Water District provides residents.

It's simply too important a job to be left to someone like Dailey.

In this case, Eisenberg represents a far better choice than Dailey.

A bit more info on Measure D

Any Issues or Concerns?

Yes. In general, we don't like ballot measures that require voter approval on decisions regarding complex issues that are arguably best handled by a City Council. However, here we are talking about public land and Los Altos already has a law on the books that requires voter approval for parks, open spaces and the Civic Center.

The parking plazas are an integral part of downtown, the community, and the unique Los Altos identity. Therefore, any changes should reflect the consensus of the community, not the personal preferences of a City Council. Unfortunately, this City Council has not done a good job of finding out what residents do or do not want.

Any voter say will come after the City Council has proposed a project that is well thought through, well documented, and has a clearly defined need and scope. Frankly, if the City does its homework and truly understands what is acceptable to the community, a vote will be more a formality than a referendum.

Our City commissions historically were the place where initial ideas were presented, vetted, and debated with robust community input. Our City management and Council have effectively eviscerated our City commissions, reducing the number of commissioners, cutting down the number of meetings, reducing their Work Plans, and increasingly bypassing them altogether.

The City Council has been dismissive of resident viewpoints on downtown plaza plans that don't reflect what it wants to happen. Furthermore, City staff has actively advocated for proposals instead of acting as a neutral third-party collecting community input and feedback.

The City Council has not been candid with residents. While claiming it has no choice but to implement State-mandated housing requirements, the current Council was among the few, out of 236 cities in California, that refused to support the recent Cal Cities Murrieta Resolution, which advocates for more local control over housing and zoning.

Many residents view this position by our City Council as hypocritical and not in the best interests of the greater Los Altos community.

While we commend the City Manager for his forthrightness regarding what Measure D actually does—and does not do—that unbiased approach is not shared by City Council members. Unfortunately, we have seen all four Council members make public statements on Nextdoor and in Council meetings that blur the line between their own personal point of view and their role as Council members representing the City.

Everyone is entitled to an opinion, but making incorrect factual statements while serving in a position of civic authority is irresponsible.

What Hasn't Been Discussed by the Opponents of Measure D

Many of the attacks on YES on Measure D have been factually wrong. We know that because they contradict what the City Manager has publicly stated to be correct.

There have also been unfounded allegations that some of the YES on D property owners want the measure to pass so they can use Builder's Remedy to build tall buildings on their properties. To date, we have neither seen nor heard anything to give credence to those statements.

In fact, those property owners have consistently been supportive of downtown and the existing businesses. Do we think Draeger's is scheming to turn its parking lot into an oversized residential development? We don't. We have spent time talking with Richard Draeger to understand his values and priorities. He wants to be a family owned, well run and well-respected grocery store in Los Altos, not a developer.

Many of the downtown businesses are firmly in favor of Measure D because they are concerned that changes to the parking plazas will have a serious negative impact on their businesses, both during construction and long term.

The business owners were not asked by LAVA (Los Altos Village Association) for their input until after the LAVA Board voted to oppose Measure D. We have also been told that LAVA representatives and NO on D campaign staff have told some downtown merchants to remove YES on D signage from their storefront windows because of LAVA policy.

The circular financing that ties many of the NO on Measure D groups together also deserves attention. What do LAVA, Los Altos Community Voices, and Los Altos Mountain View Community Foundation have in common? All are funded, directly or indirectly, by the City Council. While we are not making accusations, most residents are not aware of these potential conflicts of interest when evaluating the NO on D supporters.

The City Council created its own problem when it decided to pursue affordable housing on Plazas 7 and 8. The definition of affordable housing is driven by City and state regulations. The opponents of Measure D suggest there is ambiguity in the reference to "affordable. There is not—it is defined by the State

If the City does not require replacement of the 266 parking spaces on Plazas 7 and 8, there will be a parking shortage. This parking shortfall is not a result of Measure D and, frankly, should be replaced by whoever builds housing on Plazas 7 and 8.

There is now discussion about selling one or both parking plazas and allowing market-rate housing on one and all-affordable housing on the other. This plan would purportedly require less parking and “pay” for the lost parking on the two plazas. Until there is a concrete plan, along with a specified site for replacement parking, we consider this speculative at best.

If parking on Plazas 7 and 8 is not replaced, Safeway can pull out of its participation in the parking district. This requires Safeway to pay the City \$500,000, and the City would lose the 129 parking stalls at Safeway that are open to the public for 90-minute parking. **This is not a Measure D issue, but a consequence of the decisions the City Council has already made in declaring Plazas 7 and 8 as surplus land and available for housing.**

The biggest beneficiaries of voting NO on Measure D are the developers who are interested in acquiring parking plaza land for development and/or having the City pay for a parking garage from which they benefit. Otherwise, they would have to pay for constructing new parking when developing a project which requires additional parking.

YIMBY Law, which has threatened to sue Los Altos if Measure D passes, has also threatened to sue the City over plans for Plazas 7 and 8, which it asserts have not moved fast enough. YIMBY Law understandably wants more housing, but interestingly has not threatened to sue the City if three parking plazas are taken out of the inventory of potential housing sites to build a performing arts center and park. YIMBY Law may know what the City isn't saying: the housing units identified to go on the parking plazas can be removed since they are just opportunity sites. In fact other cities have removed opportunity sites with HCD approval.

While it is hard to believe, not everyone in politics tells lies to favor their position. To date, we have not seen any instance where the YES on Measure D campaign, made up of resident volunteers with deep history of Los Altos community leadership, has intentionally lied or misrepresented the facts. On the few occasions where the YES group has made an incorrect statement, they have corrected those statements. And it appears that the YES group is the only one which has engaged land use attorneys to draft and support their position. To date the NO on Measure D group has not.

We wish the other side was so honest and forthright.

And that is the way we see it.

Friends of Los Altos Board of Directors

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