

EAST COUNTY TIMES

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Vote no on Measure F

Editorial

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BRENTWOOD VOTERS should reject Measure F, the disingenuous initiative on the June 8 ballot that would expand the community's growth boundaries with the misleading promise that local residents would be given more control over the future of their city.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, Measure F is a developer-sponsored measure that would open up 740 acres at the southwest corner of the city and lock in plans for development of up to 1,300 homes with almost no opportunity for residents to object to details of the plans.

It's a bad proposal — bad for the region, bad for the city, bad for residents.

"So don't buy into the lie that Measure F would increase local control. It would do just the opposite. Vote no."

Brentwood voters have already been clear and wise about their desires. They recognize that ever-expanding residential sprawl, especially when there are already 4,153 parcels available for development within Brentwood and thousands more throughout the county, is costly, traffic-inducing, inefficient and environmentally destructive.

In 2005, Brentwood voters rejected an initiative that would have opened up the land on the southwest corner of the city and other parcels for development. In 2006, they joined voters in all the other Contra Costa cities that also didn't already have an

growth boundary — called an urban limit line — in setting limits throughout the county. Once again, they rejected growth into the 740 acres that's now at issue.

Thus, residents have been clear that for the foreseeable future that land should remain open space. That's why backers of Measure F, rather than being upfront about their intentions, are trying to sell their initiative as a way to raise money for road improvements, economic development and public amenities such as sports fields and public safety.

In fact, the fees that would be raised from development in the area would barely cover the costs of providing services — and they would not come for years.

The developers also are trying to sell the initiative as a way to give residents control over the city's planning boundaries. In fact, residents already have that control. If they want to expand the city's urban limit line, they can do so at the polls at any time. That wouldn't change. But this is not the project for which the boundaries should be adjusted.

The real agenda of backers is to lock in development plans that can't be rescinded. The trick in Measure F is that it not only expands the growth boundary, it also overrides the city's general plan to double the amount of houses that could be built on the site and cut the amount of open space by almost two-thirds, and it creates a binding development agreement so that residents can't seek amendments.

Unlike with other developments, residents in this case wouldn't have the usual opportunity to publicly review the plans, raise concerns and demand changes from the City Council. Measure F is a package deal. If voters buy into all the false promises and vote for the initiative, they're also agreeing to the 1,300 homes on the site.

Normally, there also would be an environmental review of a project before its approval. In this case, the process would be reversed. The environmental review would come after the voter approval. The possibilities for change to address environmental concerns would be greatly reduced. The key decisions would have already been made.

So don't buy into the lie that Measure F would increase local control. It would do just the opposite. Vote no.

**BRENTWOOD:
URBAN LIMIT LINE**

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