

City of Mountlake Terrace

Proposition 1

Ballot Title

Civic Campus Bonds

The City Council of the City of Mountlake Terrace adopted Ordinance No. 2537 concerning a proposition for financing a new civic campus and other community improvements. If approved, this proposition would authorize the City to issue bonds for the construction of a new civic campus and other improvements as listed in Ordinance No. 2537. It would authorize issuance of not more than \$37,500,000 of general obligation bonds maturing within 30 years or less, and authorize the annual levy of excess property taxes to pay and retire such bonds, all as provided in Ordinance No. 2537. Should this proposition be approved?

Explanatory Statement

If approved by voters, this proposition would enable The City of Mountlake Terrace to renovate the Civic Campus, originally built in 1961. The new site would revitalize the downtown with a new park and community space, including a community and senior activity center, new police station, emergency operations center, community green space with sitting areas and spray fountain to serve as a gathering place and link to Veterans Memorial Park.

City offices would be under one roof, with enhanced tree-lined streetscapes, wider sidewalks, improved crosswalks, amphitheater for concerts and festivals, and replacement of original roof, furniture and heating/air conditioning system at the library.

The city is currently renting space after a ceiling collapse at the former Civic Center necessitated a move in 2009. The building was demolished this year after decades of structural problems and safety hazards.

The new Civic Campus would be paid for with general obligation bonds maturing over 30 years. The total cost would be no more than \$37,500,000. The additional increase in property tax for the owner of an average home (\$256,300) at current levy rates would be none in 2011, approximately \$3.50 per month in 2012, and about \$20 per month beginning in 2013.

more argument statements for this proposition on the next page

City of Mountlake Terrace

Proposition 1 (continued)

Statement For

*Statement by: Alice Kier,
Patrick Pierce, Robert Reedy*

Vote YES for the Mountlake Terrace Civic Campus! This project is about reinvesting in our community and restoring economic vitality in Mountlake Terrace. The Civic Campus will drive targeted development to downtown, bolstering the tax base and ensuring that city services will be sustainable into the future. Utilizing existing city-owned property reduces costs and retains a central location with easy connectivity to the Transit Center and forthcoming Flyer Stop. The competitive bidding environment makes now the most fiscally responsible time to make this investment as current bids for construction projects are coming back up to 30% under estimates. A new Civic Campus plan was conceived based on the input of residents to meet our community's current and future needs. Seniors and families alike will benefit from meeting and event facilities in the Community Center, which also includes a commercial kitchen. An amphitheater, spray fountain and additional park space offer even more areas for community gatherings and events. Consolidating city services under one roof will increase efficiency and convenience for residents. A much-needed new police station and Emergency Operations Center will improve security measures and preparation for disasters and major storm events. Financing is phased in over the next three years, minimizing immediate impacts on residents while preparing our community to thrive in the future. Exemptions are provided to low-income residents. Even with this small property tax increase, Mountlake Terrace will continue as one of the most affordable cities to live. Please vote YES for this important community investment!

Statement Against

Statement by: Leonard French

The \$37.5 million Civic Campus levy will increase your monthly house payments (or rent) by \$20. That's \$240 per year. Ouch! The City already collects \$4.2 million annually from property taxes. It wants \$2.7 million more. That's a 64% increase – in a punishing recession. What are they thinking? Supporters of the levy argue that costs might be less. They could also be substantially more. No one can accurately predict construction costs or interest rates. But, don't worry; the full monthly bills will be delayed until 2013. Aren't gimmicks like "buy now, pay later" and "teaser-rate financing" how governments and individuals got into this current financial mess? It doesn't matter if payments you can't afford start now or in three years. It doesn't matter that it is \$37.5 million rather than \$45 million if taxpayers can't afford \$37.5 million. What happened to the focus of the 2007 Town Center Plan, an \$8.5 million City Hall? Citizen surveys echoing what the "City" wanted to hear made it a \$37.5 million Civic Campus. And, now, we're told is the perfect time to build, ignoring that the surveys justifying this huge increase were completed before the recession's impact on taxpayers even started. The days of easy money have given way to hard decisions. Except at city hall. Fortunately, every voter gets to decide how much is too much. \$37.5 million is too much. A 64% increase is too much. \$2.7 million per year is too much. \$20 per month is too much. **VOTE NO!**

Rebuttal of Statement Against

This is a long-term investment benefiting families and seniors while securing our future economic vitality. Opponents play with the numbers, but in reality the total tax increase is minimal. Projects throughout the region continue to come in well below estimates. This is a fact. The financial plan respects the current economy and prepares us to thrive during the recovery. Let's seize this opportunity. Don't let public land lay dormant and citizens' needs unmet. VOTE YES!

Rebuttal of Statement For

If Downtown revitalization depended on the scope of new city buildings, the same revitalization wouldn't have been promised when the plan was just an \$8.5 million City Hall.

New public buildings are always appealing conceptually. But, with costs attached in the midst of a prolonged recession, it becomes clear just how unaffordable the concept is. Only the public sector, used to getting whatever it wants, could consider a tax increase of 64% "small."