

Voters say yes to Q, R

By Crystal Lee

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Measures Q and R passed by wide margins Tuesday night, extending the city of Davis' half-cent sales tax for six more years and 2000's Measure J another decade.

Measure Q received 8,838 yes votes, 74.5 percent of those cast Tuesday, and 3,030 no votes, 25.5 percent. Measure R was approved by an even greater margin, 76.7 percent (8,801 votes) to 23.3 percent (2,669 votes).

Both measures won in all 38 precincts in Davis.

Measure Q is the local half-cent sales tax that was approved by voters in 2004. It generates about \$3 million a year for the city to fund general services, including public safety, recreational programs and facilities maintenance.

The tax has now been extended through Dec. 31, 2016. It would have expired at the end of the year if not renewed.

"We'll be able to continue to support the services that are in existence now," Mayor Pro Tem Don Saylor said. "It means we won't have to reduce further our expenditures. We already have cut \$1.7 million this year, \$3.5 million last year, so, if Measure Q failed, we'd have to take another \$3 million out."

Councilwoman Sue Greenwald said she was not worried about Measure Q failing.

"I thought it would pass because it's a simple renewal," Greenwald said. "Every time we do a survey, citizens show a tremendous satisfaction with the quality of life in Davis. I think people think it's worth half a cent."

Measure R is the renewal of Measure J, the land-use ordinance approved by voters in 2000. Measure J gives voters the right to approve or reject, with a simple majority, development proposals that are considered agriculture-to-urban-use projects.

Measure R will be in effect until Dec. 31, 2020.

Eileen Samitz, who spearheaded the Yes on Measure R, said explaining to voters that Measure R simply renews Measure J was a challenge during the campaign.

The goal was to "de-confuse" people, Samitz said at the Measure R election night party, hosted by Yolo County Supervisor Jim Provenza.

"The biggest problem for us was explaining that Measure R equaled Measure J," Samitz said. "That was one of the biggest challenges, to make sure the public understood that Measure R meant the renewal of Measure J. There was confusion. People were saying, 'What is Measure R?' and sometimes, 'What is Measure J?' So, we had to re-educate."

Mark Spencer, who also worked on the Measure R campaign, said most people they talked to knew they could vote on Measure J projects, but did not understand the mechanism that ensures they will continue to have that right.

"Fortunately, we had the dream team for Measure R," Samitz said, with, Spencer, Pam Nieberg, former Davis Mayor Ken Wagstaff and herself working on the campaign.

The four were proponents of the original Measure J, when Wagstaff was on the City Council.

"He helped put it on the ballot," Samitz said.

Since then, two housing projects have been subject to a Measure J vote. Both failed at the polls.

Wildhorse Ranch was rejected by 75 percent of voters last November, and Covell Village was rejected by 59 percent in 2005.

Two committees formed to support the measures — one in favor of Measure Q, the other Measure R .

Yes on Measure Q raised a total of \$950 and spent \$1,254 on its campaign.

Yes on Measure R spent a total of \$10,815 on its campaign. It raised \$12,692, which includes money carried over from when the committee was called Citizens for Responsible Planning, formed in 1997.

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