

# **Santa Monica PROPOSITION T**

## **Residents' Initiative to Fight Traffic (RIFT)**

### **Questions & Answers**



**YesPropT.com**

#### **What will this initiative do?**

It will dramatically reduce growth in traffic on our streets by reducing future commercial development (offices, retail, industrial) by half. Commercial development typically causes three to four times the amount of traffic as residential.

#### **Why is it necessary?**

Our city is awash in traffic; traffic our roads, streets and neighborhoods were not designed to handle. It's bad now and will only get worse. Time spent in traffic hurts our economy by contributing to lost wages and productivity, and by increasing our fuel use. Additionally, idling vehicles cause more air pollution and decrease safety, as frustrated drivers cut through local neighborhood streets.

#### **Who's behind this measure?**

Prop T was created by a grassroots residents group called the Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City. The residents who founded and run SMCLC came together in 2005 to oppose the three 21-story towers proposed on the site of Santa Monica Place. SMCLC believes that residents and local businesses are fed up with traffic and associated over-development and want to preserve their community. To find out more, visit our website at [www.smclc.net](http://www.smclc.net).

#### **Has Santa Monica seen a lot of traffic-causing commercial development?**

Yes. Over the past 25 years our city approved a spectacular amount of new office and retail space while our resident population stayed about the same. Between 1980 and 2007, our city approved over 9,000,000 square feet of office, retail and industrial space.

#### **Is 9,000,000 square feet a lot for a city our size?**

Santa Monica is only eight square miles. Since 1980 we've added to our city, in just commercial growth, the equivalent of over 16 Santa Monica Place malls! This flood of development has increased traffic congestion, parking problems, and strained our infrastructure with greater demands for water and electricity and sewers.

#### **What happens if we don't pass this measure?**

If Santa Monica's commercial growth continues at its city-projected pace, we will add up to the square footage equivalent of another six Santa Monica Place malls to our city over the next 20 years. And we may even add more than that.

#### **You mean, actual growth could be even higher than what the city is projecting?**

Yes. And based on the accuracy of past city projections, it more than likely will. In 1984, our city projected 5,800,000 square feet of new commercial growth through the year 2000. But in just six years, the city approved everything it had "projected" for sixteen years and then continued to approve many more projects year after year after year. The city has never placed limits on commercial growth. This measure will.

**1984 was a long time ago. Hasn't commercial development slowed since then?**

Some. But since 1995, growth in commercial space has averaged the square footage equivalent of adding one new Santa Monica Place mall to our city every three and a half years.

**Isn't our city already "built-out"? How much new commercial development is even possible?**

A lot. Our city remains a highly desirable place to work, so there is continuing demand for taller buildings for offices and other commercial uses. Under current zoning, our city could add a huge amount of new development. In Santa Monica's "industrial" area (Lincoln to Centinela, Colorado to Olympic) there are 47 parcels, one acre or more each, which the city recently designated as "development opportunities." The city estimates that one-third of this 80-acre "industrial" zone could undergo redevelopment over the next 20 years.

**Won't mass transit fix the traffic problem?**

It may help, but not much in the near term. Bus ridership has not kept pace with development in Santa Monica and isn't projected to. There is a proposed light-rail line, but that isn't funded and is likely to be 15 or more years from completion.

**Will this measure interfere with the ongoing LUCE process and the General Plan update?**

No. This measure will have no effect on the city's zoning policies or the General Plan. It merely puts a limit on how much new commercial development can occur in a given year under whatever plan the city eventually approves.

**Won't the new General Plan do this?**

We have wildly exceeded the development goals laid out in the last General Plan, which is how we got into this traffic mess. The city has, and may again, change our General Plan anytime after it's adopted and allow our city to be overdeveloped with no regard to traffic impacts.

**Will this measure reduce revenues needed for city services, like police and fire?**

No. Studies, including one done by our own city, show that the revenues generated by new commercial projects don't make up for their greater environmental costs in electricity, water, waste, and public services.

**If there's a limit on commercial growth, who would decide which projects are built?**

The city has wide latitude to implement this measure, including creating a competitive selection process which would result in high-quality commercial developments that best meet our community's goals and objectives.

**How can I help?**

- 1) sign the petition to get the initiative on the ballot.
- 2) get your friends who are Santa Monica residents to also sign.
- 3) this effort is going to cost money. Please make a contribution.
- 4) volunteer your time to help.

Contact us at: 310 395 RIFT, or [rift@smcl.net](mailto:rift@smcl.net).