

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

No endorsement here

Editor:

Recently representatives from the Santa Monica Red Cross chapter had the opportunity to meet with the proponents of Proposition T, known as RIFT, regarding our concern about the impact the initiative might have on our plans to upgrade our facility. We appreciate the effort made by T's authors (Santa Monican Coalition for a Livable City) to present their views regarding the potential impact of T on our renovation plans. We have also discussed the matter with opponents of the measure as well.

Prop. T's authors believe that the measure will not impede our ability to make a number of modest renovations to our facility – based on the 7,500-square-foot standard “by right” exemption allowed under current building codes as well as “traffic credits” allowed under the provisions of the measure. Our own initial review of this opinion seems to support this conclusion.

The measures affect on more extensive renovations that might include the acquisition of an adjacent property and the possible addition of an additional floor to our present building are less clear cut. That evaluation will require a much more in depth review of a proposed design and a better understanding of the details of the initiative.

As I indicated in my recent Daily Press “letter to the editor,” our concerns were about the possible impact of the initiative relating to our ability to proceed with what we consider to be essential facility expansion as part of our overall catastrophic disaster planning. Until the clarifications discussed above are resolved, we believe we must put our plans on hold and trust that this will be a timely process.

As we indicated previously, the Red Cross appreciates the efforts being made to help improve the quality of life for our residents through a wide variety of initiatives including reducing future traffic congestion in the city. We do not believe that it was the intention of the authors to impede the work of the Red Cross or other nonprofits here in Santa Monica.

However, we also recognize that the possibility of abrupt changes in city policies can bring with them unintended consequences for nonprofit agencies with limited budgets, such as disruption of orderly planning processes and timely cultivation of prospective donors.

If Prop. T passes, we see the need to ensure that a procedure exists for evaluating and quite possibly creating additional exemptions that will allow community nonprofits the flexibility to respond to changes in human services needs. The manner by which these additional exemptions or considerations would be created needs to be explored by the City Council.

I am aware that in a recent mailer from the “No on T,” Save our City organization that my name and our organization was erroneously listed as opposing Proposition T. I want to clarify that the National American Red Cross has strict prohibitions on use of our name to either endorse or oppose political candidates or ballot issues. I ask that both sides of the campaign respect this position. The concerns and clarifications I articulated in my original “letter to the editor” are, of course, in the public domain and as such available for comment.

As pointed out above, our concern was directed at the potential impact for community preparedness and is neither an endorsement of nor opposition to the initiative itself.

John Pacheco

Chief Executive Officer

American Red Cross, Santa Monica chapter

WRITE A LETTER
EMAIL TO: EDITOR@SM

Santa Monica Daily Press