

Measure W fails

By [Maggie Creamer](#)

News-Sentinel Staff Writer

A grassroots effort to stop redevelopment soundly defeated Measure W on Tuesday night.

Though it was backed by a majority of Lodi City Council members and the Chamber of Commerce, the measure drew only 46 percent of the vote, falling well short of the simple majority needed for passage.

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Opponents of the measure said the vote was a victory for average citizens.

"People are always saying, 'My vote doesn't count, they do what they want, they don't pay attention to us.' This shows we do have a voice at the local level," said Phyllis Roche, a leader of the No on W effort.

The measure was hotly, even bitterly, contested. Promoters of the measure said it would revitalize the Eastside without raising taxes. Opponents said it would surely lead to more city debt and would strip future tax revenues from other local agencies.

Each side accused the other of distorting the truth.

There were 8,134 ballots counted on Tuesday night. There were still about 445 absentee ballots and 110 provisional ballots not counted, but they would not change the outcome, San Joaquin Registrar of Voters Austin Erdman said. About 30 percent of registered voters cast ballots.

MEASURE W

28/28 Precincts. Unofficial results.

Redevelopment Plan for the Lodi Community Improvement Project	No	Pct	Yes	Pct
	4,403	54.1	3,731	45.9

One of the reasons there could have been such a low turnout is that people who oppose something are more likely to turn out than those who support it, Mayor Larry Hansen said. He is disappointed redevelopment was rejected because, he said, there will be no money to deal with issues forced upon the city.

"When the 100-year-old sewer system collapses, redevelopment would have provided a funding stream to fix it, and it would not have cost a dime," Hansen said. "Now we are all going to pay for it."

At a small party at Dave Kirsten's office Downtown, supporters of Measure W gathered to watch the results. Redevelopment proponent Pat Patrick said there were several reasons the measure didn't pass, including low voter turnout, voter fatigue from elections, economic strains and disgust with the federal and state governments.

"This is not what we were hoping for. We were hoping Lodians would understand the magnitude and gravity of what this election meant," he said.

Patrick, who is also the president and CEO of the Lodi Chamber of Commerce, said he imagines redevelopment will be brought up again in the future as a way to fix problems because there is no other solution.

Going one step further, Councilman Phil Katzakian said supporters will put it on a future general election ballot when the time required between ballot measures has passed.

"We'll regroup and try it again at the earliest possible date, because it is a good thing," Katzakian said.

He said if people had more time to be educated on redevelopment, a measure would have a greater chance of passing. Katzakian also said having it tied to a general election would get more people to the polls because special election turnout is always low.

Before the final election results, Councilwoman JoAnne Mounce said that regardless of the outcome, she is glad the citizens of Lodi got to decide on redevelopment.

"From my seat in the bleachers, it is great to see democracy at work," she said.



Yvonne Knaggs, left, signs in to vote at a polling place in Lodi for Measure W on Tuesday. Poll workers Carol Boyce, center, and Arlene Farley are also pictured. (Brian Feulner/News-Sentinel)

Mounce is the lone council member to oppose Measure W. She has been critical of the redevelopment plan and said she is ready to pursue other ideas on how to improve the Eastside.

Roche said she is proud to be a part of the grassroots campaign and hopes this sends a signal that the population's vote matters.

"It's a good thing for our country, and it's a good thing for the powers-that-be to know to not write us off," she said.

Redevelopment would have applied to a 2,159-acre area that includes all of the Eastside and several commercial corridors that stretch into central Lodi.

Lodi would have retained a larger amount of future property taxes collected in that area. The city would have used the money to make improvements to the area, which could include infrastructure repairs, the addition of public services like parks and police stations, business incentives and programs to help residents improve their houses.

Proponents have argued this is the best way to fix up the aging Eastside while opponents were worried about the debt the city would have to take on to do the projects.

The council voted in July to create the redevelopment agency. A petition was turned in with almost 4,300 signatures to oppose the agency but not in enough time to get the referendum on the November ballot.

Both sides have campaigned using signs, and newspaper advertisements and by walking neighborhoods and passing out fliers. They also have had to raise money in a short amount of time.

Patrick said members of the Yes on W campaign did everything they could with the time and money

available. Councilman Bob Johnson also agreed the Yes on W members tried to put together a campaign to educate people.

"It's beyond my ability to fathom why people can't see the benefit of it," he said.

He said he does not know what the next step should be.

"Maybe the next step is let's see what their plan is," Johnson said. "We still have the need for capital in the community, we need to move the city forward. Let's see what the other side has to offer."

Contact reporter [Maggie Creamer](mailto:maggiec@lodinews.com) at maggiec@lodinews.com or read her blog www.lodinews.com/blogs/citybuzz.

Why did you vote today? Did you vote 'yes' or 'no' on Measure W?

Asked by News-Sentinel Reporter [Maggie Creamer](#)



Maria Love, 47

Lodi

Stay-at-home mom, poll worker

"Because you don't get to complain if you don't vote. This is going to be decided by very few people. People need to be involved."



Mike Lapenta, 79

Lodi

Retired

"If I vote then I can piss and moan about it. If I don't, I have to keep my mouth shut. I was on the Planning Commission for many years and around many places that have done it, so I am very aware of all the benefits it has for a community."



Rita Kooyman, 58

Lodi

Housewife

"My husband and I discussed it, and he said to vote 'no' because he doesn't think we should be spending the

money for redevelopment."



Jordan Rodriguez, 18

Lodi

Lodi High student, first-time voter

"Mainly because during the presidential election I worked the polls, but I couldn't vote because I wasn't old enough. Redevelopment will help the whole city, not just the Eastside. I voted 'yes.'"



Dale Fellows, 66

Lodi

Retired teacher

"(My wife and I) always vote first and foremost. Also, we're for redevelopment, but we don't like the power it gives to three people. It's too much power. So we voted 'no.'"