

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[printer friendly](#)

[download pdf](#)

Published October 15th, 2008

Lamorindans to Vote on Measure E-AUHSD Facilities Bond

By Andrea A. Firth



Among the alphabet soup of measures that voters in Lamorinda will decide upon in November is Measure E, a \$93 million facilities bond for Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD), which extends three existing voter-approved AUHSD bonds.

Measure E funds are earmarked for infrastructure projects at the District's four traditional high schools; renovations and expansions at the Adult Education Center; and a 10-year technology fund. If the measure passes, Campolindo High School will receive several infrastructure improvements including a new roof.

"Campolindo is the newest school in the District, but it is almost 50 years old. It needs to be brought into the 21st century," states Cheryl Noll, Chairman of the Measure E Campaign and the mother of two Campolindo students. "Our school district is number one in the state, despite being one of the lowest funded [by the state]. This is tribute to the tremendous community support," she adds.

"[With passage of the Measure] a six million dollar technology fund will be established and spent over ten years," adds Acalanes Union High School Governing Board member Tom Mulvaney. "This will enable the District to keep up with technology as it changes so quickly." Other projects identified for completion with Measure E funds include converting obsolete facilities into additional classroom space and upgrading energy management systems to improve energy efficiency at each school.

The previous AUHSD bond measure passed in 2002 with 71% of voters in support of an annual property tax of up to \$35.58 per \$100,000 of assessed value. According to Mulvaney, residents have been paying at a rate of around \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed value, and the new bond measure will maintain this rate. When asked about the potential impact of the current financial environment on bond interest rates, Mulvaney stated that the District could delay issuing the bonds. "Given the current financial situation, we will carefully assess the financial marketplace, and we will be very prudent on when we issue the bonds," states Mulvaney.

Opponents to Measure E argue that although tax rates may not increase, Measure E represents a new tax by extending the existing tax. Because payment on Measure E bonds will not begin until the previous bonds are retired but interest will accrue as soon as the new bonds are issued, opponents question that delaying payment increases the interest cost to taxpayers.

"This is the way we have always financed schools," states Mulvaney. Earlier school bond measures were passed in 1988 and 1997. Bonds from all three previous measures ('88, '97, and '02) were refinanced in 2004, and the District currently pays an interest rate of 4.8%. All of the existing bonds will be retired by 2025.

In addition, some protest that passage of Measure E will place an unfair burden on seniors, because no senior tax exemption is provided. "Senior citizens are already being buffeted by huge losses in the stock market. Stocks and bonds are a major source of income for seniors," states Orinda resident Richard Colman.

Under state law, Proposition 39 bonds, like the bonds that would be issued

through Measure E, can only be used for capital improvements, and senior tax exemptions are not allowed. Bonds measures differ from parcel taxes, which are used to fund school programs, not buildings, and can include senior exemptions.

Passage of Measure E requires a 55% majority for approval.

Reach the reporter at: andrea@lamorindaweekly.com

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[back to top](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA