

MONTEREY VOTERS LAUNCH REFERENDUM DRIVE AGAINST \$14 MILLION CITY OFFICE BUILDING

Monterey, CA Friday, July 7, 2006

A group of Monterey voters today launched a petition drive to allow a citywide vote on the most expensive City project ever proposed – the sprawling \$14 million new office complex approved by the City Council on July 5.

Topping the list of concerns with the 35,000 sq. ft. buildings are the cost and expected negative impacts on traffic, parking and historic downtown Monterey and the Old Town neighborhood. ***Let the Voters Decide!***, a group formed for this purpose, needs to gather 1,500 signatures by August 4 in order to place the issue before Monterey voters this Fall.

According to ***LVD!***'s Mike Dawson, "Going forward with this modern multi-story complex right next to Colton Hall ignores overwhelming public opposition." Informal polls – including one done by the Monterey County Herald several weeks ago – have shown that at least two-thirds of respondents oppose the project because of its at least \$14 million cost as well as its historic, traffic and parking impacts. "Something is wrong when the City says we can afford fancy new offices but we can't keep our library open full-time or our streets clean," said Dawson.

The City has never put this project before the voters, nor surveyed its residents and business owners. Mayor Dan Albert and Councilmember Clyde Roberson both supported giving Monterey voters the chance to vote before going ahead with the Sports Center project because of its \$6.5 million price tag. "This project is two or three times as expensive as the Sports Center. We believe the voters – the folks who pay the bills - should have the chance to make the final decision, just like we did before," Dawson said.

The City recently added two new buildings for the police and fire departments to relieve crowded working conditions. Carl Anderson, the City's public facilities director, agrees that the crowded conditions no longer exist, and are no longer being used as a rationale for the new \$14 million office buildings.

The office buildings' proposed location behind historic Colton Hall is in the Old Town National Historic Landmark District. The National Park Service, the agency that administers the nation's National Landmark program, has repeatedly expressed their strong concerns with the project.

Signatures will be collected at the Alvarado Street Farmer's Market Tuesdays 3:00 – 6:00 pm.

For additional information:

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Let the Voters Decide!

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City of Monterey - **REFERENDUM** - City of Monterey

A \$14 million, 35,000 sq.ft. office complex
inside Old Monterey's National Historic Landmark District
--- for 63 employees?

Let's **RETHINK** the Civic Center!

With a more modest project, outside our Historic District, we can provide good working conditions for City employees, AND use those millions to

- 1) repair, maintain and keep our streets clean
- 2) keep our City library open full-time
- 3) fully staff our fire and police departments
- 4) protect our downtown Historic District
- 5) free up precious water 'on hold' for this project for residential and business uses

The National Park Service, who is responsible for protecting our nation's most important historic sites, has repeatedly cautioned the City to reduce the size of this current project or move it because of its impact on historic Monterey.

Can 'California's most historic city' afford to ignore that expert advice?

**Sign the referendum to
allow Monterey voters the chance to vote
on the most expensive civic project in the City's history!**

Let the Voters Decide!

For more information, call 646-8142.
<http://www.montereyvoter.com>