

Rebuttal Argument

Here are the facts: Measure A authorizes a blank check using taxpayer¹² dollars for the civic center project. The Council is already talking about a ²⁵ new Parcel Tax for the November ballot, charging for fallen trees in ³⁷ roadways and other new taxes on residents. What's next? ⁴⁶

We agree -- improved facilities are warranted. But the \$14M -- and likely ⁵⁷ much more once bids are received, the building is furnished and upkeep⁶⁹ is considered -- of so-called "unallocated public funds" targeted to be ⁷⁹ spent on a new civic center **is not spare change.** ⁸⁹

A huge structure with a large foyer, gym, and copper gutters was not ¹⁰² controversial if funded by private donations. The dismal failure of that ¹¹³ campaign -- which received pledges of less than 30% of the \$25 million ¹²⁵ promised -- should cause us to reconsider the project, not to bail it out ¹³⁸ with taxpayer money. ¹⁴¹

Town studies determined that Atherton needs more than \$72M for ¹⁵¹ drainage deficiencies, school and pedestrian route safety improvements, ¹⁵⁹ pension and healthcare debt obligations. These basics can't be funded if ¹⁷⁰ "unallocated" tax dollars are diverted to a grandiose complex. ¹⁷⁹

Not long ago, Atherton was facing possible insolvency, with skyrocketing ¹⁸⁹ retiree and staff obligations. A radical restructuring together with ¹⁹⁸ fortuitous increased property tax revenues ultimately provided a stable ²⁰⁷ financial footing. But fate -- and real estate markets -- can be fickle. ²¹⁸

The project should be cut back. We should be shown alternative designs ²³⁰ WITH their costs -- construction, furnishing and annual operating budgets ²³⁹ -- before authorizing the use of our tax dollars. ²⁴⁷

Vote NO! ²⁴⁹

250 words