



NEW POLL SHOWS DOWNTOWN PLAN LACKS PUBLIC SUPPORT

El Pasoans Oppose Eminent Domain Downtown

EL PASO, Texas, (May 3, 2007) – A new poll establishes an overwhelming majority of El Pasoans oppose the use of eminent domain for downtown revitalization. Commissioned by the *El Paso Times* and KTSM-TV, the poll shows that approximately 62 percent of El Pasoans are against using eminent domain while less than 30 percent favor it.

“These results are hardly surprising” said Stuart Blaugrund, attorney for Land Grab Opponents (LGO). “The findings are consistent with nationwide polls which show the vast majority of Americans think it is wrong to take private property for private commercial purposes. El Pasoans clearly know right from wrong.”

“Plan proponents will stop at nothing to create a false impression of public support,” said Jerry Rosenbaum, LGO’s president. “For instance, a mass mailer distributed by a group called ‘Somos El Paso’ relies on outdated data to claim that El Pasoans support the plan.”

Somos El Paso is a shadow organization that is widely believed to be a front for the Paso Del Norte Group. The organization argues that the Downtown Plan enjoys broad public support.

“Their contention completely flies in the face of reality,” added Rosenbaum. “This recent poll unquestionably shows the exact opposite is true.”

Blaugrund says members of city council who favor the Downtown Plan have engaged in a continuing pattern of deception to drum up public support.

“For example, Representative Ann Morgan Lilly distorts the truth by repeatedly implying Cielo Vista Mall paid millions more in property taxes than owners of properties in the redevelopment zone,” said Blaugrund. “However, public records show downtown owners paid more property taxes to the city than did the mall in 2005. Ms. Lilly improperly compares taxes paid only to the city in 2005 with the total amount of taxes Cielo Vista paid to all taxing authorities in 2006. This just shows the extent some public officials will go in distorting the truth and misleading their constituents.”

“Rep. Lilly also dismisses public objections to the Downtown Plan by characterizing opponents as a small group of ‘nay sayers’ intent on hijacking El Paso’s future” added Blaugrund. “This is a complete slap in the face to well-respected community leaders such as Bishop Armando Ochoa, County Attorney Jose Rodriguez, former County Judge Alica Chacon, and former Thomason Hospital CEO Pete Duarte who have condemned the plan as unjust and divisive.”

“It’s time for the city council to pay attention to these new poll results and heal this city by reversing its unpopular stance on eminent domain,” said Rosenbaum. “El Pasoans reject using eminent domain as a tool for downtown redevelopment. The city council should too.”

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