



***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE* May 3, 2022**

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<https://www.ourdowntownourfuture.org>

Our Downtown, Our Future Submits 5,000 Qualifying Signatures for November 2022 Ballot

Santa Cruz, CA - On May 3rd, Our Downtown, Our Future (ODOF) submitted what they identify as 5,072 signatures of registered Santa Cruz city voters to qualify its measure for the November 2022 Santa Cruz City ballot. To meet legal requirements, City Clerk Bonnie Bush informed ODOF last fall, they had 180 days to collect 3,848 valid signatures. According to ODOF representatives, in under 150 days the all-volunteer signature-gathering team gathered 1,224 more qualifying signatures than required. Over 1,500 other supporters who signed were not submitted because they were not registered within Santa Cruz city limits.

If the measure goes to the November election, City voters will decide the future of the Downtown Santa Cruz Library and Lot 4, where the Downtown Farmers' Market is held every Wednesday afternoon.

The measure would amend the City's General Plan and Downtown Plan to require the city to renovate the Downtown Branch Library at its present Civic Center location. Through the ballot measure, voters would decide whether the 2016 Measure S library bond money will be spent on renovating the library in its historical Civic Center location rather than building a new library as part of a mixed-use project on Lot 4.

According to the measure, Lot 4, with its Heritage trees, would be developed as a permanent public space for the Downtown Farmers' Market and the community – prohibiting construction of a multi-story parking structure there.

The measure also prioritizes affordable housing development on eight specific city-owned Downtown parking lots. According to the ODOF website, developing 100% affordable housing on one of the lots, Front Street's Lot 7, would yield more units than presently being proposed by the City for Lot 4.

Additionally, the measure would let voters decide whether the City will incur a large parking garage bond debt or instead use surplus City parking revenue toward better parking supply management, affordable housing, Farmers' Market infrastructure, and funds to supplement Measure S for the library renovation.

ODOF says people signing the petition come from voters of all ages, diverse ethnicities, and every neighborhood in Santa Cruz. Signees range from fiscal conservatives to progressives, including Democrats, Republicans, and voters registered in other political parties or no political party.

Praising the efforts of ODOF volunteers and noting the broad community support the petition drive received, co-chair John Hall commented, "We believe this measure offers the most fundamental choice about our community's future that we've had in decades. This is full community engagement for Santa Cruz voters."

According to city and county procedures, in the coming weeks City Clerk Bonnie Bush is to provide an initial count of signatures on the petition and, if sufficient, pass the petition to County Clerk Tricia Webber to report back concerning final verification of registered Santa Cruz city voters. If the City Clerk then deems the petition sufficient, it is placed on the agenda for consideration by the City Council. The City Clerk has informed ODOF that the May 3rd petition submission provides the required time for verification review and placement on the City Council's June 28th agenda. At the meeting when the City Council considers the measure, it will have the opportunity to either vote the proposed measure into law, ask for a staff report due in 30 days, or place the measure on the November ballot.

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