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Editorial: City on a hill

For El Dorado, Yes on Measure P

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Cityhood, that civic desire to control one's destiny, has spread from Sacramento suburbia to El Dorado County. Residents of El Dorado Hills can create their own city by voting Yes on Measure P on Nov. 8.

A Yes vote is the right choice. Local experience has repeatedly shown that cities are better at managing urban areas than a county board of supervisors. Orderly growth is more likely to happen when counties focus the growth in cities. Measure P is part of a positive regional trend of getting counties out of the business of behaving as if they are cities.

Measure P would create a 17,839-acre city with a population of 28,000 and rising. The boundaries would encompass those of the El Dorado Hills Community Services District and include some other areas as well - Green Springs Ranch, the El Dorado Hills Business Park, Carson Creek and the so-called Promontory developments.

Growth will continue within these boundaries whether a new City Council likes it or not. The county Board of Supervisors has approved additional suburban development. Those entitlements aren't thrown to the wind if voters pass Measure P. But the new city would get to manage its road funds. And as local land use issues and redevelopment ideas come up, this city would be far more attentive to doing things right than the county - if the Sacramento experience is any indication.

Frankly, we're more than concerned about comments in this campaign that point to a fear that the county would allow more affordable housing to be built in El Dorado Hills than a new City Council would. Regardless of the outcome of Measure P, this community needs residences for those who work there, from the gardener to the schoolteacher. Housing near jobs is key to a regional transportation solution. An El Dorado Hills City Council would be wise to work to overcome this housing phobia.

As for the council, 19 residents are vying for five seats, should Measure P win. When they look at the candidates' professional and civic backgrounds, most voters may find it a challenge to winnow the field to five. Besides the ballot statements, a nonpartisan source of information on some of the candidates (apparently a few didn't bother to respond) is available on the Internet. Find it at www.smartvoter.org/ca/ed/

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