

Election results yield Ponte Vista concerns

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Daily Breeze editorial

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In examining the results of Tuesday's local elections, one conclusion seems fairly evident: The proposed 1,950-unit Ponte Vista housing project in San Pedro looms as a potent issue for voters.

One interesting post-election analysis comes from the Web site www.pontevista.blogspot.com. The blog notes that the three winners in the City Council election in Rancho Palos Verdes had unified positions calling for continued R-1 zoning on the site. That zoning designation would likely keep the number of homes built on the site to between 430 and 700.

The three council incumbents - Tom Long, Douglas Stern and Steve Wolowicz - emerged victorious over two challengers, one of whom favored a Ponte Vista compromise that would include both single-family residences and multi-family development.

That's not to say Ponte Vista was the deciding issue in the Rancho Palos Verdes vote, but the development sits on a key Peninsula access route just outside Rancho Palos Verdes. Whatever gets built in that area will certainly have a bearing on traffic in the region.

In addition, Ponte Vista seemed to be on the minds of Lomita voters in their City Council election. Voters ousted incumbent Mark Waronek, who once did consulting work on behalf of Ponte Vista. The negative campaign waged against Waronek seemed to raise enough doubts in people's minds to elect challenger Ken Blackwood.

Like their neighbors in Rancho Palos Verdes, Lomita voters may also have worries about the project's potential effects on their city.

The election results follow the release in August of a report by a citizens advisory committee appointed by Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn. That panel opposed a 1,950-unit development, and a majority of its members favored R-1 zoning.

Certainly, the election results are not the last word on the Ponte Vista development. And granted, the countywide voter turnout on Tuesday was only 12.3 percent and may not reflect the thinking of all registered voters. (One can estimate the turnout in Rancho Palos Verdes to have been at least 22 percent.) But we suspect the numbers may cause other elected leaders to be circumspect before embracing a future political compromise for development in that area.

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