Proponents of a ballot measure naturally emphasize its good aspects. This marijuana tax would raise money IF the city government proceeds later to allow marijuana stores in Mountain View.

Giving the city government a PIECE OF THE ACTION encourages the action - whether it is authorizing marijuana stores or authorizing more office space for legions of additional private-sector employees.

Marijuana is not the biggest evil this side of Washington D.C. It has medical uses, and even its recreational use is far better than drinking alcohol. Unfortunately, marijuana is not often used in place of alcohol - just in addition. And its possession and sale remain crimes under federal law.

Not every money-making enterprise is good for every city. A few years ago, for example, Milpitas voters rejected a proposed gigantic card room (Bay 101) which then rebuilt across Highway 101 in San Jose.

Milpitas did not make money by saying NO to a card room that would have generated millions of dollars for its city government. But Milpitas did retain some integrity.

The lesson here is that city government is always eager to get more money, but voters sometimes have the sense to say NO if the proposal is not, on balance, best for the community.