

Oakland Has the Money for Lovely Parks!

The City budget exceeds \$1.1 billion per year, including the Redevelopment Agency. There's enough money to keep our parks maintained as lovely spaces.

But City Hall has other priorities. Councilmembers and officials are talking about an increase in the Landscape and Lighting Assessment (LLAD) on your property tax bill.

The way City officials tell it, there is a "shortfall" between LLAD revenues and rising park expenses. Not true! They just don't want to spend general fund tax revenues on parks, trees, and street lights – even though that's what Oakland did for decades; the LLAD only began in 1989. No law, no principle of city finance, requires that Oakland residents must pay an additional, regressive LLAD tax for basic park and street light maintenance.

Councilmembers just prefer to spend general tax revenue on ill-advised subsidies to developers, on too many bureaucrats in high pay ranges, and on counterproductive grants to selected social agencies.

Last year voters rejected a LLAD tax increase. No wonder. Under that council proposal, 55 cents of every new dollar would have gone back to the general fund and been used for anything except parks and lighting. City Hall should accept the verdict.

Oakland Residents for Peaceful Neighborhoods. Visit our website at www.orpn.org