

# Send LLAD Tax Back to Council!

Oakland property owners just received a mail-in ballot asking them to pay \$28 million in taxes, supposedly for landscape and street light maintenance (“LLAD”). It is important that you mail back the ballot with a No vote. Here’s why.

**First**, only 45 cents of each new dollar will go for landscaping and lighting. Despite an increased tax haul of \$10 million (from \$18 million to \$28 million), \$5.5 million of the new money will go to the general fund and other non-LLAD accounts. The council then spends this money for anything they like, not for parks and lighting. This is bait and switch if anything is.

**Second**, the proposed increase is one in a series of deceptive parcel taxes. The council always gives them a feel-good label: parks, Lake Merritt restoration, the libraries, even more police. What actually happens is that revenue from assessments frees up general fund money. Far too often the council hands a subsidy to a favored developer or gives a grant to a barely supervised private agency like PUEBLO, whose embezzlement and illegal campaigning have never been punished. Has the council ever proposed a parcel tax for one of these giveaways? Of course not.

Actual spending keeps straying from the stated purpose. For example, the Measure Q “library tax” passed in 2004, but the council deprived the library of four general-fund positions in the 2005 budget. What an insult. Again, councilmembers insisted Measure Y taxes would provide 802 police, but we have *fewer* police today than when the council wrote Measure Y.

A parcel tax hike of \$42 per home might look small, but the total of such assessments

on your tax bill is large. Every year the council demands one or two new parcel taxes. It is time to stop handing the council money that is spent neither wisely nor as promised.

**Third**, the park maintenance and lighting “standards” codify poor performance. For example, Oakland pledges to trim 5,500 trees per year. Since the City boasts it has 75,000 trees, that implies each sidewalk tree will be trimmed once every 13 years and 7 months. Longtime Oakland residents remember when the City trimmed trees every couple of years. That was before the LLAD tax began in 1989.

**Fourth**, all parcel taxes are regressive. A multimillion dollar house in the hills pays the same as a modest stucco home in the flatlands. Upper-income property owners have a lot of nerve voting such taxes on the rest of us.

**Fifth**, the LLAD vote denies citizens basic democracy. The City arranged to insert a puff piece in our garbage bills early this year. Then the City stuffed propaganda for a tax hike into the mail-in ballot envelope. The council rejected repeated requests to include pro and con statements, like a sample ballot.

The council threatens park and lighting cutbacks if property owners reject the LLAD tax hike – at the same time councilmembers are rushing to spend an \$8.5 million budget surplus. This is a gangster-style threat. **We should vote down the proposed tax increase.** We can revisit the matter after a real discussion about Oakland’s tax and budget games.

Oakland Residents for Peaceful Neighborhoods.

See our website at [www.orpn.org](http://www.orpn.org)