

MEASURE Y - ZOO PARCEL TAX

THE QUESTION

Shall the measure to amend Oakland's Municipal Code to

- fund Oakland Zoo operations, staffing, maintenance and capital improvements, including but not limited to animal care and rehabilitation, educational and conservation programs, fire prevention, accessibility, and visitor services,

by

- imposing an annual \$68 parcel tax for single-family parcels, and other parcels as specified, for 20 years,
- raising approximately \$12,000,000 annually
- with exemptions for low-income households and others, and citizen oversight,

be adopted?



THE SITUATION

Oakland owns the Zoo at Knowland Park and contracts out its management. The Zoo's annual budget is approximately \$23-24 million. Revenue has dropped sharply over the past two years due to the pandemic. While ticket sales, memberships, food/retail and rides provide the preponderance (82%) of operating revenue, approximately 8% of annual revenue derives from the City of Oakland, Alameda County and the East Bay Regional Parks District:

- \$171,000 from Oakland's General Fund,
- variable revenue from Oakland's Transient Occupancy Tax (totaling less than 1% of total TOT revenue, and estimated at approximately \$818,000 for 2022-3 and \$410,000 in 2021-22),
- \$100,000 from the East Bay Regional Parks District pursuant to Measure FF, and
- approximately \$1.2 million from the Alameda County 1% tax (.038% of that tax revenue).

Oakland residents constitute 15% of the approximately 950,000 annual visitors to the Zoo. Alameda County residents (including Oakland residents) constitute 65%.

THE PROPOSAL

- The initiative proposes a new 20-year parcel tax to take effect 7/1/2023.
- Tax revenue would provide approximately \$12 million each year in additional funding for the Zoo's "operations, staffing, maintenance and capital improvements."
- Proceeds would also fund various administrative costs associated with the tax. The measure requires the City to maintain its annual General Fund contribution of \$171,000.
- Other public funding detailed above would also remain in place according to the terms and limits of the respective pieces of legislation.

FISCAL EFFECT

- The parcel tax would impose an assessment of \$68 on single family parcels and on each unit of multi-unit residential parcels. Assessments for nonresidential properties would reflect frontage and square footage measurements.
- All assessments would be subject to annual cost of living adjustments.
- There is no cap on the annual adjustments.
- Measure Y requires an independent auditor and the City Auditor to issue reports that the tax has been received and disbursed properly. Oakland's Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission is charged with verifying that certain reports and audits occur.



REASONS TO SUPPORT

- The proposed tax revenue would stabilize the Zoo's finances and make the Zoo less dependent on ticket sales and memberships.
- Oakland schools, nonprofits, low income residents and seniors could benefit from expanded educational partnerships and programs and free passes if additional revenues are invested in these areas.
- Oakland could benefit from the draw of a successful zoo that conducts ground-breaking research and has been endorsed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.



REASONS TO OPPOSE

- Only 15% of the annual visitors to the Zoo are Oakland residents, yet Oakland property owners would be paying to increase the Zoo's revenue by 50%.
- Measure Y does not include specific commitments to educational programs in Oakland schools or to benefits such as free passes that could be provided to Oakland residents.
- Accountability will be weak because Measure Y authorizes spending on any of the Zoo's operations and functions rather than assigning amounts or percentages of revenue to specific programs or operations.



A YES VOTE MEANS

the parcel tax will be assessed beginning in July 2023.

A NO VOTE MEANS

it will not be assessed.