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## **Pros & Cons, June 8, 2010**

### **Measure C, Berkeley Pool Bonds**

### **Requires two-thirds voter approval**

**The Question:** Shall the City of Berkeley sell \$22.5 million in bonds to repair, upgrade and/ or replace its public swimming facilities, and pass a special tax to maintain the pools and run aquatic programs?

**The Situation:** The City of Berkeley has 4 public swimming pools, all located on school grounds: Willard and King Middle Schools, West Campus – all built outdoors in the 1960s, and the much older indoor warm-water pool at Berkeley High School. The outdoor pools need major overhauls; Willard Pool will close in July, 2010. The indoor warm-water pool is scheduled to close in 2011 because the high school needs the space for other facilities. (In 2000 a bond to upgrade the indoor warm water pool at the high school passed, but the wording restricted the funds to that site alone.)

**The Proposal:** If passed, Measure C would establish a citywide special financing district to repay the construction bond and create a special tax to pay for the anticipated gap between current and future funding for pool maintenance and aquatic programs. The bond funds would install a warm-water pool at West Campus and renovate the existing pool and associated facilities; expand the pool and upgrade the associated facilities at King School; renovate the existing pools, locker rooms and associated facilities at Willard School.

**Fiscal Effect:** Over the 30 year life of the bonds, and including the special tax for maintenance and aquatic programs, the tax rate for residential property owners would average \$0.0369 per square foot of improved property. For the owner of a 1,900 sq/ft home that is \$70.06 per year. For commercial property of 10,000sq/ft the costs would average \$368.76. When the construction costs are repaid in 2040, the per year tax for residential property owners would be \$24.02 and for commercial property owners \$126.40, in 2010 dollars.

**Supporters Say:** Public pools are a major community asset for all Berkeley families. If Measure C passes:

- § The new warm-water pool at West Campus will offer necessary exercise opportunities for the elderly and the disabled.
- § The expanded facility at King Middle School will accommodate lap swimmers and swim team practices.
- § All the pools will save operating expenses because they will be much more energy efficient.

**Opponents Say:** We support public pools for aquatic sports, but this bond is more than we can afford.

- § People needing a warm-water facility could be given memberships to the UC pool or the YMCA for 1% of the measure's maintenance allocation.
- § The city should seek a public-private partnership to support the pools, as Palo Alto has done, to reduce the public outlay.
- § The language of the bond does not require the use of green technology.