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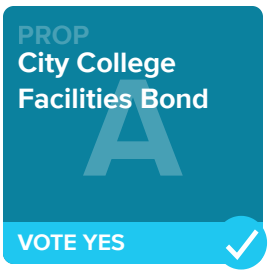
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March 2020 Voter Guide

Ballot analysis and recommendations

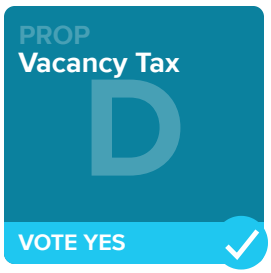
SPUR analyzed select local measures on the San Francisco, San José and Oakland ballots for the March 2020 election. Our analysis includes the background behind the measures, pros and cons, and a recommendation on how to vote.

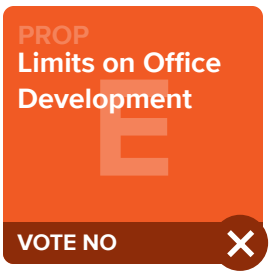
San Francisco (SF)



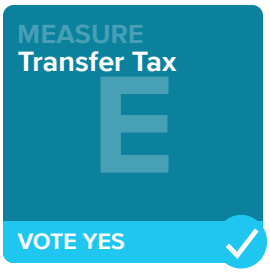




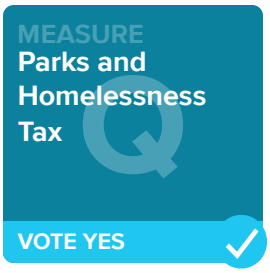




San José (SJ)



Oakland (OAK)



SF Prop A

City College Facilities Bond

BOND

City College Job Training, Repair and Earthquake Safety Measure

Authorizes City College of San Francisco to issue $845 million in general obligation bonds for new construction and building upgrades across campus facilities.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

There are good reasons to question this measure. It is a large bond request after a 14-year hiatus; cycling bonds more often would help CCSF stay on top of maintenance needs and could save voters money over time. Voters may be understandably skeptical about approving such a large bond in light of concerns over CCSF's accreditation crisis, historical management challenges, budget and enrollment.

However, SPUR recognizes that building upgrades are decades overdue and that investments in new academic facilities are critical to CCSF's success. In a rapidly changing and inequitable economy, San Francisco must continue to invest in the success of CCSF and the opportunities it provides.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

SF Prop B

Earthquake Bond

BOND

Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response Bond

Authorizes $628.5 million in general obligation bonds to retrofit emergency management facilities and infrastructure to make them resilient to earthquakes.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

SPUR believes that seismic preparedness is a public health and safety issue deserving of public investment. That's why we supported both the 2010 and 2014 ESER bonds, which have funded:

• A vulnerability assessment of all 44 neighborhood firehouses and retrofits to 37 of them, including three full replacements

• Upgrades to the firefighting water system, including water supply retrofits and the construction of 30 new cisterns around the city

• Renovations and upgrades to nine of 12 district police stations and the construction of the brand-new Public Safety Building in Mission Bay

While debating the merits of Prop. B — the third, and by far the largest, bond in the city's 10-year capital program — the SPUR Board of Directors wished for more details on how the money would be spent, how much total investment in the seismic performance of disaster facilities is needed and how much further along this relatively large bond would get the city toward its seismic safety targets. However, we also recognize that complete seismic and disaster safety is not an achievable end state: Building codes and engineering standards change, policies change, and human knowledge regarding best practices in disaster management grows with each event. San Francisco and other cities will probably always need to invest in catching older buildings up to modern codes and maintaining infrastructure in a state of good repair. This bond would complete the program envisioned in the 10-year capital plan and would address many or most of the critical risks to emergency management infrastructure that the city identified after the Loma Prieta earthquake. SPUR has a considerable body of work on seismic safety, and we have long supported San Francisco's earthquake safety programs, targets and goals. We continue to believe that significant reinvestment in lifeline public infrastructure is a critical priority.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

SF Prop C

Retiree Health Benefits

CHARTER AMENDMENT

Retiree Health Care Benefits for Former Housing Authority Employees

Extends San Francisco's retiree health benefits to former employees of the San Francisco Housing Authority.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

The eligibility of approximately 25 employees for retiree health benefits may seem like a small matter to take to the voters, but because eligibility is defined in the City Charter, there is no other way to modify the rules. Prop. C would prevent long-time Housing Authority employees from having to start at zero in accruing retiree benefits, increasing the likelihood that they will be able to retire. This is a matter of enormous consequence for the affected employees, who include current and former public housing residents and very-low-income earners. Both the population at risk and the small financial cost to the city make this measure worthy of support.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

SF Prop D

Vacancy Tax

TAX

Vacancy Tax

Establishes a graduated annual tax on vacant commercial properties in certain areas of San Francisco.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

Commercial vacancies hurt San Francisco neighborhoods. It's clear that there are a number of reasons behind vacancies and that speculative landlords are just one part of the problem. Small business owners, landlords, district supervisors and city staff all agree that major reform of city processes is needed to help fill vacant commercial space. Supervisor Peskin is committed to a package of legislation in the coming months that will provide business fee relief, more flexibility and streamlined processes. In concert with these other important changes, Prop. D could be an effective tool to push property owners to put their buildings into active use. The tax is certainly imperfect, but it has been thoughtfully tailored to protect small businesses and landlords who are acting in good faith. Importantly, the Board of Supervisors could revisit the tax and amend it as circumstances change.

Empty storefronts are bad for cities. They impact safety and threaten the physical and social cohesion of neighborhoods. SPUR hopes that Prop. D sparks a reimagining of how to plan for commercial space in San Francisco. The city needs a comprehensive effort to reform zoning, tackle the broader changes to retail, address barriers to opening small businesses and double down on the work to create dense, walkable neighborhoods — the places where businesses and people want to be.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

SF Prop E

Limits on Office Development

ORDINANCE

Limits on Office Development

Links the approval of new office development to the construction of affordable housing and changes the Planning Commission's criteria for approvals.

Vote NO

SPUR's Recommendation

While SPUR agrees that the city and region have not figured out how to grow gracefully, we resist this measure's presumption that limiting job growth will make San Francisco more affordable. Prop. E would not create new affordable housing and would likely decrease an existing source of affordable housing funding. In addition, by limiting the supply of commercial space, this measure would continue to increase office rents and force out small businesses, nonprofits and companies that employ middle-wage workers.

SPUR believes that a mix of commercial and residential growth is important to the health of a community, and we recognize how much more work San Francisco must do to build affordable housing.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

However, we believe that it makes more sense to seek a balance of jobs and housing at the regional level. Today's economy and housing market are regional. People often change jobs within the region without moving, or they move to new homes without switching jobs.

We believe that far better ways to address the challenges facing San Francisco are to build more housing across the region that is affordable to middle- and lower-income households, to invest more in the infrastructure and services that meet the needs of people who live and work in San Francisco and to focus on lifting up those left out of the Bay Area's economic boom.

SJ Measure E

Transfer Tax

ORDINANCE

Real Property Transfer Tax

Creates a transfer tax for both commercial and residential properties to provide a new revenue source to the City of San Jose General Fund.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

There is a critical need to proactively address and finance affordable housing and homelessness prevention in San Jose. The city is substantially behind on its goal to produce 25,000 housing units, and homelessness has spiked nearly 42 percent in two years. Measure E is a key potential funding source that could help to alleviate the housing shortage by enabling the creation of thousands of affordable homes for all kinds of San Jose residents.

While Measure E's aim is an important one, the SPUR Board of Directors was torn over whether a general tax is the right mechanism since its revenue could not be designated for a specific purpose. Although the City Council adopted a series of additional resolutions to ensure how these funds would be used, we have concerns about the security of the revenue over time. That said, considering the gravity of the current housing crisis and the time lost on a previous funding measure that didn't pass, we support the city's efforts to ensure passage of this measure and secure funding for these critical needs.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

OAK Measure Q

Parks and Homelessness Tax

ORDINANCE

2020 Oakland Parks and Recreation Preservation, Litter Reduction and Homeless Support Act

Levies a 20-year special parcel tax to fund parks maintenance, homeless services and improvements to water quality and trash collection systems.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

SPUR has long raised concerns about Oakland's reliance on parcel taxes to fund basic services. We believe the city must work to grow its tax base so it can cover more of its needs through the General Fund. We also note that the controversy around Oakland's 2018 parcel tax, Measure AA, which is currently in litigation, has eroded public trust when it comes to giving the City Council discretion over public funds. Combined, these issues highlight an overall need for better governance in Oakland.

But it's not the job of this ballot measure to take on the city's governance challenges. Measure Q addresses one problem: Oakland's mounting needs for both homeless services and maintenance for its public parks. The tax has been indexed to inflation, calls for performance and financial audits, and includes exemptions for those who would be hardest hit by an increased tax burden. These steps to structure the measure responsibly increase our confidence that Measure Q will have an overall positive impact for Oaklanders.

On balance, SPUR believes Measure Q is worthy of support.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

Acknowledgments

The goal of the SPUR Voter Guide is to offer objective analysis and advise voters on which measures will deliver real solutions. Our Ballot Analysis Committee heard arguments from both sides of the issues, debated the measures' merits and provided recommendations to our Boards of Directors. The boards then voted, with a 60 percent vote required for SPUR to make a recommendation.

SPUR Ballot Analysis Committee: Robert Gamble (Co-Chair), Molly Turner (Co-Chair), Michaela Cassidy, Jim Chappell, Don Falk, Diane Filippi, Ed Harrington, Aaron Johnson, George Miller, Rebecca Prozan, Doug Shoemaker, Katy Tang, Fran Weld

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