

# Things are Heating Up: Guide to Environmental Voting

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If given the choice, what would you improve about Piedmont? The upcoming Piedmont elections will have important measures and candidates on the ballot that will lead Piedmont to becoming more environmentally conscious. Learn what your vote means for Piedmont, the difference it will make in the years to come, and what your City Council Candidates have to say about it.

## **Key Takeaways**

- Piedmonts' community pool must either be rebuilt or closed, the water leakage is hurting our environment!
- Transfer taxes allow City Council to spend funds on issues of their choice
- Council candidates have big plans to make Piedmont a more sustainable city

## **Measure UU- The Pool Bond**

Measure UU, also known as the pool bond, is an estimated 19-23 million dollar project for the purpose of financing municipal improvement projects in the City of Piedmont. The objective is to prevent permanent closure of the Piedmont community pool. Our current pool is 56 years old and is far overdue for some fixing up. The deck is crumbling, the pool is not regulation length, and it is in serious need of repair. Conna McCarthy notes, "We either have to rebuild it, or we have to close it". Moreover, the current state of the pool is unsustainable for the environment. Council member Jen Cavanaugh says the community pool leaks more than 3,000 gallons of water a day, or over 1 million gallons per year.

Since there is only one pool in Piedmont, it is often used by many. Parents bring their kids to learn how to swim, high school teams practice sports, and it is even used for rehabilitating injuries. According to council member candidate Connie Herrick, "It is really important that we pass [measure UU] next month; each time we delay, we push out several years. At this point, in the best-case scenario, we're going to be open maybe in 2024, so we really can't delay anymore."

While all candidates interviewed are in favor of Measure UU, opponents of the pool bond argue money would be better spent on other pressing issues like fire safety. Both fire safety and water waste prevention have different impacts on the environment. Making a decision on Measure UU, from an environmentalist perspective, comes down to which issues are most important to you.

## **Measure TT-- The Transfer Tax**

The other measure under discussion is Measure TT, the transfer tax. Measure TT increases the tax when transferring the ownership of a property from \$13.00 to \$17.50 per \$1,000 of the home purchase price. The money from transfer taxes go into the city's maintenance fund. Unfortunately, the money currently in the maintenance fund does not cover all of the important proposed city improvement projects slated for 2020-2021, including: police and fire building upgrades, long deferred equipment replacement, facility and recreational space maintenance, and fire and safety upgrades for many city owned building. All of these improvements come out to an estimated 55 million dollars, far more than the current maintenance fund can pay for.

The transfer tax funds can be used for various purposes which is why voting for environmentally friendly council members is crucial. They can help ensure the general fund is used for more environmentally conscious decision-making. For example, ecofriendly equipment replacement, solar energy options, and sustainable landscaping.

Opponents argue that when Measure TT was written, there were no safeguards that ensure the money will be spent the way voters would like. In this case, money from transfer taxes can be used for any means such as salaries, pensions, project over-runs, etc. Voting for candidates that are sure of using funds for pressing issues and eco-friendly spending is key.

### **Along with the Measures, Learn How Your Future Council Members are Thinking About Piedmont's Environment**

Jen Cavanaugh, a City Council member completing her first four-year term, has a history of community service related to environmentalism in Piedmont. Cavanaugh is a member of Piedmont Connect, an organization that supports city efforts to become a more sustainable city. Jen is also involved with The Imperfect Food customer buying program, which ships imperfect products with eco-friendly packaging, minimizing waste. "No plastic, no extra packaging," Cavanaugh says. On the environmental quality committee, Jen advocated for a bill focused on product consumption and making sure we "push the burden on the manufacturers. When you do that, suddenly they are accountable, and now they have an incentive to do better."

Connie Herrick came to Piedmont 51 years ago and graduated from both Piedmont Middle School and Piedmont High School. Connie is participating in the Piedmont Climate Challenge, which prompts its participants to reduce food waste, eat less meat, shop local, recycle, turn off lights, and change their means of transportation to be more environmentally friendly. She supports the current Climate action plan and is in favor of implementing a climate committee, stating, "We need a climate action committee. As you know, our city has all these committees. We've got public safety, recreation, parks, we even have one for the pedestrian bikeway. But we don't have one for climate action. And if it's that important to us, which it is, then we need to have that commitment."

Conna McCarthy, a Piedmont resident of 30 years, has served the city for several years. McCarthy fully supports Piedmont doing its part to protect the earth's climate. Working off the climate action plan, she speaks fondly of the reach proposal. "We are asking people to go beyond to help mitigate climate change by lowering their carbon footprint." The proposal leans towards becoming more dependant on electric, renewable energy. Conna explains, "There's a menu with about 7 energy efficient items and when someone does a construction project over a certain value it triggers that homeowner to choose from the menu." The reach will allow our city to make the switch from unsustainable items that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, to more eco-friendly options.

As you can see, Piedmont has many environmentally friendly candidates, giving voters multiple options for how they want the city to be run. This election is about more than whether our candidates are

environmentally friendly, it's about how they are environmentally friendly. And no time is better than the present to take part in determining the future of our city.

**Want to learn more about the city council, city measures, and the environment within the city?**

**Visit:**

Conna McCarthy Candidate Statement

[https://piedmont.ca.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_13659739/File/Government/Departments/City%20Clerk/Elections/2020-11-03%20General%20Municipal/Candidate\\_Statements/McCarthy,%20Conna%20-%20City%20Council.pdf](https://piedmont.ca.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_13659739/File/Government/Departments/City%20Clerk/Elections/2020-11-03%20General%20Municipal/Candidate_Statements/McCarthy,%20Conna%20-%20City%20Council.pdf)

Connie Herrick Candidate Statment

[https://piedmont.ca.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_13659739/File/Government/Departments/City%20Clerk/Elections/2020-11-03%20General%20Municipal/Candidate\\_Statements/Herrick,%20Connie%20-%20City%20Council.pdf](https://piedmont.ca.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_13659739/File/Government/Departments/City%20Clerk/Elections/2020-11-03%20General%20Municipal/Candidate_Statements/Herrick,%20Connie%20-%20City%20Council.pdf)

Jen Cavanaugh Candidate Statement

[https://piedmont.ca.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_13659739/File/Government/Departments/City%20Clerk/Elections/2020-11-03%20General%20Municipal/Candidate\\_Statements/Cavanaugh,%20Jen%20-%20City%20Council.pdf](https://piedmont.ca.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_13659739/File/Government/Departments/City%20Clerk/Elections/2020-11-03%20General%20Municipal/Candidate_Statements/Cavanaugh,%20Jen%20-%20City%20Council.pdf)

City of Piedmont: Elections

<https://piedmont.ca.gov/cms/one.aspx?pageId=14121866>

City of Piedmont: March 3, 2020, Special Municipal Election

[https://piedmont.ca.gov/services\\_\\_\\_departments/city\\_clerk/elections/march\\_3\\_2020\\_special\\_municipal\\_election](https://piedmont.ca.gov/services___departments/city_clerk/elections/march_3_2020_special_municipal_election)

City of Piedmont: Environmental Review

[https://piedmont.ca.gov/services\\_\\_\\_departments/planning\\_\\_\\_building/about\\_planning\\_/environmental\\_review](https://piedmont.ca.gov/services___departments/planning___building/about_planning_/environmental_review)

City of Piedmont: Transfer Tax, Pool Bond Measures

[https://piedmont.ca.gov/services\\_\\_\\_departments/city\\_clerk/elections/november\\_3\\_2020\\_general\\_municipal\\_election/transfer\\_tax\\_pool\\_bond\\_measures](https://piedmont.ca.gov/services___departments/city_clerk/elections/november_3_2020_general_municipal_election/transfer_tax_pool_bond_measures)

City of Piedmont: Piedmont Prepares for 2020 Local Elections

<https://piedmontexedra.com/2020/06/piedmont-prepares-for-2020-election>

Piedmont Exedra: Q&A with City Council Candidate Jen Cavanaugh

<https://piedmontexedra.com/2020/09/qa-with-city-council-candidate-jen-cavanaugh>

Piedmont Exedra: Q&A with City Council Candidate Conna McCarthy

<https://piedmontexedra.com/2020/09/qa-with-city-council-candidate-conna-mccarthy>

Piedmont Exedra: Q&A with City Council Candidate Connie Herrick

<https://piedmontexedra.com/2020/09/qa-with-city-council-candidate-connie-herrick>

Piedmont Connect

<https://www.piedmontconnect.org/>