

AN OPEN LETTER TO FRESNO VOTERS

from David McDonald, former Measure “Z” Campaign Chairman and former Pelco CEO:

To All Fresno Voters,



As an enthusiastic supporter of Measure “P”, I want to set the record straight before voters make this very important decision on November 6th. I strongly support “Measure P For Parks” for many very good reasons, and I want to help make sure voters have accurate, complete information. **I am not a politician, and my only motivation is to help Fresno become a great city we can all be proud of.**

First, let me explain what is NOT TRUE with Measure “P”.

Fresnans deserve *both* clean, safe, usable parks *and* properly staffed public safety departments. **Measure “P” does not take a single dollar away from Fresno’s public safety expenditures.** In fact, Measure “P” specifically provides funding for the safety and security of Fresno parks and surrounding areas. As this is currently the responsibility of the Fresno Police Department, Measure “P” will release those policing resources to be used elsewhere. Measure “P” will make our parks safe by directly funding dedicated safety personnel, improved lighting, security cameras, graffiti removal, restroom renovations, and directing the homeless to proper resources elsewhere. **Anyone who tells voters different than this is simply not telling the truth.** Fresno’s outstanding, dedicated first responders know that I have always been one of their most avid supporters. I would never endorse anything that would reduce their funding nor diminish their ability to properly do their very important jobs.

Now, let me explain what IS TRUE with Measure “P”.

1. Currently, the Fresno city budget allocates about **4% of the general fund for parks, with 75% allocated for public safety (Police and Fire)**. The passage of Measure “P” will almost immediately reduce the parks portion by \$1 million per year, and eventually the 4% for parks will be reduced to less than 2% of the general fund budget. These general fund savings can be redirected elsewhere, such as toward public safety.
2. **Measure “P” provides for strict accountability to ensure that all funds are spent in Fresno on exactly what is spelled out in the measure.** A volunteer nine-member team of responsible citizens will be appointed by the Mayor, and approved by the Fresno City Council, to provide strict oversight. All Measure “P” expenditures will have to be approved by elected officials (the Fresno City Council), as parks remain the city’s responsibility.
3. **Measure “P” is modeled precisely after the Fresno Parks Master Plan which was unanimously approved by the Fresno City Council** earlier this year. After decades of severe neglect, this master plan is necessarily a thirty year plan; and so is Measure “P”. Our beginning point is the dismal fact that **Fresno is currently ranked 94th out of the country’s largest 100 cities in green space quality and quantity.** The obvious deplorable condition of our parks is a huge stain on our city’s image and reputation.
4. **Measure “P” addresses many “green space” and other community needs in addition to existing parks,** including: Eighty miles of new walking/bike trails, New trails and access improvements for the San Joaquin River Parkway, Repairing all green space irrigation systems, Funding to maintain and operate Storyland-Playland, Cleaning up and landscaping neglected roadways such as Freeway 99, Job training for veterans and disadvantaged youth, and Additional new parks where needed.

I had the privilege of leading the successful Measure “Z” campaign in 2004, and was very involved with the successful 2014 Measure “Z” renewal campaign. In spite of lots of stiff opposition, both Measure “Z’s” passed by big margins....with the help of many great people and 120,000 “Nosey” the elephant yard signs. Fresno’s seventy-five-year-old Chaffee Zoo went from nearly closing to now becoming one of the premier zoos in the entire country. The zoo is now the pride of the Central San Joaquin Valley, Fresno’s Crown Jewel, with nearly a million annual visitors from all over the world. **Now, we can do the exact same thing with our embarrassing, barely usable 1100 acres of city parks by passing Measure “P”.**

Measure “P” will transform Fresno into a beautiful, shining city with enormous, new community pride. Property values will increase, businesses will want to locate and stay here, **and our people can enjoy clean, safe parks for the first time in decades.** Measure “P’s” impressive, long list of endorsers includes many great organizations and respected community leaders from every walk of life such as former Mayors Alan Autry and Ashley Swearingin. All of them are not wrong on this one.

Great cities are known for the quality of life they provide for their residents with amenities such as outstanding green space. With the passage of Measure “P” on November 6th, we can make Fresno one of these great cities. It’s up to us. Fresno voters have never had a more clear opportunity to do this than we have right now. This has been the dream of tens of thousands Fresnans for many years, and it is my dream as well. **I hope this letter will help voters to make a thoughtful, informed decision on November 6th....with truthful, accurate information about Measure “P”.**

David McDonald

*Former Measure “Z” Campaign Chairman
Former Pelco CEO*

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