



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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TO: Felicia Brabec, Chair
Ways & Means Committee

THROUGH: Gregory Dill
County Administrator

FROM: Coy P. Vaughn, Director
Parks and Recreation Commission

DATE: June 6, 2018

SUBJECT: Parks Millage Renewal – November 6, 2018

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Board of Commissioners authorize the Washtenaw County Clerk to place on the November 6, 2018 ballot the question to renew the Parks & Recreation Millage that expires after December 1, 2019 for an additional ten (10) years, beginning with the levy to be made on December 1, 2020, for the purpose of acquiring, developing and maintaining parklands and operating recreation facilities for the benefit of Washtenaw County citizens.

BACKGROUND:

The Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC) was established by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners on August 1, 1973. The Parks Commission, which held its first meeting later that month, completed its first five-year parks and recreation plan in 1975. That plan, which was based on extensive survey data and considerable public input, outlined a strategy for developing a countywide system of parks and programs to meet the growing recreational needs of County residents. The recreation plan has been updated every five years since that time to reflect current interests, available resources and demographic trends.

On April 6, 1988, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, approved the submission to the voters of a one-quarter mill for ten years, for parks and recreation purposes including acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of park lands and recreational facilities for the benefit of Washtenaw County residents. The ¼ mill levy for park operations was first approved on November 8, 1988. It has subsequently been renewed on November 10, 1998; and November 4, 2008. The current request would seek a fourth renewal of the acquisition and development millage on November 6, 2018.

DISCUSSION:

The approval of this request by the Board of Commissioners followed by a favorable vote in November will allow the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission to continue to provide a wide range of recreational facilities and services without interruption.

Independent national research conducted over many years has consistently documented that the availability of parks and recreational opportunities are major contributors to the quality of life experienced by residents of a community. They're an asset, an investment in that community. For over four decades, County voters have overwhelmingly acknowledged the value of that investment, and repeatedly voted to provide support for the Washtenaw County parks system.

According to the Ann Arbor Area Board of Realtors, the average cost for a home in Washtenaw County in 2017 was \$300,000. Renewing the current ¼ mill levy for acquisition and development (the 2018 millage rate is actually .2314 due to the Headlee Amendment) would cost that average new homeowner about \$35 per year. Existing homeowners would pay slightly less due to the difference between the taxable value and the State Equalized Value (Proposal A of 1994).

That modest investment by the citizens of Washtenaw County will generate approximately \$3.84 million per year for County park acquisition and development. The acquisition and development millage funds construction, capital maintenance and improvements in the parks system.

We currently have 13 parks and 28 nature preserves, a total of just over 7,300 acres, available to the public year-round. The majority of these parks and nature preserves are provided at no additional cost to the public.

The Commission has been extremely successful in using the millage revenue to leverage financial support from other sources, maximizing the return on that investment. In the past decade the Commission has been instrumental in securing grants and donations for both recreational and land preservation activities.

With a common mission and in the spirit of collaboration, the acquisition and development millage has also been used to assist local communities in providing the required financial match to secure additional grant support for many local recreational projects. Examples include the trail network in the Dexter area; the Ann Arbor Skate Park; the Rutherford Pool project; the Water Street Trail in Ypsilanti; etc. Without this millage, that additional support would not have been possible and those projects would not be realized.

In summary, this millage is of significant benefit to the citizens of Washtenaw County. It enhances award winning and nationally recognized parks, programs and recreational opportunities; it stimulates the local economy by improving and adding facilities for

users; and it leverages considerable additional financial support for recreational opportunities in Washtenaw County.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

The approval of this request and a favorable vote in November will provide continued support for the staff necessary to operate the facilities and provide the programs offered by the WCPARC.

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

The approval of this request will have no impact on the General Fund budget.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS:

The approval of this request will have no impact on Indirect Costs.

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

The approval of this request will have no impact on any other county department. The Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission often partners with outside agencies including municipalities to provide support through programs such as Connecting Communities and the Summer Playground Program. The approval will allow voters the opportunity to influence the quality of life in Washtenaw County by supporting the operations of the WCPARC in providing a wide range of recreational opportunities and protected natural areas for public use.

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:

This request is in conformance with all County policies.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES:

A draft resolution seeking authorization from the Board of Commissioners to place the renewal of the 10-year, ¼ mill levy for acquisition and development within the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation system on the November 6, 2018 ballot.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTING TO THE WASHTENAW COUNTY ELECTORS A QUESTION OF WHETHER THE QUARTER MILL PRESENTLY IN EFFECT FOR PARKS AND RECREATION PURPOSES SHOULD BE RENEWED FOR TEN YEARS, BEGINNING 2020 AND TERMINATING 2029, AND CERTIFYING THE BALLOT QUESTION FOR SAID PROPOSITION

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

June 6, 2018

WHEREAS, pursuant to Act No. 261 of the Michigan Public Acts of 1965 as amended, this Board of Commissioners by resolution no. 73-0390 on August 1, 1973 established the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners on April 6, 1988 approved the submission to the voters of a one-quarter mill for ten years, for parks and recreation purposes including acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of park lands and recreational facilities for the benefit of Washtenaw County residents; and

WHEREAS, the voters on November 8, 1988 approved said millage; and

WHEREAS, the voters on November 10, 1998 renewed said millage; and

WHEREAS, the voters on November 4, 2008 renewed said millage; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Commission has been successful in using said millage for the purpose of acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of park lands and recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS, said millage expires December 31, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Commission has requested that the question of renewing the one-quarter mill for a ten (10) year period, beginning 2020 and terminating 2029, for the acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of park lands and recreational facilities be submitted to the voters of the County of Washtenaw; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners deems it advisable that this question be placed on the ballot at the General Election to be held on November 6, 2018; and

WHEREAS, this matter has been reviewed by Corporation Counsel, Bond Counsel, Finance, the County Administrators Office and the Ways and Means Committee

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of the County of Washtenaw, State of Michigan, as follows:

1. There shall be submitted to the electors of the County of Washtenaw at the General Election to be held on the sixth (6th) day of November, 2018, from 7:00 o'clock a.m. to 8:00 o'clock p.m. prevailing time, the following proposition:

“To renew the millage expiring after December 31, 2019, shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be imposed each year for all purposes on real and tangible personal property in Washtenaw County be increased as provided in Section 6, Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Michigan and the Board of Commissioners of the County be authorized to levy a tax not to exceed one quarter of one mill, reduced by the Headlee Amendment to 0.2314 (\$0.2314 per \$1,000.00 of state equalized valuation) on the taxable value of such property for a period of ten years beginning with the levy made on December 1, 2020 (which will generate estimated revenues of \$3.84 million in the first year) for the purpose of acquiring, developing, operating and maintaining park lands and recreational facilities for County citizens?”

2. The election shall be held in accordance with Chapter XXVII, the General Election Laws of the State of Michigan.
3. The Washtenaw County Clerk is hereby instructed to carry out all appropriate statutory duties as set forth in this resolution and the General Election laws of the State of Michigan so that the question of adoption may be submitted to the voters on November 6, 2018; and
4. The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby certifies to the county Clerk the following question as to the appropriate ballot wording for the November 6, 2018, General Election for the aforesaid proposition:

PROPOSITION TO RENEW THE TAX LIMITATION FOR PARKS AND RECREATION PURPOSES INCLUDING ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION OF PARK LANDS AND RECREATION FACILITIES FOR THE BENEFIT OF WASHTENAW COUNTY CITIZENS

“To renew the millage expiring after December 31, 2019, shall the limitation on the amount of taxes which may be imposed each year for all purposes on real and tangible personal property in Washtenaw County be increased as provided in Section 6, Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Michigan and the Board of Commissioners of the County be authorized to levy a tax not to exceed one quarter of one mill, reduced by the Headlee Amendment to 0.2314 (\$0.2314 per \$1,000.00 of state equalized valuation) on the taxable value of such property for a period of ten years beginning with the levy made on December 1, 2020 (which will generate estimated revenues of \$3.84 million in the first year) for the purpose of acquiring, developing, operating and maintaining park lands and recreational facilities for County citizens?”

YES

NO

Each city and township clerk shall give appropriate notice to the submission of the aforesaid proposition as provided by law which notice shall contain the statement of the Washtenaw County Treasurer as to previously voted tax limitation increases affecting property within Washtenaw County.