



**OAKLAND TOWNSHIP
LAND PRESERVATION
MILLAGE RENEWAL
NOVEMBER 6, 2018
BALLOT PROPOSAL
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**



PULL-OUT SECTION (JULY 27, 2018)

The Mission of Oakland Township Parks and Recreation Commission

“To provide a sustainable system of parks, trails, programs, amenities, and services which create memorable experiences and a sense of place, contribute to the economic value of the Township and preserve the historical and natural heritage of the landscapes for existing and future generations.”

What is the purpose of the proposed Land Preservation Millage renewal?

To continue to finance the acquisition and preservation of open green spaces within Oakland Township. The green spaces acquired with millage monies are representative of the natural and rural history of our Township and are permanently protected from residential or commercial development.

How will the Land Preservation Millage Funds be Used?

The majority of the .6310 of one mill renewal will be used by Oakland Township during the 10-year millage period for the following:

• **Acquisition of land or interests in land to protect:**

- Land along Paint Creek and Stony Creek.
- Land that contains lakes, ponds, and wetlands.
- Land where residents could hike or observe wildlife.
- Land that connects existing green spaces or natural areas.
- Habitat for our native plants and animals.
- Land with important natural features such as forests or prairie remnants.



• **Management of Oakland Township parks' natural areas:**

- Monitoring and preserving green spaces once they are purchased.
- Management of properties' natural features to maintain ecological and scenic values.
- Offering educational programs for residents to learn about natural area special features.
- Providing outreach for residents to participate in natural area management activities.



• **Improvements to provide public access to park natural areas:**

Projects proposed in the current capital improvement plan include adding improvements such as parking lots, trails and creek access at Watershed Ridge Park and Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park.

10% of Millage Funds Will Be Reserved for Long-term Natural Area Management.

This will initiate a permanent revenue stream for management of Land Preservation properties in perpetuity in the event that a dedicated revenue is no longer available.

How much land in the Township has potential for green space preservation?

Oakland County Planning and Economic Development Services estimates that there are approximately 3000 acres of land in the Township available for preservation, exclusive of park land. This represents about 13% of all Township land, which is greatly decreased from the 23% (5400 acres) that were available when the Land Preservation millage was last renewed in 2006. Of the 3000 acres, more than 1900 acres contain high-quality green spaces, which are the highest priority candidates for Land Preservation Millage funds.



What will happen to our land preservation program if the millage is not renewed?



If this millage is not renewed early it will limit the Parks and Recreation Commission's ability to plan land acquisition and management beyond the year 2020. The Parks and Recreation Commission will not be able to apply for grants, which typically require matching funding, nor finance the purchase of additional significant green spaces, nor manage the natural areas that have been acquired with these millage funds.

How will the Land Preservation ballot question be worded?

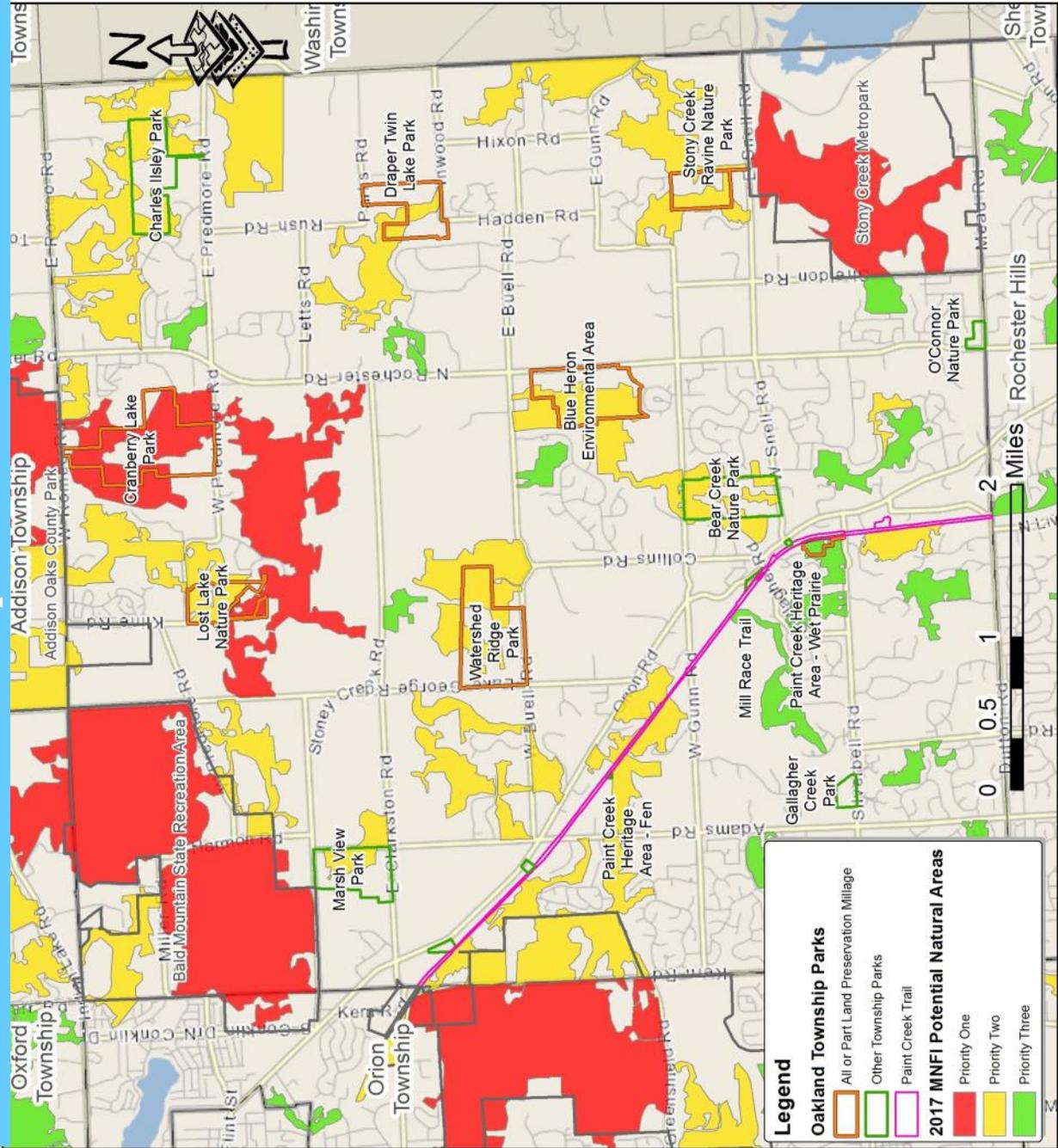
“Shall the Charter Township of Oakland be authorized to renew a levy of up to 0.6310 of one mill for a period of ten (10) years starting with the December 2021 levy for the purpose of continuing to provide funds and financing for the timely acquisition of land, the protection of natural habitat, and the preservation of green spaces within the Township? Approval of this proposal would renew the previously authorized tax limitation increase of approximately 63 cents per \$1,000.00 of taxable value on all taxable property in the Township. Revenue from the levy renewal shall be disbursed to the Charter Township of Oakland. Based upon the projected 2021 Township wide taxable value, it is estimated that this proposal would result in authorization to collect up to \$924,318 of revenue in the first year (2021) if this millage renewal is authorized and levied.”

Why is renewal of the Land Preservation Millage on the ballot this year?

Oakland Township has been fortunate in leveraging Land Preservation funds with grants and donations to protect more than 444 acres of important natural areas. To accomplish this, the Parks and Recreation Commission has committed the majority of the existing millage funds to finance these acquisitions in a timely way. While the current Land Preservation Millage expires in 2020, the millage renewal would extend the revenue stream from 2021 through 2030, enabling Oakland Township to proactively finance the protection of green spaces. In 2006, Oakland Township voters approved by 66% an early renewal of the Land Preservation Millage which enabled Oakland Township to purchase Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park and Watershed Ridge Park, saving 230 acres from residential development.



Oakland Township Parks Natural Areas



New data from the map are from the "Oakland County Potential Natural Areas Report: 2017 Update," which was funded by the Oakland County Economic Development and Community Affairs Department.

Will voting 'yes' on this millage renewal increase taxes?

A 'yes' vote will NOT increase the tax rate of Township property owners beyond its current level. A 'yes' vote will extend the time period of the authorized millage. The annual roll-back required by the Headlee Amendment would continue after the approval of this millage renewal.

Since the 2006 early renewal what has been accomplished using Land Preservation Millage funds?

Since 2006 Oakland Township has been successful in leveraging these millage monies with donations and \$3,396,168 in grants to accomplish land acquisition, public access improvements, natural habitat management/restoration and citizen outreach/education. See map on page 3 which shows where the Land Preservation millage has funded the protection of natural areas in Oakland Township parks.



Natural Areas Acquired since the 2006 Land Preservation Millage Renewal include:

2018 – Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park Expansion: Oakland Township is in the process of acquiring a 208-acre addition to Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park by combining a \$2,216,400 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) grant with Township Land Preservation Millage monies.

2008 – Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park: 60 acres acquired by Land Preservation Millage and \$893,700 MNRTF Grant.

2008 – Lost Lake Nature Park: 6-acre addition acquired by Land Preservation Millage.

2008 – O'Connor Nature Park: 10.5 acres donated (Land Preservation Millage paid for boundary survey, environmental assessment, and appraisal).

2008 – Paint Creek Heritage Area – Fen: .5 acres acquired by Land Preservation Millage.

2008 – Watershed Ridge Park: 170 acres acquired by Land Preservation Millage.

Public Access Improvements since 2006:



2008 Draper Twin Lake Park: Parking lot, pathway, boardwalk and dock funded by Land Preservation Millage.

2013 Lost Lake Nature Park: Parking lot, pathways, dock, signage, lakeside native species plantings, and nature center funded by Land Preservation Millage, Parks and Recreation Millage, and \$154,900 MNRTF Grant.

Natural Habitat Management and Restoration since 2006:

Improved 200 acres of Pollinator Habitat Along the Paint Creek Trail: Funded by USDA Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program \$84,000 Grant.

Road Right-of-Way Phragmites

Treatment: Received \$12,968 Michigan Invasive Species Grant to treat Phragmites and other invasive species in the road right-of-way and selected high-priority areas in 2016.



Land Preservation Accomplishments since 2006 (Habitat Management and Restoration continued):

Habitat Restoration with Prescribed Fire: Performed 55 prescribed ecological burns to cost-effectively manage more than 900 acres of natural areas.

Established Planted Prairies: Conversion of 75 acres of old agricultural fields to habitat for pollinators and grassland birds was funded by Land Preservation Millage, \$34,200 US Fish & Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Grant and private donations.

Monitoring and Planning: Land preservation funds were used to perform botanical and wildlife surveys and to create land management plans that guide natural area management actions.

Large-scale Invasive Shrub Control: Controlled invasive shrubs across 60 acres of natural areas; preserving scenic vistas and maintaining habitat for native wildlife and plants.



Outreach and Education:

Phragmites Outreach Program: Facilitated treatment of more than 60 acres of Phragmites for nearly 50 Township residents.

Natural Areas Stewardship Blog: This blog's (www.oaklandnaturalareas.com) 244 posts have provided information about stewardship events and programs, interesting features of each Township park and natural areas management activities.

Volunteer Program: Volunteers help with nest box and vernal pool monitoring, prescribed fire crew, and volunteer workdays (seed collecting, invasive species control).

Educational Events: Regularly offer opportunities to learn about special features of our natural areas including weekly bird walks, winter seminar series (featuring experts in fields), and invasive species workshops.



Which Township entity would manage the Land Preservation Millage funds and evaluate properties?

The Parks and Recreation Commission, having considerable experience in land purchases and donation, would continue to be responsible for managing the Land Preservation Millage monies. The OTPRC employs a combination of full-time, part-time and seasonal staff to meet operational and programming needs. They currently manage fourteen Oakland Township parks, including natural areas acquired with Land Preservation Millage funds, as well as managing the Oakland Township section of the Paint Creek Trail. The Parks and Recreation Commission has obtained ecologists' reports on the significant environmental areas within the Township. The Commission would continue to proactively seek available green space properties and evaluate them according to well-defined criteria, incorporating the recommendations of Township citizens. They would continue to work with real estate and legal professionals to pursue acquisition of the top-priority areas.



If approved, what would be the estimated cost to property owners of the millage renewal, starting in 2021?

\$100,000 home: Taxable Value \$50,000 = \$31.55/year or \$2.63/month

\$250,000 home: Taxable Value \$125,000 = \$78.88/year or \$6.57/month

\$500,000 home: Taxable Value \$250,000 = \$157.75/year or \$13.15/month

How much funding would this millage renewal provide over the 10-year period?

The renewal millage itself would raise nearly \$10 million and enable the Township to maximize its value by pursuing matching grants that could provide up to \$15 million more.

Would this millage renewal restrict private landowners' rights to sell or develop their property?

No. The millage funds will only enable the Township to work with willing sellers to purchase remaining green spaces, and will have no effect on regulations concerning the development of private property.

In addition to the preservation of natural and scenic areas, there are other public benefits from purchasing green spaces:

- Studies have found that green spaces are a desirable amenity that positively affects nearby private property values.
- Our Green Infrastructure Vision, a network of green spaces, preserves our Township's unique identity, protects native plants and wildlife and provides additional opportunities for passive recreation.
- Green spaces owned by the Township do not require the types of services associated with residential developments, including police protection, fire protection and public schools.
- Green spaces will not contribute to traffic congestion, whereas each new residential household averages 10 vehicle trips per day.



Where can I learn about Oakland Township parks and this proposed millage renewal?



The Parks and Recreation page of the Oakland Township website, www.oaklandtownship.org, contains maps and descriptions for each Township park, descriptions of our most current program offerings, advertisements of upcoming community events, volunteer opportunities, and an online version of our most current newsletter.

The 2015 – 2019 Parks, Recreation and Land Preservation Plan, is also available on the Parks and Recreation page of the Township website under the subheading 'Newsletters and Publications'. This plan, which is updated every five years, includes descriptions of Township park lands and facilities, preferences of residents which were gathered from surveys and public meetings, assessment of park system needs, park concept plans and a five-year action plan to meet the residents' desires and needs.

This document provided by
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