

News Release

Board of Commissioners approves Oakland County Parks and Recreation ballot proposal for November election

Bipartisan proposal to provide funding for parks operations, improvements, trail expansion and expanded recreation opportunities

August 11, 2020, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – With bipartisan support at its August 6 meeting, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners approved placing a .35 mills Oakland County Parks and Recreation millage proposal on the November 3, 2020 ballot. The current millage is set to expire in 2021.

“Oakland County has great parks,” Board Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak) said. “The proposal gives voters the choice to continue to support and make critical investments in our parks and natural resources for future generations, while improving services for everyone today.”

The OCPR Commission, a bipartisan group, voted unanimously to recommend that the Board place the parks and recreation proposal on the November ballot. The Board approved the ballot language at its August 6 meeting.

“This proposal was developed by staff to meet the current and future needs of our county parks for the next 10 years and beyond,” Commissioner **Gary R. McGillivray** (D-Madison Heights), who is the OCPR Commission Chairman, said. “I’m glad to see the unanimous and bipartisan support of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, and approval of the county board, to let voters decide.”

The Oakland County parks system began in 1966 with one park and 190 acres. Today, it is a 13-park system with a combined 7,000 acres and 80 miles of trails.

“For the first time in our 54-year existence, we’re asking for an increase so we can provide more high quality parks, programs and services to the citizens of Oakland County,” OCPR Executive Officer Dan Stencil said. “The parks commission and staff work tirelessly to ensure that taxpayer funding is utilized in a way that meets the needs and wants of our residents. This year alone, we’ve reduced our operating budget twice in our continuing effort to be fiscally responsible.”

If voters approve the proposal, the new millage will provide funding for:

- Free county park day-use passes to seniors (62+), veterans, active military and individuals with permanent disabilities
- Expanding the trails network
- Improving environment protection and sustainability efforts
- Continuing funding for OCPR's annual operations
- Repairing deferred maintenance in county parks
- Preserving and supporting community partnerships that expand recreation opportunities for residents

“Across our 13 parks, we have about 200 facilities, many of which are more than 30 years old,” Stencil said. “The infrastructure of our facilities, including windows, doors, roofs, roads, plumbing and electrical systems, are not the reasons you visit a park, but they are the behind-the-scenes mechanics that keep a park operating. We want to our facilities to be safe and comfortable for our two million annual visitors.”

If approved by voters in November, the OCPR proposal will cost an owner of a \$200,000 home or business, with a taxable value of \$100,000, \$35 per year. This is \$12 more than the current millage expiring this year.

For more information about OCPR, please visit www.oaklandcountyparks.com. Media can contact Desiree Stanfield, OCPR Supervisor – Marketing and Communications, at 248-705-4108

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, please visit www.oakgov.com/boc or call 248-858-0100.

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