

Ada Township Parks, Recreation and Land Preservation Millage

Questions and Answer Sheet

Q. What does the ballot proposal say?

A. PROPOSAL 1: PARKS, RECREATION, AND LAND PRESERVATION MILLAGE

This proposal is for a renewal and combination of two millages expiring in 2016 (rolled back under the Headlee Amendment): the 0.25 mills parks and recreation millage and the 0.40 mills parks and land preservation millage.

May Ada Township levy up to 0.65 mills (\$0.65 per \$1,000 of taxable value) to provide funds for purposes of parks, recreation, and land preservation, for a period of ten (10) years beginning in the year 2017 and continuing through the year 2026? These purposes include constructing, equipping, operating, acquiring and maintaining land, buildings and improvements for parks, preserves and recreational facilities; and financing for any of these purposes.

The Township estimates that this levy would raise \$612,277 in its first year.

YES NO

Q. What exactly are these funds going towards? (i.e. What do you mean when you say “constructing, equipping, operating, acquiring and maintaining land, buildings, and improvements?”

A. The proposed millage revenue will be used for the following purposes:

- **Operating and maintaining existing parks and land preserves.**

This includes costs of staffing, equipment, supplies and subcontracted services for things such as trash pickup, utilities, lawn mowing, lawn fertilizing, snow plowing, building maintenance, operating supplies, minor repairs – in short, everything needed to operate the Township’s parks and land preserve system and offer high quality programs with costs that are not fully-offset by user fees, such as kid’s summer day camps, educational/recreation sessions and outings offered on a year-round basis.

- **Major repairs, renovation and upgrades of existing facilities.**

Park facilities have a limited lifespan until major repairs or renovations are needed. Examples include re-surfacing of deteriorated tennis court play surfaces, re-roofing of buildings, replacement of outdated/substandard lighting and scoreboards at ballfields, parking and trail pavement replacement/repairs, etc.

- **Acquisition of land and development of new facilities.**

The millage renewal/combination proposal allows use of millage revenues for acquisition and improvements to land for parks, recreation and land preservation purposes. The Township currently has no plans to acquire new land for these purposes with funding from the proposed millage, other than the 3 sites identified as park space in the Envision Ada Plan for the Village – land along the Thornapple River frontage, northeast of Thornapple River Drive; land located between the new Headley Street and Fulton Street; and land located in the triangular area formed by new Headley Street, Ada Drive and Thornapple River Drive, which includes the current Speedway site. The first two of the above-listed sites will be conveyed at no cost to the Township. The Township would need to purchase the 3rd area listed above. Funding from the proposed millage renewal could be applied toward this purchase and toward park improvements on all 3 sites. Concept plans for these sites identify facilities that include a seasonal ice rink, farmers market pavilion, a small outdoor amphitheater, a kayak launch, a children’s playground and restroom facilities.

The above land acquisitions and any others would need to be evaluated and recommended by the Parks, Recreation and Land Preservation Advisory Board, and submitted to the Township Board for approval. Past citizen surveys conducted by the Township have indicated that residents place greater importance on preserving and maintaining the Township’s current land

and facilities, and less importance on continued land acquisition. These views will be taken into consideration in any future decisions regarding land acquisition.

-Support of the recreation programs provided such as softball games, day camps and school field trips. The cost of the recreations programs are offset by fees charged to the participants.

Q. Will my property tax rate go up as a result of this millage proposal?

A. The short, quick answer is NO. This is simply a Combination and RENEWAL of the existing Parks and Recreation Millage (0.25 mills) that was last passed in 2012 and the Parks and Land Preservation Millage (0.40 mills) that was last passed in 2002. The two millages are combined into one. It is for exactly the same number of mills (0.65) as was the case in 2012, and prior to that.

Q. How much money is raised by this combination of the two millages (0.65 mills) in a year?

A. The Township estimates that this levy, based on current total taxable value in the Township, would raise \$612,277 in its first year. The revenue generated in future years will depend upon the amount of new growth in the Township, general inflation rates, and trends in property values.

Q. How does Ada leverage the funding it receives?

A. Over the years, the Township has successfully sought to combine taxpayer funding sources with outside funding sources to accomplish major projects. Past examples include the following:

- Use of a \$64,000 Federal grant to pay for 75% of the \$85,400 cost to acquire a residential property in the Grand River floodplain on Pettis Ave., and convert it to permanent green space.
- Use of \$591,000 in donated funds toward the \$601,000 purchase price of the Roselle Park property.
- Use of a \$122,200 Michigan DNR grant to pay 31% of the \$390,400 cost to install paved trails in Roselle Park.
- Use of \$26,590 in funding from the Kent County Road Commission toward the \$78,207 cost of acquiring the former residential site at the southeast corner of Knapp St. and Grand River Dr.
- Generation of neighborhood donations to pay over \$100,000 of the \$313,000 total cost to acquire the Carl Creek Wetland Preserve on Alta Dale Avenue, north of the railroad.
- Use of \$300,000 in donated funds toward the \$1.3 million cost of constructing and furnishing the new classroom/meeting space/restroom building at Roselle Park.

Q. Is this millage paying for a lot of staff and overhead?

A. This millage is the main source of income that the Township has for paying the salaries and operating expenses of our parks as well as the recreation program services provided. Other revenues include recreation program fees, grant and donations. The Township Parks Department is currently staffed by a Parks Director and two additional full-time, three part-time staff and three summer seasonal staff. The current cost of operating the Township parks, preserves, recreation programs and land preserve system is approximately \$450-\$500,000 per year. About \$235,000 per year goes to parks and recreation staff. Millage revenues in excess of that amount will be used to pay for needed major repair/rehabilitation projects, and any new land acquisition or facility development projects.

Q. What are the Parks and Preserves in Ada Township?

A. Ada Township owns and manages three parks: Ada Township Park, Leonard Field Park and Roselle Park; in additions to three primary preserves: the Grand River Natural Area, Carl Creek Crossings Preserve and the Carl Creek Wetland Preserve. In addition there are smaller preserves along the Grand River and a number of conservation easements. In addition, Kent County Parks manages Chief Hazy Cloud Park and Seidman Park in Ada Township and the MI DNR manages two boat landing and the state game area.

Q. How do we find out more information about the millage or the Parks, Recreation and Land Preservation Program?

A. Contact the Parks & Recreation Department office at: 616-676-0520 or mfitzpatrick@adatownshipmi.com; or the Planning Department at: 616-676-9191 ext. 31 or jferro@adatownshipmi.com.