

Millage Options for 2020

How did we get here?

The funding of Calhoun County Parks has been a topic of conversation for decades. The situation even led to the closure of all county parks in the early 1980s. Since that time, there have been many strategies to fund the parks including grants, general allocations, and departmental mergers. In October of 2017, the PARC finance committee made three recommendations to sustainably fund the parks. They included a general fund allocation, foundation/endowment/fundraising, and a parks millage.

Consistent revenue streams were also discussed and researched heavily in 2018. Unfortunately, with current park resources, there are no feasible options to fully fund the department through consistent revenue streams. Some examples of high potential revenue sources for parks departments include large campgrounds with full hookups, adult recreation leagues and facilities, fairgrounds, and user fees at beaches. There are no self-sustaining parks departments within Calhoun County.

A likely scenario

To pass a millage in Calhoun County, the proposal would need to impact parks throughout Calhoun County, not just those managed by the County in Emmett Township. Other counties, including Ingham and St. Clair, have created millages that follow this format and are successful. If this were pursued in Calhoun County, a portion of the millage could go to Calhoun County's park system. Another portion of the millage could be allocated, via a competitive allocation or standard allocation, to parks departments in Calhoun County that have 5-year master plans on file with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Those dollars could support park improvements, capital repairs or replacements, park acquisitions, or matching funds for larger grants.

Potential millage amount

- 0.3 mills - 0.5 mills
- Cost to taxpayer per \$100,000 in home value would be \$15-\$25.
- Would raise approximately \$1 million to \$1.8 million.
- Calhoun County Parks and Recreation could receive 25%-35% of the millage to support the County's park system.

Park millage data

- 17 other counties in Michigan have parks millages.
- Other county park millages in Michigan range from .1 mills to .75 mills
- 90% (65 out of 72) of parks millage proposals have passed in Michigan since 2016.



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What do counties similar to Calhoun County do?

*see attached

General Timeline

The only viable date for a millage proposal, due to the timing of other ballot initiatives, is the Presidential Primary scheduled for March 10th, 2020

2019

- June PARC- Initial millage discussion.
- July-August – Parks and Recreation 5-year master plan survey published includes specific millage question(s).
- August PARC – Formal millage discussion with possible action to recommend to the Board of Commissioners.
- August-November – Calhoun County Administrator and Park Manager educate municipalities on millage proposal and gather input.
- October PARC – Formal millage discussion with possible action to recommend to the Board of Commissioners.
- Late November – Board of Commissioners votes on the ballot initiative.
- Mid-December – Ballot language due to the elections office.

2020

- January-March – Education campaign and external millage committee(s).
- Election Day March 10, 2020

What happens if a millage passes?

If a millage similar to the “likely scenario” above passes, the Parks and Recreation Commission and Board of Commissioners would likely set up a millage advisory committee. That committee would create standards for millage allocations, application processes, reporting criteria, and more. The first round of funding collected from the millage would not be available until early 2021 after county taxes have been received.