



A Recipe for Growth: Discovering the Ingredients of a Successful Tax Proposal



Byrum & Fisk Advocacy
Presented by ~~Crane~~ ~~Union~~ ~~State~~ ~~Faber~~



I'm not a lawyer!

**Merry Christmas from
your lawyer:**

I wish you <sup>but in no way
guarantee</sup>
^{reasonably} a Merry Christmas <sup>and/or festive
period</sup>
<sup>including but
not limited to</sup> and a ^{reasonably} happy new year. <sup>twelve (12) months
from the date
hereof.</sup>



Types of Local Taxes:

Bonds

Millages

Income Tax

Surcharge

Regardless of the type, you need to answer 3 questions for your residents:

How much is it going to cost?

Why do you need it?

What happens if it fails?

The opposite of "yes" isn't "no", it's status quo.

"When reason and emotion collide [in the voting booth], emotion invariably wins." *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation* (Public Affairs, 2007)

The facts of a proposal are critical, but so is making the case for what catastrophe may be avoided, what achievement will be gained, who will be impacted and how it will make your community a better place to live, raise family, grow old, etc.

How these things start...

Community group or coalition has an idea and approaches a school district, authority or local municipality.

Municipality, authority or school district has an idea and approaches a community group or coalition.

Usually a "partnership" of government, nonprofit and ballot committee.

**How do you
know it's
the right
time to go...**

There's no crystal ball

Each election has pros and cons: March,
May, August, November

Need to consider what else is in
the pipeline and on the horizon.

Do we have a choice?

Ingredients of a successful campaign

Early v. Late Communications

Coordination of Education/Information
and Advocacy/Lobbying

Numbers matter

Building a plan: timeline & budget

Targeting audiences

**Ingredients
of
Success:
Communication**

Research: polling & focus groups

Message discipline

Clear & transparent

Bipartisan support

Earned & paid media

Speed

Education V. Advocacy

Non-political communications: Just the Facts

Early communication is key

Harmonize with advocacy messaging

Nonprofits can spend up to 20% of their budget lobbying and advocating

**Main
reasons
people
oppose or
vote
against a
proposal**

Very seldom is opposition to a proposal about the issue or question itself. People aren't anti-school, anti-parks, anti-kids, anti-safety, anti-infrastructure, etc.

Lack of trust: generally there's more trust the more local you go

Millage fatigue: people feel worn down by special taxes

Taxes too high: perceptions of high taxes

Example

Ready by Five Early Childhood Millage:
Kent County

Grand Rapids Parks Millage

Caledonia Community Schools

Frequently Asked Questions



Frequently Asked Questions about the Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal

YES READY BY FIVE · MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2018 · 3 MINUTES · 17 Reads

1. What is the Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal?

If passed, the Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal will help make sure Kent County children under age 5 have access to vital services that ensure they are healthy and ready to learn by kindergarten. Voting "Yes" on the proposal will provide funding for community-based early childhood programs that are proven to work.



Success for every child, and how one Michigan county falls short

March 6, 2018 Lew Chamberlin Guest Commentary

SHARE THIS ON

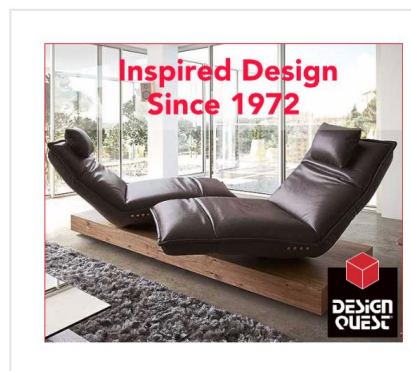


The first five years of a child's life are critical to their growth and development. Numerous studies have shown brain development and the experiences and relationships children have during this time impact their success later in life. We also know that laying a strong foundation in these first five years is critical to increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes, while a weak foundation does the opposite.

A [new analysis](#) released by [First Steps Kent](#) underscores this research and found many Kent County children are entering kindergarten without the building blocks and tools they need to be



MENU



Community members were welcomed to attend the kickoff event and learn more about the Yes Ready by Five campaign and why passing the "Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal" is essential to Kent County kids being on track and ready to succeed.



Pictured: Anissa Eddie, parent and early childhood advocate. Courtesy of Yes Ready by Five Campaign.

"As a parent of young kids, I know firsthand how important early childhood services are for children under age 5 and it makes a difference in their development and future success," said Anissa Eddie, parent and early childhood advocate. "This proposal will support parents so they can ensure their children are healthy and ready for kindergarten."

If the proposal passes, all millage dollars will be reported and go through an independent financial audit every year to ensure taxpayer funds are spent wisely. Programs and services will be evaluated to measure effectiveness to ensure transparency and accountability.



Yes Ready by Five @YesReadyBy5

- Home
- Posts
- Reviews
- Videos
- Photos
- About
- Community
- Notes
- Events
- Promote
- Visit Ad Center



Like Follow Share

+ Add a Button

Create Live Event Offer

Job

Write a post...

Photo/Video Get Messages Feeling/Acti...

Get More Page Likes
Help people find and like your Page

Get More Link Clicks
Send people from Facebook to a website

Suggested Groups

- Rage Against the DNC**
6.2K Members • 10+ posts a day
Join
- AfterBerners**
3K Members • 10+ posts a day
Join
- Local Berniecrats Activists**
2.1K Members • 10+ posts a day
Join

Political Organization



Yes Ready by Five

Published by Steve Faber [?] · November 5, 2018 · 🌐



It's almost over! Vote YES Ready by Five! www.yesreadyby5.com

Are you tired of the Election?



340
People Reached

18
Engagements

[Boost Post](#)

4

3 Shares

Like

Comment

Share



Write a comment...



Photos





Kent County's Future Starts Here

- Future Pilot
- Future Teacher
- Future Nurse
- Future Entrepreneur
- Future Builder



Vote YES
for the Ready by Five
Early Childhood Proposal
on **Nov. 6!**

Vote YES
for Early Childhood
this **Tuesday, Nov. 6!**

Research shows **children who start ahead stay ahead.** However, every year thousands of Kent County kids slip through the cracks and aren't ready to learn when they enter kindergarten. **That's why we need to vote YES on the Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal!**

Voting YES for early childhood will:

- ✓ Provide health and developmental screenings for all Kent County kids which are essential in the early detection of speech and hearing impairments, autism or other learning disabilities and making sure kids get the treatment they need.
- ✓ Support new parents and help them ensure their children are healthy and ready for kindergarten.
- ✓ Increase access to high-quality early learning experiences that build a strong social, emotional and intellectual foundation for Kent County kids.



Paid for with regulated funds by
Yes Ready by Five
PO Box 3702
Grand Rapids, MI 49501
yrbg



*Look for the Ready by Five
Early Childhood Proposal
Near the End of your Ballot*

READY BY FIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROPOSAL

Shall Kent County levy .25 of one mill which is equal to 25 cents per \$1,000 of the taxable value on all real and personal property subject to taxation for the period 2018 through 2024 inclusive for the purpose of providing planning, evaluating, and providing early childhood development services to persons up to age 5 and their parents? The amount raised by the levy in the first calendar year is estimated at \$5,702,887.

www.yesreadyby5.com





Most of a child's brain develops by **age 3**

Vote **YES** for the "Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal" on **Tuesday, Nov. 6!**



"The brain is developing very quickly during early childhood making it a critical time to support healthy brain development. Early childhood programs help connect families with the tools they need."

– Gwenden Dueker, Ph.D., local parent and developmental psychologist

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- ✓ Support new parents so they can ensure their children are healthy and ready for kindergarten.
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www.yesreadyby5.com

Endorsed by the Heart of West MI United Way, Progressive Women's Alliance of West MI PAC, Grand Rapids Chamber and many more.

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Yes Ready by Five
PO Box 3702
Grand Rapids, MI 49501
YRB_01



Our Community Supports



Family Futures - First Steps Kent - Grand Rapids
Area Chamber of Commerce - Grand Rapids Public Schools Board of
Education - Heart of West Michigan United Way - Health Net of West Michigan -
Healthy Homes Coalition - Kent County Essential Needs Task Force - Literacy Center
of West Michigan - Progressive Women's Alliance of West Michigan PAC - West Michigan
Whitecaps - State Representative David LaGrand - State Representative Tommy Brann -
State Representative Winnie Brinks - Kent County Commissioner Carol Hennessy - Kent
County Commissioner Dave Bulkowski & Melissa Budzynski - Kent County Commissioner
Harold Mast - Kent County Commissioner Jim Saalfeld - Kent County Commissioner Jim
Talen & Pat Talen - Kent County Commissioner Phil Skaggs - Kent County Commissioner
Stan Stek - Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss - Grand Rapids City Commissioner
Kurt Reppart - Grand Rapids
City Commissioner Nathaniel
Moody - Grand Rapids City
Commissioner Ruth Kelly
- Alex Contreras - Alyssa
Lock - Amanda Winn - Amy
Waldron - Ana Aleman - Andrea
Robinson - Anthony Smith - Ashley Smolinski
- Barb Corbin - Ben Brower - Beth Doman - Betty Zylstra - Bill
Faber - Bill and Mary Ford - Bill Saxton - Bincy Teodorescu - Bing Goei -
Bob & Barbara Herr - Brianna Vasquez de Pereira - Bryana Hopkins - Caitlyn
Dykehouse - Candace Cowling - - Carol Paine-McGovern - Carl Ver Beek - Carly
Stender - Cathy Albro - Christina Arnold - Christine Bonk - Christina Pavlak - Claudia
Bajema - Connie Bohatch - Courtney Myers-Keaton - Dana Evans - David Allen - Don &
Nancy Lubbers - Doug DeVos - Donte Castleberry - Dr. Bill Pink - Dr. Gwendon Dueker -
Dr. Juan Olivarez - Dr. Melinda Johnson - Dr. Susan K. Verwys - Dr. Wendy Falb - Earline
Libbett - Elizabeth Krumb - Erica Curry VanEe - Erin Stephens - Gayle Orange
- Hazel Lewis - Heather S. Boswell - Ingrid Cheslek - Jacklyn
Stetson - Janet Zahn - Jean Silbar - Jenine Torres - Jenn
Harrod - Jennifer Singer - Jim & Harriet
Engbers - Jim & Amy Keane - Jim
and Susan MacLean - Jim and Marie
Preston - Joan Secchia - Joan Silbar
- Joe Sommerdyke - John Helmholdt
- John Kennedy - John & Micki Benz
- Joslin Ham - Jonathan Gladding
- Judy Freeman - Julie Ridenour -
Kara Bilkers - Karen Burd - Karen
Lezan - Karen O'Donovan - Karen
Kathy Zacharias - Kate Campbell - Kate
Kate Pew Wolters - Katy Piirala - Kelsey
Zoller - Klaas Kwant - Kristina Donaldson
Laura Ward - Lauren McNabb - Laurie & Don
Gardner - Lew & Anne Chamberlin - Lynne Ferrell - Lisa Knight - Lynnette Robinson - Marc Branca -
Maureen Hale - Maria Lara - Mary Hoogland DeGroot - Melanie Hoeksema - Melanie Beelan - Melissa
& J. Paul Janes - Michelle Van Dyke - Mike & Sue Jandernoa - Milt & Barb Fohwer - Nate & Valerie
Guzman - Nick Thole & Amy Turner-Thole - Nkechy Ezech Ed.D. - Noah DeSmit - Paul Ellis - Paula
Brown - Paul & Julie Haan - Peggy Vander Meulen - Rachel Hood - Rachel Johnson - Rob
Jackson - Ron Caniff - Rich Liberatore - Ruth Jones - Sally Kapteyn - Sarah McLean
- Sarah Sobel - Sean Welsh - Steve Faber - Steve Heacock - Sue Schuelke-
Davidson - Sue Livingston - Suzanne Moore - Sydney Doombos - Tara
Gwamna - Tari Rauser - Tasha Washington - Tonya Harris - Tonja
Moyer - Vanessa Jimenez - Vaneese Chandler -
Wende Randall - William Tremen

Join these supporters by voting **YES** for the
“Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal”
this Tuesday, Nov. 6!



HEALTHY AND Ready to Learn

The "Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal" will be on the Tuesday, Nov. 6 ballot



✓ Endorsed by Family Futures



Building a Strong Foundation

Learn about the **Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal** on the **Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2018** ballot



Build a strong foundation

for their children so they are ready by age 5.

Children who build a foundation of *intellectual, social and emotional skills* in early childhood are more likely to succeed.



HEALTHY AND Ready to Learn

You have experienced the peace of mind that comes from knowing how your child is developing through your participation in Connections.

The Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal will allow many more children in Kent County to participate in early childhood programs like those that helped your family.

If approved, the Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal will:

- ✓ Provide all Kent County kids with health and developmental screenings through programs like Connections.
- ✓ Support new parents so they can ensure their children are healthy and ready for kindergarten.
- ✓ Increase access to high-quality early learning experiences that build a strong social, emotional and intellectual foundation for Kent County kids.

For more information www.firststepskent.org/earlychildhoodproposal

Vote Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2018  

**READY BY FIVE
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROPOSAL**

Shall Kent County levy .25 of one mill which is equal to 25 cents per \$1,000 of the taxable value on all real and personal property subject to taxation for the period 2018 through 2024 inclusive for the purpose of providing planning, evaluating, and providing early childhood development services to persons up to age 5 and their parents? The amount raised by the levy in the first calendar year is estimated at \$5,702,887.

 **Family Futures**
Results that last a lifetime.
678 Front Ave. NW, Suite 210
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
FF01



If approved, the Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal will:

- Provide health and developmental screenings for all Kent County kids, which are essential in early detection of speech or hearing impairments, autism or learning disabilities so kids get the treatment they need.
- Support new parents so they can ensure their children are healthy and ready for kindergarten.

- Increase access to high-quality early learning experiences that build a strong social, emotional and intellectual foundation for Kent County kids.

What you need to know:

- All millage dollars will go through an independent audit and be reported to Kent County every year to ensure taxpayer funds are spent wisely and transparently.
- The proposed rate of .25 mills means a homeowner with an average home value of \$150,000 will pay about \$18.75 per year, or \$1.56 per month.
- Studies show that a dollar invested in early childhood development saves \$6 down the road with reduced costs for health care, education and prisons.¹

**READY BY FIVE
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 **first steps**
growing every child's potential
First Steps Kent
678 Front Ave., Suite 160
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
FSK03

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Visit www.firststepskent.org for more information.
Vote Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2018  

1. The Life-Cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program - Garcia 2016. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2884880
Paid for by First Steps Kent, 678 Front Ave., Suite 160, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Children who start ahead stay ahead.



The **Ready by Five Early Childhood Proposal** will establish a dedicated, stable source of funding for quality early childhood services and programs proven to work.

What you need to know:

- ✓ All millage dollars will go through an independent audit and be reported to Kent County every year to ensure taxpayer funds are spent wisely and transparently.
- ✓ The proposed rate of .25 mills means a homeowner with an average home value of \$150,000 will pay about \$18.75 per year, or \$1.56 per month.



Research shows children who start ahead stay ahead. However, every year thousands of Kent County kids do not receive the health screenings and support they need.

Studies conclusively show:

- ✓ Most of a child's brain develops by his or her third birthday, making early years a critical time for learning and development.¹
- ✓ Thousands of Kent County kids are slipping through the cracks each year and aren't ready to learn by kindergarten.²
- ✓ A dollar invested in early childhood development saves six dollars down the road in reduced costs for healthcare, education and prisons.³

1. The Science of Early Childhood Development, Center on the Developing Child Harvard University. https://46y5eh11fhgw3ve3ytpwx9r-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Science_Early_Childhood_Development.pdf
2. RE.FOCUS – Analyzing Gaps in Early Childhood Services and Funding in Kent County, First Steps Kent. <https://www.firststepskent.org/making-the-case>
3. The Life-Cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program, Garcia 2016. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2884880

“I have seen firsthand how hard it is for a child to catch up once they're behind. Early childhood services are vital in making sure children are ready for preschool and kindergarten.”

— Ana Aleman, elementary principal

“Early childhood programs are essential to support children and help parents catch health and developmental issues early so children can get the help they need.”

— Linda Pickett Ph.D., local professor of early childhood

“As a parent of young kids, I know how important early childhood services are for children under age 5 and it makes a difference in their development and future success. This proposal will support parents so they can ensure their children are healthy and ready for kindergarten.”

— Anissa Eddie, parent

“It's in everyone's best interest to invest in all Kent County children.”

— Lew Chamberlin
Co-Chair of the First Steps Commission and owner of West Michigan Whitecaps



2018 Project Highlights

BIKE PARK, 580 KIRTLAND ST. SW
Advanced pump track, bike loop for kids 5 and younger, bike playground/skills loop and various site improvements

CHESEBORO PARK, 951 MERRIT ST. SE
New multi-age playground, picnic tables, bench seating, bike racks, site lighting, shade trees and an improved entryway

COIT PARK, 727 COIT AVE. NE
Improved playground, community gathering/picnic space, shuffleboard and four-square court, fruit trees and a pollinator garden

HUFF PARK, 2399 BALL AVE. NE
New boardwalk with an overlook deck, rest areas and interpretive signage, new playground and accessibility upgrades to concession and restroom building

MOONEY PARK, 314 LOGAN ST. SE
Improved playground, new site lighting, walkways, masonry seat wall, planter and landscape bed

OTTAWA HILLS PARK, 2060 OAKFIELD AVE. SE
New park made possible by a long-standing partnership with GRPS that includes fully universally accessible playground, picnic area, benches, lighting and shade trees

ROOSEVELT PARK, 739 VAN RAALTE DRIVE SW
New circular pathway, exercise equipment and community mural

WILCOX PARK, 100 YOUELL AVE. SE
Renovated basketball court project - dedicated in memory of Eastown resident Mike Sanders - is a reality thanks to \$28,500 in community fundraising accompanying \$37,000 in millage funding

2018 Pool Season

- 46,585 pool admissions (14.85% increase from 2017)
- 356 enrolled in swim lessons
- 33 new lifeguards certified
- 14 Junior Lifeguard program participants

Making a Positive Impact Five Years of Parks Millage Results

73%
parks improved
(100% by the end of 2021)

24¹
playground renovations

\$4,963,390
in new park improvements

Over \$12 million²
leveraged in outside grants and funding

\$10,908,601
in park rehabilitation
and repairs

\$3,741,565³
to fund pools

20,401⁴
volunteer hours with 7,518 volunteers

218,081⁵
total pool visits

55+
community partners

Footnotes:

1. Playground improvements at Alexander, Briggs, Campau, Cherry, Cheseboro, Coit, Caulfield, Dickinson, Douglas, Eastern, Fuller, Garfield, Highland, Huff, Joe Taylor, Lexington, Lincoln, MacKay-Jaycees, Martin Luther King, Mooney, Mulick, Ottawa Hills, Raspberry, Wilcox

2. Sources: Michigan DNR, CDBG, City Capital Improvement Fund, Friends of GR Parks, Herman Miller Cares Foundation, Peter C. and Emajean Cook Foundation, Patronicity/MEDC, Elizabeth Sanders, My GR City Points, National Parks and Recreation Association, DGRI, DDA, Brownfield, Wege Foundation, KaBOOM!

3. Through June 30, 2019

4. Source: Friends of Grand Rapids Parks

5. 2014-2018

RICHMOND PARK POOL



It wasn't long ago that we had broken drinking fountains, closed pools and rundown playgrounds. Grand Rapids residents entrusted us to do something about it when they passed the 2013 Parks Millage. We're making great progress so we can keep our promise.
— Mayor Rosalynn Bliss

The improvements made through the voter-approved dedicated parks millage are transforming play experiences for children, social spaces for families and recreational opportunities for swimmers. The millage has also allowed the City to leverage significant outside funding that otherwise wouldn't be available.
— David Marquardt, Parks and Recreation Director

With a focus on sustainability, accessibility and nature-based play, we're excited about the next set of projects made possible by the 2013 Parks Millage. We have a transparent process and are accountable for making sure all neighborhood parks benefit.
— Ryan Walkes, Parks Advisory Board President

2019 Park Projects (construction)

Alger	Joe Taylor	MacKay-Jaycees
Belknap	Lexington	Martin Luther King
Briggs	Lincoln Place	Raspberry Field
Foster	Look Out	Reservoir

CHERRY PARK SPLASH PAD



COIT PARK RE-OPENING



"From the very beginning, we were invited to share our ideas for improvements at Coit Park. The park feels like a reflection of our community and is safer, cleaner and more welcoming than ever."
— Barbara LeBeau, Belknap Lookout neighbor

Our Mission

To provide our community with inspirational experiences through the responsible management and collaborative stewardship of the City's natural, educational and cultural resources.



Our Vision

Creating and supporting a healthy, vibrant community through:

- Active neighborhoods
- Inclusive programs and events
- Innovation and best practices
- Exceptional services
- Embracing diversity

Major Goals

CONNECTED NETWORK

Create a connected network of parks, natural areas and waterways accessible to the entire Grand Rapids community

NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENTS

Create diverse experiences by drawing on community feedback, local ecology and national trends

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Create programs and projects that support the physical, mental and emotional well-being of community members

SUSTAINABLE SYSTEM

Seek innovative solutions to become more financially self-sustainable and diversify funding sources



616.456.3696 | 201 MARKET AVE SW, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

On the path to park excellence

City of Grand Rapids Parks
& Recreation Millage Update

FIVE-YEAR REPORT



Keeping a promise for future generations

✓ **VOTE YES!** for the

"Parks, Pools and Playgrounds Proposal"

Tuesday, November 5



"Our community has stepped up and made significant gains in addressing a massive backlog of repairs, keeping our neighborhood pools open and delivering on the promise of park improvements inspired by neighborhood residents. However, there is still work to be done and we cannot lose momentum or risk going backwards."

— Mayor Rosalynn Bliss



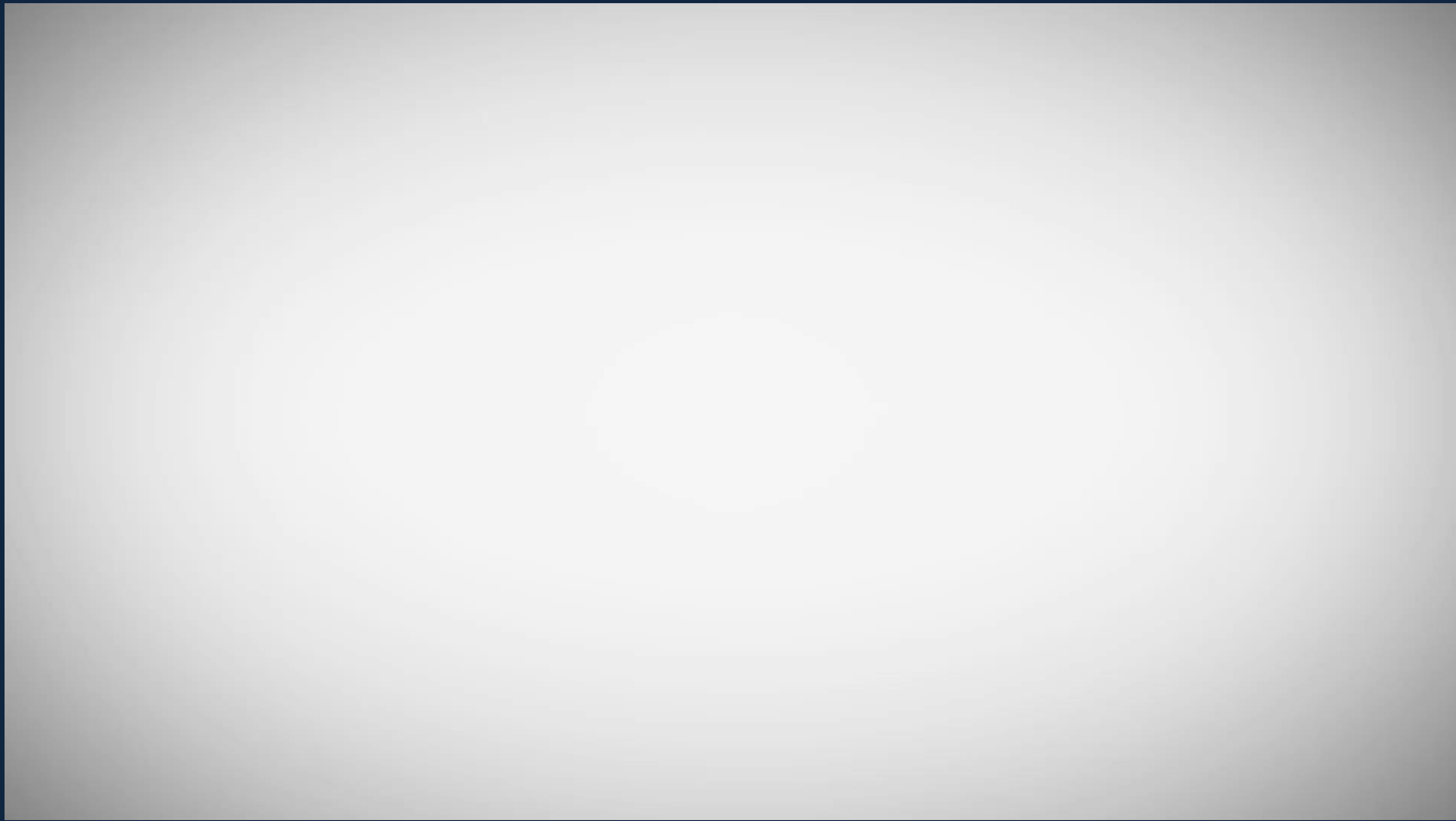
"Great neighborhoods need great parks! That's why we need to permanently renew the parks millage."

— Dotti Clune, East Hills Resident



VOTE YES! TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

For the **"Parks, Pools and Playgrounds Proposal"**!



Thank You

Q & A