

Open Space Referendum Fall 2016

This fall, Richland residents will be asked if they support extending the current 0.1% tax, which is used for purchasing conservation easements and property preserved as open space.

Since voters passed the initial bond by referendum in 2002, the Richland Township Preservation Board has been able to protect over 1,000 acres of farmland, property with scenic and historic value, property with important watershed protection and significant natural areas.

These funds have been used mostly in combination with County and State programs, as matching funds are required to participate in these programs. These programs have helped extend your tax dollars for many additional years, but after 13 years the funds are almost used up.

As you have seen, more development in the township means the need for more services. Don't forget, services like roads, schools, water and sewers cost far more than the increased tax collection from development brings. You, the taxpayer, make up the difference.

This is not a new tax. This tax is an existing Earned Income Tax (EIT) of 0.1% and would continue for another five years. This tax is not imposed on social security, pensions, interest or stock dividends.

Preservation of land helps keep balance in our community and keeps Richland Township green and sustainable.

HOW WILL SAVING OPEN SPACE BENEFIT ME?

- Keeps our township and school district taxes lower over the long term
- Maintains more of the rural feel and historic character of our community
- Increases property values
- Reduces traffic
- Ensures that farming continues in our community
- Protects our groundwater and streams in the Upper Tohickon watershed
- Does not burden retired residents and those on fixed incomes

What will the 0.1% EIT cost me per year?

Earned income:	Tax:
\$25,000	\$25
\$50,000	\$50
\$75,000	\$75
\$100,000	\$100

...and so on

The Ballot Question will read:

"Do you favor the continued imposition of an additional Earned Income Tax at the rate of 0.1% (one tenth of one percent) on an annual basis by Richland Township for an additional five (5) years following the expiration of the previously approved and enacted open space Earned Income Tax, which expires on June 30, 2018, for the purpose of financing the acquisition of open space; for the purpose of acquiring agricultural conservation and forest easements; for the purpose of acquiring recreation or historic lands and for the purpose of acquiring property development rights? YES or NO"

The plain English version of the above-listed question is as follows:

"The ballot question asks the voters of Richland Township whether the Township should continue to impose an additional Earned Income Tax at the rate of 0.1% (one tenth of one percent) on an annual basis for the next five (5) years following the expiration of the current additional Earned Income Tax on June 30, 2018 to be used for the purchase of land or the purchase of interests in land for preservation, forest, conservation of open, undeveloped land in Richland Township."

True or False: Your taxes will go up when the referendum passes.

False! Your taxes will remain the same.

True or False: Retirees on social security or pension will pay more.

False! The earned income tax doesn't tax social security, pensions, interest or stock dividends - only salaries.

True or False: Real estate development reduces local taxes.

False! The cost of roads, schools, water & sewer for new development greatly exceed the increased tax collection from the development.

True or False: Richland doesn't need to pay for preservation - the county, state or federal government will pay for it.

False! Most municipal programs require Richland to match between 25 to 50% of the funding available.