

Protecting open space is a good investment.

Why Beach Haven Residents Should Vote Yes on the Open Space Referendum

In the upcoming November election, Beach Haven voters have a critical decision to make about the future of our community while managing growth, preserving our dunes, protecting our beaches, bay front, parks, and natural habitats. The "Open Space Referendum" will appear on the ballot, asking voters to support a modest tax **dedicated** to preserving, improving, and maintaining open spaces throughout our borough. This referendum presents a unique opportunity to secure the natural beauty, recreational spaces, and historic charm that make Beach Haven so special.

Here's why it's essential to vote "yes" on this referendum.

What is the Open Space Referendum?

The Open Space Referendum proposes a small tax of **1 cent per \$100 of assessed property value** to fund the acquisition, maintenance, and conservation of Beach Haven's open spaces. For example, a property assessed at \$1,000,000 would pay just \$100 annually. These funds would generate approximately **\$220,000 annually** for the improvement of parks, beaches, playgrounds, and bayfront areas. The Beach Haven Borough Council is in full support of this open space tax.

Importantly, this dedicated funding would also make Beach Haven eligible for **matching grants** from New Jersey's Green Acres program and the County, effectively increasing the impact of every dollar raised. Several neighboring towns, including Long Beach Township, Ship Bottom, Harvey Cedars, and Barnegat Light, have passed similar measures, benefiting from new public spaces like gazebos and enhanced recreational facilities.

Why is This Important for Beach Haven?

1. Preserving Our Parks, Playgrounds, Beaches, and Bayfront

Beach Haven boasts the **largest amount of open space on Long Beach Island**, with 11 acres of parks and miles of beautiful shoreline and bayfront. From maintaining beach entrances to planting trees, installing shade structures, keeping our parks safe and welcoming, these spaces require significant investment. Currently, taxes and recreational fees are not enough to cover all the necessary maintenance and improvements.

The Open Space Fund would create a dedicated fund to ensure that we have the resources needed to keep Beach Haven's open spaces beautiful, preserved, maintained, and accessible for years to come.

2. Protecting Property Values

Well-maintained beaches and green spaces don't just benefit the environment—they **enhance property values**. Open spaces are a significant draw for both residents and tourists, contributing to the high quality of life that makes Beach Haven such a desirable place to live and visit. By keeping our parks and beaches in top condition, we protect the investments that homeowners have made in their properties.

Communities with abundant and well-maintained open spaces are more attractive to potential buyers, ensuring that property values remain strong in the long term. Voting "yes" on the referendum is a direct investment in preserving the value of your home and the unique character of Beach Haven.

3. Improving Health and Well-being

Access to open spaces is about more than aesthetics—it's also about health. Studies consistently show that time spent outdoors improves physical and mental well-being. Whether it's biking along the bay, walking on the beach, or enjoying a family picnic in the park, open spaces provide a much-needed escape from everyday stresses and an opportunity to reconnect with nature.

A "yes" vote on the referendum ensures that Beach Haven's outdoor spaces remain inviting and well-maintained, encouraging residents of all ages to stay active and healthy.

4. Building Community

Open spaces aren't just places for exercise and relaxation—they're also gathering spaces for the entire community. Beach Haven's parks host events (like this month's Chowder Cook-Off), kid's sports camps, and community celebrations, bringing people together and fostering a strong sense of community spirit. The Open Space Fund would help enhance these spaces, ensuring they remain central to community life in Beach Haven for generations to come.

Why Now is the Time to Act

While some may feel that taxes in Beach Haven are already high, it's important to recognize that **current revenues and recreation fees are not enough** to meet the demands of maintaining our open spaces. This referendum provides a targeted, modest solution that may be tax-deductible on your federal income taxes. Furthermore, the benefits of passing this referendum far outweigh its cost: a healthier, more vibrant community, higher property values, and more recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

By voting "yes" on the Open Space Referendum, Beach Haven will also unlock **additional state grant funding**—money that would otherwise be left on the table—to maximize our ability to preserve and improve our parks, beaches, and bayfront.

Conclusion: A Legacy for Future Generations

Supporting the Open Space Referendum is a small but meaningful way to protect the essence of what makes Beach Haven special. Our parks, playgrounds, beaches, and bay are integral to our identity and quality of life. A "yes" vote ensures that we have the resources to preserve and enhance these spaces, not just for ourselves, but for future generations of Beach Haven residents and visitors.

This November, let's make the smart, sustainable choice for Beach Haven's future. Vote "yes" on the Open Space Referendum and help protect the natural beauty and community spaces that define our borough.

If preserving public space and managing growth is important to you, please vote yes.