

# Home Rule Open House

Welcome

## What is Home Rule?

Home Rule transfers the basic authority to act in municipal affairs from state law to a local charter that is drafted, adopted and amended by the municipal voters.

1968: PA Constitution amended to guarantee counties and municipalities the right to adopt home rule charters

1972: Home Rule Law enacted

## What other communities are Home Rule?

- McCandless, Pine, Hampton, Bradford Woods, Upper St. Clair, Mt. Lebanon, Richland
- About 80 municipalities in PA total
- 7 counties

1. November 2025: Home Rule Charter question on the ballot
2. If yes, within 15 days of the election certification, the Commission meets for the first time.
3. 9 months to study our current form of government and recommend whether FP should become a Home Rule Charter Community.
4. If the Commission recommends yes, they have another 9 months to write the charter.
5. Then the charter appears on the ballot at the next election for voter consideration.

## Government Study Commission Ballot Questions:

1. “Shall a government study commission of seven members be elected to study the existing form of government of the municipality, to consider the advisability of the adoption of a home rule charter; and if advisable, to draft and to recommend a home rule charter?”
2. Vote for 7 commissioners

## Ballot Question Explanation:

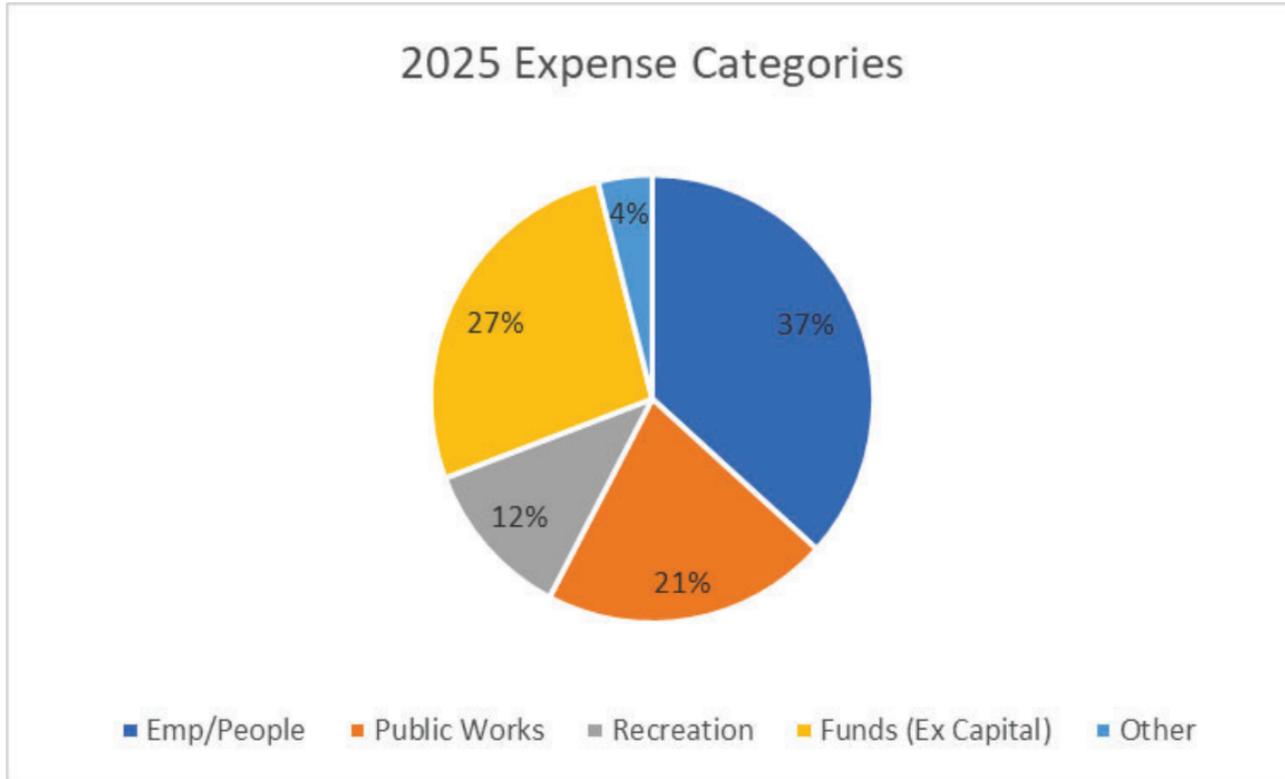
If this question is approved by a majority of those voting AND seven (7) Government Study Commissioners are elected, a Government Study Commission will be formed, whose functions and duties shall be to:

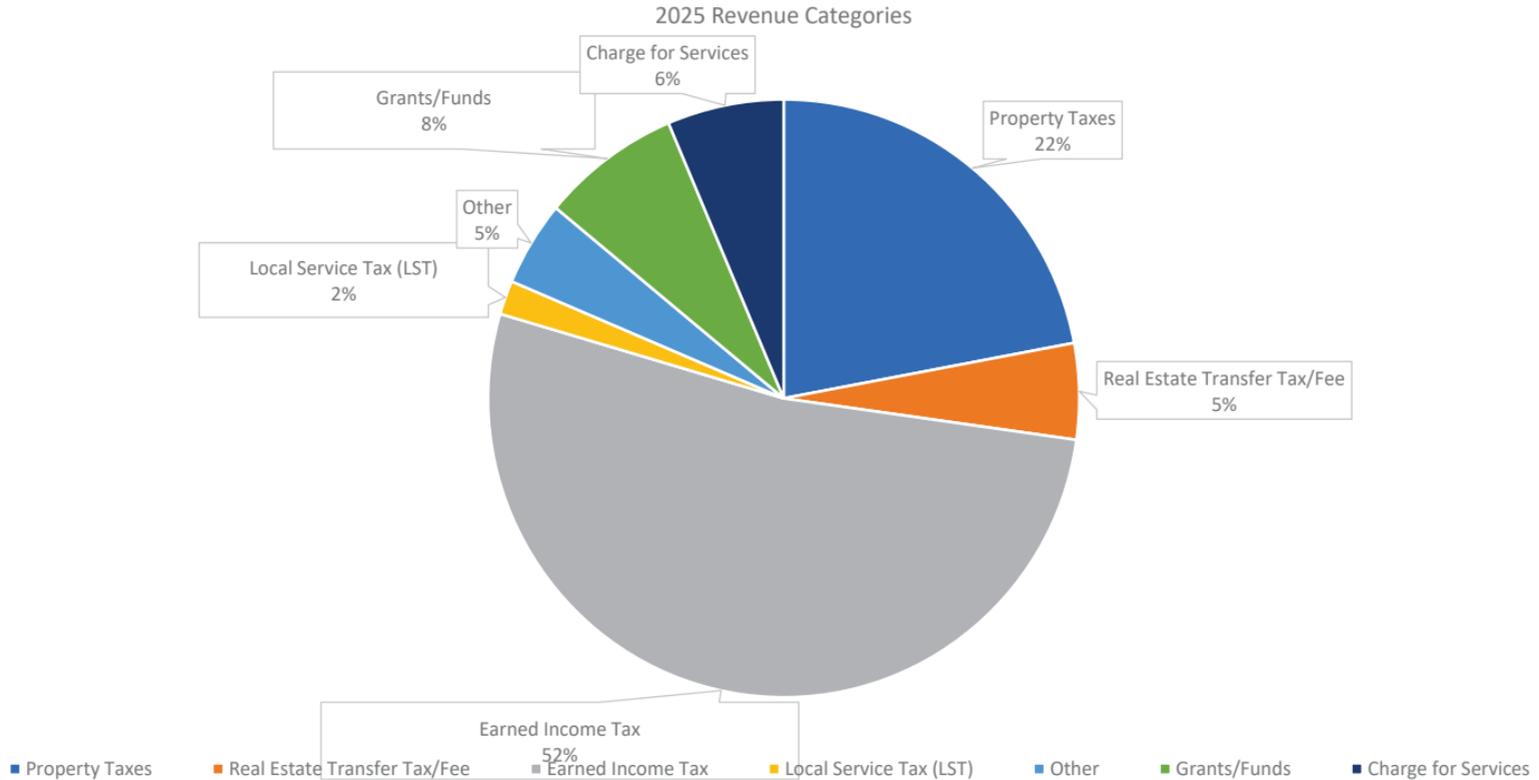
1. Study the form of government of Franklin Park Borough
2. Compare it with other available forms under the laws of Pennsylvania.
3. Determine whether or not, in its judgement, the government of the municipality could be strengthened or made more clearly responsible or accountable to the people.

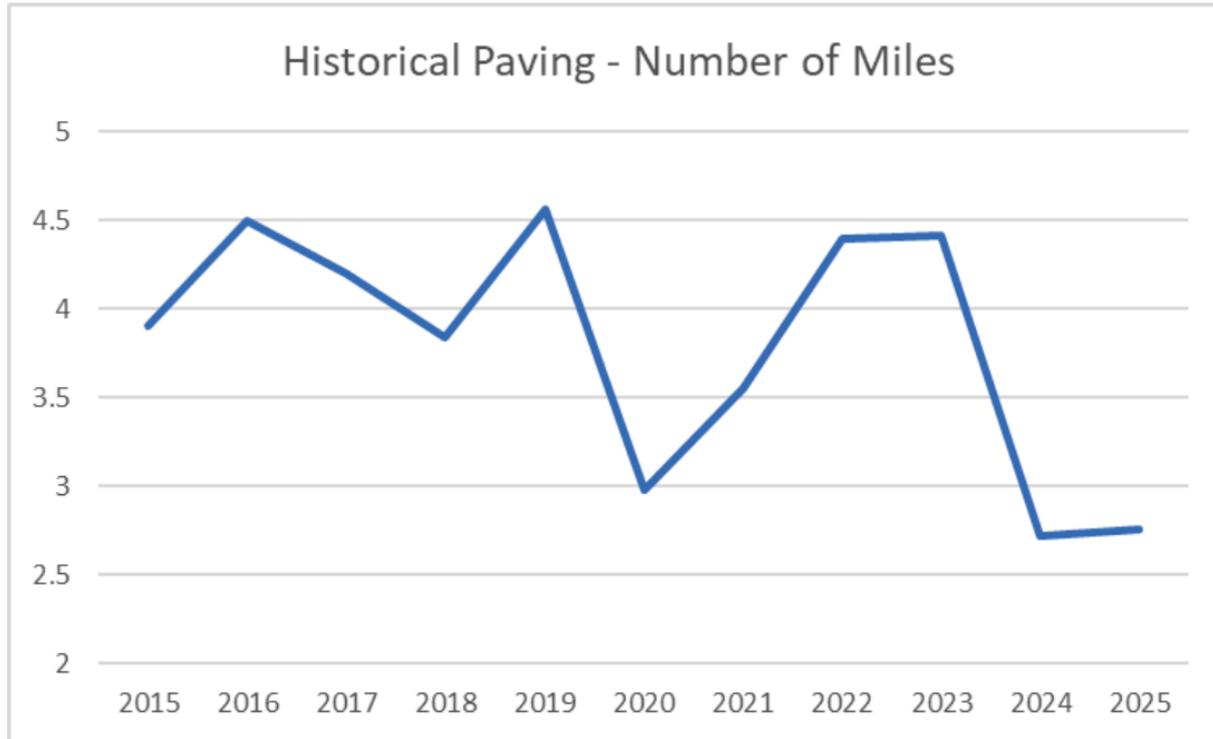
## Ballot Question Explanation continued:

4. Determine whether its operation could become more economical or efficient under a changed form of government.
5. Hold one or more public hearings to generally provide for the widest possible public information and discussion respecting the purposes and progress of its work.
6. Report its findings and recommendations to the citizens of Franklin Park Borough.

Why is Franklin Park pursuing becoming a Home Rule Charter community?







# Home Rule Charter

# Limits of Home Rule

- Arbitration/Labor Relations
- Boundary Change Law
- Election Code
- Ethics Law
- Recall
- Reapportionment
- Sunshine Law
- Open Records Law
- Recycling and Waste Reduction Act
- Vehicle Code
- Firearms/Hunting Regulations
- Private Business Limitations

- Regulation of Utilities
- Eminent Domain
- Zoning: Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code
- Local Agency Law
- Tort Claims
- Unit Debt Act
- Taxation Subjects
- Veterans Preference
- Clean Streams
- Sewage Facilities Act
- Storm Water Management Act

## Taxation

Home rule municipalities are limited to the subjects of taxation they possessed prior to the adoption of a home rule charter

## Existing taxes in Franklin Park

	Current rate*	Can raise as a Borough?	Can raise as a Home Rule charter community?
Earned Income Tax	.5%	No, we are at the max	Yes
Real Estate Property Tax	1.59 mills	Yes	Yes
Real Estate Transfer Tax	.5%	No, we are at the max	Yes
Local Service Tax	\$52 per taxpayer	No, we are at the max	No, we are at the max

\*Rate paid to FP. Other entities have their own portion of the total tax you pay.

# Home Rule Charter

# Taxes – Potential Scenarios

	2025 projected income	Potential increase	Approximate income generated
<b>Earned Income Tax</b>	\$5.9 million (.5% rate)	.1% (.6% total) \$100,000 earning = pay \$100 more annually	\$1.18 million
<b>Real Estate Property Tax</b>	\$2.8 million (1.59 mills)	Could maintain or even decrease	
<b>Real Estate Transfer Tax</b>	\$550,000 (.5% rate)	.5% (1% total)	\$550,000
<b>Local Service Tax</b>	\$175,000 (\$52 per taxpayer)	Not an option under either form of government	\$0

Potential scenarios – assuming FP stays a borough:

1. Increase property taxes: increase to 2.14 mills.  
\$260,000 home = \$143 increase annually  
Would make us the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest rate in Allegheny County  
Generate about \$1,000,000 annually
2. Cut spending
3. Combination of both

## Potential Costs

- Legal fees
- Potential for a consultant to help with the process
- Stenographer
- Printing

# Home Rule Charter

# Comparing Forms

## Borough

### Pros

- Clear separation of powers between council and mayor (can maintain this with a charter)
- Borough code provides well-defined framework (can maintain current codes as HR community)

### Cons:

- PA codes on Boroughs can be restrictive
- Limited taxing authority, leading to heavy reliance on property taxes
- Financially responsible for water runoff from state roads

## Home Rule Charter

### Pros

- More flexibility in writing own ordinances (can act except where state law says a HR community can't)
- Financial flexibility – ability to adjust taxes other than just raise property tax
- No longer responsible for water run off into enclosed facilities on state roads

### Cons

- Long process, has a financial cost
- Don't know what the charter will look like until near end of process