



THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK

COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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July 26, 2018

Dear Highland Park Neighbor:

Since early 2018, we have been actively addressing issues important to all of us. Here are six recent examples.

1. Street repairs are amongst our top priorities. This year we continue improving our roads with a *State grant of \$587,000*.
2. We will be deploying a Pavement Management System to professionally evaluate and rank all Borough roads. This evaluation will help us schedule a maintenance and repaving plan.
3. An energy audit of our administrative buildings to improve operational efficiencies was recently completed. State programs to off-set the costs of any upgrades are being investigated.
4. Work is underway for Highland Park's new Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, *paid for by the New Jersey Department of Transportation*.
5. The Borough's long-awaited, new afterschool teen building will be opening this fall.
6. Progress continues on our PSE&G solar field which will be a state-of-the-art research project that will benefit not only Highland Park, but all of New Jersey.

Due, primarily, to increased costs of employee benefits and pensions, which are mandated by the state or labor agreements, **our adopted 2018 municipal budget increases the average annual household bill by \$91.22, reflecting a 2.44% increase in the municipal tax rate.** *To see: a) where our property taxes go, and b) a breakdown on how the municipal portion of our taxes is spent locally, please read the back of this letter.*

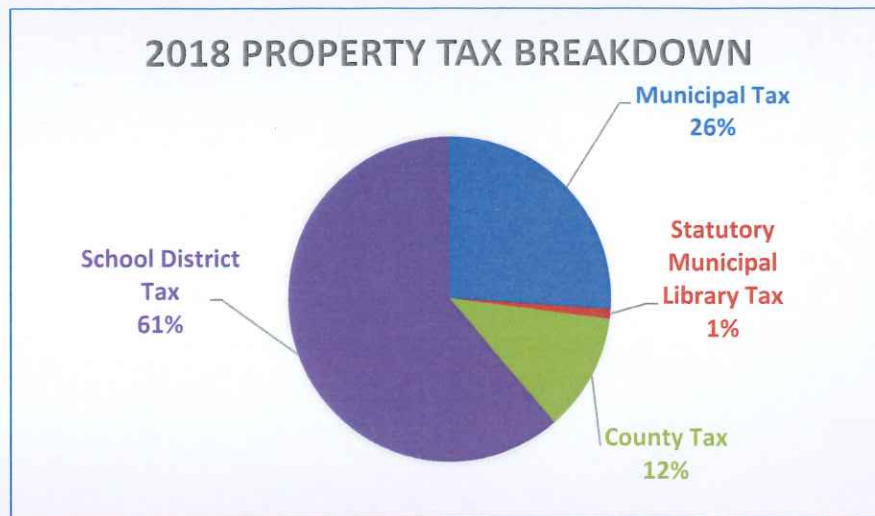
Our goal remains making Highland Park stronger, safer, and economically sustainable. We continue to explore a) more shared services with nearby towns and institutions, b) downtown redevelopment, and c) infrastructure improvements which can have long-term positive effects on our spending and resiliency.

Please contact me if you have questions about the FY2018 municipal taxes or any other Borough issue. Enjoy the rest of your summer.

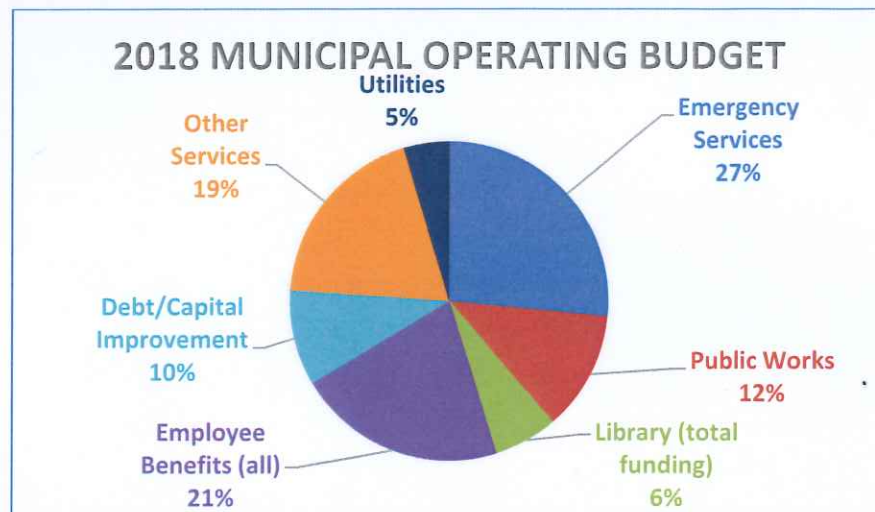
Sincerely,

Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler

brillmittlerhp@gmail.com



Only 26% of the total tax levy is dedicated to the municipal operating budget. The largest portion of our taxes supports our school district, which is independent from the Borough and has its own public process for establishing its budget. (Contact information for school district leaders can be found below).



Emergency Services include our Police, Fire, and First Aid Squad, plus the office of Emergency Management. The Employee Benefits include benefits for all employees, including public safety employees. Other Services include, primarily, municipal court, planning and zoning, code enforcement, recreation services, senior and aging services, and administration.

Explanatory note:

Highland Park, unlike some of our surrounding towns (Edison, New Brunswick, Piscataway, and Metuchen), lacks taxable commercial rateables. That is why the tax burden falls on all of us...residents. Additionally, since 2002 the State has kept over \$7,000,000 in energy tax rebates that are due to Highland Park for tax relief, making it even more difficult to operate.

Regarding the Highland Park Public Schools:

If you have any questions regarding your school taxes for the coming year, please contact the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Scott Taylor at 732-572-3400 or Board President, Darcie Cimarusti at boedcimarusti@hpschools.net.

P.S. You can read more about this year's budget by visiting www.hpboro.com.