

Understanding Municipal Taxes

Dear fellow **Harrison Residents**,

There have been some questions raised recently regarding our taxes – so I wanted to address this with you and hopefully provide some insights that will help you understand what is a rather complex system.

Like you, I am equally upset with the property tax levels in New Jersey. This has been an issue for far too long and it must be addressed in Trenton. While some will have you believe that the increase in your total tax bill is dictated by the Harrison Township Committee, the fact is that only 15% of the tax revenue that you pay is allocated to the municipality. And we continue to operate under the 2% annual cap implemented by the state.



Rather than go into everything that needs to be addressed to correct the tax issue at the State level, I found a great online post that provides more insight into what needs to be done to improve the tax situation

[Read More](#)

Getting the most out of our Budget

HOWEVER, it is important for you to understand what the 15% of your tax dollars that stay in Harrison Township pays for. And the answer is a lot, starting with the day-to-day operation of the town and the 47 employees, their salaries, benefits, pension and training. The township staff is responsible for serving our community and overseeing the services provided include Police, trash/recycling (*including the new curbside yard waste pick-up*), recreation activities, and maintaining our beautiful public parks. All of that is the Operating Expense portion of our budget.



Operating Expenses also include all costs for our Professionals -- solicitors, engineers, planners, and auditors etc. None of our professionals are paid a salary rather they are paid based on billable hours/time and services provided (like a Redevelopment Study or Architectural design). EVERY dollar they are paid is submitted by invoice and reviewed and approved by the Administrators before it's submitted to the Township Committee for final approval and payment.

The Budget Process = Transparency

At the end of the day everything that happens in Harrison Township is transparent – starting with our annual budget. All Township Department Heads are required to submit their annual budget to our Administrators, who then submit the total budget to our auditor for review. Once certified by the auditor it is presented to the committee for review and adoption. This usually occurs in April each year.

The budget is then executed as all the township expenditures (bills) are presented to the Township Committee at every meeting – this is referred to as the “Bill List.” The Township Committee then approves each bill for payment. Every dollar spent is listed on that Bill List and must coincide with the approved budget, publicly voted upon by a Roll Call vote of the 5 members.

This is the quintessential example of transparency in government. You are welcome to attend the Township Committee meetings on the 1st and 3rd Monday each month and watch this process in action.

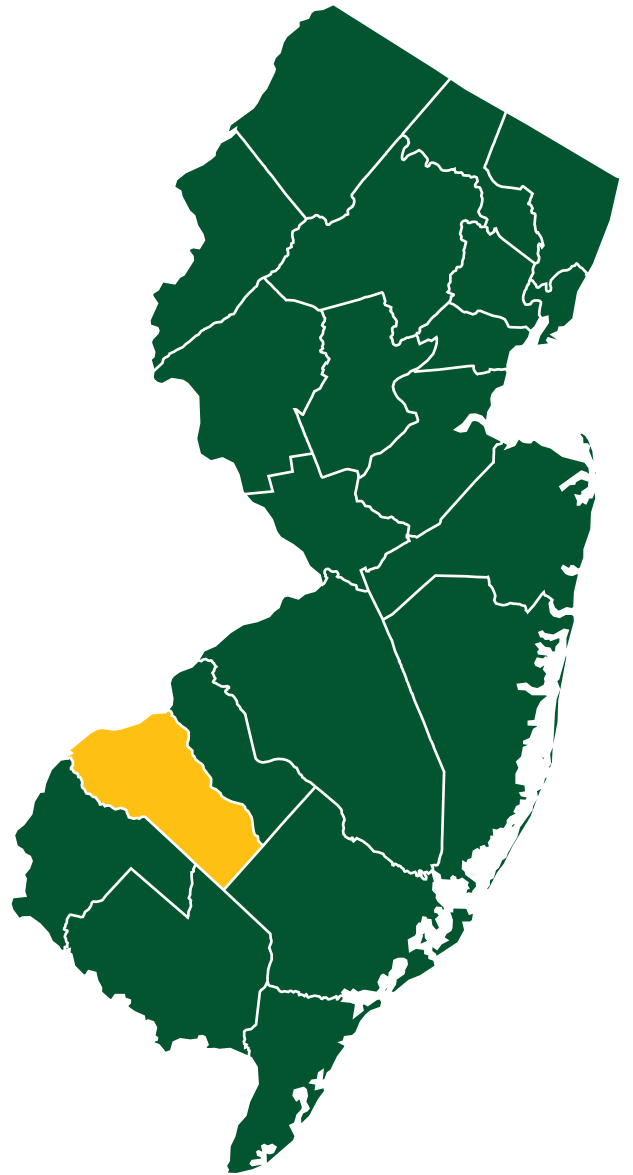
2nd Lowest Tax Rate in Gloucester County

In the end, the best barometer of how we manage your tax dollars locally is to look at the local municipal tax rate you pay, which covers all aspects of the budget items referenced here.

Recently the tax rates for all 24 towns in Gloucester County were released and I’m proud to report that Harrison Township went from the 3rd lowest to the 2nd lowest in the county. This is all made possible by our commitment to being fiscally responsible with your money, while also providing the level of service that our community deserves.

[See county tax rates](#)

We are, and always will be, accountable to the residents of Harrison Township on every level and we are very proud of OUR community.



Together for Harrison,

Lou Manzo
Your Mayor