

QUARTERLY UPDATE JULY – SEPTEMBER 2022

COVID-19 UPDATE

At the end of September 2022, the seven-day average for confirmed coronavirus cases in New Jersey was 1,696 per day, which was a 10% increase from the month before. The statewide rate of transmission was 1.04. When the transmission rate is 1, cases have leveled off at the current numbers, while anything above 1 indicates the outbreak is expanding.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Bergen County was and still is considered a medium risk of contracting coronavirus. The statewide positivity rate for Covid-19 tests conducted was 10.36%. The CDC considers positivity rates above 10% to be high. New Jersey's statewide positivity rate is substantially lower than its peak of 40.83% on January 1, 2022, during the height of the omicron variant.

More than 7 million people who work, live or study in New Jersey have reached fully vaccinated status. More than 7.9 million have received a first dose since vaccinations began in the state on December 15, 2020. More than 4.29 million people in the state eligible for boosters have received one.

There has been a total of 2.3 million reported confirmed COVID-19 cases in New Jersey since it announced its first known case on March 4, 2020. There are also numerous cases that likely never have been counted, including at-home positive tests that are not included in the state's numbers.

BUDGET

General Information and Highlights

The municipal tax rate is 0.756 cents per \$100 assessed value. On an average home assessed at \$407,000, the municipal tax increased by \$97. This is the portion of the bill that is controlled by your municipal government. The other portions of your tax bill are the County of Bergen, the Board of Education, and our library.

Under these trying times, the township council and I continue to make every effort to maintain fiscal responsibility, which is reflected in this tax bill. Like you at home, some bills must be paid each month, such as gasoline, repairs to our buildings, and maintaining our infrastructure. Yet the township council and I, with our departments, were able to reduce the discretionary spending this year by \$150,000.

We continue strengthening emergency services by hiring police officers, updating our computer and communications system, and purchasing a rescue truck for our volunteer fire department. We continue paving roads and televising underground pipes beforehand. Residents can now pay online tax and water bills. In addition, to offset some of these costs, the township actively applies for grants and has been awarded \$301,000 to pave streets, \$157,000 for the new municipal complex, \$140,000 for body-worn cameras for police, and \$50,000 for a spray park for our children.

GRANTS

Grant Applications – Submitted/Pending

FY22 New Jersey Department of Transportation – Municipal Aid

06/29/2022: The Municipal Aid program is a competitive program intended to provide municipalities with transportation-based grants to supplement their transportation programs. This application was submitted for \$458,663 for improvements to Alberta Drive.

United States BJA – Bulletproof Vest Partnership

06/27/2022: The purpose of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 1998 is to protect the lives of law enforcement officers by equipping law enforcement officers with armor vests. Eligible jurisdictions may request funds to help purchase one vest per officer per fiscal year. Federal payments will cover up to 50 percent of each jurisdiction's total vest costs. Our police department has requested eight vests for \$4,708.

Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund

05/26/2022: The 2022 grant cycle accepts applications in four categories: Land Acquisition, Historic Preservation, Floodplain Protection, and Municipal Park Improvements. The township has filed a letter of intent to improve Mayhill Street Park for \$192,000.

Bergen County Community Development Block Grant COVID-19

05/06/2022: The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) authorized the allocation of funds to respond to the effects of COVID-19. The CARES Act made available 5 billion dollars in Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds. This will be the third round of allocations distributed by the County of Bergen, and the township has requested \$40,400 for COVID-19 relief reimbursement.

United States Department of Defense (DOD) – LESO: 1033 Program

01/28/2022: The LESO program facilitates the transfer of specific excess DOD property to law enforcement agencies, providing them with the critical equipment to keep communities and officers safe. The only costs incurred by the municipality are shipping equipment that cannot be picked up. Available equipment can include but is not limited to vehicles, office furniture, kits, and supplies. Enrollment is ongoing and must be reapproved yearly by the governing body.

FEMA – Assistance to Firefighters Grant

12/15/2021: Our grant writer successfully submitted this application on behalf of the Saddle Brook Fire Department (SBFD) for \$12,959.35. The Saddle Brook Fire Department has requested turnout gear consisting of dry suits, all-terrain boots, and rugged wear gloves.

T-Mobile – Hometown Grant

T-Mobile announced Hometown Grants to support the people and organizations who help small towns across America thrive and grow by providing funding to kick-start important new community development projects. Our grant writer submitted the application on behalf of the township in the amount of \$50,000.

Grants Awarded

FY21 New Jersey Department of Transportation – Municipal Aid

This program provides municipalities with transportation-based grants to supplement their transportation programs. The township submitted the grant application on 06/23/2021 and was awarded \$216,000 to improve Cambridge Avenue by Helen I. Smith School.

FY22 Bergen County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Two priority applications were submitted on 12/20/2021, Priority #1: a new municipal elevator for \$240,000; Priority #2: Congress Street paving for \$227,000. At the central region's allocation meeting, it was recommended that Saddle Brook receive approximately \$277,000 in community development funding to be split evenly for both projects.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Mayor's Youth Group (MYG)

The MYG participated in the township Picnic and National Night Out. Thank you to all the members who attended and participated in these events. Township youth entering grades 4-12 are welcome to join the MYG. Anyone interested in registering can call Christine Genuario, Secretary to Mayor, at 201-587-2903

Community Partnership Committee (CPC) / Access for All

The committee met throughout the summer and discussed upcoming events, such as the Township Picnic, Fireworks, and National Night Out. New members from the local Woman's Club, Parent Teacher Organization, and Senior Club have been actively participating. Pastor Christopher Wolf and I did a video to promote the CPC posted on YouTube, all township social media outlets, and Our Town (Public Access) TV (Ch. 77 Cablevision, Ch. 38 Verizon Fios).

Flood Mitigation Committee Meetings

The committee met on Tuesday, September 27th, and spoke about our township's application with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System. Also discussed was the online petition started by the Borough of Lodi to request financial assistance from the federal government to address the ongoing flooding problems along the Saddle River and other areas of concern.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

NOTE: Most events are photographed and recorded. The recordings are broadcasted on Our Town (Public Access) TV (Ch. 77 – Cablevision, Ch. 38 – Verizon Fios). The photos and recordings are also posted on the township website and Facebook page.

Township Picnic, Saturday, July 3rd, 12 – 4 pm

It was great meeting again this year for the Town Picnic! I want to thank everyone for attending, with a special thanks to our Project and Activities Committee. Thank you to all township employees for helping out, especially members of our Police Department, Department of Public Works, Volunteer Fire Department, and Ambulance Corps. We always appreciate the help from our civic organizations, including the Woman's Club, Boy Scouts, and Mayor's Youth Group. Finally, I can't thank our sponsors enough for their generous contributions and participation. We could not have had the picnic without their assistance.

Township Fireworks Display, Saturday, July 3rd, 8 – 10 pm

It was exciting to bring back our annual fireworks celebration, which had been canceled the two previous years due to COVID-19. The fireworks display occurs at Saddle River County Park by Otto Pehle Pond. Thank you to all of our emergency services personnel from the Fire Department, Fire Prevention Bureau, Office of Emergency Management, Police Department, Ambulance Corps, and Department of Public Works.

Summer Concert – N.Y. State of Mind, Saturday July 22nd, 6-10 pm

The township held a summer outdoor concert in the evening at the new municipal complex. It was the first time we've done a concert and hope to do many more in the future. The event was well attended and a good time was had by all! Thank you to Councilman Andrew Cimiluca and Recreation Director Andy Gallo for planning and organizing the concert.

National Night Out, Tuesday, August 2nd

Our Police Department hosted a National Night Out celebration in the evening in the parking lot of the new municipal complex. National Night is a great way to bring the community together to meet and thank our first responders who keep us safe daily. Our Police Department was joined and assisted by members of our Volunteer Fire Department, Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and Fire Prevention. Other local participants included the Woman's Club of Saddle Brook, Boy Scout Troop 213, Community Partnership Committee, and Mayor's Youth Group. We also had representatives from state and county law enforcement and various social service organizations.

9/11 Remembrance Ceremony, Friday, September 9th

The township held a remembrance ceremony to honor the memory of those who lost their lives on that tragic day. We thanked the members of our Police Department, Volunteer Fire Department, and Volunteer Ambulance Corps for the countless hours they spend keeping us safe. During this health crisis, I can't thank enough all our first responders and essential workers. They did a phenomenal job under dire circumstances. Thank you to all who attended this special event.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Municipal Complex – 55 Mayhill Street

The construction phase of retrofitting/renovating 55 Mayhill Street into a municipal complex with township offices, a civic/recreation center, and headquarters for the Volunteer Ambulance Corps and Hook and Ladder Fire Company is almost (95%) complete. Construction began in July 2021 and is on schedule for completion in November 2022. The project has run smoothly and we are proud to say has come in on budget and on time. We are excited to announce that the township is planning a grand opening, ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, October 15th! Residents have been periodically updated on the construction progress with photos posted on the township website. There is a special section on the website, which keeps residents updated with the ongoing construction, including pictures and a work description.

Mayhill Street Phase 2

The township was awarded \$200,000 from the FY 2021 N.J. Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Municipal Aid Program to resurface Mayhill St. from the Route 80 Bridge to Market St. Our township engineer prepared bid documents, and the project went out to bid and was awarded to Frank Macchione Construction for \$573,810. This project also includes paving the new municipal complex parking lot. Concrete work, which began in September, is complete. Milling and Paving are scheduled for November 10th and 11th during the Teacher's Convention while school is closed.

2021 Road Program Phase 3

Our township engineer prepared bid documents and construction management for the third phase of the 2021 Road Program. The project includes resurfacing Garden Street and Kenwood Court. The project was bid on and awarded to Frank Macchione Construction for \$171,362. Milling and paving began the second week of July and were completed. Only punch list items remain.

Hobson Avenue and Midland Avenue Water Main Replacement

Our township engineer has been authorized to prepare plans for this water main project which consists of the replacement of the main on Hobson and the connection of services to a newly installed water main on Midland Avenue as part of the first phase of the Grande Project on Van Bussom Avenue, and extension of that water main to connect additional services. These service connections currently connect to Garfield's water main. Plans will include resurfacing Hobson Avenue after the water main installation is complete. Preparation of bid documents is ongoing

2022 Road Program

The township engineer has been authorized for the 2022 Road Program, which consists of Skillman Terrace, Spindler Terrace, Graham Terrace, Schepis Avenue, North Boulevard, South Boulevard, and Adrianna Street. The first phase consists of Skillman Terrace, Spindler Terrace, Graham Terrace, and Schepis Avenue, while Phase II will consist of North and South Blvd and Adrianna Street.

Construction on Phase I has commenced. Concrete work on Schepis, Skillman, and Spindler is complete, minus restoration work. Concrete work on Graham Terrace should commence the first week of October.

Phase II was awarded to AJM Contractors at the August 4 meeting. Construction is scheduled to commence the first week of October.

Cambridge Avenue Road Improvements

The township engineer has submitted a proposal for improvements to Cambridge Avenue, partially funded by the FY22 NJDOT Municipal Aid Program. Work will commence once the township receives word on a Safe Routes to Schools Grant, which includes sidewalk work along Cambridge Avenue adjacent to Helen I Smith Elementary School. The township engineer will prepare the plans but will wait to go out to bid until the word is heard on the Safe Routes grant announcement. The survey has been completed, and the preparation of the plans is nearly complete. The job should start date in the spring of 2023.

Other Projects

Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure Improvements

Our township engineer has submitted a proposal to assist the township in obtaining funding for this project, along with improvements to the Midland and Mayhill pump stations. Efforts will include the preliminary design necessary as part of the funding request.

Police Building HVAC Improvements

Our township engineer has prepared construction documents to replace the two rooftop unit that handles HVAC for the first and second floors. Plans are complete, and a work order has been submitted to order the equipment under the Omnia Co-op. The two rooftop units and other materials were ordered, and we await their arrival.

OTHER

Ordinances

Ordinance # 1723-22 was introduced in July, supplementing and amending Chapter 120 of the township code regulating the operation of specific classes of cannabis businesses. The township has determined to regulate zoning and permitted uses within the various zones and desires to implement a local licensing authority. This ordinance is also limiting the number of cannabis establishments within the township and is establishing license fees for cannabis establishments within the township.

Ordinance # 1724-22 amending Chapter 196, Section 43, entitled “Schedule X: Stop Sign Intersections,” was introduced in July to include a stop sign at Beech Avenue and Skillman Terrace.

Ordinance # 1726-22 was introduced in August. It supplements and amends Chapter 206 of the township code regulating the operation of specific classes of cannabis businesses within its geographical boundaries to regulate zoning and permitted uses within the various zones. The governing body intends on permitting Class 2 Manufacturing Operations up to 5,000 square feet in the B-2 zone within the township.

Special Events Attended

Saturday, 07/22/2022: Attended 100th Birthday party for resident Marie Guttuso along with Council President Florence Mazzer and Councilwoman Karen D'Arminio.

Friday, 07/29/2022: Presided over Saddle Brook Police Department promotions at Town Hall.

Saturday, 09/10/2022: Attended opening day for Saddle Brook Angels at Avon Field.

Sunday, 09/18/2022: Attended Soccer Day for Saddle Brook Recreation Soccer Program at Veterans Field.

Tuesday, 09/20/2022: Attended Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Starbucks, 419 Market Street, along with Councilman David Gierak.

Saturday 09/25/2022: Did a Community Partnership Committee video update with Pastor Christopher Wolf of the First Reformed Church.