



# Budget Presentation

## 2026

A look at where your tax dollars go, what our community needs, and how  
we build a stable future

Spencer Cadden, Township Manager

# Why This Budget Matters



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## Lawrence Park

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Lawrence Park is a small, vibrant community with aging infrastructure

## Infrastructure

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Roads, sewers, parks are currently operating beyond their intended lifespan

## This Presentation

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We want to engage the public in a discussion about our finances

## The Big Questions

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- How are our tax dollars spent?
- What is the true cost of keeping our community afloat?
- Can we simplify our financial picture?
- Is there a responsible path forward?

# Your Tax Bill Has Not Been Explained this Way Before



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- For many years, residents have asked:
  - Where do my taxes go?
  - Why are they so high?
  - What do things cost?
  - Why does it feel like we're falling behind?

**This presentation is meant to help answer those questions.**

# What does the Township Control?



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01

Roads and Alleys



02

Sewer and  
Stormwater  
Management  
Systems



03

Public Parks and  
Playgrounds



04

Local Police  
Services



05

Permits, Notices,  
Public Meetings,  
Legal and Financial  
Obligations, and  
resident services



# How Your Tax Dollars are Spent

A home with an assessed value of \$100,000 pays about \$4216 in property taxes.

Here is how that breaks down:

School District; \$2,705.76  
(64%)

Erie County: \$661.00 (16%)

Township: \$850 (20%)

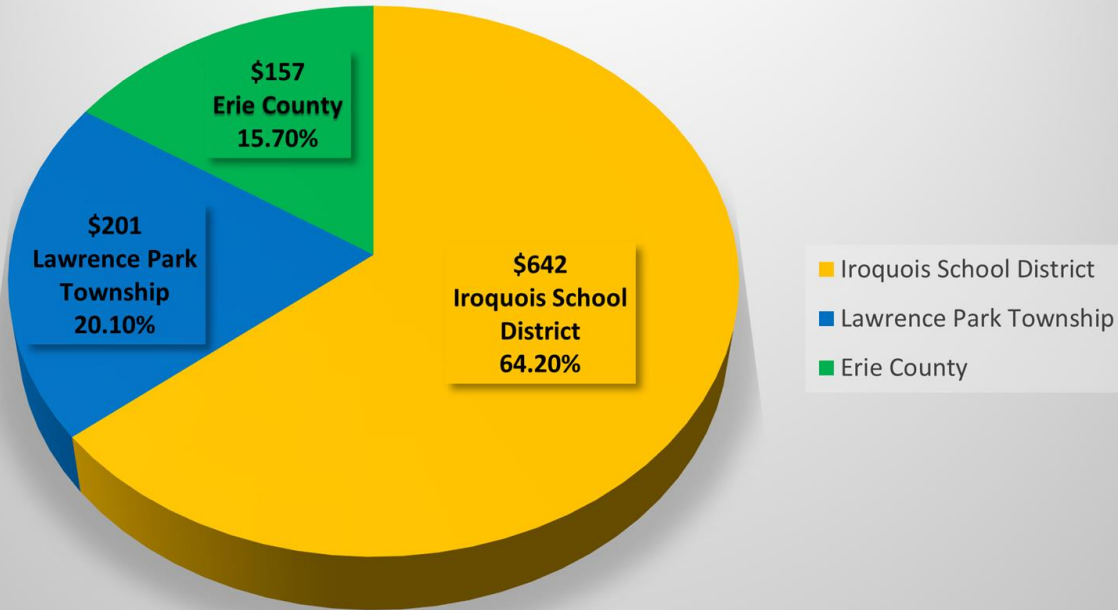
While the Township provides most day-to-day services the Township only uses about 20 cents of every property tax dollar.

# How your tax dollars are spent visualized



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**Distribution of taxes of each \$1000 paid in property taxes**



# How the Township uses its 20%

Based on the \$850 Township  
portion of a \$100,000 assessed  
home

Here is how that breaks down:

Police & Public Safety: \$320

Public Works: \$270

Admin & Legal: \$95

Parks & Rec: \$35

Insurance & Employee Benefits:  
\$60

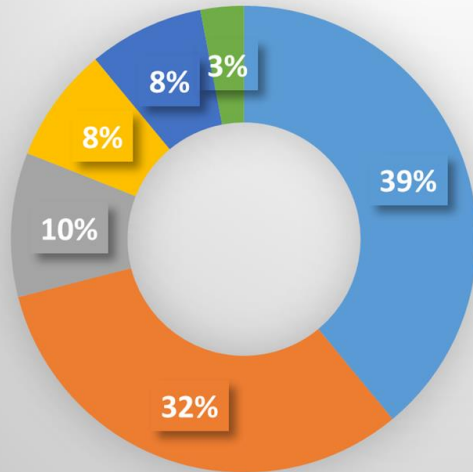
Other operating costs: \$70

# How your Township specific tax dollars are spent visualized



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## Distribution of Township Taxes\*



- Public Safety (Police & Code Enforcement)
- Public Works (Roads, Sewers, Snow, Stormwater)
- Administration (finance, legal, manager's office)
- Parks & Rec (4th of July & all other parks programs)
- Insurance & Employee Benefits
- Other Costs (building maintenance, utilities etc.)



# Where are we feeling the costs?



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- Asphalt prices are up 55% since 2019
- Equipment parts & materials are up over 30% since 2019
- Health Insurances have doubled in cost
- Sewer construction costs and stormwater drain replacements have doubled in cost
- Inflation in municipal goods is higher than in consumer goods
- State aid has largely remained flat with some small bright spots

# The State of Our Sewers



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## What is Working & What Needs Work

Lift Stations – Lawrence Park has three stations to keep wastewater moving:

- Cunningham – replaced
- Lake Cliff – replaced
- Soudan – replacement currently underway with USDA funding

These upgrades are major progress, but the system still faces:

- Inflow & Infiltration issues – groundwater entering the sewer system
- Higher treatment volumes & costs
- Stress on equipment and lines

### 2026 Plan

- New system mapping and inspections
- Identify problem areas and prioritize repairs
- Plan for long term capital needs

*This is not a one year fix, but a long term responsibility.*

# Roads

The Math Explained and  
Why Our Roads Feel Like  
They're Falling Behind

- Lawrence Park has about 11 Miles of Roadway
- We receive \$100,000 a year from the State for road aid.
- At today's prices, that pays for only about .3 miles of paving per year.
- To keep all roads on a 20-year replacement cycle, we need to pave **.55 miles** per year.

**In plain english:**

*We are not able to pave even half of what we need in order to keep up.*

The 2026 budget begins to address this critical need.

# Alleyways:

## A Different Problem

Alleyways do not count toward our 11 miles of roadway and cannot be funded with State aid.

Full reconstruction is too expensive for our tax base.

The realistic long-term solution is:

- Seal coating
- Drainage improvements
- Lower-cost preservation initiatives
- Possible new funding sources from PA Dirt & gravel

The 2026 budget shifts toward this practical approach.

# Main Street

Turnback Project  
Coming in 2027

A once in a generation rebuild

- This project was delayed by PennDOT until 2027.
- When it moves forward, it will:
  - Rebuild all of Main Street
  - Including sidewalks, curbs, and roadway
  - Electrical and storm drain improvements are included
- When the project is completed ownership of the newly finished road will transfer from the State back to the Township

# Parks: What Residents see Daily



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## Reality

**Our parks require modernization, restrooms, lighting and electrical improvements**

## The Goal

**Safe, Modern, ADA Compliant,  
Community-Friendly parks**

## The Plan

**The 2026 budget looks to stabilize our parks and kick off a parks initiative that will include grant funding, studies, and new proposals.**

# Major Equipment is Aging Out

- Many Township vehicles and machines are 20–30 years old.
- The 1996 leaf vacuum breakdown was a sign of a bigger issue.
  - Old equipment means:
  - More breakdowns
  - Higher repair costs
  - Delays in service
  - Public safety risks in winter storms

The 2026 budget begins a more realistic replacement schedule.

# Public Safety (Police)



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## Police Services – Stable for 2026

- Police services are a significant portion of the Township budget
- Costs for 2026 remain stable, with no additional increases in staffing or structure
- A regionalization study with Wesleyville is underway and is currently in an investigation stage
  - Informational
  - No decisions yet made
  - Meant to understand long-term options

The 2026 budget maintains our current level of service.



# Public Works & Administration



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## Building a Stable Backbone

### Public Works:

- Handles snow removal, road maintenance, sewer issues, stormwater, parks maintenance, leaf collection, and facility upkeep.
- Workload keeps increasing as infrastructure ages.

### Administration:

- Handles finances, payroll, compliance, meetings, grants, and public services.
- Stability is provided through:
  - New accounting support
  - Payroll support
  - Improved structures and staffing

The 2026 budget reinforces the systems that keep the Township running smoothly.

# What Happens if we do nothing?



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If the Township were to make no adjustments to our tax structure:

- Roads fall further behind
- Equipment failures continue
- Parks continue to deteriorate
- Stormwater management costs increase
- More emergency spending issues
- Larger tax increases become necessary later

The minimum responsible mill adjustment to avoid these issues is a .58 increase.

# What a Mill Adjustment Means

Taxes are assessed by millage. A unit is called a “mill.” A mill is \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. \*

\*Assessed value is set by the county is not the same as market value. Most Lawrence Park homes have an assessed value significantly lower than market price.

- A 0.58-mill increase means taxpayers pay:
- 58 cents more per \$1,000 of value

Example – \$100,000 Assessed Home

- Additional tax: \$58 per year
- That is:
  - \$4.83 per month

Why this matters

- Keeps township services stable
- Begins addressing long-term issues honestly
- Avoids larger “catch-up” increases later

# Looking Ahead

Where we go from here

2026 is about:

- Stabilizing operations
- Being honest about the condition of our infrastructure
- Stopping the cycle of deferred maintenance

With stability:

- We can plan 5-10 years ahead
- Pursue alternative funding strategies
- Build long-term goals for sewers, roads, alleys, parks and equipment

This budget does not solve everything, but helps start the process of looking forward.

# 2026 Goals

What are we going to accomplish with your tax dollars?

- A serious investment in replacing outdated sewer infrastructure including the replacement of manholes throughout the Township.
- Completion of all three lift stations
- Major work on alleyways and roads
- New community parks initiatives



# Conclusion

Lawrence Park gets about 20% of your property taxes, but is responsible for nearly everything you use day-to-day.

This budget is a responsible, realistic approach to help prepare Lawrence Park for the road ahead.

Lawrence Park is always looking for volunteers! If you want to help please contact us: [clerk@lawrenceparktownship.org](mailto:clerk@lawrenceparktownship.org)