

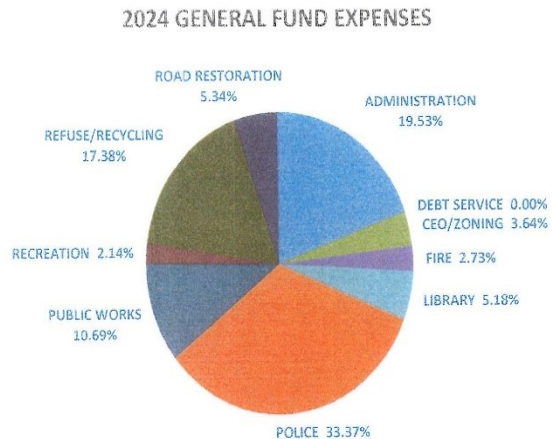
YOUR TOWNSHIP TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

Our Fellow Township Residents:

Township officials are taking this opportunity to explain the annual expenditure of tax dollars. The Township tax rate of 3.062 mills was again maintained in 2024, although the cost of services continues to increase. In fact, South Park Township’s millage rate ranks in the 20 lowest millage rates in Allegheny County based upon 130 communities. Township taxes have not increased since 1998, and the millage has been lowered on several occasions over the years to the current tax rate. A balanced budget in the amount of \$8,312,248 was adopted for 2024.

The effective management of departmental spending and maintaining expenditures within established parameters is of primary importance. Tax dollars are limited and every attempt is made to effectively allocate funding and utilize revenues to meet the diverse needs of our residents without increasing taxes. Township officials view a tax increase as a last resort budgetary financing tool, and adhere to the practice of sound financial management. Annual operating expenses are apportioned to Administration, the Public Works Department, the Police Department, Recreation and the Library. A breakdown of the department expenses and the corresponding percentage of the overall budget is presented below:

<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>%</u>
1 ADMINISTRATION	1,623,253.00	19.53%
2 DEBT SERVICE	0.00	0.00%
3 CEO/ZONING	302,750.00	3.64%
4 FIRE	226,710.00	2.73%
5 LIBRARY	430,900.00	5.18%
6 POLICE	2,774,010.00	33.37%
7 PUBLIC WORKS	888,610.00	10.69%
8 RECREATION	177,525.00	2.14%
9 REFUSE/RECYCLING	1,444,990.00	17.38%
10 ROAD RESTORATION	<u>443,500.00</u>	5.34%
TOTAL	<u>8,312,248.00</u>	1.00



A principal source of revenue is property taxes which are paid to the three taxing bodies: South Park Township, Allegheny County and South Park School District. The following chart reflects the amount of taxes that will be paid by property owners in 2024 to each taxing entity using a market value of \$200,000 and the current millage rates:

<u>Taxing Body:</u>	<u>Millage Rate:</u>	<u>Dollar Amount:</u>
South Park Township	3.062 Mills	\$ 612.40
Allegheny County	4.73 Mills	\$ 946.00
South Park School District	28.13 Mills	\$ 5,626.00



South Park Township’s millage rate is also one of the lowest when compared to surrounding municipalities:

2024 Millage Rates of Neighboring Allegheny County Municipalities	
Millage Rate (2024)	
South Park Township	3.062
Municipality	Millage Rate (2024)
Baldwin Borough	8.03
Baldwin Township	9.8
Bethel Park	3.53
Jefferson Hills Borough	5.66
Pleasant Hills Borough	9.5
Upper St Clair Township	3.83
Whitehall Borough	4.92

The investment in the Township's infrastructure remains a top priority. The road repaving budget for 2024 is \$425,000, a financial commitment that has been consistently maintained for a number of years. South Park Township **is not** responsible for the repair and maintenance of streets under the control and ownership of Allegheny County or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (PennDOT).

Sanitary and storm sewers are critical components of the Township's infrastructure that require continual maintenance. A contract in the amount of \$350,000 was awarded for the 2024 Township-wide project. DEP monitors annual progress on required municipal maintenance activities. If the Township does not comply, sanitary sewer taps will not be available for new construction. South Park Township is assessed a combined fee of \$1.8 million by three separate sewage authorities: Bethel Park Municipal Authority, Pleasant Hills Municipal Authority, and Clairton Municipal Authority, for the treatment of sewage waste. Although costs continue to increase, the Township has managed to maintain the sewage user rate of \$6.50/1,000 gallons of use since 2005. As previously mentioned, the rate has become increasingly difficult to sustain since expenses, particularly treatment charges, are exceeding revenues, and an increase in the cost per gallon sewage rate is inevitable. This year the Township implemented an online payment platform for sewage and refuse charges which had been requested by residents, and offers a number of payment options.

Public safety is of paramount importance to Township officials. Approximately 33% of the budget is invested in public safety. South Park Township's police officers are continually trained in all aspects of law enforcement because of the ever-changing dynamic of community policing. Officers are furnished with the best equipment, including weapons, body armor and vehicles to maximize on-the-job safety. Two new police vehicles are on order at a cost of \$96,000, but delivery has been delayed due to supply chain issues. New in-car cameras with state-of-the-art technology replaced older equipment in five Township police vehicles at a cost of \$40,000 which was funded by the Township. Police officers

were also recently equipped with body-worn-cameras. The \$28,000 expense was financed with grant monies received from Allegheny County Council and the District Attorney's office. The Township is currently advertising for police officers to fill vacancies in the Department, with the hiring process well underway.

Police officers are engaged in a wide array of activities, including but not limited to traffic details, investigations, traffic issues, and interaction with the various schools. The department continues with the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) efforts as coordinated by PennDOT and the Federal Department of Transportation. The purpose of MCSAP is to address safety issues such as overweight vehicles, and safety inspections of commercial truck traffic in an effort to prevent catastrophic incidents in our Township.

Snow removal is the number one priority of Township officials during the winter season. Considerable resources are allocated to the purchase of salt, and salting/plowing activities. Annual winter maintenance costs average approximately \$575,000 in labor and materials. Fortunately, the 2023-24 winter was relatively mild which had a positive impact on the budget. Public Works employees are engaged in other duties throughout the year including pothole patching on Township streets, park maintenance, sanitary sewer and storm sewer repairs/replacement, and the maintenance of detention ponds owned by the Township. Budgeting for the maintenance and upgrade of equipment and vehicles is essential to efficient operations. Purchases in 2024 include a piece of equipment for large scale asphalt patches, and a new camera to investigate problematic sanitary and storm sewer issues.

Recreation is an important component of the services offered to Township residents. The Township is responsible for the maintenance of Evans Park Complex, Wilson Field Complex, Grove Road Park, Highland Park and Whitewood Park. Several new play pieces were installed at Whitewood Park in 2024. The Township has a cooperative relationship with the various athletic associations relative to field improvement requests. The Township has also filed several grant applications to assist with funding a

number of large-scale projects. The Township entered into a lease agreement with EQT in 2023. The bonus payment has been placed in a segregated account, as will any future royalties, which is dedicated to recreational improvements at the Township's parks.

The Township offers many recreational programs and opportunities throughout the year. One of the favorites is the Summer Recreation program, scheduled for seven weeks each summer, that offers activities such as swimming at the Wave Pool, craft classes, and playground activities at a reasonable cost. The Allegheny County Park Rangers continue to be part of the program. Other recreational favorites include various holiday events such as the Easter Party, the Halloween Party, the Children's Christmas Party, the annual tree lighting, as well as Community Day, the September 11th Ceremony and monthly craft classes for adults. The 5.3-mile Montour Trail has a significant presence in the community and provides exercise opportunities such as biking and walking to all age groups. The remaining Trail section from Wood Street to Stewart Road was recently completed and will be dedicated in October. Recreational fishing receives financial support from the Township and is a popular pastime. Peters Creek was designated as a state-approved trout stream in 2021, which means the PA Boat and Fish Commission also assists financially with stocking efforts.

The Township Library is another amazing asset available to residents. The range of materials includes books, CDs, DVDs, computers, digital resources, and instructional classes. The Library will be adding a new dedicated area for teen programming that will include a 3-D printer, as well as instructional classes in video design. Grant funds were used to purchase a smart board for various presentations. Seating in the fireplace area was replaced with new, comfortable furniture. A large-scale improvement made by the Township was the construction of an attractive block retaining wall in the parking lot at a cost of \$50,000.

Every effort is made to design programs that are appealing to residents of all age categories in a variety of subjects. The Day Trips and Destinations continues to be extremely popular and gives

residents the opportunity to travel beyond the Library's walls to experience various adventures. The Friends' Spring and Fall book sales are wonderful for bargain hunters and an important Library fundraiser.

Development has continued in the community. Summit Station, which is a Transit Oriented Overlay Development (TOOD), was completed in 2023, with the exception of the commercial/retail/grocery store component. Construction continues on the Villas of South Park development located off of Snowden Road. The development is a mixture of single-family and patio homes with 96 units in the final design. 60 acres of the 100-acre development were retained as green space. Preliminary approval was granted to the proposed Majestic Woods plan to be located on Sleepy Hollow Road comprised of 108 single-family homes. The Sunset Golf development, which is 44 single-family homes, is also progressing.

An exciting update is the completion of the demolition of the blighted structures along Rt. 88. Bids for the remainder of the project were received earlier this year, with the successful bidder being Michael Facchiano Contracting, Inc. in the amount of \$1,469,157.75. The second phase includes a left-hand turning lane, public parking spaces, a pedestrian crosswalk, a new LED traffic signal, upgrades to Peach Alley to improve neighborhood safety, and an aesthetically pleasing landscape design. This phase of the project is tentatively scheduled to begin in the spring of 2025. Grant funding obtained by the Township in the amount of \$400,000 and a financial contribution from the developer of Summit Station in the amount of \$345,000 is being used to offset the project costs.

The design work was completed on the flood mitigation project in the Broughton area of the community where flooding has been an issue for many years. Township officials worked with representatives of Allegheny County to allow for the placement of flood control measures on park property. The appropriate permits have been forwarded to DEP, and the review process is underway. The Township continues to pursue grant funding for the \$900,000 project.

The objective of this article is to provide an overview of annual expenditures related to tax revenues, financial measures relative to the maintenance and enhancement of our community's assets, and goals moving forward into the future. We thank our residents for their support and assistance, and for being instrumental in making South Park Township a wonderful community.

Board of Supervisors:

Edward Snee, Brian Lucot, and Lawrence Vogel

Township Manager:

Karen Fosbaugh