



May 19, 2015

Dear City Council Members:

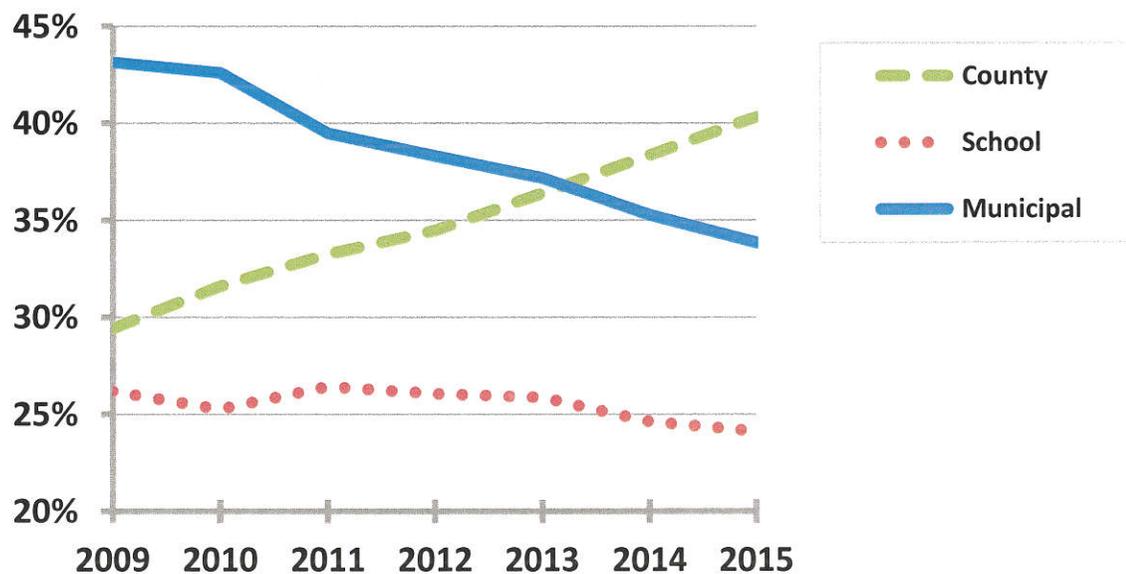
I am writing to give you an update on several important matters including county taxes, flood prevention/resiliency projects, Washington Street, manufacturing in Hoboken and the western edge redevelopment process.

First the challenging news:

**County Tax Increase**

Based on the draft County budget, Hoboken’s County taxes will increase by 11.56% this year. This is a huge contrast to the City’s successful efforts over the years to make tough decisions to reduce and hold the line on taxes with a flat tax rate for this year’s budget. The Board of Chosen Freeholders has agreed to hold one of their budget hearings in Hoboken on June 4<sup>th</sup> starting at 6:00pm so that residents can have a voice on this important matter. Considering that Hoboken will now shoulder a large 20 percent of County taxes, it is important for our residents to have a voice in the process.

The chart below shows how since 2009, the share of taxes due to the municipal budget has decreased steadily while the County portion of our property tax bill has grown tremendously, year after year.



## **Resiliency Update**

Thanks to your support, we are moving ahead on many fronts to protect Hoboken from flooding:

### Southwest Resiliency Park (Block 12)

On the agenda is an amendment for the contract with Starr Whitehouse for an additional \$93,000. Unexpectedly, the State DEP is now requiring a Level 2 Environmental Review of the property, which essentially means that an archaeological review has to be completed. Since the site consists mainly of historic fill, we do not anticipate that this will be a major problem, however the start of construction will be pushed back to the fall as a result of this new requirement.

### H-5 Wet Weather Pump

North Hudson Sewerage Authority had a meeting this week with Maxwell Place board representatives and is working with them on setting up a community meeting for residents sometime very soon. I have been advised that after this community meeting, regular written updates will be provided by NHSA. We will forward this update to all Council members once it is received.

### Rebuild by Design

We are working with the State to move forward the “Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge” flood resiliency plan. The State has decided to award a contract for the project to Dewberry, OMA, and SCAPE, a landscape firm that participated in the HUD design competition for another project. As you know, OMA was the leader of the team that developed the “Resist, Delay, Store, Discharge” strategy. My Administration advocated strongly to ensure that the project includes an evaluation of the 500 year flood event, not just a 100 year flood. This is important not just for physical protection from flooding, but to protect us from high flood insurance rates. We are working with the State to schedule a community meeting for early to mid-June. We also worked with Carter Craft and Helen Manogue to create a Citizens Advisory Committee for this project. Council President Bhalla has agreed to be the representative for the City Council. We hope that all Council members can attend the meeting in June to meet the State representatives and professionals for this project and get a firsthand understanding of the next steps moving forward. We will let you know the exact date as soon as it is finalized.

### Northwest Resiliency Park (BASF)

We plan to have a closed session at the next Council meeting to provide the Council with an update on this important project. For a number of reasons it was not possible to have the closed session tomorrow night.

### City Hall Sustainable Storm water Project

The City went out to bid and received three proposals for the project. The City has submitted the documentation to the NJ DEP and is awaiting the DEP’s authorization to award the contract. We look forward to moving this project ahead as a demonstration of the Delay/Store strategies.

### Post-Sandy Disaster Recovery Plan

The City is working with Princeton Hydro to finalize the Disaster Recovery Plan. The plan has five elements: 1. Hazard mitigation plan, 2. Resilient capital improvement plan, 3. Update to codes, ordinances, and standards, 4. Open space recreation and historic preservation plan, 5. Resilient design guidelines.

## **Washington Street Grant Application**

The City is preparing a \$14 million grant application to rehabilitate, resurface, and revitalize Washington Street through the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program. As you know, the project will also replace century-old water mains and add a fiber optic spine and electrical conduit to advance our microgrid project for energy resiliency and facilitate enhanced Internet connectivity.

Last week, I visited with Senator Menendez, Senator Booker, and Congressman Sires in Washington to seek their support for the project, and I am glad to report that all three have indicated that they will provide us with letters of support for our application. To date, we are also fortunate to have received letters of support from Senator Stack, Assemblyman Muhkerji, County Executive DeGise, Freeholder Romano and national, regional, and local organizations including NJ Transit and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Association. On the agenda is a resolution authorizing our application for the grant. The grant requires a 20% local match, which we will make through our funding of the water mains and drainage improvements along Washington Street.

**Manufacturing in Hoboken/Invite for a "Secret Business Tour"**

As you know, we retained a consultant to do an evaluation of Hoboken's industrial/arts manufacturing. From Zoku popsicles and Puppet Heap puppets being designed at the Monroe Center to beautiful wall paper being made in Southwest Hoboken to delicious coffee at Pan American Coffee being made from beans all over the world for companies across the country - amazing things are happening right here in our great City.

I was extremely impressed, and I think the Council would benefit tremendously from taking a tour of our various businesses so that rather than just hearing about it, you can see it for yourselves and better understand the needs of our important local businesses that can ensure a diversity of jobs in our City.

Local businesses are eager to show their facilities to Council members. Please let us know if you would be interested in spending Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup> or Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup> touring various manufacturing facilities. Based on the Council's availability, my office will work to set up a tour schedule.

**Western Edge Redevelopment**

The draft plan will be emailed to all Council members by tomorrow during the work day. Hard copies will also be provided to Council members. We hope that all Council members can attend the community meeting this Thursday at 7:00pm at the Jubilee Center so that you can hear firsthand and better understand the community's response to the proposed plan.

Thanks for listening.

Sincerely,



Dawn Zimmer