

Press Release

Monday, September 16, 2024

The City of Darien Announces a Proposed Property Tax Revenue Increase

The City of Darien today announces its intention to increase the property taxes it will levy this year by 3.44% over the rollback millage rate. In other words, the City anticipates an increase in revenues attributable to ad valorem taxes totaling \$81,471.00. There is no proposed millage rate increase. The increase in revenues to the City is due to increases in value of some real properties in the city as well as extraordinary growth.

Each year, the Board of Tax Assessors is required to review the assessed value of taxable property in the city. When the trend of prices on property that have recently sold in the city indicate there has been an increase in the fair market value of any specific property, the Board of Tax Assessors is required by law to re-determine the value of such property and adjust the assessment. This is called a reassessment.

When the total digest of taxable property is prepared, Georgia law requires that a rollback millage rate must be computed that will produce the same total revenue on the current year's digest that last year's millage rate would have produced.

The budget that the City of Darien anticipates adopting requires a millage rate higher than the rollback millage rate. In fact, the City of Darien anticipates keeping the millage rate at 3.007, a rate which has been applied last year. Because the application of that rate will result in increased revenues to the City, Georgia law requires three public hearings to be held to allow the public an opportunity to express their opinions on the increase in revenues to the City.

Many factors influenced the City's decision to keep the original millage rate of 3.007. Some of these factors include the annual increase in health insurance costs and other costs related to employees, inflationary headwinds, the costs of litigation in the amount of \$200,000 related to past homestead exemption practices in which the incorrect base year was utilized by the Board of Assessors, and future required capital expenditures on infrastructure. The Mayor and Council are guardians of the taxpayers of the City and have, in fact, adopted the rollback rate and lowered the millage rate for four of the past six years, from a 2018 millage rate of 3.800 to the current rate of 3.007 (a reduction in the taxation rate of over TWENTY PERCENT (20%). The aforementioned extraordinary growth that the City has experienced also brings with it more responsibilities to its citizens. The Mayor and Council strive to be forward-thinking and not reactive. The rollback millage rate would hamper our abilities to meet our anticipated budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

All concerned citizens are invited to the public hearings on this tax revenue increase to be held at Darien City Hall, Darien, Georgia on September 26, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. and on October 4, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

IF YOUR PROPERTY DID NOT INCREASE IN VALUE, YOUR TAX BILL ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE CITY WILL NOT INCREASE. THE MILLAGE RATE REMAINS 3.007 MILLS.

IF YOU HAVE A HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION, YOUR PROPERTY TAX AMOUNT FROM THE CITY OF DARIEN WILL NOT CHANGE AT ALL.