

MILL RIVER COLLABORATIVE Budget Presentation

Agenda/Outline

- **Review of Budget Request** (Provided in Budget Book)
 - Financial Request (2015-16 resource requests, bold in budget book)
 - **Total funding requested \$400,000 in Operating; \$500,000 in Capital**
 - Identify and describe Increases/decrease Year Over Year
 - OPERATING**

We requested \$400,000 in operating support in FY 2015 and the Board of Reps reduced it to \$350,000. Mayor Martin has included \$400,000 again in his 2015/16 operating budget, a decrease of \$150,000 from our request of \$550,000 to the administration.
 - CAPITAL**

In 14/15, \$300,000 in capital was appropriated for the Mill River Project. In 15/16, \$500,000 is requested for essential acquisitions of easements. Please see Business Case.
 - Human Capital/ Personnel Change

We are adding a program manager so our senior staff can devote more of their time to fundraising as we must raise over \$1 million from private sources annually.
- **Budget Management**
 - Summary of any cost reductions taken in 14/15 - include amount and source. **We had to eliminate our ambassador line and did not replace resigning employees over the winter saving \$28,000. We avoided hiring part-time help for snow removal through better management of equipment and staff time. We instituted an employee health plan that is contributing to the budget increase and will institute a limited retirement plan for long-term employees that will also contribute.**
 - Cost managements actions to be taken 2015-16. **We have trained our land care staff in organic lawn care and developed cheaper sources of organic soil supplements avoiding the cost of contractors and consultants. We have pro bono office space. We save the city money and manpower by plowing all of the bridges that cross the river and sidewalks around the park.**
- **Cost Analysis and Spending Priorities**
 - Breakdown of total department spending and resources by of priority (high to low program/department priorities) Include supporting analysis and description of how analysis was done
 - Describe what drives program cost (Cost Drivers). Highlight controllable Cost Drivers - **Our costs are driven by acreage and facilities under management, fundraising requirements, public engagement and programs and the value of capital investment that must be maintained. The value of the investment will continue to grow with the pending construction of the carousel complex and the ice skating rink and fountain complex in FY 15/16 and Phase 2 of the park landscape and the greenway to Scalzi Park in 2016/17.**
 - Key operational changes planned to improve service level (2015-16). **Our challenge will be to sustain our existing service level given the amount of construction (\$29 million over the next two years) and new acreage and facilities under management. Our main priority, beyond completing the park is to maintain the value of the investment we and the City are making.**
- Business case and justification for any increases in resources requested (1 page)

Business Case

Capital

The Collaborative's investment in Mill River Park is expanding dramatically. **In 2015/17, we will make grants to the City of over \$20 million in addition to having secured \$4 million in state capital funding.** One grant we have received requires us to complete **Phase 2 of the park (Main St to I-95 approximately) by June 2017.** To do that we must complete the acquisition of easements along the east side of the river in this calendar year and break ground in spring 2016. **The \$500,000 in capital requested is required for the purchase the easements on which a portion of the park will be built.**

Operating

The development of the park is supporting increases in municipal real estate taxes exceeding \$5 million annually. Already over 1,000 units of housing have been built around the park and another 800 are in the pipeline. **The City's investment in the park pays for itself many times over and will continue to pay in perpetuity.**

While we would not claim that the park is 100% responsible for this economic growth, it is clearly a primary enabler. The demand for housing is a City-wide phenomenon. The creation of the park is responsible for the development of new housing occurring where it is. The development of Mill River Park has removed major constraints on the economic development of the west side of Downtown Stamford. All of the developers feature the park in their marketing campaigns.

On the operating side, the Collaborative is bearing the lion's share of the costs and the costs are increasing. **To date, the Collaborative has contributed over \$4.2 million to operations and the City has contributed \$1.5 million.** Currently the **City is contributing less than 28% of operating costs.** That level is unsustainable long term for the Collaborative. The expansion of the park and its operations will drive costs higher over the next few years. **We initiated this public/private partnership on the premise of a roughly equal commitment to operating costs.**

The City's share of operating costs is a small decimal of the gains it is realizing annually. The City's contribution should be viewed as more of an investment in those rising municipal revenues than as an expense.

FOR THAT REASON, PLEASE VIEW MILL RIVER PARK DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER OUTSIDE ENTITIES, BECAUSE:

- **THE PARK IS CITY PROPERTY**
- **NO OTHER ENTITIES ARE RAISING CAPITAL FOR THE CITY LIKE THE COLLABORATIVE IS**
- **NO OTHER AGENCY IS DRIVING THE GROWTH OF CITY TAX REVENUES.**

PLEASE SUSTAIN THE MAYOR'S BUDGET REQUEST AS IT IS ALREADY POSING A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO THE COLLABORATIVE'S FINANCES FOR THE COMING FISCAL YEAR.