



FY 2024 – 2025 Budget Presentation

# MILL RIVER PARK COLLABORATIVE

March 19, 2024

Presented by  
Nette Compton  
President & CEO



# MILL RIVER PARK

## Organization Function

The Collaborative was established as a public/private partnership that would “provide collaborative leadership in creating and sustaining a successful Mill River Park.”

### Collaborative Mission

Our mission is to run a world-class urban park in the heart of Stamford that serves as both an oasis in city life and a vibrant, diverse, green-space that inspires sound environmental practices and learning.



# MILL RIVER PARK

## Significant Changes

### Program Growth

- **Approx. 230,400 visitors to the park last year, a 6.9% increase over 2022; an 80% increase since 2017**
- We have launched afterschool care in partnership with the Stamford Board of Education, with a capacity for 51 children through the schoolyear
- Expanded free programs: story hours, Community Dance events, fitness and more

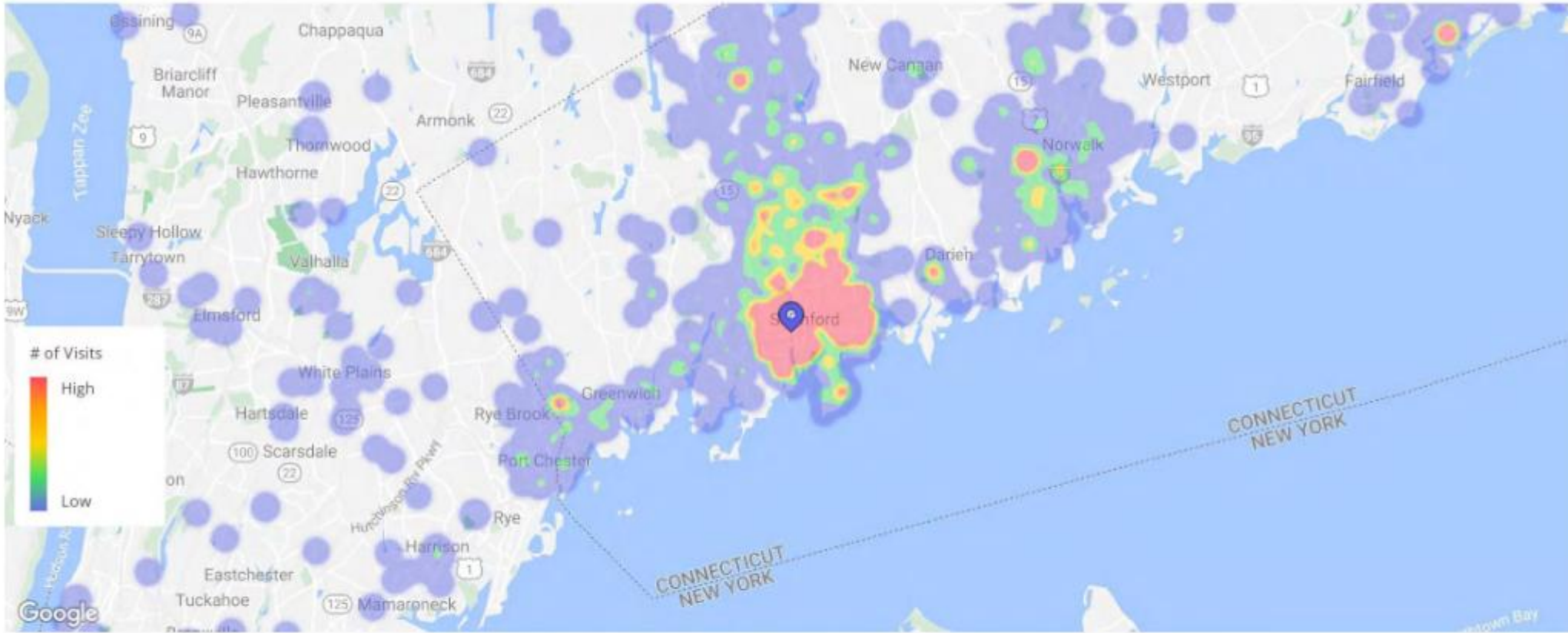
### Park Improvements

- Design and permitting for the Playground Reconstruction

### In partnership with the City of Stamford

- Nearing completion of Phase 2 of Middle Corridor West between Tresser and Richmond Hill





Home locations are obfuscated for privacy and randomly placed within a census block. They do not represent actual home addresses.

Jan 1st, 2023 - Dec 31st, 2023

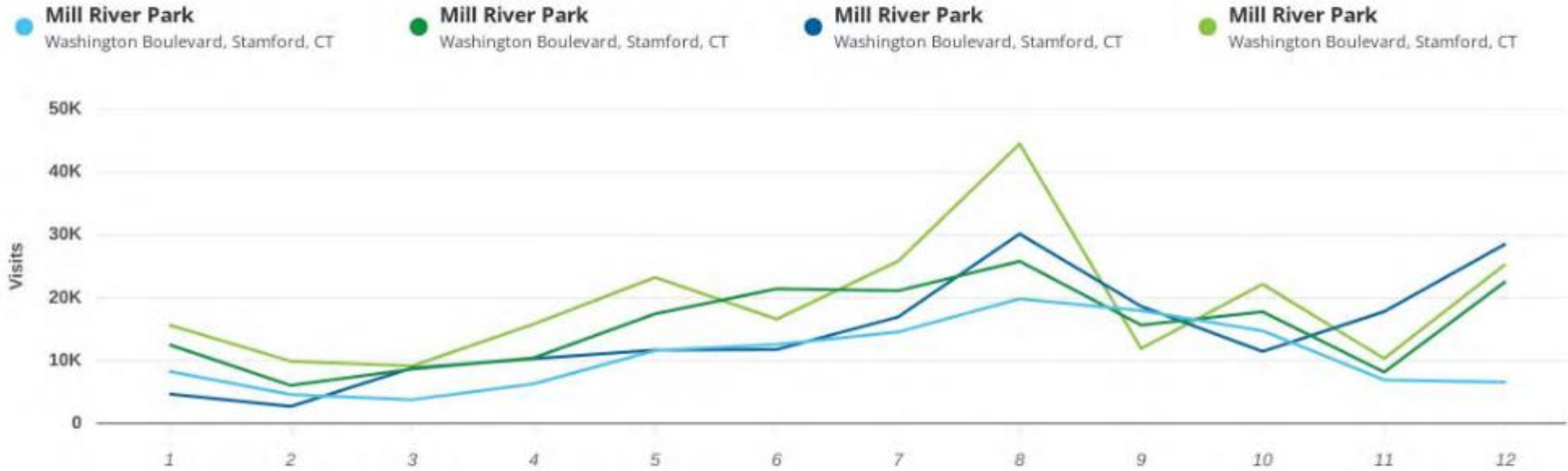
Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. ([www.placer.ai](http://www.placer.ai))

# '17, '19, '21, and '23

## Time Compare



### Visits Trend



#### Monthly | Visits

Mill River Park - Jan 1st, 2017 - Dec 31st, 2017

Mill River Park - Jan 1st, 2019 - Dec 31st, 2019

Mill River Park - Jan 1st, 2021 - Dec 31st, 2021

Mill River Park - Jan 1st, 2023 - Dec 31st, 2023

Data provided by Placer Labs Inc. ([www.placer.ai](http://www.placer.ai))



# MILL RIVER PARK

## New & Expanded Free Community Programs

- 11,600 skaters for the 2023-2024 season, including free skate tickets to 750 children via community partners
- 1,250+ at our story hour Sunday Funday and 500+ at Fun Saturday Mornings
- ~900 at Free Family Movie Nights
- ~850 at Fit Club through Summer and Fall
- 3,000 at our annual Halloween Night
- Range of free dance and music programming
  - 200 at Swing in the Park
  - 400 at Stamford Dances Downtown, with local cultural groups opening



# MILL RIVER PARK

## Additional New & Expanded Programs

Significant growth in our field trips:

- Two district-wide bookings for this school year (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade)
- Cloonan and Hart partnership to each come to the park 6+ times per year
- **2,596 students in 2023, an 84% increase over 2022**
- 79% of field trips are from Title 1 Schools
- Expanded our reach through mobility inclusive field trips, new arrivals programming, ESL class in Spanish and English



# MILL RIVER PARK

## Additional New & Expanded Programs

### Work Force Development

- **Stewards:** Mill River Stewards is a summer-long program for Stamford high school students. Through paid field-based internships, teens learn about urban park stewardship, environmentalism, and careers in conservation.
- **Docents:** An extension of our Stewards program, our Docent program is a year-round, paid position to provide programming to the 20,000+ annual visitors Whittingham Discovery Center, while receiving training in public speaking, education, and outreach to diverse audiences.





# CURRENT CAPITAL PROJECTS



W Main to Tresser - Playground  
& Infrastructure  
*Construction to start soon*

Phase 2 West Side Tresser to  
Richmond Hill  
*Construction completion  
anticipated August 2024*

# MILL RIVER PARK

## Organizational Challenges

### Personal Change and Evolution

- Director of Finance and Operations, Tom Cassazone, started in September 2023
- Retirement of Dianne Houtz, Director of Administration and promotion of Marlie Saint-Surin into the role in October 2023
- First full year with Arnold Karp as our new Board Chair

### Impact of Broader Challenges

- Increased presence of people experiencing homelessness throughout the park

# MILL RIVER PARK

## Highlights & Improvements

### Continued collaboration and coordination with the City

- Participating with the City on a range of initiatives, including the Citywide Parks Strategic Plan and advocacy for improved tree canopy
- On-going improvement of coordination across a range of capital projects

### Bringing Resources to Stamford

- **Secured \$21.5M in Federal Capital Funds**, \$17M for the Greenway and \$4.5M for the Community Commons

### Diversified Programming and Reach

- Reaching out to underserved groups such as teens, children with developmental and sensory challenges, non-English speakers

# FUTURE CAPITAL PROJECTS

Planning & Fundraising Phases



Greenway North Connections

Community Commons  
*\$4.5M Federal Grant Secured*

East Side Tresser to Richmond Hill

West Side Activation

Waterside Park

West Side Greenway

Sprague Site / Connection to Harbor Point Boardwalk



# Community Commons



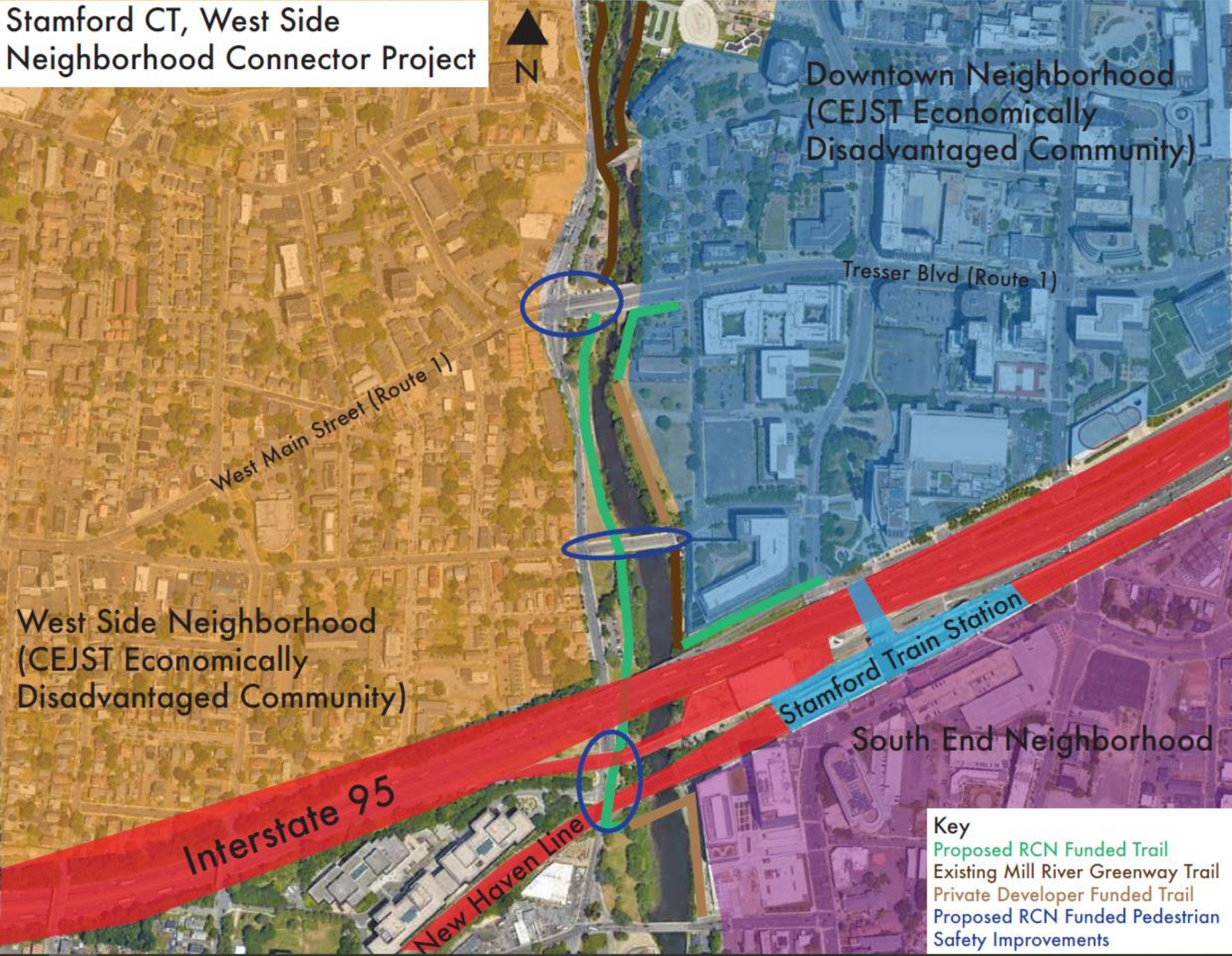
Budget projected to be \$11M+ depending on timing and inflation.

**Secured \$4.5M in Federal Funds in FY24.**

Unsuccessful Community Investment Fund application for \$6.7M working with the Stamford Delegation and Mayor's Office on reapplying.



# Stamford CT, West Side Neighborhood Connector Project



## \$17M Federal DOT Grant

### Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods

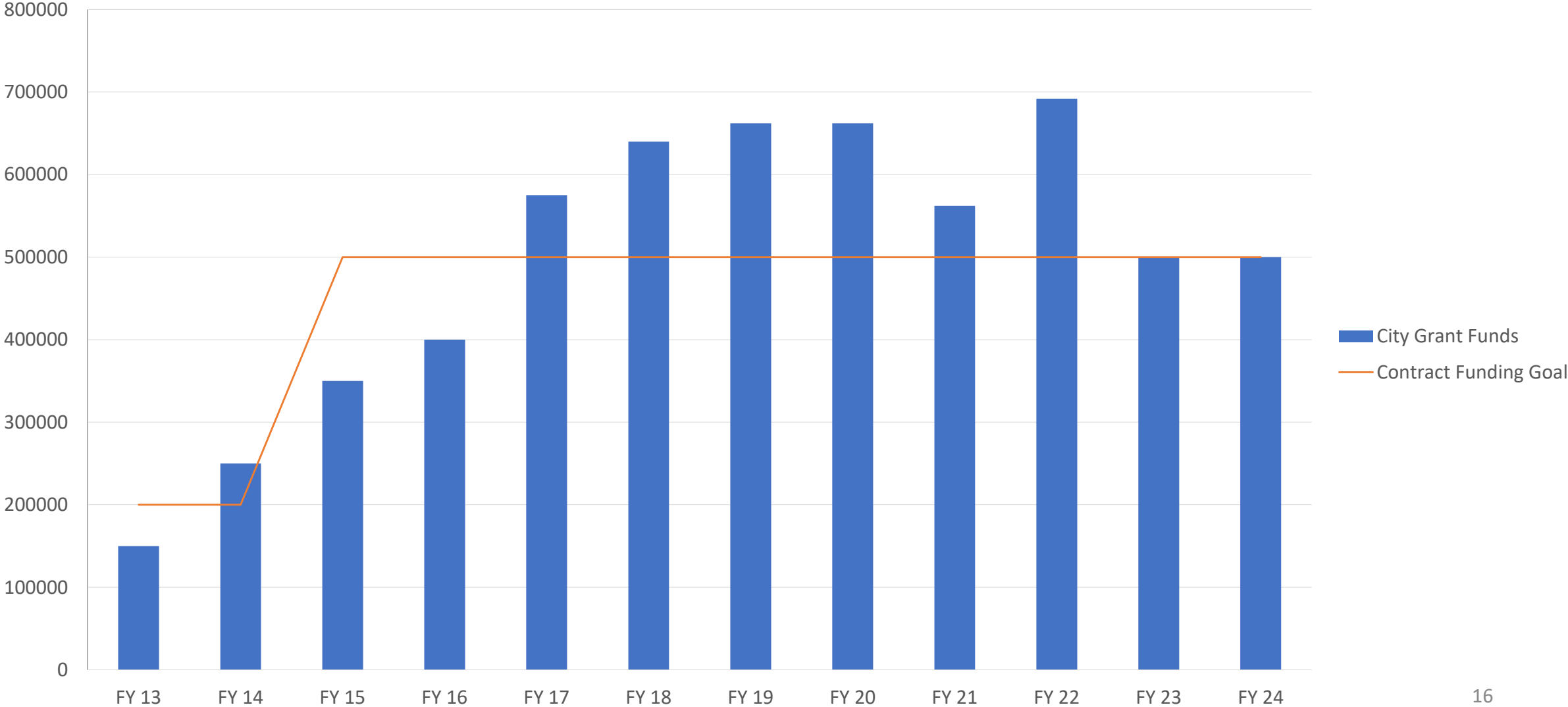
- Must be approved by Boards, grant agreement finalized
- No match requirement
- Design Refinement '25, projected construction '26-28
- Direct connection from the Mill River Greenway to the Stamford Transportation Center



# MILL RIVER PARK

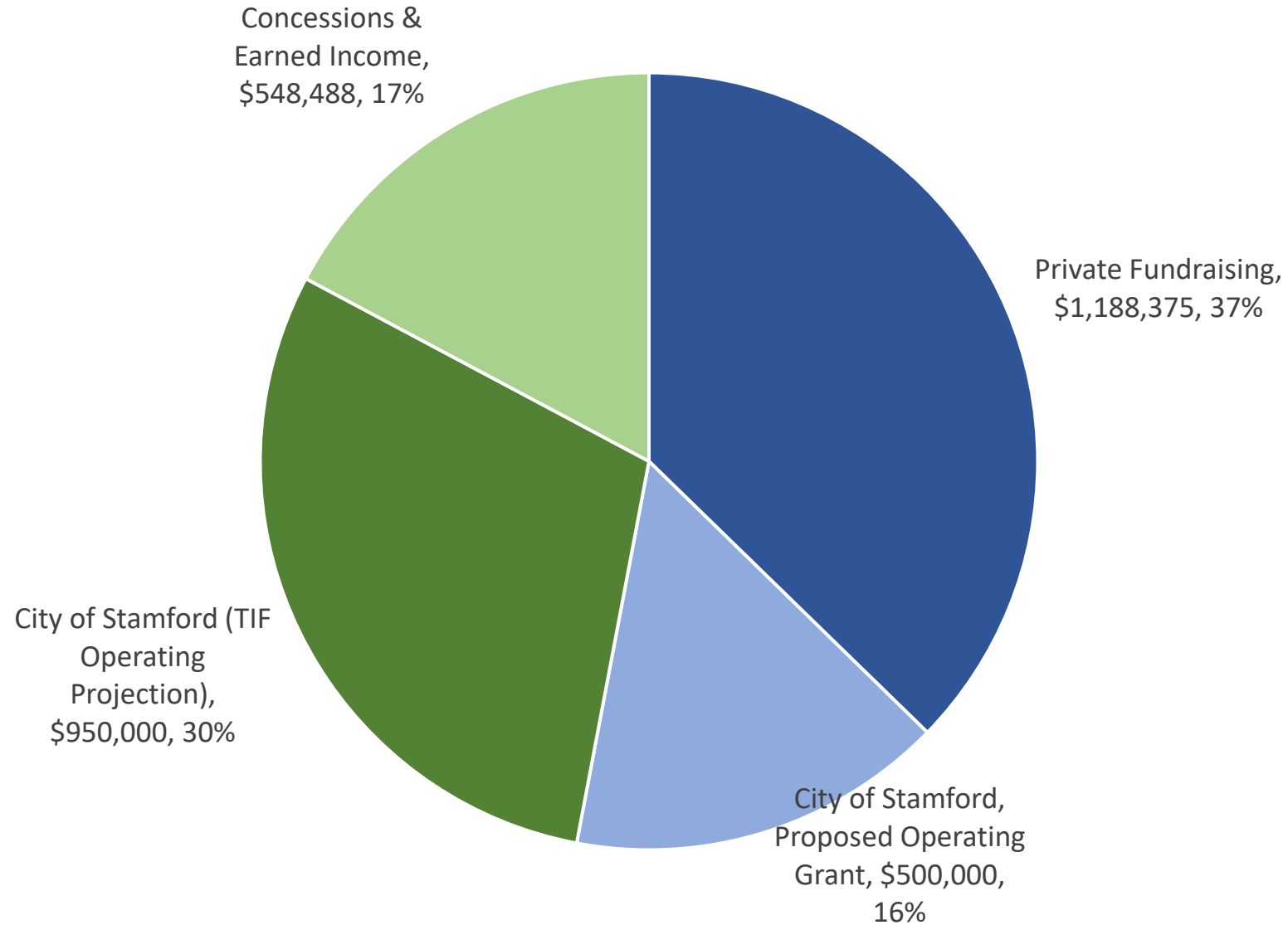
FY 25 Operating Budget Proposal:  
\$500,000 for FY 25

# CITY OPERATING GRANT – FY 13 – FY 24

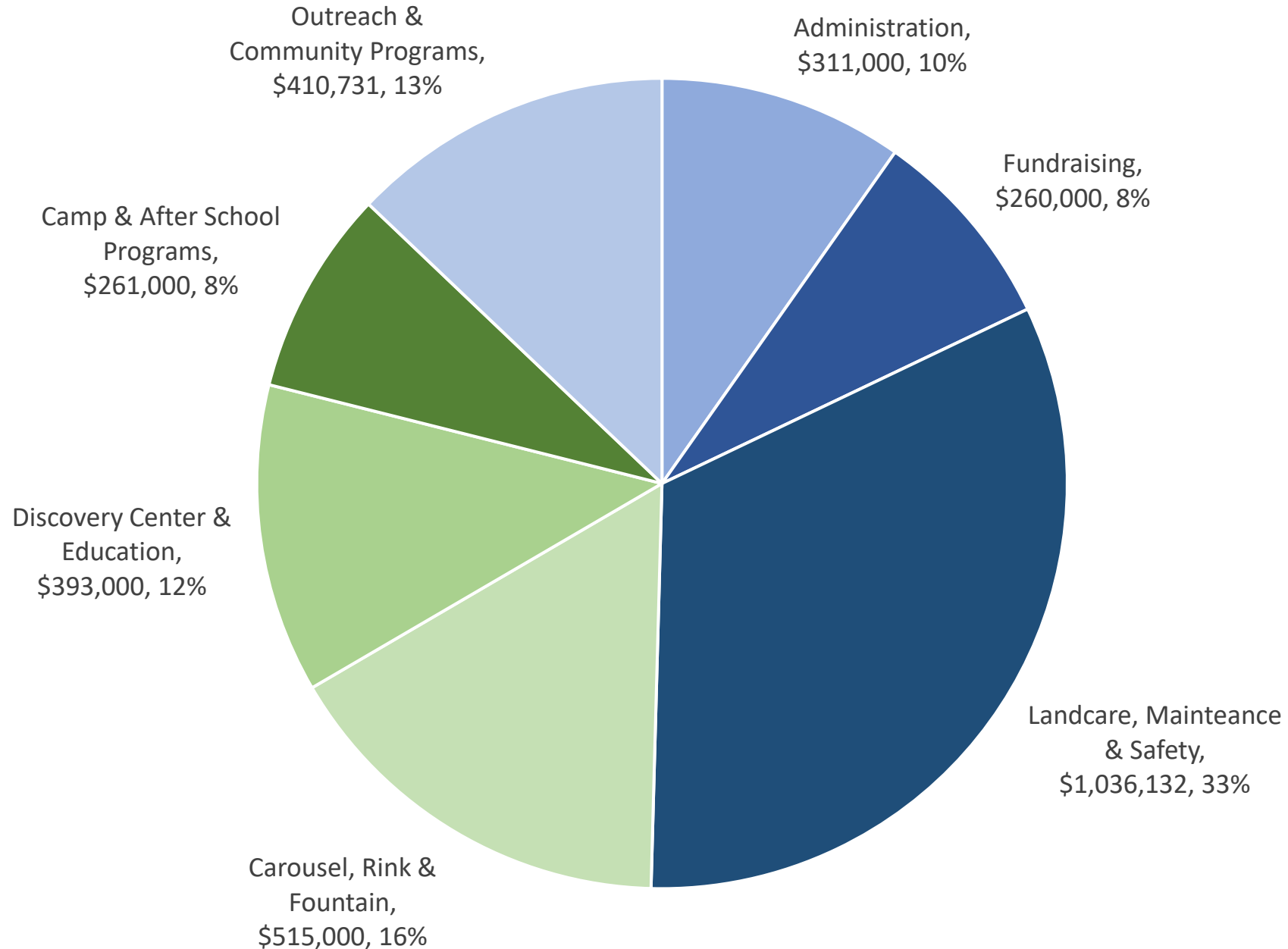




# FY 25 PROJECTED OPERATING REVENUE: \$3.19M



# FY 25 PROJECTED OPERATING EXPENSES: \$3.19M



# FY 25 PROJECTED CITY OPERATING AND TIF ALLOCATION

Budget Category	Total Expense	Expense Funded by City Funds	% Funded by City Funds
Administration	\$311,000	\$ 0	0%
Fundraising	\$260,000	\$ 0	0%
Landcare, Maintenance & Safety	\$1,036,132	\$1,036,132	100%
Carousel, Rink & Fountain	\$515,000	\$ 44,075	8%
Discovery Center & Education	\$393,000	\$ 75,000	19%
Camp & After School Programs	\$261,000	\$ 130,500	50%
Outreach & Community Programs	\$410,731	\$ 164,292	40%

