



City of Stamford FY2025-2026

Budget Presentation

March 5, 2025

Mayor Caroline Simmons

Agenda

1. Overview of Administration's Vision and Budget Priorities
2. Economic Outlook
3. Budget Priorities Overview
4. Operating Budget
5. Capital Budget
6. Proposed Surplus Designation
7. 2024 Grand List
8. State and Federal Funding
9. Conclusion



Administration Vision and Budget Priorities

Vision for the City of Stamford:

Continuing to build a more inclusive, equitable, vibrant, and affordable city where everyone can thrive.

Budget Priorities:

Deliver a fiscally responsible budget that minimizes the tax burden on Stamford residents while also investing in critical services and infrastructure projects to enhance quality of life.

Key budget priorities:

1. Public Safety
2. Schools
3. Parks and Sustainability
4. Roads, Sidewalks, & Pedestrian Safety
5. Housing
6. New Community Initiatives



Economic Outlook

- **City of Stamford Population:** 135,470 people
- **Stamford Stats:** 214th largest city in the country out of 19,000 cities and towns; ranked the safest city with a population of over 100,000 in New England; 16th most diverse city for our size in the country; largest international trade center between New York and Boston; ranks in the top 10% nationally for the number of corporate headquarters; Stamford gets 1.2 million visitors annually.
- **Business Growth:** Iron Health Physical Therapy, Charles IT, Banking Circle, Fresh & Co, Nuvance Health-GoHealth Urgent Care, Shake Shack, Cycle x Strength, Handlebar Salon, Home Matters Caregiving, Frank Pepe Pizzeria, Minuteman Press, Evergreen Daytime Senior Center, Angel Land, Whole Foods.
- **Commercial Vacancy Rate:** The vacancy rate in Stamford's Central Business District (CBD) decreased to 25.8% in the fourth quarter of 2024, down from 28.4% at the end of 2023. The non-CBD vacancy rate is 35.5%, a decrease from 36.1% in 2023. (Source: Cushman and Wakefield).
- **Unemployment Rate:** As of December 2024, Stamford's unemployment rate is 2.8%, a decrease from 3.9% this time last year; Connecticut statewide average: 3.0%; national average: 3.8%. (Source: CT DOL & Bureau of Labor Statistics & U.S. DOL Employment Report).
- **Inflation and Consumer Price Index:** As of January 2025, the annual inflation rate was 3% (compared to 3.1% in January 2024 and 7.5% in January 2022).
- **Interest Rate:** In January 2025, the Federal Reserve kept rates unchanged at 4.25%-4.5% and projects two interest rate cuts in 2025. This is down slightly from interest rates in January 2024, which were at 5.25%-5.5%.



Budget Priorities Overview

Delivering a Fiscally Responsible Budget

- Minimizing the tax burden on residents by designating surplus revenue into school construction Fund 57, while continuing our commitment to our school facilities projects.
- Conservative revenue assumptions, reduced department budgets, only invested in mission critical positions, and identified \$1.9 million in cuts to department budgets.
- Responsibly funding long-term liabilities.
- Staying within our safe debt limit and saving on debt service costs.
- Nearly maxed out Rainy Day Fund.

Investing in Critical Services for Stamford Residents to Enhance Quality of Life

- Public Safety – funding for new police department personnel and critical investments in the fire department.
- Schools – continued investments in our school facilities.
- Parks and Sustainability – new park projects and a commitment to sustainability initiatives.
- Roads, Sidewalks, & Pedestrian Safety – continuing Pave Stamford initiative, ADA curb improvements, and pedestrian safety improvements.
- Housing – investments in affordable housing projects.
- New Community Initiatives – animal shelter, design services for the East Side Library, Haig Avenue playground.
- Funding for nonprofits to further support residents.



Proposed Operating Budget: Fiscal Year 2025-2026



The **total combined City and BOE expense budget** and reserve for contingency is **\$714.2M**, a 5.0% increase from last year.



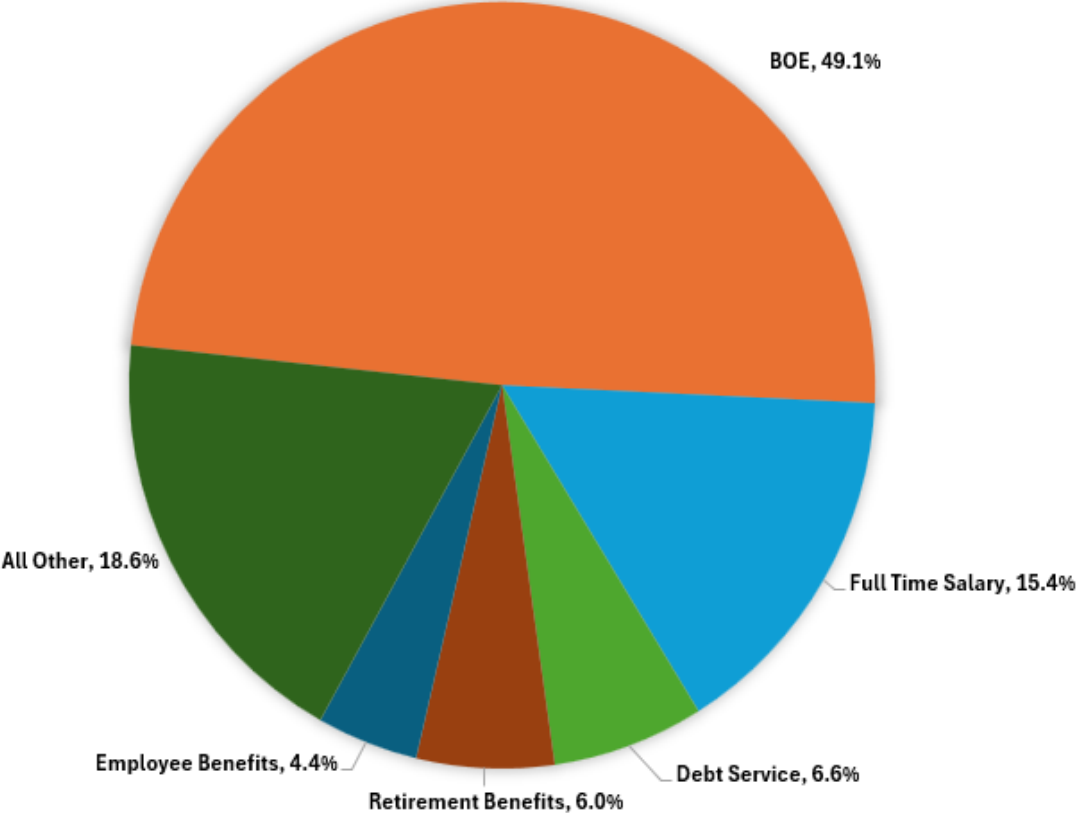
The proposed **total city government expense budget** is **\$353.7M**. This request represents a 4.16% increase on the city side including operating expenses of \$218.6M, employee benefits of \$87.4M, and debt service obligations of \$46.9M.



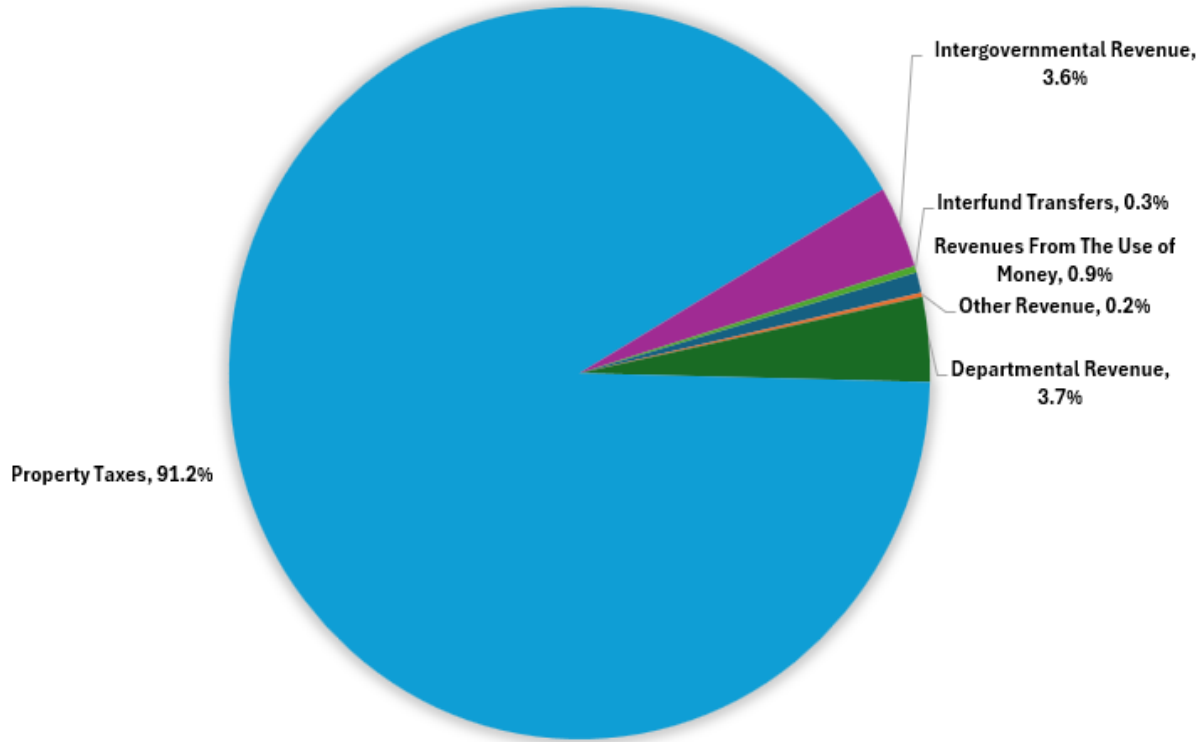
The total **Board of Education budget** is **\$350.5M** with an additional \$5.1M from the City to support education. This combined request represents an increase of 5.9% from the Board of Education.



FY25-26 Operating Expenses by Category



FY25-26 Revenue by Category



FY25-26 Budget Changes to Expenses and Revenues

Expense Increases

- Electric Costs – increased 22%
- City Benefits including Employee Benefits, Pension and OPEB – increased by 11.9%
- New positions
- Increased support for nonprofits

Expense Reductions

- Debt Service Costs – decreased by 11.2%
- Insurance – remained flat

Revenue Changes

- Revenues from the Use of Money – increased by 62.5%
- Intergovernmental Revenue – increased by 2.1%
- Departmental Revenue – decreased by 2.5%



Proposed Capital Budget: Fiscal Year 2025-2026

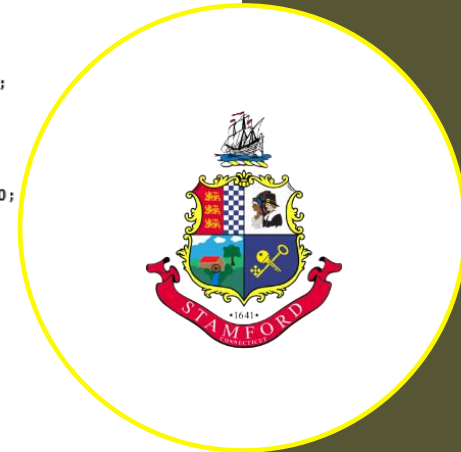
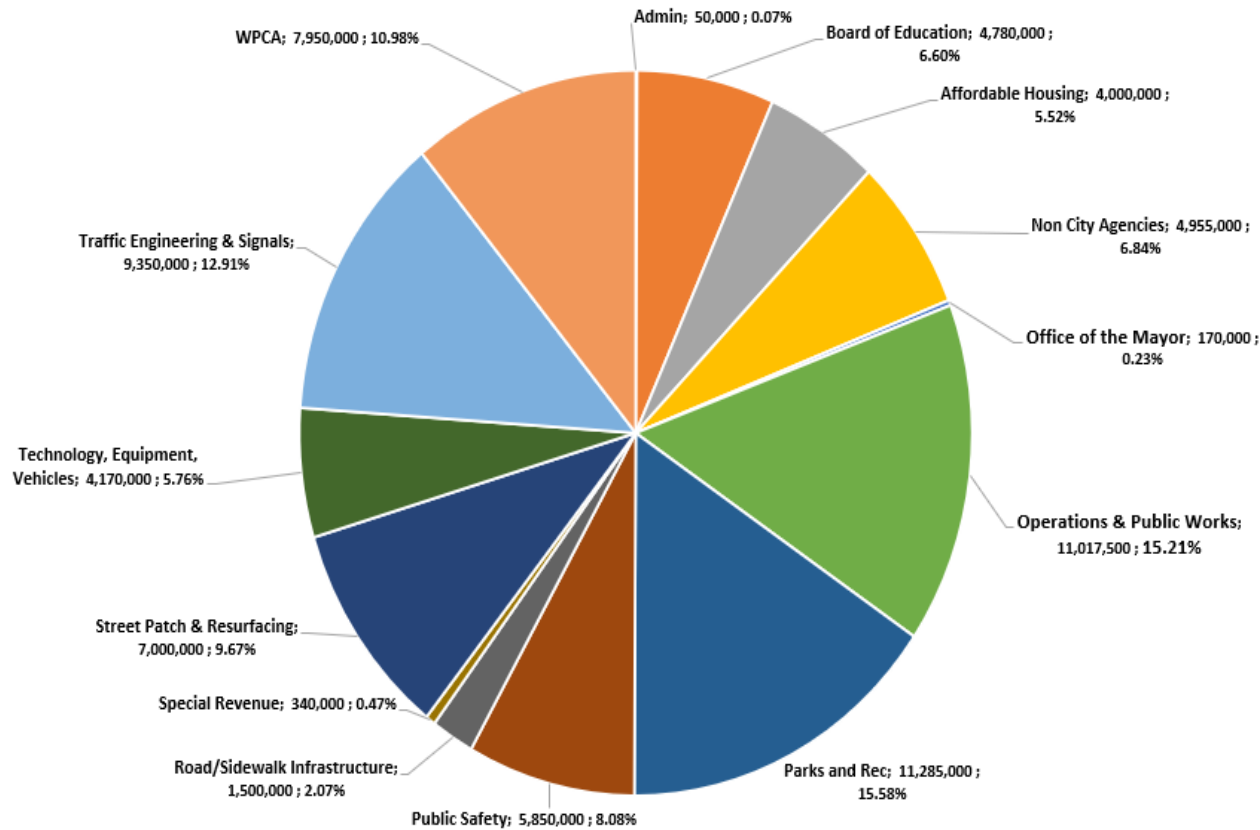
This capital budget authorizes \$72,417,500 in proposed project authorizations, including \$39,936,250 million in General Obligation bonds and \$32,481,250 million from other revenue sources.

The capital budget focuses on investments in the following projects:

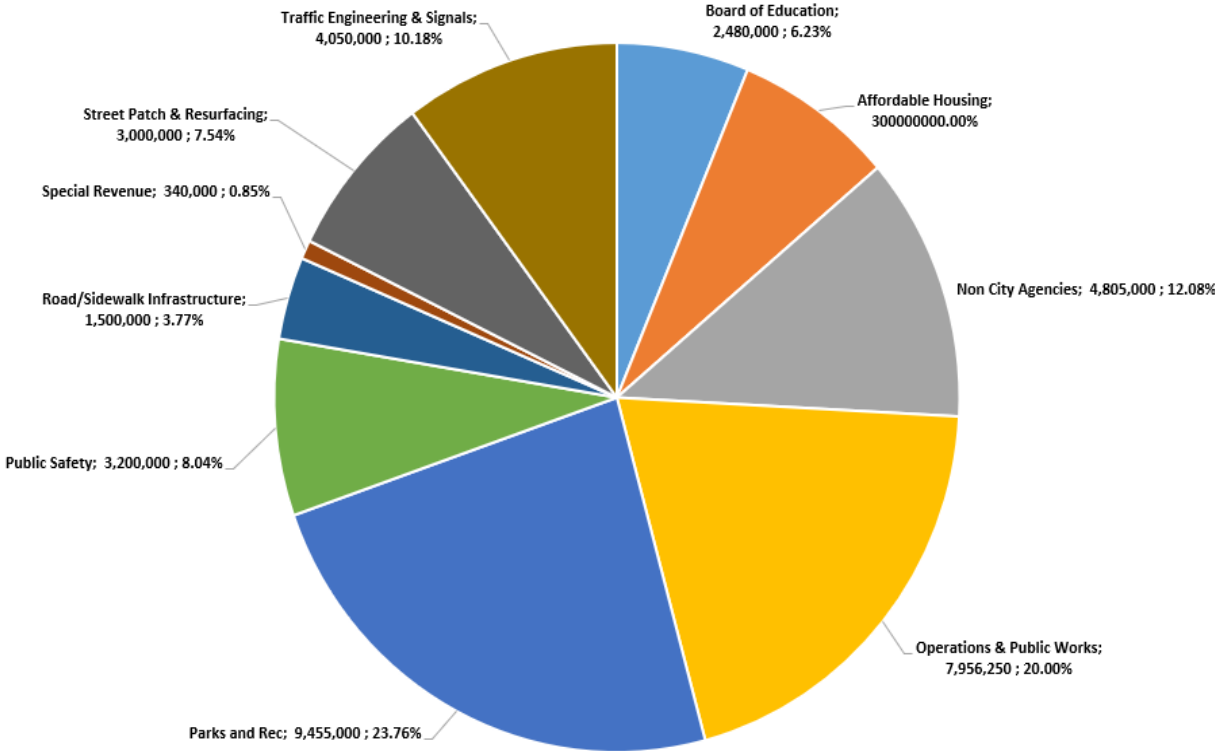
- **Schools** – Over \$4M authorized for safety and security improvements at schools, district wide facilities equipment and technology, improvements at AITE and Davenport Ridge, and district-wide athletic field renovations.
- **Parks and Sustainability** – Funding for new tennis courts at Scalzi Park, upgrades at Cummings Park, all-season accessible bathrooms, renovations to the baseball and softball infields, a new playground at Nemoitin Park at Hart School and upgrades at Northrop Park at Stark School. Also prioritizes investments in city-wide storm drains, electric refuse trucks, a city-wide tree inventory, and energy and sustainability initiatives.
- **Roads, Sidewalks, and Pedestrian Safety** –\$7M authorized in road paving, ADA curb ramps, and projects focused on making our city more accessible, and bike and pedestrian friendly.
- **Public Safety** –\$3.6M authorized for public safety equipment to support the Stamford Police and Fire Departments.
- **Housing** - \$4M for 142 upgraded or new units of affordable housing in partnership with Charter Oak, Pacific House, and the Housing Development Fund.
- **New Community Initiatives:** Animal shelter, design services for the East Side library, new playground at Haig Avenue.



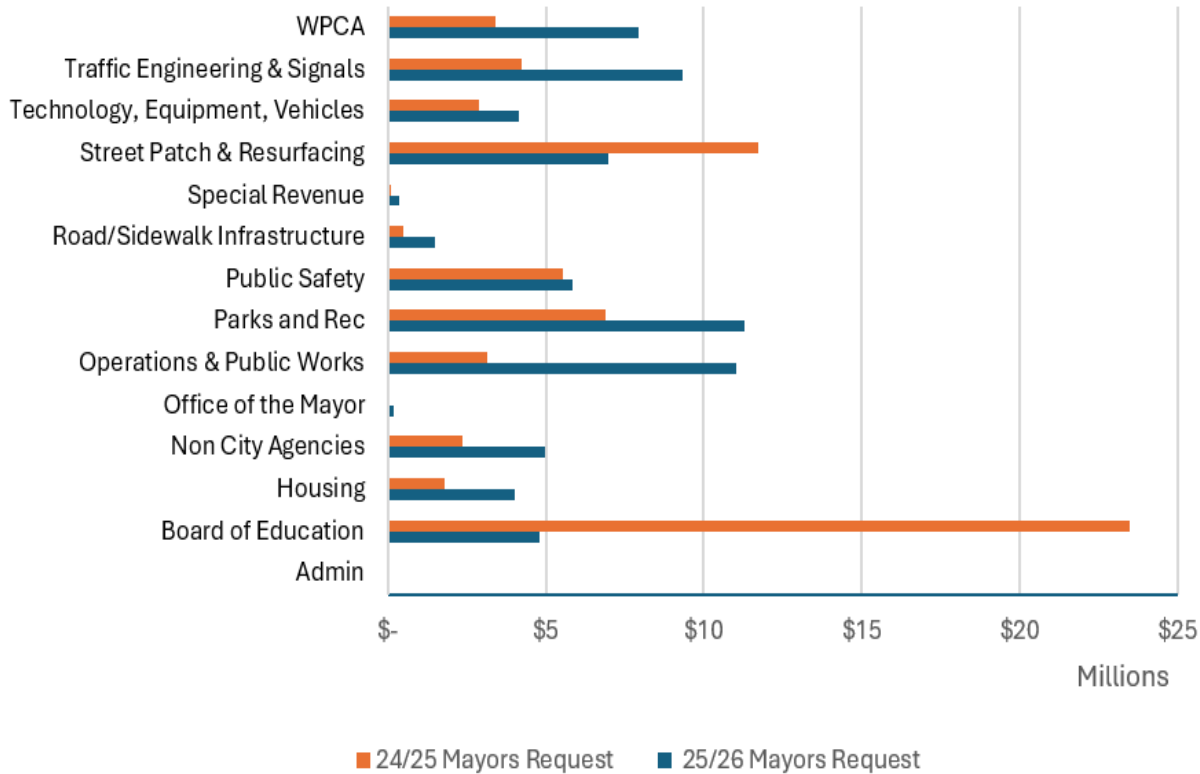
Total FY25-26 Capital Budget Authorization



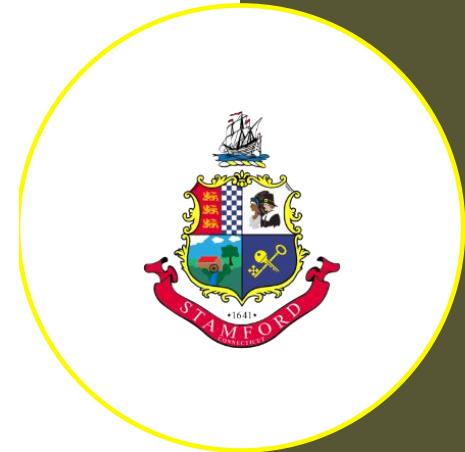
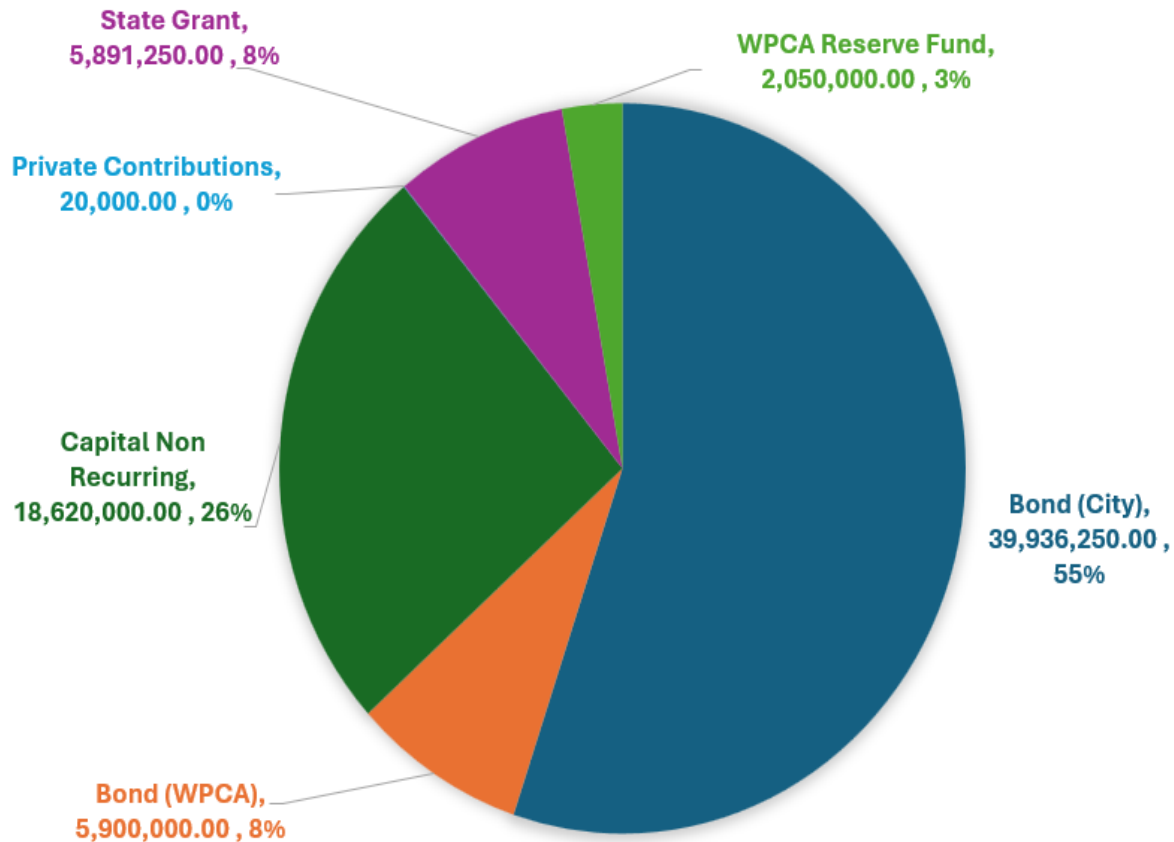
FY25-26 Proposed Capital Request Bond Authorization



Comparison 24/25 Adopted Budget vs. 25/26 Mayor's Request



Capital Budget Summary by Funding Source



Capital Budget Projects

ADA Curb Ramps



Parks - Cummings



School Security



Fire Apparatus



Housing



Parks - Scalzi

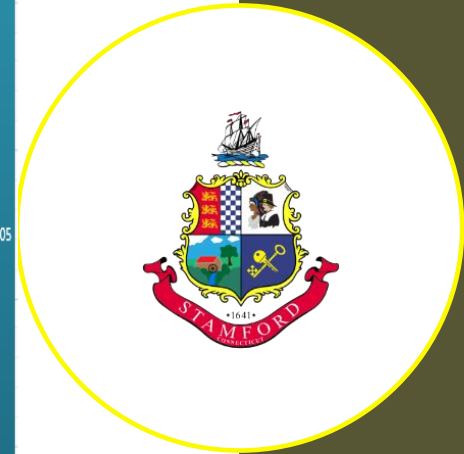
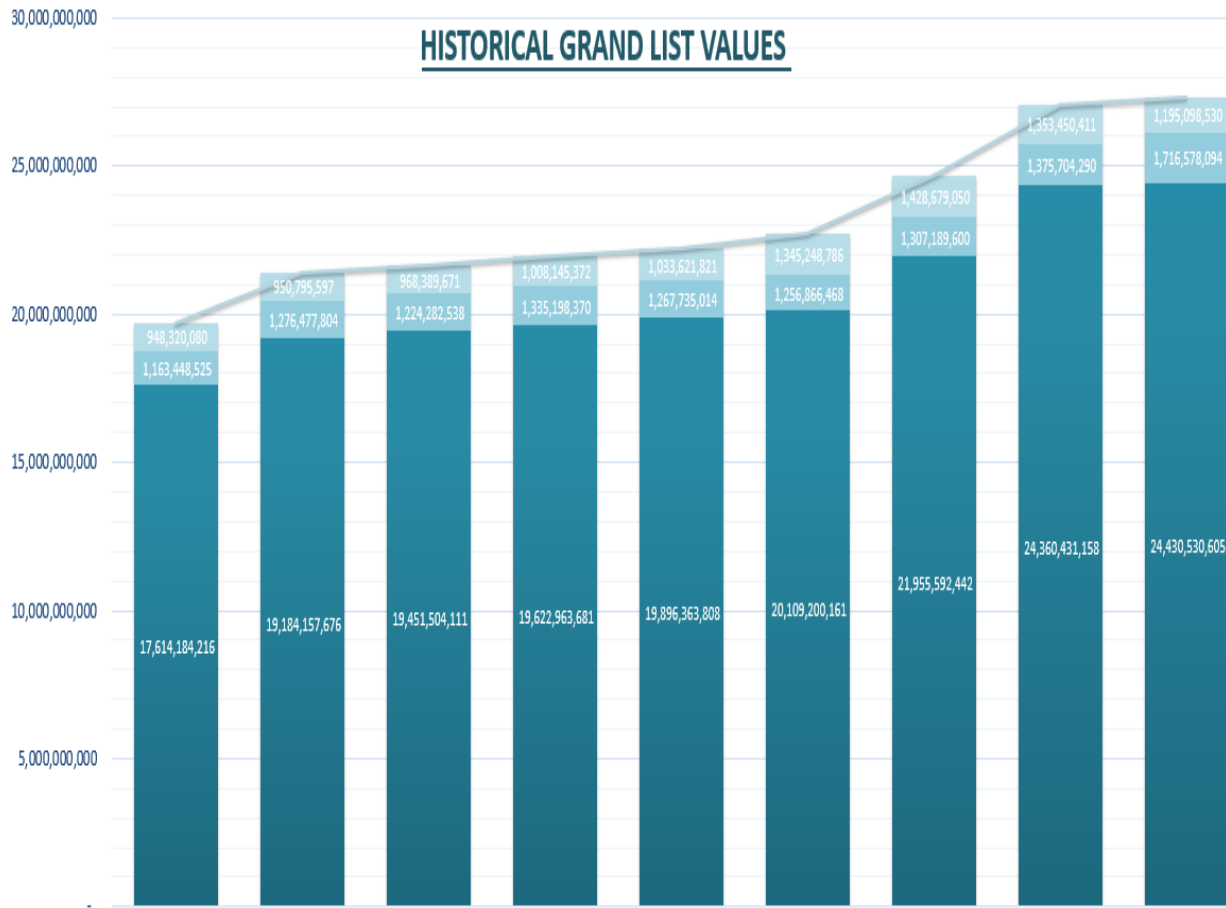


October 2024 Grand List

- The October 1, 2024, grand list is **\$27,342,207,229B**, up **\$252,621,370** from the amended 2023 grand list after the Board of Assessment Appeals.
- Overall, the **2024 grand list increased by .93%**, which includes a .29% increase in real estate, a 24.78% increase in personal property, and a -11.70% decrease in motor vehicles.
- The grand list for real estate was \$24,430,530,605, personal property was \$1,716,578,094, and motor vehicle was \$1,195,098,530.
- New apartment buildings fueled most of the growth in real estate for the 2024 grand list.
- The personal property grand list saw unprecedented growth from the 2023 to 2024 grand list, largely due to the relocation of the WWE headquarters to 677 Washington Boulevard.
- Due to a change in state law, the aggregate value of motor vehicles dropped in value by about 12%.
- Stamford has the 2nd highest grand list in the state after Greenwich.

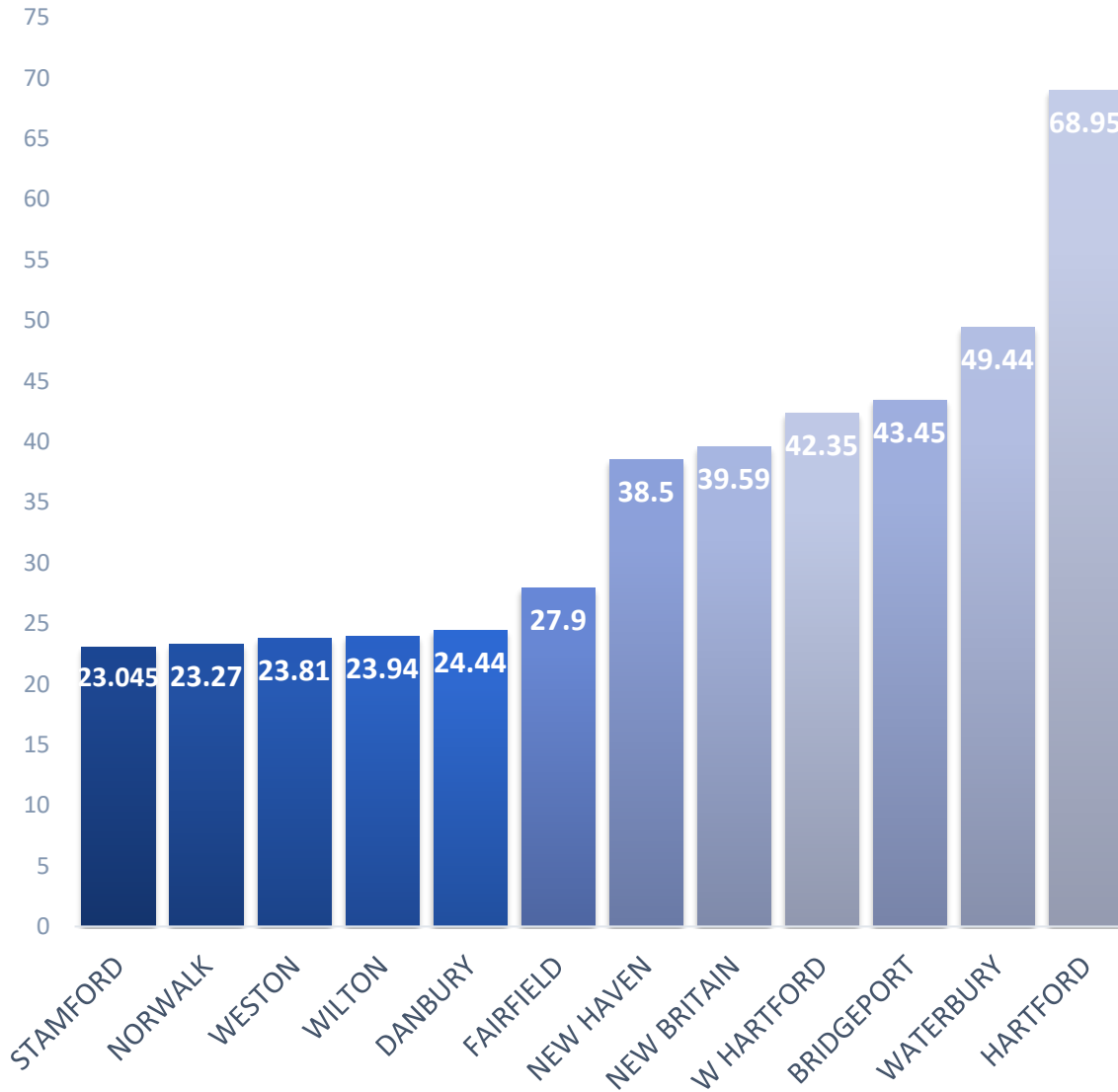


HISTORICAL GRAND LIST VALUES



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
MOTOR VEHICLE	948,320,080	950,795,597	968,389,671	1,008,145,372	1,033,621,821	1,345,248,786	1,428,679,050	1,353,450,411	1,195,098,530
PERSONAL PROPERTY	1,163,448,525	1,276,477,804	1,224,282,538	1,335,198,370	1,267,735,014	1,256,866,468	1,307,189,600	1,375,704,290	1,716,578,094
REAL ESTATE	17,614,184,216	19,184,157,676	19,451,504,111	19,622,963,681	19,896,363,808	20,109,200,161	21,955,592,442	24,360,431,158	24,430,530,605
TOTAL NET TAXABLE	19,725,952,821	21,411,431,077	21,644,176,320	21,966,307,423	22,197,720,643	22,711,315,415	24,691,461,092	27,089,585,859	27,342,207,229

MILL RATE COMPARISON BY CITY



Recommendation for Surplus Designation

- This budget recommends designating \$18.6 million from our surplus to the Capital Non-Recurring fund to support critical infrastructure projects.
- It also proposes allocating \$10 million from our surplus to support the school construction Fund 57, rather than raising that extra amount from taxpayers, so that we can continue progress on school projects while minimizing the tax burden.
- These two measures are sound fiscal practices that will support one-time capital projects, thereby reducing our borrowing costs, and continuing investments in key infrastructure projects in our city.



Long-term Liabilities

OPEB

- Total OPEB liability is \$301,697,000; net liability is \$14,788,000
- 95.1% funded

Pension Plans

- Total long-term pension liability is \$1,012,176,000; net liability is \$156,036,000
- 84.6% funded



State & Federal Funding

In partnership with Governor Ned Lamont and Stamford's legislative delegation, the City secured state funding for the following projects aimed at improving quality of life:

- \$7.7 million for the completion of the community commons project at Mill River Park.
- \$3 million for ADA pedestrian improvements and food truck parking outside the Government Center.
- \$2.3 million for a pilot two-year program for on-demand microtransit services; StamFORWARD launched in November 2024.
- \$223,608 for the planning and design of the Weed Avenue multi-use trail.

The City has also secured funding from a variety of federal agencies for projects:

- \$17 million for the West Side Neighborhood Connector Project, improving connectivity between the West Side, Downtown, South End, and the Stamford Transportation Center.
- \$5 million from the National Park Service for improvements at Cummings Park and West Beach.

The Trump administration has initiated a 90-day review of all federal grant programs to see how programs align with the administration's priorities. We are closely monitoring the situation and working with our federal lobbyist to navigate any potential impacts this may have on Stamford.



Conclusion

This FY2025-2026 budget:

- Reflects our values as an administration to build a more inclusive, equitable, innovative and vibrant City where everyone can thrive.
- Delivers a fiscally responsible budget that minimizes the tax burden on Stamford residents.
- Prioritizes the residents of Stamford by investing in critical quality of life, public safety, and infrastructure projects.



