

Dear Board of Representatives,

I am writing in support of the housing and complete street initiatives in the budget. Stamford is badly in need of affordable housing and our alternative transit infrastructure is sorely lacking. I want to highlight the following items as necessary parts of the budget and then elaborate on their importance.

Transit Infrastructure items:

- CP8705 - \$500,000 for Bicycle And Pedestrian Facilities Implementation
- CP1281 - \$1,500,000 for Roadway Design And Reconstruction
- 001291 - \$1,400,000 for West Main Street Corridor Improvement Project
- C56174 - \$1,200,000 for Citywide Signals
- CP8704 - \$250,000 for ADA Curb Ramps For Pedestrian Safety
- C56241 - \$500,000 for Traffic Management Studies

Housing items:

- C46047 - \$1,250,000 for Housing Development Fund
- Two new dedicated housing staff positions (Housing Coordinator and Housing Planning Manager)

Stamford is utterly lacking in safe bicycle infrastructure. Drivers do not respect the painted lines on the road and thus biking is impossible to accomplish safely in the city. Which is a shame because Stamford should be a biking haven 9 months out of the year. We are relatively flat and relatively geographically small. The benefits to more cyclist are multitude but a few of them are: less air pollution, healthier population, and a reduction in traffic. We must invest in our future by supporting the construction of better non-car transit infrastructure.

In addition, to upgrades to bike and pedestrian infrastructure we have numerous intersections and roads which are not well designed for the safe passage of all types of travelers, both cars and people. We need to significantly improve engineering to ensure the safety of our citizen. All the items I highlight above will go toward achieving the Vision Zero initiatives that the city has embraced.

On the housing front the money earmarked for the development fund and the two new housing staff positions are consistent with the recommendations of the Affordable housing study completed for the city in 2022 (<https://www.stamfordct.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/16832/637896039003430000>). We currently have no one overseeing and planning our housing initiatives contributing to a lack of implementation of the worthy initiatives laid out in the 2022 study. In fact, additional staff overseeing our housing development plan is one of the first recommendations in the document.

The housing development fund will be used to generate 61 new affordable units that meet modern standards of construction. It is important that our affordable housing stock is not simply restricted simply to the oldest and most run-down units in the city. This funding will help the project move forward quickly so that those new units can begin housing the families that need them as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Zach Oberholtzer