



STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

JULY 5, 2023
MAYOR CAROLINE SIMMONS



Agenda

Vision and Priorities

Economic Development

Infrastructure

Responsive Government

Vision Zero

Affordable Housing Executive Order

Climate Change Executive Order

State and Federal Funding

MAYOR SIMMONS' ADMINISTRATION'S VISION AND PRIORITIES

Vision Statement:

To build a more inclusive, equitable, and vibrant City where everyone can thrive.

Top Priorities:

- Advancing Economic Prosperity and Making Stamford More Affordable
- Investing in Our Infrastructure and Quality of Life
- Making Government Work Better for Residents

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

STAMFORD: THE ECONOMIC ENGINE OF THE STATE

- 2nd largest, fastest growing City in Connecticut.
- 2nd largest grand list in Connecticut.
- Stamford has a 96% apartment building occupancy rate and a 90% downtown retail occupancy rate.
- Home to a dozen fortune 500 and fortune 1000 companies, small businesses, and a growing sector for technology, fintech, and digital media.
- Safest City in New England.
- Approved FY23-24 budget is fiscally responsible.
- State-mandated property revaluation will be phased-in over the next two years.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Small Business Support

- Launched COVID-19 Small Business Resiliency Grant and visited 160+ small businesses; recipients will be announced in July 2023.
- Created Small Business Hub on website.
- Launching the “Made in Stamford” Initiative in fall 2023.

Business Attraction

- Launched “Global Stamford” initiative and fostered relationships with foreign delegation representatives from the United Kingdom, Finland, and South Africa.
- Successfully attracted over 20 new businesses to Stamford.
- Ongoing partnership with state DECD, Advance CT, Governor’s office, Chamber of Commerce, and DSSD on business attraction.

Workforce Development

- Expanded Mayor’s Youth Employment Program.
- Secured state grant to create a Youth Service Corps.
- Pursuing Tech Talent Pipeline initiative through state innovation corridor grant.

INFRASTRUCTURE

INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

- **Schools**

- Embarking on a \$1.5 billion School Construction Plan – largest in the City’s history.
- Worked in partnership with the Stamford legislative delegation and Superintendent Dr. Lucero to secure an 80% state reimbursement rate for the Westhill High School project.
- The City will receive \$241 million for the Westhill High School project and \$51.6 million for the Roxbury Elementary School project.
- The state reimbursement rate for all school construction projects increased from 20% to 60% for the next 25 years.

- **Roads and Sidewalks**

- Pave Stamford Initiative – the 2022 paving season was a success, doubling the previous year’s total of roads paved with over **70 roads** completed by mid-November 2022.
- The 2023 paving season started in April 2023 and thus far, 27 roads have been paved. We are on par to pave the same amount of roads as last year.

PARKS, BEACHES, MARINAS, AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Improvements have been made to over a dozen parks in the past year, including adding a new playground on the East Side at Courtland Avenue, new picnic tables and trees on the West Side at Carwin Park, upgrades in the South End at Boccuzzi Park, and the installation of public pickle ball courts at Scalzi Park.
- Phase 1 of dredging for Cove Island Marina is complete and work has begun to replace the West Beach Boat Ramp.
- The city-wide Parks Strategic Plan launched in support of our goal of ensuring every resident has access to a quality park within a 10-minute walk of where they live. The Parks Strategic Plan aims to manage and invest in the sustainability of our parks, beaches, and trails and set realistic goals and action items for their operation and development.

PARKS, BEACHES, MARINAS AND SUSTAINABILITY

West Beach Boat Ramp



Cove Island Park



Kosciuszko Park



Scalzi Park



Cummings Beach



LED Street Lights



City-wide Tree Replanting



Electric Vehicle Charging Stations



Dredging of Cove



RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT

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Walk-in Permitting Center

- Every other Wednesday in June in the Government Center 4th floor cafeteria, we piloted a walk-in permitting center for residents and small businesses.

Veterans Resource Center

- In February 2023, the Veterans Resource Center opened. The center is a place for veterans and their families to be empowered and connected to available resources and services.
- The center is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Old Town Hall from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Citizens Service Hubs

- Continue to hold Citizens Service Hubs across the City, with the most recent one held last week in the Waterside neighborhood at Building One Community.

Website Accessibility and Fix It Stamford

- The City of Stamford website is now available in 100+ languages.
- Partnering with Bloomberg Innovation to enhance Fix It Stamford system.

OFFICE OF INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIES FOR STAMFORD (I.D.E.A.S.)

- Since December 2022, all new hires have gone through a foundational I.D.E.A.S. training as a part of their orientation. On July 10th, the City will launch an effort to have all City employees attend I.D.E.A.S. training, with the goal of having all City employees trained by the end of the year. Training is conducted in-house by Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Carmen Hughes, which helps to foster a culture of inclusion and belonging, but also saves the City over \$100,000.
- This year, the City recognized Juneteenth as a paid holiday for employees and hosted its first annual city-wide celebration. We continue the tradition of hosting flag raising ceremonies to celebrate the wealth of communities that make up our diverse City.
- On July 17th, all StamfordCT.gov administrators will go through mandatory accessibility training, which will allow for all postings on social media and the City website to be posted in an accessible way that is compatible with screen readers.
- The City is working to put an official policy in place to provide meaningful access to programs and service for individuals with limited English proficiency. To date, we have expanded our relationship with interpreters and translators and begun issuing press releases from the Mayor's Office in English and Spanish.

OFFICE OF INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIES FOR STAMFORD (I.D.E.A.S.)



VISION ZERO

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1. Signed the City's Vision Zero Executive Order in September 2022, creating a Vision Zero Task Force.
2. The Transportation, Traffic, and Parking Department created a dedicated Vision Zero webpage to host all information related to the initiative, including a map with 20 pedestrian safety pilot projects.



BEDFORD AND FOREST



LOWER SUMMER STREET



SHIPPAN/HARBOR ROUNDABOUT



WASHINGTON BLVD SAFETY



BROAD STREET

AFFORDABLE HOUSING EXECUTIVE ORDER

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Last week, I was joined by City officials, community, nonprofit, and faith leaders to sign the City of Stamford's first Affordable Housing Executive Order.

The housing crisis is the defining issue of our time, and we have a moral obligation to do whatever is necessary to ensure every person who wants to live in our City can access quality, affordable, and safe housing.

Some highlights from the Executive Order include:

- Support the creation or renovation of **1,000 affordable housing units by 2025**.
- **Develop 2,443 new affordable units by 2033**, with specific priority for low-income, family-sized units.
- **Prioritize the development of housing for families and individuals** earning less than 50% of the Area Median Income.
- **Create more homeownership opportunities** and convert existing market rate residential and commercial space to affordable housing.
- **Execute a comprehensive community engagement and education strategy on housing** in partnership with the Land Use Bureau, the Mayor's Office, and the Social Services Department.

CLIMATE CHANGE EXECUTIVE ORDER

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In April 2023, I signed the City of Stamford's first Executive Order addressing Climate Change and Sustainability. Included in this Executive Order are measures to:

- Promote **energy efficiency measures at buildings city-wide.**
- **Prioritize green infrastructure projects** to make Stamford more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- **Expand the City's Food Scraps Recycling Program** to reduce waste at landfills.
- **Create the City's first Climate Action Plan** to reduce carbon emissions based on the results of the City's greenhouse gas inventory.
- Establish a **comprehensive electric vehicle strategy.**
- Launch a **public awareness sustainability campaign.**

STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDING

STATE FUNDING

The City has secured state funding for the following projects aimed at improving quality of life:

- \$3 million for renovations and upgrades for the Stamford High School athletic fields
- \$3.3 million in funding through the Small Harbor Improvements Projects Program:
 - \$3,095,520 for Cove Marina and channel dredging
 - \$236,500 for final design and permitting of the Cummings Marina
 - \$20,000 for feasibility of an additional City boat ramp in Stamford Harbor
- \$2 million for construction of the Astronomy Observatory Center at the Stamford Museum & Nature Center
- Three awards totaling \$1.29 million through the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Office of Climate Planning:
 - \$598,125 for evaluating flooding issues and developing concept-level designs in the Toilsome Brook watershed
 - \$481,125 for modeling and conceptual designs to reduce stormwater flooding in the Cummings Pond watershed
 - \$210,750 to support developing a neighborhood-level heat resilience plan
- \$1 million for renovations and improvements at Terry Conners Ice Rink
- \$270,400 awarded from the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection for the planning and design of a Greenwich-Stamford Multi-Use path

My goal is to secure state and federal funding in order to increase intergovernmental revenue, advance the City's policy priorities, and reduce burden on Stamford taxpayers.

FEDERAL FUNDING

In partnership with Senator Richard Blumenthal, Senator Chris Murphy, and Congressman Jim Himes, the City secured federal funding for the following projects:

- \$2.1 million federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant to revitalize the West Main Street Corridor
- \$2 million federal Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant for improvements to school sidewalks
- \$1.81 million federal Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant for improvements to Boccuzzi Park
- \$513,000 federal Workforce Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for pre-apprenticeship programs and job training for students

In the Omnibus Appropriations bill passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Joe Biden, the City of Stamford received over \$6 million in funding for congressionally directed spending projects:

- \$3 million for the construction of an East Side Ferguson Library Branch
- \$2 million for upgrading City streetlights to energy-saving LED streetlights
- \$1 million for installing bioswales across Stamford
- \$639,000 for maintenance of the Stamford hurricane barrier

The Connecticut Department of Transportation was recently awarded a \$26.4 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration for the purchase of 20 battery electric buses and implementation of transit facility infrastructure upgrades for the CT Transit Stamford Division.

STAMFORD, CT

