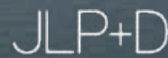

STAMFORD CITYWIDE PARKS STRATEGIC PLAN

Fall 2023



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A Note From The Mayor

MAYOR CAROLINE SIMMONS
CITY OF STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT



TEL: 203-977-4150
EMAIL: MAYORSOFFICE@STAMFORDCT.GOV

November 8, 2023

Dear Stamford Residents,

One of my first priorities as Mayor was to embark on a city-wide Parks Strategic Plan, designed to create a roadmap for enhancing each of our over 50 public parks over the next decade. Stamford is fortunate to have beautiful parks, beaches, and trails that make our city such a wonderful place to live. A great city is defined by its culture and Stamford sets itself apart with its vibrant business and retail districts, diverse education system, and beautiful natural resources.

My vision is for all residents to have access to a quality park within a ten-minute walk that can be enjoyed for generations to come. This strategic plan is reflective of extensive community input from residents and will provide guidance for my administration and future mayors on how to invest public and private funding to make our park system a crown jewel of Connecticut.

I am committed to investing resources in our public parks and I am excited about the many opportunities ahead to enhance our beautiful parks throughout the City of Stamford.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Caroline Simmons".

Caroline Simmons
Mayor of Stamford, Connecticut



Acknowledgements

This Parks Strategic Plan [the Plan] marks the completion of our initial efforts to identify opportunities for capital investment in existing and new parks to address the current and future needs of our community. Additionally, the Plan provides recommendations for funding opportunities for both capital and ongoing operations and maintenance costs to ensure sustainable growth of Stamford's park and open space system into the future.

On behalf of the City of Stamford, we want to thank the hundreds of people who have participated in this project. We have visited and analyzed many of the existing parks, marinas, beaches, and other open space areas and have solicited feedback on the needs of our parks from hundreds of Stamford residents.

Our list of "thank you" is extensive. We want to express our appreciation to the Local Design Team. Collaboration in a community engagement project is vital for a successful outcome. Tricia Martin, Walter Meyer and Chrysothemis Kouloumentas have been remarkable in their ability to offer opportunities and communicate ideas, synthesizing ideas and comments from hundreds of residents, business owners, expert consultants and others into a clear and concise path for the future of our Stamford parks.

In a community-based project, it is essential that everyone's voice be heard. That has been the role of the City of Stamford staff, including the planning, parks, and forestry groups. In addition to the City, the members of both the Parks Committee and Commission contributed informed knowledge of the issues and state of the Parks within their constituent groups. Their input is reflected in the strategic recommendations for both new parks and the renovations of existing parks.

Thank you to the Stamford community for participating in our 9-month long community engagement efforts. You attended events, filled out surveys, and provided invaluable input on the City's website on the future vision and implementation of our cherished parks.

Any project of this scope cannot be accomplished without a dedicated staff. The City of Stamford team has been extraordinary and we would like to extend our thanks to the following individuals:

Aaron Miller - Special Assistant to the Mayor
Bridget Fox - Chief of Staff
Carmen Hughes - Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Erin McKenna - Senior Planner
Frank Lagoe - Public Safety Analyst
Janeene Freeman - Special Assistant to the Mayor
Kevin Murray - Director of Parks & Recreation
Lauren Meyer - Special Assistant to the Mayor
Leah Kagan - Director of Economic Development
Lou DeRubeis - Director of Public Safety, Health & Welfare
Megan Gearhart - Assistant Superintendent of Recreation
Nette Compton - President & CEO Mill River Park Collaborative
Rachel Alonso-Mendoza - Special Assistant to the Mayor

Board of Representatives Parks & Recreation Committee

Jennifer Matheny - Chairperson
Daniel Sanford - Vice Chair, Committee Member
Bradley Bewkes - Committee Member
Cara Gilbride - Committee Member
Carl Weinberg - Committee Member
Ines Saftic - Committee Member
Virgil de la Cruz - Committee Member

Parks & Recreation Commission

Paul Newman - Chairperson
Melanie Hollas - Vice Chair
Angela Adetola - Commissioner
Jessica Katz - Commissioner
Michael Tedder - Commissioner

Board of Finance

Richard Freeman, Chairperson
Mary Lou Rinaldi, Vice-Chair
Geoff Alswanger - Member
Laura Burwick - Member
Dennis Mahoney - Member
J.R. McMullen - Member

Stamford ADA Advisory Council

Frank Mercede - Co-Chair
Phil Magalnick - Co-Chair
Honorata Kazmierczak - Vice Chair
Alicia Bingham - Secretary

Thank you all. We are honored to have worked with this amazing, diverse group of people.

Kevin Murray, Director of Parks & Recreation

Matthew Quiñones, Director of Operations

Caroline Simmons, Mayor



EMERGENCY

HOLES IN COULING



Executive Summary

The Parks Strategic Plan will help achieve our department's bold vision as a world-class Parks and Recreation organization. The Plan guides our direction, decision-making, and growth for the next five years setting forth a course of action for both our internal improvements and our external work across the City.

The City of Stamford is a dynamic region that is undergoing rapid change and requires a corresponding adaptation in recreation, programming and services. Stamford's Total Gross Domestic Product has grown steadily since 2000 and is one of the largest financial hubs outside New York City. During this time, the population continued to diversify. Today, the white population makes up just under half of the population of the City, with Hispanics at 29% and blacks at 13%. In terms of access to park space, residents in lower-income neighborhoods have access to 39% less than those in higher-income neighborhoods (source: www.census.gov). To meet the shifts in economic and demographic changes, our department has developed a visionary Parks Strategic Plan that responds to and supports the City's most vulnerable populations through improved park access, recreational programming, and other services that adapt to the region's changing needs. We are equitably distributing our resources for programming, infrastructure, and services. Our team identifies new community needs by regularly collaborating on programming and planning with residents and numerous community-based organizations. We are addressing our changing climate by deploying nature-based climate mitigation solutions, increasing tree canopy, and creating supportive amenities like shade structures and splash pads to address the effects of extreme heat. By working hand-in-hand with communities and leading with equity, our Park Strategic Plan's outcomes will improve the lives of residents across Stamford to come. This plan lays out our department's action plan through goals, strategies, and actions. Together, these steps articulate the direction and priorities of our work for the next five years. They were developed through extensive engagement with staff at all levels, external stakeholder groups, and a robust community engagement process.

The Plan consists of four goals which encapsulate broad statements of what we want to accomplish as part of our vision. Each goal is followed by a set of strategies which describe how we plan to achieve our goals and impact the community. The proposed strategies put forth a list of actions that outline the specific activities we will undertake to achieve the strategies.

The Goals are:

1. **EMPOWER:** Empowering Community Voices
2. **CELEBRATE:** Caring for Stamford's Parks
3. **CONNECT:** Improving the Open Space Network
4. **GROW:** Supporting Organizational Growth

The Strategic Plan was developed over nine months. Local Office Landscape and Urban Design [Local] led the consultant team. The team also included James Lima Planning and Development (JLP+D) for economic development and analysis services. JLP+D researched unique funding strategies in cities with similar challenges as Stamford. This case study research was further developed into concrete strategies for increasing funding for capital, operations, and maintenance for Stamford's parks. The City of Stamford hired the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to assist Local in park analysis, specifically their methodology for developing park scores related to park accessibility. Nette Compton, Executive Director for Mill River Collaborative, served as an advisor to the team, providing local insight into strategies that work for parks in Stamford and beyond.

The team conducted a thorough environmental, social, and economic analysis of the City of Stamford. The team also mapped neighborhoods that are not within a 10-minute walk of a park. In parallel with the desktop environmental and social data analysis, the team worked closely with the City of Stamford to roll out an extensive community engagement process. The team developed presentations and virtual tools, including an on-line survey, to reach a broad and diverse audience. Over 500 survey responses were submitted, providing valuable information to the City and Consultant team. Stakeholder meetings and City conversations were also conducted to collect critical information about the existing park system, challenges, and future goals.

The site analysis and community engagement were synthesized into a series of initiatives to address existing park restoration, park gaps, park equity, and increased risk of climate change. The 5-year strategic plan is the result of this synthesis, including priorities identified by the City of Stamford and the corresponding funding recommendations.



Introduction to the Plan

The Stamford Park system is entering a new era. During COVID we saw the need for outdoor and nature spaces for healing and connection, as many people could not socialize or work indoors without risks. While the worst of the pandemic appears is behind us, the pull into the outdoors and natural areas continue to grow. Various studies and surveys show that people during and after the pandemic went outdoors more than before the pandemic - for emotional health, well-being, and human connection, with an emphasis on natural outdoor environments. These global trends encourage us to look inward and ask ourselves and our city whether our parks serve us how we want them to. Do our parks offer the types of programs we are looking for? And, do all our residents have access to quality open spaces that provide a range of experiences, from ballfields to community gardens to nature trails?

In the face of our Park's successes and popularity, the challenge now is not only to maintain what we have to offer but to continue to improve and expand opportunities to retreat from the stresses of urban life for our residents and visitors in our democratic assets. Considering our city's changing environmental, social, and cultural circumstances, the Parks Strategic Plan grapples with what it would take to sustain and repair what we have while adding more parks and open spaces in under-served communities. The Plan is based on the needs over the next five to ten years to promote an "action-based" strategy that ensures implementation and successful outcomes. The Plan tackles specific challenges:

- How do we identify new open space and park opportunities for communities and residents that do not have access to quality outdoor spaces, including nature spaces?
- How will we fund this work?
- What organizational capacity do we need to accomplish our ambitious goals?
- How do we maintain our Park system with rising labor and materials costs?

To tackle these questions, we assembled our staff from across various City departments and brought on an outside consultant, Local Office Landscape and Urban Design to develop a Parks strategic Plan that responded to the needs observed and experienced by City officials but also responds to the needs and wishes of our community - the residents of the City of Stamford. The answers resulted in a Plan built around four strategic focus goals and twelve specific objectives, which together set the parameters for our commitment to improvement:

Goal 1: Empowering Community Voices. We are committed to a Plan that responds to the voices of our City.

Goal 2: Caring for Stamford's Parks. The Plan identifies strategies to enhance existing parks while finding opportunities for new parks, especially for communities that are under-served by parks, recreation and natural areas.

Goal 3: Improving the Open Space Network. The Plan identifies ways to better connect parks and other community assets such as schools and libraries.

Goal 4: Supporting Organizational Growth. By understanding that sustainable parks begin with people, we re-imagine organizational structures creating more efficient systems to better support our parks' future.

We aspire to have a world-class park system with the capacity to fulfill our important mission. All of this work will be informed by our unique knowledge and understanding of the City of Stamford, through extensive GIS and other desktop analysis, extensive community engagement and ground trooping - visiting the parks, beaches, and other open spaces within Stamford.

The Vision

The Parks Strategic Plan [the Plan] is intended as a framework to guide the City on allocating resources to enhance and grow the City's park network. The strategies that follow in this document are intended to move towards actionable objectives that respond to the needs and wishes of the community, while meeting current and future challenges.

A broader lens to parks planning and design can help mitigate our City's ever-growing risks due to climate change. During Super-storm Sandy, 1,103 properties were impacted by flooding in the city of Stamford. As our climate changes, the City is at higher risk of not only flooding, but major heat and major wind. Our changing climate demands a broader lens for parks planning and design. On the one hand, our parks are at risk - too much heat will destroy plants and habitat, flooding will result in buckled asphalt paths and eroded slopes and lawns. On the other hand, our parks have the ability to mitigate the impacts of climate change - robust gardens and tree planting provide ecosystem services by cooling our cities and providing much needed habitat for pollinators. Enhanced porous paving systems - used in plazas, paths, playgrounds and green streets can mitigate stormwater run-off alleviating upland flooding. Beach dunes, waterfront parks and greenways can function as planted berms and levees mitigating coastal flooding. The vision for Stamford Parks needs to encapsulate all of these challenges and opportunities.

Stamford is an international and diverse city, and it is important that the future of the City's parks reflect this range to meet its changing demographics and social context. From 2010 to 2020, the overall population of the city grew 10% with a nearly doubling of Asian and other immigrant population and 3% rise in Latino population (source: www.census.gov).

A growing population requires an increase in housing, streets, and other infrastructure. Density is efficient and can promote sustainable and smart city initiatives, but it can also create congestion, fragmentation, and a lack of opportunities for respite, relaxation and recreation. It also requires the often overlooked increase in open spaces and opportunities for respite and air. A Vision for Stamford's parks addresses this growth and changing demographics in a way that supports equitable opportunities for all residents.

The Plan was composed and guided through numerous conversations with City agencies, community surveys and stakeholder meetings.

“Our vision is to create a vibrant, resilient, and equitable public open space network that can be enjoyed by all for generations to come.”

The Methodology

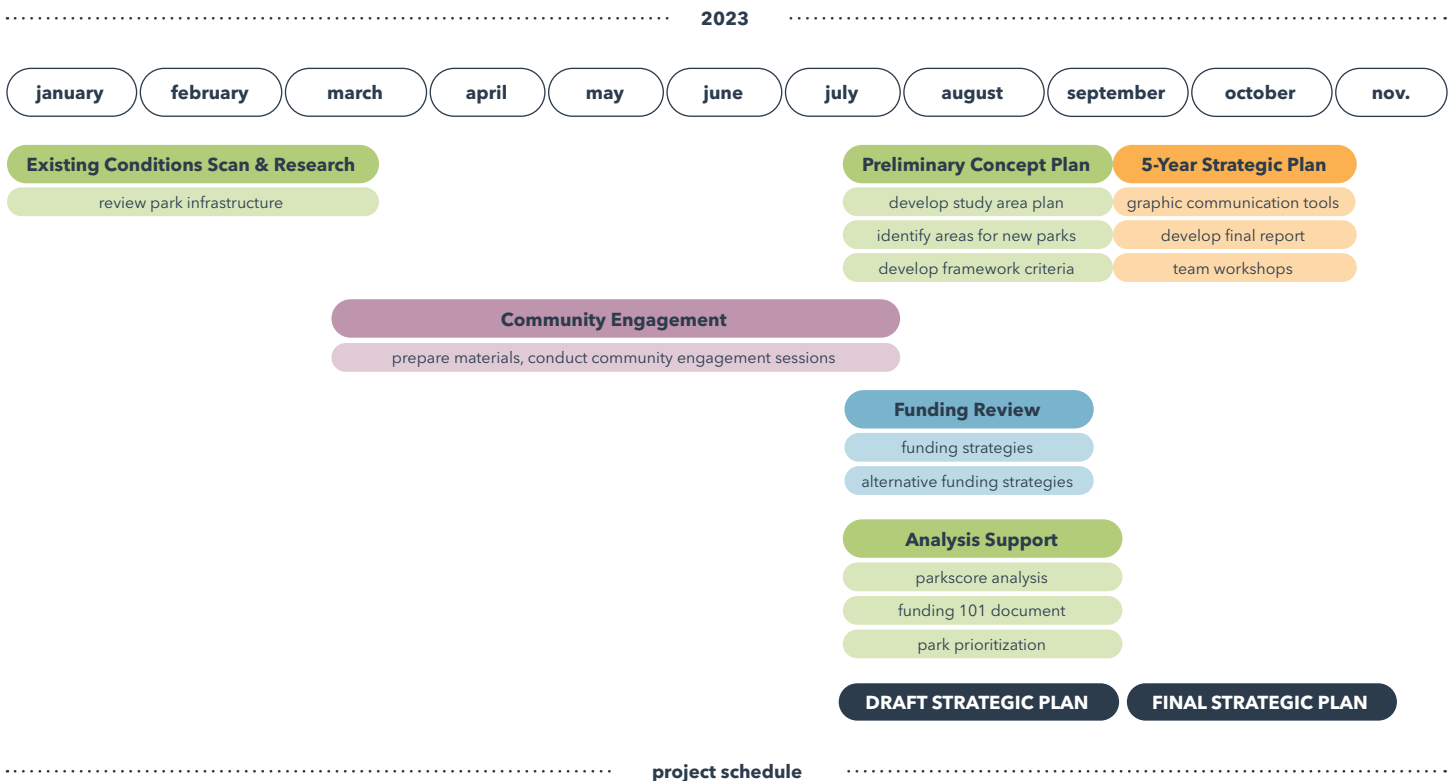
The Strategic Plan is a synthesis of two primary efforts: identifying investment opportunities and investment strategies. Investment opportunities were derived from the park analysis, which included an extensive analysis of Stamford’s environmental, social, and economic assets and risks, and from the community engagement which gathered feedback voiced by the public and key stakeholders. Investment strategies were identified through targeted interviews and conversations with city officials and other key stakeholders, and were informed by extensive case study research on similar practices and comparable paradigms.

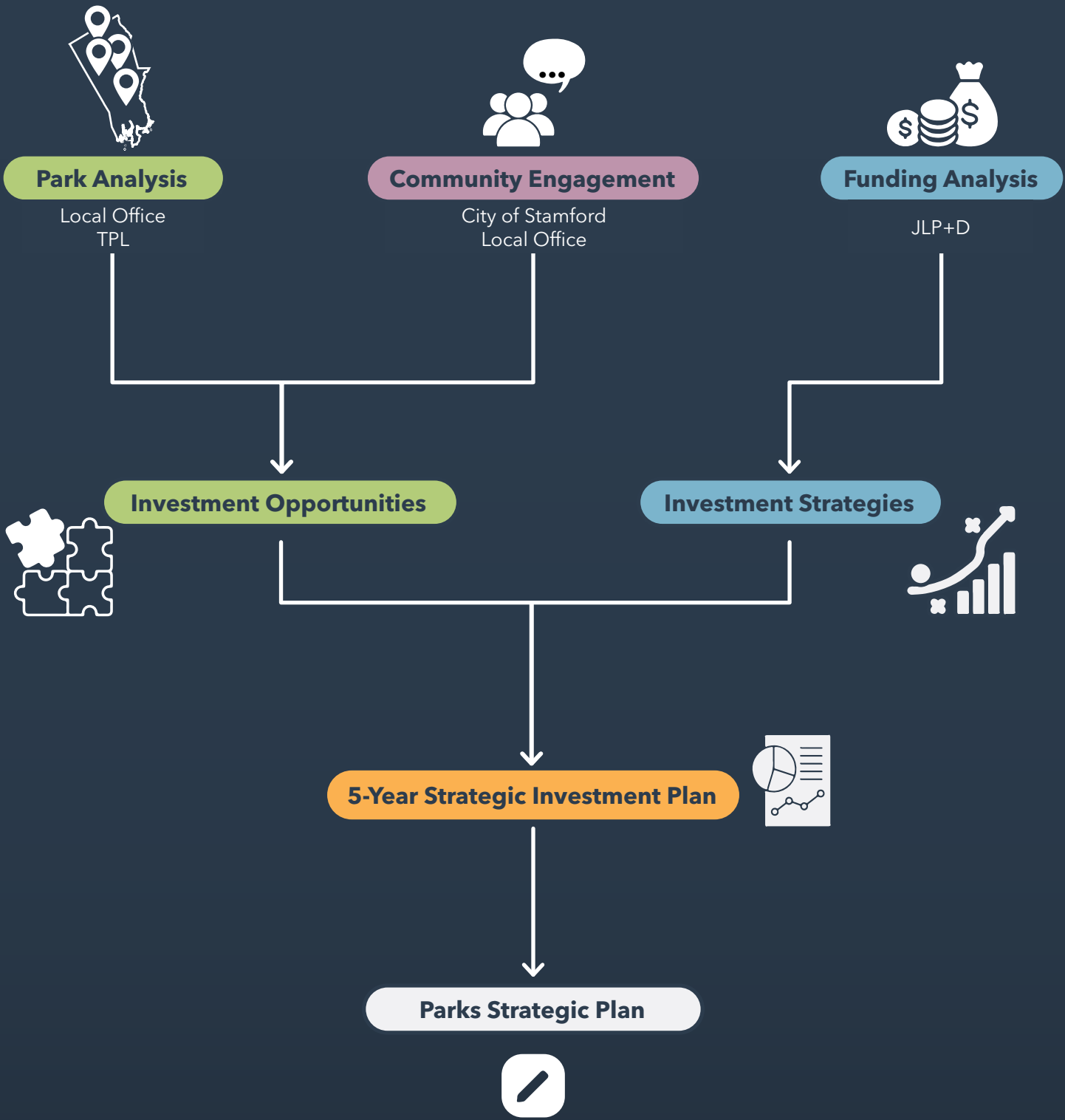
As part of the Park Analysis, TPL conducted an analysis on the existing park system and how this currently serves the community of Stamford in terms of access and equity. For the purposes of this analysis, only city parks with public access were taken into consideration, therefore excluding state parks, private facilities and large open spaces that don’t represent a park, which is particularly evident in the low-density and suburban neighborhoods of the city. The demographic profiles used in the analysis are based on 2020 Forecast block groups

provided by Esri and “low-income households” are defined as households with income less than 75% of the urban area median income; less than \$100,000 in Stamford.

As part of the Funding Analysis, JLP+D studied Stamford budget documents for capital and operating expenses from the past five-year period. This helped inform the recommendations made by the team. JLP+D researched and analyzed precedents on comparable funding models and then provided recommendations and next steps for alternative financing mechanisms and funding models for Stamford to advance the Plan.

After identifying the investment opportunities and strategies, the team developed a clear list of goals, strategies, and action items for the City of Stamford’s Parks Strategic Plan. In addition to identifying priority areas and park-wide initiatives, the Plan includes a 5-year strategic plan that organizes action items that can be addressed during the next five years in a qualitative timeline of priorities.







part one 
**community
engagement**

Community Outreach

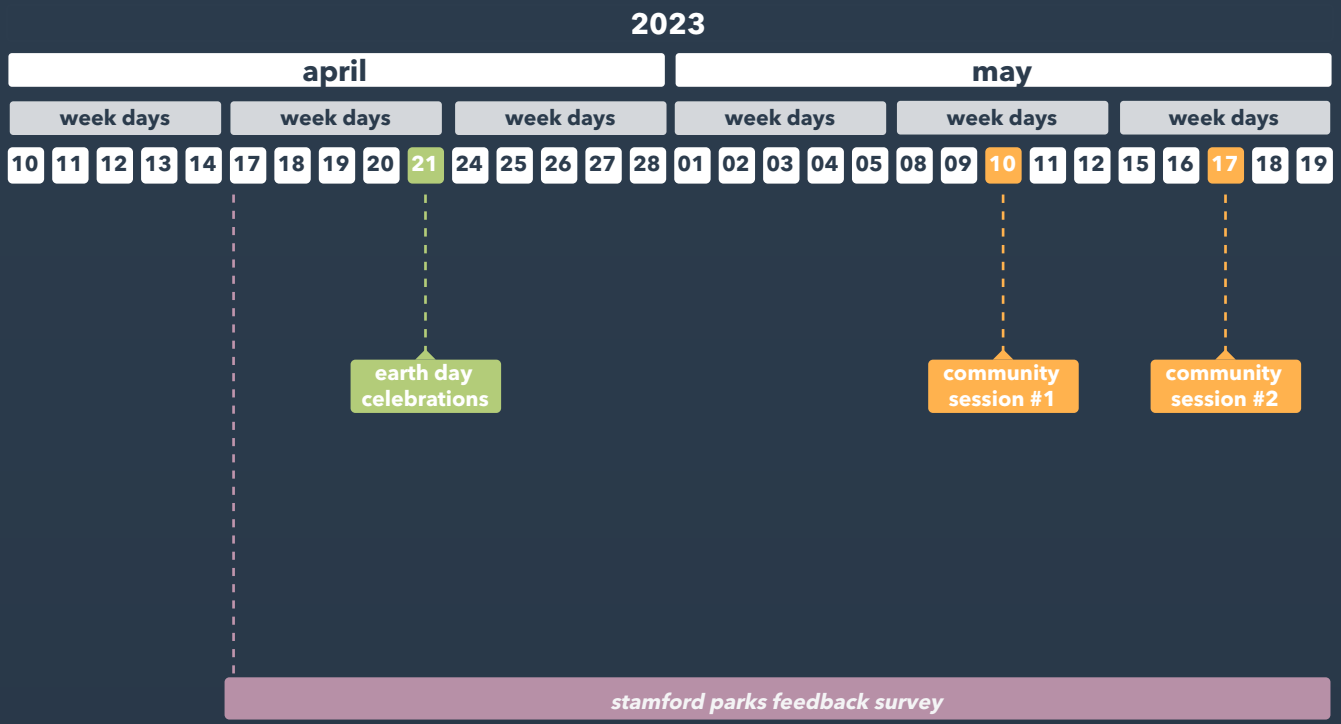
Strategy

Community engagement is fundamental to the success of public projects and planning. Therefore, a fundamental part of this endeavor was understanding how the community utilizes the city parks, how they feel about their current state, and where they believe there can be improvements. To achieve this, the team developed multiple modes of engagement for community outreach:

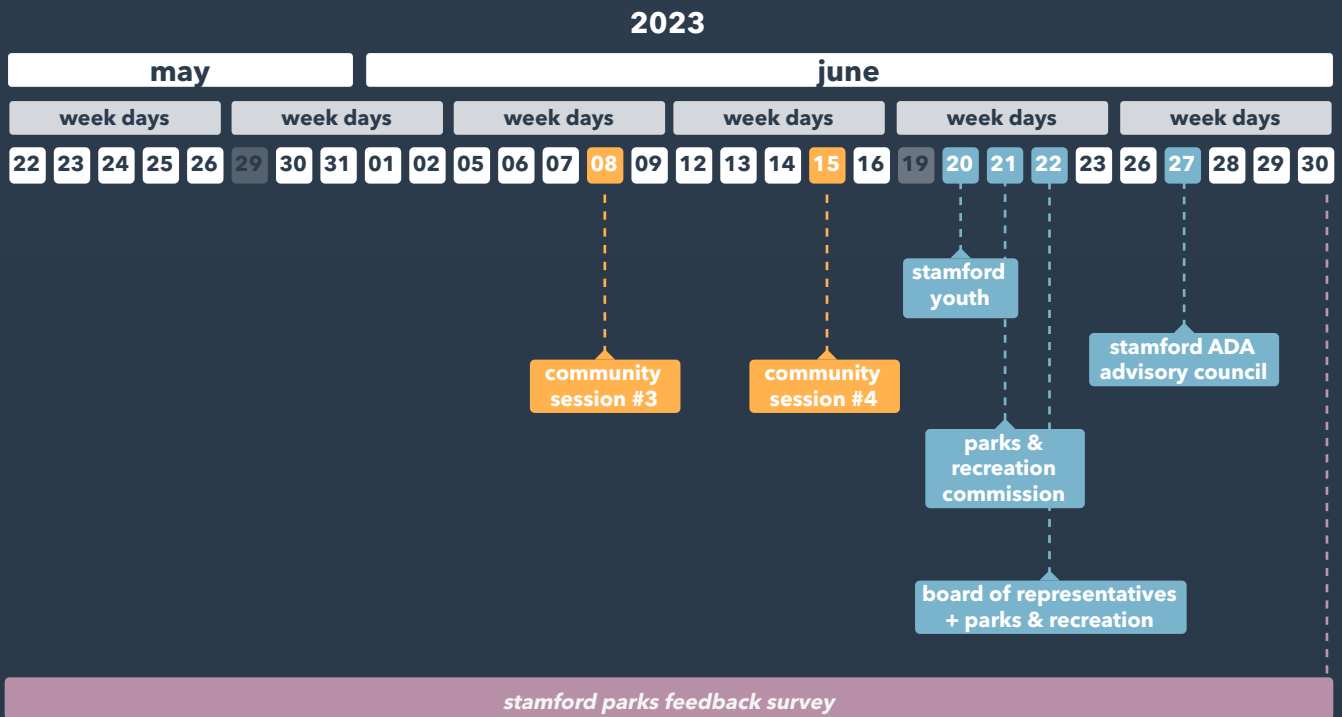
- 1. Recorded Video:** The consultant team and the Mayor's office collaborated on recording a video introducing the project to the public and providing an overview of the process. The purpose of this recorded video was to be available on the city's website and to be played in "community sessions" held by the city.
- 2. Online Survey:** An on-line survey was developed and distributed by the City as a curated questionnaire to understand how the community views the current state of Stamford's parks and which areas of operation need more attention.
- 3. Virtual Interviews:** The objective of the interviews was to meet with stakeholder groups to gather information on specific topics. The City, met with Stamford's ADA Council and discussed accessibility in parks.
- 4. Virtual Presentation:** The Consultant team gave presentations in two separate sessions to the Parks and Recreation Committee and the Parks and Recreation Commission, overviewing the progress to-date of the project and taking the opportunity to gather feedback from the members of the Committee and Commission.
- 5. Workshop:** The City hosted 4 Community Sessions for public discussion on City parks and workshopping ideas for increased community activity, participation, and potential revenue opportunities.
- 6. Summary:** The City provided the team with a detailed report on the outcomes of the community outreach, consolidating the feedback given.



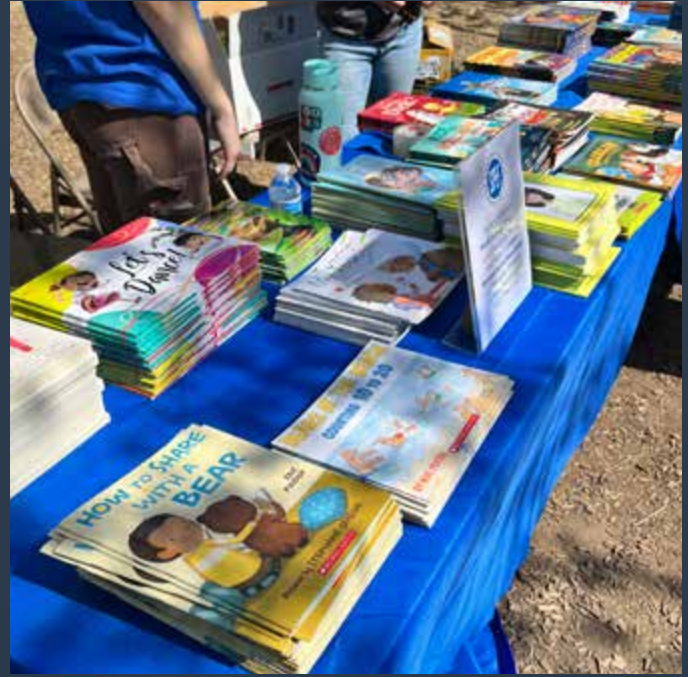
Community Engagement Schedule



- earth day ■
- stakeholder events ■
- community sessions ■
- stamford parks feedback survey ■



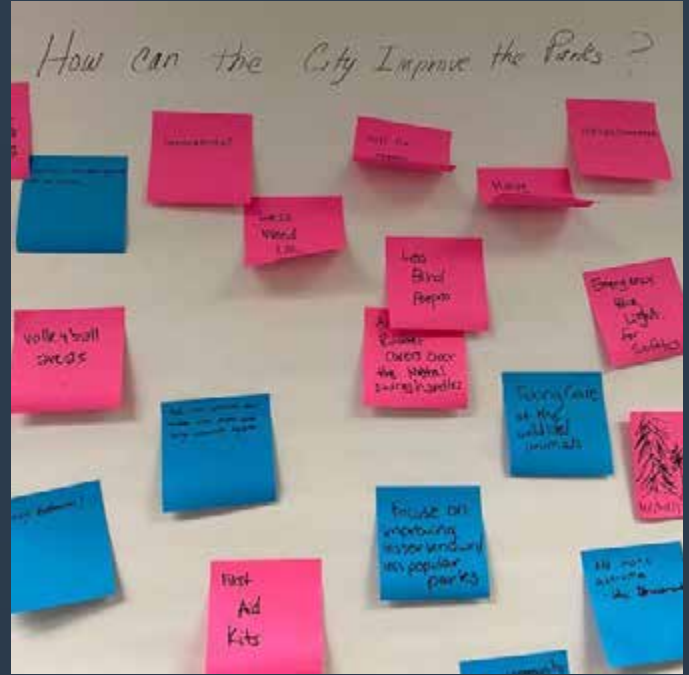
Photographs from Community Engagement Events



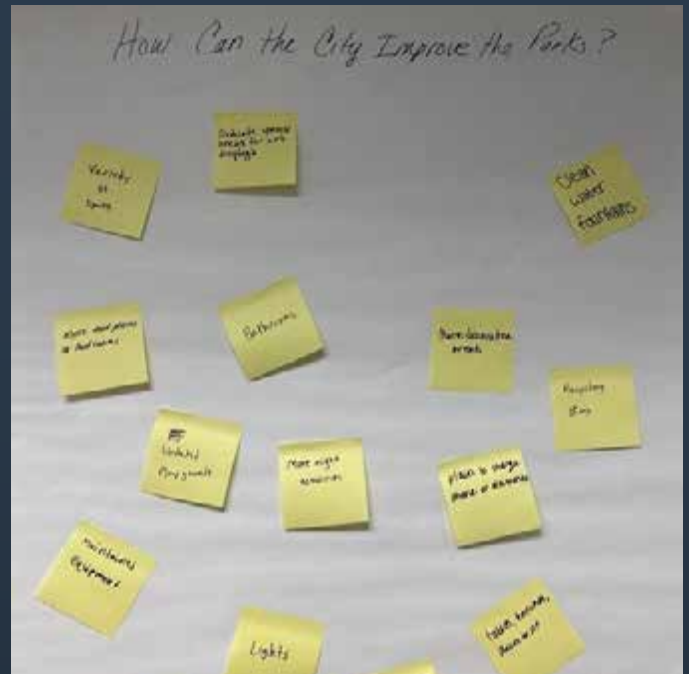
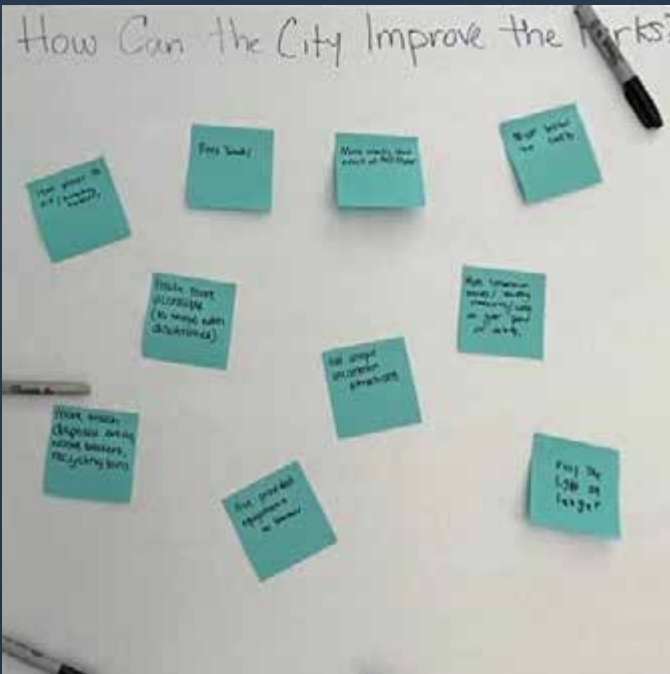
Books Across Stamford Book Giveaway by SPEF and Read-A-Loud with the Mayor at Drotar Park



Tree and Seed Planting at Carwin Park



Community Session with the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program



Community Session with the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program

Community Input

Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the Stakeholder Engagement process, the City and Consultant team participated in community events, sessions and presentations with key stakeholders and youth groups. These included Community Sessions with members of the public that took place on May 10th, May 17th, June 8th, and June 15th; Special Group Meetings with members of the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program and the Stamford ADA Council on June 20th and June 27th respectively; and virtual sessions with the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Board of Representatives of the Parks and Recreation Committee on June 21st and June 22nd respectively. The collective input from those who participated in the stakeholder engagement process is synthesized below.

Enhancements: There is an overall consensus for the provision of additional restroom facilities in public parks, to maintain a level of cleanliness, and ensure they are operational year-round. Additionally, playgrounds and sports fields are in need of refurbishment, and the public has expressed interest in additional recreational areas being included in the park network, or converting underutilized sports fields to alternative field uses with higher demand. The public desires better connectivity throughout the park system and the parks themselves by improving the connections between biking and walking trails and increasing the available bike racks at each park. The provision of additional lighting, seating, and the integration of technology to ensure park equipment and facilities are resilient and adjustable to shifting weather conditions, are expressed for increased comfort in public parks.

Maintenance: Maintenance emerged as a consistent theme throughout the community engagement process. Concerns include the need for better trash management and waste disposal which could be achieved by increasing available trash bins, promoting cleaning campaigns, and hosting community clean-up events. Blighted and deteriorating buildings found in certain parks and beaches are a public concern and should either be removed for additional open space or refurbished for supporting park facilities.

Environmental: Participants noted heat concerns in their neighborhoods, and raised the need for installing splash pads for children, using natural instead of plastic materials for play

surfaces, providing shade structures, and increasing tree canopy to create shade in public spaces. Overall there is strong interest in additional vegetation, with thoughtful planning for the strategic placement of trees and incorporating native species.

Operations: For coordinated efforts in increasing vegetation, tree canopy and conservation efforts, participants suggested hiring specialists such as an Urban Forester and a Habitat Manager to oversee relevant projects. Additionally, participants showed interest in the development of stewardship programs to help mobilize community groups in caring for and cultivating their neighborhood parks, and promoting the lesser known parks to attract more interest.

Safety and security are a public concern, primarily regarding littering, plant theft, violent incidents and vandalism. Public input calls for additional policing and enforcement to be made available in parks and be present during the night, as well as ensuring first aid kits are available throughout the park system. Concerns were also raised regarding the homeless population in public parks.

For meeting community-specific needs, participants asked for the strengthening of communications between non-profit organizations and the local community, and offering surveys to residents to ensure that the programming offered in parks reflects the needs and wants of those they serve.

Accessibility: Park planning should have a holistic approach and equitably provide access to all users. Accessible parking, sidewalk and curb cut improvements are important for accessing parks. Accessible pathways are needed for wheelchair access, walkers, and strollers for circulation through parks. Accessible seating in shaded areas is necessary for disabled seniors. Playscapes are often not accessible to children with mobility issues, most notably lacking accessible pathways and ramps. Message boards can be included for children who have difficulty communicating verbally. Bathroom facilities in public parks need to be accessible by all users.



Survey

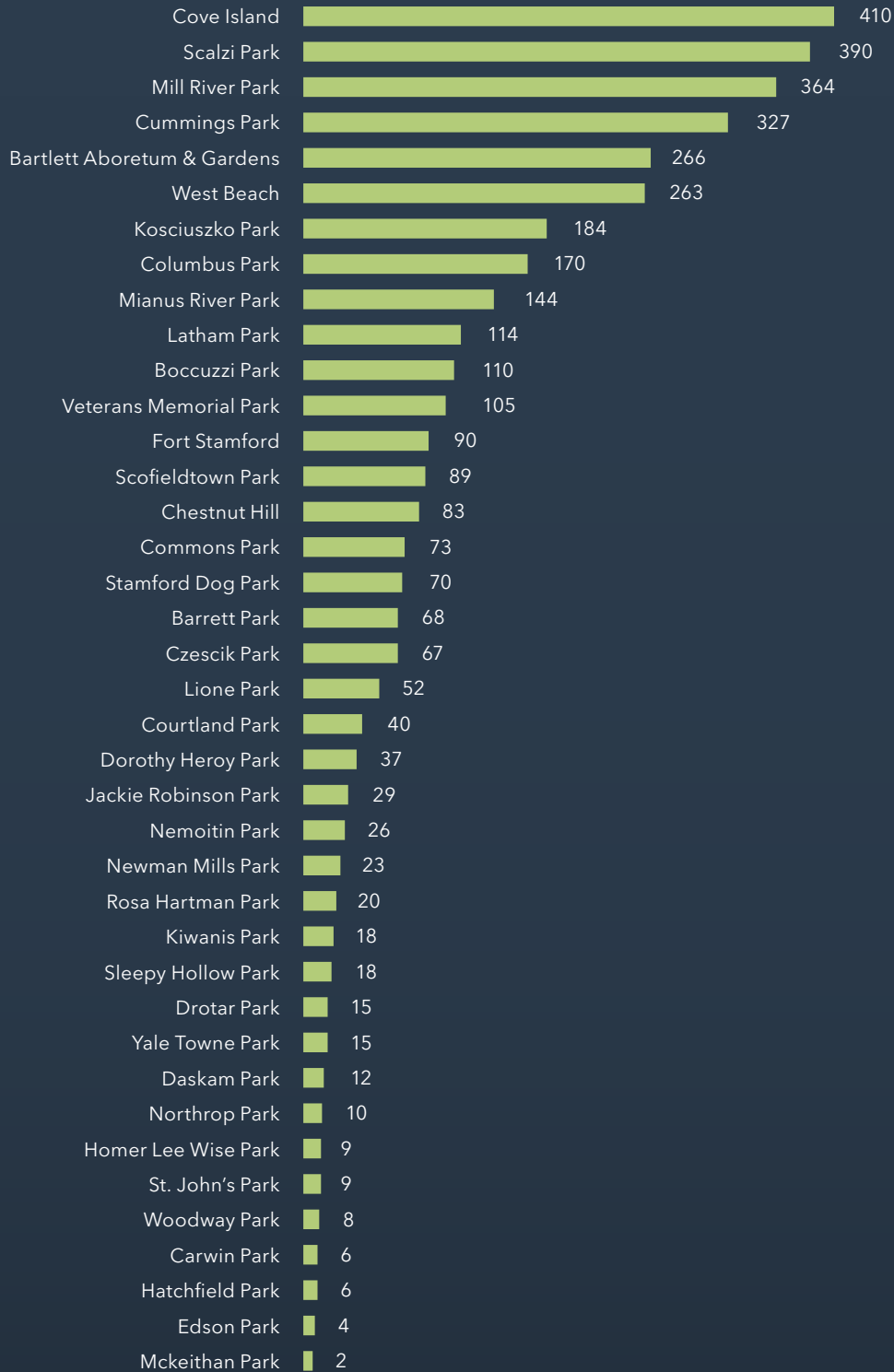
In addition to the stakeholder engagement, the City developed an on-line survey to reach a wider audience across the Stamford community. Throughout the Spring of 2023, for approximately two months, the Stamford Parks Feedback Survey was posted to the city's website and advertised to the community through outreach performed by city representatives. To ensure a broad outreach and increased participation, the survey was developed in both English and Spanish versions. The survey consisted of 12 questions which sought to gather as much feedback as respondents chose regarding park visits, upkeep, safety, and potential improvements.

533 responses were received with a 68% completion rate. All primary questions were completed by at least 80% of those submitting the survey, with follow-up questions being completed at a substantially lower rate.

Regarding location data, no stratification system was made in proportioning response rate to census tracts or neighborhoods. The survey only asked respondents to provide their street of residence and parks visited, a decision that was made based on the likelihood of receiving a sufficient and representative enough sample to take this approach. Outreach efforts were targeted in areas which had minimal response rates. As expected based on other sources, survey respondents were more likely to be frequent park visitors than the average Stamford resident. The outcome of the survey results are outlined further in following pages.

533
survey responses

Please indicate all the parks visited in the last year for you and members of your household.



Park Safety

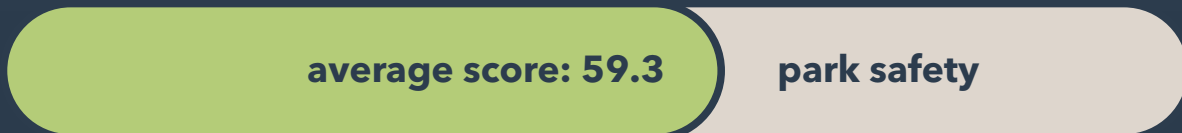
When asked to rate safety in city parks, the mean and median responses were 59 and 69 out of 100 respectively. The distribution of the data provides more insight into how residents responded. There were three modes to the data; narrow peaks at 0-4, 50-54, and a broader normal distribution of responses centered at 80-84. This suggests that a slight majority of residents feel positively about safety in city parks, with 54.95% of responses falling between 65-100. Successfully smaller groups of respondents view the city's parks as neither unsafe nor safe, and unsafe.

Individuals were also asked whether they believe that existing park rules and regulations are adequately enforced. Overall, 51.07% of respondents said that they are adequately enforced.

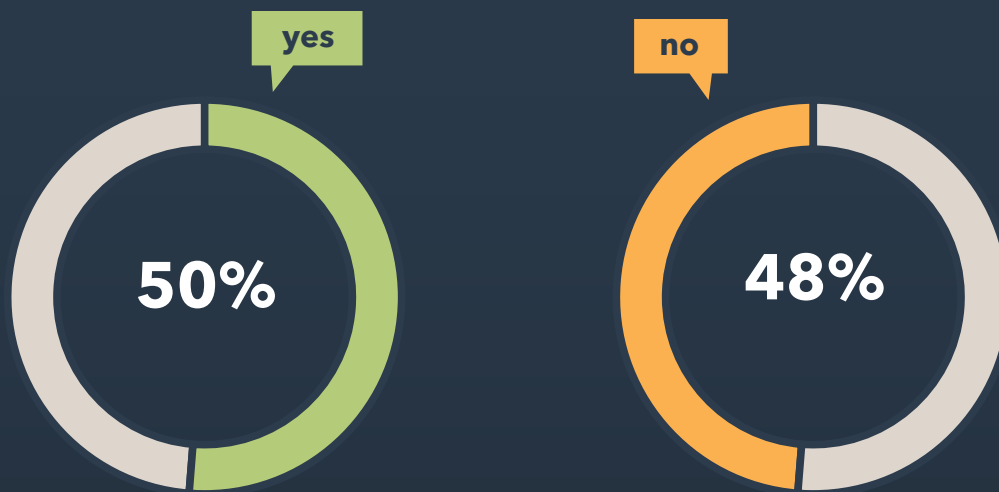
Residents were also provided an open-ended question in the case that they did not believe park rules and regulations were adequately enforced in which they could specify which rules and regulations are an issue. Of the 233 "No" responses, 193 provided a response to the follow-up question. Several issues were raised frequently. In alphabetical order: dogs (off leash and waste), noise, drug and alcohol use, and littering were involved in the majority of complaints. A general trend was also visible in that dog-related issues were especially prevalent among those visiting either Mianus River and Bartlett Arboretum while noise-related issues were most prevalent among those having visited multiple beach parks.



How would you rate the safety in city parks?



Do you believe existing park rules and regulations are adequately enforced?



Park Maintenance

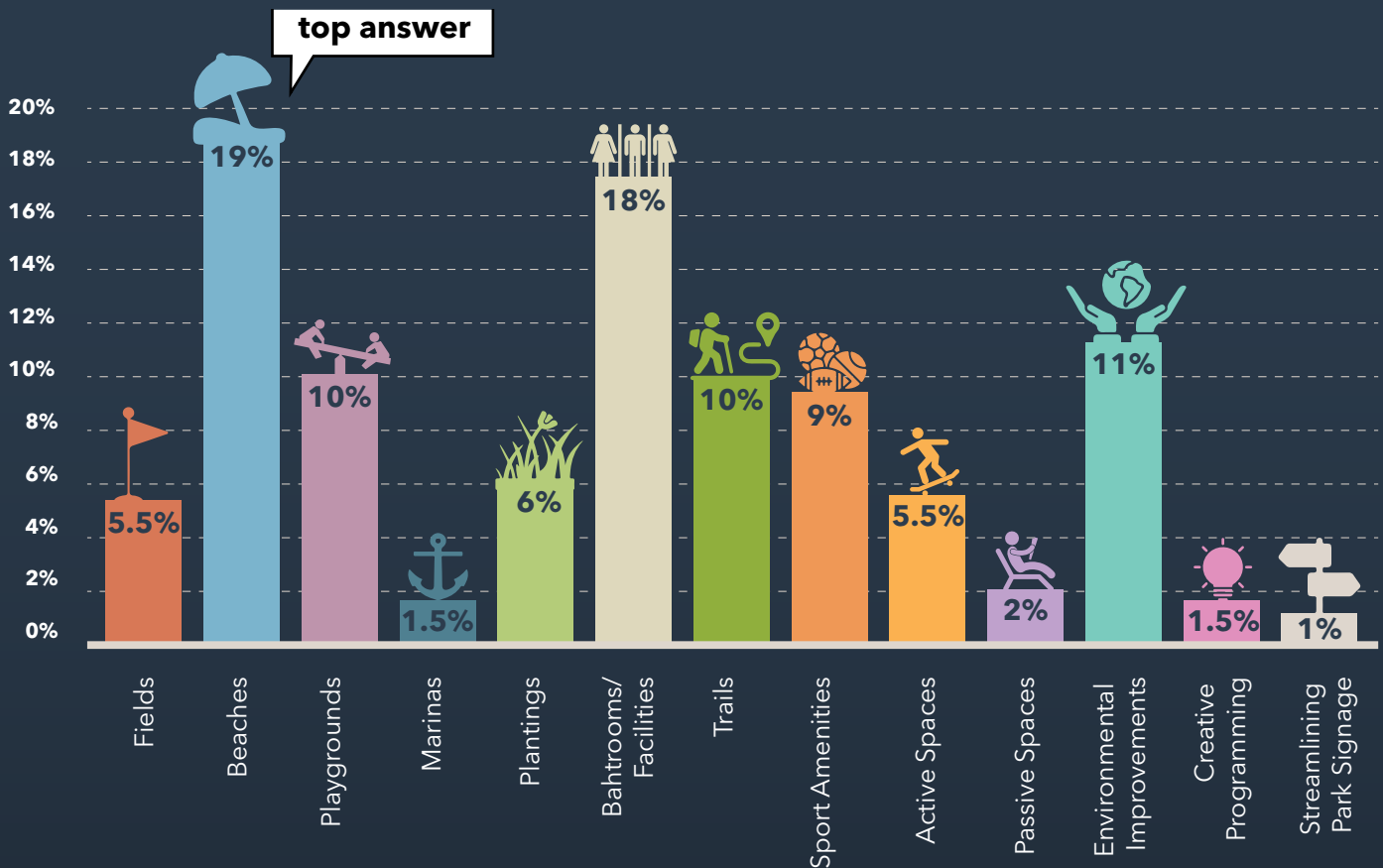
Survey respondents were asked to describe the city's beach maintenance in particular, which received an average score of 52.6. The survey also asked respondents where they would like to see additional maintenance be prioritized. The survey determined that 19% of the respondents would prioritize additional maintenance to public beaches, while bathrooms/facilities were rated second at 18%. Combined together, the two categories were rated almost twice as high as the next selection. Marinas, creative programming, and park signage were scored at the bottom of the priority list.



How would you describe the City's beach maintenance?



If the City invested more in maintenance, where would you like to see the maintenance prioritized?

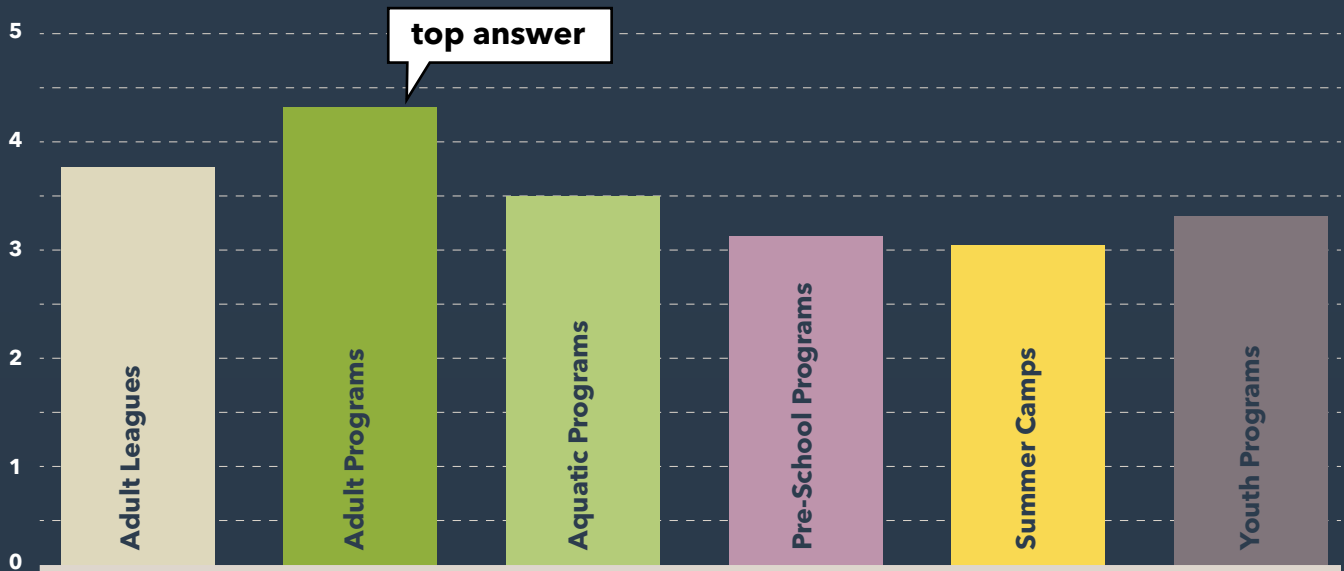


Expanded Program Offering

Survey takers were asked to rank a list of six program offerings to communicate where the public would like to see program offerings expanded. The question required respondents to rank the complete set of six, rather than selecting their top choice. As an overall observation, adult program offerings possessed a higher interest average than youth program offerings. Specifically, preschool programs, summer camps, and youth programs were ranked lower than adult leagues and adult programs. Aquatic programs received an average ranking among all responses.



If Recreation expanded its programming offerings, what type of programming would you be interested in the City offering?

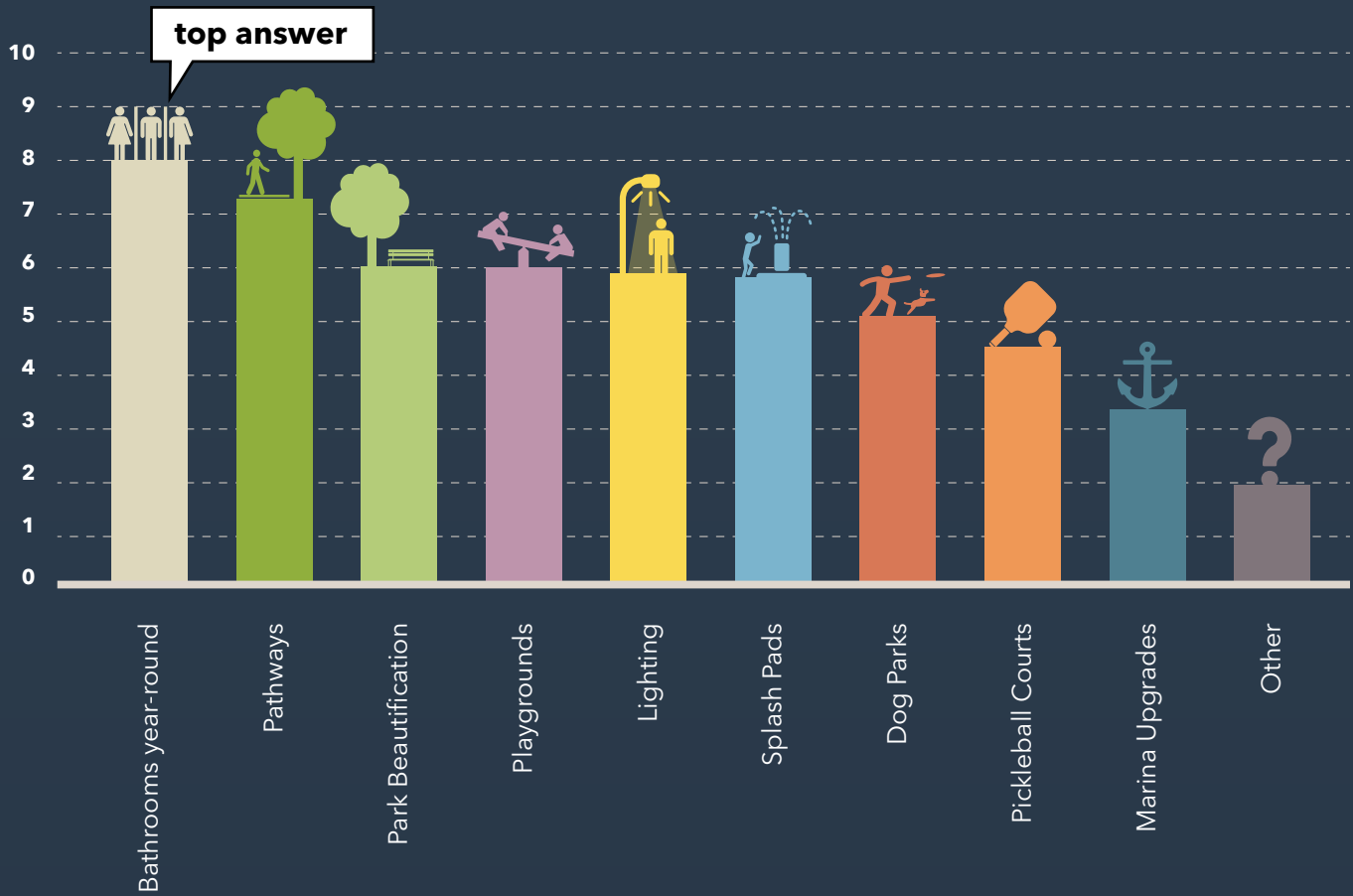


Capital Investments

Respondents were requested to rank the allocation of capital investments. Year-round bathrooms were ranked as the top selection by the highest percentage of respondents. Pathways were selected within the top 3 by the majority of respondents. Park beautification was the third ranked option. Marina upgrades were selected in the bottom three by more than 88% of respondents. From the remaining available options, playgrounds, lighting, and splash pads possessed a similar ranking.



Please rank your interest in the following potential capital park investments.



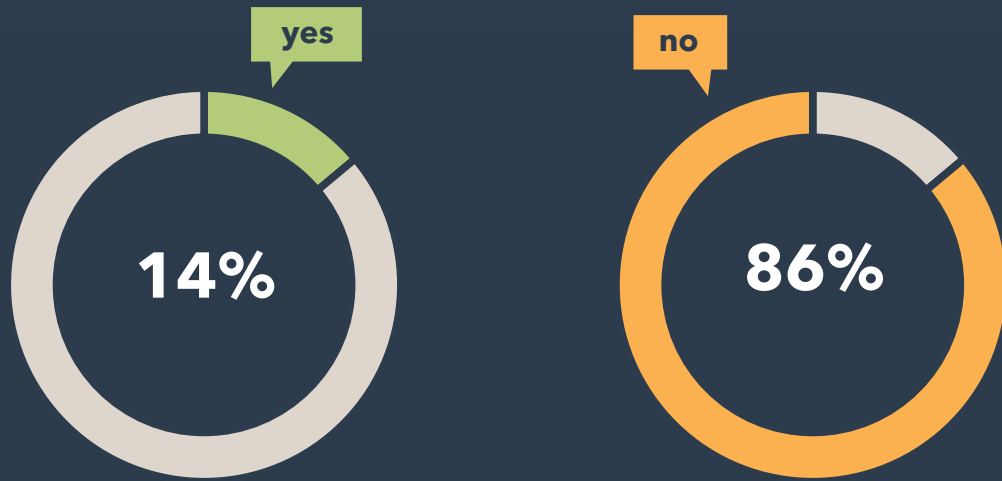
Accessibility

Approximately 1 in 6 respondents reported having challenges in accessing city parks. Respondents were also given an opportunity to expand on their challenges in a follow-up open ended question. While there was no single dominant response, the most prevalent among diverse responses were parking, distance, crime, and ADA accessibility.

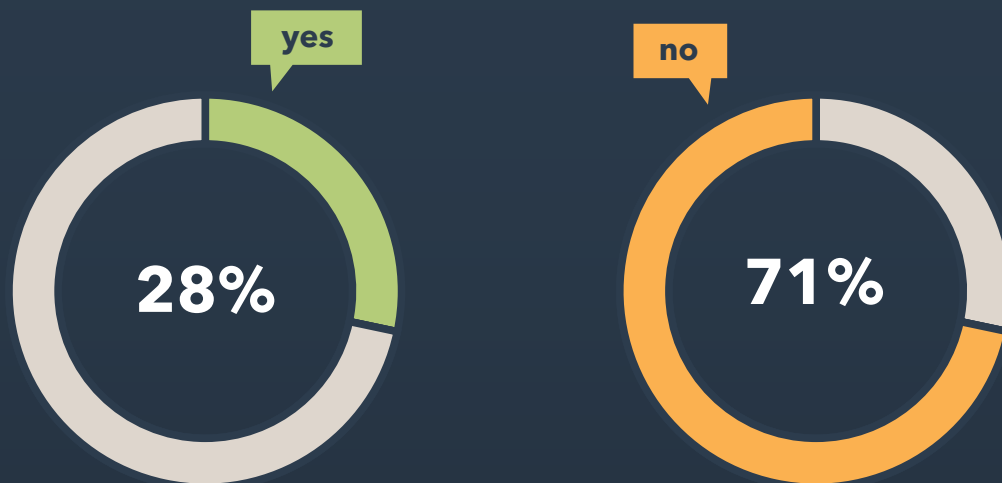
In addition, respondents were asked whether or not they were interested in permit parking at city parks. 72% of the respondents responded negatively to the City pursuing this. Only 41% of those respondents experiencing access issues in parks were in favor of permit parking.



Do you have any challenges accessing city parks?



Should the city explore permit parking at city parks?

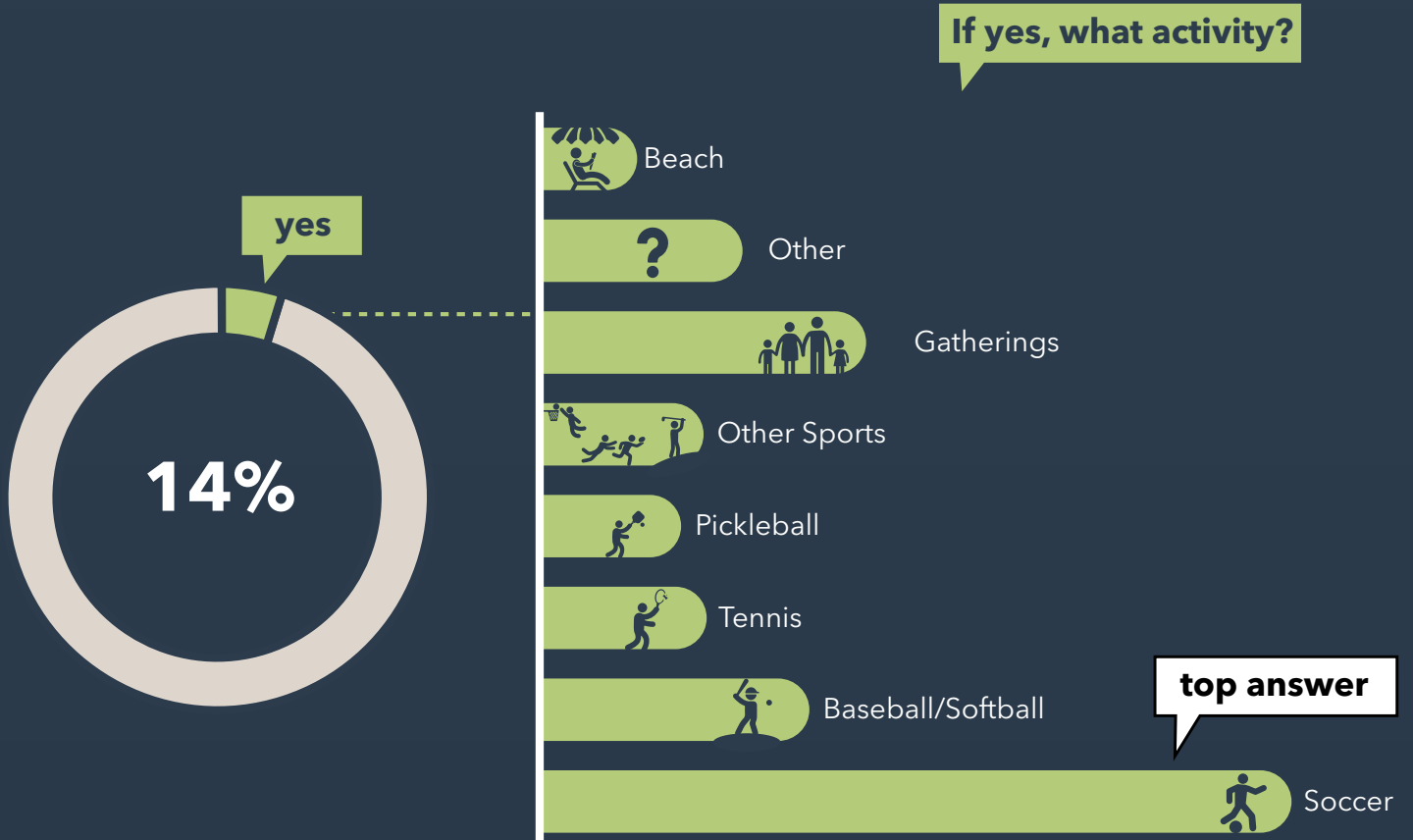


Permitting and Sanctioning

The survey asked respondents whether they do, or will seek future field use that requires permitting/sanctioning, and which activity that would apply to. Among the respondents, the majority responded negatively, with only 14% confirming field usage. In the follow up question, 36% of the responses noted soccer as the most popular specific activity amongst other sports. The second most popular answer was gatherings, which included family events and parties.



Do you currently, or will you in the future, seek field use that requires permitting/sanctioning?





part two



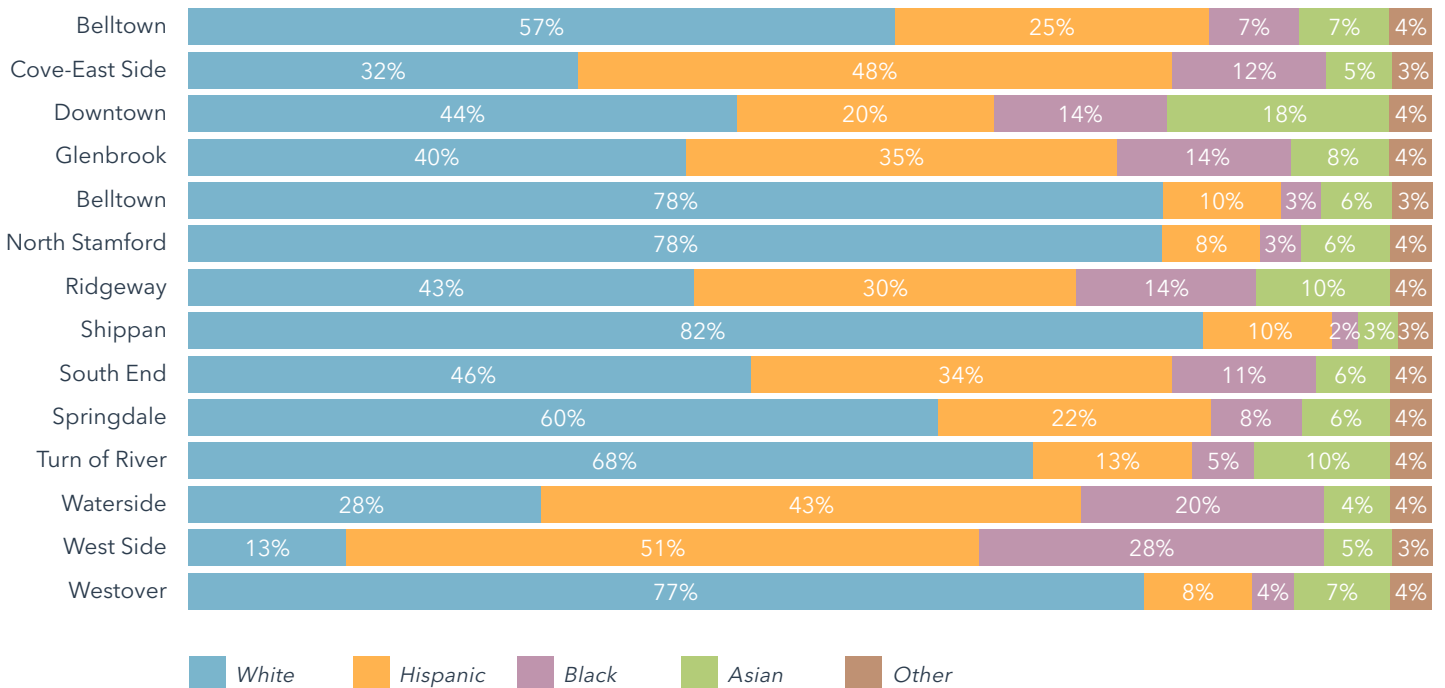
park analysis

Stamford Today

With over 136,000 people, the city of Stamford is the second most populous city in Connecticut and is comparable in scale to Bridgeport. This sizable population is composed of a diverse community, representative of many social and cultural backgrounds. The largest demographic at 48% is White, followed by 28.6% of Hispanic residents, 13% of Black residents and 8.8% Asian residents. The diverse population is also reflected in the demographic composition of neighborhoods.

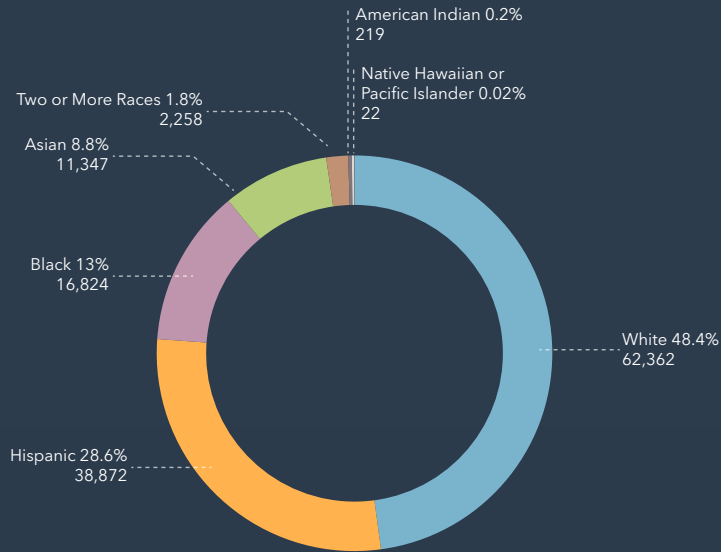
Population growth has been influenced by Stamford's metropolitan economy which is home to multiple corporate headquarters and serves as one of the largest financial hubs outside of the New York City area. Stamford's economic growth continues to rise given recent economic downturns experienced throughout the country.

Stamford's population has steadily increased since 1990 with a few spikes scattered through the last decades. Population growth is largely reflected in the southern neighborhoods of the city while the northern areas have remained steady or slightly declined. The growth of population in densely populated neighborhoods has increased the demand for open space as the acreage of open space per capita has continued to dwindle.

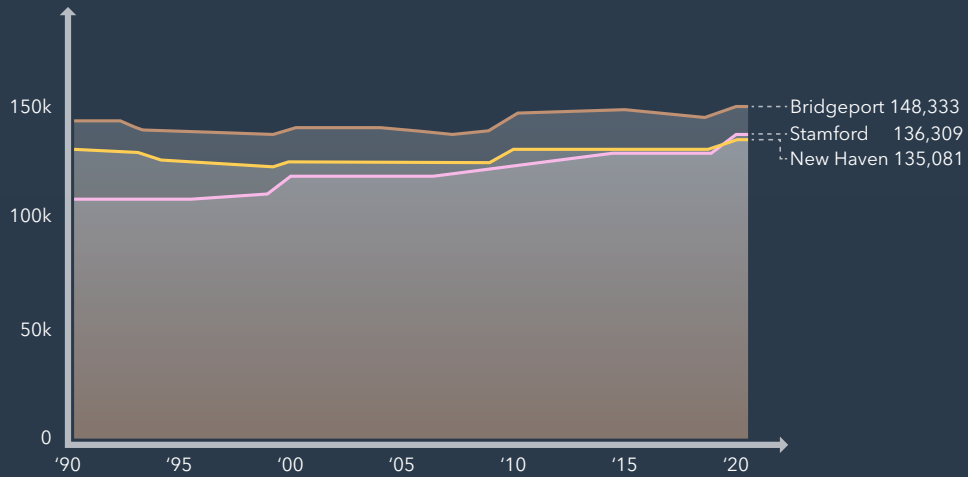


Population by Race by Neighborhood, 2020
Source: ctdatahaven.org

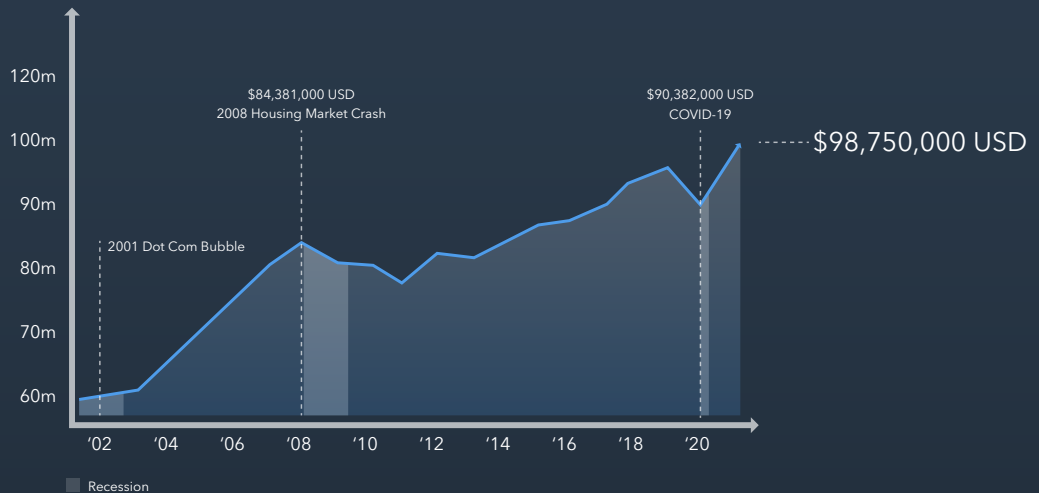
Part Two



Stamford Population by Race
Source: datacommons.org



Population Growth for Stamford, Bridgeport, New Haven
Source: datacommons.org

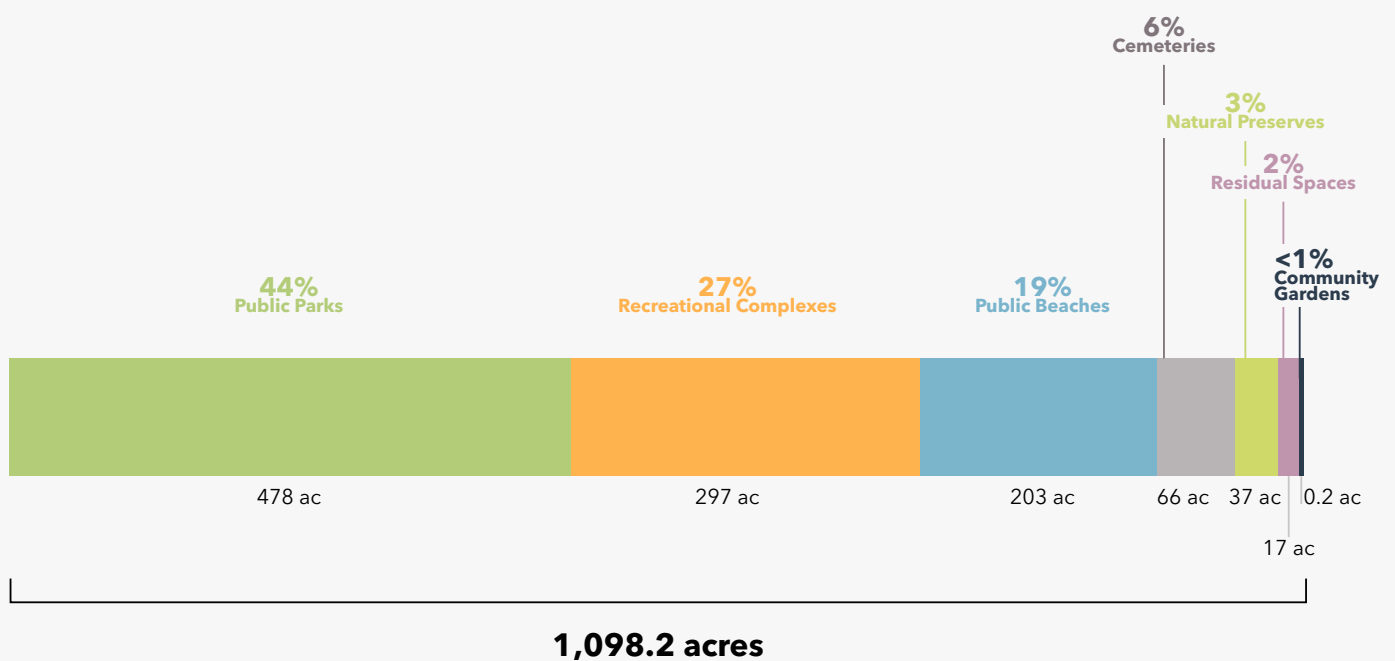


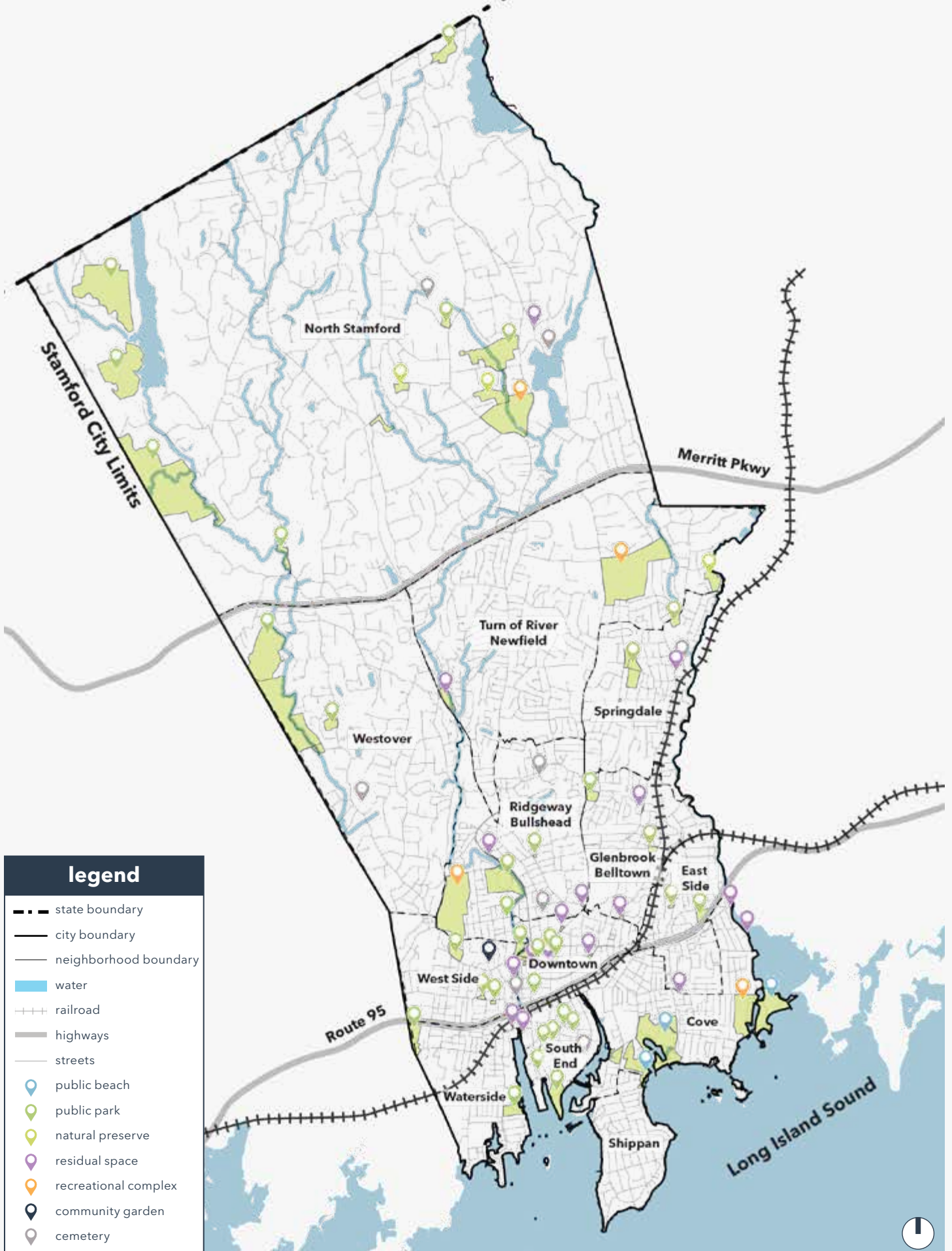
Total Gross Domestic Product for Stamford/Bridgeport Metropolitan Area
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Stamford Parks

The city of Stamford has an extensive park system of over 50 parks that provide an escape, respite, and recreation for Stamford residents, while attracting regional tourism through a range of year-round programming. While these are spread out across the city, there is a higher concentration in the southern part of Stamford, where the density of people and buildings is higher. Collectively, the city's open spaces amount to over 1,000 acres, the majority of which are occupied by public parks. Other types of open spaces include public beaches, such as Cummings Beach and Cove Island; natural preserves, mostly found toward the lower density areas of the city to the north; recreational complexes, such as the Terry Conners Ice Rink; cemeteries, often larger ones that are publicly accessible and provide a recreational component such as trails and seating; community gardens which, despite being a valued community asset, are lacking in quantity in Stamford; and residual spaces, which can be found throughout the city, either as easements, or larger pieces of undeveloped land. Several of these open spaces interface with the natural assets of the city, such as the waterfronts and marinas, or the rivers flowing through the city fabric as we move further inland.

As one of the city's greatest assets, it is crucial they are all cared for as such and to understand their use, conditions and needs. The existing park network was analyzed against a custom ParkScore Index for Stamford which offers a comprehensive overview of the park system and the amenities provided. The team also analyzed the environmental conditions affecting the city and its open spaces, and included a socioeconomic component as we aim to address climate justice.





Legend

- - - state boundary
- city boundary
- neighborhood boundary
- water
- +++ railroad
- highways
- streets
- public beach
- public park
- natural preserve
- residual space
- recreational complex
- community garden
- cemetery



Cove Island Park



Cummings Park



West Beach Park



Mill River Park



Kosciuszko Park



Scofieldtown Park



Dorothy Heroy Complex



Rosa Hartman Park



Newman Mills Park



Fort Stamford



Chestnut Hill Park



Barrett Park



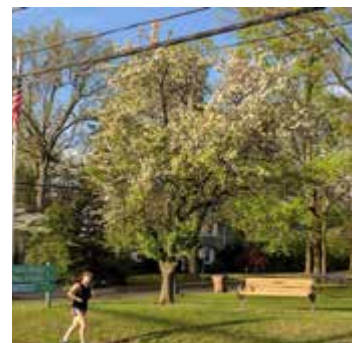
Veterans Memorial Park



Jackie Robinson Park



McKeithen Park



Homer Lee Wise Park



Mianus River Park



Bartlett Arboretum



Scalzi Park



Cove Island Park



John J. Boccuzzi Park



Woodway Park



Czescik Marina Park



Lione Park



Drotar Park



Harbor Point Commons



Northrop Field



Carwin Park



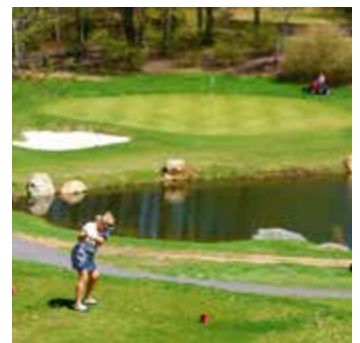
Kiwanis Park



Yale Towne Park



Columbus Park

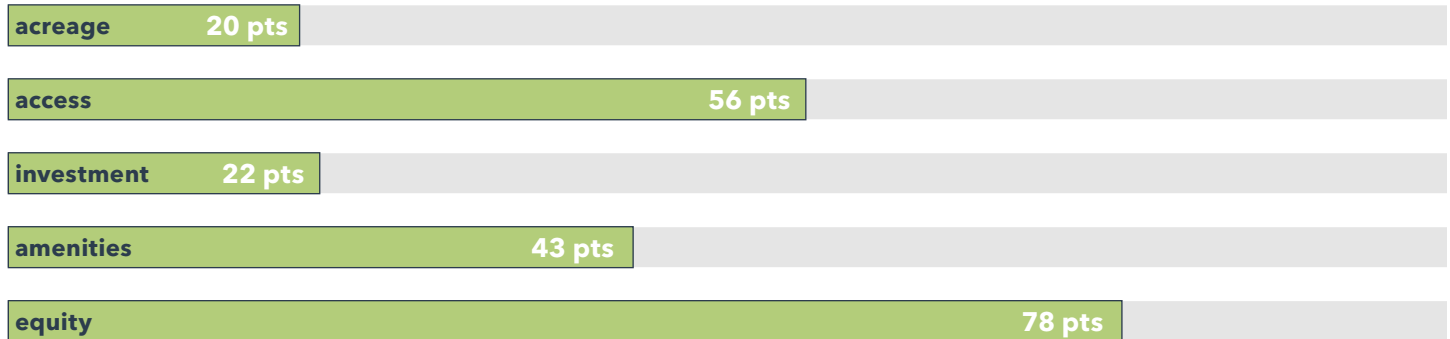


Brennan Golf Course

Stamford ParkScore Index

Overview

The ParkScore® index is the most comprehensive rating system developed to measure how well the 100 largest U.S. cities are meeting the need for parks. Across the country, more than 100 million people—including 28 million kids—don't have a park within a 10-minute walk of home. Among the 100 largest U.S. cities, residents in neighborhoods of color have access to 44% less park space than those in white neighborhoods. Trust for Public Land (TPL) applied the ParkScore Index® methodology to Stamford's park system to identify its strengths and weaknesses relative to the 100 most populous U.S. cities, as well as a peer city of New Haven. The ParkScore index measures how well Stamford compares against the nation's most populous cities on measures across 5 categories reflective of an excellent city park system: Acreage, Access, Investment, Amenities, and Equity. The Acreage and Access categories reflect the importance of both large 'destination' parks as well as ensuring all residents have access to a public park within a short 10-minute walk of their home. The Investment and Amenities categories reflect the importance of high-quality parks - the spending needed to maintain them and a wide range of activities available for multi-generational user groups. The Equity category reflects the importance of ensuring park resources are fairly distributed between neighborhoods within a city. For each measure, points are awarded on a relative basis, based on how a city compares to the 100 most populous cities. For example, a score of 90 could be interpreted that Stamford is among the top 10% of cities for that measure. The score for each of the five categories is an average of its measures; a city's overall rating is an average of the five categories. The measures are selected to facilitate comparison across a wide-range of cities.



ParkScore does not include within its acreage parks that are not publicly accessible or that have prohibitive entrance fees.

Overall Score

44

out of 100 points

Based on our analysis, Stamford's park system received a ParkScore rating of 43.8 out of a possible 100 points, indicating that it ranks slightly below average when compared to the most populous cities in the country. Stamford ranks above average for the percentage of its population within a 10-minute walk of a park. It also ranks above average for equity, with high park access and acreage numbers for communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. The city performs more poorly on its acreage, amenities, and investment, indicating that although most residents live within a walkable half-mile, there is room to increase the range of activities available at parks, to increase park size, and to invest more in parks.

Acreage

20

out of 100 points

1,064 acres of parkland (4% of city area), median park size of 3 acres.

The acreage score indicates the relative scarcity of large 'destination' parks, which include large natural areas that provide critical mental health as well as climate and conservation benefits. This category is scored as an average of two metrics, parkland as percentage of city area and median park size. Stamford scores in the bottom fourth of cities reviewed in ParkScore for both metrics.

Access

56 *out of 100 points*

71% of Stamford residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park.

The access score indicates the percentage of a city's residents that live within a walkable half-mile of a park - the average distance that most people are willing to walk to reach a destination. In Stamford, 71% of its residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, making the city slightly above average for ensuring residents have access to at least one close-to-home park.

Investment

22 *out of 100 points*

An average of \$70 per person is spent on parks and recreation in Stamford each year.

The investment score indicates the relative financial health of a city's park system, which is essential to ensuring parks are maintained at a high level for all to enjoy. This category is scored based on the total parks and recreation spending per person across all agencies and organizations, including monetized volunteer hours. With a score of 22 points (\$70 per resident per year), Stamford ranks below most cities in terms of sufficient spending to maintain its parks at a high level.

Amenities

43 *out of 100 points*

13 basketball hoops, 3 dog parks, 19 playgrounds, 2 senior and rec centers, 31 restrooms, and 3 splashpads.

With a score of 43 points, Stamford ranks slightly below average in terms of providing key amenities that drive the park usage necessary for residents to enjoy the full range of benefits parks can offer. Of the six amenities, Stamford ranks among the nation's best in terms of splashpads, restrooms, and dog parks and one of the lowest for basketball hoops.

Equity

78 *out of 100 points*

In Stamford, 82% of people of color live within a 10-minute walk of a park, as do 85% of low-income households. When comparing park space per person, neighborhoods of color have access to slightly more park acreage than white neighborhoods. Low income neighborhoods have 39% less than high-income neighborhoods.

The equity score indicates how fairly parks and park space are distributed within a city. This category is an average of two types of metrics: 1) the percentage of people of color and low-income households within a 10-minute walk of a park and 2) a comparison of the amount of park space between neighborhoods by race and income. Stamford performs well in most of these metrics. People of low and low income households have higher 10-minute walk access than the city-wide average, and neighborhoods of color have a higher amount of park space per person than white neighborhoods. However, low-income neighborhoods have a lower amount of park space per person than high income neighborhoods.

Custom ParkScore Inputs & Results: Stamford

ParkScore points are out of 100, and generally correlate to the percentile Stamford would rank about the 100 most populous cities for that metric (100 is highest, 1 is lowest)

Est. ParkScore	43.8
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		ParkScore	Per Capita Benchmarks				Aggregated Inventory				
		(out of 100)	Stamford	ParkScore benchmarks			City-Wide	By Agency (Adjust columns for locality)			
		Points	Per Capita	Lowest	Median	to get 100 points	Total	City	Mill River Collaborative	Other Non-Profits	
Acreage		20									
parkland as % city area		15	4%	1.7%	9.8%	19.5%	1,064	1,064	N/A	N/A	
median park size	acres	24	3	0.6	5.4	10.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Amenities		43									
basketball hoops	per 10,000	1	0.9	0.9	3.8	7.7	13	13	included in City inventory		
dog parks	per 100,000	84	2.2	0.3	1.3	2.5	3	3	included in City inventory		
playgrounds	per 10,000	9	1.4	1.0	2.8	5.6	19	19	included in City inventory		
senior/rec centers	per 20,000	7	0.3	0.2	0.8	1.5	2	2	included in City inventory		
restrooms									included in City inventory		
splashpads									included in City inventory		
Investment		22									
overall investment	pp. 3yr avg	22	\$70	\$28	\$108	\$216	\$9,535,189				
spending	FY20 per person		\$80				\$10,891,095	\$7,307,559	\$3,531,626	51909.72	
	FY21 per person		\$53				\$7,172,536	\$3,781,545	\$3,346,372	44618.72	
	FY22 per person		\$71				\$9,767,869	\$6,581,573	\$3,044,917	141378.62	
volunteer hours											
	FY20 per person		\$2				6,855		1,078	5,777	
	FY21 per person		\$2				6,264		114	6,150	
	FY22 per person		\$2				9,752		1,179	8,573	
Access		56									
% population within 10 min walk		56	71%	35%	74%	100%					
Equity		78									
% ____ within 10 min walk of park:											
people of color		100	81.72	38%	75%	100%					
low income households		100	85.06	43%	75%	100%					
ratio of park space per person between:											
neighborhoods of color and white neighborhoods		75	1.13	0.09	0.73	1.47					
low-income and high-income neighborhoods		38	0.61	0.14	0.70	1.40					

Inputs			
	Population	Volunteer Value	Adjusted Area
FY20	136,700	33	24,069
FY21	136,545	33	
FY22	136,994	35	

Custom ParkScore Inputs & Results: New Haven (for comparative purposes)

ParkScore points are out of 100, and generally correlate to the percentile New Haven would rank about the 100 most populous cities for that metric (100 is highest, 1 is lowest)

Total	60.4
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		ParkScore	Per Capita Benchmarks				Aggregated Inventory					
		(out of 100)	Stamford	ParkScore benchmarks			City-Wide	By Agency (Adjust columns for locality)				
		Points	Per Capita	Lowest	Median	to get 100 points	Total	City	State	Schools	Preserves	URI
Acreage		36										
parkland as % city area		62	12%	2%	9%	19%	1,469	1,003	341	52	74	
median park size	acres	10	1.53	0.58	5.39	10.77						
Amenities		71										
basketball hoops	per 10,000	78	5.3	0.8	3.29	6.59	71	47		24		
dog parks	per 100,000	100	3.0	0.3	1.21	2.43	4	4				
playgrounds	per 10,000	100	5.8	1.0	2.84	5.68	78	57		21		
senior/rec centers	per 20,000	47	0.7	0.1	0.76	1.52	5	5				
restrooms		2	0.1	0.1	1.60	3.20	2	2				
splashpads		100	10.5	0.1	1.29	2.59	14	14				
Investment		35										
overall investment	pp. 3yr avg	35	\$77.26	\$16.12	\$94.97	\$189.95						
spending	2017 per person		\$67.80				\$9,008,043	\$8,761,130			\$246,913	
	2018 per person		\$80.40				\$10,730,700	\$10,335,480			\$395,220	
	2019 per person		\$79.03				\$10,540,311	\$10,116,793			\$423,518	
volunteer hours												
	2017 per person		\$1.10				\$146,210.40				1,198	3,637
	2018 per person		\$1.56				\$208,314.45				2,565	4,144
	2019 per person		\$1.89				\$251,557.08				4,045	3,799
Access		95										
% population within 10 min walk		95	96%	35%	73%	100%						
Equity		65										
% ____ within 10 min walk of park:												
people of color		96	97%	38%	74%	100%						
low income households		97	98%	43%	74%	100%						
ratio of park space per person between:												
neighborhoods of color and white neighborhoods		34	0.53	0.09	0.69	1.37						
low-income and high-income neighborhoods		32	0.53	0.11	0.71	1.41						

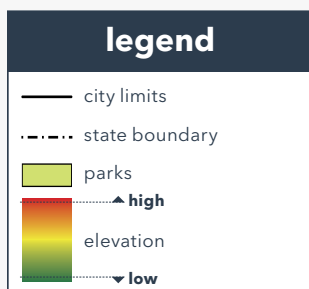
Inputs	
Population 2017	132,866
Population 2018	133,467
Population 2019	133,379
Adjusted Area	11,839

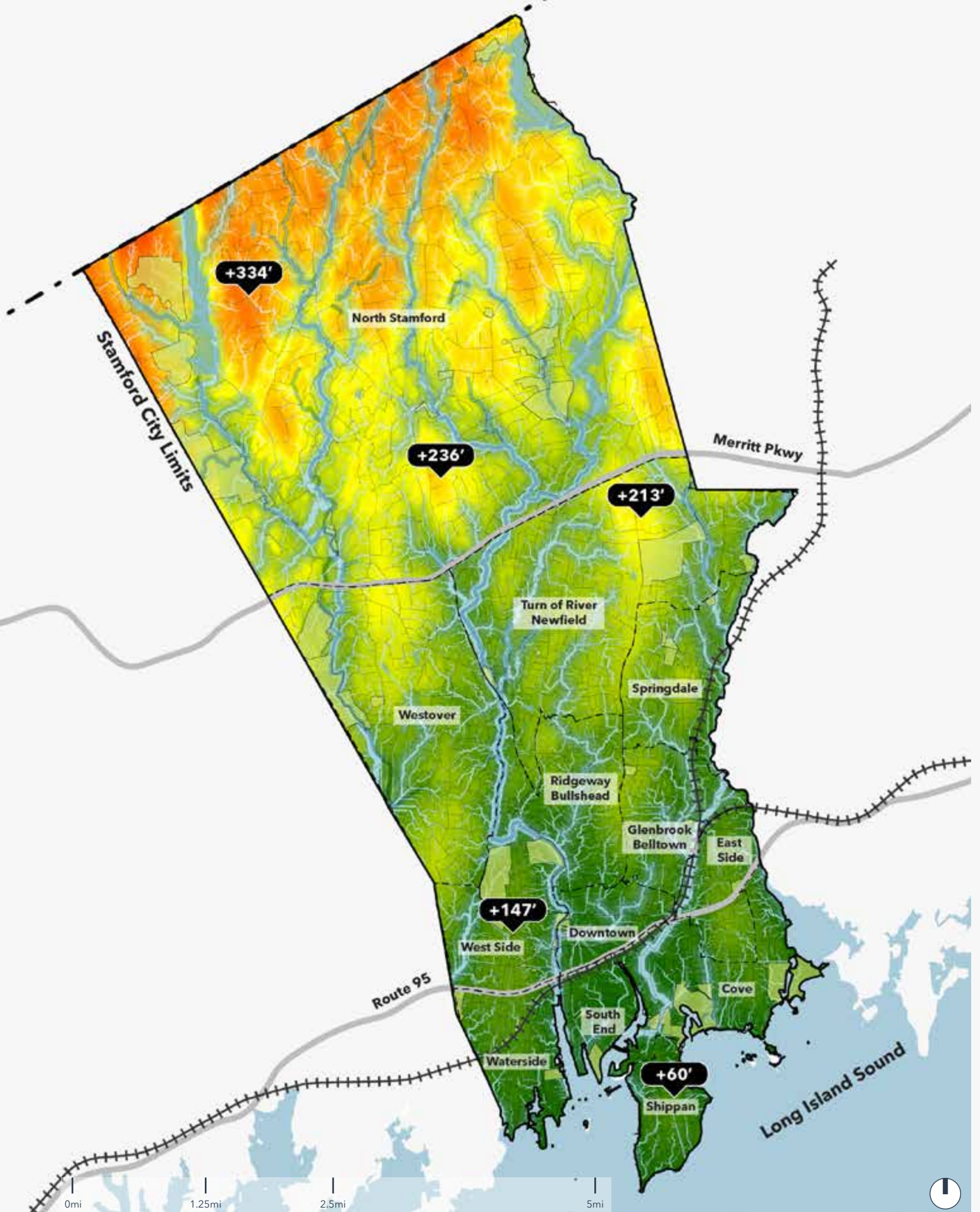
Environmental Analysis

Topography

The city of Stamford navigates a significant topographic variation between its southern coastal/waterfront edge and its northern limit.

The Long Island Sound serves as a connective armature for its coastal and upland communities. The hydrological analysis shows the natural flow of water which eventually connects to the rivers and creeks and empties out in the Long Island Sound. When considering storm events, the analysis helps to understand which areas, neighborhoods or streets would need to address stormwater runoff.





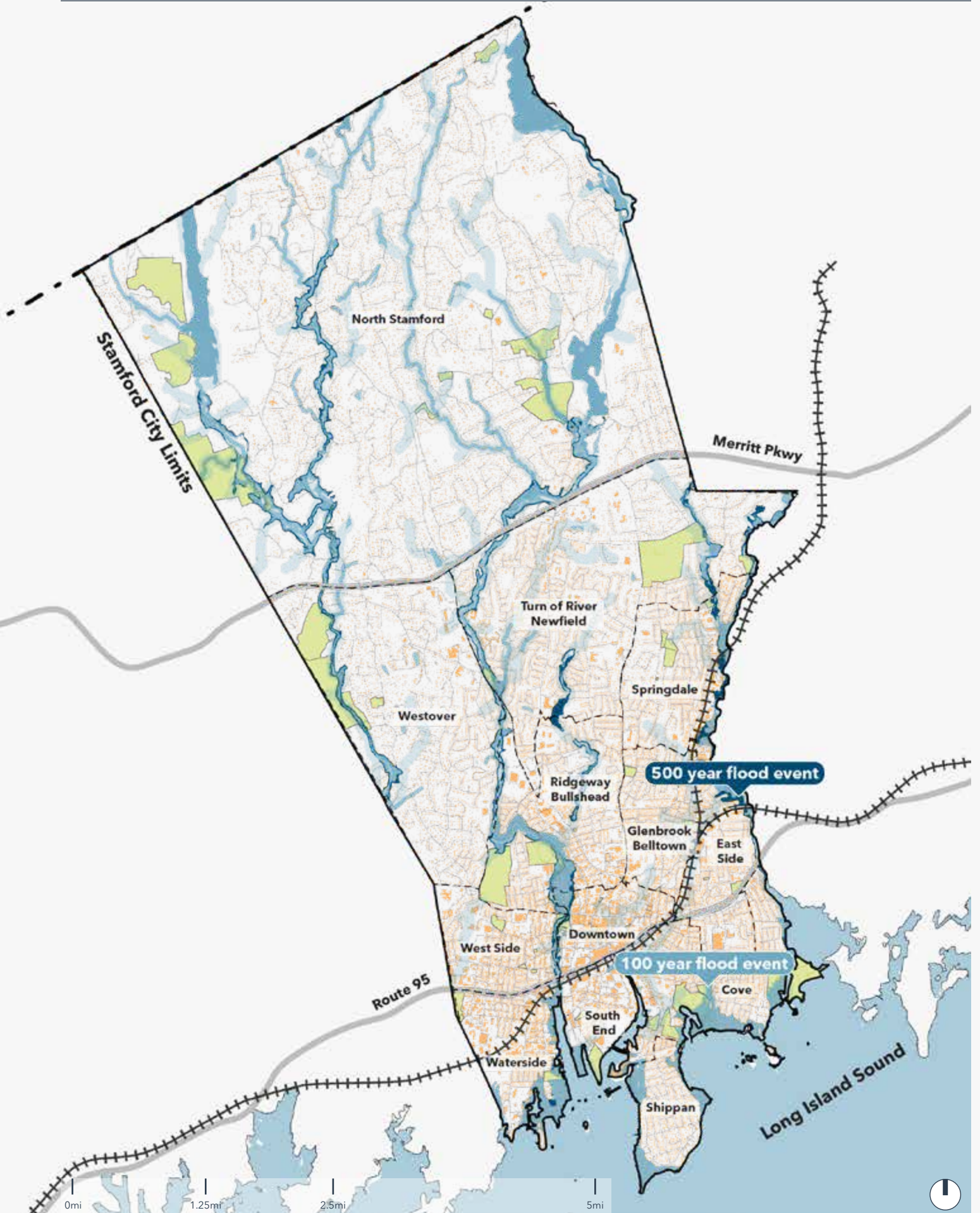
Flooding

Flooding in cities is a global concern, and Stamford is no exception. While there is notably significant vulnerability in the city's coastal neighborhoods, upland neighborhoods should not be overlooked as many of these areas experience flooding from intense rainfall and flash flooding due to their proximity to upland rivers and creeks. It is important to note that, oftentimes, upland flooding presents different challenges and impacts compared to flooding in low-lying areas.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Flood Hazard Layer (NHFL) data, Stamford's flood-susceptible areas fall in the 100-year storm event or 1% annual chance flood zone, and some under the 500-year storm event or 0.2% annual chance flood zone; occurrences whose frequency has increased dramatically over the past years. Preventative flood solutions must account for the "impact zones" along the hydrological flows, a 250ft buffer zone where interventions can have the greatest impact for vulnerable and flood-susceptible communities.



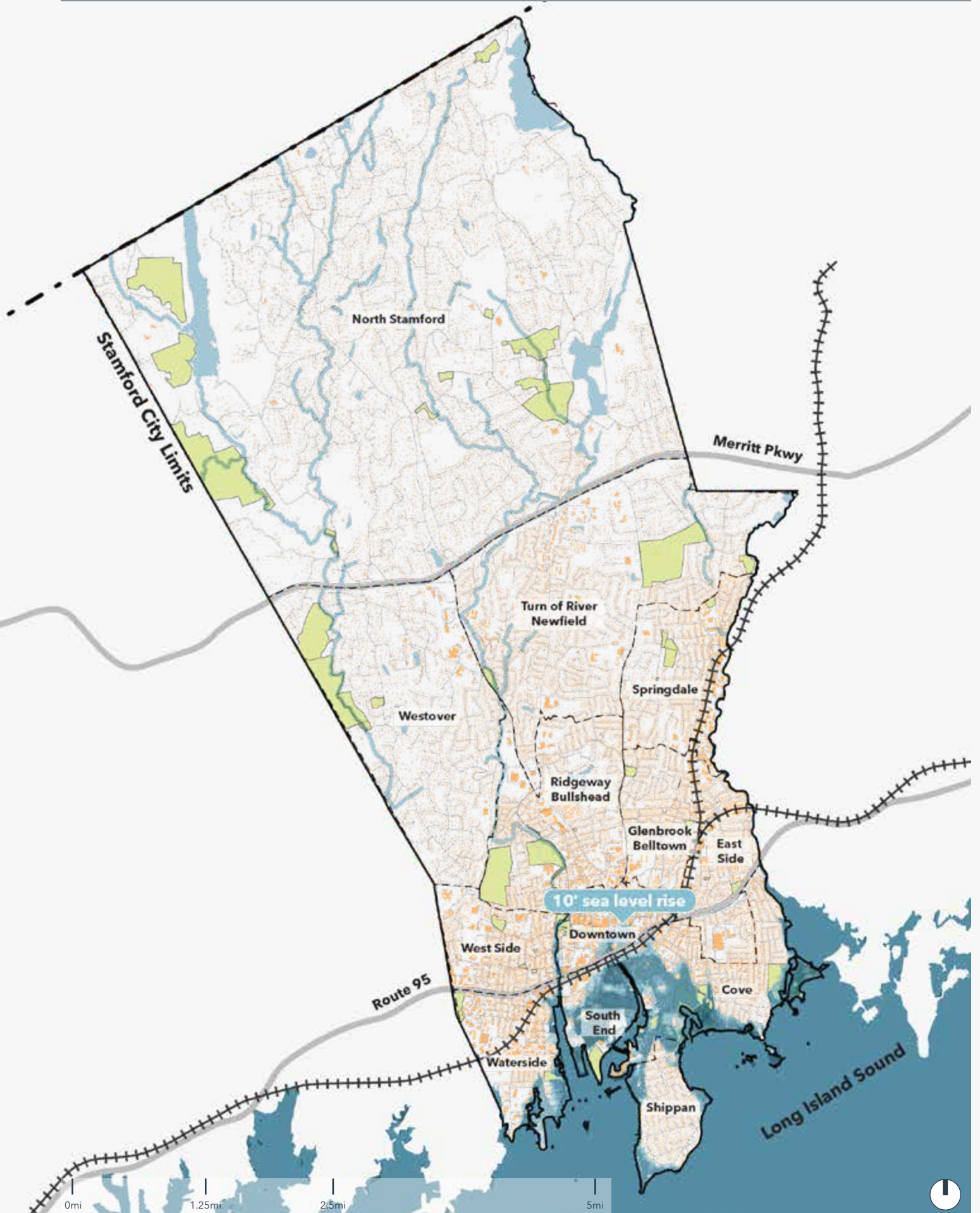
legend	
—	city limits
- · - · -	state boundary
■	parks
■	building footprints
■	waterbodies
■	100-year flood event
■	500-year flood event
○	impact zones



Sea Level Rise

Sea level rise poses a significant threat to coastal cities, gradually impacting communities, ecosystems, and infrastructure. Climate change plays a primary role in this phenomenon. As a coastal city, Stamford must adapt to these changing conditions and implement resilient strategies that involve green infrastructure, protective barriers, etc. Data collected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for sea level rise reaching up to 10 feet, show water extending from the Long Island Sound into the city fabric, impacting the city's coastal neighborhoods and its downtown area.



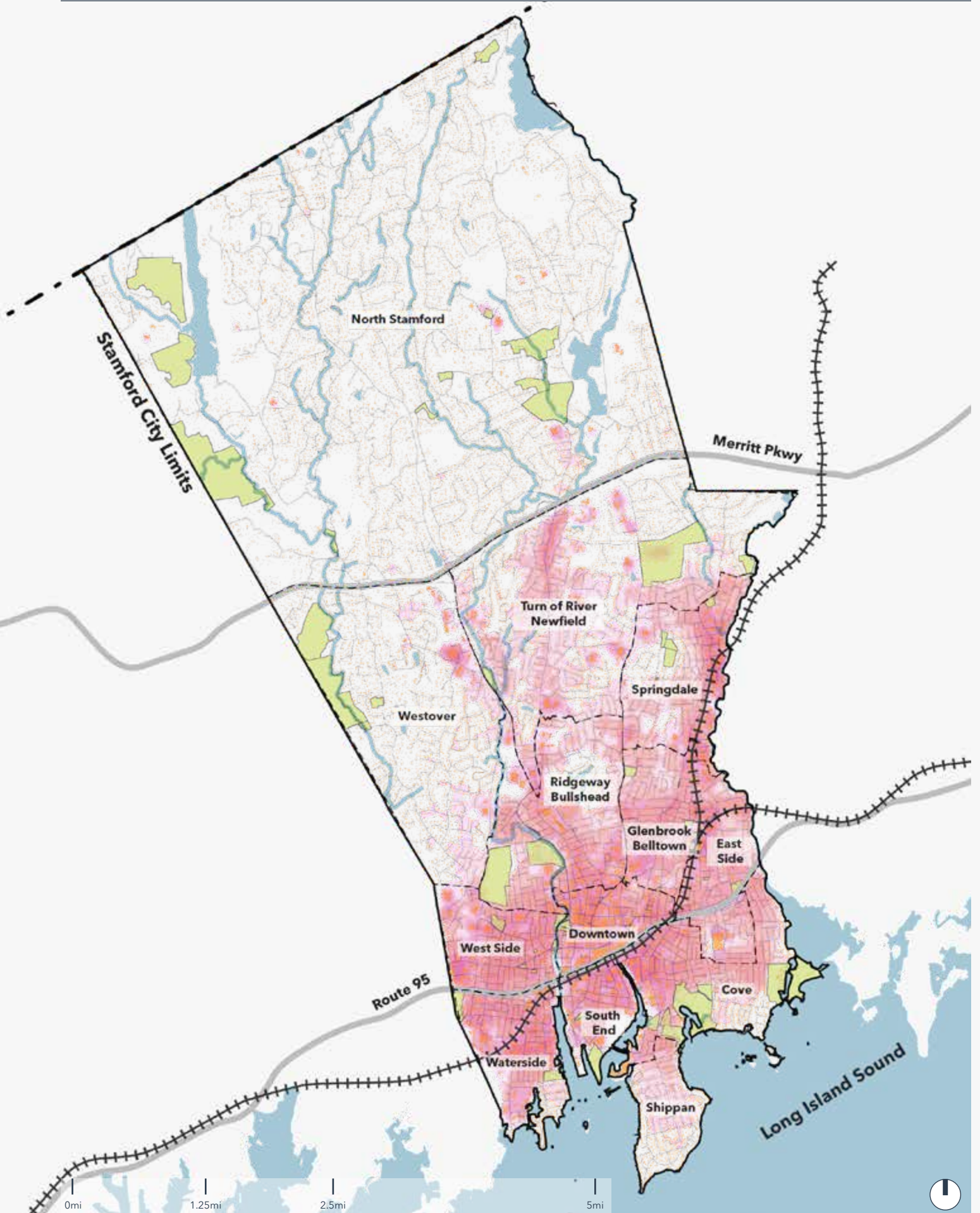


Urban Heat Island

Urban Heat Island (UHI) has negative effects to the environment and public health. Contributing factors include increase in impervious surfaces that absorb and retain heat, a lack of adequate shade and limited tree canopy, limited pervious surfaces, and increased energy consumption. Stamford experiences significantly higher temperatures in its southern neighborhoods which see a higher development rate compared to its more rural and suburban neighborhoods to the north. With temperatures rising, the trees and landscapes in our parks are at risk. Hotter summers may require additional irrigation and existing tree and plant species may not tolerate the hotter summers and more extreme weather events. Conversely, city parks serve as critical infrastructure to counteract UHI by creating a more comfortable urban environment. By adding to the city's tree canopy and pervious surfaces, urban temperatures can be significantly reduced.



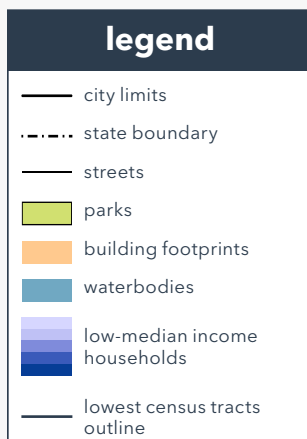
Legend	
	city limits
	state boundary
	streets
	parks
	building footprints
	waterbodies
	urban heat



Low-Income Households

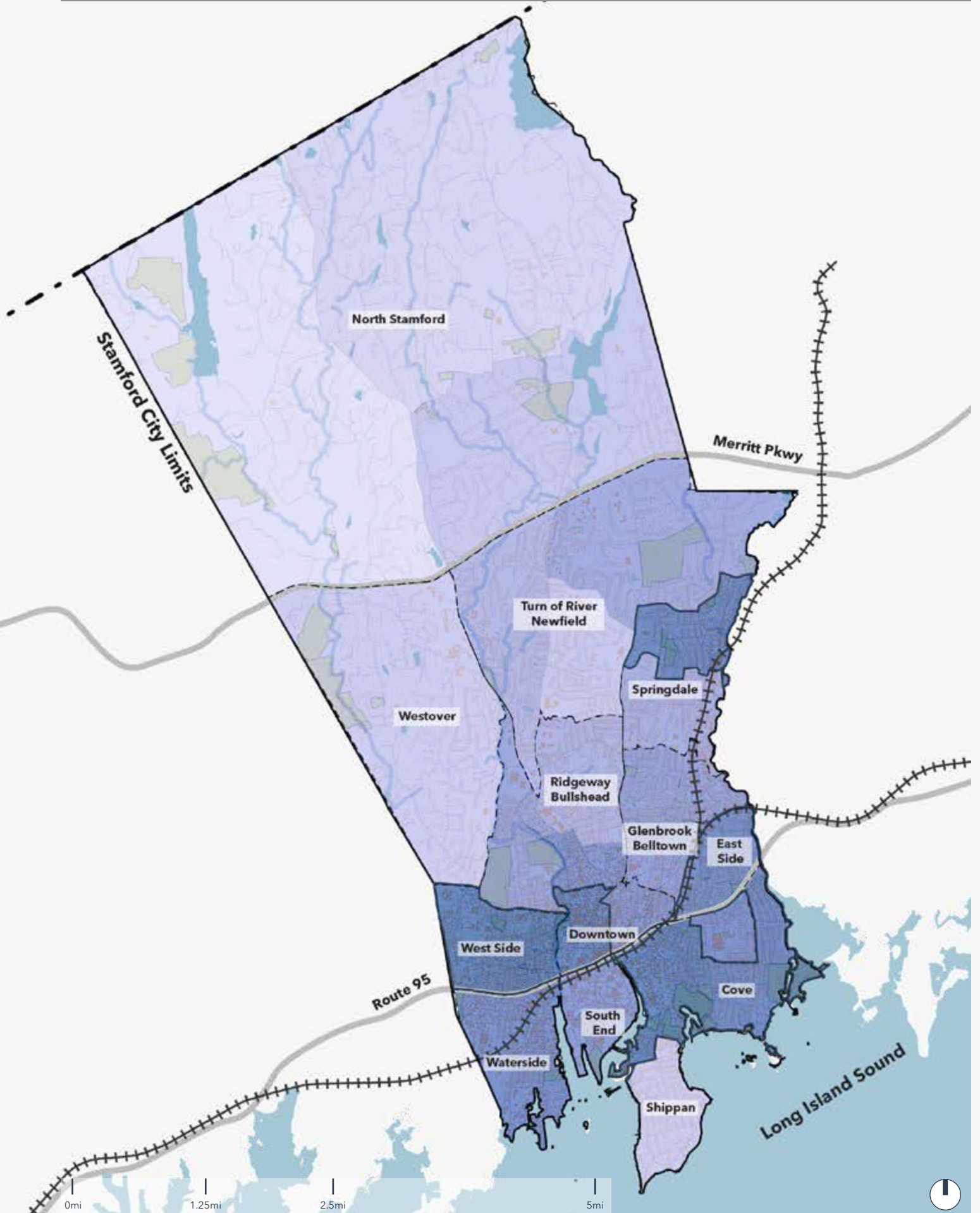
Universally, disadvantaged communities are exposed to higher severity environmental risks and are increasingly vulnerable to the effects of major events. Oftentimes, these neighborhoods are at a disadvantage when it comes to quantity and quality of open space, access to community facilities, and available amenities.

In studying the challenges the city faces, it is important to highlight the socioeconomic conditions that are woven into the city fabric and are a fundamental component of the environmental justice concerns that need to be addressed. In Stamford, the highest percentiles of low-median income households are situated in the Downtown, East Side, Cove, West Side, and Springdale neighborhoods of the city. This socioeconomic criterion can be utilized as a guiding tool to prioritize future interventions in the park system.



Low income households, as defined by the Trust for Public Land (TPL):
Households with income less than 75% of the urban area median income; less than \$100,000 in Stamford)

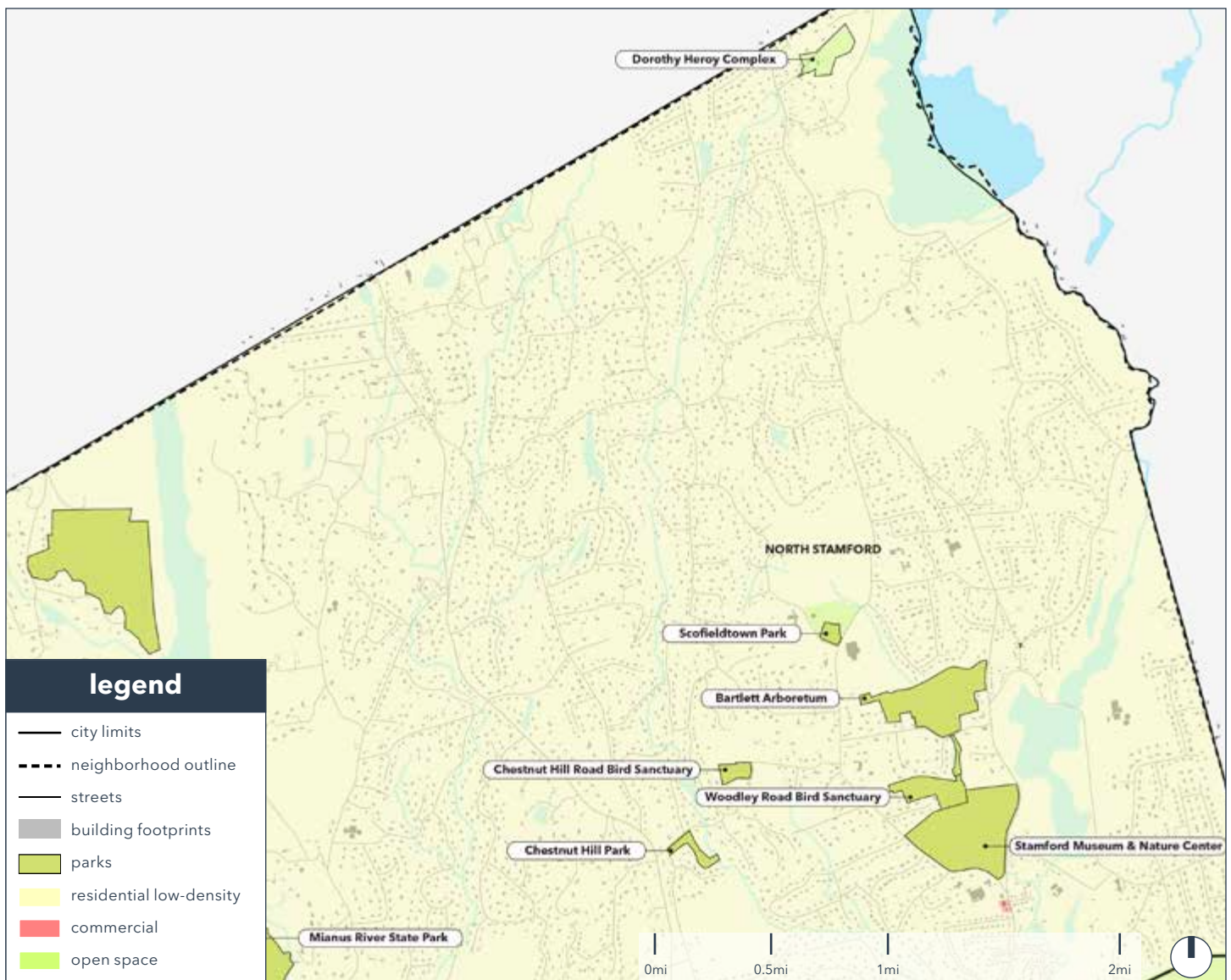


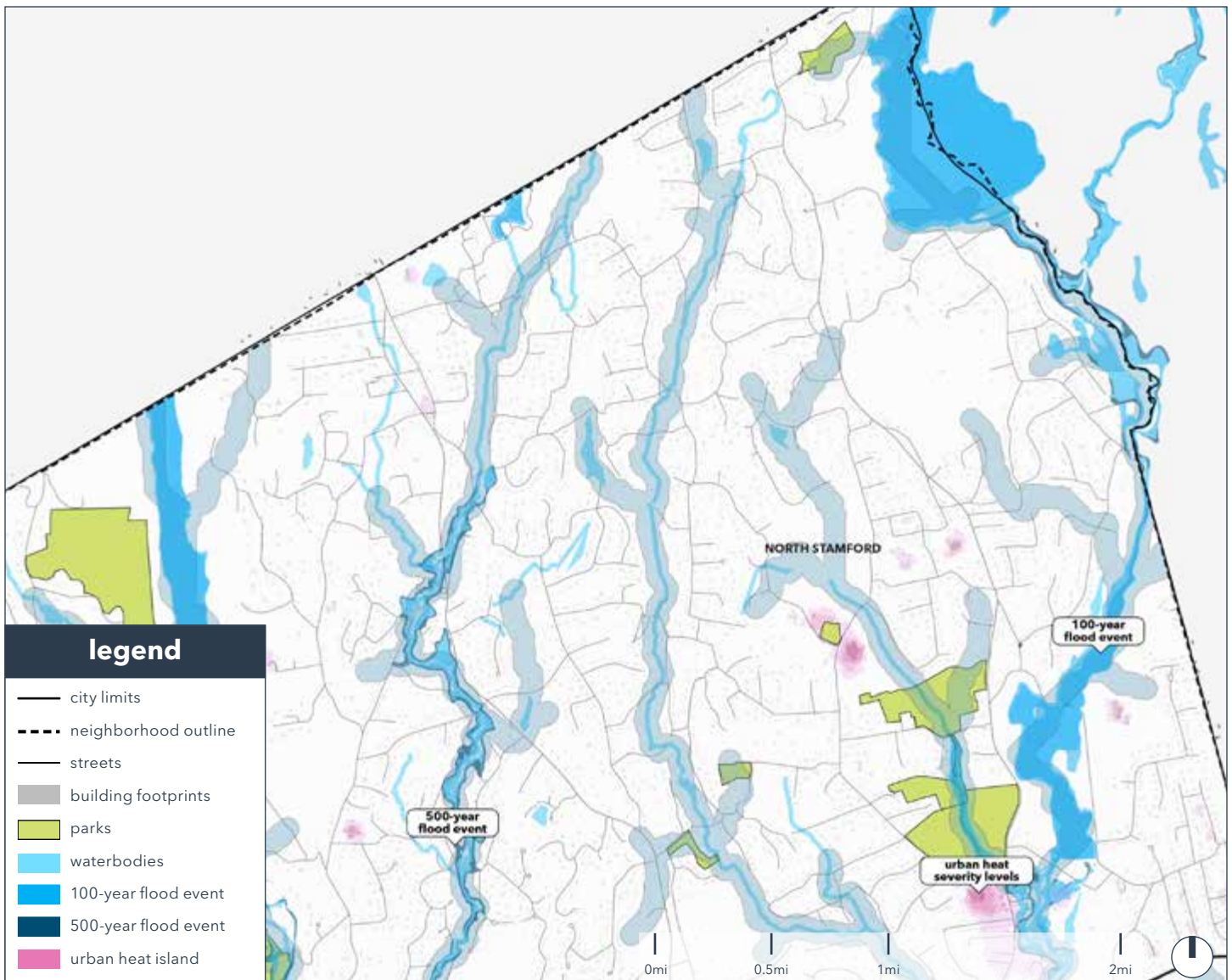
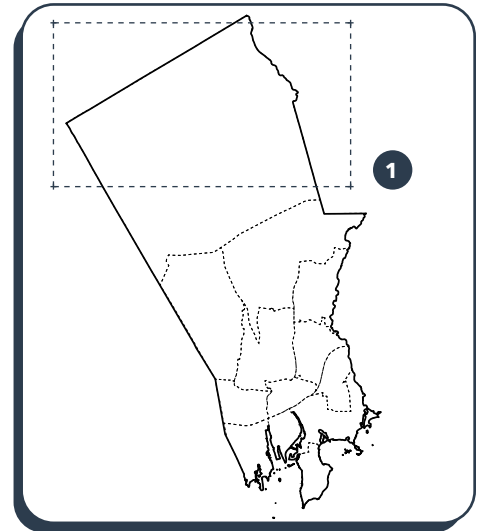


Analysis Area #1

North Stamford, the northern tip of the city above the Merritt Parkway, is almost exclusively a residential neighborhood. While the number of parks available in this area is limited, there is a significant amount of open and green space as this is a predominantly low-density, suburban area, with ample vegetation and tree canopy. Some highlights of the area include the large water bodies, reservoirs and parks, such as the Dorothy Heroy Complex, the Bartlett Arboretum, and the Mianus River State Park. Given its elevated topography and low-density, environmental risks are limited in North Stamford.

However, there are several impact zones in close proximity to the water bodies which have been identified within the FEMA 100 and 500-year flood maps.

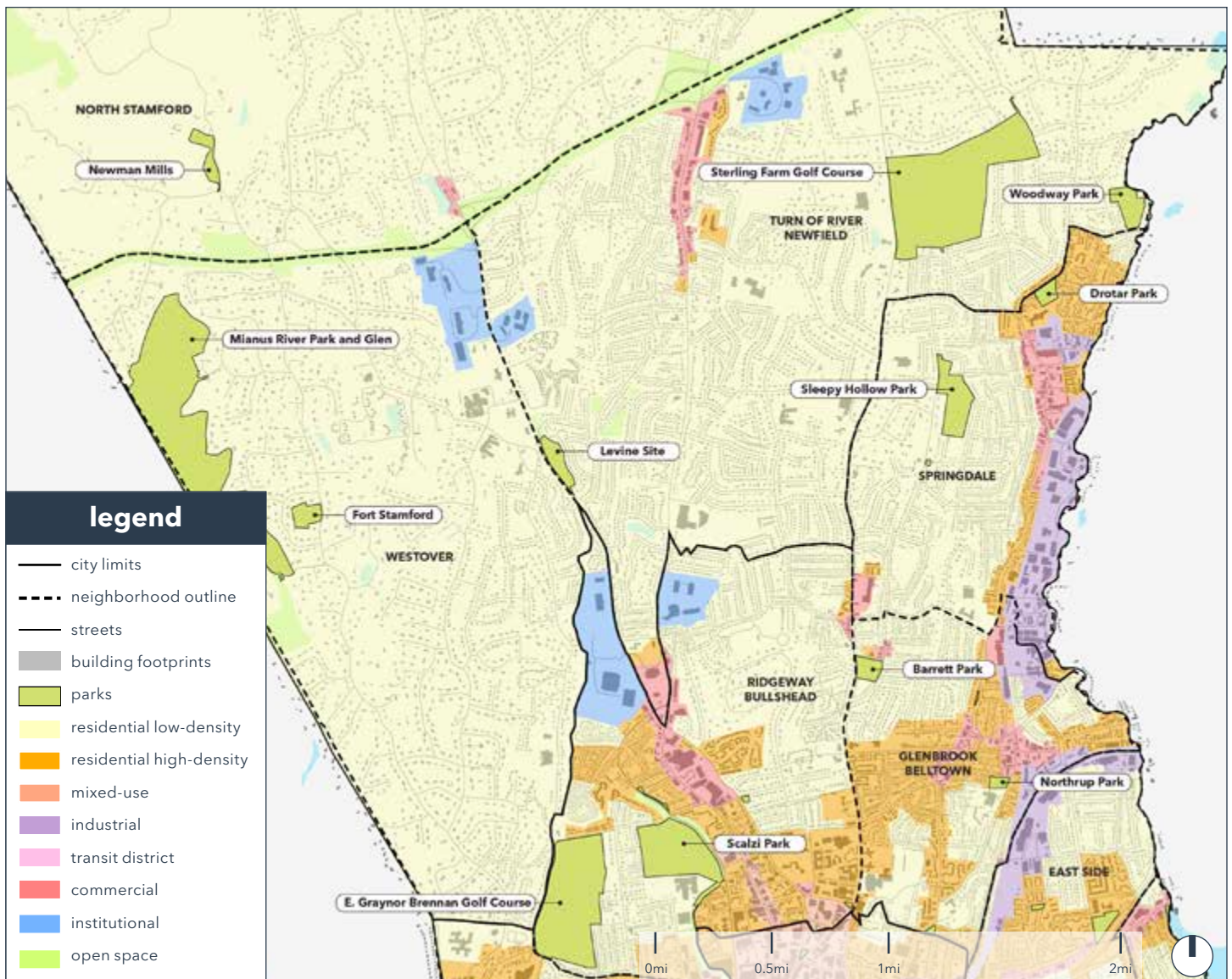


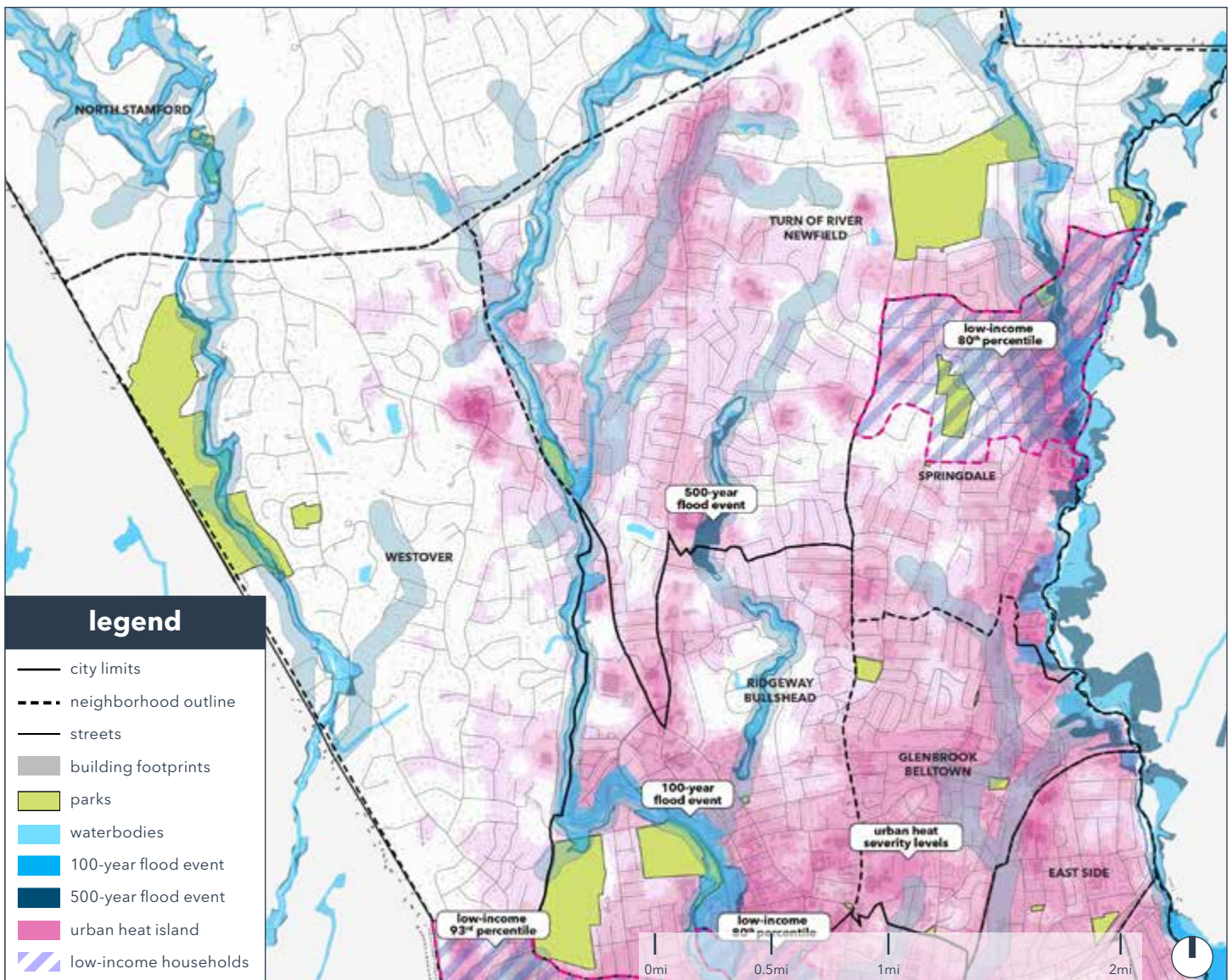
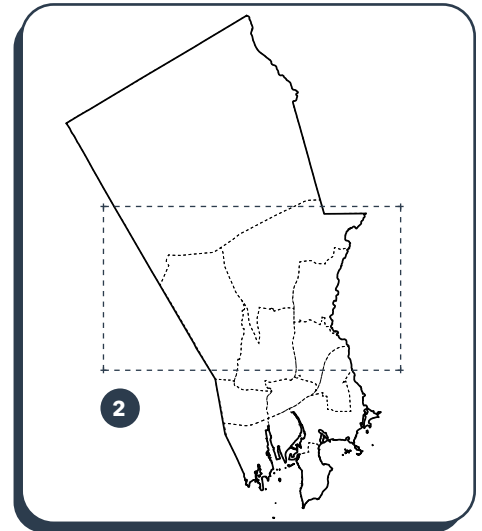


Analysis Area #2

Neighborhoods in the more central part of Stamford south of the Merritt Parkway remain highly residential with a mix of low-density and high-density housing. This area also consists of commercial, institutional, industrial and transit uses. Environmental conditions are accentuated as certain areas lie within water bodies that are susceptible to upland flooding by the FEMA 100 and 500-year flood events. Urban heat island levels are significantly higher and more extensive in this area as larger and denser urban development begin to take shape.

In addition, the area encapsulates a wider socioeconomic range as a higher percentile of low-median income communities are present, in the Springdale neighborhood. Given its demographic composition, the area could benefit from park enhancements and investments in park infrastructure. Parks included in this highlighted area are Sleepy Hollow Park and Drotar Park.



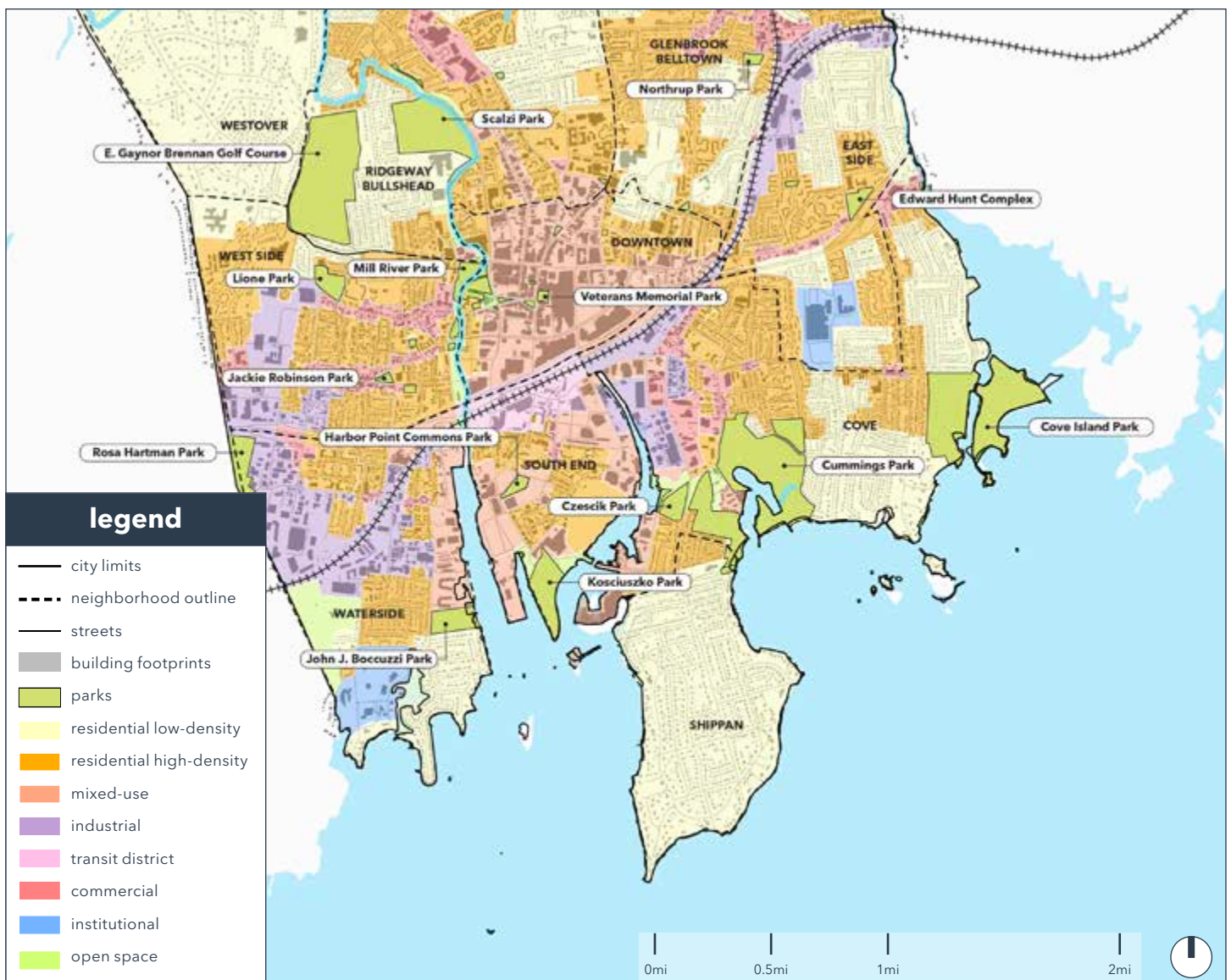


Analysis Area #3

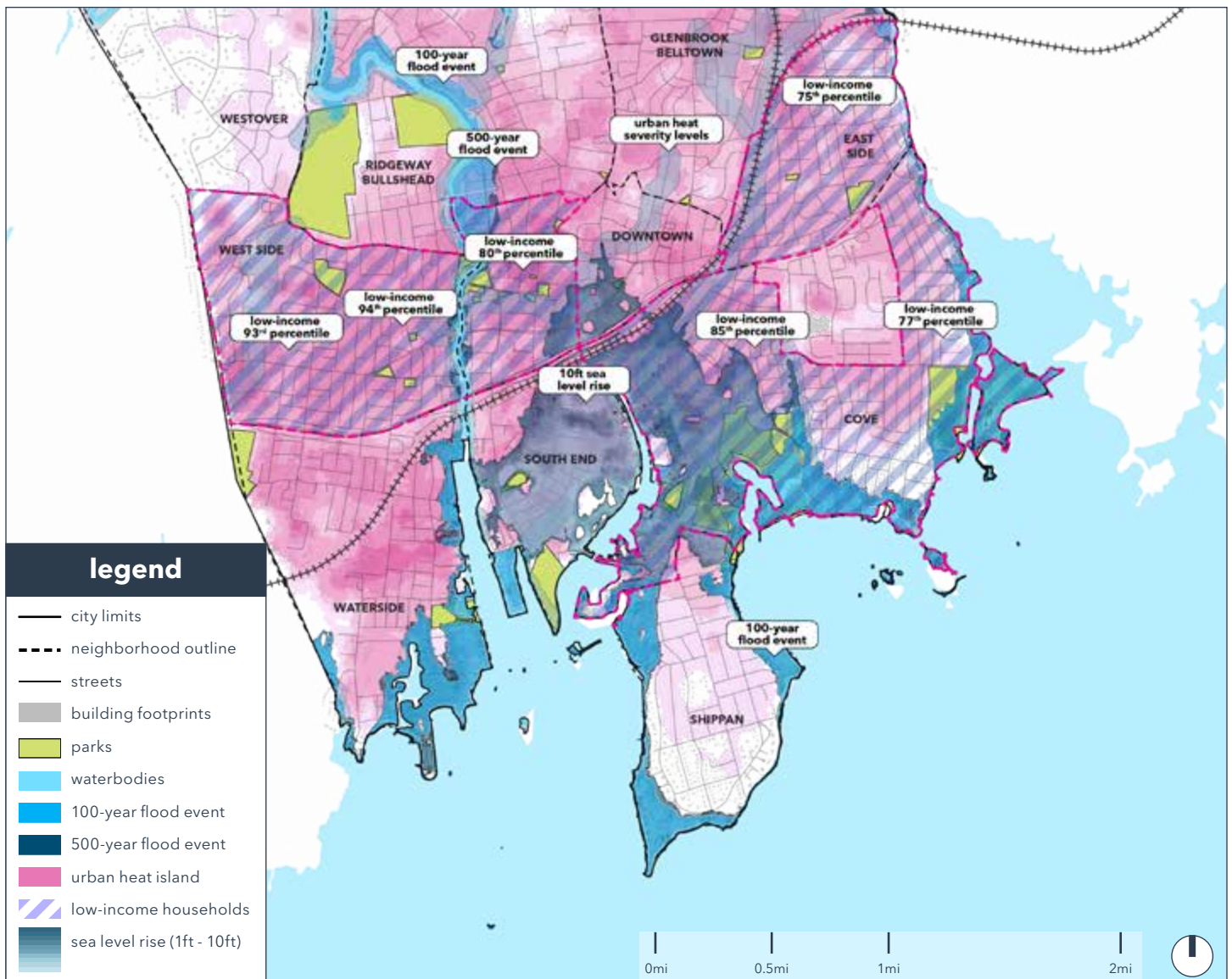
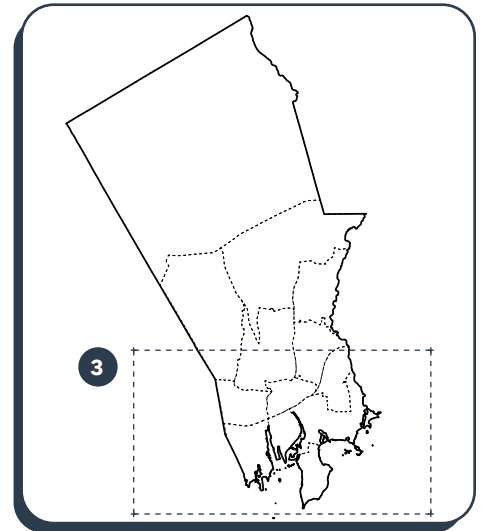
The southern portion of Stamford is the most developed part of the city and it presents the highest levels of environmental concerns and socioeconomic disparities. This is a highly mixed-use area, including residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial uses. This part of the city has a higher concentration of city parks, scattered throughout the urban fabric, and coastline including the city's public beaches. Urban heat levels are highest here as the built and impervious surfaces increase. The highest percentiles of low-median-income households can be found in the Downtown, West Side, and Cove areas; as many coastal cities, Stamford waterfront neighborhoods are vulnerable to sea level rise, affecting the

coastline and reaching into the Downtown area; the FEMA 100-year and 500-year flood events are projected to affect the entire coastline of Stamford and fall further into the city following along the Rippowam River.

Interventions and investments in parks can help address these concerns and better the quality of life and safety of the community. Areas with greatest concern have overlapping socioeconomic environmental issues. Opportunities to capitalize on park improvements include: McKeithen Park; Edward Hunt Complex; Latham Park; Kiwanis Park; Cove Island Park; Cummings Park; Czescik Park; Veterans Memorial



Park; E. A. Cornell Heritage Park; Columbus Park; Rippowam Park; Rotary Park; Hatch Field; Jackie Robinson Park; Carwin Park; Main Street Park; Lione Park; Mill River Park.



Park Access

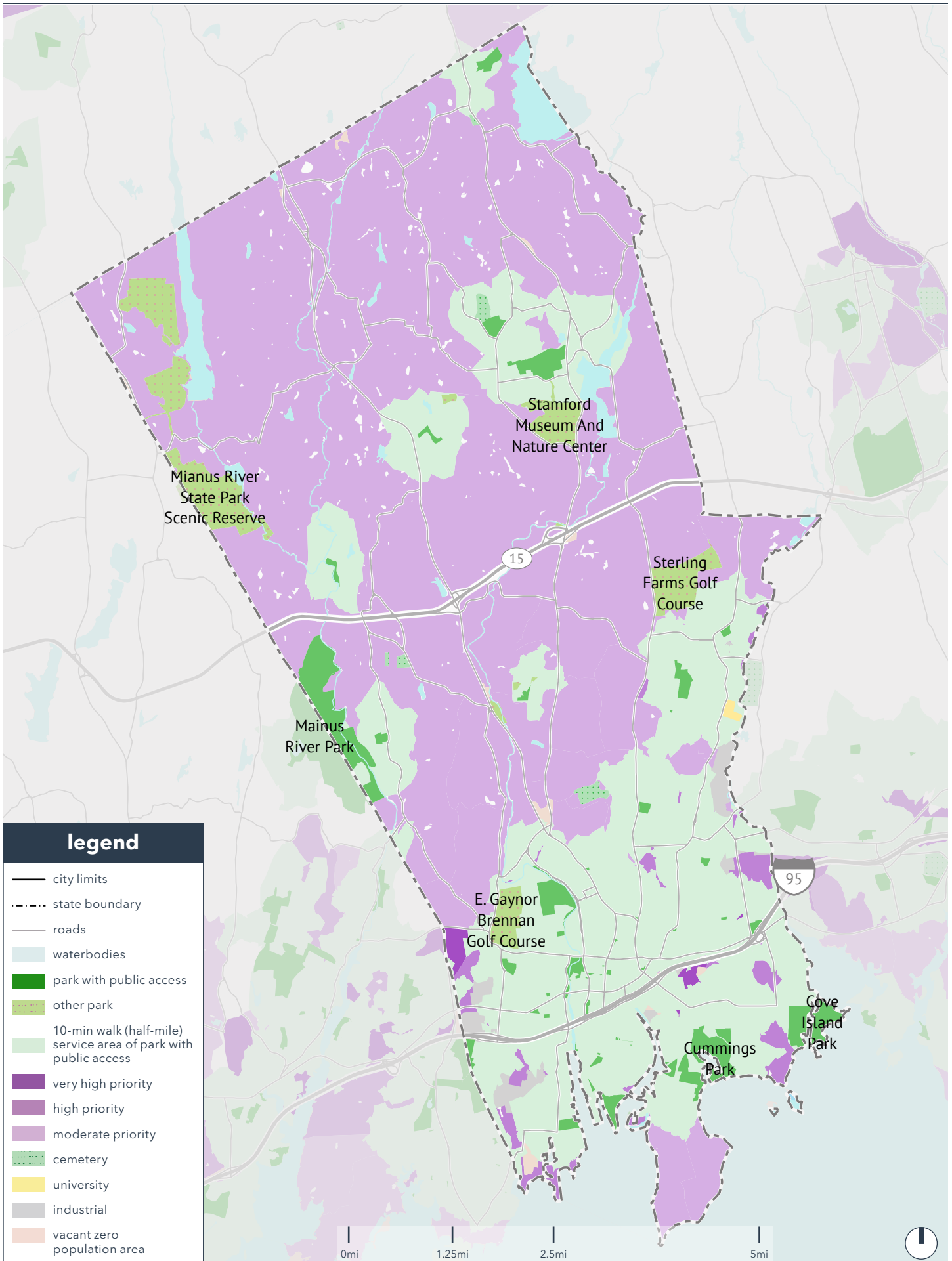
This analysis is provided via the ParkServe® mapping application, which identifies the population living within a 10-minute walk of a park by creating dynamic 1/2-mile service areas (10-minute walking distance) for all public parks. In this analysis, service areas use the street network to determine walkable distance (streets such as highways, freeways, and interstates are considered barriers).

In Stamford, 71% of the population lives within a 10-minute walk of a park. Among the remaining 39,295 people without access to a nearby park, Trust for Public Land suggests where to prioritize the development of new parks to reduce this gap. This prioritization is based on a comprehensive index of six equally-weighted demographic and environmental metrics:

- Population density*
- Density of low income households (households with income less than 75% of the urban area median income; less than \$100,000 in Stamford)*
- Density of people of color*
- Community health (a combined index based on the rate of poor mental health and low physical activity from the 2022 CDC PLACES census tract dataset)
- Urban heat islands (surface temperature at least 1.25 degrees greater than city mean surface temperature from Trust for Public Land, based on Landsat 8 satellite imagery)
- Pollution burden (air toxics respiratory hazard index from 2022 EPA EJScreen)

This map highlights areas within the city that are further than a walkable half mile ("10 Minute Walk") from a publicly accessible park.

*Based on 2022 Forecast block groups provided by ESRI



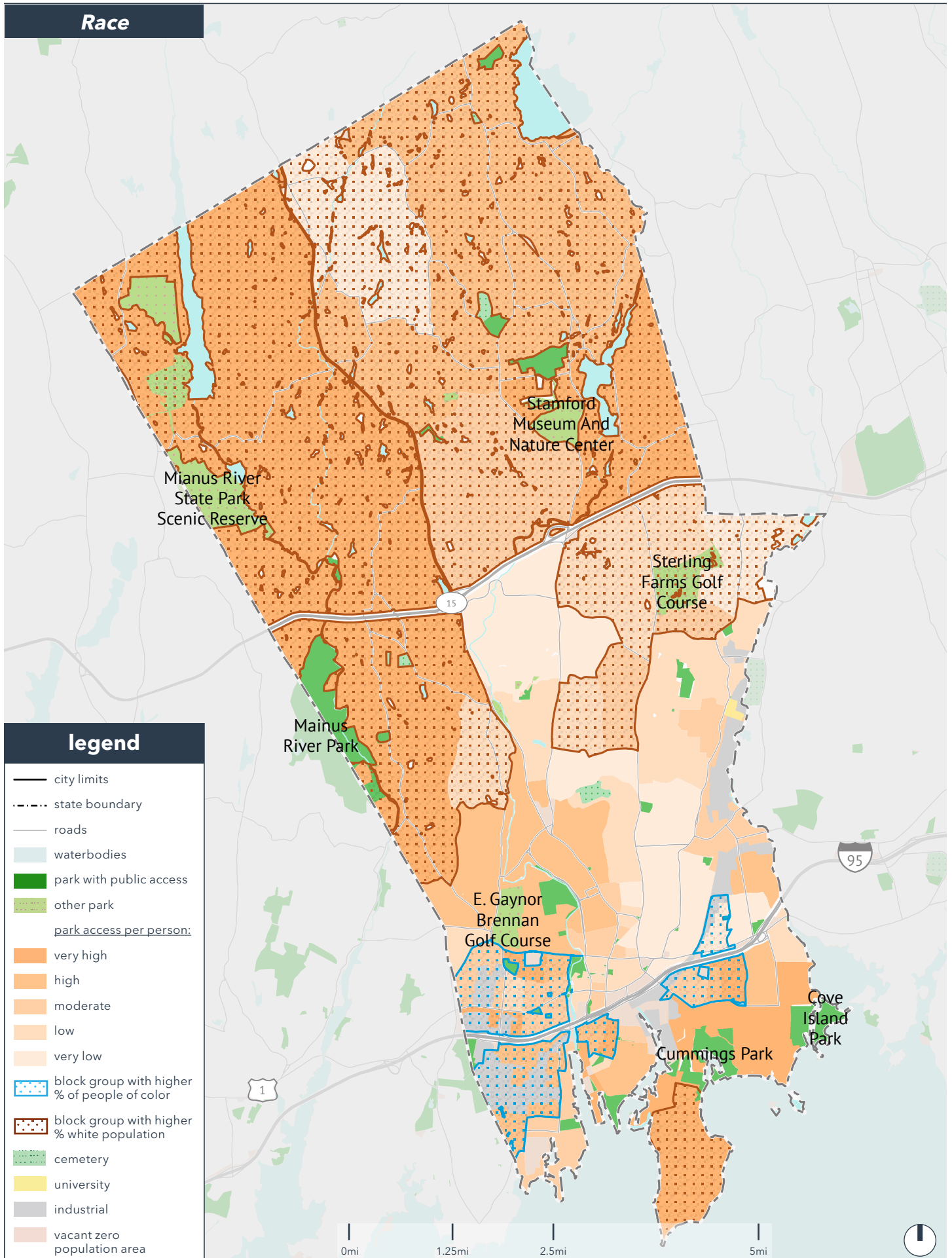
Park Equity

In Stamford, residents in neighborhoods of color have access to 13% more park space per person than those in white neighborhoods. Residents in low-income neighborhoods have access to 39% less than those in high-income neighborhoods. Park space per person effectively measures the available park space within a 10-minute walk of a micro-neighborhood, identified as those with the highest concentrations (top 20% of all census block groups in a city) of people of color or white population and high-income or low-income households. Households with income less than 75% of city median income (less than \$100,000 in Stamford) are considered low-income; households with income greater than 125% of city median income (greater than \$150,000 in Stamford) are high-income.

The metrics for people of color reflect each of the Census-designated race/ethnicity groups: Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous and Native American, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, multiple races, and other communities of color. Demographic profiles are based on 2020 Forecast block groups provided by Esri.

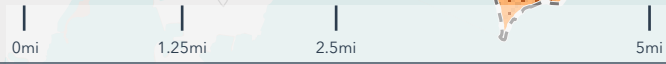
These maps highlight the difference in available park space per person among low-income and high-income block groups in Stamford, as well as between block groups that are majority people of color or white.

Race

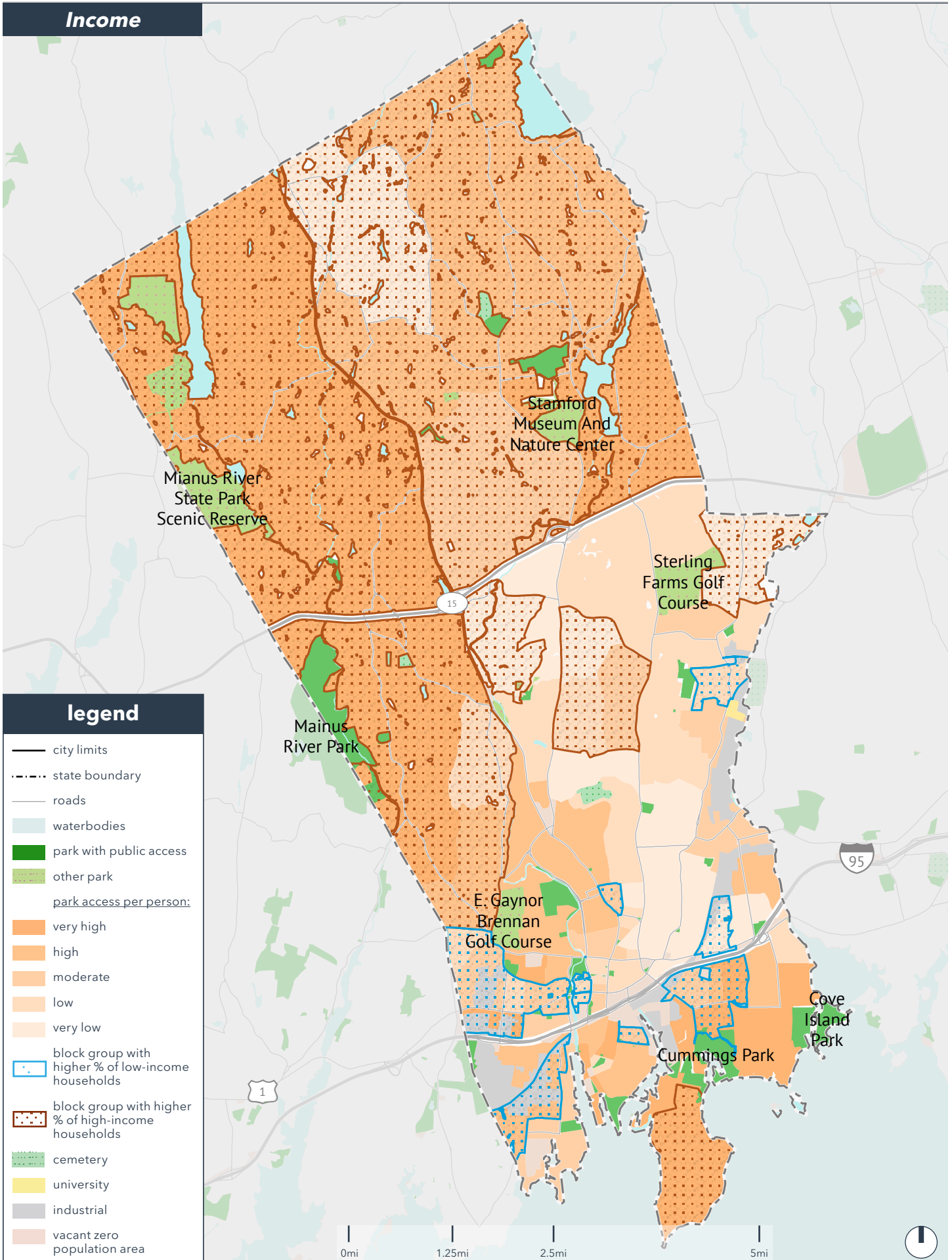


Legend

- city limits
- · - · - state boundary
- roads
- light blue waterbodies
- green park with public access
- light green other park
- park access per person:
- dark orange very high
- medium orange high
- light orange moderate
- pale orange low
- lightest orange very low
- blue dotted block group with higher % of people of color
- red dotted block group with higher % white population
- dotted green cemetery
- yellow university
- grey industrial
- light brown vacant zero population area

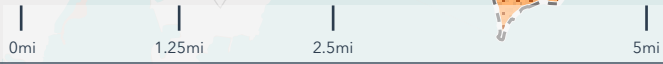


Income



Legend

- city limits
- state boundary
- roads
- waterbodies
- park with public access
- other park
- park access per person:
- very high
- high
- moderate
- low
- very low
- block group with higher % of low-income households
- block group with higher % of high-income households
- cemetery
- university
- industrial
- vacant zero population area

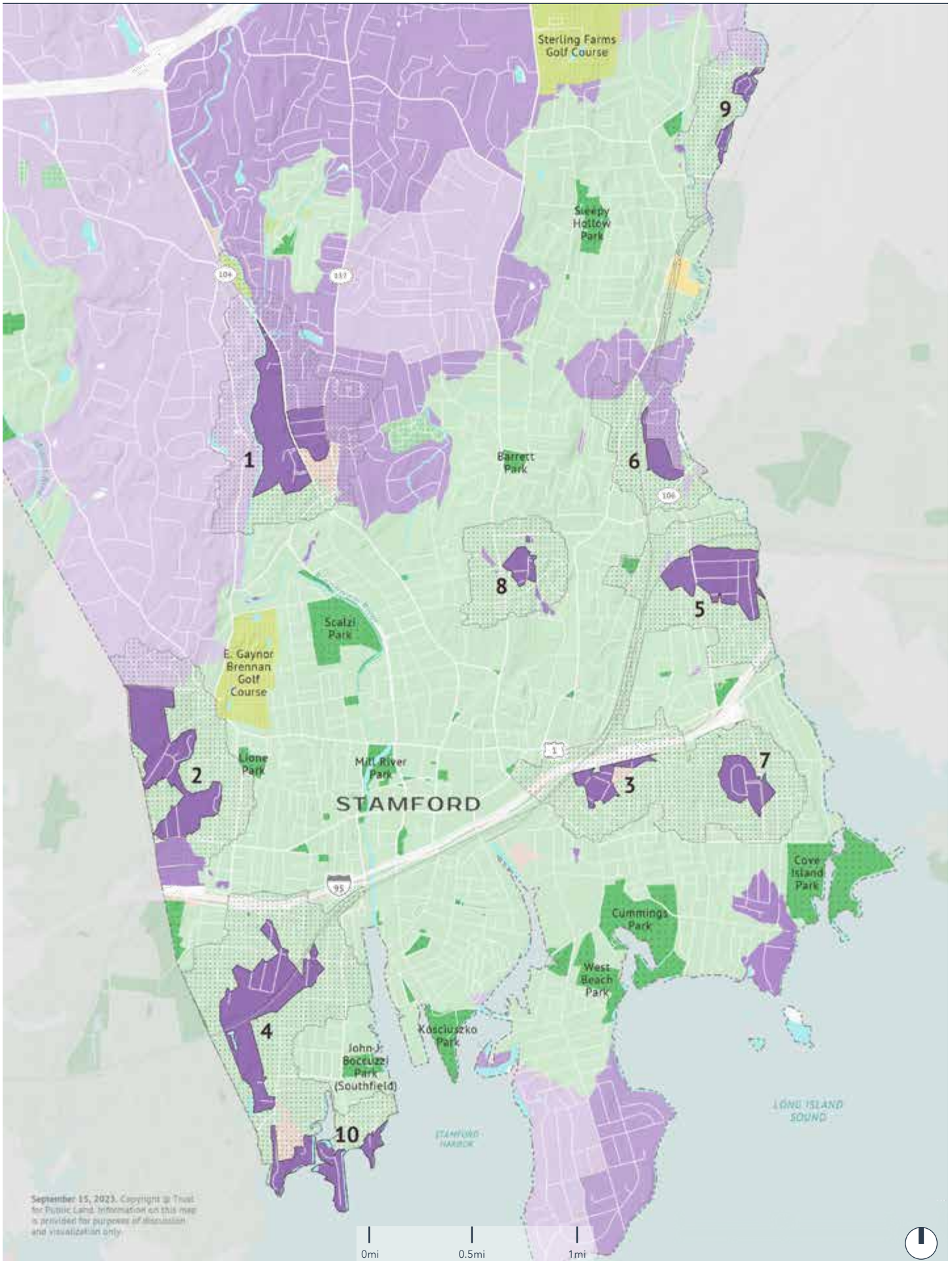


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Park Prioritization

For the city of Stamford, we identified 10 priority areas for new parks with the potential to make the greatest impact on park access in areas of the city ranked highest in an index of 4 key environmental and demographic metrics. We identified these priority areas by first ranking park access gaps across the city according to an index of urban heat, pollution burden, density of low-income households, and density of people of color. For each park access gap that ranked highest in this index, we created a 1/8th mile buffer around the gap's perimeter and selected all intersecting parcels within that buffer to define the gap's parcel analysis extent. For each parcel analysis extent, we then calculated the parcels' average population served currently living outside of a 10-minute walk to a park. The resulting 10 areas were identified as having the highest potential to serve the greatest number of residents if a park was located within or near the specified boundary. The following fact sheets describe the health, equity, and climate statistics of the communities that reside within the park priority areas.

legend	
	city limits
	state boundary
	roads
	waterbodies
	park with public access
	other park
	10-min walk (half-mile) service area of park with public access
	priority park access gap
	parcel analysis extent
<u>custom priority areas for new parks:</u>	
	very high priority
	high priority
	moderate priority
	lower priority
	cemetery
	university
	industrial
	vacant zero population area



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0mi 0.5mi 1mi



Park Priority Area #1



Overall park impact of park priority area #1:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **995** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.73%**, from 73.2% to 73.9%)

Within park priority area #1:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **616**

Health

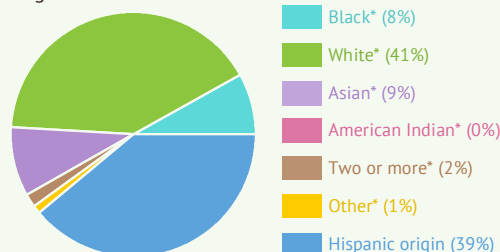
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **12.2%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **16.7%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **2.3°F**
- Heat severity: **2**

Equity

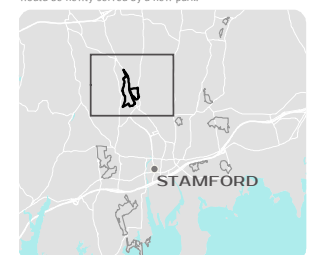
- Percent low-income households: **18%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **5%**



*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- Park access gap
- ▭ Parcel impact analysis boundary
- Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - High impact** (non-residential)
 - High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
 - No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
- 🏫 School
- 🌳 Park with public access
- 🌳 Other park or open space
- 🏘️ Cemetery

**Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.



Park Priority Area #2



Overall park impact of park priority area #2:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **667** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.49%**, from 73.2% to 73.7%)

Within park priority area #2:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **1571**

Health

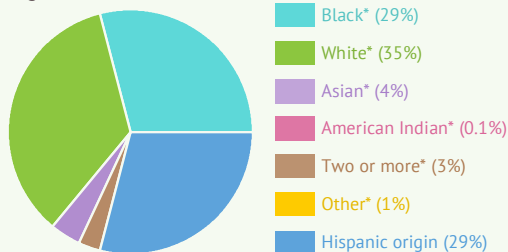
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **14.5%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **26.9%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **5.9°F**
- Heat severity: **3**

Equity

- Percent low-income households: **57%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **5%**



*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- ▬ Park access gap
- ▬ Parcel impact analysis boundary
- Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - High impact** (non-residential)
 - High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
 - No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
- 🏫 School
- 🌳 Park with public access
- 🌳 Other park or open space
- 🏘 Cemetery

**Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.



Park Priority Area #3



Overall park impact of park priority area #3:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **583** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.43%**, from 73.2% to 73.6%)

Within park priority area #3:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **616**

Health

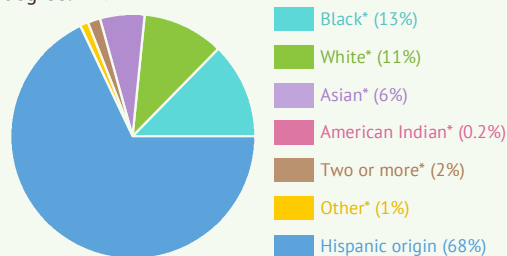
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **14.2%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **24.1%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **10.2°F**
- Heat severity: **4.8**

Equity

- Percent low-income households: **68%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **47%**



*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- Park access gap
 - ▭ Parcel impact analysis boundary
 - Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - High impact** (non-residential)
 - High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
 - No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
 - 🏫 School
 - 🌳 Park with public access
 - 🌳 Other park or open space
 - 🏘️ Cemetery
- **Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.



Park Priority Area #4



Overall park impact of park priority area #4:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **478** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.35%**, from 73.2% to 73.5%)

Within park priority area #4:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **1042**

Health

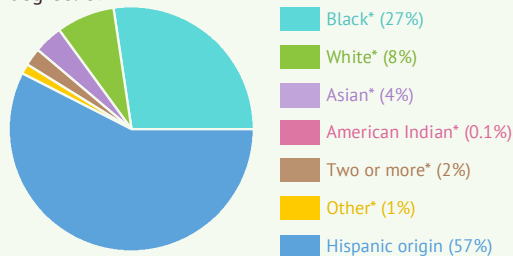
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **14.1%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **22.4%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **7.8°F**
- Heat severity: **4**

Equity

- Percent low-income households: **53%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **8%**



*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- Park access gap
- ▭ Parcel impact analysis boundary
- Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - High impact** (non-residential)
 - High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
 - No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
- 🏫 School
- Park with public access
- Other park or open space
- Cemetery

**Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.



Park Priority Area #5



Overall park impact of park priority area #5:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **436** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.32%**, from 73.2% to 73.5%)

Within park priority area #5:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **498**

Health

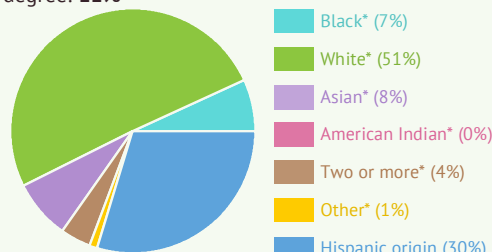
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **13.8%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **22.3%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **5.7°F**
- Heat severity: **3**

Equity

- Percent low-income households: **45%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **11%**



*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- Park access gap
- ▭ Parcel impact analysis boundary
- Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - High impact** (non-residential)
 - High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
 - No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
- 🏫 School
- 🌳 Park with public access
- 🌳 Other park or open space
- 🏘️ Cemetery

**Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.



Park Priority Area #6



Overall park impact of park priority area #6:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **432** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.32%**, from 73.2% to 73.5%)

Within park priority area #6:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **126**

Health

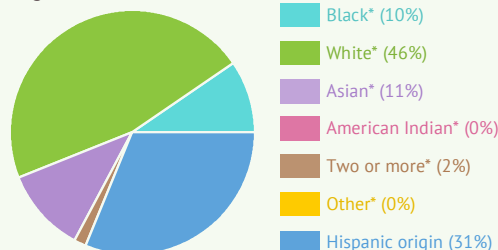
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **12.9%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **17.1%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **9°F**
- Heat severity: **4**

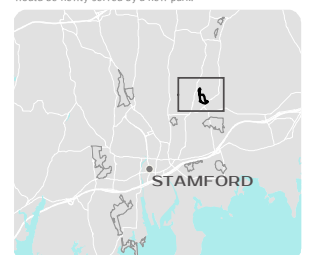
Equity

- Percent low-income households: **40%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **0%**



*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- Park access gap
 - ▭ Parcel impact analysis boundary
 - Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - High impact** (non-residential)
 - High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
 - No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
 - 🏫 School
 - Park with public access
 - Other park or open space
 - Cemetery
- **Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.



Park Priority Area #7



Overall park impact of park priority area #7:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **424** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.31%**, from 73.2% to 73.5%)

Within park priority area #7:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **563**

Health

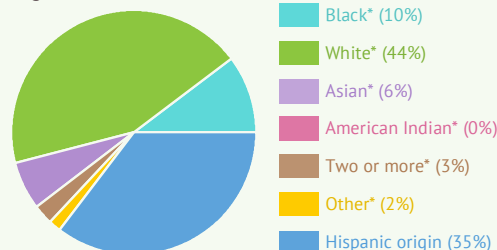
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **13.9%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **20.5%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **4.6°F**
- Heat severity: **2.9**

Equity

- Percent low-income households: **40%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **8%**



*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- Park access gap
- ⬜ Parcel impact analysis boundary
- Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - High impact** (non-residential)
 - High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
- ⬜ No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
- 🏫 School
- 🌳 Park with public access
- 🌳 Other park or open space
- 🏘️ Cemetery

**Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.



Park Priority Area #8



Overall park impact of park priority area #8:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **321** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.23%**, from 73.2% to 73.4%)

Within park priority area #8:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **268**

Health

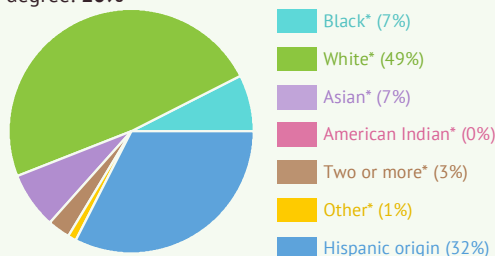
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **12.9%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **17.1%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **8.8°F**
- Heat severity: **4**

Equity

- Percent low-income households: **38%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **20%**



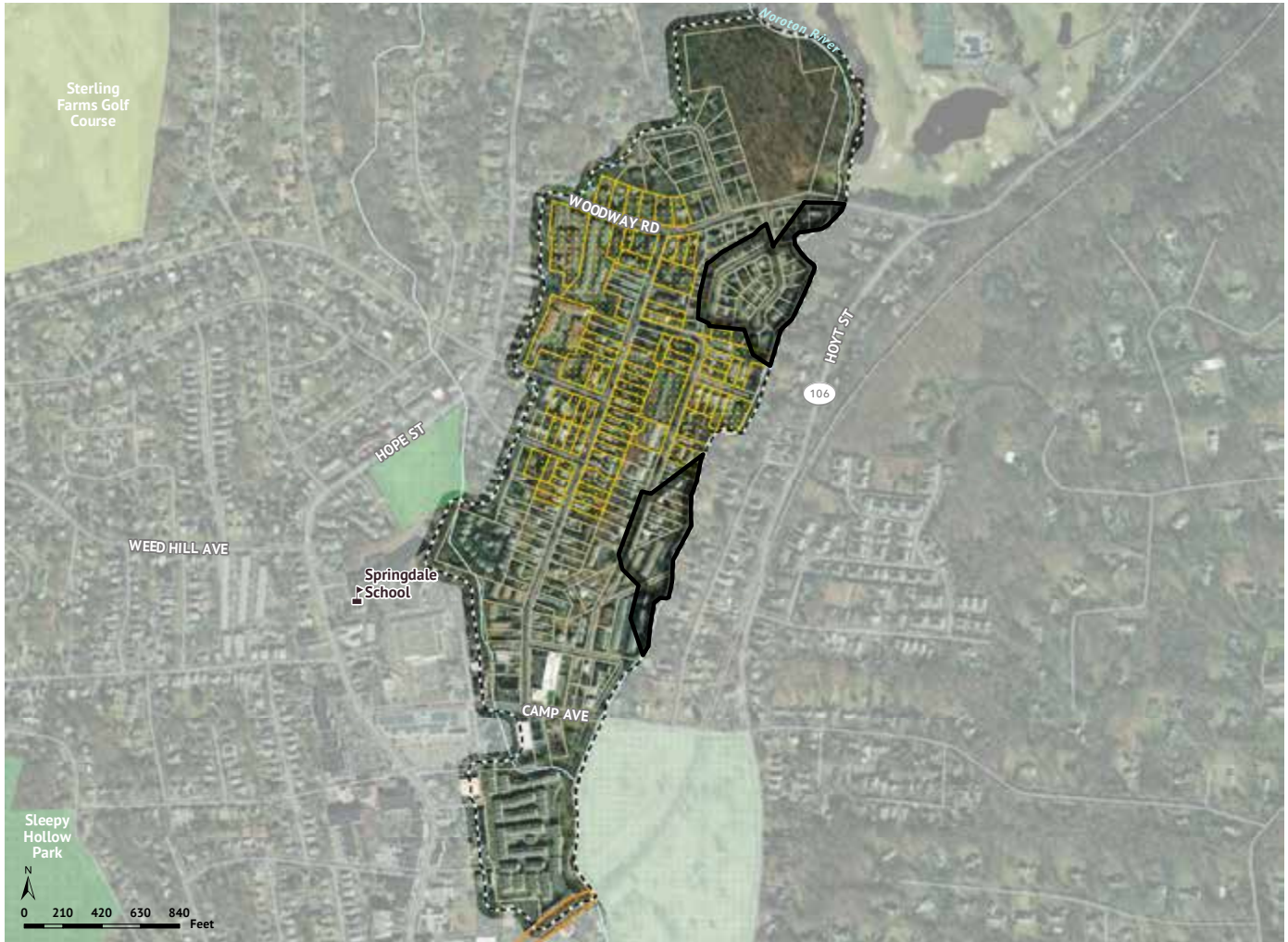
*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- Park access gap
- Parcel impact analysis boundary
- Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - High impact** (non-residential)
 - High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
 - No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
- School
- Park with public access
- Other park or open space
- Cemetery

**Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.



Park Priority Area #9



Overall park impact of park priority area #9:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **231** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.17%**, from 73.2% to 73.3%)

Within park priority area #9:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **225**

Health

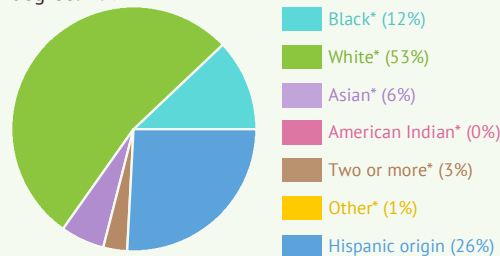
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **13.7%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **18.4%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **6.3°F**
- Heat severity: **3**

Equity

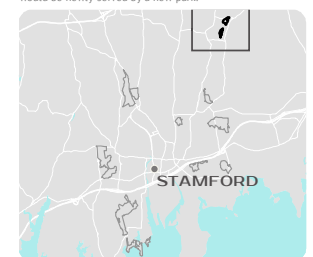
- Percent low-income households: **46%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **19%**



*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- Park access gap
- ▭ Parcel impact analysis boundary
- Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - High impact** (non-residential)
 - High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
 - No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
- 🏫 School
- 🌳 Park with public access
- 🌿 Other park or open space
- 🏘️ Cemetery

**Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.



Park Priority Area #10



Overall park impact of park priority area #10:

Estimated increase in residents within a 10-minute walk of a park: **219** (would raise the city's percent of residents living within a 10-minute walk of a park by **0.16%**, from 73.2% to 73.3%)

Within park priority area #10:

• Total population outside of a 10-minute walk to an existing park: **498**

Health

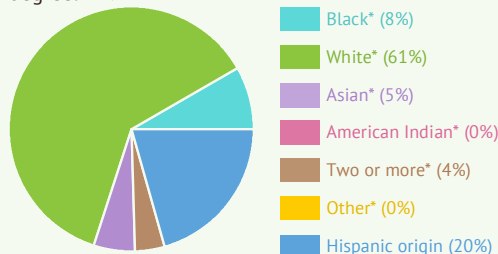
- Prevalence of poor mental health (13.6% nationally): **14.1%**
- Prevalence of low-physical activity (26.0% nationally): **22.4%**

Climate

- Average degrees above city mean: **3.8°F**
- Heat severity: **2**

Equity

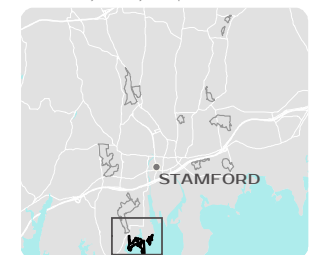
- Percent low-income households: **34%**
- Percent of population with less than a high-school degree: **14%**



*Excludes those that report Hispanic origin (which is captured separately from race by the U.S. Census)

- Park access gap
- ▭ Parcel impact analysis boundary
- Parcel impact (parcels within 1/8th mile of the park access gap)
 - ▨ High impact** (non-residential)
 - ▨ High impact** (residential)
 - Low impact
 - ▨ No impact (parcel either has no service area, or the service area doesn't intersect the park access gap)
- 🏫 School
- 🌳 Park with public access
- 🌳 Other park or open space
- 🏘️ Cemetery

**Highest impact parcels have the most population that would be newly-served by a new park.





part three 

opportunities

Opportunity Zones

Local Office conducted GIS analysis of its existing park network and the overall Stamford region and its environmental risks.

'Zone One' encompasses the neighborhoods and parks in need of most enhancements due to the overlapping of studied layers, including:

- Urban Heat Island (UHI) Data
- Sea Level Rise Data
- FEMA 100-Year and 500-Year Flood Data
- Low-Median Income Census Tracts
- Demographic Data
- Street Network Data
- Community Engagement Feedback

'Zone Two' reflects the area that is least served by a park within a 10-minute walking distance per TPL's (Trust for Public Land) Park Prioritization analysis. Dark areas on the map represent very high priority areas or park gaps within the overall network which have the potential to have a significant impact on the communities they serve.

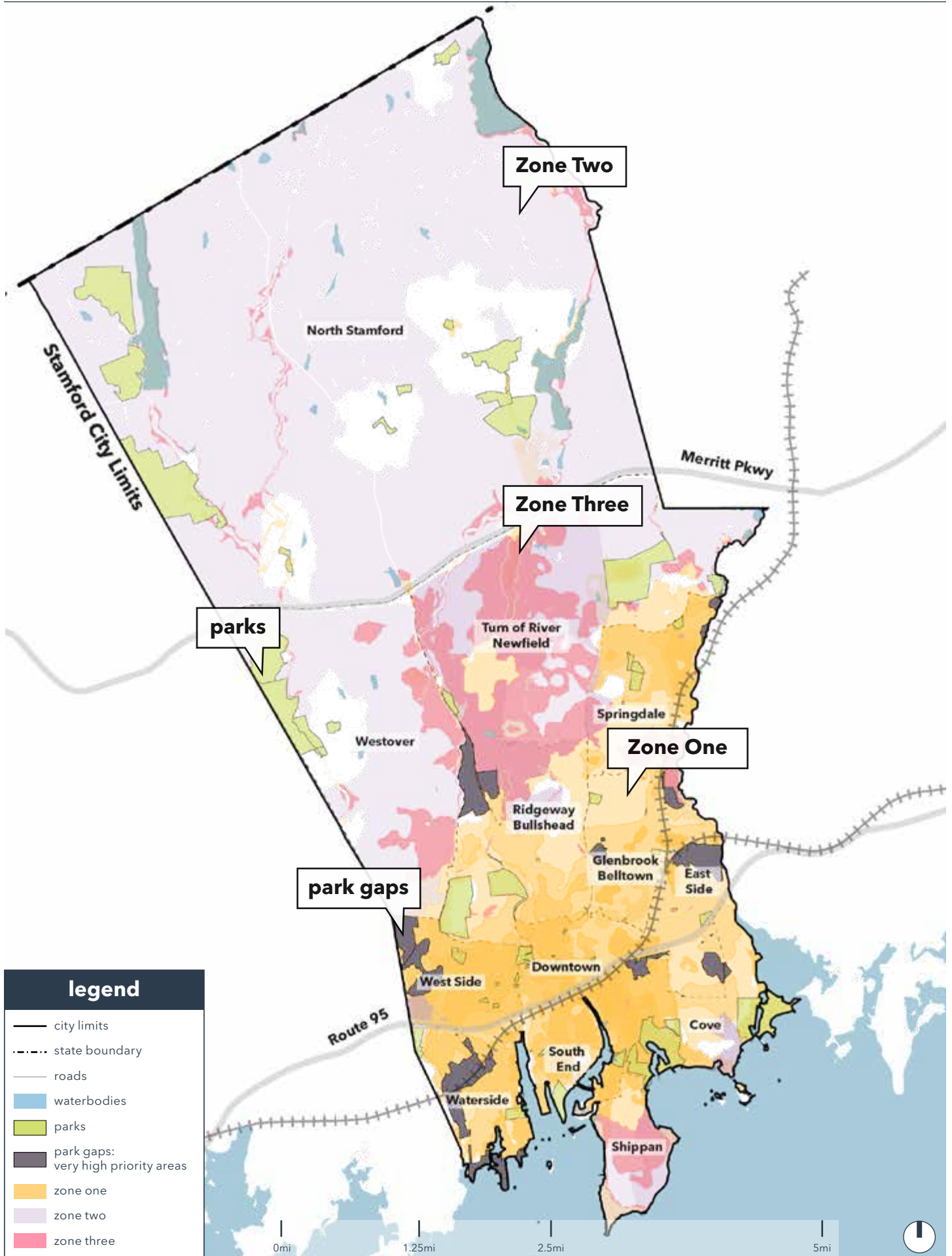
'Zone Three' consists of an overlapping of the previous zones where a combination of challenges emerge. These include environmental concerns, such as the need to reduce increasing heat levels, mitigate flooding and manage flood damage of affected communities, which can be improved through a holistic planning of new parks and open spaces.

This analysis was enhanced by community feedback and gathered public concerns, and revealed investment opportunities to improve the current park system. Improvements include providing community-specific programming needs, developing strategies for public, private partnerships. These should be coupled with annual maintenance budgets to repair and enhance park amenities, enhance and expand forestry

efforts, and develop strategies to facilitate sharing resources across city agencies. Lastly, the City can identify sites for new parks to increase park acreage and access.

These concerns and opportunities shape the following initiatives, recommended actions for improvement:

- 1. Parks at Risk: Heat**
- 2. Parks at Risk: Flooding**
- 3. Fill in the Gaps**
- 4. Parks in Funding Need**
- 5. Parks and Equity**



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Initiatives

Initiative One



Parks at Risk: Heat.

Addressing the Urban Heat Island Effect by
investing in city parks.

Parks at Risk: Heat

Urban Heat Island (UHI) is one of the more pressing environmental concerns for Stamford’s public space. While the densely developed portion of the city is at a disadvantage when it comes to enduring high temperatures, certain strategies can be employed to make communities feel more comfortable in the public realm during hot days. In dense urban fabrics, where finding substantial natural open spaces can be challenging, alternative measures can be pursued to assist in this task.

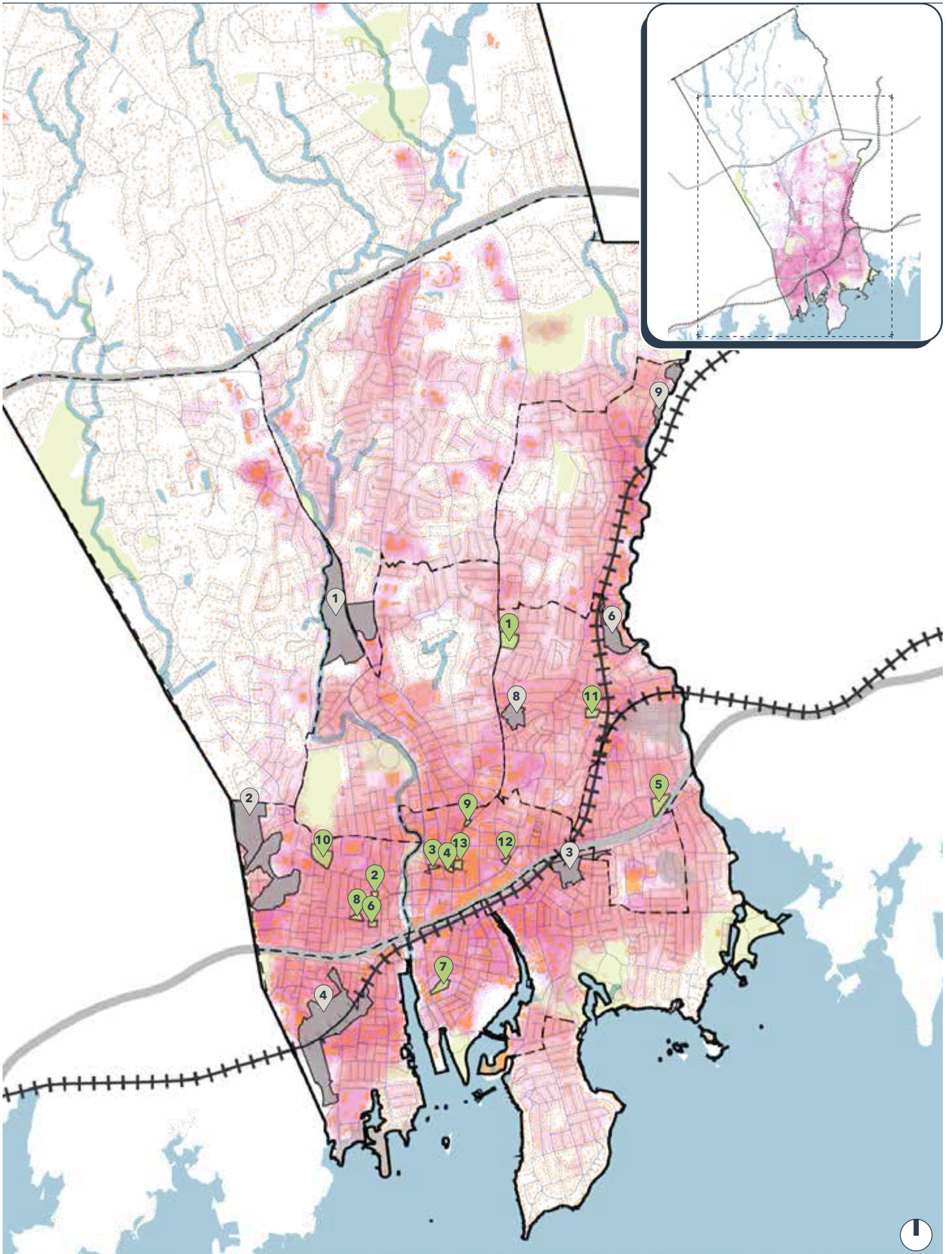
Parks & Park Gaps at Risk: Heat		
	Parks	Park Gaps
1	Barrett Park	Park Gap 1
2	Carwin Park	Park Gap 2
3	Columbus Park	Park Gap 3
4	E.A. Cornell Heritage Park	Park Gap 4
5	Edward Hunt Complex	Park Gap 6
6	Friendship Basketball Court	Park Gap 8
7	Harbor Point Commons Park	Park Gap 9
8	Hatch Field	
9	Latham Park	
10	Lione Park	
11	Northrop Park	
12	St. John’s Park	
13	Veterans Memorial	

Strategies

Provide Shade: Increasing shade in an urban environment can be accomplished through expanding the tree canopy throughout the city’s open spaces and establishing shade structures to provide relief to pedestrians during hot days. These measures will lower the temperatures of the ground surface, providing a more comfortable atmosphere for pedestrians.

Low Albedo Surface Materials: Investments in transitioning large hardscape surfaces into light colored pavement will reflect the heat from the sun rather than absorb it to minimize the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. This action should be paired with an increase in natural surfaces in open spaces, including lawns, ground covers and habitat zones.

Water Features: Water features are a significant measure to cooling the immediate surroundings and providing relief to those seeking to escaping the high heat levels. These features can consist of drinking fountains for pedestrians, spray parks for children in city parks, water misters distributed throughout the public realm and outdoor facilities, as well as natural or constructed water bodies such as ponds and streams.



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Initiative Two



Parks at Risk: Flooding

Combating sea level rise and extreme flood events along the coastline and upland Stamford.

Parks At Risk: Flooding

Parks and open spaces can be a powerful tool in addressing environmental challenges such as flooding. The city's vulnerabilities to such events are categorized into coastal and upland flooding, and therefore have strategies catered to each. Building resiliency in a city can be achieved by implementing and balancing gray infrastructure, which is already widely used in the city context and investing in nature-based solutions. Nature-based solutions have significant positive impacts while shifting towards more environmentally friendly and sustainable materials and measures. Parks and open spaces are an ideal setting to implement such measures.

Parks & Park Gaps at Risk: Flooding		
	Parks	Park Gaps
1	Cove Island Park	Park Gap 1
2	Cummings Park	Park Gap 6
3	Czescik Park	Park Gap 9
4	Harbor Point Commons Park	Park Gap 10
5	John J. Boccuzzi Park	
6	Mianus River Park	
7	Mill River Park	
8	Newman Mills	
9	Rotary Park	
10	Scalzi Park	
11	St. John's Park	
12	Stamford Museum & Natural Center	
13	West Beach	

Coastal Strategies

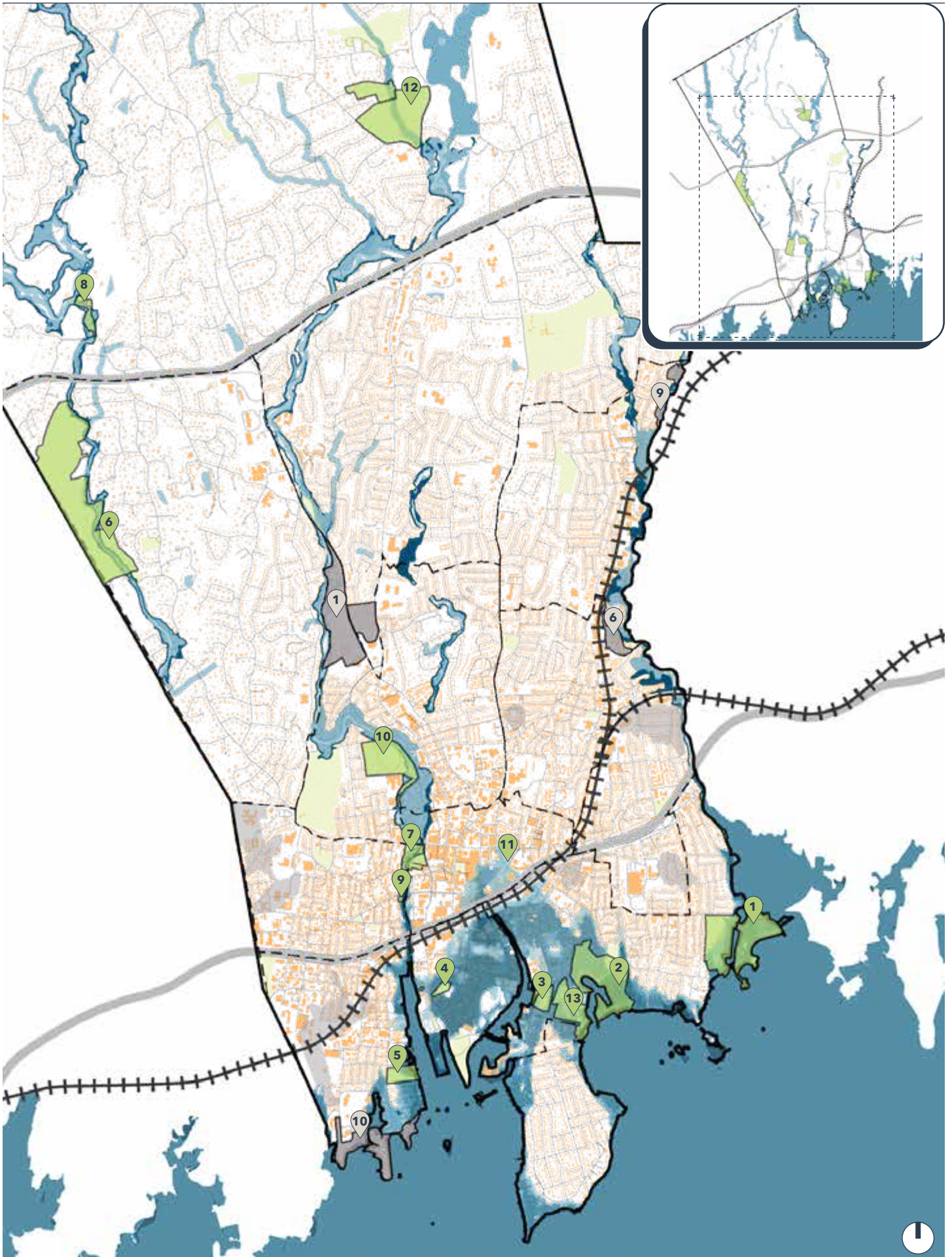
Natural Systems: Natural systems can be utilized to address flooding and protect neighboring communities. Wetlands, living shorelines, and native-vegetated sand dunes can help diffuse wave intensity in the event of a storm, absorb water volume, and provide a buffer and barrier between the sea water and the inland communities.

Hard Structures: Given design limitations, seawalls, groins, rip-rap and gabbions should be considered to complement natural infrastructures.

Upland Strategies

Green Infrastructure: Green infrastructure should be deployed throughout upland areas to mitigate flooding and absorb stormwater runoff, alleviating pressure for lowland neighborhoods. Strategies include establishing a network of bioswales and rain gardens, planting native species capable of absorbing large volumes of water, and harvesting stormwater for irrigation uses in parks.

Materials: To increase the landscape performance of the public realm, traditional materials such as concrete and asphalt should be replaced with porous pavement, permeable unit pavers, and natural turf to maximize stormwater infiltration and minimize infrastructural loads.



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Initiative Three



Fill in the Gaps

Ensuring all of Stamford residents have a park within a 10 minute walking distance.

Fill in the Gaps

This report identified the areas within the city of Stamford where residents do not have access to a park within a 10 minute walking distance, as well as the priority 'gaps' recommended for the city to focus on. The 'Fill in the Gaps' initiative outlines strategies to help identify spaces and lots that could be transformed into city parks, greenways, waterfront parks, public open spaces.

Park Gaps to Fill in the Gaps
Park Gaps
Park Gap 1
Park Gap 2
Park Gap 3
Park Gap 4
Park Gap 5
Park Gap 6
Park Gap 7
Park Gap 8
Park Gap 9
Park Gap 10

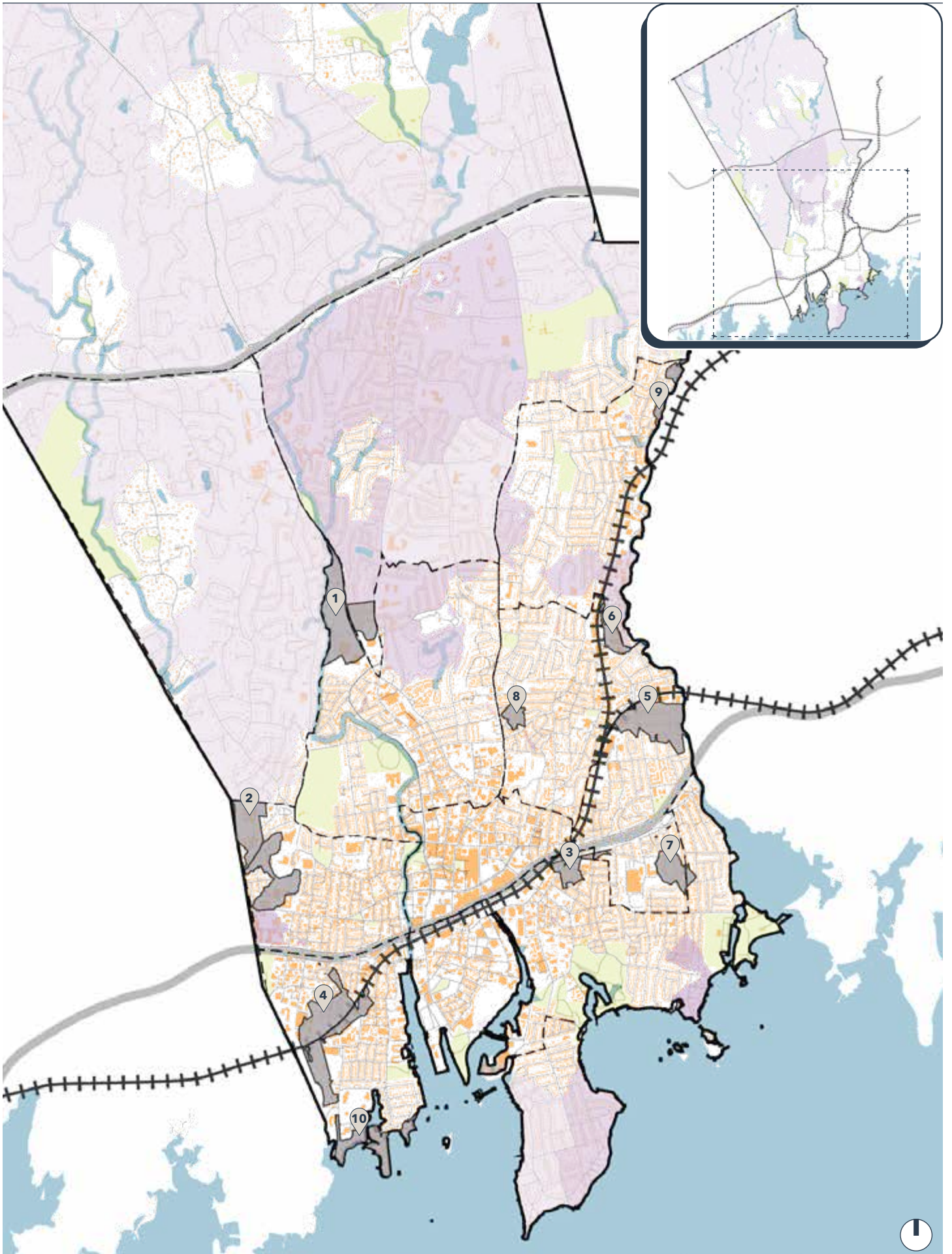
Strategies

Identify Underutilized Public Land: Street and utility easements provide an opportunity to fill in gaps in the park system. In addition, wide streets can be hybridized to streamline vehicular circulation as green and living streets. Temporary measures such as street closures, or partial closures during certain hours or days of the week can also be an asset to communities with limited access to open spaces.

Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS): The City can provide incentives to include open spaces in new private developments, ensuring that a percentage of open space is accessible to the public. The City can also develop privately owned public spaces (POPS) to include public plazas, arcades, small parks, and atriums to its list of public open spaces.

Develop Extensive Greenway Plan: Pocket and linear parks should be developed along streets, sidewalks, medians, etc. Other initiatives, such as plaza transformation programs can be put forth for public spaces.

Repetitive Flooding Sites: A severe repetitive loss grant program should be considered for sites that are routinely subject to flooding and flood damage along the city's coastline. The grant can facilitate property acquisition and relocation in favor of waterfront park expansions, such as beaches, marinas, etc.



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Initiative Four



Parks in Funding Need

Addressing accessibility, capacity, and limited resource concerns in Stamford's existing park network.

Parks in Funding Need

The community engagement process informed where increases in park funding would have the greatest impact and are summarized in the 'Parks in Funding Need' initiative. The initiative identifies measures and strategies to address public concerns and targeted at certain parks that are in significant need of additional funding.

Parks in Funding Need	
Parks	
1	Barrett Park
2	Cove Island Park
3	Cummings Park
4	Czescik Marina Park
5	Dorothy Heroy Park
6	Hatch Field
7	Kosciuszko Park
8	Mianus River Park
9	Northrop Park
10	Scalzi Park
11	Sleepy Hollow Park
12	West Beach
13	Woodway Park

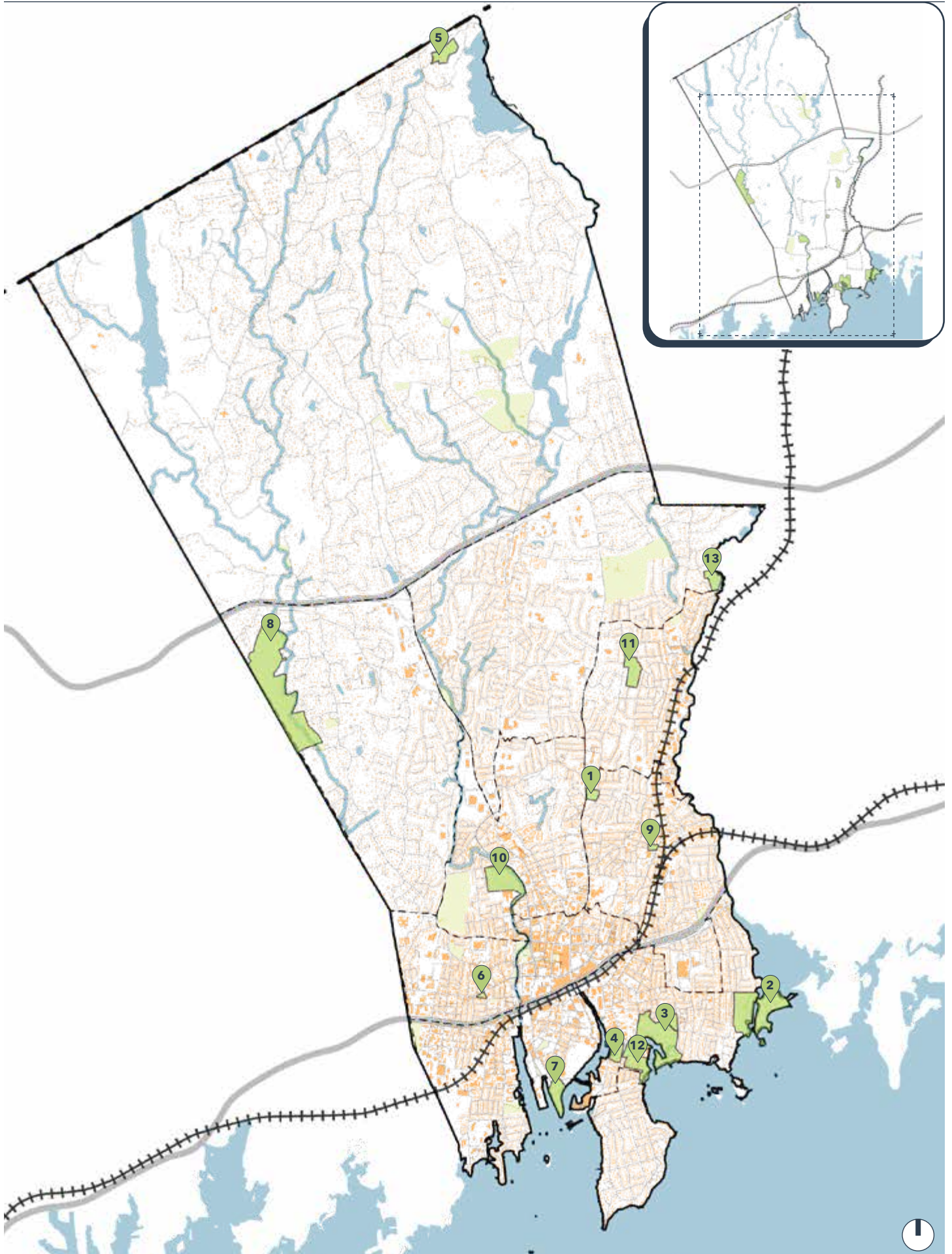
Strategies

Inventory of Current Conditions: A comprehensive cataloging should be executed of all existing city parks to capture existing conditions and determine maintenance and operations. Analysis should include arborist reports that document quantity, species, and health of all trees. Hardscapes conditions should also be included, noting paths in need of repair or replacement in addition to furnishings, play structures, etc.

Safety and Comfort: Parks can be enhanced to provide adequate lighting for the safety of users after dark, shade structures to protect from sun and rain, publicly accessible and year-round bathroom facilities, and comfort stations for those using the space.

Stewardship Opportunities: To build community investment and engagement, the City can conduct targeted neighborhood outreach to identify individualized park needs, programming, and desired enhancements.

Accessible Parks: Ensuring universal accessibility should be provided with ADA accessible ramps and/or enhancements for wheelchair access at all parks. Buckled pavements should be repaired and restrooms, shade structures and other facilities should be wheelchair accessible. ADA compliant signage should be distributed throughout the park network to build inclusivity.



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Initiative Five



Parks and Equity

Filling programmatic needs of the
community.

Parks and Equity

Low-income communities make up a significant portion of the city and are found in the more developed areas of southern Stamford. The disparities and inequalities residents face include limited access to open public space, opportunities, and community hubs. Environmental vulnerabilities and promoting safe neighborhoods need to be considered as well. Particular emphasis in these areas must be paid in building resilient communities, supporting growth and physical and mental health. Open spaces such as parks, and greenways, play a crucial role in a community's wellbeing and should be prioritized. Community engagement is highly recommended for a bottom-up approach to the planning process.

Strategies

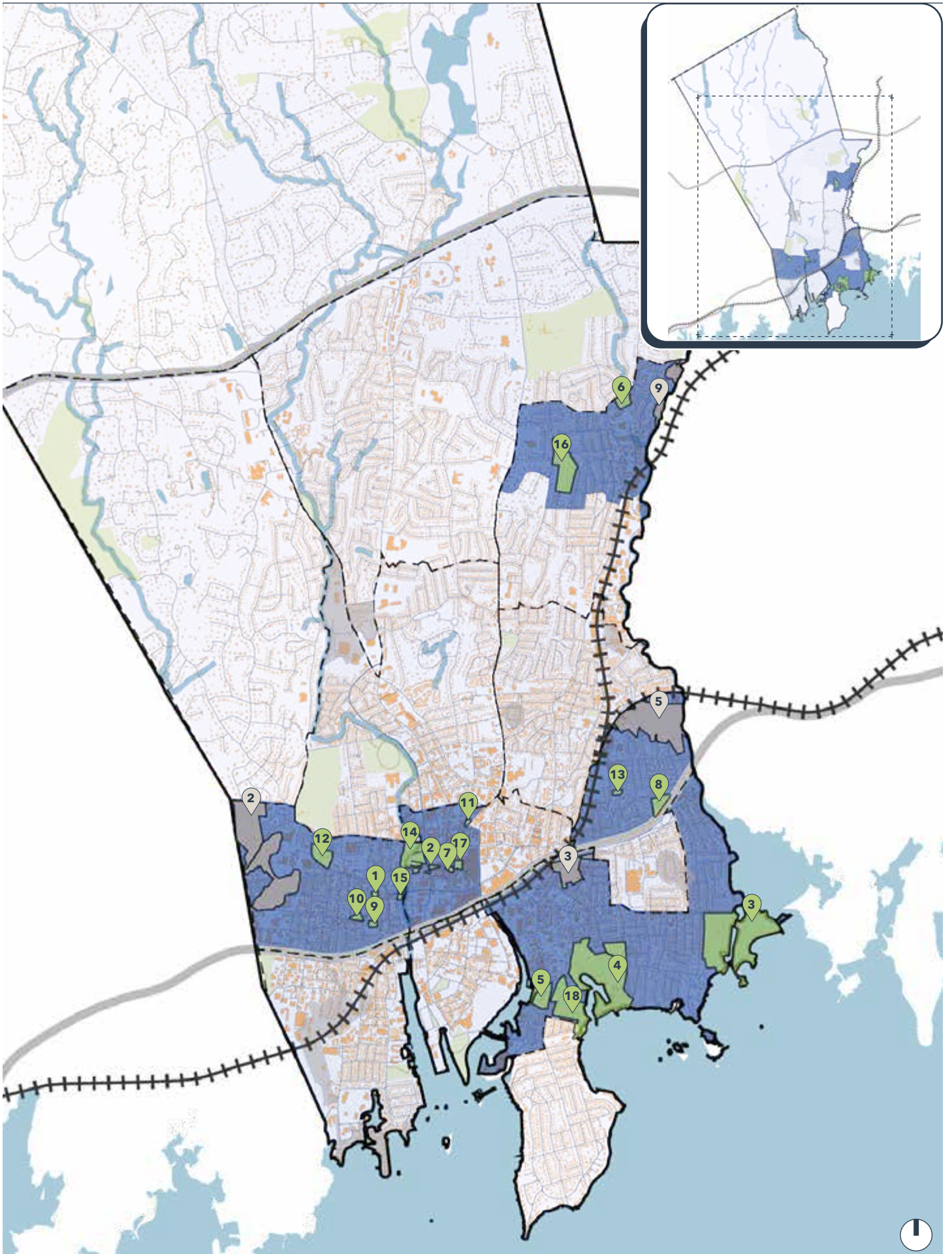
Community Engagement: New and future park planning should include community engagement in the City's planning process. The City should capitalize on engagement tools to develop and enhance parks to meet the needs of the local community.

Identify Stressors: Each neighborhood should be studied to identify any stressors that can be addressed. For example, community gardens should be implemented in neighborhoods in food deserts; pocket parks should be distributed in areas with residents facing mental health risks to provide respite and tranquility; active recreation and large trees should be incorporated in communities with elevated health risks including asthma and diabetes; green streets should be implemented in proximity to schools and parks to promote walking and biking.

Parks and Park Gaps for Equity		
Parks		Park Gaps
1	Carwin Park	Park Gap 2
2	Columbus Park	Park Gap 3
3	Cove Island Park	Park Gap 5
4	Cummings Park	Park Gap 9
5	Czescik Marina Park	
6	Drotar Park	
7	E.A. Cornell Heritage Park	
8	Edward Hunt Complex	
9	Friendship Basketball Court	
10	Hatch Field	
11	Latham Park	
12	Lione Park	
13	McKeithen Park	
14	Mill River Park	
15	Rotary Park	
16	Sleepy Hollow Park	
17	Veterans Memorial Park	
18	West Beach	

Stewardship: Parks in low-income neighborhoods should serve as hubs of economic growth by implementing year-round programming including job training and hiring of local residents for park maintenance.

Safe Streets: Neighborhoods should include 'safe streets', low-traffic and low-speed roadways that shift the priority to pedestrians and cyclists. Safe streets will provide a safer means of circulation for people, especially children, and can be used to connect neighborhoods with parks or community facilities.



Parks x Strategies

Several of these open spaces are affected by various challenges and therefore multiple initiatives could apply simultaneously. The following table illustrates the initiatives that correspond

to each open space. Please note that this shall be used as a guide in the planning process, and each area should be further studied on a case by case basis as conditions may change.

		OPEN SPACES														
		Barrett Park	Bartlett Arboretum	Carpinella Park	Carwin Park	Cedar Street Playground	Chestnut Hill Road Bird Sanctuary	Columbus Park	Courtland Park (Stamford Dog Park)	Cove Island Park	Cummings Park	Czescik Marina Park	Daskam Park	De Preta Park	Dorothy Heroy Complex	Drotar Park
STRATEGIES	PARKS AT RISK: HEAT															
	Provide Shade	●			●			●								
	Low Albedo Surface Materials	●			●			●								
	Water Features	●			●			●								
	PARKS AT RISK: FLOODING															
	Natural Systems									●	●	●				
	Hard Structures									●	●	●				
	Green Infrastructure															
	Materials															
	FILL IN THE GAPS															
	Identify Underutilized Public Land															
	Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)															
	Develop Extensive Greenway Plan															
	Repetitive Flooding Sites															
	PARKS IN FUNDING NEED															
	Inventory of Current Conditions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Safety & Comfort	○									○	○	○			○
	Stewardship Opportunities	○									○	○	○			○
	Accessible Parks	○									○	○	○			○
	PARKS AND EQUITY															
	Community Engagement				●			●		●	●	●				●
Identify Stressors				●			●		●	●	●				●	
Stewardship Opportunities				●			●		●	●	●				●	

OPEN SPACES																				
E.A. Connell Heritage Park	Edward Hunt & Chestnut Hill Park	Fort Stamford	Friendship Basketball Court	Gateway Commons	Gerli Park	Gus Edson Park	Haig Ave Park	Harbor Point Commons Park	Harbor Point Dog Park	Hatch Field (Jackie Robinson Park)	Homer Lee Wise Memorial Park	Hope Street Island Park	John J. Boccuzzi Park (Southfield)	Kiwanis Park	Kosciuszko Park	Latham Park	Lione Park	Marilyn Trefry Park	McKeithen Park	Meadowpark OS
●	●		●					●		●						●	●			
●	●		●					●		●						●	●			
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										○					○					
										○					○					
●	●		●							●						●	●		●	
●	●		●							●						●	●		●	
●	●		●							●						●	●		●	

		OPEN SPACES														
		Mianus River Park and Glen	Mianus River Park Scenic Reserve	Mill River Park	Nemoitin Park	Newman Mills Park	Northrop Field	Rippowam Park	Rosa Hartman Park	Rotary Park	Saunders Park	Scaizi Park	Scofieldtown Park	Sleepy Hollow Park	St. John's Park	Stamford Museum & Nature Center
INITIATIVES	PARKS IN HEAT															
	Provide Shade						●								●	
	Low Albedo Surface Materials						●								●	
	Water Features						●								●	
	PARKS AT RISK: FLOODING															
	Natural Systems															
	Hard Structures															
	Green Infrastructure	●		●		●				●		●			●	●
	Materials	●		●		●				●		●			●	●
	FILL IN THE GAPS															
	Identify Underutilized Public Land															
	Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)															
	Develop Extensive Greenway Plan															
	Repetitive Flooding Sites															
	PARKS IN FUNDING NEED															
	Inventory of Current Conditions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	Safety & Comfort	○						○				○			○	
	Stewardship Opportunities	○						○				○			○	
	Accessible Parks	○						○				○			○	
	PARKS AND EQUITY															
	Community Engagement			●							●				●	
Identify Stressors			●							●				●		
Stewardship Opportunities			●							●				●		

OPEN SPACES																			
Triangle Park	Terry Conners Ice Rink	Unnamed park at the end of Harbor Dr.	Veterans Memorial Park	Vincent Horan Park	Waterside Park	West Beach	Woodley Road Bird Sanctuary	Woodway Park	Yale Towne Park	Park Gap 1	Park Gap 2	Park Gap 3	Park Gap 4	Park Gap 5	Park Gap 6	Park Gap 7	Park Gap 8	Park Gap 9	Park Gap 10
			●							●	●	●	●		●		●	●	
			●							●	●	●	●		●		●	●	
			●							●	●	●	●		●		●	●	
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										●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
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										●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
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						○		○											
			●			●					●	●		●				●	
			●			●					●	●		●				●	
			●			●					●	●		●				●	



part four 
funding analysis

Fundamentals of Funding for Local Parks and Greenspaces

Executive Summary

Parks play an essential role in helping communities thrive. When people have access to a high-quality park close-to-home, they experience improved mental health, physical health, and social well-being. But, parks departments across the country face financial challenges that make it difficult to ensure that everyone has access to a high-quality park. For instance, one study found that following the great recession, spending on parks and recreation decreased 21% from 2008 - 2013.

While parks have waxed and waned on political agendas, demand hasn't gone down. In fact, we've seen the need for parks as critical civic infrastructure increase, prompted in part by the COVID-19 pandemic. City leaders and parks practitioners are being asked to do more for parks with less. But, they may not always know where to go for funding.

Trust for Public Land's 10-Minute Walk® Program has compiled this report to share common funding mechanisms available for city parks. This report is not intended to be encyclopedic, but rather to outline a wide range of frequently-used funding tools. The table below shares 21 common funding mechanisms for parks, along with a high-level summary of what they can fund.

FUNDING MECHANISM	CAPITAL COSTS	MAINTENANCE	PRE-DEVELOPMENT	ACTIVATIONS AND PROGRAMMING
LOCAL AND STATE SOURCES FOR PARK FUNDING				
Municipal Bonds	x			
Property Taxes	x	x	x	x
Sales and Use Taxes	x	x	x	x
Real Estate Transfer Tax	x	x	x	x
Parkland Dedication Ordinance	x		x	
Developer Impact Fee	x		x	
Business Improvement District	x	x	x	x
Parks District	x	x	x	x
Lottery Funds	x	x	x	x
MAJOR FEDERAL SOURCES				
NPS ORLP	x			
DOT RAISE	x		x	
NEA Our Town			x	x
EPA Brownfields Program	x		x	
DOT Transportation Alternatives	x		x	
USFS Urban and Community Forestry		x	x	x
EPA Environmental Justice Programs	x	x	x	x
DOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program	x		x	
NPS LCWF Stateside Assistance Program	x			
HUD Community Development Block Grants	x		x	
PARTNERSHIPS AND PHILANTHROPY				
Park Conservancy or Foundation	x	x	x	x
Philanthropies	x	x	x	x

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1

Local and State Funding for Parks

Municipal Bonds
Property Taxes
Sales and Use Taxes
Real Estate Transfer Tax
Parkland Dedication Ordinance
Developer Impact Fees
Business Improvement District
Parks District
State Lottery Funds

Local and State Funding for Parks

Cities generally fund their municipal operations, including their park systems, through the collection of property and sales taxes which are designated as part of a city's "general fund." A city's general fund is often the most flexible source for spending on parks and it can support capital costs, operations and maintenance, pre-development, as well as activation and programming. One challenge many cities face is weighing how to allocate general fund dollars towards parks versus the many other spending priorities of a city.

However, there are several ways that cities can generate funds specifically for parks, including ballot measures for conservation finance, developer exactions, and local districts.

Since 1996, Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance team has helped pass nearly 650 ballot measures creating \$93 billion in funding for parks, land conservation, and climate change mitigation, of which over 351 local city or county ballots have generated over \$33 billion in funding for parks and open space. The most common ballot measures passed are for bonds, property taxes, and sales taxes. Each of these mechanisms can be designed to ensure that the funding generated specifically supports a city's parks system. These have been passed in communities of all geographies, sizes, politics, and priorities.

Developer exactions - including parkland dedication ordinances and developer impact fees - are requirements that cities establish as a way to balance development with other city priorities. Developer exactions may be used as a way to create new parks that will serve a development's residents, or to fund other parks within the city that will be accessed by new residents.

In some cities, specialized local districts like Business Improvement Districts or Parks Districts are established to manage local parks. These districts can have the independent authority to generate revenue via taxes, levies, bonds, and private funding.

In addition to funds originating at the city level, some states are exploring funding mechanisms for city parks. Funding from lottery proceeds, bonds, sales tax, and real estate transfer tax are common examples. State taxes on cannabis and sporting goods are also emerging as common funding mechanisms being explored for city parks.

Municipal Bonds

What it is: A bond is debt issued by a government, territory, or one of its agencies. It is generally used to finance capital projects such as parks, roads, schools, and other public infrastructure or facilities. Bonds are a voter-approved ballot measure that are typically paid for by property owners. Bonds that fund local parks can be issued at the city, county, and state level.

What it funds: Bonds are an effective mechanism for obtaining funds for large-scale capital projects - particularly when funding is needed up-front and all at once. Bonds cannot be used for operations and maintenance.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by bonds can range widely, depending on a wide-range of factors including how cities, counties, and states are rated by external bond evaluation organizations. In 2022, TPL helped two municipal governments to develop and pass bond ballot measures - an \$85 million park bond which was passed by the voters of Salt Lake City, UT with 71 percent support and a \$15 million bond in Fort Worth, TX that was approved with 57 percent voter support.

Requirements and restrictions: There are generally no restrictions at the state-wide level that prevent cities and counties from issuing bonds. Most municipal bonds require voter approval.

Property Taxes

What it is: A property tax or millage is a levy on the value of a property. The tax is levied by the governing authority of the jurisdiction in which the property is located, and multiple jurisdictions may tax the same property. Property taxes fund a variety of public services, including and beyond parks.

What it funds: Property taxes can be used for a wide range of purposes, from land acquisition to capital improvements to operations and maintenance.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by property taxes can range widely based on the tax rate levied as well as the value and number of properties being taxed.

In 2022, TPL helped nine municipal governments develop property tax ballot measures, and seven of the measures passed. These measures supported by TPL in 2022 included a 1.5 percent tax increase in Worcester, MA for open space, recreation, historical preservation and affordable housing. The funding helps establish the Community Preservation Act in Massachusetts' second largest city.

Requirements and restrictions: Many states have strict limits or caps on the property taxes that can be levied in local jurisdictions. Property tax increases are often voter-approved, but this varies by state.

Sales and Use Taxes

What it is: A sales tax is paid to a governing authority by a consumer for the purchase of certain goods and services. Sales taxes generally allow a seller to collect the tax from a consumer at the point of purchase. When a tax on goods or services is paid to a governing body directly by a consumer, it is usually called a use tax. Certain goods, such as prescriptions or groceries, are often exempted from these taxes. Sales taxes run the risk of being considered regressive, especially if prescriptions, groceries, or other essential items are included in the tax. Sales taxes can fund a wide range of public services, including parks. Sales taxes that fund local parks can be issued at the local or state level.

What it funds: Sales taxes can be used for a wide range of purposes, from land acquisition to capital improvements to operations and maintenance.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by a sales tax can range widely based on the tax rate levied, the goods or services being taxed, and the tax base. In April 2023, TPL supported Colorado Springs, CO as voters overwhelmingly approved a 20-year extension of the existing 0.1% Trails and Open Space (TOPS) sales tax. The measure was approved with 78% support and is expected to generate \$240 million for open space, parks, and trails. The TOPS tax was first approved by voters in 1997.

Requirements and restrictions: In some states, there is enabling legislation required by the state in order for local

jurisdictions to levy sales taxes. In these states, there are restrictions governing how or whether sales taxes can be implemented on a local level. There is a wide range of how sales taxes can be implemented, including by ballot measure.

Real Estate Transfer Tax

What it is: Real estate transfer taxes are a tax or fee on the transfer of a property's title or deed. The tax is a one-time cost that is typically calculated as a percentage of a property's total sale price. Real estate transfer taxes can fund a variety of public services, including parks, and they can be levied at the state or local level.

What it funds: Real estate transfer taxes can be used for a wide range of purposes from land acquisition to capital improvements to operations and maintenance.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by a real estate transfer tax can range widely based on the tax rate levied, the value of properties being transferred within a jurisdiction, and the number of properties being transferred. TPL's Conservation Finance team has helped pass four local real estate transfer taxes that have helped to generate over \$31 million in funding for parks.

Requirements and restrictions: The implementation process of a real estate transfer tax varies from state to state. There is a wide range of how real estate transfer taxes can be implemented, including by ballot measure. In some states, there are restrictions governing how or whether a real estate transfer tax can be implemented at the local level.

Parkland Dedication Ordinance

What it is: A Parkland Dedication Ordinance is a city policy, often enacted through the zoning code or subdivision regulations, that requires a developer to donate land and/or funding for parks. There is a wide range of approaches for how Parkland Dedication Ordinances can be structured, and different approaches can be mixed together. For some cities, the developer is only required to donate land, which the city then improves. In other cities, developers can be credited

for building a publicly accessible park. Cities may also offer a “fee-in-lieu of land” option in which a one-time fee is required instead of a land donation. A growing trend is to require both a donation of land as well as a fee to ensure the city is funded to develop that land.

What it funds: When a Parkland Dedication Ordinance only requires a donation of land, no funding is provided to the city. If a fee-in-lieu of land is required, that funding can be used by the city to either develop a new park or improve an existing park that will serve the development’s residents.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by Parkland Dedication Ordinances ranges depending on how the city’s ordinance is structured, as well as the amount of development within a city. Generally, when a fee-in-lieu of land is required, that fee is assessed based on the density of a new development. Parkland Dedication Ordinances may be criticized when they are structured so that the funds raised are outpaced by the cost of land, resulting in an inability by the city to purchase parkland.

Requirements and restrictions: Parkland dedication ordinances can be enacted by cities. There are requirements for an ordinance to define geographic proximity of the dedicated land (or fee expenditure) to the new development, how the new parkland affects current levels of service, and how fees are spent.

Developer Impact Fees

What it is: An impact fee is a fee required of developers to offset the cost of city infrastructure that will need to be built in order to serve that new development. Impact fees are often used to fund traditional infrastructure projects, like roads and sewers. But some cities also use impact fees as a way to fund parks that will be needed by the development’s residents.

What it funds: Similar to funds raised through Parkland Dedication Ordinances, impact fees can only be used for park development or capital improvement.

Scale of funding provided: Similar to Parkland Dedication Ordinances, the funding raised by impact fees is dependent on the fee levied by the city, as well as the amount of development in a city.

Requirements and restrictions: Impact fees require enabling legislation at the state level in some states. There is a high-degree of specificity governing how impact fees can - and cannot - be used.

Business Improvement District

What it is: A business improvement district (BID) is a defined geographic location within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax or levy to fund projects within the BID’s boundaries. While BIDs are often funded primarily through the tax or levy, they can also draw on other public and private funding. BIDs are generally operated by a non-profit organization with full-time staff and a board of directors.

What it funds: BIDs fund a wide range of activities that support the needs of business owners in a given area from enhanced cleaning to conducting advocacy for members to conducting capital projects. For parks, BIDs may fund areas from the initial capital investment to develop a park to ongoing operations and maintenance to programming.

Scale of funding provided: Funding provided by BIDs ranges widely based on the tax or levy required by businesses within the BID, the number of businesses contributed the tax or levy, and its ability to fundraise additional revenue. New York City, which has the largest number of BIDs in the country, has BIDs with tax or levy revenue as low as \$75,000 a year and as high as \$20 million a year.

Requirements and restrictions: BIDs are often a standalone non-profit organization that must be staffed, have a board of directors, and formalized by-laws. Establishing a BID typically requires authorization from the city and support among business owners within its proposed boundaries. There are varying requirements from state-to-state that may govern the implementation of a BID, including enabling legislation. Approximately 40 states have legislation governing BIDs.

Parks District

What it is: A parks district is an autonomous organization that manages parks (and sometimes other civic assets) within

a defined geographic location. Park districts are generally funded either by a property tax or by general obligation bonds.

What it funds: Parks districts can fund and lead all aspects of park management from pre-development to development to programming to ongoing operations and maintenance.

Scale of funding provided: Funding provided by parks districts ranges widely based on the tax or levy required of property owners within its geographic bounds, as well as its ability to fundraise through bonds. One of the largest parks districts in the country, the Chicago Park District, had a budget of \$510.9 million for 2022, funded primarily by property taxes.

Requirements and restrictions: There are varying requirements from state-to-state that may govern the establishment of a parks district. Once established, a parks district generally is managed by full-time staff and its work is often overseen by a park board.

State Lottery Funds

What it is: In areas with a state lottery, a portion of the revenue can be allocated towards supporting public goods - including parks.

What it funds: The specific funding allocation from lotteries varies from state-by-state. One of the most prominent lotteries that funds environmental protection is the Colorado lottery. In Colorado, 40% of the lottery's profits fund the Conservation Trust Fund, which specifically supports local governments.⁶ Funding from the Conservation Trust Fund can be used for park land acquisition, capital improvement, and maintenance. In 2021, the Conservation Trust Fund distributed over \$70 million to local communities across the state.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by lotteries ranges widely based on lottery revenue as well as requirements for how that revenue must be disbursed. For example, Minnesota's state legislation requires that the lottery provide no less than 40% of its net proceeds towards the state's environmental and natural resources trust fund through 2025. The trust fund then receives and evaluates a number of proposals for how that funding can be used. A reauthorization of the use of lottery funds for conservation is on the ballot in

Minnesota for 2024. If approved, a portion of lottery revenue would continue to be dedicated towards conservation until 2050.

Requirements and restrictions: Rules governing a state lottery - including how its revenue is distributed - are generally made at the state-level and codified in state legislation. For example, both Colorado and Minnesota have specific legislation requirements around the usage of lottery revenue. In Colorado, the breakdown of how lottery revenue is spent was decided via a ballot measure.

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2

Major Federal Funding Sources

NPS Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP)

DOT Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)

NEA OUR TOWN

EPA Brownfields Program

DOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

USFS Urban and Community Forestry Program

EPA Environmental Justice Programs

DOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program

LWCF Stateside Assistance Program

HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Major Federal Funding Sources

The past decade has seen an unprecedented level of investment in parks and recreation from the Great American Outdoors Act, which created a permanent source of funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act, which are expected to infuse billions of dollars into city parks across the country. Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program is the only federal grant that is specifically designed to support the acquisition and development of city parks. But, other federal programs - including and beyond those listed below - can fund parks as part of a city's broader transportation, climate, and cultural infrastructure.

NPS Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP)

What it is: The ORLP Program is the most significant federal grant for city parks, and it is specifically focused on increasing access to outdoor recreation in economically disadvantaged areas with a park equity gap. ORLP is administered by the National Park Service and funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It is an annual grant that was established in 2014. Since its inception, ORLP has provided over \$100 million dollars to fund nearly 100 projects in cities across the country.

What it funds: ORLP funds both land acquisition and the development and renovation of a wide range of types of parks and outdoor recreation facilities.

Scale of funding provided: The 2022 round of the ORLP program was funded at \$192 million. Grants made to applicants can range from \$300,000 to \$10 million. The funds that the federal government provides through ORLP must be matched at a 1:1 ratio by non-federal sources.

Requirements and restrictions: ORLP is the most significant grant funding the development of local parks and the program is carefully designed to ensure specific criteria are met by applicants, including:

- Applicant: The applicant for ORLP must be a state's lead agency for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Local communities can submit their proposals to their state's lead agency for consideration and inclusion in the national competition.

- Who is served: ORLP projects must serve the needs of an economically disadvantaged area that is located in a park desert (e.g., lacks walkable, publicly accessible, parks).
- Strategic alignment: The proposed project must meet or align with at least one recreation goal of the State's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

DOT Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)

What it is: RAISE is a federal grant program - previously known as BUILD and TIGER - administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The program was initiated as part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. While primarily focused on transportation, some groups have secured RAISE funding for city trails and greenways. For example, in fiscal year 2021, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission received over \$17 million to complete 20 miles of construction for the Marquette Greenway - a 60-mile multi-use path that cuts through nine municipalities along Lake Michigan.

What it funds: In fiscal year 2023, RAISE funds were allocated for both capital and planning projects. There are a wide range of eligible projects. Within the capital category, "intermodal projects" are likely the most relevant for parks practitioners. Nearly all of the eligible project types within the planning categories could be relevant for city parks.

Scale of funding provided: Since its inception (including its iterations as BUILD and TIGER), RAISE has provided over \$12.3 billion in funding.10 \$1.5 billion was allocated for 2023. The funding is split, with half going to projects in rural areas and half going to projects in urban areas. The minimum grant award is \$5 million in urban areas and \$1 million in rural areas. In either case, grants cannot exceed \$25 million.

Requirements and restrictions: RAISE is a major federal grant program. The program is designed with highly-specific requirements to ensure specific criteria are met by applicants. There are restrictions on cost sharing, and federal funding for a project cannot exceed 80% of the total project cost except in limited scenarios.

NEA OUR TOWN

What it is: Our Town is a grant funded by the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) that supports arts engagement, cultural planning, and design projects that represent the distinct character and quality of their communities. Cities across the country have tapped into Our Town to use creative placemaking to elevate and showcase their community's arts and culture.

What it funds: Through project-based funding, the Our Town program supports activities that integrate arts, culture, and design into local efforts that strengthen communities. Our Town projects advance local economic, physical, or social outcomes in communities, ultimately laying the groundwork for systems change and centering equity. Within the context of parks, Our Town projects are often used for community programming as well as arts and cultural installations. For example, in Wenatchee, Washington, an Our Town grant funded a health and cultural event for an under-served community in a local park. In Bozeman, Montana, Our Town funded arts and cultural installations and programming in Story Mill Community Park.

Scale of funding provided: Our Town grants range from \$25,000 to \$150,000. Grants require a 1:1 match from non-federal sources.

Requirements and restrictions: In addition to the match requirement, Our Town requires a demonstrated partnership between a nonprofit organization and a local government organization, one of which must be a cultural organization. The highest-ranking local government official must submit a letter of support. Our Town grants cannot fund more than 50% of the total project cost.

EPA Brownfields Program

What it is: The EPA's Brownfields program is a suite of grants and technical assistance that support re-use of brownfields across the country. The program was established in 1995. Since then, it has supported the clean-up of over 2,400 sites and has made nearly 150,000 acres available for re-use. The Bipartisan Infrastructure law is injecting an additional \$1.5 billion of investment into the program.

What it funds: The Brownfields program provides a wide range of grants, loans, and technical assistance for cities to help revitalize brownfields, including:

- Assessment grants that fund inventorying of brownfields, along with planning activities - including community engagement
- Revolving loan funds that provide support for brownfield clean-ups
- Cleanup grants that fund remediation activities at brownfield sites
- Multipurpose grants that fund a range of assessment and clean-up activities within a specific geographic area that has one or more brownfield
- Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities (TAB) provides support to a third-party organization who can help communities within their region to understand brownfield assessment and clean-up

There are a variety of ways to tap into these programs to promote parks and greenspace. For example, the cities of Ranson and Charles Town, West Virginia, have received multiple grants from the brownfield program to rehabilitate a 1.5 mile strip of brownfields connecting the cities. Part of the rehabilitation has included the development of parks and green space.

Scale of funding provided: Each of the grants within the Brownfields Program has its own range of funding available.

- Assessment grants: Up to \$2 million
- Revolving loan fund: Up to \$1 million
- Brownfield clean-up grants: Up to \$2 million
- Multi-purpose grants: Up to \$800,000

Requirements and restrictions: Each of the grants and technical assistance opportunities within the Brownfields program come with its own set of requirements and restrictions. Restrictions and requirements generally govern who can apply for a grant, the window of time within which a grant must be spent, match requirements, and the activities allowed under a grant.

DOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

What it is: TAP is a federal grant program that funds small-scale, multi-modal transportation projects. States are allocated funding for TAP from the federal government, and are then responsible for administering those funds. There are different requirements for how funds are awarded based on the population of the area in which the funding would be allocated.

What it funds: TAP funds a wide range of transportation-focused projects, including development of multi-modal recreational trails, construction of scenic viewing points, and safe routes to schools projects. In fiscal year 2020, TAP supported nearly 2,000 projects: over 1,000 pedestrian and bicycle trails, 925 recreational trails, 14 historic preservation projects, and seven environmental and wildlife projects. Funding is available for construction, design, and planning.

Scale of funding provided: TAP funding is set-aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. In fiscal year 2022, TAP was funded at \$1.38 billion dollars, and it's budgeted to increase to \$1.49 billion by fiscal year 2026.¹⁵ Funding for TAP projects flows through block grants to states and is calculated as 10% of the state's allocation for the Surface Transportation Block Grant.

Requirements and restrictions: Funding for TAP projects is awarded through competitive processes at the state level, and the process varies from state to state. Areas with a population greater than 200,000 apply for funds through their metropolitan planning organization while populations under 200,000 apply through their state Department of Transportation. There are a limited number of entities that are eligible to receive TAP funding, including local governments, nonprofits, and metropolitan planning organizations. Projects require a 20% match of funds for a project.

USFS Urban and Community Forestry Program

What it is: The US Forest Service's Urban & Community Forestry Program (UCFP) is a technical, financial, and educational assistance program. The intent of the program is to deliver nature-based solutions for communities to ensure an equitable and resilient tree canopy in urban spaces where more than 84%

of Americans live. Through the Inflation Reduction Act, the program has established a competitive grant process to fund projects that reflect the work of the UCFP.

What it funds: UCFP funds investments at the local, regional, state, or even national level that increase equitable access to urban tree canopy and the associated health, environmental and economic benefits in disadvantaged communities. Projects may seek to broaden community engagement in local urban forest planning, and/or improve community and urban forest resilience to climate change, pests, and storm events through best management and maintenance practices.

Scale of funding provided: Urban and Community Forestry grants range from \$100,000 - \$50,000,000. Grants require a 1:1 match from non-federal sources. Match may be waived for proposals delivering 100% of the funding/program benefits to disadvantaged communities.

Requirements and restrictions: The scope of eligible entities and land types is very broad under the UCFP, but may not fund projects on federally-owned lands.

EPA Environmental Justice Programs

What it is: EPA created two new environmental justice programs in 2023 with an additional program set to be announced the summer of 2023. The EJ Collaborative Problem Solving (EJCPS) and Government to Government (EJG2G) programs announced in January, provide financial assistance to eligible organizations or government entities working to address local environmental or public health issues in their communities. The Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants will invest a historic sum of \$3 billion in communities when announced later in 2023.

What it funds: Environmental justice programs center community involvement and partnership in all project work. Proposals must demonstrate this commitment to partnership and to transforming the environmental and public health of overburdened and underserved communities. Eligible activities include research, community planning and/or public education activities as well as site-based interventions like green infrastructure projects. Eligibility is broad so long as it contributes to program goals. Differences between the EJCPS

and EJG2G projects are primarily matters of scale rather than type.

Scale of funding provided: EJCPs funds up to \$500,000 for qualifying projects while EJG2G funds up to \$1,000,000.

Requirements and restrictions: There are no cost share or matching requirements for either program. EJCPs does require the use of the EPA's EJ Collaborative Problem Solving model and a logic model illustrating how activities lead to outcomes. EJG2G recipients must also use a logic model and demonstrate an official partnership with a local community-based organization.

DOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program

What it is: This Department of Transportation program aims to fund projects that advance community-centered connection transportation projects, with a priority for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, by improving access to daily needs such as jobs, education, health care, food, nature and recreation; fostering equitable development and restoration; and reconnecting communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including to mobility, access, or economic development. In FY 2022, six Capital Construction Grants and 39 Planning Grants were awarded in the first cycle of the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program.

What it funds: The RCN Program provides funding for three types of grants:

Community Planning Grants will award RCP and/or NAE funding for planning activities for future construction projects and allow for innovative community planning to address localized transportation challenges.

Capital Construction Grants will award projects that remove, retrofit, mitigate, or replace an existing eligible dividing transportation facility with a new facility that reconnects communities; mitigates a burdening transportation facility that is a source of air pollution, noise, stormwater, heat, or other burdens; or implement a strategy to reduce environmental harm and/or improve access through transportation improvements.

Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants will award projects led by two or more eligible applicants to address a persistent regional challenge related to equitable access and mobility. Eligible activities for Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants are the same as those listed under Capital Construction and Community Planning Grants but must have a regional focus, and clearly demonstrate regional coordination and leveraging of local, State, and Federal resources and policies.

Scale of funding provided: RCN Planning Grants provide as much as \$50,000,000. The upward range of Capital Grants are flexible within the total funding allotments. Of the three grant types, the Community Planning Grants and the Regional Partnerships Challenge grants require at least 20% of the total project cost to come from non-federal sources. The Capital Construction Grants funded by the IRA Neighborhood Access and Equity program also requires 20% of the total project cost to be matched by non-federal sources.

Requirements and restrictions: In addition to the non-federal cost share requirement, Reconnecting Communities-funded Capital Grants are limited to covering 50% of the total project cost. An additional 30% may come from other federal sources with a 20% non-federal match.

LWCF Stateside Assistance Program

What it is: The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is the largest source of federal money for park, wildlife, and open space land acquisition. No less than 40% of LWCF dollars are given to, and administered by, states as matching grants for park development and land acquisition projects. LWCF funding for states or "stateside" has supported the purchase and protection of 3 million acres of recreation lands and over 29,000 projects to develop basic recreation facilities in every U.S. State and territory.

What it funds: The stateside program can assist in acquiring, preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources. These mechanisms can apply broadly to open space, parks, trails, wildlife lands and other lands and facilities desirable for outdoor recreation.

Scale of funding provided: LWCF Stateside grants vary widely in size from state to state. From multi-million-dollar land acquisition projects to a \$50,000 park rehabilitation. All LWCF grants require a 1:1 match from non-federal sources.

Requirements and restrictions: In addition to the match requirement, for parks and recreation facilities that receive LWCF funds, the government entity that owns the site must commit to maintaining these sites for the purpose of public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

HUD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

What it is: The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Beginning in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest continuously run programs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1209 general units of local government and states.

What it funds: Through CDBG, activities must meet one of three national objectives: 1) benefits low- and moderate income individuals, 2) aids in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or 3) addresses an urgent need that poses a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community which occurred within the last 18 months and for which other funding is not available. These requirements allow for flexible application of CDBG funds to local projects by state or local agencies. The program has been used widely for park and trail rehabilitation and development where these facilities are a priority at the local level.

Scale of funding provided: Award amounts through CDBG are highly variable from states to cities to municipal governments. The program is currently funded at \$3.3 billion annually. Grants do not require non-federal match.

Requirements and restrictions: CDBG is one of the most flexible sources of federal funding available, and is one of the only federal sources, authorized by its enabling legislation, that allows it to be used as non-federal match for other programs.

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3

Partnerships and Philanthropy

Park Conservancy or Foundation
Private Philanthropies

Partnerships and Philanthropy

Partnerships and philanthropy enable a city to support parks through non-governmental organizations. These external groups can fund parks operations and maintenance, programming, and capital improvement. Beyond funding, they can also provide full-time staff to deliver park services. While there are a wide range of models that exist, some of the most common are parks conservancies or foundations. The work of these organizations can be funded by private philanthropies. Private philanthropies can also play a larger role in improving park systems.

Park Conservancy or Foundation

What it is: A park conservancy or foundation is a non-profit organization that can fundraise and generate revenue to support a wide range of park activities. Conservancies and foundations are generally professionally-staffed organizations that have a formal operating agreement with the city.

What it funds: Conservancies and foundations fund a wide range of park activities from planning to capital improvements to programming to operations and maintenance. Limitations on what a conservancy or foundation can fund are primarily restricted by the organization's bylaws and its operating agreement with the city. Conservancies and foundations can be set up to support a single park, a limited number of parks, or an entire park system.

Scale of funding provided: Funding for a parks conservancy or foundation is only limited by an organization's scope and fundraising ability. In Birmingham, Alabama, the Railroad Park Foundation expended \$1.5 million in 2020. Central Park Conservancy in New York City - the largest of Trust for Public Land's ParkScore cities - spent over \$73 million in the same year.

Requirements and restrictions: There are a wide range of approaches for how to organize a park conservancy or foundation. When conservancies or foundations are structured as not-for-profit organizations (as they typically are), they are subject to all local, state, and federal requirements of non-profits. These requirements vary by city and state.

Private Philanthropies

What it is: Private philanthropies play an essential role in supporting the work of parks departments across the country. Philanthropies can play an important and catalytic role in bringing dollars to park development and improvement projects, as well as targeted, system-wide investments in specific cities. Philanthropies are not-for-profit organizations across the country that can fund a wide range of projects, including parks. Funds can be awarded either directly to a city or to a not-for-profit partner.

What it funds: Support of parks varies based on an individual philanthropy's focus. Frequently funded projects include development or improvement of specific parks, funding collective impact or coalition-building for parks, or funding creative place-making interventions for parks.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by national philanthropies ranges widely based on a philanthropic program goals and overall investment in parks. For large, national philanthropies, projects can reach hundreds of millions of dollars in investment.

Requirements and restrictions: Different philanthropic organizations have different requirements of grant applicants. In general, for large-scale grants there may be requirements surrounding matching funds, a demonstration of partnership with community organizations, and deep due diligence conducted by the funder.

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Revenue Recommendations

Introduction and Process

As part of the Stamford Citywide Parks Strategic Plan project, James Lima Planning and Development (JLP+D) was contracted with Local to provide two memorandums which aim to 1) summarize up to 3 precedents on comparable funding models and 2) advise on alternative financing mechanisms and funding models to advance the strategic plan. JLP+D reviewed City of Stamford documents, interviewed City staff, and researched case studies to understand existing budgetary opportunities and future potentials for policy and programmatic innovations. JLP+D's budgetary and policy review included a quantitative five-year budget document analysis of both capital and operating expenses for the City of Stamford. The project team observed the capital operating budget documents with a focus on the "Parks and Facilities Maintenance", "Leisure Services", "Brennan Golf Course", "Terry Connors Ice Rink", and "Shoreline Parks & Facilities" departments. Additional research included a cross-reference with budgetary document introductory notes along with the City of Stamford Parks & Recreation Commission's "Policy, Rules, Guidelines & Vision for Stamford Parks". Additional qualitative research included two (2) City of Stamford staff interviews, attended by Matthew Quiñones, Erin McKenna, and Kevin Murray. The first interview addressed a series of outstanding questions from the budgetary review, and the second interview involved an exercise of reviewing and identifying the opportunities, limitations, and required adjustments for solution implementation.

The following three (3) gaps were identified during the City of Stamford budgetary and policy document review:

1. There is a strong community interest in supporting parks and recreation maintenance and funding, but there lacks a sufficient existing mechanism that enables widely applied community-based sponsorship or adoption of public parks.
2. There are recreational facilities that can potentially generate revenue. However, budgetary documents revealed no advertising revenue for either the Terry Connors Rink or the EG Brennan Golf Course. Additional revenue opportunities may be available through the development of a more robust offering of advertising and sponsorships at both facilities.

3. In terms of fiscal policy tools, the City currently has one TIF (Tax Increment Financing) program through the Mill River TIF. However, besides such TIF, there are no diversified specific tax or fee programs that can raise dedicated funding for the parks system.

For the first submitted memorandum, JLP+D reviewed City of Stamford documents, interviewed City staff, and researched case studies to understand existing budgetary opportunities and future potentials for policy and programmatic innovations.

The second memorandum was developed through a process of City Staff engagement and feedback along with inputs from the community survey insights. The August 2023 worksession with City Staff involved a collaborative session where staff provided their professional insights for the recommendations while also observing some high-level community survey insights. It was through this process that JLP+D developed the following memorandum in response to the feedback and recommendations provided during the August 2023 session.

Topic 1

Community Contributions, Philanthropy, and Donations
(Adopt-A-Park and Park Sponsorship programs)

Topic 2

Corporate Sponsorships and Advertising Revenue for Facilities

Topic 3

Fiscal Policy Measures to Raise Funds for Parks and Facilities

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1

Topic

Community Contributions, Philanthropy, and Donations
(Adopt-A-Park and Park Sponsorship programs)

Case Studies

Case Study #1A: New York City Parks Foundation
Case Study #1B: Jacksonville Memorial Park, Adopt the Park Program

Recommendation

Create a third-party non-profit Parks Foundation
to manage grass-root efforts and philanthropy

Case Studies

Solution Introduction

Better experience of the public realm enriches the City of Stamford and helps build a strong city brand that brings civic pride and enhances equity and inclusion. Cultivating robust donor, philanthropic, and individual networks around a shared vision has the effect of reaffirming the civil society's commitment to public causes, generating a virtuous cycle of investment, stewardship, and public benefits.

In places with a significant amount of private wealth, if given the appropriate fundraising mechanisms and causes, donations by high-net-worth individuals, foundations, corporations, patient capital investors, and the general public could potentially help the managers of the public realm tap into previously unavailable funding streams.

The State of Connecticut has two (2) identified programs which provide valuable opportunities for funding and community engagement. The existing Adopt-a-Park program enables volunteers and organizations to formally commit to the long-term maintenance of Connecticut's parks and features. An additional program was recently developed through Public Act 15-106 which enables the targeted donation of funds to support the operations of state parks in Connecticut. This program provides a variety of levels of financial support for parks by outside entities. The details for this program are currently still under development.

Case Study #1A: New York City Parks Foundation

The New York City Parks Foundation demonstrates the value of establishing an umbrella non-profit that works with the City to act as a vehicle for managing the broad array of private and volunteer groups with varying capacities. The New York City Parks Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that was established in 1989, with the mission of: "invigorating and transforming parks into dynamic, vibrant centers of urban life through sports, arts, community building and education programs for all New Yorkers. Our programs—located in hundreds of parks, recreation centers and public schools across New York City—reach thousands of people each year". The organization works with the City of New York to manage and organize world class performances, manage venue rentals within the parks, develop youth and senior activity

programs, manage environmental education programs, organize local volunteer partnerships, and connect corporate partners to the park system through multi-level activation strategies. The organization currently has 275,000 program participants, 6000 kids in fitness and sport activities, over 30000 volunteers, and spans 333 parks throughout the City. In 2019, the organization had a total revenue of \$24,265,997 with \$17,688,551 derived from contributions and \$5,117,531 from program services. Key expenses for the program included salaries and wages along with executive compensation.

The chart to the right provides a detailed breakdown of the revenue sources from 2019 and 2020.

Case Study #1B: Jacksonville Memorial Park Adopt the Park Program

At the scale of individual parks, the Memorial Park Association in Jacksonville, Florida provides a case study which highlights the financial capabilities of administering an adopt-a-park program. In Jacksonville, the established the "Adopt the Park" program in May 2015 with multiple tiers of contribution and recognition:

- Citizens Committee Level Sponsor: \$25,000+ Annually
- C.A. Pillars Society: \$5,000 - \$24,999 Annually
- Promenade Level: \$2,500 - \$4,999 Annually
- Mr. Dawson Society: \$1,500 - \$2,499 Annually
- Esplanade Level: \$1,000 - \$1,499 Annually

The Association received \$311,000 annually from private contributions. Those funds were invested in the maintenance and operations of one specific park, allowing the private sector to fund public space operations.

New York City Parks Foundation Revenue Sources

Revenue Type	Revenue Source	2019 Revenue	2020 Revenue
Contributions, Gifts, Grants, and Other Similar Amounts	Federated Campaigns	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Membership Dues	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Fundraising Events	\$1,613,721	\$247,819
	Related Organizations	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Government Grants	\$11,179,427	\$1,032,306
	Non-cash contributions (above)	\$35,951	\$9,928,647
Program Service Revenue	Program Events	\$4,552,152	\$68,597
	Grant Admin Fee-Green Relief Fund	N/A	\$241,111
	Administrative Fees	\$565,379	\$54,214
Investment Income	Investment Income	\$715,283	\$655,901
Gross Amount From Sales Of Assets Other Than Inventory	Gross Amount From Sales Of Assets Other Than Inventory	\$3,003,251	\$14,625,499
Fundraising Events	Fundraising Events	\$1,613,721	\$247,819

Recommendation

Existing Efforts and Assets

Stamford is a place of many community actors and local wealth. There is a wide range of existing local non-profits that might become partners for parks advocacy and management, such as [The Friends of Mianus River Park](#), [Mill River Park Collaborative](#), and Keep Stamford Beautiful, Inc. (to name a few) . The City also has existing programs such as Adopt-A-Park to encourage community and private contributions.

To develop a more holistic and systemic approach to leverage community resources, the City of Stamford is currently in the process of both investigating the development of a parks foundation and is also working to create a better database of friends groups. These two initiatives align with the foundational strategies needed to establish a successful third-party non-profit parks foundation.

Next-Level Goals

Through the planning process, both City staff and residents have identified increased community support as an opportunity to increase funding and capacity for Stamford parks. Specifically, based on the survey responses and workshop results, residents stated an interest in “Partner[ing] with local neighborhood associations, businesses and nonprofits to raise funds”, and City staff identified an additional interest in leveraging non-profit organizations as a means of capacity building for the management and operations of Stamford’s park network.

Therefore, the goal for a third-party Parks Foundation for Stamford should focus on:

- Increasing fundraising
- Streamlining partnership management and development
- Sharing management responsibility for certain parks

Case study research of park foundations in New York City and Greenwich exemplify systems where both 501(c)(3) and 501(a)(1) classified organizations work as a mediary between the City, the non-profits, and those seeking to donate funds for the management, operations, and capital expenses of the parks systems. These organizations have diversified initiatives and revenue streams which enable them to engage citizens and donors through a variety of fundraising mechanisms and volunteer opportunities. [The New York City Parks Foundation](#)

manages and organizes world class performances, venue rentals within the parks while also offering youth and senior activity programs and volunteer partnerships. The [Greenwich Parks and Recreation Foundation](#) takes a more project-focused approach as it embarks on a number of key initiatives which includes building improvements for the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink, the development of a new civic center, the implementation of park improvements and beautification, the hosting of community events, the management of commemorative gifts, and youth recreation scholarships.

Key Implementation Considerations

Needs and Capacity Assessment:

In establishing a Parks Foundation for the management of volunteer/ nonprofit organizations and philanthropy it is important to develop a foundational understanding of existing capacity needs and volunteer offerings. By initially engaging in a process of group inventorying and capacity management, the City can start to develop efficient systems that effectively leverage the expertise and resources of its volunteer organizations. An example of this is currently present in Stamford through the Bartlett Arboretum’s partnership with the [University of Connecticut’s Master Gardener Program](#). This program enables students to engage the community through the management of community gardens, classes, and outreach projects. By further identifying these types of organizations and City needs, the City of Stamford will be able to leverage these partnerships to improve parks operations while also creating more opportunities for citizens to engage with Stamford Parks and Recreation.

Regulatory and Policy Context:

The State of Connecticut permits the implementation of park sponsorship and philanthropy through both the Adopt-a-Park program, which enables volunteers and organizations to formally commit to the long-term maintenance of Connecticut’s parks and features, and the [Public Act 15-106](#), which enables the targeted donation of funds to support the operations of state parks in Connecticut. It is important to note that the details for the Public Act 15-106 program are currently still under development.

Staffing at the City Side:

Even the most capable third-party partner cannot bring about the greatest benefits for the public without partnership and support from the City side. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the role the public sector will play in ensuring the success of the partnership. Specifically, it is recommended that the City consider the following aspects: 1) assign a dedicated personnel to work with the Parks Foundation as an equal partner; 2) ensure effective communication channels between the Parks Foundation and the City; 3) streamline decision making and reduce bureaucratic red tapes.

Marketing and Communication:

Create a unified, one-stop-shop public platform to share information and convey the visual identity. Specifically, make sure to provide easy access to websites where volunteer groups, events and programs, and important meetings are listed.

Immediate Next Steps

1. Inventory existing non-profit organizations, volunteer groups, and potential partners, creating a deeper understanding of capacity needs and organizational capabilities.
2. Conduct focus groups and workshops with key groups to develop initiatives and priorities which will guide future programming and philanthropic efforts.
3. Speak to representatives from New York City Parks Foundation and Greenwich Parks and Rec Foundation to better understand transferable lessons, best practices, and any practical constraints.
4. Develop a strategic plan and/or business plan for the new Parks Foundation. In addition to identifying program priorities, it is also recommended that the foundation outline its funding/revenue streams - this may include community events, fundraisers, donations, commemorative gifts, and public-private partnerships.

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2

Topic

Corporate Sponsorships and
Advertising Revenue for Facilities

Case Study

Case Study #2: Community Ice Rink Advertising and Sponsorship Programs

Recommendation

Provide Strong Public Guidance to Enable and Coordinate Corporate Sponsorship
and Advertising Revenue Strategy for Facilities

Case Study

Solution Introduction

Corporate sponsorship and advertising revenue in community facilities is a useful tool that enables a consistent supplementary revenue source that also supports local businesses and organizations. The Terry Connors Ice Rink and EG Brennan Golf Course present valuable opportunities to engage in this revenue stream due to their role as key institutions for the Stamford community. Advertising revenue can be generated through a variety of different formats from tiered local team sponsorships to facility sponsorships and physical advertising. Physical advertising for hockey rinks can range from wall banners, ice logos, and boards advertising within the rink to concourse and hallway advertising throughout the lobby and viewing areas. The golf course also provides many opportunities for physical advertising through golf cart signage, tee sign advertising sales, clubhouse advertising sales. These programs tend to be managed by the existing facility managers or facility superintendents.

Case Study #2: Community Ice Rink Advertising and Sponsorship Programs

Advertising has become a key income source for community hockey rinks around the United States through both its physical advertising and through its hockey team sponsorship programs. Examples of these revenue sources include the Tri-Town Arena (Hooksett, NH) and the Involved Citizens Enterprises Inc. (Traverse City, Michigan). Both arenas provide a robust range of advertising which includes arena and lobby advertising to on-ice logos and rink sponsorships.

Specifically, Involved Citizens Enterprises Inc. is a non-profit organization that manages two (2) community areas in Traverse City, Michigan. These two (2) arenas include both the Center Ice Arena and the Howe Arena. These rinks service the community through its public skating programs, hockey teams, hockey camps, figure skating, adult sports leagues, and ice rentals. In addition to its comprehensive programming, the rink also provides a range of physical advertising within its ice rinks and public spaces. This pair of sports complexes provide the following advertising fee sheets.

It is through this diverse advertising program that the arena complexes provide a combined annual advertising revenue potential of \$309,650. Of that combined \$309,650, \$271,150 is from the Centre Ice Arena advertising and \$38,500 from Howe Arena advertising.

The Tri-Town Arena in Hooksett, New Hampshire also provides a diversity of physical advertising options, through its dashboard, bench, ice resurfer, ice logos, and banner displays as well as its mezzanine advertising, locker room signage, and rink surface naming rights. In addition to these offerings, the area also allows organizations to sponsor the local teams that represent the rink. The sponsorship fee sheet is outlined below.

This team sponsorship model provides additional revenue opportunity for sports programming and rink operating costs. This model also does not include exclusivity and therefore lends itself to uncapped revenue opportunities for the teams and the arena.

The Tri-Town Arena and the Involved Citizens Enterprises Inc. Arenas manage these programs through their existing arena operations and management staff. The programs are marketed through advertising brochures or through the existing arena websites. The key clients for these products appear to be predominantly local businesses and organizations with a few nation-wide corporations (for example Coca-Cola). This program model not only provides valuable income to the local community area, but also serves as an important marketing tool for local businesses.

Centre Ice Arena Advertising Fee Sheet

Product	Quantity	Duration	Unit Price	Total Yearly Revenue Potential
Dasher Board - West Rink	31	1 Year	\$1,650	\$51,150
Dasher Board - Davids Rink	31	1 Year	\$1,650	\$51,150
Wall Banners - West Rink	18	1 Year	\$1,100	\$19,800
Wall Banners - Davids Rink	18	1 Year	\$1,100	\$19,800
Hallway Windows - West Rink	33	1 Year	\$550	\$18,150
Hallway Windows - Davids Rink	34	1 Year	\$550	\$18,700
Upper Concourse Suite Wall	1	1 Year	\$2,750	\$2,750
Upper Level Framed Posters	2	1 Year	\$1,100	\$2,200
Stairway Banners	4	1 Year	\$1,650	\$6,600
Stairway Step Banners	20	1 Year	\$500	\$10,000
Elevator Door	3	1 Year	\$1,100	\$3,300
Parking Lot Pole Banners	7	1 Year	\$1,100	\$7,700
Scoreboard - Davids Rink	1	1 Year	\$5,500	\$5,500
Press Box Banner	3	1 Year	\$1,650	\$4,950
TV Digital Ads	30	1 Year	\$250	\$7,500
In Ice Logo	4	1 Year	\$5,500	\$22,000
Rink Sponsor - West Rink		1 Year	\$20,000	\$20,000

Howe Arena Advertising Fee Sheet

Product	Quantity	Duration	Unit Price	Total Yearly Revenue Potential
Dasher Board - West Rink	31	Sept - March	\$1,100	\$34,100
Press Box Banner	4	Sept - March	\$1,100	\$4,400

Tri-Town Arena Team Sponsorship Fee Sheet

Team	Duration	Unit Price
Youth House League Team Sponsor	1 Season	\$600
Mini Monarchs Sponsor	1 Season	\$500
Adult League Sponsor	1 Season	\$2,000
Junior 'A' Team Sponsor	1 Season	\$7,500
Junior 'B' Tea, Sponsor - Empire	1 Season	\$5,000
Junior 'B' Tea, Sponsor - CHA	1 Season	\$5,000

Recommendation

Existing Efforts and Assets

The City of Stamford has previously implemented corporate sponsorships and partnerships through a variety of different formats and programs. Results include rink advertising revenue (which generated \$2,250 in FY 17/18 and \$2,267 in FY 19/20) along with a \$2,500 private sponsorship in FY 21/22 and a \$300,000 Scalzi Park Roller Rink Upgrade which was achieved through a contribution grant match with the New York Rangers (FY 22/23). These revenue streams can be further expanded on through the development of a structured system of sponsorship curation and recognition.

Next-Level Goals

Although a need for additional revenue sourcing has been identified, there is a reasonable concern for the effectiveness and appropriateness of sponsorships if those programs do not sufficiently ensure public value and access. Additional perimeters and systems must be developed in order to incentivize corporate sponsorship without impeding the experience of the residents in Stamford.

Therefore, the goal for sponsorships and advertising in Stamford should focus on:

- Limiting physical on-site recognition with a tiered system
- Proactively curating sponsorships and partnerships
- Identifying sponsor eligibility requirements and developing a criteria for sponsorship proposal approval

Both national and city-focused case studies provide valuable insights into the ways that park systems enable partnership and sponsorship opportunities that ensure positive visitor experiences. These park organizations achieve this optimized outcome through the development of detailed vetting and management frameworks which provide procedures and policies that protect the integrity of the park system. While national organizations, like the [National Park Foundation](#), focus on structuring the donor recognition process to limit on-site sponsorship recognition, other city-level park systems focus on implementing policies which focus on the protection of park space through a collaborative partnership approach (for example the [Los Angeles Sponsorship Recognition Policy](#)). It is through the implementation of these policy systems and plans

that the City of Stamford can increase its sponsorship revenue while protecting the existing park experience.

Key Implementation Considerations

Limiting Physical Recognition For Sponsorship and Donations:

A key concern identified by the City of Stamford staff was the potential for over-saturation of physical advertising, sponsorship recognition, and naming rights which may occur when implementing a corporate sponsorship and advertising revenue strategy. One methodology that may be valuable to look toward implementing is the [National Park Foundation's Donor Recognition Plan](#). This plan restricts on-site physical recognition to only the highest tier of donations/ sponsorships. Lower-tier donor recognition includes a thank you letter from superintendent or program manager, recognition in a donor book or directory, recognition on a donor recognition board for five years, recognition in the park newsletter, or an official press release. These off-site donor recognition options enable the park system to incentivize corporate donor and sponsorship practices while mitigating advertising and branding concerns.

Corporate Sponsorship Vetting:

During JLP+D's consultation with City of Stamford staff it was noted that there was an appetite for a more curated process in identifying and selecting potential corporate sponsors. The development of sponsor eligibility requirements and the implementation of a City-led sponsorship RFP process may provide valuable solutions to these identified concerns.

The Los Angeles Parks Foundation and the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks exemplifies the process of sponsorship curation through its [Sponsorship Recognition Policy](#). This policy imposes a series of procedures, guidelines, and parameters around the ways that sponsors are approved and managed within the park system.

This policy requires potential partners and sponsors to fill out a partnership questionnaire which requires details that determine whether or not the project or sponsorship aligns with

the Department’s mission and vision while also contributing to the goal of enhancing recreational opportunities for residents. Once approved, the potential sponsor/partner works with the [Partnership Section Team](#) to determine eligibility and next steps.

In 2022 the commission included additional sponsorship policies which work to prevent the commercialization of LA’s public spaces. The policies are as follows (sourced from the 2022 Revised Sponsorship Recognition Policy) :

- Specific monetary thresholds, time limitations, and design guidelines regarding recognition signage;
- The sponsorship must support and conform to RAP’s mission, must provide a direct benefit to the City and the park/park asset, and the specifics of the recognition must be commensurate with the value of the support offered through the sponsorship as set forth in the policy or as separately determined by the Board; and,
- The proposed sponsorship shall not unduly commercialize the park asset.

The City of Stamford should consider the development of a recognition policy or partnership plan which provides specific guidelines around sponsorship eligibility and management. This plan may be managed by the existing Parks and Recreation Department or by the future Parks and Recreation Foundation (as proposed in Recommendation 1).

Integrating Philanthropy and Earned Income as One Approach:

There have been concerns associated with privatized naming rights and the over-saturation of park advertising. However, philanthropy and earned income are common sources that support park systems across the country. The town of Greenwich, CT implemented this fundraising strategy as a means for obtaining a \$5 million grant by the Cohen Foundation for the development of the Cohen Eastern Greenwich Civic Center. It is noted in the [Town of Greenwich’s operating budget for 2023-2024](#) that “\$1.2 of the \$1.89 million designated for outfitting the facility is subject to release and conditioned on the presentation by Parks and Recreation to the BET (Board of

Estimate & Taxation) on an updated plan for raising additional funds (eg: naming rights for rooms, benches, etc.) for the facility”.

The Greenwich case study exemplifies the appetite for regional philanthropy to support open spaces on the condition that the public sector innovates its revenue model for long-term maintenance and operations. Therefore, while the City of Stamford should minimize the risk of over-privatization they should still think about philanthropic fundraising and earned income as one integrated system.

Immediate Next Steps

1. Work with stakeholders to identify on-site sponsorship recognition concerns and limitations (for example size, volume, content, sponsorship type)
2. Develop a partnership plan or sponsorship policy which outlines eligibility criteria and limitations using feedback from stakeholder engagement
3. Designate at least one staff member, or identify a governance structure, for the management and maintenance of the partnership/ sponsorship policy or plan
4. Conduct preliminary market outreach to potential sponsors as a means of developing strategies for partnership management and outreach

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3

Topic

Fiscal Policy Measures to Raise Funds for Parks and Facilities

Case Studies

Case Study #3A: Philadelphia Beverage Tax

Case Study #3B: San Jose Park Impact Fees

Recommendation

Implement Fiscal Policy Measures to Raise Funds for Parks and Facilities

Case Studies

Solution Introduction

Applying fiscal policy measures, like taxation programs or impact fees, provides a valuable opportunity to generate the required revenue needed to supplement the City of Stamford's parks and facilities operating and capital budgets without negatively impacting the General Fund.

This type of model has been used in Connecticut through both the 96(3) State Parks Admissions Tax and through the City of Hartford State Park Parking tax. For example, Hartford, Connecticut's State Park Parking Tax has been estimated to provide the City \$210,000 annual revenue. The following case studies present two different types of fiscal policy opportunities to inform further discussions.

Case Study #3A: Philadelphia Beverage Tax

The Philadelphia Beverage Tax (PBT) is a tax charged on the distribution of sweetened beverages. This tax applies a \$0.015 per ounce charge to the registered distributors of sweetened beverages, which includes the following:

- Soda (regular or diet)
- Non-100% Fruit Drinks
- Sports Drinks
- Energy Drinks
- Pre-sweetened Coffee or Tea

The revenue generated by this tax policy has been earmarked with a specific percentage going to the general fund, Pre-K, Community Schools, and the City offices responsible for administering Pre-K and Community Schools along with debt service for the Rebuild Program, and for Parks and Recreation Rebuild Program. The following table demonstrates the percentage of tax fund expenditure along with the total revenue since the program's implementation in 2017:

The Parks and Recreation Rebuild Program has been described as an investment in Philadelphia's parks, recreation centers and libraries with a focus on "high-need neighborhoods, as well as sites that are in extremely poor condition".

This program involved an approval process which identifies

"eligible sites" for improvement. There are currently more than 400 identified eligible sites. These sites are identified through the "[Rebuild Philadelphia](#)" portal which empowers residents to engage in the program through awareness and project progress transparency.

This program, which is funded by the ongoing beverage tax revenue, has been designed to help the City of Philadelphia develop an ambitious long-term program which seeks to improve neighborhood parks and recreation throughout the City. Both the capital projects and the City Staff budgets for the program are funded by the beverage tax.

Case Study #3B: San Jose Park Impact Fees

The San Jose Park Impact Fee program, managed by the San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS), is composed of both the City Parkland Dedication (PDO) and Park Impact (PIO) Ordinances. This policy requires new residential development projects to satisfy a parkland obligation which is equivalent to dedicating three (3) acres of land for public recreational use for every 1,000 new residents. Specifically, the program applies any of the following means for addressing the parkland obligation:

- 1. Land Dedication:** Dedicating a half an acre or more of land to the City of San José for recreational purposes;
- 2. Fee Payment:** Paying a park impact in-lieu fee that equals the value of the land dedication requirement;
- 3. Park Development:** Constructing new recreational facilities;
- 4. Enhancement:** Improving existing recreational facilities; or
- 5. Combined Approach:** Through a combination of these methods.

The program's fee payments are collected and distributed by the Park Trust Fund. This fund distributes revenue from residential development projects to adjacent parks as the program requires that facilities developed or renovated with the park impact fees

serve or benefit the project that paid such park impact fees. This program was designed to include a series of specifications in regards to the management and distribution of funds. This fund has been designed to exclusively cover capital costs as the Quimby Act prevents park maintenance or operations expenditures. In addition to specifying the funding capabilities, the current program also exclusively impacts residential developers as it does not require commercial developers to make contributions. The park impact fee program generated \$16,607,039 within fiscal year 2017-2018. The program has also resulted in the development of fifteen (15) new parks and fifty-one (51) park improvement projects (between 2002 and 2022). The strong revenue generation capabilities and results make this fiscal policy measure the second largest funding source for parks and recreation projects within the City of San Jose.

Philadelphia Beverage Tax (PBT) Fund Administration

Funded Service	Percentage of PBT Fund	2017 - 2022 Expenditure From Fund
General Fund	49.7%	\$203,600,000
Pre-K	38.6%	\$158,100,000
Community Schools	4.7%	\$19,100,000
Pre-K & Community School City Admin	1.0%	\$4,100,000
Debt Service for Rebuild	5.4%	\$22,100,000
Parks and Recreation Rebuild Program	0.6%	\$2,400,000

Recommendation

Existing Efforts and Assets

The City of Stamford has a history of applying fiscal policy measurements through projects like the Mill River TIF (Tax Increment Financing) District and the school-related Special Revenue Fund. The Mill River TIF District (established in 2004) optimized on park proximity premiums by redirecting 50% of the increase in property tax for parcels immediately surrounding the Park to the Collaborative. In 2022 the tax increment funding resulted in [\\$1,209,974](#) for Mill River which equated to 17.1% of all capital funding for the year.

Stamford has implemented a number of fiscal policy measures through the special revenue fund system. Applicable parks-related fund sources include the Harbor Commission, the E. Gaynor Brennan Golf Course, and Terry Conner's Ice Rink. These special revenue fund initiatives exemplify opportunities for Stamford to implement a similar fiscal policy measure for the funding of parks operations and maintenance.

Next-Level Goals

Both staff and residents identified an interest in exploring alternative fiscal policy measures to source additional and stable City revenue for Stamford's parks and recreation services. By exploring the existing market conditions and demands, the City will be able to identify specific areas where they may apply a special revenue fund model in order to capitalize on high-demand services or amenities. Additional goals may include furthering conversations with City Staff to identify creative alternatives to park impact fee programs (for instance the application of additional building permit fees or facility permits).

Therefore, the goal for fiscal policy measures in Stamford should focus on:

- Expanding on and streamlining the application of existing policy tools, such as special revenue funds
- In the future, exploring creative new models and borrowing lessons from other policy areas

Compared to the other two recommendations, new fiscal tools take the most effort in planning and legislative approval and require additional long-range planning. But once approved, these could potentially provide extra layers of

fiscal sustainability to the public sector and give the City more control over spending.

Key Implementation Considerations

Leveraging Special Revenue Funds:

The Connecticut statute permits the municipal implementation of [special revenue funds](#). These funds are defined as "funds [that] account for the proceeds of specific revenue and other financing sources (other than expendable trusts, or for major capital projects) that are legally restricted to expenditure for specified purposes" (Connecticut Office of the State Comptroller). This mechanism has been implemented throughout Connecticut - in Hartford, Bristol, Hebron, Bridgeport, Hartford, and Greenwich (to name a few).

Stamford currently has a series of [nine \(9\) special revenue funds](#). Existing parks-related special revenue funds include the following (sourced from the Mayor's Proposed Operating and Special Revenue Funds Budget FY 22-23):

- FY 22-23 Harbor Commission Fund and Marina Operating Fund Budgets: The Harbor Commission and Marina Operating Funds include revenue and expenses for the operations of the Harbor Commissions and for City Marinas
- FY 22-23 E. Gaynor Brennan Golf Course Budget: This budget is primarily funded from non-tax sources
- FY 22-23 Terry Conner's Ice Rink: Terry Conner's covers nearly 100% of their operational costs while providing a high-quality recreational facility for schools, clubs, and individuals.

It is recommended that the City of Stamford look towards developing complementary special revenue funds to these FY 22-23 special revenue programs. During the community survey it was identified that there was an appetite for tourist and visitor beach permits and parking fees, although it is understood that there is an existing parking special revenue fund, it may be advantageous to explore the establishment of tourism taxation and fees. Additional market analysis is required in order to identify specific revenue interventions through special revenue funds.

Implementation Efficiency:

Before proposing a new fiscal policy measure (whether implementing a special revenue fund or an additional fee scheme) it is critical that the City develops a structure around the implementation and movement of the funds. Predetermining project and operational priorities along with developing a strategy around the releasing of the funds will ensure an expedited implementation process. Applying specific measures, for instance limiting multi-departmental approvals, will mitigate the policy bottlenecks that extend the timeline between revenue generation from the policy measure and implementation to the parks and programs that are of need.

Potential Market Limitations:

In order to ensure that the fiscal policy measures are effectively implemented, it is crucial that the City embark on a process of understanding and evaluating the market conditions for the municipal service or amenity that is to be leveraged for additional revenue generation. For instance, in Philadelphia it was noted that “within 2 months of the [soda] tax’s implementation, the odds of having consumed soda that day were down by 40% and odds of having consumed energy drinks were down by 64% while finding negative but non-significant effects on the amount of consumption” ([Carlin & Lozano-Rojas, 2022](#)). Although the taxation did curb overall soda consumption, the market is strong enough that the soda taxation was able to generate [\\$409.2 million in revenue between FY 2017 - 2022](#). The strategic selection of taxed goods ensured that the fiscal policy curbed the consumption of a potentially harmful substance with a strong ongoing market demand within the municipality.

Direct Park Impact Fee Limitations:

Although City Staff identified an interest in the implementation of park impact fees, the Connecticut statute does not authorize municipalities to impose fees on new developments for the purpose of funding the development of new schools or municipal facilities. However, the City might think outside of the box and draw inspirations from other policy areas.

In the future, with additional analysis, the City may explore the option of leveraging building permit fees as a means of utilizing new development opportunities to fund open space-related public benefits, which may involve additional State-City coordination. Additional consultation with the Land Use Bureau is recommended, per interview with a Subject Matter Expert.

Immediate Next Steps

1. Conduct a market and budgetary analysis and engage local and regional subject area experts to identify potential revenue sources for the special revenue fund
2. Consult Land Use Bureau staff to identify potential solutions and limitations that work to redistribute funds from developers to the City for the operations and maintenance of parks, exploring the feasibility of an additional building permit fee

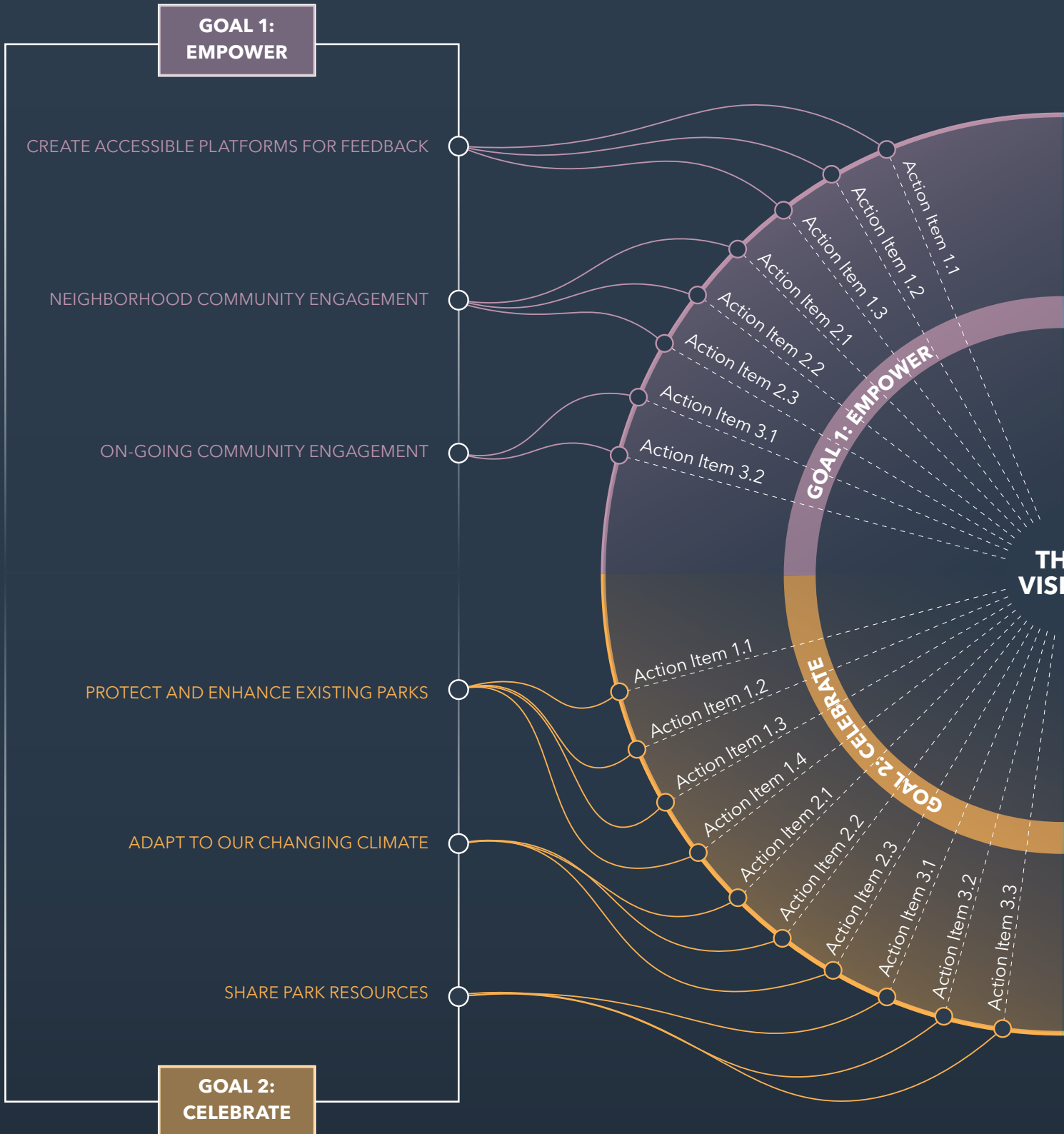


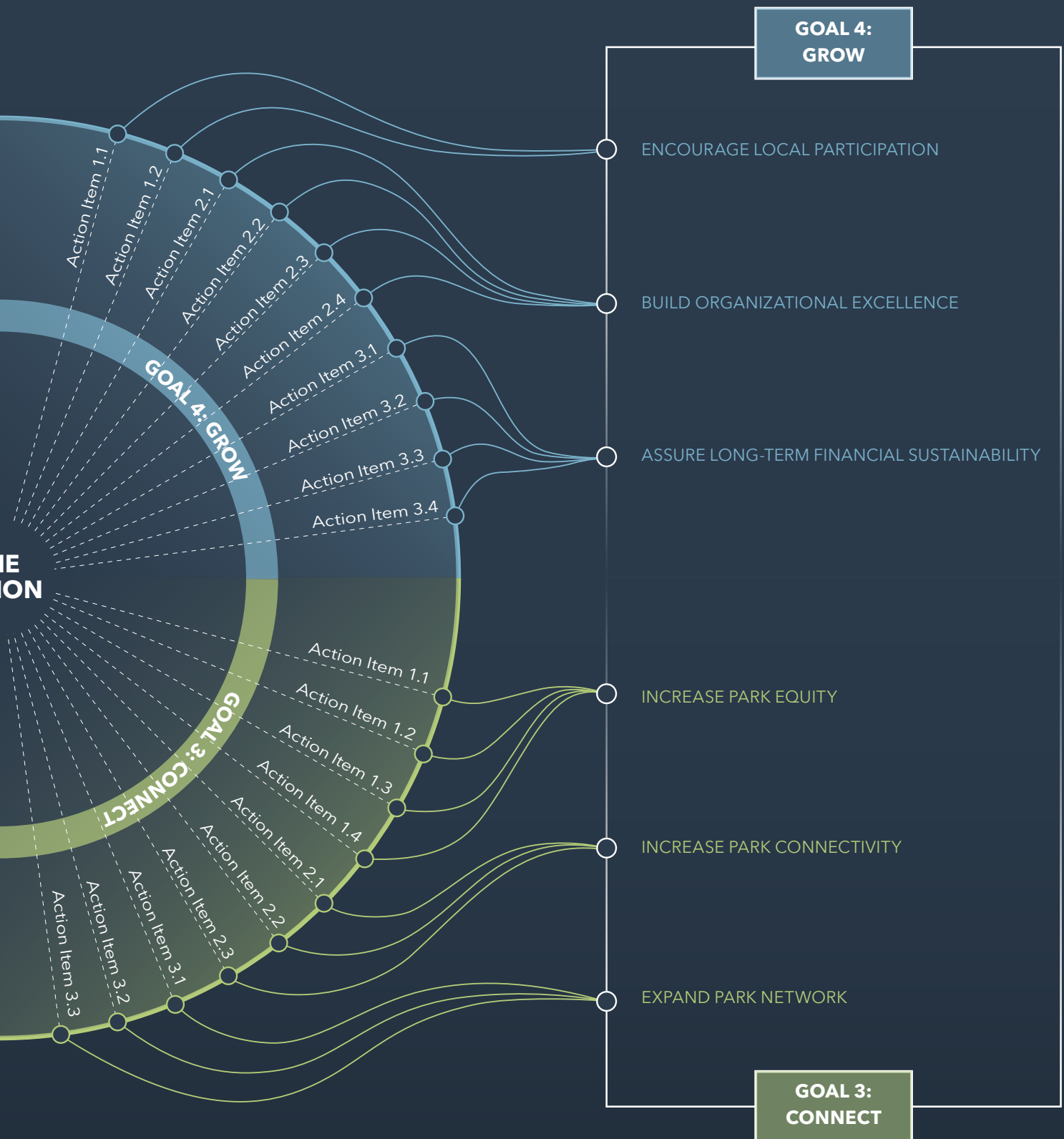
part five 

5-year strategic investment plan

THE VISION

“ Our vision is to create a vibrant, resilient, and equitable public open space network that can be enjoyed by all for generations to come. ”





Our Strategic Plan

The Goals

The goals for the Strategic Plan grew out of the Vision Statement. The Vision Statement reads, "Our vision is to create a vibrant, resilient, and equitable public open space network that can be enjoyed by all for generations to come." A vibrant park system is one that is inviting, offers a range of programs, and filled with people. A resilient parks system is one that has varied funding streams, sustainable and flexible operations and maintenance protocols, and various organizational structures to address changing demographics and environmental conditions over time. An equitable park system is one where all people from all communities have access to quality open spaces, offering opportunities for active and passive recreation. The following goals go deeper into these drivers and offer a way forward to plan for the next generation of parks for the City of Stamford.

empower



empower community voices

Engage with community members and stakeholders to gain a better understanding of Stamford's park system while re-imagining a strategy for the future.

celebrate



care for Stamford's parks

Caring for our parks begins with understanding everyday needs while preparing for future challenges such as climate change and market demands.

connect



improve the open space network

An equitable distribution of public open space can be cultivated for under-served communities and areas in need.

grow



support organizational growth

By understanding that sustainable parks begin with people, we can re-imagine organizational structures from the ground up in creating more efficient systems to better support our parks' future.



Goal 1

EMPOWER

“Empower Community Voices”

Engage with community members and essential stakeholders to gain a better understanding of Stamford’s park system while re-imagining a strategy for the future.

Strategies

1. Create accessible platforms for feedback.

action items

1.1. Curate an outreach plan to identify key stakeholders including schools, churches, community-based organizations, and local businesses for each park. Prioritize parks in low-income neighborhoods; refer to page 108.

1.2. Develop and deploy an Annual Recreation Market Needs survey, with a special focus on diverse populations, to understand recreational program interests and preferences throughout Stamford.

1.3. Establish metrics and an evaluation process for core recreation program areas.

2. Conduct neighborhood community engagement.

action items

2.1. Develop an annual community outreach plan for each neighborhood and community park to solicit feedback for the year-round programming schedule and park planning projects, and identify neighborhood stressors that can be addressed in city parks, i.e. food deserts, risks to mental and physical health, with a focus on low-income communities.

2.2. Solidify Earth Day as an annual celebration of parks. Organize community events at city parks and promote volunteer group activities.

2.3. Partner with community-based organizations, such as youth organizations and volunteer groups, to promote local and community-based partnerships to build park stewardship.

3. Maintain a community engagement schedule.

action items

3.1. Develop outreach protocols to ensure community partners and staff are engaged at the earliest stage of new open space and park planning.

3.2. Conduct focus groups and workshops with key groups to develop initiatives and priorities to guide future programming and philanthropic efforts.

An aerial photograph of a park. On the left, there is a green baseball field with a brown infield. The rest of the park is filled with lush green trees. In the lower right, there is a paved basketball court with white and yellow markings. A paved road with a few cars is visible at the bottom left. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Goal 2

CELEBRATE

"Care for Stamford's Parks"

Caring for our parks begins by understanding everyday needs while preparing for future challenges such as climate change and market demands.

Strategies

1. Protect and enhance existing parks.

action items

1.1. Execute a Parks Facility Needs Assessment to study the usage of park fields (baseball/softball diamonds, soccer/football fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, playgrounds, etc.). The study should include demographics of current and future players, analysis of sport trends, and best practices in field allocation policy according to player ages, seasons, non-profit vs for-profit, and adult vs youth. The study should also identify whether park and school fields should be combined under one administrator for maintenance and allocation.

1.2. Develop comprehensive inventories of existing conditions and repairs for all parks to inform maintenance and operations. Conduct arborist reports for all existing trees to catalogue amount, species, and health.

1.3. Ensure all parks and their respective structures and facilities are accessible and ADA compliant by providing ramps, repairing pavement, ensuring structures and facilities are wheelchair accessible. Provide ADA compliant signage and way-finding.

1.4. Invest in measures to ensure park safety and enforcement, including increased lighting, installation of security cameras, increased security staff, etc. Prioritize parks with higher incidents of crime.

2. Adapt to our changing climate.

action items

2.1. Employ the Parks at Risk: Heat initiative. See page 91 for more detail on the initiative.

2.1.1. Provide shade

2.1.2. Use low albedo surface materials

2.1.3. Install water features

2.2. Employ the Parks at Risk: Flooding initiative. See page 95 for more detail on the initiative.

2.2.1. Use natural systems for coastal protection

2.2.2. Use hard structures for coastal protection

2.2.3. Use green infrastructures measures for upland areas

2.2.4. Use materials appropriate for upland floodplains

2.3. Develop a Resiliency Plan that incorporates Stamford Parks.

3. Share park resources.

action items

3.1. Create a centralized Park Fund to collect revenue from all park facilities and events, funding, fees, grants.

3.2. Allocate funds gathered in the Park Fund equitably to parks based on their respective needs.

3.3. Coordinate with other City agencies and departments to share resources such as staff, vehicles, and physical property.



Goal 3

CONNECT

“Improve the Open Space Network”

By identifying critical areas in need, we can cultivate new forms of public open space while creating opportunities for equity that support under-served communities.

Strategies

1. Expand Park Network.

action items

1.1. Employ the Fill in the Gaps initiative. See page 99 for more detail on the initiative.

- 1.1.1.** Identify underutilized public land
- 1.1.2.** Develop privately owned public spaces (POPS)
- 1.1.3.** Develop extensive greenway plan
- 1.1.4.** Utilize repetitive flooding sites

1.2. Explore partnerships to provide parkland in underutilized areas, like utility corridors, flood control channels, railroads, and publicly owned land.

1.3. Expand school joint-use opportunities to increase parkland in high park need areas as identified in the Park Access analysis.

1.4. Utilize the Severe Repetitive Loss Grant Program to target repetitive loss properties within floodplains for acquisition or relocation to expand and create new waterfront parks.

2. Enhance Park Connectivity.

action items

2.1. Work with local transit agencies to facilitate park accessibility in public transportation.

2.2. Develop a Greenway Plan to create pocket parks along streets, sidewalks, medians, etc. to bridge the park gap by adding spaces of respite in neighborhoods in need of public spaces.

2.3. Develop a safe streets, greenway program. See page 108 for more detail on Safe Streets in the Parks and Equity initiative.

3. Increase park equity.

action items

3.1. Incorporate new parks based on the Park Prioritization analysis to ensure that all Stamford residents live within a 10-minute walk and/or a ½-mile radius from a public park.

3.2. Identify stressors and provide park needs tailored to each neighborhood/community.

3.2.1. Food deserts: develop a community garden program.

3.2.2. Mental health: provide pocket parks close to residences for respite and calm.

3.2.3. Physical health risks: incorporate year-round active recreation programming.

3.3. Prioritize investments and park planning in underserved communities and help ensure that programs and services are minimizing racial and economic disparities. Refer to page 74 for the Top 10 Priority Areas in the Park Prioritization analysis.



Goal 4

GROW

“Support Organizational Structures”

By understanding that sustainable parks begin with people, we can re-imagine organizational structures from the ground up in creating more efficient systems to better support our parks’ future.

Strategies

1. Assure long-term financial sustainability.

action items

1.1. Implement fiscal policy measures to raise funds for parks and facilities.

1.1.1. Conduct a market and budgetary analysis and engage local and regional subject area experts to identify potential revenue sources for the special revenue fund.

1.1.2. Consult Land Use Bureau staff to identify potential solutions and limitations that work to redistribute funds from developers to the City for the operations and maintenance of parks, exploring the feasibility of an additional building permit fees.

1.2. Provide public guidance to enable and coordinate corporate sponsorship and advertising revenue strategy for facilities.

1.2.1. Work with stakeholders to identify on-site sponsorship recognition concerns and limitations (for example size, volume, content, sponsorship type) and outline eligibility criteria and limitations. Consider policy changes that limit on-site sponsorship.

1.2.2. Designate at least one staff member, or identify a governance structure, for the management and maintenance of the partnership/ sponsorship policy or plan.

1.2.3. Conduct preliminary market outreach of potential sponsors as a means to develop strategies for partnership management and outreach.

1.2.4. Limit on-site sponsorship recognition by providing platforms on the city or parks' official website for off-site sponsorship and donor recognition opportunities. Refer to the National Park Foundation website as a reference.

2. Build organizational excellence.

action items

2.1. Establish protocols for partnerships with mental health providers to respond to park crisis incidents and traumatic events.

2.2. Update policies and procedures that provide guidance for parks staff when responding to disruptive or violent incidents at park facilities.

2.3. Develop a staff recognition program that includes retirement scrolls, celebration of life events, and service awards.

2.4. Develop an internal working group to review registration and reservation data, recreation market survey data, and make recommendations for enhanced amenities and recreational offerings.

3. Encourage local participation.

action items

3.1. Create a third-party non-profit Parks Foundation to manage grass-root efforts and philanthropy.

3.1.1. Catalogue existing non-profit organizations, volunteer groups, and potential partners, creating a holistic understanding of capacity needs and organizational capabilities.

3.1.2. Conduct focus groups and workshops with key groups to develop initiatives and priorities which will guide future programming and philanthropic efforts.

3.1.3. Speak to representatives from New York City Parks Foundation and Greenwich Parks and Rec Foundation to better understand transferable lessons, best practices, and any practical constraints.

3.2. Develop opportunities for volunteers in parks.

3.3. Develop a Recreation Recruitment Plan to target BIPOC, foster-youth and community college students for recreation employment.

3.4. Partner with Aging & Disabilities Department as an employment partner.

Actions Items x Goals

	ACTION ITEMS																		
	Outreach Plan for Key Stakeholders	Annual Recreation Market Needs Survey	Evaluation Process for Recreation	Outreach Plan for Neighborhood Stressors	Earth Day	Community-Based Organizations	Outreach Protocols for Community Partners	Focus Groups and Workshops	Parks Facility Needs Assessment	Inventories and Arborist Reports	Accessible and ADA Compliant Parks	Park Safety and Enforcement	Parks at Risk: Heat Initiative	Parks at Risk: Flooding Initiative	Resiliency Plan	Park Fund	Disbursement of Funds	City Agency Coordination	
	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.3	
3. Maintain a community engagement schedule.	●	●		●	●		●	●											●
2. Conduct neighborhood community engagement.				●	●	●			●		●	●	●	●	●				
1. Create accessible platforms for feedback.	●	●	●	●			●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●
3. Share park resources.												●			●	●	●	●	●
2. Adapt to our changing climate.													●	●	●				
1. Protect and enhance existing parks.									●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3. Increase park equity.				●							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2. Enhance Park Connectivity.										●	●				●				
1. Expand Park Network.													●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3. Encourage local participation.				●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●				●
2. Build organizational excellence.	●	●	●					●				●				●	●	●	
1. Assure long-term financial sustainability.																●	●	●	

Five Year Timeframe

A Qualitative Timeline

Throughout this process of developing the Parks Strategic Plan, the City identified certain aspects and actions to be prioritized in a projected 5-year timeframe.

Short Term: 1-3 years

Action items included for short term implementation include many of the community outreach initiatives and parks assessment tasks. These action items provide the neighborhood and park-scale information needed to roll out investments in renovating existing parks and addressing park equity concerns. Other short term initiatives include setting up mechanisms to increase funding, such as creating a third-party non-profit Parks Foundation, implementing fiscal policy measures to raise funds for parks and facilities, and establishing a Park Fund to direct revenue collectively raised by the park system.

Mid-Term: 3-4 years

Mid-term projects include rolling out a capital plan to begin renovating and restoring parks in low income or disadvantaged communities. These include census tracts: 201, 209, 214, 215, 218.02, 219, and 221. Existing parks within these areas to be considered for enhancements include Carwin Park, Columbus Park, Cove Island Park, Cummings Park, Czeszick Park, Drotar Park, Edward Hunt Complex, Friendship Basketball Court, Hatch Field (Jackie Robinson Park), Kiwanis Park, Latham Park, Lione Park, Main Street Park, McKeithen Park, and Sleepy Hollow Park. Mid-term projects could also include new parks on public property that are currently underutilized, such as the Levine Site. The Levine Site could be transformed into a new neighborhood park given its size, its location on a natural water body, and its inclusion in priority area #1.

Longer Term: 4-5 years

New parks and greenway networks are longer term initiatives. Regarding the planning of new parks, the City will follow the recommendations of the Park Prioritization analysis. The analysis identified 15 vacant or underutilized public sites within top 10 priority areas for consideration and further study.

The following graphic illustrates a qualitative timeline of actions to achieve the short, medium, and long term goals.

SHORT-TERM	
1	1.1 Outreach Plan for Key Stakeholders
1	1.2 Annual Recreation Market Needs Survey
1	2.2 Earth Day
1	2.3 Community-Based Organizations
1	3.1 Outreach Protocols for Community Partners
2	1.1 Parks Facility Needs Assessment
2	1.2 Inventories and Arborist Reports
2	2.3 Resiliency Plan
2	3.1 Park Fund
4	1.1 Fiscal Policy Measures
4	3.1 Non-Profit Parks Foundation
4	3.2 Volunteers Opportunities
MEDIUM-TERM	
1	1.3 Evaluation Process for Recreation
1	2.1 Outreach Plan for Neighborhood Stressors
2	1.4 Park Safety and Enforcement
2	2.1 Parks at Risk: Heat Initiative
2	3.2 Disbursement of Funds
3	1.2 Partnerships for New Parkland
3	1.3 School Joint-Use Opportunities
3	2.3 Safe Streets
3	3.2 Urban Stressors
4	1.2 Public Guidance for Corporate Sponsorships
4	2.1 Partnership with Mental Health Providers
4	2.2 Updated Policies for Violent Incidents in Parks
4	3.3 Recreation Recruitment Plan
4	3.4 Aging & Disabilities Department
LONG-TERM	
1	3.2 Focus Groups and Workshops
2	1.3 Accessible and ADA Compliant Parks
2	2.2 Parks at Risk: Flooding Initiative
2	3.3 City Agency Coordination
3	1.1 Fill in the Gaps Initiative
3	1.4 Severe Repetitive Loss Grant Program
3	2.1 Local Transit Agencies
3	2.2 Extensive Greenway Plan
3	3.1 Park Prioritization
3	3.3 Top 10 Priority Areas: New Parks
4	2.3 Staff Recognition Program
4	2.4 Internal Working Group



SHORT-TERM

1 - 3 years

- 1.1 Outreach Plan for Key Stakeholders
- 1.2 Annual Recreation Market Needs Survey
- 1.3 Evaluation Process for Recreation
- 2.1 Outreach Plan for Neighborhood Stressors
- 2.2 Earth Day
- 2.3 Community-Based Organizations
- 3.1 Outreach Protocols for Community Partners
- 3.2 Focus Groups and Workshops

GOAL 1

Empower Community Voices



MEDIUM-TERM

3 - 4 years

- 1.1 Parks Facility Needs Assessment
- 1.2 Inventories and Arborist Reports
- 1.3 Accessible and ADA Compliant Parks
- 1.4 Park Safety and Enforcement
- 2.1 Parks at Risk: Heat Initiative
- 2.2 Parks at Risk: Flooding Initiative
- 2.3 Resiliency Plan
- 3.1 Park Fund
- 3.2 Disbursement of Funds
- 3.3 City Agency Coordination

GOAL 2

Care for Stamford's Parks



LONG-TERM

4 - 5 years

- 1.1 Fill in the Gaps Initiative
- 1.2 Partnerships for New Parkland
- 1.3 School Joint-Use Opportunities
- 1.4 Severe Repetitive Loss Grant Program
- 2.1 Local Transit Agencies
- 2.2 Extensive Greenway Plan
- 2.3 Safe Streets
- 3.1 Park Prioritization
- 3.2 Urban Stressors
- 3.3 Top 10 Priority Areas: New Parks
- 1.1 Fiscal Policy Measures
- 1.2 Public Guidance for Corporate Sponsorships
- 2.1 Partnership with Mental Health Providers
- 2.2 Updated Policies for Violent Incidents in Parks
- 2.3 Staff Recognition Program
- 2.4 Internal Working Group
- 3.1 Non-Profit Parks Foundation
- 3.2 Volunteers Opportunities
- 3.3 Recreation Recruitment Plan
- 3.4 Aging & Disabilities Department

GOAL 3

Improve the Open Space Network

GOAL 4

Support Organizational Structures

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appendix

Case Study Review for Future Parks and Recreation Revenue Generation Memorandum



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MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 17, 2023

TO: Local Office Landscape and Urban Design

FROM: James Lima Planning + Development

SUBJECT: Stamford Citywide Parks Strategic Plan - Case Study Review for Future Parks and Recreation Revenue Generation

INTRODUCTION & PROCESS

As part of the Stamford Citywide Parks Strategic Plan project, James Lima Planning and Development (JLP+D) was contracted with Local to provide two memorandums which aim to 1) summarize up to 3 precedents on comparable funding models and 2) advise on alternative financing mechanisms and funding models to advance the strategic plan. JLP+D reviewed City of Stamford documents, interviewed City staff, and researched case studies to understand existing budgetary opportunities and future potentials for policy and programmatic innovations.

JLP+D's budgetary and policy review included a quantitative five-year budget document analysis of both capital and operating expenses for the City of Stamford. The project team observed the capital operating budget documents with a focus on the "Parks and Facilities Maintenance", "Leisure Services", "Brennan Golf Course", "Terry Connors Ice Rink", and "Shoreline Parks & Facilities" departments. Additional research included a cross-reference with budgetary document introductory notes along with the City of Stamford Parks & Recreation Commission's "Policy, Rules, Guidelines & Vision for Stamford Parks".

Additional qualitative research included two (2) City of Stamford staff interviews, attended by Matthew Quinones, Erin McKenna, and Kevin Murray. The first interview addressed a series of outstanding questions from the budgetary review, and the second interview involved an exercise of reviewing and identifying the opportunities, limitations, and required adjustments for solution implementation.

The following memo is the first of two (2) memorandums with a focus on identifying up to three (3) precedents on comparable funding models.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The following three (3) gaps were identified during the City of Stamford budgetary and policy document review:

1. There is a strong community interest in supporting parks and recreation maintenance and funding, but there lacks a sufficient existing mechanism that enables widely applied community-based sponsorship or adoption of public parks.
2. There are recreational facilities that can potentially generate revenue. However, budgetary documents revealed no advertising revenue for either the Terry Conners Rink or the EG Brennan Golf Course. Additional revenue opportunities may be available through the development of a more robust offering of advertising and sponsorships at both facilities.
3. In terms of fiscal policy tools, the City currently has one TIF (Tax Increment Financing) program through the Mill River TIF. However, besides such TIF, there are no diversified specific tax or fee programs that can raise dedicated funding for the parks system.

PRECEDENT CASE STUDIES

The following three (3) case studies represent potential opportunities that may address the aforementioned parks and recreation funding limitations.

TOPIC 1: COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS, PHILANTHROPY, AND DONATIONS (ADOPT-A-PARK AND PARK SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMS)

SOLUTION INTRODUCTION

Better experience of the public realm enriches the City of Stamford and helps build a strong city brand that brings civic pride and enhances equity and inclusion. Cultivating robust donor, philanthropic, and individual networks around a shared vision has the effect of reaffirming the civil society's commitment to public causes, generating a virtuous cycle of investment, stewardship, and public benefits.

In places with a significant amount of private wealth, if given the appropriate fundraising mechanisms and causes, donations by high-net-worth individuals, foundations, corporations, patient capital investors, and the general public could potentially help the managers of the public realm tap into previously unavailable funding streams.

The State of Connecticut has two (2) identified programs which provide valuable opportunities for funding and community engagement. The existing Adopt-a-Park program enables volunteers and organizations to formally commit to the long-term maintenance of Connecticut's parks and features. An additional program was recently developed through Public Act 15-106 which enables the targeted donation of funds to support the operations of state parks in Connecticut. This program provides a variety of levels of financial support for parks by outside entities. The details for this program are currently still under development.

CASE STUDY #1A: New York City Parks Foundation

The New York City Parks Foundation demonstrates the value of establishing an umbrella non-profit that works with the City to act as a vehicle for managing the broad array of private and volunteer groups with varying capacities.

The New York City Parks Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that was established in 1989, with the mission of:

“invigorating and transforming parks into dynamic, vibrant centers of urban life through sports, arts, community building and education programs for all New Yorkers. Our programs — located in hundreds of parks, recreation centers and public schools across New York City — reach thousands of people each year”.

The organization works with the City of New York to manage and organize world class performances, manage venue rentals within the parks, develop youth and senior activity programs, manage environmental education programs, organize local volunteer partnerships, and connect corporate partners to the park system through multi-level activation strategies. The organization currently has 275,000 program participants, 6000 kids in fitness and sport activities, over 30000 volunteers, and spans 333 parks throughout the City.

In 2019, the organization had a total revenue of \$24,265,997 with \$17,688,551 derived from contributions and \$5,117,531 from program services. Key expenses for the program included salaries and wages along with executive compensation.

The following chart provides a detailed breakdown of the revenue sources from 2019 and 2020:

Revenue Type	Revenue Source	2019 Revenue	2020 Revenue
Contributions, Gifts, Grants, and Other Similar Amounts	Federated Campaigns	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Membership Dues	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Fundraising Events	\$1,613,721	\$247,819
	Related Organizations	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Government Grants	\$11,179,427	\$1,032,306
	Non-cash contributions (above)	\$35,951	\$9,928,647
Program Service Revenue	Program Events	\$4,552,152	\$68,597
	Grant Admin Fee-Green Relief Fund	N/a	\$241,111
	Administrative Fees	\$565,379	\$54,214
Investment Income	Investment Income	\$715,283	\$655,901
Gross Amount From Sales Of Assets Other Than Inventory	Gross Amount From Sales Of Assets Other Than Inventory	\$3,003,251	\$14,625,499
Fundraising Events	Fundraising Events	\$1,613,721	\$247,819

CASE STUDY #1B: Jacksonville Memorial Park Adopt the Park Program

At the scale of individual parks, the Memorial Park Association in Jacksonville, Florida provides a case study which highlights the financial capabilities of administering an adopt-a-park program. In Jacksonville, the established the "Adopt the Park" program in May 2015 with multiple tiers of contribution and recognition:

- Citizens Committee Level Sponsor: \$25,000+ Annually
- C.A. Pillars Society: \$5,000 – \$24,999 Annually
- Promenade Level: \$2,500 – \$4,999 Annually
- Mr. Dawson Society: \$1,500 – \$2,499 Annually
- Esplanade Level: \$1,000 – \$1,499 Annually

The Association received \$311,000 annually from private contributions. Those funds were invested in the maintenance and operations of one specific park, allowing the private sector to fund public space operations.

TOPIC 2: CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS AND ADVERTISING REVENUE FOR FACILITIES

SOLUTION INTRODUCTION

Corporate sponsorship and advertising revenue in community facilities is a useful tool that enables a consistent supplementary revenue source that also supports local businesses and organizations. The Terry Connors Ice Rink and EG Brennan Golf Course present valuable opportunities to engage in this revenue stream due to their role as key institutions for the Stamford community.

Advertising revenue can be generated through a variety of different formats from tiered local team sponsorships to facility sponsorships and physical advertising. Physical advertising for hockey rinks can range from wall banners, ice logos, and boards advertising within the rink to concourse and hallway advertising throughout the lobby and viewing areas. The golf course also provides many opportunities for physical advertising through golf cart signage, tee sign advertising sales, clubhouse advertising sales. These programs tend to be managed by the existing facility managers or facility superintendents.

CASE STUDY #2: Community Ice Rink Advertising and Sponsorship Programs

Advertising has become a key income source for community hockey rinks around the United States through both its physical advertising and through its hockey team sponsorship programs. Examples of these revenue sources include the Tri-Town Arena (Hooksett, NH) and the Involved Citizens Enterprises Inc. (Traverse City, Michigan). Both arenas provide a robust range of advertising which includes arena and lobby advertising to on-ice logos and rink sponsorships.

Specifically, Involved Citizens Enterprises Inc. is a non-profit organization that manages two (2) community areas in Traverse City, Michigan. These two (2) arenas include both the Center Ice Arena and the Howe Arena. These rinks service the community through its public skating programs, hockey teams, hockey camps, figure skating, adult sports leagues, and ice rentals. In addition to its comprehensive programming, the rink also provides a range of physical advertising within its ice rinks and public spaces. This pair of sports complexes provide the following advertising fee sheet:

Centre Ice Arena Advertising Fee Sheet				
Product	Quantity	Duration	Unit Price	Total Yearly Revenue Potential
Dasher Board - West Rink	31	1 Year	\$1,650	\$51,150
Dasher Board - Davids Rink	31	1 Year	\$1,650	\$51,150
Wall Banners - West Rink	18	1 Year	\$1,100	\$19,800
Wall Banners - Davids Rink	18	1 Year	\$1,100	\$19,800
Hallway Windows - West Rink	33	1 Year	\$550	\$18,150
Hallway Windows - Davids Rink	34	1 Year	\$550	\$18,700
Upper Concourse Suite Wall	1	1 Year	\$2,750	\$2,750
Upper Level Framed Posters	2	1 Year	\$1,100	\$2,200
Stairway Banners	4	1 Year	\$1,650	\$6,600
Stairway Step Banners	20	1 Year	\$500	\$10,000
Elevator Door	3	1 Year	\$1,100	\$3,300
Parking Lot Pole Banners	7	1 Year	\$1,100	\$7,700
Scoreboard - Davids Rink	1	1 Year	\$5,500	\$5,500
Press Box Banner	3	1 Year	\$1,650	\$4,950
TV Digital Ads	30	1 Year	\$250	\$7,500
In Ice Logo	4	1 Year	\$5,500	\$22,000
Rink Sponsor - West Rink		1 Year	\$20,000	\$20,000

Howe Arena Advertising Fee Sheet				
Product	Quantity	Duration	Unit Price	Total Yearly Revenue Potential
Dasher Board - West Rink	31	Sept - March	\$1,100	\$34,100
Press Box Banner	4	Sept - March	\$1,100	\$4,400

It is through this diverse advertising program that the arena complexes provide a combined annual advertising revenue potential of \$309,650. Of that combined \$309,650, \$271,150 is from the Centre Ice Arena advertising and \$38,500 from Howe Arena advertising.

The Tri-Town Arena in Hooksett, New Hampshire also provides a diversity of physical advertising options, through its dashboard, bench, ice resurfacer, ice logos, and banner displays as well as its mezzanine advertising, locker room signage, and rink surface naming rights. In addition to these offerings, the area also allows organizations to sponsor the local teams that represent the rink. The sponsorship fee sheet is as follows:

Tri-Town Arena Team Sponsorship Fee Sheet		
Team	Duration	Unit Price
Youth House League Team Sponsor	1 Season	\$600
Mini Monarchs Sponsor	1 Season	\$500
Adult League Sponsor	1 Season	\$2,000
Junior 'A' Team Sponsor	1 Season	\$7,500
Junior 'B' Tea, Sponsor - Empire	1 Season	\$5,000
Junior 'B' Tea, Sponsor - CHA	1 Season	\$5,000

This team sponsorship model provides additional revenue opportunity for sports programming and rink operating costs. This model also does not include exclusivity and therefore lends itself to uncapped revenue opportunities for the teams and the arena.

The Tri-Town Arena and the Involved Citizens Enterprises Inc. Arenas manage these programs through their existing arena operations and management staff. The programs are marketed through advertising brochures or through the existing arena websites. The key clients for these products appear to be predominantly local businesses and organizations with a few nation-wide corporations (for example Coca-Cola). This program model not only provides valuable income to the local community area, but also serves as an important marketing tool for local businesses.

TOPIC 3: FISCAL POLICY MEASURES TO RAISE FUNDS FOR PARKS AND FACILITIES

SOLUTION INTRODUCTION

Applying fiscal policy measures, like taxation programs or impact fees, provides a valuable opportunity to generate the required revenue needed to supplement the City of Stamford's parks and facilities operating and capital budgets without negatively impacting the General Fund.

This type of model has been used in Connecticut through both the 96(3) State Parks Admissions Tax and through the City of Hartford State Park Parking tax. For example, Hartford, Connecticut's State Park Parking Tax has been estimated to provide the City \$210,000 annual revenue. The following case studies present two different types of fiscal policy opportunities to inform further discussions.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE #3A: Philadelphia Beverage Tax

The Philadelphia Beverage Tax (PBT) is a tax charged on the distribution of sweetened beverages. This tax applies a \$0.015 per ounce charge to the registered distributors of sweetened beverages, which includes the following:

- Soda (regular or diet)
- Non-100% Fruit Drinks
- Sports Drinks
- Energy Drinks
- Pre-sweetened Coffee or Tea

The revenue generated by this tax policy has been earmarked with a specific percentage going to the general fund, Pre-K, Community Schools, and the City offices responsible for administering Pre-K and Community Schools along with debt service for the Rebuild Program, and for Parks and Recreation Rebuild Program. The following table demonstrates the percentage of tax fund expenditure along with the total revenue since the program's implementation in 2017:

Philadelphia Beverage Tax (PBT) Fund Administration		
Funded Service	Percentage of PBT Fund	2017 - 2022 Expenditure From Fund
General Fund	49.7%	\$203,600,000
Pre-K	38.6%	\$158,100,000
Community Schools	4.7%	\$19,100,000
Pre-K & Community School City Admin	1.0%	\$4,100,000
Debt Service for Rebuild	5.4%	\$22,100,000
Parks and Recreation Rebuild Program	0.6%	\$2,400,000

The Parks and Recreation Rebuild Program has been described as an investment in Philadelphia’s parks, recreation centers and libraries with a focus on “high-need neighborhoods, as well as sites that are in extremely poor condition”.

This program involved an approval process which identifies “eligible sites” for improvement. There are currently more than 400 identified eligible sites. These sites are identified through the [“Rebuild Philadelphia” portal](#) which empowers residents to engage in the program through awareness and project progress transparency.

This program, which is funded by the ongoing beverage tax revenue, has been designed to help the City of Philadelphia develop an ambitious long-term program which seeks to improve neighborhood parks and recreation throughout the City. Both the capital projects and the City Staff budgets for the program are funded by the beverage tax.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE #3B: San Jose Park Impact Fees

The San Jose Park Impact Fee program, managed by the San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services (PRNS), is composed of both the City Parkland Dedication (PDO) and Park Impact (PIO) Ordinances. This policy requires new residential development projects to satisfy a parkland obligation which is equivalent to dedicating three (3) acres of land for public recreational use for every 1,000 new residents.

Specifically, the program applies any of the following means for addressing the parkland obligation:

1. **Land Dedication:** Dedicating a half an acre or more of land to the City of San José for recreational purposes;
2. **Fee Payment:** Paying a park impact in-lieu fee that equals the value of the land dedication requirement;
3. **Park Development:** Constructing new recreational facilities;
4. **Enhancement:** Improving existing recreational facilities; or
5. **Combined Approach:** Through a combination of these methods.

The program's fee payments are collected and distributed by the Park Trust Fund. This fund distributes revenue from residential development projects to adjacent parks as the program requires that facilities developed or renovated with the park impact fees serve or benefit the project that paid such park impact fees.

This program was designed to include a series of specifications in regards to the management and distribution of funds. This fund has been designed to exclusively cover capital costs as the Quimby Act prevents park maintenance or operations expenditures. In addition to specifying the funding capabilities, the current program also exclusively impacts residential developers as it does not require commercial developers to make contributions.

The park impact fee program generated \$16,607,039 within fiscal year 2017-2018. The program has also resulted in the development of fifteen (15) new parks and fifty-one (51) park improvement projects (between 2002 and 2022). The strong revenue generation capabilities and results make this fiscal policy measure the second largest funding source for parks and recreation projects within the City of San Jose.



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CLOSING STATEMENT & NEXT STEPS

The precedent case studies demonstrate the diverse breadth of funding opportunities that other cities are leveraging that the City of Stamford can continue to explore. A further examination of the existing opportunities, limitations, and concerns will enable more nuanced discussion regarding implementation and next steps for the alternative financing mechanisms and funding models.

Revenue Recommendations and Implementation Next Steps Memorandum



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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 13, 2023

TO: Local Office Landscape and Urban Design

FROM: James Lima Planning + Development

SUBJECT: Stamford Citywide Parks Strategic Plan - Revenue Recommendations and Implementation Next Steps

INTRODUCTION & PROCESS

As part of the Stamford Citywide Parks Strategic Plan project, James Lima Planning and Development (JLP+D) was contracted with Local to provide two memorandums which aim to 1) summarize up to 3 precedents on comparable funding models and 2) advise on alternative financing mechanisms and funding models to advance the strategic plan.

For the previously submitted first memorandum, JLP+D reviewed City of Stamford documents, interviewed City staff, and researched case studies to understand existing budgetary opportunities and future potentials for policy and programmatic innovations.

The second memorandum was developed through a process of City Staff engagement and feedback along with inputs from the community survey insights. The August 2023 worksession with City Staff involved a collaborative session where staff provided their professional insights for the recommendations while also observing some high-level community survey insights. It was through this process that JLP+D developed the following memorandum in response to the feedback and recommendations provided during the August 2023 session.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

The following three (3) gaps were identified during the initial City of Stamford budgetary and policy document review and throughout the subsequent engagement:

1. There is a strong community interest in supporting parks and recreation maintenance and funding, but there lacks a sufficient existing mechanism that enables widely applied community-based sponsorship or adoption of public parks.
2. There are recreational facilities that can potentially generate revenue. However, budgetary documents revealed no advertising revenue for either the Terry Connors Rink or the EG Brennan Golf Course. Additional revenue opportunities may be available through the development of a more robust offering of advertising and sponsorships at both facilities.
3. In terms of fiscal policy tools, the City currently has one TIF (Tax Increment Financing) program through the Mill River TIF. However, besides such TIF, there are no diversified specific tax or fee programs that can raise dedicated funding for the parks system.

Recommendation 1:

Create a third-party non-profit Parks Foundation to manage grass-root efforts and philanthropy

Existing Efforts and Assets:

Stamford is a place of many community actors and local wealth. There is a wide range of existing local non-profits that might become partners for parks advocacy and management, such as [The Friends of Mianus River Park](#), [Mill River Park Collaborative](#), and Keep Stamford Beautiful, Inc. (to name a few) . The City also has existing programs such as Adopt-A-Park to encourage community and private contributions.

To develop a more holistic and systemic approach to leverage community resources, the City of Stamford is currently in the process of both investigating the development of a parks foundation and is also working to create a better database of friends groups. These two initiatives align with the foundational strategies needed to establish a successful third-party non-profit parks foundation.

Next-Level Goals:

Through the planning process, both City staff and residents have identified increased community support as an opportunity to increase funding and capacity for Stamford parks. Specifically, based on the survey responses and workshop results, residents stated an interest in “Partner[ing] with local neighborhood associations, businesses and nonprofits to raise funds”, and City staff identified an additional interest in leveraging non-profit organizations as a means of capacity building for the management and operations of Stamford’s park network.

Therefore, the goal for a third-party Parks Foundation for Stamford should focus on:

- Increasing fundraising
- Streamlining partnership management and development
- Sharing management responsibility for certain parks

Case study research of park foundations in New York City and Greenwich exemplify systems where both 501(c)(3) and 501(a)(1) classified organizations work as a intermediary between the City, the non-profits, and those seeking to donate funds for the management, operations, and capital expenses of the parks systems. These organizations have diversified initiatives and revenue streams which enable them to engage citizens and donors through a variety of fundraising mechanisms and volunteer opportunities. [The New York City Parks Foundation](#) manages and organizes world class performances, venue rentals within the parks while also offering youth

and senior activity programs and volunteer partnerships. The [Greenwich Parks and Recreation Foundation](#) takes a more project-focused approach as it embarks on a number of key initiatives which includes building improvements for the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink, the development of a new civic center, the implementation of park improvements and beautification, the hosting of community events, the management of commemorative gifts, and youth recreation scholarships.

Key Implementation Considerations:

Needs and Capacity Assessment:

In establishing a Parks Foundation for the management of volunteer/ nonprofit organizations and philanthropy it is important to develop a foundational understanding of existing capacity needs and volunteer offerings. By initially engaging in a process of group inventorying and capacity management, the City can start to develop efficient systems that effectively leverage the expertise and resources of its volunteer organizations. An example of this is currently present in Stamford through the Bartlett Arboretum's partnership with the [University of Connecticut's Master Gardener Program](#). This program enables students to engage the community through the management of community gardens, classes, and outreach projects. By further identifying these types of organizations and City needs, the City of Stamford will be able to leverage these partnerships to improve parks operations while also creating more opportunities for citizens to engage with Stamford Parks and Recreation.

Regulatory and Policy Context:

The State of Connecticut permits the implementation of park sponsorship and philanthropy through both the Adopt-a-Park program, which enables volunteers and organizations to formally commit to the long-term maintenance of Connecticut's parks and features, and the [Public Act 15-106](#), which enables the targeted donation of funds to support the operations of state parks in Connecticut. It is important to note that the details for the Public Act 15-106 program are currently still under development.

Staffing at the City Side:

Even the most capable third-party partner cannot bring about the greatest benefits for the public without partnership and support from the City side. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the role the public sector will play in ensuring the success of the partnership. Specifically, it is recommended that the City consider the following aspects: 1) assign a dedicated personnel to work with the Parks Foundation as an equal partner; 2) ensure effective communication channels between the Parks Foundation and the City; 3) streamline decision making and reduce bureaucratic red tapes.



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Marketing and Communication:

Create a unified, one-stop-shop public platform to share information and convey the visual identity. Specifically, make sure to provide easy access to websites where volunteer groups, events and programs, and important meetings are listed.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Inventory existing non-profit organizations, volunteer groups, and potential partners, creating a deeper understanding of capacity needs and organizational capabilities.
- Conduct focus groups and workshops with key groups to develop initiatives and priorities which will guide future programming and philanthropic efforts.
- Speak to representatives from New York City Parks Foundation and Greenwich Parks and Rec Foundation to better understand transferable lessons, best practices, and any practical constraints.
- Develop a strategic plan and/or business plan for the new Parks Foundation. In addition to identifying program priorities, it is also recommended that the foundation outline its funding/revenue streams - this may include community events, fundraisers, donations, commemorative gifts, and public-private partnerships.

Recommendation 2:

Provide Strong Public Guidance to Enable and Coordinate Corporate Sponsorship and Advertising Revenue Strategy for Facilities

Existing Efforts and Assets:

The City of Stamford has previously implemented corporate sponsorships and partnerships through a variety of different formats and programs. Results include rink advertising revenue (which generated \$2,250 in FY 17/18 and \$2,267 in FY 19/20) along with a \$2,500 private sponsorship in FY 21/22 and a \$300,000 Scalzi Park Roller Rink Upgrade which was achieved through a contribution grant match with the New York Rangers (FY 22/23). These revenue streams can be further expanded on through the development of a structured system of sponsorship curation and recognition.

Next-Level Goals:

Although a need for additional revenue sourcing has been identified, there is a reasonable concern for the effectiveness and appropriateness of sponsorships if those programs do not sufficiently ensure public value and access. Additional perimeters and systems must be developed in order to incentivize corporate sponsorship without impeding the experience of the residents in Stamford.

Therefore, the goal for sponsorships and advertising in Stamford should focus on:

- Limiting physical on-site recognition with a tiered system
- Proactively curating sponsorships and partnerships
- Identifying sponsor eligibility requirements and developing a criteria for sponsorship proposal approval

Both national and city-focused case studies provide valuable insights into the ways that park systems enable partnership and sponsorship opportunities that ensure positive visitor experiences. These park organizations achieve this optimized outcome through the development of detailed vetting and management frameworks which provide procedures and policies that protect the integrity of the park system. While national organizations, like the [National Park Foundation](#), focus on structuring the donor recognition process to limit on-site sponsorship recognition, other city-level park systems focus on implementing policies which focus on the protection of park space through a collaborative partnership approach (for example the [Los Angeles Sponsorship Recognition Policy](#)). It is through the implementation of these policy systems and plans that the City of Stamford can increase its sponsorship revenue while protecting the existing park experience.

Key Implementation Considerations:

Limiting Physical Recognition For Sponsorship and Donations:

A key concern identified by the City of Stamford staff was the potential for oversaturation of physical advertising, sponsorship recognition, and naming rights which may occur when implementing a corporate sponsorship and advertising revenue strategy. One methodology that may be valuable to look toward implementing is the [National Park Foundation's Donor Recognition Plan](#). This plan restricts on-site physical recognition to only the highest tier of donations/ sponsorships. Lower-tier donor recognition includes a thank you letter from superintendent or program manager, recognition in a donor book or directory, recognition on a donor recognition board for five years, recognition in the park newsletter, or an official press release. These off-site donor recognition options enable the park system to incentivize corporate donor and sponsorship practices while mitigating advertising and branding concerns.

Corporate Sponsorship Vetting:

During JLP+D's consultation with City of Stamford staff it was noted that there was an appetite for a more curated process in identifying and selecting potential corporate sponsors. The development of sponsor eligibility requirements and the implementation of a City-led sponsorship RFP process may provide valuable solutions to these identified concerns.

The Los Angeles Parks Foundation and the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks exemplifies the process of sponsorship curation through its [Sponsorship Recognition Policy](#). This policy imposes a series of procedures, guidelines, and parameters around the ways that sponsors are approved and managed within the park system.

This policy requires potential partners and sponsors to fill out a partnership questionnaire which requires details that determine whether or not the project or sponsorship aligns with the Department's mission and vision while also contributing to the goal of enhancing recreational opportunities for residents. Once approved, the potential sponsor/partner works with the [Partnership Section Team](#) to determine eligibility and next steps.

In 2022 the commission included additional sponsorship policies which work to prevent the commercialization of LA's public spaces. The policies are as follows (sourced from the 2022 Revised Sponsorship Recognition Policy) :

- Specific monetary thresholds, time limitations, and design guidelines regarding recognition signage;

- The sponsorship must support and conform to RAP's mission, must provide a direct benefit to the City and the park/park asset, and the specifics of the recognition must be commensurate with the value of the support offered through the sponsorship as set forth in the policy or as separately determined by the Board; and,
- The proposed sponsorship shall not unduly commercialize the park asset.

The City of Stamford should consider the development of a recognition policy or partnership plan which provides specific guidelines around sponsorship eligibility and management. This plan may be managed by the existing Parks and Recreation Department or by the future Parks and Recreation Foundation (as proposed in Recommendation 1).

Integrating Philanthropy and Earned Income as One Approach:

There have been concerns associated with privatized naming rights and the oversaturation of park advertising. However, philanthropy and earned income are common sources that support park systems across the country. The town of Greenwich, CT implemented this fundraising strategy as a means for obtaining a \$5 million grant by the Cohen Foundation for the development of the Cohen Eastern Greenwich Civic Center. It is noted in the [Town of Greenwich's operating budget for 2023-2024](#) that "\$1.2 of the \$1.89 million designated for outfitting the facility is subject to release and conditioned on the presentation by Parks and Recreation to the BET (Board of Estimate & Taxation) on an updated plan for raising additional funds (eg: naming rights for rooms, benches, etc.) for the facility".

The Greenwich case study exemplifies the appetite for regional philanthropy to support open spaces on the condition that the public sector innovates its revenue model for long-term maintenance and operations. Therefore, while the City of Stamford should minimize the risk of over-privatization they should still think about philanthropic fundraising and earned income as one integrated system.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Work with stakeholders to identify on-site sponsorship recognition concerns and limitations (for example size, volume, content, sponsorship type)
- Develop a partnership plan or sponsorship policy which outlines eligibility criteria and limitations using feedback from stakeholder engagement
- Designate at least one staff member, or identify a governance structure, for the management and maintenance of the partnership/ sponsorship policy or plan
- Conduct preliminary market outreach to potential sponsors as a means of developing strategies for partnership management and outreach

Recommendation 3:

Implement Fiscal Policy Measures to Raise Funds for Parks and Facilities

Existing Efforts and Assets:

The City of Stamford has a history of applying fiscal policy measurements through projects like the Mill River TIF (Tax Increment Financing) District and the school-related Special Revenue Fund. The Mill River TIF District (established in 2004) optimized on park proximity premiums by redirecting 50% of the increase in property tax for parcels immediately surrounding the Park to the Collaborative. In 2022 the tax increment funding resulted in [\\$1,209,974](#) for Mill River which equated to 17.1% of all capital funding for the year.

Stamford has implemented a number of fiscal policy measures through the special revenue fund system. Applicable parks-related fund sources include the Harbor Commission, the E. Gaynor Brennan Golf Course, and Terry Conner's Ice Rink. These special revenue fund initiatives exemplify opportunities for Stamford to implement a similar fiscal policy measure for the funding of parks operations and maintenance.

Next-Level Goals:

Both staff and residents identified an interest in exploring alternative fiscal policy measures to source additional and stable City revenue for Stamford's parks and recreation services. By exploring the existing market conditions and demands, the City will be able to identify specific areas where they may apply a special revenue fund model in order to capitalize on high-demand services or amenities. Additional goals may include furthering conversations with City Staff to identify creative alternatives to park impact fee programs (for instance the application of additional building permit fees or facility permits).

Therefore, the goal for fiscal policy measures in Stamford should focus on:

- Expanding on and streamlining the application of existing policy tools, such as special revenue funds
- In the future, exploring creative new models and borrowing lessons from other policy areas

Compared to the other two recommendations, new fiscal tools take the most effort in planning and legislative approval and require additional long-range planning. But once approved, these could potentially provide extra layers of fiscal sustainability to the public sector and give the City more control over spending.

Key Implementation Considerations:

Leveraging Special Revenue Funds:

The Connecticut statute permits the municipal implementation of [special revenue funds](#). These funds are defined as “funds [that] account for the proceeds of specific revenue and other financing sources (other than expendable trusts, or for major capital projects) that are legally restricted to expenditure for specified purposes” (Connecticut Office of the State Comptroller). This mechanism has been implemented throughout Connecticut – in Hartford, Bristol, Hebron, Bridgeport, Hartford, and Greenwich (to name a few).

Stamford currently has a series of [nine \(9\) special revenue funds](#). Existing parks-related special revenue funds include the following (sourced from the Mayor’s Proposed Operating and Special Revenue Funds Budget FY 22-23):

- **FY 22-23 Harbor Commission Fund and Marina Operating Fund Budgets:** The Harbor Commission and Marina Operating Funds include revenue and expenses for the operations of the Harbor Commissions and for City Marinas
- **FY 22-23 E. Gaynor Brennan Golf Course Budget:** This budget is primarily funded from non-tax sources
- **FY 22-23 Terry Conner’s Ice Rink:** Terry Conner’s covers nearly 100% of their operational costs while providing a high-quality recreational facility for schools, clubs, and individuals.

It is recommended that the City of Stamford look towards developing complementary special revenue funds to these FY 22-23 special revenue programs. During the community survey it was identified that there was an appetite for tourist and visitor beach permits and parking fees, although it is understood that there is an existing parking special revenue fund, it may be advantageous to explore the establishment of tourism taxation and fees. Additional market analysis is required in order to identify specific revenue interventions through special revenue funds.

Implementation Efficiency:

Before proposing a new fiscal policy measure (whether implementing a special revenue fund or an additional fee scheme) it is critical that the City develops a structure around the implementation and movement of the funds. Predetermining project and operational priorities along with developing a strategy around the releasing of the funds will ensure an expedited implementation process. Applying specific measures, for instance limiting multi-departmental approvals, will mitigate the policy bottlenecks that extend the timeline between revenue generation from the policy measure and implementation to the parks and programs that are of need.

Potential Market Limitations:

In order to ensure that the fiscal policy measures are effectively implemented, it is crucial that the City embark on a process of understanding and evaluating the market conditions for the municipal service or amenity that is to be leveraged for additional revenue generation. For instance, in Philadelphia it was noted that “within 2 months of the [soda] tax’s implementation, the odds of having consumed soda that day were down by 40% and odds of having consumed energy drinks were down by 64% while finding negative but non-significant effects on the amount of consumption” ([Carlin & Lozano-Rojas, 2022](#)). Although the taxation did curb overall soda consumption, the market is strong enough that the soda taxation was able to generate [\\$409.2 million in revenue between FY 2017 - 2022](#). The strategic selection of taxed goods ensured that the fiscal policy curbed the consumption of a potentially harmful substance with a strong ongoing market demand within the municipality.

Direct Park Impact Fee Limitations:

Although City Staff identified an interest in the implementation of park impact fees, the Connecticut statute does not authorize municipalities to impose fees on new developments for the purpose of funding the development of new schools or municipal facilities. However, the City might think outside of the box and draw inspirations from other policy areas. In the future, with additional analysis, the City may explore the option of leveraging building permit fees as a means of utilizing new development opportunities to fund open space-related public benefits, which may involve additional State-City coordination. Additional consultation with the Land Use Bureau is recommended, per interview with a Subject Matter Expert.



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Immediate Next Steps:

- Conduct a market and budgetary analysis and engage local and regional subject area experts to identify potential revenue sources for the special revenue fund
- Consult Land Use Bureau staff to identify potential solutions and limitations that work to redistribute funds from developers to the City for the operations and maintenance of parks, exploring the feasibility of an additional building permit fee

Stamford Park Score Report



Stamford ParkScore Index ®

July 2023

Overview

The ParkScore® index is the most comprehensive rating system developed to measure how well the 100 largest U.S. cities are meeting the need for parks. Across the country, more than 100 million people—including 28 million kids—don't have a park within a 10-minute walk of home. Among the 100 largest U.S. cities, residents in neighborhoods of color have access to 44% less park space than those in white neighborhoods. Trust for Public Land (TPL) applied the ParkScore Index ® methodology to Stamford's park system to identify its strengths and weaknesses relative to the 100 most populous U.S. cities, as well as a peer city of New Haven.

The ParkScore index measures how well Stamford compares against the nation's most populous cities on measures across 5 categories reflective of an excellent city park system: Acreage, Access, Investment, Amenities, and Equity. The Acreage and Access categories reflect the importance of both large 'destination' parks as well as ensuring all residents have access to a public park within a short 10-minute walk of their home. The Investment and Amenities categories reflect the importance of high-quality parks – the spending needed to maintain them and a wide range of activities available for multi-generational user groups. The Equity category reflects the importance of ensuring park resources are fairly distributed between neighborhoods within a city.

For each measure, points are awarded on a relative basis, based on how a city compares to the 100 most populous cities. For example, a score of 90 could be interpreted that Stamford is among the top 10% of cities for that measure. The score for each of the five categories is an average of its measures; a city's overall rating is an average of the five categories. The measures are selected to facilitate comparison across a wide-range of cities.



Overall Score

Based on our analysis, Stamford's park system received a ParkScore rating of 43.8 out of a possible 100 points, indicating that it ranks slightly below average when compared to the most populous cities in the country. Stamford ranks above average for the percentage of its population within a 10-minute walk of a park. It also ranks above average for equity, with high park access and acreage numbers for communities of color and low-income neighborhoods. The city performs more poorly on its acreage, amenities, and investment, indicating that although most residents live within a walkable half-mile, there is room to increase the range of activities available at parks, to increase park size, and to invest more in parks.



Acreage

1,064 acres of parkland (4% of city area), median park size of 3 acres

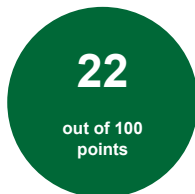
The acreage score indicates the relative scarcity of large 'destination' parks, which include large natural areas that provide critical mental health as well as climate and conservation benefits. This category is scored as an average of two metrics, parkland as percentage of city area and median park size. Stamford scores in the bottom fourth of cities reviewed in ParkScore for both metrics.



Access

71% of Stamford residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park

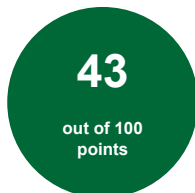
The access score indicates the percentage of a city's residents that live within a walkable half-mile of a park – the average distance that most people are willing to walk to reach a destination. In Stamford, 71% of its residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, making the city slightly above average for ensuring residents have access to at least one close-to-home park.



Investment

An average of \$70 per person is spent on parks and recreation in Stamford each year

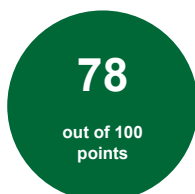
The investment score indicates the relative financial health of a city's park system, which is essential to ensuring parks are maintained at a high level for all to enjoy. This category is scored based on the total parks and recreation spending per person across all agencies and organizations, including monetized volunteer hours. With a score of 22 points (\$70 per resident per year), Stamford ranks below most cities in terms of sufficient spending to maintain its parks at a high level.



Amenities

13 basketball hoops, 3 dog parks, 19 playgrounds, 2 senior and rec centers, 31 restrooms, and 3 splashpads

With a score of 43 points, Stamford ranks slightly below average in terms of providing key amenities that drive the park usage necessary for residents to enjoy the full range of benefits parks can offer. Of the six amenities, Stamford ranks among the nation's best in terms of splashpads, restrooms, and dog parks and one of the lowest for basketball hoops.



Equity

In Stamford, 82% of people of color live within a 10-minute walk of a park, as do 85% of low-income households. When comparing park space per person, neighborhoods of color have access to slightly more park acreage than white neighborhoods. Low income neighborhoods have 39% less than high-income neighborhoods.

The equity score indicates how fairly parks and park space are distributed within a city. This category is an average of two types of metrics: 1) the percentage of people of color and low-income households within a 10-minute walk of a park and 2) a comparison of the amount of park space between neighborhoods by race and income. Stamford performs well in most of these metrics. People of low and low income households have higher 10-minute walk access than the city-wide average, and neighborhoods of color have a higher amount of park space per person than white neighborhoods. However, low-income neighborhoods have a lower amount of park space per person than high income neighborhoods.



Custom ParkScore Inputs & Results: Stamford

Est. ParkScore **43.8**

ParkScore points are out of 100, and generally correlate to the percentile Stamford would rank about the 100 most populous cities for that metric (100 is highest, 1 is lowest)

	Actual ParkScore (out of 100) Points	Per Capita Benchmarks				Aggregated Inventory					
		Stamford Per capita	ParkScore benchmarks (Lowest, Median, to get 100 points)			City-Wide Total	By Agency (Adjust columns for locality)				
			Lowest	Median	to get 100 points	City	Mill River	Collaborative	Other Non-Profits		
Acreeage	20										
parkland as % city area	15	4%	1.7%	9.8%	19.5%	1,064	1,064	NA	NA		
median park size acres	24	3	0.6	5.4	10.8	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Amenities	43										
Basketball Hoops per 10,000	1	0.9	0.9	3.8	7.7	13	13	Included in City inventory			
Dog Parks per 100,000	84	2.2	0.3	1.3	2.5	3	3	Included in City inventory			
Playgrounds per 10,000	9	1.4	1.0	2.8	5.6	19	19	Included in City inventory			
Senior/Rec Centers per 20,000	7	0.3	0.2	0.8	1.5	2	2	Included in City inventory			
Restrooms per 10,000	76	2.3	0.1	1.5	2.9	31	31	Included in City inventory			
Splashpads per 100,000	92	2.2	0.1	1.3	2.6	3	3	Included in City inventory			
Investment	22										
Overall Investment Spending pp. 3yr avg	22	\$ 70	\$ 28	\$ 108	\$ 216	\$ 9,535,189					
FY20 per person		\$ 80				\$ 10,891,095	\$ 7,307,559	\$ 3,531,626	51909.72		
FY21 per person		\$ 53				\$ 7,172,536	\$ 3,781,545	\$ 3,346,372	44618.72		
FY22 per person		\$ 71				\$ 9,767,869	\$ 6,581,573	\$ 3,044,917	141378.62		
Volunteer Hours											
FY20 per person		\$ 2				6,855		1,078	5,777		
FY21 per person		\$ 2				6,264		114	6,150		
FY22 per person		\$ 2				9,752		1,179	8,573		
Access	56										
% population within 10 min walk	56	71%	35%	74%	100%						
Equity	78										
% within 10 min walk of park	100	81.22	38%	75%	100%						
people of color	100	85.06	43%	75%	100%						
low income households											
Ratio of park space per person between:											
neighborhoods of color and white neighborhoods	75	1.13	0.09	0.73	1.47						
low-income and high-income neighborhoods	38	0.61	0.14	0.70	1.40						
Inputs											
	Population	Volunteer Value	Adjusted Area								
FY20	136,700	33									
FY21	136,545	33									
FY22	136,994	35	24,069								

Adjusted area excludes the acreage of large water bodies and industrial areas, such as railparks and airports, to better enable comparison across cities
 *Volunteer hours are monetized according to the Independent Sector's Value of Volunteer Time report, using the dollars per hour value for Connecticut



Custom ParkScore Inputs & Results: New Haven (for comparative purposes)

Total **68.4**
 ParkScore points are out of 100, and generally correlate to the percentile New Haven would rank among the 100 most populous cities for that metric (100 is highest, 1 is lowest)

	ParkScore out of 100	Benchmarks				New Haven Aggregated Inventory						
		New Haven Per capita	ParkScore benchmarks Lowest	Median	to get 100 points %	City-Wide Total	By Agency	City	State	Schools	Preserves	URI
Average												
parkland as % city area	62	12%	2%	9%	15%	1,469	1,003	341	52	74		
median park size	10	1.53	0.58	1.39	10.77							
Amenities												
Baseball Hoops	78	5.3	0.8	3.25	6.59	71	47	24				
Dog Parks	100	3.0	0.5	1.21	2.43	4	4					
Playgrounds	100	5.5	1.0	2.84	5.68	38	57	21				
Senior/Rec Centers	40	0.7	0.1	0.74	1.50	5	5					
Restrooms	2	0.1	0.1	1.00	3.20	2	2					
Sportsfields	100	10.5	0.1	1.29	2.59	14	14					
Investment												
Overall investment	35	\$ 17.26	\$ 16.12	\$ 94.97	\$ 189.95							
Spending												
2017 per-acre		\$ 47.80				\$ 500,541	\$ 8,761,130			\$ 246,913		
2018 per-acre		\$ 80.40				\$ 1,075,706	\$ 10,335,440			\$ 385,220		
2019 per-acre		\$ 78.05				\$ 1,054,311	\$ 10,316,793			\$ 423,510		
Volunteer Hours												
2017 per-acre		\$ 1.15				\$ 146,210.40				1,798	1,437	
2018 per-acre		\$ 1.56				\$ 201,114.45				2,545	1,544	
2019 per-acre		\$ 1.89				\$ 241,497.04				4,345	1,799	
*Volunteer hours are measured according to the Independent Sector's value of Volunteer Time report, using the dollar per hour value for Connecticut												
Access												
% population within 10 min walk	95	96%	19%	73%	100%							
Equity												
% within 10 min walk of park	65											
people of color	46	90%	18%	74%	100%							
low income households	57	98%	43%	74%	100%							
Ratio of park space per person between:												
neighborhoods of color and white neighborhood	34	0.53	0.09	0.68	1.37							
low-income and high-income neighborhoods	32	0.53	0.11	0.71	1.41							
Inputs												
Population 2017		132,864										
Population 2018		133,867										
Population 2019		133,779										
Adjusted Area		11,839										

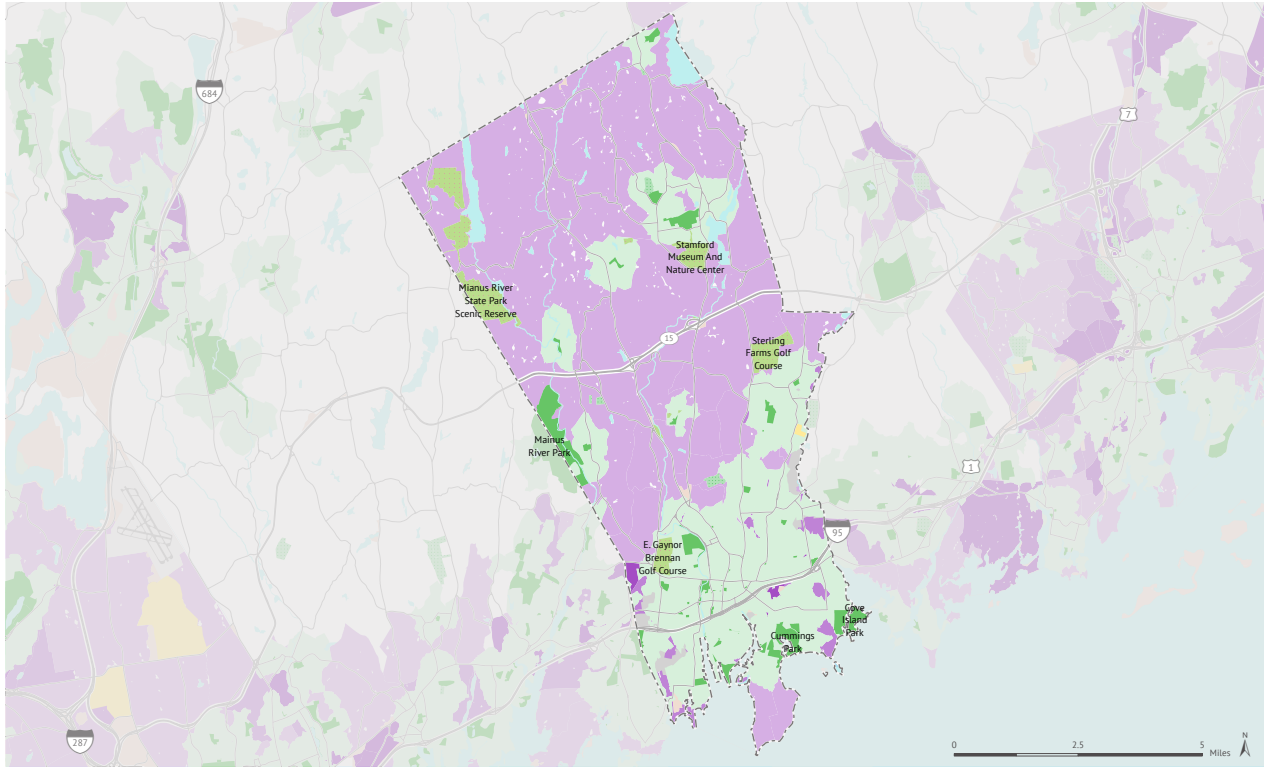
Adjusted area excludes the average of large water bodies and industrial areas, such as harbors and airports, to better enable comparison across cities



Stamford Custom ParkScore Maps

Park Access (Map 1): This map highlights areas within the city that are further than a walkable half mile (“10 Minute Walk”) from a publicly accessible park.

Park Equity (Map 2): These maps highlight the difference in available park space per person among low-income and high-income block groups in Stamford, as well as between block groups that are majority people of color or white.



Park access

STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

This analysis is provided via the ParkServe® mapping application, which identifies the population living within a 10-minute walk of a park by creating dynamic 1/2-mile service areas (10-minute walking distance) for all public parks. In this analysis, service areas use the street network to determine walkable distance (streets such as highways, freeways, and interstates are considered barriers).

In Stamford, 71% of the population lives within a 10-minute walk of a park. Among the remaining 39,295 people without access to a nearby park, Trust for Public Land suggests where to prioritize the development of new parks to reduce this gap. This prioritization is based on a comprehensive index of six equally-weighted demographic and environmental metrics:

- Population density*
- Density of low income households (households with income less than 75% of the urban area median income; less than \$100,000 in Stamford*)
- Density of people of color*
- Community health (a combined index based on the rate of poor mental health and low physical activity from the 2022 CDC PLACES census tract dataset)
- Urban heat islands (surface temperature at least 1.25 degrees greater than city mean surface temperature from Trust for Public Land, based on Landsat 8 satellite imagery)
- Pollution burden (air toxics respiratory hazard index from 2022 EPA EIScreen)

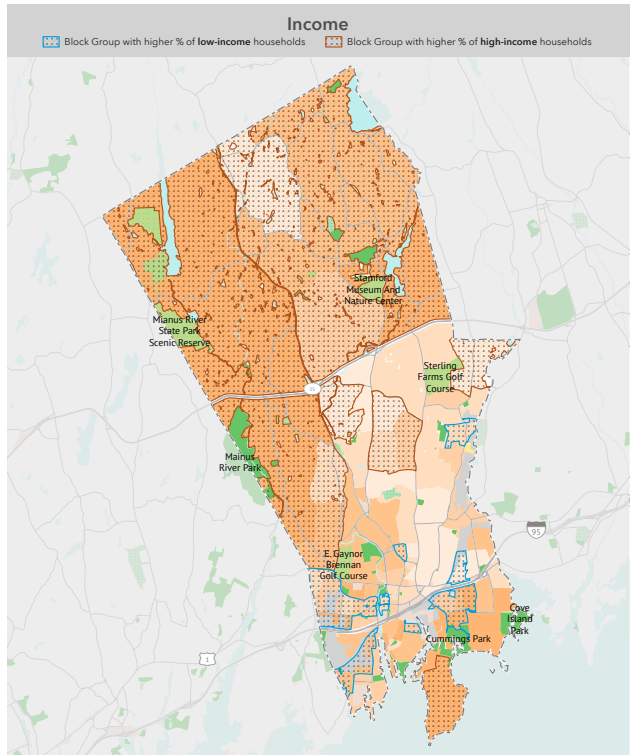
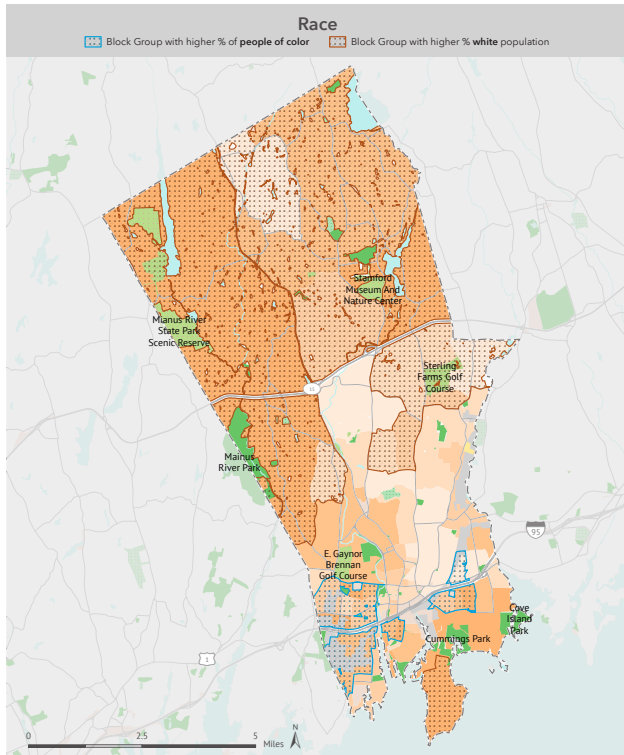
*Based on 2022 Forecast block groups provided by ESRI

- Priority areas for new parks
(outside of 10 minute walk service areas of parks with public access)
- Very high priority
 - High priority
 - Moderate priority
 - Park with public access
 - Other park
 - 10-minute walk (half-mile) service area of park with public access

- Cemetery
- University
- Industrial
- Vacant zero population area
- City boundary
- County boundary

Special thanks to the following data providers: Stamford, Local Design, Esri, OSM, CDC, EPA. Information on this map is provided for purposes of discussion and visualization only. Map created by Trust for Public Land on August 4, 2023. Trust for Public Land and Trust for Public Land logo are federally registered marks of Trust for Public Land. Copyright © 2023 Trust for Public Land. www.tpl.org





Park equity

STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

In Stamford, residents in neighborhoods of color have access to 13% more park space per person than those in white neighborhoods. Residents in low-income neighborhoods have access to 39% less than those in high-income neighborhoods.

Park space per person effectively measures the available park space within a 10-minute walk of a micro-neighborhood, identified as those with the highest concentrations (top 20% of all census block groups in a city) of people of color or white population and high-income or low-income households. Households with income less than 75% of city median income (less than \$100,000 in Stamford) are considered low-income; households with income greater than 125% of city median income (greater than \$150,000 in Stamford) are high-income.

The metrics for people of color reflect each of the Census-designated race/ethnicity groups: Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous and Native American, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, multiple races, and other communities of color. Demographic profiles are based on 2020 Forecast block groups provided by Esri.

- Park with public access
- Other park
- Cemetery
- University
- Industrial
- Vacant zero population area
- City boundary
- County boundary
- Park acres per person
- Very high
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very low

Special thanks to the following data providers: Stamford, Local Design, Esri, OSM, CDC, EPA. Information on this map is provided for purposes of discussion and visualization only. Map created by Trust for Public Land on August 4, 2023. Trust for Public Land and Trust for Public Land logo are federally registered marks of Trust for Public Land. Copyright © 2023 Trust for Public Land. www.tpl.org



Fundamentals of Funding Report



Fundamentals of Funding for Local Parks and Greenspace

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About Trust for Public Land

Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit that works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors. As a leader in equitable access to the outdoors, TPL works with communities to create parks and protect public land where they are needed most. This report was prepared in partnership between TPL's *10-Minute Walk*® Program, Conservation Finance, and Federal Affairs.

The *10-Minute Walk* Program, a Trust for Public Land (TPL) award-winning national program, is engaging city leaders to close the park equity divide so that every resident has access to a quality park or greenspace within a *10-minute walk* of home.

Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance program serves as a trusted advisor to state and local governments and community leaders on how to design, pass, and implement ballot and legislative measures to fund parks and conservation. Since 1996 we've helped pass 650 measures – 83 percent of those we've worked on – that generated \$93 billion for parks.

Trust for Public Land's Federal Affairs team works in our nation's capital to provide resources and guidance about federal land conservation policy and funding to an array of interested parties, including Congress, the White House, federal agency staff, local and state land trust activists and government officials, and other conservation groups.

Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary



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Parks play an essential role in helping communities thrive. When people have access to a high-quality park close-to-home, they experience improved mental health, physical health, and social well-being. But, parks departments across the country face financial challenges that make it difficult to ensure that everyone has access to a high-quality park. For instance, one study found that following the great recession, spending on parks and recreation decreased 21% from 2008 - 2013.¹

While parks have waxed and waned on political agendas, demand hasn't gone down. In fact, we've seen the need for parks as critical civic infrastructure increase, prompted in part by the COVID-19 pandemic. City leaders and parks practitioners are being asked to do more for parks with less. But, they may not always know where to go for funding.

Trust for Public Land's *10-Minute Walk*[®] Program has compiled this report to share common funding mechanisms available for city parks. This report is not intended to be encyclopedic, but rather to outline a wide range of frequently-used funding tools. The table below shares 21 common funding mechanisms for parks, along with a high-level summary of what they can fund.

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Funding Mechanism	Capital Costs	Maintenance	Pre-Development ¹	Activations and Programming
LOCAL AND STATE SOURCES FOR PARK FUNDING				
Municipal bonds	✓			
Property taxes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sales and use taxes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Real estate transfer tax	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parkland dedication ordinance	✓		✓	
Developer impact fees	✓		✓	
Business Improvement District	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parks District	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lottery funds	✓	✓	✓	✓
MAJOR FEDERAL SOURCES				
NPS ORLP	✓			
DOT RAISE	✓		✓	
NEA Our Town			✓	✓
EPA Brownfields Program	✓		✓	
DOT Transportation Alternatives	✓		✓	
USFS Urban and Community Forestry		✓	✓	✓
EPA Environmental Justice Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓
DOT Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program	✓		✓	
NPS LCWF Stateside Assistance Program	✓			
HUD Community Development Block Grants	✓		✓	
PARTNERSHIPS AND PHILANTHROPY				
Park conservancy or foundation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Philanthropies	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹ Planning, design, and community engagement.

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Local and State Funding for Parks

Cities generally fund their municipal operations, including their park systems, through the collection of property and sales taxes which are designated as part of a city's "general fund." A city's general fund is often the most flexible source for spending on parks and it can support capital costs, operations and maintenance, predevelopment, as well as activation and programming. One challenge many cities face is weighing how to allocate general fund dollars towards parks versus the many other spending priorities of a city.

However, there are several ways that cities can generate funds specifically for parks, including ballot measures for conservation finance, developer exactions, and local districts.

Since 1996, Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance team has helped pass nearly 650 ballot measures creating \$93 billion in funding for parks, land conservation, and climate change mitigation, of which over 351 local city or county ballots have generated over \$33 billion in funding for parks and open space. The most common ballot measures passed are for bonds, property taxes, and sales taxes. Each of these mechanisms can be designed to ensure that the funding generated specifically supports a city's parks system. These have been passed in communities of all geographies, sizes, politics, and priorities.

Developer exactions – including parkland dedication ordinances and developer impact fees – are requirements that cities establish as a way to balance development with other city priorities. Developer exactions may be used as a way to create new parks that will serve a development's residents, or to fund other parks within the city that will be accessed by new residents.

In some cities, specialized local districts like Business Improvement Districts or Parks Districts are established to manage local parks. These districts can have the independent authority to generate revenue via taxes, levies, bonds, and private funding.

In addition to funds originating at the city level, some states are exploring funding mechanisms for city parks. Funding from lottery proceeds, bonds, sales tax, and real estate transfer tax are common examples. State taxes on cannabis and sporting goods are also emerging as common funding mechanisms being explored for city parks.

MUNICIPAL BONDS

What it is: A bond is debt issued by a government, territory, or one of its agencies. It is generally used to finance capital projects such as parks, roads, schools, and other public infrastructure or facilities. Bonds are a voter-approved ballot measure that are typically paid for by property owners. Bonds that fund local parks can be issued at the city, county, and state level.

What it funds: Bonds are an effective mechanism for obtaining funds for large-scale capital projects – particularly when funding is needed up-front and all at once. Bonds cannot be used for operations and maintenance.

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Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by bonds can range widely, depending on a wide-range of factors including how cities, counties, and states are rated by external bond evaluation organizations. In 2022, TPL helped two municipal governments to develop and pass bond ballot measures - an \$85 million park bond which was passed by the voters of Salt Lake City, UT with 71 percent support and a \$15 million bond in Fort Worth, TX that was approved with 57 percent voter support.

Requirements and restrictions: There are generally no restrictions at the state-wide level that prevent cities and counties from issuing bonds. Most municipal bonds require voter approval.

PROPERTY TAXES

What it is: A property tax or millage is a levy on the value of a property. The tax is levied by the governing authority of the jurisdiction in which the property is located, and multiple jurisdictions may tax the same property. Property taxes fund a variety of public services, including and beyond parks.

What it funds: Property taxes can be used for a wide range of purposes, from land acquisition to capital improvements to operations and maintenance.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by property taxes can range widely based on the tax rate levied as well as the value and number of properties being taxed. In 2022, TPL helped nine municipal governments develop property tax ballot measures, and seven of the measures passed. These measures supported by TPL in 2022 included a 1.5 percent tax increase in Worcester, MA for open space, recreation, historical preservation and affordable housing. The funding helps establish the Community Preservation Act in Massachusetts' second largest city.

Requirements and restrictions: Many states have strict limits or caps on the property taxes that can be levied in local jurisdictions. Property tax increases are often voter-approved, but this varies by state.

SALES AND USE TAXES

What it is: A sales tax is paid to a governing authority by a consumer for the purchase of certain goods and services. Sales taxes generally allow a seller to collect the tax from a consumer at the point of purchase. When a tax on goods or services is paid to a governing body directly by a consumer, it is usually called a use tax. Certain goods, such as prescriptions or groceries, are often exempted from these taxes. Sales taxes run the risk of being considered regressive, especially if prescriptions, groceries, or other essential items are included in the tax. Sales taxes can fund a wide range of public services, including parks. Sales taxes that fund local parks can be issued at the local or state level.

What it funds: Sales taxes can be used for a wide range of purposes, from land acquisition to capital improvements to operations and maintenance.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by a sales tax can range widely based on the tax rate levied, the goods or services being taxed, and the tax base. In April 2023, TPL supported Colorado Springs, CO as voters overwhelmingly approved a 20-year extension of the existing 0.1% Trails and Open Space (TOPS) sales tax. The measure was approved with 78% support and is expected to generate \$240 million for open space, parks, and trails. The TOPS tax was first approved by voters in 1997.

Requirements and restrictions: In some states, there is enabling legislation required by the state in order for local jurisdictions to levy sales taxes. In these states, there are restrictions governing how or whether sales taxes can be implemented on a local level. There is a wide range of how sales taxes can be implemented, including by ballot measure.

REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX

What it is: Real estate transfer taxes are a tax or fee on the transfer of a property's title or deed. The tax is a one-time cost that is typically calculated as a percentage of a property's total sale price. Real estate transfer taxes can fund a variety of public services, including parks, and they can be levied at the state or local level.

What it funds: Real estate transfer taxes can be used for a wide range of purposes from land acquisition to capital improvements to operations and maintenance.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by a real estate transfer tax can range widely based on the tax rate levied, the value of properties being transferred within a jurisdiction, and the number of properties being transferred. TPL's Conservation Finance team has helped pass four local real estate transfer taxes that have helped to generate over \$31 million in funding for parks.

Requirements and restrictions: The implementation process of a real estate transfer tax varies from state to state. There is a wide range of how real estate transfer taxes can be implemented, including by ballot measure. In some states, there are restrictions governing how or whether a real estate transfer tax can be implemented at the local level.

PARKLAND DEDICATION ORDINANCE

What it is: A Parkland Dedication Ordinance is a city policy, often enacted through the zoning code or subdivision regulations, that requires a developer to donate land and/or funding for parks. There is a wide range of approaches for how Parkland Dedication Ordinances can be structured, and different approaches can be mixed together. For some cities, the developer is only required to donate land, which the city then improves. In other cities, developers can be credited for building a publicly accessible park. Cities may also offer a "fee-in-lieu of land" option in which a one-time fee is required instead of a land donation. A growing trend is to require both a donation of land as well as a fee to ensure the city is funded to develop that land.

What it funds: When a Parkland Dedication Ordinance only requires a donation of land, no funding is provided to the city. If a fee-in-lieu of land is required, that funding can be used by the city to either develop a new park or improve an existing park that will serve the development's residents.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by Parkland Dedication Ordinances ranges depending on how the city's ordinance is structured, as well as the amount of development within a city. Generally, when a fee-in-lieu of land is required, that fee is assessed based on the density of a new development. Parkland Dedication Ordinances may be criticized when they are structured so that the funds raised are outpaced by the cost of land, resulting in an inability by the city to purchase parkland.

Requirements and restrictions: Parkland dedication ordinances can be enacted by cities. There are requirements for an ordinance to define geographic proximity of the dedicated land (or fee expenditure) to the new development, how the new parkland affects current levels of service, and how fees are spent.

DEVELOPER IMPACT FEES

What it is: An impact fee is a fee required of developers to offset the cost of city infrastructure that will need to be built in order to serve that new development. Impact fees are often used to fund traditional infrastructure projects, like roads and sewers. But some cities also use impact fees as a way to fund parks that will be needed by the development's residents.

What it funds: Similar to funds raised through Parkland Dedication Ordinances, impact fees can only be used for park development or capital improvement.

Scale of funding provided: Similar to Parkland Dedication Ordinances, the funding raised by impact fees is dependent on the fee levied by the city, as well as the amount of development in a city.

Requirements and restrictions: Impact fees require enabling legislation at the state level in some states. There is a high-degree of specificity governing how impact fees can – and cannot – be used.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

What it is: A business improvement district (BID) is a defined geographic location within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax or levy to fund projects within the BID's boundaries. While BIDs are often funded primarily through the tax or levy, they can also draw on other public and private funding. BIDs are generally operated by a non-profit organization with full-time staff and a board of directors.

What it funds: BIDs fund a wide range of activities that support the needs of business owners in a given area from enhanced cleaning to conducting advocacy for members to conducting capital projects. For parks, BIDs may fund areas from the initial capital investment to develop a park to ongoing operations and maintenance to programming.

Scale of funding provided: Funding provided by BIDs ranges widely based on the tax or levy required by businesses within the BID, the number of businesses contributed the tax or levy, and its ability to fundraise additional revenue. New York City, which has the largest number of BIDs in the country,² has BIDs with tax or levy revenue as low as \$75,000³ a year and as high as \$20 million a year.⁴

Requirements and restrictions: BIDs are often a standalone non-profit organization that must be staffed, have a board of directors, and formalized by-laws. Establishing a BID typically requires authorization from the city and support among business owners within its proposed boundaries. There are varying requirements from state-to-state that may govern the implementation of a BID, including enabling legislation. Approximately 40 states have legislation governing BIDs.⁵

PARKS DISTRICT

What it is: A parks district is an autonomous organization that manages parks (and sometimes other civic assets) within a defined geographic location. Park districts are generally funded either by a property tax or by general obligation bonds.

What it funds: Parks districts can fund and lead all aspects of park management from pre-development to development to programming to ongoing operations and maintenance.

Scale of funding provided: Funding provided by parks districts ranges widely based on the tax or levy required of property owners within its geographic bounds, as well as its ability to fundraise through bonds. One of the largest parks districts in the country, the Chicago Park District, had a budget of \$510.9 million for 2022, funded primarily by property taxes.

Requirements and restrictions: There are varying requirements from state-to-state that may govern the establishment of a parks district. Once established, a parks district generally is managed by full-time staff and its work is often overseen by a park board.

STATE LOTTERY FUNDS

What it is: In areas with a state lottery, a portion of the revenue can be allocated towards supporting public goods – including parks.

What it funds: The specific funding allocation from lotteries varies from state-by-state. One of the most prominent lotteries that funds environmental protection is the Colorado lottery. In Colorado, 40% of the lottery's profits fund the Conservation Trust Fund, which specifically supports local governments.⁶ Funding from the Conservation Trust Fund can be used for park land acquisition, capital improvement, and maintenance. In 2021, the Conservation Trust Fund distributed over \$70 million to local communities across the state.⁷

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by lotteries ranges widely based on lottery revenue as well as requirements for how that revenue must be disbursed. For example, Minnesota's state legislation requires that the lottery provide no less than 40% of its net proceeds towards the state's environmental and natural resources trust fund through 2025. The trust fund then receives and evaluates a number of proposals for how that funding can be used. A reauthorization of the use of lottery funds for conservation is on the ballot in Minnesota for 2024. If approved, a portion of lottery revenue would continue to be dedicated towards conservation until 2050.

Requirements and restrictions: Rules governing a state lottery – including how its revenue is distributed – are generally made at the state-level and codified in state legislation. For example, both Colorado and Minnesota have specific legislation requirements around the usage of lottery revenue. In Colorado, the breakdown of how lottery revenue is spent was decided via a ballot measure.

Major Federal Funding Sources

The past decade has seen an unprecedented level of investment in parks and recreation from the Great American Outdoors Act, which created a permanent source of funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act, which are expected to infuse billions of dollars into city parks across the country. Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program is the only federal grant that is specifically designed to support the acquisition and development of city parks. But, other federal programs – including and beyond those listed below – can fund parks as part of a city’s broader transportation, climate, and cultural infrastructure.

NPS OUTDOOR RECREATION LEGACY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (ORLP)

What it is: The ORLP Program is the most significant federal grant for city parks, and it is specifically focused on increasing access to outdoor recreation in economically disadvantaged areas with a park equity gap. ORLP is administered by the National Park Service and funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It is an annual grant that was established in 2014. Since its inception, ORLP has provided over \$100 million dollars to fund nearly 100 projects in cities across the country.

What it funds: ORLP funds both land acquisition and the development and renovation of a wide range of types of parks and outdoor recreation facilities.

Scale of funding provided: The 2022 round of the ORLP program was funded at \$192 million. Grants made to applicants can range from \$300,000 to \$10 million. The funds that the federal government provides through ORLP must be matched at a 1:1 ratio by non-federal sources.⁸

Requirements and restrictions: ORLP is the most significant grant funding the development of local parks and the program is carefully designed to ensure specific criteria are met by applicants, including:

- Applicant: The applicant for ORLP must be a state’s lead agency for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Local communities can submit their proposals to their state’s lead agency for consideration and inclusion in the national competition.
- Who is served: ORLP projects must serve the needs of an economically disadvantaged area that is located in a park desert (e.g., lacks walkable, publicly accessible, parks).
- Strategic alignment: The proposed project must meet or align with at least one recreation goal of the State’s Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

DOT Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)

What it is: RAISE is a federal grant program – previously known as BUILD and TIGER – administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The program was initiated as part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. While primarily focused on transportation, some groups have secured RAISE funding for city trails and greenways. For example, in fiscal year 2021, the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission received over \$17 million to complete 20 miles of construction for the Marquette Greenway – a 60-mile multi-use path that cuts through nine municipalities along Lake Michigan.⁹

What it funds: In fiscal year 2023, RAISE funds were allocated for both capital and planning projects. There are a wide range of eligible projects. Within the capital category, “intermodal projects” are likely the most relevant for parks practitioners. Nearly all of the eligible project types within the planning categories could be relevant for city parks.

Scale of funding provided: Since its inception (including its iterations as BUILD and TIGER), RAISE has provided over \$12.3 billion in funding.¹⁰ \$1.5 billion was allocated for 2023. The funding is split, with half going to projects in rural areas and half going to projects in urban areas. The minimum grant award is \$5 million in urban areas and \$1 million in rural areas. In either case, grants cannot exceed \$25 million.

Requirements and restrictions: RAISE is a major federal grant program. The program is designed with highly-specific requirements to ensure specific criteria are met by applicants. There are restrictions on cost sharing, and federal funding for a project cannot exceed 80% of the total project cost except in limited scenarios.

NEA OUR TOWN

What it is: Our Town is a grant funded by the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) that supports arts engagement, cultural planning, and design projects that represent the distinct character and quality of their communities. Cities across the country have tapped into Our Town to use creative placemaking to elevate and showcase their community’s arts and culture.

What it funds: Through project-based funding, the Our Town program supports activities that integrate arts, culture, and design into local efforts that strengthen communities. Our Town projects advance local economic, physical, or social outcomes in communities, ultimately laying the groundwork for systems change and centering equity. Within the context of parks, Our Town projects are often used for community programming as well as arts and cultural installations. For example, in Wenatchee, Washington, an Our Town grant funded a health and cultural event for an under-served community in a local park. In Bozeman, Montana, Our Town funded arts and cultural installations and programming in Story Mill Community Park.

Scale of funding provided: Our Town grants range from \$25,000 to \$150,000. Grants require a 1:1 match from non-federal sources.

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Requirements and restrictions: In addition to the match requirement, Our Town requires a demonstrated partnership between a nonprofit organization and a local government organization, one of which must be a cultural organization. The highest-ranking local government official must submit a letter of support. Our Town grants cannot fund more than 50% of the total project cost.

EPA BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

What it is: The EPA's Brownfields program is a suite of grants and technical assistance that support re-use of brownfields across the country. The program was established in 1995. Since then, it has supported the clean-up of over 2,400 sites and has made nearly 150,000 acres available for re-use.¹¹ The Bipartisan Infrastructure law is injecting an additional \$1.5 billion of investment into the program.¹²

What it funds: The Brownfields program provides a wide range of grants, loans, and technical assistance for cities to help revitalize brownfields, including:

- Assessment grants that fund inventorying of brownfields, along with planning activities – including community engagement
- Revolving loan funds that provide support for brownfield clean-ups
- Cleanup grants that fund remediation activities at brownfield sites
- Multipurpose grants that fund a range of assessment and clean-up activities within a specific geographic area that has one or more brownfield
- Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities (TAB) provides support to a third-party organization who can help communities within their region to understand brownfield assessment and clean-up

There are a variety of ways to tap into these programs to promote parks and greenspace. For example, the cities of Ranson and Charles Town, West Virginia, have received multiple grants from the brownfield program to rehabilitate a 1.5 mile strip of brownfields connecting the cities. Part of the rehabilitation has included the development of parks and green space.¹³

Scale of funding provided: Each of the grants within the Brownfields Program has its own range of funding available.

- Assessment grants: Up to \$2 million
- Revolving loan fund: Up to \$1 million
- Brownfield clean-up grants: Up to \$2 million
- Multi-purpose grants: Up to \$800,000

Requirements and restrictions: Each of the grants and technical assistance opportunities within the Brownfields program come with its own set of requirements and restrictions. Restrictions and requirements generally govern

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who can apply for a grant, the window of time within which a grant must be spent, match requirements, and the activities allowed under a grant.

DOT TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP)

What it is: TAP is a federal grant program that funds small-scale, multi-modal transportation projects. States are allocated funding for TAP from the federal government, and are then responsible for administering those funds. There are different requirements for how funds are awarded based on the population of the area in which the funding would be allocated.

What it funds: TAP funds a wide range of transportation-focused projects, including development of multi-modal recreational trails, construction of scenic viewing points, and safe routes to schools projects. In fiscal year 2020, TAP supported nearly 2,000 projects: over 1,000 pedestrian and bicycle trails, 925 recreational trails, 14 historic preservation projects, and seven environmental and wildlife projects.¹⁴ Funding is available for construction, design, and planning.

Scale of funding provided: TAP funding is set-aside from the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. In fiscal year 2022, TAP was funded at \$1.38 billion dollars, and it's budgeted to increase to \$1.49 billion by fiscal year 2026.¹⁵ Funding for TAP projects flows through block grants to states and is calculated as 10% of the state's allocation for the Surface Transportation Block Grant.¹⁶

Requirements and restrictions: Funding for TAP projects is awarded through competitive processes at the state level, and the process varies from state to state. Areas with a population greater than 200,000 apply for funds through their metropolitan planning organization while populations under 200,000 apply through their state Department of Transportation. There are a limited number of entities that are eligible to receive TAP funding, including local governments, nonprofits, and metropolitan planning organizations. Projects require a 20% match of funds for a project.¹⁷

USFS URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

What it is: The US Forest Service's Urban & Community Forestry Program (UCFP) is a technical, financial, and educational assistance program. The intent of the program is to deliver nature-based solutions for communities to ensure an equitable and resilient tree canopy in urban spaces where more than 84% of Americans live. Through the Inflation Reduction Act, the program has established a competitive grant process to fund projects that reflect the work of the UCFP.

What it funds: UCFP funds investments at the local, regional, state, or even national level that increase equitable access to urban tree canopy and the associated health, environmental and economic benefits in disadvantaged communities. Projects may seek to broaden community engagement in local urban forest planning, and/or

improve community and urban forest resilience to climate change, pests, and storm events through best management and maintenance practices.

Scale of funding provided: Urban and Community Forestry grants range from \$100,000 - \$50,000,000. Grants require a 1:1 match from non-federal sources. Match may be waived for proposals delivering 100% of the funding/program benefits to disadvantaged communities.

Requirements and restrictions: The scope of eligible entities and land types is very broad under the UCFP, but may not fund projects on federally-owned lands.

EPA ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROGRAMS

What it is: EPA created two new environmental justice programs in 2023 with an additional program set to be announced the summer of 2023. The EJ Collaborative Problem Solving (EJCPS) and Government to Government (EJG2G) programs announced in January, provide financial assistance to eligible organizations or government entities working to address local environmental or public health issues in their communities. The Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants will invest a historic sum of \$3 billion in communities when announced later in 2023.

What it funds: Environmental justice programs center community involvement and partnership in all project work. Proposals must demonstrate this commitment to partnership and to transforming the environmental and public health of overburdened and underserved communities. Eligible activities include research, community planning and/or public education activities as well as site-based interventions like green infrastructure projects. Eligibility is broad so long as it contributes to program goals. Differences between the EJCPS and EJG2G projects are primarily matters of scale rather than type.

Scale of funding provided: EJCPS funds up to \$500,000 for qualifying projects while EJG2G funds up to \$1,000,000.

Requirements and restrictions: There are not cost share or matching requirements for either program. EJCPS does require the use of the [EPA's EJ Collaborative Problem Solving model](#) and a logic model illustrating how activities lead to outcomes. EJG2G recipients must also use a logic model and demonstrate an official partnership with a local community-based organization.

DOT RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS PROGRAM

What it is: This Department of Transportation program aims to fund projects that advance community-centered connection transportation projects, with a priority for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, by improving access to daily needs such as jobs, education, health care, food, nature and recreation; fostering equitable development and restoration; and reconnecting communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including to mobility, access, or economic development. In FY 2022, six Capital Construction Grants and 39 Planning Grants were awarded in the first cycle of the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program.

What it funds: The RCN Program provides funding for three types of grants:

Community Planning Grants will award RCP and/or NAE funding for planning activities for future construction projects and allow for innovative community planning to address localized transportation challenges.

Capital Construction Grants will award projects that remove, retrofit, mitigate, or replace an existing eligible dividing transportation facility with a new facility that reconnects communities; mitigates a burdening transportation facility that is a source of air pollution, noise, stormwater, heat, or other burdens; or implement a strategy to reduce environmental harm and/or improve access through transportation improvements.

Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants will award projects led by two or more eligible applicants to address a persistent regional challenge related to equitable access and mobility. Eligible activities for Regional Partnerships Challenge Grants are the same as those listed under Capital Construction and Community Planning Grants but must have a regional focus, and clearly demonstrate regional coordination and leveraging of local, State, and Federal resources and policies.

Scale of funding provided: RCN Planning Grants provide as much as \$50,000,000. The upward range of Capital Grants are flexible within the total funding allotments. Of the three grant types, the Community Planning Grants and the Regional Partnerships Challenge grants require at least 20% of the total project cost to come from non-federal sources. The Capital Construction Grants funded by the IRA Neighborhood Access and Equity program also requires 20% of the total project cost to be matched by non-federal sources.

Requirements and restrictions: In addition to the non-federal cost share requirement, Reconnecting Communities-funded Capital Grants are limited to covering 50% of the total project cost. An additional 30% may come from other federal sources with a 20% non-federal match.

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LWCF STATESIDE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

What it is: The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is the largest source of federal money for park, wildlife, and open space land acquisition. No less than 40% of LWCF dollars are given to, and administered by, states as matching grants for park development and land acquisition projects. LWCF funding for states or “stateside” has supported the purchase and protection of 3 million acres of recreation lands and over 29,000 projects to develop basic recreation facilities in every U.S. State and territory.

What it funds: The stateside program can assist in acquiring, preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources. These mechanisms can apply broadly to open space, parks, trails, wildlife lands and other lands and facilities desirable for outdoor recreation.

Scale of funding provided: LWCF Stateside grants vary widely in size from state to state. From multi-million-dollar land acquisition projects to a \$50,000 park rehabilitation. All LWCF grants require a 1:1 match from non-federal sources.

Requirements and restrictions: In addition to the match requirement, for parks and recreation facilities that receive LWCF funds, the government entity that owns the site must commit to maintaining these sites for the purpose of public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

HUD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG)

What it is: The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Beginning in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest continuously run programs at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1209 general units of local government and states.

What it funds: Through CDBG, activities must meet one of three national objectives: 1) benefits low- and moderate income individuals, 2) aids in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or 3) addresses an urgent need that poses a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community which occurred within the last 18 months and for which other funding is not available. These requirements allow for flexible application of CDBG funds to local projects by state or local agencies. The program has been used widely for park and trail rehabilitation and development where these facilities are a priority at the local level.

Scale of funding provided: Award amounts through CDBG are highly variable from states to cities to municipal governments. The program is currently funded at \$3.3 billion annually. Grants do not require non-federal match.

Requirements and restrictions: CDBG is one of the most flexible sources of federal funding available, and is one of the only federal sources, authorized by its enabling legislation, that allows it to be used as non-federal match for other programs.

Partnerships and Philanthropy

Partnerships and philanthropy enable a city to support parks through non-governmental organizations. These external groups can fund parks operations and maintenance, programming, and capital improvement. Beyond funding, they can also provide full-time staff to deliver park services. While there are a wide range of models that exist, some of the most common are parks conservancies or foundations. The work of these organizations can be funded by private philanthropies. Private philanthropies can also play a larger role in improving park systems.

PARK CONSERVANCY OR FOUNDATION

What it is: A park conservancy or foundation is a non-profit organization that can fundraise and generate revenue to support a wide range of park activities. Conservancies and foundations are generally professionally-staffed organizations that have a formal operating agreement with the city.

What it funds: Conservancies and foundations fund a wide range of park activities from planning to capital improvements to programming to operations and maintenance. Limitations on what a conservancy or foundation can fund are primarily restricted by the organization's bylaws and its operating agreement with the city. Conservancies and foundations can be set up to support a single park, a limited number of parks, or an entire park system.

Scale of funding provided: Funding for a parks conservancy or foundation is only limited by an organization's scope and fundraising ability. In Birmingham, Alabama, the Railroad Park Foundation expended \$1.5 million in 2020. Central Park Conservancy in New York City – the largest of Trust for Public Land's ParkScore cities – spent over \$73 million in the same year.

Requirements and restrictions: There are a wide range of approaches for how to organize a park conservancy or foundation. When conservancies or foundations are structured as not-for-profit organizations (as they typically are), they are subject to all local, state, and federal requirements of non-profits. These requirements vary by city and state.

PRIVATE PHILANTHROPIES

What it is: Private philanthropies play an essential role in supporting the work of parks departments across the country. Philanthropies can play an important and catalytic role in bringing dollars to park development and improvement projects, as well as targeted, system-wide investments in specific cities. Philanthropies are not-for-profit organizations across the country that can fund a wide range of projects, including parks. Funds can be awarded either directly to a city or to a not-for-profit partner.

What it funds: Support of parks varies based on an individual philanthropy's focus. Frequently funded projects include development or improvement of specific parks, funding collective impact or coalition-building for parks, or funding creative place-making interventions for parks.

Scale of funding provided: The scale of funding provided by national philanthropies ranges widely based on a philanthropic program goals and overall investment in parks. For large, national philanthropies, projects can reach hundreds of millions of dollars in investment.

Requirements and restrictions: Different philanthropic organizations have different requirements of grant applicants. In general, for large-scale grants there may be requirements surrounding matching funds, a demonstration of partnership with community organizations, and deep due diligence conducted by the funder.

Conclusion



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Across the country, there is an unprecedented level of investment in parks and recreation. But, gaps remain – particularly for funding park operations and maintenance. The lack of available funding for maintenance can widen the park equity gap by making parks less safe, usable, and attractive, and it contributes to an estimated \$60 billion backlog of deferred maintenance among local parks agencies across the country.¹⁸

Trust for Public Land's *10-Minute Walk*® Program is leading research into what other innovative models of funding are available for cities – particularly for under-supported needs like maintenance, community engagement, and programming. To learn more about any of the options outlined in this report and what model might be right for your city, contact the *10-Minute Walk* Program at 10minutewalk@tpl.org.

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Survey Report

City of Stamford Parks and Facilities

Parks Satisfaction Survey

7/15/2023

I. Survey Overview

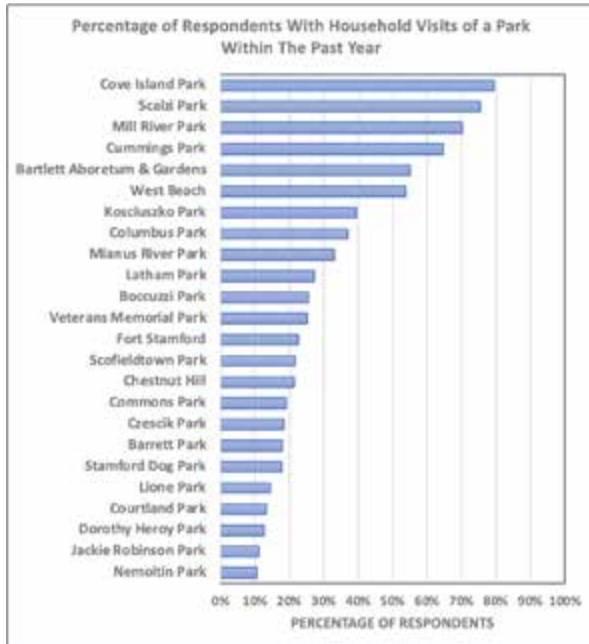
The parks satisfaction survey was available from April 16th to June 30th, 2023 in both English and Spanish versions. The survey was posted to the cities website and outreach was performed through city representatives. The survey contained 12 questions regarding park visits, upkeep, safety, and potential improvements. Respondents were permitted to answer as many or as few questions as they chose. At the completion of this period, 533 responses were received with 68% of those who initiated the survey completing it. All primary questions were completed by at least 80% of those submitting the survey, with follow-up questions being completed at a substantially lower rate.

In terms of location data, residents were only asked to provide their street and parks visited. As a result, no stratification system was made in proportioning response rate to census tracts or neighborhood. This decision was based on the likelihood of receiving a sufficient and representative enough sample to take this approach. Outreach efforts occurred through the course of the survey to those areas which appeared to be lacking in response rate. Based on information available from other sources, as expected, those responding to the survey were more likely to be frequent park visitors than the average Stamford resident.

Residents were asked which parks they had visited in the past year, however questions were generalized to parks as a whole. Therefore, conditional probabilities are available to compare responses given a park had been visited, however these responses should not be interpreted as being specific to that park.

A complete list of survey questions and summary data are available upon request.

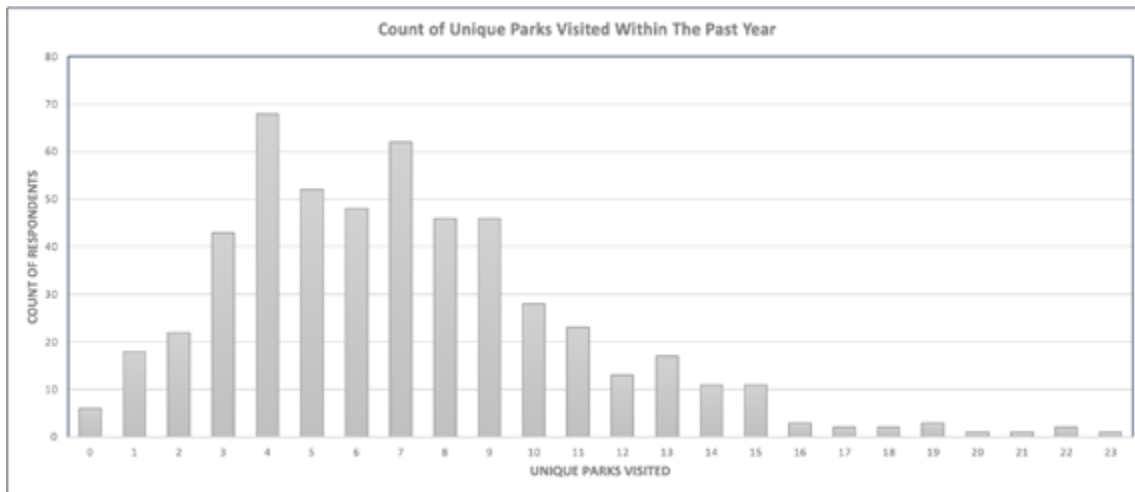
II. Survey Responses



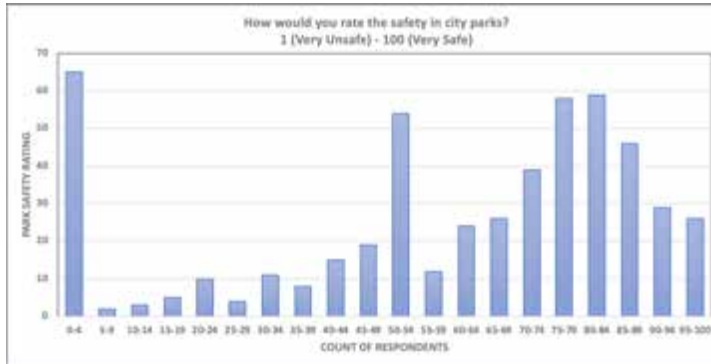
To provide a picture of the overall respondent sample, the chart to the left displays the percentage of respondents reporting having a member of their household visit a given park in the past year. This chart is limited to those parks in which more than 10% of respondents reported a visit (24 of 39 parks). The highest rate occurred with 79.36% of respondents listing visits to Cove Island Park within the past year. For six of Stamford's parks, more than 50% of respondents reported visits within the past year.

In the chart below, the number of unique parks visited by respondents is provided. The distribution is centered around 3-9 different parks visited per household, with ~70% of respondents falling within this range. Around 1 in 5 respondents reported visits of 10 or more parks within the past year. Responses generally fell similarly when looking at different subsets of the population based on these variables (i.e. opinion of park safety by those visiting few or many parks), however when

noticeable distinctions occurred, they are noted within the report.

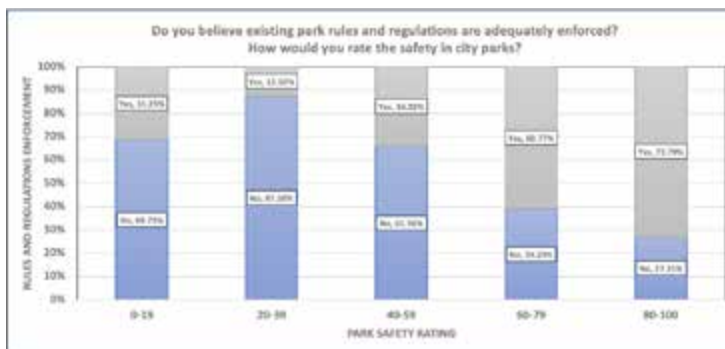


III. Parks Safety and Rule Enforcement



When asked to rate safety in city parks, the mean and median responses were 59 and 69 out of 100 respectively. The distribution of the data provides more insight into how residents responded. There were three modes to the data; narrow peaks at 0-4, 50-54, and a broader normal distribution of responses centered at 80-84. This suggests that a slight majority of residents feel positively about safety in city parks, with 54.95%

of responses falling between 65-100. Successfully smaller groups of respondents view the city's parks as neither unsafe or safe, and unsafe.

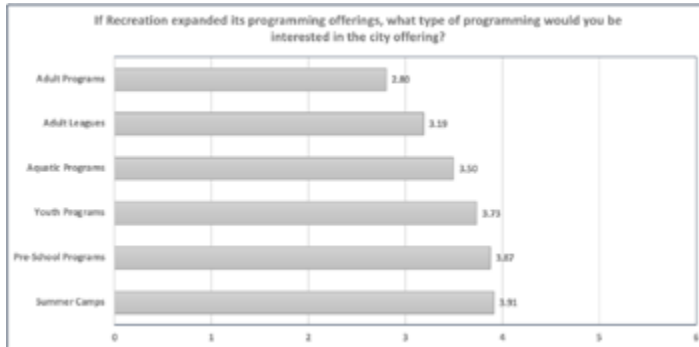


Individuals were asked whether they believe that existing park rules and regulations are adequately enforced. Overall, 51.07% of respondents said that they are adequately enforced. When we compare responses to this question to that of our previous question, we can see that, generally as park safety rating decreases so does the percentage of individuals who believe that rules are adequately enforced.

Despite this, those rating park safety at its lowest point (0-19) are an outlier from the trend of the remaining subgroups. Also notable, among those who rate parks as safe or very safe, 20-40% still do not believe that park rules are adequately enforced.

Residents were also provided an open-ended question in the case that they did not believe park rules and regulations were adequately enforced in which they could specify which one rules and regulations are an issue. Of the 233 "No" responses, 193 provided a response for the follow up question. Due to the open-ended nature of this question, we are unable to categorize responses discretely however a limited number of issues were frequent. In alphabetical order, dogs (off leash and waste), noise, drug and alcohol use, and littering were involved in the majority of complaints. A general trend was also visible in that dog related issues were especially prevalent among those visiting either Mianus River and Bartlett Arboretum while noise related issues were most prevalent among those having visited multiple beach parks.

IV. Expanded Program Offering



Survey takers were asked to rank a list of six program offerings from 1 (most interested) to 6 (least interested). The average rankings are shown to the left, with adult leagues possessing the most average interest while pre-school programs and summer camps possessing the lowest interest average.

In the chart below is a count of the individual responses by ranking.

Adult programs were both the selected first overall more frequently than any other choice, as well as the least frequently for sixth overall. Adult leagues display a slightly less drastic version of the same trend. From there, responses become a bit less differentiable. While aquatic programs possess the next lowest average ranking, a higher percentage of individuals select youth programs as their first or second choice. The average for youth programs is raised by a high number of respondents selecting this as their sixth choice. Therefore, choices made with respect to program offerings, beyond adult leagues and programs, would be dependent on whether the desired outcome is to provide the next choice for the population as a whole or to serve a wider subset of individuals who did not have a high interest in the two most popular programs.

Lastly, a point of caution in our responses for this case. Questions were not required with the goal of allowing residents to answer those questions they were interested in, however ranking any program required ranking the complete set of six. In looking at our responses we can see that, outside of adult programs vs adult leagues, the most prevalent ordering choice corresponds to alphabetical order. This raises the concern that individuals may have been unaware they did not have to answer the question or were interested in ranking a limited number of programs and from there filled them in sequentially. Of 494 individuals responding to the question, 83 selected adult leagues and adult programs as some combination of 1 and 2, and the remaining choices in alphabetical order. In this case, randomization should have been used, and was an error when publishing the survey.

If Recreation expanded its programming offerings, what type of programming would you be interested in the city offering?

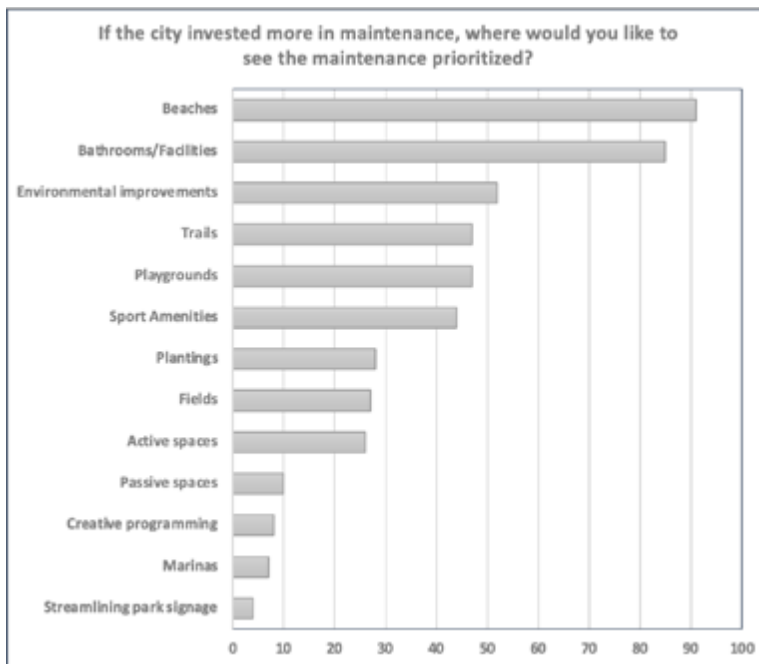
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Adult Leagues	121	107	64	40	85	77
Adult Programs	141	131	55	63	61	43
Aquatic Programs	51	64	165	90	51	73
Pre-School Programs	51	38	67	190	62	86
Summer Camps	36	75	74	66	199	44
Youth Programs	94	79	69	45	36	171

IV. Park Maintenance



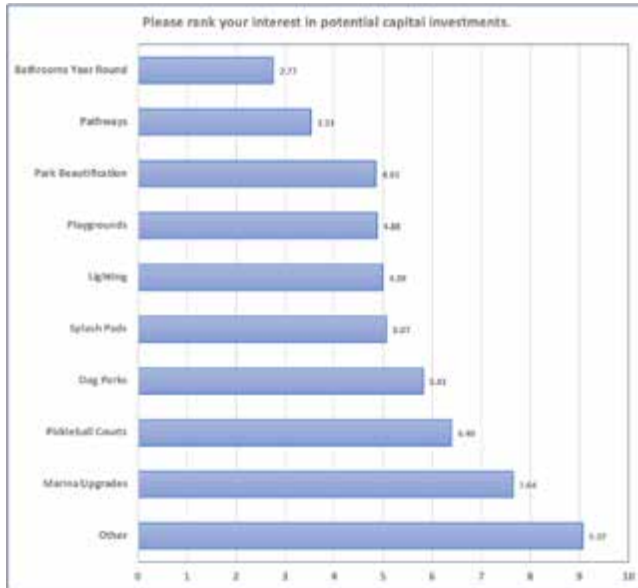
Similar to views on park safety, beach maintenance has three evident clusters of respondents. When comparing the two questions, the number of respondents who believe beach maintenance is very poor or neither good or poor is higher than that of park safety while those following into the higher ranking group is more limited. The subset of respondents listing visits to multiple beach parks was more likely to have a

negative opinion of city beach maintenance than those visiting 0 or 1 of these parks.



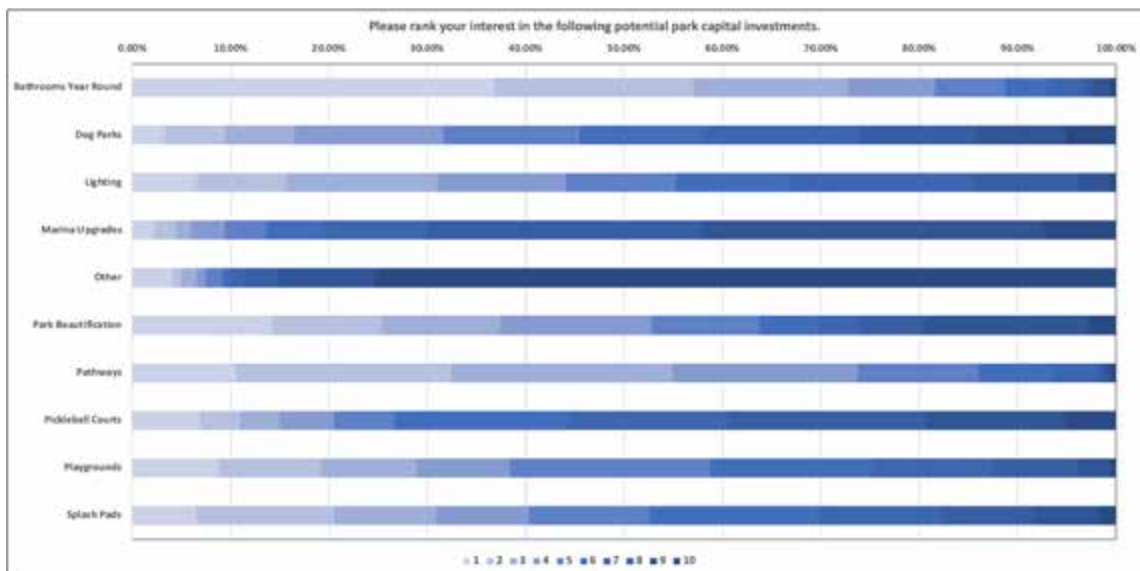
The trends that we had seen with respect to beach maintenance and capital investments are also visible when asked where citizens would like to see maintenance prioritized. Beaches (19.11%) and Bathrooms/Facilities (17.87%) were selected at a rate almost twice as high as the next selection. Marinas, much like in the case of capital investments, drew little interest.

V. Capital Investments

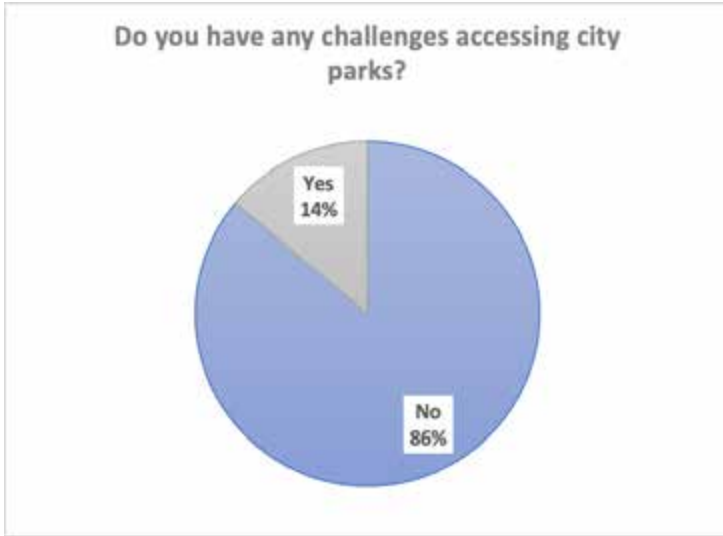


In the chart to the left, the average ranking from 1 (most interested) to 10 (least interested) is provided. Below, the overall composition of all rankings from 1 – 10 by investment are listed. Our results among our highest and lowest interest investments are consistent across visualizations. Bathrooms year round were selected as the top selection by the highest percentage of respondents, as well as falling into a respondents top 3, and top 5. Pathways, while not as prioritized, was also selected within the top 3 by the majority of respondents. Marina upgrades were selected in the bottom three by more than 88% of respondents.

Among the group of capital projects with the 3rd to 6th highest interest level, playgrounds, lighting and splash pads possessed similar composition of top 3, 4-7, and bottom 3 rankings. Compared to these three, park beautification received a much more polarized response with ~10% more respondents selecting this option in their top and bottom three while significantly less selected it between 4-7.



VI. Access Challenges



Around 1 in 6 respondents reported having challenges in accessing city parks. As a followup question an open ended question was provided in order to list access challenges. No single dominant answer was present, however parking, distance, crime and ADA accessibility were the most prevalent among diverse responses. Similar park visits compositions were present among those reporting access issues, therefore while an issue for visitors, interest appears to remain high among those experiencing these issues.



Respondents were also asked if they had interest in permit parking at city parks. 72% of those answering the question did not believe the city should do so. We did see a significant shift among those experiencing access issues with 26% of those not experiencing access issues in favor of permit parking while 41% of those who did experience access issues in favor.

VII. Permitting and Sanctioning



Among respondents, 14% currently or in the future intended to pursue permitting or sanctioning for field usage. Soccer was the most popular response for a specific activity, receiving 36% of specific responses as well as being prevalent among those listing multiple sports. Outside of the specific sports listed in the chart above, gatherings includes those listing family events, and parties.

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