



FY 2024 – 2025 Budget Presentation

MILL RIVER PARK COLLABORATIVE

March 19, 2024

Presented by
Nette Compton
President & CEO



MILL RIVER PARK

Organization Function

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

Collaborative Mission

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



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Significant Changes

Program Growth

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

Park Improvements

- Design and permitting for the Playground Reconstruction

In partnership with the City of Stamford

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



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New & Expanded Free Community Programs

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



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Additional New & Expanded Programs

Significant growth in our field trips:

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



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Additional New & Expanded Programs

Work Force Development

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



CURRENT CAPITAL PROJECTS



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

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

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Organizational Challenges

Personal Change and Evolution

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

Impact of Broader Challenges

- Increased presence of people experiencing homelessness throughout the park

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Highlights & Improvements

Continued collaboration and coordination with the City

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

Bringing Resources to Stamford

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

Diversified Programming and Reach

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



FUTURE CAPITAL PROJECTS

Planning & Fundraising Phases



Greenway North Connections

Community Commons
\$4.5M Federal Grant Secured

East Side Tresser to Richmond Hill

West Side Activation

Waterside Park

West Side Greenway

Sprague Site / Connection to Harbor Point Boardwalk



Community Commons



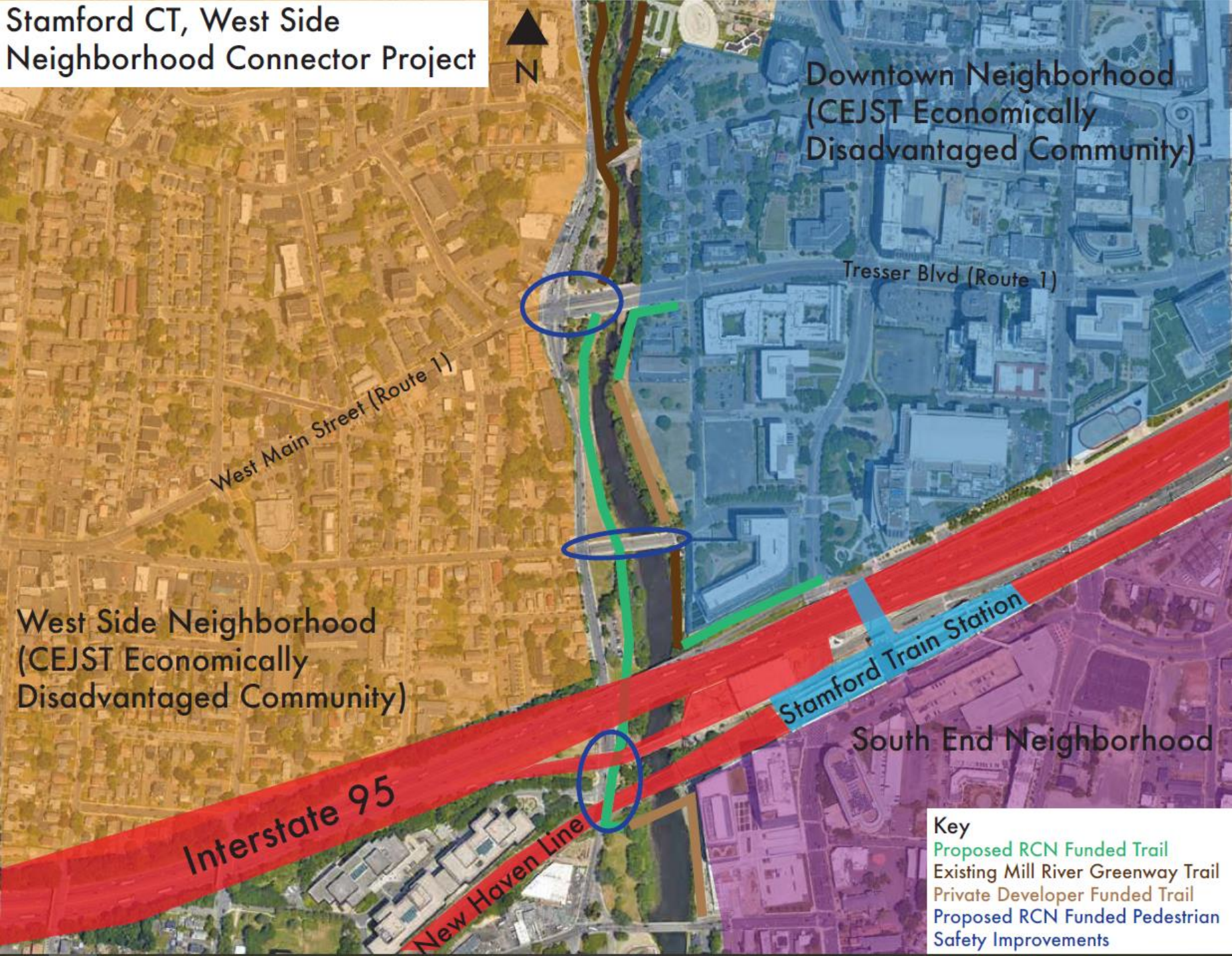
Budget projected to be \$11M+ depending on timing and inflation.

Secured \$4.5M in Federal Funds in FY24.

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



Stamford CT, West Side Neighborhood Connector Project



\$17M Federal DOT Grant

Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods

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

Key
Proposed RCN Funded Trail
Existing Mill River Greenway Trail
Private Developer Funded Trail
Proposed RCN Funded Pedestrian Safety Improvements
Stamford Train Station

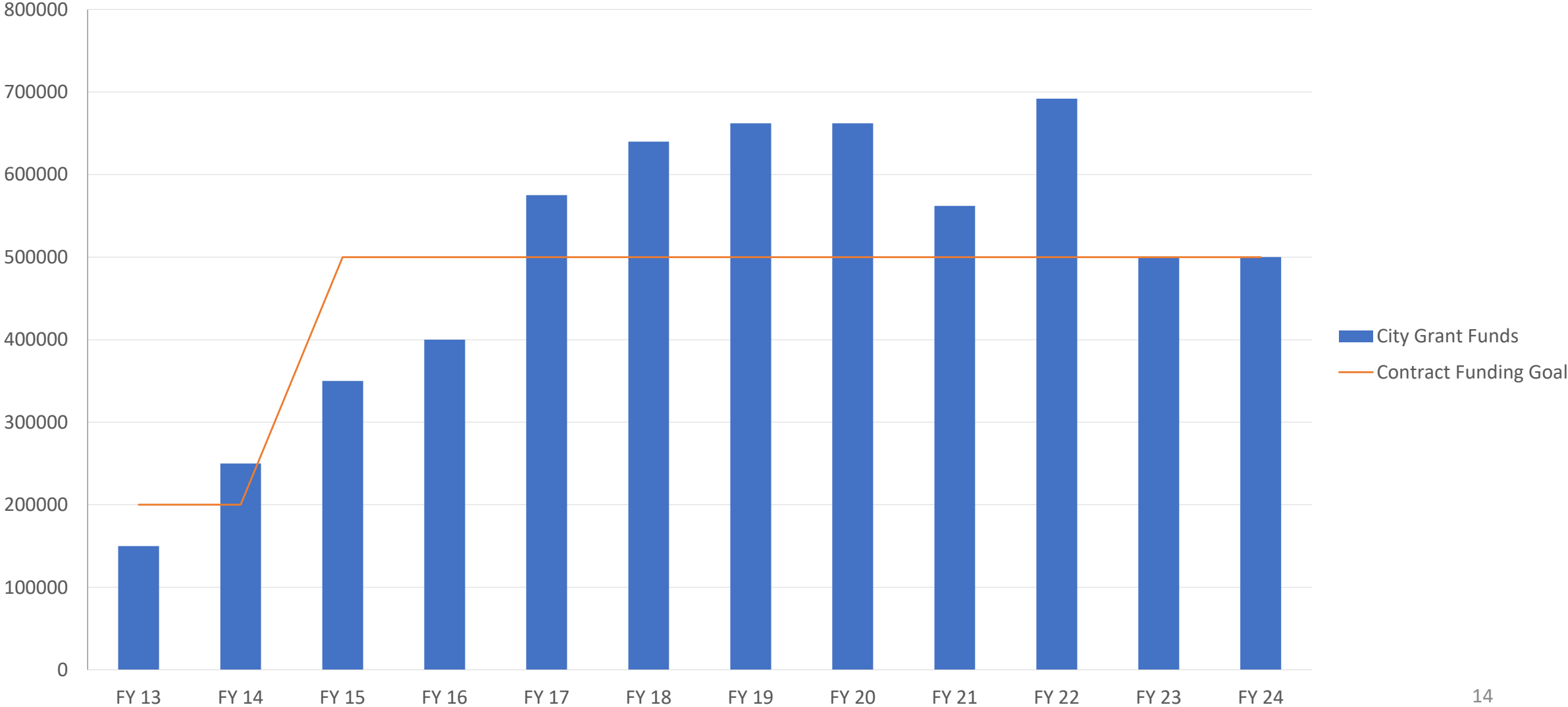


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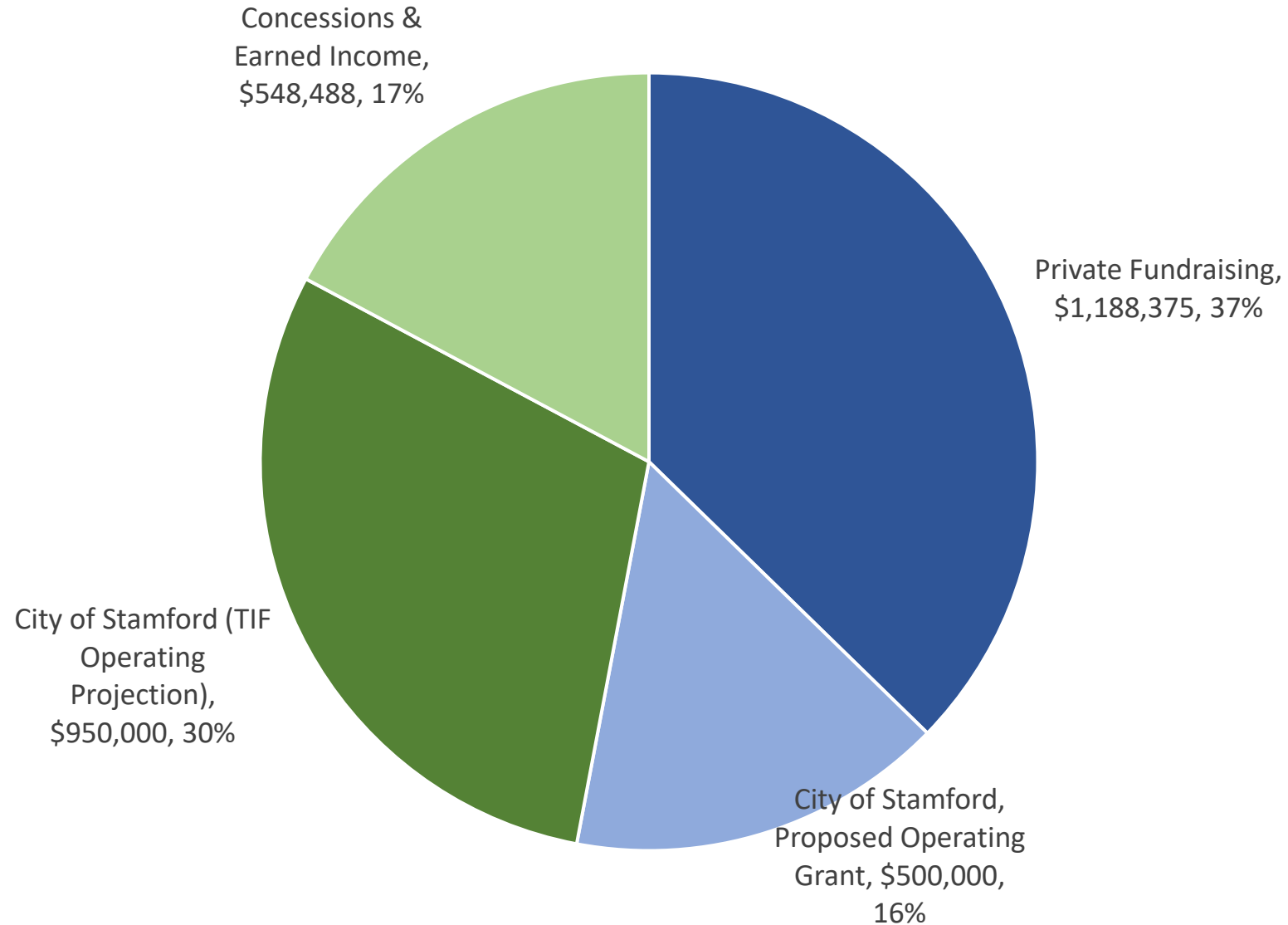
FY 25 Operating Budget Proposal:
\$500,000 for FY 25



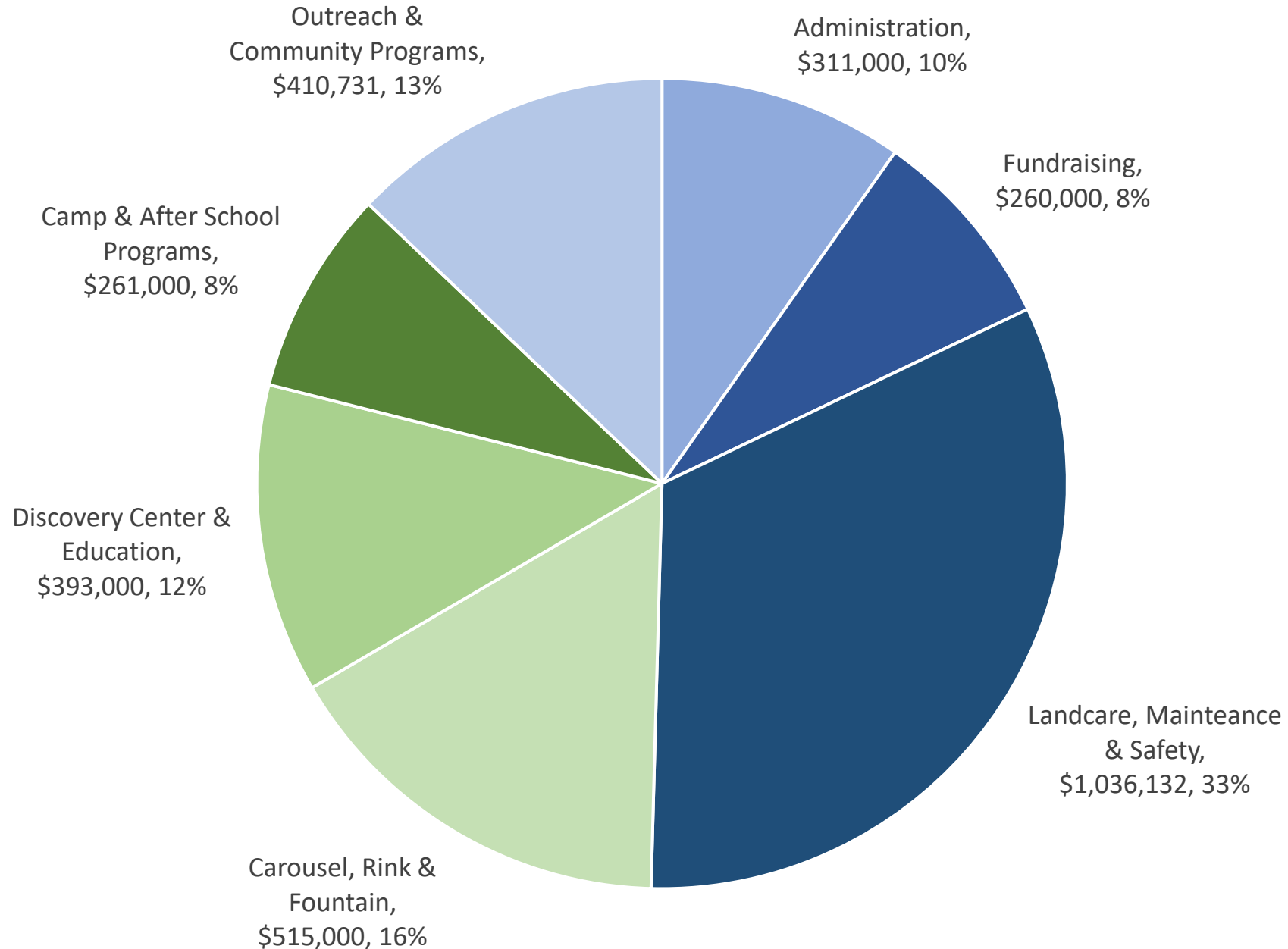
CITY OPERATING GRANT – FY 13 – FY 24



FY 25 PROJECTED OPERATING REVENUE: \$3.19M



FY 25 PROJECTED OPERATING EXPENSES: \$3.19M



FY 25 PROJECTED CITY OPERATING AND TIF ALLOCATION

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

