

The City of Stamford, Connecticut



A REPORT TO OUR CITIZENS



Issue #2

Spring 2013

Did You Know?

- The redesigned City website is more user-friendly. You can pay your tax bill, request a service, comment on City employee driving, pay a parking ticket, and more - all online. Visit the City website at www.stamfordct.gov.
- The FBI ranked Stamford as the 11th safest large city in the nation in 2012.
- Smith House Nursing Facility (recipient of a five-star Quality Rating from Medicare) offers nursing services, inpatient physical or occupational therapy, therapeutic recreation activities, social work services and more, as well as residential accommodations.
- While Stamford citizens have increased their recycling to 27%, Westhill High School students have a 70% recycling rate which won them first place in Connecticut for the Keep America Beautiful "Recycle Bowl," a nationwide competition in schools.
- 30% of Stamford's streetlights have been retrofitted to date with energy saving LED heads that are up to 67% more efficient.

Message from the Mayor

The City of Stamford provides a vast array of services to its citizens. The purpose of this report is to communicate how your tax dollars are being used, how we are working to reduce costs and how we are working to improve the level of services we provide. We work continually to make Stamford more financially sound, safe, more prosperous and better positioned for the future.

Mayor Michael A. Pavia

Demographic Information*	2012	2011
Population** (2011/2010)	123,868	122,643
Unemployment Rate	6.8%	7.3%
Median Household Income** (2011/2010)	78,201	77,827
Total School Enrollment	15,983	15,677

*Source: Fiscal Year 2012 City of Stamford Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

**Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Where 2012 data is not available, prior year data is presented.

How the City is Organized

Stamford, Connecticut, first settled in 1641, is Connecticut's fourth largest city by population. Stamford has a high concentration of international corporate headquarters, and it is the major retail trade center of Fairfield County, yet it maintains its suburban character and residential neighborhoods. Through sound urban planning, the City has strengthened its retail core, increased its housing and cultural facilities, and attracted major office development.

The Chief Executive Officer of the City is the Mayor, elected for a four-year term of office. A six-member, elected Board of Finance establishes fiscal policy and must also approve all expenditures of funds. The legislative function is performed by a forty-member Board of Representatives, two from each of twenty districts. The Board of Representatives adopts ordinances and resolutions and must approve all expenditures of funds.

"Stamford, CT is far more than a bedroom community or suburban office park...[it has] reinvented itself into a regional hub of the growing service economy."

- Christopher Jones, VP for Research, Regional Plan Association

The Mayor, subject to approval by the Board of Representatives, appoints the Director of Administration; Director of Operations; Director of Legal Affairs; Director of Public Safety, Health and Welfare; and Director of Economic Development to the Mayor's cabinet.

The City of Stamford operates under a Charter which was adopted in 1949 and most recently revised in November 2012.



In This Issue

- Our Community
- How We Have Progressed
- City Finances
- What's Next?

Stamford Urban Transitway

How We Have Progressed

Accomplishments and Services

Significant Accomplishments

Prosperity, Growth and Revitalization

- The Harbor Point and Yale and Towne developments are transforming the South End into a vibrant waterfront destination. Once complete, there will be over 4,000 new residential units and over 1,000,000 s.f. of retail and office space in addition to Waterside School, Commons Park, and a public plaza and waterfront esplanade accessible to the public.
- Top corporations continue to relocate to Stamford bringing jobs and economic growth.

Fiscal Management

- Stamford's AA1/AAA bond rating allowed the City to secure its lowest-ever long-term borrowing interest rate of 2.25% in January of 2013. Half of the \$50 million bond proceeds are dedicated to much needed infrastructure improvements for the schools.

Amenities and Services

The City offers its residents a high quality of life – including good schools, cultural events, attractive parks and recreational activities, a broad array of public services, and a safe living environment.

Arts & Culture

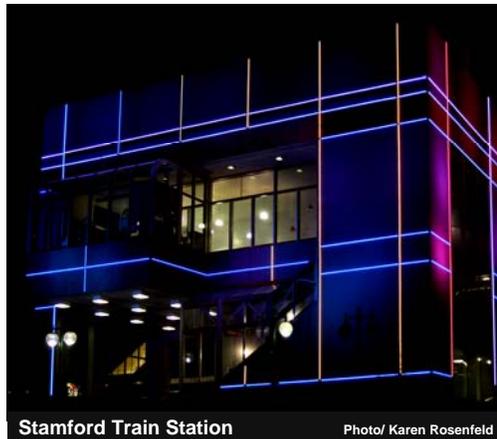
- The Stamford Center for the Arts, which has attracted some of the world's finest artists, offers a full season of cultural and entertainment events. The Palace Theater is also home to the Stamford Symphony, Ballet School of Stamford, Connecticut Ballet, Namaskaar, Lumina String Quartet, and the Stamford Young Artists Philharmonic. The City funds arts and cultural activities through a community grant program that supports local arts organizations.
- Stamford's public library system consists of five branches and a bookmobile. Total annual circulation is over one million items. In 2012, the Library offered 1,600 programs for children, teens and adults which were attended by more than 55,000 people.

Retail & Entertainment

- Downtown Stamford is host to theaters, shopping, and more than 80 bars and restaurants, many opened in the last two years. Chelsea Piers Sports Complex opened its 240,000-square-foot facility at the former Clairol site in July 2012. The annual Thanksgiving balloon parade and summer Alive at Five concert series are major attractions.

Education

- In addition to public schools, Stamford hosts two charter schools and several private and parochial schools. The University of Connecticut at Stamford, located in the downtown area, serves close to 1,400 full-time and part-time undergraduate students and approximately 500 active MBA and other graduate students. The University of Bridgeport and Sacred Heart University also have commuter campuses in the Springdale section.



- In the first three quarters of the fiscal year, the City collected over 8,000 tons of recycling, saving more than \$560,000 by diverting that waste into recycling.

Hurricane Sandy Response

- Swift storm recovery was accomplished by the teamwork of a number of City departments that provided immediate emergency response and developed a strategic plan for restoration of services. Through their efforts, citizens' safety was ensured, streets were cleared, services were quickly restored,

Transportation

The Stamford Transportation Center is key to Stamford's economic success. Partially funded by a State grant, an attractive, environmentally friendly light display has been installed at the Stamford train station. It calls attention to our city and is a sign of the ongoing revitalization of the South End. Parking garage renovations are moving forward and consultant selection is anticipated in 2013 for the first public/private Transit-Oriented Development which will leverage \$35 million of State garage funding with private funds. Within the Central Business District is the Stamford Urban Transitway ("SUT") which provides enhanced automobile, bus, bike, and pedestrian connections between the Stamford Transportation Center and the City's East Side.

funds were secured to defray expense to taxpayers, and City parks and beaches will open ahead of schedule and in time for the summer season.

Improved Services

- Implementation of the SNAP medical record program for our children in the schools leading to better safety and efficiency.
- The Mayor's Hands for Life initiative trained more than 5,000 individuals in Stamford to do CPR using the automated external defibrillator (AED), a U.S. and world record.

Stamford Public Schools



Stamford Public Schools (SPS) comprises approximately 15,500 students, 1,200 teachers, and 20 schools, including six magnet and two International Baccalaureate schools. SPS prepares each and every student for higher education and success in the 21st century. Among our successes in 2012-13:

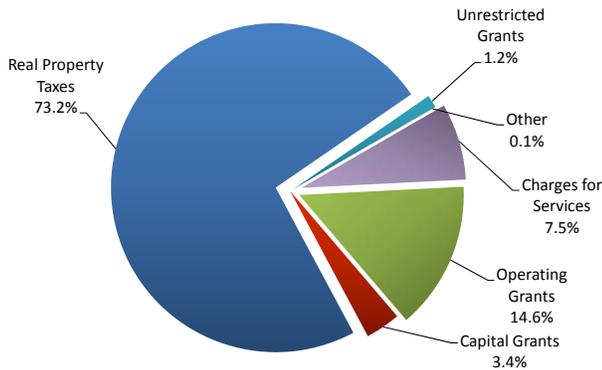
- SPS has achieved a five-year upward trend in our students' scores on the Spring 2012 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) with financial support from the GE Foundation's Developing Futures™ Program.
- SPS produced 219 Advanced Placement scholars and the second-highest number of AP test takers statewide in the class of 2012.
- 83.5% of our 2012 high-school seniors went on to higher education.

We are proud that our district is as rich in diversity as it is in talent; more than 65 different languages are spoken in the homes of our families. Stamford Public Schools offers its students a learning experience that is rich in cultural diversity and reflective of the global society in which they will work and live. To learn more about the Stamford Public Schools go to www.stamfordpublicschools.org. Be sure to read the **2011-12 Report to the Community** or our most recent **Student and Staff Achievement** highlights.

City Finances

Revenues and Expenses*

Government Activities Sources of Revenue



(In \$000s)	FY2012	FY2011
Real Property Taxes	\$420,983	\$407,065
Charges for Services	43,270	45,174
Operating Grants	83,606	80,444
Capital Grants	19,762	11,946
Unrestricted Grants	7,116	6,510
Other	205	469
Total Revenues	\$574,942	\$551,608

Revenues

Real Property Taxes - Real estate, personal property, and motor vehicle taxes and the collection of delinquent taxes from the previous year.

Charges for Services - Building permits, conveyance taxes (imposed on the transfer of real estate), and all other fees and fines related to municipal operations.

Operating Grants - Primarily from the State and consisting largely of education and "Payment in Lieu of Taxes" reimbursements.

Capital Grants - Government allocation to encourage acquisition of capital assets such as buildings, land, and machines.

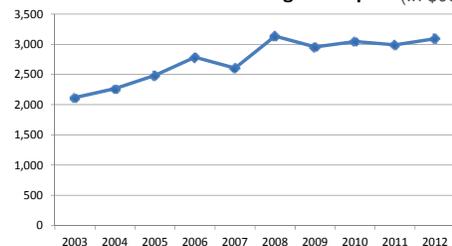
Unrestricted Grants - Grants made to further the general purpose or work of an organization, as opposed to a specific purpose or project. These funds are free from any external restrictions and available for general use.

Other - Income from short-term investments which fluctuate with interest rates.

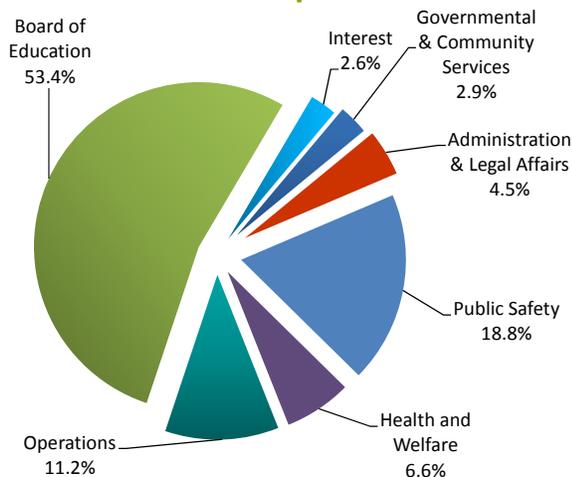
Allocation of General Fund Balance - As of June 30, 2012, the total fund balance for the General Fund was \$12.1 million. Of this amount, \$8.4 million represented the committed portion of the General Fund fund balance. The anticipated use is as follows:

	(In 000s)
Rainy Day Fund Purposes	\$4,183
Parking Fund Purposes	692
Risk Management Internal Service Fund Purposes	2,471
Disputed Assessments Internal Service Fund Purposes	30
Unreimbursed Hurricane Costs	<u>1,000</u>
	\$8,376

GO Bonds Outstanding Per Capita (In \$000s)

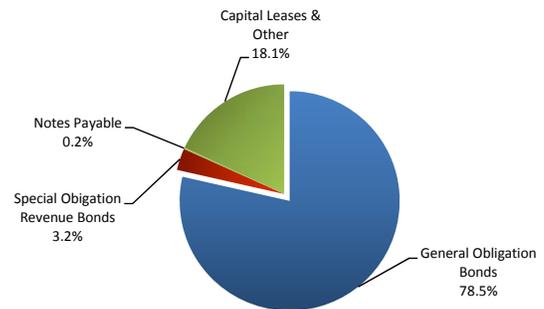


Government Activities Functional Expenses

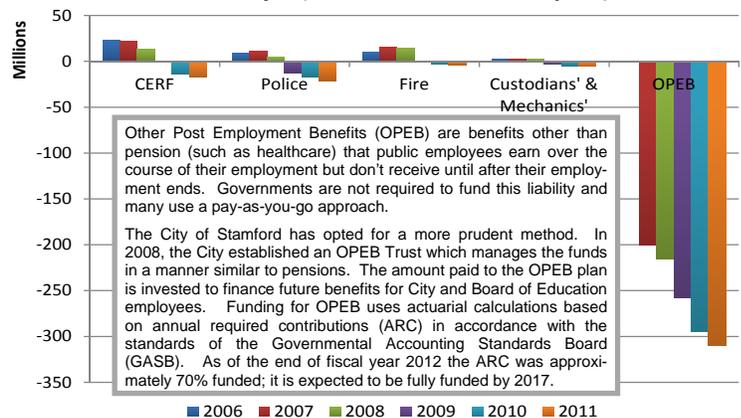


(In \$000s)	FY2012	FY2011
Governmental & Community Service	\$ 16,300	\$ 18,078
Administration & Legal Affairs	25,281	19,863
Public Safety	104,502	102,938
Health & Welfare	36,694	33,295
Operations (Public Works)	62,013	51,031
Board of Education	296,729	291,280
Interest	14,600	13,698
Total Expenditures	\$556,119	\$530,183

FY2012 Governmental Activities Long-Term Liabilities



Excess (Unfunded) Actuarial Accrual Liability As of July 1 (Based on Actuarial Report)



Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) are benefits other than pension (such as healthcare) that public employees earn over the course of their employment but don't receive until after their employment ends. Governments are not required to fund this liability and many use a pay-as-you-go approach.

The City of Stamford has opted for a more prudent method. In 2008, the City established an OPEB Trust which manages the funds in a manner similar to pensions. The amount paid to the OPEB plan is invested to finance future benefits for City and Board of Education employees. Funding for OPEB uses actuarial calculations based on annual required contributions (ARC) in accordance with the standards of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). As of the end of fiscal year 2012 the ARC was approximately 70% funded; it is expected to be fully funded by 2017.

* Source: Fiscal Year 2012 City of Stamford Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

What's Next?

Future Challenges and Economic Outlook

The Mill River Park

Following the grand opening of Mill River Park in May 2013, the next major development will be the construction of the Carousel and Event Pavilion and the "Porch," a sculptural canopy in the northwest corner of the park. Construction will begin in 2013 and be completed in 2014. In the meantime, design of the Ice Skating Center and Fountain will begin this summer. The Mill River Collaborative will also move forward to complete design of the next phase of park construction from Main Street to the cemetery at Richmond Hill Avenue.



Planned Initiatives

Improved Services

- The City has purchased ViewPermit software by ViewPoint Government Solutions which will bring the building permit process on-line. Final implementation will take six months to complete. In the interim, one-stop shopping is available in the Building Department on the 7th Floor for all sign-offs; this includes SWPCA and the Tax Office. We have eliminated the need to have Environmental Protection Board review for all mechanical permits and simple permits which don't involve wetlands.

Fiscal Management

- Continue to focus on containing costs despite the continuing challenge of rising structural costs.
- Continue to maintain fiscal discipline to moderate tax increase to the lowest possible level while assuring the highest level of City services.
- Risk Management will continue to work hard to reduce the risk of loss to the City and its taxpayers by continuing to provide safety training to employees; investigating all accidents involving City vehicles; investigating all workplace accidents; and following up on all fleet safety concerns reported by the public.

Sustainability

- Partner with CL&P and Bartlett Arboretum to expand our tree evaluation program in an effort to reduce power outages due to fallen or diseased trees.
- Installation of electric vehicle charging stations in City garages.

The Master Plan

Every 10 years, the City of Stamford updates its Master Plan, the guiding document for the City of Stamford Planning Board. BFJ Planning is the consultant company working on the Master Plan 2013, expected to result in a revised Land Use Plan (residential, commercial and industrial uses at various densities throughout Stamford) that will help guide future City decisions regarding zoning. The Plan will also make recommendations in areas such as parks and open space, transportation, and public facilities.

Health & Welfare

- The Vita Health & Wellness District, a joint effort between the City, Charter Oak Communities, and Stamford Hospital, has launched; it is bringing new life to Stamford's West Side. When complete, it will offer a mixture of health-related facilities, a community farm, restaurants, and affordable housing.

Quality of Life

- Strive to keep Stamford's top "Safe City" rating through proactive policing and community outreach programs.
- Make consistent, city-wide fire service a top priority.

Parks & Recreation

- Phase II of the Scalzi Park renovation will be complete for summer 2013. It includes repaving; renovation of the lower ball field and street hockey rink; an adult fitness area; and more than 70 trees, shrubs, and perennials.
- A new playground in Cove Island Park will also be ready for summer 2013, and will include new swings, new play areas for 2-5 and 5-12 year-olds, the addition of grass-covered "play mounds," new benches, and new pavers and plantings around the gazebo.

Property Revaluation

The City of Stamford is required by the State to perform property revaluations on a regularly scheduled basis. A city-wide valuation on all real property for the 2012 Grand List year has recently been completed. New digital images of residential dwellings and commercial buildings have been captured and updated. Assessment information is available online and includes building sketches, digital images, mapping, and query capability. For more information visit the City website at www.stamfordct.gov/property-assessment.

We want your input! Do you like this report? What additional information would you like to see included?

Please email: stamfordcitizenreport@ci.stamford.ct.us
Visit us on the web at www.stamfordct.gov