

State of the City 2013

On April 24th, I delivered my State of the City address at the annual Chamber of Commerce luncheon to share with the business community Stamford's accomplishments during the last year. Since this is my final State of the City address, I approached this one with a bit more reflection than those in the past.

I've always believed that Stamford is a city capable of constantly reinventing itself to meet the challenges of the times and take advantage of every opportunity. When we think of Stamford's origins as a small agricultural village and how Stamford has grown into the metropolis it is today, we realize the extent to which the City has taken ownership of its destiny.

From being known as the "The Lock City" to "The Research City" to "The City That Works", Stamford has developed into the thriving economic and social core it is today. Stamford is the only large city in Connecticut with significant population growth over the last 18 years with 12,000 new residents since 1990 and 5,000 new housing units since that time. We anticipate adding up to 15,000 more residents over the next 10 years.

Fiscal Responsibility

Currently, we are in very good fiscal health. Stamford has strong credit ratings with excellent financial stability: A "AAA" rating from Standard & Poor's and a "AA1" rating from Moody's -- only 13 cities in the United States have similar ratings.

- 90+% Funded Pensions
- Lowest Borrowing Costs in Stamford's history at 2.249%
- 98.6% Tax Collection Rate
- Rainy Day Fund: more than quadrupled from \$4M in 2010 to \$18M in 2013

Though it remains a challenge to continue to produce effective, fiscally viable budgets while holding the line on taxes, the 2013-2014 final approved budgets will continue to provide high quality and efficient services and programs for the residents and visitors of Stamford. The 2013-2014 budget has been presented to both the Board of Finance and the Board of Representatives, and those Boards have since made their respective recommendations. The Board of Finance will finalize the budget and set the new mill rate on May 15, 2013.

Infrastructure

The Atlantic Street underpass, a much-needed improvement in Stamford's infrastructure will soon be underway. Full funding is in place for the Atlantic Street underpass and the State Bond Commission has approved \$50 million for this reconstruction. Using new bridge construction techniques, the State is anticipating limited interruption to rail service over a period of only *two weekends* and this project is expected to be completed by late 2016.

Public Safety

Through Charter revision, Stamford now has a unified paid and volunteer department under the umbrella of the Stamford Fire Department. Residents and property owners can rely on unified training, unified command, unified procedures and equipment.

As I stated in my last State of the City address, Emergency Preparedness continues to be one of my top priorities. I'm pleased to say that Stamford's Emergency Preparedness Plan has been comprehensively updated. Our Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been modernized with efficient and timely communications equipment. Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) have been developed for each department to ensure City operations are uninterrupted in the event of an emergency. Duplicating best practices of other similar cities, a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) has been organized. To date, 42 citizens have been trained and certified in all aspects of emergency management. During Hurricane Sandy, CERT members logged 927 hours of response time. CodeRED Stamford was created to keep residents informed of critical community alerts in the event of an emergency.

Quality of Life

The new Mill River Park re-opened amid blue skies and warm temperatures and I cut the ribbon for the new facility. This downtown oasis will enrich the area and provide a peaceful respite from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Upcoming Civility Series programs include Fay Vincent on June 11 and Rick Perry on June 17. Join us for what will surely be exciting presentations from these two renowned speakers.

I'm pleased to announce that Stamford will once again host Fireworks this year on July 3 at Cummings Park.

Looking Ahead

Stamford is a vibrant City and these are exciting times for all of us. Just as Stamford has done repeatedly since its founding, Stamford is in a great position to accept all of the wonderful opportunities that will undoubtedly come in the future. With our rich resources, strong economic base, cultural amenities and diverse population, there's no better place than the City of Stamford! I wish all of Stamford's citizens an enjoyable and safe Summer and I hope to see you at the many exciting events that will be taking place in our great City!

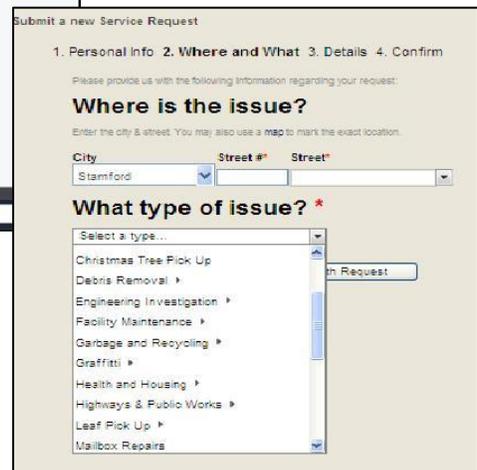
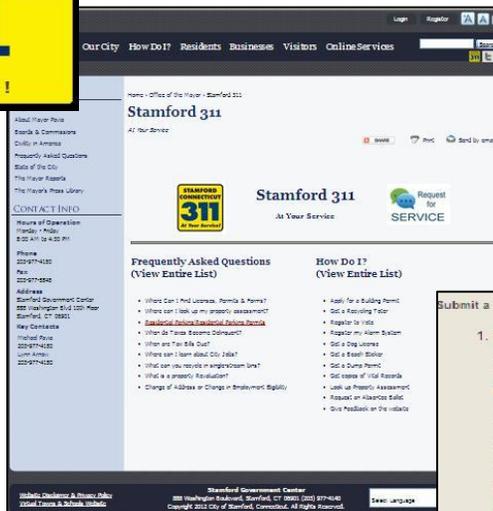
**E-Government
Online Services**

We're so proud of our newest initiative, Stamford's new website. Stamford's "Virtual Town Hall" (www.stamfordct.gov) became a reality with new interactive features like online tax and parking ticket payments, search features including find your voting district and personal property taxes, and registration features that let you register for Stamford Emergency alerts.



311

In addition, a '311' system has been created which provides answers to Frequently Asked Questions and lets citizens place a customer service request. These requests cover everything from animal control issues, garbage and recycling, leaf pickup, Christmas tree pickup, debris removal, a downed tree or street sign, snow plowing, street lights, and more.



ViewPermit

Our new permit software, ViewPermit, will let residents, contractors, and town employees track all permits, licenses, and building projects. Permits and licenses are categorized by department, i.e., DPW, Health, etc. Building projects are viewed by address and users can track every phase of a project from start to finish, including comments made by applicable departments. This software is scheduled for rollout within four to six months.

