



David R. Martin
Mayor, City of Stamford

APPENDIX

March 17, 2014

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Dear Board Members:

In the year beginning July 1, 2014 Mill River Collaborative will be undertaking the following work with and on behalf of the City and citizens of Stamford:

First Full Program Season – Now that Phase 1 of the park is open we will run a weekly program schedule that includes children’s entertainment, exercise programs, movie nights, swing dancing under the stars, cherry blossom festival, barbecue festival, Halloween party, nature programs and cultural programs every week of the warm half of the year.

Construction of the Carousel Pavilion and Trellis – We expect to bid this construction by midyear and break ground in the fall.

Ice Rink, Fountain and Park Building Construction – We also expect to bid the rink/fountain complex this summer and break ground in the fall.

Fund raising for Phase 2 – We have started applying for federal funding for Phase 2 which runs from Main Street to the cemetery south of Richmond Hill Ave. Our cost estimates for this are \$11 million. We will be pursuing \$1.6 million from RBS for the part of the park along their property and are applying to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation for \$4.8 million on the basis of the removal of all surrounding private properties from the 100-year floodplain. The balance will need to come from the next TIF bond issue or possibly from a state Flood and Erosion Control Act bond issue.

Easement acquisitions for Phase 2 – using funds requested in the capital budget and hopefully an open space acquisition grant from the state that we are applying for, we will purchase easements on the east side of the river between Main Street and Division Street for the construction of the greenway.

Main Street Bridge Reconstruction – We have applied for \$500,000 to supplement the \$2.2 million in existing federal funding for the Main Street pedestrian bridge and corridor. We look forward to coordination with the city to design and build an attractive bridge and pedestrian/bike-friendly corridor from Stillwater Avenue to Washington Boulevard. The reconstruction of the bridge in conjunction with the Phase

2 construction will lead to a FEMA flood map change that will remove all properties in the Mill River Corridor (except Czesik Houses) from the 100-year flood plain.

Design and permitting of the Greenway South – With funds in the FY 15 capital budget, we will retain consultants to design and secure permits for extending the greenway on the east side of the River from RBS to the Harbor Point waterfront esplanade at Atlantic Street. We will work in collaboration with Building & Land Technology to design and permit an alignment that works and they will be responsible for costs along their Gateway property.

In addition to these initiatives, we will continue our maintenance and restoration work in the park and up and down the river. We will also expand our environmental education programs (10 paid internships for high school Mill River Stewards, family nature club and expanding our fourth grade science education collaboration to three elementary schools from our pilot program with Hart Magnet School).

The Collaborative budget for 2014-2015 is \$1,217,599. This is an increase from the current year mainly in operations and program staffing. Our program schedule last summer was sparse and we know we must offer a robust program schedule to fully activate the park. We are adding a program sponsorship associate to pursue corporate sponsorship and grant funding for our programs. Our budgeted \$180,000 in restricted corporate and foundation contributions is all funding for programs and events.

With the carousel, ice rink and fountain coming on line at the end of FY2015, we will add an Operations Manager who will be responsible for operations and maintenance of the new buildings, structures and facilities.

Our expenses are primarily for personnel. We are projecting only 2% increases on average for staff. In addition, we have leveraged our own staff with volunteers. Vinny Piselli and his land management staff continue to perform exceptionally. In 2013, they hosted and managed volunteers who contributed over 8,500 hours of service (four full-time equivalents) in the park, the river and the greenway all the way up to Scalzi Park.

Mill River Park is a downtown urban park designed to be intensively used and requiring more intensive maintenance and programming than other Stamford Parks. The plant material in the park, will make it compellingly beautiful, but will require higher maintenance to keep it vital and inspiring. Because the Park is one of the biggest economic engines for Downtown right now, the case for increasing the City's investment is sound. The City is already receiving an outsized return, of millions of dollars annually, on its investment, including the new taxes from Trump Parc, BLVD, Mill River House, Adams Mill River House, RBS and the Advocate site. These revenues will continue to grow as the RBS tax abatement expires and the new housing on the Advocate site is completed and rented. We hope you will recognize the City's operating support for the Collaborative as an investment, rather than an expense, an investment that supports the expansion of this new municipal revenue stream.

We request that the Board of Finance support the Mayor's budgeted \$400,000 in direct operating support from the City, the same as our request last year. While we are asking for a contractual commitment of \$500,000 going forward, we recognize the fiscal pressures on the City, and are prepared to get there in steps. At a future level of \$500,000 the City will only be contributing a third of the park & greenway's operating costs. We hope you agree that this is an impressive bargain for the City and its tax payers.

Dreams Taking Root: *The Campaign for Mill River Park* has so far received capital campaign pledges of \$15 million. We anticipate making grants to the City in excess of \$10 million to fund the carousel and rink/fountain complexes. In addition, the Collaborative will make an in-kind gift to the City of the completed carousel.

We are most thankful for the Board's support for the Mill River Park project and for its commitment to the public/private partnership through which Mill River Park is being realized.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Milton Puryear', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Milton Puryear
Executive Director