

# City of Stamford Budget Presentation FY 2016-2017

## Land Use Bureau

March 28, 2016



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Land Use Bureau Chief



# *Land Use Bureau*

## ■ Programs

- Land Use Administration
- Planning Board
- Zoning Board
- Zoning Enforcement (Permits & Violations)
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Environmental Protection Board
- Park & Open Space Planning

## ■ Mission

- The mission of the Land Use Department is to provide City Planning; Zoning Regulations, enforcement, and appeals; and wetlands and flood hazard oversight to the City of Stamford.

# Services Provided

Program	Services Provided
Land Use Administration	Administration of the Land Use Bureau includes administrative support for four land use boards, as well as implementation of the land use board's decisions
Planning Board	<p>The Planning Board is responsible for planning and coordinating the development of the City in accordance with the 2015-2025 Master Plan, and amends the Master Plan when required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Planning Board holds on average 35 meetings a year, averaging 15 citizens in attendance</li> <li>• Reviews and acts upon subdivision applications (six subdivisions approved for a total of 20 new lots)</li> <li>▪ Prepares Capital Budget and Capital Program</li> <li>▪ Reviews and acts upon referrals from Zoning Board &amp; ZBA</li> <li>▪ Prepares and adopts neighborhood plans, such as the Glenbrook/Springdale TOD Feasibility Study</li> </ul>
Zoning Board	<p>The Zoning Board is responsible for regulating the use of land and buildings within the City</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Zoning Board holds on average 40 meetings a year; each meeting on average meets for over 4 hours, and averages over 25 citizens in attendance</li> <li>▪ 75 applications were received; 53 applications were approved; 1 application was exempt; 1 application was denied; 1 application was withdrawn; 19 applications are still pending</li> <li>▪ Prepares, adopts and amends the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Map</li> <li>▪ Administratively reviews site and architectural plans, special exceptions, coastal site plan applications and motor vehicle locations</li> <li>▪ Generated \$46,176 in fees</li> </ul>
Zoning Enforcement	<p>The Zoning Enforcement Office is responsible for the interpretation and enforcement of Zoning Regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Zoning Enforcement staff answered approximately 16,053 information requests, issued 1,459 zoning permits, closed 336 complaints, and is actively investigating about 200 open complaints</li> <li>▪ Zoning approvals are issued for construction projects and changes of use certificates of zoning compliance are issued once a project is completed. In addition, zoning violations and complaints are investigated and appropriate follow-up action is taken</li> </ul>

# Services Provided

Program	Services Provided
ZBA	<p>The primary function of the Zoning Board of Appeals is to consider variances of the zoning regulations where there is an unusual hardship with the land, which the ZBA acted on about 90 appeals last year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The ZBA rules on appeals from the decisions of the Zoning Enforcement Officer</li> <li>▪ Whenever a variance or special exception application concerns property in the CAM, ZBA conducts a preliminary coastal site plan review on the matter; generated approximately \$24,000 in review fees</li> </ul>
EPB	<p>The Environmental Protection Board (EPB) is organized by ordinance combining the mandated regulatory duties and responsibilities of an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, a Conservation Commission, and a local Flood and Erosion Control Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ EPB responded to 4,832 public inquiries, 1,462 applications for building or septic permits, evaluated 85 formal wetland, coastal, and subdivision applications; generated \$44,316.00 in fees</li> <li>▪ Reviews, issues special permits for, and inspects development activities on properties having inland wetlands and watercourses, buffer/setback areas, and designated flood hazard areas</li> <li>▪ Provides technical assistance/comments on subdivisions, coastal site plan reviews, site plan reviews, variances, special exceptions, erosion control plans, and other related matters</li> </ul>
Park & Open Space Planning	<p>Responsible for planning, organizing and directing activities to the design, construction, renovation, long range planning of City passive and active use parks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Issues and manages RFPs and bids as necessary for park projects, in coordination with Engineering.</li> <li>▪ Manages all aspects of consultant contracts for park design and other (Glenbrook/Springdale TOD Feasibility Study) contracts delegated by Land Use Bureau Chief.</li> <li>▪ Works closely with Engineering on management and coordination of parks construction projects.</li> <li>▪ Is the City staff person for resident groups who advocate for parks to coordinate park improvement projects, pursue grant opportunities, and collaborate on maintenance and public outreach. Work with 501(c)3 non-profits with combined funds of \$53,000 dedicated to park improvements, Pursues grant opportunities for parks and resiliency projects - \$136,516 in 2015 from State Port Infrastructure fund for dredging design for the Cummings and Cove Marinas.</li> </ul>



# 2015-16 Highlights

## Major Activities and Highlights for 2015-2016 include the following:

- The proposal to replace the former **Brewer's Yacht Haven West Boatyard** continues to demand significant staff resources in 2015-16.
- **Major Development Projects** – Yale & Towne development is 100% complete and Harbor Point development is 35% complete. 535 residential units and 429,000 square feet of commercial use were approved in the last 12 months and 1117 residential units are under review.
- **Mill River Park, Phase II**, construction drawings and state & local permitting.
- **Major Planning Projects** - State TOD project at the Transportation Center, South End Redevelopment, UConn Dormitory Housing, Village Commercial zoning expansion in Glenbrook/Springdale, West Side Transportation Study
- **Glenbrook/Springdale Transit Oriented Development Pilot Study** completed in June 2015. Master Plan amendments to implement findings of the TOD study were adopted by the Planning Board in September 2015. Submitted grant application to expand rail station parking in Springdale.
- **West Side Transportation Study** completed in October 2015
- **Capital Budget Planning** – 2016-17 budget completed within Charter timeline
- **Park & Open Space Planning Projects**
  - Veteran's Memorial Park Plan, Phase I and II, completed December 2015.
  - Dredging Design and Permitting for Cummings and Cove Marinas
  - West Beach and Cummings Marinas, construction drawings
  - Mianus River Park Restoration, Phase I, completed Sept. 2015
  - McKeithen park community-built playground, Oct. 2105
  - Boccuzzi Park Master Plan, RFP issued January 2016



# 2016-2017 Goals

The Land Use Bureau's programs, responsibilities and initiatives are largely defined by Charter and Ordinance, and remain unchanged.

- **Improve Customer Service for Zoning Permits and Complaint Response in Support of Streamlining the Building Permit Process**
  - Hire and Train an additional Zoning Inspector (pending funding)
  - Remove current limit on number of persons seen per day (currently 20)
  - Reduce the backlog of open Zoning Complaints (currently 200 +/-)
- **Continue to implement the goals and recommendations of the 2015-2025 Master Plan**
  - Village Commercial rezoning – Springdale/Glenbrook
  - West Side rezoning and traffic recommendations
  - Initiate a study of South End redevelopment and neighborhood stabilization
- **Improve the quality of major development reviews**
  - Initiate pre-application reviews of more projects
  - Retain architectural consultants to analyze major building proposals
  - Require visual impact studies of proposed buildings
  - Coordinate with Transportation, Traffic & Parking Bureau on impacts and infrastructure improvements
- **Revise the Subdivision Regulations for clarity and to be consistent with the latest City Charter Revisions**
  - Draft regulations to submit for internal staff review
  - Planning Board review and edits
  - Hold public hearing to adopt the revised Subdivision Regulations
- **Electronic Record Keeping**
  - Continue scanning approved subdivision maps and land use approvals
  - Create a GIS application to link maps and approvals to land parcel system

# Changes and Challenges

## Major changes planned

- **To fill the vacant Zoning Inspector position** bringing the Zoning Enforcement Office to four persons to better address citizen complaints, reported violations, more effective process of issuing zoning permits, responding to information requests in a more timely manner.

The **Zoning Enforcement Office** works on every 1, 2 or multifamily residence, apartment building, commercial building, parking garage, restaurant, liquor permit, sidewalk café, every pool, every fence or stone wall, and every deck or patio is reviewed by the Zoning Enforcement Office.

### Volume of requests to the Zoning Enforcement Office by category during the year:

INFORMATION REQUESTS	16,053
PERMITS ISSUED	1,459
COMPLAINTS CLOSED	336
OPEN ZONING COMPLAINTS	200

- **Refill vacant Associate Planner position**, acting as lead staff to the Zoning Board
- **Plan for the retirement of Key Staff** to maintain continuity of support to the Land Use Bureau



# *Performance Measures*

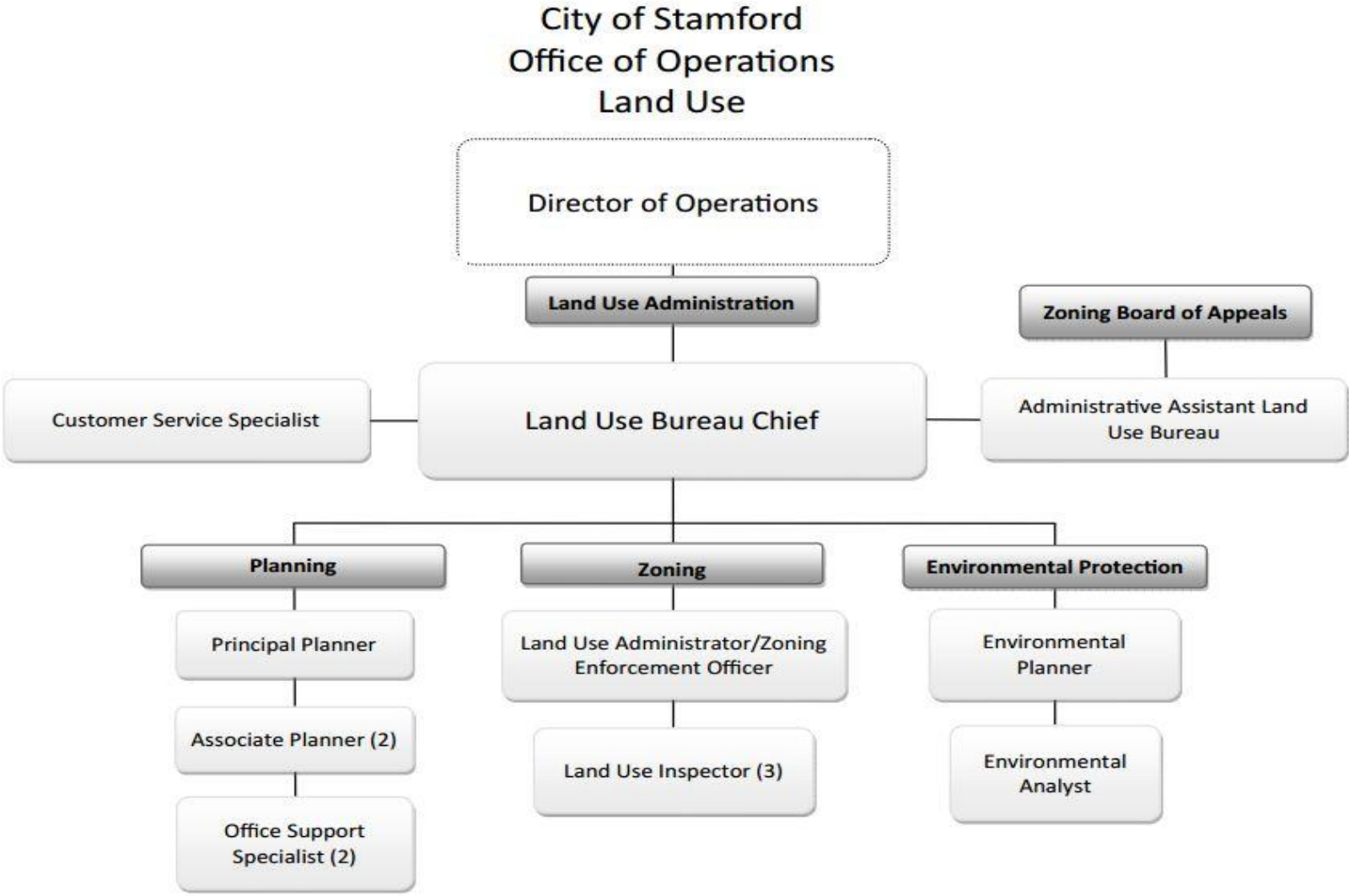
The workload of the Land Use Bureau is dictated in large part by development cycles and the number and complexity of development applications submitted for review, which must be acted upon in compliance with time limits set by Charter and State Statute. The City has been experiencing a building boom since 2006, with Zoning Board reviews alone averaging more three million square feet of floor area per year during this period. The responsibility of staff is to provide high quality, timely professional advice and support to the Land Use Boards to help them render sound decisions, and then monitoring and enforcing completion of projects in accordance with the approved plans. Typical quantitative performance metrics such as days to complete a staff report or time to issue a permit do not adequately measure the quality of the work performed.

Standard metrics can be applied to some extent to the daily issuance of zoning permits by the Zoning Enforcement Officer and Zoning Inspectors. In a year, the office typically acts on 16,053 information requests, issues 1,459 zoning permits, and closes 336 complaints. Currently, due to staffing levels, the office has had to impose a limit of 20 persons per day on a first come/first served basis during the morning when permits are reviewed. This has resulted in increased wait times although all persons signed up are served. Staffing levels have also limited the ability to investigate and respond to zoning complaints, with a current backlog of approximately 200 unresolved complaints.

For the past two years an additional Zoning Inspector position has been authorized but not funded. Funding of the position is included in the 2016-17 budget and if approved will allow removal of the 20 per day limit and increased ability to service the public and investigate complaints. Going forward, the Zoning Office will record number of persons served, permits issued, wait times, complaints received, resolved and total backlog.



# Organization, Personnel and Resources



# Summary of Operating Budget

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## Fiscal Year 2016/2017 - Department Summary

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Fund: 0001 General Fund

Office: 002 Operations

Dept/Div: 0230 Land Use

### Mission Statement:

The mission of the Land Use Department is to provide City planning; zoning rules, enforcement, and appeals; and wetlands and flood hazard oversight to the City of Stamford.

Description	FY 14/15 Actual	FY 15/16			FY 16/17					FY 17/18 Estimate	FY 18/19 Estimate
		Adopted Budget	Revised Budget	Projected Exp & Enc	Department Request	Mayor's Proposed	% of Total	\$ Var Projected	% Var Projected		
<b>Expenditures</b>											
Land Use (2300)	332,624	336,110	336,110	343,046	306,471	299,360	15.90%	-43,686	-12.7%	308,683	318,590
Planning (2310)	612,550	634,152	632,152	639,688	568,881	568,881	30.21%	-70,807	-11.1%	584,122	600,184
Zoning (2320)	489,595	504,109	504,109	502,806	596,560	594,905	31.59%	92,099	18.3%	615,516	637,519
Zoning Board (2330)	122,635	125,756	125,756	125,906	118,150	118,150	6.27%	-7,756	-6.2%	122,078	126,276
EPB (2340)	309,767	302,536	305,536	305,824	304,105	301,760	16.03%	-4,064	-1.3%	311,245	321,303
Technology (2350)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0.0%	0	0
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>1,867,172</b>	<b>1,902,663</b>	<b>1,903,663</b>	<b>1,917,270</b>	<b>1,894,167</b>	<b>1,883,056</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>-34,214</b>	<b>-1.8%</b>	<b>1,941,644</b>	<b>2,003,872</b>
<b>Revenue</b>											
Planning (2310)	1,749	3,100	3,100	3,100	2,800	2,800	0.63%	-300	-9.7%	2,800	2,800
Zoning (2320)	405,899	437,350	437,350	437,350	388,300	388,300	87.36%	-49,050	-11.2%	388,300	388,300
Zoning Board (2330)	13,695	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	4.50%	0	0.0%	20,000	20,000
EPB (2340)	34,950	33,500	33,500	33,500	33,400	33,400	7.51%	-100	-0.3%	33,400	33,400
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>456,292</b>	<b>493,950</b>	<b>493,950</b>	<b>493,950</b>	<b>444,500</b>	<b>444,500</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>-49,450</b>	<b>-10.0%</b>	<b>444,500</b>	<b>444,500</b>
<b>Net Operating Cost</b>	<b>1,410,880</b>	<b>1,408,713</b>	<b>1,409,713</b>	<b>1,423,320</b>	<b>1,449,667</b>	<b>1,438,556</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>15,236</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>1,497,144</b>	<b>1,559,372</b>