



# Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens

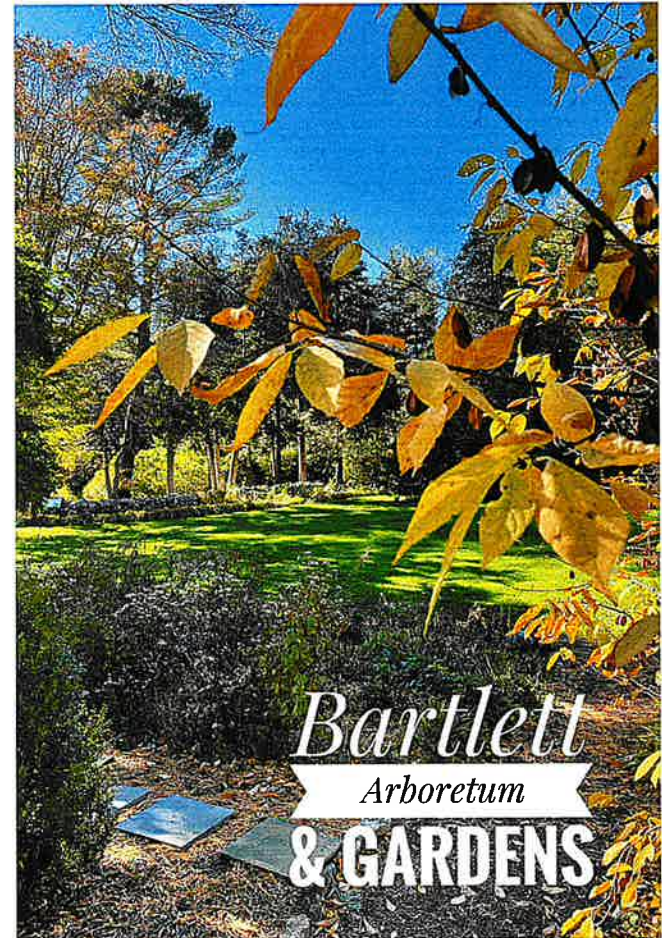
**Board of Representatives  
Fiscal Committee  
2026-2027  
Budget Request Presentation**

**Agency Overview** The Bartlett Arboretum Association, through a lease agreement with the City of Stamford, maintains a *city-owned park open to the public, free of charge, dawn to dusk, 365 days per year*. The property annually serves over **100,000 visitors** and features

- 93 acres of irreplaceable open space
- magnificent award-winning Champion trees
- 13 charming gardens
- wildflower meadows & red maple wetlands
- 2.5 miles of woodland walking trails
- varied wildlife and native habitats.

A wonderful getaway from the hustle and bustle of daily life, the Arboretum serves as a leading recreational and educational resource for area residents and visitors of all ages. *In fact, the Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens was recognized as the best public green space in Connecticut by HGTV in their feature on the Best Green Spaces in all 50 States. Other notable spaces on the list included Vermont's Shelburne Farms, Colorado's Betty Ford Alpine Gardens, Illinois' Millennium Park, and New York's Adirondack Park.*

*(It should be noted that Arboretum also maintains Potter's Field, used by the City for over 100 years to bury nearly 400 of its poor or unclaimed dead).*



**The mission of the Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens is to cultivate and develop an expansive collection of trees, gardens, and plants for all to explore, enjoy and study; and to provide through education and stewardship, a greener, healthier, more beautiful environment. We accomplish this by**

- Linking visitors from our surrounding communities to the natural world, through our grounds, exhibits and programming.
- Building a community that welcomes and respects the diversity of all visitors, staff, volunteers, donors, and advocates creating an inclusive environment.
- Providing comprehensive environmental, horticulture and plant science educational programs for children and adults of all ages and abilities.
- Preserving the historical significance of the Bartlett Arboretum for current and future generations.
- Creating opportunities for inspiration, recreation, enjoyment, and exploration of the natural world for all who visit.
- Maintaining plant collections that celebrate biodiversity and reflect the ecology and character of our region.
- Promoting conservation and principles of sustainable landscape management.

**Vision: To be a nationally recognized center of living collection expertise, education, stewardship, exhibition and horticultural best practices.**





## Highlights, Efficiencies & Service Improvements Over the Past Year

- Hosted over 110,000 visitors (over 15% from out-of-state)
- Conducted on and off-site in-person programming and workshops for community partners including Inspirica, CLC, Building One Community, Beyond Limits, Boys & Girls Club of Stamford, and several Stamford senior centers
- Provided on-site programming (4 different Plant Life Cycle Modules) to every Stamford Schools second grade classes (1,500 students)
- Expanded our program partnership with the Westhill High School Agriscience program
- Provided extended day afterschool programs at Stamford elementary schools
- Held our annual Plant Sale raising more than \$25,000 to support Arboretum operations
- Provided 8 week-long summer camp sessions for 320 campers (25% were supported by scholarships)
- Hosted a successful summer outdoor concert series attended by over 1,500 people of all ages
- Hosted two major **free** community events – The Annual Arbor Earth Day and Honey Harvest Festivals
- Graduated 32 new Master Gardeners in cooperation with the UConn Extension Master Gardener program
- Engaged over 100 local high school students in free education programs, internships and volunteer work
- Completed construction of an auxiliary greenhouse, funded totally by private donations at a cost of \$50K, to provide an on-site facility for the Arboretum's Tropical plant collection during construction of the new Horticulture Complex.

# Increased Volunteer Support from the Business Community



## New or Expanded Services or Programs in 2026-27

- In association with the City schools and other non-profit organizations, the Arboretum plans to continue expansion of its **workforce development** programs in the areas of arboriculture, horticulture, and landscape design. Two of our current employees are graduates of Westhill High School Agriscience Program.
- Working with partner organizations, including the Downtown Special Services District and Mill River Collaborative, the Arboretum to build on existing efforts to enhance the City's **Urban Forestry and Landscaping initiatives**.
- Through increased fundraising efforts, the Arboretum seeks to provide additional scholarship support for those in need of financial assistance to attend the programs and access the services provided by the Arboretum, including Camp Bart, its popular summer program experience for K-6 graders.
- Expand GrowMobile Outreach Programs...



# GrowMobile Outreach Programs





Building a vegetable garden to provide education around and access to fresh, organic produce





Providing in-person, off-site vegetable garden planting, maintenance & programs for pre-school students





Expanding outreach and on-site program services thanks to a third-party funding source





Coordinating in-person, off-site vegetable garden programs for students with special needs and intergenerational programming with residents of the Villa at Stamford



# Summary of Significant Changes

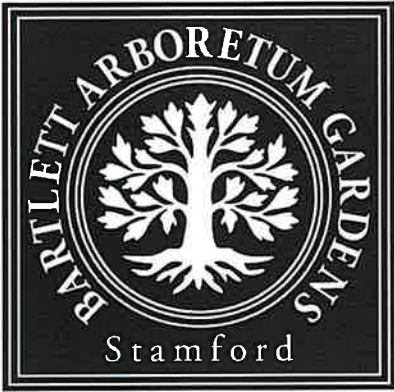
With less than anticipated support from the City in FY2025/26 we were forced to eliminate one part-time position and restructure our seasonal staffing. The Arboretum's current staff now includes 7 full-time, 3 part-time, and 4 seasonal (camp staff) employees. As a result, we have relied on the support of the Arboretum's 200+ volunteers, many of whom are graduates of the UConn Extension Master Gardener program hosted by the Arboretum.

## Key Agency Challenges or Changes expected in 2026-27

### Key Challenges:

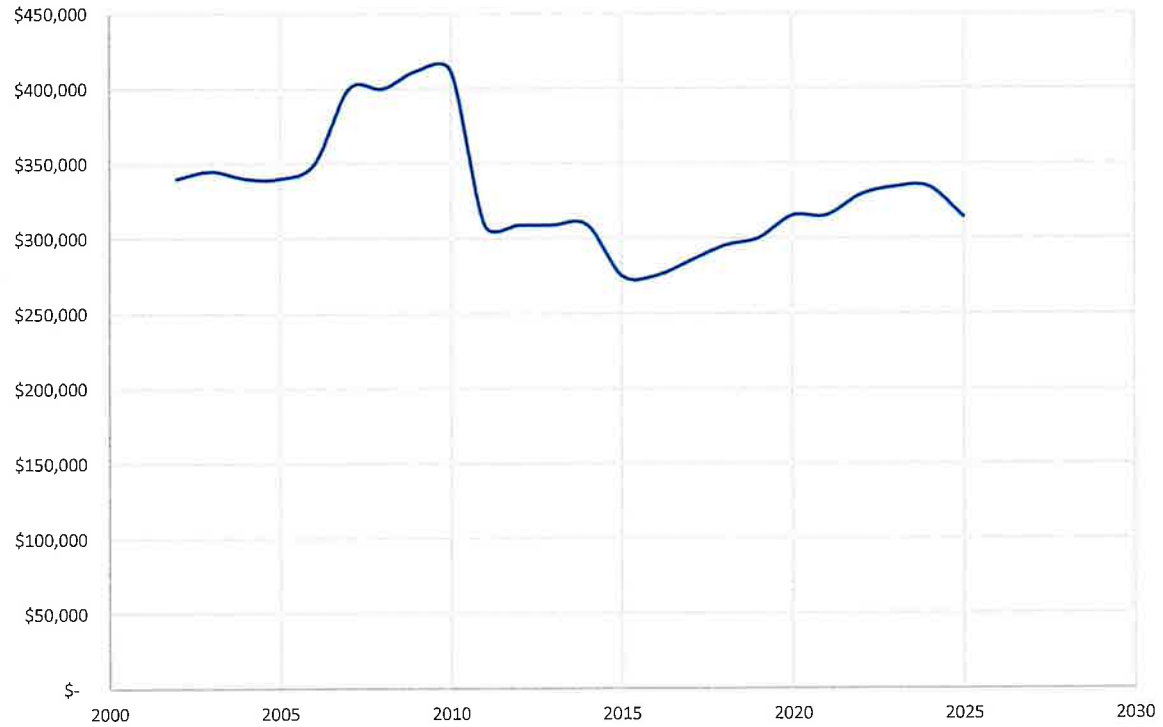
1. **Capital Projects:** The Arboretum's Horticulture Complex has been redesigned to address rising cost estimates as well as septic and stormwater management requirements. Thanks to donated services of a local contractor, we anticipate demolition of the existing greenhouse to begin this spring. With the Mayor's recommended funding for the greenhouse and pavilion, the Arboretum will have the funds necessary to begin construction within the deadlines to secure project support from the State of Connecticut.
2. **Operating Budget:** Two staff changes, one for retirement and another for maternity leave will put additional pressure on limited operating funds. Funding cuts to various federal agencies have limited, if not outright eliminated, opportunities to receive programmatic funding.





The Arboretum's projected FY26/27 operating budget is \$1,619,111. The Mayor's proposed budget recommends operating support in the amount of \$338K.

City of Stamford Operating Support 2002 -2025



## Fiscal Year 2026/2027 - Program Detail Report

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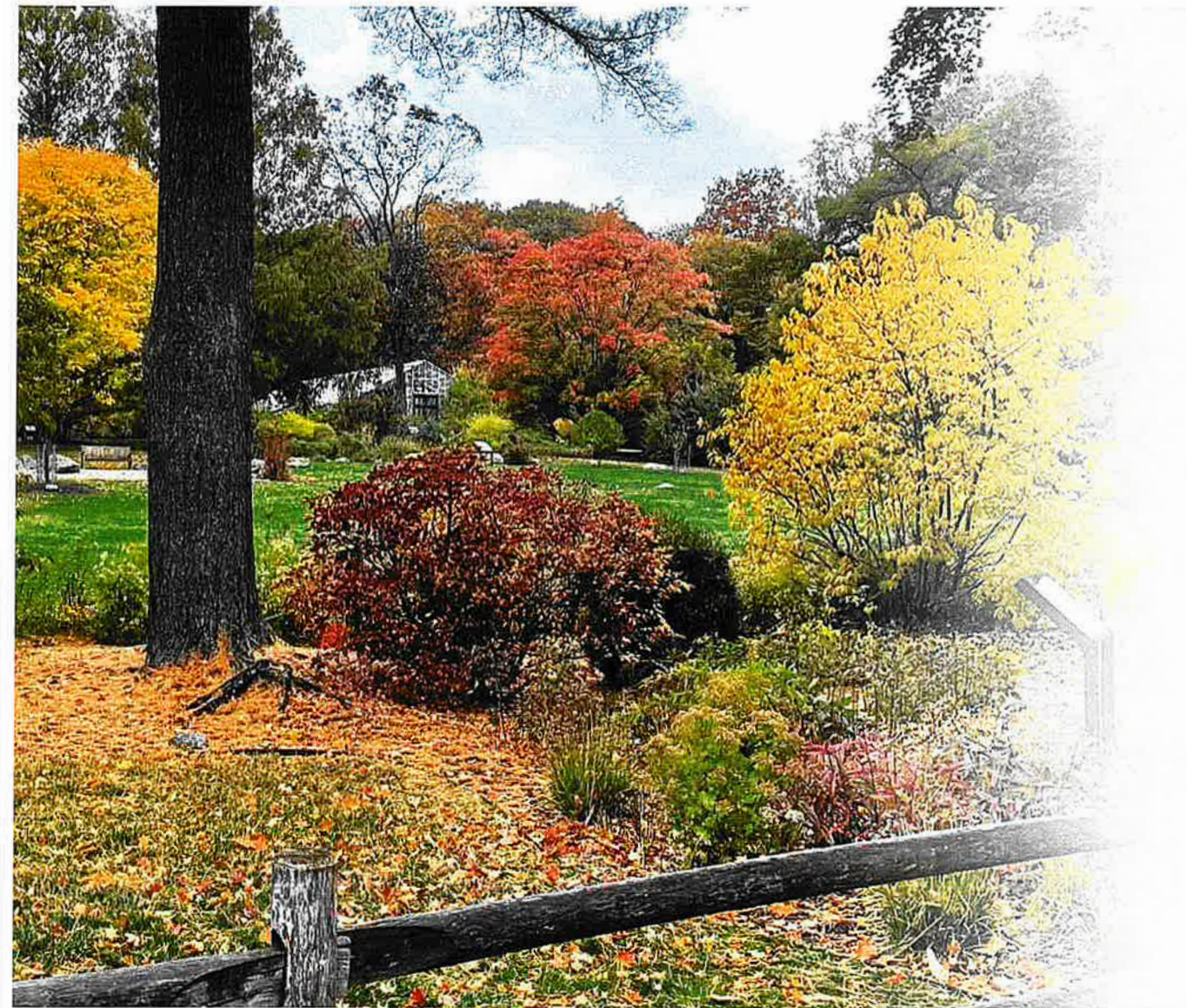
**Fund:** 1000 General Fund  
**Office:** 009 Community Grants  
**Dept/Div:** 0603 Non City Agencies  
**Program:** 6056 Cultural & Environmental

\* Transfer from Facilities Maintenance

### Program Description:

Accounts for grant funding for various cultural and environmental programs within the City of Stamford.

Ref #	Account Title	FY 23/24 Actual	FY 24/25 Actual	FY 25/26		Department Request	FY 26/27		% Var Adopted
				Adopted Budget	Revised Budget		Mayor's Proposed	\$ Var Adopted	
1000-6056-581557	Silversource, Inc	0	0	25,000	25,000	200,000	26,000	1,000	4.0%
1000-6056-581605	Stamford Museum & Nature Ctr	1,325,000	1,364,750	1,407,000	1,407,000	1,500,000	1,463,280	56,280	4.0%
1000-6056-581606	Ferguson Library	9,280,800	9,780,000	10,169,000	10,169,000	10,900,000	10,575,760	406,760	4.0%
1000-6056-581611	Stamford Historical Society	47,500	48,925	50,000	50,000	50,000	52,000	2,000	4.0%
1000-6056-581613	Bartlett Arboretum	334,000	314,000	325,000	325,000	400,000	338,000	13,000	4.0%
1000-6056-581617	DSSD	140,000	144,200	158,000	158,000	300,000	200,000	42,000	26.6%
1000-6056-581890	Multicultural Council	7,910	9,372	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,400	400	4.0%
1000-6056-581896	United Way of Coastal and Western Connecti	15,000	15,000	17,000	17,000	25,000	17,680	680	4.0%
1000-6056-581897	Boys & Girls Club-Yerwood Center	225,050	231,802	274,130	274,130	324,130	324,130	50,000	18.2%
1000-6056-581904	Stamford Partnership	40,000	41,200	45,000	45,000	50,000	46,800	1,800	4.0%
1000-6056-581919	Stamford Arts & Culture Grant	191,498	197,245	200,000	200,000	215,000	208,000	8,000	4.0%
1000-6056-581921	Lumos	25,000	25,500	25,500	25,500	25,500	26,520	1,020	4.0%
1000-6056-581924	Mill River Collaborative	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	550,000	520,000	20,000	4.0%
1000-6056-581925	Stamford Center for the Arts	47,500	48,925	50,000	50,000	150,000	52,000	2,000	4.0%
1000-6056-581505	Project Music	0	0	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	0	0.0%
1000-6056-581929	Neighborhood Community Grants Program	74,000	77,250	80,250	80,250	90,000	83,460	3,210	4.0%
1000-6056-581934	ADA Advisory Council	1,640	2,163	10,815	10,815	10,815	11,248	433	4.0%
1000-6056-581935	St. Joseph Parenting Center	0	0	0	0	80,000	10,000	10,000	100.0%
1000-6056-581936	Curtain Call	85,000	90,000	90,000	90,000	95,000	95,000	5,000	5.6%
1000-6056-581937	Sound Waters	85,000	87,550	91,000	91,000	100,000	94,640	3,640	4.0%
1000-6056-581939	Mary C Rich Clubhouse Teen Center	144,450	148,784	175,953	175,953	225,953	225,953	50,000	28.4%
1000-6056-581942	Childhood Learning Center	98,500	101,455	106,000	106,000	210,000	206,000	100,000	94.3%
1000-6056-581943	Stamford Youth Peace Foundation	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	0	0.0%



**Abandoned or Curtailed Services  
or Programs in 2026-2027:**

Hopefully, none



We respectfully ask that the Board of Representatives Fiscal Committee support the Mayor's recommendations for capital and operational funds for the Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens as proposed in the 2026-2027 budget.

Thank you!

