



# Town of Watertown

Proposed FY2026/2027

Budget

Town Council Public Hearing – April 22, 2026

*Presenter: Mark A. Raimo, Town Manager*

# TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET PRESENTATION



## Jonathan Ramsay, Chairman

Michele McHugh, Vice-Chairwoman	
Mary Ann Rosa	Ken Demirs
Robert Desena	Robert Retallick
Dan Cocchiola	Rachael Ryan
Carina Noyd	

## Mark A. Raimo, Town Manager

Finance Director	Maria Guerrera
Police Chief	Joshua Bernegger
Director of Public Works/WSA	Gerald (Jerry) Lukowski
Town Clerk	Lisa Dalton
Fire Chief	David Bromley
Fire Marshal	Kim Calabrese
Director of Parks & Recreation	Michael Ganem
Land Use Administrator	Spencer Musselman
Economic Development	Jeremi Johnson

# Watertown Town Council Mission Statement

*(Adopted 2021)*



*"In Watertown, we strive to be Litchfield County's most citizen and employee centric town where citizens, businesses and employees are valued and where all can count on efficient services, fiscal responsibility, engaging schools and a safe community."*

# Budget Philosophy



- Balance immediate operational needs with long-term investment
- Maintain core services while advancing infrastructure
  - Position the Town for sustainable financial stability



# Budget Development Process

The municipal budget is developed through a structured process:

- Department requests
  - Administrative review
    - Financial forecasting
      - Capital planning analysis
        - Town Council review
          - Public hearing and adoption

# Municipal Budget



**Municipal budgets fund the services residents rely upon every day:**

- Police, Fire, and emergency response
  - Road maintenance and snow removal
  - Parks and Recreation programs
  - Public Health services
  - Administrative and financial services

# Budget Snapshot – Municipal Budget



PERCENT CHANGE:

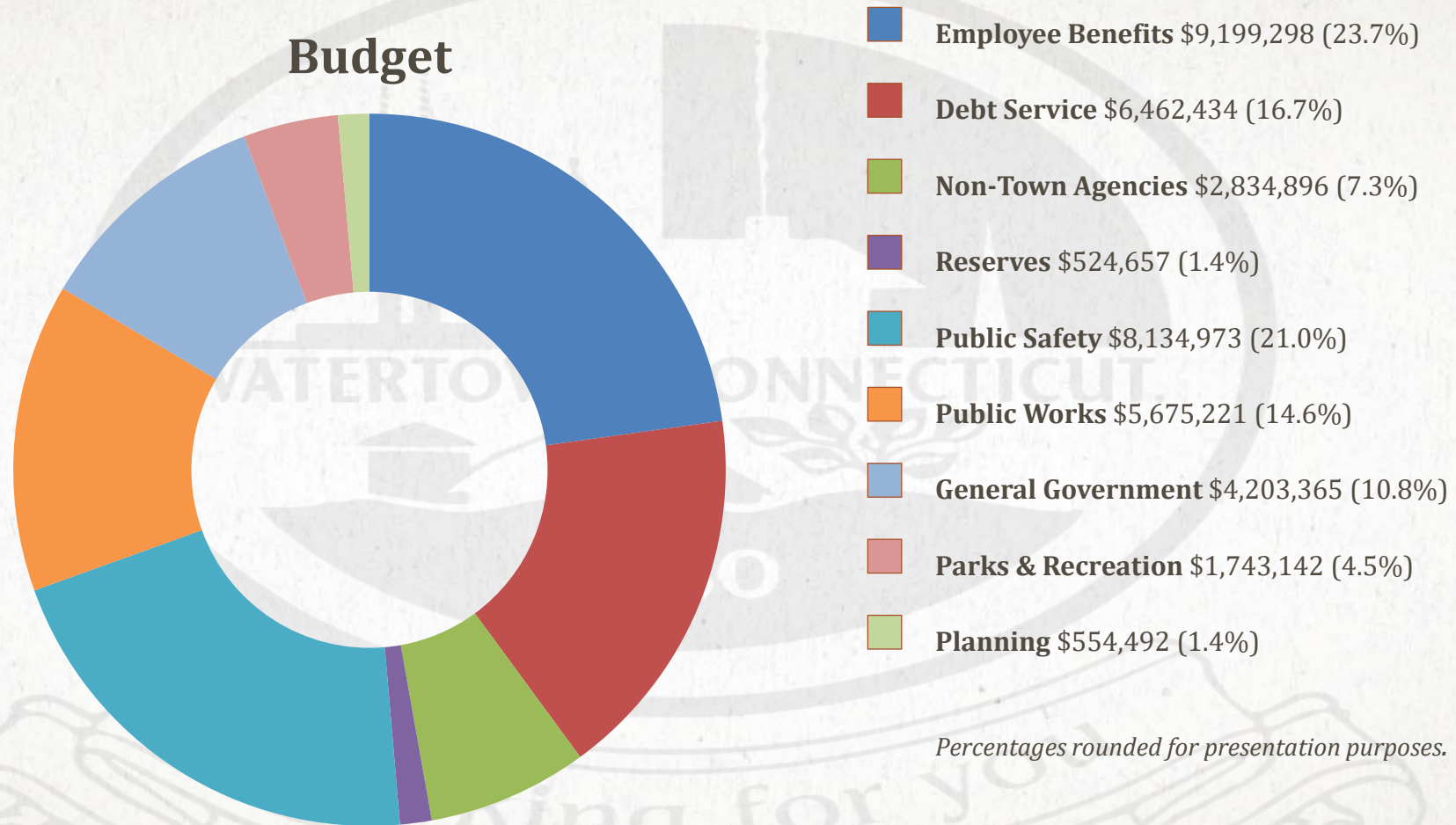
4.57%

INCREASE:

\$1,749,942

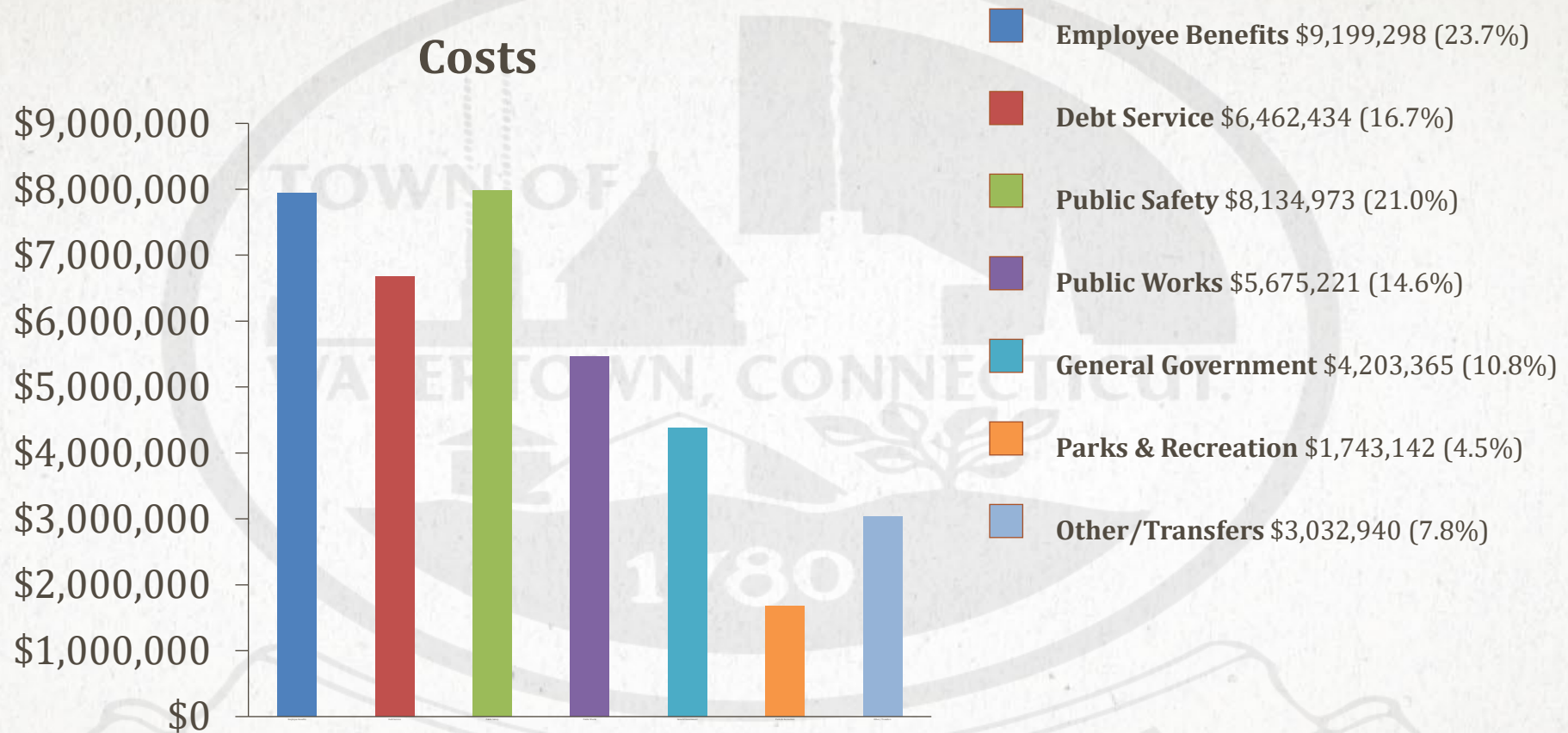
**Total Municipal Budget: \$40,071,355**

# Municipal Budget Composition (\$ - %)



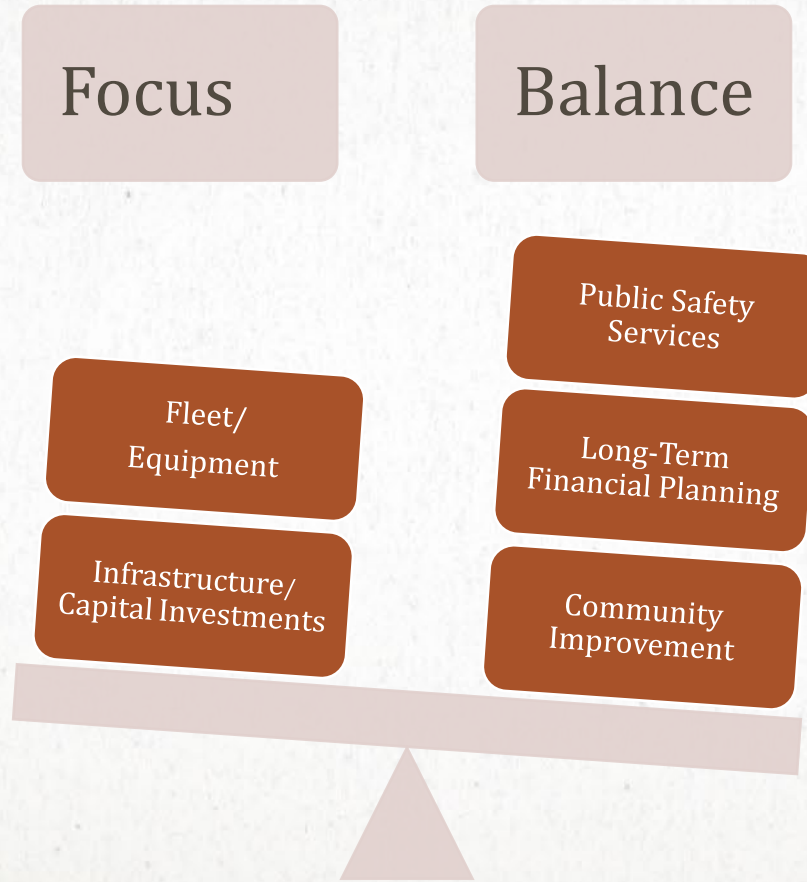
*Municipal spending is concentrated in Public Safety, Benefits, and Infrastructure-related functions.*

# Major Cost Drivers – Municipal Cost Comparison

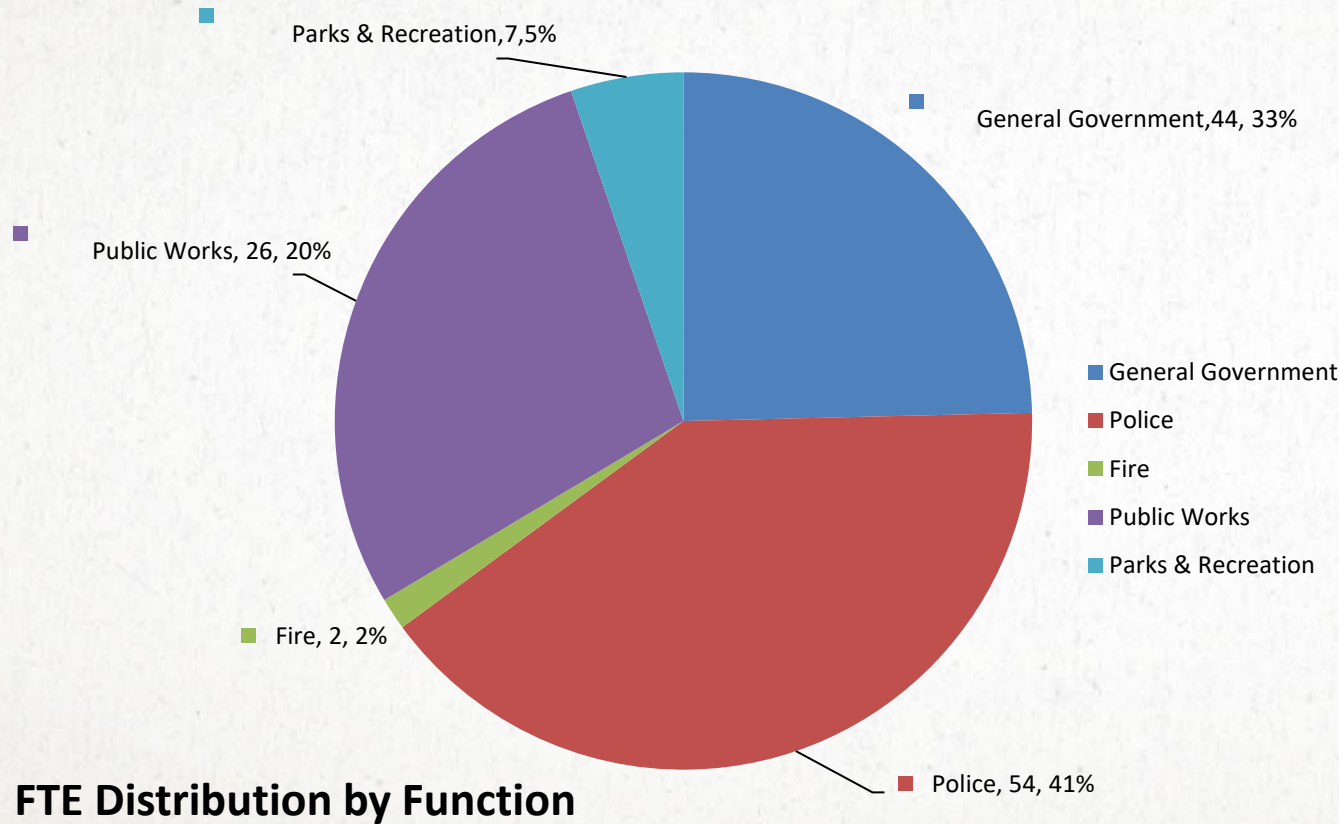


*Benefits, Public Safety, and Debt Service are the primary municipal cost drivers.*

# Major Areas of Investment

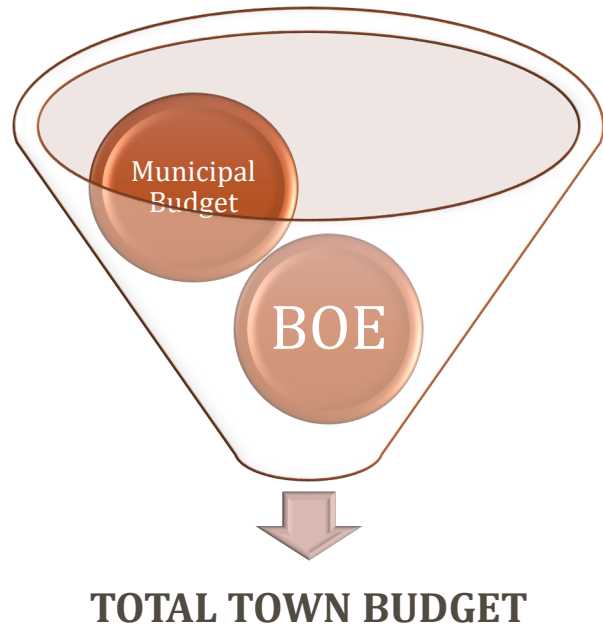


# MUNICIPAL STAFFING LEVELS FULL TIME EMPLOYEE – (FTE)



**Public Safety and Public Works represent the majority of municipal staffing.**

# CONNECTING THE WHOLE TOWN BUDGET



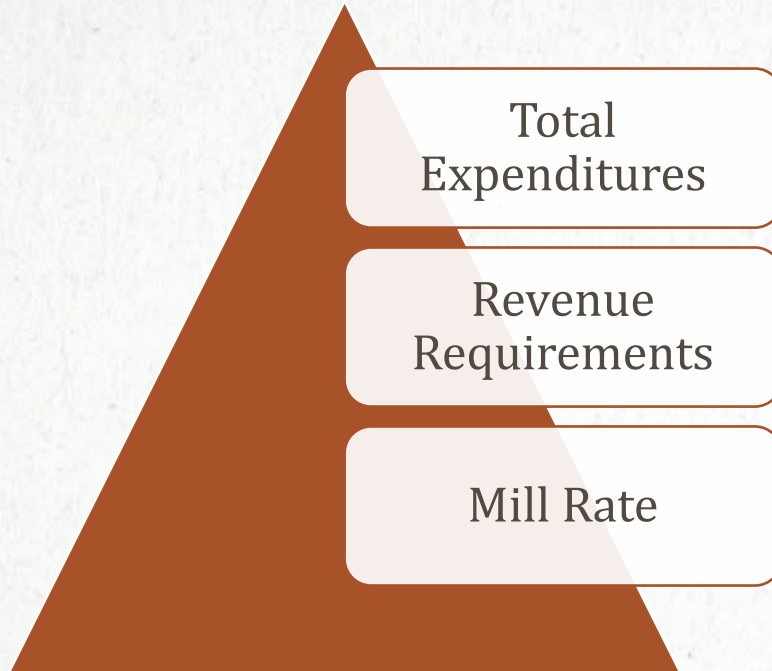
Each serves a distinct purpose:

- Education services
- Municipal services and infrastructure

*The Council reviews two budgets—but the taxpayer experiences one combined impact.*



# From Municipal Budget to Total Town Budget

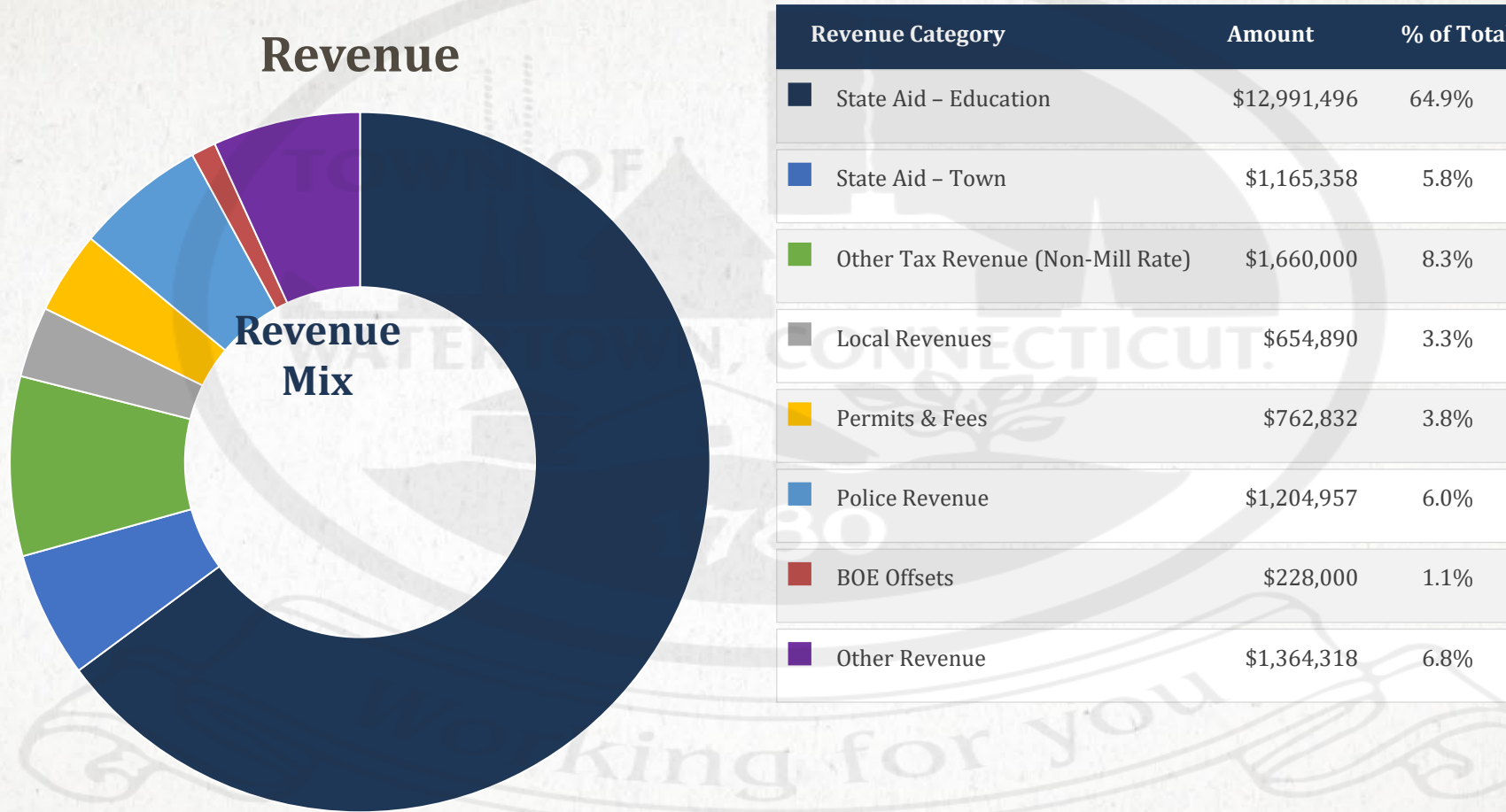


- Municipal Budget = services under direct Town operational control
- Board of Education = largest single component of total spending

*It is the combination of these two budgets that drives the final tax rate.*

# How the Total Town Budget is Funded

Revenue categories shown with dollar amount and percent of total.



*The Town has limited control over revenue growth, increasing reliance on the property tax to balance the budget.*

*State Aid - Education is the largest revenue source; all other revenues remain comparatively limited.*

# Revenue Constraints



- ❖ Limited non-tax revenue base
- ❖ State aid subject to external policy decisions
- ❖ Interest income is market-dependent
- ❖ Property tax remains the primary balancing mechanism

# Budget Snapshot – Total Town Budget



PERCENT CHANGE:

**4.34%**

INCREASE:

**\$4,162,139**

**Total Town Budget: \$100,083,317**

AVG HOUSE IMPACT:

**\$262.21**

MILL RATE IMPACT:

**1.07**

*Driven by contractual obligations, rising costs, and necessary infrastructure investment.*

# Fiscal Pressures Facing Municipal Government



**Inflation on materials and services**

**Rising equipment costs**

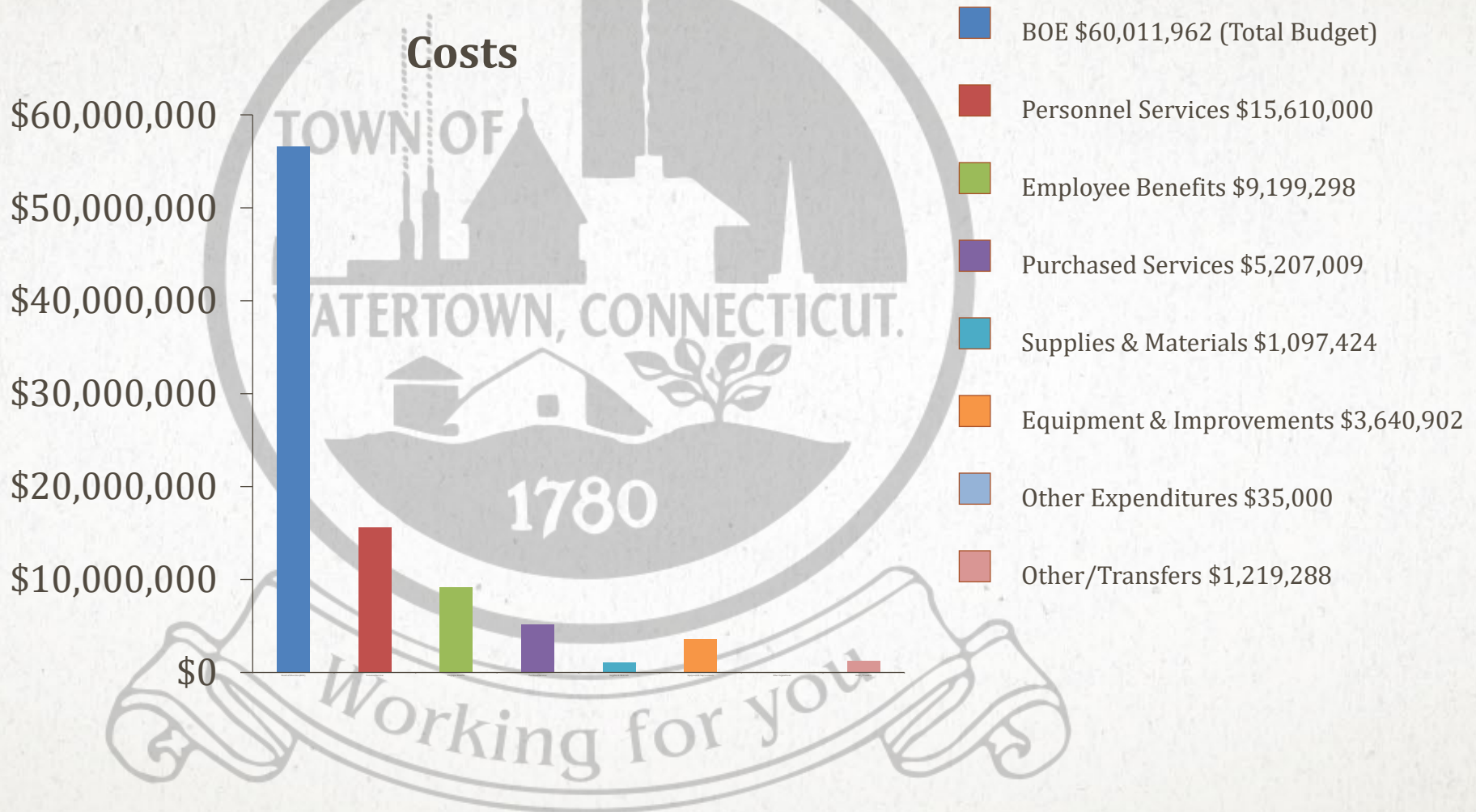
**Infrastructure construction costs**

**Health insurance increases**

**Contractual wage adjustments**

# Why Costs Increase

Total Town Cost Drivers (Municipal + BOE)



*Cost drivers remain consistent across both municipal and total Town budgets.*

# BEFORE ASKING FOR MORE...

## ACTIONS TAKEN BEFORE REQUESTING ADDITIONAL TAX IMPACT

### Direct Budget Reductions

1. Public Buildings Reduction
2. Employee Benefits Adjustment
3. Police Equipment Reduction
4. Parks Department Deferral
5. Delayed Non-Essential Spending
6. No Unnecessary Staffing Expansion

### Strategic Cost Controls

1. Highway Equipment Layering Strategy
2. Vehicle Replacement Restructuring
3. Use of Grant Offsets
4. Use of Truck Replacement Fund
5. Capital Timing Adjustments
6. Long-Term Cost Stabilization

*Before asking for additional taxpayer support, the Town reviewed reductions, delayed non-essential spending, leveraged outside funding, and restructured capital obligations to minimize tax impact.*

# INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TIMELINE



- **Past:** Deferred investment
- **Current:** Strategic reinvestment
- **Future:** Sustainable maintenance cycle
- **Goal:** Avoid costly deferred maintenance

# OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY



The Town has focused on improving efficiency through:

1. Process improvements
2. Technology modernization
3. Interdepartmental coordination
4. Responsible staffing levels

*Focus remains on delivering services efficiently without increasing staffing beyond operational need while maintaining service levels.*

# LEVERAGING GRANT FUNDING

## REDUCING TAXPAYER IMPACT THROUGH EXTERNAL FUNDING

### Strategic Funding Approach

- Identify priority infrastructure needs
- Complete design and project planning
- Pursue State and Federal grant opportunities
- Use ARPA strategically where appropriate
- Minimize General Fund burden

### Recent Major Investments

- Steele Brook Greenway
- Main Street Improvements
- Downtown Municipal Parking
- Communications Infrastructure Upgrade
- Community Connectivity Projects
- Highway Garage Improvements

*Grant funding allows the Town to advance critical infrastructure and community improvements while reducing direct impact on local taxpayers.*

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# **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE**

**CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE MODERNIZATION WITH MINIMAL GENERAL FUND IMPACT**

## **Funding Sources:**

**Total Project**

**Grant Funding: \$3.375M**

**Cost: \$4.8 Million**

**ARPA Allocation: \$1.25M**

**General Fund: \$256K**

*More than 90% of project costs were funded outside the General Fund.*

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# MAIN STREET INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC VITALITY

**Total Project Cost:**  
**\$7.5 Million**

**Funding Sources:**

**Grant Funding: \$3.0M**

**ARPA Allocation: \$1.0M**

**CTDOT Connectivity: \$800K**

**LOTICIP \$2,750,000**

*Infrastructure improvements strengthen pedestrian safety, downtown accessibility, and long-term economic development.*

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## WHAT THIS BUDGET ACHIEVES

- ✓ Maintains core services
- ✓ Advances infrastructure investment
- ✓ Balances fiscal discipline with community needs
- ✓ Supports long-term stability

*This budget reflects responsible stewardship—balancing today's needs with long-term stability.*

# RISKS & CONSIDERATIONS



- ❖ Volatility in interest and state aid
- ❖ Healthcare cost trajectory
- ❖ Capital cost escalation
- ❖ Limited flexibility due to fixed costs

# BUDGET SUMMARY



- ❖ Approximately 80% of costs are fixed or externally driven
- ❖ Limited flexibility within remaining budget
- ❖ Focus remains on service delivery and infrastructure
- ❖ Positions the Town for long-term financial stability

# NEXT STEPS



Public  
Hearing  
Feedback

Town  
Council  
Deliberation

Final  
Adjustments  
as Needed

Budget  
Referendum

Setting Mill  
Rate

**THANK YOU!**

**QUESTIONS!**

# APPENDIX / REFERENCE MATERIALS

1. Strategic Approach
2. Communications Project
3. Steele Brook Greenway
4. Main Street visuals
5. Economic Development



# STRATEGIC APPROACH MOVING FORWARD



# PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE

TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$4.8M





GRANT AND ARPA FUNDING COVERED OVER 90% OF TOTAL COST

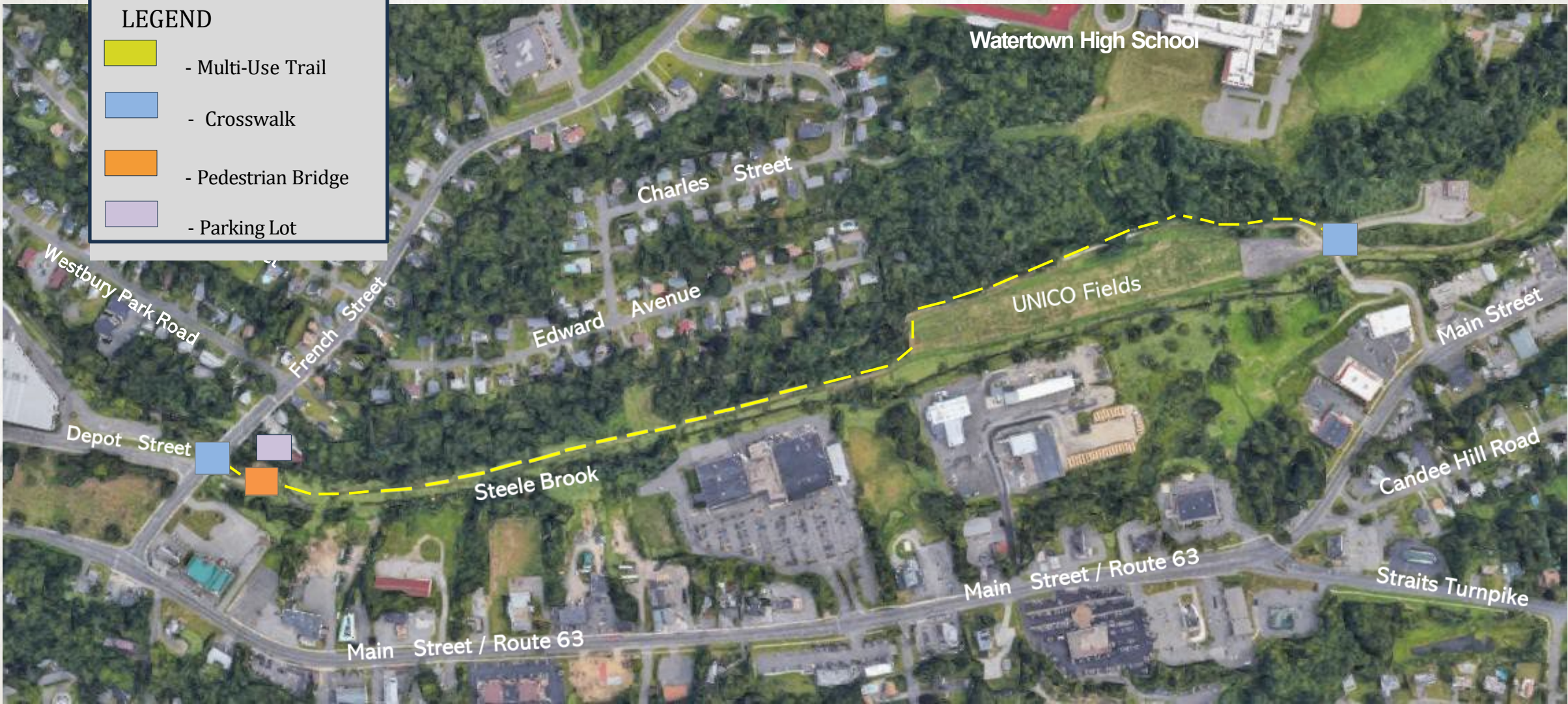


# STEELE BROOK GREENWAY - PROJECT AREA



**LEGEND**

-  - Multi-Use Trail
-  - Crosswalk
-  - Pedestrian Bridge
-  - Parking Lot





## Main St. Retaining Wall & Sidewalk Connection

Town of Watertown



- \$800,000 Community Connectivity Grant (CTDOT)
- Enhance pedestrian safety & connectivity between Woodruff Avenue and Starbucks
- Replacement/relocation of existing stone retaining wall
- 5-foot-wide ADA-accessible concrete sidewalk & ramps
- 5-foot-wide grass amenity strip for improved pedestrian comfort
- Coordination with Holy Disciples Parish & Catholic School (Formally St. John School)

# Main St – Watertown Corridor Aesthetics



After



Before

*These improvements enhance pedestrian safety while strengthening the overall economic vitality of the corridor*

# Main St – Watertown Corridor Aesthetics



After



Before

- *Brick paver sidewalk banding*
- *Replacement street trees*

# PROACTIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



*This growth expands the commercial tax base, helping to stabilize the residential tax burden.*