



BILL FINCH
Mayor

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Dear Members of the City Council,

I am honored to present the Proposed Budget for the City of Bridgeport for Fiscal Year 2015-16, for your review and consideration.

And, as the chief executive of our city, I'm focused on making smart investments in the future.

It's my job to think about the long run, and to make sure our city becomes a place where our kids and grandkids will choose to live, work, and raise their families, too. That's why I've been working hard to boost confidence in our city. And, we're on the right track. This city is on the way up.

The budget I'm presenting to you reflects that.

This budget includes no tax increase, no layoffs, and increase in funding for the Board of Education.

We're making smart workforce and service management decisions. Through collaborative efforts with our union partners, Bridgeport is making fiscally responsible choices on employee benefits. We have the highest employee share when compared to any other city.

Under my administration, we've removed 190 jobs from government payroll, using technology and efficiency measures while working closely with the private sector to grow jobs at businesses across the city.

And, we have reduced our reliance on temporary borrowing. Normally needed for cash flow purposes, we anticipate only one round borrowing necessary for cash flow needs. This is because we're getting stronger fiscally every day.

These fiscally responsible actions have been validated by Moody's Investors Service who improved its outlook for Bridgeport to stable from negative.

Investors and job creators are also taking notice of the positive direction our city is taking. As a result, our city's Grand List has once again grown this year.

After decades of broken promises, construction is finally happening at Steel Point. Starbucks, Bass Pro Shops, and Chipotle are all slated to open this fall.

Once complete, the 52-acre peninsula and surrounding properties on Long Island Sound will be home to 1,400 apartments, retail, hotels, a grocery store, and more.

It will create thousands of jobs while adding tens of millions of dollars to our tax rolls. There will be many more exciting announcements regarding Steelpointe Harbor in the coming months.

A short walk away from Steelpointe Harbor is our improving downtown.

It is now home to hundreds of new apartments, several new businesses, and a wealth of companies that are choosing to move back to the heart of our city.

Fletcher-Thompson, an architecture firm that was founded in Bridgeport more than one-hundred years ago, sadly left in 2002.

But after seeing the progress being made here, Fletcher-Thompson decided to come back, bringing with it 60 new jobs.

This is just one of many stories downtown that prove our city is on the verge of a major comeback.

Downtown North will soon to be home to hundreds of new apartments, all within walking distance of a train station, and the premiere sports and entertainment venue in Fairfield County.

We're also making progress on the East Bridgeport Development Corridor. The cornerstone of this revitalization project is Barnum Station, which will serve as our city's second Metro-North stop.

Barnum Station will be a catalyst for economic development in East Bridgeport, spurring job creation at Bridgeport Hospital and throughout the whole neighborhood.

In this budget, I am making an additional \$3.8 million available to Superintendent Rabinowitz and the Board of Education because I am committed to preparing Bridgeport kids to compete for the jobs of tomorrow.

When it comes to early childhood education, the research is clear: If kids aren't reading at the level they should be by third grade, they're less likely to graduate from high school.

Over the past year, we've added more than 360 new Pre-K seats in Bridgeport. That's more than any other city in Connecticut.

With these new seats, we're giving more than 3,800 Bridgeport kids a fair shot at a better future. And, there's more to come.

Soon, Bridgeport will become the first city in Connecticut to offer Universal Pre-K.

In this budget, we are investing towards Universal Pre-K.

We are also committed to living up to our name as the Park City.

In the Park City, our 46 parks total nearly 1,356 acres. Research clearly shows that properties located close to parkland have a higher value. According to a study by Fairfield University, residential properties within a 10th of a mile from a park in Bridgeport have an 8 percent higher value on average than properties in the next 10th of a mile away. And, commercial properties showed an 11 percent increase compared to the second 10th of a mile away.

That's why we're renovating old and opening new parks across the city. We re-opened Pleasure Beach for the first time in nearly two decades and 25,000 people visited the barrier island last year. In addition to our investments in Pleasure Beach – and all of our existing parks – we're building new parks across the Park City.

One of these is Knowlton Park, which sits where the Acme Shear Company used to be, and was long in need of regeneration. We also have a new beautiful new park on Virginia Avenue called Nob Hill Park. Improvements at sixteen different parks. Multiple districts will have new basketball courts, splash pads, playscapes, baseball and soccer fields across the city, giving our kids and grandkids safe places to play. Overall, there's been more than 140 acres of new or renovated parkland during my administration.

We've also added handicap access at parks across the city, including Beardsley Park and Puglio Park.

The new park serves as a catalyst for a nicer community, thriving businesses, higher quality of life in the neighborhood, and, giving hardworking Bridgeporters long overdue access to the waterfront. We've renovated and created over 100 acres of parkland on my watch, and we're just getting started.

The Park City is also dedicated to keeping Bridgeport kids and families safe and secure.

Our city is seeing its lowest crime rates in nearly a half-century. We've experienced a more significant drop in crime than any other city in New England. And, crime continues to decline.

There are many reasons for this, including our work with the re-entry community, which is aimed at making sure people are set up for success after serving time.

Bridgeport has the most diverse police department in the state. But I believe our police force must be even more representative of our community.

These efforts are critical to ensuring our police department and community are working together as one.

We've launched a major police recruiting effort. We're incentivizing Bridgeport residents to join this proud force and help make our city even safer.

I'm committed to making sure our police department is even more representative of our community.

My vision – our vision – for this city and its future, is already taking shape.

For example, today you can stand on the white sand of a re-opened, re-vitalized Pleasure Beach and look out onto Steel Point where development is finally happening.

There are new and improved views like this across the city, and many more to come as the city reclaims its waterfront.

Right now in Bridgeport:

- We're creating jobs.
- We're growing businesses.
- We're adding millions of dollars to our tax rolls.
- We're producing clean energy.
- We're ensuring our kids breathe cleaner air.
- We're making our city safer and more secure.
- And, we're making certain that our kids are learning in the right environment.

Together, we've accomplished a lot. And, there is so much more to come. But one thing is clear: This budget proposal clearly shows that Bridgeport is getting better every day.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Finch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Finch
Mayor of Bridgeport, Conn.

**FY 2015-2016 GENERAL FUND BUDGET
MAYOR'S TRANSMITTAL LETTER**

STATE & LOCAL ELECTORAL MANDATES	CORE OPERATIONS	ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO SUPPORT CORE OPERATIONS	QUALITY OF LIFE	NON- ESSENTIAL SERVICES
Board of Education (0)	Building & Zoning (19)	Archives (.5)	Department on Aging (7)	Airport (13)
City Clerk (6)	Economic & Community Development (21.5)	Central Grants (5)	Employee & Organizational Development (0)	Arena at Harbor Yard (0)
Ethics Commission (0)	Education & Nutrition (2141)	City Attorney (21)	Health & Social Services: Communicable Disease, Laboratory, Clinics, Parent Aide Program (10.5)	Beardsley Zoo (12)
Legislative Council (0)	Environmental Health & Licensure, Lead Prevention, Housing Inspections, Sanitation (46)	Finance (17)	Human Services (2)	Captain's Cove (0)
Mayor/CAO (17)	Fire (296)	Health Administration (6)	Libraries (53)	Fairchild Wheeler Golf Course (2)
Registrar of Voters (5)	Personnel Services: Civil Service, Benefits, Human Resources, Labor Relations (24)	Information Technology (14), Minority Business Resource Center (3)	Lighthouse Program (6)	Harbor Yard Stadium (0)
Town Clerk (7)	Police (492), Harbor Master (0)	Office of Policy & Management (6.5)	Persons with Disabilities (1)	Miscellaneous properties under 10,000 SF (0)
Vital Statistics (4.5)	Roadway, Facilities, Parks & Fleet Maintenance (94)	Public Facilities Administration (18), Engineering (6)	Parks & Recreation Administration (8)	Print Shop (6.5)
	Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (57)	Purchasing (6) Tax Assessor Collector, and Treasurer (26)	Veterans Affairs (2)	Weights & Measures (2)
3,482 TOTAL GENERAL FUND WORKFORCE				
39.5	3,190.5	129	87.5	35.5
PERCENTAGE OF GENERAL FUND WORKFORCE				
1.13%	91.63%	3.70%	2.51%	1.02%
PERCENTAGE OF WORKFORCE DELIVERING MANDATED, CORE & CORE-SUPPORTIVE OPERATIONS:				
96.47%				