



# Hartford Decide\$

*Your Ideas + Real Money = A Better City*



**ANNUAL**

**REPORT TO THE  
COMMUNITY**

2023-2024







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# Letter from the Board

We live in a time where it is both very easy to find ways to be engaged and simultaneously feel completely disengaged from our communities.

As evidenced by turnout rates alone, it is no secret that many Hartford voters feel overlooked by our political process. Building trust in our municipal systems is an ongoing project. It requires civic engagement from community members, as well as continued work, commitment to outcomes, and transparency from government leaders.

Hartford Decide\$ is one of many ways to get involved in the City. We acknowledge and celebrate the countless organizations, community groups, and civic leaders who continue to work to improve our City for its residents. We see our initiative as serving just a portion of this overall civic project, but it is important nonetheless.

For residents, Hartford Decide\$ offers the most direct way to have a say in the City budget and spending. Ideas originate from the community and are voted on by the community. This process grounds what often feels abstract or out of reach for those not directly working within City agencies. Furthermore, our process allows voices to be heard that are often missed through the usual democratic process. In particular, we reach students; anyone 10 years and older can vote. This means we can build civic engagement and excite the next generation of voters through direct results.

For City leaders, Hartford Decide\$ has been able to enhance existing priorities in Capital Project planning, as well as draw attention to ideas and initiatives that would otherwise have been missed. Through this report, we are committing to deepening our contribution to the City. Each year, we hear so much from community members: from their struggles to their dreams of how to make their experience of the City better. We aim to continue to be a resource to residents and City leaders alike, by communicating what we hear in the community and by demystifying the public process. Large-scale projects have many moving parts, require the involvement of various departments, and implementation timelines vary based on the greater puzzle of keeping our City running. When we talk in person with people and through this new yearly report, we hope to help connect the dots between vision and making ideas a reality.

The first step toward creating a better future is allowing ourselves to imagine what it can look like.

*The Hartford Decide\$ Team*

# Our Principles

## Mission statement:

To build an inclusive culture of community engagement in Hartford that strengthens social trust through a process of direct decision-making on a portion of the city's capital budget.

## Vision



**We envision a Hartford where residents and other stakeholders trust that their input will be listened to, valued, and acted upon to create a community where the dignity of every person is respected and where residents realize their power.**

### Transparency

Share information and make decisions about Hartford Decide\$ as openly as possible.

### Collaboration

Encourage neighborhoods, businesses, & community organizations to work together.

### Empower

Help Hartford residents to make decisions on the use of City capital funds set aside for Hartford Decide\$ projects.

### Civic Engagement

Increase participation by Hartford residents, especially those who have not previously been involved, in the civic life of the community.

### Unity

Bringing together individuals & neighborhoods, a sense of belonging to Hartford as a whole.

### Equity & Inclusiveness

Include people of all races, ethnicities, abilities, incomes, backgrounds, ages, genders, & neighborhoods equitably in Hartford Decide\$.

### Deliberation

Promote the sharing of perspectives & knowledge in order to collectively build ideas that connect community needs & challenges with community assets & aspirations.



# Hartford Decide\$

Your Ideas + Real Money = A Better City

Hartford Decide\$ is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that helps the residents of Hartford make decisions about how to improve their City through participatory budgeting.

## Meet the Team

We are a team consisting of a volunteer working board, one part-time employee, and a former board member who now serves as technical support. Our efforts are supported by resident volunteers and continued partnership with the City of Hartford's municipal agencies, commissions, and neighborhood organizations.



**Zoe Chatfield**  
President



**Naomi Ngoma**  
Vice-President



**M. Sagacity Walker**  
Secretary



**Frank Sentner**  
Treasurer



**Jared Chase**  
Assistant Treasurer



**Margie Arroyo**  
Board Member



**Evie Cartagena**  
Program Manager



**Joe Condren**  
Technical Support



**Richard Frieder**  
Board Member



**Heather Nelson**  
Board Member



**Graciela Rivera**  
Board Member



A silhouette of a city skyline with various buildings and a central dome, set against a dark green background.

# Our History

In early 2015, the City of Hartford and several civic organizations formed a partnership to launch Participatory Budgeting in Hartford, the first initiative of its kind in Connecticut. Named Hartford Decide\$, this process has engaged thousands of community members in brainstorming sessions, the development of proposals for capital improvements in the city, and public votes to determine which proposals will receive funding from the City's yearly Capital Improvement budget. Voting for Hartford Decide\$ projects is open to residents even if they are not registered voters or documented citizens.

**Anyone 10 years or older with a Hartford address gets to participate!**

## What is Participatory Budgeting?

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a different way to manage public money and engage people in government. It is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. It enables taxpayers to more directly influence decisions that affect their daily lives.

The process was first developed in Brazil in 1989, and there are now over 1,500 participatory budgeting initiatives around the world. Most of these are at the city level, for the municipal budget. PB has also been used, however, for counties, states, housing authorities, schools and school systems, universities, coalitions, and other public agencies.

Though each experience is different, most follow a similar basic process: residents brainstorm ideas, proposals are developed based on these ideas, residents vote on proposals, and the government implements the top projects.

The first Hartford Decide\$ project cycle began in the fiscal year 2016/2017. In 2021, Hartford Decide\$ became an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, with the goal of better organizing and sustaining the yearly process efforts.

**Funds awarded by the City of Hartford go directly to (and only to) the implementation of winning project proposals.** The operations of Hartford Decide\$ are funded through grants, as well as from donations by board and community members. Operating as a nonprofit organization has allowed us to pay part-time staff and allocate funds for enhanced community engagement events and strategies.

### During the past 7 project cycles, Hartford Decide\$ has:

- Collected hundreds of project ideas
- Gathered 3,924 resident votes for 49 projects
- Helped residents decide how the City should spend over \$1.2 million for these resident-led initiatives
- Received an allocation of \$100,000 for fiscal year 2024-25 from the City's Capital Improvement Budget for new resident-led projects!

As we look to the future, we plan to deepen our grant and fundraising efforts as part of our capacity building approach. This will allow us to pay more staff and host bigger, better community engagement events. If you're interested in donating, visit our website: [www.hartforddecides.org](http://www.hartforddecides.org).







# Hartford Decide\$

Your Ideas + Real Money = A Better City

## CYCLE TIMELINE 2023-2024

SEPTEMBER 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

**BRAINSTORMING & IDEA COLLECTION**

FEBRUARY 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

MARCH 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

MAY 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

**VOTING**

JUNE 2024						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

**Voting took place for the whole month of June.**

# OUR PROCESS



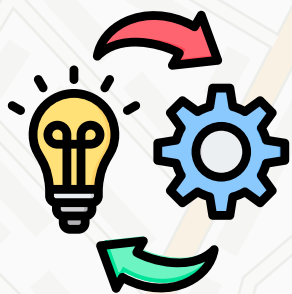
## Idea Collection

HD\$ hosts community brainstorming sessions and collects ideas from residents in person and online.



## Proposal Development

Community gets together to refine the project ideas to align with guidelines & prepare it for the ballot.



## Implementation

The winning proposals get ready to be implemented by the City. Then the cycle restarts!



## Voting

HD\$ hosts online and in-person voting events. Hartford residents 10-years and older can vote.



# IDEA COLLECTION

We collect ideas in a variety of ways to make the process as accessible and inclusive as possible. We host in-person brainstorming sessions and on-the-spot idea collection, bringing the process directly to you at community centers, churches, libraries, and even local businesses. We also offer online and mobile submissions in both Spanish and English, with plans to expand into more languages. Our goal is to meet people where they are—whether in person or online—to ensure everyone has a voice in shaping their community.

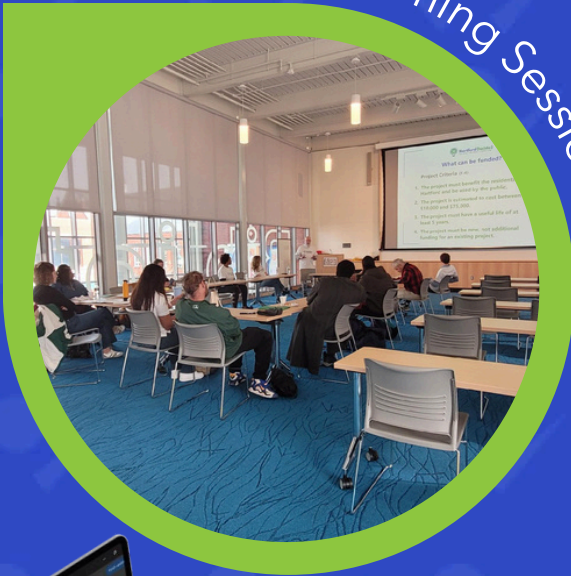
2023-2024 Cycle

30 Events Held

31 Ideas Collected

7 Eligible Projects

Brainstorming Sessions



Informational Workshops



Mobile + Online Submissions



On-site Idea Collection

# VOTING

We also make voting easy and accessible. You can vote in person at community centers, libraries, and local businesses, or find us at major city events. Online and mobile voting is available in Spanish and English, with more languages coming soon. We meet people where they are to ensure everyone has a say in the outcomes.

In-Person Voting



Online + Mobile Voting



## Engaging the Community

### Social Media:

Online informational content and communication.

Hartford PB

### Community Events:

Hosted interactive tabling events, workshops, and brainstorming sessions.

Hartford PB

### Expanded Outreach:

Increased in-person and digital outreach efforts to reach more residents.

Hartford PB

### Bilingual Inclusion:

Ensured materials, events, and communication were accessible in both English and Spanish.

Hartford PB

**Project Champions:** are partners who submit an idea and see it through the full process.

Hartford PB

**Collaborations:** Partnered with local organizations, schools, and churches to expand reach.

Hartford PB





For the 2023 - 2024 ballot we had...

**\$100,000**

Project	Cost	Location(s)	Description
<b>Safer Crosswalks at Bushnell Park</b>	\$65,000	Pulaski Circle	Pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalk lights at the entrances and exists of Pulaski Circle.
<b>Volleyball Court</b>	\$75,000	Parker Memorial Community Center	Install a volleyball court at Parker Memorial in the field adjacent to the basketball court.
<b>Bus Stop Enhancements</b>	\$42,000	City-Wide	Installation of concrete-paved boarding areas adjacent to the curb, benches, and new signs at 7 bus route stops (14 installations total, for both sides of the street).
<b>Chess Tables and Benches</b>	\$65,000	Lozada Park, Waverly Park, Cronin Park, Sigourney Square Park	Installation of two chess tables and benches, secured to concrete slabs, per proposed park location.
<b>Outdoor Games</b>	\$40,000	Bond Street Parkette	Create an intergenerational community space at Bond Street Parkette with giant outdoor games, including an ADA-compliant tic-tac-toe panel, percussion panel, and ball maze.
<b>YOUMedia ESports with VR Experience Intergration</b>	\$75,000	Downtown Public Library with Mobile Cart for other branch locations	This initiative would combine trending educational technology with the world of ESports, which would include a Virtual Reality Educational Technology cart.
<b>Video Pothole Detection System Powered by AI</b>	\$10,000	Two City of Hartford Garbage Trucks or Street Sweepers	This would add more pothole detection systems to what the Department of Public Works has already, allowing for two additional vehicles to have the equipment.

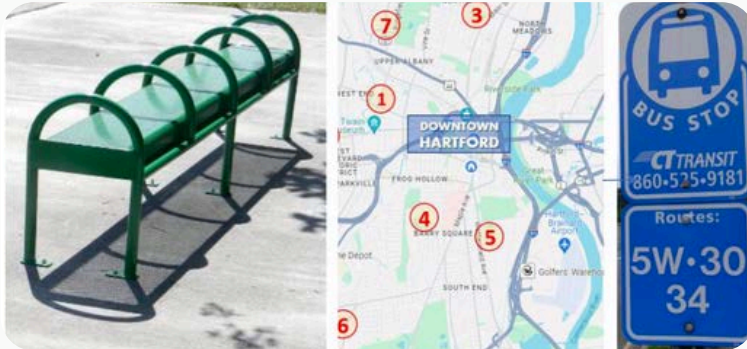
**AND THE WINNERS WERE...**

# YOU DECIDED!

## 2023-2024 WINNERS

# 1st

### BUS STOP ENHANCEMENTS



Adding seating and concrete-paved boarding areas at bus stops will improve accessibility, ease snow clearance, and enhance the transit experience for all, especially those with mobility challenges or carrying heavy loads.

# 2nd

### SAFER CROSSWALKS

Installation of pedestrian-activated flashing crosswalk lights at Pulaski Circle's Hudson and Elm Street entrances to improve safety. Currently, only Stop and Yield signs control traffic, leading to frequent near-misses and accidents as drivers struggle to see pedestrians in time.

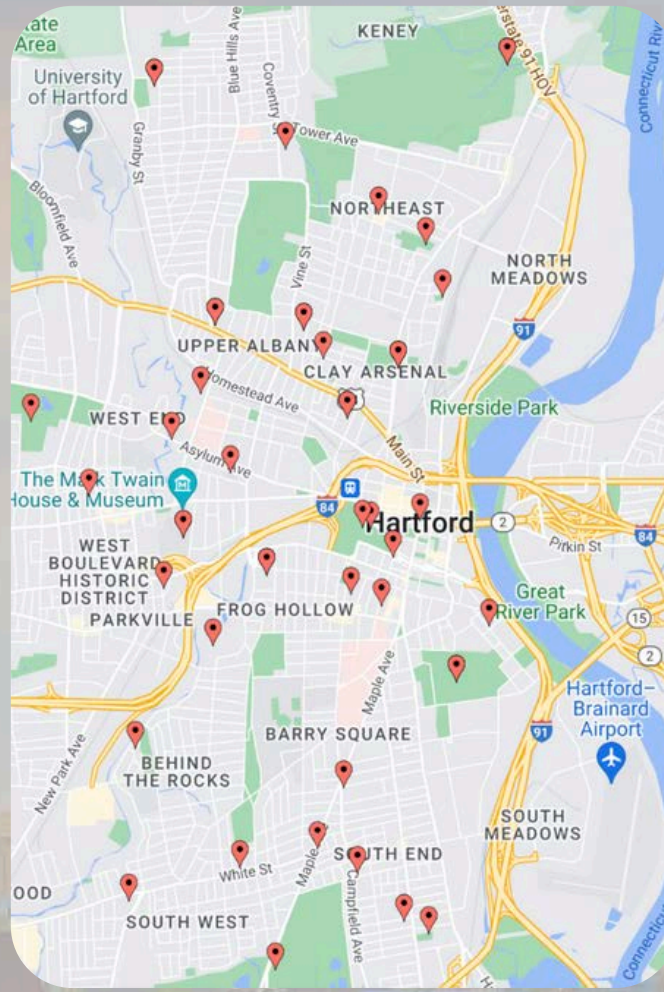


These projects received the highest number of votes.



# Projects to Date

**Hartford Decide\$ winning projects are located in all parts of the city. Winning projects are at different stages of completion. Our team works to track implementation progress.**



Check out Some of the Past Winning Projects!

## Listing of Hartford Decide\$ Project Installations and their Locations

1	Paint the City	Achievement First School, 305 Greenfield	25	Laptops for Learning	HPL - Albany Branch, 1250 Albany Ave.
2	Paint the City	Breakthrough II School, 395 Lyme St.	26	Laptops for Learning	HPL - Barbour Branch, 261 Barbour St.
3	Paint the City	Burns Latino Academy, 195 Putnam St.	27	Keney Park Fitness Trail	Keney Park
4	Paint the City	Hartford Adult Ed., 110 Washington St.	28	Urban Thinkscapes	HPL - Albany Branch, 1250 Albany Ave.
5	Paint the City	Kennelly School, 180 White St.	29	Urban Thinkscapes	HPL - Campfield Branch, 30 Campfield Ave.
6	Paint the City	McKinney Shelter, 34 Huyshope Ave.	30	Winterfest Ice Rink Enhancements	Bushnell Park Ice Rink
7	Paint the City	Metzner Early Learning, 680 Franklin Ave.	31	Wallace Stevens Bridge Repairs	Wallace Stevens Bridge, 1135 Asylum Ave.
8	Paint the City	Parker Memorial Center, 2621 Main St.	32	Tree Beautification for Schools	S.A.N.D. School, 1750 Main St.
9	Paint the City	West Middle School, 44 Niles St.	33	Tree Beautification for Schools	Breakthrough Magnet, 290 Brookfield St.
10	Paint the City	Willie Ware Center, 697 Windsor St.	34	Tree Beautification for Schools	Global Comms. Academy, 85 Edwards St.
11	Hartford Community Gardens	Hartford High School, 55 Forest St.	35	Tree Beautification for Schools	Thirman Milner School, 104 Vine St.
12	Hartford Community Gardens	Ramon Quiros Park, 356 Hudson St.	36	Tree Beautification for Schools	Noah Webster Magnet School, 5 Cone St.
13	Security Cameras at Senior Centers	NE Senior Center, 80 Coventry St.	37	Hydroponic Little Living Pantry Garden	Empty Lot at Corner of Garden & Mather
14	Security Cameras at Senior Centers	SE Senior Center, 830 Maple Ave.	38	Solar Digital Device Chargers in Parks	Keney Park
15	Improving Park Lighting	Colt Park	39	Solar Digital Device Chargers in Parks	Brackett Park
16	Improving Park Lighting	Elizabeth Park (East loop)	40	Solar Digital Device Chargers in Parks	Bushnell Park
17	Improving Park Lighting	Goodwin Park	41	Solar Digital Device Chargers in Parks	George Day Playground
18	Improving Park Lighting	Keney Woodland Park	42	Solar Digital Device Chargers in Parks	Colt Park
19	Improving Park Lighting	Pope Park	43	Tree Plantings for Schools	Bulkeley High School, 395 Lyme St.
20	Keep Kids Cool	Batchelder School, 757 New Britain Ave.	44	Tree Plantings for Schools	Burns Latino Academy, 195 Putnam St.
21	Keep Kids Cool	Hartford High School, 55 Forest St.	45	Tree Plantings for Schools	Dwight Bellizzi Academy, 218 South St.
22	Keep Kids Cool	Global Comms. Academy, 85 Edwards St.	46	S.A.N.D. Basketball Court Revitalization	S.A.N.D. School, 1750 Main St.
23	Keep Kids Cool	S.A.N.D. School, 1750 Main St.	47	Naylor Soccer Field Improvements	Naylor School, 639 Franklin Ave.
24	Keep Kids Cool	Wish School, 104 Vine St.			



A purple-tinted photograph of a brick wall, likely part of the Wallace Stevens Bridge.

**Wallace  
Stevens Bridge  
Sidewalk  
Repairs**

Year 4

A vibrant, colorful mural of a Native American figure, part of the 'Paint the City' project.

**Paint the City**  
Year 1

A photograph of people using outdoor fitness equipment at Keney Park.

**Keney Park  
Fitness Trail**

Year 3

A group of people, including children, gathered around laptops in a library or classroom setting.

**Laptops for  
Learning**

Year 2

A photograph of a glowing street lamp at night, with autumn leaves in the foreground.

**Lighting in Parks**

Year 1

A woman in a red shirt tending to plants in a hydroponic system.

**Hydroponic  
"Little Living  
Pantry"**

Year 5

A blue-tinted photograph of people ice skating.

**Ice Rink  
Upgrades**

Year 3

A group of people, including children, participating in a tree-planting activity.

**Keep Kids Cool**

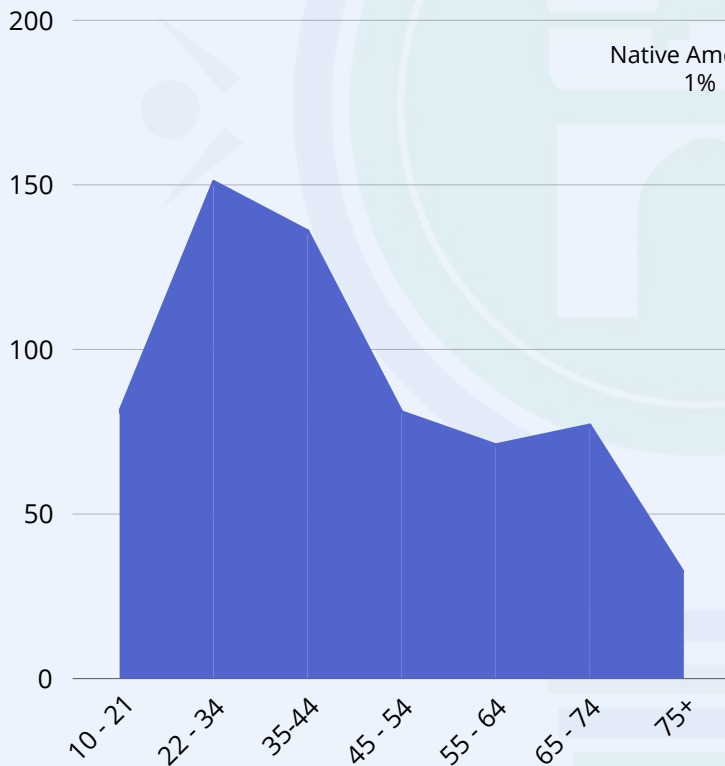
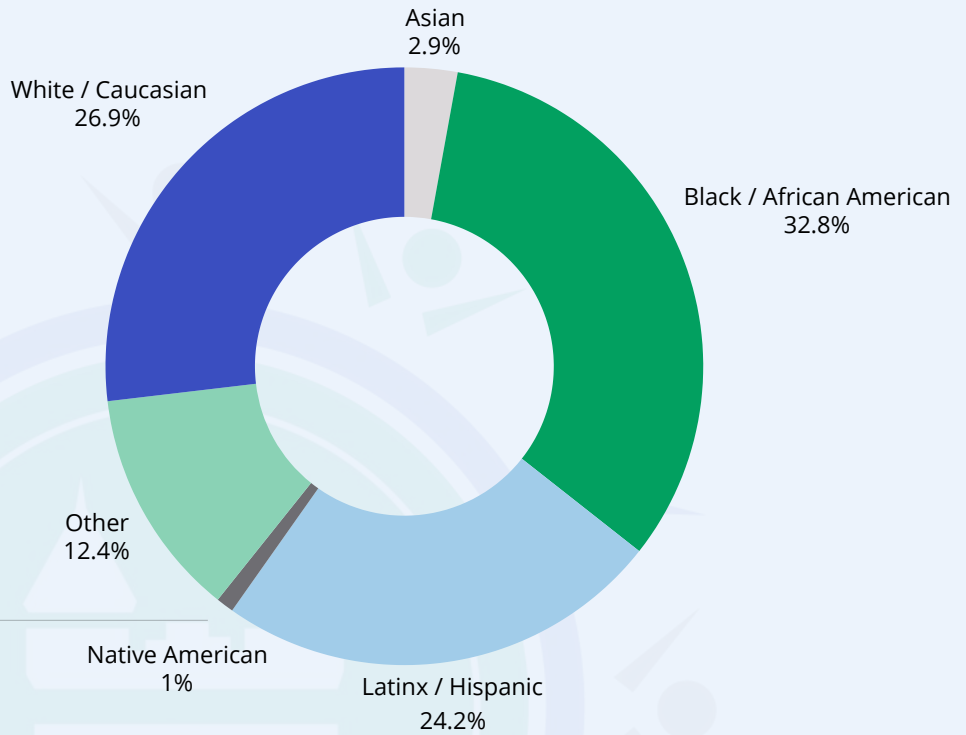
Year 2



# June 2024 Voters

## Demographics of our Participants

### Race/Ethnicity



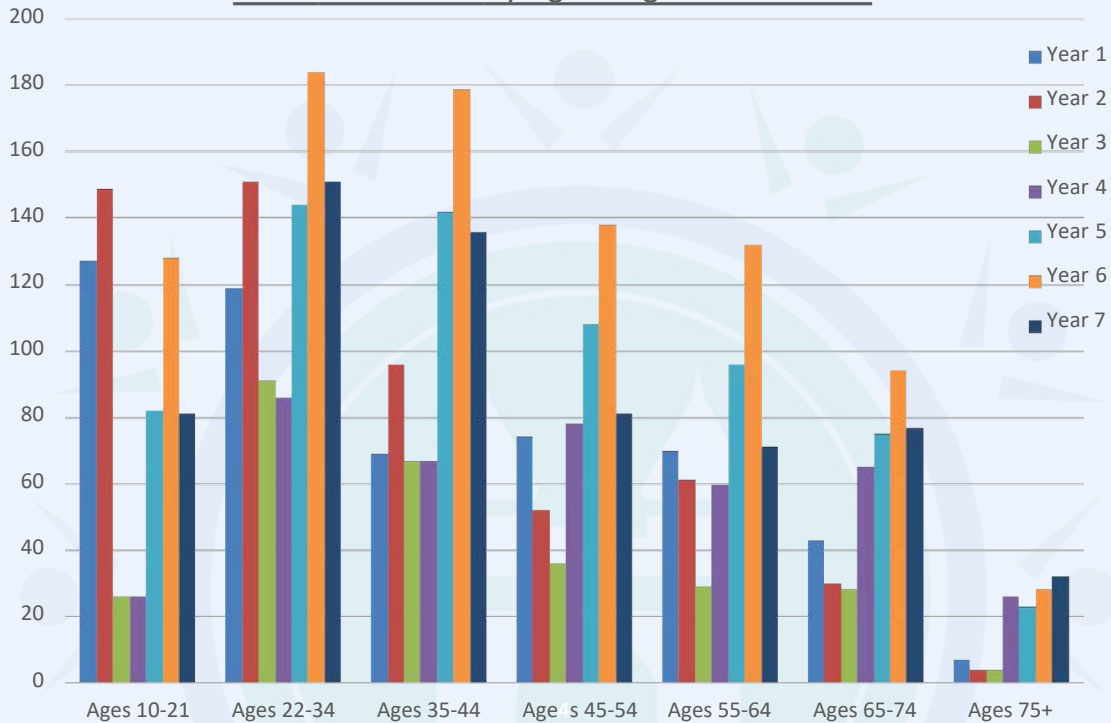
### Voter Age

**This year, we collected 629 Votes from Hartford residents in the month of June.**

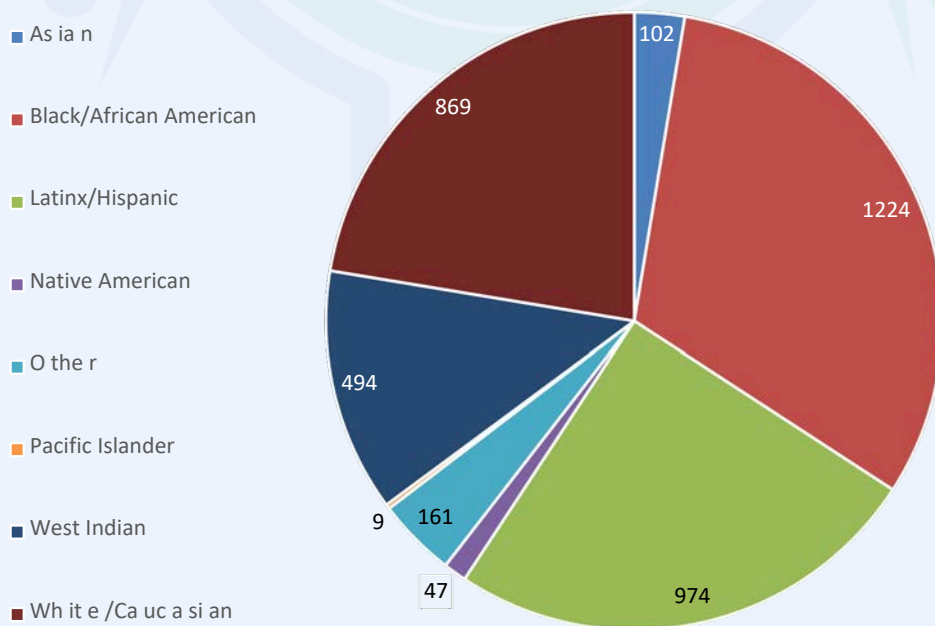
# Over the Years

## Demographics of our Participants

Voter Distribution by Age Range for each Year



Voter Distribution by Race/Ethnicity for all 7 Years



# All About the Funds

## How Does the Money Work?

Each year, the Mayor and City Council develop and vote on the City's budget, designating a portion of **Capital Improvement Funds** specifically for implementing winning Hartford Decide\$ projects. This presents an annual opportunity to advocate for increased funding for Participatory Budgeting!

If you want to see a larger budget allocation for Hartford Decide\$ winning projects, consider reaching out to City Council and the Mayor's Office via email or speaking at public hearings during council meetings. You can also visit our website at [www.hartforddecides.org](http://www.hartforddecides.org) and click on "**Tell the City**" to take action.



### The City manages the money for project funds.

The City oversees CIP funds, distributing them to the appropriate agencies, such as the Department of Public Works or Hartford Public Library, when a project wins the votes for implementation.

## What are Capital Improvement Project Funds? (CIP)

Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Funds are used to improve Hartford's public spaces by adding new structures or upgrades. These projects go beyond routine repairs and must last at least five years.

Examples of past Hartford Decide\$ Capital Improvement Projects include:

- Planting trees at public schools
- Painting and installing murals on city-owned property
- Adding features like warming igloos and skating aids to a free public ice-skating rink



## Project Criteria for CIP

What kinds of project ideas can be funded? We help develop ideas based on the following requirements set by the City:

- The project must construct, expand, modify, rehabilitate, or purchase equipment for a City-owned space or place.
- The project must benefit the residents of Hartford.
- The project must have a useful life of at least 5 years.
- The project must address a community need or problem.
- The project is a new project and not part of any City project already in development.
- The project can be implemented by the City of Hartford.

## How Does Hartford Decide\$ Get Funded?

Hartford Decide\$ is funded through grants from organizations like Travelers and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, covering administrative costs, outreach, program expenses, and staff compensation. The money set aside for participatory budgeting is never touched by our organization, ensuring full transparency and community control over project funding.

### Funding Available During 2023-2024 Cycle

Funding Source	Amount
<b>Traveler's Foundation</b>	\$15,000
<b>The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving</b>	\$33,333



### How We Use Our Funds

#### Administrative Costs

- Website hosting and domain fees
- Phone
- Office supplies
- Software & subscriptions
- Accounting & legal services
- Storage space costs
- Insurance

#### Community Outreach Materials

- Printing costs (flyers, posters, brochures)
- Digital ads & social media promotions
- Event banners & signage
- Giveaway items
- Tabling materials (tablecloths, displays, clipboards)

#### Program Costs

- Venue rentals
- Workshop materials
- Engagement technology (voting tools, tablets, microphones)
- Stipends for community facilitators
- Refreshments

#### Paying Staff

- Salaries or stipends for full-time/part-time staff
- Contractor payments (graphic design, evaluation, consultants etc.)
- Payroll taxes and benefits (if applicable)
- Professional development and training

# Growing from Within:

## Strengthening Our Foundation

### Civic Mind Evaluation (2023)

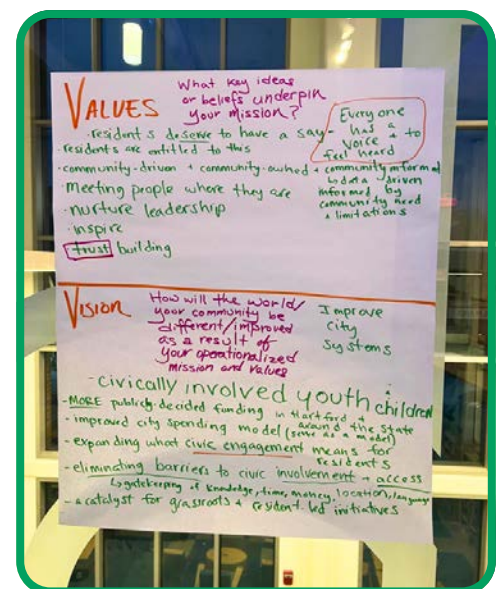
In 2023, we enlisted the Hartford-based Civic Mind to evaluate the impact of our civic engagement work. Drawing from academic literature to analyze three subcategories of community engagement and understanding: (a) civic learning, (b) civic empowerment, and (c) civic opportunities, the broad questions posed were:

- What are the effects of HD\$ on voters' knowledge of and/or attitude toward city government, budgeting, and infrastructure needs?
- To what extent do voters feel HD\$ gives them a voice in shaping local priorities and decisions?
- To what extent does HD\$ grow trust or confidence in responsiveness and/or reliability of public governance?

These questions were posed to residents that had participated in past Hartford Decide\$ votes and to residents who had not previously participated. The difference in response results between these groups provided encouraging validation of a relationship between engagement in Hartford Decide\$ and residents' levels of confidence, agency, and engagement in other civic activities. It also helped inform our strategies to improve and deepen the impact of our work.

### Board Retreat (2024)

In February, our board retreat, led by racial justice educator Derek Hall, brought old and new members together to reflect on Hartford Decide\$' mission & vision. This strengthened our foundation and led to the formation of three committees focused on community engagement, funding, and tracking past project implementation.



# REPORT TO THE CITY

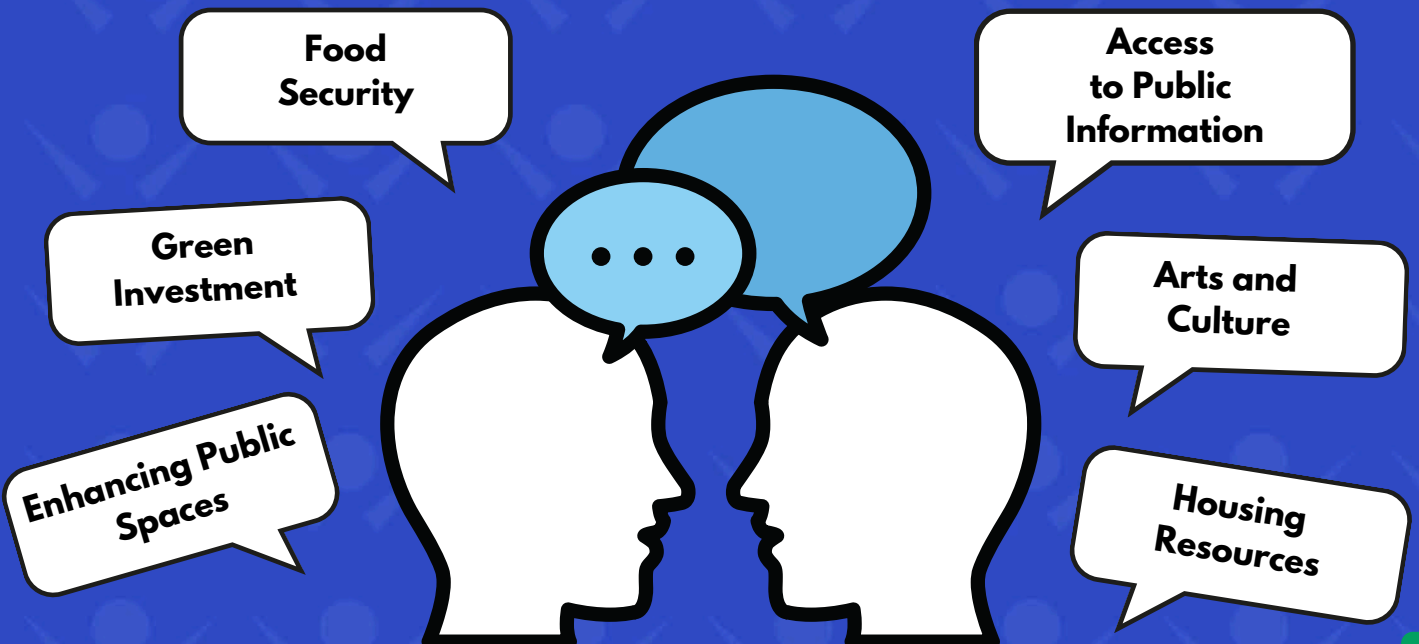
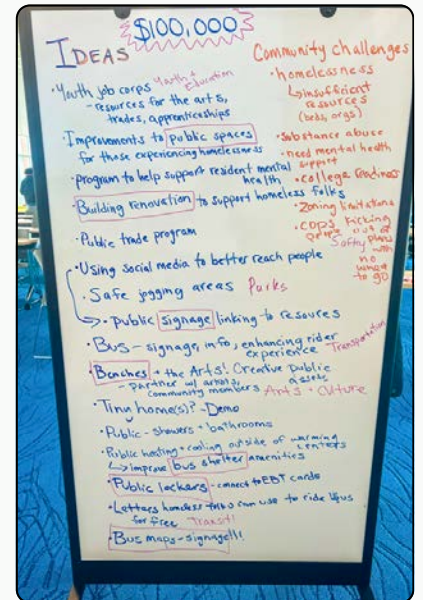


## What we learned from the community.

As an organization that bridges city agencies and residents, we use our community brainstorming sessions not only to gather insights for the projects we develop but also to report on broader issues raised by community members.

We all have needs and dreams for a better city. While not everything can be addressed through the Hartford Decide\$ process and Capital Improvement Funds, many concerns can be tackled by the city, the state, other organizations, or resident-led efforts.

“Report to the City” is a collection of community voices that brings attention to deeper issues in Hartford—ones that extend beyond individual projects and reflect broader, systemic challenges. Addressing these concerns will require leadership and action from the City.





# What We Learned

## Housing Needs

### Project idea: Storage lockers

This past brainstorming cycle, we heard a lot about the concern for **accessing housing and resources** for those experiencing homelessness. We began developing a project idea that did not make it on the ballot, but wanted to share the progress that was made.



The idea stemmed from discussions about how difficult it can be when you don't have anywhere to store the items you have while experiencing housing instability. This resulted in the idea to have storage lockers at the local library, as the library already serves as an important resource for residents. We spoke with Councilwoman Marilyn Rossetti, who also works as the Chief Executive Officer at The Open Hearth, a nonprofit dedicated to helping men experiencing homelessness, for her insights and ideas. Then we spoke with staff at the Park Street Branch of the Hartford Public Library for their thoughts.

With these conversations, the idea evolved into a vision for a program that would provide lockers to address an immediate need (storage for basic personal items) as well as a pipeline to other resources and information that folks either are not aware of or have felt discouraged by in past experiences. Many community members feel a sense of trust in libraries that they don't feel with other organizations. This trust allows for outreach to those currently being missed in the broader resource network.

This project did not end up on the ballot, as we determined it would require some further conversation and planning with the library to implement the full scope of the proposed program.

## Housing Resources

We are committed to helping our community by sharing what we hear from residents with the city, and to sharing existing resources back to residents.

### If you are in need of housing support, take a look at these resources:

- 211 of Connecticut
- Chrysalis Center
- Community Renewal Team
- Hands on Hartford
- House of Bread
- Housing Authority of the City of Hartford
- ImmaCare
- Journey Home
- Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation
- Mutual Housing Association of Greater Hartford
- My Sisters' Place
- The Open Hearth
- The Space Between program at Center Church
- South Park Inn
- YWCA Hartford's Soromundi Tower

## Food Security & Green Investment

Residents have strong interest in expanding the food options in the city, both with access to healthy food through community gardens, and interest in a new supermarket. Folks want better proximity to a variety of foods, and feel many areas in Hartford are “food deserts.” Opening a **new grocery store** is beyond the scope of a Hartford Decide\$ project, but planning for better grocery access can be incorporated into how City Hall approaches economic development initiatives.

A **community garden** is more within the scope of Hartford Decide\$, but we also know there are several existing community garden locations already around the city that sometimes go underutilized. This is an opportunity to highlight existing assets in our city and spread the word. There are 21 existing community gardens around Hartford, managed by nonprofit city partner, Knox.

Learn more here: <https://knoxhartford.org/community-gardens/>

An exciting final idea that arose in these types of discussions centered around **compost**. This year, we received two ideas around developing a composting program. One would create mulch and function in tandem with an existing community garden. The other idea was the purchase of a “Rocket composter” for a school.

## Enhancing our Public Spaces

### Increasing Access to Public Information

Hartford residents have a desire to feel connected to what’s happening in the city. Through resident-led discussions, we arrived at the idea of public information kiosks, where folks can search for a variety of things from upcoming events in the city, to locations of key municipal offices, to necessary resources for those experiencing housing and food insecurity.



**Project idea:**  
**Digital information kiosks**  
This idea was to install digital kiosks at key neighborhood hubs around the city that could provide a host of city-related information, from questions you may have as a Hartford resident related to trash days or parking bans, to upcoming local events and nearby local dining.

### Keeping Our Neighborhoods Safe & Clean

Residents have many ideas and desires for how to improve neighborhood quality of life. This includes preventing litter, cleaning up trash on the street, fixing sidewalks and pot holes, and encouraging clean up from dog walking.

#### Vacant Properties

A conversation that arose in terms of promoting neighborhood clean up and quality of life was the issue of abandoned and deteriorating properties. Residents asked what can be done to address this issue, as it is not one that is within the scope of Hartford Decide\$ work. One general idea that someone brought up was to have a strategy for incentivizing property owners to clean up abandoned properties.



## Enhancing our Public Spaces

### Arts, Culture, and Events

Hartford is home to many artists, cultural organizations, and a vibrant fabric of creativity and community events. However, many residents have expressed desire for increased investment in arts and culture. Ideas have included:

- Places to perform live music, theater, and dance; like a public stage that can be utilized by local artists. One specific request was for more public places to enjoy live music in the North End
- Plazas/areas for markets and similar community events, with covered areas (gazebos, pavilions) to allow for more year-round outdoor events
- A mural of former Hartford Mayor Carrie Saxon Perry, the first Black woman to be elected mayor of a major New England city

### Parks and Recreation

The City of Hartford has a wealth of green spaces, which already include playgrounds, pools, and areas for sports. However, Hartford residents have identified parks and parklets in need of more investment, as well as proposed ideas to continue to enhance an already amazing city asset. Here are some ideas that arose:

- More splash pads; renovate the splash pad at Waverly Park
- Interest in various sports equipment and spaces: baseball, football, soccer, skateboarding
- River walk investment for the Park River.

#### **Project idea: Dog Park**

During a brainstorming session, a resident was interested in seeing a dog park in the North End / Albany Avenue area. The city is currently conducting a study related to the desire for and implementation of a dog park in the Downtown area. We are waiting on the results of this research.



## Improved Streets and Transportation

Safe streets and improved transportation emerged as a major theme this year. Discussions ranged from pedestrian safety to bike accommodations to improving the bus experience. Here are two major ideas that arose and didn't make it on the ballot:

- **More bike racks in Downtown and on commercial strips in general. Many areas with shops and restaurants lack bike racks, making it difficult to find a spot to lock up your bike and enjoy the local food and retail. This also discourages folks from planning to go to activities on their bikes because they don't have secure places to leave them.**
- **Large maps and navigational aid at bus stops to make it easier for folks new to the bus system or without their cell phones. We learned through conversations with CT Transit and the Connecticut Department of Transportation that they are in the process of developing better signage and way-finding materials statewide. We're looking forward to seeing these improvements take shape!**



**Our winning projects demonstrate that these issues are important in our community. We're so happy to see these ideas funded, but there's more to do.**



# Got Ideas?

Got an exciting idea? Jot it down here so it's ready for submission for our next cycle!

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook or visit our website to stay tuned.

**Project Name/Idea:** *(What's your idea? Give it a name or short description)*

**What problem does it solve?** *(Tell us how your idea helps the community)*

**Who benefits from this idea?** *(Is it for kids, seniors, everyone?)*

**Do You have a location in mind?**

# LET'S SHAPE HARTFORD TOGETHER!

## Got Ideas?



[www.hartforddecides.org](http://www.hartforddecides.org)



Hartford Decide\$



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