

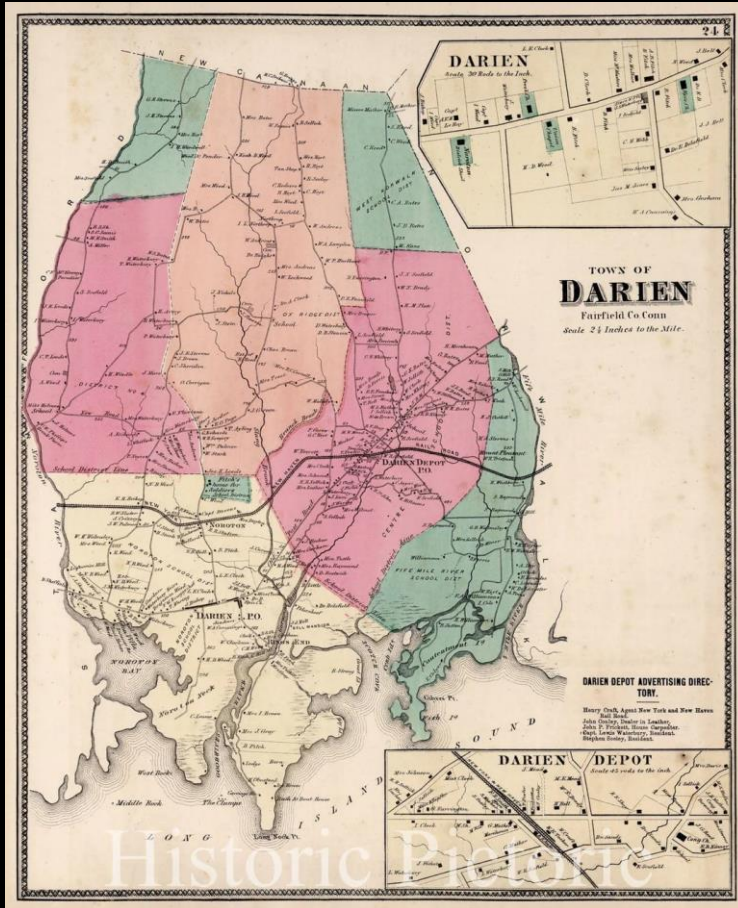


# **State of the Town**

**Jon Zagrodzky**  
*First Selectman*

*February 26, 2025*

# Topics



General State of the Town

Great Island

Town debt

Looking ahead



**“And should there be a sudden loss of consciousness during this presentation, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling.”**

# General State of the Town

## Positives

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Top-rated school system

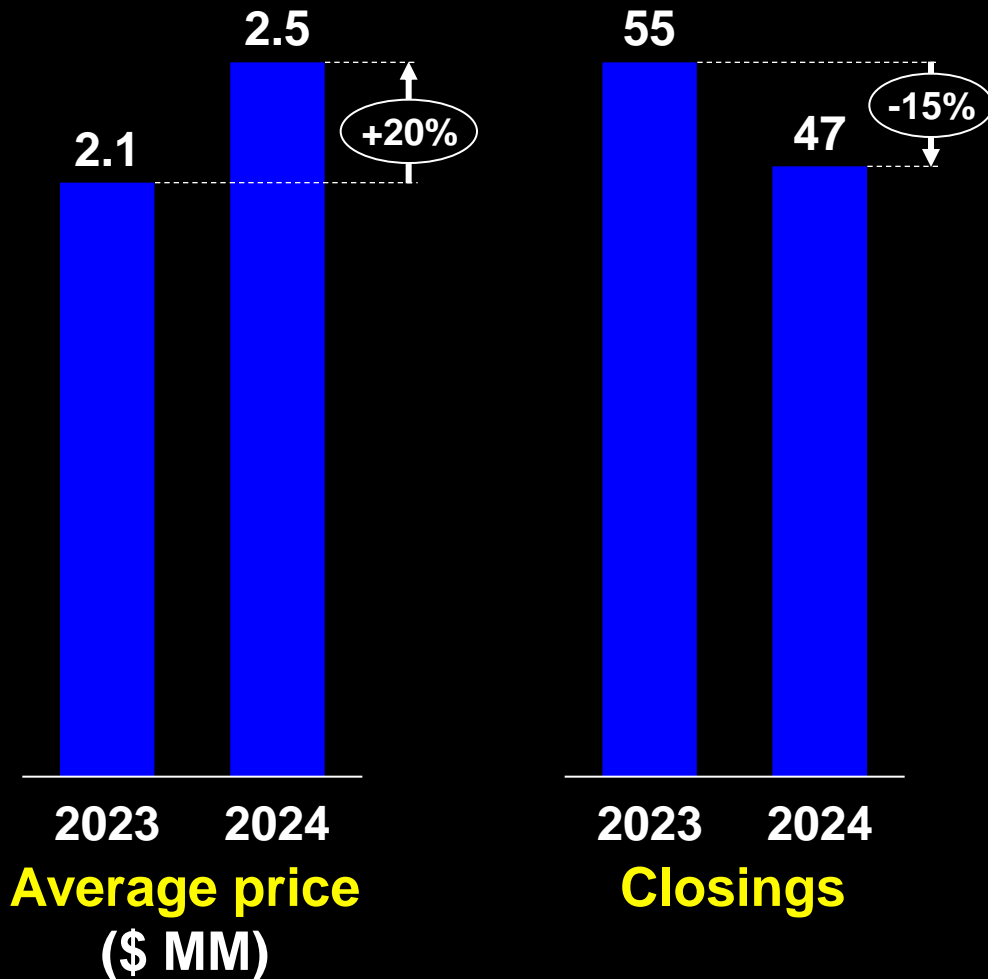
Property values

## Concerns

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# Darien property stats

Houses, full-year data



Inventory	2023	2024
< \$1 MM	1	0
\$1-2 MM	2	2
\$2-4 MM	4	5
> \$4 MM	9	7

- As of today, 14 properties are for sale; before, 60-80 was considered low
- **Rumor:** more people want to capitalize on the market, but no evidence yet

# General State of the Town

## Positives

---

Top-rated school system

Property values

New developments

Sense of community

Volunteer spirit

## Concerns

---



# Sense of community and volunteer spirit



# General State of the Town

## Positives

---

Top-rated school system

Property values

New developments

Sense of community

Volunteer spirit

## Concerns

---

Mental health

Infrastructure and traffic



# Infrastructure



Continued sewer investments (**\$5.3 MM in 2024**), but these systems are old



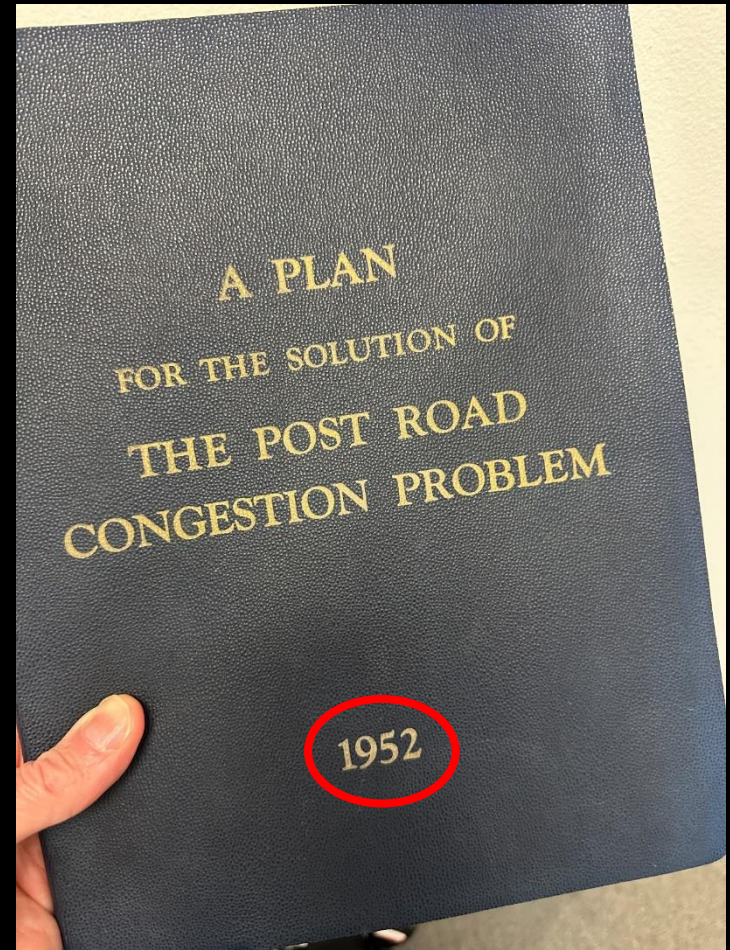
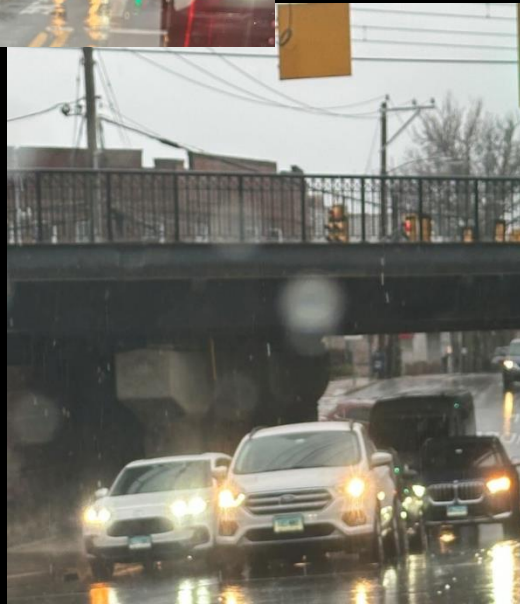
Two flooding projects in progress, but we will always remain vulnerable to the strongest storms

**Individual resilience efforts can help**



# Traffic – particularly the Post Road

A problem for sure...



...and has been for a long time

# General State of the Town

## Positives

---

Top-rated school system

Property values

New developments

Sense of community

Volunteer spirit

## Concerns

---

Mental health

Infrastructure and traffic

Crime reports

# Crime

It's unfortunate  
that crime is a  
problem...

...but we can help  
the situation by  
doing our part

- Lock your cars
- Lock your home
- Use your alarm
- Don't leave valuables visible
- Consult official sources for news
- Let the professionals do their jobs



# Great Island

How do we devise a strategy that works best for Darien?

## Building Committee approach

## Role

Board of Selectmen

Decisions

Great Island Advisory Committee

- 5 elected officials
- 4 experienced citizens

Recommendations

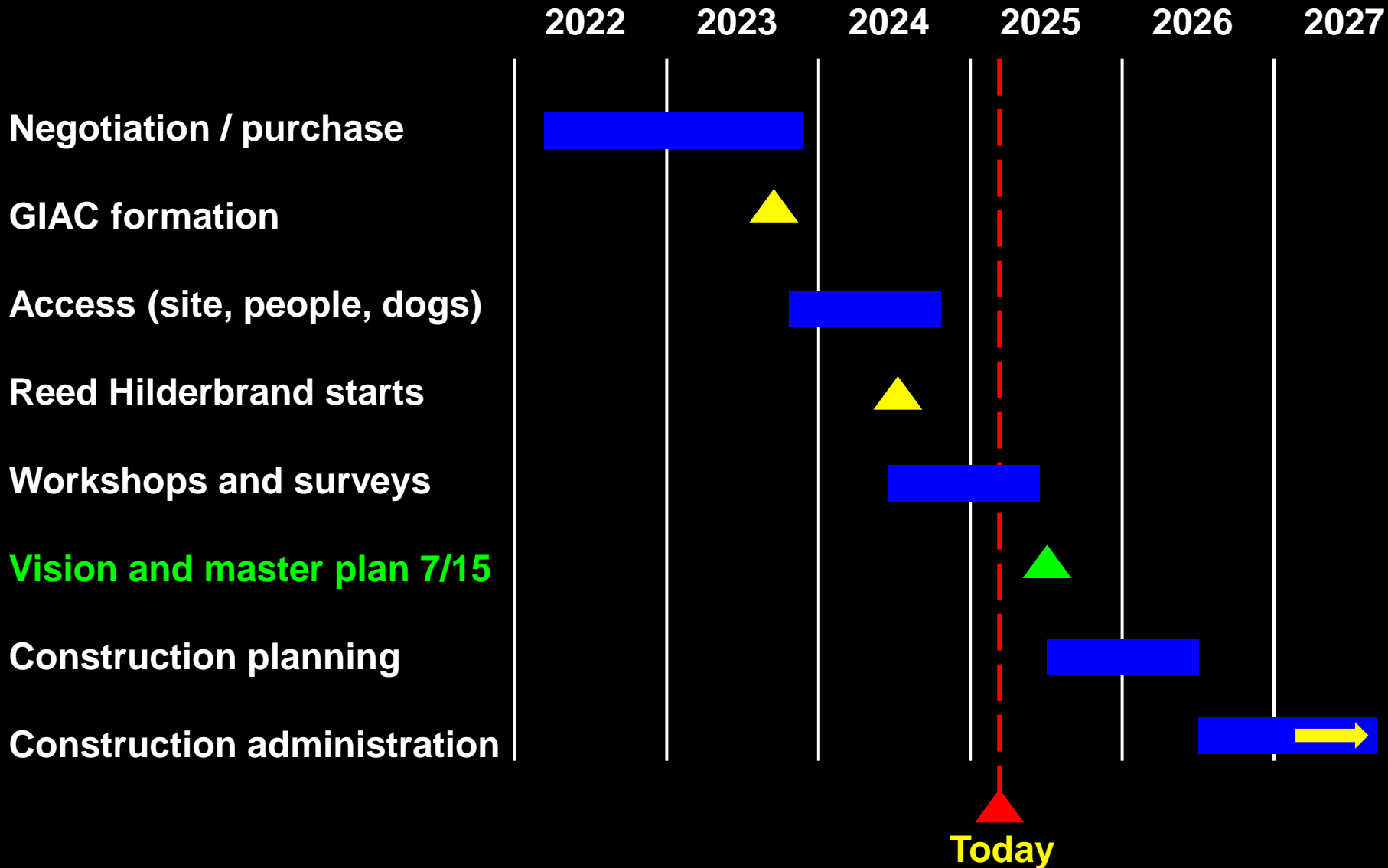
Reed Hilderbrand

- Top-tier consulting and design firm
- World-class expertise

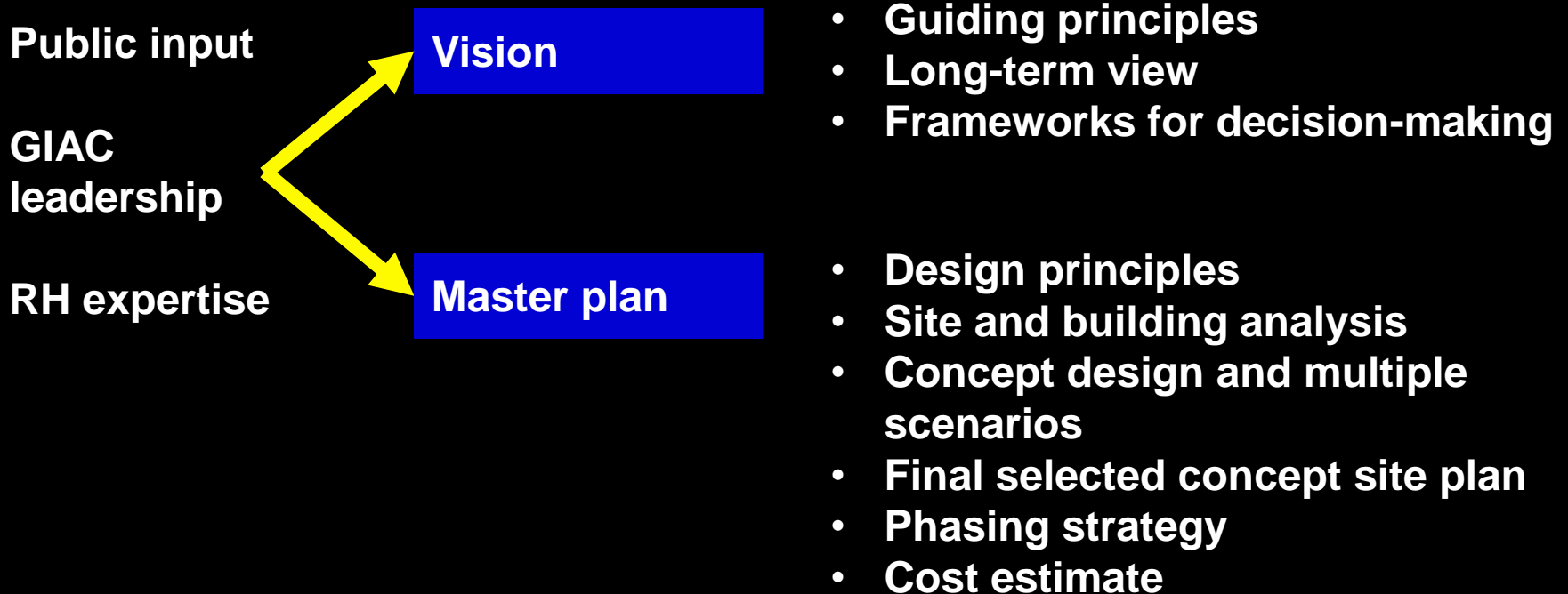
Process



# What's the current status?



# Vision and Master Plan – what can we expect?



The Master Plan will address some big questions:

- **Nature vs development**
- Plan for each building
- **Parking and vehicle access**
- Hospitality establishments or other businesses
- **Municipal assets – pool, ice rink, etc.**

# 23A update





## **23A update (continued)**



**Unless we decide to have no civilian cars on GI, we must widen this driveway, which sadly will require taking down 15 healthy trees – but with a robust replanting plan**

**Two appeals of the Tree Warden's decision in favor of this decision were filed in Stamford Superior Court**



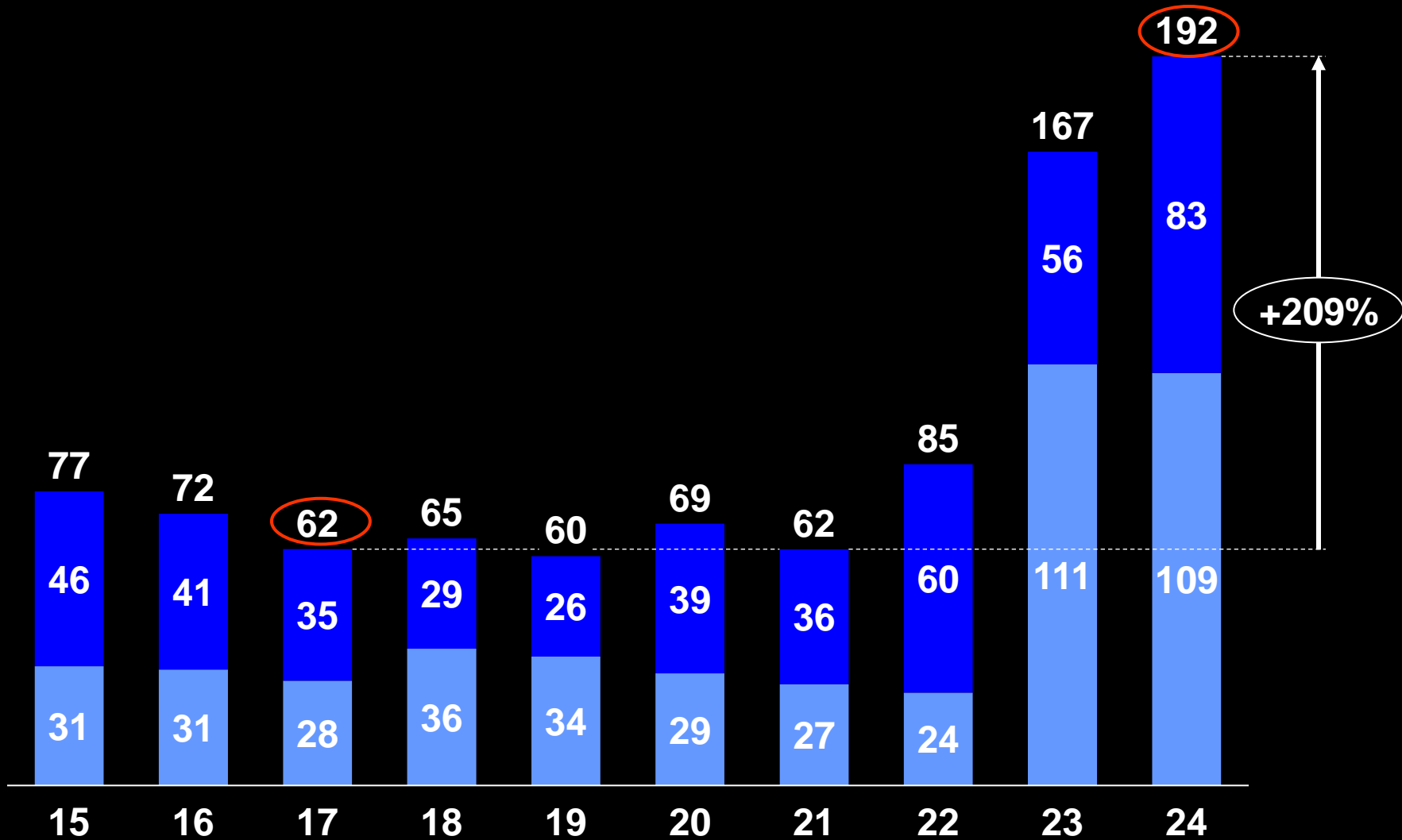
**Town Counsel is defending the Town's position – motions to dismiss have been filed – court date = March 4**

**If there were a viable alternative, I assure you we would pursue it**

# Debt levels over time

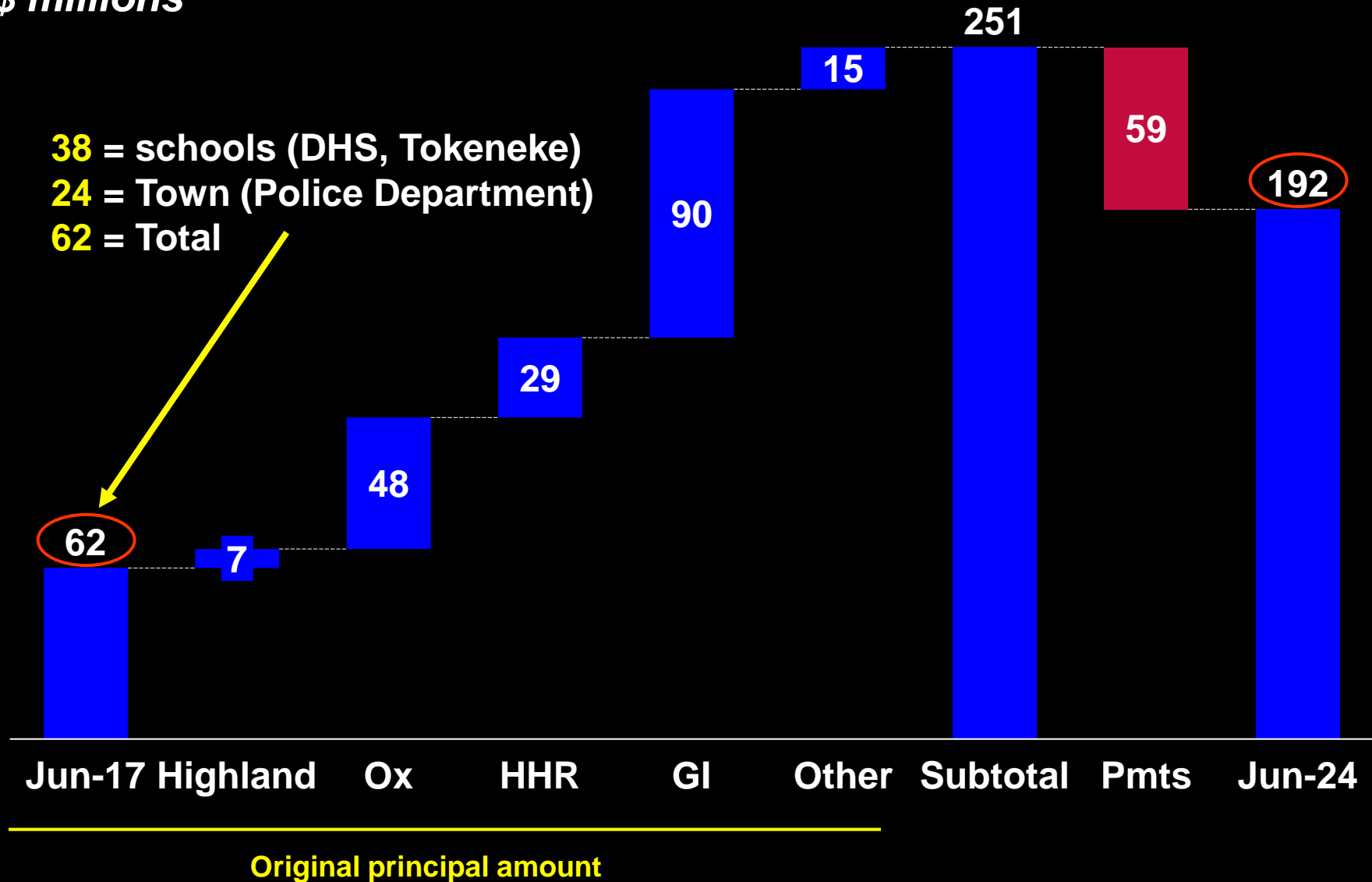
\$ millions; June 30 of each fiscal year

School  
Town



# Recent contributors to current debt level

\$ millions

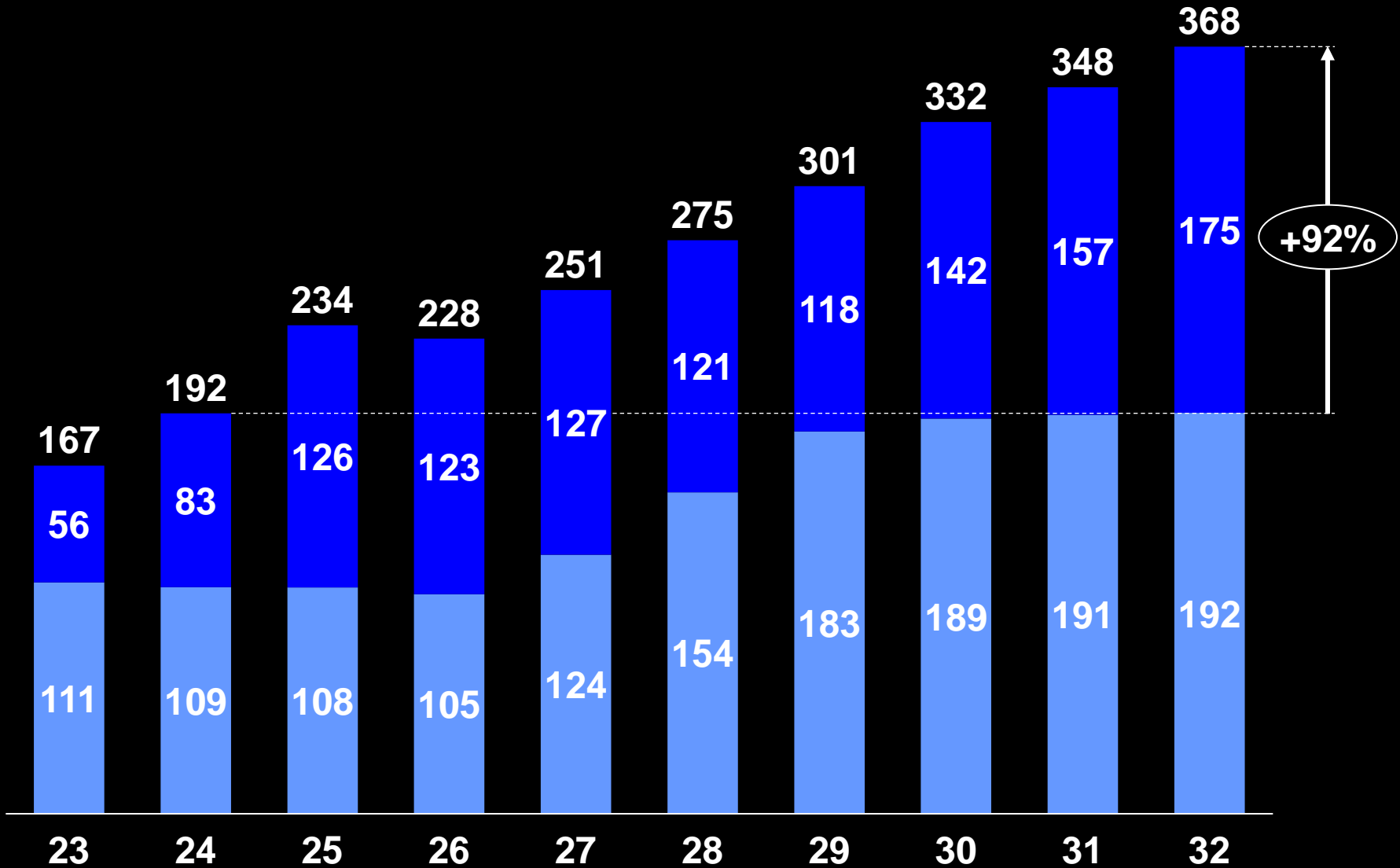




# Projected debt levels

*\$ millions by fiscal year*

Schools  
Town




# Looking ahead



- Sidewalk effort
- **Parking – no more hanging tags?**
- Pear Tree Point and Weed Beach
- **Tilley and Cherry Lawn pond dredging**
- More video updates – flooding, 23A
- **New Canaan line – Quiet Zone**
- Town Boards and Commissions
- **Blight Commission – foreclosures**

# Looking ahead – no better way to stay informed



## TOWN OF DARIEN NEWSLETTER

February 14, 2025

### Upcoming Meetings

**PRESIDENTS DAY**  
2.17.2025  
Town Hall Closed

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
2.24.2025 7:00 PM

**OPERATIONS PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
2.25.2025 4:00 PM

**RTM**  
2.25.2025 7:30 PM

**HHR**  
2.26.2025 6:00 PM

**GREAT ISLAND ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
2.26.2025 7:00 PM

The complete meeting schedule of all Boards and Commissions is available on the [main page of the Town of Darien website](#). Most meetings can be viewed on [DarienTV79.com](#).

For additional events and programs happening within Darien, view the Darien Chamber of Commerce [Community Calendar](#).

### FEMA HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE GRANTS

February 11 | 6 PM      February 27 | 6 PM

Attend an Information Session!

**FLOOD MITIGATION GRANT SUPPORT**

Register Here!

Session I  
Stanford, CT

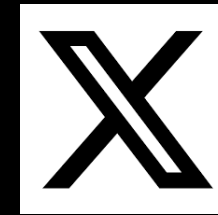
Session II  
Virtual

ABOUT THE SESSIONS  
Join the Western Connecticut Council of Governments for public information sessions geared toward property owners to:

- Discuss Available Flood Mitigation Grants
- Review Property Eligibility Requirements
- Offer Free Technical Assistance

For more information visit [www.wccog.org/2025/02/11](http://www.wccog.org/2025/02/11) or contact Judy Redick at [jredick@wccog.org](mailto:jredick@wccog.org)





## Follow us on Social Media

- Town of Darien CT
- Darien Police Department
- Great Island CT
- Jon Zagrodzky

To subscribe, send an email to [newsletter@darientct.gov](mailto:newsletter@darientct.gov) or through the “How do I Page” on the Town website

**So, how do you like being First Selectman?**



