

# Stamford Unveils Newly Renovated West Beach Boat Ramp

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By Richard Kaufman, Patch Staff



STAMFORD, CT — Stamford officials on Thursday officially unveiled the newly renovated West Beach boat ramp, which will now provide boaters and first responders with easier access to the water.

The Stamford Land Use Bureau completed a master plan for Cummings Park, West Beach, and Cummings Marina in April 2015 and identified needed improvements for the boat ramp, which had fallen into disrepair.

The construction bid was \$3 million, according to city engineer Lou Cassolo. Stamford received about \$1.2 million from the Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program (SHIPP) Grant program, and the remainder was paid for with city bonds.

"We know that one of our city's crown jewels is our proximity and access to Long Island Sound and our beautiful waterfront. We have a boating community, a vibrant parks system and beaches and marinas that our residents get to enjoy for a variety of recreational activities," said Mayor Caroline Simmons during a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony at the boat ramp on Thursday.

"Investing in these assets and in our city's infrastructure is a key priority for my administration. This project now allows for all-tide access, increases the width of the ramp, and the additional dock can now accommodate two simultaneous boat launches," Simmons said.

The improved ramp also provides an additional access point for police and fire vessels.

Work included the removal of the depth restriction that previously existed at the ramp, the widening of the ramp to accommodate two boats for launching and hauling, and the rebuilding of a timber bulkhead, among other improvements, Cassolo said. The parking lot was also upgraded.

Construction began in May 2023 and wrapped up by December.

"Prior to this improvement, you were not able to launch boats, really at all, at low tide," Cassolo said. "The ramp was widened to 30 feet. It's 105 feet long, and it accommodates a change in elevation from 4.5 feet to negative 10 feet."

Tighe & Bond served as the project designer, and Terry Contracting out of Riverhead, N.Y., was the contractor.

Cassolo said workers had to employ "very creative means and methods" at the site and water's edge to complete the project.

Both Simmons and Cassolo thanked everyone involved in helping to make the project come to fruition, from the Port Authority of Connecticut to city engineers, parks, and operations personnel and the Stamford Harbor Management Commission.

"The only group that hasn't been thanked yet is the boating public for their patience with us while we were doing this," said Harbor Management Commission Chair Damian Ortelli.

Ortelli noted the delays that come with being involved in the Harbor Commission, but he said it "felt like Christmas morning" when it looked like the project would finally get done last year.

"I'm really proud to be here. It's a huge improvement on what was here," Ortelli added. "I've been using this ramp for years with my boat, and it wasn't easy to get a boat in and out of here. It's much, much better. I hope if you're not a boater, you become one so you can come down here and enjoy these new facilities."

Executive Director of the Connecticut Port Authority Ulysses Hammond was also in attendance for the ribbon-cutting. He congratulated Stamford on the new ramp.