

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Metropolitan Police Department



Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Oversight Hearing

Testimony of
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Before the

Committee on the Judiciary

Council of the District of Columbia

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John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004



Good afternoon, Chair McDuffie, members and staff of the Committee. I am pleased to testify before you today on Mayor Bowser's Fiscal Year 2016 Budget, entitled "Pathways to the Middle Class". As Mayor Bowser recently testified before the Council, each agency plays a critical part in ensuring that District residents in all eight Wards have the education, economic opportunity, public safety, neighborhoods, environment, and infrastructure they need to reach the middle class. Mayor Bowser's Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) Budget submission will ensure that our agency and the entire government have the necessary staff and resources to help meet these ambitious goals.

This budget is the product of an unprecedented amount of outreach. The Mayor held three budget engagement forums that were attended by hundreds of residents that described how they would allocate an imaginary \$100 towards key issues facing the District. The Mayor's budget staff also met with Councilmembers and their staff to incorporate their priorities in the budget. Finally, the Mayor and her senior leadership met with numerous community groups as part of the development of this budget. All of this work on the front end gave us a much better budget as a result and we will continue that kind of outreach, transparency, and accountability—including these hearings led by the Council—to fine tune and implement the FY16 budget.

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Briefly, the Mayor's proposed FY16 budget provides local funding of \$502.7 million. This is an increase of \$25.1 million, or 5.3% percent from the approved FY 2015 budget. This includes full year funding for the FY13 – FY16 union raises, which were previously budgeted outside of MPD and a 3 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) for the civilian and the non-union sworn members of the Department. It also includes the transfer of attorneys previously budgeted under the Office of the Attorney General to MPD's budget.

Most of MPD's local budget, 89 percent, is for personal services (PS). The remaining 11 percent of the total budget – approximately \$57.1 million dollars – covers a variety of Nonpersonal Services (NPS), including specialized law enforcement purchases – such as uniforms, firearms, ammunition, as well as contracts for the Police and Fire Clinic, fleet maintenance, and information technology. Of the total budget, only \$4.6 million, or less than one percent, is not tied up in the obligated spending that includes salaries, benefits, and contracts for goods and services. This \$4.6 million covers a broad variety of necessary operating expenditures, such as fingerprint checks sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, tuition reimbursement, fuel for the helicopter, and maintenance for bicycles, the firing range, and printers and copiers.

With a 5.3 percent increase in the proposed local budget, this represents the largest increase in the past seven budget cycles. But it is important to put this in context. Over a nine year period (FY08 through the proposed FY16 budget), with a few major policy changes held constant (see Figure 1 Notes), MPD's local budget increased just 4 percent. Over this time, the MPD PS budget on salaries and benefits increased 7 percent, and NPS spending decreased 16 percent. The city has grown by about 67,000 residents from 2008 through 2014, and the number of calls for service has increased by 35,000 in just the past two years. In contrast, if attrition continues at the same rate this year, by the end of FY15, MPD will have about 200 fewer officers than it did in 2008. The Department has been able to succeed – and drive down crime – during times of tight budgets through sound and careful management of valuable resources. Fortunately, Mayor Bowser has recognized the need for investment in public safety to support a pathway to middle class.



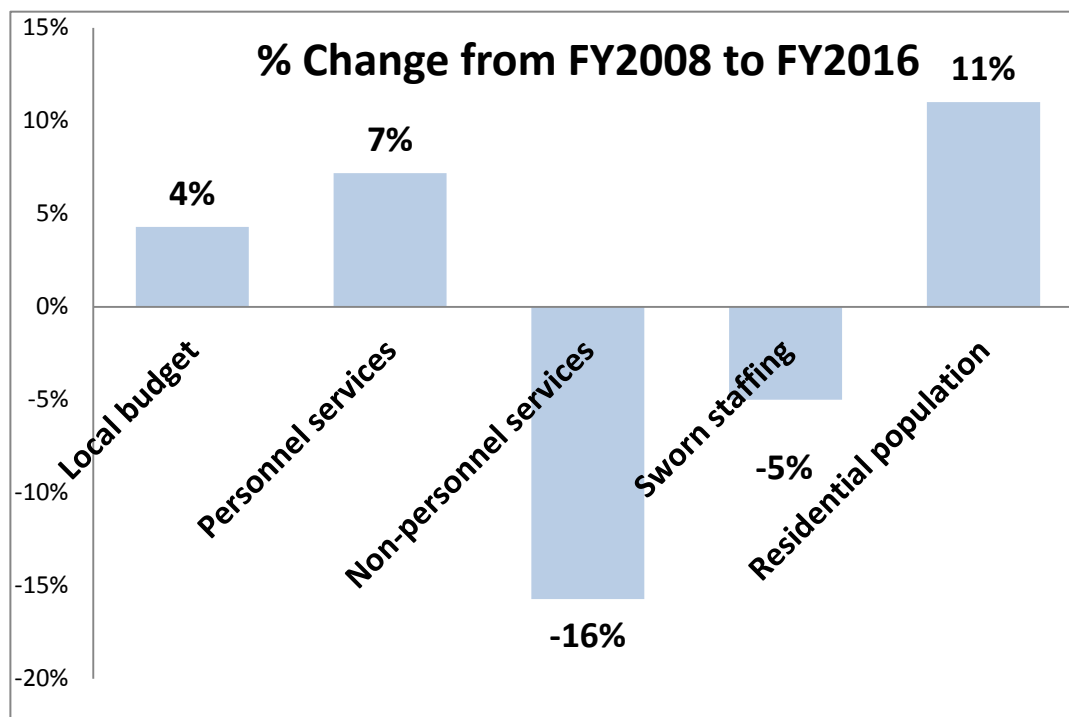


Figure 1 Notes: (a) To allow for an appropriate comparison, historical budget figures were adjusted to address three major policy changes: the movement of fixed costs and facility management to the Department of General Services, the movement of the Automated Traffic Enforcement program costs from a special purpose revenue fund to the local budget and pay increases in FY15 and 16. (b) The primary drivers in local Personnel Services spending between FY08 and FY15 were: (1) approximately 50 grant-funded positions expiring and being moved to the local budget; and (2) technical corrections for base retention differential and tech and hazard pay in FY13. (c) Sworn staffing = end of year staffing figures from FY2008 - FY2015 (projected) (d) Residential population = Mid-year US Census figures for 2008 - 2014

The proposed budget provides funding for several important new initiatives: \$5.1 million for body-worn cameras for police officers, \$2.9 million for civilianization, and \$2.5 million for an education-based incentive to increase police officer retention. Since we are having a hearing on the BWC on Thursday, I will focus on the two personnel programs today. Both of these are proposed to help MPD and the city overcome the challenge of the long-anticipated “retirement bubble.”

In 1989, MPD began a massive hiring effort that culminated in approximately 1,500 members being hired in less than two years. Since sworn members hired at that time are eligible for retirement once they have served 25 years and reached 50 years of age, we have an unprecedented proportion of the force eligible for retirement. By the end of 2015, More than one-third of lieutenants and detectives, and almost one-third of sergeants, will also be eligible to retire. More than 60 percent of the sworn command staff, comprising our Assistant Chiefs, Commanders, and Inspectors, will be eligible to retire.

Civilianization

Although MPD’s civilian employees receive much less attention from the community members and the policymakers, their work and dedication are essential to the daily operations and overall success of the Department. In critical support functions such as analyzing crime data,



researching new police tools, writing policy, and keeping our fleet functioning, civilians improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the police department in countless underappreciated ways.

Given that over the next few years we may be losing more officers each year than we can hire while maintaining high standards, one option for continuing the level of police service to the city is to significantly expand civilian support for those officers. Civilianization replaces sworn members in specific positions or relieves them of various tasks and responsibilities that can be performed by personnel without police powers. It also helps to professionalize areas of the department by bringing in skilled employees. A commitment to civilianization allows us to return officers to operational functions far faster than the Department can recruit, hire, and train officers. The long term costs to the city are lower as well because of savings in equipment, uniforms, and ongoing police training.

The civilianization plan was first developed in 1999, and then expanded in 2004 and in 2007. However, the District's fiscal challenges fell heavily on the Department's civilian force. Whenever funding is cut or frozen, civilian salaries and positions have historically been the first to go. I appreciate Mayor Bowser's commitment to restarting a civilianization program. The Department is civilianizing 59 positions in FY15, and the FY16 budget includes funding for an additional 48 FTEs. As of last week, 40 of the 59 positions for FY15 have been interviewed and selected. These 40 candidates are currently going through the background process. Of the remaining 19, six are in the interview phase and 13 are still being advertised. We anticipate the background process for the 40 candidates will be completed in the next few weeks and these members will be on board in late June/early July.

Police Officer Retention

In addition to civilianizing some positions, MPD also wants to encourage more members to stay with the Department. The Mayor's budget helps MPD to do this by funding an education based incentive program. The program will target MPD's largest population groups – members at the beginning of their careers as well as those at the end – who are also the ones most likely to separate from the Department. For both groups, it would require an obligated service agreement to ensure continued service to the city.

For the first group, officers are most likely to voluntarily resign from the Department within the first eight to ten years of their career. Those that resign within the first two years often realize that policing is not a good career for them; it is often best for the city, the Department, and the individual to part ways. But for those who have served the city for two to six years, an education incentive may help us to retain them. Applicants are required to have 60 college credit hours to join the Department, and many of our new recruits are coming on with even more education. This past year, almost three-quarters of all new hires had a bachelor's or master's degree. It is likely that many of these young officers are coming to government service with college debt. Helping them to repay some of this debt may encourage them to continue to invest their time with the District.

Not surprisingly, officers who become eligible to retire are the next large group of departures. But anecdotally, many of our members who are just reaching retirement age are leaving to pursue a second career. Therefore career development opportunities may still be appealing. An investment in additional education and career development opportunities for them may encourage them to stay here to bring an additional degree to their next career while



continuing to serve the District. Therefore we are looking at incentives that will support either a bachelor's degree or a graduate certificate for members eligible to retire in the next few years. If this funding is approved, I look forward to developing the details of the program in partnership with the union.

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The resources allocated to the agency in the Mayor's proposed Fiscal Year 2016 budget will be critical in achieving our mission and helping to grow and preserve the middle class. The Council and this Committee, led by you Chair McDuffie, have been key allies in this effort and I appreciate your continued efforts to ensure we operate efficiently and effectively.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I look forward to answering any questions the Committee may have.

