

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
District Department of Transportation



FY 2017 Budget Oversight Hearing

Testimony of
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Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Council of the District of Columbia

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Good afternoon Chairperson Cheh, members and staff of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment. I am Leif Dormsjo, the Director of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). I am pleased to testify before you today on Mayor Bowser's proposed Fiscal Year 2017 budget and six-year capital improvements plan for DDOT. This year's budget wisely invests in the District's core transportation assets. The proposed budget will preserve, and provide maintenance as needed for, alleys, streets, and sidewalks while also prioritizing access, mobility, and safety in the provision of transportation services. Making critical investments in the transportation infrastructure will ensure that District residents have a fair shot at accessing the affordable housing, education, jobs, and other services they deserve. A safe and dependable transportation system is a critical pathway to the middle class for District residents. The Mayor's proposed budget for DDOT delivers that pathway.

The Department's approach to formulating the FY 2017 operating and capital budgets was to focus on the following priorities: (1) preserve and expand the transportation infrastructure in all eight Wards; (2) increase transit opportunities; (3) ensure the safety and mobility of pedestrians, bicyclists, and the motoring public; and (4) enhance agency-wide support and customer services. In order to support these priorities, the Department plans to complete implementation of an organizational realignment that parallels the Transportation Reorganization Amendment Act of 2015.

Operating Budget in Detail

The proposed FY 2017 operating budget totals \$110.8 million with 569.4 full time employees. The FY 2017 operating budget is relatively unchanged from the prior year budget - the overall decrease is approximately 2.5 percent from FY 2016; however, there are several notable changes. One major change is the addition of 20 new traffic control officers (TCOs).

These positions will support a shift in deployment strategy, from stationary to mobile-deployment. Mobile-deployment will provide DDOT with the flexibility to quickly deploy TCOs in areas where they are needed most without diverting them from high-demand fixed locations. The augmented mobile deployment framework will also allow the agency to cover additional high-crash intersections. On January 12, 2016, DDOT released a High Crash Intersection Site Visits Report analyzing crash analysis and data for five “high crash” intersections in the District. DDOT will use the additional TCOs to address these and other dangerous intersections.

DDOT intends to deploy some of the new TCOs to support the Metropolitan Police Department and its activities related to the night-time economy. DDOT also plans to maximize the utilization of special purpose revenue funds and federal grants to offset the cost of operations. This includes utilizing the DDOT Enterprise Fund to retain 5.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), planning activities, and ongoing operating costs. A federal indirect cost recovery grant is included in the budget to pay for the additional TCO positions and to Paygo funds to the Alley Rehabilitation Capital Account to fund AlleyPalooza. The Department is also piloting a project to centralize fleet management within the Department of Public Works (DPW) with the long-term goal of consolidating fleet operations District-wide. To support this pilot, \$3.9 million was transferred to DPW in the FY 2017 budget.

Enactment of DDOT’s organizational realignment will result in programmatic and operational efficiencies across the agency. DDOT’s proposed FY 2017 operating budget highlights the agency’s programmatic priorities in the four core functional areas that are reflected in the organizational realignment: project delivery, operations, administration, and

performance management. These core functional areas cover several themes and capture the agency's most important initiatives.

DDOT will continue to work with partner agencies on the Mayor's Vision Zero initiative. Vision Zero aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities and serious injuries by the year 2024, and Mayor Bowser's budget provides sufficient funding to implement our action plan. For example, the FY 2017 budget contains half-a-million dollars to help DDOT and partner agencies implement pilot initiatives identified in the Vision Zero action plan. This year, this funding is supporting the installation of side guards on District-owned fleet, disability rights positions that will enhance accessibility, ANC safety liaisons and training, public art installations to prevent street harassment, bicycle education and services for youth, and a public safety campaign for truck safety. We look forward to new innovative ideas to implement in FY 2017. The FY 2017 budget includes twenty additional Traffic Control Officers, who will be deployed strategically at the highest priority locations. Finally, DDOT will continue to deliver physical improvements to our streets that enhance safety for all travelers. Well over \$250 million in the six-year CIP will support DDOT's delivery of bicycle infrastructure, sidewalks, and streets and bridges that have safe surfaces and signage.

The majority of DDOT's funds for personnel and nonpersonnel services are allocated to the following administrations: the Transportation Operations Administration, \$48.19 million and 317.4 FTEs; the Policy, Planning and Sustainability Administration, \$24.47 million and 39.0 FTEs; and the Progressive Transportation Services Administration, \$11.47 million and 19.0 FTEs. The Infrastructure Project Management Administration, is budgeted at \$7.65 million and 24.0 FTEs, the Public Space Regulation Administration \$6.52 million and 66.0 FTEs, and the Urban Forestry Administration, \$1.74 million and 7.0 FTEs. DDOT's gross FY

2017 budget is \$110.86 million, of which \$74.44 million or 67 percent is local funds, \$11.69 million or 11 percent is Federal grant funds, \$24.42 million or 22 percent is Special Purpose Revenue funds, and \$308,000, or less than 1 percent, is Intra-district funds. In total, DDOT's operating budget is \$111 Million in FY 2017, which is a decrease of 2.5 percent from FY 2016.

Capital Projects in Detail

The Mayor's proposed Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) for FY 2017 - FY 2022, provides DDOT with \$1.58 billion in local funding over the next six years. This represents a significant increase of 9.7% from the FY 2016 - FY 2021 total allotment of \$1.44 billion.

Mayor Bowser's proposed six-year Capital Improvements Plan provides \$425.3 million in critical investments to preserve the District's core infrastructure assets such as alleys sidewalks, streets, bridges, streetlights, and green infrastructure. The Department has been very aggressive in expending its funding allocations on these core assets in FY 2015 with even more aggressive spending planned in FY 2016. In FY 2015, DDOT spent twice the average of the previous five years and plans to spend four times more in FY 2016 to repair and rehabilitate alleys across the District. Similarly, in FY 2015 DDOT spent twice the previous five year average and plans to spend seven times more in FY 2016 on repairing and repaving local streets in all eight wards. For sidewalks, DDOT spent three times more in FY 2015 than the average of the previous five years and plans to spend seven times more in FY 2016.

These investments will produce significant benefits to residents of the District through improvements to our transportation assets and infrastructure. Based on the proposed funding provided for alley maintenance and rehabilitation in the CIP, the number of alleys in poor condition will decrease from 24 percent to 3 percent by 2020. At the same time, DDOT expects the number of alleys in excellent condition to increase from 1 percent to 23 percent by 2020. On

average, DDOT can rehabilitate or repair one alley for approximately \$60,000. Based on our performance in FY 2015 and anticipated expenditures, the Department expects to repair or rehabilitate more than 400 alleys in FY 2016. This will be done through the continuation of the AlleyPalooza campaign, which ensures that the repairs are distributed equitably across all eight Wards. This increase doubles the number of alleys DDOT completed in FY 2015.

DDOT will triple its local roadway resurfacing and sidewalk work in FY 2016 to 35 miles of local roads and 350 sidewalk segments. In FY 2015, 36 percent of the local streets were in poor, very poor or failed condition. After the FY 2016 construction season, the percentage of streets in this condition will decrease to 34 percent. Mayor Bowser's budget provides sufficient funding to eliminate all of the very poor or failing local roadways in five years, by FY 2020. By this time, 74 percent of our local roadways will be in excellent, good, or fair condition. We are making similar gains in the condition of the District's sidewalks. In FY 2015, 15 percent of the sidewalks were in fair or poor condition. After the FY 2016 construction season, the percentage of sidewalks in this condition decreases to 14 percent, and by 2018 there will be no sidewalks in poor condition. In FY 2018, 89 percent of the sidewalks—representing more than 1,300 miles—will be in good or excellent condition.

In addition to core infrastructure investments, the capital budget increases our investment in transit and enhances multi-modal transportation options by providing \$432.1 million in local funding in the six-year CIP; of this amount \$311.8 million will fund the completion of the Benning Road extension and development costs of the Union Station to Georgetown extension for the streetcar program. Additionally, \$34.5 million is provided in the CIP to replace and repair Circulator buses. This will add capacity to the District's transportation network, provide links to activity centers that complement Metrorail service, and

offer sustainable transportation alternatives. In total, the budget reflects an investment of \$415 million in the District's two core transit assets: Circulator and Streetcar. This investment reflects our commitment to expand transit in the District.

The six-year CIP also includes significant investments in special projects such as \$560 million to replace the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge, and improvements to the South Capitol Street Corridor. South Capitol Street will be transformed from an expressway to an urban boulevard and gateway to the monumental core of the District that will support economic development on both sides of the Anacostia River. Additionally, \$160 million is dedicated to rehabilitating the H Street Bridge, a crucial link to Union Station, the Metrorail system, and a vital East-West connection for the Streetcar system.

These large-scale projects will dramatically enhance the District's transportation infrastructure in trails, trees, green spaces, streetlights, and sidewalks. They will also complement investments in transit by providing safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the city.

To ensure the District is investing every dollar allocated in the capital budget, DDOT is aggressively working to close-out old purchase orders and local capital projects in order to reinvest those dollars to fund core infrastructure projects. Specifically, DDOT is reviewing approximately \$125 million of inactive purchase orders with at least 90 days of inactivity. In the last three months, DDOT has de-encumbered \$7.2 million with another \$3.5 million in the pipeline. The Department will continue this effort throughout FY 2016 and beyond to ensure that its limited resources are utilized more efficiently and effectively to meet the transportation infrastructure needs of the District.

Conclusion

The District of Columbia, while fiscally healthy, has great demands for housing, education, healthcare, and other services. We understand that resources are limited. However, investments in the transportation infrastructure are critical to enhancing the quality of life for District residents and visitors by ensuring that people and goods move efficiently and safely with minimal adverse impact on residents and the environment. Mayor Bowser's FY 2017 budget acknowledges this essential function and provides the necessary funding to achieve these goals. I am confident that these resources are sufficient to preserve and expand our core transportation infrastructure while enhancing transit options for District residents. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to responding to your questions.