**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**Department of Parks and Recreation**



Department of Parks and Recreation

Budget Oversight Hearings on Fiscal Year 2017

Testimony of

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Director

The Honorable Councilmember Mary M. Cheh

Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Council of the District of Columbia

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John A. Wilson Building

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20004

**Introduction**

Good morning Chairperson Cheh, members of the committee, and members of the public here today and watching at home. I am Keith Anderson, Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). I am pleased to testify before you on Mayor Bowser’s proposed Fiscal Year 2017 Budget, entitled “A Fair Shot.”

I would like to thank Mayor Muriel Bowser, City Administrator Rashad Young, and Deputy Mayor Jennifer Niles for their continued support and leadership. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to all of the DPR employees who serve the District’s residents on a daily basis.

This is the District’s 21st consecutive balanced budget and it makes key investments in education, affordable housing, transportation, public safety, job training, and employment services that give residents a fair shot at a pathway to the middle class. These are key investment priorities identified by District residents at the Mayor’s public engagement forums held during the budget formulation process, and the Mayor’s Fiscal Year 2017 Budget submission will ensure that DPR and all District agencies have the staff and resources necessary to make these investments.

**Investments in Parks and Recreation**

 DPR strives to enhance the quality of life and wellness of District residents and visitors by providing equal access to affordable and quality recreational services, and by organizing meaningful program, activities, and events. The Mayor’s Fiscal Year 2017 Budget proposes $50.3 million to support DPR in its work, an increase of $3.6 million or 7.6%.

Mayor Bowser is making an investment to DPR’s flagship summer programs—summer camps and outdoor pools. The Mayor proposes to fully fund seasonal camps by adding $1.3 million, giving DPR sufficient funding to operate our amazing summer camps and outdoor pools for residents next summer.

Additionally, Mayor Bowser is making a commitment for Pathways to the Middle Class at DPR by proposing:

* $1.7 million in additional funding for 38 Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) hired this year as part of the Mayor’s Fiscal Year 2015 Supplemental Budget Request to enhance the public safety of our facilities and the overall customer experience;
* $345,000 in additional funding and two (2) positions for the Malcolm X Opportunity Center in Ward 8;
* $1.8 million in additional funding to provide upward mobility opportunities for DPR’s most loyal employees by creating new management positions. It should be noted that only 6% of DPR’s workforce is currently management, so these positions will go a long way towards providing pathways to the middle class and enhanced site supervision.
* An overall increase in personnel funding for salaries, fringe benefits, and overtime.

Each of these enhancements is critical to ensuring efficient and effective agency operations and will enable DPR to continue to provide excellent service to District residents and visitors.

 In the Capital Budget, Mayor Bowser is proposing $171.9 million for investment in DPR’s facilities over the next six (6) years (FY 2017 – FY 2022). Spanning across the city, the Mayor is proposing facility improvements to ensure all District residents have access to world-class recreation and aquatics facilities. For example, Mayor Bowser has proposed to invest:

* Ward 8 – $15 million in a brand new Congress Heights Recreation Center; in
* Ward 7 – $18.5 million for a full renovation of the city’s sole Therapeutic Recreation Center; $5 million for a two phase modernization of Benning Park Recreation Center; and an additional $9.8 million for replacement of Fort DuPont Ice Arena; in
* Ward 6 – $25 million to assist in land acquisition for parks and recreation spaces in NOMA; in
* Ward 5 – $7.2 million for modernizing Arboretum Recreation Center; in
* Ward 4 – $5 million to build a new outdoor pool at Walter Reed; in
* Ward 3 – $8 million to renovate Chevy Chase Community Center; and $10 million for construction of a new Hearst Park and Pool; and in
* Ward 2 – $12 million for the renovation of East Potomac Pool; and $13.8 million to support the planning and design for renovations at Franklin Square Park.

I would also like to highlight that the District is already making significant investments in Ward 1, such as:

* $1.7 million playground renovation and fitness center renovation at the Columbia Heights Recreation Center;
* $1.2 million in renovations at Kalorama Recreation Center Playground;
* $8 million in improvements to the pool and recreation room at Marie Reed Recreation Center;
* $617,000 to make ADA, fitness center, and concession stand improvements at Banneker Recreation Center;
* $516,000 for a complete renovation of the historic Park View Field House;
* $350,000 for erosion control at Kalorama Recreation Center; and
* $47,000 in ADA improvements at Harrison Recreation Center.

Finally, citywide, over the next six (6) years (FY 2017 – FY 2022), the Mayor is proposing:

* $3 million for security infrastructure;
* $1.8 million for ADA compliance;
* $5 million for athletic field and park improvements;
* $13.7 million for general improvements;
* $500,000 for IT infrastructure;
* $1.6 million for park improvements project management; and
* $17 million for swimming pool replacement.

With this magnificent investment in DPR’s infrastructure, I am confident that DPR will continue to expand its state-of-the-art facilities for the enjoyment of ALL residents across the city.

**Conclusion**

With continued investment, support and leadership from Mayor Bowser and Council, DPR will remain a world-class leader in urban parks and recreation. We will continue to improve service delivery and ensure that ALL residents of the District of Columbia have access to outstanding facilities and programs, and a safe place to play and grow. That concludes my testimony today. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering any questions you or members of the committee may have.