



The Council of the District of Columbia
The Office of Councilmember Mary M. Cheh, Ward 3

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Councilmember Cheh Unveils FY15 Budget Priorities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a memorandum circulated today, Councilmember Mary M. Cheh (D – Ward 3), Chair of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, released her top Fiscal Year 2015 budget recommendations to her colleagues. The text of the memo can be found below:

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Members of the Council of the District of Columbia
FROM: Councilmember Mary M. Cheh
DATE: May 13, 2014
SUBJECT: The District's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget

Tomorrow, we will begin our markup of the Fiscal Year 2015 budget. To provide clarity and encourage transparency, this memorandum highlights the budget recommendations from my office. The recommendations are divided into Committee and Non-Committee proposals, as detailed below.

Committee Recommendations

1. Allocate \$45,000 and 1.0 FTE to the Department of Motor Vehicles so that the Department may hire a traffic-sign reader. Unfortunately, we do not know if all Stop signs in the District do in fact say "STOP." Providing funding for the hiring and training of a traffic-sign reader will help us locate those tricky areas of the District where Stop signs say things other than "STOP." Of these funds, \$44,975 will go towards salary and the remaining \$25 will be spent to provide

training via children's programming on the Public Broadcasting Service.¹ After completing a block-by-block analysis, this staff person will then be made available to assist District residents and tourists in deciphering conflicting parking signs. Residents and tourists will be pleased to have a government employee stand next to them, read the sign, look back at the individual, look back at the sign, look at the location of the car in question, look back at the sign, shrug their shoulders, and exclaim, "hell if I know."

2. Transfer \$500,000 from the Department of Motor Vehicles to the District Department of Transportation for the development and regulation of hoverboard lanes. According to *Back to the Future II*, hoverboards will be invented during calendar year 2015. It is imperative that the District be ready for this new means of transit. Hoverboard lanes will be placed between sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Opponents may argue that these lanes will only fuel the war on cars. This Committee stands by its position that there is no war on cars; however, as a precautionary measure, an additional \$175,000 will be allocated to the Department of Public Works to assist in the clean-up after D.C. Transit Judgment Day: the day when vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists engage in an all-out war to determine the District's transit policy going forward. Fortunately, some of us will have hoverboards to help us escape the battle.

3. Provide the Department of Public Works with \$2.5 million to develop an efficient system for collecting the old trash receptacles that have been replaced by new, larger SuperCans. Of these funds, DPW will allocate \$1 million to provide residents with a garbage bin large enough to fit the old trash receptacle inside of it. The remaining \$1.5 million shall be used for the contract and purchase of these new larger bins—referred to as SuperDuperCans—which will be designed by a manufacturer that specializes in Russian nesting dolls. The SuperDuperCans will be distributed on alternate trash days, and the old cans will certainly be picked up at some point in time in the perhaps not too distant future.

4. Certain progressive transportation advocates have suggested the construction of a gondola between Rosslyn and Georgetown. The Committee's investigation and analysis suggests such a suggestion could have a negative impact on the scenic beauty of the Key Bridge and its surrounding vistas. This Committee believes that the District should go with a more expedient and far less ridiculous option: a zip line. Accordingly, the Committee transfers \$1.75 million to the District Department of the Environment to conduct an environmental assessment and \$500 to the District Department of Transportation to purchase ropes and wires. The District may expect a fiscal impact of increased revenue over the course of the next four fiscal years.²

Non-Committee Recommendations

1. Allocate \$3.5 million for purposes of expediting the land deal necessary to enable the building of the D.C. United stadium. This will eliminate any requirement to coordinate a land transfer for the Reeves Center. Rather, the new soccer stadium will be built directly on top of

¹ This Committee suggests that this \$25 be provided to the Public Broadcasting Service during the PBS Pledge Drive so that we know that "Viewers Like You" includes the District of Columbia.

² To increase ridership, this Committee recommends making it free for a person to begin the zip line in the Commonwealth of Virginia and then pay a toll upon entry of the District of Columbia. Any person who wishes not to pay the toll is welcome to muster the upper body strength necessary to carry them back over the river or drop into the Potomac before reaching M Street.

the Safeway in the Palisades. Providing the Safeway with a grass roof will help the company obtain LEED certification. Moreover, residents will not need to be concerned about increased traffic or loud noise because—let’s face it—who really goes to D.C. United games.

2. Establish a new board that will oversee the Board of Elections. In response to the lengthy delays in releasing the April 2014 primary election results, the Committee suggests the development of the Board of Easing Elevated Election Error (BOEEEE). District residents and members of the press may contact the BOEEEE, via telephone, to lodge complaints or receive information about delays or misinformation provided by the BOE. The BOEEEE will be provided \$17 for the funding of one landline telephone—without call waiting or voicemail—and sufficient funds to staff the telephone from 3:01 p.m. to 3:03 p.m. once every two weeks. Any complaints about the BOEEEE may be made to the BOE.

3. Provide District newspapers with a \$167,500 grant for the institution of a weekly segment that covers criminal activities by government officials. The Committee suggests that this segment be written by a member of the U.S. Attorney’s Office. Rather than the cumbersome process of filing actual indictments and following federal rules of criminal procedure, such a local and unregulated venue realizes significant efficiencies by permitting the Office to litigate matters in the District Court of Public Opinion. We recommend that the Council include a line item in the Budget Request Act for those savings to be directed back from the federal government into the General Fund. In turn, these savings should be allocated to BOE, to cover the increased cost of elections where such salacious details will no doubt significantly increase voter turnout.

4. Transfer \$5,382,500 from the District Department of Transportation to the District of Columbia Public Schools in the unlikely event that a school-selection lottery system is implemented. This money will fund a new Division of Lottery Administration at the District of Columbia Public Schools. Beginning January 1, 2015, parents may choose between two alternative selection methods. Under the first option, parents will be required to bring their children to the National Cathedral. Each child will be considered individually by placing a hat on the child’s head. The name of the school that is exclaimed by the hat is the school which that child shall attend. As the hat does not require a salary, the allocated funds may be spent on maintaining a sufficient level of hygiene for the hat itself. Under the second option, parents will bring their children to RFK stadium. The selection process will occur with sixteen children at a time—one boy and one girl representing each Ward—fighting with foam swords to the death.³ The victorious child’s parents can then select the school which their child will attend, whereas the losing children, if they survive, will be sent to schools in neighboring jurisdictions. This will have the added benefit of alleviating the issue of overcrowding in District schools. Another \$25,000 is transferred to the Department of Behavior and Health to provide counseling for the unfortunate children whose parents subject them to this option.

5. Provide the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) with \$375,448 for installing additional safety mechanisms on its bus fleet. In recent years, car ownership in the District has consistently declined. Those residing in the District have found alternative means

³ Obviously, the Committee on Transportation and the Environment does not condone the injury or death of children. Despite the highly competitive nature of District parents, participating children will be trained to play dead and not fight to the actual death.

to commute throughout the city. In 2013, one rogue District resident took the lead in introducing a new transit alternative: flying. Unfortunately, our dear friend—the snowy owl—left our city after being struck by a WMATA bus. The allocated funds will outfit the WMATA fleet with pillows so that any future snowy owls may not be forced to leave the District if hit by a bus while moving about the District.