
Government of the District of Columbia



DC Department of Public Works

Testimony of
Christopher J. Shorter
Acting Director

**Performance Oversight Hearing on the
Department of Public Works Fiscal Years 2015-2016**

Committee on Transportation and the Environment

Councilmember Mary M. Cheh, Chairperson

John A. Wilson Building
Room 123/11 am
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
March 7, 2016

**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTOPHER J. SHORTER,
ACTING DIRECTOR
DC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
“PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING ON THE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
FISCAL YEARS 2015-2016”**

**BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
THE ENVIRONMENT
MARCH 7, 2016**

Introduction

- Good morning Chairperson Cheh, members of the Committee, and Council staff. For the record, my name is Christopher J. Shorter, Acting Director of the Department of Public Works. With me today is the DPW General Counsel Christine Davis. Before I begin, I would like to take this time to thank you for the opportunity to present information about the programs and services provided by the Department and its accomplishments in FY 2015 and 2016 to date.
- I would also like to take a moment to thank the Mayor and City Administrator for their involvement, continued leadership and ongoing support.
- As you know, the mission of the Department of Public Works is to provide environmentally healthy municipal services that are both ecologically sound and cost effective. To that end, DPW serves all District residents, businesses, visitors and commuters by providing:
 - Trash, recycling, litter, deceased animal, household hazardous waste, and e-cycling collection and disposal.

- Street and alley cleaning.
 - Solid waste education and enforcement.
 - Grass cutting and grounds maintenance.
 - Leaf collection.
 - Snow removal.
 - Parking enforcement, including towing, booting, and removing and impounding abandoned and dangerous vehicles.
 - Fleet management, including acquisition and disposal, fueling, and vehicle maintenance services.
- The heart of DPW is our staff, the people who perform the services I've highlighted above on a daily basis. Even when there is no snow to clear or holiday trees to collect, you can find DPW employees working 24/7 to keep our city clean, healthy and safe. Nearly 70 percent of DPW employees are District residents and we take great pride in our day-to-day work. We do our very best to design programs and provide services that are customer-focused, effective and efficient. To that end, I understand the importance of investing in our staff, as well as the impact that investment has on our service delivery.
 - To institutionalize that investment, DPW is introducing "Career Pathways for DPW Employees." We want to reach every employee where he or she is and make available the means and the guidance to reach the next step.
 - We want to see employees actively pursuing their career goals and give them support to achieve them. In fact, we know that some employees may not have identified professional goals for themselves; but with Career Pathways and a more thoughtful approach to professional counseling throughout the performance year, they will see the opportunities beyond their current job and we will provide the support to help with achieving goals that make them stronger professionals and our services more effective.

- I view Career Pathways as a strategy to producing a direct, positive impact on the entire Department by improving morale, career satisfaction, motivation, productivity and responsiveness. This is inspired by the Mayor's vision of establishing very clear pathways to the middle class for our residents and by extension our employees.
- The services DPW provides are traditional municipal services. Over time, the use of technology has allowed us to reengineer our operations to reflect population shifts, environmental considerations and industry best practices. I, along with the executive team at DPW have begun positioning the Department of Public Works to take even greater advantage of analytic tools that produce data to guide our growth and better manage the changing service environment.
- We are building on our strengths. In FY 2015, DPW's top three accomplishments included:
 - Achieving a 664.17 percent increase in alternative fuel usage and a 33.14 percent reduction in petroleum fuel usage for District government equipment utilizing DPW fueling stations.
 - Improving and maintaining a residential recycling diversion rate that is more than 27 percent for two consecutive years.
 - Establishing the Office of Waste Diversion and Recovery per the Sustainable Solid Waste Management Act of 2014 that supports meeting the District's sustainability goals and objectives; as well as, the Office of Organizational Effectiveness and Change Management to assist with institutionalizing many of the process changes currently underway.

Office of Waste Diversion and Recovery

- I would like to expand on the third accomplishment first because it signals the importance I place on fully achieving the overall mission of the Office of Waste Diversion and Recovery and the goals, actions, and requirements of both the Sustainable Solid Waste Management Amendment Act of 2014 (the Act) and Sustainable DC Plan. To ensure the requirements in the Act receive the proper attention and oversight, the Office of Waste Diversion and Recovery is housed within the Office of the Director.
- This office is responsible in part for:
 - Implementing a source separation education and outreach program.
 - Serving as a liaison between the District and neighboring jurisdictions in developing regional waste reduction and diversion campaigns.
 - Implementing policies for reducing the generation of solid waste in the District.
- The team we're forming has the environmental, operational, and management background to lead the District in accomplishing its sustainable waste management aims, including developing a zero waste plan to achieve at least an 80 percent waste diversion rate.
- The office consists of a staff of three individuals with more than 30 years of combined experience in sustainable materials management, waste diversion, and environmental management. In addition, we have a Capital City Fellow who will be part of the team through June.
- Once fully staffed, the Office will be comprised of six full time employees. We are accepting applications and expect all remaining positions to be filled before June 2016.

- To better understand the perspectives, resources and expertise offered by the robust environmental advocacy community in the District of Columbia, I have committed to quarterly, in-person meetings with the network of environmental advocates and leaders within the District.
- My philosophy is to offer a transparent and collaborative government, including the best and most experienced voices our nation's capital has to offer. I feel this level of continued engagement is critical to enhancing our programs and services.
- Among our goals for FY 2016 is increasing recycling opportunities at the Fort Totten Transfer Station by adding textile recycling to the active list of commodities that can be brought to the station by residents for processing. The District also will expand its organics diversion program either through accepting yard waste from commercial haulers or offering food scrap drop off programs to residents at its Fort Totten Transfer Station.
- The purpose of these initiatives is to continue moving towards greener, healthier living and to increase the District's solid waste diversion rate. Success will be measured by the weight of food scraps and textiles brought by District residents and the increased ratio of tons of recycled commodities to tons of trash disposed.

Office of Organizational Effectiveness and Change Management

- As stated earlier, I believe in the value of data collection, and continuous organizational and program analysis and review to drive performance improvements. This belief has led to the establishment of an Office of Organizational Effectiveness and Change Management within DPW. Its overall goal is to establish a framework for continuous quality improvement within the agency.

- This new division is responsible for utilizing Six Sigma and other performance improvement techniques to provide process reengineering, program reviews, and recommendations for improvements in our service delivery model and approach. It is an integral part of the agency's performance management program, including creating and tracking our annual performance goals and key performance indicators.
- OECEM is also responsible for producing our weekly executive dashboard, program scorecards and implementing a formal Public Works Stat process to ensure we follow through, monitor and track our performance improvement goals agency-wide.
- Further, the OECEM will aid in finding ways to reduce service redundancies, waste and/or mismanagement within the organization. OECEM will help institutionalize strategic change and performance improvement initiatives across the agency.
- OECEM's first product, the DPW dashboard, is a weekly statistical review of our solid waste, parking enforcement and fleet management operations. The dashboard helps managers identify challenges and opportunities to grow and adapt to our changing environment. This document is available on the DPW website, just go to dpw.dc.gov. It's on the home page under "DPW by the Numbers." I found the dashboard to be extremely useful in helping me understand and appreciate DPW's vast portfolio of services.

Integrated Product Team

- Under the leadership of Mayor Bowser and City Administrator Rashad Young, DGS Director Chris Weaver and I formed a cross agency Integrated Product Team (IPT) within the Departments of General Services and Public Works. The Integrated Product Team was charged with reviewing the current portfolio services provided by both agencies, identifying redundancies and making

recommendations on services that should be realigned under one agency to improve service delivery to residents. The work of the team is ongoing. We will certainly have more to report during our budget oversight hearing for FY17.

Parking Enforcement Management Administration

- Our parking enforcement administration helps to ease the flow of traffic and free up short-term parking spaces for businesses and long-term spaces for residents. The administration responds to the second highest 311 service request – increased parking enforcement – within the agency, following bulk trash collection. We are committed to providing fair enforcement that supports businesses’ customers’ access to a curbside parking space and residents’ access to a space in their neighborhood.
- In FY 2015, we made a huge leap to ensure our parking tickets are accurate. The goal was to reduce mistakes in ticket writing to help customers avoid unnecessary adjudication due to enforcement error. By implementing several quality control activities we garnered a 40% decrease in all ticket errors. The actions taken to reduce these errors included:
 - Upgrading our ticketing software to ensure the officer enters the license plate twice, which is now required by the smart phones used to write tickets. This is similar to being asked to reenter a password to ensure accuracy.
 - Also, the full conversion to smart phones was completed in FY 2015.
 - A three-module training program for supervisors to better identify recurring errors on tickets made by their staff.
 - Daily TicPix quality assurance staff review all tickets and their supporting photographs of the violations for which the tickets were written. This staff notifies supervisors via email of errors in the tickets and photographs so the supervisors can verify the errors and request the tickets are voided by the Department of Motor Vehicles. The supervisors also counsel

the officer who wrote the voided ticket and incorporate this information in the officer's ongoing training.

- Ticpix is DPW's web database of images of parking tickets and the violations for which the tickets were written. DPW began posting these images so motorists could see why the tickets were issued.
 - All ticket writers receive various forms of ongoing training experiences throughout the year.
-
- In 2016, we are addressing the ongoing problem of parking scofflaws. We believe that the vast majority of those who park in the District follow our parking regulations, and if they happen to violate a regulation, they pay the ticket in a timely manner.
 - To address the growing number of people who regularly violate parking regulations and do not pay their tickets, DPW will leverage various smart technology solutions to better locate chronic violators and ensure delinquent fees are paid.
 - We want to achieve a 5% increase in FY 2016 over the 11,401 boot-eligible vehicles captured in FY 2015. Success will be capturing an additional 570 vehicles in FY16. We have taken a number of steps to reach our goal.
 - In early FY 2015, the DPW Parking Enforcement Management Administration began working with internal and external IT professionals to expand our ability to locate chronic violators (scofflaw vehicles) by leveraging data collected by our 200+ parking officers and mobile automated License Plate Recognition Systems. Additional programming and updates recently were added to our Parking Enforcement Ticketing database, which automatically alerts booting towing and ticketing supervisors to real-time locations of vehicles with delinquent fee amounts.

- These notifications allow supervisors and vehicle immobilization staff to immediately respond to known scofflaw violations. Additionally, the data we collect from the notifications allow management to plan progressive capturing strategies and decreases the need to blindly deploy staff searching for scofflaw vehicles. This enhancement assisted the booting team with immobilizing 300 additional vehicles in FY 2015 when compared to FY 2014.

Fleet Management Administration

- Our Fleet operation keeps District government going by repairing and maintaining more than 3,000 vehicles used for city services. Fleet also fuels all 6,000 DC government vehicles, including school buses, fire and trash trucks, and street sweepers. DPW and other government agencies rely on our Fleet Management Administration for the vehicles and other equipment necessary to collect trash, transport children, and repair potholes, among other services.
- In FY 2015, DPW utilized information technology to enhance the parts management process that produced a 36.8% reduction of obsolete part inventory and a 14.3% increase in overall shop turnaround rate.
- The Fleet Management Administration, Parts Department acquired six DuraBooks (tablets) for the purpose of counting and recording accurate parts inventories. The DuraBooks were outfitted with FASTER fleet management software to enable staff to remotely input and update inventory levels directly into the FASTER parts management module. The improvements to the parts-on-hand inventory have resulted in improvements to shop turnaround times and fleet availability (over 90% weekly availability for packers and 90% weekly medium heavy equipment availability).

- DC government has more than 2,400 alternative fuel vehicles (AFV), including E85, compressed natural gas (CNG), hybrids (electric plug-in and electric/fuel vehicles) and biodiesel. All these types of vehicles are used in various operational capacities throughout the city.
- These vehicles include trash trucks, dump trucks, mechanical street sweepers, front-end loaders, sedans, vans, pickup trucks, boom trucks, tow trucks, wreckers, refrigerator trucks, and flushers.
- The 664% increase in alternative fuel use is based on the increase observed between FY 2010 and FY 2015. In FY10, we were using about 250,000 gallons of E85 and compressed natural gas. We also began program testing to introduce biodiesel in FY10.
- By FY15, our usage of alternative fuels (biodiesel, E85 and CNG) had increased to 1.66 million gallons.
- The Fleet Management Administration was also profiled in the October 2015 issue of Government Fleet for our successful procurement of green vehicles and equipment.
- In FY 2016, Fleet's focus is saving lives by installing safety devices on large vehicles to prevent pedestrians and cyclists from inadvertently being pulled under these vehicles. A partnership with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) through the Vision Zero DC Plan (a national road traffic safety project designed to achieve a transportation system with no fatalities or serious injuries) will fund a retrofit installation on all remaining 6-wheel and 10-wheel dump trucks (41 DPW trucks and 37 DDOT trucks) that currently do not have side underrun protection.
- Fleet has installed similar safety devices on trash trucks, street sweepers and other oversize vehicles.

Solid Waste Management Administration

- Everyone in the District of Columbia – resident, business, commuter and visitor – relies daily on our solid waste services, most of which are delivered by employee teams. Now, we are taking teamwork to a higher level with the HIVE – High Impact Visibility Enforcement – program that became operational in 2015.
- Through HIVE, we will improve the cleanliness of major corridors through one-day, all-hands education and enforcement clean-up efforts within a pre-defined area. Our first HIVE was conducted in Ward 4 between 7th and 13th Streets, NW and Madison and Ingraham Streets.
- SWEEP inspectors canvassed each square block and alley of the HIVE area, educating residents, business owners and commuters on proper litter, trash and recycling procedures. Warnings and/or infraction notices were issued where appropriate. Inspectors also identified unlawful trash deposits/illegal dumping sites for collection by DPW on public space, and for investigation/collection by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs on private property.
- Additionally, SWEEP inspectors were alert to identify blatant and obvious dangerous buildings, dangerous construction sites, rodent infestations, and/or illegal activity for referral to DCRA, the Department of Health, and/or the Metropolitan Police Department for investigation.
- DPW also received assistance with communication to residents and businesses from the Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services, Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, the Office of Councilmember Brandon Todd (Ward 4), the Brightwood

Community Association and the Greater Georgia Avenue Business Alliance.

- This month, HIVEs will be conducted in Wards 7 and 8.
- I also want to salute our leaf collection team for reengineering its operation in FY 2016. The pilot program that moved to a one-week collection window was successful.
- DPW was able to reduce the amount of time between residents' efforts to bag/rake their leaves to the curb and the time in which DPW collected them. Additionally, although the amount of leaves that fall is not consistent and may be impacted by new tree plantings, weather, etc., during the FY16 leaf season, DPW collected 962 more tons of leaves than the previous FY15 leaf season.
- Another first actually is attributed to Mother Nature. This year, for the first time we started the residential street sweeping program on March 1, which is the date that appears on the street signs.
- During the 2015 sweeping program, we achieved a 28% increase in the tonnage of litter and debris collected by touching nearly every District street at least once per month between March and October. Many of these streets had never received a sweeper cleaning. Additionally, we created a pilot deployment for the first shift to clean major inbound/outbound arteries before the start of the morning residential routes. We want to build on last year's success.

Community Engagement

- DPW's work is in the community. Our customers are residents, businesses, commuters and visitors. I have made it my business to

learn our operations so I can communicate effectively with our customers.

- I welcome being invited to participate in community and business group meetings and I have made presentations about DPW services at these meetings across the District. Topics covered include parking enforcement specific to the community, solid waste collections, street and alley cleaning issues, sanitation enforcement, leaf collection and snow removal.

Conclusion

- I would like to present “DPW by the Numbers” to describe our service delivery:
 - 3,771 stolen vehicle alerts were sent to MPD in FY16.
 - 91.1 percent of bulk collections were made on time in FY16.
 - 109 special events were supported by DPW staff in FY16.
 - 461.62 tons of solid waste were collected from the BIDs in FY16.
 - 103,867 tons of household waste were collected in FY15.
 - 23,432 tons of recycling were collected in FY15.
- Once again, I would like to thank the employees who work around the clock to keep our city clean and healthy and the Mayor for her tireless leadership and commitment to excellence. This concludes my formal testimony. I am happy to answer questions at this time.