

January 2007

State of the City

Neighborhood initiatives are mostly planned and budgeted.

Mayor Menino's State of the City address on January 9th reminded the citizens of Boston of his commitment to their neighborhoods. Following his last two major speeches which received media attention for his proposals for downtown to build a 1,000 foot tower at Winthrop Square and to sell City Hall, this speech was all neighborhoods, further emphasized by choosing the Strand Theatre in Dorchester for its delivery. The Mayor will be able to continue the second phase of his State of the City address when he speaks at the Research Bureau's Annual Meeting on Friday, March 2.

This address did not feel like an expensive speech since most of the initiatives announced by the Mayor are already planned in the FY07 operating and five-year capital budgets.

Public Safety - The Mayor announced that the City would hire 190 new police officers this year. How you get to 190 depends on how the officers are counted. The City bases its count on when the classes in the Police Academy begin. The Research Bureau prefers to count the officers when they graduate and are available for duty on the streets. The breakdown of the 190 is shown below.

In Police Academy Now	87
Municipal Police Transfer	33
Spring Class	70
Total	190

While hired in FY07, the officers in the spring class will not be ready for duty until FY08. On the other hand, this count does not include the 60 new officers who graduated from the Academy on October 6. These

increases are offset partially by attrition through retirements and other reasons but the trend is a gradual increase in the number of police officers in Boston. As of January 2, 2007, the number of active officers is 2,087 which represents a net increase of 95 officers since January 2004. The hiring of 190 new officers will be fully funded by the City.

Capital Initiatives – Several initiatives announced by the Mayor are included in the City's FY07 five-year capital budget. For example, the Mayor stated that the City would break ground for the building of a new Mattapan branch library. For this \$16.7M project, the City already has spent approximately \$2.9M for planning and site preparation with the balance to be spent over the next two years. The capital budget includes work on 23 parks and 23 playgrounds throughout the city over five years, including Hynes Field in West Roxbury and Ceylon Park in Dorchester that were mentioned by the Mayor. The Mayor committed \$6M to help rehabilitate the Strand Theater. The capital budget provides \$4.5M, which means an additional \$1.5M will have to be appropriated.

Public Education – The one new initiative announced by the Mayor is the "Smart from the Start" learning program that will focus on the city's poorest children from birth to 5 years old to help them be healthy and better prepared when they enter the Boston School System. The first phase of this program will center on about 3,800 children and be funded initially by \$1M from the City and various philanthropic sources.