

A large, abstract graphic element on the left side of the slide. It features a light blue outline of a sailboat that is tilted at an angle. The boat's hull points towards the bottom left, and its sail is angled upwards towards the top right. Below the boat, several thin, curved lines extend from the bottom left corner towards the center of the slide.

2023 Budget Address

Mayor Jacob Frey

August 15, 2022

Mayor Frey 2023 Budget Address – Monday, August 15, 2022

Good morning, Council President Jenkins, Council Vice President Palmisano, Council Member Payne, Council Member Wonsley, Council Member Rainville, Council Member Vetaw, Council Member Ellison, Council Member Osman, Council Member Goodman, Council Member Chavez, Council Member Chughtai, Council Member and Budget Chair Koski, Council Member Johnson, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Superintendent Bangoura, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board President Forney, Board of Estimate and Taxation President Pree-Stinson, Board of Estimate and Taxation Vice President Brandt, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Executive Director Warsame, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board Chair Hoch, City Department Leaders, and our extraordinary community partners.

Thanks for being here today. This is the first time I've given the Budget Address back in the Council Chambers since 2019. It's nice to be back.

I think it's safe to say that government has been more acutely involved in everyone's daily life over the past several years. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how people interact with government at all levels, especially at the local level.

All levels of government exist to provide services to the people of this country – providing past, present, and future needs. The judicial system litigates the past, Congress passes bills for the future. Cities operate in the here and now. You need your garbage picked up now, you need a home now, you need to feel safe now. Residents of Minneapolis are demanding results, now. We must answer that call, now.

This year's budget is geared toward the things that touch our daily lives in the here and now. The things that improve the fundamentals of a well-run city. Things that you may not notice when they are going well, but you certainly notice when they are not.

Since the start of the pandemic, cuts have been required to keep the boat afloat and our city moving. With hiring freezes, contract cancellations, and diminished city staff capacity – just taking care of the easy stuff, the basic daily services, has neither been easy nor basic. So this year, we're focusing on the services you can and should count on now.

And we're going to do them with excellence. Great service should not be the exception to the rule. There's a good reason as to why we may have fallen short over these past few years. But these setbacks will not define our city. Our city will be defined by the courage to stand up, to keep fighting. And to see the kind of progress that is emblematic of who we want to be.

And we want to provide the best possible services to our residents. We want them to be safe, housed, and cared for. And we want them to be happy. Here and now.

Crafting the Biennial Budget

Our services begin with the budget. A brief glance at your budget books reveals a substantial change this year. For the first time, you'll see we're accounting for not only 2023, but 2024 as well.

For two whole years we've been reacting on the defensive, responding to a litany of crises by amending budgets, and reamending them as projections change. As our city comes back, and it is coming back, let's press the advantage. And do more than simply get back to normal.

We can blow by the old normal and do things differently. This is one example. This two-year budget provides several benefits. First, it gives our administration and finance team the time and ability to go deeper.

Our Budget Director, Amelia Cruver, will tell you – it's a year-round passion. In a yearly budget cycle, just weeks after a budget is passed by the City Council, planning for the next budget is underway. This never-ending cycle puts all the focus on change-items but gives little time or impetus to further evaluate our base budget in full and account for data-driven results.

Speaking of results, I'd like to take a moment to thank our entire Budget and Finance team – especially for their hard work on this first biennial budget. Also to congratulate the team for being awarded the Government Finance Officer's Association's 'distinguished budget presentation award' last year. Well-deserved kudos.

Now, the second benefit a biennial budget provides is improved trust between the mayor and council. If I tell you that a program will be partially funded in the first year and fully funded in the second, you can see the commitment on paper. We will be working from the same document with shared understanding.

Third, a biennial budget gives both the mayor and council the ability to see whether a new program is working before reupping or increasing funding for the following year. It provides more of a runway to implement, evaluate, and report out before final decisions are made.

And finally, over time, a more complete review will garner a more complete fiscal picture, which in turn can improve efficiencies and hopefully reduce property tax burden.

I'll start today with this new biennial budget, providing the levy increase projections for both 2023 and 2024. The increase for 2023 will be 6.5% and we predict 2024 will be somewhere in the range of 6.2%. These increases are largely driven by a combination of inflation, growth capture, and measures to bring full-time staffing back to pre-pandemic levels.

Now, inevitably, we can't predict the future. Seemingly wise budget allocations now will need to be amended later. So next year, I will present an amended budget with new figures – and you the City Council will once again amend and approve.

As we embark on a new government structure, this biennial budget process is an important change to help improve responsiveness.

Speaking of government structure, we're changing ours for the first time in over 100 years.

Government Structure

If you've heard me discuss the government restructure, then you've heard me refer to the work we're doing today as the most important, impactful, and enduring thing we will do as local officials. People love Minneapolis, they want to be proud of our city. We need to ensure our service level meets the level of pride.

My Government Structure Workgroup researched many options and ultimately recommended two they felt could work in our city. After careful consideration, we landed on a multiple report structure – a Chief of Staff in the Mayor's office plus three direct reports to the mayor: the City Operations Officer, the Community Safety Commissioner, and the City Attorney.

I'm thrilled with our most recent nomination of Kristyn Anderson for City Attorney – an exceptionally talented person who will vigorously advocate for and represent our city with pride. Council Members will all have an opportunity to meet with her soon. The relationship between the City Attorney and City Council is an important one as the City Attorney represents both the mayor and council equally.

Last week Commissioner Cedric Alexander was sworn in as our first Commissioner of the Office of Community Safety – and the steps are being taken toward this new, comprehensive approach. Now, no matter where you stood on Question 2 last year, this office, this work, is a moment of unity around integrating our safety services. Council Members, I deeply appreciate your collaboration.

Under Executive Order 2022-02, Commissioner Alexander now has the authority and oversight to lead the work to integrate and coordinate our five safety departments – police, fire, emergency management, 911, and neighborhood safety. Not only are we setting this office up, we are staffing it.

A combination of reorganized positions and this budget proposal will give the Office of Community Safety five additional positions to help facilitate the integrated work. This work is new, it has to be innovative and different, so it needs proper staffing.

And we have other offices that need staff. Now, I know this isn't news to anyone in this room, but recently the Minnesota Supreme Court reaffirmed what we already know: our city needs more police officers.

Whether talking to business owners on Lake Street, residents on the North Side, or activists outside my home, I've been consistent in my message. We need officers, and we need them to reflect the values of our city.

I've been pushing an aggressive plan for recruitment and retention to rebuild our officer ranks as well as strengthen community trust in the Minneapolis Police Department. That commitment has been cemented through policy reforms and centered in my budget proposals.

We invested \$7 million in ARPA funds for recruitment, retention, and hiring support this past spring. A portion of these resources is dedicated to the MPD – and a marketing campaign is soon to be underway. In 2023, we will pilot the Pathways program, an internship for junior and senior high school students to explore the field of law enforcement. By investing in programs like these, we will be able to recruit new applicants who reflect the communities they serve.

Commissioner Alexander's idea of recruiting officers at restaurants in Cedar-Riverside, or on a sidewalk on East Lake Street is exactly the right approach. We are going to find community-oriented officers where you should most likely find them – in the community.

Recognizing that we won't get back to full staffing overnight, we must do things differently in the Office of Community Safety – specifically in the area of technology. Through strategic investments, we will be able to utilize both our patrol and investigative resources more efficiently to hold perpetrators of violent crimes accountable.

That's why we gave \$1 million in ARPA funds to MPD to expand both portable cameras and lighting technology. We're doubling down on the technology advancements in this budget. Technology isn't a magic-wand fix, but it certainly is the way of the future. Combine that with

mutual aid funding and increased overtime, we can help bridge the gap. And we need to be thinking about the future of our safety services.

The Office of Community Safety goes well beyond policing. We're integrating all safety services, including violence prevention and mental health response. This was a key recommendation from my Community Safety Workgroup – we need to invest in prevention work. Now those services will live in a new department called the Neighborhood Safety department, and we're making sure they're funded.

The incredible portfolio of our Office of Violence Prevention doesn't go unnoticed. They continue to break the cycle of violence and do so with integrity and innovation – even gaining attention and technical assistance from the White House Community Violence Intervention Collaborative. We used over \$3.3 million of ARPA funds for short-term expansions in OVP work through 2023. Starting in 2024, we are transitioning to ongoing funding for over \$2.3 million in violence prevention work to make that expansion permanent.

Think of the Minneapolis Violence Interrupters and Adolescent Group Violence Intervention programs – this work will now continue in a sustainable way. Additionally, we will include a one-time extension of the Violence Prevention Fund at \$1 million to continue supporting community-generated and -implemented violence prevention efforts.

We've heard loud and clear from community members, from you my Council colleagues, from MPD officers, and from our mental health responders – we need to expand the Behavioral Crisis Response team. This program began as a pilot with Canopy Mental Health & Consulting and has yielded results that speak for themselves. In just 3.5 months, they have taken roughly 1,600 calls with two vans for the entire city. We're investing \$1.45 million in 2023, with a ramp up to \$2.9 million in 2024 to expand our mental health response services for deeper coverage city-wide, providing 24/7 service with 5 vans.

Beyond Police and Neighborhood Safety, our Office of Community Safety is rounded out with Fire, 911, and Emergency Management. Each focusing on integration and innovation of services. For example, the Fire department is receiving \$245,000 of funding to update obsolete and unsupported software. This might sound boring but let me tell you – this is critical.

Their new software will bring the department in alignment with the State Fire Marshal's National Fire Incident Reporting System to maintain reporting requirements to FEMA. We also requested a three-year grant from the federal government for 15 firefighters. If this grant is received, the investment will be ongoing.

And safety in our city goes even beyond the bounds of the Office of Community Safety.

In addition to the camera and lighting investment in MPD, we used \$1.21 million in ARPA funding to eliminate the city-wide lighting repair backlog and to improve light quality in our Cultural Districts and near 2 schools.

This budget is even more lit with a \$9 million investment over two years to replace lighting systems specifically in Stevens Square, Loring Park, Como, and Marcy-Holmes. We're making our city brighter one street at a time.

And our streets need additional focus and care – especially overnight. That's why we are investing over \$900,000 in ongoing funding for 9 full-time Traffic Control Agents to handle increases in parking complaints, traffic management, and special events in the city. Requests for traffic control services from sponsoring entities and MPD have increased to a level that the current 4 staff members cannot accommodate. These added positions will lift that burden and allow us to be nimble and address where we have traffic enforcement needs, at any time of the day.

I know safety is – rightfully so – top of mind right now for much of our community, but the government restructure is about providing effective and efficient services in all areas of our local government. Importantly, this includes our Legislative branch. The branch that holds 13 esteemed Council Members, their staff, the Office of the City Clerk, the City Auditor, and all appointed Boards and Commissions.

Question 1 last year dictated a clear executive mayor and clear legislative Council. Ensuring that both branches can operate effectively requires a reorientation of positions. We're therefore honoring our commitment to the City Council and fulfilling their ask for more support by transitioning 6 existing positions into the Audit department in 2023 to fulfil legislative functions and priorities, and an additional position in the Clerk's office in 2024 for Outreach and Constituent Management.

Under the leadership of our City Clerk, Casey Carl, part of that outreach is to our Minneapolis voters. Minnesota – and Minneapolis – is known for consistently high voter turnout... like we're talking the highest in the nation. Minneapolis is equally known for its exceptional voter service, so we're investing \$6.8 million for elections in 2023 and 2024 to ensure all eligible voters have the opportunity to have their voice heard.

The Legislative branch also needs additional capacity to livestream and broadcast meetings for Boards and Commissions with decision making authority, like the Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate and Taxation. We're adding a Video Specialist to assist with that work. People want, and expect, to watch things livestreamed – a notable shift due to the pandemic – and providing that government transparency and accountability is something I'm happy to support.

As I've said repeatedly, we're not going back to normal. We're charting a path ahead. Right now in our city – and in our country – a new normal requires deep commitment to race equity. It requires a commitment not just in words but in action. That's why we have elevated Race Equity, Inclusion and Belonging to its own, standalone, department in the new structure – including its name change.

We are investing over \$282,000 in our race equity work including the design of the Minneapolis Equity Report to provide an annual measure of equity in the city – both internally and externally. We've heard from department heads that they need technical assistance to understand what race equity problems exist and how their proposals would actually address them. We're going to help make sure we do this work with precision by funding an additional full-time employee.

If you haven't heard enough about the government restructure yet, we still need to talk about a position that oversees all other departments beyond safety and legal services. The third position reporting to the mayor will be the City Operations Officer leading the work of the Office of Public Service. We've launched a national search for this role, knowing we need someone well-suited to oversee many different, critical city functions.

I would be remiss if I didn't give Heather Johnston the credit she deserves for leading our City Coordinator's Office over the past year. She has been instrumental in shifting our government structure and directing what will become the Office of Public Service.

People are tired of getting the run-around at City Hall without getting answers. The rigmarole to get a simple answer or do the basic function has deterred even the most experienced. You might not have seen our beautiful, new Public Service Building yet because it opened in the middle of the pandemic, but its service desk is set up to give residents the answers they need in one convenient spot.

This is just one example of the work happening to improve our service level now.

And our service level is dependent on how people feel about the staff that work in our local government.

Planning for a Consent Decree

People won't feel safe in our city without having trust in the departments that are providing the fundamental services. Through all the investigations and back and forth, we've been clear. Our city will enter into a consent decree – importantly, one consent decree.

Coordinating this work with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights and the Department of Justice, and arriving at a consent decree that is enforceable, clear, actionable, and achievable, will require an investment. We cannot predict what the outcomes of the DOJ investigation will be, but we can predict there will be outcomes, and we can prepare.

We have reached out to other jurisdictions that have entered into a consent decree. The best advice we've heard – you don't want to presuppose an outcome before it happens.

All we can do is prepare. That means reserving funds in the next two years. We will be reserving \$2 million this year and \$3 million next year and in future years to allow timely action once the work begins. We have an interdisciplinary team working tirelessly to make sure we are ready to hit the ground running.

But we can't wait for a consent decree to begin the important work and change we need to see. We're reorienting positions to provide greater accountability, now. For example, we're adding three new full-time employees in the Civil Rights Office of Police Conduct Review. This increased investigative capacity reduces existing caseload demands, which in turn gives the time to more thoroughly investigate. This, by the way, is a direct response to the MDHR findings.

While we do the important work to shift our culture and think differently, there are some things that are proven to work – services that are tried and true.

Core Service Rebuilding

Providing basic service with excellence requires we bring our government back to full strength.

Minneapolis has a lot of neighborhood pride. I love Longfellow, I'll always live in St. Anthony West, Victory is where I want to raise my kids – are all frequent refrains I hear when talking to constituents. That neighborhood pride is a crucial component of our Minneapolis ecosystem. Let's make sure we give them something to be proud about.

Let's pick up the trash, let's plant trees, let's clean up the graffiti. Let's put out the darkness and turn on the lights. With this budget, we are doing all of that and more.

Some of our most basic, bread-and-butter service is provided by the exceptional team at Public Works – our largest City department. The work is not glamorous, it's not generally in the news or media, but let me tell you – it is necessary, and it makes people's lives better.

By investing in these services, we are improving our response times to a 311 request. And by improving our responsiveness we are building trust with our residents.

With a nearly \$3.88 million investment in 2023, increasing to \$4.37 million in 2024, we're improving roads, trails and 311 response. This means we are putting our dollars toward addressing concrete repair, litter pickup, mowing, graffiti, sealcoat operations, trails and protected bike lanes, winter complaint response, and parking ramp maintenance. That's a long list – and it deserves the investment.

With significantly reduced revenues, we had to sacrifice the past couple years... if you noticed we weren't doing these basic functions as well – you were right. We're recommitting to that work and expanding it.

One service that's critical to our city and planet? Trees. Try to find a street in Minneapolis that looks better with fewer trees on it. I'm certain you'll fail. Find a climatologist that doesn't acknowledge that trees improve our climate. You won't. Find a psychologist who thinks the presence of trees where you live does not improve mental health. They don't exist.

While we take great pride in our Minneapolis tree canopy, those trees are not evenly distributed. Extensive foliage throughout wealthier, whiter neighborhoods leaves black and brown communities without shade, greenery, and access to nature. By investing in a tree coordinator, we can expand tree planting in lower-income neighborhoods. Not just on parkways or on park land, a service already provided by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, but also on private property which has untapped opportunities for growth.

Imagine a city employee coming up to your door and asking if you want an additional tree – and them doing that up and down the rest of the block. That's what we're talking about. Climate change can and must be fought locally. This is one step. But we're not stopping there.

We're investing \$571,000 over the next two years in Green Cost Share, which helps businesses reduce environmental pollution through solar energy and weatherization projects. With an investment of \$700,000 over two years, we're expanding electric vehicle stations across the city and positioning ourselves to be competitive for additional federal investments.

When we talk about climate change, we generally talk about doing less of something. There are other areas where we need to continue doing more – like affordable housing.

Affordable housing is – and probably will always be – my passion in service. Because housing is a right, we have transformed our budget process to bake that funding in. It is now a core

service in our city, not just as a one-time change item when money is plentiful. People need an affordable home, even and especially when economic times are tight.

Speaking of baking housing service into our budget, you won't find a change item this year for Stable Homes Stable Schools. Why? It's an ongoing budget item now. And by the way, the program is getting results.

Since it began in 2019, we've housed over 3,300 kids and their families in partnership with the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, the Minneapolis Public Schools, Hennepin County, and the YMCA of the North. Those kids are staying in the same schools – they aren't going from one school to another. They are growing up with stability and will be extraordinary adult residents in our city.

Because the program is doing so well and getting incredible results, we're expanding to even more schools throughout the city. This year, we added 3.5 dedicated Stable Home Stable Schools staff to help to deepen current service levels and to prepare for a larger expansion in 2023. Stay tuned for details later this year.

Due to labor and material shortages and inflation, housing costs have dramatically increased over the past several years. This is creating gaps in previously funded affordable housing projects and preventing others from getting off the ground. So we are yet again increasing our investments in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund from \$15 million to \$18 million for 2023 and 2024. This increase, combining with the \$5 million for the Housing Opportunity Fund made possible with APRA funding, will help us keep sprinting toward our goals.

And guess what? It's working. Unprecedented investment in the Trust Fund is resulting in unprecedented new affordable units – averaging 635 new units per year over the past 3 years. If you remember, the pre-2019 average was 330 units per year. And 32% of these new units are deeply affordable – serving households with income at or below 30% Area Median Income – this is four times the number of units produced pre-2019.

Even though these results are incredible, I'm beginning to expect them each year. With this continued investment, I'm confident that our housing staff and incredible community development partners will be able to deliver on that expectation.

Here's another housing expectation – if you're getting evicted, you will have representation. In housing courts across the country, 90% of landlords have attorneys while only 10% of tenants do. Without representation and a keen understanding of the housing legal system, unfairness becomes the law. We want to change that. We are changing that.

The sixth amendment provides legal representation if you're charged with a criminal offense. Last year, we passed the Right to Counsel policy, what I like to call a 6.5 amendment. One where you receive assistance from an attorney in a housing court. An ordinance is an important step, but we also need to allocate resources to make that right available. Through our \$1 million ARPA investment and partnerships with Hennepin County and community partners like Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, renters can access that right in a housing court today.

To ensure the sustainability of that access, we are increasing ongoing funding by \$500,000 in 2024 to reach \$750,000 total to continue providing the Right to Counsel. This enhanced representation is not just the fair and right thing to do, it prevents homelessness, saves the city money, and improves livability in our city. Rather than simply dealing with the aftermath of an eviction, let's keep people in their homes to begin with.

Finally, some of the most important housing stock is that which is publicly owned. Historic disinvestment requires more repairs, historic demand requires more units – more homes. Two years ago, we helped fund and embarked upon the Elliot Twins redevelopment project alongside the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Hennepin County. That project is now complete without a single resident being displaced. Some said the financing strategy used would result in privatization and displacement. That did not happen.

In last year's budget, we added \$1 million in ongoing funding to reestablish commitments to public housing in our city. And we used \$4.6 million in APRA funds to provide gap funding to replace 16 existing units in disrepair and add 84 units of brand-new, quality two- and three-bedroom homes. Construction on those 84 new homes will begin soon.

In this two-year budget cycle, we are signaling that while those investments were historic in their own right, we must go further. We are providing an additional \$2.7 million in one-time funding for immediate needs and emergency repairs. And today I am announcing my commitment to work with MPHA and our multi-jurisdictional partners to find opportunities that can be brought forward in the next budget cycle, in conjunction with MPHA's new strategic plan.

Government, from local to state to federal levels, has neglected public housing for generations. We must help right this ship, convene the stakeholders, refurbish existing units and build more. And get our public housing residents the results they deserve. Thank you, Executive Director Abdi Warsame for your advocacy, Chair Tom Hoch for your vision, Director Andrea Brennan for your work – we're going to do this right.

Another core service that we have baked into our budget is economic inclusion. I can't stress the importance of this enough – especially now while our city is recovering.

Earlier this year, my Inclusive Economic Recovery Workgroup provided recommendations that we recreate the Black middle class, support workforce training and entrepreneurship, and provide opportunities for wealth creation. We're doing all of that and more.

We are investing an additional \$1.5 million in NOAH Preservation in 2023 and \$2 million in Minneapolis Homes in 2024. What do two, very successful housing programs have to do with economic inclusion? The Workgroup astutely connected the dots between having an affordable place to live, especially one where you can build generational wealth through homeownership as a critical piece of economic inclusion. Their recommendations included sustaining and expanding investments in these initiatives.

Our Commercial Property Development Fund has gone from pilot to mainstay because it's working to successfully provide real estate ownership opportunities to BIPOC business owners. It's successfully giving these entrepreneurs a route to build both their business and intergenerational wealth at the same time. They should reap the benefits of these gains in equity, rather than have their dream displaced because the rent increased. With \$2 million of additional funding in this budget, combined with \$10 million in ARPA funds, and \$500,000 ongoing, we can continue the pace of loan issuance through 2023.

Now, this budget invests in community directly. We have allocated \$1 million to the Black Women's Wealth Alliance's ZaRah project which will provide technical assistance centers on West Broadway. This is a direct investment in our efforts to recreate the Black middle class.

Additionally, we are investing \$500,000 one-time funding in Dreamland, a multi-tenant, multi-level small business and event center. This will support the \$7 million project led by the Cultural Wellness Center and will help further the 38th Street Thrive Plan.

And growth and trainings go hand in hand. That's why we are investing \$250,000 in the Rise Up Center, a partnership with our Unions to build out our BIPOC workforce for the future.

Additionally, we are investing another round of one-time funding of \$1 million to continue the pilot of the Community Safety Strategies program. This program, which is truly an embodiment of community ideas and innovation, is helping us achieve safety goals and strengthen our workforce. Our Northside and Cedar Riverside partners are leading the way – and I look forward to seeing the results.

All of this economic inclusion work is allowing us to truly invest in our people. And we want our people to be happy and healthy.

Our country is continuing its long fight against the opioid epidemic. I'm sick of simply trying to prevent tragic death with no end in sight. I'm sick of our focus so exclusively being on harm reduction with limited treatment options available. When you love someone, you don't want to just prevent their death with a shot of NARCAN, you want them to get better. Compassion is giving people the tools and treatment to better their life.

Right now, we're moving towards a permanent treatment facility in partnership with the American Indian Community Development Corporation. And we are committed to making this happen as soon as possible. We will have more information to share on that project soon.

In the immediacy, we'll be investing \$645,000 in ongoing spending for evidence-based treatment for opioid addiction. Those suffering from addiction, be they American Indian, Somali, Black or white, will be able to get help right now. And over the next two years, our Health department will conduct a thorough engagement process on how best to use future funding to combat the opioid epidemic.

The recent overturn of Roe v. Wade sent shockwaves across our country. And while Minnesota provides statutory protection for pregnant people, it is incumbent on all of us to step up even more. With a \$300,000 investment toward abortion access, we'll ensure that people who need help can get it in our city. And with Executive Order 2022-01, no City staff or department will work with, or provide information to, other states or jurisdictions pursuing legal action against individuals seeking reproductive healthcare or entities providing reproductive healthcare in Minneapolis.

Our kids and teens need our help, too. We're recommending \$440,000 in ongoing funding for our school-based clinics. These clinics provide critical services like mental health, primary care, and long-term well-being – and directly impact the City's goals for keeping youth in school, eradicating teen pregnancy, and increasing high school graduation rates.

My budget last year included a historic collaboration with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to bring youth recreation front and center. Through their great work, this partnership is already bearing fruit. Whether the topic is safety, workforce development, or physical and mental health, kids are looking for things to do. We're fulfilling our commitment to youth recreation with our \$2.6 million annual investment to make sure they can access enriching and productive opportunities.

Safe recreational opportunities are not truly safe unless we make the proper investments. So this year we are honoring the Park Board's additional request to bolster security in park space through additional sworn and non-sworn personnel. This will help ensure the youth programming – and all activities in the parks – are safe.

Through these programs, I'm hopeful that our Minneapolis youth will unlock passions they didn't know they had. Perhaps their interests will even lead them toward pursuing a career in public service.

Investing in our City Workforce

My favorite part about working for the City of Minneapolis is our team. That team has been stressed and run ragged for a couple years. That team is also more resilient than ever. Leaders in every department are stepping up and doing some really amazing work. Staff across the Enterprise are doing jobs they never anticipated doing. All to keep our city, a great city, rising after a couple tough years.

And because of them, rise we will. They deserve credit and more. They also deserve support. With this budget, we are investing in our people, AND their families.

Right now, a City staff member who has a baby or adopts a child only gets 3 weeks of paid parental leave. Today I'm proud to announce we're expanding that to 12 paid weeks. And we aren't waiting to do it... Council Members on the Policy Governance Oversight Committee will be able to discuss and vote on it literally this afternoon. Some argue this benefit will result in reduced productivity for those additional 9 weeks of leave. I would argue there is a far bigger loss when an employee goes to work elsewhere because they can't have a baby when working for the City of Minneapolis.

In addition to being able to care for their babies, our employees deserve to feel safe. Two field divisions, Traffic Control and Animal Care and Control, are essential personnel who have remained in the field from the onset of the pandemic. Volatility toward these divisions has escalated into personal threats, intimidation, use of physical force and brandishing of weapons. In 2022, Regulatory Services staff have already faced multiple serious safety incidents.

Because of that, we're providing funding for voluntary body cameras for both Traffic Control and Animal Care and Control staff in addition to providing safety-focused professional development for public facing employees. The disturbing personal threats are unacceptable. So, if the question ever comes forward of whose side I'm on – it's theirs, our City staff.

This budget is also making sure our staff are equipped with the skills and agility they need to understand one another – no matter their differences.

That's why we have a two-year Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan – and we need someone to oversee it and make sure it's done right. So, we are investing over \$120,000 in ongoing funding to hire a Project Coordinator and \$200,000 to retain contractual services for workforce DEI initiatives. This will ensure sustainability, accountability, and effectiveness as we focus on recruitment and hiring, changing our internal culture, and building an infrastructure to support these changes.

We're not stopping there. We're funding a first-of-its kind anti-racism curriculum to shift the culture of our workplace. With \$40,000 in ongoing funding, all our employees will be educated on systemic racism and how to create a more inclusive work environment. The funding includes \$5,000 to support the engagement of community members during the design phase.

We intentionally engage our community in the work, because our jobs are done every day for the betterment of this community. All of our City departments work with our community in some way or another. Our Neighborhood and Community Relations department facilitates important relationships and programs, and our Communications department ensures we get key messages out not only in English, but in Somali, Oromo, Hmong, and Spanish.

In this budget, we are investing \$48,000 in ongoing funding to add staff capacity to support the work of the American Indian Memorandum of Understanding creating a healthy and thriving American Indian community and investing \$100,000 ongoing funding for cultural media programming in different languages.

While we are talking about our community. That's also how I think about our City staff – as a community. Whether we work out of City Hall, the Public Service Building, a Water Treatment Facility, the Emergency Operations and Training Center – we all are doing this work together.

Our 4,000 colleagues show up to work each and every day to fulfil their duty as a public servant and to serve the residents of this great city. I know we will continue to show up, no matter the task at hand. We have proven that time and time again. No matter what we face.

The Here and Now

We're operating in a world with complex problems. A world that far too often rewards simple but incomplete solutions. A world where sloganeering can sometimes trump policy.

The budget however is a document of numbers. And behind every one of those numbers is a person who benefits – a person who needs help. A person that has the right to safe drinking water, an affordable home, and clean air.

Behind this budget is the well-intentioned goal to make our city better, now. To make our city safer, now. To make our city more prosperous, now.

To achieve these goals, we can't subscribe to the easy promise of one simple solution. Because that promise will be broken. Rather, we must promise to double down and do the work of good governance. The work of rebuilding. The work of integrating our safety systems, restructuring our government, and recreating a Black middle class.

And we're on our way. There have been moments over the past couple years where it's been hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. There have been times when arriving at the positive outlook is an effort in and of itself.

But having put in that effort, we have a runway. We are poised for take-off. The flight will be bumpy, and we may need to reassess and take some detours along the way. But there will be no dispute we are moving in the right direction. Here and now.