

Murray proposes funding plan for additional police officers

April 28, 2016 by [Office of the Mayor](#)

Seattle Mayor Ed Murray today proposed a funding plan to [finance the hiring of 200 new police officers](#) and investments in the City's 911 call center as proposed in his 2016 State of the City address.

Murray will finance the expansion of the Seattle Police Department through reprioritizing existing resources, identifying efficiencies and by increasing selected fees and taxes on Seattle businesses.

“Public safety is the paramount duty of local government,” said Murray. “As one of the fastest growing cities in America, we face serious strains on our public safety resources that must be addressed. Today, I am proposing a specific funding plan for public safety investments that strikes a balance between new revenues and reprioritizing existing resources.”

The addition of 200 officers by the end of 2019 would grow Seattle Police Department to 1,464 officers, the highest in the history of the department. This level of expansion is in line with the recently completed [police staffing study](#) conducted by Berkshire Advisors.

“We must also ensure that we are using existing police resources most effectively, especially with regard to crime prevention,” said Murray. “We will enhance our community engagement and outreach, police visibility, and proactive relationship-building across the city.”

The cost of the new officers, improving the 911 call center and other information technology investments will cost \$37 million per year. Murray is proposing to raise \$14 million in new revenues and fund the other \$23 million (nearly two-thirds of the necessary funding) from existing resources. Roughly half of the General Fund resources has already been approved by council for hiring additional police officers.

The proposed increases in taxes and fees on Seattle businesses are:

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- 2 percent increase over two years in the existing Business and Occupation (B&O) tax rates, which have not risen since 1991, generating \$8.4 million per year. A retail business with \$1 million in revenues would pay an additional \$70 a year.
- Restructuring and increasing the City’s Business License fee, with fees increasing in five steps depending on the size of the business, generating \$5.8 million per year. The smallest businesses would see a license fee increase of \$25 a year.

Seattle is already on track to hire 120 additional officers by 2017, a commitment made the mayor made in 2014.

Incoming calls to SPD’s 911 call center call have placed a growing strain on the current system. Call center volumes have increased by 13 percent since 2010. The call center will be adding staff and making technology investments to handle the growing number of calls for service.

Other technology investments at the department include technology infrastructure to support body worn cameras for officers and a new time tracking tool to help manage officer overtime.

Last week, Murray announced that he had identified existing funds to construct a new \$160 million North Precinct and would not send a public safety levy to the voters in 2016 or 2017.

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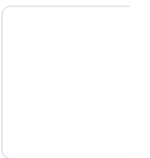
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