

Fresno's proposed city budget calls for more cops, firefighters



Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingin's proposed 2015-16 city budget would add 43 new sworn police officers over the course of the year, bringing the police department's total staffing of sworn personnel to 760. That is a jump from the 717 positions in the department now, but well below the all-time level of 848 the department reached before the recession. ERIC PAUL ZAMORA — THE FRESNO BEE | [Buy Photo](#)

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- *Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingin unveils her proposed \$1.2 billion budget for 2015-16.*
- *It proposes new spending including money to hire police officers, firefighters and code enforcement officers.*
- *The budget must be approved by the City Council. The first hearing will be June 8.*



The new budget that Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingin is proposing for 2015-16 would add 43 new police officers and hike staffing in the fire department so the downtown can be better covered.

In a Monday morning presentation to The Bee's editorial board, the mayor also described how the budget will fund neighborhood restoration work, improve transportation, expand water recycling efforts and add improvements to certain parks.

Swearingin noted that, unlike the years of the Great Recession, the budget does not forecast any employee layoffs or cutbacks. “This is the first budget that is moving beyond stability to building back service levels,” she said.

Among the highlights of the \$1.2 billion budget:

- 43 new sworn police officers would be added over the course of the year, bringing the police department’s total staffing of sworn personnel to 760. That is a jump from the 717 positions in the department now, but well below the all-time level of 848 the department reached before the recession.
- Minimum daily staffing of firefighters would rise from 70 to 73. A new truck company would be created and would be based at Station 9, which is located at Clinton and Fruit avenues, making it the second company to serve downtown and helping improve response times to the entire city.
- Police and fire would also get new equipment — from police cars and motorcycles to fire engines to hand-held radios for firefighters.
- Four new code enforcement officers will be hired, and each assigned to a quadrant of the city, to ensure the city’s rules are being followed.
- Street repaving is planned both in neighborhoods where roads have badly deteriorated as well as Blackstone Avenue as it runs from Ashlan to Shaw and from Shields to Dakota.
- Construction would continue in 2016 for a water recycling project at the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility that would yield new water suitable for outdoor use. The project is expected to be finished in 2017 and would provide 5 million gallons a day of treated water.
- A new treatment plant for surface water would get underway with construction that will continue into 2019. The project will let the city take better advantage of its rights to river water and will allow Fresno to avoid having to pump as much groundwater.
- Improvements such as playground equipment, new splash areas and renovated play courts are park improvements being planned. Work would be done at the Cultural Arts District, Vinland and Holmes parks. In addition, three miles of new trails are proposed, including the initial segment of the Bankside Trail along Shields Avenue between Fresno and First streets.

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The budget will be formally unveiled by Swearingin at a 2 p.m. City Hall news conference. Check back later today for an indepth report by The Bee’s George Hostetter.