



MEMO

To: Ms. Kimberly Greer, City Manager

CC: Ms. Kay Love, Asst. City Manager

CC: Mr. Ronnie Campbell, Finance Director

From: Mark J. Mitchell, Chief of Police 

Date: March 28, 2025

Re: FY2026 Budget Overview

Synopsis

The Police Department's proposed budget for FY2026 contains information about our requests for operating expenditures, new personnel, a public safety adjustment, specialized assignment pay, and capital items, i.e., new vehicles, replacement vehicles, Incident Command Vehicle. I strongly feel these expenditures are necessary to meet the needs of our employees, agency, City, and the citizens we serve.

In staying consistent with past budget years, we will continue to replace equipment at regularly scheduled intervals to reduce or eliminate expensive repair costs of aging vehicles and to provide officers with the latest advances in equipment and technology. Additionally, this budget year, we are going to remain focused on developing our leaders and employee career paths through education, and training in an effort to strengthen the skill set, value, culture, and retention rate of our current workforce while attracting viable professional candidates for our organization and the JC community.

Agency leadership continues to update the organization's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that forecasts future equipment expenditures. Since most equipment purchased by this agency has a serviceable life, we can reasonably project future expenditures. The CIP has been included as part of our budget submittal and provides details on personnel needs and capital items throughout FY2030.

As mentioned, this year's budget overview and submittal contains a detailed record of all personnel requests, new personnel initiatives, and increases/decreases in operating line and capital expenditures. Our Command Staff, with employee input, have worked diligently over the

past month to prepare this budget overview because we strongly believe it is important to provide thorough justification, a clear picture of our needs, and a detailed breakdown of monies being requested.

Operating Budget

The attached proposed operations budget request is less than a 1% increase over the FY2025 budget. This does not include vehicle and liability insurance, which is added by risk management.

FY2026 Budget notes/highlights:

- ✓ Less than 1% increase (\$18,586) over FY2025
- ✓ 4% increase over FY2025 if uniforms (\$10,000)/equipment (\$98,600) for the four (4) new positions are included in the request
- ✓ Flock OS/VMS/911 (Integrates data from various sources, including video cameras, license plate readers (LPR), audio detection and live 911 calls, into a single, unified view) was moved to equipment accrual
- ✓ New evidence capture and collection program - SkyBrowse added in the Professional Services Account
- ✓ Inmate Medical was reduced using historical data - (FY23 was an outlier that required midyear adjustment)
- ✓ Facilities accounts have a requested increase (\$33,500) to cover the following unanticipated costs (moving, technology breakdown, substation set-up) associated with relocating the south substation
- ✓ Replacement Long-Term Evidence Refrigerator (DNA/Blood, etc.) and added a new Drug incinerator
- ✓ Enhancement request for new drone first responded technology (Aerodome)
- ✓ Axon Air (current drone management and drone video system) was moved from Accrual to the Operations Budget to allow flexibility with research of what drone vendor we may utilize in the future due to the current situation involving Law Enforcement drones – Professional Services Account
- ✓ Equipment Accrual projects requested reflect an increase from \$764,545 in FY2025 to \$952,447 in FY2026 (25% increase). That increase is driven primarily by a need for non-DJI drones, *additional licensing for AXON, and moving Flock OS into equipment accrual.

**Note: The added licensing is for the five (5) new officers and vehicles from last year's budget because it impacts our multi-year AXON contract.*

New Personnel Request

Historical Perspective

To give you a historical background, as you know, the Police Department was launched in 2008. When the first 911 call was dispatched, there were fifty-three (53) officers on staff with our department serving a population of roughly 55,000 citizens patrolling over thirty-one (31) square miles. At that time, the Uniform Patrol Division (UPD) consisted of seven (7) patrol beats, which were manned by four (4) supervisors and five (5) officers for a total of nine (9) officers on patrol for each of the four (4) patrol squads. The basis for establishing the patrol manpower resources at the agency's inception was drawn from calls for service data when the city was being serviced by the Fulton County Police Department and a comparison of manpower in the other newly chartered North Fulton cities.

Over the last seventeen years, the city has added four (4) officer positions to UPD and twenty-nine (29) sworn specialized assignment positions to the organization. The specialized positions include additional Community Policing officers, narcotics officers, detectives, training officers, traffic officers, background/recruitment officers, and the five (5) specialized officer positions we received in the FY2025 budget.

Today, the agency has a total of eighty-five (85) officers on staff serving a population of 82,800, according to the 2020 U.S. Census, and over 28,000 households, according to the latest Johns Creek City Profile report. The UPD still consists of the seven (7) mentioned patrol beats. There are now four (4) supervisors and six (6) officers who cover their assigned patrol beats. The shift commander oversees the entire city for a total of ten (10) officers.

Justification

To help maintain our current level of professional, strategic, proactive, and trust-building level of service, I present to you the below justification for four (4) officers to be approved for UPD in the FY2026 budget.

Our updated Strategic Multi-Year Plan (SMYP) for this year strongly outlines current trends, workload impacts, crime statistics, present criminal activity, added operating standards, and consideration of the challenges impacting our valued workforce.

As stated, our sworn personnel strength is eighty-five (85) officers, which equates to a ratio of 1.02 per 1000 residents. This is still below the average of 1.60 per 1000 residents of our surrounding cities (Alpharetta, Duluth, Milton, Roswell, Sandy Springs) and below the national average of 2.40 officers per 1000 residents. Your approval of four (4) patrol officers will strengthen our level of sworn personnel to eighty-nine (89) officers, which will enhance our officer-to-citizen ratio to 1.07 per 1000 residents. The officer-to-citizen ratio data is not the only information we analyze and study in determining our staffing levels. Below are additional factors and variables that impact what we consider for our workforce and resource allocation needs.

Calls for Service

In 2024, with today's UPD manpower, the department answered 15,283 *911 calls for service. Proactive Officers initiated 63,104 incidents (traffic stops, building checks, suspicious person follow-ups, community engagement contacts, etc.) for a total of 78,387 overall calls for service for the agency (Ref: Chatcomm 2024 Annual Report). It is important to note the proactivity of the men and women who serve in our department. The span of control we have with ten (10) officers per shift allows our men and women to take extra steps in investigating criminal incidents, traffic accidents, and provides the added customer service touch our citizens deserve and expect.

Additionally, the patrol beat coverage with ten (10) UPD officers provides quick response times, quick response to many of our crime tips/traffic complaints, timely vacation/resident checks, and strategic proactive service that has helped our dedicated officers maintain one of the safest cities and quality of life status across our state and country for many years. It is significant to point out that ten (10) officers per squad is what we have staffed in the Uniform Patrol Division, but there are often factors that will lessen this coverage at times. The minimum number of officers we allow on shift per policy is six (6) because of officer safety and span of control for crime and traffic-related calls for service. Personnel vacancies, sick time, vacation time, and career development training impact the department's ability at times to staff a full complement of officers per squad.

Population/Growth

As previously mentioned, the agency has a total of eighty-five (85) officers on staff serving a population of 82,800, according to the 2020 U.S. Census, and over 28,000 households, according to the latest Johns Creek City Profile report. Also, commuter traffic directly impacts our retail crime, the number of traffic accidents officers investigate, both roadway and private property, and our entering auto incidents when suspects target citizens who shop and work in our jurisdiction.

Furthermore, the department is considering the pending growth, population increase and calls for service rise with the development of the Town Center and Medley projects. According to the above-mentioned City Report, "the adopted Town Center Code, and the city's investment in infrastructure and parks within the Town Center, are likely to promote more robust growth in the next 10 years." It's vital to note that the hiring and training of a new officer typically takes about a year. This timeline is critical, as the population of Johns Creek is expected to grow once the Medley opens. To effectively manage this increase, we must ensure that the necessary manpower is in place. By addressing this request now, we can be fully prepared to handle the growth when it arrives.

Criminal Activity

Burglaries

Officers/Detectives continue to focus on this property crime trend that has been on the rise in the Metro Atlanta area for the past couple of years. In 2024, our department investigated forty-one (41) burglaries, where the majority of them were residential intrusions. Several of these

crimes matched the method of operation for the South American Theft Group as explained in our SMYP. Response to this felonious activity initially entails several officers, followed by a Crime Scene Specialist and the on-call Detective.

Entering Autos

Officers/Detectives also focus on this criminal activity, which was on the rise in 2024 with one hundred and sixteen (116) reports that were up from one hundred and three (103) in 2023. Intel shows most of these felonies happen during the early morning hours when suspects flood a JC neighborhood either checking for unlocked vehicles or smashing out windows to gain entry. Most often, as Officers investigate and canvas the impacted area, they will find vehicles stolen from other jurisdictions that were used across the Metro-Atlanta area to perpetrate these offenses.

Family Violence

Officers responded to three hundred and forty-one (341) assault incidents, both felony and misdemeanor, in 2024, which is up from the three hundred and fourteen (314) complaints we received in 2023. Many of these assaults were responded to and investigated by two (2) or more officers due to policy and the inherent officer safety aspects involved with each of these calls for service.

Accidents

Roadway accidents and private property collisions were up in 2024. Officers responded to and investigated one thousand eight hundred and fifty-three (1,853) roadway crashes on the very busy roads in our city. The majority of these wrecks mandate a multiple-officer response due to protecting the scene, investigating the accident, and making certain the heavy traffic on our main thoroughfares is still able to be rerouted around and through the crash scene. Keeping a good flow of motorists will help alleviate the “domino effect” negative impacts on our citizens and those passing through our supportive community on other city roadways and side streets.

Special Operations/Events

We also take into consideration the workload of our ever-growing park system, city-sponsored events, homeowner’s association programs, our active shooter training program, and other important engagement opportunities placed, on both our patrol officers and our Special Operations officers. In fact, in 2024, officers provided security, safety, and educational programs for approximately ten (10) to fifteen (15) community events per month, between city-sponsored, department-hosted, school programs, and other citizen-collaborated events in Johns Creek.

Future Organizational Re-Structure to Modernize Leadership Span of Control

If you recall, the agency was approved for five (5) positions: two (2) Crime Suppression Officers, one (1) COPS Officer, one (1) Intelligence Officer, and one (1) Detective in the FY2025 budget. With that in mind, and as part of a future re-organization process we began this year, I tasked an Ad-Hoc Committee of agency leadership to research and gain input from representatives of the existing supervisory staff and present workable solutions, which facilitate the succession

planning function and efficient use of our current supervisory personnel structure. I asked the group to make recommendations on what reshaping our department should look like for the future. I told the committee to keep in mind that our agency has many supervisors in upper leadership positions, and we cannot create additional high-level leaders because it would make our department too “top-heavy.”

I urged the team to focus on how we can utilize current first-line supervisors to begin modernizing our leadership structure, our span of control of newly planned units, and to help prepare for succession planning in the future. I also advised the Ad-Hoc group along with the concentration on re-structuring our department, they will need to utilize four (4) supervisors from our Uniform Patrol Division in the near future to have the leadership oversight needed to ensure the FY2025 Intelligence Officer, Real-time Crime Information Center, Crime Suppression Unit, and our Support Services Division meet the high demands and expectations we have for our department and community we serve.

Lastly, the team came back to me with several viable options to move current leadership positions from patrol as part of a future re-organization process. With that said, I feel the only viable and strategic way to do this is with the approval of (4) new patrol officers for this budget year. If I move the aforementioned supervisors, it will create an added workload for our current managers and officers in the Uniform Patrol Division. The approval will allow our department to maintain our high level of service, enhance our abilities/span of control of newly planned units, grant us the opportunity to begin re-shaping/modernizing agency leadership, and help prepare for succession planning in the future.

I strongly believe the historical perspective, personnel justification, and reorganizational goals and objectives I have shared will give you a very realistic snapshot of how we determine the needs and justification of personnel and resources for our dedicated staff. I also feel certain the approval of new officers will allow us to continue to strategically combat criminal activity and build the much-needed trust and partnerships with those we serve. An approved increase will allow the agency to continue to advance at the same pace as our projected growth, including the Medley initiative, our increasing park system, swelling demands of city events, maintaining our successful proactive strategic policing, and community engagement programs which set us apart from other law enforcement departments across our state and country.

Public Safety Pay Adjustment for Police Personnel

Our department is committed to maintaining the safety and well-being of our community. The agency works diligently to provide a winning culture, strong leadership, respect, career development, and support to our personnel. The department is aware that it takes a balance of a successful work environment, positive leadership, and pay to retain and attract the very best fit of personnel for our organization and the community we serve.

As public safety professionals, our officers dedicate themselves to ensuring a safe environment, often at personal risk. In order to continue attracting and retaining qualified officers and to remain competitive in our law enforcement marketplace, we are requesting a Public Safety Pay Adjustment for all police officers within our department.

Justification

1. **Comparative Salary Data:** A review of neighboring law enforcement agencies reveals that the current salaries for officers at the Johns Creek Police Department are no longer competitive to those offered by nearby police departments. This discrepancy in salary creates challenges in recruitment and retention, as officers often seek opportunities in neighboring departments offering more competitive compensation packages.

✓ **Please see the attached Comparative Salary Spreadsheet**

In comparison, our department's salaries are currently below these levels, which places us at a disadvantage in both attracting new recruits and retaining experienced officers.

2. **Recruitment and Retention Concerns:** Given the competitive nature of law enforcement recruitment, it is increasingly difficult to attract qualified candidates when our salary structure does not match that of neighboring agencies. In addition, officers who have completed training and gained experience with our department are leaving for higher-paying opportunities elsewhere, whether it be in government or in the private sector. This turnover not only disrupts the continuity of service to our community but also incurs significant costs in terms of training and recruitment efforts.
3. **Recommendation:** We respectfully request a **3.4%** Public Safety Pay Adjustment in addition to the citywide COLA of **2.6%**, bringing the total adjustment to **6%** for all police officers. This increase is necessary to align compensation, maintain a competitive advantage, and to help address the growing salary disparity between our department and neighboring agencies. By implementing this change in pay, we will ensure that our officers are fairly compensated for their unwavering commitment to public service. Moreover, it will significantly contribute to enhancing morale, retention, and recruitment efforts.

A Public Safety Pay Adjustment is essential to support our officers, whose work is critical to the safety and security of our community. By approving this request, the City of Johns Creek can show its commitment to supporting law enforcement personnel who provide valuable services to our residents. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Specialized Assignment Pay

Personnel assigned as Criminal Investigation Detectives and Traffic Safety Unit Officers are considered "specialized units". They undergo advanced training that is time-consuming in the number of hours each course takes to complete and the amount of time that it takes to amass the countless number of various courses that are required. This specialized training leads to an impressive skill set that is beyond standard patrol duties and is invaluable to our citizens and organization.

Additionally, Detectives and Traffic Safety Officers have demanding responsibilities that lead to disruptions to personal life due to the detailed nature of complex investigations. These types of incidents are unpredictable and often require the majority of the units to respond to adequately address these issues. Furthermore, there have been many occasions on which our potential

applicant pool for these specialized units is decreased based on the loss of pay going from eighty-four (84) to eighty (80) hours, which can be greater than \$6000 annually. It is my recommendation to move the twenty-two (22) employee positions assigned as Criminal Detectives and Traffic Safety Officers as “specialized units” to the next pay step while actively assigned to these positions. The estimated cost to implement specialized pay for the impacted personnel is \$56,615.

New and Replacement Vehicles

In 2016, the city created a vehicle replacement schedule that anticipates when to replace vehicles in order to gradually refresh the fleet. For FY 2026, the department is requesting to replace fourteen (14) vehicles and two (2) police motorcycles. The fourteen (14) vehicles and two (2) motorcycles requested are based on elevated maintenance costs, high mileage, and intense use requirements.

The replacements will likely be fourteen (14) vehicles and two (2) motorcycles that are between seven (7) and eleven (11) years old, but the final vehicle replacement assessment will be made in the fall based on funding awarded and double-checking the mileage, maintenance, and any issues that arise between Budget adoption and the placement of the orders. The adopted \$1,196,000 of funding would provide for the replacement of the above-mentioned vehicles.

The department currently shares a command vehicle with police departments in the cities of Brookhaven, Dunwoody, and Sandy Springs. This joint resource was an extension of the North Metro SWAT Team and has been managed by the City of Sandy Springs Police Department. With our agency’s separation from North Metro SWAT, as well as the complicated logistics involved with accessing the shared command vehicle, there is a need to replace this resource with one more accessible and available for our city.

The new command vehicle would be a shared resource for not just the Johns Creek Police Department but also for the Johns Creek Fire Department. It will be more readily available for planned and emergency events that both departments respond to in the city. It is important to also note our department could utilize funding out of our Asset Forfeiture account as it relates to the requested monies for this vehicle in FY2026.

Conclusion

I hope the above information has given you a good overview of our budget and new initiative requests for the new fiscal year. As you will see, a breakdown of the documentation that has been prepared for our department’s FY2026 budget application is listed below, attached to this memorandum and separated by function.

Should you have any questions regarding any of the information presented in our FY2026 budget proposal, please feel free to contact me.

Attachments: FY2026 Operations Draft proposed
FY2026 Personnel Request

FY2026 Vehicle Replacement Accrual Form
FY2026 Equipment Accrual Form
FY2026 Enhancement Request Forms
FY2026 – FY2030 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Strategic Update
10-Year Capital Expense spreadsheet
2025 Pay Comparison spreadsheet
2024 JCPD Annual Report