



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER BROOKE PINTO
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 106
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

February 13, 2023

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser,

I am writing to submit my budget priorities on behalf of Ward 2 residents and respectfully request that you include the following investments in your Fiscal Year 2024 proposed budget. In addition to sharing specific capital funding needs, these requests reflect the primary concerns I have heard from Ward 2 residents. My priorities for this year's budget reflect the following goals:

- **Promote public safety and put an end to cycles of gun violence.** We must **invest in our police and outreach workers** and create more **supports for survivors of hate crimes and domestic violence**.
- **Meet the fundamental housing needs of our residents.** To end homelessness, extensive investments in vouchers and housing programs must be paired with **increased staff capacity for outreach and moving residents into housing**. We must also **convert hotels to bridge housing** for residents awaiting permanent housing options.
- **Make it easier to start a business and support vibrant mixed-use corridors.** Sustaining investments in **Ward 2 Clean Teams, Main Streets, and BIDs** will enhance these corridors. And **funding the BEST Act** will make it easier for new businesses to get up and running.
- **Provide access to fundamental hygiene needs and ensure access to healthy food for seniors.** We must expand **accessibility and availability of public restrooms**, fund the **PERIOD Act**, take a comprehensive look at **senior nutrition**, and fund a new **Ward 2 Senior Center**.
- **Support our youth and ensure equitable educational opportunities.** We must expand **out of school time programming**, offer **digital equity for adult learners**, and meet the **immediate needs of Ward 2 schools**.
- **Provide safe and equitable transportation options.** Safe, sustainable, and convenient transit can be provided by funding the **safety plans for our schools** and the **E-BIKE Act of 2023**, **extending the U Street Circulator route**, and **reinstating the Convention Center-Wharf Circulator route**. We must also keep our commitment to **purchase the Key Bridge Exxon station in Georgetown**.
- **Complete transformational Ward 2 infrastructure projects.** The **Penn West streetscape project** will make this iconic downtown corridor safer and more vibrant—expediting the area's economic recovery. **Extension and activation of Farragut Park** will serve as a critical focal point as we plan for increased residency downtown.

I appreciate your partnership in including many major investments in and on behalf of Ward 2 communities last fiscal year. I look forward to a continued strong partnership on behalf of our city.

Sincerely,

Brooke Pinto
Councilmember, Ward 2

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Public Safety

1. Improve Public Safety through Investment in Our Metropolitan Police Department

• Recruit, Hire, and Train Additional Police Officers

To ensure our communities are safe, we must address the shortage in officers available to respond to serious public safety incidents.

• Return Dedicated MPD Unit to Chinatown

The Chinatown neighborhood previously had a dedicated and culturally competent police presence. We should return this unit to build relationships and proactively prevent and respond to crime.

• Waive MPD Expenses for Capital Pride Parade and Festivities

Approximately \$419,000 in FY24 (Operating)

As anti-LGBTQQIA+ rhetoric and violence are on the rise, it is especially important to ensure that this cherished and nationally symbolic event is a safe and secure space.

2. Establish a Violence Prevention and Response Team (VPART) Coordinator and a Dedicated Community Response to Anti-LGBTQQIA+ Hate Crimes

1 FTE (approximately \$200,000) and additional \$250,000 to OVSJG in FY24 (Operating)

Last year, there was a 24% increase in anti-LBTQQIA+ hate crimes. A VPART Coordinator is needed to formally coordinate monthly VPART meetings between MPD, OAG, and service providers and to provide a dedicated response to hate crimes, including coordination of culturally competent services. Additional grant funding should be offered to hire a VPART Coordinator and to expand educational and mental health services for our LGBTQIA+ community, particularly in response to domestic violence and hate crimes.

3. Expand School-Based Violence Interruption Initiatives and Continue Funding our Violence Interruption Programming

We must expand VI programming, including conflict management training and mediation, for youth through our schools. Additionally, as American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding expires, it is essential that we maintain overall current funding levels for our violence interruption programs with local dollars.

4. Support a Dedicated Outreach Worker at 600 Block of T Street, NW

\$180,000 to Department of Behavioral Health (CSG 50) in FY24 and FY25 (Operating)

A DBH outreach worker is needed to pilot intensive and place-specific substance abuse outreach and services with a focus on opioid abuse treatment and prevention for ongoing challenges on this block.

5. Respond to the Increased Prevalence and Severity of Domestic Violence (DV)

Additional \$9.6 million recurring (Operating)

- \$5.6 million to OVSJG: We must offer higher salaries and benefits, maintain appropriate caseloads, and provide professional development and wellness care for essential workers supporting DV survivors.

- \$1.2 million to OVSJG or DBH: Hiring 10 additional full-time mental health care providers and hiring three additional part-time mental health care providers will provide care for at least 485 additional individuals.
- \$1.6 million to OVSJG: Hiring 17 additional staff, including clinicians, hotline advocates, case managers, and therapists will provide culturally specific care for an additional 400 individuals.
- \$800,000 to OVSJG: Hiring five additional lawyers and two additional client support staff will accommodate more of the unmet need for legal services to gain emergency and long-term safety and stability.
- \$400,000 to OVSJG: We must address the root causes of DV by investing in primary prevention efforts to promote healthier relationships, especially for those at risk of using violence in their relationships.

Housing

1. Support Our Unhoused Residents

- **Acquire Five Hotels for Bridge Housing and Supportive Services for Unhoused Residents**

Approximately \$55 million to DGS for use by DHS (Capital)

Thousands of residents experience homelessness, hundreds of whom are living outside. The purchase and conversion of five hotels (30 to 40 rooms each) will provide safe and dignified space with needed wraparound services for residents to stay while they await longer term permanent housing options.

- **Increase Salaries and Support for Outreach Workers and DHS Case Managers**

Outreach to unhoused residents is one of the most effective ways to connect individuals who are unhoused and living in encampments to services and housing. We must continue to fund the coordinated homeless street outreach network and provide salary increases for outreach workers and DHS case managers. We must also ensure that DHS has increased staffing in middle management, Human Resources, administrative support, and analyst positions focused on data, policy, and evaluation.

- **Provide Storage Units for Unhoused District Residents at Shelters and through Service Providers**

\$1.5 million to DHS in FY24 (Operating)

By offering storage units where unhoused residents can store important documents and personal property, DHS and service providers can provide residents with dignity, respect, and an opportunity to maintain their belongings as they move into permanent housing in the future.

2. Kickstart Our Downtown Recovery: Fund the RECOVERY Act

Approximately \$15 million in FY24 (Operating)

Last Council Period, I introduced the RECOVERY Act, laying out a comprehensive economic recovery package for the Central Business District (CBD). The RECOVERY Act catalyzes the conversion of underutilized commercial buildings to housing, retail, and hospitality while generating jobs in construction and high-growth industries. I am reintroducing the RECOVERY Act, and we must commit to funding this transformation of our CBD.

3. Expand Housing Assistance for Residents at High Risk for Housing Instability

- **LGBTQQIA+ Residents, including Seniors and Returning Citizens**

\$750,000 in FY24 to scale up Housing for All pilot program (Operating);

Continued funding for LGBTQQIA+ Housing Vouchers and Re-Entry Program (Operating)

Unhoused LGBTQQIA+ residents face particular challenges and barriers to finding housing in the District. Support of existing housing reentry program serving LGBTQQIA+ residents is needed.

- **Survivors of Domestic Violence**

\$18.6M to the Shelter & Transitional Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence Fund in FY24

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness. There is a great unmet need for culturally responsive emergency, temporary, and permanent, supportive low-barrier housing. The Shelter and Transitional Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence Fund should be replenished and expanded.

- **Returning Citizens**

\$1.3 million to DHS and DCHA to provide 60 returning citizen vouchers (Operating)

Nearly three out of five DC residents experiencing homelessness has been incarcerated, and more than half reported that their incarceration led to homelessness. Vouchers are needed to reduce recidivism and homelessness.

4. Enhance Resources for Pat Handy Shelter

We must fund supportive resources for residents at the Pat Handy Shelter. We must also increase security and trash maintenance around the shelter to ensure public health and safety for all in the surrounding area.

5. Invest in Public Housing Repairs, Prioritizing Occupied Units to Ensure Habitability

\$60 million in FY24

Too many of our residents live in unsanitary and unsafe living conditions and face a backlog of necessary repairs. Local funds for DCHA repairs must be prioritized for currently occupied units.

Small Business

1. Streamline Business Licensing: Fund the Business and Entrepreneurship Support to Thrive (BEST) Act of 2022

\$8.6 million in FY24 and \$29.5 million over the four-year financial plan (Operating)

The BEST Act streamlines basic business licensing processes for new and existing businesses through various measures, including reducing the number of basic business license categories from over one hundred to ten, lowering initial license fees, and removing outdated or duplicative requirements.

2. Take a Comprehensive Approach to Rodent Management for Businesses and Residences

- **Expand Trash Compactor Grant Program for Businesses and Residential Buildings**

\$300,000 in FY24 (Operating)

Grants through DSLBD are needed to reimburse costs for purchase/installation of trash compactors for businesses, which help with rodent control. Further, expanding the program to residential buildings including condominiums will provide much needed support to mitigate rodent problems for residents.

- **Expand Blue Collar Cats Program at Humane Rescue Alliance (HRA)**

Grant for 1 FTE funded through Department of Health (Operating)

HRA gives cats unsuitable for traditional adoption to residents and businesses to address rodent problems. Supporting the expansion of the program will help meet demand.

3. Improve Cleaning and Maintenance of Our Ward 2 Business Corridors

- **Continue DSLBD Funding for All Ward 2 Clean Team Programs**

Mid-City: \$289,000; Shaw: \$229,000; Dupont Circle: \$177,000; Glover Park: \$209,000 recurring (Operating)

The Shaw Clean Team and the Georgetown/Glover Park Clean Team received one-time funding in FY23. We must sustain these investments with recurring funding.

- **Chinatown & Gallery Place: Provide Dedicated Cleaning and Maintenance by Downtown BID**

Approximately \$130,000 in FY24 (Operating)

Keeping our high-traffic retail and business districts clean helps to retain customers, drive new business to the area, and alleviate rodent problems. Chinatown and Gallery Place are busy, high traffics area of the city that need ongoing cleaning and maintenance.

- **Shaw Main Streets: Fund a New Electric Truck for Cleaning and Maintenance**

Approximately \$70,000 in FY24 (Operating)

Shaw Main Streets' current truck, which is used for essential cleaning and maintenance purposes, was purchased by the District government. However, it has recently required extensive maintenance and repairs that are becoming cost-prohibitive, thus requiring that the District fund a new electric vehicle.

4. Establish New Foggy Bottom/West End Main Street or BID and Fully Fund Ward 2 Main Streets

Foggy Bottom/West End: \$151,000; Shaw: \$150,000; Dupont: \$195,000; Georgetown: \$150,000;

Logan Circle: \$150,000 (Operating)

- The Foggy Bottom business community needs a BID or Main Street to provide coordinated support and representation. In FY23, the Office of Planning evaluated these needs. The recommendations of that study must be funded in FY24.
- Providing DSLBD grant funding for our Ward 2 Main Streets programs in Shaw, Dupont, Georgetown, and Logan Circle, is crucial. An additional allocation should be provided for Main Streets that have more businesses than average to ensure a fair allocation of resources per businesses served.

5. Provide Business Support During Dupont Deckover & K Street Transitway Construction

Approximately \$10 million

Dupont Circle, Golden Triangle, and Downtown areas face two to five years of complete disruption to pedestrian, bike, and vehicle traffic that drive restaurant and retail sales. A flexible grant program run through the BIDS will ensure that our diverse and vibrant business communities survive to benefit from these transformational projects.

Education, Youth, & Community

1. Implement Immediate Improvements Needed for Ward 2 Schools

- **Provide Custodial Support and Campus Security During Evening and Weekend Activities**

Many of our schools functionally serve as community recreation centers, hosting regular sports recreation leagues and other valuable community events in the evenings and on weekends. However, some principals have reported stolen items and safety concerns during such activities. Additional security guards and custodial staff are needed for our schools.

- **Increase Teacher Parking Options**

Teachers at Ross, Stevens ELC, Garrison, Banneker, KIPP DC (5th Street Campus), and Hyde-Addison have insufficient parking near school buildings. We need to provide more parking to meet their needs.

- **Thomson Elementary School**

- **Improve Hallway Lighting**

- **Fully Renovate Playgrounds**

\$750,000 in FY24 (Capital)

Three large and two small playground areas remain in poor state and need repairs and renovation.

- **Hardy Middle School**

- **Restore Visual Arts Teacher position**

- 1 FTE recurring in FY24 (Operating)*

- Exposure to visual arts promotes cultural awareness, encourages personal expression, and fosters creativity and innovation. We must restore Hardy's visual arts teacher.

- **Expand Common Spaces**

- A complete upgrade to the auditorium and cafeteria is needed. Hardy will be at full capacity next year with an anticipated 600 students.

- **Garrison Elementary School: Install Permanent Lighting for Field and Playground**

Garrison Elementary graciously opens its gates for community use. Permanent lighting for the field and playground is needed to allow for extended use in evening hours.

2. Expand Out of School Time (OST) Grants & Youth Programs

Expanding the number and variety of OST programs and investing in creative, effective ways to connect families and youth with programs will help fit their desired location, program type, cost, and other individualized needs. The Office of OST needs adequate staffing, resources, and infrastructure to efficiently and transparently review grant applications and disburse awards to community-based organizations.

3. Support Equitable Access to Education and Digital Literacy for Adult Learners through 1:1 Student Device Ratio & Internet Access for Students at Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School

Approximately \$675,000 for laptops; \$1 million for internet data service in FY24

Carlos Rosario provides adult learners, many of whom are immigrants, with language access, job training, and other educational programs. However, many students do not have reliable internet access or technology devices to access the internet. We must ensure that our adult learners have the 21st century tools and digital literacy they need to be successful both in the classroom and in future employment.

4. Reinforce and Improve the Physical Structure of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church (Georgetown)

\$1.5 million in FY 24 (Capital)

Mt. Zion is the oldest African American congregation in Washington, DC. Improvements and renovations are needed for the structural integrity of building.

Health and Recreation

1. Support our Seniors' Health and Recreational Needs

- **Establish a Ward 2 Senior Center**

- \$12 million in FY24 (Capital)*

- The centrally located Senior Center should be accessible by public transit to help seniors connect with their friends, neighbors, and District services.

- **End Senior Hunger by Funding the No Senior Hungry Omnibus Amendment Act of 2022**

- \$1.6 million in FY23, \$26.1 million in local funds over the financial plan*

- DC has the highest rate (14.3%) of senior food insecurity in the country, meaning that 12,000 seniors do not have enough food for an active, healthy life. The No Senior Hungry Act creates concrete plans to end senior hunger in the District.

2. Provide Access to Fundamental Hygiene Needs

- **Fund the PERIOD Act**

- \$2.3 million in FY23 and \$7.1 million over the four-year financial plan.*

- Lack of readily available, free period products negatively affects mental and physical health and social and economic well-being. Providing free tampons and pads in District-operated buildings will address these negative outcomes, which disproportionately affect women of color and women with low incomes.

- **Fund the Expanding Access to Public Restrooms Act of 2023**

Additional support for the BIDs and Main Streets for installation and maintenance of public restrooms throughout all eight wards will support residents, tourists, and small businesses. The addition of public restrooms at new and substantially renovated DPR facilities will provide a much needed increase in public restroom availability.

- **Fund the Medical Necessity Restroom Access Act of 2022**

\$263,000 FY24 and \$1.08M over financial plan

This law provides individuals with eligible medical conditions with the right to use public or employee toilet facilities at retail establishments under certain conditions.

3. Provide Design Planning for Georgetown Heritage Center

\$750,000 in FY24

Funds are needed for design planning for the Georgetown Heritage Center, a 15,000 sq/ft multi-purpose facility that serves as a focal point for education, history, and interpretation of the C&O Canal, Georgetown, and the District as a whole.

4. Create a New Book Hill Park

\$200,000 in FY24 (Capital)

Green spaces are integral to the well-being of our city and residents, providing respite, gathering spaces, and biodiversity. Funding is needed for irrigation, mending and painting the fence, building out the garden, and providing tables and benches.

5. Build Additional Pickleball Courts to Meet Growing Recreational Demands

\$600,000 in FY 24 (Capital)

Pickleball continues to grow in popularity throughout the District. There are currently only 10 dedicated pickleball courts in DC, contrasted with 138 tennis courts. We should build at least 3 to 5 more courts—a request I hear often from Ward 2 residents.

6. Extend and Activate Farragut Park

\$5.1 million in FY24; \$4.6 million in FY25

Farragut Square Park is a critical focal point of a re-imagined downtown. This funding allows for the addition of green space, rain gardens, and larger tree boxes as well as the development of a retail strategy along the park with a better connection with Lafayette Park.

Transportation and Environment

1. Implement School Zone and Pedestrian Safety Measures

\$2.5 million in FY23; \$79.2 million over the four-year financial plan period (Operating)

The Ross Elementary School Action Plan developed under Safe Routes to School planning must be implemented. Funding the Safe Passage to School Expansion Act of 2022 creates an Office of Safe Passage to coordinate inter-agency safe passage efforts and develops a city-wide strategy for student safety.

2. Purchase Key Bridge Exxon with FY23 Funds & Complete Pre-NEPA Study on Bus/Gondola Transit

\$14 million Exxon station funds already committed in FY23 (Capital); \$500,000 in FY24

The District committed to purchasing the Key Bridge Exxon station for use as an EV charging station, affordable housing, and/or as the site of gondola transit. The District must keep its commitment to purchase the site. The Pre-NEPA Analysis would focus on advancing plans for bus and/or gondola transit systems.

3. Fund Additional Automated Traffic Enforcement Cameras

\$25,000 per camera in FY24

Automated traffic enforcement cameras (ATEs) are an important tool in reaching our Vision Zero goals to ensure residents and visitors can travel throughout the District safely. I ask that ATEs be added to the following areas, at a minimum:

- Speed camera at Florida and Connecticut Avenue NW; and
- Red light camera at P Street NW on Logan Circle.

4. Expand Circulator Routes

- **Extend Dupont Circle-Georgetown-Rosslyn Circulator to U Street NW and Howard University**

Additional \$1.7 to 2 million recurring

By extending this route from Dupont Circle to U Street NW and Howard University, the corridor would provide a midtown direct connection to all five Metrorail lines.

- **Reinstate Convention Center-Wharf Circulator Route**

The Convention Center-Wharf Circulator route provides a desirable express route between the Shaw, Logan Circle, and Mount Vernon neighborhoods and the Wharf. Residency and amenities at both ends of this route have dramatically increased and would benefit from a direct, express, low-fare bus route.

5. Design and Install Artistic Lighting Under the Whitehurst Freeway along K/Water Street

\$2.5 million in FY24 (Capital)

Artistic lighting under the Whitehurst Freeway would improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers and improve leasing activity in Georgetown's major office buildings located south of M Street NW.

6. Extend Sidewalk on North Side of 1800 M Street, NW

\$3 million in FY24 (Capital)

This streetscape project will bring the sidewalk into ADA compliance. By expanding the existing sidewalk, adding new tree boxes, hardening the bike lane, and potentially relocating light and utility poles, this project will make the block safer and more accessible and also support small, local businesses.

7. Make Infrastructure Repairs on Snows Court and Other Alleys in Foggy Bottom

Snows Court and other alleys within the Foggy Bottom Historic District need to be repaired to address infrastructure issues including sinkholes and sewer back-ups.

8. Finalize Upgrade and Renovation Plans for the Georgetown Canal

\$500,000 in FY24

Georgetown Heritage is committed to revitalizing and rehabilitating the Canal area, including the tow path, Mule Yard, and confluence of Rock Creek Park. This funding allows the finalization of design and planning for upgrades and renovations.

9. Maintain Penn West Funding in FY24

\$36 million in FY24 (Capital)

After years of study, this project is fully designed and shovel-ready for construction. It is essential that this project remain fully funded in the FY24 budget, especially in light of the upcoming 250th anniversary of America's independence, when the District and Pennsylvania Avenue will be on full display to the world.

10. Fund the E-BIKE Act of 2023

The E-BIKE Act establishes an instant rebate program for purchasing electric bikes making biking accessible to more residents. Other jurisdictions that have adopted e-bike incentives have seen increases in the number of residents traveling using bikes and reductions in the number of vehicle miles traveled.