



**COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING**  
**1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW**  
**WASHINGTON, DC 20004**

**JANESE LEWIS GEORGE**  
Councilmember, Ward 4

**COMMITTEE MEMBER**  
Human Services  
Labor and Workforce Development  
Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs  
Transportation and the Environment  
Special Committee, COVID-19 Recovery

March 4, 2022

The Honorable Muriel Bowser  
Mayor of the District of Columbia  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my priorities for the Fiscal Year 2023 budget for Ward 4 and the District of Columbia. I also write to share urgent priorities for the FY22 supplemental budget that should receive emergency allocations from contingency reserves this month to be paid back through the supplemental budget process. My priorities FY22 supplemental and FY23 budget have been informed by conversations and testimony during recent agency oversight hearings as well as Ward 4 residents, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, service providers, and community advocates who are all committed to ensuring the District's budget advances equity and improves the quality of life for all residents.

The pandemic has underscored the simple truth that budgets are moral documents. They are tools for advancing racial justice and closing vast wealth and opportunity gaps in our city. How we allocate our abundant resources this year will help chart our course out of the worst of this pandemic and continue to build toward a just and equitable recovery that better meets the needs of all residents.

I am grateful for the leadership you and your administration have provided over the past two years. By leveraging federal emergency and recovery funds and taking bold action when necessary, you have helped keep our city safe and healthy. We must continue to make bold decisions to address the affordable housing, displacement, gun violence, mental health, unemployment and underemployment, small business, child care, and climate crises that our city faces. These crises have a disproportionate impact on communities of color. If we are to achieve a just recovery and build a more resilient city, we must tackle all these crises as the interconnected social determinants of health and wealth they are.

I respectfully request that you address the priorities in the letter in finalizing your Fiscal Year 20223 budget for the Council, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss these further with you.

In Service,

Janeese

## **URGENT FY22 SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING NEEDS**

- 1. \$100 million for emergency rental assistance.** Thank you for your leadership administering STAY DC and ensuring all federal emergency rental assistance funds were utilized to stabilize housing for the thousands of our residents. Exhausting initial funds qualified DC to request additional assistance and I am grateful you applied to the U.S. Treasury in November for an additional \$238 million to support tenants and landlords alike. The District, however, was approved for only \$17 million, less than 8% the District's request. It is now up to us to fill the gap and ensure there is ample funding in our Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) to stave off evictions through the remainder of the fiscal year.

*Funding for ERAP is urgent.* It requires your immediate action even before the supplemental budget is proposed or approved. I strongly urge you to replenish funding for ERAP through our contingency reserves. Utilizing reserve funding that can be replenished by the supplemental budget is the most surefire way to keep our residents housed and prevent displacement of Black and Brown residents who have already borne the brunt of the pandemic. [Census surveys](#) continue to demonstrate that more than 54,000 District residents have no confidence in their ability to afford rent; 50,000 of these residents are Black, Hispanic, or mixed race. We cannot achieve an equitable recovery if we do not address these stark disparities by providing robust rent relief.

- 2. \$100 million to support excluded workers.** Workers in the informal or cash economies, a large majority of whom are undocumented residents, continue to need urgent and significant local financial assistance on account of their exclusion from federal aid programs. Many excluded workers continue to struggle to afford rent, phone bills, utilities, food, medicine, diapers, and transportation. Our more than 15,000 residents who are excluded workers need urgent action to augment what was previously funded in the FY22 budget. Immediate assistance for excluded workers should be a priority funded now by reserves and to be replenished by the supplemental budget.
- 3. Youth programming and services to prevent violence.** The TRIGGER Project frames gun violence as: “when the world makes you feel invisible, a gun makes you feel invincible.” There are so many [factors](#) that lead to our youth and young men becoming involved in gun violence, but when we fail to provide opportunity and positive alternatives, we exacerbate risk factors in the lives of our young people. The District's summer programming saved my life and the lives of so many of my peers – I felt invested in, seen, and encouraged. As we head into the summer, we must redouble our investments in summer programming, free out-of-school-time opportunities that expand horizons, substantive summer job training opportunities, continuity in mental and behavioral health counseling, restorative justice and diversion initiatives, and overall programming budgets for community organizations working to disrupt and deescalate cycles of violence. I urge you to include funding in the supplemental budget to expand staffing capacity at all existing District-funded organizations that serve our youth, extend DPR facility hours, increase the length and pay of SYEP, and meet the funding needs of community groups that deliver summer and year-long opportunities and recreational programming to our youth.

# **FISCAL YEAR 2023 OPERATING BUDGET PRIORITIES**

## **Investing in our Youth:**

- 1. Fully fund the DCPS Technology Equity Act of 2021.** This bill, which I introduced with eight of my colleagues, requires DCPS to develop a multi-year technology plan to ensure all students have the devices and resources they need for digital literacy. DCPS' Empowered Learners' Initiative (ELI) helped us get through the first two years of the pandemic. But now it's clear that we need a more sustainable, robust plan that includes device refreshes and training for staff to make sure we maintain equitable access to technology in our schools.
- 2. Fully implement funding for pay equity in early childhood education by including a Budget Support Act subtitle in your Fiscal Year 2023 Budget package that enacts the Early Childhood Education Equitable Compensation Task Force recommendations.** Last year the Council raised revenue to fund the intention of the "Birth-to-Three For All DC Act of 2018" (L22-0179) to raise pay for infant and toddler early educators. Investing in the early education workforce is foundational to our child care infrastructure; increasing pay improves educator retention, encourages continuing education and professional development, and improves the overall quality of our care settings to ensure all children have strong educational foundations from birth. Further, we cannot match the need for additional child care seats in the District if we do not have the workforce to expand our early childhood education offerings. It is exciting to see the Council and the Executive acknowledging these long-standing systemic challenges and working collaboratively to solve them. I have been particularly grateful for the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) partnership and leadership within the Early Childhood Education Equitable Compensation Task Force over the past 3 months. With funding now secured to begin to raise wages, I urge OSSE to propose Budget Support Act subtitle language that amends the Birth-to-Three law to make real the recommendations of the Task Force so all \$53.9 (FY22) and \$72.9 (FY23) million in pay equity funds can get into the bank accounts of our educators without delay.
- 3. Continue to ensure child care has stable funding throughout Fiscal Year 2023.** Our early childhood education programs remain on shaky financial footing with low enrollment, teacher shortages, COVID disruptions, and ongoing costly needs for additional PPE and cleaning supplies. For our economy to fully reopen and recover, working parents need early care and education options – they need our child care facilities to remain in business. Continue to ensure subsidy rates increase to meet the cost-of-care and funds are paid based on full enrollment versus attendance. And please ensure all small business pandemic stabilization grant funding is inclusive of the child care sector.
- 4. \$10 million to increase mental and behavioral health counseling at all DC public schools.** DC has made great strides in recent years to augment our school-based counseling programs, and still we are falling short of meeting the full needs of all students: one mental health professional per school is insufficient as our students grapple with three years of pandemic disruption and stress, learning loss, and increased community violence. I urge you to increase funding for DBH to hire additional clinicians – Licensed Independent Social Workers (LISW) – so all schools can achieve reasonable counselor-to-student ratios and to conduct a thorough analysis of the full cost of expanding high-quality school-based mental and behavioral health services. I further encourage DCPS and DBH to work together on hiring and retention incentives such as retention and merit-based raises, student loan repayments,

moving cost coverage, internship programs with local high schools and universities to promote social work careers, and increases to base funding levels for CBO contracts to enable them to provide more competitive pay and benefits packages that incentivize behavioral health counselor retention.

5. **\$8 million to DME for out-of-school-time (OST) supports.** Students need enriching and accessible opportunities outside of the school-day, whether afterschool, on the weekends or over the summer. The District should increase its local budget for OST to support families and operators who need additional funding. The DME should also engage in a public strategic planning process for how to make these programs accessible and of high quality.
6. **Increase investments in early childhood health.** Add at least \$300,000 to Healthy Steps, \$700,000 to Healthy Futures, and \$300,000 to CFSA and DC Health home visiting programs to double their impact. With additional stressors in our city right now – finances, COVID, violence, isolation – our families need additional supports to thrive and build resilience. Early interventions are proven tools for improving lifelong physical, emotional, and mental health outcomes, as well educational achievement.
7. **Make recurring investments of at least \$1.5 Million in FoodPrints.** FoodPrints has brought nutrition-based STEM learning, whole-family healthy cooking instruction, and fresh food opportunities to three of our Ward 4 elementary schools and more than 60 other schools citywide. Innovative, interdisciplinary, interactive academic opportunities like these should be sustained and expanded in our schools. Please ensure that FoodPrints funding – and other programs that bring gardening, cooking, and healthy foods to schools – is increased and made permanent beyond federal funds.
8. **Overhaul the OSSE school report website to provide a dashboard.** The State Board of Education recently passed a resolution (SR22-1) recommending that the Office of the State Superintendent of Education design a dynamic data dashboard for parents on its report card website. OSSE will need to devote time and resources to this work during Fiscal Year 2023 so the dashboard is ready before its next publication date in fall 2023.
9. **Re-Direct Underspending in Current DC SchoolConnect Program to Serve Other Safe Passage Priority Areas:** The Department of For-Hire Vehicles (DFHV) in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) established the “DC SchoolConnect” program in schoolyear 2021-22. The program’s overall budget is \$6.1 million to provide transportation services to up to 750 students (30 students each at 25 schools) in Wards 7 and 8. Unfortunately, ridership has been low in this program, averaging close to 150 student riders per day. In Year 2, the DC SchoolConnect program should be expanded to include all Safe Passage Priority Areas including Wells MS and Coolidge HS in Ward 4. Students living near LaSalle-Backus ES have no safe option to get to their neighborhood middle school or high school, and this program could help alleviate that struggle.
10. **Fund improvements in WMATA bus service reliability for our students by reducing driver vacancies through commercial driving workforce development.** Thousands of middle and high school students rely on metro busses to take them to and from school, and thousands of parents use the busses to take their younger kids to and from school or daycare and work. Driver shortages at WMATA have caused significant service delays, route changes, and created general unreliability this past year, disrupting our students’ learning. By increasing our investments in recruiting and training DC residents at the Infrastructure Academy to obtain their Commercial Driver’s License (CDL), we can build WMATA’s talent pipeline and help our students get safely to school on time.

## **Investing in Public Safety, Restorative Justice, and Rehabilitation:**

- 1. Expand the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Community Response Team (CRT) to create 5-person teams per Ward, at a minimum.** Establishing the CRT program was a smart way to expand the city's capacity to respond to common public safety concerns rooted in behavioral health crises; the CRT program is an essential complement to the role of MPD and helps free up law enforcement to focus on responding to violent crime. However, I am concerned we are understaffing this initiative as too many Ward 4 residents have reported police-only responses to calls specifically to the CRT line or to 911 requesting behavioral health response solutions. To ensure we are better able to deploy the right responders, CRT behavioral health specialist teams should be established in each Ward to build relationships and visible presences in our communities. This would also allow CRT teams to conduct more proactive and preventative outreach. Additionally, physically locating these teams in each Ward would improve their response time to urgent crises compared to relying on two host locations to serve the whole city. I urge you to increase CRT staffing from 26 to at least 40 full-time employees, 5 per Ward, and to ensure behavioral health specialists in this program are able to work successfully with both our youth and adult populations.
- 2. Ensure all ONSE, Office of Attorney General, and Department of Parks and Recreation violence interruption programs receive 15% budget increases.** Violence intervention work requires long-term relationship building, making it essential to retain talented, trusted violence interrupters. Community organizations need their contracts to increase to pay employees competitive wages, to adjust for overhead costs, and to ensure their budget for violence intervention programming can stretch farther for additional community connections, events, and services. Contracts also need to be structured as multi-year to ensure stability for employees and the community. Several District neighborhoods have experienced a surge in gun violence over the past three years but currently lack violence interruption coverage. Ward 4, in particular, requires significant staffing increases to our current violence ONSE-contracted, DPR Roving Leader, and Building Blocks-led violence intervention programs.
- 3. Expand the capacity of Family and Survivor Support programs in the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE) to 10 full-time employees.** With more and more loss in our communities, we need more grief, trauma, and counseling supports. This is the most frequent request I have received this past year from Ward 4 residents who I've visited after they lost a loved one to gun violence. Neighbors experiencing secondary trauma from gun violence also make frequent requests for counseling services and community or neighborhood trauma healing resources which should be initiated through ONSE or expanded through community-based organizations funded by the Office of Victim Service and Justice Grants (OVSJG) this year.
- 4. All OVSJG grantees meeting grant objectives should receive at least 15% funding increases.** Funding increases are particularly urgent for our service providers working to end sexual and domestic violence who have seen flat funding at a time when intimate partner violence increased. Flat funding, in practice, is decreased funding. Funding increases must be standard government operating procedure, for OVSJG grantees in particular.
- 5. Increase the capacity and frequency of MPD crisis response cross-training with DBH.** All MPD personnel in roles that interact with the public should participate in multiple professional development programs each year that focus on mental and behavioral health, substance abuse disorders, adolescent cognitive and social-emotional development, and conflict de-escalation. There is currently only one

MPD-DBH liaison for the entire force, yet every Police district would benefit from building skills in the behavioral health aspects of community policing and violence prevention. Allocate funding to bring new behavioral health specialists to all police districts and to run multiple required professional development courses for all employees of Police Department.

- 6. Double the number of Tenant-Based LRSP Vouchers for returning citizens, gun violence victims and their families, and domestic violence survivors.** The Local Rent Supplement Program provides necessary stability for some of our most vulnerable residents – stable, affordable housing for justice-involved residents and victims of violence is essential for preventing recidivism, supporting rehabilitation, and disrupting cycles of violence that too easily persist when our families remain in harm’s way. For gun and domestic violence victims, access to safe housing is essential to restoring a sense of stability and safety after experiencing trauma.
- 7. Update the camera rebate program to provide financial assistance for data storage.** Seniors and small businesses who have obtained security cameras through the city’s rebate program should similarly have the costs of camera data and footage storage covered by the city. Cameras can only meaningfully deter and assist in investigating crime when they are funded to both capture and preserve footage. Ward 4 seniors and businesses have noted a financial barrier to these storage costs.
- 8. Establish a Crime Data Lab at UDC.** The University of Chicago has pioneered an innovative policy and practice data lab to study crime and gun violence and deliver evidence-based public policy solutions to address the upstream, root causes of violence, while also guiding tools law enforcement can leverage immediately to stem the tide of neighborhood crime. A similar lab at UDC could help us more effectively keep our communities safe, while also providing workforce and career training options in data analysis, forensic sciences, law enforcement, violence intervention, and government administration. The District should fund a study in FY23 to analyze what it would take to stand up a crime data lab at the intersection of academic research, concrete violence prevention solutions, and workforce development.
- 9. \$5 million to meet the full costs of the Immigrant Justice Legal Services program.** Our immigrant neighbors are still grappling with the effects of four years of xenophobic, anti-immigrant policies, many of which have not been fully rolled back yet. The need for legal services remains high to provide detention representation, support residents seeking asylum, put our residents on a path to citizenship, and navigate city services and bureaucracy with limited English proficiency and limited documentation. It’s time to fund this critical grant program at the full cost identified by our service providers and ensure all our residents are protected and safe regardless of immigration status.

## Investing in Housing, Health, and Core Community Needs:

- 1. \$100 Million for Emergency Rental Assistance (ERAP).** Housing costs are likely to continue to be a burden for residents who lost jobs and footing during the pandemic; many have still not returned to work or to full-time work schedules. And we know from the last recession that our low-income Black and Brown residents took far longer to recover than others. We must break the cycle of underbudgeting for ERAP and running out of aid midway through the year. I urge you to allocate \$100 million for ERAP, with \$50 million budgeted as recurring funds. I also urge you to use the budget process to update ERAP to replicate the STAY DC structure of permitting 3 months of advanced rental assistance.
- 2. \$100 Million for excluded workers through the DC Cares program.** Excluded workers will also require ongoing assistance to regain footing after devastating economic disruptions and being cut out of traditional and federal pandemic safety net programs.
- 3. \$15 Million for 500 additional Permanent Support Housing vouchers for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.** Ending homelessness and reducing the necessity of our residents to find shelter on the street remains one of the city's most pressing challenges for a just recovery. We must continue to make record investments in PSH. We must also ensure our partners in ending homeless who provide case management, street outreach, housing inspection, and placement will see their grant and contract awards increase by at least 15% to hire additional staff, enable raises, and adjust for overall increased operating expenses. Additionally, as we work toward permanent housing for all our residents, the need for low-barrier transitional housing for men experiencing homelessness has been identified by my constituents: Ward 4 welcomes the opportunity to host residents in such a housing facility structured as apartment-style units that can be eventually converted into permanent affordable housing.
- 4. Fund the removal of barriers to enrollment in DC HealthCare Alliance.** It's time for Alliance enrollment requirements to be identical to Medicaid with respect to annual enrollment. The District also needs to improve translation services associated with the Alliance program.
- 5. Add eight additional employees to the Single-Family Residential Rehabilitation Program.** This critical home repairs program helps our seniors safely age in place, but they simply cannot wait for 2 or 3 years for repairs to occur, or in some cases, begin. They also cannot wait for months and years on end between communications about their application status. An additional 8 full-time employees – one per ward – to manage and expedite applications and stay in better communication with seniors would improve program outcomes, preventing seniors from being pushed out of their homes and communities.
- 6. Establish a Walter Reed transportation service for seniors.** The seniors and veterans at Abrams Hall and Karin House located at the far southwestern end of the Walter Reed campus require a dedicated shuttle service to transport them from their apartments to the Georgia Avenue bus stop, nearby stores, and other community hubs. The walk to Georgia Avenue is prohibitive for many of our seniors with limited mobility, and the senior connection shuttle service is not as reliable or convenient as a dedicated shuttle with a set schedule would be. Please launch this shuttle in FY22 if possible.
- 7. Create a new Senior Village in Petworth.** Ward 4 needs an additional senior village to bring much-needed programming and services to our neighbors who are aging in place. A new village to serve the Petworth, Sixteenth Street Heights, and Crestwood neighborhoods should be established in your

budget. The growing senior population in these communities will benefit from the events, volunteer support, service coordination, and community-building that senior villages provide.

- 8. Open new a one-stop city services center in Ward 4.** One of the most common requests I receive from Ward 4 residents is for in-person city services to be located more conveniently for them within Ward 4. Specifically, I receive frequent asks for services related to IDs and vital records, residential and visitor parking pass applications, public benefit enrollment services, affordable housing program navigation support, job training, job application, and other worker assistance programs (an expanded version of an American Jobs Center). I hope we can work together to stand up a new one-stop-shop for city services centrally located within Ward 4 such as at the Old Engine 22 Firehouse.
  
- 9. Implement the expansion of Paid Family Leave Benefits and ensure District Government workers concurrently see their benefits increase to 12 weeks of paid family, parental, and medical leave.** Paid family leave is an essential worker right. This issue has been close to my heart since needing to take unpaid leave to care for my father before he passed away. It is heartening to know that DC's new paid leave insurance program will be able to expand paid leave benefits to 12 weeks for family, parental, *and* medical leave starting later this year – and that this can be done while simultaneously reducing business contribution rates. Our businesses are getting better benefits at a better deal to make them more competitive in the talent market. Ward 4 families are counting on your leadership to implement CFO-certified paid leave expansions this year. Similarly, District government workers are counting on you to expand their paid leave benefits to include 12 weeks of fully paid parental, family, and medical leave, as well as funding two weeks of fully paid bereavement leave for all immediate familial relations. Establishing the District government as a leader on leave is essential for our employees' wellbeing and morale, as well as an important tool to help solve our District government staffing shortages.

## Investing in Infrastructure, Safety, and Environmental Justice:

- 1. Hire more agency liaisons to exclusively serve Ward 4.** The Ward 4 community engagement specialists at the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) and the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) go above and beyond for Ward 4 residents every day, but the need for DDOT and DCRA services in our communities far exceeds what one dedicated employee per Ward can reasonably deliver. These two agencies each need at least two full-time liaisons exclusively detailed to Ward 4, including two liaisons at each of the forthcoming Department of Buildings and Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection. Similarly, the Department of Public Works and Department of Parks and Recreation also needs additional Ward 4 staffing capacity. I also urge you to consider establishing constituent service liaisons at the Department of Employment Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development to better expedite the resolution of cases.
- 2. Pilot full-time positions for some DDOT crossing guards.** Safety Technicians, often referred to “Crossing Guards,” help protect families and children as they travel to and from school. As a part-time position, DDOT has experienced challenges filling these positions. Additionally, some schools require mid-day support because their students travel off-site for playgrounds or park space. DDOT should pilot a full-time salaried position to support schools in need of all-day support, and for others, find meaningful work for technicians to do during the school-day like monitor residential parking permit compliance or enter 311 tickets. My “Safe Routes to Schools” legislation calls for full time crossing guards at all schools, but there is no reason to delay this or any other provision of the bill when children’s safety is at risk.
- 3. \$500,000 to DPW to hire more abandoned/dangerous vehicle inspectors.** Currently, only a handful of people are responsible for responding to and identifying resident complaints of abandoned or dangerous vehicles. DPW should hire and train more staff for this work to meet the need in our neighborhoods. I introduced the “Removal and Disposition of Abandoned and Other Unlawfully Parked Vehicles Reform Amendment Act of 2021” to help streamline and improve this critical service but the city also needs the staffing capacity to implement an improved inspection and assessment process.
- 4. \$1 million for DPW to lease additional impound lot space.** I was pleased to hear in their recent oversight hearing that the Department of Public Works (DPW) is close to finding additional impound lot space for them to take abandoned, dangerous and other scofflaw vehicles. We cannot allow this to continue to be a barrier to full enforcement of our traffic laws or the removal of abandoned cars from our neighborhoods.
- 5. \$500 million to DC Water to remove all Lead Service Lines by 2030.** The District still has hundreds of miles of lead service lines (LSLs) leaving our residents at continued risk of lead poisoning. DC Water published its plan last year for removing all public-side and private-side LSLs. Then the Council created the Lead Service Line Planning Task Force this past year to recommend changes or clarifications to their plan and identify legislative, regulatory, and policy changes needed to complete and fund this work. We have the roadmap. We now need the full funding to move this mission forward.
- 6. Create a comprehensive DGS work order dashboard.** The Department of General Services (DGS) should establish a public-facing, real-time dashboard for monitoring work orders and maintenance requests in our public schools and parks. DGS recently released a beta version of a dashboard for HVAC work orders in DCPS buildings. This is a good start, but it should be expanded to include all work

orders in DCPS buildings as well as DPR sites and be connected to the real-time Salesforce system, rather than updated and maintained separately. Without this dashboard, members of the public (and Council) are in the dark as to when and whether DGS is working to address lingering issues like broken HVAC systems, leaky roofs, and overflowing litter cans. Such a system will allow us to work with DGS and hold them accountable for keeping our public properties in good shape.

- 7. Increase the frequency of residential trash collection.** Throughout the pandemic, remote work has drastically increased the volume of residential trash, yet trash collection schedules have not changed to keep pace. Small trash bins, once-per-week collections, and COVID-driven schedule disruptions have led to too many disheveled and unsanitary alleyways. Though the pandemic exacerbated these conditions, trash collection and alleyway maintenance were challenges for many residents prior to 2020. Permanent changes must be implemented to keep all residential neighborhoods clean and safe. DPW's budget should be increased or adjusted to provide additional trash and recycling bins to residents, to upgrade the sizes of these bins, and to increase the frequency of collections. Increasing spending on trash maintenance will reduce spending on ad-hoc 311 requests for alleyway cleanings.
- 8. Hire more SWEEP inspectors through Building Blocks.** Our neighborhoods are overflowing with trash and litter from two years of people working from home with inadequate collection services. DPW should help connect people to salaried positions to help clean up our streets, maintain clear alleys and parks, and keep our city clean for everyone.
- 9. Create an additional DSLBD Clean Team for Georgia Avenue.** Our Clean Teams provide essential sanitation and landscape maintenance work along our commercial corridors. Georgia Avenue in Ward 4 is serviced by two Clean Teams – the Upper Georgia Avenue Clean Team and the Brightwood/Petworth Clean Team. I ask that we increase the funding for each team or establish a third team so that they can better handle the workload associated with such a long and vibrant corridor.
- 10. Add recurring personnel funds to DPR to make the Roosevelt High School pool permanently open to the public.** The Council added funding in the Fiscal Year 2020 budget to construct an exterior door for the Roosevelt High School pool. Last year, the Council added \$450,000 to DPR's operating budget to ensure that the pool could be fully staffed in the mornings and evenings and over the summer for public use. We should make this permanent by budgeting local recurring funds for this important recreational amenity.

## **FY23 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN REQUESTS**

### **Ward 4 capital projects:**

- 1. \$5 million to DCPS for a modular swing space complex in Ward 4.** We are grateful that Truesdell, Whittier and LaSalle-Backus were accelerated in last year's budget and are coming up for full modernizations soon. However, the current plan for swing space for each school takes them out of their neighborhood for two years during construction – threatening their staff and student retention amidst an already difficult time. DCPS built a modular swing space complex for Coolidge HS during its modernization and could do so again near each of these three campuses. Further, it is inequitable that DCPS would ask these three Title I, predominately Black and Latinx schools to travel far away for school while they built modular swing space complexes near home for Eaton Elementary (Ward 3) and School Within School at Goding (Ward 6). Related, we must urgently address over-crowding at Roosevelt HS/STAY and Lafayette ES. The most recent Master Facilities Plan Supplement identified both Roosevelt and Lafayette as overcrowded, meaning they utilize >95% of their capacity. The Roosevelt campus is home to two schools: High School and STAY, and their combined projected enrollment for Schoolyear 2022-23 exceeds 130% of the building's capacity. Lafayette is similarly overcrowded. DCPS has not identified a viable solution to either building's dire situation and must take action, whether through expansions, re-locations or boundary changes.
- 2. Implement community requests for traffic safety measures for all outstanding Ward 4 Traffic Safety Investigation (TSI) requests.** I am grateful that Director Lott and DDOT have been working through their backlog of TSIs. It is also important that DDOT have adequate staff and resources to carefully evaluate each request, rather than feel pressure to get through as many requests as possible in a short period of time. TSIs are the public's best means of getting traffic calming or control measures added to their streets, many of which are well-known in their communities as dangerous. We should not wait for more crashes, injuries or deaths before acting to make our streets safe for everyone. Related, we must accelerate funding for Eastern Avenue, NE rehabilitation project. Planning for this project has been in the works for at least five years, and the design is set to be completed later this summer. Unfortunately, funding is not slotted in the Capital Improvements Plan until Fiscal Year 2027. We cannot wait another five years for this important safety improvement, which will include additional sidewalks, lighting, and new traffic signals at intersections that remain dangerous for local residents.
- 3. \$25 million to DCPL for an additional Brightwood/Manor Park Library.** We continue to hear from residents concerned about the DC Public Library (DCPL) system's plans to shutter the Shepherd Park Library and replace it with a library further south in Brightwood Park or Manor Park. While such a plan would address an identified service gap in these neighborhoods, it also would create a new one where the Juanita E. Thornton Library is now. DCPL should maintain a library in Shepherd Park by renovating the existing building and build a new DCPL site in Brightwood Park or Manor Park to help both neighborhoods.
- 4. Prioritize safety on Georgia Avenue NW with Bus Priority and Road Diets.** DDOT released its new Bus Priority Plan in December 2021 which ranked Georgia Avenue/7<sup>th</sup> Street NW as the 2<sup>nd</sup> most in-need corridor for improvements of bus service. Preliminary plans are in place to extend bus priority service up through Ward 1, but the FY23 budget should begin the process of extending this north to Eastern Avenue. Further, Georgia Avenue deserves comprehensive analysis through a streetscape road diet study. This analysis can help identify how to reduce vehicle speed while not unnecessarily diverting traffic onto neighborhood streets. Georgia Avenue is a known, dangerous corridor in need of improvement, and we cannot wait for another tragic crash to occur before we take action to slow down drivers and prioritize public transit.

5. **Invest in Quality DPR parks, recreation centers and programming.** Several Ward 4 recreational spaces need small capital projects to ensure their spaces, both indoors and outdoors, reflect the value we hold in our children and seniors maintaining healthy, active lifestyles. Additionally, several Ward 4 DPR facilities lack updated equipment or fully functioning WiFi Internet, which impacts the quality of programming they're able to offer. There are several Ward 4 facilities in need of refurbishment, repairs, and equipment refreshes:
- **Emery Community Center:** Persistent HVAC and other maintenance issues and insufficient equipment for programming.
  - **Ft. Stevens Recreation Center:** Persistent HVAC issues and other maintenance issues and insufficient equipment for programming.
  - **Lamond Recreation Center:** Field maintenance issues and equipment.
  - **Petworth Recreation Center:** Inadequate equipment for programming, like yoga mats or chairs and tables to support neighborhood activities. Ensure programming budget is restored to pre-pandemic levels as well. Fix the kitchen including the microwave and install monitors on the security cameras so staff indoors can keep an eye on the full outdoor facility and maintain safety for all users. Fix the locks on the exterior doors to the restroom.
  - **Raymond Recreation Center:** Ensure newly renovated facility gets the equipment and staffing to maintain full programming.
  - **Riggs-LaSalle Recreation Center:** Persistent HVAC issues. Fix the leaky roof; Restore lighting to the parking lot; Repair the locks on the exterior-facing bathroom doors; Touch-up the paint in the interior; Replace the windows in the multipurpose room; Improve the WiFi connection throughout the facility; Replace the field with a more eco-friendly and safe surface and, if space allows, add a walking track.
  - **Shepherd Park Recreation Center:** Field maintenance has been inconsistent and trash/recycling bins are not collected on a regular schedule.
  - **Takoma Recreation Center:** Ensure newly renovated aquatic center gets equipment to maximize programming opportunities.
  - **Upshur Recreation Center:** Repair and improve the basketball court.

### Citywide capital priorities:

1. **Fund the Safe Routes to School Expansion Regulation Amendment Act of 2022.** This bill, which I introduced along with all 12 of my colleagues, would require DDOT to install several proven safety improvements around our public schools (DCPS and charter) to proactively keep our children safer. We continue to see crashes, including just recently in Ward 4 in front of Truesdell ES, that could be prevented by DDOT taking a quicker approach that prioritizes our school zones and the quarter-mile walk sheds of each school. DDOT should start this work right away and focus first on the schools lacking basic school zone signage.
2. **Install smart public litter cans and recycling cans in all 8 Wards.** Every day my office hears about overflowing litter cans on our public streets – a problem that has only gotten worse amidst the pandemic. DPW should work to install more litter cans and public recycling cans and ensure that these cans are equipped with “smart” sensors so DGS and DPW can monitor their status remotely. Just like our recent streetlights contract with DDOT, we should utilize technology to make sure our streets remain clean of litter without the need for a 311 request or call to a Council office. Persistently overflowing litter cans lead to rat infestations that threaten public health. We should also revise our

pick-up schedule to ensure cans are getting serviced on a more regular basis in all eight Wards.

3. **Ensure all DC schools and recreational facilities are equipped with restrooms, locker rooms, and showers that are safe and accessible for trans and gender non-conforming residents.** The District has the [highest percentage](#) of residents who identify along the transgender spectrum and they all deserve equal and safe access to public rec spaces. Many of our schools, recreational facilities, and community centers, however, only offer gendered restrooms locker rooms, and showers, putting gender non-binary and non-conforming residents in particularly uncomfortable positions around binary choices. Further, only providing gendered locker rooms and showers, such as at Upshur Pool, can discourage pool access for trans residents because of shower requirements before pool usage. It is time to modernize all our government facilities to ensure full inclusivity,. Recreational facilities with pools should take priority for some of the more significant renovations.
4. **Invest an additional \$50 million in each year of the Capital Improvement Plan to accelerate public housing repairs.** The full scope of needs for public housing repairs is closer to \$2 billion – an alarming figure reflecting the scope of need after years of neglect. We cannot allow our residents living in public housing to continue to suffer conditions that are dangerous to their physical and emotional health. Adding \$50 million to expand and accelerate renovations – renovations that honor a build-first model – is the minimum we should be investing in improvements to this critical affordable housing stock.
5. **Create transformational change at DC Jail.** Like our public housing, the conditions at DC’s correctional facilities have long been unacceptable and in need of transformation. The poor conditions at DC Jail made national headlines this year. While public safety starts long before anyone is incarcerated, we must not wait a moment longer to both improve the current facility conditions and begin constructing a new non-traditional correction facility (or facilities) rooted in a mission of rehabilitation. This is a critical, long-term component of reducing recidivism and advancing public safety. Please include necessary funding to initiate the process of constructing a facility that implements the recommendations of the DC Jails and Justice Task Force to bring dignity, transformation, and rehabilitation to our correctional facilities.

Thank you for your attention to these urgent budget priorities.

In service,



Janeese