



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

KENYAN R. McDUFFIE
Councilmember, Ward 5
Chair Pro Tempore
Chair, Committee on Business and
Economic Development

Committee Member
Labor and Workforce Development
Transportation and the Environment
Recreation and Youth Affairs

February 26, 2020

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Mayor of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002

Re: Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Proposal

Dear Mayor Bowser:

As you prepare to transmit the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Budget and Financial Plan to the Council of the District of Columbia (“Council”), I would like to highlight a few Ward 5 priorities and request that you consider funding them in fiscal year 2021.

Last year, your Fiscal Year 2020 Budget and Financial Plan, *A Fair Shot*, made critical investments essential to Ward 5 residents and were reflective of requests I made in my letter dated February 28, 2019 on behalf of Ward 5 residents. That plan proposed to invest \$3.5 million for the completion of the Arboretum Recreation Center and \$240 million for infrastructure improvements such as streetscaping, tree planting, and the reconstruction of Dave Thomas Circle. You also invested in District students by allocating \$6 million for school-based mental health services and made a critical \$2.5 million for community-based grants for violence interruption.

The *Our Ward 5 Fiscal Year 2021 Budget* builds on those investments. In January and February of this year, Ward 5 residents provided direct feedback to help shape this request. This budget request reflects over 500 responses to our inaugural budget survey. Residents had an option of completing the survey on-line or via paper copy. The survey asked residents to rank their budget priorities. Below, you will find Ward 5 budget priorities listed and described.

1. Public Safety

- *Expansion of the NEAR Act*

Without a doubt, the number one concern of Ward 5 residents remains public safety. Last year, your budget provided roughly \$2.5 million to advance various public safety initiatives. I am requesting an additional investment to continue the expansion of much needed resources to the Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results' (NEAR Act) public health-based approach.

I am hopeful that these funds will add much needed resources to neighborhoods such as Hanover, Benning Road, Langdon, Woodridge, and Brentwood, for example. However, I am happy to discuss specific communities with your office. Funding would also go to support programmatic efforts by expanding available resources for rapid response, funds to expedite the installation of police cameras, and to expand wrap around service offerings through service providers.

- *Domestic Violence Prevention*

I am also requesting funding to support DC SAFE, the only around the clock crisis intervention agency for domestic violence in the city. Specifically, I am requesting funds to ensure survivors of domestic violence along with their families have access to shelter, transitional housing, and other relevant services.

2. Educational Investments

- *Behavioral and Mental Health*

Education is a critical key for ensuring economic mobility and towards improving socio-economic outcomes. When we invest in our young people we are simultaneously investing in our future. I am requesting that your proposed budget build on last year's \$6 million-dollar investment, by increasing adequate mental health supports and trauma-informed training for students, teachers, staff, and administrators at every District of Columbia Public and Public Charter School ("DCPS") and ("DCPCS").

This year, the most frequent request among residents was for an increase in in-school behavioral health supports. Based on the education results of our budget survey, I am requesting your budget include funding to ensure every DCPS and DCPCS has access to behavioral health technicians such as speech pathologists and counselors, especially at schools such as Luke C. Moore. I am also requesting a full investment of the Birth-To-Three for All Act and that you subsidize childcare development center costs to increase access, affordability, and quality care.

- *Educational Equity*

A key aspect to educational equity is also in ensuring students have equal choice and access to modern curriculums and instruction regardless of where the student lives. Therefore, I am

requesting additional funds to increase the at-risk weight of the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula.

I also introduced the “African American and Cultural Studies Inclusion Establishment Act of 2020.” The purpose of this legislation is to support the comprehensive efforts of the DC Government to increase student proficiency, close the achievement gap and foster greater cultural relevancy for students. Therefore, I am asking you to invest in these types of efforts to modernize educational curriculums across DCPS and DCPCS.

- *Joel Spingarn Stabilization Fund*

I am requesting funds to help stabilize Joel Spingarn High School. Once, a symbol of the best DC schools had to offer, the historic site now sits vacant in disrepair and has done so for the past seven years. I fully support the calls of residents and alumni to restore the site to a usable community benefit and utilize the site on an interim basis for innovative educational purposes.

3. Affordable Housing

Investing in affordable housing is central to building a more inclusive city. Ward 5 residents have made their desire to produce and maintain affordable housing loud and clear. This year, we are asking you to make continued investment in affordable housing for senior citizens, low and moderate-income residents, and residents living with disabilities.

According to our budget survey, affordable housing was among the highest rated priorities. I support residents’ request for investment in emergency rental assistance and vouchers, an increase in workforce housing for moderate-income residents (\$60,000-\$120,000), for low-income residents (\$0-\$60,000), and to both create new affordable units while also preserving existing affordable units.

Across the Ward, I also heard from far too many residents about how living in the District remained an elusive dream, especially for larger households and households making less than 30 percent and 50 percent of Affordable Median Income (“AMI”). That is why I requested that you assess the inventory of family-sized units in the District. The final report, entitled, “An Assessment of the Need for Large Units in the District of Columbia,” authored by the Urban Institute and the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development concluded there is a shortage of family-sized units affordable to families at very low-income levels.

As a follow-up to this report, I am asking you to fund some of the report’s critical recommendations in order to ensure family-sized units are more equitably distributed and affordable. This includes: 1.) Increasing housing subsidy contract or voucher reimbursement rates through the provision of new unit- or tenant-based subsidies; 2.) Provide density bonuses and flexibility in exchange for affordable large units through the Planned Unit Development Process and Inclusionary Zoning; 3.) Provide greater operating income or supportable debt to energy-efficient buildings with large

units by altering utility allowances; and 4.) Conducting a cost analysis to determine an appropriate portfolio of incentives that will enable the production of affordable family-sized units.¹

We know that housing defines, in large part, how residents share the wealth created by a city and how they access its assets and amenities and look forward to funding these critical initiatives.

4. Small Business and Economic Development

- *Full implementation of the recommendations of the “Disparity Report: Framework and Recommendations”*

I was extremely disappointed when the results of the legally mandated Disparity Study concluded that the District does “not currently have the data to complete a disparity study” and that, “There are currently no mechanisms in place that house all contracts in one central and accessible location.”² The Report did however, offer additional recommendations to inform planning and implementation of a future comprehensive and legally defensible disparity study based on industry best practices and standards.

I am requesting funds to implement the recommendations of the report. Funds may be used to at a minimum: 1.) Ensure all procurement contracts are accounted for in a central database; 2.) Provide training for all relevant employees and their respective agencies under the Mayor’s authority as well as independent agencies so that they are better positioned to attest to the accuracy, completeness and integrity of the award and spend data for both prime contractors and subcontractors; and 3.) Ensure that the Office of Contracting and Procurement’s (OCP) Transparency Portal contains data on all contracts awarded over the past three to five years for both agencies under the Mayor’s authority and all independent agencies.

- *Support small and minority business creation, retention, and growth*

From 2000 to 2013, approximately 20,000 District residents were forced to leave the city due to gentrification. As thousands of residents left, so too did the history, culture and businesses that these residents have worked generations to create. Within the last year, the District has lost businesses such as Cheers at the Big Chair, Bazaar Spices, and most recently, Horace and Dickies.

To help create an environment that attracts diverse businesses to the District and to help keep them here, I am asking that your budget provide significant investment to support long-time resident owned businesses, grants to start-ups under five years in operation, and to expand financial assistance to the Small Business Retailers Tax Credit.

¹ Peter Tatian, Leah Hendey, Urban Institute; Scott Bruton, Coalition for Nonprofit Housing & Economic Development, “An Assessment of the Need for Large Units in the District of Columbia.” June 2019. https://dmped.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dmped/publication/attachments/Formatted%20FSU%20Study_FINALE%206-24_1.pdf

² CRP, Incorporated, “Disparity Report: Framework and Recommendations.” Submitted to the Department of Small and Local Business Development on October, 2019. <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/43971/RC23-0137-Introduction.pdf>

I am also requesting funding for an FTE and associated operating expenses for the Department of Small and Local Business Development to develop a program according to DC Official Code 2-218.42 that allows them to develop “A set-aside program for certified business enterprises for the District of Columbia Supply Schedule” and to prioritize participation of resident owned minority businesses.

- *Mitigate challenges posed by long-term infrastructure projects*

Over the past two fiscal years, you and I have worked together to provide emergency financial and technical assistance to businesses experiencing distress due to District sponsored capital improvement projects. I even added a subtitle to establish the “Streetscape Business Development Fund” to allow eligible businesses to receive business support grants. I am calling for a minimum investment of \$5 million to expand and streamline the efforts of DC Government agencies, utilities, and quasi-government entities to establish a fund to mitigate the myriad challenges posed by such projects that have proven to be devastating to businesses.

- *Northeast Boundary Tunnel Project (NEBT)*

I am also requesting that your budget include a significant investment to mitigate the challenges currently faced by businesses in financial distress due to the NEBT project along 4th and Rhode Island Avenue, NE as well as Florida Ave NW, Rhode Island Ave NW and 3rd St NW. Last year, I moved emergency legislation to provide immediate financial assistance to small businesses impacted by the project as they are and continue to experience distress. While that funding has run out, businesses remain in distress.

The capital infrastructure project has disincentivized patrons from driving, walking, riding, or taking the metro to patronize the small businesses in close proximity to the affected projects and has demonstrably disrupted their revenue stream. While my office continues to work with all relevant utilities and other external stakeholders, we must provide immediate assistance to these businesses before they close their doors.

- *Transparency in Community Benefit Agreements*

I am also calling for an investment for the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) to develop and streamline a system that will be accessible to the public in storing and tracking developer’s final community benefit agreements.

5. Transportation and Infrastructure Improvements

Of the over 500 requests to our budget survey, one of the most repeated requests concerned investment in pedestrian safety. This year, I am requesting continued investment in ensuring the Dave Thomas Circle project moves forward. I am also requesting your budget continue to provide much needed investments in pedestrian friendly designs and redesigns as well as funding for sidewalk improvements throughout Ward 5.

In order for us to have a truly equitable city, residents must have access and equal opportunity to safe and reliable public transit options. That is why I am renewing my urgent request for expanded bus service and bike lanes, particularly throughout Brookland, Michigan Park, Edgewood, and along the Rhode Island Avenue corridor as well as along West Virginia Avenue, Montana Avenue, and Benning Road. I am requesting that you prioritize reliable, frequent, and expanded bus service particularly for the B8/B9; H6; 83 and 86.

- *Decking Over of North Capitol Project*

Numerous residents also voiced their desires to see the city commit more to the preservation of greenspace, connectivity, and innovative infrastructure designs. Last year, I requested an initial investment of \$40 million to support an initiative to deck over North Capitol Street (“Deck Over”) from V Street to Seaton Place with a pedestrian and bike-friendly greenway.

As stated last year, many Ward 5 residents advocated for the deck over project. Again, I stand with residents in advocating for funds that as the “The New North Capitol Street,” noted, would advance the “connectivity, public realm, and neighborhood character improvements that would bridge together the Stronghold, Bloomingdale, Eckington, and other nearby neighborhoods.” This project would promote green space, community public space and safety. It would also help bridge the gap between local communities affected by a highway that currently divides.

- *New York Avenue Transit*

I also heard from residents and many seniors about the difficulties of getting around town. Residents need access to reliable and consistent modes of transportation that will help them to enjoy the many wonderful things this city has to offer. That is why I am again requesting that your FY21 proposed budget includes funding to fully establish a dedicated, rapid bus line along New York Avenue from the NoMa-Gallaudet University Metrorail station to the Shops at Dakota Crossing, which would include stops at the Union Market area and Ivy City/Hecht Warehouse area. My hope is also to secure funds for a for expanded bus service, particularly for the B9 bus route.

The New York Avenue corridor has evolved into a vibrant area with new housing and businesses, including retail, restaurants, and distilleries. While residents living around Union Market and neighborhoods such as Ft. Lincoln, Woodridge, Arboretum, Ivy City, and Eckington enjoy the new amenities, they frequently lament about the challenges of accessing the area. The lack of public transportation options along New York Avenue limits residents’ ability to commute to and from work as well as restrict opportunities for visitors to patronize area businesses. As you are aware, the businesses are doing their best to continue operating, but will have a very difficult time continuing to do so without help from the District to create reliable transportation to and from this area.

6. Environmental

- *Energy-Efficient Initiatives*

Ward 5 contains the overwhelming majority of industrial sites in the entire city. Whether in neighborhoods such as Woodridge South, Brentwood, Ivy City, Gateway, Ft. Lincoln, Arboretum, V. Street, Eckington, or Langdon, neighbors frequently complain of paint particles, the decrease in air quality due to fumes from the aforementioned industrial uses, and the high incidents of asthma rates throughout the ward. According to our budget survey, residents overwhelmingly want an investment in access to energy-efficient home improvements, especially for low-income and senior residents.

Last year, your budget made important initial investments in the closing and transferring of the W Street Trash Transfer station. I am asking for continued funding in ensuring this project is completed. Further, residents also asked funding be made available to expedite implementation of curbside composting.

I am asking that your Fiscal Year 2021 budget consider funds that will advance environmental justice and equity across the Ward. This can be done by including funds to seniors and vulnerable institutions to provide relief from the Clean Rivers Impervious Area Charge (CRIAC).

7. Open Space/Recreational Investments

- *Recreational Programming in Ivy City*

Residents clearly articulated their desires for significant investment in clean, safe, and modern recreational space. In Ivy City for example, young people do not have a place to play basketball, go swimming, or play tennis. As the Alexander Crummell school continues to sit vacant, residents remain without real recreational options. Therefore, I am requesting that your proposed budget include funds for an interim use at the Crummell site.

There are numerous sites within Ivy City where we can activate space for a safe playground, pool, basketball court, art wall and or green space to allow residents a safe space. As such, investments to enhancing programming and quality must be prioritized. Therefore, I am requesting funds be allocated in Fiscal Year 2021 to activating the park by increasing access by improving pedestrian connections, fencing, and landscaping.

- *Upgrades to playgrounds and trails*

Based on feedback from residents, we can accomplish this through additional funds to activate a historic trail for the Trinidad community, and for an environmental impact assessment to examine the possibility of a paved park around Fort Circle Park at South Dakota Ave & Galloway Street, NE, and invest funds for upgrades to play surfaces for all Ward 5 playgrounds. I am also requesting funds to preserve green space and pocket parks in neighborhoods with limited green space such as the Brookland Green.

- *Edgewood Triangle Park*

Please provide funding to support improvements to the Edgewood Triangle Park that sits at the intersection of Lincoln, Franklin, and 4th St. NE. This site comprises 52,000 sq., ft. of Department of Parks and Recreation-owned space. We have heard from numerous residents about the importance of preserving, improving, and maintaining community parks. I am requesting funds that may include but not be limited to improvements to lighting, commemorative works, a dog park, recreational amenities, and ensuring accessibility. The Park provides a convenient and accessible place for these neighbors to meet, build relationships, and strengthen their communities.

8. *Health and Human Services*

- *Behavioral and Mental Health*

Investing in equitable and improved health outcomes is a priority for Ward 5 residents. Therefore, I am requesting that your FY21 budget invest in access to outpatient mental health and substance abuse support for youth and adults, and to expand in-treatment behavioral health facilities. I am also asking that your budget invest in suicide prevention.

- *Infant and Maternal Health*

Further, Ward 5 residents noted their desires to see increased support to existing prenatal and maternal health centers throughout the Ward. There should also be a deeper investment, especially among women of color to combat both infant and maternal mortality by supporting programs such as the ones offered by Community of Hope that provides hundreds of residents with access to vital services.

- *Additional Support so Seniors can Thrive*

I am also asking for investment in our seniors, particularly for funds to support recreational programs for individuals with dementia, to increase transportation options for seniors and their aides in order to participate in city programs.

- *Bus Shuttles for Families Experiencing Homelessness*

I am also requesting to expand the pilot program implemented by the Deputy Mayor for Education to provide shuttle service to assist getting children to and from schools for those families given temporary shelter in motels on New York Avenue until families are permanently removed from shelters in motels.

9. *Legislation*

I am requesting that your FY21 proposed budget fully fund the following bills:

Enacted and Unfunded

1. A23-0218, the “Go-Go Official Music of the District of Columbia Designation Act of 2019”
 - i. As introduced, it designates Go-Go music as the official music of the District of Columbia and requires the Mayor to implement a program to support, preserve, and archive Go-Go music and its history;
 - ii. I am requesting funds for the implementation of this Act.
2. L23-0024, the “Mypheduh Films DBA Sankofa Video and Books Real Property Tax Exemption Act of 2019”
 - i. L23-24 signed into law on July 24, 2019;
 - ii. L23-24 exempts 2714 Georgia Avenue, N.W., from taxation and provides equitable tax relief; and
 - iii. The law is subject to appropriations and will cost \$33,022 in fiscal year 2020 and \$142,329 over the four-year budget and financial plan. The Committee received oral and written testimony from over 3,000 District residents voicing their support for this abatement.

Introduced

1. B23-0667, the “Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption Amendment Act of 2020”
 - i. B23-0667 was introduced by Councilmembers Todd, Allen, Trayon White, Nadeau, Cheh, and Robert White on February 14, 2020 and referred to the Committee on Business and Economic Development; and
 - ii. Would provide an exemption from real property taxes for senior (70+) District residents whose household Average Median Income is \$80,000 and have owned their home for at least 25 consecutive years.
2. B23-0642, the “African American and Cultural Studies Inclusion Amendment Act of 2020”
 - i. Was introduced on February 4, 2020 with each of my colleagues;
 - ii. As introduced Bill 23-642 requires the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to develop an African-American history and cultural

studies curriculum for high school students enrolled in a District of Columbia Public or Charter School;

- iii. More specifically, the bill would allow eligible students to enroll in a course and for that course to be counted as part of the promotion requirements towards graduation; and
 - iv. This legislation supports the comprehensive efforts of the DC Government to increase student proficiency, close the achievement gap and actively engage students in their education. The goal of this legislation is to foster greater cultural relevancy for minority students, especially African Americans.
3. B23-0233, the “Diverse Washingtonians Commemorative Works Amendment Act of 2019”
- i. B23-0233 was introduced on April 2, 2019 by myself and Councilmembers Grosso, Allen, Trayon White, Robert White, Nadeau, and Bonds;
 - ii. As introduced, it allows the Council to sponsor a commemorative work on public space that honors persons who have made significant contributions to American culture or history;
 - iii. With your support, the fiscal year 2019 budget included funds to begin the process of designing and constructing the Charles Hamilton Houston statue; and
 - iv. This legislation continues to move the needle in making sure that residents and visitors to our nation’s capital, are able to see local Washingtonians that have made a lasting impact. Therefore, this legislation aims to properly recognize and honor remarkable persons who left positive indelible marks on society, men, women, and migrants such as Charles Drew, Mary P. Burrill, Rose Ishbel Greely, and the Shaed sisters.
4. B23-0234, the “Advisory Commission on Monuments, Markers, and Symbols Establishment Act of 2019”
- i. Was introduced on April 2, 2019 by myself and Councilmembers Nadeau, Bonds, Silverman, Gray, Grosso, Robert White, Trayon White, Allen, Evans, and Cheh;
 - ii. As introduced, it establishes an advisory commission to study monuments, markers, and symbols throughout the District to assess their cultural and historical appropriateness; and
 - iii. This legislation is critical in reckoning with our city’s collective histories. The bill aims to channel important dialogue occurring around our country

to reconcile symbols and monuments that have often complicated and in some cases blatantly racist history behind them.

5. B23-0038, the “Racial Equity Achieves Results Amendment Act of 2019”

- i. On January 8, 2019, along with Councilmembers Nadeau, Bonds, Trayon White, Gray, Evans, Grosso, Allen, Robert White, Todd, Silverman, and Chairman Mendelson, I introduced the Racial Equity Achieves Results Act of 2019;
- ii. As introduced, it requires the Office of Human Rights and the Department of Human Resources to develop and provide racial equity training for District employees. Among other things, It requires the Office of Budget and Planning to design and implement a racial equity tool to aid in eliminating disparities based on race. The Mayor is required to include racial equity-related performance measures in the development of an agency's annual performance plans;
- iii. While I could fill this entire letter listing the disparities that exists, the fact remains, that we can no longer deny that race, above and beyond other factors (including class, region, politics, and religion) has proven to be the most significant explanation for social, economic, and political divisions in this city;
- iv. I am requesting that the City commits to investing, naming, and advancing racial equity in the District of Columbia. Most recently, surrounding jurisdictions such as Montgomery County and Alexandria have taken bold steps in moving this agenda forward. I am calling on the Executive to work with this body in collaboration to advance these ideals in making the District an equitable city.

6. (Bill number unassigned), the “Bloomingdale Historic District Targeted Historic Preservation Assistance Amendment Act of 2020”

- i. Was filed by myself along with Chairman Mendelson in the Office of the Secretary on February 24, 2020;
- ii. As introduced, this bill establishes that grants available to assist homeowners with the rehabilitation of historic property under the Targeted Homeowner Grant Program may be used to rehabilitate a structure in the Bloomingdale Historic District;
- iii. This bill was originally introduced on September 18, 2018 and was referred to the Committee of the Whole; and

- iv. This legislation is essential in preserving the historic nature of the Bloomingdale community. Other neighborhoods that have become historic districts have been included in this important grant program and can now apply for funding opportunities. Many Bloomingdale residents, especially senior citizens would benefit from this program and I look forward to working with you to ensure it is fully funded.
7. B23-0432, the “Protecting Local Area Commercial Enterprises Amendment Act of 2019”
- i. B23-0432 was introduced on September 17, 2019 and referred to the Committee on Business and Economic Development;
 - ii. As introduced Bill 23-432 provides funding for the Legacy Business Program via a portion of the DC Supply Schedule. It establishes the legacy business assistance program to provide a commercial lease renewal process and financial assistance to landlords and eligible legacy business;
 - iii. A legacy business is one that has been continuously eligible for certification as a local business enterprise for 15 consecutive years or as a small business enterprise for 10 consecutive years and contributed to the history or identity of the District or its neighborhoods;
 - iv. This legislation builds on my commitment and numerous public statements to put forth a comprehensive approach to address locally owned legacy businesses that are being pushed out due to the increase in property taxes;
 - v. I am asking that your budget supports legacy businesses.

Unfunded and Subject to Appropriations

- 1. L22-0312, the “Sports Wagering Lottery Amendment Act of 2018” (*only amendatory sections 316(d) and (e) of section 2(e)*)
 - a. L22-0312 became effective on May 3, 2019;
 - b. Section 316 of L22-0312 establishes the Sports Wagering Small Business Development Program. The relevant provisions that are subject to funding would do several things including: 1.) Require DSLBD to establish a program to train small business enterprises (SBE) and SBE-eligible firms to develop the capacity to become sports wagering operators and management service providers; and 2.) Requires the submission of an annual report on the participation of Certified Business Enterprises (CBEs) in sports wagering;
 - c. These provisions were added to ensure that the District promotes meaningful CBE inclusion so that the local sports betting industry provides opportunities for local business owners to participate;

- d. The Office of Risk Analysis (ORA) has estimated these provisions would cost roughly \$375,000. Therefore, I am requesting that your proposed budget include funds to cover the costs of these provisions.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss the budget requests and appreciate your thoughtful consideration of each of them. For your convenience, I have directed my staff to gather estimates for each of my requests. I am happy to share these estimates with the staff you deem appropriate. My staff also has more detailed requests gathered from resident input. I am happy to share those requests if needed. Should you have any questions, please contact my Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, Brian McClure, at bmcclure@dccouncil.us or 202-724-8028.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K.R. McDuffie". The signature is stylized with a large, looped initial "K" and a distinct "M".

Kenyan R. McDuffie