



Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

[DRAFT] RESOLUTION #4B-20-0603

**Supporting Funding in FY2021 for Public Housing Repairs
Adopted June 22, 2020**

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B (Commission) takes note of the following:

- The Commission has recognized repeatedly that housing is a human right. The Commission firmly believes in the value of public housing and that public housing residents deserve safe, stable, and secure housing. See, e.g., [Resolution 4B-19-0506](#), Supporting Funding for Urgent Public Housing Repairs and Calling for Commitment to Maintain Public Housing Stock (May 20, 2019); [Resolution 4B-19-1004](#), Calling on DC Housing Authority to Preserve Public Housing and Protect Public Housing Residents (Oct. 28, 2019); [Resolution 4B-20-0104](#), Providing Feedback on Proposed Changes to the Comprehensive Plan (Jan. 27, 2020).
- As one of the District's largest landlords, the DC Housing Authority is responsible for providing safe, affordable, and well-maintained homes to nearly 20,000 of DC's most financially vulnerable residents. Many public housing residents are seniors, children, and/or have a disability. See, e.g., Morgan Baskin, *Washington City Paper*, "[As D.C. Weighs How to Fix Its Public Housing, Families Keep Getting Sicker](#)" (Mar. 20, 2019) ("By the DC Housing Authority's own count, 36 percent of residents who live in the 124-unit LeDroit Apartments are seniors; 40 percent have a disability. And one-quarter of the residents in Greenleaf are children, while 25 percent live with a disability.").
- Public housing residents face abysmal living conditions, including black mold, rodent and insect infestations, lack of hot water and heat, water leaks and in-unit flooding, and sewage backups, among other issues. See Morgan Baskin, *Washington City Paper*, "[As D.C. Weighs How to Fix Its Public Housing, Families Keep Getting Sicker](#)" (Mar. 20, 2019); Morgan Baskin, *Washington City Paper*, "[Nearly One-Third of the City's Public Housing Stock Is at Risk of Becoming Uninhabitable](#)" (Dec. 20, 2018); Morgan Baskin, *Washington City Paper*, "[What Life is Like—Still—In D.C.'s Public Housing](#)," (Aug. 16, 2018). Some families have been approved for a public safety transfer but are unable to move to another

public housing facility, in part because of the limited habitable public housing units. See Peter Hermann, *The Washington Post*, [“Boy, 13, shot less than 3 months after younger sibling was wounded by gunfire”](#) (May 6, 2019).

- The vast majority of the District’s public housing stock is in severe disrepair. The DC Housing Authority has said 2,610 of its “extremely urgent” units require repairs (including homes with “collapsed ceilings, many square feet of toxic mold, ceilings and walls that don’t fit together properly, plumbing systems damaged nearly beyond repair, or other conditions that might very well soon make them uninhabitable”), and that an additional 4,445 of approximately 8,000 public housing units across the city are in “critical condition,” with conditions that if left unabated could threaten the long-term viability of the unit. Morgan Baskin, *The City Paper*, [“Nearly One-Third of the City’s Public Housing Stock Is at Risk of Becoming Uninhabitable”](#) (Dec. 20, 2018). While the DC Council has allocated some money towards repairs, the funding this year will only help 400 of the 2,610 units the DC Housing Authority identified as needing “extremely urgent” repairs. Jenny Gathright, *DCist*, [“D.C. Attorney General Sues City’s Housing Authority Over Its Response To Crime”](#) (June 9, 2020).
- The public health emergency related to COVID-19 (coronavirus) and the Mayor’s directives regarding staying at home and encouraging telework, even during reopening phases, highlight the importance of safe and stable housing. To protect ourselves and our neighbors, we are encouraged to stay at home, but this prospect is either not possible or presents grave risks for those living in dangerous conditions. Ensuring safe and stable housing makes us all healthier and safer.
- Mayor Muriel Bowser’s proposed budget includes \$25 million for public housing repairs for Fiscal Year 2021 (\$40 million over the next two Fiscal Years), as well as an additional \$36 million dollars for the New Communities Initiative, an ongoing DC government plan to overhaul several public housing properties that has faced criticism for resulting in displacement. See Jenny Gathright & Eliza Berkon, *DCist*, [“As The Legal Battle Over A Park Continues, Public Housing Residents Say They’re Being Displaced”](#) (Mar. 9, 2020) (“While the vast majority of residents wait for their new buildings, many are forced to tolerate dangerous living conditions, or get emergency vouchers to move out.”). The [Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia](#), the [Fair Budget Coalition](#), and [Empower DC](#), among others, have asked the District to invest \$60 million per year in public housing repairs.
- Twenty-five million for public housing repairs for Fiscal Year 2021 is simply not enough. Public housing has been the subject of chronic underinvestment and piecemeal efforts at both the federal and local level

for decades, resulting in the deplorable living conditions noted above. The District must make sustained and substantial investments in public housing to ensure that families live in safe, clean, and habitable housing.

- The District has neglected public housing residents for far too long. Now is the time to do better. We ask that the DC Council and the Mayor work to ensure this year's budget protects and supports the people of the District, including through consideration of mechanisms to increase revenue, like raising taxes on the highest tax brackets, and consideration of reallocating proposed increased funding for sports betting and the Metropolitan Police Department for purposes of funding public housing repairs.

RESOLVED:

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the DC Council to work to provide as much funding as possible in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget for DC Housing Authority repairs to public housing, but at a minimum \$60 million dollars (an increase of \$35 million from the Mayor's proposed budget).
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the DC Council to establish a dedicated yearly funding allocation that would allow the DC Housing Authority to better plan for long-term stabilization of public housing in the District.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the DC Council to swiftly pass the [Public Housing Preservation and Tenant Protection Amendment Act of 2020](#) (B23-0627) in conjunction with the budget to ensure that the DC Housing Authority has a plan in place to rebuild every unit of affordable housing before it demolishes any properties; require the DC Housing Authority to put important public housing protections into regulations for residents at redeveloped properties and guarantee that tenants can enforce any violation of those rights; and ensure that tenants can have their voices heard by the DC Council throughout the redevelopment process.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Commission designates Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioner cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the

Chair to designate another Commissioner or Commissioners to represent the Commission in all matter relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, consistent with DC Code § 1-309, only actions of the full Commission voting in a properly noticed public meeting have standing and carry great weight. The actions, positions, and opinions of individual commissioners, insofar as they may be contradictory to or otherwise inconsistent with the expressed position of the full Commission in a properly adopted resolution or letter, have no standing and cannot be considered as in any way associated with the Commission.

ADOPTED by voice vote at a regular public meeting (notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of __ of nine members was present) on June 22, 2020, by a vote of __ yes, __ no, __ abstentions.