



Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

By Electronic Mail

April 26, 2021

Christine V. Davis, Interim Director
District Department of Public Works

RE: Requesting Information regarding DPW's Public Litter Can Collection & Zero Waste Efforts

Dear Interim Director Davis:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, at a duly noticed public meeting, with a quorum being the "majority of the total number of commissioner positions currently filled in Commission 4B," at its April 26, 2021, meeting voted with _ Yeas, _ Nays, and _ Abstentions to send this letter of inquiry regarding the District Department of Public Works' litter can collection and zero waste efforts.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B greatly appreciates the essential work of the District Department of Public Works and its employees related to trash and recycling collection across the District. The Commission understands the unique challenges and pressures on the Department during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) public health emergency and seeks to support the Department in keeping the District clean and moving toward zero waste.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has recently experienced a large number of full and overflowing public trash cans within the Commission's boundaries. Some public trash cans are full and overflowing shortly after collection (see the following [report](#) for a full trash can that was empty the preceding day). To assist our residents, the Commission requests the following information regarding the District Department of Public Works' public trash can collection:

- the locations of public trash cans and public recycling cans throughout the District and within Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B's boundaries subject to the jurisdiction and control of the District Department of Public Works;
- systemic efforts, if any, to expand the number of public trash cans and public recycling cans (beyond [Business Improvement Districts](#)) throughout the District and within Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B's boundaries;

- a map of routes and details regarding the dates and frequency of collection for public trash cans throughout the District and within Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B's boundaries subject to the jurisdiction and control of the District Department of Public Works (similar to the [details provided publicly for residential trash collection](#));
- details regarding whether routes and dates and frequency of collection have shifted over the course of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) public health emergency;
- the volume of trash collected along specific routes across the District and within Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B's boundaries subject to the jurisdiction and control of the District Department of Public Works;
- details regarding whether the volume of trash collected along specific routes across the District and within Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B's boundaries have shifted over the course of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) public health emergency; and
- scope and status of systemic efforts, if any, to improve the design of public trash cans to allow for improved collection, including the use of [sensors](#) to indicate when a public trash can is nearly full.

The District Department of Public Works has indicated that it recently toured public trash cans in Ward 4 and that many overflowing public trash cans were full of household trash, restaurant containers, and delivery boxes. The Department also indicated it produced a report to determine if service adjustments are necessary. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B requests a copy of that report.

To assist our residents and local small businesses, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B also requests the following information:

- efforts to determine motivations for placing household trash in public trash cans and whether the District can fulfill a need in order to minimize use of public trash cans where residential trash cans are available;
- programs, if any, to educate residents regarding proper disposal of trash, including cleaning takeout containers, to minimize rodents;
- programs, if any, in coordination with the District Department of Planning and Economic Development or other agencies to provide payment or other assistance to small businesses for trash collection;
- programs, if any, in coordination with the District Department of Planning and Economic Development or other agencies to provide restaurants and other small businesses with support for low-waste packaging for takeout and other services (see, e.g., [sustainable food container pilot program in Takoma Park](#)); and
- current status of the District's goal of moving toward zero waste, defined as the diversion of 80 percent or more of waste generated by the District (since there has been [no Solid Waste Diversion Annual Report since calendar year 2018](#)).

The requested information will allow the Commission to best serve the community and support the Department's work by understanding the need for more public trash cans, increased collection from public trash cans, and supports for residents and businesses.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B supports efforts to improve and expand public trash cans and collection and considers these essential public services. The Commission also appreciates that residents often seek to place litter within cans as opposed to littering and filling the District's streets with more trash. If public trash cans are overburdened, the Commission would like to see additional public trash cans and more frequent collection, and not the removal of public trash cans or reduction in collection.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B also voted with __ Yeas, __ Nays, and __ Abstentions to appoint the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02, Erin Palmer, or any member of the Executive Committee in her absence, to be authorized to communicate this letter and represent the Commission in communications with your agency regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02 Commissioner

cc: Councilmember Mary M. Cheh, Chair, Committee on Transportation & the Environment
Michael Porcello, Legislative & Committee Director, Committee on Transportation & the Environment

Councilmember Janeese Lewis George (Ward 4)
Councilmember Christina Henderson (At-Large)

Celeste Duffie, ANC Liaison, DC Department of Public Works