



Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

By Electronic Mail

February 27, 2023

Mayor Muriel Bowser
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B Fiscal Year 2024 Housing Justice Budget
Priorities

Dear Mayor Bowser:

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 February 27, 2023, meeting voted with _ Yeas, _ Nays, and _ Abstentions to send this letter regarding the Commission’s preliminary housing justice priorities for the Fiscal Year 2024 budget for the District of Columbia.

In submitting this letter, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B reiterates the housing justice budget priorities contained in the Commission’s April 25, 2022, [letter](#) to the DC Council regarding the Fiscal Year 2023 budget, as well as the Commission’s March 22, 2021, [letter](#) to Mayor Bowser and the Commission’s June 28, 2021, [letter](#) to the DC Council regarding the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget. The Commission’s priorities are based in part on the expertise and feedback of the Commission’s [Housing Justice Committee](#), including the Committee’s January 4, 2023, meeting and discussion with At-Large Councilmember Christina Henderson and the Committee’s February 1, 2023, meeting and discussion with At-Large Councilmember Robert White.

As Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has repeatedly stated, housing is a human right, and all District residents are entitled to safe, stable, and secure housing. “[T]he affordable housing crisis requires the District to use every tool available to ensure affordable housing.” [Resolution 4B-20-0104](#), Providing Feedback on Proposed Changes to the Comprehensive Plan (Jan. 27, 2020). “[T]he increased supply of housing – while important – will not alone solve the

affordable housing crisis, particularly as related to extremely-low and very low-income households, and must be accompanied by active and robust City goals and policies to ensure affordability, including affordability for extremely low- and very low-income households, in relation to increased supply.” *Id.* The Commission’s housing justice budget requests reflect these goals.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on Mayor Bowser to include the following in her proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget for the District of Columbia to ensure all District residents have safe, stable, and secure housing; to provide a just recovery from the racial, socio-economic, and geographic disparities the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic laid bare; and to balance longstanding disinvestment in basic needs:

- continue to invest in and expand the District’s [Black Homeownership Fund](#) and fully fund the maximum allowable down payment assistance under [Home Purchase Assistance Program](#) (which [previously did not include a funding increase](#));
- continue to expand home repair programs with an equity lens and assess and fund mechanisms to prevent the tax sale of homes owned by seniors and low-income residents, such as payment plans, credits, and sliding scales that would expand the current reduction in taxes based on age and income thresholds;
- provide additional dedicated funding for community land trusts and limited equity cooperatives to ensure permanently affordable housing, local small businesses, and other public assets through community ownership of land, see [B25-0113](#), Community Land Trusts’ Access and Homeowner Support Amendment Act of 2023 (incorporating community land trusts into the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act process and early access to purchase tax sale list properties);
- continue to fund and ensure investments in the Housing Production Trust Fund – the District’s primary affordable housing tool that historically receives significant amounts of funding – adhere to the legal requirement that 50 percent of its resources be used to serve families with the lowest incomes and with sufficient annual investments in the project-based component of the Local Rent Supplement Program;
- fund the Affordable Housing Preservation Fund by at least [\\$20 million](#) to meet the backlog in efforts by tenants to exercise their Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act rights and invest at least [\\$30 million](#) in a program to provide affordable financing to tenants seeking to exercise these rights, recognizing that Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act projects are more likely to meet affordable housing goals than some Housing Production Trust Fund projects;
- adequately fund the Emergency Rental Assistance Program by at least [\\$117 million](#) to meet need and as an important tool to prevent evictions (as well as implement data collection mechanisms to better understand needs going forward), with the goal of

preventing evictions to every extent possible, particularly in light of the lack of recurring funding and large rent increases post-pandemic;

- expand funding to every extent possible and in consideration of the full need (considering At-Large Councilmember Robert White’s request for [\\$500 million over five years](#)) and provide recurring funding for public housing repairs in light of persistent neglect and failed management and oversight, see [Resolution 4B-19-1004](#), Calling on DC Housing Authority to Preserve Public Housing and Protect Public Housing Residents (Oct. 28, 2019); [Resolution 4B-19-0506](#), Supporting Funding for Urgent Public Housing Repairs and Calling for Commitment to Maintain Public Housing Stock (May 20, 2019);
- develop a plan and fully fund tenant-based local housing vouchers for the 37,000 individuals on the DC Housing Authority waitlist, where the DC budget has historically provided no or uncertain funding for these efforts, as well as explore and fund local [vouchers for home ownership](#), a mechanism that could go a long way toward addressing wealth inequities in the District;
- fully fund housing needs for survivors of domestic violence – [a historic need](#) – by replenishing and expanding the Shelter and Transitional Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence Fund by at least [\\$18.6 million](#);
- fully fund housing needs for returning citizens, including the important and specific need to support senior citizen returning citizens, by at least [\\$1.3 million](#) through dedicated housing vouchers for 60 individuals and short-term housing options; and
- fully fund housing needs for LGBTQ+ residents, including through 60 additional dedicated [housing vouchers](#) and related supportive services;
- invest [\\$58.4 million](#) in Targeted Affordable Housing to assist 1,920 families who have been in permanent supportive housing and no longer need intensive services;
- support the DC Council in approving and fund [B25-0047](#), the Rapid Re-Housing Reform Amendment Act of 2023, which would end [heavily criticized arbitrary time limits for rapid re-housing](#) and require continued rental assistance until the participant can transition into a permanent housing subsidy program;
- invest [\\$36.6 million](#) to end chronic homelessness for 1,260 single adults and [\\$18.9 million](#) for 480 families through permanent supportive housing, see [Resolution 4B-20-0407](#), Supporting Funding in FY2021 to Address Chronic Homelessness (Apr. 27, 2020); [Resolution 4B-19-0307](#), Supporting Funding in FY2020 Budget to Address Chronic Homelessness (Mar. 25, 2019);
- invest sufficient funding to expand [staffing and capacity](#) for the District Department of Human Services to [more swiftly](#) implement historic investments made in Fiscal Year

2022 and Fiscal Year 2023 to end chronic homelessness by connecting and placing unhoused residents in housing;

- provide at least [\\$55 million](#) for additional [necessary bridge housing and wraparound services](#) to provide a safe and dignified space while residents await permanent housing options, an important need in light of challenges placing individuals matched with vouchers in housing;
- ensure adequate non-congregate shelter for residents experiencing homelessness and fund the District Department of Human Services to continue to offer 24-hour shelter access, a notable challenge in light of the [phasing out of the PEP-V program and the loss of over 600 shelter beds](#);
- evaluate [gaps in federal funding to support homeless students](#), particularly in light of pandemic relief funding that may be coming to a close, and provide local funding to ensure homeless youth have sufficient resources and access to public education, given the [urgency](#) of supporting the [6,668 DC public and charter school students](#) identified as homeless and the [increase in students experiencing homelessness in Ward 4](#) from 11 percent in school year 2018-2019 to 12 percent during school year 2020-2021; and
- expand funding for the District Office of the Tenant Advocate, which provides essential services to tenants regarding their rights and preventing evictions.

While there have been notable past funding successes toward achieving Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B's and the District's housing goals – including a previous tax increase on individual residents earning more than \$250,000 per year to fund [2,400 additional housing vouchers](#) – the Commission is troubled by implementation and oversight failures related to these housing programs. The aforementioned housing vouchers have [largely not resulted in placing our unhoused neighbors in housing](#). To add insult to injury, as the District recently pushed the clearing of a homeless encampment, news hit that the [DC government had rejected offers of aid from national homeless advocates](#). There are additional well-known implementation and oversight failures, including the [longstanding uninhabitability and mismanagement of DC's public housing](#); the [DC Housing Authority's overpayment of rent to landlords for inadequate housing](#); and [failures of the District's primary affordable housing tool – the Housing Production Trust Fund – to provide deeply affordable housing](#).

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B requests the following improvements to the implementation and oversight of the District's housing programs:

- implement legislative and oversight measures to ensure the Housing Production Trust Fund adheres to its mandate of 50 percent of funding providing extremely low-income housing, in part through additional accountability measures as previously provided in [B24-0447](#), the Housing Production Trust Fund Affordability Levels Amendment Enforcement Act of 2021, [B24-0458](#), the Housing Production Trust Fund Income

Targeting Accountability Amendment Act of 2021, and [B24-0459](#), the Housing Production Trust Fund Transparency Amendment Act of 2021;

- obtain a fulsome assessment of funding needed and develop a plan to meet public housing needs, including filling [record vacancies](#) that cost more than \$10 million annually in forgone rent and federal subsidies, as well as attach accountability mechanisms to money provided to assure funding fixes and does not merely cover up the problems, such as including language in the Budget Support Act that requires the DC Housing Authority to regularly report and account for how it is spending these funds;
- develop a plan to meet need for the 37,000 individuals on the DC Housing Authority waitlist and [assure tenants who have been waiting for years are not subject to removal from the waitlist through a cursory process](#);
- develop an [emergency plan to clear the backlogs in the housing voucher system](#) in coordination with the Interagency Council on Homelessness, the DC Housing Authority, and national and local housing and homelessness service organizations, as proposed by At-Large Councilmember Robert White;
- accelerate implementation of the [Tax Abatements for Affordable Housing in High-Needs Areas Amendment Act of 2020](#) to facilitate the production of new affordable housing in the Rock Creek West, Rock Creek East, Capitol Hill, and Upper Northeast planning areas, identified in the District's Housing Equity Report, released in October 2019, as areas in high-need for affordable housing, see [Letter](#) Supporting Affordable Housing in High-Needs Areas Tax Abatement for Takoma Metro Station Development (May 23, 2022); and
- implement additional capacity for the DC Council to better allow the Council to perform its important oversight function, including through a dedicated economist and other research and audit functions, as suggested by At-Large Councilmember Christina Henderson at the Housing Justice Committee's January 4, 2023, meeting and discussion with At-Large Councilmember Christina Henderson.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B is dedicated to supporting the DC government in funding and implementing these important housing programs as the District works to provide safe, stable, and secure housing for all DC residents.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has voted with _ Yeas, _ Nays, and _ Abstentions to appoint the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02, Erin Palmer, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B04, Evan Yeats, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B08, Alison Brooks, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B05, Kevin Gilligan, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B03, Zurick T. Smith, and the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B01, T. Michelle Colson, or any member of the Executive Committee in

their absence, to be authorized to communicate this letter and represent Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B in communication with you or any DC government entity regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02 Commissioner
Evan Yeats, ANC 4B04 Commissioner
Alison Brooks, ANC 4B08 Commissioner
Kevin Gilligan, ANC 4B05 Commissioner
Zurick T. Smith, ANC 4B03 Commissioner
T. Michelle Colson, ANC 4B01 Commissioner

cc: Glen Lee, Interim Chief Financial Officer
Kevin Donahue, City Administrator

Jennifer Budoff, Budget Director, DC Council

Councilmembers of the District of Columbia

Shawn Hilgendorf, Committee Director, Committee on Housing, Council of the District of Columbia

Kelly Hunt, Chief of Staff, Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George