

Government of the District of Columbia

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B



[DRAFT] RESOLUTION #4B-23-0302

**Calling on District Department of Public Works to
Install or Reinstall Public Trash Cans in Locations Within
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B
Adopted March 27, 2023**

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

- Public trash cans and trash collection are important public services for residents in the District. Studies have shown that [when the number of public trash cans are decreased, litter and time spent collecting litter increases. The presence of litter can increase the likelihood that people will litter.](#) The removal of public trash cans and increased neighborhood litter has many negative effects, including [attracting rodents](#), cockroaches, and other pests; [harming ecological health](#); [creating tripping and other hazards](#); [reducing resident physical activities](#) and use of outdoor spaces; and [increasing fear, perceived risk, and actual crime](#). See Dr. Eugenia C. South, “To Combat Gun Violence, Clean Up the Neighborhood,” *The New York Times* (Oct. 8, 2021) (“We found that after both the greening and trash cleanup interventions, gun violence went down significantly. The steepest drop in crime, up to 29 percent, was in the several blocks surrounding vacant lots in neighborhoods whose residents live below the poverty line.”). In some cities, studies have shown that [disparities in public trash can availability may be an effect of structural income-related disparities](#).
- Around [May 2022](#), residents began noticing the removal of public trash cans in various locations around the District. Reports of missing public trash cans noted their sudden “[disappearance](#)” and [questioned whether these public cans were being stolen](#). Informal discussions among Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners and residents indicated the removal of dozens of public trash cans. Despite email communications from the District Department of Public Works in August that there were only 11 removals from January through August 2022 and a Freedom of Information Act request response stating that the Department [only began](#)

[tracking removals in June 2022](#) and listing [12 removals](#), Commissioner and resident experiences indicate a systematic removal of public trash cans.

- The District Department of Public Works has indicated that public trash cans are removed for “abuse” or “misuse” – where residents place household trash bags in public trash cans. According to email communications from the Department, their Solid Waste Education and Enforcement Team issues fines in these instances when it is possible to determine who is “abusing” the public trash can, and these cans are removed “[a]fter two weeks of abuse.” In emails to Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, the Department stated that, “Historically, we have had a very informal process for the removal and installation of litter cans and a very broken communication process from the resident, to you, and to us.” The Department has repeatedly referenced a “tour” of public trash cans and an “assessment” of public trash can collection service but has not provided either to Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, despite past requests [\[see attachments\]](#).
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has observed challenges with regard to trash and recycling services and collection for residential buildings with 4+ units. The lack of certain services (including bulk collection), as well as the lack of enforcement for services that property owners should provide (including trash and recycling collection), has created a system that substantially favors homeowners. The tax credit provided to owners of multi-family residences does not approach the true cost of providing these services in a free market, which contributes to cost-cutting in service providers by multi-unit property managers. These challenges also appear to contribute to public dumping and what the District Department of Public Works has characterized as “abuse” or “misuse” of public trash cans for household trash.
- Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George introduced [B25-0132](#), Requirement to Provide Notice of Intent to Remove Public Litter Containers Amendment Act of 2023 on February 8, 2023. The proposed legislation would amend the Advisory Neighborhood Commission Act to require the District Department of Public Works to provide 30 days’ written notice to Advisory Neighborhood Commissions of their intent to remove a public trash can, including a “brief description of why DPW believes removing the litter container will improve neighborhood cleanliness and public health.” Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George also introduced [B25-0131](#), Containing Litter and Ensuring Adequate Neighborhood Collections Amendment Act of 2023 on February 8, 2023, which would amend the Sustainable Solid waste Management Amendment Act of 2014 to require that residential buildings with private trash collection (those with 4+ units) provide solid waste containers “of sufficient capacity” (at least 32 gallons per residential unit) and provide collection services at least twice a week.

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has repeatedly stated its opposition to the removal of public trash cans and the need for expanded trash collection services:
 - “[I]n light of the District Department of Public Works’ practice of removing public trash cans for supposed ‘misuse,’ a problem created in part through insufficient collection from residential buildings with 4+ units, the Commission believes it is essential to note that public trash cans and trash collection are an essential service and should be implemented to meet need. Removal of public trash cans where trash is being placed in those cans – through ‘misuse’ or otherwise – is never a desirable outcome.” [Resolution 4B-22-1101](#), Providing Additional Feedback on DPW Zero Waste Plan (Nov. 28, 2022).
 - “Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has observed challenges with regard to trash and recycling services and collection for residential buildings with 4+ units. The lack of certain services (including bulk collection), as well as the lack of enforcement for services that property owners should provide (including trash and recycling collection), has created a system that substantially favors homeowners. The tax credit provided to owners of multi-family residences does not approach the true cost of providing these services in a free market, which contributes to cost-cutting in service providers by multi-unit property managers. These challenges also appear to contribute to public dumping and what the District Department of Public Works has characterized as ‘misuse’ of public trash cans for household trash. The Draft Framework should 3 consider expanding services to include residential buildings with 4+ units and/or efforts to bring these services to residents at these buildings.” [Letter](#) Providing Feedback on the District Department of Public Works (DPW) Office of Waste Diversion’s Zero Waste DC Plan Draft Framework (Sept. 28, 2022).
 - “Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B supports efforts to improve and expand public trash cans and collection to address litter 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 (possibly as the result of lack of or insufficient services within residential buildings with 4+ units). Yet, the Commission has observed government removal of public trash cans based on ‘misuse,’ i.e., household trash.... Public trash cans and trash collection are a public service: If public trash cans are overburdened, the Commission would like to see additional public trash cans, changes in trash can design, and more frequent collection, and not the removal of public trash cans or reduction in collection.” [Letter](#) Providing Feedback on the District Department of Public Works (DPW) Office of Waste Diversion’s Zero Waste DC

Plan Draft Framework (Sept. 28, 2022); *see also* [Letter](#) Requesting Information regarding DPW's Public Litter Can Collection & Zero Waste Efforts (Apr. 26, 2021) (same).

- Other Advisory Neighborhood Commissions across the District have expressed similar interest in maintaining service levels for public trash cans. *See, e.g.*, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4D, [Resolution](#) Regarding the Department of Public Works' Zero Waste DC Plan Draft Framework (Sept. 21, 2022) (calling on the District "[t]o not remove public cans as the solution to public dumping," "[t]o appropriately supply an adequate number of public waste and recycling containers to public areas," and to require more robust collection from multi-unit residential buildings); Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1B, Letter Requesting Information Regarding DPW's Public Litter Can Removal Efforts & Zero Waste Policy (Sept. 1, 2022) ("ANC 1B vocally opposes the removal of public trash cans or reduction in collection without the written consent of the ANC commissioner in the single member district where a public trash can is located."); Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2F, [Resolution](#) Regarding the Department of Public Works' Public Litter Can Program (Apr. 7, 2021) (calling for the Department to "[s]tudy why residents put residential trash in public bins" and "[u]se the results of that study to identify opportunities to better educate residents and find solutions to the causes of this problem").
- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B affirms its support for and requests installation and/or reinstallation of public trash cans in the following locations:
 - 5th Street and Whittier Street, NW (south-west corner/bus stop): Service Request Number 21-00283182, Re-Installation of Public Trash Can (closed August 11, 2022) ("these cans are being abused; by T Thomas 8/10/2022"); Service Request Number 22-00383409 (submitted August 11, 2022) (public dashboard says request is not publicly accessible).
 - 232 Carroll Street, NW: Service Request Number 23-00101412, Installation of Public Trash Can (submitted March 1, 2023) (public dashboard says request is not publicly accessible) (supported by Takoma Main Street and requested due to large amounts of litter and lack of public trash cans for long stretch along Carroll Street, NW, commercial corridor); Service Request Number 22-00298720, Installation of Public Trash Can (June 2022) (resident request that public dashboard says is not publicly accessible); Service Request Number 22-00059642, Installation of Public Trash Can (February 7, 2022) (resident request closed without action on June 24, 2022).
 - 341-353 Cedar Street, NW: Service Request Number 23-00101418, Installation of Public Trash Can (submitted March 1, 2023) (public dashboard says request is not publicly accessible) (supported by

Takoma Main Street and requested due to presence of several food establishments).

- Takoma Elementary School (across from 614 Highland Avenue, NW and in front of playground): Service Request 23-00116576, Re-Installation of Public Trash Can (submitted March 10, 2023) (requested by neighbors for location that appears to contain base for previously placed public trash can).
- Takoma Elementary School (across from 626 Highland Avenue, NW and in front of playground): Service Request 23-00116579, Re-Installation of Public Trash Can (submitted March 10, 2023) (requested by neighbors for location that appears to contain base for previously placed public trash can).
- 7th Street and Dahlia Street, NW (east side by Takoma Elementary School): Service Request 23-00116591, Installation of Public Trash Can (submitted March 10, 2023) (requested by school parent-teacher organization due to high usage and need in the area reflected by regularly used public trash can at west side of the intersection).
- 9th Street and Peabody Street, NW (southeast corner near Paul Public Charter School): Service Request 23-00131800, Installation of Public Trash Can (submitted March 19, 2023) (busy corridor for Paul Public Charter School students and high loose litter count in area).
- 8th Street and Peabody Street, NW (southwest corner near Paul Public Charter School): Service Request 23-00131804, Re-Installation of Public Trash Can (submitted March 19, 2023) (busy corridor for Paul Public Charter School students and high loose litter count in area).
- 9th Street and Quackenbos Street, NW (either southwest or southeast corner near Paul Public Charter School and 4th District Police Station): Service Request 23-00131806, Installation of Public Trash Can (submitted March 19, 2023) (busy corridor for Paul Public Charter School students and high loose litter count in area).
- 9th Street and Rittenhouse Street, NW (northwest corner near Exodus Missionary Baptist Church): Service Request 23-00131809, Installation of Public Trash Can (submitted March 19, 2023) (high loose litter count in area, replacing contractor trash bags tied to street signs currently being used in place of public trash can).
- 8th Street and Nicholson Street, NW (southeast corner near Paul Public Charter School): Service Request 23-00131812, Installation

of Public Trash Can (submitted March 19, 2023) (busy corridor for Paul Public Charter School students and high loose litter count in area).

- 1st Place and Riggs Road, NE, and along Riggs Road, NE, through the entrance to Fort Totten Metro Station: Service Request Number not available (as requested by Commissioner Alison Brooks, 4B08, via conversations with a District Department of Public Works representative and by email dated March 17, 2019).
- 5900 Block of New Hampshire Avenue, NE: Service Request Number not available (as requested by Commissioner Alison Brooks, 4B08 via 311).
- Eastern Avenue and Quintana Place, NE: Service Request Number not available (as requested by Commissioner Alison Brooks, 4B08 via 311).
- 1st Place and Missouri Avenue, NE: Service Request Number not available (as requested by Commissioner Alison Brooks, 4B08 via 311).

If the District Department of Public Works does not have an open Service Request Number for any of these locations, the Commission requests that this Resolution serve as the formal request and be entered by the Department as necessary.

- Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B considers public trash cans and collection of trash from these cans as essential public services. The Commission reiterates its call for efforts to improve and expand public trash cans and trash collection services, including around transit stops, schools, libraries, recreation centers, playgrounds, and other public facilities. The Commission strongly opposes the removal of public trash cans as removal does not serve the stated end of reducing litter, but rather deprives the community of a needed service. Furthermore, the removal of public trash cans due to so-called “abuse” or “misuse” by placing household trash in public cans merely shifts dumping to even less preferable locations. At root, placing trash in a trash can is preferable to dumping in other private or public spaces. The District Department of Public Works may have a preference for household trash to be placed in household collection receptacles and can work toward that goal, but punishing whole communities for the act of placing trash in a trash can is misinformed and undermines the District’s larger goals.
- While Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B is appreciative of efforts to require notice to Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners for the removal of any public trash cans, the Commission calls for a stronger collection protocol that renders removal unnecessary and a higher and more detailed standard to justify removal of a public trash can, recognizing

that the notice and standard required in the current proposed legislation is easy to meet and unlikely to stop the removal of public trash cans. If public trash cans are overburdened, the Commission requests additional public trash cans and more frequent collection, and not the removal of public trash cans or reduction in collection.

RESOLVED:

- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Public Works to install or reinstall public trash cans at the locations mentioned in this Resolution within Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B's boundaries.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Public Works to determine the full scope of removal of public trash cans, including through comparing collection routes if they do not hold records of removals, and institute a process to track and publicly share the locations of public trash cans, removals and justifications for removals, and installations, and calls on the DC Council to exercise sufficient oversight to ensure this information is available to the public and informs action on trash and recycling collection.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the District Department of Public Works to provide publicly any tours, assessments, reports or other documents it has created to determine if service adjustments are necessary for public trash cans throughout the District, as mentioned to the Commission by the Department around April 2021.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B expresses support for [B25-0132](#), Requirement to Provide Notice of Intent to Remove Public Litter Containers Amendment Act of 2023 and [B25-0131](#), Containing Litter and Ensuring Adequate Neighborhood Collections Amendment Act of 2023, but also calls on the DC Council to revise the former to include stronger standards for the baseline position that removing public trash cans worsens litter, deprives the community of a public service, and is often reflective of another problem in need of attention, and calls on the DC Council, in coordination with the Executive and the District Department of Public Works, to work toward expanding public trash, recycling, and composting services to include residential buildings with 4+ units.
- That Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on the DC Council, including the Committee on Public Works and Operations, to exercise oversight, including determining if the District Department of Public Works has sufficient staff and resources to provide fulsome trash collection services across the District.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Commission designates Commissioner Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02, Commissioner Kevin Gilligan, ANC 4B05, Commissioner Alison Brooks, ANC 4B08, and Commissioner Evan Yeats, ANC 4B04, to represent the Commission in all matters relating to this Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, in the event the designated representative Commissioners cannot carry out their representative duties for any reason, the Commission authorizes the Chair to designate another Commissioner 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 _ members was present) on March 27, 2023, by a vote of _ yes, _ no, _ abstentions.