



Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

By Electronic Mail

February 26, 2024

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

RE: Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B Fiscal Year 2025 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 26, 2024, meeting voted with _ Yeas, _ Nays, and _ Abstentions to send this letter regarding the Commission’s housing justice priorities for the Fiscal Year 2025 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 February 27, 2023, [letter](#) to Mayor Bowser regarding the Fiscal Year 2024 budget; the Commission’s April 25, 2022, [letter](#) to the DC Council regarding the Fiscal Year 2023 budget; the Commission’s March 22, 2021, [letter](#) to Mayor Bowser regarding the Fiscal Year 2022 budget; 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 several discussions with Councilmembers, agency representatives, service providers, accountability reporters, and others regarding housing justice needs and the DC budget.

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. Yet, last year [at least 90 people died in DC without the dignity of a home](#), two-thirds of whom had housing vouchers and were waiting to move into housing. Despite last minute infusions of additional money, the District’s [emergency rental assistance program regularly and repeatedly runs out of funding](#), as

does the [home ownership assistance program](#). [More than one in ten DC residents are housing insecure](#), and [a growing share of DC renters spend at least half their income on rent](#).

“[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. To achieve a truly equitable budget, the Commission recommends expansion of the functions of the Mayor’s Office of Racial Equity and the Council Office of Racial Equity to include assessments of the budget.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B calls on Mayor Bowser to include the following in her proposed Fiscal Year 2025 budget for the District of Columbia to ensure all District residents have safe, stable, and secure housing:

- continue to invest in Black homeownership (see, e.g., [Black Homeownership Fund](#)) and ensure funding to meet need for the [Home Purchase Assistance Program](#) (which [ran out of funds on January 11, 2023](#), just four months into the fiscal year), which the [Black Homeownership Strikeforce](#) identified as the District’s main tool for tackling the racial homeownership gap;
- continue to expand [home repair programs with an equity lens](#); assess and expand funding for 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 deductions or reduction in taxes based on age and income thresholds](#); and expand funding for [Senior Villages](#), which helps seniors age in place;
- 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](#);
- develop a plan to fully fund tenant-based local housing vouchers for the [at least 12,921 individuals on the DC Housing Authority waitlist](#) (as of February 1, 2023), 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;
- assess the [lack of funding for affordable housing preservation projects](#) and fund the Affordable Housing Preservation Fund with at least [\\$5 million](#) in flexible capital to cover carrying costs and sustain current preservation projects as they secure permanent

financing, and invest at least [\\$30 million](#) in the First Right to Purchase 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 many other projects, see, e.g., [Resolution 4B-23-0901](#), Supporting Application for a Planned Unit Development for Elm Gardens, 7050 Eastern Avenue, NW (ZC Case #23-19) (Sept. 26, 2023) (supporting nearly all affordable, zero displacement Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act proposal);

- expand funding to every extent possible and in consideration of the full need and provide recurring funding for public housing repairs in light of [persistent neglect and failed management and oversight](#), see [Resolution 4B-20-0603](#), Supporting Funding in FY2021 for Public Housing Repairs (June 22, 2020); [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);
- adequately fund the Emergency Rental Assistance Program by at least \$100 million and [provide sustained funding to meet need](#) (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 [high demand and exhaustion of funding](#), as well as [technical challenges with the Program](#), see, e.g., [Resolution 4B-23-0303](#), Calling on the Executive to Address Gap in Emergency Rental Assistance Program Funding (Mar. 27, 2023) (“ERAP is consistently underfunded, regularly running out of money before the end of the fiscal year – even before the COVID-19 public health emergency and pandemic. The District has repeatedly cut funding to this program, knowing it is essential to prevent evictions.”);
- fully fund [B25-0048, the Proactive Inspection Program Act of 2023](#), which will establish a tiered proactive inspection program for multifamily rental housing properties to better ensure safe and healthy housing for District residents through regular housing inspections, see generally [Resolution 4B-24-0101](#), Supporting and Providing Feedback on B25-0574, the Do Right by DC Tenants Amendment Act of 2023 (Jan. 22, 2024);
- expand funding for the District Office of the Tenant Advocate, which provides essential services to tenants regarding their rights and preventing evictions, including [needed staffing](#) to fulfill the Office’s important mission;
- invest at least \$155.18 million in an effort to fully meet need and [to end chronic and family homelessness](#), including:
 - [\\$22.8 million](#) for permanent supportive housing for 580 families;
 - [\\$36.6 million](#) for permanent supportive housing for 1,260 individuals;

- [funding for one-time move-in expenses for residents receiving a permanent supportive housing voucher](#) (things like transportation to view units, purchase household items, and pay for vital documents);
- \$70.75 million for Targeted Affordable Housing to assist 2,326 families who have been in permanent supportive housing and no longer need intensive services;
- \$17.33 million for Local Rent Supplement Program tenant vouchers for 800 households;
- \$1.3 million for Local Rent Supplement Program vouchers for 60 returning citizens; and
- 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 to meet need; and
- fully fund housing needs for LGBTQ+ residents, including through additional dedicated [housing vouchers](#) and related supportive services;

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 for additional outreach, prevention, and diversion of homelessness, including:
 - assess and coordinate among the District Department of Human Services and service providers regarding funding needed to meet [staffing and capacity](#) for the Department to [more swiftly](#) implement efforts to end chronic homelessness by connecting and placing unhoused residents in housing;
 - invest [\\$6.4 million](#) to fully restore (\$3.5 million) and expand (\$2.9 million) outreach capacity via the Coordinated Street Outreach Network, including encampment focused outreach in Wards 6, 7, and 8 and in specific neighborhoods such as U Street and Georgia Avenue;
 - invest [\\$1.75 million](#) in [Project Reconnect](#), a shelter diversion and rapid-exit program for unaccompanied adults experiencing homelessness; and
 - maintain [\\$1 million](#) for [DC Flex](#), a program that provides flexible funds for individuals to spend on rent;
- ensure dignified shelter for those in need, including the following:
 - ensure adequate non-congregate shelter for residents experiencing homelessness by investing [\\$13.275 million](#) to operate two non-congregate shelter sites (the Aston and 25 E);
 - invest [\\$8.4 million](#) to continue to offer 24-hour shelter access and related necessary staffing, a notable challenge in light of the [phasing out of the PEP-V program and the loss of over 600 shelter beds](#); and

- provide [funding for 150 medical respite beds](#) District-wide to allow individuals experiencing homelessness the opportunity to rest in a safe environment while accessing medical care and other supportive services;
- continue to evaluate [gaps in federal funding to support homeless students](#), while recognizing [progress made in using federal vouchers to help foster youth find stable housing](#), and provide local funding to ensure homeless youth have sufficient resources and access to public education, given the [urgency](#) of supporting the [8,300 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 13 percent during school year 2021-2022.

Historically, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has supported efforts to raise revenue to fund important housing needs, including a previous tax increase on individual residents earning more than \$250,000 per year to fund [2,400 additional housing vouchers](#). See, e.g., [Supplemental Letter](#) re Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Priorities (June 28, 2021) (calling for “fulsome and sustained local funding to end chronic homelessness and expand deeply affordable housing – including by increasing taxes on the District’s highest earners, who have been economically stable during the public health emergency, have benefitted from large federal tax cuts, pay lower taxes than middle-income earners, and are best able to shoulder tax increases needed to fund basic human needs – in light of broad support among District residents and uncertain continued federal funding, as well as to ensure an equitable budget that takes every opportunity to correct for racial and other structural disparities and demonstrates a commitment to continuation of these essential programs.”). The Commission was heartened to learn about [progress made toward connecting these vouchers to people who need them](#), but highlights continued efforts are necessary to ensure the system is more efficient and less burdensome, including through necessary staffing and improved government bureaucracy. The Commission supports additional efforts to raise revenue to meet housing needs, including [adopting a higher marginal property tax rate for single family homes valued over \\$1.5 million](#).

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B recognizes some improvements in the oversight and implementation of programs to meet housing needs, including [increased utilization of federal vouchers to help foster youth find stable housing](#) and the requirement that [Emergency Rental Assistance Program funding](#) be used for its intended purpose, but notes continued challenges with regard to how even adequately funded housing programs and services are implemented. Addressing these challenges allows budget funding to be used as efficiently as possible. The Commission calls for legislative and oversight efforts that further support the District’s and the Commission’s affordable housing goals to ensure safe, stable, and secure housing for District residents:

- support the DC Council in approving and fund the Rapid Re-Housing Reform Amendment Act (soon to be reintroduced), 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, as well as plan to transition away from rapid rehousing to permanent supportive housing;

- implement additional 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 beyond those included in the Housing Production Trust Fund Accountability and Transparency Emergency Amendment Act of 2022 (approved as a subtitle to [B24-0845](#), the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Support Act), which [as of February 2023 had resulted in zero reports](#), in part through additional accountability measures like requiring a waiver request if the agency is unable to meet the statutory affordability requirements, see [B24-0459](#), the Housing Production Trust Fund Transparency Amendment Act of 2021; requiring post-completion reports on projects; requiring publication of information about applications that meet all the requirements of but do not receive Housing Production Trust Fund awards; and requiring publication about Fund awardees in a public database;
- work diligently to ensure the DC Housing Authority is a leader in the field by critically and comprehensively assessing 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, as well as develop a plan to meet need for all 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](#);
- engage meaningfully with proposed legislation regarding social housing ([B25-0191, the Green New Deal for Housing Amendment Act of 2023](#)) and an [existing social housing program in Montgomery County, Maryland](#), as a possible means to address the District's affordable housing needs through [publicly-owned, mixed-income, amenity rich housing](#), see [Resolution 4B-22-1011](#), Supporting and Providing Recommendations on B24-0802, Green New Deal for Housing Amendment Act of 2022 (Oct. 24, 2022) ("The Commission encourages consideration and comparison of existing social housing models in determining best practices regarding affordability metrics."); [Resolution 4B-20-0104](#), Providing Feedback on Proposed Changes to the Comprehensive Plan (Jan. 27, 2020) ("The Commission believes the Comprehensive Plan should include a discussion of social housing as a mechanism to address the affordable housing crisis.").
- address the known practice of [marketing buildings to participants in the Housing Choice Voucher Program or other housing subsidy programs](#), where, because of local and federal regulations (as well as poor management on the part of DC agencies), property owners can command double or triple what they would otherwise through exercising careful oversight of the rent reasonableness standard, [ensuring voucher units are](#)

[subject to rent control](#), and [enhancing inspections and oversight of voucher-based developments](#). This is an issue that has directly impacted Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, including through a proposed development by Petra Development, see generally [Letter of Inquiry](#): Questions for Petra Development regarding Affordable Housing Commitments for Proposed Development at 6928 Maple Street, NW (Nov. 22, 2021);

- ensure that appointments to independent agencies and boards (such as the Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Adjustment, and the Historic Preservation Review Board) are subject to a rigorous vetting and confirmation process to ensure that they are well-prepared to meet our city's ambitious housing and affordable housing goals in all parts of our communities; and
- engage in meaningful efforts to hold property owners accountable regarding housing conditions by limiting their ability to create new, single-purpose limited liability corporations with each building acquisition without transparency and traceability, including through improvements to [B22-0905](#), the Real Estate LLC Transparency Amendment Act of 2018 (included in [the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs Omnibus Amendment Act of 2018](#)) regarding tracking points of contact and contact information, see [Resolution 4B-24-0101](#), Supporting and Providing Feedback on B25-0574, the Do Right by DC Tenants Amendment Act of 2023 (Jan. 22, 2024).

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, and the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B03, Zurick T. Smith, 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
Zurick T. Smith, ANC 4B03 Commissioner

cc: Glen Lee, Chief Financial Officer
Kevin Donahue, City Administrator
Dr. Amber Hewitt, Chief Equity Officer

Jennifer Budoff, Budget Director, DC Council
Nami Mody, Director, DC Council's Office of Racial Equity

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

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