



## COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING  
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

**KENYAN R. McDUFFIE**  
Councilmember, Ward 5  
Chair Pro Tempore  
Chair, Committee on Business and  
Economic Development

**Committee Member**  
Transportation and the Environment  
Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs  
Housing and Executive Administration

March 1, 2022

The Honorable Muriel Bowser, Mayor  
Government of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20004

### ***Re: Ward 5 Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Priorities***

Dear Mayor Bowser:

As you prepare to transmit the proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Budget and Financial Plan to the Council of the District of Columbia, I am writing to highlight several priorities that I request you consider funding on behalf of Ward 5 residents.

Like last year, these priorities are driven by two key concerns: First, ensuring that the District's COVID-19 recovery response continues to address the immediate needs of our residents and economy; and second, ensuring that we continue to advance a racial equity agenda that dismantles the structural inequities that have long impacted our city's success and the strength of our residents.

The District's December 2021 numbers revealed a \$576 million budget surplus in Fiscal Year 2021 and approximately \$2 billion over the four-year financial plan. Moreover, the February 2022 revenue estimate, released yesterday, revised Fiscal Year 2022 revenue upward by an additional \$148 million, and the forecast for the Fiscal Year 2022-2025 financial plan has also been revised upward, by just over \$600 million. Yet, while the District's revenues are growing, COVID-19 continues to impacting our low wage workers and the industries that employ them. To ensure an equitable recovery, we must be more efficient and effective with our funding, while still addressing critical needs.

### **COVID 19 / Federal Relief Funding Priorities**

Evidence shows that COVID-19's impact has been greatest on Black and minority communities, who have suffered disproportionate rates of infection, death, job loss, unemployment, housing

insecurity, and learning loss. Accordingly, I request that our remaining federal relief funds target those Black and Brown communities that have been most affected.

I ask that you prioritize the following actions when investing federal COVID-19 relief funds, and supplement them, where appropriate, with local dollars:

1. Rent, mortgage, and utilities arrears assistance for tenants, homeowners, and small landlords
2. Financial support for excluded workers and non brick-and-mortar businesses
3. Enhanced virtual and in-person mental health support for adults and school-aged youth
4. Workforce development (re)training for hospitality and retail employees
5. Targeted educational investments to address impacts of learning loss
6. Increased investment in the promotion of the District as a destination to encourage tourism

### **Racial Equity and Community Investment**

The balance of my request focuses on strategies to advance a sustained racial equity agenda. The Fiscal Year 2023 (“FY23”) budget must build on the groundwork laid last year by creating opportunities for wealth creation, addressing the ongoing displacement of longtime residents and businesses, and providing all D.C. residents with strong and safe communities.

To do so, we must move forward with new ideas that disrupt the institutions and practices that have reinforced inequity in our city. The following is a list, by category, of Ward 5 budget priorities and recommended funding amounts.

• <b>Racial Wealth Gap</b>	<b>\$30M</b>
• <b>Affordable Housing and Anti-Displacement</b>	<b>\$35M</b>
• <b>Legacy and Small Business Development</b>	<b>\$25M</b>
• <b>Education</b>	<b>\$25M</b>
• <b>Public Safety and Community Investments</b>	<b>\$60M</b>
• <b>Transportation and Infrastructure</b>	<b>\$53M</b>
• <b>Arts and Culture</b>	<b>\$ 3M</b>

#### ***I. RACIAL WEALTH GAP (\$30M)***

In the District of Columbia, the median wealth of White households (\$284,000) is 81 times that of the median wealth of Black households (\$3,500). This disparity is the result of long-standing systems and practices that perpetuate inequity, and it must be address. We simply cannot afford to wait on delivering targeted investments in lower-income communities and communities of color to seed their growth, success, and prosperity.

Now, more than ever, the District must make key investments to eliminate the wealth gap between residents of color and their peers.

Accordingly, I ask that you:

1. Invest \$20M in the Commercial Acquisition Fund, which was established in last year's Budget Support Act to provide down payment assistance grants to eligible resident-owned, small businesses looking to maintain and expand their operations to a physical space in the District.
2. Commit \$10M to the establishment of a legacy business assistance program, which would provide technical assistance on the commercial lease renewal process and financial assistance to landlords and eligible legacy businesses. The program would also make landlords and certain legacy businesses eligible to receive real property tax abatements.

## ***II. AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND ANTI-DISPLACEMENT (\$35M)***

Investing in affordable housing remains central to building a more inclusive city. These investments must also ensure that Washingtonians have opportunities to remain in the city, instead of being displaced.

Accordingly, I ask that you:

1. Invest \$25M to establish a new down payment assistance program – that can be used in combination with the Home Purchase Assistance Program – to target graduates of D.C. public high schools or a vocational programs, such as the D.C. Infrastructure Academy. This will help to address the lack of ownership opportunities and continued displacement of long-term District residents.
2. Commit \$10M in additional funding to DHCD's Safe and Healthy Homes Programs, as follows:
  - \$4M to expand the Single-Family Residential Rehab Program to make basement waterproofing, mold remediation, and sump pump installation and/or repair eligible activities under this Program, and
  - \$6M to expand the Safe at Home Program to include additional home repairs to address code violations, updates to HVAC and other systems, and other similar repairs to ensure that District seniors can comfortably age in place.

## ***III. LEGACY AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (\$25M)***

Prior to COVID-19, tens of thousands of District residents were forced to leave the city due to gentrification and its attendant impact. Several local businesses, including Cheers at the Big

Chair, Bazaar Spices, and others closed as a result. Despite the relief granted last year, countless other small businesses are struggling to stay afloat.

Because the soul and success of our communities rely, in part, to thriving small businesses, I ask that you:

1. Prioritize the completion of the Disparity Study to lay the ground work for establishing a strong, comprehensive, Minority or Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) program for the District of Columbia.
2. Invest \$15M in a Streetscape Business Development Fund for small businesses to mitigate the myriad challenges posed by the [Northeast Boundary Tunnel Project](#) and other District-sponsored, long-term capital infrastructure projects.
3. Invest \$5M in the Equitable Impact Assistance Fund, initiated in the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Support Act to support resident-owned, economically disadvantaged, and/or women-owned business enterprises.
4. Invest \$5M in the CDFI/MDI Fund, created in last year's Budget Support Act. The fund provides critical funding to District-based CDFIs and MDIs that lend to local small business enterprises, particularly those owned by women and entrepreneurs of color. The fund supports the institutions' loan capital, equity, loan loss pool, and guarantee pool.

#### ***IV. EDUCATION (\$25M)***

The loss of in-person learning and after-school programming has compromised the engagement experience for our children in our school system. We must invest in increasing the likelihood of achieving greater academic success, improved engagement in school, and more positive health outcomes for more of our students. This is done in part by continuing the engagement experience beyond traditional school hours and physical locations.

I am requesting that you:

1. Identify \$25M for "Out of School Time" (OST) programs to ensure that families across DC - particularly low-income families - have more access to high-quality OST programs.

#### ***V. PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS (\$60M)***

The death of innocent youth traversing our city streets and the rise of senseless crime across our city this past year reinforces the need to invest more in street-level and community-based initiatives.

Accordingly, I ask that you:

1. Commit \$25M in grant funds for community-based programs that provide mentoring, conflict resolution, mental health, and workforce readiness training to residents of Wards 5, 7, and 8. Grantees must be based in the aforementioned Wards or have at least two years of proven experience working in the Wards.
2. Invest \$25M in funding for community-based organizations that support youth development.
3. Commit \$10M toward paid apprenticeships and other training for critical industries such as IT security, HVAC, electrical, and other in-demand jobs.
4. Expedite the installation of raised crosswalks at schools, libraries, and recreation centers throughout Ward 5 in accordance with the Safe Routes to School Act and enhance traffic safety measures near these campuses.
5. Invest in measures to better enforce commercial truck traffic laws in residential communities to include additional automated truck cameras and additional MPD SOD officers.

#### ***VI. TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE (\$53M)***

Chief among the hundreds of resident requests captured thus far in our Ward 5 budget survey was a greater investment in infrastructure to improve connectivity, pedestrian safety, and streetscaping.

Therefore, I ask that you:

1. Dedicate \$50M in capital funds for the development of a second entrance to the NoMa Gallaudet Metro station.
2. Commit \$1M toward improvements to the triangle park at North Capitol Street and Florida Avenue, N.E., to include the elimination of the slip lane from North Capitol Street (southbound) onto Florida Avenue (westbound).
3. Commit \$1M toward a public restroom pilot program that would install and maintain a restroom at each of the following locations:
  - North Capitol Street and Florida Avenue, N.E.
  - Starburst Plaza intersection: Benning Road, Bladensburg Road, 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Maryland Avenue, and H Street, N.E.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> and Rhode Island Avenue, N.E.
  - Lewis Crowe Park (1821 Capitol Avenue, N.E.)

4. Invest \$500,000 to study and reconfigure 1300 Brentwood Road, N.E., due to the public safety issues this street poses. The study should determine what it would take to end and/or limit private vehicular traffic along this portion of Brentwood Road.
5. Invest \$500,000 in streetscape and beautification enhancements along the run of Benning Road, N.E. from 26<sup>th</sup> Street to Bladensburg Road, N.E.
6. Expedite the installation of an 8<sup>th</sup> Street, N.E. Metropolitan Branch Trail connector.

#### ***VII. ARTS AND CULTURE (\$3M)***

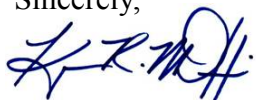
Continued investment in the local Go-Go economy fosters both community and economic development by providing opportunities to enhance equitable economic growth and increased workforce opportunities.

To that end, I renew my request from last year and ask that you:

1. Provide \$1M in additional COVID relief funds to Go-Go music artist and industry workers.
2. Invest \$1M to sponsor performance opportunities for Go-Go artists through District government media outlets such as the Office of Cable Television Music Film and Entertainment.
3. Dedicated \$750,000 in business development grants to support capacity building among Go-Go enterprises for expenses to include administrative support, operating expenses, website development, merchandising, app/website development, and other technical assistance.
4. Invest \$250,000 to support youth and young adult programming that helps to launch new Go-Go bands, produce Go-Go music, and sponsor live performances.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss the budget requests and appreciate your thoughtful consideration of each of them. Feel free to contact me or my Committee Director, Alicia DiFazio, at [adifazio@dccouncil.us](mailto:adifazio@dccouncil.us) with any questions.

Sincerely,



Kenyan R. McDuffie