



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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Ward 5 Councilmember
Chair, Committee on Youth Affairs

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Health
Human Services
Transportation and the Environment

March 09, 2026

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Mayor Bowser,

It is my privilege to submit recommendations on behalf of Ward 5's residents and businesses for inclusion in your fiscal year 2027 budget submissions. These recommendations reflect direct engagement with Ward 5 neighbors at my annual budget forum, routine conversations my office has with residents, input from Ward 5's advisory neighborhood commissions and civic associations, and conversations with District agencies, institutions, and businesses.

I recognize that the District faces unique financial headwinds, requiring careful examination of spending and, in some cases, difficult decisions about reducing or restructuring programming. At the same time, the recommendations included in this letter reflect a balanced and thoughtful approach: they aim to address rising poverty and the financial pressures many residents experience in an increasingly unaffordable city, while still maintaining fiscal discipline and controlling overall spending.

Strengthening investments in programs that support families and seniors can also help grow the local economy by raising the economic floor for households and activating commercial corridors such as Rhode Island Avenue in Ward 5, spurring economic activity for neighborhood businesses. Regarding inevitable budget reductions, I respectfully request that you communicate to residents why certain programs, such as the Childcare Subsidy, are being targeted for cuts over others and what factors informed these decisions. Providing this context will enhance transparency in the budget process and assist the Council as we review and deliberate on the proposed budget.

Regarding the contingency list that the Council created last year as part of the FY26 budget, it is my hope that your team will engage the Council earnestly on how those funds will be allocated in light of current circumstances. The spirit of the items on that list was to extend critical lifelines to residents, particularly through childcare, healthcare, and housing support wherever possible. In keeping with this spirit, I appreciate your consideration of these recommendations and look forward to partnering with you this budget cycle to deliver a fair and balanced budget to our constituents:

Expand the District’s anti-poverty investments. The District continues to be a city of haves and have-nots. While private sector earnings and passive wealth generation make the District home to some of the wealthiest residents in the country, many neighbors face high unemployment and are stuck in cycles of inter-generational poverty. While we need to ensure the services provided by the District are financially sustainable, we should not balance the budget on the backs of the District’s most vulnerable residents. Therefore, I recommend that you:

- ✓ **Implement the District Child Tax Credit.** As you know, establishing a District child tax credit has been one of my top priorities since joining the Council. Last fall, the Council voted to establish in tax year 2026 a fully refundable child tax credit of up to \$1,000 for all children under 18, with certain income restrictions. When paired with an increased match to the Earned Income Tax Credit (that was implemented in tax year 2025), the District Child Tax Credit is projected to reduce child poverty in the District by approximately 20%.¹ Without these policies, District child poverty rates are likely to continue climbing and will match or exceed pre-pandemic child poverty rates—with the Black child poverty rate approaching an unconscionable 50 percent.²
- ✓ **Preserve the Child Care Subsidy Program.** While I am aware that you and your team are looking at ways to control costs in the childcare subsidy program, I also know that demand for this enormously successful program also exceeds current capacity. The program currently makes aftercare and early childhood education affordable for roughly 7,300 children each year, drastically reducing childcare costs from as much as 32% of a family’s income to less than 5%. The availability of affordable childcare has a direct and positive impact on the District’s economy because it ensures that parents continue to work in the years prior to their children entering the school system. While I appreciate that creating a waitlist will allow the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) to control enrollment in the program (and accompanying costs to the District), we must be clear-eyed that reducing subsidies to childcare centers will significantly impair their ability to operate and negatively impact children and families.
- ✓ **Strike time limits on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) support and ramp up support for District residents to meet new federal work requirements.** In the FY 26 budget, you proposed—and the council approved—a step down in benefits for District residents who have received them for more than 60 months beginning in FY 27. Because the planned FY 27 TANF step-down could reduce benefits for roughly 4,100 families—about 36 percent of the District’s caseload—while doing little to address structural barriers to employment, the policy risks deepening child poverty without improving economic mobility and should be reconsidered.

Offset spending increases by cutting wasteful District programs and increasing the efficiency of the District’s existing spending. I am mindful that revenue projections are likely

¹ Maria Manansala, DC Tax Credits for Households with Low Incomes Will Reduce Child Poverty by One-Fifth, *D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute*, Dec. 18, 2025, available at <https://www.dcfpi.org/all/dc-tax-credits-for-households-with-low-incomes-will-reduce-child-poverty-by-one-fifth/>.

² Connor Zielinski, DC Child Poverty Back to Extreme Level After Short-Lived Progress, *D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute*, Feb. 19, 2026, available at <https://www.dcfpi.org/all/dc-child-poverty-back-to-extreme-level-after-short-lived-progress/>.

to remain flat at a time when many government costs are increasing. I also recommend the following steps, which would free up hundreds of millions of dollars in the upcoming budget:

- ✓ **Institute overspending controls and incentives in eight agencies.** In November 2025, the D.C. Auditor published a report analyzing twenty years of overspending by District agencies, which totaled more than \$1 billion.³ The report identified eight agencies that have spent more than budgeted in 13 of the 20 fiscal years from 2005 to 2024: District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), the Department of Public Works (DPW), Fire and Emergency Medical Services (FEMS), the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the Department of General Services (DGS), the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), and the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED). I recommend that you establish overspending controls at each of these agencies that include compensation penalties and rewards for agency management responsible.
- ✓ **Pause agency fleet purchases and conduct a government-wide audit of vehicle needs.** In recent years, one of several initiatives undertaken by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to reduce wasteful spending was to conduct an audit of its non-revenue vehicle fleet to determine whether fleet investments are actually necessary.⁴ That audit paved the way for WMATA to reduce its fleet by 10% overall in FY 23 and FY 24. Numerous agencies across the District have significant annual capital expenses for fleet replacement, yet there appears to be little demonstration of the need for these significant investments—especially since the shelf life of most vehicles has been extended in recent years.
- ✓ **Reduce the Events DC budget by \$68.7 million or require the organization to return that amount to the District to account for incorrect calculations in FY 2024.** As detailed by the D.C. Auditor in an October 8, 2025 report, Events DC is required by D.C. Official Code § 10-1202.13 to transfer excess cash to the District at the end of each fiscal year per. However, in FY 2024, Events DC failed to correctly calculate the excess cash owed to the District and paid \$17.7 million when it owed \$86.4 million, a gap of \$68.7 million.⁵ Accordingly, the District should withhold \$68.7 million this budget cycle that should be withheld this budget cycle.
- ✓ **Eliminate overbudgeting for debt service.** In recent years, the OCFO has repeatedly required the Mayor and Council to overbudget for debt service payments, even though the amounts owed by the District are eminently predictable. For example, in FY 25, the District budgeted \$1,229,363,000 in local funds but only spent \$1,052,666,000—a

³ Twenty Years of D.C. Agency Overspending, *District of Columbia Auditor*, Nov. 20, 2025, available at <https://dcauditor.wpenginpowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Agency.Overspending.DataBrief.11.20.25.pdf>.

⁴ Review of WMATA's Non-Revenue Vehicle Program, *WMATA Office of the Inspector General*, Jan. 23, 2023, available at https://wmataoig.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Review-of-WMATAs-Non-Revenue-Vehicle-Program-IG-Final_redacted.pdf.

⁵ Events DC Wrongly Calculated "Excess Cash," Owes D.C. \$68.7 Million, *District of Columbia Auditor*, October 8, 2025, available at https://dcauditor.wpenginpowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/EventsDC.Excess.Cash_.10.8.25.pdf.

variance of \$176.7 million.⁶ In FY 24, the variance was \$103.8 million.⁷ At a time when District residents are struggling, we simply cannot afford to leave this money on the table when crucial programs are at risk of being cut.

- ✓ **Raise the tipping fee for solid waste to match regional rates.** DPW currently charges \$70.62 for each ton of solid waste, a rate that has not been increased since 2021.⁸ Baltimore City and County, Maryland recently increased their rates to \$127.50/ton and \$125.00/ton,⁹ while Prince George’s County, Maryland, has already implemented an increase to \$85/ton and is considering an increase to \$90/ton.¹⁰ Higher tipping fees will have the benefit of incentivizing waste reduction and recycling.
- ✓ **Adopt D.C. Auditor’s recommendations to improve MPD staffing and control costs.** While I appreciate the work of our police force and the challenges presented by major events and first amendment activities, the Auditor has highlighted several adjustments that MPD can and should make to better align agency resources with needs. To prevent high overtime use during a prolonged period of recruitment challenges, MPD should implement staffing recommendations in the D.C. Auditor’s 2024 report, including: hiring more professional civilian staff to handle administrative tasks; assigning more officers to the midnight shift; reducing overnight patrols; and modernizing MPD’s time and attendance system to improve the tracking of overtime use.¹¹
- ✓ **Establish a permanent revenue and expenditure commission.** I previously sought and will continue to call for the establishment of a permanent revenue and expenditure commission so that both the Mayor and the Council can engage in more sustained efforts to control spending and bring ground tax policies in more rigorous analysis.¹² A permanent revenue and expenditure commission would serve as an expert standing body to provide recommendations to the Mayor and Council on revisions to the District’s tax code and other significant non-tax revenue sources; revisions to agency operations, contracts, and capital investments that could achieve existing results or policy objectives with reduced expenditures; and revisions to the District’s contracting and procurement

⁶ District of Columbia Annual Comprehensive Financial Report 2025, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Jan. 23, 2026, available at https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/page_content/attachments/FY%202025%20ACFR%20021826_AD%20Compliant.pdf#page=212.

⁷ District of Columbia Annual Comprehensive Financial Report 2024, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Jan. 24, 2026, available at https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/FY%202024%20DC%20Annual%20Report_Full%20Report_reduced%20size.pdf#page=213.

⁸ 21 DCMR § 720.

⁹ Board of Estimates Approves First Landfill Tipping Fee Increase in 32 Years, City of Baltimore, Oct. 3, 2025, available at <https://www.baltimorecity.gov/publicworks/news-media/board-estimates-approves-first-landfill-tipping-fee>.

¹⁰ Memorandum re Resource Recovery Division Tipping Fees for Fiscal Year 2025, Prince George’s County Government Department of the Environment, Sept. 16, 2024, available at https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/default/files/media-document/Tipping%20Fees%20for%20FY2025_%20FINAL.pdf.

¹¹ MPD Needs Improved Data Analysis, Targeted Deployment, and More Detectives, District of Columbia Auditor, September 12, 2024, available at <https://dcauditor.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/MPD.Staffing.Report.9.12.24.pdf>.

¹² Parker Amendment to B26-0265 - Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Support Act of 2025, available at <https://lims.dccouncil.gov/downloads/LIMS/57846/Meeting3/Amendment/B26-0265-Amendment6.pdf?Id=218152>.

processes that could improve the value and longevity of District assets and services or better protect the District from fraud, waste, and abuse by contractors.

Ensure that long-budgeted capital investments in Ward 5’s public libraries and recreation centers have sufficient funds to meet community needs.

- ✓ **Ward 5 residents and community leaders have expressed deep misgivings about the current Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) plans for the Langdon Recreation Center and Harry Thomas Recreation Center modernizations.** In both cases, community engagement on the most important aspects of the project—namely to project goals and scope—has been mixed, and both projects risk delivering assets that will not adequately serve their respective communities for the next 30 years. I ask for an additional \$18 million in capital dollars to ensure there are sufficient funds to include gymnasium space at Langdon and an additional \$5 million to make holistic improvements to the campus that includes Harry Thomas and adjacent District assets, including Langley Elementary School, McKinley Tech High School, McKinley Middle School, the former Emery Elementary School, and the Emery Shelter.
- ✓ **Add additional construction funds for the new Edgewood/Eckington branch library in FY 2029.** Inflation and other market forces have increased the costs of delivering a new branch library in Eckington and Edgewood. The project will need additional capital funds to proceed, but those dollars could be allocated in FY 2029. ANC 5F and neighbors in Edgewood in Eckington continue to be deeply invested in this project, and I recommend that we move forward with the investment.¹³
- ✓ **The HVAC system at Luke C. Moore High School is in need of significant upgrades and should be prioritized for a major capital project in the financial plan.** The current system is poorly designed and insufficient for the space it covers, resulting in recurring water damage to the school’s interior due to buildup of condensation and leaks from the main HVAC components. The problems encountered with the system are so severe that hardworking custodial staff have requested transfer and demotion rather than having responsibility for an untenable situation.
- ✓ **Maintain funding for an East entrance to the NoMa-Gallaudet WMATA Metrorail station.** NoMa-Gallaudet Metro Station set an all-time ridership record of 31,200 trips on February 11, 2026, making it the sixth-most visited WMATA rail station.¹⁴ I recommend that you preserve funding in the capital plan to construct an east metro entrance at the station to better serve Ward 5’s Union Market, one of the District’s most dynamic retail scenes and a hub for mixed use development.
- ✓ **Add the New York Avenue Recreation Center to the Capital Plan.** DPR’s 2023 Ready2Play report proposes significant investments in the New York Avenue Recreation Center, including a dog park, community garden, new exercise equipment, and a fitness loop. The small center and adjacent playground are also in dire need of renovation and rehabilitation. Accordingly, I recommend that you add the New York Avenue Recreation

¹³ Resolution to Request Continued Budget Support for the Eckington/Edgewood Library, *ANC 5F*, Feb. 17, 2026, available at https://resolutions.anc.dc.gov/AttachmentsFiles/46/_ANC5F_26_078_Resolution_to_Request_Continued_Budget_Support_for_the_Eckington_Edgewood_Library_TM_20260219102940AM.pdf.

¹⁴ <https://x.com/wmata/status/2022088246025760940>.

Center to the out years of the Capital Plan to ensure that this important facility is in line for future improvements.

- ✓ **Improve maintenance at Trinidad Recreation Center and add shade structures to Ward 5 recreation centers, especially at Harry Thomas, Edgewood, and Brentwood.** Residents of Trinidad have complained about severe maintenance issues at Trinidad Recreation Center, a relatively new facility. Residents have also highlighted the need to add shade structures at several Ward 5 facilities that currently lack sufficient shade, which significantly impacts use of recreation centers during the summer months.

Expand opportunities for Ward 5 and District businesses.

- ✓ **Catalyze neighborhood-facing development in Ivy City and along Rhode Island Avenue.** I am grateful for your administration’s engagement to facilitate neighborhood-facing development in Ivy City and along Rhode Island Avenue—two parts of Ward 5 that have faced economic headwinds since the COVID-19 pandemic. I look forward to working with you using all of the tools available—including upcoming changes to the Comprehensive Plan, DMPED grants, District Department of Transportation (DDOT) investments, and retailer recruitment—to bring renewed vision to both treasured Ward 5 neighborhoods.
- ✓ **Advance ABCA reform legislation to permit District businesses holding an alcohol license to sell other District-made goods.** Allowing businesses licensed by the Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Administration (ABCA) to sell other District-made goods would support local entrepreneurship and strengthen the city’s small business ecosystem. Expanding the scope of sales for alcohol-licensed establishments will help showcase locally produced products, increase revenue opportunities for neighborhood businesses, and further promote the District’s vibrant “Made in DC” economy.
- ✓ **Implement a vacant storefront tax to encourage property owners to make commercial spaces available to local businesses.** Neighbors continue to express frustration that many commercial property owners prefer to sit on vacant storefronts for years and wait for a lucrative—and sometimes imaginary—tenant rather than deal with local businesses that can afford less. I recommend that you modify current tax law that incentivizes such conduct by devaluing vacant commercial properties and implementing a modest tax on storefronts that have been vacant for over a year.
- ✓ **Create a restaurant stabilization fund to provide short term cash infusions to help restaurants survive hard times.** I have had several painful conversations with business owners who have had to close down in the face of short-term financial pinches despite businesses that have proven to be profitable in the long term. Accordingly, I recommend that DMPED establish a fund that can provide short term, no-interest loans to prevent cherished local institutions from going under.
- ✓ **Expand the small retailer property tax credit.** In the District, most retailers sign so-called triple net leases, which put the tenant on the hook for all property expenses including taxes, maintenance, and rent. This can create enormous cost pressures on small businesses, especially when commercial property values increase suddenly—such as when property transitions from a low valuation caused by vacancy to a high valuation due to the small business’s tenancy. Last fall, I introduced the Small Retailer Property Tax Credit Expansion Amendment Act of 2025, which would double the small retailer

property tax credit from \$10,000 to \$20,000 to offset property taxes or rent paid to landlords for property taxes,¹⁵ and I recommend that you include this provision in your budget submissions.

Continue building safer streets for all road users.

- ✓ **Complete the Taylor Street NE/Harewood bike lane project to provide a safe east-west multimodal corridor between the hearts of Ward 5 and 4.**¹⁶ As I have communicated directly to DDOT Director Kershbaum, Ward 5 residents deserve a safe east-west bike connection along Taylor and Harewood Streets NE built in the next twelve months. This corridor is home to numerous schools, and there is no meaningful alternative route for cyclists. As the project has already experienced several unacceptable delays, I am respectfully requesting that everything be done to deliver it to residents by Spring 2027 if not sooner.
- ✓ **Advance bus priority projects in Ward 5, including on Florida Avenue NE and Rhode Island Avenue NE.** These projects are falling behind schedule and, like other bus priority projects across the city, appear to face headwinds in your office and the city administrator's office. The Florida Avenue project has not seen any movement since November 2023,¹⁷ and the Rhode Island Avenue NE project has yet to be launched. These projects will especially help seniors, mobility-impaired, and low-income residents who deserve efficient transportation options, and I am calling on you to move them along expeditiously in your final year in office
- ✓ **Fund capital investments in Ward 5 High Injury Network Corridors, including Bladensburg Road, North Capitol Street, and New York Avenue.** DDOT's decision to target high injury network corridors¹⁸ for capital improvements is commendable. I recommend that you continue to fund the Bladensburg Road corridor project through construction and that you include additional funds for the North Capitol Street and New York Avenue corridor projects to improve traffic safety in Ward 5.
- ✓ **Begin designing a new trail project to connect the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) to the PG County Connector along Galloway Street and Eastern Ave NE.** Your work to expand the District's trail network is admirable, and residents are excited for the final segment of the MBT to begin construction this year. As I have every year since entering office, I am advocating for the District to begin work designing a trail connection between the MBT and the Prince George's County Connector Trail. NPS issued a finding of no significant impact for this trail facility in 2012, and it is past time for us to move forward with it.¹⁹

Invest in affordable housing.

- ✓ **Allocate at least \$80 million to the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF), with 30% set aside permanently for preservation.** The HPTF continues to serve as a major gateway for both affordable and preservation projects in the District. Ward 5 saw the

¹⁵ <https://lms.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B26-0445>.

¹⁶ <https://bikelanes.ddot.dc.gov/pages/taylor-street-ne#schedule>.

¹⁷ <https://buspriority.ddot.dc.gov/pages/floridaavenwne~c0be577218d24b8aaffb1cc8ccc55708>.

¹⁸ <https://visionzero.dc.gov/pages/overview>.

¹⁹ <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/showFile.cfm?sfid=142170&projectID=32448>.

development of Edgewood Commons, which is a completely affordable housing complex with 150 units for District residents. Your continued support of this fund ensures the sustained growth of affordable housing options in the District.

- ✓ **Maintain funding for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).** Since its inception, ERAP has served as a lifeline to our most vulnerable residents facing eviction. At the same time, ERAP was never intended to serve as a permanent means of housing support. We must prioritize housing stability, which helps us to maintain community and provides assurances for our housing providers.
- ✓ **Allocate \$1.75 million to Project Reconnect, which is a shelter diversion program designed for single adults.** Project Reconnect aids with financial assistance, including security deposits and transportation assistance which can serve to create a quicker return to stable housing. As a supporter of the work that the Department of Human Services (DHS) is doing to assist our homeless population, I recommend that you prioritize this program which represents a vital lifeline for our single residents.
- ✓ **Maintain funding for DC Flex.** The DC Flex Program served 560 applicants in last year's budget, providing a shallow subsidy for up to five years. Early reports on the pilot have been promising, and I look forward to the results revealed in the coming report that is due out next month. We must continue to find creative, cost-effective ways to support our low-income neighbors.
- ✓ **Expand the Nuisance Abatement Fund for housing code violation repairs.** The Nuisance Abatement Fund plays an important role in ensuring that nuisance properties are in compliance and that our residents are protected from the dangers inherent in living with severe housing violations. As this fund is one that essentially pays for itself, bringing in over \$7 million in revenue in FY25, expanding it allows the District to reach more residents in need.

Champion District youth.

- ✓ **Continue to scale DHS's truancy reduction pilot.** One area where you and I are aligned is in the need to streamline and ramp up our efforts to ensure our kids are attending school. The current process for truancy referrals is slow and ineffective, and I support your efforts to task the Department of Human Services with the responsibility of engaging with students and families to identify and resolve impediments to attendance.
- ✓ **Enhance recreational and behavioral health services for youth in the custody of the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS).** As Chair of the Committee on Youth Affairs, I have conducted oversight of DYRS and identified gaps services for detained youth that frustrate their rehabilitation. Behavioral health services, recreational opportunities, and other types of holistic programming are evidence-based treatments. We must ensure that all justice-involved youth are provided with a full spectrum of opportunities that reinforce good habits and productive behaviors. Accordingly, I recommend that you ensure that DYRS funding is sufficient to ensure that youth at the Youth Services Center and New Beginnings receive ample recreational and behavioral health services.
- ✓ **Bolster DYRS's reentry support.** Recidivism rates of youth who were committed to DYRS and housed at New Beginnings continue to be too high. For instance, seventy-

eight percent of youth admitted to New Beginnings in 2023 were found to have further justice system involvement after leaving New Beginnings. In the FY26 budget, I established a pilot to bolster reentry services such as educational transfer coordination, housing assistance, and transportation support. In alignment with this goal, DYRS has identified a need to establish a reentry division dedicated to transitional services, and I recommend that you budget for dedicated staff to support youth reentry into the community.

- ✓ **Support social service collaboratives serving District youth and families.** The Healthy Families Thriving Communities Collaboratives are dedicated to bringing together leaders to create and sustain a citywide network that empowers families and communities to improve their quality of life. Through direct service, advocacy, and linkage to resources, Collaboratives work tirelessly to prevent child abuse and neglect, preserve families at risk of child maltreatment, and stabilize families who are formally involved with the child welfare system. Accordingly, I recommend you increase funding to the collaboratives by \$1.7 million in FY27.
- ✓ **Fund workforce development for transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming youth.** Last year, I worked with Councilmember Frumin to ensure the District continued to provide vital support for transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming youth. These youth face unique challenges to employment, and I urge you to ensure that we continue to support them.
- ✓ **Increase support for grandparents and close relative caregivers.** Earlier this Council Period, I was proud to introduce B26-0398, the Increasing Support for Grandparents and Close Relative Caregivers Amendment Act of 2025.²⁰ This bill would increase the subsidy provided to grandparent and close relative caregivers, annually adjusting the subsidy for inflation, and strikes language related to offsetting the subsidy amount received by caregivers who receive TANF. To fully support those grandparents and relative caregivers who have stepped up to take care of their family members when others could not, I recommend you fully fund this legislation at the four-year total of \$24.9 million as outlined in the Fiscal Impact Statement for B26-0398.
- ✓ **Maintain investments in Out-of-School Time (OST) grants, which fund vital programming for District youth.** As Mayor, you have prioritized funding for the District's public education system, and an important component of that is funding for high quality after school and summer programs. OST investments provide critical opportunities to enrich our youth at times of day and year when parents have few other affordable options.

Support Ward 5 and District seniors.

- ✓ **Ensure that the Board of Elections has sufficient funds to do robust outreach to senior centers and residences about ranked choice voting.** I fully support efforts to educate District voters about the implementation of ranked choice voting in the current election cycle. Seniors are in particular need of thorough outreach because their experience voting in the District for decades may work against them, and we must ensure that we help them prepare for this adjustment.

²⁰ <https://lms.dccouncil.gov/Legislation/B26-0398>.

- ✓ **Facilitate seniors aging in place by increasing funding for the Single-Family Residential Rehabilitation Program (SFRRP).** This program provides grants to District homeowners to keep their homes accessible and safe for individuals with mobility or physical impairments. Applicants can receive a grant for up to 50% of the appraised value of their home; however, participants in the program currently experience overly complicated applications and lengthy waits for application processing. Accordingly, I recommend that you boost funding for this program and instruct staff to explore changes to speed up the process.
- ✓ **Enhance support for the Ward 5 Senior Village.** By increasing funding for the Ward 5 Senior Village through the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL), we will promote social engagement, health, and independence for older residents, helping seniors remain active and connected in their respective community.
- ✓ **Offer more DPR programs to meet seniors' needs.** My team repeatedly hears that DPR offers relatively few exercise classes and other programs that are specifically tailored to the needs of seniors, including water aerobics classes and other low-impact activities. I recommend that you bolster funding for those programs and take particular care to schedule facility maintenance and repairs in a manner that minimizes disruptions to those programs.
- ✓ **Minimize health care and nutrition cuts experienced by seniors.** District seniors are particularly vulnerable to cuts to health care and food assistance. While the District makes significant annual investments in SNAP and Medicare, those programs provide critical lifelines for many longtime District residents and should not bear the brunt of any proposed cuts. In addition, the Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL) should continue to focus on improving outreach to eligible residents to ensure they participate. According to one analysis, as many as two thirds of eligible District seniors do not participate in SNAP.²¹

Make targeted investments to improve residents' quality of life.

- ✓ **Bolster staffing at the Air Quality Division of the Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) to ensure robust enforcement of the District's odor control, air permitting, and anti-idling laws and regulations.** Ward 5 is home to most of the District's industrial land and faces disproportionate exposure to air pollution and odors from asphalt and concrete plants, transfer stations, and other stationary sources. Residents of Brentwood, Eckington, and Ivy City frequently request more enforcement and action from DOEE; however, current staffing levels mean that DOEE staff are tasked with an impossibly large range of permitting and enforcement responsibilities. I recommend that you enhance funding to ensure that DOEE has sufficient resources to protect residents from these environmental harms.
- ✓ **Invest \$2 million to improve housing code enforcement.** My office regularly fields complaints about the lack of prompt and effective responses to reported housing code violations. Poor housing conditions can compromise neighbors' health and safety, creating downstream costs for the District elsewhere. In light of these challenges, I

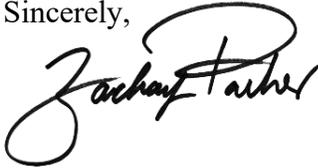
²¹ Benefits Participation Map, National Council on Aging, available at <https://www.ncoa.org/benefits-participation-map?program=snap&ids=11001>.

recommend that you bolster funding for housing code enforcement at the Department of Buildings.

- ✓ **Combat rats by bolstering composting requirements for privately managed buildings and continuing to expand curbside composting and “smart” composting collection bins.** A key driver of rat populations in the District is access to food—much of which ends up in the District’s solid waste trash system.²² The District’s residential composting program is currently budgeted to serve 12,000 households and needs to be scaled dramatically in the coming years to cover the entire District. In addition, the District should double the number of smart composting bins and place them in areas with significant residential density.

I look forward to receiving your budget along with my colleagues on April 1 and to our continued partnership in building healthy communities across Ward 5 and the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zachary Parker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "Z".

Zachary Parker
Ward 5 Councilmember
Chair, Committee on Youth Affairs

²² <https://communityaffairs.dc.gov/page/rodent-prevention>.