

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3B
GLOVER PARK AND CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS



February 14, 2019

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Mayor
District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser:

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3B representing the Glover Park and Cathedral Heights neighborhoods is strongly committed to your goals of improving city services, access to opportunities, and the quality of life for all District residents. We appreciate your call for the people of the District to share their vision for the future, as you begin your second term as Mayor.

In ANC3B, we have identified a number of areas that need additional attention and funding and we would like to share those with you as you are formulating your budget for the coming FY2020:

- housing and services for those experiencing homelessness, including daytime centers, emergency housing, transitional and longer-term housing, and wrap-around support services
- increased funding and beds to serve patients in need of psychiatric care and treatment for mental illness, particularly those single men and women who live on the streets and need long-term medication and care to restore their ability to function. Increasing the number of psychiatric beds has been identified by District experts as a key solution to one of our most intractable homeless problems.
- a significant increase in attention and funding for constructing and preserving truly affordable housing for families and individuals with extremely low incomes, who are most hurt by the city's housing shortage
- support for food and nutrition programs for residents in need, including children, families and seniors
- improvements to District recreation and community centers including health and wellness activities for seniors through the pilot satellite wellness program in Wards 2 and 3
- strong support for K-12 education, maintaining per-pupil funding and supporting STEM and other academic subjects as well as arts education including the Fillmore Arts Center serving students in our ANC
- increased funding and priority for DDOT to improve street conditions around the city, including expedited repair and replacement of streets and sidewalks identified as damaged and posing a danger to the public
- support for additional Main Streets programs in the District, including in the Glover Park commercial area
- improved local transit to underserved communities, including more frequent bus service in areas such as ANC3B that do not have a Metrorail line within 20-30 minutes walk, to provide access to jobs, schools, food, medical treatment, and other needs

Poverty and homelessness continue to be among the most troublesome and urgent challenges for the District. We appreciate deeply the focus the city has given to residents with the greatest needs, including seniors, those with low or fixed incomes, and people experiencing homelessness. As the city's new shelters are opening around the city to provide short-term housing for families facing homelessness, it will also be important to build the services and funds available for Rapid Rehousing and longer-term supported housing, with accompanying wrap-around assistance, to provide the entire continuum of services set out in the *Homeward DC* strategic plan. In addition, it is essential to continue to monitor the performance of all the elements of homeless services so any needed adjustments can be made and funds allocated to ensure that the city can effectively meet the goals of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

As part of that effort, it is vital to provide emergency shelter for individuals who are experiencing homelessness, particularly during severe weather. For the past four winter seasons, we have had no overnight hypothermia shelters for men located anywhere west of Rock Creek Park, though the number of men experiencing homelessness has increased noticeably in many parts of Wards 2 and 3 west of the park. That represents a serious gap and a threat to the lives and health of the men in our area as well as the well-being of the community as a whole. We have spoken to the departments and officials working on the challenges of homelessness and we will continue to work with them in trying to find additional ways to provide overnight and day centers to serve individuals experiencing homelessness in our community.

The city must also keep its commitment to build and preserve affordable housing, both for existing residents and future residents. We cannot rely on the "trickle down" theory to satisfy the need for lower cost housing, particularly rental apartments that can accommodate seniors, young workers, and larger families. Luxury apartments may find a market, but we also need a substantial number of units for those making 30-60% of Area Median Income or less. The District has lost 40% of the affordable housing units we had two decades ago, and we are going to need a much more concerted program to expand the supply of affordable units for the future. We cannot turn our backs on those who do not make high incomes or pretend they do not exist in our city. We have to plan for residents at all ages and levels of income and ensure that they have safe and adequate housing options to meet their needs. The budget must recognize that challenge, as well as the Comprehensive Plan and policy across the city and executive departments.

We applaud the District's work on providing nutrition and food assistance to people in need. The recent partial shutdown of the federal government revealed how many residents are just a paycheck away from having too little money to feed themselves and their families, and brought greater attention to the large number of households who are food-poor day in and day out in the city. We recognize the need to maintain and expand the free breakfast and lunch programs in the schools, along with weekend programs and added nutrition and food assistance through senior centers and community centers around the District.

We hope the District will also take a lesson from the recent furloughs and prepare for future natural or human-caused emergencies, putting in place contingency plans for food and other assistance when residents are left without means to take care of their needs. Low income and living just one paycheck away from hunger are challenges facing residents in every ward. During the recent shutdown of federal agencies, Wards 2 and 3 did not have a recreation center designated to provide free lunch on Saturdays for children affected by the furloughs. It is important to include all wards in our food policy and food programs for people in need.

No one can survive or succeed at school or work without adequate nutrition. Without education and training, it is difficult to get a good job. We need mobility to have access to education and work. And none of it is practical unless we have safe and adequate shelter. All the needs are linked, and the whole system of public policy, services and support has to work together to make healthy lives possible.

Transportation challenges are the most frequent issues that constituents bring to the ANC. We have not been able to get DDOT to carry out requested repairs or conduct the Traffic Safety Investigations our residents are demanding to deal with problem intersections, crosswalks, and blocks where traffic speeding creates risks to life and limb every day. Maintaining the streets is mandatory for the system to be usable, effective and efficient; poor road surfaces are contributing to safety risks, damage to vehicles and property, increased congestion and reduced ability of transit and private vehicles to serve people's mobility needs. We hope that some of the traffic safety needs will be addressed in DDOT's "Livability Study Rock Creek Far West" which will be launched in coming weeks, but we also want to underline the ongoing requirements for heightened attention and improved response by DDOT to ANC and residents' service requests every day and every year. The funds need to be adequate and the use of the funds needs to be more effective.

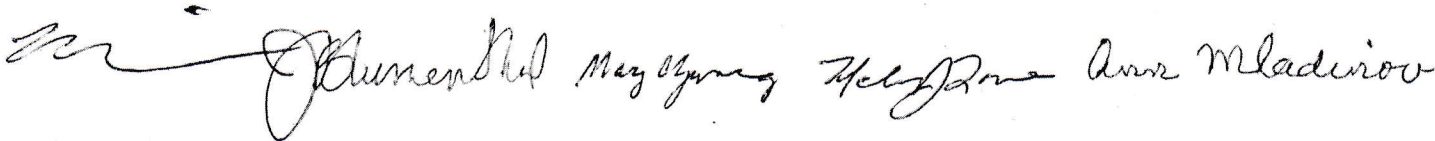
We have also worked with DDOT and WMATA to preserve and maintain public transportation services to our community, which is not served by Metrorail and has to rely on buses for transit. We understand the challenges created by the extensive disruptions required for SafeTrack, compounding congestion on the streets. WMATA has also seen a drop-off in transit use with alternate work schedules, telework, government furloughs, and the rise in use of private ride-hailing services. We cannot allow the quality of Metro service in our area to continue to decline, or ridership will fall further and we could permanently lose the option of public transit in our residential neighborhoods. We would like to see our local Metrobus routes and service maintained and strengthened, along with extending Circulator service which the city has committed to doing in our area.

In addition to safe and adequate streets and transportation services, we also appreciate the city's support for quality streetscapes and clean, healthy commercial areas in the District, through the Clean Teams and Main Street programs, and hope those will be maintained and expanded in the new budget. The Glover Park Alliance, a group of residents and business owners, is gearing up to apply for Main Street status this year to revitalize our traditional neighborhood commercial center. We urge you to approve requested funding for Main Street projects throughout the city, including in Glover Park.

We want to lend our voice to supporting a comprehensive approach to the city's needs in the budget you propose for FY2020, with increased funding recommended above.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brian Turmail
Chairman

Jackie Blumenthal
Vice Chairman

Mary Young
Treasurer

Melissa J. Lane

Ann Mladinov
Secretary

This letter was approved by the Commission by a vote of 5-0 on February 14, 2019, at a duly-noticed public meeting of the Commission at which a quorum was present. (Three of the five Commissioners constitute a quorum.)