



ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 6E
PO Box 93020 Brentwood Station, Washington, DC 20090

April 19, 2021

Muriel Bowser
Mayor
The John Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004

RE: Support for the Way Home Campaign FY22 Budget Request

Dear Mayor Bowser:

On April 6, 2021, at the duly noticed and regularly scheduled meeting of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6E (“ANC 6E” or “Commission”) and with a quorum of 7 out of seven Commissioners and the public present, ANC 6E approved the following resolution by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 against, and 0 abstentions:

WHEREAS, at least 180 people experiencing homelessness died in the District in 2020, including 23 who died of the coronavirus:¹; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic recession have intensified the dual crises of chronic homelessness and housing affordability in the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, before COVID-19 struck, an estimated 7,000 District households experienced homelessness on a given night and over 40,000 live in the tenuous line between housing and homelessness:²

WHEREAS, the homelessness crisis affects all ANCs in the District, and ANC 6E specifically hosts encampments of residents experiencing homelessness at the park at New Jersey Avenue and O Street NW and adjacent to Seaton Elementary School on the 1500 Block of 10th Street NW; and

WHEREAS, ANC 6E recognizes that there are many reasons why persons experiencing homeless may refuse shelter services and that the decision to refuse shelter is legitimate; and

WHEREAS, the unsheltered residents of encampments lack access to many essential services, including adequate sanitation facilities and access to medical, behavioral, and mental health services; and

WHEREAS, the presence of homeless encampments at the Park at New Jersey Avenue and O Street NW and adjacent to Seaton Elementary School have elicited complaints from neighbors for issues related to sanitation, access to public space, disruptive behavior, and drug and alcohol use of encampment residents, and

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/dc-homeless-deaths/2020/12/30/e94d74fc-453e-11eb-8deb-b948d0931c16_story.html

² <https://www.thewayhomedc.org/budgetandpolicypriorities>



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WHEREAS, ANC 6E recognizes that the homeless encampments in its area are a manifestation the District's failure to provide for the basic human needs of housing and supportive services to its most vulnerable residents and are inextricably related to the crisis of housing affordability; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget (FY22 Budget) presents an opportunity to make significant investments to end chronic homelessness in the District; and

WHEREAS, the Way Home Campaign, a coalition of 106 community organizations, has drafted a list of budget proposals to end chronic homelessness and ensure that nobody dies lacking the dignity of a home.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ANC 6E supports the Way Home Campaign proposals for the FY22 Budget to tackle the crisis of homelessness and housing instability, including:

- **Invest \$96.1 million to fund Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for 2,761 individuals and 432 families experiencing chronic homelessness.** By providing affordable housing coupled with intensive case management services, PSH helps people stay in housing and improve their health, and it saves a substantial amount of money as a result. This investment will ensure almost all of those assessed as needing PSH will receive it.
- **Help 1,820 individuals to exit homelessness quickly by increasing the budget for short-term assistance.** This assistance should include rental subsidies, high-quality, client-centered case management, and support in finding housing.
- **Ensure that every person who is at high risk of dying of COVID-19 is offered a placement in non-congregate shelter.** Right now, the majority of single adults are sheltered in large rooms with bunk beds and are exposed to many other people. Approximately 650 single adults who have risk factors associated with severe health outcomes or death if they were to contract COVID-19 are currently sheltered in motel rooms through the Pandemic Emergency Program for Medically Vulnerable Individuals (PEP-V) program, and there are 550 waiting for openings in the program. Up until early 2021, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) paid for 75 percent of most costs of this program with the District paying the other 25 percent. Now FEMA will pay for 100 percent of most costs, not including case management or behavioral health services. The District should immediately expand the program so everyone in need can access it. The Department of Human Services (DHS) should assess the need for case management and behavioral health services and, if deemed essential, should allocate local funds for these services.
- **Purchase bankrupt hotels.** These buildings can be used as non-congregate shelter during the pandemic and then be converted into PSH. Jurisdictions across the country are taking advantage of hotel bankruptcies, but so far DC has not.
- **Maintain street outreach at current funding levels.** Outreach services primarily target hard-to-reach individuals who do not seek shelter or other homeless services. Outreach workers help these



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individuals to apply for housing and gain necessary documentation, like a photo ID proving they are DC residents. They also help them connect with vital services like mental and physical healthcare.

- **Grow Project Reconnect, the program that helps individuals who are newly homeless find alternatives to shelter, such as reuniting with friends and families.** Shelter can be traumatic and unsafe, so avoiding shelter can benefit individuals. Additionally, because of budget limitations, only about 1 in 10 homeless individuals receive housing assistance in any one year, so shared housing may be the best option for some.
- **Invest at least \$100 million of local resources in the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) to support tenants who have been unable to pay rent as a result of the pandemic.** DC's ERAP program helps residents avoid eviction by paying for overdue rent and related legal costs.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachelle Nigro". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachelle Nigro,
Chair

CC: Charles Allen, Ward 6 Councilmember