



Eckington Civic Association
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VIA EMAIL

May 6, 2020

Mayor Bowser,

I am writing to transmit budget requests from the Eckington Civic Association on behalf of our community. The requests reflect an open engagement process from members and non-members. We anticipate that the city's response to the COVID-19 crisis and associated impacts on the local economy will result in significant changes to many aspects of the city's budget. We have therefore divided our requests in two: a short set of budget priorities for FY 2021 and a longer list of ambitions that could be funded with existing agency funds, in a future budget cycle, or in the event that the city uses this crisis as an opportunity to make significant capital investments.

Priority Budget Requests

- (1) Continue to fund Truxton/Eckington violence interruption program (OAG/ONSE).**
We ask that the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement continue to fund the violence interruption program that was established this winter in Truxton Circle and Eckington. We deeply appreciate the violence interruption efforts that Murder Free DC and Father Factor have already engaged in as well as the dedication that they have shown to coordinating with community partners. We believe that sustained funding of this program is necessary to curb violence in and near Eckington and ask that funding for this program be renewed in FY 2021.
- (2) Fund other crime prevention efforts, including increasing the deployment of officers who patrol on foot or bike and installing additional permanent or temporary street cameras. (MPD)** Residents have communicated their appreciation for patrols by officers who are on foot or bike rather than in a vehicle. This leads to more positive engagement with the officers and members of the community. Residents have also requested that MPD deploy additional temporary and permanent cameras at high-crime locations, including the intersection of Florida Avenue and North Capitol Street; Rhode Island and

4th Street NE; the alley behind the unit block of R street; the intersection of Lincoln Rd. and R street; and at Summit Place and T streets NE.

- (3) **Continue to fund the redesign and rebuilding of Dave Thomas Circle on the timetable announced by DDOT in the FY 2020 budget.** The redesign of this intersection remains a top priority for the community, and we are excited by the progress made by DDOT in the last year. Many residents have no choice but to walk, bike, or drive through this intersection to get to work or to make essential trips to the grocery store or pharmacy.
- (4) **Upgrade restrooms and other sanitation facilities in Eckington's schools and at the Harry Thomas Recreation Center.** For Eckington's public buildings to reopen safely, there needs to be adequate infrastructure in place to ensure that residents can wash their hands and take other precautions for their safety and the safety of others. The bathrooms in both Langley Elementary and Harry Thomas Recreation Center are in poor condition; and at Langley Elementary, there is no bathroom adjacent to the school's cafeteria.

Additional Budget Requests

This set of requests includes items that might be funded through existing agency funding; in other cases, they are larger capital projects that would require a more substantial investment from the city. We would appreciate you considering these requests this budget cycle, but where progress is not possible this year, we would appreciate establishing a regular dialogue with the appropriate officers and agencies to figure out how our requests might be addressed in future years. We also believe that many of these requests would merit consideration if the city uses this crisis as an opportunity to make significant capital investments across the District.

- ❖ **Rehabilitate and modernize Harry Thomas Recreation Center/Pool House (DPR).** Harry Thomas Recreation Center and Pool House serves Eckington, Bloomingdale, and other nearby communities; however, many aspects of the facility are inhospitable to intended uses because of long-term maintenance problems and inadequate investment in the facility. We respectfully request that the city consider:
 - **Undertaking a full renovation of the Recreation Center/Pool House Building.** The building rooms are painted cinderblock and are therefore too loud for most programming uses. In addition, the central air system has fallen into disrepair and regularly does not work, which is a particular problem in the summer months when temperatures can climb to unsafe levels.
 - **Extending pool hours on summer weekends, adding trees and shade structures by the pool, and addressing pool safety concerns.** As DC's summers get warmer, the pool will be an important asset for the community in coping with dangerously warm weather. It will also be more important for children to have access to the pool earlier in the day, when temperatures are lower and the sun is less direct. We also ask that the city consider planting additional trees near the pool and install shade structures over the kiddie pool to help ensure residents can use the pool safely. Finally, we ask that you consider resurfacing the kiddie pool and evaluating its curved underwater corners to improve user safety.

- **Repair the outdoor recreation areas, including the playground, playing field, and basketball & tennis courts.** The outdoor spaces at Harry Thomas Recreation Center have also fallen into disrepair, which impacts residents as well as school children at nearby Langley Elementary School. There is a persistent drainage issue on the field and under the adjacent climbing structure—issues that have been flagged but not addressed for years. The playground rubber is torn, the water fountain in the park is broken, and the tennis and basketball courts need to be resurfaced. In addition to these larger maintenance issues, routine maintenance including trash pick up, compost maintenance, mowing, and weed removal should be adequately funded.
- **Fixing the community garden water supply.** The community garden at Harry Thomas has fallen into disuse in part because the garden has no water supply. This contributed to a fire at the compost facility at the garden.
- ❖ **A public library facility in Eckington or Edgewood (DCPL).** Eckington falls in the middle of something of a library desert. Given that our community and nearby communities can expect a surge of new residents in the coming years, we respectfully request that DCPL consider bringing a neighborhood library to Eckington or somewhere nearby. One potential location for such a facility is old National Geographic Building at 3rd and R streets NE. This facility is currently being used by D.C. Public Library as a storage facility but is large enough to support a community-facing library.
- ❖ **Streetscape and Safety Improvements (DDOT)**
 - **Fix large drainage problem along 2nd Street NE sidewalk between R and T streets adjacent to McKinley Technology High School embankment.** For years, neighbors have filed 311 requests about this stretch of sidewalk that is frequently impassable due to significant sludgy run-off from McKinley Tech’s embankment onto the west sidewalk of 2nd Street. Those requests have gone nowhere. The appropriate agency, whether it is DDOT or DGS, needs to ensure that runoff from the embankment does not get dumped onto the sidewalk and prevent safe passage.
 - **Fund streetscape improvements in DDOT’s Mid City East Livability Study and requested by the Eckington Civic Association in August, 2019.** DDOT has long had plans to improve safety in Eckington, build more tree boxes, and install permeable pavement and sidewalks in Eckington. Many of those are laid out in DDOT’s 2013 Mid City East Livability study but have seen little to no action since the study was completed. We therefore ask that DDOT fund the improvements laid out in the study as well as overlapping requests that the civic association submitted in August of 2019.
 - **Install bus signal priority and bus lanes on North Capitol Street and Michigan Avenue.** Existing WMATA bus lines could benefit from prioritization on North Capitol Street, which is often heavily congested. We therefore request that DDOT pursue bus signal prioritization and install bus lanes on North Capitol Street between Massachusetts and Michigan Avenues and on Michigan Avenue from North Capitol Street to Monroe Street.
 - **Fund short and long-term safety and livability improvements to North Capitol Street.** North Capitol Street presents an unacceptable safety risk to local residents and other users. In the last 18 months, six pedestrians have perished along this corridor,

including at least three in the stretches of North Capitol Street near Eckington. DDOT and NoMA BID recently conducted a needs assessment of North Capitol Street, and we ask that DDOT commit to installing the remaining short-term improvements identified in that study. We also ask the city to fund longer-term improvements to North Capitol Street to increase safety and improve east-west connections between adjacent communities.

- **Install workout stations and plant trees along the Metropolitan Branch Trail.** The MBT could be further activated by installing workout stations alongside the trail. Neighboring jurisdictions, including Alexandria and the National Park Service, have installed workout stations along similar stretches of trail. In addition, we ask that DDOT consider planting trees along the trail to reduce the heat-island effect along this important recreational facility.
- **Fund a Ward 5 Circulator.** Ward 5 will soon be one of the few parts of the city that is not serviced by a Circulator once the city moves forward with plans to bring a route to Ward 7. We request that DDOT endeavor to bring a circulator to Ward 5 in the coming years. One potential route could serve communities on New York Avenue from the Convention Center to Ft. Lincoln via NoMa/Eckington, Union Market, and Ivy City. Another route could connect Union Station to Columbia Heights via Eckington, Stronghold, and Parkview. In either case, we believe that Ward 5 deserves improved bus access to other parts of the city.
- **Consider acquiring a triangular plot in the alley behind U Street and Summit Pl. NE for a pocket park.**
- ❖ **Capital investments in Langley Elementary (DCPS).** In coordination with the Langley Elementary PTSA, we are also asking that the D.C. Public Schools fund a number of important improvements at Langley Elementary. Many of these items cause significant disruptions to the educators and students at Langley Elementary. They include:
 - **Replacing or repairing the PA System.** The PA system is not operational in every room and presents a safety risk for the school.
 - **Replace the school's leaking roof.** The school's roof is leaking, and the leaks are impacting several classrooms that are in current use.
 - **Add a bathroom in the school cafeteria and restore other bathrooms.** The lack of a bathroom in the cafeteria poses a challenge for staff members because they have to accompany students to other bathrooms. In addition, the other bathrooms in the school are in serious disrepair and need to be restored.
 - **Expand and invest in the school library.** The school's library is too small to meet existing and future needs. It also lacks a media center, which will be of increasing importance in future years.
 - **Fund pest control on the premises.** The school continues to experience serious pest control problems, which frequently interrupt programming at the school. We therefore ask that the city redouble its efforts to control rodents and other vermin on the premises.
 - **Ensure that previously appropriated funds for building elevator and HVAC system are spent.** Although the city has previously funded a building elevator and an HVAC

system, these issues are still unresolved. Accordingly, we request that DCPS ensure that these investments are pursued in a timely manner.

❖ **Full funding of Permanent Supportive Housing, Temporary Housing, and Rapid Re-Housing for DC's homeless population (Interagency Council on Homelessness).**

Individuals experiencing homelessness in D.C. continue to need assistance from the city to secure their most basic needs—especially temporary and permanent shelter. Those needs exist in Eckington and nearby communities, but they ultimately demand a city-wide response. We therefore request that the city fund permanent supportive housing, temporary housing, and rapid-rehousing for D.C.'s homeless population.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at EckingtonCivic@gmail.com about any of these requests. Alternatively, I can also be reached by phone at 202-210-1528.

Best regards,

/s/ Conor Shaw

Conor Shaw
President
Eckington Civic Association

cc: Ward 5 Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie
D.C. Council Chair, Phil Mendelsohn
At-Large Councilmember Anita Bonds
At-Large Councilmember David Grosso
At-Large Councilmember Elissa Silverman
At-Large Councilmember Robert White
Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen
Ward 3 Councilmember & Chair of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, Mary Cheh
Dominique Chestnut, Ward 5 Liaison, Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services
ANC 5E03 Commissioner Cortney Segmen
ANC 5E04 Commissioner Sylvia Pinkney
Robin-Eve Jasper, President NoMA Business Improvement District
Christina Robbins, President Langley Elementary PTSA
Jessica Yurcheshen, President, Eckington Parks & Arts