

Mayor Muriel Bowser
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC 20004

Councilmember Trayon White, Sr.
Chair, Committee on Recreation,
Libraries and Youth Affairs
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 400,
Washington, DC 20004

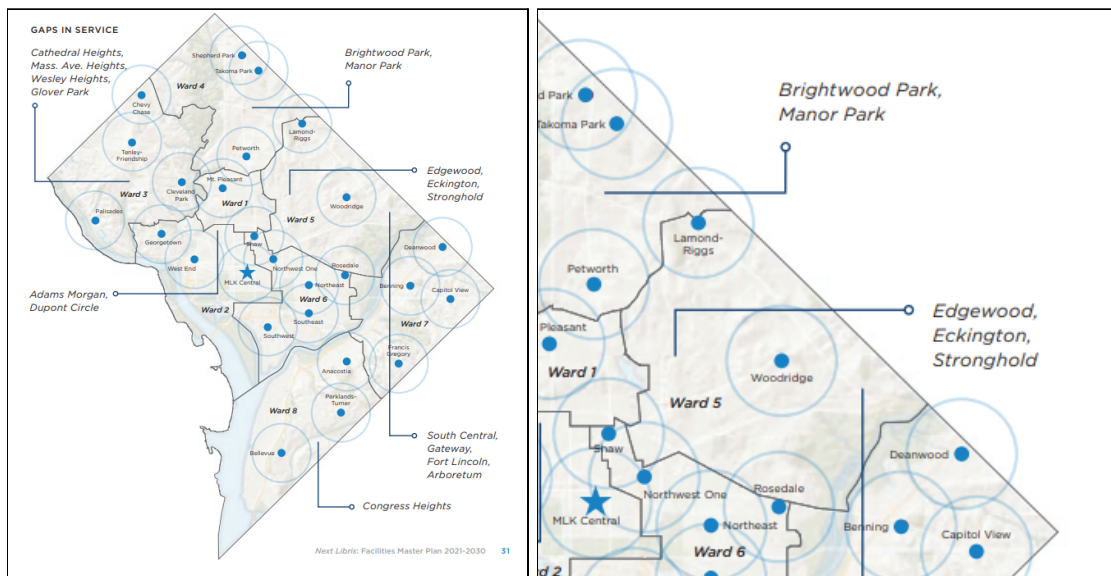
April 14, 2021

Dear Mayor Bowser and Councilmember White,

On behalf of the [Eckington Civic Association](#), [Eckington Parks & Arts](#), and the [Langley Elementary PTO](#),¹ we are writing to request that the Mayor and the D.C. Council earmark \$20M for the development of a new library in our community to address the service gap D.C. Public Library (DCPL) identified in its [November 2020 Facilities Master Plan](#). While we understand that investments like this must compete with other important priorities and services, we believe that delays in funding this project could lead DCPL to miss out on prime locations for a new branch library in Eckington and Edgewood. Time is of the essence if the city and DCPL want to build a library that is accessible by public and active transportation and proximate to residents who are most deserving of enhanced access to this critical public amenity.

The gap in service facing our communities is stark and reflects historic underinvestment in Northeast D.C. Only two libraries are located in Ward 5, and only one, Woodridge, is open during the pandemic because the Lamond-Riggs Interim Library cannot be operated safely. The geography of Northeast D.C. exacerbates this gap. Our communities are surrounded by roads and rail tracks that make walking or biking to nearby facilities difficult and unsafe—especially for younger and older residents.

Gaps in service (from [Next Libris](#)) citywide (left) and Ward 5 (right)



¹ Langley Elementary is the in-boundary DCPS elementary school for Eckington residents.

The library system provides critical services to D.C. residents. Branch libraries foster growth and life-long learning for youth and adults and provide critical free services to district residents—including meeting rooms, access to computers and other technology, and programming for residents of all ages. We are also excited about DCPL’s proposal that a new branch library in our neighborhood could incorporate new affordable housing units. For all of these reasons, bringing a public library to Eckington, Edgewood, and Stronghold is a top priority for our organizations and members.

We are encouraged to have the support of key community partners. Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie, who serves on the Committee on Recreation, Libraries, and Youth Affairs, requested \$20 million dollars for this project in his [FY 2022 budget letter](#). In December, 2020 Advisory Neighborhood Commission 5E voted unanimously to support bringing a new library to Edgewood, Eckington, and Stronghold. As of April 14, 2021, 173 local residents have also signed a [petition](#) hosted by the organization Ward 5 for All requesting that the city fund a library in our neighborhoods.

While we are enthusiastic about filling the library service gap in near northeast D.C., we are committed to ensuring that addressing the needs of our communities does not come at the expense of other underserved communities. For that reason, we are requesting that DCPL, the mayor, and the council commit to ensuring that library services are maintained or improved for residents adjacent to the Northwest One Neighborhood Library.

Our organizations stand ready to help DCPL find a location for a new branch library that residents can access easily and safely. The city [already owns several properties](#) that are proximate to Metro’s Red line, to key bus routes, and to the Metropolitan Branch Trail. These locations are also adjacent to existing or future projects that promise to deliver thousands of new market rate and affordable housing units to our neighborhoods. These projects also present opportunities for public-private partnerships, to incorporate additional resources for a public library into plans with a private development.

A public library that serves Edgewood, Eckington, and Stronghold is long overdue. We are ready to work with DCPL and other city agencies to fill this service gap. If the city acts to invest in a library now, it will maximize the chances to secure a location that will best serve the community and our residents for years to come.

Signed,

Conor Shaw, ECA President
on behalf of the Eckington Civic Association

Shoshana Sommer, EP&A President
On behalf of Eckington Parks & Arts

Annie E. Wright, PTO President
on behalf of Langley Elementary PTO

cc: Anita Bonds, Ward 4 Councilmember
Janeese Lewis George, Ward 4 Councilmember
Kenyan McDuffie, Ward 5 Councilmember
Brienne K. Nadeau, Ward 1 Councilmember
Nate Fleming, Committee Director, Committee on Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs
Richard Reyes-Gavilan, Executive Director, DC Public Library
John Falcicchio, Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development
Silas Grant, Senior Adviser to Councilmember McDuffie
Sylvia Pinkney, ANC 5E04 Commissioner
Denise Wright, ANC 5E03 Commissioner