

SAVE THE DATES!

- MARCH 31
Women's History Event
- APRIL 7 - MAY 6
Public Hearings on Mayor's Proposed FY 2012 Budget
- APRIL 28
Annual State of the Ward 4 Senior Event
- JUNE 18
Ward 4 Family Fun Day



FROM THE OFFICE OF
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PEPCO

Councilmember Bowser has taken a number of actions to ensure the reliability of the electric grid in Ward 4. In response to the recent snowstorms that left residents without power for long periods of time, she introduced a bill to require electric companies to reimburse residents for the reasonable costs of hotel accommodations if the temperature is either below 32 degrees or above 95 degrees Fahrenheit and the power is off for more than 24 hours. Whether in summer or winter, extended power outages during extreme temperatures are dangerous for residents and must be addressed.

Also in 2010, the Councilmember held three hearings dealing with reliability of the electric grid, and pressed Pepco to make major upgrades. As a result of her efforts, Pepco came forward with a Ward 4 reliability improvement plan, which is part of a larger citywide plan. The citywide plan is estimated to cost \$318 million and will be implemented over five years. The plan will include hardening wires, replacing feeders, increased vegetation management, substation improvements and targeted undergrounding. The Ward 4 plan will include work in those neighborhoods hardest this past summer: Takoma, Chevy Chase, Crestwood, Colonial Village, North Portal Estates and Shepherd Park. The work has already begun and is expected to be completed this spring.

Lastly, Councilmember Bowser held a hearing with the District's electrical utility stakeholders to discuss a study recommending that the District underground some of its power lines. By burying electrical lines beneath the ground, power outages caused by weather events are less common. Her work to investigate whether selective undergrounding is the correct answer for some Ward 4 neighborhoods continues.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT

In FY 2010, Councilmember Bowser directed more than a million dollars to key business improvement and economic development programs administered through the Department of Small and Local Business Development. The funding went to clean teams along Upper Georgia Avenue and Kennedy Street, to business assistance training and to the improvement of 21 storefronts. These programs not only improve aesthetics, but also assist our local businesses, keep District tax dollars in the District, and put hardworking locals to work. That's money well spent!



Councilmember Bowser joined Mayor Gray, library officials and community members at a ribbon cutting for a beautiful new Petworth Neighborhood Library which reopened on February 28th after a \$12 million, 14-month renovation. Work done on the library includes an updated floor plan, restored windows and doors, a repaired roof, improved ADA access, a new elevator, electrical and fire alarm upgrades, a new outdoor activity area and a 100-person meeting room, among other additions.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

Councilmember Bowser will serve as the Chair of the Metropolitan Washington Transportation Planning Board (TPB) in 2011. In this capacity, she will work with members from throughout the region to develop plans for federal funds to improve transportation access. Her prime focus will be to make sure the District receives its fair share of federal funds especially since commuters and visitors use our roads and travel by Metro into our city. She will also work to ensure that funding and transit are distributed equitably throughout all economic areas to serve those most in need. In 2010, the Washington region was awarded \$58.8 million in a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant for priority bus corridors throughout the region and a bus transit center in Maryland.



Councilmember Muriel Bowser, Commissioner Lisa Colbert and neighbors at the Grand Opening of the Newly renovated Petworth Library.

FROM THE OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER MURIEL BOWSER

FOCUS ON 4

WARD 4 ANNUAL REPORT

WINTER 2011

Friends,

With this Annual Report, I would like to detail some of the important achievements of the Council in 2010. In a year when the economic downturn began to be felt by the District, I am pleased that I was able to push forward proposals that dealt with some of our most pressing problems: widespread unemployment, the devastating foreclosure crisis, and access to quality, affordable health care. In 2010, my colleagues and I:

- reformed our health insurance market, prohibited health insurers from discriminating against women and victims of domestic violence and ensured that recent college graduates can maintain their health insurance;
- created a new mediation program which will ensure that distressed homeowners are given an opportunity to sit down for a face-to-face mediation with their lenders in order to work out a settlement;
- lowered the rates and fees of alternative financial service providers like check-cashers and pawnbrokers and gave Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners an opportunity to weigh in on whether these businesses can open in their neighborhoods;
- created a workshare program that gives small businesses the opportunity to avoid crippling layoffs while protecting jobs;
- improved the District's business climate by working with the District of Columbia Bar Association to comprehensively rewrite the District's business organizations code to put the District at the forefront of corporate law; and
- improved the District's worst-in-the-nation open meetings laws.

The transition to a new Council Period has brought new responsibilities. I now serve as the Chairperson of the Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation, where I oversee the District of Columbia Public Library system and the District Department of Parks and Recreation. I have also been elevated to Chairperson of the Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. From this new position, I will work with other local legislators on regional transportation issues.

I look forward to working with you in the year ahead to craft a District budget that is leaner, but that protects vital city services and important, long-awaited capital projects. As a city, we have made a great deal of progress the last few years, and it is vital that this progress continues.

Warmest Regards,



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FOCUS ON FOUR ANNUAL REPORT

MORE RETAIL PROPOSED FOR GEORGIA AVE...

NEW SAFEWAY STORE PROPOSED



In 2010, Safeway announced plans to build a new Safeway store at the corner of Georgia Ave. and Randolph St. NW. This long-awaited development will upgrade the area's grocery options considerably.

WAL-MART PROPOSES WARD 4 STORE



In 2010, Wal-Mart proposed locating a new urban Wal-Mart store at the site of the old Curtis Chevrolet dealership.

Both of the above projects will be reviewed by the District Office of Planning. Visit their website for more information: www.planning.dc.gov

STILL MORE PROGRESS...



In June, at its new Petworth outpost, Sala Thai restaurant celebrated its grand opening by welcoming the community to a complimentary sampling of its famous Thai cuisine. While the Triple Double Jazz Band played, more than 300 attendees strolled through the doors at 3716 Georgia Avenue NW to partake of the restaurant's sushi, traditional Thai curries, and fresh stir fry.



On January 8, Councilmember Bowser cut the leash on Ward 4's first dog park at Upshur Park. As the new Chairperson of the Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation, the Councilmember will closely monitor expected improvements to Raymond Recreation Center and Shepherd Field.



In October, Councilmember Bowser hosted 2 special meetings in Shepherd Park and Petworth with neighbors and law enforcement officials, including Chief Lanier and the U.S. Attorney's Office, to address recent issues of violent crime. Councilmember Bowser has also supported numerous legislative initiatives to fight crime this year, including bills to create safer schools by instituting no loitering zones, to allow the community adversely affected by a crime to make an impact statement at sentencing, and to raise the penalty for carrying a handgun without a license.

LEGISLATIVE SOLUTIONS

In 2010, Councilmember Bowser successfully advocated for a number of important proposals dealing with the economic crisis. The Council enacted her legislation to assist residents facing foreclosure, to make it easier for businesses to save jobs, and to fight against unreasonable health insurance premium rate increases.

KEEP D.C. WORKING ACT

In an effort to prevent layoffs, Councilmember Bowser introduced the "Keep DC Working Act of 2010," which will allow companies to partake in "workshare" programs. Workshare is an unemployment alternative that allows an employer to reduce employee hours while providing employees with unemployment compensation to offset reduced salary. Not only do layoffs cause great hardship to families, but they also harm companies which face decreased efficiency as a result of the loss of skilled workers and lowered company morale. The new law will keep employees working and ensure companies are ready to ramp up as soon as a sustaining economy returns.

ALTERNATIVE MONEY LENDING AND SERVICES REFORM AMENDMENT ACT

The "Alternative Money Lending and Services Reform Amendment Act of 2010" will protect District residents from poverty premiums. The bill reduces both check cashing fees and the interest rate charged by pawnshops. The bill, which was a response to the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs issuing a pawnshop license despite neighborhood opposition, also clarifies that Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) have an official say in the approval process for a new pawnbroker's license. All applications for a new pawnbroker license, and all transfers of a pawnbroker license from one location to another, will be subject to the "great weight" of all affected ANCs.

SAVING D.C. HOMES FROM FORECLOSURE ACT

An estimated 1 million homes were foreclosed upon nationally last year. This bill, which Councilmember Bowser introduced, provides additional protection to District homeowners facing foreclosures. Under the old law, foreclosures in the District could occur after only 30 days notice to homeowners. The bill adds an additional layer of protection by providing homeowners the opportunity to go to mediation before foreclosures can occur. Mediation allows homeowners and lenders to work on solutions that will allow homeowners to remain in their homes, instead of losing them to foreclosure.

BUSINESS CODE REFORM

The District is consistently rated as one of the least favorable jurisdictions in the nation for small businesses. In 2010, the Council approved legislation authored by Councilmember Bowser to update the District's severely out of date business entity laws. The District's previous business and nonprofit corporation laws are based on statutes enacted by the United States Congress between 1870 and 1971. The bill consists of 12 chapters and uses a "hub and spoke" approach. It brings the District's business entity laws up-to-date by providing a solid legal framework for businesses in the District to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, which should improve the perception of the District as a good place for doing business.

HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) into law. This new law requires states to implement many changes over the next several years to the health insurance market. Councilmember Bowser led efforts in 2010 to take some initial steps to implement PPACA. In December 2010, the Council approved the "Reasonable Health Insurance Rate-making and Reform Amendment Act," which she introduced. This comprehensive legislation is the first step to implementing PPACA at the local level; the bill expands the authority of the Commissioner of the Department of Insurance, Securities, and Banking to review and approve health insurance premium rates. The bill also requires that health insurers spend at least 80 cents of every dollar they collect on medical care for policyholders.

NEW PROTECTIONS FOR DEPENDENTS

PPACA contained a provision that was set to take effect in September 2010 that would allow parents to keep children on their health insurance plans until the age of 26. Recognizing that it made little sense to see hundreds of new college graduates returning to the District to an uncertain job market lose their health care for the summer, the Council approved Councilmember Bowser's "Health Insurance for Dependents Emergency Act of 2010" which made this provision effective on April 30th.



On November 3, Councilmember Bowser partnered with CareFirst and the YMCA to announce the beginning of an important new five-year wellness program, "Fit and Well Seniors." The program will feature a wide variety of free activities for District seniors, from swimming to fitness classes to therapeutic yoga, which will be available for more than 1,000 active older adults the first year and more than 2,000 active older adults in the remaining years. Activities will be offered throughout the District, including at many locations in Ward 4, and transportation will be available for those in need. For more information, contact YMCA at 202-232-6700.

NEW PROTECTIONS FOR WOMEN

As part of the rate-making bill, Councilmember Bowser included a prohibition against charging women more for coverage than men simply because of their gender. There is also a requirement included that insurers provide basic coverage for pregnancy and a provision to prohibit health insurers from using domestic violence as a pre-existing condition, bringing the District into line with 42 other states.

OPEN MEETINGS

In 2010, the Council unanimously approved a bill, which Councilmember Bowser introduced, that will increase the transparency by which the District conducts the public's business. The bill requires that public bodies in the District meet in the open, rather than behind closed doors. Councilmember Bowser took further efforts to open up the government's processes by amending the rules of the Committee on Libraries, Parks and Recreation for Council Period 19 so that they comply with the new open meetings law. With her leadership, the Committee voted unanimously to approve rules which increase the opportunity for the public to know about, and participate in, committee hearings, meetings, votes, and all other business of the committee.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The renaissance of Ward 4 continues with good things happening up and down Georgia Avenue. Not only has Walter Reed's transformation begun but across the street at 6925 and 6929 Georgia Avenue we will soon see 24 units of mixed-income residential housing where blighted buildings once stood.

WALTER REED

On October 6th, the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) approved a plan for the reuse of the District's 62.5-acre site at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The plan includes 850 units of mixed-income housing, 200,000 square feet of retail, 90,000 square feet of office space, 40 acres of open space, and calls for open and inviting green space. The site is expected to create more than 3,200 new jobs, and bring in \$18 million in annual tax revenue! The reuse plan also designates the non-profit and educational institutions that must be granted land per Army rules. Help USA along with Catholic Charities will provide 75 units of permanent housing for veterans and families, Transitional Housing Corporation will receive office space and So Others Might Eat will provide 45 units of permanent supportive housing for families. Two charter schools—Latin American Montessori Bilingual and Washington Yu Ying—will occupy space, D.C. Fire and Emergency Services will have space for Engine 22 and Howard University will have an ambulatory care facility.

VIDA SENIOR RESIDENCES

In July, Councilmember Bowser joined with then Mayor Fenty and U.S. Treasurer Rosa Rios to break ground on the construction of 36 units of affordable housing for seniors and a new senior center at the future home of the VIDA Senior Residences in Ward 4. Located in the Brightwood neighborhood, the project will include an independent-living senior center that will provide services including meals, music, presentations, dancing, minor checkups, medication management, spiritual activities, private van transportation, and of course, bingo and chess.

RIGGS ROAD

Progress on the infrastructure improvements at the Riggs Road/South Dakota Avenue intersection is on schedule. About one third of the project has been completed including installation of the sidewalk, granite curbing, and brick gutters. The completed project will bring all of us better traffic flow and much needed increases in pedestrian safety. In addition, demolition of the former "Tiger Mart" was completed in January. As you may know, due to the sluggish economy, the redevelopment has been delayed. In the meantime, I have been working with the owners and District officials to identify funding and to develop plans for an interim use that the community could enjoy for the next year or two. I hope to announce an interim use for the site in coming weeks. Stay tuned!

WESTERN AVENUE, OREGON AVENUE AND LIVABILITY STUDIES

DDOT is nearing the end of its work on **Western Avenue** which includes the resurfacing of the roadway, removal and reconstruction of curbs, gutters and sidewalks, and the installation of new wheel chair ramps to meet ADA requirements.

The Federal Highway Administration and DDOT are proposing rehabilitation of the 1.7-mile segment of **Oregon Avenue** between Military Road and Western Avenue. An Environmental Assessment is needed because of the potential for run-off into Rock Creek Park.

DDOT is also launching a series of studies to support their goals to provide more transportation choices for residents. Two studies are to begin this May – June. The **Rock Creek West I Livability Study** will cover Western Avenue to the west, 31st Street and Oregon Avenue to the north and Broad Branch Road to the south. The **Rock Creek West II Livability Study** covers Missouri Avenue to the north, Rock Creek Church Road and Spring Road to the south, North Capitol Street to the east and Park Road to the west. For more information, visit www.ddot.dc.gov.