



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

September 15, 2021

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

Dear Mayor Bowser:

We write as At-Large members of the DC Council to echo the demands of our Ward 4 colleague, Councilmember Lewis George, and request that you take urgent action to bring Building Blocks resources and interventions to the Kennedy Street community. The tragic shootings from the past two weeks underline the imperative to bring the full force of coordinated city services to curb deadly violence.

Over the past three years, the Kennedy Street NW corridor and its two adjacent streets, Jefferson Street and Longfellow Street, have experienced at least 37 recorded incidents of gun violence that have claimed the lives of many of our neighbors, left others injured, and traumatized the broader community. Earlier this month, the Kennedy Street area became the site of the worst mass shooting in DC in recent memory – three residents were killed, and three others were injured. Before their families could bury their loved ones, another shooting on Kennedy Street this past weekend claimed yet another resident. Any degree of gun violence in our communities is unacceptable, but the concentration of shootings in this particular neighborhood speaks to the need for greater intervention.

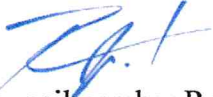
The specific challenges on Kennedy Street would benefit from Building Blocks' whole-of-government, coordinated public health approach. These challenges include neighborhood conflict and retaliation; substance abuse and mental health issues; at-risk people in need of transitional employment and mentorship; blighted and vacant properties; use of abandoned vehicles to conceal illegal activity; and shuttered businesses. Building Blocks would leverage and coordinate existing resources on Kennedy Street, such as the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement violence interruption team and help address longstanding issues previously neglected by the agencies responsible.

We appreciate the inherent challenge in prioritizing Building Blocks resources. However, the conditions on Kennedy Street clearly necessitate this intervention. The DC Council has injected additional funding into programs that address the root causes of gun violence in order to expand Building Blocks' capacity to serve our communities. DC's signature gun violence prevention program must be adaptive to the changing conditions in our city and meet critical needs as they emerge. We must act with urgency and focus to prevent further gun violence and loss of life on Kennedy Street.



We appreciate your consideration of this request and ask for a written response by Monday, September 20th. Thank you for your partnership in building safer communities and for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr., At-Large



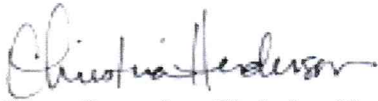
Chairman Phil Mendelson



Councilmember Anita Bonds, At-Large



Councilmember Elissa Silverman, At-Large



Councilmember Christina Henderson, At-Large

CC: Councilmember Janeese Lewis George,
Ward 4