

2023 REPORT



LISTEN AS WE CLIMB

WARD 4 LISTENING TOUR

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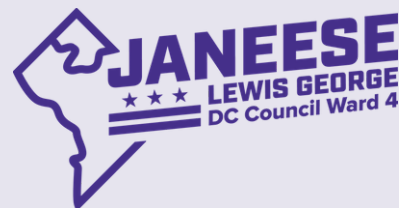


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About Listen As We Climb

I always say that you can speak *for* the community if you don't speak *with* the community. That's what Listen As We Climb – my Ward 4 community listening sessions – are all about. Since winning the Democratic primary election in the Fall of 2020 and entering office in January 2021, I've hosted these community meetings to hear directly from neighbors what your priorities are for Ward 4 and the city. As your Councilmember, my role is to represent and advocate for the legislative, budgetary, and community needs of the ward, and I can only do that with your input shaping the way.

I held my 3rd Annual Listening Session throughout January 2023. With the help of my team, we put together this report of the priorities brought up at each listening session. We hope that, together, this report illustrates the vision that your fellow Ward 4 neighbors have for the communities they live in and the communities they frequent.

If you have any questions, please reach out to my team at janeese@dcward4.us or by calling 202-724-8052.

In service,
Janeese Lewis George
Ward 4 Councilmember

Overview

Across 6 in-person listening sessions and 1 virtual we were able to connect with over 200 Ward 4 residents. Though very informative, this only constitutes a small proportion of Ward 4 residents, and the information presented below should be taken with that consideration in mind.

1 Traffic Safety

Residents presented concerns around traffic and pedestrian safety at every session. The main concerns included lack of traffic calming measures along major through-ways like 14th St, Georgia Ave, and North Capitol St, especially nearby schools and community centers where many children are present.

2 Public Safety

Concerns about public safety were central to at least half of the sessions hosted. In particular, our Brightwood, Brightwood Park, and Riggs Park community members feel that not enough is being done to keep our communities resourced, involved, and in-the-loop about incidents in their communities.

3 Housing

Throughout every session residents presented questions about affordable housing opportunities, support for unhoused residents, and the mechanisms for seniors to be able to age in place.

4 DPR and Government-Owned Facilities

Particularly for communities home to many families and children, substantial concern was raised for the quality and care of our government-owned facilities (parks, recreation/community centers, schools).

January 19, 2023

Shepherd Park | Colonial Village | North Portal Estates | The Parks at Walter Reed

Issue	Response	Resources
What are we doing to interrupt/prevent crime?	MPD reported a 35% reduction of crime in Ward 4 for 2022. This follows Council investments in violence interruption teams (ONSE, OAG), behavioral health services (DBH), and MPD (hiring incentives).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short- and Long-Term approaches to ending gun violence in Ward 4• Councilmember's Newsletter ward4news.com• MPD List Serv
Role of parents/care givers in public safety	Being safe and cared-for at home is a strong determinant of how kids develop. As Chair of Family Services Cmte., I look forward to further investing in and partnering with families to keep our children and communities safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homes and Hearts Budget Amendment• Parent Cafés• Supporting court-involved youth (e.g., CASA DC)• Cmte. on Family Services
Access to Shepherd Park Community Center during school day and weekends	The Shepherd Park Community Center is used by Shepherd Park Elementary during school hours. We will work with DPR to identify opportunities for weekend access, as well whether facilities-access is possible during the week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DPR Performance Oversight Hearing – Feb 23rd at 2pm –Register!
Upkeep of Shepherd Park fields (+Recycling!)	As Chair of Facilities Committee, I will work with DGS to ensure that litter and recycling are collected regularly on the field. We will request additional signage, education, and receptacles to improve waste management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cmte. on Facilities
Traffic Calming (near Shepherd ES)	DDOT conducts Traffic Safety Investigations to identify areas for improvement. Thankfully, with the passage of my Safe Routes to School Act, we'll see traffic calming measures become mandatory near school zones!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic Safety Input• Safe Routes to School Act
I-71 "Gift" Shops and Medical Cannabis	Congress has historically intervened when we've tried to regulate DC's cannabis market. This past year, Council passed a law to regulate the market by requiring medical certification. This will impact the presence of i-71 shops, as well as tax-revenue coming into the District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councilmember's Newsletter on the topic• Cannabis Temporary Amendment Act of 2022

January 22, 2023

Lamond | Riggs Park | South Manor Park

Issue	Response	Resources
Vehicle Noise	Councilmembers Nadeau and Pinto just introduced legislation to address this. We look forward to learning more about the proposal and implementation, and encourage residents to testify at the public hearing once announced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation text
Clustering of Group Homes	We are aware of the recent clustering of group home-type businesses in certain Ward 4 neighborhoods. Through Oversight hearings, we are working to get data from relevant agencies on the specific kinds of services provided and to better understand the clustering patterns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation text
Public Safety and Resourcing: Cameras, MPD Recruitment, Violence Interruptors, Technology, and Communication	<p>At the Riggs Park public safety meeting on January 10th, MPD and DMPSJ shared that crime in Ward 4 is down 35%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MPD confirmed their cameras were working properly• MPD has expansive hiring incentives• DMPSJ shared new technologies are being explored• We continued to urge MPD to keep the community informed, including more regular communication with the Watch Commander• ONSA announced start of VI program in RP. My team held follow-up meeting and shared report with Commissioners & civic associations.• Plan to ask MPD about Shot Spotter data during Oversight hearings <p>Regarding the increase in auto break-ins and how the community can be involved in bringing accountability to perpetrators, I recommended being in touch with the Ward 4 USAO Community Prosecutor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CM's short- and long-Term approaches to ending gun violence in Ward 4• MPD List Serv• Contact USAO Ward 4 Community Prosecutor with community concerns or invitations to community events• Jobs Not Guns – Career Youth Workshop on February 27th, 2023• Jobs Not Guns – Job Recruitment Fair on April 1st, 2023
Traffic and Pedestrian Safety	<p>Issue Areas: Blair Rd, New Hampshire, North Capitol, Longfellow St.</p> <p>A formal request was made to DDOT to explore additional pedestrian safety mechanisms at North Capitol St and New Hampshire Ave.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DDOT Traffic Safety Input• Learn more about the DDOT Rock Creek East Livability Studies
Green Space	I enthusiastically submitted a letter of support for this proposal to DPR's Ready2PlayDC!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ready2playdc.com/

January 22, 2023

Lamond | Riggs Park | South Manor Park

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January 24, 2023

Sixteenth Street Heights | Crestwood | Brightwood

Issue	Response	Resources
I-71 "Gift" Shops	See above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See above
DPR Staffing and Services	<p>I wrote to DPR Director Hunter about this Summer 2022 when the changes were first announced. Per the Director, DPR is short-staffed across the board, and the hours were cut based on usage and services and to mitigate safety risks. My team determined that DPR's Community Recreation staffing is only 58% filled. We need to use more effective recruitment strategies, including the use of bonuses and benefits we see for other agencies. Director Hunter committed to revisiting staffing Spring 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter to Director Hunter• Staffing stats at DPR as of December 2022 (compiled by CM JLG staff)
Public Safety and Resourcing: MPD Recruitment, Violence Interruptors, Drug Use, PETRA, RCCA, Role of the Community, Agency Coordination and Engagement	<p>We need to work together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MPD has reported that crime is down 35% in Ward 4. They are actively recruiting officers and the Council authorized bonuses and housing benefits to this end.• ↑ DBH budget for community response team capacity and harm-reduction strategies to make our communities healthy and safe• We have continuously engaged PETRA management to ensure that their residents and neighbors have safe living conditions. The OAG is actively engaged.• Here is my statement on the revised criminal code and accountability.• The community needs to be active. Please meet with the Ward 4 USAO Community Prosecutor, volunteer for CARE Days to build community, and work with SERVE DC to help those who need it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short- and Long-Term approaches to ending gun violence in Ward 4• 2022 Summer Safety Strategic Meeting• CM JLG Newsletter ward4news.com• MPD List Serv• MPD Hiring Bonuses• FY23 Budget Highlights• Contact USAO Ward 4 Community Prosecutor• I created Ward 4 CARE Days to bring agencies out directly to the community.
Youth Economic Development	<p>Our communities deserve opportunities for forward mobility and growth. I am cohosting a Jobs Not Guns Career Youth Workshop (Feb 27) and a Recruitment Fair (April 1) with the DC Business Gun Violence Prevention Coalition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jobs Not Guns Website• DC Summer Youth Employment Program (apply by February 28)
Traffic Safety Upgrades	<p>DDOT just updated their mechanism for requesting traffic safety upgrades. Please testify at their oversight hearing, Feb 27!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DDOT Traffic Safety Input• Oversight Hearing Info at janeeseward4.com/oversight/

January 26, 2023

Takoma | Manor Park

Issue	Response	Resources
Traffic Safety and DDOT Community Engagement: 3rd, Madison, Longfellow, Kansas Ave, Rittenhouse, 9th & Dahlia, Aspen, 5th, Nicholson, Van Buren,	DDOT relaunched the Traffic Safety Input 2.0 process in the new year. I share residents' and ANCs' concerns that the new process may restrict the role of the public in DDOT's public service. Still, residents should absolutely still document issue areas and advocate for change. DDOT has a Ward 4 representative that needs to know about these issues. My constituent services team is available to help residents navigate the TSI process. Residents should also testify at DDOT's Performance Oversight Hearing on the operations of the department to bring forward systemic change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DDOT Traffic Safety Input• Steps for submitting a TSI• Contact DDOT's W4 rep• Oversight Hearing Info at janeeseward4.com/oversight/
Public Safety and Resourcing: MPD Recruitment, Violence Interruptors and the NEAR Act, RCCA, OUC, Youth and Family Engagement	<p>A number of the issues presented during this session are addressed earlier in this report. With regards to OUC, I join the community in demanding better service and accountability. OUC is the first-step towards dispatching resources to our communities – their job is absolutely a matter of life and death, and their agency leadership must be accountable to that. DC Auditor Patterson has called for 31 reforms to the Department and I will continue to advocate for implementation. Please testify on March 29.</p> <p>I want to reiterate my commitment to addressing violence and crime in our Ward 4 communities by further investing in resources that address root problems. Resourcing our schools, community centers, and families is key to making long-term strides towards healthier and safer communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short- and Long-Term approaches to ending gun violence in Ward 4• 2022 Summer Safety Strategic Meeting• CM JLG Newsletter on OUC Operations• Contact USAO Ward 4 Community Prosecutor• Oversight Hearing Info at janeeseward4.com/oversight/
Schools	As the new Chair of the Committee on Facilities & Family Services, and as a DCPS grad, I wholeheartedly believe that schools that are fully resourced, staffed, and in shape are schools that make our young scholars and their communities healthier and safer. School buildings, teachers, mental health and family services are at the top of my priority list for DC's operational budget.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FY23 Budget Highlights• Cmte. on Facilities & Family Services• CM JLG Newsletter on this issue – 2/10/23
Homelessness	Please see below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please see below

January 30, 2023

Petworth | Brightwood Park

Issue	Response	Resources
Affordable housing	<p>We need to create more affordable housing. Right now, programs like inclusionary zoning (IZ) are only creating the bare minimum amount of affordable housing (60-80% AMI), and often don't meet the need for deeply affordable housing (30-50% AMI). The District needs to do more to support residents in our DCHA public housing and voucher waiting list. We are underutilizing these resources and we are simply not moving fast enough. Finally, I believe we as DC government need to step up – creating affordable housing cannot be left only to the private market. I introduced the Green New Deal for Social Housing bill to ensure that the District play a proactive role in creating mixed-use, deeply affordable housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DDOT Traffic Safety Input• Steps for submitting a TSI• Contact DDOT's W4 rep• Oversight Hearing Info at janeeseward4.com/oversight/
Addressing Homelessness	<p>The solution to homelessness is housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In addition to a lack of affordable housing opportunities, we need to recognize that we have more vacant units than unhoused residents in DC. Agencies like DOB need to intervene when properties are left empty.• The issue of men sleeping at the Wells Fargo on Georgia Ave has been outstanding for far too long, and is the direct result of a lack of shelter opportunities for men in the District. My team will continue working with city providers and Wells Fargo to bring available resources to these individuals, and we need to collectively advocate for funding for more safe shelter opportunities for our most vulnerable residents.• I pushed for the Homes and Hearts Budget Amendment in FY22 to create an additional 2,400 permanent supportive housing vouchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FY23 Budget Highlights• Cmte. on Facilities & Family Services• CM JLG Newsletter on this issue – 2/10/23
Drug Use in the Community	<p>The opioid crisis has taken too many lives in DC. The LiveLongDC plan makes deep investments in our health resources to save lives and reduce the spread of diseases like HIV. Partner organizations like HIPS help keep Ward 4 clean and safe, including operating vital needle collection programs. My constituent services team has extensive background in supporting community issues of this nature, so please be in touch so we can partner in making our communities stronger.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LiveLongDC<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Text LiveLongDC to 888-111 to get free NARCAN• HIPS.org
Bikelanes & DDOT	Please see above and testify on February 27!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• janeeseward4.com/oversight/

January 31, 2023

Chevy Chase | Barnaby Woods | Hawthorne

Issue	Response	Resources
Traffic Safety, particularly near schools	My Safe Routes to School Act was created to address school safety across the board. I share neighbors' concerns for the perceived lack of urgency when it comes to keeping our students safe. I welcomed neighbors suggestions for getting the community involved, including volunteer crossing guards. I also agree that the bill needs to cover early learning centers and other institutions that were removed from my initial proposal during markup.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic Safety Input• Safe Routes to School Act
Honoring the Pointers	I agree that the school should be renamed, similar to the rec center, to honor the Pointer family.	
DGS Facilities, including LP's Field	My team and I conduct yearly readiness tours of all 11 DPR centers and 18 DCPS schools in Ward 4. Fixing the field has been an outstanding item on DGS's to-do list. The issue with the field is erosion; they need to identify a long term solution, otherwise they will keep doing patch work and the same issues will happen again. We were told by DPR that DGS estimated a \$1.5M quote to fix the issue. My Committee Director is working to get more details of that quote so that we can move forward during the budget cycle. I am also prioritizing adequate lighting and play-area conditions in my budget letter to the Mayor. Please testify about this during the DPR and DGS oversight hearings on 2/23 and 2/28, respectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testify at DPR Hearing• Testify at DGS Hearing
ECC / Maret Fields	There are concerns with how the transformation of the ECC/Maret fields is going, including issues with runoff. The BZA has not yet issued a written order approving or disapproving Maret's plans, nor has the Dept of Buildings issued their own permits. As a Councilmember, I am respectful of the roles assigned to other officials who decide zoning variances and permit applications, which often become contentious. I agree with bringing forth a more holistic approach to projects like these, and recognizing that the outcome of contested cases is bound to disappoint someone, I will continue to listen and exercise proper oversight to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and in accordance with District code.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testify at OZ/BZA Hearings (Performance 2/23; Budget 3/28)• Testify at DOB Hearings (Performance 2/23; Budget 3/28)• Testify at DOEE Hearings (Performance 2/16; Budget 4/6)
Chevy Chase Civic Core Small Area Plan	As Council, we have power to encourage Executive agencies to improve their relationship with community. I've done this through oversight, letters, and my CARE Days to bring agencies to hear directly from residents. I will continue to hear your concerns, and encourage residents to testify during DMPED's performance (2/15) and budget (4/10) oversight hearings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• janeeseward4.com/oversight/• janeeseward4.com/care/

Thank you!

Thank you to all who made time to voice your concerns and love for our ward. Together, it is clear that our residents are full of passion for their community and are eager to take action to be part of our solutions. Over the next few weeks, my team will be in touch with residents who asked for help with a constituent or legislative matter. I am committed to shaping my advocacy and legislative work this Council Period around your priorities and direct asks. Please stay engaged and in action.

In partnership,
Janeese



Stay in Touch, Constituent Services

janeeseward4.com/constituent-services/

202.724.8052

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Ward 4 Newsletter

ward4news.com



Testify at Oversight Hearings

janeeseward4.com/oversight/