



Post Office Box 34776  
Washington, DC 20043  
www.logancircle.org



9 Dupont Circle, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
www.dupont-circle.org

April 23, 2021

Brooke Pinto, Councilmember  
350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 106  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Councilmember Pinto:

Litter, rats, dead trees: community associations across the District spend substantial time and effort to address these longstanding problems with our shared public spaces. Kudos to the government for making some attempts to address the issues. The Urban Forestry Division of DDOT has planted hundreds of trees; Clean Teams funded by the District make a big difference on our commercial streets, but more could be done. Dupont Circle Civic Association and Logan Circle Community Association are writing to urge you to increase the budgets for DPW and DDOT to address some long-standing problems. In particular, we are requesting:

1. Additional funding so District trucks regularly water each new tree for three years. In their first year, trees need 10-20 gallons of water per week and in the second and third years, they need 20-40 gallons per week. While some residents, building owners, and commercial establishments are able and willing to water trees near their homes and buildings, many are not. Additional care is needed from the District, which would substantially aid in increasing the health-giving benefits of tree canopies in the parts of the District most in need;
2. Funding to replace the existing style of litter can with a better one. We have attached a page to describe problems with the existing cans and to describe our preferred litter can;
3. Install more litter cans on busy streets. Most litter cans are on commercial streets, and DPW has rejected residents' requests to install more on busy streets such as 13<sup>th</sup> Street, NW.

These small moves would go a long way to cut down on future maintenance costs and citizen complaints. We urge you to discuss these initiatives with the Administration and include more funding in the 2023 budget to implement them. We would be happy to discuss at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Glenn Engelman".

Glenn Engelman, President  
Dupont Circle Civic Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pamela Wessling".

Pamela Wessling, President  
Logan Circle Community Association

Cc: Anita Bonds, At-Large Council Member      Christina Henderson, At-Large Councilmember  
Elissa Silverman, At-Large Councilmember      Robert C. White, At-Large Councilmember  
Christine V. Davis, Interim Director, DC Department of Public Works  
Everett Lott, Interim Director, DC Department of Transportation

## **ATTACHMENT: MORE AND BETTER LITTER CANS**

Rats and litter are all-too-common problems in our neighborhoods. As civic and community associations we attempt to deal with them by organizing clean-up days and rat patrols. But there are some simple changes that the District's Administration and City Council could put in place to address these recurring issues: 1.) replace existing litter cans with better ones and 2.) install more litter cans on streets where litter proliferates. We urge the Council to increase the DDOT and DPW budgets so that they have no excuse for not addressing litter more comprehensively.

### **1. Replace Existing Litter Cans**

The existing litter cans are designed with a can that fits inside a slatted metal receptacle and has a side door to open to remove trash bags. The cans are open at the top. Problems with this design are multiple:

- The cans are not large enough, or DPW trash pick-up not frequent enough, to keep trash from overflowing and blowing in the streets;
- The open top design allows trash to overflow;
- It is easy for rats to enter the cans;
- The side doors do not latch properly, and many are regularly hanging open; and
- Trash collects at the bottom between the liner and the exterior can and remains there forever, also attracting rats.



Litter can just after being emptied by DPW

There are much better litter cans (called "Big Belly") used in many cities and in DC locations where private developers maintain public property, such as at The Wharf. The "Big Belly" is available with a solar compaction feature. This type is totally enclosed; to deposit trash, one opens a flap door much like on a mailbox. Rats cannot get into these cans; litter isn't able to overflow the can; trash is not trapped between the can and liner; and there is no swinging side door. The "Big Belly" has two to three times more capacity than the standard DC litter can, and if the solar feature is used to compact the trash, that would be even better.

### **2. Install More Litter Cans**

There are not enough cans for the demand from people on our busy streets. This is especially the case in locations that are adjacent to main commercial streets, do not have Clean Teams, but experience a lot of litter spilling over from the commercial areas.