

Reclaiming the Commonwealth: A 4-Year Blueprint for Economic Democracy, Generational Wealth, and Community Sovereignty in the District of Columbia (2027–2031)

Executive Summary: The Unified Paradigm Shift

The District of Columbia stands at an acute, bifurcated socioeconomic bottleneck. This 4-year vision completely rejects the prevailing binary of corporate-aligned market reliance and isolated, unfunded progressive incrementalism. By merging radical structural reforms with an uncompromised, self-funding financial architecture, this administration treats mobility, nutrition, housing, family stability, and energy sovereignty not as commercial commodities, but as fundamental public resources and guaranteed civil rights.

The entire platform requires \$348.8 million annually for direct family and social infrastructure investments alongside a \$1.5 billion 5-year capital plan for food and transit infrastructure. It is fully financed by capturing elite corporate revenue, speculative asset growth, and carceral waste—requiring zero tax increases on working-class residents or local small businesses.

The Progressive Revenue & Capital Allocation Matrix

To permanently eliminate the "subject-to-funding" loophole that historically defangs progressive local laws, every core initiative is hard-coded to a reliable, progressive revenue engine.

- **Professional Services Business Activity Tax (BAT) (+\$500.0M/year):** Enacts a 2.0% value-added tax on the District-derived net economic activity of for-profit firms. By incorporating a \$200,000 standard deduction and functioning as a dollar-for-dollar credit against existing franchise taxes, it completely shields local mom-and-pop merchants. The tax falls exclusively on massive, resident-shielded corporate law, lobbying, and consulting partnerships whose out-of-state owners exploit a legacy 1979 Home Rule Act loophole to pay zero local franchise taxes.

- **Static Tax Conformity (+\$157.6M/year):** Permanently decouples the D.C. tax code from the regressive federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) as of January 1, 2025. This clawback recovers local revenues previously diverted into business expensing loopholes for the top 1% to fund local Child Tax Credit and EITC expansions.
- **Progressive Capital Gains Surtax (+\$121.0M to \$123.0M/year):** Establishes a tiered 1.5% to 3% surtax on resident capital gains from speculative investments and luxury real estate for households earning above \$500,000, targeting passive wealth concentration.
- **Corporate Real Estate Recordation Tax Reallocation (+\$75.0M/year):** Redirects a fraction of downtown development wealth directly into the local Food Access Fund (FAF).
- **Elimination of Stepped-Up Basis (+\$43.7M/year):** Captures unrealized gains on inherited, appreciated luxury assets at death.
- **Corporate Developer Abatement Reductions (+\$25.0M/year):** Phases out unproven trickle-down subsidies like "Housing in Downtown" and "Office to Anything".
- **Independent MPD Overtime Audit Reclamation (+\$45.0M/year):** Establishes an independent Office of Forensic Payroll Audit to implement automated scheduling software and crush systemic payroll fraud within the police department. This caps an unsustainable budget deficit that saw MPD exhaust 85% of its overtime allocation by February in FY26.
- **Central Food Processing Facility (CFPF) Procurement Savings (+\$25.0M/year):** Consolidates \$62 million in fragmented agency food purchases under a single framework, achieving economies of scale while sourcing directly from regional Black-owned and cooperative farms.
- **Data Excise Tax (+\$20.0M/year):** Levies a flat annual \$4 fee per user on commercial big-tech entities extracting personal data from District residents to fund municipal grid modernization.

4-Year Phased Implementation Timeline

Phase 1 (2027): Structural Mobilization & Immediate Relational Relief

Focus: Passing the revenue omnibus, halting state utility/child support extraction, and eliminating the early childhood care waitlist.

- **Universal Early Care & Parity:** Inject \$63.2 million into the Child Care Subsidy Program to immediately eliminate the enrollment waitlist freeze for working-class families. Allocate \$82.2 million to the Pay Equity Fund to completely restore competitive wage parity with DCPS teachers for early childhood educators, adding a 2% cost-of-living adjustment. Add \$1.4 million to HealthCare4ChildCare to guarantee free medical coverage for providers.

- **Restorative Family Pass-Through:** Authorize legacy child support enforcement software to transition to a 100% direct pass-through model. The city permanently ceases its extractive cost-recovery model—which previously intercepted child support payments to repay municipal benefits, leaving families on TANF with less than \$13,000 annually. Collected current payments and arrears bypass municipal accounts and flow straight to custodial parents without impacting TANF eligibility.
- **Immediate Utility Justice & Debt Relief:** Force the Public Service Commission to realign Pepco's authorized Return on Equity (ROE) from a bloated 9.5% to a market-matched 7.0%, immediately saving ratepayers \$40 million annually. Enact the Transparent Rates and Utility Expenses Act to permanently ban speculative Multi-Year Rate Plans, forcing rate adjustments to be based strictly on audited historical expenditures. Enact the Automatic Enrollment for Utility Affordability Act, using SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid databases to automatically enroll low-income households into Residential Aid Discount codes.
- **Decarcerating Public Safety:** Statutorily replace the permissive, highly subjective "objective reasonableness" use of force standard with an uncompromising, California-style Statutory Definitions Framework. This writes binding legal thresholds for Deadly Force, Imminent Threat, and Necessity directly into the D.C. Official Code, mandating de-escalation as an exhausted prerequisite of last resort and strictly banning lethal force for minor, non-violent offenses. Enact "Karon's Law" to legally ban dangerous high-speed police chases, roadblocking, and vehicle ramming in residential neighborhoods.

Phase 2 (2028): Aggressive Asset Activation & Restorative Community Justice

Focus: Enacting systemic debt amnesty, deploying alternative crisis response, launching tenant-ownership structures, and executing land reclamation.

- **The Debt-to-Prison Pipeline Dismantled:** Launch the Child Support Debt Relief and Amnesty Program. Low-income parents owing more than \$1,000 in state-assigned TANF arrears who face unemployment, illness, or incarceration are automatically enrolled. Accumulating interest is completely halted, and historic state-assigned debt is systematically forgiven upon compliance milestones to clear credit reports and restore driver's licenses. Support orders are automatically paused during periods of incarceration or full-time workforce development enrollment.
- **Civilian-Led Alternative Crisis Response:** Establish the District Alternative Crisis Response (DACR) division as an independent, civilian-led agency within the 911 dispatch framework. Fully fund 20 mobile responder teams (\$10M/year reallocated from MPD overtime) consisting of a licensed behavioral health clinician and an EMT to handle low-risk,

nonviolent calls regarding mental health distress, substance use, and welfare checks citywide. This shifts 3% to 5% of routine calls away from armed law enforcement, yielding a 4.12x cost reduction per incident and structurally disrupting the cycle of arrest and incarceration for unhoused residents.

- **Eminent Domain & Metabolic Justice:** Deploy aggressive executive land-use strategies to counter "food apartheid" east of the Anacostia River. Exercise eminent domain authority to seize the stalled, vacant Capitol Gateway Marketplace site in Ward 7, transferring it to a community land trust to establish a 55,000-square-foot non-profit retail facility. Release matching capital grants from a scaled \$75 million annual Food Access Fund to design and build state-of-the-art retail properties leased at zero rent to community-owned, worker-run grocery cooperatives modeled on the Mandela Grocery Co-op. These co-ops will mandate a permanent 50% point-of-sale discount for SNAP and WIC recipients on all fresh produce.
- **Renter Protection & Judicial Efficiency:** Counter the predatory rollbacks of the RENTAL Act of 2025 by establishing a balanced Eviction Diversion and Judicial Efficiency Framework to clear the 12-to-16-month Landlord-Tenant Court non-payment backlog. Establish a strict 30-day ERAP processing mandate backed by Mansion Tax funding, providing financial certainty to affordable housing providers while keeping families housed. Establish the Legal Parity Initiative, providing a Universal Right to Counsel for all tenants earning up to 400% of the federal poverty line to insulate renters against bad-faith, allegation-based evictions.
- **Explicit Survivor Exemptions:** Operationalize uncompromised protections for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking in full alignment with VAWA. Mandate compulsory lease bifurcation, allowing landlords to immediately evict a violent perpetrator while preserving the tenancy of the survivor, supported by flexible self-certification pathways and emergency transfer rights to alternative municipal units.

Phase 3 (2029): Intergenerational Wealth Expansion & Universal Transit Equity

Focus: Launching sovereign baby bonds, implementing zero-fare mass transit, establishing youth democratic governance, and professionalizing route commutes.

- **Sovereign Baby Bonds Restoration:** Permanently restore the Child Wealth Building Act using a stable \$30 million annual General Fund allocation rather than volatile sports-betting contracts. Expand wealth trust eligibility to infants born under the D.C. Healthcare Alliance, ensuring low-income immigrant children are structurally included in long-term wealth building.
- **Dual-Track Zero-Fare Transit Strategy:** De-commodify daily mobility across the District. Transition the entire District Metrobus system to a permanent zero-fare model for

all riders, eliminating boarding delays and administrative overhead (\$100M–\$120M annual cost funded by the BAT). Concurrently, execute automated enrollment for Metrorail and MetroAccess services, leveraging SNAP and Medicaid databases to automatically distribute free "Connect DC" cards to low-income residents.

- **Democratic Youth Governance:** Dismantle top-down carceral containment and paternalistic curfews. Establish a democratically elected, binding Youth Governing Council composed of representatives aged 14 to 21 from every ward. The council holds final, statutory veto power over a newly codified Youth Self-Determination Fund, governing spending, hiring, and programming priorities for all municipal recreation centers and out-of-school-time initiatives.
- **Professionalized Commutes & Safe Transit Bus Pilot:** Fully fund and implement the Safe Passage Training and School Engagement Amendment Act (\$1.32M over the financial plan). Legally mandate that all Safe Passage Ambassadors complete 56 hours of paid, standardized annual training (\$23.50/hour baseline wage) covering conflict de-escalation, cultural competency, and trauma-informed care. Deploy a dedicated Municipal School Bus Pilot fleet in Wards 7 and 8 to transport elementary and middle school students directly to school doors, bypassing dangerous transit hubs and adult solicitation.
- **Safe Passage Workers' Care Covenant:** Protect frontline ambassadors from secondary traumatic stress and physical danger by establishing a centralized municipal indemnification fund. Ambassadors are guaranteed post-incident trauma counseling and up to 10 days of fully paid trauma-recovery leave. Equip-route systems with secure communication networks linked to unarmed community crisis teams for instant safety backup.

Phase 4 (2030): Systemic Energy Sovereignty & Deep De-Commodified Housing

Focus: Achieving 100% single-stair infill code adoption, deploying the public housing Capital Corps, implementing the split-rate land tax, and executing public power transitions.

- **Single-Stair Architectural Code Reform:** Authorize single-stair residential layouts up to six stories (maximum 4 units per floor), completely unlocking development on narrow, irregularly shaped infill lots across Petworth, Columbia Heights, and Brookland. Use Mansion Tax revenues to cover the DOB's \$568,000 administrative regulation and plan-reviewer training deficit, bypassing the CFO's budget objection. Explicitly extend single-stair authorization to downtown adaptive reuse projects using the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), reducing commercial office-to-residential structural retrofitting costs by 20% to 30%.
- **The DCHA 'Capital Corps' Force Account:** Resolve the city's public housing maintenance backlog. Hire public housing residents directly as "force account" municipal

labor to perform rapid local remediation of mold, lead, and structural damage within their own complexes. Direct employment completely bypasses the \$250,000 council contract approval bottleneck that historically stalls repairs. All workers are guaranteed union-equivalent prevailing wages under Davis-Bacon standards, keeping wealth directly within marginalized quadrants.

- **Split-Rate Land Value Tax (LVT) & Progressive Mansion Tax:** Dismantle speculative land banking by transitioning the municipal property tax code to an explicit split-rate structure. Land is taxed at a significantly higher rate than the physical structures built upon it, making it financially punitive to hold vacant lots while rewarding high-density housing production. Implement a progressive Mansion Tax—a 1% surcharge on residential properties valued above \$2.5 million—targeting only the wealthiest 2% of estates to generate permanent capital for Limited Equity Cooperatives (LECs) under TOPA.
- **The Public Power Transition:** Strip Pepco of community solar credit administration, transferring control to the D.C. Green Bank to end corporate undercrediting. Formally reject Washington Gas's rebranded \$215 million "District SAFE" pipeline replacement program, redirecting funds to rate base-funded leak repairs. Enact a municipal Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) framework, enabling the District government to act as a single purchasing entity to procure bulk, 100% renewable electricity. Allocate BAT revenues to fund a comprehensive operational feasibility study for full municipalization.
- **Utility Workers' Just Transition Accord:** Protect existing union workforces at Pepco (IBEW Local 1900) and Washington Gas (Teamsters Local 96) during the transition. Codify a Thermal Energy Networks (TENs) Skills Bridge based on NY's UTENJA framework, establishing a statutory "right of first refusal" and a direct pathway with full wage parity for existing gas workers into union-led clean geothermal network construction and operations.

4-Year Success Metrics & Milestones

Policy Dimension	Milestone Goal (By Year 4 / 2031)	Primary Funding Source	Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Target
Child Support & Family Wealth	Complete debt amnesty for low-income obligors; 100% pass-through fully operational.	Business Activity Tax (BAT) & Static Tax Conformity.	Zero dollars in child support intercepted by government; 100% enrollment in pipelines.



RAISING THE STANDARDS

Four Year Vision

Policy Dimension	Milestone Goal (By Year 4 / 2031)	Primary Funding Source	Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Target
Early Childhood Education	Universal subsidized early care across all eight wards; structural teacher salary cuts reversed.	Progressive Capital Gains Surtax & BAT.	Zero families remaining on the childcare subsidy waitlist; full wage parity with DCPS achieved citywide.
Food Sovereignty	Construction of community-owned grocery co-ops and non-profit supermarkets.	BAT & Real Estate Recordation Tax Reallocation.	91,000 residents brought out of food deserts; permanent 50% discount on healthy food for SNAP/WIC.
Transit & Infrastructure	Transition of entire District Metrobus system to zero-fare operations.	Business Activity Tax (BAT).	+50% ridership increase; Metrorail wait times in Wards 7/8 reduced from 60 to 12 minutes.
Affordable Housing	Delivery of 45,000 synthesized affordable units; elimination of DCHA mold backlog.	Progressive Mansion Tax & Split-Rate Land Value Tax (LVT).	1,000 low-income units preserved under cooperative tenant ownership; 10,000 work orders cleared.
Community Safety	Deployment of 20 DACR mobile crisis responder vans across all 8 wards 24/7.	MPD Fraudulent Overtime Audits & Corporate Loophole Reductions.	25% reduction in violent juvenile arrests; 30% drop in low-level charges via civilian diversion.
Energy Sovereignty	Implementation of citywide CCA buying club and ROE margin compression.	BAT, Wealth Surcharges, and Federal IIJA/IRA Capital Matches.	22% average energy bill savings for renters; 100% retention of existing union utility labor.



RAISING THE STANDARDS

Four Year Vision

Conclusion: A Self-Sovereign Capital

By shifting the municipal framework away from speculative, corporate developer-led concessions and toward de-commodified public utilities, worker-owned wealth construction, and anti-carceral safety nets, this platform builds an insulated, self-sustaining local economy. This is not a series of fragmented reformist proposals—it is a comprehensive, coordinated strategy for working-class liberation, racial equity, and true democratic sovereignty for the residents of the District of Columbia.