



Councilmember Zachary Parker

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to provide grant authority to the District Department of Transportation to Issue a Grant to Improve Water Access at Wangari Gardens.

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Friends of Wangari Gardens Grant Emergency Declaration of 2026.”

Sec. 2. (a) In the Report and Recommendations of the Committee on Transportation and the Environment on the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget for Agencies Under Its Purview (Report),¹ the Committee on Transportation and the Environment (Committee) identified \$75,000 in the capital budget of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) for the “installation of a water meter and potable water source” at Wangari Gardens, a community garden-park located on DDOT property bordered by Kenyon St. NW, Park Pl. NW, and Irving St. NW.

(b) Friends of Wangari Gardens is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has a memorandum of understanding with DDOT regarding the use of Wangari Gardens. As detailed

¹ <https://dccouncil.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/FY2026-DRAFT-TE-Committee-Budget-Report-with-Attachments-Circulation.pdf/>.

in the Report, Friends of Wangari Gardens has been using a fire hydrant permit from DC Water as its water source, but the cost of this arrangement has increased dramatically in recent years.

As the Report details,

The treasurer for the Friends of Wangari Gardens, in communications with the Ward 1 and Ward 5 Council offices, shared with the Committee, notes that the 2025 bill for the meter and backflow preventer rental totaled \$5,525, which is considered “commercial use.” This means Wangari Gardens pays the same rate as a developer demolishing a building. The largest portion of this bill is the refundable deposit for the meter (\$2,750) and the daily rental fee (\$15/day totaling \$2,700 for the season), while the actual water usage amounts to less than \$1,000. This fee structure has led to the depletion of the Friends of Wangari Gardens' bank account in recent years, requiring personal funds to cover the bill in 2025.²

(c) Funds were allocated to DDOT because that agency is the custodian of the property where Wangari Gardens is located. Funds could not be appropriated to D.C. Water because D.C. Water is an independent self-financing authority

(d) The Council adopted the Committee’s recommendation and included \$75,000 in capital funds for a water source at Wangari Gardens in the FY 2026 Local Budget Act of 2025 and FY 2026 Local Budget Emergency Act of 2025.

(e) In conversations between DDOT staff, officers of Friends of Wangari Gardens, and council staff, it has become clear that the best path to expeditious completion of this project is for Friends of Wangari Gardens to manage the project directly and for DDOT to transfer the funds to them. While DDOT is the custodian of the property, it does not have staff capacity or expertise to engage with D.C. Water on the unique needs of Wangari Gardens.

(f) Emergency legislation is needed to provide DDOT with authority to make this grant to Friends of Wangari Gardens. While the Department of Transportation Establishment Act of 2022, effective May 21, 2002 (D.C. Law 14-137; D.C. Official Code § 50-921.02(c)(1)) provides

² *Id.* at 51

DDOT with the authority to make grants under \$1 million dollars, that authority is constrained by language requiring that those grants “achieve the District’s transportation goals, including safety objectives and to support streateries and the streatory program.” The emergency legislation clarifies that DDOT has the authority to make a grant to establish a water source at Wangari Gardens even though such a grant not related to achieving the District’s transportation goals.

Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances, making it necessary that the Fidelity in Compliance of Contracting and Procurement Emergency Amendment Act of 2021 be adopted after a single reading.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.