

Tommy Wells 2010 – [www.TommyWells2010.com](http://www.TommyWells2010.com)

1) Why are you running for City Council, and if (re)elected, what are the three most important things you intend to accomplish in the near term?

At its best, Washington--and Ward 6 in particular--offers residents an exciting environment, diverse community, and convenient lifestyle. Here we enjoy the possibility of "five-minute living," where most everything we need, as well as a rich variety of cultural amenities, is within a short walk or transit ride of our homes. Some of us already have it. My vision is to build a city that provides that experience for everyone--singles, families, children, and seniors, no matter their background or income.

**Transportation Innovation:** I am working to expand bicycle facilities, transit options, and safer pedestrian access for people of all ages--and build a new generation of streetcars that connects our neighborhoods to retail and restaurants, starting with the H Street NE corridor. These innovations are improving our quality of life while reducing our carbon footprint.

**Educational Excellence:** All students (especially elementary students) must be able to attend a quality school in their own neighborhood, and every day we move closer to that goal. To expand on the unprecedented renaissance of our Ward 6 elementary schools, I am partnering with DC Public Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee to drive middle school improvements and reinvent Eastern High School--so it can once again live up to its motto, "the Pride of Capitol Hill".

**Neighborhood Amenities:** I am a champion of our ward's vigorous arts community as well as the new recreation center and library in Rosedale and retail expansion on H Street NE, along Massachusetts Avenue NW, in Southwest and around Nationals Park. Working side-by-side with the citizens of Ward 6, we are building a dynamic community that embraces and celebrates its unique character.

2) What are the three most important issues facing the District of Columbia in the next decade?

- Financial solvency so we can meet the needs of all our residents
- Building a sustainable city that will manage energy needs, support multi-modal transportation, and protect our health and welfare
- Sustain diversity, especially targeting resources and policies for residents to "age in place" in our city. It will require a health care strategy along with a plan for seniors to access city amenities.

3) What are your qualifications to serve as Council member?

As a lawyer and social worker with experience in government and the private sector, I have a track record of accomplishments for our residents.

As an ANC Commissioner I generated community support for the successful Hope VI project – The Dwellings at Ellen Wilson. The development supports mixed income housing and it is a national model.

As a member of the DC Board of Education, I led the revitalization of our neighborhood schools in Ward 6 by introducing programs for 3 year olds and worked alongside parents to improve buildings and recruiting top notch school leadership. Almost all the elementary schools in the Ward are filling up and serve as the schools of choice of our residents.

As a Council member I have continued to oversee the renaissance of Ward 6 public schools including the development of a high quality high school with the re-launching of Eastern High School in 2011.

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I successfully launched a major initiative to clean up the Anacostia River by charging a fee for disposable bags and creating a fund to be used for clean up and restoration of our river and watershed.

In my role of Chair of Human Services I oversaw the creation of the innovative program, Housing First. The program provides housing for chronically homeless and severely compromised individuals who historically have not been humanely served.

4) In the context of the projected budget shortfall, do you believe the current budget discussions fairly balance increases in revenue against spending reductions, and fairly allocate the burden of revenue increases? If not, what would you propose?

The current budget shortfall of roughly \$600 million is forcing the District to make some difficult choices. I believe that the city's budget should be a reflection of our shared priorities and the budget did not meet that goal. Rather, it attempted to balance the budget with steep cuts to services for the most vulnerable, and paying for other budget needs by raiding special funds like the Anacostia River Cleanup Fund and raising parking meter fees. My wife and I were not asked to make any sacrifice because we do not rely on government services. The Council passed a budget that restored the Anacostia River Cleanup Fund and other special funds, eliminated the parking meter hikes, and reduced proposed fees on small businesses. I also supported reforming our income tax code to treat high income households differently than low income households.

I believe we should increase the income tax for a truly fair and honest, not just cut services and raise fines and fees.

5) The District of Columbia is suffering significantly higher unemployment than Maryland and Virginia in this recession. Describe your plan for broad-based job recovery.

The city must continue its priority on first source agreements and support for apprenticeship and training programs that create a pathway for careers for District residents. I'm working with city agencies to create job fairs and opportunities when the District invests in large projects like school modernization and recreation center construction.

6) If (re)elected, what will you do to create and protect affordable housing options for both home-buyers and tenants, and alleviate homelessness?

If re-elected, I will continue to promote affordable housing growth in all parts of the city – both for home purchase and rental. Hope VI projects such as Ellen Wilson and Arthur Capper are successfully rebuilding low-income housing with mixed incomes to create more sustainable and healthy communities. I will also continue to push aggressively to grow the Housing First program that has moved hundreds of chronically homeless individuals off the streets and into housing with wrap-around services to address mental health, addiction and other needs. I believe Ward 6 is leading the way to create more affordable housing for the city.

7) Do you think reform in the D.C. Public Schools is headed in the right direction? Explain your answer.

Elementary schools across Ward 6 are experiencing an unprecedented renaissance and waiting lists for pre-K programs demonstrate demand far outpacing capacity. I believe all students must be able to attend a quality school in their own neighborhood, and every day we move closer to that

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goal. To build on the success at the elementary school level, I am partnering with DCPS, parents and teachers to drive middle school improvements and reinvent Eastern High School.

8) What policies do you recommend for reducing crime and increasing public safety in the District of Columbia?

While crime on the streets has decreased in recent years, no level of crime is acceptable. Through close coordination and partnership with MPD Chief Cathy Lanier, I have supported the city's rapid response when crime spikes such as the rash of armed carjackings earlier this year. This quick and strategic action has led to arrests and a sharp reduction in crime. I am also working to implement Juvenile Crime Task Force recommendations to reduce the number of days a youth can skip school, require parental accountability and break down confidentiality barriers that block early intervention and community accountability for juvenile crime.

9) What are the three most important steps that need to be taken to revitalize the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority?

WMATA has three key initiatives to revitalize the system:

- Long-term sustainable capital and operating funding from the three jurisdictions and federal government. I co-sponsored Jim Graham's bill calling for a 10 Cent tax on gasoline for all regional jurisdictions to fund Metro.
- Connection to a robust streetcar system that connects neighborhoods and supports the development of local, non-commuter-based connections.
- Continued growth of Express and Rapid bus service to provide convenient and efficient transit.

10) If (re)elected, what steps will you take to invigorate the D.C. statehood movement?

I will continue to assert DC has the same right of control over local matters, the same as a state, as outlined in my transit power bill regarding overhead wires.

I will support the use government resources to support statehood for DC.

I will take the DC Statehood message as I represent the District in my official duties that carry me outside the District.

11) A moratorium on earmarks was declared in Fiscal Year 2010. Do you think past practices for awarding earmark grants should be reformed? If so, how?

I do not support no-bid awards to named programs or corporations where the service could be provided by more than one DC provider.

I would consider a no-bid grant where it is not feasible.

12) The District's election laws do not allow the rights of minorities to be subject to popular vote. Do you nevertheless think the District's new Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Equality Law should be put up for popular vote? Why or why not?

No. While I undoubtedly believe that the voters of the District of Columbia would approve such a measure, I do not believe the rights of a minority should be put to a vote of the majority.

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