



**Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

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**ANC 3/4G Resolution
For the Commission to Foster
More Informed Community Engagement
In the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan
April 12, 2021**

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

1. ANC 3/4G’s February 10, 2020 resolution on proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan supported increased density for the Chevy Chase Gateway—as the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) called for—but asked that no zoning changes be approved until completion of a Small Area Plan, which would be a prerequisite to new development. Small Area Plans provide more fine-grained guidance on where—within the plan’s bounded geographic area—higher density should be located and how the design transition should be handled.¹
2. Based on the Commission’s feedback on the Office of Planning’s amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, the Mayor proposed designating the Connecticut Avenue corridor as a Future Planning Analysis Area on the Generalized Policy Map. This designation means the area would benefit from substantial community input provided to Office of Planning for the purpose of creating a formal plan that would be submitted to the Council for approval. Such a plan would provide guidance and the details necessary for any future development in the area.²

¹ “ANC 3/4G Resolution Requesting Changes to the Office of Planning’s Proposed Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan,” February 10, 2020, page 4, available at: <https://bit.ly/2Ir1Gzb>.

² See Office of Planning’s Letter dated April 23, 2020 regarding the “Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3/4G Comprehensive Plan Resolution,” available at: https://plandc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/Comprehensiveplan/page_content/attachments/ANC%203-4G_Response.pdf.

3. Based on the ANC’s recommendation,³ Councilmember Cheh identified funding for such an effort and the Council allocated \$150,000 in FY 2021 funding for the DC Office of Planning to undertake a Small Area Plan in the Chevy Chase neighborhood along Connecticut Avenue, NW.
4. In June 2020, ANC 3/4G Task Force on Racism was formed and the Housing Work Group submitted its final report to the Commission on November 13, 2020.⁴ The report and its seven recommendations attracted significant attention and many comments during several public meetings—the October 26, 2020 Commission public meeting, the November 16, 2020 Virtual Town Hall Meeting on the Task Force on Racism’s Community, Education/Mental Health, and Housing Work Group reports,⁵ the February 4, 2021 Commission public meeting, and the March 8, 2021 Commission public meeting. Many comments expressed a need for continued and more engagement opportunities with the community on the housing recommendations.
5. In October 2020, the Office of Planning began initial preparations for the “Chevy Chase Small Area Plan,” which “will be the guiding vision for inclusive growth rooted in a people-centered planning and design approach that aligns with OP’s priorities of housing production economic recovery, and equity and racial justice.”⁶
6. The Chevy Chase Small Area Plan’s proposed boundaries are from south to north—Military Road to Western Avenue (MD line)—and from west to east—41st Street to Nevada Avenue. Attention will be focused on land use, housing, and urban design policy recommendations within these boundaries. The Office of Planning intends to coordinate development of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan with District agencies responsible for undertaking the design plans for the modernization of the Chevy Chase Community Center and Chevy Chase Public Library as well as the Connecticut Avenue Reversible Lane Study.
7. It is important to note and emphasize that prior to the completion and the subsequent adoption by the Council of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, upzoning requests presented to the Zoning Commission would not be supported. Once the Small Area Plan is completed and adopted by the DC Council, any upzoning request would be supported, if and only if it adhered to specific design guidelines spelled out in the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan.⁷

³ ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the Committee on Recreation and Youth Affairs, Committee on Education, Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization, and Committee of the Whole Budget Hearing on the Department of Parks and Recreation, DC Public Library, Office of Planning, and Housing Production Trust Fund, May 27, May 29, June 4, and June 8, 2020, available at <https://bit.ly/3fY4hPZ>.

⁴ The ANC 3/4G Task Force on Racism’s Housing Work Group final report dated November 13, 2020 can be found here: <https://anc3g.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Housing-Group-Draft-Report-11-13-20-.pdf>.

⁵ The Housing Work Group’s responses to questions raised at the November 16, 2020 Town Hall Meeting can be found here: https://anc3g.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/TF-on-Racism_Housing-WG_QAs-from-11_16_20-Town-Hall_final.pdf.

⁶ Description found on the home page of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan website (otherwise known as the “project website”) here: <https://publicinput.com/chevychase>.

⁷ See the Generalized Policy Map here:

https://plandc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/Comprehensiveplan/page_content/attachments/PolicyAmendments420.pdf. The legend on that map under the category, “Future Planning Analysis Areas,” identifies the Chevy Chase, DC area for planning activities (i.e., the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan) and states in the second paragraph, “Such analysis should precede any significant zoning changes in the area.”

8. On February 2, 2021, the Office of Planning convened and held its first meeting with members of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan Community Advisory Committee, which is a key component of a Small Area Plan. The Community Advisory Committee is a group of volunteer community members who are expected to provide guidance to the Office of Planning during the development of the plan. The membership of the Community Advisory Committee is intended to reflect the diversity of voices and interests that constitute the Chevy Chase neighborhood in DC, including citizens associations, tenant groups, ANC, Councilmember's office, business operators, arts/cultural community, older adults, and youth. Members of the CAC should live, work, study, and/or own property within the District.⁸
9. The role of the Community Advisory Committee is to: (i) learn about and engage in the planning process and have direct access to interagency partners; (ii) attend scheduled meetings; (iii) provide input and insight about issues and opportunities within the community throughout the key milestones of the planning process; (iv) disseminate information about the planning process to neighbors and community network; and (v) advise the District government and make recommendations regarding plan content, including vision, goals, and recommendations.

The Office of Planning has indicated that the Community Advisory Committee is expected to meet in a virtual setting up to six times throughout the development of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan and attend meetings with the general public, with attendance at additional meetings, if necessary. The Community Advisory Committee sunsets with the Council adoption of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan.

10. On February 22, 2021, the Commission approved a Resolution "*Requesting the Office of Planning Adopt a More Engaged and Collaborative Process for Developing the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan*" that asks OP to "take an even more engaged and collaborative approach to the planning process."⁹
11. On March 4, 2021, the Office of Planning hosted a public kick-off meeting, one of three scheduled for the next six months, for the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan that attracted nearly 400 attendees. The two-hour virtual meeting was plagued with IT difficulties, and the majority of the comments from the community were not fully addressed. Comments posted on the chat revealed sentiments expressing:

worry that the Office of Planning has already decided what the built environment will look like; concern over the height of buildings; skepticism of the need for this process or any development in Chevy Chase at all; support for affordable housing in Friendship Heights (and not Chevy Chase); suspicion over the profit motive of developers and whether their profit could be curtailed; confusion over how this process relates to the redevelopment of the Chevy Chase Community Center and the Chevy Chase Public Library; upset over planned reductions in public transit and the already overcrowding of area public schools

⁸ The names and affiliations of the sixteen members of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan Community Advisory Committee can be found on the project website here: <https://publicinput.com/chevychase>.

⁹ The ANC 3/4G Resolution "Requesting the Office of Planning Adopt a More Engaged and Collaborative Process for Developing the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan," approved on February 21, 2021 can be found here: <https://anc3g.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Small-Area-Plan-Resolution.pdf>.

that will make accommodating greater density problematic; a lack of understanding of DC land use and the process for any zoning changes, among other concerns like preserving the town feel.

Other sentiments leaned positive expressing:

support for more affordable housing across a range of incomes; increasing density to revitalize the commercial corridor along Connecticut Avenue; and bringing in more racial diversity and inclusivity to the neighborhood by increasing the supply of affordable housing.

12. In light of the difficulties encountered at the public kick-off meeting, the Commission expects the Office of Planning will find more effective and more frequent ways to engage the community and gather input, hopefully with the assistance of a professional facilitator, as the Commission's February 21, 2021 Resolution recommended.

At the second meeting of the Community Advisory Committee held on March 16, 2021, the Office of Planning showed an understanding of the need for more and different ways to engage the community. The Office of Planning shared an updated timeline that included smaller group engagements beginning on April 7, 2021 and shared their decision to hire a professional facilitator to moderate discussion though details were slim. The Office of Planning also shared that they intend to produce one-pagers addressing key topics related to the Small Area Plan and will organize a design charrette for the spring. This motivation to engage in a variety of ways with the community was expressed again at the third meeting of the Community Advisory Committee held on April 6, 2021.

Notwithstanding the community engagement that the Office of Planning will undertake, the many questions, concerns, and confusion over the purpose of a Small Area Plan raised by the community warrants the Commission's immediate attention.

13. This Background Document shall accompany the Commission's Resolution For the Commission to Foster More Informed Community Engagement in the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan adopted on April 12, 2021 by a vote of _____.