



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

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**ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the
Committee on Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs
FY 2024 Budget Hearing
Department of Parks and Recreation
April 5, 2023**

Chairperson White and members of the Committee on Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs, I am Peter Gosselin, Vice Chair of ANC 3/4G (Chevy Chase). Thank you for the opportunity to testify at the Department of Parks and Recreation's (DPR's) budget hearing for FY 2024. I am testifying on behalf of our Commission, which authorized this testimony at its properly noticed March 27, 2023 public meeting by a vote of 5 to 0 (a quorum being 4). We are testifying today to urge the Council to fully fund the public facilities in a reimagined Chevy Chase Civic Core that will include a new Community Center, Library, open/recreation space, and parking along with mixed-income, dedicated

affordable housing.¹ Although the scope of this project cannot be fully defined now, there can be no question that the funding in the Mayor’s proposed FY 2024 capital budget is not sufficient and must be increased for FY 2025 and FY 2026 in order to meet the community’s requirements.

Since 2018, with our Commission’s strong support,² the Council has authorized a new Chevy Chase Community Center and has appropriated funds in each year’s capital

¹ The Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) held a “surplus” hearing on January January 12, 2023, to consider whether a portion of the Civic Core site is no longer needed for public purposes. Memorandum from Gilles Stucker, Director of Strategic Initiatives, to ANC 3/4G Commissioners, re “Chevy Chase Civic Site — Public Surplus Hearing (revised),” December 9, 2022. On January 23, 2023, ANC 3/4G adopted a resolution indicating that “surplussing of any sort at this time is not appropriate, in part, because the Commission and the community lack the details necessary to make an informed choice.” ANC 3/4G Resolution On Proposal to Surplus a Portion of the Community Center-Library Site, January 23, 2023, paragraph 9. Capital funding for the new Community Center and Library is necessary, however, regardless of whether the site can or should be used for any other purpose, e.g., for dedicated affordable housing.

² ANC 3/4G Resolution Regarding Capital Budget to Modernize Chevy Chase Community Center, April 9, 2018; ANC 3/4G Testimony Before the Committee on Recreation and Youth Affairs Budget Hearing on the Department of Parks and Recreation April 5, 2019.

budget.³ In July 2022, the Council also approved the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, including a recommendation to “[r]edevelop the community center and library into a multi-purpose civic core with state-of-the-art public facilities and mixed-income housing.”⁴ Any housing component of the Civic Core development will require funding separately from the public facilities, and in order to maximize the number of affordable units on this site, the public facilities must be sufficiently funded that they do not require any subsidy from the housing development.

The current Community Center budget was developed in 2018, before the full scope of that project was known. In 2017 and 2018, ANC 3/4G conducted an extensive study of the community’s needs, including a survey that gathered almost 1000 responses.⁵ Based on this extensive community survey and the Commission’s previous recommendations, the community expects that the Community Center will include

³ FY 2019 Approved Budget and Financial Plan, FY 2019- FY 2024 Capital Improvements Plan, July 12, 2018, page 188 (appropriating \$19,539,000 for the Chevy Chase Community Center); FY 2020 Approved Budget and Financial Plan, FY 2020-2025 Capital Improvements Plan, July 25, 2019, page 203 (appropriating a total of \$19,567,444 with \$15,500,000 remaining for FY 2020-FY 2025); FY 2021 Approved Budget and Financial Plan, FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvements Plan, August 27, 2020, page 207 (appropriating \$19,506,000 with \$17,500,000 remaining for FY 2021-2026); FY 2022 Approved Budget and Financial Plan, FY 2022-2027 Capital Improvements Plan, September 17, 2021, page 211 (appropriating \$19,506,000 with \$17,500,000 remaining for FY 2022-2027); FY 2023 Approved Budget and Financial Plan, FY 2023-2028 Capital Improvements Plan, August 1, 2022, page 234 (appropriating \$19,506,000 with \$17,500,000 remaining for FY 2023-2028).

⁴ Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, July 12, 2022, page 31, Recommendation 3.1.

⁵ ANC 3/4G’s Report & Recommendations for the Future of the Chevy Chase Community Center, January 22, 2018.

space for a fitness center, a lecture/performance hall, meeting/games/party rooms, a half-court gymnasium, a childcare room with an indoor play area, a kitchen, a quiet lounge, an activity/tech lounge, a dance/yoga/Pilates studio, a fencing/exercise room, a pottery area and an arts and crafts space, and offices.⁶ The District issued a Request for Proposals in January 2019, and the Council approved a design services contract for the Community Center in July 2020.

It was soon apparent, however, that the appropriated funds were not sufficient to build the needed facilities. At about that same time, the District of Columbia Public Libraries (DCPL) proposed a new Chevy Chase Neighborhood Library.⁷ Because of the opportunity to coordinate the Community Center and Library with the proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan that would permit mixed use with housing,⁸ work on the Community Center was suspended and deferred until at least FY 2023.⁹ The Community Center budget also acknowledged the need for a consolidated project with the Library and housing.

⁶ “ANC 3/4G’s Report & Recommendations for the Future of the Chevy Chase Community Center,” January 22, 2018, page 4.

⁷ FY 2021 Approved Budget and Financial Plan, FY 2021-2016 Capital Improvements Plan, August 27, 2020, page 47 (appropriating \$18,128,000 for a new Chevy Chase Neighborhood Library).

⁸ 2020 Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map.

⁹ FY 2021 Approved Budget and Financial Plan, FY 2021-2016 Capital Improvements Plan, August 27, 2020, page 207.

Based on the Comprehensive Plan, the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, and community input, DMPED has begun a surplussing process that it believes is a predicate to soliciting proposals for new public facilities and housing in the Civic Core. The Commission has strongly supported building “significant [at least 50%] dedicated affordable housing and work force housing with a focus on households earning 50% or less of median family income (MFI) above the Chevy Chase Community Center and the Chevy Chase Library.”¹⁰ In order to maximize the amount of affordable housing (or any other additional use at the site), it is essential that the District fully fund the public facilities so that there is no need to subsidize those uses from the money that will be available for housing.

The proposed FY 2024 capital budget for the Community Center¹¹ merely carries forward the same funding that has been in place since 2019 — a total of \$19.5 million, \$1 million of which has already been spent, leaving only \$18.487 million (a projected balance of \$7.487 million at the end of FY 2023 and \$11 million for FY 2024). It was clear in 2020 that this amount would be insufficient to meet the required needs, and the shortfall is now even greater after at least four years of rapid construction-cost inflation and changes to the scope of the project. Even when combined with the \$24.2 million

¹⁰ Resolution Reporting the Action of the 2021-2022 Commission on the 2020 Task Force on Racism’s Community, Education and Health, and Housing Work Group Recommendations, December 12, 2022, page 5.

¹¹ [Mayor’s Proposed FY 2024 Capital Budget, Department of Parks and Recreation](#), March 22, 2024, page number 206.

capital budget proposed for the Chevy Chase Library,¹² the funding will fall short of what is required for these two new buildings, refurbished open/recreation space, and underground parking to serve the public facilities. Without adequate District funding to support its facilities, the community will not get the community center and library that they need, and we will not be able to create the needed affordable housing.

Because of delays in beginning this project, it is unlikely that much of the combined capital budget for both the Community Center and the Library in FY 2023 — a balance of \$7.487 million for the Community Center and \$1.089 million for the Library — will be spent by September 30, 2023, and will need to be carried over into FY 2024. When added to the current budget for FY 2024 — \$11 million for the Community Center and \$17.028 million for the Library — there should be enough to begin the work, but more will be needed in FY 2025 (currently only \$6 million for the Library) and FY 2026 to complete the project.

It would be premature now to establish the final costs of the public facilities in the Civic Core. No realistic estimate will be possible until the scope of the work has been defined, proposals have been received, and a developer has been chosen. Nevertheless, we urge the Council to include the following text in the capital budget for the Community

¹² [Mayor's Proposed FY 2024 Capital Budget, District of Columbia Public Library](#), March 22, 2023, page 29.

Center¹³ so that it is clear that funds not spent in FY 2023 should be carried forward to FY 2024 and additional funding will be necessary in subsequent years:

Chevy Chase Community Center is located on a site also occupied by the Chevy Chase Library. Both buildings stand at the gateway to the District, on Connecticut Avenue near the border with Maryland. The revised Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Council calls for increased density along that corridor of Connecticut Avenue. To address the need for affordable housing in Ward 3, the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, adopted by the Council, recommends that dedicated affordable housing be co-located on the site of the library and community center — while also preserving the neighborhood's hallmark livability and ensuring that new development has a compatible scale, function, and character with the surrounding structures. The redevelopment of the community center should, therefore, occur simultaneously with the redevelopment of the library, and both projects — done in tandem — should reflect community interests and planning choices adopted in that Small Area Plan. Unused funds from the capital budget for FY 2023 should be carried forward to FY 2024. Once the scope of the work has been defined and there is a firm estimate for the costs, the capital budget for FY 2025 and FY 2026 will need to be increased. The housing component of the project may also include money from the Housing Production Trust Fund, but the housing component should not subsidize the public facilities.

The project will substantially renovate the building site to create a new 21st century state-of-art LEED Silver Rated facility. The scope of work entails providing architectural and engineering services which comprises predesign, design, preparation of contract documents, commissioning, and planning services to accomplish the following: create a structure to fully comply with ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (September 2002) to include vertical transportation, interior circulation, signage, entrances and exits, walkways, restrooms, alarms, etc. The renovated Chevy Chase Community Center will reflect the program and

¹³ The “Description” section of the Community Center capital budget also mistakenly refers to the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan as still being developed, despite the fact that the Council approved the SAP in July 2022. The Commission’s proposed language corrects those mistakes. The budget’s “Justification” section should also delete the sentence “AE under contract” because there is no current AE contract.

goals of the Department and the needs of the District of Columbia residents that use the Community Center. The building will incorporate forward-thinking approaches to urban design, architecture, engineering, environmental technologies in the public realm. The renovated Chevy Chase Community Center and Library will be a destination that will attract and support hundreds of users a day, and promote a vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with an active street environment.

Thank you.