



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

Chevy Chase, Barnaby Woods, Hawthorne

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**ANC 3/4G Resolution  
Conveying Results of Its  
Community Center-Library Survey  
With Recommendations  
December XX, 2023**

**BACKGROUND & RATIONALE:**

- 1) This resolution conveys to District decisionmakers, including officials with the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) and the Office of Planning (OP), results of ANC 3/4G's survey of residents about the future of the Chevy Chase Community Center-Library site together with the Commission's assessment of these results and its recommendations.
- 2) This section of the resolution seeks to set the survey and the ANC's assessment and recommendations in context by reviewing actions by the Commission concerning an evolving set of proposals to redevelop the site as part of an effort to permit denser development along the upper Connecticut Avenue commercial corridor, including at the Community Center-Library. Subsequent sections summarize survey results and provide assessments/recommendations.

- 3) Since at least 2019, the District [has framed its proposals](#) for upper Connecticut Avenue and the Community Center-Library site as part of a broader plan to alleviate a citywide shortage of affordable housing by encouraging development of 12,000 new, affordable units by 2025, including 2,400 in Rock Creek West, a District-designated planning zone that encompasses much of Ward 3 and parts of Ward 4, and includes Chevy Chase DC.
- 4) District officials have framed the goal, especially for Rock Creek West, as aimed at addressing "[a legacy of racially discriminatory and exclusionary policies enacted in the past century.](#)"
- 5) This Commission has consistently supported the idea that the Chevy Chase community should contribute to solving the affordable housing problem faced by the District, including by developing affordable units at the Community Center-Library and/or adjacent sites. Among examples of support by the ANC majority:
  - A [July 24 2023 vote](#) "strongly" supporting the need for affordable housing and committing to work with the District to help produce it;
  - A [May 8, 2023 vote](#) calling for removal of a century-old deed restriction on the Community Center-Library property to allow affordable housing at the location;
  - A [December 12, 2022 vote](#) reaffirming previous Commission action calling for "significant dedicated affordable housing and workforce housing" at the Community Center-Library site;
  - A [May 9, 2022 vote](#) calling for affordable housing at the Community Center-Library as part of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan.
  - A [March 22, 2021 vote](#) on a series of proposals by its Task Force on Racism that, among other things, called for at least half of housing at the Community Center-Library site to be affordable, with an emphasis on affordability for households making 50 percent or less of median family income;
  - A [February 10, 2020 vote](#) calling for changes in amendments to the District's Comprehensive Plan to, among other things, ensure "affordable housing (in Chevy Chase) that will promote income diversity and enrich our civic life."
- 6) Although the District agreed to a Commission request for a small area planning process to serve as a forum for discussion about efforts to increase density and produce new affordable housing, from the outset some District agencies and advisers appeared to view community input more as a barrier to change than a basis for consensus. For example, a 2019 District-commissioned study that laid the groundwork for the Rock Creek West effort [called for](#), among other things, use of marketing techniques to elide local concerns and creation a fund "to counter the economic power of residents" who opposed affordable housing. Ultimately, the fund idea was rejected, but many of the study's techniques and verbiage were embraced by the District.

7) While the ANC has supported the community helping to solve the city's affordable housing problem, it has repeatedly defended the right of residents to a strong voice in the future of their community and – with mixed results – has called for the District to work more collaboratively with the community to find solutions that both address the housing problem and protect characteristics that make Chevy Chase an appealing neighborhood. Among examples:

- A [July 24, 2023 vote](#) to, among other things, urge DMPED and OP to delay pursuing zoning changes for upper Connecticut Avenue until the agencies receive results of the current survey;
- May 24, 2023 letters from ANC Chair Lisa Gore. One to [OP Director Anita Cozart](#) asks the agency to better explain to the public aspects of its proposed zoning changes and use its ArcGIS tools “to give the ANC and residents a comprehensive feel for what a rezoned, built-out upper Connecticut Avenue would look like under various scenarios.” A second to [Acting Deputy Mayor Keith Anderson](#) called for improved public engagement by DMPED and expressed “the ANC’s frustration navigating the District’s approach to implementing the Mayor’s goals of redeveloping the Chevy Chase Community Center/Library site and delivering affordable housing in Rock Creek West.”
- A [January 23, 2023 resolution](#) that the ANC opposed for the time being “surplussing” or transferring a portion of the Community Center-Library site to private ownership in return for affordable housing and adding that surplussing “cannot even be considered unless and until DMPED works with the Commission to develop and execute a substantial community engagement process that gives residents the opportunity to offer suggestions and site priorities prior to a surplussing decision and issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP).”
- A [May 9, 2022 resolution](#) that makes the Commission approval of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan (CCSAP) contingent on, among other things, the ANC and community having “a seat at the table” as the plan for upper Connecticut Avenue, including the Community Center-Library site is implemented.
- [April 26, 2021](#) and [February 22, 2021](#) resolutions expressing frustration with OP’s management of the small area planning process for the Connecticut Avenue corridor and the Community Center-Library site, launching Commission efforts to make improvements and calling on the District to adopt a “more engaged and collaborative process” with the community in planning for its future.

8) In addition to appealing to the District to work with the community, the Commission has sought to engage with the community in working through issues of housing affordability, equity and development by:

- Sponsoring an eight-month, nine-session [“information exchange” series](#) in 2021 and 2022 on, among other topics, [development strategies of neighboring jurisdictions](#), [creative uses of public space](#), [community land trusts](#), and [nonprofit development](#);
  - Providing forums for discussion through its standing committees on [Racial and Social Equity](#) and [Zoning, Design and Development](#);
  - Regularly [testifying before the District Council](#) on issues ranging from the [Chevy Chase Small Area Plan](#) and [funding for the Housing Production Trust Fund](#).
- 9) The survey is the latest effort by the ANC to gauge community views and make sure those views are heard by the District. Initially, the Commission sought to hire a neutral, independent professional to tackle the job, but, after being unable to land a suitable candidate and with questions about how the work would be paid for, it appointed four of its own members – Commissioners Lisa Gore, Bruce Sherman, James Nash and Peter Gosselin – to a committee to devise a survey instrument and field it.
- 10) The the survey committee set itself two goals: to ensure “the community is heard on key issues of concern” and to provide the ANC with survey data “to make actionable recommendations (to the District) that reflect key community development preferences” for the Community Center-Library site.
- 11) The committee met weekly for four months. (June 13, 20, [27](#); July [6](#), [11](#), [18](#), [25](#); Aug. [1](#), [8](#), [22](#), [29](#); Sept. [5](#), [12](#), [19](#), [26](#); Oct. 3, 13 ) It was aided by residents with survey expertise and took testimony from a variety of advocates and concerned citizens. It reviewed recent previous surveys, including a 2017 Community Center survey and a 2019 Comprehensive Plan survey conducted by the ANC and an early 2023 survey by DMPED. A draft of the Commission’s new survey was field tested with a group of about [\[\[25\]\]](#) residents who were not involved in the drafting or deeply involved in local issues. After it was fielded on Oct. 13, 2023 the Commission sent mailers to every household in the community asking for people to take the survey and providing instructions and links. It extended the deadline for taking the survey from Nov. 5 to midnight Nov. 12, 2023.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

- 12) Full results of the survey are available on ANC 3/4G’s website [here](#).
- 13) Responses: The survey received 2,836 responses, of which 2,553 were complete. That compares with the [2017 ANC survey](#), which logged 929

responses, the [2019 ANC survey](#), which logged 682 responses, and the [spring 2023 DMPED survey](#), which logged 1,692 responses.

14) Respondents: Overall, about 80 percent live in single-family houses. About 90 percent own their units. Less than six percent are 35 or under; otherwise, respondents were distributed roughly evenly across the age span. Almost 65 percent do not have children under 18 at home. Some 56 percent are female. About 85 percent are white. Fifteen percent are Black, Asian or other races.

15) What Respondents Said:

- Concerning whether the Community Center-Library site should be redeveloped and, if so, in what way, almost 40 percent agreed with the statement "I support the proposed redevelopment of the Community Center and Library site to construct new facilities with housing, including affordable housing." Some 47 percent agreed with the statement "I support only redevelopment of the Community Center and Library, including the option of renovating the existing facilities." Slightly less than 10 percent said, "I do not support any redevelopment of the site."
- Regarding open/green space at the site, respondents indicated in several ways the importance they attach to it. Asked to allocate 15 points among five likely primary elements of a redeveloped site, they ranked it third behind a new or renovated Community Center and Library. Asked to choose seven outdoor amenities they would like at the site from among 16, nearly 80 percent chose "benches/outdoor seating," 78 percent chose "outdoor green space/gardens," 66 percent chose "mature trees."
- Concerning the District's plan to "surplus," or transfer a portion of the Community Center-Library site to private ownership in return for affordable housing, 32 percent said they support it. Almost 60 percent said they are opposed.
- Regarding size, respondents expressed their views in several ways. Asked for their level of concern, if any, about spillover effects from redevelopment of the Community Center-Library site, 55 percent described themselves as "very concerned" about the "scale and style of development..." Asked what maximum building height for the project they support, 24 percent chose "40 feet (2-3 stories);" 25 percent chose "50 feet (3-4 stories);" 18 percent chose "60 feet (4-5 stories);" 23 percent chose 70 feet or more, and about 10 percent had no preference.
- Asked if they'd use underground parking if it was part of the development, 34 percent said "yes," 34 percent said "no" and the rest either didn't know or wanted no change.

16) Differences Among Respondent Groups: While the Commission continues to examine the results, it already recognizes some differences among respondent groups that could affect how the survey is interpreted and may be evidence of a shortfall in capturing the views of all residents. The most obvious shortfall

involves renters. While US Census statistics show [[XX]] percent of Chevy Chase residents rent rather than own their homes, only about eight percent of survey respondents said they rent.

- ANC vs Non-ANC: Of the 2,553 people who completed the survey, 480, or about 19 percent, live elsewhere in the city or outside of the District. A comparison of the two groups' responses shows differences, among them:
  - On the question of whether the Community Center-Library site should be redeveloped and, if so, in what way, almost 37 percent of ANC respondents agreed with the statement "I support the proposed redevelopment of the Community Center and Library site to construct new facilities with housing, including affordable housing." By comparison, 52 percent of non-ANC respondents agreed. Conversely, nearly 50 percent of ANC respondents agreed with the statement "I support only redevelopment of the Community Center and Library, including the option of renovating the existing facilities." while only 36 percent of non-ANC respondents did so.
  - Asked what maximum building height they support, 21 percent of ANC respondents said they favor 70 feet or more. The same share for non-ANC respondents was almost 35 percent.
  
- Immediately Adjacent vs Distant Neighborhoods: Of the seven single member districts in the ANC community, two – districts 5 and 6 – are immediately adjacent to the Community Center-Library site. Two others – districts 1 and 2 – are at a greater distance. A comparison of responses from the two sets of districts shows differences, among them:
  - Concerning whether and how the Community Center-Library site should be redeveloped, 41 percent of respondents in the immediately adjacent neighborhood agreed with the statement "I support the proposed redevelopment of the Community Center and Library site to construct new facilities with housing, including affordable housing." while 6.5 percent said they don't support any redevelopment. By comparison, 35 percent of respondents in the more distant neighborhood said they support redevelopment with housing while almost 11 percent said they don't support any redevelopment.
  - On maximum building height, 24 percent of respondents in the immediately adjacent neighborhood favor 70 feet or more while 18 percent from the more distant neighborhood support that height.

- Asked if they'd use underground parking at the site, 25 percent of those in the immediately adjacent neighborhood said "yes" while 45 percent of those in the more distant neighborhood answered similarly.

## **ASSESSMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 17) The community is deeply divided over housing at the Community Center-Library site. The survey's headline finding illustrates the fact; whether the numbers used are those for ANC respondents only or all survey takers, the results are basically 60:40 against housing at the site.
- 18) The ANC's assessment is that, whatever the flaws of the survey, a weak response from the some quarters, a potentially over-strong response from others or the possibility some people took the survey more than once, the results fundamentally reflect the community's views. In conveying them to District decisionmakers with this resolution, the Commission seeks to make good on the first of its survey committee's two goals – to ensure "the community is heard on key issues of concern."
- 19) Further, the Commission's assessment is that the District is intent on redeveloping the Community Center-Library site with housing and affordable housing. Municipal agencies may be delayed in pursuing this goal because of the current financial challenge of a shrinking downtown tax base or, potentially, legal action by local advocacy groups, but it is unlikely they will back down. The need for affordable housing in DC is too great.
- 20) In such circumstances, the Commission concludes:
  - The right course for the Commission and the Chevy Chase community — and the one most likely to preserve the community's ability to influence development at the Community Center-Library site – is to continue seeking to contribute to a solution to the District's affordable housing problem, including at the site.
  - The most productive use of the survey results is in pursuit of the survey committee's second goal -- to make actionable recommendations to the District for inclusion in its pending Request for Proposals (RFP) for the site that "reflect key community development preferences."
- 21) Therefore, Commission [reaffirms its position](#) that some housing should be built at the Community Center-Library site; that at least half of the housing built should be affordable with a focus on affordability for households making 50 percent or less of area median income; that the development should include a mix of affordable and workforce housing for families including, to the maximum extent practicable, ownership by residents, and that the District should work with



a coalition of nonprofit and for-profit developers, the ANC and the community in shaping and overseeing the redevelopment of the site.

22) The Commission calls on DMPED to include in the RFP that will guide developers in framing proposals for the Community Center-Library site the following key community development preferences that emerge from the survey, together with the survey results supporting the preferences. It asks OP to make further adjustments in proposed zoning changes intended to facilitate redevelopment of the site.

- Open/green space with recreational facilities:  
Residents, including strong affordable housing advocates, have consistently told the ANC they want to see open/green spaces with recreational facilities similar to what currently exists in any redevelopment. The Commission has conveyed these preferences to OP officials, who have responded by reducing the proposed maximum permitted share of the site that buildings could occupy from 80 percent to 60 percent, a change that, if adopted, would leave more space for open, green and recreational facilities. While the 60-percent figure is still higher than what exists now and therefore means that open/green space could be reduced from current levels, the OP action is a move in the right direction and an important one given the continued desire for open/green space as revealed by the survey.  
As discussed in Paragraph 14, asked to allocate 15 points among five likely primary elements of a redeveloped site, respondents [allocated a cumulative 7,475 points](#) to this category behind the top two point-getters, a "new or renovated library" and "...Community Center." Asked to choose seven outdoor amenities they would like at the site from among 16, they [overwhelmingly chose](#) green options.
- Building height:  
Residents in large numbers have warned against over-large buildings being erected at a redeveloped Community Center-Library site and expressed a strong preference for structures with a consistent scale and style to those in the immediate surrounding neighborhood. As with open space, the ANC conveyed these preferences to OP officials, who responded by reducing an originally proposed maximum possible height for buildings at the site from 93.5 feet to 80 feet. Again, the reduction is an adjustment in the right direction, but the survey results suggest that further adjustment is needed for the project to command substantial local support. Among all respondents, only 393 of 2,564, or slightly more than 15 percent, [said they would support](#) a maximum building height of 80 feet (6-7 stories). Among ANC respondents, the share [saying they would support](#) 80 feet was only 13 percent.
- Public land: Since DMPED first publicly raised the possibility the District might "surplus" or transfer a portion of the Community Center-Library site to private ownership in return for affordable housing a year ago, the idea



has galvanized opposition. The dimensions of that opposition was apparent in the survey; no other question produced as lop-sided a response. Among all respondents, [more than 59 percent answered "no"](#) when asked whether they support such a transfer. Among ANC residents, [the "no's" accounted for 62 percent.](#)

DMPED officials have said that any development in which the District contributes public land for a low price or long-term lease in return for the production of affordable housing would require the property to be surplussed. But there has been little exploration to date of ways that public stewardship of part or all of the Community Center-Library site could be retained, for example via a land trust that has public representation on its board.

Given the depth of opposition to surplussing, the Commission asks DMPED to consider giving a preference in the RFP to development proposals with a structure that allows the public to retain stewardship of the entire Community Center-Library site. In addition, it calls on DMPED to include the survey results on this issue in the material it issues as part of the RFP to indicate that the community is likely to look more favorably on a proposal with such a structure.

- 23) Beyond these specific elements, the Commission asks DMPED to convey the entire survey as part of the RFP package for the Community Center-Library site as what the Commission views as the current state of public opinion in Chevy Chase DC.

**APPROVED** at a regular public meeting, notice of which was properly given and at which a quorum of four (4) or seven (7) members was present on December XX, 2023 by a vote of **X** yes, **X** no, **X** abstentions.

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Lisa R Gore, Chair

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James L. Nash, Secretary

