



# CHEVY CHASE **FORWARD**

Building Community, Bridging Divides

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**Chevy Chase Forward’s Opposition to  
Proposed Resolution Purportedly  
“Upholding ANC 3/4G Resident Preferences  
For The Chevy Chase Community Center and  
Library at the Civic Core”  
May 27, 2026**

Chevy Chase Forward<sup>1</sup> urges ANC 3/4G to reject or substantially modify Commissioner Sherman’s draft resolution relating to the proposed functions and uses of the new Chevy Chase Community Center, Library and open space at the Civic Core site. Everyone agrees that the Rift Valley proposal unveiled at a community meeting on February 28, 2026, does not provide details about the specific facilities that will be included in the final design, which has not yet been developed. Rather than contributing to a productive dialogue about what the community needs, the draft resolution is another effort to delay and disrupt the engagement process and a thinly veiled attack on co-located housing at the site. CCF encourages the ANC to join a constructive discussion to implement the community’s expectations for a modern community center and library.

To begin filling out those particulars, the District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) has organized a two-hour “design kick off” on June 9, 2026, where the community can hear from DCPL and DPR officials, learn about modern approaches to library and recreation center design, and share the programs and services we want to see in our new library and community center. In preparation for that meeting, on June 3, 2026, CCF will host a virtual community conversation to discuss our specific needs and priorities. (Register to join that meeting [here](#).) Every aspect of the public facilities’ design remain on the table for consideration, and no final decisions have been made. Rather than making uninformed demands, we should be prepared to listen, evaluate and contribute ideas cooperatively.

It is true that the community has provided data that can be useful in developing the community center and library final designs. But the draft resolution omits the ANC’s extensive work in 2017-2018 to poll the community and identify priorities for a new

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<sup>1</sup> Chevy Chase Forward is a new grassroots community organization built by and for residents who believe in the incredible promise of our neighborhood. We are a diverse coalition uniting around a bold, shared vision: a Chevy Chase that bridges divides and builds community within our neighborhood and across DC, and where our legacy is defined by the opportunities we create for the entire city.

community center. It is our understanding that DPR is already using that work and any reliable subsequent surveys in developing its plans, and we expect those efforts to be reflected in the discussions at the June 9th design kick off.

The draft resolution begins with a fundamentally mistaken premise — the community center and library are decidedly **not** principally intended for the residents of ANC 3/4G. Many of the community center’s most popular programs — e.g., ballet and fencing — draw participants from across the District and even beyond. Many residents in adjacent ANCs 3E and 3F are significantly closer to the Civic Core site than residents in Barnaby Woods and Hawthorne, yet the draft resolution would give their views no credence. Indeed, residents of the Brightwood neighborhood east of Rock Creek Park use the Chevy Chase community center and library because those are the closest facilities with comparable services. The nearest analogous community/recreation center in Ward 3, the Guy Mason Recreation Center, is three miles from our Civic Core, making Chevy Chase more convenient for many upper-Ward 3 residents. In their design decisions, DPR and DCPL can and should consider all users, and there is no basis for requiring that the “design must serve ANC 3/4G residents as principal users” or that only their views count.

The draft resolution also mistakenly compares the reported square footage in Rift Valley’s current proposal with the purported square footage in the current Community Center and Library. First, those outmoded buildings are grossly inefficient. A significant portion of the space in the 1970s-era Community Center is currently unusable, e.g., the “stage” in the large multipurpose room and much of the basement. Second, it is highly doubtful that the footage comparisons in the draft resolution are apples to apples. A 2019 study by Bell Architects for DPR<sup>2</sup> found that the “total net building area” in the Community Center is only 22,381 square feet — almost one-third less than the footage cited in the draft resolution and almost equal to the amount in Rift Valley’s current proposal. Similarly, the “gross square footage” reported for the library in that 2020 study was 19,630<sup>3</sup> compared with 23,500 in the Rift Valley proposal — an almost 20% **increase**. The ANC should not jump to any conclusions until it has a more accurate understanding of any comparisons between the current space and the proposed space.

Moreover, DCPL and DPR are offering to help us understand “modern approaches to library and recreation center design,” which are undoubtedly much improved from the 1970s when the existing structures were conceived. Public facilities are now designed to be dramatically more efficient than those from five decades ago. It would be absurd to think that new buildings must repeat the same feckless uses of space that plague our now-obsolete buildings. In addition, the separate community center and library can be replaced by jointly designed buildings that maximize shared space, e.g., for meeting

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<sup>2</sup> Chevy Chase Community Center, Draft Concept Report, December 20, 2019, page 11.

<sup>3</sup> Draft Concept Report, page 17.

rooms. In short, the sky is not falling because of allegedly shrinking facilities, no matter how much the draft resolution waves and shouts.

Finally, and most importantly, the draft resolution suggests that the real culprit is the co-location of housing with the public facilities and that Rift Valley's current proposal prioritizes housing over the a world-class community center and library. As has been pointed out repeatedly, the comparison with the West End Library is specious. Location of housing with community centers and libraries is ubiquitous across the country<sup>4</sup> and there is no reason to believe that the District is somehow uniquely incapable of solving any issues that might arise related to co-location of housing and public facilities.

Nor is it reasonable to assume that housing is somehow stealing money that should go to a modern community center and library. Both of those facilities are funded by District appropriations. If the current appropriations are inadequate, it is the responsibility of the District to increase funding, and the ANC should be testifying vociferously at the Council's budget hearings to that effect. In no case should development of co-located housing subsidize constructing new public facilities, and housing in unused air-space does not infringe on the public facilities.

Of course more planning work remains to be done. The ANC draft resolution acknowledges the Deputy Mayor for Economic Development and Planning's estimate that community engagement to finalize all design issues is "expected to continue for 18 to 24 months" after the Council and the Mayor approve the required surplusing and disposition resolution. The ANC's draft resolution apparently assumes that all of the necessary detailed planning that is a prerequisite for construction must be front loaded to be completed before there is even a decision to proceed. No contractor would be willing to begin work on that basis, and it is not how projects get built.

We must all give the process an opportunity to work. With a significant degree of humility, we should learn from knowledgeable experts at DCPL, DPR, DMPED, and Rift Valley. We should, of course, listen to the community's expressions of its priorities and work with decision makers to find the best solutions. It is counterproductive, however, to insist that every decision be made before we fully understand the issues.

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<sup>4</sup> The ANC's Housing Work Group, part of the ANC's Task Force on Racism, found that "Chevy Chase can look to an abundance of precedents for building affordable housing above a library and community center," and cited many such instances. Housing Work Group Report, ANC 3/4G Task Force on Racism, November 13, 2020, page 17. There have been many more similar projects in the ensuing years.

We respectfully request that the ANC acknowledge this opposition at its meeting and post the opposition on the ANC's website.

Sincerely,

*Lisa R. Gore*

Lisa R. Gore  
President,  
Chevy Chase Forward