



CHEVY CHASE *FORWARD*

Building Community, Bridging Divides

Chevy Chase Forward's Opposition To Proposed ANC Resolution on "Interim Feedback and Requests as to Consideration of the Rift Valley Chevy Chase Civic Core Redevelopment Proposal"

May 11, 2026

Chevy Chase Forward¹ urges ANC 3/4G to reject Commissioner Sherman's draft resolution on the Rift Valley proposal for development of the Chevy Chase Civic Core. This draft resolution misrepresents the extensive history of community engagement on this project, exaggerates the efficacy and value of the ANC's amateur "surveys" at this advanced stage of the process, and seeks to delay progress on facilities that the community urgently needs. While questions remain about the Rift Valley proposal that will finally be submitted to the Council, the ANC and the community should work productively with the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) to flesh out the proposal rather than attempting to overturn its fundamental premises.

First, the draft resolution disregards the [decade-long process](#) that has brought us to the verge of a decision to finally move forward. ANC 3/4G first raised the need for a significant upgrade of the Civic Core Site in a meeting with Mayor Bowser on April 25, 2016². Since then, the community has weighed in repeatedly on the Civic Core's development through various working groups (e.g., on Comprehensive Plan amendments, on a new Community Center, and on housing needs to create a more diverse and inclusive neighborhood), an exhaustive Small Area Planning process, and DMPED's Request for Proposal process. There have been dozens of public meetings and multiple opportunities for everyone to be heard. After years of discussions, there is no need for "greater transparency and community engagement" on the fundamental aspects of the Civic Core development: a new, state-of-the-art community center and library, enhanced and expanded open areas, and incorporation of housing — including

¹ [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.

² The attached fact sheet describes in detail the history of community engagement on development of the Civic Core over the past decade.

affordable housing — in the available air space that has never been used or needed for public facilities.

Second, it is not true that the use of the Civic Core for housing is an “unresolved policy question requiring DC Council consideration,” as the draft resolution asserts. On the contrary, the Council unanimously approved the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan (CCSAP) on July 22, 2022, which expressly provides that “[a] request for proposals for the entire site will be issued following CCSAP adoption, which will include the library and community center **and a residential component.**”³ The CCSAP anticipated that during the request for proposals process, “[a]gencies will share their programmatic requirements to deliver a full-service library and community center **with a mixed-income housing component on the site.**”⁴ The Rift Valley proposal is consistent with the Council’s directive in the Small Area Plan to include mixed-income housing at the site. The draft resolution suggests that here is no “clear and compelling public purpose” for “any proposal involving residential use of public land.” To the contrary, the District’s oft-repeated requirement to build affordable housing in Ward 3 is indisputably a “clear and compelling public purpose” justifying the use of surplus air space that the public facilities have never used or will ever need.

Third, the draft proposal’s repeated reliance on the ANC’s 2023 and 2025 surveys is inappropriate and unpersuasive. These nonprofessional surveys raised substantial questions when they were initiated, and those deficiencies have never been fully addressed. Moreover, at most, the surveys indicated that the respondents (who may not be representative of the larger community) expressed a variety of views about development of the Civic Core, but the results do not demonstrate a “clear community consensus” on any topic. Finally, the surveys were taken before DMPED selected Rift Valley as the developer based on a substantially modified proposal. To the extent that those earlier homemade surveys have any value at all, they do not provide any useful information about the current plans.

Fourth, the draft resolution is a thinly veiled attempt to postpone an already severely delayed, essential project for our community. The existing public facilities are deteriorating to the point that they will increasingly become not just obsolete and inadequate but completely unavailable when critical systems break down. Even DMPED’s most optimistic projections don’t expect the project to be completed until 2030. The draft resolution’s request for further review and public input beyond what

³ [Chevy Chase Small Area Plan](#), July 22, 2022, page 30 (emphasis added).

⁴ [Chevy Chase Small Area Plan](#), July 22, 2022, page 30 (emphasis added).

DMPED and the Council hearing process already provide will only create unreasonable, unnecessary delay.

Finally, Chevy Chase Forward agrees that the current Rift Valley proposal needs to be fleshed out and requires refinement. Chevy Chase Forward and several coalition partners wrote Mayor Bowser on April 30, 2026, asking that she support the original Rift Valley housing proposal — a total of 207 units that would be one-third affordable to households up to 50% of median family income (MFI), one-third affordable to households up to 80% MFI (so-called workforce housing), and one-third at market rate.⁵ We believe this mixed-income proposal is feasible when coupled with the plans for modern public facilities and open space and represents the best use of the Civic Core. We also believe that these modifications can be achieved through discussions with Rift Valley and DMPED. As DMPED's normal public workshop process proceeds, the Department of Parks and Recreation and the District of Columbia Public Library will also refine plans for their facilities based on further public input. Only then will the Mayor submit a Surplusing and Disposition Resolution for public hearings at the Council.

For these reasons, Chevy Chase Forward requests that the ANC reject Commissioner Sherman's proposed resolution and instead of seeking unnecessary delays, participate actively in DMPED's community engagement processes to understand and refine the Rift Valley proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Elizabeth Martin
Board Member, Chevy Chase Forward
Chair, Social Engagement & Advocacy Committee

⁵ [Letter from Chevy Chase Forward, Coalition for Smarter Growth, DC YIMBYs, Ward 3 Vision, and Washington Interfaith Network to Mayor Muriel Bowser](#), April 30, 2026.