

CHEVY CHASE **FORWARD**

Building Community, Bridging Divides

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April 9, 2026

Dear Councilmember Frumin and Deputy Mayor Albert:

On March 23, 2026, ANC 3/4G adopted a [resolution](#) urging the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) and the D.C. Council to hold strictly separate legislative hearings for the surplus and disposition of the Chevy Chase Civic Core site. Chevy Chase Forward has reviewed this resolution and strongly disagrees with its assessment.

While we acknowledge the community's desire for transparency and understanding, artificially separating these hearings is historically inconsistent with District practices and counterproductive to public understanding. Instead of fostering clarity, bifurcating the process actually fuels misinformation by asking residents to evaluate a confusing legal mechanism in a vacuum, deliberately divorcing the conversation from the tangible community benefits of the proposed redevelopment.

There is an inherent, practical link between surplus and disposition that makes separating them illogical and detrimental to the integrity of the public process. Suggesting that the community evaluate the surplus now and review the disposition benefits months down the road is a recipe for manufactured outrage. A standalone surplus hearing creates a months-long void. As we have already seen from past misleading public statements regarding this project, this downtime will inevitably be exploited to stir community discontent, fear, and misinformation. This artificial delay deliberately divorces the 'cost' of releasing public air rights from the anchoring reality of the promised affordable housing and modernized civic facilities, allowing misinformation to poison the well before the public ever sees the final, legally binding agreement.

The ANC resolution draws on a Fall 2023 survey and a 2023 DMPED surplus hearing to imply that the concept of surplus is "confusing or counter-intuitive" for the public. However, this conflates opposition to a confusing legal term with opposition to the actual project. Asking residents to evaluate an abstract statutory mechanism without explicitly tying it to the delivery of community benefits is destined to generate opposition. This widespread confusion is precisely why a joint hearing—mirroring the successful, consolidated hearings the Council held for major

projects like the McMillan Sand Filtration Site¹ and the Franklin School²—is critical to ensuring the community possesses the complete factual background necessary to make a sound policy decision.

The public promotion of this resolution demonstrates exactly why evaluating these two legislations together is essential. While the resolution briefly acknowledges that the surplus action involves “air rights,” the rhetoric used to sell it to the community relies on a persistent obscuring of terms. For example, in a recent community post announcing the resolution, Commissioner Sherman, the resolution’s author, claimed, *‘Surplussing asks whether public land should be declared no longer needed for public use’*³. This statement fundamentally misrepresents the District’s proposed action and perpetuates misinformation. The District is not abandoning its public land; it is retaining full ownership of the land to build a modernized, publicly controlled library and community center. It is strictly the unused development potential under zoning, or “air rights” - the currently unutilized, empty space above the public uses - that are being considered for surplus to allow for housing. Statements that imply a simple loss of public land only serve to manufacture panic. A joint legislative hearing is the only way to cure this confusion, ensuring that the public can clearly understand that it is only the empty airspace being surplussed in order to create a tangible community benefit on the site.

The District of Columbia does not dispose of public land or air rights blindly; it does so to achieve specific, negotiated public goods. By demanding that the Council review the surplus of the Chevy Chase Civic Core without simultaneously considering the disposition, the ANC resolution asks the community to weigh a cost without looking at the benefit. Chevy Chase Forward urges the Mayor to submit to the Council a legislative package that includes both the surplus and disposition legislation, and the D.C. Council to proceed with a joint hearing process, ensuring that the public can evaluate the comprehensive merits of this transformative project in its full and proper context.

As a grassroots advocacy organization, Chevy Chase Forward was founded on the principle that our neighborhood must do its part to address the District’s housing crisis. We are deeply committed to ensuring the Civic Core redevelopment maximizes the creation of affordable and workforce housing. We look forward to partnering with you to advance this initiative and to demonstrating that Chevy Chase can play a constructive, leading role in building a more inclusive and equitable city.

Sincerely,



Ron Eichner,
Vice President and Chairperson, Housing Committee
Chevy Chase Forward

cc: Muriel Bowser, Mayor, District of Columbia
District of Columbia Council

¹ During the 20th Council session in 2014, the legislative packages for the McMillan Sand Filtration Site—which included both the surplus declaration and the disposition approvals for the commercial, residential, and multifamily parcels (e.g., PR 20-0870, PR 20-0871, and PR 20-0872)—were consolidated for committee review and public hearings.

² As documented by the D.C. Council’s Committee of the Whole, the surplus (PR 22-0359) and disposition (PR 22-0360) resolutions for the Franklin School were explicitly noticed and heard together in a joint public roundtable on October 25, 2017.

³ Bruce Sherman, “Resolutions for Chevy Chase ANC 34G Meeting - Monday, 7 pm,” *Chevy Chase Listserv*, message #347292, March 23, 2026.