

April 24, 2026

The Honorable Matt Frumin
Chair, Committee on Human Services
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

RE: Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) Budget Oversight Hearing - support DMPED budget along with the Chevy Chase library and recreation center capital funds to redevelop the civic core site, including affordable mixed-income housing under the original Rift Valley project proposal

Dear Chair Frumin:

Please accept these comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. CSG advocates for walkable, bikeable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way for the DC region to grow and provide opportunities for all.

We again want to acknowledge the efforts of DMPED throughout the District working on important projects like bringing affordable mixed-income housing and new neighborhoods to the RFK Stadium area, the U Street police and fire station redevelopment, and the Chevy Chase library and community center redevelopment project. We support continued staffing and resources for DMPED to strengthen their efforts with public land development and public engagement.

RE: Chevy Chase Library/Community Center redevelopment project

1. This must include more affordable housing
2. Do this by restoring the original Rift Valley proposal as presented on March 29, 2025
3. Expedite the approvals

We urge the Council to approve the FY 27 budget to support DMPED's work, and capital funding for the Chevy Chase library and recreation center redevelopment. We also urge the Council to accelerate adoption of the resolutions on surplus, disposition, and the development agreement for the site. We have already had the required public hearings for these actions.

We ask the Council to ensure that the development agreement specify that Rift Valley shall build its originally proposed project of 206 total units, with the following (minimum) affordability levels:

- Deeply affordable: 70 units (34%) at 30% and 50% AMI;
- Workforce: 67 units (33%), at or below 80% AMI;
- Market Rate: 69 units (33%)

The Rift Valley project, as originally proposed, conforms to the new NMU-4/CC2 Zone (65 ft height, 60% lot occupancy), which applies to the civic core site. The adopted zone reflects the Comp Plan and Chevy Chase Small Area Plan recommendations by providing for mixed-use and local public facility development on District-owned property, including a moderate density level of housing. The Rift Valley proposal was shaped by the extensive public process that included not only the Comp Plan 2021 amendments and the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, but also the Housing Equity report, the surplus hearing on January 12, 2023, the public disposition hearing which closed the comment period on May 25, 2025, and years of thoughtful input by previous ANC 3/4G commissions, committees and task forces.

We were greatly disappointed that DMPED downsized the Rift Valley proposal, which substantially shrank the number of affordable units, and eliminated the workforce housing units. We are mystified as to why this occurred since the original project conforms to the newly adopted Civic Core zone, and the original proposal appeared to not require additional subsidy to pay for the deeply affordable and workforce housing.

The FY 27 budget provides for funding for the replacement of the library and recreation center. This is a big advantage to help Rift Valley put together the financing for the entire project in this challenging economic environment.

We urge DMPED to work with DHCD to further support the project with Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and potentially take advantage of covering eligible public facilities construction costs along with the affordable housing costs. While we don't know that LIHTC is necessary, it could provide the benefit of an average of 60% AMI for the workforce units, which would provide greater affordability, and potentially provide additional funding to help pay for the construction costs of the public facilities.

Given the acute need for more affordable housing in Ward 3, we should not waste the opportunity of building more at the Chevy Chase Civic Core site. Nor should we delay delivering a new library, community center, and housing to the site. This is an important resource for

achieving the District's housing and racial equity goals. We have lost affordable housing opportunities in Ward 3 before -- most significantly the Tenleytown Library. This should not happen again.

We ask the committee to approve DMPED's budget, and at the same time move the resolutions to complete the development agreement for the original Rift Valley proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Cort
Policy Director