

April 24, 2026

The Honorable Janeese Lewis George
Chair, Committee on Facilities
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004

RE: Department of Parks and Recreation Budget Oversight Hearing -
Support the DPR capital budget to rebuild the Chevy Chase recreation center, along with the library, and affordable mixed-income housing under the original Rift Valley project proposal

Dear Chair Lewis George:

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 are pleased to express our support for the capital funds for a new Chevy Chase recreation center, along with a new library, civic and outdoor recreation space, and affordable, mixed-income homes at the Chevy Chase Civic Core site. We ask the Council to review and approve the resolutions to advance this multifaceted civic core project as soon as possible.

The selected proposal by Rift Valley originally offered 206 total housing units with one-third of them affordable to households earning 30% and 50% AMI, one-third at 80% AMI, and one-third market rate. We urge the Council to support this original proposal as the most expedient way to bring the planned new public facilities and more affordable homes to this high-opportunity neighborhood and rare publicly owned Ward 3 site.

We are baffled by DMPED's shrinking of the original Rift Valley proposal which reduced the number of affordable units to 54 and eliminated the workforce housing. The DMPED action lopped a story off the building, even though the original proposal conformed to the new zone for the civic core site, the new NMU-4/CC2 Zone (65 ft height, 60% lot occupancy).

The Rift Valley proposal for the site addresses the city's goals of creating more housing in high opportunity neighborhoods, progress towards racial and economic equity, and building more walkable places, and modernized public facilities - including a new recreation center.

The Rift Valley proposal was shaped by the extensive public process that included: the Comp Plan 2021 amendments, the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, the rezoning of the Chevy Chase Main Street including the civic core from 2023-2025, the 2019 Housing Equity report, the surplus hearing in 2023, the Our RFP process in 2023, the public presentations of the 8 proposals for the site in 2025, the public disposition hearing and extended comment period in 2025, and years of thoughtful input by previous ANC 3/4G commissions, committees and task forces.

We urge the council to act expeditiously to deliver a new recreation center, library, and housing to the site. The civic site offers a rare opportunity to help address Ward 3's acute need for more affordable housing. This is an important public resource that we should use to help achieve 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 the capital budget for the DPR Chevy Chase recreation center, and at the same time work to advance the land disposition and development agreement resolutions for the original Rift Valley proposal which offered 137 affordable and workforce homes. We must move these resolutions to deliver the modernized community facilities and much needed affordable housing for this high-opportunity Ward 3 neighborhood.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Cort
Policy Director