

**ANC 3/4G's Report and  
Recommendations for the  
Future of the Chevy Chase Community Center  
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**ANC 3/4G's Report and  
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January \_\_, 2017**

**I. Executive Summary**

ANC 3/4G — supported by an unprecedented level of community engagement — urges the Mayor and the Council to appropriate sufficient funds in the FY 2019 budget for a thorough modernization of the Chevy Chase Community Center (CCCC). The existing building is near the end of its useful life, and it can no longer meet the community's needs and expectations.

The Chevy Chase Community Center can be the backbone of our neighborhood. In addition to facilitating health, recreation, personal growth, and fitness and serving as a gathering place for community and arts-related events, it will function as an anchor for many in our neighborhood by building a strong sense of local identity. The Chevy Chase Community Center must continue to evolve as we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and as the needs and interests of our residents develop. The District requires a vibrant facility that will affirmatively build community and serve Northwest DC for decades to come. This comprehensive report and our detailed recommendations provide the blueprint for creating that facility.

Our analysis began without preconceptions but with an ambitious vision of what the Community Center could be — a hub for multigenerational activities that engage residents' bodies, spirits, and intellects in a convivial environment. Our community's interests and needs run a broad gamut — seniors and children, sedentary and active, and those who enjoy intellectual, social, or physical activities to varying degrees. Our Community Center should inspire them all. It should entice new users and retain faithful patrons. It should aspire to be a central focus for important neighborhood activities. Its spaces and activities should be attractive and exciting. We expect our Community Center to represent our people's best and highest aspirations.

To achieve these objectives, we sought an extraordinary level of community participation in the planning process. A typical modernization project would not begin community engagement until well after the budget had been appropriated and many preliminary framing decisions had been made. The ANC sought to turn that process on its head so that it could integrate residents' input from the inception. We held 16 public meetings over 16 months to discuss and debate what to do with the Community Center. We visited other community centers to gather information and ideas. We met with officials from the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of General Services, the Public Library, and the Office on Aging. We conducted a comprehensive survey, gathering almost 1000 responses for households representing at least 1500

individuals. We enlisted the abundant talents and expertise of our neighborhood's survey designers, architects, and data analysts to review information and examine options. We compiled the available facts in useable formats. In sum, this community-centered, collaborative process has produced documented analysis and supportable recommendations. Although ANC 3/4G is responsible for this report and its recommendations, Appendix A acknowledges those who made particular contributions.

The ANC took extraordinary steps to ensure that its survey was comprehensive and representative. Survey questions were community driven. The easy-to-complete on-line survey was widely publicized in media, through emails, and in door-to-door canvassing. This exhaustive survey process produced especially useful results. We identified the demographics of all respondents and cross-tabulated the data by respondents' particular characteristics — e.g., to determine whether seniors' answers differed from those who were responding for children. We ranked relative interests in programs and facilities to identify the community's priorities. Among other findings, the data showed strong interest in an appealing physical space, sustainable structures, a performance space, gymnasium facilities, and nurturing current hallmark programs (e.g., fencing and ballet). This analysis helped shape the ANC's conclusions and recommendations about the necessary programs and facilities in a modernized Community Center.

We developed our recommendations systematically. First, we used the survey data and community meetings to identify those programs that the Community Center needs to support. Second, we determined what facilities will be required to accommodate programs and activities, again relying on survey data where applicable. Third, we estimated the space requirements for each of the necessary facilities and whether they (a) can fit with the existing structure, (b) would need an addition to the current footprint, or (c) dictate construction of an entirely new building. Fourth, we projected the costs of a modernized Community Center using DPR experience and standard estimating factors.

Finally, we make the following specific recommendations for realizing this vision for a modernized Community Center:

1. Remove, reuse, or recycle the interior and exterior walls of the existing structure leaving only the structural supports and floors;
2. Design the new Community Center to fit within the existing structure or within the additional space between the rear of the building and the current parking lot;
3. Include space in the new building for a fitness center with equipment, a lecture/performance hall with about 125 seats, meeting/games/party rooms, a half-court gymnasium, a childcare room with an indoor play area, a

kitchen, a quiet lounge, an activity/tech lounge, a dance/yoga/Pilates studio, a fencing/exercise room, a pottery area and an arts and crafts space, offices, and rooftop amenities (e.g., a garden, greenhouse, and/or outdoor lounge);

4. Consider adding above-ground parking spaces to the current surface lot;
5. Create a new building that is aesthetically appealing, constructed to the latest sustainability standards, and resilient so that it can serve as a refuge in case of an emergency or another widespread disturbance;
6. Work closely with the ANC and the community to develop more detailed plans for the Community Center to ensure that the final design meets current and future community needs;
7. Work with the District Public Library to coordinate any improvements to the Chevy Chase Library to take advantage of synergies between the two buildings and to unify and harmonize the campus to the extent possible; and,
8. Include at least \$[24] million in the FY 2019 budget for the modernization of the Chevy Chase Community Center.

This report — including detailed appendices — substantiates these recommendations. The ANC sought and obtained extensive community input that shaped its proposals. We look forward to working with the Mayor, the Council, and District agencies to make the community’s vision for the Community Center a reality and to creating a community asset that will be a source of pride for decades to come.

## **II. Vision for the Community Center’s Future**

### **An Opportunity to Inspire**

The 1960s-era Chevy Chase Community Center sits in Ward 3 at the corner of McKinley and Connecticut Avenue in Northwest DC but also serves the larger community west of Rock Creek Park. During the last half century, only minor improvements were made in the late 1990s that did not change the building’s look or functionality. Modernization is both necessary and long overdue.

Our city has changed significantly over these decades and so have the needs of our community. Based on data collected through the 2010 U.S. decennial census, Ward 3 has a higher than average percentage of both young and old compared with the other seven wards (DC 2012 Ward Profile, [http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/wards/Nbr\\_prof\\_wrd3.html](http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/wards/Nbr_prof_wrd3.html)). Our particular

demographics present interesting challenges that a mere facelift cannot address. We need a Community Center that reflects our modern sensibilities and a building design that can endure, while being responsive to the evolving needs of our community. This opportunity to modernize the CCCC is a chance to inspire.

A 21st Century community center for Northwest DC should be an inclusive, invigorating, multi-functional space that resonates with the District's vibrancy, attracting all age-groups in our community, and aligning the environmental, sustainability, and resilience goals that our city leadership has set out for the coming decades. Notably, Mayor Bowser pledged on December 4, 2017, to make Washington, DC carbon-neutral and climate resilient by 2050 (<https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-commits-make-washington-dc-carbon-neutral-and-climate-resilient-2050>). What better way to realize these plans than to design a modernized Community Center based on those principles? The Community Center should embody our noblest aspirations.

### **A Collective Vision**

An effective community center builds and supports community. A collective vision, can and should guide our thinking as we formulate concepts, designs, and budgets. An inspiring vision reflected in a building's design — the aesthetics as well as the nuts and bolts — will draw people to take a look inside, see what the center has to offer, size up the feel of the place, and decide whether this will be a comfortable space for them. The more the community feels pulled in by “curb appeal” – i.e., the landscaping, the front entrance, and the condition and design of the outdoor physical space -- the greater the foot traffic and return visits and the more likely the center will become an essential element in providing a palpable sense of community.

A modernized Chevy Chase Community Center would bring more members of our community together in a location that naturally invites mingling across generations — where there is a common space and facilities that aren't solely uni-purpose, yet still offer privacy. That space would consciously reflect the community's shared values. To achieve those objectives, we have developed the following Guiding Principles that provide the backdrop for this report.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### **A DESTINATION THAT IS:**

- ✓ Welcoming and Accommodating
- ✓ Vibrant, Energizing, and Stimulating
- ✓ Physically and Emotionally Safe, Clean, and Accessible to All
- ✓ Light, Airy and Open
- ✓ Energy Efficient
- ✓ Well Maintained and Staffed

### **A DESTINATION THAT PROMOTES:**

- ✓ Well-Being and an Active Body, Mind, and Spirit
- ✓ Individual Enrichment and Community Growth
- ✓ 21st Century Issues, Programming, and Resources
- ✓ Intergenerational Offerings
- ✓ Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience

### **A DESTINATION THAT EMBRACES**

- ✓ Modern Look and Feel
- ✓ Feeling of Progress, Opportunity, and Promise
- ✓ Differences, Diversity and Social Interaction and Equity
- ✓ Celebration of the Local
- ✓ Desire to Learn, Do, Make, Thrive, and Gather Together

## **The Community Center As A Destination**

A modernized, 21st century Chevy Chase Community Center should be a destination for reflection, activity, and an alternative from home, school, and work to pursue hobbies and interests with other like-minded neighbors. It would be a destination for learning, doing, making, thriving, and gathering.

Community stands at the core of a 21st century CCCC as expressed and reflected in its: (a) physical layout and design, (b) programming, and (c) resources.

Physical Layout and Design. This means engaging local designers, artists, and architects to design and construct a building that is open and inviting in its aesthetics, functional in meeting all program requirements, as well as environmentally friendly and climate resilient. Using locally sourced materials and local business products and

services, where feasible, and adorning the walls with the artwork of local artists would help create a community center built by — as well as for — the community.

Programming. This means creating programming that engages curiosity, learning, and meaning that will enable our community to stay on the cutting edge of fitness, health, and practical understanding of how scientific and technological advances affect our lives. Program offerings in a dynamic CCCC might include:

- A makerspace — like those described in “Six DC Area Makerspaces,” February 25, 2015, <https://www.bisnow.com/washington-dc/news/tech/6-dc-area-makerspaces-43309> — to bring in 3-D printing equipment, metalworking equipment, telescope making, LEGO robotics, textile, sewing, and knitting classes that would attract hobbyists, artisans, artists, entrepreneurs, and new careerists.
- Lectures or exhibits that take advantage of the tremendous research at federal government agencies (e.g., NIST, NIH, DOE, NASA, ARL, etc.), research universities, foundations (e.g., Carnegie Institution for Science), and companies located in the metropolitan area and introduce a broader audience to the work that they do and the new technologies on the horizon that they are supporting that would affect how we might live, work, and thrive — e.g., driver-less cars, robotics in the home, and cybersecurity.

Resources. This means offering resources that celebrate the creators, entrepreneurs, artists, teachers, historians, reporters, and others who reside in our community and enable them to bring their talents to others as well as to provide pertinent information to our community. This integration of neighborhood assets with the community might include:

- Partnerships with NPR StoryCorps to capture the career stories of our older residents; and
- Engaging and thought-provoking talks by experienced professionals living in the area, including former US foreign service officers, historians of the city, staff from foreign embassies, professors from local universities, and book authors.

### **A Community Center That Forges Community**

The Chevy Chase DC neighborhood would welcome a Community Center that reflects the needs of the community and recognizes the warp and weft of our community’s physical, social, and intellectual fabric. A modernized, generationally integrated CCCC will add to the work that our neighborhood’s commercial businesses have been doing to build the tapestry of our community. A more attractive,

environmentally friendly, and climate resilient building with value-added programming and activities would enrich the neighborhood for everyone.

We can create a space that offers a sense of inspiration and energy, a communal space that attracts and brings a diverse and active community together in shared experiences that can fortify the strands of our social identity and strengthen our ties. With strong leadership and community involvement we can realize this vision and look back years and decades later with pride at what we built for our community. We invite the Mayor and Council to join is in making this happen.

### **III. Community Participation in the Process**

ANC 3/4G recognized from the inception of this review that full community participation was essential. Thus, at its September 12, 2016 meeting, ANC 3/4G initiated a process that would provide extensive community input in defining the Community Center’s future. The prospect for renovations was raised initially at the ANC’s April 25, 2016 meeting with Mayor Bowser, and in July 2016, several ANC 3/4G commissioners and representatives from the Chevy Chase Citizens Association (CCCA) met with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) about its plans for the Community Center. The ANC sought to develop a process to ensure that decisions would be made based on the best information available and that they would reflect a full and complete vetting with the affected community.

The District contemplated some upgrades to the Community Center in its FY 2018-FY 2023 Capital Improvements Plan (<https://cfo.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ocfo/publication/attachments/DC%20GOVT%20FY%202018%20BUDGET%20-%20CONGRESS%20-%20VOL%205.pdf>). That Plan included allocation of \$4 million in FY 2019 and \$4 million in FY 2020 to “make ADA improvements, new elevators, new multifunctional rooms and new and expanded program space” at the Community Center. DPR told the ANC at the meeting in July 2016, however, that this amount of money would only be sufficient to address critical renovation needs — e.g., improved Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility and essential upgrades to water, electrical, and heating and air conditioning systems but no new or expanded space. According to the Capital Improvements Plan, this limited work was projected to require about 17 months for design and 14 months for construction.

Because the Community Center is a vital, long-term asset for our neighborhood and because decisions made in the next few years will have ramifications for decades, the ANC sought the community’s views on several critical questions, including: (1) what are the current needs, expectations, and requirements, and how do we expect them to evolve in the future (i.e., a comprehensive “needs assessment”); (2) how will the current renovation plans satisfy short- and long-term needs; (3) are there available alternatives to

the currently planned renovation that would better meet community needs; (4) what is the best use of public funds for the Community Center; and (5) what role should the ANC, the CCCA, and the broader community have in decisions about the future of the Community Center?

The ANC unanimously adopted a motion at its September 12, 2016 meeting to begin a lengthy data-gathering and analysis process with a series of special meetings. On November 9, 2016, the ANC held the first special meeting to begin this effort. That meeting, like all of the others discussing the Community Center, was facilitated by the ANC, publicized broadly to the community, and open to everyone. Representatives from the DPR, the DC Public Library, and the Office on Aging each made presentations on their current efforts to assess the community's needs, whether the existing facilities meet those needs, and whether there are any current plans for improvements to the facilities.

DPR's Deputy Director for Community Engagement, John Stokes, welcomed the ANC's proactive approach but acknowledged that it has not initiated any analysis of future needs or requirements because there is no money available for capital improvements until at least FY 2019 and 2020. The Library's Director of Business Services indicated that it had taken a more holistic approach and has looked at options — including a possible public/private partnership — for the Community Center and the Library as part of a larger community campus. This effort was part of a study of five library properties in the District to determine feasibility. Finally, the Office on Aging's Chief of Staff said that they are pushing for a “virtual senior wellness center” in Wards 2 and 3 that may or may not be a brick-and-mortar center. He acknowledged the need, however, for a more coordinated program for seniors in Ward 3 and Ward 4 west of the Park, where no senior wellness center currently exists.

The attendees at the September 12 meeting expressed a range of views and concerns, but one repeated thread was the need for better information about what the community needs and wants from the Community Center/Library/playground complex. Based on suggestions from several attendees, the group agreed to prepare a survey plan to solicit the community's views in a systematic, reliable way. A second special meeting was held on December 13, 2016, to review the proposed survey plan and to continue the discussion, focusing on the information that the ANC needs to formulate a proposal for the Community Center's future. Section IV below describes the development of the survey methodology and reports highlights of the survey results.

At the December 13, 2016 meeting, the ANC and the CCCA also requested and later received data on classes offered at the Community Center and the numbers of people enrolled. The ANC also arranged with DPR for visits to three other community/recreation centers in the District, and several Commissioners and residents went to the Deanwood Recreation Center on January 9, 2017, to Raymond on January 12,

and to Rosedale on January 13. Those visits are documented in Appendix B and helped to suggest possible features that could be incorporated in a modernized CCCC.

As described more fully in Section IV, the ANC led a number of subsequent meetings to finalize the survey plan. The survey opened on September 13, 2017, and closed on November 7, 2017, after which the ANC held a special meeting on November 28, 2017. This meeting was widely publicized, including emails sent to the 355 survey respondents who provided addresses and asked to be notified of future activities. First, the ANC presented a report on preliminary data from the 929 respondents in the Community Center survey. While the data were still being compiled, the ANC described some high-level facts on those activities/programs and facilities that were of greatest interest to respondents. Second, John Stokes, DPR's Deputy Director for Community Engagement and Jeff Bonvechio, the Department of General Services' Deputy Director for Capital Construction, made presentations on the scope of work that would be included in rehabilitation of the existing building. (Nick Kushner, a DPR Community Planner for Capital Projects who would be working with the community on this project, also attended this meeting.) They indicated that, because of the extensive work that will be required to modernize the existing building, they expected to strip the building down to its core structure and to remove all the exterior and interior walls before constructing the new facilities and systems within that framework.

DPR and DGS did not offer specific cost estimates but indicated that modernization within the framework of the existing building was feasible, and the costs were not out of line with recent experience in renovating community or recreation centers. They emphasized that the size of the existing structure — three stories and about 31,700 square feet — provided considerable flexibility to reconfigure the facilities. Finally, the group discussed the possible scope of work for replacement of the existing building with an entirely new building. Even assuming additional features (e.g., a gymnasium and a performance hall), the program facilities appeared to fit within the shell of the existing building with the exception of a full gymnasium, which would require an addition.

The ANC led another special community meeting on December 14, 2017, (1) to review the results of the Community Center survey, (2) to discuss the types of programming and facilities that should be used in planning for the future Community Center, (3) to consider the space required to accommodate the identified facilities, either in the existing structure, in the existing structure with an addition, or in a completely new structure, (4) to estimate approximate costs that would be entailed to construct the required facilities, and (5) to develop the strategy for presenting these recommendations to the Mayor and the District's Council. The ANC reviewed this discussion at its regular meeting on January 8, 2018, and considered further input from the community.

On January \_\_, 2018, the ANC posted its draft resolution, along with its proposed report on and recommendations for the CCCC, on the Chevy Chase Community listserv, NextDoor, on the CCA's website (<http://www.chevychasecitizens.org>), and on ANC 3/4G's website (<http://anc3g.org>). The Commission invited questions and comments from the community. On January 22, 2018, at its regularly scheduled meeting, the ANC discussed the final report, any modifications based on issues raised by Commissioners and residents, and discussed a draft resolution to adopt the report and its recommendations.

#### **IV. Community Survey Methodology and Result Highlights**

One of the ideas that the ANC embraced at the first special meeting on November 9, 2016, was the development and implementation of a community-wide survey to gather residents' views about the Community Center's future. Community residents Amy Mack and Patrick Williams were instrumental in guiding this discussion. Subsequent special meetings were held on December 13, 2016, January 30, 2017, and February 28, 2017, to develop a draft survey. The participants discussed the survey that had been used in the Palisades community when considering modernization of its recreation center, the target respondents for the survey, the mechanics of developing an on-line survey, and methods for encouraging participation in the survey.

At the ANC's March 27, 2017 meeting, Amy Mack reported on the results of the four community meetings that focused on the survey, emphasizing that development of the survey's contents had been "community led." The draft survey focused both on residents in ANC 3/4G and Community Center users, regardless of where they lived and was intended to identify the ways that the Community Center is currently used and what people want and need for future uses. Everyone would be welcome to participate in the survey, however, and no one would be excluded, no matter where they live. The plan at that point was for ANC commissioners to review the draft survey, followed by possible testing on a representative focus group, and finalization of the survey plan.

The ANC discussed the pilot survey further at its April 24 and May 8, 2017 meetings, and held another special meeting on June 5 to finalize a pilot survey that would be used to assess how the survey worked with typical respondents. The ANC reviewed the proposed final pilot survey (Appendix C) at its July 10, 2017 meeting. The pilot survey contained two parts: (1) the respondent's experience with the Community Center facilities and programs, and (2) the respondent's desires and expectations for the Community Center and what changes are needed to better serve the community. The Commissioners agreed that the survey questions reflected important and extensive input from the community and that it was time to move forward with the pilot study implementation.

The Commissioners agreed that it would be prudent to conduct a pilot survey as our only opportunity to (1) refine questions, (2) identify and resolve as many potential problems or issues as possible in advance of the final survey, (3) estimate the time required for a respondent to complete the survey, and (4) test the survey platform. For this pilot we used both the on-line Question Pro platform and a pro forma paper form. Each Commissioner solicited about ten respondents to represent a rough cross section of the kind of respondents that we expected, including some from outside our ANC's boundaries. The ANC reviewed the pilot survey results and respondents' feedback at its July 24, 2017 meeting and proposed several small changes — e.g., adding the Community Center address, correcting typographical errors, clarifying directions on some questions, adding an additional age category for those 75 or older, and adding Sunday as a choice in the question on "which days and hours would you/members of your household most likely participate in programs/activities at the CCCC."

At its July 24, 2017 meeting, the ANC identified the following target categories of survey participants that had been identified through community input: (1) any resident within the Chevy Chase, DC neighborhood (i.e., within the boundaries of ANC 3/4G or as shown by the boundary map of the Chevy Chase Citizens' Association); (2) anyone who has enrolled in classes at the Community Center within the past two years; (3) members of the Chevy Chase Citizen's Association who are not otherwise included; (4) other interested stakeholders who want to participate in the survey (e.g., Northwest Neighbors Village members and volunteers, Ingleside residents, Knollwood residents, Club 60+ members), preschool families (Chevy Chase Baptist Church, Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church, Broad Branch Children's House), elementary school families (Lafayette Elementary School, Murch Elementary School), Avalon Theatre members, and local businesses along Connecticut Avenue. Nevertheless, everyone would be welcome to complete the survey, regardless of where they live if they are users or may be potential users of the Community Center.

The ANC also identified the following potential ways to disseminate the survey: (1) flyers with the link to the survey at the Community Center office and at other locations within the building; (2) posts on the ANC and Chevy Chase Citizen's Association websites; (3) posts on the Chevy Chase Community listserv and NextDoor; (4) links published in the Northwest Current; (5) notifications and distribution of flyers to other ANCs in Ward 3; (6) distribution of flyers at the Chevy Chase Library and Tenleytown Library and at recreation centers in Ward 3; (7) posts on the preschool and elementary school websites and distribution in those school's Tuesday Bulletins; (8) flyers, emails, and posts to any relevant websites such as Ingleside, Knollwood, Northwest Neighbors Village, Club 60+, Iona House, ForestHills Connection; (9) a table at Chevy Chase DC Day; (10) flyers at businesses along Connecticut Avenue; (11) emails to any constituent lists that commissioners have; (12) door-to-door canvassing by ANC 3/4G commissioners; and (13) the Saturday Farmers Market at Lafayette Elementary

School. The survey was intended to be completed online, but a paper form was also available for completion.

At its August 14, 2017 meeting, the ANC (1) finalized the several small changes to the survey that had been identified as a result of the pilot survey, (2) ratified (with a few additions) the categories of respondents that would be targeted in the survey, and (3) adopted the dissemination methods that had been previously identified in the community meetings (with small modifications). The Commissioners divided responsibility for various tasks among themselves to be sure that each task would be completed. The ANC set the start of the survey for about September 13 and the close for about October 13 and agreed that it would analyze the responses to the survey and set a time after the survey closed to present and discuss the results.

The on-line survey was finalized and went live on September 13, 2017, using the Question Pro platform with a custom URL for easier identification [CCCC.questionpro.com](http://CCCC.questionpro.com). Appendix D is a printout of the on-line survey, and Appendix E is the paper form of the survey. (The paper form of the survey was available in the ANC office throughout the survey period.) To help in notifying the community about the survey, the CCCA had 2000 flyers printed with information about the survey (Appendix F).

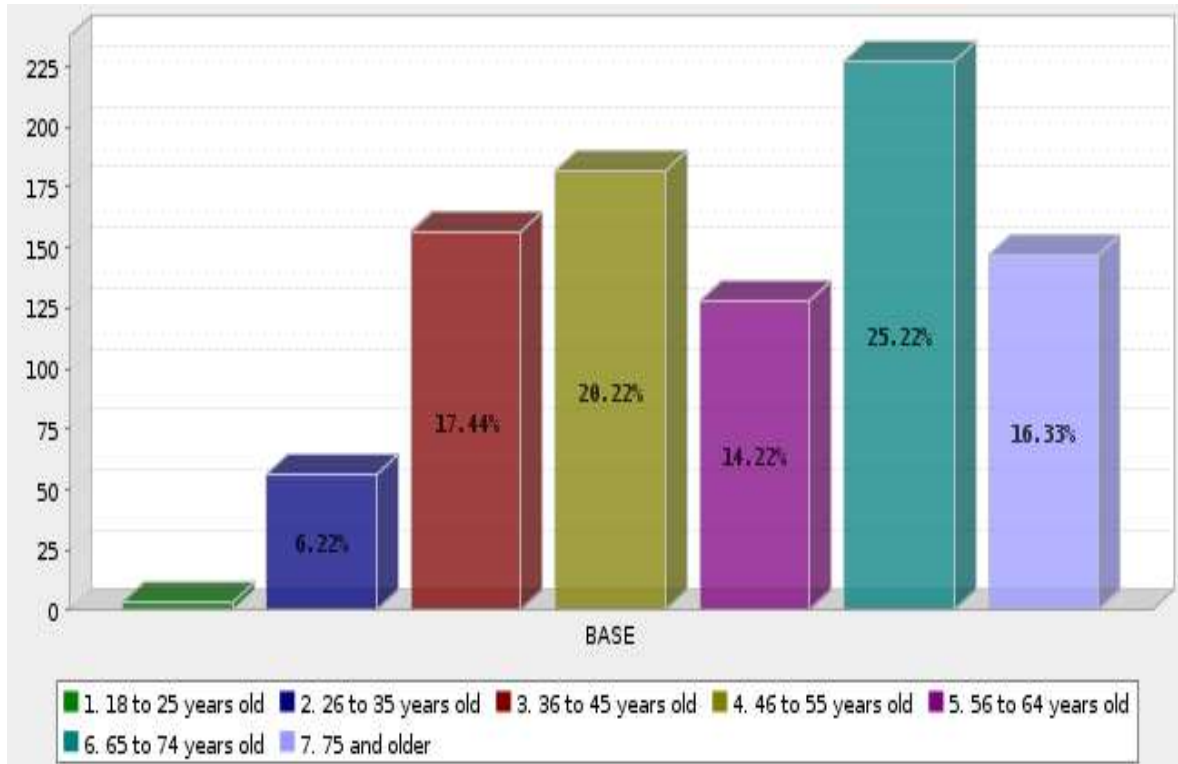
The ANC and the CCCA took the following steps to encourage the community to take part in the survey:

- (1) ANC Commissioners distributed about 75 flyers at Chevy Chase DC Day on September 16;
- (2) the ANC posted the link on the Chevy Chase Community listserv (with a circulation of 5100 emails addresses) on September 17, October 11, 16, and 26, and November 1, 3, and 4;
- (3) the ANC 3/4G Chair sent emails to all other Ward 3 ANC chairs and Councilmembers Mary Cheh and Brandon Todd on September 17 asking them to publicize the link;
- (4) Commissioners sent emails about the survey to their constituents on September 17 and 18 and sent newsletters to constituents on October 2 and 29;
- (5) the ANC posted the link on the NextDoor social network (about 5700 subscribers for West Chevy Chase plus nearby neighborhoods) on September 18 and October 29;

- (6) the ANC sent the link to the Forest Hills Connection (which published the link on September 20) and to <http://tenleytowndc.org> on September 19 for their distribution;
- (7) the ANC Chair wrote a letter to the editor of the Northwest Current with a link to the survey, which was published on September 20, and the CCCA noted the survey and its link in Northwest Current columns on September 20 and October 11;
- (8) the ANC published the link to the survey on its website on September 21;
- (9) At the ANC's request, Northwest Neighbors Village's weekly bulletin included an article with the link on September 22;
- (10) the ANC got the Lafayette Elementary School to publish an article and the survey link in the School's Tuesday Bulletin for October 3;
- (11) ANC Commissioners distributed flyers at the Lafayette Elementary School Saturday Farmers Market on October 28;
- (12) Commissioners distributed flyers to participants in the Halloween Spooktacular along Connecticut Avenue on October 31;
- (13) the ANC provided copies of the flyers to the staff at the Community Center and the Chevy Chase Library;
- (14) the CCCA published the link on its website, in its monthly newsletter, and in emails to block captains;
- (15) Commissioners sent emails about the survey to program leaders at the Community Center (e.g., fencing, telescope making, bridge, and scrabble) for them to distribute to their program participants; and
- (16) Commissioners distributed more than 1000 flyers to individual houses in their single member districts.

The ANC extended the closing date for the survey from the originally planned October 13 until November 7, 2017, to ensure maximum participation. The ANC reported some preliminary survey tabulations at its November 13, 2017 meeting and reported further data at special meetings on November 28 and December 14. Among the highlights presented were the following:

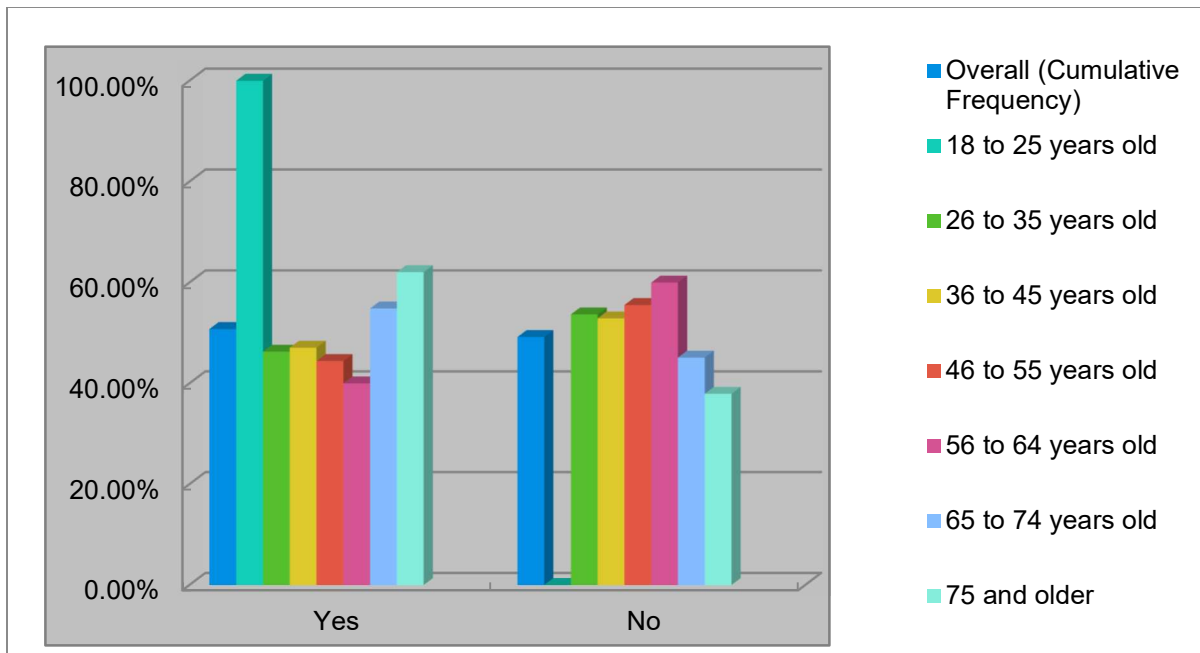
- There were 929 total respondents (777 completed the full survey and 152 completed parts of the survey).
- 289 respondents also indicated that they were answering on behalf of their children under the age of 18, and 541 children met that criteria, for a total pool of people in the survey of 1,470.
- The age breakout of those responding to the age question was:



NOTE: The age data for survey respondents reflected in this chart represents an overrepresentation of those 65 or older (42%) who, based on recent data, represent only 21% of the ANC's population.

- An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they lived in either the 20015 zip code (76%) or the 20008 zip code (10%).
- About half of the respondents had participated in Community Center activities within the past two years with those 65 or older participating at the rate of about 58% and those 26-64 at about 45% (see the chart below), and about 70% of those who had participated in Community Center activities were “extremely” or “very” satisfied.

**Over the past 24 months have you or a member of your household participated in any program/activity at the Chevy Chase Community Center?**



- To the question of how interested respondents are in having certain facilities, the following seven were the highest rated when combining responses for “Very Interested” and “Interested” for all age groups in rank order (all closely bunched between 69-76%): “Fitness Center with exercise Equipment,” “Outdoor Open Space,” “Environmentally Sustainable Structures,” “Auditorium with Stage (for Theater and Movies),” “Community Room,” “Meeting Rooms,” and “Gymnasium.”
- Additionally, in response to the question about the importance respondents placed on aspects of the facility, “Physical Space is Appealing” received a 97% combined score when adding “Very Important” to “Somewhat Important.”
- Where respondents indicated that they took programs elsewhere but would take them if offered at the CCCC, the following ranked highest (in order): “Fitness Club/Exercise,” “Music,” “Creative Arts,” “Theater,” “Foreign Language,” “Pilates,” and “Computer.”
- Where respondents indicated that they took programs at the CCCC over the past 24 months, the following ranked highest (in order): “Senior Fitness,” “Fencing Club,” “Gymnastics,” “Ballet,” “Club 60 Program,” “Bridge Instruction,” “Yoga,” “Line Dancing,” and “Qi Gong.”
- There were some differences for several questions when controlling for the age of the respondent — e.g., a “Gymnasium” was of “Interest” to 82% of those between the ages of 26-45 but only 60% to those age 65 or older; an “Activities/Game Room” was of Interest to 68% of those between 26-45 but only 52% of those age

65 or older; “Adequate Parking” was considered “Important” to 86% of those 65 or older but only 67% of those between 26 and 45.

- The preferred hours for use of the Community Center were primarily weekday evenings and weekends.

Appendix G contains detailed charts and graphs displaying the survey results, and all of the survey data (except for personal identifications) is available upon request.

## **V. Process for Evaluating Options**

The Commission followed an integrated five-step process in assessing possible options for how to modernize the Center. First, we analyzed the survey results (summarized in Section IV) to identify what Community Center functions and characteristics the community considers most important. Second, using the survey results as a starting point and supplementing it with input from community discussions, we created a list of programs that would need to be supported in the Community Center. Third, we outlined the kinds of facilities that would be required to support those programs, using multigenerational and multifunctional spaces where possible. Fourth, we considered whether those facilities could fit within the framework of the existing structure, within the existing structure but with an addition, or would require an entirely new structure. Fifth, we considered whether the projected cost of the modernization would be reasonable, considering the needs and that this structure would serve the community for decades. Throughout these five steps our guiding principles were essential to our analytical framework.

From the survey results, the Commission developed a tentative list of Community Center programming/event categories that could be used for planning current and some obvious future needs for facilities. The list was refined after discussions in the community meeting on December 14, and the following programs or activities were identified (in alphabetical order):

### **KEY PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES**

**Activities/Parties**

**Art and Crafts**

**(Painting/Pottery/etc.)**

**Basketball/Volleyball**

**Computer/Technology**

**Cooking**

**Dance**

**Exercise/Yoga/Fitness**

**Fencing**

**Games (Bridge/Scrabble/etc.)**

**Gymnastics**

**Informal Gatherings**

**Meetings**

**Performances**

**Physical Training**

The Commission then considered what facilities would be necessary to support these programs. Although multifunctional rooms will satisfy some needs, a few programs that are hallmarks at the Community Center require specialized space. For instance, ballet instructors noted that the floor of the current dance studio is state-of-the-art and the only such DPR facility within the District. They said that this facility could be shared with yoga or Pilates instruction, but it could not share with programs like fencing because of the size of the room and the need to protect the specialized floor. The fencing instructor agreed but said that the fencing room could be shared with exercise classes or other closely related activities. Similarly, specialized arts and crafts need to be accommodated with dedicated space. For instance, pottery requires pottery wheels, and kilns that are not required for other crafts. Sinks will be required for all arts and crafts rooms, but not in other classrooms.

The survey results showed that 69% of respondents were “Interested” or “Very Interested” in having a gymnasium at the Community Center, with the greatest interest among younger respondents. Although a gymnasium ranked seventh, it was bunched closely with other desired facilities. It was apparent, however, that a full-court gym probably could not be fit into the available space, and if it were included, it might eliminate many of the current 30 parking spaces (2 spaces for handicap accessible and 28 others) to potentially create additional problems with parking for users from beyond the neighborhood. Moreover, there are full-court gyms nearby (e.g., at Lafayette Elementary School). It could be possible, however, to include a half-court gym that can accommodate a variety of activities — e.g., basketball, volleyball, pickleball, exercise classes, gymnastics, etc.

Community meetings indicated a strong preference for facilities that encourage multigenerational use. For instance, rather than a dedicated “seniors’ lounge,” it may be desirable to have spaces for a “quiet lounge” and an “activities lounge” (including technology, such as the new Tech Lounges that DPR has recently opened at three District recreation centers). Facilities could also be used by different people during different times of the day. Even a childcare room — which should include a dedicated children’s play area — could be used for other purposes as well. Such multifunctional spaces will need to be planned with those functions in mind and will need to include adequate storage space.

Survey respondents ranked an “Auditorium with Stage (for Theater and Movies)” as third highest. The community once had a vibrant theater group, and there is now no suitable public space in the neighborhood to stage performances. Community discussions noted that a performance hall could have many uses — e.g., lectures, films, presentations, theater, music performance, dance recitals, ANC and other community organizations’ meetings, etc. For example, The Avalon Theatre could hold film events or educational programming. Politics & Prose, which currently uses Sixth & I Historic Synagogue downtown for its author readings and other speaking events, could hold some of these

events at CCCC. Such a multifunctional space would give the Community Center a unique ability to host varied events that cannot be accommodated elsewhere in the neighborhood.

The community meetings also discussed possible uses for the roof space on the building. Possible rooftop activities could include a garden, solar panels, or a small outdoor lounge that would augment the indoor lounge and provide an added attraction.

The survey respondents also placed great value on sustainability (ranked third highest in interest). The roof should certainly be used to promote sustainability through a roof garden and/or solar panels. The modernized Community Center should also be designed to be resilient so that it can be self-sustaining in case of an emergency. A fully resilient Community Center could be a safe haven if there are power outages, extreme heat or cold, or any other disruptive event. With solar panels and the latest battery technology, the Community Center could be able to withstand widespread power outages.

Finally, the survey found an overwhelming interest in appealing physical space — 97% of respondents. At least anecdotally, many potential Community Center users are deterred by the current building that is described as “gloomy,” “depressing,” and “uninviting.” As emphasized in Section II above, the modernized Community Center should draw in potential users because it is an attractive, inviting space.

Based on these considerations, the Commission and the participants in community meetings identified the following facilities or activities that require specific space in the modernized Community Center that fits within the vision, as expressed in Section II of this report (in alphabetical order):

#### **SPECIFIC SPACE REQUIREMENTS**

**Activity/Tech Lounge**

**Arts and Crafts**

**Childcare Room**

**Dance Studio/Yoga/Pilates**

**Fencing/Exercise**

**Fitness Center with Equipment**

**Half-court Gymnasium**

**Kitchen**

**Meeting/Games/Party Rooms**

**Offices**

**Performance/Lecture Hall (100-125 seats)**

**Pottery**

**Quiet Lounge**

**Rooftop Garden/Greenhouse/Outdoor Lounge**

The Commission next examined the existing layout of the Community Center, as reflected in Appendix H. The current building has approximately 31,700 net square feet on three floors (excluding the roof), but the space is not being used optimally. Some rooms (particularly in the basement) are hardly used at all, and there is no use of the roof. As DPR suggested in the November 28, 2017 meeting, it appears to be feasible to remove the exterior and interior walls to leave only the framework of the building — i.e., the structural supports and the floors — intact. The spaces could then be reconfigured to better suit current and future needs.

With the assistance of architects on the Commission and in the community, the Commission prepared a preliminary estimate of the space requirements for the identified facilities. These estimates will need to be adjusted based on further discussions and additional information. This rough estimate indicates that a modernized Community Center of about 32,550 net square feet (Appendix I) could meet the community's needs and could be built within the framework of the existing structure, with a possible addition. There is some room for an addition to the current structure between the existing building and the parking lot — e.g., to fit a half-court gym. (The ratio of gross space to net space is typically about 1.4 to 1. Thus, the gross space requirements — to include non-program space for mechanical/electrical/plumbing spaces, circulation, and structure — would be about 45,570 square feet.)

The survey indicated that adequate parking was particularly important for older residents, and some community members suggested the modernized Community Center should include underground parking. Underground parking would not be feasible under the existing building, but would be possible under an entirely new building or under the current basketball court and surface parking lot. Underground parking is almost prohibitively expensive, however, since an underground garage requires excavation, ventilation, and other support. Alternatively, it could be possible to add more spaces to the existing surface parking lot. If additional spaces are needed, an examination of the impact on the neighborhood that an elevated level would have could help determine its feasibility as an alternative to a much costlier and more time-consuming construction of an underground level.

The Commission also considered the tradeoffs between using the skeleton of the existing structure and building an entirely new building. The architects said that there would be significant cost savings in using the existing structure. The drawback, however, is that it will be more difficult to optimize the use of the space since the existing structure dictates how particular facilities can fit into it. With an entirely new structure, it would be possible to use the space more efficiently. It would also be possible to integrate the new Community Center better with any added parking spaces.

Any Community Center modernization will entail a long-term closure when the facilities will not be available. DPR and DGS advised the Commission at its November

28, 2017 meeting that it would be impossible to do the kind of modernization that is necessary without closing the Center entirely for at least 15 months. Because major systems will have to be replaced and structures reconfigured, it will not be possible to leave any portion of the building open during construction. Thus, it will be important to find suitable space for key activities that now take place at the Community Center to continue uninterrupted so that they can be resumed at the Community Center when construction is completed. Construction of an entirely new building would take only marginally longer to complete.

DPR told the Commission that it had completed recent renovation projects for about \$435 per square foot of gross space — about \$18.7 million. Of course, that would not be a reasonable estimate of the final cost, however, because it does not include all of the necessary equipment, expansion of parking facilities, or any normal design and construction contingency. Those factors would add about 10% for a total of about \$[24] million. This estimate suggests that the costs for the facilities we recommend could be made available within the budget process.

## **VI. Recommendations**

For more than 16 months and at 16 public meetings, the Commission solicited the community's views on the future of the Chevy Chase Community Center. Almost 1000 residents participated in the Commission's community-wide survey, representing the interests of almost 1500 individuals, and dozens of community residents and interested parties attended our public meetings. The Commission enlisted assistance from DPR, DGS, the Public Library, and the Office of Aging and drew on the expertise of the talented members of our community. We have considered and analyzed various options not only from the perspective of the current Community Center users, but we have also attempted to anticipate what future residents would expect from their Community Center. We have been guided by the principle that the Community Center should serve the entire community and should be a hub for strengthening and building our community.

The existing Community Center no longer meets residents' needs, nor does it meet current building and accessibility codes. A cosmetic facelift will not address fundamental deficiencies and will only postpone the time when major changes must be made. Rather, a thoughtful investment now will serve the community well for decades to come. As laid out in Section II above, a modernized Chevy Chase Community Center should inspire creativity, physical activity, intellectual stimulation, and social interactions. It should bring more members of our community and beyond together in an environment that naturally invites mingling across generations. It should provide a common space and facilities that aren't solely uni-purpose, yet still offer privacy. It should also make evident the community's choices to do our part to promote sustainability and resilience.

With this objective in mind and based on the Commission's extensive analysis, we advise the Mayor and the Council to authorize a major modernization to the Community Center to begin in FY 2019. This recommendation is based on the following:

1. The interior and exterior walls of the existing structure should be removed and reused or recycled to the extent possible so that only the structural supports and floors remain.
2. The new Community Center should be designed to fit within the existing structure to the extent possible or within the additional space between the rear of the building and the current parking lot.
3. The new building should include spaces for the following: a fitness center with equipment; a lecture/performance hall with about 125 seats; meeting/games/party rooms; a half-court gymnasium; a childcare area with an indoor play area; a kitchen; a quiet lounge; an activity/tech lounge; a dance/yoga/Pilates studio; a fencing/exercise room; a pottery area and an arts and crafts space; offices; and rooftop amenities such as a garden, greenhouse, and/or outdoor lounge.
4. The design of the new building should include additional above-ground parking spaces if feasible.
5. The new building should be aesthetically appealing and constructed to align with the latest sustainability standards and should be made resilient so that it can serve as a refuge in case of an emergency or another widespread disturbance.
6. DPR and DGS should continue to work closely with the ANC and with the community to develop more detailed plans for the Community Center to ensure that the final design meets current and future community needs.
7. The District Public Library should be consulted about the possibility of coordinating any improvements to the Chevy Chase Library to take advantage of any synergies between the two buildings and to unify and harmonize the campus to the extent possible.
8. The Mayor should include in her budget submission to the Council and the Council should approve a budget of not less than \$24 million in FY 2019 for the modernization of the Chevy Chase Community Center.

A resolution to adopt this report and these recommendations was adopted by the Commission at its January 22, 2017 meeting by a vote of \_\_ to \_\_ (a quorum being 4).