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NNV'S ROLE ON THE CHEVY CHASE SMALL AREA PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As many of you know, the District of Columbia is about to approve a city-wide comprehensive plan that addresses housing and development in DC. As part of that process, the DC Office of Planning (OP) will develop more localized plans, called Small Area Plans (SAPs) for certain neighborhoods. These plans will provide suggestions for the development of city corridors and neighborhoods, such as identifying housing priorities and highlighting gaps and opportunities in city services. Each SAP should include an analysis of current conditions and a vision and set of goals for the neighborhood.

The main corridor of Chevy Chase DC (along Connecticut Ave., from Livingston St. to Chevy Chase Circle) is one of the neighborhoods selected for an SAP, based in part on a recommendation by our local ANC.

The DC Office of Planning describes the SAP as "a guiding vision for inclusive growth rooted in a people-centered planning and design approach that aligns with OP's priorities of housing production, economic recovery, and equity and racial justice." The SAP, to be developed and written over the next six months, will not determine or dictate issues of growth and development, but will serve as guidance for decision makers such as the zoning commission to assist in their approval processes. Therefore, the SAP should reflect the concerns and vision of those who live in the neighborhood.

In the case of Chevy Chase DC, the city's draft Comprehensive Plan contemplates increasing the zoning in the corridor from low density to moderate density in order to encourage more affordable housing. Issues relevant to NNV that might be included in the plan include topics such as the timing of crosswalks, accessibility, redesign of the community center and library, encouraging the right mix of businesses along the Connecticut corridor, and promoting the construction of affordable housing designed for older adults.

In order to assist in creating the SAP, the DC OP has created an advisory committee: The "Chevy Chase Small Area Plan Community Advisory Committee" (CAC). This group of volunteer community members represents a wide range of viewpoints and the OP has directed it to "provide input on the planning process, identify needs of diverse community groups, share information with neighbors and community networks, and advise the District government on plan content."

NNV was asked to have a representative on the advisory committee in order to provide input regarding the needs of older adults in our neighborhood. This is particularly important since Ward 3 has a higher percentage of citizens over the age of 65 than any Ward in the city. It also demonstrates the increasingly visible role that NNV is playing in our community. NNV has asked former president Steve Altman, who has lived in the area for over 35 years, to represent NNV on the advisory committee.

Steve will focus on the concerns of our NNV community by providing information on relevant issues and obtaining feedback from our members, supporters and other Chevy Chase citizens who are over the age of 60. Neither Steve nor NNV itself will be adopting a formal position on the final plan.

While there will be multiple opportunities for public comment and input to the planning process, those who live in the impacted area can learn more and provide input by attending on-line seminars and following the progress at publicinput.com/13078/. Historic Chevy Chase DC will also be holding Zoom webinars in May and June to educate the public about the history of the neighborhood (www.historicchevychasedc.org/).

Two highly valued qualities for older individuals are independence and engagement with the community. Please help NNV build these goals into the SAP by learning about the details and sharing your hopes for our neighborhood. We have developed a survey to better understand your needs and wants for the Connecticut Ave. corridor, follow this link: www.surveymonkey.com/r/BYMYKDG.

It is a privilege to represent you in this important endeavor.