



BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE REGIONAL SERVICES

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Bethesda, Cabin John, Chevy Chase, Friendship Heights,
Garrett Park, Glen Echo, North Bethesda, Potomac,
Rockville, and Twinbrook Communities

Peter C. Fosselman
Director

April 16, 2025

Dear County Executive Elrich,

The Western Montgomery County Citizens' Advisory Board (WMCCAB) hosted the your FY27 Capital Improvements Program Forum at the Regional Service Building. The community appreciates and values the time you took to listen to our funding requests.

The residents in the downcounty portion of Montgomery County do not have a recreation center. We believe there is an opportunity to re-imagine the use of the B-CC Regional Services building in Bethesda. The Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) is requesting you refresh the building and consider the site as pilot recreation center.

The Regional Services building is one of the most underutilized assets in the County. It sits on prime real estate steps away from the Bethesda Metro. It also has a large open greenspace and is centrally located in the most densely populated area of the County. However, because of its lack of attention by the County, the site has shortcomings:

- Regional Services office suite in need of paint and new carpet as well as kitchen upgrades; much is exactly as it was on day one 29 years ago in 1996.
- Vacant offices and unused meeting rooms with outdated and worn appearances.
- Underutilized greenspace, playground, and courtyard
- Non-existent programming
- Maintenance and upkeep that have been deferred, such as broken blinds, cabinets, and sinks.
- Unusable ground floor due to loading dock odor.
- Persistent pest control issues.

We long to see the building filled with vibrant life again. It is clear the only way to fix these issues is to invest resources into renovating for the needs of the community.

The Bethesda community has reverberated the need for a recreation center that prioritizes serving the needs of Bethesda residents, students, and workers that is centrally located with easy access for pedestrian and public transportation. We have heard in listening sessions the recreation centers in Chevy Chase and Friendship Heights do not possess the characteristics that make it usable to Bethesdians. This is most evident in the observation of students in Bethesda, their need for a “third space”, and lack of productive options. There is a perception that students are often unwanted and pushed from commercial spaces. With few places to go, they spend time in unproductive places like garage stairwells. Students are already using the Regional Services courtyard. With a recreation center program there we can provide a better place to strengthen the public health of our

community.

We understand that building a dedicated recreation center can be a long and complicated process, but if it doesn't have to be. New flooring, paint, kitchen/bath upgrades can be simple and fast. A partnership with the Recreation Department is already in play. We are asking you to take these first steps towards this goal:

- Fix the most immediate maintenance and renovation needs such as the Regional Services Office suite and public spaces/conference rooms.
- Test a pilot recreation center program as proof of concept at the Regional Services building.
 - Assign DGS, Recreation, and Regional Services to evaluate and provide recommendations on how the space can be renovated and the funding needed. Existing spaces can be renovated, spaces can be merged, and rooms built for recreation activities.
 - Design the use of the greenspace and courtyard for recreation and community gatherings.
 - Provide funding in the FY26 Operating budget for design, build, and operation.
 - Program and manage the operation of the pilot program through the Department of Recreation
 - Take lessons learned from the pilot program and use them towards furthering a plan for a dedicated larger recreation center in Bethesda.

We thank you for listening to our concerns regarding the state of the Regional Services building and the need for a recreation center in Bethesda. We hope to engage with you further regarding how we may resolve these issues together and accomplish the goals outlined in this letter.

Sincerely,

Kristen Nelson
Chair, Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board

Cc: Kathleen Stewart, County Council President
Jennifer Bryant, Director of Office of Budget and Management

Community Engagement Cluster

4805 Edgemoor Lane • Bethesda, Maryland 20814 • 240-777-8200 • 240-777-8211 Fax
www.montgomerycountymd.gov

montgomerycountymd.gov/311



Maryland Relay 711