

## WILLARD-SHERWOOD HEALTH AND COMMUNITY CENTER – FACT SHEET

*(The information in this document comes from the Fairfax City website and from presentations made to the City Council, the most recent of which took place on February 10, 2026. For questions or comments, please email: [friendsofwillardsherwood@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofwillardsherwood@gmail.com) )*

### History

- The desire to have a community center in the City goes back decades. The 2020 Commission, which was created in June of 1992, recommended that the City “consider building a performing arts and community center.”
- In 2015-16 the City Council created a Green Acres Feasibility Study Committee to consider whether it was wise to continue using Green Acres as a community center. To see what nearby community centers had to offer, the group visited the newly constructed Providence Community Center, as well as the ones in Falls Church City and Vienna. That group identified the Willard Center property as an ideal location due to its proximity to Sherwood, Van Dyck Park, and the police station. It was not considered as a feasible site due to the fact that it was owned by the County, which used it as a health clinic. Green Acres was determined not to be a good location for a comprehensive community center due to its limited space, limited parking, poor physical condition, distance from public transportation, and location deep in a residential neighborhood.
- In 2016-17, the County completed a feasibility study which resulted in a recommendation to replace the old Willard building, which had been built in 1954.
- In late 2017 an initial letter of agreement was signed by the City Council and the County Board of Supervisors to begin a feasibility study of a possible joint venture for the Willard Health Center and the Sherwood Center.
- In 2019 a second letter of agreement was signed by both jurisdictions to study and refine the concept of a joint venture.
- In January, 2021, the City Council and County Board of Supervisors adopted resolutions to partner on a joint project.
- In May, 2021, the City and County signed a Phase I agreement to move forward with conceptual design services.
- In December, 2022, the City and County signed a Phase II agreement for full design and construction of the joint project.
- Over the past few years, over 20 stakeholder and community meetings were held from pre-design to construction design. Feedback from these meetings was incorporated at all stages of design. At the outset of the project, the City

conducted an online survey that received responses from 1,483 participants and generated 465 comments and questions.

## Design

- After demolishing the current 40,000 square foot Willard building, a new 102,000 square foot Willard/Sherwood Health and Community Center will be built on the site. The current Sherwood Center, which not be demolished, will be connected to the new Willard building by an enclosed walkway.
- The Willard side will have three stories. The third story will be set back and will not be visible from the street
- A two-story underground garage will be constructed under the community center in order to limit the height of the building. The garage will include 241 parking spaces (including 7 ADA accessible spaces, 5 fully fitted out electric vehicle (EV) spaces, and 20 future EV spaces). There will also be a drop-off area and 6 additional spaces (2 ADA accessible) on the surface adjacent to the building entrance.
- There will be bicycle racks and pedestrian walkways around the building and convenient access to the planned Blenheim Blvd/Layton Hall Drive transportation hub with a bus stop and bike-share facilities.
- The County section of the new building will include a County Health Department District Office, a Pharmacy, Public Health Clinical Programs, a Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program, Vital Records Department, Dentistry Services, Infant-Toddler Connection, and Child Development programs with a fenced in playground.
- The County Health Department District Office will offer the same services as it did in the old Willard building, which are the same as offered in the other district offices throughout the County. The only difference is the new Willard building will include a pharmacy.
- The City Community Center section will include a Senior Center, a two-story multi-use court that will be striped for basketball, volleyball, and four pickleball courts, an elevated walking track, a fitness center, fitness classes, childcare center, additional meeting rooms, a fenced-in playground, outdoor park-like seating. and, potentially, additional performance spaces.

## Costs

- The costs will be divided between the City and the County based on prorated share of building square footage and parking requirements. The splits are County/City building costs 58%/42% (based on the space allocation for each

jurisdiction) and parking 64%/36% (this is a cost breakdown; actual parking spots will be open to all).

- The County will pay ~ \$73.1M of the total project costs.
- The City will pay ~ \$54.3M of the cost of construction. This cost has been factored into the City's CIP budget since 2017.
- The City has already spent ~\$4M on the design phase, while the County has spent ~\$8M.
- Subtracting the ~\$4M the City has spent, it will have to borrow ~\$50.3M to complete the project. This money will be borrowed over a three-year period. The first year the principal and interest (debt service) will cost \$1.6M; the second year \$3.5M; and the third year \$3.8. This will be a 20-year loan so for the following 17 years the cost will hold steady at \$3.8M per year.
- The contractor will provide a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) so the costs will be known and will not exceed the GMP.
- Thanks to the joint investment, the City avoids land acquisition, demolition, and site preparation costs.
- This level of cost sharing significantly improves the City's return on investment while reducing financial risks.
- The annual operating costs will be ~\$1.7M which includes security, maintenance, utilities, and additional staffing.
- There will be fees for the fitness center, classes, and rentals to help pay for the operating costs. Based on fees charged by other community centers, moderate usage should pay for the operating costs. Higher usage could yield as much as ~\$680,000 in extra money for the City. The fact that this facility will be available to both City and County residents creates greater usage.

### **Environmental Features**

- Rooftop solar panels
- LEED gold certification
- Indoor water reduction features
- LED lighting
- Light pollution remediation
- High performance building envelope to retain heating and cooling.
- Overhead canopies on the exterior to increase shading.
- Vertical sunshade fins to reduce heat gain and glare.
- All electric building systems
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Natural light

- Stormwater controls for both quantity and quality of runoff
- Use of native plant materials

### **Ownership**

- The City will continue to own the Sherwood Center and the property that it sits on.
- The County will continue to own the land under the Willard Center but will give the City a 99-year land lease at a cost of \$1 per year.
- The Willard building will be jointly operated by the County (health clinic, childcare facility) and the City (community center facilities).

### **Green Acres Property**

- A feasibility study is planned to consider the future of this property and the 10-acre parcel of city-owned land.
- Locating the community center at the Joseph Willard site provides the City flexibility on future use of the Green Acres property.

### **Community Involvement and Support**

- In 2015-16, the Green Acres Advisory group was formed to consider the future of a community center. The group consisted of two members of City Council, one representative from the School Board, one representative of the Planning Commission, one representative from George Mason University, the Director of Parks and Recreation, the Superintendent of Schools, the Director of Community Development and Planning, the Economic Development Director, the chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, one representative from the Fairfax Police Youth Club, one representative from the Senior Center, and three citizens at large.
- The following is a partial list of outreach to the community: virtual open house, Jan. 26, 2022; in-person open house at Sherwood, Jan. 29, 2022; virtual open houses, Jan. and Feb., 2022; in-person open house at Sherwood, Feb. 23, 2022; virtual open house, Nov., 2022; in-person open house at Sherwood, Nov. 19, 2022; City Council work session presentation, Jan. 9, 2023; in-person design showcase, Jan. 13, 2024; virtual design showcase, Jan. 18, 2024; City Council work session presentation, Jan. 9, 2024; project open house, Nov. 16, 2024; City Council public hearing on the project, Oct. 14, 2025.
- The support of 7 City Councils, the Planning Commission, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the School Board

- There was outreach to thousands through the following ways: Facebook posts (4042); Twitter (over 1000); ten videos (viewed by over 1500); 14 mass emails (sent to over 40,000)

### Concerns

*This project is very expensive.*

This is a fair point, but several additional factors should be taken into account:

- Enhancing the quality and range of amenities in the City can increase residential property values and improve overall neighborhood attractiveness. Willard-Sherwood sends a powerful signal to the private market. When investors see a city willing to make long-term, well-planned public investments, it builds confidence. That confidence encourages additional commercial reinvestment, not just around the project site, but across the City. Additional investment creates more revenue for the City.
- If this project is abandoned, the ~\$4M already spent will be lost because the City will get nothing in return.
- If it turns its back on its agreements, the City could face possible liability from the County which has spent ~\$8M on the design phase for the health center and will face an additional \$12 million to start over.
- If the City chooses instead to build a new community center at the Green Acres site, the cost will be more than building on the Willard site. (~\$54.3M vs. ~\$55.6M)

*I don't like the current design of the Willard Sherwood Health and Community Center*

- At every stage of the design, input from hundreds of community members was taken into consideration. Features such as space for a senior center, a preschool, a standard-size gymnasium, adequate lighting, and a roof top gathering place were all considered desirable.
- To make changes to the design at this point will cause delays. Delays will cost approximately \$400,000 per month in escalation costs.

*Why doesn't the City save money and continue to use the Green Acres Center?*

- Due to its age and condition, including deferred maintenance and non-code compliance, Green Acres would eventually have to close. The City would lose its Senior Center, the Main Street Child Development Center, and youth and community programs.

- Significant reinvestment in the 65-year-old building would cost more than a new center.

### **Summation**

- Having a comprehensive community center will enhance the City's appeal relative to competing jurisdictions and reinforce its identity as a complete, service-rich community. Neighboring cities and towns like the City of Falls Church, the Town of Vienna, and the Town of Herndon already have had comprehensive community centers for many years. The Herndon Community Center also includes an aquatic facility.
- The City will be able to keep a County Health Department clinic within its boundaries. The others are not very close to the City. They are in: Annandale, Herndon-Reston, Franconia-Springfield, West Springfield, and Mount Vernon. With a facility within our boundaries, City families and all residents will have easy access to no-cost required school vaccinations, childcare, hearing and vision testing as well as other services.
- This will be an ADA-compliant building with LEED gold certification.
- The landscaping and inclusion of native trees will add to the beautification of the City.
- This project will increase preschool and childcare opportunities for City families.
- The combined building will lead to better utilization of the Sherwood Center.
- Having this facility accessible to public transportation and adjacent to Van Dyke Park and the police station will create new economic development opportunities for the City.
- This project represents intergovernmental cooperation and the efficient use of public funds.
- This project has broad support throughout the City.
- This project also represents a generational opportunity to change the face of the City by having such an amenity close to Old Town Fairfax.

February 27, 2026

