

Introduced by: Councilmember Grimes

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
RESOLUTION 2015-57
PROVIDING COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED MONTGOMERY COLLEGE TAKOMA
PARK/ SILVER SPRING 2016 – 2026 FACILITIES MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, Montgomery College (the “College”), founded in 1946, is Maryland’s oldest community college with three campuses, the first of which was established in 1950 and lies in part within the 1976 Takoma Park National Register Historic District; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus is distinct from the other campuses because of its residential setting, compact site, its location partially within the 1976 Takoma Park National Register Historic District and its proximity and adjacency to residences both within the Takoma Park National Register Historic District as well as the local Montgomery County Takoma Park Historic District; and

WHEREAS, the College is in the process of updating its Facilities Master Plan, which is intended to serve as a framework for the development of each of the College’s campuses in a manner that is cohesive, integrated, and visionary while addressing the individual campuses’ space usage and academic and administrative requirements; and

WHEREAS, the College, on September 10, 2015, presented to the City and community members a Facilities Master Plan update schedule with a highly compressed timeline: Staff would perform analysis and develop concept alternatives in the period September 7 to November 30; present “final reports” in community meetings December 8-10, 2015; present to the Board of Trustees on December 14; and Board of Trustees approval in a January 25, 2016 vote; and forward the approved Facilities Master Plan to the Maryland Higher Education Commission, as required by law, by February 1, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the College has made no provisions for formal public comment on the proposed Facilities Master Plan, nor for College response to City or public comment, contrary to customary and best practices for a public entity in the development of a public document, and has averred that the Facilities Master Plan is exempt from Mandatory Referral to The Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning Commission, which would entail a 60-day review period; and

WHEREAS, the general counsel of the Montgomery County Planning Department has communicated to Montgomery College that the department believe Mandatory Referral is required, despite contrary Montgomery College assertions; and

WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park believes that public entities developing public documents – including Montgomery College in developing the Facilities Master Plan update – should provide adequate opportunity for public input; and,

WHEREAS, to accommodate the College’s expansion needs, beginning in 2000, the Montgomery

County Executive, the Montgomery County Council, and the Montgomery County Planning Board agreed and financed a policy of westward expansion of College facilities and a “shift of uses from the east campus to the Georgia Avenue campus;” and

WHEREAS, both the County and the City, through their actions, have recognized the limited expansion potential of the Takoma Park core campus and wish to identify opportunities for sustainable short-term and long-term growth and expansion of the College in Silver Spring; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery College Foundation owns a developable parcel on Burlington Avenue in Silver Spring, and the College could explore acquisition of significant commercial parcels along Fenton Street, south of Route 410 and immediately adjacent to existing College facilities, in Silver Spring, for new construction; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park Master Plan, adopted in December 2000 recommends “maintaining compatibility with adjacent residential communities” and providing pedestrian and bike linkages as the College expands; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery College 2006-2016 Facilities Master Plan Update 09-27-10 states, “Most projects require the demolition of existing obsolete structures... include[ing] the existing Science North and Science South buildings,” and the College has suggested that these plans, which have not yet been executed, will be carried over into the 2016-2026 Facilities Master Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park is particularly concerned about scale, massing, and design of renovated and reconstructed buildings, including particularly the Science North and Science South buildings.; and

WHEREAS, the City is pleased with the engagement that the City and the College ultimately arrived at in the redesign of Pavilion 3, particularly regarding scale and massing, but notes with disappointment that the building was subsequently built higher than planned with no notice to the city or community; and

WHEREAS the City passed Resolution 2008-62: “Providing Comment on the Proposed Montgomery College Takoma Park/Silver Spring 2006 – 2016 Facilities Master Plan” and wishes to provide guidance – lacking a proposed 2016-2026 Facilities Master Plan Update to comment on – on elements the City seeks for inclusion in the 2016-2026 update.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT the following comments reflect the Council’s position on the development of the College’s 2016- 2026 Facilities Master Plan Update.

Section 1. The Council recognizes the great value the College has for the community and is committed to working constructively and cooperatively with the College in identifying short and long-term solutions to its expansion needs.

- Section 2. The Council supports redevelopment of the Takoma Park campus and the use of design guidelines and massing standards which reflect and preserve the architectural integrity and residential character and scale of the adjoining neighborhood and historic districts.
- Section 3. The City asks that Fenton Avenue remain open for motor vehicle traffic for the duration of any constructions activities.
- Section 4. The Council continues to advocate for the expansion of the Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus into South Silver Spring along Georgia and Burlington Avenues and calls for College acquisition of real-estate parcels along Fenton Avenue, south of Route 410, and use of the Burlington Avenue parcel owned by the Montgomery College Foundation, for any construction whose size, massing, or design is not compatible with those of buildings to be renovated, rebuilt, or replaced, and for any uses that are not safe and compatible for location in College buildings in, adjacent to, or near residences.
- Section 5. The Council applauds the College's commitment to sustainability and LEED certification and endorses the College's efforts to develop a pedestrian and bicycling oriented campus and streetscape along New York Avenue and Fenton Street and to create attractive and environmentally sensitive linkages between the campus and Takoma Park, South Silver Spring, and Fenton Village.
- Section 6. The Council protests the College's non-accommodation of adequate public comment and urges modification of the schedule and process to allow for timely, informed community input once the College has a draft proposal for discussion.
- Section 7. The Council reminds Montgomery College of the importance of full and timely College compliance with the 2002 Agreement Between the City of Takoma Park, Montgomery College, Historic Takoma, Inc. and Montgomery County to Subject the Activities of Montgomery College in the Historic Preservation District of the City to Local Control.
- Section 8. The City looks forward to working in partnership with the College in encouraging and promoting the use of alternative forms of transportation such as transit, shuttles and bicycling through appropriate policies and infrastructure improvements.

Adopted this 12th day of October, 2015.

Attest:

Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk