

**City of Takoma Park Safe Roadways Committee
Monthly Meeting, November 18, 2014**

MINUTES

1. The meeting convened at 7:30pm with the following committee members in attendance: Kacy Kostiuk, Joe Edgell, Liz Cattaneo, Ryan Morden, Kati Nolfi, and Sheryl Gross-Glaser.
2. Joe introduced Eric Saul to the committee and invited him to speak. Eric has created a redesign plan for the Takoma Junction intersection.
 - a. Eric presented his proposal for a revision of the intersection with a sketch distributed to all of the members in attendance. According to the new design, Carroll Ave would be redirected so that it intersected in a more common T formation with Ethan Allen and Sycamore. Carroll Ave would be redirected to pass through what is an existing pavilion, and the pavilion would be moved in front of the businesses on the other side of Carroll to create a pedestrian plaza. The “gazebo” located on the existing pavilion could be relocated onto this plaza area.
 - b. Joe noted that the cycle for the stoplight on Sycamore is currently very long. Eric’s design would eliminate 25 seconds out of the light cycle so that more cars could get through. Ryan asked how many light cycles there would be in an hour; Joe suggested that it might be worth researching this to get a sense of how 25 extra seconds would affect traffic flow overall.
 - c. The scale of this intersection would be no larger than the Carroll/Flower intersection, Eric said.
 - d. Eric also noted that a bus stop could be added after the intersection, if needed, resolving the existing issues with the bus stop located on Ethan Allen before the intersection. Joe noted that even without a bump-out, cars could go around a bus at the location after the intersection because there are two lanes of traffic on each side at that location.
 - e. Joe noted that the existing “gazebo” is an old gas station. Eric proposes moving this to a space in the plaza where it would be more useable. It is currently not being used much if at all and is located in a strange “no-man’s land” in the pavilion as it currently exists.
 - f. Kacy about whether Grant Ave needed to be accessible from Carroll Ave and whether it could be made into a dead-end street that did not intersect with Carroll so as to reduce further confusion at the intersection. Eric said that the Stillpoint Spa is moving to the building behind the existing gas station, so perhaps there would be traffic going in that direction. Joe noted that Tim Male has proposed eliminating access at that location. Eric said that this might be worth considering; Kacy noted that it may or may not be advantageous.
 - g. Joe noted that Historic Takoma does not want any intersection reconfiguration. Eric said that perhaps a paving pattern that recognizes the old flow of the road might help give homage to the history while allowing for a redesign of the intersection – perhaps a plaque or different pavement could be added. Joe suggested something looking like old railroad tracks could harken back to the old trolley route there.
 - h. Sat Jiwan Ikle-Khalsa (an attending member of the public) said that he believes Historic Takoma’s argument would be that if there is any redevelopment of the intersection, it opens the door for many other changes that may not be as favorable. He said he has also seen a proposal to bring Ethan Allen to a T, leaving Carroll Ave in its current route.
 - i. Joe noted that getting “approval” to move the historical building could enable it to remain historic legally. Joe noted that he has seen a picture from the 70s where that intersection did not look the same as it now does at all. Furthermore, the “historic” gas station was built on the site of a house that was torn down, and then it became a car lot.

- j. The concern of Historic Takoma has been a fear that 410 would be widened through Takoma Park. Joe said that he thinks this is not a major issue now that the beltway has been built and the idea of freeways this close to the city does not seem very likely.
 - k. Kacy asked Eric what his plan would be for the crosswalks across Carroll – would there be a pedestrian zone for the long space in front of the new plaza? Where would cars stop at the stoplight if the crosswalk were large? Eric suggested perhaps creating a wide crosswalk like the one at the zoo and putting a stop line for cars behind that location.
 - l. There was a discussion of making the entire intersection a pedestrian cross zone, allowing pedestrians to cross in all directions at the same time. Kacy noted that this would likely result in more of the current problem at the intersection, which is a long wait-time for pedestrians to cross and for cars waiting for pedestrians. Joe suggested that a combination of a pedestrian all-walk and one-street-only crosses could possibly remedy that situation.
 - m. Sheryl asked if this intersection and the stoplights located there are operated by SHA. Joe noted that traffic signals on 410 have been turned or will soon be turned over from the state to Montgomery County for control.
 - n. Sat Jiwan suggested that creating a bus bay in front of the Carroll Ave businesses might be useful. Joe noted that he would like to work with the businesses to get their support, and he noted that they would like the plaza, as it would be beneficial for most of them.
 - o. Eric noted that parallel parking on the Carroll side would remain. He said that perhaps a wider green space could be added by the house on the side next to the existing pavillion, as he could understand why the owner might dislike the proposed change, which would result in the house being exposed to road on three sides. Joe asked Eric to do a calculation on the existing number of parking spaces and how many would be lost or gained in his proposal.
 - p. Joe noted that there may be technological solutions to address the challenge of buses needing to get out.
 - q. Liz said that a redesign of the intersection could help create a hub of business and pedestrian activity at Takoma Junction in a way that there is in Old Town now. Liz asked if the redesign of the intersection would or could in any way be made particularly appealing to the Coop. Joe noted that it might actually be helpful to keep discussion of the intersection design free of concerns related to the Coop, as there seem to be a lot of strong feelings related to any change that would affect the Coop. Nonetheless, it seems like it this redesign would make pedestrian access to the Coop easier; Eric also noted that it would make the Coop the center of the intersection. Sheryl noted that people currently don't cross the street after shopping at the Coop to use businesses on the other side because of the long waits for lights; this would help with that.
 - r. Joe and Eric noted that any redesign should be bike-friendly.
3. Joe asked if anyone had changes to the proposed agenda. Ryan moved to approve the agenda; Kacy seconded the motion. All voted in favor of approving the agenda.
 4. The committee decided to wait to vote on whether to approve the meeting minutes from October, as several members had not yet had an opportunity to review them.
 5. The floor was opened for public comments. Sat Jiwan Ikle-Khalsa, a member of the Takoma Park Committee on the Environment, was in attendance. Sat Jiwan said that he wanted to attend the meeting to increase committee cooperation and work together. His committee is trying to win a \$5 million grant for an environmental proposal; there have been some questions related to transportation. He suggested possibly working with the Safe Roadways Committee on this. The main proposal probably would not focus on transportation issues, but it would be helpful to consider how the committee could work together.
 - a. The grant competition is called the Georgetown University Energy Prize. The city has made it to the quarter finals, which includes 52 communities. He thinks Takoma Park

- will move on to the semi-finals. Several communities will be in the final stages, spending several years working on this.
- b. Joe asked whether one part of this could involve removing people from cars and moving toward bikes and/or walking. Joe added that increased numbers of sidewalks could be an environmental plus if it is getting people out of their cars and walking more – perhaps less of a piecemeal approach would be more beneficial.
 - c. Liz said that there may not be actionable things the government is ready to do for this. Joe noted that perhaps we could use this grant as a motivation to encourage the city council to move on certain transportation projects.
 - d. Joe suggested improving bike and pedestrian access on major roads.
 - e. Sat Jiwan suggested an ongoing or one-time award for city staff who use greener commuting options.
 - f. Liz suggested that bikeshare expansion might be a project related to this grant.
6. The committee worked on the annual report. Joe said that he made the changes and accepted changes from the others.
- a. Joe noted that committee needs more photos. He asked committee members to take pictures and add to the folder he created online. He suggested finalizing this and adding the photos within the next week. The committee will meet with the city council in January.
 - b. Joe asked Ryan to add the photos and finalize the formatting, and he agreed to do so.
 - c. Joe noted a concern for the law against using the sidewalk for bikes; there is a sign telling bikeshare users to go on the sidewalk, and this does not make sense. Kacy asked whether it might be better to avoid taking steps to change this law, as it could perhaps be used as an excuse not to build more bike lanes.
 - d. Sheryl moved to accept the existing text of the annual report; Liz seconded the motion. The committee unanimously voted to accept the existing text.
 - e. Joe asked for volunteers to give or lead the presentation to the city council and suggested creating PowerPoint slides. The committee will probably have 30 minutes to present, including the question-and-answer period. The presentation itself should probably be about 10 or 15 minutes.
7. Ryan reported on the post-election landscape. He said that it seems that the governor-elect has not expressed any zeal for multimodal transportation and seems more focused on road construction and reconstruction than on improvements for cyclists and pedestrians. The biggest test will be whether he supports the purple line. Ryan said that he ran his campaign on publicly funded laws; he is also a real estate businessman, which may be a good thing if he understands that smart growth can improve property values.
- a. Sheryl said that she attended the recent ACT meeting (Action Committee for Transit). She said ACT is waiting to see what happens with the new governor.
8. Kacy has nothing new to report related to the Carroll crosswalk. Kacy will contact Kate Stewart to see how the committee can help with the efforts by her and Tim Male.
- a. Joe said that he saw technology in Seattle that allowed pedestrians to push a button and get flashing lights to cross the road.
 - b. Joe suggested solid red lights with “walk” lights that also can change to a flashing caution cycle.
 - c. Joe said that there are lights with sensors so that red lights will turn off quickly if there are no further pedestrians in the street. Sheryl noted that there can be problems with going too “technological,” as there can be delays to fixing them if something goes wrong, and they can be more costly.
 - d. Liz said that she has previously made a complaint to Daryl requesting that homeowners cut back bushes to improve sight lines at an intersection, and this did work.

9. Joe urged all committee members to take pictures of problems they see and to share them in the folder he created. Members can also include pictures of good things they see in Takoma Park and elsewhere.
10. There was a brief discussion about the issue of leaves being raked onto the sidewalks or onto the road for the fall leaf collection program.
11. The meeting adjourned at 9:05pm.