



**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK
CITY COUNCIL 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

Bond Bill for the Library Renovation

The City is in the design phase for expansion and renovation of the beloved Takoma Park Library; the City is preparing to borrow funds to pay for the construction.

Request: A Bond Bill is requested to provide some of the funding to support the project.

- The Library was built in 1955 and last had an interior renovation 26 years ago. It needs to be substantially renovated to be energy efficient and meet current building code provisions.
- The Library facility is not sufficiently accessible for people with disabilities; to make the changes required to meet ADA standards, space for books and activities would need to be reduced unless the building shell is expanded.
- The Library is heavily used and serves a large number of low income residents, people of color, and immigrants but does not have space to fully meet the needs.
- The Library has a children's room, but no comfortable space for school-aged children and teens to read, study, and collaborate.
- The proposed design is very attractive and will provide a flexible community library space that can adapt over time and will last for decades.

Legislation to Address Issues Related to SHA and Utility Work in the Public Right of Way

The City Council is concerned about lack of coordination, notice, and timely completion of projects in the public right of way.

Request: Require standards for repair and communication to be established and met for work done by SHA and utility companies.

- State Highway Administration and public utilities conduct work in the right of way that can result in destruction of newly completed sidewalks and roadways. This practice has both financial and environmental impacts on municipalities.
- There is often a lack of coordination and communication between local governments and the utilities and SHA.

- Lack of reasonable notice for street or utility work to the City and its residents can result in inconvenience and great frustration for residents and businesses; notice is sometimes provided a year in advance with no specificity as to when it will take place, or no notice is provided at all.
- Repairs and projects are sometimes started but not completed in a timely manner which can result in ongoing frustration for our residents.
- City had budget language inserted in the FY17 State budget to report on these issues, but the report has not yet been released.
- An example of conflicting standards among utilities has to do with trees: Different utilities have different standards on when trees may be impacted.

Economic Development Assistance

The City Council requests support for economic development efforts, particularly along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor.

Requests: Advocate for State Highway reconstruction of New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) and for assistance to local businesses in the corridor wishing to renovate.

Help keep the Purple Line project on track.

- The City had budget language inserted in the FY17 State budget, requesting a report on the amount of tax revenue that could be gained by the State, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and the City of Takoma Park if redevelopment consistent with zoning occurred. Also requested was the cost of State Highway improvements needed for New Hampshire Avenue. That report was recently released.
- The report shows that redevelopment of 15 sites in the corridor could increase property tax revenue by 771%. It could increase State property tax revenue from the current \$310,000 to \$2.67 million annually; county revenue from \$2.4 million to \$21 million annually; and municipal revenue from \$780,000 to \$6.14 million annually. The number of jobs and related income tax revenue would also increase.
- The cost of reconstructing New Hampshire Avenue is estimated to be \$266 million.
- The Purple Line is critical to redevelopment of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads and New Hampshire Avenue.
- The New Hampshire Avenue corridor links the District of Columbia to Montgomery County and Prince George's County. It includes gateways to Maryland, the two counties, and Takoma Park.
- Several years ago, the City initiated a planning study that resulted in the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan. The plan envisions New Hampshire Avenue as a pedestrian friendly multi-way boulevard, with housing as an integral part of commercial redevelopment along New Hampshire Avenue. This and the current Sector Plans were the bases for the recently-issued State report.

Improvements Being Pursued for the Washington Adventist Hospital Campus: Freestanding Medical Facility, Aquatics Center, and Complementary Uses

The relocation of Washington Adventist Hospital will present both challenges and opportunities for our community. While the main hospital will move, a number of health-related services will remain. Hospital administrators and City officials have been working together to ensure the Takoma Park campus provides the community services that Takoma Park residents need while working to make sure the campus is financially sustainable. The campus is in the heart of Takoma Park along Sligo Creek.

Request: Help support redevelopment of the Takoma Park campus with complementary health and community services in an environmentally sustainable way.

- The City Council supports Maryland Health Care Commission regulations that would streamline the approval process for a **freestanding medical facility** (emergency room) on the Washington Adventist Hospital campus. Washington Adventist Hospital administrators will pursue this provided it makes sense from a financial and operational perspective.
- Takoma Park has partnered with Washington Adventist Hospital, Washington Adventist University and Montgomery College to request that the County Executive evaluate construction of a Montgomery County Department of Recreation **aquatics facility** on the campus.
- Such a facility would provide much-needed recreation and exercise for our community, including low income residents, people of color, and immigrants in the Takoma Park/East Silver Spring area.
- Other uses to help provide **neighborhood services** and generate income to offset expected losses from the property to Washington Adventist Hospital are also being explored.

Evaluate the State Collection and Distribution of Business Personal Property Tax

Takoma Park staff has found serious inconsistencies in the amount of personal property tax paid by businesses and has found that revenue distribution to counties and municipalities has been misapplied, similar to the problems found for income tax revenue.

Request: Convene a task force to review how Personal Property Tax information is collected and revenue distributed.

- Collection of the business personal tax relies heavily on self-reporting. Many businesses do not file the forms. The forms are remarkably confusing, resulting in inconsistent reporting and similar businesses paying very different tax amounts. There is little enforcement, so that only honest businesses pay their fair share.

- The distribution of the tax revenue by the State of Maryland also relies on self-reported information. Municipalities may be receiving much less tax than owed or may be receiving revenue that should be going elsewhere.

Establishment of a Municipal Innovation Fund

The City Council supports establishment of a State Municipal Innovation Fund

Request: Advocate for the establishment of a State Municipal Innovation Fund

- Local governments know best what will work in their communities and are in a position to try innovative solutions to the complex problems that they encounter. However, they may not have the resources to pilot a program, even on a very small scale, that may not succeed or that requires more time to develop and implement than existing resources would allow.
- An innovation fund could encourage targeted piloting of programs on a small, local scale that could later be replicated in other communities if successful.