



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of September 14, 2016

Response to Resident Inquiry

In the public comment period of the September 7 Council Meeting, a resident asked if the unfunded liability of the Takoma Park Police Employees' Retirement Plan counts towards the City's debt cap and does the City Council want it to count towards the debt cap? A complete answer is not yet available, but there are some initial pieces of information to share based on discussions with our auditors. First, pension liability is not the same as borrowed money, such as a bond. For auditing purposes, they are counted differently. Debts are fixed amounts to be paid back over a set period of time with a certain amount of interest. Pension liability varies by the contributions made, the life expectancies of the participants, the return on investments, etc. In addition, the pension liability is not new, it's location on the City's financial statements has changed. Second, the City Charter does not have a debt cap, it has a cap on tax anticipation borrowing and it has a provision that any new indebtedness that is greater than 5% of the revenue budgeted for that year requires a public hearing. There are general rules of thumb about safe levels of indebtedness. As we come back to the Council to discuss the City's Financial Policies in the coming year, it makes sense to be clear about the City's policies on acceptable levels of indebtedness and on the level of unfunded liability of the pension plan.

Information to Share

Update on TJCCPAC

The Takoma Junction Community Consultation Process Advisory Board met for the second time on Monday, September 12. Based on guidance from the TJCCPAC, NDC will be planning a series of community meetings in the fall to gather feedback from the community on the following four themes. More information will be forthcoming, as the TJCCPAC continues to meet and plan for the community consultation process:

- Form and character, including façade, setbacks, amount of glass, etc.
- Public realm, including both public space and green space, sidewalk, sustainability features, green roof
- Access and mobility, including the multi-modal nature of the site, and the current and future state of traffic and parking
- Retail and market considerations, including the different types and character of retail and the impact on the use of the site at various days and times

Construction Updates

Carroll Avenue Bridge: We recently learned that the upcoming request for Sligo Creek Parkway closure to allow the bridge reconstruction contractor to pour concrete will be for just one day next week - Sept 26. Additionally they want to do another Parkway closure the following Monday, October 3. The time will be 9 am to 3:30 pm. The contractor will install no parking signs on Lincoln Avenue and detour signs as needed.

Sidewalk Work: ADA sidewalk work on Erie Avenue is expected to be completed this week. There are two small sections of sidewalk that will be replaced with flexipave, due to tree impacts. The flexipave installation should take place within a month. ADA sidewalk work will continue in Ward 3, likely on Cockerille, Spring and Poplar Avenues. Affected residents will receive a notice from the City prior to the work.

Dog Park

MNCPPC has finally approved all of the legal agreements for access to the Dog Park. City staff has scheduled the pre-construction meeting for the Dog Park, as required by the County, for Tuesday, September 20. Those in attendance will include MNCPPC, Montgomery County DPS, Montgomery County Schools, the contractor and inspector. We will pass on the expected dates of the construction after that meeting. Once started, construction work is expected to take less than two months.

Metro SafeTrack Surge #10

WMATA has announced new dates for SafeTrack Surge #10. It will run from October 29 through November 22. This surge will have a significant impact on Takoma Park residents as there will be NO RED LINE SERVICE between Fort Totten and NoMa-Gallaudet stations during this time.

Stormwater Billing

City stormwater bills are being sent out this week. Recipients may pay by mail or online. Over the coming year, we will be working to allow recipients to get their bills by email, rather than by hard copy.

Flower Avenue Green Street

Information shared with Council as a result of recent emails about the design costs of the Flower Avenue Green Street is attached.

My Schedule

I will be attending the annual ICMA Conference in Kansas City from Sept. 24-28. The Deputy City Manager will also attend.

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HISTORY OF FLOWER AVENUE GREEN STREET DESIGN COSTS AND COUNCIL ACTION

September 14, 2016

Development of the Flower Avenue Green Street project has been underway since 2010 and authorization to contract for design services was granted on May 21, 2012. The original design and engineering contract amount was for **\$275,755**, and has since expanded significantly as we have continued to work with and address the interests of the residents and other stakeholders, encountered some challenges related to utility work and easement negotiations, and complied with the requirements of large grants received for the project.

As we have worked on the project, we have consulted with Council every step of the way. A brief count of agenda items or budget discussions that have come before Council on the Flower Avenue Green Street project totals 24.

As we worked with more partners in the project, such as Washington Gas, WSSC, Pepco, Ride On and Washington Adventist University, each design step required more sign offs and adjustments. Needs for changes often required meetings with residents or new easement agreements. Many of these activities were undertaken or assisted by City staff to minimize the amount of work needed to be done by the engineering firm.

Council considered and authorized additional funds for the project in July 2014 for added design costs associated with additional meetings with stakeholders and the community (which were held at the request of Council), revisions to the designs to accommodate feedback from stakeholders and reduce the need for easements, development of streetlighting plans and increasing the number of stormwater facilities to be designed. The July 2014 Council action brought the costs up by \$176,794 to a total of **\$452,549**.

This past spring, the design firm identified the need for additional funding. The additional costs considered and authorized by Council totaled \$74,578, bringing the project total to **\$527,127**. The additional costs were to cover:

- Preparation of the application required by M-NCPPC as part of the Mandatory Referral Review Process
- Survey investigation and drawing updates as a result of an error in the original survey documents (when the City requested that the County provide the right-of-way to the City, the surveying firm, separate from the design engineers, made some errors in their documentation)
- Additional coordination with Washington Gas to review their gas main replacement plan
- Additional lighting coordination with PEPCO for LED upgrades
- Structural analysis, design and plan revisions for stormwater management facilities proposed for Washington Adventist University property
- Additional project management hours for coordination with the City, SHA, Department of Permitting Services and Ride-On anticipated through completion of final design documents

The most recent proposal, which Council will consider tonight, is for an additional \$46,550, which would bring the total costs up to **\$573,677**. The additional funds, which do not require a budget amendment as there are sufficient funds in the budget for the design work, will cover:

- Revision of the Invitation for Bids (IFB) package and preparation of 95% design documents for SHA review (*this is a new requirement of SHA for the TAP Grant Funds*)
- Review of comments from SHA and resubmission of the 100% design documents for SHA approvals
- Securing permits and approvals from SHA District 3 and Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services
- Additional project management hours for coordination with the City and WSSC anticipated through completion of final design documents