



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of October 12, 2016

Follow-Up from Last Council Meeting

Charging Station Usage

Councilmember Kovar asked what data was available related to the use of the electric vehicle charging stations. Unfortunately, the stations themselves are not set up to record use and they are connected to existing meters, so power consumption for the charging stations cannot be parsed out. We can, however, provide a *hypothetical* analysis by looking at the station at BF Gilbert, which shares a meter only with the lighting fixture, so it has not fluctuated month-to-month based on temperature and other cyclical factors. If we assume that the other chargers are experiencing the same use, we could extrapolate that the stations, combined, are using about 245 kWh of energy per month (about \$26.95 worth of electricity) and saving 29 gallons of gas and 568 pounds of CO₂. It appears that usage is steadily increasing on a month-to-month basis as well.

Bicycles on Sidewalks and Bikeshare Questions

Attached are answers to several questions raised during the review of the Safe Roadways Committee's Report of November 2015. At some point in the future, the subject of bicycles on sidewalks will come back to the Council for additional discussion.

Information to Share

Sligo Creek Parkway Closure – Monday, October 17

We were recently informed that we can expect another closure/detour on Monday, October 17 to permit concrete pouring related to the Carroll Avenue Bridge work. We were told that the closure/detour will last from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We will get word out to residents through the website and social media.

Community Partners Program

I have received questions from Councilmembers about the new Community Partners Program and when the process would begin. The short answer: I have asked department heads to submit proposals for desired new or expanded programming or services which address an identified Council priority for my consideration by the end of the month. Once I consider the proposals, departments will prepare a scope of services and identify desired deliverables so that a request for proposals can be prepared. We will solicit proposals from service providers and award funds based on a competitive

process. We hope to begin distributing funds later this calendar year. We will aim to begin the process next year shortly after the budget is adopted.

Update on PEPCO Tree Removal and Pruning Program

At last week's Council meeting, I reported on the City's request for PEPCO to suspend tree removals and pruning for the week while staff gathered information on the trees remaining to be removed. Staff had identified four trees that we wanted an assessment of by a contracted arborist. That assessment was not able to be completed last week, so PEPCO extended their suspension of activities in Takoma Park. The assessment of the four trees has now been completed, as was the assessment of a fifth tree that had been identified by a resident that wanted a second opinion.

The contracted arborist concurs with four of the five removals and indicates that these trees do present a hazard and should be removed. The one tree that he did not agree was a hazard was a 28" oak at 6903 Prince George's Avenue. (This is not the tree for which the resident had requested a second opinion.)

I intend to notify PEPCO that they may proceed with removing the trees on their list, with the exception of the one at 6903 Prince George's Avenue. I understand that PEPCO will resume work on the trees next Monday.

Kudos

Kudos to Roz Grigsby for all that she did this past month while HCD Director Sara Daines was out on extended leave. Not only did she oversee the day to day operations of the Planning Division and her own assignments in her usual professional manner, she kept things running smoothly department-wide and provided assistance when and where needed, regardless of the task. Thank you, Roz!

My Schedule

I will be attending the Maryland Municipal League Fall Conference in Solomon's Island on Thursday and Friday, along with most of the City Council.

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Staff notes to questions raised at October 5 City Council Meeting discussion in response to the Safe Roadways Committee’s recommendations on Bikeshare and biking on sidewalks.

Q: With regards to allowing bikes on sidewalks, should the City support attracting more kinds of cyclists or not?

A: Research conducted at Portland State University has identified four general groups of attitudes towards bicycling:

- Strong and fearless (~4% of population): Very confident bicyclists who are comfortable operating in the roadway as a vehicle
- Enthusied and confident (~9% of population): Bicyclists who are comfortable riding on some roadways, but prefer bicycle facilities separate from vehicular traffic (bike lanes or shared use path)
- Interested but concerned (~56% of population): Bicyclists who would like to ride more, but have safety concerns that are dissuading them
- No way no how (~31% of population): People who have no interest in riding a bike for transportation.

City Council could set a goal or objective to increase the number, types, or percentage of cyclists in Takoma Park, which could link with other City sustainability objectives. If so, a plan could be developed which may involve, among other things, allowing certain conditions for biking on sidewalks in pursuit of a policy objective. In the absence of a policy-oriented conversation with measurable objectives, conversations around biking in Takoma Park will continue to be anecdotal and centered on individual experiences.

Q: Are there dimensions of bikeshare stations (re: relocating the Old Takoma bikeshare station)?

A: Bikeshare station dimensions are part of a set of criteria used by a team of planners and engineers to evaluate existing and prospective bikeshare station locations. A 15-dock Bikeshare station requires a flat space of approximately 8’ width by 45’ length adjacent to a flat and accessible public space. If adjacent to a curb or sidewalks, additional offsets are required to avoid conflicts with vehicles and pedestrian movements. Additional criteria include sunlight for solar power and secured access nearby for operations vehicles to “rebalance” the station.

Q: What are the plans for bikeshare expansion in DC and Prince George’s County?

A: DC developed a plan for bikeshare expansion over FY16-FY18 which proposes two additional bikeshare stations within a mile of Takoma Park, planned for installation this fiscal year.

Prince George’s County is developing a feasibility study for implementing bikeshare. The study area includes the Chillum and Langley Park neighborhoods adjacent to Takoma Park, but phasing of implementation will be subject to community input and funding.

Q: Is there a design specification for speed bumps with cuts for bicycles?

A: In our region, the City of Rockville, the City of Alexandria, and Arlington County have specs for a “speed cushion” or “speed table” with cut outs intended for emergency vehicles (spaced somewhat wider than a standard axle) but which also function for bicycles. The City could set a policy where on designated bike routes, more bike-friendly traffic calming devices (e.g. modified speed bump designs with cut outs) are required. This kind of policy could be incorporated into the City’s Streetscape Manual and/or the resident-led traffic calming petition process.