



October 8, 2017

Mayor Stewart and Members of the Council
City of Takoma Park
7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Dear Mayor Stewart and Council Members,

The leadership of the Takoma Park Silver Spring Coop supports, and has always supported, the need for an appropriate, green, low-density development that reflects the special values of this community and allows the Co-op to thrive. Indeed green, low-density development was shown numerous times over the past years in renderings of possible plans. However, the concept plan presented on September 27 is high-density with no public green space or open market features aside from a possible sidewalk café and maybe a green roof. More specifically, the plan poses several problems for the Co-op, the Junction, the neighborhood, and the City.

We understand that the Council's vote on October 18 for the concept plan is not a vote for the final plan, but it affirms that we, the community, agree with NDC's direction and allows NDC to rely on that affirmation to continue with the concept's current path. That direction gambles with the viability of the Co-op.

Under the proposed plan TPSS is adversely impacted for the following reasons:

Deliveries. While the lay-by became part of NDC's design it was never our choice because it always was problematic. The proposal as presented confirms that as it does not adequately accommodate our operational needs, those needs were disclosed in our December 29, 2016 LOI (Exhibit B, item 4). The lay-by is not long enough to accommodate at least one semi-trailer truck and three straight trucks at one time. Unlike a Trader Joe's, which can control its larger deliveries, we cannot. It is also not clear how buses and riders would fare utilizing that space when a semi is parked. Our other concerns speak more to community issues than the viability of our business: *e.g.*, safety issues for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as truck fumes and noise directly impacting those who would be trying to enjoy the outdoor seating currently proposed in the plan.

Parking. As acknowledged by NDC, the proposed 72 spaces do not meet code even before we are reasonably accommodated by renting 25 spaces. The proposed plan also brings up the question of how the City will make parking available for other businesses at the Junction, which we understand has been the City's intention. At the last Council meeting Colin Greene of StreetSense suggested that the

site tenants would need the spaces primarily in the evening, but should it not be assumed the restaurants would also be open for lunch and the offices above might generate parking needs?

Traffic. The proposed plan makes an already challenging traffic issue worse. The traffic patterns become more complex with the parking garage, the lay-by, and right-turn-only options for shoppers. We are concerned that many shoppers will simply abandon our business. When parking becomes too burdensome or costly, some simply opt out.

Waste Management. We cannot discern if enough space was allocated for our dumpsters along with the dumpsters required by the Junction tenants. We have three large units; two are for recycling. These dumpsters are already emptied six times a week, so fewer dumpsters with more frequent removal is not an option.

We can honestly say that the Co-op has worked hard and in good faith, and invested significant funding, to reach an agreement with NDC. Once the terms became \$45/square foot with a 4% annual escalator we were priced out of the project. Our research indicates that the rate is much higher than comps and will not be affordable for many, much less an anchor tenant. The density of the proposed development is out of proportion for the Junction. NDC cannot do a project and not be adequately compensated, but the rents and design do not remain true to the community and Council's original vision.¹ That said, the Co-op remains open to NDC proposals, but given our marketplace reality we are simply unable to meet their current rate requirements. Along with NDC we have invested resources in hope of reaching an agreement, so we are as disappointed as anyone that we were not able to reach such an agreement.

As we know you agree, the 9,600+ member Co-op contributes significantly to the quality of life in the City of Takoma Park. We are grateful for the Council's consistent statements recognizing the value of the Co-op to the community. Considering the implications posed by the proposed development, we now ask you to vote against the NDC's proposed concept plan. A lower density, Union Market-type incubator development with a loading area near the back of the development would meet the community's desires, attract economic activity, minimize traffic impacts, and reflect the special character of this city.

Sincerely,

Board of Representatives
TPSS Co-op

¹ <http://hcd-takomapark.s3.amazonaws.com/public/planning/2015.02.09-Site-Criteria.pdf>