

Councilmember Jarrett Smith
Tue, Jul 10, 2018, 7:39 PM

**ALTERNATIVE RESOLUTION REGARDING THE TAKOMA JUNCTION SITE PLAN
-- OFFERED BY COUNCILMEMBER SMITH**

WHEREAS the City Council entered into a Development Agreement with Neighborhood Development Company (NDC) on August 1, 2016 with objectives including provision of public or community spaces that result in enhanced interactions, expansion of community use of public space, support of independent businesses, expansion of parking options for area businesses, improved mobility and enhanced streetscape, encouraging alternate modes of transportation, and a retail tenant mix with a high priority for local and regional operators;

WHEREAS after conducting a Community Consultation process and engaging in extensive communications with City staff and City Council members, NDC shared a draft Site Plan in September 2017 that was not sufficiently responsive to the terms of the Development Agreement;

WHEREAS City Council Resolution 2017-53 of October 25, 2017 called upon NDC to revise the Site Plan to incorporate eleven specific changes;

WHEREAS the presentation of NDC's revised Site Plan is still incomplete in several key respects and fails to meet several terms of Resolution 2017-53;

WHEREAS NDC's revised Site Plan now relies upon the removal of the signal and crosswalk at Grant Avenue and the reconfiguration of the intersection of Carroll, Ethan Allen, and Sycamore Avenues in order to accommodate a truck lay-by and public space;

WHEREAS the traffic impact analysis commissioned by NDC does not make clear the methodology by which it projects that the existing intersections will fail in the absence of intersection reconfiguration and also does not take into account potentially positive traffic impacts of the Purple Line and intersection improvements nearing completion at Ethan Allen Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue as well as the closure of Washington Adventist Hospital;

WHEREAS an analysis of the traffic impact study commissioned by NDC, indicates that the large-scale retail and office development proposed by NDC would introduce more traffic to the Junction than the current configuration of intersections can handle during peak hours;

WHEREAS there are many reasons to question the feasibility and advisability of such an intersection reconfiguration, based upon the reliance of such a project on the State Highway

Administration; as well as uncertainty about the direct and ancillary costs, the funding sources, the possible impacts on downstream intersections, cut-through traffic, pedestrians, cyclists, and nearby businesses' viability, and the “induced demand” which NDC’s traffic consultants acknowledged would be inevitable, as well as uncertainty about the impacts on the historic character of the Junction resulting from roadway realignments and on the quality of life in Takoma Park due to increased capacity for vehicles in the 410 and Carroll Avenue corridors;

WHEREAS NDC and the Co-op have not yet reached final agreement on accommodations for the Co-op's continued operations;

WHEREAS NDC has not yet provided a Letter of Intent with an anchor tenant, and the City Council needs this information to be able to evaluate the suitability of the project for the community;

WHEREAS the City has not produced a racial or socioeconomic equity analysis of the impact of the proposed development, or a Racial Equity Statement;

WHEREAS the community is deeply divided over the current site plan, with a critical need for building greater consensus around an appropriate development through a community process of charrettes, Town Halls, and mediation;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the City agrees to wait for a vote on the NDC proposal until the following conditions are met:

- (1) The mediation with the Co-op has been concluded;
- (2) We have clarity on how and whether the intersection should or would be reconfigured, who would pay for it, and how the intersection would function if the development is built before (or without) a reconfiguration;
- (3) The City undertakes a racial and socioeconomic equity analysis and releases a Racial Equity Statement for the proposed development;
- (4) The City holds an effective, mediated process for resolving the problems outlined here, including charrettes, and a Town Hall process to consider alternatives, and to help residents to better understand the reasons for this development, and to seek greater consensus in the community around any changes that can and should be made.