



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – April 11, 2018 Agenda Item 4

Work Session

Discussion of Takoma Junction Site Plan – Building Design and Placement on the Property

Recommended Council Action

None –discussion only

Context with Key Issues

Neighborhood Development Company, the selected partner for the City-owned lot at the Takoma Junction, presented their site plan for the redevelopment of the Junction to Council on April 4, 2018. NDC's plan builds on the Council feedback received during the review of the Concept Plan in 2017 as well as from agencies who oversee aspects of the development process.

During this Work Session, Council will review the building design and placement on the property. The focus will be on the exterior design of the building, its “massing” or shape and the space it occupies, and its placement on the property. Specific discussion points include architectural features such as the roofline, windows and entrances, decorative elements, and building materials. The set-back of the building from Carroll Avenue will also be considered.

A Work Session is scheduled for April 18 to focus on the public space and sustainability features of the planned redevelopment. A Work Session is scheduled for April 25 to focus on traffic study findings. A “pop up” exhibit on the site is scheduled for April 22 to help residents visualize the placement of the proposed building on the property.

Council Priority

Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life: Takoma Junction Development

Environmental Impact of Action

The Environmental Site Assessments, Phase I and II, confirm that the site was formerly a dump which was paved over for the parking lot. The redevelopment project will do the required remediation to clean up the property while preserving almost half the site as green space. Projects of infill-development in neighborhoods that are already served by good public transportation, roads, and other public services provide environmental and economic benefits. The project will be designed and constructed in a manner that satisfies the requirements for LEED Gold or higher certification from the U.S. Green Building Council or an equivalent certification.

Fiscal Impact of Action

The transformation of the parking lot to an active commercial property will add to the City tax base. The cost of the development will be borne by the developer. The property, currently exempt from property taxes, will be placed on the tax role effective July 1, 2018. The developer will be required to pay property taxes at that point in addition to the annual ground lease rent.

Racial Equity Impact of Action

The property is located in the center of the City; 57% of the residents of Takoma Park are people of color. Of 464 businesses in Takoma Park, 139 are identified as minority-owned businesses (US Census Bureau, 2015). We do not believe this Council action will disproportionately impact any particular group.

Attachments and Links

- [Development Guidelines for Commercial Buildings in the City of Takoma Park](#), Adopted by [Council Resolution 2011-36](#)
- Building Design and Placement Focus Points
- [Resolution 2017-53 Expressing the Sense of the Council Regarding the Takoma Junction Redevelopment Project](#) (October 25, 2017)
- [Takoma Junction Redevelopment – Project Page](#)

Building Design and Placement Focus Points
April 11, 2018

Characteristic	Features considered	Acceptable/ Not Acceptable	Comments
Setback	Setbacks of neighboring buildings		
Orientation	Junction commercial buildings squarely face the street.		
Height	Relative size, proportion of elements, fit the context.		
Proportion	Relationship of size of elements to each other -- doors, windows, elevations		
Rhythm: windows and entrances	Spacing of repetitive façade elements		
Massing	Articulation of the façade by use of elements to contribute to character of the street		
Height	In character with surroundings - not more than one story more or less than existing buildings		
Materials	Selection of materials for walls, windows, roof, details		
Roof shape/details	Shape and details		
Storefront	Purpose to display merchandise		
Details and Ornamentation	Degree of detail of adjacent buildings		

1 Introduced by: Councilmember Qureshi

2
3 **CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

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5 **RESOLUTION 2017-53**

6
7 **EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE COUNCIL REGARDING THE**
8 **TAKOMA JUNCTION REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN**

9
10 **WHEREAS,** Council adopted Resolution 2015-19 in April, 2015, authorizing the initiation of
11 negotiations with Neighborhood Development Company (NDC) for the
12 redevelopment of the City lot at the Takoma Junction; AND

13 **WHEREAS,** Resolution 2015-19 also gives direction on the goals and desired vision for the
14 Takoma Junction Redevelopment Project; AND

15 **WHEREAS,** the August 2016 Development Agreement with NDC, approved by the Council on
16 July 27, 2016, includes other provisions and guidance concerning the
17 redevelopment project and referenced in quotes and elsewhere below; AND

18 **WHEREAS,** a Concept Plan related to use, parking and vehicular circulation is needed in order
19 to pursue traffic studies, design work, and reviews by outside agencies leading to
20 the preparation of a Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan; AND

21 **WHEREAS,** a Concept Plan was presented to the Council on September 27, 2017; AND

22 **WHEREAS,** a Concept Plan is an initial sketch of the development site and with continued
23 negotiations with NDC will be further revised to result in a more specific Draft
24 Site Plan/Preliminary Plan which will fully show how the Council's goals and
25 desired vision for the project will be met; AND

26 **WHEREAS,** after considering the presented Concept Plan and hearing public comment, the
27 Council held a Work Session on October 11, 2017 to discuss the Concept Plan
28 and to identify changes and direct NDC in the necessary elements to include in
29 the future Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan to meet the requirements of the
30 Development Agreement; AND

31 **WHEREAS,** this Resolution is to provide the incoming Council with a sense of the current
32 Council regarding its comments on the Concept Plan, and to direct NDC on
33 changes regarding the Concept Plan so that following further consultation with
34 NDC, and completion of the traffic studies, a Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan
35 may be prepared that would be consistent with the Council's goals and desired
36 vision for the project, and the requirements of the Development Agreement, and
37 thus be approvable by the Council; AND

38 **WHEREAS,** specific comments on the Concept Plan are:

- 39 1) The Concept Plan does not show at street level adequate “public or
40 community spaces that result in enhanced interactions among residents and
41 visitors.”
- 42 2) The Concept Plan does not show or adequately detail the “accessible outdoor
43 space devoted to year-round public use or enjoyment” and how those
44 components comport with the design requirements of Section 6.3.6 of the
45 Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance.
- 46 3) The Concept Plan does not show a “building structure that aspires to elegance,
47 beauty, and place-setting that will be admired by professionals and residents.”
- 48 4) Pending review by the Maryland State Highway Administration and the
49 Montgomery County Planning Board, the inclusion of a lay-by sized for use
50 by 18-wheel delivery trucks may be an acceptable way to meet the need for
51 deliveries for the TPSS Co-op.
- 52 5) The inclusion of a lower level of structured parking is an acceptable way to
53 provide “continued inclusion of public parking on site.”
- 54 6) The Concept Plan shows a design for deliveries by non-18-wheel trucks and
55 trash and recycling collection that raises questions and concerns about its
56 workability, and questions remain about the opportunity for deliveries or trash
57 and recycling collection to occur through the lower level of structure parking.
- 58 7) The Concept Plan gives the appearance of an uninteresting building in a large
59 mass of two, and potentially three, stories which raises concerns regarding
60 appropriateness and fit with surrounding buildings.
- 61 8) The Concept Plan does not address the appearance of the rear of the property
62 which should be of a design “that minimizes detrimental impacts on
63 neighboring properties on Columbia and Sycamore Avenues.”
- 64 9) The Concept Plan does not provide information on green elements that would
65 ensure “that the Building satisfies the requirements for LEED Gold or higher
66 or equivalent” requirements.
- 67 10) The Concept Plan does not clearly identify the “amount of retail, community,
68 and open space included in the project;” AND

69 **WHEREAS,** the parcel size for this Concept Plan is larger than originally proposed due to the
70 potential inclusion of the Takoma Auto Clinic parcel to the west of the City lot;
71 AND

72 **WHEREAS,** purchasing the Takoma Auto Clinic parcel, which Council supports, has a number
73 of likely benefits for the proposed development:

- 74 1) It allows the driveway entrance to the underground parking lot to be in a
75 location that has less negative impact on Carroll Avenue traffic flows.

- 76 2) It allows for more underground parking spaces.
77 3) It provides more distance between the driveway entrance and the lay-by so
78 that more street trees along the curb could be accommodated, providing
79 greater comfort and safety for pedestrians.
80 4) It may allow for more public gathering space in front of the building and
81 accessible outdoor space devoted to year-round public use.

82 **WHEREAS,** the key information from a Concept Plan that is needed for a traffic study includes
83 the identification of the proposed square footage of retail space and of other
84 proposed uses in order to be able to calculate the numbers of vehicles drawn to
85 the site because of the development; the proposed number of parking spaces
86 provided on site; and the proposed locations of driveways for customers and
87 service vehicles; and truck unloading areas; AND

88 **WHEREAS,** Council has discussed the square footage of the development and wishes to be
89 better informed about the impacts and tradeoffs of development at different sizes
90 in terms of traffic impacts, appearance and financial feasibility, additional public
91 space, as well as potential rents for tenants; Councilmembers are interested in
92 seeing the impacts of an approximately 34,000 square foot structure of two stories
93 (first level retail, second level office and community space) and of any updated
94 square footage estimate that includes the expanded area of the Takoma Auto
95 Clinic parcel and of the impact of a development concept that includes greater
96 public gathering space at the front of the building at street level and space for
97 year-round outdoor use, including the potential of a third floor public space; AND

98 **WHEREAS,** having traffic study models at several ranges of development size will provide
99 important information to the incoming City Council when considering the project;
100 AND

101 **WHEREAS,** Resolution 2015-19 and the Development Agreement, the comments from the
102 residents participating in the Community Consultation sessions, and the
103 comments from the Council and residents throughout this process provide
104 direction and guidance for the design work leading to the preparation of a Draft
105 Site Plan/Preliminary Plan; AND

106 **WHEREAS,** the inclusion of a 34,000 square foot development option among the options to be
107 considered as part of the traffic study does not constitute approval of a 34,000
108 square foot option by the Council; AND

109 **WHEREAS,** the traffic study should include analysis of the potential impacts of the various
110 development options on pedestrian and bicycle traffic and public transportation.

112 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF**
113 **TAKOMA PARK THAT** the Concept Plan presented to the City Council on September 27,
114 2017 shows the following information on which a traffic study can be based: approximately
115 34,000 square feet of retail and office space (two floors); a level of underground parking; the
116 location of the entrance to the parking garage and service area; and a lay-by on Carroll Avenue,
117 the Council directs NDC to also evaluate traffic associated with updated square footage of retail
118 and office space associated with the Takoma Auto Clinic parcel and of a development concept
119 that includes greater public gathering space at the front of the building at street level and outdoor
120 space for year-round public use, including the potential of a third floor public space.

121 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT**, as the project moves forward, the Council expects to
122 see a Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan that meets the criteria of Resolution 2015-19 and the
123 Development Agreement, including the Agreement's provisions relating to reasonable
124 accommodation of the TPSS Co-op, and, in particular, regardless of whether the traffic studies
125 show minimal impact on traffic, provides:

- 126
- 127 1) A large amount of vibrant, comfortable, and easily accessible street-level public space
128 that functions as a community gathering spot, does not require the purchase of food or
129 beverage to use, and is accessible for year-round use.
 - 130 2) Accommodation of delivery, trash and recycling vehicles in a manner that does not cause
131 traffic problems, optimizes public enjoyment of the site, addresses the needs of on-site
132 tenants, and provides reasonable accommodation to the TPSS Co-op.
 - 133 3) Placement of the elevator or elevators in a location that serves patrons and tenants
134 conveniently, including patrons of the TPSS Co-op.
 - 135 4) A street-facing façade design that consists of large storefront windows on the retail level
136 and includes exciting or iconic features that evoke the spirit of Takoma Park.
 - 137 5) Massing that fits with the area and is comfortable for those using and passing by the site
138 on Carroll, Sycamore, and Columbia Avenues.
 - 139 6) Appropriate landscaping and building façade design of the Columbia Avenue side of the
140 property that improves the appearance of the green space and would help address
141 environmental sustainability and other goals for the project.
 - 142 7) Design features that will preserve and improve alternatives to automotive transportation.
 - 143 8) Details regarding parking options for off-site businesses located in the Takoma Junction.
 - 144 9) Design and construction features which satisfy the requirements for LEED Gold or higher
145 certification from the U.S. Green Building Council or an equivalent certification.
 - 146 10) Details necessary to provide reasonable accommodation to the TPSS Co-op for access for
147 loading of deliveries, customer parking, and continued operations during construction.
 - 148 11) Identifies any resolution or agreement reached between NDC and the TPSS Co-op
149 regarding shared façade design or other improvements that would enhance the aesthetic
150 appeal of the whole commercial strip between Sycamore Avenue and the fire station.

151 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** if a lay-by is deemed appropriate, then it shall be
152 shown on the Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan.

153 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan shall be
154 announced and made public with adequate time for review.

155 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the traffic studies upon completion shall be announced
156 and made public with adequate time for review and will be the basis for one or more City
157 Council work sessions.

158 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Council directs NDC to continue to periodically
159 provide updates to the project schedule so that this public document reflects an accurate picture
160 of the status of the project and tasks within it.

161 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Council directs NDC and the City to identify and
162 provide to Council the full list of “main tasks” that are referenced in the Development
163 Agreement and to ensure the process for amending main task deadlines in the Development
164 Agreement is followed.

165 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Council directs NDC to:

- 166 1) continue to the traffic study, taking into account in the study to the extent possible the
167 items in the second Resolved clause that have a bearing on traffic, and
168 2) continue toward the development of the detail necessary to produce a Draft Site
169 Plan/Preliminary Plan of the project.
170

171 **Adopted this 25th day of October, 2017.**

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173 Attest:

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177 _____
177 Jessie Carpenter, CMC

178 City Clerk