



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – July 25, 2018 Agenda Item 7 (prepared by Councilmember Smith)

Voting Session

Alternative Resolution Regarding the Takoma Junction Site

Recommended Council Action

Consider the resolution.

Context with Key Issues

On July 25, the Council is scheduled to vote on a resolution regarding the Takoma Junction Site Plan. That resolution was discussed at the work session on July 11. Also on July 11, Councilmember Smith submitted an alternative resolution for the Council's consideration and requested that the Mayor add it to the agenda. The alternative resolution is scheduled to be taken up before the resolution that the Council has been discussing.

The considerations listed below have been provided by Councilmember Smith.

Council Priority

A Livable Community for All; Engaged, Responsive & Service-oriented Government

Environmental Considerations

Delaying the vote for a matter of months to fulfill the conditions described in this resolution would not have a direct effect on the environment. Choosing a smaller, more open, or greener development plan, or changing the plan in any substantive way, could have an undetermined effect on the carbon footprint of the development, on other environmental effects, and/or on the environmental issues caused by construction, depending on the site plan.

Fiscal Considerations

There would be fixed one-time costs associated with hiring consultants to fulfill the tasks described in this resolution, including a racial equity analysis experts, and mediators to conduct the community charrette and Town Hall process.

Racial Equity Considerations

Based on the latest Census data, 57% of residents in the City are people of color and 30% of businesses in the city are minority-owned. However, the majority of the businesses in the Junction are owned by people of color. And the majority of employees working in the Junction businesses are people of color.

Delaying the vote for a matter of months, to fulfill the conditions listed in this resolution, will create time for an analysis of the impact on people of color who live within a half-mile radius of the Junction (close to the mean and median walking distance in the US

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3377942/>), who are employed in the Junction, and who own businesses in the Junction. Given that the lease is for 99 years and these impacts are going to be essentially permanent, the extra months needed to complete an equity analysis will have a negligible effect. The impacts need to be determined by experts in racial equity, local history, demographics, and economics, and based on outreach to all residents, employees, and business owners in the Junction radius to participate and give qualitative input. The following impacts should be included (but is not exhaustive):

1. The number of small businesses owned by people of color that could be stressed by construction, permanent loss of free parking, loss of the convenience of surface parking, difficulty of entering and exiting from the underground garage, and increased commercial lease rates in response to the rents charged in the proposed development.
2. The number and quality (pay, benefits) of jobs held by people of color in all Junction small businesses that could be lost due to the above stressors caused by the proposed development.
3. The number and quality (pay, benefits) of jobs at the Co-op that would be lost if the Co-op moves or closes due to the difficulty of continuity of operations during construction, difficulty of shoppers driving/parking/walking/biking/bus-riding through the Junction during construction to reach the Co-op, permanent loss of free parking for patrons in the City lot, loss of the convenience of surface parking in the City lot, difficulty of entering and exiting from the underground garage, difficulty of monitoring their Sycamore lot for use by those not using the Co-op, and difficulty with vendors unloading and waste pick-up in the proposed site plan.
4. The number of people of color who would be impacted by the loss of the ability to buy with SNAP benefits at the Co-op, if the Co-op were to move or close.
5. The number of people of color who would be impacted by the loss of the only grocery store downtown if the Co-op were to move or close.
6. The number and quality (pay, benefits) of new jobs available to people of color potentially created by the proposed development.
7. The number of businesses owned by people of color that could benefit from additional walking traffic or in some other way with the addition of the proposed development.
8. The number of new businesses owned by people of color that could be added through the proposed development.
9. The number of people of color who currently use the City lot for free parking.

10. The number of people of color impacted by the loss of public space that has historically been held on the lot (and could be held on the lot in the future) including concerts, movie nights, Halloween, Earth Day, etc.
11. The African-American cultural history and social atmosphere that could be lost if a neighborhood of businesses run by black owners (currently including the veterinarian, barber, hair salon, yoga studio, music studio), either move out or close.
12. The loss to people of color if a business recognized as a multicultural community gathering space (the TPSS Co-op), and that sells African-American health and beauty products, international prepared foods, and vegan and vegetarian versions of traditional prepared African American foods and baked goods, attracting people of color of all income levels from throughout the DMV region, were to move or close.
13. The number of people of color who run small businesses (or work for them) throughout the DMV region and close-in Pennsylvania, including farmers and bakers and chefs, who are among the over 100 vendors at the Co-op and would lose business if the Co-op were to close.
14. The number of people of color impacted by the loss of the potential to use any this public land as space for all races and income levels to spend time together without having to buy or consume: including the lost possibility of a community space large enough for a gathering, interactive play features, a stage for music and dance, communal picnic tables, a small business incubator, a food hub, a workforce training center, a new center to recognize African-American history and culture in Takoma Park, or any other non-profit use.
15. Any hypothetical presumed City revenue stream from rent and taxes from the current proposed development plan that might be spent on programs benefiting people with lower incomes (including a specific percentage of people of color) would need to be weighed against the revenue currently received by the City from the food Co-op in rent and taxes.

Attachments and Links

Alternative Resolution submitted by Councilmember Smith

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.