



## Takoma Park City Council Meeting – October 26, 2022

### Agenda Item 4

#### **Voting Session**

Resolution on Pedestrian and Transportation Safety

#### **Recommended Council Action**

Vote on the resolution.

#### **Context with Key Issues**

The City Council has identified a goal of improving transportation planning and outreach to create a safer and more racially equitable community for all residents, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle occupants.

The existing traffic calming and new sidewalk request policies have been identified as not racially equitable due to their request-based nature. The Takoma Park Complete Safe Streets Committee developed a set of recommendations to improve decision-making and prioritization related to pedestrian safety initiatives in Takoma Park and presented those to the City Council in March 2021.

The City Council held a work session on October 12, 2022, and heard updates from City staff on progress toward achieving transportation safety and equity goals. Recommendations from that presentation were to adopt criteria for new sidewalk and traffic calming requests and any related ordinance or regulation changes, as well as consider additional staffing or funds to support consulting services to fully implement recommendations.

This resolution directs City staff to develop and present revised traffic calming and new sidewalk request policies and prioritization procedures that the City Council will consider for a vote in the future. It also recommends continued quarterly meetings with State Highway Administration officials to further progress toward improving pedestrian and bike safety on State Highways.

#### **Council Priority**

A Livable Community for All; Fiscally Sustainable Government; Environmentally Sustainable Community; Engaged, Responsive, Service-Oriented Government

#### **Environmental Considerations**

Improved safety and well-being of pedestrians and people on bikes could lead to more people using modes of transportation other than vehicles, which could have a tangible impact on the city's carbon emissions. The goals of reducing climate impact via improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities directly supports goals and recommendations laid out in the City's 2020 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

#### **Fiscal Considerations**

While there is no direct fiscal impact to considering new policies related to traffic calming and new sidewalk requests, it will require staff time to develop proposed new policies and procedures for Council consideration.

Each year, the City Council typically allocates funds in the CIP for traffic calming measure and new sidewalk installations. Changes to the policies and procedures could result in an overall change in

expenditures. For example, prioritization and staff-driven planning initiatives could reduce some of the costs associated with explaining and administering the petition process to residents, as well as reduce work on traffic calming or sidewalk initiatives that do not move forward due to lack of resident support. On the other hand, additional analyses or holistic planning approaches could cost additional funds if more staff time or contracting with consultants is required.

### **Racial Equity Considerations**

A change to the current policies and procedures would likely have a positive impact on the provision of more equitable, walkable community infrastructure. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) residents in Takoma Park are less likely to own a car than white residents and rely more heavily on walking and public transit. Petition processes to request traffic calming or new sidewalks also place a higher burden on locations near multi-family residents due to the need to meet the threshold of petition signatures. Adjusting existing processes and policies away from request-based processes would enable planning and prioritization of traffic safety measures that improve racial equity, rather than piecemeal responses to requests.

### **Attachments and Links**

- [October 26, 2022, Work Session and Complete Safe Streets Committee Recommendations](#)
- [Presentation from October 26, 2022, Work Session](#)

Introduced by:

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

**RESOLUTION 2022-**

**RESOLUTION ON PEDESTRIAN AND TRANSPORTATION SAFETY**

WHEREAS, the City Council identified a goal of improving transportation planning and outreach to create a safer and more racially equitable community for all residents, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle occupants, in Resolution 2021-6; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 2021-6 also outlined strategies of exploring adopting a Vision Zero initiative, examining potential components such as education/outreach, policy, changes, and infrastructure improvements, and continuing to revise processes for traffic calming and sidewalk requests; and

WHEREAS, other goals outlined in Resolution 2021-6, such as climate change mitigation and improved city policies and processes to enhance resident interaction with the city, support this goal of improved transportation planning and outreach; and

WHEREAS, the City has identified inequities in the existing traffic calming and sidewalk request policies; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park Complete Safe Streets Committee developed a set of recommendations to improve decision-making and prioritization related to pedestrian safety initiatives in the City of Takoma Park and presented those recommendations to the City Council in March 2021; and

WHEREAS, those recommendations include, among other things: utilizing data-driven and evidence-based criteria as the basis for decisions; balancing the weight of “public input” by giving more weight to other criteria, including racial equity; proactively considering traffic data; considering a variety of traffic-calming measures as options in addition to speed humps; planning more holistically for traffic calming and pedestrian safety across larger geographic areas; utilizing a variety of methods for resident outreach and education; and creating criteria for prioritizing locations for new sidewalk installation; and

WHEREAS, Montgomery County is undertaking a number of initiatives to improve pedestrian safety, including the Action Plan for Vision Zero, the Pedestrian Master Plan, the Predictive Safety Analysis, the RideOn Reimagined Study, and the Bicycle Master Plan, that may inform and help support work on these issues in Takoma Park; and

WHEREAS, many of the most dangerous locations for traffic safety, as identified in the Montgomery County Predictive Safety Analysis and Takoma Park Police data, are located on State Highway Administration roads in the city; and

WHEREAS, State law now allows municipalities in Montgomery County to decrease speed limits down to 15 MPH after performing an investigation; and

WHEREAS, during an October 12, 2022, work session, City staff presented about ongoing work and progress on safety improvements for pedestrians, transit-users, and people riding bicycles in the City; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has held work sessions on development of a Public Space Management Plan that is anticipated to be adopted in the near future and will outline key recommendations related to use of public space and evaluation criteria that may further inform changes to pedestrian and transportation safety.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City Council directs City staff to develop and present revised traffic calming, sidewalk request, and street safety policies and prioritization procedures for City Council consideration that:

- Prioritize safety and equity in decision-making processes and planning;
- Emphasize the wellbeing and safety of the most vulnerable roadway users and prioritize the best use of the public space for the community as a whole;
- Consider holistic approaches addressing larger geographic areas, including investigation of reduced speed limits, and integration of other City plans and priorities such as sustainability efforts, public art initiatives, and other projects;
- Utilize data-driven criteria for evaluating and prioritizing sidewalk and traffic calming installations and other traffic calming approaches such as reduced speed limits (as allowed by state law), and for planning and identifying where safety measures are needed;
- Allow for multiple avenues for initiating consideration of locations that may need traffic calming or sidewalks, speed limit reductions, or other measures;
- Make progress toward a more comprehensive approach to transportation and public space planning that prioritizes pedestrian and non-vehicle safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council supports continuing periodic meetings between State Highway Administration representatives and City staff and/or Councilmembers to further progress toward substantially improving pedestrian, bike, and automobile safety on State Highways, and directs City staff to work with SHA to ensure that such meetings take place quarterly or as frequently as practicable.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of October, 2022.

Attest:

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Jessie Carpenter, CMC  
City Clerk