



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – December 6, 2023

Agenda Item 3

Work Session

Update on Minor-Master Plan Amendment (MMPA) – Planning Board Work Sessions

Recommended Council Action

Receive an update on the MMPA Planning Board Work Sessions and ask questions to City staff.

Context with Key Issues

In 2021, in partnership with the City of Takoma Park, Montgomery Planning began a Minor Master Plan Amendment to update portions of the 2000 *Takoma Park Master Plan* to re-envision critical resources within the City and the surrounding community. The project area includes the Washington Adventist Hospital and University campuses, Maple Avenue, and Erie Center.

The Public Hearing Draft of the MMPA was available for public review and comment from June 9, 2023 through September 30, 2023. During that time, the City Council passed two resolutions providing feedback and requested changes to the Public Hearing Draft (Resolution 2023-16 and Resolution 2023-33) in addition to Mayor Searcy's testimony during the Public Hearing on September 14, 2023.

At the close of the Public Comment period, the Planning Board scheduled a series of five work sessions to review the Public Hearing Draft and make revisions prior to the adoption and transmission of a Planning Board Draft of the MMPA. The Planning Board has outlined the following work session schedule:

- October 19, 2023
 - Organization of the work sessions and schedule
 - Overview of Takoma Park City Council Resolution 2023-33
 - Chapters 1-3: Introduction, A Renewed Vision, Plan-Wide Recommendations
- November 2, 2023
 - Chapter 3: Plan-Wide Recommendations
- November 9, 2023
 - Historic Preservation Recommendations
- November 16, 2023
 - Chapter 3: Plan-Wide Recommendations
 - Chapter 4: District Recommendations (Municipal District, Maple Avenue District)
- November 30, 2023
 - Chapter 4: District Recommendations (Flower Avenue District)
 - Chapter 5: Implementation
 - Review of Changes to the Public Hearing Draft and final edits
- December 14, 2023
 - Vote to approve the Public Hearing Draft and transmit to County Council and County Executive

In Resolution 2023-33, the City Council provided thirty (30) comments on the Public Hearing Draft. These comments ranged from explicit land use or policy recommendation changes to broad research questions. As the Planning Board has progressed through the MMPA chapters during work sessions, they have identified relevant comments from the Council Resolution and discussed any subsequent edits to the MMPA draft. City staff have observed the Board directly addressing all non-research questions in the resolution. During the work sessions, Planning Board members have repeatedly stressed the Board's partnership with the City and provided feedback to ensure that the Board's ultimate plan is responsive to the Council resolution. To date, the Planning Board's reaction to Resolution comments have fallen into three categories:

1. Comments that have led to revisions to the MMPA draft. These changes may include specific recommendations related to future development review/land-use, additional clarifying language, or recommendations for other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to consider.
2. Comments that have been considered by the Board but have not led to revisions to the MMPA draft
3. Comments that the Board considered either outside the scope of a Master Plan or already sufficiently addressed within the MMPA draft

At the conclusion of the Public Hearing Draft review and prior to a final vote on the Public Hearing Draft, Planning Board staff will provide the City Council with a memorandum outlining how the work sessions addressed each item in the Resolution. In preparation for this memo, City staff will provide an overview of the work sessions to date.

Council Priority

Advancing a Community of Belonging

Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Environmental Considerations

In July 2022, the Montgomery County Council passed [Bill 3-22](#), "Climate Assessments". This law requires the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) to conduct climate assessments of county bills and requires the Planning Board to conduct climate assessments of Zoning Text Amendments (ZTAs) and master plans. The climate assessment requirement applies only to the Planning Board Draft Plan that is transmitted to the County Council for final approval.

Area master plans typically include recommendations to address environmental issues and the impacts of climate change on particular communities. Montgomery Planning staff incorporate these considerations during each phase of the master plan process—scope of work, community engagement, Working Draft Plan development, and Planning Board review, culminating in the Planning Board Draft Plan approved by the Board that is transmitted to the Council for its final approval.

Climate assessments for bills, ZTAs and master plans are required for the County Council's process and must reflect the item as transmitted to the Council for its review. Master plan recommendations can change during Planning Board review; therefore, the climate assessment cannot be completed until the Planning Board Draft Plan is approved by the Planning Board to be transmitted to the Council.

Fiscal Considerations

Plan recommendations, improvements, and amenities are implemented in one of two ways: private development or public capital projects. Generally, private development of new buildings will include

public amenities required by the Zoning Ordinance and those recommended by the plan. Amenities and improvements are implemented on a project by project basis through the public development review process. Public amenities may include:

- open space,
- public facilities
- improvements to sidewalks
- sewers and utilities
- bike lanes
- roadways along the property frontage.

New public facilities or improvements to existing ones, like parks and roadways, are funded through the capital budgets of their respective jurisdictions. Within the plan area, Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MD SHA) each have responsibilities for some parks and/or roadways. Improvements to roads or land owned or controlled by the City of Takoma Park would be funded through the City.

Racial Equity Considerations

[The County Racial Equity and Social Justice Act](#) (Bill 27-19) requires the County Office of Legislative Oversight to prepare a Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement for bills and Zoning Text Amendments and the Planning Board to consider racial equity and social justice impacts when preparing a Master Plan.

In accordance with Bill 27-19, Montgomery Planning's Equity Agenda for Planning is an ongoing commitment to systemically dismantle the institutional and structural racism that exists in and has long influenced planning and zoning processes and to prevent that influence in the future. As part of this agenda for Master Plans, Montgomery Planning closely considers equity in examining the history and existing conditions of communities, engaging with the county's diverse residents during plan development, conducting data analysis, and developing plan recommendations.

The Takoma Park Minor Master Plan efforts included:

- analysis of the demographics and history of the planned area
- providing authentic and informative engagement opportunities
- educating stakeholders on how to advocate for their community
- crafting goals that reflect the desires of the community.

During staff work sessions following September 14, 2023, Public Hearing, the Planning Board will consider and discuss the racial equity and social justice impacts of the Minor Master Plan Amendment. The City of Takoma Park adheres to the City's racial equity goals during the process of planning and in evaluating the recommendations and provisions of the Minor Master Plan.

Attachments and Links

- [Takoma Park Minor Master Plan webpage](#)
- [Montgomery Planning Board Agendas](#)
- [Resolution 2023-16](#)
- [Resolution 2023-33](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) between the Montgomery County Planning Department and the City of Takoma Park