

PUBLIC COMMENT ON TAKOMA JUNCTION

| 2018 DATE | NAME | WARD* | COMMENT |
|-----------|----------------------|-------|---|
| 4/20 | Rick Weiss | 3 | <p>Dear Council,</p> <p>I write in opposition to the plan under consideration for Takoma Junction. I am not generically opposed to development on the site, but I object to the current plan. My primary reasons for opposing this plan are:</p> <p>1) It is out of scale with the neighborhood and the neighborhood plan, both in footprint and in massing.</p> <p>2) The plan for handling parking, loading, unloading, and garbage pick up is completely inadequate. In particular I strongly oppose the lay-by idea on a number of grounds including that it requires transfer of large amounts of merchandise and garbage across the walkway, causing safety issues and aesthetic insults; it promises congestion and line of sight and traffic issues at one of Takoma’s most difficult intersections; and it will be home to idling diesel engines almost directly in front of the small amount of public space being set aside for people to commune in this plan, making that area unrestful and unhealthy.</p> <p>3) Lack of green space - This was a major priority for the original plan and has been shrunk to something about the size of a postage stamp.</p> <p>4) Lack of details. This is a very important point. The plans to date are shockingly thin on numbers, measurements, details – including details about handling water runoff in back, bus stops, deliveries and garbage, actual parking space capacity and who would have access and at what kinds of costs, how to resolve the completely wrong placement of what is for now the only planned elevator.</p> <p>And all these and other gaps*before*the inevitable value engineering kicks in, as always seems to happen with these kinds of projects here, which means we will get even less than we think we are bargaining for - an amount that is already paltry given that we are giving up something of enormous potential value - our last patch of public, community-owned property in the middle of our historic city.</p> <p>We should hew to the plan drawn up years ago with a huge amount of work and public input. We should stop now while we can and reassess options. We should not take this plan just because it is the one that has made it this far! This is a time for real leadership and the strength to say “No, let’s try something different.” We can and should do better.</p> |
| 4/20 | Jeffrey Noel-Nosbaum | 3 | <p>I haven't been very sympathetic of the Co-op's positions in the past but while I do not agree with all of their most recent concerns, I see legitimacy in a number of them and I see them together as serious even if I don't agree that all of the particular issues are important.</p> <p>To me the one issue raised that is of most concern, whether the Co-op survives or not, is that NDC’s plan includes only one elevator; when the elevator is out of service the building will be practically ADA inaccessible. I have seen this issue with the second level businesses on the portion of Ellsworth Dr between Georgia Ave & Fenton St. There is only one outdoor elevator and I have had to change plans once because a member of the group I was with could not make it up to the second level because that elevator was not working.</p> <p>-Jeffrey Noel-Nosbaum</p> |

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| 4/20 | Dan Proudfoot | 2 | Hello, I am a Takoma Park resident and strongly support the NDC plan to develop Takoma Junction. I'm tired of having a parking lot at that junction, and I honestly feel the plan is a great opportunity to partner with a local firm to build something for everyone-- commercial/retail and open space as well, but low profile too. I feel like dragging this out even more would be painful and embarrassing...it's such an eye sore right now and has been for years. I'd love to have more opportunities to walk and shop local. Thank you, Dan |
| 4/20 | Cristina Cunha-Strasser | 2 | We need small development that does not jeopardize existence of our Coop and does not bring further congestion to a very busy road. Money and profits should not be the driving force behind your decisions. Rather think what's best for the residents of this beautiful and cohesive city. Protect and support small businesses! Cristina Cunha Strasser |
| 4/20 | Matt and Kate Frades | 2 | I've already emailed once about this, but there is another online push to oppose the plan and I wanted to express once again that our family supports the plan. Best, Matt and Kate Frades |

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| 4/20 | Stephanie Hartman | 2 | <p>Hello, I live on Woodland Ave and have been following plans to develop the Junction with growing concern. My original utopian fantasies—of green public spaces with local businesses, spaces for events and pop-ups, maybe a biergarten—were dashed by NDC’s conventional plan. NDC has had every opportunity to fulfill their contractual obligation to make the development community-centered and Co-op friendly. But they have been unable or unwilling to do so.</p> <p>Jane Jacobs wrote in <i>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</i> that “Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.” By ignoring so much of the development agreement, and the City Council’s list of points to be addressed in the concept plan, NDC has in effect cut the community out of the process. The resulting development provides primarily for NDC. It still—again—does not give us what we asked for, what would benefit us who will live with it for decades. To include the community, to enable us to be co-creators of this development, it is essential that the City Council listens to its constituents, especially at this key juncture.</p> <p>NDC was charged with creating a plan that provided specific features, ones committee members spent many hours drafting. In their October letter, NDC interpreted the mandate in the most general, abstract, and meaningless terms, saying that the site will “serve as a cultural meeting point” and be “forward-thinking and attractive.” But in concrete and quantifiable ways, it has simply not done what it was asked to do. Others have enumerated these points--and the list is long--but for me, the most glaring and disappointing is that it has not fully integrated community, open, green space into the heart of the design, but relegated just a little to the edge. It’s like saying my house has community space “devoted to year-round public use” because there’s a sidewalk out front (at least Woodland isn't a highway).</p> <p>I recognize that development in this location is challenging and that every plan will disappoint somebody. But the city originally bought this lot to ensure that it be used for the public good, to benefit our community. In the public/private partnership of Junction development, the public’s voice has been repeatedly ignored. It’s hard to imagine any private developer offering a plan with less greenery, less public space--or less of an attempt to preserve the Coop.</p> <p>I’ve been to well-designed shopping areas that were really lovely places to hang out, support local businesses, and enjoy the day. I have nothing against commerce. But I’m a bit puzzled that NDC’s end product reflects so little of what it was charged to provide. They seem to have a sweet deal, and we are left feeling a bit bereft and wondering what happened to our greenery, independent businesses, alternate transportation, public space, etc.</p> <p>It is reasonable for us to want development that includes community input and reflects our community’s needs and values (as the Co-op does!). NDC cannot seem to do that. I’m sorry about it too. I hear people making excuses for NDC: “oh well it will probably be okay, maybe, could be worse, guess we have to go through with what we began.” No, they failed to do what was asked. This does not seem like a good reason to put the future of Takoma Junction in their hands. We have too much to lose.</p> <p>Sincerely, Stephanie Hartman</p> |
| 4/20 | John Maynard | 3 | As a ten-year resident of Takoma Park, I support the Takoma Junction redevelopment |
| 4/20 | Lee McCracken | 1 | I support moving forward with this site plan to provide Takoma Park residents with more options to support local business and to come together as neighbors for recreation and community interaction. |
| 4/20 | Rob Chase | 1 | <p>I support development of Takoma Junction. While want to examine the details the plan seems sensible and appropriate to our community.</p> <p>Rob Chase Baltimore Ave</p> |

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| 4/20 | Richard Schmechel | 1 | <p>Good morning, I write to state my approval of the latest Takoma Junction development plan. I am concerned about traffic effects, but otherwise none of the concerns voiced by opponents seem significant enough to outweigh the benefits. Thank you, Richard Schmechel</p> |
| 4/20 | Jason Strachman Miller | ? | <p>Greetings, I'm writing to express my support for the site plan moving ahead as scheduled. I recently saw a call-to-action lobbying against the city's efforts to put forward this plan and after reading up on it, I do not share their beliefs. I certainly understand the concerns for the Fire Department, however there are many firehouses located across the city in very tight locations and all manage to respond in a timely fashion to emergencies. Further, I lived in the Cathedral Commons neighborhood during the major renovation that occurred there four years ago and heard many of the same sentiments expressed by the opposition. Meanwhile, the new area is flourishing with great restaurants and more housing than ever. I trust the Mayor and City Council have done their due-diligence and would not vote to move this plan forward if it was detrimental to the city as a whole. There will always be unhappy people, please keep in mind the overall benefit this should bring as you move forward. Respectfully, Jason Strachman Miller</p> |
| 4/20 | Alan Strasser | 2 | <p>I live on XXXX Garland Avenue, Takoma Park. I've been a member of the Coop for over 20 years. And I have participated in writing to you before, along with the Mayor, regarding my concerns over the proposed development at the Junction. And I have been to many meetings regarding this issue over the years. This area is very congested and needs a plan that protects the Coop and small businesses- not one that crams a large development into a congested area, while not meeting the Council-set criteria from October. It is time to follow your criteria and listen to your citizens, not the developers who only wish to maximize profits- even if it means pushing out the Coop, a Takoma institution. As a transportation and environmental attorney, I urge you to delay action until the Maryland Highway Administration has completed its review of the traffic study with sufficient time for public comment. We all know this area is congested, and we often avoid it when we are in a rush. So let's find a solution that works for all. The Coop has been reasonable in trying to forge consensus. Will you be reasonable and act? With sincere concern and appreciation for your consideration, Alan W. Strasser, Esq. MA</p> |

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| 4/20 | Rick Weiss | 3 | <p>I'm a constituent on Pine Avenue. A couple of points for the "reader comment" tally on ongoing local events:</p> <p>1) Taxes: I favor the raise. (I also favor ongoing efforts to get the county to pull its weight/normalize our rebates, but I'm a believer in taxes, as long as our government is not being wasteful.) Services cost money. I'm personally tired of everyone trying to get out of it.</p> <p>2) The Junction: You've probably heard me speak at various meetings. The thing is out of scale, ill-conceived, unresponsive to the community's original plan and needs as expressed by our citizenry years ago and repeatedly since then. We are in above our heads and it seems we are about to get rolled by the developers, whose incentives, no matter how nice they are, are fundamentally different than ours. We should start over. That would take guts, but we should.</p> <p>John Nevins: What the what?? hundreds of cars snaking around our little streets with their blind curves and narrow widths already choked by one-sided parking? Making noise. Spewing exhaust. Stressed at rush hours. Stuck at corners trying to break into traffic on Carroll or Ethan Allen or Eastern? Are you kidding? And they are going to purchase this first and then apply for a permit and get traffic studies later?? The only plausible explanation is they feel assured they have this zoning thing wrapped up. Why would they think that? I wonder. This is way different than having a few buses pas through each day. From what I've heard (second hand so correct me) you've been fairly complacent about this issue. This is a huge deal for our neighborhood. You don't need to be against it but you do need to make clear you've got some tough questions and you're not going to let this effort undermine quality of life for your constituents. Being a rep is a serious business. This is exactly the kind of situation where you need to show real leadership. I was out of town for the one meeting that I'm aware of that addressed this issue, but with little else from you to really put the buyers on notice that there should be NO presumption of success here, the train seems to be barreling down the tracks. With all respect: What is your position on this? What are you doing to make sure we don't find ourselves in a position where it's too late to make this work for the people who LIVE here? Does anyone really believe we'll have half a chance of bargaining from a position of strength once the sale goes through? NOW is the time for you and the City to be holding these people's feet to the fire, reading them the riot act, making sure they realize what they are getting into and what we fully expect and indeed will demand of them.</p> <p>We are counting on you. Thanks.</p> <p>-- Rick Weiss</p> |
| 4/20 | Ken Wright | 3 | <p>I'm still concerned about the plan for Takoma Junction.</p> <p>What Michael H Shuman said makes sense to me.</p> <p>I'm concerned about the plan's impact on the Co-op, among other problems. I don't want to lose the Co-op.</p> <p>Shuman's memo and blog post (I figure you're already aware of them):</p> <p>http://michaelshuman.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/MHS-Review-of-Takoma-Junction-Redevelopment-Plan.pdf</p> <p>http://michaelshuman.com/?p=378</p> <p>Ken Wright</p> |

*Ward is included if it was provided or can be looked up by address. NR denotes non-Takoma Park resident commenter. Question mark ? denotes not enough information provided. NA denotes that ward is not applicable