

PUBLIC COMMENT ON TAKOMA JUNCTION

2018 DATE	NAME	WARD*	COMMENT
4/23	Peggy Edwards	3	<p>I like many things about Byrne's plan. He's really thinking outside the various boxes already formed in many people's minds!! Even if we can't incorporate all of his plan, I think his green space and the underground entrance for trash trucks and delivery trucks should be considered. I've been taking a back seat on the while TJ redevelopment ever sense the ability Project was taken out of the plan.</p> <p>If that had been in the works, I would have accepted a bigger structure, (even 3 stories)</p>
4/23	Carin Brown	2	<p>I am very troubled by the present plans for the Takoma Park development and feel that the council should vote to NOT go ahead with it as it is presently proposed. If that means loosing some money for any agreements made with NDC so be it. My reasons are these:</p> <p>1. Traffic problems/disaster</p> <p>The Junction is already a problem area. There are 5 roads (including Sycamore entering/exiting the Junction) plus the gas station and the parking lot that have cars entering and exiting in to the Junction. The're limited options for correcting the already problematic Junction due to the residential nature of the area and thus few options for widening streets and creating left or right turn lanes. Even without any development, the junction is going to present increasing traffic problems due to the ever-increasing traffic from surrounding development in and outside of Takoma Park. There is already the plans for the John Nevins Andrews School which will bring in a lot for drop off and pick up traffic and their will be increase from whatever development is planned for the Washington-McLaughlin Property. Thus, IF anything commercial building is going to be built on the proposed lot, it must not bring in more traffic.</p> <p>The proposed plan as far as the building and side walk area is concerned are attractive enough and would be a nicely designed commercial area in ANOTHER SETTING but is not viable as a solution at Takoma Junction. If they are to be successful establishments, the proposed restaurant and a café on the ground floor would bring in substantial amount of traffic constantly coming and going with left turns in and out of the parking garage entrance in the middle of the already confused emergence of streets. They would contribute substantially to the number of delivery trucks while the other rental spaces would contribute substantially to the number of fed-Ex, UPS, Staple's trucks etc. The lay-by is a totally non-viable solution as has been pointed out very well by many other citizens.</p>

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4/23	Carin Brown (cont'd)		<p>2. Coop My second big concern is the long-term survival of the Coop. The Coop is a treasured establishment for Takoma Park citizens. The proposed plan is not respecting the needs of the Coop for its survival. The lay-by as already mentioned is not a viable answer for deliveries. Coop parking lot is already undersized for the amount of business it does and more parking options are needed. With the present development design putting the entrance to the parking garage at the opposite end from the coop it does not serve coop customers or pedestrians as it would mean shopping carts would be left there in the sidewalk area in front of the café or restaurant or roll into the entrance lane of the parking entrance.</p> <p>3. Subsidy to NDC From reading Michael Shuman’s analysis it seems to me that there are problems with the financial aspects of this deal that are at odds with the best interest of the residents of Takoma Park. Why has the Council not explained their reason for the subsidy? All negotiations need to be transparent. Despite very clear requests from Takoma Park citizens, NDC really has not put a lot of thought into traffic solutions or the asked-for respect for the Coop’s needs, . Their main concern is on maximizing their income. Any development of this land needs to be for the public good. The desire for increased City revenue must not trump the livability of our neighborhoods or the viability of cherished businesses such as the coop. Sincerely, Carin Brown</p>
4/23	Carin Brown (cont'd)		<p>Things that I think need to be considered:</p> <p>1. A much smaller commercial building with room for a delivery lane that would run around back of the building so trucks would be off the intersection and by having one side of the building to enter and other to exit there would be no dangerous backing of trucks out into traffic and pedestrian areas. OR 2. Pay parking area to serve the coop and other existing businesses along Carroll Ave combined with a small park/green area that makes it attractive.</p>
4/23	Ellen Fabian	3	<p>I live on Allegheny Ave, about .4 miles from the Junction. I support the proposed development at the junction. I shop at the Coop all the time, and I see this as benefitting the Coop - as well as the surrounding community - including mine. Please support the development of the Takoma Junction</p>
4/23	Kristina Grear	1	<p>I think this is a great initiative that will contribute to lovely the neighborhood feel of Takoma Park while bringing some additional business to the area. The current parking lot is a total eye sore. I am a member of and regular shopper at the co-op. Thank you for continuing to pursue this development initiative despite the overly aggressive and dramatic opposition. Unfortunately, those who oppose this project have been so vocal that I am practically afraid to show my support publicly. A fact which is not lost on me given Takoma Park prides itself on "inclusiveness"! Stay strong and carry on!</p>

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4/23	Pete Hackeman	2	<p>I wanted to share a quick note with you about our excitement for and interest in the Takoma Junction project. I'm not quite sure where in the process you and the city are (which is on me, I suspect the information is broadly accessible), but as I've seen some information about upcoming meetings and discussions and heard about the topic at the playground, it seems that something is coming up soon.</p> <p>Among the things that Amie and I love about Takoma Park (and Takoma DC to the extent that we cross the border daily) is the ability to walk and bus easily to many places that we commonly go. We think it would be beneficial to have another thoughtfully constructed, community-oriented place to walk or bus to at the Takoma Junction space.</p> <p>Right now, the only use of that space for us is to get our Christmas Tree from the firefighters (which we loved doing last winter). I'm certain that the FF will be able to sell trees in the future if the parking lot and repair store are developed into something that meets a lot of other community needs/interests the rest of the year.</p> <p>If we were stopping by a restaurant or shop or community space, or friends at work in office space, at that location, we'd be more likely to stop in the Co-Op to get some groceries too.</p> <p>I hope that as you consider your position and priorities for this process, that you'll continue to be in touch and that you are ultimately part of a consensus to develop the space in a way that benefits the neighborhood and the city the most.</p> <p>thank you, Pete Hackeman</p>
4/23	Matthew Hobbs	3	<p>I'm writing to ask you to support the Takoma Junction development as proposed by NDC. It's a sensibly-sized project that will create needed commerce and community space in that part of town.</p> <p>The debate about the redevelopment has been long and intense, but the objections to the current proposal seem to boil down to arguments that it's too big and that it would hurt the Co-op.</p> <p>Regarding the size argument, I feel that a green roof and functional space is a great trade for a surface parking lot, but everyone is entitled to their opinion.</p> <p>Those concerned about the loss of open community space should fundraise and transform the existing space across the street from the Co-op. While well intentioned, the gazebo there now never seems to be used, and could be replaced by trees and grass.</p> <p>Regarding the harm to the Co-op, I'm a Co-op member and weekly shopper and I think the store is being ridiculous. If an open parking lot was so vital to the Co-op's operations, why did it value it at \$0 in its initial bid for the site?</p> <p>Having a neighbor will require some adjustments as it would for anyone, but I've never heard the Co-op explain why other grocery stores are able to operate in urban areas without the benefit of a large adjacent surface parking lot while it thinks that it can't.</p> <p>Indeed, one need only look down the street to the Ace Hardware for a business that successfully receives large deliveries on the street — admittedly at a less busy intersection but without the benefit of a lay-in.</p> <p>If the Co-op feels it needs more parking spaces or other enhancements, it can buy them from NDC or renovate its existing space. It's a private business, and one that now seems more focused on selling beer and wine than fruit and vegetables, if shelf space is any indication.</p> <p>Any big project involves risk. The new building may not get enough tenants and could indeed create hassles for the Co-op. But if the city doesn't try for significant improvements, it will never get them. Please give your support to those willing to take a chance on Takoma Park, not those opposed to change.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely, Matt Hobbs</p>
4/23	Sarah Kanter	1	<p>I support the development of Takoma Junction and believe it will be a smart use of space for the town.</p> <p>Sarah on Holly Avenue</p>

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4/23	Linda Keely	3	<p>Dear Mayor and Council,</p> <p>Thank you for your continuing support of the new Takoma Junction proposed development.</p> <p>The new site plan proposed by NDC is attractive, matches the character and tenor of Takoma Park, and provides the much needed (and long awaited) missing piece to a vital piece of Takoma Park. Completing this project is a progressive act that furthers goals such as environmental sustainability, public transit, fostering community, and providing tax revenue to support Takoma Park's social programs.</p> <p>Please do not let a few loud voices derail this project that is so close to fruition.</p> <p>I am counting on your support and your vote to approve the Site Plan.</p> <p>Thank you very much for your dedication and service.</p> <p>Linda Keely</p>
4/23	Peter Lane	?	<p>Thank you for serving Ward 3 and the city of Takoma Park...and for keeping us informed about the Takoma Junction Redevelopment. A few questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am concerned that storefronts will sit empty (like the ones near the metro did until recently...also see Silver Spring). Has the developer and/or the city done any study of likely tenants? If so what level of confidence in getting that space rented and what types of businesses are expected? 2. What parking will be available to customers of the Co-op during construction? 3. That intersection is already a mess and not pedestrian friendly. I know there is a traffic study which I hope to see...I'm sure this is already an important factor for you to consider. <p>Thanks again, Peter</p>
4/23	Lorraine Pearsall	?	<p>You are Historic Takoma's councilperson, so I would like to make you aware of some major issues on this topic. It is not okay if parking is much more expensive or not readily available to the general public. Historic Takoma does rely on our visitors being able to park at the city lot for our events, otherwise they will park in the neighborhood. We are not the only ones. Please consider the small businesses on our side of the street, we don't want to drive out small businesses there. The spaces behind the businesses are even more limited now. I am very concerned about giving away our only public parking to a private entity.</p> <p>Thanks,</p> <p>Lorraine</p>

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4/23	Lyssia Merriman	3	<p>Thank you for the time you put in to listening to your neighbors and responding to concerns. I am writing you to for three reasons.</p> <p>1. With the traffic studies and traffic safety I would like to highlight the top of Sycamore Ave crosswalk and the entrance to the Coop parking lot on Sycamore as being two spots that are difficult for children to navigate. I would love for you all to keep in mind that the majority of children from the neighborhood cross those two spots to get to school. I would like to make that spot safer as we look at the entire Junction.</p> <p>2. I would love to see an effort with NDC to look at materials that are green and reflect the values of Takoma Park. The Living Building Challenge has a list of Declared materials that are justly sourced, meaning that they are light on our planet but also sourced from companies who treat their workers with dignity and respect. The list is below and there are forums in the DC area on locally sourced material as well. It would be great to see an effort made by NDC in this area when they look into material details and sourcing. https://living-future.org/declare/</p> <p>3. I like the look of the current elevator and visually it works where it is now. I am not sure that size would work closer to the Coop, however I do think an elevator closer to the Coop would be a good idea. Is there a way to have two? The second one being more discreet closer to the Coop? I know the Coop was hoping to have an elevator closer to the back of the building where it's staff can get to the lower level of the Turner building. It is currently so unsafe and horrible to get down these tiny steep steps to staff lockers. This is the Coops issue and not yours but I would like to consider the possibility. I am excited by the different ideas generated by the traffic studies and possibilities for the new building. Please keep asking questions and keeping this about process, details, and content.</p> <p>I have been disheartened by the divisiveness and comments that I hear at council meetings with people declaring that they are Takoma Park and represent Takoma Park. We do not need the otherization that we see at the national level here in Takoma Park.</p> <p>The lights worked a little better today at the Junction. Carolyn, our crossing guard mentioned that she liked the timing better. I was also happy to hear that the sidewalk on Carroll was fixed for our neighbor in a wheel chair.</p> <p>Seoul Food is so beautiful and I am seeing some wonderful things happening in the Junction. Let's keep this going and our eyes on real change. These steps make a difference.</p> <p>Thank you kindly, Lyssia Merriman Sycamore Ave.</p>

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4/23	Lyssia Merriman	3	<p>I took these photos in October of 2017. Note the duration in the photos and see the woman crossing with the walk sign. This was a backup around 4pm when I was walking my children home from school. The crossing guard was there as well trying to help. Please see how in the photos there are cars trying to enter from both directions into the Coop parking lot and there is another car stopped in the parking lot not moving forward because it is waiting for a car to back out of the space which is stopping the two cars from entering the Coop parking lot.</p> <p>The last photo is of my sons head. How is he supposed to navigate this on his own? I walk him home every day but note that the two cars trying to enter the lot are actually stopped in the crosswalk. That entrance into the Coop lot is so dangerous because it is also a crosswalk and some cars actually back into the crosswalk.</p> <p>When walking across the cross walk on Sycamore after navigating the parking lot entrance, kids do not intuitively know to look all the way behind them when crossing to see if a car is taking a right onto Sycamore. I have seen cars almost hit people crossing by a car turning right onto Sycamore.</p> <p>When considering the traffic studies, I would like to make sure we do not ignore the traffic problem of turning into the Coop parking lot on Sycamore which is part of the main route for children walking to school.</p> <p>The traffic jams that happen with the left and right turns into the Coop parking lot needs to be considered in the discussions on traffic changes. I would like to make this safer for all but this is the section that is most heavily walked by children. Children rarely walk in front of the development site because most kids are coming up the hill and crossing in front of the Coop to Grant to go to the schools.</p> <p>Thank you for your efforts and questions this evening. I would like to see more questions on this entrance and traffic flow into the Coop lot on Wednesday.</p> <p>Also I would like to know if there is modeling done in the proposed new plus sign model of traffic flow with Carroll going straight to Sycamore if that will increase traffic flow onto the top of Sycamore.</p> <p>I am concerned about the free right, although it makes great sense for traffic flow on Carroll (very compelling when just looking at traffic flow of cars), having a park in between to roads just does not seem like a comfortable place to hang out. If that park were relocated in front of the stores that would make sense from a pedestrian point of view.</p> <p>Thank you again! Lyssia Merriman Sycamore Ave. ++++++++ (photos attachment)</p>

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4/23	Paul Mackie	2	<p>Hi, I plan to be at the meeting Wednesday night, but I hope the Council will support the long-overdue development of Takoma Junction. I'm worried the anti-development folks have an extremely outsized voice in this debate. I would bet they are a very small percentage of our community. And I also believe they have a bottomless supply of misinformation and just plain strange taking points (not least of which was some of their shocking antics at the Co-op this past weekend). I spoke with one of them about her belief that the co-op is a true "placemaking" ground central. While the co-op might be a part of what we view our Takoma Park's image as being (local products, community owned), the business is also leading the charge in preventing our wonderful communities from having a walkable, vibrant place to congregate. That is the core of any definition of placemaking. I know that most of my friends and neighbors in Forest Park and Spring Park and many of the other areas near Takoma Junction are itching to have more to enjoy at that location.</p> <p>Frankly, the co-op is a bit of a joke amongst all the people I know in Takoma Park. The prices are too high and they don't have that great of a selection. I'm not saying it should go away. It can be very convenient to pick up a few essentials. But their hardening stance and belief that they seem to need a massive non-placemaking parking lot for their 18-wheeler deliveries (aren't massive 18 wheelers the opposite of local fame deliveries?) is unacceptable.</p> <p>Just think how great it would be if the co-op and its handful of NIMBY supporters who envision some sort of 1960s' ideals would listen to the new era of TP residents (many of whom, like me, study exciting new kinds of transportation and urbanity for a living) instead of preventing healthy, fun, and exciting development?</p> <p>I for one would love to regularly take my family and children to improved options at TP. There should be no fear that TP doesn't have enough of a vision of itself to prevent Wal-Marts and CVSs from occupying that space. Those kinds of businesses would never succeed there. But that seems to be a major fear of the anti-development crowd.</p> <p>Happy to discuss further as we can hopefully come together soon as a community and turn that eyesore into something we can be proud of.</p> <p>Thanks for your service, Paul Mackie</p>
4/23	Beth MacNairn	2	<p>I am not sure if the open comment time is still available on the proposed project at the Takoma Junction.</p> <p>I attended the pop-up this weekend and want to express my support for the development project and for the city staff who patiently explained the design.</p> <p>Thank you, Beth MacNairn</p>

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4/23	Janice Simsohn Shaw	2	<p>Hello - I am a homeowner on Circle Ave and parent of two elementary school aged students. I am in FAVOR of continuing to move forward with the Junction development project. I have tremendous faith in you, our elected officials, to work with the developers to firm up a design that is appropriate for our community and a traffic plan that manages those ramifications.</p> <p>I'm excited to have our little end of downtown Takoma Park be a more vibrant commercial area, with more businesses for me and my kids to walk to and enjoy.</p> <p>I'm sad and frustrated at how particularly generationally divisive this issue has been. It feels like a real NIMBY debate. I don't see an underutilized concrete parking lot as desirable open space - c'mon, folks!</p> <p>Most importantly, I think we have bigger fish to fry in this town around equity, affordable housing, education, etc.</p> <p>Please continue to move the development forward and focus your important energy on the bigger issues our community faces.</p> <p>THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE & LEADERSHIP.</p> <p>Respectfully, Janice Simsohn Shaw</p>

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4/23	Steve Smith	3	<p>I should say at the start that I am supportive of some sort of development at this site, and I sent extensive comments in the fall - although it appears that many of my previous concerns remain valid. (I need to review the updated plan some more and will submit updated comments.)</p> <p>However, I am a bit concerned about this document: https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/Takoma-Junction/HCD-20180405-takoma-junction-qa-sheet-Benefits-Financial_FINAL.pdf posted by the city. I'm not sure why city staff have produced a document with only positive points (or is there a similar document that lays out dis-benefits that I don't know about?). In addition, some of these points do not seem to be logically consistent or factually correct (see my comments below.)</p> <p>I would rather see a neutral document that lists both pros and cons. Otherwise, it doesn't appear that the city staff are taking a neutral stance on the proposed project.</p> <p>Could you: 1) please look into the role of the city staff here. Based on this particular document, it does not appear that the citizens (or the council) are getting unbiased information. 2) Could you please forward my comments to staff. I would be happy to work with them on revisions.</p> <p>Going into grading mode, here is the city's list,, parsed by me into three categories. These make sense to me:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ☑ Creation of appealing space for new and expanding local and regional businesses; • ☑ Increased activity and vibrancy of the area which will benefit existing businesses; • ☑ Mitigation of the environmental impacts created over the years by the dump located under the asphalt surface of the parking lot; • ☑ Reduction of the heat sink effect created by the asphalt parking lot; • ☑ Diversion and treatment of run-off into the Chesapeake Bay with the construction of various storm water management features; and <p>(And the financial benefit to the city would seem to be real as well.)</p> <p>The following seem somewhat ambiguous to me:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ☑ Improved circulation of pedestrians and bicyclists traveling through the Junction; <p>(There will be a wider sidewalk. However, if traffic congestion increases, this is not a benefit to bicyclists. As a pedestrian, I would be crossing a higher volume parking entrance. I'm not sure there is a net benefit here.)</p>

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4/23	Steve Smith (cont'd)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ☑ Retention of the green area on Columbia Avenue, the stabilization of the wooded slope, the removal of invasive plants, and the introduction of new landscaping elements. (This gets a mixed grade from me. If nothing was done the green space would still be maintained. Do I don't see how that counts as an "improvement". If the developer cleans up the invasive plants *and* maintains that area that would be great, particularly if there were a path or other access that would be useful public use. But I would not approve of turning the wooded area into a highly landscaped area, which is what most developers would do. I would like to see a path with access to the upper commercial area (which I don't believe is part of the current concept), perhaps with some benches, etc., with the area restored to native vegetation, rain gardens, etc.) And the following don't make sense to me: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ☑ Creation of an attractive, inviting area for community members to interact; (There's almost no community space in the current plan, unless you count potential outdoor seating from a restaurant. There's current a very small rental space on the roof. But that's community space in a very narrow sense). • ☑ Increased parking options for the customers of area businesses; (I don't see that parking is limited at present - Is that surface lot ever full? The new development will have underground parking, which is not as convenient as a surface lot. So I'm not sure this is a net benefit. The main need for additional parking beyond the current surface lot will be the increased needs of the new businesses in the new development. So I find it hard to read this as an improvement.) • ☑ Reduction in the carbon footprint of the community through the introduction of sustainability features such as a vegetative roof and other energy conserving improvements; (This is not correct. The building will use additional energy, that will not be offset by a vegetative roof! While energy conservation will reduce the energy use of the building relative to a building with no such features, the net carbon footprint of the city will increase due to this development. There is no way around that. I do energy analysis for a living...) <p>Sincerely, Steve</p>
4/23	Janis Williams	?	<p>Residents of Takoma Park deserve safe walking, driving and parking conditions. Public parking should be kept for public use and not for wealthy developers.</p>

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4/23	Dan Zibel	3	<p>I hope the Council will support the long-overdue development of Takoma Junction. I wanted to add my voice — paraphrasing thoughts that have been sent to other members of the council.</p> <p>I’m worried the anti-development folks have an extremely outsized voice in this debate. I would bet they are a very small percentage of our community. And I also believe they have a bottomless supply of misinformation and just plain strange taking points (not least of which was some of their shocking antics at the Co-op this past weekend).</p> <p>While the co-op might be a part of what we view our Takoma Park’s image as being (local products, community owned), the business is also leading the charge in preventing our wonderful communities from having a walkable, vibrant place to congregate. That is the core of any definition of placemaking. I know that most of my friends and neighbors are itching to have more to enjoy at that location.</p> <p>Frankly, the co-op is a bit of a laughing matter amongst all the people I know in Takoma Park. Many people don’t like it — but honestly, are simply afraid to say so because of the perceived “love” for the co-op. The prices are too high and they don’t have that great of a selection. I’m not saying it should go away. It can be very convenient to pick up a few essentials. But their hardening stance and belief that they seem to need a massive non-placemaking parking lot for their 18-wheeler deliveries (aren’t massive 18 wheelers the opposite of local fame deliveries?) is unacceptable.</p> <p>Just think how great it would be if the co-op and its handful of NIMBY supporters who envision some sort of 1960s’ ideals would listen to the new era of TP residents instead of preventing healthy, fun, and exciting development?</p> <p>I for one would love to regularly take my family and children to improved options at TP. There should be no fear that TP doesn’t have enough of a vision of itself to prevent Wal-Marts from occupying that space. Those kinds of businesses would never succeed there. But that seems to be a major fear of the anti-development crowd.</p> <p>Happy to discuss further as we can hopefully come together soon as a community and turn that eyesore into something we can be proud of.</p> <p>Thanks to you both for all you do.</p> <p>Dan Zibel</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