

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON TAKOMA JUNCTION**

2018 DATE	NAME	WARD*	COMMENT
5/16	Sara Fitzpatrick	5	<p>I grew up just 2 blocks from downtown Bethesda, and when I was a kid growing up in the 80s, Bethesda was a nice place to live. It was walkable, drive-able, affordable for my family, had many 1 and 2 story buildings. It was human scaled. I'm sure you know where I'm going with this. I don't like going to Bethesda anymore, I can't afford it, and I don't belong there. I've lived here in Takoma Park on-and-off for over 9 years. I keep coming back here because this is one of the only places I've lived in the world that actually comes close to feeling like a community, and because Takoma Parkers don't just talk about their values, they live them. These are people accustomed to participating in their democracy on a daily basis, who are willing to push the boundaries that need to be pushed. All of this is to say that when I look at what the City and NDC want to build, on this public land, in my home, I'm heartbroken. And I'm beginning to see how easily we could lose so much of what we love about this place. I'm reminded of the plaque on the wall outside this auditorium that honors our former mayor Sam Abbott. It quotes him as saying, "if we can't do it in Takoma Park, there's no hope for the nation". Even if others aren't doing it, we can. So for me, the tragedy of the story of the Junction is that we have the tools to do something meaningful with this land. Where others might go with business as usual, the Takoma Park I know has the vision and the imagination to use this unique opportunity to much greater potential. And like every great place to live, Takoma Park also has problems. So I'm asking myself, what is the problem that NDC's plan is designed to solve? I can tell you right now, a problem we do not have is not enough places to go out to eat. I don't need any more \$5 coffees or \$12 cocktails. Do we care about making real strides in affordable housing? Are we being honest with ourselves about how this development will exacerbate skyrocketing home prices in our town? Are we committed to intentionally and purposefully improving racial and economic equity? Do we genuinely understand and value the transformative power of meaningful public space? Do we want more places where low-income residents are welcome, without requiring them to spend money, or are we resigned to further excluding them? Window shopping, by the way, does not count. If we can all agree that gentrification is a widespread problem, what is stopping us from doing what we can, here in Takoma Park, to slow or even turn that tide? It's no small task, but what we do here matters, if we really are "thinking globally, acting locally." Takoma Park didn't get to be the way it is by accident, and it won't stay what it is without hard work, this too can disappear. We strangely seem to be in a hurry to just, get something done, and as a result, we're throwing up our hands. And that's the least Takoma Park thing I've ever heard.</p>
5/16	Nicole Ferraiolo	1	<p>Just a quick note to voice that I am in strong support of the Takoma Junction redevelopment plan. It's also important to me that the development company and many of the small businesses that are slated to take advantage of the new space are owned by people of color. The city's attention to creating opportunities for all of its residents is part of the reason that we chose Takoma Park as a place to raise our mixed-race family. Thank you to our council members for working so hard to make TKPK such a wonderful place to live.</p>
5/16	Li Howard	?	<p>Nothing in the junction could be more important than a thriving co-op and a reasonable traffic flow (it's bad enough already). Personally I would prefer to keep the parking lot and allow them to keep the deliveries coming. I don't really care about how tall it is. Green areas would be nice, but my priority but I rely don't want to go back to the days when you couldn't buy a fresh vegetable in Takoma Park. I rely on the co-op and I see a diverse (in spite of what I understand some people are saying) population who do likewise. People report (rightly I suspect) that the co-op has been less than co-operative in these negotiations and that's unfortunate, but it's not for the fair to the rest of us to say 'well, they don't deserve to have a say'. Please don't bow to those who are in a rush to bring in revenue. At the very least let's wait for the traffic study. Thanks for Listening.</p>

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON TAKOMA JUNCTION**

2018 DATE	NAME	WARD*	COMMENT
5/16	Kristy Cook	?	<p>I am a voyeuristic citizen watching the debate about the junction development. I just want to provide my input as one of your constituent members:</p> <p>1) I enjoy the Co-op and think it is a valuable part of our community - I especially appreciate the options to reduce waste and buy organic produce. I am not really income constrained so price has not been my issue. I love the convenience - I can walk.</p> <p>2) I hate the traffic at the junction as do many citizens in and out of Takoma. I've been angry that the County took away the bus pull off - that created one of the biggest messes. We need 'smart' lighting at the junction but I'm not sure how that can be done - good surveys, better testing at different times, pedestrian-option lights (if there is no one pushing a button, why do all cars have to wait, etc.</p> <p>3) I believe in the need for development of the junction property - but we only get to do it once for many years and it should be done right. Traffic is a HUGE consideration - movement into and out of the space should be prioritized to facilitate the flow of vehicles and people. Underground parking very good idea. Loading and unloading is always a huge problem for places - the proposed lane on the street is a bad idea- will destroy the people-friendly space that is desired and continue to create traffic issues. There is a need for off street site for these trucks.</p> <p>4) I believe Takoma needs to begin to build up and not worry so much about height restrictions - it's the environmentally friendly thing to do. Those are my thoughts - I have completed on line surveys but am simply do not have the time nor personality to join the community meetings. I am hoping that you will be able to bring our multiple voices to the table.</p> <p>Thanks for being our representative - I voted for you and believe you reflect some of my views, especially on environmental issues.</p> <p>Good luck and hard work on this challenging issue!</p>
5/16	Jenny Ruark	?	<p>I just wanted to register, since I'd written to you before, that after participating in the community debate over the project for the past month-plus, I am now in favor of the Council voting to go forward with the project. Some of my concerns remain, but I am optimistic that they will be resolved as the project proceeds.</p>
5/16	Merrill Leffler	3	
5/17	Lisa Sindass	6	<p>I think the Takoma junction redevelopment plans need to consider parking as a major issue. I commonly practice yoga in that area as well as buy bread at the bakery. Parking is tight during the week between 4-7 pm. I may not be able to go if no parking. The co-op business needs to be placed somewhere else . Their lot is small and hard to get to depending in the time of day. They only serve a small market of people with means to pay their ridiculously high prices and now its another liquor store. I love to walk there on weekends but coming from dc where I and a lot of my neighbors work ethan allen road gets major traffic then when you get to the junction no where to park .</p>
5/17	Jeffrey Trunzo	3	<p>I recommend that Council suspend the pilot program to include a racial equity impact statement on all Council agenda items, effective immediately.</p> <p>I am very proud to live in a community where people care about each other, and understand our country's history of racial inequality. However, the noble gesture of taking the first step to recognize the importance of racial equity in government decisions - meant to simply create a shared goal to applying a racial equity lens to decisions - has been unsatisfying to many members of the community.</p> <p>I am distressed to see it used as a blunt weapon against Council, City staff, redevelopment, and pit residents against each other.</p> <p>After Council discussions, assuming there is sufficient resources in a future budget, and if enough City residents are interested in volunteering to develop recommendations, I hope the program can be defined beyond the pilot phase, and then relaunched.</p> <p>I commend you all for your efforts on our behalf, we are grateful.</p>
5/17	Julia Lyskawa	3	<p>Hello! As a Takoma Park resident, I wanted to express my support for the Takoma Junction development. I appreciate the city working to develop this space and I think it will be a great addition to our community.</p>

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON TAKOMA JUNCTION**

2018 DATE	NAME	WARD*	COMMENT
5/18	Howie Schaffer	2	<p>Hope you are doing well. I just wanted to reach out to you (and I'm including my wife Rachel, who also votes) to give you our perspective on the Takoma Junction.</p> <p>We are big fans of honest and patient dialogue and support consensus. However, I want to encourage you not to vote to allow NDC and the City to break the development agreement. We've come too far and too much is at stake. I'd like to see the Coop leadership be more flexible. IMHO they have been inflexible and alarmist, which is a form of not negotiating in good faith.</p> <p>All the big issues of delivery, traffic, supporting small business etc can be worked out within the framework of the existing agreement. I'm glad to see the mediation process beginning. However, there is word on the street that you and Jarrett Smith have changed your position on the agreement and are no longer in support. I hope this is not true.</p>
5/18	Ben Rempell	1	<p>I was on the list to speak on Wednesday night but was pulled away by my otherwise crazy life of two kids and fulltime job, so sadly could not stay for my time. I would like to enter into the points I intended to make to you on Wednesday.</p> <p>1. I am deeply concerned by the clearly planned messages coming from the group of people who are against this development to play the race and gentrification card. I am also deeply concerned about the safety and security of our children card that has also been utilized. These are not matters to be taken lightly, and this relatively small but very loud group of people are making unsubstantiated claims that our kids will be killed to create fear and economically incorrect arguments to increase racial divisions in Takoma Park. Gentrification is not caused by increasing urban development, but by increased housing supply and demand. This project doesn't impact this issue, though it does offer the potential for increased employment opportunities for existing low-income residents as well as the potential to generate needed city revenue so you can continue to support antigentrification policies like rent control. I hope the council will not be swayed by these wildly outrageous claims that are not backed by economic theory.</p> <p>2. I am happy to hear that mediation is going to move forward, but I have strong concerns that the Co-op is under no pressure to compromise and work with NDC and the city on the demands that they have stuck to throughout this process. If the city continues to offer up the monopoly to the Co-Op that no additional grocery store can come into the Junction, they need to show that they are being serious and planning to thrive with the development. Thus far, all public documents have shown that the Co-op strategy is to resist and stand firm, and the council must demand more action from them; providing a monopoly to them (a for-profit company with little transparency) without demanding anything in return is irresponsible governance. I have made my points to Peter in recent weeks, but I did not see any progress on this from his public comments on the mediation or in his interrogation of NDC on Wednesday night. The NDC representative was completely correct that they have given quite a bit to this relationship, and gotten nothing in return.</p> <p>Thank you. Ben Rempell</p>
5/18	Jordie Hannum	3	<p>I want to reach out regarding the Takoma Junction debate, as I recently heard that the Co-op has agreed to mediation. While I applaud the Mayor and City Council for again showing its willingness make accommodations to the Co-op, I am surprised that the City is paying for mediation for a private business and the the Co-op is not paying anything. The Co-op's reluctance to pay is especially surprising in that they received a \$500,000 state grant, plus a an exclusive non-compete agreement from the city.</p> <p>I am also puzzled as to why they say they support a development but when they had the opportunity to make an offer years ago, they bid \$0, and now once again, they are offering nothing. I fear this may be stalling tactic to force NDC to leave the project under the guise of discussion. I hope that's not the case because this project is about more than what benefits the Co-op, it's about what would benefit the whole community. Regardless of the mediation, I do hope this will not delay the vote by the end of June. The City has done its due diligence and it's time to hold a vote. Thank you for all your work and patience on this project!</p>

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON TAKOMA JUNCTION**

2018 DATE	NAME	WARD*	COMMENT
5/18	Steve Teles	1	<p>I write to just briefly respond to claims at the last Council meeting that the proposed Junction project will lead to gentrification and have deleterious effects on minority communities in Takoma Park. If there is a conflict between social and racial justice and development policy, it is created by unreasonable obstacles to new development. All the communities in the DC area—ourselves in particular, because of our proximity to downtown and Metro—must do our part to accommodate the thousands of people who want to move to our area. If we do not, we will be implicated in gentrification and sprawl—along with windfall profits for existing property owners as a result of supply constraints—exactly the opposite of the values we claim to support. While there are certainly complications in these questions, the price of housing is fundamentally set by supply and demand. When there are families who want to move into an area, and they cannot be absorbed through new supply, then they will bid up the price of existing housing. That will lead to existing residents being displaced by newcomers who can afford higher rents. As I argued in my recent book, <i>The Captured Economy</i>, this artificial scarcity is at the root of skyrocketing housing costs in our major cities, the DC area included. President Obama’s head of the Council of Economic Advisors, Jason Furman, calculated that in the 1990s final sale prices were on average about 33 percent higher than construction costs. By 2013, that gap had grown to 56 percent. In short, we have made land more expensive by making it harder to build. The more we constrain construction in places people want to move, the more we drive up housing costs—leading to a cycle in which newcomers displace existing residents. Supply constraints combined with rent control may temporarily protect existing residents from displacement, but at the cost of generating sprawl (as newcomers are accommodated further away from the city center—that is, by simply pushing the problem of housing newcomers to others, but with very steep environmental impacts associated with long commutes). Building more housing, along with shopping and other amenities to support it, should prevent gentrification, and benefit existing lower-income residents. To accommodate more people, we need to support developments like the Junction that provide the neighborhood amenities we need if we are to have accommodate new members of our community. A combination of new housing and accompanying amenities should prevent an imbalance of supply and demand that drives housing costs up. In essence, new supply makes room both for newcomers and existing residents. But second, and often ignored, new higher-income residents and existing lower-income residents have a community of interest. Higher-income residents can afford to purchase higher-margin goods and services—in developments like the Junction—thereby creating new and higher-paying employment opportunity for existing lower-income residents. It is only unreasonable constraints on development that pit these two communities against one another. In other words, the opponents of reasonable development are creating precisely the gentrification and racial inequality they say they oppose.</p>

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON TAKOMA JUNCTION**

2018 DATE	NAME	WARD*	COMMENT
5/20	Byrne H. Kelly	?	<p>Please take a look at this and let me know your thoughts. I really believe we, the citizens and property owners, of the City Parking Lot, can, and should get better for what we are giving away.</p> <p>I also think it could be 3 stories along the back, as you wouldn't see it from the front, and then the NDC can get their 50K square feet. As you know I am not at all opposed to developing this lot. I just want all of us to be satisfied with the outcome, and not to have so much divisiveness, including:</p> <p>Junction for All            Community Vision for Takoma Park            NDC and the            Co-op            The adjacent business owners            and the City Government</p> <p>Please Madame Mayor &amp; Council it is all of ours, it's our property, and your decision. You can press the pause button, you can tell NDC that we are their client and we are giving them an incredible opportunity to develop here. Please do not be bullied, or hurried by Adrian Washington or our City Staff, as it appeared to us, was in fact, happening to you last Wednesday night.</p> <p>Really what is the rush? What do you really want? Make them give us, all of us what the majority of the persons and organizations involved have asked for. This Plan, and the explanation that goes with it does just that. The Co-op becomes the "Anchor Tenant" it's a win, win, and home run for all of us. You also should have no doubt, That we, (maybe more than any other municipality) can get SHA to allow for a compromise solution:</p> <p>To allow the joint loading dock, have the use of a 2 minute transponder hold on the red lights for a semi-truck to pull into the Plaza-Piazza between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. Yes, even the Co-op would have to accept a compromise, just like all of us and you as our governing body have to.</p> <p><i>(Attachment)</i></p>
5/20	Martha Feldman	2	<p>I would appreciate it very much if you would distribute copies of the attached letter to all members of the City Council. Thank you very much.</p> <p>If you cannot distribute the letter, or you have a problem accessing it,, please let me know and I will help in any way I can. <i>(Attachment)</i></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