

Introduced by: Councilmember Seamens

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
RESOLUTION 2010-34
REGARDING SLIGO PARK HILLS/RITCHIE COMMUNITY TRAFFIC ACCESS RESTRICTIONS**

- WHEREAS, it is a goal of the Takoma Park City Council to “create and maintain a livable community that is vibrant, healthy, and safe, with convenient transportation for all of its residents” and it is a strategy of the City Council’s goal to create an environmentally sustainable community to “expand and enhance existing infrastructure to provide access to, and promote increased use of, alternative modes of transportation and walking;” and
- WHEREAS, the Ritchie Citizens Association has observed that many vehicles drive through its neighborhood and that many cars drive at an unsafe speed given the lack of sidewalks in some areas; and
- WHEREAS, the adjacent Sligo Park Hills neighborhood association has requested traffic access restrictions to its neighborhood due to high levels of cut-through rush-hour traffic via the process outlined in Montgomery County Code Section 31-69; and
- WHEREAS, the Ritchie Citizens Association neighborhood has been concerned that traffic that has been going through the Sligo Park Hills neighborhood may be diverted to Ritchie and Geneva Avenues in their neighborhood if Sligo Park Hills traffic access restrictions are implemented; and
- WHEREAS, through the assistance of County Councilmember Valerie Ervin and the City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County expanded the study area of the Sligo Park Hills traffic access restriction study to include the entire traffic area zone, which includes the Ritchie Citizens Association neighborhood; and
- WHEREAS, the resulting combined traffic study resulted in recommendations for a number of access restriction signs in unincorporated Montgomery County and in the City of Takoma Park to protect the neighborhoods from cut-through traffic, as shown on Attachment A; and
- WHEREAS, the Sligo Park Hills neighborhood is largely in unincorporated Montgomery County, so the process for approving the installation of traffic access restriction signs is pursuant to Montgomery County Code Section 31-69; and

WHEREAS, the Ritchie Citizens Association neighborhood is wholly within the City of Takoma Park where the process for approving the installation of traffic access restriction signs in a neighborhood is less defined, but usually is done by Executive Order by the City Manager after receiving direction via a resolution of the City Council; and

WHEREAS, a joint public hearing on the traffic access proposals was heard on February 24, 2010, at which 38 people spoke and 199 people submitted testimony by the public comment closing date of March 10, 2010; and

WHEREAS, of the unduplicated oral and written comments, 85 were in favor of the access restrictions and 122 were in opposition; and

WHEREAS, after considering the testimony and reviewing the technical information in the field, the Montgomery County Hearing Examiner recommended approval of the request by Sligo Park Hills for traffic access restrictions and the County Executive approved the recommendation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park did not agree with the approval of the traffic access restrictions; and

WHEREAS, two of the signs required for implementation of the Sligo Park Hills traffic access restrictions (signs 6 and 7 on the map in Attachment A) are proposed to be located in City of Takoma Park right-of-way, requiring authorization by the Takoma Park City Manager; and

WHEREAS, the Ritchie Citizens Association has requested that the Takoma Park City Council agree to restrictions on Ritchie Avenue, Geneva Avenue and Hilltop Road at the same time; and that the Council either:

Temporarily impose all study-recommended restrictions on Ritchie Avenue, Geneva Avenue and Hilltop Road (that is, signs 1-4, 6 and 7 on the map in Attachment A) concurrently with the restrictions being implemented in Sligo Park Hills; with signs 1-4 to be in place until traffic-calming construction on Maple and Ritchie Avenues, as identified on Attachment B, is reasonably complete; or

Temporarily impose all County-recommended restrictions on Ritchie Avenue, Geneva Avenue and Hilltop Road concurrently with restrictions being implemented in Sligo Park Hills, with the exception of the AM westbound restriction at the intersection of Maple and Ritchie Avenues (sign 1), which will

be replaced by a permanent NO LEFT TURN sign at the intersection of Sligo Creek Parkway westbound and Maple Avenue; with signs 2-4 to be in place until traffic-calming construction on Maple and Ritchie Avenue, as identified on Attachment B, is reasonably complete; and

WHEREAS, the Ritchie Citizens Association has further requested that, upon reasonable completion of the traffic calming methods, signs 1-4 (or 2-4, if the Maple Avenue/Sligo Creek Parkway sign is installed) may be removed, subject to an evaluation of rush hour traffic volumes two months after sign removal, but, if bidirectional traffic volumes at that time along Ritchie Avenue exceed a pre-agreed upon limit, traffic restriction signs will automatically be reinstalled; and

WHEREAS, the City Council discussed the options at its worksession of June 7, 2010 and concluded that the installation of pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures is the best long-term solution to the problems faced by residents of the Ritchie Citizens Association; and

WHEREAS, the Council determined that to deny the installation of signs 6 and 7 in the City of Takoma Park right-of-way, as part of the Sligo Park Hills access restriction plan, would hurt Takoma Park residents; and

WHEREAS, the Council acknowledged that it is important to install signs protecting the residents on Ritchie Avenue, Geneva Avenue and Hilltop Road (signs 1-4, 6 and 7 on the map on Attachment A) at the time the Sligo Park Hills access restriction signs are installed, so as to discourage morning rush hour traffic that is diverted from the Sligo Park Hills neighborhood from using Ritchie Avenue, until pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures are installed; and

WHEREAS, the Council believes monitoring of traffic volume and speeds is important to determine the impacts of traffic control measures on neighborhoods.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Takoma Park directs that, if the Sligo Park Hills access restriction signs are approved for installation by the Sligo Park Hills neighborhood:

1. The City Manager will authorize the installation of a "DO NOT ENTER 6:30 – 9:30 AM MON-FRI" sign for Hilltop Road westbound direction on eastern leg at the Hilltop Road and Geneva Avenue intersection, before the apartment complex entrance.

2. The City Manager will authorize the installation of a “DO NOT ENTER 4:00 – 7:00 PM MON-FRI” sign for Hilltop Road eastbound direction on eastern leg at the Hilltop Road and Mississippi Avenue intersection.
3. The City Manager will authorize and direct the installation of a “NO RIGHT TURN 6:30-9:30 AM MON-FRI” sign for Maple Avenue westbound direction on eastern leg at the Maple Avenue and Ritchie Avenue intersection; a “NO LEFT TURN 4:00 – 7:00 PM MON-FRI” sign for Ritchie Avenue southbound direction on northern leg at the Maple Avenue and Ritchie Avenue intersection; a “NO RIGHT TURN 4:00 – 7:00 PM MON-FRI” sign for Geneva Avenue eastbound direction on western leg at the Geneva Avenue and Hilltop Road intersection; a notice sign for Ritchie Avenue eastbound direction on western leg – ‘NOTICE NO THRU TRAFFIC TO SLIGO CREEK PARKWAY 4:00 – 7:00 PM MON-FRI” at the intersection of Piney Branch Road and Ritchie Avenue; and a notice sign for Mississippi Avenue eastbound direction – “NOTICE NO THRU TRAFFIC TO SLIGO CREEK PARKWAY 4:00 – 7:00 PM MON-FRI” at the intersection of Mississippi and Piney Branch Road.
4. That planning, engineering and installation of the pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures be completed within nine months. If this is not achieved, the City Manager will notify the City Council three months prior to the deadline and a new date for completion will be set.
5. That, upon completion of the installation of the pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures, the signs identified in number 3 above be removed.
6. Prior to removal of the signs, a traffic monitoring plan be agreed to by the City Manager and the Ritchie Citizens Association.
7. If, within six months of the date that the signs are removed, average peak hour traffic counts on Ritchie Avenue, on regular school and work days, show a level greater than 200 cars per hour, the signs will be re-installed.

Adopted this 14th day of June, 2010.

Attest:

Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk