CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION 2017-53

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE COUNCIL REGARDING THE
TAKOMA JUNCTION REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

WHEREAS, Council adopted Resolution 2015-19 in April, 2015, authorizing the initiation of negotiations with Neighborhood Development Company (NDC) for the redevelopment of the City lot at the Takoma Junction; AND

WHEREAS, Resolution 2015-19 also gives direction on the goals and desired vision for the Takoma Junction Redevelopment Project; AND

WHEREAS, the August 2016 Development Agreement with NDC, approved by the Council on July 27, 2016, includes other provisions and guidance concerning the redevelopment project and referenced in quotes and elsewhere below; AND

WHEREAS, a Concept Plan related to use, parking and vehicular circulation is needed in order to pursue traffic studies, design work, and reviews by outside agencies leading to the preparation of a Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan; AND

WHEREAS, a Concept Plan was presented to the Council on September 27, 2017; AND

WHEREAS, a Concept Plan is an initial sketch of the development site and with continued negotiations with NDC will be further revised to result in a more specific Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan which will fully show how the Council’s goals and desired vision for the project will be met; AND

WHEREAS, after considering the presented Concept Plan and hearing public comment, the Council held a Work Session on October 11, 2017 to discuss the Concept Plan and to identify changes and direct NDC in the necessary elements to include in the future Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan to meet the requirements of the Development Agreement; AND

WHEREAS, this Resolution is to provide the incoming Council with a sense of the current Council regarding its comments on the Concept Plan, and to direct NDC on changes regarding the Concept Plan so that following further consultation with NDC, and completion of the traffic studies, a Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan may be prepared that would be consistent with the Council’s goals and desired vision for the project, and the requirements of the Development Agreement, and thus be approvable by the Council; AND
WHEREAS, specific comments on the Concept Plan are:

1) The Concept Plan does not show at street level adequate “public or community spaces that result in enhanced interactions among residents and visitors.”

2) The Concept Plan does not show or adequately detail the “accessible outdoor space devoted to year-round public use or enjoyment” and how those components comport with the design requirements of Section 6.3.6 of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance.

3) The Concept Plan does not show a “building structure that aspires to elegance, beauty, and place-setting that will be admired by professionals and residents.”

4) Pending review by the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Montgomery County Planning Board, the inclusion of a lay-by sized for use by 18-wheel delivery trucks may be an acceptable way to meet the need for deliveries for the TPSS Co-op.

5) The inclusion of a lower level of structured parking is an acceptable way to provide “continued inclusion of public parking on site.”

6) The Concept Plan shows a design for deliveries by non-18-wheel trucks and trash and recycling collection that raises questions and concerns about its workability, and questions remain about the opportunity for deliveries or trash and recycling collection to occur through the lower level of structure parking.

7) The Concept Plan gives the appearance of an uninteresting building in a large mass of two, and potentially three, stories which raises concerns regarding appropriateness and fit with surrounding buildings.

8) The Concept Plan does not address the appearance of the rear of the property which should be of a design “that minimizes detrimental impacts on neighboring properties on Columbia and Sycamore Avenues.”

9) The Concept Plan does not provide information on green elements that would ensure “that the Building satisfies the requirements for LEED Gold or higher or equivalent” requirements.

10) The Concept Plan does not clearly identify the “amount of retail, community, and open space included in the project;” AND

WHEREAS, the parcel size for this Concept Plan is larger than originally proposed due to the potential inclusion of the Takoma Auto Clinic parcel to the west of the City lot;

AND

WHEREAS, purchasing the Takoma Auto Clinic parcel, which Council supports, has a number of likely benefits for the proposed development:

1) It allows the driveway entrance to the underground parking lot to be in a location that has less negative impact on Carroll Avenue traffic flows.
2) It allows for more underground parking spaces.
3) It provides more distance between the driveway entrance and the lay-by so that more street trees along the curb could be accommodated, providing greater comfort and safety for pedestrians.
4) It may allow for more public gathering space in front of the building and accessible outdoor space devoted to year-round public use.

WHEREAS, the key information from a Concept Plan that is needed for a traffic study includes the identification of the proposed square footage of retail space and of other proposed uses in order to be able to calculate the numbers of vehicles drawn to the site because of the development; the proposed number of parking spaces provided on site; and the proposed locations of driveways for customers and service vehicles; and truck unloading areas; AND

WHEREAS, Council has discussed the square footage of the development and wishes to be better informed about the impacts and tradeoffs of development at different sizes in terms of traffic impacts, appearance and financial feasibility, additional public space, as well as potential rents for tenants; Councilmembers are interested in seeing the impacts of an approximately 34,000 square foot structure of two stories (first level retail, second level office and community space) and of any updated square footage estimate that includes the expanded area of the Takoma Auto Clinic parcel and of the impact of a development concept that includes greater public gathering space at the front of the building at street level and space for year-round outdoor use, including the potential of a third floor public space; AND

WHEREAS, having traffic study models at several ranges of development size will provide important information to the incoming City Council when considering the project; AND

WHEREAS, Resolution 2015-19 and the Development Agreement, the comments from the residents participating in the Community Consultation sessions, and the comments from the Council and residents throughout this process provide direction and guidance for the design work leading to the preparation of a Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan; AND

WHEREAS, the inclusion of a 34,000 square foot development option among the options to be considered as part of the traffic study does not constitute approval of a 34,000 square foot option by the Council; AND

WHEREAS, the traffic study should include analysis of the potential impacts of the various development options on pedestrian and bicycle traffic and public transportation.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
TAKOMA PARK THAT the Concept Plan presented to the City Council on September 27, 2017 shows the following information on which a traffic study can be based: approximately
34,000 square feet of retail and office space (two floors); a level of underground parking; the
location of the entrance to the parking garage and service area; and a lay-by on Carroll Avenue,
the Council directs NDC to also evaluate traffic associated with updated square footage of retail
and office space associated with the Takoma Auto Clinic parcel and of a development concept
that includes greater public gathering space at the front of the building at street level and outdoor
space for year-round public use, including the potential of a third floor public space.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, as the project moves forward, the Council expects to
see a Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan that meets the criteria of Resolution 2015-19 and the
Development Agreement, including the Agreement’s provisions relating to reasonable
accommodation of the TPSS Co-op, and, in particular, regardless of whether the traffic studies
show minimal impact on traffic, provides:

1) A large amount of vibrant, comfortable, and easily accessible street-level public space
that functions as a community gathering spot, does not require the purchase of food or
beverage to use, and is accessible for year-round use.
2) Accommodation of delivery, trash and recycling vehicles in a manner that does not cause
traffic problems, optimizes public enjoyment of the site, addresses the needs of on-site
tenants, and provides reasonable accommodation to the TPSS Co-op.
3) Placement of the elevator or elevators in a location that serves patrons and tenants
conveniently, including patrons of the TPSS Co-op.
4) A street-facing façade design that consists of large storefront windows on the retail level
and includes exciting or iconic features that evoke the spirit of Takoma Park.
5) Massing that fits with the area and is comfortable for those using and passing by the site
on Carroll, Sycamore, and Columbia Avenues.
6) Appropriate landscaping and building façade design of the Columbia Avenue side of the
property that improves the appearance of the green space and would help address
environmental sustainability and other goals for the project.
7) Design features that will preserve and improve alternatives to automotive transportation.
8) Details regarding parking options for off-site businesses located in the Takoma Junction.
9) Design and construction features which satisfy the requirements for LEED Gold or higher
certification from the U.S. Green Building Council or an equivalent certification.
10) Details necessary to provide reasonable accommodation to the TPSS Co-op for access for
loading of deliveries, customer parking, and continued operations during construction.
11) Identifies any resolution or agreement reached between NDC and the TPSS Co-op
regarding shared façade design or other improvements that would enhance the aesthetic
appeal of the whole commercial strip between Sycamore Avenue and the fire station.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT if a lay-by is deemed appropriate, then it shall be shown on the Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan shall be announced and made public with adequate time for review.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the traffic studies upon completion shall be announced and made public with adequate time for review and will be the basis for one or more City Council work sessions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Council directs NDC to continue to periodically provide updates to the project schedule so that this public document reflects an accurate picture of the status of the project and tasks within it.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Council directs NDC and the City to identify and provide to Council the full list of “main tasks” that are referenced in the Development Agreement and to ensure the process for amending main task deadlines in the Development Agreement is followed.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Council directs NDC to:

1) continue to the traffic study, taking into account in the study to the extent possible the items in the second Resolved clause that have a bearing on traffic, and
2) continue toward the development of the detail necessary to produce a Draft Site Plan/Preliminary Plan of the project.

Adopted this 25th day of October, 2017.

Attest:

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Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk