



# CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

## City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of May 22, 2019

### ***Information to Share***

#### **Notice of Additional Cost Increases for Recycling Processing**

Earlier this week, we received a notice from the operator of the Prince Georges County Recycling Facility that as of the May 1 invoice, the price per ton for processing will be increasing by over \$9/ton from the current rate to \$68.82/ton. The notice goes on to say that another surcharge review is scheduled for July 1, at which time we will be notified of any further charges based on processing costs.

For perspective, the price per ton at the beginning of FY18 was \$32/ton. The price increased each time there was a surcharge review. At the beginning of FY19, the price was \$34/ton which jumped to \$59.45/ton in January and now to \$68.82/ton. So in less than a year, the price has more than doubled. We typically budget for 1,300 tons of recycling per year. For FY19, we budgeted \$44,200 but, in light of the recent hikes, estimate we will spend around \$77,000.

We are seeking other options but are very concerned about the price increases, which seem to be a national trend for recycling.

#### **Street Resurfacing**

The City will begin our street resurfacing program next week. The work includes milling the street surface and then repaving with a two-inch asphalt layer. The process is expected to start May 28 and extend through the week of June 3, depending on weather. All streets will first be milled then resurfacing will be completed the following week. The order of work will be as follows:

1. Tulip Avenue between Holly Avenue and Cedar Avenue (Ward 1)
2. Crescent Place (both sides) (Ward 1)
3. Holt Place (Ward 1)
4. Second Avenue between Cockerille and Allegheny (Ward 3)
5. Cockerille Avenue between Kansas Lane and 4th (Ward 3)
6. Glaizewood Avenue (Ward 2)
7. Glaizewood Court (Ward 2)
8. Linden Circle and Linden Alley (Ward 2)
9. Greenwood Avenue (Ward 5)
10. Winding Hill Way (Ward 5)

All homes on the affected streets will receive notices this week. The paving contractor will post no parking signs prior to the expected work day on each street. Because most of the streets included in this year's paving are fairly short, the contractor will be doing multiple streets in one day.

This information is also included on the City's project page for street resurfacing:  
<https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/street-resurfacing/>

#### **Information in Response to Questions on Lincoln Avenue Sidewalk and Aspen Ave.**

Last week, a resident brought up questions and concerns about Lincoln Avenue sidewalk construction and water being temporarily cut off in the vicinity of Aspen Ave on Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding the water being shut off, this was the result of an accidental water main break, which occurred when a contractor doing stormwater work on Lincoln was excavating and hit the water main. This water main was not marked correctly and was more shallow at that point than initially assumed based on prior test pits. WSSC was out within an hour of the break and was able to restore water to the block before noon. Of course, it is unfortunate when a utility line is affected during the work. We and our contractors do everything we can to avoid such incidents, but there are times when it is unavoidable. In those cases we work very quickly to notify the utility and coordinate repairs. We have a very good working relationship with the WSSC area maintenance manager and we were glad they could address the problem so quickly. During an unexpected break that needs to be repaired quickly, notices are not delivered by WSSC. Information can be found on their website or can be provided by phone. If residents have questions about their water or water quality, they should be directed to WSSC which has an emergency call center that can be reached at 301-206-4002.

The resident also asked whether the City conducts water quality tests on stormwater flowing into Sligo Creek. The City does indeed test water quality at all of our outfalls annually - per our State permit requirements. We also respond to any illegal dumping or water quality issues that come up by contacting the County and assisting in their investigation on the source of the issue.

Finally, the resident noted a high number of drivers who exceed the speed limit on Aspen. Police have been notified and will be monitoring the area.

Regarding the Lincoln Avenue sidewalk construction project, a detailed letter has been sent to the resident who raised the issues. A summary of the information is: The project began with a request for sidewalks from residents in 2013. The project was awarded a State Safe Routes to Schools grant, which necessitates a great deal of process, documentation and the requirement to go out to bid for a contractor rather than using a firm on retainer by the City for such work. Most of the sidewalk installation is complete, but some corrections are needed. Permeable sidewalk surface is yet to be installed but all of the sidewalk-related work is expected to be done by late May/early June. Stormwater improvements are underway separately and are to address areas identified by residents and staff. The process for the Lincoln Avenue sidewalk work has taken a long time, but has been done with community involvement and high quality standards throughout. Detailed information is on the City's website.

#### **Additional Information on Sharrows Installation**

At the Council meeting of May 15, Councilmember Kovar asked for additional information regarding the installation of bike sharrows on the Community Center parking lot and Cedar Avenue. The cost of the installation was \$14,000. Sharrows are a traffic control device with standardized colors and shapes. Like traffic signs, lane markings, stop bars, etc., traffic control devices are not subject to historic preservation review. They were not addressed in the review of streetscape design. Funds for bicycle and transportation safety markings are in the budget each year. This year part of the money was to help mark the routes identified in the recently adopted County Bicycle Plan. Cedar Avenue is a shared bike route specifically identified in the Plan. As was noted last week, City staff did not provide advance notice that although the discussed bicycle "pop-up" lane was not able to be pursued during Bike Month, the related sharrows would be. Again, I apologize for the lack of notice.

#### ***Kudos***

Kudos to the Recreation Department for their work on another great Celebrate Takoma event this year, which took place on Saturday. This year's event had a variety of activities including games, sidewalk chalk, and a (very popular) mechanical bull. Attendees enjoyed the creativity and entertainment of Thomas Young and the Piney Branch Elementary School Dancers, a great

craft area with Greek Pottery Scratch Art, Velvet Art Mandalas and Color Me Flags, and delicious food provided by Chef Hogate, El Pollo Submarine and Tasty Grill to Go. There were over 20 community vendors disseminating information about their respective local organizations. As always, the Azalea Awards were a hit and recognized individuals for their great work in the community. And let's not forget our tremendous bands that performed: Elena & Los Fulanos and Panquility.

Recreation Director Greg Clark put it well in an email to staff: "I wanted to convey how proud I am of our team for the work and effort putting together this year's Celebrate Takoma Event. The event was well attended, well organized and I repeatedly received compliments from Community members regarding the event. Thanks to each of you for your work...and a special thank you to John Webster taking the lead on the event."

Thanks are also in order for the Public Works and Police Department staff who provided lots of support for the event.

### ***Hiring Update***

We are currently advertising and/or interviewing for a number of positions including Human Resources Director, Custodial Crew Leader, Recreation Program Leader, Public Works Intern, Planning Intern, HR Intern, Sr. Accounting Assistant, Audio-visual Technician (part time), and Police Officer-Lateral.