



City of Takoma Park City Manager Comments

Report of January 27, 2021

COVID-19 Related Information

The top topic of the day is COVID-19 vaccinations. The biggest difficulty is that there is not yet enough vaccine available to effectively meet the need or desire for vaccinations. And, there is a great deal of confusion even in Montgomery County about who is eligible for a vaccine, who can actually receive a vaccine, and where and how to register to receive a vaccine. **Right now, Montgomery County is accepting pre-registrations for many categories of residents,** including people 65 years of age or older, child care workers and many essential workers. **Go to the [Montgomery County Vaccine Information](#) page to pre-register. You can also call 240-777-2982 to pre-register.** There are also ways to sign up for vaccines through the [Maryland Vaccine Website](#). The categories eligible for vaccines on the State site often differ by site, and registration availability changes day to day.

The City of Takoma Park will do our best to get accurate information out. The best options are to check in frequently with the [Montgomery County Vaccine Information](#) website page and the [Maryland Vaccine Website](#).

IMPORTANT – DO NOT SEND REGISTRATION LINKS TO OTHERS, DO NOT RESPOND TO UNSOLICITED LINKS OR LINKS FROM FRIENDS, AND DO NOT JUST SHOW UP AT A VACCINATION SITE WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT

COVID-19 testing in Takoma Park

Even though all of the attention is on vaccinations right now, it is still important to have regular COVID-19 testing. Free, no appointment COVID-19 testing is being held most Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Avenue from 10 am to 5 pm. For this and other testing options, please see the information here: [Montgomery County Testing Sites](#)

Update on COVID-19 Response

A detailed presentation was provided to the City Council at its Priorities Retreat on January 16. The presentation has been posted on the website: [COVID-19 Response Presentation 01162021](#)

Each week, the City's COVID-19 Dashboard is updated. The most recent one is here: [COVID 19 Dashboard](#)

Housing Assistance: In the first two weeks of January, \$35,000 was provided to families needing assistance with rent. The average amount of assistance was \$2,700. Our partners in providing assistance include MUSST, Interfaith Works, Bethesda Cares, and Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

The Federal stimulus approved in December includes rental assistance funding and the County is receiving a direct allocation of funds. They are working to structure that rental assistance similarly to the previous federally funded assistance that was called COVID Rent Relief, and it will take 45-60 days to roll out.

Courts are not scheduling eviction actions until after March 15, and the Federal and State eviction protections for tenants who have lost income due to COVID impact will continue beyond that (Federal to 3/31 and may be extended, State until end of State of Emergency).

Business Assistance: A number of businesses have recently requested financial assistance for thorough cleaning after an employee had tested positive for COVID-19. The amount set aside for those funds has been exceeded, but there are other emergency funds available for assistance at this time. We are keeping track of the various types of needs in case more substantive reallocations of funds within the COVID-19 Fund are needed.

We have two pieces of good news from our business community. The special [Shop Takoma E-Gift Card](#) program for our local businesses that began during the pandemic has really taken off. 41 businesses have signed up to participate in the gift card program and the amount spent so far is \$4,600. This was a great boost during our recent holiday season and shows how much Takoma Park residents wanted to patronize our local businesses.

We also learned today that the Old Takoma Business Association has received a \$188,963 grant from the State of Maryland to support its Takoma Micro-Grant Fund for Covid Relief. Such good news at a hard time for our business community!

City Staff Preparation: City staff have been working to prepare for child care and summer camp programs in City facilities. Funds are being spent on special training, cleaning supplies, plastic dividers, and PPE. These expenses can be submitted for 75% FEMA reimbursement.

Reimagining Public Safety Task Force Applications Open Until February 5

Last night there was an informational meeting on the schedule and what to expect for potential members of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. The video of the informational session is now available to review. The deadline for applications had been this Friday, but has been extended for a week to Friday, February 5. While it will require a significant commitment from Task Force members, the work of the Task Force is to end by June 5. We are very excited to have an excellent facilitation team to ensure that the meetings are productive. This is a great opportunity to imagine public safety in all of its aspects for Takoma Park. Here is the link to the project page: [Reimagining Public Safety Task Force](#).

Community Quality of Life Grants

The City of Takoma Park is currently accepting applications for its Community Quality of Life Grants Program through Thursday, March 11, 2021. Projects are eligible for up to \$10,000 in financial support, for projects taking place between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. For more information and to apply, go to: [Community Grants](#).

WSSC Study

If you live in and around the North Takoma part of Takoma Park, you may have received a letter from WSSC asking you to identify if you have a drain on your property that looks like this:



This “North Takoma Surcharge Study” is a study to help WSSC address back up flooding into basements and toilets during rainstorms. The term “surcharge” does not refer to a financial surcharge but to overflow in the WSSC infrastructure. Letters were sent to many properties on the following streets: Piney Branch Road, Hodges Lane, and the following Avenues: Takoma, Chicago, Chestnut, Buffalo, Baltimore, Birch, Holly, Cedar, Maple, Hancock, Willow, Spruce, Eastern, Boston, Albany, New York, Grant, Park, Dogwood, Darwin, Sherman, Valley View, and Lee.

WSSC is requesting your assistance in indicating whether you have one of these drains on your property. This will greatly streamline our process.

If you have an areaway drain on your property, please take a picture of it and email it, along with your house address, to Zachary Tucker, of Brown and Caldwell (the WSSC contractor) at BCBeltsville@BrwnCald.com. If you do NOT have an areaway drain on your property, please email that information as well.

Grand Opening – Enterprise Car Rental

We are so happy to welcome a new business to Takoma Park! The ribbon cutting for Enterprise Car Rental, 6494 New Hampshire Avenue, will be at 11 am, Thursday, January 28. Enterprise used to have a location near the Dunkin Donuts on New Hampshire Avenue, just across the line

from Takoma Park. After they moved from that location, they looked for a way to get back to our community, and took over and renovated the property at the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Sheridan Street. We are happy they made that investment in Takoma Park!

What Does a City Manager Do?

As the City Council begins its process to hire a new City Manager to take over when I retire on July 1, you may wish to learn more about what a City Manager does. One place for information is the International City County Management Association (ICMA) website. Here is an overview of what a professional manager does: [City and County Management](#).

Remembering Those We Have Lost

COVID-19 and the mental health strains of isolation have led to serious illness and death in Takoma Park, as in the rest of the world. Between privacy concerns and the difficulty of physically gathering together to remember our loved ones, we do not have a good list of residents lost in Takoma Park during the pandemic. We would like to gather names and contact information from people who might want to have their loved ones recognized on a memorial webpage, garden, video or other format. We will be creating a secure mechanism to leave the contact information, but in the meantime, if someone wants to share the name of a person who has passed and a contact person for them, they can email me at: SuzanneL@takomaparkmd.gov.

One person we are remembering today is **Maria Veltri**, a resident of Takoma Park and daughter of Joanna Veltri, also a resident of the City. A zoom memorial for Maria was held on Saturday, January 23rd. Friends, family, and neighbors joined the service and reflected on her rich life.