



City of Takoma Park
City Manager Comments

Report of May 5, 2021

COVID-19 Related Information

All residents 16 years of age and older can now be vaccinated in Maryland!

Please get vaccinated as soon as possible. The one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines are available again and there is easy access to the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. It sounds like the Pfizer vaccine will soon be able to be offered to young people twelve years of age and older. Hooray!! People are still getting seriously ill from COVID-19. We know what the coronavirus can do, and we need to protect ourselves and others by getting vaccinated.

“V” is for Vaccinations and Voting: two important civic duties! Remember, you can register to vote at any time, so why not take care of both Very soon!

COVID-19 testing in Takoma Park

There will be COVID-19 testing this Saturday in Takoma Park at the Recreation Center on New Hampshire Avenue. The County recommends being tested monthly. For details on this and other testing options, please see the information here: [Montgomery County Testing Sites](#).

COVID-19 Dashboard

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

Final Push Ahead on Tax Duplication Fairness!

Thanks to a large-scale push by Montgomery County municipal leaders and residents, the County Council’s Government Operations (GO) Committee recommended on Friday that the municipalities get the [municipal tax duplication](#) rebate amount they had been requesting for FY22 and put the processes in play to get fair rebates in FY23 and beyond. This is a tremendous win, but is only a recommendation to the full County Council. The full Council needs to approve the GO Committee recommendation and then Council President Tom Hucker needs to put the money in the Reconciliation document for final approval.

What is the amount recommended for FY22? GO Chair Nancy Navarro proposed adding \$5 million to the County Executive’s proposed amount for tax duplication rebates. The \$5 million was divided into three amounts (\$2 million, \$1.5 million, \$1.5 million), in case a decision is made that the County cannot fully fund the entire \$5 million. The \$5 million would be divided among the County’s municipalities; if the County fully funds the increase, the City of Takoma Park would receive an additional \$480,000.

What is the plan for FY23 and the following years? The next most important step is to determine a fair amount to be reimbursed for police services. The City of Takoma Park currently receives about \$4 million for police services, but that is based on an obsolete model of policing. Gaithersburg, Rockville and Chevy Chase Village get no money for their police services, because they do not have full-service police agencies. The County Code needs to be changed to allow rebates for shared services and the four jurisdictions with police departments need to negotiate with the County on a reasonable formula that would estimate what the County would spend if they provided all of the police services. Negotiations are to be concluded by this October so that the amounts can be in the FY23 budget. In addition to determining the formula for police services, a formula for park maintenance costs also needs to be developed.

What can you do to ensure that Takoma Park and the other Montgomery County municipalities get back all of the money that has been overpaid to the County?

First, thank the GO Committee Members, Chair Nancy Navarro and members Andrew Friedson and Sidney Katz! Send an email, reach out via social media, or handwrite a note. After many, many years, the GO Committee unanimously voted for a real and fair resolution to the tax duplication matter that has been discussed for decades. A special shout-out needs to go to Chair Navarro for actually putting the money on the table.

Second, reach out to the rest of the County Councilmembers and ask them to support the GO Committee's recommendation for the full amount of the money for FY22. The Council is likely to act next week on the recommendation.

Third, it's not real until it's in the budget! Contact Council President Tom Hucker and reinforce the importance of putting the entire additional \$5 million in the reconciliation budget. Again, send emails, tag on social media, and talk to him at the fish store or streetery. Let our officials know that you are watching their actions on this important issue of tax fairness.

So, send thanks to:

Councilmember.Navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov
Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov
Councilmember.Katz@montgomerycountymd.gov

Urge approval of the GO Committee's recommendations to:

Councilmember.Albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov
Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov
Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov
Councilmember.Rice@montgomerycountymd.gov
Councilmember.Riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov

And, urge Council President Tom Hucker to put the \$5 million in the reconciliation budget:

Councilmember.Hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov

Lots of Events Coming Up in June!

Whether it's Pride (rainbow crosswalks in Old Takoma!), Summer Mercado on Anne Street, the Artery, or classes and camps, there are many activities coming up in June and they are probably listed in the weekly **Insider!** To get Insider news, just click: [Sign Up For Insider](#)



Arts and Humanities Report

The Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission has issued its 2020 Report to Council. Despite the pandemic, it has been a very busy year for the arts. As can be seen in the report, artists have found ways to bring arts to the community despite the constraints. Now, we're looking forward to enjoying the arts with others in the coming year!

[2020 Arts and Humanities Report](#)

Many Were Helped with Tax Preparation This Year!

Takoma Park has been able to partner on free tax preparation assistance provided by the AARP TaxAide program this year. Kathleen Thomas worked safely from the Community Center and prepared 87 tax returns for 83 persons in Takoma Park. (4 persons needed both their 2019 and 2020 returns prepared). Given the complications of doing taxes this past year, I'm so glad the City was able to partner on this free service.

Progress on Opportunities for Affordable Home Ownership

We are happy to note that the City closed on the 320 Lincoln Avenue property on Friday, in conjunction with Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc. (HIP), so that it may be renovated into a sustainable and affordable home for an eligible purchaser. Special thanks to neighbor Jay Keller, who has been keeping the grass mowed during the transition in ownership!

We are also happy to note that Habitat for Humanity, Inc., is nearing the date in June when eligible applicants for the Garland Avenue duplex property will be accepted as the new owners. There were 72 applications; 25 of which were from Takoma Park (2 from Ward 2, 14 from Ward 4, 4 from Ward 5, and 5 from Ward 6). The reviewing committee will be considering 18 of the 72 applicants, 9 of which are from Takoma Park. Clearly a strong demand – good luck to all!

Passing of Philip Sardelis

All Sardi's Restaurants are closed today to honor the CEO and co-founder of the restaurant chain, Philip Sardelis, who passed recently from COVID-19. We love our Sardi's Restaurant on University Boulevard and we express our deep sympathies to the family, friends, and employees of Philip Sardelis.

Congratulations to our Community Police Academy Graduates!

Due to the pandemic, our popular Community Police Academy has not been able to celebrate the graduations of its 2020 and 2021 classes with the traditional graduation dinner and program. Nevertheless, we would like to recognize the many students who took the Academy in 2020 and 2021. The 2020 class was able to finish most of its classes and only missed one field trip when the pandemic closures began. The 2021 Academy was shorter and done virtually. Members of both classes are invited to join in on future Community Police Academies to attend classes or field trips they missed.

Besides congratulating the graduates listed below, I want to send a special thanks to organizers Cathy Plevy and Ron Hardy of the Police Department, who were able to pivot during the pandemic shutdown and creatively develop a virtual program. Thank you!

The 2020 students were:

Adrienne Vaughn
Barbara Rosenblatt
Benjamin Wakefield
Bill Oaks
Brooke Spears
Cindy Herrera
Cliff Schwartz
Donna Wright
Fatima Hernandez
Gil Winters
Joshua O'Donnell
Kathe Quinn
Matt Ling
Neal Chalofsky
Pamela Sumner Coffey
Patsy Bader
Tanya DeKona
Vicki Booker
Alumni Guest: Ira Vaughn

The 2021 students were:

Colin Gilligan
Denzel Walker
James Della-Giacoma
Jessica Clarke
Patrick Fleming
Rachel Hardwick
Rosalind Grigsby
Vilis Kuskevics