



City of Takoma Park

City Manager Comments

Report of June 2, 2021

Welcome Jamal T. Fox!

The news that the Council has hired the next Takoma Park City Manager is posted in many places so I won't repeat it here, but I am really pleased to extend my congratulations to Jamal Fox, who will begin his tenure on August 2nd. Deputy City Manager Jessica Clarke and I have already been working with him on the transition planning and I can tell he will bring much expertise and energy to the City. I urge everyone to welcome him and show him what is special about Takoma Park so he can jump right in!

COVID-19 Related Information

COVID-19 testing in Takoma Park ends this Saturday

There will be COVID-19 testing this Saturday in Takoma Park at the Recreation Center on New Hampshire Avenue, **HOWEVER June 5 is the last date for COVID-19 testing at this site.** For details on this and other testing options, please see the information here: [Montgomery County Testing Sites.](#)

Walk-up Pfizer Vaccinations Available!

Montgomery County will be holding free COVID-19 vaccination events this week and next at Sligo SDA Church, 7700 Carroll Avenue. Use parking lot on Greenwood. These free, no appointment needed, vaccination events are with the Pfizer vaccine, so for people 12 years of age and older. Dates and hours are Thursday and Friday, June 3 and 4, from 9 am to 4 pm; and next week Monday through Friday, June 7-11, from 12 noon to 7 pm.

For those who received vaccinations on May 16 hosted by Small Things Matter and Continuum Healthcare, the second dose will be available this Sunday, June 6 at the Takoma Park Community Center from 10 am to 3:30 pm.

COVID-19 Dashboard

Each week, the City's COVID-19 Dashboard is updated. The most recent one is here: [COVID 19 Dashboard](#). While great progress is being made in our region in bringing the number of COVID-19 cases down and the percentage of residents vaccinated up, there was one more death in the 20912 zip code last week. This brings the total number of deaths for this zip code to 39. Our sympathies go out to all who have experienced loss during this time.

↓↓↓ **BIG NEWS !!!**

City of Takoma Park Facility Reopening and Mask Protocol Changes Announced

It is such good news that the COVID-19 pandemic is coming under control in Maryland. Business and governments can begin reopening for in-person service and mask requirements are being lessened nationwide. In alignment with [new CDC guidance](#), the Statewide mandatory mask mandate and capacity limits in Maryland have been lifted for indoors and outdoors. [Montgomery County health guidance](#) is aligned with [State health orders](#) as of Friday, May 26.

The relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions is the result of the rapid pace of COVID-19 vaccinations and steep declines in key COVID-19 metrics across the State. However, local governments, businesses, and workplaces still have authority to determine their own COVID-19 protocols. Unvaccinated people are strongly encouraged to continue to take precautions, and children under 12 cannot yet be vaccinated.

Due to the fact that children under 12 will be participating in our Recreation Department summer camps and some camp activities will take place inside the Community Center, we have decided to keep certain requirements in place for both staff and visitors to the Community Center. We understand the difficulty that is faced by many families with young children in navigating the changing mask requirements. The City's new mask requirements as outlined below may change over time. It is encouraging that the declines in key health metrics at the County and State level are mirrored in Takoma Park. Already, 53.6% of our residents are fully vaccinated. We will continue to monitor this evolving situation throughout the summer.

Facility Reopening Schedule

We will be monitoring health metrics from the Memorial Day weekend. Assuming no surprising health concerns, here is the planned reopening schedule.

- 1) Effective May 28, 2021, there are no COVID-19 related capacity limits in City facilities.
- 2) Beginning June 14, individuals can receive in-person services by City staff in the Community Center by appointment only. Some meetings may be held in the Hydrangea Room or Auditorium. Facilities may have reduced evening hours for room reservations.
- 3) The Public Works lobby will open to the public, no appointment needed, beginning June 14 as well.
- 4) The Community Center and Recreation Center will be open for summer camp participants starting June 28.
- 5) City staff working remotely will return to in-person work beginning July 6. Some staff may continue to telework full time or part time on a case-by-case basis.
- 6) The Library will reopen for in-person services on July 6.
- 7) On Monday, August 23, all facilities will fully reopen to the general public (summer camps will have ended by this time).

Mask Requirements

Effective immediately through August 22, 2021:

- 1) In areas where children under 12 are attending programs, masks must still be worn by all occupants. This means in the second (main) floor of the Community Center when

summer camps are in session and it means in the children's room of the Library. This is in accordance with [MD Health Department COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Facilities](#).

- 2) City staff or visitors in any of the City facility public lobbies should wear masks when others are present. (These spaces include the various entrances to the Community Center, the Public Works lobby and the Recreation Center lobby.) Masks in non-public and outdoor areas are optional for City staff unless specifically recommended or required by prevailing guidance (such as certain activities where children are present).
- 3) City staff should always have masks available when intersecting with the public outside City facilities. Staff on City business should be prepared to wear masks when entering homes and other constrained private space or when otherwise requested to do so.
- 4) When a meeting or program or other gathering is being held when it is requested that masks be worn, we will have signage/messaging to that effect.

Beginning August 23, 2021, masks will be optional in City facilities unless an exception is specified for certain situations.

All policies are subject to change based on the City Manager's determination and any changes in State or County guidelines.

Maryland Public Information Act Time Limits To Be Reinstated

One of the various emergency actions taken during the COVID-19 pandemic that is being lifted is the suspension of time limits within which the City must respond to requests under the Maryland Public Information Act. The suspension of response times for requests will be lifted on June 7, 2021. A notice regarding this change will be posted on the City website.

OTHER INFORMATION

Tax Duplication Update

The Montgomery County Council has voted on its final budget for FY22 and has included the slightly increased amount of tax duplication for Takoma Park that the County Executive put in his proposed budget. Up to an additional \$5 million was adopted to be added if/when additional revenue comes to Montgomery County over the course of the fiscal year. Because there usually is additional revenue, and there was a lot of commitment to addressing the tax duplication problem by County Councilmembers, I am optimistic that the full amount will come to the municipalities. If the total amount of the additional funds comes through, the City of Takoma Park would receive approximately \$468,000 more for FY22. Even more important than the funds for FY22, however, is the commitment to establish up-to-date rebate formulas for police services and other categories when residents pay taxes to both a municipality and the County, but receive services from only the municipality. This will establish a fair system going forward. Thanks to all who helped advance the efforts on tax duplication!

Grant Money Comes to Takoma Park!

Building on the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan, and the hard work of the City's Housing and Community Development team, a number of grants will be coming to assist projects in the City of Takoma Park.

In the past week there have been announcements regarding the awarding of significant grant funds to the City of Takoma Park as well as to organizations with projects located in Takoma Park. These grants are from the State Department of Housing and Community Development National Capital Strategic Economic Development Fund:

\$500,000 to the City of Takoma Park to help in acquiring properties to develop affordable homeownership opportunities and preserve a continuum of housing affordability in the City.

\$500,000 via the City of Takoma Park to go towards the revitalization of 6530 and 6600 New Hampshire Avenue. The project includes the acquisition and rehabilitation of the properties. The property at 6530 New Hampshire Avenue – currently a derelict 3-story commercial building – will become a state-of-the-art conference center and commercial-use building and will have new construction to create housing units. The private developer will need to go through the development review process. If the housing units are to be rental units, they will be subject to the City's rent stabilization laws, and if they are for purchase, they will be subject to the County's laws regarding proportion of affordable units. *(Note: this process of having funds come through the City of Takoma Park to a private or non-profit entity to meet State goals is common. Past pass-through grant fund recipients have included 8435 Piney Branch Road, two-story commercial building near Flower Avenue; 7667 Maple Avenue, Parkview Towers; 7328 Carroll Avenue, Historic Takoma; 8204 Flower Avenue, Takoma Park Cooperative Nursery School; 7551 New Hampshire Avenue, façade grants.)*

\$100,000 to Habitat for Humanity for assistance in costs of the Garland Avenue duplex project facilitated by the City of Takoma Park.

\$400,000 to Montgomery Housing Partnership for pre-development work associated with the renovation of the Hillwood Manor Apartments on New Hampshire Avenue.

And, an additional \$45,410 in grant funds have been awarded to the City by Montgomery County to pay for durable, attractive furniture for our streets.

Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off This Saturday

On Saturday, June 5 from 10 am to 2 pm, residents can drop off household hazardous waste at the Takoma Park Public Works yard at 31 Oswego Avenue. All participants must wear a mask (no exceptions!); enter from Oswego Avenue only; all hazardous materials must be in the trunk of a car or the back of a pickup truck only; City staff will remove the materials from the back of your vehicle. There is no charge for residents; non-Takoma Park residents must pay \$10 by CHECK only.

My Schedule

I will be away Friday, June 4 through Monday, June 7. Deputy City Manager Jessica Clarke will function as Acting City Manager during this time.