



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of April 4, 2018

Information to Share

Wireless Emergency Alert Test – April 5

On Thursday, April 5 between 10 and 11 a.m., 20 Washington metropolitan-area jurisdictions, including all of Montgomery County, will simultaneously issue a test message to the public through the national Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) system. This will be the first live regional test using WEA's geo-target capabilities and is expected to reach 5.2 million people.

The WEA system should not be confused with the local "Alert Montgomery," "Takoma Park Alert" or other emergency alert programs in jurisdictions within Montgomery County, or used in other metro-area jurisdictions. The local programs are separate from this national system. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) launched WEA nationally in 2012. It has been used more than 33,000 times across the country to warn the public about dangerous weather, missing children, and other critical situations – all through alerts on WEA-enabled cell phones and other enabled wireless devices. Most types of phones are WEA-enabled, an older "Flip Phone" might not be. The public does not sign up or register for WEA, and there is no fee for the service.

On April 5, individuals in the participating jurisdictions will receive a message customized to their area. Within Montgomery County the message will be: "A test of the Montgomery County Wireless Emergency Alerts System. No action required." The alert will trigger a loud (somewhat annoying) noise and will cause the receiving device to vibrate. Both the loud audio signal and vibration will be repeated twice, while displaying the text-like message on cell phones and mobile devices.

Although no action is required, folks will be encouraged to respond to a survey about how and where they received the alerts so that emergency planners can identify any gaps or problems with the alert system.

Pepco Project and Detour Update – Takoma Avenue

Contrary to our original understanding that the detour related to work being done by Pepco on Takoma Avenue would just be required for a limited number of days as contractors completed tree work, we have now learned that the detour will likely to be required for several weeks. The first phase they are working on now should last four to six weeks, and the contractor believes the detour could be required for the duration of the phase.

In the immediate future we should expect that Takoma Avenue between Baltimore and Buffalo Avenues will be closed to traffic from 9:00am to 3:00pm on weekdays for Phase 1. We have adjusted the current detour to include Baltimore Avenue between Takoma and Albany, and Albany Avenue to Fenton Street (they are no longer using Buffalo Avenue). City staff recommended this adjustment because it is easier for vehicles to navigate those two roads rather than an additional turn at Buffalo.

We have had several conversations with the contractor and Pepco and have inquired as to whether Pepco would develop and deliver a new notice to the affected homes on Baltimore Avenue and Albany Avenue, notifying them of the length of the detour and asking anyone who can to park off the street when possible. We want to start with this as a request, rather than require no parking on the street. If the traffic back-ups are a problem, we will revisit the idea of posted no parking on certain sections. If Pepco is unable to produce such a notice in the short term, we can do so.

Need Something to Do on Saturday?

9 am to 2 pm: Fitness Expo 2018 at the Takoma Park Recreation Center on New Hampshire Ave
~~10 am to 2 pm: Arbor Day Celebration at the Takoma Park Library~~ **POSTPONED TO APRIL 14**
2 pm to 5 pm: Budget Open House in the Azalea Room in the Community Center
2 pm to 5 pm: Takoma Junction Open House in the Atrium/Lobby of the Community Center

Note that the Recreation Department will have activities for children during the Open House period so that others can look over information, ask questions and share thoughts.

Free Compost!

Participants in the Food Waste Collection Program can get up to five buckets of free finished compost from Public Works now through June 22. This is part of a larger effort to encourage organic lawn care in Takoma Park. Compost is generally available in the spring and summer. To check for availability, please call Public Works at [301-891-7633](tel:301-891-7633) before dropping by.

Construction Notice for Stormwater Facility Renovation on Holly and Tulip Avenues

The City plans to reconstruct portions of the stormwater system on Tulip Avenue. The project will start at the inlet in front of 7112 Holly Avenue and extend down Tulip Avenue ending at the inlet at 102 Tulip Avenue. The work will include replacement of the inlet on Holly and installation of new stormdrain pipe. The work will take place in the street. This is Phase 2 of a project completed a year ago on the section of Tulip Avenue from Cedar Avenue to the middle of the block.

We anticipate the construction will begin in early April and should take about two weeks, weather permitting. The work area will be posted for no parking during work hours, which are usually 7 am to 4 pm. Tulip Avenue will remain open for traffic, though there may be brief periods of delay. Notices have gone out to residents in the construction area with a note to contact the City Construction Manager with any questions at: ianc@takomaparkmd.gov or 301-891-7611.

Montgomery Parks Holding Public Meeting on Silver Spring Intermediate Neighborhood Park

On Wednesday, April 18, Montgomery Parks staff will hold a public meeting to discuss plans on improving Silver Spring Intermediate Neighborhood Park, located at 7801 Chicago Avenue in Takoma Park. The meeting will be held in the Montgomery Regional Office Building Auditorium, located at 8787 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring.

The goal of the project is to enhance access to the park and connections between park amenities, improve the existing athletic fields and address ongoing drainage issues. Existing amenities within the park will remain. Potential new amenities may include a shade structure, viewing area for the fields, exercise stations and additional walkway connections. Meeting participants will be encouraged to provide input on park usage and offer ideas on potential park improvements. For additional information, visit the [Silver Spring Intermediate Neighborhood park project web page](#).

Tax Credit Available for Certain Low Income Renters

Montgomery County renters with household income up to \$73,000 may qualify for a tax credit of up to \$1,000 if they are 60 or older, are 100 percent disabled or if they are under age 60 and have dependent children under age 18. The program is designed to help renters who are struggling with rising rent payments and meet the program's eligibility criteria.

In 2016 the County enacted a County supplement to the State Renters' Tax Credit so that all renters who receive the State credit also will receive the County supplement that is equal to 50 percent of the State credit. A separate application for the County supplement is not needed because when a renter applies for the State credit, the State calculates the eligible credit and sends that information to the County. The County then calculates the Montgomery supplement.

The Montgomery County's Renters Tax Credit program is managed by the State of Maryland and enhanced by Montgomery County. Renters who qualify will receive one check from Maryland and

another from Montgomery County. Checks from Montgomery County are mailed once a year—in January.

Applications must be filed by September 1. Application forms are available by calling [1-800-944-7403](tel:1-800-944-7403) or via email at taxcreditapp@maryland.gov.

Kudos

Kudos to the many staff members who contributed to the development of the recommended budget over the last several months. It really takes a village – the Senior Leadership Team and other managers, Finance staff, Media Specialist, and others. It is not an easy task and the team always does a great job!

Kudos to **Cathy Plevy, Ron Hardy**, and other Police Department staff for their work in developing and facilitating another very successful Community Police Academy. I have received a number of positive comments from participants.

Hiring Update

We are currently advertising for a number of positions, including Police Dispatcher, Police Officer, Sanitation Driver, Recreation Program Leader, and Contract CDL Driver.

Welcome to Jamee Ernst, former planning intern, starting today in the permanent Planner position in HCD. We're glad to have you back!