



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of May 2, 2018

Information to Share

Takoma Junction Signals

The switch of Takoma Junction area traffic signals and pedestrian signals from SHA control to Montgomery County control has been taking place over the last ten days. As part of the switch, there have been a variety of combinations of times for traffic signals and for pedestrian signals. At the Junction, it appears that there is an interest in having the pedestrian light on during an all-red phase for approximately 10 seconds, rather than 30 seconds, and then allowing drivers to be able to make turns while the pedestrian signal remains on, similar to many other intersections. While this provides a much smoother flow of traffic, it is very different than the pattern that both pedestrians and drivers had been accustomed to; there was no warning given of the signal changes. The tweaking will continue for perhaps a week more. We have asked that signs be placed and other notices given that there is a change in traffic patterns. When Montgomery County believes they have the best balance of timings, they will need to have it approved by SHA and the County would like to also hear from the City on the signal timings (although SHA has the final say).

TKPK5K

This Sunday, May 6, marks the 10th Anniversary of the Safe Routes to School Program's TKPK5K challenge. The event will be held here at the Community Center with the official start line is at the corner of Maple and Grant Avenues. Post-race activities are held on Grant Avenue next to the Community Center.

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| <u>Races:</u> | 5K Run and Walk | 8:00 a.m. |
| | 1 Mile Fun Run | 9:00 a.m. |
| | 1/4 Mile Youth Run | 9:15 a.m. |

Registration: Register for the [TKPK5K](#) until Thursday, May 3 at 11:59. We like it when runners decide to register in advance but, of course, you may also register in person either at Race Packet Pick-up on Saturday, May 5, 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. or on Race Day, Sunday, May 6 beginning at 7:00 am, at the [Takoma Park Community Center](#). Cash and check ONLY.

Maple Avenue Closure and Parking Restrictions: Maple Avenue between Philadelphia Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway will be closed to traffic from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on race day. No parking will be allowed on Maple Avenue, between Philadelphia Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway or on Grant Avenue between Maple Avenue and the Community Center Parking lot during this time. The Ride On bus will be rerouted.

Additional information on the TKPK5K challenge is available at www.TKPK5K.com.

Purple Line Community Advisory Team (CAT) – Report on Activities

City Planner, Jamee Ernst attended University Blvd - Purple Line Community Advisory Team meeting on Tuesday, May 1. She reports that the planned work will be completed in stages and will progress from Adelphi Road moving toward Carroll Avenue (east to west along University Boulevard) beginning this spring with lane closures occurring throughout the process in the subsequent work zones. Tree clearing, overhead and underground utility relocation, traffic signal reconstruction and timing adjustments will begin in the next few weeks and continue for approximately 6 months. Utility companies will notify residents and businesses of any potential service interruptions that may occur as a result of this work.

Representatives of the Purple Line will also be working with businesses in this corridor that will be directly impacted by construction on an individual basis to ensure access and continuity of operations. They will also be working with transit operators to coordinate bus stop relocation and inform riders of changes. Bus stops are less likely to be impacted at the New Hampshire Avenue/ University Boulevard, as the Purple Line stop will be located at the Takoma/Langley Transit Center.

Residents who wish to stay informed on this project can sign up for Purple Line updates at www.purplelinemd.com, email outreach@pltlc.com or call the 24/7 hotline at (240) 424-5325. Services are available in English and Spanish.

Montgomery County Development Review Process Takoma Junction Redevelopment Project

Staff has been compiling Councilmember questions and concerns related to the Takoma Junction Redevelopment Project. The information will be packaged and submitted to NDC on Friday for their response and used by staff to develop a preliminary draft resolution for Council consideration. During the May 16 work session, the Council, will identify changes they would recommend being made to the resolution regarding the combined plan. The draft resolution regarding the project would be considered again May 23 when the Council is tentatively scheduled to take formal action on the resolution.

If Council votes to move forward, the site plans will be refined by NDC and submitted to Montgomery County Department of Planning for development review. A list of the materials that must be included with the submission is available online.

Site Plan Check List:

<http://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Site-Plan-Upload-Checklist-Submission-Requirements-2017-12-6-1.pdf>

Preliminary Plan Check List:

<http://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Preliminary-Plan-Upload-Checklist-Submission-Requirements-2017-12-6-2.pdf>

The Development Review Process and Takoma Junction

Montgomery County's Development Review process incorporates the expertise of many agencies to evaluate projects. The review process includes environmental impacts, traffic studies, evaluation of fire department access, utility plans, sediment control, and many other technical considerations.

Projects are reviewed by an inter-agency task force composed of representatives from public agencies and utilities including:

- Maryland State Highway Administration (which includes impact of project on traffic, safety)
- Montgomery Departments of Planning (which includes historic preservation)
- Montgomery Department of Permitting Services (which includes fire and safety review)
- Montgomery Department of Environmental Protection (which includes urban forestry and stormwater review))
- Montgomery Department of Transportation (which includes roadway design and circulation patterns)
- WSSC and PEPCO

The Development Review meetings are open to the public to observe the process. There is no public comment period or opportunity to participate in the Development Review meeting discussion. Following County staff's review of the project, the project will go to the Planning Board for a public

hearing and decision. Prior to its submission to the Planning Board, the City Council will have an opportunity to provide further comment on the plan. Any formal action taken by the Council will be included in the materials submitted to the Planning Board. As outlined in the City and Planning Board's Memorandum of Agreement, the Planning Board can only override an action of the City Council if four of the five members of the Board vote in opposition. Community members will have an opportunity to provide comment during the required public hearing before the Planning Board.

State Highway Administration's Involvement in the Development Review Process:

As part of the development review process as it pertains to traffic, the applicant is required to mitigate the impact of the additional trips generated by the project. SHA participates in the development review process, where it evaluates the traffic study and reviews the impact. The final analysis of the traffic studies and the impact on the Junction intersection will be examined as part of the review process. The updated timing of the traffic lights at the intersection will be considered as part of the overall evaluation of the intersection.

The current project at the Takoma Junction, as well as other development projects within the City limits, including the Takoma Park Middle School expansion and the 117 Elm Avenue proposal, has required SHA's engagement with a focus on the Junction intersection.

It is possible for a development review project to be approved conditionally before permits are released, with specific requirements such as dedicated funding for intersection improvements.

Because MD-410 and MD-195 are State Highways, any changes in the intersection can only happen with the State Highway Administration (SHA) approval. Although the City has lobbied SHA for years to address the existing traffic issues and create a safer, better functioning intersection with an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle environment, it has only been since the proposed development project was introduced that the agency has expressed a willingness to evaluate and address these concerns. The City is applying for Transportation Alternatives Program grant funding through SHA to develop an optimized design for the intersection and to encourage their involvement in addressing traffic issues that have existed at the location for many years. It is not possible to identify the timeline or funding of that process at this point.

The development review process for the Takoma Junction redevelopment project, and the redesign and reconstruction of the intersection, if required, are related but individual initiatives. The problems of the existing traffic will continue, with or without any development at the Takoma Junction, until specific action is taken to address it. The County Development Review process requires that the applicant mitigate the additional trips generated by a project, or the project will not be approved. The City process, as laid out in the Development Agreement between the City and NDC, is separate from the specific, technical considerations that the County development review process covers, although the City is interested in both.

Kudos

A well-deserved shout out goes to Arts Coordinator **Brendan Smith** and Intern **Yeny Villatoro** for their work to promote the City's "We are Takoma" cultural series. In the short time they have been working for the City, they have revamped the weekly Arts e-newsletter and partnered with CityTV staff to offer a monthly cultural segment on the Takoma Radio station, interviewing performers, lecturers, artists and poets participating in the series and offering listeners information on upcoming events in Spanish. Future plans include re-visiting the "BackStage Takoma" segment for CityTV. We encourage you to check out the [City's Facebook events page](#) and the [Arts and Humanities webpage](#) to learn more about upcoming events. A great event tomorrow is the screening of the documentary *Burkinabe Rising* about a nonviolent resistance movement in the country of Burkina Faso, to be held tomorrow night at 7:30 pm in the Auditorium. After the film there will be a panel

discussion. In attendance will be the brother of the former Burkina Faso President who was killed in a 1987 coup, as well as the Ambassador from Burkina Faso. Great work, Brendan and Yeny!

Kudos also to **Jason Damweber** who was recently nominated and elected by peers to serve on the Maryland City/County Managers Association Executive Board.

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.

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