



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of January 15, 2020

Information to Share

Departure of Deputy City Manager Jason Damweber

Today is the first City Council meeting since DCM Jason Damweber left for a new position with the town of Estes Park, Colorado. Jason served the City well for 4 ½ years and Takoma Park is better for it. I deeply appreciated his help, advice and friendship and I wish Jason and his family well as they start their next adventure. Jason wrote a nice going-away [Blog](#). One of the features of that blog is a sense of the wide range of activities Jason was involved in. While Takoma Park debates many issues, most residents don't realize the great deal of internal work needed to run a government. Jason oversaw IT, Human Resources, Communications and Finance and was an eagle eye over expenses, set up review committees for technology and vehicle purchases and was a terrific manager of people. He also really helped advance the racial equity work of the City and worked well with the City Council on legislative matters. To fill his very large shoes, we are in the process of reviewing the 110 applications received so far for the vacant DCM position. I assume the interview process will take place in February and we may have a new deputy city manager in March.

Race Equity Work

The City of Takoma Park has four staff members participating in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Race Equity program in conjunction with GARE, the Government Alliance on Race and Equity. This program requires time each month in an off-site program as well as additional work on identifying ways to really implement a race equity focus in day to day government operations. Besides this work, conversations about race equity take place each day around City processes and programs, agenda packet preparation, and FY21 Budget planning.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Activities

Today is Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and the national holiday is Monday, January 20 this year. City facilities will be closed Sunday and Monday, although the Police Department remains open for emergency services. There are many ways to celebrate Dr. King's birthday, making it a day on, not a day off. Some of the activities in Takoma Park are two service projects, followed by a potluck supper and celebration. The two service projects will be held Monday from 10 am to noon. One is a clean-up project at Hillwood Manor Park (along Sligo Creek east of New Hampshire Avenue) and the other is a clean-up project at Takoma Woods between Takoma Park Middle School and Piney

Branch Elementary School. The Potluck Supper and Celebration will be held at Takoma Park Middle School from 4:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Information is on the City's website and in the Takoma Park Newsletter.

Montgomery College Project Update Forum, Tuesday, January 21

Montgomery College will host a Project Update Forum about the Catherine and Isiah Leggett Math and Science Building on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus Tuesday, January 21, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Catherine F. Scott Commons, Room CM 211, 7600 Takoma Avenue, Takoma Park. Hear about the progress of abatement, preparation for construction, and updates on the project timeline with the teams from Barton Malow and LINK Strategic Partners. This event is part of the College's ongoing commitment to engage with community stakeholders as we continue the design and plan construction of a building that balances the needs of neighbors, students, and fiscal prudence.

Major Projects Chart

So much is going on in the City of Takoma Park! Staff keeps project pages updated on the City website, but often we need to look at the information in a consolidated format. A copy of our Major Projects Chart is attached to this document.

Takoma Park Safe Routes to School

Takoma Park is one of 19 communities nationwide to receive a 2020 Community Change grant award from America Walks, a non-profit dedicated to providing communities and advocates the resources to advance safe, accessible, and enjoyable walkability. Takoma Park Safe Routes to School envisions a one mile themed sensory/fitness route titled "Walk in Someone Else's Shoes." The route intersects with two elementary schools and one middle school, Takoma Park Community Center and Library and Takoma-Piney Branch Local Park. Students, teachers, and parents can begin the route at any point to enjoy a 15-30 minute walk enhanced with fitness activities and themed exercises. The proposed messaging will relate to inclusion, mindfulness, and kindness while the fitness prompts engage the walkers in bursts of activity. For example, users may be prompted to do 5 jumping jacks and with each one say something kind about someone. Pavement markings will be stenciled with paint or pre-made decals. Students today, especially in Takoma Park, have the advantage of growing up in an era marked with increased tolerance, acceptance, and understanding of differences in race, gender, or ability. However, we still struggle as a nation to address equity. The themed-route, "Walk in Someone Else's Shoes," provides a safe space for dialogue and exploration of these issues. Using the route together as a class, family, or group of friends gives walkers a break from the routine and a time to move forward, both physically and emotionally. The planned route is ADA compliant.

Flyer About Charter School Opening

A flyer has been distributed in some areas of Takoma Park advertising a charter school for boys and for girls on the Washington-McLaughlin property in Ward 2. The flyer gave the impression that opening of the school would happen soon. However, there is a lengthy approval process involved in opening a charter school in Montgomery County

as well as in doing the construction work involved in readying a building for a school. The flyer was distributed to see if there was community interest in the school.

Corrective Map Amendment H-130

On January 14th, County Council held a public hearing on the Corrective Map Amendment H-130 to correct technical errors that lead to an inaccurate depiction of the zoning classifications impacting properties at 7201, 7211, 7221 Carroll Ave, 0 Columbia Ave and 0 Carroll Ave between Grant Avenue and Philadelphia Avenue in Takoma Park. The parcels in Takoma Park are incorrectly zoned as a result of a mapping error approved through Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) G-791 and incorrectly recorded property boundaries. The zoning on the current map applies multiple zones to parcels that is not consistent with the intention of the 2000 Takoma Park Master Plan and the subsequent conversion during the 2014 rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance. The error also affected parcels within the Takoma Park/East Silver Spring (TPSS) Commercial Revitalization overlay zone. There were no public comments on the matter.

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2019/20191203/20191203_4B.pdf

Takoma Junction Vision Study Update

The MDOT-SHA Takoma Junction Vision Study is still underway, with a meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) scheduled for February 25, 2020, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm in the Takoma Park Middle School Cafeteria. According to the meeting notice, “The MDOT SHA team will present a summary of the study recommendations and you will workshop how those recommendations could be implemented **in a perfect world** (remember, this is a *Vision Study*).” As we learn more about this process and the status of the project, we will share the information.

Districtwide Boundary Analysis for MCPS

Montgomery County Public Schools is undertaking a Districtwide Boundary Analysis. This is an initiative designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of Montgomery County Public School boundaries by analyzing various data points such as school facility utilization and capacity, student demographics, school assignment and travel patterns. The initiative builds on MCPS’s engagement efforts from Spring 2019 and will continue to involve community members from all backgrounds through a variety of forums to fully understand the spectrum of challenges towards creating more meaningfully integrated and culturally responsive schools within Montgomery County.

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/publicinfo/boundary-analysis/>

Post-Carbon Cities of Tomorrow (POCACITO) Fellowship

We’re pleased to note that City Planner, Jamee Ernst, was accepted into a weeklong fellowship in Germany to learn about sustainability and smart city initiatives in Frankfurt and Cologne. The fellowship is organized by Post-Carbon Cities of Tomorrow (POCACITO), an initiative by the European Union to facilitate the transition of EU cities to a sustainable, post-carbon economic model. This iteration of POCACITO in Germany is funded by the Ecologic Institute and German Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy’s European Recovery Program. The program aims to foster collaboration

between German and American planners to develop innovative solutions to climate change. Jamee is excited to bring this knowledge back to Takoma Park and we're excited to share Takoma Park with the world.

Changes in Dockless Mobility Service Area Assignments

Montgomery County Department of Transportation has announced that all three dockless vehicle companies with current MOUs with Montgomery County are permitted to operate in both East County and West County pilot districts. All of the provisions in the MOUs still apply including the minimum number of vehicles deployed, the sticker for visually impaired, enforcement of the hours of operation (no trips starting after 10:00 p.m. and before 5:00 a.m.), permitted parking regulations, and regular reporting and data sharing. In addition, a minimum of one-third of the inventory on a daily basis must be available in each of the two districts.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-DIR/commuter/bikesharingCSS.html>

Cyber Security

Takoma Park has been experiencing an unprecedented number of serious cyberattacks over the past week and we are working to mitigate the increased risk to the City. Yesterday the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) issued an Emergency Directive to certain departments and agencies of the Federal government to immediately patch several critical vulnerabilities. We are following CISA's recommendation that all state and local governments follow their directive so we are running off-schedule patching on all computer systems within the City.

Moving to Online Tree Permit Applications and Payments

While the Council, Tree Commission and others are working to update the City's Tree Ordinance, staff has been working to allow residents to capture resident correspondence in the City's Citizen Relationship Management (CRM) system and pay tree removal permit and replanting fees online. The online Tree Removal Permit Application will be rolled out in the next few weeks. It may very well need to be modified as the Ordinance changes, but having an online system has been a goal for several years and we are pleased to be moving in this direction. Once we see how this system works, we can expand online permitting to other permitting services in the City.

Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Waiver Issued

A waiver has been issued for 8202 Houston Court, a six unit building. The tenants have no interest in purchasing the building and the City has waived its option as well.

Proposed Change to Parking Meters on Carroll Avenue between Grant and Lee

A proposal to change parking meters on Carroll Avenue between Grant and Lee Avenues is being considered. The proposal would change one-hour meters to two-hour meters, create two dedicated handicapped spaces (one on Grant near Carroll and one on Carroll near Lee), and allow several spaces for short term deliveries or drop-offs. Once public comment is received, I will consider the comments and share the decision on any changes to the parking meter spaces.

County Council Bill on Bodywork Establishments






The County Council, sitting as the Montgomery County Board of Health, will be considering Bill 1-20, Health and Sanitation – Bodywork Establishments – Licensing – Amendments as a Board of Health Regulation. Whenever there is a proposed Board of Health regulation, municipalities are to be notified of the proposal. The legislation would delete the provisions concerning massage establishments and expand the scope of bodywork establishments to include massage establishments. The regulation would require every individual performing bodywork services to be a certified massage therapist or registered massage practitioner. A public hearing will be held on February 4 at 1:30 pm in the Council Office Building in Rockville.







Congratulations to Author Jason Reynolds

Jason Reynolds is a DC-area author who writes books for kids and teens. He was just named the Library of Congress' new National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. Mr. Reynolds was a panelist in April here in Takoma Park at the Library's program celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Coretta Scott King Book Awards. Once again, the Takoma Park Maryland Library's programming is shown to be awesome!





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Major Projects – January 15, 2020







Project	Status	Lead Entity	Comments	Impact now thru 6/2020 Staff Time	Cost
<i>Livable Community</i>					
<u>New Ave Bikeways Design</u>	Underway	City	60% designs for Section A of the bikeway are in progress. An additional \$235,000 in funds were secured for FY20 to complete semi-final designs for Section B of the bikeway. It is anticipated that the entirety of the New Ave Bikeway will have completed semi-final designs by FY21.		\$
<u>MCPS Elem School Site Selection</u>	On hold	MCPS	Discussions continue about what to do with PBES and need for more elem school space, but approach by MCPS is not clear		-
<u>ADA Sidewalk Retrofit</u>	Underway	City	Funds include \$250,000 for ADA sidewalk repairs to be spent on repairs to existing Flower Avenue sidewalks on the west side.		\$
<u>Public Space Mgmt Plan</u>	Underway	City	Staff has developed draft goals and completed initial demographic analysis of public space allocation. Currently identifying next steps for community engagement and input.		-
<u>Parking Management Plan</u>	Underway	City	Council appointed the Parking Management Task Force in November, 2019 to consider staff		-




			recommendations.		
<u>New Sidewalks and Traffic Calming</u>	Underway	City	FY20 budget includes \$250,000 for new sidewalks and traffic calming which will be spent on Glenside Avenue sidewalk (construction began in FY19) and the Flower Ave and Sligo Creek Parkway traffic calming project. Any remaining funds will be used for traffic calming designs		\$ \$
<u>Street Repaving</u>	Underway	City	Paving was largely completed in Fall. May have some remaining work in Spring.		\$ \$
<u>Racial Equity</u>	Ongoing	City	COG/GARE cohort underway; Council still to determine how to spend \$10,000 in budget for racial equity training.		\$
<u>Small Cell Antennas</u>	Ongoing	County and City	Ordinance and administrative regulations in place. Project page created to include application information. Staff tracking time on application review and associated work. Possible minor Ordinance revisions to consider.		
<u>Bus Shelters</u>	Ongoing	City	Staff has developed a priority list for bus shelter installation in the City, to augment the COG-funded technical assistance grant underway to look at ADA compliance and amenities.		\$











Financially Sustainable Government					
Sustainable Investment and Banking Policy	On hold	City	Have not had time to focus on this item; SunTrust in process of merger with BB&T	—	—
Modify Budget Document to earn GFOA award	Submitted to GFOA and received first ever award!	City	We will be using comments from reviewing committee to make improvements to next budget document.	👤	—
Environmentally Sustainable Community					
<u>Sustainability efforts</u>	Underway	City	Consultant completed revised Energy Action Plan and made a presentation to Council. Staff working on implementation steps. Continue to support energy efficiency for multi-family, commercial, residential and low and moderate income households.	👤	\$
<u>LED Street Light Conversion</u>	COMPLETED	City/ Pepco	City will save money going forward due to the LED conversion. Final invoice from Pepco not yet received.	👤	—
<u>Flower Ave Green Street</u>	Underway	City	Project has slowed as corrections were needed to be done by the water main subcontractor. Expected completion by the end of 2020.	👥	\$ \$
Stormwater Mgmt Fee Structure	In preparation	City	Staff presented report to Council regarding impervious area evaluation; Council to discuss possible policy and rate structure change to implement in FY21.	👤	\$
Increase Tree Canopy	Underway	City	Tree Canopy Evaluation completed in FY19, work continues on Tree Canopy Goal	👤	—


			recommendation and implementation plan		
<i>Engaged, Responsive and Service Oriented Government</i>					
Review/Improve Tree Ordinance	Underway	City	Council has scheduled Council sessions to review the Ordinance.		—
<u>MOUs with area Police Agencies</u>	Under review	City	Not likely to be moving forward.		—
<u>Police/Comm Relations</u>	Ongoing	City	Departmental structure has been changed; Chief's Advisory Board has been revised. Several new community outreach programs have been initiated. City-wide community meeting to be held.		—
Communications Improvements	Ongoing	City	Translation improvements made to social media, Newsletter and Council meeting videos; expect continued discussions about communication from/with utilities.	—	—
Improve Notification re SHA / Utility Work	Have established mtgs with SHA and utilities	City	Continually update information on the project pages for major utility projects; community meetings have been held at City's insistence to provide updates. It does not seem the utility companies are making substantial improvements to their public notice processes.		—
Improve Process requesting Sidewalks and Traffic Calming	May be taken up by Complete Safe Streets Committee	City	No changes to regulations have been implemented	—	—
<u>Police Dept</u>	Construction	City	Closing in of Atrium and		


<u>Renovation</u>	documents complete, building permit application submitted.		reconfiguration of communications area and nearby offices anticipated to begin Spring, 2020. Initial approach to contract award resulted in high cost, so City will use traditional RFP process.		\$ \$
Security Initiatives	In Process	City	Implementation of Cisco Umbrella security platform is complete. Vulnerability assessment & remediation work will begin in January, 2020 and continue throughout 2020.		\$
Identity and Access Management Service (IAMS)	In Process	City	Project will provide single sign on (SSO) for Takoma Park and NCR systems. The system has been installed and system configurations will begin in December 2019.		\$
Security Camera System	The initial project has been completed.	City	New security camera system for the Community Center, Recreation, and Heffner Park buildings has been completed. A request to replace the cameras at Public Works will be completed by the end of the fiscal year.		\$
GovQA upgrades and enhancements	In Process	City	Work includes upgrading My TkPk online and the IOS and Android applications. A Tree Permitting application is currently in development and will be in production in December 2019 or January 2020.		\$
Planning for	Underway	City/County	MOU approved. Charter		


Changed Date of City Elections			amendment completed. Election code revisions in process. BOE is conducting vendor research.		-
Transition to new City Attorney	Underway	City	New City Attorney selected; contract being developed; transition of duties to occur before January 31.		-
2020 Census Outreach	Ongoing	City/County	Staff is developing plans for outreach related to Census including on-site events at the Rec Center and Community Center, bus shelter ads, etc. Application for Census grant to help with efforts due Dec. 31.		\$
Secure Print Services	In Process	City	A secure print server is being created for confidential print jobs. This capability will be followed by the removal of smaller personal office printers which are costly to operate and maintain.		-
Staff computer upgrades	In Process	City	As part of the 4 year computer replacement cycle all staff computers will be on schedule by the end of January, 2020. Senior staff will be transitioning to laptop computers.		\$
<i>Community Development for an Improved and Equitable Quality of Life</i>					
<u>Takoma Junction Intersection Improvements</u>	SHA still working on Vision Report	SHA	Initial visioning process took place in FY19, SHA had expected to produce results of that effort in Fall 2019, but not sure when will be done.		-
<u>Takoma</u>	In County	City/NDC	NDC is working with the		


<u>Junction Dev Project</u>	review process		County Planning Department on Development Review, including the Historic Preservation Commission. SHA review expected after Vision Report completed.		—
<u>Purple Line Preparation</u>	Underway.	State/Purple Line Partners/City	Construction activities are affecting traffic flow and patterns and accessibility to local businesses. While the project is a State one, City staff and Councilmembers have been monitoring progress and working to provide protections to businesses when construction begins to affect them. Agreements have been made between the Purple Line and Takoma Langley Crossroads CDA for “Open for Business” signs during construction.		—
John Nevins Andrews School Property	Property for sale and actively being marketed	Property owner/City	Mandatory Referral was approved. Deeds were amended to reflect use and ownership. City continues to advocate for appropriate reuse.	—	—
<u>Library Renovation/Expansion Project</u>	Design work underway	City	Recommendations are to build library with a higher floor but similar planned footprint; architect has provided several options on changes to interior space; will provide update in January or February.		\$ \$
<u>Econ Dev</u>	Ongoing	City	Housing and Economic		


<u>Initiatives</u>			Development Strategic Plan was adopted by Council. Implementation plan being prepared.		
<u>Housing Initiatives</u>	Ongoing	City	Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan was adopted by Council. Implementation plan being prepared.		
<u>Redevelopment of Takoma Park Recreation Center</u>	Land transaction effective July 1, 2019.	City	RFP has been issued for a Public Engagement Firm, with a due date of January 31. Public Engagement firm to be selected by February 2020.		
<u>Wash Adventist Hospital site</u>	Working to identify appropriate site reuse	WAH/City	City continues to advocate for appropriate redevelopment of the site. Is likely to be part of a Minor Master Plan effort by Montgomery County Planning.		
<u>Montgomery College Projects; Math Science Building</u>	Underway	Montgomery College	Project approved, construction underway.		

 little or no impact

 staff resources required

 significant staff resources required

 some financial costs involved

 significant financial costs involved