



Office of the President

April 14, 2016

The Honorable Nancy Floreen
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Council President Floreen:

Thank you and the Council for your longstanding support of Montgomery College and your commitment to locally provided high quality affordable postsecondary education for all of the residents of our community.

I write today in response to recent correspondence from the City of Takoma Park (“the City”) and residents of the City regarding The Agreement Between the City of Takoma Park, Montgomery College, Historic Takoma, Inc. and Montgomery County to Subject the Activities of Montgomery College in the Historic Preservation District of the City to Local Control (“the Agreement”), which addresses consulting with the City and others when redeveloping the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. The following review reflects our commitment to our relationships and specific information about the current situation.

The College values and prioritizes community engagement.

As an institution integral to the future of our community, we understand the need for community engagement and value it. Such engagement is important to us at all of our campuses. Our close proximity to the community in Takoma Park makes our engagement particularly important. It is so important to us, that we even signed the Agreement with the City, County, and Historic Takoma in 2002 to document our mutual responsibilities—which is the subject of my letter.

Master plans are conceptual in nature—not design documents—and are required by the state.

The letter you received concerns the College’s Facilities Master Plan. Such master plans are required by the state of every community college to demonstrate the college’s ability to carry out its academic mission and respond to the state’s projected enrollment. All of Maryland’s 16

community colleges follow the same process. The document is a high-level concept plan and, while there is some measure of information about the general size and density of each of building, it is by no means a design document. These master plans are to be crafted for a 10-year period and updated every five years. We submitted our most recent plan to the Maryland Higher Education Commission in February as required. With today's enrollment, the College still has a space deficit 1,025,785 net assignable square feet collegewide.

Consultation took place.

Prior to submission of the master plan to the state, the College conducted two community meetings in Takoma Park and Campus Vice President and Provost Brad Stewart addressed the City Council on January 20, 2016. Community meetings were held on September 10, 2015, at 7 p.m. and on December 10, 2015, at 7 p.m. in the Commons Building on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. The meetings were held in the evening, at a convenient location with easy access to parking, and scheduled so as to avoid holidays as well as Takoma Park City Council meetings. Letters were sent to every address within a quarter mile radius of the Campus and included homeowners and business owners. Electronic mail notifications were sent to community and home owner associations—we accessed tools available from the Montgomery County Planning Department to accomplish these communications. Notifications via letters and electronic mail were also provided to the City's elected officials, the City's Housing and Community Development Department, and the Montgomery County Planning Office. Additionally, College staff met with the director of housing and community development for the City of Takoma Park and her staff on February 18, 2015, in preparation for the master plan update. All notifications were sent two weeks in advance of the meetings. Approximately, 20 people attended the September meeting and four attended the December meeting.

The master plan responded to community concerns within confines of the state requirements.

During our master planning process this past year, we chose to hold community meetings on all *three* campuses—those meetings were held during the fall and early winter.

The plan submitted to the state made accommodations to respond to community concerns we heard at the September community meeting in Takoma Park, and during previous community meetings from past years about the College's Facilities Master Plan. For example, in the plan submitted, the math/science building now sits closer to Fenton Street and further from New York Avenue and Block 69 than the current structures. This is also now planned as a three-story building instead of the originally envisioned four-story building. The community would prefer we develop this building elsewhere, but the College is constrained by the state's master plan requirements to plan for specific facilities on ground already owned, and to plan with fiscal prudence.

We shared these location and size revisions at the community meeting in December and with the Takoma Park City Council in January.

Community meetings followed past practices and the College analyzed community suggestions.

At the meetings, the presentations and content were consistent with past practice—we held similar meetings when the plan was updated in 2008. Additionally, no plan changes were anticipated for the Campus. Much of the feedback at the September 2015 meeting was similar to what we heard during the 2008 meetings. The focus of the conversation has centered on the math/science buildings then and now.

The community has consistently suggested obtaining privately owned businesses on Fenton Street or utilizing the parking lot on the west side of the Campus to provide the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus with a modern math/science facility. Based on the residents' feedback in 2008, we completed a real estate analysis of suggested sites, including the two storage facilities on Fenton Street, the auto body shop on King Street, and the used car businesses on Burlington Avenue. We concluded that obtaining those properties was too expensive for the taxpayers for simply supplanting ground already owned by the College.

The College also completed a high-level land use analysis of the West Campus parking lot as a suggested site. The conclusion of this study was that a multiple-story building would be necessary to build the square footage needed. That is significant because tall buildings with specialized laboratory instructional space are generally more expensive than shorter buildings. Additionally, given the College's parking challenges—there is a shortage of 3,540 spaces collegewide—we can ill afford to lose access to those spaces at this time. Our parking challenges are made worse by the loss of the Carver Educational Services Center lot. Additionally, we will need the space to eventually tackle our space deficits rather than, again, supplant the use of already owned ground.

In the Facilities Master Plan covering 2006 to 2016 (prepared in 2008), we included the City's resolution expressing its concerns and its recommendations. We also included that resolution in our most recent submission, the 2013 to 2023 plan, as well. And, finally, while the state allows us to speculate in the plan about ground not in our control to accommodate future growth, we must submit a plan that only utilizes land we own and control for specific projects.

The College responded to community concerns to the best of our ability.

The plan submitted to the state in February 2016 attempted to accommodate the concerns of the residents as the math/science building in the plan now sits closer to Fenton Street further from New York Avenue and Block 69, and is now envisioned as a *three*-story building instead of a *four*-story building. We shared this revision at the December community meeting and with the City Council in January.

The College has and will continue to live up to our agreement with the City when designing the math/science building.

We have consulted and will continue to consult with the City and the community according to our Agreement (emphases here mine), “when making any or substantial *changes* or alterations to the existing *structures* ... and the parties agree that this consultation ... will occur at the earliest practicable stage during the planning for any alteration...” We said this when the then-City Councilmember Josh Wright participated in the County Council’s capital budget worksession regarding the College’s request before the then-Chair Ervin several years ago. We stand by our commitment now. The master plan is the earliest possible opportunity to discuss changes to our buildings. As noted above, we met our obligation to consult during the deliberations for the most recent submission of the master plan, and on prior occasions for previous submissions. The challenge for community engagement, however, lies in the fact that the plan as noted above is a *concept plan* only and does not and cannot include *detailed design of any building*. When the actual building design process begins for the math/science building, we will again consult the City and the community as we have in the past on the specifics of building design.

The College will host a charrette and submit the building design for mandatory referral.

Additionally, we will follow the County Council’s direction to hold a charrette for the design of the math/science building that will include all stakeholders. The College will also submit the math/science building for mandatory referral through the Planning Board—its expertise will no doubt be helpful in ensuring we hear the community and are responsive to the extent practicable within space and budgetary limitations along with academic programmatic needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you and the members of the County Council.

Again, we appreciate your commitment to Montgomery College and the students we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DeRionne P. Pollard", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard
President

The Honorable Nancy Floreen

April 14, 2016

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cc: The Honorable Kate Stewart, Mayor, City of Takoma Park
The Honorable Peter Kovar, Ward 1 Councilmember, City of Takoma Park
The Honorable Tim Male, Ward 2 Councilmember, City of Takoma Park
The Honorable Rizzy Qureshi, Ward 3 Councilmember, City of Takoma Park
The Honorable Terry J. Seamens, Ward 4 Councilmember, City of Takoma Park
The Honorable Jarrett Smith, Ward 5 Councilmember, City of Takoma Park
The Honorable Fred Schultz, Ward 6 Councilmember, City of Takoma Park
The Honorable Suzanne Ludlow, City Manager, City of Takoma Park
Ms. Susan Silber, Takoma Park City Attorney
Ms. Lorraine Pearsall, Vice President/Secretary, Historic Takoma, Inc.
The Honorable Isiah Leggett, County Executive, Montgomery County
The Honorable Nancy Floreen, Council President, Montgomery County Council
The Honorable Roger Berliner, Council Vice President, Montgomery County Council
The Honorable Marc Elrich, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council
The Honorable Tom Hucker, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council
The Honorable George Leventhal, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council
The Honorable Nancy Navarro, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council
The Honorable Craig Rice, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council
The Honorable Hans Riemer, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council
Mr. Marc Hansen, County Attorney, Montgomery County
Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Ms. Gwen Wright, Planning Director, Montgomery County Planning Department
Mr. Robert Kronenberg, Chief of Area 1, Montgomery County Planning Department
The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Maryland State Senator, District 20
The Honorable Sheila Hixson, Maryland State Delegate, District 20
The Honorable Will Smith, Maryland State Delegate, District 20
The Honorable David Moon, Maryland State Delegate, District 20
Dr. James D. Felder, Jr., Secretary of Higher Education
Mr. Anwer Hasan, Chair, Maryland Higher Education Commission
Mr. Charles Atwell, President, Innovative Business Interiors
Mr. Ray Berry, Director, AFI Silver Theater
Mr. Mark Bloom, Executive Director, Washington Adventist University
Mr. Dan Figueroa, Senior Property Manager, Downtown Silver Spring/Peterson Group
Mr. Avi Halpert, Vice President, United Therapeutics
Mr. Bruce Lee, President, Lee Development Group
Mr. Paul Nazelrod, Vice President of Construction, Washington Properties
Ms. Anita Powell, Executive Committee, NAACP, Maryland State Conference
Ms. Jane Redicker, President, Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce
Mr. Reemberto Rodriguez, Director of Silver Spring Regional Services Center
Ms. Stephanie Steele, Market General Manager, Fillmore Silver Spring