

Community Conversations  
About Montgomery College's Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus

**Meeting #1 – Online Comments**

Note: Each block below are the comments made by one person.

1. Hello, If there is a chance to revive the original plan to replace Science North as well as Science South while leaving Falcon Hall largely intact, please do so. The second plan makes no sense compared to the first one. Also, if I lived across the street from campus, I would much rather a small building without lots of light versus a large building with lots of windows. Every night there would be classes and labs with lots of light spilling onto the neighbors' houses and maybe even foot traffic right outside the door. If they plan to put in an underground parking garage to replace the small faculty parking lot, that would be even worse. Falcon Hall needs repairs and renovations, but it's in a spot that's well-suited to it and the campus needs a fitness facility. Science North and Science South both need to go. Science South is too old and is barely functional. Not only is Science North old and outdated, it's a poorly designed building in the first place. It needs to be replaced. Thank you, Jason Michel Chemistry Lab Coordinator Montgomery College TP/SS

It would be great if there could be a session devoted almost entirely to debating the merits of the first master plan with those of the second master plan. I think everyone would see what I do, which is that the first plan is far superior.

2. 1) In spite of the numerous speakers citing "Historic Takoma," I am still baffled by what their vision for the TP/SS campus would entail.

1b) In presenting the proposals, street view renderings might help to reassure residents that their houses would not be dominated by the proposed buildings.

2) I endorse the need for a working group that could make decisions that would be accepted by the community and College.

3) Nearby property owners should consider the alternative to a vibrant and vital college campus on the MC property. They might very well not be happy. Look at what has happened to the open space near the Metro station.

4) If it would be better to expand into the storage area buildings, perhaps the threatened neighbors should persuade the owners of that property to sell - and maybe contribute to the purchase.

5) An important aspect of relations to the nearby community is traffic, both daily student use and construction related. If the TP/SS campus made a commitment to dealing with and educating each semester's new students as to how to best live with the surrounding residents, this would be a major point of compensation to the community. I live near the Adventist Hospital, and overflow parking is one of the major annoyances from that business.

5a) As parking enforcement, instead of \$50/hr city police, how about \$10 students, not issuing citations, but leafleting all improperly parked MS student cars with a "Hey! We're trying to get along with our neighbors! Please use the parking lot! (and bring this flyer in for a free piece of pizza to show you read it.)" The flyers would be visible to both the offenders and the affected neighbors.

5b) Perhaps County Councilman (and Ward 5 TP resident) Marc Elrich would step in to help focus Montgomery County on the needs of its residents on the border of the College.

3. Hello, I'm a 35yr + resident of TP ( Ward 5) and a 30+ yr employee of MC. I invite opponents of the proposed building revision to look at some of the College's past growth figures, especially as they relate to the TPSS Campus. <http://cms.montgomerycollege.edu/EDU/Department4.aspx?id=54314>. This is only projected to increase. I've seen seismic changes in the student body/college capacity since I began and if we are to continue to serve the "down county " area the TPSS Campus must include more density and redesigned facilities. I can understand the apprehension about the recent vertical in fill along Fenton St and in SS in general but the Facilities Master Plan does not suggest anything like that. The TPSS Campus only borders the Historic District. Perhaps some street views of the proposal would help understanding of the proposed changes.
4. Montgomery College and the City of Takoma Park should work together to make the area around the college including Philadelphia Ave much safer for the many students, other pedestrians and bicyclists who use the area. This would involve coordination with Maryland State Highway Administration-- currently something that appears to be nearly non existent. A simple first step would be to have functioning sidewalks and a speed limit consistent with the rest of Philadelphia Ave (from 30 mph to 25 mph). Other traffic calming and bike friendly measures can be taken so students and others can more safely cross streets making the area more pedestrian, bicycle, and student friendly. The whole community and students benefit when this is prioritized.
5. I keep hearing the community propose that the college purchase the two storage facilities on Fenton and the auto body shop on King Street. I keep hearing the College's response that they have assessed and determined that those high-cost purchases aren't cost effective for taxpayers and that the Master Plan is based on existing real estate. Can this conflict be put to bed? What are the official positions of the County government and College Board on this issue?
6. Even though the College is situated in Takoma Park, it actually belongs to Montgomery County. So please bear in mind that Silver Spring residents are equally affected. If this is going to be a fair process, SS must be represented on the advisory board (or whatever groups are formed).
7. Montgomery County fought long and hard to preserve Jessup Blair Park when the west campus was being negotiated. It is legally protected and will NOT be available for the new Health Center!
8. I support Montgomery College to fulfill their mission and their talented students to reach their full potential. I believe any controversy to expansion can be remedied as a matter of good planning and facility location. I was impressed by President Pollard's desire for the College to be a good neighbor to the surrounding community. I was also struck by introductory comments by the Planning Board Chair Anderson who asked us to look at the big picture of an urban Campus spread along Georgia Ave., and TP Councilmember Kovar who cautioned us to think in terms of an integrated campus plan, not just one or two new replacement buildings.  
  
I would prefer Montgomery College build their new Math & Science facility on the Montgomery College Foundation property, on Burlington Ave. behind the CAC where the large surface parking lot is located, or on one of the other designated "potential expansion opportunity " sites and not in Historic Jesup Blair Park. Or across Burlington Ave. along Fenton St. where there are nearby properties for sale or lease. These proposals would take pressure off the concept of building in the Park and building densely adjacent to the North Takoma Historic District neighborhood. Thus Campus and Park trees would not be destroyed.  
  
Critical PE programming could continue unabated in Falcon Hall, including life saving water safety instruction, until the next phase of construction commences: the new Health and Fitness facility along

Fenton St. where Science North is now located. (See 2016 updated Facilities Master Plan.) The MC tennis courts would continue to provide outdoor recreation for students instead of using Park facilities.

I am opposed to the College building in Historic Jesup Blair Park. Occupying the Moorings Mansion for classrooms is fine, but please remove all future Park building concepts from consideration. Parkland is precious and irreplaceable in the SS CBD. More than 7,000 new residential units are in the pipeline for the SS CBD. The Garden Apartments across Blair Rd. from the Park are not historically protected, so at some point density may increase several fold with new high-rise construction on these sites. Douglas Development just received permission from DC Planning to construct 215 residential units at the Morris Miller site just across the DC line, which may begin the march of high-rise buildings down Georgia Ave. as envisioned by the Georgia Ave Redevelopment Corp.

For these reasons we need to retain and protect Parkland, especially Jesup Blair Park with such high quality, historic, great treed, open space, from any buildings. Historic Park and Mansion are National Register eligible.

TP Councilmember Kovar mentioned identifying other areas of concern people may have with Montgomery College's 2016 updated Facilities Master Plan. I would like to see the College agree to abide by County historic preservation regulation; the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A. If the College were ever allowed to build in Master Plan for Historic Preservation Jesup Blair Park, they need to agree to local control administered by our Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Several years ago College lawyers convinced a judge that the College was a quasi-state/local entity, immune to the provisions of the Preservation Ordinance.

As it now stands, if the Parks Department of M-NCPPC, another state entity, wishes to erect a swing set in the Park, it needs to apply for a Historic Area Work Permit from the HPC. But if the College wants to load up the Park with buildings, it can bypass the HPC altogether. Both of these "State Agencies" are of course subject to Section 5-106 Review by the Maryland Historical Trust, but that is advisory not regulatory control. Furthermore, in 2002, the College agreed to respect County Preservation Law where they have property in the Takoma Park Historic District. What is good for Takoma Park should be followed by Montgomery College in the rest of the County.

Financially speaking, what might help frame the proposed expansion is to determine and release the costs of some recent construction projects on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring campus, including dates of completion. New buildings would be CAC, Health Sciences, Cafritz Arts Center, P3, West Garage, and the Student Services Center including the pedestrian bridge and the Fenton St. realignment. Renovation projects include the Commons, Resources Center, and Falcon Hall. Thank you. George French, 510 Albany Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912, 301-587-5955

9. Create a Working Group comprised of Historic Takoma and Adjacent Neighborhood Representatives; confer with Silver Spring Historical Society to provide our expertise, especially as it relates to our irreplaceable Green Oasis, Historic Jesup Blair Park, significant at national, state, county and local levels.

We are alarmed by: MC Facilities Master Plan Updated 2013-2023: "Construct a new Health and Fitness Center at 32,360 NASF (49,230 GSF). This building is [currently] shown located on the site of Science North. However, an optional location in Jesup Blair Park is shown in the 2023-33 Land Use Plan and in fact may be the preferred location for this planning period if feasible." Please remove this concept from your Master Plan. Viable expansion options exist!

J.B. Park Mansion is being restored and in a couple of years will be activated partly by MC adult

education classes! SSHA has been working with the Parks Dept. on its exciting restoration. Mansion served as the S.S. Library from 1934-1957. Folks & MC Art Students enjoy picnic tables set in the Grove of ancient trees to the left of the House; as well as scattered throughout the Park. Folks of all ages, including the San Miguel School fellows, energize the soccer field, lighted basketball & tennis courts! Small kids & their families enjoy the playground. Runners, walkers, some with baby buggies, are regulars in our Park! Folks do Yoga and stretching exercises. Recently, a surprise marriage proposal surrounded by friends took place in the Park; and the Hindu Festival of Colors! There is no need for any new building(s) in our irreplaceable Park.\*\*

Over 7,000 residential units have been approved for construction in the S.S. CBD, and are bringing new folks to Downtown S.S. ["Mo Co Development Pipeline, Pipeline Master Plan Summary, Sept. 2016]. Established Parks are at a premium and irreplaceable!

Viable Options include MC Parking Lot along Burlington adjacent to CAC; and Self-Storage Bldgs on Fenton: MC-identifies these as "potential expansion opportunities."

2 Very Available Nearby Buildings to Montgomery College provide Ready & Viable Options:

Both are for Sale; 7900 Fenton/former Banner Glass will Lease also. 850 Sligo at Fenton  
Flyer: <http://x.lnimg.com/attachments/EB2F544F-3BFF-4B4F-93A9-B991CB1978AB.pdf> <http://www.loopnet.com/Listing/19881722/850-Sligo-Avenue-Silver-Spring-MD/>

850 Sligo has the advantage for students of being diagonally across from the upcoming Artists' Center, the imaginative adaptive reuse of S.S.'s former Police Station! With 8 stories, it also provides "aerial" views for photographers and artists! Its fabric consists of brick, solar-bronze glass, & bronze spandrels. Includes 65 parking spaces

! <http://delmararchitects.com/OfficesLabs.html> See photo of 850 Sligo

Of interest, headquarters of its architect Eugene A. Delmar FAIA resided on the top floor of his award-winning building! <http://delmararchitects.com/History.html> He/his firm currently are in Olney, Md.

7900 Fenton St. <http://www.loopnet.com/Listing/19978163/7900-Fenton-St-Silver-Spring-MD/> Total Square Footage 4,920; Interior SF 3,120; Warehouse SF 1,800, [www.amrcommercial.com](http://www.amrcommercial.com) Click on "Watch This Property"

Flyer describes that it's "adjacent to Montgomery College Takoma Park campus"! Includes 18 parking spaces! Includes eye-catching Monumental Sign!

Contact: Rick Kelly, Sr. V.P., Alexander, Montrose, Rittenberg Commercial Real Estate Brokerage, AMR [rkelly@amrcommercial.com](mailto:rkelly@amrcommercial.com) 301-961-9696, 301-367-1033, Cell Plat & Floor Plan can be provided.

7900 Fenton is diagonally across Fenton from 850 Sligo! Both are Freestanding! Both are Corner Lots!

<http://www.showcase.com/c/commercial-real-estate/AMR-Commercial-LLC-Bethesda-26237?src=ppcg#&&/wEXAQURV29ya2Zsb3dlaXN0b3J5SUQFJDUzNWM1NmYwLTViYWUtNDQ0MS04NmUwLTg0MjAyODE5NDYwOTWgxxwQwZbM27zDseCP2lct+/MA>

850 Sligo, Maryland National Bank Building, by Eugene A. Delmar, 1928-, won an architectural award in 1966 for its design. Evening Star, 12/16/1966, P. 70, "Awards Given for Architecture":

"Separation of office spaces and services in distinct shafts permits a very flexible arrangement in this exceptionally well-designed building. There is a very handsome design relationship of brick wall and glass space completely expressive of function."

Current Campus Buildings' designs are AIA-award winning, by noted Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill firm. They fit in adjacent to the neighborhood of single family homes; and adjacent to T.P. Historic District. Mo Co Historic Preservation Expert Clare Lise Kelly features these Takoma Park Campus buildings in her new book "Montgomery Modern," P. 173.

Why not Work WITH what already exists, e.g., continue the renovation of Falcon Hall with its gym and pool! Remain size-appropriate for the neighborhood. Adaptively reuse/save parts of architect James Francis Stann's 1961 Science South: fieldstone wall, turquoise panelization, awning windows, window wall revealing zig-zag staircase, & rare Planetarium! Science South is the Earliest remaining bldg. on campus! Save these parts and "spawn" a new bldg., fully equipped, from these unique eye-catching features! What a stunning endeavor for MC's Architecture Program!

Light-filled Library/Resource Center, 2-stories, is superbly designed, includes its own lecture hall angling from first floor to lower level!

Retain lovely natural, civilized curve at Takoma & Fenton, featuring tall pine and flowering trees, picnic tables, bench, adjacent to Parking Lot & Falcon Hall & Tennis Courts, allowing one to catch one's breath. These lovely features at the curve and adjacent amenities fit harmoniously and perfectly across from the neighborhood of single family homes, also in the T.P. Historic District. \*\* Jesup Blair Park/The Moorings is our unique, irreplaceable Green Oasis, 15 acres, including its Grove of ancient trees; significant at national, state, county, local levels; POS site; bequeathed with its Mansion as a Public Park in Perpetuity to the State of Md. by Violet Blair Janin, Granddaughter of S.S.'s founder Francis Preston Blair, adviser to Pres. Lincoln & many other Pres. What a Gift; Parkland is scarce in S.S.'s CBD; what a swathe of Green. 7000 new living units are in the Pipeline. Serves as a calming, embracing, welcoming gateway at the Md./D.C. Border! Park & Mansion is on the County Master Plan for Historic Preservation and National Register eligible; it is a pre-Civil War, Civil War & Underground R.R. site. Lincoln's Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, Dred Scott's defender, lived there during the Civil War when his nearby house was torched and burnt to the ground. See Park Signage! 6 Signs!

Marcie Stickle, SSHS Advocacy Chair, 8515 Greenwood Ave., T.P., MD 20912, 301-585-3817

10. I live a half a block from the college and generally enjoy having it as a neighbor. Unfortunately, the history of the college and the neighborhood is not great. The college missed some opportunities to pick up land for expansion which continue to affect us. I do attend events at the arts center and have taken classes, though none here.

I think that the old yellow buildings on the campus are pretty unattractive and I will not be sorry to see them go. I am not sure that renovation of those is a good option.

The use of the buildings for chemistry and other science labs does not bother me. I expect that safety would be greater in a new building than in the current building. I would hope that the new structure would be set back enough to maintain the existing trees and setback from the street. The height of the proposed structure does not worry me as much as the massing presented to the street. The current structure has some very tall elements.

Transition zones between land uses are always difficult. The old residential nature of the neighborhood needs a gradual transition to the college structures. For the most part, I think that exists now, but do worry about any plans for any structures that are closer to the street than the existing facilities. I do recognize that part of the buffer that exists now is a parking lot that may not be the best use of the land, but replacing that lot with structure does concern me.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

11. Specific Topics we would like to see covered at the May 9, 2017 meeting:

1. Setting up a working group to resolve critical issues.
2. Tree Preservation measures during construction and enforcement procedures, including how does one report infractions to the agreement for immediate resolution.
3. Have the College strongly consider leasing & or purchasing available properties for classrooms and labs to meet enrollment projections in nearby Silver Spring.
4. Montgomery College needs to agree to respect and abide by our County Preservation Law as it pertains to all Historic Properties and Historic Districts in our County. This includes Master Plan for Historic Preservation Jesup Blair Park, where the College expresses a preference to construct a Health and Fitness Center, as well as Locational Atlas & Index of Historic Sites along Georgia Ave.
5. Why not plan to immediately utilize the properties depicted as ? Potential Expansion Opportunity? sites in the Facilities Master Plan, especially the College Foundation parcel, but not the Historic Jesup Blair Parkland site?
6. Discuss recent TPSS campus building and renovation cost, capital and otherwise.

George French & Marcie Stickle, SSHS Advocacy Chair, marcipro@aol.com, 301-585-3817

- 12, As with T.P. Council Spoken Comment period, I recommend that folks line up at the podium with mike; will be more efficient; more folks will have opportunity to share their insights; for those who aren't able physically to get up to podium, then mike can be brought to them. Took time to recognize individual speakers, to pass mike around and retrieve, then time again for hands up and recognition, etc. Believe will be much more effective to present at the podium.

Marcie Stickle, Silver Spring Historical Society, Advocacy Chair, marcipro@aol.com

13. Beautiful Nature-Filled Curve & Triangle at Fenton & Albany, adjacent to and in harmony with neighborhood and campus, please retain: Lovely green haven with Bald Cypress, mature White Pines, mature Willow Oaks, and 3 Cherry Trees, picnic tables, and benches; fragrant from the pines; provides shade to cool in the spring & summer; refreshing spot to enjoy, great for studying, drawing, picnicking, chatting, relaxing!

Marcie Stickle, Silver Spring Historical Society, Advocacy Chair, marcipro@aol.com, 301-585-3817

14. On behalf of Montgomery Preservation Inc., I support the comments of Marcie Stickle and George French, both board members of the Silver Spring Historical Society, notably the opposition to the college's building anything in historic Jesup Blair Park.

Please consider the alternative options outlined in the statement of Marcie Stickle. The park is deserving of protection under the County's Master Plan for Historic Preservation and is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places - as it is currently and not with a building constructed on it.

We also support and agree with the comments of Lorraine Pearsall of Historic Takoma, which were

made at the meeting. It is important that the college to respect the physical integrity and aesthetic character of the Takoma Park historic district and closely surrounding area.

We believe the college can continue to prosper and to serve the needs of its students while maintaining the integrity of the community and the park. We hope the series of public meetings will lead to the fulfillment of these goals.

Mary Reardon  
Vice President, Montgomery Preservation Inc.