

# City of Takoma Park, Maryland

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*Suzanne R. Ludlow, City Manager*

October 18, 2017

Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-op  
ATTN: Rachel Hardwick, President Board of Directors  
Martha Whitman, Interim General Manager  
301 Ethan Allen Avenue  
Takoma Park MD 20912

Dear Ms. Hardwick and Ms. Whitman,

Thank you for meeting with the Mayor and staff recently and for the comments provided by you and many of your members on the planned Takoma Junction development throughout this roughly four year process. We are committed to the project and our partnership with NDC and appreciate your desire to protect the business interests of the Co-op.

We have many hopes for the Takoma Junction area, including the development of the City's lot which will act as an economic stimulus for all of the business in the area. We believe that by expanding the customer base of existing businesses, by providing opportunities for new and growing enterprises, and by providing desired services, options, and amenities for the community, we will be able to facilitate the revitalization of the Junction in a manner that is equitable, contextually sensitive and environmentally sustainable.

We are pleased that the Co-op is as equally committed to the Junction. Your decision to renew your lease for another 20 year term and the substantial cash reserve you have set aside for interior and exterior capital improvements, including the \$500,000 grant recently secured from the State of Maryland, is encouraging and evidence of your long term commitment to the Junction and the community.

During the Council's October 11 work session, a number of questions were raised by Council about identifying the Co-op's needs and how the Co-op can potentially use its site and its construction funds to help address the logistical problems that are being discussed. Several additional questions had been raised by staff in its meetings with Co-op representatives.

Here is the information that would be helpful:

## Delivery Schedules

While the Co-op has been clear about the inability to control the timing of the seven 18-wheeler deliveries each week, what is the schedule of the deliveries from the smaller trucks and other vehicles? Can these deliveries be scheduled in a way that minimizes vehicular conflict on and around the site; that is, minimizes multiple trucks arriving at the same time or at times of heavy customer traffic?

## Location of Deliveries

While the 18-wheeled trucks require special site arrangements, smaller delivery vehicles (box trucks, vans, etc.) can drive into the Co-op's parking lot for unloading. At the rear of the property on the Sycamore Avenue side, there is a loading dock and an area with no parking spaces. On the Columbia Avenue side there is a ramp for deliveries, with several doors. Construction work may be needed on the interior and exterior of the building to make these locations work well for deliveries and/or trash and recycling collection (see below) since it has been a long time since they were used this way. Interior design changes might include the installation of a freight elevator to make the best use of possible storage areas. Use of the Co-op's parking lot may also require a redesign of the lot and could affect curb cut locations. Have options for any of this been considered? What has been learned from looking into these options?

## Trash/Recycling Collection

What is the schedule for trash and recycling collection? The Co-op noted there is collection six days per week. Is that of both trash and recycling? What kinds of trucks do the collection for trash and for recycling use and what time of day does each come? Could the collection be done from the Sycamore or Columbia sides of the Co-op building, with appropriate design modifications? Such modifications would likely include an enclosed area for the dumpsters and bins. Scheduling of the collections for appropriate times would likely be desirable.

## Parking

The Co-op currently rents 16 parking spaces on the City lot, primarily for staff parking, with no additional spaces dedicated for customer parking. Other spaces on the City's lot are only lightly used (and parking is not just for Co-op customers). The Co-op has indicated that it needs 25 parking spaces on the City's site to accommodate its needs. How did the Co-op determine that this is the number of spaces it needs? What are the parking needs of the Co-op staff? When is the heaviest demand for customer parking? Do 25 spaces need to be dedicated for Co-op use or can they be shared based on time of day, etc.? Can the Co-op's parking lot on the Sycamore Avenue side be modified to provide more on-site parking for your customers? Is the Co-op considering other options to reduce parking space need such as grocery delivery or a ride home for patrons without a car, as is provided by the MegaMart grocery store?

### Possible Co-op Site Changes

If changes are being considered in the way the Co-op's site is used, that information will be important to incorporate into the upcoming traffic studies. And, if some of the information learned in answering these questions could affect the site design on the City's lot, either negatively or positively, this is the time to know. The combined area of the Co-op's lot and the City's lot is relatively small and so a collaborative approach to operations and design is in the interests of all of us.

### Business Opportunities

The Co-op's interim general manager, Martha Whitman, noted the "shift in the market place and increased pressure on the margins" at last Wednesday's Council meeting. New businesses and attractive activities will draw new customers to the Junction, providing an opportunity for the Co-op to expand its customer base. As you move forward on your own plans to increase your presence in the Junction, we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

*Suzanne R. Ludlow*

Suzanne R. Ludlow  
City Manager

cc: Takoma Park City Council