



City of Takoma Park, Maryland  
**Takoma Junction Development Review**  
**Council- NDC-Staff Conference Call Notes**  
March 8, 2019

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As part of the Takoma Junction redevelopment, Neighborhood Development Company, the selected partner for the City's project, has submitted a combined preliminary plan/site plan application to Montgomery County. Beginning on March 1, 2019, Takoma Park City Council members, NDC representatives and City staff began holding a weekly conference call to share updates and ask questions.

For more information, please check the City webpage for the Takoma Junction Redevelopment: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/takoma-junction-redevelopment/>

Participants on the conference call:

Mayor Kate Stewart and Council members Kacy Kostiuk and Cindy Dyballa; City staff Jason Damweber and Rosalind Grigsby; NDC representatives Adrian Washington and Jingjing Liu.

#### **NDC updates**

The County Development Review Committee meeting is scheduled for March 19, at 9:30 a.m. NDC is waiting for the DRC comments.

#### **Staff updates**

Staff did not have new information to share with Council or NDC at this time.

#### **Questions for NDC:**

1. *For the back of the building, how visible will the garage portion be from Columbia Avenue? Will it appear as a full story or somewhat submerged in the ground?*

The final coordination of grades around the building will have to be completed as the documentation process occurs. Generally, the building will appear smaller from Columbia Avenue due to the smaller ground floor and second floor, which will be located farther from Columbia Avenue at the rear of the building. The parking garage level will be visible from Columbia Avenue, though some portion of the garage will be below grade and not visible. Elevation wise, it would appear as a full story and have louvers for garage ventilation along the wall. There is the stormwater bioretention piece as well.

*For the by-right plan, what will be the actual appearance and heights that will be visible above ground? A glance at the drawing suggests it is about 10' for the main part.*

Assuming this question is still pertaining to the garage elevation at the rear, it will again vary based on final grading, but what we have shown is approximately 10'6". Some portion of the parking garage will be below grade and not visible.

*How much more visible is the larger portion next to the Coop?*  
Closer to the Co-op, it is approximately 18'.

*Do we have any changes of the rear view between the original plan and by-right plan?*  
From the rear, the ground floor and second floor will appear pushed back for most of that rear façade, almost 30' pushed back from the corner of the Co-op building. So, it would appear less visible from Columbia Avenue.

2. *What are the plans for the woods after construction? When will there be more information regarding planting of trees and "landscaping" (i.e. creating a natural environment) in that area?*

The forest conservation area will be improved and maintained as a natural forest area. It will not include any hardscape, paths or benches. Trees that are dead or determined to be in poor condition, through the forest conservation submission and verified by the City Urban Forest Manager, will be removed. NDC is developing the tree protection plan to address conditions during and following construction. NDC representatives and City staff have a call scheduled on this topic for Monday, March 11. The City has a role in determining the replanting requirements for the forested area.

The County development review process and the City tree permitting process run parallel. NDC will submit documents for City tree impact assessment, tree protection plan and tree removal permits.

3. *Will there need to be changes to parking along Columbia Ave? Is the stretch between Sycamore and Poplar going to be a fire lane restricted for parking?*

The NDC plan does not determine changes in parking on City streets, that is a City decision. Columbia Avenue behind the City property is currently a no parking zone. The development review requires County fire department access review and approval. If Columbia Avenue between Sycamore and Poplar becomes a designated fire lane, the current parking restrictions would remain in place.

4. *On stormwater, will the green roof be split into two or three separate units? Will the total runoff to be treated be the same estimated volume as before, and what are NDC plans for increased green roof maintenance as a result of having separate units?*

The green roof plans in the by-right development are the same size and configuration as in the earlier plans. The green roof is in three parts: a 4,550 square foot area, a 2,635 square foot area, and a 4,350 square foot area. In the earlier plan, the three areas were all on the roof level. In the by-right plan, the 4,350 square foot area is on the lower level. NDC will maintain the area as originally planned, in adherence with the stormwater standards and requirements. Currently there is no stormwater remediation of run-off from the parking lot.

5. *If public utilities such as light poles or bus stop infrastructure need to be moved, whose financial responsibility is that?*

These decisions will be part of later discussions of reconfiguring the intersection with SHA, the City, the utilities and the bus systems. The financial cost will also be determined at that time.

6. *There's still confusion about why the NDC plans do not identify an alternative bus stop and Bikeshare location--can NDC restate its expectation and commitment on this?*

These decisions will be part of later discussions of reconfiguring the intersection with SHA, the City, Montgomery County Bikeshare, WMATA and RideOn. NDC and the City are committed to maintaining the bus stop and Bikeshare at the Junction. The County development review process includes review of the impact on local transportation, with transportation planners and SHA reviewers participating.

7. *Can you explore further why a significant decrease in size of space to rent will not affect rents?*

Rental rates are driven by the market. The rental spaces at the front of the building are preferred by prospective tenants and the expected rental rates for those tenant spaces are unchanged. The by-right plan is less profitable overall due to the fixed costs of the project which are not reduced with the size of the building. The Development Agreement and Ground Lease include restrictions on the types of businesses that are allowed in the new development.

8. *Can NDC provide more information on the reasons for the waiver requests: property line waiver, parking spaces waiver, and waiver of loading requirements?*

NDC has requested waivers from the County for the rear setback, parking and the loading requirements. The rear setback is regarding the distance from the residential lot that is part of the City-owned property at the Junction. The required setback is intended to buffer adjacent properties. In this case, the residential lot will not be developed and will be part of the forest conservation area.

The Development Review submission includes two waivers for parking: one for 12 spaces and one for 45 spaces. The first waiver, for 12 spaces, is part of the by-right plan. The second waiver is applied to the larger proposal, which is not under review. Therefore, the only waiver for parking under consideration is the one for 12 spaces. The County process allows for

adjustments to parking requirements by consideration of the availability of other options like public transportation and Capital BikeShare.

According to the Takoma Park Master Plan: “Waivers of parking requirements may be approved where overflow parking will not be a problem in nearby residential areas. Considerations for approval of waivers should include provision of adequate transit service and of improvements to circulation and appearance of commercial centers.” (p. 45).

The third waiver is for the loading requirement. NDC’s plan provides loading space through the lay-by as a solution to accommodate the deliveries for the Co-op and tenants, particularly the deliveries by 18-wheelers. County reviewers will need to clarify if the proposal meets the technical requirements of the County code or if a waiver is necessary.

*9. On the Montgomery County Development Activity Information website, for the preliminary plan and the site plan, the “Owner” is listed as the City and the “Owners Representative” is listed as NDC. Obviously, the City owns the property. Can you explain your understanding of what it means to be listed as the Owners Representative?*

When an applicant submits materials to the County for the Development Review, the categories and names of the categories are already set in the form. There is a space for the “Owner” and the “Owner’s Representative” and those categories are static. NDC views their role with the City as a partnership, as outlined in the Development Agreement which is the legal document determining the parameters of the arrangement between the City and NDC.

**NDC call wrap-up**

Weekly calls have been established for the next several weeks.