

# Regular Meeting

<b>Agenda Item #</b>	1
<b>Meeting Date</b>	October 28, 2013
<b>Prepared By</b>	Suzanne Ludlow Deputy City Manager
<b>Approved By</b>	Brian T. Kenner City Manager <i>BTK</i>

<b>Discussion Item</b>	Takoma Metro Station Development
<b>Background</b>	<p>The Takoma Park City Council held a public hearing on October 7 regarding a modified proposal to develop the land at the Takoma Metro station. The proposal involves a multi-family building of 200+ units and reorganization of the transit facilities on the site. The concept plan was presented to the City Council on July 22, 2013. A previous proposal by the same developer, EYA, was for a townhouse development. EYA is renegotiating a Joint Development Agreement with the WMATA Board, with action on the Agreement possible in November. If approved, a Compact Public Hearing could be scheduled for January. The development proposal would then proceed through the District of Columbia zoning and historic district review processes, at which time the site plan and building massing and façade would be considered.</p> <p>Twenty persons spoke at the public hearing on October 7; several of them also provided written testimony. Additional written testimony was submitted by six others. The testimony was considered at the Council work session of October 21.</p> <p>After Council discussion, staff was directed to make revisions to the draft resolution using points made in a document distributed by Councilmember Grimes.</p>
<b>Policy</b>	The Council is interested in development and transportation matters affecting the Takoma Park community.
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	n/a
<b>Attachments</b>	Draft revised resolution
<b>Recommendation</b>	Consider the resolution.
<b>Special Consideration</b>	

Introduced by:

**Resolution 2013-XX**

**Resolution Regarding Development Proposed for the Site of the Takoma Metro Station**

- WHEREAS,** the City of Takoma Park deeply values the access to bus and rail transit provided by the Takoma Metro station on our border with Washington, D.C.; and
- WHEREAS,** the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is a public body whose responsibilities include providing exemplary transit services while maximizing transit accessibility, use, and transit-generated revenue; and
- WHEREAS,** any development of WMATA-owned land must further this transit mission by seeking maximum financial returns from development activities while maintaining exemplary transit access and service; and
- WHEREAS,** WMATA wishes to enter into an Amended Joint Development Agreement with EYA, which had previously proposed building a townhome development on the Takoma Metro station property; and
- WHEREAS,** as part of that Agreement, a detailed concept plan for development of the Takoma Metro station property has been prepared similar to the one presented to the Takoma Park City Council by a representative of EYA on July 22, 2013; and
- WHEREAS,** any concept plan to be considered as part of a Joint Development Agreement should incorporate changes stemming from the findings of the traffic study and the comments of the community, and WMATA should work with the City of Takoma Park as a Local Jurisdiction before the Agreement is considered for WMATA board and board committee approval; and
- WHEREAS,** the access by pedestrians, bicyclists, handicapped patrons, and bus riders should be easy, safe, comfortable and attractive and the transit facilities must be of an adequate capacity to accommodate the community's transit needs for decades; and
- WHEREAS,** any development of the property should complement the surrounding neighborhoods in Takoma Park and Washington, D.C.; and
- WHEREAS,** the Council held a public hearing on the Takoma Metro development concept plan on October 7 and received testimony from 26 people and organizations with varied opinions on the proposed development; and
- WHEREAS,** the concept design places the drop-off location for the Metro station's elevator entrance at a distance two to three times greater than the current location, posing a hardship for persons with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS,** the concept design places a loading dock in a location opening directly onto Eastern Avenue and in a configuration such that large vehicles, including waste-hauling and delivery trucks, must back across the sidewalk (which will be a primary pedestrian path to the transit facilities); and

**WHEREAS,** the concept design shows five stories along Eastern Avenue, with three stories set back just 23 feet from the property line and two additional stories just eight to ten feet back from the front of the building, which would be a large mass directly across a narrow right of way from single family homes; and

**WHEREAS,** neighborhood compatibility suggests that the building height should be similar to the four above-ground stories found in the four multi-unit resident apartment buildings constructed near the Takoma station in recent years, and upper stories of the building that front along Eastern Avenue should be more setback from the lower stories; and

**WHEREAS,** the concept design places parking access lanes only nine feet from the adjoining multifamily residential property on Eastern Avenue, providing little buffer for the residents; and

**WHEREAS,** the concept plan shows 178 parking spaces for the 212 apartment units which, at a .844 parking ratio is too high for a transit-oriented development, creating neighborhood traffic impact and risking sacrifice of transit-use revenue to driving; and the plan shows just 98 parking spaces for transit users despite significant community demand for parking, discouraging transit use by community residents who wish to drive to the Takoma station; and

**WHEREAS,** green space on the property is a valued amenity and should be recorded as a permanent park of approximately the same size of the existing green space; and it is important that the green space be attractive and usable; and

**WHEREAS,** WMATA is conducting a traffic study for the area around the Takoma Metro property to provide information on the extent to which the development may impact streets and intersections in the area and on the measures that may be taken to address that impact, which the City will comment on at the appropriate time;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT**

**SECTION 1.** The City of Takoma Park requests that WMATA's staff and board consider the comments of the City prior to any action that would affect the Takoma Metro station property and transit facilities and the neighboring community and business district.

**SECTION 2.** The City asks WMATA and developer EYA to modify the concept design

associated with the Takoma Amended Joint Development Agreement, to fully address concerns expressed here about the safety (loading-dock positioning), transit-accessibility (location of drop-off for persons with disabilities), neighborhood compatibility (setback from Eastern Avenue, NW; massing on, and step-back from, Eastern Avenue NW; building height no more than the four stories of other Takoma residential development;, and adequate buffer from neighboring building), and traffic and transit-use impact (number of residential parking spaces) of the Takoma project prior to a vote on the Amended Joint Development Agreement.

**SECTION 3.** The City appreciates WMATA’s policy that it “coordinates closely with Local Jurisdictions to implement its joint development program” and asks that such coordination, with the City of Takoma Park as a Local Jurisdiction, continue for the duration of the Takoma project, and that developer EYA, per WMATA’s requirement “to work with Local Jurisdictions throughout the joint development process,” maintain regular contact with the City, working in a timely way with the City regarding design changes, planning, and other project milestones.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the City Manager shall inform the Montgomery County Executive and Council of the City’s comment to WMATA concerning the Takoma Amended Joint Development Agreement.

Adopted this XXth day of \_\_\_\_\_.

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