

**Pre-Submission Community Meeting for the
Takoma Junction Preliminary and Site Plans**

November 27, 2018

MEETING MINUTES

The meeting began at approximately 7:05pm in the Takoma Park Middle School Cafeteria, located at 7611 Piney Branch Road, Takoma Park, MD 20912. Present at the meeting on behalf of the applicant were Jingjing Liu and Adrian Washington of NDC Takoma Junction, LLC (“NDC”), the applicant, Erin E. Girard and Laura M. Tallerico of Linowes and Blocher LLP, land use counsel for NDC, Colin Greene of Streetsense, the architect for NDC, Paul Dorr and Glenn Cook of The Traffic Group, the traffic consultants for NDC, and Bradley Job of AMT Engineering, the civil engineers for the Project. Approximately 81 neighbors and interested parties attended the meeting. Ms. Girard began the meeting by introducing the project team and asking all attendees to sign in and identify whether they wanted to be a party of record, explaining that being listed as such would entitle them to receive notices relating to the application. Ms. Girard explained the relationship between the Montgomery County (“County”) entitlement process that is now commencing and the initial City of Takoma Park (“City”) process that concluded with the passing of a resolution in July 2018 authorizing NDC to file Preliminary and Site Plan applications for the project. Ms. Girard explained that the purpose of the meeting was to receive feedback from the community prior to filing the preliminary plan and site plan applications. She then explained the process that will occur after NDC files the applications, as well as the entities that will be involved and the opportunities for further public comment during the process.

Using PowerPoint slides, Ms. Girard then introduced the location of the Property and noted that the back triangular portion of the property has different zoning and will not be

included in the applications. Ms. Girard explained that the total size of the proposed building is 53,550 square feet, the same number that was vetted and approved by the City. She explained that following approval by the City, NDC noticed a discrepancy between the density approved by the City and the FAR allowed by the property's zoning. As a result of the discrepancy, Ms. Girard explained that NDC is working to purchase density from adjoining and confronting properties. Attendees asked Ms. Girard to clarify what that meant. Ms. Girard explained that the plans for the building are larger than the allowed FAR and that NDC will either have to transfer density to the property or reduce the size of the project. An attendee asked what is meant to transfer density. Ms. Girard explained that, within certain zones, density is like "Lego" blocks that can be transferred from one property to another. Attendees asked further clarifying questions about density and its relationship to height and massing. In response, Ms. Girard explained that height is capped by zoning, regardless of the density transfer, that some components of a building, such as parking, are not included in the density calculation, and that 0.75 FAR did not necessarily mean that a building would encompass three-quarters of the lot as the density could be arranged either vertically or horizontally.

An attendee expressed concerns that the building had expanded from 30,000 square feet to 40,000 square feet to 53,000 square feet and that the expansion had not been done transparently. Ms. Girard stated that the building, as approved by the City, was 53,550 square feet and that any previous numbers the attendee heard were contemplated in earlier phases of the design process. Another attendee expressed that she felt density transfer was "illegal" and Ms. Girard explained that the Zoning Ordinance allows it. Ms. Girard then reviewed the draft preliminary and site plan drawings, explaining that post-filing all technical drawings would be available online for review.

Mr. Greene then went through a PowerPoint presentation that included architectural renderings, floor plans for all floors, architectural elevations for the front and rear, and a streetscape plan. At the outset of the presentation, Mr. Greene explained that the Project had been adjusted according to the City of Takoma Park's resolution. During the presentation, Mr. Greene explained the 1) architectural features of the Project; 2) parking, access and circulation for vehicles and pedestrians; 3) open space, including streetscaping; 4) loading and deliveries; and 5) green features and stormwater management. Both during and following the presentation, attendees asked questions and made comments.

A few attendees expressed frustration at being shown architectural renderings that they had already seen at previous presentations to the City that were not drawn to scale, some stating they were misleading. Mr. Greene did not agree that the plans were not to scale, although he acknowledged hearing the comment and noted that the presentation also included to-scale plans. Attendees also asked a series of questions about the streetscape and public space. In response to questions about the dimensions of the Carroll Avenue streetscape elements, Mr. Greene explained that 1) there will be an 8-foot wide pedestrian clear zone, with no seating, running across the Property; 2) where the public open space is located, there will be 35 feet from the curb to the building and 7 feet between seating and the curb; 3) along the layby, there will be 2.5 to 3 feet between permanent bollards and the pedestrians; and 4) the layby itself will be 12 feet to accommodate trucks. Another attendee inquired as to how many people could fit in the public space and expressed a concern as to the location of the trees in the public space. Mr. Greene noted that the space was approximately 2,700 square feet in area and explained that the plan views would help clarify the various relationships.

A number of attendees asked about the future locations for public transportation amenities, including the crosswalk, bus stop and a potential future bikeshare station along the Property's Carroll Avenue frontage. Mr. Greene noted that the crosswalk would remain at its current location, and Ms. Girard explained that NDC cannot provide locations for any bus stop or bikeshare at this time because NDC needs input from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation on these issues, which will not be provided until after filing. Another attendee expressed concerns that the plans lacked bike amenities such as bicycle racks. Mr. Greene and Ms. Girard explained that the submitted plans would detail bicycle amenity locations and that the Zoning Ordinance mandates a certain number of long and short term bicycle parking spaces. In response to a question regarding NDC's awareness of a planned bicycle lane on Carroll Avenue, Mr. Greene explained that NDC is reviewing it.

There were a series of questions regarding the trash removal plans. In response to these questions, Mr. Greene responded that trash will be kept in 4-cubic-yard dumpsters in an enclosed area with drainage and that on trash day, a porter will bring the dumpsters from their location to the roadside for pick up. Mr. Greene explained that this practice is not uncommon for commercial areas and that an example is Bethesda Row, although he did not know the specifics of the Bethesda Row operations and had not experienced this situation with one of his own projects.

In response to specific questions regarding parking, Mr. Greene explained that the parking spaces would be sized according to regulations, that drive aisles would be wide enough for two-way traffic (approximately 18-20 feet), and the garage would have a 7-foot clear height, which would not be high enough to accommodate deliveries larger than vans within the garage. In response to questions regarding the garage supports, Mr. Greene noted the locations of the

pillars on the plan and stated that they are shown as 2' x 2', but that a structural engineer would have to finalize their size and location. One attendee asked about the excavation depth for the parking garage and whether a geotechnical report would be done and submitted to the city. Mr. Job responded that the depth would be 10-12 feet and that a geotechnical report had been prepared. In response to safety concerns regarding the garage, Ms. Girard stated that the garage will be well lit and noted the possibility of surveillance in the garage. In response to a question regarding whether the rear portion of the garage would include windows, Mr. Greene explained that it would not but that there would be vents.

In response to inquiries regarding the sufficiency of parking, NDC's traffic engineers responded that they are still calculating the adequacy of the parking and stated that different tenants would use the parking at different times. They also noted the proximity of the site to the Metro, although, in response to a question, Ms. Girard acknowledged that they were not expecting all employees to walk or bike to the site. Attendees also asked about accommodations for electric vehicles, shared vehicles, and Uber/Lyft. Mr. Greene explained that, because NDC is seeking LEED gold, parking for electric vehicles would likely be included. Mr. Greene also stated that shared vehicles and Uber/Lyft can be accommodated, but that the team is still looking into specifics. An attendee asked what measures would be taken to protect the Co-op's parking for Co-op customers. Ms. Girard stated that that is for the Co-op to decide.

There was then discussion regarding the location of handicapped parking within the garage, and it was suggested that there should be a handicapped space near each elevator. Mr. Greene noted that they would further evaluate the proposed four handicapped spaces' location. Attendees asked whether there would be paid parking and/or reserved parking and, if paid, whether the first hour could be free. Mr. Greene stated that NDC has not yet decided these

specifics, and, in response to further comments, noted that decisions had also not yet been made regarding whether the garage would be attended and whether hours would be restricted.

Attendees asked whether tenants had been identified and what the total building capacity might be. Ms. Girard responded that tenants have yet to be identified and that capacity will be determined by which tenants ultimately choose to lease space in the building. In response to questions regarding the financing of the project and NDC's intent to purchase other properties in Takoma Junction, Ms. Girard explained that such questions were not relevant to the purpose of the meeting. In response to a question regarding the split ownership of the property, Ms. Girard explained that NDC is working through various options with the City.

Attendees asked a number of questions regarding the buildings' corridors. Mr. Greene explained that the internal corridor had to comply with fire safety regulations, which require a point of egress on to a public right-of-way, and that the service corridor between the Project and the neighboring Co-op would be terminated in a railing, would not provide access to the woods, is open to the sky, connects to the Co-op door on the south side and is 10 feet clear in width.

The team then responded to questions regarding stormwater management and noted that the City would only review the stormwater plans and that the civil engineer would design them. In response to an inquiry, Mr. Greene located the stormwater feature on the east side of the rear wall and identified the black line in this location as its outer wall. Mr. Job explained that this stormwater feature is in a below-grade concrete planter.

An attendee commented that the Property was previously used as a dump and asked what would be done if hazardous material were uncovered; and who would cover the removal costs. Ms. Girard explained that NDC would consult with the engineer if hazardous material is found and that payment would be worked out with the City.

A number of questions were asked concerning deliveries to be made in the proposed layby lane and whether a separate loading area would be necessary to serve the project. An attendee commented that there will be logistical difficulties if multiple deliveries arriving at the layby at once and that such issues might hamper NDC's ability to attract tenants. Mr. Greene responded that delivery times would have to be tightly controlled and coordinated between NDC and the Co-op. Attendees also expressed concern that trucks will only be able to enter the layby from the west and that the trucks might travel on neighborhood streets in order to enter the layby. NDC's traffic engineers confirmed that trucks can only enter from the west, but stated that this should be efficient because eastbound traffic on Carroll Avenue tends to be lower at typical delivery times. An attendee asked whether the traffic consultants had counted trucks as part of their traffic study and Mr. Cook confirmed that they had. Another attendee commented that individuals might park in the lay by and that enforcement might be an issue.

In response to questions about where the Co-op's trash would go, Ms. Girard stated that it would go somewhere on the Co-op's property. A Co-op's representative that was present then stated that the agreement between NDC and the Co-op does not provide for the Co-op's trash and the Co-op is exploring this independently.

Regarding the driveway providing vehicular access to the parking garage, Mr. Greene confirmed that it is 22 to 24 feet wide and can accommodate two-way travel. Attendees expressed concerns regarding pedestrian safety because the sidewalk runs in front of the garage entrance and the public open space is near the garage entrance. Mr. Greene responded that elements would be incorporated to ensure safety, including a stop sign, mirrors, and signage. Ms. Girard also noted that special paving for the sidewalk could be included to minimize the safety risks. With regard to vehicular access, concerns were expressed regarding visibility

exiting the garage, and some suggested that left-in and left-out movements should be prohibited. Another attendee disagreed. Ms. Girard noted that a site distance analysis would be done as part of the applications and that appropriate turning movements would be studied with relevant agencies as part of the application process. An attendee asked if the driveway is spaced far enough from the Philadelphia Avenue light to meet the regulations, and NDC's team confirmed that it was. Another attendee asked whether it would be possible to deck over part of the ramp. In response, Mr. Greene stated that this had not been considered because NDC wanted to create a clear zone above grade. A number of attendees questioned whether there would be back-ups on the driveway because of backups on Carroll Avenue, and NDC's team confirmed there could be. Some attendees expressed concerns about the proximity of the driveway to the fire station, and Mr. Cook noted that the fire station is capable of preempting the traffic signals so that the emergency vehicles will have the right-of-way at the intersections. In addition, Mr. Cook explained that the sirens will be heard by vehicles exiting the garage so there will be no safety issues with the emergency vehicles from the Fire House. A volunteer firefighter in attendance confirmed that the fire station has this capability and that the driveway will not be a concern.

In response to questions regarding the wooded triangular property to the rear of the project, Ms. Girard explained that it would remain wooded and that more trees might be added. She also confirmed the zoning line between the two properties would be shown on the submission materials. Mr. Job explained that the plans would include a line of disturbance, which would be a little beyond the proposed building. They also explained that a forest conservation plan would be submitted and any tree disturbance would have to be mitigated.

The intersection of Carroll, Ethan Allen, and Sycamore Avenues was also discussed. An attendee asked whether NDC's traffic consultants consider the intersection a failure. Mr. Cook

confirmed that the intersection was currently failing and that they were exploring with the State Highway Administration potential changes to the intersection. It was noted that the community would have input on the proposed intersection improvements. Another attendee asked whether NDC could construct and/or occupy the proposed building before intersection improvements were complete, and Ms. Girard responded that the timing of the required intersection improvements with regard to project construction would be worked out as part of the review process. An attendee commented that the “all red” phase of the light at the intersection should not be changed, as it assists school children with crossing the street. Another attendee commented that, regardless of the improvements made, traffic will remain a problem as more people will travel through the intersection once it is improved.

NDC’s team also responded to questions about traffic generally. An attendee asked whether the traffic impact analysis would account for the maximum capacity of the building. NDC’s traffic consultants explained that the traffic impact analysis is based on national standards, which tend to be conservative. In response to further questions, Mr. Cook confirmed that updates would be made to the traffic study to reflect projects in the area, but the daycare in particular was left in to be conservative. In response to another question, Ms. Girard explained that projects could be denied due to a lack of transportation capacity.

Concerning the next steps in the process, one attendee expressed concern that questions raised at City Council meetings had gone unanswered. Ms. Girard stated that the submitted plans would be online for review and that the M-NCPPC staff report, to which community members will have an opportunity to respond, will answer many questions. Ms. Girard also explained that many elements are still uncertain because input from State and County agencies is necessary and these agencies will not give input until after the application is filed. An attendee

asked if there would be a post-filing meeting. Ms. Girard stated that such a meeting was unlikely, but that the community would receive notices of the filing, that the plans would be posted online, and that there would be a number of additional opportunities for public comment. An attendee asked about the phasing and staging of the construction. Ms. Girard explained that the building would be constructed in one phase and that NDC had yet to determine the exact staging. An attendee asked how to follow up with the team after the meeting. Ms. Girard noted that her contact information was included on the notice and that she would hand out her business card to those interested.

The meeting ended at approximately 9:35 p.m.

These minutes were prepared by:

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