

Monday, October 3, 2022

Elizabeth F Wallace

Takoma Park City Council Candidate for Ward 1

Responses to TFA Questionnaire

- Please describe your vision for what you'd like Takoma Park officials to do to promote these sites for revitalization.
 - The new council must learn from the experiences of the Junction, the library, and maybe even the Community Center on Maple. We must unearth what went right and what went wrong in order to create a set of best practices and metrics we can use should we try again to revitalize any tracts that may be currently 'un- or underused.' I trust that the outgoing council will share what they learned in hindsight and what they might have done differently. Any future projects must be a win first for the residents and environment, and also the city government, the developer, the tenants, and the traffic on both city and state roads.
 - Per the attached map, the larger city-owned, non-park land that is not already in use is mainly limited to the Takoma Park Recreation Center on New Hampshire and the Takoma Junction parking lot. Other large tracts of land you may be referring to are not owned by the city. Any collaboration between the owners and the city of Takoma Park to develop such land to our best interests must be done with the utmost care and consideration since we don't have a great track record. For example, Adventist may have their own vision for the land and the university. We have to work amiably with EYA at Takoma Metro so that we are not overwhelmed by the traffic and possible overflow of parking. It's one thing to push our ideas and another to work so we can live together as good neighbors for decades. That being said, perhaps we can agree that multi-use buildings with affordable housing, shops and some community amenities will be the outcome.
- Automatic exemption from rent control restrictions for a fixed period of time (e.g. 10-20 years)?
 - Without being presented with more relevant data, I can't presume that there is a causal relationship between rent stabilization and the lack of new construction. We don't have a lot of space to build. I think a majority of the private homes were built

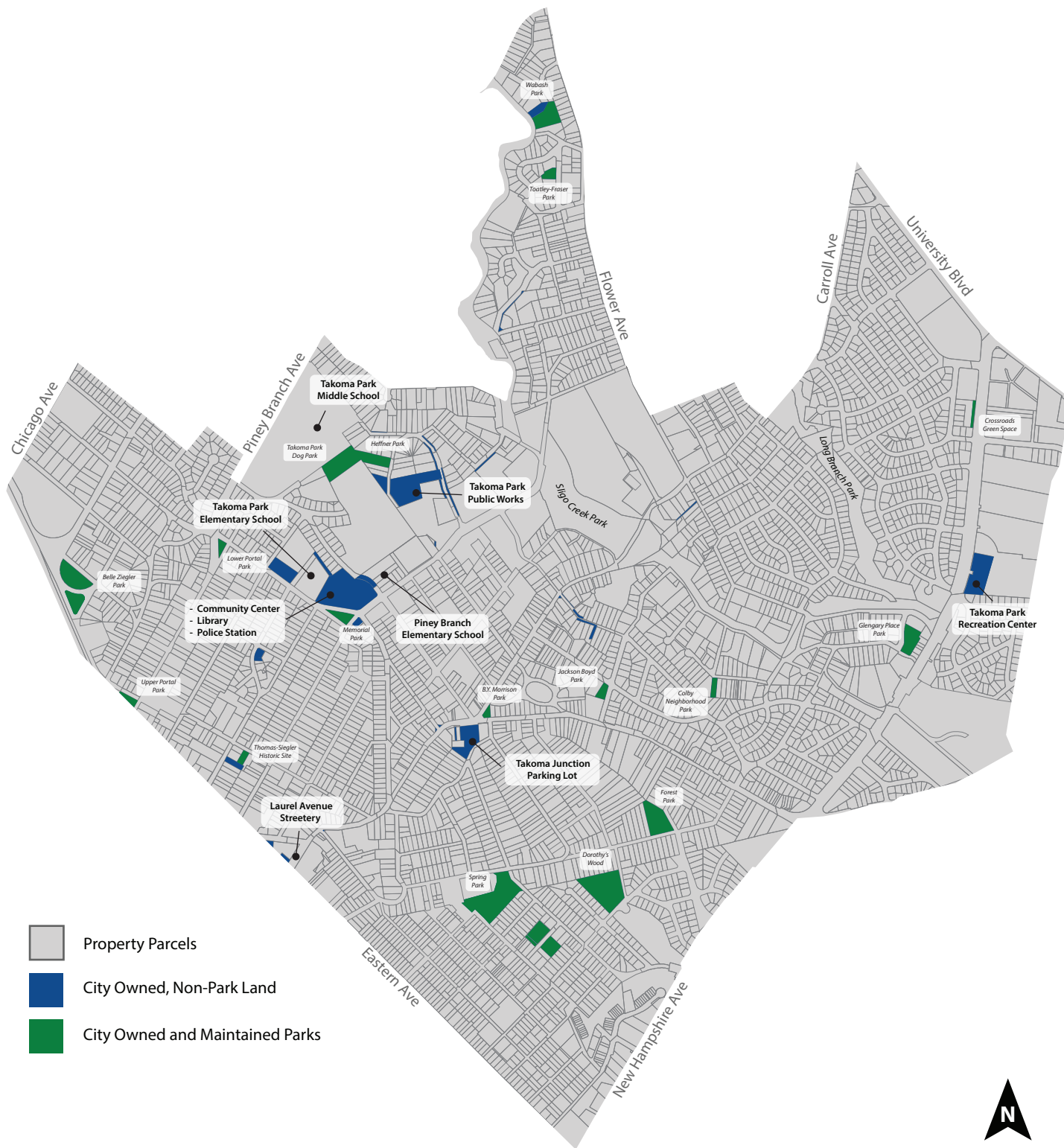
before 1980 as well. Mine was. It's a testament to the builders that they are all still being inhabited by owners or tenants.




- So apart from that, I think builders should make their investment decisions with the understanding that Chapter 6.20.030 of our charter currently states that newly constructed rental facilities with two or more dwelling units are eligible for exemption from rent stabilization for a period of five years after the issuance of a rental license pursuant to an application for exemption. Perhaps they can accept that.
- However, one may argue that the code could use a review since its prior history goes back as far as 1985, however, without a more substantial justification, I cannot, at this moment, agree to a 10-20 year automatic exemption. I'd have to see the numbers, the intended configuration, how the decision would affect the community at large and confer with other council members to decide if an amendment to the municipal code is the right path.
- *Thrive 2050* and designations for properties that are adjacent to transit hubs
 - In general what I know of the plan is forward thinking, however, it would be easier for me to say I support, or don't, the revision of land use designations if I could see proof that what's envisioned really does fulfill the Thrive 2050's promises.
 - Metro: The Takoma Park City Council has no purview over the Takoma Metro station, so are you implying that the land use designations would apply to the properties on the MD side along Eastern, and maybe even Takoma, where single family homes are now? Without that information, I can't reply to that part of the question at this time.
 - Takoma Langley: When I was born I lived near what is now the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Transit Center in a post-war, two-story garden apartment. My mother said it was hot and treeless. I visited the apartment complex using Google Maps the other day. It is still treeless, and in the summer, I imagine, very hot.
 - I could support land use designations there that would include engaging "third spaces" amid smaller sized and varied multi-family units, walkable streets in mixed-use centers and affordable commercial space for the small businesses who already contribute jobs and products needed by the community. While it's currently easy for some people to telecommute, I don't know how well the new transportation hub will really support people who may still need to drive miles to work in person because the companies are not located in Takoma/Langley area

and are not at “the other end of the line” either. I would not want to support zoning changes for another lifeless downtown Bethesda.

- Do you support the building of a new high school located in Takoma Park or Silver Spring?
 - I would not want any student to have to go to an overcrowded school. Rather than building a new school, perhaps it would be possible to repurpose a structure *like* the Discovery Channel. There might be no football or soccer field but perhaps students who don’t care for field sports would attend and be encouraged to exercise in a well-equipped gym.
 - That being said, the MCPS and its budget are not under the purview of the Takoma Park City Council.
- The Montgomery County Public School system previously proposed expanding Piney Branch Elementary School in a way that would eliminate the indoor pool. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?
 - The pool would be a welcome advantage to our students, as it was for my son, but the MCPS and its budget are not under the purview of the Takoma Park City Council.
- Permanently close all or part of Laurel Ave and other commercial spots to increase the public space for our residents and commercial patrons.
 - I would consider voting to permanently close part of Laurel Ave but not all of it. Downtown Takoma needs all the parking spaces it can get. However, there should be equity in how the public spaces are used. The restaurants on Laurel have access to more seating than those on the other side, like Mark’s Kitchen. It affects the bottom line and it’s an unfair advantage. Other locations would have to be considered with the same concern for equal access.
- Cycling
 - It’s a particularly daunting task to provide safe bike lanes for cyclists of all backgrounds in Takoma Park due to the hills, parked cars, two-lane roads and more. Takoma Park driveways are part of the problem as they were constructed when home owners had only one car. Getting to the most active cycling corridors safely is important too. I look forward to reviewing plans that take all of these concerns and more into account.

- It's also important to make Takoma safe for pedestrians to cross streets without fear of a vehicle of any kind which doesn't yield or come to a full stop at a crosswalk or stop sign.
- Vacancy Tax
 - Before one could create a vacancy tax, it must be determined what our city would consider "vacant". Some cities, like Vancouver, exempt primary residences that are used for at least 6 months of the year in periods of 30 or more consecutive days. While the vacancy tax might spur property improvements, I would not want its enforcement to affect our residents as harshly as some DC residents have experienced.
- Reaching across the aisle
 - There are many methods that can help build consensus. Rather than bringing in another outside consultant, it might be best to hire residents who already have the skills to teach us how to do it ourselves. That way we can use the knowledge in our daily affairs as well.
 - Mediation
 - Sociocracy:
 - Braver Angels Debate
 - Human Library



-  Property Parcels
-  City Owned, Non-Park Land
-  City Owned and Maintained Parks

