



Takoma for All sent ten questions to all 13 candidates for city offices on September 19, 2024. We received detailed responses from 11 candidates. One candidate declined to respond and another candidate was not responsive.

We are making all responses public for all voters in Takoma Park. Below is a compilation of all the responses so the reader can learn about their candidates as well as candidates from other wards to make an informed decision about their vote.

Please use the Table of Contents below to jump to specific questions or candidate responses. The candidates' responses have not been altered in content, though the formatting has been synchronized to allow for easier reading. The questions are repeated in the header of each page as an additional aid.

We express our deep appreciation for the time and thought that went into responding to these questions.

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Dear Candidates for Elected Office in the 2020 Takoma Park City Council Election,

[Takoma for All \(TFA\)](#) is a group of Maryland and Washington D.C. neighbors working to strengthen a vibrant, inclusive, prosperous, resilient, and transit-friendly community. We advocate for [smart growth principles](#) and for creating and preserving affordable and market-rate housing, commercial spaces, and community amenities, including schools, parks, recreation facilities, and public spaces.

Thank you for standing for election to city office. To help us understand your position on topics of interest to our group and the Takoma Park public, would you please provide responses to the following questions, in as much detail as you feel comfortable?

## Vision

1. Please share your overall vision for Takoma Park in broad strokes. Include your views on actions that address sustainability, economic vibrancy, and housing affordability or housing access.
- 

Mayor

Talisha Searcy

My vision for revitalizing Takoma Park is rooted in our rich history of being an inclusive and progressive community. A place where it does not matter how much money you make or the color of your skin, in Takoma Park you can thrive. My overall vision for Takoma Park is a community where everyone can live, work, play, and thrive. This means that we must focus on the needs for our entire community. We need to think about every person. From the single mother in an apartment on Maple Ave. who dreams of owning a home to the retiree who wants to downsize. We must meet all our residents' needs. This spans multiple aspects of one's life.

- a. **Sustainability:** Climate change is impacting everyone. We must mitigate its impacts. First, under my leadership as mayor, the City has conducted a Takoma Park Stormwater Resiliency Study which identified things that the City could do to address stormwater problems on public and private property. We also worked to provide funding for these projects. The city also offered grants to multifamily buildings to support electrification and stormwater mitigation.
- b. **Economic Vibrancy:** We have a growing and lively business community. From the Takoma Langley Crossroads to Old Town, Takoma Park is the place to come if you are looking for amazing food and community. However, with the move the Washington Adventist Hospital, we lost our largest employer. We must make sure that we have economic diversity, meaning more housing, employers, and small business to support our community.
- c. **Housing Affordability and Access:** The City has a lack of housing diversity. We have affordable apartments for individuals but no way for them to grow. I have spoken to residents to simply want more space, a 3-bedroom apartment or a townhouse. However, the only alternative is a \$600,000+ single family home. We must address fill our missing middle housing problem. This means identifying incentives for the development community to create the types of housing we

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need. It also means providing funding opportunities to residents to help them with improving their living situation.

## Ward 1

### Shana Fulcher

So much of this is addressed in your questionnaire below, so I am going to be very broad in my strokes.

My single mom bought our first home in Montgomery County through the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program. I deeply understand the stability provided to a family in homeownership through the impact that it had on my life. It's disappointing Takoma Park has never had a development project that triggered MPDU requirements.

As a teenager, my mom and I aspired to live in Takoma Park. I thought it was extremely cool to be in a city where people didn't just embrace their liberalism but flaunted it. I've always been artsy and I thought the hippies of Tacky Park were who I wanted to be when I grew up.

Now that I'm here, living in Ward 1, I have some regrets. While fortunate to live within walking distance of schools, public transportation, businesses, and even a community college, I don't have the neighbors that I had growing up. I don't live on the same block as single moms and new immigrant families. I can count the Black families that live on my street on one hand. Takoma Park must make some changes to live up to what we claim we stand for. We need more housing. We need to make space for new businesses. I'm looking forward to opportunities for duplexes in Ward 1, within a city that has access to all the things that make a living environmentally sustainable.

As a mother, I truly embrace my Girl Scout Leadership opportunities. I always want to "leave a place better than" I found it. I am excited about the work that I have been able to do as Ward 1 Councilmember and I look forward to doing a lot more. I'm proud of the team that I have worked with on Council. I enjoy supporting them and the support that they give me. This is not because we all agree all the time, but because we hear each other out and find compromise.

### Jessica Landman

My vision for Takoma Park is of a distinctive small city, nestled in MoCo and alongside its DC and PG neighbors, that is 'vibrant, inclusive, prosperous, resilient, and transit-friendly,' (TFA's view, which I share) with a quirky personality that embraces 'live and let live', while going the extra distance to welcome many newcomers to America and people of limited means with our homegrown voting and housing policies.

## Ward 2

### Cindy Dyballa

Since my first term I've described a vision for our community that we all want to live in:

- inclusive –for all our cultures, races, ages;
- affordable –for a range of incomes, housing types and lifestyles; and
- sustainable—for our climate, environment, and fiscal health.



*Question: Please share your overall vision for Takoma Park in broad strokes. Include your views on actions that address sustainability, economic vibrancy, and housing affordability or housing access.*

This cuts across almost all city policies and programs. Some actions I am working toward: to grow our housing options as well as protect our current tenants and improve housing quality; support and expand local businesses; build sustainability in to all these; and expand our city sources of revenue to decrease reliance on single family property taxes.

## Ward 3

### Matt Bormet

My vision for Takoma Park is a place where families of different incomes, geographies, and family types can work together to help each other. My family moved here so our kids would be in school with kids that didn't look like them, spoke different languages, and lived in different kinds of housing. We also wanted a walkable community that allowed our kids to play safely outside. Those things exist today but we must work hard to improve on past successes.

I believe our city will be more vibrant and sustainable with housing for all income levels. A sustainable future requires giving people transportation options that don't involve driving alone in a car. Economic vibrancy requires talking to people who want to invest in our city and not demonizing them. It also requires new businesses like ours.

I am laser focused on actions the City Council can actually take in a timely manner to address these issues. I support the four housing tax credit proposals on the table at the council, and hope the council votes on them soon. I support safer roads for our kids to walk alongside and attacking the climate crisis with a city-wide traffic calming plan that makes people comfortable getting out of their cars. I support dialogue with leaders in the development industry to find ways to move forward after the junction debacle. I want us to be productive partners in redevelopment of simpler projects, like those on New Hampshire Ave, so that in the future we can have an Adventist Hospital site that meets our community's needs.

In sum, I am less interested in talking about big picture grandiose ideas that can often be unfeasible, and more focused on what the city council can actually do. I am action oriented and simply don't have the time in my day to wax philosophical. If you want to get things done, you should ask a busy person to do them. I'm that person.

### Lucy Moore

I want to be part of a Takoma Park that lives our values. We are proud of our diversity, our progressivism, and our commitment to affordability and sustainability. We love our festivals, our farmers markets, and our walkable streets. I want to push more of our values into action through our City budget, programs, and policies. This means prioritizing dollars and services for the one in five Takoma Park households that live on under \$35,000 a year, such as the continuation and expansion of the Direct Cash Assistance program. Long term, we need more housing for everyone and more, denser development of all kinds. This will create more for everyone: more of the kinds of places we love for more people to enjoy, more of the local spending we need to keep our smaller retail corridors thriving, and more housing and development in our neighborhoods that are walkable to major public transit hubs.

## Roger Schlegel

My vision is that Takoma Park is the centerpiece of a broader, interconnected community reaching from Rock Creek to Northwest Branch and from the Beltway to the Fort Circle ridge in DC. Within our boundaries, we are prizing and protecting the waters of Long Branch, Brashear's Run, Takoma Branch, and Sligo Creek; our patchwork of protected upland and bottomland forests, and the urban forest canopy, understory, and other vegetation that provide habitat, refuge, and migration routes for animals as part of a healthy ecosystem. We as humans are recognizing that we belong to this Takoma Park land for as long as we live here and are obligated to pass it on in a more healthy condition than we find it now, even with the threats posed by climate change. We are educating each other and cooperating to manage public and private land in ways that respect the ecosystem's interconnectedness – through efforts such as canopy protection, stormwater management, food forest plantings, energy efficiency upgrades, local alternative energy generation, greater reliance on the local foodshed, and the use of non-automotive transportation by those able to do so.

In terms of our built environment, I envision that we are putting into practice the concept of “healthy urbanism” or the “fifteen-minute neighborhood” where people are healthier and happier, where life is quieter, where relationships are stronger, and where money circulates more within the community. The economic vibrancy of this place begins with access to affordable and nutritious food and primary health and personal services. It proceeds to sustainability-oriented businesses that provide green approaches in terms of buildings, energy, transportation, and landscape. Retailers, food establishments, and places for performances or festivities round out the economic picture, along with local offices or meeting places for businesses that may or may not have their headquarters here. The mix of businesses in Takoma Park serves and mirrors the cultural diversity of the broader area, including parts of Silver Spring, Prince George's County, and the District. Young people growing up in Takoma Park find their first job experiences here and proceed to build meaningful relationships with local employers that help them develop great work skills as well as career interests.

In terms of housing, Takoma Park functions as a true hometown in my vision, in the sense that people at any stage of life, from youth to retirement, can find affordable options for continuing to live in the community should they wish to do so in their next stage of life. No one has to fear or worry about being displaced from their home, and homes, whether rented or owned, are maintained in healthy conditions. The provision of affordable housing remains exemplary and well above average for the County and in comparison to the District – such that workers earning lower wages need not endure costly, unhealthy, and environmentally damaging commutes; there are also realistic options here for people displaced from elsewhere by climate change to find good homes here. In no way does Takoma Park feel like an affluent enclave. The overall mix of housing occurs at a wide range of price points but skews toward affordability, which is achieved by creative and purposeful public, non-profit, and private efforts and policies. There is a robust program of rent stabilization designed to prevent renters from being housing burdened while providing complementary resources and measures to ensure that rental housing is climate-adapted, safe, and comfortable. Moderately-priced starter homes and downsizer homes are a significant part of the housing supply and are made possible in part by judicious guidance given to builders or renovators that has gradually reduced the typical square-feet-per-capita size of homes, either at the time of construction or through incentives to create more than one dwelling unit within the same existing structure or on the same plot of land.

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New housing has thus appeared in different ways throughout the City, although a large amount of new housing has been created in originally automobile-oriented sites along New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard and on vacant institutional land. New clusters of housing have been carefully designed to provide a village-like feel, with green gathering space, good linkages to pre-existing neighborhoods, and business, educational, and play spaces that help to draw the broader community together.

In my vision, our city is organized around twelve linked nodes of activity (in addition to the parks). Along the edge, and shared with neighboring jurisdictions, are (1) the Crossroads, (2) Brown's Corner (north end of Carroll Avenue), (3) Long Branch (top of Flower Avenue), (4) Montgomery College, (5) Old Town, (6) the New Hampshire Gateway (Eastern to Poplar), and (7) the Ethan Allen Gateway. An inner ring of nodes entirely within the City includes (1) the Sligo Creek Entrance/Recreation Center area, (2) the University/former Hospital/Erie Avenue area, (3) Maple Avenue, (4) the Municipal/Library/Schools area, and (5) Takoma Junction. A reliable and frequent circulator network serves these twelve nodes as well as Purple Line, Bus Rapid Transit, and Metro stations, provides transfers to the Silver Spring circulator, and attracts significant ridership from areas just outside the City boundaries. Circulator routes provide advantages over driving because they are able to pass through certain street connections exclusively, so that automobile cut-through traffic is discouraged. Cyclists and walkers benefit from well-lit, shaded, and safe routes across the community, with cyclists afforded routes that ease the burden of hill-climbing. The speed limits in residential neighborhoods are 18 mph or lower, with a courtesy rule of "5 mph when people are present." Not only children but also wildlife can safely step into the street, every time. Visitors to Takoma Park come away wanting to implement the "human ecosystem" policies, designs, and patterns of interaction that they have experienced here.

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

My vision for Takoma Park is much of what I see at present. A vibrant, high quality service community with a solid and reasonable government. A city that functions with inclusion and equal opportunity for all, at the forefront of its existence. The City of Takoma Park has been a settling place for immigrants and native persons of color since after the Civil War. We can only continue with what makes this city so special by continuing to do what is necessary to ensure affordable and plentiful housing for those desiring to be a part of our community.

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

I envision Takoma Park as a community where everyone is able to experience a sense of belonging, rooted in shared values that reflect our diversity and our long-standing commitment to practicing good governance and providing a community where all can thrive. I aim to promote an array of housing opportunities, ensure that our City supports recreation and economic opportunities for all,

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build an even more vibrant local democracy, and strike a balance between sustainability, equity and resilience.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

My vision for Takoma Park on creating a more equitable, sustainable, and vibrant city where residents across all income levels have access to affordable housing, green spaces, and opportunities for meaningful employment. Maintaining and improving the Takoma Park leadership in climate emergency will be one key focus, with initiatives around renewable energy, transportation solutions, and green infrastructure. Housing access and affordability are essential, and I am committed to policies that support mixed-income developments and improve existing affordable housing stock. This vision includes fostering local businesses, enforcing city's social services with more job opportunity for low incomes, and creating more opportunities for economic development through smart growth strategies.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them

### Amy Wesolek

The Takoma Junction project failed partly due to unresolved traffic issues and non-community inclusion at the beginning of the project. I would support reconfiguring the intersection to improve traffic flow while maintaining pedestrian safety and reducing neighborhood cut throughs. I envision a more community-oriented approach to reimagining the Junction, with input from local businesses and residents. I believe we can come up with a very modern commercial center that benefit both the city and its residents if all parties are included during the studies.

These are complex issues, and I welcome the opportunity to engage further with Takoma for All and other community members.

## Inclusion and Consensus Building

2. A [consultant report](#) recently commissioned by the City Council found that “Takoma Park is a ‘Tale of Two Cities’ with very clear, stark divides across lines of race and class. Understanding how to provide multiple platforms for diverse voices in the city and how to elevate those voices that often remain unheard will be critical for the success of any engagement effort deployed in the future.” How will you ensure that diverse perspectives are adequately represented in city discussion and decision-making, particularly with respect to residential, commercial, and public facility development? How do you plan to build consensus across different perspectives around sensitive subjects, and what experience do you have in reaching “across the aisle” and overcoming divisions?
- 

### Mayor

#### Talisha Searcy

To build consensus, first we must meet people where they are. We must educate as many people as we can on the issue. Then, we LISTEN to their thoughts and needs. Therefore, starting with where we agree and recognizing and valuing lived experience is key. At the end of the day, the key to consensus is making sure that everyone feels heard and their needs considered.

Since serving as mayor, the City of Takoma Park has increased its community engagement activities. These activities included going door to door to inform residents about the Minor Master Plan Amendment and hosting a series of informational meetings. As mayor, I hope to continue community engagement to build consensus within the community about development.

Additionally, I have a proven history of reaching across the aisle to get things done in the city. I have built relationships at all levels - county, state, local - that allow us to leverage available resources to meet those community needs. For example, to avoid having residents travel to Rockville, to speak about the Minor Master Plan, we had the county council come to the City of Takoma Park. Similarly, we have worked to engage the development community to learn more about what challenges they face. All these things are important to realize our shared vision for the city.

### Ward 1

#### Shana Fulcher

It is clear from our City Council meetings that minorities, low income residents, residents parenting young children, and young voters are all underrepresented in that space. In order to balance the uneven perspectives represented in Council meetings, I spend a lot of time communicating via email, in person at meetings with residents, and attending events throughout the City and County to ensure I hear different resident perspectives.

In order to be a more inclusive city, I am prepared to advocate for us to move towards a policy in which all Council meetings are “linguistically inclusive.” This would mean having as many City Council meetings every year that we can afford to have live translation for. We would likely have to have fewer meetings in a year in order to make it economically feasible, but this would be more in line

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with the frequency of meetings in other municipalities such as Rockville, College Park, and Hyattsville.

The City should return to having meetings in different locations, such as the Recreation Center and in apartment community rooms. I appreciate off site meetings take a large effort on our Takoma TV staff, but a change in location could make a big difference in who is able to easily attend

I often meet face-to-face with residents. I have spent a lot of time meeting in person with opponents from my last race to help address their concerns. I work from the perspective that the Council works together as a team, and strive to ensure I hear my colleagues; it’s important for Council members to feel understood even when our votes may not align. This relationship supports consensus building across our meetings.

Inclusiveness is a core value that I think means building consensus. I’m well-prepared to build consensus as my history as a leader, formally, and consensus-builder extends at least as far back as High-School where I served as Secretary of my Class and as a peer-mediator, and continued throughout my life. My consensus-building skills are underpinned by my experience at MaryPIRG and FEMA, and as PTA President, Leader of two Girl Scout Troops, GS Service Unit Leader, Director of Camp Tuckerman, and now, as Councilmember for Ward 1. I am also a mother to four-children.

The commonality among my experiences is that I keep my values and principles in the forefront while looking for places to connect my dots with those of others so that we can achieve an outcome together to the extent possible.

## Jessica Landman

When chairing the Tk Pk Complete Safe Streets Committee to address pedestrian safety and traffic calming equitably, I and fellow Committee members (including TFA’s Emanuel) experienced the negative effects of lack of diverse representation firsthand. The consultant report you cite made some interesting recommendations, such as the development of a ‘stakeholder network’ and having an engagement framework to guide the City staff (and community) in future. Those ideas are worth exploring.

The City seems to have done more to engage with businesses, e.g. through support for and interaction with the Old Town Business Association (OTBA) and the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority Inc. (CDA), than with residential stakeholders.

One promising way to build up a residents’ stakeholder network (and encourage next-generation civic leaders) is to rebuild the community’s tenants associations and community civic associations, some of which were negatively affected by COVID; others may need support to build from scratch. This would create a natural network of leaders attuned to highly localized needs and concerns, likely with diverse language skills. The City staff can work with tenants’ rights nonprofits in MoCo to help achieve this.

On the City Council I would prioritize outreach to residents in affected buildings and neighborhoods when considering legislation. I would encourage the City Council to hold more city council meetings or work sessions at the Recreation Center (or the temporary library site). I would promptly identify

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nominees for City committees from my Ward and call on other Councilmembers to do likewise. And I would ask the CM to build a roster of voluntary translators for relevant events and meetings.

I have years of professional experience building common ground with diverse stakeholders and those with different viewpoints, and believe it always starts with identifying common values and goals, and acting first on those consensus areas to achieve success. For example, I chaired a national network of about 1,000 (often fractious) clean water activist organizations to strengthen clean water laws; they twice voted me a Clean Water Hero for my leadership. I built from scratch a cross-sectoral business/NGO/co-op/restaurant coalition to support responsible fishing legislation. These efforts involve listening closely to identify common ground, a skill I would bring to the City Council.

## Ward 2

### Cindy Dyballa

I continue to make a priority of seeking the perspectives of all our residents on many issues (not just development) and also engaging a broader range of residents in our civic life and city committees. This is not a solo task, and we must be willing to try different approaches. City council has committed to this priority, and city staff have been expanding the set of engagement tools they use. The report cited, for example, describes work to engage the community right around the New Hampshire Ave recreation center. It is challenging, for sure, but we cannot thrive as a community if only some voices are heard. One specific approach I am working on is to bring to life an ARPA-funded community connectors pilot program to strengthen engagement.

Building consensus is even more challenging. I have extensive city council experience in first seeking common ground, then building from there to help shape a council vote. It may not be possible on all issues, and continuing to seek more input can be used to delay difficult decisions. Perhaps we can focus first not on the most divisive issues, but start with what we can mostly all agree on.

## Ward 3

### Matt Bormet

When I finished graduate school, my first job was running the mail room for Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR). One thing I learned very quickly was that we didn’t make policy there based on the loudest voices in the room, but by considering who might be left out of decisions. If we did things based on volume, we would have been working on conspiracy theories all day long. The same holds true at the local level - most people simply don’t have the time or resources to engage with city decisions. The job of any elected official is to balance the concerns of all her constituents, not just those who have the time to participate the most. That sometimes includes people who don’t live here yet! We’re responsible for having a welcoming community, and that requires thinking about the people who want to live here too.

I wasn’t involved in the divisive politics that have defined our local government for the last few years. I was slightly nervous about running for this position given that reputation. Happily, I’ve found 99% of the people I talk to are reasonable and willing to talk.

At our bookstore, we’ve worked hard to make a place where everyone can feel welcome, regardless of their viewpoint or politics. And as a former policymaker on Capitol Hill, I’m comfortable reaching



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across the aisle to pass laws and advance priorities - it’s really the only way things ever get done there. I would put those skills to work in this position.

As part of my effort to reach out to people in the Ward who may not feel heard, I am doing my best to find people where they are. That includes snail mail to every house in the ward, text messages inviting people to events where I can hear their concerns, social media advertisements, and phone calls. We need to be proactive in engaging people who might not otherwise feel they have a say in the future of our city and I’m running a campaign engaged in that work.

## Lucy Moore

I’m an organizer at heart. Effective organizing relies on building trust. You build trust by asking what people need, being transparent about what you need, and finding a path together on common ground. You show up where people are - at playgrounds, bus stops, local events - and you make connections between their concerns and yours. You listen as they do the same. You also have to build awareness of your own relationships to power and pay attention to what blind spots that may bring.

I am running for office, in part, because of my experience organizing with Takoma Park residents and neighbors to successfully advocate for a City Ceasefire Resolution. We worked together to research the Ceasefire Resolution movement and Takoma Park’s history of calls for peace. We built a diverse coalition of community members willing to write letters, attend and speak at Council meetings, and join public demonstrations. We succeeded in encouraging Council to pass a resolution. For some that was a victory. For others the language of the resolution was a disappointment. But in doing so, we built new, valuable relationships that I keep front-of-mind as other challenges and divides arise in our community.

## Roger Schlegel

We can do much better with engaging residents in community decision-making. The City must encourage stronger neighborhood, tenant, and community organizations by routinely calling for their input in processes of visioning, design, decision-making, and evaluation. The City can help to catalyze an independent citywide network of civic organizations by providing space, resources, and publicity for periodic summits or other get-togethers. Designs and strategies crafted upon the lived experience and expertise of residents will be more effective and will be sources of community pride. With regard to issues in my own ward (3), residents need to be involved in how the City addresses issues such as Lincoln and Boyd cut-through traffic, Laurel Avenue street closure, stop-sign running, Eastern Avenue construction, New Hampshire Avenue development, and Sligo Mill Road beautification. Involvement doesn’t necessary require proximity; for example, the post office on Laurel Avenue has patrons from all over the City, all of whom deserve a voice in determining how access to the facility is made available.

Over the three months of this campaign, I am working to reach as many voters as possible in person and to engage in quality conversation about issues, especially those related to housing and development. On a basic level, this is outreach and knowledge-building that I intend to bring to my work on the Council and amplify in deliberations. I will continue to make this work a priority while on the Council, not only by providing informative report-outs on Council matters and City opportunities for engagement, but also by actively seeking out people from my campaign notes who are not



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choosing or able to be more participatory, with a particular emphasis on residents’ diversity of backgrounds, lived experience, type of housing, makeup of household, stage of life, and views on the issues. The time needed for this kind of outreach doesn’t appear out of nowhere. A council member must open up this time by being judicious in responding to, and sometimes redirecting, very active residents who may be accustomed to having their concerns given priority. I have worked hard in my profession as a teacher to make equitable choices in how I seek information, avoid assumptions, set priorities, initiate interactions, respond to requests, and include or exclude people from the conversation.

With this in mind, it is essential that our City Council and staff avoid making assumptions or speaking on behalf of people who will be most affected by policies, ordinances, and site plan review decisions related to housing and/or development. To cite a few examples: it is essential that City Council members (and staff) sit down with residents of multifamily buildings *in their buildings* and, if possible, spend time in apartments, so as to understand what the living environment is and how residents feel about it as individuals or as members of a community. It is essential that Council members experience what it is like to walk or take public transportation to a grocery store. It is essential that Council members understand the factors constraining “mom-and-pop” landlords of small properties from updating or improving their tenants’ living situations. It is essential that Council members seek out and listen to the perspectives of house-burdened homeowners who are feeling squeezed by taxes, can’t afford to renovate to support accessory dwelling units, want to downsize, but don’t want to move out of the community. It is essential that Council members talk with children and young people about their experiences with the schools, recreation, and early job opportunities they are seeking out.

To undermine patterns of participation that are dominated by white residents, homeowners, and to some extent residents without young children, there are a host of strategies that the City should undertake, and the key is always fostering lasting relationships rather than searching out one-time connections. To this end, I would support Council and staff action to: (1) reach out to property managers at multifamily properties, churches, resident leaders, and local organizations to maintain connections in the broader community; (2) nurture the relationships among city agencies and share communication networks in order to reach more residents; (3) emphasize cultural competency to go beyond mere language translation; (4) identify Community Liaisons who can work specifically with communities where trust of City institutions and agencies may be an issue; (4) Use texting as a regular means of disseminating information to those who prefer it; (5) prioritize in-person, on-site engagement opportunities as much as virtual or Civic-Center-based events; (6) repurpose the City Newsletter to pack in a far greater amount of short “blotter”-style announcements and reminders in the same column space; and (7) gently guide highly-engaged residents to use existing channels to resolve problems, while keeping Council members in the loop if staff responsiveness seems to be lacking.

When it comes to climate change, the City can use its communications media and convening power far better to provide residents, property owners, and businesses the know-how and support they seek to respond to climate threats. Early adopters of sustainable living approaches are in every neighborhood. The City newsletter and other media should provide them with platforms for sharing their knowledge and how-to’s so that many more can join them. City sustainability staff should

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coordinate ongoing dialogue among renters and property owners who are trying to go green – with efficiency, energy generation and storage, transportation, waste, food, repair, reuse, and support for native plants and animals. This dialogue and knowledge-sharing can accelerate community efforts and focus City policies in response to obstacles, gaps, and opportunities. Renters in multifamily buildings particularly need support in advocating for efficiency and energy improvements. To the extent the City is involved with increasing demand for environmentally friendly efficiency, energy, transportation, and landscape improvements, this is a great opportunity to foster local green services and employment opportunities, perhaps through partnerships with Montgomery College and with existing businesses and nonprofits. Any sustainability initiatives must respect those whose routines are built around climate-unfriendly technologies and who need more time, resources, or assistance, or new infrastructure in place, before they can make transitions.

In terms of reaching “across the aisle” to develop consensus, in my campaigning in Ward 3, I have not been detecting the kind of polarized, binary distribution of views about development that this question seems to assume. I have been finding broad consensus that some degree of new infill development and new housing can be beneficial to the City and community. There is broad consensus that such growth needs to be guided in ways that preclude the addition of expensive, “luxury” housing, fail to grow the supply of affordable housing proportionately, cause traumatic short-term displacement, cause involuntary relocation out of the community, harm the natural environment, discourage human-scaled interactions, or ignore the need for a transition to a carbon-neutral community. The major differences of opinion seem to be around (a) how much control the City can exercise over private-market development; (2) how viable the options are for using federal, state, nonprofit, or local resources to reduce the costs of development; (3) how much compromise or incentivizing (through tax breaks) is needed to get development underway; (4) the advisability and feasibility of tearing down rather than retrofitting buildings; and the level of trust that residents’ have in the City government’s protection of City interests and values. A sixth question that generally hasn’t been asked, but that would likely have a range of responses, concerns what the ideal built-out population for the City would be, i.e. what is a good target for the City’s population density?

My approach to building consensus is to ask direct questions and listen closely, with empathy, to the answer; to seek to have deliberations grounded in accurate facts, to call attention to common interests in what seem to be divergent views, to call out and reject superficial, binary characterizations and name-calling; and to engaging people in searching for well-synthesized paths forward that help to ameliorate multiple local issues. My experience in building consensus comes broadly from 30 years’ work as a classroom teacher and from years of collaborative theater direction. My three most important local experiences in building consensus in Takoma Park have been (1) as a co-president of the Takoma Park Cooperative Nursery during a challenging period, (2) as president of the Pinecrest Community Association when negotiating a plan for a neighborhood playground that had to be harmonized with the existing community garden, and (3) on the Takoma Junction Task Force, where I brought extensive research and community-outreach findings into the deliberations and helped to lead the development of the final report’s consensus recommendations. Those who worked with me in these situations noted my patience, authentic listening, optimism, and creativity, which helped lead to harmonious outcomes despite the range of perspectives present at the table. When I encounter people who feel differently from me about an issue, even if they are rude, I have trained myself to stay engaged and actually to increase my eagerness to understand

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where they are coming from and what lies beneath or behind their frustration and anger. I have worked to be transparent not only with my thinking but also with my emotions so that I have stamina and genuine interest in engaging with conflicts. I also have trained myself to admit and apologize for my own mistaken assumptions and bad judgments. I never give up on the possibility of developing trust, which is always founded upon honesty and accountability.

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

I am a retired City of Takoma Park Police Officer. During my career, I excelled in Community Oriented Policing. My duties and responsibilities involved reaching out to community members and forming partnerships amongst community members. I worked hard to educate members of the community of government processes and the how's regarding crime reporting and police complaints. I assisted with organizing citizens associations, citizen patrols and a apartment manager's association. These racially diverse community groups met regularly with local government and reported issues and concerns. As councilmember, I would resume such efforts, with emphasis on our growing immigrant community members, many of whom have a feeling irrelevance.

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

Building on progress from previous Councils, I've worked hard over the past 22 months, alongside colleagues, on issues of representation and inclusion. A key focus has been language inclusivity, using my experience as a Spanish-speaking international development professional to improve outreach to non-native English speakers. For example, our City Manager recently committed to providing translation at key meetings, and we held our first Spanish-language public safety meeting in Ward 5, and I arranged for our City police to come to SSIMS, our local middle school (to which only Ward 5 residents are zoned), to connect directly with our Spanish-speaking parents. I seek to expand on these and similar initiatives and try to institutionalize new ways of doing business that ensure greater representation.

I prioritize trust, communication, and relationship-building to foster consensus, believing that while we may not always agree on outcomes, we must be dedicated to ensuring a healthy and robust democratic process. We must also work hard to ensure representation. My focus is on upholding fair, inclusive practices. Community-building among marginalized groups has been central to my career, both locally and globally.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

I'm aware of the deep racial and socioeconomic divides within Takoma Park, and it's crucial to engage all residents in decision-making processes. To elevate diverse voices, I would advocate for community forums, multilingual outreach, and participatory budgeting, ensuring underrepresented groups are not only consulted but empowered to shape policy. My experience in working across

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differences—both in city council and community settings—will help me bridge divides and seek common ground on contentious issues. As for instance, I am a bilingual Takoma Park based small business owner that advocate for unheard voices. One of the reasons for me running for a city council.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them

### Amy Wesolek

We need to ensure that open communication channels exist to all of our residents, regardless of language, race, or class and I am committed to doing this with all residents of Ward 6. I intend to be in dialogue with folks on the ground so that messages can flow from residents to me and vice versa. That should include multiple modes of communication - not just emails but also in person events, flyers, trusted messengers, and more. This will mean that I can confidently represent Ward 6 in our city’s decision making.

I believe strongly in consensus building so that progress can be made. I am skilled at soliciting and listening to varied opinions and then coming up with a way forward. Most recently, I did this several times as board president at Silver Spring Nursery School from 2021-2023. Our families were struggling to raise their young kids without stronger community support given the pandemic’s constraints. I moved forward policies that helped our families right away while also staying true to the values of this longstanding organization.

## Commercial, Residential, and Public Facility Development

3. The city and county approved the [Minor Master Plan Amendment](#) earlier this year, which envisions new residential and commercial development along Maple Avenue and Flower Avenue, including the Washington Adventist Hospital site, in the coming decades. Do you agree with the plan? What specific development projects would you like to see in this area, and how do you envision this project enriching the community and local economy? What would you advocate for the City to do over the next term to advance this plan?
- 

### Mayor

#### Talisha Searcy

I support the Minor Master Plan Amendment. Modifications to land use designations, like those found in the Minor Master Plan Amendment, create more opportunities for housing. Without creative action in zoning, we could have serious consequences for housing affordability and availability in our city.

When it comes to the Washington Adventist Hospital site, I would like to see development that addresses the needs for the community and Washington Adventist University. I envision mixed-use development which includes housing, commercial, and public uses. The project would also address the needs of the university's students and faculty such as classroom space and student housing. It is important for residents to understand that the Washington Adventist Hospital site is privately owned property, and we cannot predict when development will occur. Therefore, collaboration is key. As mayor, I have been and will continue to regularly engage the leadership at Washington Adventist University and Adventist Healthcare. It is also important to work with Montgomery County and in some cases the state to advance any project. I am actively working with county and state staff to ensure that they are familiar with the site before Washington Adventist submits any development plans.

### Ward 1

#### Shana Fulcher

I continue to support the Minor Master Plan Amendment (MMPA). The MMPA uses zoning as a tool to support growth in Takoma Park, a city that hasn't seen a new apartment or condominium building erected in the last forty years. We are a city with strong environmental regulations and with good access to public transportation that can grow in an eco-friendly way. The nation is facing a housing crisis of both affordable and middle income housing. We are positioned well to provide both here in our community.

The new zoning allows for "infill" at parking lots and taller buildings on Maple Avenue. Due to costs of construction, building owners are unlikely to replace existing buildings. Infill is the most likely effect that the MMPA can have on Maple Avenue in the near future. When I met with Montgomery Housing Partnership members, they said exactly this: we are hoping to build on our underutilized parking lots to create a greater number of affordable housing units.

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Some people are claiming that upzoning Maple Avenue properties would result in demolition of existing buildings. This is simply not true. The property values in Takoma Park have been increasing for years. If property value increases were the only factor in a building's existence, owners would have torn down existing buildings long ago.

Some people are suggesting the Council make the hospital property its priority while the Council is focused in-tandem on both existing Maple Avenue housing and hospital property. Currently, the college does not have a development plan for their property. The MMPA makes the development of homes on the property possible in a manner that allows for middle income homeownership opportunities. Takoma Park is truly missing a middle class. The absolute best use for this site is middle income homeownership – and a lot of it. Without adding density to this site for this purpose, we will not make a meaningful dent in the shortage. The fact that the City has rent stabilization makes this the most likely outcome of that privately owned space, which is much to the benefit of our housing market.

The new zoning also allows for street level retail both along northern Maple where rental housing exists and at the hospital site. Everyone benefits from a walkable community, and it is wrong to limit walkable retail to the higher income areas of Takoma Park. Also, many current Takoma Park residents are interested in opening small businesses in this area of the city as they cannot afford the price of commercial spaces currently available in Takoma Park where retail space is also not plentiful. Adding supply to the retail 'housing' market may help lower rental prices, creating more business opportunities in our community.

We need to continue to have strong working relationships with the entities that own land within the MMPA. This requires check-ins along the way. Many of the decisions that landlords, Washington Adventist University, and developers make are not in the hands of the City or residents. We need to be good partners so that they will consider our needs.

### Jessica Landman

The Master Plan Amendment (MMPA) covers a broad area, making different zoning changes in different areas. I generally support the changes on the former hospital site, which call for CRT zoning and building heights of 55' and 70' maximum in areas abutting residential/small shop streets, and up to 120' in portions not directly adjacent to one-and two-story properties. Although some stressed the critical need for strong environmental and stormwater safeguards, with which I agree, overall I detected community support (or neutrality) in public comments on this portion of the MMPA.

I would welcome mixed use development that adds housing, retail and restaurants on Hospital Hill; I would favor the adaptive reuse of existing buildings wherever possible, to avoid emission-generating heavy demolition.

The City Council's role includes ensuring we have the professional capacity to evaluate how proposals will impact stormwater and tree cover – our 2 areas of legal responsibility. We must call on developers to design for avoidance, minimization and mitigation of impacts, especially given anticipated rainfall intensity increases and stress to trees from climate change.

The portion that alters zoning on the Maple Ave corridor goes too far: it establishes by-right 150-foot building heights (approx. 15 stories) for most of the parcels. My key concern is the potential impact

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on our current neighbors. As County Executive Marc Elrich's detailed [critique of the proposal explains](#), this portion of the MMPA "proposes to increase the number of housing units through redevelopment that will replace existing deeply affordable housing, leading to the displacement of current residents who cannot afford to live elsewhere in the County." (Emphasis added by me.)

The displacement risk is real; the verbal commitments to prevent it, made during MMPA consideration at the County Council, are not. They are not enforceable, because they were not written into the MMPA – and they could have been. In my judgment, this aspect of the MMPA is not consistent with Takoma Park's values of equity and inclusion. In addition, very high density development in this location that falls outside of the Thrive 2050's recommended zones for such density (namely, close to Metro or purple line stops or along a major commercial corridor) is inconsistent with Thrive.

## Ward 2

### Cindy Dyballa

I voted for the Plan, as well as a list of adjustments the city council called for. The Plan seeks particular types of mixed-use development, which I would like to see—locally focused and small-scale commerce, and a variety of housing types and price ranges (especially affordable, senior and workforce housing), along with strong protections for current renters and stressing reuse of existing buildings to improve quality. Our community and local economy will be enriched by more and more varied housing choices, more local business opportunities, more residents paying income and property taxes (or rent), and properties seeing greater use. I note that the Plan is just one part of city policies and programs to realize renovation and development, and that projects are still to be proposed and make their way through the county review process.

## Ward 3

### Matt Bormet

Yes, I would have voted in favor of the resolution on the MMPA at the city level and I was glad to see the County Council approve it. It's important to note that the City of Takoma Park doesn't have land use authority, and the only real lever we have in that space is making noise. I would like to see as much multifamily housing as possible at the Adventist site, along with transit options, retail, and medical space. An urgent care at the site is sorely missed. The city needs to work productively with Washington Adventist University, which now owns the hospital site, and avoid talking any future project to death.

The major hurdle to redevelopment at the Adventist campus is that our reputation as a place to build anything new is in the gutter due to the divisive fight around the junction. We need to prove ourselves as a fair actor willing to be a partner in development - and I'm focused on a couple sites where we can walk before we run (more on that in the next answer).

### Lucy Moore

I agree with the City Council's support for the Minor Master Plan Amendment and see it as a start rather than an end. It is a base from which the City and County must act to preserve and improve existing affordable homes, provide new housing at a variety of scales, and create new commercial space. The Minor Master Plan creates a framework to enhance and expand the existing



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neighborhoods along Maple Avenue, but it must be paired with growth and more housing density in surrounding neighborhoods through the proposed modifications to the County's zoning regulations that would allow duplexes and garden apartments within single-family zones.

I want to see apartment or condo buildings with stores on the ground floor at the former Adventist Hospital Campus. This could even involve an adaptive reuse of the existing hospital structures, which would reduce the project's construction waste and carbon footprint. Apartments near Sligo Creek would provide more rental homes with easy access to the creek and within a walk, bike ride, or bus ride of the Purple Line and Red Line. Along with private development I want to see Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) undertake the much-anticipated capital improvements to Piney Branch Elementary School to expand its capacity to serve residents along Maple Avenue and provide funds for improvements at schools served by future development including Rolling Terrace Elementary School and Silver Spring International Middle School.

### Roger Schlegel

People treasure living in Takoma Park because of its unique degree of diversity in the metropolitan area (as well as its relatively healthy natural environment). We must protect, preserve, and grow the City's economic diversity in the face of our challenging regional housing market. When the County Council was deliberating on the proposed Minor Master Plan Amendment (MMPA), I stood up to point out that the rezoning provided "by right" protections and opportunities for developers of infill or tear-down projects, while providing mainly aspirational language about environmental protections, infrastructure capacity, protection against displacement of residents, and assurance of no net loss of affordable housing. I also said that a rezoning in accordance with Takoma Park's demographic diversity ought to incentivize the addition of new affordable housing at various price points.

With the MMPA now in place, Takoma Park needs to guard against displacement and protect affordability and diversity with the limited tools available. It's easy to see that gaining new neighbors through greater density can be a positive for our close-in community. That said, this year's zoning change, which allows greater density and high-rise buildings along Maple Avenue, on the Adventist university and former hospital campus, and in nearby areas, has made tear-downs of existing buildings a profitable option for property owners. It does not include hard-clad guards against displacement, let alone proportional increases in the supply of affordable housing. The City now needs to focus its energies on educating and supporting residents who seek to avoid displacement. Anything the City can do to help generate smaller housing units will create more long-term affordability in this market. Supporting the establishment of a community development bank supported by local investors is one tool to explore.

Children growing up in Takoma Park, families outgrowing smaller units, and adults downsizing in Takoma Park should have accessible options to stay so that this is a true hometown community. Given the historic and continuing economic impacts of systemic racism, the City has an obligation to prioritize the needs of people who are housing burdened in this very costly regional market. Maintaining quality, affordable housing is also key to any comprehensive response to the climate emergency because it allows people without high incomes to live closer to where they work in this very traffic-congested region.



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The best locations for mixed-use development projects in our area (the City) are in the areas that were originally built in the 1950s as auto-centered business districts, primarily along New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard. I'm addressing these areas elsewhere in this questionnaire. Within City neighborhoods outside of the MMPA, there are some good infill development opportunities at three sites in Ward 3: the former John Nevins Andrews school campus on Elm Avenue; the Washington-McLaughlin School (former Ray Road School) campus between Woodland and Poplar Avenues, and the church property for sale at the corner of Jackson and Ethan Allen Avenues. There are two large parking lots in Old Town and (of course) the parking lot at the Junction, but the cost of excavation and then building upward at these sites, given their relatively small size and Historic District height constraints, seems to make infill development difficult. The separate parking areas on parcels behind Carroll Avenue might support a building that wouldn't undermine the historic character of the district, but the complexity of combining multiple parcels for such a project might make it difficult. At the north end of Flower Avenue at Piney Branch Road, a significantly-sized commercial area also contains multiple small parcels and has some new construction already underway.

Within the MMPA, the most advantageous site for development is the large former hospital campus. While I am not privy to the information, I expect that City staff have already been in talks with the property owner, as well as the University, to try to work out ways to encourage mixed-use development on that site. I agree with the MMPA's aspirational statements about reusing, rather than demolishing, existing structures where possible, establishing good connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit through the property, protecting the original campus green as public space, and – of course – ensuring ample provision of new affordably-priced housing units. I would like to see the City Council stand up for these components in any site plan process.

Along Maple Avenue, the large sloping parking lot next to the Park Ritchie is obviously an excellent site for infill development that could actually reduce the amount of impervious surface on that property. The challenge for any new development along Maple Avenue is that if developers are expecting to provide parking while eliminating surface lots, they are likely to encounter Brashear's Run groundwater not far below the surface once they start excavating in that floodplain. Maple Avenue is, as far as I can tell, the most intensively developed floodplain in the entire County because nearly every other floodplain and bottomland in the County has been protected by M-NCPPC. If developers (or redevelopers) along Maple Avenue seek to provide residential parking without excavating deeply, they will wind up trying to use some of the lower floors of their buildings for parking. This will become a tricky proposition in the site plan process because the vision expressed in the MMPA is for a mixed-use, walkable street, ostensibly with retail storefronts.

Piney Branch Elementary School is aging, overcrowded, and restricted in its ability to expand. An obvious idea for the County to explore is moving the school to a new campus on the former hospital site, perhaps in conjunction with a land swap that would allow mixed-use development on the current school site. Related to this idea, it may be possible that the County could purchase the entire hospital campus, which would make land costs lower for any public-good uses, including affordable and moderately priced new housing.

Three critical needs in the MMPA area are access to a full-service grocery store, improvement of transit and bike connections to the Takoma Metro and the two new Purple Line stations, and

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protection of Sligo Creek. The latter must include careful transportation planning to ensure that Sligo Creek Parkway retains its original purpose as a pleasure drive and is prevented from becoming a major thoroughfare for new residents in the area.

If property owners or developers decide to renovate or tear down/replace existing buildings on Maple Avenue, the City Council should seek ways to implement a coordinated, phased approach to prevent displacement of residents who wish to remain living on Maple Avenue. Ideally, a phased approach would begin with government-supported rental of a brand-new building (e.g. on the lot next to the Park Ritchie) which would then provide the temporary housing for residents displaced when other buildings were under renovation or replacement. Developer impact fees could help to fund the temporary use of this first new building for that purpose. It might be that each subsequent building, once renovated or constructed, would take over serving as temporary housing for residents of the next building in the queue, in an ongoing sequence.

I have stated elsewhere my strong interest in supporting, not only “no net loss” of affordable housing, but also a proportional increase in affordable housing so that with new population, the City remains welcoming to new lower-income residents. I would advocate with Council colleagues to put these stronger objectives in place when guiding and incentivizing development in the MMPA area. To my mind, high-priced or “luxury” housing is the least of our needs, so the mix of new housing units should be dominated by a variety of “missing middle” and affordable units.

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

I feel that the Minor Master Plan Amendment was approved with good intention and provides the possibilities for larger multi-dwelling buildings in the future. This would make the area more attractive to developers when the time comes for renovations. The prospects of new businesses and economic growth is exciting for the Washington Adventist Site. Our community has already seen rising consumer activity at some of our businesses in Old Town and the Junction area. The WAH site could also see such activity with the right types of businesses and apartment construction could strengthen our tax base and provide additional housing. Gathering as much information from traffic studies and community engagement should guide decision making going forward

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

Before answering whether I agree or disagree with “the plan,” I believe it is important to differentiate between the Minor Master Plan Amendment as a zoning plan versus a development plan. We are not yet at the stage of seeing a development plan, which is a much more concrete vision for what will likely be built on the site, vs. what can be built on the site. With this in mind, I believe that the previous Council, City and County’s decision to undertake re-zoning was the right decision to take, including the geographic boundaries that were adopted. I am also satisfied that we passed the re-zoning plan, including amendments that were adopted.

*Question: The city and county approved the Minor Master Plan Amendment earlier this year, which envisions new residential and commercial development along Maple Avenue and Flower Avenue, including the Washington Adventist Hospital site, in the coming decades. Do you*

Rather than fixing my view on the end goal, I view the next stage as one of collaboratively exploring possibilities that align with residents needs and priorities, and optimizing what can be achieved to benefit our current and future residents, in accordance with the Plan.

I am hopeful that the Plan Amendment will serve as the amendment/plan that our City needs to bring in much-needed investment to our City to-- improve the quality of our affordable housing on Maple Avenue, increase the possibility of constructing more missing middle housing, provide significant public benefit to City residents in a multiplicity of ways (whether it is retail, childcare, recreational facilities, etc), and allow WAU to modernize its facilities to ensure that it can continue to provide quality education to the students it serves.

As we proceed towards potential development opportunities, I am eager to see our City promote continuous communication and collaboration with WAU, potential housing developers, the County, and other potential investors, to optimize these benefits.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

I broadly support the vision outlined in the Minor Master Plan Amendment for development along Maple Avenue and Flower Avenue. However, I would ensure that any new projects emphasize both sustainability and affordability, incorporating mixed-use buildings that blend residential, commercial, and community spaces. I envision developments that serve the community's diverse needs and create economic opportunities through local hiring and support for small businesses.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them

### Amy Wesolek

I support the approved Minor Master Plan Amendment (MMPA). I believe it lays out a framework for our city to move forward with development opportunities, both residential and economic. I am in favor of smart growth development that is walkable and bikeable, environmentally efficient and resilient, and reflective and uplifting of the multiracial and multicultural community we uphold here in Takoma Park.

I would advocate for a clear and finite process for public feedback on proposed actions. If actions are in line with the MMPA and there isn't substantial opposition or clear misalignment with our values, then I would vote to approve so that we as a city can move forward and see progress towards our goals.

*Question: What are your approaches and priorities for induced economic growth in the city? Where do you see economic growth opportunities, what are current barriers that need to be addressed, and what expertise can you leverage?*

#### **4. What are your approaches and priorities for induced economic growth in the city? Where do you see economic growth opportunities, what are current barriers that need to be addressed, and what expertise can you leverage?**

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##### Mayor

##### Talisha Searcy

The city has not grown. The City's population has not grown since 1980. We have had no new housing creation or mixed-use development during that time. In the long-term, we must increase economic development in the city which will increase the city's tax base. This is critical to ensuring that the City is not overly reliant on property taxes to fund important services and programs. First, we must have a clear understanding of the community needs that we are trying to address with each project. Do we want housing, jobs, a grocery store or other retail, a school, or a park? A single project may not be able to solve all the City's problems. But City leadership and the community must understand how each project individually advances our collective goals. This means conducting robust community engagement to ensure that we know what we want as a community before engaging partners.

Second, we must establish a solid foundation for each project. This means proactively addressing barriers such as zoning changes that might be a deterrent for development. This is one of the major reasons why projects such as the Minor Master Plan are so important.

Lastly, we simply must market our community - the vibrancy, the sense of community, our quality workforce, to show potential partners what our city offers. We must build relationships within the city and externally. As mayor, I have worked with City staff to host development tours for county and state housing and community development staff. There are numerous sites across the city which would benefit from increased density and investment, such as the Takoma Langley Crossroads, New Hampshire Ave, Washington Adventist Hospital.

##### Ward 1

##### Shana Fulcher

The two greatest economic growth opportunities in Takoma Park are a direct result of the MMPA. One, the addition of new middle income home ownership, which will also increase the tax base. Two, the addition of street level retail along Maple Avenue and Flower Avenue will provide more business opportunities while supporting already existing businesses with a longer contiguous corridor. When I attended the Maryland Municipal League's Summer Housing Symposium, I heard the number one barrier to attracting new businesses to Maryland is the undersupply of housing. New businesses would in turn support job growth.

I have gained considerable expertise over the last two years while serving on the Council. I understand how extremely devastating our housing shortage is and am ready to do what I can to support our City Council and City Staff, and to foster relationships with property owners to put us on the right track. As I have stated, I was elected to Council with pedestrian and cyclist safety as a clear priority, and the housing shortage very quickly rose as a new additional priority. I have not turned down an opportunity to talk to experts about housing, either through informal chats or conferences.

*Question: What are your approaches and priorities for induced economic growth in the city? Where do you see economic growth opportunities, what are current barriers that need to be addressed, and what expertise can you leverage?*

I believe we should not only focus on meeting the needs of our current residents, but we should also look forward to residents who want to move here and who will enrich our community.

## Jessica Landman

Economic growth opportunities most needing proactive Council action should be its focus: areas negatively affected by Purple Line construction disruptions, and/or blighted by vacant or derelict buildings along commercial corridors (e.g., NH Ave). Short term, bird-dogging those responsible for construction disruptions to prevent further economic harm should be pursued more proactively. Vacancy tax/enforcement penalty approaches to address blighted sites should be considered.

Longer term, partnering with County and State officials to direct resources for infrastructure, housing and jobs to the area should be our goal. Relevant good ideas along these lines are spelled out in the City's [Housing and Economic Development Plan FY 2019-2030](#).

Along these lines, incentivizing redevelopment of the McLaughlin School site into senior housing, coupled with daycare and health services—and all the attendant jobs -- is something that I would like the Council to explore.

For a fuller discussion of economic growth opportunities, please see the Purple Line question below.

## Ward 2

### Cindy Dyballa

City council can continue to implement the current city housing and economic development strategic plan I voted for, and continue to fund a city economic development program, modest city incentives, and support for our two community development associations (CDAs). I see opportunities both to strengthen current, and to add more small, locally-owned businesses. This in turn will help us achieve the vision outlined in #1 above. Many nearby communities of similar size rely more on business and less on property taxes. Some barriers: many small businesses are renters, with less control over their location, for example parking lot eateries during covid; and some are not part of a CDA, and struggle on their own.

## Ward 3

### Matt Bormet

I'll tell you from firsthand experience: we need more retail space, badly. When we wanted to open our bookstore, it took over a year to find a space that met our needs, and required a lot of work to beat it into shape. Our community is wonderful about supporting small businesses in Old Town, and I'm hopeful we can be just as supportive of businesses along New Hampshire Ave. Completing these projects successfully would be productive for our reputation as a place to invest, and provide us the platform to get to the best possible Adventist Hospital site plan. It is dangerous to write off development as inherently bad -- technically, my wife and I are developers because we developed the bookstore into a community gathering space. I am confident that we can continue to develop Takoma Park in a way that fits with our values, like encouraging neighbors to shop local and providing employment opportunities for our community.

*Question: What are your approaches and priorities for induced economic growth in the city? Where do you see economic growth opportunities, what are current barriers that need to be addressed, and what expertise can you leverage?*

## Lucy Moore

Induced economic growth should mean more, but also better, for everyone in our community. There are economic growth opportunities throughout our City, but particularly along the underutilized and vacant properties on New Hampshire Avenue in Ward 3 and at the former Adventist Hospital Campus. I support the current Mayor and City Council's housing tax credit initiatives to incentivize the construction of more rental housing and investment in existing affordable units and multifamily buildings. I think the incentives, along with the City's ongoing collaboration with commercial property owners and prospective developers along New Hampshire Avenue, will help shift our reputation to that of a city ready to take action.

## Roger Schlegel

In terms of economic development, I would like the City to prioritize green businesses. Existing companies that do renovations, landscaping, or roofing, for example, could be assisted to get into, and expand, the market for efficiency upgrades, solar and geothermal installations, and urban agriculture. With the proximity of Montgomery College and the University of Maryland, the City could partner with these organizations (and the County) to help young people prepare for careers in this likely-expanding sector of the economy. Other green business opportunities could include installation of EV chargers, assistance to local car rental companies in adding EV's to their fleets, and bike, furniture, clothing, and home appliance repair services. It remains to be seen what happens to the regional office-space market over the next few years.

Cross-jurisdictional relationship building, especially with Prince George's County, is also very important in developing a common vision and coordinated incentives for economic development, particularly along lower New Hampshire Avenue, which has the potential to be a vibrant bi-county "Main Street" and hub of commercial activity. An early and urgently-needed first step towards this kind of cooperation is the establishment of effective Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between police agencies and much better performance measures to evaluate how well our own Takoma Park police are deterring crime along New Hampshire Avenue and promoting not only the reality of safety but also the perception of safety. This includes the basic imperative of preventing littering and illegal dumping in areas such as the Sligo Mill Conservation Area. To these efforts, I can bring long standing, detailed knowledge of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor and its neighborhoods on both sides as well as in Lamond-Riggs across the line in the District. I also have cultivated personal relationships with business owners on the Takoma Park side of New Hampshire Avenue and have assisted business or property owners in gaining access to Housing and Economic Development grants or assistance.

With clear Council direction, staff expertise can help our community engage with development in positive ways. Experience has shown that it's too much to expect a small staff on its own to fast-track development, let alone co-manage projects, while also providing responsive community engagement. Putting hard-clad protections in place to prevent displacement of existing small businesses should be the first priority for City staff. Leveraging available grants and funding sources for improved non-automotive transportation options (e.g. a circulator shuttle) is a second important preparatory step if the City seeks to lay the groundwork for more density. A third priority, as suggested above, is facilitating community visioning processes for areas such as lower New Hampshire Avenue in Pinecrest, so that the City and community organizations can respond with one voice when development applications are in the works.

*Question: What are your approaches and priorities for induced economic growth in the city? Where do you see economic growth opportunities, what are current barriers that need to be addressed, and what expertise can you leverage?*

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

Thriving businesses create employment opportunities. They also bring consumers and expose them to other qualities of city business. Old Town is an improving example of this. I look forward to areas such as the WAH campus bringing a similar impact on the economic growth of the city. Assisting business owners who may want to make improvements to their respective businesses, but cannot afford it, could help. Good business, brings good consumers and employment opportunities, thus supporting the economy.

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

To stimulate economic growth, I would like to see us continue to explore new sources of revenue that go beyond property tax, and yet also do not excessively tax our small business owners, that I see as the foundation of Takoma Park's local economy and culture. This will require significant creativity, and seeking lessons from other localities. My profession centers on working with diverse stakeholders to generate out of the box solutions. I will continue to generate opportunities to foster such ideas, proactively foster relationships between stakeholders whose collaboration is non-traditional and might lead to such initiatives, and seek out ideas that might help us make progress on this front.

I also believe that creating more middle-income housing and housing options in our local community will be key ingredients to building a more vibrant local economy.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

Takoma Park's economic growth should prioritize local businesses, sustainable industries, and green jobs. A key barrier to economic growth is the limited availability of commercial space and high costs for entrepreneurs. I would advocate for policies that provide tax incentives for small businesses and push for the development of affordable commercial spaces, especially in areas undergoing redevelopment.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them

### Amy Wesolek

I believe in smart growth for our city. I see opportunities throughout Takoma Park and especially in Ward 6 along New Hampshire Avenue and at the Takoma Langley Crossroads. I believe we need to show that we can be good faith partners to developers, business owners, and residents to push forward projects that will add to our vibrant community. My strong communication and community building skills will be useful as we bring these varied interests together to create change.



*Question: Takoma Park hasn't seen new apartment buildings added since the 1980s, in contrast to significant growth in the county, the state, and the Takoma neighborhood in D.C. Why do you think this is? As a councilmember, what would you do about it?*

**5. Takoma Park hasn't seen new apartment buildings added since the 1980s, in contrast to significant growth in the county, the state, and the Takoma neighborhood in D.C. Why do you think this is? As a councilmember, what would you do about it?**

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Mayor

Talisha Searcy

It is important to keep in mind that several factors that must fall into place for a development deal to be financially viable. I have heard from developers that barriers to development include our rent stabilization laws, uncertainty regarding credits or incentives such as Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs), land prices, interest rates, length of time to get permits from Montgomery County, and costs associated with our strict tree protection requirements. Additionally, we must admit that we have a reputation among developers as being a difficult community to work with.

As mayor, I will continue to collaborate with the community and identify best practices that we can leverage to engage residents during development. For example, Montgomery College used a community engagement team when building the new Catherine and Isiah Leggett Math and Science Building which really helped to address the community needs during construction. I also believe that developing tax credits, being transparent about what they are, and how developers can use the credits, is also important. Lastly, modifying our rent stabilization law is going to be critical.

Ward 1

Shana Fulcher

The Minor Master Plan Amendment (MMPA) was initiated in direct response to the closure of the Washington Adventist Hospital campus. This is the most significant tract of land to be available for development in Takoma Park for decades. The lack of large parcels clearly contributed to our stagnation.

Rent stabilization has also played a role. Rent stabilization makes apartment buildings in Takoma Park less profitable than its neighbors. It also makes it more difficult for developers to get needed financing for projects.

I think it's important to be honest about who we are: Takoma Park has a reputation of being 'unfriendly' to development. This goes as far back as the 1970s when residents opposed having a parking garage at the Takoma Metro Station. Our anti-development reputation was reinforced as City funds were directed to oppose the housing project planned for the Takoma Metro, in DC. Some individuals and advocacy groups appeared to publicly 'celebrate' a developer's failure to complete a nearly finished building that would have provided affordable housing

As I have stated, I continue to support the work that we did on the MMPA. I also will support needed tax abatement for creating new affordable rental units and to rehabilitate aging units. These are the tools needed to attract development to Takoma Park.



*Question: Takoma Park hasn't seen new apartment buildings added since the 1980s, in contrast to significant growth in the county, the state, and the Takoma neighborhood in D.C. Why do you think this is? As a councilmember, what would you do about it?*

## Jessica Landman

By the 1980's Takoma Park, the closest-in MD suburb to DC, had already been largely built out with very few large parcels of real estate undeveloped. We do now have a new large site, partially greenfield, available for development on Hospital Hill.

## Ward 2

### Cindy Dyballa

More important than the reasons for lack of new multifamily development in the past is how we now welcome more investment in new and renovated housing, and what we can do to encourage that. That's why (for example) I have voted for contributions to a city housing reserve fund, support the Plan (MMPA), and am looking closely at the proposed tax credits. Since we have limited vacant land, encouraging smaller multifamily development is important as well as maintaining solid protections for current tenants.

## Ward 3

### Matt Bormet

Takoma Park has a great history of building multifamily housing. I'm not a historian and I'm not sure it's helpful to argue over why we haven't kept that streak going. As a councilmember, I will support forward looking tax credits, discussions with homebuilders, and an action-oriented agenda to move these projects forward, focusing specifically on the two potential projects mentioned above.

## Lucy Moore

Takoma Park has not seen the construction of a new apartment building in over 40 years because of single-family zoning, our isolated rent stabilization policy, and the narrative that Takoma Park resists change.

The vast majority of Takoma Park is zoned for single-family home construction, blocking the construction of new duplexes, townhomes, and garden apartments. As Ward 3's Councilmember I will actively support the county-wide zoning changes, proposed by our County's Planning Board, that would redefine existing single-family zoning to include small-scale, multi-family buildings much like those already found throughout our neighborhoods.

In 1981 Takoma Park led the region in passing a rent stabilization policy that creates stability for renters, who make up half of Takoma Park residents, by tying rent increases to inflation. But for over 40 years, Takoma Park has provided rent stabilization on its own, without a matching policy from the County. As a result, Takoma Park now makes up 2% of the county's population but is home to 8% of the county's affordable homes. This past summer Montgomery County enacted a rent stabilization policy that, along with other affordable housing initiatives, can move us towards housing for all by providing more affordable homes throughout the County. As Councilmember, I will support the City tax incentive, currently under consideration, that encourages building owners to extend deed-restricted affordable housing agreements. I believe this incentive, paired with the other tax incentives that support the construction of more and improved rental housing, will help shift the political narrative that Takoma Park resists change.

*Question: Takoma Park hasn't seen new apartment buildings added since the 1980s, in contrast to significant growth in the county, the state, and the Takoma neighborhood in D.C. Why do you think this is? As a councilmember, what would you do about it?*

## Roger Schlegel

I am aware that Takoma Park hasn't added new apartment buildings since the 1980s, but I have heard only anecdotal explanations for this, which generally emphasize either that "developers have been scared away" or that "rent stabilization makes it impossible to build new housing." I have not heard an evidence-based argument that developers are doing the numbers and simply finding it not feasible to build in Takoma Park, or that they are so in fear of local opposition that they won't try to pursue projects.

The citing of the failed Takoma Junction project as a disincentive to developers seems to be a red herring to me. That case involved an idiosyncratic site with intense design constraints (steep-slope forest, historic district limitations, state highway routes, curves, district-wide parking needs) that the developer either failed to anticipate or found it financially unfeasible to work with. The City first failed the developer by not making those constraints clear up-front; then the developer failed the City by repeatedly bringing forward essentially the same unresponsive plan; then the City extended the process by a couple of years while seeking right-of-way changes (that the State Highway Administration would not support) in order to accommodate the developer's failing design. This was not a site where development was impossible; it was a site where two non-profit organizations had reasonable proposals, in fact, that might have worked within the site constraints.

It seems unlikely that a potential developer of land on, say the hospital campus, the large parking lot next to the Park Ritchie on Maple Avenue, or New Hampshire Avenue would "do the numbers," find a project financially feasible, but then opt not to proceed simply because of a project that hadn't passed muster in the Historic District (and whose developer had then gone bankrupt).

Another possible explanation for the lack of new multifamily housing in the past 40 years is that Takoma Park, like other inner suburbs in this region and around the country, reached a plateau, in terms of how built-out it was, sometime around 1980, and that suburban sprawl in the metropolitan area made it cheaper to build farther out for the next four decades. Not to be flip, but just to throw in a little humor here: it is also true that Takoma Park hasn't seen any new bowling alleys, movie theaters, gas stations, soccer fields, libraries, churches, or recreation centers since the 1980s! Now, however, with gas prices rising and the desirability of long commutes fading, it seems possible that owners of the large parcels in town best suited for development have been quietly waiting for Purple Line and Bus Rapid Transit completion (or nearly so) before they will collectively, and in a somewhat coordinated way, jump into redevelopment or infill development. It is also important not to overlook that non-profit redevelopers such as Montgomery Housing Partnership, albeit with Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) incentives, have indeed been able to renovate large buildings in the City, and not even with an emphasis on market-rate housing.

As a Council member, I would urge colleagues and staff to get a fully-informed picture of the opportunities and obstacles to development, as experienced by for-profit as well as non-profit developers, and with regard to the whole range of costs, including land, permitting, financing, design, construction, advertising, taxes and fees, and ongoing operating costs. I would not accept some of the simplistic arguments that have been amplified in much of the discourse of late. These include the "no new multifamily in forty years" statement (a fact in search of an explanation) considered above. They also include the specious argument that creating new market-rate housing will automatically, via a trickle-down effect, generate new affordable housing. From an economics

*Question: Takoma Park hasn't seen new apartment buildings added since the 1980s, in contrast to significant growth in the county, the state, and the Takoma neighborhood in D.C. Why do you think this is? As a councilmember, what would you do about it?*

standpoint, this argument may make sense on a national or even regional level, but it makes no sense in an in-demand small jurisdiction like Takoma Park: as fast as this jurisdiction adds market-rate housing, relatively affluent buyers and renters are likely to pour into this jurisdiction. Takoma Park is more like Vancouver or San Francisco in this regard than it is like Youngstown or Petersburg. These simplistic arguments also include the notion (implied or stated) that the combination of private developers and private equity investors is the only tool for getting new development underway. Private developers, charging a 4-5% fee, and private investors, seeing 12-20% returns on investments, will of course make the argument to legislators and policy makers that they need x dollars in incentives before a shovel can go in the ground. Firms specializing in non-profit development may not insist upon the same requirements.

One great way to get, and maintain, more “accessible” or “missing middle” housing in Takoma Park is to push for smaller units, i.e. comfortable homes that allocate fewer square feet per occupant, with plenty of options for families. Units with smaller per-capita footprints are likely to remain more affordable over time even if they are not subject to rent stabilization. These could be accessory dwelling units, tiny houses, duplexes, triplexes, or smaller apartments. These smaller places would be closer to the scale of homes that predominated in the 1950s, 1960s, and even 1970s; they would have smaller environmental footprints as well. As Ward 3 residents may recall with the cases of Circle Woods and Dorothy's Woods, our community has in the past zealously guarded natural areas. It's important to ask whether the City wishes to continue along this path. Regardless, the City must keep on prioritizing environmental protection and restoration in considering any redevelopment.

To repeat and emphasize, as Council member I would advocate for our deliberations about housing policy to be informed by transparent fiscal analysis. At the September staff-led Housing Policy Forum, I asked how staff determined that the proposed 10+5 year property tax forgiveness policy (for market-rate multifamily housing) offered the “sweet spot” that would tip potential developers in favor of pursuing new projects. The staff member did not provide an answer to the question although he had implied earlier that staff had landed on that number after some form of careful consideration or analysis. Indeed, as of this writing, the fiscal analysis to justify that and other tax-incentive programs has not been completed yet. Sound policy must be based on sound information, calculations, and projections. Private developers shouldn't be demonized, but their role often is to view land as a profit-making opportunity; the City's role is to look far into the future and ensure a high quality of life long after developers have moved on.

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

This community has always taken great pride in its historical features. This limits some economic growth to a small degree. The re-zoning of the WAH campus and the Maple Ave corridor is a step in the direction of that type of change. Whether or not this type of change needs to occur will be the decision of the community. Gathering consensus from the community, along with responsible surveying and studies would be the appropriate response for the council.

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

*Question: Takoma Park hasn't seen new apartment buildings added since the 1980s, in contrast to significant growth in the county, the state, and the Takoma neighborhood in D.C. Why do you think this is? As a councilmember, what would you do about it?*

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

Our City has not added housing and our population has not increased in more than a decade, while there has been significant growth all around us. Yet we are relatively close to public transit and soon to be even better connected. At the center of Ward 5 is Washington Adventist University/the old Adventist Hospital site. The campus is almost exactly 1 mile to 4 different public transit sites - Takoma DC metro station (slightly more than 1 mile), and what will be three new Purple line stations- Long Branch, Piney Branch, and Takoma/Langley.

I think that the main obstacle to growth in the City is fear of change, combined with distrust that government, and profit-seeking entities are motivated to protect vulnerable populations or the local environment.

My goal is to bridge divides by fostering robust communication and building trust in how the City handles development.

I am also committed to working towards increasing quality housing options for all- with a focus on trying to expand our missing middle options, and creating better access to recreation, green space, and a modernized Piney Branch Elementary School. Although Takoma Park has demonstrated its commitment to providing affordable housing for many decades, it has not actually provided a ladder of local housing opportunities for households to grow their comfort levels or wealth and continue to live in our City—both of which are essential to building intergenerational wealth and ensuring that true equity is being achieved. Also, many residents do not have easily accessible or quality public options for recreating, exercising or accessing green space, particularly in the parts of our City that have the most dense, affordable housing with the least amount of indoor space.

I hope that in the next few years, I can work closely with colleagues and the County to identify and implement strategies that will expand both middle income home ownership and rental opportunities of higher quality housing. I also hope that we can simultaneously consider how to ensure that every resident has easily accessible options for exercise, recreation and green space, if they want it. Finally it is very important to me that we press for a solution - as soon as possible - for Piney Branch ES to be modernized and brought up to the same standard as those in many of the wealthier areas across the County.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

The lack of new apartment buildings in Takoma Park since the 1980s can be attributed to a combination of zoning restrictions, city property tax increment, rent stabilization policies, and community resistance to higher-density developments. I would encourage new multifamily developments by updating zoning laws to support higher-density housing where appropriate, while maintaining and or improving affordability protections.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them

*Question: City staff has proposed new tax incentives to stimulate new housing development and preserve existing affordable housing. Some observers have suggested reforms to Takoma Park's rent stabilization law to stimulate multifamily development. Relatedly, Montgom*

## Amy Wesolek

I believe Takoma Park has gotten a reputation as a place that is not friendly to new development. Since we need new development to ensure high quality and affordable housing for our residents, we need to change how we are representing ourselves to developers. We should consider new and expanded tools to show that we could and would be partners in good faith. We need to prioritize these opportunities and act upon them swiftly and judiciously.

6. City staff has [proposed new tax incentives](#) to stimulate new housing development and preserve existing affordable housing. Some observers have suggested [reforms](#) to Takoma Park's rent stabilization law to stimulate multifamily development. Relatedly, [Montgomery County recently passed a new rent stabilization law](#) suggesting that Takoma Park could align its rent stabilization law. Do you support the proposed tax incentives? How, if at all, would you advocate changing rent stabilization in the city?
- 

## Mayor

### Talisha Searcy

Rent stabilization is a vital tool to reach the goal of maintaining rental housing affordability in the city. At the same time, the City has not modified its rent stabilization policies in decades. Developers may view rent stabilization as a barrier to housing development. Prospective rents, land prices, interest rates, and maintenance costs are a critical components of a housing project's financial outlook. Thus, to address barriers that rent stabilization may have on future development, the Council must pair the policy with other financial incentives. As mayor, I will prioritize a modifying the City's rent stabilization law to ensure that it addresses the negative impact on housing creating but continues the provide affordable housing to residents. I will also continue to support the City's efforts to solidify its housing credits initiatives.

## Ward 1

### Shana Fulcher

Our rent stabilization law has supported affordable rental housing in many ways. Rent stabilization slowed buildings from increasing in value because it suppressed the rents landlords could expect to collect. Buildings were then more affordable for nonprofits to purchase. Today, many of these buildings now operate under deed-restriction, capping maximum rents to no more than 30% of the annual income of the residents. Rent stabilization continues to keep the average rent significantly lower for all rental units in Takoma Park compared to surrounding parts of Montgomery County.

Unfortunately, rent stabilization can also present many challenges. It has become unaffordable for some landlords to make needed improvements to properties. Some homes with apartments in them have taken their apartments off of the market because they were no longer able to make a profit from the rent. Plots of land that could have a small apartment building are instead used to build a single family home, supporting only one family rather than many.

I am not ready to defer to the County's rent stabilization law, as I don't think it is strong enough, but I can understand many reasons why community members are questioning the City's law. We are

*Question: City staff has proposed new tax incentives to stimulate new housing development and preserve existing affordable housing. Some observers have suggested reforms to Takoma Park's rent stabilization law to stimulate multifamily development. Relatedly, Montgom*

forcing landlords to provide a public service. I support continued conversations around how we as a community can create a better balance of quality and affordable housing available to residents.

It has always proven difficult for developers to secure loans for development in Takoma Park due to rent stabilization. Now, we are seeing extremely high interest rates. This is a nationwide problem and has led to many development companies to cease operations. We need to help developers by providing financial incentives to build new affordable rental & middle income home ownership units. Similarly, we need to support rehabilitation of existing rental units. City Staff has four proposals for the current council – one we have decided to table for the time being. The small incentives we provide to builders help give them leverage to secure loans and state & federal grants. Increased demand for housing has been outpacing production for a very long time and we need to create new units.

### Jessica Landman

I support three of the tax incentives proposed by City staff, subject to seeing their final form. The ones aimed at incentivizing rehabilitation of existing buildings, and at encouraging the creation of additional units in existing buildings via tax breaks for the increment of value, make sense (although the tax break for additional units should not be available for properties in which the additional units are used for AirBnB type rentals – only for residential uses. We should also consider having a cap on the per-sq.-ft rental rates beyond which the tax break would not be available.

I do not support the tax holiday for private developers to build market rate rental apartments. The hospital's departure marks the first time since the 80's that a significant vacant parcel has been available for development. We should wait and see whether private investment arrives on its own. Moreover, additional residents will bring additional demand for city services (police, trash, library, etc.); we are currently in a structural deficit and heavily taxed, threatening homeowners on fixed incomes and tenants whose rents are tied to commercial property tax increases: foregoing significant future revenues is not a wise strategy.

### Ward 2

#### Cindy Dyballa

I support the concept of tax incentives based on the city's foregoing some part of future income from the new housing, as part of an array of tools to address our housing needs. It's not a new concept in Takoma Park, as (for example) the city in the past has negotiated PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) for affordable buildings. I am still weighing the specifics and timing of these proposals.

Some tweaks to city rent stabilization may improve it for renters and small local landlords. But I'm not currently interested in major changes to align with the county rent stabilization law (which is very different from ours). I note that the county planning board's earlier recommendation on city rent stabilization in the MMPA was removed by county council, at the city council's request.

### Ward 3

#### Matt Bormet

I support all four tax credits, and would ask city staff to work on additional incentives for building. I do not support changing the city's rent stabilization laws.

*Question: City staff has proposed new tax incentives to stimulate new housing development and preserve existing affordable housing. Some observers have suggested reforms to Takoma Park's rent stabilization law to stimulate multifamily development. Relatedly, Montgom*

## Lucy Moore

I will work with the Mayor and Council to support the proposed new tax incentives, then to evaluate the relationship between Takoma Park's rent stabilization policy and the County's. I oppose changes that threaten existing affordable housing, but I am open to modifications that would apply to new construction so that we can provide more housing. We need to both preserve and grow to do our part in creating a world where housing is a human right.

## Roger Schlegel

It may be that, by the time the next Council begins its term, some kind of policy for subsidizing market-rate projects through property tax forgiveness will have gone into effect. I hope that any policy put into place will be based upon extremely careful consideration of the tradeoffs involved. With a structural budget deficit and property tax collections increasing faster than the rate of inflation, it is necessary to recognize that new projects, and new residents, will generate more demand for City services, as well as potentially new infrastructure. From a fairness standpoint, it doesn't seem just to ask existing residents to cover the cost of City services for new residents – *of the same or greater incomes* – for fifteen years or more, unless the City makes commitments to forestall the expansion of services and expenditures.

The City should be certain that it effectively calibrates any incentives in light of regional demand and County zoning, planning, and policies, which may be incentives enough for developers to increase the local supply of market-rate housing. (The City should continue to monitor the impact of any new legislation at the federal or state level and be prepared to adjust its policies accordingly.) Here are two of the emerging patterns that may already be creating incentives for development within the City boundaries: (1) Takoma Metro-area development will have impacts that need to be evaluated, managed, and perhaps mitigated. (2) Upcoming Purple Line and Bus Rapid Transit stations, including along New Hampshire Avenue in Ward 3, will likely encourage market-rate redevelopment without further incentives.

I understand that rent stabilization is a broad-strokes approach that requires period reexamination to ensure that its structuring and details are meeting policy objectives. As mentioned earlier, there is good reason for reexamining how our rent stabilization ordinance can better incentivize and/or make feasible good-faith efforts by landlords to maintain, update, or retrofit properties for environmental efficiency. This reexamination should take into account not only the policies themselves but also the application processes and access to information and assistance, and overall simplicity of meeting program requirements. From an equity standpoint, it also seems fair to investigate how some kind of means-testing or sliding-scale fine-tuning of rent stabilization could be accomplished without invading people's financial privacy or oversimplifying the financial constraints faced by people in various stages of life and in various situations.

Overall, however, I strongly support rent stabilization on principle as a way of allowing the Takoma Park housing market to resist regional market pressures and thus maintain income diversity within the community. I would strongly resist efforts to align Takoma Park's rent stabilization ordinance with that of Montgomery County, on three grounds: (1) the vast majority of property-tax paying residents I have spoken to favor rent stabilization even though they understand that it effectively increases their tax burden; (2) Montgomery County's rent stabilization doesn't commence for many



*Question: City staff has proposed new tax incentives to stimulate new housing development and preserve existing affordable housing. Some observers have suggested reforms to Takoma Park's rent stabilization law to stimulate multifamily development. Relatedly, Montgom*

years longer after the initial occupancy of a building and is thus far weaker in preventing high rents; and (3) Montgomery County's much greater size (in area and in housing supply) creates a far-different market than what we have in our very close-in, in-demand municipality; so the provision of affordable housing here in Takoma Park requires more vigilance and proactive effort.

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

The responded skipped this question. – T4A

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

I generally support the thrust of the City's proposed new tax incentives. I have also been impressed by the deep knowledge and values of our City's housing experts. I am still learning more and working with colleagues to solidify what is known about exactly how each of the incentives is likely to impact on our City's housing goals (especially in relation to missing middle), and projections on how it will impact our local economy. With respect to rent stabilization, I think the County has done the right thing in adopting rent stabilization, as our City did so many years ago, even if their policy is not as strong or comprehensive as our City's.

Over the next few years, I will be interested to see how housing and our own market is impacted, including seeing studies on projected changes. In the short run, I do not see our City making any changes to our rent stabilization policy with one exception. I would like to see us do a deeper dive on how to better support some of our smaller landlords. In Ward 5, we have many such units, many tenants are living in inadequate conditions, and landlords suggest that they are struggling. I am keen to foster dialogue on how we might make adjustments that would give some of those smaller landlords more capacity and incentive to invest and refurbish our significantly aging and (in many cases) deteriorating housing stock.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

It is really confusing to me at this moment as the incentive does not really go to the low-income tenants but to the developers. However, I support tax incentives for both new housing development and the preservation and improvement of affordable housing. As for rent stabilization, I believe reforms are necessary to balance protecting tenants with ensuring that landlords can maintain their properties and invest in new development. I would consider aligning with the recent changes in Montgomery County's rent stabilization law while advocating for additional support for affordable housing initiatives.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them



*Question: Traffic fatalities have doubled in Washington D.C., and Takoma Park has also seen several recent fatalities, especially along New Hampshire and University Blvd., despite Vision Zero and other initiatives. What specific actions would you propose to make our*

## Amy Wesolek

I support the proposed tax credits. I believe our city staff took their due diligence and put forward options that they think would be advantageous for us as a city while being in line with the strategic housing plan the City Council adopted in 2019.

I believe firmly that rent stabilization is a pillar of our housing policy and one that so many residents rely upon. However, I would support considering a recalculation of our rent stabilization formula if it might spur housing development, so long as it remained extremely stable for residents.

## 7. Traffic fatalities have doubled in Washington D.C., and Takoma Park has also seen several recent fatalities, especially along New Hampshire and University Blvd., despite Vision Zero and other initiatives. What specific actions would you propose to make our city more friendly and safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, and others?

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## Mayor

### Talisha Searcy

We must slow people down first and foremost. As mayor, I have advocated obtaining redlight cameras installed along New Hampshire Ave. I believe that this will be very important to make sure that drivers are not blocking pedestrian crosswalks. I am also working with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to get improvements for several problematic intersections on state roads.

## Ward 1

### Shana Fulcher

As I have said, pedestrian and cyclist safety have been my top priority. I am happy to advocate for stop signs, such as at Grant Avenue, and for no parking areas to increase pedestrian, cyclist and motor vehicle visibility, such as in front of Takoma Park Elementary School. New Hampshire and University Blvd are clearly unsafe for pedestrians. When I have the ear of SHA or a Maryland State representative, I bring up issues in that area, whether it's advocating for red light cameras or for the missing crosswalks to be put back into place. I am more of an expert on the issues in Ward 1, but I recognize that pedestrians are at greater risk of fatality at Takoma Langley Crossroads, so I feel that it is my duty to highlight those issues.

1. We should use **road diets** to narrow our roads, using protected bicycle lanes whenever possible. I will continue to advocate for this to be a requestable traffic calming tool. Takoma Avenue is an example of a street in Ward 1 that could easily accommodate a bike lane between parked cars and sidewalks. When a road is wide and straight, drivers perceive it as safe to speed, regardless of posted speed limits.
2. The City should purchase "**temporary traffic calming devices**" to allow us to experiment with road diets, bike lanes, stop signs, speed bumps, etc. It's not always clear what the solution to a problem is, and temporary devices allow us to be more innovative in solving problems.
3. Make our crosswalks safer by adding **pedestrian lead time** to provide greater visibility for walkers and to allow **pedestrian scramble** to keep cars away from pedestrians whenever possible.

*Question: Traffic fatalities have doubled in Washington D.C., and Takoma Park has also seen several recent fatalities, especially along New Hampshire and University Blvd., despite Vision Zero and other initiatives. What specific actions would you propose to make our*

We need to work together to change the car culture. Takoma Park should prioritize the safety of pedestrians and cyclists over the convenience and shortness of commute for vehicular traffic.

## Jessica Landman

I support using available data from County and city police sources to identify danger hotspots and fashion site specific traffic calming and safety improvements. I served on the County's [Vision Zero Task Force on Racial Equity](#) to make their policy implementation more inclusive and equitable: we should use the Task Force's useful recommendations and partner closely with MoCo and the State as needed.

## Ward 2

### Cindy Dyballa

Safe passage for all on our public ways is critical, for safety, health and climate reasons. I would continue and expand the policies and programs of the last two councils, which have laid the groundwork to do even more. I strongly support our new, data-driven approach to new sidewalks and traffic calming on city roads. We continue to push State Highway Administration for action on state roads in our city. And I'm excited about a grant-funded citywide safety action plan so we can consider how lower speed limits and other measures fit together.

## Ward 3

### Matt Bormet

This issue is personal to me, and has been a professional passion for a long time. As a daily cyclist and parent of two children, traffic safety is one of my biggest concerns in the city, and one that the city actually has control over. I'm a former transportation staffer on Capitol Hill and in that capacity worked hard to [bring attention to](#) safety issues for cyclists and pedestrians, [increasing funding for bike and pedestrian facilities](#), and [expanding the Transportation Alternatives program](#).

The city has no coordinated safety program, and the newly inaugurated speed bump program requires residents to spend lots of time gathering signatures and knocking on doors, something most working families simply don't have time to do. You shouldn't have to spend dozens of hours of your life to live on a safe street. Instead, we need a city-wide traffic safety plan that particularly focuses on places with more traffic incidents, based on data.

We need to start construction on the [improvements to the Met Branch Trail](#) in the city quickly. We need to execute on long-proposed safety improvements along New Hampshire Avenue - the "New" New Hampshire Ave program is now over a decade old without much to show for those efforts. We need to finish the New Hampshire Ave bike lanes next year. We need to finish the Maple Avenue redesign to make it a safer street for the many families walking and biking to school.

Specifically within the Ward, I'm committed to working with ANC members on the DC side of the boundary to fix Eastern Avenue's lane striping problems, put Eastern on a road diet, and install a four way stop sign at Eastern and Walnut. I will work to make sure Laurel Avenue near the streeterly gets necessary safety improvements as well - right now we've got a de facto playground with no fence next to an active road, which is particularly dangerous on the weekend. I would support a two-way closure of Laurel Avenue on the weekends for those safety reasons. We need to fix the bike lanes

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(which are incorrectly striped) and the sidewalks (which are still damaged from the 2008 earthquake) along Carroll Avenue between Old Town and the junction. That's probably plenty of work for the next two years, but I'm going to be open to any safety improvements we can make.

This answer is already way too long, but perhaps the most important thing we do for all of these priorities is to fill the vacant Housing and Community Development director position with someone who has the skills, experience, and passion to start closing out some of these long-standing priorities and who understands the importance of these issues.

## Lucy Moore

We all deserve safe streets. As City Councilmember, I will ensure the continued and enhanced funding of Takoma Park's Public Works Department so that City Staff can complete more traffic calming and sidewalk improvements following the new City policy for providing safe and equitable infrastructure improvements with an emphasis on the well-being of the most vulnerable roadway users.

## Roger Schlegel

This question breaks down into two topics: safety on and near major arteries, and safety along neighborhood streets. To make pedestrians and cyclists safer along roads like New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard, we need to begin by recognizing that these areas, especially the Crossroads area, are among the *most* pedestrian-used places in the County while also being among the *least* pedestrian-safe places. Simply put, drivers of cars and trucks moving through these areas need to encounter pavement surfaces, signage, lighting, narrowed lanes, pedestrian peninsulas and refuges, speed cameras, and stop light cameras, all working together to get vehicles to slow down and be ready to cede the street at any moment to a pedestrian. The speed limit should be lowered to 20 miles per hour (or less) along University Boulevard between Carroll Avenue and Riggs Road, and along New Hampshire Avenue between Merrimac Street and Merwood Avenue. The median fencing and curbside fencing currently installed to channel pedestrians toward safe crossings should be maintained, but if desire paths indicate the need for mid-block crossings, these should be opened up, signaled, and striped. If the Crossroads area undergoes redevelopment, a cycling route along the back edge of the B.F. Saul parcel (southwest quadrant) should connect with the service lanes along the south side of University Boulevard leading toward Carroll Avenue. In the southeast quadrant, a bikeway should be established one "block" east of New Hampshire (see response below to question 8).

Safety along neighborhood streets is a top priority for me as a candidate. I have engaged residents in examining conditions at the Streeter and along the mid-Ward 3 cut-through corridor that includes Walnut, Elm, and Pine as well as Westmoreland Avenue. I've made my own observations during the peak hour at neighborhood intersections. I've worked in the past as Pinecrest Association president to fill gaps in the neighborhood sidewalk network and to get an agreement to keep a Pinecrest-based roofing company's trucks off residential streets. For improved pedestrian safety in neighborhoods, we need to examine each intersection to see how the location of the stop line or nearby vegetation and fencing might need adjustment to ensure that stopping vehicles can see to the right and left. We need to experiment with stop sign cameras at intersections such as Walnut/Westmoreland and Sligo Mill Road/Orchard Avenue to train drivers to obey the signage. We need to paint crosswalks to

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connect ADA ramps wherever cut-through or reckless traffic is becoming a pattern. These incremental changes need to be taken with an understanding of how the cut-through traffic behaves across neighborhood corridors. If possible, the City should instruct navigation apps to remove routes from their databases. If absolutely necessary for safety, the City should begin to explore how forced turns and one-way routings might make cut-through routes too circuitous to be inviting, if this benefit outweighs the added inconvenience for residents entering or exiting their neighborhoods. (It's easy and cheap to experiment with these kinds of routing alterations by using temporary cones or barricades.) With the hiring of a new Traffic Planner position, the emphasis should be on a systems-thinking based approach that emphasizes safety above all.

For greater cyclist safety, I support the completion of the Montgomery County Bicycle Master Plan segments in town. I would like to see the southernmost segment of the New Hampshire Avenue Bikeway very carefully designed to eliminate dangers at the three turns along the route where cyclists are sharing the road with cars. I also would like to experiment with signage that requires vehicles traveling downhill on steep blocks to yield to uphill-traveling cyclists. Piney Branch Road through Ward 1 is a vital route for cyclists offering no safety from cars. This is a long-standing problem not easily remedied, but a reduced speed limit and emphasis on opening up space for "climbing lanes" on uphill sections would make a big difference. New development in the MMPA area should be accompanied by public-amenities agreements with builders to support a convenient, comfortable bike route all the way from the Takoma Metro to the Takoma Langley Purple Line station.

Last, to protect both cyclists and pedestrians – and especially children – the City should see how far it can go in legally reducing speed limits on neighborhood streets. It would seem that an 18 or 15 mph speed limit would be appropriate, along with a rule stating "pass at 5 mph when people or animals are present" – reinforced with signage along flat, play-intensive blocks.

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

In the absence of a comprehensive traffic report to show recent accidents and or fatalities, I would simply encourage the police department to continue distracted and impaired driving enforcement in the mentioned locations. I would also request that SHA conduct a survey of the area and make traffic and pedestrian safety recommendations.

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

I strongly support using data as well as proven methodologies to determine exactly where and how we address traffic calming and making the City more friendly for pedestrians, bicyclists and others. I fully support some of the recent progress being attempted and made towards improving safety in the New Hampshire and University area. I am also putting on pressure and creating enabling conditions to ensure that some of the areas in Ward 5 such as Piney & Flower also receive a higher level of attention for this kind of improved safety. I will continue to work very hard with our State

*Question: The Purple Line is now 70% complete, with opening planned for Winter 2027. Please describe how you will leverage this opportunity with Purple Line developers and local stakeholders for the city's and residents' benefit, as well as by advancing other conne*

representatives, Purple Line construction managers, State Highways, and our City staff (as needed) to advocate for red light cameras, stop sign cameras where needed, and creative traffic calming solutions that promote safer streets. I will fully stand behind budgeting for and enabling the hiring and maintaining of the new City traffic engineer who I hope will help guide us towards data driven, equitable, effective solutions to reduce fatalities.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

Improving pedestrian and cyclist safety should be a top priority. I would support traffic-calming measures, expanded bike lanes, and better crosswalk visibility, particularly in high-risk areas like New Hampshire and University Boulevard. Vision Zero should be fully implemented with specific metrics for reducing traffic fatalities. I will also request more security camera at the at some point. We need stop sign at all intersections.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them

### Amy Wesolek

Public safety is a big concern for residents in Ward 6. The construction of the Purple Line at University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue has made pedestrian pathways unclear and unsafe. Cars trying to avoid construction are detouring through our neighborhoods, driving too fast and too frequently.

I would work with those who can help modify our existing infrastructure to make things safer now. For traffic calming, I would work with staff in Public Works to implement some of the recommendations of the New Hampshire Gardens traffic survey. Some changes might seem small but, if we can alter several things, the effect will add up.

For the Purple Line, the challenge is that multiple jurisdictions have a say in matters there. I would be effective at pressing for change because I am committed to long term relationship building with these county, state, and transportation partners. I would work to see what we can change, but still keep a good relationship for the next time we need to work together.

**8. The Purple Line is now 70% complete, with opening planned for Winter 2027. Please describe how you will leverage this opportunity with Purple Line developers and local stakeholders for the city's and residents' benefit, as well as by advancing other connected transportation means like sidewalks, bike lanes, buses, etc., to increase efficiency and ease for users and reduce CO2 more deeply.**

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## Mayor

### Talisha Searcy

The City of Takoma Park is advocating for pedestrian improvements along the Purple Line corridor. The University Blvd. and New Hampshire Ave. has been one of the deadliest locations for pedestrians. Therefore, I have been advocating for improvements for years. I have spent many years addressing traffic and pedestrian safety issues including adding sidewalks, traffic calming, New Ave

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Bikeway project, and advocating for bike lanes and pedestrian safety measures around the Takoma/Langley Purple Line station. I am happy to highlight the recently installed new sidewalk along Carroll Ave at Merrimac Drive. As mayor, I will support adding and improving bike lanes and will advocate for state and county funding to support this work. We can also do more to protect cyclists and pedestrians through lowering speed limits and traffic calming measures, which I will continue to support as mayor. Lastly, I am looking forward to continued engagement on plans for New Hampshire Ave. Flash Bus Rapid Transit ([BRT](#)).

## Ward 1

### Shana Fulcher

Pedestrian and cyclist safety is my number one concern for our city. Our City Council Priorities include environmental goals and racial equity goals, and lifting up pedestrian and cyclist safety is the best way to support those goals. This fiscal year, the City Manager's Office added a Traffic Planner to the budget. This is because all Councilmembers have shared a concern for pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular safety and quality of experience. The addition of the Purple Line as a public transportation option for Takoma Park residents will only be positive if we are able to safely and easily get to it, which we are now better prepared to do.

Our City also enacted new administrative procedures for requesting sidewalks and traffic calming devices. The new more equitable procedures allow for a single person to suggest a sidewalk or traffic calming device, rather than the request requiring a petition. The person can be a resident within a quarter mile of the suggested location or it can be a staff member. The request is then considered against others within the same fiscal year, according to its public benefit of better connectivity and its utility to traditionally underserved populations. Considering the proximity of the two stations nearest Takoma Park, Piney Branch and Takoma Transit Center, to Wards 5 and 6, projects that better connect Takoma Park to these two stations will rise to the top of the queue in the FY 29 budget if not sooner.

### Jessica Landman

The Purple Line will provide a far easier way to bring people to Takoma Park; we want visitors from both College Park and Bethesda directions to have a reason to hop off here. Takoma Park's 'unique selling point' is its large number of local businesses and restaurants, with their rich diversity of products, cuisines and cultural flavors. The opportunity lies in retaining that unique quality; people in Bethesda would have no reason to travel east to visit a replica of the shops and eateries in their backyard.

The City should work with current businesses and business associations (and perhaps encourage the creation of an OTBA-style voluntary association for the Flower Ave. business district most directly impacted with the actual Purple Line stop) to devise a 'sales strategy' akin to the Main Street USA tactics, to celebrate and promote those unique qualities all along the route in other communities, to strengthen existing local businesses. This would require public-private collaboration, and probably funding, which the City should call upon the Purple Line authorities to provide in partial compensation for the extensive, lengthy disruptions nearby communities have experienced.

*Question: The Purple Line is now 70% complete, with opening planned for Winter 2027. Please describe how you will leverage this opportunity with Purple Line developers and local stakeholders for the city's and residents' benefit, as well as by advancing other connections.*

In addition, I will support and advocate for more County and state resources to complete planned bike routes, and will oppose any further cuts to existing bus services until Purple Line services provide adequate substitutes. And I will work alongside other council members to advocate for compensation (as appropriate) from construction impacts, including re-construction or construction of sidewalks and other 'last mile' infrastructure to blend the new transport line seamlessly into surrounding businesses' street fronts.

## Ward 2

### Cindy Dyballa

Completion of the Purple Line will bring us many benefits, but also brings some concerns. The opportunities are to obtain renovated, expanded and new housing and small businesses, while applying our renter protections. We should continue to work with the Crossroads development authority and our most affected residents to protect tenants and support small businesses, and also to address construction-related safety impacts for pedestrians and residents. The New Hampshire Ave bikeway, for example, will help improve access to stations. Much of the Crossroads area is in a federal Opportunity Zone, offering a way to finance responsible redevelopment. And I'm already a champion of more transportation connections.

## Ward 3

### Matt Bormet

We need to finish all the projects listed in the above question, and also finish our bus stop improvement program. We must provide a safer New Hampshire Ave so that all the new residents living near the Purple Line can commute and play safely.

### Lucy Moore

The opening of the Purple Line (sound the trumpets!) is a tremendous opportunity to connect our communities - through the City's transit, housing, and economic infrastructure - to the largest public transportation project in this region since the completion of the Green Line. It is also a chance to recognize the ongoing suburbanization of poverty and build partnerships with the most vulnerable communities near the Purple Line to prevent displacement.

As Councilmember I will work with City Staff to ensure our Public Works and Housing and Community Development Departments continue to support the communities, particularly in Ward 5 and Ward 6, impacted by the Purple Line construction and opening. This looks like completing projects that support safe pedestrian and bike access to public transit in coordination with County and State infrastructure improvements. In service of Ward 3 residents, I will work with City Staff to advance the design and construction of the New Ave Bikeway, a project that will develop safe bike infrastructure along and near New Hampshire Avenue from Ward 3 up to the Purple Line. It means supporting zoning changes that would allow for small-scale, denser housing, and working closely with the existing small businesses who are invested in ensuring that the Takoma Langley Crossroad and Hampshire Langley Shopping Centers are lively, safe commercial centers that serve all our local communities.



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## Roger Schlegel

As I stated in my 2020 questionnaire responses, the Takoma-Langley Crossroads commercial area is excellently situated for mixed-use infill development, located as it soon will be along a key transit corridor. (The small commercial area at the southeast corner of Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road in Ward 5 has similar potential because of its proximity to the Arliss Purple Line station.) As I discussed in my response to question 4 above, there is a need right now to accelerate cross-jurisdictional relationship-building, positioning current small business owners and adjacent residents at the forefront in revisiting, updating, and fine-tuning the visions contained in the Sector Plan. If and when the time arrives that major property holders decide to coordinate their timing for redevelopment, this cross-jurisdictional vision can help to guide plans and reduce conflict. I don't know the ins and outs of the grants and assistance that can be made available to help businesses persist in the face of redevelopment, have a stake in the profits, and finally find new homes in new buildings; but our Council should push in every way to ensure that if that land gains monetary value, the businesses that currently occupy it will gain as well.

My vision for the Takoma-Langley Crossroads area continues to be for mixed-use development that protects existing affordable goods and services, generates rental and ownership housing units at a variety of price points, incorporates excellent public amenities including a piazza or public square and a play area, improves pedestrian and bicycle access to the area from Wards 6, 2, and 5, protects the Long Branch and Sligo Creek stream valleys, and maintains the character of the adjacent Ward 6 neighborhood in terms of noise and light buffering and traffic circulation patterns.

I continue to believe that care should be taken to integrate the design of the entire Crossroads area and to coordinate the timing and logistics of construction projects across jurisdictions, so that the area, when developed, has an even more cohesive feel and so that the two major road arteries do not function as dividers between neighborhoods or sub-districts. Any redesign of local bus/circulator routes and networks should allow for easy transportation to connect Takoma Park's commercial and major institutional nodes with the Crossroads. (See my response to the first question above in this questionnaire.)

To encourage walkability and bikeability as well as reduction of our community's carbon footprint, innovative designs should be encouraged in coordination with the Counties and State. These could include rooftop or parking-lot based solar installations, narrow-profile wind turbines, the planting of canopy-scale shade trees, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian pathways, and possibly even a cross-intersection pedestrian bridge.

Specifically, the two quadrants of the Crossroads lying within Takoma Park could be redesigned along the lines of the Station at Riverdale Park, with narrow pedestrian-oriented access lanes between buildings that generate shade while providing necessary access for persons with disabilities and small-scale deliveries. On the east side, Holton Lane and its connecting driveway leading down to University Boulevard provide a starting point for thinking about how such a tiny-streets grid might be configured to allow access while discouraging and circulating traffic. On the west side, it would be wonderful to create a north-to-south, shady, pedestrian-oriented route, one "block" off New Hampshire Avenue, that would lead into and through the Takoma Overlook property, past the Recreation Center, and on to the lovely Hillwood Manor garden at Sligo Creek. On the east side, a



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newly designed development could provide an internal connection to the New Hampshire Avenue bikeway already planned.

The large B.F. Saul-owned property at Takoma Langley Crossroads Shopping Center presents an uninterrupted barrier to the adjoining neighborhood right now. To encourage walking and biking, it would seem to be good to create a couple of pedestrian access points (I believe these are envisioned in the Sector Plan). The northern portion of New Hampshire Gardens is the last neighborhood in the city without access to a neighborhood playground, and this has been noted since the adoption of the 2000 Master Plan. Redevelopment of the Crossroads area should definitely include acquisition or transfer of a plot of land well-suited to making a fine new playground that should attract children and families from all over the City and beyond.

I agree with the widely-held vision that Takoma Langley Crossroads and indeed the entire New Hampshire corridor should retain its international economic diversity and be recognized and celebrated as a major economic engine for the northeast side of the inside-the-Beltway DMV. To amplify this identity, it would be great for the State of Maryland, perhaps in conjunction with the Smithsonian or the University of Maryland, to establish a National Museum of the Immigrant Story at the Crossroads. This would be a dynamic institution preserving and celebrating the stories of immigrants from Latin America, Asia, Africa and elsewhere from the years since Ellis Island ceased to be a major arrival point and especially since the Great Society era, when Eurocentric immigration quotas were liberalized. This institution would also have a community and regional presence in helping immigrant communities stay organized, share their heritage, and pursue communal healing in response to trauma and injustice experienced here or elsewhere in the world.

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

The development of the Purple Line can help more county residents who may want to frequent Takoma Park, do so with quicker transportation options. Advertising this option on business and city websites should help with resident and visitor education. An evaluation of access to the Purple Line Station by Ride-On and other mass commuter options is necessary to ensure maximum possibilities of reduced CO2.

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

The Purple Line promises an extraordinary opportunity on so many fronts, particularly on improving equity and decreasing car reliance.

I am already leveraging these opportunities on our behalf and will continue to do so. I have built my own relationships with the various Purple Line stakeholders, including our small business owners, have encouraged, enabled and set up meetings to advocate for more collaborative solutions that advance these goals- especially in the Ward 5 and adjacent Long Branch area, and am working closely with our City's Special Projects team, Public Works to promote improved walkability and

*Question: The New Hampshire Ave Recreation Center site has not seen any redevelopment action despite being a priority over several councils. What is your vision for the site, and what actions do you propose to make progress?*

biking across Ward 5. I will also continue to attend and press for reliable public transit across the area to ensure that we are taking advantage of this unique moment. I also hope that stakeholders across our City will help us to seize this moment, continuing to provide us with strategic information and help us advocate for the solutions we should all be working towards.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

The Purple Line presents a major opportunity for Takoma Park. I will have the city come up with a deep, inclusive and strong studies that line out the real opportunities and by working with Purple Line developers and local stakeholders to ensure the city benefits from improved transit access and reduced congestion. This includes connecting the Purple Line to bike lanes, sidewalks, new parking zones, new business and commercial building, more and strong security cameras, and public transit networks to increase transportation efficiency while lowering carbon emissions.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them

### Amy Wesolek

The time to invest in those relationships is now. We as a city need to be a part of discussions about the Purple Line's impact and the areas around it. I will advocate for the area to be safe and accessible for those walking and riding bikes. My strength in communication and consensus building will be beneficial to all residents of Ward 6.

## 9. The [New Hampshire Ave Recreation Center site](#) has not seen any redevelopment action despite being a priority over several councils. What is your vision for the site, and what actions do you propose to make progress?

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### Mayor

#### Talisha Searcy

The City of Takoma Park's Recreation Center is critical to meeting the needs of residents in areas of the city that currently lack public space and recreational amenities. The Recreation Center development has been and continues to be a priority for me as mayor. While serving as Ward 6 Councilmember, I

- a. Supported the land swap with Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning (M-NCPPC) which was critical to obtaining the City's ownership of the Recreation Center ([resolution here](#)).
- b. Advocated for the project with County and State officials.
- c. Recognized limitations with prior City community engagement on the project and requested a new community engagement project which took a more culturally sensitive approach to engagement ([final report here](#)).
- d. Engaged key stakeholders on the project, including the neighboring properties and faith-based organizations along New Hampshire Avenue.

*Question: The New Hampshire Ave Recreation Center site has not seen any redevelopment action despite being a priority over several councils. What is your vision for the site, and what actions do you propose to make progress?*

- e. Encouraged the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to make improvements to the existing Recreation Center and design activities related to the new Recreation Center.

The city released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to develop the Recreation Center which closed January 2023. The purpose of the RFP was to promote the reuse of the recreation center to achieve the City's objectives of the development of a new recreation facility, high-quality housing, and increased tax generation opportunities. Based on the [proposals received](#), we learned that the current site is not conducive to serving all of these needs. As your mayor, I will lead the council through our [next stage](#) of decision-making on the project which requires us to think about financing strategies and redevelopment options to provide staff with the direction needed to move forward. I am committed to building a Recreation Center which embodies the desires of the community and advances the City's goals.

## Ward 1

### Shana Fulcher

Until we have completed the Library, I do not think it's wise to start another large construction project. From the responses we have received from our RFPs, I think that our priorities for this project need to be narrowed down and reevaluated. The number one priority for a new recreation center is just that, a recreation center. It might be nice to include housing, but it will be difficult on a small piece of land. It is clear to me that when the RFP was written, Staff and Council had it in mind that the housing built in conjunction with the new Recreation Center would be affordable, that the affordable housing construction would be financed by a developer, and that the Recreation Center would also be financed by a developer. That is all unrealistic. If we are going to build a new recreation center, which we should do, it will need to be paid for with tax money. Takoma Park has a problematic history of recreation centers (please watch *They Called Him "Mister Lee"* documentary if you haven't already) and has underserved Ward 6. It would be a great step to better us as a community to provide quality recreation facilities in Ward 6.

For the time being, we should consider continuing the use of the temporary library for recreation, once the new library is complete. It could serve as a small library collection for our Spanish books (which is seeing unprecedented use) and for some recreational activities that do require a gym space. The temporary library is lauded as a sun filled space that residents are really enjoying, which is a welcome contrast to the Recreation Center. The Takoma Foundation has recently considered helping to fund a makerspace, which could have a home there. I do not think that this sublocation would need to be open for the lengthy hours that our current library is staffed. A fix like this seems like it could save money compared to taking on a renovation right now.

### Jessica Landman

The Request for Proposals to undertake the desired redevelopment yielded no suitable proposals. The City needs to re-evaluate what it sought in that RFP, consulting with development experts, to determine why. With that info we can plan how to re-ignite the RFP. Meanwhile, we should make appropriate modest investments in the rec center to maintain it in good repair and maintain its 'street appeal.'

*Question: The New Hampshire Ave Recreation Center site has not seen any redevelopment action despite being a priority over several councils. What is your vision for the site, and what actions do you propose to make progress?*

And I support the recent requests by Ward 5 and 6 Council Members to evaluate whether some of the library services at its temporary location adjacent to the rec center can be continued after the new library opens; those services complement the Rec Center's offerings very constructively in a community that has been relatively underserved.

## Ward 2

### Cindy Dyballa

Based on recreation needs across the city and on views of the nearby residents, my vision has been first, a renovated and upgraded recreation center, and second, multifamily housing above. Several attempts to draw in redevelopment partners showed the financial aspects did not pencil out. We need to get more creative in approach and in financing, and be more clear on which recreation center needs are priority.

## Ward 3

### Matt Bormet

The rec center has been a tough nut to crack, largely because we haven't gotten a proposal that met the city's desires. I'd love to see multifamily housing on the site, but if no developer can propose such a thing within our cost structures then we need to find a way forward on redevelopment with or without housing so that the communities the facility serves can have a future at the site. It's probably worth going out for another RFP once we have proven ourselves on other projects.

## Lucy Moore

We need a new and improved Recreation Center, but we don't have the funds to pay for one. Construction is expensive. As context, the Library Renovation - which will provide a vital community resource - has cost \$13.8 million. A comparable recreation center in Anacostia is currently under construction with a \$16 million dollar budget. Our annual City budget is about \$40 million. The City's 2021 RFP envisioned a new recreation center built by a developer who would cover much of the costs through construction of housing and commercial space, something like the public-private partnerships that DC has used to rebuild libraries and fire stations within new mixed-use developments. But the respondents all concluded that the site was too small to accommodate all that was envisioned. So the City can take one of two paths. It can push for county, state, and federal funds to construct a new recreation center on the existing site, or it can investigate a variation on the public-private partnership model to explore a land swap or establish other terms that would allow a developer to build housing on the current recreation center site and a new recreation center at a different location. This second path would likely still require public funds. As a City Councilmember I will work closely with the City Council and Staff to define and evaluate the two options, and pursue the best option with focus and purpose.

## Roger Schlegel

Friends of the Recreation Center and other community advocates worked very hard to try to achieve a public-private partnership success at the Recreation Center site that would have produced an updated recreation facility and housing, including some affordable housing. I agree with this vision for the site. Ultimately, a suitable partnership arrangement couldn't be worked out. With the City now facing a \$1.2 million structural deficit, ARPA funds depleted, and very large debt payments

*Question: The New Hampshire Ave Recreation Center site has not seen any redevelopment action despite being a priority over several councils. What is your vision for the site, and what actions do you propose to make progress?*

associated with the Library construction bond, there doesn't appear to be much financial ability for the City to replace the Recreation Center absent major grant monies. This situation doesn't preclude the possibility of doing phased renovations, hopefully using smaller grants, that would renew the building and extend its versatility as an activity and gathering space.

I think that two keys in considering projects of this kind are (1) emphasizing functionality rather than "signature" design and (2) maintaining a laser focus on project objectives, with an emphasis on equity. There may be out-of-the-box solutions for providing more recreational space on a tight budget, perhaps in dispersed or temporary locations across time. For example, the Washington-McLaughlin School property between Woodland and Poplar Avenues in Ward 3, steps away from New Hampshire Avenue, has a large unused north end that includes several large classroom spaces and an auditorium space. The empty Gussini shoe store on New Hampshire Avenue south of Ethan Allen is also a large open space with a high ceiling that could accommodate many kinds of indoor sports and fitness activities. Even on the current Recreation Center site, it might be possible to accommodate a temporary "tennis bubble" type of structure next to the existing building, perhaps in conjunction with a renovation project or perhaps on an ongoing basis. The City's recent experience with the temporary library on Upper New Hampshire Avenue has shown that there is more than one way to deliver excellent services to residents.

I think it is important to note that in the vicinity of the Recreation Center, at the southeast end of Sligo Creek Parkway and wrapping around onto New Hampshire Avenue, there is a significant row of commercially zoned parcels. If some of this land were acquired with Program Open Space or County funds, it could serve as a bargaining chip in a new public-private partnership arrangement that could involve a combination of mixed-use development and Rec Center revitalization, with both that area and the existing Rec Center site in play as part of the negotiation.

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

The appropriate action by a new council person would be to find out what conversations have been had since the request for development proposals. Finding viable developers will be essential for progress. I would love to see a center with attractive facilities for group meetings, small parties etc.. Programs for all ages would be great.

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

I will look to our new City Manager, the Ward 6 Councilmember and our Mayor to take the lead on proposing a vision for the recreation center. I am ready to collaborate towards the moving new plans forward because it is desperately needed in a part of our City where a public, accessible, high quality recreation center is of the utmost importance.

That said, it is also true that our City staff is stretched thin at present finalizing library construction - a major project that needs to be brought to successful completion- before we embark on another

*Question: The decade-long Takoma Junction revitalization project recently failed. The city has not yet developed any new vision for the parking lot. The traffic situation was a key sticking point for the State Highway Administration, and several studies conducted by*

major infrastructure project. I am hopeful that while the City finishes work on the library, we can continue to work with our staff and across Council to consider what additional steps we can take to re-invigorate recreation center development plans and explore financing options. I am hopeful that our new City Manager will have some recommendations based on his extensive experience.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

The New Hampshire Avenue Recreation Center is a prime opportunity for redevelopment. I would push for inclusive and community-driven process to redesign the space, prioritizing affordable housing, recreation facilities, and public green spaces. Partnerships with local organizations and county agencies could help move the project forward after years of stagnation.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them

### Amy Wesolek

I am strongly in favor of redeveloping our city's Recreation Center. Currently our Rec Center supports so many vital activities for our residents and is an important part of our community - but it is also true that it is in disrepair and not up to the high standards we hold for other city facilities. I envision a facility that responds to what our community wants based on the [2021 engagement process](#), such as a full size gymnasium with seating, multi use and flexible spaces, and community wifi. I am opposed to making the redevelopment of the Recreation Center the fix to all of the City's problems, which is part of why I think this project has stalled in the past. This alone cannot fill our recreation needs *and* provide affordable housing *and* provide economic development. Those are problems to be tackled city-wide and I will not let improvements for our residents, particularly in Ward 6, be held up unnecessarily.

**10. The decade-long Takoma Junction revitalization project recently failed. The city has not yet developed any new vision for the parking lot. The traffic situation was a key sticking point for the State Highway Administration, and several [studies conducted by the city and the State Highway Administration](#) found that reconfiguring the Takoma Junction intersection would reduce congestion and cut-through traffic in the adjacent neighborhoods. What would you propose to be done at Takoma Junction? Would you advocate for reconfiguring the intersection? If so, how would you help advance this process?**

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## Mayor

### Talisha Searcy

The City of Takoma Park has been closely with the State Highway Administration to address the challenges with the Takoma Junction intersection. One May 22, 2024, City Council met with State Highway Administrator (SHA) William Pines. One focus of the discussion was modifications needed at Takoma Junction. Since this time, the city has been collaborating with SHA District 3 to adjust the

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intersection. However, if the intermediate steps do not work to improve traffic flow and increase pedestrian safety then I will advocate for reconfiguring the intersection. This would require working with our state delegates and SHA to get such a project funded.

## Ward 1

### Shana Fulcher

Even without development, the intersection needs to be reconfigured. The City does not have jurisdiction over the intersection, meaning we are not authorized to make decisions about what happens there. We continue to advocate SHA to significantly increase the intersection to make it safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Since the sitting City Council hired our City Manager, Robert DiSpirito, and he in turn hired David Eubanks and Andrew Bolduc to serve in two Deputy City Manager positions, I have seen the City become more effective in its partnership with SHA. I recently attended the Great Montgomery County Bike Summit as did SHA Administrator William Pines, which demonstrates SHA is expected to hear from the cyclist community. We are better positioned now than ever before to get our needed changes.

I am not in favor of revisiting a development project at the Junction in the near future. I do understand the City purchased the parking at the Junction in order to gain control, not to stop the development of the property. Being elected, I was hopeful that I could find common ground to move forward with the project proposed. Given the complexity underpinning starting a project in Takoma Park, on a lot owned by the City, and current market conditions, I think it's unlikely a developer would be eager to engage with us on this project right now. Also, the divisiveness that ensued from the development of a project on a parcel of city land causes residents and both past and existing Councilmembers to express exhaustion when the Junction is mentioned. I am in favor of the City moving to a pay lot system to encourage short term use, discourage overnight parking, and to raise funds for a stormwater project to abate water flowing off of the lot and for solar panels.

### Jessica Landman

I was appointed to the MD State Highway Administration's Stakeholder Advisory Group for [the Takoma Junction Vision Study](#) (alongside Emanuel Wagner of TFA), the goal of which was "to identify a long-term vision for the future of transportation at Takoma Junction." Many of the Task Force's recommendations are worthwhile. Some have been implemented, like narrowing lanes; others, like improving sidewalk connectivity, have not yet been carried out. They should be, resources permitting.

Reconfiguring the intersection was not recommended by the Task Force, due to pedestrian safety (especially due to additional crosswalks for school kids), drivability by large trucks, and cost; I do not support it. I do support making the other recommended improvements, and readjusting the current poor traffic light timing, which provoke unsafe and illegal driving maneuvers. Enhanced enforcement is also needed.

## Ward 2

### Cindy Dyballa

I continue to be an advocate for the State Highway Administration (SHA) for make meaningful safety changes and produce a plan for reconfiguring the intersection. Those need to be addressed



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regardless of any plan to change the current use of the city owned lot. To advance this, we need a strong push with SHA; the groundwork has been laid in the city council's May meeting with the SHA Administrator and the city manager's relationship building with the SHA district office.

## Ward 3

### Matt Bormet

Finally, the elephant in the room! I recently heard another candidate for this prestigious post suggest we "beautify the parking lot", which seemed to me to be a deeply sad sentiment. Free city-owned parking is probably the worst possible use of the site. As soon as possible, we need to start charging a fair rate for parking there, and if the nearby businesses feel like reimbursing their customers for that service, they can feel free. At our store, we pay rent, property tax, insurance, and maintenance for our parking lot, and other businesses should do the same. I sometimes hear that the parking lot is a "third space" where people gather. My sense it is 99% of the time a place where cars gather, and I know a little bit about third spaces.

I support reconfiguring the intersection to make it safer for pedestrians and bikers, and to discourage dangerous driving behavior, like people speeding around stopped buses. We've studied it to death, and I think it's past time we fix the intersection. To do so, I'd work with our state representation and MDOT to get to a decision on which is the best potential site change, and how quickly we could do it.

In the long run, the city needs to put something, anything, other than free private car storage paid for by taxpayers at this site. I'm open to any and all ideas about how to get it done, but again my view is that we lack the credibility to approach it at this time, and no private money would invest on a project there right now.

### Lucy Moore

I support a reconfiguration of the Takoma Junction intersection that prioritizes the well-being and safety of the most vulnerable roadway users. As the Ward 3 Councilmember, I would ensure that a proposal to reconfigure the intersection is brought through the City's new administrative process that uses a holistic, data-driven approach to evaluate traffic and sidewalk projects so that staff time and resources spent towards the Junction intersection reconfiguration are considered in the context of City-wide needs.

Medium to long term, a large surface parking lot is clearly not what we need or want in the center of our City as we confront rising CO2 levels and global temperatures. After an intersection reconfiguration, and after we've all had time to decompress from the last few years of debate, the Council must again consider realistic options for turning the junction parking lot into facilities and spaces that reflect our values and serve our City, our residents, and our environment.

### Roger Schlegel

This question somewhat appears to misinterpret the findings of the Vision Study that the City asked the State Highway Administration to conduct a few years ago. That study did not recommend significant changes to the layout of the streets and intersections at Takoma Junction. Setting aside the fact that the Historic District designation of the Junction severely constrains redesign of streets, it is conceivable that adjustments to Junction streets, intersections, legal movements, or signal timings could decrease travel times through the Junction (increase the number of vehicles per hour) during



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peak hours. However, given the well-known phenomenon of induced demand and the amount of through-traffic in and around Takoma Park, any reductions in congestion would be short-lived, as navigation apps and driver choices would quickly reroute drivers from more congested routes into the Junction and/or would generate more local trips.

Even if new patterns defied the induced-demand phenomenon, reconfigurations at the Junction that improved traffic flow there might serve only to move congestion downstream, e.g. at Carroll and Flower, along Ethan Allen, in Old Town, or along Philadelphia Avenue. The Vision Study ultimately, and reasonably, emphasized safety improvements rather than major reconfigurations of the area. Therefore, I would not propose reconfiguration of the intersection or further studies in this regard. I base this opinion on many, many hours spent studying this issue and examining all kinds of options while on the Takoma Junction Task Force and later while tracking the development process, traffic studies commissioned by the City and developer, and while participating in and following the SHA Vision Study process.

Anyone who has sat for three minutes straight at the Sycamore Avenue traffic signal (as I do frequently – I call it the “one song light” when my radio’s on) has soon asked, “Why don’t they just get rid of that old gas-station shell and realign Carroll Avenue so that it aligns with Sycamore?” Believe me, that was a question I raised soon after starting on the Takoma Junction Task Force. After studying the possibilities closely, I saw that this realignment idea is not as good as it might seem. Beyond the aforementioned prohibitions related to Historic District designation, there are more fundamental problems involved with creating this alignment: the Poplar-Columbia route would instantly become an attractive part of a through-the-Junction bypass for commuters trying to avoid back-ups on New Hampshire Avenue; *and* at the same time, Columbia Avenue would essentially become a southern bypass to Carroll Avenue between Ethan Allen and Old Town.

A traffic roundabout is another possible “solution” that occurs to anyone frustrated by the Junction. Our Takoma Junction Task Force also looked closely at this idea. Because of the elevation changes in the area and underlying conduits, it would be very costly, if not impossible, to regrade the combined intersections to accommodate a roundabout. A roundabout would come into conflict with the traffic signal at Philadelphia, would also encourage the establishment of a Poplar-Columbia-Sycamore commuter corridor, and would move congestion elsewhere in the corridor in proportion to the amount of additional capacity it added at the Junction.

I will go ahead and mention three ideas that don’t involve reconfiguring streets. First: just recently, the SHA restriped Carroll Avenue in front of the Fire Station, taking it from two lanes (outbound) down to one. This has generated additional congestion in the area because vehicles coming from Old Town and planning to proceed on Carroll Avenue towards Sligo Creek have to share a lane for about 100-150 feet with vehicles following 410 from Philadelphia towards Ethan Allen. This also generates dangerous blocking of the Fire Station driveway when vehicles get “hung up” and then has the added negative effect of encouraging honking. As a Council member, I would immediately seek clarity on why the SHA has done this. I have a few theories but no answers at this point, so while I see that the change has created a huge problem, I reserve judgment pending more information.

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Second: one possibility that the Council might explore – with ample input from the affected neighborhoods – would be to restrict left turns from Ethan Allen Avenue onto Sycamore, perhaps at peak times. In my observation, a single car waiting to turn left onto Sycamore can stop a long string of cars from passing through the intersection during a green light cycle. Restricting left turns there would have obvious trade-offs and, like any change, would have to be evaluated with consideration of the entire system of streets south of Carroll and Ethan Allen Avenues.

Third, and this is merely a potentiality to keep in mind for the future: If it ever becomes feasible, all things considered, to excavate underground parking at the current City-owned parking lot site (e.g. for an appropriately sized development), it *might* be possible to create a one-way circulation pattern (at least for lower-clearance vehicles) that would work as follows: The entrance ramp would be to the right of the Co-op building, in line with (and using) the existing signaled intersection of Ethan Allen and Carroll. The egress for the underground parking would be via the Fire Station rear parking lot, under the cantilevered portion of the Station, and out onto Carroll Avenue just west of Philadelphia (the stop line for Carroll Avenue would have to be moved back). This arrangement would eliminate the mid-block driveway entrance that currently exists and would allowed for signalized entry and exit from an underground parking area.

## Ward 4

### Kurt Gilbert

It seems as if the previous study was conducted without consideration being given to several traffic options. I would like to see a more comprehensive study that covers the missed areas mentioned in the letter from Morton Thomas and Associates. I know that the CO-OP already gets many DC residents. I am not certain to what degree that impacts traffic. I would defer to traffic engineers and surveyor's to come up with the most viable traffic pattern.

### Tony Kyere

No response received. - T4A

## Ward 5

### Cara Honzak

Since joining the City Council, I have not been deeply involved in any discussions around the design of Takoma Junction, although I followed it from afar as a resident prior to my Council service two years ago. Thus, I cannot yet say if I would advocate for reconfiguring the junction. I am open to learning more if it becomes a priority. Given the City's other pressing projects at present, I do not imagine that it will be an immediate focus, but I will be prepared to engage when needed.

## Ward 6

### Ambroise Agosse

The Takoma Junction project failed partly due to unresolved traffic issues and non-community inclusion at the beginning of the project. I would support reconfiguring the intersection to improve traffic flow while maintaining pedestrian safety and reducing neighborhood cut throughs. I envision a more community-oriented approach to reimagining the Junction, with input from local businesses

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and residents. I believe we can come up with a very modern commercial center that benefit both the city and it resident if all parties are included during the studies.

These are complex issues, and I welcome the opportunity to engage further with Takoma for All and other community members.

### Jason Small

Due to the controversies about these questionnaires, I decided to not answer any of them

### Amy Wesolek

There could definitely be improvements made to this area of the city, but I believe it needs to be kept on hold so that we can focus our resources on other areas - particularly Ward 6 and the eastern side of our city.

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Thank you for your time and working to make our city a great place for everyone. – T4A