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1. Vision, Inclusion and Consensus Building

Please share your vision for Takoma Park, including how you would approach sustainability, economic vibrancy, and housing access. A 2021 consultant report commissioned by the City found that Takoma Park is a "Tale of Two Cities," with stark divides across lines of race and class. How would you ensure a wide range of residents is heard in decisions about residential, commercial, and public facility development? When those views conflict, how would you weigh them and explain your decision, and what experience do you have building consensus across a real division?

My vision for Takoma Park is an equitable, climate resilient community where residents of all backgrounds can afford to put down roots. With strong safeguards like rent stabilization, stormwater management mandates, and tree canopy preservation already established, we must pivot toward creating solutions rather than stalling them.

I support transit oriented density across all wards. We must build denser housing near Metro, Purple Line, and Ride On/Metrobus hubs. Addressing our "Tale of Two Cities" means expanding gentle density citywide, not only concentrating on multifamily growth along Maple Avenue. In Ward 1, I support missing middle housing like duplexes and fourplexes, supported by updated zoning and electrification infrastructure.

Growth must not displace neighbors; I actively support Good Cause eviction protections so renters can stay rooted. I also backed street level retail in the Minor Master Plan to foster walkable, neighborhood serving businesses. Along with more sidewalks and bikelanes, robust tree canopy is essential for shade infrastructure, protecting walkers and cyclists from extreme heat so outdoor mobility remains viable.

Formal Wednesday council meetings cannot be the only path to civic participation.

- I hold informal emails and one on one discussions in the same regard as dais testimony.
- My work with Takoma Park Lunch and Learn proved that engaging residents directly in apartment lobbies is essential for reaching voices often left out.
- On the 2024 Budget Working Group, I helped create a plan centered on broad, accessible public input across the entire city.

Conflict and Consensus

When opinions divide, our long term housing and climate commitments must guide decisions. Residents respect compromise when their concerns are genuinely heard. For Edinburgh House, while a transit adjacent site ideally calls for minimal parking, I support moving the project forward with more parking both because residents requested it and endless debate delays needed housing.

Similarly, navigating the Minor Master Plan Amendment showed that real consensus requires respecting the councilmembers and communities most directly impacted, while governing responsibly for all six wards, not just Wards 1, 2, and 3. We cannot let perpetual debate stall urgent action on housing and climate resilience.

To build an inclusive Takoma Park, we must address the root cause of our affordability challenges: a severe shortage of housing supply.

2. Housing, Zoning and Rent Stabilization

Takoma Park has not seen a new multifamily building since the late 1970s. Much of the city is zoned R-60, which permits only detached single-family homes, and Montgomery County, not the City, sets the zoning. Meanwhile, the City's rent stabilization law, the first of its kind in Maryland, is under review by the current Council. What changes to the law, if any, would you support, and what would you pursue at the County on zoning? How would you bring renters, housing providers, and homeowners to an outcome that each can accept?

I favor incorporating a predictable floor/ceiling model, informed by the City's pending housing study. The current capital improvement process leaves housing providers with no certainty on cost recovery, causing critical building maintenance and decarbonization to stagnate. We must streamline these approvals with clear guardrails, applying capital recovery increases between tenancies and advocating on the state level for Good Cause Eviction so owners cannot displace residents. We should also reconsider our five year new construction exemption, as lenders consider it too risky to finance new builds in Takoma Park, and consider providing exemptions for small landlords.

County Zoning Advocacy

I strongly support legalizing "Missing Middle" housing, duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings, across all of Takoma Park, including Ward 1. Socioeconomic diversity requires integrating different income levels throughout our neighborhoods, alongside transit oriented

density on primary corridors. The County must also reform restrictive ADU rules, such as arbitrary size caps tied to small primary homes and prohibitions that block families from building flexible spaces for eldercare. Leveraging my regional experience on the MWCOC Transportation Planning Board, I will advocate directly with County leaders for these changes.

Building Consensus

A sustainable outcome benefits everyone: renters gain stronger protections and better maintained homes; housing providers gain the predictability needed to invest; and homeowners gain a broader tax base to support essential services and green infrastructure. To move beyond divisive hearings, I support segmented stakeholder focus groups alongside on site tenant pop ups with community connectors so every resident can participate candidly and comfortably. Elected officials can only address residents' true concerns when they receive honest input.

3. Development Sites and Tax Base

Single-family homes make up about half of Takoma Park's housing units but pay about 77 percent of its property taxes. Meanwhile, the next Council will inherit decisions on several of the city's most significant sites: the former Washington Adventist Hospital campus, the New Hampshire Avenue Recreation Center, Takoma Junction, the McLaughlin property on Poplar Avenue, and 6530 and 6600 New Hampshire Avenue. What is your vision for these and similar sites, how would you attract developers who can deliver it, and what role should new development play in easing the burden on homeowners?

When Takoma Park's municipal budget grows, the tax bill falls squarely on the shoulders of residential homeowners. Because our commercial and multifamily tax base has remained largely static, homeowners face property tax bill increases year after year to maintain services we as a city find essential. My concern isn't about an abstract percentage, it is about real families feeling the squeeze. We must expand and diversify our tax base so we can spread municipal costs fairly and prevent long term residents from being taxed out of their homes.

At the same time, intentional land use is about meeting the regional housing shortage and confronting climate change. Building walkable, transit oriented density reduces vehicle miles traveled and fosters vibrant neighborhood hubs. To achieve this, the City Council must stop overloading individual sites with demands and instead bring disciplined, financially viable focus to each parcel.

Washington Adventist University (WAU) Campus & Hospital Site

Having helped shape the Minor Master Plan on Council, I see this parcel as our most immediate opportunity for transformative, transit accessible growth. WAU is an invested community anchor. We should partner with them to exceed baseline affordable housing minimums alongside mixed use retail, green space, and civic amenities. City staff should negotiate Public Benefit that can extend beyond the property lines, directing developer investments toward the Flower Avenue corridor and recreation facilities.

New Hampshire Avenue Corridor & Recreation Center

The initial RFP, crafted before my term in office, offered an expensive lesson in municipal development economics. Mandating 100% affordable housing, structured parking, and a new rec center on a small footprint that requires land acquisition simply did not pencil out, even for non-profits. Not every project must include housing, but if we are to move forward with housing, here we would need a mixed income framework where market rate units subsidize affordable homes. I know that the City is currently exploring a capital lease back option. This seems wise since we do not want to increase our current debt level.

Takoma Junction: Focus & Equity

The Junction stalled because too many priorities were crammed onto a tight parcel. We must commit to one to three achievable goals. It would be important to partner with a developer willing to invest directly in traffic calming and intersection safety for pedestrians and cyclists, coordinated with SHA. As that area is now thriving, building a shared parking structure to support local merchants, reduce circling traffic, and stop commercial overflow into residential streets would be a priority of my own. It is important for us to protect council bandwidth. Endless gridlock over this one site drained staff energy from needs in Wards 4, 5, and 6.

McLaughlin Property

This site has sat dormant for years under private ownership, constrained by outdated zoning. City staff have worked closely with the owner; if momentum is truly building, the Council should aggressively petition the Montgomery County Planning Board and County Council for a Sectional Map Amendment or master plan update. Proper zoning will unlock Missing Middle and street level businesses when the property transitions. Given its proximity to Dorothy's Woods, nature based childcare would make an exceptional community addition.

Delivering Results

Developers avoid jurisdictions where rules continuously shift. Takoma Park must provide predictable, economically grounded RFPs rather than unattainable wish lists, while actively championing density on teardown ready parcels. Pairing economic realism with climate

conscious growth will allow us to build needed housing, bolster local businesses, and spread municipal costs so homeowners no longer carry the burden alone.

4. The Purple Line and Safe Streets: The Purple Line is expected to open in late 2027, with a station at the Takoma Langley Crossroads. New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard remain dangerous corridors despite Vision Zero and other initiatives. How would you leverage the Purple Line for the city's benefit, and what would you do to make those corridors, and for that matter, the city, safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, scooters, and other non-car travelers?

The Takoma Langley Crossroads is a vibrant, diverse commercial hub, yet it is often overlooked by residents living outside Ward 6. The small, largely immigrant- and minority-owned businesses there serve an essential daily role for the surrounding community and our neighbors across the Prince George's County border. Connecting the rest of Takoma Park to this corridor is not just good transit policy, it is a matter of citywide solidarity and economic prosperity.

The Purple Line will make the Crossroads a destination for customers across our region, supporting local merchants while opening new housing opportunities. I want to see mixed use redevelopment that adds multifamily housing above existing street level retail.

Transit is also a lifeline for regional economic mobility. While one family member may work locally in Takoma Park, others may need a seamless commute to College Park or Bethesda. As construction nears completion, the Council must solve the last mile challenge by prioritizing dedicated feeder bus routes and protected bike connections for neighbors living just outside walking distance.

University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue remain notoriously dangerous because the State Highway Administration (SHA) treats them as high speed vehicle thoroughfares through a densely populated, walking community. Takoma Park has already shown that coordinated advocacy from our Council, staff, and police can secure intersection jurisdiction and automated speed enforcement. We must demand much more:

- SHA invested heavily in redesigning Route 1 to protect students in College Park. They must demonstrate that same concern and capital commitment for the working class Latino community walking the Crossroads.
- We need shorter crossing distances, pedestrian refuge islands, and mid-block crossings with pedestrian signals. Current road design prioritizes cars over human life; these changes would send a clear message that pedestrian safety matters.

While we cannot unilaterally reshape state highways overnight, the streets the City owns are fully within our control. We must champion bike corridors connecting Takoma Park directly to Silver Spring, Prince George's County, and D.C. I favor physically protected bike lanes over painted lines so children and new cyclists can ride safely, alongside continuous sidewalks and neighborhood traffic calming.

Finally, we must acknowledge an important truth: many sidewalks built in Ward 1 were funded by tax dollars generated by businesses in Ward 6. As Purple Line construction finishes and traffic patterns settle, the entire Council owes it to Ward 6 residents to deliver the street safety, traffic calming, and pedestrian protections their neighborhood deserves.

5. Growth and Climate

The City has committed to net zero emissions by 2035, but modeling presented to the City Council in January 2026 shows 55 percent of that goal is not achievable on the current path. Transportation is the largest single source at 54 percent of the City's emissions, and Montgomery County, not the City, sets building energy codes. How would you close that gap? Would you support making the 2035 target binding for municipal operations, where the City does control the levers, and what role does land use play for the rest?

I do not support purchasing carbon offsets. Funneling municipal funds into third party credits does not clean our local air or reduce community emissions, and our Sustainability Committee has expressed concerns about the actual impact of the purchased offsets. Following guidance from City staff and the Sustainability Committee, our dollars belong in tangible, on the ground environmental improvements here in Takoma Park.

I do not support lowering or abandoning our 2035 Net Zero goal. Keeping that target drives vital urgency. As Councilmember Dyballa noted, the 2020 Climate Emergency Response Framework committed us to 2035 "as resources would allow." It is too early to retreat, especially federal funding opportunities could change under different administrations. If we fall short because the County and State fail to enact the building codes or utility policies we need, I would rather be honest about that shortfall than dilute our ambition. Setting appropriate challenging goals means that you don't always accomplish them.

I do not support making the 2035 target legally binding for municipal operations. A rigid mandate ignores practical realities:

- During my Council tenure, we urgently needed to replace police cruisers, but the hybrid models we sought were unavailable due to supply chain backlogs.

- Peer jurisdictions warned us that heavy electric trash trucks proved unreliable in regular service. Buying unproven or unavailable vehicles is not a sound investment when public safety and sanitation are on the line.
- Meanwhile, we have made great progress retrofitting City owned buildings. We should continue that success.

We should direct capital toward net-zero projects when they deliver major, dependable gains, rather than binding future councils to inflexible mandates.

Because transportation generates 54% of our emissions, smart land use is our most powerful climate tool. Adding dense, walkable housing along transit corridors helps the entire region reduce vehicle miles traveled, extending our impact beyond our borders. Within municipal control, we must invest heavily in protected bike corridors and public curbside EV chargers so renters and residents without driveways can transition away from fossil fuels.

With Montgomery County controlling building energy codes, our Sustainability Office should actively help homeowners and multifamily landlords access federal and county grants for heat pumps, solar arrays, and weatherization. Crucially, these subsidized upgrades can help protect affordable housing. Finally, the Council must partner with state legislators to push Pepco for the electrical grid upgrades and heavy-ups required for widespread electrification.