



**Planning, Program Development and Real Estate Committee**

**Item V – C**

**March 12, 2015**

**Approval of Takoma Public Hearing Staff  
Report and Amendment of the General Plans  
and the Adopted Regional System Plan for  
the Takoma Station**

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
**Board Action/Information Summary**

Action  Information

MEAD Number:  
201296

Resolution:  
 Yes  No

**TITLE:**

Takoma Replacement Facilities

**PRESENTATION SUMMARY:**

A proposed joint development project by TM Associates LLC, an affiliate of developer EYA LLC, will result in the relocation and reconfiguration of Metro facilities at the Takoma Metrorail Station as detailed in a Final Public Hearing Staff Report including a March 2015 Supplement with staff responses to public comment on the staff report. Staff is requesting Board approval of the supplemented report and amendment of system plans to reflect the changes.

**PURPOSE:**

Approve staff recommendations in the Final Public Hearing Staff Report, as supplemented, on proposed changes to Metro facilities at Takoma Metro station; and

Amend the General Plans and Adopted Regional System plan to include the proposed changes in the report and supplement, and as summarized in "Key Highlights", below.

**DESCRIPTION:**

A proposed joint development project of approximately 200 apartment units will dislocate the surface parking lot currently at the Takoma Metrorail station. The project is a redesign of a 90-unit townhouse project originally proposed in 1999 and which met opposition from some local residents who considered it too auto-centric and a consumer of too much space on the 6.8 acre station site.

**Key Highlights:**

The redesigned project incorporates the proposed changes below:

- Metro's parking and Kiss & Ride facilities will be relocated to the ground floor of a new building owned and maintained by developer; Metro will operate the parking and Kiss & Ride facilities and will collect all revenue generated therein but developer will be liable for all costs of maintenance/repair of these facilities;
- Metered parking spaces will be reduced from 141 spaces to approximately 87 spaces in the new facilities;
- Kiss & Ride facilities will be located next to the station entrance and will include 5 reserved spaces for people with disabilities, 14 driver-attended waiting spaces, and 7 spaces for taxis and shuttles;
- A new bus bay and a dedicated layover bay will be added to the existing bus loop;

- One acre of the open space area east of the bus bays will be permanently dedicated as a public park, to be owned by Metro but maintained by TM Associates, LLC;
- Pedestrian access to the station is improved with paths in the new parking facilities and across the open space area to Eastern Avenue and Cedar Avenue; and
- Bicycle access is improved from Eastern Avenue, and the plan reserves space along the Eastern Avenue side of the site for a future extension of the Metropolitan Branch Trail.

Advantages of the redesigned project are:

- It preserves the large open space area on the eastern side of the station site;
- It promotes walkability to the station by providing a substantial amount of housing close to the station entrance;
- It provides a covered parking area for Metro patrons; and
- The presence of more residents will help increase safety at the site.

### **Background and History:**

The Takoma Metrorail Station currently features a surface parking lot with one hundred forty one (141) metered spaces, six (6) spaces reserved for customers with disabilities, three (3) motorcycle spaces, five (5) spaces reserved for waiting motorists, and five (5) spaces currently used for car sharing. The bus loop contains nine (9) bus bays and can be accessed from either Eastern Avenue or Cedar Street. There are also bicycle racks that can accommodate one hundred four (104) bicycles and bike lockers that can house up to sixty (60) bicycles.

In Resolution 2007-46, the Board of Directors approved an amendment to the General Plans and Revised Adopted Regional System to include changes to the Metro facilities at the Takoma site as described in the *Final Public Hearing Staff Report, Review of the Public Hearing and Staff Recommendations, Proposed Relocation of Bus Facilities and Parking and Parking Changes, Takoma Metrorail Station, Red Line, Washington, D.C., Hearing No. 175, Docket No. R06-S*. These changes included:

- A new parking structure with approximately one hundred twenty-one (121) park and ride replacement spaces;
- A relocated bus loop with ten (10) bus bays, four (4) layover spaces, and a roundabout for bus circulation;
- New sidewalks and crosswalks to provide safe access to the Takoma station;
- Bicycle storage facilities to provide approximately sixty (60) racks and seventy (70) storage lockers; and
- New access roads to the parking and bus facilities.

The proposed project, including the townhouses, was never developed. The primary factors in the delay initially were objections from the local community and then the economic collapse of the real estate market.

When the real estate market began to recover, WMATA and the developer negotiated a

new concept that would better address the local community's concerns. In Resolution 2014-11, the Board authorized the holding of a Public Hearing to receive comment on the new proposed changes to WMATA's facilities at the Takoma site. The Public Hearing took place on June 18, 2014.

**Discussion:**

In response to comments from the public hearing, Metro staff worked with the project developer, TM Associates, LLC, to make changes to a revised concept plan for transit facilities. Listed below are some of the most frequent comments received, along with a description of how the plan was revised to address the comments:

- **Kiss & Ride entrance driveway too wide** -- The entry drive to the Metro Kiss and Ride facility has been reduced from three to two lanes, wide enough to accommodate traffic turning movements;
- **Loading dock on Eastern Avenue will impede traffic** -- Trucks will now use the parking area entry drive to reach apartment building loading docks located interior to the site;
- **The project eliminates a green buffer between the Metro site and adjacent apartment** -- A substantial buffer area has been inserted between the proposed Metro development and a neighboring apartment building;
- **Loading docks impede pedestrian access** -- The loading docks are long enough to accommodate 30-foot vehicles and will have a transparent wall to the south so that pedestrians on the sidewalk in the garage can safely approach the loading docks when exiting the garage;
- **The building is too close to Eastern Ave.** -- The project has been shifted further back from Eastern Ave. and space is provided for a ten-foot Metropolitan Branch Trail extension for cyclists and a five-foot sidewalk for pedestrians in the 30-foot setback between the proposed apartment building facade and the Eastern Avenue curb line; and
- **Residential entrance and drop off on Eastern Ave may impede traffic** -- A residential drop-off area adjacent to Metro's metered parking is reached by driving through the Kiss & Ride facility; this change results from moving the apartment building entrance to the sidewalk facing the bus loop and open space area in order to increase the setback on Eastern Avenue.

The changes were presented in a Public Hearing Staff Report. The report was released for public review on January 30, 2015, and the record for public review was kept open until March 2, 2015. A March 2015 Supplement, attached as an exhibit to the Final Public Hearing Staff Report, provides staff responses to comments received.

**FUNDING IMPACT:**

The WMATA replacement facilities will be paid for by the developer.	
Project Manager:	Rosalyn Doggett
Project Department/Office:	Chief Financial Officer / Office of Real Estate and Station Planning

## **TIMELINE:**

### **Previous Actions:**

- July 2000 - Board approval of original developer for townhouse-based project
- November 2007 - Board approval of first public hearing staff report
- March 2014 - Board approval to execute an amended joint development agreement and to hold second public hearing on the revised plan for Metro facilities

### **Anticipated Actions after Presentation:**

- Spring 2015 - Final contract negotiation
- Spring/Summer 2015 - Developer begins District of Columbia entitlement processes (Planning Unit Development application, Historic Preservation Review)

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve staff recommendations in the Final Public Hearing Staff Report, as supplemented, on proposed changes to Metro facilities at Takoma Metro station; and

Amend the General Plans and Adopted Regional System plan to include the proposed changes in the reportsupplement:

- Metro's parking and Kiss & Ride facilities will be relocated to the ground floor of a new building owned and maintained by TM Associates, LLC; Metro will operate the parking and Kiss & Ride facilities and will collect all revenue generated therein but TM Associates, LLC will be liable for all costs of maintenance and repair of these facilities;
- Metered parking spaces will be reduced from 141 spaces to approximately 87 spaces in the new facilities;
- The new Kiss & Ride facilities will include 5 reserved spaces for people with disabilities, 14 driver-attended waiting spaces, and 7 spaces for taxis and shuttles;
- A new bus bay and a dedicated layover bay will be added to the existing bus loop;
- One acre of the open space area east of the bus loop will be permanently dedicated as a public park, to be owned by Metro but maintained by TM Associates, LLC;
- Pedestrian and bicycle access will be improved with new paths to the station.



Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

# Approval of Takoma Public Hearing Staff Report

Planning, Program Development, and Real Estate Committee

March 12, 2015



# Purpose

- Request Board approval of:
  - Takoma Public Hearing Staff Report
  - Amended System Plan for Takoma





# Background

## Previous Plan:

- Expensive, sub-optimal transit facilities
- Lack of emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle access
- Townhouse project, while nice, not TOD appropriate
- Constrained future transit expansion







## Background

- Prior to the June 2014 Public hearing, staff:
  - Researched / reviewed historic community concerns
  - Conducted outreach with community leaders (MD and DC)
  - Conducted Station Access and Transit Planning analysis
  - Created a plan focused on accommodating **transit first**
  - Retooled the development program to then fit around transit
  - Obtained Board approval of the revised JDA and approval to conduct the Compact Public Hearing



## Background

- Since the June 2014 Public Hearing, staff has:
  - Reviewed all comments on the public hearing record
  - Participated in September 2014 Developer workshop with community
  - Worked with Developer to make concept plan changes
  - Provided Draft Staff Report for public comment on January 30, 2015
  - Reviewed all comments on draft public hearing report



# Revised Concept – Plan

Increased Eastern Ave setback

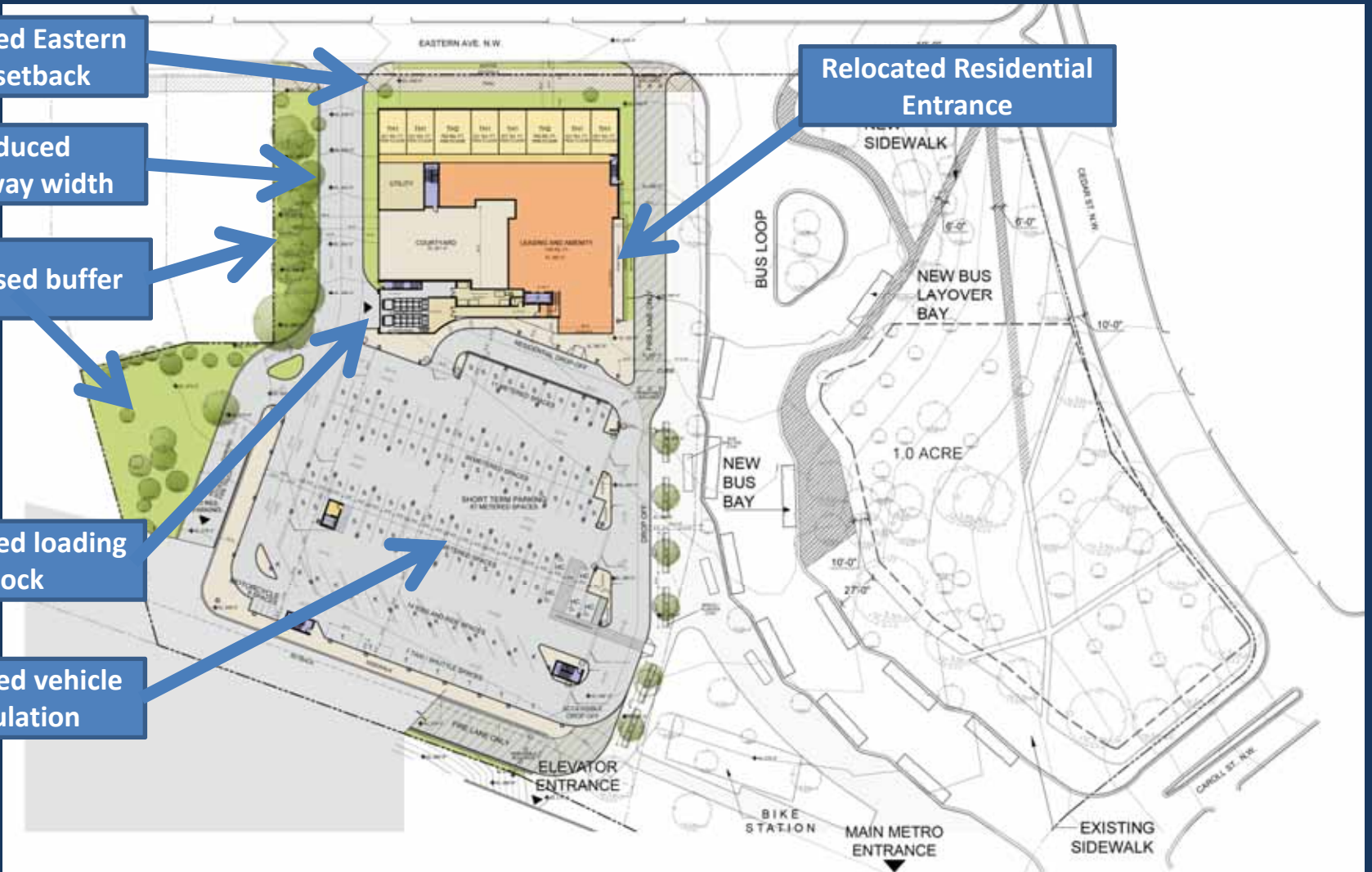
Reduced driveway width

Increased buffer

Relocated loading dock

Improved vehicle circulation

Relocated Residential Entrance





# Revised Concept – Cross Section





## Next Steps

- ✓ WMATA Board – Approval of Revised Development Agreement (JDA); Approval to Conduct a Compact Hearing (February 2014)
- ✓ **Compact Public Hearing** (June 2014)
  - WMATA Board - Approval of Compact Public Hearing Report; Approval to Amend JDA (if necessary)
  - **Planned Unit Development (PUD) Preparation** (including Community Meetings)
  - PUD and Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) Submissions
  - **Zoning Commission Set-down Hearing**
  - **HPRB Approval Action**
  - **Community Meetings**
  - **Zoning Commission Full Public Hearing**



# Recommendation

- Board approval of:
  - Takoma Public Hearing Staff Report
  - Amended System Plan for Takoma





SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT FOR THE REPLACEMENT AND RECONFIGURATION OF METRO FACILITIES AT THE TAKOMA METRORAIL STATION

RESOLUTION  
OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF THE  
WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, In Resolution 2007-46, the Board of Directors approved a Final Public Hearing Staff Report for the replacement and reconfiguration of Metro facilities at the Takoma Metrorail Station to accommodate a joint development project; and

WHEREAS, In Resolution 2014-11, the Board of Directors authorized WMATA to negotiate and execute an Amended and Restated Takoma Joint Development Sales Agreement ("Agreement") with TM Associates, LLC, and approved the holding of a second Public Hearing because the Agreement substantially altered the configuration of Metro facilities approved in Resolution 2007-46; and

WHEREAS, A notice of the public hearing was published in the Washington Post on May 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and, at the same time, an information package showing the proposed changes to the Metro facilities was made available for public inspection at the Takoma Park Maryland Library, at the Takoma Park Neighborhood Library, at the Office of the Secretary and online at [www.wmata.com/hearings](http://www.wmata.com/hearings); and

WHEREAS, The Public Hearing was held on June 18, 2014 and the record remained open for written comments until June 30, 2014; and

WHEREAS, A report on the Public Hearing entitled *Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Public Hearing Staff Report, Review of Public Hearing and Staff Recommendations, Proposed Replacement Facilities at Takoma Metrorail Station, Washington, DC, Docket No. R14-01, Public Hearing No. 595, January 2015* (Staff Report) was presented to the public for thirty (30) days to allow for comment; and

WHEREAS, The public comment period closed on March 2, 2015 and the Staff Report has been supplemented with the additional comments received; and

WHEREAS, The Final Public Hearing Staff Report, which includes *inter alia* the public hearing transcript and record of comments received, the complete public record, and

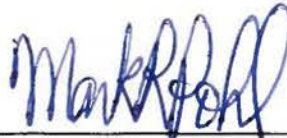
the hearing notice, is attached hereto and has been made available to the Board of Directors for review, and the Board of Directors has considered this information; now, therefore be it

*RESOLVED*, That the Board of Directors approves the attached Staff Report and amends the General Plans and the Adopted Regional System plan to include the following changes to Metro facilities at the Takoma Metrorail Station:

1. The parking and Kiss & Ride facilities for Metro's patrons will be relocated to the ground floor of a building that will be owned and maintained by TM Associates, LLC, or its successors; WMATA will operate the new parking and Kiss & Ride facilities and will collect all revenues generated therein but TM Associates, LLC, or its successors, will be solely liable for the costs of all maintenance and repair of these facilities;
2. Metered parking spaces will be reduced from the 141 spaces currently provided in the surface lot to approximately 87 metered parking spaces;
3. The new Kiss & Ride facilities will be placed adjacent to the Metrorail Station entrance and will include five reserved spaces for people with disabilities, fourteen driver-attended waiting spaces, and seven spaces for taxis and shuttles;
4. A new bus bay and a dedicated layover bay will be added to the existing bus loop;
5. One acre of the open space area to the east of the bus loop will be permanently dedicated as a public park, to be owned by WMATA but maintained by TM Associates, LLC, or its successors;
6. Pedestrian access to the station will be improved with new paths in the parking facilities and across the open space area to Eastern Avenue and Cedar Avenue;
7. Bicycle access to the station will be improved with access from Eastern Avenue and a reservation of space along the Eastern Avenue side of the site for a future extension of the Metropolitan Branch Trail; and be it further

*RESOLVED*, That this Resolution shall be effective 30 days after the adoption of this Resolution.

Reviewed as to form and legal sufficiency,



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Mark R. Pohl  
Acting General Counsel



**WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
FINAL PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT  
REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEARING AND STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF WMATA FACILITIES  
AT THE TAKOMA METRORAIL STATION  
WASHINGTON, DC**

**DOCKET NO. R14-01**

**PUBLIC HEARING NO. 595**

**March 2015**

**PROPOSED**

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Preface*

On June 18, 2014, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) held a public hearing (Public Hearing) pursuant to the WMATA Compact and WMATA Board of Directors (Board) Resolution 2014-11, adopted on March 27, 2014 (Exhibit A), to receive comment on proposed changes to WMATA's transit facilities at the Takoma Metro Station in Washington, DC. This report provides a compilation of, and response to, issues regarding the transit facility changes raised at the Public Hearing and in written comments received by WMATA by the close of business on June 30, 2014, the end of the formal comment period.

The proposed changes to transit facilities result from a joint development project proposed for the site. WMATA's joint development real estate program seeks to sell or lease WMATA-owned properties in order to encourage mixed use, transit-oriented development. The benefits of joint development are: increased ridership for the rail system; more sustainable commuting patterns for the region (reduced auto dependency and increased station access by walking and cycling); additional tax revenue for member jurisdictions; real estate revenue to WMATA; improved WMATA transit facilities; and safer station areas resulting from more activity. A tenet of the joint development program is that existing WMATA transit facilities, if needed, must remain on-site, although they may be reconfigured and/or relocated. The existing transit facilities on the site are described in a following section on *Transit Facilities*.

### *Background*

Joint development at the Takoma station was originally initiated by a solicitation for development issued by WMATA in July 1999, to which developer Eakin Youngentob Associates (now EYA, LLC) responded. WMATA has been working since then with EYA, LLC and its affiliate TM Associates (Developer) to bring about a development on the Takoma site. Following the District of Columbia Council's approval in 2002 of a Takoma Central District Plan that included the joint development site and extensive comment from local community representatives regarding the proposed development for the site, WMATA's Board of Directors approved a final Public Hearing Report for changes to transit facilities by Resolution 2007-46 in October 2007. Resolution 2007-46 amended the General Plans and Adopted Regional System plan for the Takoma Metrorail Station to include the changes to WMATA's bus facilities, parking, and access described in that final Public Hearing Report. That Public Hearing Report (First Report) is attached as Exhibit B, and gives detailed background on the history and planning of the station site up to that point.

Under the 2007 proposal, EYA, LLC would purchase the site and develop approximately 90 town houses. The proposed plan included a new WMATA parking garage and relocated bus bays, but also diminished the open space presently on the site. The U.S. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) concurred in the sale in March 2009. The proposed project was delayed after Board approval of the First Report, primarily because of intervention by local citizens who urged revisions to the proposed development plan. The project was delayed further when the “Great Recession” made financing for real estate projects nearly unobtainable.

When the Developer was ready once again to pursue development, the cost of proposed facilities had risen considerably making the financing scheme for the 2007 project infeasible. Further, after reviewing concerns of community representatives, WMATA and the Developer agreed to explore development of mid-rise multi-family housing. A mid-rise multi-family housing scheme is more consistent with transit-oriented development principles, community concerns and recent development changes in the surrounding area than the previously-approved townhouse scheme. The plan presented at the Public Hearing was for multi-family development in a four- to six-story building.

Throughout 2013, WMATA worked with local community representatives and the Developer to revise site plans to better meet transit requirements and community goals. WMATA also conducted studies on future needs for station facilities and access to the station by all modes of transportation (walking, cycling, car and bus). It utilized its own consultant to scope out a safe and efficient means of customer access to the station. The Developer agreed to integrate these transit facility requirements into its design.

#### *Purpose of the Public Hearing*

In Board Resolution 2014-11, the Board authorized the holding of a Public Hearing to receive comment on the proposed WMATA replacement transit facilities. In the event that WMATA received public comments on matters regarding building design elements (size, height, massing, etc.) the Board directed staff to report such comments in this report and forward them to the District of Columbia Zoning Commission.

### TRANSIT FACILITIES

#### *Existing Facilities*

The 6.8 acre Takoma Metrorail Station site’s existing facilities include the following:

1. An elevated Metrorail station with two entrances, the one to the north having elevator access to the platform and the one to the south having escalator access to the platform;

2. A Kiss & Ride lot, with access from Eastern Avenue, NW, containing 141 metered spaces, six reserved spaces for customers with disabilities, three motorcycle spaces, five "A" spaces reserved for waiting motorists, and five additional spaces currently used for car sharing;
3. Nine bus bays with access from both Eastern Avenue and Cedar Street; and
4. Bicycle facilities consisting of bike racks accommodating 104 bicycles and bike lockers housing up to 60 bicycles.

The aerial view of existing conditions in the *Takoma Metrorail Station Access Analysis Technical Memorandum, September 2013* (Access Analysis), attached as Exhibit C, shows these facilities.

#### *Access Analysis*

WMATA conducted the Access Analysis to evaluate future needs to improve access to the station by all modes of transportation. Principal findings of the Access Analysis that were incorporated into the proposed plan are:

- Two main pedestrian desire lines (paths that meet pedestrians' desired routes to the station entrance) should be accommodated by dedicated walkways:
  - 1) One across the open space area east of the bus bays to the Eastern Avenue/Cedar Avenue intersection and
  - 2) One across the existing Kiss & Ride lot, from the bus bays to the northern entrance of the Kiss & Ride lot;
- As the station currently has high bicycle ridership, future plans should accommodate an expansion of bike facilities;
- Consideration should be given to adding a new bus bay;
- Though there are currently no private shuttles providing service to the station, with future development, including that at the Walter Reed campus, provision should be made for new spaces for shuttle access;
- The existing metered lot is used at less than 50% of its capacity, and the remaining parking facilities (passenger pickup, ADA and driver attended waiting spaces) are adequate for the foreseeable future; and

- It would be desirable to have additional curbside queuing space for passenger drop off.

## PROPOSED TRANSIT FACILITIES PRESENTED AT PUBLIC HEARING

The plan presented at the Public Hearing featured a mid-rise apartment complex of approximately 200 units on the site of the existing Kiss & Ride parking lot and adjacent WMATA-owned land. The plan also showed one acre of the existing open space area east of the bus bays to be preserved permanently as a village green, which would be maintained by the Developer (Exhibit D, Site Concept Plan).

The plan included a Kiss & Ride parking area located on the ground floor of the proposed apartment complex with access from Eastern Avenue. The new Kiss & Ride facility would have 85 metered spaces and six additional reserved spaces for people with disabilities; 21 spaces for taxis, shuttles, and driver-attended waiting; three motorcycle spaces; and drop off areas for people with disabilities and other customers. The number of metered spaces (85) was down from the number (95) cited in Resolution 2014-11, owing to adjustments for safer turning movements. The parking accessibility diagram, Exhibit E, compares existing and proposed distances for reserved spaces and the drop off area for people with disabilities. It shows that, in the proposed plan, reserved spaces and the drop off area are closer to the elevator entrance to the station than at present. The proposed plan shown at the Public Hearing also has a new Bike & Ride facility for 105 bikes that will be installed by WMATA in 2016 at the station's escalator entrance, an additional bus bay, and a new bus layover bay. Overall site circulation is shown on Exhibit F. It includes bicycle circulation that was inadvertently left off the circulation diagram presented at the Public Hearing and a bicycle path from Eastern Avenue to the new bike facility. The diagram highlights new pedestrian sidewalks through both the open space area and the new Kiss & Ride facility. The primary pedestrian sidewalks will be well lit. These improvements conform to recommendations in the Access Analysis. The interim parking plan attached as Exhibit G, shows that available Kiss & Ride parking spaces will be reduced during the construction of the new Kiss & Ride facility, anticipated to last approximately 20 months. However, pick up and drop off of passengers can occur at curb side, as is informally done at present. Further, customers will be directed to temporarily use the parking facilities at the Fort Totten and Silver Spring stations. Because the Developer still has the zoning and building entitlement processes to go through, it is not likely that construction would start on the project for another two to three years.

The Developer will construct all of the WMATA replacement facilities (except the Bike & Ride facility) at its own cost. The new Kiss & Ride facility and surrounding structure will be owned and maintained by the Developer. The Developer will be solely liable for all

maintenance and repair of the new Kiss & Ride facility but WMATA will operate the Kiss & Ride facility and collect the revenue.

A detailed traffic analysis for the proposed Takoma joint development project was conducted by WMATA's engineering consultant in the fall of 2013 (Traffic Analysis). The full Traffic Analysis was provided in the docket for the Public Hearing. A copy of the Traffic Analysis is included in the Environmental Evaluation attached to this report as Exhibit L. The Traffic Analysis assessed the expected impact of the proposed development on the Kiss & Ride lot, bus operations, and surrounding streets. The Traffic Analysis concluded that the proposed development will add only 44 and 54 vehicles, respectively, to traffic on Eastern Avenue in the morning and evening peak hour periods, a negligible addition to existing and projected traffic.

The Access Analysis, the modified transit facilities associated with the proposed development, and the Traffic Analysis were all presented in the docket for the second Public Hearing.

#### CONDUCT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing started at 5:00 pm on Thursday, June 18, 2014, in the assembly room of the Takoma Education Complex at 7010 Piney Branch Road, NW, in the District of Columbia. Before the hearing, WMATA held an open house to provide an opportunity for attendees to ask about the proposed changes in WMATA facilities.

The Public Hearing was chaired by WMATA Board member Kathy Porter. Present at the dais with Ms. Porter were Stan Wall, Director, WMATA Office of Real Estate and Station Planning, and Blair Fishburn, WMATA's Acting Chief Financial Officer.

As Chair, Ms. Porter explained ground rules for the conduct of the Public Hearing, asked Mr. Wall to describe WMATA's proposed facilities and then called upon public officials and members of the public to testify in the order signed up, with those who had not signed up given time at the end of the Public Hearing.

Staff's responses to testimony and comments are divided into four sections: *Other Agency Review and Staff Response, Procedural Issues and Staff Response, Transit Facilities and Staff Response, Public Comment and Staff Response, and Building Design.*

#### REVISED SITE CONCEPT PLAN

A Revised Site Concept Plan dated January 16, 2015, Exhibit H, was prepared by the Developer in response to the Public Hearing comments, a Developer meeting with the District of Columbia Office of Planning, and a workshop with local residents held by the

Developer on September 13, 2014. Transit-related changes incorporated in the Revised Site Concept Plan are:

- The pedestrian entrance to the proposed apartment complex has been moved to the sidewalk facing the bus loop and open space area;
- A residential drop off area is provided within the proposed parking garage; residents will drive through WMATA's Kiss & Ride facility to reach this drop off area;
- Space is provided for a ten-foot Metropolitan Branch Trail for cyclists and a separate five-foot sidewalk for pedestrians in the 30-foot setback between the proposed building façade and the Eastern Avenue curb line;
- The entry drive to the WMATA Kiss & Ride facility, residential drop off area, residential parking, and the loading dock has been reduced to two lanes, which are wide enough to accommodate truck access and circulation;
- A buffer of 30 feet is provided between the entry drive and the property line on the northwest corner of the site; and
- The loading dock has been lengthened to accommodate 30-foot vehicles and will have a transparent wall to the south so that pedestrians on the sidewalk in the garage can safely approach the loading dock exit.

The District Department of Transportation reviewed the change to the entry drive and provisionally concurred with the revision at a meeting on September 23, 2014.

#### OTHER AGENCY REVIEWS AND COMMENTS

Copies of the Public Hearing Notice (Exhibit K) were sent to federal, state, regional and local agencies per Section 15 of the WMATA Compact. Comment was received from Takoma Park Mayor Bruce Williams, who provided City Council Resolution 2013-68, and Councilmember Seth Grimes, City of Takoma Park; and District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B member Sara Green who provided ANC 4B Resolution 14-0506, and Resolution 13-1105, adopted November 25, 2013, with her personal testimony. Additionally, comments were received from Congressman Chris Van Hollen; Montgomery County Council Member Marc Elrich; Maryland State Senator Jamie Raskin; and Maryland State Delegates Sheila Hixson, Tom Hucker, and Wendy Mizeur.

Mayor Williams emphasized in testimony that access to the station by pedestrians, bicyclists, patrons with disabilities and bus riders should be easy, safe, comfortable and attractive, and transit facilities must be of an adequate capacity to accommodate the



community's transit needs for decades. He noted that the Access Analysis provides helpful data and recommendations on pedestrian, bicycle and bus access and stressed that there is a need for wide sidewalks where pedestrians want to walk, benches for those who need to rest, convenient parking and drop off areas for patrons with disabilities, a good pathway for and connections to the Metropolitan Branch Trail, and sufficient bicycle parking. He further stated that there should be enough short term parking spaces for transit users so that residents can continue to find a space to park at the Metro station to go downtown for appointments. He said, also, that Takoma Park is concerned about traffic congestion on Eastern Avenue which the Traffic Analysis shows will worsen From Piney Branch Road to WMATA's property and for which no recommendations for improvement were proposed. City Council Resolution 2013-68 predates the Site Concept Plan presented at the Public Hearing. Section Two of the City Council Resolution asked for design modifications to fully address concerns about safety (loading-dock positioning), transit-accessibility (location of drop-off for persons with disabilities), and the garage entry drive that did not appear to allow adequate buffer for a neighboring building. Takoma Park Councilmember Grimes stated that the "excessive" residential parking provided would compromise transit operations. Other comments from Mayor Williams and Councilmember Grimes are summarized in the report section on *Building Design*.<sup>i</sup>

Commissioner Green provided two resolutions adopted by ANC 4B. Resolution 14-0506 recommends (1) not reducing metered parking at the site, (2) designing the entrance to the project parking garage to preserve the existing treed buffer between the entry drive and the neighboring building, and (3) designing bicycle access to the station so that street parking is preserved on Eastern Avenue NW. Additionally, this resolution notes that congestion in and around key intersections and on Eastern Avenue is a concern, and criticized WMATA's Traffic Analysis. Resolution 13-1105 addressed building design.<sup>ii</sup>

Congressman Van Hollen was represented by Danielle Perry, at the Public Hearing.<sup>iii</sup> She quoted a letter from the Congressman with these concerns about transit: (1) pedestrian safety around the position of the building's loading dock [on Eastern Avenue] and (2) conclusions of an independent traffic analysis that says WMATA's Traffic Analysis significantly understates the traffic impacts from the development. The Congressman also noted that Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act may apply to this project. Finally, the Congressman asserted that WMATA's desire to focus on transit elements rather than building design elements prevents a critical avenue for his constituents who do not currently have party status in the District of Columbia Planned Unit Development process to be heard on a development that has significant impacts on their neighborhood.

Montgomery County At-Large Councilmember Marc Elrich requested the establishment of a neighborhood design working group to include appropriate Maryland representation before a final Board vote on the Public Hearing record.<sup>iv</sup> Maryland State Senator Raskin, and delegates Hixson, Hucker and Mizeur expressed two main concerns. The first concern is that the Public Hearing Notice, Exhibit K, includes matters such as “land use, population, economic factors affecting development plans, existing and proposed transportation and transit facilities, any dislocation of families or business; preservation of the beauty and dignity of the Nation’s Capital and factors affecting environmental amenities and aesthetics and financial resources.” Further, they said that the Public Hearing Notice includes consideration of “stations and parking facilities, the character, nature, design [and] location.” They argue that the Board must address all concerns of neighbors before approving a Public Hearing Staff Report and passing the project on to the Zoning Commission for review. The second stated concern was the lack of interaction with the Developer in the design of the proposed project. The state legislators, like Councilmember Elrich, proposed the establishment of a neighborhood design working group “which would include representatives from both Maryland and D.C. and which would work actively with WMATA and [the Developer] to develop and refine a design plan....”<sup>v</sup>

#### *Staff Response*

City of Takoma Park. Mr. Wall’s presentation at the Public Hearing addressed City of Takoma Park concerns about easy, safe, comfortable and attractive access to transit facilities. He described the proposed improvements and explained how the Site Concept Plan, which was reviewed by WMATA’s operating departments and Office of ADA Policy and Planning, provided improved access to the station for all transit modes and customers. The improvements are also described in the earlier section of this report on *Proposed Transit Facilities Presented at Public Hearing*. The Revised Site Concept Plan shows changes to the entry drive, loading docks, and buffer area. With regard to traffic on Eastern Avenue, the Traffic Analysis did recommend changes which are discussed in the section on *Traffic Analysis*. In his presentation, Mr. Wall set forth the reasoning behind the reduction of metered parking spaces, i.e., that the spaces are not heavily occupied. This issue is more fully covered in this report’s section on *Adequacy of Parking in the Kiss & Ride Facility*. Staff notes Councilmember Grimes’ concern about residential traffic but does not conclude that the addition of 44 vehicles in the morning peak hour and 54 vehicles in the evening peak hour will impede operation of the WMATA Kiss & Ride facility. Further, while early versions of the development proposal, including that studied in the Traffic Analysis, featured a ratio of 0.9 parking spaces per residential unit, the residential parking ratio in the proposal shown at the Public Hearing had been lowered to approximately 0.7 spaces per unit as a result of

community input and WMATA staff negotiation. In addition, per Board Resolution 2014-11, WMATA staff continues to negotiate with the Developer to minimize the number of the project's residential parking spaces in order to promote greater transit utilization by residents and reduce traffic impact; however, the parking ratio will ultimately be addressed by the Zoning Commission.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B. As requested by ANC 4B, bicycle access to the station has been redesigned in the Revised Site Concept Plan so that street parking may be preserved on Eastern Avenue. (See the section below on *Bicycle Access and Circulation*.) The independent traffic study referenced by ANC 4B (and also noted by Congressman Van Hollen) is attached to the testimony of Sara Green. This traffic study was prepared by Joe Mehra of MCV Associates and is addressed in the section on *WMATA's Traffic Analysis*.

Congressman Chris Van Hollen. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act does not require action by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for this proposed project, as explained in the section on *Procedural Issues*.

Councilmember Elrich, Senator Raskin and Delegates Hixson, Hucker and Mizeur. With regard to establishment of a neighborhood design working group, Board Resolution 2014-11 states: "...WMATA will receive public comment on matters regarding residential building design elements during the second Public hearing. WMATA staff shall report such comments in the staff report on the Public hearing and forward those comments to the District of Columbia Zoning Commission[.]" Staff believes that the matters raised by the State of Maryland legislators with regard to the Public Hearing notice are addressed in the updated Environmental Evaluation dated January 2015, Exhibit L.

## PROCEDURAL ISSUES AND STAFF RESPONSE

Several commenters stated that FTA has approval authority over joint development land transactions, and, therefore, this project constitutes a federal "undertaking" within the meaning of federal law.<sup>vi</sup> Consequently, they believe that FTA must conduct a Section 4(f) analysis under the Department of Transportation Act and an environmental review under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). However, the proposed project is not a federal undertaking. FTA's latest guidance (Circular 7050.1 dated August 25, 2014, p. V-3) supports this position by stating that: "If FTA is not funding the actual joint development and is not otherwise involved in project decisions, then a FTA NEPA evaluation would not be necessary."

An argument similar to that for Section 4(f) and NEPA review has been made by the Deputy General Counsel for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the counsel for Historic Takoma, Inc., and others.<sup>vii</sup> They assert that, because the project lies within the Takoma Park Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and requires FTA approval, FTA must comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. However, the previously-stated reasoning applies. No federal funds are involved, and therefore the proposed project is not a federal undertaking. FTA does not have to approve the sale of the project site. It has only to concur that the sale is occurring within FTA guidelines. The project will, however, be subject to local law which will incorporate historic review and approval. The Developer will have to obtain Planned Unit Development approval for its plans from the DC Zoning Commission. To obtain such approval, the project will be subject to review and approval by the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), which will consider the effect, if any, of the entire project on the Takoma Park Historic District.

Another commenter, Paul Chrostowski, asserted that the Public Hearing did not meet the Compact's requirement to consider "factors affecting environmental amenities and aesthetics."<sup>viii</sup> WMATA's staff disagrees with Mr. Chrostowski's assessment because the Compact only requires that these matters be the subject of meaningful discussion at the Public Hearing and that those discussions and other relevant materials are given due consideration by WMATA's Board.<sup>ix</sup> Environmental-related issues regarding air quality, transportation, open/green space, trees, land use, zoning, neighborhoods, and aesthetics, were presented and were subject to considerable discussion at the Public Hearing, in the written responses received, and also as part of the Board's deliberations leading up to this Public Hearing. However, as suggested by Mr. Chrostowski and in the interest of best practices, WMATA's staff has prepared an Environmental Evaluation, attached as Exhibit L, to supplement the record. This Environmental Evaluation is made available for public comment during the review period for this Public Hearing Staff Report.

Mr. Chrostowski's comments included an objection to the scope of the 2007 Environmental Evaluation. The 2015 Environmental Evaluation was modeled on the Environmental Evaluation undertaken in 2006 for the 2007 Public Hearing. WMATA's staff notes that 2007 Environmental Evaluation was accepted by WMATA for the First Report.

Another commenter stated that before WMATA makes any decisions, it must make the final site plan approved by the WMATA Board in 1974-75 part of the record for review. This commenter argues that the 1974 site plan needs to be considered because it carries regulatory weight.<sup>x</sup> WMATA provided a draft of the 1974 site plan approved by the Board in Exhibit 1 to the First Report, which shows very clearly what exists on the

ground today. Secondly, the plan approved by the Board in the 1970s does not carry regulatory weight because Board Resolution 2007-46, adopted on November 8, 2007, amended the General Plans and the Adopted Regional System plan for the Takoma Metrorail Station to include the facilities described in the Developer's 2007 proposal and the First Report (attached as Exhibit B). That is the plan of record today.

*Staff Conclusion and Recommendation:* Because there is no federal funding of the proposed development, federally-conducted environmental and historic preservation analyses are not required. Historic preservation review will be addressed in the District of Columbia's consideration of the Developer's Planned Unit Development request. The District of Columbia zoning approval processes provide an appropriate venue for interested parties to be heard on these issues.

## TRANSIT FACILITIES - PUBLIC COMMENT AND STAFF RESPONSE

Comments about the replacement of WMATA's facilities made by speakers at the Public Hearing and in written comments are grouped in the following categories:

- Adequacy of Parking Spaces in the Kiss & Ride Facility;
- Traffic Analysis;
- Bicycle Access and Circulation;
- Pedestrian Access;
- Air pollution;
- Other Transit Improvements;
- Loading Dock Safety; and
- Need to Keep Site Open for Future Transit Use.

### *Adequacy of Parking Spaces in the Kiss & Ride Facility*

The type and amount of parking at the station has been the subject of debate, with widely differing views from the time that planning for the station advanced (See pages 2-6 of the First Report). As that report noted, when the station first opened in 1975 the Board of Directors formally limited parking at Takoma Station to 100 non-commuter spaces, of which approximately 45 were Kiss & Ride spaces. The shorter duration parking spaces were installed at the express wishes of the local community. Later, the lot was restriped to increase capacity but the policy of limiting parking to seven hours remains, in order to: a) discourage use of the Kiss & Ride facility for commuter parking and b) allow use of Metro by local residents to keep appointments and run errands.

Commenters argued that parking should not be reduced but did not refute Metro's analysis of less than 50% usage.<sup>xi</sup> However, most blamed the underutilization on the restrictions that Metro has imposed to curtail use, so that only 50% of parking can be used at certain times.<sup>xii</sup> As described in the Access Analysis, parking hours are limited to prevent commuter parking and to permit short duration parking for midday errands or evening trips to downtown Washington. In one area, parking is permitted from 10 AM until 2 AM. In another, parking is allowed from 8:30 AM until 2:30 PM. Others suggested that the current amount of parking ought to be maintained because it can be utilized for shopping in the neighborhood.<sup>xiii</sup> Though that may be an added convenience for neighbors, the intended purpose of Metro parking is to accommodate users of Metrorail. Another participant stated that on weekends, when there are no time restrictions, the lot is filled.<sup>xiv</sup> Staff notes that parking is free on weekends, and that may account for higher usage. Two commenters requested continued use of free parking on weekends.<sup>xv</sup>

In light of the Public Hearing comments, including those suggesting that rules prohibiting parking be eased, WMATA staff has concluded that parking hours ought to be expanded and is recommending that all metered parking be available from 5 AM until 2 AM, seven days a week. This change will allow more parking for transit use, for up to seven-hour periods of time, while serving as a deterrent to those who might use the parking area for commuting and for weekend storage of vehicles. At the same time, the change will allow WMATA to gain increased revenue from use of a scarce resource. Staff believes that this adjustment also responds to a Takoma Park resident who thought that reducing metered parking spaces will cause cars to park on side streets.<sup>xvi</sup>

Another commenter indicated that existing meters are often broken and enforcement of the time limits seems lax.<sup>xvii</sup> A suggestion was also made to allow use of SmarTrip cards for parking meters.<sup>xviii</sup> Both of these comments have been forwarded to WMATA's Office of Parking and MTPD, the transit police.

A commenter stated that covered parking tends to be unsafe.<sup>xix</sup> Enhanced lighting, emergency phones, security cameras, and minimized visual obstructions in the new development will reduce security risk. Another commenter stated that the entry to the Kiss & Ride facility looked confusing and that there would be an associated traffic backup. The entry to the parking area will be well marked and signed, which should eliminate confusion.<sup>xx</sup>

*Staff Conclusion and Recommendation:* Staff recommends reducing the parking to 87 metered spaces. The Revised Site Concept Plan shows 87 metered parking spaces; five reserved spaces for people with disabilities; 14 Kiss & Ride spaces (driver-attended waiting) 7 taxi/shuttle spaces); and 6 motorcycle spaces. Staff further recommends

Board approval of extended revenue hours: 5 AM to 2 AM seven days per week for all metered parking.

### *Traffic Analysis*

Over two dozen speakers addressed the Traffic Analysis. The primary concerns were that: a) it did not take into account traffic to be generated by all future development in the area including new development currently under construction;<sup>xxi</sup> and b) statistics, particularly those regarding level of service at intersections (LOS) used in the Traffic Analysis, conflict with or did not take into account conclusions in a prior study: “*Traffic Impact Study Walter Reed Local Redevelopment Authority Reuse Plan, final Draft, August 15, 2012.*”<sup>xxii</sup> These claims were underscored in a memorandum written by traffic consultant Joe Mehra of MCV Associates. The memorandum does not say that traffic generated from the proposed joint development project is significantly understated in the Traffic Analysis. It does say that the Traffic Analysis underestimates the future amounts of traffic from other sources on streets near the station site.

With regard to the first concern, the Traffic Analysis forecasted future traffic using the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government (MWCOG) 2.3 model. The MWCOG model is the official travel forecasting model for the metropolitan region and includes approved development projects reflected in the Round 8.1 Cooperative Land Use forecasts (July 2012). The Cooperative Forecasting program is a joint effort by MWCOG and local governments to produce a set of long-range economic and demographic forecasts for use in metropolitan and local planning programs. The methodology used in the construction of the Cooperative Forecasts includes the preparation of independent projections by local jurisdictions of future local growth and development based on master plans and “pipeline” development in each jurisdiction. Based on this model the Traffic Analysis assumed a total traffic growth of 15% from 2013 to 2020 in the AM and PM peak period which is equivalent to an average annual traffic growth of 2%.

The second concern is correct but not of consequence given the purpose of the Traffic Analysis. The Traffic Analysis was undertaken to assess whether the proposed development would have a significant adverse impact on existing and projected traffic conditions. The answer to that question, as noted earlier in the section on *Proposed Transit Facilities Presented at Public Hearing*, is no. Vehicular traffic generated by the proposed apartment development would have a minimal effect on peak hour traffic in the immediate area. Traffic in the area is, and likely will continue to be, heavy, and, as a result, intersections may become congested, e.g. along Piney Branch Road, at certain times of the day. The Traffic Analysis did recommend signal timing optimization, as well as lane configuration changes on Carroll Street and Piney Branch Road, to improve traffic flow. DDOT will review traffic impacts of the proposed development as part of the

Zoning Commission's deliberations and will be able recommend changes it deems necessary to improve traffic conditions. WMATA will not bear the cost of any changes.

A speaker stated that the project posed a safety issue because emergency vehicles might not be able to reach their destination swiftly on congested streets.<sup>xxiii</sup> As noted above, this issue that does not result from the proposed project.

A comment included a request to retain curbside parking on Eastern Avenue.<sup>xxiv</sup> The proposed project does not eliminate curbside parking. Another hearing participant opposed a recommendation in the Traffic Analysis to eliminate curbside parking on Piney Branch Road between Dahlia Street and Eastern Avenue.<sup>xxv</sup> This issue may be dealt with in the Zoning Commission review of the proposed project.

*Staff Conclusion and Recommendation:* Staff concurs with the Traffic Analysis' conclusion that the proposed apartment development will produce minimal additional traffic and does not recommend any further analysis.

#### *Bicycle Access and Circulation*

Several comments were made about bicycle access to the station. One noted that the Circulation Paths diagram presented at the Public Hearing lacks bicycles, an inadvertent omission.<sup>xxvi</sup> The corrected Circulation Paths diagram, Exhibit F, shows bicycle circulation. Another participant stated that the development does nothing to improve bicycle access to the station, and others indicated that there is no dedicated bike lane from Eastern Avenue to the station entrance.<sup>xxvii</sup> The broad sidewalk and fire lane from Eastern Avenue to the station entrance along the east façade of the proposed apartment building will provide ample space for bicycle circulation to the station entrance, without bicycles impinging on pedestrian circulation. Further, Metro will provide a Bike & Ride facility for storage of bicycles adjacent to the station escalator entrance.

Other commenters suggested that space be left for a Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) extension along Eastern Avenue.<sup>xxviii</sup> The Revised Concept Plan includes this space. The extension of the MBT to Takoma will not only enhance bicycle access to the station but also to other areas since the trail will eventually extend to downtown Washington and Silver Spring.

*Staff Conclusion and Recommendation:* The improvements incorporated in the station's circulation plan address citizen input. These changes address and improve bicycle circulation and storage at the station and should be adopted.



### *Pedestrian Access*

Commenters requested that any sidewalk through the garage be wide enough for pedestrian safety and should have a barrier to protect pedestrians from traffic.<sup>xxxix</sup> Staff believes that this largely has been done, although no barrier is proposed. This matter is discussed below in *Loading Dock Safety*.

A number of commenters suggested a direct pedestrian access from the west side of the tracks to the station entrance, in particular to the elevator entrance.<sup>xxxix</sup> Though desirable, a connection that involves tunneling under WMATA and CSX tracks is extremely costly. WMATA's 2006 order of magnitude estimate for such an entrance was approximately \$10 million, a cost that cannot be borne by the joint development project.

*Staff Conclusion and Recommendation:* The pedestrian changes proposed in the plan will increase accessibility and are planned to promote safety. Staff recommends adoption of the changes.

### *Air Pollution*

Two comments were received about the bus loop. One asserted that the bus loop is a generator of fumes and therefore prevents use of the green space which has become an amphitheater that collects fumes.<sup>xxxix</sup> Bus engines do emit particulate matter as part of the combustion process. Increasingly, the Metrobus fleet contains vehicles with newer diesel-electric hybrid, compressed natural gas (CNG), and clean diesel models. These improvements in fuel efficiency have meant that the buses can travel the same distance while consuming less gas, reducing fuel costs and emitting fewer greenhouse gas pollutants into the air. A major component of Metro's Capital Improvement Program includes funding to continue replacing older buses with the most up-to-date vehicle technology.

A second commenter suggested improvements to the tree canopy, possible use of solar panels for bus shelters, and tree root protection. These can be addressed as more detailed planning for the site occurs.<sup>xxxix</sup> As noted earlier, WMATA intends to dedicate one acre of the open space area as a village green for community use and anticipates that Takoma's creative community members will use it.

Also, concern was expressed that project traffic would contribute to reduced air quality. However, given the limited number of additional trips expected to be generated by the

project, WMATA's Environmental Evaluation does not expect a degrading of air quality.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

*Staff Conclusion and Recommendation:* No increase in air pollution from buses or cars is anticipated. Since the bus loop is a critical component of the transit access, it must remain. New clean fuel technologies area anticipated to reduce air pollution.

#### *Other Transit Improvements*

A suggestion was made for better access to the station through use of jitneys or circulators.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Staff has forwarded these comments to DDOT for its consideration. On a related note, the proposed Kiss & Ride facility can accommodate shuttle buses, including those providing access for customers with disabilities, from nearby developments. The South of Sligo Citizens' Association suggested special passes for those who live 1-3 miles away and need special accommodation and, also, some commuter parking.<sup>xxxv</sup> To date, such suggestions have not been advanced by other nearby residents.

*Staff Conclusion and Recommendation:* The proposed project has been designed to accommodate various modes of transit access to the station and appears to be adequate at present. However, Metro should remain open to operating changes that are economically viable and enhance rail and bus usage.

#### *Loading Dock Safety*

Early plans for the apartment building showed a loading dock area on Eastern Avenue. At the Public Hearing, a number of citizens stated that trucks backing into a loading dock area on Eastern Avenue would be a safety issue for vehicles on Eastern Avenue and, also, for pedestrians. The City of Takoma Park also objected to the siting of the loading docks on Eastern Avenue.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

By the time of the Public Hearing, WMATA and Developer had agreed to move the loading docks off of Eastern Avenue. The plan presented at the Public Hearing actually showed loading docks moved over to the new Kiss & Ride access driveway interior to the site. Following the Public Hearing, WMATA worked with the Developer to refine the design to improve traffic flow and protect pedestrians using the sidewalk next to the access drive through the following measures: 1) increase the loading dock length so that trucks would be contained entirely within the dock space and not intrude on the sidewalk or driving lanes and 2) increase the width of the sidewalk from 8 feet to 10 feet in order to provide safer pedestrian access. These changes are shown on the Revised

Site Concept Plan. To further enhance safety, the Developer will install a transparent wall on the south side of the loading docks so that pedestrians walking toward Eastern Avenue will be able to see activity in the docks.

Additionally, WMATA and the Developer concluded that projected traffic did not warrant the three drive lanes shown on the plans at the Public Hearing. Two lanes would suffice provided that they were wide enough to allow trucks to back in safely to the loading docks and make turns safely to and from Eastern Avenue. WMATA and the Developer then consulted with DDOT to gain preliminary approval for two lanes of 14-foot width each. The overall decrease in the number of drive lanes allows more room for planting of vegetation to screen the project from neighboring apartments in the treed buffer area at the edge of the site. Many of those making comments noted that the buffer was greatly diminished in early plans and needed to be preserved.<sup>xxxvii</sup> A 30 foot buffer is shown on the Revised Site Concept Plan.

*Staff Recommendation and Conclusion:* Loading docks have been relocated from Eastern Avenue to the Kiss & Ride facility entrance drive. Drive lanes to the Kiss & Ride facility are now reduced to two. Staff recommends adoption of the plan that includes these features.

#### *Need to Keep the Site Open for Future Transit Use*

Two participants proposed excluding all development to save the entire area for future transit needs.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Metro staff has analyzed future needs and did not identify any overarching need to preserve space. Staff is aware of possible plans to extend a streetcar line to the station. However, the extension may go to Silver Spring (no decision has been made). The portion of the open space area along Eastern Avenue that will not be preserved for the village green may be made available in the future for expanded bus service should that be necessary. The Kiss & Ride facility, with seven taxi/shuttle drop off spaces, can accommodate added shuttle bus service from future developments.

Another commenter suggested that the site be preserved as is to provide a rapid emergency staging area in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack.<sup>xxxix</sup> The current plan does not preclude this usage.

*Staff Conclusion and Recommendation:* Given the findings of the Access Study and the demonstrated demand for apartment living adjacent to Metro service, the current plan reflects a balance among community objectives for open space retention, transit-oriented development, and improved and appropriate access via all modes of circulation

to the station. Staff does not recommend preserving the entire site for hypothetical future transit needs.

## BUILDING DESIGN

Throughout the 2013 and 2014 public meetings that led to authorization of the Public Hearing, some local community members and elected representatives urged the WMATA Board of Directors to review the developer's design of the housing project. Many recommended that the Board of Directors establish a neighborhood design working group.<sup>xi</sup> In Resolution 2014-11 authorizing the Public Hearing, the Board did not endorse but did not reject the apartment building design. The resolution directed staff to report residential building design comments in this report and to forward Public Hearing commentary on those issues to the District of Columbia Zoning Commission.

One commenter thought that the design of the building and the design of the WMATA facilities are interrelated; consequently one could not be addressed without the other, and, further, building design dictated the location of transit elements.<sup>xii</sup> However, staff believes that the proposed transit facilities can be evaluated independently of aspects of building design that do not physically intersect with those facilities. Staff has required numerous design revisions to ensure that WMATA's standards for traffic and pedestrian circulation and for access for persons with disabilities are followed in the design of the changed Kiss & Ride facility, bus bays, sidewalks and access from the Kiss & Ride parking area to the station entrance.

Of the 60 speakers testifying at the Public Hearing, most directly (or indirectly by speaking about traffic generation) addressed the design of the building. Some 46 speakers expressed reservations about the proposed structure while 14 speakers expressed support for the proposal.<sup>xlii</sup> In testimony submitted after the Public Hearing about the same ratio of writers expressed concerns about or support of the proposal.<sup>xliii</sup> A petition was also submitted expressing dissatisfaction with the building design; it was signed by some 216 people, many of whom otherwise wrote or spoke for the Public Hearing record; a second petition signed by some 75 people also addressed building design.<sup>xliv</sup>

Concerns expressed included the following:

- The building is too tall, is out of scale compared with nearby buildings, in particular the houses across the street on Eastern Avenue and the garden apartments on Eastern Avenue to the northwest of the site;
- The building setback from Eastern Avenue is inadequate;
- The building intrudes on a 50-foot treed buffer area on the north edge of the site;
- The proposed building, at approximately 200 units, is too large and would have a deleterious effect on auto traffic in the area;
- There is excessive residential parking in the project;
- Residential parking should be placed underground;
- The project does not conform to certain provisions of the Takoma Central District Plan and to matter-of-right zoning;
- The Board of Directors should establish a neighborhood design working group composed of local DC and Maryland representatives, mandate that the Developer work with this group and receive its findings on design before holding a final vote on the Public Hearing Staff Report; and
- Representatives of Takoma Park, Maryland fear that they will not have a sufficient voice to discuss design issues under District of Columbia processes.<sup>xlv</sup>

Those who supported the project believe that the scale of the building is in keeping with the project's location on the station's doorstep next to elevated Metrorail tracks. Supporters also felt that concerns about traffic generated by the proposed project were unfounded and that proposed changes to transit facilities are appropriate. Some expressed interest in lower residential parking ratios and higher than minimum amounts of affordable housing.<sup>xlvi</sup>

At least two writers expressed support for residential development but expressed neither support for, nor opposition to, the proposed project.<sup>xlvii</sup>

*Staff Notes:* In accordance with Board Resolution 2014-11, WMATA staff will transmit the adopted Public Hearing Staff Report, including all testimony, to the DC Office of Zoning for use in Zoning Commission deliberations. WMATA's Board of Directors also pledged, in its deliberations on Resolution 2014-11, to recommend party status for Takoma Park, Maryland so that its standing in front of the DC Zoning Commission would be recognized.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>i</sup> Mayor Bruce Williams, Public Hearing Transcript (“Transcript”) pp. 22-26; testimony of the City of Takoma Park, Bruce R. Williams, June 18, 2014; City of Takoma Park, Maryland Resolution 2013-68, Takoma Park Councilmember Seth Grimes, Transcript, p.30 and written statement dated June 18, 2014
- <sup>ii</sup> Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B Resolutions 14--0506 and 13-1105 attached to written testimony of Sara Green dated June 18, 2014
- <sup>iii</sup> Danielle Perry, Transcript pp. 18-21, on behalf of U.S. Representative Chris Van Hollen
- <sup>iv</sup> At-Large Montgomery County Councilmember Marc Elrich, Transcript, pp. 25-32 and undated letter from the Councilmember
- <sup>v</sup> Written testimony of Maryland State Legislators (Senator Jamie Raskin, and delegates Sheila Hixson, Tom Hucker and Heather Mizeur) dated June 18 2014; Delegate Tom Hucker, Transcript pp. 163-168
- <sup>vi</sup> Lorraine Pearsall (Historic Takoma, Inc.), Transcript pp.117-118 and written testimony dated June 30, 2014. Also, Paul Chrostowski, Michele Rosenfeld (on behalf of Historic Takoma, Inc), Elizabeth Merritt (National Trust for Historic Preservation), Marion Werkheiser (Cultural Heritage Partners, PLLC), Nancy Young
- <sup>vii</sup> Lorraine Pearsall, Transcript pp. 117-118 and written testimony dated June 30, 2014. Also, Michele Rosenfeld, Elizabeth Merritt, Marion Werkheiser, Nancy Young, Danielle Perry (on behalf of U.S. Representative Chris Van Hollen), Sara Hayden, Christine Simpson
- <sup>viii</sup> Written testimony of Paul Chrostowski dated June 30, 2014
- <sup>ix</sup> Saunders v. WMATA, 359 F. Supp. 457, 459 (D.D.C. 1973)
- <sup>x</sup> Written testimony of Lorraine Pearsall dated June 30, 2014.
- <sup>xi</sup> ANC 4B Resolution 14-0506. Also, Sara Green, Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison (DC/MD Neighbors for Takoma Transit statement of January 21, 2014 attached to written testimony of Sara Green), Faith Wheeler, Catherine Tunis (South of Sligo Citizens Association—SOSCA), Mary Rein, Sharon Mandel, Suzanne Izzo, Doug Dembling, Ellen Cassidy, Katherine Mack, Bevi Chagnon, Carol Mermey, Robbin Phelps, Antonio Estrada. [One commenter, Bradley Decker, argued for keeping the same hours and another, David Paris, suggested reducing parking to 40 spaces for people with disabilities; however they were clearly in the minority]
- <sup>xii</sup> Written testimony of Sara Green dated June 18, 2014. Also, Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison, Sabrina Eaton, Catherine Tunis, Barbara Rosenblatt, Suzanne Izzo, Bella Schauman, Chris Elfring, Theo Jacobson, Jessica Landman
- <sup>xiii</sup> Written testimony of Sara Green dated June 18, 2014
- <sup>xiv</sup> Written testimony of Mary Rein dated June 26, 2014. Also, Suzanne Izzo, Catherine Tunis
- <sup>xv</sup> Written testimony of Mary Jane Muchui dated June 29, 2014
- <sup>xvi</sup> Written testimony of Mary Jane Breinholt dated June 30, 2014. Also Susan Bortnick
- <sup>xvii</sup> Written testimony of Gene Koo dated June 25, 2014
- <sup>xviii</sup> Written testimony of Catherine Tunis (SOSCA) dated June 30, 2014
- <sup>xix</sup> Written testimony of David Reiser dated June 30, 2014
- <sup>xx</sup> Written testimony of Dan Amon dated June 27, 2014
- <sup>xxi</sup> ANC 4B Resolution 14-0506. Also, Sara Green, Joe Mehra, MCV Associates (Memorandum to Michele Rosenfeld, of February 20, 2014), Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison, Jack Sullivan, Mary Rein, Mary Jane Breinholt, Carolivia Herron and Shannon Cockett (on behalf of the Board of North Washington Neighbors, Inc.), Carol Mermey, Robbin Phelps, Ruth Foster, Clifford Schwartz, Diane Vidutis
- <sup>xxii</sup> Mayor Bruce Williams (Takoma Park, MD), Council Member Marc Elrich, Sara Green, Joe Mehra, ANC 4B Resolution, Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison, Simone Shannon, Valerie Tennant, Fred & Monica Davy, David

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Reiser, Keith Kozloff, Karen Collins, Theo Jacobson, Danielle Perry , Ruth Foster, Lorraine Pearsall, Joseph Harris & Cynthia Uleman, Laura Kleinman, Joan Payton-Turner, Wendy Rodgers, Jack and Carol Werner, Lyndon & Marjorie Wilkes

xxiii Clifford Schwartz, Transcript pp. 170-172

xxiv ANC 4B Resolution 14-0506. Also, Sara Green, Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison, Becca Williamson

xxv Loretta Neumann, Transcript p.66. Also, Daniel Smith and Loretta Neumann

xxvi Jeffrey Silverstone (Seekers Church), Transcript, pp. 56-59

xxvii Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison statement of January 21, 2014 (DC/MD Neighbors for Takoma Transit). Also, Jeffrey Silverstone (Seekers Church), Jack Sullivan

xxviii Mayor Bruce Williams, Transcript pp. 22-26. Also, Jeffrey Silverstone and written statement dated June 18, 2014, Kenneth Firestone

xxix Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison statement of January 21, 2014 (DC/MD Neighbors for Takoma Transit)

xxx Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison statement of January 21, 2014 (DC/Takoma Neighbors for Takoma Transit). Also, Jeffrey Silverstone, Chris Elfring, Barbara Whitney

xxxi Brian Robinson, Transcript p. 156

xxxii Written testimony of Jack Sullivan dated June 30, 2014

xxxiii Ruth Foster, Transcript, p. 82. Also, Nancy Currier

xxxiv Written testimony of David Paris dated June 30, 2014

xxxv Written testimony of Catherine Tunis (SOSCA) dated June 30, 2014

xxxvi ANC 4B Resolution 14-0506. Also, Sara Green, Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison, Valerie Tennant, Mayor Bruce Williams, Jack Sullivan, Bevi Chagnon, Steven Silverman, Becca Williamson, Gregory Bordynowski, Shannon Cockett

xxxvii ANC 4B Resolution 14-0506. Also, Sara Green, Pamela Ellison & Jacqueline Davison, (David Boyd, Simone Shannon, Stacey Crossett, Luis Morales, Shireen Lewis attached to written testimony of Sara Green dated June 18, 2014), Joseph Radzевич, Sara Hayden, Sabrina Eaton, Faith Wheeler, Mayor Bruce Williams, Jack Sullivan, Christine Simpson, Lorraine Pearsall, Mary Rein, Doug Payton & Eric Evans, Doug Dembling, Katherine Mack, Susanne Lowen, Steven Silverman, Becca Williamson, Carolivia Herron and Shannon Cockett , Daniel Smith & Loretta Neumann, Antonio Estrada, Valerie Tennant, Rob Nordheimer, Marcy Stickle, Chris Turner, Catherine Tunis, Nancy Currier, Julie Boddy, Kathleen Carroll, Ray Martone, Linda Rabben

xxxviii Ian Barclay, Transcript pp. 158-160. Also, David Paris

xxxix Written testimony of Hugh Geoghegan dated June 30, 2014

xl Councilmember Marc Elrich, Transcript, pp. 25-27 and undated letter. Also, Councilmember Seth Grimes, Senator Jamie Raskin (on behalf, also, of delegates Tom Hucker, Sheila Hixson and Heather Mizeur), Joseph Radzевич, Peter Kovar, James DiLuigi, Leonard Rubin, Delegate Tom Hucker, Paul Weckstein, Jessica Landman

xli Written testimony of Sara Green dated June 18, 2014. Also Joseph Radzевич

xlii Those who spoke, in opposition, about building scale and design rather than addressing transit facilities and are not cited elsewhere in this report include Thomas Fedewa, Peter Feiden, George French, Scott Knickerbocker, Lucy Mikulak, Elliott Queen, Robert Whitaker.

xliii Those who wrote, in opposition, about building scale and design rather than addressing transit facilities and are not cited elsewhere in this report include George French, Patricia Labovitz, Maggie Little, Sally Madden, Nahanni Rous, Donna Scarboro, Marc Sklar, John & Andrea Urciolo, Stephen Whitney. Also (as attachments to written testimony of Sara Green dated June 18, 2014), Anna Petrillo & Javier Rivas, Ronald Watson, Daniel Hines, Rob Callard, Patrice Lee, Candi Murphy, Deirdre Bannon

xliv Undated petitions submitted with written testimony of Sara Green dated June 18, 2014.

xlv Delgate Tom Hucker, Transcript pp. 163-168

xlvi Those who spoke in support of the proposed project include Elise Ambrose, Nick Casey, Cheryl Cort

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(Coalition for Smarter Growth), David Frye, Charles Gorham, Bradley Green, Alex Jaffe, Tracy Kaufman, Richard Layman, Robert Miller, John Rectenwald, Alex Salazar, Margaret Salazar, Jesse Thomas. Those who wrote in support of the proposed project include Theo Bartmann, Melissa Burke, Payton Chung, Cheryl Cort, Richard Cowden, Christopher Delfs, Ashley Douglass, Kenneth Firestone, Sharon Gilles, Bradley Green, Alain Jachiet, Gene Koo, Richard Layman, Greg McElhatton, Kathleen Padgett, Greg Padgett, Jeff Pierpoint, Marie Ringwald & Michael Kerr, Margaret Salazar, Justin Schor, Nancy & Stephen Smith. Also (as attachments to written testimony of Sara Green dated June 18, 2014), Alice Giancola, Richard Van Metter, Chris Adams, Sharon Villines, Paul Schwartz<sup>xlvi</sup> Brittany Benowitz, Rocco Casagrande (Old Takoma Business Association)

### **Exhibits**

- A. Board Resolution 2014-11
- B. First Report (2007 Public Hearing Report)
- C. Takoma Metrorail Station Access Analysis Technical Memorandum, September 2013
- D. Site Concept Plan dated May 14, 2014
- E. Parking Accessibility diagram
- F. Circulation Paths (including bicycle circulation)
- G. Interim Parking Plan
- H. Revised Site Concept Plan dated January 16, 2015 (with Building Site, Ground Floor Plan, Sections)
- I. Public Hearing Transcript
- J. Public Hearing Written Testimony
- K. Public Hearing Notice, Docket No. R14-01
- L. Environmental Evaluation, 2015
- M. Public Hearing Staff Report Supplement, March 2015



**Exhibits A-L**

Available online at:

[http://wmata.com/community\\_outreach/R14-01\\_landing/R14-01\\_landing.cfm](http://wmata.com/community_outreach/R14-01_landing/R14-01_landing.cfm)

PROPOSED

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**Exhibit M**

Public Hearing Staff Report Supplement

March 2015

PROPOSED

**WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY  
PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT SUPPLEMENT  
REVIEW OF PUBLIC COMMENT ON PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT  
AND FINAL STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF WMATA FACILITIES  
AT THE TAKOMA METRORAIL STATION**

**WASHINGTON, DC**

**DOCKET NO. R14-01**

**PUBLIC HEARING NO. 595**

**March 2015**

**PROPOSED**

## **BACKGROUND**

The WMATA Board of Directors convened a public hearing on June 18, 2014 to receive comments on proposed changes to WMATA facilities in conjunction with a proposed joint development project at the Takoma Metrorail Station.

On January 30, 2015, the Interim General Manager released the Public Hearing Staff Report and staff recommendations for comment (notice attached at end of this supplement). The comment period for the Public Hearing Staff Report closed on March 2, 2015. This supplement will be attached to, and become part of, the Final Public Hearing Staff Report.

## **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND STAFF RESPONSE**

Comments were received from the Takoma Park City Council, DC-MD Neighbors for Takoma Transit and individuals.

### *Takoma Park City Council Comments*

On September 25, 2015, the City of Takoma Park City Council adopted Resolution 2015-11 in response to the Public Hearing Staff Report. The Resolution has detailed comments attached which recognize “positive elements in the evolution of the proposed site design.” The Resolution “asks WMATA and developer EYA to modify the design associated with the Takoma Amended Joint Development Agreement, to fully address concerns expressed here and in the City’s comment, about neighborhood compatibility (massing on, and step-back from, Eastern Avenue NW; building height within current zoning limits; and adequate buffer from neighboring building); and traffic and transit-use impact (number of residential parking spaces), prior to the WMATA Board’s vote on Public Hearing Staff Report, R14-01.”

The detailed comments recommend that all open space be preserved as a park instead of the one acre proposed with the amount remaining available for transit improvements. They state also that WMATA makes a “specious” distinction between open space and park land. City comments further suggest that moving loading docks beneath the building would eliminate “the loading-dock safety threat.” Finally, city comments suggest that if residential parking were placed underground there would be no need for access lanes along the western edge of the site. However, access lanes would still be needed to reach WMATA’s Kiss & Ride parking.

Additionally, Council Member Seth Grimes sent in the following: “I drafted the City of Takoma Park’s resolution and comment.... I wish to re-emphasize points made by saying that while the staff report is generally a fair summary of the June 1, 2014 public hearing, the staff response to points raised in June 18 testimony, including points that I personally made, is unsatisfying.” Mr. Grimes states that site design—covering the transit and residential facilities both—should be a WMATA concern and that the oversupply of residential parking will cost WMATA transit revenue and create excessive congestion affecting transit access.

### *Staff Response*

Staff responded to these parking and design issues in the public hearing report. It noted that the developer has reduced parking ratios and that staff would continue to advance the idea that parking minimums should be lower (pursuant to Board Resolution 2014-11). Staff noted in the report that the Board specifically removed itself from involvement in the residential building's design issues (massing, height, etc.), instead leaving that topic to the District of Columbia Zoning Commission in its deliberations on the developer's Planned Unit Development application for the Takoma project.

Staff believes, also, that it adequately addressed loading dock safety improvements in the staff report. It does not expect the frequency and timing of loading dock use to adversely affect use of the entry drive for Metro station access. The final agreement between WMATA and the developer will include an easement governing the shared access entry drive. This easement will include provisions to ensure access to the station is not blocked by loading dock traffic.

Open space at station areas is not deemed park land by WMATA, which does not consider itself in the business of providing parks though it does maintain open green space areas. The one-acre Carroll-Cedar open space area east of the bus bays, outlined on the Revised Site Concept Plan provided with the public hearing report, conforms to the village green reservation targeted in the small area plan for Takoma (see the Takoma Central District Plan). It will be reserved in perpetuity and maintained by the developer. The portion of the green space at the northern end of the site along Eastern Avenue is reserved for possible future transit use, but will be maintained as green space until that time. The Revised Site Concept Plan also delineates a buffer area between the entry drive to project parking and a neighboring apartment building.

### *DC-MD Neighbors for Takoma Transit Comments*

This group of citizens sent a letter addressing, in the main, design issues and urging the WMATA Board to postpone a decision on the Public Hearing Staff Report.\* The group makes many suggestions about design that staff will forward to the DC Zoning Commission pursuant to Board Resolution 2014-11.

In order to reduce scale of the apartment complex, they suggest "placing the WMATA parking either in a structure or underground..." This, however, would make access to the station elevator entrance more difficult for persons with disabilities.

The group asks the WMATA Board to "attach ... [eight] conditions to any approval of this project..." The first condition would have the Board direct the WMATA staff to create a neighborhood advisory committee to provide comments on the project design, parking issues, and other neighborhood impacts.

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\*The letter was sent by Sara Green on behalf of Jacqueline Davison, Sabrina Eaton, Pamela Ellison, Peter Feiden, Linda Gray, Faroll Hamer, Sara K. Hayden, Peter Kovar, Lorraine Pearsall, Joseph Radzевич, and Faith Wheeler. It was endorsed by Marianne Alweis and Richard Mellman, Jeff Blum, Ellen Cassidy, Lea Chartock, Chris Elfring, George French and Marcie Stickle, Austin Jacobson, Judith Johnson, Maggie Little, Carol Mermey, and Megan Scribner. Additionally, Marcella Hovancsek voiced similar concerns.

The next five conditions are for developer provision of 1) contextual drawings, 2) a building that is appropriate for its context, 3) a parking study and analysis of the Metro station and the nearby community, 4) assurance that changes recommended by WMATA's Traffic Analysis can be implemented, and 5) a thorough CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) analysis. The seventh condition requires preservation of the entire open green space east of the bus bays along Carroll and Cedar Streets as a park in perpetuity and provision of a green buffer in perpetuity adjoining the apartments on Eastern Avenue. The last condition calls for a survey of existing trees, a tree protection plan and an accurate description of existing and proposed open space.

#### *Staff Response*

With regard to the first condition, it is unclear whom the neighborhood advisory committee would advise but more significantly it appears to produce a parallel process to that of the DC Zoning Commission. The Board previously addressed this suggestion and chose to defer residential building design issues to the DC Zoning Commission (see Resolution 2014-11).

The next five conditions will be dealt with through the DC Zoning Commission's review of the project, as will the eighth and last condition concerning inventories of trees and open space. The seventh condition for preservation of open space is addressed under *Takoma Park City Council Comments*, above.

#### *Additional Comments from Individuals*

A number of individual commenters addressed the specific topics below.

##### *1. Pedestrian Access from the West*

The Public Hearing Staff Report stated that a requested new west approach to the station elevator entrance involves tunneling under WMATA and CSX tracks, is extremely costly and cannot be borne by the proposed project. In his comment on the report, Jeffrey Silverstone states that a 2006 WMATA study indicated that a new entrance was costly because of the need to relocate an elevator machine room. Mr. Silverstone provides a sketch showing a jog around the existing elevator machine room and suggests that the feasibility of his proposal be studied.

The 2006 study report Mr. Silverstone cites does not specifically call out costs for the machine room relocation. It does however analyze the difficulty of tunneling under WMATA and CSX tracks and constructing a new passageway to the west. The 2006 study report estimated that the tunnel would cost \$10 million to construct. The revenue from this project cannot support that cost. Moreover, based on consumer price index increases since 2006 for this metropolitan area, it is likely that costs would since have risen over 20%

##### *2. WMATA Parking*

Megan Scribner and Jeffrey Lubbers did not approve of a reduction in WMATA metered spaces, and both thought that prohibition of parking during designated weekday hours should be eliminated. Mr.

Lubbers advocated for continued free weekend parking. These issues were discussed in the staff report. Dan Amon and Molly Madden, who live across the street from the WMATA parking area, felt that the interim WMATA parking plan will be disruptive to traffic. The concerns about the interim parking have been received by the appropriate offices at WMATA dealing with parking and construction and will be considered in WMATA's review of the developer's construction plans. There will also be an opportunity for the community to address this concern in the zoning process.

### 3. *Other WMATA Facilities*

Mr. Amon and Ms. Madden noted that the current elevator access is overcrowded and has maintenance issues. Staff will investigate the maintenance issue further. Mr. Amon and Ms. Madden also state that current bus shelters are unused. This was not the conclusion of WMATA's Access Analysis cited in the Public Hearing Staff Report.

### 4. *Residential Parking and Traffic*

Irene Huntoon endorsed the Takoma Park City Council position that residential parking ratios for the project should be further reduced. David Reiser stated that it is unwise to add any more traffic to an already "failing infrastructure" (the local road network). Mr. Amon and Ms. Madden also expressed concern about additional traffic effects. These issues were addressed in the staff report and will receive additional scrutiny in the DC zoning process though Mr. Reiser, as a Maryland resident, expressed dissatisfaction with that venue, alone.

### 5. *Scale*

Ms. Huntoon and Ms. Scribner made comments on building design which have responded to earlier in this supplement. Mr. Amon and Ms. Madden also stated that elevations of the residential development were needed in order to judge compatibility and impact.

### 6. *Open Space*

Mr. Lubbers endorsed preservation of the open space buffer and open space area east of the bus bays in perpetuity. David Paris submitted extensive comments, the gist of which is that WMATA committed in mid-1970's to preserve the open space at Takoma station as park land in perpetuity and has not been forthcoming in producing documents evidencing that pledge. Mr. Paris raised these issues prior to Board adoption of the 2007 Public Hearing Staff Report. At that time, documents were searched for and not found, and the 2007 report providing for townhouses to be built on a portion of the green space was adopted despite Mr. Paris' claims. Mr. Paris also asserts that open space at the station is *ipso facto* park land. However, as noted earlier WMATA does not characterize its green areas as parks since the provision and maintenance of active parks is not the agency's mission. In any event, the Revised Concept Plan includes one acre of the open space area to be preserved permanently as a village green.



### *Multiple Topics*

Joseph Cirincione, Priscilla Labovitz, and Christine Simpson wrote identical letters dealing with a number of topics. Like the DC-MD Neighbors for Takoma Transit they asked for postponement of a Board approval of the Public Hearing Staff Report pending continued discussion with the developer, particularly since those discussions give Maryland constituents input to the Board. Like the MD-DC Neighbors they requested better drawings and models from the developer and preservation as a village green of all the green space at Cedar Street, Carroll Avenue and Eastern Avenue. They also question the adequacy of reduced metered parking and Eastern Avenue's ability to handle increased traffic. Finally, they are concerned that trucks backing into loading docks will impede access for vehicles bringing Metro passengers to and from the station entrance. Staff has responded to all of these comments earlier in this supplement.

### **FINAL STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The review of comments, above, on the staff report shows that the bulk of issues concern design of the residential apartment complex, a subject that the WMATA Board has clearly indicated in the past is the purview of the DC Zoning Commission. WMATA staff will forward these comments to the DC Zoning Commission. As noted in the staff report, the proposed reduction in parking is in keeping with original (1970's) Board decisions about the amount and purpose of non-commuter parking.

Staff recommends adoption of the changes to WMATA facilities recommended in the Final Public Hearing Staff Report.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Final Public Hearing Staff Report also discusses changes to the revenue hours for the metered parking at the site. For clarity, this issue will be addressed independently of this staff report.

**Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
Proposed Changes to WMATA Facilities at  
Takoma Metro Station  
Docket R14-01**

**DRAFT PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT  
AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION**

Notice is hereby given that the draft staff report for proposed changes to WMATA facilities at Takoma Metro Station is available for review and comment through February 26, 2015. The document addresses comments received at the public hearing held on May 14, 2014, as well as written comments received during the public comment period. Comments on the draft staff report will be accepted until 5 p.m. on Thursday, February 26, 2015. The report is available on-line at [www.wmata.com/hearings](http://www.wmata.com/hearings) and during business hours at the following locations:

WMATA  
Office of the Secretary  
600 Fifth Street, NW, Room 2D-207  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-962-2511  
(Please call in advance to coordinate)

Takoma Park, Maryland Library  
101 Philadelphia Avenue  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Takoma Park Neighborhood Library  
416 Cedar Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20012

**HOW TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS**

Written statements and exhibits must be received by 5 p.m. on Thursday, February 26, 2015 and may be emailed to [writtentestimony@wmata.com](mailto:writtentestimony@wmata.com), or mailed to the Office of the Secretary, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, 600 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. Alternatively, you may send a fax to 202-962-1133. Please reference the Docket Number R14-01 in your submission. All comments received may be posted, without change, to [www.wmata.com/hearings](http://www.wmata.com/hearings), including any personal information provided.