

Proposed Changes to Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Facilities at Takoma Metro Station

On March 27, 2014, WMATA's Board of Directors authorized the negotiation and execution of an amended and restated Takoma Joint Development Sales Agreement and the holding of a public hearing required by the WMATA Compact among its member jurisdictions to receive public comment on the proposed changes. Existing facilities and proposed changes and the reasons for the changes are described in the narrative below, along with seven exhibits that are attached.

Existing Facilities

An accompanying report, Takoma Metrorail Station Access Analysis Technical Memorandum, September 2013 (Access Analysis), **Exhibit 6**, describes the 6.8 acre station site and its existing facilities. In brief, they are:

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 ADA spaces for disabled customers, three motorcycle spaces, five "A" spaces reserved for waiting motorists, and five additional spaces;
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, **Exhibit 1**, shows these facilities.

Proposed Changes

Proposed changes result from:

1. The findings of the Access Analysis
2. A proposed housing development on part of the site and from community input informing that proposed development

Access Analysis. The Access Analysis was conducted to determine current and future needs to improve access to the station by all modes of transportation. Principal findings incorporated in the proposed plan are:

- Two main pedestrian desire lines should be accommodated by dedicated walkways: 1) across the grassy area east of the bus bays to the Eastern Avenue/Cedar Street intersection and 2) across the parking lot, from the bus bays to the northern entrance of the parking lot
- As the station currently has high bicycle ridership, future plans should accommodate additional expansion of bike facilities
- Consideration should be given to adding a new bus bay so that an existing bus bay might be used for passenger drop off
- 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 only up to 50% of its capacity and other parking facilities are adequate for the foreseeable future though it would be desirable to have additional curbside queuing space for passenger pickup

Proposed Development. 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 are increased ridership for the fixed rail system, more sustainable commuting patterns for the region, additional taxes for member jurisdictions, and real estate revenue to WMATA. WMATA has been working for over a decade with EYA, LLC, and its affiliate TM Associates (Developer) to bring about a development on the Takoma site. A principle of the joint development program is that needed WMATA transit facilities must remain on-site though they may be reconfigured.

An earlier development proposal took up an extensive portion of the site, including most of the existing open space area, and resulted in an expensive reconfiguration of WMATA bus and parking facilities. Following consultation with local community leaders and the Developer, WMATA proposed an apartment complex in the space now occupied by the Kiss & Ride lot, without disruption to the existing open space area or bus loop.

The resulting plan for WMATA facilities shown on the concept plan on **Exhibit 2** includes a Kiss & Ride lot with access from Eastern Avenue. The lot contains 85 metered spaces, 27 spaces for taxis, shuttles, driver-attended waiting spaces, reserved spaces for people with disabilities, and drop off areas for customers. The parking accessibility diagram, **Exhibit 3**, compares existing and proposed distances for reserved spaces and the drop off area for people with disabilities. Motorcycle spaces remain at three. The proposed plan also shows a new bike station for 105 bikes that will be installed by WMATA in 2014, an additional bus bay and layover bay and pedestrian sidewalks a) through the open space area and b) through the new Kiss & Ride lot. These conform to recommendations in the Access Analysis. Overall site circulation is shown on **Exhibit 4**.

The Developer is proposing a mid-rise apartment complex of some 200 units which will be built on the site of the existing Kiss & Ride lot and completely cover the proposed Kiss & Ride lot. During the construction of the replacement Kiss & Ride lot, anticipated to last approximately 20 months, the Kiss & Ride lot will be considerably reduced. Approximately 50 spaces will be available for parking in contrast to the 160 total spaces currently available. Pick up and drop off of passengers can occur at curb side as is informally done at present. The interim parking plan is shown on **Exhibit 5**. As the Developer has 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 improvements (except the bike station) at no cost to WMATA. The Kiss & Ride lot and surrounding structure will be owned and maintained by the Developer. WMATA will operate the Kiss & Ride lot and collect the revenue.

Traffic Analysis. WMATA conducted a traffic analysis to assess the expected impact of the proposed development on the Kiss & Ride lot, bus operations and surrounding streets. The analysis is described in the attached Takoma Metro Station Traffic Analysis Technical Memorandum, April 2014 (Traffic Analysis), **Exhibit 7**. The Traffic Analysis concludes that the proposed development will add only 44 and 54 vehicles, respectively, in the morning and evening peak periods, a negligible addition to existing and projected traffic. To improve overall traffic conditions irrespective of development on the Takoma station site, the Traffic Analysis suggests optimizing signal timing in the vicinity of the site and providing lane configuration improvements, including 1) adding a 100 foot long right-turn pocket on westbound Carroll Street before Cedar Street and 2) eliminating curb side parking on northbound Piney Branch Road between Dahlia Street and Eastern Avenue.