



Government of the District of Columbia Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B

By Electronic Mail

June 26, 2023

Marnique Heath, Chair
1100 4th Street, SW, Suite 650 East
Washington, DC 20024

RE: Requesting a Community-Driven Process for Park Programming and Design at the Takoma Metro Station Project (HPA 23-288)

Dear Chair Heath:

TM Associates, LLC (EYA Multifamily, the Developer) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) have applied to the Historic Preservation Review Board for concept approval of a mixed-use building consisting of 434 residential units, 17,000 square feet of ground-floor retail, a new transit zone adjacent to the Metrorail station for buses, and a 1.8 acre park and plaza. This project is known as the "Takoma Station Development," and is before your Board as case HPA 23-288 and was previously considered at the Board's June 1, 2023 meeting. This letter summarizes the Commission's prior feedback on this project and requests the Board allow for a community-driven process for park programming and design for the park space in this project.

The Takoma Station Development site is located within Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, Single Member District 4B04, the Takoma Park Historic District, and the Rock Creek East planning area. As part of their application, the Developer has met with the Commission's Housing Justice Committee twice (March 2, 2022 and June 7, 2023) and the full Commission four times (April 25, 2022, June 27, 2022, November 28, 2022, and May 22, 2023), as well as participated in three joint public Single Member District meetings hosted by the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B04 (at the time of the meeting, the Commissioner for the Single Member District 4B01 containing the project), Evan Yeats, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02, Erin Palmer, and the former Commissioner for Single Member District 4B07, Geoff Bromaghim, and an additional community site walk with Commissioner Yeats and Commissioner Palmer on June 7, 2023. These ten meetings are in addition to the public notice

and feedback process used by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, which included a public meeting on the project at Takoma Elementary School on January 17, 2023 prior to a regular Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board meeting; and a public meeting of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission June 15, 2023 as well as various other small group meetings and engagements.

This Letter supplements the Commission's prior actions on this project and incorporates them here by reference. See [Letter](#): Supporting and Providing Additional Feedback on Application of TM Associates, LLC, and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority for Consolidated Approval of Planned Unit Development and Map Amendment at Takoma Metrorail Station (ZC Case #22-36) (Jan. 23, 2023); [Letter](#): Providing Feedback on the Proposed Planned Unit Development at the Takoma Metro Station (June 27, 2022); [Letter](#): Supporting Affordable Housing in High-Needs Areas Tax Abatement for Takoma Metro Station Development (May 23, 2022).

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B supports efforts to bring new housing to transit accessible areas, including adjacent to the Takoma Metrorail Station. For example, the Commission has supported numerous efforts to provide new housing around the Station, with a particular emphasis on affordable housing. See [Resolution 4B-22-1007](#), Supporting Construction of an Apartment Building at 7050 Eastern Avenue, NW (HPA 22-487 (Oct. 24, 2022)); [Resolution 4B-20-1107](#), Supporting the Preliminary Design for 6928 Maple Street, NW (Nov. 23, 2020); [Resolution 4B-20-0905](#), Supporting the Provision of DHCD Funding for 218 Vine Street NW (Sept. 28, 2020); [Resolution 4B-20-0410](#), Supporting Proposed Design for 300-308 Carroll Street NW (Apr. 27, 2020); [Resolution 4B-19-0606](#), Supporting Proposed Design for 218 Cedar Street NW (June 24, 2019).

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B has previously provided feedback on the land use of this area through the drafting process of an updated Comprehensive Plan for the District, stating: "the Commission generally supports increased density around the Takoma Metro Station and other high-quality transit corridors, in part because individuals of all income levels should have access to robust public transit options. The Commission believes that any effort to increase density, particularly on publicly-owned land, should maximize affordable housing, including deeply affordable housing, including through affordable housing set-asides that capture a significant portion of the value provided through any re-zoning. In addition, the Commission believes that any development of these sites should require developer efforts to mitigate transportation and infrastructure impacts on surrounding communities, including mechanisms for stormwater impact mitigation and for increased transit service to ensure livability for existing neighborhoods." [Resolution 4B-20-0104](#), Providing Feedback on Proposed Changes to the Comprehensive Plan (Jan. 27, 2020).

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B continues to support the proposal for the Takoma Metro Station Development, which has been shaped by feedback from the community and the Commission provided through the legally-binding Planned Unit Development process. Through its participation in this process, the Commission has provided its views of community needs and

interests to secure strong commitments to affordable housing, permanent usable park space, improved stormwater mitigation, improved safety for vulnerable road users, and reduced impact on the impact on neighboring homes.

The Commission is supportive of the Historic Preservation Office [staff report](#) for the project and agrees that “a site of this size and in this location – at the heart of a commercial area that is being redeveloped with mid-rise buildings on Carroll and Cedar Streets – can accommodate a large building that is compatible with the Takoma Park Historic District” and the “general concept for the project [is] compatible with the character of the Takoma Park Historic District.” Throughout this process, the Commission has appreciated and wholeheartedly supports the ongoing iterative process with Historic Preservation Office staff.

The Commission reiterates here our design-related priorities from our prior unanimous letters on this project:

- That the proposed retail transit plaza be designed to facilitate movement through the site to the community and to other businesses and provide wayfinding signage that encourages patronizing local businesses, exploring the broader Takoma community, and connecting local businesses on both sides of the Metro station. The Developer shall seek feedback and input on this signage from the Old Takoma Business Association/Main Street Takoma, which could also include historical information about the neighborhood and community “kiosks” to share flyers and information regarding community events.
- That the proposed passive recreational “park” space include, at a minimum, lighting, benches, trash cans, water fountains, attractive landscaping, and a recreational component and that these amenities be available to the public and not designed in any way to limit use.
- That the Developer work with the community and the Commission to identify and create public art projects as part of the development as required by DC law with a particular emphasis on art from local women and people of color and participatory or playable art.
- That the Developer and WMATA replace the current 104 bike racks with the same number of outdoor bike racks and that the 30 “unattractive, inefficient, and dated plastic bike storage boxes” be replaced with a modern bike storage facility similar to the one proposed by WMATA in 2020 and presented to the Commission as part of HPA 20-221. See [Resolution 4B-20-0403](#), Supporting Construction of a Bike Storage Facility at East Entrance to Takoma Metrorail Station (HPA 20-221) (Apr. 27, 2020).
- That the Developer continue to provide the prominent placemaking and signage in the current renderings and plans and requests that the Developer and the Historic Preservation Review Board preserve them in future revisions.

- That the Developer work with the community and the Commission to identify the best high-quality recreational component for the “park” space – such as a playground, splash pad, fit lot, and/or community gathering place and then construct it.

While the Commission recognizes the Historic Preservation Review Board has expressed interest in “the design and programming of the public park” as part of this project (“HPRB Actions” June 1, 2023), that interest is misplaced. The park and the community-focused and community-driven programming related to it are hard-won community benefits resulting from and integral to the Planned Unit Development process. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B is a party to that process via the District’s zoning procedures, and the Historic Preservation Review Board is not. With that in mind, the Commission encourages the Board to defer to the Commission’s proper role via the Planned Unit Development process in representing the community in negotiating such benefits to ensure that this community benefit is truly one driven by community and meets its needs – whether through a “playground, splash pad, fit lot, and/or community gathering place.”

Advisory Neighborhood Commission 4B, at a duly noticed public meeting, with a quorum being the “majority of the total number of commissioner positions currently filled in Commission 4B,” at its June 26, 2023, meeting voted with X Yeas, X Nays, and X Abstentions to send this letter. The Commission also voted with X Yeas, X Nays, and X Abstentions to appoint the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B04, Evan Yeats, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B02, Erin Palmer, the Commissioner for Single Member District 4B08, Alison Brooks, or any member of the Executive Committee in their absence, to be authorized to communicate this letter and represent the Commission in communication with the Historic Preservation Review Board or any DC government entity regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Evan Yeats, ANC 4B04 Commissioner
Erin Palmer, ANC 4B02 Commissioner
Alison Brooks, ANC 4B08 Commissioner

cc: Janeese Lewis-George, Councilmember, Ward 4
District of Columbia Zoning Commission