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Montgomery County Council  
Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

**Re: City of Takoma Park Support for the Minor Master Plan Amendment**

Council President Friedson and Members of the Montgomery County Council:

Thank you for your ongoing review of the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment. This Amendment provides a unique opportunity to update portions of the 2000 Takoma Park Master Plan to account for changing conditions in the City, including the relocation of the Washington Adventist Hospital. The City of Takoma Park has worked with our partners in Montgomery Planning (M-NCPPC) since 2020 on the Amendment. We strongly support the adoption of the Minor Master Plan Amendment.

The Takoma Park City Council voted 6-1 on December 13, 2023, to approve Resolution 2023-38: Support for the Planning Board Draft of the Minor Master Plan Amendment. Since the passage of that Resolution, the City has continued to monitor the Plan's progress and we thank the County Council for addressing the City's final outstanding request by removing language in the Plan recommending the City consider modifying its rent stabilization policy; increasing the moderately priced dwelling units (MPDU) threshold from 12.5 percent to 15 percent; and making other moderate adjustments to building heights along Maple Avenue.

I have also requested that City staff review the March 18, 2024, Equity Analysis memo from the Office of the County Executive. The County Executive's memo highlights important equity considerations such as displacement protections, the promotion of affordable housing, and community engagement.

For example, the Equity Analysis memo raised questions regarding why multifamily buildings along Maple Avenue were included in the boundary of the plan area. It is important to note that in 2021 through Resolution 2021-22, the Takoma Park City Council approved the boundary and scope of the plan area. In this resolution, the City Council emphasized the importance of community engagement of the residents within the multifamily units along Maple Avenue. The City and M-NCPPC staff then worked collaboratively to bring a robust engagement to residents in the community. This engagement included door-to-door surveying, table sitting at numerous community events on Maple Avenue, monthly newsletter articles and other mailers, and community presentations and meetings hosted by City staff, M-NCPPC, or City Councilmembers.

Additionally, the Equity Analysis memo highlighted maintaining affordable housing in the City. Nearly half of the City's residents are renters. The City has policies in place that offer protection for current renters on Maple Avenue which are stronger than those available within Montgomery County. There are approximately 1,260 housing units in the Maple Avenue District; condominiums make up 16 percent of the units; approximately 40 percent are market-rate

rental units governed by the City’s rent stabilization laws; and 44 percent are affordable rental units, also known as “deed restricted subsidized housing”. It is important to maintain and expand the availability of affordable housing within the plan area. However, as was noted in the Equity Analysis memo, the City also has a need for a diversity of housing opportunities. These opportunities include creating affordable homeownership opportunities; particularly for our residents who have lived in our rent-stabilized units for years and want to grow, thrive, and remain in the community.

As the Minor Master Plan acknowledges, both the City and County will need to ensure adequate protections for residents at risk of displacement. We are pleased that the Plan explicitly calls out the right to return for existing residents and will continue to ensure that existing policies such as rent stabilization, Tenant Opportunity to Purchase laws, and City and County tenant displacement laws appropriately meet the needs of our residents.

The City remains confident in how these issues have been addressed throughout the development of the Plan, including the already strengthened plan language around no-net loss of affordability and increase in minimum MPDU percentages. We look forward to continuing to work with the County to identify the critical funding needed to address longer-term equity priorities in the Plan area such as existing residential property infrastructure, incentivization of additional affordable housing production, and enhancement of local school infrastructure.

I look forward to working with the County to implement the Plan in the coming years.

Sincerely,



Talisha Searcy  
Mayor