

February 11, 2021

## Zoning Text Amendment No. 20-07: R-60 Zone – Uses and Standards

### Support + Amendments

Takoma for All (TFA) is an advocacy organization that promotes a sustainable, equitable, transit-oriented community through the creation and preservation of affordable and market-rate housing, commercial spaces, and community amenities.



**TFA supports proposed Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 20-07 and asks that the County Council adopt four amendments.**

We're all aware of the need for additional housing in Montgomery County, and we see allowing duplexes, triplexes, quads, townhouses, and multi-unit apartment buildings in areas zoned "residential detached" as one mechanism toward that end. We also seek to encourage racial and economic diversity throughout the county. ZTA 20-07 would advance us toward both goals. Lacking a Montgomery County transit oriented development (TOD) residential zone or countywide TOD master plan, this ZTA is a proper (and timely) mechanism for these reforms.

Takoma for All's suggests amendments as follows:

- 1) Some "residential detached" areas within the ZTA 20-07 coverage radius around Metrorail stations are not zoned R-60. **Please amend ZTA 20-07 to cover R-90 and R-40 zones in addition to the R-60 zone.**
- 2) Takoma For All communicated another requested amendment to the Takoma Park City Council, which held a worksession discussion of ZTA 20-07 on January 21. The council is considering a position. Relaying that amendment to you: **Please amend ZTA 20-07 -- both allowance for duplexes, townhouses, and multi-unit apartments (including triplexes and quads) and lessened parking and infill density requirements -- to cover the full extent of incorporated Takoma Park.**

Many Takoma Park neighborhoods, both within a mile of the Takoma Metro station and outside that radius, already support a mix of Missing Middle housing types in the form of houses subdivided into apartments and small-scale apartment buildings as well as townhouses. City areas that are distant from the Metrorail station are close to the planned Long Branch and Takoma-Langley Crossroads Purple Line stations, to the Takoma Langley Crossroads Transit Center, and to express buses and possible future bus rapid transit along New Hampshire Avenue.

A ZTA 20-07 covering the full extent of Takoma Park would advance the goals of the city's 2019 Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan and our city's commitment to racial

equity and economic diversity. A particular benefit is that an extended-coverage ZTA would raise the density floor for a couple of large redevelopable parcels in the city: the former Washington Adventist Hospital campus and the Washington-McLaughlin property, site of a former school.

Please amend ZTA 20-07 to cover the whole of Takoma Park, just as 2019's ZTA 19-01, liberalizing accessory dwelling unit (ADU) rules, was extended to cover the whole city.

- 3) Please amend the ZTA so that **all clauses that reference a radius distance from “a Metrorail Station entrance” should also be amended to cover that radius distance from “a Metrorail Station entrance, Purple Line station, bus-rapid transit (BRT) station, or MARC station.”**
- 4) **Please amend to eliminate parking minimums within the areas covered by ZTA 20-07**, within one mile of a Metrorail station and additionally within one mile of a Purple Line, BRT, or MARC station, if the ZTA is amended to cover those other transit facilities, within the “residential detached” zones that are covered.

**Takoma for All asks the County Council to enact ZTA 20-07 with amendments that extend it to cover 1) R-40 and R-90 zones, 2) areas within one mile of Purple Line, bus rapid transit, and MARC stations in addition to Metrorail stations, and 3) the entirety of the City of Takoma Park and to 4) eliminate parking minimums in the covered areas.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

*Submitted February 8, 2021 on behalf of Takoma for All by Seth Grimes, seth.grimes@gmail.com.*

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Takoma Park's *Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan* includes:

Objective #1: “Increase the number of units and variety of housing types across the affordability spectrum that are attractive to a diverse demographic and do not result in economically segregated communities or increase existing economic segregation.”

Strategy A: “Encourage and facilitate the creation and expansion of housing types that are under-represented in Takoma Park, or in a particular section of Takoma Park, and desired by existing and new residents of various incomes, needs, abilities and family configurations; work to change County allowable use and zoning provisions to accomplish this.”

Strategy D: “Encourage infill housing development, such as single-family detached homes, townhouses, and multifamily structures; encourage investments to grow residential capacity on properties with existing single-family homes through accessory dwelling units and owner-occupied group homes. Build in such a way as to be resilient to the effects of climate change; and, where possible, use grants, credits or other methods to lower purchase prices, maintenance costs, and energy costs to allow for greater affordability.”