

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

March 26, 2014

Tom Downs
Chairman of the Board
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Takoma Joint Development Sales Agreement

Dear Chairman Downs,

I am writing on behalf of my constituents in the City of Takoma Park to express concerns about the Joint Development Agreement under consideration on the Takoma Metro site. As I understand it, the WMATA intends to sell property adjacent to the metro station and located in the District of Columbia to a private developer for a multifamily residential development. While the developer has made significant improvements over the initial design proposed several years ago, my constituents continue to have serious concerns about the impact of the development on the neighborhood, which includes parts of both the District of Columbia and Maryland and is part of National Register Historic Districts in both jurisdictions.

As you know, the current plan presents higher densities and greater heights than the Takoma Central District Plan adopted in 2002 and incorporated into the current Comprehensive Plan. While I understand that WMATA's primary focus has been on transportation elements of the plan, the process at WMATA presents a critical avenue for my constituents, who do not currently have party status in the DC Planned Unit Development process, to be heard on a development that has significant impacts on their neighborhood. Additionally, a number of their concerns, including pedestrian safety around the position of the building's loading dock and the increase in residential parking spaces, have an impact on transit functionality and revenue.

Of particular concern is an independent traffic analysis that says that the traffic study provided from WMATA significantly understates the traffic impacts that will be generated by the development. I ask that you respond to the issues raised in that report and, if justified, prepare an amended WMATA traffic report. Any project in this space should endeavor to maximize utilization of the Takoma Metro Station and limit additional vehicular traffic.

Additionally, I call your attention to the station's unique position within the District of Columbia's Takoma Park National Register District and adjacent to Maryland's Takoma Park National Register District. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act calls on federal agencies, including the Federal Transit Administration, to take into the account the effects of projects on historic properties and resolve adverse effects. I expect that this review will be part of the development process and ask that you keep me informed on its progress.

Given the direct impact of this project on my constituents in the City of Takoma Park, I ask that you continue to work with local residents to come to a mutually-agreeable result prior to final WMATA Board approval of the Joint Development Agreement. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Van Hollen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "H".

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
Member of Congress