



TPSS Co-op

March 17, 2021

Ms. Suzanne Ludlow, City Manager
City of Takoma Park
7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park MD 20912

RE: Fact Sheet re Takoma Junction Site Conditions and Limitation

Dear Ms. Ludlow:

I am writing on behalf of the Takoma Park-Silver Spring Food Co-op in response to the discussion related to delivery vehicles in the above-referenced "Fact Sheet." The Fact Sheet, dated March 10, was posted earlier this month on the City's website. I also appreciated the opportunity to discuss the Fact Sheet in our meeting on Monday, March 15. Because the Fact Sheet raised written concerns about our operations that were posted on the City's website, I would ask that you also post this letter on the City website, so that the Co-op's response to these issues can be made available to members of the public.

As you know, the Co-op has used the City-owned parking lot on our building's west side for deliveries for more than 20 years. In my three years as General Manager, we have had no safety issues with deliveries, and I was not informed of any previous problems. Thus, it was very troubling to learn, via the Fact Sheet, that the City now believes the Co-op's use of the parking lot next to the Co-op for deliveries creates "unsafe conditions."

I can assure you that the Co-op has every interest in ensuring the safety of all pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists in the parking lot and on the public sidewalks and streets. We respond as quickly as possible to any safety concerns that are brought to our attention, because we want to be good neighbors to City of Takoma Park residents. We also want to be good stewards of the lot we currently sublease from the City's tenant, the Neighborhood Development Company.

As we discussed, I was previously unaware of any situations in which 18-wheel trucks have been observed backing into MD Route 410 traffic. I agree that any such occurrence would pose a safety hazard. Therefore, I plan to address your concern by re-opening the Sycamore Avenue-side parking lot, which has been closed for the past year as part of our Covid-19 response. The closed Sycamore lot was used for socially distanced queuing, out-door grocery pickup, and twice-monthly distribution of food assistance boxes to large

numbers of food-insecure individuals and families. We will now use other spaces for those activities. By opening the Sycamore lot, we will free up more parking space on the City-owned parking lot, thereby giving delivery trucks more room to maneuver. In effect, we will return the City-owned parking lot to its pre-pandemic role of providing overflow parking for the Co-op and parking for patrons of other Takoma Junction businesses.

In addition, I would be pleased to work with the City and the State Highway Administration to seek installation of appropriate signage and other enforcement measures in order to prohibit left turns upon entering or exiting the City-owned parking lot on Md Route 410. Please contact me at your earliest convenience about this matter.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to working with you to address any concerns you may have about the safety of our deliveries.

Sincerely,

Mike Houston
General Manager

Cc: Mayor Stewart
All City Councilmembers