



City of Takoma Park, Maryland
TAKOMA JUNCTION
Site Conditions and Limitations
March 2021

The City of Takoma Park acquired the vacant parking lot at the Takoma Junction and the adjacent wooded lot on Columbia Avenue for purposes of stabilizing this small but important historic neighborhood commercial district and facilitating the redevelopment of the area in accordance with the City's Master Plan.

The redevelopment of the Junction parking lot necessitates environmental clean-up and stormwater management in order to meet current regulations. Whether or not the lot is developed, due to its size, the use of the lot for deliveries by large vehicles cannot be done safely nor can transportation design standards for deliveries be met. Almost any activity that would require permits or action by a County or State agency regarding the property would require standards to be met and deliveries by large vehicles would be curtailed. Due to these requirements, the current use and management of the lot cannot continue indefinitely. In order to have a safe and permanent solution for deliveries by large vehicles for the Takoma Park-Silver Spring Coop, a layby on Carroll Avenue is the only option that has been found to meet delivery design standards.

Delivery Conditions

The current delivery practices present unsafe conditions. Delivery trucks regularly and illegally cross the double yellow line to enter and exit the City-owned parking lot. The largest 18-wheeler delivery trucks have been observed backing out onto MD-410 after making deliveries, causing traffic backups in both directions and endangering pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. These practices endanger pedestrians, transit-users, bike riders and motorists.

Environmental Conditions

The City contracted with RK&K to do an Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), Phase I and Phase II. The Phase I study indicated the site had served as a dump for many years, which is why the City proceeded with the Phase II study. Any necessary environmental cleanup will be undertaken during the development of the site.

From the Phase II executive summary:

Based on the results of this investigation, all soils samples were below Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) cleanup standards for residential development, except for a detection of the SVOC benzo[b]fluoranthene at TJ-GP-01. Petroleum impacted soils below MDE residential cleanup standards were identified on the western side of the property boundary, near the Takoma Auto Clinic at 7221 Carroll Avenue. Low levels of SVOCs and some RCRA metals were also detected below MDE cleanup standards. PCBs and VOCs were not detected above their respective laboratory detection limits. Subsurface soil impacts were absent or below MDE soil cleanup standards beneath the eastern portion of the parking lot area bordering Carroll Avenue and the undeveloped wooded area to the south of the property. Samples collected from the southwest portion

of the parking lot and the southern portion of the 10-foot wide right-of-way between 7221 and 7211 Carroll Avenue indicate the presence of historical petroleum impacts. As a result of historical subsurface releases, localized zones of petroleum impacted soil may persist in these areas. The Phase I and Phase II reports are available on the City's website: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/takoma-junction-redevelopment/takoma-junctionhistory-and-time-line/>

- **Environmental Assessment Phase 2**, May 2013
- **Environmental Assessment Phase 1**, Nov 2012

Stormwater Management

The parking lot is an impermeable asphalt surface, with untreated stormwater runoff. Any pollutants from automobiles or activities on the lot end up in storm drains and, eventually, the Chesapeake Bay. Any new development on the lot would be required to treat all storm water on site through environmental site design, reducing the adverse impacts of the parking lot. A large asphalt parking lot also operates as a heat sink, increasing the ambient temperature of the area.

Wooded Lot on Columbia Avenue

The Environmental Site Assessment confirmed that many of the trees in the wooded lot are growing on fill, not on stable soil, and may not have healthy root systems. The tree inventory classified many of the trees in fair and poor condition, though the area has stood undisturbed for decades. With the increasing frequency of severe storms, the instability of the hillside and the declining condition of the trees, the area is likely to experience tree loss, worsening erosion and flooding, with impacts on adjacent streets, especially Columbia and Poplar Avenues. Managing stormwater from the property combined with proactive tree management and large-scale planting of new trees will be needed to ensure that the wooded area can be healthy and sustainable.

Economic Development Benefits

Takoma Park has had a stable small business community for many years. As a result of increased population in the surrounding jurisdictions and favorable economic conditions, our small business community is now growing! Long standing, existing businesses are bursting at the seams and require larger space to continue to grow and thrive in Takoma Park, the home of their small business. The Economic Development Division is currently in conversations with several Takoma Park small business owners - from retail to day care - who are looking for a way to expand their services to meet customer demand yet stay in Takoma Park. The disappointing reality is that Takoma Park has very few options for our local businesses to stay in the City without the development of new commercial spaces that provide opportunity for growth.

Ultimately, we are facing the potential loss of our homegrown small businesses to neighboring jurisdictions that have more space and location options to offer. With their departure is a loss of tax revenue that is shouldered by both our small business community and our residents. As Takoma Park welcomes the growth and startup of local businesses, our neighborhoods and communities are the first beneficiaries of jobs, services, products, and an increased tax base.