



Candidate: Mike Moore
Ward#: 6

Embracing Change,
Championing Inclusive Growth

www.takomaforall.org

Dear Candidates for Elected Office in the 2022 Takoma Park City Council Election, Takoma for All (TFA) is a group of Maryland and Washington D.C. neighbors working to strengthen a vibrant, inclusive, prosperous, resilient, and transit-friendly community. We advocate the creation and preservation of affordable and market-rate housing, commercial spaces, and community amenities including schools, parks, recreation facilities and public spaces.

Thank you for standing for election to city office. To help us understand your position on topics of interest to our group and the Takoma Park public, would you please respond to the following questions?

1. Despite the recent failed Takoma Junction project, Takoma Park has several large tracts of land that are unused or underused. Please describe your vision for what you'd like to see Takoma Park officials do to promote these sites for revitalization?

A: The question is pretty broad, but I would say that, where financial considerations, environmental factors, and the prevailing view of the adjacent community align, I'd be inclined to favor reasonable development of properties that are currently un- or seriously under-utilized. I remain convinced that the parking lot by the coop at Takoma Junction is one such property, though the well has been so poisoned by the divisiveness of the NDC project that the city probably should go back to square one. (Untangling that mess without inviting a lawsuit will be problematic, though.) But in general, I tend to think that mixed-use—a blend of residential and commercial—development is often the optimal solution. I look forward to the discussion of such development on the grounds of the Adventist hospital.

2. Takoma Park hasn't added any apartment buildings ever since it adopted rent control in 1981. If elected, would you support providing an incentive for builders to construct apartments by giving them an automatic exemption from rent control restrictions for a fixed period of time (e.g. 10-20 years)?

A: I'm not sure I would favor exemption from rent stabilization for new apartment construction for a lengthy period of a decade or more without learning from a potential developer how they would propose to maintain the affordable status of the buildings without rent controls. However, I'd be open to hearing more about such proposals.

3. Do you support Montgomery County's proposed general plan, known as "Thrive 2050"? If so, do you support Thrive's central tenet to revise land use designations for properties that are adjacent to transit hubs like the Takoma Metro Station in DC and proposed Purple Line Stations in Takoma Park?

A: I'm not fully familiar with the Thrive 2050 plan yet, but yes, I generally do support revisions to zoning/planning parameters to promote development around Metro and Purple Line hubs. But we should be mindful of measures that could lead to the demise of many of the small businesses that exist in those areas now.

4. Although Takoma Park kids can choose from several high schools, Montgomery Blair High School is the "home" school for most kids and it is overcapacity by more than 300 kids. Blair HS is projected to be more than 900 kids over capacity in less than 10 years (p.6). Do you support the building of a new high school located in Takoma Park or Silver Spring?

A: Yes, we must explore options for an additional high school in the Takoma Park/Silver Spring area now before the size of the student body

at Montgomery Blair becomes even more untenable. I saw the effects of overcrowding when my daughters attended Blair more than a decade ago, and the student population has only grown bigger in the years.

5. The Montgomery County Public School system has previously proposed expanding Piney Branch Elementary School in a way that would eliminate the indoor pool. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

A: The PBES pool is certainly a valuable amenity in the community, given the lack of other free pools anywhere nearby. However, I don't know what implications its retention would have on plans for expansion of the school, and I'm not sure how much sway the city would have on the county's decisions.

6. Takoma Park city employees are currently developing a much-needed public space management plan, but it's already clear that some recent changes have been successful such as the partial closure of Laurel Avenue during the pandemic to increase public space. If elected, will you consider voting to permanently close all or part of Laurel Avenue and other commercial spots to increase the public space for our residents and commercial patrons?

A: Yes, I absolutely support continuation of the closure of Laurel Avenue for the Takoma Park "streetery." And having seen how valuable such conversions have been area-wide—both to the adjacent business and their patrons—I'd be inclined to look favorably on proposals to expand their use to other locations in the city.

7. Cycling is a proven method to provide our kids and our poorest residents with a climate-friendly mode of travel around Takoma Park, but only if it's safe for users. Maple and Carroll Avenues are

among the city's most active cycling corridors due to their proximity to community amenities. If elected, will you vote to provide our children and most vulnerable residents with a safe place to use their bicycles to access critical Takoma Park amenities?

A: As an avid cyclist, I am very much in favor of upgrading Takoma Park's streets (and where necessary, modifying sidewalks) to encourage more adults and children to avail themselves of opportunities to bicycle on our streets. The Maple Ave. corridor is especially ripe for such improvements, but as a Ward 6 resident, I'm also interested in exploring ways to enable residents in the eastern part of town to more directly access the Metropolitan Branch Trail to head downtown.

8. The City of Takoma Park [currently only requires](#) vacant properties to be registered as such by their owners. If elected, would you support the creation of a vacancy tax to encourage landlords to make productive use of their properties?

A: I'm not sure how much vacant private property exists in the city, and I would need to hear a great deal more about any sort of vacancy tax before I'd be able to say I could support it. How many of those properties would be amenable to development? Where would we draw a line between those that would and those that wouldn't?

9. How do you envision building consensus around controversial subjects likely to come before the council? What is your experience in reaching "across the isle" and thereby overcome possible division in the city?

A: It's hard to say how I would bridge a divide without knowing which particular issue we might be disagreeing on. But I certainly have friends who have a broad spectrum of views on local issues, and I've rarely had our disagreement on any position be less than amicable. In any event, I

know from experience that any legislative body engages in a certain amount of “horse-trading,” and Takoma Park is no exception. But we have to be able to reach consensus in a way that doesn't threaten the cohesiveness of the community. (Not always the case, obviously.)

10. What are your plans to allow for residents with diverse backgrounds, e.g. renters, minorities, immigrants, and young families to be an active part of the discussion and decision making in the city (e.g. in Committees)?

A: Obviously the residents who have the most time and expertise, and who are most adept at dealing with local government, are the ones who participate the most. It's more difficult for those with multiple jobs, small children, or language barriers to take part. Takoma Park has been proactively recruiting more of these folks to serve in advisory roles, such as on city committees, but we should find ways to more proactively bring them into the process. Perhaps the mayor and councilmembers should make an effort to get out more into the community, where under-served residents live, especially when a particular issue affects them most—e.g., the rent-stabilization rate—is on the table, to make participating easier.