



Candidate: Randy Gibson
Ward#: 3

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?

(Responses by Randy Gibson)

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: Sites with potential for revitalization or redevelopment must be seriously considered for expanding our commercial presence and/or for affordable housing opportunities. I do not have the specifics to comment on which sites can be classified as unused or underused at this time.

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: Rent stabilization is one tool we have for offering lower income residents an affordable housing option. Deviating from this would have

to bring significant and tangible benefits to our lower and middle income residents current or future.

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: Thrive 2050 needs to better clarify ha a significant supply of long-term below market housing would be generated. However, there is real benefit in increasing density and affordable housing in areas around transit hubs, so long that it does not sacrifice environmental concerns.

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: I don’t believe the City Council has a role in deciding capacity issues for our public schools. Were the Council to be asked to comment on a site proposal, the impact on the environment, equity and transportation would need to be considered.

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: I don't believe the City Council has a clear role in this issue, although encouraging collaboration among stakeholders may be an appropriate. Furthermore, I would encourage the City to support it staying open as a social justice issue.

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: I have spoken to several businesses who oppose this action. Without additional information I am undecided. I will certainly consider the issue seriously.

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: Yes, safe cycling corridors are essential. I will strongly support such efforts.

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 agree that landlords of vacant properties must do more than register and furthermore that the rights of renters must be respected. I am undecided on what incentives or burdens should be considered for landlords.

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: Listening to all perspectives is a key first step. Finding any missing data needed is next. The goal should be to find common ground and then let democracy work.

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: Active and continuous outreach to underrepresented populations should be a business norm. Identifying and working with relevant interest groups can be the most effective way to reach many of these populations.