



Candidate: Terry Seamens
Ward#: 4

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: We have a few such tracts, but the Council and staff have made plans or are working on plans for most of them. We are seeking grants, in some cases and the mini Master Plan is a first step for the old WAT property.

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 will not support an automatic exemption, but I am open to considering alternate proposals that will result in affordable housing for low and middle income people.

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 am not thoroughly versed on the Thrive 2050 plan, but I could support increased density around one of our transit hubs if it can be done in a way that safeguards our residents.

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 could support a new school or expansion of the existing facility. I cannot imagine a suitable site for a new school inside Takoma Park city limits.

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 will recuse myself from any discussion about the pool, because my wife is the Director of Pool Operations (with pay).

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 agree that the closure of Laurel Avenue has been successful. I support looking at other possible locations, but each case will require careful consideration of the details.

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: I strongly support the expansion of bikeways throughout Takoma Park. The devil is often in the details. Many very low-income residents live in Ward 4 and require adequate parking as do residents of other Wards. We need plans that serve all.

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 support vacancy tax on buildings but not on separate units of multi-family buildings.

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: Since joining the council I have been open minded. I listen to others and seriously consider their opinions and suggestions. Transparency & public discussions and events help to reach compromises.

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: All residents have always been allowed to participate. The Council and I have taken steps to encourage and foster greater participation. I have ~~learned a lot~~ learned a lot through my years working in the community. I am committed to this issue being my highest priority through the next term when elected.