

City of Takoma Park, Maryland

Richard M. Finn
City Manager

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 TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

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The Honorable Arthur Holmes, Jr.
 Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board
 8787 Georgia Avenue
 Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

THE CHAIRMAN
 THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY NATIONAL CAPITAL
 PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

February 21, 2002

Dear Chairman Holmes:

On behalf of the City of Takoma Park I would like to request permission to use the existing tennis courts at Takoma Piney Branch Neighborhood Park for the construction of a Skatepark facility. In partnership with M-NCPPC, we propose to apply for a Maryland Department of Natural Resources-Community Parks and Playground Fund 2002 grant, to fund the design and construction of the Skateboard facility. If the grant is approved the City would construct and operate the Skateboard park as a local primarily walk-to facility. Upon receiving notification of the grant being approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be drawn up with M-NCPPC and the City specifying the terms of agreement for future maintenance of the Skateboard park.

Debra Haiduven, the Director of the Department of Recreation for the City of Takoma Park is prepared to make a presentation to the Planning Board in conjunction with Commission staff on the proposed project. We have been working with Ellen Masciocchi of the Park Development Division, and Tanya Schmieler of Countywide Planning Division on this Plan. They have requested time on the Planning Board, March 14th evening agenda for this item. This project has been coordinated with a renovation project for this park which both the City and Commission have been working on for the past three years.

The City Council held a public hearing on Monday, January 28th at which over 40 youths and their parents testified in favor of the proposal. Enclosed is a signed copy of Resolution #2002-6 - Approving Site and Concept for Skate Park Facility at Takoma-Piney Branch Neighborhood Park.

We look forward to meeting with the Board on March 14th, 2002 and discussing this exciting proposal to serve our community's youth. We also look forward to the strengthening of the ongoing partnership that continues to develop between your agency and the City of Takoma Park. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Richard M. Finn
 City Manager

Introduced by: Councilmember Williams

Resolution #2002-6
Resolution Approving Site and Concept for Skate Park Facility
at Takoma-Piney Branch Neighborhood Park

WHEREAS, The City of Takoma Park's Recreation Department has received many inquiries from parents, youth and staff regarding the need for a safe place for skating activities; AND

WHEREAS, The Takoma Park Youth Council has identified the construction of a skate park as one of its major agenda items for the 2002 session; AND

WHEREAS, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) submitted a report titled "Roller Hockey, In-Line skating and Skateboarding Report" which concluded that there is a growing demand for skating facilities and none exist in this part of the county; AND

WHEREAS, Takoma Park citizens are concerned for the safety of their youth; AND

WHEREAS, The Takoma-Piney Branch Local Park is an ideal setting for a skate facility due to its isolated nature, proximity to three schools, its seldom-used tennis courts and existing fencing which would allow for an economical conversion to a skate park; AND

WHEREAS, The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is sponsoring a grant program for Parks and Playgrounds which this facility would be eligible for; AND

WHEREAS, MNCPPC is a willing and enthusiastic partner in this venture; AND

WHEREAS, The Takoma Park Recreation Department is poised to supervise and manage the facility with no major impact on the operating budget; AND

WHEREAS, This proposal was initiated by the youth of the city;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT the City Council hereby supports the installation of a skate park facility at the Takoma Piney Branch Neighborhood Park to be operated by the Recreation Department and jointly maintained with MNCPPC.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Council authorizes the City Manager to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Maryland National Capital Park and Planning pertaining to the construction and maintenance of the skate park.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT city officials will pursue alternative options to losing tennis courts, including soliciting cooperation from the Montgomery County School Board toward improvement of their existing courts adjacent to Takoma Middle School and from M-NCPPC toward improvement and maintenance of their tennis facilities in the down-county area.

FURTHERMORE the City Council authorizes pursuing DNR grant funds to finance the skate park project.

THIS RESOLUTION IS ADOPTED THIS 28TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2002.

Attest:


Catherine E. Waters, CMC/AAE
City Clerk

M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK & PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

February 22, 2002

8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

Ms. Debra Haiduven
 Director of Recreation
 City of Takoma Park
 7500 Maple Avenue
 Takoma Park, Maryland 20912

Dear Ms. Haiduven:

I understand you asked our staff to respond to a request for information about tennis courts in the vicinity of the Takoma Park Piney Branch Local Park. M-NCPPC staff attended the public hearing on January 28, 2002 on the proposed skateboard park for the Takoma-Piney Branch Local Park. As you know, at that meeting, a number of City residents raised the issue that this proposal would remove tennis courts from the park and expressed concern about being able to play tennis. Please be assured that the recommendation to use the tennis courts for a skateboard park was not made without consideration of alternative options for tennis.

There are four parks with tennis courts within a two mile radius of the Takoma Piney Branch Local Park. M-NCPPC staff surveyed them recently and found the courts to be in good condition. They are as follows: Sligo Avenue Neighborhood Park, Sligo Creek Park Stream Valley Unit 1, Jesup Blair Local Park and Silver Spring Intermediate Neighborhood Park.

A user survey conducted by M-NCPPC staff in the spring and summer of 2000 indicated that all of the courts, including those at Takoma Piney Branch are vacant much of the time. Specifically, the survey findings for Takoma Piney Branch Local Park were as follows:

1. The park was visited 20 times (7 weekends, 7 weekday evenings, and 6 weekdays). On only 1 visit out of twenty was anyone playing tennis. On that occasion, 5 adults and two children were on the courts. On two occasions, there were boys practicing roller hockey.
2. Out of a total of 1084 park users, only 7 were tennis court users.

According to the park user survey, nearby tennis courts were not crowded as well. At Silver Spring Intermediate Neighborhood Park, there were only a total of 20 users out of 266 on the tennis courts, and at Jesup Blair Local Park, which has three tennis courts, there were only 5 tennis users out of a total 635 park visitors.

M-NCPPC staff has been in touch with Montgomery County Public Schools staff with regard to the tennis courts at Takoma Park Middle School. The school has four courts, which will be refurbished as soon as the two portable classrooms have been removed. This could occur as soon as this summer.

Given the extreme underutilization of existing local courts and the nearby courts at Takoma Park Middle School, it is the M-NCPPC staff's opinion that the loss of the tennis courts at this park would not be significant. M-NCPPC determined that there was not sufficient space in the park to add tennis courts in addition to the skateboard park. M-NCPPC staff's opinion is that there is a greater need to address the large number of youth who need a safe alternative for recreation that could be provided by a skateboard park.

Please contact Ellen Masciocchi on 301-650-2867 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Tanya Schmieler
Planning Supervisor
Countywide Planning

M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

March 5, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ellen Masciocchi, Project Coordinator, Park Development

VIA: Glenn Kreger, Team Leader, Silver Spring/Takoma Park *JK*
Community-Based Planning Team

FROM: Don Downing, Planner Coordinator *D. D.*
Miguel Iraola, Planner Coordinator *M.I.*
Silver Spring/Takoma Park Community-Based Planning Team

RE: Proposed local skateboard park at Takoma\Piney Branch Local
Park

The Community-Based Planning staff recommends Approval of the request by the City of Takoma Park to use the existing tennis courts at the Takoma\Piney Branch Local Park for the construction of a skateboard park, subject to the following condition. The design and placement of the skateboard park shall be reviewed by the Park Police to ensure that CEPTED\safety principles are followed.

Relationship to the Takoma Park Master Plan, December 2000

The Master Plan states that community facilities and parks are essential elements of community life and identity, which provide valuable services and programs. Furthermore, the high density communities along Maple Avenue would benefit from additional park facilities.

Two Master Plan recommendations (page 71) include:

- Renovate and maintain existing facilities and provide new ones with recreation programs for a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and interests.
- Provide community facilities at appropriate locations to meet the recreational needs of the diverse community.

The City of Takoma Park proposes to meet the desires and needs of local youth for a skateboard park. The facility will serve youth in the surrounding community, including the nearby high density communities along Maple Avenue. The location within Piney Branch Local Park is appropriate for such a facility. Therefore, the proposal for a skateboard park is consistent with the Takoma Park Master Plan.

Relationship to Fenton Gateway Park

A proposed skateboard/in-line skate park is currently prepared for the future Fenton Gateway Park located in Fenton Village within the Silver Spring CBD approximately one mile from the Takoma Piney Branch Local Park. The *Silver Spring CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan (2000)* envisions Fenton Gateway Park as a terminus to Fenton Village and as an active urban public space that improves the overall image of the community. The Proposed Montgomery County Department of Park & Planning FY03-08 CIP has included Fenton Gateway Park for Facility Planning beginning in FY03 and completing in FY04. Land acquisition for Fenton Gateway Park has begun pursuant to the Sector Plan recommendation that the park be expanded through the purchase of land" [Sector Plan p. 129]. The CBD Sector Plan also calls for relocation of the interim (now closed) skateboard park within the CBD.

A conceptual design for Fenton Gateway Park has been prepared which includes a 14,000 square foot skateboard/in-line skate park, lighting, new sidewalks and paths, landscape plantings, public art or other focal element, parking and a potential building. The skateboard/in-line skate park facility at Fenton Gateway, located in a more visible urban context, is intended to serve a larger region including portions of East Silver Spring and other neighborhoods surrounding the CBD. The Takoma facility is intended and should be designed to serve a more local population. Staff feels that the proposed local skateboard park at Takoma Piney Branch Local Park should not impact the future proposed skateboard park proposed at Fenton Gateway Park based on its proximity and the type of facility proposed.

Dd:c & a(19):\takoma\skateboard; March 5, 2002