

## **Takoma Park Large Community Grant Request**

### **SUMMARY**

The Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority, Inc., requests \$4615 from the City of Takoma Park's Large Community Grant Program for FY14, which we will match for a total of \$9230.00. The grant funds will provide half the costs of six concrete planters with flowering plants.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Takoma/Langley CDA is a 501c6 nonprofit business association established by the City in 1987. It's mission is to market, promote, advocate, secure and maintain the Takoma/Langley commercial management district, a geographically defined area representing about 135 business and property owners in Takoma Park including restaurants, retailers, service organizations, government and professionals. The CDA is extremely international with ethnic businesses serving Latinos, South Asians, African-Americans, Africans, and Afro-Caribbeans around the region. It is located on Maryland's International Corridor (University Boulevard), the largest concentration of international businesses in the state.

The CDA is at the intersection of University Boulevard (MD193) and New Hampshire Avenue (MD650), where 89,000 vehicles pass daily. Area demographics have changed during the past 40 years, while the built environment has stayed about the same dating from the 1950's. Huge one-story suburban shopping centers anchor the four corners of the Takoma/Langley Crossroads, all but one featuring massive asphalt parking lots in front. Surrounding the Crossroads are densely built residential neighborhoods—single family, duplexes, and garden apartments in the thousands.

Demographics have contributed to Takoma/Langley's sustainability, as residents incomes' have spiraled down during the past several decades. Lower income residents have contributed to Takoma/Langley's transformation from a regional shopping destination in 1965 to a neighborhood-serving commercial area with offices in 2013. Low income residents without cars shop on foot and keep the commercial area vital. Pedestrian safety improvements advocated for years by the CDA were implemented during the past decade by the Maryland State Highway Administration, greatly improving the walkability of the Crossroads for Takoma Park residents. Commercial vacancies are low, and most businesses have been in operation for years, contributing to the area's sustainability.

### **CDA REJUVENATING**

After twenty-five years, the CDA is rejuvenating itself with a new logo, brochure, and business directory. It is getting a new interactive website that will help promote and market members and attract shoppers to the Crossroads. New CDA banners were hung a week ago, replacing ones that had been there so long that nobody noticed them. The CDA will change banners three times a year with two additional banner sets in 2013 sponsored by CDA members, keeping the area fresh 12 months a year.

## **TAKOMA/LANGLEY REJUVENATING**

Takoma/Langley is a livable community with 32,497 residents living within a one-mile radius of the Crossroads. It is served by excellent public transportation provided by Montgomery County's RideOn and WMATA Metrobus services. Thousands of Takoma/Langley commuters use public transportation, the rationale for the state's Transit Center that will be built on the northwest corner of the Crossroads. Population density and reliance on public transportation underlie the importance of the Purple Line to area residents and businesses. The Purple Line will be a tremendous convenience for persons going to work, school, downtown DC, airports, and destinations throughout the region. It will contribute to Takoma/Langley's sustainability, especially when redevelopment under the Takoma/Langley Sector Plan begins, which encourages mixed use, transit-oriented development. The Purple Line will enhance the appeal of Crossroads' commercial area, ensuring that it continues to serve local needs of residents in the future.

## **PLANTERS**

The CDA proposes to purchase six *Larkspur* planters manufactured by Landscape Forms of cast concrete in three different sizes (shown below). *Larkspur* planters were specified in the City's NewAve Streetscape Standards, which include the Takoma/Langley Crossroads area. The CDA proposes to install two sets of planters, three each, at the southeast and southwest corners of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue, visible to all passersby in the Crossroads.



Soil amendments, plants, and maintenance are included in the proposal budget, to be provided by the CDA and a watering contractor. The planters will require weekly watering to remain attractive. The sets will grace the Crossroads' gateway to Takoma Park, enhancing the appearance of a key entry point for Takoma Park residents travelling southbound on New Hampshire Avenue from I-495.

The CDA is prepared to oversee installation of the planters from its headquarters at 7676 New Hampshire Avenue, Suite 303, Takoma Park. It will procure soil amendments and plants from area nurseries, and install the plants in the planters. It will manage the watering contractor to ensure the planters are maintained each week. The CDA will photograph the planters to record their contribution to the Crossroads, and may procure additional planter sets in future years to expand streetscape improvements.

The concrete planters are the major cost of streetscaping the CDA. Without the City's Large Grant Program, the CDA could not purchase the planters with its modest public relations/marketing budget. Plants and soil amendments are less costly and could be funded in the future through the CDA's budget and members' contributions.

## **CONCLUSION**

The CDA proposes to enhance the appearance and quality of life in Takoma Park's largest commercial center with the addition of two new sets of planters at the University/New Hampshire intersection in the Crossroads. This streetscape improvement will launch the CDA's streetscaping initiative, which will

expand each year to other blocks, making the Crossroads more visually competitive with other shopping areas in the county. Once the Purple Line begins construction, the planters can be temporarily relocated but will remain a permanent asset in the area for decades to come.

## Streetscape Budget, Takoma/Langley CDA

### PLANTER SETS

	<i>Larkspur</i>		
(36" square planter, 7 cu ft)	24"		\$890.00
(48" square planter, 17 cu ft)	30"		\$1,460.00
(32" square planter, 10 cu ft)	48"		<u>\$1,315.00</u>
		Set	\$3,665.00
	2 sets		\$7,330.00

### Soil Amendments

Dirt, manure, compost, mulch	\$100/set	2 sets	\$200.00
------------------------------	-----------	--------	----------

### PLANTS

Shrubs, perennials, annuals	\$100/set	2 sets	\$200.00
-----------------------------	-----------	--------	----------

### Watering

Weekly, 6 planters	\$100	15 weeks	<u>\$1,500.00</u>
--------------------	-------	----------	-------------------

**TOTAL \$9,230.00**