



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – February 13, 2019 Agenda Item 4

Work Session

Report Out from the Council Retreat and Discussion of Council Priorities

Recommended Council Action

Discuss priorities established at the Council Retreat in preparation to affirm them by Resolution

Context with Key Issues

The Council holds a retreat each year in advance of the budget preparation process. At the retreat, the Councilmembers discuss their priorities (later affirmed by resolution) which indicate the strategic direction they aim to move the City during their term. The priorities also inform the development of the City Manager's Recommended Budget.

This year's retreat took place over two evenings on January 24 and February 5. As they have done the last several years, the Council reflected on the priorities established the previous year and progress made to date, and discussed interests in policy, project and budget priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. This year, the retreat had an overarching theme of racial equity and much of the discussion was focused on how racial equity considerations could be built into all of Council's priorities and actions. The retreat was facilitated by consultants who have expertise and experience facilitating such discussions.

In addition to racial equity, the Council discussed existing priorities and preliminarily selected the top items they want to focus on in the coming fiscal year. The items preliminarily identified as top priorities include:

- Ensuring we have a range of safe, quality, and stable housing options that are affordable for residents of varying incomes and all races and ethnicities
- Planning and preparing for development in the City and region while maintaining the special character and diversity of Takoma Park
- Prioritizing actions, policies, innovations, and new opportunities that mitigate and adapt to the causes and effects of climate change
- Improve and formalize systems for Council-appointed committees
- Improving policies and processes, particularly those related to the Tree Ordinance and traffic, to make them more equitable and easy to understand and follow

While these items were identified as top priorities during the retreat, there are several other very important priorities and projects that Council and staff will address and/or continue to work on.

At tonight's meeting, the Council will further discuss their priorities and propose revisions as they see fit. Just prior to this meeting, Council heard directly from City department heads about the

identified priorities, how they align with current staff work plans and ongoing projects, and what they believe can realistically be accomplished in the upcoming fiscal year and beyond with existing staffing. In the coming weeks, Council will further refine the priorities document and vote to affirm the Council Priorities in March.

Council Priority

A Livable Community for All; Fiscally Sustainable Government; Environmentally Sustainable Government; Engaged, Responsive, Service-Oriented Government; Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Environmental Considerations

The Council Priorities could result in increased use of sustainable energy, improved energy efficiency City-wide, greener development, and maintenance/growth of the tree canopy, among other possibilities.

Fiscal Considerations

To be determined during the budget process.

Racial Equity Considerations

The adopted 2018 Council Priorities have a goal specifically focused on furthering the City's efforts related to racial equity. The strategies associated with the goal include developing a strategic plan to take the racial equity framework to the next level, exploring the creation of a task force on racial equity, acquiring grant funds to provide racial equity training to members of Council-appointed committees and other residents, and conducting a racial equity survey among City staff.

Over the next few weeks, Council will discuss and determine how to document its strategy regarding next steps on addressing racial equity.

Attachments and Links

- Adopted 2018 Council Priorities

Takoma Park City Council Priorities – Adopted March 7, 2018



A Livable Community For All

Goal	Strategy	Desired Outcome	Achieved
Identify programming needs in the community and develop approaches to meet those needs, emphasizing youth, families, seniors, and our more vulnerable residents, such as those with lower incomes, immigrants, and people with developmental disabilities.	Utilize resident survey, staff and committee reports, and other sources to determine where there may be existing gaps in program offerings; develop programs to close gaps. (B/P)	Expanded or improved programming tailored to residents who need them the most or who are accessing them the least.	
Ensure we have a range of safe, quality, and stable housing options that are affordable for residents of varying incomes and all races and ethnicities.	Consider draft Strategic Plan related to housing and economic development and adopt strategies to address housing and economic development challenges and opportunities; develop implementation plans. (P/B)	Meet the current and future housing needs of the community to ensure affordable housing options for residents of varying incomes levels and of all races and ethnicities.	
	Develop and implement plan of action for Housing Reserve Fund, including request for contributions from the County and State. (P)		
	Develop incentives and possible new enforcement and other measures for landlords to improve living conditions for tenants. (P/B)	Improved living conditions for renters.	
	Facilitate improved communication among City, landlords, and tenants; build on existing outreach and tenant education efforts. (B)		
Defend status as a Sanctuary City and continue to be a welcoming and inclusive community for all residents.	Continue advocacy efforts on behalf of immigrants, including connecting those in need of assistance to appropriate area organizations. (P/B)	Remain a strong Sanctuary City.	

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Further efforts related to racial equity.	Develop strategy to address racial equity issues, including how we organize, institutionalize, and operationalize the racial equity framework; explore possible task force on racial equity. (P/B)	Progress toward a more racially equitable community and government.	
	Provide racial equity training to members of Council-appointed committees and other residents; seek grant funding for training. (B)		
	Conduct racial equity survey among City staff members. (P)		

Major projects, initiatives and ongoing activities

- Advocacy for City residents with respect to MCPS site-selection and Piney Branch facility study and pool
- Sidewalks – retrofit existing sidewalks to meet ADA requirements; sidewalk design improvements
- Public Land and Open Space Management Plan – development of plan and implementation of agreed upon recommendations
- Public Transit/Bike/Pedestrian Safety projects – including continuation of the Safe Routes to School Program and bike improvements
- Cultural Plan – implementation of recommendations included in FY16 Update


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Fiscally Sustainable Government

Goal	Strategy	Desired Outcome	Achieved
Increase funding from County and State to address tax duplication and other City needs.	Councilmember advocacy and lobbying activities; improve coordination of efforts between staff and Councilmembers. (P)	Increased funding from County and State to address tax duplication and other City needs.	
	Partner with other Montgomery County municipalities to pressure County and General Assembly. (P)		
	Acquire grant funding to help offset costs for library renovations. (P/B)		
Adopt financial policy to determine the appropriate level of designated reserves.	Review best practices and benchmarks and determine reserve level suitable for City. (P)	Formally establish reserve levels.	
Minimize adverse impacts of changes to the federal tax system.	Assess implications of changes to federal tax system and develop tactics to help mitigate adverse impacts. (P/B)	Minimize adverse impacts of changes to the federal tax system.	
Adopt sustainable investment and banking policy and practices.	Identify and work with consultant to determine tolerance levels and next steps in adopting sustainable investment and banking policies and practices. (P/B)	Work to align the City's banking and investments with values of social responsibility.	
Major projects, initiatives and ongoing activities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify budget document in accordance with GFOA standards of excellence in communicating about budget process • Determine how to address Personal Property Tax issues for businesses 			

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 Environmentally Sustainable Community			
Goal	Strategy	Desired Outcome	Achieved
Continue to be a leader in community programs and policies for energy and environmental sustainability.	Continue program and policy efforts for more efficient energy use, especially for renters and multi-family buildings, businesses, and City operations. (P/B)	Improved energy efficiency City-wide; increasingly sustainable City operations and building; increased use of renewables and offsets.	
	Increase use of renewable energy (especially solar) throughout the City; offer bulk buy of solar and/or wind power to residents; consider incentives for multifamily buildings and new buildings; continue efforts related to electric vehicle use. (P/B)		
	Consider draft Strategic Plan related to housing and economic development and adopt strategies to promote and ensure sustainable development. (P/B)		
	Work with Committee on the Environment to identify potential ways to minimize environmental impacts during development construction. (P)		
Preserve and grow tree canopy.	Establish and support tree and tree canopy goals through programs and education; identify opportunities for tree retention, maintenance, and growth. (B)	Greater maintenance of mature trees; more plantings on City and private property.	
	Coordinate efforts to review tree ordinance with tree canopy goals to ensure changes to the tree ordinance advance and do not adversely impact tree canopy goals. (P)		

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Major projects, initiatives and ongoing activities

- Enforcement, education, and outreach related to City codes – polystyrene ban; Safe Grow; multifamily and business recycling; plastic bag ban; snow clearing
- Continue work toward achievement of all Green Team priorities, including those related to water quality
- Continue implementation of Sustainable Energy Action Plan
- Flower Avenue Green Street
- Implement additional Sustainable Maryland Certified goals
- Continue to implement Council authorized Smart Energy Community Goals for energy reduction and green power
- Implement stormwater management projects to meet State and Federal mandates for 2017 and 2025
- Review stormwater management fee structure; review Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) calculation based on impervious surface; consider incentives for stormwater improvements on private property

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 Engaged, Responsive, Service-oriented Government			
Goal	Strategy	Desired Outcome	Achieved
Identify policing priorities and explore options for enhanced police/community relations.	In addition to resident survey, hold community meetings and conversations to learn more about perceptions of police relations with the public; develop and implement steps that the Police Department can take to improve community relations. (P)	Improve relationships between the police department and community measured by resident survey responses and through other means.	
	Develop and implement plan of action to enter into mutual aid agreements. (P)	Mutual aid agreements in place with District of Columbia and Prince George’s County to enhance coordination among police departments.	
Improve communications with residents, especially two-way online and social media communication.	Regularly update project directory, staff and Councilmember blogs on City website, promote My TkPk application. (P)	Information about issues and programs more easily accessible for all residents.	
	Explore ways in addition to Newsletter to get information to a broader array of residents; increase in non-English communications. (B)		
	Develop innovative graphic representations of key issues to help communicate key issues to residents and policymakers in Rockville and Annapolis; develop outreach on City programs including property tax assistance and others. (B)		

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	<p>Improve notification system for utility and other work in the right-of-way, including work by City contractors and staff, and explore development of accountability measures to address deficient notification and to strengthen monitoring of utility and contractor work. (P)</p>	<p>Better communication with residents about utility and other work that may impact them.</p>	
	<p>Conduct resident survey. (B)</p>	<p>Data that can be used to inform decision-making.</p>	
<p>Improve policies and processes related to the tree ordinance; traffic calming; sidewalk requests, repair and maintenance; and residential/commercial boundary conflicts.</p>	<p>Review existing tree ordinance, and develop and implement improvements. (P/B)</p>	<p>More user-friendly and easy to understand tree ordinance.</p>	
	<p>Consider existing traffic calming policies and processes, develop and implement recommendations for improvements. (P/B)</p>	<p>Improved and more equitable policy and processes related to traffic calming.</p>	
	<p>Consider existing policies and processes related to sidewalk requests, repair, and maintenance, develop and implement recommendations for improvements. (P/B)</p>	<p>Improved and more equitable policy and processes related to sidewalk requests, maintenance and repair.</p>	
	<p>Consider existing issues and code enforcement strategies related to the intersection of commercial and residential areas; develop and implement recommendations for improvements. (P/B)</p>	<p>Improved policy and processes related to residential/commercial boundary conflicts.</p>	
<p>Improve and formalize systems for Council-appointed committees and external committees on which Councilmembers serve (e.g. MWCOG).</p>	<p>Review existing structure, appointment processes, and practices for Council-appointed committees, and make changes to increase efficiency and effectiveness and attract new members; explore innovative ways to engage residents who tend to be harder to reach. (P/B)</p>	<p>Diverse, engaged, productive, and rewarding committee membership.</p>	

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	<p>Develop a formal plan and procedures for how Council works with and represents the City on outside committees and communicates back to the full Council. (P)</p>	<p>Better understanding of individual Councilmember’s roles; improved communication amongst Council</p>	
<h3>Major projects, initiatives and ongoing activities</h3>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement changes within the Police Department consistent with Council’s July 2017 resolution • Police Department renovation – concept design • Continue to serve as liaison between utility companies and community to improve communication and understanding of project impacts • IT Projects – IT Switches, Next Generation Firewall • Planning for moving City elections to coincide with state and federal elections 			

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Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Goal	Strategy	Desired Outcome	Achieved
Plan and prepare for development in the City and region while maintaining the special character and diversity of Takoma Park.	Consider draft Strategic Plan related to housing and economic development and adopt strategies to address housing and economic development challenges and opportunities; develop implementation plans. (P/B)	Implementation plans developed and adopted to plan and prepare for development and maintain the special character and diversity of Takoma Park.	
	Optimize and improve coordination with the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority and the Old Town Business Association to bolster their work in promoting thriving businesses and commercial districts. (P/B)	Improved coordination with business associations in order to help make them more effective; thriving local businesses.	
	Provide direct outreach and support for local businesses. (B)		

Major projects, initiatives and ongoing activities

- Takoma Junction redevelopment
- Purple Line preparation
- John Nevins Andrews School – advocate for appropriate reuse of property
- Washington-McLaughlin property
- Library renovation and expansion, including ADA improvements
- Economic development along New Hampshire Avenue
- Redevelopment of Takoma Park Recreation Center
- Contracts for economic development services in Old Takoma and Takoma Langley Crossroads business districts
- Washington Adventist Hospital – advocate for campus that continues to meet the needs of the community
- Ethan Allen Streetscape projects
- Montgomery College construction projects, including new Math and Science Building