



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

### **Voting Session**

Resolution Declaring Climate Emergency and Setting Direction for the City's Accelerated Sustainable Energy Action Plan

### **Recommended Council Action**

Consider and vote on the resolution.

### **Context with Key Issues**

At the January 23, 2019 Green Team meeting, members expressed growing concerns over the emergent nature of climate change. The Green Team discussed the possibility of the Takoma Park City Council declaring a Climate Emergency via a resolution. The Committee on the Environment followed up with City Council on February 5, 2019 to recommend that the Council take action and adopt a resolution declaring a Climate Emergency. This resolution also sets direction for an accelerated update of the City's Sustainable Energy Action Plan.

Cities that have declared a Climate Emergency recognize that the current rate of climate change of just one degree Celsius has triggered cataclysmic changes to the Earth. These changes include an accelerating collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, the thawing of the Arctic permafrost, an increase in mega-droughts, heat waves, super-storms, flash flooding, the migration of mosquito-borne diseases, the melting of glaciers, polar ice-sheet collapse, coral bleaching, the mass extinction of species, ocean oxygen loss, and sea level rise. In 2018 Takoma Park and the entire Washington DC region experienced the wettest year on record, with record flooding and stormwater issues. Trends for the region indicate more severe weather events, continued increases in annual rainfall, and more frequent and longer stretches of extreme heat. These changes inflict substantial and often catastrophic damage to our physical, social, and economic well-being.

Climate Emergency resolutions also recognize that scientists agree greenhouse gas emissions must be eliminated in a decade at most -- with a simultaneous global effort to remove excess carbon from the atmosphere -- to stabilize at or near the 1.5 C (2.4 F) threshold. This threshold will provide the best chance for survival of human civilization.

Declaring a Climate Emergency mobilizes action at the local level. A declaration builds public awareness that we are in an emergency with devastating consequences for inaction. The declaration will serve as a public statement that that our City will pursue necessary local steps to address this global challenge. By declaring that we are in a climate emergency and committing to addressing it in time to avoid the worst outcomes, Takoma Park can serve as a leader and inspire others to do the same.

The City Council discussed a draft resolution at its meeting on March 6, 2019.

**Council Priority**

Environmentally Sustainable Community

**Environmental Considerations**

Greenhouse gas emissions, sustainability, energy efficiency

**Fiscal Considerations**

Economic resiliency; short and long term budget impacts of more frequent and severe weather events; increased health costs due to climate change; lost economic productivity and tax revenue

**Racial Equity Considerations**

Communities most vulnerable to climate impacts tend to be the least prepared to manage and recover from the physical, economic, mental, and social devastation climate change can cause. Children, the elderly, indigenous peoples, and those with preexisting health conditions are especially vulnerable to climate disruptions such as flooding, dangerous heat, drought, and poor air quality. This is particularly true if they live in low-income communities, which often are exposed to multiple environmental hazards, yet are least likely to have resources or connections to address the cumulative impacts of environmental exposures that are worsened by climate change. (*American Journal of Public Health*)

**Attachments and Links**

- Draft Resolution Declaring a Climate Emergency

1 Introduced by:  
2

3 **CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**  
4

5 **ORDINANCE 2019-**  
6 **DECLARING A CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY**  
7

8 WHEREAS, recent reports from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the  
9 National Climate Assessment have made clear that we are in a global climate  
10 emergency, by documenting the extent, speed and acceleration of global climate  
11 change and planetary warming, and their dramatic effects on our Earth; and  
12

13 WHEREAS, climate change is already inflicting and will continue to inflict substantial  
14 damages to our physical, social and economic well-being; and  
15

16 WHEREAS, these damages, such as an increase in stormwater runoff and extreme weather,  
17 will continue to worsen without immediate significant action; and  
18

19 WHEREAS, communities most vulnerable to climate impacts tend to be the least prepared to  
20 manage and recover; and  
21

22 WHEREAS, a greenhouse gas emissions inventory has identified residential and commercial  
23 buildings as the largest contributing sources in Takoma Park; and  
24

25 WHEREAS, Takoma Park strives to be a leader in responding to the challenges of climate  
26 change and in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through our many local policies  
27 and actions; and  
28

29 WHEREAS, the City is publicly committed to action on climate change through the Global  
30 Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, the Paris Climate Agreement and the  
31 Sierra Club 100% renewable energy pledge; and  
32

33 WHEREAS, the City in Resolution 2018-9 (January 30, 2018) recently affirmed its  
34 commitment to aggressively implement its current Sustainable Energy Action  
35 Plan and related actions for all sectors of the City as its resources allow, and  
36 acknowledged and supported Montgomery County's aspirational goals of 80%  
37 reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2027 and 100% reduction by 2035; and  
38

39 WHEREAS, as the City is committed to working toward racial equity in all its actions, and the  
40 Council has established priorities including housing affordability, it is vital that  
41 City climate related actions thoroughly integrate these commitments.  
42

43 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Takoma Park joins with communities  
44 across the US and the world to declare that we are in a climate related emergency that threatens  
45 our community and others in our nation and worldwide, and which requires mobilizing more  
46 aggressive action on all our parts; and

47  
48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Takoma Park calls on, and will continue to  
49 advocate for, more aggressive action on climate change, mitigation and adaptation at the county,  
50 state and federal levels, to move rapidly toward net zero GHG emissions; and

51  
52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Takoma Park Sustainability Manager will  
53 accelerate an update of its Sustainable Energy Action Plan and GHG inventory for all sectors of  
54 the City, to identify the most aggressive local actions its authorities and resources will allow,  
55 along with costs and benefits of these actions; and

56  
57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Plan update should identify what steps the City can  
58 take to move rapidly toward net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, including near term  
59 implementation steps and achievable interim goals and dates; and

60  
61 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Plan should:

- 62 • Focus on dramatically improving efficiency of all our buildings (single family,  
63 multifamily, commercial and institutional), by far the largest sector of local GHG  
64 emissions; as well as a transition to renewable energy in electricity and heating/cooling;
- 65 • Propose actions that integrate with other City Council priority goals, such as housing  
66 affordability and racial equity;
- 67 • Offer methods that consider equity, affordability, and access for all members of our  
68 community, especially renters and low income and energy-burdened residents;
- 69 • Include a transparent and inclusive public process to gather public input, increase  
70 community engagement, and ensure that community members and local businesses have  
71 opportunities to participate; and
- 72 • Examine leading policies around the country and build on them to propose nation-leading  
73 policies for our community.

74  
75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Council seeks results of this Plan and  
76 recommendations from the City Sustainability Manager on specific methods (as well as costs and  
77 savings) for accelerating the City's sustainable energy action program Dec. 31, 2019.

78  
79 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Takoma Park will address local actions for  
80 climate adaptation and resiliency, such as stormwater, trees and green space, and greenhouse gas  
81 capture and sequestration, as our authorities and resources will allow.

82  
83 Adopted by the Council of the City of Takoma Park this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

84  
85 Attest:

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87  
88 Jessie Carpenter, CMC  
89 City Clerk

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