

Building A Livable
Community
for All

City of Takoma Park
Draft Housing and
Economic Development
Strategic Plan

Building a Livable Community for All: Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan

OVERVIEW

Two priorities of the City of Takoma Park Council are to be a “Livable Community for All” and to have “Community Development for an Improved and Equitable Quality of Life.” These priorities intersect in the areas of housing and economic development.

The City of Takoma Park is a densely developed, largely residential municipality of almost 18,000 people living within 2.4 square miles in Montgomery County, Maryland, and bordered by Washington, D.C. and Prince George’s County. Its residential housing stock is about half multifamily (mostly rent-stabilized) buildings and half single family detached homes. The City has had almost no new housing units or commercial buildings constructed or redeveloped since the 1970’s. As the City looks to meet its critical housing needs, housing development initiatives are interlaced with the City’s economic development initiatives, particularly in light of the positive and negative challenges of the coming of the Purple Line light rail line along Takoma Park’s borders, the closing of the community’s hospital in the heart of the city, and the changing Washington, D.C. area market forces.

In 2016, the Takoma Park City Council authorized the development of a community-wide strategic plan for housing and economic development. Now completed, this plan, through a set of recommended policies and strategies, identifies the steps needed to meet the goals of having a range of safe, high quality, affordable, and stable housing available throughout the community and having options for employment, business support, and economic well-being equitably available to Takoma Park’s residents and businesses.

In moving forward on the recommendations of the strategic plan, the City is also looking to consider every action through a race equity lens, take into account the climate change resiliency needs of our existing and future residential and commercial properties, and develop a financial base to support ongoing City services that has less dependence on residential real property tax.

The overall vision for this work is to ensure:

A community that protects the rights of all people; embraces and provides equitable access to opportunities for people of all ages, races, ethnicities, citizenship status, abilities, gender identities, and sexual orientations; maintains and enhances the physical characteristics of its residential and commercial neighborhoods; and is safe, sustainable, accessible and affordable across socioeconomic groups.

The plan’s goals, objectives, strategies and indicators are summarized in the following pages and categorized into the themes of Preserve, Produce and Protect:

- **Preserve existing businesses and affordable housing in Takoma Park, including in revitalizing areas.**
- **Produce more housing and opportunities for local businesses to start and grow across the income spectrum and in neighborhoods across the City to meet the diverse housing and economic needs.**
- **Protect renters, homeowners, and local businesses from discrimination and displacement; and protect our environment from destruction.**

This Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan will be used to provide guidance to this and future Councils when setting policies and adopting budgets, will assist City staff in the development of annual implementation plans, and will be reviewed periodically as conditions and needs change in the City of Takoma Park.

HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Strategic Plan has two overarching goals associated with Housing and Economic Development, as defined below.

Goal 1: Housing

Ensure that a range of safe, high quality, affordable and stable housing options are equitably available in neighborhoods throughout the community.

Goal 2: Economic Development

Ensure that all may benefit from economic well-being, a high quality of life, and a stable tax base by creating and retaining jobs; by promoting workforce development and entrepreneurship; by retaining and attracting businesses; and by encouraging the development and redevelopment of commercial, mixed-use and residential properties.

[add something about race equity and climate change?]

Objectives

The Plan's objectives are categorized under the headings "Preserve," "Produce," and "Protect," which, in turn, have their own associated objectives, strategies, and indicators. The categories are defined as follows:

- **PRESERVE** existing businesses and affordable housing in Takoma Park, including in revitalizing areas.
- **PRODUCE** more housing and opportunities for local businesses to start and grow across the income spectrum and in neighborhoods across the City to meet the diverse housing and economic needs.
- **PROTECT** renters, homeowners, local businesses from discrimination and displacement, and protect our environment from destruction.

PRESERVE

Preserve existing businesses and affordable housing in Takoma Park, including in revitalizing areas.

Objectives:

- 1. Preserve the affordability of the existing multifamily housing stock.**
- 2. Conserve and improve the physical condition of the existing low to moderate cost housing stock.**
- 3. Improve the capacity of residents, property owners and business owners to maintain their property, manage residential (tenant, homeowner, common ownership) associations or business organizations, and access resources.**
- 4. Retain local businesses.**
- 5. Seek local, county, state and federal decisions, policies, legislation, regulations and funding that support these objectives.**

Objective #1: Preserve the affordability of the existing multifamily housing stock.

Strategy A: Continue the rent stabilization program for multifamily buildings that lack other housing affordability protections; consider modifications to the program if needed to improve functionality.

Strategy B: Provide support for multifamily buildings that ~~offer~~ provide housing affordability protections for a majority of their units through direct or indirect government assistance such as Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements, grants, tax credits, etc.

Strategy C: Encourage and support improvements for energy efficiency as a way to keep multifamily housing stock affordable.

Objective #2: Conserve and improve the physical condition of the existing low to moderate cost housing stock.

Strategy A: ~~Pursue~~Identify grant funds, incentives and partners that can facilitate residential building improvements, including improvements to mechanical systems, materials, landscaping and aesthetics.

Strategy B: Facilitate partnerships and policy changes that would permit or encourage commercial or nonprofit use in portions of residential buildings or property to support economic stability.

Strategy C: Modify the capital improvements process and other regulations to encourage and facilitate building and energy-efficiency improvements.

Objective #3: Improve the capacity of residents, property owners and business owners to maintain their property, manage residential (tenant, homeowner, common ownership) associations, or business organizations, and access resources.

Strategy A: Provide capacity-building trainings, either directly or via partners.

Strategy B: ~~Pursue~~Identify grant opportunities and incentive programs that enhance capacity for internal operations, which may include sustainability programs, systems and technology improvements, façade improvements, etc.

Strategy C: ~~Expand~~Provide opportunities for economic self-sufficiency for Takoma Park residents and businesses.

Objective #4: Retain local businesses.

Strategy A: Create and grow connections between ~~Ensure that~~ local businesses are familiar with and the resources of the City, County and other partners, including through increased outreach and systematic collection of information about local businesses and their needs ~~and ensure that City, County and other partner organizations are familiar with the businesses in Takoma Park.~~

Strategy B: As redevelopment occurs, work to keep local businesses in Takoma Park (in the same or different location in the city) through agreements, incentives, and an understanding of the needs and assets of individual businesses and of commercial areas.

Strategy C: Take affirmative steps to ~~c~~Celebrate and promote local businesses.

Objective #5: Seek local, county, state and federal decisions, policies, legislation, regulations and funding that support these objectives.

Strategy A: Advocate for and when appropriate, adopt local, county, state and federal decisions, policies, legislation, regulations and funding in support of these objectives.

PRODUCE

Produce more housing and opportunities for businesses to start and grow across the income spectrum and in neighborhoods across the City to meet the diverse housing and economic needs.

Objectives:

- 1. Increase the number of units and variety of housing types across the affordability spectrum that are attractive to a diverse demographic and do not result in economically segregated communities.**
- 2. Encourage the construction of new moderate and higher density infill commercial, residential and mixed-use development and redevelopment.**
- 3. Cultivate entrepreneurship among residents.**
- 4. Attract new businesses to Takoma Park and facilitate the growth of existing businesses, particularly those that help meet workforce development, local ownership, or other goals defined by this plan.**
- 5. Improve enforcement of ~~Enforce~~ antidiscrimination and race equity provisions in City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County, State of Maryland and federal policies and regulations.**
- 6. Seek local, county, state and federal decisions, policies, legislation, regulations and funding that support these objectives.**

Objective #1: Increase the number of units and variety of housing types across the affordability spectrum that are attractive to a diverse demographic and do not result in economically segregated communities.

Strategy A: Encourage and facilitate the creation and expansion of housing types that are under-represented in Takoma Park, or in a particular section of Takoma Park, and desired by existing and new residents of various incomes; changes in allowable use or zoning may be considered as a way to accomplish this.

Strategy B: Adopt housing targets and work to meet them, consistent with the regional housing targets adopted by the Washington Metropolitan Area Council of Governments.

Strategy C: Encourage and facilitate ways to allow purchase or rental of ~~existing or new~~ ~~infill~~ single-family homes by people of moderate incomes, through initiatives ~~means~~ ~~(from the City or others)~~ such as down payment assistance, tax credits, allowance of

accessory dwelling units, donations of property, shared equity arrangements, and education of residents and real estate professionals.

Strategy D: Encourage infill housing development, such as single-family detached homes, townhouses, and multifamily structures in zones that allow for them; where possible, use grants, credits or other methods to lower purchase prices, maintenance costs, and energy costs to allow for greater affordability and build in such a way as to be resilient to the effects of climate change.

Objective #2: Encourage the construction of new moderate and higher density infill residential, commercial and mixed-use development and redevelopment.

Strategy A: As part of master planning efforts, work to allow for new moderate and higher density development and mixed-use residential development.

Strategy B: Encourage moderate and higher density development and redevelopment in zones that allow for it through means such as supporting applications during the development review process and providing or encouraging financial assistance for projects.

Strategy C: Develop and maintain partnerships with entities that can facilitate such developments.

Strategy D: Encourage development locations and site plans that create attractive welcoming character-rich, walkable, bikeable, transit-accessible developments and neighborhoods throughout the community.

Strategy E: New construction should be built with climate change in mind; that is, minimizing greenhouse gases, emphasizing energy efficiency and able to minimize or withstand flooding.

Objective #3: Cultivate entrepreneurship among residents.

Strategy A: Facilitate creation of spaces to start and grow businesses, such as “pop-up” spaces, vending, traditional retail, commercial kitchens, studios or workshops, and non-traditional office and collaboration spaces.

Strategy B: Expand knowledge of financial options through business outreach programs.

Strategy C: Connect staff of the City and other partners to business owners and entrepreneurs.

Objective #4: Attract new businesses to Takoma Park and facilitate the growth of existing businesses, particularly those that help meet workforce development, local ownership, or other goals defined by this plan.

Strategy A: Utilize benefits provided by Enterprise and Opportunity Zones to encourage business investments.

Strategy B: Market development opportunities in the Takoma Langley Crossroads, New Hampshire Avenue Corridor, and Long Branch areas, as well as opportunities that may arise from zoning changes at the former hospital site.

Strategy C: Promote high-density development in targeted areas to improve the quality, quantity and accessibility of commercial space.

Strategy D: Improve the attractiveness of the City to business owners by improving transportation accessibility, streetscapes, opportunities for public art, and the quality of business spaces.

Strategy E: Assess a higher property tax on developed vacant commercial structures to encourage reuse.

Objective #5: Improve eEnforcement of antidiscrimination and race equity provisions in City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County, State of Maryland and federal policies and regulations.

Strategy A: Improve eEnforcement of antidiscrimination and race equity provisions as new development is considered and produced and as assistance is provided to residents and businesses.

Objective #6: Seek local, county, state and federal decisions, policies, legislation, regulations and funding that support these objectives.

Strategy A: Advocate for and when appropriate, adopt local, county, state and federal decisions, policies, legislation, regulations and funding in support of these objectives.

PROTECT

Protect renters, homeowners, local businesses from discrimination and displacement, and protect our environment from destruction.

Objectives:

- 1. Ensure homeownership and rental opportunities are available in welcoming, character-rich, walkable and bikeable neighborhoods throughout the community**
- 2. Provide opportunities for economic self-sufficiency for Takoma Park residents and businesses**
- 3. Enforce antidiscrimination and race equity provisions in City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County, State of Maryland and federal policies and regulations.**
- 4. Plan, build, and maintain properties, buildings and neighborhoods with environmental sustainability as a major consideration, including climate change resiliency and greenhouse gas reduction.**
- 5. Seek local, county, state and federal decisions, policies, legislation, regulations and funding that support these objectives.**

Objective #1: Ensure homeownership and rental opportunities are available in welcoming, character-rich, walkable and bikeable neighborhoods throughout the community.

Strategy A: Use master planning, development and policy-making opportunities to make the entire City of Takoma Park welcoming, character-rich, walkable, bikeable and transit-accessible.

Objective #2: Provide opportunities for economic self-sufficiency for Takoma Park residents and businesses to avoid displacement.

Strategy A: Undertake and promote the work of partners on workforce development and business assistance programs to build economic self-sufficiency for individuals and businesses to remain in Takoma Park.

Objective #3: Enforce antidiscrimination and race equity provisions in City of Takoma Park, Montgomery County, State of Maryland and federal policies and regulations.

Strategy A: Enforce antidiscrimination and race equity provisions to avoid displacement of, or improper actions against, individuals and businesses in Takoma Park.

Objective #4: Plan, build, and maintain properties, buildings and neighborhoods with environmental sustainability as a major consideration, including climate change resiliency and greenhouse gas reduction.

Strategy A: Use the City’s Sustainability and Climate Action Plan to guide development and redevelopment.

Objective #5: Seek local, county, state and federal decisions, policies, legislation, regulations and funding that support these objectives.

Strategy A: Advocate for and when appropriate, adopt local, county, state and federal decisions, policies, legislation, regulations and funding in support of these objectives.