



## Takoma Park City Council Meeting – January 15, 2020 Agenda Item 3

### **Work Session**

Update on Review of Committees

### **Recommended Council Action**

Discuss and provide direction to staff

### **Context with Key Issues**

In an effort to increase community engagement through the Council-appointed committees, a small working group is focusing on how the committees function and identifying opportunities for improvement. The City has 143 current committee members serving on its 16 active standing committees and two limited duration task forces.

In Fall 2019, the City surveyed residents, who either serve or had served on a City committee within the last few years, about their experiences. A total of 164 people received the link, and 100 people answered the 52-question survey. Survey results and a summary are attached. Four general topics emerge from the responses: membership, committee relations with Council, staffing and resources, and operations and training.

Overall, the committees are not representative of the demographics of the City. Almost 80% of the survey respondents are white; 84% are home-owners, 70% have achieved master's, professional or Ph.D. degrees; and over 65% have a household income over \$100,000.

Survey participants report a wide range of experiences regarding the functionality of committees, the obstacles to participating, and the adequacy of support. Generally, participants indicate they find the experience rewarding (76%), that they learn a great deal (75%); and that they would recommend volunteering on their committee to others (73%). The survey also identifies areas for improvement with operations of the committee.

Next steps are to develop recommendations for standardizing, systematizing and improving committee operations and training, and to consider a range of options for recruitment, selection, and support.

### **Council Priority**

A Livable Community for All  
Engaged, Responsive & Service-oriented Government

### **Environmental Considerations**

There is no environmental impact from the review of the Council-appointed committees.

### **Fiscal Considerations**

There is no fiscal impact from the review of the Council-appointed committees.

**Racial Equity Considerations**

Council-appointed committees do not generally reflect the diversity of the population of Takoma Park. Improvements of the recruitment, training, functionality and support of committees may encourage more people from all backgrounds in the City to participate in the Council-appointed committees.

**Attachments and Links**

- Summary of Survey Results
- Charts showing results of survey questions