



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – Sept. 30, 2020 Agenda Items 1 & 2

Presentation and Work Session

Racial Equity Initiative - Best Practices and Next Steps

Recommended Council Action

Discuss actions over the short and long term to advance racial equity in Takoma Park

Context with Key Issues

As a result of discussions at the 2017 City Council Retreat, the City Council established the Takoma Park Racial Equity Framework, which committed the City to systematically and deliberately apply a racial equity lens in decision-making. With the passing of [Resolution No. 2017-28](#) in April 2017, the City Council directed staff to begin including Racial Equity Considerations on all agenda items as a first step. Over the past three years, these considerations have challenged decision-makers to consider the implications of policy and budget decisions on Takoma Park residents of all racial backgrounds. That same year, the City became a member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). City Council and senior staff were subsequently trained by GARE and able to engage with practitioners from across the country on racial equity issues.

The following year, as part of the 2018-2021 City Council Policy Priorities, the City Council made racial equity a central tenet of the Livable Community for All priority, with the goal of furthering efforts related to racial equity and making progress toward a more racially equitable community and City government. Also in 2018, the City conducted the [Takoma Park Resident Survey and Focus Group Report](#). The survey included direct questions about racial equity in service provision and focus groups comprised of African immigrants and Spanish-speaking residents. The results of the survey have shaped community engagement and Council and staff discussions on how to meet the needs of communities of color.

The City Council 2019 Retreat was focused on racial equity and facilitated by racial equity professionals. The City worked with the National League of Cities' Race, Equity, and Leadership (REAL) division to create a Racial Equity Roadmap in March 2019 to guide future efforts. In the summer of 2019, the City sent four staff members to join the GARE Implementation Cohort. GARE cohort members benefitted from further training and close collaboration with GARE experts on project management with a racial equity lens. City staff continue to engage each month with the Council of Governments (COG) Racial Equity work group, a forum for DMV region jurisdictions to share resources and ideas.

These are just a few of the formal actions the City has taken in recent history to reinforce a strong commitment and community vision toward racial equity. There are many examples of past and ongoing projects that reflect the thoughtful engagement of City staff in implementing the 2017 Racial Equity Framework. However, much work remains to be done to address racial disparities in quality of life Citywide and to encourage residents of all backgrounds to engage in government processes.

Public Administration Fellow Jordyn Battle will present findings from her Summer 2020 best practices research and discussions with Racial Equity Officers from other jurisdictions. Deputy City Manager

Jessica Clarke will lead the work session on short-term actions and long-term strategies to further institutionalize and operationalize the Takoma Park Racial Equity Framework in all aspects of City government.

Council Priority

A Livable Community for All

Environmental Considerations

The City is in the process of creating a new Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (SCAP) whose primary goals include increasing equity in Takoma Park and creating adaptation plans and procedures that focus on those most impacted by climate change. By planning next steps for the Racial Equity Initiative, City leadership will provide resources for City staff to engage in the community collaboration portion of the SCAP development process in a more equitable manner.

Fiscal Considerations

There is no budgetary ask at this time; short-term proposals will use existing resources, and subsequent discussions will determine what additional resources are needed for long-term objectives.

Racial Equity Considerations

Racial Equity Considerations are a key part of implementing the Racial Equity Framework. The act of filling out this section for each Council agenda item functions as a mandatory thought exercise on who is helped and who is harmed by Council actions. The Racial Equity Initiative Next Steps work session will build on the Racial Equity Considerations requirement by exploring additional tools and organizational structures that can be used by City Departments to promote racial equity. The expansion of Racial Equity Initiative institutional mechanisms beyond Racial Equity Considerations will support City Council and staff in evaluating the racial dimensions of City projects and addressing potential disparate impacts of City services on communities of color.

Attachments and Links

[Racial Equity Initiative Webpage](#)