



2021 - CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES



1. A Livable Community For All

- 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.
- 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.
- Defend status as a Sanctuary City and continue to be a welcoming and inclusive community for all residents.
- Improve transportation planning and outreach to create a safer and more racially equitable community for all residents, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle occupants.
- Further efforts related to racial equity.

2. Fiscally Sustainable Government

- Increase funding from County and State to address tax duplication and other City needs.
- Minimize adverse impacts of changes to the federal tax system.
- Adopt sustainable investment and banking policy and practices.

3. Environmentally Sustainable Community

- Prioritize actions, policies, innovations, and new opportunities that mitigate and adapt to the causes and effects of climate change.
- Protect, plan for, and improve Takoma Park's natural resources including urban forest health and water quality, and continue to be a leader in community sustainability programs and policies.

4. Engaged, Responsive, Service-oriented Government

- Improve policies and processes related to the tree ordinance; traffic calming; sidewalk requests, repair and maintenance; and residential/commercial boundary conflicts.
- Improve and formalize systems for Council-appointed committees and external committees on which Councilmembers serve (e.g. MWWOG).
- Identify policing priorities and explore options for enhanced police/community relations.
- Explore alternative approaches to enhance public engagement and two-way communication.

5. Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

- Plan and prepare for development in the City and region while maintaining the special character and diversity of Takoma Park.
- Redevelopment of Takoma Park Recreation Center.



Vision

City of Takoma Park, a community of excellence renowned for exemplary service to all residents.

Mission

It is our mission to champion quality and efficiency through a dedicated workforce and a cooperative spirit between government and people.

City Council Priorities

The City Council's Priorities are used as a tool to guide policy and budget decision-making and outline strategies to work toward desired outcomes for a wide range of major projects, initiatives and ongoing activities. The Council affirms their priorities by Resolution each year.

City Council policy affects many aspects of civic life in Takoma Park. Establishing and sharing priorities helps inform residents, businesses and regional stakeholders on what the City Council's constituents and elected officials view as important for the Takoma Park in an easy to understand and transparent manner.

How City Council Priorities Affect You

Priorities are not policy. They serve as the framework used to shape it. Anyone affected by City Council policy who has input – whether in agreement or not – is encouraged to engage with the City Council to help shape how priorities are implemented.

You can engage in the process by attending a City Council meeting, contacting your City Councilmember or by joining a board, commission or committee.

What are the City Council's Priorities?

The City Council's priorities break down into five broad categories with key major projects, initiatives and ongoing activities identified for each. Those five broad categories are:

1) A Livable Community for All

Identify Programming Needs

Goal: 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.

Strategy:

- 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.

Desired outcome: Expanded or improved programming tailored to residents who need them the most or who are accessing them the least.

Ensure Stable Housing Options

Goal: Ensure we have a range of safe, quality, and stable housing options for residents of varying incomes and all races and ethnicities.

Strategy:

- Finalize Strategic Plan related to housing affordability and economic development and begin work on strategies to address housing and economic development challenges and opportunities; finalize implementation plans.
- As part of work on Strategic Plan, develop and implement plan of action for Housing Reserve Fund, including request for contributions from the County and State.
- Develop incentives and possible new enforcement and other measures for landlords to improve living conditions for tenants. Explore needs and potential programs for residents who live in condominiums.
- Facilitate improved communication among City, landlords, and tenants; build on existing outreach and tenant education efforts and capacity building efforts.

Desired outcome: 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. Improved living conditions for renters.

Defend Sanctuary Status

Goal: Defend status as a Sanctuary City and continue to be a welcoming and inclusive community for all residents.

Strategy:

- Continue advocacy efforts on behalf of immigrants, including connecting those in need of assistance to appropriate area organizations.

Desired outcome: Remain a strong Sanctuary City.

Improve Transportation Planning

Goal: Improve transportation planning and outreach to create a safer and more racially equitable community for all residents, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle occupants.

Strategy:

- Explore adopting a Vision Zero initiative; begin to examine potential components such as education/outreach, policy changes, and infrastructure improvements.

Desired Outcome: Improved traffic safety resulting in eliminating serious vehicle, pedestrian, and bike collisions; improved comprehensive transportation planning throughout the City with a data-driven approach that takes into consideration impacts throughout the City; racially equitable transportation system and outcomes.

Racial Equity

Goal: Further efforts related to racial equity.

Strategy:

- 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.
- Continue to provide racial equity training to members of Council-appointed committees and other residents; seek grant funding for training.
- Conduct racial equity survey among City staff members.

Desired outcome: Progress toward a more racially equitable community and government.

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.
- Cultural Plan – implementation of recommendations in approved 2018 Plan.

City Council Priorities

2) Fiscally Sustainable Government

Increase Funding from Montgomery County and State

Goal: Increase funding from Montgomery County and State to address tax duplication and other City needs.

Strategy:

- Increase Councilmember advocacy and lobbying activities; improve coordination of efforts between staff and Councilmembers.
- Partner with other Montgomery County municipalities to pressure County and General Assembly.
- Acquire grant funding to help offset costs for library renovations.

Desired outcome: Increased funding from County and State to address tax duplication and other City needs.

Address Changes to Federal Tax System

Goal: Minimize adverse impacts of changes to the federal tax system.

Strategy:

- Assess implications of changes to federal tax system and consider tactics to help mitigate adverse impacts; consult with State and County elected officials about potential steps to help achieve this goal.

Desired outcome: Minimize adverse impacts of changes to the federal tax system.

Sustainable Investment and Banking Policy

Goal: Adopt sustainable investment and banking policy and practices.

Strategy:

- Identify and work with consultant to determine tolerance levels and next steps in adopting sustainable investment and banking policies and practices, taking into account the concerns raised by the Nuclear Free Committee about SunTrust Bank.

Desired outcome: Work to align the City's banking and investments with values of social responsibility.

Major Projects, Initiatives, and Ongoing Activities

- Modify budget document in accordance with GFOA standards of excellence in communicating about budget process.

3) Environmentally Sustainable Community

Lead in Community Programs/Policies for Sustainability

Goal: Prioritize actions, policies, innovations, and new opportunities that mitigate *and adapt to* the causes and effects of climate change.

Strategy:

- Accelerate program and policy efforts for more efficient energy use, with priority on largest contributing factors, such as residential and commercial buildings, and where the largest gains can be made with City action.
- 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.
- Consider draft Strategic Plan related to housing and economic development and adopt strategies to promote and ensure sustainable development.
- Consider ways to address increased stormwater in the City and its impacts, particularly stormwater on private properties.

Desired outcome: Improved energy efficiency City-wide; increasingly sustainable City operations and building; increased use of renewables and offsets.

Tree Canopy Preservation

Goal: Protect, plan for, and improve Takoma Park's natural resources including urban forest health and water quality, and continue to be a leader in community sustainability programs and policies.

Strategy:

- Establish tree canopy goals and support the maintenance and growth of the urban forest through programs and education; identify opportunities for tree retention, maintenance and growth.
- Review tree ordinance with tree canopy goals to ensure changes to the tree ordinance advance and do not adversely impact tree canopy goals.

Desired outcome: Greater maintenance of mature trees; more plantings on City and private property.

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.
- Update Sustainable Energy Action Plan for more accelerated actions and continue plan implementation
- 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.

4) Engaged, Responsive, & Service Oriented Government

Identify Policing Priorities

Goal: Identify policing priorities and explore options for enhanced police/community relations.

Strategy:

- In addition to community 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, including considering options for greater civilian input in policing policies.

Desired outcome: Improve relationships between the police department and community measured by resident survey responses and through other means.

Strategy:

- Develop and implement plan of action to enter into mutual aid agreements.

Desired outcome: Mutual aid agreements in place with District of Columbia and Prince George's County to enhance coordination among police departments.

Improve Communications With Residents

Goal: Explore alternative approaches to enhance public engagement and two-way communication.

Strategy:

- Regularly update project directory, staff and Councilmember blogs on City website, promote My TkPk application.
- Explore ways in addition to Newsletter to get information to a broader array of residents; increase in non-English communications.
- Consider new ways, in City Council meetings and in other settings, of engaging in two-way communication with residents, especially those who are traditionally less likely to participate in governmental affairs, as well as policymakers in Rockville, Annapolis, Washington DC, and Prince George's County; develop outreach on City programs including property tax assistance and others.

Desired outcome: Information about issues and programs more easily accessible for all residents.

Strategy:

- Improve notification and communication systems for utility and other work in the right-of-way, including work by City contractors and staff, and explore, at the local level and with State and County officials, development of accountability measures to address deficient notification and to strengthen monitoring of utility and contractor work.

Desired outcome: Better communication with residents about utility and other work that may impact them.

Improve Tree Ordinance and Utility Policies and Processes

Goal: Improve policies and processes related to the tree ordinance; traffic calming; sidewalk requests, repair and maintenance; and residential/commercial boundary conflicts.

Strategy:

- Review existing tree ordinance, and develop and implement improvements.

Desired outcome: More user-friendly and easy to understand tree ordinance.

Strategy:

- Consider existing traffic calming policies and processes, develop and implement recommendations for improvements.

City Council Priorities

Desired outcome: Improved and more equitable policy and processes related to traffic calming.

Strategy:

- Consider existing policies and processes related to sidewalk requests, repair, and maintenance, develop and implement recommendations for improvements.

Desired outcome: Improved and more equitable policy and processes related to sidewalk requests, maintenance and repair.

Strategy:

- Consider existing issues and code enforcement strategies related to the intersection of commercial and residential areas; develop and implement recommendations for improvements.

Desired outcome: Improved policy and processes related to residential/commercial boundary conflicts.

Goal: Improve and formalize systems for Council-appointed committees and external committees on which Councilmembers serve (e.g. MWCOG).

Strategy:

- 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.

Desired outcome: Diverse, engaged, productive, and rewarding committee membership.

Strategy:

- 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.

Desired outcome: Better understanding of individual Councilmember's roles; improved communication amongst Council.

Major Projects, Initiatives, and Ongoing Activities

- Continue to implement changes within the Police Department consistent with Council's July 2017 resolution.
- Police Department renovation – finalize design and begin construction.
- Continue to serve as liaison between utility companies and community to improve communication and understand of project impacts.
- Planning for moving City elections to coincide with state and federal elections.

5) Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Plan and Prepare for Development

Goal: Plan and prepare for development in the City and region while maintaining the special character and diversity of Takoma Park.

Strategy:

- Consider Strategic Plan related to housing and economic development and adopt strategies to address housing and economic development challenges and opportunities; develop implementation plans.

Desired outcome: Implementation plans developed and adopted to plan and prepare for development and maintain the special character and diversity of Takoma Park.

Strategy:

- 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.
- Provide direct outreach and support for local businesses, including those that are not members of local business associations.

Desired outcome: Improved coordination with business associations in order to help make them more effective; thriving local businesses.

Goal: Redevelopment of Takoma Park Recreation Center

Strategy:

- Develop a shared vision for the Recreation Center using an evidence-based approach; improve community engagement around the City's recreational needs and the future Recreation Center; facilitate the City's ownership and design of the future Recreation Center.

Desired outcome: Leverage both public and private stakeholders to accomplish the goal of developing the Recreation Center that meets the City's need for recreation services and affordable housing.

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.
- 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.
- Montgomery College construction projects, including new Math and Science Building.