

TAKOMA PARK  
REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY  
TASK FORCE WORK SESSION



## Review of the RPSTF Recommendations by City Staff

- The City of Takoma Park appreciates all of the hard work done by the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) and the thoughtful recommendations.
- The City of Takoma Park is committed to reimagining public safety in Takoma Park. This involves a comprehensive staff review of all of the RPSTF recommendations and taking a holistic approach to how the City can best provide public safety services.
- The majority of the recommendations are already implemented or in the process of being implemented by City of Takoma Park. Others require further review and discussion.





## Ensure patrol staff focus resources on serious crime and de-prioritize minor infractions

Total arrests and citations of all types have declined significantly since 2015. The data trends in our data release reflect:

Refocusing the Department on criminal enforcement

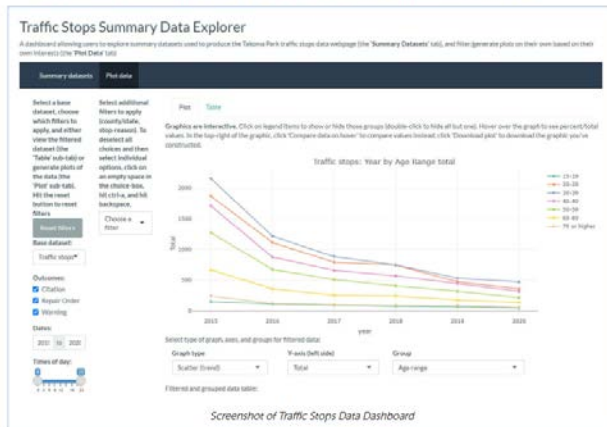
Revamping the TPPD Evaluation and Reward System

Significant decline in arrests for minor infractions since 2015

Significant increase in arrests for serious offenses since 2015

### Webpages

- Arrests, 2015-2020 webpage
- Traffic stops, 2015-2020 and computer-aided dispatch calls, 2018-2020 webpage
- Data dashboard: arrests, 2015-2020
- Data dashboard: traffic stops, 2015-2020 and computer-aided dispatch calls, 2018-2020



## Continue practicing “Guardian Policing”

TPPD is committed to practicing “Guardian policing.” This philosophy is reinforced by police department policy/culture and through a resolution passed by the city council.

The guardian approach is also reinforced through our evaluation and reward system. Officers are rewarded for community engagement and problem solving. A ~~de~~emphasis was made on quantity enforcement actions with a refocus on serious public safety issues. This has led to a large reduction of the number of arrests and traffic citations issued by TPPD officers, a reduction in arrests for low level offenses and an increase in arrests for serious crimes. Even though arrests and citations have gone down, crime has been reduced in the city.

“Guardian Policing” is also reinforced through training. All staff are required to attend annual deescalation and crisis avoidance training. All sworn staff recently attended Active Bystander for Law Enforcement (ABLE) training. This reinforces the need for officers to intervene when other officers are not performing their duties professionally.

In addition, all of our officers attend implicit bias training on an annual basis.



## Increase Transparency of Investigations into Complaints Against Police Officers

The City of Takoma Park is committed to an accessible and transparent process for filing complaints. Complaints can be filled online, via mail, via phone, and in person.

We encourage any resident who is dissatisfied with any interactions they had with a member of the TPPD to file a complaint. The department investigates all complaints received.

Previously state law prohibited the release of police disciplinary records, as they were considered “personnel records” under the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA).

SB178 The Maryland Police Accountability Act (Anton’s Law), which took effect October 1, 2021, declared administrative or criminal investigations of misconduct by police officers not to be deemed “personnel records” and thus releasable to the public via the MPIA. The city is committed to full compliance with SB178.



## Prohibit the Militarization of Civilian Law

The city does not currently participate in the federal 1033 program or any other federal program that transfers military equipment to civilian law enforcement agencies. This is reinforced through police department policy.

We are evaluating the need to have this reinforced by city policy as well.



## Prevent the Use of Excessive Force by Police

The City of Takoma Park is committed to eliminating the excessive use of force by police. We have clear use of force policies and a use of force continuum which calls for the absolute least amount of force necessary utilized by city officers. We have very few use of force incidents in the city. However, all use of force incidents are fully documented and investigated to ensure compliance with policy and best practices in de-escalation.

All officers attend annual de-escalation training. In addition, the vast majority of our officers are trained as crisis intervention officers. This allows them to utilize de-escalation techniques when dealing with individuals in mental distress.





## Recruit and Retain a Quality Police force

The City of Takoma Park is committed to recruiting and retaining a quality police force.

We currently have diverse workforce that is reflective of the demographics of the City of Takoma Park. 56% of our patrol staff have been hired within the last 3 years. Of the 28 staff we have hired in the last three years, 22 are members of minority groups and 7 females. The group has members fluent in five different languages, with 8 fluent in Spanish.

We are committed to the 30 by 30 initiative which a goal to have 30% of all sworn officers in the country be women by the year 2030. 21% of current sworn staff are women.

We are committed to a wellness culture within the police department. The PD recently appointed a staff member to enhance our wellness program. This involves moving away from a wellness program to wellness culture where employees have access to confidential mental health, stress management, and peer support services without fear of retaliation. The moto is, "It is OK to not be OK."



## Mental Health Outreach/Response

One of the biggest issues facing our country and the city of Takoma Park is the issue of mental health.

A large amount of the calls for service handled by the police department involve residents suffering from mental crisis. There are currently not enough County resources to handle to demand for services.

The police department has proposed a pilot program to hire mental health counselors to address the mental health crisis here in Takoma Park. The counselors would work hand in hand with the PD, HCD, the county crisis center and the MC Department of Health and Human Services.

They would be able to respond to calls for service as they occurring, but more importantly act as case workers, similar to our victim/witness coordinator. This proposal will be evaluated through the budget process.



Increase Bike and Foot Patrols in  
Business Districts within Takoma  
Park/Purchase Electric Bikes



The city police department instituted a “Take 30” initiative in all of the city’s business districts; the Takoma Langley Crossroads, the Flower Ave corridor, and the Old Towne Business District. Every officer takes at least 30 minutes per shift to patrol Takoma Park Business Districts on foot and by bicycle.

The city purchased six new electric bicycles to enhance the business district patrols.



Create a Community  
Assistance Office,  
Community Safety Team,  
and Community  
Programming

- Many of the services outlined in the recommendations are provided by Montgomery County or through partner non profit organizations funded by federal, state and county dollars.
- HCD staff work closely with residents as well as with our government and nonprofit partners on housing issues and have insight in other social services needed by residents.
- HCD refers residents in need of social services to DHHS, which has staff capacity and expertise to handle these issues.



## Coordinate Community Engagement, Transparency, and Training

- HCD actively promotes community engagement and works closely with our partners in TPPD on cases that involve housing issues.
- HCD's Community "Quality of Life" Grants program established a pipeline of workforce training programs available to low-to-moderate income residents and grants are provided on an annual basis.



Invest in an increased number of scholarships for after - school and weekend programs for children in Takoma Park.

- The Recreation Department currently has a scholarship program that affords residents 20%, 50%, and 70% reductions. With COVID, we added 100% fee reductions. We currently grant all scholarship requested by disadvantaged and underserved populations.
- We will work with residents and community groups to spread the word about this program.



Create a Takoma Park mentorship program. High school students who are residents of Takoma Park would be offered the opportunity to pair with residents and/or business owners in order to expose students to new opportunities and realities and expose both mentors and students to new cultural backgrounds and frames of reference.

- The Recreation Department currently partners with groups such as MANUP for youth and teen mentoring.
- The Department also partners with local businesses as part of the City's Summer Youth Employment program which pairs teens with summer job and skill building opportunities. This program was cancelled in 2021 due to COVID but will resume in 2022.
- We have a full-time Youth Outreach position that focuses on connecting with teens and young adults ages 17-24 with developmental and skill-building opportunities.



Ensure that the community has easy, reliable, clear, timely and accessible access to City information by improving and resourcing City-led Communications



# Communication TouchPoints

## 15 - Communications TouchPoints

**Social Media** – Facebook, Instagram,

Twitter - Upcoming:

Linkedin – gained access – adding career

information

Whats App – in process

**Newsletter** - every household is scheduled to receive one

**Takoma Insider** – e-news 2 editions per month

**CityTV – Radio** - weekly announcements

**City TV Stations** - digital signage - (Community Center)

**Emails** - Multi family dwellings, Schools (Principals, Asst. Principals, PTAs)

**Website** – dept sections/pages/pages

**Blog** - front page announcements

**Mailchimp** - Create announcements

**Survey Monkey** - participation from the community on a given project

**Bus Shelter Ads** – Monthly updates – 10 shelters / English and Spanish

**Printing & Posting Flyers** - Translated flyers (Amharic, French and Spanish) - posted in Multi family dwellings,

**Library Flyers** - printed materials put into books-to-go & delivery service

**Tabling & in person** : flyer distribution

**Graphic Design** - create flyers, posters & images





*We are using many different forms of outreach including multilingual materials, visual and audio communications such as: CityTV & Radio, Indigenous People's Day, etc.*



## Communication

### Where Do We Go From Here

- With more staff we can do more!
  - New Communications Specialist on board
- Increase Collaboration across Departments
  - Share information on communication methods and lessons learned needs to be shared across Departments
    - ex: sharing seminars/training and workshops
  - Create How-Tos:
    - Coordinating translators for Zoom meeting
    - Setting up ASL & Language Interpreters
    - Identify multilingual staff already assist with proofreading interpreted mat'ls & interpreting
    - Contractor - contact, pricing and guidelines
- Returning to in-person events post-COVID
- Provide staff interpreters more often at community events

*We know that building a institutional culture of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion requires a framework with expert guidance and directions, and conversation that results in action.*



**Communications & HCD staff are completing training on inclusive public engagement and racial equity, and sharing the learning materials with other Departments.**

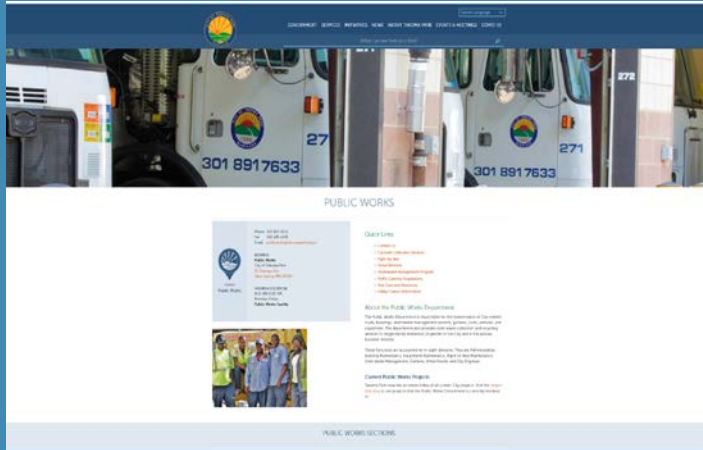
- The City's Communications Manager took a 9 month certification program, Certified Government Digital Services Professional (CGDSP), which included Crisis Management Communications and website accessibility.
- The HCD team & Communications Manager participated in the Harvard Foundations of Data Equity, We All Count, an 8hr series which provided tools the City can design projects and programs more inclusively using a racial equity framework
- The HCD team & Communications Manager participated in the Safe Routes Partnerships & Safe Routes to School Interactive Community Engagement Workshops which provided a planning framework for more inclusive project design



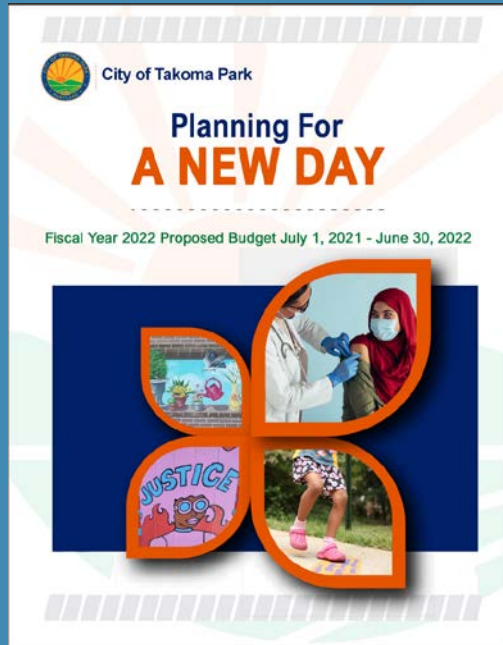
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## Citywide Rebranding Strategy

- Under City Manager Fox, the Communications Dept has begun a multi-year rebranding strategy for the City to reach a broader and more diverse audience
  - Staff are evaluating website vendors to redesign the City website. We plan to switch to a new platform that will include engagement tools, better navigation, and the ability to showcase city initiatives as City services expand.
  - The Communications Manager will design a new logo and communication templates with community involvement
  - Staff are developing graphic standards and new communications protocols with staff and provide training for staff on communications touchpoints
  - Creating a promotional video for the City



Increase transparency and advance notice regarding the City budgeting process



- The Preliminary Budget document is released 30 days in advance of the Council budget reconciliation work session and votes on budget ordinances each year.
- The City Manager provides a public presentation soon after the Preliminary Budget document is released that highlights budget changes by Department.
- The Finance Department added new budget highlights and change columns to budget tables in the FY22 budget book.
- The City is evaluating the possible purchase of budget publishing tools that will allow residents to explore budget data in more detail year-round.



Review of City Departments and Division structure, including potentially moving functions from one Department to another

- A Citywide Organizational Needs Assessment is expected to be completed in 2022 that will evaluate departmental capacities and structures to identify pressing organizational needs to meet the City's strategic goals.
- Citywide Wage and Compensation Study will be completed in 2022.
- City Management would also like to complete a 5 Year Financial Forecast in order to project out funding availability for any expansion of programming.



## Next Steps

City staff will continue to review all recommendations.

The Chiefs Advisory Board (CAB) is reviewing all recommendations made by the RPSTF and will provide input on how best to implement the recommendations.

Many of the recommendations have staffing and budget implications that will have to be approved by the City Council.

