



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – March 16, 2022 Agenda Item 5C

Work Session

Discussion of the proposal to enter into a contract with CHPlanning to complete the Public Space Manage Plan - a First Reading Ordinance

Recommended Council Action

Listen to the presentation, review the draft ordinance, and provide feedback.

Context with Key Issues

On January 5, 2022, the City of Takoma Park announced a Request for Proposals (RFP) for services to assist the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) in the completion of the Public Space Management Plan. The City received one proposal from the firm, CHPlanning, which staff found to be considerably aligned with the project requirements detailed in the RFP.

The purpose of the Public Space Management Plan is to develop a data-driven and equity-infused framework for managing public spaces around the City of Takoma Park. The planning process began in 2018, but was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and staff turnover. In Fall 2021, Planning staff determined that a request for proposals for support completing the Plan would yield the highest quality product.

The deadline for the submission of proposals was February 2, 2022. On January 19, 2022, HCD staff held an informational Zoom meeting attended by representatives from seven different planning firms. The presentation offered an overview of the RFP, including timelines, expected deliverables, and evaluation criteria. All questions from the session were uploaded to an FAQ document on the project web page and available to any potential applicants.

In response to the RFP, the City received one (1) proposal from the Philadelphia-based planning firm CHPlanning. Planning staff invited additional staff from the departments of HCD, Public Works, and Recreation. to review the proposal against the evaluation criteria pre-determined in the RFP.

Despite receiving only one proposal, staff found that the proposal met the needs presented in the RFP. The firm displayed innovative work on similar projects in other municipalities; their project team features a deep bench of experience, including a Project Manager who previously worked on the planning team for Prince George's County; and their proposal infused a deep understanding of equity, environmental stewardship, and thoughtful community engagement. In addition, CHPlanning is a minority woman-owned business with most of their project staff based locally in the Washington region. A review of project references included in the proposal confirmed the quality and experience in working with the firm.

Council Priority

A Livable Community for All

Fiscally Sustainable Government

Environmentally Sustainable Community

Engaged, Responsive, Service-Oriented Government

Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Environmental Considerations

The firm, CHPlanning, proposed a project that engages thoughtfully with questions of sustainability and environmental justice. The final Public Space Management Plan will directly impact public space resources around the City and guide decisions about how those spaces are developed, maintained, and/or acquired. These decisions will have environmental impacts, which will be considered for each specific project, although the process of completing this project will not.

Fiscal Considerations

The proposed cost of this project, as agreed in the contract, is not to exceed \$75,000. Funds for the project have been allocated in the FY22 operating budget. There are no direct, ongoing costs beyond the completion of the project.

Racial Equity Considerations

A core purpose of the Public Space Management Plan is to create a process that centers racial equity, as supported by rigorous analysis and data, in municipal decision-making processes regarding public space. The firm, CHPlanning, proposed a project that recognizes importance of these values and centers them in their proposed process and product. The final Public Space Management Plan will influence how the City of Takoma Park operationalizes its racial justice priorities when presented with decisions about public space. These decisions will have yet-to-be-known racial justice impacts. Additionally, in a field where nearly 75% of urban planning professionals identify as white, the selection of this

firm supports a Black woman-owned planning company and a project team of majority Black, Latinx, and Asian planners.

Attachments and Links

Public Space Management Plan web page:

<https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/housing-and-community-development/planning-and-community-development/public-space-management-plan/>

Request for Proposals (attached)

Draft Ordinance Authorizing Execution of a Contract for Services with CHPlanning Ltd. (attached)

Public Space Management Plan Contract Approval

March 16, 2022

Presented by:

Alex Freedman, Planner

Housing and Community Development Department

alexanderf@takomaparkmd.gov | 301-891-7213



What is the Public Space Management Plan?

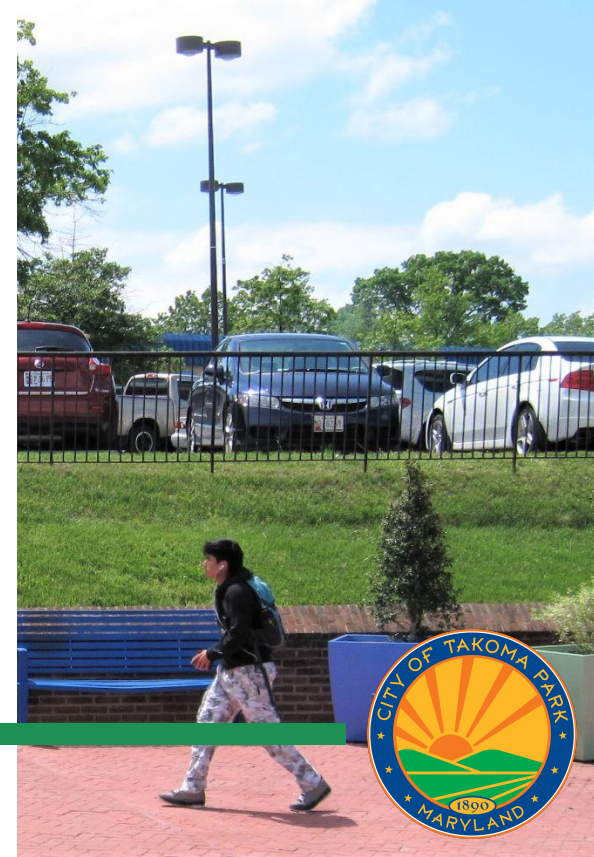
The Public Space Management Plan will **provide guidance** on how public space will be used and maintained in Takoma Park.

It will **create a process** for thinking about how, when, and where the City devotes funding and resources to public spaces.



Background

- **November 2018:** City Council approved a scope of work for a new Public Space Management Plan
- **2019-2020:** Community Engagement and Analysis
- **October 2021:** Public Space Values Workshops
- **January 2022:** RFP Released



Request for Proposals

Responsive proposals will:

- Conduct **supplementary public space analysis** about different uses and best practices;
- **Review existing city policies** and procedures regarding public space;
- Present a transparent, data-driven, equity-infused **decision-making framework** for city staff and City Council;
- Use high-quality **visualizations and table.**



Proposal Review

CRITERIA	JUSTIFICATION
Equity/ Sustainability	Proposal robustly acknowledges and addresses racial equity and environmental sustainability issues
Qualifications	Firm has more than five years of professional experience and more than five comparable projects
Responsiveness to Scope of Work	Proposal reflects a strong understanding of the project needs and unique scope required
Experience with Government	Firm demonstrates substantial experiences working with local governments on similar planning processes
Personnel	Assigned personnel roles and experience reflect high proficiency with project work proposal
References	The client references demonstrated high-quality products and positive working experience
Cost	Existing funds available



Firm: CHPlanning Ltd.

“Clients rely on us to translate community ambition and identity into welcoming places that provide enduring value. We help decision-makers understand the choices that offer greatest promise in the most equitable manner.”

- **Washington area-based project staff & Philadelphia HQ**
- **Black, woman-owned business**
- **5-person project team, led by former M-NCPPC planner**
- **Sample work:**
 - University City District Just Spaces (Philadelphia)



Timeline

- **February - March:** Proposal review, contract approval
- **April:** Consultants begin work
- **July:** 50% Check-in & Staff Review
- **July-August:** Community Feedback on Draft
- **September:** 90% Check-in & Staff Review
- **October:** Presentation of Draft Recommendations to City Council; 100% Check-in & Staff Review
- **November:** Presentation of Final Recommendations to City Council; Project Completion Date



Questions?

Alex Freedman
Planner

Housing and Community Development Department
alexanderf@takomaparkmd.gov | 301-891-7213



Introduced by:

Single Reading

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
ORDINANCE NO. -**

**AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT FOR SERVICES
WITH CHPLANNING, LTD.**

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council has identified a need for a comprehensive, data-driven, and equitable approach to making decisions about public space around the City; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council initiated the development of a Public Space Management Plan in November 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Division released a Request for Proposals to solicit assistance from private planning firms to complete the final pieces of the Public Space Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City staff review process selected the proposal by CHPlanning, Ltd. as the most aligned with the desired scope of work, quality of product, and equity initiative of the City; and

WHEREAS, CHPlanning Ltd., a minority woman-owned, private planning firm with operations in both the Washington D.C. area and Philadelphia, has been identified using the competitive bid and selection process in accordance with City Code Chapter 7.08.060; and

WEHREAS, the City has included funding for contracted services, scheduled to be completed in Fall 2022.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND:

Section 1. The City Manager is authorized to enter into a contract for services for the Public Space Management Plan with CHPlanning Ltd. in an amount not to exceed \$75,000.

Section 2. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Adopted this _____ day of March, 2022 by roll-call vote as follows:

AYE:

NAY:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT