

# Takoma Park, Maryland Public Space Management Plan

## Council Briefing

September 14, 2022  
8 PM



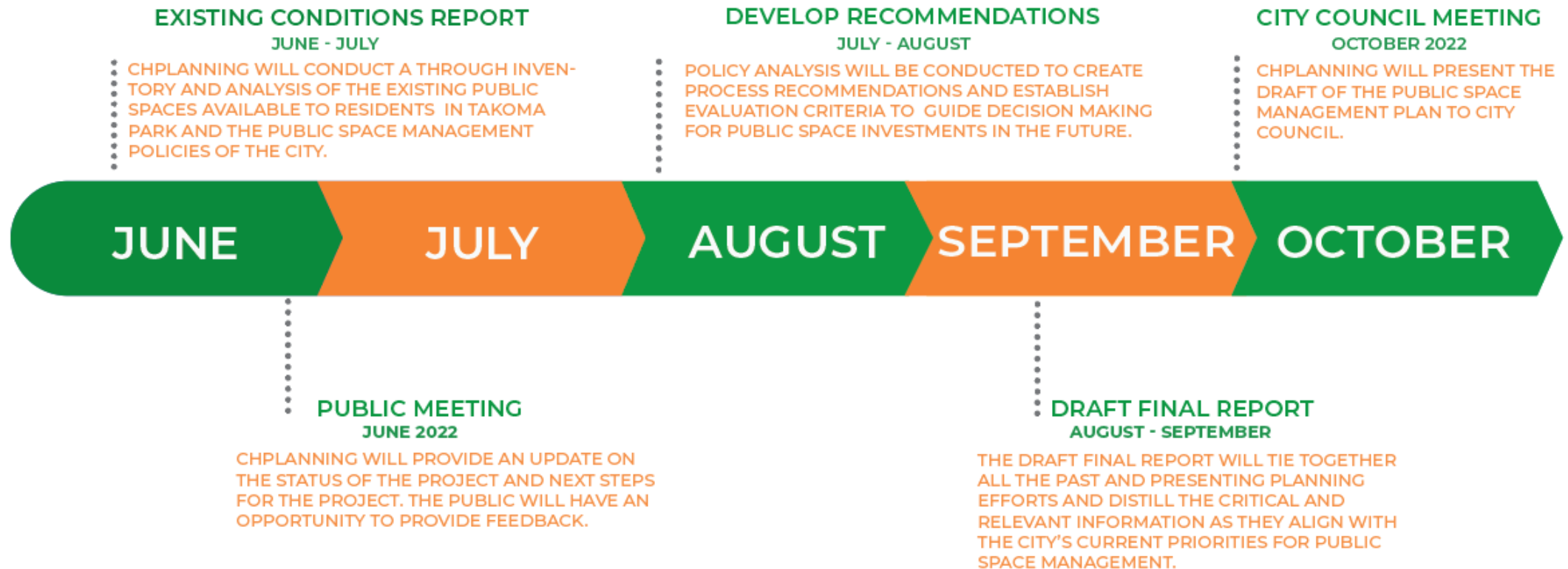
## Introduction/ Project Overview

- The **Public Space Management Plan** will provide guidance on how public space will be developed, used, and maintained in Takoma Park.
- Components:
  - Existing Conditions
  - Policy Analysis
  - Recommendations
  - Evaluation Criteria
  - Final Report

← We are here



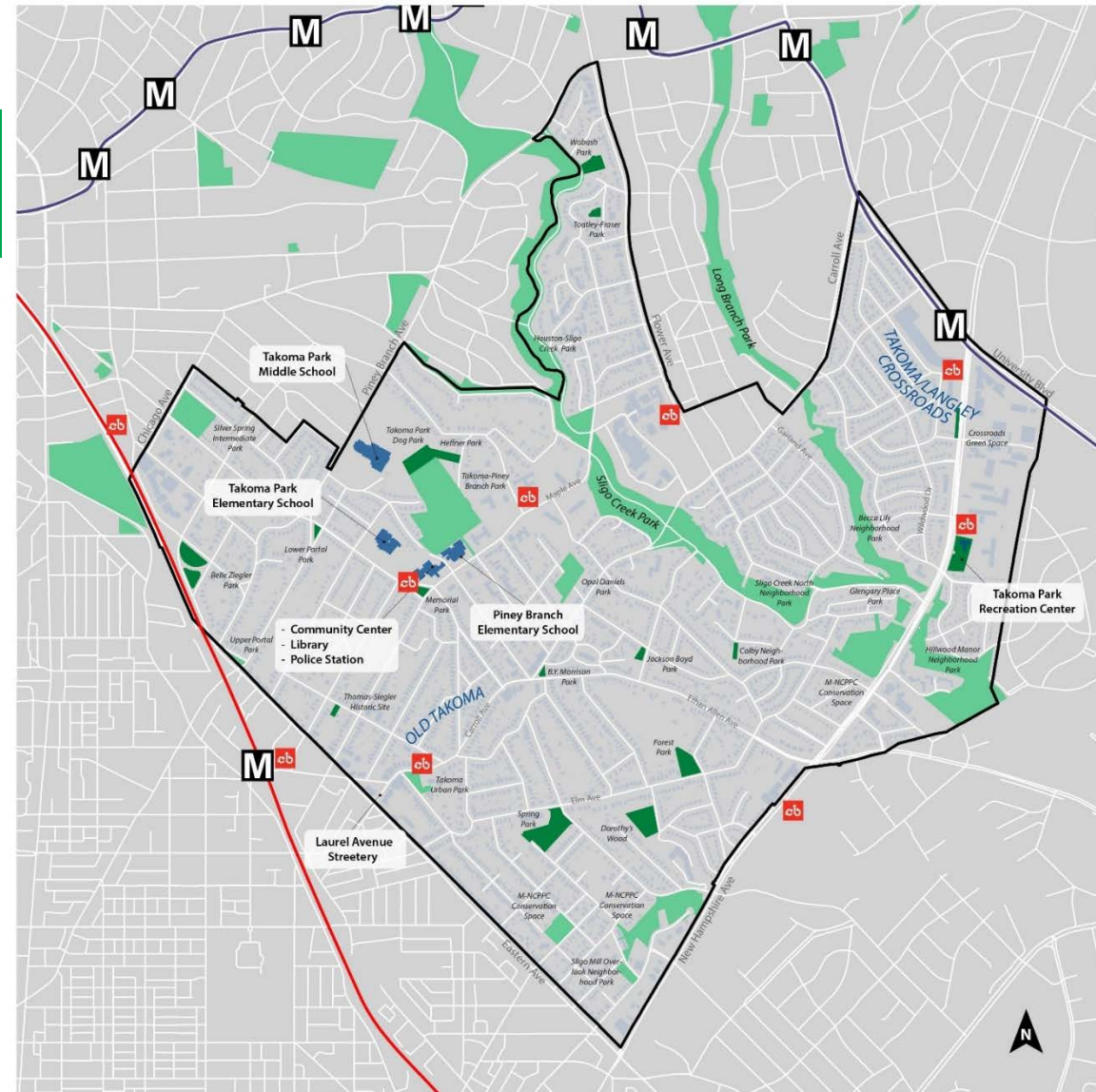
# Schedule





# Existing Conditions - Recap

- Population and Demographics
- Public Streets and Roadways
- Parks
- Sidewalk Inventory
- Permitting
- Capital Budget(s)
- Identified Issues / Opportunities
- Current Recreation Programming
- Existing Plans / Studies
- Community Outreach

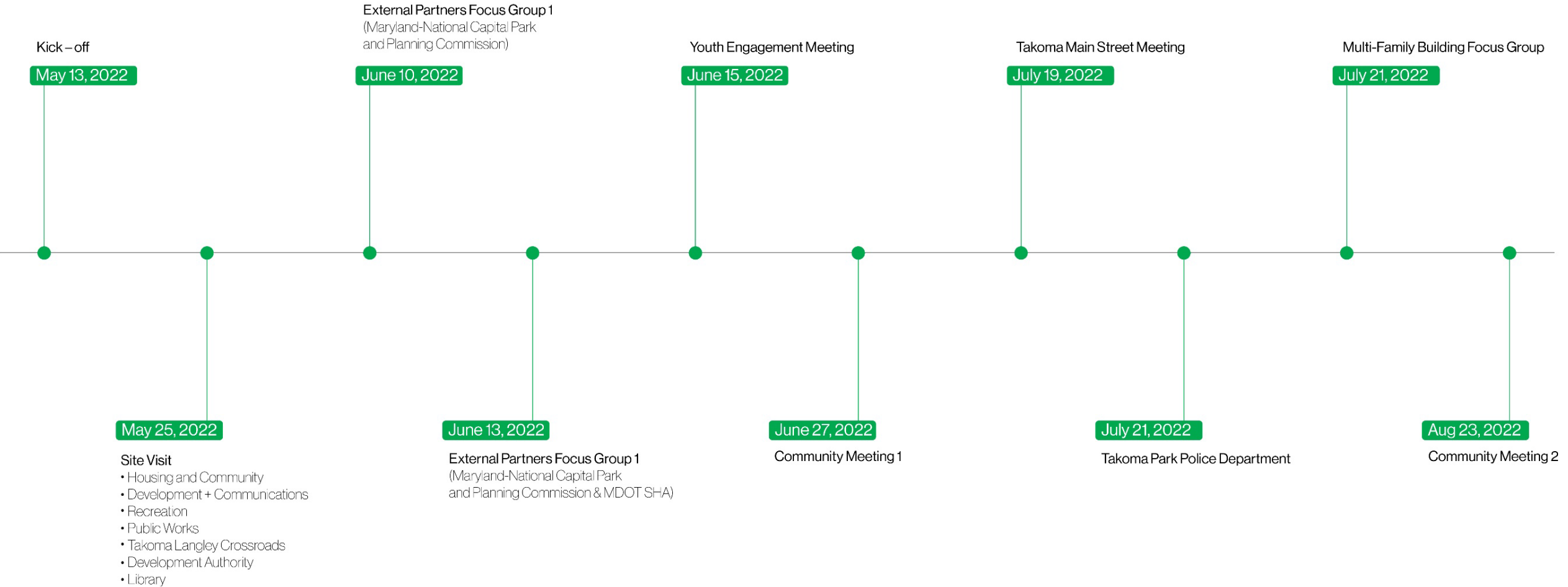


- Takoma Park Building Footprints
- Public Building Facilities
- City-Managed Parks
- County-Managed Parks

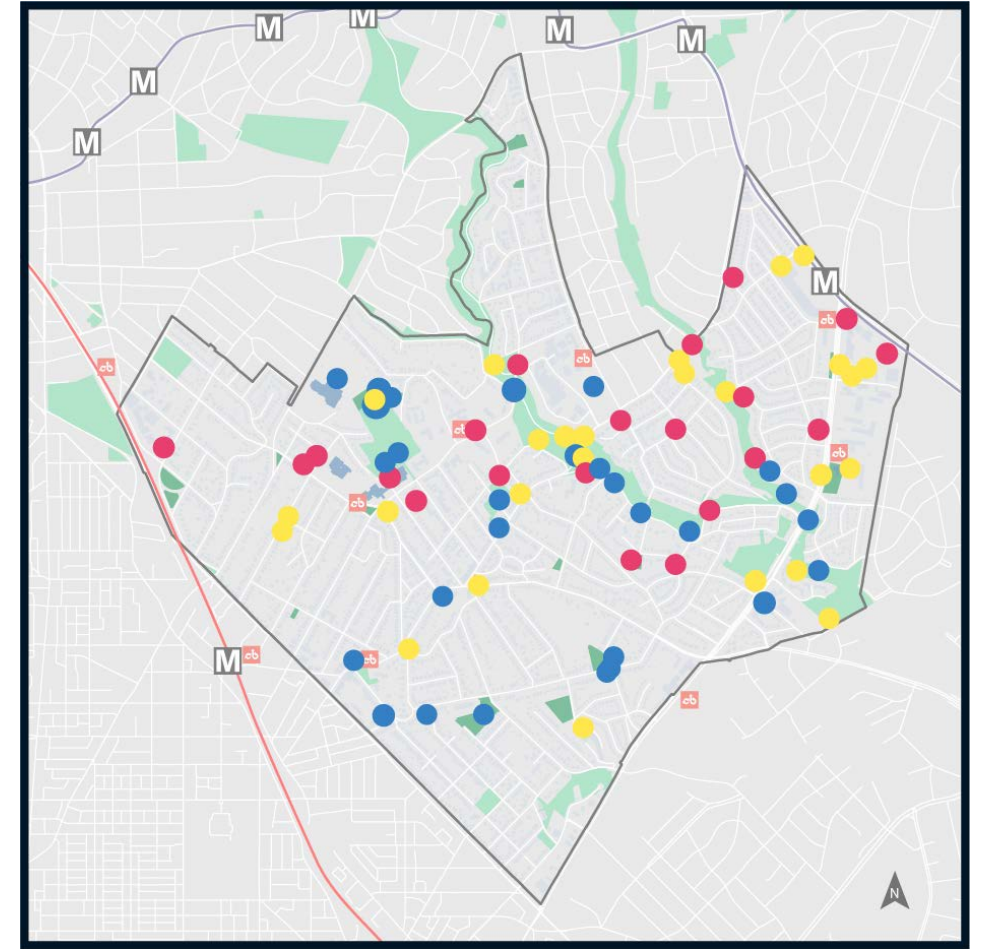
- Metro Red Line Station
- Proposed MTA Purple Line Stations
- Capital Bikeshare Stations



# Stakeholder Engagement



# Stakeholder Engagement – Community Meetings

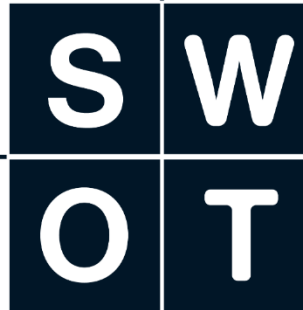




# City of Takoma Park SWOT Analysis

- Lots of well-liked parks and public spaces
- Easy to navigate through community
- Community values greenery and natural spaces
- Trails along Sligo Creek are well used by the community
- Civic pride/ Community Events
- Community Center is well used
- Streeterly
- Available Parking
- Sligo Parkway closure
- Diversity
- Safety
- Engaged residents

- Gaps in sidewalk network
- ADA challenges (utility poles, etc.)
- Dangerous street crossings
- Social and income disparity between homeowners and renters
- Permit process can be confusing for different types of uses
- Renters, particularly those who are Ethiopian and Spanish speaking, feel unheard and unwelcomed by their landlords and the greater Takoma Park Community
- Income and racial disparity in access to parks
- Wayfinding and signage is not uniform/used properly to locate city parks
- Maintenance of the city's park lacks official documentation, staffing, and process
- No official protocol to evaluate participation in recreational activities/to adjust programming or conduct racial equity analysis
- Street activation mostly happening in Old Takoma area
- Protocol for informal markets



- Establishing a streamlined central system for event permitting
- Formalize currently informal trails along Silo Creek and other sites
- Plan for Washington Adventist Hospital site, redevelopment will establish new public space opportunity through exaction
- Paper Streets
- Sidewalk expansion
- Additional pedestrian scale lighting
- Engagement with youth, seniors and special needs populations
- Promote Takoma Park and local businesses through public space improvements
- Racial Equity Resolution
- Improving pool access
- Native plants
- EV Charging
- Metro Station development
- Farmer's Market

- High volume of vehicular traffic along Maple Avenue, Carroll Avenue, and New Hampshire Avenue poses danger to pedestrians and bicyclists
- Growing rift between single-family homeowners, condo owners, and renters
- Public Works budget often cannibalized, limited capacity
- Feeling by multi-family residents that local planning does not consider their needs
- Waste management
- Stormwater
- Invasive Species
- Traffic
- Crime
- Pedesetrian safety
- Drivers don't always stop at stop signs

# Policy Analysis

Wide Variety of Policies and Ordinances:

- Mandatory Replacement of Trees
- Urban Forestry and Canopy
- Invasive Species
- Non-Invasive Vegetation Management
- Noise Control
- Storm Water Management
- Snow Removal
- Traffic Calming
- Recreation Code of Conduct
- Missing sidewalk study





# Policy Analysis

## Areas for Consideration:

- **Prioritization**
  - Can everything be fully funded and implemented?
  - Alternative funding
- **Thresholds for Public / Open Space (How much do we need?)**
- **Permitting for events and use of Public Space**
- **Criteria for Future Public Space**
  - How does new development / redevelopment relate and integrate into the City?
- **Community Focused Events**
  - This will help focus the need to create and manage great Public Spaces



## Key Recommendations - Categories

- General
- Legal
- Acquisition
- Planning and Community Engagement
- Maintenance and Operations
- Development
- Fundraising and Capital Budgeting
- Sustainability



## Key Recommendations - General

- Work to fill gaps in the existing sidewalk network
- Work to improve accessibility to public spaces with an emphasis on completing planned ADA upgrades.
- Identify new opportunities for pedestrian connections.
- Add interpretive signage to educate local community.
- Add variety to the existing park system and recreational opportunities.
- Create system to streamline permitting
- Work with community to identify additional ways to improve pedestrian scale lighting to support safety and visibility.
- Continue to improve wayfinding at trails, parks, connections, and major destinations.
- Establish an official protocol to work with different city agencies to review and update the city's public space inventory.
- Establish a working group to discuss and prioritize public space efforts, include key agencies such as SHA and MNCPPC.
- Continue to build public awareness of public space management efforts
- Inventory public space network, planned improvements, and recently completed projects in GIS. Align with CIP and update regularly.
  - Align with recommendations from Complete Safe Streets Committee work.





## Key Recommendations - Legal

- Pursue lease agreements and long-term maintenance agreements.
- Allow and promote the activation of public space in areas outside Old Takoma Park.
- Create a public space stewardship guide to help residents and other stakeholders navigate regulatory processes.
- Consolidate permit responsibilities and streamline processes



## Key Recommendations – Acquisition

- Develop community thresholds for Public Space acquisition, maintenance and management, including a desired ratio of public space per person.
- Identify the desired amount of Public Space within each Ward.
- Solidify a system to identify and prioritize future park and public space development. A policy for reviewing upcoming opportunities at a minimum is recommended.
- While a parcel specific plan is not desired, at least develop an acquisition fund and identify resources that may be available should desirable acquisitions become available.
- Identify ways to improve coordination with The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to participate in their annual acquisition program.



# Key Recommendations – Planning and Community Engagement

- Refine the outreach strategy which ensures that ethnic minorities, and low-income residents are engaged in planning efforts which impact their communities. Devote adequate resources so that City departments can spend the time developing requisite relationships.
- Identify key issues for vulnerable populations and prioritize them in planning and implementation decisions
- Conduct safety analysis and recommendations to complete the sidewalk network within ½ mile of local schools
- Activate use of viable paper streets to support public uses. Consider relinquishing / selling non-viable properties to adjacent property owners.
- Implement an open streets program that provides programming throughout Takoma Park to foster awareness and education about the importance of public space use, and alternative transportation methods and walk-to “pop-up” style public events.
- Work with the Arts and Humanities Commission to create an equity review process for the design and implementation of public art.
- Continue to develop relationships with M-NCPPC, SHA, and other state and regional bodies to elevate public awareness of public space facilities, maintenance and programming.
- Continue to foster and promote nature-based education and recreation programs across all ages.
- Work with community organizations to provide information and develop a reasonable permitting process for temporary events/uses on public space
- Identify ways to align City’s Public Space Management priorities with local resources for example:
  - Designate a volunteer coordinator
  - Continue vegetation management events
  - Formalize the ROE agreement for Dorothy’s woods





## Key Recommendations – Maintenance and Operations

- Refine the playground renovation schedule to ensure it can be fully funded, include representatives from the City of Takoma Park, Department of Recreation and include healthy public engagement.
- Improve communication among internal and external stakeholders.
- Identify a revenue source for implementing a strategy of removing invasive species
- Continue to use equity considerations to affirm commitment to the development/ update of a bus shelter development and maintenance plan
- Develop a review process to evaluate recreational program demands and gaps per age group and across all populations
- Continue to address encroachments in the sidewalk from trees and shrubs.



## Key Recommendations – Development

- Establish a need-based playground and park equipment replacement system based on existing conditions and equity considerations.
- Initiate a City-wide Natural Resource inventory. The goal is to identify natural areas that are a high priority and should be protected and preserved. These highly valued sites would also be the focus of invasive species removal.
- Create guidelines on how open space will be incorporated into future development and redevelopment efforts to inform exactions. (County req. 10%)
- Consider developing a strategy to put new utilities underground.





# Key Recommendations – Fundraising and Capital Budgeting

- Promote transparency in the city's public space management budget. Develop initiatives, and programs by Ward.
- Look for grant dollars to match with existing city budgets to help take on larger projects.
- Continue to provide multiple opportunities for the public to provide input into the Capital Improvement Program process.





## Key Recommendations – Sustainability

- Define all Public Space and the intended use of this space within the City of Takoma Park. Circulate this information to all residents.
- Implement more green stormwater infrastructure in public spaces, reduce impervious surfaces where possible. Encourage residents to participate in grant programs to mitigate runoff that are available at the County and State levels.
- Continue to seek out state of the art storm water management projects and processes that will allow for maximum infiltration while allowing the simultaneous use of public space.
- Establish a working committee with Montgomery County Storm Drain Design and perhaps the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOCG)
- Continue to prioritize planting native plants in public spaces and encourage property owners to also plant native plants. This will assist with canopy goals and help to reduce stormwater runoff.
- Formalize the City's commitment to Native Plants and identify invasive species of particular interest.
- Coordinate with County to improve erosion control

