



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – July 19, 2023 Agenda Item 1

Presentation

Presentation of the Public Review Draft of the Public Space Management Plan

Recommended Council Action

Listen to the presentation and provide feedback on next steps.

Context with Key Issues

On March 23rd, 2022, the City Council authorized City staff to execute a contract with the firm CHPlanning to complete the Public Space Management Plan. This presentation offers a summary of the project to date, with some additional background to support the orientation of new councilmembers.

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 need for a new plan to more comprehensively approach the management of public spaces first arose in a City Council discussion in 2015. After an update to the City's Streetscape Manual and some internal staff analysis, in Fall 2018 the City Council reviewed the draft scope what has become known as the Public Space Management Plan. This kick-started an inventory of public parks around the city, and a more defined scope of work came before the Council in January 2020. Despite forward movement by City staff on internal analyses, including a community-wide online survey and a park proximity study, the plan development process stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and staff turnover.

In Fall 2021, after a round of public outreach, Planning Division staff determined that a request for proposals for support to complete the Plan would yield the highest quality product. CHPlanning continued the plan development process, including additional rounds of community engagement that included hybrid in-person/virtual workshops, focus groups, and staff interviews. The final draft of the plan is currently in development. The contract for work with CHPlanning concluded in June 2023.

Between July and October 2023, Planning Division staff will conduct a series of public engagement activities in order to develop an Action Plan, to be presented alongside the finalized Public Space Management Plan later in the fall for a voting session on adoption.

Council Priority

Advancing a Community of Belonging; Fiscally Sustainable Government; Environmentally Sustainable Community; Engaged, Responsive, Service-Oriented Government; Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Environmental Considerations

Not applicable for this presentation. The Public Space Management Plan, and its policy recommendations, will have tangible impacts on how the City manages and prioritizes its public spaces, most of which are directly connected to environmental quality and community resilience. The immediate impacts of the plan are limited to which recommendations are implemented and when. Considerations for climate resilience, stormwater, urban heat island issues, local biodiversity, equitable access to green space, and other environmental concerns were included in the development of the recommendations.

Fiscal Considerations

There are no direct, ongoing costs associated with the adoption of this plan. Although many of the plan's recommendations require additional funds, the budget implications of the Public Space Management Plan are not yet known. The contract with CHPlanning has been closed out, and the FY24 budget does not include dedicated funds to support the implementation of many of the recommendations within the report. As City Council initiatives and the budget priorities change over time, different components of this plan would be able to be implemented.

Racial Equity Considerations

Not applicable for this presentation. However, a core purpose of the Public Space Management Plan is to create a process that centers racial equity, as supported by analysis and data, in municipal decision-making processes regarding public space. The firm, CHPlanning, proposed a project that recognizes importance of these values and centered them in their process and product. When adopted, the 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.

Attachments and Links

- Public Space Management Plan – Public Review Draft (7/7/2023) [[PDF](#)]
- Public Space Management Plan web page: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/housing-and-community-development/planning-and-community-development/public-space-management-plan/>