



## Takoma Park City Council Meeting – October 11, 2023 Agenda Item 2

### **Work Session**

Demonstration of the Balancing Act platform to review how it may assist with the budget development process by engaging, informing and receiving feedback from the community about their priorities and the trade-offs involved in the process.

### **Recommended Council Action**

Ask questions of the City's vendor on the capabilities of the platform and provide guidance to staff in how it might be used to gather councilmember or community input in the development of council priorities and budget priorities.

### **Context with Key Issues**

In 2022, City Management purchased the Balancing Act tool with the aim of developing a platform that would inform and engage residents in the budget development process, improve transparency of the budget process, and better target the City's resources towards residents and Council's priorities.

Balancing Act worked with City staff during the FY24 budget development process to create three modules that demonstrate the platform's capabilities.

The annual subscription cost for the three modules, funded by the ARPA Fund, and based on an initial three-year contract, is \$5,800. This includes the Simulate for Budget (\$2,320), Prioritize (\$2,320) and Tax Payer Receipt (\$1,160) modules. For year one there was an additional charge of \$4,000 for the concierge service to help build the Simulate for Budget module.

### **Council Priorities**

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

### **Environmental Considerations**

The tool can be used to obtain residents' feedback on the City's environmental goals and the projects that residents rank highly.

### **Fiscal Considerations**

Fiscally Sustainable Government: continue to build on improvements in budget process, presentation of budget information, and communication to residents.

### **Racial Equity Considerations**

The tool provides the opportunity to ask and receive feedback from all areas of the community as well as collect demographic information that could be used in furtherance of an equitable quality of life in the City.

### **Attachments and Links**

N/A