

1. Advancing a Community of Belonging

Goal: Build on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic to increase residents' and small businesses' resilience to the impact of unforeseen events, so that they can recover and thrive in the future.

Strategies:

- Continue to allocate COVID- 19 Relief Funds to programs that ensure residents and businesses can recover from the pandemic and increase their future stability by having access to the emergency assistance they need in terms of food, housing, health care, childcare, financial support, and other needs.
- Support residents in their efforts to build financial stability by obtaining new employment through emergency workforce development programs and technical assistance.
- Offer technical assistance based on lessons learned during the COVID-19 response to businesses to ensure that they are able to stay in the community during future events.
- Coordinate with State, County, and local nonprofits and community groups to ensure that there is a social safety-net available to provide support to residents during future emergencies.

Desired Outcome: Residents and businesses have access to the services and programs they need to recover quickly from emergency situations.

Goal: Further the City's racial equity work.

Strategies:

- Build on the work underway to address racial equity issues, including how we organize, institutionalize, and operationalize the racial equity framework and racial equity considerations; explore possible taskforce on racial equity.
- Evaluate how the City is processing and responding to requests and complaints so that they are done in an equitable way across the City.
- Continue to provide racial equity training to members of the City Council, staff, and Council-appointed Committees and other residents. Consider racial equity work experience when evaluating new hires.
- Increase use of metrics to examine racial and intersectional socioeconomic equity issues in our programming, with respect to our City's demographics.

Desired Outcome: Continued progress toward a more racially equitable community and government, where all residents of our City experience a sense of belonging.

Major Projects, Initiatives, and Ongoing Activities

- Public-Land and Open Space Management Plan – finalization and implementation of the plan
- Cultural Plan – revisit/ update of the 2018 Plan

Goal: Identify programming needs in the community and develop approaches to meet those needs, emphasizing youth, families, seniors, and residents who tend to face barriers to opportunities such as Black, Indigenous, and people of color, immigrants, those with unsustainable lower- paying jobs, immigrants, and people with developmental disabilities.

Strategies:

- Utilize resident surveys, staff and committee reports, program attendance, racial equity assessment tools, and other evaluative or outreach approaches to determine existing gaps in program offerings and develop programs to close identified gaps.
- Improve equitable access to programming, and services, and government decision-making using innovative strategies and technology, such as exploring ways to fill gaps in access to technology and library services, to reach residents, including residents of color, immigrants (especially those with limited English), and renters, who rarely engage with the City.
- Explore establishing a pilot Community Ambassador or Navigator system to help assess residents' needs and to help develop updated and improved systems to connect residents to services.
- Continue use of low-tech solutions that acknowledge the existence of the technology divide within our community.

Desired Outcome: Expanded and/or improved programming or partnerships tailored to residents who need them the most or who currently face barriers to access.

Goal: Defend our status as a Sanctuary City and maintain our commitment to being a welcoming and inclusive community where all residents experience a sense of belonging.

Strategies:

- Continue advocacy efforts focused on immigrant rights and needs, including connecting those in need of assistance to appropriate area organizations.
- Explore new ways to share information with and provide services to immigrant and refugee communities through improved community outreach and engagement processes, including through translation and Community Ambassadors or Navigator systems.
- Continue efforts to lobby at state level for legislation supporting and protecting immigrants and refugees.

Desired Outcome: Remain a welcoming and strong Sanctuary City and Strengthen access to programming and information to meet the needs of immigrants and refugees.

2. Fiscally Sustainable Government

Goal: Explore expanding City revenue options to identify long-term solutions necessary to diversify the City's revenue streams.

- Increase advocacy and lobbying activities at state and county levels to advocate for additional revenue sources for municipalities.
- Identify and analyze potential alternative revenue sources for the City, within current authorities.
- Actively pursue external federal, state, and county grant funding opportunities to meet short-term City goals.
- Promote economic development to increase the tax base and revenue options, consistent with the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- Build on organizational assessment and other recent analysis to explore cost-saving alternatives to program and City service delivery.

Desired Outcome: A more diverse set of revenue sources for the City.

Goal: Explore ways to provide a more equity property tax assessment system including providing property tax adjustments to residents in need.

Strategies:

- Advocate at county and state levels for changes in property taxes to assist residents in need.
- Explore and promote City property tax credits, deferrals, and other options for residents in need and advocate for such options at the county level.
- Continue to examine and advocate for changes to the City's property assessment process to ensure an equitable approach.

Desired Outcome: A sustainable and equitable property tax process and system minimizing the tax burden on vulnerable residents.

Goal: Continue to build on improvements in the budget process, presentation of budget information, and communication to residents.

Strategies:

- Develop innovative budget processes to identify ways to present a budget development framework, summary, as well as detailed budget information in a way that is easy to understand.
- Provide opportunities for resident feedback on the budget with an emphasis on equitable access and outreach.
- Identify baseline performance measures under key departmental line items to highlight the link between budget decisions and anticipated strategic outcomes.

Desired Outcomes: Continued work toward greater clarity and transparency in the budget process and increased resident understanding of the City budget.

Goal: Adopt sustainable investment and banking policy and practices.

Strategy:

- Take the next steps recommended by a resident task force to adopt sustainable investment and banking policies and practices, taking into account the concerns raised by the Nuclear Free Committee about Truist Bank and considering required City staff resources and status of automated financial systems and financial cost to implement.

Desired Outcome: Work to align the City's banking and investments with the community's social responsibility values.

Goal: Establish the City's long-term fiscal sustainability strategy.

Strategy:

- Review City policy on the appropriate level of unassigned reserves that should be maintained and determine whether updates are needed.
- Establish policies for the appropriate level of reserves in Equipment Replacement Reserve, Facilities Maintenance Reserve, and other reserves, as well as consider establishing new reserves where needed for new programming and long-term financial planning.
- Manage the City's ARPA funds to ensure responsible fiscal management and the spending complies with federal requirements.

Desired Outcome: Fiscal sustainability for key services.

3. Environmentally Sustainable Community

Goal: Climate Change Mitigation: Work towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions goal by 2035.

Strategies:

- Prioritize and accelerate policies and programs that implement the 2020 Climate Emergency Response Framework strategies for buildings, transportation, renewable energy, and a fossil fuel-free community.
- Update on an annual or bi-annual basis greenhouse gas emissions contributed to and reduced by City Operations, in order to improve our carbon profile and serve as a model to residents.
- Continue and expand City sustainability programs with emphasis on equity issues and on engaging all types of city residents in terms relevant to them.
- Coordinate and advocate for climate change mitigation resiliency and sustainability funds and programs with county, state, region and federal governments.
- Integrate City climate goals and strategies with other City policies and programs, such as urban forest, housing, economic development, and Vision Zero transportation goals.

Desired Outcome: Progress toward City's climate mitigation and resiliency goals; more sustainable City operations.

Goal: Climate Change Resilience: Improve our ability to adapt and be resilient to local impacts of climate change.

Strategies:

- Build on the results of the Stormwater Resilience Study to consider actions and planning that address increased stormwater in the City and its impacts on both private properties and public areas, including incentives and code changes, stormwater permitting changes, education, collaboration with the county and other jurisdictions on flooding issues, and a more holistic resilience and adaptation strategy.
- Strengthen City emergency preparedness plans and activities for extreme weather, with an emphasis on planning for high probability events with disproportionate and grave risks to the City's most vulnerable residents.
- Review and prioritize the 2019 resiliency recommendations and take initial steps forward on measures that produce co-benefits to heat island mitigation and equity-based resilience.

Desired Outcomes: Improved stormwater management for both the public space and stormwater flows on and between private properties. Improved City readiness for extreme weather events, with an emphasis on reduced risks to vulnerable residents.

Goal: Manage our Community's Natural Resources Sustainably: Protect, maintain, and improve the health of our urban forest and ecosystems, natural resources, and water quality, with an

emphasis on equity

Strategies:

- Adopt the multi-year urban forest management plan, with a focus on no net loss, increased biodiversity, and equity in tree cover.
- Expand a pilot project for collaborative planting of trees in select neighborhoods, with the aim of helping to address inequities in tree distribution within the City.
- Explore viability of using City tree funds to motivate and enable lower income property owners or those with higher numbers of trees to better maintain tree or grove health.
- Recognize and highlight the value and role of our ecosystem health in our public spaces through review, protection and management of these resources.
- Conduct innovative, culturally appropriate environmental outreach and education to all residents in ways that connect with issues relevant to them, such as litter's effect on water quality.
- Consider ways to encourage native plantings and invasive removal on public and private property, including leveraging volunteer efforts and partnerships.
- Support city staff to work together across programs and departments and with civic groups to further implement climate, environmental sustainability and other city priorities.

Outcome: No net loss of urban forest canopy citywide, more equitably distributed tree canopy over time, increased biodiversity, and improved maintenance of mature trees citywide.

Major projects, initiatives and ongoing activities:

- Enforcement, education, and outreach related to City codes in such areas as recycling; plastic bag ban; snow clearing. Cooperation with county and state where applicable.
- Climate Action Framework strategy development and implementation
- City sustainability programs and initiatives
- Implement additional Sustainable Maryland Certified goals
- Implement urban forest program and revised tree ordinance provisions
- Green stormwater management projects to meet State and Federal mandates for 2025
- Public Space Management Plan
- Minor-Master Plan
- Stormwater Resilience Study

4. Engaged, Responsive, Service-Oriented Government

Goal: Hire and onboard a new City Manager.

Strategies:

- Conduct a successful search with community input and the assistance of a consultant.
- Establish Council and community priorities for the new City Manager; including identifying ways to engage the community in the selection process.
- Successfully onboard the new City Manager and work together to develop further plans and priorities working toward community-identified visions of the future.

Desired Outcome: The hiring of an excellent City Manager who can effectively manage the day to day operations of the City government and implement the policy directions of the City Council.

Goal: Improve City communications with residents and adopt innovative, culturally appropriate initiatives to improve public engagement and collaboration with residents, particularly with residents who may face barriers to participating in municipal government activities and community affairs.

Strategies:

- Improve the City's current communications tools including the City website and social media tools to increase public engagement and more easily and effectively share information.
- Expand the reach of City communications through bolstering City staff partnership with and empowerment of Councilmember-facilitated communications within their ward.
- Review lessons learned from recent more targeted community engagement efforts and apply them to improve public input, engagement, and collaboration.
- Investigate and adopt ways to improve accessibility of community meetings especially for residents whose dominant language is not English, those who are deaf, and others who may face barriers to engagement with the City government.
- Continue efforts for more effective and engaged city committees that more closely reflect the diversity of our community.

Desired Outcome: Facilitate and enhance involvement, representation, trust, and collaboration among residents and City government.

Goal: Improve policies and processes to enhance resident interaction with the City government and the Council, including requests for government services, complaint systems, and code enforcement.

Strategies:

- Review city processes and identify methods to improve them including traffic calming requests; sidewalk requests; and code enforcement citations.
- Review and strengthen the process of new Council Member on-boarding and technical assistance.
- Review recommendations from the Complete Safe Streets Committee and implement appropriate improvements
- Identify improved approaches to tracking resident inquiries to ensure that staff are responsive within established timeframes.

Desired Outcome: Improved and more equitable policies and processes related to City services, such as traffic calming, sidewalk requests, maintenance and repair, and other City services.

Goal: Review and reform the City's approach to public safety to ensure racial justice and work toward a safer, more livable community for all residents.

Strategy:

- Update Council resolution 2017-45 establishing goals and priorities for the Takoma Park Police Department.
- Review, explore, and put in place appropriate changes recommended by the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force.

Desired Outcome: A more equitable and just approach to public safety that meets the needs of residents.

Goal: Improve service delivery and reduce administrative burden by updating internal policies, IT infrastructure and software.

Strategy: Assess resources required to update the City's systems. Support the purchase of tools to facilitate cross-departmental collaboration.

Desired Outcome: Reduction in time spent on manual, inefficient processes to improve service delivery and allow staff to find greater bandwidth to innovate towards and advance Council priorities.

Goal: Ensure the City of Takoma Park is a great place to work.

Strategy:

- Update and implement HR policies and procedures that address matters such as evaluations, telework policies, etc.
- Conduct follow-up actions based on the results for the City's recent wage study and

organizational assessment.

Desired Outcome: Increase staff productivity and staff morale by improving workplace positivity.

5. Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Goal: Ensure that a range of safe, high quality, affordable, stable, green and energy efficient, and stable housing options are equitably available in neighborhoods throughout the community.

Strategies:

- Implement the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan. Specifically:
 - Continue to build partnerships with nonprofits, foundations, financial institutions, Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, and other outside entities to expand affordable housing options in the City.
 - Explore the needs of and create programs to assist common ownership communities.
 - Revise sections of the Housing Code, including sections on rent stabilization.
 - Review and make changes to the HomeStretch Downpayment Assistance Program aimed at expanding eligibility.
 - Develop a formal policy and criteria regarding the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program (PILOTs).
 - Continue collaboration and coordination of the City's housing and sustainability staff on key projects to meet Council goals.
 - Review staffing levels necessary to implement the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan

Desired Outcome: Meet the current and plan for the future housing needs of the community while ensuring affordable housing options for residents of all of all races, ethnicities, and varying income levels and of all races, and ethnicities.

Major projects, initiatives and ongoing activities:

- Library Renovation
- Takoma Junction Development
- Purple Line Construction
- Economic development along New Hampshire Ave
- Washington Adventist Hospital Campus
- Montgomery College Math Science Building construction
- Continue to advocate for renovations at Piney Branch Elementary School and increased public school facilities in the City or nearby
- Review selected county policies that support City housing, equity and sustainability goals as they are proposed

Goal: Improve transportation planning and outreach to create a safer, more environmentally sustainable and more racially and economically equitable community for all residents, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle occupants.

Strategies:

- Adopt a Vision Zero initiative; examine potential components such as education/outreach, policy changes, and infrastructure improvements
- Work with SHA to address safety at dangerous intersections as identified by Montgomery County Predictive Safety Analysis and Takoma Park Police data.
- Advocate for transportation improvements that impact Takoma Park residents through regional collaboration and coordinated efforts, including on Purple Line, safety, and transit access.

Desired Outcome: Improved traffic safety resulting in eliminating serious vehicle, pedestrian, and bike collisions; improved comprehensive transportation planning throughout the City with a data-driven approach that takes into consideration impacts, including environmental ones, throughout the City; and racially equitable transportation system and outcomes.

Goal: Plan and prepare for development in the City and region while maintaining the special character and economic and racial diversity of Takoma Park.

Strategies:

- Implement the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan. Specifically:
 - Provide support for small businesses especially those impacted by Purple Line construction.
 - Explore options for providing support services, including through direct assistance and partnerships, for businesses located outside the areas covered by existing business associations.
 - Attract new businesses to Takoma Park and facilitate the growth of existing businesses, particularly those that help meet workforce development and local ownership goals.
- Leverage both public and private stakeholders to accomplish the goal of developing the Recreation Center that meets the City's need for recreation services and affordable housing.
- Complete the minor master plan process for the Washington Adventist area of the city, in partnership with local residents and stakeholders across and around the plan area, and with the county and others.
- Coordinate with the County on planning, zoning and development issues affecting the city.

Desired Outcome: Implementation of the Strategic Plan, prepare and plan for development activity, and support local businesses and workers.

