



City Manager Fiscal Year 2019 Evaluation Summary for Release

On January 22nd, 2020, the Mayor and City Council met with Ms. Suzanne Ludlow to conduct her Fiscal Year 2019 performance evaluation. In an effort to maintain transparency both the Council and Ms. Ludlow wish to share this joint statement regarding the evaluation of her performance.

Overall, this year has been successful with key accomplishments including finalization of the Housing and Economic Strategic Plan, small cell regulation development, and working to address climate change. The Council is very satisfied with Ms. Ludlow's performance. Although staffing issues have made for some challenging situations, Ms. Ludlow put a great deal of time and effort into her work for the City and in promoting the goals and priorities of the City Council.

As noted in past evaluations, Ms. Ludlow's dedication to the success of the City, her sincere desire to do what is in the best interest of the City, and her high ethical standards are why she continues to garner the Council's respect and appreciation. The City Manager's dedication to the position and to the City of Takoma Park is apparent, and we appreciate all of her hard work! It does not go unnoticed.

Overall, the City Manager has done a good job working with the Council on initiatives and in her management of the City's operations and budget. The Council recognizes the City Manager works very hard on key City initiatives and retaining staff even during difficult periods. Communication in general has been good. In addition, the Council recommends that the City Manager develop strategies to identify and implement better ways to communicate with Council and residents about big projects or difficult issues.

This year, succession planning for the City's key staff positions is critical. The recent departure of the Deputy City Manager, the number of staff in key positions who are eligible for retirement, and Ms. Ludlow's planned retirement reveal the need to ensure that a clear plan is in place to recruit new staff and groom current staff for management. Doing this will require a focus on succession planning, development of individuals with management potential, and the overall development of staff. Council feels that the City Manager should increase delegation of

her tasks where appropriate. The City Manager should also encourage other staff or managers with potential to develop via professional training and management development.

The Council has identified the following areas to focus on in the coming year:

- develop a process to ensure inter-departmental coordination on key projects including development of strategic project plans that will better establish expectations for the goals, scheduling, and communication plans for key projects;
- continue to increase communication with Council and residents, building on past efforts and exploring new channels, and develop processes and guidelines for communication and interaction between residents and staff to set expectations and put in place a clear and transparent process for responses and interactions; and
- further develop and begin to implement strategies for succession planning and the professional development of staff members, especially with an imminent transition as the City Manager prepares to retire.

The evaluation period covers July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019. In conducting this evaluation, Councilmembers filled out a survey and met twice in administrative session. The City Manager was evaluated in the areas of relationship building, management, personal traits, support for Council's 2019 priorities, and completion of the goals outlined in her previous evaluation.

The City Manager's evaluation was adopted with a 6-1 vote of the Council, with Councilmember Smith dissenting.