



City of Takoma Park

## City Manager Robert DiSpirito

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Thank you, Madam Mayor and members of Council,

I'm very excited about and appreciate the opportunity to serve the community of Takoma Park, working closely with and supporting this visionary Mayor and Council, and its talented employees. These first three days have been a whirlwind where I've met so many impressive people! I first want to salute David Eubanks and Andrew Bolduc for their tremendous contributions by stepping up in managing the City this past year. I look forward to working with both of you!

To the residents, businesses civic and non-profit organizations, I will say that I really look forward to getting out into the community to meet and listen to you. I'm also anxious to meet and support our wonderful volunteer boards, commissions and committees, who contribute so much personal time and effort to assist this community. My City phone number is (301)891-7229. I invite anyone to call me if you'd like to share your thoughts and ideas, make an appointment to meet in person either at my office or out in a neighborhood, or to just get acquainted. I welcome that and would enjoy the opportunity very much. There is much I can learn from you and I will always try to help you. I also have always worked to establish and nurture partnerships with resident groups, nonprofits, schools, churches, and the business community, since we are stronger together than alone. I enjoy forging these relationships.

I'm quite blessed, in that I had a long and very productive tenure in Rockville, building and supporting excellent staff teams, and as I did in the two other cities that I managed prior to that. I plan to bring to Takoma Park what I've learned in my 28 years as a city manager in those three cities in three different states, serving under the guidance of 37 different elected officials during that time. All of these cities have been progressive, dynamic and very caring communities, and Takoma Park certainly fits that description! Having worked as a city manager in Montgomery County for seven years, I am able to draw on my knowledge of, and relationships with, officials in both the County and the State of Maryland.

I was very attracted to the goals and priorities established by this Mayor and Council, to address the challenges that we face, and to improve the quality of life here. I look forward to working hard with everybody to help achieve those aspirations, and leading my team to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of this government organization, to better serve the people. Now some news from a few of our City Departments.

### HCD:

- Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 pm- 10:00 pm at the Takoma Park Middle School, the Montgomery County Council is holding a public hearing for the Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment. Please note- Registration to testify closed today at 5:00 pm. The Montgomery Planning Climate Assessment for the Plan is now available and a link to it will be posted in tomorrow's City Manager Comments.
  - Link: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/housing-and-community-development/planning-and-community-development/minor-master-plan/>
- There are two virtual meetings that residents can register for- on January 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm is the Montgomery College Project Update Forum-Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus: Leggett Math and Science Building and the Library Renovation **-and-** on January 31<sup>st</sup> from 7:00 – 8:30 pm the New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor Advisory Committee Meeting #5. Links will be posted in tomorrow's Comments.
  - Link for January 30<sup>th</sup>:  
[https://montgomerycollege.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0lceGhqz0oEtdJsQzc-J02zLAQa-4k606I?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=RSVP%20&utm\\_campaign=tpsslibrary\\_01302024#/registration](https://montgomerycollege.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0lceGhqz0oEtdJsQzc-J02zLAQa-4k606I?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=RSVP%20&utm_campaign=tpsslibrary_01302024#/registration)



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- Link for January 31<sup>st</sup>:  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUucOGgrjguE9Yb2NK9H\\_osFuynmSiYDIDQ#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUucOGgrjguE9Yb2NK9H_osFuynmSiYDIDQ#/registration)
- A reminder concerning the call for Public Art Submissions- HCD is seeking proposals for a sculptural installation outside the Takoma Park Recreation Center. The sculpture should reflect a theme of “welcome” or “crossroads”. The Call for Artists will close on March 3, 2024. A link with more information will be posted with the City Manager’s Comments tomorrow.
  - Link: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/public-notice/call-for-public-art-installation/>
- Staff have reworked the Business Investment Grant (BIG) program and plan to release a new grant program for small businesses (the “Open for Business” Grant) on January 29, 2024. This new, simplified program will make it easier for any business, either moving to or expanding in Takoma Park, to receive assistance. Maximum grant award is \$10,000 and funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- A community meeting on January 18th included a presentation and group discussion about ways to make Maple Avenue safer and more comfortable for pedestrians, bike riders and bus riders as part of the Maple Avenue Connectivity Project. The preliminary designs are viewable using the following StoryMap link which will be posted tomorrow in the City Manager’s Comments. Please share your feedback by February 2nd through the survey in the StoryMap or send written comments to the City’s Planner, Alex Freedman ([alexanderf@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:alexanderf@takomaparkmd.gov)).
  - Links:
    - StoryMap link: <https://arcg.is/OPHHr40>
    - <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/housing-and-community-development/planning-and-community-development/maple-avenue-connectivity-project/>

### Police:

- Takoma Park Police are collecting new/gently used bath towels, beach towels, bathroom rugs, hand towels, washcloths, blankets, beds, toys & unopened food to help the Montgomery County Animal Shelters. We will be collecting through Friday, February 2.  
Please bring your donations to the Takoma Park Police Department lobby, 7500 Maple Ave, Takoma Park, MD and we will get them to the animal shelters.  
\*\*NOTE: For the safety of the animals, NO fitted sheets, items with zippers or snaps, and/or other fabrics with rips or frayed edges.\*\*  
Thank you for your generosity!
- The Community Police Academy is now accepting applications for its 12-week long program geared toward helping community members better understand the work of the Police Department. Participation is free to residents but limited to 25 participants. The application is due on Friday, February 16, 2024. For more information, please access our page on the City website or use the link provided in tomorrow’s posted City Manager Comments.
  - Link: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/police/community-policing/community-police-academy/>



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### City Manager:

- Each meeting in my report to you, I will include Employee Highlights or “Shout-Outs,” in order to highlight special employee accomplishments or to simply recognize our unsung heroes, individual employees or employee work teams who are not normally singled out for the attention that they deserve:
  - The Recreation Department would like to recognize the work of John Webster and Ron Hardy, from the Police Department, for working through the City’s Winter Staff Appreciation Celebration by driving the bus to and from our buildings so that staff didn’t have to lose time looking for a parking place.
  - The Police Department would like to recognize not only Ron Hardy, but also Detective Janelle Lane. In addition to her daily duties as a detective in our Criminal Investigations Section, Detective Lane has volunteered to coach a youth basketball team in the City's Winter basketball league. Detective Lane will be coaching a middle school grade boys team. Detective Lane played college basketball for the Lady Eagles of Coppin State University. Detective Lane's willingness to step up and mentor our youth continues our department's dedication to relationship building, especially with our youth. Positive interactions between police and our youth helps foster an environment and culture of trust between our youth and our police department.
  - HCD would like to thank our new Grants Coordinator, Patti Mallin, for jumping feet first into assisting with the City’s external grant funding and internal grant programs. In just over one month in this new position, Patti has successfully managed updated reporting and site visits for our Community Quality of Life grants, overseen quarterly reporting and new awards for the City’s State DHCD grant awards, and been instrumental in the development and release of as many as three new City funded programs.
  - Finally, I began my first day by meeting the City’s Refuse and Recycling employees at the Public Works Center. It was 5:30 a.m. and 12 degrees, so it certainly reminded me of the difficult jobs and harsh working conditions that so many of our unsung employees experience every day that they serve our residents. I then went to meet with some of the Police Department’s night shift as they were returning from duty on the street. Our officers are also working difficult hours in extreme weather to keep us safe. I am sure that we all salute these great City employees. They really care about this community!

Thank you, Madam Mayor and Council, that concludes my report this evening.