# Organizational Assessment Final Report

## TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

June 17, 2022

**matrix** consulting group

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# 1.   Executive Summary

The Matrix Consulting Group was retained by the City of Takoma Park to conduct an organizational assessment that analyzed the operations, organizational structure, and staffing levels of the City.  This study was designed to provide an understanding of the organizational structure, the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall processes, operations, and technology utilization and to identify appropriate changes to improve the staffing allocations against service demands. This report summarizes the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## 1.   Study Scope and Methodologies

In this study, the Matrix Consulting Group's project team utilized a wide variety of data collection and analytical techniques, including the following:

- **Staff Interviews and Data Collection.** Developed an understanding of operational approaches and staffing allocations in the City of Takoma Park through interviews and data collection.  Interviews focused on determining roles and responsibilities of staff, levels of services provided, resources available to perform said services, and current or potential issues. Data collection efforts were undertaken to develop an understanding of workload levels and other important documentation practices.

- **Employee Survey.** An online employee survey was distributed to all employees to understand their perspective of the organization.  The employee survey included a combination of agree/disagree statements, ranking statements, and open-ended questions for the respondent to share viewpoints in their own words.

- **SWOC Analysis.** The project team conducted a SWOC - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges - assessment with the Senior Leadership team to understand their perceptions of the current situation facing the City organizational structure, staffing levels, and operational approaches.

- **Best Practices and Comparative Assessment.** The project team utilized best practices reviews during the analysis to identify areas of strength and improvement opportunities and potential to impact staffing requirements.  This was supplemented with a comparison of organizational structure, budgets and staffing with other communities.

- **Recommendations.** Based on the project team's activities and initial findings, the team analyzed issues, explored alternative service delivery options, and developed

recommendations that focused on organizational needs, business processes and practices, staffing, and technology needs.

## 2.    Key Themes

Several key themes arose from the assessment that are worth noting to put the following recommendations into context.  Overall, the City of Takoma Park is providing extremely high levels of service to the public, beyond those typically seen in other organizations of comparable size, and at a level higher than might be expected with current resource allocations.  The notable themes that emerged included:

- Strong focus on customer service and responsiveness to the public.

- Generally, service levels provided to the public are in alignment with levels expected and are appropriate for the community.

- Solid inter-departmental cooperation and coordination in provision of services.

- Generally staffing levels throughout the organizational structure are appropriate, though in some cases on the lean side, for the services and service levels expected by the City Council.

- Existing data within the organization and software systems is not fully utilized to provide insight into operational performance or analyzed for opportunities to enhance processes or service delivery.   This limits, to some extent, the ability of the organization to effectively plan, manage, and understand emerging service trends.

- Some organizational structure changes have been implemented to address specific operational issues, or to take advantage of specific skills of individuals, that are not in alignment with typical organizational structures seen in other local governments.

## 3.    Listing of Recommendations

Based on the project team's assessment and analysis, there are a variety of recommendations for each service area covered in this assessment. These recommendations are discussed in detail throughout this report. Please note that recommendations are presented in the order they are discussed in the body of the report and not listed in order of priority though priority and an implementation timeframe is provided for each recommendation.

| # | Recommendation | Priority | Implementation Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Annual workplans for each department should be adopted as guiding documents that are considered a part of performance evaluations and developed in alignment with overall City priorities and budget. | High | 2023 |
| 2 | The City should expand on efforts by identifying and adopting additional performance and workload measures to regarding the organization's performance and accomplishments. | Medium | 2023 |
| 3 | An additional position should be added to the City Manager's Office and tasked with oversight of the annual work plan program, the City's performance management program, and providing analytical support to the entire organization on special projects. If established at the Assistant City Manager level, this position could directly oversee the recommended Public Information Office. | High | 2023 |
| 4 | The Communication and City TV functions should be organizationally combined into a single department. | High | 2023 |
| 5 | In future years, a Public Information Officer position should be established. | Medium | 2024 |
| 6 | Upgrade (or replace) the financial software system to improve Finance Department staff's processes, resulting in enhanced operational efficiencies. | High | ASAP |
| 7 | The Finance Department should perform regular data analysis on its data to help detect any financial irregularity or non-compliance with financial policies. | Medium | 2023 |
| 8 | The City should develop a long-range financial plan that forecasts operational and capital revenues and expenditures over a 10-year time horizon and implement an enhanced and detailed five-year capital budget to guide policy decisions and focus on long-range fiscal health and service delivery approaches. | High | 2023 |
| 9 | The City should move the grants position from Housing and Community Development to the Finance Department and establish city-wide grants focus centralized in one position. | Medium | 2023 |
| 10 | Finance should be authorized an additional position of Purchasing Coordinator. | Medium | 2023 |
| 11 | Transition the Arts Coordinator to a full-time position to provide enhanced art and cultural programming. | Low | 2023 |
| 12 | Move Arts to the Recreation Department. | Low | ASAP |

| # | Recommendation | Priority | Implementation Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | In the event that the Special Project Coordinator (Planning) or Grant Coordinator (Housing) position becomes vacant, the two positions should be combined to a full-time position to focus on grant administration and the safe route to school program for Housing and Community Development functions. | High | 2023 |
| 14 | The Department should develop a methodology for predicting upcoming retirements based on age and years of service of employees and update it at least annually to anticipate which employees and skills will need to be replaced. | Medium | 2023 |
| 15 | The City should expand on the existing training policy and implement a formal training policy outlining the annual training requirements for various positions, including required supervisory training. | High | 2023 |
| 16 | Risk Management should be a responsibility of the Human Resources Department with strong coordination with Finance. | High | 2023 |
| 17 | A Senior Human Resources Generalist position should be added to the department | High | ASAP |
| 18 | Create an Information Technology Strategic Plan that identifies and prioritizes technology needs for the next five years and update the plan annually. | High | 2023 |
| 19 | Add one IT position to assist with strategic plan development, new project implementation, and ongoing systems support. | High | ASAP |
| 20 | Maintain current staffing at the Library until there is greater clarity on the impacts of additional space and the programming offered to juveniles and adults. | n/a | n/a |
| 21 | Begin the accumulation of relevant patron and operating data that will guide programming, staffing and operations once Library construction is completed. | Medium | 2022 |
| 22 | The Library should develop and implement a materials selection policy that guides which materials will be included in the collection, which staff member(s) has responsibility, and what criteria should be used to determine these. | Medium | 2022 |
| 23 | Move the Neighborhood Services Division (parking and code enforcement) to the Housing and Community Development Department. | Medium | 2022 |
| 24 | Fill the authorized positions of Facilities Maintenance Supervisor and Building Maintenance Technician. | High | ASAP |

| # | Recommendation | Priority | Implementation Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | Investigate the causes of the inability of the Facilities Maintenance Division to attract and retain qualified maintenance personnel in a timely manner. | Medium | ASAP |
| 26 | Should the inability to attract qualified facilities maintenance personnel persist, the Public Works Department should outsource both the provision of on-call, emergency repair services and the provision of preventive maintenance services as well. | High | ASAP |
| 27 | Maintain the staffing in the Vehicle Maintenance Division at two (2) Mechanics. | n/a | n/a |
| 28 | The Right of Way Division should maintain its current staffing levels. | n/a | n/a |
| 29 | The Vegetation Management Division should retain its current staffing levels. | n/a | n/a |
|  | The Division should develop and institute a standardized, objective survey to apply to the maintenance of the developed acreage under its areas of responsibility.  These should be reported to the Department Director on a monthly basis during the growing season. | High | 2023 |
| 30 | The Engineering Division should hire an additional engineering position to supplement the skills of the City Engineer, and to assist with the volume of work associated with the wide array of responsibilities in the Division. | High | 2022 |
| 31 | The Construction Management Division should retain the current staffing level of one Construction Manager. | n/a | n/a |
| 32 | The Urban Forestry Division should be authorized to hire a part time Technician to assist in the clerical and administrative duties related to permit application review and issuance, as well as the development of a public education plan. | Medium | 2023 |
| 33 | The Urban Forestry Division should consider the development of a comprehensive tree inventory for all trees in the public rights of way. | Medium | 2023 |
| 34 | The Sustainability should hire a part time Specialist to assist in research, grant writing and public outreach. | Medium | 2023/2024 |
| 35 | Consider the cost savings, or cost transfers to other divisions in the Department, in the decision to continue to allow Solid Waste Drivers and Technicians to depart work after the completion of their routes. | High | ASAP |

| # | Recommendation | Priority | Implementation Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|
| 36 | Begin the process of defining the information requirements of a new computerized maintenance management system that incorporates the input of each of the divisions in the Public Works Department. | High | 2022 |
| 37 | In the interim period, instruct the employees of each division to manually record the attributes of the work accomplished.  A listing of these data items is provided in the discussion of this issue. | Medium | 2022 |
| 38 | In the longer term, begin to accumulate data and information related to times per task, material usage, equipment usage and other important elements of work that will allow for a more precise definition of time and expenses necessary to accomplish work. | Medium | Ongoing |
| 39 | Consolidate the currently separate divisions of Right of Way Maintenance and Vegetation. | Medium | 2023 |
| 40 | Eliminate one of the two supervisory/managerial positions over the two currently separate divisions. | Medium | 2023 |
| 41 | Consolidate the currently separate divisions of Facilities Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance. | Medium | 2023 |
| 42 | Consider the transition to an outsourced model of facilities maintenance, with only lower-skilled services provided internally. | Medium | 2023 |
| 43 | Maintain staffing of the Recreation Department at current levels. | n/a | n/a |
| 44 | Institute a routine data analysis effort.  This should eb a monthly effort on the parts of the two Recreation Program Managers until such time that workload volumes indicate the need for a full time Data Analyst. | High | 2022 |
| 45 | Transfer the responsibility for the maintenance of athletic fields from the Recreation Department to the Public Works Department. | Medium | 2023 |

As the recommendations table indicates, there are several opportunities for improvement in organizational structure, operational approach and staffing levels to better align service delivery with available resources.  The following chapters provide context and more details regarding each recommendation.

# 2. City Manager's Office, City Clerk, and Communications and City TV Operations.

The City Manager's Office is charged with overseeing all operations of the City of Takoma Park including Council support, policy implementation, day-to-day oversight of operations, and interaction with the Public.   Closely aligned services are provided by the City Clerk who is responsible for supporting the City Council, handling agendas and minutes, and overseeing the records retention program for the City.  Community and public engagement operations are handled by both the Communication and City TV operations who are responsible for developing a robust portfolio of documents, newsletters, and TV programs to engage and inform the public about City operations.

## 1. Departmental Annual Workplans Should be Developed.

The effectiveness of the City's service delivery can be enhanced by ensuring that the key efforts of each department are well delineated and that these are used as the basis for on-going policy and management decisions.  In particular, the City should adopt annual departmental workplans that are in alignment with the budget and the highest priorities identified for the coming year and that appropriate performance metrics are utilized to track and manage operations.   Annually, departments should develop their annual workplan and notate the key efforts that will further or support the achievement of the strategic goals – or position the City operations to move closer to the achievement of the goals so that there is alignment between these annual workplans and the budget process.

Annual workplans should be a guiding effort for each department's focus during the year, and a portion of the performance evaluation for staff in that department should be linked to accomplishing the workplan.   Progress on the workplans should be reviewed at least quarterly between the City Manager, Deputy City Manager and the respective department head.  A semi-annual update on progress should be provided to the City Council.

As part of the budget review of annual workplans, the City Council will be provided the opportunity to make policy decisions that will ensure alignment with the resources allocated and the work activities to be performed.    This review and decision-making process will help to ensure that expectations and ability to perform are consistent between staff and the City Council.  Resources may need to be adjusted if items not contained within the annual workplans are desired to be performed by the City Council.

**Recommendation:**

Annual workplans for each department should be adopted as guiding documents that are

considered a part of performance evaluations and developed in alignment with overall City priorities and budget.

## 2.    The City Should Implement a Performance Measurement Program.

The City of Takoma Park should implement a more data-informed decision-making framework to more effectively document existing performance and provide data for future decision-making regarding service levels and, in some cases, staffing levels needed to maintain or change service levels.  By collecting, analyzing and utilizing data regarding service provision, the City can improve decision-making and education of the public regarding City overall performance and ensure transparency for the organization regarding service levels.  In many departments currently, there is good data available regarding workloads and performance but there is little organizational capacity to effectively evaluate this information, develop reports, and evaluate improvement opportunities.

Ideally, the City will identify a small number of critical performance metrics for each department with the City's performance in meeting these measures widely reported – both to the City Council and the public – and published in a dashboard approach on the City's website.   The City should attempt to identify performance metrics that report on outcomes achieved from the services provided and which are linked to the overall adopted strategic goals of the City.

An effective and robust performance measurement program is designed to meet many organizational needs.  Some common aspects include:

- Serving as a tool to assist in the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of operations.  It is accomplished by collecting, analyzing, and reporting performance-related data.

- Measures can be based on inputs (resources used), outputs (activities performed), efficiency measures (ratio between inputs and outputs), or outcomes (results achieved).  Efficiency and outcome measures are often the most difficult to effectively measure or quantify but provide more useful data than simple input/ output counts.

- Government accountability is often a driving factor in local government use of performance measurement.  Effective use of performance measures can enhance transparency and public trust.

- Measures should ideally be aligned with adopted strategic goals.  Is progress being made toward the highest-level goals? What has the greatest effect on the people served?

- The performance measure should be easily understood by the general public. Overly complicated or obscure measures, even if providing great data on performance, will not be effective if the public cannot understand what it is showing. Some measures are more important for use by managers to make decisions but aren't appropriate for public reporting.

- A department may monitor more performance measures than those reported as part of the City's dashboard.  Public facing measures should be ones that inform on overall service outcomes, when possible, and that provide insight to the public and policy makers regarding City performance.   Additional measures may be utilized internally, only by the City Manager and Department Heads, as indicators of staff or process efficiency and/or effectiveness.

Ideally, the performance measures would be provided on the City's website with frequent updating (to maintain relevancy) at least quarterly or monthly.

**Recommendation:**

The City should expand on efforts by identifying and adopting additional performance and workload measures to regarding the organization's performance and accomplishments.

**3.      An Additional Position Should be Authorized and Tasked with leading the City's annual work plan, performance management effort and other special projects for the City Manager's Office.**

The City Manager's Office has limited staffing to conduct internal special projects and data analysis. The Deputy City Manager positions provide support to the City Manager by taking direct oversight of most of the operating departments and provide additional support by handling some special projects and initiatives.  There is little capacity with the existing positions to easily expand the efforts needed to enhance strategic efforts on planning services and implementing a revised and enhanced performance management program or adoption of annual work plans for operating departments.

It is recommended that an additional position be added to the City Manager's Office to staff these important initiatives. Given the position's location in the City Manager's Office and the high priority that should be placed on data analysis, data-informed decision-making and the need to fully implement a performance measurement program, it is recommended that the principal duty of this position be allocated to development, implementation and coordination of the performance measurement program, oversight of the annual work plan development and monitoring, and other special projects as assigned by the City Manager.  This will take close cooperation and interaction with all departments.  This position will also provide analytical support as departments work to

enhance their internal data analytical abilities.  Given the need to enable the City Manager to focus on more strategic efforts, consideration should be given to establishing this position at the level of Assistant City Manager.  In addition to these functions, the position could oversee the functional areas of Public Information (as will be discussed later in this section).  If the City does not choose to establish an Assistant City Manager position, this position should be established at a level consistent with a Senior Management Analyst classification.

**Recommendation:**

An additional position should be added to the City Manager's Office and tasked with oversight of the annual work plan program, the City's performance management program, and providing analytical support to the entire organization on special projects.   If established at the Assistant City Manager level, this position could directly oversee the recommended Public Information Office.

**4.      The City Clerk's Office should be Authorized an Additional Position.**

In reviewing the City Clerk's Office, the project team noted no significant operational issues that needed to be addressed other than the need for an additional position to handle records retention and file management functions.  The City does not have a robust records management, digitization program or file management operation currently.  This is primarily due to lack of resources.  The City Clerk has clearly articulated the type of program that she would like to see implemented to ensure the City is in compliance with records retention requirements, to implement a well-developed digitization program so that key City document are available online for both internal and external access, and to establish the appropriate protocols and technology for file sharing.   Additionally, some support in handling public records requests is also needed.

There is a plan to begin focusing on acquiring appropriate technology to support this effort, but it cannot be fully implemented without additional resources.  While technology will provide the necessary platform, the necessary program cannot be fully developed or implemented without an additional position.    The project team is recommending that a Records Management Coordinator position be established in the next budget cycle to fully implement the necessary program for records retention and file digitization.   While contractual support could be provided to handle the digitization process, the level of effort needed to develop, manage, and maintain the program moving forward would best be accomplished

**5.      Communications and City TV**

The City has established a high-level of service in communications and City TV operations.  The level of service provided by these two units typically exceed those seen in other communities or comparable size.   The level of TV programming and public communications efforts are of high quality and positively reflect on the City.  Despite all the positive programs and efforts of these two units, there remains one gap in service delivery relating to Public Information.

The City of Takoma Park does not have a designated Public Information Officer position other than the one in the Police Department which focused solely on police related issues. Over the coming years, the City should establish an individual who is designated as the City's Public Information Officer – while this may not initially be a full-time position, someone needs to be able to support the City Manager and Department heads in their interactions with the public and media.  One alternative for this could be addressed as part of the earlier discussion about the additional position in the City Manager's Office. The PIO function could be handled by this position initially until the time that the City warrants (or can afford) a full-time Public Information Officer Position.

Additionally, to establish the appropriate organizational structure, the City should merge the Communications and City TV operations into a single Public Information and Communications unit with the existing staffing allocations.   In future years, this unit can be headed by a designated Public Information Officer who is a department head level position.  This would be a new position to supplement the existing resource allocations.

### Recommendation:

The Communication and City TV functions should be organizationally combined into a single department.

In future years, a Public Information Officer position should be established.

# 3.    Finance Department

The Finance Department oversees the City's budgeting process, maintains the City's financial records, and manages the City's investment accounts.  The team is tasked with processing account payable and receivables, payroll, and collects various City fees and process bill payments.  Payments are collected at City Hall, sent via mail, or paid online. Staff also assist with employee payroll processing.  Finance staff include a Director; a Budgeting and Accounting Manager; an Accounting Supervisor; a Senior Accountant; and two Accounting Assistants.

The Finance Department have robust processes that are very time intensive as many of the actions are manual.  This is noted in the fact that the Accounting Supervisor is primarily focused on processing payroll every two weeks and is supplemented by the Budgeting and Accounting Manager approximately two days per month.  Also, staff must create a significant number (approximately 600 annually) of journal entries that is focused on accounts receivable/payable as a work around for the current financial software system.  Efforts are often duplicated in Excel prior to input into the software system.  The current financial software system is not fully utilized and creates duplicative and manual work processes.

The Finance Department in association with Information Technology staff should evaluate the current financial software system and identify the needs to enhance operational efficiencies. Modern finance software systems are intuitive and should include all aspects of municipal financial reporting and record keeping needs. Secondarily, many new finance systems have payroll and time keeping modules that are either embedded or can be added to improve operational efficiencies.  Utilizing a single platform for financial records and reporting will reduce the likelihood of errors and create greater operational efficiencies for staff. An updated financial software system should be acquired and implemented for all financial aspects of the City.  All financial reporting and record keeping should be incorporated in the financial software system, including processing payroll. Once a new financial software system is implemented, staff's workload should be reduced through automation.   *Note: A new financial management software system is budgeted in the FY 2024 budget year.*

**Recommendation:**

Upgrade (or replace) the financial software system to improve Finance Department staff's processes, resulting in enhanced operational efficiencies.

**2.      The Finance Department Should Perform Regular Financial Analytics to Ensure Compliance with Policies and for Internal Control Purposes**

The City of Takoma should conduct additional financial analytics to ensure compliance with their policies and to enhance internal controls. There are several financial calculations that can be performed with basic spreadsheets to detect financial policy violations or potential issues related to expenditures.  The use of data analytics to detect fraud can be an effective measure to protect an organization. The use of horizontal analysis, vertical analysis, Benford's analysis, and duplicate testing are all viable means to detect possible inappropriate items within the thousands of financial data fields seen in most municipal government operations.

With adequate time, finance staff could proactively and regularly run analytics to look for missing data fields in vendor files, missing data fields in accounting entry fields, verify even dollar amounts, check for duplicate voucher payments, and even perform data set matching analysis with vendor-to-vendor files or vendor to employee files. At least quarterly and if time permits, staff could run a Benford's analysis on entire data sets to uncover predictable patterns often associated with fraudulent invoices.

The ability to perform these functions is often limited only by staffing levels and time to perform them. The project team noted that the City's finance staff generally do an excellent job in their efforts; however, they are limited in their ability to do more proactive work by existing workload and current staffing levels.

| Type of Analysis | Method | Benefits |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Horizontal | This method compares financial statement items ratios or line items over any of a number of accounting periods. | Can detect items with a significant percentage change between periods that could warrant additional investigation. |
| Vertical | This method compares relationships between financial components of the same time period. Items are expressed as percentages of a whole and compared between periods. | Can detect increases in spending that warrant further investigation that might not otherwise be visible to the naked eye. |

| Type of Analysis | Method | Benefits |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Benford's | This method compares large data sets by assigning expected values to each number (0-9) in an invoice amount and comparing the expected number to the actual number found in the data set. | Can detect fraudulent invoices when someone makes up billing numbers. |
| Duplicate | This method searches for duplicate payments of invoices. | Can detect if a payment to a vendor was made more than once for the same service. |

The City should consider implementing additional financial analytics to enhance internal controls and compliance with City policies.

### Recommendation:

The Finance Department should perform regular data analysis on its data to help detect any financial irregularity or non-compliance with financial policies.

### 3.     The Finance Department Enhance Effort on Long-Range Financial Planning Grants Management, and Revenue Management.

The City of Takoma Park should enhance and utilize a long-range capital improvement plan, a ten-year fiscal plan (that forecasts revenues and expenditures), and other organizational development activities to continually evaluate the organization's changing needs and service demands resulting from population growth and the changing complexity of the organization.  The management of revenue and financial forecasting is a critical gap identified in the assessment that should be addressed to ensure that future financial operations of the City are effectively handled based upon detailed financial forecasting.  Similarly, there is a significant need for an individual to focus on capital project financing and management to ensure that all planned investments are appropriately planned, financed and expenditures accounted for in a timely manner.

These types of plans are critical and necessary for the City to plan for the future and enable the elected officials to focus on setting policies and priorities to guide future operations. They ensure that focus is placed beyond the current budget-cycle or two and information is available to guide decisions and understand the long-term impact of policy decisions.  Additionally, the City should have this position conduct a greater focus on grants management activities to ensure the City is fully compliant with all grant requirements, reporting requirements, and effectively pursues all available grant

opportunities.  These duties cannot be performed at an adequate level or quality under the current staffing allocation and a full-time grants position should be established in the Finance Department.

**Recommendation:**

The City should develop a long-range financial plan that forecasts operational and capital revenues and expenditures over a 10-year time horizon and implement an enhanced and detailed five-year capital budget to guide policy decisions and focus on long-range fiscal health and service delivery approaches.

The City should move the grants position from Housing and Community Development to the Finance Department and establish city-wide grants focus centralized in one position.

## 4.      Purchasing Should be Established as a Formal Program in Finance.

The City of Takoma Park needs to establish a formal procurement function within the City Finance Department.   A position dedicated to purchasing should be able, though improved procurement policies, to reduce the costs the City is spending on the procurement of goods, materials and services by more than the cost of the position over time.  The establishment of a Purchasing Coordinator position will provide administrative support to all departments and eliminate some workload that each department is currently performing, allowing them to reallocate this time to core duties of their department.

The position should be responsible for handling all procurements, operational and capital budget related, for the entire organization.  Over time, this position should establish contracts for commonly procured items, develop RFPs and RFQs for services, handle paperwork associated with purchase requisitions and purchase orders, and ensure terms and conditions for purchasing contracts are fully complied with.

**Recommendation:**

Finance should be authorized an additional position of Purchasing Coordinator.

# 4.    Housing and Community Development

The Housing and Community Development Department consists of Economic Development, Housing, Planning/Community Development, Arts, and Humanities. The Department is tasked with preserving and enhancing the City's built environment, revitalization of the commercial and residential areas, ensure safe and affordable housing opportunities, and enrich the lives of residents through arts and humanities programming.

## 1.    Economic Development

Economic Development focuses on the recruitment, retention, and expansion of business in the City. Efforts may include assisting in the creation and implementation of workforce development programming, facilitation with local small business association, and creating relationships with small business owners. Economic Development consists of one Economic Development Manager and an intern that provides support throughout the year.

Economic Development efforts are important to the vitality and creation of an engaged community and therefore the current approach to providing economic development should continue. Efforts should continue with the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic plan, which was adopted in 2019.

## 2.    Planning and Arts

Planning is primarily focused on special projects and long-range planning efforts and works closely with Montgomery County and other regional planning and transportation organizations to develop and implement these plans. Planning includes the Safe Routes to School Coordinator (Special Project Coordinator) who focuses on grant funding and multi-modal transportation system updates. Staff provides GIS mapping and support for all City departments. Planning is comprised of a Manager, Planner, Special Project Coordinator (0.5 FTE), and Intern (0.5 FTE).

The Planning Manager oversees the City's Arts program. Arts is tasked with providing free public art, art exhibitions, performing arts, lectures, film screening, and cultural events throughout the City. Arts staff include an Arts Coordinator (0.625 FTE) and an Intern.

The Planning and Arts division is tasked with implementing the following strategic plans and programs.

| Plan Name | Plan Name |
|---|---|
| Takoma Park Master Plan | Maple Avenue Complete Streets Guide |
| New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Plan | Safe Routes to School |
| Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan | Takoma Park Equity Walk |
| Long Branch Sector Plan | Public Space Management Plan |
| Minor Master Plan Amendment | |

The current allocation of staff for Planning is appropriate. One area that may be considered is to increase the pursuit of grants. If the City desires to increase the use of grants, then the Special Project Coordinator position may be expanded to a full-time position.

Takoma Park has a strong desire to provide art and cultural program to the community. This is currently achieved through a combination of a part time Arts Coordinator and an intern. Arts programing could be increased, as there are nearly unlimited opportunities to provide arts and other cultural programs to the community. Consideration should be given to transitioning the Arts Coordinator to a full-time position. This will allow for enhanced services to the community and greater flexibility for providing these services outside of traditional business hours.

Also, the Arts program component should be moved organizational to under Recreation. Recreation and Arts both are community facing functions that are tasked with enriching the lives of the community as a whole with a very similar mission. Moving to under the oversight of the Recreation Department will provide a better aligned mission and better integration of services between the two teams. Also, this will provide an opportunity to utilize Recreation staffing resources for special events and other activities/programs facilitated by Arts. Moving Arts under recreation will help create operational efficiencies for Arts programming. It should be noted that the level of effort allocated to the Arts functions is greater than seen in other communities and could be modified is necessary.

### Recommendations:

Transition the Arts Coordinator to a full-time position to provide enhanced art and cultural programming.

Move Arts to the Recreation Department.

### 3.     Housing

Housing staff focus on implementation of the City's housing rental program, licensing, and compliance of the City's landlord-tenant laws, including the rent stabilization

program. Housing also operates the Down Payment Assistance Program called The Home Stretch, and they administer the following grants: STEM/Arts, Spark, and Community Partner Grant programs. Housing is comprised of a Housing Manager, two Housing Specialists, a Licensing Specialist, and a Grant Coordinator (0.5).

Workload was not provided for Housing but based on the current programs and the level of service that City Council desires related to Housing, the current allocation of staff is appropriate. The use of Montgomery County to provide housing inspections for complaints is appropriate and should continue as this workload fluctuates and is not significant.  One operational consideration is to combine the Grant Coordinator in Housing with the Special Project Coordinator in Planning to have one full time staff member dedicated grant administration for all functional areas in HCD.  In the event that either position is vacant then combining the two positions into one position is appropriate and will provide a single point of contact for the various grant functions within the Department.

Grant writing and reporting requires a unique skill set.  For many grants the reporting requirements are onerous and having someone who focuses full time on grant writing and reporting for the Department will be more beneficial to all HCD functional areas. There are nearly unlimited grant opportunities for Housing, Economic Development, and Planning related functions and dedicated a full-time resource to this function will help provide the Department and ultimately the community with enhanced revenue generation and improvements to the quality of life in Takoma Park.  This approach will help capitalize finding, applying for, and receiving grant opportunities.

### Recommendation:

In the event that the Special Project Coordinator (Planning) or Grant Coordinator (Housing) position becomes vacant, the two positions should be combined to a full-time position to focus on grant administration and the safe route to school program for Housing and Community Development functions.

# 5.   Human Resources

The Human Resources Department is responsible for the oversight of all recruitment, compensation and classification, employee relations, training, collective bargaining, and benefits programs for the City of Takoma Park.

## 1.      Additional Workforce Planning Should be Undertaken.

Information about upcoming retirements can be used in an organization to determine when vacancies are likely to open up in various departments, which allows HR staff to get a head start on developing a qualified pool of applicants. Anticipating openings due to retirement can help the department begin to make decisions about succession planning tactics sooner rather than later. Currently, the department does not currently have a formal methodology for projecting the likely retirement of employees over time. While staff within a customer department may know when retirements are upcoming, the HR Department is not always informed about these transitions. In order to optimize the effectiveness of the recruitment staff in this effort, the Department should adopt a more formal workforce and retirement planning model.

One model for projecting employee retirement involves totaling employees' ages and their years of service, and indexing those totals at the current time, as well as for future dates, to determine likely retirements. Both of those figures could easily be obtained from data readily available. An example of this method is depicted in the table below:

| Employee | Age | Years | Current Total | 2 Year Total | 5 Year Total |
|----------|-----|-------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Employee 1 | 23 | 1 | 24 | 28 | 34 |
| Employee 2 | 48 | 15 | 63 | 67 | 73 |
| Employee 3 | 45 | 19 | 64 | 68 | 74 |
| Employee 4 | 50 | 19 | 69 | 73 | 79 |
| Employee 5 | 48 | 23 | 71 | 75 | 81 |
| Employee 6 | 48 | 24 | 72 | 76 | 82 |
| Employee 7 | 49 | 27 | 76 | 80 | 86 |
| Employee 8 | 52 | 25 | 77 | 81 | 87 |
| Employee 9 | 54 | 32 | 86 | 90 | 96 |
| Employee 10 | 57 | 35 | 92 | 96 | 102 |

Existing data should be sufficient to generate reports such as the one above (or at least data that can be presented as a report). These projections should be updated on at least an annual basis in order to account for employee turnover and refresh the department's strategy for replacing lost employees and skills.

Employee skills and certifications could also be included in these projections. This would help the HR department anticipate when skills will be lost and begin strategizing to replace them, either by hiring new employees with the desired skills or by incentivizing existing employees to acquire those skills and certifications.

**Recommendation:**

The Department should develop a methodology for predicting upcoming retirements based on age and years of service of employees and update it at least annually to anticipate which employees and skills will need to be replaced.

**3.     Human Resources Should Coordinate and Provide a More Comprehensive Training Effort for the City Staff.**

The provision of training is currently a shared responsibility between the City's Human Resources Department and the operating departments.   While Human Resources provides centralized training opportunities (on-boarding and overall City policies), departmental managers are responsible for job specific training for their employees.  An expanded policy and practice should be adopted that outlines the type, amount and frequency of training that will be provided to employees and clearly state whether the responsibility lies with the Human Resources Department or with the specific operating department.   This policy should outline and differentiate the required training for general employees and for supervisory employees.

At a minimum, the policy should provide the following for supervisory personnel:  an annual allotment of eight hours covering basic supervisory practices, supplemented by refresher training on sexual harassment, diversity, and equal employment practices.   Job specific training should continue to be provided by the operating department (and included as part of each individual employee performance appraisal) but tracked and monitored in a centralized training database / software maintained by Human Resources.

The policy should provide for a feedback mechanism to accomplish two objectives: solicit feedback from local managers on gaps in employee performance that could be mitigated by additional training opportunities; and solicit feedback on results and effectiveness of specific training efforts to allow program modification.

**Recommendation:**

The City should expand on the existing training policy and implement a formal training policy outlining the annual training requirements for various positions, including required supervisory training.

**3.      Risk Management Should be Organizationally Placed in Human Resources.**

The City had developed an approach prior to the start of this engagement, to organizationally move the Risk Management function to the Human Resources Department from Finance.  The project team reviewed the planned approach that had been developed by the City and compared to organizational structures in other communities.  The project team concurs with the City's plan to organizationally move Risk Management to Human Resources.  This change will provide a more logical structure and place risk management functions appropriately in the organization.  It will enable a much closer working relationship with Human Resources staff.

Once this organizational change is made and fully implemented in the department, the HR Director should evaluate the administrative support needs of the department next year. The department may need to convert the part-time administrative assistance position to a full-time position to support all of the administrative needs of the department that will increase once this change is implemented and the other recommendations in the report related to this department are fully implemented.

**Recommendations:**

Risk Management should be a responsibility of the Human Resources Department with strong coordination with Finance.

**4.      An Additional Position is Required to Handle the Human Resources Functions.**

To accomplish the additional duties outlined above for Human Resources and to address workload associated with recruitments and selections processes and enhance the training efforts within the City of Takoma, an additional position should be added to the Human Resources organization.  Given the variety of duties that need to be performed, ranging from recruitment / selection activities, training, and data analysis, the new position should be established as a Human Resources Generalist position.     This additional position will also provide capacity for the department to handle increased workload associated with workforce growth in the coming years and ensure that sufficient resources are available to complete all recruitments and selection processes as expeditiously as possible.  As has been noted in several departmental narratives, many departments have had significant vacancies in the last year and given that most departments are operating on tight staffing allocations (meaning there is no excess

capacity), it is critical that sufficient resources are available to ensure the recruitment and selection processes can be completed as quickly as possible and to provide the quality of training necessary for the overall organization.

**Recommendation:**

A Senior Human Resources Generalist position should be added to the department.

# 6.   Information Technology

Information Technology is responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the City's technology systems including software programs and hardware.  Hardware systems include computers, phones, security systems, and electronic door systems for City properties.  Information Technology is comprised of four staff who are tasked with the implementation and maintenance of the City's software and hardware systems.  They provide support in conjunction with software vendors. The Software Engineer Technician position primarily services as the network administrator for the various software systems deployed by the City. The Application and Hardware Technician focuses on maintaining the various computers, phone, and physical hardware of the City.  The Systems Specialist focuses on processing work orders and troubleshooting software systems and technical needs. The department is overseen by the Manager.

Information Technology does not have a strategic plan to guide the organization on the maintenance and updating of the various hardware and software components deployed by the City.  Historically, the department has primarily been reactive to the needs of the departments and no holistic needs assessment has been developed to guide the purchasing and implementation of systems.  During Information Technology and other departmental staff interviews it was clear that there are multiple technology needs across the municipal organization.  Most of the technology needs are independent of enterprise-wide systems that are deployed and focus on individual departmental needs.  Also, staff identified the need for additional technology training.

Information Technology needs to create a strategic IT plan to serve as a framework for future projects and to identify the capital expenditures required to upgraded or acquire new technology systems.  An IT Strategic Plan will allow staff and the City to prioritize current and future technology needs and allocate resources (fiscal and staff) to implement the technology systems needed.

IT staff are responsible for a total of 1,154 hardware items they currently maintain for the City.  The list of hardware items maintained is below.

**Items Supported (Current)**

| Windows Devices | Quantity |
| --- | --- |
| Desktops | 127 |
| Laptops / Tablets | 54 |
| Servers (Virtual / physical) | 48 |
| **Multi-Function Devices (copier/fax/scanner)** | |
| Printers | 5 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Copiers | 11 |
| Scanners | 3 |
| Fax | 1 |
| UPS Units | 135 |
| Smartboards | 4 |
| **Telephony** | |
| Desk Phones (Digital / Analog / VOIP) | 145 |
| Trunks (PRI/Analog) | 50 |
| POTS Lines (Analog) | 4 |
| NEC PBX Server | 5 |
| TPPD call recording (NICE System) | 1 |
| **Network Devices** | |
| Switches | 52 |
| Firewalls - ASA | 4 |
| VPN | 1 |
| WAPS | 16 |
| **Carrier Services (Demarc Equipment)** | |
| FiberNet interfaces (Montgomery County) | 2 |
| RCN | 4 |
| Verizon Fios | 1 |
| Comcast | 2 |
| Line of site RF | 2 |
| **Security** | |
| Camera's | 75 |
| Door card readers | 84 |
| Controllers | 26 |
| **Miscellaneous** | |
| MOCO Dispatch system | 4 |
| CAD PC's | 4 |
| Motorola Body Cam and Taser system | 80 |
| Kronos access readers | 4 |
| Panic Buttons Community Center/PW | 14 |
| TV / AV devices and infrastructure | 10 |
| **Wireless Devices** | |
| Cellular Phone/Wireless Routers | 176 |
| **Total Items Supported** | **1,154** |

Additionally, IT staff is responsible for supporting 50 software systems either on premise or through the cloud.

There are limited ratios for the number of staff needed to maintain hardware and software items as many of the items may not require regular or routine maintenance and

some may be full supported by the vendor or manufacturer.  Generally, the number of IT staff needed for a local government operation range between one IT staff per 50 to 100 staff members.  This ratio is generally only for supporting existing systems and does not account for any special projects.

In the next two years, the City is expecting to procure and implement four major projects: a new HRIS system, Finance/Accounting software system, replacement of the current phone system, and implement a new eDiscovery (public information request) system. With the current need to provide enhanced technology support across the City and the implementation of four major projects in the next two year, there is a need for additional staff support.  To accomplish this, one additional IT position should be budgeted.  Initially this position can help develop the IT strategic plan and then transition to project implementation and support and provide training on new technology systems. This position should be a more general position such as a System Engineer or Specialist.

## Recommendations:

Create an Information Technology Strategic Plan that identifies and prioritizes technology needs for the next five years and update the plan annually.

Add one IT position to assist with strategic plan development, new project implementation, and ongoing systems support.

# 7.    Library

The Takoma Park Library provides print and electronic media for City residents, as well as a computer lab for research.  The Library also provides programming and other services for children, teens and adults.  It is organized into the three divisions of Technical Services, Public Services and Youth Services, each overseen by a Library Manager position.  The Technical Services Division is staffed with a full time and a part time Library Associate, with some supplemental assistance amounting to about 0.9 FTE.  Public Services is staffed with a Library Associate, and Library Instructional Associates that total approximately 1.4 FTEs.   The Youth Services Division is staffed with a Librarian, a part time Librarian (approximately 0.6 FTE) and a Library Shelver (approximately 0.4 FTE).  Including the Library Director, the administrative Library Associate and the three divisions, there are approximately ten full time equivalent employees in the Takoma Park Library.

It should be noted that provision of library services is discretionary on the part of the City.  It provides library services as an added benefit to its residents, who receive customized programming and support.  However, library services are a responsibility of Montgomery County, and although the City has embarked on an aggressive construction plan for the expansion of the current library, not all cities in Montgomery County provide library services, and the services it provides to Takoma Park residents should be viewed as discretionary benefits by the City to its residents.

## 1.    Analysis of Library Staffing Needs

The Library is located at the southeast section of the City office building at 101 Philadelphia Avenue.  Approximately six years ago, the City issued a bond to fund the expansion of the Library to generally expand circulation space, but also to provide a dedicated Programming Room, a Teen Room and reconfigure the electrical wiring, as well as to raise the flooring to address potential flooding concerns.

The construction of the new Library is expected to take between 15 and 18 months, which will reportedly begin sometime in the fall of 2022.  However, at the time of the development of this report, discussions were still ongoing regarding where Library operations will be in the interim period.  One option being discussed is to move all operations, and staff, to a single location.  The other is to divide the operation into two locations.  Reportedly, however, the City has not determined an actual facility from which to operate.

Expansion of space, as a general rule, would not in itself result in the need to increase staffing.  There will be greater circulation space, as well as a new Teen Room and Adult

Programming Room, however even these would not result in the need for greater staffing levels, as these spaces can be monitored by current staff during the times that they are in use.  Further, the Library will continue to operate on a single floor of the current building, negating the need for additional staff to monitor multiple floors.  The issue, then, is whether additional programming is foreseen, and whether these additional programs will create a need for additional staffing.

To analyze this issue, the following table presents participation data for juvenile and adult programs from FY11 though FY18.

## Program Attendance

| Year | Juvenile | Adult | Total |
|------|---------|-------|-------|
| FY11 | 14,220 | 201 | 14,421 |
| FY12 | 13,876 | 150 | 14,026 |
| FY13 | 14,798 | 342 | 15,140 |
| FY14 | 14,133 | 581 | 14,714 |
| FY15 | 15,891 | 842 | 16,733 |
| FY16 | 17,292 | 439 | 17,731 |
| FY17 | 16,358 | 52 | 16,410 |
| FY18 | 18,078 | 77 | 18,155 |

Unfortunately, the Library does not possess data beyond FY18 in any summarized fashion, so it is difficult to make any firm conclusions regarding staffing needs in the future based upon the available data.  It is clear, however, that there was a much more pronounced decrease in adult programming than was the case with juvenile programming during the time period shown in the table.  Discussions with the Library Director indicate that programming for both juveniles and adults declined further in FY20 and FY21, coinciding with the COVID pandemic, although to what degree is not known.

The current fluid circumstances surrounding where Library staff will be located during construction, as well as the uncertainty of the direction and levels of juvenile and adult programming, combine to argue in favor of maintaining staffing at current levels until there is more clarity in these regards.  Adding to the uncertainty surrounding the interim location of staff during construction is the additional transition from a long-tenured Librarian in charge of Youth Services to a relatively new Youth Services Manager. Replacing specialized service providers is difficult under any circumstances, however it is even more so for employees with many years of experience, many contacts that have been accumulated over the years, and familiarity and comfort levels with both the offered programs and the patrons attending them.  The new Youth Services Director has unique skills and will provide an array of new and old programs that will meet resident needs; however, this is one more factor adding to the ambiguity of staffing needs at the current time.

For each of the stated reasons, the project team makes no recommendation relating to altering staffing levels at this time, however the Library should take this opportunity to begin accumulating and more data that will guide these decisions, as well as to develop performance measures that will assist in determining the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations.  These will be discussed below.

**Recommendation:**

Maintain current staffing at the Library until there is greater clarity on the impacts of additional space and the programming offered to juveniles and adults.

## 2.      Analysis of Library Information Needs

As was noted above, the information accumulated by the Library is insufficient to make any meaningful analysis of its operations.  This is true not only for purposes of this current project, but more specifically for the Library Director and the City going forward.  The Library is, and has been, in a state of transition for some time, and viewed from this perspective, it is perhaps understandable that the accumulation and analysis of data have been viewed as secondary concerns by the staff.  However, although data analysis is an important endeavor for all departments in the City, it is an especially opportune time for the Library, as the data will be vital in determining the direction of programmatic offerings, the staffing required to provide them, trends in visitation and specific programs, and the efficiency and effectiveness with which they are provided as well.

In the previous section of this report, we provided the available data for the numbers of participants for both juvenile and adult programs offered by the Library.  However, the data are not available beyond FY18.  The project team provided summary level data; however, we should note that participation data are available at a more granular level than has been shown in this report.  For example, although we show summary data for "Juvenile" programming, the data are available for "Lapsit," "Ones," "Toddlers," "Bedtime," and many others.  Similarly, data for such adult programs are available as well, and the project team recommends that staff summarize these data as has been done in the past.

There are, however, certain other gaps in data accumulation and analysis, and some of these are presented below.

- Patron visits to the Library.  (The Library has not had functioning security gates for several years, which inhibits the collection of this information.  This issue will be corrected in the new building).

- Resident and non-resident circulation.

- Residents with library cards, and percentages of total residents holding a library card. These data should be used to further determine the total circulation per card holder.

- Operating cost per card holder.

- Material turnover rates.

To restate, the Library is in a transition period, and although data accumulation will likely be viewed as an intrusion on other seemingly more pressing needs as the staff make plans to move to transitional locations, it is also vital to understanding patron profiles and matching these to required programming to meet their needs once Library construction is complete. Secondarily, the data serve as a guide in determining optimum staffing levels to meet these identified needs.

### Recommendation:

Begin the accumulation of relevant patron and operating data that will guide programming, staffing and operations once Library construction is completed.

### 3.      Analysis of Library Policies

In addition to the need for more robust data accumulation and analysis, the Library needs greater clarity on material selection and the responsibilities for this vital effort. The Library has not developed a materials selection policy, which is essential to the identification of needed materials for patrons, and for defining how these materials are on-boarded and made available. The Library Director is aware of the need for such a policy and has indicated that efforts will be made in the future to develop one. However, as a preliminary guide in its development, the project team offers the following points that should be addressed in any such policy.

- The role of Library staff in selection, and guidelines for the staff to follow in choosing materials. These may relate to quantifiable material turnover rates, expressed needs by patrons, formal opinion surveys, or other input.

- Final authority for selections.

- Subject areas for which the Library collects materials.

- Prioritization of materials collected for all identified subject areas.

- Statement regarding the Library's policy on youth and adult reference materials.

- Gifts to the Library, and how these are to be processed and used.

- Handling of public objections to materials in the Library's collection.

In developing the materials selection policy, it should be made clear which of the Library's staff has the responsibility for implementation, and who has authority to approve these selections for inclusion in the overall inventory.

**Recommendation:**

The Library should develop and implement a materials selection policy that guides which materials will be included in the collection, which staff member(s) has responsibility, and what criteria should be used to determine these.

# 8.   Police Department

The Takoma Park Police Department (TKPD) is responsible for providing law enforcement services for Takoma Park.  This chapter will analyze the workload, staffing, and organizational needs of the Police Department.

## 1.    Patrol Workload Analysis

The following sections provide analysis of patrol workload and other issues relating to the effectiveness of field services.

### (1)    CAD Analysis Methodology

Our project team has calculated the community-generated workload of the Police Department by analyzing incident records in the computer aided dispatch (CAD) database, covering the entirety of a year.  CAD used for this study was from 2019. 2019 data was used versus 2020 or 2021.  2020 calls for services was a historic low due to the Covid-19 pandemic and 2021 calls for service was lower than the pre-pandemic average calls for service.

For incidents to be identified as community-generated calls for service and included in our analysis of patrol, each of the following conditions needed to be met:

- The incident must have been unique.
- The incident must have been first created between January 1 and December 31, 2019.
- The incident must have been generated by the community and warranted a response by the Police Department.
- There must have been no major irregularities or issues with the data recorded for the incident that would prevent sufficient analysis, such as having no unit code or lack of any time stamps.

After filtering through the data using the methodology outlined above, the remaining incidents represent the community-generated calls for service handled by TKPD patrol units.

### (2)    Calls for Service by Hour and Weekday

The following tables display the total number of calls for service handled by patrol units by each hour and day of the week:

## Calls for Service by Hour and Weekday

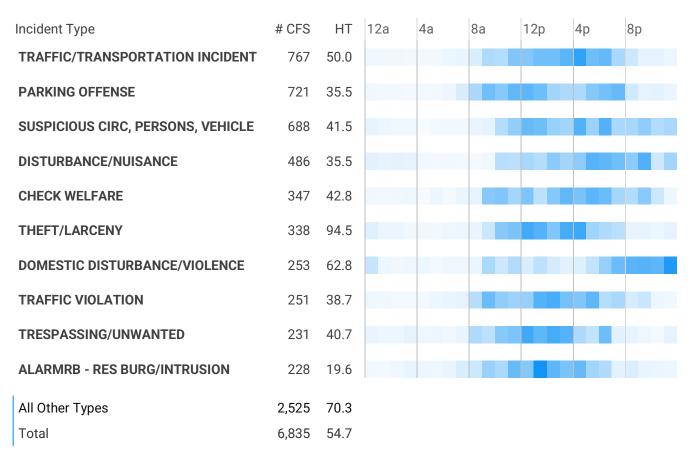| Hour | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Total |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| 12a  | 33  | 23  | 34  | 14  | 27  | 13  | 30  | 174   |
| 1am  | 28  | 18  | 15  | 8   | 13  | 28  | 19  | 129   |
| 2am  | 26  | 19  | 17  | 16  | 12  | 8   | 22  | 120   |
| 3am  | 29  | 8   | 12  | 12  | 10  | 12  | 28  | 111   |
| 4am  | 16  | 8   | 9   | 6   | 6   | 8   | 13  | 66    |
| 5am  | 14  | 10  | 10  | 9   | 16  | 11  | 14  | 84    |
| 6am  | 13  | 18  | 17  | 25  | 10  | 20  | 12  | 115   |
| 7am  | 20  | 21  | 32  | 29  | 25  | 25  | 22  | 174   |
| 8am  | 26  | 32  | 42  | 37  | 47  | 34  | 31  | 249   |
| 9am  | 33  | 55  | 51  | 52  | 49  | 57  | 41  | 338   |
| 10am | 46  | 59  | 42  | 47  | 47  | 57  | 46  | 344   |
| 11am | 48  | 65  | 61  | 59  | 64  | 48  | 62  | 407   |
| 12pm | 75  | 54  | 60  | 52  | 57  | 86  | 52  | 436   |
| 1pm  | 52  | 59  | 63  | 68  | 56  | 66  | 50  | 414   |
| 2pm  | 41  | 51  | 55  | 64  | 68  | 55  | 58  | 392   |
| 3pm  | 53  | 78  | 43  | 55  | 72  | 73  | 50  | 424   |
| 4pm  | 51  | 63  | 83  | 74  | 64  | 60  | 52  | 447   |
| 5pm  | 31  | 62  | 71  | 77  | 67  | 67  | 48  | 423   |
| 6pm  | 54  | 74  | 66  | 61  | 63  | 66  | 54  | 438   |
| 7pm  | 48  | 55  | 55  | 58  | 47  | 50  | 60  | 373   |
| 8pm  | 50  | 41  | 55  | 42  | 55  | 37  | 53  | 333   |
| 9pm  | 36  | 45  | 42  | 44  | 58  | 54  | 45  | 324   |
| 10pm | 46  | 27  | 41  | 37  | 37  | 41  | 48  | 277   |
| 11pm | 35  | 30  | 27  | 32  | 30  | 40  | 49  | 243   |
| Total | 904 | 975 | 1,003 | 978 | 1,000 | 1,016 | 959 | 6,835 |

Call activity increases steadily throughout the day and begins to plateau late morning and tapers off after 7 p.m.

## (3)    Most Common Types of Calls for Service

The following table provides the ten most common incident categories of calls for service in 2019 as well as the average call handling time (HT)[1] for each:

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[1] Handling time is defined as the total time in which a patrol unit was assigned to an incident. It is calculated as the difference between the recorded time stamps the unit being dispatched and cleared from the incident.

## Incident Types

| Incident Type | # CFS | HT | 12a | 4a | 8a | 12p | 4p | 8p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TRAFFIC/TRANSPORTATION INCIDENT** | 767 | 50.0 | | | | | | |
| **PARKING OFFENSE** | 721 | 35.5 | | | | | | |
| **SUSPICIOUS CIRC, PERSONS, VEHICLE** | 688 | 41.5 | | | | | | |
| **DISTURBANCE/NUISANCE** | 486 | 35.5 | | | | | | |
| **CHECK WELFARE** | 347 | 42.8 | | | | | | |
| **THEFT/LARCENY** | 338 | 94.5 | | | | | | |
| **DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE/VIOLENCE** | 253 | 62.8 | | | | | | |
| **TRAFFIC VIOLATION** | 251 | 38.7 | | | | | | |
| **TRESPASSING/UNWANTED** | 231 | 40.7 | | | | | | |
| **ALARMRB - RES BURG/INTRUSION** | 228 | 19.6 | | | | | | |
| All Other Types | 2,525 | 70.3 | | | | | | |
| Total | 6,835 | 54.7 | | | | | | |

"Traffic/Transportation" incidents are the most common incident types, representing 11.2% of all calls followed, by "Parking Offense" at 10.5% of calls. The top two calls for service types which account for nearly 22% of all calls for service.

## 2.    Analysis of Patrol Resource Needs

Analysis of the community-generated workload is at the core of analyzing field staffing needs. Developing an understanding of where, when, and what types of calls are received provides a detailed account of the service needs of the community, and by measuring the time used in responding and handling these calls, the staffing requirements for meeting the community's services can then be determined.

Takoma Park provides a high level of service to the community and responds to all requests for service. To provide this level of service, it is not enough for patrol officers to function as call responders. Instead, officers must have sufficient time outside of the community-driven workload to proactively address community issues, conduct problem-oriented policing, engage with community members, and perform other self-direct

activities throughout the community.  As a result, patrol staffing needs are calculated not only from a standpoint of the capacity of current resources to handle workloads, but also their ability to provide a certain level of service beyond responding to calls.

With this focus in mind, the following sections examine process used by the project team to determine the patrol resource needs of TKPD based on current workloads, staff availability, and continuation of high service level objectives that focus on proactive community policing efforts in the community.

## (1)    Overview of the Resource Needs Analysis

An objective and accurate assessment of patrol staffing requires analysis of the following three factors:

*i.*      The number of community-generated workload hours that should be handled by patrol.

*ii.*     The total number of hours that a patrol officer is on-duty and able to handle those workloads, based on current staffing numbers and net availability factors (e.g., leave, administrative time, etc.).

*iii.*    The remaining amount of time that patrol has to be proactive, which can also be referred to as "uncommitted" time.

This study defines the result of this process as, **patrol proactivity,** or the percentage of patrol officers' time in which they are *available and on-duty* that is *not* spent responding to community-generated calls for service. This calculation can also be expressed visually as an equation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Net Available Hours} - \text{Total CFS Workload Hours}}{\text{Total Net Available Hours}} = \text{\% Proactivity}$$

**The result of this equation is the overall level of proactivity in patrol**, which in turn provides a model for the ability of patrol units to be proactive given current resources and community-generated workloads. There are some qualifications to this, which include the following:

•       Optimal proactivity levels are a generalized target, and a single percentage should be applied to every agency. The actual needs of an individual Police Department vary based on a number of factors, including:

        –       Other resources the Police Department has to proactively engage with the

community and address issues, such as a dedicated proactive traffic unit.

－    Community expectations and ability to support a certain level of service.

－    Whether fluctuations in the workload levels throughout the day require additional or fewer resources to be staffed to provide adequate coverage.

•    Sufficient proactivity at an overall level does not guarantee, based on workload patterns, and deployment schedules, that resources are sufficient throughout all times of the day and week.

Overall, given the dense geographic response area and the community's desire for a high proactive threshold, TKPD should generally target an overall proactivity level of at least 60% as an effective benchmark of patrol coverage.

## (2)    Patrol Unit Net Availability

While the staffing levels provided in the descriptive profile provide the scheduled staffing levels, it does not reflect the numbers that are actually on-duty and available to work on at any given time. Out of the 2,184 hours per year that officers are scheduled to work in a year (excluding overtime), a large percentage is not actually spent on-duty and available in the field.

As a result, it is critical to understand the amount of time that officers are on leave – including vacation, sick, injury, military, or any other type of leave – as well as any hours dedicated to on-duty court or training time, and all time spent on administrative tasks such as attending shift briefings. The impact of each of these factors is determined through calculations made from TKPD data (2019 and 2021), which are then subtracted from the base number of annual work hours per position. The result represents the total **net available hours** of patrol officers, or the time in which they are on-duty and available to complete workloads and other activities in the field.

The following table summarizes this calculation process, displaying how each net availability factor contributes to the overall net availability of patrol officers:

**Breakdown of Officer Availability**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Base Annual Work Hours | | 2,184 |
| Total Leave Hours | − | 353 |
| On-Duty Training Hours | − | 167 |
| On-Duty Court Time Hours | − | 20 |
| Administrative Hours | − | 229 |
| Net Available Hours Per Officer | = | 1,415 |
| | | |
| *Number of Officer Positions* | × | *14* |
| Total Net Available Hours | = | 19,807 |

Overall, officers combine for 19,807 net available hours per year, representing the total time in which they are on duty and able to respond to community-generated incidents and be proactive.

Net officer availability was determined for Corporals to account for a higher percentage of administrative support time they provide to the Department. The following table presents the breakdown of Corporal availability.

**Breakdown of Corporal Availability**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Base Annual Work Hours | | 2,184 |
| Total Leave Hours | − | 353 |
| On-Duty Training Hours | − | 97 |
| On-Duty Court Time Hours | − | 20 |
| Administrative Hours | − | 550 |
| Net Available Hours Per Officer | = | 1,164 |
| | | |
| *Number of Corporal Positions* | × | *4* |
| Total Net Available Hours | = | 4,656 |

### (3)    Overview of Call for Service Workload Factors

The previous section examined various trends in patrol workload, including variations by time of day and of week, common incident types, as well as a number of other methods. This section advances this analysis, detailing the full extent of the resource demands that these incidents create for responding patrol personnel.

Each call for service represents a certain amount of workload, much of which is not captured within the handling time of the primary unit. Some of these factors can be calculated directly from data provided by the Police Department, while others must be estimated due to limitations in their measurability.

The following table outlines the factors that must be considered in order to capture the full scope of community-generated workload, and provides an explanation of the process used to calculate each factor:

Factors Used to Calculate Total Patrol Workload

**Number of Community-Generated Calls for Service**

Data obtained from an export of CAD data covering a period of an entire year (2019) that has been analyzed and filtered in order to determine the number and characteristics of all community-generated activity handled by patrol officers.

*Calculated from TKPD data:* **6,835 community-generated calls for service.**

**Primary Unit Handling Time** (multiplied by the number of calls)

The time used by the primary unit to handle a community-generated call for service, including time spent traveling to the scene of the incident and the duration of on-scene time. For each incident, this number is calculated as the difference between 'call cleared' time stamp and the 'unit dispatched' time stamp. The handling time includes the time that officers are processing an arrest.

*Calculated from TKPD data:* **54.7 minutes of handling time per call for service.**

**Number of Backup Unit Responses**

The total number of backup unit responses to community-generated calls for service. This number often varies based on the severity of the call, as well as the geographical density of the area being served.

This number can also be expressed as the *rate* of backup unit responses to calls for service and is inclusive of any additional backup units beyond the first.

*Calculated from TKPD data* **1.02 backup units per call for service.**

**Backup Unit Handling Time** (multiplied by the rate)

The handling time for backup units responding to calls for service is calculated using the same process that was used for primary units, representing the time from the unit being dispatched to the unit clearing the call.

*Calculated from TKPD data:* **40.7 minutes of handling time per backup unit.**

### Number of Reports Written

The total number of reports and other assignments relating to calls for service that have been completed by patrol units. This includes any supporting work completed by backup units.

*From TKPD data:* **0.24 reports written per call for service.**

### Report Writing Time (multiplied by the report writing rate)

The average amount of time it takes to complete a report or other assignment in relation to a call for service. Without any data detailing this specifically, report writing time must be estimated based on the experience of the project team. It is assumed that 45 minutes are spent per written report, including the time spent by backup units on supporting work assignments.

*Estimated:* **45 minutes per report**

### Total Workload Per Call for Service

The total time involved in handling a community-generated call for service, including the factors calculated for primary and backup unit handling time, reporting writing time, and jail transport/booking time.

*Calculated from previously listed factors:* **107.3 total minutes of workload per call for service.**

Each of the factors summarized in this section contribute to the overall picture of patrol workload – the total number of hours required for patrol units to handle community-generated calls for service, including primary and backup unit handling times, report writing time, and jail transport time.

These factors are summarized in the following table:

### Summary of Patrol Workload Factors

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total Calls for Service | 6,835 | 51 |
| Avg. Primary Unit Handling Time | 54.7 min. | % |
| | | |
| Backup Units Per CFS | 1.02 | 39 |
| Avg. Backup Unit Handling Time | 40.7 min. | % |
| | | |
| Reports Written Per CFS | 0.24 | 10 |
| Time Per Report | 45.0 min. | % |
| | | |
| Avg. Workload Per Call | 107.3 min. | |
| **Total Workload** | **12,219 hrs.** | |

Overall, each call represents an average workload of 107.3 minutes. This includes all time spent by the primary unit handling the call, the time spent by any backup units attached to the call, as well as reports or other assignments completed in relation to the incident.

## (4)     Calculation of Overall Patrol Proactivity and Staffing Needs

Using the results of the analysis of both patrol workloads and staff availability, proactively can be calculated. The result can then function as a barometer from which to gauge the capacity of current resources to handle call workload demands, given objectives for meeting a certain service level. It is important to note that overall proactivity is calculated based on patrol officers only, as field sergeants was excluded.

The following table shows the calculation process used by the project team to determine overall proactivity levels, representing the percentage of time that patrol officers, corporals, and sergeants (half time availability) have available outside of handling community-generated workloads:

### Overall Patrol Proactivity

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total Patrol Net Available Hours | | 27,011 |
| Total Patrol Workload Hours | − | 12,219 |
| Resulting # of Uncommitted Hours | = | 14,792 |
| | | |
| Divided by Total Net Available Hours | ÷ | 27,011 |
| | | |
| Overall Proactive Time Level | = | 54.8% |

At an overall level, TKPD patrol officers have 54.8% of time available to be proactive, after

factoring in community-generated workload. This is in the targeted threshold of between 50 to 60% proactive time for small communities.

The following charts show this analysis at a more detailed level, providing proactivity levels in four-hour blocks throughout the week by service area:

### Proactivity by Hour and Weekday

|           | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Overall |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------|
| 2am–6am   | 70% | 85% | 74% | 92% | 81% | 88% | 69% | **80%** |
| 6am–10am  | 65% | 75% | 54% | 28% | 71% | 58% | 58% | **58%** |
| 10am–2pm  | 61% | 43% | 49% | 37% | 29% | 22% | 62% | **43%** |
| 2pm–6pm   | 61% | 35% | 40% | 47% | 41% | 30% | 59% | **45%** |
| 6pm–10pm  | 57% | 37% | 52% | 58% | 41% | 55% | 40% | **49%** |
| 10pm–2am  | 54% | 77% | 65% | 66% | 50% | 54% | 56% | **60%** |
| Overall   | 61% | 57% | 55% | 53% | 51% | 50% | 58% | **55%** |

At 57%, proactivity is more than adequate to provide excellent law enforcement services. However, there are several four-hour blocks that the proactive time falls below 40%, which indicates higher call volume times. While a proactive time in the 40 percent range is sufficient to handle most calls for services, there may be times when lower priority calls may not be responded to by multiple responding officers due to less officer availability. There are times when the proactive level drops below 30% (Thursday and Friday between 10am and 2pm), and this indicates there may be times when low priority calls have a longer hold time for an officer to respond.

To determine patrol officer staffing needs the following metrics were used:

· 2019 calls for service (6,834) and associated workload hours (12,219)
· Net Annual Work Hours of 1,415 per officer and 1,164 per corporal.
· Turnover rate of 13% (based on sworn turnover from 2019 – 2021).
· Proactive target of 55%.

The following table summarizes the patrol officer staffing calculation.

### Staffing Analysis

| | | |
|---|:-:|--:|
| Total Workload Hours | | 12,219 |
| Proactivity Target | | 55% |
| Staffed Hours Needed | = | 30,547 |
| | | |
| Net Available Hours Per Officer | ÷ | 1,415 |
| Turnover Factor | + | 13% |
| Patrol Officer FTEs Needed | = | 24 |

A total of 24 patrol officers/corporals are needed to maintain a 55% proactive level. This is a no change in the number of officer/corporal positions.

## (5)    Opportunities to Improve Proactive Time

Takoma Park provides a high level of law enforcement services to the Community.  This is seen represented to the Department's focus on community policing efforts, proactively engaging citizens, and providing robust law enforcement services.  One area where Patrol can improve proactive time is by reducing the backup rate for call types that do not require a multiple officer response (e.g., low priority and non-violent calls). The backup rate for patrol is 1.02 back up officers for each community generated call.  Indicating an average of 2.02 officers respond to each call.

Backup is extremely important for certain call types (e.g., domestic violence, suspicious persons, welfare checks, etc.) but certain call types do not typically require back up. Based on the high backup rate, it is assumed that officers are providing back up on a number of calls that do not require a second officer.  Reducing the backup response rate will help bolster overall proactive time for patrol officers.  Also, reducing the handling time for back up officers when applicable will enhance proactive time for patrol staff.

## 3.    Analysis of Investigation Resource Needs

Criminal Investigations is responsible for investigating serious reported crimes in the city and conducting background investigations for potential new hires. The team also includes a Victim/Witness Coordinator who assists victims with a variety of services.  A Property Specialist is tasked with the processing and retention of evidence. A Crime Analyst provides UCR/NIBRS crime analysis and administrative support to the team.

Special Assignment is tasked with proactive investigations with an emphasis on street crimes. Also responsible for extraditions, other special event coordination, and protective details.

Criminal Investigations consists of 1 Lieutenant, 1 Special Assignment Sergeant, 1 Special Assignment Corporal, 1 Special Assignment Detective, 1 CID Sergeant, Corporal Detective, 1 Detective, 1 Victim / Witness Coordinator, 1 Crime Analyst (1 vacancy) and 1 property specialist. Special Assignment Sergeant, Corporal and Detective provide proactive investigations while the CID Sergeant, Corporal Detective and Detective conduct investigations on cases that are assigned from patrol.

To conduct the analysis of staffing needs for detectives the 2020 caseload data provided by the department was used. Caseload data was filtered by case type to determine approximate caseload hours because of the variance in investigative hours needed based on caseload type.

## (1)    Average Case Investigative Hours

The following types of case types were used to determine caseload work hours for investigations: Homicide, Person Crimes, Sex Assault, Property Crimes, ICAC, Fraud, Missing Persons, and General Crimes. Average case hours for each case type were developed through numerous interviews and studies conducted over the last six years with dozens of law enforcement organizations. Each of the average case hours per type of investigation are detailed in the following table:

**Average Case Investigative Hours**

| Case Type | Avg. Hours per Case |
|---|---|
| Homicide | 275 |
| Person Crimes | 22.6 |
| Sex Assault | 26.6 |
| Property Crimes | 16.9 |
| ICAC | 44.4 |
| Fraud | 29.6 |
| Runaway / Missing Person | 3 |
| General Crimes | 6 |

## (2)    Caseload Data

The Takoma Park Police Department reported a total of 153 cases assigned in 2020. The department also assigned background investigations to detectives and tracked time spent on these investigations which is noted below. The following table notes the hours associated with each case type and the number of cases assigned:

**2020 Investigative Caseload**

| Case Type | # | Avg. Hours per Case | Total Case load Hours |
|---|---|---|---|
| Homicide | 3 | 275 | 825 |
| Person Crimes | 44 | 22.6 | 994.4 |
| Sex Assault | 22 | 26.6 | 585.2 |
| Property Crimes | 43 | 16.9 | 726.7 |
| ICAC | 1 | 44.4 | 44.4 |
| Fraud | 4 | 29.6 | 118.4 |
| Runaway / Missing | 26 | 3 | 78 |
| General Crimes | 10 | 6 | 60 |
| Backgrounds | N/A | N/A | 455 |
| **Total** | **153** | | **3,887.1** |

## (3)    Summary of Workload Hours for Detectives

As mentioned above there are a total of 3 authorized detective positions (including the sergeant) assigned to work cases. Using the previous calculation of net available hours for sworn staff and total 2020 caseload the number of detectives needed to investigate the caseload can be determined:

Calculation of Detective Staffing Needs

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Total Caseload Hours | | 3,887.1 |
| *Divided by total net available hours for 1 detective (1,485)* | ÷ | 1,485 |
| **Number of Detectives Needed** | **=** | **2.62** |

As the chart indicates the number of detectives recommended to work the assigned caseload hours assigned is 2.62 and there are a total of 3 detectives currently assigned.

Caseload work hours closely match the net hours available to work cases with three assigned detectives to work these cases. This includes the Sergeant being assigned caseloads.

### (4)    Special Assignment Detectives

The special assignment detective conducts proactive investigations which often require 2 to 3 personnel to perform.  This is an elective unit so minimum staffing or caseload hours are not applied. The value of this unit is it provides the police department the ability to investigate crime that impacts quality of life issues or crime that impacts the community.  Drug related crime and overdoses continue to be an issue in the community. Patrol officers can investigate some street level narcotic cases; however, many of these types of cases are complex and require surveillance or the use of human intelligence which cannot be successfully accomplished while working a patrol shift. The use of a Special Assignment Detectives should continue.

### 4.    Neighborhood Services

Neighborhood Services is comprised of the parking and code enforcement teams. Staffing includes a Neighborhood Services Supervisor, two Code Enforcement Officers, and two Parking Enforcement Officers. Code enforcement is tasked with conducting proactive and reactive property maintenance investigations, education and enforcement of environmental initiatives and the commercial recycling programs.   Parking enforcement focuses on conducting paid parking compliance checks and compliance with parking permit zones and other parking enforcement issues.

The following table summarizes the historic workload.

**Neighborhood Services Workload**

| Task | 2019 | 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| Parking Tickets | Not Reported | 3,503 |
| Property Maintenance Cases Opened | 679 | 953 |
| Vacant Property Cases | 31 | Not Reported |
| Staff Initiated/Target Inspections | 4,234 | 3,368 |
| Complaints Received & Inspected | 197 | 88 |

The current allocation of two parking officers provides adequate coverage for the primary parking hours for the City's timed parking areas.

Code enforcement has a robust staff-initiated inspections completed workload, indicating that staff are very proactive in finding potential violations.  Approximately 85% to 90% of the workload for Code Enforcement officers is proactive investigations, which

is extremely high.   The City should maintain the current allocation of two code enforcement officers to provide enhanced proactive services.

Neighborhood Services provides both education and enforcement of City adopted regulations. In the event a violation is issued, they are classified as civil violations as they primarily focus on quality-of-life issues in the community.   Since Neighborhood Services investigations and enforcement actions focus on quality-of-life issues and a significant component of their workload is public education, the mission of the Division aligns better with those in the Housing and Community Development Department.  It is recommended to move Neighborhood Services to the Housing and Community Development Department.

The Parking Enforcement Coordinator position which is under Support Services should also be organizationally located with Neighborhood Services since they are responsible for processing parking violations and scheduling court dates. The Parking Enforcement Coordinator position would also move from the Police Department to under Neighborhood Services in Housing and Community Development.  *Note: Code Enforcement staff will move to Housing and Community Development on July 1, 2022.*

## Recommendation:

Move the Neighborhood Services Division (parking and code enforcement) to the Housing and Community Development Department.

## 6.    Summary of Staffing Recommendations

The following table summarizes the staffing recommendations and changes for the Police Department.

| Classification | Current Authorized | Recommended | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chief | 1 | 1 | |
| Deputy Chief | 1 | 1 | |
| **Operations** | | | |
| Capitan | 1 | 1 | |
| Lieutenant | 1 | 1 | |
| Sergeant | 4 | 4 | |
| Corporal | 4 | 4 | |
| Officer | 20 | 20 | |
| Traffic Sergeant | 1 | 1 | |
| Traffic Officer | 1 | 1 | |
| **Support Services** | | | |
| Captain | 1 | 1 | |

| Classification | Current Authorized | Recommended | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lieutenant | 2 | 2 | |
| SA Sergeant | 1 | 1 | |
| SA Corporal/Detective | 2 | 2 | |
| CID Sergeant | 1 | 1 | |
| CID Corporal/Detective | 2 | 2 | |
| Victim Witness Coordinator | 1 | 1 | |
| Crime Analyst | 1 | 1 | |
| Property Specialist | 1 | 1 | |
| Neighborhood Services Supervisor | 1 | 1 | Move to Housing and Community Development Department |
| Code Enforcement Officer | 2 | 2 | |
| Parking Enforcement Officer | 2 | 2 | |
| Parking Enforcement Coordinator | 1 | 1 | |
| Records Specialist | 1 | 1 | |
| Logistics & Payroll Specialist | 1 | 1 | |
| NCIC Warrant Specialist | 1 | 1 | |
| Dispatcher | 6 | 6 | |
| Crossing Guards | 3.68 | 3.68 | |
| **Grand Total** | **64.68** | **64.68** | |

While there are no overall changes in recommending staffing levels, the headcount for Police would be reduced if the internal reallocation of parking and code enforcement is moved to Housing and Community Development.  All other staffing levels are adequate to maintain the current level of service if all positions are filled.

# 9.   Public Works

The Public Works Department is responsible for the physically and environmentally safe and efficient maintenance and repair of the City's physical infrastructure, including paved surfaces, sidewalks, street signs and markings, facilities, vehicles and equipment and others.  The Department also manages the construction of public infrastructure and the urban forest and provides engineering services for these and other projects.  In addition, the Department is responsible for snow removal and the collection and disposal of household solid waste and recyclable materials, bulk items, illegal dumps, household hazardous waste, electronic waste and yard waste.  Finally, the Department manages "green" initiatives promulgated by the City Council and City residents and provides education and monitors progress against these initiatives.

## 1.      Analysis of Public Works Staffing Needs

## (a)     Facilities Maintenance

The Facilities Maintenance Division has recently experienced a staffing shortage due to resignations of key personnel, which have included both the Facilities Maintenance Supervisor and the Building Maintenance Specialist.  Although the Division continues to provide custodial services, the vacancies in the facilities maintenance function have effectively left the Division dependent on contractors and some direct assistance provided by the Public Works Director.

The Division is responsible for the maintenance and repair of approximately 84,700 square feet of space, which includes the following.

| Facility | Area (sq. ft.) |
|---|---|
| Community Center | |
|     Library | 9,000 |
|     Computer Learning Center | 4,000 |
|     Police Level | 12,000 |
|     Community Level | 19,700 |
|     Administrative (3rd Level) | 5,500 |
| Hefner Park | 1,800 |
| Public Works Facility | 22,700 |
| New Hampshire Ave. Rec. Center | 10,000 |
| **Total** | **84,700** |

Typical staffing levels for organizations providing facilities maintenance and management are 45,000 to 50,000 square feet of maintainable space per maintenance technician.  Therefore, the current authorized staffing of two employees for the City's facilities is appropriate.  The issue, however, is the persistent inability of the Division to

attract and retain sufficient staffing to ensure proper and adequate maintenance for the City's buildings.  Interviews conducted in the Department of Public Works in December 2021 indicated that the vacancies in the Facilities Maintenance Division had persisted since January of that year, or about eleven months.  Failure to provide routine, preventive maintenance for facilities can result in excessive costs in future years.  In fact, some studies have shown that the investment of time and financial resources into preventive maintenance returns $2 in savings for every $1 invested. Therefore, it is clear that a well-established and consistently provided preventive maintenance program is not only necessary for the safe operation of the City's buildings but is cost-effective as well.

Facilities maintenance and management can be effectively provided by contractors, and if the inability to attract qualified full-time City personnel persists, this may be a viable solution for the City of Takoma Park.  However, as is the case with most outsourced functions, this solution would likely result in the expenditure of excessive funds for this purpose.  Contractors have a key role in the provision of facilities maintenance services in most municipal organizations, however the use of contractors generally should be limited to either specialized services for which it is not cost-effective to retain in-house, or during occasions of unusually heavy workload.  The persistent inability to attract and retain sufficient staffing internally, though, may make the hiring of contractors the most attractive alternative after thoroughly investigating the causes of the Department's inability to attract qualified facilities maintenance personnel.  This would involve not only the provision of on-call, emergency repair services, but routine preventive maintenance services as well.

### Recommendations:

Fill the authorized positions of Facilities Maintenance Supervisor and Building Maintenance Technician.

Investigate the causes of the inability of the Facilities Maintenance Division to attract and retain qualified maintenance personnel in a timely manner.


Should the inability to attract qualified facilities maintenance personnel persist, the Public Works Department should outsource both the provision of on-call, emergency repair services and the provision of preventive maintenance services as well.

### (b)    Fleet Maintenance

The Fleet Maintenance Division provides maintenance and repair services for 81 vehicles and pieces of heavy equipment, as well as 33 smaller pieces of equipment and non-rolling stock, including mowers, pumps, etc.  In calculating the adequacy of fleet maintenance

staffing levels, the project team utilizes the Vehicle Equivalent Unit (VEU). This approach acknowledges the varying levels of maintenance and repair intensity required of different types of vehicles and equipment. Therefore, although the arithmetic computation of the average number of vehicles and equipment per mechanic is 57 to 1 (i.e., 114 units divided by two mechanics) in the Public Works Department's Vehicle Maintenance Division, this ratio gives equal weight to, for example, the maintenance requirements for an air compressor and a grader. The VEU approach, however, assigns numerical weights to the various pieces of equipment in the fleet. The standard VEU is an administrative sedan, which is assigned a weight of one (1) VEU. An air compressor or trailer, which require far less maintenance and repair expenditures on the parts of mechanics during a typical year, are assigned VEUs of 0.5. On the other hand, motor graders and sweepers are assigned higher VEUs, as they require far greater maintenance expenditures than sedans, air compressors and trailers.

The project team assigned VEUs to each of the 114 pieces of equipment for which the Vehicle Maintenance Division is responsible and calculated the VEU total at 148.1 Therefore the ratio of VEUs per mechanic is roughly 74 to 1 before considering any of the time expended by the Working Foreman. This ratio is slightly less than the typical ratio of between 90 and 110 per mechanic, however in smaller shops, it is common to employ a minimum of two mechanics in order to provide consistency of service during absences. In any case, the presence of only one mechanic would indicate an under-staffing situation according to the VEU calculation methodology.

## Recommendation:

Maintain the staffing in the Vehicle Maintenance Division at two (2) Mechanics.

## (c)    Right of Way Maintenance

The Right of Way Division of the Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance and repair of 34 center line miles of roadway. As is noted elsewhere in this report, the Public Works Department does not record data in sufficient form to facilitate a quantitative analysis of individual employee or divisional workloads related to activities in maintaining the City's roadways. However, in the project team's experience, well-functioning public works organizations allocate one dedicated maintenance worker for every 15 to 20 linear miles of roadway. The Takoma Park Right of Way Division has a Supervisor, two (2) working Crew Leaders, an Equipment Operator and three (3) Maintenance Technicians in addition to a variable number of seasonal temporary employees. This equates to approximately one field worker for every 5.7 linear miles (i.e., 34 miles / 6 field workers), which is well below the range of 15 to 20 miles noted above.

The City's Right of Way Division provides the functions that many other similar municipal streets maintenance organizations provide, however it does not provide roadside mowing, which is a service provided by the Vegetation Management Division of Public Works.  There are, however, certain other factors that impact staffing in the Division. These include the provision of park playground maintenance, snow removal, illegal dump abatement, leaf collection and disposal, delivering mulch to private residents, and during the street sweeping season (generally from March through October), Drivers must transport road debris to the transfer station in Washington DC, which is a time-consuming effort.  In addition, Right of Way Division staff members fill in for Solid Waste Drivers when needed and given the high priority of solid waste and recycling services, and the unpredictable nature of many absences, this can have a significant impact on the ability of the Right of Way Division to accomplish scheduled tasks.

The relatively high staffing level in the Right of Way Division (e.g., only 5.7 linear miles per field worker) may be explained by several mitigating factors.  Although on a typical work day (i.e., no snow removal requirements, no illegal dumps, no requirements to fill in for Solid Waste Drivers, etc.), the Division has sufficient staffing to provide a very high level of road maintenance service, the fact remains that the staff not only may be required to divert from core divisional service, but the Supervisor and Crew Leaders on a very high percentage of workdays may not be able to schedule work for their crews with any degree of certainty that the work will be accomplished.  Additionally, it is common for municipalities in areas of the country that must be prepared to remove snow from their streets to maintain minimum staffing levels in their streets maintenance organizations to sufficiently cover all snow removal routes.  All of these factors combine to indicate that, although by some standards, the Division may be considered to be "over-staffed," the project team makes no recommendation to reduce the current field staffing level of six (6) workers.

### Recommendation:

The Right of Way Division should maintain its current staffing levels.

### (d)    Vegetation Management

The Vegetation Management Division is responsible for the trees, shrubs and herbaceous materials at 109 sites in the City, comprising 13.9 acres.  Of this number, the Division has historically outsourced the maintenance of about 0.8 acres.  The contractor typically makes six visits to each of the sites covered by its contract. The Division has an internal staff that consists of a Supervisor, three Maintenance Technicians and some seasonal and temporary workers.

The intensity of the maintenance of vegetative areas should conform to pre-defined service levels desired by the community.  Although the service levels can vary from one site to another, generally a more manicured look correlates with a more labor-intensive effort on the parts of staff.  By example, fully developed parks that receive very high service levels will require the greatest staff resources.  Conversely, park land with no facilities can receive minimal services.  The broad industry guidelines that the Matrix Consulting Group has evaluated relate the ratio of park maintenance workers to acres under maintenance for various service levels ranging from "A" to "D".

The following table provides the basic definition for each of these service levels.

| Service Level | Service Level Definition and Required Maintenance Staffing |
|---|---|
| A | State-of-the-art maintenance applied to a high quality, diverse landscape.  Turf is lush, free from weeds and cut to a precise level.  Plants and trees in parks are pruned for safety, tree health and ornamental beauty. Hardscapes are regularly swept, and litter is collected 5-7x per week. Requires one park maintenance worker per 4 to 6 developed park acres. |
| B | A reasonably high level of maintenance associated with well-developed park areas with higher visitation rates.  Major difference with Service Level "A" is turf is not cut on frequent, regular intervals at precise level and plants and trees in parks are not pruned and trimmed at the same frequency. Litter control is periodic and hardscape maintenance is less frequent.  Requires one park maintenance worker per 6 to 10 developed park acres |
| C | The lowest expected service level for fully developed parks for a moderate level of maintenance associated with park locations of large size, of average development, and/or visitation. Maintenance is accomplished, usually with longer service intervals, to keep the park safe and minimally serviceable to the community. This level requires one park maintenance worker per approximately 12 to 18 acres. |
| D | A minimal service level to parklands or open space with no facilities with the intent to maintain safe grounds and a "natural" ambience.  Generally, inspection services and litter control are conducted, but on an infrequent basis.  Usually such services are conducted as "fill-in" work by staff but otherwise one park maintenance worker can cover several hundred acres of undeveloped parkland or open space. |

The above park maintenance service levels can help frame alternative levels of service that can be provided when maintaining a park system.  These modes of service, as formally defined by the NRPA, are further discussed below.[2]

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[2] *Operational Guidelines for Grounds Management*, National Recreation and Park Association, 2001

- **Mode A** is state-of-the-art maintenance applied to a high quality, diverse landscape usually associated with City-owned core facilities, destination parks with high levels of visitation, championship golf courses, and the like.  Mode A locales have the following characteristics:

  – The turf is lush, dark green in appearance, of high quality and free from weeds, insects, fungus, or any foreign grasses.

  – The turf is cut to a precise level and groomed weekly on a consistent schedule.  Trimming along all lawn edges is performed concurrent with mow services.

  – Plants and trees are pruned, trimmed, and shaped to ornamental beauty and are free from insects or fungus.

  – Planter beds are well raked and cultivated weekly and are free of any weeds, grass, or any foreign matter.  Significant color planting (flower beds) is noted throughout the park network.

  – Irrigation systems are constantly maintained and tested weekly.  There are no brown spots in the lawn as a consequence of irrigation issues or under watering.

  – Litter and/or other debris is removed daily along with trash receptacles.

  – Reseeding and sodding are done rapidly whenever bare spots are present.

- **Mode B** is a high level of maintenance associated with well-developed park areas with reasonably high visitation. Mode B level of service is similar to Mode A level of service, with a major difference being the degree of plant and turf grooming. The turf has a lush green appearance and is relatively free from weeds and foreign grasses (less than 5%).  Precise cutting and mowing (e.g., golf course-like) however, is generally not practiced.  Plants and trees are trimmed, pruned, and shaped but not with the same level of frequency. Planter beds are generally free from major weeds, debris, or grasses, but flowerbeds are not as extensive throughout the park network.

- **Mode C** is a modest level of maintenance associated with locations of moderate to low levels of development and moderate to low levels of visitation. Mode C facilities have the following characteristics.

  – Turf management such as mowing, reseeding and sodding, weed control, fertilization and irrigation are practiced to maintain generally healthy grass. However, turf maintenance services are applied less frequently than other maintenance modes (levels). Turf areas under this service level are generally not useful for a variety of high traffic organized sports and leisure

      activities (e.g., soccer) unless turf degradation (browning, bare patches, etc.) is tolerable over the course of a season.

    – Weeds and mixed grasses are tolerated in the turf and are considered minimally intrusive since turf conditioning and mowing is practiced on a scheduled basis.

    – Turf edging is performed monthly conducive to a generally neat appearance <u>for a larger portion</u> of the time.

    – Litter and/or other debris are removed weekly.  Trash receptacle maintenance can be problematic in certain instances of high activity as refuse is not removed on a more frequent basis.

    – Plants and trees are trimmed and pruned annually to ensure proper growth, risk reduction (e.g., falling limbs), and to maintain a reasonably healthy appearance.

    – Planter bed areas are weeded and cultivated at four-month intervals so wild weeds or grasses may be present for shorter periods of time prior to scheduled maintenance.  They are tolerated at this level as long as they are small in size, and the area covered with weeds is minimal.

- **Mode D** level of service is for areas in which maintenance is reduced to a minimum.  Such areas do not have developed turf or irrigation systems.  These areas are maintained only to the extent necessary to control growth to reduce fire hazards and keep native vegetation alive and healthy during the growing season and to eliminate unsafe facilities.  However, these facilities will need variations in the level of service defined based upon the type of open space.

The Takoma Park Vegetation Management Division is responsible for the maintenance of approximately 13 acres (net of the acreage under contracted maintenance) at a relatively large number of individual locations in the City.  As was noted above, the Division has three full time Maintenance Technicians and a variable number of seasonal and temporary workers.  This equates to a ratio of approximately four developed acres per field worker, which is sufficient to provide a very high level of service corresponding to the "A" Service Level presented in the table above.

The project team's on-site activities occurred during the winter season, and therefore our team was unable to visually observe the degree to which the actual maintenance levels meet "A" service level standards.  The relatively few acres under maintenance should allow the staff to intensively maintain its area of responsibility, and we recommend that the Division perform standardized and objective surveys of the maintenance levels at each site under internal management as well as for contractors.

The project team makes no recommendation to alter staffing levels at this time, however, as will be discussed later in this report, the relatively low ratio of developed acres to available staff mitigate in favor of allowing some flexibility of the use of Vegetation Management Maintenance Technicians in other divisions of the Department.

**Recommendations:**

The Vegetation Management Division should retain its current staffing levels.

The Division should develop and institute a standardized, objective survey to apply to the maintenance of the developed acreage under its areas of responsibility.  These should be reported to the Department Director on a monthly basis during the growing season.

## (e)     Engineering

The engineering function of the City is staffed with a single incumbent who is responsible for all engineering services, including stormwater permit issuance, stormwater plan reviews, identification of road improvement needs and oversight of the pavement condition assessment.

In recent years, the number of permit applications and plans reviewed by the Engineering Division has been relatively steady, as is shown in the table below.

| Permit Type | FY 2019 | FY 2020 | FY 2021 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Driveway Apron | 10 | 10 | 5 |
| Utility | 39 | 42 | 48 |
| Right of Way | 16 | 11 | 8 |
| Dumpster/Storage Pod | 35 | 39 | 17 |
| Fence in Right of Way | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Stormwater Concept Plan | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| Stormwater Permit | 2 | 2 | 11 |
| **Total** | **106** | **105** | **98** |

Although some permit types have decreased over the past two fiscal years, others have increased to generally offset them from a numerical standpoint.  However, it should be noted that some of the more time-intensive reviews have increased markedly when viewed year-over year.  These include stormwater concept plans and permits, and although these types of applications can be difficult to predict, the Department anticipates that given the growth in the City in recent years, the increases are likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

Notwithstanding the increases in some of the more time-intensive reviews the Engineering Division has experienced in recent years, the totals are relatively light.

Although permit review is one indicator of current and future workload, however, the City Engineer is responsible for numerous other duties which consume the vast majority of the single incumbent's time.  These include the following:

- Managing the street restoration program.  The City generally allocates approximately $500,000 to maintain city streets in good or better condition, as defined by the pavement condition assessment program, which is performed once per seven years.  The City Engineer is responsible for creating a multi-year work schedule based on condition rating, coordinating with utilities and others whose work may impact the streets and impact scheduling.  The City Engineer is also responsible for maintaining historic records of work and costs to provide a database for tracking and future decision making, as well as managing the public notification process prior to and during work.

- Establishing ongoing Indefinite Delivery and Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts for asphalt, concrete and stormwater work by soliciting periodic contracts.  The City Engineer develops the Request for Proposals (RFP), scope of work, evaluates bids and makes annual price adjustments when required.

- Managing the Sidewalk ADA Compliance Program. The City Engineer manages between $500,000 and $1,000,000 annually to ensure Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance of existing sidewalks.

- Managing Traffic Calming Requests.  The City has a regulatory process for requests for traffic calming. The Engineering Division, in coordination with the City Clerk's office, receives petition requests and schedules public hearings. Responsibilities include reviewing requests, determining the best course of action, developing the design, and if approved by Council overseeing installation. There Council has also expressed interest in conducting a broader evaluation of traffic impacts and speed, and the office of City Engineer will perform a critical role in developing the proposal for further review.

- Managing request for new sidewalks. The City Council has authorized a process for neighborhood requests for new sidewalks, and the office of City Engineer is responsible for receipt of requests, management of required notification and communication process with the affected residents, tracking results of voting and contracting with engineering design firms to develop the sidewalk proposals, working with the community to review the designs and scheduling construction of approved plans.

- Managing the general pavement marking and sign maintenance process in accordance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards.

- Managing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination (NPDES) permit compliance for the City which requires programs to address public outreach, public involvement, illicit discharge detection, construction site runoff control, post construction management and pollution prevention and housekeeping. In addition, the City is required to develop and implement an Impervious Area Restoration Workplan to provide water quality treatment for 20% of the existing impervious area by 2025.

- Overseeing the maintenance of existing stormwater infrastructure through video pipe inspection and developing a multi-year schedule of work.

- Designing and constructing new stormwater management measures, including green measures and traditional pipe and inlet measures.

- Managing the Stormwater Management Utility Fee by reviewing fee structures, recommending changes, reviewing requests for correction and credit for treatment.

- Managing City compliance with the Industrial Discharge Permit at the Public Works yard, including water quality testing and inspections and record keeping.

- Identifying water quality projects and soliciting grants.

- Updating the Geographical Information System (GIS) database.

The duties listed above are typical of an office of City Engineer, however they require a very broad array of skills that relate to regulatory compliance, planning, design, review, record-keeping, mapping skills, public engagement and interaction and others.  In addition, these skills cross functional areas related to both civil and hydraulic engineering.

The array and volume of skills and services required of the office of City Engineer require an additional engineering position.  This position should be at the level of an Engineer in Training (EIT), and should require skills related to either, or both, civil and hydraulic engineering.

**Recommendations:**

The Engineering Division should hire an additional engineering position to supplement the skills of the City Engineer, and to assist with the volume of work associated with the wide array of responsibilities in the Division.

**(f)     Construction Management**

The construction management function in the Department is staffed with a single Construction Manager who reports to the Department Director.  The incumbent is responsible for inspecting roadway, sidewalk and stormwater construction work performed by City crews and contractors.  The Construction Manager is also responsible for educating the public, City workers and managers, Council members and others regarding the reasons for projects and the needs for disturbances to the infrastructure.  This involves both informal discussions as well as public meetings prior to project initiation.

The Construction Manager has, in the past three years, overseen the Flower Avenue Green Street project, valued at $5,775,875, and the Lincoln Avenue Safe Routes to School project, valued at $435,134.  Construction on both of these projects has been substantially completed, however the Construction Manager also oversees routine sidewalk repair and installation, new stormwater systems and repairs, as well as street construction and restoration project.

Although the dollar value of projects managed by the Construction Manager is generally below that of municipal construction project managers in the experience of the project team, it is necessary for any municipality to oversee the work of both City workers and contractors in the rights of way to ensure compliance with City engineering and construction standards.  For this reason, the project team does not recommend any change in staffing levels for this service.  In addition, the incumbent should continue to review right of way and stormwater permits, and enter these into the electronic spreadsheet system, with the objective of transferring these into GovQA, as has been accomplished for tree permits.

### Recommendation:

The Construction Management Division should retain the current staffing level of one Construction Manager.

### (g)     Urban Forestry

The urban forestry function in Takoma Park is staffed with a single Urban Forestry Manager who is responsible for the implementation of the City's Tree Ordinance.  A large proportion of the incumbent's time is expended in the review and approval of applications for proposed trees and removal of trees for construction projects.  This involves issuing tree removal permits, tree impact assessments to determine the requirement for Tree Protection Plans, and, if necessary, the issuance of a Tree Protection plan permit.  The following table provides the numbers of tree permits issued in the past three fiscal years.

| Permit Type | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 (est.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Removals | 58 | 86 | 80 |
| Impact Assessment | 138 | 95 | 120 |
| Protection Plan | 59 | 38 | 60 |

Although three years are shown in the table, the relatively low numbers in FY20 should be viewed as abnormal, as there was a general decline in permits, as well as many other governmental services, that year due to the COVID pandemic.  However, looking strictly at the estimated figures for FY21, if it can be assumed that a total of three hours is expended for every permit type, including permit review, field observation and multiple interactions with each permit applicant, this accounts for approximately 50% of all available time of the Manager.

In addition to permitting activities, the Urban Forest Manager is responsible for interacting in the field and in the office with resident, contractors and internal staff regarding questions about conformance with the Tree Ordinance, and for educating the public regarding tree planting, pruning, maintenance and removal of trees, as well as for generally relating the impacts of trees on the ecosystem.  Although the Urban Forest Manager is organizationally located within Public Works, and reports to the Public Works Director, the position's responsibilities necessarily require frequent interaction with the City's Code Enforcement as well as the Public Works divisions of Right of Way Maintenance and Vegetation Management.

The City has placed substantial importance on the management of the urban forest, having issued a comprehensive Tree Ordinance (see Chapter 12 of the City Code) that requires intensive reviews of proposed plans, as well as frequent interaction with construction contractors.  With at least half of the incumbent's time expended in permit application review, this minimizes the time available for other, equally important, responsibilities such as the development and implementation of a public education plan, a comprehensive tree inventory, tree planting programs, periodic observation of possible un-permitted work in the community that impacts trees, and other initiatives such as update and maintenance of the divisional web site.

The array of both technical, educational and administrative duties required of the Urban Forest Manager requires a greater level of effort to ensure that all mandated duties are adequately addressed.  The Public Works Department is fortunate that the current incumbent in the Vegetative Management Division happens to be a certified Arborist and can lend some assistance from time to time to the Urban Forest Manager.  However, as it is not currently a requirement that that any position in the Department be certified as an Arborist, the current situation should not be viewed as permanent.  For this reason, the project team recommends that the Urban Forestry Division be allocated a part time staff

member to assist in the review of certain permits as well as entering these into the system, the development and implementation of a public education plan and the update and maintenance of the Division's web site to include both educational materials and permit requirements.

The Urban Forestry Division has a dense tree canopy, (the percentage of the aerial view covered by branches, stems and leaves) reportedly approximately 60%. This suggests a relatively great number of trees for a City of the geographical size of Takoma Park. However, the Urban Forestry Division has not developed a tree inventory of all trees in the City. The tree inventory has several benefits, including the locations of diseased trees in order to proactively identify hazards and to prioritize schedules for the staff in the Right of Way Division in removing them. Additionally, a comprehensive tree inventory should assist in identifying species that thrive in the specific environment in Takoma Park.

Should the Urban Forestry Division elect to develop a comprehensive tree inventory, it should ensure that only information that is going to be used is collected in the process of developing it, and given the limited resources to which the Division has access, it should begin at a very basic level that includes:

- Tree species. This should use scientific names, not common names.

- Tree diameter. This should be taken at a standard height for all trees. A common height is 4.5 feet, or diameter at breast height.

- Tree condition. Record any maintenance needed, including removal. This should include any diseases or damage that is apparent, and a recommended treatment.

- Site condition. This should include an estimate of the probable space available for the root system, as well as the general soil condition. Also, how close are power lines, and will trees cause impairments to traffic site distances?

- Locations of historic or distinctive trees.

The development of a tree inventory is time-intensive and would likely take multiple years to complete if accomplished only with the staff available within the Public Works Department, and certainly in the Urban Forestry Division. Many municipalities outsource this effort; however, some also engage interns or volunteers to accomplish the effort over time. Both of these groups require considerable preliminary education to ensure a standardized collection process, and even some direct field oversight by the Urban Forest Manager to further ensure conformance.

**Recommendation:**

The Urban Forestry Division should be authorized to hire a part time Technician to assist in the clerical and administrative duties related to permit application review and issuance, as well as the development of a public education plan.

The Urban Forestry Division should consider the development of a comprehensive tree inventory for all trees in the public rights of way.

## (h)    Sustainability

The sustainability function in Takoma Park is staffed by a single Sustainability Manager who receives some assistance from an intern.  The Division is responsible for the retention of knowledge and expertise regarding infrastructure efficiency, leading the development of the Comprehensive Climate and Resiliency Plan, working with the Mayor and Council to set sustainability priorities and strategies to achieve them, educating the public regarding sustainability and other related services.  One of the Division's primary roles is to help City residents understand the need to eliminate the use of oil boilers and natural gas in favor of electricity, or to "electrify" the City.  In this role, the Manager writes and administers grants in conjunction with the City's Housing and Community Development Department.  The City has established a goal of "net zero," or completely negating the effects of greenhouse gases produced by human activity by 2035.

The function of Sustainability is a discretionary one in the City but represents an initiative on which the Council has placed a high priority.  From this standpoint, the sufficiency of staffing is a function of the degree of emphasis the City wishes to place upon it.  When viewed on a numerical basis, there has been little progress toward the stated goal of eliminating greenhouse gases, as the table below indicates.

| Year | Metric Tons of CO2 Emitted in City |
|---|---|
| 2012 | 148,698 |
| 2015 | 152,659 |
| 2018 | 151,435 |
| **Average** | **150,931** |

There are many factors that influence greenhouse gas emissions, however taken at face value, the data do not show any marked reduction in MTCO2 levels in the City.  This does not necessarily mean that the Sustainability Division has had no positive impact, however. Mitigating factors such as increases in population and miles traveled per resident have not been accounted for, nor has the lengthy lag time required to transition to alternate infrastructure such as electric heat pumps, electric stoves, electric vehicles and other items used on a routine basis.

As noted above, the sufficiency of staffing for this service is a discretionary one, and the project team makes no recommendation regarding the efficacy of the sustainability initiative in the City, which the Council has deemed to be an important one. A cursory review of the data presented in the table above would indicate that the sustainability initiative has had no positive impact on MTCO2 emissions, however the data can be misleading in this regard. And it should also be noted that the available data are four years old, and they may show a more positive numerical impact when these data do become available.

An initiative as broad as the one outlined for the Sustainability Division, with its requirements for research, grant writing, outreach, data accumulation and analysis, policy development, administration and reporting presents a large challenge for a single employee, albeit with some periodic assistance from an intern. The project team recommends that the Public Works Department allocate a part time position to the Sustainability Division to assist with not only the clerical and administrative duties of the Sustainability Division, but the research, grant writing and public outreach elements of its responsibilities as well. The City has established an aggressive goal of "net zero" greenhouse gas emissions within 13 years, and by the only objective measurement available, there has been no progress in achieving this goal. It is not realistic at this date to assume that the goal will be achieved by employing the same level of resources as has been done in the recent past, and therefore these resources should be increased if the City wishes to maintain its stated goal of "net zero' by 2035. The hiring of a par time Specialist in this area will not only enhance the efforts of the Sustainability Manager but will allow that position to focus on a broader outreach within the City as well as to work with neighboring cities in their sustainability initiatives as well, as sustainability is a regional issue as much as a local one.

## Recommendation:

The Sustainability should hire a part time Specialist to assist in research, grant writing and public outreach.

## (i)     Solid Waste

The solid waste and recycling collection functions are accomplished in Takoma Park by a Supervisor, four Drivers and five Sanitation Technicians. The Division is responsible for the curbside collection of household solid waste and recyclables for all single-family residences and apartments of up to 12 units. Additionally, the Division collects food waste on a subscription basis at approximately 2,000 homes. Collection is accomplished once weekly, Tuesday through Friday, by two rear load solid waste collection trucks and

one recycling truck. Solid waste is transported to a transfer station in Washington DC, and recyclables are transported to a facility in Prince Georges County.

The Solid Waste Division collects curbside waste at approximately 3,800 collection points utilizing two trucks on each of the four collection days. This equates to an average of 475 collection points per day, per truck. As the crews on each of the two collection routes complete their routes, they may leave work and return to their homes.

In the project team's experience, automated, side-loading collection vehicles are becoming much more widely used by municipalities and private haulers. The automation of the collection by using standardized carts collected by a side arm operated by the Driver has allowed the elimination of the manual collection of curbside collection by a Sanitation Technician, resulting in an ability to staff a collection truck with a single employee. However, the City of Takoma Park has elected to collect waste with rear load vehicles that require a Driver and a Sanitation Technician. This is reportedly due to the predominance of on-street parking in the City which prohibits the use of automated collection vehicles without undue inconvenience to the City's residents.

In the experience of the project team, a rear loading collection truck can make 850 to 950 stops at collection points in an eight-hour day, as compared to the average of 475 collected by Takoma Park Sanitation trucks. However, the Drivers in Takoma Park must transport waste and recyclable materials to collection points outside the City's boundaries which consumes some amount of time that may vary based on traffic conditions and congestion at the collection points. For this reason, it is not possible to consolidate the two waste collection routes into one.

As noted above, the Department of Public Works allows each of the members of the solid waste and recycling crews to return to their homes after their collection and disposal duties are accomplished, and the City compensates them for a full day of work. This model has the benefit of incentivizing the rapid collection of waste and recyclable materials, however it effectively increases the cost per collection point above actual cost. Alternatives to this model include either outsourcing the solid waste and collection functions to a private contractor or transferring the Drivers and Technicians to other divisions within the Public Works Department at the completion of their route duties.

The cost savings available to the City through the outsourcing of solid waste and recycling collection and disposal are not known to the project team and are outside the scope of services for this engagement. However, the savings available to the City by transferring Solid Waste employees to other functions within Public Works after completion of their routes are calculable using certain assumptions and are presented below. (Note that the calculations provided are for one household waste collection vehicle, and do not include the cost of the collection of recyclable materials).

| Description | Amount |
|---|---|
| **PERSONNEL COSTS** | |
| A. Average direct hourly compensation of Drivers | $23.51 |
| B. Average direct hourly compensation of Technicians | $23.00 |
| C. Total direct hourly compensation of one crew (A+B) | $46.51 |
| D. Direct hourly compensation of Supervisor | $39.71 |
| E. Allocation of Supervisor hourly compensation to one crew (2/9)*D | $8.82 |
| F. Allocated hourly compensation of crew, less fringe benefits (C + E) | $55.33 |
| G. Fringe benefits (at 40%) of allocated hourly cost (0.4 * F) | $22.13 |
| H. Fully allocated hourly cost of one crew (F+G) | $77.46 |
| **I. Fully allocated annual cost of one crew (H * 2,080)** | **$161,116.80** |
| **EQUIPMENT COSTS** | |
| I. Replacement cost of one collection vehicle | $228,907.00[3] |
| J. Assumed economic life (years) | 7 |
| **K. Annual depreciation cost of one collection vehicle (I / J)** | **$32,701.00** |
| **MAINTENANCE COST** | |
| L. Average Mechanic hourly compensation | $29.58 |
| M. Fringe benefits (at 40% of direct hourly cost) | $11.83 |
| N. Total hourly compensation of Mechanic (L + M) | $41.41 |
| **O. Total estimated annual maintenance cost at 35 hours per year (35 * N)** | **$1,449.35[4]** |
| P. Total annual operational cost per truck (I + K + O) | $195,267.15 |
| Q. Total annual operational cost per account P / (3,900 / 2)[5] | $100.14 |

The estimated annual cost of collecting household waste is $195,267.15 per truck, or $390,534.30 for both trucks covering the entire City. These costs are provided so that the City can compare them to any potential cost estimates received from private service providers. All of these costs would be eliminated and replaced by the cost of the contract. To restate, solid waste collection crews depart after their respective routes are completed. Depending upon the time taken to complete their routes, there are variable cost savings – or reallocation of existing costs to other services within Public Works – by transferring crew members to, for example, the Right of Way or Vegetation Management divisions. These cost savings, or potential cost transfers, are presented in the table below.[6]

| Description | Amount |
|---|---|
| Total average annual personnel cost of four Solid Waste crew members (Line I * 2, in table above) | $322,233.60 |
| Cost savings (or cost transfers) available if crews complete routes in: | |
| 5 hours | $120,837.60 |
| 6 hours | $80,558.40 |
| 7 hours | $40,279.20 |

[3] Cost provided by Department of Public Works
[4] Cost excludes automotive parts and fuel
[5] Each truck is assumed to service one-half of the 3,800 accounts in the City
[6] Equipment maintenance and depreciation costs are assumed to remain the same regardless of when crews depart each day and are therefore excluded from the calculation of available cost savings or transfers.

Allowing Solid Waste collection personnel to leave after the completion of their routes is a policy decision that is based on whether the City wishes to incentivize rapid completion of routes over cost savings or cost transfers to other service areas. Therefore, the project team makes no recommendation in this regard. However, depending on the time currently being expended on collection, these cost savings or transfers may be relatively substantial, as the table above shows. To place these costs in a different context, if employees are completing their routes within six hours, on average, each day, the available cost savings, or transfers, can equate to a full-time equivalent employee, which is a significant percentage of the total labor available in both the Right of Way and Vegetation Management divisions.

It is beyond the scope of this engagement to make recommendations relating to the feasibility of outsourcing the solid waste collection service in Takoma Park, however, we have provided, above, a simple cost estimate that may be compared to any cost estimates received from private service providers. However, it should be noted that one element of cost that is not considered in the calculations above is any amounts expended on Workers Compensation. Any of these known or estimated costs should be added to the costs in the table above before direct comparisons to private service providers are made.

**Recommendation:**

Consider the cost savings, or cost transfers to other divisions in the Department, in the decision to continue to allow Solid Waste Drivers and Technicians to depart work after the completion of their routes.

## 2.      Analysis of Public Works Management Information Needs

### (a)      Computerized Management Information System

Recording and reporting the activities of an organization allows it to analyze many elements of its work and workforce. Although this may be accomplished manually, the availability and relatively low cost of computerized management systems combine to facilitate this task to a degree that most modern public works departments recognize their value as a force multiplier in enabling staff to analyze and report, as well as to plan and manage work.

The Takoma Park Public Works Department does not currently possess a suitable computerized maintenance management system (CMMS), relying on the City's work request system, CityWorks, for the receipt of requests, and the reporting of completed

work.  Currently, all other work that is recorded is captured manually, with the exception of the Fleet Maintenance Division, which utilizes the "JetFleet" automated system.

The absence of a CMMS deprives supervisors and ultimately the Director of the ability to assess productivity, and to determine how much work can be accomplished with a given set of resources.  The current manual system relies not on quantifiable and historical time estimates of previous work and productivity, but on vague estimates of the amount of time that might be required for any particular task.  Critically, though, it ultimately relies on employees who perform the work to determine the time required to perform it.  And the failure to both capture and summarize the data over an extended period of time deprives the Department of any ability to measure success against pre-established metrics, or the ability to assess either progress, or the reasons for failure.

The Public Works Department should begin the process of defining the specifications required of a new CMMS.  Then, the City should allocate funding for the procurement of a CMMS through a public bid process.  In the interim period, however, the Department Director, working with division supervisors and managers, should require all employees to record time expended on particular tasks to enable the identification of the services provided (e.g. pothole patching, drainage repair, street sweeping, etc.), the levels of service (e.g., each street segment should be swept once annually, with downtown areas swept twice weekly in fall months), the outputs of each of these services (e.g., the tonnage of asphalt laid in place), and the cost of those services in terms of the total cost and the cost per unit of output.

The CMMS should be used to incorporate the following basic elements:

- The ability to plan and schedule preventive maintenance.  Preventive maintenance should constitute a significant portion of the divisions of Right of Way Maintenance, Vehicle Maintenance and Facilities Maintenance work.

- The ability to monitor and report on the inventory and procurement processes of the Department. The CMMS should provide the ability of the Department to electronically track all materials and supplies inventories on hand, and to reconcile these against purchase orders, as well as do routine physical inventory counts.

- The ability to record and manage the work performed in the Department.  Work activities should be defined for the significant maintenance work that is performed.  There is a definable set of work activities for each division, and they should be entered into the CMMS.  As work is accomplished against these work activity codes, data such as the employee, date, labor hours, equipment hours and materials used should be entered as well.

- The ability to generate and analyze reports on the maintenance of an asset, and on the productivity of the staff in maintaining it. Analysis of trends in maintaining an asset may indicate either a need to replace the asset, or the need for greater skills and training of the staff who maintain it. Anecdotal reports of these trends may suffice when there are relatively few assets being maintained by a few number of staff, however they are insufficient in providing meaningful analysis of the number of assets under management by the City's Public Works Department. The CMMS should be used to isolate these trends and to assist in making decisions regarding asset replacement as well as skills development.

- The ability to measure performance. Currently, the Department has established no performance measures, and has no ability to accumulate and report performance against a set of measures in any case. Redesigning work practices to ensure that all work, materials and equipment are associated with specific jobs and categories of work will allow the Department to analyze and report on the efficiency with which the work was accomplished.

It is unrealistic to expect that the crews will immediately begin to report work in the consistent and comprehensive manner that will ultimately be necessary to maximize the usefulness of the CMMS once it is procured and installed. For this reason, the Department should begin to require employees in all divisions to report time on manual forms (with the exception of the Fleet Maintenance Division, which currently records time electronically) as an interim step in acclimating them to the requirements of the new system. The basic information that should be required on each work order should include the following:

- Crew Member Name (or Numeric identifier).

- Location of Work. The specific location of the asset should be identified in the work order. Similarly, for Vehicle Maintenance, an identifier for each unit should be developed; for Right of Way, a numeric identifier for the specific roadway section should be developed, and similar identifiers for other assets such as signs, street trees, etc., and for Building Maintenance, an identifier for the building and the specific piece of machinery being maintained. In each case, this should be identified in the CMMs for the work performed by both internal crews or contractors.

- Job Number. This should be a unique numeric assignment associated with a definable activity. Should the work activity span multiple days, the same numeric identifier should be used, however different dates of activity should be noted, as in the next category.

- Date of Work.

- Equipment Used.  This should reflect the number of hours a specific piece of equipment was used.  It should reflect the total time at the work site, and not simply the number of engine hours or mileage accumulated.

- Materials Used.  This should reflect the quantities and their costs.

- Contracted Costs.  Bills from contractors should be reflected in the work order and should reflect the dates of accomplishment, hours, materials and equipment billed, and total labor hours.

- Activity Code.  For example, the Right of Way Division should develop activity codes that describe the work accomplished, such as an alpha numeric code like, "RW-001" may describe pothole repair work, whereas "BM-001" may describe a particular maintenance activity for building maintenance such as changing air filters.

In the early stages of development, the Department Director, Managers and Supervisors should analyze each crew member's input on these work orders to ensure a proper and consistent understanding and completion of each element.  Any remedial instructions should be made at the earliest possible time to ensure that incorrect procedures are not ingrained into the process.

As the CMMS is brought online, the addition of mobile technology would greatly enhance not only deployment, but also the effective tracking of activities and costs.  The purchase and deployment of tablets or smart phones in the field would facilitate the input of work as it is accomplished and will allow crews to note locations of needed repairs while in the field as well.

In many deployments, it is preferable to roll out a "pilot program" to test the technology across the Department and with a variety of mobile technology platforms.  A pilot program allows for a small segment of the workforce to test training, tools, and accuracy before making full team deployment decisions, and provides an opportunity to discover any successes or pitfalls before full investment and roll-out.


### Recommendations:

Begin the process of defining the information requirements of a new computerized maintenance management system that incorporates the input of each of the divisions in the Public Works Department.

In the interim period, instruct the employees of each division to manually record the attributes of the work accomplished.  A listing of these data items is provided in the discussion of this issue.

In the longer term, begin to accumulate data and information related to times per task, material usage, equipment usage and other important elements of work that will allow for a more precise definition of time and expenses necessary to accomplish work.

## 3.     Analysis of Public Works Organization

### (a)     Vegetation and Right of Way Maintenance

The Takoma Park Department of Public Works separates the functions of road maintenance from that of vegetation maintenance and control into two divisions. Although these are clearly separate functions, they are provided in generally the same service areas, and with crew members who possess skill sets that unlike, for example, vehicle maintenance and facilities maintenance, require little or no previous experience to acquire.  These factors combine to suggest that a consolidation of the two divisions would allow both for greater flexibility in the use of labor but would also permit the reduction of one Manager or Supervisor position.

The project team recommends the consolidation of the currently separate divisions of Right of Way Maintenance and Vegetation.  The two divisions have relatively few staff, and, as was noted above, would allow the elimination of a Manager or Supervisor position, which would also have the effect of reducing the span of control for the Director and Deputy Director, which is currently nine, excluding the clerical position of Administrative Assistant.  Given that these nine positions supervise the activities of only about 25 employees, the low spans of control for these positions' contrasts with the relatively large span of control of the Director.  The relatively low span of control of divisional supervisors and managers is especially apparent when considering that the Solid Waste Division accounts for nine of the 25 total supervised positions in the department.

### Recommendations:

Consolidate the currently separate divisions of Right of Way Maintenance and Vegetation.

Eliminate one of the two supervisory/managerial positions over the two currently separate divisions.

### (b)     Facilities Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance

The facilities maintenance function in the Public Works Department has experienced chronic staffing shortages in the recent past, and these persist as of this writing.  As was

noted elsewhere in this report, there may be underlying reasons for this, and the project team has recommended investigating these. However, in the interim period, the vacancies in the Facilities Maintenance Division have diverted the attention of the Public Works Director disproportionately into the provision of facilities maintenance services, even, reportedly, by providing direct support to customers. Clearly, this is a situation that must be addressed as soon as possible.

In contrast to the Facilities Maintenance function, the Vehicle Maintenance Division has been relatively stable in terms of staffing, and the division is relatively well managed as well. Both the Facilities Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance divisions are internal service providers, meaning that they have no direct external customers as do, for example, the Right of Way, Vegetation, Solid Waste and Urban Forestry divisions of the Department. For this reason, some municipalities consolidate the management of these functions.

Although vehicle maintenance and facilities maintenance are different functions with different skill sets, there are commonalities between the two. They both develop and institute rigorous preventive maintenance programs, are demand-driven to a large degree, make routine materials purchases, stock and account for inventory, make strategic outsourcing decisions, and must develop replacement plans based on assessments of the operability of their infrastructure and capital.

The project team recommends the consideration of the consolidation of the Facilities Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance divisions in the Takoma Park Public Works Department. Facilities Maintenance has been a problematic function from a staffing standpoint, and the consolidation of the two divisions, at a minimum, would alleviate the burden it has placed on the Public Works Director, who should be focused on the strategic direction of the Department as a whole. Further, it would allow for the elimination of the Facilities Maintenance Supervisor position, which effectively reduces the recruitment and retention problem by half.

Beyond these advantages, however, the consolidation would not only capitalize on the relatively effective management capabilities in the Vehicle Maintenance Division but would allow for the consideration of a formal transition to an outsourced model of facilities maintenance. This is effectively the case currently, as the absence of qualified maintenance technicians has forced a reliance on contractors for skilled maintenance and repair. The outsourcing of skilled maintenance services would allow the Department to fill the Building Maintenance Specialist position with an incumbent that provides basic, but unskilled, maintenance services such as light plumbing, minor carpentry, furniture movement, response to temperature control issues, and other similar lower-skilled duties.

**Recommendations:**

Consolidate the currently separate divisions of Facilities Maintenance and Vehicle Maintenance.

Consider the transition to an outsourced model of facilities maintenance, with only lower-skilled services provided internally.

# 10.  Recreation

The mission of the Recreation Department is to enhance the quality of life of City residents by providing safe and well-maintained parks and public spaces, to create a sense of place, to strengthen the bonds of the community and to create opportunities for enrichment and recreation.  It accomplishes its mission through the provision of youth and adult sports programming, educational classes, fitness instruction, youth camps, family activities and special events.  It is further responsible for the maintenance of athletic fields through a contract with private service providers.

## 1.      Analysis of Recreation Staffing Needs

The Recreation Department is managed by a Department Director and Assistant Recreation Director. The Department is broadly divided into the two separate divisions of Community Programs and Community Center, each overseen by a Recreation Program Manager.  Community Programs is further segmented into Youth Outreach services, supervised by a Recreation Supervisor; Recreation Center programs, also supervised by a Recreation Supervisor; and Sports programming, overseen by a part-time Recreation Specialist, a position that was unfilled as of the time of the project team's on-site activities.

Community Center programs, provided at the Heffner Park location, are divided into Camps, Before and After School services, overseen by a Recreation Supervisor; and Senior Programs, overseen by a Recreation Coordinator.  Special events are also provided through this Division by full time, part time and seasonal staff.

The project team's assessment of the services provided by the Recreation Department are sufficient for the provision of the programs, activities and events that are provided to residents of Takoma Park.  The Department hires part time and seasonal staff each year, and these staff members assist each of the divisions and functional areas described above.  These staff are flexibly transferred into various programmatic and clerical areas as needed.

Additionally, the project team analyzed programmatic offerings for the Spring and Summer season and determines that these are relatively comprehensive as well.  Offerings vary from one season to another, and local preferences should always dictate the optimum mix of programs and activities in each municipality.  Our analysis indicates that there is a typical blend of programs that cover, for example, children's and teen programming, youth and adult athletics, dance, martial arts, senior programming, camps, family-oriented activities and others.  However, our analysis did indicate that some age

groups may be more comprehensively served than others, as the table below shows. The project team sorted all spring and summer offerings and determined that there were 70 distinct programs[7] and activities offered during this season.

| Age/Age Group | Classes, Programs and Activities Offered |
|---|---|
| 1 to 9 | 20 |
| 10 | 18 |
| 11 | 23 |
| 12 | 23 |
| 13 | 18 |
| 14 | 14 |
| 15 | 14 |
| 16 | 26 |
| 17 | 24 |
| 18 | 30 |
| 19 to 54 | 24 to 25 |
| 55 and older | 40 |

The table above, though it does not account for the numbers of participants or the desires of the represented age groups for more or different programming, does indicate that the ages of 13, 14 and 15 are under-represented in at least the absolute numbers of programs and activities offered.  The objective in presenting these data is not necessarily to suggest that a greater effort needs to be made in increasing the numbers of programs for any specific age group, but rather to highlight a potential area of need within the Department, which is its lack of analytics.  The Recreation Department understandably allocates its scarce staffing resources to the provision of direct services to its residents. However, the lack of a robust analytical effort may miss opportunities for enhancing and accentuating popular programming for specific age groups.  At the same time, these efforts may be channeled into discovering deficiencies in these areas, as well as programs that may show declining participation rates and therefore should be either discontinued or marketed to residents in a different manner.

In the project team's experience, the analytical effort required of the Takoma Park Recreation Department would likely be approximately eight (8) to 16 hours per month, with this effort likely being somewhat greater than this for the first six to nine months as the Department evolves in its understanding of the data.  The project team therefore does not recommend additional full-time staff for this effort, but during the course of each month, both Recreation Program Managers should summarize its own portion of total

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[7] Several programs and activities are offered in multiple sessions.  For example, four Zumba Gold sessions are offered at different times, and these were considered to be a single offering for purposes of the table provided in this section.  Other classes and programs were treated similarly so that there were 70 distinct offerings.

Department offerings, and report these to the Assistant Director. In addition to the analysis of offerings by age group, described above, potential areas of analysis may include the following.

- Total cost of each program, event or activity. This should include direct costs of labor and materials, as well as an allocable portion of the indirect costs of clerical, supervisory and managerial support.

- Total revenues from each program, event or activity. This should be shown as a percentage of total costs.

- Trends in participation in each program, event or activity over a three-to-five-year period. Any unexplained changes in participation levels should be highlighted for discussion on a regular basis in order to determine if mid-course corrections in service delivery are warranted, or if, for example, declining participation represents a longer-term trend.

- Identification of successful programming trends in other municipal organizations that may translate to successful implementation in Takoma Park.

- Gaps in programmatic offerings.

- Cross-marketing of programs. ActiveNet may be of great assistance in this regard. As a stand-alone registration package, ActiveNet allows participants to register for programs, classes, activities, etc., for which they are aware, or have received word-of-mouth recommendations. However, registration and participation data should be analyzed to market other programs for which participants in one program may be interested. For example, a participant in Kung Fu may be interested in registering for Karate, and vice versa, and a participant in Hip Hop dance may also be interested in registering for Zumba or other dance classes that may be offered.

Recreation professionals are generally highly skilled in-service provision as well as customer service and interaction, and this appears to be the case specifically in Takoma Park as well. However, these professionals are not typically trained in data analysis, which can be vital in identifying trends that will assure that the Department continues to change, grow and adapt to the needs of its service population.

The service offerings are likely not of a volume to justify a full-time data analyst, and the project team therefore does not recommend the addition of such a position to the organization at this time. However, the Department's volume of programming should not allow it to overlook opportunities to adapt to its customers' needs as it becomes necessary. Therefore, the analytical effort should not be one that is performed only periodically, or as time permits, but rather should be a required, routine effort on the parts of managerial staff until such time as a full time Data Analyst is warranted.

## Recommendations:

Maintain staffing of the Recreation Department at current levels.

Institute a routine data analysis effort.  This should eb a monthly effort on the parts of the two Recreation Program Managers until such time that workload volumes indicate the need for a full time Data Analyst.

## 2.        Analysis of Recreation Operational Needs

The Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance of two athletic field in the City, for which is contracts out these duties to a private service provider.  As is noted elsewhere in this report, the Public Works Department has the responsibility for the maintenance of parks, natural areas, landscaped areas, dog parks, median strips and other similar areas that are mowed, manicured and maintained by the Vegetation Management Division.  These locations are, in many cases, in close proximity to the athletic fields under the responsibility of the Recreation Department.

Although the project team does not possess the exact dimensions of the two athletic fields under the responsibility of the Recreation Department, our experience is that football/soccer fields are generally in the range of 1.5 to 2.5 acres in size.  A riding mower with a 30-inch cutting radius can take about two (2) hours to mow a field of this size, and a riding mower with a 72-inch cut can mow the same area in 20 to 25 minutes.  Lining a football field can also take between two (2) and three (3) hours, so the total time invested in both fields is estimated to take between eight (8) and ten (10) hours using a 30-inch mower, and between five (5) and seven (7) hours using a 72-inch mower.

The fact that the fields are in close proximity to acreage already maintained by the Public Works Department suggests that there are economies available by transferring the responsibility for their maintenance from Recreation to Public Works' Vegetation Management Division.  That organization can make the decision as to the viability of determining whether it can reasonably accommodate the care of these two fields using internal staff or by contract.  However, an additional reason to transfer the responsibility out of the Recreation Department is that field maintenance is outside the core service area, and well within that of Public Works.  Even if the decision is made that the work is not accomplished directly by staff in the Vegetation Management Division, that division may make more informed decisions regarding outsourcing the function, as it is possible that it can be combined with the maintenance contracts it already administers for certain vegetative areas in the City for which is has current responsibility.

**Recommendation:**

Transfer the responsibility for the maintenance of athletic fields from the Recreation Department to the Public Works Department.

# Appendix A - Employee Survey Analysis

As part of the Matrix Consulting Group's study of Takoma Park, MD, a survey of the City's staff was conducted. The survey aimed to gauge the opinions of employees on several topics relevant to the study. The survey was conducted online through SurveyMonkey from February 8th to February 28th, 2022. The project team sent email invitations to 225 recipients and received 121 responses. This indicates a completion rate of 54%.

## 1.    Key Findings

Later sections discuss the survey responses in more depth, however the key takeaways from the survey are summarized in the following bullet points:

- **Strengths:** Survey questions related to the quality of service provided by the City polled consistently high. This was also highlighted as a strength during the open-ended response section. The quality of current staff/team members was also frequently mentioned, with around a quarter of open-ended responses mentioning said strength.

- **Staffing:** A key issue facing the organization is a lack of staffing. Questions related to adequate staffing levels generally garnered strong disagreement (40% or more) from respondents. The shortage of staff was also often pointed out during the open-ended section.

- **Communication:** Statements relating to the quality of communication from leadership also received higher disagreement levels.

- **Workload:** Responses to the workload-related question were largely consistent despite a few outliers. 44% of all respondents said they are always busy but can keep up with the work. Respondents from General Government and Public Works were more likely than others to say that they were always busy and unable to catch up. Respondents from Library and Police were more likely than others to say that they have the right balance of workload and time.

- **Career Prospects:** One of the more poorly received statements asked respondents how they felt about the prospect of making a career at the City. This received less than 55% agreement from all respondents except for those who had worked for the City for more than 20 years.

- **Tenure:** Two demographics usually had higher agreement levels and lower disagreement levels than others. Those who had worked for the city for 0-2 years as well as those who had been with the organization for more than 20 years generally responded more positively to survey statements.

- **Succession planning:** Statement #18 asked respondents about how succession planning was being implemented in their department. This question received some of the lowest levels of agreement, reaching as low as 10% among those from Housing and Community Development.

- **Police:** Responses from the Police department generally had higher disagreement levels than those from other departments. Statements that received higher disagreement levels from Police involved staffing levels, policies and procedures, management, performance expectations, and employee wellness/safety.

## 2.    Respondent Demographics

While the survey was anonymous, respondents were asked to identify their department, length of employment, and the terms of their employment (full-time, part-time, or seasonal). The goal of asking these questions was to allow insight into whether certain perceptions were organization-wide or limited to certain employee groups. The following table shows the responses received to these demographic questions:

| Department | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| General Government | 23 | 19% |
| Housing and Community Development | 10 | 8.3% |
| Library | 11 | 9.1% |
| Police | 41 | 33.9% |
| Public Works | 14 | 11.6% |
| Recreation | 22 | 18.2% |

| Length of Employment | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| 0-2 Years | 41 | 33.9% |
| 3-5 Years | 12 | 9.9% |
| 6-10 Years | 25 | 20.7% |
| 11-20 Years | 26 | 21.5% |
| More than 20 Years | 17 | 14.1% |

| Type of Employee | Number of Respondents | Percentage of Respondents |
|---|---|---|
| Full-Time | 91 | 75.2% |
| Part-Time | 27 | 22.3% |
| Seasonal/On-Call | 3 | 2.5% |

## 3.    Multiple-Choice Responses – Employee Experience

Respondents were provided with two sets of statements for them to respond to. Respondents were able to indicate their level of agreement with the statement by responding "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Disagree", or "Strongly Disagree".

The first eight statements sought to understand how staff perceive working for the organization as a whole. The following table lists said statements along with the agreement levels of those who responded:

| # | Statement | Agree or Strongly Agree | Disagree or Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | There is good teamwork between my department and other departments within my organization. | 67.6% | 26.5% |
| 2 | I have the technology/software necessary to complete my job efficiently and effectively. | 70.6% | 23.5% |
| 3 | I am able to complete internal paperwork (e.g., benefits-related paperwork, finance or procurement paperwork, etc.) electronically without having to print or manually sign papers. | 69.6% | 23.5% |
| 4 | I am empowered to make decisions within my professional judgement. | 74.3% | 20.8% |
| 5 | I am kept informed of what is happening in my organization. | 64.0% | 33.0% |
| 6 | My department and the other departments work toward the same strategic goals. | 61.8% | 23.5% |
| 7 | The City of Takoma Park is a good place to work. | 74.3% | 20.8% |
| 8 | I feel that I can make a career with this organization. | 55.9% | 31.4% |

It is worth noting the above statements received over 50% agreement amongst all respondents.

### 1)    Areas of Strong Agreement

Three of the eight statements in this section received more than 70% agreement ("agree" and "strongly agree" combined). They are listed below:

• Statement #2 addressed the technology and software needs of staff. 70.6% of respondents agreed that they are appropriately equipped to do their job.

- Statement #4 focused on the empowerment of staff to make decisions. 74.3% agreed that they were encouraged to make decisions using their professional judgment.

- Statement #7 – that the City is a good place to work – received 74.3% agreement.

## 2)    Areas of Agreement

These three statements received less than 70% agreement but did not exceed 30% disagreement.

- Statements #1 and #6 dealt with collaboration between departments. #1 received 67.6% agreement and 26.5% disagreement. #6 received 61.8% agreement and 23.5% disagreement.

- Statement #3 related to the digitization of forms and other paperwork. It received 69.6% agreement and 23.5% disagreement.

## 3)    Areas of Mixed Agreement

The two statements below had disagreement levels ("disagree" and "strongly disagree" combined) exceeding 30%.

- Statement #5, that employees are kept informed about what is going on within the organization, received 33% disagreement.

- Statement #8 received 31.4% disagreement. The statement dealt with the prospect of making a career within the organization.

## 4)    Differences by Division

The following points highlight some differences in agreement levels between the various divisions polled for this survey:

- While Statement #2 received strong agreement (70.6%) across the organization, those within General Government had much higher disagreement levels (52.4% disagreement). The statement asked respondents if they are appropriately equipped with the technology to do their jobs.

- Police had higher levels of disagreement across many of the statements, including Statement #1 (34.3%), Statement #4 (32.4%), Statement #5 (55.9%), and Statement #6 (42.9%). These statements dealt with teamwork, communication, and individual empowerment. Police responses for these statements generally had the highest levels of disagreement amongst the various divisions.

- Statement #8 – the prospect of making a career within the organization - received higher levels of disagreement (31.4%) from all respondents. Disagreement levels were particularly high amongst respondents in General Government (38.1%), Library (45.5%), and Recreation (40%).

## 5)      Differences by Length of Tenure

The project team also analyzed how a respondent's length of employment impacted their agreement levels for each statement:

- Respondents who had worked for the organization longer than 20 years generally had higher levels of agreement across all statements. Statement #5, which related to how well-informed staff were regarding events in their organization, is a good example of this. New staff were also much less likely to disagree. Conversely, staff within the 3-5- and 6-10-year range had higher disagreement levels than other demographics.

- Statement #1, that there is good teamwork between departments, saw generally low disagreement levels from staff besides those with 3-5 years of experience. 41.7% of this group disagreed with the statement.

- While Statement #2 received strong levels of agreement (70.6%) across the organization, employees with 0-2 years of experience were less likely to agree. This demographic had an agreement level of 54.8% and a disagreement level of 41.9%. This statement dealt with the technological needs of staff.

- Statement #7 – that Takoma Park is a good place to work - saw largely high (74.3%) levels of agreement from most respondents. One exception was those with 3-5 years' experience, who were slightly less likely (65%) to agree with this statement than their peers.

## 4.     Multiple-Choice Responses – Department Specific and Workload

The next set of statements sought to understand how staff perceive working for their respective departments. The following table lists said statements along with the agreement levels of those who responded:

| # | Statement | Agree or Strongly Agree | Disagree or Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | My department provides a high level of service to the residents (or other employees if an internal services department). | 93.1% | 5.9% |
| 2 | Providing high-quality work is a priority for my department. | 94.1% | 5.9% |
| 3 | My department places a high priority on cost-effective methods of providing services. | 77.2% | 8.9% |
| 4 | My immediate supervisor does an effective job of coaching and mentoring me. | 75.0% | 20.0% |
| 5 | In my department, employees in similar classifications are assigned a similar amount of work. | 55.4% | 21.8% |
| 6 | In my department, we do a good job of planning ahead and scheduling our work. | 73.0% | 22.0% |
| 7 | The organizational structure of my department promotes the efficient delivery of services. | 72.0% | 22.0% |
| 8 | Staffing levels in my department promote efficiency for the work being performed. | 51.5% | 43.4% |
| 9 | Our internal policies and procedures are effective at helping me perform my job. | 67.7% | 25.3% |
| 10 | I am encouraged by my managers and supervisors to identify better ways to provide services. | 71.3% | 19.8% |
| 11 | Managers and supervisors in my department communicate a clearly defined strategic direction. | 63.3% | 32.7% |
| 12 | We have high performance expectations in my department. | 77.2% | 17.8% |
| 13 | Performance issues in my department are dealt with appropriately. | 56.0% | 26.0% |
| 14 | Managers and supervisors in my department do a good job of communicating important information to me in a timely manner. | 69.3% | 26.7% |
| 15 | My section effectively manages workload so that all individuals are highly utilized. | 73.7% | 17.2% |
| 16 | My department explores new and innovative ways to provide services. | 71.3% | 17.8% |
| 17 | The City provides sufficient training opportunities for staff. | 55.4% | 37.6% |
| 18 | Succession planning is effectively implemented throughout the City organization. | 38.4% | 37.4% |
| 19 | Employee wellness and safety is a high priority within the organization. | 57.6% | 37.4% |

It is worth noting that all but one statement (see #18 below) received more than 50% agreement.

## 1)  Areas of Strong Agreement

Ten statements had agreement levels ("agree" and "strongly agree" combined) of 70% or more. There are listed below:

• Statements #1-3 all deal with the level of service and quality of work. These all received high agreement levels, with #1 and #2 each exceeding 90% agreement.

• Statements #4 and #10 focused on receiving mentoring and encouragement from supervisors. They received 75% and 71.3% respectively.

• Statement #6 related to the planning and scheduling of work. 73% of respondents agreed with the statement.

• Statement #7 – that the organizational structure of the department is efficient – received 72% agreement.

• Statement #12 dealt with having high performance expectations within the department. 77.2% of respondents agreed.

• Statement #15 focused on the effective utilization of staff. The statement received 73.7% agreement.

• Statement #16 – that the department explores new and innovative ways to provide service – received 71.3% agreement.

## 2)    Areas of Agreement

These statements received less than 70% agreement but did not exceed 30% disagreement:

• Statement #5 looked at equity in the assignment of work. 55.4% agreed while 21.8% disagreed.

• Statement #9 related to policies and procedures. It received 67.7% agreement and 25.3% disagreement.

• Statement #13 dealt with how performance issues are addressed. It received 56% agreement and 26% disagreement.

- Statement #14 focused on communication from management. It received 69.3% agreement and 26.7% disagreement.

## 3) Areas of Mixed Agreement

Five Statements had disagreement levels ("disagree" and "strongly disagree" combined) of 30% or more. They are listed below:

- Statement #8, which focused on staffing levels, received 43.4% disagreement.

- Statement #11 dealt with communication from managers and received 32.7% disagreement.

- Statement #17 related to training opportunities for staff. It received 37.6% disagreement.

- Statement #18 focused on succession planning and received 37.4% disagreement. It is worth noting that this statement had a higher level of respondents who abstained from answering.

- Statement #19 – that employee wellness and safety is a high priority – received 37.4% disagreement.

## 4) Differences by Department

Agreement levels varied between departments. The following points offer some key highlights:

- In general, the Police Department had lower levels of agreement and higher levels of disagreement when compared to other departments. Police had disagreement levels exceeding 30% for eight of the statements.

- Police had disagreement levels exceeding 50% for three statements. Statements that received higher disagreement from police involved staffing levels (#8, 69.7%), strategic direction (#11, 51.5%), and employee wellness (#19, 60.6%).

- Statement #7 asked respondents if the organization's structure is effective. It received strong agreement from all respondents combined (72%). This statement received 57.14% agreement (and 33.3 % disagreement) from General Government staff.

- While Statement #8 – that staffing levels are appropriate - received 43.4% disagreement from all respondents combined, 90.9% of Library staff agreed with the statement.

- Generally, most of the responses to Statement #9 (policies and procedures) were in strong agreement. Two departments – Library and Public Works – had agreement levels at around 90% each. General Government, on the other hand, was split between agreement (42.9%), and disagreement (47.62%).

- Statement #10 dealt with encouragement from managers and supervisors. It received strong agreement from the organization as a whole (71.3%). This statement also received 58.8% agreement – and 32.6% disagreement – from Police.

- While responses to Statement #13 were mixed, it did receive higher levels of agreement from Public Works (80%) and Housing and Community Development (66.7%). Statement #13 looked at how performance issues are handled within each department.

- Compared to other departments, General Government and Police each had a stronger level of disagreement with Statement #14 (33.3% and 38.2% respectively). The statement asked respondents how they viewed communication from leadership.

- Statement #15 (the effective management of workload) received 73.7% agreement organization-wide. The same statement received 57.14% agreement from General Government.

- Police had a lower level of agreement when it came to Statement #16. 52.9% of those respondents agreed with the statement. The average for all departments combined was 71.3%. The statement dealt with innovation in the delivery of services.

- Staff from Public Works and Recreation were more likely to agree with Statement #17 (having sufficient training opportunities) than those from other departments. The statement had an average agreement rate of 55.4%, while those two departments reached 80% and 73.3%, respectively.
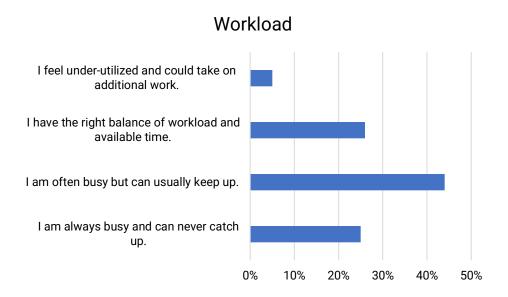
- Only 10% of respondents from Housing and Community Development agreed with Statement #18. Agreement levels were low for this Statement in general, with three out of the five other departments sitting at around 36%. Public Works and Recreation were slightly higher, with agreement rates at 50% and 57.1% each. The statement dealt with the quality of succession planning within the department.

- Statement #19, which dealt with employee health and wellness, received 37.4% disagreement overall. As mentioned before, respondents from the Police department had a much higher disagreement rate of 60.6%. Conversely, Library and Public Works had lower disagreement rates of 9.1 and 10% respectively.

## 5)     Differences by Length of Tenure

- Respondents of varying tenure length had levels of agreement/disagreement overall. Taking an average of agreement/disagreement for all statements shows that those with 0-2 years' experience trended similarly to those with more than 20 years' experience. These two groups generally had the highest agreement levels and lowest disagreement levels for each statement.

- Higher levels of disagreement were usually found amongst respondent's that had been working for the City between 3 – 5 years. For instance, this group was much more likely to disagree with the statement "Staffing levels in my department promote efficiency for the work being performed." 66.7% disagreed.

- Newer employees had a much lower level of disagreement (19.4%) for Statement #19 (employee health and wellness) when compared to the others.
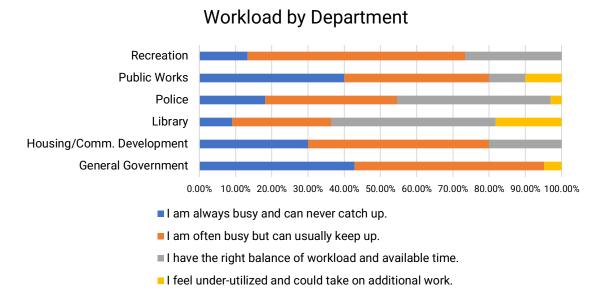
## 6)     Workload

Staff were also asked how they perceive their workload. The responses are represented by the bar chart below:

## Workload



The most common response (44%) was that staff are busy but able to manage the workload. 25% of respondents stated that they are always busy and can never catch up, while 26% claimed that their workload was adequately balanced. Only 5% of respondents viewed themselves as under-utilized at work.

**7)    Workload by Department**

The graph below looks at how each division responded to the workload question:

## Workload by Department



- I am always busy and can never catch up.
- I am often busy but can usually keep up.
- I have the right balance of workload and available time.
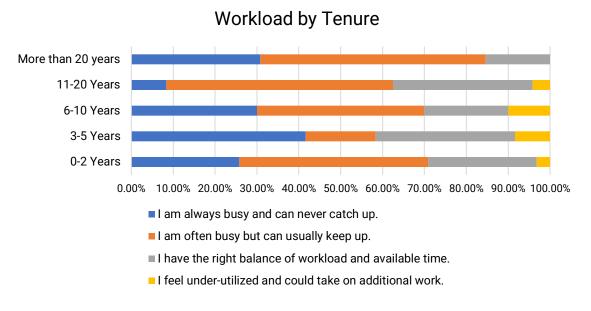- I feel under-utilized and could take on additional work.

- • Compared to other divisions, General Government (42.9%), Community Development and Housing (30%), and Public Works (40%) had more respondents

who perceived their workload as "I am always busy and can never catch up." The average agreement level for this statement was 25%.

• Library (45.5%) and Police (42.4%) had higher agreement levels for the statement "I have the right balance of workload and available time." The average agreement level for this statement was 26%.

• Respondents from the Library division also had a lower agreement level for "I am often busy but can usually catch up" (27.3%) and a higher agreement level for "I feel under-utilized and could take on additional work" (18.18%).

**7)      Workload by Length of Tenure**

This chart looks at how respondents with varying lengths of tenure responded to the workload question:

## Workload by Tenure



• Compared to other respondents, those who had been with the city for 3-5 years were more likely to agree with the statement "I am always and can never catch up." Agreement levels among this demographic was 41.67%, while the average was 25%.

• Agreement levels for the first statement were also higher from those with 6-10 years' experience (30%) and more than 20 years' experience (30.8%). Agreement levels among those with 11-20 years' experience were much lower – 8.3%.

## 5.    Open-Ended Responses

The survey concluded by asking a series of open-ended questions. The questions allowed staff to highlight what they to perceive as opportunities for improvement as well as the organization's strengths. The following subsections summarize the responses:

1)    **Many respondents would not reduce or eliminate any services currently provided by the City.**

The first open-ended question asked if there were any services or programs that the City would benefit from either reducing the level of service or eliminating entirely. This question received 60 responses.

• Of those respondents, 25 (or about 42%) said that no such changes should be made.

• There were also three mentions of "duplicative services" that should be removed due to them being offered by Montgomery County. Some examples were rental licensing and inspection, COLTA, and some permitting tasks.

2)    **Some respondents would not add any new services to be offered by the City. Some believe that events, community outreach programs, and social services are needed.**

The second open-ended question asked if there were any services or programs that the City would benefit from introducing. This question received 60 responses.

• 15 of those respondents would not add any new services offered by the City.

• Seven respondents suggested either new social programs or extensions/enhancements to existing ones. This included childcare, senior care, and hiring social workers. The City hiring its own social workers was mentioned in three of the responses.

• Five of the suggestions focused on community outreach of some kind. This included advertising the City's services, establishing programs that create a dialogue with citizens, and police outreach.

• Four suggestions were related to activities and events. Respondents cited new programming for both adults and children (from both recreation and the library) as well as a new play area for the after-school program.

**3)      Respondents perceive a shortage of staff to be the City's largest staffing-related problem.**

Respondents were asked for what they perceived to be the biggest staffing-related issue facing the City. The question received 80 responses.

- 22 (28%) of respondents cite staffing shortages as the greatest staffing-related issue. Many respondents note a lack of depth at many positions.

- COVID-related issues were specifically mentioned ten (12.5%) times. Organizational challenges related to the pandemic (keeping people healthy, working from home, etc.) were mentioned four times. Mandates (both for masks and vaccines) were mentioned six times. The latter group suggested that mask and vaccine mandates are pushing staff away from the organization.

- Nine respondents said employee retention is poor. Several comments point towards high turnover in their department.

- Wages and pay scale were specifically mentioned by six (7.5%) respondents. Comments pointed out lower pay compared to other jurisdictions.

- Other issues that were frequently mentioned include management, morale, and quality of staff.

**4)      Respondents saw community partners and nonprofits as valuable partners in reducing costs and increasing efficiency.**

This question asked respondents for opportunities for the City to reduce costs and increase efficiencies via partnerships/shared services. This three-part question received 68 comments from 34 respondents.

- 11 responses suggested community partnerships and working with non-profits. Some suggestions included working with non-profits to establish affordable housing, organizing community computer literacy courses, and community volunteer programs.

- Eight responses suggested partnerships with other governments. Some suggestions included having IT meetings with other municipalities and having Montgomery County provide dispatch and police in lieu of the City's own.

**5)      Staff members and the quality of service are seen as the City's biggest strengths.**

Respondents were asked to list what they perceive to be the three greatest strengths of the organization. This question received 155 comments from 63 respondents.

- 41 (26.5%) responses cite staff/team members as one of the City's greatest assets.

- 18 responses point to the overall quality of service as a strength. Many comments note that the service provided by the City is of a high quality.

- Several responses focused on the City's culture and its impact on the community as a whole. Ten responses cite things such as progressive values, citizens' rights, a democratic culture, and the promotion of sustainability practices.

- Similarly, there were many responses that touched on the workplace culture at the organization. Six responses discuss how innovation and creativity is encouraged. Three responses mention how workers are given heightened independence within their roles.

- Other frequently mentioned strengths were benefits (six), communication (six), and diversity in the workplace (five).

**6)      Many staff members view additional staff, access to new hardware, and software as key to improving their work.**

This question asked respondents to identify resources, technology, or equipment that would improve the effectiveness and/or efficiency of their work. This question received 109 comments from 55 respondents.

- 13 comments stated that providing staff with hardware (computers, cell phones, earbuds) would improve the quality of their work.

- 13 responses focused on implementing new software and data management tools. Five sought a new data/content management system used for tracking documents. Four comments specifically asked for a dedicated HR integrated system (HRIS). Another four mentioned a variety of programs such as Salesforce, MS Office, DocuSign, and mapping software.

- Nine responses requested an increase to staffing levels.

- Six responses said that improved training was necessary.

- Four responses dealt with Police equipment such as less-than-lethal equipment, evidence collection tools, facial recognition tech, and license plate readers.

- Other responses mention having an on-site gym (three), a library program meeting room (three), more space/new buildings (four), and an more flexibility to work from home (four).

# APPENDIX

The following table show a more detailed perspective of multiple-choice responses received by providing the specific percentages in each category – Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.  This provides additional insight into the strength of responses related to the level of agreement or disagreement.

The first table includes statements related to employee experience:

| # | Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | There is good teamwork between my department and other departments within my organization. | 11.8% | 55.9% | 16.7% | 9.8% |
| 2 | I have the technology/software necessary to complete my job efficiently and effectively. | 14.7% | 55.9% | 17.7% | 5.9% |
| 3 | I am able to complete internal paperwork (e.g., benefits-related paperwork, finance or procurement paperwork, etc.) electronically without having to print or manually sign papers. | 14.7% | 54.9% | 17.7% | 5.9% |
| 4 | I am empowered to make decisions within my professional judgement. | 15.8% | 58.4% | 15.8% | 5% |
| 5 | I am kept informed of what is happening in my organization. | 17% | 47% | 23% | 10% |
| 6 | My department and the other departments work toward the same strategic goals. | 8.8% | 52.9% | 13.7% | 9.8% |
| 7 | The City of Takoma Park is a good place to work. | 23.8% | 50.5% | 14.9% | 5.9% |
| 8 | I feel that I can make a career with this organization. | 15.6% | 40.2% | 20.6% | 10.8% |

The next table contains department specific statements:

| # | Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | My department provides a high level of service to the residents (or other employees if an internal services department). | 55.5% | 37.6% | 5.9% | 0.0% |
| 2 | Providing high-quality work is a priority for my department. | 47.5% | 46.5% | 5.0% | 1.0% |
| 3 | My department places a high priority on cost-effective methods of providing services. | 27.7% | 49.5% | 8.9% | 0.0% |
| 4 | My immediate supervisor does an effective job of coaching and mentoring me. | 35.0% | 40.0% | 16.0% | 4.0% |
| 5 | In my department, employees in similar classifications are assigned a similar amount of work. | 9.9% | 45.5% | 14.9% | 6.9% |
| 6 | In my department, we do a good job of planning ahead and scheduling our work. | 14.0% | 59.0% | 13.0% | 9.0% |
| 7 | The organizational structure of my department promotes the efficient delivery of services. | 15.0% | 57.0% | 18.0% | 4.0% |
| 8 | Staffing levels in my department promote efficiency for the work being performed. | 8.1% | 43.4% | 26.3% | 17.2% |
| 9 | Our internal policies and procedures are effective at helping me perform my job. | 8.1% | 59.6% | 16.2% | 9.1% |
| 10 | I am encouraged by my managers and supervisors to identify better ways to provide services. | 23.8% | 47.5% | 15.8% | 4.0% |
| 11 | Managers and supervisors in my department communicate a clearly defined strategic direction. | 15.3% | 48.0% | 25.5% | 7.1% |
| 12 | We have high performance expectations in my department. | 27.7% | 49.5% | 11.9% | 5.9% |
| 13 | Performance issues in my department are dealt with appropriately. | 12.0% | 44.0% | 16.0% | 10.0% |
| 14 | Managers and supervisors in my department do a good job of communicating important information to me in a timely manner. | 19.8% | 49.5% | 19.8% | 6.9% |
| 15 | My section effectively manages workload so that all individuals are highly utilized. | 14.1% | 59.6% | 14.1% | 3.0% |
| 16 | My department explores new and innovative ways to provide services. | 18.8% | 52.5% | 13.9% | 4.0% |

| # | Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | The City provides sufficient training opportunities for staff. | 11.9% | 43.6% | 27.7% | 9.9% |
| 18 | Succession planning is effectively implemented throughout the City organization. | 7.1% | 31.3% | 21.2% | 16.2% |
| 19 | Employee wellness and safety is a high priority within the organization. | 17.2% | 40.4% | 19.2% | 18.2% |

This table shows disagreement levels ("disagree" and "strongly disagree" combined) from all departments for the first set of multiple-choice questions:

| Statement | Organization-Wide | General Government | Housing and Community Development | Library | Police | Public Works | Recreation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 26.5% | 14.29% | 10% | 27.27% | 34.29% | 0% | 26.67% |
| 2 | 23.5% | 52.38% | 30% | 18.18% | 8.57% | 20% | 20% |
| 3 | 23.5% | 33.34% | 40% | 9.09% | 30% | 30% | 6.67% |
| 4 | 20.8% | 19.05% | 10% | 9.09% | 32.35% | 10% | 20% |
| 5 | 33.0% | 30% | 10% | 0% | 55.88% | 20% | 33.33% |
| 6 | 23.5% | 19.05% | 10% | 18.18% | 42.86% | 0% | 13.33% |
| 7 | 20.8% | 20% | 20% | 0% | 28.57% | 10% | 26.66% |
| 8 | 31.4% | 38.10% | 30% | 45.45% | 22.85% | 20% | 40% |

The last table shows disagreement levels ("disagree" and "strongly disagree" combined) from all departments for the second set of multiple-choice questions:

| Statement | Organization-Wide | General Government | Housing and Community Development | Library | Police | Public Works | Recreation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5.9% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 8.8% | 0.0% | 20.0% |
| 2 | 5.9% | 4.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 11.8% | 0.0% | 6.7% |
| 3 | 8.9% | 14.3% | 10.0% | 0.0% | 8.8% | 10.0% | 6.7% |
| 4 | 20.0% | 23.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 23.5% | 20.0% | 33.3% |
| 5 | 21.8% | 28.6% | 20.0% | 27.3% | 17.6% | 40.0% | 6.7% |
| 6 | 22.0% | 28.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 29.4% | 10.0% | 33.3% |
| 7 | 22.0% | 33.3% | 20.0% | 18.2% | 26.5% | 0.0% | 13.3% |
| 8 | 43.4% | 38.1% | 50.0% | 0.0% | 69.7% | 33.3% | 26.7% |
| 9 | 25.3% | 47.6% | 22.2% | 9.1% | 26.5% | 10.0% | 13.3% |
| 10 | 19.8% | 23.8% | 0.0% | 9.1% | 32.4% | 20.0% | 6.7% |
| 11 | 32.7% | 28.6% | 10.0% | 20.0% | 51.5% | 20.0% | 26.7% |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 17.8% | 9.5% | 0.0% | 9.1% | 32.4% | 10.0% | 20.0% |
| 13 | 26.0% | 28.6% | 0.0% | 18.2% | 41.2% | 20.0% | 13.3% |
| 14 | 26.7% | 33.3% | 20.0% | 0.0% | 38.2% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| 15 | 17.2% | 28.6% | 10.0% | 27.3% | 18.2% | 0.0% | 6.7% |
| 16 | 17.8% | 19.1% | 0.0% | 9.1% | 29.4% | 10.0% | 13.3% |
| 17 | 37.6% | 47.6% | 40.0% | 36.4% | 41.2% | 20.0% | 26.7% |
| 18 | 37.4% | 33.3% | 60.0% | 36.4% | 42.4% | 30.0% | 21.4% |
| 19 | 37.4% | 33.3% | 40.0% | 9.1% | 60.6% | 28.6% | 36.6% |

# Appendix B – SWOC Analysis

The Matrix Consulting Group facilitated a discussion with the senior leadership team of Takoma Park to determine the organization's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC). The discussion allowed department heads and other senior staff to candidly speak about the areas that they, or external elements, perceived as strong and the areas that need improvement. This could be of their own department or from a citywide perspective. The conversation provided insightful information that will assist City leaders in making future decisions and compliment Matrix's analysis of the overall operations of the organization.

Participants in the SWOC from the City of Takoma Park included:

- Jamal Fox - City Manager
- Jessica Clarke - Deputy City Manager
- Susan Cheung - Director of Finance
- Steve Blazek - Director of IT
- Jessie Carpenter - City Clerk
- Tony DeVaul- Chief of Police
- Daryl Braithwaite - Director of Public Works
- Greg Clark - Director of Recreation
- Alex Cross - Director of HCD
- Jessica Jones - Director of Library
- Vernae Martin - ARPA Manager

The participants engaged in a facilitated brainstorming activity to identify the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing the City of Takoma Park.

## Strengths

Below is a list of what the senior leadership team perceives as strengths of the City that should continue to be utilized.

- Diversity of workforce
- Responsive staff
- Training availability
- Staff dedication to public service
- Limited bureaucratic red tape
- Size (Small enough to adapt quickly, large enough to accomplish goals)
- Empathetic staff
- Strong team atmosphere

- Innovation (Constantly looking to improve)
- Great residents and elected officials
- Large focus on environmental and sustainability efforts
- Location within metropolitan area
- Fiscally sound

## Weaknesses

Below is a list of what the senior leadership team perceives as weaknesses of the City that need to be mitigated.

- Low staffing levels
- Overall lack of resources
- Overly independent (Do not look for help when needed)
- No long-term financial plan
- Multiple strategic/master plans for the City, instead of one comprehensive, coherent plan
- Expected to do more with less
- Lack of space and updated facilities
- Lack of technology and automation, lack of training with technology
- Micromanaging
- Lack of public input from minorities, lower economic status residents
- Organization is reactionary as opposed to proactive
- Lack of protection from resident's plethora of requests
- Lack of policies/procedures for hiring/retention
- Police turnover
- Staff feeling a lack of support from Council
- Front line workers do not feel connected to city organization as a whole
- Have not done a great job of telling the city's story/accomplishments
- Lack of quantifiable performance indicators/workload tracking
- Lack of timely evaluations/feedback
- Overwhelmed staff

## Opportunities

Below is a list of what the senior leadership team perceives as opportunities for the City to take advantage of.

- County assistance
- Grants and other funding available
- Fresh perspective of newer city manager
- Reputation as a city with levels of service
- Multiple strategic plans
- Progressive policies
- Progressive council
- Improvements to PD oversight committee
- Targeted public engagement
- Various plans that could be operationalized
- Educating council
- Pandemic innovations
- Revenue opportunities

## Challenges

Below is a list of what the senior leadership team perceives as challenges that the City faces.

- Funding
- Resident's and Council's reactions to national headlines
- Workload
- Determining core services
- Goals that are too broad
- Mangers focusing on managing
- Allocation of resources
- Recruiting qualified employees
- Organizational morale
- Staff recognition

## Highlights

The final facilitated activity was to identify the top issues in each category. The following table summarizes what the leadership team saw as the top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. These are in no specific priority order.

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| - Customer Service / Empathetic and Servant Oriented Staff<br><br>- An Engaged Council<br><br>- A Focus on Environmental and Sustainability Issues<br><br>- Limited Bureaucratic Red-Tape / Innovation / Adaptability<br><br>- Certain Groups of Residents are Very Engaged | - Lack of Space and Outdated Facilities<br><br>- Technology<br><br>- Limited Policies and Procedures<br><br>- Public Engagement<br><br>- Staffing Level |
| **Opportunities** | **Challenges** |
| - Organizational Study<br><br>- Clarify Council-Staff Relationship<br><br>- Communication<br><br>- Development of KPI's<br><br>- Refocus on Core Services | - Lack of Space and Outdated Facilities<br><br>- New Funding Opportunities<br><br>- Prioritization of Strategic Goals<br><br>- Engaging with Specific Groups of Residents<br><br>- Creating KPI's and Workplans |

## Final Points

The senior leadership team was outspoken about the fact that revenues need to increase to meet the demands of the residents and council. Staff noted that there is a significant disconnect between them and council. The elected officials are asking for more without the funding or the staff levels needed to complete it. Staff also noted that they could take advantage of the technology they have to improve efficiency. Front line workers are also an asset that need to be utilized to understand how services can be improved.

Overall, the facilitation led to a very open and honest discussion. Leadership now has a better idea of where the city is currently and where they should be focusing future efforts.