

The following table outlines major services areas within each operating department and discusses whether the service is a core service or not, in comparison to other similarly situated communities, and provides notes and alternatives for each area. There are several service areas where the City of Takoma Park is providing services that could be achieved from the County, though at a potentially different level of service, or where they have expanded services beyond minimal requirements to achieve a policy goal or to enhance services to the community. These enhanced service levels are not inappropriate per se but are noted only to provide context of which services are required versus not required to be provided by the City organization.

Service / Function	Core Service	Alternatives
<b>City Manager's Office</b>		
Administrative Oversight	Yes	Few alternatives but organizational structure could be established without second Deputy City Manager. This would impact ability of City Manager to focus on strategic efforts due to workload associated with day-to-day operations.
Annual Work Plans / Performance Management	No	While implementation of both performance management systems and annual work plans are best practices, when tied to evaluating services and budgetary resources, these would not be defined as critical core services and not implementing would enable to City to postpone the additional staff position proposed.
<b>City Clerk's Office</b>		
Records Management	Yes	While a core service, the City could take an alternative approach with each department focused on compliance with records management policy overseen by City Clerk. This approach would require additional administrative support from individual departments impacting their availability for their core departmental duties and increasing risk of City being non-compliant.

Service / Function	Core Service	Alternatives
Elections (non-citizen, ranked choice, and 16/17 age voting)	No	The adoption of local policies that enable voting rights for individuals not typically deemed eligible for voting (non-citizens, individuals aged 16/17 years old) and the implementation of ranked choice voting create an increased workload and eliminate the ability of the City to vote in local elections, and the implementation of ranked choice voting prevent the City from having their elections on the state ballot. These policies require the City to incur election costs that are not typical for most other similar communities. Reversing these changes, would require a policy decision and change in current regulations to implement. Impact would be minor increase in time that could be spend on other duties and the costs associated with the election that could be avoided. This is purely a policy decision for the City regarding election access and eligibility but does represent a cost incurred voluntarily.
<b>Communication / City TV</b>		
Public Communications	Yes	However, the City could scale back the number of efforts undertaken and implement a single position of Public Information Officer/Communications Officer. This would limit the proactive outreach and communication to key constituencies but allow the City to not implement the new position recommended.
City TV Programs	Partially	Televising of public meetings is viewed as a core service in municipal governments. However, the City of Takoma Park has developed a strong program of developing additional programming to promote the City, programs, businesses and events within the City. The City could contract out for televising of only key meetings of decision-making commissions and reduce overall expenditures in this area.
<b>Finance</b>		
Financial Oversight	Yes	All services provided by the Finance Department at present are core services. Several recommendations were made in the assessment to expand and enhance services to fully provide serviced typically seen as core services within local government. While these could be postponed or not implemented to reduce costs, this approach would prevent the City from compliance with best industry practices in municipal finance.

Service / Function	Core Service	Alternatives
Grants Management	Yes	One area recommended for additional resources is the implementation of more comprehensive grants management operation. While necessary to comply with financial management best practices, implementation could be delayed, and the City could continue with the limited focus on grants management
Purchasing	Yes	While a fully centralized and staffed purchasing function was recommended, with one additional staff position, to implement best practices, this could be delayed should funding be limited. It would prevent compliance with best practices in local government and not enable the City to potentially reduce expenditures through more effective procurement practices.
<b>Housing and Community Development</b>		
Economic Development	Yes	The main alternative would be to discuss regional economic development efforts with the County and surrounding municipalities with a shared cost approach. However, a regional approach may limit the ability of the City to promote its own priorities and target and attract specific entities to the City of Takoma Park.
Planning	Yes	This is a fundamental service focused on defining and developing the City according to locally defined criteria and policies. This should remain a core service provided by City staff.
Arts	No	The type of Arts programs supported by the City of Takoma Park would typically not be classified as a core function in most local governments. Elimination of this program would reduce costs through elimination of one part-time special projects coordinator position.
Housing	Yes	Increasingly over the last decade, especially in higher cost of living communities, the provision of a defined and dedicated housing program is essential for the local government to provide.
Licensing	Yes	However, there may be opportunities to contract with the County for the provision of licensing functions. Dependent upon the cost sharing agreement, this may have potential to reduce annual costs.

Service / Function	Core Service	Alternatives
Grant Programming	Yes	<p>Most communities provide various grant programs to their community to support and develop targeted services / industries in their community. Those provided by Takoma Park are no different; however, the number of programs has increased in recent years and the vast majority of current programs are ARPA funded. When these funds are no longer available would require alternative revenue source to maintain program focus. Some of these programs are on hold due to staffing issues.</p> <p>Takoma Park has a robust effort including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TKPK Business Investment Grant. Funded by ARPA.</li> <li>• Multifamily Building Grant for Electrification and Building Improvements. Funded by ARPA.</li> <li>• Emergency Assistance Program (basic human need support such as housing, utilities, prescription drugs or food). Administered by MUSST and currently funded by ARPA – previously general fund supported.</li> <li>• Rental Assistant Program (administered by MUSST). Currently funded by ARPA – previously general fund supported.</li> <li>• Community Quality of Life Grants (provides greater access and opportunities to participate in the arts and sciences). Currently funded by ARPA – previously general fund support.</li> <li>• Home Stretch Down Payment Assistance Program (provides financial assistance to eligible participants to achieve homeownership. General Fund supported.</li> <li>• Takoma Park Spark Small grants to create stronger and more connected neighborhoods by supporting community driven projects. Currently funded by ARPA, previously but general fund. On hold until Grants Coordinator hired.</li> <li>• Façade Improvement Grant for eligible commercial properties. Funded by ARPA.</li> <li>• Small business grant targeting local small businesses. Funded by ARPA.</li> <li>• Food Insecurity Reduction Grant designed to increase access to SNAP and to increase access to food for disadvantaged individuals and families. Funded by ARPA.</li> <li>• COVID-19 Relief Fund for emergency services to residents and small business and to facilitate economic recovery. Funded by ARPA.</li> </ul>

Service / Function	Core Service	Alternatives
<b>Human Resources</b>		
Recruitment / Retention	Yes	No alternatives. This should remain an internally provided function.
Employee Relations	Yes	No alternatives other than contracting out entirely the labor relations / collective bargaining function. However, our experience with other entities shows this is typically a more costly approach.
Training	Yes	The training program could be contracted out. Dependent upon scope of services developed, this could be more cost-effective for core training program.
Payroll	Yes	While payroll can be entirely contracted out for processing, it is likely that this would be more costly to the City especially given the data issues present with the existing systems. This should remain an internally provided service.
<b>Information Technology</b>		
IT Support	Yes	While a core service, the City could solicit RFPs to contract out a defined set of IT services such as network security, server management, etc. This approach is not typical for an organization the size of Takoma Park and is only beneficial if high service levels can be provided at a lower cost than currently achieved with internal staff which is unlikely.
<b>Library</b>		
Library Services	Yes	While a core service of local government, as noted in the full report, the City has the ability to receive base library services from the County. For a variety of reasons, including the desire to provide enhanced levels of service, increase accessibility for residents, and the desire to tailor services to the community demographics, this approach has not been pursued and the City has committed to building a new library. The only alternative to reduce costs in this area are to reconsider this decision and seek services from the County or to reduce the number of hours of service provided weekly to reduce staffing. It should be noted that the current hours are generally in alignment with recommended industry standards.

Service / Function	Core Service	Alternatives
<b>Police</b>		
Patrol	Yes	This is a critical public service. The only real alternative to the current approach for service delivery, which as noted in the full report, is being provided at a high level of service and with an appropriate staffing complement, would be to receive these services from the County. The cost impact of this is difficult to determine exactly and would require some significant discussions with the County due to the method utilized for the revenue currently received from the County because these services are provided locally. However, in procuring these services from the County, the City will have much more limited control over establishing the approach to providing law enforcement services within the community.
Detectives	Yes	This is also a core and critical police service. Any decision regarding approaches to providing detective services would be made in alignment with a decision on overall police services. If maintained locally, this should remain local. If procured through the County, this function would transfer to the County.
Dispatch	Yes	As noted in the full report, the recommendation was to maintain a 911 service within the Police Department if police services are provided by the City. If, in the future, the City seeks police services from the County, dispatch services should also be procured from the County.
<b>Public Works</b>		
Facilities Maintenance	Yes	The project team does not recommend any reduction in current maintenance approaches and recommended in the report the development of additional positions and a more defined work program. While contracted services can be procured, they should be used only for specialized services or where cost-effective. Most contractual services for basic maintenance cost more than when performed in-house.
Fleet Maintenance	Yes	It is feasible, but not recommended, to contract these services out. The current staffing is efficient and enables timely provision of equipment repairs.

Service / Function	Core Service	Alternatives
ROW Maintenance	Yes	As noted in the report, the staffing allocated to this function is above the industry standard mainly because they are utilized as support to other functions of PW. It may be possible to realign staffing to reduce total allocation of staff to this function, and still maintain the service levels, if other functional areas are appropriately staffed.
Vegetation Management	Yes	These work activities are routinely contracted out by municipal entities when available contractors are present in the marketplace. Unlike some other specialized maintenance activities, these may be able to be procured at a lower cost through contracted services, but this is only knowable upon conducting an RFP process.
Engineering	Yes	No alternatives recommended for consideration. The City is operating with limited engineering capacity at present.
Construction Management	Yes	No alternatives recommended for consideration. The City is operating with limited capacity at present, and it is beneficial to have these skillsets internally.
Urban Forestry	Yes	No alternatives recommended for consideration. The City is operating with limited capacity at present and any reduction in resources would require elimination of this function entirely which is not in accordance with best practices.
Sustainability	Partially	While sustainability is emerging as a consideration in the provision of all government services, it is still uncommon, especially for a smaller local government, to have dedicated staff in a sustainability program with focus on climate and resiliency planning. It is even more uncommon yet commendable, for a City the size of Takoma Park to have a “net zero” goal by 2035. The City could reduce efforts in the service area and still be in alignment with service approaches of other local governments. Elimination or reduction of focus in this area could reduce one FTE position with resulting salary and benefit savings. However, this would require a change in policy focus and stepping away from the “net zero” policy as this cannot be achieved without dedicated resources.

Service / Function	Core Service	Alternatives
Solid Waste	Yes, partially.	However, the City may wish to consider a formal RFP process to gather information from the private sector for providing these services. Over the last several decades, the number of communities providing this service in-house has declined due to a typically competitive market to procure these services in the open market. The City's provision of composting service is not a typical service provided by most communities.
<b>Recreation</b>		
Programming	Yes	However, the City should establish an overall cost recovery target for programming activities and develop program offerings in alignment with that target. The City does have the opportunity to reduce the number of programs provided to control or mitigate costs of these programs.
Before / After Care	No	While not typically defined as a core service provided by all municipal governments, this is a service offered by other entities based upon community needs. Other than limiting the program entirely, the greatest opportunity to manage costs is to ensure that the City has adopted a cost recovery target for these programs and sets fees for services accordingly. If the cost recovery target adopted cannot be made, the City could then consider whether the continuation of the program with funding from the general fund would be maintained or alternatives suggested.