

# Worksession

<b>Agenda Item #</b>	1
<b>Meeting Date</b>	January 31, 2008
<b>Prepared By</b>	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager
<b>Approved By</b>	

<b>Discussion Item</b>	Identification of Council Priorities
<b>Background</b>	<p>In early 2006, the City Council met with staff to identify goals and priorities. The City Council established the following policy areas for calendar years 2006 and 2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservation of affordable housing in the community</li> <li>• Completion of the Community Center and exploration of the proposed gymnasium</li> <li>• Promotion of appropriate development in various areas of the City</li> <li>• Redevelopment of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor</li> <li>• Fairer tax duplication payments from Montgomery County</li> </ul> <p>A general election was held in November 2007, and a new Council subsequently took office. The worksession provides an opportunity for the current Council to set priorities for their term of office.</p> <p>On January 14, 2008, the National Research Center, Inc.—the firm retained to conduct the first survey of City residents-- presented the survey results to the City Council and to the community. In response to the community feedback received through the community survey process and other Council discussions, staff has outlined suggested courses of action in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community safety</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Communications and outreach</li> </ul>
<b>Policy</b>	<p>The City Council is the policymaking making body for the City of Takoma Park and establishes work priorities for the staff.</p> <p>The City Council values the input of City residents. The community feedback obtained through the survey process can be used by the City to improve its service delivery and to guide future budget decisions of the City Council.</p>
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	None—Discussion Only

<b>Attachments</b>	Staff response to community safety concerns  Suggested course of action—Sustainability  Suggested course of action—Communications and outreach
<b>Recommendation</b>	Staff recommends that the City Council consider the information prepared by staff and discuss other policy areas of interest.
<b>Special Consideration</b>	

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# **Community Safety**

# Resident Survey 2007

- Residents given a list of potential neighborhood problems
- Crime and traffic of most concern
- 62% reported crime as at least a “moderate” problem
- Desire for more police visibility

# Existing Initiatives and Programs

- Tactical Enforcement Unit
  - Plainclothes unit that focuses on the prevention of robberies, burglaries, and thefts
- Bicycle Patrol Program
- Partners on Patrol Program

# Existing Initiatives and Programs

- Walking Patrols
- Robbery and Burglary Details
  - Focused deployment of personnel on an overtime basis to address problem areas
- Crime analysis and information sharing

# Patrol Division – Staff Deployment

- Response to residents' concerns for more officer visibility and uniform presence
- Predicated on full authorized strength
- Creation of new positions and units

# Patrol Division – Staff Deployment

- Four patrol teams of six officers
  - Comprised of one sergeant, two corporals, and three officers
- Additional coverage at full strength
  - Traffic Team (2 officers)
  - Bike Patrol Team (2 officers)
  - Temporary Duty Assignment (1 officer)

# Traffic Team

- Focused traffic enforcement by targeting known problem areas
- Respond to resident concerns of problem areas and conduct enforcement
- DWI enforcement
- Advanced collision investigation

# Bike Patrol Team

- Provide highly visible patrol to business areas. Focus areas will be Old Town to Takoma Junction and Crossroads.
- Act as business liaison officer, meeting and providing partnerships with area businesses.
- Provide fill-in for patrol team during periods when off temporary duty assignments.

# Temporary Duty Assignments

- Provided to officers based on performance
- Voluntary in nature
- Possible assignments include CID, MCPD Silver Spring SAT Unit, MCPD Auto Theft Unit, or MCPD Alcohol Enforcement Unit

# Benefits of New Staff Deployment

- Enhanced customer service
- More visibility and uniform presence
- Better trained officers
- Increased utilization of bike patrols
- Quicker response to traffic complaints
- Improved morale due to increased diversity of assignments and job training



# **Communications and Outreach**

# Resident Survey 2007

- Survey provided detailed information on communications.
- 85% report getting City of Takoma Park news from the Newsletter.

# Resident Survey 2007

- About half of the respondents had visited the City's web site, but much lower when income less than \$50K, much higher when above \$50K; Ward 4 was low.
- City TV-13 viewership was about 28%, but varied by race, as did watching programs on the web site.

# Resident Survey 2007

- Watched a Council meeting on City TV-13:  
White, 21%; Black, 44%; Other, 29%
- Watched other programs on City TV-13:  
White, 19%; Black, 46%, Other, 34%
- Watched Council or programs on web site:  
White, 10%; Black, 28%, Other, 21%

# Resident Survey 2007

- 61% of respondents used the City Recreation Guide.
- On most City subjects, a majority of respondents felt they received about the right amount of information.
- Topics in which 1/3 or more felt they did not receive enough information were: construction or development projects, affordable housing, the City budget, tree regulations, City Council actions, and Board and Commission activities.

# Communication/Outreach Steps

- Acknowledge Newsletter as key vehicle for distributing City information.

# Newsletter

- Newsletter improvements in past year:
  - Enhanced role of editor resulted in improvements to content and appearance
  - Better use by City staff
  - Better delivery to multi-family units
- Recommend expansion to 12 issues, add pages
  - Added pages could be special topics
  - Current cost \$65,000; new cost \$85,000.

# Communication/Outreach Steps

- Improve ease of use of web site for people seeking information; Gov Q&A implementation in progress.
- Implement strategic use of City media and outreach methods based on topic, audience and timing.
- Let people know of content of other media (cross promotion); Newsletter is common denominator.

# Communication/Outreach Steps

- For City TV, new digital server will offer quality improvements and will allow more diversity in program offerings.
- New multi-media bulletin board can simultaneously display video, activity calendars, and RSS feeds from outside sources. Updates can be done remotely; important in emergency situations.

# Sense of Community

- Real differences in sense of community by race, income and ward. In general, residents of Wards 4, 5 and 6 seem to feel less connected.

# Sense of Community

- But, little difference in perception of “Opportunities to Attend Cultural and Arts Activities.”
- Could take advantage of cultural and arts activities to help create sense of community across the City. Could invest in better brochures, involve more departments in activities, promote City services, etc.

# Welcoming the Community

- Focus on customer service improvements.
- Welcome people to City buildings, programs and Council meetings. (Community Center and wayfinding signage expected by April.)
- Recognize that we all have role to play in building a welcoming community.

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# **Sustainability**

# Resident Survey 2007

- Residents asked why they chose to live in Takoma Park
- Many residents cited trees and parks as a factor
- Progressiveness of community and diversity of people also cited

# Resident Survey 2007

- Residents asked to rate various community characteristics
- Availability of affordable housing rated below the norm
  - 67 percent rated as fair or poor

# Resident Survey 2007

- Residents asked to rate their quality of life in Takoma Park and in their neighborhood, as well as the City as a place to raise children
- Overall, residents were favorable
- Notable difference based on ward breakdown
  - Ratings lower for Wards 4, 5, and 6
- Other ward differences in ratings for sense of community and openness and acceptance of community towards people of diverse backgrounds

# Resident Survey 2007

- Residents had the opportunity to provide any other comments
- Property tax and tax duplication mentioned by many

# “Going Green” Council Discussion

- Worksession on January 22
- Strong interest on part of Council to put greater emphasis on environmental protection

# Sustainability

- Staff recommends that City take a more comprehensive approach to sustainability
- Environmental protection only one aspect

# Integrated Triple Bottom Line

- Environment
- Economy
- Social Equity

# Sustainability Advisory Committee

- Redefine Committee on the Environment as a Sustainability Advisory Committee
- Committee scope and mission should reflect all elements of sustainability

# Suggested Steps - Environment

- Building upon existing City programs
  - Stormwater Management
  - Urban Forestry
  - Recycling/Solid Waste
  - Energy Conservation

# Stormwater Management

- Review existing ordinance for possible amendment and strengthening
- Possibly provide for smaller disturbance area to more closely match County requirements
- No budgetary impact

# Stormwater Management

- Research County Rainscape Program for possible implementation in Takoma Park
- Extent to which City could piggyback off County process needs to be determined
- Budgetary impact unknown
  - General operating funds to establish grant program

# Urban Forestry

- Increase tree planting on public property
  - Budgetary impact = \$30,000 - \$50,000 per year
  - Available funding in Tree Fund = \$34,500
- Consider enhancement of tree planting requirements in Tree Ordinance

# Urban Forestry

- Encourage tree planting on private property
  - Expand bulk tree purchase program to two times per year
  - No budgetary impact

# Recycling/Solid Waste

- Greater emphasis on City purchase of environmentally conscious goods
- Enter into MOU with County for multi-family and commercial recycling
  - Discussions are already underway
- Little or no budgetary impact

# Energy Conservation

- Retain consultant to conduct assessment of City facilities
  - Budgetary impact unknown
- Consider pre-qualification of firms to conduct energy audits for City residents
  - No budgetary impact
  - Cost to be borne by homeowner

# Staffing

- Hire Environmental Projects Coordinator
  - Develop, coordinate, and implement environmental standards and regulations
  - Provide support to City Engineer and City Arborist
  - Staff liaison to Sustainability Advisory Committee
- Budgetary impact to be determined
  - Approximately \$60,000 - \$65,000 per year

# Suggested Steps - Economy

- Continue efforts to revitalize New Hampshire Avenue Corridor
- Continue efforts to obtain fair tax duplication payments
- Work towards development of long-range financial plan
  - Address facility needs

# Suggested Steps – Social Equity

- Monitor impact of recently adopted Living Wage Law
- Continue efforts to preserve affordable housing
- Work together to address quality of life concerns in Wards 4, 5, and 6