

# Worksession

<b>Agenda Item #</b>	2
<b>Meeting Date</b>	January 5, 2009
<b>Prepared By</b>	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager
<b>Approved By</b>	

<b>Discussion Item</b>	Discussion of Strategic Plan and Council Priorities
<b>Background</b>	<p>In calendar year 2008, the Council held a series of discussions to develop its priorities. The Council agreed on three policy areas as focal points:</p> <p><u>Sustainability</u> – Work in partnership with City residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to ensure a Takoma Park that is financially, environmentally, and economically sustainable for the City and its residents.</p> <p><u>Livable Community</u> – Work in partnership with City residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to build and maintain a livable community that is vibrant, healthy, and safe, with convenient transportation for all of its residents.</p> <p><u>Engaged, Responsive, and Service-Oriented Government</u> – Ensure the delivery of high quality City services by engaging City residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to understand the community's needs; being responsive to those needs; and measuring how we are doing at meeting those needs.</p> <p>On October 13, 2008, the Council held a worksession at which it discussed the three policy areas and how to further refine them into an actionable strategic plan. At the conclusion of the worksession, the Council asked for staff’s feedback on the draft strategic plan under discussion.</p> <p>A marked up version of the draft strategic plan, reflecting staff’s comments and recommendations, is attached. While staff made some minor formatting and grammatical changes to the original draft, this was not the focus of its efforts so other changes may still be required. Additionally, pending further discussion by the Council, staff did not address the project timeline at the end of the document; it will need to be updated once the Council has concluded its deliberations.</p> <p>The January 5, 2009 worksession will provide an opportunity for the Council to discuss and consider staff’s comments and recommendations and to provide clarification of certain points.</p>
<b>Policy</b>	The City Council is the policymaking making body for the City of Takoma Park and establishes organizational priorities through direction given to the City Manager.
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>	None—Discussion Only
<b>Attachments</b>	Draft Strategic Plan FY 2009 – FY 2014, with accompanying staff comments and recommendations
<b>Recommendation</b>	Discuss and consider staff’s comments and recommendations regarding the draft strategic plan.

**Special  
Consideration**

A follow-up worksession has been scheduled for January 12, 2009 to allow for further Council discussion of the draft strategic plan.

It is anticipated that the Council will take formal action to adopt the strategic plan in February. An opportunity for public comment on the proposed plan will be provided in conjunction with the Council's legislative process.

# City of Takoma Park, Maryland



## **Strategic Plan FY 2009 – FY 2014** **October, 2008**

“Sustainable and Livable Communities, with an Engaged, Responsive, and Service Oriented Government”

Staff Comments and Recommendations  
December 19, 2008

## **Purpose**

This strategic plan has four main purposes: First, it is designed to set the direction and vision for the City of Takoma Park and its Government for the next 5 years. Second, it provides direction to the City Manager and City staff on immediate priorities for the next 1-2 years. Third, the plan should be the driving force behind the annual budget proposal and expenditures, words must be followed up with actions and funding. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it provides the City Council and City staff with a vision and set of values that should provide guidance in all of their decision making, no matter how large or small. It embodies the values and work culture we want the city government to have and a general plan for moving forward. The plan is not meant to be prescriptive about the specifics of every project or function that the city performs in a given year.

**Comment [S1]:** Staff noted that many on-going projects are not included in the Strategic Plan, such as work on the Takoma Metro, Montgomery College, Purple Line and other similar projects. There is Council direction to work on these projects, and they require a good deal of staff resources. Staff feels these projects should be acknowledged in this document.

## **Annual Review**

This plan should be reviewed by the City Council and the City Manager annually. The assumptions in the plan should be looked at closely. The Council should answer the question, “Have changes occurred in the world that would make assumptions no longer valid, and if so, should we change them, or add new assumptions?” If any of those assumptions change then the Council should answer the question, “Does the change in assumptions mean that we should employ different strategies or add or reprioritize the timing of priority projects?” This review should take place early in the calendar year so that changes can be incorporated into the annual budget process.

## **Elements of and Definition in the Strategic Plan**

**Executive summary** – A one page summary, that anyone should be able to read and understand what we are trying to achieve and how we want to achieve it.

**Prioritized Goals** – Identify what the City strives to achieve to realize Council’s vision.

**Assumptions** – State facts and predictions based upon institutional knowledge and analysis that affect the development of strategies.

**Strategies** – Describe broadly how the City plans to achieve its prioritized goals over the term of the plan.

**Priority Projects/Initiatives** – Describe more specifically how the City plans to achieve its goals in the short and long term

**Key Indicators** – Outcome measurements tools that the City will use to measure and determine baselines for key indicators and will measure again at the end of each year to determine progress against those baselines.

**Areas of Focus/Priority Projects Timeline** – Clarifies the timing of priority projects, and what level of focus and resource allocation we will be putting on each project in which year of the 5 year plan

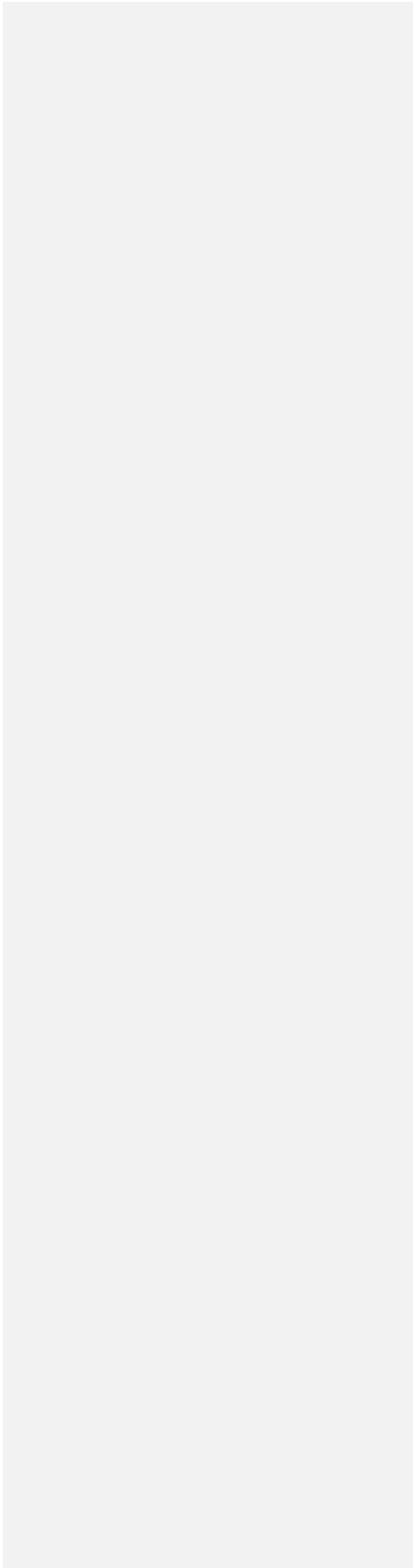
**Core Services** – Police, City infrastructure (physical system of roads, bridges, sidewalks, and drainage facilities), trash and recycling pick up ...

**Comment [S2]:** It would be helpful for the Council to decide which services are Core Services. For example, the City of Takoma Park does not need to provide police services; Montgomery County would provide the services if Takoma Park did not. Other services are required to be provided in order to be a municipality or to maintain City-owned infrastructure. The Council can decide what services, in addition to required services, it considers Core Services.

## **Progress**

Through the hard work of City staff and previous City Councils, progress has already been made on a number of the priority projects that this plan highlights. This will mean that in some areas there is less work to do or that we do not need to immediately devote significant resources and

focus to some areas.



## Executive Summary

The City of Takoma Park strives to be the leading forward-thinking inclusive community in the Washington, DC Metro area. The City wants to attract and retain a wide range of residents who are interested in being active participants in an integrated community that is diverse in cultures, ideas, and means. Takoma Park has achieved many aspects of this vision, but we still have more work to do. To achieve this goal we must take advantage of the many great assets of the community: our proximity to good transit, the historic nature of our town, its walkability, our talented city employees, and our engaged and hard working residents.

As we consider the actions to take to meet this goal, we must also recognize that the City of Takoma Park cannot and should not do it all. Other governmental agencies, institutions, community organizations and residents help make our community the special place it is—they provide services and take actions that have value in the community. Where others provide services that advance the vision for our community, we should value this contribution. When it is necessary and appropriate for the City of Takoma Park to take action to advance the vision, then that action should be incorporated into the City’s plans and budget. Determining what to do and how to implement (This will require all of us—residents, elected officials, and City employees—to listen to each other more closely and to work even harder together. We will also be required to make some tough decisions and to focus the limited resources we have on the efforts that will best help us achieve our vision.

–The City Council believes that we must focus on three high level **prioritized goals** to achieve our vision, these goals are:

Sustainability – Work in partnership with City residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to ensure a Takoma Park that is financially, environmentally, and ~~commercially~~ economically sustainable for the City and its residents.

Livable Community – Work in partnership with City residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to build and maintain a ~~City that is more~~ livable community that is: vibrant, healthy, and safe, with convenient transportation for all of its residents.

Engaged, Responsive, and Service Oriented Government – Ensure the delivery of high quality City services by engaging City residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to understand the community’s needs: being responsive to these needs: and measuring how we are doing at meeting those needs.

Many of the strategies or priority projects in this plan could reside under more than one of these high-level goals. This is positive as we should be seeking to have strategies and undertake projects that help us achieve multiple goals at the same time. The City Council is excited and energized to embark on this journey with you to make our city all that we want it to be.

#### Five immediate areas of focus

- 1.) Resolve Tax Duplication issues with the County
- 2.) Ensure appropriate development and redevelopment in the city
- 3.) Make Environmental improvements focused on reducing climate change & improving storm water management
- 4.) Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Recreation Department's programs
- 5.) Improve customer service and responsiveness of all City departments

**Comment [S3]:** The immediate areas of focus should reflect the items listed in the first year of the timeline.

#### First year projects are:

1. Financial Sustainability: Identify core services so budget needs can be determined; work to obtain tax duplication rebates in Takoma Park's favor; work with unions to evaluate new health care and pension options.
2. Development/Transportation Projects: Work to ensure the following projects are appropriate for Takoma Park - Takoma/Langley Sector Plans and related work; Purple Line; redevelopment of the Washington Adventist Hospital site; expansion of Montgomery College; Takoma Metro; complete ADA and gap sidewalk surveys; design of Public Works facility.
3. Customer Service: Implement GovQA service request system and new Recreation programming and registration software; conduct 2009 Residents' Survey; enhance City's website.
4. Environment: Charge Committee on the Environment with recommending programs and policies to meet Council's sustainability goals; fund environmental project coordinator position.
5. Engaging the Community: Develop strategy for attracting and retaining Council committee members representative of the City's diversity.

**Comment [S4]:** Position cost is approximately \$75,000 per year.

#### Strategic Plan Details

**Sustainability** – Work in partnership with City residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to ensure a Takoma Park that is financially, environmentally, and commercially sustainable for the City and its Residents.

Assumptions

1.) Fiscal

- a. The City will continue to have a small and limited number of revenue sources.
- b. Core services must be funded out of regular/reoccurring revenue funds.
- c. The price of housing will stay flat or increase slightly in the foreseeable future, resulting in close to flat property tax assessments. As home prices stabilize, tax differentials created by the homestead tax credit will equalize.
- d. ~~It will take some time for the economy to recover, which will continue to impact housing prices and the access to credit for development.~~
- e. ~~Housing costs will be well above the national average and market rate housing in the city will be too expensive for working class families to afford.~~
- f. ~~Current housing prices in the city have the potential to threaten the socio-economic diversity of our city.~~
- e.g. If nothing is done to the property tax rate, property taxes will continue to rise for long time homeowners, as the 10% increase cap catches up with assessments. These ~~percentage~~ increases will far exceed the rate of inflation and the ~~percentage~~ increase of average household income for the city. This will have a disparate impact on fixed and low income homeowners.
- f.h. ~~Property taxes on rent stabilized housing will rise more slowly than on owner occupied residential property.~~ We will ~~to~~ continue to have rent stabilization in the City.
- g.i. ~~Property taxes on rent stabilized housing will rise more slowly than on owner occupied residential property.~~ The restrained property taxes on rent stabilized housing means that property taxes on ~~comparable~~ owner occupied homes are higher to support the same level of city services.
- h. ~~Housing costs will be well above the national average and market rate housing in the city will be too expensive for working class families to afford.~~
- i. ~~Current housing prices in the city have the potential to threaten the socio-economic diversity of our city.~~

**Comment [S5]:** These items were listed by Council, but we moved them to this location to better group the assumptions.

2.) -Environmental

- a. Global climate change will continue to be a major worldwide problem.
- b. Global climate change is caused by mankind's production and release of greenhouse gases.
- c. All prices on energy and materials that are produced using fossil fuels will continue to rise over the long term.
- d. Residents will desire more places that they can walk to or ride a bike to for shopping, recreation, and/or work.
- e. Development near transportation lines and hubs will become more desirable.

## Strategies

- 1.) ~~Support~~~~increase~~ development and redevelopment ~~projects in the city~~ to expand the ~~City's~~ tax base and increase the local availability of services and products. Focus development on retail, commercial, and denser residential development near transportation lines and hubs of a design and scale appropriate to surrounding neighborhoods and their historic nature.
- 2.) Coordinate with development ~~and planning~~ agencies in the surrounding jurisdictions to foster comprehensive development and redevelopment.
- 3.) Complement the County's green building standards by regular review of the tree ordinance and stormwater management requirements for construction in order to enhance and encourage environmental protection. Encourage development that meets green building standards.
- 4.) Coordinate with county, state, and federal agencies to advocate for increased and appropriate mass transit in and around our city.
- 5.) Promote sustainable environmental policies and practices to ~~reduce~~ significantly reduce our energy use and the environmental footprint of City services. This would include vehicle use, fuel use, facility efficiency, purchasing preference for recyclable and green products, use of alternative, less environmentally damaging products, etc., as well as a review of alternative work schedules for City employees." ~~and to become environmentally responsible in all aspects of governmental, residential, and business activities.~~
- 6.) Encourage the community, including residential, commercial and institutional sectors, to become more environmentally responsible in the use of energy, resources and services provided. Establish programs to promote environmental awareness of actions that the community can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce use of resources, enhance the natural environment and improve water quality.
- ~~6.7.)~~ Continue efforts~~work~~ to resolve tax and service duplication issues and negotiate more favorable~~better~~ rebate formulas.
- ~~7.8.)~~ Use longer term planning and budgets to meet longer term goals.

**Comment [PC6]:** The County requires LEED certification for new buildings and major additions.

## Priority Projects

- 1.) Resolve Tax and Service duplication issues with the County in our favor through:
  - a. County tax duplication task force and followup lobbying
  - b. Continued coordination with MML on statewide efforts to improve municipal revenue options
  - c. Pursuit of creative legal options for tax duplication situation
- 2.) Create and enact a 5-year city-wide redevelopment plan focusing on:
  - a. Redevelopment of the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor
  - b. Revitalization of the Old Town ~~and~~ Takoma Junction business districts
  - ~~b.c.~~ Development of the ~~and~~ City owned parking lot in Takoma Junction.

**Comment [PC7]:** Many projects, such as mass transit or mixed used development, may take 10 or more years to come to fruition, while requiring substantial staff time through the years.

- d. Strategies which encourage, retain, and revitalize retail development elsewhere in the City.
  - e. Support, strengthen, and encourage the creation of organizations that have strategic value to implementing the City's redevelopment goals. Creation of Takoma Park CDC/land trust entity
  - d. Strategies to encourage, retain, and revitalize retail development elsewhere in the City.
  - e. Actions to control "mansionsization"
- 3.) Create and enact a 5-year environmental plan with corresponding budget including:
- a. Revise Local Action Plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Revise reduction goals to be consistent with State, County and Council of Government plans. A 5-year greenhouse gas emission reduction plan for entire city
  - b. Develop a 5-year CIP for storm-water management programs. The program should include improvements to existing infrastructure, identify new projects to enhance water quality and establish incentive programs to encourage residents to implement stormwater management projects on private lots through the use of rain gardens, reduction of turf areas and development of infiltration areas where possible. plan and budget
  - c. Charge the Committee on the Environment with recommending programs and policies that advance the Council's sustainability goals. Task the Committee with developing recommendations for Council consideration on an annual basis. Coordinate timing of recommendations to be able to address through the City's budget development process. Sustainable environmental and energy policies and practices (e.g. expand recycling program to include more items, such as most recyclable plastics, City government 100% renewable electricity purchase by 2010; reduce City energy use).
  - d. Fund a new environmental project coordinator position to facilitate the development and implementation of the Committee on the Environment's recommendations and report to the Council on progress made toward reaching those goals and meeting the Local Action Plan goals.
  - e. Support a Sligo Creek Task Force to prepare a plan for the improvement and enjoyment of Sligo Creek. Develop a public education plan to educate and engage the community. Coordinate with community groups working on these issues.
- 4.) Refine and enact the Affordable Housing Plan for the city by:
- a. Collaborating with County Housing Opportunities Commission and non-profit housing agencies- organizations/entities to develop funding strategies and incentives for affordable housing.
  - b. Assessing true total cost of rent stabilization and true total subsidy provided.
  - c. Developing affordable homeownership programs.
- 5.) Assessing true total cost of rent stabilization and true total subsidy provided

**Comment [S8]:** Moved up in the list, to better group the projects.

**Comment [S9]:** The mansionsization issue should be monitored to see if recent County Council action needs to be modified or other steps taken.

**Comment [S10]:** Position cost is approximately \$75,000 / year.

**Comment [PC11]:** The Friends of Sligo Creek is a very active, very effective organization that has been established to address Sligo Creek issues. There is no need to duplicate their work.

**Comment [S12]:** The State of Maryland and Montgomery County both have homeownership programs. The extent to which the City should fund other programs needs to be determined by Council.

**Comment [S13]:** Technical assistance will be required; fiscal impact unknown.

- 5→6.) Develop a Funding Plan for the long-term sustainable financing of City infrastructure, special projects, facilities, & services including
- A 5-year, project expenditures budget.
  - Through the City’s annual budget process, the Council will address budgetary constraints by re-evaluating the level and mix of services and proposing strategic solutions that may include revenue enhancements, privatization of services, and asset shedding.

**Comment [PC14]:** The City has a 5-year CIP and a much-longer term Equipment Replacement Reserve schedule. Is something different needed?

**Key Indicators**

- For each of the 5-year and other plans listed above, use the timeline for completion of the plan to measure progress to completion and implementation of the Priority Projects.
- Annual measurement of City government and City-wide greenhouse gas admissions.
- Annual measurement of increase in tax base as a result of new development or redevelopment that meets desired criteria listed above in strategies.
- Measure amount of dollars spent on affordable housing (including reduced tax revenue as a result of rent stabilization) and amount of subsidy provided. This should be measured separately for rental and home ownership.
- Appropriate measures from bi-annual resident survey.
- At least one performance-based budget measure for each one of the above priority projects.

**Comment [PC15]:** As noted above, many projects take longer than 5 years.

**Comment [PC16]:** Indicators from the Local Action Plan and other defined City environmental goals would be more appropriate. Emission measurements should be done on 10- year intervals at most. It takes enormous time and effort to collect this data. Since Takoma Park is so small, we should tap into COG’s efforts at greenhouse gas measurements.

**Comment [PC17]:** Because Takoma Park is so small and already developed, it may be several years between large projects that could impact the tax base. Use of tax abatements or deferrals (i.e., PILOTs and Enterprise Zones) to attract new business may delay tax benefits.

**Comment [S18]:** As mentioned above, technical assistance would be required.

**Livable Community** – Work in partnership with City residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to build a livable community that is City that is more livable: vibrant, healthy, and safe, with convenient transportation for all of its residents.

**Assumptions**

- Crime, ~~and the s that are committed by individuals from outside of our city will continue to be one of the biggest drivers of~~ a feeling of vulnerability to crime, is the most significant ~~and~~ threats to a good quality of life in our city.
- Although significant differences in the perceptions of average quality of life between wards was a significant finding of the 2007 Residents’ Survey, will remain for some time to come, as a city, we are committed to raising the quality of life for all residents regardless of where they live.
- The city Residents’ Survey will continue to show a negative correlation between income level and quality of life for residents for some time to come.
- Our City will remain economically, racially, and culturally diverse, but less well integrated residentially.

**Comment [PC19]:** Staff questions whether or not these are true.

Strategies

- 1.) ~~Coordinate~~ with County and State agencies to provide high quality social services within the City and for City residents.
- 2.) ~~Continue Enhance~~ police actions ~~that~~ to send a message to criminals from inside and outside Takoma Park that they will be caught if they commit crimes here.
- 3.) ~~Continue to u~~Use community policing to work in partnership with residents.
- 4.) ~~Continue to f~~Foster cross jurisdictional cooperation with other City, Metro, and County police departments.
- 5.) ~~Work to ensure that~~ Create high quality recreation programs ~~are accessible~~ for all residents. This will ~~make residents healthier and~~ provide opportunities for ~~residents to be healthier and for~~ individuals from different parts of the city to engage with each other.
- 6.) Develop strategies that capitalize on our assets as a City, especially as a youth and family- friendly place, and our tremendous ~~interest~~assets in arts, culture, and the environment, ~~to create a community that is welcoming to people in all phases of their lives—youth, single adults, families and seniors. Engage these assets in making the City a better place to live.~~
- 7.) Maximize the use of volunteers in all departments.
- 8.) Proactively support redevelopment of areas of the City that need it through a community-centered process to implement the proposals.
- 9.) Enhance coordination between City Recreation, Police and local schools to design programs that provide an overall improvement in the education, health, and safety of TP residents.
- 10.) ~~Continue to provide high quality landlord-tenant services.~~

**Comment [PC20]:** Historically, the County has provided most social services for the residents of Takoma Park. The most notable exception to this is the City's provision of afterschool programs. If there is a need for social services that are not being provided, the City can lobby the County to provide them. Some services may be provided by non-governmental organizations. The City Council has at times supported those organizations with grants.

**Comment [PC21]:** Recognize that the programs need not be run by the City.

**Comment [PC22]:** Volunteers should be used where they are needed and there is the capacity to oversee the work. The County's volunteer bank can be tapped for those instances. The volunteers that the City does use, including Committee members, should be valued and shown our appreciation.

**Comment [S23]:** More detail and clarification needed: How is "proactively support" defined? Which areas need redevelopment? What would the community-centered process look like? Depending on what is desired, there may be a fiscal impact.

**Comment [PC24]:** As with other services, it is important to determine what programs and services are needed by Takoma Park residents and which entities are best able to provide those services, either solely or in partnership with others. A good first step is to identify gaps in services.

**Comment [PC25]:** Many residents have commented that our special landlord-tenant services help make Takoma Park a livable community.

**Comment [PC26]:** Are there three particular programs that the Council desires? Or, is it desired that we develop three new programs per year? What is goal?

Priority Projects

- 1.) ~~EContinue to e~~nsure that we have a strong and effective police force that keeps our residents safe by ~~continuing to~~:
  - a. ~~Using~~ a variety of policing methods to fight crime, such as:
    - i. ~~OIncreased o~~n the street police presence through walking patrols, bike patrols
    - ii. Use of plain clothes units
    - iii. ~~AIncreased a~~lysis of crime statistics to police more efficiently
  - b. ~~Keep~~ing police force fully staffed
  - c. ~~Infus~~ing the entire police department with professionalism, accountability and customer service orientation
  - d. ~~Retain~~ing quality personnel while maintaining opportunities for advancement
  - e. ~~Developing three crime prevention programs~~

- f. Identifying and resolving key public safety issues of each neighborhood in the City by ~~w~~Working with neighborhood residents, and staff in all City departments to develop and implement plans to improve public safety in each neighborhood

**Comment [PC27]:** This is done to a limited extent now. It would be helpful to hear more detail about what the Council would like to see with this project. More staff resources may be needed to accomplish the Council's goals for this project.

2.) Continue to develop and provide creative, diversified, and safe recreation programs and services, which will attract participants of all ages and cultures, and ~~to~~ deliver those services and programs in an effective and efficient manner by:

- a. Maximizing use of Takoma Park-operated~~the~~ recreation facilities and resources located within Takoma Park city limits, such as ~~the swimming pools~~, community centers, recreation centers, gymnasiums, fields, and parks.
- b. ~~Ensuring that~~Offering a full range of recreation opportunities ~~are available to~~~~that~~ provide an overall improvement in the education, health, and safety of city residents.
- c. Achieving ~~increased~~~~a balanced~~ participation from each Ward
- d. Collaborating and partnering with organizations, such as the Police Department, Library, local schools and PTA's, and other local volunteer groups to design and run programs such as crime prevention programs for youth, expansion of internet usage, expansion of inter-generational activities, and artistic and cultural activities.
- e. Promoting and supporting Takoma Park community events.
- f. Recreation, Library, and Police Department to develop cross departmental crime prevention youth programs

**Comment [PC28]:** We need to balance maximizing use with the need for maintenance. Many of our facilities and fields are overused and difficult to keep up to a good condition. Does this comment extend to a desire to expand use of fields to play by other than the youth sport leagues?

**Comment [S29]:** These need not all be provided by the City of Takoma Park.

**Comment [PC30]:** Achieving a balanced participation from each ward may not be feasible given differences in distances to programs and the ability of some families in some wards to afford more expensive non-City programs.

**Comment [PC31]:** As with other activities, it is important to identify service gaps and opportunities. Some programs may be offered by other organizations or institutions, some may be better handled by the City of Takoma Park, and some may be best as a collaboration.

**Comment [PC32]:** The City promotes and supports Takoma Park community events through many ways and by the staff of many departments as needed and as directed by Council. Decisions as to the level of support, for which events, should be made.

**Comment [PC33]:** The various departments function in a complementary way to serve youth. A major role of the Community Center is to provide a safe, comfortable place for young people to be in programs and with each other. Both the Library and the Recreation Department have structured programs and drop-in spaces. The Recreation Dept. also has programs such as Holla at Me to provide a place to share frustrations and learn good strategies for getting along with others. Staff function as mentors and friendly support for young people. The Police Dept. is using its crime analyst and community policing staff to identify trends to stop crime early on. Communication among the department staffs is critical to working in this complementary way.

**Comment [PC34]:** Sidewalk studies are underway.

**Comment [PC35]:** Not sure which plan is being referred to. There is a bicycle plan in the Master Plan and there are efforts by several committees on bikeways.

3.) Enhance Transportation by:

- a. Performing Sidewalk Studies to identify need for additional sidewalks based on identified priorities
- b. Develop a mechanism to fund sidewalks that is equitable throughout the city.
- c. Identifying funding opportunities to expand sidewalk network to address priority needs.
- d. Prioritizing improvements and funding for the existing bike transportation enhancement plan

4.) ~~I~~Create and implement a 5-year plan for improvement ~~the~~of physical appearance of privately and publicly-owned properties in Takoma Park~~the City~~by including:

- a. ~~Identifying a systematic and holistic approach to addressing problem properties through:~~
  - i. Proactive code enforcement by the City and the County
  - ii. Public education on city code
  - iii. Legal and social service approach for more problematic properties

- b. ~~Reducing the adverse effects of the Public Works department on the surrounding neighborhood~~ Ensuring that all City facilities are well maintained and that the negative impact to neighbors is minimized to the extent possible.
- c. Working to ensure that utilities and other governmental agencies maintain their facilities well, including:
  - PEPCO responding to ~~Reporting and resolving~~ street light outages quickly;
  - WSSC maintaining its infrastructure properly and completely restoring damaged streets quickly;
  - SHA maintaining its rights-of-way properly and free of litter, including roads, sidewalks, and medians
  - e- Telephone and cable companies maintaining their infrastructure properly and completely restoring damaged streets quickly.
- d. ~~Identifying hot spot litter areas and devising strategies for reducing litter and other debris in these areas.~~

**Comment [S36]:** These would probably be addressed by the actions in "a" and by the item related to SHA.

5.) Develop programs to reach out to less visible segments of the community; engage them in city activities through encouraging participation in programs, serving on committees, registering to vote and voting in city elections, attract members of the community who are not currently using City services and to engage them in becoming more active on citizen committees and in other community activities.

6.) Provide support and resources to the arts community to develop a self-supporting arts and cultural environment.

**Comment [S37]:** What is the goal? Is the Council interested in phasing out the Arts and Humanities Committee? Does the Council wish to give grants to have self-supporting arts organizations be established?

**Key Indicators**

- 1.) For each of the 5-year and other plans listed above, use the timeline for completion of the plan to measure progress to completion and implementation of the Priority Projects.
- 2.) Crime Rates
- 3.) Arrest and citation statistics
- 3-4.) % of part 1 crimes solved
- 4-5.) Appropriate measures from periodic Residents' S-survey
- 5-6.) Linear feet of sidewalk that meet ADA and City standards.
- 6-7.) Objective measure of City's walkability (e.g <http://www.walkscore.com/>)
- 8.) Utilization of City-operated recreation facilities in Takoma Park and how satisfied are they with the program they participated in
- 7-9.) Results of Residents' Survey and participant program evaluations regarding City recreation programs.
- 8-10.) Ward participation in recreation programs (equal when measured across all programs, and equal in at least 10% of the discrete programs) increases by 5% each year.
- 9-11.) Number of newly active community members in activities and how satisfied are they with City's efforts to get them involved.

**Comment [PC38]:** Sometimes the survey is referred to as a bi-annual survey and sometimes a periodic one. Staff feels there should be a standard schedule of every two or three years.

**Comment [PC39]:** Walkability surveys can be costly; we may want to look at other measures.

**Comment [S40]:** We may be able to determine this from the Residents' Survey, depending on the questions asked.

12.) Opened and closed code enforcement case statistics.

**Engaged, Responsive, and Service-Oriented Government** – Ensure the delivery of high quality City services by engaging City residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to understand the community’s needs; being responsive to these needs; and measuring how we are doing at meeting those needs.

Assumptions

- 1.) Core City services touch the most number of residents and often determine their opinion about the effectiveness of city government.
- 2.) Great managers/leaders as the directors of each department will make for great performance in each department.
- 3.) Funding of core services will remain a priority.
- 3.)4.) Council committees represent a strong resource for informing the City Council and City staff of the community’s needs and views and for outreach to the larger community.

Strategies

- 1.) Use key indicators for each department as an objective measure of performance that are tied to annual budget goals and tied to activities and functions of the department.
- 2.) Refine employment policies and practices to enhance the City’s ability to attract, hire, and retain top talent and enhance its ability to rid itself of weak or poor performers.
- 3.) Use alternative formats and locations for council meetings to engage in conversation with city residents (e.g. roundtable discussions which include staff, council, and members of the public).
- 4.) Maximize resource utilization through use of public-private partnerships and volunteers.
- 5.) Develop synergistic and collaborative relationships among all city employees, especially across departmental lines.
- 6.) Use appropriate (which often means multiple) modes of communication (e.g. newsletter, email, web, Cable TV) to best reach target audiences with the information that is desired to be communicated with city residents whenever possible.
- 7.) Provide support and resources to the arts community with the intention of developing a self-supporting arts and cultural environment. Use and value Council committees to inform and recommend strategies and policies to the City Council and to provide outreach to the larger community.

**Comment [PC41]:** Are there policies or practices that the Council wishes to see changed? Changes to collective bargaining agreements would require negotiation.

**Comment [PC42]:** Are these substitutes for, or in addition to, council meetings? Maybe 3 meetings each month and one “roundtable” or visit to a community association.

**Comment [S43]:** Staff feels that departments work well together and look for ways to partner to create better outcomes. Are there particular gaps that the Council wishes to see addressed?

**Comment [S44]:** Arts item already addressed under Livable Community.

Priority Projects

- 1.) Improve customer service and responsiveness of all City departments. Infuse world class customer service through all departments by:

- a. Tracking all resident, councilmember, and staff service requests or questions that cannot be completed in one day, including measurement of responsiveness (i.e. timing of acknowledgement of request, timing of completion, etc.).
  - b. Creating online and 311 phone number that feeds into the system mentioned above.
  - c. Developing and implementing a regular schedule of training for customer service and technology.
- 2.) Improve ease of use of city services by:
- a. Successfully implementing the already identified credit card and online payment systems for all city services, permits, and fines.
  - b. Adding online scheduling and reservations for all city facilities and services including bulk trash pick-up.
  - c. Instituting online application submission for all city permit services, while identifying hours of operation that are varied, to improve residents' ability to pay for or schedule services in person.
- 3.) Online reporting of street light outages.
- 4.) Performance-based budgeting with creation of a few key indicators for each department tied to departmental goals and budgets, tied to an activity or function of the department (provides objective measure of success for each department).
- 5.) Ensure that the City's communication capability and infrastructure meet the needs to easily and effectively get information out to the community, and receive information back from the community. Revamp City communication capability and infrastructure by:
- a. Ensuring the website is ~~Creating an~~ up-to-date and user-friendly ~~website.~~
  - b. Better communicate to residents what they are getting for the taxes they pay
  - c. Using interconnection between online, print, and TV media to enhance the effectiveness of all three
  - d. Expanding the use of the cable TV station for local content, e.g., local artists, schools & students.
  - e. Creating the capacity to brand and promote the city
  - f. Collaborate with the Library staff to expand significantly the use of the Office's various public information outlets.

**Comment [PC45]:** GovQA should be on line very soon and the staff who answer 301-891-7100 calls should be handling requests similar to a 311 system. We will be working to improve that responsiveness as we get comfortable with GovQA. 311 systems don't work for people calling from outside the jurisdiction (such as when residents call from work).

**Comment [PC46]:** We do have regular technology and customer service training.

**Comment [PC47]:** We need to find a balance between hours of operation that are convenient for residents, while appreciating staffing constraints. Where possible, take advantage of online services, drop-box options, and evening and weekend Community Center staff.

**Comment [S48]:** Between working to have PEPCO establish an effective online system and the new GovQA system, this should be covered.

**Comment [PC49]:** City TV already does quite a bit of this. How much expansion is desired? Is there a particular gap in this area?

**Comment [PC50]:** Unsure what this means. All departments have public information outlets and all should be working together and with the Communications Office to best reach target audiences.

6) Use and value Council committees by having the Council take the following actions:

- a) Devising a strategy to recruit and retain committee members so that committees are representative of the diversity of the community, especially those communities that have traditionally been less active in City government affairs.

- b) Charging committees with preparing recommendations for the Council on the Council's priority projects and then ensuring that those recommendations are thoughtfully considered and, if desired, acted upon, in a timely way.
- c) Encouraging Council committees to undertake at least one outreach activity in the Community Center and one in a neighborhood setting each year so as to help engage the larger community in City issues and to provide a greater variety of activities in the Community Center.
- d) Supporting the activities by attending committee events.

Key Indicators

- 1.) For each of the 5-year and other plans listed above, use the timeline for completion of the plan to measure progress to completion and implementation of the Priority Projects.
- 2.) Each department would have a few key indicators
  - a. Appropriate measures for each department from periodic Residents survey
  - b. Some examples of additional indicators might be
    - i. Public Works
      - % of total tons of trash recycled
      - Miles of streets that are rated good or better above the condition index (PCI) of fair divided by the cost per mile paved (adjusted for inflation).
    - ii. Recreation
      - Dollar spent per participant program hour
      - % of cost recovery
      - scholarship dollars divided by total fee dollars
      - % of participants who rated a recreation program highly
- 3.) Indicators for issue tracking
  - a. % of request acknowledge within 24 hours
  - b. % of request answered within 48 hours
  - c. % of request resolved favorably within 1 week

4) Diversity of committee membership by race, age, ward, and renter/owner status

**Comment [PC51]:** PCI determination is a time consuming and expensive practice. We recommend an evaluation every 3 years, followed by a 3 year resurfacing improvement program based on the results.

**Comment [PC52]:** The new software will provide statistics on participation levels and costs. However, we will need to be careful in tabulating the information as there are many free and drop-in programs as well as large public events which can skew numbers. There are also various ways to fund programs and pay contractors. We will be working with Council to establish indicators that are helpful in meeting Council goals, as they are determined.

**Comment [S53]:** Many issues cannot be solved in one week, such as code enforcement items. Further discussion needed on appropriate indicators.

**Takoma Park Areas of Focus/Priority Projects Timeline**

High degree of focus and resources required	
Medium degree of focus and resources required	
Low degree of focus and resources required	

	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
<b><u>Sustainability</u></b>						
1.) Resolve the Tax duplication issue with the county in our favor						
2.) Creation and enactment of 5 year city wide development and redevelopment plan						
3.) Creation and enactment of 5 year environmental plan with corresponding budget						
4.) Refine and enact the affordable Housing plan for the city						
5.) Develop a sustainable Funding Plan for the long-term sustainable financing of City infrastructure, facilities, special projects, & services <sup>A</sup>						
<b><u>Livable Community</u></b>						
1.) Continue to ensure that we have a strong and effective police force <sup>B</sup>						
2.) Develop and provide creative, diversified, and safe recreation programs and services, which will attract participants of all ages and cultures and to deliver those services and programs in an effective and efficient manner						
3.) Enhance Transportation						
4.) Creation and implementation of 5 year plan for improvement of physical appearance of the City						
<b><u>Engaged, Responsive, and Service Oriented Government</u></b>						
1.) Improve customer service and responsiveness of all City departments <sup>C</sup>						
2.) Increase ease of use of city services <sup>D</sup>						
3.) Implement performance based budgeting with creation of a few key indicators for each department tied to departmental goals and budgets (provides objective measure of success for each department tied to an activity or function of the department. – move this up a year.)						
4.) Revamp City Communication capability and infrastructure						

A. Much of the work in this area has already been completed by the city manager and finance department

B. The Police department has already greatly improved we need to continue to make sure it stays on this trajectory

C. An issues tracking system is already being installed, using the system to drive staff work processes will be key

D. An online credit card purchasing and facility scheduling system for city is already being installed