

Regular Meeting

Agenda Item #	1
Meeting Date	May 18, 2009
Prepared By	Suzanne Ludlow, Deputy City Manager
Approved By	

Discussion Item	Resolution Adopting the Strategic Plan
Background	<p>Over the past year, the City Council held a series of discussions to reach consensus on its policy priorities and to develop a five-year Strategic Plan for the City of Takoma Park. A public hearing on the draft was held on March 16, 2009 and a number of comments were submitted on the plan. A revised document has been prepared for consideration.</p> <p>The draft Strategic Plan focuses on three general policy areas, as described below:</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 progress at meeting those needs.</p>
Policy	<p>The City Council is the policymaking body for the City of Takoma Park and establishes organizational priorities through direction given to the City Manager.</p> <p>The City Council values the input of City residents. The community feedback obtained from the public hearing was considered when revising the Strategic Plan.</p>
Fiscal Impact	None
Attachments	Draft resolution; May 15 Strategic Plan draft; citizen comments
Recommendation	Approve resolution.
Special Consideration	

Introduced By:

RESOLUTION 2009-

Resolution Adopting the Strategic Plan

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council is the policymaking body for the City of Takoma Park and establishes organizational priorities through direction given to the City Manager; AND

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to clearly identify its vision and priorities to assist in budget preparation and decision making; AND

WHEREAS, a Strategic Plan document has been prepared with the vision and prioritized goals that have been established over many months of consideration; AND

WHEREAS, it is understood that the Strategic Plan is a living document that is to be reconsidered and revised not less than annually.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Takoma Park hereby adopts the City of Takoma Park Strategic Plan.

ADOPTED THIS ___ DAY OF MAY, 2009.



City of Takoma Park, Maryland

STRATEGIC PLAN FY 2010 – FY 2015

**“A Sustainable and Livable Community, with an
Engaged, Responsive, and Service Oriented Government”**

*Draft March 9, 2009
Revised May 15, 2009*

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 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 more can be achieved. The community must take advantage of the many great assets of the City: our proximity to good transit, great schools, the historic nature of our town, its ethnic diversity, our talented City employees, and our engaged and hard working residents.

As our community considers the actions required 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 the actions of others advance our vision for our community, we should value their 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. This will require all of us - residents, elected officials, City employees, and other stakeholders - to listen to each other more closely and to work even harder together. This will also require tough choices and the commitment to focus the limited resources we have on the efforts that will best help us achieve our shared vision for Takoma Park.

The City Council believes that we must work in partnership with city residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to achieve our vision. The City Council is focused on three high level *prioritized goals*:

Sustainability – Ensure a Takoma Park that is fiscally, environmentally, and economically sustainable.

Livable Community – Create and maintain a 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. The City Council and City need to understand the community's needs, be responsive to these needs, and measure progress in meeting those needs.

Many of the strategies or priority projects in this plan could reside under more than one of these high-level goals. The City Council is excited and energized to embark on this journey with the residents and stakeholders of this community to make the City of Takoma Park a vibrant and healthy place in which to live, work, play, and learn.

OUR VISION FOR TAKOMA PARK

We envision Takoma Park to be “a sustainable and livable community, with an engaged, responsive, and service oriented government.”

The City Council believes that the City must work in partnership with city residents, community organizations, non-profits, the business community, and other governmental agencies to achieve our vision for Takoma Park.

The City’s Strategic Plan is guided by City Council’s Vision for Takoma Park and includes the three components referenced below: the Takoma Park Master Plan, the Capital Improvement Program, and the Prioritized Goals identified herein.

The Takoma Park Master Plan, adopted in December 2000, guides the physical growth and development of the city. It details objectives, policies and strategies as they relate to land use, neighborhoods, transportation, community infrastructure and services, the natural environment, and community character and appearance. The Master Plan is used by the City Council as it evaluates programming requests, establishes budgets, and provides comments on proposed redevelopment and development activities throughout the community.

The Capital Improvements Program compiles a vision of current capital improvements in the city and an assessment of needs in the future. The program contains the annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget, the funded CIP Program (subject to appropriation), and a prioritized list of needed but unfunded capital projects.

The Strategic Plan specifically addresses the major issues or challenges confronting the City and is to be used by the City Council to set the direction and vision for the City of Takoma Park and its government for the next five years; to identify the City’s immediate priorities for the next one to two years; to guide the annual budgeting process and evaluate proposed expenditures, and to provide the City Council and the City with a vision and set of values that provide guidance in all decision-making.

STRATEGIC PLAN

This strategic plan, adopted by the City Council in May 2009, embodies the values and work culture that the City Council wishes to instill in the community and its City government and sets forth a general plan for moving towards the City Council's vision for Takoma Park. The plan is not meant to be prescriptive about the specifics of every project or function that the City performs or actions that the City Council takes in a given year, but to provide guidance on all decision making, no matter how large or small.

The Strategic Plan focuses on three broadly defined goals:

- **Sustainability** - Ensure a Takoma Park that is fiscally, environmentally and economically sustainable.
- **Livable Community** - Create and maintain a livable community that is vibrant, healthy, and safe for all of its residents.
- **Engaged, Responsive, and Service-Oriented Government** - Ensure the delivery of high quality city services. The City needs to understand the community's needs, be responsive to these needs, and measure progress in meeting those needs.

The Priority Goals developed by the City Council for each of these areas of interest address the challenges confronting the community and recognize the valuable community and City assets that can be utilized to successfully meet those challenges.

For consistent understanding, the following are definitions of terms used in the Plan.

Elements of the Strategic Plan:

Prioritized Goals identify what the City strives to achieve to realize the City Council's vision for the community and the organization.

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

Strategies describe broadly how the City Council and the City plan to achieve its prioritized goals over the term of the plan.

Priority Projects/Initiatives describe more specifically how the City Council and the City plan to achieve its goals in the short and long term.

Key Indicators are used to define and measure progress toward the prioritized goals set forth in the Strategic Plan. In evaluating the progress made toward achieving these goals, a baseline measurement for select indicators must be established and re-evaluated on an annual basis.

Other Terms:

Areas of Focus/Priority Projects Timeline, to be developed upon adoption of the Strategic Plan, identifies the timing of priority projects and the level of focus and resource allocation for each project.

Core Services are those essential services that must be provided by a government to successfully fulfill its proper functions. For purposes of this Plan, the City Council has identified the following functions as core services: police, public works, housing and community development, public library, recreation, administration, and communications.

Quality of Life is an all inclusive term that includes economic prosperity, an affordable home, gainful employment, clean air and water, quality healthcare, safe and attractive neighborhoods and working environments, ample educational and recreational opportunities, convenient transportation systems, and an active and diverse community that is rich in art and cultural amenities.

Annual Review

This plan should be reviewed by the City Council annually. The assumptions in the plan should be carefully considered. Have changes occurred in the community that would make these assumptions no longer valid, and if so, should they be changed or new assumptions added? Should different strategies be developed or the timing of identified projects revised? This review should take place early in the calendar year so that changes can be incorporated into the plan and considered during the annual budgeting process.

Progress

Progress has already been made on a number of the priority projects highlighted in this plan. As a result, fewer resources will need to be dedicated for these projects in the short term, leaving significant resources available to focus on higher priority projects or emerging areas of concern.

SUSTAINABILITY

Work in partnership with others to ensure a Takoma Park that is fiscally, environmentally, and economically sustainable for the city and its residents.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Assumptions

- The City will continue to have access to a limited number of revenue sources.
- Core services offered by the City will continue be funded by regular and reoccurring revenue sources.
- The current rebate formula used by Montgomery County for services provided by the City is inequitable and does not sufficiently cover the cost of providing these services.
- The assessed value of owner-occupied single family homes will remain flat or decline for several years due to current economic conditions.
- The assessed value of rent stabilized properties will remain lower than unregulated rental housing and owner-occupied housing.

Strategies

- Develop long term financial planning and budgeting techniques.
- Identify key indicators for each department as objective measures of performance that are tied to annual budget goals and the activities and functions of the department.
- Secure more equitable and favorable rebate formulas from Montgomery County.
- Support commercial and residential development and redevelopment projects which increase the City's property tax base.

Priority Projects and Initiatives

- Develop a five-year plan to establish performance-based budgeting with the creation of one or two key indicators for each department tied to departmental goals and budgets and an activity or function of the department.
- Evaluate the cost and effectiveness of all City services; explore alternative revenue sources; pursue cost saving measures. Each activity, function or program will be

reviewed not less than every four years, on a schedule to be determined by the City Manager. Each year the City Council will approve and, where appropriate, fund the studies scheduled for that year. Some of these reviews will be conducted by an independent third party.

- Continue to measure residents' perceptions of city services and the community through the use of the "Takoma Park Resident Survey;" develop other means of measuring the community's satisfaction with the services and programming offered by the City.
- Develop a long term plan for the sustainable financing of capital projects and ongoing operational costs; identify, evaluate and implement strategic and creative financing options such as revenue enhancements, privatization of services, and asset shedding.
- Develop and implement a five-year projected expenditures budget.
- Finalize the report of the Montgomery County Tax Duplication Task Force; work towards the implementation of the recommendations of the report; coordinate lobbying activities with the Maryland Municipal League on state-wide efforts to improve municipal revenue options.
- Continue to promote the development and redevelopment opportunities identified in the New Hampshire Avenue Concept Plan.
- Create, using community-based planning techniques, a redevelopment plan for Takoma Junction; provide for the redevelopment of the City-owned lot located in the 7200 block of Carroll Avenue.

Key Indicators

- Completion of Priority Projects and Initiatives within established time frames.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating the value of city services for the taxes paid as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey and other evaluation tools.
- Improvement in key performance-based budgeting indicators developed for the various City departments (e.g. percent of total tons of trash recycled, miles of streets that are rated good or better, dollar spent per participant program hour, percent of cost recovery).
- Increase in City's property tax base resulting from new residential and commercial development.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Assumptions

- Residents support policies and practices that encourage the City and the community - our residential, commercial, and institutional sectors - to become more environmentally responsible.
- Residents would, if the infrastructure were in place, prefer to walk or bike to and from work and school, to local businesses, and for recreational purposes.
- Residential and commercial development near transportation lines and hubs will become more desirable as the community explores alternative modes of transportation and the use of public transit.
- The maintenance, restoration and preservation of our open spaces and natural resources (e.g. Sligo Creek, parks, gardens and urban forest) are priorities of the community.
- The existing Public Works facility is obsolete, inefficient and in need of replacement.

Strategies

- Coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions to foster and promote comprehensive, environmentally sound development and redevelopment in the community and throughout the region; support higher density retail, commercial, and residential development near transportation routes and hubs, that is environmentally sensitive and of a design and scale appropriate to surrounding neighborhoods and their historic nature.
- Review existing environmental policies and programming to evaluate their effectiveness.
- Develop new policies and procedures which significantly reduce the City's energy use and its environmental footprint.
- Advocate with county, state, and federal agencies for the provision of increased and appropriate mass transit services in and around our city.
- Implement existing plans which promote the use of alternative modes of transportation and reduce the negative environmental impacts of the City's operations.
- Expand and enhance existing infrastructure to provide access to, and promote increased use of, alternative modes of transportation and walking.

Priority Projects and Initiatives

- Create and enact a five-year plan for improving the environmental sustainability of the City with corresponding budget. Plan should consider 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.

- Develop a five-year CIP for the City's storm water management programs; identify new projects which will enhance water quality, including improvements to existing infrastructure.
- Review existing polices and develop new policies which advance the City Council's environmental sustainability goals; develop, in partnership with the community, the Committee on the Environment, Friends of Sligo Creek and others, programming for City Council consideration; coordinate timing of recommendations with the City's budget development process.
- Revise the Local Action Plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; establishing reduction goals which are consistent with state, county, and MWCOG plans.
- Review the requirements of the City's Ordinances (e.g. Trees and Vegetation and Stormwater Management); updating as appropriate to ensure the furtherance of the City Council's environmental sustainability goals.
- Perform sidewalk studies to identify need for additional sidewalks based on identified priorities; identify opportunities to expand sidewalk network to address priority needs; develop a funding mechanism that is equitable throughout the community.
- Prioritize improvements and provide funding for improvements included in the existing bike transportation enhancement plan.
- Complete construction of a new, energy efficient Public Works facility, incorporating, to the greatest extent possible, LEED standards.
- Establish educational and incentive programs to increase the community's awareness of actions that they can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce use of resources, enhance the natural environment, and improve water quality. Encourage residents and businesses to undertake and maintain storm water management projects on private property (e.g. rain gardens, reduction of turf areas, and development of infiltration areas).
- Establish benchmarks and key indicators, providing for an appropriate means of measuring progress made by the City and the community to improve our environmental sustainability (e.g. water quality and emission standards).

Key Indicators

- Completion of Priority Projects and Initiatives within established time frames.
- Improvements in key indicators developed by the City as a means of measuring progress made towards achieving environmental sustainability.

- Increase in the number of linear feet of sidewalk that meets ADA and city standards.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating the ease of travel in Takoma Park by walking as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey and other evaluation tools.
- Increase in the linear feet of bike routes available in the community.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating the ease of travel in Takoma Park by public transit as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey and other evaluation tools.
- Reduction in City use of non-renewable resources.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating the City's Stormwater Management program as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey and other evaluation tools.
- Increase in the number of residents participating in educational programming and accessing available incentives to establish and maintain stormwater management projects on private property.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Assumptions

- Household income, housing prices, and access to credit by local businesses and developers will continue to be affected until such time as current economic conditions improve.
- Residents, if given the opportunity, would prefer to support local businesses and service providers.
- The appearance of a business and the condition of the building in which it is located is important if the business is to remain financially viable.
- The cost of purchasing a home in Takoma Park will remain above the national average, limiting homeownership opportunities for working class families and potentially threatening the socio-economic diversity of the community.
- Property taxes for homeowners will become increasingly unaffordable as the ten percent cap on increases on assessments is phased out. The City Council anticipates that the assessments of long term homeowners will increase at a rate in excess of the rate of inflation and the increase of the average household income.

- Rents in Takoma Park will remain lower than the surrounding metro area due the City's rent stabilization laws. The City Council will continue to regulate the frequency and amount of rent that can be charged to tenants.

Strategies

- Support, strengthen, and promote local businesses and business associations.
- Partner with non-profit affordable housing providers and other public entities in advocating for affordable housing.
- Support public and non-profit efforts to preserve and create affordable rental housing and homeownership opportunities in the community,
- Partner with non-profit community service organizations to provide emergency housing, food, and medical assistance to residents.

Priority Projects and Initiatives

- Partner with Takoma Langley Crossroads CDA, the Old Takoma Business Association and the Maryland International Corridor Community Development Corporation to encourage residents to support local businesses.
- Implement economic development recommendations included in the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan, the Takoma Langley Sector Plan and the Main Street Takoma plan; assist outside entities such as Montgomery and Prince George's Counties' Park and Planning Departments, the Crossroads Farmers Market, and the Old Takoma Business Association, in implementing the recommendations contained within these plans.
- Provide access to funding opportunities to businesses interested in improving the physical appearance of their building or site.
- Review the Takoma Park Affordable Housing Policy and Action Plan on an annual basis; implement identified programming.
- Continue existing efforts to increase residents' awareness of and access to local, state and federal homeownership opportunities.
- Identify new and creative funding, beyond the Payment in Lieu of Property Taxes (PILOTS) traditionally used by the City, to assist low income housing tax credit projects.

Key Indicators

- Completion of Priority Projects and Initiatives within established time frames.

- Increase in the percentage of residents rating the availability of affordable housing and shopping opportunities as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey and other evaluation tools.
- Reduction or leveling of the number of residents applying for relief through the City and State's homeowner and renter's property tax credit program, and the amount of reimbursements or credits issued.
- Reduction or leveling of the number of residents requesting emergency housing, food or medical assistance.
- Increase in the number of participants attending homeownership seminars.

LIVABLE COMMUNITY

Work in partnership with others to create and maintain a livable community that is vibrant, healthy, and safe for all of its residents.

LIVABLE COMMUNITY

Assumptions

- All residents, regardless of where they live or their incomes, desire and deserve to live in a community which is vibrant, healthy, and safe.
- The community will remain economically, racially, and culturally diverse, but less well integrated geographically.
- An individual resident's quality of life is affected by his or her access to adequate health care, social services, and decent housing.
- Crime, and the feeling of vulnerability to crime, is a significant threat to creating and maintaining the livability of the community.
- The physical condition of a property impacts residents' perception of the livability of a specific neighborhood and of the city as a whole.
- The livability of the community is driven in part by the recreational and cultural programming offered by the City.
- Residents are interested in becoming active, engaged members of the community.

Strategies

- Provide appropriate programming which improves the health and safety of city residents.
- Advocate for the provision of high quality social services for city residents.
- Maintain a strong and effective police force through the use of a variety of policing techniques.
- Proactively enforce the City's Property Maintenance Code utilizing available social, legal, financial and regulatory resources to resolve repeated and ongoing violations.
- Continue ongoing outreach and educational efforts to inform the community of its responsibilities for appropriately maintaining their property.

- Ensure that all City facilities are well maintained and negative visual and environmental impacts on adjoining neighborhoods are minimized.
- Develop and deliver, in an effective and efficient manner, a range of creative, diversified, and safe recreational programming which takes full advantage of the community's recreation facilities and resources.
- Continue programming and services provided by the Takoma Park Maryland Library.
- Capitalize on the community's tremendous interest in the arts and culture.
- Promote and support volunteer based community events.
- Optimize the use of volunteers.

Priority Projects and Initiatives

- Identify emerging crime patterns; implement neighborhood based prevention strategies; engage in cross jurisdictional efforts to cooperatively improve public safety in each neighborhood.
- Develop, in collaboration with local schools, an inter-departmental five-year plan (including involvement of the Recreation and Police Departments) to provide appropriate and cooperative programming designed to improve the health and safety of city residents.
- Develop and implement, in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), and local volunteer groups, crime prevention programs for youth.
- Improve the physical appearance of residential and commercial properties by providing technical assistance and access to available financing programs to property owners.
- Complete planned improvements to the grounds and the exterior of the Takoma Park Community Center; undertake similar efforts to improve the physical appearance of other City owned facilities.
- Review and revise the City Code to address concerns expressed by the community regarding the negative impacts of utility work in the public right-of-way.
- Develop and implement an on-line system that provides for easy reporting of streetlight outages; connect to PEPCO's or Montgomery County's on-line reporting system; develop an online mapping system that allows residents to easily identify the pole number of a specific streetlight.
- Collaboratively develop and implement programming which expands the use and proficiency in using the internet resources available at the Takoma Park Community

Center, provides expanded opportunities for intergenerational activities, and increases access to arts and cultural events and activities.

- Update the Takoma Park Cultural Plan; addressing the need for arts and cultural programming for residents in all phases of their lives - youth, single adults, families, and seniors.
- Develop and implement programs designed to reach out to underserved segments of the community; engage them in the community by encouraging participation in City programs, serving on committees, registering to vote, and voting in city elections.

Key Indicators

- Completion of Priority Projects and Initiatives within established time frames.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating specific quality of life indicators as excellent or good as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Increase in the percentage of residents reporting that they feel very safe when walking alone as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Reduction in the number of crimes committed in Takoma Park, by type of crime.
- Increase in number of arrests made and citations issued by the Police Department.
- Increase in the percent of Part One crimes solved by the Police Department.
- Reduction in the percentage of residents rating neighborhood specific problems such as graffiti, overgrown grass and vegetation, and run down houses and buildings as a major or extreme problem as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating specific city services as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating the quality and accessibility of City facilities as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Increase in the total number of residents participating in programs offered by the Recreation Department.
- Increase in the number of residents, by Ward, participating in programs offered by the Recreation Department.
- Increase in percentage of participants rating the quality of specific recreational programming as good or excellent.

- Increase in utilization rates at the Takoma Park Community Center and other City-operated recreational facilities.

ENGAGED, RESPONSIVE, AND SERVICE-ORIENTED GOVERNMENT

Ensure, in partnership with others, the delivery of high quality City service. The City Council and the City need to understand the community's needs, be responsive to these needs, and to measure its progress in meeting those needs.

ENGAGED, RESPONSIVE, AND SERVICE-ORIENTED GOVERNMENT

Assumptions

- The City's core services touch the most number of residents and often determine their opinion about city government.
- The continuation of core services will remain a priority.
- The time and talents of individuals serving on Council Committees are valued resources and the City Council appreciates their input and the insight they offer on the needs and views of the community.
- Residents access, process and convey information in a variety of ways, requiring the use of different and often multiple means of communication.

Strategies

- Encourage the development and implementation of limited term demonstration projects.
- Refine employment policies and practices to enhance the City's ability to attract, hire, and retain talented and high performing personnel and to dismiss weak or poor performers.
- Conduct off-site City Council meetings using alternative formats to engage in conversation with residents.
- Develop synergistic and collaborative relationships among all City employees and across departmental lines.
- Maximize resource utilization through the use of public-private partnerships and volunteers.
- Actively task Council Committees to solicit community input, assist with outreach and to develop strategic policy and programming recommendations. Develop process for City Council consideration of recommendations.

- Use and maintain appropriate and varied modes of communication – online, print and TV media - to effectively and efficiently reach target audiences.
- Develop and maintain user friendly web site; provide timely and accurate information to the community.

Priority Projects and Initiatives

- Identify and maintain hours of operation that are varied, improving residents' access to City staff and services.
- Track all service requests or questions that cannot be addressed in one day; measuring responsiveness of City personnel.
- Implement credit card and online payment systems for all City services, permits, and fines.
- Develop and implement online scheduling and reservations system for all City facilities and services, including bulk trash pick-up.
- Develop and implement online application system for all City permit services.
- Develop and conduct routine customer service training for all City employees.
- Develop and conduct routine computer software and technology training for all City employees.
- Conduct a minimum of two off-site City Council meetings per year, using alternative ways of communicating with residents (e.g., roundtable discussions that include staff, councilmembers, and members of the public).
- Develop a strategy to recruit and retain committee members that are representative of the diversity of the community, especially those communities that have traditionally been less active in City government affairs.
- Assign Council Committees the task of preparing recommendations for implementation of the Strategic Plan and Priority Projects and Initiatives.
- Develop and support the undertaking of at least two outreach activities per Council Committee per year - one to be held at the Takoma Park Community Center and the other in a neighborhood setting - to help engage the larger community in City issues and to provide a greater variety of activities in all locations. Activities are to be planned and organized by the Council Committee. The City Council will attend, as a show of support, Council Committee activities.

- Expand existing infrastructure and resources to allow for timely and effective interaction with the community; explore the effectiveness of the use of new media such as blogs, video, podcasts, RSS feeds, and social networking opportunities.
- Expand the capacity of City TV to include additional local programming.
- Develop and implement one limited term demonstration project per department per year. Specific projects are to be determined by the City Manager with funding provided by the City Council.

Key Indicators

- Completion of Priority Projects and Initiatives within established time frames.
- Improvement in the percent of requests for service that are acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt of request, percent of requests for information that are addressed in 48 hours, and percent of requests or complaints that are resolved with established parameters.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating the job the City does welcoming resident involvement as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating their contact with the Police Department as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating their impression of City employees as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating the customer services provided by city employees as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Increase in the number of off-site City Council meetings held.
- Extent to which the membership of Council Committees reflects the community's demographic make-up, includes representation of all wards, and includes both homeowners and renters.
- Increase in the number of activities and community events planned and organized by Council Committees.
- Increase in the percentage of residents rating the City website and the quality of the programming on CityTV as good or excellent as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.
- Increase in the percentage of residents accessing information online, on CityTV, or via the Takoma Park Newsletter, Recreation Guide or other publications as reported in the Takoma Park Resident Survey.