

## Takoma Park and Long Branch Goals 2016

CHEER conducted small group visioning and goal setting sessions for the Takoma Park/Long Branch community on housing, health, and the local economy. Each of these groups was representative of the racial/ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the community. This resulted in a community strategic plan in 2012. In 2014 a similar process took place for youth. CHEER continues to reach out to immigrants, tenants and other underrepresented groups to update these goals and learn more about barriers and challenges to achieving community goals.

### ***Goal 1: Employment opportunities and training needed to obtain employment are available to all community members.***

**Local Business Development:** A positive local business climate promotes local job growth. Community members can shop locally and support local micro-enterprise development efforts.

**Local Finance:** Small locally owned businesses are at a financing disadvantage. Community members can invest locally through OTBA's Takoma Notes or other tools See <https://tpslocalvesting.org/>

**Youth Leadership Development and Job Preparation:** Takoma Park youth 16 to 19 have 45% unemployment rate. Minority unemployment is more than twice the rate of whites. Youth entrepreneurship and work readiness programs can help.

### ***Goal 2: All people have access to health services and disparities are reduced.***

**Health Care Access:** Long Branch has one of the highest concentrations of uninsured in the DC area, especially among immigrants. CHEER helps connect immigrants to affordable health care.

**Healthy Food Access:** Recent Report from the Montgomery County Food Council reports that Long Branch is a County hot spot for limited access to healthy food. A local food system is under development, and County food Security Plan is being formulated.

**Health Outcomes:** Healthy Montgomery data indicates that the Takoma Park zip code has one of the highest hospital utilization rates for uncontrolled diabetes and alcohol abuse. Long Branch has very high hospital utilization rate for pediatric asthma.

### ***Goal 3: Make housing equally available to all income levels.***

**Affordable Homeownership:** Most renters would like to own their own home, but high home values, and limited financing access makes home ownership very difficult.

**Affordable Rents:** Although average Takoma Park rent levels are low for Montgomery County, many renters in Takoma Park and Long Branch have experienced, excessive rent increases that erode affordability.

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**Rental Housing Quality and Safety:** Takoma Park and Long Branch have landlords that neglect maintenance, intimidate renters who complain or seek to organize, and create dangerous living conditions that put in serious jeopardy children's health.

***Goal 4: Neighbors know each other and are involved in common projects and activities.***

**Neighbor Connections:** Community members want active neighborhood and tenant associations, but many are not currently active or organized.

**Community and Neighborhood Events:** Community members want events where homeowners and tenants, and people from diverse cultures interact.

***Goal 5: The community provides safe and comfortable spaces for interaction and commerce, especially for independent locally owned businesses.***

**Accessibility:** Make local business areas pedestrian-friendly and bike accessible, through complete streets development.

**Common Area:** Long Branch needs a "town square" and other public space. Maintain and make park space more accessible and usable to the community that lives there.

**Commercial Space:** Preserve affordable commercial and residential space around Purple line developments.

***Goal 6: Every young person in Takoma Park has a relationship with a caring adult, is prepared for employment, and receives an education that prepares them to fulfill their personal potential.***

Too many young people in Takoma Park are not job ready or prepared for higher education when they turn 18. This is especially true among minority youth. Multi sector collaborative efforts are needed.

Additional Concerns among tenants and immigrants

**Financial Capability:** Low wages and high costs put households with little or no assets at risk of financial disaster. Programs such as budget coaching and individual development accounts are needed to promote financial well being.

**English Lessons:** Immigrants are always in high need of low or no cost English classes.

**Behavioral health:** Public provision for behavioral health is inadequate. Community based peer support programs, coordination of counseling resources and other innovative programs are needed.

**Long Branch Emergency Preparedness:** The recent explosion and fire at Flower Branch Apartments revealed gaps in the ability to provide cultural and linguistically appropriate supports to those affected by disasters. An effort to create a Long Branch Emergency Plan is getting started.

[www.communitycheer.org](http://www.communitycheer.org)