

**DECEMBER 2025 & JANUARY 2026 MONTHLY
REPORT
MAYOR TAKISHA D. JAMES
BLADENSBURG TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
February 12, 2026**



The Annual Senior Gala featured Ms. Senior Maryland 2024 (Sherri Roberts Lumpkin) and Ms. Senior Maryland 2025, Monica Jeffries

(December 11, 2025)

MONTHLY MEETING AND EVENTS | DECEMBER 2025:

December 3: Town of Bladensburg Inauguration

I was honored to be sworn in by Prince George's County Clerk of the Court, the Honorable Mahasin El Amin, to serve another term as Mayor of the Town of Bladensburg. I am grateful to the elected officials, residents, and community stakeholders who attended and offered their support and congratulations.

I look forward to serving the community honorably for the next four years.

December 4: MML State of the Municipality

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) State of the Municipality event featured a presentation on *Municipal Service Delivery in Maryland* by Dr. Ann Cotton of the University of Maryland. This report, commissioned by MML, examined the scope and cost of services provided by municipalities across the state.

The study analyzed 15 municipal services grouped into six major service areas:

- Housing, planning, and development
- Public works and infrastructure
- Economic and workforce development
- Public safety
- Environmental stewardship
- Recreation and parks

Findings showed that 91% of municipalities provide services related to housing, planning, and development, with public works and infrastructure, as well as public safety, also commonly provided. Overall, 49% of municipalities (77 of 157) responded to the survey.

Key Takeaways from the Survey

- Code Enforcement: Average budget of \$194,424, or \$16,735 per 1,000 residents.
- Rental Licenses: Average budget of \$156,387, or \$10,154 per 1,000 residents.
- Service Scope: On average, Maryland municipalities provide 9 of the 15 services included in the study. Public works and infrastructure services were identified as particularly capital-intensive, requiring significant investment by both municipalities and public end users.

Service Area Highlights

- Recycling: Twenty-seven municipalities reported recycling budgets ranging from \$0 to \$1.3 million. The average budget was \$189,147, or \$50,518 per 1,000 residents.
- Road Maintenance: Forty-nine municipalities reported road maintenance budgets ranging from \$500 to \$3.0 million. The average budget was \$491,758, or \$117,873 per 1,000 residents.
- Police Services: The average municipal policing budget was \$5.4 million, or \$470,844 per 1,000 residents.
- Environmental Stewardship: Combined budgets for stormwater management, sediment control, and forest conservation ranged from \$0 to \$4.6 million, with an average of \$604,080, or \$58,672 per 1,000 residents.

Survey Methodology

The second phase of the analysis included an online survey designed to (1) confirm services

identified through online research and (2) supplement data categorized as “No Evidence” or “Unsure.” A total of 58 municipalities (37%) completed the survey, with an additional 19 municipalities (12%) submitting partial responses. Increased participation in future surveys would further strengthen the data's completeness and reliability.

The event also included a presentation by Harshita Tanksali, Senior Research Specialist with the National League of Cities (NLC) Center for Research and Data Analysis, on the newly released report *City Fiscal Conditions 2025*. A copy of the report is attached for the awareness of the Town Council and Department Heads as we proceed through the budget planning process (**Attachment #1**).

Survey data was collected from 335 municipalities, with the majority of responses coming from cities with populations under 10,000. Key highlights include:

- Only 45% of surveyed finance officers anticipate being better able to meet FY2026 needs compared to FY2025.
- Respondents identified tariffs and the future of the municipal bond tax exemption as emerging considerations in budget assumptions.
- Many cities are reining in expenditures as federal pandemic relief funds phase out and revenue growth plateaus following earlier post-pandemic rebounds.
- In 2025, the pace of general fund spending growth slowed as cities faced emerging fiscal headwinds.
- Constant-dollar general fund revenues increased by 3.9% in FY2024 compared to FY2023; however, cities anticipate a year-over-year decline of 1.9% in FY2025 as property and income tax revenues stabilize after post-pandemic growth.

December 4: Town of Bladensburg Closed Session

The Town Council met in Closed Session pursuant to the following provisions of the Maryland Code:

- §3-305(b)(7): To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.
- §3-305(b)(1): To discuss personnel matters, including the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of individuals over whom the public body has jurisdiction.

December 5: Annual Yule Log Event

This year's Annual Yule Log Event was especially meaningful as it marked the 25th anniversary of this cherished community tradition. Children and residents of all ages gathered at Town Hall Park to welcome Santa, who arrived with a special escort and was greeted by the brightly burning yule log in David C. Harrington Park.

Following Santa's arrival, families enjoyed holiday photos at the gazebo. Inside Town Hall, residents participated in festive activities including gingerbread making and karaoke. These activities brought together a diverse cross-section of the community to celebrate the holiday season, connect with neighbors, and engage with members of the Town Council.

Special thanks to Mr. Ray Jeffries for leading the coordination and creative planning of this event. We received numerous expressions of gratitude from residents who appreciated the opportunity to celebrate this longstanding tradition together.



December 6: Meeting with Residents at Newton Green Senior Apartments

Council Member Kalisha Dixon and I hosted a meeting with residents to provide updates on town initiatives and projects. We were joined by Officer Pickering of the Bladensburg Police Department, who shared important public safety updates and tips.



December 9: Town of Bladensburg Closed Session

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December 10: Holiday Reception at the Governor's Mansion

Governor Wes Moore and First Lady Dawn Moore hosted a series of holiday receptions to bring together leaders from across the administration and various industries. I was pleased to attend this prestigious event with Former Mayor and First Gentleman Walter L. James, Jr.



Elizabeth Seton Holiday Dinner & Winter Concert

I also attended the annual Elizabeth Seton Holiday Dinner and Winter Concert and enjoyed the musical talents of the Seton Orchestra, directed by Dr. Bradley Tatum, and the choir, directed by Mr. Samuel Cromwell.

December 11: Senior Gala



The Town hosted its annual Senior Gala to celebrate our senior residents and provide an opportunity for fellowship. The holiday season can be a lonely time for seniors, making events like this especially important to supporting quality of life and community connection.

I extend my appreciation to Council Member Blount for leading the organization of another successful event, and to the staff and council members who attended and supported the gala.



December 11: PGCMA Legislative Dinner

The Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) Legislative Dinner was held to present the association's 2026 legislative priorities to county, state, and federal officials.

1. Economic Development & Zoning

Municipal Authority in Land-Use Decisions

- Strengthen municipal voice in zoning decisions
- Require municipal recommendations to be binding or overridden only with written findings
- Align decisions with Master & Sector Plans and Plan 2035
- Ensure development reflects community character

Housing Affordability & Preservation

- Expand County affordability tools
- Fund municipal-scale housing projects
- Preserve naturally occurring affordable housing
- Support missing-middle & ADU implementation
- Promote equitable, transit-accessible housing options



2. Revenue & Municipal Fiscal Health

Modernizing the Tax Differential System

- Update formulas to reflect full municipal service delivery
- Prevent double taxation for residents
- Ensure transparent, regularly updated methodology
- Change review cycle from annual → triennial
- Replace two "unincorporated area" seats with two municipal managers/administrators

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3. Infrastructure & Transportation

Road Maintenance & Lighting

- Adopt clear service standards across SHA, County & municipalities
- Improve coordination on resurfacing, pothole repair & lighting upgrades
- Provide shared tracking systems for timely responses
- Ensure safe, well-lit neighborhoods

First/Last Mile Connectivity

Create a municipal partnership program for:

- Sidewalks, safe crossings, bridges
- Protected bike lanes & trail links
- Improve safety, mobility, equity & economic development near Purple Line stations

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4. Social & Community Services

Municipal Mental Health Initiatives

- Establish dedicated funding streams for municipal programs
- Support youth engagement & crisis-response partnerships
- Expand neighborhood-based mental-health outreach
- They strengthen community resilience and reduce public-safety strain

Protection of Immigrant Residents

- Guarantee access to State/County services regardless of immigration status
- Strengthen County/State language-access requirements
- Limit local resources used for civil federal immigration enforcement. End the use of 287(g) agreements.

Just-Cause Eviction Protections

- Require legitimate reasons for non-renewal
- Ensure adequate notice and ban retaliatory evictions
- It supports housing stability, school continuity & economic mobility



5. The Environment & Climate Resiliency

Bottle Bill

- Implement modern beverage-container deposit program
- Reduce litter & increase recycling rates
- Include municipal grants for cleanup, education & compliance support

Flood Prevention & Stormwater Management

- Increase County/State funding for municipal-scale projects
- Support green infrastructure and drainage system upgrades
- Align with climate goals & MS4 requirements
- Address frequent flooding impacts in municipal neighborhoods



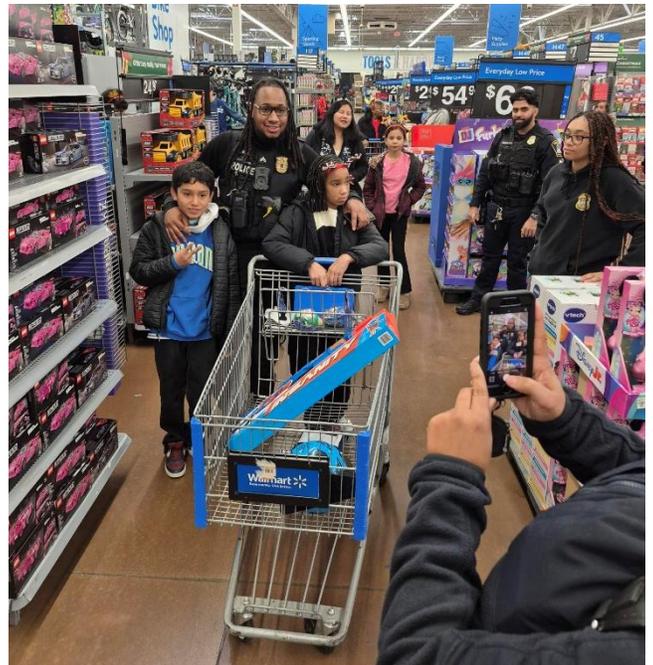
December 12: Town of Bladensburg Legislative Briefing

The Town Council and staff hosted county, state, and federal elected officials and staff to present the Town's 2026 legislative priorities. This briefing provided an important opportunity to share the Town's vision and to receive valuable feedback from legislators and officials on potential modifications to strengthen and advance our priorities.



December 13: Shop with a Cop

Shop with a Cop remains one of the year's most meaningful events, providing local underprivileged students with positive interactions with law enforcement officers. This year, the Bladensburg Police Department hosted nearly 100 students, who were able to purchase Christmas gifts. I am deeply grateful for the leadership of the Bladensburg Police Department in organizing this event and for the partnerships that made it possible, including Port Towns Elementary School, Rogers Heights Elementary School, Chick-fil-A, and allied law enforcement agencies.





December 15: Prince George's Gateway Development Authority

The Town of Bladensburg hosted the formal presentation of the Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Plan to county and state leaders. The presentation provided an opportunity to share the Town's vision and highlight priority projects designed to spur economic development and revitalization within the gateway communities.

December 22: Meeting with Prince George's Gateway Development Authority Consultants

Town Administrator Bailey-Hedgepeth and I met with project consultant Chris Harrington for a site visit and discussion regarding the Bostwick House. We revisited prior conversations related to placemaking opportunities and potential future projects for the site.

MONTHLY MEETING AND EVENTS | JANUARY 2026:

January 8: Town of Bladensburg Closed Session

The Town Council met in Closed Session pursuant to the following provisions of the Maryland Code:

- **General Provisions Article §3-305(b)(7):** To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.
- **General Provisions Article §3-305(b)(1):** To discuss personnel matters, including the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom the public body has jurisdiction, as well as other personnel matters affecting specific individuals.

January 14: MML 90th Anniversary Kickoff

A small reception was held to commemorate the kickoff of the Maryland Municipal League's 90th anniversary year, marking nine decades of service and advocacy on behalf of Maryland's municipalities.

MML Legislative Opening Day Reception

The Maryland Municipal League also hosted its annual Legislative Opening Day Reception to mark the first day of the 449th legislative session. Governor Wes Moore attended and expressed his commitment to working collaboratively with municipal partners throughout the legislative session.

January 15: MML Executive Committee Meeting

The MML Executive Committee met to review agenda items for consideration at the January Board of Directors meeting. President Todd Nock, Mayor of Pocomoke City, along with League staff, provided updates on recent outreach efforts aligned with the President's "*Back to the Future*" initiative. December activities focused on student engagement and workforce development.

- Campus visits were conducted at the University of Maryland and Bowie State University and were reported as well-received.

Staff discussed strategies to further strengthen student engagement, including:

- Implementing a reduced student rate for undergraduate and graduate students attending the Summer Conference.
- Developing workshops tailored to student attendees, with department representatives participating to discuss career pathways and professional experiences.

Time to Care Act / Family and Medical Leave Act

Staff also reported ongoing challenges related to implementation and communication of the Time to Care Act, including:

- Continued confusion among some Montgomery County municipalities, particularly those with existing parental leave programs.
- Concerns regarding potential fraud issues reported in Minnesota following enactment of a similar program.
- Legislative uncertainty, with speculation that Maryland's program may be delayed, revised, or canceled.

Staff recommended exercising caution before issuing broad guidance until further legislative clarity is provided, while acknowledging the need for updated information during the budget-planning season. Municipalities also expressed concern regarding potential future rate increases, with informal estimates reaching up to 13%, though no final determinations have been made.

January 16: Formula 2040 – External Engagement Outreach Meeting

This meeting was convened by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to gather feedback from municipal staff and elected leaders regarding the Formula 2040 plan and any identified gaps in needs.

Formula 2040, formally known as the *Functional Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space*, is the culmination of work that began in 2008 with the *Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond Needs Assessment*. The "formula" in Formula 2040 represents *Parks + Recreation = Experience*, reflecting the department's recognition that parks, recreation, and leisure programming

are central to its mission. The plan establishes a framework to ensure future parks and recreation programmatic and facility needs can be met.

January 21: Town of Bladensburg Closed Session

The Town Council met in Closed Session pursuant to the following provisions of the Maryland Code:

- **General Provisions Article §3-305(b)(7):** To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.
 - **General Provisions Article §3-305(b)(1):** Pursuant to the General Provisions Article §3-305 (b) (1) of the Maryland Code, the Mayor and Council will meet in a Closed Session to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.
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January 22: Interview with the Maryland 250 Commission Staff

I participated in an interview with Maryland 250 Commission staff for an upcoming edition of the MD250 newsletter, scheduled for publication on Friday, January 30.

January 26: Prince George's County Office of Emergency Management Weather Briefing

The Prince George's County Office of Emergency Management held a weather briefing for municipal leaders to discuss preparedness and response efforts related to Winter Storm Fern. At the time of the briefing, OEM expressed confidence in the snow and ice removal operations underway across the county.

January 29: MML Board of Directors Meeting

The Maryland Municipal League Board of Directors convened for its January meeting to receive updates on the League's financial and investment reports, as well as staff and legislative updates.

Town of Bladensburg Closed Session

Following the meeting, the Town Council met in Closed Session pursuant to:

- **General Provisions Article §3-305(b)(1):** To discuss personnel matters, including the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom the public body has jurisdiction, as well as other personnel matters affecting specific individuals.
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Legislative & Other Updates

Maryland General Assembly Legislative Updates

URGENT: HB 0239 | Land Use – Zoning – Limitations
(*Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026*)

Sponsor: Chair, Economic Matters Committee, Delegate Kriselda Valderrama
(*By Request – Departmental – Housing and Community Development*)

Status: In the House – Hearing scheduled for **February 12 at 1:00 p.m.**

Synopsis:

This legislation would prohibit local jurisdictions from adopting or enforcing certain zoning provisions related to lot size, dimensions, setback requirements, lot coverage, and design or architectural elements for certain single-family homes. The bill would also limit a local jurisdiction's ability to prohibit certain housing types in specific zoning districts and restrict the subdivision of certain lot types.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Town submit a letter **opposing** this bill. The Maryland Municipal League (MML) is also opposing the legislation. **Testimony is due Tuesday, February 9, 2026.**

SB 0342 | Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program

Sponsors: Senators Brooks, Augustine, Guzzone, Hettleman, Kagan, Love, Muse, Smith, and A. Washington

Status: In the Senate – Hearing scheduled for **February 10 at 1:00 p.m.**

Synopsis:

This bill would establish the Maryland Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program to increase the reuse and recycling of beverage containers and reduce litter, pollution, and associated cleanup costs. The legislation would prohibit a producer from selling or distributing a redeemable beverage container in the State unless the producer is registered with the Department of the Environment, pays a required fee, and participates in a beverage container stewardship organization.

Update:

Although testimony was due last week, it is still recommended that the Town submit a letter to the Chair of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to express its position.

MML Legislative Updates: Please note the MML 2026 Legislative Priority and Strategic

Initiative.

2026 PRIORITY: MODERNIZING MUNICIPAL REVENUE STRUCTURES

Municipal governments are on the front lines, providing essential day-to-day services like clean drinking water, public safety, and road maintenance to two million Marylanders. However, the capacity to fund these critical services is severely constrained. The current revenue structure, which relies overwhelmingly on municipal property tax, is an outdated, and unsustainable system that limits local leaders' flexibility, threatens housing affordability, and fails to capture the economic impact of non-residents who use local services.

Maryland's municipal revenue structure has not had a meaningful update in nearly six decades. Since that time, the expectations, mandates, and financial burdens placed on cities, towns, and villages have changed dramatically, while revenue options have not. Municipalities operate under a financial model that is failing Maryland and its residents.

A modernized and diversified municipal revenue structure is essential for a thriving Maryland economy, its residents, and competitiveness. Municipalities contribute one-third (1/3) of all state sales and use tax revenue despite being less than 5% of the entire land mass. Equipping our cities with modern tools is a vital investment in Maryland's largest economic engines. Municipalities play a large role in the state's solutions for long term economic stability.

OVER-RELIANCE

Property taxes are the only meaningful financial vehicle local governments have, accounting for 50% of the average municipal general fund budget.

UNSUSTAINABLE PRESSURE

Continuously raising property taxes is unsustainable and inequitable. It directly threatens housing affordability for municipal residents and, in particular, our most vulnerable residents including seniors and working families.

UNFAIR BURDEN

The current structure forces residents and property owners to subsidize non-residents and out-of-state tourists who use local infrastructure and services (police, trash collection, parks).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSUMPTION TAX AUTHORITY AND REVENUE SHARING



By supporting legislation to create a fair and more flexible funding model, the General Assembly can ensure the continuation of essential services to its municipal residents.

The list below represents just a fraction of communities who have begun the process to incorporate without success:

- 2025- Fort Washington
- 2025-Odenton, Eldersburg, Lexington Park
- 2023- Columbia
- 2022- Waldorf
- 2021- Fort Washington
- 2020- Edgewood
- 2019- Landover, Damascus
- 2017- East Bethesda
- 2016- Calvert Shores
- 2013- Ocean Pines, Edgewood
- 2009- Clarksburg
- 2007- Rollingwood
- 2003- Langley Park
- 2002, 2003- Largo
- 1997- Friendship Heights

2026 STATEGIC INITIATIVE

The Problem

Maryland's municipal incorporation process has been broken for 70 years and it is costing the state of Maryland growth, revenue, and community empowerment. Since 1954, when the General Assembly shifted incorporation approval to counties, Maryland has seen zero new municipalities form, despite countless communities fighting for local control. This is not an accident but instead a systemic barrier that denies residents their right to vote on self-governance while the state loses out on critical economic benefits. Municipalities drive population growth, provide oversized tax revenue to the state, and foster a sense of community values.

The Opportunity

Finding a solution is not just about fairness; it is a critical strategy for addressing Maryland's growth needs:

- Population is growing 4x faster in municipalities than in non-incorporated areas.
- Property values increase 12-13% in the long run following the formation of a municipality.
- One-third (1/3) of all state sales and use tax revenue comes from municipalities.

The Solution

Utilizing existing resources to create a fair and clear process is essential for empowering Maryland's communities. State legislators also recognize this need. We aim to reform the 1954 framework to enable community-driven incorporation through resident referendum.

The Impact

Unlocking incorporation delivers:

- Responsible growth management in high-demand areas
- Increased property tax base for counties and state
- Higher sales tax revenues when Maryland needs them most
- Local control for communities ready to self-govern