

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2026

October 20, 2025

Mayor Takisha James and the Town Council
Town of Bladensburg



Dear Partners and Legislative Colleagues,

As we prepare for the upcoming legislative session, the Town of Bladensburg stands as a **Town with Momentum**—a community determined to move forward, even amid broader economic uncertainty. Guided by a shared commitment to progress, equity, and regional cooperation, our Mayor and Town Council remain focused on delivering meaningful results for our residents while continuing to build strong partnerships across the Port Towns. We cannot be stopped, and we have continued to provide and increase services to our residents.

We believe that optimism paired with strategic action is essential to resolving long-standing issues and positioning our Town and our region for long-term success. In this report, we have outlined our key priorities, which reflect the bold direction we are pursuing in FY 2026:

Advancing Growth, Annexation, and Regional Collaboration

We are actively working to expand our municipal boundaries, invite new business opportunities, and ensure residents and businesses in unincorporated areas have access to high-quality services and representation. Regional coordination with our fellow Port Towns is central to this effort.

We are also thrilled to be a part of the Prince George's Gateway Arts District with the municipalities of Brentwood, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, Mount Rainier, and North Brentwood. This group has made great strides over the last year in developing a vision and gathering economic data. These collaborative efforts have greatly encouraged us and provided additional momentum in our forward progression.

Pushing for Greater Influence in Land Use and Zoning

Local voices must have a stronger role in the decisions that shape our built environment. We are advocating for legislative changes to increase municipal input into planning and zoning, particularly in areas where redevelopment is most needed.

Launching the BCCE Port Towns Community Development Corporation

This transformative initiative will unite Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston in a shared economic development vision. This project has been underway for the last few years, but this year is different. We have formed the new entity, and appointments will be taking place in each entity in September. Together, we have applied for funding and started to develop the first-year goals. Key projects include:

- Board Formation and kick-off will be in Fall 2025.
- A branding and wayfinding strategy to strengthen regional identity
- Façade improvement programs to support small and mid-sized businesses
- Strategic initiatives to spur development and redevelopment in key corridors

- A comprehensive approach to flooding and infrastructure planning, especially in our industrial zones
- Programs to honor our rich history and culture through community events and public art

Continuing Capital Investments

We are committed to completing and advancing major capital projects that enhance our Town's infrastructure and cultural assets, including:

- Stabilizing and preparing Bostwick House for future use
- Planning for a new Town Hall and updated Police Department facilities

Addressing Long-Term Challenges

Bladensburg is actively working on long-term priorities that require sustained advocacy and funding:

- Solutions for the Peace Cross intersection
- Monitoring the potential impacts of the proposed MAGLEV project
- Expanding senior transportation services (Call A Bus)
- Supporting affordability through homeowner and renter assistance, including energy efficiency programs
- Encouraging changes to laws that support HOA Groups and renters
- Coordination with MNCPPC on the Upcoming Projects
 - Publick Playhouse
 - Bladensburg Community Center

Enhancing Public Safety

We are prioritizing a safe, walkable, and resilient community through:

- Pedestrian safety improvements and green infrastructure investments
- Legislative advocacy on juvenile crime and recent changes to Maryland law
- Continued support for automated traffic enforcement to improve safety and accountability

We are deeply grateful for the continued support of our County and State partners, and for the collaboration of our fellow Port Towns. This report is designed to elevate the priorities of the Town of Bladensburg and provide a clear roadmap for how we can work together to meet the evolving needs of our residents and businesses.

We look forward to a productive session and thank you for your partnership in building a brighter future for Bladensburg and the region.

Sincerely,
Mayor Takisha James
And the Bladensburg Town Council

Town of Bladensburg Legislative Priorities

Growth, Annexation, and Regional Cooperation

Building on momentum from last year's high-profile annexation efforts at Hospital Hill, the Town of Bladensburg is preparing for the next phase of **smart, cooperative growth**. In FY 2026, we are renewing our focus on annexation in partnership with our neighboring jurisdictions, with the shared goal of promoting stability, equity, and economic opportunity for the Port Towns region.

Our annexation plan is both **strategic and community-centered**, and we are developing educational materials and outreach tools to show **why businesses and residents should choose Bladensburg**. We believe joining the Town offers distinct advantages, including:

- 24/7 Dedicated Police Coverage
- Responsive Public Works Services (e.g., Enhanced Snow Removal)
- Improved Code Enforcement and Infrastructure Maintenance
- Easier Access to Local Elected Officials and Services
- Support for Local Businesses through Grants and Incentives
- Increased Representation in Local Planning and Decision-Making

We look forward to collaborating with residents, county leaders, and property owners to ensure this process is inclusive, transparent, and forward-thinking. The Town is supportive of legislation that protects the rights of municipal entities and does not curtail annexation by municipalities.

Land Use and Zoning Authority for Bladensburg

As we look ahead to FY 2026, the Town of Bladensburg remains steadfast in its commitment to equitable growth and inclusive planning. One of our top priorities continues to be securing a more meaningful role for municipalities in land use and zoning decisions that directly impact our communities. Our population is at the cusp of 10,000 residents, but our small stretch of land is a key commercial and industrial corridor. We believe that Towns of our size should have the option to exercise more autonomy or receive significant notice and participation in zoning actions.

Currently, municipalities have limited participation in county-level planning and zoning processes. In 2024, the Town passed a resolution in support of legislation that would provide greater municipal input in land use decision-making. Since then, we have engaged actively with other like-minded municipalities to build a coalition of support that advocates for more local authority and collaboration with state and county partners.

We have also maintained a productive partnership with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPCC) and were proud to participate in the development of the Port Towns Sector Plan. While we are encouraged by this collaboration, zoning control remains a

fundamental issue, and we continue to seek legislative remedies that will help us shape development that reflects the needs and values of our residents.

BCCE Port Towns Community Development Corporation (CDC)

A major highlight for FY 2025 was the official formation of the BCCE Port Towns CDC—a collaborative initiative uniting Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston under one visionary platform for shared progress. As we move into the fall, we will be off and running to bring meaningful development to the area.

This CDC represents a transformational step for the region. With support from state and county partners, the BCCE Port Towns CDC will serve as a centralized engine for revitalization, branding, and economic development, helping our communities attract investment, improve quality of life, and create a cohesive identity for the Port Towns corridor.

Planned initiatives for FY 2026 include:

- Obtaining funding for branding, signage, and a wayfinding program to unify the four towns
- Supporting local entrepreneurs through technical assistance and façade improvement grants
- Advocating for infrastructure and transit improvements to support residents and businesses
- Coordinating workforce development programs and promoting local hiring and training for local residents.
- Pursuing public-private partnerships to strengthen commercial corridors and mixed-use development

We are optimistic that this new structure will not only amplify each town's strengths, but also provide a strong, united voice for the region's future.

Capital Funding Priorities

Bostwick House Preservation and Activation

The Bostwick House, one of the most historically significant sites in Bladensburg, remains a focal point of preservation and revitalization efforts. Over the years, the Town has successfully secured grant funding for exterior and structural improvements to enhance stability. However, interior restoration is urgently needed to make the home usable for events, tours, and civic engagement.

We are actively pursuing additional capital investments and bond bill funding to bring Bostwick House to full functionality. Once restored, the site will become a vital part of the Town's cultural and tourism strategy community anchor that bridges our past and our future.

The Town has moved proactively on the following items over the last two years:

- **Encore Report - Stability and Feasibility Study** | Throughout FY 2025, we conducted the stability and feasibility study with Encore Sustainable Partners, which had a cost of \$200,000. This project, completed in collaboration with Aman Trust, provided a valuable assessment of the structural issues and areas in need of renovation. This project began in September 2024 and is wrapping up now.
- **Windows** | In July 2024, the Council approved a contract with WMG Historic Restoration, LLC for Bostwick Historic Window Restoration in an amount not to exceed \$82,913. In May 2024, following the approval, a scope of work was bid, and emails were sent to several local Historic preservation and window companies, who declined to bid or did not respond. Due to the nature of this work, the repair and placement take significant time and a particular talent set. This installation was completed by November 2024.
- **Masonry Repairs** | In September 2024, the Council approved a contract with EGG Construction for Bostwick House Repairs in an amount not to exceed \$142,575. As part of the ongoing preservation efforts for Bostwick House, an in-depth analysis was conducted of the required masonry repairs and the scope of roofing work needed for the front porch and the metal cap at the kitchen chimney.
- **Encore Report Update** | In November 2024, a presentation was provided to the Council and the public on the preliminary efforts of the Encore Report. The final report will be presented to the in November 2025.
- **Window Coverings** | In November 2024, we engaged with a non-profit to cover the newly improved windows with painted plywood to secure the project from break-ins and damage.
- **Final ULI Report from FY 2024** | In January 2025, a presentation on the Final ULI report and information on the next steps of this process.
- **Bostwick Day and Community Events** | This event occurred on May 5, 2025. We are planning more events at the house to open it to the Public.
- **Wash House Repairs** | In May 2025, the Council approved a contract to move forward with Historic Preservation Grant Funds from MNCPPC to repair parts of the Wash House Structure.

Next Steps: Continue monthly collaboration with Aman Memorial Trust, finalize expenditures, and secure all required approvals by June 2026.

New Town Hall and Municipal Facilities

The Town of Bladensburg fails to meet the community's needs and adequately staffs our essential functions. A new Town Hall facility is needed to encompass more space for resident use, featuring a visitor's center, emergency response and preparedness, job training center, the Town's police department, administrative staff, council, and possibly the Fire Department.

The Town has limited community space for resident functions, meetings, job training, a computer lab, etc. In addition, we have very little room for growth as it relates to our administrative staff.

Our facilities are dated and would benefit from more energy-efficient and sustainable construction. We have moved forward with the Neighborhood Design Center on developing an actionable plan for the facility. In Fall 2025, we will be exploring state financing opportunities; however, we want to have a facility that is both practical and affordable without the aftershock of increasing the debt burden for our residents.

We currently lack sufficient space to accommodate our expanding public safety and public works functions. The Town's facilities are outdated and do not match the modern needs of the community.

Here are some updates on the project using Bond Bill funding:

- **Site Development and Community Engagement Contract with Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) - December 2023 – Summer 2024:** The Town has compiled the space needs and evaluation process. After discussing the process, we realized the need to enhance the scope and focus of the Project.
- **Purchasing Alternative Properties and Sites in the Area – In Progress – January 2024 – May 2024:** The Town has identified a vacant commercial office site for potential purchase; however, these spaces were sold and did not meet the specialized needs of Public Safety
- **Council Action in FY 2025 and FY 2026:** As with the Bostwick House project, this outline will provide dates and information on the steps that have been taken to move this project forward.
 - **Contract with NDC** | In September 2024, the Council approved a contract with The Neighborhood Design Center for professional services not exceeding \$73,550 to support the successful development of the Bladensburg Town Hall Project.
 - **Existing Conditions Report** | In March 2025, the Council received a report for the Council/community to review on the development of the Bladensburg Town Hall Project, and was updated on the Existing Conditions Report.
 - **Town Hall Images and Recommendations** | In April 2025, the Council reviewed initial images on the Town Hall program and confirmed the following initial recommendations:
 - The current building cannot be used to reconfigure or expand
 - The Police Annex can be reconfigured to help mitigate building expenses
 - Two Possible Site Locations reviewed
 - Existing Town Hall Site
 - Bostwick – Lot 4 Adjacent to the House
 - **Conceptual Design** | In May 2025, the Council advanced the conceptual design process for a future Town Hall in partnership with the Neighborhood Design Center (NDC). On April 29, 2025, the Town Council participated in a design input session to provide feedback on preliminary concepts for the new facility, which is envisioned at approximately 28,000 square feet. The project aims to support

current operational needs and accommodate future community growth. Key topics discussed included:

- Council Chamber Design: The Council expressed concerns about the initially proposed 60-person seating capacity, recommending an expansion to accommodate 150–200 attendees. A fixed dais and the potential to combine the chamber with adjacent community space for larger events were also favored.
- Office Space Planning: Discussions emphasized the need for dedicated workspaces for the mayor and council, with a preference for ward-based offices over shared areas. Cost considerations were noted, with the Town's bonding capacity possibly capped at \$18 million. Staff highlighted the value of flexible, efficient layouts.
- Design Aesthetic: Council members preferred a traditional architectural style with natural lighting. For interiors, the Council selected furniture with flexible seating and preferred office layout Option 6, featuring frosted glass for privacy and visibility.
- **Cost Estimate** | In June 2025, NDC provided an overall Cost Estimate based on the features that were discussed in the previous meetings. The proposed Bladensburg Town Hall and Police Station, which analyzed five similar precedent projects, adjusting their original costs for inflation and local construction conditions to calculate a projected 2027 cost per square foot. The updated cost estimate ranges from \$15.5 million to \$19 million, with an average projected cost of \$17.25 million.
- **Bonding Resolution** | In July 2025, the Council passed a resolution directing staff to begin the process of seeking Bond Capacity to determine the affordability of the project.
- **Revised Floor Plans** | September 2025, NDC presented revised floor plans which condensed the needs from 28,000 sqft to 24,500 sqft.

Next Steps: The Town will be working on the following items for the remainder of FY 2026

- Continue community engagement efforts to ensure the inclusive development of the Town Hall project.
- Develop a funding plan for the future debt and overall forecasting for the Town.
- Partner with NDC on developing an RFP or RFQ for different design and building processes for the Town Hall.

State Road 769C Quincy Road – One Way and Green Street

Over the last several years, the Town has collaborated with the State Highway Administration (SHA) on reducing traffic and making these areas safer for pedestrians. SHA implements temporary barriers in the area to create a one-way. This project is nearing completion, and a

more permanent solution is needed to address not only traffic and pedestrian safety but also the chronic flooding and erosion in the area. The Town has assembled local and non-profit partners such as Low Impact Design Center, Aman Trust, EcoSite Engineer, and Anacostia Watershed Society to develop a long-term green street that will connect the community to the Waterfront Park, Historic Bostwick House, and Bladensburg Elementary.

Addressing Industrial Area Flooding – Bladensburg and Edmonston | From Flood to Flow

The Bladensburg–Edmonston: From Flood to Flow Stormwater Management Proposed Study is a collaborative initiative between the Towns of Bladensburg and Edmonston to address chronic, long-standing flooding in their shared industrial corridor. This area, historically impacted by severe stormwater outflows from the Edmonston Channel, has experienced over a century of catastrophic flooding, posing ongoing threats to infrastructure, economic activity, and environmental health.

Rooted in the legacy of partnership between the two municipalities under the Port Towns initiatives, this project builds on the region's existing foundation of cooperative planning and environmental innovation. Specifically, this effort is an extension of the Walkable Watershed Plan to align mobility, stormwater, and equity goals, and this study continues those efforts through targeted flood mitigation planning.

The project will:

- Analyze stormwater outflows and hydrologic patterns contributing to flooding within the industrial districts of Bladensburg and Edmonston;
- Identify and evaluate green and grey infrastructure solutions for long-term flood mitigation and resilience;
- Produce an actionable roadmap, including engineering recommendations and funding-ready priority projects, for future investment in sustainable infrastructure.

The study will give special attention to existing assets, including the network of rain gardens and stormwater retrofits installed in the Edmonston industrial and residential areas. By mapping these efforts and tracing their relationship to broader watershed dynamics, the project will uncover new opportunities to scale green infrastructure regionally.

***Edmonston Channel and Quincy Run Flood Study* { Use Photo from website}**

Furthermore, over the last several years, the Town has invested \$500,000 in ARPA funding, along with Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation, on a study and project analysis of the Edmonston Channel and Quincy Run. This project has a significant cost but only less than \$1 M has been funded. A copy of the most recent updates can be found:

<https://www.cisolutions.com/project/flood-risk-reduction-project-in-historic-bladensburg/>

Peace Cross Traffic Management Plan

This is a longstanding issue and priority not only of Bladensburg but of all of the Port Towns. The Town has worked with SHA and other State and Federal officials to improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure at the Peace Cross Intersection. This intersection is where three major roads converge, and both pedestrian and vehicle traffic are subject to potentially life-threatening situations daily. This intersection and issue will be highlighted in the Port Towns Sector plan, which is expected to be completed in FY 2026 by M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning.

This area is adjacent to the Bladensburg Waterfront Park, a major recreational asset of the Port Towns. A study is needed at this intersection to help identify alternatives that will allow pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles to move safely. This is a significant intersection of the Port Towns that has an effect on the overall area traffic flow.

State Legislation

Condominium and Homeowners Association – Repair and Rehabilitation Funding

The Town supports legislation introduced during the previous sessions by Delegate Marvin Holmes to secure funding from the county or state to support this fund. The legislation called for authorizing a county or a municipality to establish a specific fund to support infrastructure repair in a community subject to a condominium association or a homeowner's association and requiring that certain property tax revenues be assigned to a fund created under the Act. In Bladensburg, we have this issue and need legislation to address the needs of our residents.

Homeowner and Rental Assistance

With the end of APRA funding and the changing federal funding priorities, our residents need assistance in identifying rehabilitation programs for homeowners and rent payments. Many of these programs have disappeared, and the Town often receives pleas for help, which, for the most part, can not be addressed.

Identifying potential incentives for first-time homeowners will increase homeownership and result in more families relocating to the Port Towns. Equally important is matching affordable housing programs and services to help existing homeowners stay in their homes longer and age in place with incentives to upgrade windows, exteriors, and interior items like energy-efficient appliances. The Town will be seeking funding with MEA for upcoming rounds of funding in Winter 2026.

Tenant Rights- Failure to Repair Serious and Dangerous Defects- Tenant Remedies Tenant Safety Act:

With several multi-family and rental units in the Town of Bladensburg, we support legislation that establishes tenant remedies. The bill last session that Senator Washington authored established that a landlord that offers a dwelling for rent is deemed to warrant the dwelling fit for human habitation, authorizing a single tenant or tenants' organization to seek remedies on behalf of a group of tenants for a landlord's failure to repair serious and dangerous defects on the leased premises; authorizing a tenant, a group of tenants, or a tenants' organization to bring a civil action for money damages if a landlord fails to repair certain defects within 90 days of the court finding the conditions complained of exist; etc.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Pedestrian Safety

Over the past few years, we have had three tragic incidents within the town borders and one adjacent to the Town where pedestrians have been struck and resulted in fatalities. In Fall 2024, the Town has recently adopted the Vision Zero pledge, and we need legislative support to hold individuals accountable and ensure the infrastructure is in place to keep Bladensburg and Port Town residents safe.

We also need safer routes for children and families. This will support the students and families around Bladensburg Elementary, where additional infrastructure is needed to provide these safe passages. The Town has worked collaboratively with SHA on key crossing funding has been spread thin,

Juvenile Crime – Child Interrogation Act

This issue was not resolved in the last session, and we would like to see some action. In Maryland, violent crimes have spiked and are associated with juvenile involvement, including armed carjackings, assaults, homicides, car thefts, and more. The Child Interrogation Act impedes law enforcement officers from removing violent juveniles from communities such as Prince George's County, MD. Law Enforcement Officers would like to see violent criminals held accountable. We recognize that 98% of juveniles are law-abiding citizens working hard in schools to become productive citizens. They are our future leaders, but those committing murder, carjackings, shootings, robberies, assaults, and other heinous crimes should be held accountable.

A bill was passed in the General Assembly in 2022, which prohibits law enforcement officers from interrogating juveniles without allowing them to consult with an attorney and requires that parents be notified before questioning anyone under the age of 17. This bill restricts officers from interrogating suspects who typically cooperate with police officers during interrogations. They will freely consent to speak with officers or interrogators who ensure their rights are read to them, and the juveniles acknowledge that they understood their Miranda Rights.

These interviews/interrogations are recorded and screened intensely by prosecutors, judges, and defense attorneys before they are admitted into court as evidence in criminal cases. These interactions also provide law enforcement with crucial information that could lead to the identification, arrest, and prosecution of suspects involved in committing dangerous, violent crimes within communities, victims and evidence, such as firearms and other dangerous and deadly weapons, stolen property, and illegal CDS Activities; and facts that could assist in the investigation of additional alleged criminal activity which ultimately could bring criminals to justice and provide closure to families.

Other Regional Projects:

Bladensburg Community Center:

M-NCPPC has begun evaluating the current site and building a new center, and the town has participated in this process. However, the current designs show a slightly larger building, but the community's needs are great. We are being told that there are site constraints, but we would like more opportunities for public input.

The Bladensburg Community Center is an essential recreational asset for local communities. The Center offers multiple fitness and sports programs, summer camps, after-school activities, and classes designed to improve the quality of life for residents of all ages. The Center also serves as a community gathering location for social interaction and educational opportunities.

Due to limited space, the Bladensburg Community Center cannot currently expand its programming and meet the area's growing needs. Expanding or building a new facility will improve the overall quality of life and provide essential programs and services needed in Port Towns. However, we do not want to continue to have an undersized facility.

Publick Playhouse Revitalization

The Town recently annexed this property into its jurisdiction and is excited to partner with MNCPPC and the state on this historic site. We see that this is an attraction that is for the entire region and supports the development of this project. M-NCPPC has announced new investments into the site, and the Town is looking forward to participating in this project. We see that this project will support the Prince George's Gateway Development Authority, which the Town has been participating in since 2024.

The Town envisions

Prince George's Gateway Development Authority

The Prince George's Gateway Development Authority, established by Maryland state legislation and reaffirmed by Senate Bill 659 in 2024, is a dedicated entity focused on fostering economic growth and community development in key areas of Prince George's County. Our organization is

committed to working with local businesses, government entities, and community members to create sustainable and inclusive economic opportunities. We strive to provide a platform for businesses to thrive and contribute to the overall prosperity of the community.

As a member of the Authority, the Town of Bladensburg is supportive of the future funding opportunities and projects within this area. The Town of Bladensburg has proposed a plan for the Bostwick House that would allow for improvements to be made to the Stables and outdoor areas to support the overall community use of the events and private-public partnerships. We see the development of this plan will create a historic, culturally diverse, and community-focused venue that will allow people to experience tranquility in an Urban area. The Town believes that this venue will promote the sustainability of the Bostwick Site and allow the area to attract visitors and promote art through community events and activities.

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