

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2025

Town of Bladensburg, Maryland



Land Use for Bladensburg

The municipalities must be able to provide input into the zoning issues impacting our communities. The municipalities have very little participation in the planning and zoning decisions that affect our towns.



This is a continued request to assist in coordinating discussions with county and state representatives to discuss drafting legislation to give the Port Towns more say in planning and zoning decisions. In 2024, we passed a resolution to support legislation allowing municipalities to have more input in Land Use. This year we will have been working closely with other like-minded municipalities on this matter to develop a collation of support,

Over the past year, we have actively collaborated with MNCPPC on the Port Towns Sector Plan, a crucial component of our overall development. We value our partnership with MNCPPC and are committed to working together on projects. However, the zoning issue remains a key concern for the municipalities, and we seek your understanding and support in this matter.

STATE LEGISLATION AND FUNDING

Bostwick House funding



The Bostwick House is a historic house located in the Town of Bladensburg. Over the years, the town has been fortunate to receive grant funding to help stabilize the structural integrity of the building. The interior of the house needs restoration to allow the Town to utilize the home for tours, attract visitors, and to have the ability to host events and meetings. To fully restore this historic treasure, the Town will need to seek other

sources of capital investment to cover the total costs associated with restoring a historic structure. We are also looking at options on the site to make it more usable for all Town residents.

Current Bond Bill Fund Actions: Bond Bill funding is being implemented for some stabilization projects. These projects will address the house's structural integrity so that we

can get funding to complete all repairs and get the home to a functional state. Our team is working with Aman Trust to put together bid packages for the \$500,000 that has been allocated.

FY 2024 Actions	FY 2025 Current and Planned Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with Aman Memorial Trust and hired Architect and Historic Property Planner. • ULI Technical Assistance Panel • Approvals from MHT and MNCPPC on Stabilization Projects • RFP and Bidding for Stabilization Projects • MNCPPC Grant funding for FY 2024 for Stabilization Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award on Window Replacements • Award for Architectural /Engineer Consultants • Award for Masonry and Facade Work • Award for Preservation Work to cover window

New Town Hall and Municipal Facilities

The Town of Bladensburg does not meet the community's needs and staffing of 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, 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 currently do not have sufficient space to house our growing public safety and public works functions. The Town's facilities are outdated and do not match the modern needs of the community.



Current Bond Bill Funding Actions: Over the last year, the Town engaged in some predevelopment work and will issue an RFQ to start the process of this fund so that we can get this project off the ground. We will utilize current Bond Bill funds this year. We will be working with our newly appointed Economic Development Consultant on integrating the site for the overall redevelopment of the Town. This Fall (2023)/Spring (2024), the Town will be engaging with the Neighborhood Design Center on a comprehensive look at the properties owned by the Town and overall space needs. We estimate that a new facility will cost in the range of \$15M, given our needs for public safety staffing.

FY 2024 Actions

- **Site Evaluation:** Evaluated the current site and properties for sale in the area. Developed a list of comprehensive space needs for the Town.
- **Bostwick House Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) :** Evaluated the site and use of current site for land Trade for Town Hall.
- **FY 2024 Earmark Funding:** Sought and obtain \$1M Earmark for a Public Safety EOC as part of Town Hall Site.

FY 2025 Planned Actions

- **Architectural and Site Assessment:** The Town has engaged with Neighborhood Design Center to develop a Town Hall concept with the information gathered.
- **Purchasing Interim Parcels and locations to move Town Services:** The current Town facilities are not adequate for staff needs, we have been looking at commercial parcel for purchase or lease for office space.

Call-A-Bus

We are committed to expanding and actively partnering in funding opportunities to improve the Call-A-Bus service, enhancing the mobility of our seniors and disabled residents. The Town has been a vocal advocate for improving the Call-A-Bus service over the last several years. We currently collaborate with Colmar Manor to provide these essential services to our residents, demonstrating our shared commitment to our community's well-being.

The Call-A-Bus service is not just a mode of transportation; it is a lifeline for some of our most vulnerable residents. As transportation costs continue to rise, this service becomes increasingly important. For many of our residents, the Call-A-Bus service is their only means of getting to doctors' appointments and accessing other critical services, significantly improving their quality of life.

Wayfinding Signage



The Town needs the County's assistance in securing funding for a Wayfinding signage program in collaboration with M-NCPPC. The installation of this program will not only guide visitors to transit stops, recreational assets, and historic attractions but also significantly enhance the marketing and promotion of the Port Towns as a vibrant place to visit, live, and do business.

Bladensburg Community Center:

MNCPPC 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.



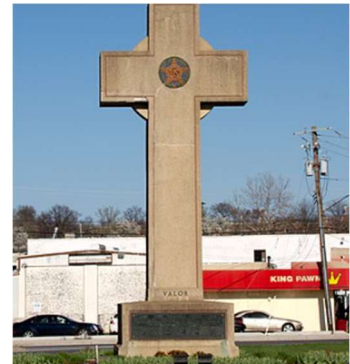
The Bladensburg Community Center is an essential recreational asset for local communities. The Center offers multiple fitness and sports programs, summer camps, after-school activities, and classes designed to improve the quality of life for residents of all ages. The Center also serves as a community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

Peace Cross Traffic Management Plan

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 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 to move pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles safely. I



Condominium and Homeowners Association – Repair and Rehabilitation Funding

The town supports legislation introduced during the last session by Delegate Marvin Holmes to support funding from the county or state to provide resources for this fund. The previous bill called for authorizing a county or a municipality to establish a certain 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 Assistance

With the end of APRA funding, the town needs some assistance with identifying rehab programs for homeowners. Identifying possible incentives for first-time homeowners will increase home ownership and result in more families locating in 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.

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.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Façade Improvements Program

Assist and support the Town as we seek and identify state resources to facilitate façade improvements to our aging strip malls. Over the years, we have identified and asked for resources to provide aesthetic enhancements for small businesses and our commercial centers that will attract investment and increase retail options for the Port Towns, ensuring economic sustainability for future generations.



Over the last year, we have sought DCHD funding for this program, and we are awaiting the results.

Port Towns Redevelopment

We need assistance identifying incentives to attract capital investment to encourage redevelopment of the Port Towns. Identifying and advocating for incentives to attract developers and capital investment is critical for the continued growth of the Port Towns. Our communities' economic sustainability depends upon redevelopment opportunities and new mixed-used residential projects to attract new residents, create jobs, and provide an exceptional quality of life. The Town would like to build upon the efforts being made with **Senate Bill 696 – Gateway Art Development Authority** and would like to look at the acquisition of key parcels that will support the Art and development of workforce housing that would allow “artist” and other members of the creative class to move to the Port Towns. (This may also include some county legislation/funding opportunities.)

Small Business Growth



The Town needs assistance with identifying state resources to help facilitate small business growth in this challenging environment. Strengthening the small business sector is an integral part of Port Town’s economy and will help to increase the diversity of businesses in our communities. Assisting with identifying resources to provide events, classes, and workshops will encourage new business growth in the Port Towns.

Strategic Redevelopment Acquisition Funding/ Gateway Art District

The town seeks funding to purchase parcels to support the strategic redevelopment of areas supporting the Gateway Art District. The Town borders the Publik Playhouse, and we are looking for opportunities to find locations for investment in properties and centers that can be used to support the creative community and create workforce/affordable housing units.

Bladensburg Internal Operations:

Quality of Life – Assist with identifying funding to facilitate a branding/marketing campaign to help define the Port Towns' identities and to promote the benefits of living, working, and visiting the area. Better defining the identity of the Port Towns will lead to increased awareness of the benefits of living, working, and visiting the area. A strong identity will also strengthen the ability of our partners to attract resources, resulting in better and improved services and programs for our residents.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Pedestrian Safety

Over the last year, we have had three tragic incidents within the town border and one adjacent to the Town where pedestrians have been stuck and resulted in fatalities. The Town recently adopted the Vision Zero pledge, and we need legislative support to hold people accountable and the infrastructure to keep Bladensburg and Port Town residents safe.



Organized Retail Theft Assistance

We have started to work with the County on this emerging issue, but this requires a multi-phased approach to enforcement and interventions. Major retailers are leaving urban areas due to high rates of retail shrinkage. On the ground, we have partnered with our shopping centers by adding mobile cameras to parking lots and obtaining “No Trespassing” agreements that allow for better enforcement outcomes.

We are asking state legislators for more substantial penalties for repeat offenders and mandatory rehabilitative measures to deter the behavior in the future.

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.

This 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.

Chief Collington serves as the President of the Police Chiefs of Prince George’s County Association and is a member of NOBLE, MD Chiefs and Sheriffs Association. He is willing to provide solutions on how we can protect young people but not inhibit law enforcement's work as we combat this rise in juvenile crime and victimization.

BLADENSBURG TOWN COUNCIL



BUDGET REQUESTS

Governor's Capital Budget Requests:

Title	Scope	Overall Amount
Town of Bladensburg Municipal Center	This funding is to design and construct a municipal center to replace our aging complex, which the Town has outgrown. We are requesting significant seed funding to meet our Town's needs. We estimate the overall funding needed for this project will exceed \$15M.	\$6,000,000.00
Training Center	The town has initial funding from the federal delegation for this project. More funding is needed to acquire a site for the facility.	\$2,000,000.00
Total 2025 Capital Request		\$8,000,000.00

Bond Bill Funding

Title	Scope	Overall Amount
Town of Bladensburg Municipal Center	This funding is to design and construct a municipal center to replace our aging complex, which the Town has outgrown. We are requesting significant seed funding to meet our Town's needs. We currently use the \$1M in Bond funding to do preliminary design work and assess the feasibility of the site. We estimate the overall funding needed for this project will exceed \$15M.	\$2,500,000.00
Bostwick House – Stabilization	Over the years, the aging site has seen some repairs, but in the Fall of 2023, a more extensive list was compiled. Current Bond Bill funding of \$800,000 will be used for planning purposes or property acquisitions to meet the current Town needs for office space.	\$1,000,000.00
Total 2025 Capital Request		\$3,500,000

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