

TOWN OF BLADENSBURG

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2025



**TOWN OF
BLADENSBURG
COUNCIL**

FY 2024-2025

Mayor Takisha James

Ward 1 Council Members

Trina Brown
Kalisha Dixon

Ward 2 Council Members

Marilyn Blount
Carrol McBryde





LETTER FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

October 2024
Town of Bladensburg

Dear Legislative Team:
Re: Legislative Priorities for 2025 | Bladensburg

As we prepare for the upcoming legislative session, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce the Town of Bladensburg's key legislative priorities for 2025. Over the last several years, we have focused on critical issues impacting our community. We are proud that the Town has made significant progress in many areas. However, there is still much work to be done, and we eagerly look forward to your invaluable support as we continue to make improvements that will benefit not only Bladensburg but the entire Port Towns region. The following are the key areas where we seek your advocacy and partnership:

Land Use for Bladensburg

We are committed to ensuring thoughtful and sustainable land use policies that enhance both residential and commercial development in Bladensburg. This includes preserving green spaces, improving zoning regulations, and fostering development that aligns with the community's needs and values.

Bostwick House Funding

Securing additional funding to preserve the historic Bostwick House is a top priority. As a landmark of national significance, its preservation will contribute to Bladensburg's rich cultural heritage and serve as a focal point for education and tourism. We are obligated to and ready to expand the current bond funding. We have an estimated Capital need of over \$1.5 million to address basic issues.

New Town Hall

Our plans for a new Town Hall are central to improving municipal services and community engagement. We seek support to make this vision a reality, providing a modern, accessible space for town operations and public meetings. The Town has contracted with Neighborhood Design Center to begin the concept process. However, we know that with escalating construction costs, more capital funding is needed.

MAGLEV

The Town remains concerned about the impact of the proposed MAGLEV project. We advocate for a balanced approach that considers the environmental and community impacts, and we urge continued dialogue to protect our residents' interests.

Call-a-Bus and Wayfinding

Expanding and improving local transit options, such as the Call-a-Bus program and enhancing wayfinding signage, are crucial for better mobility, particularly for seniors and those with disabilities. These improvements will strengthen connectivity within Bladensburg and the surrounding areas.

Multi-Generation Community Center

We are supportive of the development of a multi-generational community center that will provide critical services, programs, and recreational opportunities for residents of all ages. This center will become a cornerstone of community engagement, wellness, and enrichment.



LETTER FROM THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

(CONTINUED)

Peace Cross Intersection

Traffic and safety concerns around the Peace Cross Intersection remain a pressing issue. We seek support for comprehensive infrastructure improvements to enhance pedestrian safety and ease traffic congestion in this historically significant area.

Homeowner and Rental Assistance

Expanding programs that assist homeowners and renters will help stabilize our community, especially in the wake of the economic challenges many face. We are advocating for increased funding and program flexibility to support needy residents better. The town has also been supportive of measures that help homeowners' associations with issues regarding their reserves and provide aid to groups that have severely underfunded their capital needs.

Small Business Growth and Assistance (Facade Improvement)

Encouraging the growth of small businesses is a key priority for the Town. We are seeking assistance to expand facade improvement programs and other forms of support to help local businesses thrive, creating a vibrant and economically strong community.

Port Towns CDC

The Port Towns Community Development Corporation (CDC) has been a vital partner in fostering regional economic and social development. We are looking to reinstate this organization to enhance economic development in the Port Towns.

11. Public Safety Matters

Chief Collington is active locally and serves as the president of the Prince George's Police Chief Association. He is leading our efforts in Public Safety matters for the Town.

- **Pedestrian Safety:** We are committed to making our streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists through infrastructure enhancements and safety education initiatives.
- **Juvenile Crime:** Addressing juvenile crime through preventive measures, community programs, and partnerships with law enforcement is essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of our youth.
- **Organized Retail Theft:** Over the last few years, we have seen a spike in incidents, and the town has been on the front lines in this matter.
- **Speed Camera Monitoring:** The Town supports a measure allowing civilians to issue citations and other bills that will enhance public safety revenues.

We are grateful for your ongoing support of Bladensburg and the Port Towns. We believe that through collaboration and strategic investment, we can continue to build a stronger, more vibrant community for all our residents. The Town looks forward to discussing these priorities with you further and working together to achieve meaningful progress.

Sincerely,

Mayor Takisha James and the Town Council
Town of Bladensburg



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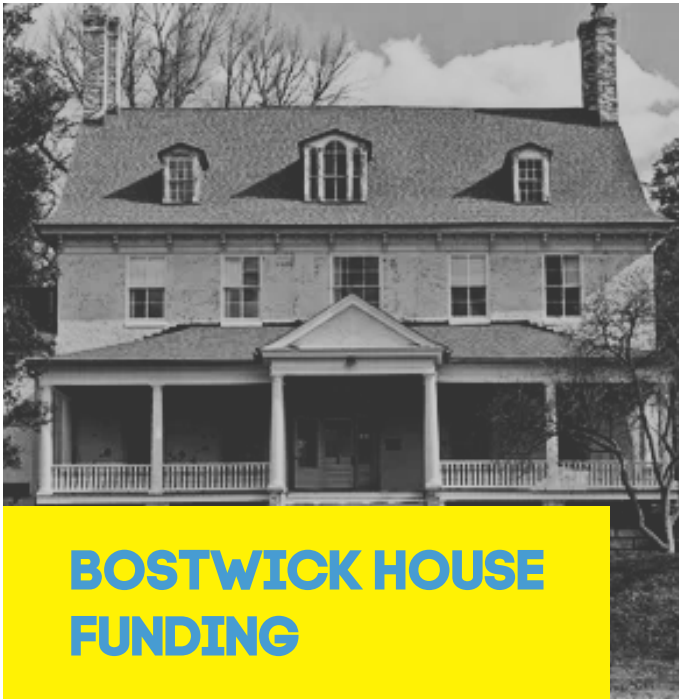
LAND USE FOR BLADENSBURG

We believe that municipalities must be able to provide input into the zoning issues impacting our communities. The municipalities have very little participation in the current 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 and other municipalities in Prince George's County 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 M-NCPPC on the Port Towns Sector Plan, a crucial component of our overall development. We value our partnership with M-NCPPC and are committed to working together on projects. However, the zoning issue remains a key concern for us and the municipalities, and we seek your understanding and support in this matter.

STATE LEGISLATION & 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.

FY24 ACTIONS

- Collaboration with Aman Memorial Trust and hiring an architect and historic property planner
- ULI Technical Assistance Panel - **April 2024**
- Approvals from MHT and MNCPPC on stabilization projects - **March 2024**
- RFP and bidding for stabilization projects - **Spring 2024**
- MNCPPC grant funding for FY 2024 for the stabilization project - \$50,000

FY25 CURRENT & PLANNED ACTIONS

- Awarded on window replacements - work began in **Sept. 2024**
- Awarded architectural/engineer consultants - work began in Aug. 2024
- Awarded for masonry and facade work - beginning **Oct. 2024**
- Nov. 2024** - Award for preservation work to cover window
- Nov. 2024** - ULI final report

NEW TOWN HALL & 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 has engaged with the Neighborhood Design Center in September of 2024 so that we can get this project off the ground. We will utilize current Bond Bill funds in 2025. We have obligated \$80,000 in spending at our council meeting in September.

We will be working with our newly appointed Economic Development Consultant on integrating the site for the overall redevelopment of the Town. We estimate that a new facility will cost in the range of \$15 million, given our needs for public safety staffing.

FY24 ACTIONS

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

FY25 CURRENT & PLANNED ACTIONS

- Architectural and Site Assessment:** The Town has engaged with the Neighborhood Design Center to develop a Town Hall concept based on the information gathered. Council Action - **Sept. 2024**
- 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. - **In Progress**



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.



MAGLEV

* The Town remains concerned about the impact of the proposed MAGLEV project. We advocate for a balanced approach that considers the environmental and community impacts, and we urge continued dialogue to protect our residents' interests.



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 and we believe that more space is needed. We are being told that there are site constraints, but we would like more opportunities for additional 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 the current 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



The Town has worked with State Highway Administration (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.

Over the last several years, the Port Towns have advocated for a solution. SHA has been a good partner, but we know that funding is key to accomplishing this project and no clear funding source has been identified.

HOMEOWNER & RENTAL ASSISTANCE

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 final expenditures 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



**FACADE
IMPROVEMENT**

The Town is seeking additional resources to facilitate façade improvements to our aging strip malls and general support to our business owners. Over the years, we have identified and asked for resources to provide aesthetic enhancements and strategic investments for small businesses 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. Over the last several months, we have collaborated with the other Port Towns to revive the Port Towns CDC. 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

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



CHIEF
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Chief Tyrone Collington serves as the head of the Bladensburg Police Department and manages a contingent of sworn and civilian personnel. He currently serves as President of the Police Chiefs of Prince George's County Association. In addition, he is a member of NOBLE, MD Chiefs and Sheriffs Association. He provides our agency with valuable expertise and solutions on how we can protect our citizens. Here are some key issues on public safety that are the focus of the Town.

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 Towns 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 car jackings, 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, car jackings, 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. The act mandates that they 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.

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 \$800,000 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	The Town has made significant progress on some basic stabilization of the Bostwick House. These projects are just a portion of an estimated \$2 million in items that have been identified.	\$1,000,000.00
	Total 2025 Bond Bill Request	\$3,500,000.00

CONTACT US



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