



Council Woman Jocelyn Route

Town of Bladensburg
Ward 1



To: Town of Bladensburg Residents, Staff, and Town Council
From: Council Member Jocelyn Route
cc: Town Administrator Robert McGrory
Date: September 13, 2021
Re: July-August Council Report – Ward 1

Please accept my following report of activities and services to the Town of Bladensburg Residents, Businesses, Visitors, and Staff:

- Co-facilitated planning and execution of activities for State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy Our Streets, Our Future event. Attended planning meetings, obtained donations for raffles, attended walk through, participated as day-of Emcee, participated in community walk and marketed event on social media channels.
- Finalized Council Member discretionary funds FY21 \$250 Peace Cross Brick inscribed with "Bladensburg Town Council 2021" & \$250 donation to the Bladensburg High School Football Team
- Attended Bladensburg National Night Out
- Attended Town of Bladensburg Staff Administrative Meeting 8.5.2021
- Met with Town Administrator McGrory & Council Member Lundy 7.22.21 to discuss concerns related to the Town of Bladensburg and make request on behalf of residents and businesses
- Attended Ice Cream with a Cop
- Facilitated Special Meeting: Closed Session for Personnel issues in compliance with State of Maryland Open Meetings Act on 7.30.21
- Responded to Ward 1 Town of Bladensburg Resident concerns in person regarding Parkway Shopping Center (Water washed out walkway behind 5668 Annapolis rd)
- Submitted 311 request for PG County issues within Ward 1 on 8.22.2021, 8.23.2021, 8.28.2021
- Initiated Bladensburg C.A.R.E.S. Campaign to address mental health needs in the Town of Bladensburg
 - Co-led by
- Responded to Board of Education Member Adams-Stafford's questions about Bladensburg Elementary School & 769C
- Corresponded with PGCPs and Board of Education Member Adams-Stafford regarding Bladensburg High School Field conditions.
 - Response received from PGCPs, Principal Faulkner-Jones, and PGCPs and Board of Education Member Adams-Stafford
- Established Free ESL Program in partnership with Council Member Lundy & Maryland Dept. of General Services Surplus Property Division
- Collaborated with Bladensburg Officer Harris & Chief Collington for LEOPS presentation
- Attended Special Meeting: Closed Session for Personnel issues in compliance with State of Maryland Open Meetings Act 9.7.21
- Responded to Residents and Businesses concerns and suggestions both in-person and virtually



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- Participated in Radio Interview The Outlet Kei-Touch on Gun Violence in communities & importance of Mental Health services and supports (Radio One WOL 1450 & 95.9 woldcnews.com 8.28.21, 5-6pm)
- Read Proclamation on behalf of County Council District 5 Jolene Ivy at Young PJ Evans funeral. PJ Evans was murdered in result of senseless gun violence
- Attended Town of Edmonston Our Streets, Our Future event
- Attended Mexican Independence Day Celebration in David Harrington Town Park

Outstanding Request:

- American Rescue Plan Act Meetings
 - Confirmation of Meetings & Correspondence to Stakeholders:
 - Staff meeting Thursday, October 21 – Staff at 3 PM
 - Every Door Direct Mail postcard to Residents Tuesday, September 21
 - Business meeting at 6PM, Wednesday, October 13 via Zoom
 - Resident meeting at 7PM Wednesday, October 13 via Zoom
- Zoom Account
- Town of Bladensburg Cell Phone for business purposes

Upcoming Activities

- ESL Program *10 available Laptops
- October Gun Violence Concert in collaboration with GoGo Artist Suga Bear
 - October 7, 2021 Bladensburg Waterfront Park
- Vaccination Clinics 9/23 & 9/24
- Ward 1 Town Hall & Check-In
 - Saturday, October 2, 2021 10am
 - Zoom

Follow me on personal Instagram @Jocelyn_Route & Facebook to obtain pictures and real time updates @JocelynRoute

All My Best,

Jocelyn Route, Council Woman

Council Member Jocelyn Route

Town of Bladensburg
Ward 1



September 13, 2021

Dear PGCPs Board Member Adams-Stafford,

I am writing this correspondence to share concerns regarding transportation for Prince George's County Public School students. I am not sure if Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) realizes the severity of the issues, but parents and students can no longer just wait for a solution. The time is now for a reasonable, swift and safe solution to the transportation nightmare that has already caused parents a financial burden, negative responses from their employer, and anxiety amongst our PGCPS scholars during the first week of the FY21-22 school year.

The Covid-19 pandemic has pushed more people away from the profession of driving, but a bus driver shortage cannot continue to be the answer to parent and students' complaints regarding transportation. I realize a bus driver shortage, exacerbated by COVID, is more severe than ever. The school bus driver shortage has long been an issue. In a 2016 survey of school transportation professionals conducted by the National Association of Pupil Transportation, 87% of respondents reported that the bus driver shortage was a major problem — and 70% said it was getting worse. The national results from a recent survey in 2021 are even worse. Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondents described their driver shortage as "severe" or "desperate". Roughly three-quarters of all respondents (78%) also indicated that the school bus driver shortage is getting "much worse" or "a little worse".
<https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/nsta/70966/2021-08-31-PR-3N-Driver-Shortage-Survey-2021-08-27-FINAL.pdf>

Bladensburg parents have shared they strongly believe the shortage of school bus drivers exists because a lack of drivers has persisted throughout the pandemic. In speaking with an unemployed resident of Bladensburg, they shared "I can't be a bus driver and make only \$13.50 an hour and work part time hours, No....its just not enough money." Bus driver roles are usually part-time. Although this may work well for retirees and others who are looking for a limited work schedule, the part-time nature of this work is an impediment for a lot of potential applicants who want — or need — a full-time job with benefits. The first solution to mitigate the transportation issue is to drastically increase the rate of pay for our bus drivers. Poor pay and tough working conditions may be a reason unemployed Prince Georgian's are not interested in working as a bus driver. Sign-on bonus for new CDL drivers, in addition to competitive starting full-time salaries should be immediately considered as a recruitment tool.

CC: Bladensburg Town Council, Prince George's County Council Members, Dr. Monica Goldson, and Dr. Rudolph Saunders.

Council Member Jocelyn Route

Town of Bladensburg

Ward 1

Recently, parents, students, and educators within the Bladensburg community have shared with me some alarming realities. Parents and students have reported they have taken taxis/ubers/lyfts to school and have paid \$28 one-way so that their student can make it to school because PGCPs provided transportation failed to come or is taking too long.

I too am a parent and I have waited up to 35 minutes at the bus stop with my children on multiple days and the bus has not arrived. After waiting 35 minutes, I chose to find other methods of transportation for my children but not all of our parents are afforded this opportunity. Non reliant buses can cause extreme distrust in PGCPs and anxiety for both parents and students. Parents also shared that they have been disciplined by their employers for arriving to work late as result of busses arriving late and not wanting to leave their child standing unsupervised at a bus stop given the most recent incidents of violence in Prince George's County communities. Parents and students have shared that taking taxis/ubers/lyfts are not a safe method of transportation for the children as well because the transportation is not shared, and anything can happen to their child riding with a stranger. Parents have shared their nightmare of their child potentially being inappropriately touched or abducted by an uber/taxi/lyfts driver.

Being solution focused, I would like to propose some ideas to immediately address the transportation issues county-wide:

- As shared above, sign-on bonus for new CDL drivers, in addition to competitive starting full-time salaries. During the off times drivers can sanitize buses and school settings.
- Contract with trusted private School Transportation providers to assist with transportation hubs until PGCPs bus driver capacity is reached.
- Hub Stops for Schools to shorten trips to and from schools and improve efficiency and reliability. In the Town of Bladensburg, there should be one or two hub stops for each Ward.
- Transportation Call Center tapped into PG County's 311. Often times parents have attempted to call the bus lot and no one answers. The calls should be routed to the Countywide call center who can have access to real time updates to provide information to students and parents regarding the bus status. Presently, the geo tracking is turned off for Stopfinder and as a result students and parents can not have real time updates.
- Older students provided free WMATA & the Bus Transportation during school hours and HUB pickup and drop off similar to other surrounding school districts and neighboring states.

Council Member Jocelyn Route

Town of Bladensburg

Ward 1

The transportation issue is debilitating for both parents and students. I received a frantic call from a parent on a Saturday pleading for financial support because she could not afford to pay for transportation for her student to and from school \$28 one way, any longer. Our transportation issues affect our most vulnerable students and their parents, and it is our job as elected and appointed leaders to do our absolute best to provide safe, reliable, and reasonable solutions swiftly in response to the current issues.

As a member of the Bladensburg Town Council, I remain ready and available to assist, actively, in anyway I can. I am desperately requesting your assistance in mitigating the immediate transportation issues. Please respond to this written correspondence in 5 business days or sooner.

All My Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jocelyn Route, MSW".

Jocelyn Route
Town of Bladensburg
Council Member
FY 22 Mayor Pro Tem

Council Member Jocelyn Route

Town of Bladensburg
Ward 1



August 23, 2021

Dear Bladensburg Principal Faulkner-Jones,

I am writing this correspondence to share concerns regarding the Bladensburg High School main grass outdoor field and practice field. After a long year and a half of limited fall sports, Bladensburg High School have both junior varsity and varsity teams to play football and soccer. I know that the school board and Bladensburg High School leadership is committed to the safety of all children. Unfortunately, the field conditions are deplorable. Here is a link to videos taken this past weekend, August 21, 2021, where football team unfortunately had to play their practice scrimmage on the practice field. Please view Bladensburg Football Field here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-UUu3zUPc5WkgW3oxuJDO7tsGiLzwzK5?usp=sharing>

Several families, alumni, and youth have contacted me to share their recent concerns of the Bladensburg High School field conditions. To my understanding, the field has been in the condition for over 4 years and the field conditions pose a safety concern for youth who participate in outdoor sports that require an outdoor grass field. I am formally asking the Bladensburg High School collectively with the PGCPs leadership and school board to address the outdoor grass field and come up with a plan of action to support the fall outdoor sports while the field conditions are addressed. Students mental and physical health are closely tied together. Playing organized sports promotes healthy living and improves mental and physical health. Our children have given up a lot already due to the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency. The students should not have to sacrifice their safety and have an adequate training facility to participate in school sports, which could be an outlet to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Bladensburg High School continues to be an outlier in our area by not having an adequate outdoor grass facility to host fall sports training and development. I am desperately requesting your assistance in mitigating this issue. Please respond to this written correspondence in 5 business days or sooner.

All My Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jocelyn Route, MSW".

Jocelyn Route
Town of Bladensburg
Council Member
FY 22 Mayor Pro Tem

CC: Bladensburg Athletic Director Brian Trueblood, PGCPs Board of Education Member Shayla Adams-Stafford, Chief of School Support and School Leadership Helen Coley, Ph.D



SUPPORTING SERVICES

Charoscar Coleman, Associate Superintendent | charosc.coleman@pgcps.org
13300 Old Marlboro Pike | Upper Marlboro, MD 20772 | 301-952-6564

August 30, 2021

The Honorable Jocelyn Route
Council Member, Ward 1
Town of Bladensburg
4229 Edmonston Road
Bladensburg, Maryland 20710

Dear Council Member Route:

Thank you for reaching out regarding the concerns with the athletic facilities at Bladensburg High School. The Supporting Services Division has completed an assessment of the situation. The findings revealed there is a natural spring on the Bladensburg High School site causing drainage issues. The football field was designed with a pumping system to remove water from the field area. Unfortunately, the pumping system is insufficient to quickly remove excess water, sometimes taking several hours depending on the volume of rain. Building Services has increased the pump size to help alleviate the issues and continues to monitor the conditions of the field. Bladensburg High School is scheduled to receive a new turf field and the drainage system will be addressed as part of the installation project.

The safety of our student athletes is our number one priority. As a result, all Bladensburg varsity football games have been relocated to the Northwestern High School turf field and Bladensburg High School will be the home team for these events. The junior varsity football team will be relocated to Charles H. Flowers High School. The soccer games are being scheduled as away games.

Thank you for your continued patience and support as we work to address the athletic facilities at Bladensburg High School.

Sincerely,

Charoscar Coleman, Ed.D.
Associate Superintendent, Supporting Services

c: Helen Coley, Ed.D., Chief of School Support and School Leadership
Mark E. Fossett, Ed.D., Chief Operating Officer
Carletta Marrow, Ed.D., Area 3 Associate Superintendent
Shayla Adams-Stafford, Board Member
Samuel Stefanelli, Director, Building Services
Lisa Faulkner-Jones, Bladensburg High School, Principal
Bryan Trueblood, Bladensburg High School, Athletic Director

LEOPS – Law Enforcement Officers Pension System

Officer Harris
&
Bladensburg Ward 1 Council Member Route



On-the-Job Stress Negatively Impacts Police Officer Health

- Police officers experience daily psychological stress that puts them at an increased risk of various long-term health effects to include:
 - 1) Cardiovascular disease
 - 2) Obesity
 - 3) Suicide
 - 4) Sleeplessness
 - 5) Cancer
 - 6) Back and joint pain



Chief Philip Albert O'Donnell



September 4, 1946- August 31, 2021

- After serving two tours of duty in Vietnam, receiving three Purple Hearts, and more than 50-year career in law enforcement Chief O'Donnell passed away.
- Chief O'Donnell was serving as Chief of Police for the City of Glenarden and was set to officially retire on September 1 when he passed away.



Bladensburg Police Department Sworn Officers

- Carry a minimum of 30lbs of gear daily on their body
 - Physical Health impacts
- Sacrifice their Holidays, and family gatherings.
 - Family life impacts
- Exposed to violence and disturbing reality on a regular basis
 - Mental Health impacts

Presently, offered SETPS - State Employees & Teachers Pension System in the Town of Bladensburg



Who can join?

SETPS - State Employees & Teachers Pension System

- *All Bladensburg Employees can join (including Police Officers)*

LEOPS – Law Enforcement Officers Pension System

- The Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System was established in 1990, to address the job-related stress of law enforcement.
- Membership in the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System is available to certified police officers employed by state, county and municipal agencies who have elected to participate in the Law Enforcement Officers' Pension System.
- To date, the Town of Bladensburg has not enrolled in LEOPS



SETPS - State Employees & Teachers Pension System

SETPS - State Employees & Teachers Pension System

- *Time of service plus age equals 90*
- *A 21 Y/O Employee can retire at the age of 55.5 after working 34.5 years*
- *A 25 Y/O employee can retire at the age of 57.5 after working 32.5 years*
- *A 30 Y/O employee can retire at the age of 60 after working 30 years*

LEOPS – Law Enforcement Officers Pension System

- An employee can retire after working 25 years



How can Town of Bladensburg enroll in LEOPS?

1. Determine eligibility to join the System
2. Submit application to the Maryland State Retirement Agency
3. Request a Preliminary Valuation
4. Action by Governing Body
5. Bladensburg Employee Choice: Enroll or Opt out
6. Submission of Employee Enrollment Information to the Maryland State Retirement Agency
7. Participation Agreement
8. Final Valuation



Determine Eligibility to Join the System

- 1) The Town of Bladensburg must determine if it is eligible to become a participating governmental unit (PGU).
- 2) A PGU that currently operates in a State system, may elect to become join a second State system only if:
 - A. The local plan: (THE FIRST STATE PLAN) requires member contributions at the same rate as the member contribution rate that would apply to the unit's employees in the (SECOND) State system (LEOPS)
 - In this case, both the Town's current plan and the LEOPS plain have contribution rates of 7%
- 3) The Town of Bladensburg approves its employees to participation in one of the retirement or pension systems (LEOPS or SETPS).



Submit Application

1) Town of Bladensburg must complete and submit a participating Governmental Unit Entry Application on or before *September 1st of the year prior to the fiscal year that the governmental unit seeks to join a State System

* In order to join as of July 1, 2022, the town must submit an application by September 1, 2021. *



Request a Preliminary Valuation

- 1) The System's actuary must perform a preliminary actuarial valuation to determine the Town of Bladensburg's cost of participation
- 2) The cost of performing the valuation is an expense the Town of Bladensburg will bear whether the Town decides to participate in the System or not
 - The estimated cost of the valuation is \$5,000-\$6,700



Preliminary Valuation: REQUEST

- To request a preliminary valuation, the Town of Bladensburg must notify the Retirement Agency, **in writing no later than (November 1, 2021) for entry on July 1, 2022**
 - Employees may only transfer into a new system on July 1.
 - The first valuation is preliminary because it is based on the previous year's valuation
- For the actuary to develop an estimate, the governmental unit must provide the Retirement Agency with certain demographic data for the employees eligible to enroll in the System if the Town of Bladensburg decides to participate



Action by Governing Body

- After reviewing the preliminary valuation results and the estimated costs to join the System, the Town of Bladensburg can do the following:
 - Present the option of joining the System to its employees
 - 60% of the employees need to petition to become members of the System

awaiting clarification if it needs to be 60% of town employees or police employees
- The Town Council must pass a formal resolution authorizing participation in LEOPS
 - **This resolution must be submitted to the Retirement Agency on or before May 1, 2022, to join the system on July 1, 2022.**



Employee Opt in or Opt Out

- If your employees have an election to participate in the System, this decision is a one-time irrevocable election
- Employees should be given at least two weeks to consider their options and make their decision



Submission of Employee Enrollment Information

- The Town of Bladensburg must submit to the Retirement Agency, **no later than May 15, 2022**, all required documents to ensure enrollment of all eligible employees and to initiate timely payroll reporting once the governing body has decided to join the System and at least 60% of the employees have voted in support of the Town of Bladensburg joining LEOPS
- **On or before May 15, 2022** the Retirement Agency must receive the following information:
 - 1) Properly completed, signed and notarized information for all employees of the governmental unit who have indicated through the irrevocable election described in item 4 above to join the plan
 - 2) Application for Membership for enrollee (Form 1)
 - 3) Designation of Beneficiary (Form 4)
 - 4) Proof of date of birth of Enrollee



Participation Agreement

- **On or about July 1, 2022**, the governmental unit and the System will enter into a written Participation Agreement which sets forth the calculation of the cost of participation and the responsibilities of the participating governmental unit
 - Not all cost are due at one time



Final Valuation

- A final valuation will be performed by the actuary several months after the effective date of participation to adjust and finalize the costs of participation.
- The Town of Bladensburg will also be responsible for the expense of that final valuation.





Jolene Ivey
County Councilwoman



Takisha D. James
Mayor



Jocelyn Route
Town Councilwoman



COVID-19 Free Vaccine Vacuna Gratis

REGISTER HERE
REGÍSTRATE AQUÍ



AMERICANA GROCERY STORE
4900 Annapolis Rd, Bladensburg, MD
20710



09/23/2021 (2pm-4pm)
No appointment – Sin cita



NO Photo ID or insurance required
NO necesita ID o seguro médico



Save
a lot

COVID-19

Free Vaccine

Vacuna Gratis

REGISTER HERE
REGÍSTRATE AQUÍ



SAVE A LOT

4900 Annapolis Rd, Bladensburg, MD
20710



09/24/2021 (4pm-6pm)
No appointment – Sin cita



NO Photo ID or insurance required
NO necesita ID o seguro médico

FREE English Classes & Laptops for Adult Bladensburg Learners



Prince George's Community College (PGCC) offers **FREE** classes for those interested in improving their English. The Town of Bladensburg will provide residents with a **FREE** laptop* if you enroll in the course!

How To Receive a Laptop:

1) Call 301-546-8350, or email adulthoodeducation@pgcc.edu to enroll in course.

2) Email proof of enrollment to: jroute@bladensburgmd.gov.

Hosted By:

Bladensburg Council Members



Carletta Lundy



Jocelyn Route

Winter 2021

Class Days	Time	Start Date	End Date
Monday & Wednesday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Nov 30	Mar 10
Tuesday & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Dec 1	Mar 4
Monday & Wednesday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Jan 4	Mar 24
Tuesday & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Jan 5	Mar 11
Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	9:30am - 12:30pm	Jan 5	Feb 17
Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	9:30am - 12:30pm	Feb 18	Apr 13
Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Jan 5	Feb 17
Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Feb 18	Apr 13
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Jan 4	Feb 8
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Feb 16	Mar 29

Spring 2021

Class Days	Time	Start Date	End Date
Monday & Wednesday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Mar 22	Jun 14
Tuesday & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Mar 23	Jun 10
Monday & Wednesday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Apr 5	Jun 14
Tuesday & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Apr 6	Jun 10
Saturday	9:00am - 12:00pm	Mar 6	Jun 12
Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	9:30am - 12:30pm	Apr 27	Jun 9
Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Apr 27	Jun 9
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	Apr 5	May 6
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	May 12	Jun 16

***10 LAPTOPS AVAILABLE!**

Clases de Inglés & Computadoras Portátiles **GRATUITAS** para residentes de **Bladensburg**



Prince George's Community College (PGCC) ofrece clases **GRATUITAS** para aquellos interesados en mejorar su inglés. ¡La ciudad de Bladensburg estará dando a los residentes una computadora portátil **GRATIS** * si se inscribe en el curso!

Como Recibir Una Computadora:

1) Llamar 301-546-8350, o mandar correo electrónico adulthoodeducation@pgcc.edu para inscribirse en el curso

2) Mandar un correo electrónico con la prueba de inscripción: jroute@bladensburgmd.gov.

Organizadores del programa:

Miembro del consejo de Bladensburg



Carletta Lundy



Jocelyn Route

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Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday	6:30pm - 9:30pm	May 12	Jun 16

***10 COMPUTADORAS DISPONIBLE!**