

# TOWN ADMINISTRATOR MONTHLY MEMO

February 2024

Dear Town Council, Residents, Business owners, and Employees of the Town of Bladensburg;



**It's Winter!** We finally had our first major snow last month, and I want to thank our Public Works Team and Police Department for their work.

We are working on a number of projects as we prepare for spring:

- Hiring new staff
- Planning for Light project 57<sup>th</sup> Ave
- Planning for CDBG Projects Bridge and Sidewalks Projects.

**Business Roundtable:** The Town held its first Quarterly Business Roundtable on Tuesday, January 31, 2024. This meeting connected Local Business Owners so that the network and the Town provided updates on Topics of interest, such as a legislative update, and MNCPPC shared information on the Port Town Sector Plan Process.

**Black History Month:** The town hosted its Black History Month event at the Bladensburg Library on Saturday, February 10. This event featured a literature showcase, poetry, and more! This promises to be a great event, and I look forward to seeing residents.



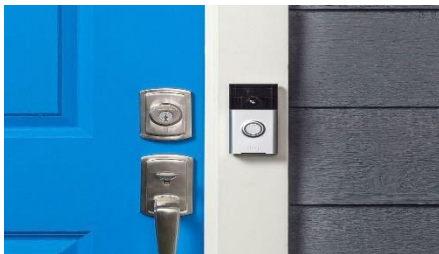
**COG Updates:** The Town is a member of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG), the Town of Bladensburg represents its citizens in the region with a seat at the table on several key committees and groups. I wanted to provide periodic updates on the current level of participation. Below are some updates on the COG Committees that have been attended by Town staff.

**Region Forward Collation** – Vito Tinelli attended the most recent **Region Forward Collation** group's Quarterly meeting on January 26, 2024. This group includes members from throughout the greater Washington DC area. This meeting focused on the topic of prosperity. The group examined the post-pandemic office space vacancy crisis and its economic effect. This group brings together regional policy experts to discuss and educate leaders on emerging topics.

The Town has also been participating in the **WASHINGTON-ARLINGTON-ALEXANDRIA, DC-VA-MD-WV METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA PRIORITY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (PCAP)**. This group is working on the overall grant process and request for the region. The Town Administrator has participated in the COG and State of Maryland discussions. This overall plan has been developed to develop regional priorities necessary for the grant application process. The meetings have been used to gain consensus on the issues that the region should seek. The focus of the PCAP is reducing “greenhouse” emissions and taking steps to mitigate the effects of climate change. Sample projects include electric vehicle charging, urban tree canopy creation, non-fossil fuel energy alternatives, and other items.

**COG Chief Information Security Officers (CISO)** –The Committee aims to build working relationships, exchange knowledge, and coordinate and enhance cybersecurity programs across the COG region. The Committee reports to the Regional Emergency Support Function-2 (RESF-2) Chief Information Officers (CIO) Committee. As requested, the Committee advises RESF-2, the Homeland Security Executive Committee (HSEC), and other COG policy committees on regional cybersecurity matters. Even though the town does not have full-time staff, we periodically attend to participate in the discussions.

**COG Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Committee** – This Committee meets monthly to discuss regional issues and is an opportunity for the administrative offices to address regional problems. The group recently met and worked with WMATA on long-term and short-term financial issues. The schedule for this year is being developed. The Town Administrator regularly attends and participates in these meetings to gain information on regional matters. In December 2023, the group held a Table-Top Exercise (TTX) with Homeland Security and Emergency Management. These exercises provide hands-on experience on how to deal with emergencies.



**Security Camera Reimbursement Program:** The Town started advertising the program in early August, and information is on the website. We have also posted announcements on the Town’s social media. The program is funded with \$50,000 in ARPA funds. This is estimated to assist 50 households in each ward. *Please make sure to apply today!*

**ARPA Rental and Utilities Assistance Fully Expended:** On January 16, 2024, the Town expended all the entire allocation of the funds that were set aside the Town Council for Rental and Utilities Assistance. These programs helped many residents over the last year and a half and we provided of \$500,000 to Bladensburg residents.

**Port Town Sector Plan:** We have continued to work with MNCPPC on the Port Towns Sector Plan update over the last few months. This is important because the County's plan is updated every

10 to 15 years to help gauge and determine future development and growth in the area. The Town of Bladensburg will work with Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston to determine common goals and objectives; your assistance will help us shape this vital report. On January 25, 2024, I participated in the first steering committee meeting. This group comprises citizens, community leaders, and staff who will help in outreach and engagement with the residents.

**Walkable Watersheds:** On February 7, 2024, I attended the Walkable Watershed meeting with Mayor James. This group is spearheaded by the University of Maryland, Environmental Finance Center. This project is doing a planning process for the Port Towns. During our meeting, each Town provided updates on their projects and activities. The next set up meeting for this group will occur in April.

**Tax Provider Resources for Residents:** Please see the information regarding Free or Low-Cost Tax Preparer Sites in Prince George's County:

Prince George's County - Community College - Tax Services  
<https://www.pgcc.edu/go/tax/>

List of Prince George's Free Tax sites  
<https://www.pgcash.org/free-tax-sites-in-prince-georges-county/>

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

<https://www.icarol.info/ResultDetails.aspx?org=2046&agencynum=34787679>



I want to thank the Town staff for their work and dedication throughout the year and the snow storms that we had in January 2024.

Regards,  
Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth, Town Administrator