

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Discussion: City Manager's Quarterly Update

Mayor Jordan started meeting at 7:30 p.m., held in Council Chambers, and virtually via Zoom.

In attendance: Councilmembers Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney, Jenni A. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

City Staff: Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Tim George, Assistant City Manager; Bertha Gaymon, City Treasurer; Dawane Martinez, Director of Human Resources; Greg Varda, Director of Recreation; Tyra Smith, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Officer; Chief Richard Bowers, Greenbelt Police Department; Brian Kennell, Director of Information Technology; Brian Kim, Director of Public Works; John Mason, Economic Development Manager; Chondria Andrews, Public Information & Communications Coordinator; Terri Hruby, Director of Planning and Community Development; Cary Eure, Grants Coordinator; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Deputy City Clerk.

Others present: Michael Hartman, Bill Orleans and others.

Mr. Salmerón acknowledged and thanked staff for all their work and provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the accomplishments of various departments. The Council discussed and reviewed each department's accomplishments.

Public Works Department

Mr. Kim presented updates on the Public Works Department, including submitting grants for the chiller project and purchasing an electric refuse and recycling truck. The Council also discussed the completion of the Solar Farm and the potential savings in electricity generation.

There was discussion regarding the issues with dumping at recycling centers, particularly at the Buddy Attic Park and Hanover Parkway areas. Mr. Roberts said the problem did not guarantee significant investment in cameras or moving the oil collection container behind a fence. However, Ms. McKinney pointed out that the issue was more important than initially thought, with images showing people dumping in several locations and a cost analysis showing the impact on staff time and the overall budget.

The Council agreed to revisit the issue and consider the cost of monitoring the recycling centers to prevent further contamination and dumping. The discussion also touched on the issue of dumping at the Northway field. Mr. Kim noted the concrete work at Greenbelt Center as part of the ongoing improvements.

Finance

Ms. Gaymon presented updates on the Finance Department, including completing the 2024 audit. She stated that the City received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Award for 2025. The 2026 budget process has started, with a small deficit of \$4.2 million.

Ms. Gaymon stated that the Finance Department will continue to produce monthly financial reports and has submitted the quarterly American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Report. The Finance Department is also working on the single audit due on March 31st. Concerns were raised about the potential impacts of the Federal Administration's freeze on grant funding, particularly on assistance programs. Ms. Gaymon stated that staff monitor the situation and will provide updates as more information becomes available.

Public Information

Ms. Andrews discussed the City's website redesign, with a survey to be sent out to the community for feedback. She stated that the Public Information Office (PIO) team has been busy interviewing local media outlets to strengthen relationships and promote the City's activities. Ms. Andrews mentioned the acquisition of new equipment and the completion of a Corporate Communications Certificate Program. The possibility of a podcast being discussed, with the first topic likely to be the "Know Your Rights" information session. She also discussed the potential of using newer social media platforms like Blue Sky, and Ms. McKinney suggested the social media platform Fan Base. Ms. Andrews discussed the challenges of coordinating various City channels and maintaining clear and concise messaging across all outreaches. The Council and Ms. Andrews touched on brand management, with Ms. Andrews expressing concern about individual department brands potentially diluting the City's overall brand.

Human Resources Department

Mr. Martinez presented an update on the Human Resource Department, including hiring the new Constituent Services Coordinator, Director of Public Works, Community Center Supervisor, Recreation Therapeutic Coordinator and Animal Services Officer. He also discussed the successful implementation of the Paycor System.

Economic Development

Mr. Mason discussed the progress of the Economic Development Strategy, emphasizing the importance of partnerships and organic growth. He highlighted the success of the Strategic Plan launch, which has garnered buy-in and input from colleagues. The plan aims to focus on industry sectors already strong in the County, such as healthcare, and encourage existing businesses to grow and expand. Mr. Mason also mentioned the successful partnership with Greenbelt Business Alliance (GBA) and the use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for data extraction and analysis. Mr. Mason discussed the expansion of the CCI facility and the launch of the Employ Prince George County (EPGC) facility for healthcare training. The goal is to build resilience in the face of uncertainty and changes in the retail sector. He also discussed the progress of various projects and initiatives. Mr. Mason mentioned relocating the clinic to a new building on Edmonston Road in a Hub Zone due to its demographics. The Council also discussed the potential for the Roosevelt Center to be designated as a Main Street, which would involve significant investment and work.

Planning and Community Development

Ms. Hruby presented the accomplishments of the Planning and Community Development Department, which included the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Cemetery Preservation Master Plan and the completion of a review for the off-site road improvements.

Ms. Hruby mentioned ongoing work on the Greenbelt Station connecting path and the Vision Zero Project. Mayor Jordan expressed interest in reinitiating discussions about the Greenbelt Road corridors with the local executive director of the Urban Land Institute (ULI). Ms. Hruby discussed the enforcement of property rental codes and the handling of inhabitable properties.

Police Department

Chief Bowers discussed integrating the LPR systems with the County and the potential for real-time data dashboards on crime throughout the region. Concerns were raised about the accuracy and timeliness of the data. The Council discussed the participation of the Greenbelt Police Department in the U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force and the policies regarding cooperation with immigration and customs enforcement.

Chief Bowers addressed the success of their Crisis Intervention Team and the high degree of trust within the community. He mentioned the successful pilot of automatic stop sign cameras and the recruitment of new personnel.

Recreation Department

Mr. Varda presented the Recreation Department's accomplishments, including the completion of the Springhill Lake Recreation Center outdoor playground renovation project, the second Learn to Earn Program session with 15 participants, and the Public Art Projects. The department also filled two vacant positions and worked on the Summer Camp Guide.

Mr. Varda discussed the upcoming field rehabilitation projects at Schrom Hills Park and Braden Field, with the start date planned for March. He also noted the challenges of displacing youth sports programs due to the indoor pool closure and the upcoming Aquatic and Fitness Center project. There were discussions regarding the possibility of offering free swimming lessons to Springhill Lake Rec Center after-school program participants to alleviate space limitations in the pool.

The Council also explored partnering with the Franklin Park at Greenbelt Station Apartment pool for swimming lessons, considering the logistics and potential liability issues. Mr. Varda and Ms. Hruby discussed the development of Project Greenbelt Square, which is currently in County permitting.

CARES

Dr. Park reported on CARES Department's accomplishments, such as the GAIL Program hosting a Free Flu Clinic, Holiday Food Box Distributions and Winter Wonderland event.

Dr. Park mentioned that she serves on the Maryland State Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform & Emerging Best Practices and Prince George's County Opioid Abatement Task Force. Dr. Park also highlighted the collaboration between CARES staff conducting training for the Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness staff for de-escalation training. Dr. Park informed Council that she and staff have been working with Gizelle Alvarez, new Constituent Services Coordinator, to

assist residents know their rights about the recent immigration policies in their community and the uncertainty surrounding federal funding for their services. Finally, the collaboration with George Washington University nursing program was also discussed.

Information Technology

Mr. Kennell reported accomplishments of the Information Technology Department and shared improvements such as security measures installed at the Armory, fiber optic connections, and enhanced Wi-Fi security measures.

Grants

Ms. Eure reported on the achievements of the Grants Department, highlighting the receipt of five additional grants submitted in FY2024. This brought the total funds awarded to approximately \$4 million, including \$40,000 for FY 2025. There was also a discussion about Electric Vehicle (EV) charging grants.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Ms. Smith reported on the accomplishments of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Department, which included the JEDI Action Team, has formed three subcommittees (The Education and Awareness Subcommittee, the Employee Engagement Subcommittee, and the Strategic Planning Subcommittee), hosted employee townhalls on the draft vision statement, and launched an all-staff learning journey

Information Items

Mr. Salmerón proposed hosting a "Know Your Rights" session specifically for elected officials with the city potentially acting as the host. The Council discussed scheduling work sessions with the school superintendent and other stakeholders to address the use of school fields and issues related to academic achievement.

Additionally, the Council talked about the upcoming budget season and emphasized the need for preparatory discussions before it begins. They also expressed their opposition to a bill about eminent domain authority for the Maglev project.

Mayor Jordan shared that he had testified regarding Senate Bill 55 and requested that staff provide Council with a summary of all bills related to the Maglev project.

Ms. Knesel left at 10:02 p.m. The meeting ended at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

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Deputy City Clerk