



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – November 8, 2023

Agenda Item 1

Work Session

Discussion of Legislative Priorities

Recommended Council Action

Identify priorities for the 2024 Legislative Session.

Context with Key Issues

Each year the City Council identifies its priorities for the upcoming session of the Maryland General Assembly.

Ann Ciekot, the City's Legislative Advocate, will make brief remarks at the beginning of the discussion on November 8 and will be available on Zoom during the work session.

As background, the following materials are attached for Council review:

- Resolution 2023-17 transmitting Legislative Action Requests to the Maryland Municipal League
- Maryland Municipal League approved legislative priorities for the 2024 Session

The City Council will meet with the 20th District Delegation on December 6 to share the City's priorities and to hear from members of the Delegation.

Council Priority

All: Advancing a Community of Belonging; Fiscally Sustainable Government; Environmentally Sustainable Community; Engaged, Responsive, Service-Oriented Government; Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Environmental Considerations

The Council considers environmental and sustainability goals when determining legislative priorities.

Fiscal Considerations

The Council considers the City's fiscal health and the promotion of opportunities for revenue generation and cost savings when determining legislative priorities.

Racial Equity Considerations

The Council considers racial equity when determining its legislative priorities.

Attachments and Links

- Maryland Municipal League (MML) 2024 Legislative Priorities
- Takoma Park's 2024 MML Legislative Action Requests
- 2023 Session Wrap-Up (May 17, 2023 Presentation by Ann Ciekot)
- [Montgomery County Delegation Website](#)
- [Maryland General Assembly Website](#)

Maryland Municipal League 2024 General Assembly Priorities

(September 27, 2023) Annapolis, Md. – The Maryland Municipal League (MML) Board of Directors, which represents 160 Maryland local governments, unanimously approved three legislative priorities for the upcoming 2024 Maryland legislative session. MML advocacy efforts will focus on expanding local revenue opportunities, supporting pedestrian safety by allowing additional trained personnel to review speed camera citations, and seeking authorization for local tourism zones to further economic development throughout Maryland.

1. Expanding local revenue opportunities.

Municipal governments are responsible for providing everyday essential services to two million Marylanders but are limited in their ability to raise revenues needed to fund those services. Property taxes are the only meaningful financial vehicle available, but increasing property taxes can be harmful to housing stability efforts. Rather than focus on property taxes, the League will pursue a long-term solution to expand sources of municipal revenue. This will ensure the continuation of essential services from clean drinking water and public safety to protecting our critical coastal shorelines and waterways, and cement municipalities as a partner in providing solutions that will house and serve more Marylanders.

2. Allowing trained staff to review speed camera citations.

The League is committed to a stronger pedestrian safety mission among its local governments. This priority seeks to authorize municipalities to train non-officer employees to review and certify speed camera citation, similar to the red-light program already established in law. While 88 municipalities employ a law enforcement agency, many do not and depend on outsourcing citations to another jurisdiction. Recognizing the retention and recruitment issues being faced across the country, this solution would also allow officers to attend to community connections and other pressing public safety responsibilities.

3. Authorizing local tourism zones for statewide economic development.

More tools are needed to attract and retain local businesses that strengthen our towns and cities, which often serve as social and cultural centers. Unfortunately, many areas do not meet the current criteria for state incentives like the Enterprise Zone program, and municipalities lack authority in state law to create their own. Modeled after a successful Virginia law, this priority would authorize local governments to provide an array of local tax credits or waivers to businesses to encourage statewide economic development through tourism expansion.

“Each of these priorities speaks to the core function of government – rising to collectively meet our challenges. We look forward to working with our state partners to make all of Maryland stronger,” said MML CEO Theresa Kuhns.

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Introduced by: Councilmember Honzak

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION 2023-17

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TRANSMITTAL OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION
REQUESTS TO THE MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE FOR CONSIDERATION**

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council is charged with setting policy and pursuing legislative changes in the best interests of the Takoma Park community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park is an active member of the Maryland Municipal League (MML); and

WHEREAS, MML pursues legislative changes to benefit Maryland municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has identified requests to forward to MML for its consideration as legislative priorities for the League.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Takoma Park authorizes the City Manager to transmit to the MML the following Legislative Action Requests:

1. The Council urges MML to initiate or support legislation to increase authority for municipalities to collect revenue. Options might include the authority to collect a sales tax or receive a percentage of sales tax collected in the jurisdiction or receive a portion of revenue generated by alcohol and tobacco sales.
2. The Council urges MML to initiate or support legislation that assists municipalities with housing and community development issues such as:
 - Promoting legislation or sources of funding to expedite affordable housing creation in areas with rising property values and rents including creating workforce homeownership opportunities.
 - Giving authority for municipal or county governments to enact “just cause” eviction legislation if they desire.
 - Creating an infrastructure repair and rehabilitation fund for multifamily buildings such as condominiums to support building improvements including energy efficiency upgrades.
 - Examining income eligibility criteria for state property tax credit programs for low-income homeowners to ensure that the criteria accounts for the rising cost of living in the area.

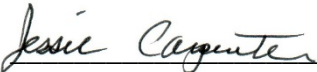
3. The Council urges MML to prioritize or support legislation that will advance Vision Zero goals such as:

- Providing more local funding for transportation and pedestrian improvements along or near state roads.
- Implementing safety standards for more safe and walkable communities including expanding automatic enforcement tools (i.e., stop sign cameras).
- Ensuring that the State Highway Administration (SHA) works collaboratively with local jurisdictions to improve state road maintenance and pedestrian safety.

Adopted this 21st day of June, 2023.

AYES: Searcy, Fulcher, Dyballa, Gibson, Seamens, Honzak
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Small

Attest:



Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk

Maryland General Assembly Session 2023: City of Takoma Park Wrap-Up & Next Steps



Maryland's 2023 General Assembly

- Governor inaugurated after state of session
- New state agency leaders named
- Del. Wilkins named Vice Chair of House Ways & Means Committee
- Senate confirmed almost 1,000 nominees
- FY 2024 budget – overnight picture change

Major State Issues

- Minimum wage and financial support for low income families
- School funding and mental health services
- Legal cannabis licensing & tax structure
- Reproductive, transgender & immigrant health
- Paid family leave

Legislative Bond Initiative

- Takoma Park Maryland Library and Community Center Redevelopment Project

➤ \$125,000

Successful Legislation

- SAFE Roads
- Energy Performance Targets and Low-Income Housing
- Recycling Needs Assessment and Producer Responsibility for Packaging Materials
- Unlawfully Restrictive Covenants
- Cannabis Reform – funding to locals
- Jaelynn's Law (Child Access Prevention)

Legislation Needing Work

- Just cause eviction
- Ranked choice voting
- Melanie Diaz Sprinklers Save Lives Act

MML Bills of Interest

- Constant yield rate
- Forest conservation
- School speed zones
- Abandoned property

City Council Priorities

- Advancing a Community of Belonging
 - Supporting and protecting immigrants
- Fiscally Sustainable Government
 - Additional revenue sources
- Environmentally Sustainable Community
 - Climate change mitigation resiliency
- Engaged, Responsive, Service-Oriented Government
- Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life
 - Affordable housing and common ownership community support
 - Work with SHA on safety and support additional transportation improvements

Next Steps

- Maryland Municipal League Legislative Action Requests
 - Start discussion of priorities that are appropriate for an LAR – May 17, 2023
 - Approval of resolution for LARs by City Council by June 21, 2023
 - Submit LARs to MML – June 30, 2023
- Engage with new State agency leaders (DHCD, MDOT/SHA) – beginning in June
- Early December briefing with District 20 team
- 2024 General Assembly Session starts January 10th

Questions & Discussion

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