



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – December 4, 2024

Agenda Item 1 and 2

Work Session

Introduction to the General Assembly and Lobbying and Discussion of Legislative Priorities

Recommended Council Action

Identify priorities for the 2025 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.

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

- Resolution 2024-17 transmitting Legislative Action Requests to the Maryland Municipal League
- Maryland Municipal League approved legislative priorities for the 2025 Session

The City Council will meet with the 20th District Delegation on December 11 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 General Assembly Session 2025 Presentation
- Resolution 2024-17 – City 2025 MML Legislative Action Requests
- MML 2025 Legislative Priorities
- [Montgomery County Delegation Website](#)
- [Maryland General Assembly Website](#)

Maryland General Assembly Session 2025: What to Expect & Where You Fit In



Maryland's General Assembly

- Meets annually for 90 days
 - January 8 through April 7, 2025
 - Must pass a balanced budget (FY 26)
- 47 Legislative Districts
 - Takoma Park = District 20
 - Senator Will Smith
 - Delegates Lorig Charkoudian, David Moon, Jheanelle Wilkins

District 20 in Leadership

- **Sen. Smith** is Chair of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
- **Del. Charkoudian** is Chair of Unemployment Insurance Subcommittee of ECM
- **Del. Moon** is the Majority Leader
- **Del. Wilkins** is Vice Chair of the House Ways & Means Committee and Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus

The Big Picture

- The budget outlook is bleak
 - FY 2025 budget deficit is \$300 million
 - FY 2026 budget deficit is estimated to be \$2.7 billion
- We do not know what the impact of federal actions will be yet
 - Capital: Key bridge, Red Line, FBI headquarters
 - Federal employee layoffs? Deportation increases?
 - Attempts to move program responsibilities to the states
- There will be budget cuts and likely use of one-time-only reserve funds
- There will be many proposals to enhance revenues – some will propose to be more progressive, some will be “sin” taxes, so will be regressive

The Budget Process

- The Governor introduces a budget (January 15, 2025)
 - Can increase line items – must take from another part of the budget
 - Cannot increase the overall state budget
 - Governor will have line-item veto power
 - General Assembly can override
- The budget, as passed in April, must be balanced, per the State Constitution

How a Bill Becomes Law

- Each bill that is introduced must be sponsored by a legislator
- There are an average of 2,500 bills introduced each year – About 600 bills are passed each year
- To become a law, each bill must:
 - Pass 3 readings on each chamber (House of Delegates and Senate)
 - Be identical to one another on the final vote by each chamber
 - Not be vetoed by the governor

Pressure Points

- Every bill introduced that meets deadlines gets a hearing in a standing committee
 - 4 committees in the Senate & 6 committees in the House
 - The public can testify – written &/or oral testimony – live and virtual
- Takoma Park's effectiveness is:
 - Concrete examples where issues impact municipalities & residents
 - Reminding legislators where municipal authority is needed
 - Adding to the voices supporting/opposing a particular issue

Takoma Park City Council Priorities

- 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

MD Municipal League – Takoma Park LARs

Every year MML accepts Legislative Action Requests by its members to discuss and vote on. This past summer, the City of Takoma Park passed a resolution urging MML to:

- Continue efforts to protect Highway User Revenues for municipalities and to initiate or support legislation to provide additional revenue authority for municipalities
- Initiate or support legislation to require the State Highway Administration to pay for sidewalk infrastructure along state highways, including utility relocation; and support SHA implementing safety standards for safer and walkable communities including expanding automatic enforcement tools (i.e., stop sign cameras)
- Support legislation to increase mental health and substance use services to youth; including increasing behavioral health service capacity within schools as well as funding for wraparound youth programming and recreation services and infrastructure

MD Municipal League 2025 Priorities

- After discussing legislative action requests from its members, the MML Board of Directors voted to adopt two legislative priorities this coming session:
 - Authorize municipalities to collect a sales tax; receive a percentage of their county's sales tax and provide additional revenue sources for municipalities to supplement the property tax, either through enabling legislation or revenue sharing
 - Permit municipalities to utilize trained, non-sworn personnel to issue citations for speed camera violations

Questions & Discussion

Email: aciekot@policypartners.net
410-207-3189



Introduced by: Councilmember Small

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION 2024-17

**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 discussed potential requests and a work session on May 15, 2024; and

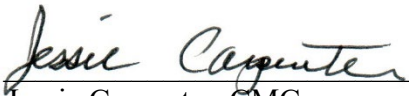
WHEREAS, the City Council has identified requests to forward to MML for its consideration as legislative priorities for the League.

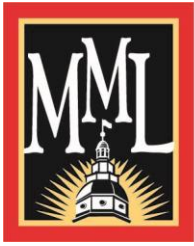
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Takoma Park authorizes the City Manager to transmit to the MML the following Legislative Action Requests:

1. The Council urges MML to continue efforts to protect Highway User Revenues for municipalities and to initiate or support legislation to provide additional revenue authority for municipalities.
2. The Council urges MML to initiate or support legislation to require the State Highway Administration (SHA) to pay for sidewalk infrastructure along state highways. MML should consider bills related to utility relocation along state roads. MML should also support SHA implementing safety standards for safer and walkable communities including expanding automatic enforcement tools (i.e., stop sign cameras).
3. The Council urges MML to support legislation to increase mental health and substance use services to youth. Efforts may include increasing behavioral health service capacity within schools as well as funding for wraparound youth programming including recreation services and infrastructure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Takoma Park also urges MML to track legislation designed to advance the states' clean energy goals.

Adopted by unanimous vote this 29th day of May, 2024.

Attest: 
Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk



THE MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

The Association of Cities and Towns

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Justin Fiore, 410-295-9100, JustinF@mdmunicipal.org

Maryland Municipal League Approves 2025 General Assembly Priorities

(September 17, 2024) Annapolis, Md. – The [Maryland Municipal League](#) (MML) Board of Directors, which represents 160 local governments in Maryland, held its annual Board retreat in the Maryland State House, and unanimously approved two legislative priorities for the upcoming 2025 Maryland legislative session. MML advocacy efforts will focus on championing pedestrian safety within municipal boundaries and expanding local revenue growth opportunities.

1. Allowing trained staff to review speed camera citations.

Automated traffic enforcement has repeatedly been proven to change driver behavior. Red-light cameras work. Speed cameras work. While any jurisdiction in Maryland can administer a red-light camera program and use trained staff to certify violations under current law, the same code then requires speed camera violations to be signed by a sworn law enforcement officer. Since less than 55% of Maryland's cities, towns and villages have an independent police department, this framework creates sizeable gaps throughout the state leaving a high number of sensitive pedestrian zones, such as elementary schools, without enforcement protection.

The League priority seeks to authorize municipalities to utilize trained employees to review and certify speed camera citations, similar to the Maryland red-light enforcement program. Furthermore, recognizing the current challenges with police officer retention and recruitment being faced across the country and here in Maryland, this solution would allow officers to focus on community policing and other pressing areas.

“This is not a complicated process or one that actually requires unique police training beyond vendor instructions, much like how the red-light camera process in Maryland operates, which is already in statute,” said City of Frederick Mayor and MML President, Michael O’Connor. “There’s no reason this issue should remain a barrier to protecting kids walking to school or playing at home in their own municipal neighborhoods. Enforcement has been proven to change bad driver behavior and at the end of the day, we all strive for safer communities.”

2. Expanding revenue opportunities within the Amusement and Admissions structure

Municipal governments are responsible for providing everyday essential services to 25% of the state's residents, roughly two million Marylanders, yet are limited in their ability to raise the required revenue needed to fund those services. Maryland's 160 cities, towns and villages are forced to rely on property tax revenues to supplement existing programs and new challenges, such as the ever-growing effects of climate change and combatting cybersecurity threats. For example, data shows many local jurisdictions must utilize general revenue funds to support highway funding shortages. Given the existing housing supply ecosystem and increased dependency on housing valuations for local governments, it is a difficult conversation to balance



when fiscal impacts land solely on local residents. The current revenue structure was not designed to handle the modern responsibilities and complexities of local government.

Authorizing an enabling local fee under the Admissions and Amusement statute would allow municipal governments to hold local public hearings and assess the viability for each unique jurisdiction. The proposed 2% local food and beverage fee is significantly less regressive than continuing to increase property tax rates and is in line with neighboring states like Virginia, with up to 7.5% authority, and the District of Columbia, which sits at 10%. This would limit the revenue burden being placed on Marylanders, as out of state visitors would also then contribute to supporting the cost of services used under this model.

“Maryland’s cities and towns are being asked to solve modern challenges with an antiquated revenue structure,” said MML Chief Executive Officer, Theresa Kuhns. “It has been over 55 years since we’ve added a significant revenue source for local governments and Marylanders are feeling it on their property tax bill. And we recognize potential first-time homeowners, future state residents and companies are looking elsewhere, which directly influences our states economic growth and the ability to close the equity wealth gap with homeownership. This is a responsible and competitive solution.””

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About The Maryland Municipal League:

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) was founded in 1936 and serves as the collective voice of 160 municipal governments and the 2 million Marylanders it represents. A voluntary, non-profit, nonpartisan association controlled and maintained by city and town governments, MML works to strengthen and support municipal government through advocacy and the development of effective leadership. Through its membership in the National League of Cities MML offers legislative representation in Washington, urban research programs, and a national municipal government information exchange. MML is the only statewide organization in Maryland composed solely of municipal officials and devoted to the promotion of all branches of municipal administration.