

# TOWN NOTES

*News from La Plata Town Hall*



## MAYOR'S CORNER

As we begin a new year, I hope that you can look back on the Holiday Season as an enjoyable time spent with family and friends and are looking forward to 2015 with the best expectations. We are all fortunate to live in an area and a community where good things can happen and usually do.

As we begin a new year it is a time for your local government to review the accomplishments of the past and to plan for the future. While each year is important, it is also extremely important to put into place initiatives and projects that will benefit the Town for many years to come. The recent upgrade to our waste water treatment plant and recent improvements in our police department and public works facilities are a few examples of doing what is required today to ensure that we are prepared for tomorrow.

Both the Town Council and Town Staff study numerous issues and projects on an ongoing basis. The Town Council spends considerable time working independently and in our regularly scheduled work sessions and formal meetings solving current issues and planning for the future. We are always cognizant of the fact that we are entrusted in our elected offices to look after the interests of all Town residents. The priorities we set, each and every year, are dedicated to this primary purpose.

Knowing how people feel about the Town and ongoing issues is extremely important if we are to manage effectively.

Continued on page 3

## La Plata Police Department's Commitment to Excellence

La Plata Police Department's Commitment to Excellence

On November 24, 2014, Corporal Jason Posey and 33 other law enforcement officials from around Maryland graduated from the International Association of Chiefs of Police Leadership in Police Organizations training at the Maryland Police & Correctional Training Commission facility in Sykesville, MD. The intense 120 hour course, which was completed over three months, is an ethics based leadership and problem solving course.



*Corporal Jason Posey and Chief Carl Schinner*

Other participants in the course included officers from the Gaithersburg, Fredrick, and Rockville Police Departments, Maryland State Police, Maryland Transportation Authority, Baltimore City Schools, and Coppin State College, as well as officers from Calvert, Carroll, Anne Arundel, Howard and Montgomery Counties.

Congratulations to Corporal Posey and all of the graduates!



A thank you to Southern Maryland Electric for installing and removing the beautiful Christmas lights that adorn the Town during the holidays. Also a thank you to members of the La Plata Business Association for getting the lights ready.



Town of La Plata



La Plata Police Department

## COUNCIL COLUMN

### Councilman Lynn Gilroy, Ward 3

By the time you read this we should be well into 2015. It is hard to believe how time moves so quickly. I hope each of you had a delightful holiday season as much as I and my family did.

We are now working on our budget preparation and your town is going to work very hard to keep the same level of quality service without any increases in your property taxes.

We are all looking forward to working with the new Charles County Commissioners, the new Sheriff, as well as the new Governor, the Delegates and Senators in Annapolis. Just like last year, and years before, the restoration of the highway user revenues (HUR) is still at the top of the agenda. This will help us maintain our roadways and sidewalks.

During the year of 2014 we have seen some improvements to the roadways in the town and some more will come in the summer of 2015 with improvements to Oak Avenue.

We have been working with the La Plata Business Association to foster a better relationship and encourage people to "Shop La Plata". With that in mind when you have friends from out of town visiting, or you are looking for something to do on any weekend, I suggest that you may want to plan some shopping, have dinner at one of our special restaurants, and then take in a show at the Port Tobacco Players. This will be a memory that will last for a long time.

Finally, stay in touch with us on the Town's web site and receive notices of special events by our staff. Go to [www.townofaplata.org](http://www.townofaplata.org) and sign up.

I look forward in hearing from you so we can try and solve our future issues together. Please feel free to contact me at [lgilroy@townofaplata.org](mailto:lgilroy@townofaplata.org), by calling Town Hall at (301) 934-8421 or by cell at (301) 653-1440.

### Councilman Joseph Norris, Ward 4

Happy New Year to all that I have not greeted already in person. I'm looking forward to a great New Year for La Plata, its citizens and its businesses.

I know this is old news but I must congratulate Christine Parker, CFP Parker Financial, LLC for the great job she did as chairperson of the Shop Small Saturday and Shop La Plata. It was really encouraging sight to see all the people walking around town and shopping. Happily all the feedback I heard was that it was a great success for the local businesses. Thanks again Christine and we look forward to working with you again next year.

Over the coming months we will be working on our 2015-2016 Fiscal Year Budget. Though we are fortunate to have adequate reserves we are expecting our revenues to be pretty flat. We are going to have to work hard and smart to continue to have a balanced budget and still provide the services that the citizens have come to expect. The

governing bodies have always been conservative in their planning and we have every intention to continue doing so. Please remember that almost all of our meetings are open to the public and we encourage attendance so you know firsthand what is going on.

One of our continuing concerns is funding for street maintenance. As you know the legislature reduced our long standing share of the Highway User Revenues (which you pay when you buy gasoline) to balance the state budget several years back. The funding has increased slightly but not to the old level and not in a manner the county and municipal governments can count on. We are lobbying hard to change this so that we can reinstate our regular street maintenance. If we aren't successful, the time will come when we will have to make some hard decisions of cutting other areas or raising additional revenues.

#### LA PLATA CRIME WATCH COUNCIL

Come out and see what is happening in your community and get some tips on being safe. The La Plata Crime Watch Council meets the 1st Wednesday each month in the Community Meeting Room within the La Plata Police Department. Should you have any questions please contact Det. Sgt. William Brooks via phone 301-934-1500 or email [wbrooks@townofaplata.org](mailto:wbrooks@townofaplata.org)

As always if you have any questions or issues, I may be reached by phone at 301 934-9230 or by email at [jnorris@townofaplata.org](mailto:jnorris@townofaplata.org). Thank you for allowing me to serve.

## LA PLATA POLICE DEPARTMENT IN THE COMMUNITY:



Throughout the year the La Plata Police Department (LPPD) organizes, sponsors, and/or partners with a variety of community and governmental organizations to ensure a plethora of events go on safely. From parades to 5K runs and from community walks to block parties, LPPD is committed to being a community partner with all of its citizens and business owners. Over the next several months LPPD will be hosting a series of meetings known ...as Coffee with Command Staff.

This is an excellent way for the community to have an open dialogue with LPPD's com-

manders. The next Coffee with Command Staff will be on Thursday, March 19 at 7:00 p.m., at Police Headquarters located at 101 La Grange Avenue. Please RSVP below or by calling (301) 934-1500. The RSVP is to ensure we have enough coffee brewed. We look forward to seeing you on March 19 or at a future Coffee with Command Staff event.

## WINNERS OF THE HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST

### Commercial:

1<sup>st</sup> place Whimsical  
 2<sup>nd</sup> place Whimsical  
 1<sup>st</sup> place Traditional  
 2<sup>nd</sup> place Traditional  
 3<sup>rd</sup> place Traditional  
 Honorable Mention

Optical Shoppe, 403 Charles Street  
 Martin's, 309 Charles Street  
 Alchemy Salon, 103A St. Mary's Avenue  
 Royal Tea Room, 110 Charles Street  
 Baldus Center, 101 East Charles Street  
 Greene Turtle, 6 St. Mary's Avenue, #104  
 House, 6 St. Mary's Avenue, #100A

### Residential:

1<sup>st</sup> place Whimsical  
 2<sup>nd</sup> place Whimsical  
 3<sup>rd</sup> place Whimsical  
 1<sup>st</sup> place Traditional  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Traditional  
 3<sup>rd</sup> place Traditional  
 Honorable mention

Yeckley Family, Quailwood  
 Simpson Family, Quailwood  
 Young Family, Clarks Run  
 McCort Family, Kings Grant  
 Cogle Family, Agricopia  
 Kamienski Family, Haldane  
 Mc Cowan Family, Kings Grant  
 Mayhew Family, Jamestowne

## BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

### Commercial building permits issued November 2014 to December 2014

Neibauer Dental Care, 124 Rosewick Road  
 Dept. of Public Works administration  
 building

### Occupancy Permits November 2014 to December 2014

Tobacco Shop, 6482 Crain Highway

SAIC, 113 Howard Street  
 Morgan Stanley, 107 Centennial Street  
 Coal Road CrossFit, 403 E. Charles Street  
 UPS Store, 34 Shinning Willow Way  
 Davis Florist, 82 Drury Drive  
 Glow Lashes/Skin Care, 600 Charles Street  
 Shelton Family Chiropractic, 6537 Crain  
 Highway

### Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

**President's Day**

**Monday, February 16, 2015**

If you have a **water or sewer emergency** after hours, call (301)934-8421 and follow the instructions given to report your emergency. The automated response system will alert the appropriate department to respond to you.

## TOWN OF LA PLATA OFFICIALS

Mayor: Roy G. Hale

### Council:

Wayne Winkler . . . . . Ward 1  
 C. Keith Back . . . . . Ward 2  
 Lynn D. Gilroy . . . . . Ward 3  
 Joseph W. Norris . . . . . Ward 4

### Town Manager:

Daniel J. Mears

### Treasurer: Robert W. Oliphant

### Assistant Town Manager:

Michelle D. Miner

### Town Clerk: Danielle Mandley

### Police Chief: Carl H. Schinner

### Director of Planning:

Jeremy D. Hurlbutt

### Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

### Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

### Manager of Inspections: James Q. Yates

305 Queen Anne Street,  
 La Plata, Maryland 20646

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Telephone: (301) 934-8421 / (301) 870-3377

La Plata Police Department: (301) 934-1500

Email: mminer@townoflaplata.org

Website: www.townoflaplata.org

### MAYOR'S CORNER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

We utilize various methods to obtain this information, public meetings being one, but it is usually from surveys that we obtain the most feedback. Questions are placed in our bi-monthly newsletter that provides positive input but space limitations allow for few questions. Over the past several years we have mailed out a National Citizen Survey to a statistical sample of La Plata residents. The most recent survey was mailed to 1,200 residents in 2014 and 331 completed surveys were received for a response rate of 28%. The responses are compared with similar questions surveyed in over 500 cities and towns throughout the United States by the National Research Center, Inc. Knowing how we compared with other communities and trend analysis are important if we are to set realistic goals and objectives.

The National Citizen Survey attempts to report on the "livability" of La Plata. The results describe a location that is not only livable but that is desirable. It is not only where people live, but also where they want to live. While a majority of the respondents to the survey gave excellent or good marks to the overall image, neighborhoods, a place to raise children and overall appearance, less than a majority felt La Plata was a good place to retire. The condition of our streets and roads, pedestrian issues and a limited amount of hiker and biker paths also contributed to lower evaluations in these categories. Notwithstanding the concerns expressed about our street maintenance and pedestrian crossings, the majority of residents responding expressed that they were strongly or somewhat opposed to an increase in our property tax rate, a rate that we have not increased for many years, to improve these conditions. Our utility bills were also deemed to be high but we charge only what it costs to maintain these services at the high level expected by all residents.

We have begun our deliberations toward establishing a budget for the next fiscal year and the results of the National Citizen Survey, together with trend analysis from prior years, will be very beneficial in setting our priorities for the future.

We would also like to hear from those who were not included in the statistical survey so feel free to contact me or another member of the Council with your comments or concerns.

As your Mayor, you may reach me at my office (301) 934-8421 or at home (301) 934-4850.

# LA PLATA TOWN SERVICES

## Special Trash Pickup

Bulk items are picked up the first Monday of each month, or the following Monday if the first one is a holiday. Large amounts of loose material (such as brush) should be bundled or bagged in such a manner that the weight is less than 50 lbs. The Town reserves the right not to pick up items too heavy to safely handle. General construction cleanup and hazardous materials are not eligible. Items must be at curbside by 7:30 a.m. on pickup day. Call Town Hall before pickup day to be placed on the list. Billing for special trash pickup is included on your quarterly utility bill.

## Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Household hazardous waste collection is on the first Saturday of each month,



CHARLES COUNTY  
**HOUSEHOLD  
HAZARDOUS WASTE  
COLLECTION**

from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. in the parking lot of the Charles County Department of Public Works building, located at 10430 Audie Lane, off of Radio Station Road in La Plata. Household hazardous waste collection is a contracted service and items cannot be accepted when the contractor is not on site. Items accepted free of charge include pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, expired prescription drugs, and other poisons that are around your house. Please keep the materials in their original containers whenever possible, and bring them to the collection site

in cardboard boxes to ease unloading. For more information, call the Charles County Department of Public Facilities, Environmental Resources Division at (301) 932-3599.

## Yard Waste Pick Up

Residential yard waste pick ups will only take place on Monday and Fridays. Containers of yard waste ONLY – leaves, grass and shrub clippings, brush or branches may be put out on Mondays and Fridays. The containers must be marked “Yard Waste”. Brush or branches must be bundled, weigh no more than 50lbs. per bundle, and the branches may not be larger than 4 feet long. *Plastic bags are not allowed – if you bag yard waste you must use paper bags.*

## Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

### If your regular trash collection day is:

Monday, February 16, 2015

### Yard Waste Pick Up Schedule Adjustment

Monday, February 16, 2015

### Trash will be picked up on:

Tuesday, February 17, 2015

No Pick Up

## TO DO LIST

- Contact Town Hall for a 95 gallon recycling container
- Sign up to be on the Town's Constant Contact email list
- Get a second Town trash container for extra heavy trash days
- Set up your utility bill for automatic payment
- Complete the latest Snap Poll question
- Attend a Town Council meeting
- Plan to attend a Special Event at Town Hall
- Submit a Mini-Grant application
- Get alerts on your water consumption
- Like the Town's Facebook Page
- Receive Electronic Meeting Agendas
- Visit <http://www.townoflaplata.org> for more information on all of these



## Shop with a Cop

Members of the La Plata Police Department participated in the annual “Shop with a Cop” program. Over 60 children from Charles County were able to go shopping.

From left to right are Cpl. Matthew Norris, two of the shoppers, and Cpl. Michael Payne.

## Toys for Tots

Another Reason Why La Plata is a GREAT Place to Live, Work, Shop and Visit. The fine folks at Murphy & Murphy, CPA, delivered over 100 gifts to the La Plata

Police Department for the Toys for Tots Campaign! This generous donation by Murphy & Murphy's employees and clients will help put a lot of smiles on some of Charles County's youngest citizens.



# FEBRUARY 2015

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1

Yard Waste Pick Up  
Special Pick Up  
(please call by 1/30 to be  
put on list)

2

Planning Commission  
meeting; 7:00 p.m.

3

Design Review  
Board meeting; 9:00 a.m.  
Crime Watch Council  
meeting; 7:00 p.m.

4

5

Yard Waste Pick Up

6

8

Yard Waste Pick Up

9

Mayor and Council work  
session; 7:00 p.m.

10

Parks and Recreation  
Commission; 5:00 p.m.

11

12

Yard Waste Pick Up  
Beautification  
Commission  
meeting; 10:00 a.m.

13

**Happy  
Valentine's  
Day**  
Valentine's Day

14

15

Town Hall Closed  
for President's Day

16

No Yard Waste

Trash Pick Up for 2/16

17

No Trash Pick Up  
(trash pick up 2/17)

Mayor and Council work  
session; 7:00 p.m.

18

Design Review Board  
meeting; 9:00 a.m.

19

Yard Waste Pick Up

20

21

22

Yard Waste Pick Up

23

Mayor and Council  
business meeting;  
7:00 p.m.

24

25

26

Yard Waste Pick Up

27

28

# MARCH 2015

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1

Yard Waste Pick Up  
Special Pick Up  
(please call by 2/27 to be  
put on list)

2

Planning Commission  
meeting; 7:00 p.m.

3

Design Review Board  
meeting; 9:00 a.m.  
Crime Watch Council  
meeting; 7:00 p.m.

4

5

Yard Waste Pick Up

6

7

8



Daylight Savings

9

Mayor and Council work  
session; 7:00 p.m.

10

Parks and Recreation  
Commission; 5:00 p.m.

11

12

Yard Waste Pick Up  
Beautification  
Commission  
meeting; 10:00 a.m.

13

14

15

Yard Waste Pick Up

16



Mayor and Council work  
session; 7:00 p.m.  
St. Patrick's Day

17

18

Design Review Board  
meeting; 9:00 a.m.

19



Coffee with a Cop;  
7:00 p.m.

20



Yard Waste Pick Up  
First day of Spring  
Family Camping  
Tilghman Lake

Family Camping  
Tilghman Lake

22

Yard Waste Pick Up

23

Mayor and Council  
business meeting;  
7:00 p.m.

24

25

26

Yard Waste Pick Up

27

28



29

Yard Waste Pick Up

30

31

# SPECIAL EVENTS

## Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering

The holiday spirit was in the air at the Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering on Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. Attendees were treated to musical performances by Port Tobacco Players Encore Kids, The St. Maries Minstrels, and John the Fifer. Many enjoyed a ride around town on the horse drawn carriage rides. Children enjoyed the holiday crafts and story time from the Charles County Public Library. La Plata Volunteer Fire Department delivered a very special visitor to greet all the children – Santa Claus! Thank you to all who attended and volunteered at the event!



## Breakfast with Santa

Santa stopped by Town Hall on Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> to visit with the children and hear their special wishes for Christmas.



## Neighborhood Event Mini-Grant

Is your neighborhood interested in organizing an event like a block party or cook out to bring your community together? If so then help is here. Town of La Plata Neighborhood Event Mini-Grant is designed to provide an opportunity for Town of La Plata residents

to strengthen their neighborhoods through producing special events. The Town of La Plata invites neighborhood associations and communities to submit the neighborhood grant application for review. There will be 5 grants awarded up to \$500 each during the 2015 fiscal year. Deadline to submit application is March 6, 2015. Grant applications are available for download from the Town's website or email Colleen Wilson, Special Events Coordinator at [cwilson@townoflaplata.org](mailto:cwilson@townoflaplata.org) or (301) 934-8421 ext. 142. The Town will offer a grant opportunity specifically for National Night Out events in May.



Grab some teammates and sign up for the Town of La Plata Bed Races! Bed Races take place on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm as part of the Celebrate La Plata event. Your team will race on La Grange Ave as the crowd cheers you on.

It's easy to participate – no registration fee and the Town has beds that can be used for the races.

Get your creative juices flowing and make your own team bed! Each team must have four participants that are 16 years old or older. Don't miss out on the chance to come dressed in team t-shirts or costumes to promote your business or organization. The annual bed race is a great way to do some marketing while having a lot of fun. Prizes will be awarded to the top teams and best team attire.

Registration deadline is April 17. For more information or to register for the Bed Races, contact Colleen Wilson at (301) 934-8421 or [cwilson@townoflaplata.org](mailto:cwilson@townoflaplata.org). Participation form is available on the Town's website [www.townoflaplata.org](http://www.townoflaplata.org).



Photos from 2014 Bed Races courtesy of Ronald and Barbara Caballero, Waldorf, Maryland

Fill out the interest form below to receive more information.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teammate 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teammate 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teammate 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

We are interested in racing our own bed.

We are interested in using a Town bed.

(Town beds will be shared among teams so only decorations that can be quickly and easily removed will be allowed.)

Please return the form to:

Town of La Plata  
 Colleen Wilson, Special Events Coordinator  
 PO Box 2268  
 La Plata, MD 20646  
 Or email the information to [cwilson@townoflaplata.org](mailto:cwilson@townoflaplata.org).

(continued on page 8)

## POLICE DEPARTMENT

Over the last several months policing has become a topic of discussion in the media, in the workplace and at the kitchen table in homes across America. Police officers are one of government's most visible stewards. When someone is involved in a vehicle collision or the victim of a crime, they depend on the men and woman in law enforcement to respond in a timely, competent and professional manner. Locally, citizens, business owners, and visitors depend on the La Plata Police Department (LPPD) to proactively patrol, enforce traffic laws to keep our community safe, and to problem solve. In its efforts to provide timely, competent, and professional services to the citizens of La Plata, the men and women of LPPD have committed themselves to adhering to the philosophy of community policing.

The crux of the community policing philosophy is partnerships and for LPPD those partnerships begin with other Town departments. On a frequent basis, LPPD officers' partner with the leadership and members of Town Council and Management, Public Works, Planning Department, Inspections, and the Town's Event Coordinator to develop holistic plans to problem solve and ensure the plethora of events that occur in the Town are enjoyable, relaxing, and safe.

In 2014, the LPPD continued to build new and strengthened old partnerships in its effort to make La Plata a great place to live, work, visit, and participate in special community events. In May, LPPD held its first community walk through the Kent Avenue Corridor which was followed by a

Community Block Party in late summer. LPPD partnered with Casey Jones for its Shamrock 5K Run, the Charles County Regional Medical Center 5K Walk/Run, the Lifestyles of Southern Maryland Walk, Alzheimer's Association Walk, La Plata High School Parade, and many other events to include those hosted by the Town.

It is important to recognize a few of LPPD's other community partners that assisted in developing holistic approaches to a few crime and quality-of-life issues. These partners include, but are not limited to the Carroll La Plata Village/La Plata Grande Gardens, Charles County Chapter of the NAACP, Charles County Child Aid Society, Charles County Department of Social Services, Charles County Sheriff's Department, Charles County State's Attorney's Office, Charles Regional Medical Center, Chick-Fil-a of La Plata, Greater Baden Medical Services, Lifestyles of Southern Maryland, Mary's Pantry at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, and Maryland State Police. Through these partnerships, many lives were positively impacted and community trust was foster and strengthened. LPPD looks forward to working with these and new community partners in 2015.

As equally important as community partnerships, to ensure police services are timely, competent and professional, is proper training. LPPD encouraged every officer to attend training in their career development track in 2014. Some of the advanced training LPPD officers received included: certified general and firearms instructor

training; narcotics investigations; response to active shooters; hazardous material response; advanced writing skills; senior citizen drivers training; how to be a field training officer; fitness and nutrition training for law enforcement; interacting with sovereign citizens; and criminal investigation classes. Through this training, the department will be better equipped to deliver quality professional services to the community.

In addition to building community partnerships and ensuring officers receive quality training. LPPD has been working diligently to ensure its written directives are in compliance with law enforcement best practices. Throughout the year, commanders, supervisors, and subject matter experts have been comparing the department's written directives with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) 482 standards. By embracing law enforcement's best practices, the department will be better able to deliver its services in a competent and professional manner.

As noted earlier, the men and women of LPPD are committed to the philosophy of community policing. As the department moves into the New Year, LPPD will continue to take a holistic approach to crime and quality-of-life issues to ensure the safety of all those who live, work, and visit the town. Moreover, the department will continue to provide training opportunities for its staff in an effort to provide timely and competent responses to calls for service. Happy New Year!

## SPECIAL EVENTS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

### Upcoming Events

Stay tuned for the 2015 Special Events Calendar! Information will be posted on the Town's website in early March. Make sure to like our Facebook page so you can be one of the first to know what's happening in the Town. The Town's official face book page is listed as Town of La Plata.

### Ice Cream with the Easter Bunny

Monday, April 6th: 11 AM to 1 PM

Hop on in for ice cream with the Easter Bunny! Stop by the La Plata Town Hall on the Monday after Easter, April 6th from 11

AM to 1 PM. Bring the kids for ice cream, crafts, and visit with the Easter Bunny.

### Celebrate La Plata

Saturday April 25th: 12 noon to 4 PM

The Town of La Plata will come together for a day of family fun at the annual Spring Festival, Celebrate La Plata on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy a day of activities for children of all ages at Celebrate La Plata; face painting, displays, entertainment, refreshments for sale from local favorites, and the very popular Bed Races!



Employees of the Town help load toys collected during the Toys for Tots campaign. The Toys were collected and taken to the Jaycees in Waldorf to be distributed.

## WEBSITE POLL

Visit the Town of La Plata's website at <http://www.townoflaplata.org> to participate in an online poll. Click on the 'Snap Poll' link on the left side of the web page to go to the poll and see the results to date. There are four related questions in the poll:

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel:

- Very safe
- Somewhat safe
- Neither safe nor unsafe
- Somewhat unsafe
- Very unsafe
- Don't know

- In your neighborhood during the day
- In your neighborhood after dark
- In La Plata's downtown area during the day
- In La Plata's downtown area after dark

### December Website Poll Results

Below are the website 'Snap Poll' results from the last issue. The question and results are:

How long do you plan to live in La Plata?

- Less than one year - 6%
- 1 - 2 years - 3%
- 3 - 5 years - 17%
- 5 - 10 years - 8%
- 10 - 20 years - 22%
- The rest of my life - 44%

## SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY

The Town Hall was the site for the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to Kick off Small Business Saturday on November 28, 2014.



Left to right; Councilman Lynn Gilroy, Karen Acton, Councilman Joe Norris, Craig Renner, Councilman Wayne Winkler, Betsy Burian with the Charles County Chamber of Commerce, and Mayor Roy Hale.

The Town of La Plata has several core services that benefit the community on a daily basis. From sanitation services, to law enforcement, providing clean water, treating waste water, building and property inspections, and maintenance of rights of way and public property. These core services are immediate and affect the lives of those in the community today.

A significant aspect Town governance is the planning and preparation for future service needs. Through land use and infrastructure planning activities, the citizens and staff who work our Town government are ensuring the ability of the Town to provide those core services in the future as well. Residents who volunteer on the Planning Commission, Park Board, and other committees work with the elected Town Council and the Town staff to plan for the La Plata of the future.

As this snap poll indicates a significant

majority of today's residents plan on living in La Plata for a long time.

So, just as people made decisions 25 years ago that impact La Plata today, the decisions being made now will help shape what La Plata will be like in future years. If you plan on being in La Plata for many years to come, please be sure to talk with your elected officials, the many citizen volunteers, and Town staff to share your ideas and hopes for what La Plata can be in the future. Many things will impact that, like the economy, what happens in other parts of Charles County and region, and societal changes. However, as a community the people that live here have a voice to see that their needs and desires for the future are met.



## Efficiency Corner

### Making La Plata More Efficient

With resources strained by challenges in the economy, it is vital that the Town explore ways to make its operations more efficient to save money, time, and add value to the services provided. Town staff is charged with finding new ways to improve services, and the Town regularly invests in technology or implements process changes to drive efficiencies.

### Debt

The Town of La Plata has many different types of expenses including payroll, supplies, utilities, insurance, equipment, and maintenance. Many of these expenses occur regularly and are managed through the regular course of business. Other expenses are larger, and the Town saves money towards expenditures, such as vehicles and large equipment. There is another category of expense where the Town does not pay for it at the time of acquisition, instead the Town will borrow money to finance the purchase. An example of the type of purchase in which the Town would use debt is the Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) upgrade of the Town's wastewater treatment plant.

When faced with a large expenditure, the Town often considers whether it is financially viable to issue debt. When debt is issued the Town considers how much funding is presently available for the expenditure, the costs of borrowing money, the amount of interest earned on account balance, and whether there is another potential expense that the money could be used for. Another criteria considered, which is very important, is when the benefit from the expenditure will be received.

In the case of the BNR upgrade, the Town was required to make the improvement to the plant by the Maryland Department of the Environment. It was not a project that could be deferred. Additionally, the goal of the upgrade was an improvement to water treatment quality, which would benefit residents of La Plata for many years into the future. Since the benefit of the investment would be going out long into the future, the decision to incur debt, and spread the expense of the upgrade to future members of the community made it a logical choice to issue debt. The improvement occurred right away, the benefits were long term, financing opportunity showed favorable interest rates, so the cost was spread out into the future.

Since 2002 the Town has been paying the debt on the BNR upgrade of the treatment plant through Major Facility Fees. The Town completed another required upgrade to the treatment plant in 2014 called Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR), even while the prior major upgrade is still being paid for. Absent the use of debt, the Town would not be in a good financial position to fund major expenses like these.

## 2014 CITIZEN SURVEY

In November 2014, 1,200 households in the Town of La Plata were randomly asked to again participate in The National Citizen Survey. The National Citizen Survey for La Plata contains a menu of questions about services and community issues as well including several policy questions. The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality research methods and directly comparable results from jurisdictions across the United States.

Resident opinions offer elected officials an opportunity to identify challenges and to plan for and evaluate improvements and to sustain services and amenities for long-term success.

The survey results are used by the Town Council for community planning and resource allocation, program improvement, and policy making. This is the Town's sixth survey conducted over the past eight years and the elected body has used previous surveys in evaluating services, assisting in the development of Council priorities, and guiding them in making decisions regarding the budget.

The full survey is available on the Town's website through the Citizen Survey link.

Basic utilities like water, sewer, and garbage collection are essential to daily life in La Plata. With the change last year in garbage collection, the Town is pleased to see that with 88% rating the service as excellent or good, garbage collection remains La Plata's top rated utility. Water and sewer services have increased since the first survey in January of 2008.

Sewer went from 63% rating as excellent or good to 72% in 2014. Drinking water service went from 57% in 2008 to 72% today. Yard Waste pickup went from 73% in 2008 to 80% in 2014.

Each survey the Town asks some policy specific questions. In this survey, residents were asked if they would support the installation of traffic cameras to deter speeding in school zones in La Plata. 64% of respondents supported the concept, up from 56% when asked in 2012. This past fall the Town evaluated three locations in school zones for traffic cameras, with two of the three not demonstrating speeding problems. Changes to State law this past year would place a financial burden on the Town to install speed cameras, so the Town must continue to evaluate how to provide this service the majority of residents support.

With continued inadequate funding from the State Highway User Revenue for street repair, the survey showed a large reduction in score from 55% stating street repair was Excellent or Good in 2012 to 40% in 2014. The Town again asked residents whether they would support increasing property taxes to replace lost Highway User Revenue for road maintenance. The response in 2010 and 2012 had 38% of respondents supporting the idea, which decreased to 35% in 2014. Despite a 15% drop in positive perception of street repair, residents are also less likely to support financing the maintenance. These two concepts cannot be supported in the long term, and eventually street quality will require additional funding to

maintain minimum serviceability.

In 2012 the Town also asked residents to evaluate the importance of 12 of the Town's major initiatives. The highest priority initiatives in that survey were Pedestrian Safety with 57% rating it a high priority, Roads with 41% rating it a high priority, and Sidewalk Maintenance with 36% rating it a high priority. To address these resident priority areas, the Town asked in the 2014 survey whether residents would support increasing property taxes to fund La Plata's pedestrian access throughout the community. The results were even less supportive than for roads with just 32% of respondents supporting the idea.

This spring, the Town Council will again need to discuss how to address the highest priority concerns of the Town's residents, pedestrian access and roads, without support of the community to finance those activities, given the State's reduction in gasoline tax to local government.

This is just a sampling of results from the survey. The complete survey with previous year results in regards to transportation, housing, land use & zoning, economic sustainability, public safety, environmental sustainability, parks and recreation, culture, arts and education, community inclusiveness, information and awareness, social engagement, resident priorities, and policy questions can all be viewed on the Town's website at [www.townoflaplata.org](http://www.townoflaplata.org) under the section labeled Citizen Survey.

## EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHT



**Seth Koons, Planning Technician**

The Town of La Plata is happy to welcome Seth Koons as the new Planning Technician. Seth graduated from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana on December 13, 2014 with a bachelor's degree in Urban Planning and Development. Seth grew up in Indiana and after graduation wanted to move out of state to get a different perspective on the world and broaden his horizons.

# Family Camping at Tilghman Lake

Friday, March 20 and Saturday, March 21, 2015.

Space is limited to the first 50 registrants.

Permit form is available at [www.townoflaplata.org](http://www.townoflaplata.org) or  
by calling 301-934-8421.

**La Plata's Largest Park!**

**40 Acres of nature to explore**

**Located at 10598 Box Elder Road off of Radio Station Rd**

Take the opportunity to camp with your family and friends close to home. You can bring charcoal to cook out dinner and breakfast on one of the many grills located in the park. Eat under the large beautiful pavilion overlooking Tilghman Lake. Enjoy fishing from the dock or lakeside. Walk the trail loop, or walk the connection to Laurel Springs Regional park where there is a playground, ball fields, and sport fields.



For more information,  
visit the Family Camping page at  
[www.TownofLaPlata.org](http://www.TownofLaPlata.org).



# TOWN OF LA PLATA

305 Queen Anne Street  
P. O. Box 2268  
La Plata, Maryland 20646-2268

PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
WALDORF, MD  
PERMIT NO. 10131



**Town Notes** is a publication of the Town of La Plata.



Time to start your training for the Town of La Plata Bed Races! Gather three of your friends, family, or co-workers and sign up today. Bed Races take place on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm as part of the Celebrate La Plata event.

Registration deadline is April 17. For more information or to register for the Bed Races, contact Colleen Wilson at (301) 934-8421 or [cwilson@townofaplata.org](mailto:cwilson@townofaplata.org). Participation form is available on the Town's website [www.townofaplata.org](http://www.townofaplata.org).