

TOWN NOTES

News from La Plata Town Hall



MAYOR'S CORNER

I trust most of you experienced a happy Thanksgiving Day, celebrated with family and friends. The list of things for which we are thankful is growing, like the storm Sandy whose roar was worse than its bite at least in our Town and surrounding area. The Town was prepared for this storm and critical needs personnel were on hand at all times. Once again this demonstrates the exceptional personnel the Town has on its staff and their dedication to keeping our Town safe.

The Town Government recently mailed selected households a citizens survey that solicited inputs on issues that the person completing the survey felt were good, fair or not so good. This survey is only one method that your elected and appointed officials use to determine the state of our Town. The survey does not concentrate on one or two hot button issues but covers a wide spectrum. Town Council Meetings, public hearings, direct conversations with residents, e-mails, telephone calls all add to the source of information that is used to gauge the public perception and urgency on issues affecting the Town. We use all this input when priorities are set, usually during annual budget deliberations, but it also drives how we allocate limited resources throughout the entire year. I trust that everyone who received a citizens survey form completed it because we do desire your input.

The preceding paragraph, leads me to an issue that I do not feel can be over emphasized. Our goal has and will continue to be providing a high level of services to our residents. This is our number one priority; nothing less is warranted, since

Continued on page 3

Community Traffic Awareness Action Plan

Traffic can impact residential communities in La Plata. These impacts are principally related to excessive vehicular speed within communities. To address this, the Police Department has a comprehensive community speed control program. The program incorporates three elements to combat excessive vehicular speed: traffic safety education, vehicular law enforcement, and, when needed, engineering a retrofit of the roadway to improve conditions.

The program is closely monitored and necessary changes are made as results are collected.

Traffic Safety Education

Traffic Safety Awareness Campaign

Community Speed Watch - With a **Speed Monitoring and Awareness Radar Team (SMART)**, individuals and community groups can take an active role in reducing speed in their neighborhoods. After training, participants use radar equipment to record the number of cars and their speeds. Citizens take no enforcement action. The program allows the Police Department to determine which streets need enforcement or additional educational or engineering efforts.

Community Association Activities - The Department works with impacted communities to address the community's traffic and speed concerns. Contact La Plata Police Chief Gittings for additional information at (301) 934-1500 or email cgittings@townoflaplata.org.

Vehicular Law Enforcement

The La Plata Police Department recognizes that excessive speed and other traffic violations in residential areas are a source of concern to the community. The Department takes an active role in enforcing applicable laws, educating the public, and making suggestions for road engineering improvements.

It is the responsibility of each patrol officer to enforce motor vehicle laws, including those involving excessive speed. Radar training and equipment has been provided to the Patrol Division to assist them in this effort during the normal course of their patrols. Supervisors who become aware of speed problems in specific communities direct their officers to conduct speed enforcement in those areas.

Specific speeding reports in residential areas are directed to the Operations Commander, who keeps a file of all such reports.

A Radar Road List is published each month to direct the enforcement efforts of patrol officers assigned radar or other speed measuring devices.

In addition to the monthly Radar Road List, the Operations Commander identifies roadways for officer enforcement. These may also include roads in which the use of unmarked vehicles or special equipment is necessary.

The La Plata Police Department offers the SMART program to interested communities. The program aims to reduce excessive speed in residential neighborhoods through peer pressure and awareness.

Community Speed Control Program Implementation

Many of the neighborhoods in the Town have requested that action be taken to provide additional speed control in their areas. In order to prioritize requests, the Department ranks requests as top priority (school walking routes), second priority (connector or through streets), and third priority (remaining cul-de-sacs or isolated road system communities).



Town of La Plata

COUNCIL COLUMN

Councilman Keith Back, Ward 2

There are a couple of items Councilman Keith Back, Ward 2 would like to mention in this edition of the Town Newsletter. The first is in reference to an item that will be voted on soon by the Town Council related to a change to an annexation agreement. There has been some discussion and feedback by a very small number of citizens about this at previous meetings. I want to briefly address this and hopefully solicit a wider range of comments from the public.

The developers of the planned Heritage Green Subdivision and the Town have been in discussions for the past year on potential changes to their development as it relates to the recreational amenities that will be provided with their project. The original annexation agreement for this property requires the developer to build a golf course before constructing homes. This golf course will be a private enterprise but must be made available for La Plata residents to pay to use for the first 5 years. After that initial 5 year period, they can make it an exclusively private club, or can leave it open to the public, or even close the course. The developers have requested that in place of this golf course that they be allowed to develop and then turn over to the Town 295 acres of parks in the form of an integrated park system with both passive and active recreational uses that can be used by all Town citizens

without any time restrictions. There have been some vocal arguments that this is just a proposal to benefit the developer. Others have argued that this will provide parks and trails that all citizens of the Town can use, both young and old and without time restrictions. This will be decided by the Town in the near future and there will be a Public Hearing on this matter on December 11.

I cannot speak for the other members of the Council, but I for one would like to hear from a broad group of citizens on whether they would like to have the golf course built or they would like to see a broader more inclusive set of parks built and provided to the Town including amenities such as trails, picnic shelters, an amphitheater, playgrounds, and much more. Please come out to the public hearing and make your thoughts known. We have been criticized by some for not soliciting the feedback from citizens. The Public Hearing on this issue and the Public Forum at each Town Council meeting is the best way to make sure your thoughts on this subject are part of the formal record and are heard by all on the Council. The Town Council needs to hear from the public on how they feel on this topic and why they feel that way. This is an important issue and will shape the look and feel of the Town for a long time. The Town Council needs to hear from a broad range of the Town's citizens not just the few people that typically come out to

voice their concerns on all issues.

The other topic I would like to mention is that as we move into the Holiday season, please remember those less fortunate than yourself. It could be a neighbor in need, a family overcoming a tragedy, or the many people that are just now beginning to recover from the disaster caused by Hurricane Sandy along a large stretch of the East Coast. It was only 10 years ago that our Town was in need of help after the tornado and many people reached out to come to our aid.

Code Corner

Removal of Snow and Ice from Sidewalks (Town Code Sec.170-16 Maintenance of sidewalks by property owner.)

With snow inevitable this season, please keep in mind that you are required to shovel the sidewalks so people can get to their destinations safely. Snow or ice accumulation must be removed within 48 hours after the precipitation ceases. If you have a sidewalk in front of your house, it is your responsibility to clear it. If you live on a corner lot, you may have sidewalks in the front of your house, on the side, or even along your back yard. Don't forget to clear them all!

Also, please remember to remove your vehicles from the street if snow or ice is in the forecast. This will allow plows and/or salt and sand vehicles to more thoroughly treat your street. If the snow or ice accumulation constitutes a hazard or requires snow removal, the Town of La Plata may declare a snow emergency. In the event of a snow emergency, all vehicles must be removed from all streets designated as emergency streets. If you are unsure whether your street is a snow emergency route, we strongly encourage all residents to take the time to move vehicles off the road anyway so that the Town may plow clear the snow from curb to curb. Moving your vehicle keeps the streets safe for our citizens and leaves less work for you!

NEW EMPLOYEE



Nina Ruhter joined the Town of La Plata staff in September as the new Planning Technician. She graduated with a BS in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Virginia in 2011. While in school, Nina had internships with various local governments including the Albemarle County Service Authority and the Fairfax County Department of Transportation. Nina has always been interested in planning at the local level, specifically as it relates to economic growth, transportation, and the environment. She is very excited to

be part of the Planning and Community Development Department. Nina grew up in Falls Church, Virginia and now lives in Leonardtown.

STAY IN LA PLATA FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Each issue of the Town Notes includes the new commercial occupancy permits in the Town. Even through the downturn in the economy, La Plata has been a place for businesses to invest. Whether it is the investment in new businesses, or the continued investment of La Plata businesses that have serviced the community for years, it is important to support those businesses with shopping, dining, and service dollars.

Our local businesses are a big part of the La Plata community and contribute to our daily lives and our sense of place. When faced with a choice of where to shop or where to dine, please consider La Plata businesses first. La Plata businesses are convenient to home, but they also support the community.

By investing in La Plata, these businesses add to property values and keep the tax base strong. The resources from local businesses help support law enforcement, utilities, special events, parks, and other valued municipal services. The choice to spend your money in La Plata gets the added benefit of investing back into the community.

La Plata businesses are where your friends and family shop. It is where you see the most friendly faces and can best connect with your community. With out of town guests, bring them to unique places in La Plata, to show off your hometown. There are many great options to satisfy everyone on your shopping list. There are many businesses to choose from and whether you

support an independent business or a chain, the owners and employees of the businesses often live right in our community.

By shopping and dining in La Plata you help to support your neighbors and your community, keeping and multiplying our resources locally. The success of our local businesses helps maintain the success of our community. It adds to the character and vitality that all our establishments provide to the Town. Thank you and Happy Holidays.

MAYOR'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

it is usually the quality and quantity of services that prompt individuals to move to an incorporated town or city. As I have reported in this column since becoming mayor, a lot has been accomplished in upgrading and improving our infrastructure and operating procedures so that those services most important to the vast majority of our residents, such as our water delivery system, wastewater system, trash removal, recycling program, and snow removal, function smoothly. The advent of new trash containers, new water meters, new electronic payment system for paying utility bills, upgrades to the waste water treatment plant and storm water management programs all add to our ability to maintain the highest level of services possible. It is understood that no matter how many people benefit from a change in a system or program, there are those who do not benefit from the changes at least in the short run. We must find ways to bring everyone onboard and this is our challenge as we continue to move forward.

Traffic is and will continue to be a high priority for Town Officials and residents alike. It is also the most costly and difficult of issues. The long anticipated Heritage Green Parkway, as part of the Heritage Green Development, hopefully will be built soon and will provide a means to limit the traffic in the immediate downtown area. Traffic calming devices must be identified and tested where they will improve traffic flow and lessen the severity of congested intersections. Pedestrian safety issues must be included in any proposed traffic studies or engineering concepts. A more permanent repair to the railroad crossing on Charles Street has been identified, concrete in lieu of wooden planks, but awaits approval and permits from the State Highway Administration.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

As your Mayor, I am always receptive to your comments, positive or critical. You may reach me at Town Hall (301) 934-8421 or at home (301) 934-8450.



On October 20, the Charles Street Bakery had their 10 year celebration of being in business in downtown La Plata and on November 8, Joson Fine Jewelry and Home Boutique celebrated their 8 year anniversary. La Plata Nutrition is also celebrating 5 years. Thanks for being a part of the community and we look forward to many more.

Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

Christmas Eve	Monday, December 24, 2012
Christmas Day	Tuesday, December 25, 2012
New Year's Day	Tuesday, January 1, 2013
Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday	Monday, January 21, 2013

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
- Paddy Mudd 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

Project Manager: Steven F. Schroeder

Police Chief: Cassin B. Gittings

Director of Planning and Community

Development: David M. Jenkins

Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

Senior Planner: Theresa C. Dent

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

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.



**CHARLES COUNTY
HOUSEHOLD
HAZARDOUS WASTE
COLLECTION**

2012 are on the first Saturday of each month through December from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. in the parking lot of the 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 pickups 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.*

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Household hazardous waste collection days for

Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

If your regular trash collection day is:

Christmas Eve - NO CHANGE

Monday, December 24, 2012

Christmas Day

Tuesday, December 25, 2012

New Year's Day

Tuesday, January 1, 2013

Martin Luther King Day

Monday, January 21, 2013

Trash will be picked up on:

Monday, December 24, 2012

Wednesday, December 26, 2012

Wednesday, January 2, 2013

Tuesday, January 22, 2013

Recycling Collection Adjustment

Recycling for Wednesday, December 26, 2012 will be picked up late in the day of the 26th and December 27, 2012.

Recycling for Wednesday, January 2, 2013

will be picked up late in the day of the 2nd and January 3, 2013

Yard Waste Pick Up Schedule Adjustment

There will be no Yard Waste pick up on:

Monday, December 24, 2012

Monday, January 21, 2013

Christmas Tree pick up

Wednesday, December 26, 2012

TOWN POSTS SNOW EMERGENCY ROUTES:

Old man winter is just around the corner, this means the possibility of snow. The Public Works Department has posted snow emergency routes throughout the Town. Parking will be prohibited on these streets

while a snow emergency plan is in effect for Charles County. Vehicles parked along these roads will be ticketed or towed at the owner's expense during a snow emergency. To aid snow removal crews and improve

safety, please do not park along streets when winter weather is in the forecast. Instead park in your garage, driveway, or designated parking space. The following is a list of the Town's snow emergency routes:

Agricopia Drive
Bath Drive
Clarks Run Road
Cornwall Drive
East Patuxent Drive
Fescue Circle
Garrett Avenue

Hawthorne Drive
*(between Rt. 301 and
Washington Avenue)*
Heritage Green Parkway
Hickory Circle
Hickory Lane
Kent Avenue

La Grange Avenue
Llano Drive
Magnolia Drive
Norfolk Drive
Oak Avenue
Oriole Lane
Quailwood Parkway

Queen Anne Street
Redwood Circle
Savanna Drive
Shining Willow Way
*(between Rt. 301 and
Washington Avenue)*
Somerset Street

St. Mary's Avenue
Suffolk Drive
Wales Drive
Wicomico Street
Willow Lane

DECEMBER 2012

SUNDAY

MONDAY

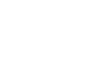
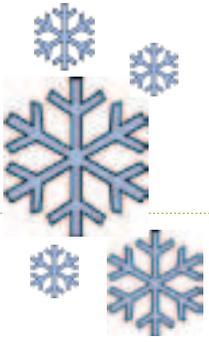
TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Older Tyme Holiday gathering; 3:00 pm

Yard Waste Pick Up
Special Pick Up (please call by 11/30 to be put on list)

Planning Commission Meeting; 7:00 p.m.

Design Review Board Meeting; 9:00 a.m.
Crime Watch Council Meeting; 7:30 p.m.

Yard Waste Pick Up
Pearl Harbor Day

Breakfast with Santa (reservations required)
Early Warning Device Tests; 10:00 am

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

Yard Waste Pick Up
Christmas decoration contest (have lights on by 5:00 pm)

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

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

Yard Waste Pick Up

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

Yard Waste Pick Up
Beautification Commission meeting; 4:00 p.m.

Mayor and Council Regular Meeting; 7:00 p.m.

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

Yard Waste Pick Up

Winter Begins

23/30

24/31

25

26

27

28

29

Town Hall closed 12/24
REGULAR TRASH PICK UP
No Yard Waste Pick Up

Town Hall closed
No trash Pick up (will be picked up on 12/26)

Christmas Tree Pick Up begins
Recycling delayed or extended to 12/27

Recycling continued from 12/26

Yard Waste Pick Up



JANUARY 2013

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



1
Town Hall closed
No Regular Trash Pick Up (1/2/13)
No Special Pick Up
No Yard Waste Pick Up

2
Planning Commission meeting: 7:00 pm
Design Review Board meeting: 9:00 am
Recycling delayed or extended to 1/2
Crime Watch Council: 7:30 pm



3
Recycling continued form 1/2
Yard Waste Pick Up

4
Yard Waste Pick Up



5

6
Yard Waste Pick Up
Special Pick Up (please call by 1/4 at 4:00 to be put on list)

8
Mayor and Council Work Session: 7:00 pm.

9
Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting: 5:00 pm.

11
Yard Waste Pick Up

13

14
Beautification Commission meetings: 4:00 pm
Yard Waste Pick Up

16
Design Review Board meeting: 9:00 a.m.

18
Yard Waste Pick Up



20

21
Town Hall Closed
Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday
No trash Pick Up (1/22)
No Yard Waste Pick Up

22
Mayor and Council Regular meeting: 7:00 pm.
Trash Pick Up from 1/21

25
Yard Waste Pick Up



26

27

28
Yard Waste Pick Up

29



30



31

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.

Town Hall Geothermal

Several years ago during the design/build of the La Plata Town Hall, there was a strong desire to reduce the potential operating expense of the new building. Since heating and cooling are major components of the utility expense for any structure, the Town sought out a cost effective solution. Heat-

ing and cooling in La Plata Town Hall is achieved through a geothermal system.

As its name implies, the system uses the consistent temperature of the earth to regulate the indoor air temperature of Town Hall. In a traditional air conditioning system, a liquid moves between an air handler inside a building to a unit outside a building. The heat that is collected indoors is transferred outdoors, thus cooling the interior. A somewhat similar process occurs with a geothermal system. Instead of the heat being dispersed outside, the cooling water is pumped into wells deep in the ground. In the case of Town Hall there are over 30 individual wells under the Town Hall parking lot where the heat is transferred into the earth.

During cooler months, the opposite process takes place. Instead of the system taking heat out of the air in the building, it takes the heat out of earth and transfers it to the air in the building. Unlike a traditional heating unit that uses electricity or a fossil fuel to heat up the air moving through it, a geothermal system can take advantage of smaller temperature variances in the earth.

Because of the higher costs associated with the installation of a geothermal system, the installations typically are found in larger buildings or in places able to take advantage of a longer time horizon to recoup the installation costs.



Town of La Plata Utility Payment Automatic ACH Withdrawal Authorization Instructions & Terms

INSTRUCTIONS:

Fill out the accompanying form. Please print or type all of the information.

The person(s) completing the form must return the completed form to the Finance Office in the Town Hall in person and must provide some form of picture identification to the Town staff at the time they submit it, documenting that they are the person(s) who signed the form.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

The automatic withdrawal will become effective for the first billing cycle that ends after the authorization has been submitted.

Customers electing to pay their bills via this process will still be mailed bills each quarter and will have ample time from the date the bills are mailed until the due date to contact the Town re: any issues they may have with their bill and get them resolved before their account is drafted.

It is the customers responsibility to ensure there are adequate funds in their account to cover their payment at the time that the withdrawal is scheduled to occur and will be subject to fees and interest if there is not.

It is the customers responsibility to make sure their payment is withdrawn from their account prior to the due date and may be subject to late fees and interest if it is not.

If a customer desires to change or terminate this service once it has been initiated, they must communicate their desires to the Town in writing, a minimum of two weeks before the end of the calendar quarter.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering

Sunday, December 2nd from 3 pm to 6 pm
Celebrate the season with music, children's activities, refreshments, and visit from Santa.

Breakfast with Santa

Visit with Santa at the Town Hall on Saturday, December 8th. Each child is asked to bring a homemade card for nursing home residents or a canned good for the Sacred Heart Church Food Bank. There are four time slots: 8-8:45 am,

9-9:45 am, 10-10:45 am and 11-11:45 am. Space is limited and reservations are required. To register, call Town Hall at (301) 934-8421.

LA PLATA Fall Festival

With the sun shining and the leaves changing colors, the weather could not have been more perfect for the Fall Festival on Sunday, October 21st. With over

70 craft and food vendors to explore, there was something for everyone to enjoy. Live music was provided by the Wise Guys and children decorated pumpkins and craft projects at the art tent. The Charles County Chamber of Commerce sponsored the Annual Scarecrow Festival and people had the opportunity to vote for their favorite scarecrow at the Fall Festival. Thanks to all who came out to support the event!



HARVEST HALLOWEEN PARTY

Crafts, yummy treats and a spooky good time for all!



Veterans' Parade

Thank you to all who came out on Sunday, November 11th to honor the men and women of the US Armed Forces. The weather was perfect for an old-fashioned, home town parade! Thank you to all the parade participants for their support.



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. The current question is:

What is the best way to generate revenue for essential Town services?

Property Taxes

User Fees for Services

Income Taxes

Fines

Licenses and Permits

Utility Franchise Fees

Sales Taxes

State and Federal Government Funding

Grants

October Website Poll Results

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

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? La Plata has a good reputation for conservatively preparing a budget, given its revenue.

Strongly Agree - 36%

Somewhat Agree - 32%

Neither Agree nor Disagree - 16%

Somewhat Disagree - 4%

Strongly Disagree - 12%

The services provided by the Town of La Plata are the most basic ones that any community needs to function. Road maintenance, law enforcement, potable water, trash pickup, land use planning, inspections, community events, parks, and sewerage are the

main services provided. Most would agree that life in La Plata would be significantly different if any one of these basic services was not available. Given the need for these services, the community uses a combination of revenue sources including fines, grants, income taxes, licenses and permits, property taxes, sales taxes, state and federal government funding, user fees for services, and utility franchise fees to fund those operations.

The challenges in the economy have put stress on license and permit revenue, with reduced development activity within the Town. Even the traditionally stable revenue source of property tax has declined, because of the decline in property assessments in the community. Since 2007 water consumption has declined every year, resulting in a smaller amount of salable water on which to operate the water and sewer systems of the Town. Fiscal pressures are not just felt at home or in businesses, but within local government as well. The key to weathering these times is to implement efficiencies, remain flexible, and above all plan far into the future.

The La Plata Town Council takes the fiscal and service delivery decisions of the community very seriously. Annually the Town Council takes community feedback about services along with revenue and expenditure data to develop its upcoming budget. By revisiting the Town's Service Priorities every year, the Town Council can assure that resources are allocated in the best place to maintain quality municipal services. The Town Council has been proactive investing in efficiencies to help control long term costs, as well as improve service.

For the past three years, the Town has been preparing a five year operating budget. Instead of looking at financial needs for just the upcoming year, the Town Council looks at its operating and capital needs over

the next five years to ensure that it is not caught with unexpected funding needs or shortfalls of revenue. This longer view of budgeting helps to show the impact of decisions when implementing a new program, or changing the way a service is delivered. By seeking to maintain or improve service, while reducing costs, the Town strives to be well prepared for the rocky economy.

In addition to looking into the future, the Town works to save for major expenditures like equipment or large capital projects. The Town created a Vehicle and Equipment replacement fund in 2008 to annually budget a portion of the replacement value of major vehicles and equipment. A trash truck is a major expense, and instead of trying to find \$300,000 or more in a single budget year when one needs to be replaced, the Town will save \$30,000 a year over ten years to even out its expenditures and ensure it is not in a fiscal bind when the item needs to be replaced.

With property tax reassessments this past year, La Plata's largest revenue source became substantially lower for the next three years. Despite facing increasing energy, commodity, and insurance costs, the Town Council was able to maintain its tax rate at \$0.32. This tax rate has been the same many years, and La Plata works to provide services within that revenue level. A challenge from other revenue sources declining and the State government taking away local road funding and Police aid adds to La Plata's fiscal challenges. Community support and ideas are vital in the coming years with continued fiscal pressure and as the demand for quality municipal service remains high.

EARLY WARNING DEVICES/SIRENS TESTING

The Town of La Plata will test our early warning devices/sirens on **Saturday, December 8, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.** Testing is done twice per year in early May and early December. The testing lasts about a half hour. The tests consist of both siren alerts and audible notifications. The tests are conducted in conjunction with the Charles County 911 Communications Center, which controls and operates the system for the Town.

The devices are installed at the following locations:

- On Charles Street in front of the Charles County Courthouse
- On Curley Hall Road at the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant (near Quailwood Subdivision)
- In Clarks Run Subdivision
- In King's Grant Subdivision
- On Shining Willow Way next to the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department

Emergency Management Officials remind you that in the event of a real emergency to stay tuned to local radio stations for more information, to have emergency supplies on hand - including a radio which can be operated during a power outage, and to know where the safe haven is in your home. It is everyone's responsibility to plan for an emergency.

TOWN OF LA PLATA SNOW POLICY

County Plowed Roads	Town Plowed Roads	State Plowed Roads
Glen Albin Road St. Mary's Avenue from Frederick Drive to Rt. 301 Washington Avenue from Route 301 to Route 6 Radio Station Road	St. Mary's Avenue from Rt. 6 to Frederick Drive Quailwood Parkway from Hawthorne to Route 6	Route 301 Route 6 - Charles Street Route 225 - Hawthorne Drive west beginning at Route 301 Route 488

Snow Preparation Procedures

- Snow removal crews will be put into action at the call of the Director or Asst. Director of Public Works
- Snow removal will begin when 2" of snow has accumulated on roadways.
- Snow removal efforts will be ongoing during the event and will continue until all streets in the Town are cleared.
- It may be necessary to pile snow in front of mailboxes, especially in smaller courts and cul-de-sacs.



Plow Routes

- The Town will normally plow to provide better access to the higher traveled streets first (Primary Roads, Collector Streets and Major residential roads). In addition, the Town has agreed to provide snow removal and salting for treatment of ice accumulation from all roadways, parking areas, vehicle entrances, sidewalks, and bus stop location at the MTA lot located on Washington Avenue.
- Secondly secondary streets and municipal buildings are plowed.
- Lastly cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets are plowed.

Icy Conditions

- Salt distribution will be determined based on the following criteria and priority:
 - Main Collector Streets
 - Streets with Hills
 - Difficult intersections – stop lights

and stop signs
Major residential roads

- Cul-de-sacs and courts may not receive salt treatment

Sidewalks

- Town crews are responsible for clearing sidewalks at public facilities, Town Hall and Parks.
- Town of La Plata property owners are responsible for keeping all sidewalks along their property clear and free of snow and ice.

Parking

- Residents are asked not to park vehicles on any street.
- If you must park on the street park as close to the curb as possible and on one side of the street.



Examples of Street designations:

Primary Roads	Collector Streets	Major Residential	Secondary
Agricopia Drive East Patuxent Drive Oriole Lane Shining Willow Way	St. Mary's Avenue Washington Avenue Heritage Green Pkwy.	Llano Drive Martin Drive Laurelwood Court	Baltimore St. Cecil St. Calvert St. Howard St.

Snow Emergency Routes

Parking of vehicles on marked snow emergency routes is prohibited when the snow emergency plan is in effect for Charles County. Parking shall continue to be prohibited until the snow emergency plan has been cleared. Any vehicles that are illegally parked, that are obstructing traffic, or interfering with the clearing of snow and/or ice are subject to a parking violation or the vehicle being towed at the owner's expense.

Mailbox Replacement Policy

Please contact the Public Works Department at (301) 934-8421, if your mailbox is damaged during snow removal. The Public Works Department will investigate the claim to determine if the damage was caused by the Town or contracted equipment making physical contact with the mailbox. If it is determined by the Public Works Department that the mailbox damage was at fault of the Town or contracted equipment the following options are available.

1. Replacement by the Town of existing mailbox with a standard wooden post and mailbox.
2. Property owners may be reimbursed at a flat rate of \$45.00. It will be the responsibility of the property owner to replace the mailbox.

Mailboxes damaged by snow flowing from plows will not be replaced or reimbursed.



TOWN OF LA PLATA

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Planning and Community Development

What is planning? The American Planning Association (APA) provides the following description:

Planning, also called urban planning or city and regional planning, is a dynamic profession that works to improve the welfare of people and their communities by creating more convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient, and attractive places for present and future generations.

Planning enables civic leaders, businesses, and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives.

Good planning helps create communities that offer better choices for where and how people live. Planning helps communities to envision their future. It helps them find the right balance of new development and essential services, environmental protection, and innovative change.

In the context of this definition, PCD's **Mission Statement** is:

Create an efficient and effective organization that provides planning advice to the Mayor and Town Council, our citizens, Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Board of Appeals, and Parks and Recreation Commission. PCD engages our community, empowers staff, and cultivates leadership, continuing the "Service is our Business" tradition.

Our **Goals**:

- Fulfill Maryland's planning enabling mandate contained in Article 66B
- Be effective public servants, be proactive, work efficiently as team members, and provide responsive customer service
- Develop predictability for all development review procedures and approval processes
- Maximize available technology
- Develop communication/outreach techniques to foster informed decision making and constructive community involvement
- Be responsible stewards of public and natural resources

Our **Planning activities** include the following:

Implementation and comprehensive updating of the following:

- October 2009 La Plata Comprehensive Plan
- February 2011 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan
- August 2009 La Plata Transportation Plan
- 2001 Vision Plan

Development Review:

- Building Permits – residential, commercial, and municipal

- Commercial Site Plans
- Residential subdivisions
- Zoning and Use authorization
- Final Plats
- Annexation, re-zoning, and Special Exceptions
- Facilitation of the Technical Review Team (TRT)

Building Inspection/Code Enforcement:

- Building Code and Fire Safety Code inspection and compliance
- Water, sewer, storm water management adequacy review
- Use and Occupancy certification
- Rental housing, livability code compliance
- Town Zoning Ordinance compliance

Support to:

- Planning Commission
- Design Review Board
- Board of Appeals
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- La Plata Town Centre Development Corporation
- 2001 Vision Plan Team