

County Councilman David Marks Fifth District Newsletter



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MESSAGE FROM COUNCILMAN MARKS: **HISTORIC AMOUNT TRIMMED FROM BUDGET**

Families and businesses make tough choices all the time, prioritizing exactly what they need to spend—a lesson that governments sometimes forget. While Baltimore County has long been recognized for its fiscal management, we can always do better. The economy forced the county to make difficult decisions in adopting its Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

Here are some highlights:

Historic Budget Cuts. [The Council cut about \\$59 million from the budget.](#) Last year, I voted for more than \$40 million in cuts—meaning that I have supported about \$100 million in reductions over the past two years. The cuts hold the public school and community college budgets to Maintenance of Effort—which still represents an increase over last year—as well as negotiations with our labor unions. The Council also reduced funding identified by our auditors.

No Tax Rate Increases. There is no increase in the

property tax rate. I supported reducing the property tax rate—as I did in 2018—but that motion was defeated.

Local Projects. Despite budget cuts, many local projects remained funded. The Fiscal Year 2021 budget includes funding to:

- Implement the Towson Circulator, improving mobility in Downtown Towson.
- [Expand parking at Seven Oaks Senior Center](#), long sought by the members at this busy location.
- Continue to repair the Little Gunpowder River and its tributaries in northeastern Baltimore County.
- Construct improvements at the Fullerton fire station.

Full county funding is preserved for an addition at Pine Grove Middle School and two new northeastern schools. We await the state's share, which has now been delayed since 2019.

SITE IDENTIFIED FOR NEW HIGH SCHOOL



For the past two decades, community leaders have advocated for construction of a new high school in eastern Baltimore County. At its June 1st meeting, the County Council passed legislation sponsored by Councilwoman Bevins that will ultimately allow for acquisition of a 43-acre site on Ebenezer Road in White Marsh. Between 25 and 30 acres can be used for a high school, a long-term goal once two other schools are built for younger students in the area.

BALTIMORE COUNTY NOW STARTING TO REOPEN

As of late May, [Baltimore County has reopened at Phase One of Governor Hogan's recovery plan](#). The following places may now open in accordance with safety protocols.

- Restaurants with outdoor seating;
- Drive-in movie theatres;
- Outdoor youth sports, day camps, and pools;
- Retail stores up to 50 percent capacity, including staff, with curbside pickup and delivery strongly encouraged;
- Barbershops and hair salons up to 50 percent capacity, including staff, and by appointment only.
- Churches and houses of worship up to 50 percent capacity indoors, with outdoor events strongly encouraged.

Residents should continue to stay home when possible. Older and more vulnerable residents, and those who live with them, are strongly advised to stay home whenever possible.

Residents and visitors should practice safe physical distancing and wear masks in public, and frequently wash their hands and sanitize high-touch areas. Employers should continue to encourage telework for their employees when possible. Individuals who can work from home should continue to do so.

Here are important resources as Baltimore County works to contain the coronavirus and protect our citizens, particularly the most vulnerable.

- For a summary of county actions—including the status of agencies—go here: <https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/News/coronavirus.html>
- Updates from the State of Maryland are here: <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>
- If you have questions or concerns, call the county hotline at 410-887-3616.

COUNCILMAN MARKS CALLS FOR POLICE SUBSTATION, COMMUNITY CENTER IN DUNFIELD AND BELMONT

In January, Councilman Marks joined with the state legislators from the Eighth District to urge the county to build a community center and police substation serving the Belmont and Dunfield communities. The county budget did not include any funding, but the elected officials will continue to call for such a facility in this area.

REZONING DECISIONS WILL PRESERVE GREEN SPACE

[The Comprehensive Zoning Map Process occurs every four years in Baltimore County](#). During this year-long process, the development potential of every property in Baltimore County is reviewed first by the Planning Board and then the Baltimore County Council.

In 2012 and 2016, Councilman Marks supported zoning changes that preserved green space throughout the Fifth District and lightened the impact of future development on school overcrowding. This year, he has announced several decisions so far.

- [An agreement has been reached that will block retail development at Joppa and Magledt Roads and preserve the snowball stand.](#)
- [Councilman Marks will support the downzoning of more than 90 acres along Silver Spring Road.](#)
- Councilman Marks will also support the downzoning of 15 acres in the Idlewyld area.

