

PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION

MEETING NOTES

THURSDAY, October 16, 2025, 7:00 P.M. – CITY HALL

Attendees: Councilmember Jeffery Mills; Chief Dove Robison, Laurel Volunteer Fire Department; Captain Clyde Williams, Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad; Sergeant Henson, Laurel Police Department; Arman Safakhah, Department of Public Works; Ed Rowe; Vicki Rambow; and Don Gavelek.

Previous Minutes Approved By: Chief Robison

Seconded By: Councilman Mills

Pushed Into Purpose Conference

The city will host the “Pushed Into Purpose” Conference, a free, family-friendly event focused on motivation and community connection. Panels will cover transportation, civic issues, food, health, the arts, banking and investment, fashion, real estate, and technology, with five speakers per panel and short presentations introducing each topic.

The conference will be held at the Craig Abel Martin Lord Martin building. Ten free vendor spaces remain available; vendors are asked to arrive by 9:00 a.m. to set up. Food trucks will be stationed outside the venue. Residents interested in vendor space may reach out by phone or email.

Traffic Cameras and Pedestrian Safety

Members shared mixed observations on driver behavior since speed cameras were installed. Several noted that drivers are slowing near crosswalks along Route 1, and pedestrians report that motorists are stopping for them in shopping-center crosswalks.

Citation volume has dropped considerably since fines increased. While some community members on social media have called the cameras a “money grab,” the committee emphasized that drivers who observe the speed limit are not penalized.

- 12–15 mph over the limit: \$40
- 16–19 mph over: \$70
- 20–29 mph over: \$120
- 30–39 mph over: \$230
- 40+ mph over: \$425

Maryland Traffic Law Changes

Stricter state enforcement followed a 2023 incident on I-695 in which six highway workers were killed. As of October 1, Maryland law now classifies driving 30 mph or more over the posted limit as reckless driving, which carries a mandatory court appearance and potential incarceration of up to 60 days.

The committee also discussed enforcement challenges, including inconsistent sentencing across counties and

concerns about lenient penalties for serious offenses. The shared goal is to change driver behavior and improve road safety.

Vehicle Modifications and Targeted Enforcement

Maryland law prohibits altered exhaust systems and other vehicle modifications. Citations can be issued for the modifications themselves and for failure to restore the vehicle to a compliant condition.

To address repeat offenders, car rallies, and high-performance vehicles, the city is using saturation patrols, monitoring social media for rally locations, and exploring the use of license plate readers for egregious violations. A multi-jurisdictional enforcement effort and a sober-ride program are also underway to support safer roadways.

DUI Prevention and Vehicle Technology

Under Maryland's Noah's Law, ignition interlock devices are required for DUI offenders, including those receiving probation before judgment. Newer interlock systems include cameras and improved safeguards to prevent circumvention.

Modern vehicles are also equipped with "black box" event data recorders that allow investigators to determine pre-impact speed, throttle activity, and seatbelt use during accident reconstruction.

Department of Public Works Updates

DPW reported active progress across multiple infrastructure projects:

- Ashford Blvd/Oxford Dr: new raised crosswalks with rapid-flashing beacons near the park; sidewalk repairs and pothole patching underway.
- Van Dusen Road: in the design phase, with work planned in three phases, including conversion of the traffic signal from span wire to mast arm.
- Snowden Place, Northview Court, and Ward Street: sidewalk concrete work nearly complete; paving still to come.
- Capital Improvement Program: crack sealing, thermoplastic crosswalk striping, signage replacement, stop bar adjustments, and ADA ramp upgrades.
- Cherry Lane Bikeway: received a \$200,000 MDOT grant for design.
- Safe Streets for All: nearly \$500,000 in federal funding awarded to develop a comprehensive safety action plan.
- Seasonal: snow removal and leaf collection preparations are in progress.

McCullough Field Parking Lot

The parking lot, which previously lacked a sidewalk, is receiving 300 linear feet of depressed curb-and-gutter and a five-foot-wide sidewalk and apron to improve drainage and ADA accessibility. The lot will also be repaved and restriped.

Main Street Improvements

The city's 10-year master plan includes Main Street sidewalk upgrades using stamped concrete and brick pavers, along with additional rapid-flashing beacons at pedestrian crossings. Utility work is being coordinated ahead of surface improvements.

New Developments

Several developments are advancing in the city, including projects on Park Center Drive and along the Anderson Cooper corridor. The city continues advocating for two entry points where appropriate.

Rodent Activity

The city has received few formal complaints regarding rodents. Code enforcement will continue monitoring trash compliance, and residents are reminded that cooler weather drives field mice indoors.