

LAUREL LIVING

The Official Newsletter for the City of Laurel

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Craig A. Moe Laurel Multiservice Center celebrates its grand opening.



\$10K grants available through 'Laurel Thrive' to support new businesses and job creation in Laurel



City of Laurel Launches First-Ever Strategic Plan to Shape Future Growth and Service Delivery

A Message from Mayor Keith R. Sydnor

"As we celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, we take this time to recognize and honor the vast contributions of Hispanic Americans to our community and our nation. The City of Laurel is proud of its rich diversity, and the vibrant culture and history of the Hispanic and Latino communities are integral to that fabric.

From arts and education to business and public service, Hispanic Americans have shaped our country in countless ways. Their resilience, creativity, and dedication have left an indelible mark on our society, and we are stronger for it.

This month provides us with the opportunity not only to celebrate these achievements but also to reflect on the challenges that remain in ensuring equality and opportunity for all. As Mayor, I am committed to fostering a community where everyone, regardless of background, can thrive.

I encourage all residents to join in the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, to learn, to engage, and to honor the rich traditions and stories that continue to shape the American experience."

Keith R. Sydnor

Did You Know?

The first Hispanic American to serve in the Maryland General Assembly was Ana Sol Gutierrez. She was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates in 2002, representing District 18 in Montgomery County. Gutierrez, of Salvadoran descent, was the first Latina to serve in the state's legislature. Her election was a significant milestone for Hispanic representation in Maryland politics.





Proudly Serving You!



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Christian L. Pulley, CPM
City Administrator
Ext. 2242



Office of the City Council
Sara Green, City Clerk
Ext. 2120



Office of the Mayor
Ana Navarro, Executive Asst.
Ext. 2124



Budget and Personnel Services
Michele Saylor, Director
Ext. 2248



Communications
Natalie Williams, Director
Ext. 2208



Community Resources
and Emergency Management
Christina Cornwell, Director
Ext. 2232



Economic and Community
Development
Monta Burrough, Director
Ext. 2301



Fire Marshal and
Permit Services
Danny Selby, Director
Ext. 2195



Information Technology
James Cornwell-Shiel, Director
Ext. 2240



Parks and Recreation
Bill Bailey, Director
Ext. 2233



Police Department
Russell Hamill, Chief
(301) 498-0092



Public Works
Tim Miller, Director
Ext. 3206



Bridging Resources and Hope: **The Launch of the Craig A. Moe Laurel Multiservice Center**

On September 10, 2024, the community gathered to celebrate the grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Craig A. Moe Laurel Multiservice Center. The Multiservice Center represents a significant milestone for the City of Laurel, aimed at enhancing resources and services for vulnerable populations.

Current Mayor Keith R. Sydnor delivered a heartfelt welcome, emphasizing the city's commitment to providing accessible services and fostering a supportive environment for all. Maryland State Senator Jim Rosapepe also spoke, highlighting the importance of the center in strengthening community ties and improving local quality of life. The ceremony included special proclamations from Prince George's County, Anne Arundel County, Howard County, and the City of Laurel, each recognizing the center's vital role in reinforcing community support systems. These acknowledgments highlighted the collaborative efforts across jurisdictions to bring this vision to life.

As attendees toured the facility, they observed firsthand the resources and services offered, including short-term housing units for men, women, and families, providing a safe and temporary living environment. The facility will also feature overnight sheltering for those in immediate need. For daily needs, a prepared meal service will be available, with a fully equipped kitchen and a delivery window, access to postal boxes and a package delivery area for their correspondence and deliveries. A barber and hair salon will be on-site for grooming needs, while a food pantry will provide storage and distribution of essential food supplies. Additionally, a learning center will offer educational resources and job training opportunities. For health services, a medical suite will be available, equipped with space for both physicians and nursing staff to provide necessary medical care. The new center is not just a building; it represents a commitment to investing in the future of Laurel and the greater community.

This facility is owned by the City of Laurel and managed by the Department of Parks & Recreation. It collaborates with various local agencies to ensure effective daily operations. The services offered at the Craig A. Moe Laurel Multiservice Center were chosen based on the recommendations of the City of Laurel Homelessness and Community Task Force, established in 2019. Their mission is to offer streamlined services that promote equity, create opportunities, and foster hope for a brighter future through the support of individual independence.



Video Watch

Click here to see the entire grand opening celebration.

Laurel Thrive Small Business Grant Program

\$100,000 in Grants Available to Support New Businesses in the City

Mayor Keith R. Sydnor is proud to announce the launch of the "Laurel Thrive" Small Business Grant Program, a new initiative administered by the Laurel Department of Economic and Community Development (Laurel ECD). This program is designed to provide financial support to new businesses within the city, helping them to grow, expand and develop their operations.

The "Laurel Thrive" program aligns with the City's broader goals to spur economic development, foster entrepreneurship, and create additional jobs for Laurel residents. The program will offer grants of \$10,000 to eligible businesses that establish operations within the City of Laurel between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

"This grant program reflects our commitment to fostering a thriving business community in Laurel," said Mayor Keith Sydnor. "Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, and we want to give them the support they need to succeed. By investing in new businesses, we're not just creating jobs, we're building a stronger, more resilient city for everyone."

Applications will be accepted beginning Tuesday, September 3, 2024, and will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. Business owners are encouraged to carefully review all grant terms and application instructions before submitting their applications, as incomplete or inaccurate submissions may result in delays or ineligibility. Only one application per business entity will be accepted.

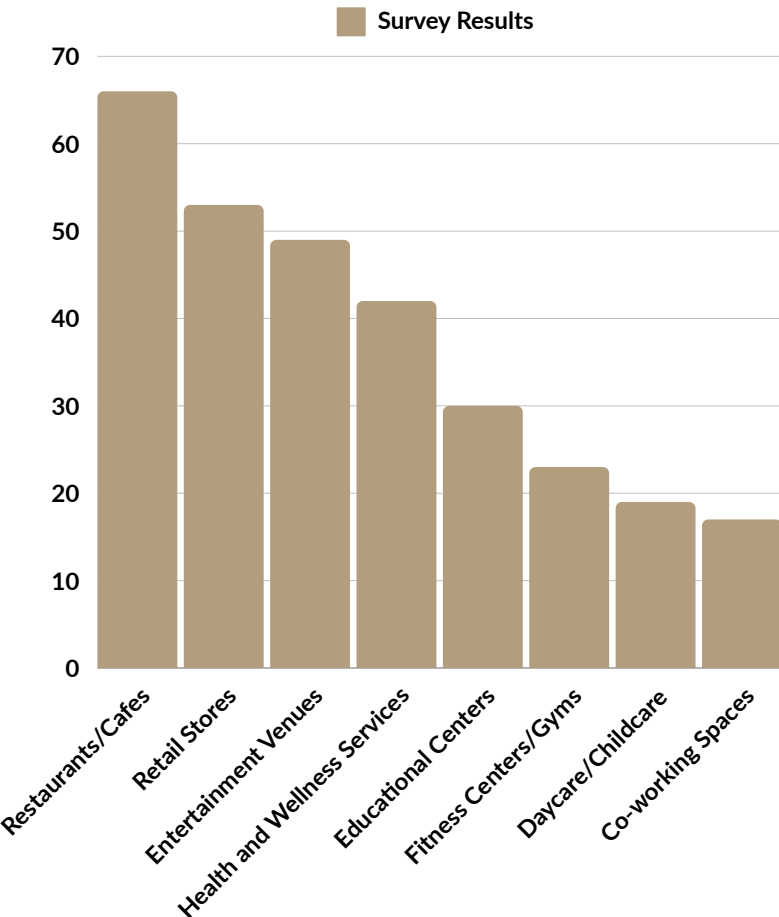
The total fund dedicated to this program is \$100,000, sourced from the City of Laurel's General Operation Budget. Business owners who have received funding from the City within the last five years are not eligible for this grant. For more information about the "Laurel Thrive" Small Business Grant Program or to apply, please visit <https://www.cityoflaurel.org/1929/Thrive-Small-Business-Grant-Program> or contact the Laurel ECD at ECD@laurel.md.us.

Shaping Laurel's Future

Community Survey Results Unveiled

Mayor Keith R. Sydnor is excited to share the results of a recent community survey aimed at shaping the future of business within the Westside Community MXT Zone on Westside Blvd in Laurel, MD. With over 318 participants weighing in, the survey has provided valuable insights into the types of businesses residents wish to see in their community. The survey results indicate a strong preference for various business types, reflecting the community's diverse interests and needs.

Note: The sum of percentages exceeds 100% due to multiple selections allowed by survey participants.





Enhancing Engagement Renovations in the Council Chambers for Enhanced Civic Engagement

The City of Laurel is making significant strides to improve public access and engagement with its government proceedings by investing in advanced audio and visual upgrades to the City Council Chambers. The renovation is designed to modernize the space's technology, enhancing both in-person and hybrid meeting capabilities.

This extensive upgrade project was initiated two years ago when the city secured the contract to overhaul the Council Chambers' aging audiovisual system. The renovations are being implemented to meet the growing demand for reliable virtual participation options. For instance, if a Councilmember, presenter, or resident can't make it to the Chambers for a meeting, they will still be able to participate.

Key features of the upgrade include state-of-the-art sound systems that provide clear and consistent audio throughout the room, coupled with new high-definition video equipment to capture and stream live sessions with professional-grade quality. These improvements will not only enhance the experience for council members and meeting attendees but will also significantly elevate the quality of live broadcasts and virtual meetings.

The renovations will also enhance our capability to conduct hybrid meetings, allowing participation both in-person and virtually at the same time. This is an essential competency for maintaining accessibility in local government, particularly considering the increased reliance on digital platforms by residents to get information about our community. With these renovations, the City of Laurel is preparing to meet the needs of a more digitally connected community, ensuring that residents can remain informed and involved, thereby fostering greater civic engagement.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mayor and City Council Work Session, **October 2 (Virtual)**
Eighteenth Mayor and City Council Meeting, **October 16th (Virtual)**
Nineteenth Mayor and City Council Meeting, **October 28th (In-Person)**

Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center
8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, Maryland 20707





A Vision for Growth: City of Laurel Unveils Historic First-Ever Strategic Plan for a Thriving Future

The City of Laurel, Maryland, is celebrating a historic milestone with the creation of its first-ever strategic plan in the more than 150-year history of the City. This landmark initiative sets the foundation for the city's future growth, development, and service delivery, ensuring that the community continues to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The strategic plan will serve as a blueprint to guide decision-making and resource allocation, aligning the city's efforts with the needs and objectives of our community. The plan is grounded in Laurel's mission to provide exceptional services to a diverse community, fostering an environment where both residents and businesses can thrive.

City Administrator Christian Pulley is "excited to unveil the city's first strategic plan, a testament to our commitment to a brighter future. This plan is not just a roadmap for our community's growth; it reflects the hard work and dedication of our incredible staff. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to making Laurel a place where everyone can flourish."

The city's vision, "Laurel, where the future comes to live and thrive," reflects the administration's commitment to forward-thinking development and quality of life. After collecting information from citizen, stakeholder and employee surveys the City identified these top initiatives to address the most pressing needs and enhance the quality of life for all residents:



Sustainable Development: A key focus of the strategic plan is fostering strategic development that enhances the community's long-term sustainability. This focuses on creating a well-planned, vibrant, and sustainable urban environment for current and future generations.

Effective Communication: To bridge the gap between city officials, residents, and staff, Laurel is committed to fostering open lines of communication. This goal establishes new avenues for the exchange of ideas, keeping the community informed and engaged.

Safe and Healthy Community: Public safety and health are paramount to the success of any city. Laurel's goal is to ensure that all residents have access to the protection, education, and resources needed to achieve a high quality of life.

Premier Workplace: Creating a work environment that encourages employee satisfaction, engagement, and growth is crucial to the city's success. This goal aims to cultivate a supportive, inspiring workplace, empowering employees to deliver their best to the public.



[Video Watch](#)

[Click here to see more of our Strategic Plan celebration.](#)





[Video Watch](#)

To watch the full confirmation visit our YouTube Page [@LaurelTVOfficial](#). Click on the October 2024 Newsletter Playlist.

Continuing the Vision

Monta Burrough Confirmed as Director of the Department of Economic and Community Development for the City of Laurel

In September 2024, Monta Burrough was confirmed by the Laurel City Council to serve as the Director of the Department of Economic and Community Development for the City of Laurel. His journey with the City began in 2016 when he was hired as a Planner I, and he quickly advanced to Planner II. Most recently, from March 2022 until his promotion to Director, he served as Deputy Director of the department, where he played a key role in supporting the Director and overseeing critical functions like supervising the Planner I and II positions.

Before joining the City of Laurel, Mr. Burrough gained extensive experience with Arlington County, Virginia, where he served in various roles, including Acting Front Counter Services Supervisor for Zoning, Zoning Plan Reviewer, and Site Plan Inspector. With nearly 15 years of local government experience, Mr. Burrough has built a solid foundation in public service.

Reflecting on his new role, Mr. Burrough stated, "I am honored to step into this role and continue the work of fostering economic growth and community development here in the City of Laurel. I want to thank Mayor Sydnor for this nomination and the City Council for their trust and support. Together with my team, I'm committed to ensuring that our department continues to drive forward initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all our residents and businesses."

In addition to his professional experience, Mr. Burrough has completed numerous leadership and customer service training programs, such as Leadership in Action Training, Aspiring Supervisor Training, and Customer Service Training. His educational background includes a Bachelor of Science in Architecture and Environmental Design from Morgan State University and, as of May 2024, a Master of Real Estate Development from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Originally from Washington, D.C., Mr. Burrough brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his new role as Director, where he will continue to contribute to the growth and development of Laurel.



Commitment to Public Service:

City of Laurel Officials Complete Local Governance Academy

Christina Cornwell, Director of Community Resources and Emergency Management and Council President James Kole of the City of Laurel graduated from the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance at the University of Maryland. The ceremony took place on Sunday, September 22, 2024 at the Memorial Chapel on the University of Maryland College Park campus.



139 public officials from across the state received an Academy certificate in the presence of family and friends. All Academy Fellows completed a robust program, which included core and elective classes designed to meet their professional needs as municipal or county officials in local government. Through the program, the graduates not only enhanced their understanding of local government issues and ethical standards for public service, but also developed a foundation for informed policy-making and effective governance.

The Academy, which offered its first classes in 1998, is a collaborative effort between the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, the Maryland Municipal League, the Maryland Association of Counties, and the Local Government Insurance Trust.

From Local Service to National Duty City of Laurel Bids Farewell to Dedicated Volunteer Andy Kostas



If you've attended a City of Laurel event recently, chances are you've seen Andy Kostas in action. Since 2023, Andy has been a dedicated volunteer, lending a hand at events like the Farmer's Market, the No Mow April Kickoff, and Women's History Month celebrations. Now, he's taking his commitment to service to a new level by joining the U.S. Navy.

In 2024 alone, Andy has volunteered 110 hours at various events, becoming a familiar face at the Farmer's Market, where he frequently hands out reusable bags and chats with visitors. His dedication and enthusiasm inspired Michele Blair, the City of Laurel's Sustainability Manager, and Carreen Koubeck, Special Assistant to the City Administrator, to organize a celebration in his honor. On September 12, 2024, elected officials, Farmer's Market organizers, and community members came together to recognize Andy's contributions to the community. Along with heartfelt words of appreciation, Andy was presented with a certificate and a framed photo of himself volunteering at the Market, surrounded by handwritten messages from those he's worked alongside.

Joining the Navy has been Andy's lifelong dream. While we'll certainly miss seeing him at City of Laurel events, we're incredibly proud of him and excited for the next chapter of his journey. To learn more about volunteer opportunities in the City of Laurel, visit www.cityoflaurel.org/volunteering.

By Popular Demand ... Fall Extension: Farmer's Market Adds New Dates

The Laurel Farmer's Market is excited to announce extended market dates this fall! Be sure to visit on October 3rd, 17th, and 31st from 3 PM to 7 PM for fresh produce, local goods, and more. Don't miss out on these extra opportunities to support our community vendors!



Opportunity to Serve the City of Laurel: Now Accepting Resumes

The City of Laurel is currently accepting resumes for two important vacancies: Ward 2 Planning Commission and Ward 1 Board of Election Judge. These roles offer an opportunity to serve your community and contribute to the growth and governance of Laurel.

Interested? Email: Laurelmayor@laurel.md.us

Showcasing the Beauty of Diversity Highlights from Laurel's 2nd Annual Community and Culture Day



On September 7th, the City of Laurel, Maryland, was transformed into a vibrant hub of cultural celebration as residents and visitors gathered for the 2nd annual Community and Culture Day event. This highly anticipated occasion showcased the rich diversity of the community, drawing people together through a shared appreciation of cultural heritage.

The day was marked by an array of live performances that captivated the audience. Traditional Igbo dancers graced the stage with their rhythmic movements, telling stories through dance that have been passed down through generations. Brazilian performers brought the energy of samba to life, their colorful costumes and dynamic choreography creating an electric atmosphere. The passionate artistry of Spanish Flamenco dancers added a dramatic flair, mesmerizing spectators with their intricate footwork and expressive movements.

Beyond the performances, the event offered a feast for the senses with a variety of food stalls serving dishes from around the world. Attendees had the opportunity to savor flavors from different cultures, from spicy Nigerian jollof rice to savory Brazilian feijoada and delectable Spanish paella. The culinary delights provided a delicious way to explore and appreciate the diverse culinary traditions represented at the event.

Music played a central role throughout the day, DJs spinning tunes that kept the crowd dancing and singing along. The infectious beats and melodies created a festive atmosphere, encouraging people of all ages to join in the celebration. Traditional games and activities were also available, offering fun and interactive ways for families to engage with different cultural practices.

Community and Culture Day in Laurel was more than just an event; it was a powerful reminder of the strength and beauty that comes from embracing diversity. By bringing together individuals from various backgrounds, the celebration fostered a sense of unity and mutual respect within the community. It was a day filled with laughter, learning, and connection, leaving attendees with lasting memories and a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of cultures that make up their town.

In Case You Missed It ... Must See Events In Video!



 [Laurel's finest wrap up the summer with Doggie Dip Day.](#)



 [Remembering September 11th - Push up Challenge with Mission BBQ, Laurel Police, Mayor Keith R. Sydnor, and Jimmy Smith Sr.](#)



Clyopatra Winery & Vineyard The Nation's First African Immigrant Owned Winery

Owner, Ifeoma Clyopatra Oniya dreamed of opening a winery since she was a little girl and opened the City of Laurel's first winery in October of 2023. Clyopatra Winery offers several kinds of red and white wines which come in single servings, by the bottle, or you can get a flight of four different wines to try. Visitors can choose to pair their wine with a selection of chocolates from Ghana or with several Nigerian dishes that are on Clyopatra's menu.

Located at 24 C St. in the City of Laurel, Clyopatra's Tasting Room is open Thursday-Saturday from 3:00pm-11:30pm and Sundays 1:00pm-8:00pm.

<https://youtu.be/Tenl1hcgCko>

Supporting Local Businesses



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347 Main Street
Laurel, MD 20707
(301) 337-8098



Leda Rose Poduszka Agency
8773 Contee Road #102
Laurel, MD 20708
(301) 275-0767





Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Join us as we celebrate and explore the rich traditions, history, and contributions of the Hispanic community. Through music, dance, art, and engaging conversations, this event offers a unique opportunity to learn, celebrate, and connect with the vibrant culture that continues to inspire and shape our community. This is a free bilingual event. Bring your family and friends.



Saturday, October 19
12:00pm - 2:00pm

Joseph R. Robison Municipal Center
8103 Sandy Spring Road
Laurel, Maryland 20707
(301) 725-5300