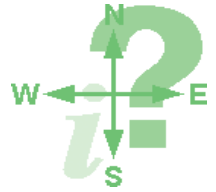




# THE GREENBELT BULLETIN

## A NEW SOURCE OF INFORMATION!

Welcome to *The Greenbelt Bulletin*! In response to suggestions raised during the Visioning Sessions held earlier this year, the City of Greenbelt has decided to establish a new quarterly newsletter to keep you informed. This newsletter is in addition to information that you can get from the city's website at [www.greenbeltmd.gov](http://www.greenbeltmd.gov), the weekly "City Information" ad published in the *Greenbelt News Review*, and information posted on Comcast Channel 71 and Verizon Channel 21.



It is the City of Greenbelt's goal to help keep you informed about issues that are important. Please let us know how we are doing by e-mailing [bpalau@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:bpalau@greenbeltmd.gov) or calling 301-474-8000. We hope that you will find this newsletter helpful and informational.

## NEW PROPERTY TAX CREDIT PROGRAM



In recognition of the increasing burden of property taxes on people of limited or fixed incomes, in December 2007, the Greenbelt City Council approved a property tax credit program. The program begins this fiscal year (July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009). To make

the program as simple as possible for people who might qualify, the City's program "piggybacks" on the existing State of Maryland program. By filing for the State program, if approved, a property owner automatically qualifies for the additional Greenbelt tax credit. The City's credit will be equal to twenty-five (25) percent of the State's credit.

Qualifications for the program are based on income, the value of one's property, and net worth. Property owners with a gross

household income of \$60,000 or less are encouraged to look into the program. Information about the State program is available from the State of Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation and on its website at [www.dat.state.md.us](http://www.dat.state.md.us) including the application.

The filing deadline is September 1, 2008.

If you have any questions about the city's program, contact Jeff Williams, City Treasurer, at 301-474-1552 or [jwilliams@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:jwilliams@greenbeltmd.gov).

### City of Greenbelt Phone Numbers

- City Offices.....301-474-8000
- Planning & Comm. Development  
.....301-345-5417
- Public Works.....301-474-8004
- Police Non-Emergency  
.....301-474-7200
- Police Emergency.....301-474-5454
- Greenbelt CARES.....301-345-6660
- Recreation Dept.....301-397-2200
- Community Center.....301-397-2208
- Aquatic & Fitness Ctr..301-397-2204
- Springhill Lake Recreation Center  
.....301-397-2212

### GREENBELT ALERT SYSTEM FOR RESIDENTS!

Greenbelt ALERT is a text based emergency communication system. City Officials will use this system to send out important messages, updates, or instructions to City residents via wireless communication devices.

**YOU CAN SIGN UP NOW!** The website to login to Greenbelt ALERT is <http://alert.greenbeltmd.gov>

In the event of an emergency, such as a severe weather incident, this system will deliver important text alerts to up to four of the wireless communication devices that you choose to register including your: e-mail account(s) (work, home, other), cell phone, text pager, BlackBerry, or wireless PDA.

Participation in Greenbelt ALERT is totally voluntary and you decide which of your "devices" to register. This network is free for City residents. However, your wireless carrier may charge you a fee to receive/send text messages. Please check your wireless service agreement to review your carrier's pricing scheme. If you have any questions, e-mail [roomsupport@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:roomsupport@greenbeltmd.gov).



### **PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY**

The new Public Works facility, which consists of 2 new buildings, is progressing well. Building 2, which is the large storage building, is 90% complete with just some interior work left to do. Building 1 which will provide offices, men's and women's locker rooms, restrooms and meeting space is now 40% complete. It is estimated that the complete project will be done in late 2008 or early 2009.

### **GREENBELT THEATRE**

The upcoming theatre renovation will provide: an upgrade to the lobby area; enlarged restroom facilities; HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems upgrades; and ADA compatible upgrades. This project is now in the permitting process and work is expected to begin this fiscal year.

### **BUDDY ATTICK PARK RESTROOM FACILITY**

The City is ready to complete the purchase of a public restroom for

## **CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE**

Buddy Attick Park. The building is a two room, multi-user facility; approximately 25 by 21 feet with a 6 foot overhang in front of the restroom doors. There are two drinking fountains outside and baby changing stations in each restroom. The building will be delivered sometime early in 2009. Construction should take just a day or two once the building arrives.

### **HILLSIDE STABILIZATION PROJECT**

The City has contracted with Environmental Systems Analysis, Inc. (ESA) to develop construction plans for the Greenhill/Hillside Roads Outfall Stabilization and Stream Restoration Project. The final design plans have just been completed and are under review by City Planning staff. This summer, the City will apply for the required State and Federal permits, and it is anticipated that construction will occur in the spring of 2009. The plans propose to restore approximately 600 linear feet of stream. The proposed project was identified as highest priority within the Greenbelt Watershed Assessment Study.

The primary goals of the project are to restore and stabilize the stream channel and to reduce sediment erosion. As directed by City Council,

emphasis is being placed on the use of innovative natural and/or bioengineering structures (i.e., biologs, matting and fascines). In addition, the plan focuses on minimizing tree loss.

### **BRADEN FIELD TENNIS COURTS**

Improvements are coming to the Braden Field Tennis Courts! Plans are underway to resurface and relight Braden Field Tennis Courts (BFTC) 1 thru 4. With the new surface, cracks will be repaired and the new color coat will make the courts look like new. In addition to the new surface, new lighting is slated to be installed on BFTC 1-4 to replace the 30+ year old lighting that is there now. The new lighting system will be more energy efficient than the existing lights and include state of the art glare controls that will significantly reduce light spill over into adjacent areas. With the better lighting controls, less energy will be needed to operate the lights.

Another feature being considered is remote operation of the lighting system. If this component is included, it would be possible for users to reserve courts online and turn the lights on/off when they plan to play. Using this system would require membership and a pass code but could make the use of the courts much more user friendly.

For additional information on these improvements please call Joe McNeal at the Greenbelt Recreation Department at 301-397-2200.



## **NEW CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY LAW**

As of June 30, a new law requires Maryland's children up to age eight to use a child safety seat or booster seat when riding in a motor vehicle, unless the child is 4'9" tall or taller or weighs more than 65 pounds. The law used to require children to use safety seats until they reached six years of age and weighed 40 pounds. This new law will help protect older children who are not ready for adult seat belts, even after reaching the previous requirement of age six and

a weight of 40 pounds, most children were not tall enough for adult seat belts to fit properly.

Proper fit for a seat belt means the lap-shoulder belt fits low on the child's hips and across the mid-chest. If the belt fits across the child's neck or stomach, the child could be injured in the event of a crash.

The new law means some children who have been secured with adult seat belts under the current law will have to return to a safety seat or booster seat. The appropriate seat for most six to eight year olds is a booster seat—which is designed to raise the

child up so that adult seat belts will fit properly. Booster seats do not have harness straps and are not permanently installed in the vehicle.

Fortunately, boosters are generally the least expensive type of safety seat, with some starting as low as \$13. For families who cannot afford to purchase a safety seat, loaner programs are available throughout the state.

For more information about Maryland's child passenger safety laws and loaner programs, call Maryland Kids in Safety Seats at 1-800-370-SEAT, or visit their Web site at: [mdkiss.org](http://mdkiss.org).

# CITY COUNCIL APPROVES FY 2009 BUDGET

The Greenbelt City Council approved the budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 (July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009) on June 2nd. This year, the Council held 10 Work Sessions and 2 Public Hearings on the budget giving the public plenty of opportunity to provide input.

This year's budget finds the City of Greenbelt on "sound fiscal footing." Property values in Greenbelt are estimated to increase 9.3% due to the State's assessment process which spreads changes over three years and limits the increases on individual properties in one year to ten (10) percent. Put another way, while market values for real estate in many areas throughout the region and nation are flat or declining, the assessed value of property in Greenbelt is still catching up to the

increases in real estate that occurred in the first half of this decade.

As a result, the City's projected revenues for FY 2009 are projected to increase 6.3% and will likely increase a similar amount in FY 2010. However, FY 2011 will be a new assessment cycle and if property values in Greenbelt drop or flatten, it will certainly constrain revenues.

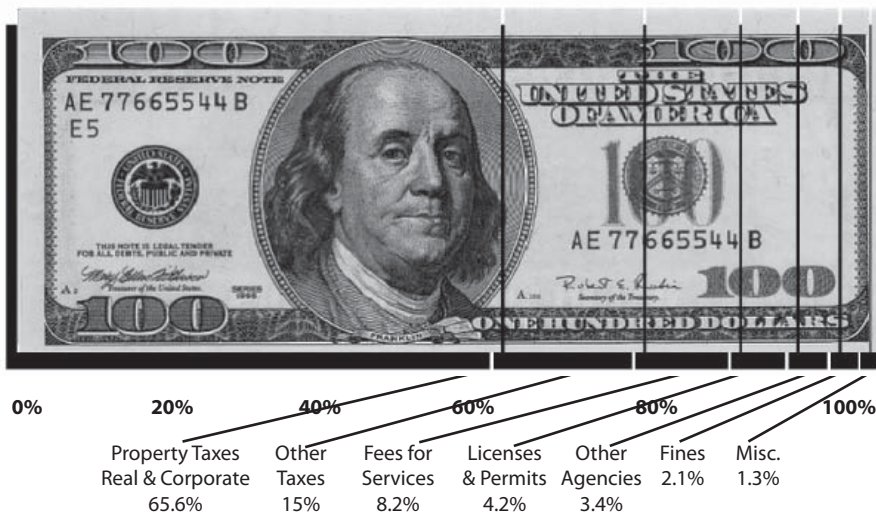
Due to the positive revenue story, the approved budget allows the City to continue to provide its residents the quality services that they are accustomed to. Also, this has enabled the City Council to add two positions that will enable the City to address issues also raised during Visioning Sessions. These positions are a

Community Development Inspector that will focus specifically on the Empirian Village (formerly Springhill Lake) neighborhood and an additional Public Information person that will assist in providing additional resources, like this newsletter, to help keep the public informed.

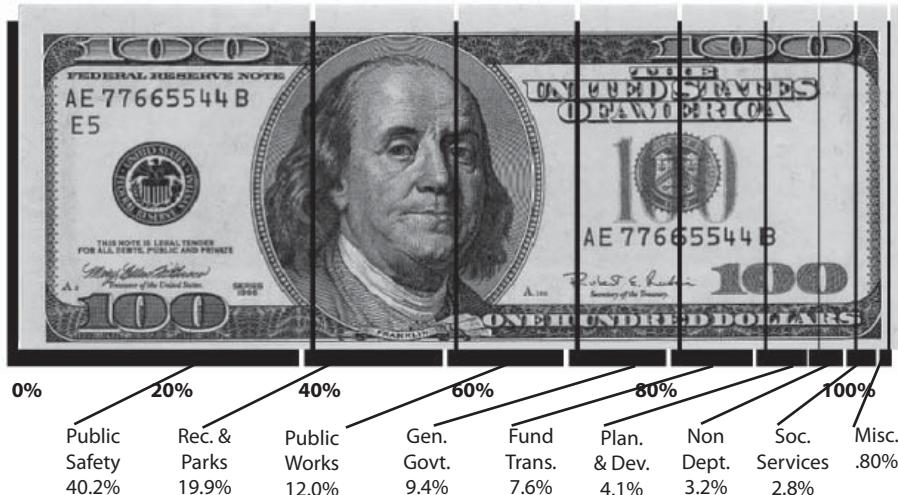
Some highlights for this fiscal year include the completion of the long awaited new Public Works facility, a restroom facility for Buddy Attick Park, improvements at Greenbelt Theatre, new surveillance cameras for the Greenbelt Aquatic and Fitness Center, and the implementation of a new computer system in the Police Department with a computer aided dispatch system.

*Below are graphics showing where the City gets its money and how it gets spent.*

## FY 2009 REVENUES



## FY 2009 EXPENDITURES



### GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL

**Judith F. Davis, Mayor**  
[jdavis@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:jdavis@greenbeltmd.gov)

**Rodney Roberts, Mayor Pro Tem**  
[rroberts@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:rroberts@greenbeltmd.gov)

**Edward Putens, Council Member**  
[eputens@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:eputens@greenbeltmd.gov)

**Konrad Herling, Council Member**  
[kherling@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:kherling@greenbeltmd.gov)

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 Public Information, 240-542-2026  
[bpalau@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:bpalau@greenbeltmd.gov)

## WHAT IS TAX DIFFERENTIAL?

The onset of summer means swimsuits, picnics and the mailing of property tax bills. Every Greenbelt resident pays property taxes in one way or another. Property owners pay them directly, while renters pay them indirectly through their rent. In Greenbelt, residents pay taxes to a number of government agencies – the City, Prince George's County, the State of Maryland and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). While this may seem duplicative, each agency provides necessary public services. The good news is that Greenbelt residents receive a significant reduction in their County and M-NCPPC taxes due to the services that Greenbelt provides.

In the case of Prince George's County property taxes, Greenbelters pay a lower County tax rate than any other County residents, except residents of the City of Laurel. This lower tax rate is due to the County's Tax Differential Program. The Tax Differential Program recognizes that because cities and towns like Greenbelt provide services such as police and public works, the County saves money by not having to provide those services in Greenbelt.

As a result, the County tax rate is lowered by an appropriate amount. For example, in Fiscal Year 2008 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008), most County residents paid a tax rate of 96 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. Greenbelt residents paid a County rate of only 79.2 cents. In the coming year, the County rate is expected to remain the same at 96 cents, but the rate for Greenbelt residents will drop by 8/10ths of a cent to 78.4 cents.

Greenbelt residents also pay a lower property tax rate to M-NCPPC. M-NCPPC sets tax rates for four functions – Recreation, Parks, Planning and Administration, and Land Acquisition. While M-NCPPC does not have a tax differential program, Greenbelt residents pay a lower M-NCPPC rate because they are not charged the Parks rate which is the largest component. The M-NCPPC tax rate for most County residents is 27.9 cents per \$100 assessed valuation, but for Greenbelt residents it is 10.7 cents. The reduction recognizes that Greenbelt provides and maintains its own parks. In addition, the City received \$79,000 from M-NCPPC towards recreation programs in



further recognition of the value the programs provide to Greenbelt and County residents.

Each year, the City updates its Tax Differential report to the County to ensure that its residents receive as much credit as possible for the services provided and regularly raises with M-NCPPC the need to increase the support the City receives for the extensive recreation services it provides.

So while taxes are never anyone's favorite topic, residents do save on their County and M-NCPPC tax bills due to the services provided by Greenbelt. If you would like additional information on the subject, please contact Jeff Williams, City Treasurer, at 301-474-1552 or [jwilliams@greenbeltmd.gov](mailto:jwilliams@greenbeltmd.gov).

**City of Greenbelt  
25 Crescent Road  
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770**

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US Postage Paid  
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# Postal Customer