

Responding to the challenges of COVID-19

An Update from Gavin: May 2020

Dear Friends and Neighbors,
Fighting the spread of COVID-19 has brought huge changes to our lives – changes none of us imagined a few months ago. It's been a difficult and painful time. Many in our community are hurting, many are worried, and many are vulnerable. I want to let you know what we are doing to keep our community safe while looking ahead to recovery. My goal is to ensure Annapolis stays strong, that we build resilience, and keep supporting one another.



Moving to recovery: changes to shutdown restrictions

Last week, we began taking the first steps to ease restrictions in line with the [Maryland Roadmap to Recovery](#). The Roadmap provides a flexible path forward that allows us to tailor a local approach based on public health data and community circumstances. It explicitly *“empowers individual jurisdictions to make decisions regarding the timing of reopenings”*.

Annapolis is moving forward slowly and thoughtfully toward Stage One of the Roadmap, largely in step with Anne Arundel County. The only difference in the City approach is that we're allowing retail stores to permit one customer inside their business at any given time, in addition to curbside pick up. Small retail stores are at the heart of our unique downtown economy and my goal was to create some equity for them as other stores begin to open. It is one small step to help our local stores maintain an operational foothold, until further easing of restrictions is possible.

I know these recent changes have raised concerns and I'm aware there are different views about how and when we should reopen. In the midst of multiple, competing voices, please be assured that City planning and decisions will continue to be based, first and foremost, on science and data. I will also continue to consult with residents, businesses and our government partners, and look for safe ways to keep supporting our local businesses. As the Roadmap states *“economic recovery and protecting public health are not opposing goals – they are the same goal and must work together hand in hand”*.

Staying informed

As we navigate this complex crisis, it's vitally important we all stay informed. There's a wealth of information for residents and businesses on the [City](#), [County](#) and [Maryland Government](#) websites. Below, you'll find a full list of resources and links to help you access detailed and up-to-date information.

And while guidelines and restrictions may change, the steps we must personally take to stay safe remain clear: stay at home as much as possible and follow good hygiene practices including frequent, thorough hand-washing. In public, we are still required to practice social distancing and observe the six-foot rule and we are still required to wear masks when inside shops and businesses. It's also recommended that we wear masks whenever we are out in public, open areas.

These measures are more important than ever as improving weather and eased restrictions bring more people outside. The City will continue to monitor public safety and respond quickly to issues as they arise, as we did last weekend when we saw large numbers of

Supporting our community

I'm also aware that many residents will also continue needing support for some time. The City has introduced a number of initiatives to help, including suspending utility shut offs; supporting local food banks; and providing weekly pop-up COVID-19 testing sites in our most vulnerable communities. We've also established a Small Business Recovery Task Force; eased a number of business restrictions; and introduced free downtown parking.

I'm also uplifted by the way so many of you have responded to this challenge – community groups and businesses providing food and practical assistance; church communities, residents and neighbors helping one another; the selflessness of health workers, City employees and all those providing essential services. These good news stories make me proud and grateful to be part of this wonderful, caring community.

We have a long way to go, and there's a lot of need across our community. Food insecurity remains a major issue. Further below you can

people gathering downtown, sometimes in violation of health guidelines. We acted quickly, putting in place additional signage and enforcement, and reminding local businesses of their obligations. We'll be remaining vigilant and enforcing guidelines to ensure we don't jeopardise the painstaking progress we've made over the past three months.



find information and links to Feed Anne Arundel, other community support groups, and an important 'One Annapolis' fundraising event being held online this Saturday, May 23rd. Please help if you can. Everyday acts of kindness and consideration are also needed more than ever. Keep an eye out for neighbors especially our seniors and those who are vulnerable. Consider running an errand for someone who can't leave their home. Share important information and help each other stay informed. Keep supporting our local businesses by shopping and ordering online. These little things can make a big difference. Thank you Annapolis!



Looking ahead with hope

As hard as it's been, this experience has also given us a unique opportunity to reflect on what we want for the future. Physical separation from loved ones has re-taught us the value of our relationships and personal contact. Forced changes to how we live and work have opened our eyes to new and better ways of living and being. The City is already considering how we can use what we've learned to emerge from this even stronger and more resilient. Your ideas will be needed as part of this process. We all have a part, and a voice, in re-imagining a better future for ourselves, our environment, and our City.

Along the way, let's keep supporting each other with kindness and understanding. Because that's how we'll get through this - together.

Gavin

Links and Resources

- [COVID-19 Health Line – 410-222-7256](#)
- [City of Annapolis Coronavirus information and Support](#)
- [Small Business Recovery Task Force](#) – advice and support for local businesses to help navigate the new environment and plan for recovery.
- [Maryland COVID-19 response](#)
- [Maryland Roadmap to Recovery](#)
- [Anne Arundel County Roadmap to Recovery](#)
- [Anne Arundel County Coronavirus Information](#)
- [Anne Arundel County Health Dashboard](#)
- [Community Food Pantries](#) – information on food services and community pantries with an interactive map of their locations.
- [Food Pantry Donations](#)
- [Red Cross Blood Donations](#)
- [One Annapolis Streaming Festival, Saturday May 23, 12-10pm](#) – virtual event with multiple artists, guest hosts and more, to raise funds for community non-profits including: Feed Anne Arundel, YWCA (domestic violence prevention), Co-op Arundel (homeless prevention).

Participating in the Maryland Primary Mail-in Ballot

The upcoming Maryland Primary is an opportunity to step up and

make our values and our voices heard. All registered voters will receive a mail-in ballot for the election. Return your ballot by mail by June 2 or drop it off at designated locations between May 21 and June 2. More information, including how to check your voter registration and return your ballot, is available on the [Anne Arundel County Board of Elections website](#).

When you vote, please remember the importance of an impartial, experienced, and trusted local judiciary. I am endorsing our sitting Anne Arundel County Circuit Court Judges: Pamela Alban, Elizabeth Morris, Rob Thompson and Richard Trunnell. They are all well known for their knowledge, character, legal expertise and judicial temperament, and have been endorsed by all elected Democrats and Republican county officials. Please consider giving them your support as well.



Thank you for reading. Stay safe!

This newsletter is produced by Friends of Gavin Buckley.

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