
WHAT A YEAR!

Couldn't have done it without you!

Report on 2018 and 'thank you' from Mayor Gavin Buckley

It's just over a year since I was elected Mayor of Annapolis. I am still so grateful for the trust placed in me by voters and especially by all of you, the people who got behind my campaign in its early days. You stood up for a healthy local environment, a strong local economy, and a diverse, vibrant community with opportunities for all – especially for families and young people. It's a vision we've come to call 'One Annapolis'.



One year in, I want to let you know how we are working to deliver that vision and some of the challenges we still face. A detailed [report on the year's outcomes and achievements](#) was recently published on the City website. It highlights how much is delivered through our City administration thanks to the hard work of employees and residents, including many programs that are not always visible to the broader public. There's also an [end-of-year video](#) to highlight the community engagement we've been working hard to build.

I won't repeat everything here but instead highlight a few things I'm particularly proud of, some of the priorities ahead, and acknowledge some of the challenges that have arisen along the way. I also want to let you know about some long overdue campaign communication updates, including our new email address.

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1. Getting the City budget & administration into shape

While I'm proud to be known as an 'arts and community' kind of guy, strong financial management has always been the foundation for building my businesses. I believe it's also the foundation for a strong and successful Annapolis. For years the City has been borrowing to keep itself afloat and during the election campaign I was very clear about the need to fix this and get us onto a sustainable financial footing.

Early in the year we hired a new, highly experienced City Manager and Finance Director to identify inefficiencies and streamline budgets. We worked closely with Council throughout and in the end it became clear: we couldn't fix the City's budget problems unless we made the hard decision to raise taxes. We didn't want to but I don't think it's right to run for office and then avoid hard decisions. I'm proud that my fellow Council members honoured that responsibility and took action. And I'm pleased to say we are already seeing the benefits: for the first time in a long time the City has fully funded mandatory pension contributions and we are no longer borrowing money to do road maintenance.

During the campaign I also promised to end the neglect of our public housing. Under the leadership of CEO Beverly Wilbourn, the City's Housing Authority has made real progress to address the needs of residents, including redevelopment of Newtowne 20. This year, for the first time in several years, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development upgraded the rating of our housing authority - an expression of renewed confidence in the City's management.

2. A cleaner, greener Annapolis

I made a number of pledges during the campaign to protect our City's natural environment and resources – particularly our waterways. This year we strengthened storm water management and soon Annapolis will be Styrofoam free thanks to an expanded polystyrene foam ban that will reduce litter and keep foam out of our waterways. Most recently, we also fulfilled a campaign promise to strengthen 'No Discharge Zone' rules for city waters.



We've also implemented a 'Zero Net Loss' provision for all new developments to protect our urban tree canopy; opened a solar park at Waterworks Park; and we are now exploring other environmental programs there as well.

3. Community Engagement - *One Block at a Time*

Community connection has long been at the heart of my approach to business and I believe it should be at the heart of government too. Over the year, we've conducted extensive outreach and held events all across town to ensure that all parts of our community have a say in our City's future direction. A number of these events were held as part of our *One Block at a Time* initiative, to connect with every Ward across the City – a program we'll be expanding next year. We also created two new full-time liaison positions to the African American and Hispanic communities to ensure the Mayor's Office reflects the diverse face and voice of Annapolis.

The [end-of-year report on the City's website](#) outlines numerous community events, festivals and programs that celebrated the different cultures and heritage of our community. These include declaring June 'Pride Month' in our City; the 29th *Kunta Kinte Heritage Festival*, recognising those of African and Caribbean descent; and the City's first *Dia De Los Muertos*, or 'Day of the Dead', celebrating our Latino community and their families.



4. Supporting each other & our press - *Annapolis Rising & the Capital Gazette*

In June, we were just getting ready to launch another festival, *Annapolis Rising*, to celebrate our musical roots, when the tragic shooting occurred at the Capital Gazette. We then switched gears to celebrate freedom of the press and honor our first responders. The concert raised \$64 000 for the Capital Gazette Family Fund, which was later doubled by a matching donation.

The Gazette tragedy left its mark on all of us, not least because we are a small, close-knit city and the victims were known to many of us personally. I'm proud of the way our community came together to support Capital Gazette staff and their families, and I was also proud and uplifted to see our Gazette journalists honoured this week among 'The Guardians', *Time Magazine's* 'person of the year'. I remain firmly committed to tackling the issues of gun violence and mental illness that plague cities across our country and ensuring the place of a free and local press in our community.



5. Looking ahead to next year's priorities

There are many challenges still ahead including how to move forward with flood mitigation in and around City Dock. We've worked with our state partners to secure two million dollars in funding, but many crucial planning decisions remain, including where to place the required large pump houses.

Now the Annapolis Yacht Club has moved back to its permanent home, we also need to determine the future of the empty buildings on City Dock. I am keen to look at ways the City can partner with private enterprises to stretch our limited public dollars to achieve maximum community benefit out of our City's best real estate – in particular, ways in which we can open up and protect public water access and views.

While the new Market House has provided a great start, there is also more to be done to ensure the long-term economic future of our historic downtown area. I remain committed to finding new ways to attract both residents and visitors downtown, ease traffic and parking congestion, and establish an accessible, sustainable model for our downtown economy.



6. The need for fresh ideas and constructive dialogue

I've always tried to be clear and honest about my commitment to new ideas and trying new approaches to solve City problems. I'm aware though that sometimes my ideas can get ahead of public consensus. The best example this year was the trial bike path on Main Street which quickly became a flashpoint for people's concern for our downtown economy and fears about losing what they know and love about Annapolis. While I still believe we need to reimagine aspects of our City in order to meet the challenges we are facing, as Mayor, I also need to listen. After listening carefully to the fears and concerns expressed about the bike lane, I decided to end the trial two weeks early.

Next year I'm even more committed to listening, improving consultation and bringing residents, businesses and community groups together to develop joint solutions. But I will also continue to bring fresh ideas to the table – that is who I am.

I know many of you share this commitment to fresh ideas and to 'One Annapolis'. Many of you continue to stop me on the street, or speak to me at events and community gatherings to let me know you still support the vision I took to the election and want me to 'keep it up'. Your words of encouragement, your

continued support for an inclusive, diverse, strong community, all help me get through the challenges that being Mayor inevitably brings.

So, please keep speaking out for the vision we share and encourage others to approach our common challenges with positivity and creativity. It's vital that we at least consider new ideas and enter into debates and planning constructively and considerately. That's how we will keep building One Annapolis together.

7. Staying in touch - updates to campaign email

On a different note, I want to draw your attention to some much needed communication updates – primarily a new campaign email address: gavin4annapolis@gmail.com. Please use this email to contact me or my campaign team, 'Friends of Gavin Buckley', with your ideas and feedback on our vision and policies, or any ideas for campaign outreach or events. (Note: emails to our old campaign address will still reach us.) You can also contact me any time on any aspect of City administration at mayor@annapolis.gov.

Next year I hope to stay in more regular communication, including via an updated website. I'll let you know more about that in the near future.

8. Best wishes for Christmas and the Holidays!

I certainly couldn't do half of what I do without the support of my family, in particular my wife Julie, and I owe them a huge debt of gratitude. As the year draws to a close we are certainly looking forward to some family time as I'm sure you are too. Whatever your heritage and traditions, Julie and I hope you will enjoy celebrating the holidays with your loved ones. This community means a great deal to us so, once again, our thanks for your continued support and our warmest wishes for the season and for a bright and prosperous new year.



Gavin

(And if you made it all the way through to the end – thanks for reading! I appreciate it!)

Authority: Friends of Gavin Buckley, Jessica Daigle, Treasurer

