



# WOODS END NEWS

November 18, 2023

## **Council Passes Multiple Bills as Legislative Year Nears Conclusion**

*Council Supports Urban Streets Legislation, CHIPS Act, and Historical Black Maternal Health Measure; Enacts Zoning Bills*

The Prince George's County Council convened on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, for a day-long session that included, 21 public hearings and the final passage of multiple bills. Among the bills enacted:

### **Walkable Urban Streets Act**

**The Walkable Urban Streets Act of 2023**, proposed by Council Member Eric Olson (District 3), includes [CB-69-2023](#), [CR-067-2023](#), and [CR-068-2023](#). The bills aim to save lives by keeping speed limits low, implementing recommendations made by a 2017 task force, and incorporating state-of-the-art street designs.

### **Prince George's County Chip Act of 2023**

This legislation, proposed by Council Member At-Large Mel Franklin, ensures that Prince George's County is positioned to fully benefit from \$280 billion in federal funds earmarked for the CHIPS (Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors) Program, signed by President Biden, and to become a national leader in the production of computer chips. [CB-072-2023](#) establishes a 10-year incentive program for companies to research, develop, and manufacture semiconductor computer chips in the County.

### **Fair Criminal Record Screening**

[CB-090-2023](#), legislation proposed by Council Member Edward Burroughs III (District 8), modifies the County's existing Fair Criminal Record Screening Standards to prohibit the County, acting as an employer, from inquiring whether a potential employee has consumed or used cannabis.

### **Returning Citizens' Fair Chance to Housing**

Council Member Burrough's bill [CB-097-2023](#) alleviates housing discrimination suffered by citizens returning from jail or prison and those with criminal convictions in their search for suitable housing by prohibiting landlords from making inquiries into a prospective tenant's criminal history. The bill provides exceptions for the most severe crimes.

### **Emergency Room Wait Times Task Force**

[CR-082-2023](#) proposed by Vice Chair Wala Blegay (District 6), establishes an Emergency Room Wait Times Task Force to identify the root causes of excessive wait times in the County's emergency rooms, study the regulatory environment, access and availability of healthcare services and in-patient bed availability, and provide the Council with policy recommendations.

### **Public Safety Tax Credit**

[CB-087-2023](#), also proposed by Vice Chair Blegay, provides a property tax credit of \$2,500 to encourage public safety officers to live and work in the County. Firefighters, emergency medical technicians, correctional officers, police officers, and deputy sheriffs employed full-time by a public safety agency, and volunteer firefighters or volunteer emergency medical technicians for the County's Fire/EMS Department would be eligible for the credit.

### **Childcare Grant Program**

To help working families defray costs associated with work-related childcare expenses, the Council enacted [CB-096-2023](#), allowing local businesses to apply for a County grant to offset expenditures incurred through business contributions to employees' work-related childcare costs. The bill was proposed by Council Member Krystal Oriadha (District 7).

### **Black Maternal Health**

[CR-090-2023](#), also proposed by Council Member Oriadha, establishes a Black Maternal Health Fund to support organizations whose mission is based on alleviating maternal health disparities in African American communities. Under the measure, the Council will request an allocation of up to \$1 million, subject to appropriations through budget allocation or funds raised through public or private partnerships. A related resolution, [CR-91-2023](#), will create a task force to audit County policies and healthcare benefit options focusing on maternal health.

### **Project Labor Agreement Coordinating Committee**

[CB-091-2023](#), proposed by Council Member Burroughs, revises the thresholds for Project Labor Agreements, requiring all County projects valued at over \$10 million to have a mandatory Project Labor Agreement approved by the Project Labor Agreement Coordinating Committee for submission to the County Executive.

### **Local Impact Grant Funds**

[CR-085-2023](#) transmits the Local Impact Grant Funds Multiyear Plan to the County Council for review and approval. The spending plan details the planned use of video lottery terminal taxes from FY 2024- FY 2026. The FY 2024 spending plan totals \$10,022,500. It allocates funding to the following areas: Crossland High School Career Academy, Prince George's Community College, Prince George's Memorial Library System Police Department, Fire Department), Employ Prince George's National Harbor Job Training Center, Youth Employment Program, Department of the Environment, Department of Public Works, Revenue Authority, scholarships for high school students attending Friendly, Oxon Hill, Potomac and Crossland high schools and various Community Impact Grants. The FY 2024 portion of the plan has been included in the FY 2024 Approved Budget Ordinance.

"The People's Council has worked extremely hard to address the needs and concerns of our residents based on the agenda we put forth at the beginning of the year," Council Chair Tom Dernoga (District 1). "I believe we accomplished this with the bills passed on Tuesday and throughout our legislative session."

The Council will convene on November 21, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. for the final session of the Legislative Year to address CB-070-2023, a Zoning Ordinance for cannabis use.