

**Mayor Gavin Buckley  
State of the City  
City Council Chamber  
April 8, 2019, 7 PM**

Good evening. Thank you for being here.

It is with most sincere sadness that we start the review of the State of the City tonight with a remembrance in the passing of Annapolis favorite son, Speaker Mike Busch. Our City, our State and our country has lost a great man. I wish Godspeed to my mentor and friend.

Here are some photos of the Speaker over the years.

Let's take a moment of silence for you to each remember Mike in your own experiences.

[moment of silence]

Now let me give you my thoughts about the "State of the City."

Annapolis is strong and the citizens are fighting to make it stronger. We don't always agree with each other, so decisions are not easy, but we all care in our different ways. We all want to protect what is unique in this City and at the same time reach our full potential for generations to follow.

This last year, a major piece of both protecting our city and the ability to move forward was getting our finances straight and transparent.

City Manager, **Teresa Sutherland** has been on the job for about a year now. In that time, she has strengthened the supervisory role that the City Manager plays. She brought her accounting and auditing expertise to make the city's finances organized and understandable. She hired **Jodee Dickenson** as Finance Director. A lot of corrections have been made in the budgeting process and in arranging the structure of City government.

I'd like to talk about some of the specifics:

- The operating budget process has been revamped.
- The Capital budget process has been revamped.
- We have drafted a purchasing ordinance.
- We have made sure that all departments are accountable for not overspending.
- We have improved our bond rating for water and sewer

In the arena of finance, we were left to correct poor management decisions in place before my time. I was shocked to learn of a secondary set of books called "revolving funds" where departments were getting funding after appropriations ran out.

Now all monies expended in the City are budgeted.

For our future, we have made sure that the City is aggressively addressing infrastructure financing needs. That requires innovation and substantive changes in how the city partners with the community and looks at public-private partnerships.

We will present operating and capital budget books to make it easier for City Council members and the public to understand how taxpayer dollars are being spent. The budget books will be posted on the City website tomorrow for the first time in this format.

In other areas, we are searching for ways to bring in revenue that doesn't have us asking residents to pay more in taxes, fees and fines.

The legislative session closing tonight without the final gavel from Speaker Mike Busch, has provided the City of Annapolis, in future years, a guaranteed annual payment as the State Capital.

Speaker Busch, Senator Sarah Elfreth, and Delegate Alice Cain realized that since the City provides public safety services including police, fire and EMS for the legislature, the Governor and state agencies that operate in Annapolis, a payment was important as we are obliged to deliver the services. We don't collect taxes on any State property.

The costs are roughly \$750,000 per year, but we only received a little more than \$360,000 a year back: about half of what the City spends. And the allocation had not been increased since 1996.

We were happy to see it pass unanimously in the Senate and with a strong veto-proof majority in the House. It was not vetoed by the Governor.

In addition the bill indexed the PILOT funds to inflation, so even after we're long gone, the City won't have to keep begging the state to pay their fair share.

We are grateful for the support of **Speaker Busch, Senator Elfreth, Delegate Alice Cain** and those who worked on this legislation.

We've also worked in some additional revenue opportunities in the form of grants and alternative revenue streams.

We received \$20,000 to paint bike road sharing arrows or "sharrows" on area roads and install road signs to make riding bicycles safer for both cyclists and cars. That's from the Downtown Annapolis partnership.

We received our annual Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant for \$260,000 to help us realize viable urban development.

The fire department received a grant for \$20,000 to conduct training for residents.

We found that we weren't collecting the taxes that people were paying from online hotel bookings on Priceline and other platforms. We are working with those platforms and the county to collect our money.

One of the things we are looking at for the future is the ability to apply our hotel tax on Air B&B, VRBO and other customers. This is a pass-through, so it won't cost local residents renting out their homes anything. But it has the potential to bring in revenue that we can collect from these online home sharing apps. Other municipalities are doing this and we shouldn't miss out.

I'd like to thank **Teresa, Jodee**, and members of the City Council for helping us to get City finances on the right footing.

All of these financial directives not only give residents more confidence in City government, they help build confidence that Annapolis is open for business.

I'd like to mention and recognize some local businesses. Mind you, these aren't the only success stories, but it puts a human face on the business side of our City.

"Orsted" is one of America's leading offshore wind developers and they have chosen to put their headquarters in the City of Annapolis. Can we have a round of applause for **Joy Weber** for making the decision to place her trust in our City?

[Applause]

Another success story goes back 50 years. "Art Things" in West Annapolis had a great run when the owners decided to retire. New owners **Skye Vasquez** and her husband Jonas "Miguel" Vasquez took a chance and are now finding their own success in the same store at the same location. Congratulations to the Vasquez family! Please stand and be recognized.

Another kind of business success is the Chesapeake Bay Trust. They bought an old marine building in Eastport, renovated it for offices and continued marine use as they award grants for Bay cleanup.

Also, in the past year, we've had:

- 61 existing businesses expand or relocate within the City. This equates to jobs for 407 people.
- 14 businesses have transferred to new ownership, preserving 154 jobs.
- 36 new businesses have opened in the city, creating 257 jobs.

Annapolis also made some prestigious lists, including Wallet-Hub's "Best Small Cities in America." National Geographic's List of "Best Small Cities in America" -- at Number FIVE. And Smart Asset named Annapolis one of the "Best State Capitals to Live In."

If you're thinking about opening or expanding your business in Annapolis, we'd love to have you!

Along with talking about how to make Annapolis business friendly, we want to become the "resilience Capital."

A recent study, published by Stanford University, looked at the economic costs to the City and businesses of continuous flooding events in downtown.

Their test case for this study was the City of Annapolis.

Climate change, and the resulting flood events, which are both more frequent, but also more severe, are costing local businesses money.

Businesses, especially in the historic district, lose revenue when the number of visitors dip during a flood event -- either because people can't park and they leave the city to do their shopping and sightseeing somewhere else, but also because after a few false starts, visitors don't put Annapolis on their list of places to go in the first place.

City coffers also suffer because we don't get the revenue from parking fees.

The Stanford study illustrated, in real dollars, that the City and businesses miss out on hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue by not addressing infrastructure problems in downtown.

That is why we are working with city planners, public works, the finance office, and federal agencies to secure funding for a short-term and long-term solution to ongoing flooding issues around City Dock.

We are experimenting with a short-term solution on City Dock that could be ready by summer and will help businesses with ongoing flooding issues.

We will be installing a pumping system along both sides of Ego Alley. We will be working alongside the US Naval Academy -- because they are working on a solution for their ongoing flooding issues.

We are partners in resolving these issues for businesses, visitors and, of course, residents.

During my campaign, one of the things I often mentioned was that when you first come to Annapolis and you look down Main Street, you can't help but fall in love with this City.

It's why I decided to stay here. It's why I decided to start a business here. It is why I am raising my family here.

But we aren't going to be able to love that view and love the historic district and love City Dock if we don't do something to support the infrastructure changes that are needed.

In addition to the capital improvements to get the flood waters out, a study from the Urban Land Institute looked at how to make the most of City Dock for the most people.

They met with stakeholders and came up with a plan and recommendations for improving City Dock.

Last month, the newly convened City Dock ULI Action Team and Working Groups met for the first time. The Action Team is chaired by former City Planning and Zoning Director **Eileen Fogarty**.

Along with the working groups, a total of about 90 people, they have a timeline to get an implementation plan to the City Council by the fall. To be clear, this is an implementation plan.

They're not adding new plans or studies to the mix, just recommending how to get the ULI recommendations done.

I'd like to recognize Eileen for loving this City enough to take on this topic and organizing all of these people to get a good result.

This is the kind of civic participation that enriches our community because there is resident buy-in. I hope you'll attend some of the meetings and weigh in where appropriate. City Dock may exist in Ward 1, but it is really a crown jewel for the entire City. For meeting agendas and details visit [Annapolis.gov/CityDock](http://Annapolis.gov/CityDock).

One other thing in downtown... I am very happy that we saw the reopening of Market House. It is doing very well. It's become a favorite place for lunch and happy hour. I'm happy to see it is thriving.

Annapolis is surrounded by miles and miles of shoreline and the water that surrounds us has long been neglected. It's polluted with trash. Stormwater runoff has not been controlled in a meaningful way. We've taken out trees for development without considering which ones are the most important for preventing erosion and slowing runoff.

I made a commitment to work on environmental priorities and we have a few things I'd like to list for you, specifically around waterways:

- We established a Waterways Cabinet. These are stakeholders from the community including nonprofits and representatives of environmental organizations alongside city public works and planning and zoning personnel. This group will meet a couple of times a year and bring relevant information to my office.
- The City Council passed a Styrofoam ban. The county passed similar legislation and at the end of last week, we learned the State of Maryland followed our lead and also passed a statewide ban.
- The Department of Planning and Zoning established a cultural resources hazard mitigation plan while Public works instituted energy conservation contracts on all city facilities.
- The new water treatment plant came online and won a major green building award from the Maryland Green Building Council.
- We opened a solar park on an old city landfill
- We had the Harbormaster, city workers and volunteers pull debris out of Ego Alley and along the shoreline after last year's Conowingo Dam release
- The Harbormaster removed 9 abandoned boats from Upper Spa Creek.
- We increased forest protection.

- David Jarrell, our director of Public Works, implemented a policy requiring 100 percent stormwater mitigation on redevelopment, higher than the county requires.
- The budget being introduced tonight increases funding for tree canopy goals by \$53,000.
- The budget also includes an additional stormwater management engineer to enhance and expedite our environmental goals.

These are just a few of the measures the City has undertaken to begin to make our waterways swimmable and fishable.

One of the ways I hope to further strengthen our environmental commitment is in something I will be formally announcing later tonight, and that is my intention to elevate Environmental Policy into the Mayor's office.

I'm doing this for the residents of our city today, but I'm also doing it for my children and residents of our city in the future.

Last year, Annapolis joined the list of now 80 cities with mass killing -- the tragic, mass shooting at the Capital Gazette office.

First, I'd like to call out our Annapolis Police and Fire Departments for acting with professionalism and dignity.

Annapolis Police Officers **Wesley Callow** and **Brian Criss** are here tonight to accept our thank yous. They were some of the first officers at the scene.

Thank you for your bravery.

Although not here tonight, I'd also like to recognize the following police officers at the scene:

- Gwynn Tavel
- John Murphy
- Jim McGriff
- Kristopher Baum
- Ed Cooper
- Larry Deleonibus
- Tony Thomas
- Ryan Holby
- Tim Lathe

This was a horrific blow to our City.

Just a week before this event, the Annapolis Fire and the Office of Emergency Management had conducted “Active Assailant” preparedness drills. These practiced skills and training helped save citizen lives and secure evidence for the criminal case.

Fire department personnel first on the scene and entering the building included Battalion Chief Carroll Spriggs, **Capitan Phil Morris, Lt. Steven Truesdell, Firefighter Kenneth Bloodsworth**, and Firefighter Steven Bear.

Captain Morris, Lt. Truesdell and Firefighter Bloodsworth are here tonight. Thank you.

Residents joined hands and marched down Main Street for a candlelight vigil at Susan B. Campbell Park. We held a benefit concert where ticket sales raised more than \$63,000 -- and were matched to more than \$100,000 -- to help the survivors and the victim’s families. We made a stand for the First Amendment.

The Capital staff marched with us in the July 4 parade.

This City came together in compassion and love. We supported the local journalists who tell our stories and write the history of this wonderful City.

Annapolis residents also showed we care when the young people, including in our community, came together for the March for Our Lives. We held a March here in our City of Annapolis.

I believe that the young people are going to help us turn the corner on the ongoing story of Mass Shootings.

**McKenzie Boughey**, who organized the Annapolis March for our Lives event, has been at a number of panel discussions and events in the aftermath of the Capital Gazette shooting.

I’d like to recognize McKenzie for bringing attention to this issue and continuing to be an activist.

But it doesn’t end there. We need to end the scourge of mass shootings. Since 2000, there have been 80 mass shootings in America. That number doesn’t include Columbine or other shootings that happened in the prior century.

Tomorrow and Wednesday, I will be in Toledo Ohio at the National Conference of Mayors, working with the leaders of other municipalities. I don’t want another city or town to have to go through what we have experienced. I am committed to working with people of all parties and at all levels of government to find solutions.

Earlier this month, the General Assembly passed a joint resolution declaring June 28 “Freedom of the Press” Day.

I’d also like to announce that we will be having an event on June 28, a remembrance concert. I invite everyone to attend to remember **Rebecca, Wendi, Rob, Gerald and John**.

Another of the themes I ran on was to build community and bridge divides across all Wards. We call this One Annapolis and we are happy to partner with every member of the City Council on

ongoing events, including “One Block at a Time” where we visit residents and businesses. It’s a great way to check in.

I’d like to highlight some of the other outreach events we have hosted in the past year.

We’ve held community engagement and listening sessions on a variety of topics, the most recent of which is one where we are asking residents to tell us the qualities and characteristics they want to see in a new city Police Chief.

We’ve hosted business roundtables for African American business owners and Hispanic business owners. We hosted a women’s empowerment seminar at Pip Moyer Center. We run English language programs for Hispanic adults and after school programs for youth.

The Stanton Center hosted 334 meetings last year and served 550 people Thanksgiving dinner.

I have hired a diverse and proactive staff in my office.

But one of the issues that is serious and has caused me great concern for our City is the opioid epidemic. We are tackling this issue head-on.

To provide some perspective, in 2016, we had 122 overdoses, 10 of which were fatal. Narcan, an opioid antagonist, was used 50 times.

A year later, we had 173 overdoses, 12 fatalities and Narcan was used 109 times.

In my first year in office, we deployed more Narcan than any previous year, at 137. We suffered one fewer fatality than the year before at 11. But the total number of overdoses went up to 199.

That is an average of 16 overdoses per month for last year. That is 16 a month too many.

The three programs we are working are:

1. The Naptown Antidope Movement. This is where we offer events for people to attend where they can hear stories of recovery, but also gather resources for themselves or their family or friends who might be suffering from addiction.
2. Your Life Matters. This is with our Fire Department where we offer Narcan training and CPR to anyone that asks for it. We also have our **Safe Stations** program at local police and fire stations. If someone requests assistance, they will be provided with a medical assessment and, if they don’t need immediate medical attention, will be connected to a crisis response team to provide further access to treatment and follow up care.
3. OD Free Annapolis, through the Office of Emergency Management, has launched a new web portal that launched in February. It includes online resources including harm reduction strategies, crisis response system contacts, peer support services, and access to the data sets, including a map for overdoses by ward.

This three-pronged approach is in place to make sure we help Annapolis residents in any way we can.

I'd like to recognize **Toni Strong-Pratt** and **William Estep** for helping with outreach and for telling their stories at the Naptown events, and for making powerful videos with our TV station. Sharing stories of recovery is important. Thank you Toni and William.

Much of this discussion is about connecting communities. I'd like to announce tonight that we have a plan to build a pedestrian and bicycle greenway that we will be calling "Busch Walk." That is not an Australian term. We are naming it after Speaker Mike Busch. It will cross Spa Road and adjoin some of the places that people frequent, like Maryland Hall, the Senior Center, the Library, plus parks, fields and schools -- all places he fought for and supported.

Anne Arundel and Annapolis City just earned the League of American Bicyclists bronze award for being "a Bike Friendly Community." I hope next year to report to you that we have connected all the paths and greenways in the Master Bike Plan.

As you know, we've had great success in Ward 2 with the Poplar Trail that connects Wards 3 to Ward 1. It's well utilized by the very young and very old. It's well maintained by the Germantown-Homewood Community Association in partnership with the city and a way for people to get out of their cars.

Again for now and in the future, we want to meet people where their transportation needs are. People want more alternatives. We can deliver those without sacrificing anything for our automobile users.

We can already see these transportation needs changing with people utilizing the bicycle shares downtown and young people moving away from automobile ownership and using more ride sharing apps and public transit. If you truly care about the environment, you have to consider transit alternatives.

Another way to enhance our City is through making sure we are doing the most to hear from residents. Government doesn't need to be a one-way street. Annapolis has 28 boards and commissions, where residents have an opportunity to weigh in on all kinds of issues and report back to the Mayor and Council.

There has been a backlog of unfilled seats and they have been underutilized.

First, we are working to fill these seats. Second, we are interested in having individuals from all walks of life in these positions. Diversity is important to the City and it is important to my administration. I'd like to recognize everyone who has joined a board or commission. Please stand.

Let me go through a number of other quality of life initiatives that the City has tackled.

First, crime is down. I would like to thank our police officers for doing all that they are doing.

We are in the process of finding a new police chief. As I mentioned, we recently held a series of town hall meetings, where we heard from residents who are interested in new models of community policing that are more inclusive and are focused on building trust in a diverse cross-section of communities.

Our planning department has been busy and in the past year unveiled the Bowman Project, which are six housing units for veterans. An additional 42 affordable housing units came online with Town Court.

Our Pip Moyer Recreation Center awarded about \$17,000 in monies for camps and programs and saw roughly 18,000 people taking fitness classes, including fitness options for people with disabilities.

About 1,000 children attended summer camps right here in the City.

We've got bike shares in downtown that are well utilized with multiple places for pickup and drop-off.

In transit, we made a half a million passenger trips. Our fleet has been updated to reduce pollution and our transportation staff has completed and delivered to my office a five-year plan on transit. We have three new buses with updated fare management.

We tripled financing for road repaving in 2019, and we are continuing at that level for 2020.

Our Office of Emergency Management has helped us to manage a number of events, from the inauguration of the governor this past January, to hurricanes and city preparedness for winter storms, including multiple openings of warming and cooling centers.

In September of this year, we will close Truxton Pool and in 2020 reopen with a beautiful new pool and water park that will be an incredible asset for young and old alike.

I love Annapolis. I love being your mayor and I hope we'll all continue on this wonderful journey of public service together.

Now we've got some slides from events and activities over the past year. Enjoy the show!