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MEMORANDUM

February 28, 2008

TO: David Deutsch
City Manager

FROM: Leonard L. Lucchi *LLL*

RE: Legislative Update

With the 2008 Session of the Maryland General Assembly entering its last five weeks, bill introductions are mostly completed, bill hearings are well underway, and almost all of the major decisions remain to be made. Here is an update on issues of interest to the City:

1. **Speed Imaging** – The Prince George's County Senate Delegation has introduced Senate Bill 963, the Safer Roads Act of 2008, which would allow speed imaging for all roads in Prince George's County with speed limits up to 55 miles per hour. At the request of Senator Douglas Peters, the bill allows municipalities within the County to set up its own speed imaging cameras and to collect the fines paid for infractions. The bill is currently assigned to the Senate Rules Committee. The Governor's speed imaging bills, SB 269 and HB 364, which cover residential roads, school zones and work areas, have had their public hearings and are awaiting committee votes. The Prince George's House Delegation speed imaging bills are being held in the House Delegation's Law Enforcement Committee pending standing committee action on the Governor's legislation.
2. **Municipal Building Excise Tax** – At the request of the Maryland Municipal League, legislation was introduced (HB 663/SB 791) to allow municipalities to impose a building excise tax for all building construction within municipal borders. Neither House nor Senate staffers consider it likely for the bills to pass.

3. **Prince George's Hospital System** – As you may have read, the County Executive has presented the Senate and House Delegations in closed session as well as the Executive Branch with a proposal to transfer the management of the hospital system to Ascension Health, the nation's largest nonprofit health system. At first blush, this proposal does not seem to meet the criteria set forth by State Health Secretary that any solution must include an open and transparent vendor selection process, must be governed by a primarily state-appointed hospital authority and must set forth a long-term plan to bring a world-class hospital system to the County. Not waiting for state-county negotiations to ensue, the House Delegation is prepared to approve House Bill 1039, which would meet the State Health Secretary's conditions. A hearing on that bill is scheduled for Thursday, March 6, 2008 at 1pm before the House Committee on Health and Government Operations.
4. **Bond Bills** – The Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the House Appropriations Committee have scheduled the annual "Bond Bill Saturday" for Saturday, March 8, 2008. On that date, the two committees will separately hear hundreds of requests for state capital contributions for local non-profit projects. On the docket for projects within the City of Bowie are requests from the Bowie Lions Club, the Cornerstone Assembly of God, Whitehall Pool and Tennis Club, Belair Swim and Racquet Club, Belair Bath and Tennis Club and Pointer Ridge Pool and Tennis Club.
5. **Base Realignment and Closure** – Both the House and Senate Committees have now held public hearings on the Governor's BRAC Community Enhancement Act (SB 206/HB 366) which would allow certain municipalities, such as Bowie, to apply to be designated as a BRAC Revitalization and Incentive Zone. Such designation confers special tax breaks and other benefits upon companies locating in the Zone. It is likely that the bills will receive favorable action.

School Construction – Neither House has before it suggestions that the Governor's school construction budget of \$334 be cut. Appeals of decisions by the Inter Agency Committee on School Construction that were heard by the Board of Public Works in January will be back before the Board in May for a determination of the final state school construction budget for Fiscal Year 2009.