



Historic Preservation Commission
Regular Meeting
March 20, 2026, 11:00 AM
Council Conference Room, La Plata Town Hall
305 Queen Anne St.
La Plata MD

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Attendees, please use meeting courtesy. Virtual attendees are asked to mute microphones when joining the meeting. Participants may be muted by the Town Clerk, and meetings will be recorded.

In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the public has the right to view/listen to the discussion only. At their discretion, the Finance Committee may allow participants to voice questions or provide comments on the topics under discussion. Written comments may be submitted via email to Legislative@townoflaplata.org

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 258 482 113 801 02

Passcode: K2DX3Ei7

(Calendar Year: 2026)

1.2. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Approval of Minutes

2.1. Approval of minutes from meeting on January 16, 2026.

3. Matters of Discussion

3.1. Adopted Town Council Resolution 26-11 Approving HPC Work Plan for 2025-2030

3.2. Adopted Town Council Resolution 26-14 Approving Centennial Plaque Program (HPC Work Plan Item No. 1)

4. Work Group Reports

4.1. Status update on the Maryland 250 Programs for La Plata (Work Plan Item No. 2)

4.2. Status update on Historic Preservation Professionals List (Work Plan Item No. 3)

5. Matters of Information
 - 5.1. Chair Report
 - 5.2. Town Council Report
 - 5.3. Staff Report
6. Public Comment
7. Adjourn



TOWN OF LA PLATA
Historic Preservation Commission Minutes
January 16, 2026, 11:00 AM
Regular Meeting
Council Conference Room, La Plata Town Hall
305 Queen Anne St.
La Plata MD

PRESENT: Vice Chair Steuart Bowling
Mary Beth Chandler
Jane Hobbs
Councilman Paul Guttenberg
Kathy Dodson Hancher

ABSENT: Chair Rich Gilpin

TOWN STAFF: Don Dooley, Director of Planning
Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk

GUESTS:

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Bowling called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.
Vice Chair Bowling served as Chair for the meeting in the absence of Chair Gilpin.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Bowling led all assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. Approval of minutes from meeting on November 21, 2025.

Councilman Guttenberg moved to approve the minutes as presented from the meeting on November 21, 2025.

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Mary Beth Chandler.

Kathy Dodson Hancher abstained from the vote on the minutes for the reason of non-member status during the November 21, 2025 meeting.

Passed Unanimously

4. Election of Historic Preservation Commission Chair & Vice Chair for 2026

4.1. Election of Chair

Mary Beth Chandler moved to nominate Chair Rich Gilpin to remain as Chair for 2026.

Moved By: Mary Beth Chandler, seconded by Jane Hobbs.

Passed Unanimously

4.2. Election of Vice Chair

Jane Hobbs moved to nominate Stuart Bowling as Vice Chair for 2026.

Moved By: Jane Hobbs, seconded by Mary Beth Chandler.

Passed Unanimously

5. Matters of Discussion

5.1. Adoption of Centennial Plaque Program Resolution

Councilman Guttenberg moved to adopt Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 2026-01, recommending a "Centennial Plaque Program."

Moved By: Paul Guttenberg, seconded by Mary Beth Chandler.

Passed Unanimously

5.2. Development of a Preservation Professionals List for La Plata Community

Director Dooley informed the Historic Preservation Commission that he would begin development of the Preservation Professionals List, a component of the 2025 -2030 Work Plan, while answering clarifying questions on the task. Upon request for volunteers by Director Dooley, Commissioner Chandler agreed to assist in the list development.

5.3. Historic Resource Commission Meeting Cadence

The Historic Preservation Commission and Director Dooley discussed concerns about the cadence at which meetings occur. The Commission determined there was no need to have monthly HPC meetings at this time.

6. Work Group Reports

6.1. 1926 Tornado Commemoration Activities

Chair Bowling reported on the status of the 1926 Tornado Commemoration activities and plans.

6.2. Celebrate La Plata day display Town Hall

Chair Bowling reported on the status of the Celebrate La Plata day activities and plans.

6.3. Train Station Museum

Chair Bowling reported on the status of the Train Station Museum and maintenance needs.

7. Matters of Information

7.1. Town Council Liaison Brief

Councilman Guttenberg reported on the board's and commission's training.

7.2. Planning Director Brief

8. Public Comment

No public speakers were present at this meeting.

9. Adjourn

Jane Hobbs moved to adjourn at 12:19 PM.
Moved By: Jane Hobbs, seconded by Paul Guttenberg.

Passed Unanimously

Submitted by:

Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk



TOWN OF LA PLATA
305 Queen Anne Street
Post Office Box 2268
La Plata, Maryland 20646

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: March 20, 2026

TO: Honorable Chair and Members of the Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Don Dooley, Director of Planning

SUBJECT Town Council Adoption of Resolution 26-11 Approving the HPC Work Plan for 2025-2030.

REQUEST: Informational Item. Transmittal of Town Council Resolution 26-11, Approving the 2025-2030 Historic Preservation Commission Work Plan.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on February 24, 2026, the Town Council formally adopted the Historic Preservation Commission's proposed 2025–2026 Work Plan, under Town Council Resolution No. 26-11, as drafted and recommended by the Commission during its meeting on November 21, 2025, under HPC Resolution No. 2025-01. The adopted plan includes three work program items for each fiscal year, consistent with the Commission's recommendations.

DISCUSSION

With the Town Council's adoption of the HPC Work Plan, staff and the Commission will now begin working toward the implementation of the three work program items identified for each fiscal year between 2025–2030. Implementation efforts will include establishing new HPC Subcommittees to help facilitate and support each work program item, as needed. Staff will also begin developing appropriate budget requests to ensure all HPC Work Plan items scheduled for each fiscal year are properly funded for execution, subject to Town Council funding approval.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an informational item only. Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission receive and file this report.

**Historic Preservation Commission
Adopted Town Council Resolution Approving the Centennial Plaque Program
March 20, 2026**

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Town Council Resolution 26-11 Approving the 2025-2030 Historic Preservation Commission's 2025-2030 Work Plan.

**COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LA PLATA
Resolution 26-11**

Introduced By:	Mayor Jeannine E. James, by request
Date Introduced:	February 24, 2026
Date Adopted:	February 24, 2026
Date Effective:	February 24, 2026

A RESOLUTION concerning

Historic Preservation Commission 2025 – 2030 Work Plan

FOR the purpose of adopting a work plan for the activities of the Historic Preservation Commission in the Town of La Plata for the period of 2025 - 2030; and all matters generally relating thereto.

* * * * *

1
2 **WHEREAS**, Section 11-8(A)(10) of the La Plata Municipal Code charges the Historic
3 Preservation Commission with the responsibility to propose a long-range plan for historic
4 preservation in the Town of La Plata, including a historic district; and
5

6 **WHEREAS**, the Town Council recognizes the importance of historic preservation in
7 promoting economic development, community identity, sustainability, and heritage
8 tourism; and
9

10 **WHEREAS**, the Historic Preservation Commission, in collaboration with Town staff,
11 has developed a comprehensive five-year work plan for the period of 2025–2030, consisting
12 of sixteen projects aligned with the Commission’s statutory purposes, powers, and duties;
13 and
14

15 **WHEREAS**, the work plan provides a framework for advancing historic preservation
16 activities, prioritizing projects based on complexity, resource availability, and fiscal
17 considerations, and may be updated periodically with approval by the Town Council; and
18

19 **WHEREAS**, the Historic Preservation Commission adopted Resolution No. 2026-01
20 on November 19, 2025, recommending Town Council approval of the proposed Work Plan
21 as drafted by staff; and
22
23

Resolution 26-11

24 **WHEREAS**, the Town Council has reviewed the staff report dated February 24, 2026,
25 and finds that the proposed work plan supports the Town’s Strategic Plan goals of economic
26 prosperity, community identity, and sustainability.
27

28 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF**
29 **LA PLATA** that the Historic Preservation Commission Work Plan for 2025–2030, attached
30 hereto as Attachment 1 is hereby adopted and incorporated herein by reference; and
31

32 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Town staff shall consider incorporating funding
33 requests for applicable Work Plan items into the annual Planning Department budget
34 process, subject to Council review and approval; and
35
36

Resolution 26-11

37 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Historic Preservation Commission may update
38 the Work Plan periodically with Council consent to reflect changing priorities and conditions
39

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Council of the Town of La Plata on this 24th day of
February, 2026.

SEAL:


COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LA PLATA




Jeannine E. James, Mayor



Paul C. Guttenberg, Councilman


Patrick McCormick, Councilman


Gregory Sampson, Jr., Councilman


Tyjon C. Johnson, Councilman

ATTEST:


Shelby Pritchett
Town Clerk

Date 24 February 2026

**TOWN COUNCIL APPROVED HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION WORK
PLAN PROJECTS FOR THE TOWN OF LA PLATA**

February 24, 2026

2025-2026

- 1) **PLAQUE PROGRAM** - Create a plaque program to identify the age of vintage and historic homes in the town of La Plata (currently underway). An application process and guidelines would be created for this program.
- 2) **LA PLATA/MARYLAND 250 PROGRAM** - Participate and have La Plata recognized in MARYLAND's 250 Celebration. The celebration pertains to America's 250th Birthday. An HPC Subcommittee could be organized to plan two or three special events/activities in Town for 2026.¹ Staff has included a copy of

¹ The Town's Special Event Coordinator (Lucinda Anderson) has expressed a willingness to help with this effort. This is a great way to foster heritage tourism in La Plata. Local businesses may also wish to participate and help sponsor events. Particularly, if an organized event schedule was created by the Town. The schedule could be posted on the Town website with flyers of the event schedule posted in Town and in sponsoring businesses.

Conceptual Special Event Ideas:

- A) Host a "Revolutionary War Encampment" (living history program) in La Plata with Revolutionary War reenactors, skirmishes, 18th century crafts, games, sutlers, etc. This would be a weekend, family, event. Think of a mini, outdoor, Williamsburg event that could be in a setting like Tilghman Park.*
- B) Create patriotic exhibits/exhibitions in Town Hall and/or at sponsored locations in Town (i.e., paintings, material culture, displays etc. relating to the history/culture of the Nation, State, County, Town).*
- C) Host a La Plata version of the "Antiques Road Show."*
- D) Host a reading of the Declaration of Independence with a flag raising ceremony outside of town hall with participation of an honor guard/veteran organization.*
- E) Host a historic house/building/site tour focusing on architectural history in La Plata and Charles County. Perhaps use of the Town trolley could be used.*

**Town Council Approved HPC Workplan Projects and Activities (2025-2030)
February 24, 2026**

the “MD Two-Fifty” Application for La Plata’s official recognition by the State for its participation. However, the Commission must develop programming before the Town can be recognized: <https://planning.maryland.gov/Documents/Our-Engagement/MD250/Maryland-250-Commission-annual-report-and-action-plan-2023-1231.pdf> (see Attachment “A”)

- 3) **PRESERVATION PROFESSIONALS LIST**. Develop a reference list of properly trained/educated and experienced architects, craftsmen, carpenters, architectural salvage companies, historic resource consultants (that meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualifications) etc. to help property owners who want to correctly do rehabilitation and conservation work to their buildings, structures, objects, and sites to preserve their historic integrity. Research sources could also be included for people looking to do historic research on their properties (i.e., links to Sanborne Maps, archival facilities on-line, research libraries etc.). The information could be posted on the Town’s website for public information.

-
- F) Develop special, patriotic, banners, etc. to display throughout Town and/or in Town Hall. These could be of famous Marylanders, historic events, or places from the State’s earliest history onward.*
- G) Working with the local business community, create a “La Plata 250 Celebration” branding of materials for Town events that promote economic development of businesses in Town.*
- H) Working with local schools and businesses, develop a “La Plata 250 Passport Program” that encourages kids and adults to visit a certain number of local historic and cultural sites in Town and Charles County. Once completed, a prize could be awarded to participants. Such a program would help identify, educate, and promote public engagement with our historical and cultural resources in and around the La Plata environs.*
- I) Working with local schools, develop a contest to have various school age groups design, write or create something related to the history of the nation, State, County or La Plata’s history for display in Town Hall with a prize and recognition by the Town Council for the winners.*

2026-2027

- 4) **LA PLATA FIREHOUSE MUSEUM** Facilitate the adaptive reuse the old La Plata Firehouse as a community museum. This will require review and approval by the Town Council as there are various soft and hard costs associated with its rehabilitation work, programming, maintenance, staffing, insurance, etc. to operate and maintain a museum. There is currently no budget for this Town-owned asset in the FY 2025-2026 Budget.

- 5) **ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**. Organize and develop an oral history program/project to collect verbal histories from residents associated with various historic contexts in Town. This could range from La Plata's railroad history to the destructive tornado that occurred in Town. This would be a wonderful way to collect stories that could be published and used in La Plata's schools, displayed on a Town "memory board," used for museums for exhibits/displays, etc. Collecting information could be done in various ways such as having a station at community events. Oral histories are the most vulnerable histories to lose since people pass away without sharing what they know for the benefit of future generations.

- 6) **LEGACY BUSINESS PROGRAM**. Create a program to recognize "Legacy Businesses" in Town. These are businesses that can demonstrate that have existed in Town and have served the community for at least 35 years in Town (1990 or earlier). These businesses provide a sense of place and identity for La Plata residents. A place "everyone knows." A Town recognized "Legacy Business" would be given special recognition and be qualified for special Town considerations (i.e., small building/property maintenance grants or an exemption from annual business license fees or building permit fees etc.) to support and promote their retention and growth. Such a program also facilitates economic development and encourages their retention in Town.

2027-2028

- 7) **COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY**. With the aid of a historic preservation consultant/firm, conduct a comprehensive historic resource survey of the town of La Plata from pre-history to 1980 to discover buildings, structures, objects and sites that have never been evaluated before as well as to survey the integrity of previously identified historic resources. Such a survey can be used to help recognize properties that could be deemed eligible or designated historic resources as well as identify historic districts in Town. Once identified, these resources might be eligible for programs developed by the HPC (with approval of

**Town Council Approved HPC Workplan Projects and Activities (2025-2030)
February 24, 2026**

the Town Council) to support their recognition and help preserve/protect their historic integrity.

- 8) **FAÇADE AND PRESERVATION EASEMENTS**. Develop formal processes and procedures for the Town's formal consideration of acquiring and/or accepting preservation easements for buildings, structures, objects, and sites to ensure that the important, character defining, features of designated historic resources are preserved. This project would align well with the identification of new historic resources with the completion of a historic resource survey.
- 9) **HISTORIC PRESERVATION SEMINAR**. Develop and sponsor a historic preservation seminar for development professionals, government staff, property owners etc. The seminar will provide awareness of historic preservation issues, education on the Secretary of the Interiors Standards and Guidelines, preservation success stories, as well as demonstration of preservation trades etc. This seminar may be used to pattern future, Town sponsored, preservation seminars.

2028-2029

10) **UPDATE THE TOWN'S 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Evaluate and recommend updates to the Town's Comprehensive Plan to address historic preservation matters in Town and recommend objectives, goals, and polices to facilitate historic preservation and cultural awareness of the Town's history. The timing would be particularly favorable following a comprehensive historic resource survey of the Town. This workplan item may likely carry through to the completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update in 2030.

- 11) **LOCAL PRESERVATION GRANT PROGRAM**. Develop a local historic resource grant program (for La Plata) to help property owners, with eligible or designated historic resources, to properly preserve or restore important character defining features of their resource(s). This could also be done for vintage buildings, structures, and objects (at least 50 -years old) that retain significant historic integrity but are not designated historic resources. This promotes the preservation of community character and sense of place. Similarly, grants could be given to help develop private, public history, displays within the community when located in public settings like a commercial shopping center or along public walking trails. Grant guidelines and applications would be created as part of this program concept.

- 12) **PUBLIC HISTORY PLAN**. Develop a comprehensive plan of wayside signage and other public history projects/concepts (throughout Town) that tell stories, commemorate people, places, and events associated with local, County, State, National history in the context of La Plata. If desired, an ordinance could be considered to collect a minor “history fee” associated with new building permits (with Town Council support) to create Capital Improvement Projects associated with creating and installing public history projects under an approved, comprehensive, plan of projects. This project would align with the findings contained in a comprehensive historic resource survey of the Town.

2029-2030

- 13) **UPDATE HISTORIC RESOURCE ORDINANCE**. Re-evaluate the Town’s current historic resource ordinance to look for opportunities to incentivize historic preservation, promote economic development, and to strengthen historic preservation in Town (i.e., protect vulnerable historic resources, create a requirement for an Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Report for any designated historic resource being demolished, etc.). An updated ordinance could allow contain development exceptions (i.e., for reduced parking requirements, special signage considerations, etc.) for the adaptive re-use of designed historic resources in Town. This would promote the value of owning and using historic buildings to promote economic development. The timing of this project, in 2030, would be ideal in order to follow and align with the completion of the Town’s update to its Comprehensive Plan.
- 14) **CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT**. Explore becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG). There are currently 24 towns/cities, and County’s that have CLG status in Maryland. CLG’s have access to competitive grants (that non-CLG communities do not have) to promote a variety of historic preservation activities in their respective communities. The money comes from the Maryland State Historic Preservation Office via the Department of Interior. To be eligible for CLG status a town/county must: 1) Have a qualified Historic Preservation Commission, 2) A qualified historic preservation ordinance with the ability to designate and protect historic properties, 3) A regular system of surveying and inventorying historic properties, 4) Provide public participation in the Town’s local historic preservation programs (such as nominating potential historic resources); and, 5) Performing the duties outlined above. As CLG status will likely require changes to the existing La Plata Historic Preservation Ordinance, it is appropriate to pursue CLG status with revisions to the Town’s preservation ordinance at the same time for work efficiencies.

**Town Council Approved HPC Workplan Projects and Activities (2025-2030)
February 24, 2026**

15) LAUNCH A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION WEBSITE FOR LA PLATA.

Based on the findings contained in a comprehensive historic resource survey of the Town, the website would provide an on-line “historic tour” of all Town historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts with information on each. All historic preservation programs, initiatives, information, and updated public policy documents related to historic preservation in La Plata would also be found here for easy public reference based on the completion of the HPC’s earlier workplan items.

FUTURE PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION (NO TIMELINE)

- 16) LEASE-LOAN PROGRAM.** Develop a voluntary lease-loan program where historic pictures and material culture, owned by others (i.e., museums) could be displayed inside of public and/or private business to promote public history to their customers/clients. Museums typically only display a small portion of their collections. Why not work to bring history out of museum basements and into the public realm?

-END-

Attachment “A” - (MD Two Fifty Application and Programing Guidelines)



Apply for your program, project, or event to be officially recognized by the MD TwoFifty Commission.

Please complete the following application to be considered as an officially recognized program, project, or event with the MD TwoFifty Commission. Please email: Erin.bode@maryland.gov with any questions.

Historic Preservation Commission

Guidelines and Guidance for Maryland TwoFifty Commission Programming Work Plan 2025-2030
Attachment A

The 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America will occur on July 4, 2026. It is in the interest of the State to develop, encourage, and execute an inclusive observance of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the nation that recognizes all Marylanders' struggle for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness before, during, and after the American Revolution.

This anniversary invites us to reflect on the ongoing evolution of American democracy, Maryland's integral role in that process, and the impact of Marylanders on the nation's past, present, and future. Stories of revolution exist in all periods of time and in all places and sectors of our State, demonstrating Marylanders' boundless capacity for innovation, growth and development. By celebrating our successes and reckoning with our setbacks, we will deepen public understanding of our complex history, strengthen public appreciation for service to our country, and inspire public engagement in civic life.

Inclusive conversations about our shared past allow us to discuss who we are today and who we want to be in the future so that we may invigorate and sustain the United States of America for the benefit of future generations, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Programs and initiatives recognized by the MD TwoFifty Commission will:

- Acknowledge that the confiscation of Indigenous land and displacement of Indigenous people is central to the United States' origin story and recognize the persistence and contributions of these communities today.
- Honor the legacy of both free and enslaved African Americans in the making of Maryland and the nation, whose untold stories of heroism and perseverance are critical to the understanding of our shared past and present.
- Support the identification and enhancement of cultural assets that tell the story of who we are as Marylanders and promote place-based visitor experiences for residents and visitors alike.
- Engage youth, new Americans, and lifelong learners in programs designed to encourage the search for meaning behind America and deepen engagement in civic life.
- Celebrate service to country and community, and create opportunities that promote social responsibility, compassion and understanding that will unite and strengthen Maryland's diverse communities for the benefit of all.
- Occur within the anniversary period of 2024-2027.
- Encourage collaborations with public and private partners.
- Seek funding from multiple sources: federal, state, local, corporate, and private.
- Utilize historical evidence and current data to shape interpretation and storytelling.
- Align with current research and scholarship.
- Prioritize interdisciplinary work that integrate the arts, humanities, and sciences.
- Connect to current events and social issues, bridging past to present.
- Represent Maryland's regional and geographic reach, focusing on place-based stories, historical sites, and environmental context.

The MD TwoFifty Commission will:

- Provide resources and opportunities for groups to learn more about doing history program in a thoughtful and inclusive way.
- Market and promote statewide programming that align with the guidelines and guidance.

Point of Contact (First and Last Name):

Title of Point of Contact:

Name of Organization:

Organization Address

Point of contact email address:

Point of contact website:

Point of contact phone number:


Name of program, project or event:

Is this a (Check one):

- Program
- Project
- Event

Please provide a description of the program, project or event. You are welcome to attach additional documents for review.

If submitting additional documents, please attach here:



Browse Files

Drag and drop files here

MD TwoFifty Commission themes represented (Check all that apply):

- History
- Civics
- Service

Please explain how the selected themes will be represented in your program, project or event:

Please select which focus area(s) are represented in your program, project or event:

- Acknowledge that the confiscation of Indigenous land and displacement of Indigenous people is central to the United States' origin story and recognize the persistence and contributions of these communities today.
- Honor the legacy of both free and enslaved African Americans in the making of Maryland and the nation, whose untold stories of heroism and perseverance are critical to the understanding of our shared past and present.
- Support the identification and enhancement of cultural assets that tell the story of who we are as Marylanders and promote place-based visitor experiences for residents and visitors alike.
- Engage youth, new Americans, and lifelong learners in programs designed to encourage the search for meaning behind America and deepen engagement in civic life.
- Celebrate service to country and community, and create opportunities that promote social responsibility, compassion and understanding that will unite and strengthen Maryland's diverse communities for the benefit of all.

Official Recognition will only be awarded to programs, projects and events that are fully planned and ready to activate. Is your program, project or event planned and ready to activate?

- Yes

Who is your target audience?

In what ways will your program, project, or event impact your community, region, or the state?

Please describe your program, project or, event timeline in detail?

For information on funding sources for the 250th, check out <https://mdtwofifty.maryland.gov/grants-applications/> .

Submit

Create your own Jotform

Guidelines and Guidance for Maryland 250 Programming

The 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America will occur on July 4, 2026. It is in the interest of the State to develop, encourage, and execute an inclusive observance of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the nation that recognizes all Marylanders' struggle for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness before, during, and after the American Revolution.

This anniversary invites us to reflect on the ongoing evolution of American democracy, Maryland's integral role in that process, and the impact of Marylanders on the nation's past, present, and future. Stories of revolution exist in all periods of time and in all places and sectors of our State, demonstrating Marylanders' boundless capacity for innovation, growth and development. By celebrating our successes and reckoning with our setbacks, we will deepen public understanding of our complex history, strengthen public appreciation for service to our country, and inspire public engagement in civic life.

Inclusive conversations about our shared past allow us to discuss who we are today and who we want to be in the future so that we may invigorate and sustain the United States of America for the benefit of future generations, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Programs and initiatives supported by the MD 250 Commission will:

- Acknowledge that the confiscation of Indigenous land and displacement of Indigenous people is central to the United States' origin story and recognize the persistence and contributions of these communities today.
- Honor the legacy of both free and enslaved African Americans in the making of Maryland and the nation, whose untold stories of heroism and perseverance are critical to the understanding of our shared past and present.
- Support the identification and enhancement of cultural assets that tell the story of who we are as Marylanders and promote place-based visitor experiences for residents and visitors alike.
- Engage youth, new Americans, and lifelong learners in programs designed to encourage the search for meaning behind America and deepen engagement in civic life.
- Celebrate service to country and community, and create opportunities that promote social responsibility, compassion and understanding that will unite and strengthen Maryland's diverse communities for the benefit of all.
- Occur within the anniversary period of 2024-2027.
- Encourage collaborations with public and private partners.
- Seek funding from multiple sources: federal, state, local, corporate, and private.
- Utilize historical evidence and current data to shape interpretation and storytelling.
- Align with current research and scholarship.
- Prioritize interdisciplinary work that integrate the arts, humanities, and sciences.
- Connect to current events and social issues, bridging past to present.
- Represent Maryland's regional and geographic reach, focusing on place-based stories, historical sites, and environmental context.

The MD 250 Commission will:

- Provide resources and opportunities for groups to learn more about doing history program in a thoughtful and inclusive way.
- Market and promote statewide programming that align with the guidelines and guidance.



TOWN OF LA PLATA
305 Queen Anne Street
Post Office Box 2268
La Plata, Maryland 20646

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: March 20, 2026

TO: Honorable Chair and Members of the Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Don Dooley, Director of Planning

SUBJECT Town Council Adoption of Resolution 26-14 Approving the Centennial Plaque Program.

REQUEST: Informational Item. Transmittal of Town Council Resolution 26-14, Approving the “Centennial Plaque Program” under Work Plan Item No. 1 of the Historic Preservation Commission’s 2025-2030 Work Plan.

BACKGROUND

At its regularly scheduled meeting on January 16, 2026, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) voted to recommend approval of the “*Centennial Plaque Program*” (“Program”) to the Town Council. The Program is intended to identify and recognize buildings, structures, objects, and significant sites within the Town of La Plata that are at least 100 years old. The purpose of the Program is to promote public awareness of La Plata’s earliest historic resources, highlight the community’s architectural and cultural heritage, and encourage preservation of these longstanding assets. The Program is identified as the first Work Plan Item on the Commission’s 2025–2030 Work Plan. It represents the initial step toward establishing a comprehensive historic preservation program for the Town.

DISCUSSION

At its regularly scheduled meeting on March 10, 2026, the Town Council approved the Centennial Plaque Program as drafted and recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission. While Council approval authorizes staff and the Commission to proceed with preparing application materials and facilitating public awareness of the Program, there is currently no Town funding to implement the new Program at this time. However, staff is proposing funding for the Program in the Town’s FY 2027 Budget to enable the approval and issuance of up to five Centennial Plaques. If funding is approved by the Town Council, the Program would commence on July 1, 2026 (the beginning of Fiscal

**Historic Preservation Commission
Adopted Town Council Resolution Approving the Centennial Plaque Program
March 20, 2026**

Year 2027). Thereafter, staff would propose on-going funding each fiscal year to support the approval and issuance of up to five Centennial Plaques each year, subject to Town Council approval.

To facilitate public awareness of the new Program, staff believes it would be appropriate for an HPC Subcommittee to be organized. The Subcommittee's duty would be to help promote the Program so it can gain public momentum and encourage applications to the Town of La Plata, presuming the Town Council provides funding for the Program during FY 2027.

RECOMMENDATION

This is an informational item only. Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission receive and file this report.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Town Council Resolution 26-14 Approving the Centennial Plaque Program from the Historic Preservation Commission's 2025-2030 Work Plan.



TOWN OF LA PLATA
305 Queen Anne Street
Post Office Box 2268
La Plata, Maryland 20646

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: March 20, 2026

TO: Honorable Chair and Members of the Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Don Dooley, Director of Planning

SUBJECT Status Update on Maryland 250 Programs for La Plata

REQUEST: Informational Item.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on February 24, 2026, the Town Council approved Resolution 26-11, adopting the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Work Plan for 2025–2030.

Recently, staff and the HPC Subcommittee (consisting of Commissioner Hancher and Hobbs) convened to begin developing interactive public and school-based public engagement initiatives to support La Plata's contribution to the Maryland 250 Program. Programming is being developed for consistency with statewide guidance and the HPC Workplan.

Attachment No. 1 includes a proposal, proffered by Vice-Chair Bowling, to create a '*Service Recognition Banner Program*' in La Plata as part of the Maryland 250 Programming. The proposal explains that many municipalities use decorative banners to honor active-duty service members and veterans, featuring photos, service details, and recognition of awards or distinctions. It outlines typical implementation processes, including application collection, banner design, vendor coordination, and installation considerations. The proposal also highlights cost ranges, hardware needs, administrative workflows, and ethical review considerations related to verifying military service. Banners may also be expanded to recognize police, firefighters, EMTs, and first responders.

The proposal notes that banner programs often require substantial administrative oversight and storage logistics due to seasonal rotation, and that the number of applications received can vary significantly, affecting overall program cost and manageability.

**Historic Preservation Commission
Status Update on Maryland 250 Programs for La Plata (Work Plan Item No. 2)
March 20, 2026**

DISCUSSION

While the concept is meaningful and consistent with honoring Maryland's heritage, staff has identified several implementation concerns:

1. Public Application Requirement

Such a program would require applications from residents to identify veterans or service members. Without knowing how many applications the Town would receive, the total number of banners is indeterminable, making it difficult to estimate total program costs or develop a reliable budget recommendation.

2. Budgetary Risk

Depending on the volume of applications, costs could exceed the Town Council's eventual allocation for Maryland 250 programming. Until budget guidance is issued, staff cannot confirm that the banner program would be feasible within the financial resources likely to be available.

3. Administrative Oversight & Town Authority

Staff believes that approval of banners must be retained solely by the Town of La Plata. Delegating approval to outside veteran groups, individual volunteers, or other third parties would constitute an inappropriate delegation of municipal authority, particularly for a Town-wide commemorative program. Program oversight should remain with Town staff and appointed boards/commissions.

4. Alignment with Maryland 250 Themes

Staff recommends that any banner program, if pursued, should more closely align with the Maryland 250 thematic framework, which emphasizes:

- Famous Marylanders;
- Historic events;
- meaningful places across the Town/State's early history; and
- inclusive, place-based storytelling.

This would ensure consistency with Maryland 250 criteria as well as with the HPC Work Plan concepts for the Maryland 250 Program and avoid the creation of a program that is primarily honorary in nature rather than historically interpretive.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission receive and file this report and refer this banner concept to the HPC Subcommittee and staff for final determination based on Commission feedback.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Conceptual Banner Program for Maryland 250 Programming.

Proposal For HPC to Recommend Implementing a Service Recognition Banner Program in La Plata

Recognition banner programs have been implemented in many municipalities as a way of honoring military service by local citizens, both past and present. The programs consist of printed banners displaying a photo of the service member, their name, years of service, and branch of service. Options to recognize combat veterans, medal recipients, POW/MIA, wounded and killed in action with special banners or designations exist. The banners are typically displayed throughout the municipality on streetlight poles or similar fixtures, but may also be limited to specific zones. The banners are weather resistant and could be kept up all year if so desired. The programs can also be adapted to honor police, firefighters, EMT's and first responders.

The programs can be implemented in a variety of ways, but typically require coordination with the municipality for access to display locations. The banners are produced by many different providers and many offer support setting up and implementing the programs. The general process is as follows:

A banner design is selected

Most banner providers offer a selection of pre-designed banner templates that can be customized to the needs of the local banner program. Often they also make designs from other programs already in operation available as options.

An application system is used to accept applications for banners.

Online application systems are usually offered by the company producing the banners. They consist of an online form requesting the information needed to complete the desired banner design. Most can be completed in five minutes and include options to upload service photos and secure permission for their use.

The applications are reviewed and approved

The review process can be handled by local veterans groups or by volunteers. Eligibility standards must be decided in advance. Reviews are necessary to ensure ethical use of the system. Consideration should be given to the scope of recognition as older claims of service may take longer to verify.

The banners are ordered and printed

The programs are touted and supported by the banner printers who hope to profit from the printing. Costs may be handled in a variety of ways, including corporate sponsorship, individual purchase, grant money, donations, veterans groups, historical societies or through a funded town program.

The banners are hung for display

Some banner providers offer support installing the banners. Utility companies, volunteers and veterans groups may also be tapped to provide assistance installing and removing the banners or it may be implemented by town employees.

Costs

Costs vary according to the quality of materials and the sizes of the banners chosen. Most of the companies seek to negotiate costs and do not offer fixed prices, however one (Military Tribute Banners) with prices ranging from \$75 to \$145 each depending on size guarantees to match any lower price. Installation hardware may represent a separate cost depending on the banner provider.

Designs and Materials

Most are printed on weather resistant vinyl, with size options typically including 18" x 36", 24" x 48", 24" x 60" and 30" x 60". Designs also vary with most including top and bottom pockets or sleeves to support installation hardware. There does not appear to be a standard installation hardware type as part of the choice depends on the type of fixture from which the banner will be hung. Some companies referred people to Amazon to secure installation hardware.

Program considerations

The scope of service recognition programs should be carefully considered. The southern Maryland region has hosted a variety of military installations with some going back more than 100 years. Applications for banner could quickly exceed approved places to display them.

Designs should honor national service and sacrifice and avoid focusing on specific campaigns.

The program can rotate banners based on the time of year, with banners celebrating military service hung for a period around Veteran's Day, banners honoring fallen and MIA soldiers hung for a period around Memorial Day and banners for first responders Day, etc. Rotating them will add to costs. Banners not on exhibit must be stored, but the longer banners are displayed the faster they may wear out and need replacing.

Suggested Providers to Consider:

militarytributebanners.org

They offer guidance on planning and implementing banner program, extensive price match guarantees, and a very detailed overview of the entire program implementation process from start to finish.

VeteranBanners.com

Veteran Banners.com seeks to provide a turnkey implementation, including an online design and banner application process and guidance on how to start and run a banner recognition program.

Mainstreetdesigns.com

They offer online order forms, advice and guidance and 30 years experience with banner recognition programs. They typically work with local VFW and American Legions to implement the programs.