



**Historic Preservation Commission
Regular Meeting**

August 8, 2025, 9:00 AM
305 Queen Anne ST

LA PLATA MD

Agenda

1. Call to Order
 - 1.1. Call to Order
 - 1.2. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Matters of Discussion
 - 2.1. To adopt a five-year workplan (2025-2030) for the La Plata Historic Preservation Commission for the Town Council's review and approval.
3. Adjourn
 - 3.1. Adjournment



TOWN OF LA PLATA

305 Queen Anne Street
Post Office Box 2268
La Plata, Maryland 20646

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 18, 2025

TO: Honorable Chair and Members of the Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Don Dooley, Director of Planning

SUBJECT Draft Historic Preservation Commission Work Plan for 2025-2030:

REQUEST: To initiate a draft, five-year work plan for the La Plata Historic Preservation Commission for consideration and adoption by the Town Council.

BACKGROUND

Chapter 11 (Historic Preservation Commission) of the La Plata Code of Ordinances established the La Plata Historic Preservation Commission pursuant to the Land-Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (as amended). The Commission's specified powers and duties, as outlined in Section 11-8, state:

"11-8 - Purpose, powers, and duties.

A. The Historic Preservation Commission is created for the purpose of identifying and protecting historic buildings, structures, and archaeological sites and other features in the town that have historic significance and shall have the following powers and duties:"
[emphasis added]

(1) To direct studies, reports, and surveys to identify historical, archeological, or architecturally significant sites, structures, and districts that exemplify the cultural, social, economic, political, or architectural history of the Town of La Plata, state, or nation and forward any such recommendation to the Mayor and Council for historic designation;

(2) Consistent with the Town of La Plata's Charter, ordinances, resolutions, local public law, policies, and procedures regarding the acceptance and use of gifts by public officials, to accept and use gifts for the exercise of its functions;

(3) To prescribe appropriate rules and regulations for transaction of its business;

(4) From time to time transmit to the Mayor and Council proposals for the amendment,

Historic Preservation Commission
Draft Workplan for 2025-2030
July 18, 2025

supplement, change, modification, or repeal of the rehabilitation and new construction design guidelines and criteria for construction, alteration, reconstruction, moving and demolition of designated landmarks, sites, structures, and districts which are consistent with the secretary of the interior's standards for rehabilitation;

(5) Consistent with the Town of La Plata's charter, ordinances, resolutions, local public law, policies, and procedures governing the acquisition of easements, to accept or otherwise acquire historic preservation easements on designated landmarks, structures, or sites located within the Town of La Plata;

(6) To preserve the historical heritage and culture of the Town of La Plata, with proper allowance for necessary change or progress, to cooperate with historical societies, community groups, and other interested organizations in these efforts and to accept, with the approval of the Town Council, gifts to promote these objectives.

(7) To use available photographs, old newspapers, historical documents and first-hand accounts to create a permanent record of the town's history;

(8) To consult with the Mayor and Council when historic structures may be threatened by pending development or changes in the town;

(9) To assist in the plans for development and use of the railroad station, old fire house and other buildings that may become historically significant to the town;

(10) To propose a long-range plan for historic preservation in the Town of La Plata including a historic district;

(11) To explore ways to make the citizens of the town more aware of its history;

(12) To receive gifts, real or personal, from private persons or governmental agencies to promote the purposes of the Historic Preservation Commission and to recommend to the Mayor and Council the purchase and/or sale of assets that would further the duties and responsibilities of the Commission or the implementation of the purpose of this chapter; and

(13) To undertake any other action or activity necessary or appropriate to the implementation of its powers and duties or the implementation of the purpose of this chapter."

As described above, the Commission is vested with a wide range of responsibilities associated with preserving and promoting the history and culture of the La Plata Community.

DISCUSSION

Under Section 11-8(A)(10) of the La Plata Code of Ordinances, the Historic Preservation Commission is charged with the responsibility *“To propose a long-range plan for historic preservation in the Town of La Plata including a historic district.”* To achieve this goal, staff proposes a “Historic Preservation Commission Work Plan” to provide the Commission with greater focus, direction, and specific goals for advancing historic preservation activities in Town. At present, the Commission does not have a designated workplan that has been sanctioned by the Commission and authorized by the Town Council. Having an adopted workplan will also help staff develop a budget for executing the Commission’s workplan activities each fiscal year.

To initiate discussion on developing a five-year work plan (2025-2030) for the Historic Preservation Commission, staff suggested 16 different historic preservation projects or activities for the Commission’s consideration (see Attachment No. 1). All projects align with one or more of the powers and duties of the Historic Preservation Commission, under Section 11-8(A)(10) of the La Plata Code of Ordinances (see above). The suggested projects are grouped by fiscal year based on the appropriate timing of each activity, their anticipated complexity, budget considerations and the time necessary to complete. The Commission may support, modify, defer or decline any of these projects or activities. It may also use the suggested workplan activities to identify alternative projects provided they are consistent with Section 11-8 - *Purpose, powers, and duties (above)*. However, given limited staff resources and the frequency of Commission meetings (every two months), it is recommended that no more than two or three projects be pursued each year. Once the Commission has identified a draft list of preservation projects or activities for its workplan, staff will forward the proposed workplan to the Town Council for their review and consideration. Once the workplan is established, it can be periodically reviewed by the Commission for adjustment in order to meet any changing needs, priorities, or budget considerations.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission consider the draft work plan concepts in Attachment No. 1 and identify those projects or activities it would like to recommend to the Town Council for their consideration and approval during the next five fiscal years.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Draft Work Plan Projects and Activities with Attachment 1-A (MD TWO FIFTY Application and Guidelines)

ATTACHMENT NO. 1
DRAFT HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION WORK PLAN PROJECTS FOR
THE TOWN OF LA PLATA

July 18, 2025

FY 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.*

the “MD Two-Fifty” Application for La Plata’s official recognition by the State for its participation. However, the Commission must develop programing 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.

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- 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 participates. 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.*

FY 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.

FY 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

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.

FY 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 policies 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.

FY 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.

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 “1-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.

Guidelines and Guidance for Maryland TwoFifty Commission 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 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.

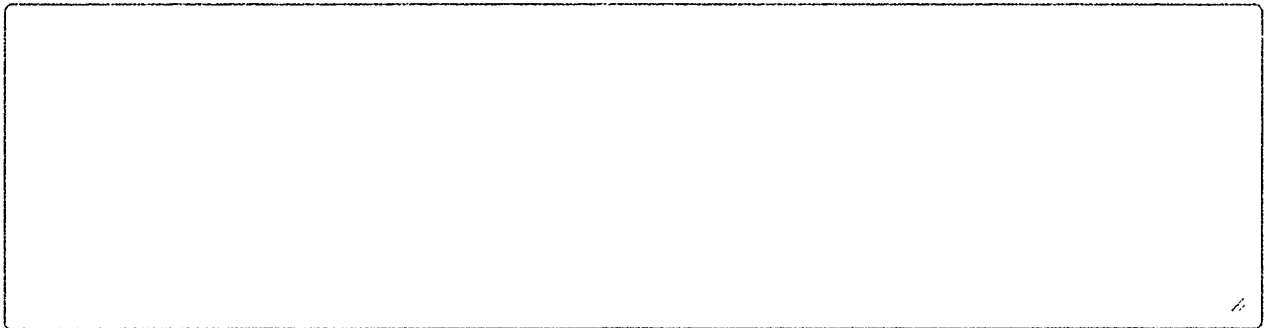
Official Recognition will only be awarded to programs, projects and events that are fully planned and ready to activate. Is your program, project or event planned and ready to activate?

- ☐ 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?

Submit

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



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