



**TOWN OF LA PLATA**  
**Historic Preservation Commission Minutes**  
November 21, 2025, 11:00 AM  
Regular Meeting  
Council Conference Room, La Plata Town Hall  
305 Queen Anne St.  
La Plata MD

**PRESENT:** Chair Rich Gilpin  
Vice Chair Steuart Bowling  
Mary Beth Chandler  
Jane Hobbs  
Councilman Paul Guttenberg

**ABSENT:**

**TOWN STAFF:** Don Dooley, Director of Planning  
Kenar Johnson, Senior Planner  
Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk

**GUESTS:**

1. Call to Order

1.1. Call to Order

Chair Gilpin called the meeting to order at 11:02 am.

1.2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Gilpin led all assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes

2.1. Approval of minutes from meeting on September 19, 2025.

Chandler moved to approve minutes as presented.

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

**Passed Unanimously**

3. Matters of Discussion

3.1. Draft 2025-2030 Work Plan

Vice Chair Bowling moved to approve the work plan as presented.

Moved By: Steuart Bowling, seconded by Jane Hobbs.

**Passed Unanimously**

3.2. Draft Centennial Plaque Program

Director Dooley gave a presentation on the Centennial Plaque Program. The commission agrees to proceed with a resolution to adopt, including recommended modifications. Director Dooley will present to the commission at the next scheduled meeting.

### 3.3. Workgroup Reports

- Train Station Museum
- Firehouse Museum
- Art Audley Memorial
- 1926 Tornado Marker & Observances
- Willing Helpers Hall Plaque
- Placement of the Schoolhouse Plaque
- Small Business Saturday

Chair Gilpin reported on the Train Station Museum and Small Business Saturday. Chair Gilpin and Vice Chair Bowling reported on the Art Audley Memorial. Director Dooley reported on the Firehouse Museum. Vice Chair Bowling reported on the 1926 Tornado Marker & Observances. Commissioner Chandler reported on the Willing Helpers Hall Plaque. The Historic Preservation Commission did not report on the placement of the Schoolhouse Plaque.

### 4. Other Business

Chair Gilpin confirmed there was no other business to report.

### 5. Matters of Information

#### 5.1. Town Council Report

Councilman Guttenberg provided the Town Council report to the Historic Preservation Committee, reminding them of the upcoming January 15, 2026, Boards and Commissions Training, including amplifying details as to the need for the training.

#### 5.2. Staff Report

Director Dooley indicated there was no Staff Report.

### 6. Adjourn

#### 6.1. Adjournment

Vice Chair Bowling moved to adjourn the meeting. Chair Gilpin adjourned the meeting at 1:06 PM.

Moved By: Steuart Bowling, seconded by Paul Guttenberg.

Ayes: None

Nays: None

Abstained: None

Absent:

Submitted by:

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Shelby Pritchett, Town Clerk



## TOWN OF LA PLATA

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

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### HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** November 21, 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 recommend to the Town Council the Adoption of a Five-Year Work Plan (2025-2030) for the Historic Preservation Commission.

#### **BACKGROUND**

At the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Meeting of July 19, 2025, staff presented a draft, five-year, work plan (2025-2030) for the Commission's review and approval to recommend to the Town Council for adoption. The purpose of the HPC Workplan is to provide direction, focus, and accountability on the projects to be accomplished by the Commission as no formal workplan exists. It will also provide a basis for Town Council budgeting on the actual needs of the HPC each fiscal year.

During July 19, 2025, HPC Meeting, staff presented the draft work plan and answered Commission questions concerning many of the proposed work plan items. However, as the Commission wanted more time to review and discuss the proposed draft, workplan, the Commission continued the item to a noticed work session. That meeting was held on August 8, 2025.

At the August 8, 2025, meeting, the Commission expressed support for the draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan. However, the Commission believes the following, five-year, work plan items need to be addressed first. In some cases, multiple work plan items are proposed for consolidation into a single item based on Chair Gilpin's e-mail to staff dated August 1, 2025, (see Attachment No. 3):

- "1. [Work Plan] Item 1 - continue the Plaque program which includes element 5 (Oral History) and element 15 (web site).*
- 2. [Work Plan] Item 4 - Establishing a town museum in the former firehouse. We have a*

**Historic Preservation Commission  
Draft HPC Workplan for 2025-2030  
November 21, 2025**

*strategy to do this in two steps, the first to reopen the existing fire museum as soon as feasible followed by a more comprehensive building renovation that will allow us to open a broader museum on the second floor and an activity space in the singles floor portion of the building.*

3. *[Work Plan] Item 7 - conduct a comprehensive resource survey to identify which buildings and sites are historically significant. Elements of item 6 related to the legacy business program would fit here as well.*
4. *[Work Plan] Item 2 - Md 250 program. The members are certainly supportive of this effort but need clarity on what is desired. If there are grants applicable to our first three priorities, then by all means we should pursue them. We can also support the special event coordinator in her ideas though we are resource constrained as well.*
5. *[Work Plan] Item 10 - Update the towns Comprehensive plan to include all our historic preservation objectives.”*

The Commission subsequently continued this matter to its regularly scheduled HPC Meeting of September 19, 2025. The purpose of the continuation was to enable Council Liaison Guttenberg to be present at the September 19, 2025, meeting so that he may express his opinions on the draft work plan before the Commission formally votes on the matter. However, as Council Liaison Guttenberg was absent at the September 19, 2025, meeting, the project was subsequently continued to the meeting of November 21, 2025. However, in an email to staff and Chair Gilpin, dated September 21, 2025, Council Liaison Guttenberg stated,

*“I have reviewed the staff report and the draft work plan, and I am writing to express my full support of the staff plan as presented. Having read the staff reports and watched the recordings of the recent meetings I believe the staff's plan is a practical and achievable approach that aligns with the town's goals and management practices.”*

## **DISCUSSION**

If the Commission votes to recommend Town Council approval of the draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan, subject to the proposed modifications discussed above (under Background), it will be scheduled for an upcoming Town Council Meeting. At that meeting, the Town Council will be asked to accept the HPC's recommendations, subject to any Council changes.

As previously expressed by staff, the proposed HPC changes to the July 18, 2025, draft workplan does not fully consider critical factors for the successful and timely implementation of the overall workplan in staff's opinion and experience. These considerations include alignment of the proposed workplan items with each other, staff

workload, budgetary allocations, specific project timelines; and the anticipated work effort/needs to successfully implement more complex workplan items.

While staff makes its professional recommendations to the Commission, it is the HPC's prevue to make its recommendations to the Town Council for its review and approval of the Draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan. Nevertheless, staff has included an alternative HPC Resolution recommending approval of the Draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan, as presented by staff, without any changes to the document (see Attachment No. 3 of this report).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt the attached, alternative, draft Resolution (in Attachment No. 2) recommending to the Town Council approval of the proposed 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan dated July 18, 2025.

However, if the Commission desires to recommend approval of the modifications to the Draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan (dated July 18, 2025), it should adopt the Draft Resolution in Attachment No. 1 to the staff report.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Draft Historic Preservation Commission Resolution 2025-01
- 2) Alternative Draft Historic Preservation Commission Resolution 2025-01
- 3) Draft Work Plan Projects and Activities with Attachment 1-A (MD TWO FIFTY Application and Guidelines), dated July 18, 2025.
- 4) HPC Chair Gilpn's E-Mail to Director Dooley dated August 1, 2025
- 5) HPC Staff Report Dated July 18, 2025

**TOWN OF LA PLATA, MARYLAND  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
RESOLUTION NO. 2025-01**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF LA PLATA, MARYLAND  
RECOMMENDING TO THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVAL OF ITS  
FIVE-YEAR (2025-2030) PROJECT WORK PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the La Plata Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) does not have a documented workplan, authorized by the Town Council, to provide direction, focus, and accountability of its work activities to ensure consistency with its official responsibilities pursuant to Chapter 11 (Historic Preservation Commission), Section 11-8 (Purpose, powers, and duties) of the La Plata Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the HPC has reviewed and evaluated staff's proposed (draft) 2025-2030 Work Plan, dated July 18, 2025, during its public meetings held on July 18, 2025, August 8, 2025, and November 21, 2025." and,

**WHEREAS**, the HPC is supportive of the concepts contained in the Draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan; and,

**WHEREAS**, the HPC believes the following changes to the Draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan (dated July 18, 2025) should be made to prioritize (and combine) the following Work Plan items:

1. Work Plan Item No. 1 – Develop a “Plaque Program” that also includes Work Plan Item No. 5 (Oral History Program) and Work Plan Item No. 15 (Launch a Comprehensive Historic Preservation Website for La Plata).
2. Work Plan Item No. 4 - Establish a town museum in the former firehouse under Work Plan Item No. 4.
3. Work Plan Item No. 7 (Conduct a Historic Resource Survey) in conjunction with the development of “elements” of the “Legacy Business Program” under Work Plan Item No. 6.
- 4) Work Plan Item No. 2 (Maryland 250 Program).
5. Work Plan Item No. 10 (Update the Town’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan for Historic Resources)

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the La Plata Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends Town Council approval of its Draft 2025-2030 Work Plan (dated July 18, 2025) subject to the revisions identified in the previous recital of this Resolution.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE LA PLATA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION** on November 21, 2025, by the following vote:

Yes:

No:

Abstain:

Absent:

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Richard Gilpin, Historic Preservation Commission Chair

Attest:

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Don Dooley, Director of Planning

Attachments:

- 1) Draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan Dated July 18, 2025

# ALTERNATIVE RESOLUITON

## TOWN OF LA PLATA, MARYLAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2025-01

### A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF LA PLATA, MARYLAND RECOMMENDING TO THE TOWN COUNCIL APPROVAL OF ITS FIVE-YEAR (2025-2030) PROJECT WORK PLAN

**WHEREAS**, the La Plata Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) does not have a documented workplan, authorized by the Town Council, to provide direction, focus, and accountability of its work activities to ensure consistency with its official responsibilities pursuant to Chapter 11 (Historic Preservation Commission), Section 11-8 (Purpose, powers, and duties) of the La Plata Municipal Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the HPC has reviewed and evaluated staff's proposed (draft) 2025-2030 Work Plan, dated July 18, 2025, during its public meetings held on July 18, 2025, August 8, 2025, and November 21, 2025." and,

**WHEREAS**, the HPC is supportive of the concepts contained in the Draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan, as presented, to help create a comprehensive historic preservation strategy for the Town of La Plata.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the La Plata Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends Town Council approval of its Draft 2025-2030 Work Plan, dated July 18, 2025, and incorporated herein by reference.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE LA PLATA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION** on November 21, 2025, by the following vote:

Yes:

No:

Abstain:

Absent:

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Richard Gilpin, Historic Preservation Commission Chair

Attest:

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Don Dooley, Director of Planning

Attachments:

- 1) Draft 2025-2030 HPC Work Plan Dated July 18, 2025

DRAFT

**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.<sup>1</sup> Staff has included a copy of

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*<sup>1</sup> 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, 18<sup>th</sup> 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.*

**Draft HPC Workplan Projects and Activities (2025-2030)**  
**July 18, 2025**

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.

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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 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.*

#### 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

## Draft HPC Workplan Projects and Activities (2025-2030)

July 18, 2025

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 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.

#### **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-



Outlook

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## HPC Strategic Plan

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**From** Richgilpin <richgilpin@yahoo.com>

**Date** Fri 8/1/2025 2:29 PM

**To** Paul Guttenberg <pguttenberg@townoflaplata.org>; Don Dooley <ddooley@townoflaplata.org>

**Cc** Mary Beth Chandler <mbc900@comcast.net>; Steuart Bowling <SteuartBowling@outlook.com>; Jane Hobbs <janechobbs@gmail.com>; P Mudd Verizon <paddymudd@verizon.net>; Ron Rosenthal <kayron\_rosen@yahoo.com>; Tony Puzzilla <apuzzilla@aol.com>; Kelly Phipps <khipps@townoflaplata.org>; Bob Curran <flyingham@verizon.net>; Kathleen Quimby <kquimby1508@gmail.com>

 1 attachment (109 KB)

ATTACHMENT ! - DRAFT HPC WORKPLAN PROJECTS FOR 2025-2030 - 7.01.25.pdf;

CAUTION: This email originated from OUTSIDE of the Town of La Plata email system. If the senders name displayed is a Town user, it is NOT legitimate and should be deleted immediately. Do not click links or open attachments unless you are certain this is a legitimate message.

Councilman Gutenberg/ Mr Dooley

In preparation for our working session this Friday to work on the HPC strategic plan attached below for reference I collected inputs from the HPC members (voting and non voting) to get a sense on everyone's thinking on the proposed plan. I will start off by saying that the draft plan Don put together reflects a lot of thought by Don and was thought provoking for all of us. Our strategy, based on my early discussions with the Mayor, over the last few years has been to bring LaPlata's history to life and use our history as a means to bring out the public to not only learn about our town but to enhance the small town feel and vibrancy of the town. Our ongoing activities to operate the Train Museum, our plaque program and observances work towards those ends. Steuart Bowling pointed out that the draft plan suggests another area of focus that "...the ultimate destination seems to be achieving CLG status and guiding the HPC towards becoming a regulating body of sorts...." This may be a good place to start our discussion as we consider what the focus on our specific plan should be. Clearly this change in focus would require input from the Mayor and Council before going further down this path. I have asked all of the members to recommend what they saw as the first five items we should work on first. There is clear consensus as follows:

1. Item 1 continue the Plaque program which includes element 5 (Oral History) and element 15 (web site).
2. Item 4 Establishing a town museum in the former firehouse. We have a strategy to do this in two steps, the first to reopen the existing fire museum as soon as feasible followed by a more comprehensive building renovation that will allow us to open a broader museum on the second floor and an activity space in the singles floor portion of the building.

3. Item 7 conduct a comprehensive resource survey to identify which buildings and sites are historically significant. Elements of item 6 related to the legacy business program would fit here as well.
4. Item 2 Md 250 program. The members are certainly supportive of this effort but need clarity on what is desired. If there are grants applicable to our first three priorities then by all means we should pursue them. We can also support the special event coordinator in her ideas though we are resource constrained as well.
5. Item 10 Update the towns Comprehensive plan to include all our historic preservation objectives.

We should discuss the items not addressed above to be pushed later or, in some cases, dropped from the plan.

Thank you,

I am looking forward to our discussion Friday Aug 8.

Richard Gilpin  
Chairman Laplata Historic Preservation Commission.

Sent from my iPad



## TOWN OF LA PLATA

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

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### 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)