

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority
Executive Committee
October 1, 2025**

The October 1, 2025 meeting of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) Executive Committee was convened virtually and streamed live for the public. The purpose of this meeting was to review and discuss the first draft of the Strategic Plan's Implementation Plan.

MHAA Executive Committee Members Present:

Secretary Rebecca L. Flora, Dennis Doster, Melissa Archer, Pete Leshner

Staff Present:

Administrator Ariane Hofstedt, Assistant Administrators Andrew Arvizu, Martha Waldron
The meeting was called to order at 3:01 PM.

Opening Remarks

Secretary Flora reminded the Executive Committee that the purpose of the implementation plan is to operationalize the tactics of the strategic plan, most of which will be the responsibility of Maryland Heritage Areas Program staff. She hoped that this initial preview and vetting by the executive committee will result in confidently recommending the draft implementation plan to the full Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. MHAA and the heritage area directors will then have an opportunity to comment on the draft after it has been shared at the October MHAA meeting.

The implementation plan, which outlines priority tactics (action items), internal performance measures, and external impact indicators was developed to best meet the intent of the strategic plan goals and was informed by data points and recommendations from the strategic planning consultants and process.

Secretary Flora asked the Executive Committee members to ask questions, provide feedback, and/or make suggestions.

Presentation and Discussion of Draft Implementation Plan

Ms. Hofstedt walked through the draft implementation plan, making a point to focus on tactics that are new so that the executive committee could understand the impact on staffing and Authority resources.

A discussion ensued about the format of the document itself, to help with readability in addition to a clearer priority order and understanding of staff resources as it relates to ongoing activities and new activities/tasks, in addition to specific priority tactics in which executive committee members had comments or suggestions.

Process for Approving Final Implementation Plan

Secretary Flora shared that the draft implementation plan, refined and commented on by the executive committee, will be presented to the full Authority at the upcoming October 22 in-person meeting. From there, the Authority and the heritage area directors will be given 30 days to provide comments which will be summarized and shared with everyone. The goal is for the Authority to vote to approve the implementation plan at the January 2026 MHAA meeting.

The group was unable to talk through the entire draft implementation plan in the time allotted, so Ms. Hofstedt will reformat the document and send it to the executive committee members for additional comments with the possibility of hosting another executive committee meeting to discuss any substantive issues.

Before adjourning, Ms. Hofstedt noted that there is only one external indicator in the implementation plan that identifies the heritage area management entities as the responsible lead, which is an ongoing request to provide information in their grant final reports. This will be made clear during the presentation to the group in October.

There was a short discussion about the importance of reiterating the definition of the Maryland Heritage Areas Program as a state program, which was approved with the adoption of the strategic plan. The presentation in October will reiterate this definition and make clear that the implementation plan is primarily for program staff and Authority members at the state level.

Mr. Leshar motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Archer.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 PM.