



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Robert S. McCord, Secretary
Sandy Schrader, Deputy Secretary

Maryland Department of Planning
Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget
Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

House Appropriations Committee
Transportation & the Environment Subcommittee
Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
February 4, 2021

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
Public Safety, Transportation, and Environment Subcommittee
Senator Cory McCray, Chair
February 4, 2021

Key Observations

2. Outcome of the 2020 Census

The Department of Legislative Services (DLS) recommends that MDP comment on a methodology for determining the impact of all the types of 2020 Census outreach on the self-response rates in low response rate areas and comment on how these self-response rates can be increased.

Planning Response:

It will be almost impossible to compare the response rates from the 2020 Census to previous censuses due to the effects of the new phone and internet response capabilities together with the difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The recruitment of trusted voices in these communities was going very well at the local level, however, many of the congregate and door-to-door activities that were planned were curtailed due to the pandemic. Once the final numbers are made available, Planning will be looking at the sub-county level at the number of census tracts in low response areas that had met or exceeded their previous response rates as well as reviewing the population increases in those areas. We will also be reviewing the weekly top five low response tract reports that were provided to each local Complete Count Committee to analyze how they may have changed over time and analyze the results in each of those tracts. Planning will also review the reports of the grant recipients and glean which strategies were most productive. Many food distribution points became a point of contact for receiving information about the importance and the ease of response to the census. Those staffed with census takers were able to take online

responses. Planning will be seeking data from the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) on the number of responses obtained by their activities.

Increasing self-response rates in low response score areas will remain a challenge that can be overcome by strong partnerships with local groups and community leaders who are trusted in each of these areas. Additionally, the placement of online response assets that include native language speakers where indicated and trained USCB personnel at congregate sites will continue to be an important strategy for increasing response rates. The novelty of online response prevented full consideration of requests to have state or local workers “deputized” to be official Census takers. There were valid federal concerns expressed regarding protection of census information privacy, however, extending the oath and penalties to approved state and local personnel for the purpose of increasing the number of response takers in certain situations, such as at community events, should be pursued. In addition to a multi-prong approach, to the extent that digital outreach was effective, geofencing and microtargeting in these areas should also be considered. The Census Grants Program should continue, however, the time for making applications should be extended and the possibility of providing assistance to potential grantees during the application process should also be considered. The grant scoring rubrics should continue to prioritize low response score areas and should also take into account some measure of the per capita cost of response where possible.

4. *Cash Match Requirement for MHAA Grants Funding Removed and Economic Contribution Study Completed*

DLS recommends that MDP comment on the breakdown of the data from the completed study for each of the 13 certified heritage areas, what lessons are to be learned from the study about the management of the heritage areas, and how these lessons will be applied.

Planning Response:

In addition to the statewide economic contribution analysis report, individual reports were created for each of the 13 heritage areas. Those reports can be found here:

mht.maryland.gov/heritageareas_impact.shtml

The chart below shows the summary information from those 13 reports.

| Heritage Area | Square Miles | Certification Year | Heritage Tourists in 2019 | Annual Economic Impact | State and Local Tax Impact | Jobs Supported |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Passages of the Western Potomac | 1.67 | 1996 | 159,080 | \$19.5 million | \$2.6 million | 273 |
| Lower Susquehanna | 73.23 | 2000 | 942,300 | \$100.7 million | \$14.9 million | 1,579 |
| Baltimore National | 25.45 | 2001 | 3,850,000 | \$753.7 million | \$60.9 million | 6,422 |
| Four Rivers | 86.45 | 2001 | 2,074,436 | \$244.8 million | \$32.8 million | 3,469 |
| Maryland Milestones | 100.7 | 2001 | 614,088 | \$36.1 million | \$5.3 million | 565 |
| Heart of Chesapeake Country | 732.14 | 2002 | 325,380 | \$40.2 million | \$5.3 million | 570 |
| Beach to Bay | 341.01 | 2003 | 1,755,006 | \$230 million | \$29.6 million | 3,145 |
| Heritage Montgomery | 262.6 | 2004 | 3,193,023 | \$376.1 million | \$50.4 million | 5,327 |
| Southern Maryland | 397.76 | 2004 | 1,578,287 | \$187 million | \$25.3 million | 2,637 |
| Stories of the | 1,201.57 | 2005 | 824,800 | \$98.4 million | \$13.1 million | 1,397 |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------|------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|-------|
| Chesapeake | | | | | | |
| Heart of the Civil War | 732.06 | 2006 | 3,816,250 | \$450.2 million | \$60.3 million | 6,376 |
| Mountain Maryland | 185.54 | 2011 | 781,152 | \$155.1 million | \$12.5 million | 1,327 |
| Patapsco Valley | 37.15 | 2015 | 753,374 | \$50.9 million | \$6.8 million | 728 |

It is important to note that the economic impact of any given heritage area is heavily impacted by the location, size, visitor, and resource types. This study made it abundantly clear that each heritage area is unique. The smallest heritage area, Passages of the Western Potomac (Canal Place) is less than 2 square miles – the largest is more than 1,200 square miles. The visitation numbers in Baltimore are not the same as the visitor numbers in Dorchester County. The study was not intended as a means to compare one heritage area to another, but instead to demonstrate the impact the individual heritage areas have in their own communities, and the impact of the program across the entire state. What the study did show, however, was that regardless of the management structure or size of the heritage area, they all produce tremendous economic impact for their communities, and together are a significant economic driver for the State of Maryland.

In addition to developing the economic contribution analysis highlighted in the report, the consultants also developed a series of metrics, which can be collected annually. This will allow MHAA, working with an external evaluator, to demonstrate the overall program impact, including the more qualitative elements such as new and enhanced experiences and exhibits, buildings preserved, land conserved, and technical assistance provided, on an ongoing basis. This process will also include testimonials and case studies from program partners, and perceptions of program performance. Collection of this data will begin in FY22.

The completion of this study at a time when the state’s heritage tourism resources are suffering badly due to the forced closures and reduced visitation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic helps to demonstrate how critical it is to ensure that these sites and

organizations survive and are visitor-ready when it is once again safe to travel. Many of MHAA's partners have turned to the Heritage Areas Program for support in this challenging time, whether in the form of operating support through emergency or converted grants, or funding to help adapt their sites to a post-COVID world, with increased safety and cleaning protocols, as well as more virtual and outdoor offerings. By providing this support, the Maryland Heritage Areas Program is ensuring that moving forward the program will continue to make a meaningful economic impact on the state.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. *Delete long-term vacant planner lead/advanced position (PIN 00518) and funding in the Planning Data and Research Program. The position has been vacant since December 5, 2018. The Maryland Department of Planning notes that the position is currently in the reclassification process, but the urgency to do so appears limited given the greater than two-year vacancy period.*

Planning Response: Do Not Concur.

The agency has continued a policy preference of promoting from within and does not want to be discouraged from doing so simply by responding to an age of the vacancy that overlaps with once-in-a-decade responsibilities and a pandemic. Planning was able to reassign some smaller project priorities and promoted staff continued to perform some of their previous duties. This is not sustainable and the position is currently undergoing reclassification, just like every position that has become vacant has been considered for reclassification.

The Planning Data and Research Program will be supporting important activities that include:

- (a) Redistricting - with online submissions and support for the Independent Commission as requested;
- (b) Interagency Commission on School Construction - support is needed especially with school enrollments challenged by the pandemic, including decreased birth rates, flight to private schools, and myriad home schooling options;
- (c) Assistance to local election boards - there is no way to estimate how many precinct-level geography adjustments will need to be made at the conclusion of the redistricting process at every level; and
- (d) Continued support to State agencies - Planning, like all state agencies, are working to support the Governor's COVID relief efforts, including distribution of the vaccine.

As a result, many of our staff have been indefinitely detailed to the Maryland Department of Health (Health) to support their work. The Planning Services division alone has reassigned 12.5% of its staff to Health to assist in the vaccination process. Planning is also providing assistance to the Opioid Task Force as that ongoing health crisis, having been overshadowed by the pandemic, has not abated and continues to rage. The State is fortunate to have great people stretched thin in places who are continuing to do great work, and Planning respectfully requests to retain the position.