



Preservation Advocacy TOOLKIT

HOW TO MAKE THE CASE FOR SAVING
HISTORY & BUILDING STRONG
COMMUNITIES

PREPARED BY PRESERVATION MARYLAND ■ JANUARY 2017

We work to protect the places, stories, and communities in Maryland that matter. Founded in 1931, we are dedicated to preserving Maryland's buildings, neighborhoods, landscapes, and archaeological sites through outreach, funding, and advocacy.

Preservation Advocate:

Since the earliest days of historic preservation, we've always been a movement dependent on the voice of our grassroots supporters. *Simply put:* our effort to preserve and protect historic places doesn't work without our local network of individuals that care about our history.

That's why it's so important for our friends-in-the-field to have the necessary tools to make preservation a priority for Maryland.

Enclosed in this booklet are the types of advocacy tools that work and tips on how to make them even more effective.

Before you get started, be certain you know who represents you by visiting: mdelect.net.

Then, be sure to sign up with Preservation Maryland for advocacy action alerts by providing your email address at our regional Town Halls or by visiting: presmd.org.

Once the General Assembly begins on January 11, 2017, you'll be hearing from us about more specific opportunities to make your voice heard.

This year, we're also hosting a **MARYLAND HISTORY & PRESERVATION ADVOCACY DAY** on Tuesday February 7, 2017, 9-6pm in Annapolis. For details, be sure to sign up for our e-news at presmd.org.

Thank you again for your support – feel free to make as many copies of this document as you please and share as widely as possible.

Your partner in preservation,

Nicholas Redding, Executive Director
Preservation Maryland

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

January 11 - Session Convenes in Annapolis

January 18 - Introduction of Governor's Budget

February 1 - Governor Hogan's State of the State Address

February 7 - Maryland History and Preservation Advocacy Day

DATE: Tuesday, February 7, 2017 ■ 9am briefing; 10am-5pm meetings, 6pm reception

LOCATION: Briefing: Paca House, 42 East Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Reception: House Office Building, Room 180, 6 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21204

WITH: Preservation Maryland, Historic Annapolis, Campaign for Maryland History, Maryland Historic Tax Credit Coalition, Maryland Heritage Area Authority - *Preservation Maryland is extremely grateful for the many organizations willing to co-host and sponsor this event!*

April 10 - Adjournment of Session ("Sine Die")

USEFUL WEB RESOURCES

Maryland General Assembly: www.mgaleg.maryland.gov/

Maryland Legislative Watch: www.marylandlegislativewatch.com/

Maryland Reporter (government news): www.marylandreporter.com

1000 Friends of Maryland (smart-growth advocacy): www.friendsofmd.org/

Partners for Open Spaces (land preservation): www.partnersforopenspace.org/

SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

Preservation Maryland Facebook: www.facebook.com/preservationmd

Maryland Preservation Forum: www.facebook.com/groups/marylandforum/

Preservation Maryland Twitter: www.twitter.com/preservationmd

Maryland Reporter: <https://www.facebook.com/mdreporter>

Maryland Preservation News Round-Up (weekly): storify.com/PreservationMD

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TEN THINGS YOU CAN DO

TO SUPPORT HISTORIC PRESERVATION

To protect the best of Maryland, we need to monitor and participate in the political process and hold our elected officials accountable. We can do this by educating, supporting and pressuring our leaders about policies that encourage smart growth strategies while protecting valuable historic resources and cultural landscapes. Individuals play a vital role in supporting the preservation of Maryland's history and ensuring its long-term protection.

1. EDUCATE YOURSELF about the issues and where your elected official stands. Visit their website, find out how they voted in the past on issues that you care about. Here's a good place to find out about bills & votes: GO TO mgaleg.maryland.gov THEN CLICK "*Legislation by Session*"

2. WRITE LETTERS to your legislators and elected officials and local paper to educate others about specific issues in your area and propose solutions.

3. SPEAK UP at a Town Hall Meeting and tell your elected officials to support policies that protect historic resources, provide funding for critical state preservation programs and tax credits, and which protect open spaces and cultural landscapes. Hold them accountable for their choices.

4. TESTIFY AT HEARINGS. Elected officials need to hear from their constituents. Attend hearings to testify in support of plans and projects that are preservation-friendly and help strengthen our existing communities.

5. ORGANIZE A GROUP of people in your area who share your concerns or enthusiasm about land use or transportation projects. Know who to call on to join you at a hearing, town hall meeting or letter-writing party.

6. SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS. Get on your favorite social media platform and let your friends and families know about the value of historic preservation to our everyday lives.

7. READ MEDIA SOURCES AND WRITE opinion pieces about issues you care about. Respond when you think there is an important story to tell to make the issue better understood.

8. INFORM YOUR COMMUNITY. Are you part of a Neighborhood Association or organization? Discuss key legislation in your newsletter and describe how it could affect your readers and your neighborhood. Provide contact information for your legislators and encourage readers to communicate with them.

9. INTRODUCE YOURSELF to staff of your elected official and your local planning department.

10. **JOIN PRESERVATION MARYLAND.** Become a member to support our work across the state. Sign up at presmd.org to receive periodic updates on current issues and how you can help.

WRITING A LETTER TO AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

Writing a letter to your elected official is one of the easiest ways to convey your thoughts and concerns on preservation issues. When elected officials receive numerous letters on a specific issue it influences their votes. Here are some tips on how to write an effective letter:

- **FIRST, FIND OUT YOUR LEGISLATOR'S NAME** and contact information at this website: mdelect.net/
- **ADDRESS ELECTED OFFICIALS PROPERLY.** i.e. “The Honorable _____” or “Senator _____”
- **USE YOUR OWN STATIONERY OR CARD.** Make sure you write neatly or type the letter.
- **IDENTIFY YOURSELF.** If you have met your elected official before, briefly note the time and place to help jog their memory.
- **WRITE YOUR OWN THOUGHTS AND WORDS.** Form letters or preprinted postcards are not as impressive as an original letter. Write about a personal experience and how the issue affects you.
- **MAKE YOUR POSITION CLEAR.** State your position clearly and precisely. Avoid being hostile.
- **BE SPECIFIC.** If appropriate, cite a specific bill number and name, list its sponsors, and include a brief summary of the contents of the bill.
- **REQUEST ACTION.** Ask the elected official to vote for a particular bill or amendment, request a hearing, co-sponsor a bill or talk with their colleagues about the issue.
- **ASK FOR A REPLY** containing the legislator’s position on the issue. Include your return address or the best way to get a hold of you.
- **FOLLOW-UP.** If you asked for a reply and did not receive one, write another letter. Send a thank you note if the legislator showed that they considered your position or did what you asked.

CALLING AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

Calling an elected official is a great way to make sure they hear your voice. Here are some tips:

- You may need to *leave a message* or speak with a legislative aide.
- *Identify yourself as a constituent* and give your name and address.

- *Define the issue with a specific bill* number and name if possible.
- Ask for their position on the issue and *request their vote in your favor*.

MEETING WITH AN ELECTED OFFICIAL

If you have a strong story worth sharing it might be best to meet in person! Elected officials want to meet their constituents – you are the ones who vote for them, not lobbyists. Remember to keep your message succinct.

REQUEST A MEETING

- Arrange a meeting in advance with the scheduler or legislative aide.
- ***Provide the names of attendees and the topic.***
- Make sure they know that you are a constituent.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

- Decide on talking points ahead of time.
- If a small group of people is meeting with the official ***avoid points that cause tension.***
- ***Practice*** your talking points.
- ***Clarify what you want to achieve.*** What is it that you want your elected official to do?
- ***Be courteous.*** Arrive on time, dress authentically, and be informed about your issue.

DURING THE MEETING

- ***Stay on topic*** during the meeting.
- ***Provide a fact sheet*** on the issue and your contact information. Back them up with no more than five pages of materials that you can leave with your elected official.
- ***Answer questions as well as you can*** and ***offer to get back to them when you don't have an answer.*** Do not make up answers that you don't know.
- ***Request a specific action*** from your legislator—ask for their position and what you can do to help.

AFTER THE MEETING

- ***Thank them*** for meeting with you.

- Each person who took part in the meeting should *promptly send a personal thank you letter* to the elected official. Follow up in a timely fashion with any requested materials and information.

WRITE A LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR OF A NEWSPAPER

Write a letter in response an article concerning the issues of interest when featured in your local newspaper.

- **KEEP IT SHORT AND ON ONE SUBJECT.** Many newspapers have strict limits on the length of letters due to their limited space to publish them.
- **MAKE REFERENCES TO THE NEWSPAPER.** While some papers print general commentary, many will only print letters that refer to a specific article. It is best to reference the article in the first part of your letter.
- **BE ACCURATE.** Support your letter with facts, statistics, citations or other evidence.
- **OPEN YOUR LETTER WITH A STRONG STATEMENT.** The statement might point out an error or misrepresentation in an article, disagree with an editorial position, or add to the discussion by pointing out something readers need to know.
- **MAKE IT READABLE AND LEGIBLE.** Write short sentences grouped into two or three paragraphs. Type your letter if your handwriting is difficult to read. Many newspapers allow letters to be submitted online.
- **SEND LETTERS TO WEEKLY COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS.** The smaller the newspaper's circulation, the more likely it is that your letter will be printed.
- **BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION.** Many newspapers will only print a letter to the editor after calling the author to verify his or her identity and address. Newspapers will not give out that information and usually only print your name and city should your letter be published.

MARYLAND LETTER-TO-THE-EDITOR RESOURCES:

Baltimore Sun: www.baltimoresun.com/bal-letters-box-htmlstory.html

Carroll County Times: www.carrollcountytimes.com/news/opinion/letters_to_the_editor/

Cumberland Times: www.times-news.com/opinion/

Frederick-News Post: www.fredericknewspost.com/opinion/letter_to_editor/

The Gazette: www.gazette.net/section/contactus

Hagerstown Herald-Mail: www.heraldmillmedia.com/opinion/letters/

Maryland Coast Dispatch: www.mdcoastdispatch.com/category/opinions/letter-to-the-editor

Southern Maryland Newspapers: www.somdnews.com/section/contactUsSM

Washington Post: www.washingtonpost.com/letterstotheeditor

TESTIFYING AT A LEGISLATIVE HEARING IN ANNAPOLIS

The committee process provides legislators more opportunity to closely study a bill. If you feel strongly enough to testify in Annapolis, come on down! Everyone is welcome to speak and constituents are often allowed to go first. It is important that you know your audience, understand the issue and become familiar with the committee process. Below are some tips for making your presentation successful.

Calendar of Committee Hearings

GO TO mgaleg.maryland.gov THEN CLICK “Schedules”

INFORM YOUR REPRESENTATIVE. If your delegate or senator serves on the committee, call his or her staff in advance and let them know you plan to attend.

ARRIVE EARLY. Thirty minutes before the hearing is scheduled to begin.

SIGN IN at the door when you arrive.

BRING COPIES OF YOUR TESTIMONY. Hand 25 copies of your written testimony to the committee administrator before you begin. Make sure your name and contact information are at the top of the page.

BE PREPARED TO ADAPT YOUR REMARKS. Avoid making the same points made by previous speakers.

REMEMBER ONE COURTESY - address the committee through the committee chair. Begin your remarks with “Madame Chair, Members of the Committee ...” and respond to questions with “Chairman Jones, Representative Smith...”

CLEARLY STATE YOUR POSITION. Give a clear and concise description of your position on the issue, policy or appropriations bill you are speaking on.

SPEAK FROM YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE. Stick to the facts and avoid reading from your written testimony. The committee will appreciate your testimony if you speak with your own words.

REQUEST ACTION AND OFFER SOLUTIONS by stating exactly what you would like the committee to do.

BE RESPECTFUL AND COURTEOUS. Never make accusatory remarks, stay within the time limit, and thank the decision maker at the end of your presentation.