Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area: Strategic Plan Update 2022-2028

HEART OF THE
CIVIL WAR
HERITAGE AREA
MARYLAND
HERITAGE AREA
Maryland Heritage Areas Authority

Contents

Cover photos: Tolson's Chapel (top left), Catoctin Furnace interpretive signage (top right, courtesy of Catoctin Furnace Historical Society), Antietam Battlefield (bottom left), and Carroll County Farm Museum (bottom right)

All photos by consultant team unless otherwise noted.

Executive Summary

The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Inc. (HCWHA), headquartered in Frederick, Maryland, manages the Maryland certified Heritage Area by the same name, a region including portions of Carroll, Frederick, and Washington counties in Maryland. The HCWHA works closely with the Destination Marketing Organizations in each of its three counties, and with the area's nonprofits and government entities, to support work that stimulates the economy through heritage tourism. The Heritage Area boundaries follow corridors that correspond to Civil War troop movements, battles, encampments, and surrounding areas. Twenty-seven municipalities—ranging from cities to small towns—are included, in addition to three county governments, numerous local, state, and national parks, and a host of institutions that focus on our region's archaeological, historical, cultural, and natural resources.

Certified by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority in July 2006, the HCWHA has established a successful track record with the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) 2019 economic impact report noting that its annual economic contribution is $450.2 million. Additionally, the HCWHA supports or sustains 6,376 jobs and generates $60.3 million in local and state taxes. The HCWHA is an autonomous 501c3, certified by Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) and therefore authorized to seek MHAA grant funds for management and marketing. The Heritage Area also facilitates MHAA project grants to eligible nonprofits and government units within its certified boundaries within Carroll, Frederick, and Washington counties.

 A Management Plan for the HCWHA was adopted in 2005, shortly before the heritage area was certified. It continues to be a valid founding document, and this Strategic Plan builds upon its work:

- Most of the priorities in the original Management Plan have been accomplished. This Strategic Plan provides new Goals and Objectives to pursue through 2029.
- The original Statement of Significance and Interpretive Themes provide a reasonable foundation for the Civil War story. The interpretive chapter of this Strategic Plan offers timely updates that reflect how historical research and understanding have expanded.
- There was a strong awareness in 2005 that Civil War history mattered beyond the battlefields—emphasizing home front and stories of more people than famous soldiers. This Strategic Plan expands on this by connecting Civil War era history to our current times, more fully realizing the ripples past events carry forward.

Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area staff and volunteers provide visitor services and tourism information through the Newcomer House at Antietam Battlefield, a partnership with the National Park Service.

Maya Angelou once said, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." Perhaps most notable between the 2005 Management Plan and today's Strategic Plan is the history field's and Heritage Area's deeper understanding of how immensely America's race-based slavery and the failure of post-war Reconstruction to heal that racial divide have continued to influence our society today. This awareness necessitated a clear commitment to Black history and an inclusive perspective in this plan. This is the right thing to do. In addition, it will strengthen the HCWHA, as American communities and travel audiences are diversifying over time and will seek different or additional experiences than the traditional Civil War battlefield traveler.

This Strategic Plan includes updated guiding statements (Mission, Vision, and Values), interpretation updates for the Statement of Significance and Themes, program goals and objectives, marketing recommendations, a summary of the planning process, a section on measurements & dashboards, and an implementation/action plan matrix. A number of objectives reflect the natural role of a Heritage Area—that of convener, organizer, planner, and regional connector. Organizational planning, focused on sustainability concerns, is incorporated into the Program Goals under "Organizational."

Just as we recognize that becoming a more inclusive society is an incremental effort, so, too, is the realization of the strategies herein. Thus, this Strategic Plan should be regarded as a living document. If significant changes occur after its adoption, the plan will also adapt. Life has proven to be changeable, and institutions must be flexible, too, to thrive.

Guiding Statements

Mission

The Mission helps drive the core work of the HCWHA by concisely affirming why we exist, who we serve, and why. It is the organization's reason for existing.

> *The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area—with its partners—preserves and promotes the historic sites, towns, cultural landscapes, and diverse stories in Carroll, Frederick, and Washington County, Maryland.*

Vision

The Vision describes a future in which the mission has been accomplished. It is ambitious and inspiring.

> *A vast and diverse audience engages meaningfully with the past and present in the HCWHA, carrying their experiences here into the future.*

Values

Institutional Values are the standards we will not compromise in pursuing our Mission. They inform decision-making and priorities for the HCWHA.

1. *Integrity: of ourselves, of our organization, and of the resources.*
2. *Welcoming: of visitors, of residents, of diversity, and of varied viewpoints.*
3. *Committed: to responsive public service, to making a lasting difference, to the value and relevance of Civil War history.*
4. *Inclusive and Accessible: in all aspects from our governance to our staffing, from programming to partnerships.*
5. *Connecting: partners, resources, information, assistance, visitors, residents, stories, experiences, and ideas.*

Significance and Interpretation

The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA) is fortunate to have significant historical records and artifacts in the collections of local historical societies and in various private collections, as well as a number of professional historians, educators, interpreters, and other public historians who are active in the Heritage Area effort or as its partners. These along with impressive landscapes and sites have informed a powerful interpretive approach to the HCWHA since its inception. A group of public historians committed to the success of the Heritage Area came together in March 2022 to set Foundational Principles for interpretation and to discuss the significance and themes of the Heritage Area. Their work resulted in three Foundational Principles to guide the Heritage Area going forward and some suggested revisions to the existing interpretive structure approved by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority when the region was designated.

MDCWHA Interpretation: Foundational Principles

Foundational principles are the non-negotiables of our interpretation work. They are the ideals we will not compromise as we make decisions in the Heritage Area regarding historical research and storytelling.

Principle 1: The Civil War is unfinished business, providing a lens that helps us understand who we are and where we come from, thereby influencing who we become.

From the lead up to the conflict through today's struggles over human and civil rights, the causes, experiences, and impacts of the Civil War ripple into our present. While the structural end of American slavery and the continuation of the United States were integral to our American identity, so, too, were the effects of violent efforts against Reconstruction and our failure to reunite across lines of race and ideology, for example. A cornucopia of the war's impacts is seen in today's cultural landscape and will continue to influence us as United States citizens until we reconcile and heal regarding these elements of our history.

For example, the long line to today's racially unjust mass incarceration practices is traceable to post-Civil War policy. Enslavement did not end with the Emancipation Proclamation, although it did change form from chattel slavery to other strategies to coerce the labor and liberty of African Americans, including the convict leasing system that deprived African Americans of their freedom for often petty "crimes." In Maryland, a system of "apprenticing" African American children and taking them from their families arose in the post-Civil War years. Industrial labor practices, particularly at Maryland canneries where even child labor continued into the 1920s, mimicked the terrible conditions of enslavement and were not much improved until Lewis Hine's photographs were released and spurred advocacy and action in the form of labor reform.

Connections from the past through to today can be found in memorials and monuments, which are historical memory-making tools as well as influencers of contemporary identity. What we preserve and commemorate—and how those things are preserved, understood, and interpreted over time—are revealing of our individual and collective selves and can provide a map to the future. A majority of those memorialized were white, male, high-ranking military leaders from both Union and Confederate forces. The latter reflected a society that desired a continuation of slavery, so their presence in public spaces conveyed messages about our culture and ourselves to contemporary generations. The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area contains many monuments and memorials across battlefields, towns, and cemeteries, representing multiple layers of history: from the originating events and individuals, the communities that erected

monuments to historical memory, and our contemporary landscape today. The Barton Sculpture in Hagerstown, now under development, is adding a woman to our memorial landscape, and discussions are underway regarding how to memorialize those harmed by lynching in the region.

A living sense of history can also revive a feeling of community and can support dignity and self-esteem when stories uplift and generate pride and understanding of self. Jonathan Street in Hagerstown is home to many such stories, including that of brothers Robert, Joseph, and Perry Moxley, who had an 11-member band ("Moxley's Band") that joined the US Colored Troops and earned their manumission. We will seek and elevate stories like these that resonate and make personal connections to diverse and varied audiences.

Principle 2: Complexity is interesting and a source of inclusion and strength in storytelling.

In the United States, public narratives and educational institutions have romanticized the Civil War story, emphasizing a good White soldiers/poor Black victims narrative, followed by a glossed over idea of reconciliation. However, the true experience and effects of the war were complex. The lack of complexity in storytelling, over time, left people of color unable to find themselves in Civil War museums, sites, and history in meaningful ways, only reflected as passive players, victims, or criminals ("fugitive slaves"). This approach also influenced generations of White Americans to embrace "White savior" viewpoints that helped keep our country racially divided.

When one singular narrative is embraced, others can be completely ignored. This misses many opportunities for multiple audiences to find relevance in the Civil War story and in the Heritage Area. For example, during the racial justice protests of 2020, highly diverse groups of American citizens gathered at Confederate Civil War monuments to protest racial injustice—indicating a level of relevance for the Civil War's causes and impacts historians had not previously imagined. Embracing complexity and multiple perspectives will enrich our interpretation and ensure diverse visitors find relevance here.

Some examples of the complex stories one can find here include the following:

-    The dichotomy of Confederate versus Union is challenged at Union Mills, where the Confederate family members owned no enslaved laborers while the Union family members did own enslaved laborers.

The HCWHA is committed to understanding and helping partners transmit the complexity of Civil War history beyond a simplistic "North versus South" dichotomy. One place this dual narrative can be challenged is Union Mills, where family loyalties to Union or Confederate causes did not dictate views on slavery and abolition in obvious ways.

- The idea of President Lincoln as a hero who ended slavery is complicated in many ways—by his relationship with abolition and by his treatment of American Indians, for example. Here in the Heritage Area, we can also highlight his massive expansion of federal authority to pursue a united nation and the end of slavery. He suspended the Writ of Habeas Corpus and issued the Emancipation Proclamation—both examples of ways he expanded presidential powers which had ramifications in the Heritage Area.
- This landscape has layered meaning. It holds significant Native American sites, sites of enslavement, routes of the Underground Railroad, battlegrounds, and more. Singular sites hold layered meaning themselves, gathered over time. For example, Fort Frederick was built in 1756 during the French and Indian War: it served as a prison camp during the American Revolution and by the time of the Civil War the fort and surrounding land was owned by the Williams family. Nathan Williams and his wife, Ammy, were free African Americans who had been born into slavery. Their family sold produce to the passing armies during the Civil War and were involved in educational and political initiatives.

There are many stories embodied in America's Civil War. The Heritage Area has numerous resources and a responsibility to share an array of viewpoints.

Principle 3: If we don't know the stories, we can't share them.

We require knowledge of the range of our Civil War history to tell a rich, impactful, inclusive, and meaningful story. To acquire that knowledge, research is a foundational need, for where we lack information, we find gaps in the story; romanticism of the Civil War; and entirely missing groups, narratives, and demographics. History is a social science: in completing new research, we find new facts and recover memories. For harder to uncover stories, such as those regarding everyday people, resources do often exist: we will investigate what's available, interrogate the spaces, and train our partners in where to find more information.

An example of how research can be transformative to the visitor experience can be found at Catoctin Furnace, a historic iron forge in Frederick County, where a multi-year study using research, archaeology, and genetics revealed new truths about the past. Catoctin Furnace was ultimately able to complete facial reconstruction connected with information on their identity for some people who were enslaved there. This illustrates the impact research can have when translated into programs and interpretation.

Statement of Significance

The Statement of Significance focuses on the assets, attributes, or characteristics that make a place important. It should answer: Why does this story and this place matter? Why do we tell the Civil War story, and why do we tell it here specifically? It should illustrate what we can do here that other regions cannot. The HCWHA's significance is at least state level with great potential for regional or national importance.

The following lists the points from the original Statement of Significance in the Management Plan approved by Maryland Heritage Areas Authority and includes suggested adjustments.

- **Border Setting:** The Heritage Area is located at the border of Pennsylvania and Maryland, known as the Mason-Dixon Line and generally regarded as the dividing line between North and South. It is this borderland location that presents opportunities to explore the complexities of loyalty to Union, Confederate, or other causes; abolition movements; the experiences of free and enslaved Black people; and more.
- **Preeminent Civil War Sites:** The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area encompasses the sites of three battles that had an impact on the outcome of a campaign or the war itself: Antietam, Monocacy, and South Mountain. In addition, the Heritage Area makes a geographic connection between Gettysburg and Harpers Ferry, two major Civil War sites with high national significance. These landscapes and others in the Heritage Area provide a layered experience of history. Although sites are preserved to reflect a battle, they also embody antebellum communities, the horrors and contemporary experiences of war, memory landscapes, and more.
- **Resource Diversity:** In addition to the three significant battlefields mentioned above, the Heritage Area includes skirmish, encampment, and other military sites; museums and heritage sites that interpret pre- and post-Civil War history as well as non-military Civil War era stories; intact structures from the era; scenic landscapes; document and artifact collections; and much more. Sites and collections that provide context for the era, for the lead-up to and for the war itself, and for understanding how our nation has evolved since are part of the diversity of resources that tell a range of stories to visitors.
- **Authenticity:** Scenic landscapes, battlefields, and historic towns/structures populate the Heritage Area, and many have been preserved through careful planning and protection, luck, or benign neglect. Thus, the area offers an authentic experience of the Civil War and its era that might not be available in a place where historic resources are more eroded. Authentic places are those that embody the experiences of generations past: some authentic places in the Heritage Area may lack the pristine historical integrity defined by the National Park Service Secretary of the Interior's Standards but still offer a rich tapestry of stories and learning for visitors.
- **Support for Civil War History Initiatives:** The residents and public officials in the Heritage Area are aware of and excited by its Civil War history. There is support for preservation of Civil War resources and for telling the Civil War story. Additional groups have become involved in the effort since

The Heritage Area is home to a number of preeminent Civil War sites—sites that make travelers' "bucket lists." Antietam Battlefield is one such site, and visitors to Antietam will soon see updated interpretive exhibits with an expansive focus that includes the battle but also elements related to the causes, experience, and consequences of war.

its beginning, identifying sites and opportunities to add experiences, such as the planned African American Heritage Center in downtown Frederick and the Reconstruction-era Tolson's Chapel and Schoolhouse in Sharpsburg, a recently designated National Historic Landmark.

The HCWHA offers a wealth of resources to experience and understand the Civil War not only as a slice of time in American history but as a pivotal event that both reflects the trajectory of American history up to its time and that has continued to impact our culture to date.

Themes

The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Management Plan organizes six themes in an outline interpretive structure: An Era of Change, Maryland as a Borderland, Maryland as a War Zone, Reunion and Reconciliation, Aftermath, and Shadows of the Civil War. The following expands upon what is in the Management Plan and suggests some additional and different ways to consider those themes.

An Era of Change

Technology Changes. The two decades prior to war saw major technological developments that changed long-established patterns. Railroads were expanding rapidly, replacing canals as the preferred way to move goods to markets and taking travelers to their destinations much more efficiently; this sparked the growth of towns and cities served by this new mode of transport: locally, the example of the C&O Canal and the B&O railroad reflect this competition. Efficiencies in the harnessing of water and steam power led to industrial expansion in the north, where textile mills provided a growing market for Southern cotton, which drove a need for enslaved labor to pick and process. The first application of steam power to boats can be traced to the Catoctin Iron Furnace under Jacob Kunkel, who provided the materials to make the plates on the steamship *Monitor*. Newspapers of the time and electric telegraphs revolutionized communications, with the former contributing to divisions through politicized reporting.

Societal Tensions. The era leading up to the Civil War was a time of intense conflict, disagreements, and shifts. Technological and economic changes in a growing northern industrial economy based on free labor was increasingly at odds with a southern agrarian economy whose labor system was based on slavery. Disagreements about what to do about abolition, racial equality, temperance, prison reform, women's rights, immigration, and labor

A growing number of historic sites and museums in the HCWHA include the African American experience of the Civil War era. Two such sites are Tolson's Chapel and Schoolhouse, a recently designated National Historic Landmark in Sharpsburg, and the planned African American Heritage Center in downtown Frederick.

rights, to name a few, increasingly divided Americans. Locally, class and religion added layers of tension, for Swiss-German immigrants did not have wealth and power and did not tend to employ enslaved labor, as many came from Anabaptist traditions that held slavery an abomination. The English were more likely to be wealthy and hold dominant political positions. A Caribbean-style plantation—the Vincendierres at L'Hermitage—was located on the grounds of what became Monocacy battlefield. Their slavery practices were not embraced by locals, and they were taken to court for cruelty. Anti-immigrant sentiments were so strong that a nationally recognized anti-immigrant movement, the Know-Nothings, became prominent in many cities across Maryland including in western Maryland in the 1850s and rioted in Baltimore in 1856. Also in 1856 Maryland was the only state won by Know-Nothing party presidential candidate Millard Fillmore. The Just Government League, a national women's suffrage movement in the early 20th century, had a regional headquarters in Westminster that was led by local suffragette Mary Bostwick Shellman, who later worked on behalf of Civil War veterans.

The Abolitionist Movement. Maryland's position on the border of slavery and freedom below the Mason-Dixon Line made it a frequent battleground between abolition and the continuation of slavery, as many enslaved people seeking freedom passed through the state–and especially its narrow point in Washington County–to continue north. John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry and the *Dred Scott* decision were two key triggering events to the war, and both have associations with the HCWHA: John Brown and his men stayed at an area farm, and Roger Brooke Taney, who lived and worked in Frederick early in his career, was Chief Justice and author of the *Dred Scott* opinion.

Maryland as a Borderland

Geographic Borders. The Mason-Dixon Line, the Maryland-Pennsylvania boundary, can be said to be the most famous line in America, traditionally thought to separate North from South. Maryland is south of the Mason-Dixon Line, but also north of the Potomac River, another boundary considered to separate North and South during the Civil War. The state's location translated into divided sympathies within communities and even families. In addition, freedom seekers moved through Maryland north to Pennsylvania and beyond—ultimately to Canada in many cases—to seek refuge. Militarily, Maryland bordered the federal capital and was therefore a strategic military location.

Cultural Divisions. Within Maryland, free and enslaved Blacks shared communities but had very different lives. With both free and enslaved Blacks living in communities across the state, the former illustrated the possibilities to the latter. Free Black and White citizens lived adjacent to each other but also had very different lives, with the former constrained by the structures of racism. Even among White property owners, Western Maryland's hillier landscapes were more often home to yeoman farming while the flat terrain and soils of the Eastern Shore and southern Maryland were conducive to crops like tobacco and cotton, which lent themselves to a plantation economy. The Anglo-American immigrants who settled in the tidal Chesapeake areas typically held different views on slavery than the German Brethren that lived in the HCWHA region. Disparities abounded. Before the war, the second largest enslaved holding in Frederick County was L'Hermitage, located on land that became Monocacy Battlefield. At the same time, there were far more free than enslaved Blacks in Frederick as the war began.

Tense Communities. As war clouds darkened, divided loyalties were common and put a strain on community life across the state. Diaries and letters are a rich source of stories related to this tension. For example, Frederick County resident Jacob Englebrecht's diary tells of the political journey from favoring secession prior to war, to wanting unification by the early 1860s. Other well-known examples of civilian experiences of war include the Shrivers of Union Mills, where family members took different sides. Newspapers are another rich source of contemporary observation; at the time, they tended to be fiery and often inflamed the passions of residents. Such was the heightened emotional climate following Gettysburg that several ministers in Hagerstown, concerned about possible

violence among community residents with split loyalties, joined together to print and distribute broadsides urging peace and cooperation without recriminations.

Maryland as a War Zone

Maryland's Pivotal Location. Maryland's location was crucial to keeping the Union intact and secure, especially the federal capital of Washington, D.C. To prevent a vote for secession, Lincoln had members of Maryland's General Assembly arrested and held, in deliberate violation of the Constitution. When the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, the support of the military—under generals who sometimes did not agree with Lincoln's actions or motivations—was essential to keep presidential and federal power secure, and General McClellan was in the Heritage Area when he had to agree to support the President's request for martial law. Today's debates about human and civil rights, safety, governmental reach, and presidential ethics and power indicate that these same issues during the Civil War era are ripe for exploration.

Occupied Towns and Countryside. What was it like to live in a war zone? The area of Maryland between Gettysburg and the Shenandoah Valley saw four years of advancing, retreating, battling, foraging, and occupying armies. The bloodshed in area battles and skirmishes was not neatly limited within battlefield boundaries, as battlefields encompassed privately held homes and farms as well as whole towns. During the conflict and in the years afterward civilians–often children–were routinely wounded and killed by unexploded ordnance found in fields, forests, and even near well-traveled roads and paths. The presence of troops resulted in strain on area resources as they required food, drink, firewood, and other rations. Civil liberties continued to be abridged during the war years in Maryland, including imposition of martial law and civilian arrest, and suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus. Confederate troops even threatened to set fire to towns unless ransom was paid; Hagerstown, Frederick, and Middletown were each held for Confederate ransom. In 1864, Frederick paid $200,000 and Hagerstown paid $20,000 ransom to General Jubal Early's forces.

Mercy and Healing. Thousands of soldiers lay wounded and dying following the battles of Antietam, South Mountain, Gettysburg, and Monocacy. Advances made in the treatment of battlefield trauma during the Civil War remain the core of modern military medicine; for example, Antietam was the first battle in which an ambulance corps was used. Ambulance corps was a common assignment for African American volunteers and the US Colored Troops. The medical advances of the time were insufficient to the task, however, and throughout the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, civilians pitched in to care for the wounded, most of
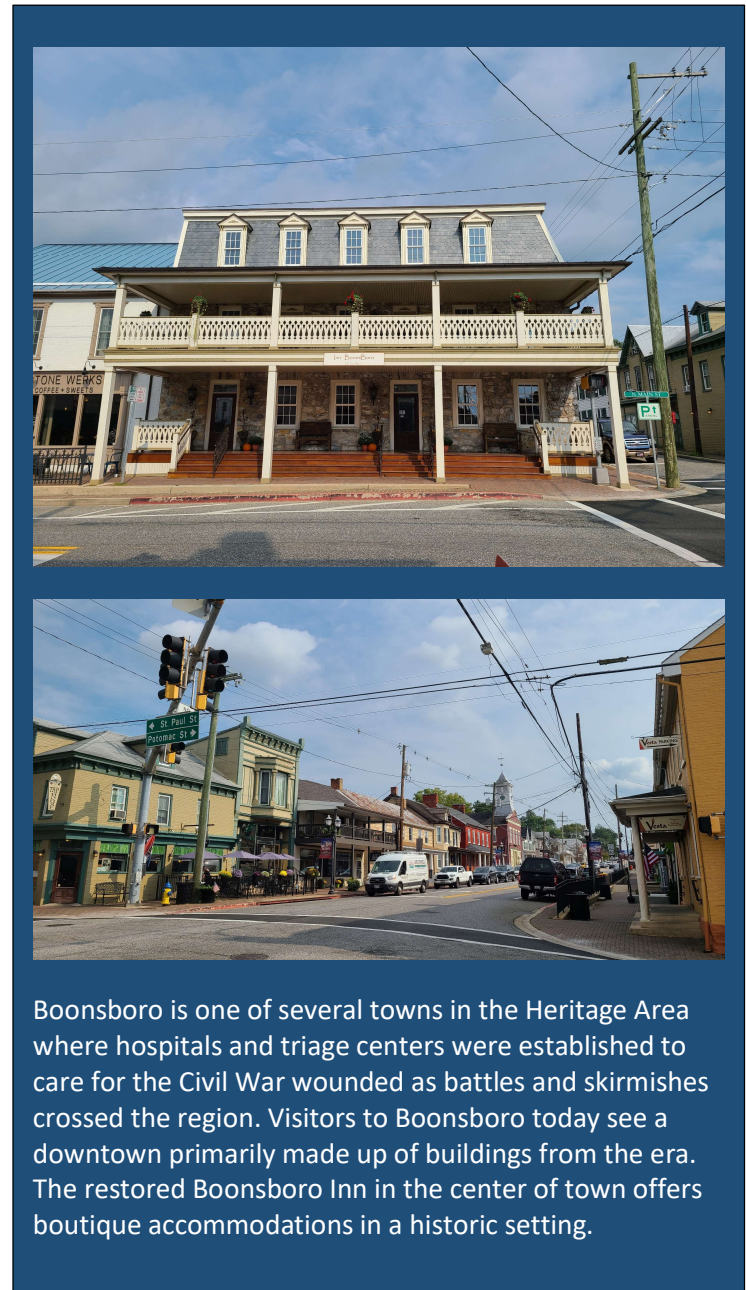
Boonsboro is one of several towns in the Heritage Area where hospitals and triage centers were established to care for the Civil War wounded as battles and skirmishes crossed the region. Visitors to Boonsboro today see a downtown primarily made up of buildings from the era. The restored Boonsboro Inn in the center of town offers boutique accommodations in a historic setting.

whom were far from their homes and families. Churches, assembly halls, and other public buildings in Frederick, Hagerstown, Emmitsburg, Westminster, Keedysville, Boonsboro, Middletown, Sharpsburg, and Burkittsville became surgeries and hospitals in the weeks following battles. Frederick alone has 29 documented Civil War hospital sites and had one of the largest area hospitals at the Hessian Barracks, where over 900 men were cared for at one time. Hospitals were typically segregated, and care for Black soldiers was not always up to the standard of that for White soldiers. Furthermore, Black soldiers had to face the possibility of being murdered by Confederates if left wounded on a battlefield, as it was known that little mercy was shown to African American soldiers by those fighting to continue enslavement.

Reunion & Reconciliation

Seething Passions. Many dramatic events illustrate the high emotions across the Heritage Area as the war came to a close; for example, Westminster newspaper editor Joseph Shaw was murdered—purportedly by Know-Nothing sympathizers—in the emotionally charged days following Lincoln's assassination for having published strongly pro-Confederate views. These passions did not subside immediately upon the war's end. What was it like when the war ended and troops that had been fighting on opposite sides came back to their hometowns to resume civilian life? What happened in communities as now-free Black citizens sought new pursuits, homes, and roles outside the previous restriction of enslavement? The Heritage Area offers opportunities to explore the challenges of reuniting communities and resuming everyday life. Diaries, letters, and newspaper articles in historical societies and library collections are said by scholars to be rich sources of contemporary first-person observations.

Reunification. It is remarkable that the United States rejoined into a single nation following the Civil War; unlike other places, America did not experience new or continued formal armed conflict after a major Civil War. Communities and families came back together despite having fought for different sides during the war. On the other hand, reunification is a complex concept that included a brief period of federally sponsored Reconstruction followed by a crushing, racist "Redemption" movement and the beginning of Jim Crow. Meaningful gains made by Black Americans, whether emancipated by the war or long free, were violently fought using powerful tools like convict leasing, the forcible "apprenticeship" of children, lynching, and voter suppression. Peaceful reunification was challenged in some arenas by further oppressing African Americans through "Lost Cause" mythology and memorialization that idolized Confederate soldiers and Southern women and obfuscated slavery as the primary cause of the war, further asserting that slavery was good for both slaveholder and enslaved. One interpretive workshop participant observed that "reunification following the Civil War was only for Whites. There was no reunification for Black citizens."

Aftermath

The Newness of Freedom. The most notable outcome of the war is the abolition of race-based slavery in United States. The experience of formerly enslaved individuals and families can be examined throughout the Heritage Area, where they worked, lived, and created churches, businesses, communities, and schools. Others moved from or through the Heritage Area, some on their way to northern cities where industrial work was plentiful. The quest for a true realization of citizenship, one that would provide full access to voting rights and property rights as well as complete protection under the law, has continued through today as an evolution of the definition and application of democracy and freedom.

Changed Economies. The end of slavery brought a great shift in economies, and there were important differences in how this unfolded across the South. Maryland and the upper South's experience was quite different from the states in the deep South. In the deep South, former slaves often remained on the same plantations or nearby as sharecroppers. The Heritage Area does have examples of historic rural African American enclaves throughout the three counties. Most

commonly, freed slaves in the upper South often migrated to urbanized areas, where a growing industrial economy offered opportunity for skilled and unskilled laborers. The growth of the railroad, and shops in Hagerstown, pulled many newly free people away from the agrarian countryside.

Commemoration. The practice of commemoration required answering who to grieve, how to honor them, and what narratives to assign to the war. The Lost Cause mythology was born immediately after the war to reunite the nation and provide a balm to the raw emotions of White southerners. By failing to assign slavery as the primary cause of the war and limiting the story to impressive military exploits, the post-war years of commemoration failed to facilitate the national healing needed for a country built upon race-based slavery. Many cemeteries and battlefield memorials were erected right after the war. However, most Confederate Civil War monuments and memorials were erected during two waves of struggle for and against civil rights: around the 1920s and the 1960s. The Lee Monument outside the Newcomer House was erected in 2003, and the National Park Service has provided interpretive signage to describe how it fits within this national movement of monument building. During the 2020 racial justice protests, American citizens sited their protests at these Confederate monuments because they are understood to reinforce Lost Cause mythology and convey subtle and sometimes explicit messages about the goodness of enslavers and slavery. The Heritage Area has numerous monuments, memorials, and cemeteries in which to examine memory, commemoration, and history—and the role of these tributes in constructing the same.

Caring for the Dead. The dead were littered on the battlefields of Maryland. For decades after hostilities ceased, fields contained hundreds of corpses. The creation of cemeteries began soon after the war, initially for Union dead because the destroyed economy of the South prevented reclamation of Confederate dead and creation of Confederate cemeteries. After Antietam, cemeteries for Union soldiers were completed first, but some cemeteries for Confederate dead followed. Church cemeteries and community cemeteries, like Mt. Olivet, were tasked with burying the Confederate dead. Most cemeteries, including military cemeteries, were segregated. Veterans of the US Colored Troops are buried in church and community cemeteries throughout the Heritage Area; families were seldom able to reclaim the remains of those who were casualties of war. Mortuary practices born during this time are interpreted at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick.

Preserving Sacred Places. Soon after the war's end, the preservation and memorialization process began at the major battle sites, with the War Department and veterans' organizations

Interpretive signage addressing the Lee Monument outside the Newcomer House illustrates a growing understanding by citizens regarding Confederate Monuments—that they were not primarily erected in the years immediately following the war and instead tracked against major civil rights movements in the United States.

playing major roles. The War Department purchased some important avenues of military approach and Union positions for veterans to take cart rides. Later the NPS purchased some pivotal battlefields. Numerous public agencies and private groups erected statues, panels, and markers on the landscape. With the "Lost Cause," the Confederate fields were bought and even at Gettysburg today much of the rear of the Confederates line on Seminary Hill is under the Eisenhauer Farm. In the late twentieth century, beginning with the 100th, energized by subsequent anniversaries of the battles, and prompted by concern about developments infringing on sacred lands, the modern battlefield protection movement gained power and has invested heavily to protect the character of battlefields in Maryland, Virginia, and other places. Several land conservation organizations within the Heritage Area work to conserve the historic landscape that surrounds our battlefields and municipalities. Within the Heritage Area, innovative preservation actions could be presented and interpreted as models for other places; for example, Antietam has a unique and innovative preservation story.

War Alumni. The early prevailing interpretive message about the Civil War was one of epic heroism and courage on both sides, appropriate for reunification and neatly sidestepping discussions of the conflict's motivations, particularly that of slavery. Reunions of veterans and of widows of veterans were common, with some even taking place at the major battlefields upon which they fought. For example, the Grand Army of the Republic's "National Encampment" events pulled together many Union veterans at one time to relive their experiences in the war.

Shadows of the Civil War

Political Tensions. Although the war ended nearly one hundred and sixty years ago, its influences linger on our political and cultural landscape. Political tensions continue around the issues of political party affiliation, federal government and presidential powers, states' rights, individual and community relationships to government, race relations, and differences between southern and northern ways of life. There are excellent opportunities to explore a number of these lingering traces through thoughtful interpretive programming that could resonate with visitors as well as provide residents of the HCWHA with insights into their own culture.

Racism and White Supremacy. America's race-based slavery system was built on a generalized, often subconscious set of beliefs and actions that worked to keep White citizens protected and provided for above those with darker skin. By reconciling the war as one of White brother against brother, slavery was left out of the narrative, thereby missing the

Citizens increasingly see the connection between the legacy of slavery and the subsequent failure of Reconstruction and today's issues with racism. The racial justice protests that began in 2020 were often sited at Confederate Monuments for this reason. (Photo by Tisch Abelow, 2020, courtesy of the AARCH Society)

opportunity to process and heal that stain on America's story. The direct connection between antebellum and post-war culture based in those same beliefs is also severed without that processing. Segregated Jim Crow-era neighborhoods in Hagerstown and Frederick, for example, were influenced by policies similarly meant to hold Black Americans back.

Living History and Reenactments. Early preservation and commemoration efforts have given us protected battlefields, surrounding conservation easements and preserved land, and other sites of memory from which to learn, ranging from battlefields like South Mountain to history sites like Carroll County Farm Museum. One way these resources are utilized is through a strong living history movement. Reenactments and living history have also been a regular part of the Heritage Area experience although not offered directly by the HCWHA. Living history can be a powerful interpretive tool if it doesn't romanticize the past and if it includes the array of experiences embodied in the era. For the HCWHA, one goal will include ensuring diversity of viewpoints in reenactments and living history experiences as well as supporting appropriate, empathetic, and educational interactions between reenactors and the public, especially in scenarios with Confederate presence.

Interpretive Priorities

In addition to addressing the interpretation itself, two priorities for implementation arose from the workshop: training partners and supporting efforts to diversify the cultural/heritage field.

Training

The Heritage Area has an opportunity to support partners and influence the overall interpretive approach for the region. By providing training and guidance in this arena, the HCWHA can make an impact in the visitor experience and help cultural/heritage organizations navigate a challenge: interpreting the Civil War in contemporary times. Some considerations to include in addition to the Foundational Principles are listed below:

- Start by interpreting the distinct qualities of the place and its resources (places, collections, etc.).
- Seek to provide a cohesive experience.
- Help visitors make personal connections across specific sites and stories without a lot of legwork on their part.
- Keep an outsider's perspective (objectivity).

The Carroll County Farm Museum is one of many educational sites of memory in the Heritage Area. In addition to agricultural history, the site tells the story of a county almshouse in 15 buildings and acreage near Westminster.

- Include a focus on empathy.
- Be comfortable with nuanced conversations.
- Prepare docents, volunteers, and front-line staff for deep conversations and strong reactions from visitors.
- Move beyond exceptionalism—our sites *are* exceptional but think through how individuals relate to "exceptional" landscapes and sites. Consider the rest of our landscape, including locations that have lost their historic structures or are considered "empty." The interpretive value of these locations can be changed with research and additional knowledge.

Diversity and Equity in Staffing

Cultural/heritage disciplines face a diversity shortage. The reasons are believed to be myriad and complicated, and the HCWHA cannot address this concern alone. However, participants in the workshop felt strongly that supporting efforts for Heritage Area partners to address equity and diversity concerns in their own leadership, staff, and volunteer corps is an essential role. This could include training for organizations and their leadership or seeking funds for internships and fellowships to encourage new talent to join the region, for example.

Conclusion

Interpretation is at the heart of the Heritage Area's work. The narratives and the resources associated with them are the reason visitors come and the reason cultural/heritage organizations exist. As such, it is essential to continue improving this element of the HCWHA's efforts. The significance and themes of Civil War history have evolved and now include much clearer lines to contemporary—sometimes contentious—issues. To remain relevant and honest in our work, we must continue to examine the historical record and resources for evidence that will ultimately help us understand our country and ourselves as we are today—and ideally, to heal from our past divisions.

Program Goals & Objectives by Category

This Strategic Plan organizes goals and objectives under the categories of effort classified by Maryland Heritage Areas Authority. This section lists goals and objectives. The next section lays out details and actions steps for each objective. Finally, the At-a-Glance Implementation Chart summarizes the timeframe for each objective.

Product Development

The HCWHA supports or initiates place-based (archaeological, historic, cultural, natural) experiences for visitors and Maryland residents. Heritage Areas are particularly effective when product development opportunities require connections across geographic boundaries, organizations, historical topics, or time periods. By concentrating on a regional product development, the Heritage Area enables the partner Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) to focus more energy on marketing and communications.

Goal 1: Embrace creative risk-taking and utilizing solid data to support and encourage enhanced product development among partners.

a: Encourage grants to applications that embrace creativity and innovation.

Goal 2: Ensure that experiences in the Heritage Area are appealing and welcoming to diverse audiences that reflect future visitation trends.

a: Support research into diverse stories that are not currently apparent across the Heritage Area.

b: Share data and trends that will future-proof product development, marketing, tourism planning, and experience efforts.

c: Connect partners to national cultural heritage trends, organizations, and opportunities.

Goal 3: Facilitate/support platforms and methods to connect and weave assets of Heritage Area together into cohesive experiences and products.

a: Facilitate efforts to expand K-12 audiences through curriculum and digital programming.

b: Bring existing tours, driving tours, and apps together for regional linkages.

c: Coordinate marketing across common regional stories, routes, and experiences.

d: Share connective storytelling research and information through articles, social media, and video.

Building Partnerships

Heritage Area management entities engage partners and leverage resources for a common benefit. The HCWHA is particularly interested in aiding partners with organizational capacity building and connecting partners to collaborative efforts that can leverage their work into a greater sum than their individual efforts can achieve. Some such collaborations that will take place during the period of this Strategic Plan include the 250th anniversary of the United States and creation of the Office of Outdoor Recreation in Maryland.

Goal 4: Support capacity building through technical assistance for heritage and cultural tourism organizations in the Heritage Area. Include an emphasis on supporting organizations that represent and originate from marginalized or underrepresented communities.

 a: Provide structure and accreditation "lite" through a pilot of the StEPS program.

 b: Increase opportunities to gather, network, and learn from each other.

Goal 5: Provide support for vulnerable collections and sites.

 a: Investigate opportunities for collections storage collaborations, such as co-ops.

Goal 6: Support and coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States across the Heritage Area.

 a: Highlight relevant themes for the Heritage Area's participation in the United States' 250th.

 b: Develop a specialized grant emphasis.

 c: Leverage the United States' 250th as an opportunity to expand and reach priority audiences:

 -Expanded age groups, especially 25-34, 35-44, and 45-54

 -Spanish-speaking audiences / Latino/a/X

 -African American audiences

Goal 7: Continue to grow focus and efforts around outdoor recreation and conservation.

 a: Leverage opportunities with outdoor recreation, conservation, and natural resources partners.

Regional Identity

Heritage Areas amplify and accentuate the distinctive archaeological, cultural, historic, and natural assets of a region. In the HCWHA, one priority is to increase the appreciation of local residents for these assets. This includes fostering greater support for the preservation of the
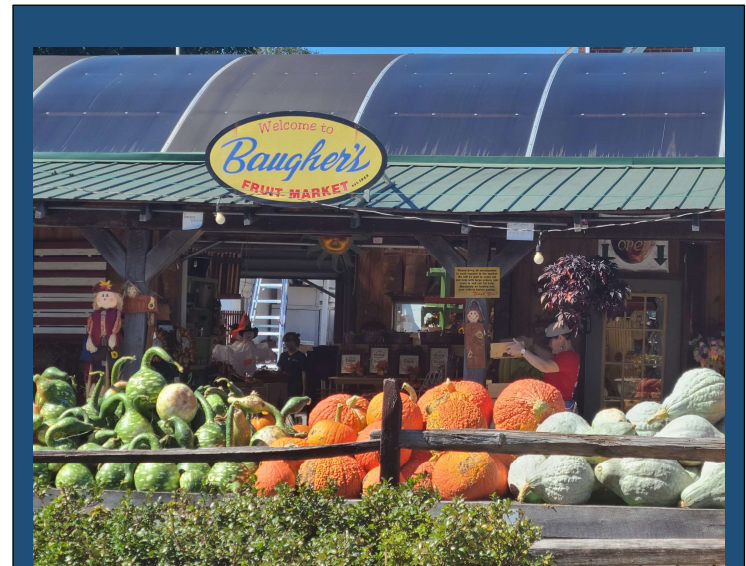
The popular Baugher's Fruit Market is a local experience that represents the power of place inherent in the Heritage Area.

historic and cultural resources that form the foundation of the Heritage Area's attractiveness as a destination. The HCWHA is also uniquely positioned to notice and help to develop and promote uniquely local experiences, an element of serendipity for visitors to the region.

Goal 8: Engage local residents in knowing, preserving, and promoting the Heritage Area themselves.

a: Create a module to be included in the tourism ambassador programs being created by DMO partners.

b: Promote effective historic preservation, focusing on preserving the overall power of place that drives the attractiveness of this region.

Organizational

Organizational development and sustainability are foremost priorities for the HCWHA. Regional bodies like Heritage Areas suffer from competition with their own constituents for fundraising purposes—often grants, memberships, and individual or philanthropic donations to the Heritage Area could have been given to a partner of the Heritage Area. This makes crafting a revenue model beyond the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority funds complicated. Governance is also an area of interest, especially board diversification and succession planning, as the HCWHA looks to the future.

Goal 9: Develop and implement a plan for sustainability for the Heritage Area.

a: Update the bylaws.

b: Develop and implement a plan for sustainable revenue generation.

c: Develop and implement a plan for sustainable operation of the Newcomer House / Visitor Center at Antietam Battlefield.

Goal 10: Examine how digital technologies can help the Heritage Area address the future needs of audiences in sustainable and relevant ways.

a: Assess and revise the HCWHA website.

b: Assess and apply relevant emerging social media technologies.

Goal 11:   Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs.

a: Diversify the HCWHA Board of Directors.

b: Develop a succession plan for important board and staff positions.

c: Update the personnel policies and employee manual.

d: Fully staff the heritage area to fulfill its commitments and potential.

Marketing and the Heritage Area

The Heritage Area's role in marketing can include participating in regional marketing efforts, promoting key experiences within a Heritage Area, communicating important messages or approaches to Heritage Area partners, marketing the Heritage Area organization for the purposes of increasing fundraising or organizational support, and/or organizing collaborative marketing efforts within/across the Heritage Area. The most important functions to the economic health of the Heritage Area at large are to market the entire region and to organize collaborative efforts; these are work that others, such as Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), are not likely to undertake on their own. Some questions the HCWHA might consider as marketing and promotions projects occur include the following:

- o How can the Heritage Area BEST use its marketing dollars to motivate more visitors?
- o Where do travelers get trip planning information? Where do trends suggest this will occur in the future?
- o What is the best way to reach stakeholders?
- o Lastly, how does marketing shift as Civil War relevance includes more impactful and serious stories? Do travelers view these trips as "vacation" in the same way as battlefield and downtown visits?

Communications regarding the value of the Heritage Area organization's work are important to ensure that public and philanthropic support for its efforts are sustained. Partners are not guaranteed to provide this messaging on behalf of the Heritage Area without some organizing and effort by the HCWHA. It is necessary that the Heritage Area is known, understood, and supported if it is to continue existing to serve its partners and the region. The Strategic Plan directs the HCWHA to develop a plan for sustainable revenue generation, which will include a communications component. In addition, there is an array of marketing and marketing-adjacent efforts across goals and priorities, as outlined below.

Support for DMOs and Partners:

- Share data and trends that will future-proof product development, marketing, tourism planning, and experience efforts.
- Connect partners to national cultural heritage trends, organizations, and opportunities.
- Create a module to be included in the tourism ambassador programs being created by DMO partners.

Audience Growth:

- Leverage the United States' 250th as an opportunity to expand and reach priority audiences.

Messaging:

- Coordinate marketing across common regional stories, routes, and experiences.
- Promote effective historic preservation, focusing on preserving the overall power of place that drives the attractiveness of this region.

Digital Outreach:

- Assess and revise the HCWHA website.
- Assess and apply relevant emerging social media technologies.

The HCWHA will be best served by leveraging its regional strength and working in concert with the DMOs in each county when marketing to potential visitors. In addition, the Heritage Area will need to consider how best to message about the work the organization itself is achieving on behalf of culture and heritage to strengthen community support for its work.

Priorities & Action Plans: Details

Goal 1: Embrace creative risk-taking and utilizing solid data to support and encourage enhanced product development among partners.

Objective a: Encourage grants to applications that embrace creativity and innovation.

Action Items (Activities):

- Include grant reviewers with expertise that allow for expanding grants into areas such as new technologies.
- Encourage applicants to pursue creative ideas during grant trainings, including the idea that the Civil War is unfinished business.
- Encourage grant applications that can serve as test cases or benchmarks for other Heritage Area partners.
- Build points into mini-grant review for creativity and innovation.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):

- Some awarded grants each year reflect creativity, innovation, and comfort with risk through the inclusion of new technologies; up-to-date public history practice in interpretation, outreach, and research; and/or audience engagement, for example.

Required Resources (Inputs):

- MHAA or other grant funding lines to regrant within Heritage Area
- HCWHA Staff
- HCWHA Grant Reviewers

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA - Partner: Maryland Heritage Area Authority	- **Heritage Product Development** - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2024-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):

- There can be no progress without space for creativity, innovation, and risk. The HCWHA can help partners explore worthy new ideas by modeling and supporting a culture that rewards calculated risk-taking.

Goal 2: Ensure that experiences in the Heritage Area are appealing and welcoming to diverse audiences that reflect future visitation trends.
Objective a: Support research into diverse stories that are not currently apparent across the Heritage Area.

Action Items (Activities):
- Encourage research into lesser detailed histories associated with the places in the Heritage Area.
- Connect partners to support for research, including grants, wherever possible.
- Share research resources online, including *Crossroads of War* and updated content on the website.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- New stories about the diverse people, places, and occurrences of the past in the Heritage Area are revealed.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Research funding
- Local archives
- Online repositories

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA - Partner: Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (to allow/encourage research as a grantable activity) - Partner: Area colleges or universities with history degrees - Partner: Local archives	**Heritage Product Development** - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2023-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- With a variety of stories, a more diverse audience can find meaningful connections to the Heritage Area. For example, at Catoctin Furnace, research enabled robust and meaningful programming about the enslaved iron workers, including facial reconstruction.
- It is ethical to present a more complete, accurate story, and it requires knowing the stories to present them.

Goal 2: Ensure that experiences in the Heritage Area are appealing and welcoming to diverse audiences that reflect future visitation trends.
Objective b: Share data and trends that will future-proof product development, marketing, tourism planning, and experience efforts.

Action Items (Activities):
- Work with partners like the County DMOs on trend tracking.
- Schedule regular intervals to collect and share relevant audience, economic development, and tourism data.
- Work with DMOs and Maryland Office of Tourism Development on application of data/information to product development and marketing.
- Encourage partners to consider up-to-date, relevant data in their efforts.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Product development, experience packaging/planning, and marketing across the 3 counties is responsive to audience needs and trends, evidenced by successful audience attraction.
- Visitors report feeling welcome in their travels in the HCWHA.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Data and information (ex: from DMOs, Maryland Office of Tourism Development, and national tourism and economic development data organizations like Longwoods International)
- Process for tracking/organizing data and trends
- Vehicle for communication and coordination with key marketers and partners

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA - Partner: County DMOs - Partner: Maryland Office of Tourism Development	**Heritage Product Development** - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2026-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Demographics are changing nationally, reflecting similarly shifting potential audiences for travel. Staying up-to-date on these and related trends allows Heritage Area partners to adjust as variations occur, staying relevant and meeting visitor expectations.
- Understanding trends in travel technology, audience demographics, and traveler needs/desires will help HCWHA partners avoid investing in products that become obsolete by the time they are released.

Goal 2: Ensure that experiences in the Heritage Area are appealing and welcoming to diverse audiences that reflect future visitation trends.
Objective c: Connect partners to national cultural heritage trends, organizations, and opportunities.

Action Items (Activities):
- Connect partners to national organizations like the American Association for State and Local History through information sharing and connecting.
- Connect partners to national cultural heritage trends via data sharing.
- Share national cultural heritage opportunities with partners.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Partners in the Heritage Area are aware of and responsive to national cultural heritage trends.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- National organizations' content, such as briefs, webinars, and special reports

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
• Lead: HCWHA • Partner: National organizations	• **Heritage Product Development** • Partnership building • Sustaining Regional Identity • Organizational	2023-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Connections between local partners and national cultural heritage organizations broadens the scope of focus for the Heritage Area and keeps it inclusive of trends, opportunities, and challenges within the discipline of public history and cultural heritage as a whole.

Goal 3: Facilitate/support platforms and methods to connect and weave assets of Heritage Area together into cohesive experiences and products.
Objective a: Facilitate efforts to expand K-12 audiences through curriculum and digital programming.

Action Items (Activities):
- Encourage schools and tour guides in the Heritage Area to use materials on the education portal.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Increased K-12 engagement with education portal materials.
- Increased student tours to Heritage Area sites.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Staff - Partner: Local curriculum coordinators	- **Heritage Product Development** - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2025-2026

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- K-12 engagement can lead to lifelong interest in and support for heritage and cultural resources.

Goal 3: Facilitate/support platforms and methods to connect and weave assets of Heritage Area together into cohesive experiences and products.

Objective b: Bring existing tours, driving tours, and apps together for regional linkages.

Action Items (Activities):
- Research existing information and linkages that could be brought together into regional tours, driving tours, apps, etc.
- Encourage development of products linking the Heritage Area through the grant program and trainings.
- Lead a collaborative effort to identify and develop experiences that connect Heritage Area offerings by theme, audience type (ex: families), etc.
- Examine existing platforms/infrastructure available for use already, such as the C&O Canal Trust app or the Maryland Civil War Trails app.
- Seek incorporation of information across the entire region into platforms to entice visitors into deeper experience with the Heritage Area as a whole.
- Encourage and support digital product development as needed.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- New connective experience(s) in Heritage Area are complete and available.
- Visitors and residents use new connective experiences.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- Contract Staff
- Platform(s) for connecting information and resources
- Information on sites/destinations organized by theme(s)

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: Contract Staff - Partner: HCWHA Staff - Partner: HCWHA partner organization	- **Heritage Product Development** - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2027-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Products that tie individual experiences together using themes, experience types, etc. motivate visitation and can provide incentives to visit lesser-known attractions.
- The HCWHA is uniquely positioned to support products that link the various experiences of the Heritage Area across county lines.

Goal 3: Facilitate/support platforms and methods to connect and weave assets of Heritage Area together into cohesive experiences and products.
Objective c: Coordinate marketing across common regional stories, routes, and experiences.

Action Items (Activities):
- Identify stories, routes, and experiences across the three-county area; develop, if necessary, and promote them.
- Encourage partners to take part in or help promote routes, experiences, and Civil War Trails routes.
- Leverage the DMO presence on the Marketing Committee to enhance coordinated regional marketing.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- County DMOs increase their investment in regional marketing efforts.
- Partners increase their awareness of and support for regional promotion to visitors.
- Multi-county routes (byways, heritage trails, etc.) have an increased presence as part of the Heritage Area.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Marketing investment by County DMOs
- Support by Maryland Office of Tourism Development

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA - Partner: County DMOs - Partner: Maryland Office of Tourism Development - Partner: HCWHA partners	**Heritage Product Development** - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2027-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Regional marketing across common stories, routes, and themes encourages tourists to visit multiple sites—regardless of county lines—linking the Heritage Area as a cohesive region.
- Routes and trails spread visitation across the Heritage Area, defining it as a more complete destination.

Goal 3: Facilitate/support platforms and methods to connect and weave assets of Heritage Area together into cohesive experiences and products.
Objective d: Share connective storytelling research and information through articles, social media, and video.

Action Items (Activities):
- Support the planning and implementation of the next iteration of the *Crossroads of War* website content.
- Collect and share connective storytelling via HCWHA social media channels, website, etc.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Engagement with HCWHA social media channels and website increases.
- Next iteration of *Crossroads of War* website content is implemented.
- High public engagement with *Crossroads of War* content continues in new format.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Contract Staff / part-time Staff
- *Crossroads of War* team
- Technology platform(s) & hosting

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
 • Lead: HCWHA Staff • Partner: Contract Staff • Partner: *Crossroads of War* team	 • **Heritage Product Development** • Partnership building • Sustaining Regional Identity • Organizational	2025-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Engaging place-based storytelling online can be a powerful way to reach audiences, thereby encouraging visitation to the Heritage Area.
- The *Crossroads of War* website contains content that has been heavily utilized, but the platform is outdated.

Goal 4: Support capacity building through technical assistance for heritage and cultural tourism organizations in the Heritage Area. Include an emphasis on supporting organizations that represent and originate from marginalized or underrepresented communities.
Objective a: Provide structure and accreditation "lite" through a pilot of the StEPS program.*

Action Items (Activities):
- Coordinate and research with AASLH regarding StEPS as basis for training and technical assistance.
- Develop approach for training program, including pricing or sponsorship model.
- Fundraise as necessary.
- Launch program with pilot cohort and determine what changes are needed for future cohorts.
- Encourage partner participation.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Regional StEPS program pilot project is launched with initial cohort.
- Cohort survey(s) indicates organizations found value in training and experience.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- Contract or new, part-time HCWHA Staff
- HCWHA Staff
- StEPS Program materials and guidance from AASLH
- Program fees from participants or sponsorship

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: Contract or part-time HCWHA Staff - Partner: HCWHA Staff - Partner: AASLH	- Heritage Product Development **Partnership building** - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2023-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Partners in the Heritage Area are in need of technical assistance and capacity building, and the StEPS program provides critical knowledge that strengthens the operations of cultural organizations. This will allow the HCWHA to build upon an existing program rather than create a new service from scratch. *The StEPS Program is targeted technical assistance organized around key topics of interest for heritage and culture organizations, including outreach, governance, collections, education, and more.*

Goal 4: Support capacity building through technical assistance for heritage and cultural tourism organizations in the Heritage Area. Include an emphasis on supporting organizations that represent and originate from marginalized or underrepresented communities.

Objective b: Increase opportunities to gather, network, and learn from each other.

Action Items (Activities):
- Host six to eight gatherings per year for partners to meet with and learn from each other.
- Choose a topical focus for some gatherings and consider an outside expert or a presenter from within the group to kick off the gathering.
- Assess effectiveness of gatherings with partners through a basic evaluation tool.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- HCWHA hosts six to eight Heritage Area-wide gatherings per year.
- Connections between partners are increased.
- Partners have opportunities to learn from one another.
- Partners feel connected to the Heritage Area.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Evaluation tool; input and feedback from Heritage Area partners
- Speakers and presenters by topic
- Venues; refreshments

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
• Lead: HCWHA Staff	• Heritage Product Development • **Partnership building** • Sustaining Regional Identity • Organizational	2023-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- At the listening sessions, partners repeatedly requested opportunities to come together, share their experiences, and learn from each other.
- Shared learning and strengthened relationships will fortify partners' investment in the success of their colleagues and thus, in the regional nature of the Heritage Area.
- Expert speakers strengthen partner knowledge and skills in targeted areas.

Goal 5: Provide support for vulnerable collections and sites.
Objective a: Investigate opportunities for collections storage collaborations, such as co-ops.

Action Items (Activities):
- Conduct a needs assessment.
- Benchmark other co-ops and regional cooperative collections solutions.
- Convene partners to explore possible solutions.
- Aid partners in decision-making and organizing around a preferred solution.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Partner needs for collections storage collaborations are identified.
- Solutions are vetted, presented, and ranked.
- A preferred solution is chosen.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- Contract Staff
- Commitment from partners to investigate a shared solution
- Research on other collaborative collections solutions

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: Contract Staff - Partner: HCWHA Staff - Partner: Heritage Area partners in need of collections storage	- Heritage Product Development **Partnership building** - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2025-2027

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Supporting vulnerable collections and sites protects valuable heritage resources.

Goal 6: Support and coordinate the commemoration of the 250ᵗʰ anniversary of the United States across the Heritage Area.
Objective a: Highlight relevant themes for the Heritage Area's participation in the United States' 250ᵗʰ.

Action Items (Activities):
- Share semiquincentennial resources (such as the AASLH 250ᵗʰ Field Guide) and highlight relevant themes found in existing frameworks to partner sites.
- Encourage partners to utilize overarching themes in their commemorative programs and events.
- Promote and share local connections to the national commemoration via social media channels and the website.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Partners engage with the 250ᵗʰ throughout the Heritage Area by engaging relevant themes that tie the story to the region.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Contract Staff
- National research and content on United States' 250ᵗʰ

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
 • Lead: HCWHA Staff • Partner: Contract Staff	 • Heritage Product Development • **Partnership building** • Sustaining Regional Identity • Organizational	2022-2025

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- One opportunity of a commemoration is to dig deeper into interpretation and find new perspectives on existing stories, to unearth new stories, and to connect stories to a larger narrative—in this case, the commemoration of the United States' 250ᵗʰ.
- The 250ᵗʰ is viewed as an echo of a country still seeking to realize the promise of democracy, which fits well with the interpretive approach for HCWHA, including the idea of the Civil War as incomplete business.

Goal 6: Support and coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States across the Heritage Area.
Objective b: Develop a specialized grant emphasis.

Action Items (Activities):
- Develop a grant emphasis geared towards projects related to the 250th anniversary of the United States.
- Encourage related applications.
- Award worthy grants to 250th projects and programs.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Grant recipients pursue successful projects related to the 250th anniversary of the United States.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Maryland Heritage Areas Authority grant funds
- Grant reviewers
- Information on the 250th overall: national interpretive themes, program examples, etc.

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Staff - Partner: Maryland Heritage Areas Authority	- Heritage Product Development **Partnership building** - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2022-2025

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Another opportunity of a commemoration is the energy embodied in a limited-time engagement around a particular set of stories and resources; grants related to the United States' 250th anniversary will motivate and support partners as they participate in the region's activities related to the anniversary.

Goal 6: Support and coordinate the commemoration of the 250ᵗʰ anniversary of the United States across the Heritage Area.
Objective c: Leverage the United States' 250ᵗʰ as an opportunity to expand and reach priority audiences.

Action Items (Activities):
- Identify elements in the 250ᵗʰ commemoration that appeal to expanded, priority audiences.
- Connect programs, projects, funding, and other 250ᵗʰ opportunities to expanded, priority audiences.
- Develop a plan for continuing engagement with these audiences following the commemoration.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Reach is increased to expanded age groups, especially 25-34, 35-44, and 45-54.
- Reach is increased to Spanish-speaking and Latino/a/X audiences.
- Reach is increased to African American audiences.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Contract Staff
- Research on key audiences
- Marketing investment in key audiences

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Staff - Partner: Contract Staff - Partner: Partner organizations with relationships in key audience groups	- Heritage Product Development **Partnership building** - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2023-2025

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- The 250th is an excellent opportunity to engage with national-level commemorations within the Heritage Area, capturing visitors interest during a time of increased historical awareness and presenting an opportunity to reach expanded audiences for the Heritage Area.

Goal 7: Continue to grow focus and efforts around outdoor recreation and conservation.
Objective a: Leverage opportunities with outdoor recreation, conservation, and natural resources partners.

Action Items (Activities):
- Search for and leverage opportunities with partners such as Heart of Maryland, local conservation organizations, county planning departments, agricultural land preservation efforts, state natural resource agencies, and the new Maryland Department of Outdoor Recreation.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- New partnerships around outdoor recreation in the Heritage Area will be launched.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Staff - Partner: Heritage Area outdoor recreation, conservation, and natural resources partners - Partner: Heart of Maryland - Partner: Maryland Department of Outdoor Recreation	- Heritage Product Development **Partnership building** - Sustaining Regional Identity - Organizational	2027-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Heritage and cultural tourism includes a wide range of activities and resources, including outdoor recreation and conservation, and public interest in outdoor resources has increased since COVID.

Goal 8: Engage local residents in knowing, preserving, and promoting the Heritage Area themselves.
Objective a: Create a module to be included in the tourism ambassador programs being created by DMO partners.

Action Items (Activities):
- Develop a flexible module for the Heritage Area (focused on heritage, cultural, and natural resources and history) that can be incorporated into existing tourism ambassador programs or used by organizations as a stand-alone unit.
- Promote the tourism ambassador module through HCWHA channels.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Many tourism, front-line, and cultural institution workers engage in the tourism ambassador module.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- DMOs of the three counties
- Information on the character, resources, infrastructure, and services of each county
- May offer a certificate for those that complete stand-alone module
- May include digital resources and in-person workshops

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
• Lead: HCWHA Staff • Partner: DMOs of the three counties	• Heritage Product Development • Partnership building • **Sustaining Regional Identity** • Organizational	2027-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Greater depth of knowledge of the region helps local tourism industry professionals and front-line workers effectively promote the full range of the Heritage Area to visitors they serve.

Goal 8: Engage local residents in knowing, preserving, and promoting the Heritage Area themselves.
Objective b: Promote effective historic preservation, focusing on preserving the overall power of place that drives the attractiveness of this region.

Action Items (Activities):
- Serve as a connector:
  - Develop a brief of preservation tools to share with partners, such as tax credits, neighborhood conservation districts, and more.
  - Work with partners like Preservation Maryland and local historic preservation programs to develop a list of tools/resources.
  - Share and promote historic preservation tools and resources to partners through a variety of vehicles: newsletters, the website, trainings, etc.
- Serve as an advocate:
  - Develop an official Heritage Area stance on preservation/language to call on in different situations. Messaging could include benefits for the environment, heritage tourism appeal, quality of life, and economic development.
  - Work with partners like Preservation Maryland to craft message(s) for common situations that arise, such as threatened resources.
  - Train board and staff on when and how to utilize messaging (For example, will Executive Director or Board President be spokesperson?).

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Heritage Area partners have increased knowledge of incentives and tools available to preserve historic resources.
- HCWHA staff and board members have increased confidence regarding their path of action when called upon to intervene in a preservation crisis.
- The Heritage Area increases its reputation as a credible source of expertise regarding historic preservation.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- Contract Staff/part-time HCWHA Staff with expertise in historic preservation
- Time from Heritage Area partner organizations in historic preservation

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: Contract Staff/part-time HCWHA Staff - Partner: Preservation Maryland - Partner: City and County historic preservation programs - Partner: local historic preservation advocacy organizations	- Heritage Product Development - Partnership building **Sustaining Regional Identity** - Organizational	2023-2025

Reason for Priority (Impacts):

- Listening sessions for this Strategic Plan revealed concerns regarding losses to historic fabric in the Heritage Area. The HCWHA can support and provide connections that aid preservation efforts, understanding that cultural heritage tourism relies on these resources.
- Partner awareness of available tools can bolster preservation in the Heritage Area.

Goal 9: Develop and implement a plan for sustainability for the Heritage Area.
Objective a: Update the bylaws.

Action Items (Activities):
- Create a board subcommittee focused on bylaws revision.
- Revise bylaws, including adding the Vice President position.
- Present bylaws for approval to Board of Directors.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Revised bylaws are adopted by the HCWHA Board of Directors.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Bylaws Board of Directors Subcommittee

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Staff - Partner: Bylaws Board of Directors Subcommittee	- Heritage Product Development - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity **Organizational**	2026

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Regular updates to the bylaws are part of running a healthy 501c3, and the HCWHA is due to update the bylaws.

Goal 9: Develop and implement a plan for sustainability for the Heritage Area.
Objective b: Develop and implement a plan for sustainable revenue generation.

Action Items (Activities):
- Create a board committee focused on resource development, inclusive of strategies for funding staff expansion recommended in this Strategic Plan.
- Create a resource development plan that includes sources of new revenue, to include operational endowment campaign and increase in current revenue streams.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- An endowment campaign is completed for the Heritage Area.
- New and existing revenue sources increase the annual income for the Heritage Area.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Resource Development Board Committee
- Research and guidance into operational endowment campaign planning
- Aid from key supporters, such as testimonials, property or matching gifts, kickoff gifts, etc.

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Staff - Partner: Resource Development Board Committee - Partner: Key supporters - Partner: Development advisors/consultants	- Heritage Product Development - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity **Organizational**	2025-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Sustainable, reliable, autonomous and diverse revenue allows the HCWHA to perform its duties, serve its partners, fulfill this Strategic Plan, and complete the mandates of being a Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Heritage Area.

Goal 9: Develop and implement a plan for sustainability for the Heritage Area.
Objective c: Develop and implement a plan for sustainable operation of the Newcomer House / Visitor Center at Antietam Battlefield.

Action Items (Activities):
- Fund and continue to implement remaining goals in the 2019 Visitor Experience Plan for the Newcomer House.
- Convene with National Park Service (NPS) representatives to ascertain NPS long-term plans for the property.
- Determine ideal hours, services, and programs for Newcomer House and associated staffing needs. Maintain minimum current operations and programs.
- Calculate required staff and volunteer time to provide above.
- Determine funding source.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Newcomer House is staffed and operates smoothly.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- .50 FTE to support Newcomer House operations and programs
- Volunteers
- Input from NPS leadership

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Staff - Partner: National Park Service (NPS) - Partner: Volunteers	- Heritage Product Development - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity **Organizational**	2023-2024

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Newcomer House is the most public-facing component of the HCWHA, and its location at Antietam National Battlefield makes it highly visible. Smooth operations and regular hours through adequate staffing is essential to maintaining service to visitors and to the Heritage Area's reputation.

Goal 10: Examine how digital technologies can help the Heritage Area address the future needs of audiences in sustainable and relevant ways.
Objective a: Assess and revise the HCWHA website.

Action Items (Activities):
- Conduct data-driven planning session(s) to determine the audience and purpose for the HCWHA website: trip planning, partner support, etc.
- Build website map.
- Include evaluation method(s) in planning (traffic to site, use of resources, etc.).
- Create a digital directory of completed project resources accessible from the website.
- Create a history of the Heritage Area to include on the website.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- User-friendly, high traffic website is launched.
- Evaluation indicates website is utilized by intended audiences.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- Contract Staff
- Website platform: proprietary or open source
- Current web-based content, reconfigured for new site
- New content for site

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
• Lead: Contract Staff • Partner: Website design contractor	• Heritage Product Development • Partnership building • Sustaining Regional Identity • **Organizational**	2025-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- A website that aligns to audience needs and current/future trends will best serve partners and visitors to the Heritage Area.

Goal 10: Examine how digital technologies can help the Heritage Area address the future needs of audiences in sustainable and relevant ways.

Objective b: Assess and apply relevant emerging social media technologies.

Action Items (Activities):
- Hire contractor or assign staff to lead the steps of a refreshed social media strategy, to include best social media platforms and technologies for the HCWHA; key audiences; general schedules; responsible parties; and more.
- Continue/increase posting social media engagements.
- Include social media engagement evaluations in Board of Directors updates.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Increased social media followers.
- Increased social media engagements: likes, click-throughs, shares, comments, etc.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- Contract or HCWHA Staff
- Guidance and information on social media strategy and communications
- Technology platform for managing posting across more than one platform, if needed

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: Contract or HCWHA Staff - Partner: HCWHA Staff or volunteers	- Heritage Product Development - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity **Organizational**	2025-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Social media is a permanent and popular way of communicating, and there are significant opportunities for the HCWHA to both build reputation and awareness for itself and to market and promote the Heritage Area and its partners through an expanded social media presence.

Goal 11: Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs.
Objective a: Diversify the HCWHA Board of Directors.

Action Items (Activities):
- Track and assess progress to date on goals for board diversity—use Board Profile Grid.
- Review board diversification resources for planning purposes.
- Detail next steps and goals with timelines for increasing diversity on Board of Directors. Include as part of Board Development Committee effort.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Board Development Committee will see that the Board of Directors makeup meets or exceeds goals for board diversity by stated dates.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- Training and informational materials regarding board diversification
- Board Profile Grid

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Staff - Partner: HCWHA Board - Partner: HCWHA Board Development Committee	- Heritage Product Development - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity **Organizational**	2024-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Board diversification is healthy for an organization's well-being, connects to the organization's values, and represents a commitment to effective diversity and inclusion in programs and services.

Goal 11: Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs.
Objective b: Develop a succession plan for important board and staff positions.

Action Items (Activities):
- Cultivate board members for additional roles as donors or subcommittee members/volunteers.
- Determine who will succeed board members using the Board Profile Grid.
- Consider a long-term and interim succession plan for Executive Director position.
- Build leadership and growth opportunities for Assistant Director position.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- Board transitions are smooth and maintain strong board leadership and diversity.
- Succession plan is in place for Executive Director to avoid a disruption to leadership in the future.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- HCWHA Board

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Staff - Partner: HCWHA Board - Partner: HCWHA Board Development Committee	- Heritage Product Development - Partnership building - Sustaining Regional Identity - **Organizational**	2023-2024

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Organizations lose momentum, knowledge, and relationships with key organizations and individuals when major transitions are unplanned and represent "starting over" every time.
- It is important to consider the succession plan for any Executive Director: it is especially so when a director has a long tenure and is well-respected in the community, as is the case with the HCWHA.

Goal 11: Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs.
Objective c: Update the personnel policies and employee manual.

Action Items (Activities):
- Review policies and manual and identify outdated or missing elements.
- Revise policies and submit to Board of Directors for review.
- Train board and staff on new policies and procedures as needed.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- New policies and manual are completed and approved.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- HCWHA Staff
- HCWHA Board
- Example policies from other nonprofits

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
 • Lead: HCWHA Staff • Partner: HCWHA Board	 • Heritage Product Development • Partnership building • Sustaining Regional Identity • **Organizational**	2023-2024

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- Well-run institutions periodically audit and update policies and procedures, and documenting those policies for employees is part of an institution's professional responsibility.

Goal 11: Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs.
Objective d: Fully staff the heritage area to fulfill its commitments and potential.

Action Items (Activities):
- Determine priority, pay grade, and timeline for positions.
- Identify revenue source for positions.
- Develop plan for contract labor versus staff labor.
- List and hire according to plan.

Deliverables / Measurable Success Items (Outcomes):
- HCWHA is able to complete ongoing mission work and Strategic Plan items.
- Staffing plan is completed and implemented.

Required Resources (Inputs):
- Additional staff to support Strategic Plan initiatives as follows (approximately 2 half-time or 1 full-time staff member/s):
  - Heritage Product Development = .2 FTE
  - Partnership Building = .2 FTE
  - Sustaining Regional Identity = .2 FTE
  - Organizational = .5 FTE
- Additional .5 FTE to support Newcomer House operations and programs

Project Lead and Partners:	MHAA Categories (Bold those that apply):	Project Duration:
- Lead: HCWHA Executive Director - Partner: HCWHA Board	**Heritage Product Development** **Partnership building** **Sustaining Regional Identity** **Organizational**	2023-2028

Reason for Priority (Impacts):
- HCWHA is working at capacity today, and pursuing additional initiatives will require adding capacity with contract or hired labor.

At-a-Glance Implementation Chart

(Chronological order by year work begins)

Goal	Objective	Year to Start
6: Support and coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of United States across the Heritage Area.	a: Highlight relevant themes for the Heritage Area's participation in the United States' 250th.	2022
6: Support and coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of United States across the Heritage Area.	b: Develop a specialized grant emphasis.	2022
2: Ensure that experiences in the Heritage Area are appealing and welcoming to diverse audiences that reflect future visitation trends.	a: Support research into diverse stories that are not currently apparent across the Heritage Area.	2023
2: Ensure that experiences in the Heritage Area are appealing and welcoming to diverse audiences that reflect future visitation trends.	c: Connect partners to national cultural heritage trends, organizations, and opportunities.	2023
4: Support capacity building through technical assistance for heritage and cultural tourism organizations in the Heritage Area.	a: Provide structure and accreditation "lite" through a pilot of the StEPS program.	2023
4: Support capacity building through technical assistance for heritage and cultural tourism organizations in the Heritage Area.	b: Increase opportunities to gather, network, and learn from each other.	2023
6: Support and coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of United States across the Heritage Area.	c: Leverage the United States' 250th as an opportunity to expand and reach priority audiences.	2023
8: Engage local residents in knowing, preserving, and promoting the Heritage Area themselves.	b: Promote effective historic preservation, focusing on preserving the overall power of place that drives the attractiveness of this region.	2023
9: Develop and implement a plan for sustainability for the Heritage Area.	c: Develop and implement a plan for sustainable operation of the Newcomer House / Visitor Center at Antietam Battlefield.	2023

Goal	Objective	Year to Start
11: Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs.	b: Develop a succession plan for important board and staff positions.	2023
11: Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs.	c: Update the personnel policies and employee manual.	2023
11: Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs.	d: Fully staff the heritage area to fulfill its commitments and potential.	2023
1: Embrace creative risk-taking and utilizing solid data to support and encourage enhanced product development among partners.	a: Encourage grants to applications that embrace creativity and innovation.	2024
11: Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs.	a: Diversify the HCWHA Board of Directors.	2024
3: Facilitate/support platforms and methods to connect and weave assets of Heritage Area together into cohesive experiences and products.	a: Facilitate efforts to expand K-12 audiences through curriculum and digital programming.	2025
3: Facilitate/support platforms and methods to connect and weave assets of Heritage Area together into cohesive experiences and products.	d: Share connective storytelling research and information through articles, social media, and video.	2025
5: Provide support for vulnerable collections and sites.	a: Investigate opportunities for collections storage collaborations, such as co-ops.	2025
9: Develop and implement a plan for sustainability for the Heritage Area.	b: Develop and implement a plan for sustainable revenue generation.	2025
10: Examine how digital technologies can help the Heritage Area address the future needs of audiences in sustainable and relevant ways.	a: Assess and revise the HCWHA website.	2025
10: Examine how digital technologies can help the Heritage Area address the future needs of audiences in sustainable and relevant ways.	b: Assess and apply relevant emerging social media technologies.	2025
2: Ensure that experiences in the Heritage Area are appealing and welcoming to diverse audiences that reflect future visitation trends.	b: Share data and trends that will future-proof product development, marketing, tourism planning, and experience efforts.	2026
9: Develop and implement a plan for sustainability for the Heritage Area.	a: Update the bylaws.	2026

Goal	Objective	Year to Start
3: Facilitate/support platforms and methods to connect and weave assets of Heritage Area together into cohesive experiences and products.	b: Bring existing tours, driving tours, and apps together for regional linkages.	2027
3: Facilitate/support platforms and methods to connect and weave assets of Heritage Area together into cohesive experiences and products.	c: Coordinate marketing across common regional stories, routes, and experiences.	2027
7: Continue to grow focus and efforts around outdoor recreation and conservation.	a: Leverage opportunities with outdoor recreation, conservation, and natural resources partners.	2027
8: Engage local residents in knowing, preserving, and promoting the Heritage Area themselves.	a: Create a module to be included in the tourism ambassador program being created by DMO partners.	2027

Measurements & Dashboards

This plan recommends the Heritage Area choose a limited number of measures to track regularly and over time in each goal category, using a dashboard format. These measures will be representative of progress for the plan, and each goal can be reported on as completed by the Deliverables/Success Items/Outcomes listed in the goal matrixes. A dashboard format utilizes graphics wherever possible to track progress (a thermometer, bar, or other progress image to track progress toward simple completion, for example) and answers "Where is the organization?" for a limited number of measures. This allows the staff, board, and anyone else affiliated with HCWHA to become familiar with the tracking tool and to read it easily and quicky each month or quarter. Some potential measures for tracking are outlined below.

The dashboard will be a normal part of Board reporting on the Strategic Plan and can also inform external sharing of successes.

Product Development

Measure Goal 2: Ensure that experiences in the Heritage Area are appealing and welcoming to diverse audiences that reflect future visitation trends, Objective a: Support research into diverse stories that are not currently apparent across the Heritage Area.

- Quantify the number of projects supported by HCWHA:
  - Grant inquiries
  - Successful grants
  - Technical assistance
  - Unsuccessful grant applications

Measure the regional nature of the Heritage Area, which is at the heart of why heritage areas exist. A number of Heritage Area goals reference regional product development.

- Quantify the number of regional HCWHA projects and products—funded by grants, planned/implemented by the Heritage Area or by partners, incentivized or encouraged by the Heritage Area, etc.

Building Partnerships

Measure Goal 4: Support capacity building through technical assistance for heritage and cultural tourism organizations in the Heritage Area, Objective b: Increase opportunities to gather, network, and learn from each other.

- Quantify the number of gatherings, including expert speakers, networking events, StEPS pilot meetings, 250th events with partners, and the Annual Meeting. Gatherings may be virtual or in-person. Target 6-8 per year.
- Assess the quality partners gain from gatherings through a survey tool. Inquire about relationships and learning.

Regional Identity

Measure Goal 8: Engage local residents in knowing, preserving, and promoting the Heritage Area themselves, Objective a: Create a module to be included in the tourism ambassador programs being created by DMO partners.

- Quantify the number of people trained with the module.

Organizational

Measure Goal 11: Align the human resources of the Heritage Area with its future needs, Objective a: Diversify the HCWHA Board of Directors.

- Define diversity goals—race/ethnicity, gender, skills, knowledge, geography, etc.?
- Determine whether diversity goals are relative (related to / representative of the regional population, for example) or fixed (a percentage or number within the board).
- Measure board diversity against set goals.

Measure Goal 9: Develop and implement a plan for sustainability for the Heritage Area, Objective b: Develop and implement a plan for sustainable revenue generation.

- Determine categories of revenue to track.
- Determine goals for each category.
- Track revenue against goal for each category.

Measure Goal 10: Examine how digital technologies can help the Heritage Area address the future needs of audiences in sustainable and relevant ways, Objective a: Assess and revise the HCWHA website.

- Quantify website traffic: unique visitors, time on site, what content they seek.

Measure Goal 10: Examine how digital technologies can help the Heritage Area address the future needs of audiences in sustainable and relevant ways, Objective b: Assess and apply relevant emerging social media technologies.

- Quantify social media engagement: followers, likes, shares, comments.

Planning Process & Acknowledgements

The Strategic Planning process began in September 2021. Engagement activities ranged over the planning period through March 2022 and included a variety of activities. Engagements were crafted to share information, solicit input, and garner feedback from an array of stakeholders, including Heritage Area leadership, partner organizations, heritage and culture supporters, and state and regional institutions. These encompassed three in-person countywide listening sessions in each county of the Heritage Area, one virtual Heritage Area-wide listening session, in-person and virtual interviews, in-person and virtual focus groups, an online survey, a HCWHA Board Retreat, a revenue development meeting, an interpreters' workshop, and planning discussions with staff. Conversations were robust, productive, and greatly informed the development of this plan.
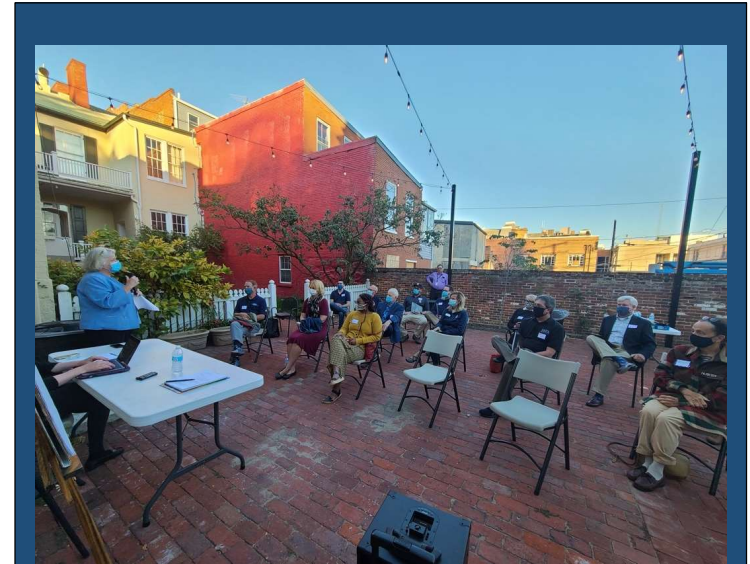
Acknowledgements

Plan Sponsor

Rural Maryland Council

Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Board of Directors

- Kristen McMasters, President
- Shuan Butcher, Vice President
- Stephanie Basalik, Secretary
- Gary Candelaria, Treasurer
- Maria Lane
- John Lyburn
- Catherine Mägi
- Al Martion
- Tereance Moore
- Richard Turner
- David Ziedelis

Three listening sessions informed the beginning of the planning process. The Washington County meeting took place at the Miller House in Hagerstown.

- John Fieseler, Emeritus
- Dennis Frye, Emeritus
- Tom Rifford, Emeritus
- Dan Spedden, Emeritus

Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area Advisory Council

- Joe Adkins
- Andrew Banasik
- Cathy Baty
- Steve Bockmiller
- Michelle Burrelli
- Lynda Eisenberg
- Dennis Frye
- Andrea Gerhard
- Jeremy Hulse
- Meghan Jenkins
- Tracey McIntire
- Kristen McMasters
- Katie Reichard
- James Shriver
- Dan Spedden
- Bonnie Staub
- Susan Trail
- Amanda Whitmore
- Dave Ziedelis

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- Emily Huebner, Assistant Director
- Rachel Nichols, Washington County Heritage Area Assistant
- Nadia Dixon, 2021 Project Assistant

- Jackie Barton, Principal, Birch Wood Planning, LLC
- Lucy Matthews, Projects & Research Manager, Cultural Heritage Partners, PLLC