

To: Delegate Stewart and Members of the Committee
From: The Town of Port Deposit and Bainbridge Development Corporation
Date: March 5, 2025
Subject: Clarification on Park Concept Costs and Fiscal Feasibility

Delegate Stewart and Members of the Committee,

This memorandum serves to provide further clarification on the cost implications of the proposed park concept and the ability of the Town to bear such a financial burden. The current park concept, as proposed, represents a significant cost burden on any entity, whether public or private. This was a key consideration of the advisory group in the suggestion to modify the overall concept and involve multiple entities in the preservation and restoration efforts of these historic treasures.

A primary recommendation to mitigate costs is the reduction of the proposed legislation to encompass 12-19 acres, allowing the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to focus exclusively on the Snow Hill area. This adjustment effectively removes any costs associated with the Tome School or the wooded conservation area, which collectively amount to over \$34,000,000.

While the fiscal note accounts for the necessary infrastructure and utility costs to establish a park, should the Town assume ownership of the Tome School campus, it is likely that a cost-sharing arrangement would be implemented for these expenses, as the infrastructure and utility services would benefit both properties. This cost-sharing strategy would further alleviate the financial burden on DNR. As a result, the revised cost estimate for the park—excluding the Tome School and wooded area and incorporating a cost-share for infrastructure— would likely be as low as \$10,000,000, a significantly more manageable figure for state resources.

Regarding the preservation and restoration of the Tome School campus, discussions with the Town, the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT), and the Bainbridge Development Corporation (BDC) have outlined a phased approach. This plan includes the demolition of the deteriorated wooden cottages, the deconstruction of damaged granite structures, and the immediate stabilization of Madison, Monroe, Headmaster's House, and the facade of Memorial Hall. The estimated cost for this scope of work is approximately \$2,900,000.

The attached concept plan provided by the Town outlines the phased implementation of this project and highlights the projected revenue from the Bainbridge Development that could be reinvested into the initiative. Retaining the Tome School property under local ownership would enable the Town and/or BDC to pursue grant funding and collaborate with private entities, leveraging historic tax credits for investment and preservation. As emphasized in the Maryland Department of Planning Historic Complex Study (2020), public-private partnerships have proven to be the most effective approach for historic preservation and adaptive reuse.

This strategic revision not only ensures the preservation of these historic sites but also distributes financial responsibility in a way that is sustainable and feasible for all stakeholders. We appreciate your time and consideration of this matter and welcome any further discussion or questions.

Attachments: Town Concept Plan & Phasing Overview