



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

March 16, 2026

RE: Support for Preservation Maryland's Lease of the Historic Ellicott City Jail

Members of the Howard County Council,

On behalf of Preservation Maryland (PM), I write to request favorable action and approval of the proposed lease of the vacant Ellicott City Jail. Preservation Maryland has been working collaboratively with Howard County to bring new life to the historic site in accordance with the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan. The approval of this lease is critical to accomplishing the next phase of this dynamic project.

This project represents an example of what can be achieved through collaboration between public and private partners. The historic jail, a part of the greater courthouse complex, is an irreplaceable piece of Howard County's history, and its revitalization holds lasting cultural, educational, and economic benefits. Preservation Maryland, in partnership with Howard County, the University of Maryland's School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (UMD), as well as other important stakeholders, are reactivating the 19th-century Jail into a center for heritage excellence in one of Maryland's most highly visited National Register Historic Districts. **The current vision will:**

- Establish the first of its kind research center to provide UMD architecture, planning and preservation students with opportunities to solve real-world problems alongside PM staff,
- Create a sustainable headquarters for PM and shared community meeting and events space opportunities for other nonprofit organizations and local groups,
- Rehabilitate the character defining historic fabric of the Jail, a contributing resource of the national historic district, and re-use of historic materials in the new interior layout,
- Remove significant areas of impervious surface surrounding the building to create a publicly accessible contemplative green space with art display,
- Add new, meaningful interpretive signage throughout the grounds and building to shed light on its 174-year history.

To date, Preservation Maryland has raised more than \$4 million in private and public grants to support the Jail's rehabilitation, including \$500,000 from the County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. These dollars reflect broad community and statewide support for the shared vision.



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

Approval of the lease will also open additional funding pathways to support the remaining capital costs associated with reactivating the long-vacant space. This includes the potential for receiving federal historic tax credits, (which require at least a 40-year lease to meet IRS standards meant to show long-term investment in a property), along with significant private philanthropy which views an executed lease as proof of the project's viability.

With the County Council's approval, Preservation Maryland will begin a new chapter in Howard County.

Appreciatively,

Nicholas A. Redding
President & CEO