



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Freedman's State Park: Master Plan

Preservation Maryland, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, is soliciting proposals from qualified firms for the development of a concept-level Master Plan for the State of Maryland's inaugural Freedman's State Park, positioned within the Patuxent River State Park in Montgomery County.

To be considered as eligible, the firm providing a submission must be properly licensed in the State of Maryland to practice planning, architecture, engineering, and landscape architecture. Firms must demonstrate experience in master planning, and project teams should include planning, engineering, landscape architecture, and historical and cultural resource expertise.

Preservation Maryland requests that interested parties respond to the solicitation by **4:30 P.M. ET on Tuesday, March 24, 2026**.

1. CLIENT

Preservation Maryland is a statewide non-profit working to protect Maryland's unique and irreplaceable heritage while creating a more equitable and sustainable future. The organization harnesses the power of historic places to revitalize and reinvest in communities, advocate, and build the historic trades workforce for the benefit of all Marylanders. To learn more, visit www.preservationmaryland.org.

Preservation Maryland is working directly with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Maryland Park Service to accomplish capital and planning projects related to the Service's large inventory of historic sites and buildings. The Maryland Park Service and the Department of Natural Resources will be the official recipients of the work provided by the selected firm.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

2.1 Background

Owned by the State of Maryland and managed by the DNR Maryland Park Service, the future Freedman's State Park will be an approximately 1,000-acre park located within the existing boundaries of Patuxent River State Park. The new park will encompass land once owned and farmed by the Howard family.

[Enoch George Howard](#), the family's patriarch, was born into slavery in 1814. At 37, he purchased his own freedom, securing his wife Harriet's two years later and their four eldest children's freedom seven years after that. The Howards later bought the land and home from the family who had once enslaved Harriet. By the time of Enoch's death, the property had more than doubled in size and included a chapel that served as both a place of worship and a school for the local Black community. During his lifetime, Enoch was a highly respected figure, and many of his descendants went on to distinguish themselves through their achievements and service. Since that time, the land has remained largely undeveloped, continuing in agricultural use. Several historical, funerary, agricultural, and archaeological sites present today derive much of their significance from this period of Howard family stewardship and ownership.

In order to recognize this rich history and elevate the contributions of Black Americans in Maryland, the 2022 Great Maryland Outdoors Act (GMOA) directed the establishment of Freedman's State Park. The GMOA charged DNR with establishing the park—as a partnership park managed alongside a local government, a bi-county agency, or a nonprofit organization—to “educate the public about and preserve and interpret the lives and experiences of Black Americans, both before and after the abolition of slavery.”

To date, DNR has met with key stakeholder groups to discuss a stakeholder advisory committee for park planning. DNR also has performed preliminary mapping and planning and has commissioned a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), Historic Structures Report (HSR), and archaeological investigations through Preservation Maryland. See **Attachment A – Completed Work and Documentation** for more information.

2.2 Description

Acting as project manager on behalf of DNR, Preservation Maryland is seeking consultant services to prepare a concept-level Master Plan to advance the development of Freedman’s State Park. The purpose of this project is to produce a planning document that establishes the foundation for future park development.

Project objectives include:

- Compile existing property information and studies.
- Conduct necessary analyses for site planning.
- Engage the public and key stakeholders to identify priorities, park needs, and opportunities that will shape the conceptual design of the park.
- Address the unique history of the park’s resources, highlight the layered stories of the Howard Family and site historical context, and promote connections to other historically significant sites and properties in the area.
- Provide a base-level implementation strategy outlining project phasing, key steps, and considerations to guide subsequent planning.
- Develop two options for site development and, through a public stakeholder process, select a preferred concept for Park development supported by illustrative graphics, maps, conceptual renderings, and preliminary cost estimates.

This project is being executed in partnership with DNR. Preservation Maryland and DNR staff will be involved throughout the entire project. Preservation Maryland will serve as the main point of contact, contract signatory, invoice recipient, and liaison between the hired project professionals and any relevant government agencies, which will include coordination of document submission. DNR will be involved in project meetings, documentation review, as applicable, and site visits and will serve as final authority on the content of the master plan.

2.3 Timeline

Work is expected to begin immediately upon execution of the contract and conclude within 18 months. Respondents should account for ample opportunity within this timeline for DNR discussion, review, and feedback of project progress, milestones, and deliverables, stakeholder and public engagement, and a limited period after the final Master Plan draft submittal to incorporate minor revisions as may be requested by DNR.

3. SERVICES AND SCOPE OF WORK

The consultant team will build upon existing documentation and planning efforts, as identified in **Attachment A**. Where applicable, work recommended shall adhere to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties, and local, state and federal laws and regulations. Anticipated work to be undertaken by the consultant team may include, but is not limited to, the following:

3.1 Services

- Coordinate with Preservation Maryland, DNR, and project stakeholders throughout the duration of the project.
- Establish a project work plan and timeline to be updated and referenced regularly.
- Prepare brief status memos on a quarterly basis.
- Review and synthesize existing documentation and information.

- Conduct an analysis to confirm existing conditions, assess infrastructure and environmental factors, and evaluate potential facility locations, e.g.:
 - Rare/threatened/endangered species
 - Floodplain
 - Drainage/stormwater management
 - Infrastructure evaluation, including utilities siting
 - Site accessibility and circulation review
 - Access feasibility study, including an evaluation of Montgomery County codes and regulations and road standards.
- Review partnership opportunities to set the park within a local and regional context (a preliminary list of partners is provided and will be further informed by discussion with DNR)
- Hold regular, monthly virtual meetings with DNR and Preservation Maryland for status updates, information-gathering, and deliverable feedback
- Prepare for and conduct stakeholder engagement meetings:
 - Expect at least three (3) in-person stakeholder meetings, including Montgomery County, for concept development input and feedback (a finalized list of stakeholders will be provided to the successful Respondent).
- Develop online surveys and solicit public input on site development.
- Prepare for and conduct one (1) public meeting to present preliminary concepts.
- Prepare concepts for park development based on stakeholder and public input. Concepts will consider new facilities and visitor amenities, utilization of historic sites and structures, and key park features, including interpretative, road/trail access, and incorporation of passive park experiences. DNR will evaluate concepts and cost/feasibility for implementation.
- Develop a concept-level master plan document with an overview of the planning process and “Rough Order of Magnitude” cost estimates. The draft plan shall be sufficiently complete with formatted text, concept renderings, maps, photographs, and graphics so that it may be digitally disseminated for feedback from DNR staff, stakeholders, project partners, and the public at large.

3.2 Deliverables

- Quarterly status memos.
- Site assessment reports.
- Stakeholder and public meeting agendas, presentations, handouts, and summaries.
- Public survey results.
- Park development concepts with cost estimates.
- Master plan document encompassing the following elements:
 - Executive summary
 - Site description and significance
 - Outline of planning process and public engagement efforts, establishing:
 - Vision and mission statements
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Constraints and opportunities that consider:
 - Regional/Local setting
 - Existing and Proposed Infrastructure
 - Historical and cultural resource preservation
 - Land restoration

- Partnership collaboration
- Visitor experience
- Site development impact(s)
- Site management
- Finalized preferred concept
- Implementation plan outlining park development phasing and recommendations, accompanied by cost estimates

4. PROJECT BUDGET

This project is supported by grant funding for all related expenses and will be contracted based on a lump sum in negotiation with the selected Respondent. In no event shall the selected Respondent be entitled to receive more than the contracted amount unless authorized in advance and in writing by Preservation Maryland and DNR. Competitiveness of the budget will be considered as part of the proposal review process.

5. INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENTS

5.1 Where to Deliver Submittal

All submittals must be submitted as a single PDF, no more than 25 pages total, to the following email: LHouston@presmd.org.

5.2 Submittal Due Date

Submittals are due by **4:30 P.M. ET on Tuesday, March 24, 2026.**

5.3 Preparation of Submittal

Respondents must submit the following:

- Firm profile(s)
- Qualifications of key personnel, including names, titles, and relevant experience
- Examples of projects similar in scope and scale recently completed (i.e., within the last 7 years)
 - To reduce page count, Respondents may include hyperlinks to project examples.
- Proposed project approach
- Project timeline that indicates durations for key tasks and the overall project
- Itemized project budget
- Three (3) client references, including the full name, telephone number, and email address for the primary point of contact and a one-to-two sentence description of the nature of the project

5.4 Subcontracts

Respondents must identify all portions of the work intended to be performed through subcontractors. Acceptance of the submittal does not necessarily constitute approval of the subcontractors identified therein.

5.5 Minimum Qualifications

Demonstrated experience in planning, park development, and historic sites development is preferred. For purposes of this Qualification, “projects similar in scope and scale” shall be understood to include the multiple of the following elements: 1) engagement-driven planning, including stakeholder workshops, community engagement, and partner coordination; 2) park master planning or concept-level planning for state, regional, or local parks, cultural landscapes, or large public lands; 3) planning for sites with historic, cultural, or natural resource sensitivities, including work informed by Cultural Landscape Reports (CLR), Historic Structures Reports (HSR), or similar studies; 4) cost estimating at the concept or master-planning level, including comparative cost models for multiple alternatives.

5.6 Small Business Enterprise (SBE), Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and/or Woman-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)

Respondents are not required to be or have subcontractors who are certified SBE, MBE, and/or WBE companies. However, use of SBE, MBE, and/or WBE companies is encouraged.

5.7 Inquiries

Questions regarding this RFP must be received at least fourteen (14) days prior to the RFP due date. Questions may be submitted by e-mail to LHouston@presmd.org. Clarifying information and supplemental instructions will be communicated to all prospective Respondents no later than one week / seven (7) days prior to the RFP due date. Submission of a proposal constitutes acknowledgment of receipt of all information pertaining to this RFP.

5.8 Rejection of Submittal

Proposals must be delivered to the specified location and received by the proposal due date to be eligible for consideration. Preservation Maryland and DNR reserve the right to reject submittals not prepared and submitted in accordance with the provisions specified herein and reserves the right to waive any minor deviations or irregularities in an otherwise valid submittal.

6. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

6.1 Evaluation Procedure

Each response will be evaluated by Preservation Maryland and DNR in accordance with the indicated criteria below.

1	Background and Qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Relevant experience (i.e. past performance) regarding public outreach and coordination, park master planning, public lands planning, or historical and cultural resource planning. b) Demonstrated experience coordinating with multiple stakeholders and the public. c) Special expertise of personnel for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cultural landscape analysis and historic preservation planning – Environmental planning, conservation, and resource management – Access, circulation, and site infrastructure planning – Interpretation and visitor experience design
2	Project Approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Names and functions of personnel assigned b) Demonstrated capacity to meet schedule requirements, including assessment of current workload c) Commitment to project completion within time constraints d) Competitive budget
3	Technical Merit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Demonstrated comprehension of tasks to be completed b) Completeness, clarity, and organization of submittal c) Quality and relevance of previous work samples

6.2 Award

Acceptance of the successful Respondent's proposal does not create a contractual relationship. Preservation Maryland and DNR reserve the right to award the agreement to the next available Respondent in the event the

successful Respondent fails to enter into the agreement, or the agreement with said Respondent is terminated within 30 days of the effective date.

7. EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT

Upon Preservation Maryland and DNR's acceptance of the proposal, the successful Respondent must provide:

- Contract for review
- Completed Form W9
- Satisfactory evidence of insurance coverage as required by the State of Maryland and Preservation Maryland including but not limited to:
 - General Liability coverage with minimum limits of no less than \$1,000,000.00 per claim
 - Automobile Liability coverage to include Owned, Non-Owned, and Hired Autos, with minimum combined single limits of no less than \$1,000,000.00 per claim
 - Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability coverage with minimum limits of no less than that required by Maryland law
 - Professional Liability coverage, if applicable, with minimum limits of no less than \$1,000,000.00 per claim
- If ACH payment preferred: Name and email address of individual to whom a secured form can be sent to obtain necessary information

Preservation Maryland and DNR reserve the right to cancel the award of the agreement without liability at any time before the agreement has been fully executed by all parties.



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Attachment A: Completed Work and Documentation

Respondents may access the files below via the following link: [Completed Work and Documentation](#). You will be prompted for a password, which may be obtained by emailing Laura Houston at LHouston@presmd.org.

- A. Park Boundary and Historic Sites Map
- B. Partnership Opportunities Map
- C. Freedman's State Historical Park Cultural Landscape Report
- D. John Howard House Historic Structure Report

The following documentation and information may be made available to the successful Respondent upon project kick-off:

I. Existing Site Documentation:

- a. Archeological reports, including Phase 1A Investigation and GPR fieldwork
- b. Determinations of Eligibility
- c. Scope(s) of work for Enoch Howard House restoration
- d. Scope(s) of work for funerary site conservation
- e. Road access map
- f. Topographical data
- g. Utility data
- h. Property line data
- i. GIS data
- j. Existing trail data
- k. Land Deed Research
- l. Howard Family Research
- m. Enslaver Research
- n. Historic photographs of structures and family members

II. Administrative/Operation Documentation:

- a. Preliminary park development plan
- b. Preliminary cost projections (2022)
- c. Relevant DNR manuals, documents, and/or criteria for park management
- d. Park visitor count—current and projection(s)
- e. Stakeholder list