



FILM TASK FORCE

Final Report

August 10, 2026

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Letter from County Executive Calvin Ball



Howard County is home to robust and thriving arts and cultural communities, historic towns, scenic landscapes, and distinctive neighborhoods. Our county is no stranger to the film and television industry, with many film projects featuring Howard County in productions over the years, supporting our local economy.

In February 2026, I signed Executive Order 2026-04 to establish Howard County's Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force. Tasked with evaluating and making recommendations on strategies to make Howard County a leading film-ready Community in the Mid-Atlantic Region, the Task Force spent seven months meeting with experts, conducting research, and engaging in policy deliberations to prepare this final report.

The recommendations proposed by the FILM Task Force include proposals for new incentives, process streamlining, permitting, logistics, location marketing, and workforce support to build off our strong community assets and support a sustainable and inclusive film economy. Through this Task Force, we aim to grow our efforts to access this underrepresented sector of our arts economy by positioning Howard County as a film-ready, competitive destination for film, television, and media production.

Bringing the film industry back to Howard County will support our robust local workforce, bring in tourism and revenue to our local economy, showcase our unique and beautiful county, and help ignite the creative energy of our creative residents and businesses here in Howard County and the State of Maryland.

I would like to thank our Task Force members for their hard work and thoughtful insights during the last several months. Their wide-ranging and diverse backgrounds and positions were invaluable to shaping this report. I am also deeply grateful to the community members and partners that shared their voices with the Task Force; they brought in further depth and insight to the discussions.

With this FILM Task Force report, we now have a detailed plan for how to move forward and adapt in the rapidly developing film industry and national environment. Through these recommendations, Howard County will be more prepared to meet the needs of this vital industry and grow this sector of our local economy.

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive

Letter from Task Force Co-Chairs





It has been our honor to serve as Co-Chairs of Howard County's Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force. When County Executive Calvin Ball established this Task Force through Executive Order 2026-04, we saw both an opportunity and a responsibility: to build the foundation for a film industry in Howard County that has, for too long, remained an underrecognized part of our local economy and creative life. Howard County was once an important base for large-scale, award-winning film and television production, including House of Cards, VEEP, and The Wire, among others. That market changed as film production tax incentives that once made Maryland competitive were scaled back.

Over the past seven months, the Task Force met six times, welcomed presentations from state and local experts, and listened closely to filmmakers, producers, county staff, and residents who shared their experiences and ideas. What emerged from this process is a clear and shared understanding: film and media production is not a niche pursuit on the margins of our economy. It is a legitimate industry and an important art form, one that deserves the same attention, investment, and infrastructure that Howard County dedicates to sectors like technology, cybersecurity, and medical innovation. For too long, film has been something of an invisible industry here: present in our communities, but without the coordinated support needed to grow.

The 17 recommendations in this report reflect our effort to change that. They call for a dedicated Film Liaison and Film Commission to give the County a consistent point of contact; streamlined permitting and updated facility-use policies to remove friction; new incentives, grants, and workforce partnerships to support both independent productions and larger-scale projects; and a coordinated marketing strategy to make sure Howard County's assets are visible to the industry. Together, these recommendations are designed to build the basic infrastructure Howard County needs so that filmmakers, large and small, find it easy and attractive to bring their productions here.

We view this report not as an endpoint, but as a foundation. Once these recommendations are implemented, we believe they can serve as the basis for continued growth, encouraging education, creating opportunity, and elevating film alongside the other industries that shape Howard County's economic future.

We are deeply grateful to County Executive Calvin Ball for his vision and leadership in establishing this Task Force, and to our fellow Task Force members, Jennifer Jones, Theresa Colvin, Mary Kane, Dewan Clayborn, Kristi Simon, Chester Stacy, Julie Miller, Demitian Gilbert, Nicholas Mooneyhan, Bob Frances, Catherine Batavick, and Josh Slates for their tireless work, expertise, and commitment over the past seven months. We also thank the presenters and subject-matter experts who generously shared their time and insight, the residents who took part in public comment, and our Task Force staff for their support throughout this process.

We are proud to submit these recommendations, and we look forward to working with the County to bring them to life.

Amanda Hof, Co-Chair
Robert Neal Marshall, Co-Chair

Executive Summary

In February 2026, Howard County Executive Calvin Ball established the FILM Task Force for Howard County. The 13-member committee was charged with developing a coordinated strategy to position Howard County as a leading film-ready jurisdiction in Maryland and the Mid-Atlantic region.

While film production contributes to a vibrant arts and culture community, it is also a powerful economic development tool. The industry supports businesses across numerous sectors, creates high-quality jobs, attracts new investment, and generates lasting benefits for the entire community. According to the Motion Picture Association, the film and television industry supported more than 2 million jobs and more than 162,000 businesses across the United States in 2024.

To encourage local filming in the United States, more than 30 states offer film production incentives to encourage local investment from the film industry. Maryland's Film Production Activity Tax Credit is the State's primary incentive to encourage productions to choose the state for filming. According to the Maryland Film Office, since its inception in 2012, the Maryland Film Production Activity Tax Credit has generated a total economic impact of nearly $1.5 billion, driven by 21 major productions, including House of Cards, Veep, Lady in the Lake, and Special Ops: Lioness. These projects have directly spent $827 million in the state, often hiring more than 1,000 Marylanders and utilizing thousands of local businesses per production.

Recognizing this potential and economic opportunity, the FILM Task Force began its work by carrying out the charge set forth in the Executive Order: to evaluate film-related strategies and develop recommendations across four major focus areas: Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining, Incentives & Opportunities, Location Assets & Industry Readiness, and Marketing & Branding Strategies. Through informed discussion, public input, policy research, and stakeholder engagement, the Task Force developed 17 recommendations for Howard County Government and its partner agencies to help make Howard County a more film-friendly and attractive jurisdiction for the industry.

FOCUS AREA #1: INTERAGENCY COORDINATION & PROCESS STREAMLINING

- Review existing workflows for permitting, road closures, insurance requirements, location agreements, and departmental approvals.
- Make recommendations as to necessary updates to County policies, codes, or administrative procedures to reduce friction and improve turnaround times.
- Evaluate and make recommendations as to a unified process or "single point of contact" model for production companies.
- Review long-term coordination functions, such as the creation of a permanent local film council to support the film, television and media industry.

The Task Force developed six recommendations focused on reviewing and updating existing County policies and establishing a single point of contact for film-related requests. It also recommended creating guides and intake forms to help prospective productions navigate County processes more easily and to simplify coordination for County staff.

FOCUS AREA #2: INCENTIVES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Evaluate potential County-specific incentives and fee adjustments to promote the film industry.
- Explore opportunities to align film-industry growth with tourism, small business development, hospitality, and growth of supporting industries.

The Task Force developed four recommendations to expand investment in grant and workforce opportunities, strengthen and grow local film festivals, and advocate at the state level for greater economic and tax incentives to make Maryland a more attractive destination for film production. The Task Force emphasized that while local incentives can help draw smaller and independent productions to Howard County, state-level reforms are necessary for Howard County and Maryland to compete effectively for larger-scale film projects.

FOCUS AREA #3: LOCATION ASSETS & INDUSTRY READINESS

- Make recommendations to assist in the development of a comprehensive inventory of potential filming locations including historic districts, parks, rural landscapes, County-owned facilities, commercial spaces, and adaptive reuse sites.
- Make recommendations on logistical feasibility (access, parking, staging areas, electrical capacity, security considerations).
- Make recommendations on opportunities for County assets, including underused or flexible spaces, to support production needs.
- Make recommendations on ways to access local availability of film-related trades and technical talent.
- Explore and recommend ways to support local small businesses in set construction, catering, transportation, lodging, media services, and related fields.

The Task Force developed four recommendations in this category to strengthen Howard County's ability to showcase its film-ready locations. These recommendations include publishing lists of local filming sites, contributing to statewide databases that promote film locations, and developing more creative studio spaces in County facilities to support small and local producers.

FOCUS AREA #4: MARKETING & BRANDING STRATEGIES

- Make recommendations and provide feedback on a branding and messaging strategy to promote Howard County as a film-ready community.
- Coordinate with Visit Howard County to highlight accommodations, attractions, and local businesses.
- Recommend partnership strategies with the Maryland Film Office, production companies, streaming platforms, and independent filmmakers.
- Evaluate the creation of a digital film website or portal with site inventories, contact information, permitting guidance, and FAQs.

The Task Force developed three recommendations in this focus area, though they closely relate to recommendations under Location Assets & Industry Readiness. These recommendations include creating an official, centralized County film website; developing and funding a campaign to brand Howard County as "film-ready"; and joining the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) and other relevant film associations.

OF THE 17 RECOMMENDATIONS DEVELOPED BY THE TASK FORCE, THE FOLLOWING FIVE WERE IDENTIFIED AS THE HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR LOCAL POLICYMAKERS TO CONSIDER:

1. **Hiring a dedicated film liaison** within the Howard County Tourism Council. The film liaison should be a central figure to manage film-related communications, inquiries, and marketing. Currently, film-related activities are fragmented between departments and agencies within county government and partner agencies. There is no central place or role for film productions to contact the County and navigate permitting, locations, incentives, and other processes. The Film Liaison will address this gap by offering coordinated and streamlined services to support a film-ready county.
2. **Establish an appointed Film Commission**, composed of relevant community leaders and subject matter experts, to continue to review Howard County policy and advise the County, nonprofits, and private organizations on the best practices to make the County attractive for film productions.
3. **Create a dedicated film website** to serve as a central hub of information, marketing, and communication, allowing the County to share information and accept inquiries in one place.
4. **Publish a database of local film locations** to show off Howard County's various scenic and film-ready locations. For example, the County is home to various parks, historic sites, and natural resources that would serve as excellent filming sites.
5. **Invest in a comprehensive branding and marketing plan** to advertise Howard County as a film-ready jurisdiction and a welcoming environment for film productions. Howard County is in a central, scenic area of Maryland, between Baltimore and Washington, DC, and with strong transportation and hospitality infrastructure.

It is important to note that while these recommendations represent the top five proposals put forth by the Task Force, all 17 recommendations included in this report will help advance the film industry in Howard County. Many of the other recommendations do not need to wait for others to be completed before implementation. We encourage policymakers to consider all recommendations fully as the implementation process commences.

Howard County has already demonstrated its potential to host major film and television productions. By implementing the FILM Task Force's recommendations, the County can strengthen that potential and reestablish itself as one of Maryland's premier destinations for filming and production. The remainder of this report provides additional detail on each of the 17 recommendations, along with key information about the Task Force process, public input, and policy deliberations. Each recommendation includes a brief description, implementation actions where applicable, and an estimated cost and implementation timeline.

Task Force Process

Between February and August 2026, the Task Force held six meetings, receiving presentations from state and local industry stakeholders, county departments, and community organizations, while also accepting public comment from interested community members. This section of the report summarizes the work of the Task Force in chronological order, highlighting the focal points and discussions of each meeting.

Meeting 1: February 19, 2026

The Task Force held its kickoff meeting at the Howard County Welcome Center. Staff liaison Felix Facchine reviewed the Task Force's obligations under the Open Meetings Act, including requirements for posting agendas and minutes, providing public access to meetings, and avoiding deliberation among a quorum of members outside of a public meeting. Mr. Facchine also outlined the Task Force's purpose and charge, noting that members were responsible for developing recommendations for a final report due to the County Executive in August. Four areas of focus were identified to guide the Task Force's work: (1) Locations, Assets & Industry Readiness; (2) Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining; (3) Marketing & Branding; and (4) Incentives & Economic Development Tools.

Co-Chair Robert Neal Marshall then presented an overview of Maryland's film incentive landscape, noting that the state ranks approximately 30th out of 41 states offering film incentives, and that the most recent economic impact study on the program dates to 2014. Members discussed potential county-level opportunities that would not depend on state action, including making county-owned properties available at little or no cost, streamlining permitting through a single point of contact, and reducing permit fees to predictable levels.

The discussion also covered the absence of a clear, centralized online entry point for productions seeking information about filming in Howard County, and the possibility of creating a "Film in Howard County" webpage as a single intake funnel.

Members reviewed recent state legislative activity related to the film tax credit, including a prior unsuccessful effort to remove the program's $10 million per-project cap and a proposal to limit rollover credits. The meeting closed with a discussion, led by Co-Chair Amanda Hof, of Howard County's existing strengths and public assets, and how film production spending benefits local hospitality, construction, trades, and services.

Meeting 2: March 30, 2026

The second meeting, held at the Capitoline Center in Historic Ellicott City, began with a presentation from the Maryland Film Industry Coalition (MFIC), represented by Chair Debbie Donaldson Dorsey, Chair of the MFIC Gov't Relations Committee David Bonnet, and Chair of the MFIC Communications Committee Sarah Fales. The presenters reported that updates to Maryland's film production incentives since 2011 have generated an estimated $1.5 billion in economic impact and supported thousands of jobs and businesses. They also emphasized that the tax credit is the single most important factor productions use in choosing a filming location. MFIC provided a legislative update

on the 2026 session, noting that a proposed reduction to the tax credit program via budget reconciliation had been rejected by both chambers, while a proposal to remove the program's $10 million per-project cap remained in conference committee between a Senate version eliminating the cap and a House version proposing a $30 million cap through fiscal year 2030.

Task Force members discussed why productions set in Baltimore are frequently filmed in New York instead, citing New York's roughly $800 million incentive program offering a 30–40% credit compared to Maryland's smaller, lower-ranked program. They identified critical industry needs, including predictable incentives, a rapid-response film liaison function, and streamlined permitting, as well as structural issues including insufficient funding scale and annual uncertainty in the state program. Potential recommendation areas emerging from the presentation included Howard County exploring membership in the Association of Film Commissioners International, developing a film-ready certification model, evaluating integration with the state's Reel-Scout location database, and assessing creation of a permanent film liaison role.

The Task Force then accepted public comment from seven individuals, including a creator-economy advocate, an IATSE Local 487 member, an independent filmmaker, a production sound manager, a producer, a television writer, and a Teamsters representative. Recurring themes included the need to integrate the creator economy into the County's film strategy, the importance of permitting reform, workforce retention challenges (including a cited disparity of roughly 1,500 Teamsters working in film in Atlanta compared to about 40 in Baltimore), and the competitiveness of incentives in a global production market.

Following public comment, the Task Force received a legislative update that the state tax credit itself was likely to be preserved, though the tax credit cap issue remained unresolved. Task Force members discussed a work plan built around the State's location database, a resource directory for crew, equipment, hotels, catering, and vendors, and private-sector location engagement (farms, warehouses, and private estates). The Task Force outlined a set of near-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities, ranging from developing a county location inventory to eventually building a film-ready certification model, marketing campaign, and regional collaboration strategy with neighboring jurisdictions.

Meeting 3: April 30, 2026

The third meeting, held at the George Howard Building in Ellicott City, focused on county and community facilities as potential film locations. Anna Hunter of the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) presented DRP's filming inventory, which includes 12 historic sites, 8 regional parks, roughly 30 neighborhood parks, three Natural Resource Management Areas, and a network of private farms maintained for rural filming options. Hunter described operational requirements, including a 100% on-site staffing requirement, mandatory certificates of insurance, defined lead times, and multi-agency coordination with Risk Management, the Office of Law, and General Services. She noted that DRP had facilitated only about one major filming agreement in the past year, and that a recent project required more than 30 emails before the formal process began, underscoring the case for a more centralized intake process. Ms. Hunter also highlighted geographic advantages, including clustered filming zones around Historic Ellicott City, Rockburn Branch Park, and Belmont Manor that would enable efficient multi-site filming.

Task Force member Julie Miller then presented on behalf of the Columbia Association (CA), describing CA's scale of more than 60 facilities, 3,600 acres of open

space, and 95 miles of pathways, along with specific filming-relevant assets such as fitness clubs, aquatics facilities, the CA Art Center (previously used in filming for Veep), the Lakefront Stage at Lake Kittamaqundi, and the historic Oakland Manor. Miller noted that CA currently has no standardized process for handling film requests, relying instead on inquiries. Task Force member Demitian Gilbert cited an example of recent filming at the Columbia Lakefront – a request related to a TV show that arrived only one day before filming – illustrating the operational strain caused by the lack of a centralized intake system for film requests.

Task Force staff member Felix Facchine presented comparative research on film office and liaison structures in comparable jurisdictions, including Somerset County, NJ; Rockland County, NY; Marin County, CA; Fayette County, GA; and the Prince George's County and Baltimore City film offices. Key takeaways included the importance of a centralized film liaison, coordinated permitting, the need for Howard County to define its marketing "pitch," and the significance of workforce development partnerships. Building on this research, the Task Force discussed a recommendation to establish a coordinated film office, liaison, or commission, and reviewed the state's Reel-Scout location database as a tool Howard County could use to curate and advertise its own locations.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of potential recommendations, including a curated list of film-friendly restaurants and hotels, a guide for businesses interested in supporting the film sector, small grants for local and independent productions, state-level advocacy for film incentives, and workforce development partnerships involving Howard Community College and local schools.

Meeting 4: May 20, 2026

The fourth meeting, held at the George Howard Building in Ellicott City, shifted focus toward supporting local filmmakers and the film workforce. Barbara Valentino, CEO of Docs in Progress, joined virtually to present on her organization's nearly 20 years of work supporting documentary filmmakers through workshops, fellowships, screenings, fiscal sponsorship, and community engagement, including the Village Reels intergenerational filmmaking program and a Filmmaker Disability Initiative. Ms. Valentino described a severe downturn in film industry activity nationally, including in California, and the resulting long-term unemployment facing independent filmmakers, along with reduced federal and humanities grant funding. She identified filmmakers' primary needs as income opportunities, networking and community gathering spaces, and local government support through operating grants, video/social media contracts, and programming partnerships.

Task Force members discussed how the County might support local filmmakers alongside efforts to attract larger productions, including the potential for local film festivals, government-sponsored short film competitions, 48-hour film project/festivals, and workforce apprenticeship opportunities. Co-Chair Robert Neal Marshall discussed the history and continuation of the Columbia Maryland Film Festival, including its role sustaining arts programming during the COVID-19 pandemic and its current support for local and student filmmakers. Demitian Gilbert then presented a proposed Howard County Film Hospitality Initiative, emphasizing Howard County's dense concentration of hotels and restaurants, geographic convenience, and diverse filming locations, and recommending the establishment of vetted hospitality partners and centralized resource packets covering lodging, catering, transportation, and union-compliant accommodations. Co-Chair Amanda Hof discussed potential coordination with the County's Tourism office on request-for-proposal coordination, hotel matching, and transportation planning.

To close the meeting, Felix Facchine announced that the Task Force was entering the final phase of research and recommendation development.

Meeting 5: June 22, 2026

The Task Force held its fifth meeting at the George Howard Building on June 22. The Task Force received a presentation from Wendy Levy, Executive Director of The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture, on the organization's nationally recognized Arts2Work Registered Apprenticeship Program. Ms. Levy described career pathways for multimedia producers, video editors, digital marketing specialists, graphic designers, and digital archivists, along with pre-apprenticeship opportunities that allow students to begin training as early as high school and receive industry certifications and paid work experience. Ms. Levy highlighted Maryland success stories, including the placement of the program's first apprentice at Wide Angle Youth Media in Baltimore. Levy emphasized the importance of building sustainable, year-round creative-economy employment rather than relying solely on temporary film production work.

In response to member questions about funding and employer incentives, Ms. Levy highlighted that Maryland currently offers wage reimbursements and training support for employers participating in apprenticeship programs. Task Force members discussed several potential Howard County applications, including creative apprenticeships through the County's existing Apprenticeship Opportunity Program (AOP), integration of podcasting, storytelling, and digital media production into the County's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), storytelling support for local businesses through Visit Howard County, and potential partnerships with Howard Community College's new Workforce and Trades Center in fields such as welding, carpentry, and set construction.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of a draft recommendation matrix presented by Task Force staff member Felix Facchine, intended to organize the Task Force's final recommendations by implementation action, responsible agency, estimated cost, timeline, and priority ranking. Members discussed each draft recommendation and offered comments and revisions to be incorporated into the final report. Task Force members noted that a priority recommendation is to create a dedicated film liaison position to serve as a single point of contact for productions, coordinate among county departments, and connect productions to workforce and funding opportunities. Members also discussed creating a permanent film commission or advisory board to continue the Task Force's work after its final report, and marketing and branding recommendations including a dedicated film website and membership in film-industry associations.

Mr. Facchine closed the meeting by reviewing next steps, noting that recommendations remain in draft form and will continue to be refined and that final recommendations and the completed report were expected to be ready for a final Task Force vote and submission to Howard County leadership in August.

Meeting 6: August 10, 2026

The Task Force held its sixth and final meeting on August 10, 2026, at the George Howard Building in Ellicott City. During the meeting, the Task Force discussed the draft report and made changes to certain recommendations and report language. Following discussion of the draft report, the Task Force voted unanimously to approve the final report and send the report to the County Executive to complete its charge under Executive Order 2026-04.

Task Force Recommendations

Guide to Recommendations

Estimated Cost: each recommendation includes an estimate of anticipated cost to implement, which are defined below.

- No Cost
- Low Cost: under $25k
- Medium Cost: $25k - $100k
- High Cost: $100k+

Anticipated timeframe to implement the recommendation: each recommendation includes an estimate of the timeframe to implement, which are defined below.

- Short Term: within 6 months
- Medium Term: 6 months to 2 years
- Long Term: 2 years+

Category 1: Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining

Recommendation 1: Create a dedicated film liaison position for Howard County

The Task Force recommends that the County establish a dedicated Film Liaison position to act as a single point of contact for film outreach. Establishing this role will strengthen coordination, streamline services and information, and reduce fragmentation between departments. The Film Liaison role will coordinate with the Department of Recreation & Parks (DRP), Risk Management (RM), Department of General Services (DGS), Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits (DILP), Howard County Police Department (HCPD), Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS), Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA), Visit Howard County (the Howard County Tourism Council), etc. The Task Force recommends that the Film Liaison position be housed within Visit Howard County, which currently receives and coordinates filming requests and is best positioned to advance logistics, operations, and marketing support for the film sector.

Implementation Actions:

1. Secure County funding for the Film Liaison position in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2028 Operating Budget through additional funding to Visit Howard County.

1. Identify dedicated office space for the Film Liaison within a county or partner-managed facility, such as the Howard County Welcome Center or the Maryland Innovation Center (MIC).Recruit and hire a film liaison.

    - High estimated cost
    - Medium term implementation timeline

Recommendation 2: Create a Howard County Film Commission

The Task Force recommends that the County create a local Howard County Film Commission housed within Visit Howard County (the Howard County Tourism Council) to provide oversight, guidance, and recommendations to the Film Liaison and related county departments, nonprofits, and partner agencies. The Film Commission should be comprised of experts in the film industry, private sector, economic development professionals, business leaders, and the hospitality sector (restauranteurs, hoteliers, etc.). The County should consider including ex-officio representation from key agencies and stakeholders, including Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits (DILP), Howard County Police Department (HCPD), Department of Recreation & Parks (DRP), Columbia Association, and other public/quasi-public agencies and local institutions.

Implementation Actions:

1. Determine the structure, memberships, and role of the Film Commission.

1. Establish the Commission through local legislation or governance processes.

    - Low estimated cost
    - Medium term implementation timeline

Recommendation 3: Create an intake form for prospective film productions

The Task Force recommends that the County and/or a future film liaison create an intake form for prospective film productions to signal interest, receive information, streamline communications, and provide a single point-of-contact. The purpose of this intake form would be to centralize and focus the spread out and de-centralized series of agencies that a prospective film production would have to contact individually.

- Low estimated cost
- Short term implementation timeline

Recommendation 4: Review and update County policies on use of facilities

The Task Force recommends that the County review and update Howard County policies on the use of county facilities for filming locations. The goal of this recommendation is to reduce costs, eliminate barriers, and streamline the process for receiving county approval to film on publicly owned sites in Howard County. Howard County Government and the Department of Recreation and Parks already have a Use of Facilities policy that permits filming at County-owned locations. However, this policy does not address fee waivers, permits, and other requirements that are in place for film productions.
The Task Force recommends reducing and minimizing fees for use of county facilities wherever possible to incentivize productions to come to Howard County.

- Low estimated cost
- Medium term implementation timeline

Recommendation 5: Streamline and create a guide for the permitting process

The Task Force recommends that the County streamline the permitting process and create a permitting guide for all film production needs (e.g., special event permits, traffic permits, temporary structures permits, etc.) with accessible permitting costs to encourage film productions with low barrier to entry.
The Task Force recommends that the County explore a unified permit for film productions that includes information on all impacts to support streamlined and efficient approvals.

Implementation Actions:

1. Compile and consolidate all permits into a single permit or a permitting checklist for film productions
2. Consider waiving permit fees for small and independent productions.
    - Low estimated cost
    - Medium term implementation timeline

Recommendation 6: Develop a film guide for private organizations

The Task Force recommends that the County and/or a future film liaison develop a guide of best practices for dealing with film productions for private organizations (e.g. Columbia Association) and businesses (e.g. Merriweather District) that are interested in serving as film locations and supporting film industry needs. This film guide and other resources should be centrally located on a film website.

- Low estimated cost
- Short term implementation timeline

Category 2: Incentives & Opportunities

Recommendation 1: Establish small grants for local and independent film productions

The Task Force recommends that the County create new opportunities for small and independent film productions to succeed and grow in Howard County. This can be accomplished by establishing small, competitive grants to support local and independent film productions. For example, the Baltimore Mayor's Office of Arts, Culture and Entertainment and the Baltimore Film Office offer an annual Baltimore Screenwriters Competition that supports screenwriters, expands youth participation in the arts, and offers financial awards to winners. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Prince George's County offered a Film Grant Program, which was a one-time grant program to provide financial and technical assistance to filmmakers in Prince George's County, up to $25,000 per production/project. Howard County should explore establishing similar programs that are specifically tailored to small, local, and independent productions/artists to support the local creative economy. Larger financial incentives for major productions are likely only effective if done at the state level.

Implementation Actions:

1. Identify a host organization or entity to manage the grants program, screenwriter competitions, and/or awards program. This could be accomplished through existing or new arts grants offered by the Howard County Arts Council (HCAC), which is the County's designated arts council.
2. Secure County funds to support a small grants program.
3. Collaborate with the Maryland Film Office (MFO) and Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) to promote the program.

- Medium estimated cost
- Medium term implementation timeline

Recommendation 2: Support and expand local film festivals

The Task Force recommends that the County pursue strategies to strengthen support for existing film festivals in Howard County (e.g. the Columbia Maryland Film Festival) and support the expansion of new local film festivals, such as The 48 Hour Film Project. Local film festivals can boost the economy through increases to tourism and visitor spending. Furthermore, local film festivals can enhance community education and engagement with the film sector, providing greater visibility for local productions.

Local festivals such as the Columbia Maryland Film Festival promote film through screenings, curated conversations, and other events centered around film. The goal of The 48 Hour Film Project is to support local creators who write, film, and produce a short film within a short period of time, such as a weekend, to be submitted for recognition during a film festival. Both these types of film festivals offer distinct benefits to the film sector and can drive economic outcomes and creativity.

Through this recommendation, the Task Force recommends that the County encourage partnerships with nonprofits and community organizations to host screenings and film festival events. Additionally, the County should encourage multi-day film festivals that promote regional tourism during priority seasons.

Implementation Actions:

1. Invest in a small grants program to support local film festivals.
2. Allow use of county facilities in-kind for hosting film festivals.
3. Foster local partnerships, such as with Columbia Association, for local screening locations.
4. Incentivize multi-day festivals during priority seasons when tourism is low.
    - Low estimated cost
    - Medium term implementation timeline

Recommendation 3: Participate in State-level advocacy for expanded incentives

The FILM Task Force recognizes that the most significant financial incentives that attract film productions to Maryland are offered at the State level. While recommendations on structure of these State incentives are outside of the scope of the Task Force and the authority of the County, the Task Force recommends that Howard County Government and aligned partner agencies advocate at the state level to encourage broader economic film incentives across Maryland.

Advocacy to the State may include recommendations for the State to:

1. Expand the annual tax credit allowance for film productions offered by the Maryland Department of Commerce to a recommended $30 million - $100 million annual tax credit cap, up from the current annual cap of $10 million.
2. Ensure continued investment and allocation of State tax credits to local and independent film productions to promote the local arts ecosystem in Maryland.
3. Explore a regional tax benefit/bonus for film productions that locate in Maryland counties, such as Howard County and other counties in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

Implementation Actions:

Develop an advocacy agenda to coordinate advocacy to the State of Maryland on improvements to existing film incentives.

- No estimated cost
- Short term implementation timeline

Recommendation 4: Invest in workforce development and apprenticeship opportunities in the creative economy

The Task Force recommends that the County invest in workforce development programs to specifically support employment opportunities in the creative economy. The County should explore utilizing its existing Apprenticeship Opportunity Program (AOP) to support the creation of apprenticeships in film-adjacent fields, such as media production, digital video editing, and graphic design. These apprenticeships could be sponsored by local or regional employers that serve Howard County and incentivized through AOP. Successful workforce programs offered in Maryland include apprenticeships hosted by the nonprofit Wide Angle Youth Media through the Arts2Work program offered by The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture.

Additionally, the Task Force recommends working with local educational institutions such as Howard Community College (HCC) and Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) to review workforce development programs offered at the Cathy and Danny Bell Workforce Development and Trades Center at HCC and the Career and Technical Education Center through HCPSS.

- Medium estimated cost
- Medium term implementation timeline

Category 3: Location Assets & Industry Readiness

Recommendation 1: Create a Howard County film hospitality guide

The Task Force recommends the creation of a Howard County film hospitality guide that recruits, vets, and promotes hospitality partners that can support the film industry and local productions. The guide should include resource packets with hotel/lodging information, restaurants/catering options, transportation resources, etc. The purpose of this guide would be to highlight the film-readiness of Howard County, showcase the County's robust slate of hospitality options, and inform productions of readily available services. Creating, updating, and distributing this guide should fall under the responsibilities of a film liaison role within the Howard County Tourism Council, once created.

Implementation Actions:

1. Define film-ready standards and needs in the hospitality sector to create the guide.
2. Recruit initial hospitality partners to pilot the guide.
3. Pilot with active productions, then evaluate and scale as needed.
    - Low estimated cost
    - Short term implementation timeline

Recommendation 2: Develop creator-focused studio spaces

The Task Force recommends exploring new creator-focused studio space for local filmmakers and artists to produce, film, create, and address industry needs. Establishing flexible studio space can support the creative economy as well as the traditional film industry, depending on size and resources. Due to limited resources, the Task Force recommends that this be first piloted within existing facilities, such as those owned or operated by the County or the Howard County Arts Council, to better assess demand and impact before scaling.

Implementation Actions:

1. Evaluate existing county-owned and managed facilities for potential studio space.
2. Explore new space in future county facilities or buildings.
3. Coordinate with Howard County Arts Council (HCAC) on potential film studio guidelines and program.
4. Partner with the Howard County Library System (HCLS) to review spaces and services at different library branches in Howard County.
    - High estimated cost
    - Long term implementation timeline

Recommendation 3: Partner with MFO to participate in a filming location database

The Task Force recommends that the County partner with the Maryland Film Office (MFO) to participate in a standardized filming location database and advertise Howard County filming locations on a state-level database. The State currently advertises filming locations across Maryland through the Reel-Scout software. However, this software is outdated and requires frequent updates, database management, and active participation from locations, which limits impact of the software. The County should evaluate participating in Reel-Scout or any subsequent location database software that the State of Maryland utilizes to advertise filming locations owned by Howard County.

- Low estimated cost
- Short term implementation timeline

Recommendation 4: Publish list of ideal County-owned potential filming locations

The Task Force recommends that the County update and publish a list of ideal and available County-owned locations that can be used for filming locations. These locations should include at minimum: historic sites, parks, public buildings, architecturally significant facilities and areas, natural resources, and major location settings. Examples can include the historic Longwood Property (the site of future Public Gardens), the Patapsco Female Institute, and other historic areas such as Main Street in Historic Ellicott City, Historic Savage, and Blandair Regional Park.

- Low estimated cost
- Short term implementation timeline

Category 4: Marketing & Branding Strategies

Recommendation 1: Market Howard County as a "film-ready" jurisdiction

The Task Force recommends that the County invest resources to develop a marketing strategy for Howard County as a "film-ready" jurisdiction that offers streamlined coordination for film productions, quality filming sites, an ideal location (proximity to D.C., Baltimore, BWI, Mid-Atlantic), and local incentives and business resources to support film productions. This branding and marketing campaign must be accompanied with resources to promote and advertise Howard County's efforts as a film-ready jurisdiction. The Task Force recommends exploring local competitions among creators to promote and market Howard County as a film-ready jurisdiction.

- High estimated cost
- Long term implementation timeline

Recommendation 2: Create a film website

The Task Force recommends that the County or its assigned implementation agency develop a centralized and dedicated film website or webpage. The website should include filming site location inventory, rules & regulations, permit information, contracts and Certificate of Insurance (COI) templates, and a point of contact for film inquiries (i.e. the Film Liaison). The film website should also include an interactive map/guide for past film productions in Howard County to promote local film tourism. This website would serve as the main medium through which any film productions would assess the film readiness of Howard County.

An effective website will be paramount for marketing the County as a film-ready jurisdiction and should complement the marketing efforts called for by Category 4 – Recommendation 1. The County and partner agencies should consider the most effective way to advertise the film website, such as a standalone microsite, to generate more traction.

Implementation Actions:

1. Determine a hosting agency or partner to create and manage the film website, such as the Howard County Tourism Council.
2. Appropriate funding for website development, if needed.
3. Launch and advertise film website.
    - Low estimated cost
    - Short term implementation timeline

Recommendation 3: Become a member of the AFCI

The Task Force recommends that Howard County become a member of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI). Local Film Commissions certified by AFCI must be endorsed by the local government they represent/ serve. The Task Force also recommends membership to other relevant film associations for counties and municipalities that provide resources, information, and best practices for the film sector.

- Low estimated cost
- Medium term implementation timeline

Acknowledgements

The FILM Task Force extends its sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed time, expertise, and insight to this process over the past seven months. We thank County Executive Calvin Ball for his vision in establishing this Task Force through Executive Order 2026-04 and for his continued support of Howard County's arts and creative economy.

We are especially grateful to the members of the Task Force, who volunteered countless hours to attend meetings, review research, and deliberate on recommendations: Co-Chairs Amanda Hof and Robert Neal Marshall, Jennifer Jones, Theresa Colvin, Mary Kane, Dewan Clayborn, Kristi Simon, Chester Stacy, Julie Miller, Demitian Gilbert, Nicholas Mooneyhan, Bob Frances, Catherine Batavick, and Josh Slates. Their diverse backgrounds and perspectives span economic development, the arts, hospitality, county facilities, and the film industry itself. The Task Force members were essential to shaping a well-rounded set of recommendations.

The Task Force also thanks the many presenters and subject-matter experts who generously shared their knowledge over the course of this process, including:

- The Maryland Film Industry Coalition (Debbie Donaldson Dorsey, David Bonnet, and Sarah Fales), for its overview of Maryland's film incentive landscape and legislative environment;
- Anna Hunter of the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, for her presentation on County filming policies and facilities as filming locations;
- Julie Miller of the Columbia Association, for her presentation on CA policies and facilities that could serve as filming locations;
- Barbara Valentino of Docs in Progress, for her insights on supporting local and independent filmmakers; and
- Wendy Levy and Sonia Dowuona of The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture, for their presentation on the Arts2Work Registered Apprenticeship Program and creative workforce development.

We also thank the members of the public who took the time to share their perspectives during public comment periods, including local filmmakers, producers, union representatives, and creative-economy advocates. Their voices ensured that this report reflects the needs of both major productions and Howard County's independent filmmaking community.

Finally, the Task Force thanks its staff – Felix Facchine, Lola Oduyoye, and Ian Tyrrell – for their support in coordinating meetings, conducting research, and drafting this report.

Conclusion

Over the course of seven months, the FILM Task Force brought together county officials, industry professionals, community organizations, and residents to examine how Howard County can better position itself to attract and support film, television, and media production. What emerged from this process is a clear picture and directive: Howard County has the locations, infrastructure, and community assets to become a competitive, film-ready jurisdiction. However, realizing that potential requires sustained coordination, targeted investment, and a unified approach across county government and its partners.

The 17 recommendations outlined in this report are designed to work together. A dedicated Film Liaison and Film Commission would give the County a consistent point of contact and ongoing oversight; streamlined permitting and updated facility-use policies would reduce the friction that has historically discouraged productions from choosing Howard County; new incentives, grants, and workforce partnerships would support both large-scale productions and the County's independent filmmakers and creative workforce; and a coordinated marketing and branding strategy would ensure that Howard County's efforts translate into real visibility within a competitive regional and national market. It is important to note that the creation of a dedicated Film Liaison is foundational to many of the recommendations included in this report.

While many of these recommendations can be accomplished absent a dedicated Film Liaison, they may be more limited in efficacy without a dedicated staff resource supporting the film sector and coordinating policies and programs across various departments, offices, and partner agencies.

The Task Force recognizes that Howard County cannot control every factor that determines where productions choose to film, especially state-level tax incentives which remain the single largest driver of location decisions. However, Howard County does control its own readiness: how easy it is to get a permit, how visible its locations are, how well it supports its local creative workforce, and how clearly it communicates that it welcomes this industry. This report is intended to serve as an actionable roadmap for strengthening that readiness.

The Task Force respectfully submits these recommendations to Howard County Executive Calvin Ball for consideration and implementation. We are optimistic that, with continued commitment, Howard County can once again become a destination of choice for film and television production – one that supports local jobs, strengthens the creative economy, and showcases Howard County's distinctive character on screens across the region and beyond.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Task Force Members

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Amanda Hof,
Co-Chair

Robert Neal Marshall,
Co-Chair

Jennifer Jones,
Howard County Economic Development Authority

Theresa Colvin,
Howard County Arts Council

Catherine Batavick,
Maryland Film Office (February 2026 – April 2026)

Josh Slates,
Maryland Film Office (May 2026 – August 2026)

Mary Kane,
Maryland Chamber of Commerce

Dewan Clayborn,
Central Maryland Chamber of Commerce

Kristi Simon,
Howard County Chamber of Commerce

Chester Stacy,
Production Design Professional

Julie Miller,
Columbia Association

Demitian Gilbert,
The Collective

Nicholas Mooneyhan,
Department of Recreation and Parks

Bob Frances,
Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits

TASK FORCE STAFF

Felix Facchine,
Chief of Staff

Lola Oduyoye,
Administrative Assistant

Ian Tyrrell,
Policy Intern

Appendix 2: Recommendation Matrix

Rec. #	Rec. Category	Recommendation	Implementing Actions (if applicable)	Implementing Agency	Estimated Cost	Implementation Timeline
	Categories: *1 - Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining* *2 - Incentives & Opportunities* *3 - Location Assets & Industry Readiness* *4 - Marketing & Branding Strategies*	*Description of recommendations with high-level overview*	*Actions that can be taken to implement the recommendation in an actionable way*	*Suggested county department or partner agency/nonprofit to implement*	***Estimated Cost Tier:*** *No Cost* *Low Cost (under $25k)* *Medium Cost ($25k - $100k)* *High Cost ($100k+)*	***Anticipated timeframe to implement the recommendation:*** *Short Term (Within 6 months)* *Medium Term (6 months to 2 years)* *Long Term (2 years+)*
1	Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining	Create a dedicated Film Liaison position for Howard County	1. Secure County funding for the Film Liaison position in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2028 Operating Budget through additional funding to Visit Howard County. 2. Identify dedicated office space for the Film Liaison within a county or partner-managed facility, such as the Howard County Welcome Center or the Maryland Innovation Center (MIC). 3. Recruit and hire a film liaison.	Visit Howard County (Tourism) County Administration	High Cost	Medium Term
2	Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining	Create a Howard County Film Commission	1. Determine the structure, memberships, and role of the Film Commission. 2. Establish the Commission through local legislation or governance processes.	Tourism County Administration	Low Cost	Medium Term
3	Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining	Create an intake form for prospective film productions		Tourism Film Liaison	Low Cost	Short Term
4	Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining	Review and update County policies on use of facilities		County Administration Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) Department of General Services (DGS) Risk Management Film Liaison Film Commission	Low Cost	Medium Term
5	Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining	Streamline and create a guide for the permitting process	1. Compile and consolidate all permits into a single permit or a permitting checklist for film productions. 2. Consider waiving permit fees for small and independent productions.	Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits (DILP) Howard County Police Department (HCPD)	Low Cost	Medium Term
6	Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining	Develop a Film Guide for private organizations		Tourism Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA)	Low Cost	Short Term
7	Incentives & Opportunities	Establish small grants for local and independent film productions	1. Identify a host organization or entity to manage the grants program, screenwriter competitions, and/or awards program. This could be accomplished through existing or new arts grants offered by the Howard County Arts Council (HCAC), which is the County's designated arts council. 2. Secure County funds to support a small grants program. 3. Collaborate with the Maryland Film Office (MFO) and Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) to promote the program.	Film Liaison Howard County Arts Council (HCAC) County Administration	Medium Cost	Medium Term
8	Incentives & Opportunities	Support and expand local film festivals	1. Invest in a small grants program to support local film festivals. 2. Allow use of county facilities in-kind for hosting film festivals. 3. Foster local partnerships, such as with Columbia Association, for local screening locations. 4. Incentivize multi-day festivals during priority seasons when tourism is low.	Film Liaison HCAC DRP	Low Cost	Medium Term
9	Incentives & Opportunities	Participate in State-level advocacy for expanded incentives	1. Develop an advocacy agenda to coordinate advocacy to the State of Maryland on improvements to existing film incentives.	County Administration Tourism HCEDA HCAC	No Cost	Short Term
10	Incentives & Opportunities	Invest in workforce development and apprenticeship opportunities in the creative economy	N/A	Office of Workforce Development (OWD) Nonprofits HCEDA County Administration	Medium Cost	Medium Term
11	Location Assets & Industry Readiness	Create a Howard County Film Hospitality Guide	1. Define film-ready standards and needs in the hospitality sector to create the guide. 2. Recruit initial hospitality partners to pilot the guide. 3. Pilot with active productions, then evaluate and scale as needed.	Tourism HCEDA	Low Cost	Short Term

Rec. #	Rec. Category	Recommendation	Implementing Actions (if applicable)	Implementing Agency	Estimated Cost	Implementation Timeline
12	Location Assets & Industry Readiness	Develop creator-focused studio spaces	1. Evaluate existing county-owned and managed facilities for potential studio space. 2. Explore new space in future county facilities or buildings. 3. Coordinate with Howard County Arts Council (HCAC) on potential film studio guidelines and program. 4. Partner with the Howard County Library System (HCLS) to review spaces and services at different library branches in Howard County.	County Administration DGS DRP Howard County Library System (HCLS) HCAC	High Cost	Long Term
13	Location Assets & Industry Readiness	Partner with the MFO to participate in a filming location database	N/A	Tourism DRP County Administration	Low Cost	Short Term
14	Location Assets & Industry Readiness	Publish list of ideal County-owned potential filming locations	N/A	DRP DGS County Administration	Low Cost	Short Term
15	Marketing & Branding Strategies	Market Howard County as a "film-ready" jurisdiction	N/A	Tourism	High Cost	Long Term
16	Marketing & Branding Strategies	Create a film website	1. Determine a hosting agency or partner to create and manage the film website, such as the Howard County Tourism Council. 2. Appropriate funding for website development, if needed. 3. Launch and advertise film website.	Tourism	Low Cost	Short Term
17	Marketing & Branding Strategies	Become a member of the AFCI	N/A	Tourism County Administration	Low Cost	Medium Term

Appendix 3: Executive Order 2026-04

County Executive

of

Howard County, Maryland

Executive Order: 2026-04
Date: February 19, 2026
Subject: Creating the Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force

WHEREAS, filming can boost the local economy through job creation and increased business for local vendors; and

WHEREAS, a Film Commission can help identify and promote opportunities for local businesses to engage with film productions; and

WHEREAS, a Film Commission can also make recommendations to streamline the permitting process for filmmakers, making it easier to navigate local regulations and can recommend guidelines to protect community interests and public spaces during filming; and

WHEREAS, I wish to establish a Film Industry and Location Marketing "FILM" Task Force to evaluate current capabilities, recommend operational improvements, and design a comprehensive framework for incentives, logistics, permitting, workforce, and location marketing that supports a sustainable and inclusive film economy in Howard County, thus making Howard County a "Film-Ready Community"; and

WHEREAS, the goal of this Task Force is to further develop this important component of Howard County's economy, advancing tourism, local spending, employment, and other economic benefits that create a strong return-on-investment for Howard County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED, that the Film Industry and Location Marketing "FILM" Task Force is established.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Task Force shall conduct studies and reviews and provide advice and recommendations on the following areas:

1. Incentives and economic development tools that may make Howard County an attractive film location including reviews, advice and recommendations on:
    a. Local incentive models that successfully attract productions.
    b. Potential County-specific incentives and fee adjustments to promote the film industry.
    c. Opportunities to align film-industry growth with tourism, small business development, hospitality, and growth of supporting industries.

2. Location Assets & Industry Readiness
    a. Make recommendations ~~to assist~~ in the development of a comprehensive inventory of potential filming locations including historic districts, parks, rural landscapes, County-owned facilities, commercial spaces, and adaptive reuse sites.
    b. Make recommendations on logistical feasibility (access, parking, staging areas, electrical capacity, security considerations).
    c. Make recommendations on opportunities for County assets, including underused or flexible spaces, to support production needs.
    d. Make recommendations on ways to access local availability of film-related trades and technical talent.
    e. Explore and recommend ways to support local small businesses in set construction, catering, transportation, lodging, media services, and related fields.

3. Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining
    a. Review existing workflows for permitting, road closures, insurance requirements, location agreements, and departmental approvals.
    b. Make recommendations as to necessary updates to County policies, codes, or administrative procedures to reduce friction and improve turnaround times.
    c. Evaluate and make recommendations as to a unified process or "single point of contact" model for production companies.
    d. Review long-term coordination functions, such as the creation of a permanent local film council to support the film, television and media industry.

4. Marketing and Branding Strategies
    a. Make recommendations and provide feedback on a branding and messaging strategy to promote Howard County as a film-ready community.
    b. Coordinate with Visit Howard County to highlight accommodations, attractions, and local businesses.
    c. Recommend partnership strategies with the Maryland Film Office, production companies, streaming platforms, and independent filmmakers.
    d. Evaluate the creation of a digital film website or portal with site inventories, contact information, permitting guidance, and FAQs.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, the Task Force will produce a Film-Ready Community Action Plan for Howard County, which will be a comprehensive strategic plan detailing short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations for building a sustainable local film economy. The Action Plan will include recommendations on the following areas:

- Incentives & Policy Recommendations – a set of proposed incentives, fee structures, permitting adjustments, and administrative improvements to attract and support productions.
- Draft Countywide Film Location Inventory – an organized, digital catalogue of filming locations including photographs, descriptions, logistical considerations, and contact information.

- Marketing & Branding Strategy – messaging recommendations, marketing concepts, partnership recommendations, and structure for a web-based Film-Ready website or portal.
- Long-Term Coordination Role – recommendations on the long-term coordination role that Howard County Government should play with other entities, such as Visit Howard County and Howard County Economic Development Authority, to ensure successful film industry.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Task Force shall consist of the following voting members:

1. Dewan Clayborne, Central Maryland Chamber of Commerce
2. Theresa Colvin, Howard County Arts Council
3. Robert Frances or Designee, Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits
4. Demitian Gilbert
5. Amanda Hof
6. Jennifer Jones, Howard County Economic Development Authority
7. Mary Kane, Maryland Chamber of Commerce
8. Shawn MacInnes or Designee, Columbia Association
9. Robert Neal Marshall
10. Nicholas Mooneyhan or Designee, Department of Recreation and Parks
11. Kristi Simon, Howard County Chamber of Commerce
12. Chester Stacy
13. The Director of the Maryland Film Office or the Director's designee

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that Amanda Hof and Robert Neal Marshall shall serve as Co-Chairs of the Task Force.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Task Force shall meet at least monthly and issue a written report by August 1, 2026.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDERED, that the Task Force and the terms of its members shall cease to exist on October 1, 2026.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, Calvin Ball, as County Executive of Howard County, Maryland have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of Howard County to be affixed this ___th day of February, 2026.

Calvin Ball
County Executive

Appendix 4: Meeting Agendas & Meeting Minutes

Howard County Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force
February 19, 2026 | Kickoff Meeting
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Howard County Welcome Center
8267 Main St, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Approved Meeting Agenda

I. **Welcome and Introductions**

II. **Review Task Force Purpose, Charge, and Desired Outcomes**

III. **Overview of Maryland's Film Incentives**

IV. **Howard County's Opportunities, Strengths, and Current Landscape**

V. **Task Force Workflow**
   - **Forming Subcommittees**
     - Incentives, Economic Development, & Marketing (Film-Ready Strategy)
     - Locations, Assets & Industry Readiness
     - Interagency Coordination & Permitting
   - **Meeting Schedule**

https://www.howardcountymd.gov/boards-commissions/film-industry-and-location-marketing-film-task-force

FILM TASK FORCE
APPROVED MINUTES – MEETING #1

February 19, 2026 | Kickoff Meeting
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
Howard County Welcome Center
8267 Main St, Ellicott City, MD 21043

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Amanda Hof	Dewan Clayborn	Lola Oduyoye
Robert Neal Marshall		Felix Facchine
Bob Frances		
Catherine Batavick		
Chester Stacy		
Kristi Simon		
Demitian Gilbert		
Jennifer Jones		
Julie Miller		
Mary Kane		
Nick Mooneyhan		
Theresa Colvin		

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEM(S)
Welcome and Introductions	Co-Chairs Robert Neal Marshall and Amanda Hof opened the meeting at 12:00pm and facilitated introductions among all Task Force members.	
Review Task Force Purpose, Charge, and Desired Outcomes	Felix Facchine review compliance obligations under the Open Meetings Act (OMA), including posting of agendas, minutes, and public access to meetings. Also reviewed that a quorum of members may not deliberate outside a public meeting. Regarding email protocol, Task Force Members were advised to avoid "reply all." Communications should be directed to staff and the two co-chairs to prevent inadvertent violations and deliberations under OMA. After reviewing OMA guidance, Felix provided a brief overview of the Task Force purpose, scope, and expected outcomes. Key points: • The task force is responsible for developing recommendations. • Members may invite subject matter experts to present during meetings. • Staff will assist with drafting the final report.	Deadline: Final report due to the County Executive by August 1, with intent to begin implementation within the calendar year.

	• Members may form subgroups aligned with expertise or interest. Felix identified local tools to supplement state incentives and improve communication with productions. • Locations, Assets & Industry Readiness – Develop recommendations and a potential inventory of locations, workforce, and support resources. • Interagency Coordination & Process Streamlining – Improve permitting, marketing, and cross-agency coordination; explore a "one-stop shop." • Marketing & Branding – Strengthen the county's visibility and reputation as a film-friendly destination. • Incentives & Economic Development Tools – Identify local tools to supplement state incentives and improve communication with productions.	
Overview of Maryland's Film Incentives	Robert Neal Marshall shared a presentation and led a discussion on Maryland's film incentives. A summary of the presentation and key discussion points is outlined below: Current Landscape & Constraints • There is interest from industry partners, but building a soundstage or sustaining consistent production is difficult without incentives. • State-level sentiment toward tax incentives is limiting opportunities in Maryland. • Maryland currently ranks approximately 30th out of 41 states offering film incentives, limiting competitiveness. • Members agreed the county should pursue local solutions rather than waiting for state action. • The most recent referenced economic impact study dates to 2014; updating the analysis was recommended. • The small-film set-aside for the Maryland tax credit (10% of annual funding reserved for local productions) was identified as a strength. County Level Opportunities: Task force members discussed steps the county can take to attract production: • Make county-owned properties available at no cost except required hard expenses. • Streamline permitting through a single point of contact. • Reduce permit fees to predictable, affordable levels. • Emphasize broader economic benefits (restaurants, hotels, local spending) rather than maximizing permit revenue. Marketing, Intake & Centralized Access	Add comparative presentation of other local jurisdictions and incentives to future meeting agenda.

	• No clear public online entry point exists for productions seeking information. • Informal referrals currently direct inquiries tourism contact(s), but this is not obvious externally. • In many jurisdictions, film contacts are housed in tourism or economic development offices, which may not be widely understood. • Proposed Solution: Create a centralized "Film in Howard County" webpage serving as a single intake funnel, with instructions and links to relevant departments. Strategic Targeting & Timing: Members discussed strategies to increase early momentum: • Position the county as a welcoming destination for smaller or independent productions (e.g., budgets under $5,000). • Encourage filming during off-peak hospitality periods to maximize economic impact. State Legislative Update: Film Tax Credit: Discussion covered recent legislative developments: • A prior state bill was unsuccessful due to added language that complicated the program and failed to remove the $10 million cap. • Typical TV series credits average $12M–$20M, making the cap a barrier. • A separate bill proposed limiting rollover credits, which could limit incentives. • Because projects have been restricted for several years, approximately $46M in unused credits exist; without rollover limits, the pool could reach roughly $55M. • Increased funding could temporarily improve competitiveness and attract limited series or feature films. • The County has already submitted testimony to the State supporting improvements to the program. Members expressed interest in advocacy while the legislative session remains open, particularly with House members. Industry Readiness Discussion - key themes: • Permitting complexity spans multiple agencies (police, fire marshal, development, etc.). • Smaller productions may need additional guidance and coordination. • Suggestions included: ○ Dedicated film liaison or concierge role ○ Centralized production portal with forms, insurance requirements, and response timelines.	

	○ Digital location library with details such as access, restrictions, and virtual scouting tools. • The state maintains existing databases for locations and crew/vendors; local participation should be encouraged.	
Howard County's Opportunities, Strengths, and Current Landscape	Amanda Hof led a discussion on Howard County's opportunities and strengths, including the various public facilities and assets available in the county. Task Force Members discussed how film production benefits local economies, including immediate spending in hospitality, construction, trades, and services.	
Task Force Workflow	Felix covered final administrative items, including sending out minutes and a poll to schedule future Task Force meetings. Meeting adjourned at 1:17pm.	Felix to send out calendar poll and minutes following meeting

Howard County Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force
Monday, March 30, 2026 | Task Force Meeting
4:30 PM – 6:30 PM

The Capitoline Center
8360 Court Ave, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Approved Meeting Agenda

I. **Welcome and Introductions (5 mins)**

II. **Presentation – Maryland's Film Incentives (25 mins)**

III. **Public Comment (1 hour)**

IV. **Legislative Update (10 mins)**

V. **Task Force Work Plan (20 mins)**

Public Comment Sign Up Information

The Howard County Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force invites public comment from film professionals, industry stakeholders, and community members on strategies to make Howard County a Film-Ready jurisdiction. This meeting provides an opportunity for the FILM Task Force to hear feedback and input on film strategies from the public as they develop recommendations. The meeting will take place in a hybrid format through Webex and in-person at the Capitoline Center, 8360 Court Ave, Ellicott City, MD 21043.

Speakers must sign-up individually, and one person may not sign-up for several testifiers. Additionally, all testimony is limited to two minutes. Speakers who have a document or record they wish to submit with their testimony are asked to submit it at the bottom of this form.

We would like to remind residents that virtual testimony is considered public information and, as such, is subject to the Maryland Public Information Act. If you have any questions or problems, please contact Lola Oduyoye at ooduyoye@howardcountymd.gov.

To sign up to provide comments during the next meeting, please visit: https://services.howardcountymd.gov/hcportal?id=sc_cat_item_311&sys_id=37b01af51ba77e10d3c9ea45604bcb65.

FILM TASK FORCE
APPROVED MINUTES – MEETING #2

March 30, 2026 | Meeting 2
4:30 PM – 6:00 PM
Capitoline Center
8360 Court Avenue, Ellicott City, MD 21043

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Amanda Hof, Chair	Nick Mooneyhan	Lola Oduyoye
Robert Neal Marshall, Chair	Chester Stacey	Felix Facchine
Demitian Gilbert	Mary Kane	
Catherine Batavick	Theresa Colvin	
Jennifer Jones		
Julie Miller		
Kristi Simon		
Dewan Clayborn		
Bob Frances		

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEM(S)
Welcome and Introductions	Meeting called to order by Chair Amanda Hof at 4:30pm. Felix Facchine highlighted the Capitoline Center as an adaptive reuse project and creative infrastructure model.	None
Presentation on Maryland Film Initiatives	The Task Force received a presentation from the Maryland Film Industry Coalition (MFIC), represented by Chair Debbie Donaldson Dorsey, David Bonnet (Producer and Chair of the MFIC Gov't Relations Committee), and Sarah Fales (Chair of the MFIC Communications Committee). **Key Statistics and Impact Data:** • Since 2011 updates to Maryland's film production incentives: ○ $1.5 billion in economic impact generated ○ Thousands of jobs created ○ Thousands of businesses supported • Tax credit identified as the #1 determining factor for film/tv production site selection	Potential Recommendation Areas for the Task Force: • Howard County to explore Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) membership • Develop film-ready certification model • Evaluate location database (e.g., Reel-Scout integration with the State) • Build multi-county collaboration frameworks

	Primary Mission of MFIC: • Strengthen and expand Maryland's film tax credit program • Advocate at the state legislative level • Build workforce pipelines **Legislative Update (2026 Session):** Tax Credit Program Preservation • Threat: Department of Legislative Services proposed program reduction via budget reconciliation • Outcome: Successfully rejected by both chambers Cap Increase Debate • State Proposal: Remove $10M per project cap • Status: Senate supported removal • House: Proposed $30M cap through FY2030 Current Status: In conference committee **Strategic Insight from Presenters** 1. Critical Industry Needs • Predictable, stable incentives • Immediate response infrastructure (film liaison function) • Streamlined permitting 2. Operational Gaps Identified as Lack of: • Rapid-response contact system for production • Centralized local film liaison • Real-time location access coordination **Major Question Raised:** • Why are productions about Baltimore being filmed in New York instead of Maryland? • **Tax Credit Comparisons** o New York: ▪ **$800M program** ▪ 30–40% credit o Maryland: ▪ Significantly lower funding ▪ Ranked approx. **30th nationally** **Structural Issues Identified** • Insufficient funding scale • Annual uncertainty in program • Lack of rollover stability • Higher U.S. labor costs vs other nations	• Assess creation of a permanent film liaison role to work with the State, other counties, and industry

Public Comment	The Task Force accepted public comment and input from members of the public and stakeholders. Individuals were allowed to sign up to provide up to two minutes of public comment. The main themes of the public comment period were: creator economy integration, permitting inefficiencies, workforce loss, lack of infrastructure, need for incentives. Summaries of individual public comments are capture below: **Ashley Wilson (Creator Economy Advocate; Columbia, MD)** • Advocated for integrating the creator economy into the County's film strategy, noting the growing convergence between traditional film and digital content creation. Recommended developing creator-focused studio space, partnerships, and grant opportunities through the Arts Council to support this sector. **Mia Collins (IATSE Local 487 Member)** • Emphasized that tax incentives are critical to attracting productions and sustaining industry activity. Also highlighted the importance of regional collaboration across jurisdictions to strengthen the film ecosystem. **Travis Persick (Filmmaker; Elkridge, MD)** • Highlighted the importance of incentives and organization in attracting productions and pointed to successful models like Frederick County's 72-hour film project. Noted that while park permitting is accessible, processes for other locations—such as historic properties—could be improved. **Benjamin Sands (Production Sound Manager; Silver Spring, MD)** • Emphasized that production location decisions directly affect local crew employment and highlighted ongoing workforce loss to larger markets like Atlanta, Los Angeles, and New York. Urged the County to prioritize consistent production volume and film-friendly systems to retain talent and sustain careers locally. **Richard Kain (Producer; Woodbine)**	Key Recommendations from the public comment period included: • Incorporating creator strategy to support local creators and arts economy • Prioritize permitting reform for easy navigation and approval • Evaluate workforce retention issues due to lack of sustained employment opportunities • Develop Creator-focused studio space • Promote and support film festivals / conferences tied to digital creators • Strengthen partnerships with local companies for branded content

	• Film background for 25+ years. Noted that he has filmed productions in Howard County, citing location access and permitting as key barriers. Recommended improving film-friendly infrastructure, including streamlined permitting, studio space, directories, and an equipment-sharing/co-op system. Also noted support to bring SAG-AFTRA micro budget up to $25,000, or lower tax incentive to $20,000 to match existing micro budget amount **Nayna Agrawal (TV Writer; Clarksville, MD)** • Television writer with experience on 11 productions, most of which were filmed outside the U.S. due to stronger tax incentives. Emphasized the importance of local government engagement and expressed willingness to serve as a resource connecting creatives with institutions. **Pat O'Toole (Teamsters Representative)** • Highlighted a major workforce disparity, noting approximately 1,500 Teamsters in Atlanta working on film compared to about 40 in Baltimore. Questioned why productions set in Baltimore are often filmed elsewhere. Emphasized that competitive incentives, especially in a global market—are the primary driver and urged Maryland to evaluate what other jurisdictions are doing to attract productions.	
Task Force Business	Jennifer Jones moved to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2026, meeting. Bob Frances seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.	
Legislative Update	Catherine shared an update on state legislative actions regarding the Film Incentive Tax Credit, noting that efforts to eliminate the tax credit entirely were not likely to succeed. Tax credit is expected to be preserved, but the issue of the tax credit cap is unresolved.	Continue monitoring State legislation.
Task Force Work Plan Discussion	1. Reel-Scout Database • Existing statewide location system • Capabilities: ○ Image libraries ○ Location metadata ○ Contact information • Opportunity to have county's access and update the state system.	**Future Meeting Topics & Research Areas:** **Immediate (Next 30–60 Days)** • Develop county location inventory (public + private)

	2. Resource Directory • Include: ○ Crew ○ Equipment ○ Hotels ○ Catering ○ Vendors 3. Private Sector Engagement • Farms • Warehouses • Private estates Challenge: • Requires voluntary participation + outreach	• Explore Reel-Scout integration, including a specific portal for Reel-Scout that the County can access • Begin permitting process audit • Identify film liaison structure **Mid-Term** • Conduct comparative analysis of peer jurisdictions • Engage: ○ Developers (warehouse/studio potential) ○ Private landowners • Build resource/vendor directory **Long-Term** • Develop: ○ Film-ready certification model ○ Marketing campaign ○ Regional collaboration strategy (with Prince George's County, Baltimore City, etc.)
Adjournment	Felix Facchine announced the date and time of the next meeting: April 30, 10:00 AM, at the George Howard Building in Ellicott City. Chair Amanda Hof called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dewan Clayborn made the motion to adjourn; Catherine Batavick seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM.	None

Howard County Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force
April 30, 2026 | Task Force Meeting
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

George Howard Building – Columbia/Ellicott Room
3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

APPROVED Meeting Agenda

I. **Call Meeting to Order & Welcome** (5 minutes)

II. **Approval of Agenda & March 30, 2026 Minutes** (5 minutes)

III. **County/Community Facilities as Film Locations** (1 hour)
- Presentation from Recreation & Parks
- Presentation from Columbia Association

IV. **Film Office/Liaison Structure** (30 minutes)

V. **Announcements** (5 minutes)

VI. **Adjournment** (1 minute)

FILM INDUSTRY AND LOCATION MARKETING (FILM) TASK FORCE
3430 Courthouse Drive • Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 • 410-313-2013
Calvin Ball, County Executive • Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer
Contact: Felix Facchine, fefacchine@howardcountymd.gov

FILM TASK FORCE
APPROVED MEETING #3 MINUTES

April 30, 2026, | Meeting 3
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Amanda Hof, Chair	Kristi Simon	Lola Oduyoye
Robert Neal Marshall, Chair	Jennifer Jones	Felix Facchine
Bob Frances		Anna Hunter
Catherine Batavick		
Chester Stacy		
Demitian Gilbert		
Dewan Clayborn		
Julie Miller		
Mary Kane		
Nick Mooneyhan		
Theresa Colvin		

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEM(S)
Call Meeting to Order & Welcome	Meeting called to order by Chair Amanda Hof at 10:05 AM followed by a round of introductions.	None
Approval of Agenda & March 20th, 2026, Minutes	Chair Amanda Hof asked for motions to approve the agenda and minutes. Theresa Colvin motioned to approve the agenda, and Nick Mooneyhan seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously. Catherine Batavick motioned to approve the minutes from the March 20th, 2026, meeting. Demitian Gilbert seconded the motion. Minutes approved unanimously.	None
County/Community Facilities as Film Locations **a.** Presentation by Recreation and Parks	**<u>DRP Presentation</u>** Anna Hunter from the Department of Recreation & Parks (DRP) presented on DRP's facilities as potential film locations: **DRP Leadership & Structure** • **Director:** Nick Mooneyhan • **Presenter:** Anna Hunter • **4 Core Bureaus:**	Discussion among Task Force members of a recommendation to create single point of contact (reduce fragmentation) for film outreach. Discussion to recommend developing a centralized website with: • Site inventory • Rules/regulations

b. Presentation from Columbia Association	○ Registration / Customer Service (billing, contracts) ○ Fields & Sports Events (scheduling, conflicts) ○ Public Information Office (PIO) (initial inquiries) ○ Parks / Operations (site prep, coordination, restoration) **Filming Inventory (Key Stats)** • 12 historic sites • 8 regional parks • ~30 neighborhood parks • 3 Natural Resource Management Areas (NRMAs) • + indoor facilities & additional county-owned sites • Private farm network maintained for rural filming options **Preferred Filming Windows** • Best days: Monday–Thursday • Weekends: High conflict with public use (generally avoided) **Staffing & Cost Requirements** • 100% on-site staff requirement (park ranger/staff at all times) • Overtime required → paid by production • No surplus staff → limits scalability **High-Restriction / Low-Availability Sites** • Community centers → "almost always unavailable" • Sensitive environmental areas → 0% access (e.g., protected zones) **Environmental & Content Restrictions** • **Current policies:** ○ No vegetation removal ○ No tree damage (no nails/hooks) • Full restoration required immediately post-filming • Content bans: ○ No sexual content ○ No violence (even simulated) **Community Impact Factors**	• Contracts & COI templates • Pricing transparency Recommendation to use fillable intake forms → reduce email volume Recommendation to develop a guide of best practices for private organizations (such as CA) and businesses that are interested in being film locations

	• Must mitigate: ○ Night lighting ○ Noise/curfew issues ○ Loss of park access • Existing uses: ○ Field rentals run until ~11:30 PM • Capital projects → non-flexible schedules **Logistical Considerations** • Common constraints: ○ Equipment storage (especially multi-day shoots) ○ Restroom/water access varies by site ○ Camera infrastructure impacts (rails, dollies) • **Drone use:** Must comply with county regulations **Process & Requirements (Key Metrics)** • Certificate of Insurance (COI): required 100% of the time • Lead time: Mandatory, defined timeline required • Director retains approval authority • Multi-agency coordination often required: ○ Risk Management ○ Office of Law ○ General Services / Real Estate **Recent Activity & Efficiency Gaps** • Very low volume: ~1 major filming agreement in past year • Example project required: ○ 30+ emails before formal process began **Geographic & Location Advantages** • Clustered filming zones (efficiency opportunity): ○ Ellicott City ○ Rockburn Branch Park ○ Belmont Manor • Enables multi-site filming within small radius **Example Site Data Points** • **Longwood Site:** ○ ~97.5 acres ○ Low neighbor impact ○ Not open to public → easier closures	

- **Regional Parks:**
  - High usage → require signage & coordination
- **Historic Ellicott City:**
  - Dense, diverse visuals
  - Requires traffic + noise management
  - Likely off-site storage needed

Columbia Association Presentation

Julie Miller (Task Force Member) presented on Columbia Association's facilities and amenities that could serve as possible film locations.

Asset Scale (Key Stats)

- 60+ facilities
- 3,600 acres of open space
- 95 miles of pathways
- 3 lakes + multiple ponds/streams
- Extensive:
  - Playgrounds
  - Neighborhood parks
  - Village/community centers

Visual & Environmental Character

- Master-planned suburban design
- Key features:
  - Mature trees and lush greenery
  - Mid-century architecture (notably in Wilde Lake)
  - Well-maintained lakes, streets, and open spaces
- High maintenance investment → consistently "film-ready" condition

Filming-Relevant Facilities (Key Counts & Types)
Fitness & Recreation

- **3 major fitness clubs**
  - Cardio + weight areas
  - Large arena spaces (courts, group classes)

Sports Infrastructure

- Indoor & outdoor:
  - Tennis courts
  - Pickleball courts
- Batting cages
- Skate/sport courts

	• Ice rink (available, not highlighted visually) **Aquatics (Major Asset Category)** • 23 outdoor pools • 4 indoor pools • 2 mini water parks • Range of settings: ○ Quiet / low-activity pools ○ High-energy family environments **Arts, Culture & Performance** • **CA Art Center** ○ Used in Veep filming ○ Includes: Classrooms & studios; garden • **Lakefront Stage (at Lake Kittamaqundi)** ○ New outdoor performance venue ○ Used for concerts & movie nights ○ Potential filming use during off-peak times **Parks, Lakes & Pathways** • Lakes: ○ Wilde Lake ○ Lake Kittamaqundi ○ Lake Elkhorn • Features: ○ Piers, docks, bridges, fountains ○ Interconnected pathway system (95 miles) • High visual value + strong accessibility **Historic & Community Spaces** • Oakland Manor ○ Historic estate used for: ▪ Weddings ▪ Period filming ○ Interior retains historic character ("frozen in time") • Village centers: ○ Multi-purpose interiors ○ Some include stages/performance areas • Barns & legacy structures integrated into CA landscape **Current Filming Process** • No standardized process across CA for film exclusively • Current workflow:	

	○ Informal, relationship-based inquiries ○ Case-by-case agreements • Requires: ○ Scope review (content, crew size, impact) ○ License agreement + film release **Fees & Cost Structure (Key Points)** • **Open space:** ○ Typically no fee for low-impact filming ○ Conditions: No disruption to members; Agreement in place • **Village centers:** ○ Controlled independently by each village • **Member-only facilities:** ○ Likely fees required if filming impacts users **Operational Risks / Lessons Learned** • Example: The Real Housewives of Potomac ○ Request came 1 day before filming ○ Limited processing time → operational strain **Standard Requirements** • Certificate of Insurance (COI): should be required universally • Need for: ○ Centralized intake ○ Faster approval process ○ Clear point of contact (interim identified)	
Film Office/Liaison Structure	Felix Facchine (Task Force staff) presented research on comparable jurisdictions that share characteristics with Howard County; including Maryland benchmarks, mid-Atlantic benchmarks and nationwide benchmarks that have demonstrated a successful film approach. Examples included: • Somerset County, NJ • Rockland County, NY • Marin County, CA • Fayette County, GA • Prince George's Film Office • Baltimore Film Office	The Task Force discussed a recommendation to establish coordinated film office Liaison, Commission, etc. The Task Force discussed importance of leveraging location assets (local assets and proximity to major cities) and marketing as a film ready jurisdiction. The Task Force reviewed and discussed different location marketing tools, such as Reel Scout, and

	Key Takeaways: • Emphasis on permitting and Location coordination • Marketing is key – what is Howard County's pitch? • State incentives are critical: creative local incentives may help • Workforce development partnerships strength human infrastructure • Howard County and Maryland have potential Task Force members discussed a recommendation for a Film Liaison/central office. This individual could receive and field all initial inquiries, coordinate with Rec & Parks, Risk Management, Office of Law, DGS, Police, Fire, etc.	encouraged exploration of strategies to promote film tourism. The Task Force also discussed recommendation to create a guide for businesses interested in supporting film sector. The Task Force also discussed recommendations on potential local incentives, including small grants to support local and independent film productions and advocacy at the state level to encourage state film incentives across Maryland.
Announcements	Felix Facchine announced the date and time of the next meeting: May 20th, 4:00 PM, at the George Howard Building in Ellicott City. Catherine Batavick provided an overview of the Maryland Film Office's Primary location tool, Reel Scout. Reel Scout could be utilized at the local level to allow Howard County / Visit Howard / Rec & Parks / CA to: 1. Curate Howard County locations 2. Update photos and details 3. Ensure contact information is current 4. Catherine noted that Baltimore City had an affiliate license giving them control over their own layer of the database. Task Force member Demitian Gilbert raised a recommendation for discussion at the next FILM Task Force Meeting: • Create a curated list of "film friendly" restaurants and hotels that: • Understand production needs • Have proven capacity for large, short notice orders or long stays. Task Force members discussed opportunities to support workforce development partnerships between Howard County Government, Howard Community College, and other institutions (e.g., high schools, Docs in Progress,	Felix and Lola will work on scheduling remaining meetings for the Task Force. Will send a Doodle poll to schedule June–August meetings. Task Force and staff will start preparing draft recommendations for discussion/amendment at the June meeting. Invite Docs in Progress and Wide Angle Youth Media to brief the Task Force on their training models, funding, and partnerships with local governments and schools.

	Wide Angle Youth Media). Task Force also discussed how existing apprenticeship incentives can support film and media jobs. Theresa Colvin suggested that the Task Force invite local film organizations Docs in Progress and Wide Angle Youth Media at the next Task Force meeting.	
Adjournment	Chair Amanda Hof called for a motion to adjourn the meeting; Bob Frances made the motion to adjourn, and Julie Miller seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.	None

Howard County Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force
May 20, 2026 | Task Force Meeting
4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

George Howard Building – Columbia/Ellicott Room
3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

APPROVED Meeting Agenda

I. **Call Meeting to Order & Welcome** (5 minutes)

II. **Approval of Agenda & April 30, 2026 Minutes** (5 minutes)

III. **Supporting Local Filmmaking & Film Workforce** (30 minutes)
- Presentation from Docs in Progress

IV. **Film Industry & the Hospitality Sector** (30 minutes)

V. **Announcements** (5 minutes)

VI. **Adjournment** (1 minute)

FILM INDUSTRY AND LOCATION MARKETING (FILM) TASK FORCE
3430 Courthouse Drive • Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 • 410-313-2013
Calvin Ball, County Executive • Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer
Contact: Felix Facchine, fefacchine@howardcountymd.gov

FILM TASK FORCE
APPROVED MEETING #4 MINUTES

May 20, 2026 | Meeting 4
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM
George Howard Building, Columbia/Ellicott Room
3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Amanda Hof, Chair	Chester Stacy	Lola Oduyoye
Robert Neal Marshall, Chair	Julie Miller	Felix Facchine
Bob Frances		
Josh Slates		
Demitian Gilbert		
Dewan Clayborn		
Kristi Simon		
Jennifer Jones		
Mary Kane		
Nick Mooneyhan		
Theresa Colvin		

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEM(S)
Call Meeting to Order and Welcome	Meeting called to order by Chair Amanda Hof at 4:00 PM, followed by a brief round of introductions.	None
Approval of Agenda & April 30th, 2026, Minutes	Chair Amanda Hof called for the approval of the agenda, moved by Mary Kane and seconded by Theresa Colvin. The agenda was approved unanimously. Chair Hof called for the approval of the April 30, 2026, meeting minutes, moved by Jennifer Jones and seconded by Theresa Colvin. Minutes were approved unanimously.	None
Supporting Local Filmmaking & Film Workforce: Presentation from Docs in Progress	**Topic: Supporting Local Filmmaking & Film Workforce Introduction** • Barbara Valentino, CEO of Docs in Progress, joined virtually to present on her organization and their work in the film sector. • Organization is nearing 20 years in operation. • Mission centered on supporting emerging and established documentary filmmakers through:	Develop recommendations to establish 48 hour film festival, strengthen existing film festivals, and invest local dollars in film competitions/festivals

	○ Workshops ○ Fellowships ○ Screenings ○ Fiscal sponsorship ○ Community engagement initiatives **Current Initiatives Highlighted** • **Village Reels Program** ○ Intergenerational filmmaking initiative ○ Expanding beyond Montgomery County into additional Maryland jurisdictions and Washington, D.C. ○ Supported by National Endowment for the Arts funding • **Filmmaker Disability Initiative** ○ Supports filmmakers with visible and invisible disabilities ○ Focused on networking access and industry inclusion **Industry Challenges Discussed** **Valentino emphasized:** • Severe downturn in the film industry nationally • Limited production activity even in California • Independent filmmakers struggling with long-term unemployment and lack of projects • Loss of federal and humanities grant funding impacting nonprofits and artists **Discussion Topics** **Task force members discussed:** • Supporting local filmmakers alongside attracting large productions • Lack of a well-developed film ecosystem in Howard County • Potential for: ○ Local film festivals ○ Government-sponsored short film competitions ○ 48-hour film festivals ○ Workforce and apprenticeship opportunities **Columbia Maryland Film Festival** **Robert Neal discussed:** • Creation and continuation of the Columbia Maryland Film Festival • Festival's role sustaining arts programming virtually during COVID • Current efforts supporting local and student filmmakers	

	Funding & Support Needs Valentino noted filmmakers primarily need: • Income opportunities • Networking/community gathering spaces • Honorariums and paid creative opportunities • Local government support through: ○ General operating grants ○ Social media/video contracts ○ Programming partnerships **Additional Topics Raised** • Howard County arts education and lack of a dedicated arts magnet school • Howard County Public Schools' philosophy of equitable arts access across all schools • Exploration of workforce development partnerships with: ○ Howard Community College ○ Universities ○ Wide Angle Youth Media	
Film Industry & the Hospitality Sector	**Overview** Demitian Gilbert presented concepts for a proposed Howard County Film Hospitality Initiative **Focus areas included:** • Making Howard County "film ready" • Coordinating hospitality services to support productions • Leveraging existing restaurant, hotel, and tourism infrastructure **Key Concepts** Gilbert emphasized Howard County's strengths: • Dense concentration of hotels and restaurants • Geographic convenience • Diverse filming locations • Ability to house, feed, and support crews locally **Proposed Hospitality Strategy** **Recommendations included:** • Establishing vetted hospitality partners • Creating centralized resource packets for productions • Identifying: ○ Lodging ○ Catering ○ Restaurants ○ Transportation ○ Extended stay accommodations ○ Union-compliant lodging options	Develop recommendation focused on hospitality industry (restaurants, hotels, etc.) that can support film industry.

	Amanda Hof discussed potential coordination efforts with Tourism, including: • Tourism office assistance with: ○ RFP coordination ○ Hotel matching ○ Transportation planning ○ Group logistics • Potential inclusion of hospitality partners on a future "film ready" website Discussion on other operational considerations included: • Need for tiered pricing structures • Craft services considerations • Union lodging requirements • Shared commercial kitchen opportunities • Transportation coordination • Howard County's strong extended-stay hotel inventory • Ability to accommodate both independent filmmakers and larger productions • Importance of seamless logistics to attract repeat productions	
Announcements and Discussion	Felix proposed focusing on workforce development at June meeting with a presentation from Wide Angle Youth Media and engagement with HCC and school system. Potential discussion and recommendation areas: - Partnerships with Wide Angle Youth Media - Apprenticeship programs - Collaboration with Howard Community College and universities - Film-related workforce pathways connected to Blueprint investments Jennifer Jones discussed film-friendly infrastructure, such as: - Film permitting best practices - Streamlined special event permitting - Film-ready hospitality infrastructure - Centralized county resource coordination Chair Marshall, Chair Hof, and Theresa Colvin discussed local film ecosystem development, including potential recommendations to develop: - County-supported film festivals - Filmmaker competitions	Felix will poll members for final three meeting dates Draft recommendation matrix will be prepared for June meeting Wide Angle Youth Media and other workforce organizations (TBD) will be invited to June meeting

	- Networking/community events - Grants and operational support for arts organizations Demitian Gilbert discussed hospitality coordination, including potential recommendations to: - Formal hospitality partner network - Transportation partnerships - Union-ready lodging options - Catering and production support services Felix Facchine announced: • Task force entering final phase of recommendation development. • Meetings for June, July, and August are being finalized and will be determined based on Doodle Poll results. • There will potentially be an August meeting if necessary. • Draft recommendation matrix to be presented at upcoming meeting. • Goal is to: - Review recommendations in June - Finalize report drafting between June and July - Potentially vote on final recommendations in August	
Adjournment	Chair Amanda Hof called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion made by Theresa Colvin and seconded by Jennifer Jones. Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.	None

Howard County Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force
June 22, 2026 | Task Force Meeting
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

George Howard Building – Columbia/Ellicott Room
3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043
WebEx Link

APPROVED Meeting Agenda

I. **Call Meeting to Order & Welcome** (5 minutes)

II. **Approval of Agenda & May 20, 2026 Minutes** (5 minutes)

III. **Film Industry & Workforce Development** (45 minutes)
- Presentation from The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture

IV. **Discussion on Draft Recommendation Matrix** (45 minutes)

V. **Announcements** (5 minutes)

VI. **Adjournment** (1 minute)

FILM TASK FORCE
APPROVED MEETING #5 MINUTES

June 22, 2026 | Meeting 5
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Hybrid Meeting
George Howard Building, Columbia/Ellicott Room
3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Amanda Hof, Co-Chair	Mary Kane	Felix Facchine
Robert Neal Marshall, Co-Chair	Bob Frances	Lola Oduyoye
Chester Stacy	Theresa Colvin	Ian Tyrrell
Dewan Clayborn		
Demitian Gilbert		
Jennifer Jones		
Josh Slates		
Julie Miller		
Kristi Simon		
Nick Mooneyhan		

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEM(S)
Call Meeting to Order & Welcome	Meeting called to order by Chair Amanda Hof at 9:00 a.m.	None
Approval of Agenda and May 20th, 2026 Minutes	Chair Amanda Hof called for a motion to approve the agenda for the June 22 meeting. Robert Neal Marshall moved to approve the agenda, and Nick Mooneyhan seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously. Chair Amanda Hof called for a motion to approve the May 20, 2026, meeting minutes. Robert Neal Marshall moved to approve the minutes, and Julie Miller seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.	None
Film Industry and Workforce Development – Presentation from	**Presenter:** • Wendy Levy, Executive Director of The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture	Add a recommendation to support youth apprenticeship and youth employment opportunities in the creative

The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture	• Sonia Dowuona, Operations Manager of The Alliance for Media Arts + Culture **Overview** Wendy Levy provided a presentation on the nonprofit Alliance for Media Arts + Culture and its nationally recognized Arts2Work Registered Apprenticeship Program, which focuses on workforce development within the creative economy. **Key Points** **National Apprenticeship Model** • Arts2Work became the nation's first federally registered apprenticeship program focused on media arts and creative technologies. • The program was developed to address the lack of workforce-development funding and career pathways available to artists and media professionals. • Emphasis was placed on viewing creative careers as legitimate workforce opportunities rather than hobbies or supplemental work. **Career Pathways Offered** The apprenticeship model includes pathways for: • Multimedia Producers • Video Editors • Digital Marketing Specialists • Graphic Designers • Digital Archivists **Pre-Apprenticeship Programs** • Students can begin training as early as high school. • Participants receive: ○ Industry certifications ○ Paid work experience ○ Competency-based training ○ Direct pathways into registered apprenticeships **Maryland Success Stories** • The first Arts2Work apprentice was placed at Wide Angle Youth Media in Baltimore. • Wide Angle Youth Media has become a model for workforce development and received significant philanthropic support, including funding used for apprentice salaries. • Existing Maryland partners include:	economy through existing county workforce programs.

	○ Wide Angle Youth Media ○ Action Youth Media ○ Joe's Movement Emporium **Creative Economy Focus** Levy stressed the importance of creating sustainable, year-round employment opportunities rather than relying solely on temporary film productions. **Examples included:** • Storytellers-in-residence for government agencies • Content creation for local governments • Small business marketing and storytelling support • Podcast and video production • Community engagement projects **Discussion Highlights:** **Funding & Employer Incentives** Task Force members raised questions were raised regarding: • How employers can afford to hire apprentices. • Available wage reimbursements and training grants. Levy explained that: • Maryland currently offers wage reimbursements and training support for employers participating in apprenticeship programs. • The Alliance assists employers with administrative requirements. • Bloomberg Philanthropies has a skilled trades funding initiative. Members discussed funding opportunities related to creative workforce development. **Workforce Development Benefits** Discussion focused on: • Creating reliable local production crews. • Developing a sustainable workforce between major film productions. • Providing local creative professionals with year-round employment opportunities. Task Force members discussed several Howard County Opportunities, including: • Creative apprenticeships through existing County workforce programs, such as the Apprenticeship Opportunity Program (AOP). • Integration with Howard County's summer youth employment program (SYEP). There was discussion	

	about incorporating podcasting, storytelling, digital media, and creative content production into SYEP. • Potential opportunity to use existing youth workforce structures as creative pre-apprenticeship pathways. • Storytelling support for local businesses through Visit Howard County. • Connections with Howard Community College's workforce training programs at the new Workforce and Trades Center. Potential partnerships involving skilled trades such as welding, carpentry, and set construction may be possible. Task force member Jennifer Jones expressed interest in exploring how Howard County's existing apprenticeship initiatives could be expanded to include creative occupations. Wendy Levy suggested continuing discussions after the meeting regarding incorporation of creative apprenticeships into county workforce programs. Wendy Levy and Sonia Dowuona offered continued assistance with apprenticeship development, employer recruitment, workforce training, high school apprenticeship programs, and creative economy planning.	
Discussion on Draft Recommendation Matrix	Task Force staff member Felix Facchine presented a draft recommendation matrix intended to organize the task force's final recommendations with details on: • Recommendations • Implementation actions • Responsible agencies • Estimated costs • Timeline • Priority ranking Recommendations remain in draft form until approved by the Task Force. The July meeting is expected to include a straw vote on recommendations, with a vote on the final report expected in August. The final recommendations will be incorporated into the report for submission to the County. **Key Recommendations Discussed** **Film Grants Program** • Explore small competitive grants for: ○ Independent filmmakers	Refine and revise recommendation matrix per the Task Force's discussion and deliberation. Staff to prepare a final report to be voted on in August.

	○ Screenwriters ○ Local productions • Potential administration through existing programs of the Howard County Arts Council. **Film Festival Support** • Expand support for existing film festivals. • Explore creation of a Howard County 48-Hour Film Festival. • Use festivals to: ○ Build public awareness ○ Encourage local filmmaking ○ Increase tourism and overnight stays ○ Activate multiple community venues **State Legislative Advocacy** Discussion focused heavily on Maryland's film tax credit program. Topics included: • Increasing the annual tax credit cap. • Improving competitiveness with neighboring states. • Addressing concerns surrounding unused rollover tax credits. • Supporting smaller productions and student filmmakers. Josh Slates from the Maryland Film Office emphasized that tax-credit limitations remain one of the largest barriers to attracting major productions. **Workforce Development** Task Force members discussed: • Expanding Howard County apprenticeship programs into creative fields. • Supporting filmmaker education and training opportunities. • Leveraging existing county workforce initiatives. **Film Locations & Industry Readiness** Recommendations included: • Updating county filming-location inventories. • Improving location databases.	

	• Streamlining permitting processes. • Evaluating filming costs associated with county facilities. **Studio & Production Space** Discussion centered on: • Identifying existing resources before constructing new facilities. • Utilizing: ○ Howard County Library System creative spaces ○ Recording studios ○ Editing suites ○ County/Arts Council facilities ○ Future community arts spaces **Hospitality & Support Services Guide** • Develop a centralized guide highlighting: ○ Hotels ○ Restaurants ○ Event venues ○ Other support services useful to productions **Film Liaison Position** Proposed responsibilities: • Single point of contact for productions. • Coordination among county departments. • Assistance with permitting and logistics. • Marketing and promotion. • Connection to workforce and funding opportunities. Possible placement: • Visit Howard County • Economic Development Authority Several members viewed a dedicated film liaison as a foundational recommendation. Co-Chair Amanda Hof and Jennifer Jones will evaluate whether Tourism or EDA is most appropriate agency to house the film liaison and include for recommendation in the final report. **Film Commission / Advisory Board**	

	Discussion included creating a permanent advisory structure to: • Continue the work of the task force. • Provide ongoing policy guidance. • Maintain industry engagement. **Marketing & Branding** Recommendations included: • Creating a dedicated film website. • Marketing Howard County as a film-ready destination. • Joining professional film-industry associations. • Investing in outreach and promotion efforts.	
Announcements	Felix Facchine concluded the discussion of the recommendation matrix and reviewed next steps. Recommendations will continue to be refined. A straw vote on draft recommendations is anticipated at the July meeting. Final recommendations and the final report are expected to be completed in August for a final Task Force vote and submission to Howard County leadership.	
Adjournment	Chair Amanda Hof called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Julie Miller moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Nick Mooneyhan. The meeting was adjourned unanimously at approximately 10:45 a.m.	

Howard County Film Industry and Location Marketing (FILM) Task Force
August 10, 2026 | Task Force Meeting
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

George Howard Building – Columbia/Ellicott Room
3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043
WebEx Link

APPROVED Meeting Agenda

I. **Call Meeting to Order & Welcome** (5 minutes)

II. **Approval of Agenda & June 22, 2026 Minutes** (5 minutes)

III. **Discussion on Draft Report** (1 hour)

IV. **Action – Vote on Final Report** (5 minutes)

V. **Announcements** (5 minutes)

VI. **Adjournment** (1 minute)

FILM TASK FORCE
APPROVED MEETING #6 MINUTES

August 10, 2026 | Meeting 6
4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF PRESENT
Amanda Hof, Co-Chair	Mary Kane	Felix Facchine
Robert Neal Marshall, Co-Chair		Lola Oduyoye
Demitian Gilbert		Ian Tyrrell
Jennifer Jones		
Josh Slates		
Julie Miller		
Nick Mooneyhan		
Theresa Colvin		
Bob Frances		
Dewan Clayborn		
Kristi Simon		
Chester Stacy		

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEM(S)
Call Meeting to Order & Welcome	The meeting called to order by Co-Chair Robert Neal Marshall shortly at approximately 4:05 pm.	None
Approval of Agenda and June 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes	Co-Chair Robert Neal Marshall called for a motion to approve the agenda of the August 10, 2026 meeting. Task Force member Theresa Colvin moved to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Task Force member Demitian Gilbert. The agenda was unanimously approved. Co-Chair Robert Neal Marshall called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the June 22, 2026 meeting. Task Force member Kristi Simon moved to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Task Force member Nick Mooneyhan. The meeting minutes were unanimously approved.	None
Discussion on Draft Report	The Task Force moved into a discussion of the draft report of the FILM Task Force.	None

	Members were thanked for providing comments and feedback following the previous meeting. The most recent version of the report incorporated edits and feedback received through the morning of the meeting. Task Force members acknowledged that they had read the full report and provided feedback, Members were invited to raise specific areas of concern, proposed edits, or recommendations that should be addressed before the report was finalized. **Proposed Changes and Feedback** • Co-Chair Amanda Hof recommended revisiting the estimated cost for a proposed Film Liaison position under the Howard County Tourism Council. Co-Chair Hof noted that the current cost estimate was listed in the medium cost range and capped at $100,000. Hof suggested that, given the scope and caliber of work anticipated for the position, the estimate should be reconsidered to high cost to reflect the anticipated cost of a new position with benefits. Task Force members agreed with the change without objection, and the report was updated to reflect a high cost estimate for this recommendation. • Members expressed appreciation for the comprehensive nature of the report and the amount of research and work that went into its development. Members also discussed what would happen to the report after the Task Force approved it. • Task Force staff member Felix Facchine shared that, once finalized, the report would be provided to the Public Information team for final formatting and preparation. The completed report would then be submitted to the County Executive, with copies provided to the County Council, along with the Task Force's recommendations. Implementation would involve coordination with County departments as well as outside partner organizations, including organizations such as the Howard County Tourism Council, the Howard County Arts Council, and the Howard County Economic Development Authority. • The group discussed that some recommendations may require additional administrative or legislative action. For example, establishing a film commission may require local legislation, while other recommendations, such as establishing a film liaison or developing grant programs, would require further discussion regarding structure,	

	funding, and the appropriate agency or organization to administer them. • Members also discussed the importance of the report in providing continuity during the upcoming transition to a new administration. The Task Force's recommendations could help inform the incoming administration and support continued implementation of the work. **Prioritization of Recommendations** • Members discussed the five recommendations identified as the report's primary priorities. Members generally agreed that the five recommendations were straightforward, reasonable, and achievable. • Task Force member Nick Mooneyhan emphasized that the five priority recommendations should not prevent progress on other recommendations that could be implemented more quickly. In particular, members discussed the potential to begin work on resources such as a centralized database of available facilities and filming locations without waiting for all five priority recommendations to be implemented. • The group discussed the value of consolidating information and resources that may already exist across County departments and partner organizations into a more accessible, centralized source. Members noted that this type of resource could benefit not only the film industry but also other businesses and organizations interested in locating or working in Howard County. • In response to these suggestions, Task Force staff updated the report to include a note that the recommendations do not need to be implemented sequentially and that some of the 17 recommendations could begin moving forward independently, including the development and consolidation of location-related resources.	
Action – Vote on Final Report	Following the discussion and review of the draft report, Co-Chair Robert Neal Marsahll called for a motion to approve the final report, which was so moved by Task Force member Theresa Colvin and seconded by Task Force member Josh Slates. Task Force members voted unanimously in favor of approving the report, with no objections noted. The final report will be formatted for submission to the County Executive in August.	None

Announcements	No formal announcements were made. Members expressed appreciation to one another for their work on the report and for the significant effort involved in completing the Task Force's recommendations.	None
Adjournment	There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30 pm.	None

