



Maryland Marketing Partnership

Board Retreat Summary
From June 2, 2025

Prepared by Violet M. Apple

Retreat Facilitator

VeeApple Consulting, LLC

violet.m.apple22@gmail.com

veeappleconsulting@gmail.com

(717) 575-6251



Overview of the Retreat

Purpose

As the central organization branding Maryland as a premier place to live, work, and do business, the MMP is committed to:

- Marketing Maryland's assets to out-of-state businesses
- Promoting the state's strengths in target industries
- Highlighting Maryland success stories
- Encouraging business relocation and growth in the state
- Fostering strategic partnerships for business development
- Supporting workforce attraction and retention

Retreat Goals

- Conduct a forward-thinking branding strategy discussion to attract and retain businesses
- Cast a compelling vision for Maryland's economic future
- Tap into Board member expertise to support MMP's mission

SESSION 1 - Naming the Elephants - Maryland's Strengths – SWOT -Pro/Con Analysis

Conducted a SWOT Analysis by the Board Member

STRENGTHS

- Sports groups
- Undeveloped land
- Mid-Atlantic – Waterways
- Diversity
- Culture
- Educational Institutions
- Medical Field

OPPORTUNITIES

- Work pay
- Inclusive Leadership
- STEM
- Port of Baltimore

WEAKNESSES

- **High Corporate Taxes**
- Federal Government
- Outdated perceptions and delayed processes
- Permitting process
- Fiscal condition
- Cost of Bus
- Baltimore vs Western MD
- Collaboration of Government at County Executive level
- MD location to proximity other states
- Governor with a National reach
- Innovation economy
- collaboration with the business community

- leveraging young talent
- capital investments

THREATS

- Gatekeepers of MD Narrative
- Competitiveness of Virginia
- Job lost

- Negative Narrative internal
- Siloed
- Complacency by some counties
- Crime
- Federal Government policies
- Lack of robust energy sources all over the state

Reviewed Board SWOT against the state SWOT

Market Situation Analysis:

MARYLAND SWOT Analysis



Strengths:

- Highly educated workforce- scientists and engineers
- Life sciences -Top3 BioPharma cluster, cyber assets, quantum assets, aerospace cluster
- Access to research institutions and federal R&D
- High Value Location/quality of life -schools, healthcare, infrastructure-roads/airports,
- Innovation culture, high # of patents, supportive tech communities that collaborate
- Diversity and Low poverty rate

Opportunities:

- Strategic plan = better coordination/outreach
- Capital of Quantum investments
- Innovation economy
- Workforce development
- Entrepreneurial support
- Tax and Policy reform
- Tech Transfer

Weakness:

- High Corporate Tax Rate
- Regulatory Burdens
- Anti-business sentiment, esp w/ new 3% tech tax
- Competitor states traditionally known as more business friendly
- Crime

Threats:

- States lowering corporate tax rates
- Decreased federal investment
- Still skill shortages even with talent pipeline
- Low GDP and population growth
- Loss of high earners
- State budget deficits
- Loss of AAA bond rating

Board Discussion led to the following:

- The importance of addressing these issues to enhance the state's competitiveness was emphasized.
- Possible regional meetings to increase awareness and engagement with the Commerce Department.
- The idea of creating a database to reach out to various communities and nonprofits is proposed.
- Leveraging the board's expertise to address these challenges is important.
- Explore developing apprenticeships and training programs to develop local talent.
- Leverage the collaboration between government, business, and community to drive growth.
- Highlight Maryland's proximity to major East Coast hubs as an opportunity.

Societal Trends that are having an impact on MD's ability to attract business

- Impact of federal government policies, tariffs
- the lack of an integrated transit system.
- Siloed by areas Western Maryland vs Southern Maryland and do not talk as one MD

Session 2: Branding Maryland – Strategy & Insights

Session 2 focused on Maryland's economic trends and strategic plans. **Summarized:** Key points included Maryland's 6.2 million residents, a GDP decline, and a median household income of \$80,000. The labor participation rate is 65.6%, with a high median household income but challenges in attracting talent. Maryland ranks third in education, with a strong life sciences sector and federal agencies. The state faces issues in tech transfer and workforce development, particularly in STEM roles. The discussion emphasized the need for targeted campaigns to attract talent and businesses, focusing on high-paying jobs in bioinformatics, cybersecurity, and aerospace. The importance of regional development and countering misperceptions was also highlighted.

Market Situation Analysis:



MARYLAND ANALYSIS

CONTEXT

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| 6.2M Total residents | \$546B Annual GDP ² | \$98k Median household income ¹ | 3.1% Unemployment rate ³ | 65.6% Labor force participation rate ³ |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|---|

STRENGTHS

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 3rd Most educated state | 3rd Academic science and engineering R&D | 2.5x Life scientist specialization compared to U.S. | 60+ Federal agencies | Top 10% Counties in the U.S. for Black and Hispanic well-being |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|--|

CHALLENGES

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| 1/10th Incentive spending of leaders NC and NY, per GDP | 26th 2-year postsecondary graduation rates | 89% Top STEM roles regularly unfilled | 50th Startup early job creation | 25% Combined Black and Hispanic worker share in five highest-paid occupational categories |
|---|--|---|---|---|

Market Situation Analysis:



LIGHTHOUSE SECTORS

Evaluating Maryland's leading industries for impact

| Sector | Impact | | | Region. equity, avg. LQ W + ES regions ⁴ | |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Job quality, avg. wages, \$K, 2023 ¹ | Job growth, 2023-28 by scenario, K ² | Econ. impact, avg. jobs multiplier, 2023 ³ | Region. equity, avg. LQ W + ES regions ⁴ | Diversity, % Black and/or Latino workers, 2023 ⁵ |
| Technology | High \$159 | High 12-19 | Medium 2.3 | Low 0.3 | Medium 27% |
| Life Sciences | High \$169 | Medium 5-12 | High 3.2 | Low 0.6 | Medium 24% |
| Aerospace and Defense | High \$166 | Low 1-10 | Medium 2.4 | Low 0.2 | Low 18% |
| Professional Services | High \$142 | High 15-25 | Medium 2.0 | Low 0.5 | High 31% |
| Distribution | Medium \$97 | Medium 9-18 | High 2.6 | Medium 0.9 | High 38% |
| Manufacturing | Medium \$93 | Low 1-5 | Medium 2.2 | High 1.2 | Medium 30% |
| Tourism | Low \$55 | Medium 3-4 | Low 1.7 | High 1.3 | High 37% |
| Agriculture | Low \$54 | Low <1 | Low 1.5 | High 1.2 | Low 22% |

The Board focused on enhancing Maryland's marketability and addressing perceptions. **Summarized:** Key points included identifying credible ambassadors and storytellers, leveraging the governor's national ambitions, and addressing regulatory reforms. The discussion highlighted the need for better housing affordability compared to Texas, and the importance of sectors like financial institutions, labor development, manufacturing, and high-tech industries. The idea of using podcasts and awards to showcase rising stars was proposed. Additionally, the potential of real estate development, green spaces, and AI job opportunities was emphasized, along with the role of nonprofits in employment.

Session 3: Headlines from 2030 – Visioning Exercise – BREAKING NEWS

Participants were challenged to think about what success looks like in the form of Breaking News in 2030. What would a headline look like and what would be three points be included in the article. Small group discussion”

Group 1

“10 Years Post COVID, MD Ranks #1 For Bio Tech Innovators and Has the Lowest Unemployment Rate in the Country”

Group 2

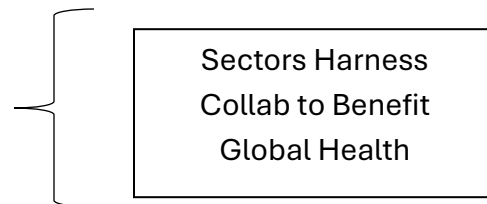
“Maryland’s Quantum industry generates \$80B”

- President Wes Moore designates Baltimore a Tech Hub
- IonQ relocates out-of-state facilities (WA & TN) to Western MD
- USM graduates have the highest number of quantum engineers globally

Group 3

“Maryland becomes BIZ Magnet: The MD Magnet”

- Tax rates lowered in MD
- Miracle Drug developed in MD
- Dozens of Cancers cured in MD
 - Life Sciences
 - Med Institutions
 - Education
 - Tec (Quantum)



Group 4

“MD becomes the New Silicon Valley”

“MD’s Rising Stars Lead the Way”

“From Coast to Capital: Maryland Offers prime Living for Career Builders”

Session 4: Action Planning – “Let’s Prioritize” and Financial Outlook

Budget Recap to give perspective:

Fundraising Outlook:

BUDGET PROJECTIONS FOR 2025-2030



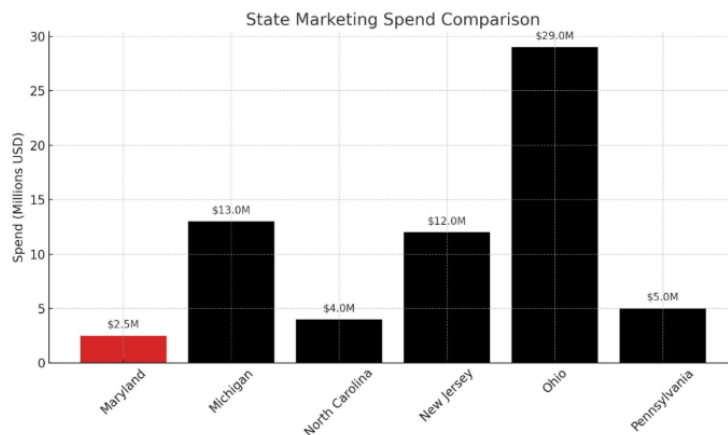
| Fiscal Year | New Revenue | | Spending | Ending Balance |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| | State Contribution | Fundraising Contribution | | |
| FY2025 | \$1,000,000 | \$323,333 | \$2,500,000 | \$3,794,803 |
| FY2026 | \$1,000,000 | \$206,665 | \$2,500,000 | \$2,501,468 |
| FY2027 | \$1,000,000 | \$0 | \$2,000,000 | \$1,501,468 |
| FY2028 | \$1,000,000 | \$0 | \$2,000,000 | \$501,468 |
| FY2029 | \$1,000,000 | \$0 | \$1,501,468 | \$0 |
| FY2030 | \$1,000,000 | \$0 | \$1,000,000 | \$0 |

Market Situation Analysis:

STATE MARKETING BUDGETS



Many states we compete with are outspending Maryland for business attraction marketing.



Context was Shared: Laura, Board Chair emphasized that Board members play an important role in identifying and opening doors to potential sponsors or partner organizations to support the Maryland Marketing Partnership. Since the Partnership’s ad campaigns and promotions are largely funded through these sponsorships—and with some multi-year partnerships coming to an end—there is a pressing need to secure new funding sources. The Chair acknowledged current budget constraints and the challenging

environment, including the tech tax, and stressed the importance of Board involvement more than ever. Members were encouraged to share leads with Rob (the chief sponsorship officer), Sherri, or the Chair directly. The team is willing to engage at all levels, even involving the Secretary or the Governor if needed, to support meaningful partnerships that align with our organization's priorities.

Sherri, Executive Director, shared that the Maryland Marketing Partnership is financially stable for now, with a projected advertising budget of \$2.5 million for both this year and next. However, without new funding, the budget will need to be reduced by \$500,000 in 2027, leading to scaled-back advertising efforts—though funding will remain relatively strong. The goal is not just to sustain but to grow and improve, incorporating new ideas from the Board.

She noted that Maryland accepted a \$1 million infusion from the state but emphasized that the state contributes far less to marketing efforts compared to other states. For instance, Michigan spends \$13 million annually, and Maryland has previously reached \$4.45 million during stronger economic periods. Other states like Ohio, Michigan, and North Carolina often use innovative funding models—such as beverage or tobacco taxes—to support tourism and marketing. The Executive Director advocated for increased state investment and highlighted the need to explore creative funding mechanisms to better compete and promote Maryland effectively.

Boards Reactions to Financial Forecast and Fundraising

Board members responded enthusiastically to the idea of creating an **event or awards program** to raise awareness, attract sponsors, and celebrate Maryland's rising stars. They stressed the need to **think creatively and beyond traditional approaches** to fundraising and visibility for the Maryland Marketing Partnership (MMP). Many agreed that **few people are aware of the MMP**, which hinders fundraising efforts, and that **an annual signature event** could help showcase the impact of the Partnership's work.

Ideas included:

- Hosting a **storytelling-driven awards event** that recognizes businesses, nonprofits, and individuals making an impact across the state.
- Using the event as a **networking opportunity**, where attendees—especially small or mid-sized businesses—could buy tables to be in the room with top leaders, including possibly the **Governor**.

- Creating a **tiered sponsorship model**, offering visibility not just at the event but across podcasts, social media, and the website—creating a year-round marketing package.
- Ensuring the event is **inclusive**, with award criteria that allow smaller or newer businesses to be celebrated alongside larger companies, thereby encouraging broader participation and business development.
- Emphasizing that the event should be **revenue-generating**, while also enhancing awareness of Maryland’s business and innovation ecosystem.

Overall, there was strong support for moving forward with planning an event that would both celebrate local success stories and serve as a strategic tool for fundraising, marketing, and engagement.

Board members were asked to share one challenge or idea to be prioritized:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory Reform, ease taxes to spur economy and attract business, • Key credible ambassador program (e.g. Lighthouse sector), • Better understanding of Perceptions of MD vs our instincts, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do business leaders think about MD? Are there repercussions and risk or areas of reputational strength, • More collaboration between MMP Board members, partners and elected officials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can be accomplished with more events which can also be used as recruitment for new companies to contribute toward the MMP and Dept Commerce, • New Sectors: Financial Institutions – growing funding opportunities for new businesses, investment, venture capitalists. Labor Development – tourism, apprenticeship developing labor trades to close gap in industries, manufacturing, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we identify sectors to attract? What do we use to attract business, • Criteria of focus for MMP Awards – “highlight all growth/all industries”, • Focus more on tourism industry and talent development to boost MD awareness and job sector, • Have an intentional effort to expand our marketing audience with a podcast and/or COMMS outlet to drive new businesses to, • Host an event that highlights medium and small business in the area. I would like this event to also have some type of feature that ties back to the nonprofit sector, • Elevate Maryland’s equality of life, • Podcast for MMP and Annual Rising Stars Storytelling Event, • Ease Taxes and ease regulatory issues/requirements to attract businesses to Maryland and discourage businesses from leaving MD.... Specifically small businesses |
|---|---|

Session 5: Engaging the Board

Board members were also asked to reflect on how they could leverage their expertise and help move the work of MMP forward. A Leveraging Board Expertise Checklist was provided for each Board member. All completed forms were given to Sherri.

LEVERAGING BOARD EXPERTISE

Here's a **Checklist** of ways **Board Members from the Maryland Marketing Partnership (MMP)** can lend their expertise to help attract and drive new business to Maryland. This list is structured around leveraging strategic influence, professional networks, and specialized knowledge:

NAME: _____

Strategic Promotion

- ☐ Promote Maryland's business strengths and assets (workforce, location, incentives) in presentations and speaking engagements.
- ☐ Amplify Maryland success stories through personal networks and media opportunities.
- ☐ Capture interviews of employees from Maryland companies about why it's great to live and work in Maryland.
- ☐ Present to other Commerce boards on what the MMP is doing.
- ☐ Nominate Maryland-based businesses for awards and recognition that elevate the state's reputation.

Market Intelligence & Insight

- ☐ Share sector-specific trends and insights that can inform the state's outreach and recruitment efforts.
- ☐ Provide feedback on marketing materials or campaigns from a business leader's perspective.
- ☐ Advise on potential national markets that Maryland can target with advertising.
- ☐ Advise on competitor trends and tactics.
- ☐ Serve on PR subcommittee.

Brand Amplification

- ☐ Share state-led marketing campaigns and content through social and professional platforms.
- ☐ Provide testimonials or case studies for use in promotional materials.

- ☐ Promote Maryland's business advantages through LinkedIn and other professional platforms.
- ☐ Participate in interviews, webinars, or podcasts to speak on Maryland's strengths.
- ☐ Feature Maryland initiatives or partnerships in company newsletters, etc.
- ☐ Write guest blog posts for Commerce blog or letters to the editor of various pubs.

Strategic Thought Leadership

- ☐ Share insights on current marketing trends and sector-specific opportunities.
- ☐ Offer input on advertising campaigns and branding strategies.
- ☐ Participate in strategic planning sessions focused on business attraction.
- ☐ Recommend new strategies or tactics to drive business attraction.

Business Development & Fundraising

- ☐ Identify prospects for fundraising and assist with connecting MMP fundraiser to your contact.
- ☐ Make introductions to C-suite contacts in target industries outside of Maryland (tech, life sciences, aerospace, manufacturing).
- ☐ Provide event space for future meetings or events.
- ☐ Serve on a fundraising subcommittee.

Local Investment & Community Leadership

- ☐ Advocate for local investment and expansion within their own organizations.

☐ Serve as a visible champion for Maryland in business and civic forums.

☐ Share photography or video footage of Maryland or Maryland businesses.

Marketing & Communications Expertise

☐ Provide feedback on digital marketing campaigns and content strategies.

☐ Assist with refining target audience segmentation based on industry experience.

☐ Review and provide feedback on pitch decks, proposals and marketing materials for business attraction initiatives.

Policy & Advocacy Support

☐ Advise on policy recommendations that could improve Maryland's competitiveness.

☐ Support legislative advocacy that aligns with business recruitment priorities.

☐ Provide testimonials or case studies to support Maryland's economic development agenda.