

## Chapter 5 - COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the City's approach to providing major facilities and services. Community facilities are extremely important to maintaining and enhancing the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents and visitors of Aberdeen. Attractive public facilities are important in maintaining the confidence of homeowners and business owners in the community at-large. Schools, libraries, parks, and other facilities are all highly valued by residents and are important factors in where to buy or rent a home.

The location of community facilities should be consistent with plans for future growth and development in the City. Besides helping build a sustainable community, attractive public facilities also build community pride.

Community facilities include all properties and buildings owned by and/or providing a service to the City of Aberdeen. These facilities are grouped into five categories: (1) open space, (2) parks and recreation areas, (3) public buildings and services, (4) schools and cultural facilities, and (5) health services. The following sections detail the current status and projected needs of each of these community resources.

### OPEN SPACE

Important elements of this chapter are the public parks, recreation, and open space opportunities that are a key component of our community's quality of life. A distinction must be made between planning for parks and recreation and planning for open space. Open space is necessary to adequately provide and plan for parks and recreation. At the same time, open space is also required for the protection of environmental features and resources. Currently, there are approximately 120 acres of recorded open space within the City limits that includes storm water management facilities, non-tidal wetlands, floodplains, forest conservation easements, and required open space.

In the future, land designated as open space should be controlled or acquired to ensure that it is not utilized for development. One approach may be to have the land that is impacted by sensitive areas deeded to the City and provide pockets of open space areas in subdivisions. Developers or homeowners associations may be interested in allowing the City to own these areas and provide passive recreational opportunities. Another approach may include the City coordinating with the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway Commission to determine if any adjoining lands can be acquired in order to enhance and expand the Greenway. There are many advantages to being part of the Greenway, which include promoting existing natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources.

***PARKS AND RECREATION AREAS***

There are many different types of parks and recreational facilities that serve various areas of the City (see attached Existing and Proposed Park Areas Map on page 5-5):

**Existing Facilities**

## 1. Plater Street Park

Plater Street Park is a neighborhood park with improvements including a pavilion, a picnic area with grills, and playground equipment. The park is located off Plater Street near Moyer Drive. The City installed new playground equipment in 2009 that was funded by the Department of Natural Resources Parks and Playgrounds Grant Program. The park comprises 0.94 acre and is located in the southwest portion of Aberdeen. It is zoned R-2. The City of Aberdeen's Department of Public Works maintains this park. The Aberdeen Board of Parks and Recreation handles organization, sponsorship, and program coordination of the park.

## 2. A. B. DeMarco Park

A. B. DeMarco Park is a community park featuring open space for a variety of active and passive recreational activities. This park is located off Ruby Drive and MD 22 near Beards Hill Shopping Plaza. A parking lot with pedestrian access is located to the rear of the Beards Hill Shopping Plaza. Access off Middleton Lane will be provided in the future. The park is 3.79 acres in area with a zoning of R-2. The City of Aberdeen's Department of Public Works maintains this park. The Aberdeen Board of Parks and Recreation handles organization, sponsorship, and program coordination of the park. The City is currently working with the Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation and the State of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources to relocate this facility to an area located off Beards Hill Road.

## 3. North Deen Park

North Deen Park is a community park featuring active and passive leisure opportunities in a residentially developed area. Primary access to the park is from Old Post Road and the North Deen residential community. This park is the second largest park in Aberdeen and is improved with a baseball/softball field, a football/soccer/lacrosse field, an in-line hockey rink, seating, a tot lot, a skateboard facility, and a large parking lot. The park is 11 acres in area and is zoned R-3. The City of Aberdeen's Department of Public Works maintains this park. The Aberdeen Board of Parks and Recreation handles organization, sponsorship, and program coordination of the park.

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4. Victory Street Park

Victory Street Park is a neighborhood park located on Victory Street between Swan and Liberty Streets. Improvements include playground equipment, a pavilion with picnic tables and grills, and a basketball court. This park is 6.20 acres in area and is zoned R-3. The park features mature trees and plentiful on-street parking. The City of Aberdeen's Department of Public Works maintains this park. The Aberdeen Board of Parks and Recreation handles organization, sponsorship, and program coordination of the park.

5. Aberdeen Festival Park

Aberdeen Festival Park is a beautifully landscaped community park offering opportunities for picnics, concerts, festivals, and open-air activities. The annual summer concert series and the annual Earth Day festival are held in this park. This park is located downtown on the west side of Howard Street between Centennial Lane, Franklin Street, and Parke Street with nearby on-street parking. Aberdeen Festival Park is improved with a pavilion, walking path, seating, restrooms, and a children's playground. Festival Park is zoned B-2 and is 2.16 acres in area. The City of Aberdeen's Department of Public Works maintains this park. The Aberdeen Board of Parks and Recreation handles organization, sponsorship, and program coordination of the park.

6. Twin Oaks

Twin Oaks was purchased for neighborhood open space in the Maxa Woods subdivision located off Courtney Drive and Cronin Drive. The open space area consists of two residential lots, one of which features an historic oak tree that is estimated to be over 100 years old. Both lots are landscaped and can be used as picnic areas for the residential community. The City of Aberdeen's Department of Public Works maintains this area.

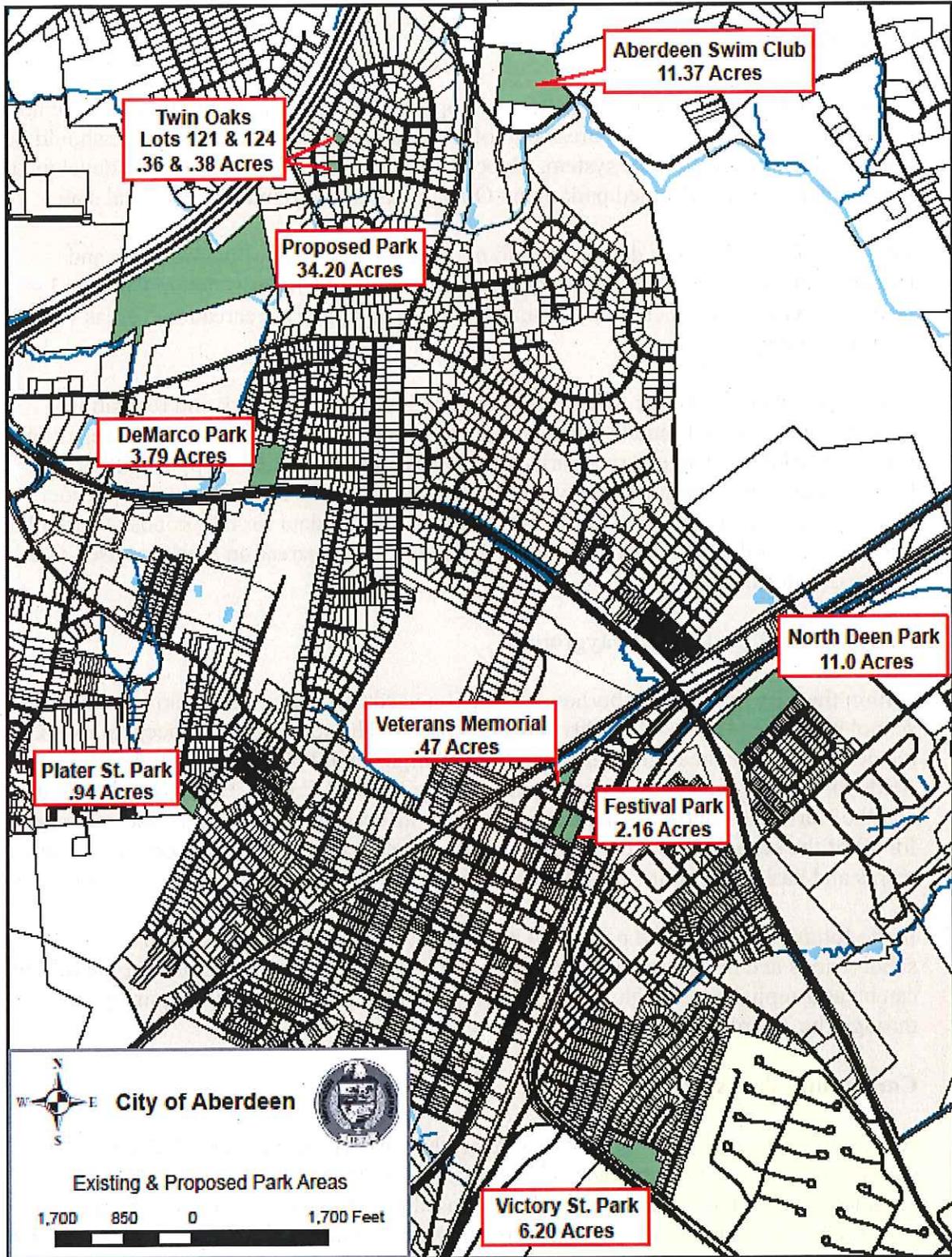
7. Veterans Memorial Park

Veterans Memorial Park is traditionally used for Veterans Day activities. It is landscaped with azaleas and mature shade trees and is home to a field artillery piece. Veterans Memorial Park is zoned B-2 and is located immediately north of the intersection of North Rogers Street and North Parke Street. The park is approximately 0.47 acre in area and the City of Aberdeen's Department of Public Works maintains this park.

## 8. Aberdeen Family Swim Center

Aberdeen Family Swim Center is developed for recreation and leisure opportunities. It is owned by the City of Aberdeen. It features an Olympic size outdoor swimming pool, pavilion, picnic area, and restrooms. It is the largest park in the City at 11.37 acres. It is located off Paradise Road and Old Robin Hood Road and is 1 mile north of MD 22. A summer youth camp is available at this facility. The City of Aberdeen's Department of Public Works maintains the facilities.

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## PROPOSED PARK PLAN

In the Aberdeen area, outdoor recreational opportunities are varied, but facilities are not extensive. As the City grows, areas that offer advantages as large open spaces should be preserved as part of the park system. Special recreation facilities can then be developed in accordance with a detailed park plan. Other areas would remain in a natural state.

The City of Aberdeen has developed and maintained a number of public parks and recreational facilities. With the anticipated growth of the City as stated in Chapter 3 – Municipal Growth Element, the demand for active and passive recreational areas will continue to increase.

The proposed park plan for Aberdeen is designed to guide new park and recreational opportunities and to stimulate interest in the existing recreational venues. In preparing the proposed park plan, existing parks, open space, and recreational opportunities have been evaluated to determine their viability and need for future improvements in order to assure their success. In order to provide the most current data for the proposed park plan, the 2005 Harford County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan was used as a source of information.

### Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds

Within the City limits, neighborhood recreation needs can be met by making active use of school playgrounds as well as City managed parks. The school-park concept allows City residents to utilize the elementary, middle, and high school playgrounds and athletic fields for passive recreational opportunities. The Harford County Board of Education and the Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation have a joint use agreement for all of the school recreation facilities. Baseball diamonds, football/soccer fields, and tennis and basketball courts are an integral part of the Aberdeen recreation system.

In the future, neighborhood parks will be needed in new large-scale residential subdivisions and developers will be required to make adequate provisions for them. This can be accomplished through the preliminary site plan process and by requiring this through the Aberdeen Development Code

### Community Parks

As residential growth in Aberdeen continues, the City will need to develop additional community parks. The City owns approximately 34.19 acres off Beards Hill Road, bounded by I-95 and Carsins Run. The proposed plan for this area in the northwestern part of the City includes athletic fields, nature trails, a community center, and associated parking lot. The City is currently working with the Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation and the State of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources on this project.

## **Open Space and Greenways**

The existing and planned community park areas should, where possible and practical, be incorporated into a greenways network. Walking and bicycle paths could eventually be provided which would meander through the City and form a visual border for our residential neighborhoods. Potential connections to a greenway network may be formed by Cranberry Run to the south and by Carsins Run and Swan Creek to the north.

Permanent greenways and open space fall into two major categories. The first categories include land in public or semi-public ownership, but not necessarily open to the public; the second category includes the remainder, controlled by other means.

The proposed greenway network would provide Aberdeen with a connection to the existing park system to be enjoyed not only by all age groups of the immediate community, but also by Harford County as a whole. The elements of the plan should not be expected to be accomplished immediately, but should evolve over time as development proposals are reviewed or as land becomes available. Civic groups, organizations, and individuals should be encouraged to participate in this plan by sponsoring, promoting, and administering the proposed greenway network.

Developers should be required to set aside open space areas for passive recreation for the community they are creating. This method of acquiring and creating open space and community parks is a recognized part of the development process, with the play area or park commonly maintained by a homeowner's association or deeded over to the City of Aberdeen.

In addition, the City should encourage future connections to the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway (LSHG). The LSHG area is a walking trail through history that builds on tourism and preservation areas. The LSHG is projected to include 40 miles of trails, of which 22 miles are already developed. The LSHG has trails leading to Aberdeen but not throughout the City. It would also be beneficial for the City, where feasible, to explore future linkages with Aberdeen Proving Ground and the LSHG to promote our military history.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

High quality public facilities and services are important because they support private investment in neighborhoods, help retain residents and businesses, and build community pride and improve the quality of life. An important factor in the City's ability to sustain long-term fiscal health will be the way in which it manages growth and re-development. Expanding the tax base without over-committing to expenses will help pay for the facilities and services that help renew the City and attract new residents and businesses.

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## **Existing Conditions and Future Needs**

The City of Aberdeen has well developed facilities to support all aspects of community services. This section reviews the existing status of each of these facilities. For the purposes of this chapter, the United States Post Office is also considered a public facility.

### **Public Offices and Administrative Facilities**

Aberdeen's City Hall is located in the Municipal Center at 60 North Parke Street. The Municipal Center houses the City's administrative and finance offices, as well as the Police Department. The two wings of the building meet at a central lobby, with each wing also having a separate entrance. The Council Chamber, located off of the main lobby, is a 2,600 square-foot octagonal room. The City Administration wing totals 11,200 square feet of space, while the Police Department side encompasses 12,800 square feet. The Municipal Center opened in 2000.

### **Fire Protection**

The Aberdeen Fire Department, Inc., is responsible for fire suppression and prevention, rescue services, and emergency medical services. Fire and rescue services in Aberdeen are provided by both volunteer firemen and paid emergency medical technicians.

The City of Aberdeen is served by three fire stations. The main fire station, located on Rogers Street, is centrally located in its service area and has ready access to major streets in all directions. In addition to the main fire station, the City also has two substations, one located on MD 22 (which has been recently rebuilt and expanded), and the other located on East Bel Air Avenue. There is also one substation located in Perryman that is owned and operated by the Aberdeen Fire Department, but not within the corporate limits of Aberdeen.

### **Police Protection**

The City of Aberdeen's Police Department is the primary provider of police protection. Primary financing for the City Police Department is provided by City taxes, with additional support from County, State, and Federal sources. The Police Department currently employs forty-four sworn officers, full-time dispatchers, and clerical staff.

The City of Aberdeen has seen a constant pattern of growth in various areas over the past two decades. Statistics show that while the City's population grew 23% between 1980 and 2005, the number of officers did not keep pace with this growth. From 1995 to 2005, annexation expanded the City's geographic area by 576 acres and calls for service to the Aberdeen Police Department increased by 230%. During this same time period, the allocation for sworn officers remained static. The overall continuing increase in calls for service is reflective of activities taking place at our public schools and Ripken Stadium, combined with additional bank, business, and infrastructure security checks. A manpower assessment was completed in January 2009 resulting in a recommendation for patrol officer staffing at 42 sworn officers.

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### **Department of Public Works**

The Department of Public Works Maintenance Facility is located off Michaels Lane next to the Aberdeen Wastewater Treatment Facility. The office building is 11,000 square feet, with an additional 8,000 square foot covered storage area housing maintenance vehicles, equipment, and refuse trucks.

### **U.S. Post Office**

The Aberdeen Post Office is located on West Bel Air Avenue. There are no current plans by the U.S. Postal Service to relocate or expand this facility.

### **Library**

The Aberdeen branch of the Harford County Library is located on Franklin Street, across from the Aberdeen Municipal Center. The branch has meeting room space and public use computers equipped with Internet access and access to the library's catalog and on-line databases.

### **Aberdeen Senior Activity Center**

The City of Aberdeen's Senior Activity Center is located at 7 Franklin Street. The building is 7,800 square feet in area. The Aberdeen Senior Activity Center offers a variety of programs for senior citizens that include day trips, crafts, cards, computers, dance, exercise, billiards, health and nutrition, music lessons, and fellowship. There is a growing need to expand the Senior Activity Center and possibly relocate the center to a larger community facility envisioned on City-owned land located off Beards Hill Road.

### **Harford County Boys' and Girls' Club**

The Aberdeen unit of the Harford County Boys and Girls Club is located at 100 East Bel Air Avenue. The Boys and Girls Club is open to children ages five to seventeen. Their stated mission is "to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens."

### **Ripken Stadium**

The Ripken Stadium is a 6,000-seat state-of-the-art minor league baseball facility, located off Long Drive and MD 22. The stadium opened in June 2002. The IronBirds enjoy sellout crowds for each of their 38 home games. The stadium features two pavilions with ample seating, concession stands, and entertainment for children.

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### **Ripken Youth Baseball Academy**

The Ripken Youth Baseball Academy is host to the Cal Ripken World Series. Cal Sr.'s Yard is a youth-sized version of Oriole Park at Camden Yards featuring a 3,500-seat stadium with concession stands and restroom facilities. The Academy also features additional youth fields used for instruction during the many camps held at this facility.

## **SCHOOLS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES**

Aberdeen has three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Harford County Government funds all of the public schools in Aberdeen. St. Joan of Arc Catholic School is our only parochial school, providing instruction for students from kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Aberdeen High School**, 251 Paradise Road, consists of 209,150 square feet located on an educational campus with Bakersfield Elementary School. There is 20 acres of outdoor activity area. An 18,350 square foot addition that includes 12 classrooms and 255 seats was completed in 2008. The 2009/10 enrollment for Aberdeen High School was 1,464, with a State Rated Capacity of 1,679. The Science and Mathematics Academy at Aberdeen High School (SMA) is a magnet school for all high school freshmen residing in Harford County and is located on the third floor of the school. In order to get into the SMA, one must apply in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and only 50 students per school year are selected. It was the first magnet school within the Harford County Public School system, welcoming its first class of students in the fall of 2004.

**Aberdeen Middle School**, 111 Mt. Royal Avenue, consists of 196,800 square feet. The 2009/10 enrollment for Aberdeen Middle School was 1,095, with a State Rated Capacity of 1,444. Aberdeen Middle School was constructed in 1973. The school was renovated and an elevator installed in 1982. There is 17 acres of outdoor activity area.

**Bakerfield Elementary School**, 36 Baker Street, consists of 65,687 square feet. The 2009/10 enrollment for Bakerfield Elementary School was 438, with a State Rated Capacity of 455. Bakerfield Elementary School was constructed in 1961 and renovated in 1999. There is 8 acres of outdoor activity area.

**George D. Lisby Elementary School at Hillsdale**, 810 Edmund Street, consists of 56,295 square feet. The 2009/10 enrollment for George D. Lisby Elementary School was 316, with a State Rated Capacity of 432. The George D. Lisby Elementary School was constructed in 1968, and renovated in 1997. There is 15 acres of outdoor activity area.

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**Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School**, 203 East Bel Air Avenue, consists of 63,082 square feet. The 2009/10 enrollment for Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School was 415, with a State Rated Capacity of 632. The Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School was constructed in 1943 and renovated in 1997. There is 9 acres of outdoor activity area that is currently being improved with new playground equipment, an active play area, and a walking trail.

**Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum, Inc.**, 18 North Howard Street, was incorporated on February 25, 1991. Students, businesses, and organizations use the facility to conduct research for their projects, and open houses at the Museum are always a part of Aberdeen's many activities and celebrations.

## HEALTH SERVICES

Aberdeen is served by Upper Chesapeake Health Center and the Harford Memorial Hospital. The Upper Chesapeake Health Center was opened in 2000 and is located off Maryland Route 24 in Bel Air. Harford Memorial Hospital is located in Havre de Grace.

Patient First, a primary and urgent care medical provider, recently opened at the corner of Beards Hill Road and Hospitality Way. Patient First offers prompt medical service with laboratory and x-ray facilities available on-site.

Aberdeen offers numerous medical, dental, and physical therapy services in the west end business district and downtown area.

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