



## **02 City Profile**

## INTRODUCTION

The City’s geographic and demographic profile, location and connectivity to the region, heritage and population characteristics are discussed in this chapter. The City of Aberdeen takes pride in its rich history and historic homes with a strong military and railroad influence, its prime location, its inclusive parks and recreation facilities, and its incremental and planned growth. The City Profile helps to capture a snapshot of the existing framework in order to create goals which can be clearly articulated and defined in planning the next 10 years. The City of Aberdeen is committed to maintaining consistency with Maryland’s Twelve Planning Visions which address Quality of Life and Sustainability, Public Participation, Growth Areas, Community Design, Infrastructure, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, Environmental Protection, Resource Conservation, Stewardship, and Implementation. The City of Aberdeen’s community design focuses on compact, mixed use, walkable areas that are both consistent with the existing community character and located near available transit options.

## LOCATION

The City of Aberdeen is the largest municipality in Harford County and is located 26 miles northeast of Baltimore, at the north end of the Upper Chesapeake Bay. Home to well-known landmarks such as Aberdeen Proving Ground, the Ripken Experience™, and Leidos Field at Ripken Stadium, the City is within a one to three-hour drive to many major cities including Baltimore, Wilmington, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and New York City. **Figure 2-1. Aerial View of the City of Aberdeen** shows an aerial view of the City’s location.



**Figure 2-1. Aerial View of the City of Aberdeen**

Aberdeen is served by several major highways, with I-95 being the most prominent. Access to the City is provided via an interchange with MD 22 (Churchville Road), which also connects directly to Aberdeen Proving Ground and the greater Churchville - Bel Air area. US 40 is another major thoroughfare, generally running east to west, parallel to I-95, and stretching from Baltimore, Maryland to Wilmington, Delaware. Other State highways serving Aberdeen include MD 7, MD 132, MD 159, MD 462, and MD 715. In addition to the various highway routes, there are several rail access points within the City. The Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC), Amtrak, and the Norfolk Southern/CSX railways all provide means of transportation into and through the City. The Aberdeen Train Station located in the heart of the downtown area serves as a key multimodal connection serving the City and providing regional connectivity. **See Chapter 7—Transportation** for additional information on the City’s transportation system.

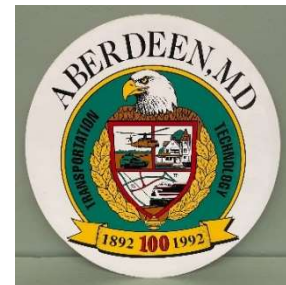
### CITY HISTORY

Aberdeen began as a farming community in 1720, when Charles Calvert, the fifth Lord Baltimore, granted 1,140 acres of fertile land to Edward Hall. Located on the western edge of the Chesapeake on the main road between Alexandria and Philadelphia called the Old Post Road, the village at Halls Cross Road remained small until the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad scouted the area for a watering station in 1835. One of the railroad company’s engineers was Edmund Law Rogers who saw the great potential for development. Rogers developed the Village of Aberdeen around 1800. The name originated from its mother city, Aberdeen, Scotland, as a result of the close relationship the Rogers family had with their cousin, the Earl of Aberdeen, who became Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1852. The history of Aberdeen has always been centered around transportation, military presence, and its overall prime regional location.



The area that now comprises Aberdeen was originally a cluster of three communities: Hall's Cross Roads, located at the intersection of Old Philadelphia Road (MD 7, also known as Old Post Road or Philadelphia Post Road) and Bush River Neck Road (then the main road from Swan Creek); Mechanicsville; and the Village of Aberdeen. In 1892, Aberdeen was reconstituted as a town under Chapter 136 of the Acts of 1892 and the Town became a city in 1992, after amending its charter and celebrating its centennial.

As a part of the Centennial, a new seal was designed by Jim Wilkinson, under the Centennial Committee. The original seal, created in 1920, acknowledged the focus on agriculture and the proving grounds at that point in time. The seal’s update included the various transportation improvements and additions (Rt. 40 and Rt. 95), a nod to the agricultural roots of the City, as well as the importance of the history of the Proving Grounds.



In 1987, The Aberdeen Historical Museum was established. This small nonprofit 501(C)(3) museum was initially referred to as the Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum, Inc. It is open to the public on Tuesdays and Thursdays as well as Saturdays and is run primarily by volunteers. It allows visitors and residents to visit the rich history of Aberdeen’s roots as well as enjoy various events such as the Richard Morton Art Show held recently.

Since 1992, the City has continued to grow and prosper. In addition to being a destination as a place to live and work, Aberdeen also serves as a recreational and tourist destination. The opening of the Ripken Stadium in 2002 has aided in Aberdeen’s recreational appeal. The Stadium, now named Leidos Field at Ripken Stadium, is home to the Aberdeen IronBirds, an affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles. Leidos Field hosts



a wide assortment of events each year, from charity races and walks, autocross, and seasonal festivals to weddings, corporate meetings, concerts, and The Ripken Experience™ Aberdeen. The Ripken Youth Baseball Academy, located adjacent to the Stadium consisting of now nine youth baseball fields, holds numerous events at the facilities including tournaments, week-long experiences, summer collegiate leagues, spring training, camps, and clinics. In 2022, Ripken Baseball estimated hosting over 1,500 teams and 25,000 participants, bringing approximately 100,000 visitors to Aberdeen.

### Aberdeen Proving Ground

Aberdeen is home to the U.S. Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), which was established by an Act of Congress and came into operation in January 1918. APG serves as the headquarters of the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC). It occupies more than 72,500 acres (113 sq. mi.) in Harford County. APG is the largest employer in Harford County and the sixth largest in the state of Maryland. It has played a major role in the development and growth of the City over the past 100 years. Additional information on APG is found in **Chapter 8—Economic Development**.



## Historic Sites

Aberdeen has a rich history. There are many properties that provide historic, architectural, archeological, or cultural significance where events of historic significance took place or are the locations of structures, whether standing or ruined. With over 300 years of history, the preservation of the City’s history is an important and a key element of the character for the community.



The City aids owners in getting properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP). The structures/sites listed in **Table 2-1, NRHP Listed or Eligible Historic Properties** are on the MIHP and are either listed on the NRHP or are eligible for listing. Several hundred additional properties are also listed on the MIHP but were either determined not eligible for listing, or no eligibility determination has yet been made regarding inclusion on the NRHP.

**Table 2-1. MIHP/NRHP Listed or Eligible Historic Properties**

MIHP/ NRHP #	Property Name	Location
<b>HA-781</b>	Aberdeen Train Station “MARC/Amtrak”	18 E Bel Air Avenue
<b>HA-841</b>	B&O Railroad Station	408 W Bel Air Avenue
<b>HA-1559</b>	James B. Baker House	452 W Bel Air Avenue
<b>NRHP - 94000730</b>	Swansbury – Jay House	Beard’s Hill Road Extended
<b>NRHP- 73000922</b>	Sophia’s Dairy	Belcamp Road/US 40
<b>NRHP - 78001465</b>	Griffith House	1120 Old Philadelphia Road
<b>NRHP - 76000998</b>	Poplar Hill – Cranberry Hall	115 Poplar Hill Road
<b>NRHP - 83003780</b>	Chestnut Ridge – Christian Hoopman House	3850 West Chapel Road

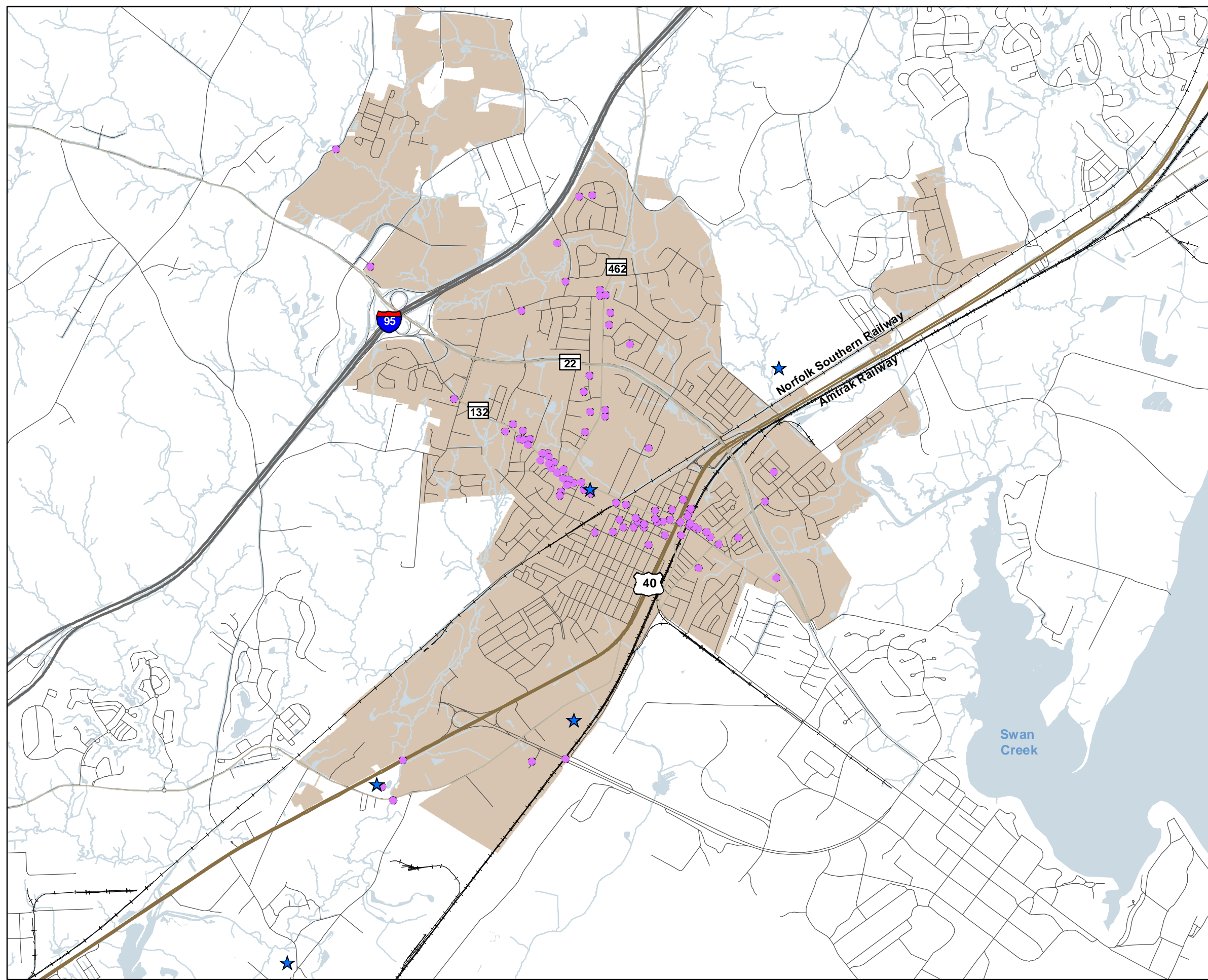
Source: Maryland Historical Trust, Cultural Resource Information System (June 2022)

Notable properties within Aberdeen that are included in the National Register of Historic Places include the Griffith House, James B. Baker house, Poplar Hill, Aberdeen Train Station, B&O Railroad, Sophia’s Dairy, Chestnut Ridge, and Swansbury (also known as Jay House). Full descriptions and history of each of these properties can be found on Maryland Historical Trust’s website ([https://mht.maryland.gov/research\\_nationalregister.shtml](https://mht.maryland.gov/research_nationalregister.shtml)). **Map 2-1, Historic Sites** shows the locations of these properties throughout the City.

# MAP 2-1

## Historic Sites

- City of Aberdeen
  - Water Bodies
  - Railroad
  - Maryland Inventory of Historic Places
  - National Register of Historic Places
- Major Roads**
- Interstates
  - US Highways
  - State Routes
  - Local Routes

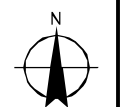


**plan**ABERDEEN  
Our City. Our Plan. Our Future.

Source: MD IMAP

Wallace Montgomery created this map for planning purposes from a variety of sources. It is neither a survey nor a legal document. Information provided by other agencies should be verified with them where appropriate.

April 2023  
0 0.175 0.35 0.7  
Miles



The B&O Railroad Station continues to be a historical landmark in the City. The train station was central to the economy and culture of the City of Aberdeen for many generations. When the train line expanded in 1886 with the completion of the Susquehanna River bridge, the B&O connected Baltimore to Philadelphia and New York. This resulted in freight and passenger service becoming available to Aberdeen. The station was a key factor in the city’s canning industry as the canneries shipped their products nationwide.

In 1917, the federal government’s establishment of the Aberdeen Proving Ground made the B&O station important for transporting troops, military weaponry, and supplies. Post World War I, train line expansion allowed for citizens and freight to depart and arrive at the Aberdeen B&O station to reach cities such as Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Cincinnati and Chicago. In 1958, passenger service on the line ended and the station was no longer used.

A new 501(c)(3) corporation (Friends of the Aberdeen B&O Train Station) was formed in June of 2020. This group was formerly connected to the Aberdeen Historical Museum. In April of 2022, it was announced that the Friends of the Aberdeen B&O Train Station, Inc. was awarded \$850,000 in State bonds to put towards the task of updating and renovating the train station, allowing for Phase 3 of their project. Phase 1 relocated the Station; Phase 2 included a structural stabilization of 75% of the station. Phase 3 will include finishing the stabilization, replacing the roof, and rehabilitating the exterior of the station as well.



### ***Aberdeen Historical Museum***

The Aberdeen Historical Museum is dedicated to remembering Aberdeen’s history. Here, you will find pictures, maps, and historical archives that will take you back to Aberdeen’s beginnings. Not to mention the large collection of baseball memorabilia. The museum is located at 18 N. Howard Street, and is open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 10am to 1pm.

# DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS & TRENDS

## Introduction & Data Overview

Understanding the historical population growth of the City, as well as the trending population dynamics, is critical in identifying future housing, employment, community services and public infrastructure needs for supporting a vibrant community. This demographic information, when compared to Harford County and Maryland, helps identify local and regional trends that may impact the City's growth. Using this information helps direct the goals through the Plan to serve residents, businesses, and other stakeholders today, tomorrow and in the long-term future.

Aberdeen's demographics were drawn from U.S. Census products. Due to sampling and surveying error, the data contained cannot be construed as an irrefutable measure of existing conditions. It is important to note that the U.S. Census Bureau changed the method it uses to collect and disseminate much of its information. Beginning with the 2010 Decennial Census, the Census Bureau stopped distributing the traditional 'long form' survey that historically provided enhanced data, published as Summary File 3 and Summary File 4. These included social statistics (e.g., educational attainment, household relationships, veteran status, disability status, ancestry, language spoken) and economic data (e.g., employment, occupation, poverty status). These summary files were replaced by American Community Survey (ACS) data, which are available in five-year estimates. For this Chapter's purposes, all references to ACS data is assumed to mean the 2016-2020 ACS, unless otherwise noted; references to the Census refers to the decennial U.S. Census and will note the applicable year.

In addition, full release of 2020 Census statistics has not occurred due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Where possible, the 2020 data was utilized; however, the more descriptive data is only available from the ACS at this time. Data sources are clearly identified for each table and figure. See **Chapter 6—Housing** for additional statistics on the City's housing stock and **Chapter 8—Economic Development** for statistics on related topics.

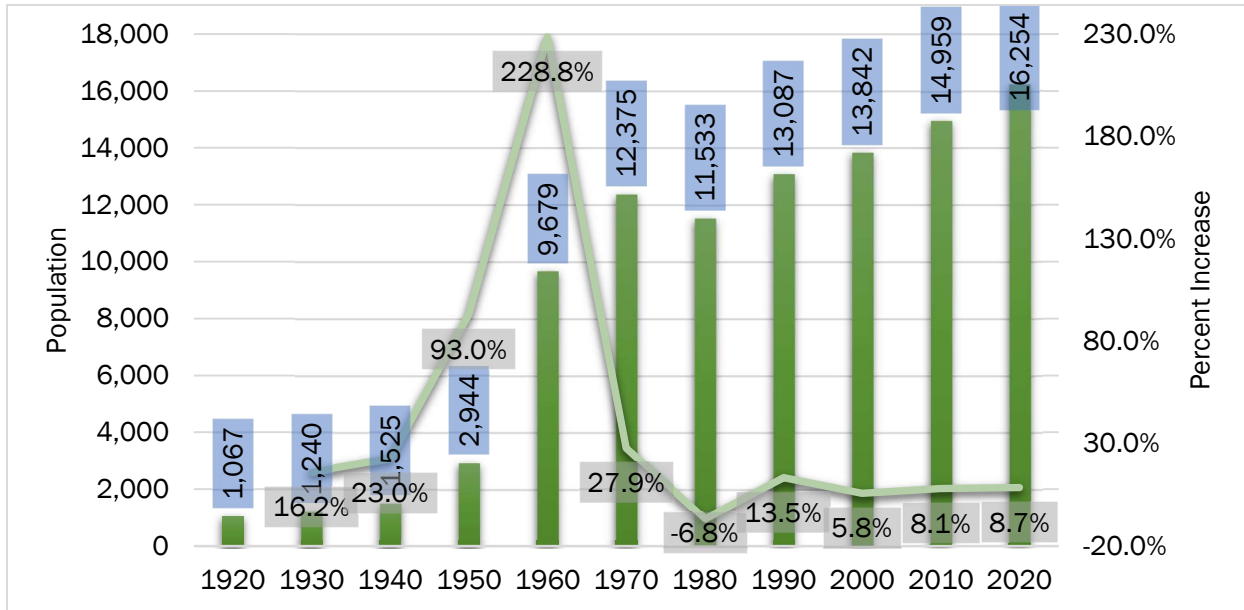
## Population

According to the 2020 Census, Aberdeen has a population of 16,254 residents. This change in population when measured from the 2010 Census is an 8.7% increase from the 2010 population count of 14,959. The average annual growth rate for the City is 0.83%. During the same period, the County's population saw a lesser increase at 6.6% from 2010-2020 or 0.64% average annual growth rate. The State's population increase landed between the other two areas, demonstrating an increase of 7.0% from 2010-2020 or 0.68% average annual growth rate. The Population Trends (**See Figures 2-2 through 2-4, Population Trends**) depict the population trends for the City, County, and State since 1920. *Note: If ACS data are used for analysis, total population counts will differ from those stated in this section.*

As shown in **Figure 2-2, Population Trends - City of Aberdeen**, the City experienced incremental growth of over 8% in population since the year 2000, a population increase of 2,412 as measured from the 2020 data. This increase indicates a very well established, stable community and points to a desire for residents to want to stay or move to the City. This increase in growth can also be attributed to infill development and the annexations in the City that have occurred over the last few years to meet the residential demand.



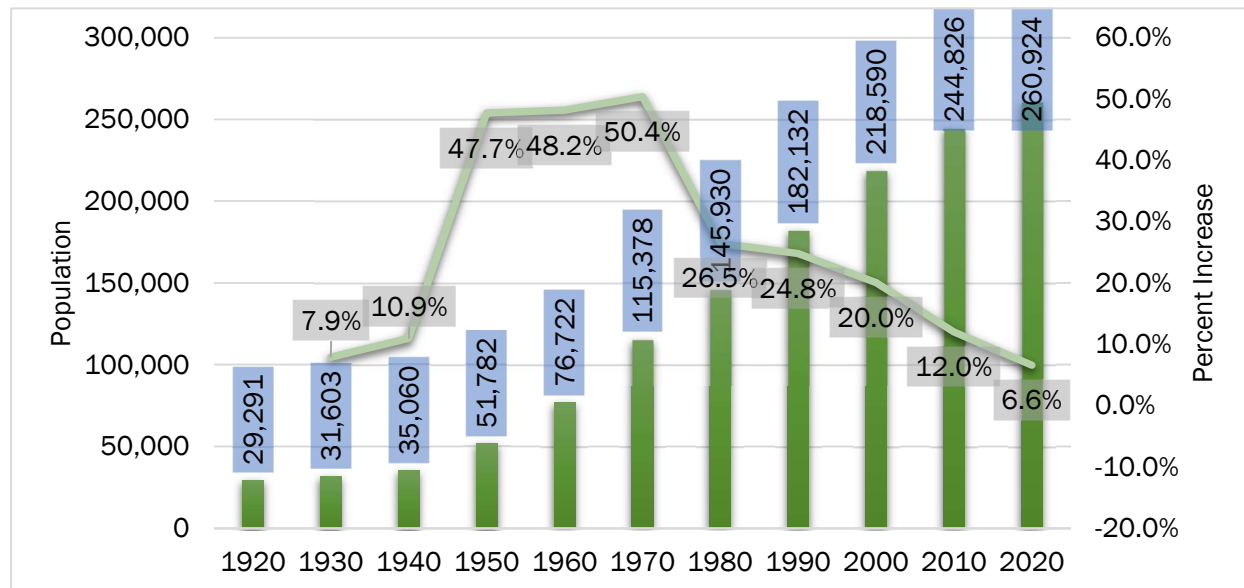
**Figure 2-2. Population Trends—City of Aberdeen**



Source: U.S. Decennial Census (1920-2020)

As shown in **Figure 2-3, Population Trends – Harford County**, the County experienced a decrease in the high rate of population growth that was occurring since the year 1980. While the County is still experiencing an overall increase in population; however, the overall rate of growth is decreasing as measured from 1980 to present. In comparison, Aberdeen continues to show a positive trend on the rate of population growth over this same time span. This indicates that residents are continuing to select Aberdeen as their home and will likely continue to drive demand in regional residential markets.

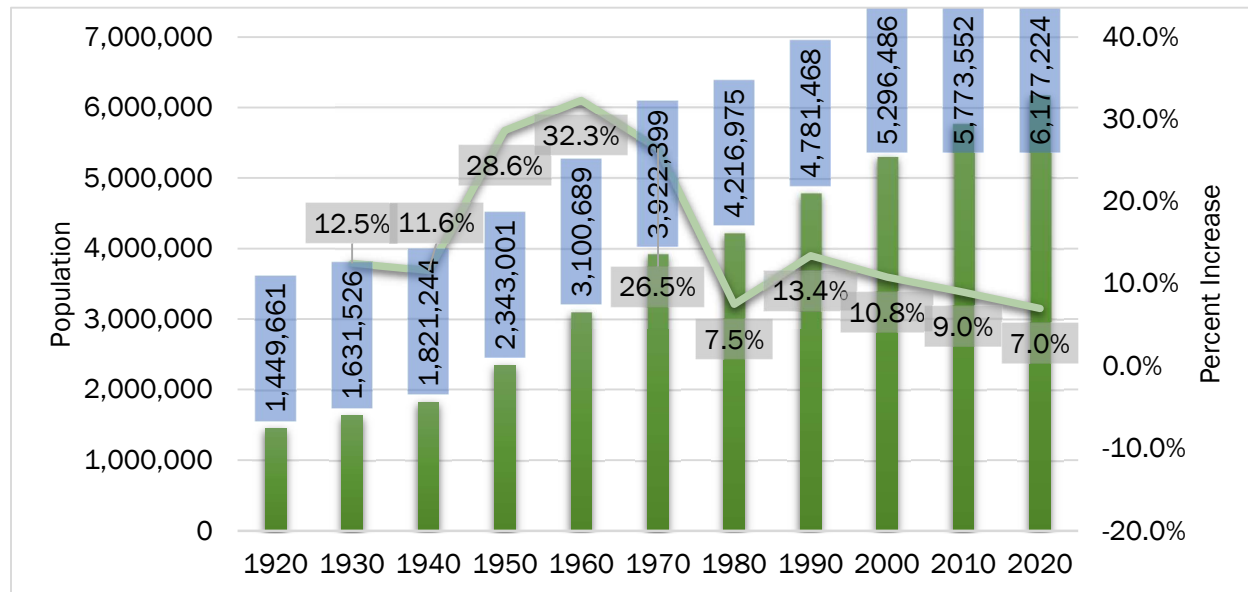
**Figure 2-3. Population Trends—Harford County**



Source: U.S. Decennial Census (1920-2020)

As shown in **Figure 2-4, Population Trends – Maryland**, the State has experienced a slight decrease in the percentage of population growth that has been occurring since the year 1990. Even though the overall percentage of growth has decreased, the State is still experiencing an overall increase in population. Overall, the City of Aberdeen has seen the highest percentage of population growth in 2020, when compared to both Harford County and State percentages.

**Figure 2-4. Population Trends—Maryland**



Source: U.S. Decennial Census (1920-2020)

### Race and Ethnicity

The diversity of its residents in Aberdeen is a key consideration for planning its future. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (US OMB) defines the race and ethnicity categories that federal agencies must use to collect data—including the Census Bureau. Local, state, tribal, and federal programs all use these critical factors and data to develop numerous policies, particularly for civil rights. The concept of transportation equity is a central theme in the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Transportation projects, or other capital investments, are distributed in a manner that doesn't unfairly benefit some populations and disadvantage others. Aberdeen continues to factor in these types of demographic patterns in the context of their growth plans and infrastructure management budgeting.

According to the census data and based on overall percentages, the City's population is more racially diverse than Harford County but, when compared to the state of Maryland, the City's population is slightly less diverse. Since 2000, the City has shown increasing racial diversity, with a 7% decrease in the White population and over a 32% increase in the Black or African American population. All other non-white races show a similarly increased rate of change for this period. While these minority populations are showing higher rates of growth, their total population remains relatively low. **Table 2-2, Racial Composition Comparisons** compares the City's racial composition to that of Harford County and Maryland in 2020.

**Table 2-2. Racial Composition Comparisons (2020)**

Race	City		County		State	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>One Race</b>	14,972	94.1%	242,425	92.9%	5,695,323	92.2%
White	9,499	59.7%	190,128	72.9%	3,007,874	48.7%
Black or African American	3,728	23.4%	37,706	14.5%	1,820,472	29.5%
American Indian & Alaska Native	43	0.3%	712	0.3%	31,845	0.5%
Asian	681	4.3%	8,173	3.1%	420,944	6.8%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	0	0.0%	198	0.1%	3,247	0.1%
Some Other Race	1,021	6.4%	5,508	2.1%	410,941	6.7%
<b>Two or More Races</b>	932	5.9%	18,499	7.1%	481,901	7.8%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>16,254</b>		<b>260,924</b>		<b>6,177,224</b>	

Source: 2020 U.S. Decennial Census (Redistricting Data)

Over the last 20 years, Aberdeen’s population has also grown more racially diverse. **Table 2-3, Change in City Racial Composition** summarizes changes in the City’s racial composition from 2000-2020.

**Table 2-3. Change in City Racial Composition (2000-2020)**

Race	2000		2010		2020		Change		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	00-10	10-20	00-20
<b>One Race</b>	13,361	96.5%	14,166	94.7%	14,972	94.1%	6.0%	3.3%	9.5%
White	8,984	64.9%	8,815	58.9%	9,499	59.7%	-1.9%	-5.4%	-7.1%
Black or African American	3,790	27.4%	4,564	30.5%	3,728	23.4%	20.4%	9.8%	32.3%
American Indian & Alaska Native	34	0.2%	59	0.4%	43	0.3%	73.5%	27.1%	120.6%
Asian	343	2.5%	437	2.9%	681	4.3%	27.4%	12.8%	43.7%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	13	0.1%	52	0.3%	0	0.0%	300.0%	28.8%	184.6%
Some Other Race	197	1.4%	239	1.6%	1,021	6.4%	21.3%	181.2%	241.1%
<b>Two or More Races</b>	481	3.5%	793	5.3%	932	5.9%	64.9%	104.5%	237.2%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>13,842</b>		<b>14,959</b>		<b>16,254</b>		<b>8.1%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>

Source: 2000-2020 U.S. Decennial Census

**Table 2-4, Change in Hispanic & Latino Population** provides a summary of the City’s population self-reporting as Hispanic or Latino origin. The absolute number of people reporting Hispanic or Latino origin increased by 1,290 from 2000-2020, as did the percent change (increasing by almost 223%). Significant trends like this rate of growth indicate that there may be a near-term rise in the need for translation services or similar support. Reviews of governmental customer service interactions should be considered to ensure communication gaps are not impacting residents’ access to services.

**Table 2-4. Change in Hispanic & Latino Population (2000-2020)**

Ethnicity	2000		2010		2020		Change		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	00-10	10-20	00-20
<b>Hispanic or Latino (any race)</b>	477	3.4%	815	5.4%	1,767	11.1%	70.9%	89.0%	222.9%
<b>Not Hispanic or Latino</b>	13,365	96.6%	14,144	94.6%	14,137	88.9%	5.8%	4.0%	10.1%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>13,842</b>		<b>14,959</b>		<b>16,254</b>		<b>8.1%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>

Source: 2000-2020 U.S. Decennial Census

### Age

When discussing housing needs, community services, schools, and other public services, age is a key factor considered throughout the Plan to ensure that the needs of the community are addressed. **Table 2-5, Age Distribution Comparison** indicates that the City’s population is younger on average than that of Harford County and Maryland. The overall median age of City residents decreased by 1.4 years during the 2010-2020 period. Conversely, the median age of residents in the County increased by 2.1 years, and by 1.2 years in the State, over the same period. The share of the City’s population that is of working age, or between 20-64 years old, is slightly less than the County or State’s; the City’s population over 65 years is greater than both the County and State.

**Table 2-5. Age Distribution Comparisons (2020)**

Age	City		County		State	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Under 5 Years</b>	1,156	7.3%	14,178	5.6%	363,618	6.0%
<b>5 to 19 Years</b>	3,003	18.9%	48,067	18.9%	1,131,200	18.7%
<b>20 to 64 Years</b>	9,107	57.2%	150,449	59.2%	3,611,931	59.9%
<b>65 Years &amp; Over</b>	2,638	16.5%	41,042	16.1%	930,875	15.6%
<b>Median Age</b>	37.5		40.8		38.8	
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>16,254</b>		<b>253,736</b>		<b>6,037,624</b>	

Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

**Table 2-6, City Age Distribution** shows that the City experienced some changes in the distribution of its population’s age groups. During the 2010-2020 period, increases were seen in the Under 5 Years and 65 Years and Over age categories. It is important to the City to maintain an even distribution of ages within the population to ensure a sustainable City.

*Note: detailed age data has not yet been released for the 2020 Census.*

**Table 2-6. City Age Distribution**

Age	2010		2020		Change
	No.	%	No.	%	10-20
<b>Under 5 Years</b>	776	5.2%	1,156	7.3%	49.0%
<b>5 to 19 Years</b>	3,148	21.1%	3,003	18.9%	-4.6%
<b>20 to 64 Years</b>	9,250	62.0%	9,107	57.2%	-1.5%
<b>65 Years and Over</b>	1,761	11.8%	2,638	16.5%	49.8%
<b>Median Age</b>	38.9		37.5		-3.6%
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>14,920</b>		<b>16,254</b>		<b>6.6%</b>

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, 2006-2010 & 2016-2020 American Community Survey. Note: Due to ACS estimate rounding and margin of error, numbers may not add to 100%.

Changing percentages in the Under 5 Years and 65 Years and Over groups should be watched and are important as these two age groups can result in the need for more specialized services such as pediatric and geriatric medical practitioners, day care, adult day care, senior apartments, assisted living facilities, and skilled nursing care.

## Education

Educational attainment is a metric used to identify the level of education completed by the population. This information can help identify the needs for maintaining or improving various institutions, as well as a metric to identify the types of employment or other services required to serve the population.

**Table 2-7, Educational Attainment** compares the City’s educational attainment for the Population 25 Years & Over with that of Harford County and Maryland. As the table shows, Aberdeen has a higher percentage of residents who have not graduated from high school or received their graduate equivalency (GED) than the County or the State, while concurrently, the percentage of the population who have bachelor’s degrees or other advanced degrees is almost half that of the County or State. *Note: educational attainment data has not yet been released for the 2020 Census.*



**Table 2-7. Educational Attainment (2020)**

Education Level	City		County		State	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Not High School Graduates</b>	1,439	13.4%	12,248	7.0%	393,028	9.5%
<b>High School Graduate</b>	3,159	29.3%	45,907	26.0%	1,006,008	24.2%
<b>Some College, No Degree</b>	2,398	22.2%	38,313	21.7%	779,586	18.7%
<b>Associate degree</b>	1,381	12.8%	14,924	8.5%	282,898	6.8%
<b>Bachelor’s Degree</b>	1,379	12.8%	37,733	21.4%	907,523	21.8%
<b>Graduate Degree or Higher</b>	1,027	9.5%	27,393	15.5%	795,655	19.1%
<b>Population 25 Years &amp; Over</b>	<b>10,783</b>	<b>67.8%</b>	<b>176,518</b>	<b>69.6%</b>	<b>4,164,698</b>	<b>69.0%</b>

*Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey*

Aberdeen will continue to partner with the Harford County Board of Education, the local schools in the City, and other County and State agencies to better understand the underlying reasons that may explain this discrepancy in High School and GED attainment. Where possible, any additional State, County, or local programs that could be instituted to try and reverse these trends should be studied for implementation. This effort should be focused particularly for those not receiving high school diplomas, as there are studies showing a higher correlation between those without high school diplomas and higher rates of criminal activity and drug and alcohol abuse.