



08 Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

Economic development generally refers to the sets of policies, regulations, and programs that are intended to create wealth and economic stability, bolster the tax base, and ensure the highest possible quality of life for City residents. This chapter, consistent with the State of Maryland’s Twelve Planning Visions, identifies Aberdeen’s key assets and issues and serves as a guide for economic development within the City. It describes current economic conditions and trends, identifies economic issues and opportunities, and outlines goals and strategies for economic development and for promoting a vibrant and diversified economy. While economic development is included as one of Maryland’s 12 Planning Visions, it is not a required element in comprehensive plans. However, economic development is a major motivation for coordinated land use planning. Within the areas designated for growth considerations for innovative techniques for economic development and streamline review applications, including permit review and subdivision plan review should be incorporated in City policies and regulations.

Encouraging economic development leads to benefits beyond increasing the sale or production of goods and services for the City’s residents. In 2020, the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services industry continued to rise in the City. Economic Development accounted for 15.6% of all jobs (1,211), overtaking retail trade, which was the industry with the greatest number of employees in 2010 (1,397 or 19.0%). With this in mind, this chapter aims to identify the best way to take advantage of this information and apply it to the benefit of the City, encouraging responsible economic growth that reflects the needs and desires of its residents.

GOALS

The overarching goal for economic development is to create the conditions for private enterprises to establish and sustain a varied mix of commercial, industrial, and service-focused jobs that provide residents of Aberdeen and surrounding areas with employment opportunities and sources of goods and services. The following goals have been specifically identified as critical to the ongoing success of Aberdeen and its residents:

- 1. Diversify Aberdeen’s employment base and encourage industries that promote skilled employment.**
 - Promote job training and educational programs offered by Harford Community College, Harford County Office of Economic Development, and Susquehanna Workforce Network.
 - Continue to be an advocate for Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) and the Army Alliance. Support the mission of Aberdeen Proving Ground and the defense community.
 - Address joint land use and the Department of Defense’s Army Compatible Use Buffer Program as it relates to APG.
 - Promote the University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake initiatives and support growth in the medical and health industry sectors.

2. Provide the overall conditions to attract new businesses and retain and expand existing businesses.

- Continue to work with business owners to identify opportunities to develop and enhance workforce pipelines. This could include creating or enhancing job training or apprenticeship organizations. Collaborate with Harford Community College and other agencies for assistance with programs and resources to focus on this issue.
- Collaborate with internal and external agencies to improve the efficiency of workflows on the review and approval of development plans.
- Analyze the Code of the City of Aberdeen for regulations that may hinder economic development and growth (i.e., admissions and amusement tax, personal property taxes, etc.).
- Ensure future small area plans include economic development elements.
- Ensure that infrastructure necessary for businesses are available at a level of service that supports and encourages economic development. This includes roads, water and sewer infrastructure, as well as broadband internet service, sidewalks, bicycle accommodations and public transit that connects residents with commercial centers.
- Complete an analysis of retail and business needs nearby and develop a strategy to address needs.

3. Revitalization of downtown and U.S. Route 40.

- Create a unified approach to revitalizing U.S. Route 40 with the City of Havre de Grace and Harford County Government.
- Encourage and assist entrepreneurs in start-ups, marketing, and finding working capital for their new business ventures.
- Promote the assets within the Main Street area such as the Aberdeen MARC/Amtrak Train Station, civic uses, historic B&O Train Depot, and Festival Park to encourage business development and tourism.
- Encourage the adoption of a vacancy ordinance for downtown and U.S. Route 40.
- Market the culturally diverse businesses in the downtown.
- Work with the property owners to identify obstacles that preclude them from leasing their buildings.
- Market the downtown as a viable center for transit, retail, customer service uses, professional offices, and civic functions.
- Continue to seek funding for the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) – Station Square improvements.
- Continue to seek funding from State Revitalization Programs that benefit businesses in this area.
- Promote the existing business incentives offered by the City.
- Target businesses that do not have a presence in Aberdeen and provide financial incentives to attract them.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT Analysis generally examines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing a particular entity. The sections below present a SWOT Analysis for Aberdeen, focused on economic development considerations.

Strengths

The City of Aberdeen is well-positioned to meet the economic needs of its residents and business community over the next decade. Part of this positioning is a direct result of the sustained focus on growth management and comprehensive planning activities in this area.

Aberdeen’s strengths include:

- A well-balanced and diverse residential housing inventory that will continue to attract new residents for several years, thereby ensuring a base of consumer demand for local goods and services
- A well-run local government organization that has consistently invested in necessary infrastructure to support the needs of the population as evidenced by the capital programs and assets that contribute to local standards of living
- Attraction of high-profile commercial entities, like Frito-Lay and Fanatics, that provide quality jobs while building inertia and word-of-mouth advocacy for the recruitment of new enterprises
- Land use and zoning regulations that provide commercial activities with the flexibility they need in developing commercial sites (the IBD and TOD zoning)
- A resident workforce that has the training, education, and availability to support new opportunities
- Sufficient public service infrastructure (water, sewer, education, broadband, etc) available to meet new demand

Weaknesses

While there are many characteristics of Aberdeen that will help drive its economy in the future, there are still areas of concern that the City should continue to address:

- The over-abundance of Class A/B office space that is currently vacant will create financial burdens on owners if they remain unused for long, and which will eventually turn to blight if unaddressed
- Perceptions of unsavory behaviors will plague the core downtown area and reduce its popularity as a destination for tourists or consumers
- Lack of a high-profile anchor institution in the downtown mixed-use area hampers efforts to attract new commercial uses and customers
- The mixed-use areas around the Ripken Stadium development are comprised primarily of residential buildings; failure to diversify uses in this area could constrain its economic performance
- Lack of public transportation infrastructure and services limit the ability of low-income residents to fully engage in the area and will reduce the attractiveness of the area for all economic strata

Opportunities

In the coming years, Aberdeen will have several chances to continue to build on the success of the past decade by addressing the following potential opportunities:

- Work with entities like the University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake (UMUC) to develop plans to address workforce pipeline needs
- Work with employers similar to UMUC and Aberdeen Proving Ground to identify associated industries or commercial activities that are not currently provided and try to attract businesses in that industry to locate to Aberdeen
- The Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Integrated Business Districts (IBD) provide a great degree of flexibility that should attract mixed-use development. Performing recurring analysis of the mixture of uses that are actually developed and alter the zoning regulations to encourage an increase in uses that are more economically viable to provide developers with assurance that investment in these areas will not stagnate
- Expand on the success of the Ripken Experience and develop recreational facilities and attractions that position Aberdeen as a sports tourism destination. This could include developing additional sports fields and amenities, but could also include things like batting cages, indoor courts/fields, sporting goods stores, or specialty training facilities. Consider the inclusion of non-traditional recreational opportunities like rock climbing, miniature golf, disc golf, or pickleball

Threats

Despite the favorable position that Aberdeen finds itself in currently, it is always wise to be aware of, and planning for, downturns in economic outlooks. The COVID pandemic was an example of this, and the City should take note of its own lessons learned throughout that time. The following conditions have been identified as potential threats to the continued growth of Aberdeen’s economy:

- Macro-level economic conditions across the nation indicate the potential for contractions of the economy and fears of a recession remain present. While Aberdeen cannot, by itself, control national or international economics, they would be wise to plan for this potential downturn.
- Inflation and the associated reduction in consumer purchasing power is something that Aberdeen should consider in developing future economic plans. While inflation rates are outside of Aberdeen’s control, the City should factor these concerns into future spending plans and economic development decisions.
- A reliance on Aberdeen Proving Ground to support local businesses and the Aberdeen economy. Another Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act or similar reduction in government contract awards would be detrimental.
- Increases to interest rates for homeowner mortgages have been recently implemented by the Federal Reserve. Homebuyers’ ability to afford higher-priced housing stock will be impacted by these interest rate increases. Aberdeen should be aware of ripple effects in local housing markets due to this change. It is likely that the recent historically low interest rates offered over the past decade will not be sustained into the coming years. While it is too soon to accurately predict if and where rates will stabilize, Aberdeen should work with developers to facilitate flexibility in responding to changing economic conditions by revising proposed development plans to better

suit changing economic conditions. Further discussion on issues such as sustainable housing and affordable housing take place in **Chapter 6 – Housing**.

Based on the conditions and circumstances noted above, Aberdeen appears well-positioned to withstand any future market upheaval, economic contraction, or other change to the current economic climate. Building off of this analysis, the sections below present concrete steps that Aberdeen should consider.

ECONOMIC MARKETS

The City has a diversified employment base with a robust and growing blend of commercial, industrial, financial, governmental, educational, and non-profit institutional employers. Notable employers include Frito-Lay, C&S Wholesale Grocers, Amazon, Fanatics, Medifast, and a UPS distribution hub. Due to its strategic location, the City is also on the Amtrak and MARC rail system. Between 2015-2019 the entire portion of MD 22 and its supporting infrastructure, the principal arterial highway serving I-95, downtown Aberdeen and Aberdeen Proving Ground, was completely redone using Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) funding. In 2020, Amazon selected Aberdeen as a home for a new distribution center that employs several hundred individuals. In 2019, Aberdeen was selected as the home for a freestanding medical center owned and operated by University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health Care System. The University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Medical Center obtained several parcels of land totaling approximately 65 acres of land for this purpose. The construction of the freestanding medical facility is expected to be completed in Spring 2023. The City is also home to the Aberdeen IronBirds, a minor league team under the ownership of baseball's renowned Cal Ripken Jr., an Aberdeen alumnus. The City is experiencing growth in both residential and commercial construction, with over 1,300 residential units planned, which will increase the real estate tax base within the next 5 to 10 years.



Major Employers

Aberdeen's strategic location directly off Interstate 95 and U.S. Route 40 provides opportunity for robust manufacturing and distribution hubs, while its proximity to Aberdeen Proving Ground brings government contracting opportunities (**See Table 8-1, Largest Employers**). These elements, combined with a talented regional workforce, have attracted some major employers to the area. Listed below are the largest employers in the City.

Table 8-1. Largest Employers

Company	Type
Aberdeen Proving Ground	Military
Frito-Lay	Manufacturing
UPS Distribution	Distribution
C&S Wholesale Grocers	Distribution
Amazon	Distribution
KBRWyle	Government Services
Benfield Electric	Electrical Contractor
Bravura, Inc.	Government Services
Fanatics	Manufacturing
University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health	Health Care

Source: City of Aberdeen

See **Table 8-2, Employment by Industry** for the complete breakdown.

Table 8-2. Employment by Industry (2010-2020)

Industry	2010		2020		Change	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting & mining	14	0.2%	17	0.2%	3	21.4%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation & food services	677	9.2%	1,211	15.6%	534	78.9%
Construction	402	5.5%	501	6.5%	99	24.6%
Educational services, health care & social assistance	1,336	18.2%	1,195	15.4%	-141	-10.6%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental & leasing	370	5.0%	228	2.9%	-142	-38.4%
Information	148	2.0%	56	0.7%	-92	-62.2%
Manufacturing	489	6.7%	614	7.9%	125	25.6%
Other services	218	3.0%	236	3.0%	18	8.3%
Professional, scientific, management, admin & waste management services	626	8.5%	892	11.5%	266	42.5%
Public administration	1,162	15.8%	1,061	13.7%	-101	-8.7%
Retail trade	1,397	19.0%	1,210	15.6%	-187	-13.4%
Transportation, warehousing & utilities	295	4.0%	450	5.8%	155	52.5%
Wholesale trade	212	2.9%	92	1.2%	-120	-56.6%
Total Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over	7,346		7,763		417	5.7%

Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Manufacturing & Distribution

Aberdeen has become a hub for manufacturing and distribution in the Mid-Atlantic region due to its location directly off I-95, access to US 40, and access to railroad infrastructure. The Port of Baltimore, one of the most utilized ports in the United States, is only a 30-minute drive from the City, and the Baltimore-Washington Thurgood Marshall Airport is also less than an hour away. These factors contribute to the potential for Aberdeen to continue to expand its manufacturing and distribution services.

There are several trends in these industries that will continue to create challenges that will impact economic growth in these areas for Aberdeen. These trends mostly revolve around workforce

development and employee's interest in the field. Specifically, there is a growing movement of workers exiting the trucking and distribution industry. Recent changes to employment models of trucking have resulted in wage stagnation and increased the level of dissatisfaction with employers amongst truckers. As an example, truckers are often only paid when their vehicles are in motion; when truckers are waiting to be loaded or unloaded, the time they spend waiting is often unpaid. Aggravating this unpaid time are new regulatory constraints on the amount of time a driver may be active behind the wheel. These time constraints result in drivers being forced to drive through rush-hour traffic when they would instead schedule their trips to avoid driving during this time; force truckers to drive at times that they are excessively sleepy; and generally, have created additional burdens for truckers to navigate to earn a living. These factors, combined with corporate focus on cost-cutting and truck leasing and training models that create serf-like working conditions, have resulted in significant shrinkage in the employment numbers for the trucking industry. It will be a challenge for Aberdeen to resolve these issues as the scope of the problems are nation-wide and Aberdeen's ability to influence the trends is likely to be fairly low.

Healthcare

UMD Upper Chesapeake

In November 2021, University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health (UM UCH) opened Phase 1 of its 60-acre multi-phase \$120 million medical campus in Aberdeen, Maryland. The first phase included redevelopment of a preexisting building which now functions as the Health and Wellness Center and the construction of a new Medical Center building.

The Health and Wellness Center presently serves patients and families seeking care in the following areas:

- Primary Care
- Cardiology
- Endocrinology & Diabetes Care
- Hematology & Oncology
- Chemotherapy Infusion
- Orthopedics
- Rehabilitation & Sports Medicine
- Wound Care

By winter 2023, additional programs will include:

- Radiology Imaging & Diagnostics
- Cardiac Nuclear Imaging
- Outpatient Behavioral Therapy
- Laboratory Services



Late winter of 2023 to early 1st quarter of 2024 will herald the opening of the Medical Center on the Aberdeen campus, which will include a new, state-of-the-art, 24-bay Emergency Department with specialized capabilities in the areas of geriatrics, behavioral health, and chemicals and toxicology. In addition, the Medical Center will house an advanced 33 bed inpatient Behavioral Health Pavilion, with expansion capabilities to 40 beds. Lastly, short stay medical observation beds serve short-stay patients

that typically require less than 48 hours of care. This initial observation unit will have 17 beds with the potential to expand to 24.

To support the campus a state-of-the-art Heliport will provide access to the multi-faceted specialties within the University of Maryland Health System such as the world-renowned R Adams Cowley *Shock Trauma* Center in Downtown Baltimore.

The campus also boasts designated meeting rooms, designed to host a variety of community health, civic and non-profit organization-based meetings, events, and discussion forums.

Tourism

Aberdeen’s outdoor tourism economy is highlighted by the Ripken Experience–Aberdeen, which holds baseball and softball tournaments at the Cal Ripken Sr. Yard and surrounding fields. In 2018, there were



36 events related to baseball tournaments, generating approximately 241,000 attendees. Overall, baseball events and associated attendees has been experiencing a slight decrease from 2016 to 2018, as shown in **Table 8-3, Baseball Tournament Summary**. Nevertheless, baseball events still generate an average of approximately 30,000 hotel room nights a year. Recently, the Ripken Experience announced that it was shifting its headquarters from Baltimore to Aberdeen.

Additionally, two new baseball fields were opened with more potentially on their way, to support expanded tournaments that run almost year round. The Ripken Stadium also generates local tourism activities and offers minor league baseball action during the summer season.

Table 8-3. Baseball Tournament Summary

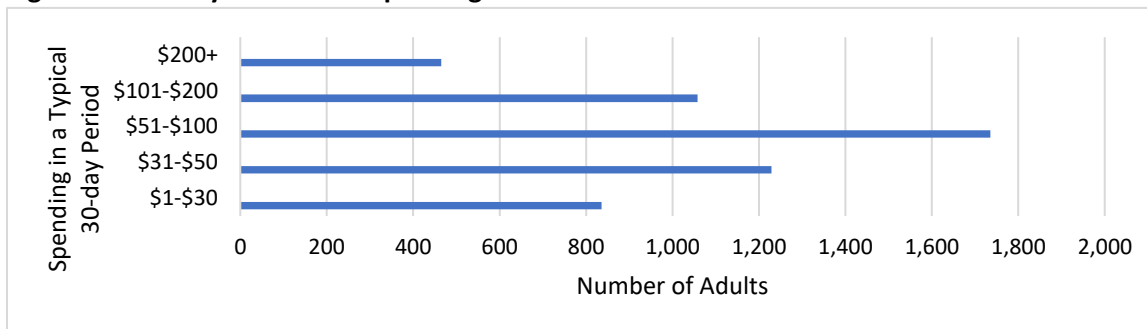
Category	2016	2017	2018
Total Events	43	38	36
Total Attendees	269,200	273,400	240,802

Source: Economic & Fiscal Impact Analysis for Select Outdoor Sports Tournaments Held in Harford County, MD (Crossroads Consulting, 2019)

Restaurants

According to GIS data, there are 54 restaurant locations within the City. Collectively, these restaurants had 1,002 employees and had sales worth \$46,065,000. The average annual amount spent dining out per Aberdeen household per month was \$360 for breakfast, \$1,080 for lunch, and \$1,705 for dinner. During a typical 30-day period (**See Figure 8-1, Family Restaurant Spending**), families are spending on average between \$51-100 per adult at restaurants.

Figure 8-1. Family Restaurant Spending



Source: 2022 ESRI-U.S. BLS Data

Retail, Service, & Office Market Sectors

While the retail and service sectors are critical to the success of a local economy, over time, these businesses alone cannot maintain a thriving local economy. A critical component of sustainable economic development requires the expansion of the industrial and office space segments. The industrial and office space market segments provide a tremendous boost to local economies by virtue of their creation of higher paying jobs as compared to retail and service sector wages. These higher paying jobs, in turn, help drive overall demand for retail and service sector goods and services. Therefore, economic development strategies need to ensure that a wide range of economic sectors are incorporated into any plans in order to generate sustainable economic conditions.

Retail Segment

Understanding what retail market trends mean to local commercial entities is critical to establishing economic development goals that can adequately mitigate the negative impacts of these trends on the local economy. Additionally, while these trends suggest that negative impacts may be widespread and significant, the trends also reveal opportunities that Aberdeen should integrate into their economic development strategies to capitalize on potential market demands. Noted below are some of the major trends and areas of concerns that will impact the continued evolution of Aberdeen’s commercial sector.



1. **Department stores** – Consistent with national and regional trends, the traditional department store commercial enterprise has struggled over the past decade. With growing rates of consumers making their purchases for household goods over the internet, demand for in-person brick and mortar stores have dropped considerably. Without governmental intervention in economic policies that tips the cost/benefit calculations towards purchasing from physical stores and away from online commerce, this trend will continue, and traditional stores will feel pressure to adjust in order to survive. Unfortunately, this trend will likely contribute to continued closings of local department stores.
2. **Box stores** – Except for operations associated with TJX, other known national chains like Kohl's are financially struggling to compete with online entities. The largest operations, such as Walmart

and Target, are rapidly moving online and expanding home delivery. The number of wholesale club stores is declining. The number of box stores will continue to shrink.

3. **Made to order and fit** – Clothing and many other commodities will be made to fit. The entities offering such exist at present and require much less space than traditional operations as inventory needs are reduced. (One example is Indochina which is a Canadian-based men's clothing operation.)
4. **Less space per operation** – Less inventory as a result of enhanced inventory control and "made to fit or order" technology application will continue to result in decreased space needs for all operations.
5. **Online growth** – Purchasing online continues to grow at double-digit or exponential rates. Shifting of traditional box and mega stores to online operations will only further this growth, especially with options like home delivery or site to store pick up options.
6. **Home delivery** – Home delivery is growing rapidly whether for prepared foods, groceries, or other merchandise. The introduction of new technology for deliveries will further facilitate this. New housing is sometimes built with areas designed explicitly to accommodate and hold deliveries.
7. **Retail in general** – Retail is redefining itself; this evolution is characterized by changing consumer demands that now favor smaller operations more befitting traditional downtowns and mixed-use areas than traditional shopping malls. Another part of this evolution is the desire for more than just straight retail stores. Shoppers are seeking to have experiences as part of their commercial engagement. This often takes the form of family-focused, or child-friendly, shopping experiences that include diversions, recreation, or similar leisure opportunities. By integrating these non-traditional services with standard retail by expanding permitted uses in zoning districts, Aberdeen can create conditions that provide opportunities for economic growth. Dave and Buster's, a popular arcade and restaurant located at the White Marsh Mall in Baltimore County, provides a good example of the type of leisure-based commercial entity that could help to anchor new or existing commercial areas. These types of anchor entities will help to attract smaller businesses seeking to capitalize on the traffic generated by the anchor.
8. **Future Retail Demand** – Opportunity for additional retail and services will exist into the foreseeable future.

Retail Product Demand

Forecasting demand for retail product requires an assessment of demographics and retail consumption patterns throughout various retail trade areas. Retail trade areas are used as retail consumption is driven by both disposable income and proximity to consumers. Typically, consumers prefer to drive roughly 15-minutes from their homes/work to consume. For this study, drive-times of 5, 15, and 30 minutes from the intersection of Gilbert Road and Long Drive was developed.

Table 8-4. Retail Sales Gap Analysis is adapted from the "Aberdeen I-95 Area Land Use Study" developed by the Matrix Design Group. This table presents a summary of the region's demographics and retail consumption behavior. As can be seen from the data, the median disposable income throughout the 15-minute drive-time was approximately 8% higher than the 5 and 30-minute regions; however, Harford County's median disposable income is 10% higher than the 15-minute drive-time. When looking at the Retail Sales Analysis section of the table, given the consumption patterns (demand) and current retail

development (supply) within each region, there appeared to be little demand for retail product within the three planning districts as of 2019 for each of the drive-time regions.

Table 8-4. Retail Sales Gap Analysis (2019)

Demographics	5-Minute	15-Minute	30-Minute	Harford County
Total Population	4,939	88,771	386,293	259,422
Total Households	2,007	33,312	147,068	95,657
Household Size	2.46	2.66	2.63	2.71
Median Age	39	38	39	41
Median Household Income	\$61,949	\$80,850	\$74,236	\$89,041
Median Disposable Income	\$47,049	\$57,707	\$55,427	\$60,443
Retail Activity				
Annual Average Retail Demand	\$32,658	\$41,5823	\$40,001	\$44,707
Annual Average Retail Supply	\$87,055	\$41,403	\$47,287	\$39,103
Retail Gap per Household	(\$54,397)	\$121	(\$7,286)	\$5,604
Retail Sales Analysis (\$ million)				
Demand	\$65.55	\$1,383.23	\$5,882.85	\$4,276.50
Supply	\$174.72	\$1,379.20	\$6,954.43	\$3,740.46
Supportable Square Feet (2019)	(229,841)	8,478	(2,255,960)	1,128,497
Supportable Square Feet (2020-2040)	225,699			

Source: Aberdeen I-95 Area Land Use Study (October 2019)

For retail to be successful, it is critical to draw consumers from other areas, whereby bringing retail options closer to their place of residence (population density). Through 2040, pending other retail development throughout Harford County, it is estimated that the area encompassed within the Gilbert and Long/HEAT Planning Areas and the areas within the existing City boundaries, north of I-95, can capture approximately 20% of Harford County’s retail demand. Assuming a sales per square foot figure of 475, the future retail development within the planning district can reasonably support approximately 225,000 square feet of retail product throughout the 20-year development horizon.

Office Segment

It was anticipated that the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process and associated transportation enhancements would result in substantial growth in the demand for office spaces in Harford County and Aberdeen beyond the limits of Aberdeen Proving Ground. In spite of the development of private sector buildings to accommodate this anticipated demand, the impacts from BRAC have not been as substantial as anticipated, primarily as a result of the following factors:

- Decisions by the Department of Defense to allow much of the private sector military contractors to utilize office space "inside the fence" or within the confines of APG.
- Significant changes in the rates of office staff utilizing teleworking due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- The infrequent use of the Aberdeen Train Station for MARC and Amtrak services due to increased telework and job-related travel demands for defense contractors and employees outside of the Maryland area.
- Sequestering and the Department of Defense budget disagreements have resulted in stagnant spending numbers due to uncertainty in future operating budgets.

Chapter 8 – Economic Development

Because of the noted conditions, there is an oversupply of office space in Aberdeen in general and more specifically "Class A/B" space. There are three potential opportunities for the TOD area: an additional 10,000 to 20,000 square feet of "Class C" space, home office spaces in new housing, and incubator space that can house both traditional offices, tech-driven manufacturing that only needs electricity in processing, and crafts activity some of which is currently occurring in homes throughout Harford County. Some of this space can attract foot traffic or meet other needs.



Given this demand and the regional glut in office product, Harford County is projected to see a net-new demand for office of 1.2 million square feet by 2040.4 (the 1.2 million square feet projection assumes the absorption of the current vacant space and a space requirement of 150 square feet per worker). The Aberdeen region, however, is projected to see no net-new demand for regional office product. This is due to the severe overdevelopment of office product throughout the Aberdeen region at nearly 420,00 square feet. Aberdeen's vacant space constitutes approximately 50% of the entire County's vacant product. (See **Table 8-5, Sectors Driving Demand for Office Space** and **Table 8-6, Office Demand by Square Footage**)

The City of Aberdeen has available office space at a lower cost than surrounding regional areas and located in proximity to APG. The City can also connect interested parties to available tax incentives and funding opportunities.

Table 8-5. Sectors Driving Demand for Office Space

Sectors Driving Demand (2019)	Net New Jobs 2020-2040
Health Care & Social Assistance	676
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	266
Finance & Insurance	255
Real Estate & Rental and Leasing	97
Educational Services	42
Administrative and Support & Waste Management and Remediation Services	-135
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0
Information	-18
Total	1,185

Source: Aberdeen I-95 Area Land Use Study (October 2019)

Table 8-6. Office Demand by Square Footage (2020-2040)

Region	Inventory (sf)	Vacant (sf)	2020-2040 Demand	2020-2040 Net-New Demand
Aberdeen	874,831	(418,323)	177,678	(240,645)
Harford County	5,953,874	(819,561)	2,009,2766	1,189,715

Source: Aberdeen I-95 Area Land Use Study (October 2019)

Cyber Security & Technology

Aberdeen is a gateway to leading advancements in technology, as Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) has 5.7 million square feet of laboratory space including the Aberdeen and Edgewood Areas. With a \$5.1 billion economic impact and the State’s 6th largest workforce center, APG’s current workforce is over 21,000, including approximately 6% military personnel, 47% civilian employees, and 47% contractors. There are 11 major commands among the tenant units including the U.S. Army Communications-Electronic Command (CECOM), U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Center (ATEC), and the U.S. Army 20th Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Command. Today, the installation is one of 23 Major Range & Test Facility Bases (MRTFB) and home to five Centers of Excellence: Research and Development; Test & Evaluation; Chem Bio; Command, Control Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (C5ISR), Public Health, and Security Investigation. APG provides a unique opportunity for Aberdeen to attract specialized and technical corporate entities as they engage with the DoD to support these missions.

One common theme connects the various missions that are supported by APG operations; the missions often utilize cutting-edge Information Technology (IT) services, assets, and infrastructure as a key element underpinning their services. Aberdeen’s capability to provide support for these activities is a key element to promoting the City as a destination for companies to relocate to. Aberdeen offers interested corporate parties with more than sufficient vacant land inventory across all land uses; has an existing base of DoD support contractors both in the City and immediately adjacent to APG; has the critical IT infrastructure already in place to support operations; and has a workforce that is experienced with DoD operations, has the technical skills, and the desire to further engage with this type of work. However, there are several opportunities that Aberdeen should take advantage of to attract more technology-focused, DoD contractors to the City:

- *Broadband Infrastructure* – Aberdeen should coordinate with the Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband, part of the Department of Housing and Community Development, to ensure that the City is fully served by high-capacity broadband data services. This will demonstrate to APG and the defense contractor industry that Aberdeen understands the critical function that widespread broadband accessibility provides to the community, specifically as it regards preparing the residents for jobs in the IT industry. Additionally, having widespread broadband access, not only for commercial areas but across residential areas too, will eliminate one of the concerns that companies looking to relocate will have in their site analysis (i.e. the availability of broadband). As more workers telework as opposed to commuting to the office, the need for residential broadband accessibility is a critical consideration for relocating contractors.
- *Workforce Development* – While Aberdeen residents generally have a wide range of skills that are needed to support DoD and contractor needs, the actions and programs the City takes to further expand and develop the technical skills and capabilities of City residents will factor into companies relocation decisions. By demonstrating a commitment to raising the technical skills of residents, Aberdeen can provide assurance to companies considering a move that they will have ready access to a pool of potential employees who have a baseline understanding of the technology used to support DoD missions.
- *Affordable Office Space* – Aberdeen has a significant inventory of vacant Class A/B office space that is generally priced at lower rates than similar cities in the region. However, it is not simply

the availability and affordability that presents the opportunity for Aberdeen; it is the location and context of the office spaces that set Aberdeen apart from competing cities. The proximity of the office space to APG, I-95, and railroads, along with its ease of access to major cities like Baltimore, Washington D.C., and Philadelphia, combine to spotlight Aberdeen’s unique geographic situation and serve to elevate Aberdeen above other relocation options.

Aberdeen should continue with, and expand on, its efforts to coordinate with APG to identify companies that are engaged in these missions and that may be looking to relocate to the area. By addressing the opportunities noted above and actively advertising the City’s advantages to interested corporations, Aberdeen will be able to attract new IT-related DoD contractors to the City.

The City supports the Army Alliance, Inc., a non-profit civic organization that is an advocate for the missions, programs, and people that support Aberdeen Proving Ground. The Army Alliance facilitates initiatives to support Aberdeen Proving Ground and the community so that their workforce, missions, and programs continue to thrive. The Army Alliance’s mission is to ensure that Aberdeen Proving Ground remains a vital military installation asset and is not threatened by a Base Realignment and Closure action.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Broad national and regional demographic and economic trends will affect the City’s labor force and economy to varying degrees. Nationally, the population is aging, and new generations are increasingly represented in the primary workforce. New generations challenge many traditional employer expectations. Seniors also challenge assumptions regarding older employees, with 90% of those aged 50 and above planning to work past the traditional retirement age of 65. Longer life spans and longer work lives will mean increased tax generation and consumerism. Conversely, many young adults leave areas where they grew up after completing their education, in search of alternative economic, social, and cultural opportunities. It is important to balance the needs of these diverse constituencies, retaining young citizens and those who wish to age in place, by creating jobs and economic development opportunities that provide a living wage and suitable career opportunities. The nature of work has also changed with automation causing dramatic shifts in employment opportunities and needs.



Employment

According to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS), there were a total of 8,168 Aberdeen residents in the labor force, of which 7,763 (61.3% of the City’s aged 16+ population) were employed within the civilian labor force. This percentage was slightly higher than either Bel Air or Havre de Grace, but slightly lower than Harford County or State. An additional 165 Aberdeen residents (1.3% of the City’s aged 16+ population) were serving in the Armed Forces; this percentage was higher than the comparison

jurisdictions, which makes sense due to the proximity of Aberdeen Proving Ground. See **Table 8-7, Employment Status** for the comparisons.

Table 8-7. Employment Status (2020)

Jurisdiction	Civilian Labor Force				Armed Forces		Total Labor Force
	Employed		Unemployed		#	%	#
	#	%	#	%			
Aberdeen	7,763	61.3%	240	1.9%	165	1.3%	8,168
Bel Air	5,124	58.3%	225	2.6%	0	0.0%	5,349
Havre De Grace	7,169	60.6%	473	4.0%	49	0.4%	7,691
Harford County	131,679	64.4%	5,706	2.8%	1,461	0.7%	138,846
State of Maryland	3,076,280	63.5%	167,571	3.5%	32,103	0.7%	3,275,954

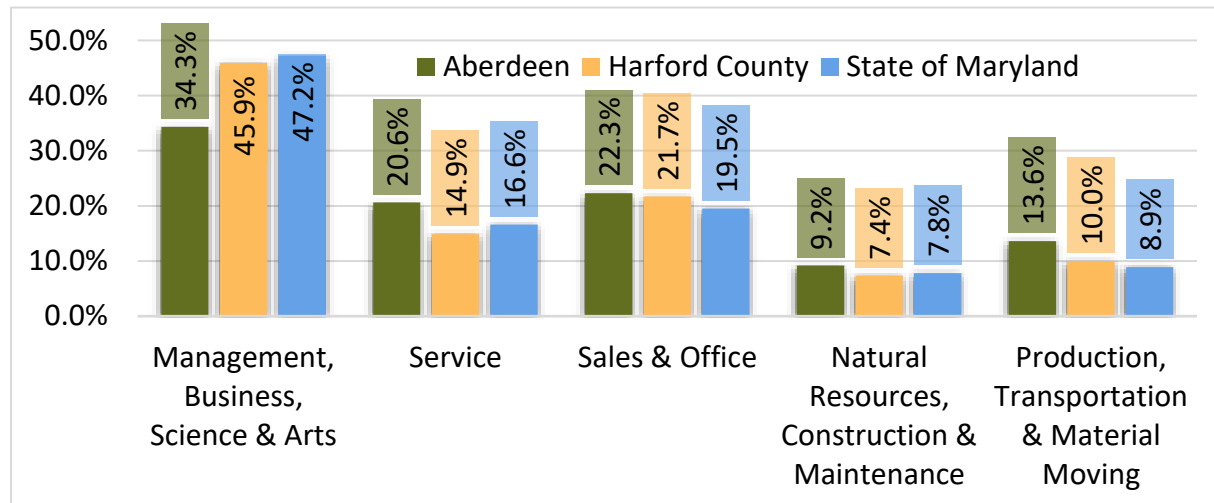
Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Across the U.S., the labor force participation rate has been steadily declining for nearly two decades. It has remained relatively flat since 2014, hovering at slightly over 60%. Maryland has a stronger participation rate (67.6%) than the nation, as does Harford County with a participation rate of 67.9%. While still above the national rate, Aberdeen’s participation rate is still not as high at 64.5%. A growing participation rate is an encouraging sign—growth indicates that workers who may have previously been discouraged or disengaged are now re-entering the labor force. Greater participation from prime age workers (25-55) is vital to maintain current participation rates with an aging workforce and retiring Baby Boomers. It is also important to monitor this indicator over the next few years to understand what part the COVID-19 pandemic may have played.



The 2020 ACS shows that the occupations Aberdeen residents hold are fairly similar to County and State percentages. **Figure 8-2, Employment by Occupation** shows the percentages employed in various occupations and how they compare to Harford County and State. All City resident occupation percentages are higher than Harford County or State, except for management, business, science, and arts, which is over 10% lower but still represents the largest share of Aberdeen occupations.

Figure 8-2. Employment by Occupation (2020)



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Commuting

Commuting data allows the City and development investors to understand what proportion of the workforce lives in the place where they work, and what proportion commutes outside Aberdeen for other employment opportunities. In 2019, per the U.S. Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data, there were 5,239 employed residents and 7,391 persons employed in the City. Approximately 88.3% of the employed residents commuted outside the City for work, mostly to Baltimore, Havre De Grace, Riverside, Edgewood, Bel Air, and Towson. Approximately 91.7% of all people employed in the City came from outside of Aberdeen, mostly from Bel Air, Edgewood, Baltimore, Havre De Grace, Riverside, and Joppatowne.

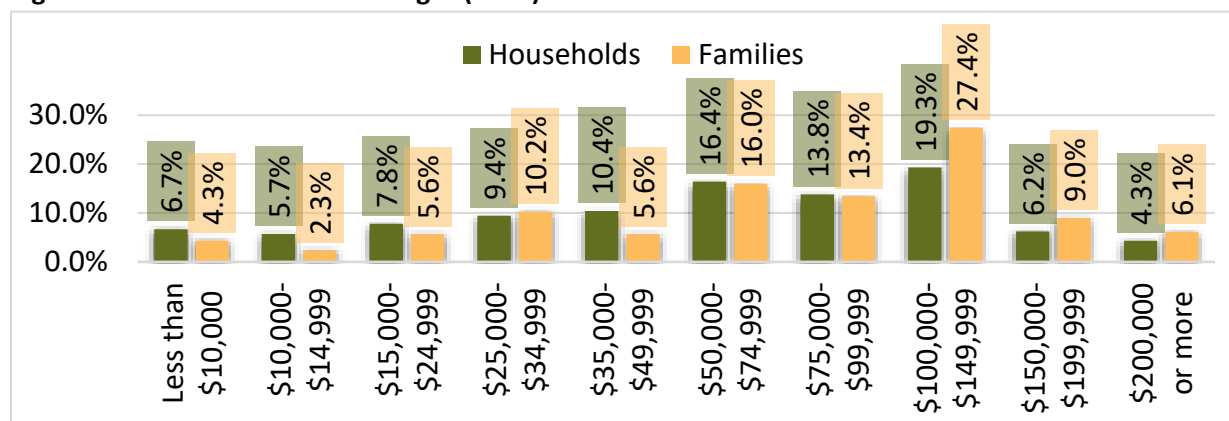
Communities that tend to have larger outflows than inflows are commonly referred to as “bedroom communities” or “commuter towns.” Conversely, those that have more people coming into the community than leaving for work, as is Aberdeen, is referred to as a “commercial center.” Approximately 38.4% of the City’s employed residents traveled less than 10 miles to get to work, 19.9% traveled 10 to 24 miles, 29.2% traveled 25 to 50 miles, and 12.4% traveled greater than 50 miles. These statistics indicate many residents commuting out of the City and fairly long distances to get to work.

Employers and communities would likely benefit from having a stable workforce that is more invested in living in the community, while employees benefit from having more time and fewer travel expenses with a shorter commute.

Income & Poverty

As of the 2020 ACS, the City had a total of 6,412 households and 3,951 families. Of those, 12.4% of households and 6.6% of families had annual incomes less than \$15,000, while 29.8% of households and 42.5% of families had incomes greater than \$100,000. The income range of \$100,000-\$149,999 accounts for the largest single income range for households (19.3%) and for families (27.4%) (**See Figure 8-3, Aberdeen Income Ranges**).

Figure 8-3. Aberdeen Income Ranges (2020)



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Table 8-8, Annual Income, shows the median household, family, and per capita income for the City, in comparison to other municipalities, Harford County, and State of Maryland. Aberdeen’s median family and per capita income was lower than all other compared jurisdictions and its median household income was lower than all but that of Bel Air. Household income is typically defined as the total gross income received before taxes in a twelve-month period by all members of a household above age 15, regardless of whether the individuals are related to each other. Family income measures the income of all people living in one household and that are related to each other through blood, adoption, or marriage.

Table 8-8. Annual Income (2020)

Income	Amount in Dollars				
	Aberdeen	Bel Air	Havre De Grace	Harford County	State of Maryland
Median Household Income	\$66,481	\$60,476	\$80,853	\$94,003	\$87,063
Median Family Income	\$83,455	\$86,577	\$103,415	\$111,503	\$105,790
Per Capita Income	\$32,511	\$41,447	\$46,955	\$42,744	\$43,352

Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Wage rates in the Susquehanna Workforce Region, comprised of Harford and Cecil Counties, are the highest in the following occupations: management; computer and mathematical; architecture and engineering; life, physical, and social science; legal; healthcare practitioners and technical; and business and financial operations occupations. Attracting similar occupations to Aberdeen would likely increase the number of higher-paying jobs within the City, as long as the market does not become oversaturated.

One consistent pre-pandemic characteristic of many of these classes of jobs is their traditional reliance on appropriate office spaces for employees. Unfortunately, in post-COVID employment trends, office space requirements are no longer a reliable association with these classes of jobs. Where Aberdeen’s abundantly available office space would once have positioned the City well to leverage and incentivize new or expanded uses of vacant offices, the City now needs to develop a strategy to adapt these office spaces to better serve these business classes in order to attract them to relocate here. These strategies should include consideration of permitting greater flexibility regarding permitted uses in commercial districts, analyzing the appropriateness of rezoning commercial and office uses to more mixed-use classifications, the potential for renovation of vacant office buildings to support uses associated with things like long-

term assisted care or medical facilities, and should include consideration of existing adjacent uses to identify collaborative opportunities for adaptive reuse of these office buildings.

According to the 2020 ACS, 9.4% of Aberdeen’s resident families and 14.9% of its total residents had incomes that fell below the poverty level, as depicted in **Table 8-9, Poverty in the City**. Close to 31% of families with a female head of household and nearly 23% of individuals under the age of 18 were considered to be living below the poverty level within the City.

Table 8-9. Poverty in the City (2020)

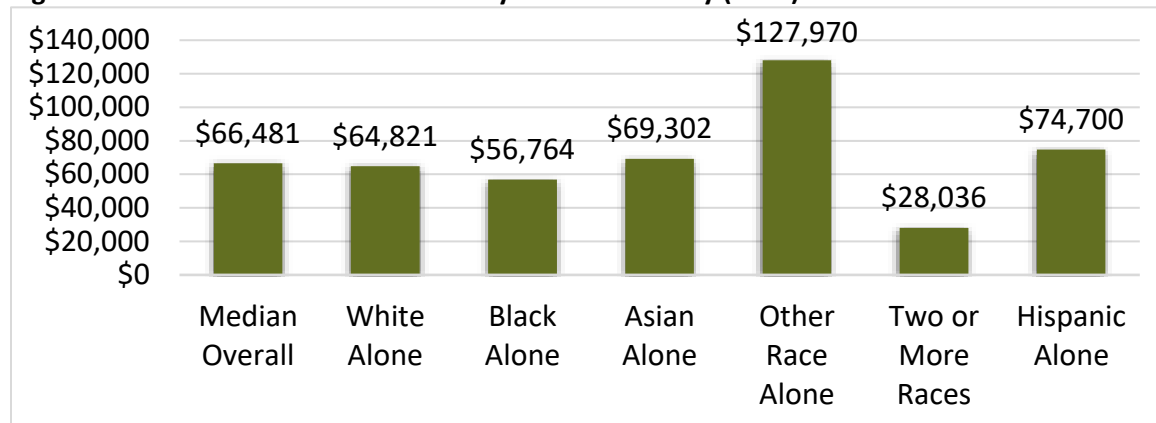
Description	# or %
Total Families within City (regardless of poverty status)	3,951
All families	9.4%
With related children under 18 years	17.8%
With related children under 5 years only	14.9%
Married couple families	3.5%
With related children under 18 years	8.5%
With related children under 5 years only	16.2%
Families with female householder, no spouse	30.9%
With related children under 18 years	41.0%
With related children under 5 years only	23.8%
Total People within City (regardless of poverty status)	15,904
All people	14.9%
Under 18 years	22.9%
18 years and over	12.5%
65 years and over	9.4%
People in families	11.5%
Unrelated individuals 15 years and over	27.2%

Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Equity in the Economy

Aberdeen’s median household income of \$66,481 (based on 2020 ACS data) was approximately 76% percent of the State median (\$87,063), 71% of the Harford County median (\$94,003), and 82% of the Havre de Grace median (\$80,853), but is 110% of the Bel Air median (\$60,476) (See **Figure 8-4, Median Household Income by Race & Ethnicity**). In Aberdeen, the gap between wealthy and poor households has been widening. From 2010 to 2020, the number of households with a median income greater than \$100,000 increased by 64% while the number of households with an income below \$25,000 increased by 1%. There are also some racial disparities in the City’s distribution of median household income, with Black households and households of two or more races earning less than White households (by \$8,057 and \$36,785, respectively) and the overall median. However, Asian households, households of another race on its own, and Hispanic households earned more than White households and the City’s overall median (by \$4,481, \$63,149, and \$9,879, respectively). The City should focus on leveraging opportunities to encourage wider varieties of employers to the area, as well as the development of affordable housing for those not making livable wages, based on median household income levels. By reducing the proportional burden of a households monthly expenditures on rent and housing by increasing the inventory of affordable housing, the City can effectively increase the economic capacity of these households and increase their economic safety net.

Figure 8-4. Median Household Income by Race & Ethnicity (2020)



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

Tax Base & City Assets

Real property tax is the City’s largest revenue source, followed by personal property tax. Between FY 2012 and FY 2021, the City’s real property value increased by \$130.3 million (9.4%), while its personal property value increased by \$49.3 million (78.5%), for a total assessed property value change of \$179.6 million (12.4%). The review of this information reveals the financial health of the City, and encourages the continued practices already taken.

ECONOMIC CENTERS

Within Aberdeen there are several distinct clusters of commercial activity. Each of these areas has their own strengths and concerns for their future sustainability and expansion. The sections below discuss the main economic centers in Aberdeen and offer insight to potential growth opportunities that could be supported by the City. **Map 8-1, Economic Centers** and **Map 8-2, Business Incentive Zones** provide context for the location of these economic centers.

Downtown

Aberdeen’s historic downtown is generally not a large area and has few vacancies (12 vacancies in downtown), but residents of Aberdeen and City leaders have consistently expressed a desire for a better mix of uses to attract residents and commercial enterprises to the Downtown area. A common viewpoint



shared during public engagement efforts was that Aberdeen should consider increasing the intensity of uses in the Downtown area in an effort to entice more and different shops and services. However, these goals are challenging because properties near the MARC train station are relatively small—with fragmented ownership—meaning that land assembly may be required to create the compact, mixed-use development needed to achieve the goal of increasing density of uses. Aberdeen is working

closely with developers, landowners, and other stakeholders to consolidate these parcels by providing incentives to spur the investment needed to make the redevelopment of these lots economically viable. Development potential at the train station itself is limited because of the limited land area adjacent to the station. However, the potential for redevelopment in the wider vicinity is substantial.

One of the consistent comments received from the public during the public engagement phase of developing Plan Aberdeen concerns crime, and the perception of crime, in the Downtown area. Crime was cited as a potential explanation for Downtown’s underachievement as it regards economic growth and development. Additionally, public comments noted that it was not necessarily the actual levels of crime that kept people away from the Downtown, so much as it was the perceived levels of crime held by people from outside Aberdeen. Regardless of whether it is crime or the public perception of crime rates, the end result is that it has deterred some degree of solicitation of businesses in this area. Reversing this trend will require not only enhanced attention to the criminal element from public safety officers but will also require Aberdeen to combat the perception that this area is not safe. Aberdeen should take care, however, not to overreact to this concern by mobilizing police forces to an extreme degree in the name of reducing crime. This approach can be perceived as heavy-handed when the underlying crimes driving the rates are primarily property, nuisance, and minor theft related crimes. The Main Street Coordinator is working with downtown business/property owners and the APD to add security cameras in obscure locations to combat the perception of criminal activity and reduce crime. To find the proper balance in policing this area, Aberdeen should work with the police, business owners, residents, and other stakeholders to identify the classes of crimes, locations, and economic impacts from criminal actions to develop targeted enforcement activity, increase the visibility of police and community monitors in specific areas, and demonstrate to the public that the City is taking action in this area. Subsequently, these actions need to be broadcast to the larger community in order to help counter the perception of excessive crime rates. This effort will require sustained attention over many years with support from the elected officials, Departments of Public Works, Planning and Community Development, and the Aberdeen Police Department. The Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce and Aberdeen’s Main Street committees can assist with promoting the downtown as a safe place to visit, shop, and eat.

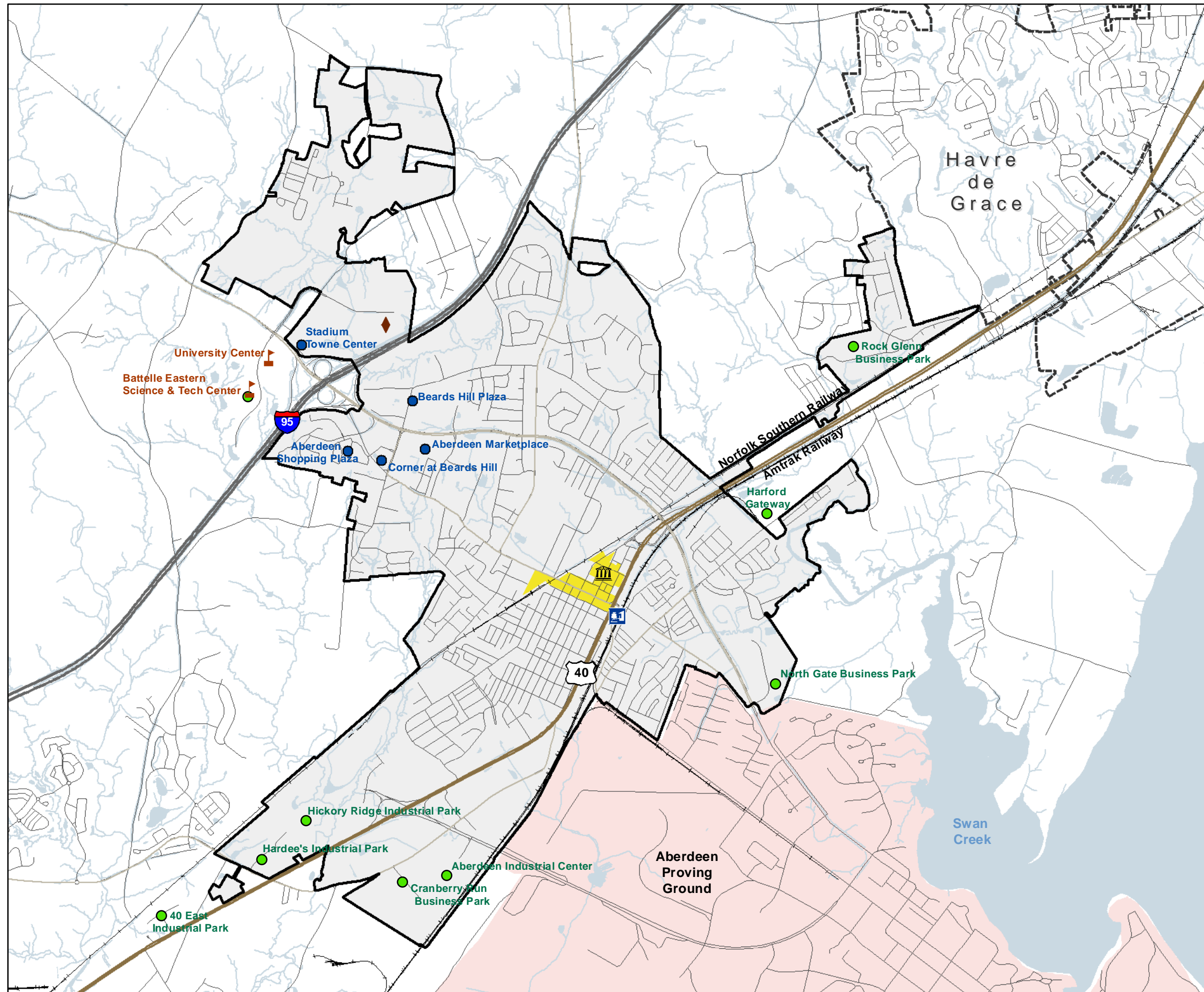
Main Street Maryland Program

Main Street Maryland is a comprehensive downtown revitalization program created in 1998 by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The program strives to strengthen the economic potential of Maryland’s traditional main streets and neighborhoods. Designated Main Street Maryland communities have made a commitment to improve the economy, appearance, and image of their traditional downtown business districts. To accomplish Main Street goals, the department has partnered with the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s National Main Street Center, which developed the Main Street Approach for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization.

MAP 8-1

Economic Centers

- City of Aberdeen
- Havre de Grace
- Aberdeen Proving Ground
- Water Bodies
- Railroad
- Major Roads**
 - Interstates
 - US Highways
 - State Routes
 - Local Routes
- Aberdeen Main Street
- City Administration Building
- Aberdeen Train Station
- Higher Education
- Ripken Stadium
- Business/Industrial Parks
- Shopping Centers



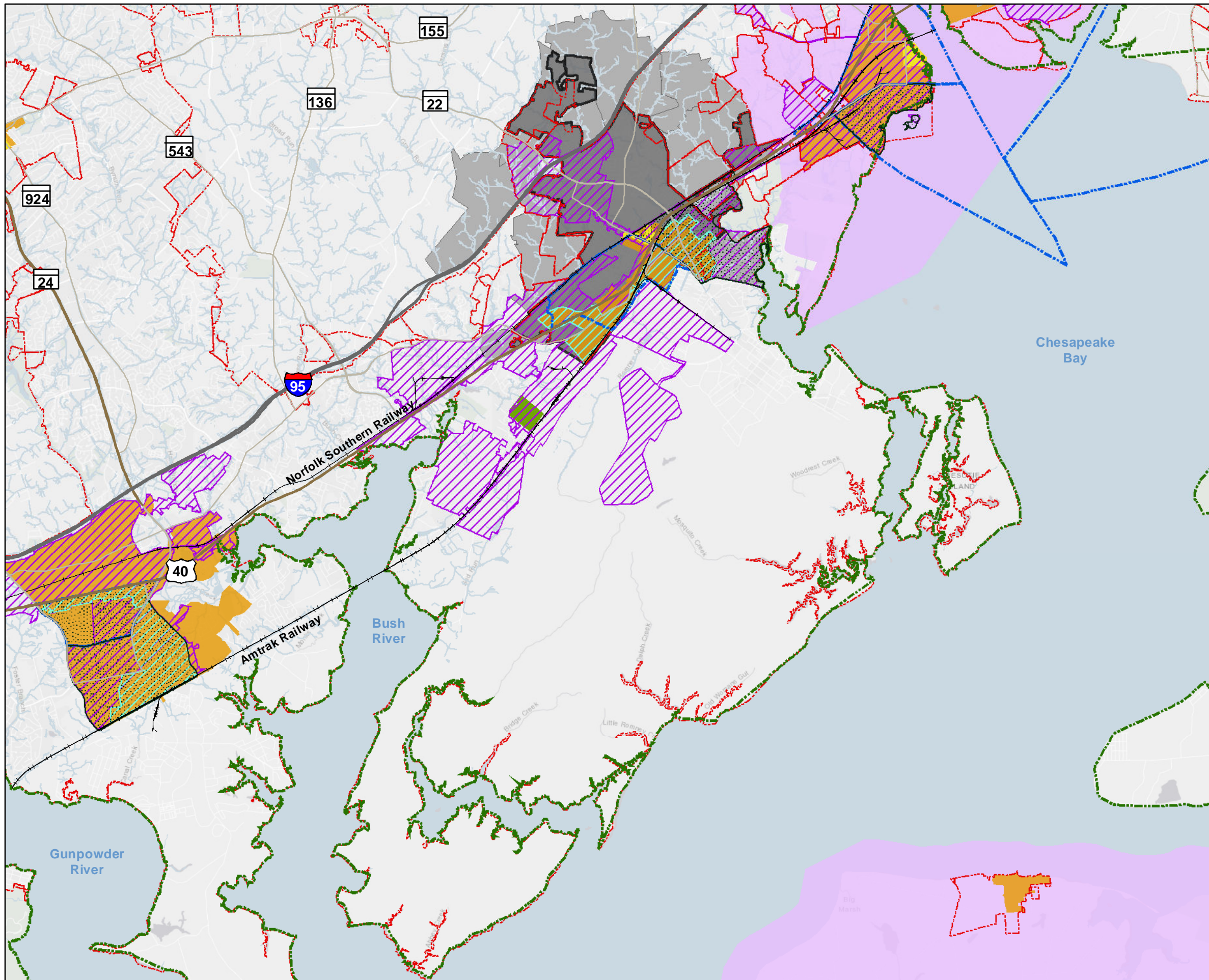
planABERDEEN
Our City. Our Plan. Our Future.

Source: City of Aberdeen, Harford County
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

MAP 8-2

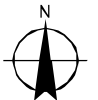
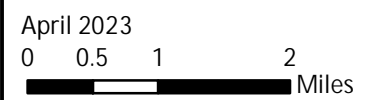
Business Incentive Zones



- City of Aberdeen
- Water Bodies
- Railroad
- Major Roads**
 - Interstates
 - US Highways
 - State Routes
- Planning Areas
- Priority Funding Areas
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations Boundaries
- Opportunity Zones
- Main Street Areas
- Qualified HUBZone
- BRAC Zones
- Enterprise Zones
- Sustainable Communities
- Foreign Trade Zones
- Heritage Areas
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Areas



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.



Main Street Maryland emphasizes the importance of working simultaneously in the following areas:

- Design: Enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging supportive new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning,
- Organization: Building consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization process.
- Promotion: Marketing the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens, and visitors.
- Economic Restructuring: Strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities and challenges from outlying development.
- Clean, Safe & Green: Enhancing the perception of a neighborhood through the principles of Smart Growth and sustainability.

The Main Street Maryland Program offers official designation as a state recognized Main Street, as well as technical assistance, training, and other services to communities across the State. These services include Main Street Manager orientation and professional development, site visits to help the community develop and plan for the future, architectural design and historic preservation assistance, specialized training on commercial revitalization, education about State and Federal programs, grants, loans, and facilitate partnerships for designated Main Street communities and other business districts.

Aberdeen Main Street

Like many other older communities, Aberdeen's Downtown Area has been a focal point of challenges and concerns. As businesses moved to the peripheries of the City, City leaders conversed, strategized, and executed plans for downtown growth and renewal. On March 17, 2020, the City of Aberdeen's diligent revitalization efforts were recognized by the State of Maryland when it was granted the prestigious Main Street Maryland designation. With this acknowledgement at the State level, the City continues to invest in its traditional downtown area to create an active hub for small businesses and entrepreneurs where they may flourish.

The Aberdeen Main Street area encompasses 32 acres in downtown stretching from West Bel Air Avenue to North Parke Street with a portion of North Rogers Street, South Parke Street, Franklin Street, Howard Street, and North Philadelphia Boulevard included. The Aberdeen Main Street district is anchored by major assets such as the MARC/Amtrak Train Station, B&O Train Depot, and Festival Park. Main Street Maryland will assist in the continuation of improving the economy, appearance and image of Aberdeen Main Street as well as offering technical assistance, training, and other commercial revitalization services to cultivate the growth of businesses.



Multiple grants awarded to the City have created the ability for Aberdeen to offer incentives for businesses considering a location in the downtown area. Overseen by the Director of Planning and Community Development, the Aberdeen Main Street program will continue to strengthen and foster small businesses in Aberdeen's downtown area.

Branding & Marketing

The branding and marketing of the downtown is an important component of retaining and attracting new businesses. Establishing an identity and highlighting the downtown as a strategic, high-value location will provide an advantage in retention and recruitment efforts and ensure a continued competitive presence within the region. The City worked with consultants, Mahan Rykiel Associates and Arnett Muldrow & Associates to create a Main Street Marketing, Communication, and Design Plan. The plan provides branding and image of Aberdeen's Main Street as well as developed strategic marketing efforts to attract new businesses, residents, and visitors to the downtown. As part of the plan, the City will also be creating a wayfinding system and gateway signage to solidify the identity of Main Street.



The consultants developed the brand concepts in the context of community history and current initiatives:

- **Our Agricultural Legacy:** Our history is rooted in agriculture. It is here that the abundance of fertile land attracted early settlers to farm the rolling fields of early Harford County in the years before the Revolutionary War. Local resident George Washington Baker would create a revolution of his own by inventing the cans that would keep the corn, tomatoes, and other vegetables preserved to be shipped to the growing cities of Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. By the late 1800s there were more canneries based here than in any place in the United States.
- **Our Transportation Hub:** The early growth of Aberdeen village was possible because of its location on the Old Post Road between Alexandria and Philadelphia. This early passage is but a prelude to Aberdeen's transportation legacy that lives on to this day. The legendary B&O Railroad stopped here at a station designed by Frank Furness that has been saved from demolition marking a key entrance to downtown. Today, Aberdeen remains a transportation hub with active passenger and freight rail along with major highway thoroughfares traversing the city.
- **Our Military Service:** World War I would mark a pivotal change in the life of Aberdeen. In 1917, the United States Army established Aberdeen Proving Ground here for its strategic location close to shipping and industrial hubs. By the second World War, the base would be home to over 2,000 officers and 24,000 enlisted personnel. Training here would cement Aberdeen's role in securing victories for America's military on the world stage. The country's first programmable computer, the ENIAC electronic, numerical, integrator, and computer was located here where women mathematicians were employed to run the large complex machine.
- **Our Nation's Pastime:** Aberdeen's agriculture, transportation, and military history is woven closely with America's pastime, baseball. Baseball in Aberdeen dates back to 1910, just eighteen years after the incorporation of the City. The Aberdeen Cannons that came later were the first incarnation of minor league ball was part of the region's Susquehanna League. The Ripken family's

link to Aberdeen baseball has existed for generations and today both the Aberdeen IronBirds and the Ripken Experience bring thousands of families and young people here each year.

- **Our Hometown Community:** Today, Aberdeen is a dynamic, diverse, and growing city. It is a community where pride of place runs deep, a warm welcome is sincere, and neighbors look after one another. As we continue to thrive, Aberdeen is united to focus on its historic downtown, still a center of connections, community activity, and celebrations. Established businesses based here for decades stand next to startups who see downtown as a place where entrepreneurs can thrive.

West Bel Air Avenue Beautification

The City of Aberdeen utilized funding from the Community Development Block Grant program for enhancements to West Bel Air Avenue. The improvements include street furniture, lighting, planters, trash receptacles and recycling cans, and new signage and audio system at Festival Park. The improvements on Main Street were coupled with an investment from Maryland State Highway Administration to repave West Bel Air Avenue.

Franklin Street Mixed Use Development

In 2022, the Aberdeen City Council approved the sale of three plots of land on Franklin Street to a local developer. This land, located across from City Hall and Festival Park, was purchased with the intent to develop the space into a three-story, mixed-use development with commercial and retail space on the bottom floor and residential space on the upper levels. In addition to the mixed-use development, the contract of sale calls for additional improvements to Aberdeen Festival Park. The mixed-use development on Franklin Street, anticipated to be completed within three years, will bring new businesses and residents to the downtown area. As one of the first major construction efforts in the downtown area, Franklin Street will be a signal beacon to other investors that Aberdeen’s downtown area is prime real estate for redevelopment.

Aberdeen Historical Museum

The Aberdeen Historical Museum collects, records, preserves, and shares historical archives and artifacts that tell the story of the greater Aberdeen area to awaken an interest in local history and to inspire new perspectives on the present. The Aberdeen Historical Museum (previously known as the Aberdeen Room Archives and Museum, Inc.) is a small nonprofit 501(c)(3) museum. It connects the Aberdeen community with the area’s rich history to awaken an interest in local history and to inspire new perspectives on the world we live in today. The Museum is open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The Aberdeen Historical Museum is largely run by volunteers and funded through generous gifts and donations.

Sustainable Communities

The Sustainable Communities program is a place-based designation overseen by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and provides local governments with a framework for promoting environmentally, economically, and socially responsible community development and revitalization in existing older communities within the State of Maryland. The City of Aberdeen’s Sustainable Community Area was designated in 2011 and shown on Map 8-2. The Sustainable Community designation is a requirement for eligibility of certain State funding programs, such as the Community Legacy and Strategic Demolition Fund offered through the Department of Housing and Community Development.

The City of Aberdeen is required to renew the Sustainable Community application every five years. In 2022, the City of Aberdeen submitted an application and was redesignated as a Sustainable Community. The City’s renewal application included a reflection of accomplishments within the last five years as well as goals and focus areas for the future. Many of the desired outcomes and strategies for achieving those outcomes have been included in the various chapters of this Plan, but also summarized as follows:

- Environment – Areas of focus include providing extended recreational opportunities and incorporating green infrastructure into the City, including rain gardens, community gardens, and green buildings.
- Economy – Areas of focus include small business retention and attraction, attracting skilled workforce, and revitalization of the U.S. Route 40 and Main Street Corridor.
- Transportation – Areas of focus include improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity throughout the City and promoting multimodal transportation.
- Housing – Areas of focus include assisting homeowners with renovations and façade improvements, working with the City’s Code Enforcement Officer to decrease the number of code violations, and residential growth and vacancy reduction.
- Community Health and Quality of Life – Areas of focus include addressing the growing homeless population and facilitating arts and culture programs.
- Local Planning and Staffing Capacity – Areas of focus include addressing the growing homeless population and facilitating arts and culture programs.

Aberdeen Transit-Oriented Development District

In 2010, the Aberdeen station area was officially designated by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) as a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District. Partnering with many government agencies—MDOT, including Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and the State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP), Harford County agencies, Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor, Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG), the Army Alliance, Amtrak and CSX railroads—the City developed a master plan for the Aberdeen TOD District.

Among the recommendations in the 2012 TOD Master Plan was to amend the City Code to encourage infill development and adopt a form-based code for the Aberdeen TOD area to address:

- Pedestrian-friendly design
- Building setback/build-to lines
- Parking requirements
- Building height restrictions
- Allow and encourage mixed-use development
- TOD and pedestrian-friendly stormwater treatment strategies
- Changes and updates to landscaping, lighting, security features, and signs

The TOD Master Plan also helped establish the Sustainable Community district boundary and Action Plan. Since achieving a Sustainable Community designation in 2012, the City of Aberdeen has successfully

utilized the Department of Housing and Community Development Strategic Demolition Fund (SDF) to acquire parcels identified in the Master Plan for redevelopment.

TOD Feasibility Study – Festival Square Area

The purpose of this Feasibility Study completed in 2018 was to create a plan that guides decisions and actions that are based on a complete feasibility study, emerging market trends, and findings from this effort. The intent of the Study was to ensure a viable and diversified TOD district. The Feasibility Study was prepared by The Chesapeake Group, Inc. based on a survey of Harford County residents, one-on-one interviews with stakeholders, secondary data that indicates trends for various economic generators, and multiple analyses including but not limited to cluster analyses and demand forecasting.



The Aberdeen TOD Master Plan was adopted in March 2012. The Plan illustrated three distinct TOD areas: TOD Area 1—Station Square and US 40 Boulevard, TOD Area 2—Festival Square, and TOD Area 3—Residential Square.

The goals outlined in the Plan for TOD Area 1—Station Square include:

- Position the train station and platforms so that they connect the two sections of East and West Bel Air Avenue
- Encourage and facilitate multimodal (e.g., vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian) connections to and from APG, downtown, and give an improved presence and identity to US 40
- Provide easy and safe pedestrian access (via steps and ramps) through tunnel and underpass
- Provide a terraced green space that becomes a focal point and amenity creating areas for food kiosks, markets, etc.
- Work with MDOT SHA on the Complete Streets initiative for US 40; improvements may include landscaping on both sides to create a green boulevard

Some actions have already taken place:

- City acquired and demolished 15 East Bel Air Avenue, the site has been cleared and is an open space area for the community currently and will be part of the proposed Station Square improvements in the future.
- City acquired and demolished 25 N. Philadelphia Boulevard, the site has been cleared and is an open space area (for land banking/future redevelopment)
- City acquired and demolished 21 N. Philadelphia Boulevard, the site has been cleared and is an open space area (for land banking/future redevelopment)
- Aberdeen Proving Ground resurfaced APG Road between East Bel Air Avenue and Raymond Avenue

- City acquired 11, 15, and 19 Franklin Street, the sites have been cleared and are available for redevelopment opportunities. The City has sold these sites to a developer to construct a mixed-use project.

The goals outlined in the Plan for TOD Area 2—Festival Square include:

- Build on the existing civic uses around Festival Park
- Increase density and provide adequate parking to entice development
- Provide opportunities for mixed uses such as sidewalk cafes, dining on the ground floor, community center/mixed use
- Add street trees throughout Festival Square to make the area more pedestrian friendly

Actions for this section have also been taken:

- City acquired the former Moose Lodge, 102 N. Rogers Street and it was sold to a developer who in turn redeveloped the building and leases it to the Prost German Restaurant.
- City acquired the former high school building, and it was sold to investors who in turn sold the property to another investment group. The current owners opened a vascular surgery center and the proposed Phase II plans include an assisted living facility and other medical uses.

The goals set forth in the Plan for TOD Area 3—Residential Square include:

- Add mixed-uses to include retail/commercial on the ground floors with residential above
- Adding additional high-density residential increases opportunities for retail along West Bel Air Avenue and US 40

Military and Civilian Compatible Use Project

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) is committed to protecting the \$55.5B in economic impact from the state’s 20 military facilities, including 12 major installations based on the 2016 Economic Impact Analysis of Maryland’s Military Installations. Civilian activities and uses that are incompatible with military missions could potentially mean a loss of that mission or even the closure of the base, a blow to the local economy from loss of revenue and jobs generated. The Department of Defense defines incompatible civilian development as land use activity and civilian development activity that adversely affects the utility or training and readiness missions of a military installation. It is important that communities and military collaborate on compatible land use planning.

To promote compatible civilian development in Maryland that supports long-term military sustainability and continued regional community development around MD installations, the Department of Commerce received a \$178K grant from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) in 2017 to fund an effort that would provide Maryland with a strategic approach, in coordination with local governments, to address compatibility issues. The deliverable for this project was the Statewide Joint Land Use Response Implementation Strategy (SJRIS), completed in 2019.

A Compatible Use Study (also known as Joint Land Use Study or JLUS) is a strategic planning process undertaken by State or local government in partnership with the military installation to preserve and protect military readiness and defense capabilities, seek ways to reduce the operational impacts on adjacent lands, and support community growth and economic development. A Compatible Use Study is a key tool for compatible land use planning. APG is one of five Maryland installations and facilities that have completed Compatible Use Studies.



The SJRIS includes seven recommendation focus areas and 33 implementation activities. To implement some of the recommendations, the Department of Commerce, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) received a \$1.12M grant from the OLDCC to fund the implementation of key focus areas: strengthening communication and coordination between the State, military, and community; technical guidance/assistance for local communities on best practices for land use; facilitating compatible renewable energy siting; and exploring legislative initiatives to address compatible use issues.

The state has also developed a Compatible Use Website and Handbook to educate, inform, and guide State and local leaders, members of the military and military communities, and the general public on compatible use issues and solutions. To complete the website and technical handbook, MDP hired a Compatible Use Community Planning Liaison to direct an outreach effort, including the formation of two stakeholder groups, the SJRIS Implementation Workgroup and the Compatible Use Policy Committee.

US 40

The US Route 40 corridor has long been a commercial and industrial focal point not only for Aberdeen, but for Harford County as well. The history of this highway spans back to the mid-1800's when portions of US 40 were connected near Frederick, Maryland to the National Pike as it was known then. Over the decades since its creation, US 40 has provided vital functions related to transportation services. This corridor served as one of the primary interstate connector roads until the development of Interstate 95 supplanted this role. Throughout much of this road's history, commercial activities were situated along this corridor to take advantage of the high volumes of traffic that used the road. In addition to the typical roadside commercial services like gas and service stations, a full range of commercial entities were established along this route and thrived as ever-increasing numbers of people settled in the Aberdeen area.

However, the development of I-95 as the primary interstate corridor significantly reduced the numbers of motorists using US 40 for travel and movement of goods. This reduced the viability of commercial activity and changed the characteristics of the remaining commercial uses. In the past two decades, there has been an increased demand for economic revitalization efforts to focus on the US 40 corridor to help reverse the impacts that started with the creation of I-95. Two main components exist in these revitalization efforts; one component tackles the aesthetics of the road corridor, while the other components address commercial activity in general. These programs cannot often be separated – in order to improve economic conditions, a certain degree of beautification is required as the historic road design

standards and the accompanying commercial activities were often not visually appealing and contributed to the decline of economic activity due to the perception of the area as being “run down” or neglected.

Commensurate with the aesthetic improvements is the need to attract new commercial enterprises to the area. Over the past decade, Aberdeen and the surrounding region has found success in attracting a wide range of new commerce in this area including:

- Aldi and Lidl Grocery Stores
- University of Maryland Urgent Care
- Walmart
- Hilton Hotel – Home2 Suites
- Several car sales and car service stations

These developments have occurred as many beautification efforts have been spearheaded by the Maryland Department of Transportation – State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), Harford County government, and cities like Aberdeen. These projects have addressed traffic safety improvements, stormwater drainage and management, and visual considerations like transforming long stretches of concrete median barriers into more attractive planter boxes for vegetation. By increasing the aesthetic perception of the US 40 corridor, the ability of economic development efforts to effectively attract business to the area has been greatly increased.

While many improvements have been made to the US 40 corridor within Aberdeen, there are still many stretches of roadway that require continued attention to improve economic circumstances. As part of the efforts to provide for economic development of this area, it is recommended that Aberdeen:

1. Continue collaboration with MDOT SHA and Harford County to develop targeted aesthetic improvements to the roadway itself. These improvements should address traffic safety and flow, water quality impacts, and beautification elements.
 - a. As part of regional requirements to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, there are likely to be opportunities to expand water quality projects to address beautification needs and economic development at the same time. Aberdeen should identify the location and timing of these water quality projects and attempt to piggy-back on these improvements to address the City’s priorities.
2. Increase collaboration with agencies and groups focused on economic development and steer the focus to the US 40 corridor. This collaboration has been recommended for economic development across the city, but US 40 requires dedicated focus on this area. Specific organizations to be included in this outreach includes the Northeastern Maryland Technology Council, Regional Additive Manufacturing Partnership of MD (RAMP MD), Regional Manufacturing Institute of Maryland, and the Route 40 Business Association.
3. Consideration of a commercial business maintenance standard. The City should consider whether establishing basic façade maintenance standards would be an effective means to continue to bolster the perception of the US 40 corridor and, if so, how it can be implemented. Aberdeen should make sure to include a diverse representation from businesses located along this corridor and should take care to prevent façade standards from becoming overly burdensome to impacted properties.

The long-term health and viability of the US 40 corridor will help to create additional jobs to accommodate a diverse workforce.

Ripken Stadium

Ripken Stadium hosts the Aberdeen IronBirds, which is a Class Advanced, High-A East Minor League Baseball affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles Major League Baseball team. Associated with Ripken Stadium is Cal Ripken Sr, Yard and ancillary baseball fields, which hold youth baseball tournaments. In 2018 alone, this facility held 36 baseball tournaments that generated roughly 241,000 attendees.

Leidos Field at Ripken Stadium

The IronBirds play 66-regular season home games, featuring Friday night firework shows, Kids Run the Bases, and the Senior Stroll. Prior to all Saturday home games, fans can play catch on the field prior to the game.

Events at Ripken Stadium

There are many events hosted at Ripken Stadium throughout the year. Military shows, crab feasts, weddings, and other special events are planned to bring more year-round activities to the facility. The City even contracted with a company to generate new activities for the municipally owned Ripken Stadium. Additional information on Ripken Stadium can be found in **Chapter 3 – Community Facilities**.



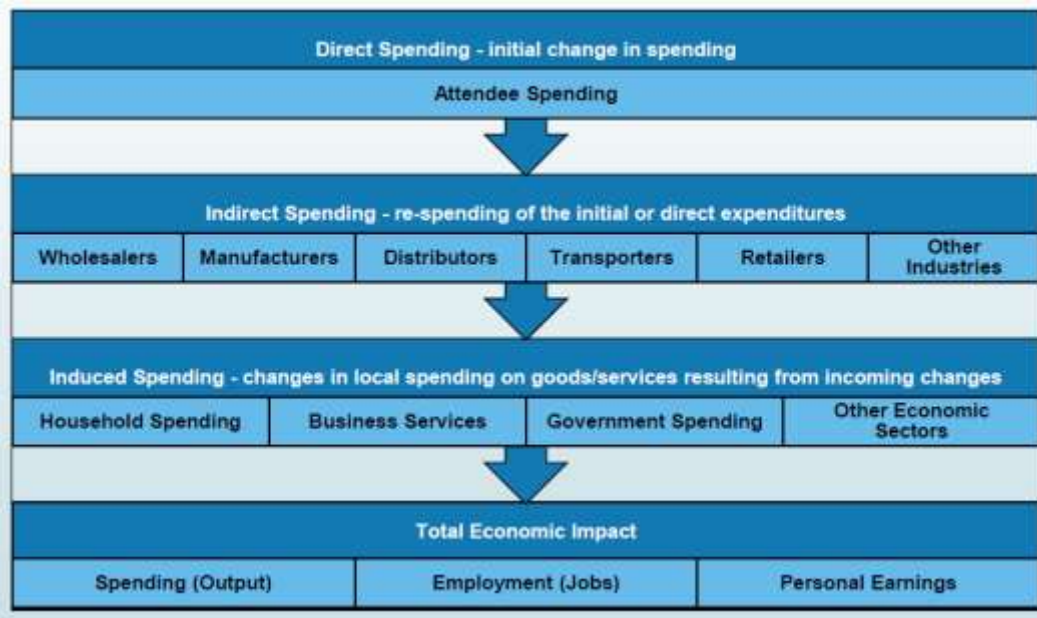
Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis for Select Outdoor Sports Tournaments Held in Harford County, Maryland

In March 2019, Visit Harford! released an Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis for Select Sports Tournaments that was conducted by Crossroads Consulting. One of the major components of this analysis was Ripken Stadium.

The Ripken Experience-Aberdeen has nine total baseball and softball fields and is the home to Cal Ripken Senior's Yard, a 2,000 seat stadium, and the Ripken Stadium, which has 6,300 seats. It is in close proximity to hotels with multiple service levels and price points, which is advantageous in attracting competitive sporting events that draw overnight attendees.

The **Figure 8-5 Economic Impact Multiplier Effect** illustrates the multiplier effects for calculating total economic impact.

Figure 8-5. Economic Impact Multiplier Effect



Source: *Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis for Select Outdoor Sports Tournaments Held in Harford County, Maryland (Visit Harford!, 2019)*

The estimated spending generated from outdoor sports tournaments creates tax revenues for the City, Harford County, and the State of Maryland. In general terms, all State tax proceeds are collected in the State’s General Fund and then allocated to variety of program areas such as education, transportation, public safety and others. As such, individual revenue sources, such as the sales and use tax, are not designated to fund specific programs. As a result of this process, municipalities and counties benefit from a variety of State and locally administered programs. For purposes of the analysis, only collections have been quantified, without regard as to how the funds are ultimately spent through the individual State departments/funds.

Estimating the economic impact of a sporting event is based on the inputs used, primarily those related to the number of participants and spectators attending and the amount that they spend on items outside the facilities where the event occurs. Attendance at profiled sporting events includes both participants and spectators. Participants were calculated by multiplying average roster size by the number of teams. The estimated number of participants excludes coaches and team staff, which provides a conservative estimate. For tournament activity, an attendee day is defined as total attendance (including participants and spectators) multiplied by the event length. For example, a three-day tournament with 200 attendees equates to 600 attendee days, which reflects that people return to the event multiple days. Over the profiled three-year period, baseball tournament activity averaged 39 events per year with approximately 20,600 total participants and 62,000 total spectators for a total of 261,100 attendee days. These numbers exclude the Cal Ripken World Series, which was only held in Harford County in 2016 as data was not provided for this event.

The number of baseball tournaments held decreased in both 2017 and 2018. The average number of baseball teams playing remained relatively consistent in 2016 and 2017 before decreasing by 17 in 2018.

The estimated number of hotel rooms generated from tournaments for 2016-2018 is based on the estimated percentage of attendees staying overnight in hotels and the average number of people per hotel room provided in survey responses. The estimate of hotel room nights does not include any visitors staying at apartments/condos, with family/friends, etc., or any attendees who only visit for the day. In aggregate, there were approximately 89,300 hotel room nights generated per year from baseball activity during the profiled three-year period.

Based on information provided by individual sports organizers as well as other secondary sources, it was estimated that, on average, approximately 64 of the attendees at baseball tournaments (excluding the 2016 Cal Ripken World Series) stayed overnight in hotels. The number of hotel room nights was multiplied by an ADR of 95, which represented the average for April through October. In addition, overnight attendees were estimated to spend an average of 95 per person, per day. Daytripper attendees were estimated to spend an average of 35 per person, per day.

Table 8-10, Estimated Economic Impacts, below summarizes the estimated fiscal impacts generated from baseball tournaments held in 2016-2018. The activity resulted in an average of \$21.996 million in direct spending and \$10.704 million in indirect/induced spending, for a total output of \$32.7 million.

Table 8-10. Estimated Economic Impacts

Category	2016	2017	2018	Average
Output				
Direct Spending	\$22,819,000	\$22,977,000	\$20,192,000	\$21,996,000
Indirect/Induced Spending	\$11,096,000	\$11,186,000	\$9,833,000	\$10,704,000
Total Output	\$33,915,000	\$34,163,000	\$30,025,000	\$32,700,000
Total Jobs	450	450	400	430
Total Earnings	\$11,939,000	\$12,044,000	\$10,587,000	\$11,523,000

Source: Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis for Select Outdoor Sports Tournaments Held in Harford County, Maryland (Visit Harford!, 2019)

INCENTIVE ZONES, ORGANIZATIONS & PROGRAMS

The City of Aberdeen is committed to creating a business-friendly environment and assisting businesses in their growth and location to the City. To assist in this area, several incentive programs are available for assistance. The following are several of the programs available in support of sustaining and creating new opportunities for providing additional services to the residents of Aberdeen.

Incentive Zones

There are a number of federal and State incentive zones that Aberdeen has taken advantage of in support of its economic development efforts.

Opportunity Zones

The Opportunity Zone program is a nationwide initiative administered by the U.S. Treasury created under the *2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act*. This program provides federal tax incentives for investment in distressed communities over 10 years. Areas designated as opportunity zones will be able to reap the benefits of

capital gains to help redevelop underserved communities. The Opportunity Zone designated within the City of Aberdeen is Census Tract 3029.02 and shown on Map 8-2.

Enterprise Zones

An Enterprise Zone is a geographically designated area where investments in commercial development and redevelopment and job creation are eligible to receive tax credits. Eligible commercial projects within the Enterprise Zone can be certified to receive a commercial real property tax credit prorated over 10 years. Eligible businesses operating within the Enterprise Zone can receive income tax credits for the creation of full-time jobs. The following uses are not eligible: fast food restaurants, convenience stores, standalone gas stations, adult entertainment, and gambling facilities.

The Greater Aberdeen/Havre De Grace Enterprise Zone is one of two Enterprise Zones in Harford County and is shown on Map 8-2. It was originally designated in June 1996 and re-designated in June 2016 to include nearly 9,000 acres in the cities, extending into Aberdeen Proving Ground and Harford County. The re-designation will help promote commercial and industrial reinvestment, R&D development, and increase the local tax base. The Maryland Department of Commerce approves the State’s enterprise zones, while local governments are responsible for their administration. Businesses operating within an enterprise zone may be eligible for a tax credit toward their State income tax filings based on the number of new jobs created and a tax credit on their local real property taxes based on their overall capital investment into a property.

The focus of the designated zones is:

- To ensure business retention, increase business expansion, and attract new businesses
- To encourage the creation of well-paying new jobs
- To promote development and occupancy of vacant, underutilized land and buildings
- To revitalize older industrial areas

A business located within the Enterprise Zone is eligible if it meets minimum capital investment in the construction or rehabilitation of real property of \$75,000 (if business has 10 or less employees) or \$125,000 (if business has 11 or more employees). Minimum full-time job creation eligibility is the creation of 2 new jobs (if business has 10 or less employees) or 5 new jobs (if business has 11 or more employees).

Local Real Property Tax Credits

Credits are available for up to ten years on capital investments. Credit of 80% on increases in assessed value of real property for first five years, decreasing by 10% annually for the remaining five years. Any real property tax credits are granted for full taxable years only.

State Income Tax Credits

The State requires that a minimum number of new full-time jobs be created. Salaries must be 150% of minimum wage for 35 or more per hours per week. Credits for hiring “economically disadvantaged” employees (vouchered by the State) are \$3,000 for the first year, \$2,000 for the second year, and \$1,000 for the third year. There is a one-time credit of \$1,000 for all other eligible new jobs

Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone Program

The Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone Program is designated and managed by the Small Business Administration (SBA). It is designed to stimulate economic development and create jobs in urban and rural communities and qualifies small businesses located in the zone for preferential status in competition for federal government contracts. A business obtains HUB Zone certification in part by employing workers residing in the zone. A small business must meet all of the following criteria to qualify for the HUBZone program:

The program allows eligible businesses to compete for the program's set-aside federal contracts. To be eligible for the program, a business must meet all of the following criteria:

- It must be a small business by SBA standards
- It must be located in a recognized HUB Zone
- It must be at least 51% owned and controlled by person(s) who are U.S. Citizens, Community Development Corporation, an agricultural cooperative, Native Hawaiian organization, or an Indian Tribe
- It must have at least 35% of its employees live in a HUBZone.

Priority Funding Areas

In 1997, the Maryland General Assembly passed "Smart Growth" legislation that created Priority Funding Areas (PFAs). This enactment followed the *1992 Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act*, which articulated Maryland's growth policy by establishing seven visions, which have since been expanded to twelve. The 1997 legislation, now known as the *Priority Funding Areas Law*, was enacted "to preserve existing neighborhoods and agricultural, natural, and rural resources; prohibiting state agencies from approving specified projects that are not in priority funding areas; providing for specified exceptions; establishing a certification process for the designation of eligible priority funding areas; requiring municipal corporations to adopt specified development standards and assist counties in the collection of fees to finance specified school construction; etc." PFAs were established to focus the State's growth-related spending into existing communities and locally designated growth areas, thus ensuring a more efficient use of funding and limiting growth induced by the extension of infrastructure into areas better suited for preservation and limited growth.

Sustainable Communities:

Sustainable Communities are designated under a State law that consolidates resources for community revitalization and economic development under a single designation with an emphasis on infrastructure improvements, multimodal transportation, and green development. Designation as a Sustainable Community automatically qualifies a community as a Targeted Growth and Revitalization Area under Plan Maryland.

Transit Oriented Development Area

Aberdeen's Transit-Oriented Development District is discussed in the **Economic Centers** section of this chapter.

TOD Economic Development Incentive Program

There is a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Water and Sewer Area Connection Charge Waiver Economic Development Incentive Program for the City of Aberdeen. The purpose of this program is to

increase the City's employment and tax bases by stimulating development and redevelopment in the City's TOD District as delineated by the City's TOD Regulating Plan, by waiving Water and Sewer Area Connection Charges imposed pursuant to *Chapter 450, Article II* and *Chapter A550 of the Code of the City of Aberdeen*. Because further development and redevelopment in the TOD District is a benefit to the City's property tax base and the City as a whole, this program provides for payments from the General Fund's Fund Balance to the Water Fund and Sewer Fund to recoup revenues to be lost to the Water Fund and Sewer Fund by the granting of waivers under the program.

Eligible participants in the incentive program include owners of land in the TOD on which new commercial or residential development requires new connections to the City's water and sewer systems for which connection fees are payable or owners of land in the TOD on which commercial or residential redevelopment require connections to the City's water and sewer systems for which additional connection fees are payable. The TOD Economic Development Incentive limits the total available credits for the program to 100 Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs). One EDU is a measure of wastewater generated from the business or residential unit whose deemed average daily flow is 250 gallons. No single project is eligible for a credit of more than one-third of the total available EDUs. Any water and sewer connection credits applied under this program are not transferrable.

Organizations & Programs

Aberdeen Facade Improvement Program

The Facade Improvement Program provides matching grants to property owners and tenants to stimulate improvements to building frontages for commercial properties located within the Aberdeen Sustainable Community Area. It is designed to stimulate private investment in improvements that contribute to the overall strength of the commercial district. The program goals and requirements for the Facade Improvement Program are to create attractive and inviting commercial/retail areas to allow greater use by residents and visitors; to promote the commercial vitality of the Aberdeen Sustainable Community Area and improve economic development; to emphasize the importance of public/private partnerships as the key to successful revitalization; and to use public funds to stimulate private investment that conveys an image of an economically viable marketplace where businesses can prosper.

Eligible applicants include property owners of a commercial building located within the Aberdeen Sustainable Community Area and tenants of a commercial building located within the Aberdeen Sustainable Community Area with an executed lease. Businesses occupying the building to be renovated must have a current Harford County/City Business License; funds must be used for exterior improvements only; work must be done on street elevations visible from public spaces or parking lots; applicants must obtain all required permits; the applicant must obtain design review approval from the Aberdeen Architectural Review Committee, if applicable; and funding is provided on a reimbursement basis where the City must receive proof of expenditures prior to releasing funds directly to the applicant.

Eligible improvements include architectural services for façade improvements; interior improvements; awnings/canopies; exterior wall finishes including painting, stucco, and masonry products; exterior doors and windows; exterior building lighting; landscaping; and signage. Ineligible uses include improvements related to the lack of regular and normal building maintenance; refinancing existing debt; security bars, roofing, HVAC, plumbing and mechanical equipment; projects completed prior to final loan approval; and parking lot paving, striping, or lighting.

Advantage Maryland (MEDAAF)

Funds grants, loans, and investments to support economic development initiatives in priority funding areas of the state. Uses include business attraction and retention, infrastructure support, brownfield redevelopment, revolving loan funds and local strategic planning.

<http://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/medaaf>

Brownfield Redevelopment Assistance Program

The Maryland Dept. of Planning has created a Brownfield redevelopment assistance and outreach program to help connect local planning jurisdictions with EPA Brownfields funding opportunities, identify technical and financial resources to help parties navigate the Brownfields process.

<https://planning.maryland.gov/Pages/OurWork/envr-planning/brownfields/brownfields-redevelopment.aspx>

Brownfields Revitalization Incentive Program (BRIP)

This program is intended to promote economic development, especially in distressed urban areas, by identifying and redeploying underutilized properties. Reusing real property makes efficient use of existing infrastructure while providing an alternative to developing open space that contributes to urban sprawl. BRIP may be able to offer financial incentives for help organizing and assessing a Brownfield property, performing environmental evaluations, and remedial action cleanups through grants, loans, and real property tax credits. The program is administered through the Maryland Department of Commerce and the Brownfield property must be located within a participating jurisdiction that has enacted BRIP legislation and carries the requirement for participation and completion of Maryland's Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP).

<https://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/medaaf>

Brownfields Tax Incentive

Provides incentives including tax credits, loans, and grants for the redevelopment of eligible brownfield properties in participating jurisdictions.

<http://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/brownsfields-tax-credit>

Data Center Maryland Sales & Use Tax Exemption Incentive Program

Data centers that locate or expand in Maryland and create new full-time positions may receive an exemption from Maryland sales and use tax on the purchase of qualified data center personal property.

<https://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/data-center-maryland-sales-and-use-tax-exemption-incentive-program>

Economic Development Opportunities Fund (Sunny Day)

Supports extraordinary economic development opportunities that create and retain employment as well as create significant capital investments.

<http://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/sunny-day>

EPA Brownfields & Land Revitalization in Region 3

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 3 Brownfields Program offers financial and technical assistance to communities and other parties interested in redeveloping Brownfields sites within the State of Maryland. Some assistance opportunities include Technical Assistance to Brownfields and EPA performance of Targeted Brownfields Assessments.

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-and-land-revitalization-region-3>

Greater Baltimore Committee

The GBC is the leading business advocacy organization in the Greater Baltimore area. Representing more than 500 businesses, nonprofits, foundations, and leading educational and civic institutions, the GBC is an influential voice on matters of public policy, business issues, and promoting jobs and economic growth in the region and the state. In May 2022, the GBC formally merged with the Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore.

<https://gbc.org/>

Innovation Investment Tax Credit

Provides an investor with income tax credits equal to 33% or 50% of an eligible investment in a Qualified Maryland Technology Company (QMTC), supporting investment in seed and early-stage technology companies in designated industries.

<https://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/Pages/innovation-investment.aspx>

Job Creation Tax Credit

Businesses that create a minimum number of new full-time positions may be entitled to state income tax credits of up to \$3,000 per job or \$5,000 per job in a revitalization area.

<http://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/job-creation-tax-credit>

Maryland Commuter Tax Credit

A business entity in Maryland may claim a tax credit in an amount equal to 50% of the cost of providing qualified commuter benefits to their employees. The credit may not exceed \$100 per individual employee per month.

<https://onestop.md.gov/forms/maryland-commuter-tax-credit-registration-5da5b08b5d937b010116fc63>

Maryland Economic Adjustment Fund (MEAF)

MEAF provides loans of up to \$150,000 for small and underserved businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

<http://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/meaf>

Maryland Industrial Development Financing Authority (MIDFA)

Encourages private sector investments with insurance, and the issuance of tax-exempt and taxable revenue bonds for projects located in Priority Funding Areas. Uses include land acquisition, building acquisition, construction costs and more.

<http://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-lending-institutions/midfa>

Maryland Opportunity Zone Enhancement Credits (State Program)

Enhanced tax credits are available for several of the Maryland Department of Commerce's tax credit programs for businesses located in federal Opportunity Zones that meet certain requirements.

<http://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/opportunity-zone-enhancement-credits>

Maryland Opportunity Zones (Federal Program)

A nationwide initiative administered by the U.S. Treasury; the program provides federal tax incentives for investment in distressed communities over the next 10 years. The U.S. Treasury has designated Maryland's 149 Opportunity Zones.

<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Pages/OZ/OpportunityZones.aspx>

Maryland Small Business Development Center Network (MDSBDC)

The MDSBDC network provides services to current and prospective small business owners in Maryland including free individual, confidential counseling; market and industry research; high-quality training; business plan assistance; and accessing capital.

<http://mdsbdc.umd.edu>

Microenterprise Loan Program

Designed to provide entrepreneurs with flexible financing for microenterprise start-ups and expansions within designated Sustainable Communities and Priority Funding Areas throughout the State.

<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Business/Pages/microenterprise.aspx>

More Jobs for Marylanders

Provides new and existing manufacturers and businesses that locate or expand in a Maryland Opportunity Zone with tax incentives tied to job creation for a 10-year period, including a refundable income tax credit, and for manufacturers, encourages additional investment in new equipment through accelerated and bonus depreciation.

<http://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/more-jobs-for-marylanders>

Neighborhood Business Works

Provides flexible financing to new or expanding small businesses and nonprofit organizations in Sustainable Communities and Priority Funding Areas throughout the state.

<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Business/Pages/NBW.aspx>

Partnership for Workforce Quality (PWQ)

Provides matching training grants and support services targeted to improve the competitive position of small and mid-sized manufacturing and technology companies.

<http://commerce.maryland.gov/grow/partnership-for-workforce-quality-pwq>

Reinvest Maryland

Reinvest Maryland is a set of strategies to focus and synergize investments, budgets, regulatory authority, and resources to support places where people already live. Investment within Maryland's existing cities, towns, and communities through infill, redevelopment, and targeted economic development, if well-executed, can have many positive returns:

- Residents benefit from increased access to jobs, shopping, services and amenities, and better transportation options as business opportunities grow.

- Local businesses benefit from an expanded customer base, easier access to employees, and proximity of similar businesses as residential population increases.
- Business districts benefit from a better reputation as a place to shop and do business, increased occupancy rates, and reduced blight.
- Local governments benefit from increased tax revenues, jobs, and businesses per acre, increasing the rate of return on investment and resources for infrastructure and services, and the ability to repay bonds more quickly.
- The economy benefits from local government’s improved financial stability, increased entrepreneurship, and higher employment rates.
- The environment benefits from remediation of contaminated sites, updated stormwater management associated with redevelopment, diminished pollution from driving and septic systems, and reduced development pressure on farms and other natural resource-rich lands.

Reinvest Maryland represents an opportunity for all levels of government to work together, strengthen collaborative efforts to support revitalization and reinvestment, and to engage stakeholders of all types in the effort to rebuild communities and improve quality of life. This effort builds on the State’s original *Reinvest Maryland* report, completed in 2014, and expands it as a toolkit designed to encourage local communities to consider redevelopment projects in partnership with the private sector that are supported by public programs and resources.

The recommendations in the report are intended to improve the caliber of Maryland’s infill, redevelopment, and revitalization efforts:

- Infill: The development of vacant parcels within previously built areas.
- Redevelopment: Building or rebuilding on parcels that have been previously developed, with redevelopment aiming for a higher and better use of the area for the community.
- Revitalization: Instilling new life and vitality into a community through infill and redevelopment or other activities, such as building reuse and renovations, façade improvements, beautification efforts, small business loans, and special events.

Reinvestment through infill, redevelopment, and revitalization is needed within cities, suburbs, and rural towns, in municipalities, and in unincorporated locations. Local considerations will influence the look, feel, and scale of specific projects, which can range from the rehabilitation and reuse of a single building to projects encompassing many acres or blocks.

Research & Development Tax Credit

Businesses that have qualified R&D expenditures in Maryland may qualify for the Growth R&D Tax Credit. <http://commerce.maryland.gov/fund/programs-for-businesses/research-and-development-tax-credit>

RMI Energy Efficiency Program

Provides grants to assist Maryland businesses and nonprofit organizations in the commercial and industrial sectors to implement energy efficiency projects in their facilities. <https://rmiofmaryland.com/rmi-energy-efficiency-air-ventilation-programs-for-maryland-manufacturers/>

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

SCORE is a volunteer association sponsored by the Small Business Administration. SBA staff matches volunteer business management counselors with clients in need of expert advice, helping them identify problems, determine the causes, and find solutions. All individual and team counseling is free. SCORE provides online resources including workshops, business plan, and financial templates to assist in the business planning process. SCORE features topics on business planning and management, communications and human resources, finance, franchising, government, international trade, legal, tax, sales and marketing, and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

TEDCO Funding Programs (Various)

TEDCO (Maryland Technology Development Corporation) manages a variety of programs to help for-profit Maryland companies in their effort to develop and commercialize new technology-based products.

<https://www.tedcomd.com/funding>

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

SBA provides financial, technical, and management assistance to start, run, and grow your business. The agency's services include information on procurement assistance and the Small Business Innovation Research Program.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & TRENDS

As a long-range planning document, Plan Aberdeen must consider the needs and potential changes that may affect the City throughout the rest of the 21st century. It is important to consider that economic development planning is an ongoing effort. As circumstances change, so should the objectives and efforts of the City.

Business Retention & Expansion

While it is important to maintain a business-friendly atmosphere to attract desirable firms to the area, there is also a critical need to support home grown businesses and investment. Local owners have an inherent interest of the long-term health of the City. Community-based businesses and owners are essential to charitable endeavors, serving on local boards, and supporting a variety of local causes.

The money spent at a community-based business creates a multiplier effect in the local economy. It is a commonly accepted fact that from each dollar spent at a local independent merchant, three or more times as much typically goes back into the local economy compared to a dollar spent at a chain-owned business.

Another advantage of supporting community-based businesses is the tendency of locally owned retailers to carry a greater degree of locally produced products. Local retailers bring a different flair to their presentation and a local feeling that is distinct from that provided by a national chain, which may have some local elements, but would otherwise be indistinguishable from a similar outlet anywhere else in the country. Local businesses are essential to a community because they offer a variety of benefits



such as providing jobs; ensuring choice and diversity of goods and services based on local interests; maintaining community character and identity; convenience; and providing for a stronger tax base.

For many economic activities, it is advantageous to direct growth where infrastructure and investment already exist. Infill and redevelopment provide economic benefits by connecting businesses to both their customers and their workforces. Additionally, redevelopment can lessen the financial burden of building new infrastructure needed to spur economic growth.

Skilled Workforce

Connecting an educated and trained workforce that meets the needs of an evolving workplace market sector is a major challenge. The region provides significant competition for skilled labor. Ample opportunities for workforce training should be offered to retain and attract employers. This process starts in the local school system with both academic and technological training.

Flexible Working Space

Flexible working space in the City will offer a variety of businesses and individuals with the opportunity to grow or adapt to changing markets. These spaces (e.g., business accelerators) will provide individuals looking to start a company with the space necessary without a large financial outlay or the need to commit to a long-term lease. These opportunities will help to create a culture of innovation in the City that expands the economy into new markets. Additionally, maker spaces will provide space designed to create products or prototypes and often provide some training and basic tools.

Transportation Changes

In recent years, transportation on demand has dramatically changed travel within urban areas—many people rely less on owning a car when a ride can be requested through a mobile application. Simultaneously, walking and bicycling for transportation have increased in many areas. In the 21st century, it is likely that drastic changes in transportation methods, including the use of autonomous vehicles, could continue to disrupt the current system. The extent and effects of such a systematic change are currently unknown; therefore, it is important to remain flexible.

Technological Advances

New and evolving technology continually shapes society and how society interacts with the built environment. The internet has revolutionized how most people shop, travel, and work over the past few decades. More people are shopping online, reducing demand for physical retail space. Many traditional brick and mortar retail stores are developing on smaller footprints with less inventory but providing delivery services. Many new retail establishments focus on offering entertainment experiences over consumer goods.

Technology has—and continues to—evolve transportation trends. Rideshares have become a more viable alternative to owning a personal vehicle in an urban environment. Additionally, autonomous vehicle technology is also rapidly advancing and could change the way communities are designed. Without the necessity to park cars in proximity to destinations, urban areas can be reshaped to accommodate smaller drop-off locations rather than large parking lots surrounding buildings. Lastly, the widespread accessibility of broadband and mobile devices has allowed employees to choose where they want to live and work remotely, which has become more common with the demographic shift. This has also supported coworking spaces, where remote employees of various employers can share a common office space. Coworking office spaces provide amenities of a traditional office environment but shared among individuals and employees working remotely for various employers.