

**CITY OF ABERDEEN
PLANNING COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT 2019**



This report was prepared by the Aberdeen Planning Commission and the Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Aberdeen for the period of January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 and adopted by the Aberdeen Planning Commission on August 12, 2020.

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Stefani Spector

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INTRODUCTION

The Aberdeen Planning Commission was established in conjunction with the first Zoning Ordinance adopted on September 12, 1957. The Planning Commission is responsible for adopting rules of procedure for their meetings and actions; preparing and adopting a Comprehensive Plan; reviewing and recommending for approval preliminary site plans and preliminary and final subdivision plats; recommending changes to zoning boundaries; recommending text amendments to the Development Code; recommending rezonings and annexations; recommending changes to the Subdivision Regulations; recommending changes in land use or development that arise from local, State, or Federal programs or policies; and recommending programs for public structures, improvements, and land acquisitions.

The Planning Commission's Annual Report highlights the major planning, zoning, and development activities that occurred during the 2019 calendar year. This year's Annual Report includes text amendments to the Development Code, building permit activity, annexation activity, capital improvement projects, and approved site plans and subdivision plats. Each of these initiatives worked towards implementing the State's vision for sustainable communities that protect the natural environment, direct growth, maintain and improve infrastructure, and include citizen participation in the process. Overall, the City did not have any restrictions on development in the designated Priority Funding Area during the 2019 reporting period.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Aberdeen has a population of 16,019, making it the largest municipality by population in Harford County. The City is served by a diverse transportation system including one interstate highway (I-95), one federal highway (US 40) and five state highways (MD 22, MD 132, MD 462, MD 715, and MD 7), MARC commuter rail service, AMTRAK passenger rail service, Harford Transit LINK, and MTA bus service. The City of Aberdeen functions as an independent municipality, providing many public services for its citizens. The City has its own planning and zoning authority, water and sewer services, police department, and public works department. Fire protection service is provided by the Aberdeen Volunteer Fire Department. Harford County Government provides schools, libraries, courts, additional police protection, health, recreation, transit links, and other community services.

PLANNING IN ABERDEEN

Legal Authority

The authority to plan for the City's development and to enact and enforce laws relating to land planning and zoning is derived from the Local Government and Land Use Articles of the Annotated Code of Maryland and the City Charter.

Land use planning and regulation in Aberdeen is the responsibility of five official bodies: the City Council, the Department of Planning and Community Development, the Planning Commission, the Board of Appeals, and the Architectural Review Committee. The City Council adopts the Comprehensive Plan, enacts legislation to ensure compliance with the Plan, adopts amendments to the Development Code and the Zoning Map, and funds capital improvements necessary to implement the Plan.

The Department of Planning and Community Development is responsible for the administration of planning and zoning within the City and advises the Planning Commission and the Board of Appeals regarding all zoning cases, annexations, subdivisions, site plans, zoning reclassifications, and Development Code amendments.

The Board of Appeals is comprised of five members and one alternate appointed by the City Council. The Board considers applications for special exceptions, variances, interpretations of the Development Code, and appeals from administrative decisions related to planning and zoning.

The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is comprised of four members appointed by the City Council. The ARC reviews site, signage, and landscaping plans for development projects located in the two established overlay districts.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission is made up of seven members who are appointed by the City Council for staggered five-year terms. The Commission elects a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from its membership for terms of one year, with eligibility for re-election. Mr. Mark Schlottman is Chairman and Ms. Dominique Edwards is Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission.

The Commission meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, 60 North Parke Street, Aberdeen. The agenda is posted on the City's website and all meetings are open to the public.

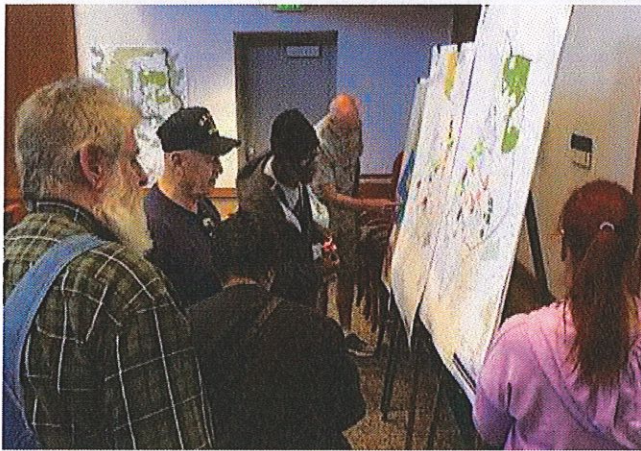
The Commission is directly involved with all phases of the planning process. Certain powers and duties of the Commission are mandated by the Local Government and Land Use Articles of the Annotated Code of Maryland and the Code of the City of Aberdeen. The Commission is required to file an Annual Report on its activities with the Mayor and Council and the Maryland Secretary of Planning.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

Development Code Amendments

The Planning Commission reviewed and recommended approval of two amendments to the Aberdeen Development Code. The Table of Uses were amended for the B-3 Highway Commercial District to allow garden, mid-rise, and high-rise apartment uses as a principal permitted use. The Table of Uses and Definition Sections were amended to address breweries, microbreweries, and wineries in the B-2, B-3, M-1, IBD, and TOD zoning districts.

I-95 Area Land Use Study



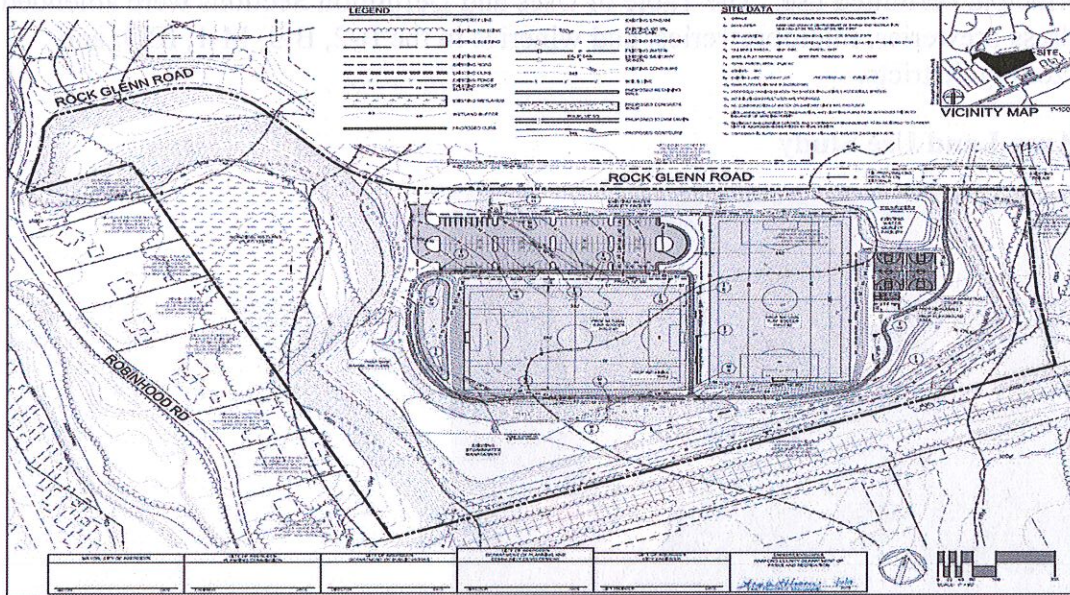
I-95 Area Land Use Public Workshop

The City Council approved a consulting contract with Matrix Design Group to undertake a Land Use Study for the area west of I-95. The study included two future growth areas in the Aberdeen Comprehensive Plan, Planning Areas 10 and 11, and the Integrated Business District area. The total area encompassed 1,000 acres. The Matrix Design Group was tasked with developing concepts for these areas, concepts for adaptive reuse of the Ripken Stadium and the vacant Class A office building, exploring opportunities to promote the environmental features in these areas, transportation connections, public facilities improvements, and report on the market conditions. Five public workshops were held with 80 people in attendance. The public workshops included members of the City Council, City staff, Planning Commission, Economic Development Commission, developers, and residents. The I-95 Land Use Study was completed in October 2019.

2011 Comprehensive Plan Updates

The Planning Commission and the Department of Planning and Community Development began reviewing Chapters 1, 2, and 3 along with the future growth areas. The anticipated completion date of the updates to the Comprehensive Plan is 2021.

Planning Commission Development Reviews



Preliminary Site Plan for Rock Glenn Park

The Commission conducted regular reviews of subdivision plats, site plans, and annexation requests. The Commission and staff reviewed these requests and ensured that compliance with the Aberdeen Development Code, Comprehensive Plan, Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, and Subdivision Regulations were achieved. The following development activity was reviewed, and actions noted: (Refer to the Map on Page 9 for the 2019 Development Activity)

1. Review Preliminary Site Plan for proposed improvements to the Rock Glenn Park by the Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation located off Rock Glenn Boulevard on Tax Map 52, Parcel 0437. The improvements include two natural turf soccer fields, parking lot with 151 spaces, two basketball courts, a pickle ball court, and a playground. Recommended approval of the site plan.
2. Participated in the I-95 Area Land Use Study public workshop.
3. Review Annexation Petition and supporting documents for the Presbyterian Homes of Maryland, Inc. property located off Long Drive on Tax Map 51, Parcels 946 and 951. The acreage of the property to be annexed is 9.062. Recommended the parcel be annexed with Integrated Business District zoning.
4. Review Final Subdivision Plat for Lot 58, Section IV-A, Hillcrest Manor located off Manor Road and Hillcrest Drive on Tax Map 202, Parcel 2739. Recommended approval of the subdivision plat.

5. Review Revised Final Subdivision Plats for Aberdeen Corporate Park located off MD 22, Middleton Road, and McHenry Drive on Tax Map 202, Parcel 620. Recommended approval of the subdivision plats.
6. Review Preliminary Site Plan for Lots 2 and 2C Bevoir Partnership located off U.S. 40 on Tax Map 203, Parcel 2870. Recommended approval of the site plan.
7. Review Final Subdivision Plat and Preliminary Site Plan for 998 Hospitality Way and 999 Beards Hill Road located off Beards Hill Road and Hospitality Way on Tax Map 200, Parcels 2709 and 17. Recommended approval of the site plan and subdivision plat.
8. Review Preliminary Site Plan for Mountain Christian Church at Aberdeen Shopping Plaza located off West Bel Air Avenue on Tax Map 200, Parcel 28. Recommended approval of the site plan.

ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES ORDINANCE (APFO)

New residential and non-residential development projects are subject to Chapter 302, Growth Management, in the Code of the City of Aberdeen. The Growth Management requirements are applicable to school capacity, sewerage, water, and roads.

OTHER PLANNING STAFF WORK EFFORTS

The City was awarded a Transportation Alternatives Program grant in the amount of \$700,000 for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity enhancements at the Aberdeen MARC Train Station. The City Council approved a contract for architectural and engineering design work with EXP US Services for the planned connectivity improvements. The City staff is working closely with MDOT SHA and MDOT MTA on acquiring the necessary rights-of-way for the sidewalk construction and completing the design work. Construction of the planned improvements is anticipated for 2020/21.

The City Council approved the acquisition of 13.8 acres of land located at 684 West Bel Air Avenue for the purpose of a future activity center with multi-purpose fields, parking lot, and accessory uses. The City staff worked closely with the property owners, legal counsel, and civil engineers during the due diligence phase. The City staff is working with a civil engineering firm to develop conceptual plans for the activity center.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN CHANGES IN 2019

The Planning Commission reviewed a Petition for Annexation for the Presbyterian Homes of Maryland, Inc. property located off Long Drive containing 9.062± acres. The proposed annexation area is in the City's Future Growth Planning Area 11 – Long/HEAT as noted in the approved 2011 Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission's favorable recommendation of the annexation with Integrated Business District zoning was forwarded to the City Council and is under review at this time.

The City issued the following building permits for new construction in calendar year 2019:

NEW BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED - 2019

Type of Construction	Number Issued	Total Estimated Construction Costs
Residential – Single Family Dwellings	9	\$3,660,000
Commercial	2	\$1,335,000
Industrial	0	0

All building permits were issued within the corporate limits of Aberdeen, which is a designated Priority Funding Area.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS



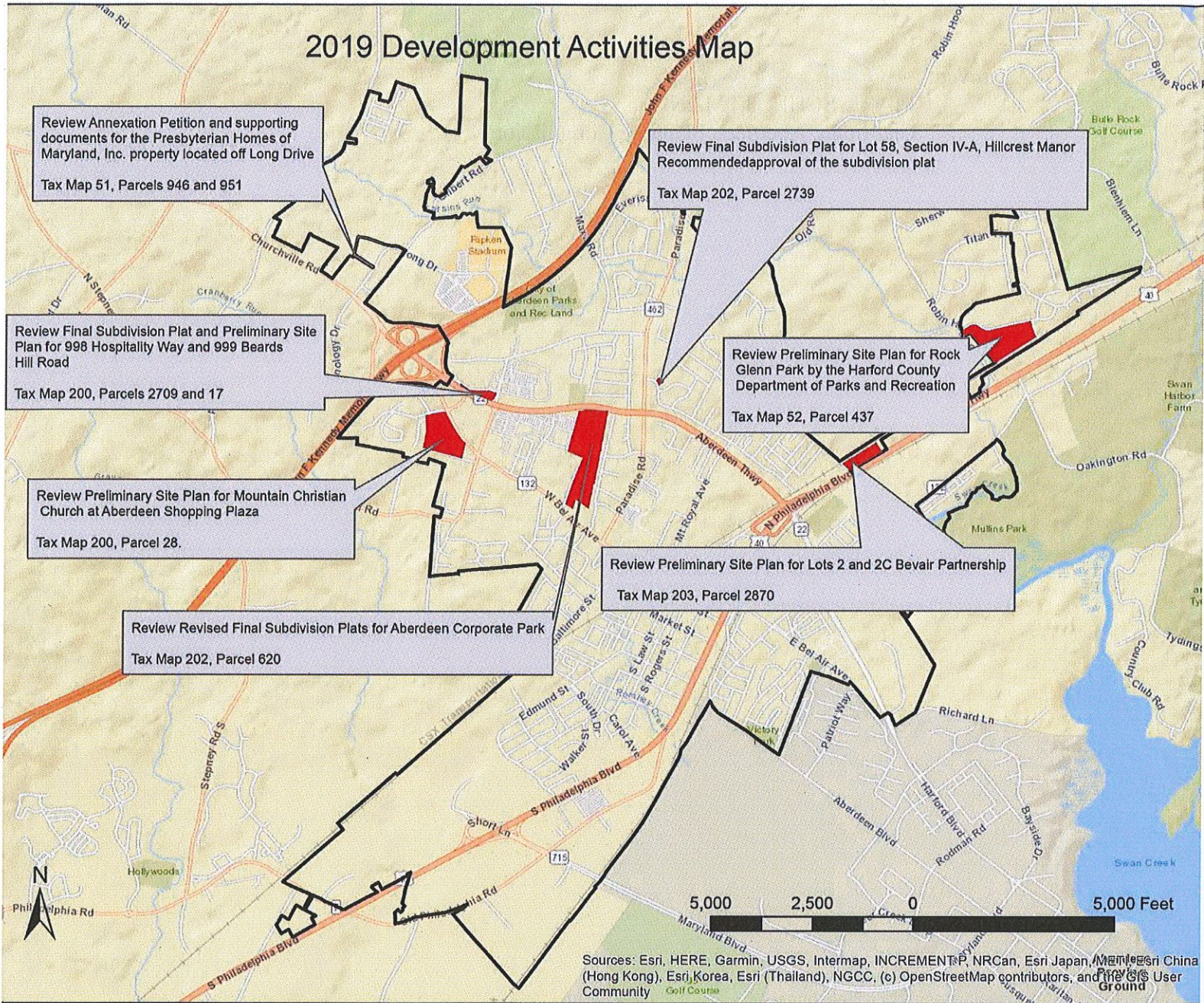
Dedication Ceremony for Middelton Road extended on October 3, 2019

To address the needs of the community and improve road connections, the City Council approved a contract for the construction of the Middelton Road extension from MD 22 to Beards Hill Road. The road extension has been noted in the City’s Transportation Element and Major Thoroughfare Plan since the 1980s. The project included a new roundabout, pavement, curb and gutter, sidewalks, commercial driveway entrances, landscaping, and construction of a water main. The project cost was approximately \$1,200,000 and was dedicated on October 3, 2019.

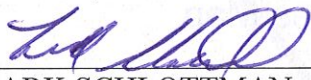
DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES MAP

The Development Activities Map is located on Page 9 and highlights all approved preliminary site plans, final subdivision plats, and annexation areas that occurred in 2019. For further details, please refer to Pages 6-7 under the Planning Commission’s Development Reviews.

2019 Development Activities Map



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Approved: 
MARK SCHLOTTMAN
Chairman, Aberdeen Planning Commission