



**CITY OF ABERDEEN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
ANNUAL REPORT 2020**



University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake – Aberdeen Medical Campus rendering

**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, 2020, through December 31, 2020, and adopted by the Aberdeen Planning Commission - September 2021.**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

Mark Schlottman, Chairman  
Dominique Edwards, Vice Chairman  
Susan Brown  
Michael Hiob  
Samuel Posten  
Terri Preston  
DeAunte Printup  
Jimmy Baxendell (resigned from the Planning Commission)

**BOARD OF APPEALS**

John Landbeck, Chairman  
Amy Landbeck (moved to the Board of Appeals, Chairman)  
Peggy Dymond  
Patrick Faircloth  
DeAunte Printup (moved to the Planning Commission)  
Erick Stone  
Amy Lindecamp, Alternate (moved to Board member)

**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Gary Getz, AIA, NCARB  
Merrill Messick, AIA  
David O'Steen

**DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Phyllis Grover

**SENIOR PLANNER**

Gilbert Jones

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING ASSISTANT**

Stefani Spector

**ABERDEEN PLANNING COMMISSION  
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**INTRODUCTION**

The Planning Commission has rules of procedure for their meetings and actions; their responsibilities are provided in the Code of the City of Aberdeen, Chapter 235-10. The Planning Commission is tasked with preparing and recommending a Comprehensive Plan; reviewing and recommending approval of preliminary site plans and preliminary and final subdivision plats; recommending zoning boundary changes and text amendments to the Zoning Map and Development Code; recommending rezonings and annexations; recommending text amendments 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 2020 calendar year. This year's Annual Report includes text amendments to the Development Code, building permit activity, annexation reviews, 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 2020 reporting period.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Aberdeen has a population of 16,254, 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 is a full-service 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, Inc. 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 four text amendments to the Development Code and provided recommendations to the City Council:

1. Ordinance No. 20-O-08 Development Code Revision for Chickens As Accessory Uses; for the purpose of establishing provisions to allow chickens under certain circumstances within the accessory uses section of the Code.
2. Ordinance No. 20-O-11 Adequate Public Facilities; for the purpose of regulating adequate public facilities in Aberdeen.
3. Ordinance No. 20-O-18 Development Code Revision for Assisted Living; for the purpose of requiring a special exception for assisted living facilities in an R-1 zoning district and creating provisions for these facilities if approved.
4. Ordinance No. 21-O-02 Development Code Revisions for the purpose of modifying the definitions, changes to the Table of Use Regulations, modifying the sign regulations, permitting self-storage facilities and pet day care services, and changing the minimum width requirements of certain townhouse units.

### **Planning Initiative and Studies**

The City Council approved a consulting contract with Matrix Design Group to undertake a Grid-Based Study for the area west of I-95. The study outcomes were presented to the City Council on July 27, 2020, at a public meeting. The study area focused on three properties: Locksley Manor, Inc., 206± acres, Siebert and Adams properties, 80± acres, and Presbyterian Home of Maryland Incorporated, 116± acres.

The design principles that were a factor in the conceptual development renderings included: 1) provide multiple points of connectivity, 2) support pedestrian mobility, 3) create walkable and connected development patterns, 4) encourage variety of housing types, 5) minimize parking impacts, 6) cluster development, 7) protect natural resources, 8) connect contiguous open space, and 9) integrate natural features with development plans. The Smart Growth planning, Strong Town principles, and Grid-Based designs were addressed throughout the planning study for the area. The outcomes included these Smart Growth/Grid-based design elements: 1) small, compact and uniform block lengths, enhancing walkability and increasing connectivity to other modes of travel, 2) connections to larger community development pattern, 3) varied lot sizes and housing types, 4) concentrated development intensities preserve natural open space, 5) open space connectivity, and 6) smaller, more efficient lot sizes, enabling increased percentage of open space preservation.

## **Planning Commission Development Reviews**

The Commission conducted regular reviews of subdivision plats, site plans, and annexation requests. The Commission and staff reviewed these requests and ensured compliance with the Aberdeen Development Code, Comprehensive Plan, Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, and Subdivision Regulations. The following development activity was reviewed, and actions noted: (Refer to the Map on Page 9 for the 2020 Development Activity)

1. Review Preliminary Site Plan and Final Subdivision Plat for The Edge at Middleton located off Middleton Road on Tax Map 202, Parcels 2591, 54, and 2864. Recommended approval of the site plan and subdivision plat.
2. Review Petition for Annexation for Locksley Manor, Inc. approximately 206.358 acres of land located off Gilbert Road on Tax Map 43, Parcels 350, 381, and 392 (Lot B), and Tax Map 51, Parcel 166 (Lot 12). Recommended approval of the annexation with Integrated Business District and R-1 Low Density Residential District zoning designations.
3. Review Preliminary Site Plan for Parke Towers located off Howard Street on Tax Map 205, Parcels 977, 979, and 980. Recommended approval of the site plan.
4. Review revision of amended Subdivision Plat for Brentwood Square located off Ray Avenue on Tax Map 207, Parcel 2731. Recommended approval of the subdivision plat.
5. Review revised Preliminary Site Plan for parking lot expansion at 913 Old Philadelphia Road located off Old Philadelphia Road on Tax Map 58, Parcel 241 (Lot 1). Recommended approval of the site plan.
6. Review Preliminary Site Plan for the Preserve at Gilbert Meadows located off Gilbert Road on Tax Map 51, Parcels 250 and 99. 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. Ordinance No. 20-O-11 was recently adopted by the City Council creating changes to the APFO requirements.

## **OTHER PLANNING STAFF WORK EFFORTS**

The City was awarded a MDOT/SHA 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 has acquired the necessary rights-of-way for the sidewalk construction on East Bel Air Avenue and has developed an Invitation for Bid to accompany the approved engineering and design plans. Construction of the planned improvements is anticipated for 2021/22.

The City Council acquired 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 Harford County Council approved \$9.0M in their FY2021 budget for the design and construction of the proposed activity center. The City staff is working with Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation to develop design plans for the activity center and remaining lands.

## **DEVELOPMENT PATTERN CHANGES IN 2020**

The Planning Commission reviewed a Petition for Annexation for the Locksley Manor, Inc. property located off Gilbert Road containing 206± acres. The proposed annexation area is in the City's Future Growth Planning Area 10 Gilbert as noted in the approved 2011 Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission's favorable recommendation of the annexation with Integrated Business District and R-1 Low Density Residential District zoning was forwarded to the City Council and the annexation was effective in August 2021.

The City issued the following building permits for new construction in calendar year 2020:

### **NEW BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED - 2020**

<b>Type of Construction</b>	<b>Number Issued</b>	<b>Total Estimated Construction Costs</b>
Residential – Single Family Dwellings	86	\$35,961,542
Residential – Multi-family buildings	3	\$38,100,000
Commercial	5	\$16,346,000
Industrial – additions/alterations	8	\$26,746,060

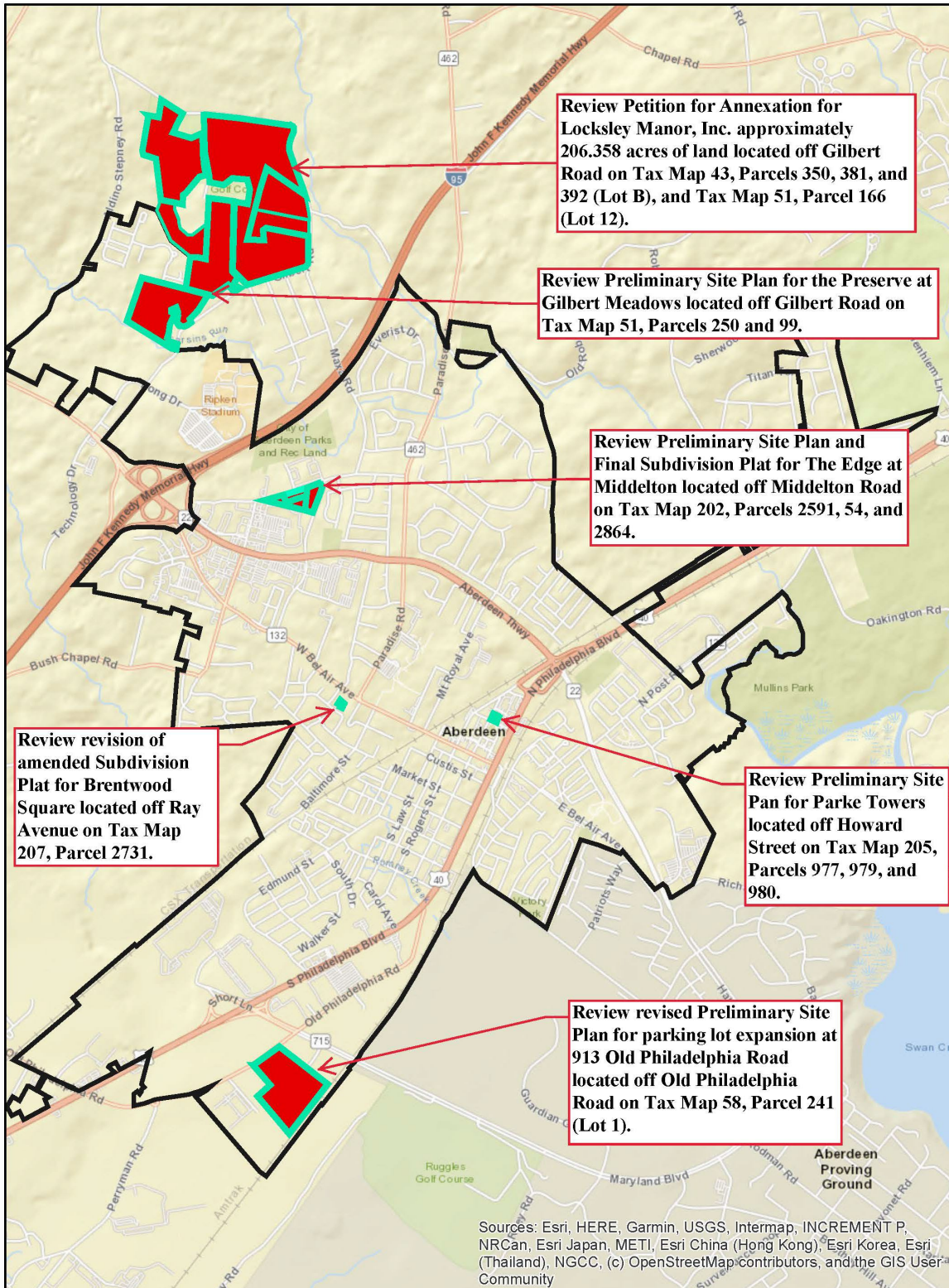
All building permits were issued within the corporate limits of Aberdeen, which is a designated Priority Funding Area.

## **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 2020. For further details, please refer to Page 6 under the Planning Commission's Development Reviews.



## 2020 Development Activities Map



Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
MARK SCHLOTTMAN  
Chairman, Aberdeen Planning Commission