



CITY OF ABERDEEN
PLANNING COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Aberdeen Medical Pavilion, 34 N. Philadelphia Boulevard

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, 2021, through December 31, 2021, and adopted by the Aberdeen Planning Commission.

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PLANNING ASSISTANT

Sydney Trionfo

**ABERDEEN PLANNING COMMISSION
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2021**

INTRODUCTION

The Code of the City of Aberdeen, Chapter 235 Development Code §10 establishes the rules of procedure and responsibilities for the Planning Commission. The 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 to the Zoning Map and text amendments to the Development Code and Subdivision Regulations; recommending rezonings and annexations; 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 2021 calendar year. This year's Annual Report includes introductions with the City's consultants, Wallace and Montgomery who are tasked with updating the 2022 Comprehensive Plan, text amendments to the Development Code, building permit activity, annexation reviews, and approved site plans and subdivision plats. These initiatives worked towards implementing the State's vision for sustainable communities that protect the natural environment, direct growth, maintain and improve public infrastructure, and include community involvement. Overall, the City did not have any restrictions on development in the designated Priority Funding Area during the 2021 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 Route 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 is responsible for public 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 three 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 Gillis 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 the following Ordinances amending the Development Code and provided recommendations to the City Council:

1. Ordinance No. 21-O-02 Chapter 235 - 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.
2. Ordinance No. 21-O-08 Chapter 302 Growth Management for the purpose of establishing an Adequate Public Facilities Agreement for proposed improvements to support development activities.
3. Ordinance No. 21-O-09 Chapter 235 – Development Code Revisions for the purpose of modifying the definitions, height requirements, and changes to the Table of Use Regulations to permit stacked townhouse dwelling types in certain zoning districts.
4. Ordinance No. 21-O-15 Chapter 235 – Moratorium on processing Building Permits and Special Exception applications for approvals for specific medical services and uses in the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) District.

Planning Initiatives

The City Council approved a consulting contract with Wallace Montgomery to prepare the 2022 Comprehensive Plan. The City of Aberdeen's Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2011. The Plan is primarily focused on land use planning, municipal growth, transportation, housing, community facilities, sensitive areas, solid waste, and public facilities/water resources. The Scope of Services for Wallace Montgomery include:

- 1) Updating the 2011 Comprehensive Plan to reflect changes in the City's corporate boundaries, economic conditions, growth opportunities, redevelopment, housing, employment, and demographics.
- 2) Incorporating the recommendations of various planning studies completed since original adoption of the existing Plan.
- 3) Preparing three small area plans for Planning Area 9: Aldino Stepney; Planning Area 10: Gilbert; and Planning Area 13: Bush Chapel to address growth, transportation, and public facility issues.
- 4) Engaging the public to develop a vision for the City's future that is sustainable.

- 5) Identifying trends that should be considered in planning for the future.
- 6) Facilitating a comprehensive process to update the City's Comprehensive Plan to provide a blueprint for the next 10 years.

The 2022 Comprehensive Plan work efforts have started with three public visioning workshops, community surveys, and homework assignments for the City Council, Planning Commission and other volunteer boards. The Plan will be completed in the fall 2022.

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 2021 Development Activity)

1. Review revised preliminary site plan for Fieldside Commons located off Long Drive on Tax Map 51, Parcel 108, Lots 1-3 and Parcel 4; proposed conversion of a Class A Office Building to Self-Storage Facility and 533 apartment units. Recommended approval of the site plan.
2. Provide input for the Community Informational Meeting regarding the Petition for Annexation for FRP Old Philadelphia Road, LLC located off Old Philadelphia Road and Cranberry Run Drive.
3. Review Petition for Annexation for FRP Old Philadelphia Road, LLC approximately 22.046 acres of land located off Old Philadelphia Road and Cranberry Run Drive on Tax Map 58, Parcels 252 and 265. Recommended approval of the annexation with M-1 Light Industrial District zoning designation.
4. Review revised final subdivision plat for Land of Hartzell, 312 N. Philadelphia Boulevard located off Philadelphia Boulevard (US Route 40) on Tax Map 203, Parcels 2241 and 2242. Recommended approval of the subdivision plan.
5. Review preliminary site plan for Aberdeen Overlook located off Long Drive and 825 Aldino Stepney Road on Tax Map 51, Parcels 96, 951, and 946; proposed 122 single family dwellings, 83 villa style townhomes, and 159 townhomes for a total of 344 residential dwellings. Recommended approval of the preliminary site plan.
6. Review preliminary site plan for The Fields of Aberdeen located off Gilbert Road on Tax Map 51, Parcel 948, Lot 1; proposed 94 stacked townhome style units. Recommended approval of the preliminary site plan.
7. Review preliminary site plan and final subdivision plat for Rutter's Store No. 103 and M&G Realty, Inc. located off US Route 40 and Old Philadelphia Road on Tax Map 58, Parcels 130, 561, and 562; proposed convenience store with fueling stations for vehicles and tractor trailers. Recommended approval of the preliminary site plan and final subdivision plat.

8. Review preliminary site plan for 500 Hickory Drive for a parking lot expansion for Frito Lay, Inc. located off Hickory Drive and US Route 40 on Tax Map 58, Parcel 264, Lot 1. Recommended approval of the preliminary site plan.
9. Review final subdivision plats one – sixteen for The Preserve at Gilbert Meadows located off Gilbert Road on Tax Map 51, Parcels 250 and 99; proposed 83 single family dwellings and 93 villa style townhomes. Recommended approval of the final subdivision plats one – sixteen.
10. Review preliminary site plan for Railbird Alley Water Booster Pump Station located off Beards Hill Road extended on Tax Map 203, Parcel 1028. Recommended approval of the preliminary site plan.
11. Review Petition for Annexation for 2106 Titan Terrace approximately .723 acres of land located off Titan Terrace and Telestar Way on Tax Map 52, Parcel 336. Recommended approval of the annexation with R-1 Low Density Residential District zoning designation.

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. 21-O-08 was recently adopted by the City Council creating changes to the APFO establishing an Adequate Public Facilities Agreement for proposed improvements between the owner/developer and the City of Aberdeen.

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 architectural and engineering design work was completed by EXP US Services and the Invitation for Bid for the project was awarded to DSM Contracting for the planned connectivity improvements. Construction of the planned improvements is anticipated for the fall 2022.

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 architectural and engineering design for the proposed activity center. The City staff is working with Harford County Department of Parks and Recreation and their architects and engineers from JMT Architecture and Site Resources on the design and site layout. Construction of the activity center is anticipated for 2024.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERN CHANGES IN 2021

The Planning Commission reviewed two Petitions for Annexation: 1) FRP Old Philadelphia Road LLC located off Old Philadelphia Road and Cranberry Run Drive on Tax Map 58, Parcels 252 and 265 containing 22.046 acres. The area proposed for annexation is in the City's future growth area known as Planning Area 15 – Old Philadelphia. The proposed uses of the property are for warehouse distribution and logistics. The Planning Commission made a favorable recommendation to annex the parcels M-1 Light Industrial District; and 2) Richard Baker property known as 2106 Titan Terrace located off Titan Terrace and Telestar Way on Tax Map 52, Parcel 336. The area proposed for annexation is in the City's future growth area known as Planning Area 6 – Titan Terrace. The proposed use of the property is for residential purposes. The Planning Commission made a favorable recommendation to annex the parcel R-1 Low Density Residential District.

The City issued the following building permits for new construction in calendar year 2021:

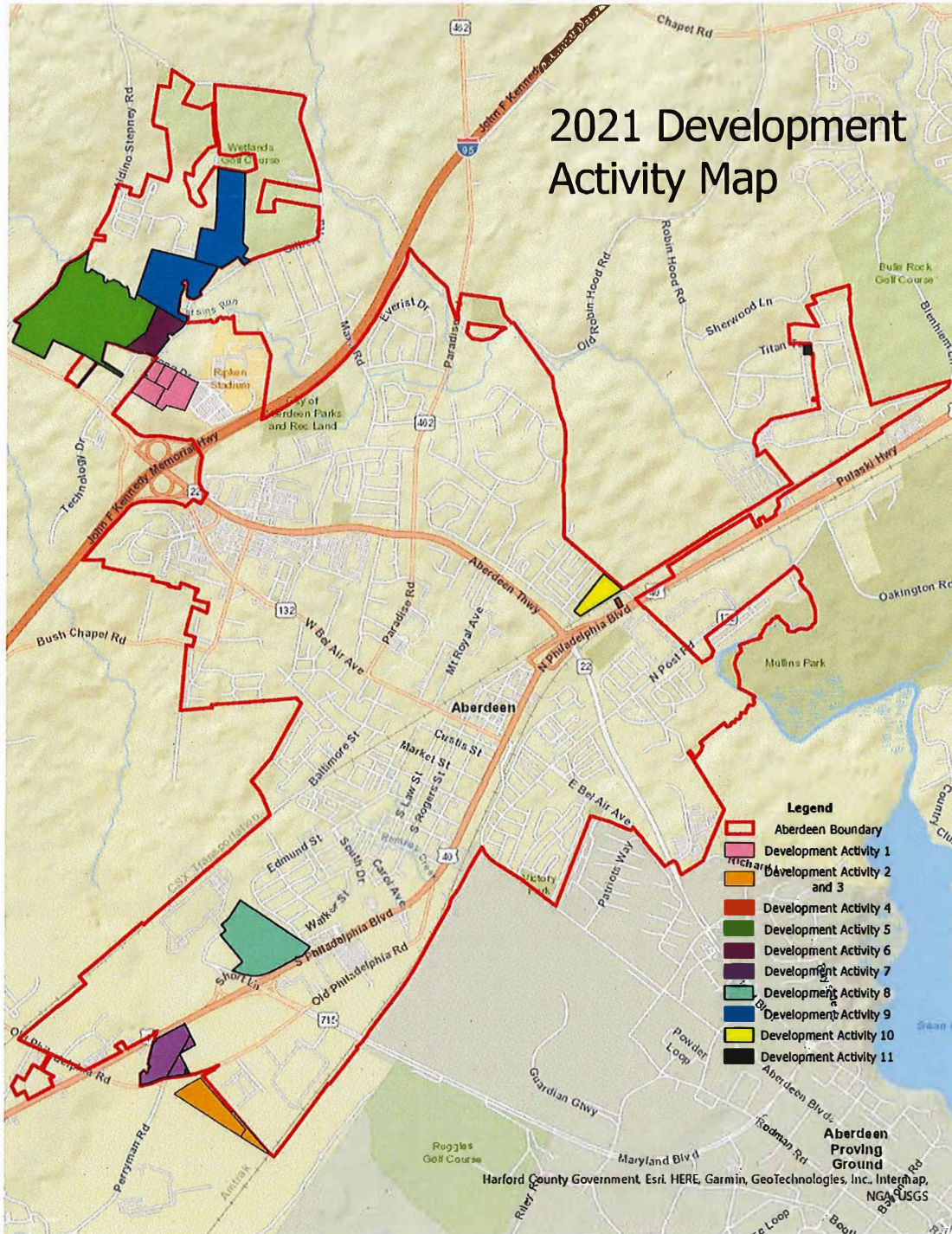
NEW BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED - 2021


Type of Construction	Number Issued	Total Estimated Construction Costs
Residential – Single Family Dwellings	15	\$6,179,503.00
Commercial	2	\$375,000.00
Commercial – Alterations	45	\$41,899,799.00
Industrial	1	\$150,000.00

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 2021. For further details, please refer to Pages 6-7 under the Planning Commission's Development Reviews.



Approved: 
MARK SCHLOTTMAN
Chairman, Aberdeen Planning Commission