



C Appendix - Public Involvement

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In 2022, the City of Aberdeen updated its comprehensive plan, Plan Aberdeen, which is the long-range policy guide for the City's physical, social, and economic development. Each of the Plan's updated chapters provides an inventory of the topic and related data and identifies a vision, goals, key issues, and strategies for the future.

Public participation was an essential component of Plan Aberdeen. The City reached out to residents and stakeholders in a variety of ways to gather public input on local preferences, concerns, and priorities for the future. This appendix summarizes the results of those efforts.

PUBLIC OUTREACH APPROACHES

The City gathered input and using the following methods (summaries of which are attached in this Appendix):

1. Community Survey
2. Commission and Council Homework
3. Public Workshops
4. Stakeholder Interviews
 - a. Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning
 - b. Harford County Department of Community and Economic Development
 - c. Harford County Public Library – Aberdeen Branch
 - d. Maryland Department of Planning
 - e. City of Aberdeen Police Department
 - f. Aberdeen Volunteer Fire Department

CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

The City of Aberdeen conducted a community survey to collect thoughts and insight from its residents and community stakeholders. They received 105 responses in total. Below is a summary of the information gathered from those responses.

RESPONDENT SNAPSHOT

- 71.43% live in Aberdeen
- 91.89% of those who live in Aberdeen, also own their own home
- 73.33% of respondents are between the ages of 25-64

WHY DO RESIDENTS CHOOSE TO COME/LIVE HERE?

- 42.67% chose to live in Aberdeen to be close to family and friends
- 32% chose to live in Aberdeen because of housing affordability

WHAT WE HEARD:

WHAT RESIDENTS WISH THEY HAD:

- Revitalized Downtown
- Community Center
- More sit-down restaurants

WHAT RESIDENTS DON'T WANT:

- Adult stores/strip club
- Fast food restaurants
- Rehabilitation facility/Adult counseling

WHAT WOULD IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN ABERDEEN:

- Reduce crime
- More community activities
- Revitalize the Downtown area
- Increase green space/parks throughout the City

ABERDEEN'S GREATEST STRENGTHS:

- Community
- Ripken Stadium
- Diversity
- Affiliation with Aberdeen Proving Ground

ABERDEEN'S MOST CRITICAL ISSUES:

- Crime
- Code enforcement
- Downtown area/sustaining businesses
- Affordable housing

RESIDENTS TOP CONCERN:

- Crime and safety

CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

HOMEWORK #1: SUMMARY COMMENT COMPILATION

In November/December 2021, we distributed the enclosed questions to select City boards/commissions and staff and asked for responses to be completed individually. We received comments from 2 City Council members, 7 Planning Commission members, 3 Economic Development Commission members, and 5 City Staff members. We compiled all results into verbatim and summary documents. These comments will be used to develop the Comprehensive Plan Update and to help determine key issues and priorities for the City to consider over the next 10-year planning period.

QUESTION 1

THE CITY'S CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WAS ADOPTED IN 2011. HOW HAS ABERDEEN CHANGED SINCE THAT TIME?

- BRAC impacts
- Downtown decline
- Increase in civilian jobs
- Increase in commercial development/Class A office conversion/fast-food/ warehouses
- Increase in high-end rental units
- Increase in residential development/HOA communities
- Improved multimodal transportation
- Main Street designation
- Population growth/change
- Upper Chesapeake Medical Center

QUESTION 2

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP PRIORITIES OR AREAS OF CONCERN THAT YOU HOPE TO SEE ADDRESSED IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE?

- Code enforcement (residential and commercial)
- Downtown revitalization
- Economic development
- Implementation progress
- Parks and recreation/open space
- Pedestrian connectivity
- Public facilities (water/sewer/roads)
- Quality of life/community design
- Sustainability/environmental protection
- Transit-oriented development
- Transportation/capacity/traffic
- Updated Planning Areas (number/boundaries)

QUESTION 3

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

- Defined goals/multiple objectives
- Planning Area maps, descriptions & recommendations
- Topic breadth and depth
- Zoning District map/discussion

WHAT DO YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT THE CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

- Implementation follow-through
- Lacks discussion of economic development and undeveloped land opportunities
- Lacks Executive Summary
- Land use accountability
- Needs assessment of public services and

- infrastructure needs
- Needs to address 12 Visions
- Not enough forward planning for growth
- Not visually appealing/needs more graphics

QUESTION 4

IS THERE ANYTHING IN THE CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN THAT IS A “MUST KEEP?”

- Architectural and street design
- Descriptions of existing zoning districts
- Planning Area maps/recommendations
- Quality of life/recreation & open space
- Table of approved development projects
- Updated Community Facilities Element
- Updated Introduction
- Updated Municipal Growth Element
- Updated Land Use Element
- Updated Transportation Element

QUESTION 5

WHAT AREAS DOES THE CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN NOT ADDRESS THAT IT SHOULD?

- Code enforcement (residential/commercial)
- Detailed plan for infrastructure improvements
- Economic development/revitalization
- Emergency services considerations for roads
- More detail/recommendations for housing
- More detail/recommendations for sensitive areas/environment
- Role within Harford County

QUESTION 6

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD THE PLANNING TEAM SEEK INPUT FROM?

- Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce
- Aberdeen Historical Museum
- Aberdeen Lions Club
- Aberdeen Police Department
- Aberdeen Rotary
- Aberdeen Volunteer Fire Department
- APG/DOD
- Boys and Girls Club of Aberdeen
- Golden Age Club of Aberdeen
- Harford County Association of Realtors
- Harford County Chamber of Commerce
- Harford County Government
- Harford County Public Schools
- Harford County Sheriff’s Office
- Historical Society of Harford County
- Local businesses/churches/citizens/developers/engineers
- MDE
- MDTA, FHWA, CSX, AMTRAK

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS: INTERNAL ELEMENTS THAT GIVE THE CITY AN EDGE OR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE. THESE CAN BE UNIQUE ASSETS, SKILLS, OR RESOURCES THAT ABERDEEN CAN USE TO ITS BENEFIT.

- Aberdeen Proving Ground
- Ability to expand
- Affordable shopping
- Amtrak/MARC line
- Business friendly
- City staff/officials
- Diversity
- Havre de Grace partnership for water
- Healthcare hub (Upper Chesapeake)
- Infrastructure investment

- Low cost of living
- Low traffic
- Own wastewater treatment plant
- Ripken Stadium/sports tourism
- Schools
- Strategic location
- TOD/multimodal hub
- Volunteers (organizations/individuals)

WEAKNESSES: INTERNAL ELEMENTS THAT HINDER THE CITY'S ABILITY TO REACH OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE AND PREVENTS ABERDEEN FROM REACHING ITS GOALS. THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THESE.

- Appearance/aesthetics
- City interactions with communities/citizens
- Code enforcement/property maintenance
- Concentration of low-income areas
- Department of Public Works
- Downtown activity/variety/streetscape
- Extent of supportive services/programs
- Extent of warehouse facilities
- Few ties/events to Aberdeen Proving Ground
- Future vision
- Lack of long-term infrastructure plan
- Lack of parks/recreation program/facilities
- Lack of youth activities
- MDOT/FHWA/CSX/Amtrak
- Mix of restaurants/retailers
- Needed revitalization
- Perception of safety
- Perception of schools
- Relationship with Harford County
- Road conditions

OPPORTUNITIES: EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND POTENTIAL SITUATIONS THAT CAN BE USED OR EXPLOITED TO BENEFIT ABERDEEN. THEY ARE BEYOND THE CITY'S CONTROL, BUT ABERDEEN CAN MAKE THE MOST OF THEM.

- Aberdeen Proving Ground
- Affordable housing
- Amtrak/MARC
- Available downtown property
- Federal infrastructure investment
- Hospital complex
- Land
- Proactive adaptation to lifestyle changes
- Recreation Center
- Ripken Stadium
- Stagnant growth of nearby cities
- Strategic location

THREATS: EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT POSE A THREAT TO ABERDEEN'S CURRENT OR FUTURE ABILITY TO ACHIEVE WHAT IT WANTS TO. THE CITY SHOULD MITIGATE OR AVOID THESE POTENTIALLY DAMAGING EFFECTS.

- Aesthetics/appearance
- Business closures
- Closure of Aberdeen Proving Ground
- Concentration of low-income areas
- COVID-19 pandemic
- Crime
- Extent of warehouse distribution facilities
- Harford County coordination efforts
- Housing mix
- Lack of vision
- Limited IBD development
- Overdevelopment
- Perception of safety
- Retailer locating
- School ratings
- State legislation guided by Baltimore politics
- Teleworking impacts
- Traffic issues
- Trash collection
- Water cost

CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

VISIONING WORKSHOP #1: GROUP EXERCISE COMMENT COMPILATION

The City held its first Visioning Workshop on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 from 4:30-6:00pm at Mt. Zion Baptist Church (200 Post Road, Aberdeen). Following is a compilation of the workshop’s discussions and comments. A summary of all Visioning Workshops—including Boards—is provided separately.

ATTENDEES

PARTICIPANTS

Beth Boyson
 Roberta Clay
 Amy DiPietro
 Norm Fegel
 Bob Hartman
 Quentin Johnson
 Don Kern
 Shirley Kern
 Denita McDaniels
 Mack McDaniels
 Chris Petsko
 Joe Snee
 Malcolm Whyte
 James Williams

ABERDEEN PLANNING COMMISSION

Mark Schlottman, Chair
 Dominique Gillis, Vice Chair

ABERDEEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Holly Bennett
 Sheryl Kohl
 Chuck Jacobs

ABERDEEN STAFF

Phyllis Grover, Director—
 Planning & Community
 Development
 Rolla Chng, City Engineer
 Stefani Specter, Senior Planner
 Sydnie Trionfo, Planning
 Assistant

**WALLACE MONTGOMERY—
 CONSULTANT/FACILITATOR**

Lauren Good, Project Manager
 Ray Moravec
 Nicky Davis

EXERCISE #1

NEEDS: WE NEED TO ADDRESS THIS CRITICAL ISSUE

- Adequate roads
- Need a City Planner to guide City Council on all things growth
- Get rid of the walking bridge to East Bel Air Avenue
- Upgrade Amtrak train station
- Affordable rental properties
 - Maintenance can be an issue
 - Affordable single occupant dwellings
- More public transportation so people can get to work at all hours/days
- Cleaning of streets/curbs, especially on Rt. 40 Frontage Road (at night?)
- Code violations
- Rental property issues with County law enforcement
- Climate design – flooding/drainage
- Neglected/abandoned properties
- Water tower – West Side
- Comprehensive Transportation Plan (public transit, roads, bike, sidewalk connections, ADA)
- Public and road transportation (transit, bike lanes, pedestrian)
- Convenient parking downtown and well-marked (wayfinding sign for public parking)
- Revolving loan fund to demolish properties in the downtown (Strategic Demolition fund)

- Expansion/extension of Main Street properties w/DHCD (*State Department of Housing & Community Development*)

- Removal of derelict properties – State Strategic Fund to remove
- Extension of Main Street designation

WANTS: IF WE HAD THE CHOICE, WE WOULD CHOOSE TO HAVE...

- Better/more restaurants and shops
 - Sit down restaurant/pub
- Broad range of housing options
 - More housing to support APG and hospital employees
- More parking downtown Main Street to support businesses
- Brewery
- Department store – Kohls
- Michael's
- Professional offices – legal, real estate, medical
- New US Post Office and personnel
- Trader Joes
- Whole Foods
- Red Lobster
- Big box stores
- Post office with adequate access (handicap) and parking
- Safe streets
 - Speed limits
 - Revisit plans/criteria

- Walking trails – incorporate playground, better utilization of Festival Park; indoor walking path
- Train station renovation
- Rehab/parole probation locations – no more in downtown
- 22/40 better coordination with Federal Highway/SHA for streetscape (visual appeal)
- Better/proactive code enforcement
- Commercial recycling initiatives/incentives
- Good mix of housing moving in a good direction
- Revisit zoning by new/incoming hospital
- Park at community center (waiting)
- Charging stations for electric vehicles
- Preserving open space/nature (natural habitats)
- Craft store
- District courthouse
- Walking paths – active transportation
- Better utilization of parks
- Baseball, pickleball, etc. – outside recreation

DESIRES: WOULDN'T IT BE NICE IF..., BUT IT'S OK IF WE DON'T GET IT

- Community Center

BARRIERS: IMMOVABLE OBJECTS OR OBSTRUCTIONS THAT WE MUST GO AROUND—WE CAN'T SIMPLY ELIMINATE THEM

- Pedestrian overpass
- Day shelter
- Truck traffic
- Bel Air Avenue improvement
- Vagrancy/homeless people congregating in downtown (need a day shelter)
- State rules
- Harford County—need improved relationship

- Borders are “unmoveable” (ex. State Highway, federal institutions, etc. block movement)
- Pedestrian walkway/overpass removal
- Warehousing and truck traffic
- Clear understanding for businesses/owners
- Route 40 – no identity
- Annexation procedures

OBSTACLES: THINGS GET IN THE WAY OF WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH, BUT CAN BE CHANGED

- Promoting the vision
- Annexation procedures – too time consuming
- Rt. 40/MD 22 – transportation issues

- Vacant buildings; commercial and residential
- Pitiful school system in Aberdeen
- Developers

- Landlords in downtown content with current conditions; will not promote Vision of Main Street
- I-95
- Lacking code enforcement

ANNOYANCES: THINGS WE JUST DON'T LIKE; TEND TO BE NUISANCES AND PERSONAL; DO NOT PREVENT YOU FROM ACHIEVING GOALS

- Need increased police presence downtown to address traffic violations: U-turns in the middle of the street, parking on City streets all day and are marked 2-hour parking
- Keep tractor trailers out of downtown
- Perception of Aberdeen not being safe; Rt. 40 Corridor is bad

EXERCISE #2

2011 Comprehensive Plan Vision: Aberdeen will concentrate development in a manner that ensures a safe, attractive, and economically viable land use pattern that sustains a balance between the City's current footprint and the inevitable growth that will occur.

I LIKE...

- Family focus
- More professionals moving here and not just working here
- Live/work/play
- Easy access
- Walkable community
- Small town feel - 2
- Feedback from Mayor and Council
- Accommodating to change
- Pivot depending on circumstances affecting Aberdeen – Upper Chesapeake Hospital
- Work/life balances
- Aberdeen is the "Center of Activities" in Harford County
- I-95 interchange
- Train Station
- Post office
- Inevitable growth
- Sense of community
- Local elected official response
- Interconnected with focal points to area
- Center of many areas
- Relationship to planning areas

I DON'T LIKE...

- Eliminate BRAC statement
- Need more community events (speakers at park, draw families in)
- Not enough parking downtown
- Not enough connection between sections of the City
- Revitalize properties, not build new
- Focused too much on development activities
- Ignoring underutilized "old" development
- Inevitable growth sounds negative
- Walking bridge by Amtrak - eyesore

IT'S MISSING...

- Vibrancy – need to make it feel like a City
- Current vision statement is boring
- Revamp "old town"
- Main Street feel
- Feel good about walking around/spending time in Aberdeen
- Fun places to hang out/eat
- Interconnectedness between developments,
- parks, businesses; cohesive feel
- Sense of place
- Human element; need more people that live here – connections
- Affordable housing opportunities
- Environmental impact
- Environmentally friendly designs and recognizing the environmental importance of

- our location
- Inclusivity of all generations
- Senior housing options/elderly care
- 55+ age targeted
- Lacks a sense of “downtown feel”
 - Nothing to walk to
 - Think of Havre de Grace
- Develop infill
- Lacking parking downtown
- Make Aberdeen a place of access
- More professional housing (work and live in Aberdeen)
- Additional housing – single-family homes
- Needs to address sustainable growth
- Infrastructure (water, police, etc.)
- Sidewalks
- Downtown business district
- SHA/County/City coordination
- Sense of community
- Safety

WHAT WILL ABERDEEN BE KNOWN FOR IN THE FUTURE?

- Place of access
- Creativity to draw people in
- Housing for young professionals
- Safe
- Diverse Community
- Youth Baseball
- Convenience
- Small town feel
- High tech jobs
- Military presence
- Science and Math Academy
- Amtrac and MARC train station
- BVO train Depot
- Historic houses
- Community Events
- Community Communication Weekly Newsletter
- Hopefully a City that Cares
- Good Quality of Life
- Stay incorporated as a City Government to control what we can
- Work/improve our image as a City
- Recreation
- History
- Community coordination

CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

VISIONING WORKSHOP #2: GROUP EXERCISE COMMENT COMPILATION

The City held its second Visioning Workshop on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 from 7:00-8:30pm at Mt. Zion Baptist Church (200 Post Road, Aberdeen). Following is a compilation of the workshop’s discussions and comments. A summary of all Visioning Workshops—including Boards—is provided separately.

ATTENDEES

PARTICIPANTS

Christy Rumbaugh

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Adam Hiob

ABERDEEN PLANNING COMMISSION

Terri Preston

DeAunte Printup

ABERDEEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Steve Horne, Chair

Mark Shaver

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Vickie Horne, Main Street
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Sydney Trionfo, Planning
Assistant

WALLACE MONTGOMERY—CONSULTANT/FACILITATOR

Lauren Good, Project Manager

Ray Moravec

Nicky Davis

EXERCISE #1

NEEDS: WE NEED TO ADDRESS THIS CRITICAL ISSUE

- Family oriented activities/entertainment options (including indoor)
- Restaurants (non-fast food) – 3
- Sit-down restaurants
- Public/Private attractions
- Quality of life features
 - Walking trails
 - Community Center/Youth programming
- Vibrant downtown after hours with transportation (bus routes)
- MARC/Amtrak Station Revision and connection to communities on both sides of track
- Transportation for seniors
- Connect downtown and neighborhoods to hospitals
- Diverse housing options
- Community events
- Retail shops (Kohls)
- Parks and Rec – Aberdeen lacking a department
- Better quality of life for citizens
- Mix retail in downtown area
- Restrict types of business in downtown area
- Deli/Sandwich shop open 6 days/week
- Area for eatery/food service at Medical

- Center to encourage both patients and staff to eat/spend time/walk
- Library improvements (or new) – encourage events/speakers
- Overall connectivity
- Downtown area needs more to attract you to actually go downtown
- Brewery
- Retail clothing stores

- Make Festival Park more user-friendly – bathrooms not accessible unless there’s an event
- Bakery
- Specialty shop
- Craft night/paint night
- New library
- More evening/weekend activities
- Parks & Recreation

WANTS: IF WE HAD THE CHOICE, WE WOULD CHOOSE TO HAVE...

- More retail options
- Pocket parks throughout the City
- Entertainment & events for families of all ages – utilize public space
- Mixed use of recent annexed land commercial (walking distance) from the planned residential projects
- Skilled nursing and residential treatment facility
- Affordable senior living with wellness focus

- Parks and amenities – 2
 - Bathroom availability
 - Family planning/events
- Brewery
- Sit down restaurant
- More active downtown – bakery, specialty shops, creative spots (paint night, etc.)
- Focus on homeownership (east side)
- Housing that is affordable

DESIRES: WOULDN'T IT BE NICE IF..., BUT IT'S OK IF WE DON'T GET IT

- Brewery in the TOD
- Bakery and other specialty shops
- Community gardens
- Family focused options (similar to Havre de Grace and Bel Air)
- Single floor living
- Sustainability/green team

- Remove barrier on Rt. 40 (walking overpass) to make better connectivity between East side of Town
- Private development focused on revitalizing blighted property
- Better communication from City on what is happening

BARRIERS: IMMOVABLE OBJECTS OR OBSTRUCTIONS THAT WE MUST GO AROUND—WE CAN'T SIMPLY ELIMINATE THEM

- Railroad bridge
- Redevelopment of worn-down homes/properties - 2
- Breaking through old impressions of Aberdeen that we aren't an area worth investing in or that the community isn't considered safe
- Not having a property maintenance ordinance - 2
- Crime and safety
- Reason to go downtown on evenings and weekends
- Not a large enough population radius for

- retail shops to build/desire to come here
- Attracting developers for redevelopment
- Low income/subsidized housing issue with Historic East Side
- "It's all Aberdeen" – erase notion that it's East or West
- Properties in squalor drive away potential residents
- Lack of organized Parks & Rec
- Ignored neighborhoods – "slumlords" and absentee landlords
- Concrete pedestrian overpass/train tracks
- Lack of communication on active/in-progress

- projects
- Lack of community engagement

- Lack of community investment in character/community events

OBSTACLES: THINGS GET IN THE WAY OF WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH, BUT CAN BE CHANGED

- Absentee landlords
- Communication
- Relationships with Government partners (County/State) needs improving and finding mutual benefit from growth and investment
- Getting ahead of the water/sewer needs in order to supply the growth expected West of I-95
- Need a more civic/volunteer focused

- community
- Solve for the aesthetics related to the rail (Amtrak)
- Better participation of Aberdeen citizens and employees of the City
- Many activities geared towards mid-day; need activities for evening/weekend
- Lack of organized Parks and Rec department
- East side of City “ignored” – need to reinvest

ANNOYANCES: THINGS WE JUST DON'T LIKE; TEND TO BE NUISANCES AND PERSONAL; DO NOT PREVENT YOU FROM ACHIEVING GOALS

- Lack of code enforcement
- Traffic issue in certain areas of Aberdeen – mostly includes warehouse traffic

- Progress is slow and finding compromise in government to plan out more than one project at a time makes it difficult to execute a comprehensive plan, but it is still doable.

EXERCISE #2

2011 Comprehensive Plan Vision: Aberdeen will concentrate development in a manner that ensures a safe, attractive, and economically viable land use pattern that sustains a balance between the City's current footprint and the inevitable growth that will occur.

I LIKE...

- Have a safe City (proven by stats)
- Economically viable, great location

- Safe

I DON'T LIKE...

- Don't need dependency on BRAC; City is more than APG/BRAC

- Not really attractive (aesthetically)

IT'S MISSING...

- Get people to live/stay and not just drive through
- Climate control/sustainability
- Quality of life
- History (has been and will continue to be)

- Vibrancy
- Sense of community
- Recreation
- Attractive

WHAT WILL ABERDEEN BE KNOWN FOR IN THE FUTURE?

- A great place to live
- Focus on what we have instead of what we don't
- Build around experiences (APG, Ripken, University Health System)
- Vibrant Main Street with Culture and History

- Active Community (Civic Mindset)
- More active transportation/less reliability on cars
- “Work, play and stay”
- Tie together public health/resiliency
- Friendly

- Welcoming
- Community
- Medical expertise
- Employment opportunities
- Build off of what we already have
- Sustainability

CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

VISIONING WORKSHOP #3: GROUP EXERCISE COMMENT COMPILATION

The City held its third and last Visioning Workshop on Saturday, February 12, 2022 from 9:00-10:30am at the Aberdeen Boys & Girls Club (100 E Bel Air Ave, Aberdeen). Following is a compilation of the workshop’s discussions and comments. A summary of all Visioning Workshops—including Boards—is provided separately.

ATTENDEES

PARTICIPANTS

Bethany Ables
 Jessica Boyle Tsottles
 Tom Burns, Jr.
 Peter Dacey
 Sarah Davis
 Julius Dow
 Paul Fallace
 Julian Gordon
 Lillian Ishibashi
 Natalie Johnson
 Leigh Maddox
 Indy McGrady
 Susan Osborn
 Jackie Smith
 Linda Snier
 Tom Snier

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND

Nathan Osborne, Directorate of Public Works Master Planning Division

HARFORD COUNTY

Kim Gutierrez, Harford County Public Schools
 Len Parrish, Community & Economic Development Director

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Patrick McGrady, Mayor

ABERDEEN PLANNING COMMISSION

Susan Brown

ABERDEEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Steve Horne, Chair
 Sheryl Kohl

ABERDEEN STAFF

Phyllis Grover, Director—Planning & Community Development
 Vickie Horne, Main Street Coordinator
 Stefani Specter, Senior Planner
 Sydnie Trionfo, Planning Assistant

WALLACE MONTGOMERY—CONSULTANT/FACILITATOR

Lauren Good, Project Manager
 Ray Moravec
 Angela Fleck

EXERCISE #1

NEEDS: WE NEED TO ADDRESS THIS CRITICAL ISSUE

- Native plant care
 - Vision of care
 - Historic protection
 - Small business > chain
 - Covered bus stops
 - Traffic remediation plan for Old Philadelphia
- Road between Route 715 – traffic circle.
 Tractor trailer backups 4-5 deep both directions on two-lane rural road with no turning lane.

- Could be caused by business not accepting trucks vs turning movement issue
- Branding (what do you stand for)
- Improve Rt. 40
- Homeless (I see less now than in the past so I do not know if Aberdeen is addressing homelessness)
 - What services are there to address needs of homeless in the community?
- As someone stated, plants in public areas should be sustainable. Should also be native plants to sustain wildlife and helpful in collecting stormwater so that stormwater is directed away from drains. This helps keep our Bay clean.
- Traffic volume
- Affordable housing
- Home ownership
- Hold landlords accountable for their rental property
- Hold landlords accountable for renters not keeping up property
- Signage for tractor trailers going to APG. Often come into Swan Lake residential area and have to back out.
- Better bus routes
- Pedestrian, scooter & bike crossings with attention to road and street design
- Development patterns that allow complete communities
- Government buildings/recreation areas currently replacing plants with same thing every year. Would be cheaper to plant native, come back every year vs planting every year and maintaining. Want less cost/maintenance
- Bus stops not as available – access is an issue
 - Section near Boys & Girls Club has only 2 stops – opportunities for more
- Rt. 22 corridor from 95 to APG Paradise Rd to 40 in need of repaving – potholes
- Focus on more small/independent shops and restaurants vs national chains
- Ripken Stadium is the City's only true attraction. Need to identify additional resources and economic development/marketing opportunities.
- 2 components of City – business district and residential areas
 - Lack of code enforcement in residential areas – need to maintain integrity of community
 - Need commitment from city/prioritize code enforcement throughout; proactive because they're visible
- Focus attention on bicycle/pedestrian connectivity. Currently doing but need more focus. (active transportation)
- Aberdeen Train Station Bus Terminal – problem with loitering inside/outside
 - Signs?
 - People not there for transportation needs, just hanging out
 - Citizens should be safe/comfortable when trying to use – currently a detraction
- S Philadelphia Blvd has people driving the wrong way – need 1-way signage
- With new road improvements, need wayfinding to major areas (downtown, Stadium, 95, etc.)
- Sidewalks without connectivity – need to fill gaps
 - People crossing Rt. 40 in unsafe way
- Vision of care – covers subjects such as homeless, addictive, elderly, released criminals, youth → help address problems encountered
 - Look at what we have and build on (ex. Harford Family Home will help transition people to their own homes)
 - Don't have affordable addiction services
- Have level of elderly care in some of the community but no assisted living or senior care – opportunities for aging in place

WANTS: IF WE HAD THE CHOICE, WE WOULD CHOOSE TO HAVE...

- Indoor pool at new community center
- Water access to Chesapeake Bay and Bush River
- Farm brewery
- Handyman group to assist homeowners/seniors complete various tasks they can't do and at a reasonable rate
- Playgrounds (better & bigger)
- Improved wayfinding to key destinations (e.g., APG & Rt. 95)
- Aberdeen Train Station is the only public historic building in the City – the area is blighted. Friends of Aberdeen Train Station has effort underway to preserve the station and turn it into a gateway to the City, which could be a transformative attraction
- Better connectivity
- Healthy living (walking trails)
- More homeownership
- More homeowners
- More accessible bus stops
- Local businesses
- Complete communities with commerce & residential instead of blocks of houses and a "downtown" that has all commerce
- Jazz, blues, and other cultural events

DESIRES: WOULDN'T IT BE NICE IF..., BUT IT'S OK IF WE DON'T GET IT

- More local establishments for entertainment and shopping
- Scoops partner with interested parties and be open in the evenings
- Possible wine/cocktail pub
- High-density community development and investment in real property
- Even out sidewalks
- Not to look like a transient town

BARRIERS: IMMOVABLE OBJECTS OR OBSTRUCTIONS THAT WE MUST GO AROUND—WE CAN'T SIMPLY ELIMINATE THEM

- Traffic
- Pattern of adding new development without adequate infrastructure
- State & County roads controlled by other entities
- Real estate controlled by outside folks without resources or intent to invest in our community
- Maryland State Highway – administration and improvement needs
- Lack of engagement
- Traffic control
- Volunteer work (getting more active in the community)
- Pedestrian overpass
 - Working on underpass
- What about both? Overpass would provide a view; underpass wouldn't be a physical barrier

OBSTACLES: THINGS GET IN THE WAY OF WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH, BUT CAN BE CHANGED

- Volunteering
- Advertisement of meeting
- Poor representation of minorities
- Access
- Money → priorities
- Funding
- Crime
- Trash/clutter
- Branding/what are you known for
- Aesthetics
- More homeownership
- Stricter accountability of landlords to have tenants maintain property
- Volunteers – lack of \$\$\$
- Cynicism of citizens
- Train station overpass/improvements
- Economic upward mobility
- Expensive baseball stadium with long-term

- obligations
- Money
- Developing buildings without having appropriate infrastructure in place first
- Need for/knowledge of/education on “city awareness coordination” – what’s going on in the community, programs, volunteer needs, opportunities
- Sale/transfer of real property – “real estate moves glacially;” takes time to transfer “bad” properties to someone to make it better
- Local people focusing on local issues buildings a community that cares about each other so we can do great things together
 - Grassroots effort to get people involved, talk to each other, and build relationships
- Need money for development/community building
- Only so much staff/elected officials can do, especially without support of citizens

ANNOYANCES: THINGS WE JUST DON’T LIKE; TEND TO BE NUISANCES AND PERSONAL; DO NOT PREVENT YOU FROM ACHIEVING GOALS

- Pesticide/herbicide use
- Stricter accountability of landlords to have tenants maintain property
- Drug activity
- Holding landlords accountable for renters not keeping up property!
- Drug dealer @ 50 Aberdeen
- People who whine but don’t take individual action
- Local people to do local things?
- Building a community that cares
- Downtown development district → funding/resources

EXERCISE #2

2011 Comprehensive Plan Vision: Aberdeen will concentrate development in a manner that ensures a safe, attractive, and economically viable land use pattern that sustains a balance between the City’s current footprint and the inevitable growth that will occur.

I LIKE...

- Sustain balance “speaks to acknowledgement of CoA culture but also preparing for the future”
- The small town “look and feel”
- Safe, attractive, economically viable
- Splashpads, pools, outdoor activities, parks
- Reading at the libraries
- Safe
- The small-town community feel
- Accessibility of the government
- Community facilities
- Dated regarding BRAC component
- Concentrate (focus on community)
- Small-town life
- Accessibility to government
- Libraries/community facilities
- Safe, attractive, economically viable land use
- Sustains a balance between culture and preparing for the future
- Specific to development and land use – critical element

I DON’T LIKE...

- Remove BRAC language
- Inevitable growth sounds passive aggressive toward people that may want to maintain open space
- As someone said, the vision statement lacks sense of community and soul
- Rental property not maintained
- Inevitable growth is baloney

- Litter, video games, uneven sidewalks
- Lack of clothing stores
- County's perception of Aberdeen
- Doesn't have a feeling
- Community feel missing
- Language regarding BRAC
- Development – already have buildings empty/neglected. Need to fix up what we have vs building more (focus on redevelopment versus new)

- Doesn't sound like Aberdeen has soul
- Too focused on business environment/development
- Idea of existing for APG – important to know when/how growing but not main factor for City
- Future of ABD belongs to young people → education for children, raising bar for education/school system

IT'S MISSING...

- No mention of green spaces!?
- Personality (what is APG known for) – small diverse charming city, great opportunities live, work, and play
- As someone said, a "picture" of the vision
- Main Street businesses and selection
- Ferris wheels, more baseball games, indoor soccer arenas, sports
- Aberdeen is a community that cares about each other and where families can live and our young people don't have to move away when they grow up
- Rock banks, music
- Support community members
- Education
- Education for our children
- What is the culture of Aberdeen?
- Need a picture
- Multicultural hub of services/restaurants – something to make you stop

- Destinations
- Interconnection between multiple travel modes/access/circulation
- Picture of city we want to be
- Pictures of communities we want to see/like to be
- Existing statement is specific within discipline of planning/zoning/land use – not community
 - Sense of community
 - Community development encompasses neighbors
 - Government needs overall vision statement
- Current "home of opportunity" – opportunity needs to be in community development – opportunity to live in an All-American City
- Statement not comprehensive
- Statement too business oriented – needs to encompass more

WHAT WILL ABERDEEN BE KNOWN FOR IN THE FUTURE?

- As others said, cultural centers/events, financially sustainable
- Local Harford County town where residents care about each other and the town
- Clean, cool town where folks love their community and take care of each other
- Center of healthcare in northeast Maryland
- Opportunities and farmers markets, community events, play, work, live, and retire
- A wonderful place to live, grow, raise

- children
- Home of community opportunity
- Volunteers that host community activities
- May-Nov go to Bel Air specifically for farmers' market
 - Aberdeen's existing one is very small and repetitive
 - ABD/HDG partner for larger one with significant stuff
 - Want similar events with local providers
 - Need facility to accommodate

- When young people grow up, they don't have to move away for opportunities
- Regardless of economic standing, quality of life is good for anyone
- Great place to play, work, live, and retire
- Caring people
- Financially solvent
- Need arts, culture, plays, museums for adults and kids
- Open/green spaces – places to rest/rejuvenate that are cared for
- Use Ripken Stadium for outdoor cultural events
- HDG has taken the lead on sponsoring events – why can't we?
- Need community engaged and involved to make events happen – not just attend
- Important to hear from outsiders
- Envision ABD as a growth area with residential north of Ripken Stadium
- Outside of community, not a lot of residential development
- Attractions to downtown area – Main Street
- Iron Birds expansion efforts/Ripken Baseball will utilize local services – hotels, restaurants, other local businesses
- #1 employer in county is APG – don't need more office space. BRAC added 150 offices but limited employees (not as many as expected). Seeing alternate uses of existing office space
- Hospital (#2 job sector in county)
- Northgate – see transitioning to something else in future
- #3 county sector is big box. Currently 2 available spaces with current interests. Once occupied, will be completely occupied. Not really looking for more big-box.
- Want to be known for vision of care

CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW: JENNY JARKOWSKI

Stakeholder: Jenny Jarkowski, Director of Planning & Zoning
Harford County, Department of Planning & Zoning

Date: Thursday, March 24, 2022 | 2:00pm-3:00pm | Teams Virtual Meeting

WM Team: Lauren Good, Project Manager
Nicky Davis, Planner
Ray Moravec, Vice President of Planning

City Staff: Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning & Community Development
Stefani Spector, Senior Planner

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

Jenny has been the Director of Planning & Zoning for Harford County since January 2021 and previously served as the Deputy Director since January 2015. In this role, she oversees the long-range planning, zoning administration and enforcement, mapping, development review, and agricultural preservation services offered by Harford County.

Email: jbjarkowski@harfordcountymd.gov
Phone: 410.638.3103
Department: <https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/164/Planning-Zoning>

DISCUSSION TOPICS

FROM YOUR PLANNING PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES THE COUNTY AND ABERDEEN ARE FACING TODAY? WHAT ABOUT OVER THE NEXT 10-20 YEARS?

- Seven years ago, the County went down the road looking at accessory dwelling units to see if they would be palatable. So many roadblocks were brought up in Harford County because of its suburban nature—they were just insurmountable in some ways, particularly due to the availability of emergency services, metering, and addressing. There's a question about how do these uses become practical?
- Restructured cottage housing. There has been an increased need for people to have relatives live with them within the same unit, so changes to regulations to make this easier to navigate would be beneficial.
- Apartment interest is dwindling.
- Minor changes in people not going to the office due to Covid (i.e. changes to how people are working).
- County has been very focused on their Greenhouse Gas Plan, Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan; staying away from more of the traditional economic development plans.

THE COUNTY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INCLUDES SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS RELATED TO THE IDENTIFIED ABERDEEN/BUSH RIVER/HAVRE DE GRACE COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA THAT WOULD INVOLVE SPECIFIC COORDINATION WITH THE CITY. COULD YOU SPEAK TO THEIR STATUS/COUNTY PLANS FOR MOVING FORWARD WITH THEM OR OTHER SIMILAR EFFORTS THAT SHOULD ENTAIL COORDINATION EFFORTS?

- A Route 40 Corridor Study in being completed in conjunction with the Baltimore

Metropolitan Council.

- Planning & Zoning is working on finalizing the 5-year update/midpoint check on Harford

Next (hoping to have ready sometime soon). There were 486 implementation strategies identified in Harford Next.

DO YOU HAVE ANY GENERAL COMMENTS OR CONCERNS ABOUT THE GROWTH OR PLANNING AREAS ABERDEEN IDENTIFIED IN THEIR 2011 PLAN? WE'LL BE REVIEWING THESE OVER THE COMING MONTHS TO DETERMINE WHAT, IF ANY, UPDATES MAY BE DESIRED AND ARE LOOKING FOR INITIAL INPUT.

- The City identified 17 Planning Areas. [Jenny} Wrote the initial Municipal Growth Element guidelines while at the Maryland Department of Planning and had initial concerns about this high number of areas. She previously suggested narrowing in on priorities. Major concerns focused being able

to provide basic infrastructure to the areas when it would be needed, and that land use and zoning wouldn't match up appropriately because annexations that come in to the City will have a more intense use. Everything annexing will be agricultural land and will be approximately 50% more dense.

CAN YOU DISCUSS ANY SUCCESSES OR IDENTIFIED PLANS FOR THE COUNTY'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE US 40 CORRIDOR AND YOUR THOUGHTS ON HOW THE CITY PLAN MIGHT STRENGTHEN OR FURTHER THOSE EFFORTS?

- Desired focus on beautification efforts or bike lanes going through the City but likely won't move forward without obtaining funding through MDOT District 4.
- County is putting bike lanes through Aberdeen.

- Great opportunities for median areas for plantings, etc. to show that you're in Aberdeen—this type of gateway treatment could encourage motorists to slow down because of the indicated pedestrian presence.

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY CHANGES TO THE COUNTY'S TIER MAP SINCE THE CITY ADOPTED IT THAT WOULD NEED TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR IN THE CITY'S COMP PLAN?

- The Tier mapping was previously agreed upon and there have been no changes.
- City ARPA funds are going to be used to make

improvements including adding a water tower and other infrastructure investments on the west side.

THE COUNTY'S WRE NOTED COORDINATION MEETINGS THAT OCCURRED AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR WATER/SEWER SERVICE AREA BOUNDARIES WERE DETERMINED BY THE COUNTY. HAVE THESE PROJECTIONS BEEN UPDATED SINCE THE PLAN'S ADOPTION OR DOES THE COUNTY INTEND TO DO SO?

- Some internal conversations were held with Public Works. The Deputy Director is the best contact in reference to any data/capacity.
- County possibly needs new WWTP, depending on numbers or capacity. They

anticipate the City will have similar issues and seek funding from MDE to look at updating treatment plants as well, especially with additional units being built on the west side of City. How will those be served?

WHAT PLANNING EFFORTS ARE EITHER CURRENTLY UNDERWAY OR PLANNED THAT WILL IMPACT THE CITY OR SHOULD INFORM THIS PLANNING EFFORT.

- Development along Technology Drive with the potential for a police substation.
- Development along Gilbert/Long Drive and the fact that the style of development isn't

preferred due to the lack of services—zoning and land use designations do not seem to line up.

- Have seen permits go down significantly in

the County. This could be caused by the pandemic, rising construction costs, etc. There are a lot of things that are potential factors. The County is hopeful that sometime in the near future, things will get back to normal.

- Have seen a dearth of apartments in recent years. People are afraid to put down roots and buy something due to economy/world issues.
- Development of Carsins Run supposed to be a continuing-care retirement community (CCRC), but the developers pulled out citing a 30% increase in construction costs and per

the State, they have to have a 70% deposit by a certain time. CCRCs are so needed in the County—people want to stay in the County and age in place.

- Hopeful that at the 6-month mark, there will be potential increases in permits.
- Regarding school enrollment, some have gone down significantly. The Department has just updated enrollment projections and will forward spreadsheets as well as historical data.
- Regarding Census data, Al Sundara is a good contact at the State Data Center and would be a good contact for all things Census.

WE HAVE A COPY OF THE COUNTY'S 2021 TRANSPORTATION PRIORITY LIST; ARE THERE UPDATES OR CHANGES TO THIS LIST FOR 2022?

- They'll send FY23 once complete for April 1 submission to MDOT.
- Aberdeen Train Station improvements (e.g., parking and other improvements) have been included in the Priority Letter since 2012 and the Transit Oriented Development since 2007. These dates are stressed in the current letter.
- Some things are being earmarked at the federal level, not necessarily new projects but general discussions about the rail corridor

that would significantly impact Harford County. There is still no state brief on where billions from the federal government will be going.

- Woodley Road and Perryman Peninsula: Woodley Road did not receive federal funding so pulled out of TIA for planning studies. 30% design now; hoping to get federal dollars to move project forward.

WHAT HAVEN'T WE ASKED YOU THAT WE SHOULD HAVE?

- Don't have push for historic preservation in Aberdeen – a lot of the people who had been involved previously have died. Phyllis would like to have a program to promote it, but not a strong desire throughout the City. County is putting together new related grant soon—stay tuned!
- Friends of the B&O Train Station have applied for State funding and through legislative offices. Very interested in restoring the station.
- Served on Edgewood Small Area Planning Committee; a lot of things have been done related to this but a lot of things still left to do elsewhere.

Meeting Notes:

Lauren Good, Project Manager

Nicky Davis, Planner

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CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW: LEN PARRISH

Stakeholder: Len Parrish, Director of Community & Economic Development
Harford County—Department of Community & Economic Development
Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 | 10:00am-10:45am | Teams Virtual Meeting
WM Team: Lauren Good, Project Manager
Nicky Davis, Planner

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

Len has been the Director of Community & Economic Development for Harford County since December 2014. In this role, he oversees the housing, community development, transit, and economic development programs offered by Harford County through a number of grant funded projects from federal, state, and local entities. The Department brings together housing, transportation, and job services to the citizens of the County.

Email: lrparrish@harfordcountymd.gov

Phone: 410.638.3045

Department: <https://www.harfordcountymd.gov/2474/Community-Economic-Development>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/len-parrish-8a043818/>

DISCUSSION TOPICS

FROM AN ECONOMIC OR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE, WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES FACING ABERDEEN TODAY? WHAT ABOUT OVER THE NEXT 10-20 YEARS?

- APG is the #1 employer. On/off-Post employment is about 30,000 employees within the County. Not seeing a lot of residential development elsewhere in the County.
- Going to see much more remote working. APG is operating at 50% on-Post right now.
- Anything with Amtrak/MARC transportation would have been a bigger issue but may not have been/will be as much now due to Covid.
- Need to ask, "what is defense community looking like regarding transportation."
- Construction of new hospital. Health care is #2 sector within the County. There will be some job creation within the County, but most involves employee transfers from Havre de Grace. Anticipating new technology uses in the future.
- Anticipate Aberdeen will see more residential growth than other areas in the County, especially on north end near Ripken Stadium.

- With rooftops brings retail – will continue to do well. Absorption has gone up and vacancy down from 8% to 6% during Covid.
- Industrial is #4 sector in County with many facilities just outside the City. Anticipates additional industrial facilities to be developed across from the stadium.
- City is served well by the bus system. Would like to see MARC system throughout the County – could see travel from North Carolina to Boston but there is a 12-mile gap in area. Would like to see connection to SEPTA in the future, which would open the City up to more growth. This has been on the State’s radar for a while and received a lot of traction under

the O’Malley Administration. The main station would have to be in located in Delaware, so he looked to Perryville as an appropriate place for a station, but the cost was much higher than the State was willing to absorb. Would have to work with Amtrak for 4th rail – have land but question remains whose responsibility this would be. Hope was that maybe with ARPA funding, rail would be considered, but with upcoming change in Maryland Governor, this conversation is going to be starting over. It will take 10-20 years for this project to build out (once started) and take a major commitment from multiple parties.

WHAT TRENDS ARE YOU SEEING IN THE COMMUNITY? AND PARTICULARLY FROM A BUSINESS/RETAIL/OTHER COMMERCIAL STANDPOINT?

- Data centers are another opportunity. These are large industrial/warehouse type facilities. They will not employ a lot of people but will use a lot of power. Big data is key for large online platforms. There will likely be defense contractors and private sector facilities that

want to locate near them.

- Automation and artificial intelligence are developed at APG and within the City, but also utilized locally.
- Advanced manufacturing (both building and research) will likely continue.

HOW CAN ABERDEEN CONTINUE TO DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF FROM OTHER AREAS OF THE REGION/STATE?

- Train station – main station in Harford County.
- Festival Park has some opportunity – large park in center of town in front of the City Administration building. Doing nice job using

the facility in terms of farmers’ market and concerts, but the City could take advantage of it more, including additional promotion of the resource.

HOW CAN ABERDEEN ATTRACT BETTER DIVERSITY OF BUSINESSES OR SHOULD THE CITY FOCUS ON PARTICULAR NICHE AREAS?

- Always focus on diversification for economic development, but this is done well for the County generally.
- Concern more for the future – people are being hired at the hospital and have to be there in-person. For defense industry, this is not the case. Defense will potentially hire people from outside the area who will be able to do the majority of their work from other locations. There is likely to be less emphasis on on-Post locations for defense side of things (*confirm with Nathan Osborne*). There

will be more opportunities to bring in additional defense contractors. The issue is they are not employing the higher number of employees that were anticipated during BRAC, so larger buildings/offices have fewer people/need for space.

- Future trends will include smaller office spaces and/or flexible design and location near the train station as it provides an easy in/out for commuters.
- Sports tourism is going to continue to grow in the County. The majority of County tourism

money comes from Ripken baseball. They are getting ready to open 2 new fields and possibly 2 more. There are opportunities for week-long tournaments. Attendees will be looking for restaurants, hotels, and gas stations. They will be moving their headquarters from Baltimore to Aberdeen.

- Flexibility in zoning is key near the stadium. A vacant building is currently transitioning to self-storage in the area – it will do well but

not necessarily the best use for area to leverage stadium and visitors.

- Rail continues to do well.
- There has been a shift to people buying products online, but many still like to shop in neighborhood areas – local restaurants and retail (mom and pop vs national).
- Grocery is always a concern for Rt. 40 – not necessarily in Aberdeen but generally. Would like to see grocer move into the area.

WHAT NEEDS ARE THERE FOR BUSINESSES IN THE CITY/REGION? FOR SMALL OR START-UP BUSINESSES? (E.G., INCUBATOR SPACES, SKILLS TRAINING, OTHER RESOURCES)

- Harford County Public Schools and the Community College are doing a good job coming together to provide training for trades.
- Lab space & related training continue to be

- needs.
- There is an ongoing need for assistance in obtaining military clearance.
- The college could potentially make significant investment in the City.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS OBSTACLES TO REINVESTMENT IN THE CITY? WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THE CITY COULD DO TO REMOVE THOSE OBSTACLES?

- Aberdeen seems pretty flexible in terms of development/developer needs. This is part of the reason the hospital chose this location. The City is willing to work with those coming.
- Vacant spaces are present throughout the

- City and County – nothing can really be done to incentivize.
- There is a high land cost, which is a problem throughout the County, not just in Aberdeen.

ARE THERE SERVICES OR PROGRAMS THAT THE CITY SHOULD CONSIDER PARTICIPATING?

- Continue supporting the Main Street program, which DHCD continues to fund. This has been a strong program generally.
- Enterprise Zone designation is key – there are real property and income tax benefits when

- businesses locate within the area. Big chunk of Aberdeen falls within the Enterprise Zone.
- Not a ton of economic incentives within the County other than matching State money that goes into the community.

THE COUNTY'S RECENT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN NOTED A DESIRE FOR COORDINATION REGARDING IMPROVEMENTS WITHIN THE US 40 CORRIDOR—CAN YOU PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON WHAT IS DESIRED?

- Façade improvements – have grants/loans that can be used on a commercial building; generally only for properties that front Rt. 40.

- Redevelopment/beautification along corridor always welcome; new construction has been pretty decent.

COULD YOU TALK A LITTLE ABOUT ANY HOUSING NEEDS/OPPORTUNITIES?

- Worry about affordable housing within Harford County. Any lower/entry level jobs will have difficulty finding housing. Hope that new housing developing in north end will provide opportunities. This is a need countywide – there are plenty of jobs

- available, but the question is where employees are going to live and how are they going to get to jobs.
- There are no extreme issues related to housing within the City.
- There are problems with homelessness

throughout the County and, at one time, Aberdeen was a hub for this population but not the case so much anymore. The County is looking to expand the current individual homeless shelter; they do not have a family shelter.

- Family House in Aberdeen is a great provider that tries to help families in transitional vs emergency housing. Giving/working them on a year-long program – hand up vs hand out to get people back to self-sufficiency. The County is going to continue to invest with them and are in the process of merging with the individual homeless shelter.
- Senior living – giving people the opportunity to age-in-place is key. Aberdeen has at least 1-2 senior housing communities. The focus should be on finding areas where services can be provided onsite.

- Accessory dwelling units are available. These provide an opportunity to have aging parents living with you. Flexibility in zoning is key to allow. Or even kids getting out of college but not going out on their own. ADUs provide help for affordable housing needs and providing housing stock in general.
- All programs have a wait list (Housing Choice Vouchers, etc.).
- There is a big push for moving toward Areas of Opportunity (Opportunity Zones). Aberdeen had not been in an Opportunity Zone previously, but one present toward south end from rail line to APG – more State money is going toward these areas and is pushing this growth more toward those areas. There is a need if a developer was interested and could get approved.

DURING PREVIOUS WORKSHOPS AND THE COMMUNITY SURVEY, CRIME WITHIN THE CITY WAS BROUGHT UP A FEW TIMES. DO YOU FIND THAT THERE IS HESITATION TO LOCATE IN THE CITY DUE TO THIS PERCEPTION?

- Part of this is a perception issue. Don't think there is really a crime issue in Aberdeen. There is a strong policing unit and community policing unit. They do a good job trying to interact with communities that are most in need.
- Problems with crime occur in specific, known

communities within the City. This is not impacting business attraction. Problem areas are typically south of the railroad and closer to APG. This is a more low-income area where drug use and crime occur typically. While there is a problem, businesses aren't trying to locate here – their focus is more on locations closer to I-95.

Meeting Notes:

Lauren Good, Project Manager

Nicky Davis, Planner

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CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW: ABERDEEN BRANCH LIBRARY

Stakeholder:	Jennifer Jones, Aberdeen Branch Manager Mary Hastler, CEO/Director of Harford County Public Library Beth LaPenotiere, Senior Director for Public Services
Date:	Monday, April 11, 2022 1:00pm-2:00pm Teams Virtual Meeting
WM Team:	Lauren Good, Project Manager Nicky Davis, Planner
City Staff:	Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning & Community Development Stefani Spector, Senior Planner

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

Harford County Public Library has an Aberdeen Branch at 21 Franklin Street. Jennifer Jones currently serves as the Branch Manager. The stakeholder conversation was held with Jennifer, as well as Mary Hastler, CEO and Director of the Harford County Public Library, and Beth LaPenotiere, Senior Director for Public Services.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

CAN YOU PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE SERVICES AVAILABLE AT THE ABERDEEN BRANCH?

- The Aberdeen branch is 1 of 11 branches in the overall system.
- Available collections include traditional books, DVDs, special collections, American Girl dolls, superhero action figures, etc.
- Curriculum is provided for all ages.
- Outdoor story garden.
- Branch manager is out and about in the community. Participant in the community. If something's happening anywhere in the County, the Library feels that they should be there in support.
- "Opening the Gift" – licensed daycare provider program. Library would visit households for Storytime, drop-off books, train parents to qualify for MD program.
- Partner with many nonprofits in the community. "Lawyer in the Library" provides legal services to residents. Social workers through CAA. Work with school to provide free lunches/dinners. Provide food trucks/giveaways. MD health dept – worked to provide COVID vaccine distribution as well as test kit distribution.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE ABERDEEN BRANCH PLAY IN THE COMMUNITY? WHAT BENEFITS DOES IT PROVIDE TO THE ABERDEEN COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE?

- "Silver Reader" — outreach vehicle serving seniors in the County
- "Rolling Reader" — outreach vehicle serving after school and more vulnerable population, also visits Aberdeen Proving Ground as it can be scheduled
- In children's area (*birth through HS), STEM is an emphasis especially due to relationship with Aberdeen Proving Ground.
- 3D printing
- Big events bringing authors, activities to the public

- Go outside to the parks, festivals, outreach type events—go “out of the walls”
- Aberdeen has very good relationship with the City—evident when emerging from COVID seclusions. City accommodated for events

outside which allowed for more participants for outside Storytime than could fit within the library building.

- A lot of technology training. Computers heavily used. Upgraded on a regular basis.

WHO ARE THE MAIN USERS OF THE ABERDEEN LIBRARY?

- Community branch—many people walk to it.
- Have not only people who have lived in community for their entire lives but people more recent due to Aberdeen Proving Ground
- Some of the homeless population will come in but many haven’t come back after Covid— not sure where they’ve gone
- A lot of the kids not coming back after Covid—not sure where they’ve gone
- Pre-COVID, there was a very active teen group that would walk to and congregate in the library—just “hang out”. With 2 years of covid, expect part have graduated and moved

on. Others slowly making their way back. Emphasized virtual products. Some of those that would have needed to come in in person can utilize stuff virtually.

- Teens who were coming in would bring in others—this is not happening anymore. Interruption to continuity. Kids are tired. When they’re done with school, they’re just done. Used to have 20 teens generally but not that many in the building anymore.
- Older folks not quite ready to come back inside. Use curbside pickup.

ARE THERE ANY SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT DON’T APPEAR TO BE WELL REPRESENTED BY THE LIBRARY?

- Have fairly far-reaching system. Even if certain people don’t use, someone in their household does.
- Concern about seniors—have tried to continue to reach out virtually as much as possible. Covid has impacted some parts of

the community harder than others.

- Even though there’s an east/west split, people walk and use the busses. Get lot of people who walk from across MARC/Amtrak to visit.

WHAT ARE THE ABERDEEN LIBRARY’S STRENGTHS? WEAKNESSES?

- So embedded within community
- Flexible & nimble delivering services
- Known nationally for being creative
- Staff, live, work, go to school here. Fully embrace Harford county. Staff really do care. Most staff want to give back, help, make sure you have a great experience. This is what brings people back—they know staff is there to help them get what they need.
- Weaknesses? Biggest parking has always been parking. Staff parking. Outside book

drop in back took up a space. Street parking only other than little staff space. Outgrow meeting room if a big event. People don’t always realize they can park around on the street. Think the space is filled up.

- Need to let people know the library is there regardless of the fact they’ve been in the space for almost 50 years. Still this need to get the word out. Per Phyllis, there is plenty of parking around central park, LED/digital signs are permitted.

WHAT FACILITY NEEDS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS OR SO?

- Can't think of any. Looked at enlarging the building, but that didn't work. Neither did looking for annexes nearby. Will partner with someone in the community for larger events. Don't mind going out into the community.
- New recreation center being built by County (hopefully 2024. W Belair Ave.) Hoping to

partner and hold events there/support the City.

- Building built in 1975. Staff spaces thinking about some renovations/bringing outlets up to date, etc. to allow for computer usage.
- Would love to have better landscaping. At mercy of county landscapers.

ARE THERE ANY NEW OR EMERGING NEEDS THAT YOU SEE IN THE COMMUNITY?

- Not just in Aberdeen but seeing mental health issues throughout the community. During COVID, a lot of people going through change/impact. Uptick of people being angrier (especially in schools), not exhibiting

correct behavior in public. Make sure city can provide these health services. Some youth, especially some of the younger ones, don't remember what it's like not to wear masks.

WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHODS OF COMMUNICATION TO REACH THE COMMUNITY (E.G., NEWSLETTERS, EMAIL, TEXTS, WEBSITE, OTHER MEDIA)?

- All of these. Still trying to figure out the best way—it depends on the person.
- Social media posts, website.
- Haven't brought back "Headlines and Happenings" quarterly magazine.
- Being out and about in the community.

- Still struggle getting the word out to the community.
- Staff good when people are in the building, call, or ask questions online.
- City does weekly newsletter that picks up library events, specials, etc.

HOW HAS COVID IMPACTED THE LIBRARY?

- Completely renovated branch
- Some people haven't returned—teens, seniors—for different reasons.

- Taking longer to do and get everything (e.g., materials/building upgrades)

DOES THE BOOKMOBILE "ROLLING READER" GET OUT TO DIFFERENT PARTS OF ABERDEEN?

- Yes. Rolling Reader serves children through high school; Silver Reader for seniors
- Children's Library—filled for book drops throughout community for COVID
- Getting ready to start pop-up visits for vans to go out to visit community where people

will be able to get on the vans. Going to use for festivals, etc. similar to Amazon vehicle pop-ups in NYC.

- Rolling Reader has multiple stops in Aberdeen throughout the day. Park at Festival Park in between stops

THE CITY IS PREPARING TO CHANGE UP THE FARMERS MARKET, AND IT WILL NOW BE SATURDAY'S IN THE PAVILION AREA WITH A LIVE BAND AND MOVIE NIGHT.

- Staffing on Saturdays is a current concern but want to support if possible. Perhaps once a month. Farmers' market is going to be once

a month too. See this as an opportunity for partnership.

THROUGH RENOVATIONS,

- Children's gardens, sails installed. Outdoor story garden concept started in Brooklyn, NY. 1st official one within the Harford County

Library system. Ribbon cutting planned. Have used space a couple times but not yet as often as desired. Have held baby group, kids

escape room zoo theme.

WHAT HAVEN'T WE ASKED YOU THAT WE SHOULD HAVE?

- Appreciate all the support over the years whether it's the 5K for breast cancer or other events.
- Whatever's happening in the City, want to support and be involved
- Regardless of where staff may live, the library is part of the community

Meeting Notes:

Lauren Good, Project Manager

Nicky Davis, Planner

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CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW: DAVID DAHLSTROM

Stakeholder: David Dahlstrom, Regional Planner—Upper Shore
Maryland Department of Planning
Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 | 1:00pm-1:50pm | Teams Virtual Meeting
WM Team: Lauren Good, Project Manager
Nicky Davis, Planner

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

When David took his position at the Maryland Department of Planning, the existing Comprehensive Plan was in place. David and Phyllis Grover (Aberdeen Director of Planning & Community Development) both worked on the form-based code team for the transit-oriented development area. He also directly reviews all water/wastewater amendments as well as grant/funding requests for the City.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

FROM MDP'S PERSPECTIVE, ARE THERE AREAS OF THE CITY OR PLANNING CONCEPTS THAT WE SHOULD FOCUS ON DURING THIS PLANNING PROCESS?

- Current legislation (not adopted yet) by the General Assembly dealing with accessory dwelling units. It would appear be mandating them. The City may want to mention them in the plan so that they're not restricted—have criteria where the City would allow them.
- Housing is a big state concern—generally Maryland has a problem with affordability overall.

AS PART OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS, WE'LL BE SUBMITTING A DRAFT OF THE PLAN TO MDP FOR YOUR REVIEW IN A FEW MONTHS' TIME. WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO SEE INCORPORATED?

- New housing element requirement: make sure there's a plan to update zoning code and clearly identify growth areas.
- WRE updates; changes in land use—how do those changes impact the City?
- Updated Census data. Need to be aware how reliable data is, particularly Census. Make sure to identify if there's a large margin of error.
- Overall the existing plan is well written; perhaps identify things that may seem outdated and identify new challenges.
- What level/amount of parks are there? Are each of the parks appropriate for the age of the community members?
- Thinking about COVID, where do people go to get outdoor recreation?
- Look at commercial standards—is an outdoor environment being promoted? Are incentives needed to facilitate or offset desired situation? Maybe parking reduction?
- Adequate parking is overrated. This is not a reason that a business fails.
- Incorporate Tier Map if haven't already done so. If there are changes to growth areas, the City should identify those. A Tier Map is not as important for the towns as with the county, since there's sewer availability and in the PFA vs areas not in the county.

ARE THERE BEST PRACTICES FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES THAT YOU THINK ABERDEEN SHOULD CONSIDER?

- ARPA funding is supposed to be for infrastructure. What are they using it for? I&I? storage? Capacity? Distribution? The uses need to be spelled out in the

comprehensive plan and water/sewer plan in order to get that funding or at least be eligible to apply.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON ABERDEEN GENERALLY? WHAT ARE ITS ASSETS? WHAT IS IT DOING WELL? WHERE DOES IT NEED TO IMPROVE?

- Very proactive—not a large town, not large staff.
- Embraced TOD (transit-oriented development) and FBC (form-based code)—a lot of jurisdictions would be apprehensive.
- Phyllis has pushed to try and get improvements—wish FHWA would rethink standards since Rt. 40 is such an impediment.
- Video on station area improvements.
- Underpass is a big-ticket item—need more support.
- I-95 study had community involvement—being proactive, about as much as you can be.
- Designated Main Street area is great for the City.
- Sustainable Communities designation is great for the City.
- Applied for Community Legacy funds and received them.
- Harford County TAP grants.
- Implementing what they have about as much as they can bite off—can't really say the City's going in a wrong direction.
- Discussion about train station in current plan needs modification/updating—museum being renovated.
- Maybe consider utilizing some of the ARPA funding for community improvements, state/fed funding for underpass?
- Continuing to work on Main Street.
- Already has a lot of affordable housing; the City is probably looking for more market rate,

- but ADUs are a topic of interest in Annapolis.
- Sustainable Communities funding application just came in—increase in residential 4%? 7.3% reduction in crime. Moving in right direction. 40% increase in vacant housing—not sure if there was a low number to begin with?
- Have had some issues around APG base due to some of the development there—some of the constraints put on them
- From a growth/development standpoint, the comprehensive plan needs to be out with the old and refining some of the new but not drastic changes. Continue existing path.
- Talked about creating a new IBD Zone—big focus in the plan should be getting the zoning code amended. Want to make sure any changes identified to the Code are actually going to be implemented.
- Is there big box/industrial being proposed for technology park? Harford County has a citizen group identified to fight it. Massive facilities have lots of impacts and are not attractive neighbors, especially if losing farmland.
- Maybe in HEAT area, development being proposed not as originally envisioned but still allowed by Code.
- In IBD, development coming in going to try to get max they can unless Code modified to address what's actually desired.
- For WRE, changes in land use and what impacts will be due to those changes. Be

aware of when limited capacities might become problematic. What is the current capacity? Typically MDE wants you to start evaluating allocations once you reach 80%—don't wait until you get to 100%. May need to start looking at this 5 or so years in advance. Growth is going to go where there's sewer capacity. Is treatment plant in need of expansion? What's needed and when? The City needs to consider all constraints and truly put thought into how to address capacity issues in the future.

- Look at water withdrawals and saltwater intrusion. Is Aberdeen near limits? Are new wells or deeper aquifers needed? What happens if there's a drought year?
- Is the City using their APFO as a tool to make sure they're acquiring new capacity to accommodate growth?
- No real reference to APG in Harford County's comprehensive plan. Aberdeen should take that into account. What about their water/sewer needs?

HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH CITY/EXISTING PLAN?

- Existing plan was already in place.
- TOD (transit-oriented development) Master Plan—attended charrette, met Phyllis Grover. One of the recommendations was to adopt FBC (form-based code). Have been on team to assist in that development over about a year.
- Have been reviewing water/ sewer amendments and annexations, sustainable community applications, etc.
- Attended some of the I-95 land use study meetings.
- Involvement directly related to requests for assistance. Phyllis appreciates assistance she gets from Maryland Department of Planning.

Meeting Notes:

Lauren Good, Project Manager

Nicky Davis, Planner

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Transcript Available:

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Recording Available:

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CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW: KIRK BANE

Stakeholder: Kirk Bane, Deputy Chief
City of Aberdeen Police Department
Date: Wednesday, March 30, 2022 | 1:00pm-2:00pm | Conversation via Cell Phone
WM Team: Lauren Good, Project Manager
City Staff: None Present

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

Deputy Chief Kirk Bane began his career with the Aberdeen Police Department in 1997 after receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Safety and Risk Management from Virginia Commonwealth University. Deputy Chief Bane graduated from the Harford County Sheriff's Office Academy in June 1998 and was assigned to the Patrol Division. In August 1998, he was assigned to the Special Operations Unit and was tasked with narcotics interdiction and gang suppression. In July 2000, he earned the rank of Detective and was assigned to the Criminal Investigations Division where he investigated a myriad of cases including homicides, robberies, arsons, rapes, and white-collar crimes. He was promoted to Corporal in October 2001 and assigned to the Patrol Division as a shift supervisor where he remained through his promotion in April 2005 to Sergeant. In July 2006, he earned the rank of Detective Sergeant and was placed in charge of the Criminal Investigations Division. In this capacity, he oversaw criminal investigations, internal investigations, crime scene processing, and the Special Operations Unit. He remained in this position until he was promoted to Lieutenant in March 2011 and placed in command of the Patrol Division. In July 2014, he was promoted to Captain and named the Deputy Chief of Police. In this capacity, he oversees the Field Operations Division, which includes Patrol, Traffic, K-9, and School Resource Officers.

In October 2013, the municipalities of Aberdeen, Bel Air, and Havre de Grace formed the Harford County Municipal S.W.A.T. team, a multi-jurisdictional team that Bane spearheaded and currently serves as Commander. Bane had been a member of the Aberdeen S.W.A.T. team since 1998 and a Team Leader since 2000. He received several awards throughout his career from City, County, State, and federal levels and in 2002, was named Harford County Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. After serving in the Aberdeen Police Department for 25 years, Deputy Chief Bane is retiring in 2022.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

CAN YOU PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT'S STRUCTURE—DEPARTMENTS, DIVISIONS, ETC. IS THE PATROL AREA STRICTLY WITHIN ABERDEEN CITY LIMITS?

- The Patrol Division is the largest. It has 4 shifts with 24/7 operation that handles all calls for service, traffic complaints, other complaints. These are what the public thinks of as the "typical" day-to-day police officers.
- The Criminal Investigations Division handles all cases that are more serious (beyond what the Patrol Division handles). They also handle all crime scene processing, property and evidence collection and storage, and internal investigations.
- The Administrative Division handles records processing and storage, communications (dispatchers), vehicle maintenance,

equipment, uniforms, grants, applicant processing/background investigations for new hires, etc.

- The Department's service area generally consists of the City limits. The Criminal Investigations Division typically goes outside

of those limits (also special operations). They will go beyond City limits if something starts in the City but needs to be pursued outside or when the Department receives a request from other agencies asking for assistance (County/Havre de Grace).

WE'VE HELD MULTIPLE VISIONING SESSIONS AND CONDUCTED A COMMUNITY SURVEY. ONE ITEM THAT WAS BROUGHT UP WAS A PERCEPTION OF CRIME WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. ARE THERE AREAS OF THE COMMUNITY WHERE YOU'RE SEEING A TRUE "CRIME" PROBLEM OR IS THIS A PERCEPTION ISSUE?

- This is more of a perception issue than an actual crime issue. When he first started with the Department, there were drug and gang issues that are not present today, as well as problem properties that have new tenants or owners.
- He and the Department are proud of the City's low crime statistics now but, historically, the area was "crime ridden." Reputation is often difficult to change and there is always a segment of the population or generations that think Aberdeen is what it was 15-20 years ago, which is not the case

anymore.

- The City has won awards for being safest in the State.
- The City's biggest issues aren't considered "major crimes." They are theft (biggest complaints are Walmart shoplifting) and domestic assaults; other types of crimes are pretty consistent across the board.
- There have been no homicides within City limits in the past several years. Shootings do occur from time to time, but they are by no means a regular occurrence.

WHERE ARE PLACES THAT SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS ARE MOST CRITICAL? WHAT ARE THEY?

- At one time, Aberdeen had the worst intersection in the County as far as crashes but they have done a lot to alleviate the engineering issues behind them
- Along Rt. 40, there is a lot of traffic and a lot of pedestrian traffic, which is why this location is where the Department tries to do a lot of speed enforcement. Outside of the City, the speed limit is 55, which drops to

40/30 within City limits. The street is two lanes in each direction with wide shoulders. The nature of businesses in the area is that they produce a lot of foot traffic. Unfortunately, there are probably 2-3 pedestrians struck/killed each year. The area from Rt. 22 to Walmart is the worst; there is little to no foot traffic beyond this area.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TYPES OF SERVICES THE CITY SHOULD CONTINUE TO FUND OR CONSIDER FUNDING TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF VARIOUS GROUPS WITHIN ABERDEEN?

- From the Police Department side, the Department already does more than other municipalities in the County; there is not much more or additional programs that the Department could be doing.
- Chief Trabert is always open and willing to give something a shot.

- A civilian employee was brought on as a liaison to downtown businesses; this employee is also used as an advocate for the homeless and mental health—there are numerous mental health clinics in a 2-3 block radius.
- The City doesn't really have a well-

established parks and recreation program. Aberdeen relies on volunteers, which has been problematic over the past several years due to claims of embezzlement, people not getting along, etc. Kids don't have programs or sports to get involved in—those that are available are located outside the City and not

everyone has the ability to get to these other places. It would be beneficial for the City to have a better Parks and Recreation association, or at least someone on City staff to coordinate/manage/oversee volunteers to ensure there are things to do.

DOES THE PD HAVE A NEED FOR NEW OR EXPANDED FACILITIES? WHERE AND WHAT KIND?

- The Department has outgrown the space they are currently using. Half of City Hall is the Police Department; the other half is the rest of City Administration. It is likely true that City Administration has outgrown their side too. Renovations are needed to the Police

Department side to keep up with changes to the profession. The Department has been in the building for approximately 22 years. Rooms that were initially larger closets were turned into offices because of personnel expansion.

COULD YOU PROVIDE THE CITY'S CRIME STATISTICS (AND HOW FAR BACK DO THEY GO)? ARE THEIR FORMATS IN MORE OF AN EXCEL/PDF OR IS ANY OF IT AVAILABLE IN A GEOGRAPHIC FORMAT (E.G., HEATMAP)?

- Crime statistics are broken down by month.

These can be provided by Jen Liberto.

WHAT INTERACTIONS ARE THERE (IF ANY) WITH THE HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (OR OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES)?

- Typically, the Department doesn't have a lot of engagement with Aberdeen Proving Ground because it's a federal installation—they have stricter laws and separation between the base and outside. Jurisdiction

typically ends at the gate.

- The Department does Interact with Havre de Grace, Harford County, and State Police frequently, especially for major incidents and when additional manpower is needed.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT CODE ENFORCEMENT IS HANDLED BY THE APD. ARE CODE ENFORCEMENT ISSUES A PROBLEM FOR THE CITY? WHAT ARE THE MOST PREVALENT COMPLAINTS? DO YOU HAVE STATISTICS THAT COULD BE PROVIDED?

- Code Enforcement is the biggest problem Aberdeen Police Department has in the City.
- People within the City don't seem to understand what the Code really is. They think that if they don't like something that it can just be cited.
- Most frequent complaints are vegetation, trash, and cars, with vegetation being the biggest actual code enforcement issue.
- Code Enforcement used to fall under Planning

and Community Development; Aberdeen Police Department took it over in late 2016 (approximately). Since this change, the City has had four different Code Enforcement Officers.

- Code enforcement is a long process—it might take upwards of a month to actually show action. For something to have more teeth, need to get elected officials involve – differing opinions on what this means.

Meeting Notes:

Lauren Good, Project Manager

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CITY OF ABERDEEN ♦ COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW: ABERDEEN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Stakeholder: Josh Montague, Fire Chief
Russ Piper, President
City of Aberdeen Volunteer Fire Department

Date: April 14, 2022 | 3:00pm-4:00pm | Teams Virtual Meeting

WM Team: Lauren Good, Project Manager

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION

The Aberdeen Volunteer Fire Department is responsible for fire suppression and prevention, rescue services, and emergency medical services. Fire and rescue services in Aberdeen are provided by both volunteer firemen and paid emergency medical technicians. The City of Aberdeen is served by three fire stations. The main fire station, located on Rogers Street, is centrally located in its service area and has ready access to major streets in all directions. In addition to the main fire station, the City also has two substations, one located on MD 22 (which has been recently been rebuilt and expanded), and the other located on East Bel Air Avenue. There is also one substation located in Perryman that is owned and operated by the Aberdeen Volunteer Fire Department, but not within the corporate limits of Aberdeen.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

CAN YOU PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT'S STRUCTURE AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE ORGANIZATION TO THE CITY ITSELF? IS THE SERVICE AREA STRICTLY WITHIN ABERDEEN CITY LIMITS (TYPICALLY, UNLESS CALLED TO PROVIDE AID)? HOW MUCH INTERACTION IS THERE WITH APG? HOW MUCH OF THE DEPARTMENT IS CAREER VS VOLUNTEER? DO YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY ATTRACTING NEW MEMBERS (AND IF YES, WHAT DO YOU ATTRIBUTE THAT TO?)?

- Independent association with a Board of Directors (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, three Trustees, Assistant Chief, Chief) as the governing body. Board meetings once a month and holds regular meetings once a month.
- Have own budget set up on annual basis.
- Funded through fund drives, Harford County, City of Aberdeen. All buildings are privately owned by the Aberdeen Volunteer Fire Department.
- Service area goes beyond the City boundary, encompasses entire City, but mutual agreements with the County along with other cities/towns.
- Have mutual aid agreement with APG; more often APG coming off base to assist the AVFD, but occasionally AVFD will assist APG
- Volunteer company. All fire personnel are 100% volunteer. EMS is paid service. Hire people to staff medic units.
- Difficult to attract new members. People coming into the County don't realize that it is an all-volunteer system.

WHAT STRENGTHS CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE DEPARTMENT?

- Being in business since 1889—core group of individuals. Have pride in the organization.
- Had problems 20 years ago with providing an ambulance service so went to paid system

but still struggling due to lack of career medics.

- People want to come out, go on calls, enjoy being at firehouse, have passion for fire service—keep it going daily

- Just put together \$9M renovation of station through all volunteers. Had \$1.5M from County, <\$100k from City. Working on paying off \$6M loan.

WHAT ARE SOME AREAS WHERE YOU BELIEVE THE DEPARTMENT COULD MAKE IMPROVEMENTS?

- Everywhere!

WHAT PROGRAMS OR SERVICES ARE YOU CURRENTLY PROVIDING? WHAT ARE THE MOST FREQUENT CALLS FOR SERVICE YOU RECEIVE?

- Put in smoke detectors for the community.
- Mainly EMS and fire protection.
- Most frequent calls are EMS—90% of what they do.

DOES AVFD HAVE A NEED FOR NEW OR EXPANDED FACILITIES? WHERE AND WHAT KIND? WHAT ABOUT MAJOR EQUIPMENT?

- Replacing medic units at least 3x within next 20 years; fire trucks at least 1-2 replacement needed within that timeframe.
- Short-term rescue truck and 2 engines need to be replaced.

ARE CURRENT RESPONSE TIMES/STAFFING APPROPRIATE FOR THE SIZE/TYPE OF COMMUNITY?

- Day-to-day changes in response times. With people around, can occur in a reasonable time. Others, 6-7 minutes to get equipment on the road because volunteers are not in firehouse. Good bit of members within City limits but others take some time to get to firehouse. Most days looking at about 5 minutes to get equip on road.

IN THE CITY'S 2011 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, A NUMBER OF FUTURE PLANNING AREAS ARE IDENTIFIED FOR POTENTIAL FUTURE ANNEXATION. WHAT CONCERNS (IF ANY) DO YOU HAVE ABOUT BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE SERVICE TO THESE AREAS?

- Biggest concern is the amount of calls from those developments. More concerned about EMS calls. As far as fire incidents, don't think there would be that much of a struggle or big change. New development would increase calls a bit but as they get plans for new developments, they'll have to look at response times, types of incidents they might handle, will it be an issue to get those calls covered. Will always be concerned with this because 100% volunteer.
- Once the department gets upwards of 2,000-3,000 calls per year, what will this do to the volunteers currently have.
- Need to go to paid force is definitely coming. It is an eventuality. Would say it's a safe bet within 10-20 years will have some kind of paid system.
- Volunteer system as a whole is taking a hit so just one of those things where there will be a need to have people in the station 24/7. Whether just paying 2 trained personnel, driver/officer and volunteers to be firefighters or other situation remains to be seen.

ARE THERE AREAS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY THAT ARE CHALLENGING TO PROVIDE SERVICE? WHERE AND WHY?

- With new development, how much space is going to be on the roadways? Some

developments the department has recently been sent to have asked if equipment has fit and wanting to make sure it will fit.

- As far as height, it can be a challenge but don't foresee high-rise buildings within the

community.

- Cars parking on the street combined with width of street a concern due to size of equipment.

ARE THERE ANY AREAS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT DO NOT HAVE ADEQUATE WATER PRESSURE FOR FIREFIGHTING NEEDS (OR AREAS WHERE YOU WOULD HAVE TO RELY ON WATER TRUCKS, ETC. DUE TO THE LACK OF HYDRANTS)?

- Within City limits, most areas have hydrants and most of those are really good hydrants.
- Older mains mean pressure is not as good, but this is being addressed already.
- Within the City, hydrants are roughly 500-600 feet apart, which is pretty standard. There

are some areas where it's a longer distance (dead-end street) but not really that many where that's a problem. If it is a problem, the officers plan for this and have a plan prior to an incident occurring.

ARE YOUR FIREFIGHTERS/EMTS ABLE TO FIND ADEQUATE HOUSING WITHIN THE CITY OR IS HOUSING AFFORDABILITY A PROBLEM?

- Never really been brought to their attention.

DO YOU ENCOUNTER ISSUES WITH VACANT PROPERTIES?

- Run into very little issues with vacant properties or those occupied by people that aren't supposed to be there.
- Even with EMS calls, rarely getting calls related to this.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS WITH EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS OR AREAS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY THAT HAVE POOR COMMUNICATION SIGNALS?

- Pretty good within the City.
- Warehouses tend to have issues.

WHAT HAVEN'T WE ASKED YOU THAT WE SHOULD HAVE?

- If solar panels on roof and there's a fire, don't have access to roof to vent. For most part case by case review.
- Would like to find funding for EMS and start of paid fire force. Definitely would like to see support from City to do this. Not asking for money to ask for money. Doing this to keep up and provide good quality service to Aberdeen. Also for vehicle replacement.

Meeting Notes:

Lauren Good, Project Manager

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