



**CITY OF ABERDEEN
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

**60 North Parke Street
Aberdeen, MD 21001
Council Chambers
www.aberdeenmd.gov
October 8, 2025, 6:00 PM**

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

C. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

C.1 September 10, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

D. BUSINESS ITEMS - *Public comments will be allowed at the discretion of the Commission before any action of the Commission is taken. Public comments are limited to 3 minutes and must be pertinent to the subject matter on the agenda.*

D.1 Discussion and Comments: Draft Aberdeen Bike and Pedestrian Plan 2025
[Draft Aberdeen Bike and Pedestrian Plan](#)

D.2 Discussion: Swan Meadows Rezoning Concerns
[Rezoning Request Swan Meadows Letter.pdf](#)
[Appendix A Legal Justification for the Swan Meadows Overlay.pdf](#)
[Appendix B MDP Letter.pdf](#)
[Appendix C Swan Meadows Zoning Protection.pdf](#)

E. PUBLIC COMMENT - *Public comments are limited to 3 minutes and must be pertinent to the subject matter on the agenda.*

F. ADJOURNMENT

Under Md. Code Ann., General Provisions Article §3-305(b), all or any portion of public meetings are subject to closure.

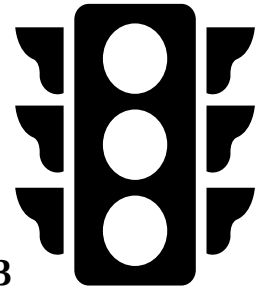


Bike and Pedestrian Plan - 2025

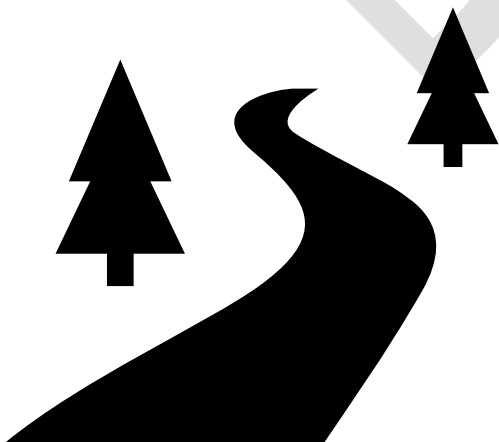
Aberdeen
Maryland



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Aberdeen Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Stake Holders

City of Aberdeen Planning and Community Development

City of Aberdeen Department of Public Works

City of Aberdeen Police Department

Aberdeen Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

MDOT State Highway Administration

Harford County Department of Planning & Zoning

Harford County Department of Parks & Recreation

MARC (Maryland Area Rail Commuter)

Amtrak (The National Railroad Passenger Corporation)

Harford County Public Schools

Harford County Public Library

Bike Harford

Baltimore Metropolitan Council

Introduction

The City of Aberdeen's Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan is grounded in a regional commitment to improving safety, accessibility, and multimodal transportation across Harford County. This approach emphasizes community-driven planning, data-informed decision-making, and a commitment to Complete Streets principles—values that form the foundation of Aberdeen's efforts.

This plan uses information from the Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) Action Plan developed by the City of Aberdeen, the Town of Bel Air, and the City of Havre de Grace. Through the SS4A initiative, these municipalities are working together to achieve Vision Zero—the goal of eliminating serious injuries and fatalities on local roadways. As part of this effort, the City of Aberdeen has partnered with a transportation consultant to assess and identify improvements at six key intersections and corridors where pedestrian and cyclist safety is a pressing concern. The intersections identified include West Bel Air Avenue at Bush Chapel Road and Beards Hill Road West, Bel Air Avenue at Middleton Road, U.S. Route 40 at Carol Avenue, U.S. Route 40 at James Avenue, MD 22 at Old Post Road, and the proposed shared-use pathway along U.S. Route 40 from the Aberdeen Train Station to the City of Havre de Grace.

In addition to the SS4A framework, this plan aligns with the City of Aberdeen's 2022 Comprehensive Plan, particularly Chapter 7: Transportation, which outlines long-term goals for enhancing multimodal connectivity, pedestrian access, and safety infrastructure. By integrating the short-term focus of the SS4A Action Plan with the long-range policies of the Comprehensive Plan, this Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan maintains consistency with citywide priorities and supports Aberdeen's broader vision for a safe, connected, and equitable transportation network.

This plan is developed in close coordination with Harford County's transportation planning efforts and aligns with regional initiatives such as the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Resilience 2050 Plan. This collaborative approach ensures that Aberdeen's bicycle and pedestrian improvements support broader goals of safety, accessibility, climate resilience, and regional connectivity.

Vision Statement

The City of Aberdeen envisions a community where walking and biking are safe, convenient, and accessible for all residents, fostering health, equity, sustainability, and a vibrant community. This plan guides ongoing investment and collaboration to build a multimodal transportation network that serves current and future generations.



Background and Context

The City of Aberdeen, Maryland, is a vibrant community situated at a strategic crossroads connecting the Town of Bel Air and the City of Havre de Grace. As a key node in Harford County's transportation network, Aberdeen serves a diverse population. The city's geography, characterized by major highways such as U.S. Route 40 and MD 22, presents both opportunities and challenges for active transportation. While these corridors support significant vehicle traffic, they also create barriers for pedestrians and cyclists due to wide roadways, high speeds, and incomplete infrastructure.

Recognizing the need to improve safety and mobility for all users, the City seeks to foster a transportation system that encourages walking and biking as viable options for daily travel, recreation, and regional connectivity. This plan builds upon regional efforts such as the Safe Streets & Roads for All initiative to align goals and maximize impact.

Additionally, it integrates guidance from the City of Aberdeen Comprehensive Plan (2022), which emphasizes sustainable growth, transportation equity, and infrastructure investment as essential to supporting a livable, connected community. The Comprehensive Plan's multi-modal transportation policies provide a strategic framework that complements and strengthens the priorities identified in this Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, ensuring coordinated action across city departments and regional partners.

Regional Coordination and Alignment with Harford County Plans

The City of Aberdeen's Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan is closely aligned with Harford County's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, which emphasizes the importance of creating a safe, connected, and accessible active transportation network across the entire county. Harford County's plan prioritizes infrastructure improvements that enhance safety for vulnerable users, especially along major corridors such as U.S. Route 40 and MD 22, which run through Aberdeen. It also highlights the need for regional trail connections, including links between

municipalities like the City of Aberdeen, Town of Bel Air, and the City of Havre de Grace, to support commuting, recreation, and tourism.

By coordinating with the County's planning efforts, Aberdeen can leverage shared funding opportunities, technical resources, and inter-jurisdictional collaboration to advance projects that benefit both residents and the broader region. Furthermore, the County plan's focus on equity, accessibility, and community engagement strongly complements Aberdeen's goals, ensuring that investments in active transportation serve diverse populations and contribute to a healthier, more sustainable community. This alignment underscores the City's commitment to working within the regional framework to maximize the impact of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements.

In addition to bicycle and pedestrian improvements, the City of Aberdeen plays a key role in supporting a broader multi-modal transportation network. The city serves as a regional transit hub, with Harford Transit LINK bus routes connecting Aberdeen to neighboring communities and MARC commuter rail and Amtrak providing access for people to work within the region. Enhancing connections between these services and local pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is a shared priority with Harford County. Investments such as safer pedestrian access to transit stops and expanded bike facilities near the Aberdeen Transit Center are planned.

Alignment with Resilience 2050 Regional Goals

As the City of Aberdeen advances its bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, it is essential to consider the growing challenges posed by climate change and extreme weather events. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Resilience 2050 Plan emphasizes the need for resilient transportation networks capable of withstanding flooding, heat waves, and other climate-related impacts. For Aberdeen, this involves designing pathways, sidewalks, and crossings using durable materials and incorporating effective stormwater management and flood-resistant features.

Integrating green infrastructure such as permeable pavements, bioswales, and enhanced tree canopies can mitigate urban heat and manage runoff, creating a safer and more comfortable environment for active transportation users. Additionally, maintaining access to critical pedestrian and bicycle routes during severe weather supports community mobility and emergency response. By aligning with these regional resilience goals, Aberdeen can build a sustainable active transportation system that improves safety and connectivity while strengthening the city's capacity to adapt to climate change.

Plan Vision and Goals

The vision of the City of Aberdeen Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan is to create a safe, inclusive, and well-connected transportation system that encourages walking and biking for people of all ages and abilities. This plan supports the development of a cohesive active transportation network that links neighborhoods, schools, parks, transit hubs, and employment centers, while also promoting public health, environmental sustainability, and equitable mobility options. It further reinforces the multimodal priorities and Complete Streets commitments outlined in the City's 2022 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 7: Transportation.



In addition to advancing safety, equity, and connectivity, this plan embraces the region's commitment to transportation resilience and coordinated planning. By aligning with Harford County's active transportation priorities and the Resilience 2050 Plan, Aberdeen aims to develop infrastructure that is durable, adaptive, and well-integrated into the larger regional network.

To achieve this vision, the plan establishes the following five core goals:

1. Improve Safety and Eliminate Fatalities and Serious Injuries

Aberdeen will adopt a Vision Zero approach to transportation safety, aiming to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries involving pedestrians and cyclists. This includes implementing intersection and corridor redesigns, traffic calming strategies, and safer pedestrian crossings—especially at the six priority locations identified in the SS4A study. This safety-focused approach reflects the comprehensive plan's objective to improve transportation safety across all modes of travel.

2. Expand and Connect the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network

The plan supports the creation of a continuous and connected network of sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bike facilities. Special focus will be placed on developing the shared-use path from the Aberdeen Train Station to Havre de Grace, as well as improving access along U.S. Route 40 and MD 22, where large roadways currently limit pedestrian and cyclist mobility. These efforts align with the Comprehensive Plan's goals of enhancing non-motorized mobility and promoting connected, multimodal corridors.

3. Advance Transportation Equity and Accessibility

Infrastructure investments will prioritize equitable access to safe and convenient transportation options for all users, especially for residents in underserved neighborhoods, older adults,

individuals with disabilities, and those without access to a vehicle. All improvements will comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

The Aberdeen Department of Public Works also maintains a Road Paving and Curb/Sidewalk Priority list which is evaluated annually for the condition of the residential roadway, sidewalk, and curb and gutter that requires replacement. Equity and accessibility improvements also support the comprehensive plan’s broader objectives for inclusive infrastructure and neighborhood connectivity.

4. Encourage Active Transportation and Healthy Living

By providing safe and attractive walking and biking environments, Aberdeen seeks to encourage more residents and visitors to choose active non – motorized transportation. This supports public health goals, reduces emissions, and fosters a stronger sense of community. The plan complements the comprehensive plan’s emphasis on environmental sustainability and community health.

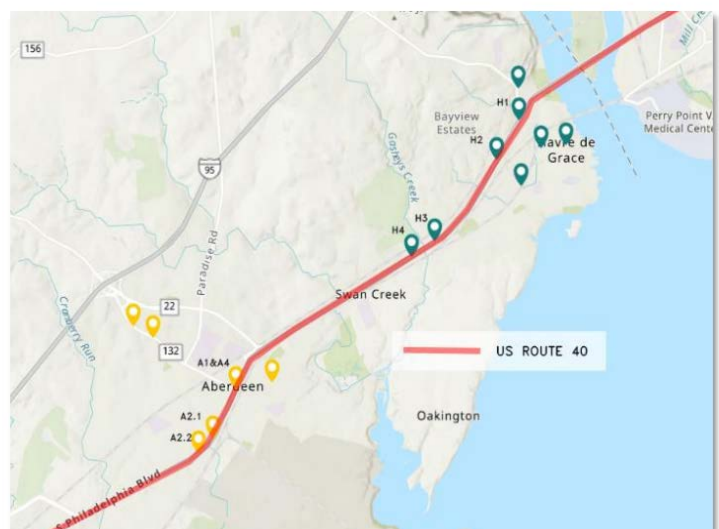
5. Align with Complete Streets and Smart Growth Principles

Aberdeen will integrate Complete Streets principles into future street design and reconstruction projects, ensuring that the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users are fully considered. This includes adding pedestrian-scale lighting, curb extensions, protected bike lanes, and high-visibility crosswalks. This goal is in direct support of the City’s comprehensive plan, which promotes Complete Streets, compact development patterns, and coordinated land use and transportation planning.

Data and Analysis

The development of this plan utilized all available data sources, including traffic crash reports, pedestrian and bicycle counts, and community input gathered through public meetings. Crash data analysis revealed several intersections with elevated rates of pedestrian and bicycle injuries, particularly along U.S. Route 40 and its connecting corridors. Traffic volume and speed studies highlighted areas where vehicular movement conflicts with non-motorized users, emphasizing the need for enhanced crossing treatments and traffic calming. Public feedback underscored

US 40 Corridor						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Note
Total Crashes	20	25	19	23	28	-
Fatalities	1	0	0	0	0	One fatality (pedestrian) in Jan 2024
Pedestrian-related	2	1	1	0	1	One fatality (pedestrian) in Jan 2024



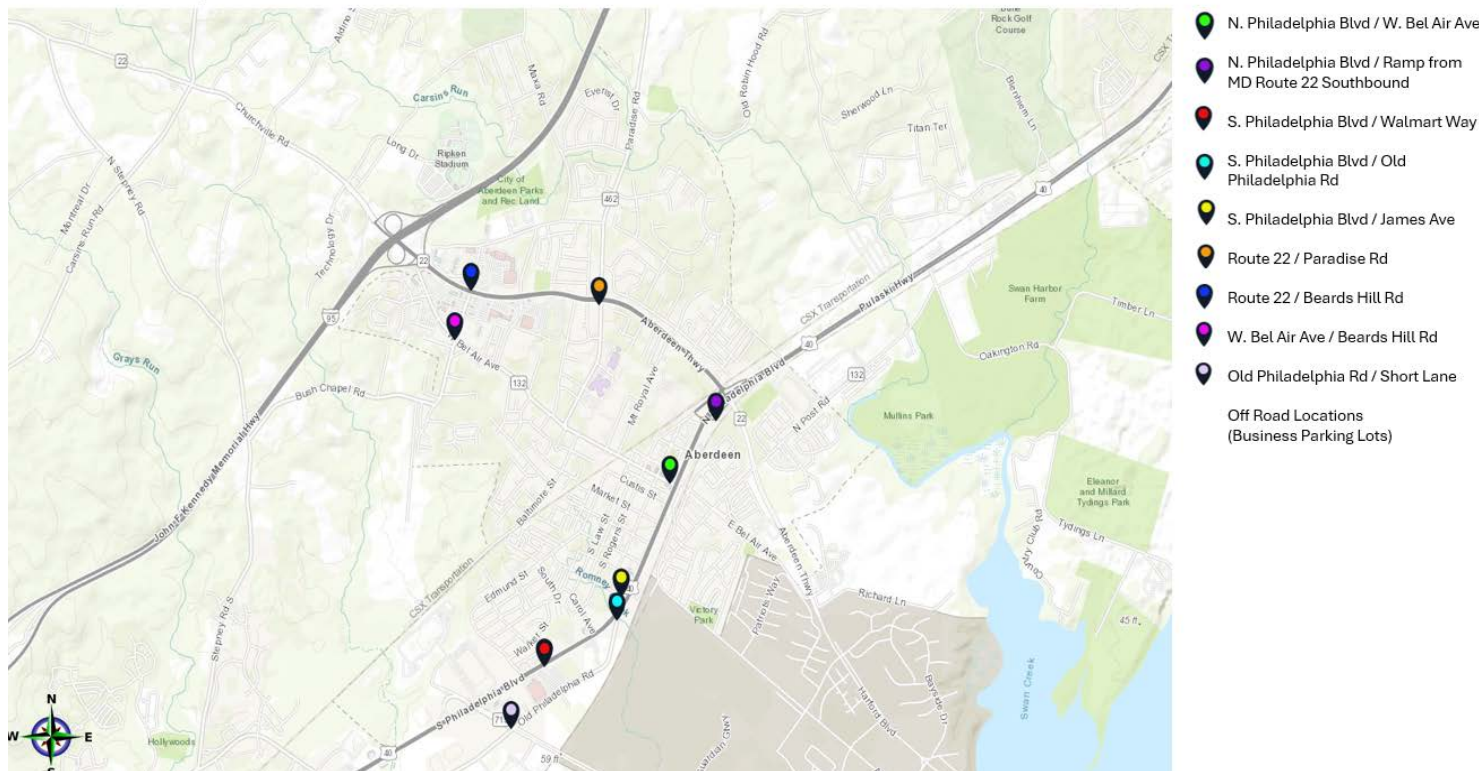
common concerns such as lack of continuous sidewalks, poor lighting, and limited safe crossing opportunities, especially near schools and transit stops.

The consultant-led SS4A Action Plan focused on six key intersections and their geometric constraints, signal timing, and multimodal accommodation challenges. These findings guided the prioritization of improvements, and the development of targeted strategies aimed at addressing safety gaps and increasing active transportation usage.

In addition to the SS4A findings, this plan integrates goals and policies from the City of Aberdeen Comprehensive Plan (2022), which highlights the importance of multimodal connectivity and pedestrian safety as part of the city's broader transportation and land use framework. This integration ensures that bicycle and pedestrian investments align with long-term community development goals and support equitable access to services and amenities.

To further support safety analysis, the top 10 intersections in Aberdeen with the highest number of vehicle crashes in 2024 were identified and mapped. These intersections are concentrated along high-traffic corridors, including North and South Philadelphia Boulevard (U.S. Route 40), MD Route 22, and West Bel Air Avenue. Locations such as Philadelphia Boulevard at Walmart Way, James Avenue, and Old Philadelphia Road experienced frequent collisions, some occurring in proximity to major commercial areas or transit corridors. Off-road crash concentrations, including incidents in business parking lots, were also noted. These high-crash areas represent critical zones for future pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements and should be prioritized for enhanced crossing treatments, signal upgrades, and visibility enhancements.

Top 10 intersections in Aberdeen for Number of Car Crashes 2024



Throughout the planning and prioritization process, a strong emphasis on equity has been embedded to ensure that improvements benefit underserved and historically marginalized communities. Equity considerations have shaped project selection and design, emphasizing investments in neighborhoods with demonstrated needs and limited existing infrastructure.

Objectives and Performance Measures

To ensure progress toward the plan’s vision and goals, the City of Aberdeen will implement a set of measurable objectives. These objectives provide clear targets for infrastructure development, safety outcomes, and community engagement, and they allow the City to measure success over time.

Aberdeen’s objectives are organized into five key focus areas:

**A1 & A4 – WEST BEL AIR AVENUE (MD 132) AT US 40 & US 40
SHARED USE PATH**

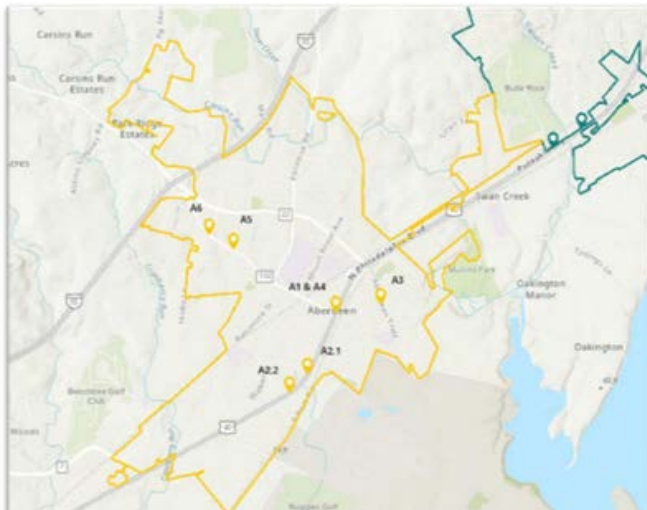
A2.1 – JAMES AVE & US 40

A2.2 – CAROL AVE & US 40

A3 – MD 22 AT OLD POST AND POST ROAD (MD132B)

A5 – MIDDLETON RD & WEST BELAIR AVENUE (MD 132)

**A6 – MD 132 AT BUSH CHAPEL ROAD AND BEARDS HILL RD (MD
132A)**



1. Safety Improvements

Objective: Reduce the number of pedestrian and bicyclist crashes, injuries, and fatalities across Aberdeen, especially at the six priority locations identified in the SS4A study.

Performance Measures:

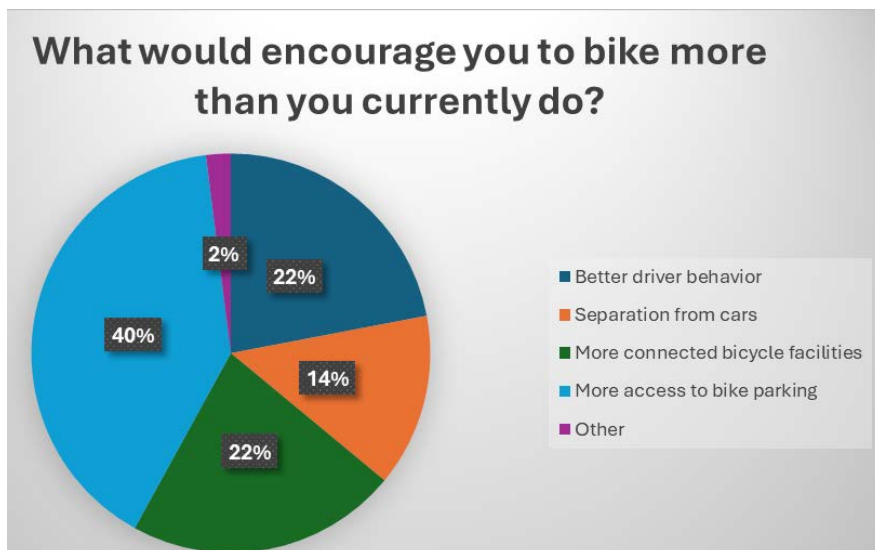
- Track total and injury-related pedestrian and bicyclist crashes annually, using police and crash data.
- Target a 50% reduction in pedestrian- and bicycle-related crashes at the six study intersections within five years.
- Monitor implementation of countermeasures such as high-visibility crosswalks, curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, and protected bike facilities.

2. Network Connectivity

Objective: Expand and improve the city's bicycle and pedestrian network by filling critical gaps, connecting to regional trails, and enhancing access to transit and community destinations.

Performance Measures:

- Construct at least 3 miles of new shared-use paths, sidewalks, or bike lanes within five years.
- Coordinate with Harford County to apply for federal funding to complete the proposed shared-use path from the Aberdeen Train Station to the City of Havre de Grace.
- Achieve sidewalk or trail connectivity for 90% of homes within a half mile of schools, transit, or commercial centers.



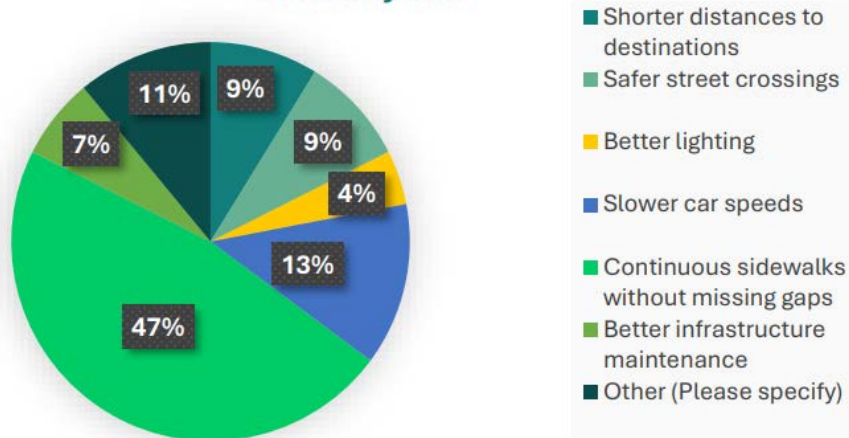
3. Accessibility and Equity

Objective: Ensure all residents, including those in historically underserved areas, have safe, convenient access to the bicycle and pedestrian network.

Performance Measures:

- Conduct an equity mapping analysis to identify infrastructure gaps in low-income and minority neighborhoods.
- Ensure that at least 75% of new pedestrian or bicycle projects serve equity-priority areas.

What would encourage you to walk more than you currently do?



- Conduct ADA audits of all major corridors and prioritize upgrades at deficient crossings and sidewalks.
- Equity considerations will also be integrated into all phases of project prioritization, design, and public engagement to ensure that investments produce inclusive benefits.

4. Public Participation and Education

Objective: Build community support and awareness for active transportation through public outreach, education, and engagement.

Performance Measures:

- Hold at least one public workshop or open house annually focused on pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Invite the Aberdeen Police Department to talk about pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Launch a city-branded Safe Streets education campaign in schools, libraries, and public spaces.
- Partners with local organizations and employers support Bike to Workday and walking school bus programs.

5. Implementation and Policy Alignment

Objective: Integrate bicycle and pedestrian planning into all levels of city policy, budgeting, and project development.

Performance Measures:

- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian criteria into all capital improvement planning and development review processes.
- Apply for state or federal funding grants (such as TAP or SS4A) annually to support plan implementation.
- Update the City's design standards to reflect Complete Streets and Trail Connectivity principles.

6. Regional Coordination and Resilience

Objective: Foster collaboration with Harford County and regional partners to align bicycle and pedestrian improvements with countywide priorities and resilience strategies.

Performance Measures:

- Participate in regional planning efforts and regularly coordinate with Harford County on project development and funding applications.
- Incorporate resilient design elements into at least 75% of new infrastructure projects to mitigate climate impacts such as flooding and heat.
- Monitor and report on infrastructure performance during extreme weather events and adjust maintenance priorities accordingly.
- In addition, this plan emphasizes the important linkage between active transportation and climate goals, highlighting how walking and biking infrastructure reduces greenhouse gas

emissions by supporting alternatives to driving and how infrastructure can be designed to incorporate green stormwater management and other sustainability features.

Infrastructure Strategies and Recommendations

To achieve the goals of safety, connectivity, and accessibility, the City of Aberdeen's Department of Public Works will implement infrastructure improvements focused on critical corridors and intersections. These six locations were identified through the SS4A Action Plan as high-priority areas due to crash history, poor pedestrian and bicycle conditions, and regional connectivity needs. Each site will be evaluated for short-term safety improvements as well as long-term multimodal design opportunities.



Maintenance and sustainability are critical components of the plan's success. The City will develop and fund a dedicated maintenance program for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to ensure facilities remain safe, accessible, and attractive over time. Responsibilities for upkeep will be clearly assigned, and maintenance will include regular inspections, prompt repairs, winter snow removal, and vegetation management. This commitment will maximize the lifespan and effectiveness of investments and foster public confidence in active transportation infrastructure.

1. West Bel Air Avenue at Bush Chapel Road and Beards Hill Road

This intersection experiences high traffic volumes and serves as a key access point to nearby residential neighborhoods and retail areas. Existing pedestrian facilities are fragmented, and crossings are either absent or lack visibility.

Recommendations:

- Install high-visibility continental crosswalks across all legs of the intersection.
- Add pedestrian countdown signals with leading pedestrian intervals (LPIs).
- Evaluate feasibility of a pedestrian refuge island in the center median.
- Extend sidewalks and ensure ADA-compliant ramps.
- Assess opportunity for a bike lane connection along West Bel Air Avenue.

2. Bel Air Avenue at Middelton Road and Bel Air Avenue at U.S. Route 40

These closely spaced intersections are along a primary corridor linking downtown Aberdeen to U.S. 40. The area lacks safe crossings and has high turning movements.

Recommendations:

- Coordinate signal timing and add pedestrian phases at both intersections.
- Install raised pedestrian crossings or curb extensions to reduce crossing distances.
- Re-stripe travel lanes to accommodate buffered or protected bike lanes on West Bel Air Avenue.
- Evaluate lighting improvements to enhance nighttime visibility.
- Include wayfinding signage directing users toward the Aberdeen MARC Train Station and local trails.

3. Carol Avenue and U.S. Route 40

Carol Avenue intersects U.S. 40 at a location with heavy vehicular traffic and no safe pedestrian crossing infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- Construct a signalized or RRFB-controlled mid-block crossing with pedestrian refuge.
- Install median treatments and traffic-calming elements to slow vehicle speeds.
- Extend sidewalks along Carol Avenue and improve bus stop access if applicable.
- Add bike route markings or signage connecting to local residential streets.

4. James Avenue and U.S. Route 40

This intersection is critical for connecting residents on the north and south sides of U.S. 40, but current infrastructure creates barriers to safe pedestrian crossing.

Recommendations:

- Introduce protected signalized crossings or pedestrian hybrid beacons.
- Widen sidewalk approaches and provide ADA-compliant ramps on all corners.
- Consider intersection realignment or narrowing to shorten crossing distances.
- Evaluate long-term potential for an overpass if warranted by volume and funding.

5. MD 22 at Old Post Road

A major intersection with significant vehicular activity, including truck and commuter traffic. There is limited pedestrian accommodation and no dedicated bicycle infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- Add full pedestrian signalization with push buttons and crosswalks on all approaches.
- Introduce traffic-calming elements like narrower lanes or curb extensions.
- Stripe bike lanes along Old Post Road where feasible and improve transitions to adjacent trails.
- Coordinate with MDOT SHA for intersection redesign options consistent with state highway standards.

6. U.S. Route 40 Proposed Shared-Use Pathway (Aberdeen Train Station to the City of Havre de Grace)

This corridor has strong potential as a regional multimodal connector, supporting both commuter and recreational users. Current conditions vary, with limited dedicated facilities.

Recommendations:

- Design and construct a 10–12 foot wide shared-use asphalt path separated from traffic, with landscaping buffers.
- Ensure seamless connections to transit hubs, schools, and the downtown core.
- Provide safe crossings at all major intersections along U.S. Route 40, using refuge islands or signal enhancements.
- Install amenities such as lighting, wayfinding signage, and benches.
-
- Coordinate with Harford County Government, MDOT SHA, and the City of Havre de Grace to complete the regional link. Apply for federal or state funding to support this project.

Completed Pedestrian & Bicycle Improvement Projects

As of September 14, 2018, the City of Aberdeen completed a series of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements around the Aberdeen MARC Train Station as part of the





Aberdeen MARC Station Connectivity Enhancement Project. Funded through a Transportation Alternatives Program grant, the project was designed to improve access, safety, and overall connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists in the area.

Upgrades to the transit waiting area included a 22-inch seating wall behind the bus shelter, brick pavers around the shelter and sidewalks, tree grates with flowering trees and landscaping,

three Acorn-style light posts, and the consolidation and relocation of existing road signage.

New five-foot-wide sidewalks were constructed along Polk Street (formerly Taft Street) from the existing curb ramp to near Highland Commons, and along East Bel Air Avenue from the Magnolia Farms apartment complex to APG Road. These segments included the planting of a total of eleven street trees.

To enhance pedestrian safety, three crosswalks were painted at the intersection of East Bel Air Avenue and Polk Street, and a new ADA-compliant curb ramp was installed at the southern corner. The curb was extended along East Bel Air Avenue to APG Road to align with the new sidewalk, and wayfinding signage was added to guide pedestrians and cyclists to the station.

Additional improvements included the replacement and relocation of the MARC Station entrance sign, ensuring utility pole clearance near Magnolia Farms, and installing benches, trash receptacles, and inverted U-style bike racks at three locations.

Overall, the project significantly enhanced pedestrian and bicycle access, safety, and visual appeal around the Aberdeen MARC Train Station.





Design Guidelines and Standards

To ensure safety, accessibility, and consistency, all infrastructure improvements recommended in this plan will adhere to established design guidelines and standards. The City of Aberdeen will reference the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guidelines, which align with national standards such as

those from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). These guidelines emphasize Complete Streets principles, requiring that roadways be designed and operated to enable safe access for all users regardless of age or ability. Key elements include appropriate sidewalk widths, ADA-compliant ramps, buffered or protected bike lanes where feasible, pedestrian refuge islands, and signal timing adjustments like leading pedestrian intervals. Additionally, lighting, signage, and pavement markings will conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to maximize visibility and user comprehension.

Where appropriate, design solutions will be tailored to the specific context of each corridor or neighborhood to balance safety, functionality, and local character. The City will also establish maintenance protocols to ensure that pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure remains safe, accessible, and attractive over time. Periodic reviews of design standards and community feedback will help incorporate the best new practices and evolving needs.

By following these standards, Aberdeen will promote a safe and comfortable environment for walking and biking that encourages more residents to choose active transportation.

Implementation Plan and Funding Strategy

To transform the goals of this plan into real, on-the-ground improvements, the City of Aberdeen will follow a phased implementation strategy that prioritizes high-impact projects and leverages available funding sources. This approach allows the City to begin with targeted safety enhancements and gradually expand its bicycle and pedestrian network over time. The six priority intersections identified in the SS4A Action Plan, along with the proposed U.S. Route 40 shared-use path, will serve as the initial focus areas for investment and design.

In the first two years, the City of Aberdeen will concentrate on initial action projects that can be implemented quickly and provide immediate safety benefits. These include the installation of high-visibility crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signals, and ADA ramps at key intersections, particularly where crash data shows elevated risk. During this phase, the City will also begin

developing public education campaigns to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety and raise awareness about new infrastructure. The City will apply for available funding specifically for the U.S. Route 40 shared use path.

From years three to five, the City will focus on broader corridor improvements and network expansion. This will include the construction of the U.S. Route 40 shared use connectivity path, the implementation of bike lanes and pedestrian enhancements on West Bel Air Avenue and Middleton Road, and sidewalk extensions in neighborhoods near schools and transit. The City will also work to ensure all existing sidewalks and intersections meet ADA standards through targeted upgrades, informed by an accessibility audit. During this phase, Aberdeen will begin incorporating Complete Streets principles more fully into its development review and capital improvement processes, ensuring that all future roadway projects account for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.

In the long term, from year six through ten, the City will explore more complex improvements such as grade-separated crossings at high-volume locations like U.S. Route 40. This may include feasibility studies and conceptual designs for pedestrian overpasses or underpasses. Additional investments will be made to retrofit older corridors with traffic-calming elements, protected bicycle infrastructure, and pedestrian-scale lighting. The trail network will continue to grow during this phase, extending into newly developing areas and better connecting underserved neighborhoods with the city core. As infrastructure is implemented, the City will also expand data collection efforts to monitor pedestrian and bicycle activity and assess the impact of completed projects on safety and mobility.

Securing funding for these efforts will require a combination of local, state, federal, and private resources. The City will actively pursue federal grant programs such as the Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) implementation grants, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants. These programs are well-aligned with Aberdeen's goals, particularly the emphasis on safety, equity, and multimodal access. At the state level, Aberdeen will seek support through the Maryland Department of Transportation's Pedestrian and Bicycle Program and collaborate with the State Highway Administration on intersection upgrades along state routes. Harford County will also be an important partner in coordinating shared use path connections and regional improvements.

Local funding will play a supporting role in the form of capital improvement allocations and potential developer contributions. The City will work to include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in its capital improvement planning process and look for opportunities to integrate these features into roadway resurfacing or reconstruction projects. Where new development occurs, the City will seek to require or encourage pedestrian and bicycle accommodation as part of the project scope. Public-private partnerships may also be explored for specific projects, such as trail amenities, wayfinding signage, or maintenance support.

A clear, proactive funding roadmap will be developed, including a calendar of grant application deadlines, staff responsibilities, and diversified funding strategies that include partnerships and sponsorships to support ongoing implementation and maintenance.

The implementation of this plan will depend not only on funding but also on strong interagency coordination and community support. Aberdeen will continue to collaborate with the Town of Bel Air and the City of Havre de Grace to ensure regional trail continuity and consistent application of safety standards. Close coordination with Harford County and state agencies will help align priorities, avoid duplication of effort, and accelerate project delivery.

Furthermore, this implementation strategy directly aligns with the policy framework established in Chapter 7 of the City of Aberdeen Comprehensive Plan (2022), which highlights the importance of integrating transportation improvements with land use planning, prioritizing multimodal infrastructure investments, and pursuing diversified funding sources to support sustainable growth. The Comprehensive Plan also encourages partnerships across jurisdictions and sectors to enhance mobility options and improve quality of life—principles reflected in this Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan’s phased, collaborative approach.

With a structured, phased approach and a commitment to sustained investment, the City of Aberdeen is well-positioned to achieve its vision for a safer, more walkable, and bikeable community.

Community Engagement and Evaluation

A central principle of the City of Aberdeen’s Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan is that successful infrastructure planning must be informed by the people who live, work, and travel in the community every day. Aberdeen has emphasized public involvement as a key component in shaping priorities, identifying needs, and building trust in the planning and implementation process. The City recognizes that sustained engagement is not a one-time activity, but an ongoing commitment to listening, adapting, and responding to the experiences and concerns of its residents.

Community feedback collected through the Safe Streets & Roads for All planning process has already provided a solid foundation. Residents expressed concerns about safety when crossing major roadways, the lack of continuous sidewalks in many neighborhoods, and the absence of dedicated bicycle infrastructure. In response, this plan places clear emphasis on addressing those concerns through targeted intersection improvements, ADA-compliant upgrades, and new connections to trails and transit. Continued outreach, especially in areas near the six priority intersections, will ensure that these projects meet the needs of the neighborhoods they serve.





The City of Aberdeen will maintain a proactive approach to community engagement throughout the life of this plan. Public workshops, neighborhood meetings, and online surveys will be used regularly to gather input and provide updates on project progress. Outreach materials will be made accessible in multiple formats to reach a wide audience, including those who may face language, mobility, or technological barriers. Partnerships with local schools and advocacy groups will be used to promote participation and encourage shared ownership of the improvements.

Evaluation and performance tracking are equally important to ensure accountability and long-term success. The City will establish a baseline of pedestrian and bicycle usage, safety data, and network coverage against which future progress will be measured. Annual reviews of this plan will track key indicators such as the number of crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists, the number of completed infrastructure projects, the total mileage of sidewalks and trails added, and the percentage of the population within walking distance of key destinations such as transit, schools, and parks. These reports will be shared publicly and used to refine project priorities, seek new funding opportunities, and adjust strategies where needed.

The City of Aberdeen will maintain strong partnerships with Harford County and regional agencies to coordinate active transportation projects and leverage joint funding opportunities. This collaboration ensures that improvements within Aberdeen complement countywide networks and regional resilience goals. Aligning projects with the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's Resilience 2050 Plan further strengthens Aberdeen's ability to build infrastructure that withstands climate-related challenges while supporting sustainable mobility.

By maintaining effective communication with the public and grounding decision-making in reliable data, the City of Aberdeen will ensure that this plan remains responsive and effective. Community engagement and evaluation are not only tools for better planning; they are critical to building a culture where walking and biking are not only possible, but safe, convenient, and embraced as everyday modes of transportation.

Conclusion

The City of Aberdeen's Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan represents a critical step forward in making the community safer, more accessible, and better connected for people who walk, bike, and use transit. The focused attention on key intersections and corridors, combined with a phased approach to implementation and a strong commitment to community engagement, positions

Aberdeen to create a transportation network that supports healthy lifestyles, environmental sustainability, and equitable mobility.

This plan acknowledges the challenges ahead—from funding constraints to the complexities of retrofitting existing infrastructure—but emphasizes that progress is possible through deliberate planning, coordinated efforts, and ongoing dialogue with residents and stakeholders. By prioritizing safety, connectivity, and inclusivity, Aberdeen can transform its streets into vibrant, people-centered places that enhance quality of life and foster a strong sense of community. The City invites residents, businesses, and partners to join this effort to make walking and biking safe, convenient, and enjoyable for all.

Aligned with the vision and policies outlined in the City of Aberdeen Comprehensive Plan (2022) and strengthened by the collaborative Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) initiative, this plan serves as a roadmap for sustained investment in multimodal infrastructure and safety improvements. Together, these efforts will lay the foundation for a more resilient, active, and livable Aberdeen, ensuring that everyone shares the benefits of safe and accessible transportation today and for generations to come.

22 September 2025

Subject: Request for Support of the Swan Meadows Protective Overlay

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

Following recent developments, we have been advised to return to the Planning Commission to request your support in advancing protective measures for the Swan Meadows community.

As you will recall, in 2023 our residents submitted a petition signed by over 90% of homeowners seeking a protective overlay or rezoning to preserve the stability of our neighborhood. This request was included in last year's comprehensive rezoning plan but was ultimately set aside due to concerns raised by the Mayor regarding possible conflicts with MD House Bill 538 (Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024).

To address this uncertainty, our community formally reached out to the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP). In their written response, MDP reaffirmed that zoning remains a local authority and that HB 538 neither prevents nor requires overlays or rezoning. They provided no indication that our request would conflict with the law. Instead, they pointed to state guidance on "unreasonable limitations," defined as actions that would prevent projects from happening at all, reduce affordability, or eliminate density bonuses.

Our request does not seek to impose such unreasonable limits. Instead, it seeks protection from exploitation while still allowing the current housing density and compatible, affordable housing types such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and duplexes. In this way, the overlay aligns with HB 538's intent: preserving affordability, preventing displacement, and implementing housing goals equitably across all neighborhoods.

To reinforce this point, we have attached:

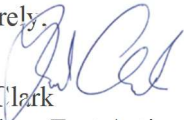
- **Appendix A:** Legal Justification showing the overlay's alignment with HB 538
- **Appendix B:** State Response Letter from MDP confirming local authority
- **Appendix C:** Letter of Support from Delegate Andre Johnson, Jr., who was present during the passage of HB 538

Our overlay would maintain the neighborhood's modest character while still permitting affordable and compatible housing types such as ADUs and duplexes. It protects existing naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), prevents displacement, and ensures growth remains consistent with Swan Meadows' infrastructure limits.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission re-recommend the Swan Meadows Protective Overlay to the City Council. We also ask to participate directly in the process: if the Commission identifies any concerns about potential conflicts with HB 538, we request the opportunity to respond with additional clarification and supporting evidence.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people of Aberdeen.

Sincerely,



Paul Clark
Aberdeen East Action Committee (AEAC)

Cc: Aberdeen City Council Members, Bb: AEAC Members

Appendix A: Legal Justification for the Swan Meadows Overlay Based on Maryland House Bill 538 (2024)

Prepared by: Residents of Swan Meadows, Aberdeen, Maryland

Subject: Legal and Legislative Alignment of Proposed Protective Zoning Overlay with HB 538 (2024)

Date: [Insert Date]

1. Purpose of this Report

This appendix accompanies our formal request to the Maryland Department of Planning to demonstrate that the proposed protective overlay for the Swan Meadows neighborhood is consistent with the intent and letter of Maryland House Bill 538 (2024) — the *Housing Expansion and Affordability Act*. Contrary to any claims that HB 538 prohibits our zoning overlay request, we argue that our narrowly tailored proposal does not conflict with — and may in fact help advance — the bill’s legislative goals.

2. Summary of the Requested Zoning Overlay

Swan Meadows is a small, historically marginalized and working-class neighborhood consisting largely of single-family homes and duplexes. It is currently zoned R-3, which permits higher-density apartment development, transitional housing, and workforce housing. The proposed **Protective Overlay** seeks to:

- Preserve the existing small-scale residential character
- Prevent large-scale multi-family and institutional developments inconsistent with current infrastructure
- Allow for gentle density through permitted uses such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), duplexes, and compatible infill

This overlay is not exclusionary, nor does it prohibit affordable housing. It is intended to **protect a vulnerable, modest-income community from speculative exploitation** and displacement.

3. Legal Alignment with House Bill 538 (2024)

HB 538, passed in the 2024 Maryland General Assembly session, establishes uniform rules that promote affordable housing development near rail and transit hubs. While its language emphasizes **increased density in certain zones**, it also sets guardrails against *unreasonable restrictions*. We believe our overlay is neither unreasonable nor precluded by the bill. Here’s why:

A. Scope of the Law Does Not Forbid Community-Driven Overlays

“A local jurisdiction may not impose a requirement or limitation that has the effect of creating an unreasonable limitation on the development of a qualified project...”
(*Section 5-509(B), HB 538*)

Our overlay does **not prohibit qualified projects** under the law — it **permits affordability** but limits form and scale. It applies only to a *defined micro-neighborhood*, not citywide or transit-wide. It does not:

- Cap the number of units citywide
- Prohibit housing altogether
- Ban affordable housing options within our district

Thus, **the overlay cannot reasonably be considered a “de facto denial”** or “unreasonable limitation” under Section 5-509(B).

B. The Bill Requires Support for Affordable Housing — Not Mandatory Upzoning Everywhere

“The intent of this subtitle is to provide a statewide framework to facilitate the development of affordable housing and housing near transit...”
(*Preamble/Legislative Intent, HB 538*)

Nowhere does HB 538 require **every parcel near transit** to be upzoned. Rather, it aims to:

- Remove **barriers to affordability**, not override local preservation for low-income homeowners
- Facilitate **affordable housing production**, not speculative apartment development without affordability

Our overlay supports this goal by:

- Retaining **naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH)**
- Allowing compatible infill and ADUs
- Ensuring existing working-class homeowners are **not displaced by luxury or market-rate redevelopment**

C. The Bill Allows for Local Variation Based on Equity and Community Preservation

“To ensure equitable access to housing... the law must be implemented with sensitivity to existing communities and infrastructure constraints.”
(*Legislative testimony summary and floor discussion excerpts, 2024 Session*)

Swan Meadows has:

- A legacy of serving **diverse and low-income residents**
- Infrastructure that cannot support high-density projects (narrow streets, drainage limits, parking constraints)
- A lived history of neglect and lack of protection — we now seek to reverse this by asking for **measured, community-driven planning authority**

If HB 538 were interpreted to deny protections to such a community, it would be **fundamentally inequitable and contrary to the spirit of the legislation**.

4. Protecting Marginalized Communities from Displacement and Overdevelopment

Swan Meadows could face increasing pressure from:

- Outside developers seeking high-profit apartment sites
- Loopholes in R-3 zoning allowing personal care and transitional housing
- Disproportionate concentration of density burdens compared to R-1 and R-2 zones

We respectfully submit that denying our request would exacerbate:

- **Economic displacement** of existing homeowners
- **Social and racial inequities** by imposing development burdens only on historically underrepresented neighborhoods
- **Environmental harms** from incompatible density on aging infrastructure

The overlay is a **community-driven safeguard** that promotes **equitable growth**, consistent with Maryland's housing goals.

5. Conclusion

We believe the Swan Meadows Protective Overlay is **entirely consistent with Maryland House Bill 538 (2024)**. It does not deny the goals of affordability or access — rather, it ensures those goals are **implemented fairly** and without harm to those the law was meant to uplift.

We urge the Maryland Department of Planning to:

- Recognize this overlay as a **legally sound planning tool**
- Affirm that HB 538 does **not** prohibit localized protective overlays for marginalized communities
- Uphold our community's right to self-determination in the face of speculative land pressure

On Monday, September 8, 2025 at 03:56:49 PM EDT, Brooks Phelps -MDP- <brooks.phelps@maryland.gov> wrote:

Hello Mr. Clark,

Thank you for your email about the Housing Expansion and Affordability Act (HB 538) and its impact on the Swan Meadows community in Aberdeen. While the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) is supportive of new housing, the proposed zoning amendment or overlay you described in your email to Secretary Flora is a local decision on which MDP cannot provide legal guidance. However, we can provide some guidance related to HB 538.

HB 538 neither prevents nor requires local governments to amend their zoning ordinances. Also, a change in zoning would not prevent qualified projects from receiving a density bonus under HB 538. This could include middle housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, cottage clusters, and townhomes in areas zoned for single-family residential use, or 30% more units than currently allowed in a multi-family residential use where it is allowed by the zones. These projects must include at least 15% affordable units.

MDP cannot comment on whether the proposed Swan Meadows overlay would constitute an “unreasonable limitation”. However, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development [created HB 538 FAQs](#) (see section 6, pages 16-18) that describe an unreasonable limitation as “a restriction that would prevent a project from happening at all, reduce the affordability of a project, or that would prevent a project from maximizing the housing density allowed under HB 538.”

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Thank you,
Brooks Phelps



Brooks Phelps

Regional Planner for Central Maryland

Maryland Department of Planning

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ANDRE V. JOHNSON, JR.
Legislative District 34A
Harford County

Economic Matters Committee

Subcommittees

Alcoholic Beverages

Unemployment Insurance

Joint Committee on Federal Relations



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Subject: Swan Meadows Zoning Protection

Dear Mayor and City Council Members,

I am writing you this letter because it was just brought to my attention of a matter of significant concern regarding the Swan Meadows community. I was informed that last year the residents of Swan Meadows petitioned the Aberdeen City Council to safeguard their neighborhood from potential future exploitation by requesting a rezoning condition that accurately reflects its current character and land use.

Specifically, they seek to prohibit the prospect of increased residential density as permitted under R3 zoning.

I firmly believe that any marginalized community seeking to protect itself from potential exploitation should be afforded that right. As public servants, it is our duty to support and uphold such requests.

While the provisions of HB 538 passed this session, I believe there is room for interpretation that would allow for the residents' request to be accommodated. I am confident that, through collaborative effort and open dialogue, a solution can be found that satisfies both the community's needs and any legislative requirements.

Therefore, I respectfully urge the Council to consider the residents' petition and explore possible legislative actions to preserve the character of the Swan Meadows community. I am open to discussing this matter further and working together to find a mutually beneficial solution.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Delegate Andre V. Johnson Jr.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andre V. Johnson Jr.", written over a horizontal line.