

*This Comprehensive Plan is designed to serve as the community's blueprint for its future physical and economic development. It includes plans, goals, objectives, policies, and actions for use by elected and appointed officials, members of advisory committees, civic groups and organizations, department directors and staff, and citizens as ongoing decisions are made and the community vision is achieved. The plan provides guidance and direction in the areas of land use and future growth, transportation, economic development, parks and recreation, and community appearance.*

**T**he Aberdeen Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for long-range planning of Aberdeen and its three-mile planning area. It provides a broad context in which local decisions may be made to foster a sustainable environment, a prosperous economy, and a high quality of life for all residents. It balances population, housing, and employment growth with the preservation of open space and prime agricultural lands as well as infrastructure needs.

**Why Plan?** - The decision to engage in a comprehensive planning process was done principally to exact control over the destiny of the community rather than reacting to change. This plan is a deliberate stance taken to proactively manage future growth and development as opposed to reacting to development proposals on a case-by-case basis without consideration of community wide issues and objectives. It has been since 1988 that Aberdeen has conducted a comprehensive

planning process and adopted a plan, which emphasizes the importance of this plan as a blueprint for the community's growth and development.

As part of the plan development process, a series of stakeholder interviews were conducted to solicit the input of residents, which was invaluable toward understanding the underlying issues and needs of the area and specifically the values and priorities of those who know best – citizens, advisory board/commission members, neighborhood and civic organizations, community service organizations, business and industry leaders, major landowners and developers, and other community leaders. There were several reasons identified by these persons as to why Aberdeen should plan, including:

- ♦ First and foremost, to “know where we’re going”, so as to plan in advance for future requirements and anticipate and mitigate challenges before confronting them. Planning is used by every business,

*“Plans are worthless.  
Planning is essential ... “  
- General George Patton  
(1947)*



Cities plan for many reasons, among them are to:

- ◆ Take advantage of the community's strengths and advantages while solving its limitations and challenges
- ◆ Protect the interests of property owners by determining in advance how, when, and where the community develops
- ◆ Direct rather than react to new development by timing and sequencing the improvement of infrastructure and provision of municipal services
- ◆ Seize economic opportunities through support of existing businesses, attraction of new industry, and fostering business start-ups
- ◆ Enhance the features that contribute to quality of life, such as parks and recreation areas, preservation of historic resources, conservation of natural resources, and quality public safety services
- ◆ Offer assurance as to the City's commitment to manage its future to ensure compatible and sustainable development

organization and group as a means to create strategies for success – the community is no different.

- ◆ To show those interested in making an investment in the community that the City has a vision and acting in a proactive manner to achieve it.
- ◆ To maintain a "small-town atmosphere", quality schools, low rate of crime, and family-oriented facilities and activities, each of which contribute to the acclaimed excellent quality of life;
- ◆ To reverse the declining population trend by diversifying and strengthening the economy thereby creating employment opportunities for the community's youth as well as those maturing in their careers;
- ◆ To reinvest in neighborhoods to sustain their integrity and create quality living environments, including consideration of adequate, available and affordable housing for all persons;
- ◆ To redevelop "tired" areas of the community as a means to stabilize and increase the tax base as well as improve and enhance the appearance and image of the community;
- ◆ To ensure adequate community facilities and services, including utility infrastructure (water,

wastewater and drainage); fire, police and emergency medical services; school facilities; and parks and open space, that are necessary to support new development and further enhance quality of life;

- ◆ To make wise and fiscally-responsible decisions relating to the management of future development; and,
- ◆ To reach consensus on behalf of private and public interests as to the future vision of Aberdeen and the proactive steps necessary to achieve success.

### What is the Value of Planning? -

The process required to develop this plan was as valuable to the community as is the plan itself, since the plan is only a snapshot in time. The planning process involved major community decisions about how much and where growth will occur, the nature of future growth, and whether the community can afford to provide the necessary public services and facilities to support this growth. This leads to pivotal discussions about what is "best" for the community and how everything from taxes to "quality of life" will be affected.

This plan provides an opportunity for the elected and appointed officials to step back from the day-to-day issues and to clarify their ideas on the kind of community



they are trying to create. The plan development process provided a chance to look broadly at programs for neighborhoods, housing, economic development, provision of public infrastructure and services, open space and environmental protection, and how these concerns relate to one another. The Aberdeen Plan represents a "big picture" of the City and its planning area, which can be related to the trends and interests of the broader region as well as the State of South Dakota.

Local planning is often the most direct and efficient way to involve members of the public in describing the community they want. The process of plan preparation provided a rare opportunity for two-way communication between citizens and local government officials as to their vision of the community and the details of how that vision is to be achieved. The plan resulted in a series of goals, objectives and actions that will guide the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Commission in administering development regulations; in the location, financing, and sequencing of public improvements; and, in guiding reinvestment and redevelopment efforts. The Plan also provides a means of coordinating the actions

of many different departments and divisions within the City.

**How will the plan be used?** - The Aberdeen Tomorrow Plan belongs to the community and its citizens who generously offered their time and talents to create it. The ability to implement the plan is directly correlated to the amount of citizen participation and the sense of ownership derived from the process. The plan contains many components and serves numerous functions such as providing information, identifying existing conditions and characteristics, and establishing local governmental policies and strategies. It is a definitive source of information regarding the existing and future conditions and characteristics of the community. By its nature, the plan is intended to serve all interests of the community and offers the following benefits:

- ♦ It states the intentions of the City's governing body as to the area's physical development and infrastructure investment, which creates a level of certainty for landowners and developers;
- ♦ It establishes policy and provides guidance toward future development and redevelopment, which may be utilized by the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Commission and others in their decision-making;

- ◆ It identifies programs and initiatives in the form of specific recommendations, which may form a coordinated work program for the departments of the City;
- ◆ It identifies capital improvement needs and priorities, which may be utilized by management in annual budgeting and capital programming;
- ◆ It indicates the type, pattern, and density of future development and coordinates transportation and infrastructure improvements, which notifies the citizens of the pattern of development and its influence on private property; and,
- ◆ It serves as a blueprint for the area's future economic and physical development, which is useful to other local, State and Federal agencies engaged in the provision of programs, services and facilities.

development of the territory under its jurisdiction. For the plan to be effected, the City "shall provide by ordinance for a planning and zoning commission," which shall be "for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of the municipality." The statute specifies that "municipalities shall, as soon as possible, make, adopt, amend, extend, add to or carry out a general municipal plan of development, such plan to be referred to as the comprehensive plan."

[Section 11-6-14, Preparation of Comprehensive Plan for Municipal Development](#), specifies that "it shall be a function and duty of the planning commission to propose a plan for the physical development of the municipality, including any areas outside the boundary and within its planning jurisdiction which, in the commission's judgment bear relation to the planning of the municipality. The comprehensive plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts and descriptive and explanatory matter, shall show the commission's recommendations for the said physical development and may include, among other things, the general location, character, and extent of streets, bridges, viaducts, parks, parkways, waterways and waterfront developments, playgrounds, airports, and other

*"The general plan is the official statement of a municipal legislative body which sets forth its major policies concerning desirable future physical development; the published general plan document must include a single, unified general physical design for the community, and it must attempt to clarify the relationships between physical development policies and social and economic goals."*  
- T.J. Kent, The Urban General Plan

### Statutory Authority to Plan

As defined in the state statutes ([Chapter 11-6, Comprehensive City Planning](#)), a "Comprehensive Plan," is any document which describes in words, and may illustrate by maps, plats, charts, and other descriptive matter, the goals, policies, and objectives of the municipality to interrelate all functional and natural systems and activities relating to the



public ways, grounds, places and spaces; the general location of public schools, of public buildings and other public property; a zoning ordinance for the regulation of the height, area, bulk, location, and use of private and public structures and premises, and of population density as may be provided by law may be included as an adjunct to the comprehensive plan; the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, light, power, heat, sanitation, transportation, communication, and other purposes; the acceptance, widening, removal, extension, relocation, narrowing, vacation, abandonment, or change of use of any of the foregoing public ways, grounds, places, spaces, buildings, properties, utilities, or terminals; the general location, character, layout, and extent of community centers and neighborhood units, and the general character, extent, and layout of the replanning of blighted districts and slum areas. The commission may from time to time propose amendments, extensions, or additions to the plan or carry any of the subject matter into greater detail.

### *Organization of the Aberdeen Tomorrow Plan*

This plan is organized into 10 individual plan elements, each of which address existing conditions; key issues; and goals, objectives and recommendations for the respective elements of the community. The chapters include:

- ♦ **Chapter 1, Introduction** – This chapter outlines the important reasons for this plan, as stated by residents of the community through the public involvement process. It also outlines the statutory authority for the community to plan for its future.
- ♦ **Chapter 2, Community Profile** - This chapter offers an in-depth introduction to the city, which documents existing socioeconomic conditions and demographic characteristics pertaining to its historical and current population; the age, gender and educational attainment of its people; and the economic position of the community and its businesses. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the community has grown since its settlement in the late nineteenth century, to identify its current characteristics and resources that will contribute to the envisioned future, and to analyze where the community appears to be headed in the future.

### Table of Contents

1. *Introduction*
2. *Community Profile*
3. *Community Vision*
4. *Land Use*
5. *Transportation*
6. *Economic Development*
7. *Parks and Recreation*
8. *Community Appearance*
9. *Growth Policies*
10. *Implementation*

- ♦ **Chapter 3, Community Vision**
  - This chapter establishes a vision for the future of Aberdeen that reflects the hopes and aspirations of residents, and is based on a realistic understanding of existing conditions and opportunities facing the community. It described the process of developing the vision, including stakeholder interviews, a community forum, and a representative citizen committee, and the vision and mission statements for this plan and the community's future. It also includes the goal statements from each element of the plan.
- ♦ **Chapter 4, Land Use** - This element provides a vision for the future physical development of Aberdeen and its three-mile planning area. The purpose is to establish the necessary policy guidance that will be used in making decisions about the compatibility and appropriateness of individual developments within the context of the larger community. An essential component of this chapter is the land use plan, which will serve as the City's policy for directing ongoing development and managing future growth, preserving valued areas and lands, and protecting neighborhoods.
- ♦ **Chapter 5, Transportation** - The purpose of this transportation chapter is to address area-wide mobility needs on all levels, from sidewalks and trails, to local streets and neighborhood access, to arterial roadways and highways. The principal aim of transportation planning is to ensure safe and efficient movement of people and goods. To achieve this end, this element includes a Thoroughfare Plan, which is the long-term plan for developing an overall system of thoroughfares for the City and its three-mile planning area. The plan is to be used as a guide for securing needed rights-of-way and upgrading and extending the network of streets, roads and highways in an orderly and timely fashion.
- ♦ **Chapter 6, Economic Development** - This chapter expands upon the community's opportunities to retain and support existing businesses, attract and grow desirable new businesses, adequately train and educate youth and the community workforce - all while sustaining, protecting, and enhancing the characteristics valued most by those who live in Aberdeen. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance



to the community as to how it can be proactive in its economic development and achieve its vision without compromising character or quality of life.

- ◆ **Chapter 7, Parks and Recreation** – The purpose of this chapter is to determine the community's current and future needs for improving its existing parks, and providing adequate areas and facilities to meet its short and long-term needs. This plan element forms the policy direction of the City pertaining to the timing of park development, their placement within the City and planning area, the type and quality of facilities, and the method by which enhancements and improvements are funded.
- ◆ **Chapter 8, Community Appearance** - The focus of this chapter is the character and appearance of Aberdeen, which emphasize how the physical elements of individual corridors and districts fit together to form a unified whole community. It also expresses how the framework of the community ties important locations together and helps orient people within the community, how new construction relates to the physical elements already in place, how districts

and neighborhoods are to function and be designed, and how government processes work to effectively achieve these goals.

- ◆ **Chapter 9, Growth Policies** - This chapter establishes a policy framework for managing future development in a manner that is wise and fiscally responsible. It includes policies for sensitive future development, a growth sequencing plan to stage development concurrent with adequate facilities and services, as well as annexation policies and criteria.
- ◆ **Chapter 10, Implementation** - The purpose of this plan is to identify a course of policy direction for the community, which is then used to make specific decisions as to the actions that must be taken, the department or agency responsible for the initiatives, the actual process and timeframe for completion, and the source of funds necessary to implement the recommendation. Therefore, the role of the chapter is to form the construct by which specific decisions may be made. It outlines the organizational structure necessary to implement the plan, establishes a process for annual and periodic evaluation and appraisal of the plan, and sets forth a five-year action plan.