While the divisions kept busy with daily tasks related to land use applications, building and site review, the major achievement in FY20 was the adaption, in March 2020, to the challenges of maintaining these essential City services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thanks to our friends in Emergency Management, the department had given much thought to continuity of operations during a major emergency and these plans were pulled off the shelves and became our starting point for navigating this challenge. Employees and customers adapted quickly to the establishment of a web-based appointment calendar for Walk-Thru Wednesdays, which eliminated wait times and congregating in long lines for permits as well as virtual inspections and Zoom meetings.

While the department has long had a desire to streamline permitting with more online offerings, CARES Act funding provided the means to implement online plan submittal and permit issuance while reducing risk of exposure to the virus for both staff and customers. And because customer feedback has been so positive, many of the new procedures we put in place while under the pandemic will become permanent, convenient options for customers.

Construction on existing projects did not slow down in FY20 as the Landings at Cannon Branch and Tru Hotel neared completion, though many sites were shut down for short periods of time due to virus exposures to allow for thorough cleaning of the job sites. In particular, Micron continued its fast pace to complete the 600,000 square foot facility which is expected to be delivered on time in the Spring, 2021. The largest construction project in the City’s history, the Micron facility has required close coordination by City staff with Micron personnel, construction managers, other City departments, and on-call inspectors.

The submission of new building permits did drop from a high of 752 in FY19 to 504 in FY20 and it remains to be seen if the economic conditions created by the pandemic have an impact on growth and development in FY21 and FY22.

This year Transportation Planner Chloe Delhomme secured $5.5 million in grants that are funding the City’s transportation CIP with an emphasis on bike and pedestrian trails, consistently ranked as a top citizen priority in the City’s biannual community surveys. And the long-range planning team worked with the City’s Planning Commission to implement the newly adopted 2040 Comprehensive Plan, including supporting City-initiated commercial rezonings to relieve property owners of outdated proffers that were making it difficult to attract tenants and fully lease existing commercial space.

I want to close with thanking the hardworking staff of the Planning & Development Department for not missing a beat whether working on streamlining outdoor dining regulations or handling virtual inspections. We are masked up and ready to keep the essential business of government going through whatever happens.

Elizabeth Via-Gossman, FAICP
Assistant City Manager & Director of Community Development

Community Development Department team members masked up and adopted new pandemic practices to better serve citizens.
When the Covid-19 pandemic caused a rush to shutter schools and businesses, quarantine at home, and interrupt life as usual, Planning & Development and Long Range Planning staff set to work to help City restaurants and businesses weather the storm with special permits and business-friendly zoning.

Creating more sidewalk outdoor dining space gave restaurants the chance to continue serving patrons in a safe way, while keeping their businesses more visible. The sidewalk dining permits—and later permits for temporary tents and outdoor heaters—were processed quickly in collaboration with the Fire Marshal’s office so restaurant owners could spend less time on paperwork and more time in the kitchen. Opening the Harris Pavilion for outdoor takeout dining also gave restaurants and diners more space.

Customers who were used to dropping off or picking up plans in the second floor Planning and Development office quickly adapted to using an outside drop-off box when City Hall was closed for in-person transactions. The box has made it more convenient for customers to quickly submit plans.

Planning & Development established an easy-to-use web-based appointment calendar for customers to discuss projects large and small. The appointments have eliminated waiting times, especially during the popular Walk Through Wednesdays, and ensured that social distancing can be maintained.

In ordinary times, building inspections might include peering up at ceiling joists, or opening electrical panel boxes in dark basement corners. When the pandemic made it impossible to get inside homes and commercial construction sites, the permit and inspections staff quickly found that virtual inspections conducted on iPads and phones could keep building projects on track, and that most inspections could be done quickly and safely from a distance.

The virtual inspections did require a little extra prep time. Permit technicians contacted customers who requested inspections and confirmed that they could use Facetime or Zoom, and let them know if they might need a screwdriver to open a panel, or a tape measure to show the dimensions of something. Sometimes inspectors had to explain where to find connections, bolts, or explain what a nosing or a stair tread is. When in-person inspections were necessary for projects like decks, customers could place their plans outside. For more complex commercial and residential project inspections that couldn’t be done virtually, staff maintained social distancing and avoided contact with contractors as much as possible.

Because customer feedback has been so positive, virtual inspections, web-based appointments, and the outdoor plan drop-off box—all developed to keep customers and inspectors safe during the pandemic—will become permanent, more convenient options for customers.
The Long Range Planning Division is responsible for articulating the community's long-range vision for land use and implementing that vision through policies and ordinances, planning studies, capital project planning, and development review. The division is dedicated to improving the quality of life for City residents through appropriate land use policies and regulations while fostering a competitive business environment.

Matt Arcieri
Director of Planning & Development

The focus of the Long Range Planning Division, in partnership with the Planning Commission, was the completion and implementation of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Master Plan. Both plans will guide future efforts to enhance neighborhoods, support commercial development, and improve mobility and ease of access across the City.

Rezonings Help Commercial Property Owners

In the 1980s, when the Beauregard Square shopping center was built, zoning regulations required that 25 percent of the property be occupied by office space. That regulation made it difficult to attract tenants today, so Long Range Planning staff teamed up with Economic Development staff on a rezoning project that repealed these outdated regulations and has made it easier for business owners to better utilize their properties.

The project also rezoned two other 1980s-era properties: Godwin Business Park from I-2 Heavy Industrial to I-1 Light Industrial, and Commerce Corner, which changed from I-2 Heavy Industrial, to B-4 General Commercial. As property owners make requests, staff will continue to pursue rezonings that better reflect changing businesses and neighborhoods, and to support the development and redevelopment of under-utilized commercial properties.

Beauregard Square

It's never too early to learn about what planners do for the City. (top) Planning Commission Chair Harry Clark told Boy Scouts from Pack 1188 about the way zoning projects are considered. (bottom) Staff and Planning Commission members who visited the Jennie Dean Elementary School Lego Club consulted about building projects made of less durable materials than they’re used to.
The 2040 Comprehensive Plan that will guide future planning in the City was adopted by City Council on February 24, 2020. The three year-long collaborative process brought together citizens, stakeholders, the Planning Commission, staff, and elected officials to define a community-driven vision for the Plan.

Balancing growth and preservation, the land use plan adopts Character Areas to guide the form and character of development while allowing mixed uses and promoting context-sensitive infill and redevelopment. The mobility chapter responds to citizen demands for improved multimodal connectivity, incorporating an equity-based bike and pedestrian plan and an innovative Complete Streets typology that abandons traditional level of service classifications in favor of safe routes for all users and modes.

Other notable strategies include a green infrastructure plan, updated level of service criteria to respond to state proffer laws, and strategies for public health, resiliency, and housing affordability. The Plan broadens the use of an implementation table, showing that two-thirds of the over 200 strategies are tied to two or more themes – Manassas is Balanced, Connected, Vibrant, and Resilient – which better informs community discussion on the use of limited City resources.

The Transportation Master Plan, which was completed in September, 2019, identifies how existing roadways, transit, bike and pedestrian facilities are serving the community, recommends improvements, and provides a guide for future transportation investments to improve mobility in the city.

Planning and GIS staff worked to launch an interactive Comprehensive Plan that enables users to click on links throughout the story map that open chapters of the plan. When users click on map layers they can explore popups or zoom in and out for greater context.

Transportation Planner Chloe Delhomme discussed the Transportation Master Plan at Car Free Day during the Saturday Farmer’s Market.
Development review of rezonings and special use permits showed no significant change, reflecting current market conditions and an increase in rezonings due to ongoing efforts to update existing property’s zoning in conformance with the city’s new zoning ordinance.

The Planning Commission met in seven regular meetings to act on land use cases. The Planning Commission acted on two special use permit cases, four rezonings, two zoning text amendments, and two Comprehensive Plan Amendments recommending approval for:

- A home-based business on Maple St.
- A height modification for the new Public Safety Facility on Grant Ave.
- A motor vehicle repair (minor) use in the Home Depot parking lot on Liberia Avenue.
- Three proffer/rezoning amendments to remove outdated restrictions at 8951 Center Street (Beauregard Square Shopping Center); 9819 Godwin Drive (Godwin Business Park), and 9037 Liberia Avenue (Commerce Corner).
- A Landmark designation for Hibbs and Giddings building at 9129 Center Street.
- A public facility review for the new Manassas City Library at the Wellington Station Shopping Center.
- Annual updates to the zoning ordinance.
- The 2040 Comprehensive Plan

In FY20, there were no cases before the Board of Zoning Appeals.
If you drive, ride, or walk in the city, transportation planning and projects help you get around and improve the surrounding landscape.

This year Transportation Planner Chloe Delhomme secured $5.5 million in grants that are funding existing CIP Projects to move those projects forward to completion.

**The Wellington Road bike and pedestrian trail** from Prince William Street to the Route 28 overpass is the missing gap that will make it safe for pedestrians and bikers to travel from Godwin Drive to Liberia Avenue. The first part of the Wellington trail was built in the 1980s. The project has been funded with a federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) $675,000 grant, and has consistently ranked as a top citizen priority in the City.

**The Mathis Avenue Streetscape Project** from Sudley Road to Liberia Avenue will have a planted median and dedicated turn lanes within the existing right-of-way. This project includes streetscape and pedestrian improvements.

Working with Engineering and Public Works and the City’s street paving program, **seven miles of on-street bike facilities** were added including new lanes on Richmond Avenue (at right) and Cloverhill Road.

Imagine doing without a car for even a day. Now imagine that you learn about transportation alternatives that make a car-less day seem possible. That was the goal of the third annual **Car Free Day** at the city’s Saturday Farmer’s Market. The event featured a community bike ride between the George Mason University’s Manassas campus and the Farmer’s Market, escorted by Manassas City Police officers. An OmniRide bus was on hand to promote commuting by bus, and Transportation Planner Chloe Delhomme discussed new trails and initiatives with visitors who stopped by the pop-up park. City employees also participated by car-pooling or riding bikes to work during the three day-long Car Free event.
Property Code Enforcement

Property Code Enforcement (PCE) staff is responsible for enforcing the City’s nuisance codes, including tall grass and trash ordinances, the Virginia Property Maintenance Code, the Building Code for work without permits, and the Zoning Ordinance. This type of complaint-based and proactive code enforcement is critical to our city’s neighborhood preservation and revitalization efforts.

Carlos Perez
Property Code Enforcement Supervisor

PCE maintains an aggressive goal that within 45-business days a case:
• Should be abated;
• Should be under an abatement plan; or
• Transferred to the City Attorney or Public Works for court action or clean-up.

In FY20, 92% of cases were abated within the 45-day goal. An even more stringent measure—a 15 day disposition of Civil Penalty Cases (including vehicle violations and junkyard citations) increased 15% over last year. Over 75% of new cases are proactive, or initiated by code inspectors, and focus on areas of concern (like tall grass and inoperable vehicles) indicated in the City’s Citizen Survey.

PCE continued efforts to educate property owners and tenants in English and Spanish about the many tools and resources available to assist in cleaning up and maintaining their homes.
Property Code Enforcement

The suspension of interior inspections during the pandemic resulted in a decrease in overall inspections, but proactive and complaint-based exterior inspections continued.

PCE continued to actively remove unpermitted roadside signs, and collected 753 in FY20.

New Cases by Type
The Land & Building Development Division provides timely and reliable plan review, permitting and inspections to the community. The division also acts as staff liaison to the Architectural Review Board (ARB), and Building Inspection Board of Appeals.

**Greg Bokan**  
Land Development Manager/Zoning Administrator

**Eric Lowe**  
Building Development Manager/Building Official

The division supported five major development projects in FY20:

- At the 40-acre **Landing at Cannon Branch** site, construction of a new 20,000 square foot multi-use office building, and construction of the 98-room Tru by Hilton hotel, were nearly complete at the close of FY20. Construction of over 270 new townhomes and condominiums is ongoing.

- The division continues to support the $3 billion expansion of **Micron Technology Inc.’s semiconductor plant** with plan reviews and inspections that help keep the project on track. Virtual meetings and consultations continued during the pandemic.

- The 110,000 square foot **Chantilly Air Fixed Base Operator** hangar, terminal and office space began construction at the Manassas Airport.

- Construction began on the City’s 21,000 square foot **Fire Station #21**, and inspections are ongoing.

- Site and building plans for the 68,000 square foot **Public Safety Facility** were reviewed and construction began in FY21.

*(top) Inspections have been ongoing at Fire Station #21 and the Landing at Cannon Branch development (middle); Chris Hogan files plans submitted by a customer.*
Development Projects

THE LANDINGS AT CANNON BRANCH
10509 Ratcliffe Trail
- Residential Component: ongoing construction of 274 Stanley Martin Homes with 114 condos and 160 townhomes

TRU HOTEL
10550 Gateway Boulevard
- Construction of 98-room, four floor, 45,058 square foot Tru Hotel

CHANTILLY AIR FIXED BASE OPERATOR
10481 Observation Road
- $13 million project has 110,000 square feet of hangar space
- 30,000 square feet of offices
- 11,000 sq ft terminal

OFFICE/RETAIL AT THE LANDINGS
10560 Gateway Blvd.
- 20,000 square foot office/retail space

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
9750 Wellington Road
- Fellowship hall, kitchen, and additional community meeting rooms

THE GODDARD SCHOOL
10405 Dumfries Road
- 10,400-square-foot school for ages 6 months to 6 years

RESIDENTIAL INFILL LOTS
9918, 9920, 9922 Wellington Road
- Three new construction single family homes
Development Projects

**HASTINGS MARKETPLACE LIVE/WORK UNITS**
*Market Street*
• Eight Live/Work Units

**MI RICO PERU RESTAURANT**
9700 Liberia Avenue
• New pad site in Signal Hill Shopping Center

**TONY’S PIZZA**
8801 Centreville Road
• Relocation of restaurant to renovated space

**BATTLE STREET BISTRO**
9402 Battle Street
• Conversion of office space to restaurant, including future roof top dining

**RESIDENTIAL RENOVATION**
9512, 9514 Liberty Street
• Home renovations

**MERCANTILE USE**
9209 and 9213 Center Street
• Renovation of existing storefronts
Development Projects

FIRE STATION #21
10306 Dumfries Road
• New combined 21,000 square foot four bay Fire and Rescue Station
• Site and building plan approval; construction ongoing

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY
9608 Grant Avenue
• 68,000 square foot Police Headquarters, consolidated Public Safety logistics, 911 Center, Emergency Operations Center, Fire & Rescue Administration, and IT Department
• Site and building plans reviewed

Micron’s 600,000 Square Foot Facility Takes Shape
Construction of Micron’s $3 billion Godwin Drive facility began in December, 2018 and is expected to be complete in the spring of 2021. The largest construction project in the City's history has required close coordination with Micron, construction managers, other City departments, and on-call inspectors for the foundation, interiors, plumbing, electric, utilities and clean room, where memory products for industrial automation, drones, the IoT (Internet of Things) and autos will be manufactured. Staff will complete the final inspections.
Overall building plan submissions dropped by 32% and site plan submissions fell by 14%, likely due to both advancing construction work on major projects including the Landing at Cannon Branch, and due to the pandemic.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the division reviewed 90% of building plans in two and a half weeks. The number of priority-processed building plans—allowing certain City and commercial project review times to be reduced to less than one week—was unchanged but the number of priority-processed site and subdivision plans increased by 130%.
The number of inspections decreased by 26% and the number of inspections performed on the day requested dropped to 76% as staff worked to institute virtual and distanced inspections.

The majority of Architectural Review Board applications were for signs and minor structure modifications, but the Board did review and approve two notable projects:

- Exterior modifications to 9212 Lee Avenue, The First New Birth Baptist Church, which included window replacements, security doors, and wood siding repair, abating previous violations and saving the structure from deterioration.

- The owner of the Hibbs and Giddings Building requested that it be included in the adopted list of historic landmarks. This request was supported by the ARB, as well as the Planning Commission, and was adopted by City Council. This omission has led staff to take a closer look at updating the adopted list of historic landmarks.

(top) Combination Inspector Cherri DeSilva checks hot water inside a Landings at Cannon Branch unit; (bottom) DeSilva, Combination Inspector Brian Wicks, and Building Development Manager/Building Official Eric Lowe meet with a construction engineer at Micron.
Assistant City Manager and Community Development Director Liz Via-Gossman was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners. The FAICP designation recognizes her as a model planner who has made significant contributions to planning and society, and has achieved excellence in professional practice, teaching and mentoring, research, public and community service, and leadership in a more than 30-year career.

Senior Transportation Planner Chloe Delhomme’s work on joint mobility projects was recognized during a Council presentation by Executive Director of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) Dr. Robert Schneider. “Working with Chloe has been a game-changer for us,” Schneider said. “Having that enthusiasm and invigoration helps us push forward.” Chloe is at left (center) during the Car Free Day Council proclamation. Chloe also received a City Beat Award after being nominated by her peers for work that goes above and beyond to reflect the City’s visions and values.

City Manager Pat Pate surprised Permit Technician Chris Hogan, former Permit Technician Jessica Gordon, and Land Development Manager/Zoning Administrator Greg Bokan with a Making a Difference Award for their extra efforts in customer service. Several customers had taken the time to recognize their help in completing complex development projects.

(top) Matt Arcieri, Director of Planning and Development, spoke about new bike lanes, and (bottom) Liz Via-Gossman spoke about planning for Annaburg, the City’s newest park during segments on WDVM news.