HARRISONBURG CITY COUNCIL 2045 VISION

2025 - 2028 ACTION PLAN

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Mayor Deanna Reed
Vice-Mayor Dany Fleming
Council Member Laura Dent
Council Member Monica Robinson
Council Member Nasser Alsaadun

HARRISONBURG 2045:
A CITY FOR ALL

We provide a quality urban living option for everyone who wants to reside here.

Our diverse population thrives in a welcoming city where all are valued as friends and neighbors.

Our inclusiveness is our strength and reflects the true spirit of our city.

The pillars of our multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-generational city consist of a robust economy and a vibrant education epicenter, along with a broad range of amenities and a beautiful natural environment that enrich life.

This is made possible by the fiscally sound planning of our staff and elected leaders.

Bold thinking, community input, and best practices lead the city to consider new paths and structures that have led to our recognition as a model locality.

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	A HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY

PRIORITY A	Develop a central resource/hub for newcomers that makes them welcome in City Hall and other City locations, provides information, and ensures access to City services.

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

A centralized location with interpretation services will increase access by creating a convenient, welcoming location for new residents to learn about services the City provides and to receive navigation support, including signing up for these services and programs. By creating this centralized hub, we will remove barriers, increase trust and transparency, and improve efficiency of service delivery.

STAFF CHAMPION	Michael Parks

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Research similar models of a centralized hub in other communities	November 2024
2. Consider the best location or format for this type of service	November 2024
3. Do a strategic assessment with systems mapping to understand how the newcomer to the community currently accesses services and how to improve navigation of services and access to them	December 2025
4. Evaluate and propose a listening session with segments of our community that could inform what information and assistance they are seeking	December 2025
5. Solicit input from City departments and other community stakeholders on what information is of highest demand and what programs and opportunities should be better highlighted through this location	January 2026
6. Develop a communications plan for promoting the new location to all segments of our community	January 2026

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VISION AREA	A HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY

PRIORITY B	Employ strategies to ensure all residents, visitors, and businesses have effective access to City services and reduce barriers to access.

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The City should ensure sufficient language and physical access to City services on a regularly reoccurring basis. Access to those services should be measured to inform how resources can be deployed to reach segments of the community that may be underutilizing services that can benefit them. Additionally, businesses interested in expanding into Harrisonburg should have access to information on how to do so in the most streamlined manner possible. Visitors should be able to locate amenities, local businesses, and public spaces with ease.

STAFF CHAMPION	Michael Parks

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Evaluate best practices and models from successful organizations around an annual resident survey	November 2024
2. Convene a multi-disciplinary workgroup of ELT members, staff members, the Director of Communications & Public Engagement, and Outreach Coordinators	November 2025
3. Create the survey based on service focus areas and research different surveying options	January 2026
4. Present the draft survey to ELT, DLT, Committee for Equity & Harmony, and City Ambassadors; explore needs and translate survey into top languages	February 2026
5. Create a communications and outreach strategy focused on educating the community about the survey and encouraging their participation	February 2026
6. Beta-test the survey	March 2026
7. Create a schedule around public engagement opportunities (in-person listening sessions, focus groups, presence at faith-based organizations, engagement at neighborhood events, etc.), including marginalized groups	April 2026
8. Collect data	May 2026
9. Compile and analyze data in a presentation format. Present the data to internal stakeholders and City Council (through the City Manager)	August 2026
10. Show community ways their input from the survey is being used to improve service by departments	January 2027

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	A HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY

PRIORITY C	Coordinate and promote awareness of Public Safety services and programs that enhance community safety.

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Currently, the City's Public Safety Departments (Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, 911 Services, and Emergency Management) have robust community engagement programs.

What is needed is more public awareness and accessibility to the programs provided by these departments and respective divisions, with a focus on prevention, access, mitigation, and recovery.

A significant underlying issue in improving saturation and target audience reach is gaining trust in communities that are historically distrustful of public safety or government officials so that everyone can access programs that increase public safety and provide assistance where necessary.

STAFF CHAMPION	Chief of Police, Chief of Fire, Director of HRECC

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Utilize the new Community Outreach Specialist in the Police Department to coordinate methods to advertise events and services in our outlying communities and share with our Public Safety Partners	December 2024
2. Form a committee comprised of Public Safety team members and Communications to develop a plan to collaborate on efforts and share opportunities to 'get the word out' about our collective services	June 2025
3. Determine who the target audience is and identify trusted leaders within the target audiences	June 2025
4. Develop a strategy to convene community leaders to raise awareness about Public Safety services and programs	August 2025
5. Strengthen internally the referral system when community members have problems or needs, but the resources are provided by a community partner	December 2024
6. Convene community leaders for meetings to seek understanding about how public safety agencies can build trust and improve the willingness and ability to access public safety service	August 2025
7. Measure and evaluate an increase in requests for public safety engagement in marginalized communities	August 2025

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	A HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY

PRIORITY D	Implement a discussion of measures and actions the Council can take to remedy past actions, current harms and lasting impacts

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

We must educate our community about and acknowledge its own history of discrimination and racial injustice to move our City forward and fulfill our vision as a City for All. The government was complicit in perpetuating racial disparity through policy decisions and tools such as condemnation that dismantled the City's historically black neighborhood and business center and forcibly displaced black residents from their homes, places of worship, and community gathering spaces. These actions continue to fuel distrust in government.

STAFF CHAMPION	Amy Snider

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Research similar measures taken domestically and internationally to acknowledge and memorialize past harms	March 2025
2. Utilize a facilitator to assist Council in deciding on their preferences and to inform research by City staff	August 2025
3. Analyze legal issues involving potential remedies	September 2025
4. Take steps to follow through on solutions that are selected and develop new action plans	January 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	A HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY

PRIORITY E	Identify and employ tools to give citizens greater access to City decision-making, including addressing barriers to participation in governmental processes

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Participation in local government is important to good and equitable governance. Some considerations include how to identify and understand barriers and how to educate residents regarding the importance of being active in local government.

STAFF CHAMPION	Amy Snider

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Implement a strategic assessment to identify barriers and learn how people want to have communication and what would inspire participation	March 2025
2. Consider holding rotating town halls in different locations around the City	April 2025
3. Evaluate and quantify the cost of providing stipends for boards and commissions	June 2024
4. Evaluate and quantify the cost of providing food and childcare at community meetings	June 2025
5. Consider a resident newsletter	June 2025
6. Evaluate strategies to empower Council Members to be ambassadors in inviting community members to be more participatory in their government	June 2025
7. Launch a robust public access channel that can be a portal for boards, commissions, public meetings, educational opportunities, and programmatic highlights of City services	December 2025

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	A HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY

PRIORITY F	Explore/conduct research on the advisability of establishing an office of human rights or a human rights commission

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Exploring the establishment of an Office on Human Rights reflects our city's recognition of the inherent dignity of all individuals and the importance of protecting and promoting fundamental rights at the local level. As our community grows more diverse and our civic landscape becomes more complex, there is value in assessing whether a dedicated office could help ensure that principles of equity, inclusion, and fairness are upheld. While further evaluation is needed to determine the most effective approach, considering such an office signals our city's openness to institutional solutions that foster trust, prevent discrimination, and affirm the rights of every resident.

STAFF CHAMPION	Wesley Russ

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Research enabling ordinances for other localities, evaluating the differences in structure and funding sources	July 2025
2. Receive feedback from other communities on perceived effectiveness, limitations, and success in achieving intended outcomes	October 2025
3. Evaluate estimated budgetary impact of different options based on implementation in other localities	November 2025

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	**A THRIVING EDUCATIONAL EPICENTER**
PRIORITY A	Assess and determine how to provide additional support to expand early childhood education and after-school programs supported by the City

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Early childhood education is a crucial factor for a child's success. In addition to the benefits of early childhood education, childcare plays a foundational role in allowing city residents to get to work and generate economic development. Currently, the City operates an after-school program through the Parks and Recreation Department and works with Shenandoah Valley Partnership, whose business plan includes consideration of the childcare needs of regional employers. Additionally, City Council allocated $596,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to increase childcare seats in the city through helping in-home providers become licensed and supporting childcare centers.

Implementation of this priority necessitates consideration of the capacity of facilities, City staff, and financial realities. The Child Care and Early Learning Needs Assessment will obtain data on the current supply of child care by provider type, ages served, cost, and hours of availability; identify gaps by provider type, age, hours, and geographic location; and quantify the quantity and category of seats needed to meet community demand. A primary purpose is for local data and information to be used to guide community decisions around child care and early learning.

STAFF CHAMPION	Amy Snider

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Procure a consultant to conduct an early childhood education needs assessment	December 2025
2. Conduct a Child Care and Early Learning Needs Assessment to identify current public and private childcare availability, community childcare needs, and potential action items to increase childcare capacity in the city, if necessary	December 2025
3. Request funding for any immediately actionable City-led actions on childcare and early childhood education in FY25-26 Budget	March 2026
4. Incorporate the results of the Child Care and Early Learning Needs Assessment into the Economic Development strategic plan to identify opportunities to expand private childcare businesses, if necessary	March 2026
5. Convene key partners in the city school system to discuss opportunities for expanding early childhood education capacity	April 2025
6. Incorporate results of the Child Care and Early Learning Needs Assessment into the Parks and Recreation Department Master Planning process to identify opportunities to expand City early childhood education programs, if necessary	July 2025
7. Develop strategies and staff recommendations for City-led actions on childcare and early childhood education for City Council	December 2025
8. Request funding for City-led actions on childcare and early childhood education in FY26-27 Budget	July 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	A THRIVING EDUCATIONAL EPICENTER

PRIORITY B	Work with the School Board to identify a successful strategy to meet our school needs

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

City Council is responsible for funding the City Schools and therefore must be involved in addressing the operational and capital needs of the school system within the context of the broader community's needs. Considerations include acknowledging the City School Board is duly elected to make policy decisions regarding public education and to operate the schools; determining how to best facilitate communication and cooperation between the two Bodies; and that there are limitations on state funding for capital improvement.

STAFF CHAMPION	Ande Banks

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Work with the City-City Schools Liaison Committee to develop a scope for a Weldon Cooper Center study of population projections	February 2024
2. Hold facilitated work session(s) between the City School Board and the City Council on student projection methodology, capital planning, and expansion needs	June 2025
3. Develop a facilities plan in conjunction with the City Schools to address citywide school capacity needs	January 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	A THRIVING EDUCATIONAL EPICENTER

PRIORITY C	Enhance City-University relationships as economic and community partners for the benefit of residents and students

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Our universities, when combined, contribute over half of the City's population and therefore drive our economy and create pressures on City services. The City would benefit from a greater degree of collaboration on significant issues. Considerations include acknowledging the universities are independent institutions and that there are limitations under State law regarding what can be required of state institutions.

STAFF CHAMPION	Ande Banks

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Convene a multi-departmental City group to identify and evaluate issues, needs, and possibilities that might be addressed with the universities	March 2025
2. Enhance City liaison committees with EMU and JMU by creating a set schedule of meetings and agendas to cover items including stakeholder engagement, resident communication, land use, and service delivery	April 2025
3. Work with JMU to hold annual meetings with student organizations to share community expectations	June 2025
4. Work with JMU and EMU to create an annual or bi-annual meeting between department heads and the senior leadership of the universities	June 2025
5. Evaluate a rental inspection program from a cross-departmental perspective in conjunction with a landlord stakeholder group and the universities	December 2025

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	A THRIVING EDUCATIONAL EPICENTER

PRIORITY D	Continue to foster a relationship with partners to identify and deliver continuing education and workforce development that meets the needs of our community

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Developing an educated community does not stop with K-12 or post-secondary education. To improve the financial stability of families and to prepare our workforce for industry changes, we must invest in lifelong learning and training opportunities.

STAFF CHAMPION	Brian Mancini, Brian Shull

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Identify continuing education target areas of community need in coordination with the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development staff	November 2025
2. Install and create a workforce development training lab at the Lucy Simms Center	September 2026
3. Work with local workforce training providers to identify facilitators and instructors for these new programs	January 2027
4. Promote the new training opportunities through city physical and digital media channels.	May 2027

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	AVAILABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

PRIORITY A	Complete the zoning ordinance re-write

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The Zoning Ordinance has not been updated since the mid-1990s and should be modernized to meet current trends and needs such as creating more opportunity for housing, reducing parking requirements, increasing the tree canopy, and increasing home businesses, among others.

STAFF CHAMPION	Thanh Dang

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Project kick off including presentations to City Council, Planning Commission, and Ordinance Advisory Committee	July 2020
2. Host stakeholder meetings	October 2020
3. Begin writing draft of Module/Part 1 of the Ordinances	December 2020
4. Begin writing draft of Module/Part 2 of the Ordinances	June 2021
5. Begin writing draft of Module/Part 3 of the Ordinances	December 2021
6. Commence public comment period for Module/Part 1, including open house event	July 2021
7. Kick off Re-start Ordinances Update Project, including a presentation to City Council	January 2024
8. Reconvene Ordinance Advisory Committee and Staff Technical Team	March 2024
9. Commence public comment period for Module/Part 2, including open house event and Ordinance Advisory Committee and Staff Technical Team meetings	July 2025
10. Commence public comment period for Module/Part 3, including open house event and Ordinance Advisory Committee and Staff Technical Team meetings	July 2025
11. Commence public comment period for Modules/Parts 1, 2, and 3, including open house event and Ordinance Advisory Committee and Staff Technical Team meetings	July 2025
12. Present ordinances at public hearings at Planning Commission and City Council for adoption	September 2025
13. Implement new zoning ordinance	January 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	AVAILABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

PRIORITY B	Research and implement viable housing strategies that will achieve recommendations of the Housing Study with a focus on increasing home ownership and spurring the supply of needed housing across all incomes

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The 2021 Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Market Study provided data and multiple strategy recommendations. A housing strategy implementation framework will further define the actions, resources, and agencies/partners necessary to pursue the identified recommendations.

STAFF CHAMPION	Liz Webb

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Create a three-year housing strategy implementation framework	September 2025
2. Develop marketing and outreach strategy for housing programs	September 2025
3. Complete Year 1 Tasks	September 2026
4. Complete Year 2 Tasks	September 2027
5. Complete Year 3 Tasks	September 2028

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	AVAILABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

PRIORITY C	Continue the relationship with the City/County Homeless Coalition to ensure collaboration and communication among service providers

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Since 2019, the City has convened monthly meetings with agencies providing services to unhoused community members. These meetings have been important forums for the City and direct services providers to discuss challenges, needs, and solutions. One of these solutions was the construction of the Navigation Center in 2025. Participating with this coalition promotes information-sharing, dialogue, and stronger connections between the City and the agencies providing services to un-housed community members.

STAFF CHAMPION	Amy Snider

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Continue to convene monthly meetings	January 2024
2. Evaluate the topics of focus and level of engagement with the coalition	January 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	AVAILABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

PRIORITY D	Establish a sustainable Housing Trust Fund that addresses specific needs and goals, along with clear administration, policies, and funding

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Establishing a housing trust fund is one tool to promote long-term housing affordability and stability within our community. As housing costs continue to rise and demand grows, vulnerable populations face increasing challenges in securing safe, adequate, and affordable homes. A dedicated fund could provide resources to support the development, preservation, and rehabilitation of affordable housing units, stimulate economic growth, and promote equitable access to housing opportunities.

STAFF CHAMPION	Liz Webb

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Apply for Virginia Housing grant to supplement FY26 budgeted item for housing consulting	July 2025
2. Write RFP for consulting services with defined scope of work	September 2025
3. Issue RFP, select consultant, and negotiate terms	December 2025
4. Initiate study activities	January 2026
5. Present initial study findings to council for direction on implementation	March 2026
6. Prepare Housing Trust Fund models for visioning charettes and collaborative engagement	June 2026
7. Finalize report, including anticipated costs and outcomes of preferred models	September 2026
8. Present final report	October 2026
9. Plan and budget to operationalize report recommendations	December 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	COMMUNITY RESILIENCY & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PRIORITY A	Provide community engagement and education activities to implement community goals for the widespread adoption of renewable energy and efficiency measures

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The City has an adopted Environmental Action Plan that is a guide for city leaders, staff, and community members to implement sustainability visions and principles. The City seeks to be a leader by our actions in our municipal operations and facilities, providing visible examples and highlighting experiences with renewable energy and efficiency measures. Community engagement activities may help increase the awareness and adoption of energy efficient practices, providing for a healthier city while saving residents money.

STAFF CHAMPION	Keith Thomas

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Continue to utilize an environmental review lens in developing additional comprehensive plans, CIP, and budgets for the City	July 2025
2. Demonstrate leadership through developing a solar implementation plan to install solar on city facilities	July 2023
3. Demonstrate leadership through conducting building energy audits to understand potential energy efficiency upgrades	July 2023
4. Develop a customized education and outreach strategy to better engage with the community	January 2024
5. Evaluate feasibility of operational changes in water operations from Dry River that utilize in-line generation to reduce energy use or generate energy	June 2026
6. Evaluate feasibility and funding strategies for implementing cost share programs for sustainable practices	July 2025
7. Explore potential partnerships to promote and encourage adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency	July 2025

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	COMMUNITY RESILIENCY & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PRIORITY B	Continue implementation of the Urban Forestry Management Plan

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The Urban Forestry Management Plan establishes when, where, and how to plant trees and how to maintain them to promote healthy urban forests as well as to maintain and expand our tree canopy. Urban forests are important as they provide multiple benefits such as reducing the impacts of urban heat islands, enhancing CO2 sequestration, reducing stormwater runoff, and reducing erosion. Urban trees also increase the desirability of public spaces and neighborhoods.

STAFF CHAMPION	Aaron Rhoney

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Continue to plant trees across the city in public rights of way	July 2025
2. Promote the value of trees to the community through education, outreach, and workshops	July 2025
3. Expand greenspace staff to better maintain existing trees	July 2026
4. Incorporate trees into capital infrastructure projects, including stormwater and transportation projects	July 2025
5. Update tree canopy study and inventory	December 2025
6. Determine outreach strategies to encourage desired plantings and best practices on the part of residents and businesses, and pursue strategies as appropriate	December 2025

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	COMMUNITY RESILIENCY & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PRIORITY C	Continue implementation of the Urban Wood Program

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The City of Harrisonburg's Urban Wood Program presents a vision to reclaim public trees for a second life at their highest use, use reclaimed wood in city projects whenever possible, educate the public about the urban wood program, and continue to make public wood waste available to the public.

STAFF CHAMPION	Aaron Rhoney

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Preserve through contract language all cut timber within city capital projects to utilize wood	April 2022
2. Develop marketing strategies and procurement policies to get wood products to end users	July 2025
3. Expand partnerships involved with the urban wood program	January 2024
4. Create a plan to increase lumber storage	September 2025
5. Promote and increase the awareness of urban wood utilization to the community through education, outreach, and workshops	July 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	COMMUNITY RESILIENCY & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PRIORITY D	Develop and implement a landscape management plan

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The Landscape Plan for the City of Harrisonburg will demonstrate responsible environmental stewardship, cost effectiveness, and efficient maintenance, all while fostering an aesthetically pleasing community year-round.

STAFF CHAMPION	Aaron Rhoney

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Assemble a team of stakeholders	September 2023
2. Develop an inventory of areas, plant list, amenity types, and gateways	October 2023
3. Develop an RFP for a landscape management plan	August 2025
4. Initiate a study to include public engagement to determine key values, evaluate amenity types, and create a city-wide plan through the consultant	August 2025
5. Report study results	February 2026
6. Develop an implementation funding schedule for high priority strategic action plans and capital projects	July 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	COMMUNITY RESILIENCY & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PRIORITY E	Explore and enable sustainable practices that support financial stability and education regarding environmental impacts for lower income families

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Historically disadvantaged and lower-income communities and households are disproportionately impacted by climate change. These groups also tend to have the fewest resources to help mitigate climate change impacts, such as access to air conditioning and filtration, the ability to pay for increased energy expenses during extreme weather events, or adequate insurance to recover from climate-based damage. These communities are also more likely to have pre-existing health conditions that put them at further risk from air pollution and extreme heat.

Fortunately, many climate solutions can also increase the financial stability and health outcomes of historically disadvantaged and low-income communities, like home weatherization, energy efficiency renovations, rooftop solar, effective public transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, green space access, and tree cover. A consideration is that other organizations, including federal and state governments provide tax credits, rebates, funds, and incentives for sustainable practices that support and enhance financial stability for lower income families.

STAFF CHAMPION	Keith Thomas

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Develop a customized education and outreach strategy to better engage with the community	January 2024
2. Develop a website with the housing coordinator to consolidate resources, including weatherization and energy efficiency rebates for residents	June 2025
3. Evaluate feasibility and funding strategies for implementing cost share programs for sustainable practices	October 2025
4. Explore partnerships with landlords and property management firms to undertake energy efficiency updates to save money for property owners and renters	July 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	COMMUNITY RESILIENCY & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

PRIORITY G	Collaborate with HEC to develop a plan for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in alignment with community goals

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Cities are large emitters of greenhouse gases, which contribute to climate change. Changes in climate can result in more extreme weather events that have disproportionally adverse effects on lower income households. Though the City cannot mitigate these effects on its own, reducing greenhouse gases demonstrates the City is a good steward of the environment and is a contributor to a broader solution. Environmental sustainability and innovation can also lead to long-term financial savings for governments and households. HEC, as a community partner and an energy industry expert, may be able to further city efforts to reduce emissions.

STAFF CHAMPION	Tom Hartman, Keith Thomas

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Conduct a greenhouse gas inventory and compare emission levels to the 2016 baseline	June 2026
2. Conduct an inventory of HEC's current sustainability initiatives, review where the City can help promote or expand HEC initiatives, and explore the potential for additional City programs	January 2026
3. Summarize how Dominion Energy's IRP and the Virginia Clean Economy Act timelines can support our local community goals, identify community benefits coming from these programs, and identify areas staff could advocate for more action	January 2026
4. Research best practices from other distribution-only utilities to identify actions that the City could collaborate on with HEC	July 2026
5. Explore creating a city-wide survey to identify barriers and missed opportunities	December 2026
6. Develop a draft plan with recommendations	December 2027
7. Provide public engagement on the draft plan	March 2028
8. Finalize the plan	July 2028

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

PRIORITY A	Collaborate with private regional workforce transportation partners to establish a well-connected public transportation system, focused on enhancing workforce and resident transportation within the area

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Reliable transportation to and from work is one barrier to entering the workforce for residents, particularly new residents. If this barrier is removed, local employers can fill more positions and families can save more money that can then be put back into the local economy.

STAFF CHAMPION	Brian Shull

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Work with local partners to survey major employers to discover which transportation actions could improve the local business climate	December 2026
2. Coordinate with local partners to identify specific needs for assisting area residents with transportation to Harrisonburg employers	June 2026
3. Continue efforts to implement action steps with a well-connected transportation system into the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board's Talent Pathways Initiative regional draft plan currently in progress	July 2027

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

PRIORITY B	Enhance small business and entrepreneurship training, support, and access to grants and funds

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to attracting established companies from outside of the city, fostering an entrepreneur ecosystem within the city can generate jobs and provide desired services for our residents. Small, locally owned businesses keep more money within the city and add to the character of the community, which in turn encourages additional investment. Additionally, small businesses empower families and create opportunity. Many people have ideas and unique skills that can be leveraged to start a business, but they may not understand the logistics needed to launch it. By investing resources into training and support, the city can help remove barriers for aspiring entrepreneurs.

STAFF CHAMPION	Peirce Macgill

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Gather demographic data to better understand makeup of our small business owners in partnership with the Federal Reserve	October 2025
2. Identify best practices that would improve entrepreneurship training and support in collaboration with the National League of Cities	December 2025
3. Partner with Shenandoah Community Capital Fund to identify and apply for grants to enhance small business support	June 2026
4. Continue and enhance the Harrisonburg Entrepreneurship Development Initiative program	June 2026
5. Collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce's Latino Business Council to offer and promote Spanish language entrepreneurship training workshops	June 2026
6. Launch a quarterly small business coaching circle available to all city small businesses	July 2027

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

PRIORITY C	Develop an economic development strategic plan that includes the identification of target business sectors for the City and appropriate recruitment strategies

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Economic development is crucial to the long-term success of Harrisonburg and the well-being of all its residents. An economic development plan will establish goals and identify economic partners. Because economic conditions are prone to factors outside the City's control, the strategies and goals within this plan must be flexible to meet the City's changing needs. Existing internal and external strategic plans and strategies will inform the development of Harrisonburg's Economic Development Strategic Plan.

STAFF CHAMPION	Brian Shull

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Assemble existing internal and strategic plans, including the Downtown Plan, the Technology Sector Marketing Plan, Shenandoah Valley Partnership's Strategic Plan, and internal economic development strategies, among others	February 2024
2. Procure a consultant to conduct an industry cluster analysis to identify potential new areas to focus economic development activities	May 2024
3. Create an economic development strategic plan framework	February 2025
4. Conduct Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis to inform economic development plan priorities and strategies	March 2025
5. Convene existing businesses across all sectors to solicit feedback on specific strategies related to their sector	April 2025
6. Convene development stakeholders to solicit feedback	April 2025
7. Convene tourism stakeholders to solicit feedback on specific strategies related to their sector	May 2025
8. Convene entrepreneurship stakeholders to solicit feedback on specific strategies related to their sector	July 2025
9. Write economic development strategic plan, incorporating information from existing plans, results of the cluster analysis, results of the SWOT analysis, and feedback from stakeholder groups	November 2025
10. Present draft plan to City Manager	December 2025
11. Present plan to City Council	January 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

PRIORITY D	Research, identify and implement programs to enhance the financial wellbeing and prosperity of residents

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Promoting financial wellbeing and prosperity among residents is essential to creating a community that is resilient and inclusive. Through careful research and the implementation of effective programs, the city can foster economic stability and help individuals and families move toward greater financial security. Improving financial literacy, expanding access to employment, and encouraging entrepreneurship strengthens the local economy and can lead to greater civic engagement while easing pressure on social services.

STAFF CHAMPION	Amy Snider

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Explore additional training opportunities related to economic mobility and prosperity	February 2026
2. Attend the national Economic Mobility and Opportunity Conference in 2026 to enhance knowledge and build connections with other engaged communities	May 2026
3. Identify community partners interested in or already offering mobility programs	July 2026
4. Determine, through stakeholder collaboration, a community focus to enhance or begin in the area of economic mobility	September 2026
5. Identify and apply for grants to achieve community identified economic mobility priorities	September 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

PRIORITY E	With partners, evaluate and enhance strategies and processes that enable individuals to start businesses with greater ease

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

By working with partners to evaluate and improve the systems that help individuals start businesses, the city can reduce common barriers like regulatory complexity and limited access to resources. Streamlining these pathways empowers aspiring entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds and encourages local investment. This focus strengthens the local economy, promotes self-sufficiency, and ensures business opportunities are within reach for all residents.

STAFF CHAMPION	Brian Shull, Peirce Macgill

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Update the Starting a Business in Harrisonburg guide	September 2025
2. Meet with the Small Business Development Center and former business owners to identify specific roadblocks to starting a business	January 2026
3. Enhance outreach to better promote City programs and resources to minority-owned businesses based on National League of Cities feedback and best practices	December 2026
4. Identify and train Spanish language Launch Harrisonburg facilitators	January 2027
5. Offer a Spanish language Launch Harrisonburg cohort	March 2027

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	HIGH-QUALITY CITY SERVICES

PRIORITY A	Implement the Transit Strategic Plan

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

HDPT's Transit Strategic Plan (TSP) is a 10-year plan designed to ensure that transit services meet the mobility needs of all residents of the City of Harrisonburg. The TSP is an opportunity for HDPT to evaluate and update its services and network to respond to changes in demand. Stakeholder priorities, including community feedback concerning where and how to provide services in an efficient manner, will be considered when prioritizing which tasks to implement first.

STAFF CHAMPION	Gerald Gatobu

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Operate the Blue Line and the Purple Line as separate routes	August 2025
2. Continue offering extended hours seasonally, and work toward offering extended hours on certain routes year round	July 2027
3. Complete a restructuring of routes 1,2,3, and 6	July 2027
4. Increase the service frequency of different routes as demand warrants	July 2027

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	HIGH-QUALITY CITY SERVICES

PRIORITY B	Continue strengthening city staff's ability to meet and serve our city into the future.

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The city government is a people-centric organization. Recruiting and retaining a highly skilled workforce is essential to deliver the services that residents expect. In addition to providing for employees now, staff also must plan for the future workforce. As the city focuses on enhancing comprehensive benefits, evaluating staffing needs, recruiting a team representative of the community, and integrating the principles of High Performance Organizations, we can continue delivering best-in-class services to residents.

STAFF CHAMPION	Angela Clem

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Conduct a Comprehensive Benefits Study	May 2024
2. Conduct an annual classification and compensation review, review the annual cost of labor in accordance with the budget calendar, and conduct an annual market review of a segment of position classes/departments	January 2024
3. Evaluate comprehensive current and future staffing needs	January 2026
4. Provide for professional development programs to retain and prepare employees for technical and supervisory roles	January 2026
5. Prepare for succession and transfer of institutional knowledge	January 2026
6. Foster diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging in the organization through the work of the Committee for Harmony & Equity	January 2026
7. Integrate an understanding and practice of the High Performance Organization (HPO) model and concept throughout the organization	January 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	HIGH-QUALITY CITY SERVICES

PRIORITY C	Develop methods to effectively acquire customer service feedback

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

Gathering customer service feedback is a vital step toward building a more responsive and accountable city government. When residents share their experiences, it provides valuable insights into what is working and where improvements are needed. This feedback helps the city identify service gaps, address concerns more effectively, and adapt to changing community needs. It also strengthens public trust by showing that the government listens and acts on what it hears. Over time, a thoughtful approach to collecting and using feedback will lead to better services and a stronger connection between the city and its residents.

STAFF CHAMPION	Michael Parks

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Integrate a Likert scale about quality of services into the annual survey process noted in Focus Area #1, Priority B.	October 2025
2. Research and identify the most effective strategies to capture resident, visitor, and business owner feedback utilized by other organizations.	February 2026
3. Make a recommendation on the best methods to capture real time feedback on quality of City services and performance.	June 2026
4. Create a communications and outreach strategy to educate the community about how to provide feedback on customer service.	June 2026

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	HIGH-QUALITY CITY SERVICES

PRIORITY D	Complete the Update to the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan and prioritize recommendations for implementation

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The 2013 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan is in need of an update for the city to maintain its role as a regional leader in the delivery of quality parks, recreation facilities, and programs. The citizen-driven Master Plan establishes the Parks and Recreation Department's core services and responsibilities and prioritizes capital investments

STAFF CHAMPION	Vic Garber

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Write the scope of services and develop the RFP to include the Early Childhood Needs Assessment as appropriate	November 2025
2. Acquire funding to solicit consulting firm inquiry systems utilized by other organizations	July 2025
3. Procure best consulting firm following presentations and final negotiations	February 2026
4. Secure contract for consulting firm.	March 2026
5. Begin plan to include strong community engagement	April 2026
6. Provide final report and study results to City Council	March 2027

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	HIGH-QUALITY CITY SERVICES

PRIORITY E	Design and construct Station 5 in the Northwest Section of the City and begin implementation of the planned replacement of Station 4 in the Northeast Neighborhood

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The City has long identified the need for a fire station in the Northwest Section of the City where response times are the longest. Due to the availability of ARPA funding, Station 5 was approved by City Council in December 2022 and will be complete in 2025. In addition, the City has also planned to replace Fire Station 4 in the Northeast Neighborhood due to its age. The implementation of that replacement project is scheduled to begin after Station 5 is completed.

STAFF CHAMPION	Matt Tobia

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Identify and secure land for new fire station	December 2022
2. Conduct an RFP/RFQ process to acquire a design-build firm	April 2023
3. Recruit staff for Fire Station 5 based on Fire Department staffing analysis and budgetary approval	July 2024
4. Construct Station 5	July 2024
5. Conduct neighborhood listening sessions pertaining to the exterior appearance of Station 4, service impacts, and construction period in the Northeast Neighborhood	September 2025
6. Conduct an RFP/RFQ process for Fire Station 4 contingent on design and construction funding made available	October 2025

2045 CITY COUNCIL VISION 2025 - 2028 PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN

VISION AREA	HIGH-QUALITY CITY SERVICES

PRIORITY F	Update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

RATIONALE AND CONSIDERATIONS

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is intended to be a long-range visionary plan that incorporates the current and future bicycle and pedestrian needs throughout the city. The plan identifies priority areas and segments currently lacking sufficient infrastructure. City staff utilize this plan to inform the Capital Improvement Plan and to seek grant funding. The update will identify new priorities and new segments and will include an enhanced community engagement component to ensure historically disadvantaged communities have input.

STAFF CHAMPION	Tom Hartman

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	
TASKS	**TARGET DATES**
1. Secure funding to solicit a consultant to complete study and consider use of cooperative procurement or CSPDC on-call contract to streamline procurement	July 2024
2. Execute contract and begin study	April 2025
3. Engage with the public to determine key values and needs, and work with the consultant to identify and prioritize projects.	June 2027
4. Report study results and develop implementation funding schedule to implement high priority strategic action plans and capital projects.	July 2027