HARRISONBURG|VA
FRIENDLY BY NATURE

HARRISONBURG 2043:
VISION & PRIORITIES
STAFF PROGRESS UPDATE

CITY OF HARRISONBURG
ESTABLISHED 1780
VIRGINIA

HARRISONBURG 2043:
CAPITAL OF THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

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

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At the City Council Retreat of 2023, Council Members together reviewed and enhanced a vision statement originally created in 2019. The statement envisions the most ideal state of the city 20 years into the future, and exists as a guiding document for City Council and City staff.

City Council's vision in 2023 included the following focus areas:

- A City For All
- Economic Development: Goals, Gains, and Growth
- A Thriving Educational Epicenter
- Available Housing For All
- Community Resiliency & The Natural Environment
- Distinctive, Reliable Delivery of High-Quality City Services
- Fiscal Responsiblity & Planning

The City's Executive Leadership Team developed a work plan with 29 actionable priorities and related projects for City departments to focus on for the next three years. The purpose of the plan was to advance the 2043 vision.

Each year the City will review its accomplishments and report to City Council on progress.

Significant progress has been made on the vision since its initial adoption in April 2019. This annual report highlights some of the most recent accomplishments regarding work plan implementation and projects underway.

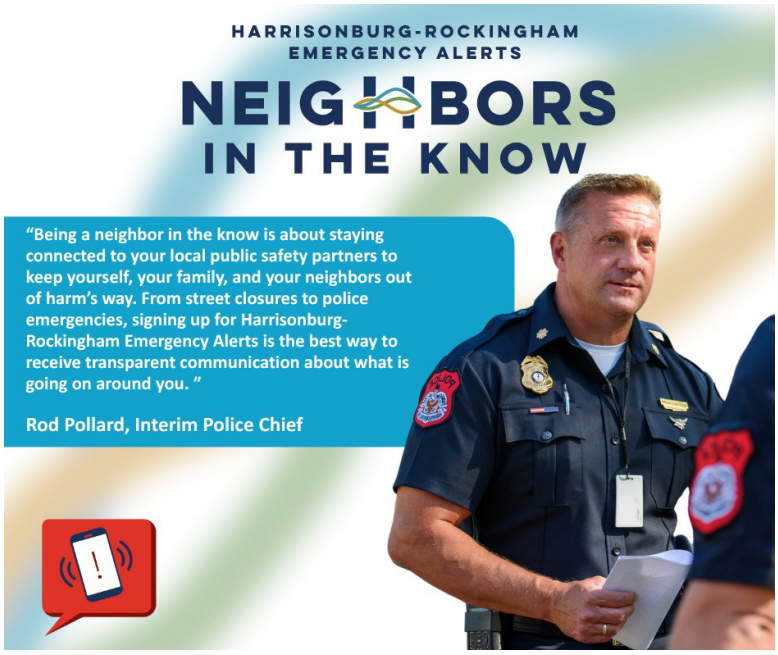
A CITY FOR ALL

Where we wish to be in 2043: We are a harmonious, caring, welcoming city where differences are embraced, celebrated, and accommodated. Recognizing Harrisonburg's diversity, our support systems assure that any community member has access to city services. We are a city that allows all people to feel safe, valued, and have abundant opportunity. We continuously overcome barriers to progress and boldly address inequities.

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

PUBLIC SAFETY OUTREACH

Led by the HPD Communications & Outreach Specialist, a communications strategy has been developed and put into action to begin better community engagement and increased educational opportunities around public safety programs, services and events. One key project in this effort is the Neighbors In The Know campaign, which works to educate people about the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Alerts tool and get them registered.



CENTRAL RESOURCE HUB RESEARCH & PLANNING

Staff have completed research into peer organizations that employ a central resource hub for their community members. Communications & Public Engagement staff are researching how to create a virtual portal for this information and a physical location in the City Hall lobby.

PRIORITIES

Develop a central resource hub for newcomers

Create an assessment process that periodically reviews City services

Promote awareness of Public Safety services/programs

Remedy past harms

Employ tools to give citizens greater access to City decision-making

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Staff have completed research into potential survey tools and determined that ICMA's survey research tools are the best option for our community. Staff will soon begin considering what areas of interest should be covered by a community member survey.

COMMUNITY CONNECTORS & PAST HARMS

Intentional outreach to residents, businesses, houses of worship and community groups in and surrounding the Northeast Neighborhood allowed the Community Connectors team to actively engage with and empower people to share their stories and needs in order to create a shared vision for the Northeast Neighborhood's future. This effort is an inclusive, community-driven planning process with the goal of establishing a Small Area Plan.

A THRIVING EDUCATIONAL EPICENTER

Where we wish to be in 2043: Harrisonburg has an exceptional public education system. Our schools are award winning and nationally recognized. Our investment in education attracts families and engaged leaders, and develops entrepreneurs and forward thinking businesses that contribute to our community. The City is a partner in ensuring that early childhood education is universally available for all children. City school graduates are skilled and qualified individuals who are college, career, and life ready. Moreover, as the home of two institutions of higher learning, and in partnership with our regional community college, the city is a hub of innovation, technology, and workforce development.

PROJECTS COMPLETED

POPULATION/ENROLLMENT REVIEW

The City conducted a comprehensive review on population and student enrollment projections through 2034. This data will be used to improve budget allocations and capital planning over the next decade.

CHILDCARE SUPPORT

To help address a shortage of availability, the City assisted with the expansion of several early childcare facilities, adding approximately 250 more slots in the community than existed last year.

PRIORITIES

Expand early childhood education in the City

Work with School Board on strategy to meet future needs

Enhance City-University relationship

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

UNDERSTANDING CHILDCARE NEEDS

City staff have budgeted and are soliciting services for a childcare needs assessment. This assessment will specifically provide data on which services are needed the most and where they are needed the most. This information will help the City compete for grants and leverage private sector resources to meet the community's needs.

JMU STUDENT-RESIDENT AFFAIRS

Staff are coordinating with JMU leadership to establish a Student-Resident Affairs committee to hear and advise on how both organizations can work together for the betterment of the community.

AVAILABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

Where we wish to be in 2043: Harrisonburg is at the forefront in developing a comprehensive ap proach to meeting a spectrum of housing needs through innovative planning and effective partner ships. The city has logistically integrated high quality affordable housing throughout its neighbor hoods. As a result, Harrisonburg's neighborhoods reflect its diverse and unique character. Creative land use planning has permitted flexible redevelopment of our residential areas. Support and services are available for people experiencing housing insecurity so they can remain safely and securely housed. Moreover, the city has achieved these goals while maintaining a strong and sustainable tax base.

PROJECTS COMPLETED

NAVIGATION CENTER

The Navigation Center has opened, providing 80 beds and supportive services for unsheltered community members in Harrisonburg. Work continues between the City and Open Doors to assure all necessary needs are met.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PIPELINE

The City has added numerous affordable housing units to the development pipeline this year. Staff will keep updating the list of approved projects so Council will have information on what is pending as needed.

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

ZONING ORDINANCE ENGAGEMENT

Staff are continuing engagement as significant portions of zoning ordinances are being rewritten to enhance housing opportunities. A public meeting will be held this year.

PRIORITIES

Complete the zoning ordinance rewrite

Develop and implement a strategic housing plan

Continue the relationship with the City/ County Homeless Coalition

HOUSING STUDY

Staff are finalizing an implementation plan for the Housing Study recommendations. Steps such as creating online resources and hosting homeownership classes are already underway.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY & THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Where we wish to be in 2043: Harrisonburg is a community with extraordinary beauty and an abun dance of natural assets. We prioritize protection of these natural assets - air, streams, mountains, trees, and open space - critical to maintaining our quality of life and vibrant economy. We are a re silient community prepared to face numerous current and future challenges such as flooding, extreme fluctuation in weather, aging infrastructure, new energy technologies, and water supply as demands increase. With our partners, we are effectively reducing and responding to climate change impacts, especially as they impact historically disadvantaged communities. Investments in sustainable assets and infrastructure have established a strong foundation for the future.

PROJECTS COMPLETED

STORMWATER IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The SWIP has been updated. Future implementation of the plan will include ways the City can incorporate flood-ing, drainage issues, and climate change impacts into the stormwater program

ENVIRONMENTAL LENS

The City has incorporated the Sustainability and Environmen-tal Manager into the Capital Improvement Program process to review all proposals from an environmental perspective.

SOLAR ADOPTION

The City now installs solar systems on all newly con-structed and significantly renovated buildings and is im-plementing the solar deployment plan to add solar sys-tems to existing facilities where technically feasible.

PRIORITIES

Promote renewable energy goals

Implement Urban Forest Management Plan

Implement Urban Wood program

Implement Landscape Management Plan

Enable families to improve financial stability through environmental practices

Update the Stormwater Improvement Plan

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

URBAN WOOD

Staff are evaluating how to best expand the urban wood pro-gram and are exploring additional storage for wood and a potential point-of-sale service for businesses and residents.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

The City is developing a scope of work for a landscape management plan after consulting with different depart-ments and other stakeholders in order to beautify the community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Where we wish to be in 2043: Harrisonburg is the economic capital of the Shenandoah Valley. We are the regional destination for education, shopping, dining and entertainment. Our economic development partnerships have resulted in thriving technology zones, higher wage jobs, and a vibrant North End Gateway. Local economic activity is robust throughout the city and is easily accessible. Our economic development strategies continue to grow existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, and attract new opportunities.

PROJECTS COMPLETED

B-CUBED SUCCESS

The Black- and Brown-owned business growth program B-Cubed has served nearly 100 minority-owned businesses since its inception.

NEW PROGRAM UNDERWAY

The Harrisonburg Entrepreneurship Development Initiative program paired 30 local, early-stage business owners with technical experts to grow these businesses. New cohorts are planned for the near future.

EXTENDED HOURS POPULAR

HDPT has offered extended hours on public transit routes, enabling workers with nontraditional shifts a free commuting option. Thousands of riders have used this option so far.

PRIORITIES

Enhance workforce transportation

Support the Black and Brown-owned Business Growth program

Develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

SOUTHERN CITIES ECONOMIC INITIATIVE

Harrisonburg was selected to join the Southern Cities Economic Initiative to acquire best practices for economic mobility and receive an implementation grant to bolster the HEDI program.

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN IN WORKS

Staff are working toward completing the Economic Development Strategic Plan by the beginning of 2026. The Industry Cluster Analysis, which is being used to recruit new development, has already been completed.

HARRISONBURG | VA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUCCESS IS SECOND NATURE

DISTINCTIVE, RELIABLE DELIVERY OF HIGH-QUALITY CITY SERVICES

Where we wish to be in 2043: Harrisonburg prides itself on high quality service provision. The city is clean, safe, and has abundant and diverse recreational opportunities. Traveling through the city is pleasant and easy, whether by car, bike, foot, or transit bus. Our highly engaged community members know the city is responsive to their concerns. Innovation in service delivery is encouraged and other communities turn to Harrisonburg as a center for best practices. The city government attracts and retains talented public servants due to its reputation for being well-managed and as a great employer.

PROJECTS COMPLETED

STRATEGIC PLAN ACTIVE

The Transit Strategic Plan was completed after a series of meetings with HDPT staff, City leaders and community members. The plan is currently being implemented.

MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROGRAM

HB Flex, a pilot on-demand microtransit service, took place this summer. Staff are currently analyzing data to learn how the program benefited the community and how it can be improved in the future.

CITY STAFF BENEFITS STUDY

A Comprehensive Benefits Study has concluded and is being implemented. A number of enhancements are already in place, and the Benefits Study Committee is now looking at the next group of benefits to consider.

PROJECTS UNDERWAY

FIRE STATION 5

Fire Station 5 will be completed this fall on Mt. Clinton Pike.

PRIORITIES

Complete the Study for the Transit Strategic Plan

Follow through on the study for on-demand microtransit

Recruit, retain, and train employees to meet City's future needs

Acquire customer service feedback

Update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Align justice system with City values

Construct Fire Station 5 and Plan for Station 4 replacement

Update the bike-pedestrian plan

PARKS & REC MASTER PLAN

Funds have been allocated for a Parks Master Plan and a scope is being developed for solicitation.

BIKE-PED PLAN

An agreement is being signed by the Federal Highway Administration to begin the bike-pedestrian plan study.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY & PLANNING

Where we wish to be in 2043: We are a city with a long-term commitment to meeting demands for increased service while maintaining high standards. The city is financially secure with the highest bond rating and a healthy fund balance. The city balances its growth through thorough evaluation of future needs and thoughtful planning. There is recognition of the need for careful financial man agement, while also prioritizing investment in essential operational and capital programs to lead us toward a more progressive future.

PROJECTS COMPLETED

UPDATES IN PLACE

Staff have completed all tasks associated with this priority, including updating the City's Financial Management Policies in accordance with industry best-practices.

PRIORITIES

Update Financial Management Policies