



# CITY OF HARRISONBURG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7701 • FAX (540) 432-7778

---

TO: Eric D. Campbell, City Manager

FROM: Brian Shull, Economic Development Director

DATE: December 6, 2021

RE: Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 – Presentation to Council December 14, 2021

**Summary:** City staff has partnered with HDR and Interface Studio to conduct the first-ever master plan for Downtown Harrisonburg. After a year-long collaborative process, the Interface Studio team will present its findings and recommendations to City Council.

**Background:** Throughout all of 2021, a collaborative process has been underway to determine what Harrisonburg residents want their Downtown to look like by 2040. Interface Studio has analyzed all of the input data and will be offering Council a range of short-term and long-term strategies to hopefully accomplish community goals.

**Key Issues:** What is the best location and design for a downtown park? How can the City-owned parking structures best be redeveloped? Could or should there be design changes made to Main, Liberty, and/or Federal Streets? All of these issues and more are being addressed in Harrisonburg Downtown 2040.

**Environmental Impact:** Recommendations will include improvements to limit stormwater runoff, more vegetation throughout Downtown, and potential daylighting of a portion of Black's Run.

**Fiscal Impact:** Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 is a planning document to help guide future public and private development projects and investments. Ballpark cost estimates will be incorporated into the Master Plan documentation, but each capital project will require further fiscal analysis.

**Prior Actions:** Council included funding for a Downtown Master Plan in the FY 2020-2021 and FY2021-2022 budgets. Following a competitive RFP process, the City entered into a contract with Interface Studio on November 9, 2020.

**Alternatives:** None

**Community Engagement:** Interface Studio developed a collaborative map that enabled and encouraged community members to provide input about downtown. Two pop-up events were hosted (July 23-25 and November 19) to gather resident input. Multiple surveys were posted online. In all, over 500 individuals actively participated in this important planning process.

**Recommendation:** Interface Studio will virtually present its findings and recommendations to City Council at its December 14 meeting. Recognizing that this report includes wide-reaching recommendations that will span many years and multiple budget cycles, no action will be requested at this time. Following thorough review and discussion, staff hopes that Council will seek to incorporate Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 into the Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan.

**Attachment:** PowerPoint submitted by Interface Studio. Principals of the consultant team will virtually participate in the December 14 Council meeting and will facilitate the presentation.

**Review:**