



City of Harrisonburg

City Hall
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Master

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**Agenda
Section:**

In Control: City Council

File Created: 05/30/2020

Subject:

Final Action:

Title: Consider amendments to Chapter 12, Transportation of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan

Internal Notes:

Sponsors:

Enactment Date:

Attachments: CC Memorandum CPA (Transportation Chapter), CC Proposed Amendments to Chapter 12, Transportation - Chapter Text, CC Proposed Amendments to Chapter 12, Transportation - Street Improvement Plan Map, CC May 22, 2020 Letter from the Virginia Department of Transportation, PC Memorandum, PC Proposed Amendments to Chapter 12, Transportation - Chapter Text, PC Proposed Amendments to Ch. 12, Transportation - Street Improvement Plan Map, PC May 22, 2020 Letter from the Virginia Department of Transportation

Enactment Number:

Contact:

Hearing Date:

Drafter: thanh.dang@harrisonburgva.gov

Effective Date:

Related Files:

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
2	Planning Commission	06/10/2020	recommended to full council	City Council	07/14/2020		Pass

Action Text: This PH-Action Item was recommended to full council.to the City Council due back on 7/14/2020

Notes: Chair Colman read the request and asked staff to review.

Tom Hartman, Director of Public Works, said that the City of Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan presents a vision of what kind of community the City would like to be in the future and identifies steps to move toward that vision. The Plan is the central organizing umbrella under which other plans, regulations, and initiatives exist. The Plan establishes the preferred overall long-term vision for our community. The Plan is not a

regulatory document but serves as a guide for Harrisonburg and it helps City and community leaders with setting policies and decision-making.

Virginia Code Section 15.2-2223 requires the City to have a Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive plans deal fundamentally with the physical characteristics of a community. Hence, land use is the core element of a comprehensive plan. However, in order to arrive at an appropriate plan for the use of land, other physical aspects must be addressed, such as environmental features, transportation, water and wastewater facilities, and other public facilities.

Chapter 12 includes the Street Improvement Plan, which contains project descriptions and a map that identifies transportation infrastructure improvements that the City may pursue to address safety, congestion, bicycle and pedestrian needs, and new development. Projects are not prioritized in the Street Improvement Plan. Instead, the City will utilize the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan to represent prioritized projects.

These amendments to Chapter 12, Transportation of the Comprehensive Plan are proposed to add projects that have been recommended by various transportation studies that have been completed since the adoption of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. Studies include the East Market Street (Route 33) Corridor Improvement Study; the South Main Street Corridor Improvement Study and Erickson Avenue/Pear Street Intersection Study; the Port Republic Safety and Operations Study; and the Downtown Harrisonburg Operations Study. (Information on the studies can be found online at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/transportation-planning>.) The studies were conducted to identify solutions for facilities that have a high number of crashes and/or congestion. Some of the study recommendations were, or are planned to be, implemented with City funds.

The Department of Public Works will pursue grants to implement larger, more expensive recommendations. The amendments to Chapter 12, Transportation of the Comprehensive Plan are being made so that the City's transportation funding (Smart Scale) applications can obtain higher scores, by meeting the criterion of the projects' inclusion in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The projects' inclusion in the plan will also allow City staff to work with developers to plan for implementation of the improvements as adjacent properties develop.

The proposed amendments also remove completed projects and identifies those that have been awarded funding since the 2018 Plan was adopted. Awarded projects have implementation schedules spanning approximately the next eight years.

No changes to the planning assumptions were made. However, the Planning Process section of the chapter was updated to include traffic studies as a method of identifying projects to include in the Street Improvement Plan. The Planning Process section of the

chapter describes the methods used in developing the Street Improvement Plan.

Additionally, since the 2018 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, VTRANS2040 has been updated and is now called VTRANS 2045 Mid-Term Needs. Proposed amendments to Chapter 12 reflect this change. VTRANS 2045 Mid-Term Needs is Virginia's statewide long-range, multimodal transportation plan. Led by the Commonwealth's Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, it is a policy document that focuses on the needs of the Commonwealth's Corridors of Statewide Significance, the multimodal regional networks that support travel within metropolitan regions, and improvements to promote Urban Development Areas (UDAs).

Lastly, there are a few minor text amendments proposed throughout the document. Such amendments are not substantial and include matters such as appropriately identifying the Department of Community Development and correcting an acronym associated with the Design and Construction Standards Manual.

Chair Colman asked if there were any questions for staff.

Chair Colman asked how are these projects and their funding impacted by COVID-19 and the City's funding cutbacks? What is your projection on funding?

Mr. Hartman said that the State and the City are still working on their revenue projections to see what that decrease is going to look like for transportation funding. VDOT has released their 2021 six-year plan. We have not seen how previously funded projects are going to be affected. It will be the fall or winter before we get a better view of State revenue on transportation and how that will impact some of the projects that we are applying for. We are still going to apply the seven projects. We are wading into the unknown regarding what the State funding is going to be.

Commissioner Finnegan asked if there were any projections regarding the impact of fewer cars on the road because more people are working from home? Have you seen any projects regarding a drop in traffic because JMU students are taking classes online?

Mr. Hartman said that we have been following the volume of traffic throughout the City. In the beginning of March, our volume was about 50%-55% of what they were last year at that time. Over the past week, and as of last Friday we were 32% down of what we have seen historically for that time of the year. There has been a bit of a rebound from what it had been. There definitely was a reduction in vehicle traffic throughout the City. The Interstate has had the lowest I have seen in percent reduction in vehicle miles travels. They are coming back up a little bit faster. They are at a 20% reduction from the last update I heard. The metrics that are used for these projects and the scoring are based on odd year averages. It will take a few years for this to fully be incorporated into metrics.

Commissioner Finks asked if there will be future additions or edits to this chapter in regard

to the Downtown Parking Plan.

Mr. Hartman said that the Parking Plan has been completed and is a document that will be used when we roll into the Downtown Master Plan. Depending on how we move forward with the Master Plan and the projects recommended to improve parking and transportation throughout the Downtown, there may be amendments coming forward once that document is completed. Right now, there are none on the radar. We put that document on pause and are waiting for some information for the Master Plan.

Chair Colman asked if there were any more questions for staff. Hearing none, he opened the public hearing.

There were no calls regarding the amendments to Chapter 12, Transportation of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Colman closed the public hearing and opened the matter for discussion.

Commissioner Whitten made a motion to recommend approval of the amendment to Chapter 12, Transportation of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, as presented.

Commissioner Finnegan seconded the motion. The goal here is to get Federal funding and we need that now more than ever.

Commissioner Finks added that he appreciates staff coming forward with amendments like this. I appreciate us focusing on trying to keep the Comprehensive Plan as a living document. We are making it a relevant document when we are making edits and changes when it makes sense for the City.

All members voted in favor of recommending approval of the amendment to Chapter 12, Transportation of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan (7-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on July 14, 2020.
