



CITY OF HARRISONBURG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

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TO: Ande Banks, Interim City Manager

FROM: Brian Shull, Economic Development Director

DATE: March 1, 2022

RE: Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 – Request for Council Endorsement March 8, 2022

Summary: City staff 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 presented its findings and recommendations to City Council on December 14, 2021. City staff would like to have Council's endorsement of the final plan to serve as a roadmap for future downtown development.

Background: Throughout all of 2021, a collaborative process was conducted to determine what Harrisonburg residents want their Downtown to look like by 2040. Interface Studio analyzed all of the input data and presented Council a range of short-term and long-term strategies to hopefully accomplish the identified 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 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 have been incorporated into the Master Plan documentation, but each capital project will require further fiscal analysis.



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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. The 2040 Plan has been finalized and this contract has been closed out.

Alternatives: None

Community Engagement: Interface Studio developed a collaborative map that enabled and encouraged community members to provide input regarding 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. The Interface Studio team presented to Council on December 14, 2021. The final report is currently posted on www.harrisonburgva.gov/downtown-2040

Recommendation: Interface Studio presented its findings and recommendations to City Council at the December 14 meeting. Recognizing that this report includes wide-reaching recommendations that will span many years and multiple budget cycles, no action was requested at that meeting. City staff recommends Council's endorsement of the 2040 Plan and hopes that it will seek to incorporate components of the 2040 Plan into future updates of the Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan.

Attachment: A Briefing Book summarizing the Downtown 2040 Final Report is attached as a PowerPoint. This was prepared by the Interface Studio team.

Review: