

HARRISONBURG CITY COUNCIL VISION STATEMENT
Drafted on February 3, 2019; Adopted April 23, 2019, Revised on July 10, 2021

Harrisonburg 2039:
Capital of the Shenandoah Valley

We are the 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 that enrich life. This is made possible by the fiscally sound planning of our staff and elected leaders.

Our attention to these focus areas assures this future . . .

A City for All

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.

Economic Development: Goals, Gains, and Growth

Harrisonburg is the economic capital of the Shenandoah Valley. We are the business transaction center of Western Virginia, where companies and professional service firms want to be. We are the regional destination for education, shopping, dining and entertainment. Our retail centers are robust throughout the city, including along South Main Street, Downtown, and East Market Street. Our regional economic development partnerships have resulted in thriving technology zones, higher wage jobs, and a vibrant North End Gateway. Our economic development strategies continue to grow existing businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, and attract new opportunities.

A Thriving Educational Epicenter

Harrisonburg has an exceptional public education system, from pre-kindergarten through high school. 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’s schools graduate 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.

Available Housing for All

Harrisonburg has been at the forefront in developing a comprehensive approach to community housing needs. The city has successfully partnered with community organizations and has embraced policies such as a housing trust fund, supported by appropriate fees and incentives. As a result, Harrisonburg offers a wealth of affordable, diverse housing options for all.

Through innovative planning and partnerships, homelessness in Harrisonburg is now largely a thing of the past. Creative land use planning such as varied lot sizes has permitted flexible redevelopment of our residential areas. The city has logistically integrated high quality affordable housing throughout its neighborhoods. As a result, Harrisonburg's neighborhoods reflect its diverse and unique character. Moreover, the city has achieved these goals while maintaining a strong and sustainable tax base.

Community Resiliency and the Natural Environment

Harrisonburg is a community with extraordinary beauty and an abundance 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 resilient 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 responding to and reducing climate change impacts. Investments in sustainable assets and infrastructure have established a strong foundation for the future.

Distinctive, Reliable Delivery of High Quality City Services

Harrisonburg prides itself on high quality service provision. The city is clean, safe, and has abundant 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.

Fiscal Responsibility and Planning

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 a AAA 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 management, while also prioritizing investment in essential operational and capital programs. 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.