



# City of Harrisonburg

City Hall  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

## Meeting Agenda

### Environmental Performance Standards Advisory Committee

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Wednesday, April 29, 2026

1:00 PM

Public Works Building

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#### 1. Call To Order

#### 2. Approval of Virtual Participation (if needed)

#### 3. Approval of Meeting Summary

2025-10 - Harrisonburg EPSAC - Meeting Summary

Attachments: [2025-10 - Harrisonburg EPSAC - Meeting Summary](#)

#### 4. Public Comment

Carl Larsson- Public Comment on Private Development Environmental Standards

Attachments: [Carl Larsson- Public Comment on Private Development Environmental Standar](#)

#### 5. New Business

##### 5a. Focus Area Updates

##### 5b. EAP Community Goals Updates

Special Presentation: EN-ROADS by Climate Interactive and MIT

##### 5c. Updates from Sustainability Manager

Update on Current City of Harrisonburg Environmental Initiatives

Attachments: [Update on Current City of Harrisonburg Environmental Initiatives](#)

##### 5d. Harrisonburg Community Event

#### 6. Other Committee Topics

##### 6a. Discussion on EPSAC CMO Request - EAP Rubric for Development

##### 6b. Report on Recent Meetings

**6c. Member Check-In: Sharing Emerging Issues (Informational Only)**

**7. Meeting Dates for 2026**

**July 29, 2026**

**October 28, 2026**

**8. Adjournment**

**Notice to Public**

**Residents/Media will be able to attend the meeting. The Public can also view the meeting live on the "Harrisonburg Public Works" Facebook page.**

**Residents also may provide comment by 12:00 noon the day prior to the meeting by e-mail to [keith.thomas@harrisonburgva.gov](mailto:keith.thomas@harrisonburgva.gov) and indicating that it is a Public Comment for the EPSAC meeting.**



# City of Harrisonburg

City Hall  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** ID 26-004, **Version:** 1

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**Subject:**

2025-10 - Harrisonburg EPSAC - Meeting Summary

Presented By: [Click or tap here to enter Presenter.](#)

[Click here to enter the action/summary \(insert the summary from the memo here](#)



## City of Harrisonburg Environmental Performance Standards Advisory Committee

### *Meeting Minutes*

October 29, 2025 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Public Works

**Members in attendance:** Laura Dent, City Council Representative; Andy Kohen, School Board Representative; Bill Howe (arrived 6:00pm); Dave Powell (virtual); Doug Hendren; Ferwerdin Barzanji; Joy Loving; Rob Alexander

**Staff in attendance:** Keith Thomas, Shayna Carter, Maya Waid

**Others in attendance:** Brian O'Dell, General Manager of HEC; Zach Nyce, Manager of Engineering HEC; Harsit Patel, PW Support Services Manager

#### **Call to Order**

Rob Alexander called the meeting to order.

#### **Approval of Virtual Participation**

Rob Alexander advised the Committee that David Powell requested to participate in the meeting virtually as allowed in the Bylaws and in accordance with § 2.2-3708.3 Appendix A of the Code of Virginia. David Powell noted an illness prevented him from physically attending tonight's EPSAC meeting. Rob Alexander called for a motion to allow for his participation. Joy Loving motioned to approve David Powell's virtual participation. Doug Hendren seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Per § 2.2-3708.3 Appendix A of the Code of Virginia, David Powell may make motions, vote, join in closed meetings, and otherwise participate fully as if he or she was physically present.

#### **Review and Adopt Meeting Summary**

Joy Loving moved to approve the July 30, 2025 EPSAC Meeting Summary. Andy Kohen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Public Comment**

Carl Larsson addressed the Committee to express concerns about the proposed Link development project. He questioned what role the Committee has in environmental performance standards and how development projects are evaluated against the Environmental Action Plan (EAP). The Committee asked Carl Larsson to submit his comments by email to the Sustainability and Environmental Manager so they could be included in the next meeting.

The Committee then discussed EPSAC's role in evaluating potential development projects. Doug Hendren noted that during his time on the Committee, he was not sure the group had ever formally considered its role in development review. Laura Dent provided a brief overview of the process developers go through with the Planning Commission and City Council. Rob Alexander suggested that the Committee develop a request to the City Manager outlining how EPSAC could play a role in proposed development. He also proposed setting aside time at the January meeting to further discuss the topic.

#### **Focus Area Updates**

Keith Thomas directed the Committee's attention to an attachment in the agenda under Focus Area 2 that included responses to several questions raised at the previous meeting.

Keith Thomas then reviewed the Focus Area 4 target data document, noting that it summarized all data available to date and showed progress toward the 2025 targets. He asked what process the Committee wanted to use to evaluate targets for 2030 and beyond, as well as how to set targets that currently have “TBD” benchmarks. Keith Thomas briefly reviewed the process the Committee previously used to establish the 2025 targets. The Committee agreed that using the same format would be appropriate. Doug Hendren, Dave Powell, Rob Alexander, and Laura Dent all expressed interest in participating in the Focus Area 4 working group.

Tom Hartman provided an update on the Liberty Street project, noting that the 30 percent design phase had been completed. He also shared that a public meeting is planned to gather additional community input. The next step in the project will be to begin the right-of-way process.

Harsit Patel introduced himself to the Committee and gave an overview of the City’s recycling program. He noted that recycling tonnage has increased in recent years. The City currently operates a cardboard pickup service for businesses, and beginning in 2026, the service will expand to residential pickup through an online or call-in reservation system that uses route management technology to create the most efficient collection routes. Harsit Patel explained that this technology has helped reduce fuel use in sanitation collection and lower the City’s carbon footprint.

Rob Alexander asked whether reduced fuel usage would be reflected in the City’s greenhouse gas inventory. Keith Thomas responded that changes in fuel consumption would appear in the inventory, as fleet fuel usage is included in the data. Joy Loving asked whether the new cardboard collection process would affect users of the Recycling Center or the mobile recycling unit. Harsit Patel said he did not anticipate any impacts. Ferwerdin Barzanji asked why bulk items could not be collected using trash trucks. Harsit Patel explained that bulk items cause increased wear on sanitation compactors. Ferwerdin Barzanji then asked how staff would help residents learn to use the new system. Harsit Patel said staff have held several public events to assist residents to navigate the online system. He also noted that residents can always call in or come to our office for help. Andy Kohen asked whether the changes would affect staffing levels. Harsit Patel responded that there would be no staffing impacts. Tom Hartman added that schedules have been adjusted to accommodate the changes.

### **Community Goals Updates**

Keith Thomas reported that staff are still waiting for Dr. McGinnis to complete the 2024 greenhouse gas inventory. Keith Thomas noted that Dr. McGinnis has had to change his workload to adjust to new timelines on several federal grants he is working on.

### **Updates from Sustainability & Environmental Manager**

Keith Thomas provided an update on the Turner Pavilion solar project, noting that staff have completed the procurement process and selected AEC, the same contractor that installed the solar system at Bluestone Elementary. He explained that the project will include a 35.2 kW system, which is smaller than originally anticipated due to building code requirements. Keith Thomas added that AEC is currently conducting a structural assessment of the facility and that some additional repairs will be required to meet code. Doug Hendren asked for clarification on why the system size was reduced. Keith Thomas explained that staff received an initial set of designs that were reviewed by the Building Official, who provided comments that resulted in a smaller system. Brian O’Dell added that fire code setback requirements also contributed to the reduction. Keith Thomas further clarified that the initial design had been based on the residential building code, which was not appropriate for Turner Pavilion.

Bill Howe expressed interest in making the City’s solar production data publicly available through a website or dashboard. Doug Hendren agreed, noting that public education about solar is part of the Committee’s mission and that sharing solar data could support that goal.

Keith Thomas then reminded Committee members of expiring terms and to reapply if they were interested in continuing to serve.

Joy Loving asked about the Solarize numbers in the updates document and why they are so low. Brian O’Dell cautioned the Committee against using Solarize participation rates as a proxy for overall solar adoption in the City, noting that HEC had 24 new solar connections this year.

### **Harrisonburg Community Town Hall Updates**

Rob Alexander reviewed the draft plan for the proposed event. Dave Powell shared that he has begun reaching out to several industrial and large energy users in the City to describe the event and gauge interest. He reported that approximately 25 organizations have expressed some level of interest in attending.

Rob Alexander asked the Committee for input on the best time of year to hold the event. Dave Powell noted that a summer timeframe would not be ideal. Rob Alexander then conducted a straw poll on holding the event in the spring or fall. The Committee was split between the two options, so Rob Alexander suggested that the subcommittee planning the event further discuss and refine the timeline.

Rob Alexander also noted that Keith Thomas, Dave Powell, and he would meet soon to organize and prepare ahead of the next subgroup meeting.

### **Other Committee Topics**

Laura Dent announced that she would be attending the 2025 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 30) which will take place in November in Belém, Brazil. She advised she would give an update on the conference at the January meeting.

### **Next Meeting Dates**

2026 Dates

- January 28, 2026
- April 29, 2026
- July 29, 2026
- October 28, 2026



# City of Harrisonburg

City Hall  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** ID 26-137, **Version:** 1

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**Subject:**

Carl Larsson- Public Comment on Private Development Environmental Standards

Presented By: [Click or tap here to enter Presenter.](#)

[Click here to enter the action/summary \(insert the summary from the memo here](#)

**From:** [Carl Larsson](#)  
**To:** [Keith R. Thomas](#)  
**Subject:** EPSAC Public Comment on Private Development Environmental Standards  
**Date:** Monday, November 3, 2025 4:41:54 PM

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**WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.**

Dear Keith,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak during the public comment period at the EPSAC meeting last Wednesday. I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak, as well as for the helpful discussion by members of the committee.

As requested by the committee, I finally had an opportunity to type up a summary of my comments and concerns (below). When you have an opportunity, could you please forward this email to the rest of the committee?

I'd also be happy to connect with anyone who's interested in discussing this topic further, and can be reached by email at [ProfCarlLarsson@gmail.com](mailto:ProfCarlLarsson@gmail.com).

Thank you again for everything, and hope you have a great evening!

Best,

Carl Larsson  
487 S Mason St

### **Encouraging Private Sector Environmental Performance Standards - The "Link" Apartments**

This public comment concerns the negative environmental impacts of the proposal to build [the "Link" apartments at 473 S Main St](#) (site of the current Lindsey Funeral Home property, immediately adjacent to City Hall, Build Our Park, and the Farmer's Market). The goal of raising these concerns is to seek ways for our city to work constructively towards ensuring that the developer is committed to meeting or exceeding the environmental standards that we require for our own public buildings in the City of Harrisonburg.

The development proposal would bring needed housing to downtown, and its high density in a walkable, downtown area offers environmental and economic benefits. Density alone, however, isn't enough. A large, 265 unit development (with proffers that would allow for up to ~760 bedrooms) must also be designed with many other important considerations in mind (e.g., size and massing relative to its surroundings, impact on the Downtown Historic District, design, affordability, traffic, and downtown parking spillovers, among other issues). Another significant concern is the environmental impact of the proposed development. Some obvious, negative environmental impacts of the proposal include the following:

- **Loss of mature tree canopy**—as noted in the EPSAC July '25 minutes, our citywide canopy already fell 5.5% from 2014–2024 and remains well below the 40% target. The property currently has a number of mature trees, which all appear to be slated for removal under the developer's July rezoning application. Newly planted replacement trees would take decades to mature, and in the meantime the city will lose the public benefits of the mature trees (e.g., carbon sequestration, shade/cooling, mitigation of stormwater runoff). Could the developer preserve and build around some of the mature trees, especially with regard to the largest tree at the southwest corner of the property? This would be in the spirit of the Bryant Heights development that is profiled by Biophilic Cities: <https://www.biophiliccities.org/bcfilms>
- **Exacerbated urban heat island effect** - For example, the 5-6 story parking deck is slated to be built immediately adjacent to the planned Build Our Park space. How will this impact the temperatures and overall experience of visitors to the park, especially during hotter summer months when our city hosts summer concerts? How can the developer mitigate these impacts either by preserving existing, mature trees, or allowing additional set-backs from the property line to plant larger species of trees?
- **Increase in impervious surfaces and stormwater run-off.** Current plans show a drastic increase in impervious surfaces spanning the 2.7 acre property. How will this impact stormwater run-off in the area? How will its very close proximity to Black's Run, almost immediately across the street, impact flooding risk for land and neighborhoods further downstream?
- **Minimal commitment to sustainability features:** For example, the developer in its July Planning Commission application only committed to rough-in for solar (but not to install any panels), only 10 EV chargers in a large, 400+ space garage, and interior bike parking far below the potential cap of ~760 bedrooms (90 interior bike parking spots, and only 8 exterior spots).

To proceed, the developer is requesting a rezoning of the property from R-3 to B-1C. It's my understanding that they are currently gathering further input on the project, and it's my hope that they can strengthen the proposal to better serve the common good of our city. **Rezoning is a discretionary privilege that City Council can vote to approve or deny. It is therefore my hope that City Council will only grant rezoning if the project meets the highest standards for commercial real estate development, including in its environmental performance.** For example, could the developer be asked to commit to LEED certification (or equivalent) as part of any rezoning approval?

I understand EPSAC's stated purpose includes encouraging private projects to follow our city's environmental standards, and I wanted to learn more about how that might work in the case of the Link. Would EPSAC perhaps consider drafting a recommendation to Planning Commission and City Council that any rezoning, if approved, be conditioned on legally binding proffers that meet or exceed our municipal environmental standards, and/or that the developer commit to a recognized building standard such as LEED (or equivalent)? While Planning Commission has expertise in land use and zoning, EPSAC's input on environmental impact could be very helpful to them as they consider whether to recommend approval of the rezoning (I also understand from speaking with a former member of Planning Commission that there's a precedent for members of Planning Commission to consult with other city committees on the various impacts of proposed developments). Or are there other avenues that members of EPSAC could follow to pursue the committee's goal of encouraging private

projects to follow our city's environmental performance standards?

The Link is a high-profile project, with the developer claiming that it's the largest investment in the history of Downtown Harrisonburg. The standards our city holds the developer to on this project could end up setting a precedent for other future development in the city. For that reason, I'd be extremely grateful for any input that the committee may have on recommending high standards for both this project, as well as others that may follow in the future.

**From:** [Carl Larsson](#)  
**To:** [Rob alexanrw Alexander](#)  
**Cc:** [Keith R. Thomas](#)  
**Subject:** EPSAC Comments on the Link  
**Date:** Monday, March 9, 2026 10:12:36 PM  
**Attachments:** [PastedGraphic-1.png](#)

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**WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.**

Dear Rob and Keith,

I hope you're doing well. As a follow-up to my comments at the EPSAC meeting last fall on private development standards (thank you again for that opportunity!), I'd like to share some additional concerns about the environmental impact of the Link apartment proposal, which is about to go before the Planning Commission in a **public hearing this Wednesday, March 11th**. If possible, I'm interested in sharing these comments with the rest of the committee members on EPSAC, and was wondering if you could please forward this email to them, in addition to including it in the docket for the next EPSAC meeting?

I'd like to start by expressing my gratitude for the work that the committee does in advocating for environmental stewardship and sustainability in our city. With those shared goals in mind, I'd like to gently raise one category of concerns (out of many) that I have on the Link, which is that the currently proposed proffers in the Link's rezoning application fall far short of our city's ideals for environmental performance. **Given our city standards for sustainability, and because the developer has stated a commitment to sustainability (more details below), it's my hope that our Planning Commission will not recommend approval of the rezoning application until the developer has revised its written plan and proffers to be in accordance with the high standards that our city desires to see in large, prominently-located buildings such as the proposed Link apartments.**

**Concern #1: Loss of tree canopy.** On this, I'd like to reiterate my suggestion that the developer should explore options to preserve as many of the existing, mature trees on the property as possible (see <https://www.biophiliccities.org/>, from Professor Tim Beaty at UVA, for more on preserving trees in new-build developments). Similarly, I'd like to suggest that our city should expect the developer to commit (via written proffers) to a more robust tree planting strategy that aims to achieve a specific canopy/coverage target (as opposed to the current proffers, which are more vaguely written, with sparsely planted trees, and allowances to substitute up to 50% of the required large trees for shrubs or ornamental grasses). This could be further advanced by setting aside additional space on S Main St for **a large, tree-lined promenade that terminates at City Hall (see renderings from John Mathers, attached here;** this design would also preserve our sight-lines of City Hall when traveling up S Main Street. It's my understanding that the rezoning applicant has seen this rendering and should be familiar with the concept.). Imagine the great positive impact that a tree-lined promenade in front of City Hall would have on our city, both in terms of improving our tree canopy, as well as by creating a beautiful, pedestrian-focused public space! The tree-lined promenade is also a design idea that seems to be a point of mutual agreement among many who are both generally in favor and opposed to the 6-story apartments.

**Concern #2 on the urban heat island effect**, especially due to the large, 6-story concrete parking deck in front of City Hall and immediately adjacent to Build Our Park. On this, I'd like to suggest that our city should not approve anything less than a fully "wrapped" parking deck (aka, a "Texas Donut" design). As an example of wrapped parking, please reference this [recent development at George Mason University](#). The slides show that the developer's original concept had a visible parking deck, but they then revised the plan to hide the parking by wrapping it with residential units along the street. It's a helpful illustration of how feedback during the planning review process can lead to substantial improvements in building design. (Notably, this project implemented wrapped parking despite being outside a historic district; in contrast, the Link site sits within Harrisonburg's historic district and civic core, where even stronger context-sensitive design should reasonably be expected.). Wrapped parking would improve the aesthetics, symbolically demonstrate how much we value people/pedestrians in our downtown civic core, and cut down on the heat radiating onto the park and farmers market from the current design of the large, concrete parking deck. Wrapped parking is also another example of a design change that I feel would have widespread support in our community, including among those who are both generally opposed and in favor of a 6-story building on this lot.

**Concern #3 on LEED (or similar) certification**. Finally, on the sustainability of the building itself, it concerns me that the developer isn't pursuing any LEED (or similar) certifications. Their sustainability commitments are minimal, as summarized in our city staff report on the Link's rezoning application:

The applicant has proffered sustainability features including, but not limited to, rough-in measures to allow for future installation of solar panels (Proffer I.j.), a minimum of 14 electrical vehicle (EV) charging stations (Proffer III.c.), a minimum of 120 secure indoor bicycle parking spaces, and a minimum of 16 exterior bicycle parking spaces (Proffer III.d.).

The developer is not committing to install solar from the outset (so how likely is it that they will later on?), and out of a 480+ spot parking garage, they're only committing to 14 EV spots (~3% of the total). The developer's application claims they'll offer "bike storage at LEED recommended levels" - this sounds good to me, but imagine how much better it would be if they also followed LEED specifications on all aspects of the project!

An important reason why the LEED certification makes a difference is because research from the EPA shows that buildings generate roughly one-third of greenhouse-gas emissions in the United States, roughly comparable to the emissions from all cars and light trucks combined. I remember being surprised by this when I first encountered the data while studying real estate in graduate school. For this reason, *density alone is not enough to make a building truly sustainable*. The environmental outcome also depends heavily on how the building itself is designed and constructed. [According to the USGBC](#), "*LEED-certified buildings typically consume 25% less energy, reduce carbon emissions by 34%, and use 11% less water.*" For a building the size of the Link, a LEED (or similar) certification would result in a *substantial* reduction in energy use, carbon emissions, and water use.

Furthermore, a LEED (or similar) certification for the Link would set an important precedent for future development while also symbolizing our city's values. The proposed apartments

will sit immediately adjacent to our city's primary civic spaces (e.g., City Hall, Build Our Park, and the Farmers Market), which are places designed to reflect the shared values of our community. Imagine the symbolic statement that a state-of-the-art, energy-efficient building on this block would make about our city's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Conversely, allowing such a visible project to move forward under its current proffers (which commit only to minimal sustainability features) could unintentionally send the opposite message: that environmental stewardship is not a priority for our city.

**City sustainability standards, applied to the Link.** Thanks to the work of ESPAC, our city already has high standards for public building sustainability - *shouldn't we expect large, private developers to meet the same standards*, especially when requesting City Council to evaluate whether the proposal creates the public benefit needed to grant the privilege of a discretionary zoning change? Additionally, *many peer communities encourage or require green building certification for large developments such as the Link*. Once again, isn't this something that we, too, should expect of the Link before approving their requested change to the zoning map?

**Developer statements and the Downtown 2040 Plan explicitly recommend sustainable building practices on this specific building site:**

- The Downtown 2040 Plan (one of our city's guiding documents for planning decisions), clearly states that our city should encourage green building solutions on this specific site adjacent to City Hall (screenshot of this page attached, with the sustainability verbiage highlighted). This very exhibit is included in the developer's current application, and the developer frequently appeals to its commitment to realizing aspects of the Downtown 2040 Plan. I feel this is a good sign that they should be open to improving on the sustainability features of their building, too, to bring them in line with the 2040 Plan.
- The developer's rezoning application states that they have a "proven track record of creating **sustainable**, community-focused developments across the Mid-Atlantic region." (Bold font added for emphasis)
- The developer's [webpage for the Link](#) states, "*The Link will have 136+ secured bike parking spaces and 14 EV charges [sic] to further enhance **our commitment to Harrisonburg's sustainability goals.***" (Bold font for emphasis)

All of this evidence seems to suggest that the developer is both capable of and verbally committed to improving on the sustainability features of its proposed project. **I therefore gently suggest that the Planning Commission should not recommend approval of the current rezoning request until the developer has substantially improved on its proffered commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.**

**Additional concerns.** While this email focuses on environmental concerns with the Link, the [55 pages of public comments](#) attached to the agenda for the 3/11 Planning Commission meeting indicates that there are numerous other, significant issues with the current application for the Link and its merits for rezoning that warrant serious investigation by our city before moving forward with a zoning change. Developers in other cities routinely go through multiple rounds of planning commission before receiving the green light that their plan provides tangible public benefit and meets the city's criteria for rezoning. For all of these reasons combined, **I feel that it's important not to recommend approval of the current application until all of these matters—including, but not limited to, the environmental performance of such a prominent building—can be fully sorted out and improved upon**

**in a future, revised application.**

**Long-term benefits.** Any buildings constructed on this property will likely stand for many decades. The effort we invest today towards keeping high standards on this rezoning request will yield large, long-term benefits for our community. Importantly, we need the developer to commit to these changes within the written proffers of their application *before* a rezoning is granted and the city loses much of its leverage.

I hope that some of these ideas may be of service to the committee members in evaluating the rezoning request that will go before Planning Commission this Wednesday for public hearing. I will also forward these thoughts to our city's members of Planning Commission. Thank you all again for your service to Harrisonburg and for the thoughtful attention you give to the long-term well-being of our community.

Best,

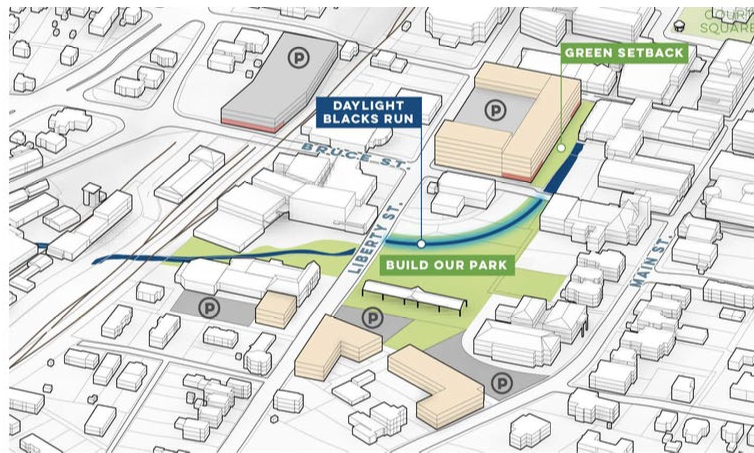
Carl Larsson  
487 S Mason St., [SEP]Harrisonburg, VA

P.S. More indirectly related to environmental performance and sustainability, I also have concerns about the high proportion of student-focused, 3- and 4-bedroom units (units that are leased by the bedroom) in the current proposal for the Link. While the developer has offered some slight reductions in these types of student-focused units, **the current proffers still appear to allow for up to ~80% of the total 555 bedrooms to potentially be housed in 3- and 4-bedroom units** (I'm happy to share my calculations on this, if it'd be helpful). This unit mix is consistent with how the developer had originally [labeled the project, "JMU Development / Student Housing"](#) last summer, before later changing the label to "Harrisonburg Development / Market Rate Housing". If we want to create sustainable, centrally-located, walkable housing for both students and non-students alike, **it's my hope that our Planning Commission will not recommend approval of this project until the developer commits in its written proffers to a substantially larger proportion of 1 and 2 bedroom units, at ratios that they prove to be more in-line with local averages for non-student housing apartments.**

Conceptual site plan for:

**SOUTH DOWNTOWN**

residential commercial parking open space



**A**  
 Create more activity south of Water Street - The Ice House has brought new life in Downtown south of the concentration of restaurants along Water and Main Streets. Currently, the Farmers Market anchors what is now a large surface parking lot. The recent parking study indicates the Water Street parking deck should be redeveloped given its age and condition. Redevelop the deck as a new mixed-use structure with housing wrapping a new parking deck. Activate Water Street and Blacks Run with new space for commercial uses. Step the new

building back from Blacks Run as well to create a linear park along the creek to help connect this area south toward the Farmers Market and the proposed park. Integrate new housing close to City Hall to activate the south side of the Farmers Market, encouraging green building solutions, such as solar energy and recycled or sustainable materials. Coordinate with nearby private property owners about the possibility of creating new parking just to the west of Liberty Street intended to serve a range of developments and businesses.

<b>New Parking:</b>	1,040 spaces
<b>Net New Parking:</b>	270 spaces
<b>New Residential:</b>	270 units
<b>New Commercial:</b>	13,000 square feet
<b>New Park Space:</b>	2 acres

**EXHIBIT 3**



MATHER & BALT  
ARCHITECTS





# City of Harrisonburg

City Hall  
409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** ID 26-136, **Version:** 1

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**Subject:**

Update on Current City of Harrisonburg Environmental Initiatives

Presented By: [Click or tap here to enter Presenter.](#)

[Click here to enter the action/summary \(insert the summary from the memo here\)](#)

# Update on Current City of Harrisonburg Environmental Initiatives

## General Education and Outreach- Past Calendar Year

Group	Topic	Date

*\*Note the above table is only for events. Educational messages on social media, newsletters, in the media, or in other formats are not included.*

## Grant Updates

Grant	Project Description	Status/Update
EECBG Formula Grant	Install 35kW of solar on Turner Pavilion	The City has completed the project and working through the close out process.
Transportation/Bike-Ped Grants	More information about funded transportation related projects can be found at: <a href="https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/transportation-projects">https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/transportation-projects</a>	

## Focus Area 1: Buildings and Energy

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory- Community & Municipal

The emissions inventory describes energy use of different areas of municipal operations, including, but not limited to: fleet vehicles, buildings, and street lighting. The emissions inventory also describes energy use of different areas and operations within the community.

The GHG Emissions Reports are available at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/EAP>.

*Current Status: 2024 inventory in progress*

*Alignment: FA1 Goal 2*

*Staff Contact: Keith Thomas*

## Solar on City Facilities

Building	Solar System Size (kW)	Year Installed	Percentage of the Total Building Load (%)
Bluestone Elementary	340	2023	90
HCPS Central Office	35.1	2023	20
New PW Building	91	2024	66
Fire Station 5	83	2025	TBD
Turner Pavilion	35.2	2026	TBD
The Navigation Center	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Total kW Solar:</b>	<b>584.3</b>		

In addition, Friendly City Solar provides 1.755 MW DC (1.5 MW AC) solar to the City's grid.

*Current Status: Ongoing*

*Alignment: FA1 Goal 1, 3, 4 & 6*

*Staff Contact: Keith Thomas*

## SolSmart

The City has completed requirements needed for silver designation. City staff created a solar landing page:

<https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/solar-resources>. More information about SolSmart is available at:

<https://solsmart.org/>.

Bronze	60 Total Points	3 Prerequisite Criteria
	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 Points in Permitting & Inspection <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Points in Planning & Zoning <input type="checkbox"/> 20 Points from any other category	<input type="checkbox"/> Solar Statement (PR-1) <input type="checkbox"/> Solar permitting checklist (PI-1) <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning review (PZ-1)
Silver	100 Total Points	4 Prerequisite Criteria
	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete bronze designation requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Permit staff training (PI-2) <input type="checkbox"/> Inspection staff training (PI-3) <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning clarification (PZ-4) <input type="checkbox"/> Solar landing page (CE-1)
Gold	200 Total Points	3 Prerequisite Criteria
	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete silver designation requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Permit turnaround time (PI-4) <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning accessory use (PZ-5) <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning barrier removal (PZ-6)
Platinum	350 Total Points	4 Prerequisite Criteria
	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete gold designation requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Instant permitting (PI-5) <input type="checkbox"/> Post metrics (PI-6) <input type="checkbox"/> Install solar (GO-1) <input type="checkbox"/> Community partnerships (CE-2)

Read about the SolSmart designation press release here: [https://harrisonburgva.gov/sites/default/files/CMO/files/press\\_release/2024/01-17%20Harrisonburgs%20Hard%20Work%20Earns%20SolSmart%20Silver%20Designation.pdf](https://harrisonburgva.gov/sites/default/files/CMO/files/press_release/2024/01-17%20Harrisonburgs%20Hard%20Work%20Earns%20SolSmart%20Silver%20Designation.pdf)

*Current Status: Silver Designation*

*Alignment: Guiding Goal 2, FA1 Goal 6*

*Staff Contact: Keith Thomas, Thanh Dang*

## Solarize Campaign

The City partnered with LEAP to promote their Solarize Campaign. The 2025 campaign is expected to kicked off April 15. More information about Solarize Virginia is available at: <https://solarizeva.org/>.

Year	Area	Total Signups	Total Executed Contracts
2022	Harrisonburg	29	4
2023	Harrisonburg	13	0
2024	Harrisonburg	6	1
2025	Harrisonburg	8	1

*Current Status: Complete*

*Alignment: Guiding Goal 2& 3, FA1 Goal 6*

*Staff Contact: Keith Thomas*

## Focus Area 2: Land Use and Green Space

### Expanding & Protecting Tree Canopy

Staff applied for and received funding from the [Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program](#) to create an urban forest management plan. Staff have worked with our consultants, Urban Canopy Works LLC, to develop and finalize the plan. An urban forestry management plan is essential to the City of Harrisonburg because it helps guide city staff to care for and manage single trees and tree populations in urban settings for the purpose of improving the urban environment. Urban forestry involves both planning and management, including the programming of care and maintenance operations of the urban forest. Urban forestry advocates the role of trees as a critical part of the urban infrastructure including stormwater mitigation. Urban foresters plant and maintain trees, support appropriate tree and forest preservation, conduct research and promote the many benefits trees provide. The final report is planned to be presented to City Council in late November or December.

**Citizen Tree Plantings:** The City provides opportunities for citizens to plant trees through our Harrisonburg Conservation Assistance Program (HCAP) (<https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/hcap>). Staff previously worked with the program managers for the Anne Arundel County Community Tree Planting Grant Program to understand ways in which we could improve our program design based on lessons learned from the Maryland program. Advantages of our HCAP program is that citizens get the value of a certified arborist to evaluate the site and make recommendations on where to plant and what to plant. This helps ensure that the right tree for the right place principle is followed and does not place the burden on a landowner to design their own planting plan.

Public Trees Planted	
Trees planted this year (CYTD)	<b>1040</b>



*Current Status: Ongoing*

*Alignment: FA2 Goal 1, FA2 Goal 2, FA2 Goal 3, FA2 Goal 4, FA6 Goal 4*

*Staff Contact: Jeremy Harold, Keith Thomas*

### Pollinator Habitat

Staff work to convert traditional landscaped areas and turfgrass into pollinator habitat spaces. Many of these spaces have been in road medians. View our interactive webmap: <https://arcg.is/0HuTS1>

Read this article about the City of Harrisonburg’s Pollinator Program: <https://www.nrpa.org/blog/the-buzz-in-the-burg/>

NRPA published a new resource for other professionals which features our program on page 21 and a case study on page 30. For more information visit: <https://www.nrpa.org/blog/create-more-sustainable-parks-through-pollinator-and-native-habitat/>

*Current Status: Ongoing*

*Alignment: FA2 Goal 1; FA2 Goal 4*

*Staff Contact: Jeremy Harold, Keith Thomas*

### Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances Update Project

The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances regulate how land is used and is developed.

Topics that the Zoning Ordinance could address that may be of interest to the EPSAC include, but are not limited to: regulations that promote higher density, compact, and mixed use development; regulations that allow community gardens as a principal use; regulations that allow beekeeping as an accessory use; regulations effecting the location and design of solar installations; regulations that require landscaping and trees; regulations that encourage tree preservation

during development; and regulations that require less off-street parking or that establish a maximum number of parking spaces. More information is available at: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/zoning-subdivision-ordinances-update>.

*Current Status: The project is anticipated to continue and will include opportunities for public engagement and input.  
Alignment: FA 2 Goal 1; FA 4 Goal 5; FA 4 Goal 6; (could also support) FA 1 Goal 6; FA 2 Goal 3; FA 3 Goal 1  
Staff Contact: Thanh Dang*

### Riparian Buffer

Staff continue to plant new and care for existing trees and native vegetation within city maintained riparian buffers. In 2023, approximately 3 acres were re-planted in a section of the Northend Greenway stream restoration project where the previous tree planting failed. In addition, trees were planted along a 5.5 acre buffer for the Blacks Run South stream restoration project.

*Current status: Ongoing  
Alignment: FA2 Goal 4  
Staff Contact: Keith Thomas*

### Continued Expansion of Sidewalks, Shared Use Paths, and Trail Facilities

Refer to: Alternative Transportation Infrastructure (Shared Use Paths, Safe Routes to School, etc.) under Focus Area 4.

## Focus Area 3: Regional Food Systems

*There are no updates. Staff shared Staunton’s community garden ordinance with Community Development for consideration in their zoning update work.*

## Focus Area 4: Sustainable Transportation

### Alternative Transportation Infrastructure (SUPs, Safe Routes to Schools)

Staff continue to expand infrastructure for alternative transportation methods such as biking or walking. These include building shared use paths, bike lanes, protected bike lanes, road reconfigurations, sidewalk, pedestrian crossing features, etc. The goal is to create more accessible, safe, and convenient methods of traveling throughout the city with alternative methods of transportation. More information: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/transportation-projects>

*Current status: Complete  
Alignment: FA4 Goal 5  
Staff Contact: Jakob zumFelde*

### Fleet E-Bikes

PW purchased two e-bikes. These bikes are used in lieu of fleet vehicles for staff to get to meetings, site visits, and other city business around town. The following miles chart represents the total miles ridden on the bikes. While the mileage on a bike is not exactly correlated to the miles that would have been driven on the road, the miles do represent general usage and a reduction in vehicle mileage. Furthermore, fleet e-bike use represents our commitment to bike-ped infrastructure and multimodal transportation.

Total Miles	
Bike	Miles
Red Como*	1016
Black Globe Haul	543
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,559</b>

*\*exact mileage prior to PW use is unknown. It is estimated between 30-50 miles were on the bike prior to PW purchasing the bike in June 2023.*

Current status: Ongoing  
 Alignment: FA4 Goal4  
 Staff Contact: Keith Thomas

Fleet EVs

Vehicle	#
Chevy Bolt EUV	2
Ford F-150 Lightening	3
International CE Series EV school buses	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

\*PW planned to order 3 additional F-150 Lightenings in FY26, but Ford has ceased production. Will be getting F-150 hybrids.

## Focus Area 5: Waste Reduction and Recycling

Eateries Acting Towards Sustainability (EATS)

Certification program designed as a voluntary initiative for proprietors within the food service sector to opt into. The objective of this certification is to recognize the dedication and efforts of these establishments. The aim is for the Eateries Acting Towards Sustainability (EATS) program to serve as a valuable tool in steering sustainability efforts within food service operations, potentially igniting further environmentally friendly business endeavors.

Furthermore, the EATS Program aims to prioritize waste reduction and position the Harrisonburg restaurant industry and broader hospitality sector as pioneers in sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. By fostering a culture of practical sustainability, this initiative not only benefits the environment but also enhances the overall quality of life for all residents in Harrisonburg. Through public education on minimizing single-use waste and empowering restaurants to adopt cost-effective waste reduction measures, this program will tackle waste-related challenges.

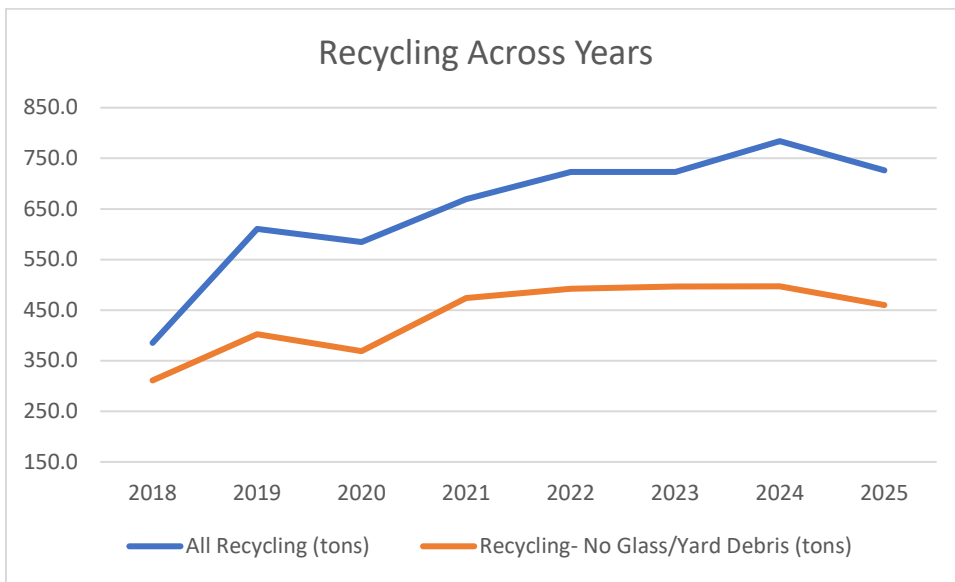
This certification program has three levels to highlight everyone’s level of sustainability. The first level, called the Sprout Level, is a very low-barrier entry to reward people for making the small but necessary steps towards sustainability. The second level, Bloom, pushes businesses to take an even bigger step to reduce their single-use plastic. The final level, Harvest, will show how businesses are putting sustainability at the forefront of their everyday operation. At the Harvest Level, businesses will hopefully be able to start reaping the rewards of their hard work and will be able to share their experience with others. The points system is based on categories that align with the six focus areas of The City of Harrisonburg’s Environmental Action Plan. More information about the program is available at:

<https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/EATS>.

Certified Establishments		
Establishment	Level	Year Certified
Drifters Cafe	3- Harvest	2024
Grilled Cheese Mania	3- Harvest	2024
Bowl of Good	3- Harvest	2024
Friendly City Co-op Food Bar	3- Harvest	2024
Black Sheep Coffee	3- Harvest	2025
Aristocat Cafe	3- Harvest	2025

## Recycling

Year to Date	
January- March 2026	
Item	tons
Plastic #1	4.6
Plastic #2	2.5
Mixed Paper	4.8
Cardboard	42
Plastic Bags	2.1
Aluminum	1.5
Tin/Scrap	5.6
Glass	25.4
<b>Total Recycled</b>	<b>94.1</b>
<b>Total MSW</b>	<b>2043.3</b>



*Alignment: FA 5 Goal 1; FA 5 Goal 2; FA 5 Goal 3*

*Staff Contact: Harsit Patel*

*(Note for Keith: Spreadsheet: [Located here](#))*

## Urban Wood Program

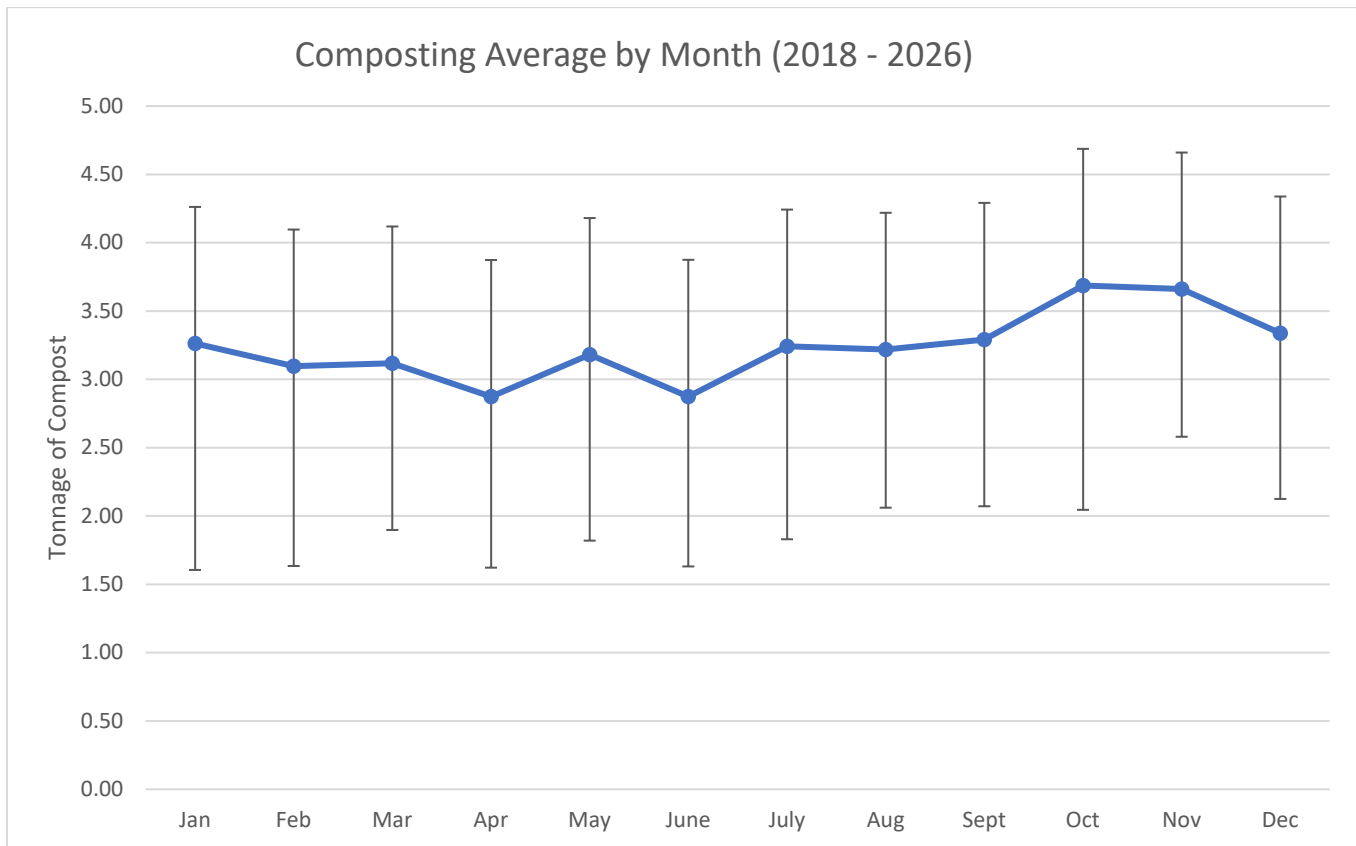
The Urban Wood Program seeks to reuse trees that must be removed because of insect, pest, disease, or weather damage. The goal is to keep this material out of landfills by repurposing the material and offsetting the need to harvest new material. Between 2020 and 2022, the program has kept an estimated 46 tons of wood out of our landfill through public auction of logs and firewood. Additionally, another 5-10 tons of woody debris was used as woodchips around pollinator habitat and newly planted trees throughout the City. For their hard work and innovation, staff were awarded the Gold Medal for the Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award for the Urban Forestry and Urban Wood programs. More information can be found in this press release: [04-05 Public Works Honored with Gold Medal for Urban Forestry and Wood Program.pdf \(harrisonburgva.gov\)](#).

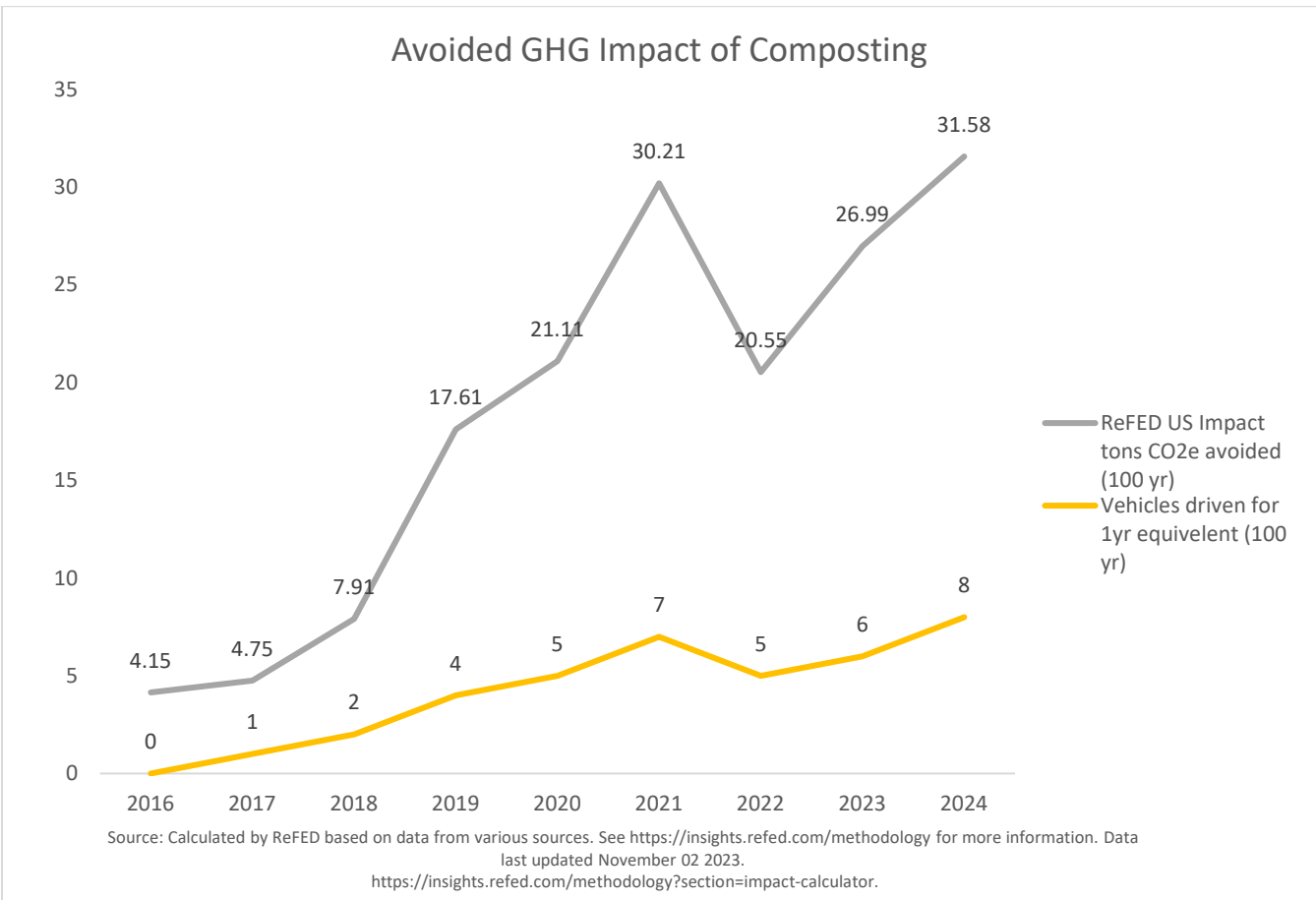
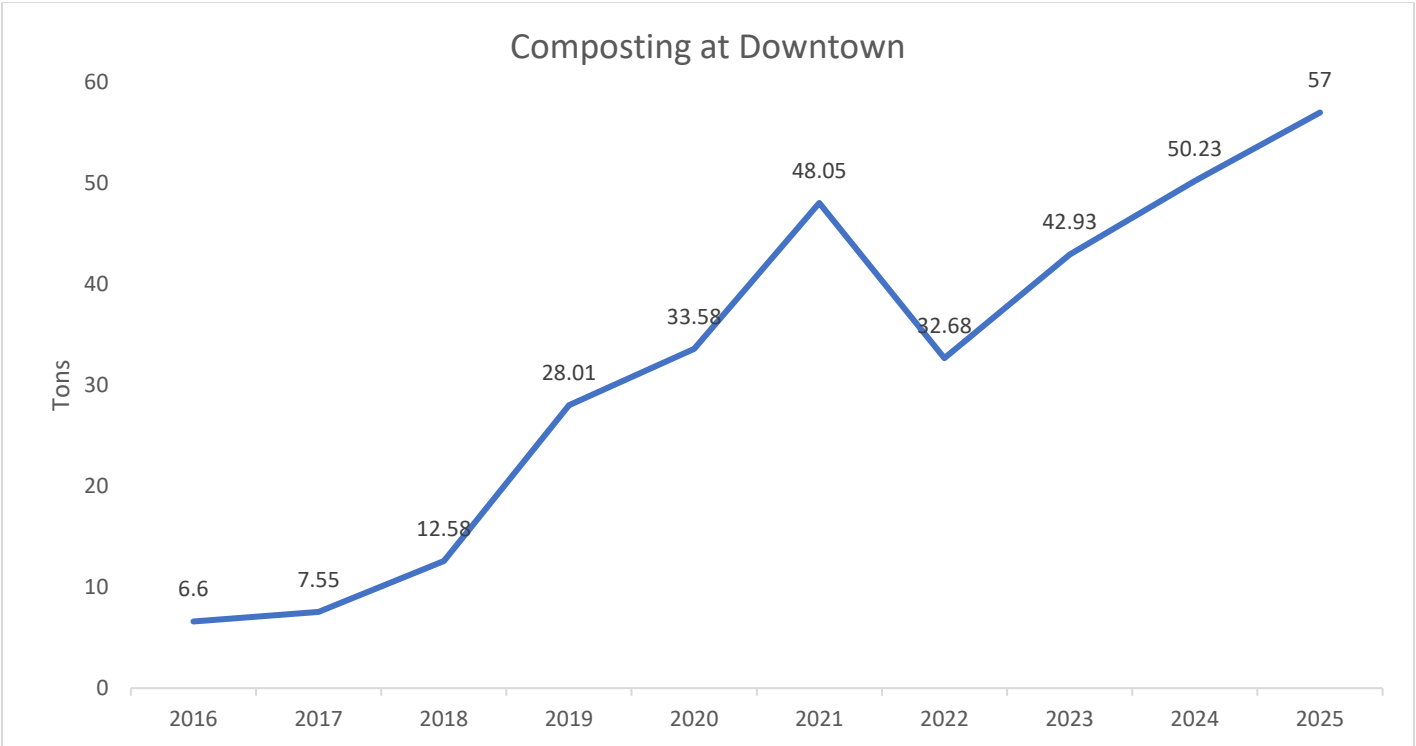
*Current status: Ongoing*

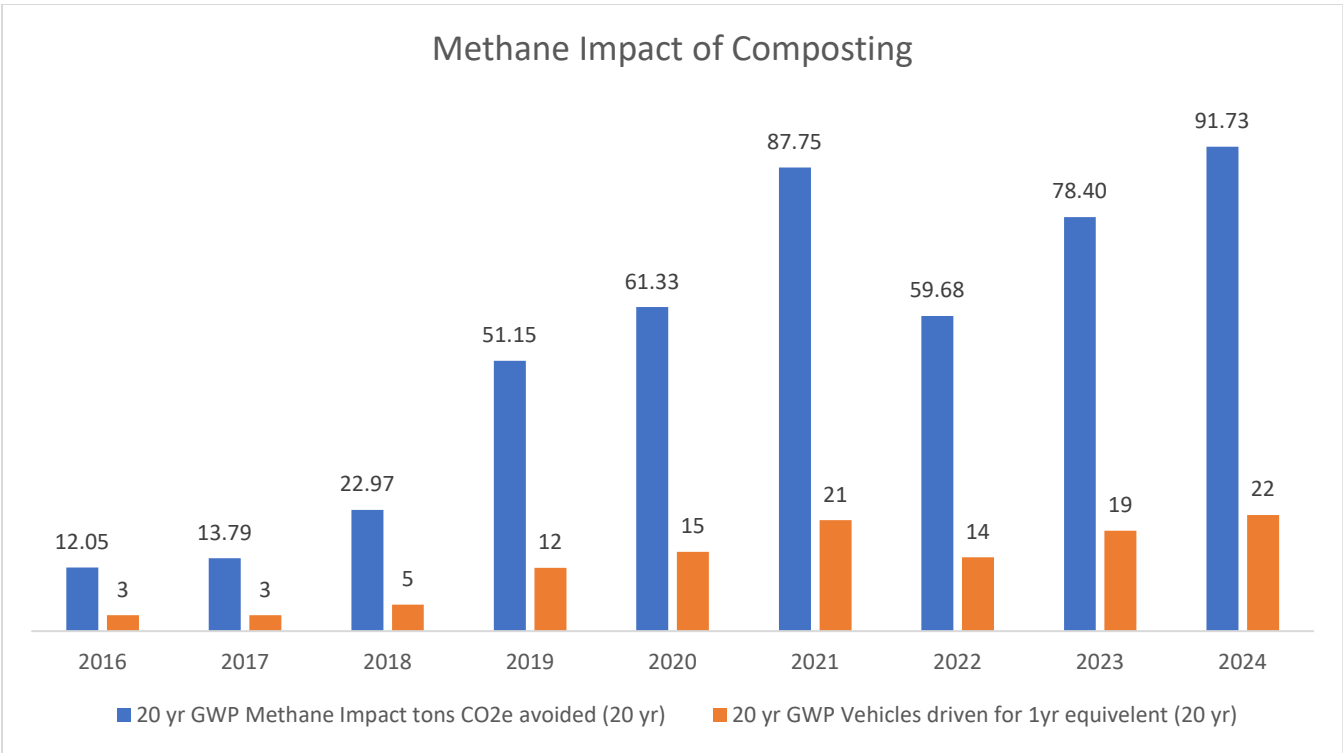
Composting at City Hall

Composting City Hall			
	YTD Total	Average	Max- All Time
Item	tons	tons	tons
January	5.52	3.26	5.52
February	4.78	3.10	4.78
March	4.87	3.12	4.87
April		2.87	4.55
May		3.18	5.28
June		2.88	4.29
July		3.24	5.27
August		3.22	4.85
September		3.29	4.72
October		3.69	5.93
November		3.66	4.66
December		3.34	4.92
<b>2026 Total</b>	<b>15.17</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>57</b>

The following annual tons and GHG charts will be calculated at the end of every calendar year.







Staff also encourage at home composting in social media posts and flyers.

*Current status: Ongoing*

*Alignment: FA 5 Goal 1; FA 5 Goal 2*

*Staff Contact: Shayna Carter, Harsit Patel, Keith Thomas*

*(Note for Keith: Spreadsheet: [Located here](#))*

### Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events

Staff work with the Rockingham County Landfill to offer two household hazardous waste collection days in April and October. More information: <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/hazardous-waste-collection>

*Alignment: FA 5 Goal 1; FA 5 Goal 2; FA 5 Goal 4*

*Staff Contact: Shayna Carter, Harsit Patel, Keith Thomas*

## Focus Area 6: Water Resources

### Stream Restoration Work

Work started on the Mountain View Drive stream restoration project and is completed. In addition, work on the Blacks Run South stream restoration is about 70 percent completed and will continue through this year. Stream restorations are part of the suite of BMPs the City is constructing to help reduce erosion, filter pollutants, and improve water quality. Additionally, some stream restoration projects are designed to protect infrastructure.

Stream Segment	Length Restored (lin ft)	Year Complete
Purcell Park	Approx. 2000	2009
Northend Greenway	3,137	January 2021
Mountain View Drive	1,650	February 2024
Blacks Run South	5,500	April 2025
<b>Total:</b>	<b>12,287 (2.33 miles)</b>	

*Current status: Ongoing*

*Alignment: FA 6 Goal 4*

*Staff Contact: Tom Hartman, Keith Thomas*

### Harrisonburg Conservation Assistance Program (HCAP)

HCAP provides funding for private landowners to voluntarily install best management practices (BMPs) on their property to help treat or reduce runoff from their property.

FY Year	Approved Projects	Completed Projects	Cancelled Projects	Carryover Projects	Total Project Payment
2020	5	3	2	0	\$23,918.07
2021	3	3	0	0	\$38,503.71
2022	3	1	2	0	\$352.10
2023	8	7	0	1	\$7,492.69
2024	25	17	0	8	\$21,204.18
2025	27	16	3	8	\$56,953.59
2026 (YTD)	21	5	4	TBD	\$3,785.50

*Current status: Ongoing*

*Alignment: FA 6 Goal 4*

*Staff Contact: Keith Thomas*

### Septic to Sanitary Reimbursements

Year	Completed Connections
2006 - 2016	28
2017-2025	32
2026 (YTD)	0

Septic systems tend to leach bacteria and nutrients into waterways which contributes to water pollution. Connecting to sanitary sewer diverts these pollutants from the ground to the sanitary sewer systems which is treated at the waste treatment plant and improves local water quality.

*Alignment: FA 6 Goal 4*

*Staff Contact: Keith Thomas*