



City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

Department of Planning & Community Development

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Building Inspections
Engineering
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To: Eric Campbell, City Manager
From: Thanh Dang, City Planner and
Harrisonburg Planning Commission
Date: November 13, 2018
Re: Comprehensive Plan

Summary:

Public hearing to consider adoption of the comprehensively updated City Comprehensive Plan. The proposed Comprehensive Plan will replace the current Comprehensive Plan, which was last comprehensively updated and approved on May 10, 2011.

Background:

The City of Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan (the 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.

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. Additionally, other issues are reviewed by comprehensive plans including, but not limited to, affordable housing, historic resources, employment, and economic development. Components of a comprehensive plan should be well-coordinated and complimentary. Virginia Code Sections 15.2-2223 through 15.2-2232, describes local comprehensive plans.

The Plan contains general recommendations. However, one of the most important and practical purposes of a comprehensive plan is to give guidance to the specific land use regulations adopted by the local government. Such regulations include:

- the Zoning Ordinance,
- the Subdivision Ordinance, and
- other growth management tools (i.e. design standards and guidelines, transportation planning, economic development initiatives, housing programs, and others).

The Plan is intended to set the groundwork for the City's growth and development policies for the next five years within a long-term planning horizon of 20 to 30 years.

Key Issues:

In Summer 2016, Planning Commission reviewed the 2011 Comprehensive Plan and determined that it should be updated to reflect the City’s latest ideals and to adapt the Plan to changes that have occurred since May 2011. A summary of activities that have occurred since Summer 2016 follows:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Sept 2016 – Feb 2017 | City staff develops plans for public engagement and updates baseline data within the Plan chapters. |
| Feb 2017 | Planning Commission and city staff hosts three public information sessions. |
| March 2017 | Planning Commission appoints 48 community members to one of four Advisory Committees. |
| April – Sept 2017 | Advisory Committees provide input and recommendations on chapters; Land Use Guide, Street Improvement Plan; Goal, Objective, and Strategy (GOS) statements, and other elements of the Plan. Chapters and GOS statements are updated. |
| Oct – Nov 2017 | Planning Commission and city staff hosts four public workshops and a public comment period. |
| Dec 2017 – Jan 2017 | Planning Commission discusses the Plan at regular meetings and at a special work session. |
| Jan – July 2018 | City staff updates chapters and GOS statements. |
| June 2018 | Planning Commission reviews Priority Objective Statements. |
| Aug 2018 | Public Open House event and public comment period. |
| Aug - Sept 2018 | Planning Commission and city staff updates the Plan. |
| Oct 2018 | Planning Commission (7-0) recommends approval of the Plan. |

The proposed Plan consists of the following chapters: (1) Introduction, (2) Vision and Goals, (3) Implementation, (4) Planning Context, (5) Community Engagement and Collaboration, (6) Land Use and Development Quality, (7) Neighborhoods and Housing, (8) Education, Workforce Development, and Lifelong Learning, (9) Arts, Culture, and Historic Resources, (10) Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship, (11) Parks and Recreation, (12) Transportation, (13) Community Infrastructure, Services, Safety, and Health, (14) Economic Development and Tourism, (15) Revitalization, and (16) Goal, Objective, and Strategy Statements.

The Plan includes an updated Land Use Guide and Street Improvement Plan. The Land Use Guide recommends future long-term (20+ year) land uses in the City. All three development types must be considered for the Land Use Guide: new development, infill development, and redevelopment. The Land Use Guide descriptions and map make up the official land use policy of the Plan and is to be used as a guide in decisions on such matters as rezonings, special use permit proposals, and the location of public facilities.

The project descriptions and map that make up the Street Improvement Plan identify transportation infrastructure improvements that the City may pursue to address safety, congestion, bicycle and pedestrian needs, and new development. The City did not prioritize projects 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.

The most recent version of the proposed Plan was made available to the public for review on October 1, 2018. This is the same printed version provided to City Council. A number of edits have been made to the Comprehensive Plan since that time. On October 10, Planning Commission reviewed the edits described below and recommended approval of the Plan with the edits.

1. Chapter 1, Introduction

- a. Edited the first paragraph. The original sentence was intended to be a general statement to describe what might be necessary but could be misunderstood to mean being required in a regulatory sense.

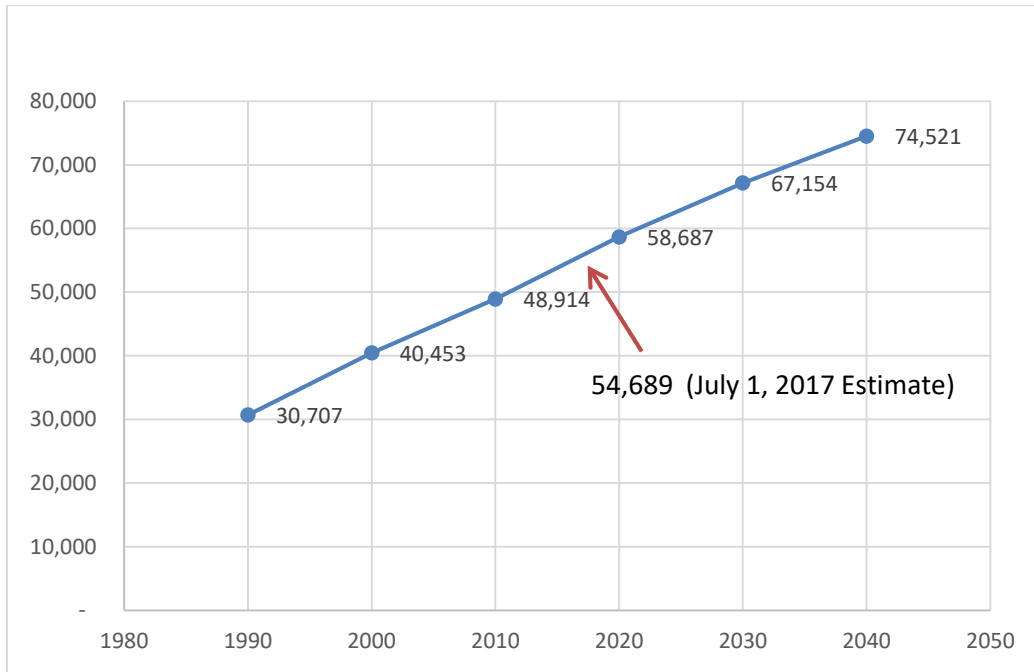
The City of Harrisonburg Comprehensive Plan presents a vision of what kind of community the City would like to be in the future and identifies ~~the steps required~~ to move toward that vision. The Plan is the central organizing umbrella under which other plans, regulations, and initiatives exist. The 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.

2. Chapter 3, Implementation

- a. There were two Strategies numbered 1.3.1. The second 1.3.1 was renumbered to 1.3.2. This was also updated in Chapter 16.

3. Chapter 4, Planning Context

- a. Updated Figure 4-6 and associated text in the preceding paragraph with new 2020, 2030, and 2040 projections from Weldon Cooper. New Figure below:



4. Chapter 6, Land Use and Development Quality
 - a. Table 6-5. City Land Use as Recommended by Land Use Guide, was corrected and changed from “Mixed Use Development” to “Mixed Use.”

5. Chapter 7, Neighborhoods and Housing
 - a. Corrected the first paragraph under “Housing Supply.”

Housing Supply

The City continues to see an overall increase in the housing stock with a total number of units available in 1990 of 10,900 and in 2016 of 18,039. Single-family detached dwellings grew about 48 percent between 1990 to 2016, while during the same time the number of duplex and townhouse units has grown by about 154 percent, and multiple-family units has grown by about 61 percent. This trend is anticipated to continue due to the high rental market, duplexes and townhomes typically being more affordable to
 - b. Corrected sources for Table 7-1.
 - c. Corrected labeling issues with some of the Tables and Figures.

6. Chapter 12, Transportation
 - a. In the Chapter Resources section, added web address for Transit Development Plan, <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/hdpt>.

7. Chapter 13, Community Infrastructure, Safety, and Health
 - a. On the chapter cover sheet, replaced the left photo with updated one on the right due to uncertainty of original source of the left photo:



8. Chapter 15, Revitalization

- a. On the chapter cover sheet, replaced the left photo with the updated one on the right:



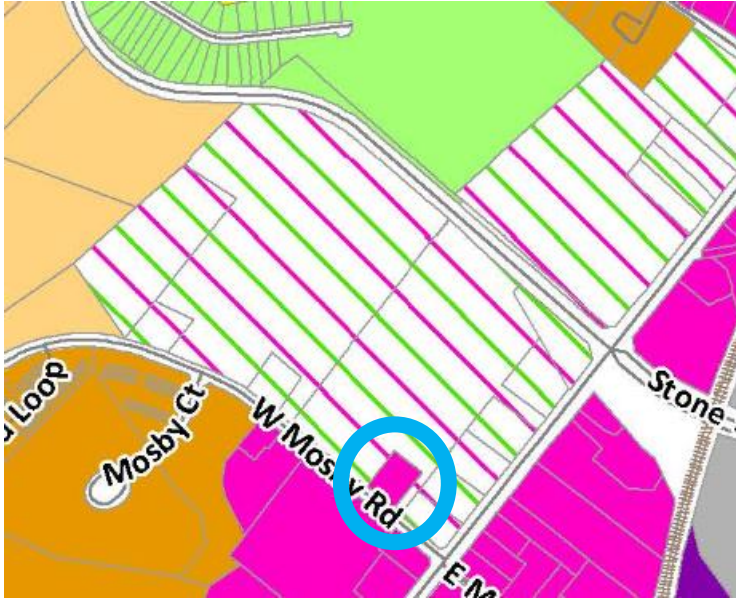
9. Chapter 16, Goals, Objective, and Strategy Statements

- a. On the chapter cover sheet, replaced the left photo with the updated one on the right due to uncertainty of original source of left photo:



Since Planning Commission met on October 10, several mapping errors were found to the Land Use Guide and have since been corrected. They are as follows:

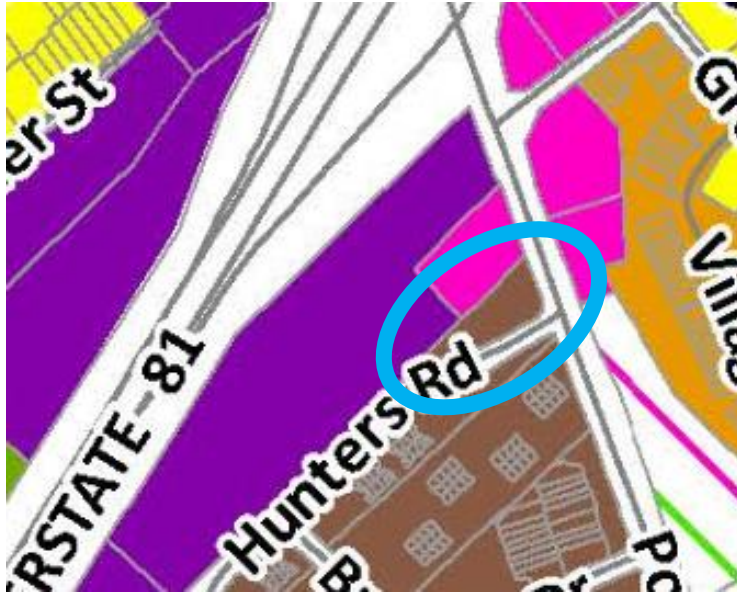
1. The parcel addressed as 20 West Mosby Road and circled in blue below was incorrectly designated on the map as “Commercial.” It has been corrected to be “Mixed Use.”



2. The parcel addressed as 1356 Edgelawn Drive and circled in blue below was incorrectly designated on the map as “Limited Commercial.” It has been corrected to be “Mixed Use.” Note: in 2017, City Council approved changing the designation of this parcel to “Mixed Use Development Area” as part of the request for the project known as “Stone Suites.”



3. The parcel addressed as 715 Port Republic Road and circled in blue below, was incorrectly designated on the map as “High Density Residential.” This property was designated in the 2011 Land Use Guide as “Commercial” and there was no direction from Planning Commission to change its designation. It has been corrected to be “Commercial.”



Staff and Planning Commission (7-0) recommend approval of the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan will replace the current 2011 Comprehensive Plan.

Environmental Impact:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Prior Actions:

N/A

Alternatives:

- (a) Approve of the Comprehensive Plan as presented;
- (b) Approve of the Comprehensive Plan with additional edits; or
- (c) Table the Comprehensive Plan and direct Planning Commission to conduct additional research or updates.

Community Engagement:

As required, the request was published in the local newspaper twice advertising for City Council's public hearing. The advertisement was published as shown below:

Comprehensive Plan

Public hearing to consider adoption of the comprehensively updated City Comprehensive Plan. The proposed Comprehensive Plan will replace the current Comprehensive Plan, which was last comprehensively updated and approved on May 10, 2011. 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. Additionally, other issues are reviewed including, but not limited to, affordable housing, historic resources, employment, and economic development. Components of a comprehensive plan should be well-coordinated and complimentary. As drafted, the proposed Comprehensive Plan will guide the City's general development for the next twenty years. The proposed Plan consists of the following chapters: (1) Introduction, (2) Vision and Goals, (3) Implementation, (4) Planning Context, (5) Community Engagement and Collaboration, (6) Land Use and Development Quality, (7) Neighborhoods and Housing, (8) Education, Workforce Development, and Lifelong Learning, (9) Arts, Culture, and Historic Resources, (10) Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship, (11) Parks and Recreation, (12) Transportation, (13) Community Infrastructure, Services, Safety, and Health, (14) Economic Development and Tourism, (15) Revitalization, and (16) Goal, Objective, and Strategy Statements. The Comprehensive Plan includes an updated Land Use Guide and Street Improvement Plan. The Land Use Guide recommends future long-term (20+ year) land uses in the City. All three development types must be considered for the Land Use Guide: new development, infill development, and redevelopment. The Land Use Guide descriptions and map make up the official land use policy of the Comprehensive Plan and is to be used as a guide in decisions on such matters as rezonings, special use permit proposals, and the location of public facilities. The Street Improvement Plan project descriptions and map identify transportation infrastructure improvements that the City may pursue to address safety, congestion, bicycle and pedestrian needs, and new development. The City did not prioritize projects 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. Information related to the proposed updated Comprehensive Plan is available to review on the Comprehensive Plan website at www.harrisonburgva.gov/yourplan and at the Department of Planning & Community Development.

In addition, a notice was provided on the City's website at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/public-hearings> and <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/yourplan>, through the Comprehensive Plan e-newsletter, and through a press release.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends alternative (a) approval of the Comprehensive Plan as presented.

Attachments:

1. Extract from Planning Commission public hearing (12 pages)
2. Proposed Comprehensive Plan Update as of November 5, 2018 (264 pages)
3. Public comments received after the August 10-29, 2018 public comment period ended (6 pages)

Review:

Planning Commission recommended alternative (a) to approve the proposed Comprehensive Plan (7-0).