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For Immediate Release – Jan. 6, 2020

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City Council to hear Environmental Action Plan presentation

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Residents will have the opportunity to learn more about Harrisonburg’s future environmental goals at next week’s City Council meeting.

Phase 1 of the City’s Environmental Action Plan (EAP) will be presented to City Council during their meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 14, at Council Chambers. The EAP is a guide for City leaders, staff and community members to implement sustainability visions and principles and was created through a series of discussions between City staff and the Environmental Performance Standards Advisory Committee (EPSAC).

Development of the EAP will be completed in three phases. The current effort represents Phase 1, and is intended to lay the groundwork for future phases of EAP development and implementation of strategies toward environmental sustainability.



(Above) People gather at an Environmental Action Plan public forum at City Hall. Phase 1 will be discussed at City Council.

Phase 1 is organized into six focus areas in which action can be taken to improve the environment and sustainability. The six focus areas are: Buildings and Energy, Land Use and Green Space, Regional Food Systems, Sustainable Transportation, Waste Reduction and Recycling, and Water Resources.

After EAP Phase 1 is adopted by City Council, Phase 2 will involve inventorying (gathering data and studying) municipal and community activities to develop baselines to be later used for measuring progress toward achieving goals. Phase 3 will establish targets with statements that define a reduction or increase by a specific year.

For example, during Phase 2, for *Goal 3 of Focus Area 2 – Maintain and Increase a Healthy Tree Canopy*, the City might choose to inventory tree canopy cover using available aerial photography and planimetric surveys. The baseline could be represented as either the total acreage of tree canopy cover in the City or a percentage of the City covered by tree canopy. Then during Phase 3, a target might be developed to state “Maintain an overall tree canopy of at least 40 percent by the year 2030.”

The draft Environmental Action Plan can be viewed at www.harrisonburgva.gov/EAP

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 54,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.