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City to accept comments on Chesapeake Bay TMDL Action Plan

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The City of Harrisonburg’s Public Works Department is accepting comments on an effort to protect the Chesapeake Bay here at home.

The City is developing its second phase of the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Action Plan. A TMDL quantifies the maximum amount of pollutants a waterway can carry and the amount of each pollutant that must be reduced to stay within this limit. The Chesapeake Bay TMDL covers three pollutants: nitrogen, phosphorous, and total suspended solids.

The first phase of the Action Plan was completed in 2018, when the City reduced the three pollutants by 5 percent. The second phase outlines how the City will meet the required 35 percent additional reductions that are needed by 2023. Full compliance is required by 2028.

Harrisonburg is already active in reducing pollutants in a number of ways. The City has two street sweepers that sweep 14 miles of streets daily, and sweep all City streets twice a month, to reduce sediment and other items from making it into waterways. Public Utilities and Public Works also offers incentives to property owners to connect their septic systems to the sanitary sewer system in part to target pollutants, and the City is currently planning the restoration of a section of stream along Mountain View Drive to improve that waterway. The new woodchip bioreactor, recently installed at Purcell Park, specifically targets nitrogen, removing it from the water before it enters the park’s pond.

The public comment period provides an opportunity for citizens to provide input on the additional BMPs proposed in the second phase as well as a chance to express any concerns about the plan. Members of the community are encouraged to review the plan online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/Chesapeake-Bay-Action-Plan and ask city staff questions for additional information. A summary of comments received will be included in the plan as well as any revisions made to the Action Plan as a result of public participation.

Comments can be submitted in writing to Rebecca Stimson at Rebecca.Stimson@HarrisonburgVA.gov or by mail to 320 E. Mosby Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22801. The deadline for comments is Oct. 8.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.



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