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Nov. 19 meeting to discuss Comprehensive Housing Assessment & Market Study

Community encouraged to attend virtual meeting, ask questions about study's results

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Work on one of the City of Harrisonburg's guiding principles is moving forward this month, as an upcoming meeting will seek to gather resident feedback on the future of housing in The Friendly City.

City staff, along with consulting firm Mullin & Lonergan, will host a virtual public meeting Thursday, Nov. 19, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. to present findings of the initial draft of the City's Comprehensive Housing Assessment & Market Study. The meeting will allow an opportunity for staff and consultants to receive public input about the initial findings and other comments that should be known about housing. Staff and consultants will later present the final study and recommendations.

The community will be able to engage, watch, and listen in the following ways:

- Watching on a computer or mobile device via GoToWebinar. Register in advance at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4677783570708996623> - Webinar ID: 281-556-371.
- Calling in to listen by phone at +1 (951) 384-3421, Access Code 484-931-436.
- Watching the meeting live on Public Education Government Channel 3

Community members who want to engage live during the meeting can participate through GoToWebinar by submitting questions and comments during the meeting using the webinar's chat function. Additionally, depending upon the flow of the meeting, participants may be able to speak through the virtual meeting platform. The community will also be able to submit questions and comments during the meeting by leaving a voicemail at 540-433-1390. The number is now active and will remain active until Thursday, Dec. 3, at 5 p.m. Furthermore, a survey will be available and posted at the project site, listed below, at the conclusion of the meeting.

"We are very excited to be at this point of the Comprehensive Housing Assessment & Market Study," Harrisonburg Director of Community Development Adam Fletcher said. "It's important that the community uses this opportunity to learn what the study is informing us of, and to provide feedback that can help us improve the local housing situation for everyone."

A key tenet of the Harrisonburg City Council's Vision & Priorities plan is: Available Housing for All. One objective of this priority was to complete a comprehensive housing plan.

To address this objective, the City contracted with Mullin & Lonergan Associates, Inc., in July 2020 to partner with staff on the citywide Comprehensive Housing Assessment & Market Study. The initial draft of this study includes data on demographics; economic conditions; homeownership market; rental housing market; students and student housing; housing with supportive services; current programs, organizations, and projects; trends and needs; financial gaps; and barriers. Recommendations based on nationwide best practices to address the housing concerns are also included in the study.

In addition to the recommendations, the study provides an analysis of affordability for homeownership and renting throughout all population and income segments of the City, details current demographics and housing stock, and analyzes barriers preventing the market from effectively responding to the housing demands.

City officials hope the study provides a better understanding of the local housing market and that the recommendations assist the entire community in working together to make improvements for all current and future Harrisonburg residents.

For more information on the Harrisonburg Comprehensive Housing Assessment & Market Study, please visit the project site at www.harrisonburgva.gov/housing-study.

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.



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