



HARRISONBURG VA FRIENDLY BY NATURE



For Immediate Release – Feb. 5, 2021

Contact: Michael Parks, Harrisonburg Director of Communications
540.432.7701
Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov

City's Housing Assessment & Market Study available for review

Residents can download report online at www.harrisonburgva.gov

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Harrisonburg residents interested in the future of area housing can now view the Comprehensive Housing Assessment and Market Study, prepared as part of the Harrisonburg City Council's efforts to create A City For All.

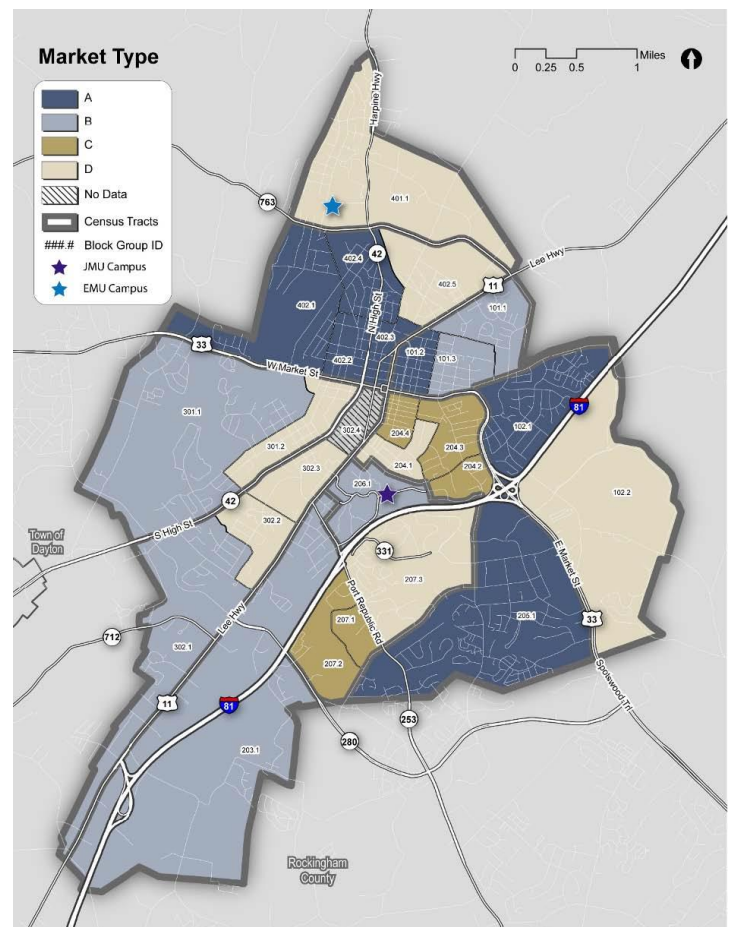
The more than 200-page report, the first ever conducted by the City, views housing needs through the lens of social determinants of health, introduced by the World Health Organization, to quantify existing housing supply, assess demand for different housing types, identify barriers to meeting demands, and list potential policy tools to address housing gaps.

The full study can be downloaded online at the City's website here: www.harrisonburgva.gov/housing-study.

The study concluded that a significant contributor to the community's housing challenges is a "housing mismatch" in which thousands of households live in units that do not align with their income. Higher income households residing in lower cost housing are effectively "squeezing out" lower income households – who, because they are lower income, have the fewest housing options.

The study additionally showed that the lowest income group (up to \$19,410 for a family of four in 2017) have the smallest housing inventory available and affordable to them. The lack of available and affordable units is because there is both a shortage of units affordable to this income tier relative to the number of households, and many of the units that do exist are occupied by households with higher incomes.

The study projected that to meet the need for housing for additional households, as well as to attain a vacancy rate of 5 percent, there is a need for an additional 455 to 616 rental units by 2025. Over the next five years, it is projected the Western VA Continuum of Care will need to add 126 beds of Permanent Supportive Housing to meet the number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.



(Above) The study looked at four different market types in Harrisonburg to better understand the state of housing.

The study produced 21 recommendations structured to establish a foundation to address affordable housing now and in the future. Many of the recommendations included in the study are being implemented in other Virginia municipalities, and several are best practices in places throughout the U.S. Seventeen of these recommendations fall primarily under the authority of the Harrisonburg City Council, while four recommendations fall primarily under the responsibility of the Western Virginia Continuum of Care.

City staff are now in the process of reviewing the study findings and recommendations. The next step will be to develop a framework for implementation of the study's recommendations.

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.



###