



CITY OF HARRISONBURG PUBLIC WORKS

320 EAST MOSBY ROAD, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 434-5928 • FAX (540) 434-2695

For Immediate Release – March 5, 2021

Contact: Kelly Adams, Outreach & Communications Specialist
540-434-5928 x2215
Kelly.Adams@HarrisonburgVa.gov

Harrisonburg's Urban Forestry Wants to Hear from You!

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The Harrisonburg Public Works Urban Forestry Team is creating an Urban Forestry Management Plan, and resident feedback is needed in the process.

City staff have partnered with Urban Canopy Works to develop this plan with the help of a grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry. A community survey focused on how effective efforts to care for and maintain public trees have been is a key function in the plan's creation.

The City of Harrisonburg created an Urban Forestry Program in May 2017 in response to the arrival of the emerald ash borer beetle to the Shenandoah Valley. The first initiative of this program was to identify the more than 800 dead or dying ash trees on the City's public property and start removing them before they became a safety risk. As a part of this process, 36 of the larger, healthier ash trees were selected for biannual treatment in three different parks in an effort to save them.



Ash tree providing shade for a shelter
at Ralph Sampson Park.

The devastation of the ash borer has had an impact on Harrisonburg's 26 percent tree canopy, which is a bird's eye view down on the City to see coverage of trees over land. Tree canopy has ecological benefits like reducing temperatures, air and noise pollution, enhancing wildlife habitat and improving property values. Most importantly, tree canopy reduces stormwater runoff.

Rachel Comte, Urban Canopy Works' Urban Planner and Arborist, says "We know from study after study that trees and tree canopy are key elements in a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community. I'm excited that Harrisonburg is making tree canopy a focus and is working to improve its internal operations and approach to better maintain public trees and increase the City's tree canopy overall. This project will have significant impacts that will benefit the sustainability and livability of The Friendly City and improve the health and safety of all citizens, now and in the future."

The Harrisonburg Public Works Urban Forestry Team created a short survey where residents can share their thoughts on how the City is caring for and maintaining its public trees. The survey is available at the Harrisonburg Public Works

[Facebook](#) page, online at www.harrisonburgva.gov/urban-forestry-program, and by following the QR code on posters placed around the city. The survey will be available until March 31.

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

Follow **Harrisonburg Public Works** on [Facebook](#)

###