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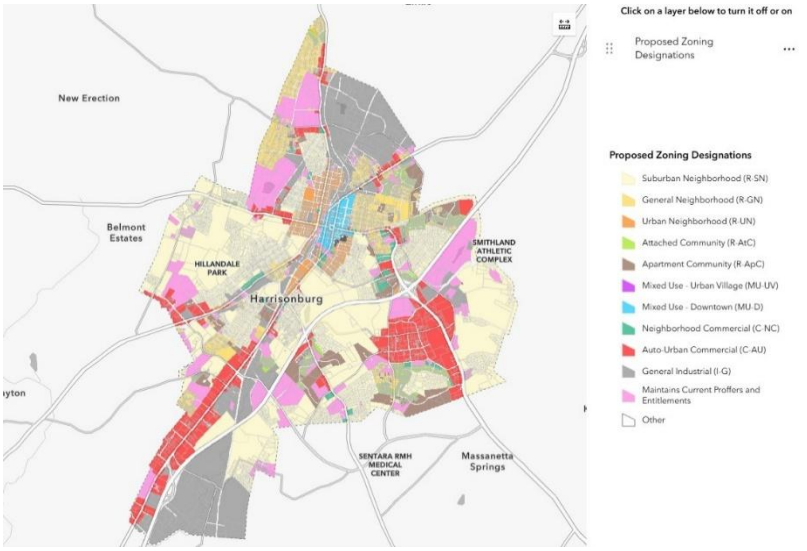
City offers Zoning Ordinance Update Project public engagement events

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The Harrisonburg Community Development Department is encouraging community members to take part in an important opportunity to guide future growth and land use regulations in The Friendly City.

A series of public meetings, an online survey and other engagement opportunities will kick off in the coming weeks regarding the City's Zoning Ordinance Update Project. This effort seeks to modernize Harrisonburg's zoning ordinance so it is clearer, more consistent and easier to use, providing the community and Harrisonburg City Council a better foundation for continued policy discussions around subjects such as meeting a spectrum of housing needs, strengthening economic activity in local business centers and neighborhoods and prioritizing protection of natural assets – priorities set in the Harrisonburg City Council 2045 Vision Plan.



(Above) An image of the proposed zoning map, which community members will get to review and provide feedback on at the engagement meetings in October. New zoning districts are some of the proposed changes included in the Zoning Ordinance Update Project.

Public meetings are currently scheduled for:

- Wednesday, Oct. 21, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Harrisonburg Public Works Building, 320 E. Mosby Road
- Monday, Oct. 26, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center, 620 Simms Ave.

City staff will be available at both meetings to explain proposed updates to the zoning ordinance, with booths and handouts focused on zoning districts, residential lot area requirements, setbacks, parking requirements, townhouse development review and more. Community members are encouraged to attend to learn more about proposed changes and provide their feedback. Staff seeks to bring a final zoning ordinance update proposal to City Council in early 2027.

"This ongoing process is focused on improving organization, updating language and definitions, streamlining procedures and creating a new zoning district framework and map that better reflect existing development patterns in Harrisonburg as well as proposed changes, such as reductions to residential lot area requirements and setbacks," Harrisonburg Community Development Deputy Director Thanh Dang said. "Community input is essential toward making sure this update establishes a strong foundation for future community discussions on additional zoning ordinance amendments to achieve goals for development, growth, preservation and other vital zoning-related topics."

In addition to public meetings, City staff is visiting local stakeholder groups to discuss this project more and encourage feedback. Community members also are invited to visit Community Development on the second floor of Harrisonburg City Hall with any questions or to pick up a yard sign to encourage their neighbors to take part in this engagement opportunity, and to take part in an online survey available at the project webpage starting Oct. 14.

“Whether you’re interested in everything the zoning ordinance covers or just have one question about how this may impact your property, we hope you join us to be part of this conversation,” Dang added.

Among other benefits, a modern zoning ordinance positions the City for the next update of its Comprehensive Plan. Attendees at the public engagement meetings will be able to visit a booth focused on future steps, such as the Comprehensive Plan, where they can provide feedback to consider in that effort. More community engagement opportunities will be posted as the Comprehensive Plan update project nears.

Learn more about the zoning ordinance update project at https://harrisonburgva.gov/zoning-ordinance-update.

The City of Harrisonburg *is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 56,879 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.*

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