



**HARRISONBURG | VA**  
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For Immediate Release –

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## **Community invited to ribbon-cutting at Harrisonburg Navigation Center**

*Event to take place Wednesday, Dec. 18 – sheltering services to begin in center following week*

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Vital support for Harrisonburg’s unhoused community and all those seeking human services guidance is nearing completion, as City officials and partner Open Doors will come together next week to recognize the pending milestone.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Harrisonburg Navigation Center – which will include an overnight low-barrier emergency shelter and daytime drop-in center for adults experiencing homelessness or other hardships – will be held Wednesday, Dec. 18, at 2 p.m. at the center located at 1111 N. Main St. Attendees will hear from officials with the City of Harrisonburg and homeless and human services provider Open Doors about the importance of the Navigation Center and have an opportunity to tour portions of the center.

Final additions to the center are still taking place, with Open Doors currently proposing Dec. 23 as the start date for sheltering services. Daytime drop-in services would begin in January, with a definitive date to be decided by Open Doors in the near future.

“After a long journey of construction, we are thrilled to finally reach this moment,” Harrisonburg Deputy City Manager Amy Snider, the Navigation Center project manager, said. “The Navigation Center represents more than walls and roofs – it symbolizes compassion, support and a new beginning for those in need.”

Open Doors is currently operating a temporary emergency overnight shelter in Downtown Harrisonburg at the location of the former Virginia Quilt Museum. The new center will provide a lasting, reliable location for individuals to receive support services as needed moving forward.

“We are excited to expand our life-saving shelter program, as the Navigation Center will bring a new level of stability and ability to serve the unhoused,” Open Doors Executive Director Nate Riddle said. “The addition of the daytime drop-in center will allow us to extend our life-changing mission through resource navigation available to all in our community.”

The Navigation Center project is supported in part by \$5 million in funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), approved by Harrisonburg City Council in November 2021. Council had previously identified the need for a permanent, low-barrier shelter in its Harrisonburg 2039 Vision Plan.



*(Above) A look inside a sleeping area at the new Harrisonburg Navigation Center. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the center will be held Wednesday, Dec. 18.*

“This center is something I and many in our community have been dreaming about for many years, so to see it come to fruition thanks to the hard work of so many in Harrisonburg is truly a blessing,” Harrisonburg Mayor Deanna Reed said. “If we are to become a City For All, where all people feel safe, valued and have abundant opportunity, that means no one can be left behind. And the Navigation Center will make sure those who need that extra support receive it and have that opportunity.”

Open Doors, which the City has worked closely with for many years on homeless services, will receive \$100,000 of annual funding from the City to support operational expenses as part of their three-year contract. The City will be directly responsible for the expense of the utilities and the maintenance of the structure, its mechanical systems and its fixtures, such as kitchen and laundry equipment. An existing building on the 3.68-acre property, formerly the Shenandoah Presbytery, was preserved and renovated to provide space for administrative offices and a clinic with exam space for routine healthcare for the unhoused. The shelter and drop-in center will operate out of the new connected addition to the existing building.

The shelter, open every day from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m. once in operation, will contain space for up to 80 congregant beds and four universal rooms, with other support facilities such as showers and a laundry room. Open Doors expects to operate the drop-in center Monday to Friday, except for major holidays, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Open Doors will partner with other local agencies, including Sentara RMH, the Suitcase Clinic for the Homeless, Strength in Peers, Mercy House, First Step and the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Community Services Board, to provide on-site services. Open Doors continues to work on potential partnerships to advance on-site access.

The Navigation Center was designed by the architecture firm MTFA. The contractor is Nielsen Builders.

Find more information on Open Doors and the nonprofit’s mission at [www.valleyopendoors.org](http://www.valleyopendoors.org).

***The City of Harrisonburg*** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,990 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).

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