

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION PACKET

THE COST OF COMPROMISE

Response to Revised Application Materials

B-1C Rezoning Request — 473 South Main Street, Harrisonburg, Virginia

“The Link” — TCP Link Harrisonburg, LLC / Timberwolf Capital Partners

Submitted to:

Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Harrisonburg City Council

February 2026

This packet supplements the original Opposition Packet submitted to Planning Commission and City Council. It incorporates analysis of revised application materials filed February 10, 2026, and the updated Traffic Impact Analysis review by David Bernstein dated February 17, 2026.

Executive Summary

On February 10, 2026, the applicant submitted revised materials for the proposed B-1C rezoning of 473 South Main Street, including an updated Proffer Statement, Supplemental Zoning Justification Letter, revised Concept Plan, building elevations, an affordable housing analysis prepared by Virginia Proffer Solutions (VPS), and a Parking Memorandum of Understanding. This supplemental packet addresses each of these revisions and incorporates new findings from an independent Traffic Impact Analysis review completed February 17, 2026.

Our analysis identifies the following critical deficiencies in the revised application:

- 1. The Traffic Impact Analysis severely understates impacts to neighborhood streets.** The TIA generated trips using 290 units while the proffer structure allows up to 695 legal residents. At four intersections, the Build model shows identical traffic to the No-Build model – assuming the building adds zero cars to neighborhood streets. Traffic counts were collected on the next-to-last day of JMU classes. Key residential streets were excluded from the study area.
- 2. The Proffer Statement contains systematic escape clauses.** Nearly every commitment delegates final decisions from elected Council to appointed staff or developer discretion during site plan review, using qualifier language including “substantial conformance,” “material availability,” “deemed beneficial,” and “may waive in whole or in part.”
- 3. The affordable housing proffer (\$93,738) is nominal.** At \$169 per bedroom, this amount represents less than one month’s rent and was derived using a consultant methodology that assumes students create zero affordability impact – contradicting the City’s own Housing Study findings.
- 4. The parking “benefit” is a non-binding commercial lease.** The Parking MOU is explicitly not legally binding, requires the City to pay \$42,900 annually, and includes a mechanism to reduce public spaces after two years. The MOU and proffers contain inconsistent unit counts and parking figures.
- 5. The project will degrade quality of life and threaten tax base stability** in surrounding residential neighborhoods without adequate mitigation. No proffers address noise, outdoor amenity hours, light pollution from a six-story structure with rooftop parking, or operational impacts. Total cash proffers (\$153,738) represent 0.37% of estimated project value.

Section 1: Traffic Impact Analysis – Critical Deficiencies

This section incorporates findings from *Shortcomings of the Traffic Impact Analyses Conducted for The Link* by David Bernstein, dated February 17, 2026 (attached as Appendix A). The analysis reviews the Liberty Multifamily Development TIA (March 2025) and Section 7 of the October 2025 revision, evaluated against the February 2026 Proffer Statement.

1.1 Trip Generation: 695 Residents, Not 290 Units

The TIA generated trips using ITE Code 221 (Mid-Rise Multifamily Housing) with 290 units. However, the Proffer Statement’s leasing structure materially changes the occupancy calculation. Proffer I.f states that studio and one-bedroom units may be leased to “a family of no more than two unrelated individuals” and all other units “to a family of no more than one unrelated individual per bedroom.”

Applying the proffer’s unit mix constraints (minimum 44% studio/1-BR, maximum 34% 4-BR), Bernstein identifies four configurations consistent with the proffers, all yielding between 665 and 695 potential lessees. Using 695 lessees rather than 290 units in the same ITE Code 221 formula produces the following trip generation comparison:

“Unit” Definition	AM Total	AM Exit	PM Total	PM Exit
Units in TIA (290)	107	82	113	44
Parking Spaces (415)	153	117	162	63
All Spaces (480)	177	136	187	73
Bedrooms (555)	205	157	216	84
Lessees (695)	256	197	271	105

At maximum occupancy, the project would generate **2.4 times the AM trips and 2.4 times the PM trips** assumed in the TIA. This estimate does not include visitor trips (student housing generates above-average visitor traffic) or the possibility of “informal cohabitants” beyond the lease. It also excludes trips generated by the 65 municipal parking spaces, whose trip generation rate depends on their use (commuter, shopper, or displacement of existing spaces) and was not analyzed.

1.2 Build/No-Build Turning Movements Are Identical at Four Intersections

Bernstein’s comparison of the “Build 2027” and “No-Build 2027” models reveals that at **four separate intersections**, the TIA assigns zero additional trips from the project to neighborhood streets:

Intersection / Direction	Build vs. No-Build
Westbound on Paul St. at Mason St.	Identical – zero change
Eastbound on Paul St. at Mason St. (thru + left)	Identical – zero change
Westbound on E. Grattan St. at S. Main St.	Identical – zero change
Northbound on S. Mason St. at MLK Jr. Way	Identical – zero change

This means the traffic engineer modeled a 555-bedroom complex and concluded it would add precisely zero vehicles to these neighborhood streets. This assumption contradicts the applicant’s own proffer of the Paul Street Extension (which presupposes traffic demand on Paul Street) and contradicts the October 2025 Section 7 analysis (which studied the Paul Street route specifically because traffic was expected there).

1.3 The Paul Street Paradox

The October 2025 TIA Section 7 concludes that the project will not significantly impact Paul Street traffic, with the “traditional” MLK Jr. Way route being preferred by residents. If this conclusion is accurate, **there is no traffic justification for constructing the Paul Street Extension** – the applicant’s primary transportation infrastructure proffer.

Conversely, if the Paul Street Extension is warranted (which the applicant clearly believes, having proffered it), then the TIA’s conclusion that the project will not impact Paul Street is incorrect, and the neighborhood street analysis is fundamentally understated.

The applicant cannot simultaneously argue that the project requires a Paul Street Extension AND that the project will not impact Paul Street traffic. These positions are mutually exclusive.

Bernstein further identifies multiple flaws in the Section 7 route choice analysis:

Simplistic route choice model. The analysis assumes all drivers choose the single “best” route. Standard transportation engineering practice uses Wardropian (equilibrium) assignment models, which account for the reality that as the “best” route becomes congested, drivers shift to alternatives until all routes are equally attractive.

Travel time difference is statistically insignificant. The measured difference between routes is 16–20 seconds, approximately 1% of any real trip (to campus, Target, shopping). Drivers will perceive the routes as equivalent and distribute across both.

Driving speed assumptions favor MLK. Data was collected at the posted 25 mph speed limit on Paul Street. Drivers traveling at 35 mph (a reasonable real-world expectation) would reduce Paul Street travel times by up to 28 seconds, making Paul Street the faster route – with fewer traffic signals.

The driven route was longer than the actual route. Because the Paul Street Extension does not yet exist, the actual path driven to collect data was longer than the extension would be. With a shorter actual route, the time advantage of MLK disappears entirely.

Westbound trips were not analyzed. The Section 7 study only examined eastbound (outbound) trips. Westbound (inbound) trips during PM peak congestion on MLK are likely to prefer Paul Street, further distributing traffic onto residential streets.

1.4 Scope Limitations and Data Quality

The TIA excludes key residential streets from its study area, including Myers Avenue, Franklin Street between Main and Myers, Ott Street from Paul to E. Market, Mountain View Drive, and Paul Street between MLK and Eastover Drive — all of which serve trips to and from JMU’s East Campus, the Walmart Shopping Center, and E. Market Street commercial areas.

Traffic counts at the S. Main/E. Grattan intersection were collected on December 5, 2024 — the next-to-last day of JMU classes — likely producing an undercount of typical conditions. These counts were then applied to the Paul Street Extension turning movements, compounding the underestimate.

The TIA analyzes only AM and PM peak hours. However, traffic count data presented in the TIA itself shows that congestion on South Main Street and MLK Jr. Way is sustained from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM, never falling below approximately 1,600 vehicles per hour. Neighborhood street impacts are not limited to peak hours.

1.5 Paul Street Geometry and Safety Conditions

The TIA does not account for the physical characteristics of Paul Street that limit its capacity to safely handle additional traffic:

Effective width of 15 feet east of Mason Street. Existing chokers (bulb-outs) and on-street parking on both sides reduce Paul Street to a single usable lane east of Mason. Vehicles currently must take turns, yielding to oncoming traffic. Bernstein’s photographic documentation (attached) confirms this condition.

Misaligned segments at intersections. Paul Street segments do not align at either the Main Street or Mason Street intersections. The proposed extension would connect a wide segment (west of Main) to the existing narrow segment (east of Main), creating a transition that the TIA does not evaluate.

Sight-line obstruction at Paul and Ott. The grade of Paul Street at the Ott Street intersection creates an area where eastbound drivers cannot see oncoming westbound vehicles. Additional traffic through this intersection increases exposure to collision risk.

\$30,000 traffic calming fund is inadequate. A single speed table costs \$5,000–\$15,000 installed. A comprehensive traffic calming program for the Paul Street corridor would cost \$100,000–\$200,000+ based on comparable Virginia municipal programs. The proffered amount covers approximately two speed tables.

Section 2: Proffer Statement – Systematic Escape Clauses

The revised Proffer Statement (signed February 10, 2026) presents commitments that appear binding on initial reading but contain qualifier language that delegates final decisions from the elected City Council to appointed staff or developer discretion during site plan review. This section catalogs the escape clauses identified throughout the document.

Proffer	Apparent Commitment	Escape Clause Language
I.a – Concept Plan	Building conforms to plan Council reviews	Modifiable if “deemed beneficial”; approved by Dept. of Community Development, not Council
I.g – Architecture	Building matches renderings	“Subject to final construction documents, Site Plan approval, and material availability”
I.h – Architectural Detail	Upper floors include balconies, varied facade	“In general conformance” – weaker than “substantial conformance”
I.i – Garage Screening	60% surface coverage on structured parking	“Lighting” counts toward coverage percentage; reviewed by Zoning Administrator
I.j – Solar Energy	Sustainable energy features	“Rough-in measures to allow for future installation” – no panels required
II.b – Bump-outs	Traffic calming at intersections	Public Works “may, in its sole discretion, waive, in whole or in part”
II.d – Sidewalks	Improved pedestrian infrastructure	“Determined in consultation with and approved by the City” – no enforceable standard
II.e – Traffic Calming \$	\$30,000 contribution	Payable only “upon request” within 5-year window; obligation expires if City doesn’t ask
III.b – Public Parking	65 municipal spaces in garage	Non-binding MOU (Section 5); reducible after 2-year “demand review”
IV.b/c – Landscaping	Trees and screening installed by CO	“Or bonded for completion” – developer can occupy building and finish later
IV.d – Landscape Buffer	Screening for adjacent properties	Zoning Administrator “may allow reduction or modification” for “public safety”
V.a – Affordable Housing	\$93,738 contribution	“Voluntary” proffer – under VA Code § 15.2-2303.4(D.1), reasonableness determined solely by applicant

The cumulative effect of these provisions is that Council would approve a rezoning based on representations – renderings, concept plans, and proffer language – that the developer retains the contractual right to substantially modify during site plan review. The community would have no meaningful opportunity to object to these modifications because site plan review is an administrative process, not a legislative one.

Total Cash Proffers

Proffer	Amount	Per Bedroom
Traffic calming (II.e)	\$30,000	\$54
Parking enforcement (III.f)	\$30,000	\$54
Affordable housing (V.a)	\$93,738	\$169
TOTAL	\$153,738	\$277

For a project the developer estimates at over \$15 million per acre on 2.75 acres (\geq \$41 million in assessed value), \$153,738 in total cash proffers represents **0.37% of the project’s estimated assessed value**. At \$277 per bedroom, these proffers are not proportional to the scale of the project or its impacts on the surrounding community.

Section 3: Virginia Proffer Solutions Affordable Housing Analysis – Methodological Concerns

The VPS Proffer Analysis (dated January 27, 2026) arrives at an affordable housing proffer of \$93,738 – approximately \$375 per unit or \$169 per bedroom. This section identifies the methodological choices that systematically minimized this figure.

3.1 The “Net New Resident” Assumption

VPS assumes only 51 of the building’s estimated 540 occupants will be “net new” residents of Harrisonburg, with the remainder being existing residents who relocate from other local housing. This 9.4% net-new rate is the foundation of the entire affordability calculation. It is derived from VPS’s proprietary assumptions about student enrollment stability and local migration patterns, is not independently verified, and dramatically reduces the proffer obligation.

3.2 Students Create “Zero Affordability Impact”

VPS assumes that 385 student occupants (71% of the building) create zero additional demand for affordable housing because JMU enrollment is “stable.” This assumption confuses *whether* students exist in the market with *where* they live. Moving 385 students from dispersed rental housing into a premium downtown building does not remove them from the market – it changes which housing they occupy. The units they vacate re-lease to other students in a college town with persistent demand, not to lower-income households.

This directly contradicts the City’s own Housing Study, which identifies student demand as the primary mechanism by which lower-income households are squeezed from the rental market. Students renting units above their income level absorb housing that would otherwise filter to lower-income residents. Adding 555 premium-priced bedrooms targeting the 80%+ AMI population accelerates precisely this dynamic.

3.3 The Migration Chain Discount

VPS applies a five-year “migration chain” model that discounts affordability impacts by approximately 20% per year, arguing that housing vacated by The Link’s residents will filter through the market to lower-income occupants. This theoretical filtering process does not operate as described in markets with persistent student demand, where vacated units are re-absorbed by students rather than filtering downward. The discount is applied multiplicatively, reducing the calculated impact substantially.

3.4 The Yu v. East Palo Alto Citation

VPS cites *Yu v. City of East Palo Alto* to support the argument that new housing construction creates no affordability impact. This citation is misleading: the case was a settlement (creating no legal precedent), involved a single accessory dwelling unit (ADU), and is not analogous to a 250-unit commercial development. The settlement terms of a single-home ADU dispute have no applicability to the proffer analysis for a 555-bedroom student-oriented apartment complex.

The VPS methodology was specifically designed to minimize the affordable housing proffer. Every major assumption – net new residents, zero student impact, migration chain discount – reduces the figure. The result (\$169 per bedroom) does not reflect the project’s actual impact on Harrisonburg’s housing affordability.

Section 4: Parking MOU – Non-Binding Obligations and Document Inconsistencies

4.1 The MOU Is Not Legally Binding

Section 5 of the Parking MOU (dated July 3, 2025) states: *“This Letter of Intent is not legally binding on either party.”* Despite this explicit disclaimer, the Proffer Statement and Zoning Justification Letter present the 65 municipal parking spaces as a confirmed public benefit. The community is being asked to support a rezoning based in part on a parking arrangement that neither party is obligated to honor.

4.2 The City Pays the Developer

The lease terms require the City to pay \$55 per space per month (\$42,900 annually) with 10% escalation every three years. Over a 20-year term, the per-space cost rises to approximately \$82/month. This is not a public benefit – it is a commercial lease. The total 20-year cost to the City exceeds \$1 million for access to spaces in a private garage where the developer “may control access for safety and commercial reasons.”

4.3 Document Inconsistencies

Item	MOU (July 2025)	Proffers (Feb. 2026)
Maximum dwelling units	No more than 265	Not to exceed 250
Total parking spaces	Minimum 400 (est. 425)	Minimum 480

These discrepancies raise a fundamental question: which numbers govern? The MOU was negotiated based on a larger project with fewer parking spaces. The proffers describe a smaller project with more spaces. The two documents have not been reconciled.

4.4 The Two-Year Reduction Mechanism

Proffer III.b provides that the parking agreement will “provide for a review of actual usage and demand for parking after two years” for “leased space adjustments based on demand.” No methodology is specified for this review. No minimum number of public spaces is guaranteed beyond the initial period. This mechanism allows the developer to reduce or eliminate public parking access based on a review process that has no defined standards.

Section 5: Quality of Life and Tax Base Impact

The neighborhoods surrounding 473 South Main Street — along South Main, Paul Street, Ott Street, Franklin St, Campbell Street, and the corridors connecting to Martin Luther King Jr. Way — represent one of Harrisonburg’s most stable and significant residential tax base contributions. The proposed rezoning would relocate approximately 385 to 695 predominantly college-age residents into the center of this established middle-class residential area with no proportional mitigation of the resulting impacts.

5.1 Unmitigated Noise and Operational Impacts

The proffers commit to 15,000 square feet of outdoor amenity space including a pool and hot tub complex of at least 1,400 square feet. There are **no proffers whatsoever** governing hours of operation for these outdoor amenities, amplified sound, quiet hours, or noise mitigation measures for adjacent residential properties. College-age residents maintain different schedules and social patterns than the families, retirees, and working professionals who occupy the surrounding homes. The noise impacts from 500+ residents with outdoor amenity access are predictable, well-documented in college-adjacent communities, and entirely unaddressed.

5.2 Light Pollution from a Six-Story Structure

A six-story building with a rooftop parking garage will generate light intrusion that does not currently exist in this area: vehicle headlights sweeping through upper garage levels, building-mounted and unit lighting, and illumination of outdoor amenity spaces. The proffers reference pedestrian-scale lighting along property boundaries but include no provisions addressing light trespass from the building itself, the parking structure, or amenity areas. The escape clause in Proffer IV.d allows even the limited landscaping screening to be reduced by the Zoning Administrator.

5.3 Tax Revenue Claim Lacks Integrity

The Zoning Justification Letter claims approximately \$600,000 in annual real estate tax revenue. This figure is presented as a gross number without:

Current site revenue. The existing R-3 structures generate tax revenue that should be subtracted to calculate net benefit.

Increased service costs. Police, fire (six-story building requiring aerial apparatus), stormwater infrastructure for impervious surfaces, sanitation, and road maintenance costs attributable to the project have not been quantified.

Tax incentive eligibility. Nothing in the proffers prevents the developer from seeking Technology Zone, Enterprise Zone, urban development area, or other Virginia tax abatement programs that could substantially reduce the claimed revenue.

Surrounding property value impacts. A 5–10% reduction in assessed values across surrounding residential parcels from proximity to concentrated student housing could offset a significant portion of the net revenue gain. No analysis has been provided.

A net fiscal impact analysis has never been provided. The community is being asked to evaluate a tax revenue claim that accounts for none of its offsets.

5.4 Long-Term Tax Base Erosion

Approval of a 555-bedroom student-oriented complex at the gateway to these neighborhoods signals to existing homeowners that the City values developer revenue over residential stability. The consequences are predictable: long-term homeowners begin to exit, properties are purchased by investors for student rental conversion, and the residential tax base transitions from stable owner-occupied homes to transient rental properties. The City's own Housing Study documented this conversion pattern in Harrisonburg's tight rental market.

5.5 The Rezoning Is Permanent

B-1C zoning runs with the land. If the proffers prove inadequate, if traffic impacts exceed projections, if noise and safety concerns materialize as predicted, there is no mechanism to undo the zoning change. The residents of these neighborhoods will live with the consequences indefinitely. The developer retains the option to sell the property and exit.

Conclusion and Requests

The revised application materials do not resolve the concerns raised in our original opposition packet. They introduce new deficiencies, including a proffer structure built on escape clauses, an affordable housing analysis designed to minimize the contribution, and a non-binding parking arrangement presented as a guaranteed benefit. The Traffic Impact Analysis remains fundamentally flawed, with the updated independent review demonstrating that trip generation may be understated by a factor of 2.5 and that neighborhood streets were excluded from meaningful analysis.

We respectfully request that the Planning Commission and City Council:

1. Require a corrected Traffic Impact Analysis using actual occupancy projections consistent with the proffer's leasing structure, including all neighborhood streets within the study area, with traffic counts collected during representative conditions (not the last day of classes).
2. Require a net fiscal impact analysis that accounts for current site revenue, increased service costs, tax incentive eligibility, and surrounding property value impacts.
3. Require the Parking MOU to be executed as a legally binding agreement with reconciled unit and parking space counts before any vote.
4. Evaluate whether total cash proffers of \$153,738 (\$277/bedroom) are proportional to the scale and impact of a \$41M+ project at the gateway to downtown.
5. Require enforceable proffers addressing noise, outdoor amenity hours, light pollution, and operational impacts on adjacent residential properties.
6. Deny the B-1C rezoning unless and until these deficiencies are addressed.

Respectfully submitted by the Concerned Citizens of Harrisonburg
February 2026

Appendix A: Shortcomings of the Traffic Impact Analyses Conducted for The Link (Bernstein, Feb. 17, 2026) – attached separately

Shortcomings of the *Traffic Impact Analyses Conducted for The Link*

David Bernstein

521 Ott St. Harrisonburg VA 22801



What follows is a detailed discussion of the *Liberty Multifamily Development Traffic Impact Analysis* (TIA) dated March 2025 and Section 7 of the version dated October 25. This discussion is based on the numbers presented in the February 10, 2026 revision of the *Rezoning Request Proffer Statement* (The Proffer Statement).

The main conclusions are as follows:

- Though the complex is described as having a maximum of 250 units, 695 lessees could legally reside there and there could be even more "informal cohabitants".
- The number of trips generated by lessees and their visitors could be more than 2.5 times the number that is used in the TIA.
- Though the TIA concludes that the vast majority of trips from the complex will use Main St. to MLK Jr. Way, half the trips (or more) might use neighborhood streets, increasing traffic on those streets and raising safety concerns.
- The TIA does not consider the increased demand for parking that will result from the complex or the traffic that will be caused by residents, visitors, and shoppers searching for spaces.
- There are known limitations to the methodology used in basic traffic analyses. In particular, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has noted that a standard traffic impact analysis ignores many important issues that arise in the City of Harrisonburg.

In other words, there are many reasons to believe that the TIA severely underestimates the traffic impacts of The Link. However, if the TIA is correct:

- There is no reason to build the Paul St. Extension.

Issues Related to Trip Generation

The TIA analysis classifies the proposed project as Code 221 (i.e., Mid-Rise Multifamily Housing) with 290 units. However, it is important to recognize that the proposed project will have a minimum of 480 parking spaces (of which, the City may reserve 65) and will likely have considerably more lessees. The *Rezoning Request Proffer Statement* states that the maximum number of residential dwelling units shall not exceed 250, a minimum of 44% of all dwelling units (i.e., 110) will consist of studio or one-

bedroom apartments, and a maximum of 34% of all dwelling units (i.e., 85) will consist of 4 bedroom apartments. It also states that the maximum number of bedrooms shall not exceed 555.

There are many configurations that are consistent with the proffer statement, including those listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Configurations that are Consistent with The Proffer Statement

	1 Bed. Units	2 Bed. Units	3 Bed. Units	4 Bed. Units
Configuration 1	110	57	0	82
Configuration 2	110	0	115	25
Configuration 3	115	50	0	85
Configuration 4	140	0	25	85

The Proffer Statement also states that studio and one-bedroom units may be leased to a family of no more than two unrelated individuals and that all other residential dwelling units may be leased to a family of no more than one unrelated individual per bedroom. This means that the different configurations may lead to the number of lessees shown in Table 2. Note that, **the 695 potential lessees is far greater than the 290 units that was used to generate trips in the TIA.**

Table 2. Possible Number of Lessees

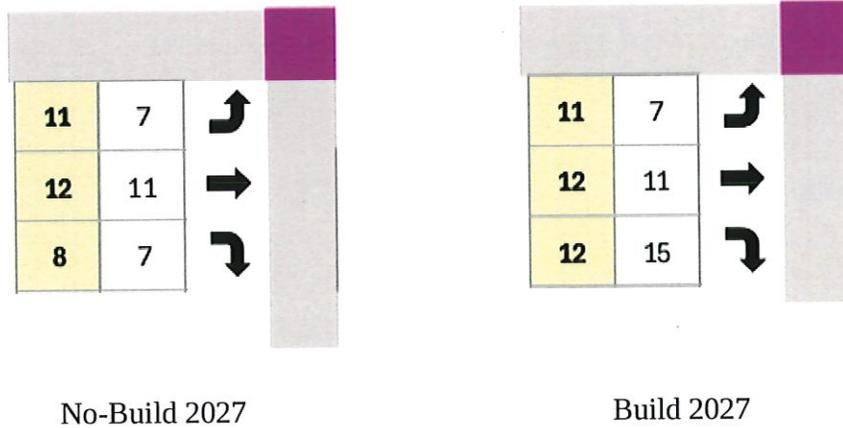
	In 1BR Units	In 2BR Units	In 3BR Units	In 4BR Units	Total
Configuration 1	220	115	0	330	665
Configuration 2	220	0	345	100	665
Configuration 3	230	100	0	340	670
Configuration 4	280	0	75	340	695

Using the same trip generation rates (as in land use code 221) but different numbers of "units" corresponding to the number of spaces or bedrooms, **there would be a significantly larger number of trips** as shown in Table 3 (where the first row is the estimate used in the TIA).

Table 3. Total New Trips on Surrounding Streets

Definition of a "Unit"	Qty	AM			PM		
		Total	Entry	Exit	Total	Entry	Exit
Units in the TIA	290	107	25	82	113	69	44
Spaces (Not Reserved)	415	153	36	117	162	99	63
Spaces (All)	480	177	41	136	187	114	73
Bedrooms (Max)	555	205	48	157	216	132	84
Lessees (Max)	695	256	60	197	271	165	105

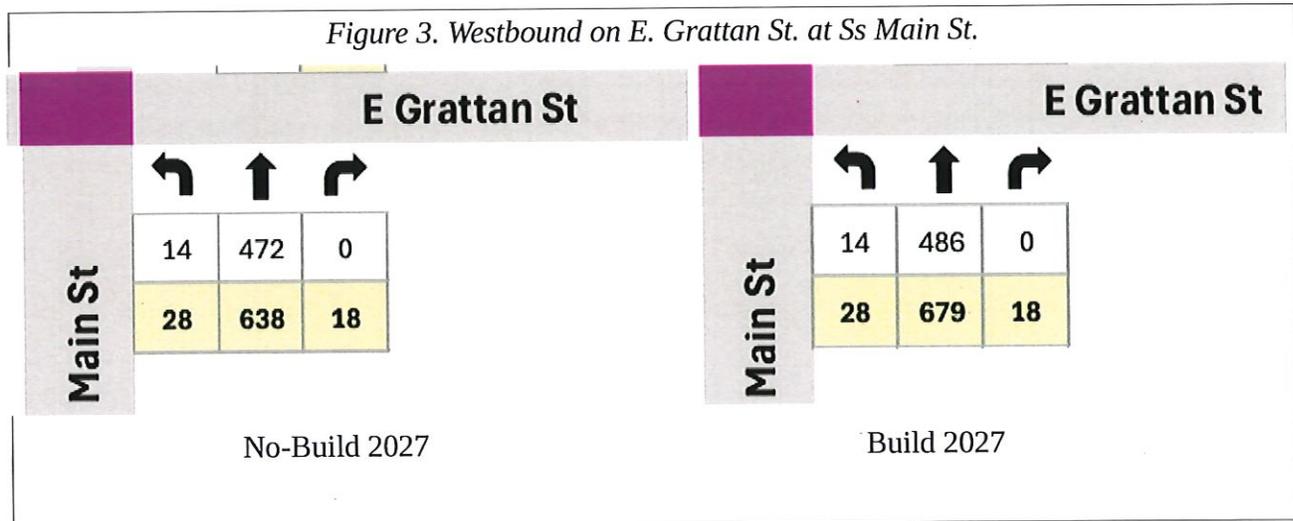
Figure 2. Eastbound on Paul St. at Mason St.



This ignores the fact that some percentage of the trips from the proposed project to East Campus, the Walmart Shopping Center, and E. Market St. shopping will use Paul St. to get to MLK Jr. Way. In addition, the right turn movements are assumed to increase by 4 during the peak and 12 during the off-peak. This means that the model assumes very few trips from the proposed project to West Campus will use Paul St. to get to S. Mason St.

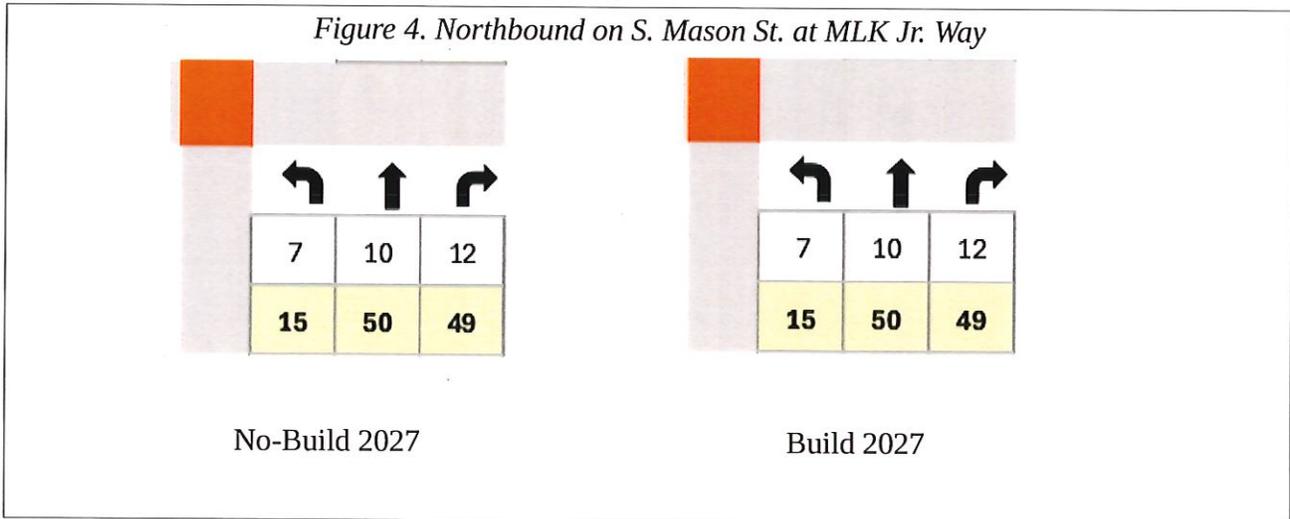
Third, the turning movements in the "Build 2027" model westbound on E. Grattan St. at S. Main St. are identical to those in the "No-Build 2027" model.

Figure 3. Westbound on E. Grattan St. at Ss Main St.



It is not clear what the origins and destinations of the current trips are, but it seems very unlikely that the number won't increase as a result of the proposed project

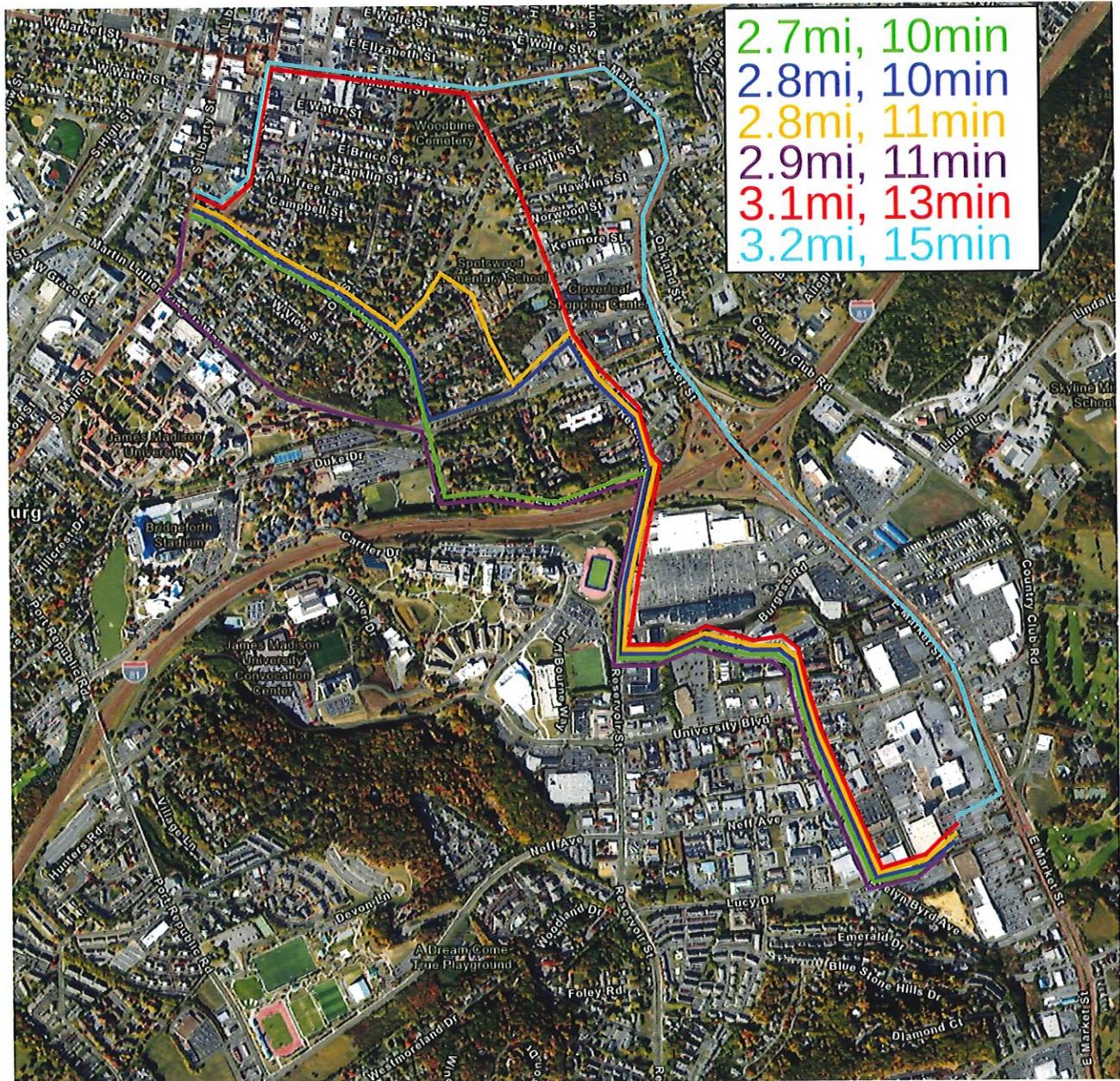
Fourth, the turning movements in the "Build 2027" model northbound on S. Mason St. at MLK Jr. Way are identical to those in the "No-Build 2027" model. This ignores the fact that some percentage of the trips from the East Campus to the proposed project will use S. Mason St. to get to Paul St. and MLK Jr. Way.



Finally, the traffic counts at the corner of S. Main St. and E. Grattan St. were collected on Thursday 12/5/2024 which was the next to last day of classes at James Madison University. Hence, they are likely to be an under-count. This causes a problem with the turning movements at the corner of S. Main St. and Paul St. in the "Build 2027" model because the left-turn movements at that intersection are assumed to be the same as those at S. Main St. and E. Grattan St.

These shortcomings are, in large part because the original TIA (dated March 2025) did not take route/path choice decisions into account at all. As an example, the following figure illustrates the approximate lengths and travel times from The Link Apartments to one likely destination, Target.

Map 1. Some Alternative Paths/Routes from The Link to Target



As shown in Map 1, there are many paths/routes from The Link Apartments to Target that have very similar lengths and travel times, and hence are likely to be considered viable alternatives.

Section 7 of *The Link Apartments – Traffic Impact Analysis* dated October 2025 attempts to address this issue, and concludes that the proposed Link Apartments will only have an impact on the route that uses Main St. and Martin Luther King Jr. Way. However, there are several shortcomings of the October 2025 analysis that call its conclusions into question.

First, and perhaps most importantly, the analysis uses a very simplistic model of route/path choice. Specifically, it assumes that all travelers will choose the "best" route/path (ignoring, for the moment, how "best" is defined) and that this will not have any impact on the "best" route/path. However, it is well known that this is unrealistic and that one should, instead, use an equilibrium assignment model (sometimes called a Wardropian assignment model) when predicting route/path choices. Though the mathematics of such models can be difficult to understand, the basic principal is actually quite simple – as more people use the "best" route it becomes less and less preferred (because it becomes more congested). In fact, at some point, what was the "best" route will no longer be preferred, and people will look for alternatives. This adjustment process will continue until all used routes are equally preferred. What this means in the current context is that **some of the new trips will use the MLK Jr. Way route/path (what the report calls the "traditional" route/path) and some of the new trips will use the Paul St. route/path (what the report calls the "cut-through" route/path).**

Second, how people define "best" can vary. Some people may be concerned with distance (indeed, some people use distance as the criterion in their GPS navigation systems rather than time), some people may be concerned with travel time variability (i.e., the prefer consistency) as measured by the standard deviation in travel times, and some people may be risk averse (and, hence, don't take the route/path with the maximum possible travel time). Comparing the two routes/paths using the criteria in Table 4, **a significant number of people (including visitors and other non-residents relying on a GPS navigation system) may consider Paul St. the "best" route/path.**

Table 4. Trip Characteristics on Two (Partial) Paths/Routes

	From Site (AM)		From Site (PM)	
	MLK	Paul	MLK	Paul
Length (ft)	4350	3650	4350	3650
StDev (sec)	29.9	21.9	23.5	16.0
Max (sec)	198	201	207	200

Third, it is not clear that the differences in measured median travel times (i.e., 16 seconds during the AM peak and 20 seconds during the PM peak) is significant enough to have an impact on people's behavior. It may look like a significant difference as a percentage of the trip time, but that is because the analysis treats The Link Apartments as the origin of the trip and the intersection of Paul St. and MLK Jr. Way as the destination. So, 16-20 seconds appears to be a significant percentage (on the order of 10%) of what is a trip of between 130 seconds and 180 seconds. However, when considered as a percentage of a real trip (e.g., to East Campus or Target) it is a much smaller percentage difference (on the order of 1%). In fact, it is quite likely that people who experiment with the different routes/paths

Finally, the study only considers trips in the eastbound direction (i.e., away from the proposed development site). It is quite possible, indeed likely, that trips in the westbound direction will use Paul St., especially during the PM peak, when MLK Jr. Way is very congested.

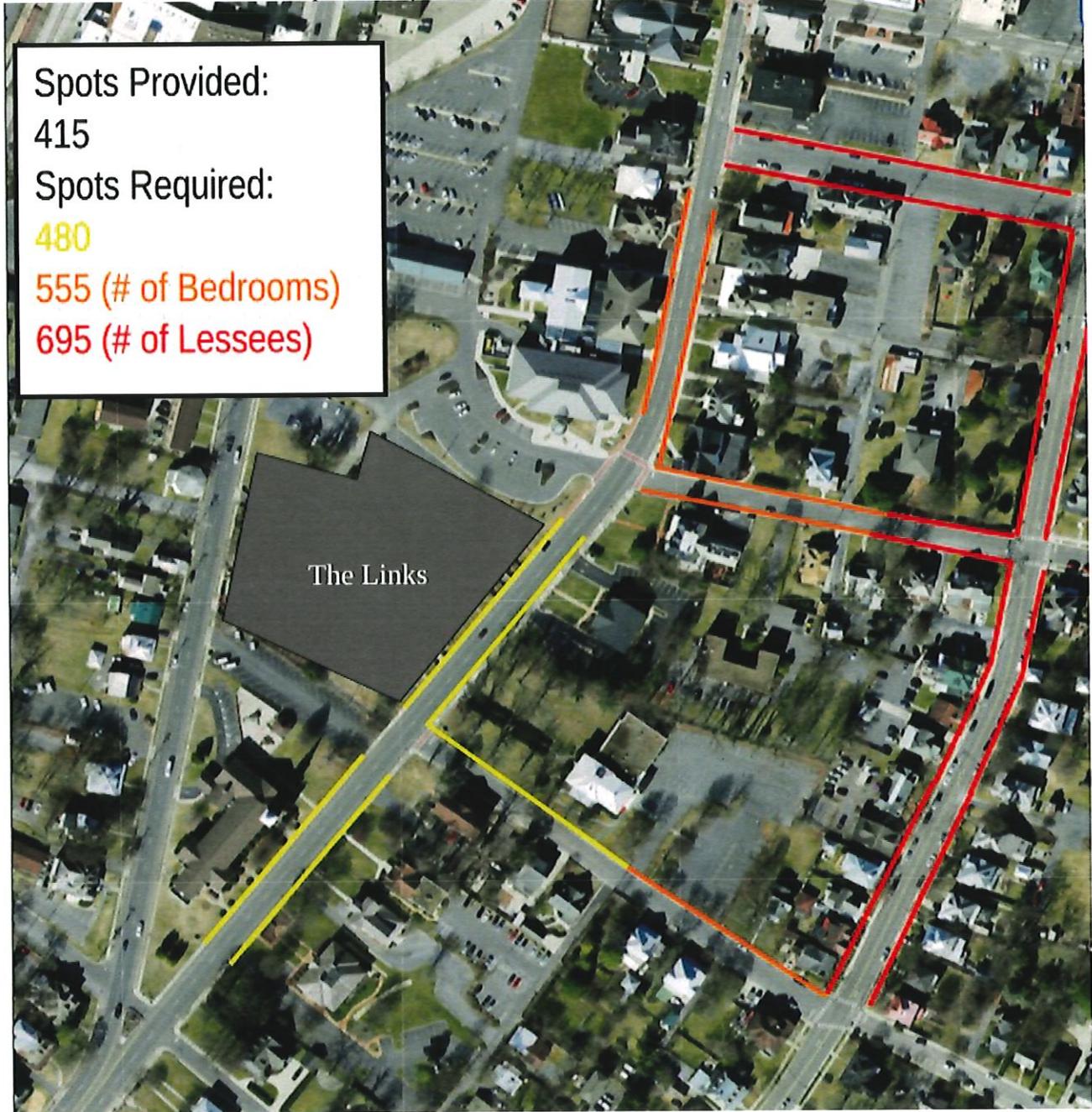
Issues Related to Parking

The Proffer states that a minimum of 480 structured parking spaces will be provided with up to 65 spaces reserved for municipal/public uses. This could be far fewer spaces than are required, and this could have an enormous impact on parking and traffic in the city.

If, in fact, all 480 spaces are required by residents, the closest 65 on-street spaces are on Main St. and Paul St. (as shown in yellow on Map 3). If, instead, there is one car per bedroom (as is possible in a complex in which the residents are college students and/or unmarried professionals), then 555 spaces will be required. The next closest spaces are farther north on Main St., and on Campbell St. (as shown in orange on Map 3). If, in fact, there is one car per lessee, then 695 spaces will be required (with the next closest spaces to the complex shown in red on Map 3).

Of course, many of these spaces are already used by existing residents and shoppers. Hence, either the existing residents and shoppers will be displaced, or the residents of the new complex will have to park farther away. **It is also important to note that the amount of traffic generated by people circling for a space is likely to be significant.**

Map 3. Overflow On-Street Parking Near The Link



Issues Related to the Scope of the Analysis

It is also important to note the the scope of the TIA was limited in many ways.

First, the geographic extent of the model is quite limited. Most importantly, it does not include:

- Myers Ave.
- Franklin St. between Main St. and Myers Ave.
- Ott St. from Paul St. to E. Market St.
- Mountain View Dr.
- Paul St. between MLK Jr. Way and Eastover Dr.

all of which are relevant for trips to/from East Campus, the Walmart Shopping Center, and E. Market St.

Second, the TIA only considers the AM and PM peaks However, as the traffic counts for 9/11/2024 on Grace St. and and S. Main St. show, the hourly traffic counts are fairly constant from 9:00 until 19:00, never falling below about 1600 vehicles per hour (with the study peaks at 1846 and 2470). The same pattern is shown for S. Main St. at MLK Jr. Way in the plot on page 58, and for MLK Jr. Way and S. Mason St. as shown in the plot on page 60.

This means that the congestion problems in the study area are not just limited to the peaks, they occur all day long.

Issues Related to the Geometry and Grade of Paul St.

There are several aspects of the geometric design of Paul St. that should not be ignored.

The various segments of Paul St. have different widths and different traffic calming elements. This will likely make it difficult for Paul St. to safely handle additional traffic.

At the location of the proposed extension, Paul St. will go from a wide segment (on the east side of S. Main St.) to a narrow segment (on the west side of S. Main St), and the two segments may not align well. This is illustrated in Photo 1 and Photo 2.



Photo 1. Overhead View of Paul St. and S. Main St.

*Photo 2. The Intersection of Paul St. and S. Main St.
taken from the Property Line of 25-J-2 (The Proposed Extension)*



Similarly, at the intersection of Paul St. and S. Mason St., Paul St. goes from a wide segment (to the west of S. Mason St.) to a narrow segment that contains traffic calming measures, and the two segments do not align on the south side of the intersection. This is illustrated in Photo 3 and Photo 4.

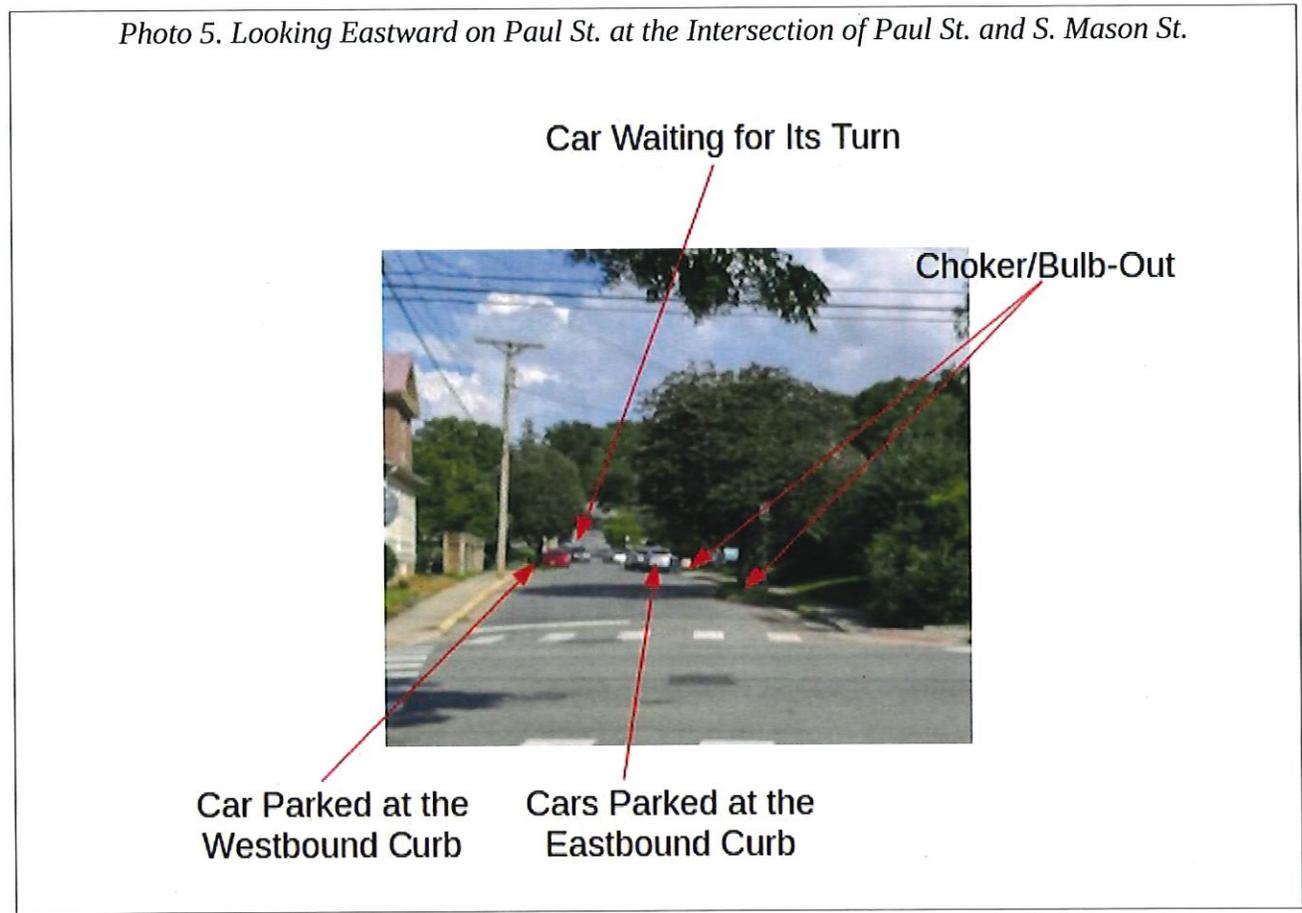
Photo 3. Overhead View of Paul St. and S. Mason St.



Photo 4. The Intersection of Paul St. and S. Mason St. taken from the Eastbound Curb



S. Mason St. is very difficult to cross as a result of the geometry. This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that there are chokers on the narrow segment and by the fact that cars are always parked on both sides of the street. The result is that the effective width of this segment of Paul St. is only 15 feet. Hence, cars must take turns using this segment. This is illustrated in Photo 5.



Finally, though it varies, the grade of Paul St. is quite steep in places. This is particularly true in and around the intersection with Ott St. This causes a large number of problems when the road is slick, but also causes problems under normal conditions. In particular, when crossing Ott St. on Paul St. in the eastbound direction, there is a fairly large area in which it is impossible to see oncoming cars. This is illustrated in Photo 6.

Photo 6. Paul St. and Ott St.



Issues Related to Known Limitations in the Methodology

There are known limitations to the methodology used in basic traffic analyses. In particular, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has noted that a standard traffic impact analysis does not directly account for the following conditions that can occur between intersections:

- Presence or lack of on-street parking;
- Driveway density or access control;
- Lane additions leading up to or lane drops leading away from intersections;
- Impact of grades between intersections;
- Any capacity constraints between intersections (such as a narrow bridge);
- Mid-block medians and two-way left-turn lanes;
- Turning movements that exceed 20 percent of the total volume on the street; and
- Queues backing up to and interfering with the operation of an upstream intersection.

Many of these exist in downtown Harrisonburg and the surrounding residential neighborhoods and should be accounted for, at least subjectively.

In addition, it is important to recognize that many of the "connectors" in the TIA are really "neighborhood streets". Though they do connect busy roads, they should not be treated as such and should not be used for traffic dispersal.

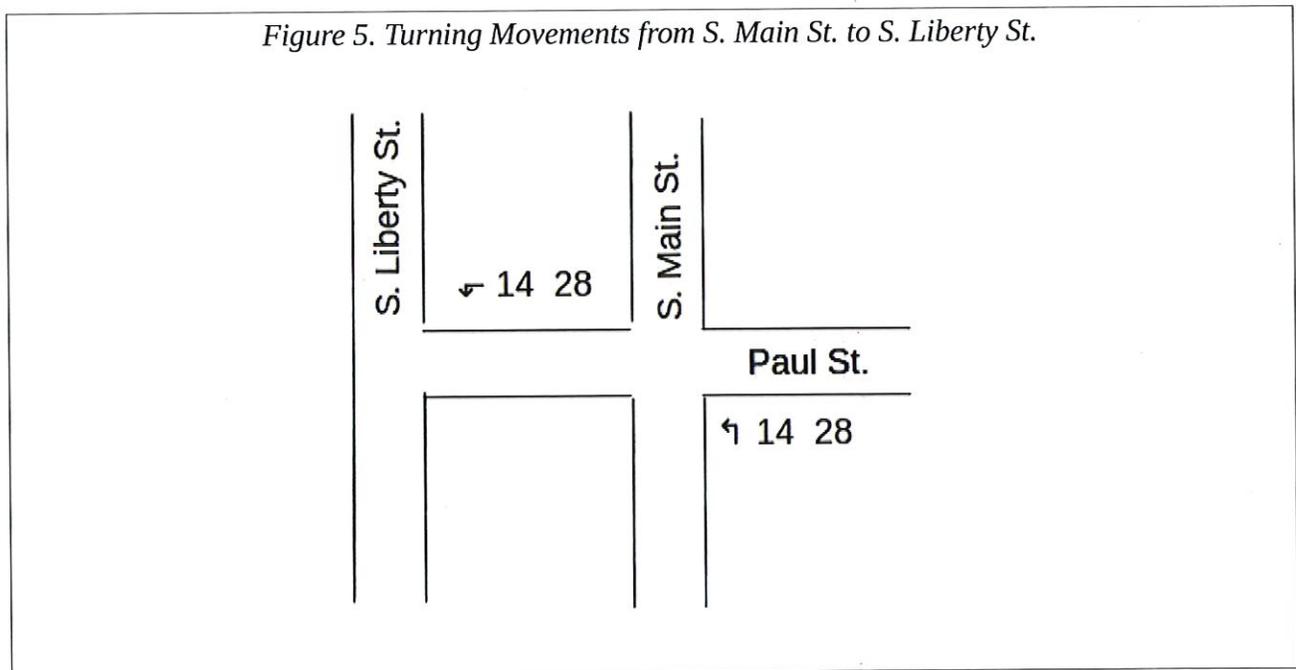
Issues Specific to the Paul St. Extension

Based on the TIA, there is no justification for building the Paul St. Extension.

Section 7 of *The Traffic Impact Analysis* dated October 2025 argues that the project won't have a significant impact on the traffic on Paul St. Hence, the only possible justification for the Paul St. Extension is based on existing traffic. However, the *Traffic Impact Analysis* dated March 2025 makes it clear that existing traffic does not justify its construction because it will not carry a significant amount of traffic.

On eastbound Paul St. at S. Main St., the TIA predicts 4 left-turn movements and 8 thru movements during the AM Peak Hour and 2 left-turn movements and 4 thru movements during the PM Peak Hour. **This is certainly not enough trips to warrant the construction of the extension.**

On westbound Paul St. at S. Liberty St., the TIA predicts 14 left-turn movements during the AM Peak Hour and 28 left-turn movements during the PM Peak Hour. While these numbers are significant, if one takes a closer look at the area, one sees that these numbers are very unlikely. As shown in Figure 5, the northbound trips on S. Main St. that turn onto the Paul St. extension immediately turn southbound onto S. Liberty St.



It turns out that these movements are identical to the northbound movements from S. Main St. onto E. Grattan St. that were measured on 12/5/2024. While those movements make sense (because W. Grattan St. continues past S. Liberty St.), it does not make sense to assume the same movements for the Paul St. extension.

In other words, there are many reasons to believe that the Traffic Impact Analyses severely underestimate the traffic impacts of the proposed Link Apartments and, hence, that the zoning change should not be approved. However, if the Traffic Impact Analyses are correct and the zoning change is approved, then there is no reason to build the Paul St. Extension.

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The Link Proposed Development

From [REDACTED]

Date Tue 1/13/2026 10:36 AM

To Adam Fletcher <Adam.Fletcher@harrisonburgva.gov>; Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Good morning!

I am writing to you about my concerns over the proposed Link Development at 473 South Main Street. I participated in the 2040 Downtown Plan visioning exercises and support ideas to bring coherent development to this part of town. I am not opposed to development at this location but the density and scale of this project seems out of step with the Plan and therefore concerns me.

In regard to density, the potential for close to 700 bedrooms (in the proposed 265 apartments) will significantly increase traffic in the surrounding area. As a frequent pedestrian in this part of downtown, that kind of increase in traffic makes me concerned for my safety. It is already difficult enough to navigate as a pedestrian. Relatedly, increasing the amount of traffic at the terminus point of the Liberty Street bike lanes seems like an accident waiting to happen. And while I am not opposed to students living in the complex, the mix of apartments must meet the needs of a broader group of Harrisonburg citizens, especially our young professionals who work downtown or at JMU. The ratio of apartment sizes has been adjusted by the developer, but I would ask the Planning Commission to look closely at the final mix to ensure it can alleviate housing pressure for our permanent residents.

Secondly, the scale and mass of the building will dwarf everything around it without adding significant benefits to the community. A six-story building is excessive for this area of town, which is mostly residential, and many of the amenities seem to be solely for Link residents. The building should engage the public by providing useful services and welcoming space. Retail space that adds to our mix of downtown businesses and larger setbacks (like the adjacent municipal building) would go a long way toward this objective. As a regular participant in events at the Turner Pavilion, I also worry about the effect on the proposed park. Six stories will overshadow the park and make it feel boxed in - even with wall murals to "soften" the effect.

Here are a few questions I would ask the Planning Commission to consider as they review the Link development proposal:

- **Does this development make sense as part of Harrisonburg's 2040 Downtown Plan?** While the proposal meets some of the 2040 downtown plan goals, it significantly misses the spirit of the plan. The developer has made some modifications to their proposal, but I hope the City will encourage them to continue to evaluate options to further meet these goals.

- **Looking to the future, what would the effect of allowing B1C at this spot now have on future zoning in this area?**
- **Are there exceptions that can be made for R3 zoning that would make this attractive to the developer?**
- **Are there proffers we can require for B1C zoning that would ensure the safety of residents in the area and make the development a better compliment to the neighborhood?**
- **And finally, is it all or nothing? Or is there a different zoning that could better serve Harrisonburg and the developer?**

I appreciate the opportunity to voice my concerns. Thank you for your time and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,
Mary Hoffman

The Link - public comment

From Nyrma C. Soffel <Nyrma.Soffel@harrisonburgva.gov>

Date Thu 9/25/2025 3:30 PM

To Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

Thanh,

Linda Hammer [REDACTED] called today (9/25/2025) with questions and comments regarding the Link project on S. Main Street. Her comments are as follows:

Ms. Hammer is a long-time city resident. She was born and raised in Harrisonburg. Her family has been in Harrisonburg for generations, since the mid-1800's. The proposed apartment building is "so gigantic and out of place" and "does not fit in." She does not support the proposed development and would not like to see something of that size at that location.

Nyrma

Nyrma C Soffel
Planner
City of Harrisonburg
Department of Community Development
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
(540) 432-7700 Ext. 1804
Pronouns: she, her, hers
Se habla español.

Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

From City of Harrisonburg, VA <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>

Date Wed 2/25/2026 8:31 PM

To Michael E. Parks <Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov>; Pamela S. Ulmer <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>; Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Submitted on Wed, 02/25/2026 - 20:31

Submitted values are:

Name

Anna Bricker

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-03-11

Agenda Item Number

1

Comment

I oppose rezoning 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B1-C.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

No

Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

From City of Harrisonburg, VA <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>

Date Wed 2/25/2026 9:38 PM

To Michael E. Parks <Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov>; Pamela S. Ulmer <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>; Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Submitted on Wed, 02/25/2026 - 21:38

Submitted values are:

Name

Abigail Spitzer

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-03-11

Agenda Item Number

Unsure

Comment

I oppose rezoning 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B1-C.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

No

No to B-1C Rezoning Downtown

From Nicole Kornblatt <[REDACTED]>
Date Thu 2/26/2026 7:15 AM
To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please do NOT rezone the Lindsey Funeral Home to a a 500+ student housing monstrosity.

Please do not ruin our downtown with a huge modern building.

As a local resident who enjoys going downtown regularly for the library, weekly dance classes for my daughter, the children's museum, restaurants, stores, coffee, photography and more I do not want to fight with college students to find parking.

Also aesthetically it will not match our small and cute downtown.

Please preserve our beautiful downtown.

Thank you,

Nicole Kornblatt
My address is 911 Confederacy Drive, Penn Laird, VA 22846

Re: No to B-1C Rezoning Downtown

From Ben Kornblatt <[REDACTED]>
Date Thu 2/26/2026 8:12 AM
To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Good morning planning committee,

I would like to submit my request of not rezoning the Lindsey Funeral Home to a 500+ student housing giant eyesore.

Please do not ruin our downtown with a huge modern building.

As a local resident who enjoys going downtown regularly for the library, weekly dance classes for my daughter, the children's museum, restaurants, stores, coffee, photography and more I do not want to fight with college students to find parking.

Also aesthetically it will not match our small and cute downtown. This would be extremely out of place for our town.

Please preserve our beautiful downtown. There is enough place in town that is not directly downtown for this sort of building.

Thank you,

Benjamin Kornblatt
My address is 911 Confederacy Drive, Penn Laird, VA 22846
912.660.4302

On Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 7:15 AM Nicole Kornblatt <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Please do NOT rezone the Lindsey Funeral Home to a a 500+ student housing monstrosity.

Please do not ruin our downtown with a huge modern building.

As a local resident who enjoys going downtown regularly for the library, weekly dance classes for my daughter, the children's museum, restaurants, stores, coffee, photography and more I do not want to fight with college students to find parking.

Also aesthetically it will not match our small and cute downtown.

Please preserve our beautiful downtown.

Thank you,

Nicole Kornblatt

My address is 911 Confederacy Drive, Penn Laird, VA 22846

Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

From City of Harrisonburg, VA <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>

Date Thu 2/26/2026 8:28 AM

To Michael E. Parks <Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov>; Pamela S. Ulmer <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>; Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Submitted on Thu, 02/26/2026 - 08:28

Submitted values are:

Name

Ben Melton

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-03-11

Agenda Item Number

I don't know the item number. The topic is the rezoning involving the proposed Link project at the current Lindsay Funeral Home site.

Comment

I am opposed to this proposed rezoning. It poses a number of known and potential problems that will cause traffic and quality of life issues for years to come. Housing needs can be addressed by developing the property for residences under its existing zoning.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

Yes

If you would like to be contacted, please provide preferred contact information

[REDACTED]

Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

From City of Harrisonburg, VA <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>

Date Mon 3/2/2026 11:18 AM

To Michael E. Parks <Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov>; Pamela S. Ulmer <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>; Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Submitted on Mon, 03/02/2026 - 11:18

Submitted values are:

Name

Ted Tallent

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-03-11

Agenda Item Number

Rezoning o 473 S. Main St.

Comment

"I oppose rezoning 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B1-C."

473 S. Main St

From T Webster <[REDACTED]>

Date Sun 3/1/2026 4:56 PM

To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

I oppose rezoning 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B1-C.

comment on B-1C rezoning

From Bronson Griscom <[REDACTED]>

Date Tue 3/3/2026 9:31 AM

To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Please forward the following comment to the planning Commissioners.

This is to voice my support for proposed B-1C rezoning, as a homeowner and resident in old town Harrisonburg. I support higher density and not-too-expensive housing within walking distance of downtown Harrisonburg, both for social reasons (we need more less expensive housing) and for environmental reasons (higher density housing is lower impact on the environment per unit).

In concert with this re-zoning, i also advocate for more pedestrian friendly downtown infrastructure, such as more clearly designated bicycle/pedestrian lanes and closing off Court Square to automobile traffic so Harrisonburg would have a truly pedestrian downtown experience that would draw business and enhance our civic experience.

Regards,

Bronson Griscom
217 Franklin St, Harrisonburg

Sent from my iPhone

Rezoning of 473 S. Main

From Parentheses Books <[REDACTED]>

Date Wed 3/4/2026 10:21 AM

To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Planning Commissioners,

My name is Amanda Friss and I am a homeowner in Old Town (315 E Grattan St) and a business owner here in downtown (Parentheses Books).

I just want you to know that **I oppose the rezoning of 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B-1C.**

Aesthetics are just as important to a place as other factors to be considered, like population density or mixed uses. We don't need to sacrifice one for the other. There are ways to do both. Please keep this in mind.

Thank you for the work you're doing to care for our wonderful little city.

Sincerely,
Amanda Friss

--


The logo for Parentheses Books features the word "Parentheses" in a large, black, cursive script font. Below it, the word "BOOKS" is written in a smaller, black, all-caps, sans-serif font.

76 W Gay Street
Harrisonburg VA 22802

Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

From City of Harrisonburg, VA <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>

Date Wed 3/4/2026 11:52 AM

To Michael E. Parks <Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov>; Pamela S. Ulmer <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>; Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Submitted on Wed, 03/04/2026 - 11:52

Submitted values are:

Name

Tom Reynolds

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-03-11

Agenda Item Number

rezoning of Lindsey Property

Comment

"I oppose rezoning 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B1-C."

If you would like to be contacted, please provide preferred contact information



Rezoning 473 S Main Street

From Gloeckner, Janet W - gloeckjw <[REDACTED]>

Date Wed 3/4/2026 2:01 PM

To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

I am opposed to rezoning 473 South Main Street (and the rest of the addresses involved) from R-3 to B1-C and would like this to be included in the agenda packet for the public record.

Janet W. Gloeckner
231 West View Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

From City of Harrisonburg, VA <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>

Date Wed 3/4/2026 2:59 PM

To Michael E. Parks <Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov>; Pamela S. Ulmer <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>; Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Submitted on Wed, 03/04/2026 - 14:58

Submitted values are:

Name

Kimberly Shipe

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-03-11

Agenda Item Number

1

Comment

I oppose rezoning 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B1-C.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

No

Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

From City of Harrisonburg, VA <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>

Date Wed 3/4/2026 3:28 PM

To Michael E. Parks <Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov>; Pamela S. Ulmer <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>; Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Submitted on Wed, 03/04/2026 - 15:28

Submitted values are:

Name

Katherine Byers

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-03-11

Agenda Item Number

Rezoning of Lindsey Funeral Home property

Comment

As I tried to drive through downtown on 2/28/26 I was rather dismayed at the very large numbers of students walking from house party to house party. While I am grateful for the many benefits JMU brings to our community, my feelings were quite negative towards the students on that day. I do not see having more student housing downtown as a good thing.

I would like to know how the proposed housing contribution meaningfully addresses local affordability needs? Does The Link broaden housing diversity?

What lasting burdens and unintended consequences will adjacent neighborhoods and the citizens of Harrisonburg be forced to carry for years to come?

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

No

The Link Rezoning Comments

From Steven Tennyson [REDACTED]
Date Wed 3/4/2026 7:17 PM
To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Ms Dang,

Please share these comments regarding the rezoning of 473 South Main Street with the members of the Harrisonburg Planning Commission in anticipation of their March meeting. Please include them in the agenda packet for the public record.

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I am Steven Tennyson, residing at 507 Paul Street, and I oppose the rezoning of 473 South Main Street from R-3 to B-1C for the following reasons:

First and foremost: this property has been zoned R-3 for decades and, along with Harrisonburg Baptist Church, anchors the adjoining neighborhoods while connecting them to Downtown. Until this point, no one has seen a need to rezone it. There are other properties with B-1C zoning that can be redeveloped to accomplish the goals of creating a walkable Downtown living community without the need for rezoning. If this property is rezoned and the proposed development proceeds, it will alienate rather than anchor the surrounding neighborhoods as well as City Hall by towering over everything in sight and stretching from sidewalk to sidewalk. One look at the 3-D printed scale model of the proposed structure and adjacent buildings clearly shows how out-of-character this is.

Neighborhood Safety: My family has lived on Paul Street in the Preston Heights neighborhood for 15 years. In that time, Paul Street has become increasingly hazardous to pedestrians as more cars use it as a way to bypass the traffic snarls at the intersection of MLK Way and South Main Street. There are no sidewalks on my side of Paul Street and cars routinely travel well above the 25 mile per hour speed limit. Preston Heights is a neighborhood of families who are grateful that their children can walk to and from school at Spotswood Elementary. On the Old Town side, Paul Street is one and a half lanes wide at best and cannot support increased traffic. By approving the rezoning and the Paul Street Extension included in the proposed development, more traffic will divert onto Paul Street and increase the risk for people who live in the neighborhood. One of the goals of the proposed development is to improve walkability. Is sacrificing one neighborhood's walkability for another really a net gain for the City?

Student Housing: Originally, the proposed development was marketed as student housing. Although the developer has changed the narrative to spotlight "mixed use," little of substance regarding the proposal has changed meaningfully. The majority of the residents will be students. There is clear evidence that students are not good neighbors to the residents in and around Old Town. They host

massive, loud parties along South Main Street and Mason Street. They litter the surrounding properties with plastic cups, beer cans, and bottles. They shout obscenities at all hours of the night. They urinate wherever they please. Approving the rezoning will put more students in closer proximity to the party hotspots and exacerbate the problem.

Please note that I am not opposed to more housing in Harrisonburg. I am not opposed to high density housing either. I am opposed to this rezoning because R-3 has been and will continue to be the appropriate zoning for this location. Other properties already zoned B-1C should be considered first for redevelopment.

Respectfully,
Steven Tennyson

Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

From City of Harrisonburg, VA <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>

Date Wed 3/4/2026 5:14 PM

To Michael E. Parks <Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov>; Pamela S. Ulmer <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>; Thanh Dang <Thanh.Dang@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Submitted on Wed, 03/04/2026 - 17:14

Submitted values are:

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg Planning Commission

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-03-11

Agenda Item Number

Rezoning of 473 S. Main St from R-3 to B1-C

Comment

To the Planning Commissioners,

I have been a resident of Harrisonburg, Virginia since 1973. I live in Old Town. I am opposed to the proposed rezoning of 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B1-C. I believe that this unwarranted change would have a negative impact on Old Town and the city of Harrisonburg since it would permit the creation of far too many residences on this site. Traffic will increase and there will be insufficient places for parking.

I hope that you, as Planning Commissioners, recognizing that the construction of this residence has not been voted on by residents in the city, seriously take the opinions of citizens into account. Harrisonburg can grow and create new apartments on the outskirts of the city to meet demand, but the creation of high rise buildings in Old Town will diminish the attractiveness and quality of life in Harrisonburg.

Thank you for your dedicated service to our community.

Sincerely,

Mary Louise Loe

201 West View Street

Harrisonburg, Va. 22801

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

No

No B-1C

From Louise Loe <[REDACTED]>
Date Wed 3/4/2026 5:07 PM
To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

To the Planning Commissioners,

I have been a resident of Harrisonburg, Virginia since 1973. I live in Old Town. I am opposed to the proposed rezoning of 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B1-C. I believe that this unwarranted change would have a negative impact on Old Town and the city of Harrisonburg since it would permit the creation of far too many residences on this site. Traffic will increase and there will be insufficient places for parking.

I hope that you, as Planning Commissioners, recognizing that the construction of this residence has not been voted on by residents in the city, seriously take the opinions of citizens into account. Harrisonburg can grow and create new apartments on the outskirts of the city to meet demand, but the creation of high rise buildings in Old Town will diminish the attractiveness and quality of life in Harrisonburg.

Thank you for your dedicated service to our community.

Sincerely,

Mary Louise Loe
201 West View Street
Harrisonburg, Va. 22801

Rezoning of 473 S. Main St from R-3 to B1-C

From jhmhull <[REDACTED]>
Date Thu 3/5/2026 10:47 AM
To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

For public record:

I oppose rezoning 473 S. Main Street from R-3 to B1-C.

Please forward this comment to the Planning Commissioners and include it in the agenda packet for the public record.

Your response confirming receipt of this email would be appreciated.

Best,

John Hull
252 West View Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

[REDACTED]

Fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te.
You created us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.

Link Apartments Sound Proofing for better tenant mix

From Stephen Horn <[REDACTED]>
Date Thu 3/5/2026 1:46 PM
To CD Planning <CDPlanning@harrisonburgva.gov>

WARNING: External email. Be cautious when clicking on links or opening attachments.

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

My name is Stephen Horn and I have lived in the old town area for over twenty five years, first on Franklin St. and now on Campbell St. I am writing to you about the proposed Link apartment complex. I am neutral in terms of whether it should be approved or not, but if it is approved I would like to see it done right. The city would like to see a mixed use building in this location with a mix of tenants between students and older tenants, as would I, and if that's the case then it's essential that the city require adequate soundproofing in the building.

One of the problems with 5-over-1 buildings is that they are frequently designed to last 30 years but lose their luster before that. In particular the wooden upper stories are frequently not very soundproof or even sound resistant. This prevents these buildings from having mixed tenants. The minimum level of soundproofing required (STC 50) allows loud talking to be heard through walls. Students who have later schedules disturb the nonstudents in the building who need to get up earlier. Eventually the nonstudents move out and the remaining tenants are all students.

Both Urban Exchange and the development by this developer in Williamsburg have complaints about the amount of noise that can be heard from adjacent units. For this reason I strongly urge you to consider making approval of this change in zoning contingent on a proffer of higher levels of soundproofing. In particular:

Walls: Proffer that walls separating *different* apartments and in bedroom units within apartments must meet an **STC rating of 60**.

Common Area Walls: Proffer that walls bordering hallways, elevators, or lounges meet an **STC of 60**.

Floor/Ceiling Assembly: Proffer an **IIC (Impact Insulation Class)** rating of 55+

Hallway Buffer: Proffer Hallway-to-unit entry doors shall include automatic drop-seals to mitigate noise from common areas.

Structural Sound Buffers: Proffer the rooftop perimeter include **acoustic glass railings** and/or sound-absorbing planters. This is important since the rooftop terrace will be at the level of many homes in Old Town.

Windows: Proffers that all residential building envelopes shall achieve a minimum **STC rating of 35** and a minimum **OITC rating of 28** for all glazing assemblies (windows and glass doors). (The interior courtyards are going to be echo chambers and a mixed use facility is going to be generating exterior early morning noise from delivery trucks).

These changes would address several concerns and goals of city residents and officials:

1. The building would be less likely to lose its “luster” before the end of its 30 year lifespan and become an eyesore.
2. The building would be more likely to contain a mix of students and nonstudents.
3. City resources would be less likely to be strained by having the police respond to noise complaints or deal with other violations of city codes (a resident in the Williamsburg complex noted that management didn’t handle noise complaints but instead referred them to local police).

Thin walls were one complaint about the Midtown Row building in Williamsburg but there were others related to management of the property. In addition to these changes the city should require a management plan proffer that addresses the concerns raised by other complaints about the Midtown Row property.

As I stated I’m neutral about this development, but if it’s done it needs to be done right which means the proffers need to be made to address the problems that occurred with other buildings done by this developer and the complaints you find in general about these 5-over-1 structures. Developers like the 5-over-1 buildings because they’re cheap but that’s not in the best interest of the city or the city’s residents who might be future tenants. If this isn’t done right, there will not be much support for the rest of the city’s 2040 plan.

Best regards,
Stephen Horn