

Thanh Dang

From: Dennis Snyder <dsnyder@summitfgi.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 1, 2022 3:38 PM
To: Adam Fletcher
Cc: Thanh Dang; Meghan T. Rupkey; Christopher Perez-Leon; Tyler.Banks@harrisonburgva.gov
Subject: 935 and 937 Vine Street Rezoning

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Harrisonburg Community Development:

IT has been brought to my attention that the proposed 935 and 937 rezoning request plans to use Wren Way as a main access point into development. I am strongly opposed to eliminating the cul de sac. I have lived on this street from over 25 years. My main reasoning for purchasing my home at 964 Wren Way was because it WAS on a cul de sac and which provided a quiet safe street. I raised my two daughters knowing that thru traffic would not an issue to their safety. I watched many children over the years learn to ride a bicycle under the safety of no thru traffic. I cannot believe the City would allow this significant change. I want to go on record that I am strongly opposed.

Respectfully,

Dennis L. Snyder
Market President
Summit Community Bank
224 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
Office: 540-442-6776
Cell: 540-830-1330
Fax: 304-530-0961
Email: dsnyder@summitfgi.com
NMLS ID: 745085

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November 4, 2022

Harrisonburg City Planning Commission,

I'm writing to address the requests before the Planning Commission for a rezoning of 935 and 937 Vine Street from an R-1 to an R-8C residential district, and for a special use permit to allow attached townhouses in the plot of land in question.

As the Planning Commission is aware, the move from an R-1 to an R-8C residential district represents a DRASTIC change in the nature of the housing that will be added to this property. The proposal on the table specifies an entry point to this new housing from Wren Way, off of Star Crest Drive, both of which are streets in R-1 housing. The definition of R-1 housing is "low-density, relatively spacious single-family housing" according to the Notice of Public Hearing posted on harrisonburgva.gov. By contrast, R-8C housing is described as "medium-to-high-density housing."

R-8 districts are characterized as possibly including duplex housing and in special circumstances, attached townhouses. "Special circumstances," in this case, refers to the special use permit that is also being requested for 935 and 937. This permit, if granted, would allow the developer to build up to eight attached townhouses on the property, which would create an even HIGHER concentration of dwellings than is typical for an R8-C district.

To say that these proposals would represent a fundamental change to the surrounding neighborhood would be an understatement. Currently on Wren Way, Star Crest Drive and the surrounding streets, we are fortunate enough to have a neighborhood that meets the definition of R-1 housing. That is the neighborhood that we were moving into when we purchased our homes. Some residents of these streets have lived here since their houses were first built in the 1970s, and the kind of neighborhood in which they chose to set down roots has never seen such a drastic change as the one being proposed.

It's my understanding from conversations with City of Harrisonburg officials that the reason this development is being proposed to extend from Wren Way rather than Vine Street, which is positioned just on the other side of the property, is because it would add too much traffic to an already traffic-dense city street. If that's the case, then the objective conclusion is that the residents of Wren Way are going to suffer for the fact that a developer wants to build overcrowded housing near an already highly-concentrated area just one street over.

This proposal, if approved, would have immediate, injurious impacts on the residents living on Wren Way, Star Crest Drive, Blue Ridge Drive and other nearby streets. The first negative impact is the infrastructure problem. By definition, R-1 district roads are not intended to handle the type of traffic that would be generated by an R-8C development. Many residents in our area can attest to the already uncomfortable levels of traffic and reckless driving we see on our streets, as evidenced by the Harrisonburg Police Department's placing of a speed checking device on Blue Ridge Drive in addition

to many of our own personal experiences. Put simply, an R-1 district cannot and should not be expected to handle R-8C traffic.

The second is the inevitable impact on property values that would result from the fundamental change in the nature of our neighborhood represented by this proposal. When comparing the estimated property values of the free-standing, single-family houses on Wren Way with those on Vine Street, an R-4 district, there is an average of roughly \$30,000 difference of home values. For some of us, a drop of \$30,000 in our home's value would wipe away any and all progress we have made as property owners through renovation and improvements to our homes.

Looking at the bigger picture, the simple, irrefutable fact is that this proposal is completely incongruent with the goals of the city and the benefit of its residents. An R-8C district sandwiched between R-1 and R-4 districts is tantamount to stuffing new property owners into a sardine can, and taking the current residents along with it. It represents a complete contradiction of the comprehensive plan for the city (found at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/comprehensive-plan>), which sensibly earmarks 935 and 937 Vine as R-1 housing.

This proposal is bad for the current residents, bad for the potential future residents, and bad for the integrity of the comprehensive plan. In fact, the only parties it's good for are landowners who want to make as much money from as small a portion of land as possible. I fully understand the city's desire to develop this plot of land into new housing. I'm familiar with Harrisonburg's housing demand and we expected this to eventually occur when my family moved into the neighborhood. Our request is simply that this land remain designated for use as R-1 housing so that the new homes it brings can maintain the same style of housing, and so our new neighbors can experience the same type of neighborhood that we have all come to enjoy.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this matter.

Respectfully,
A Concerned Resident of Wren Way