



Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition
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SVBCoalition.org

Mayor Reed and Harrisonburg City Council Members,

The Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition has closely followed the requests for alley closures that have come before the Harrisonburg Planning Commission and Harrisonburg City Council. We are concerned that the closure of alleyways in the City of Harrisonburg directly conflicts with the community's vision to make Harrisonburg more walkable and bikeable for everyone.

We ask the City of Harrisonburg to consider retaining all public access through existing alleys, "paper streets," and public access through any existing corridors. We know how hard it is for the city to obtain property and right-of-way and have seen the acquisition of such corridors as a significant barrier to creating safe and accessible places to walk and bike. We should retain the access we already have whenever possible.

Sometimes, we may need to open or improve access to more of these alleys. We hold that any alley's current condition or lack of maintenance shouldn't be relevant to whether or not we close an alley. We should always strive to preserve these corridors for future generations.

Alleys remain an essential connection for comfortable low-stress walking and biking. Even those that are not currently passable could prove helpful for future connectivity. The areas of our city with traditional neighborhood development are few and far between. This development pattern should be maintained wherever possible.

More importantly, we believe that alleys will be necessary and critical if we want to one day encourage and allow accessory dwelling units and improve housing options in our city.

We ask that you please preserve the public access alleyways and similar spaces that the city currently owns. Selling off alleys is a slippery slope that could result in a considerable loss of connectivity and future options to improve housing and walking/biking.

Kyle Lawrence

Executive Director
Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: HarrisonburgVA.gov via HarrisonburgVA.gov <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 2, 2022 8:30 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Form submission from: Agenda Comment Form

WARNING: This email was sent from outside of your organization.

Submitted on: Friday, September 2, 2022 - 8:29am

Name: Bronson and Heather Griscom
Type of Meeting: Harrisonburg City Council
Date of Meeting: Fri, 09/02/2022
Agenda Item Number: ID 22-277

Comment:

We (Bronson and Heather Griscom) and our children use this public right-of-way frequently, for neighborhood walks. We love the public right-of-ways in Old Town Harrisonburg for both the safety and connectivity they provide to the walking public, like ourselves. These rights-of-way are easily lost, and virtually impossible to recover, for public use. There are a variety of studies we can provide with evidence that such rights of way improve (rather than reduce) safety for adjacent private residences. Also, this specific closing at 267 Campbell would effectively eliminate the public use of the entire right-of-way alley behind multiple residential houses...since connectivity would be eliminated.

Sincerely, -Bronson and Heather Griscom

Contact:
Contact Info:

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: HarrisonburgVA.gov via HarrisonburgVA.gov <noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 6:19 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Form submission from: Agenda Comment Form

WARNING: This email was sent from outside of your organization.

Submitted on: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 - 6:18pm

Name: Kim Leach and Cindy Leach Schelhorn

Type of Meeting: Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Meeting: Tue, 09/13/2022

Agenda Item Number: ID 22-277

Comment:

Members of the Planning Commission and City Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to add our comments to those of our neighbors regarding the request to close a portion of the alley running perpendicular to Mason Street and parallel to Campbell Street, referenced in the application as the "south alley." We only recently learned of this request per a letter from the City received on Sept. 8, 2022.

For more than 100 years, our family has owned and lived in the home at 260 Paul Street. During that time, our grandparents, and then our parents, acquired adjacent lots that stretched down to the alley running parallel to Mason Street and to the "south alley" now in question. At one point, they also owned property on the north side of "south alley." These lots have been home to gardens, shade and fruit trees, and wildlife, and have provided a quiet oasis in the heart of Old Town not only for our family, but for friends and neighbors whose homes adjoin them.

We have read the comments submitted by our neighbors and echo their concerns that the requested closure of the two alleys will severely restrict the ability to provide easy and safe access to maintenance crews and vehicles to their properties. We rely on access to our lots through these alleys for tree trimming and removal services and maintenance on a swimming pool that has been in place since the early 1970s. We do hope that this conversation may open a more in-depth discussion with the City on any necessary steps needed to address ongoing maintenance of the alleys themselves.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Kim Leach and Cindy Leach Schelhorn
260 Paul Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
540-434-4238

Contact: No

Contact Info: