

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Elena Zimmermann <emzimmermann58@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2026 4:29 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Rezoning

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

Dear Ms. Ulmer,

I oppose the rezoning on the piece of land where Lindsey Funeral Home currently stands. Please include this in the public record.

Your assistance is appreciated,
Elena Zimmermann
Old Town Resident

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Carol Maureen <cmaureen@earthlink.net>
Sent: Friday, May 1, 2026 10:44 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monia.Robinson@harrisonburgva.gov
Subject: Preserve Harrisonburg Please!!!

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

Greetings,

Please protect the beauty, the homes and the history, the treasures of Harrisonburg.

I oppose the rezoning "The Link" at 473 S. Main St, Harrisonburg, VA!

Thank you,

Carol Maureen DeHart

540-810-4827

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 8:31 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Tue, 04/28/2026 - 20:31

Submitted values are:

Name

Kelsey Rockey

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-04-28

Agenda Item Number

6

Comment

The video for this meeting is not working. I'm home with small children. This is one of the most important items council will vote on at this time.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

Yes

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

kelsey.rockey@gmail.com

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 8:32 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Tue, 04/28/2026 - 20:32

Submitted values are:

Name

Kelsey Rockey

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-04-28

Agenda Item Number

6

Comment

The video for the council meeting is not working. I'm home with small children. This is one of the most important items council will vote on at this time.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

Yes

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

kelsey.rockey@gmail.com

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Powell, Bonnie - powellbs <powellbs@jmu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 10:00 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Powell, Bonnie - powellbs
Subject: State your position, "I oppose the rezoning"!

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

I oppose the rezoning!
No to B-1C

Thank you,
Bonnie and Mark Powell

2170 Lake Terrace Drive
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 4:45 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Tue, 04/28/2026 - 16:44

Submitted values are:

Name

Sara Leichty

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-04-28

Agenda Item Number

6b

Comment

I oppose the rezoning of the property from R3 to B1C for multiple reasons. It is not proportional to our downtown, and I do not think it fits into the vision of the 2040 plan. It is a monolith that would be a permanent fixture, and would dominate the entry to our charming, historic downtown. I think the local government vision should be much bigger, and community focused for a lasting impact. A park that incorporates the area history and features that attract young families and old alike would not only encourage local use of the area, but would attract tourists as well. Winchester has a great example in their Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and gardens. It is a major tourist attraction. There are other, less prominent places in downtown where a large 6 story, high density housing complex would blend much better.

Another idea is historic appearing row houses for adults or seniors wanting to retire downtown where they can walk and drive less. They would actually contribute money to downtown business, unlike what would happen with luxury student housing, where Jack Browns and Billy Jacks would be the primary business beneficiaries.

There are so many other options, and to believe that it is a choice between The Link and "trashy townhouses" as some have expressed, is a false narrative. One that is started and perpetuated by the developer for obvious reasons.

Last, the people pushing this luxury student housing most are the real estate broker firm, the land use attorney, and the developer themselves. It is a curious position that the people accusing the "NIMBYism" charge are the ones with county property or who have tried to connect this process with the challenge of helicopter skiing (John Hoover to the smaller group meeting).

Please vote no on this proposal and have a vision of something that welcomes both local residents and tourists alike.

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Carl Larsson <profcarllarsson@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 2:53 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson
Subject: Vote no tonight for a better yes tomorrow
Attachments: Possible alternatives.pdf

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

Dear Ms. Ulmer: Please include this email in the public record for the rezoning at 473 S Main St ("The Link").

Vote "no" tonight for a better "yes" tomorrow

Dear Members of City Council,

I urge you to please vote "no" this evening on the rezoning request for 473 S Main St. ("The Link"). This rezoning request is problematic for several, significant reasons, including the following:

1. **It is inconsistent with our established zoning map.** Granting an exception in a prominent case like this could set a precedent that undermines the predictability and consistency that zoning maps are meant to provide, making it harder for City Council to apply uniform standards in future land use decisions.
2. **It is inconsistent with the Downtown 2040 Plan**, which City Council recently adopted as our guiding document for downtown development. *Page 60 clearly shows the achievement of housing density on the Lindsey property via 3-story apartments, with both historic buildings preserved.* The Link instead proposes building twice as high (6 stories) and requires the destruction of both historic buildings. *If we do not follow the Downtown 2040 Plan here, it raises a fundamental question: why have a plan at all?*
3. **The Link is strongly opposed by the community** There are 1500+ signatures asking Council to vote "no" to B-1C on this property, with signatures coming from addresses in neighborhoods all across the city.
4. **Failure to meet Council's expectations for community engagement.** Council called for public discussion and meaningful input, *but the developer held only one, invitation-only meeting where the key issues—like building size and whether the land should be rezoned—were explicitly off the table.*
5. **There's a long list of unresolved issues:** affordability, negative impacts on the historic district, traffic impacts, management plans, fiscal impacts (including the possibility of tax breaks), parking spillovers, impacts on local infrastructure, environmental impacts, future design changes, legal enforceability of proffers, the mix of students vs. non-students (especially important given JMU's

plan to house 60% of students on campus by 2040), etc. These are significant issues that still deserve clear answers.

We all support downtown growth and housing density—but it must align with our adopted plans and the character of this district. **A “no” vote tonight does not stop progress; it invites a better proposal.**

I’ve attached a brief set of alternative concepts for your review, not as the only solutions, but to show there are alternative uses for this land that could better serve the needs and common good of our community. A rezoning at this prominent civic-core site should require a plan rooted in genuine community input, fully aligned with the Downtown 2040 Plan.

Once again, please reject the current rezoning request as a first step toward inviting a better vision for this property.

Thank you for your service to our city. Best,

Carl Larsson
487 S Mason St.

Proposed Architectural Renderings from Timberwolf Capital Partners, LLC

The 3D rendering's perspective compresses height, making the **six-story** apartments and parking deck appear comparable to the **three-story** municipal building. The actual scale would likely feel out of context with its 2–3 story historic surroundings. Final materials (e.g., brick) are not guaranteed under current proffers. **The Link proposal is inconsistent with current zoning, it conflicts with the Downtown 2040 Plan, and it lacks community support (1,500+ signatures opposing B-1C).**



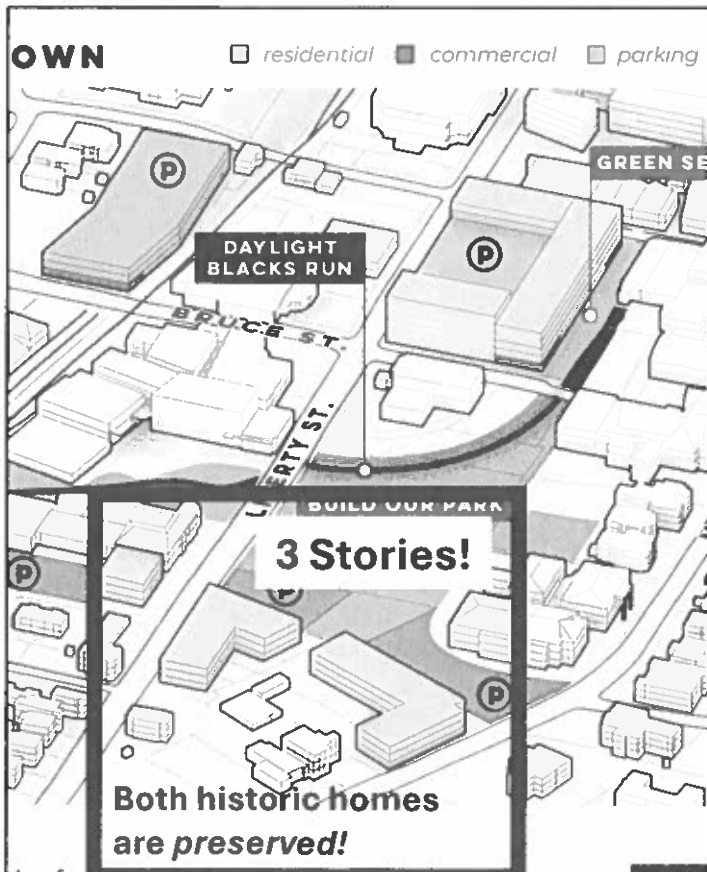
Possible Alternative Use #1: Downtown Central Park

This image envisions the site as a downtown central park—a high-return public infrastructure investment that could draw residents and visitors while boosting activity around Build Our Park, the Farmers Market, City Hall, and nearby businesses. Preserving green space would advance environmental goals, enhance downtown livability, and help support future, context-sensitive housing (“density done right”):



Possible Alternative Use #2: Context-sensitive 3-story apartments (“Density Done Right”)

If housing is pursued on this site, its scale, massing, and design should **fully align with the Downtown 2040 Plan**. This image illustrates a 3-story concept, *consistent with the 3-story development shown on p. 60 of DT 2040*, which is context-sensitive, provides a better transition from the B-1 district to adjacent 2-story residential, preserves more green space, reduces strain on infrastructure (water, traffic, parking), and delivers “density done right” to our downtown.



Left image: Excerpt from P. 60 of *Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 Plan (DT 2040)* – “Conceptual Site Plan for South Downtown”

Our city’s adopted plan for downtown (approved by City Council) shows **3-story development** on the Lindsey site with **both historic buildings preserved**. *The Link proposal conflicts with DT 2040 by demolishing these buildings and introducing a 6-story project in a transitional area next to residential neighborhoods, where that scale is not appropriate under sound planning principles.*

Additional inconsistencies of the Link with DT 2040 include:

- Limited “green building solutions” (p. 60)
- Building and parking deck design falls short of the “highest standards of design” expected for this downtown gateway (p. 44), and proffers allow developer to change design and materials after rezoning.

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Irvin Peckham <iwpeckham@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 3:23 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; nasser.alsaadun@harrisonburg.gov; Laura A. Dent; monica.robinson@harrisonburg.gov
Subject: B-IC

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

While sensitive to perspectives in support of the rezoning to accommodate the LINK project, I have decided against it and urge you to vote likewise. I admit to the charge of not wanting a massive addition in people and traffic in my neighborhood, but I also think that property could be preserved and repurposed, perhaps with a park area in a way that better suit this area of Harrisonburg. Please include this letter in the public record for rezoning 473 Main Street.

Irvin Peckham
610 Ott St
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Irvin Peckham, PhD
UNO/LSU/Retired
<https://personalwriting2.blogspot.com/>
[Viajando sin Mapas](https://www.amazon.com/author/irvin_peckham)
https://www.amazon.com/author/irvin_peckham

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Ben Trumbo <bwtrumbo@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 2:42 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: A Citizen in Opposition to Rezoning for "The Link"

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

Greetings, Ms. Ulmer,

I am contacting you to add my voice to the many citizens of Harrisonburg asking the City Council to deny the rezoning request for the proposed "Link" development on South Main Street.

While I'm certainly not opposed to the additional housing in the City (affordable, sustainable housing is desperately needed), I fear that The Link, as proposed, would not address this need. I actually fear that it would result in housing that more represents a dorm, as we have seen grow throughout the City for some time. Very often resulting in obnoxious noise issues as well as grossly unnecessary amounts of trash that stay in yards and along streets for days. Those two issues are before we talk about the personal safety of students and fulltime citizens alike.

I do believe there is a balance to be consistently maintained within a dynamic like we have in Harrisonburg: A constant tension between the needs of the City, the student, faculty, and staff bodies of a major public university, and the businesses that seek to address the needs of all. Maintaining such a balance requires mindfulness and an intentionality that I find lacking in the plans for The Link. I see plans for obvious profits for the developers, additional rooms, and access to City amenities, for the students, but not very much in the way of what will likely benefit the fulltime citizens of the City itself; beyond perhaps the now worn thin and vague references to "future tax revenue" and "additional business" coming to Downtown.

It does not appear to me that the deal, as it currently stands, would work well for the City. I fear that this would set a precedent of putting the wants of groups who often do not have a long term commitment to or relationship with Downtown Harrisonburg over the needs of citizens who make it their home and where they make a living.

I ask that the City Council reject the rezoning request until a plan that better suits all stakeholders is devised and shared with the public at large.

Thank you very much for your time, consideration, and work on behalf of our City.

All the best,
Benjamin Trumbo
Harrisonburg, Virginia

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 2:11 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Tue, 04/28/2026 - 14:10

Submitted values are:

Name

Isaac Hull

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-04-28

Agenda Item Number

6.b. The Link Apartment Project

Comment

Dear Members of City Council,

My name is Isaac Hull, I have spent most of my life as a resident of Harrisonburg. What has always stood out is not any one building or street, but the feeling of the place—the ease and flow of life here. You see familiar faces when you're out. The town carries memory in a quiet, steady way—through its homes, storefronts, and gathering places. That is the fabric of a real community.

To the City's credit, growth here has often been handled with care. Investments in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure are good examples—improvements that meet needs without losing what makes this place work. We have also seen successful redevelopment projects such as Ice House, City Exchange, and others that have added value while still respecting the scale and character of the surrounding area. That balance matters.

I am not opposed to growth. It is natural that people are drawn here, and housing is a real and pressing issue. But those challenges require thoughtful, well-fitted solutions.

I have serious concerns about The Link.

This project would fundamentally alter a primary approach into downtown in a way that feels out of scale with its surroundings. It changes the experience of entering that part of town, and not in a way that builds

on what is already there.

There are also practical considerations. Main Street already carries significant traffic, especially at peak times. A development of this size, in that location, will almost certainly add strain. We have seen what that looks like—Port Republic Road at 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., for example. It is not something we should invite lightly.

This comes down to function as much as appearance. How a place works matters. And it is worth asking why Harrisonburg has grown in the first place. People are not coming because of large-scale projects. They are coming because of the character that has been built over time—the pace, the sense of place.

That has value. It is also what attracts outside investment.

Companies like Timberwolfe Capital recognize that value, but their goals are different. They are looking for returns. That is not a criticism—it is simply a reality. But it does mean the responsibility for protecting what makes this community work falls to you.

Growth should happen on our terms. It should fit. It should contribute.

I do not believe The Link meaningfully addresses our housing needs. What it does introduce is a level of change—in scale, in traffic, and in overall impact—that risks doing more harm than good.

The Link is engineered for student housing, and it is optimistic to assume this will meaningfully free up single-family homes currently occupied by students. We do have other tools available to relieve housing pressure—but they require time, intention, and a willingness to think long term.

We can do better.

We should pursue development that respects the existing fabric of the city and builds on it—solutions that meet housing needs without compromising what makes this place livable and distinct. Thoughtful growth is not slower growth; it is better growth.

I would encourage you to keep these points in mind as you consider this project. I urge you to vote No this evening and protect what makes us a great soulful town.

Respectfully,

Isaac Hull

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

Hullisaac@gmail.com

5404350047

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Carol Lown <lownc@emu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 10:32 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: The Link

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

Dear Ms. Ulmer,

Please include this in the public record in regard to the rezoning. I strongly oppose the rezoning.

I am writing as a resident of a neighborhood bordering Old Town. I spend several hours each day walking the streets of Old Town with my dog.

It seems to me that in the last 20 years, the city of Harrisonburg has bent over backwards to accommodate transient JMU students. I strongly affirm being a welcoming presence for students. **But I grieve for the families, many with young children, who have chosen to make the Old Town neighborhood their home.** There is no doubt that a project of this size and scope will forever change this neighborhood. Isn't it time to consider the families who have chosen to make this their home, rather than students who are here for just a short time?

Allowing such an outsized project will set a troubling precedent for future development - one that prioritizes short term gain over long term health and identity of our city.

Thank you!

Carol Lown

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 11:49 AM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Tue, 04/28/2026 - 11:48

Submitted values are:

Name

Neil Detweiler

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-04-28

Agenda Item Number

6.b. Consider a request from Trenton Inc. and Bernard LC to rezone 435, 445, 457, 473, 483 & 495 South Main Street and 282, 288, 294 & 298 South Liberty Street (The Link Apartments)

Comment

I want to voice my support for approving the rezoning for "The Link" apartments. We need to allow new housing to be built in order for housing prices to be affordable. We also need to allow for higher density residential, especially near downtown, because it is under increasing demand, and allows people to be less dependent on cars. As we strengthen our network of sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, and bus system, this will alleviate traffic and cost the city less than the alternative, which is continued suburban sprawl and greater need for more miles and lanes of expensive automobile infrastructure.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

No

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Sheree Boland <sheree.boland@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 12:36 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer; Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson
Subject: Please vote NO to B-1C at 473 S Main St.

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

Dear Pamela, Please include this email in the public record for the reasoning at 473 S Main St. (The Link).

My name is Sheree Boland and I live at 469 Ott St, Harrisonburg, VA . I have been a permanent resident of Harrisonburg for over 50 years.

I am opposed to this reasoning for many reasons. The bottom line is that I believe this change from the 2040 plan is short sighted and detrimental for the long range health of our permanent community.

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Michael Boland <michaeljboland@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 12:36 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Danny.Fleming@harrisonburgva.gov; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson
Subject: My opposition to Rezoning 473 S Main Street for The Link Project

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

Dear Pamela,

Pease include this email in the public record for the Rezoning of 473 S Main Street(The Link) Thank you!

My name is Michael Boland, I live at 469 Ott Street, and I oppose the Rezoning of 473 S Main Street to B-1 C for The Link project. I have multiple concerns, many of which you will hear this evening, but my main concern is putting a college dormitory in the center of the city, no less between the historic Harrisonburg Baptist Church and our own City Hall. I think this is an inappropriate use of this property that contradicts the intent of the Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 Plan, the existing R-3 zoning of this parcel, and the surrounding neighborhoods. Please vote no to this zoning change.

Michael Boland

Proposed Architectural Renderings from Timberwolf Capital Partners, LLC

The 3D rendering's perspective compresses height, making the **six-story** apartments and parking deck appear comparable to the **three-story** municipal building. The actual scale would likely feel out of context with its 2–3 story historic surroundings. Final materials (e.g., brick) are not guaranteed under current proffers. **The Link proposal is inconsistent with current zoning, it conflicts with the Downtown 2040 Plan, and it lacks community support (1,500+ signatures opposing B-1C).**



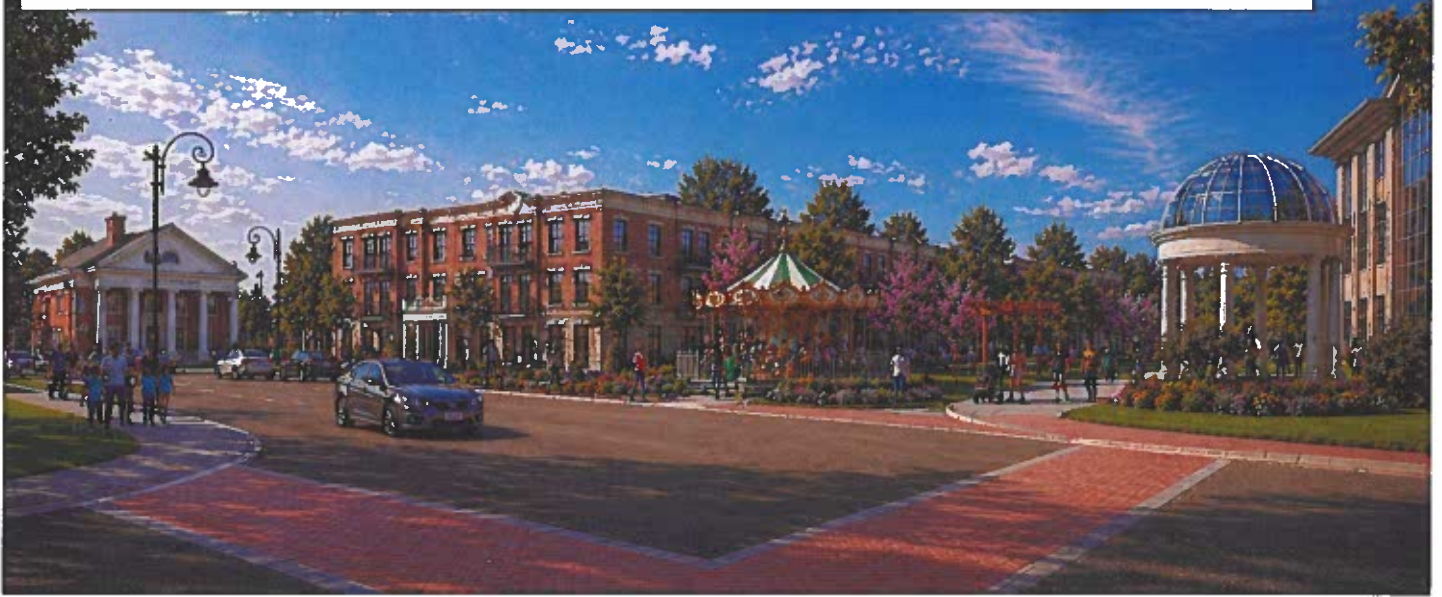
Possible Alternative Use #1: Downtown Central Park

This image envisions the site as a downtown central park—a high-return public infrastructure investment that could draw residents and visitors while boosting activity around Build Our Park, the Farmers Market, City Hall, and nearby businesses. Preserving green space would advance environmental goals, enhance downtown livability, and help support future, context-sensitive housing (“density done right”).



Possible Alternative Use #2: Context-sensitive 3-story apartments (“Density Done Right”)

If housing is pursued on this site, its scale, massing, and design should **fully align with the Downtown 2040 Plan**. This image illustrates a 3-story concept, *consistent with the 3-story development shown on p. 60 of DT 2040*, which is context-sensitive, provides a better transition from the B-1 district to adjacent 2-story residential, preserves more green space, reduces strain on infrastructure (water, traffic, parking), and delivers “density done right” to our downtown.

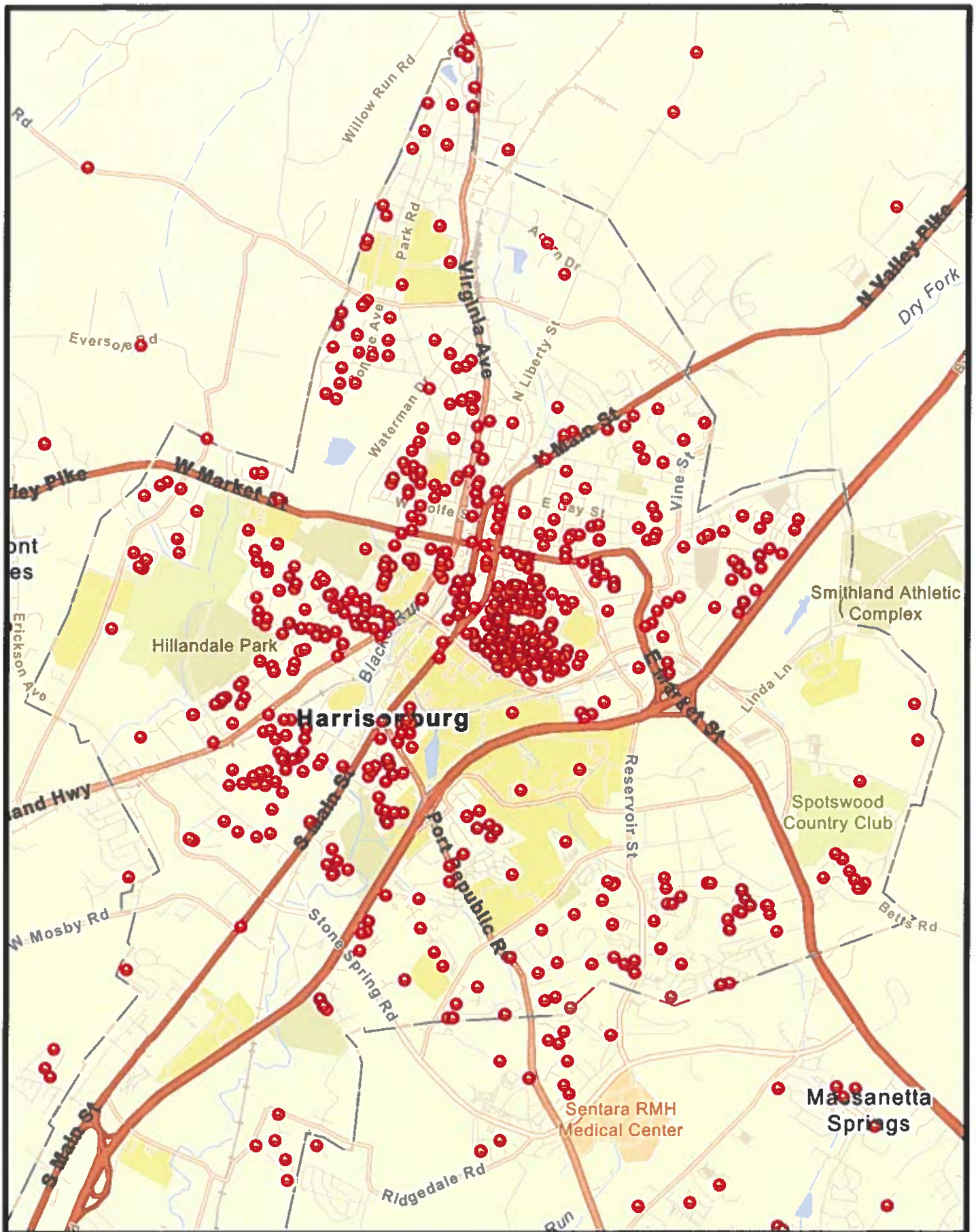


Left image: Excerpt from P. 60 of *Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 Plan (DT 2040)* – “Conceptual Site Plan for South Downtown”

Our city’s adopted plan for downtown (approved by City Council) shows **3-story development** on the Lindsey site with **both historic buildings preserved**. *The Link proposal conflicts with DT 2040 by demolishing these buildings and introducing a 6-story project in a transitional area next to residential neighborhoods, where that scale is not appropriate under sound planning principles.*

Additional inconsistencies of the Link with DT 2040 include:

- Limited “green building solutions” (p. 60)
- Building and parking deck design falls short of the “highest standards of design” expected for this downtown gateway (p. 44), and proffers allow developer to change design and materials after rezoning.



Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Heidi Pennington <hlpennington@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 6:36 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Opposition to B1C rezoning, please include in public record

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

Greetings!

This message is for all members of city council and I would like this to be included in the public record.

I am a Harrisonburg citizen writing to voice strong opposition to the proposal to rezone 473 S Main St. to B1C. Anything of the proposed scale and features of The Link will not complement our downtown character and cultures. The Link will dominate and entirely remake (possibly destroy) the historic features and amenities that many of us value in this city. There are more complementary and sustainable ways to increase housing and affordability in our Friendly City. Catering to students at the cost of our city's full-time working residents and historic downtown is not the answer. Please vote NO to rezoning.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration, Heidi

Heidi L. Pennington

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: AOL Inc. <gfriend07@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 8:19 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson
Subject: REZONING OPPOSITION

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

04-27-2026

Louise A. Johnson
98 Perry Street"
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

I am opposed to the rezoning of 473 South Main Street ("The LINK"). I am urging City Council Members to

VOTE NO

I use to think Rocco Feeds old feed mill was an eye sore at the North end of Main Street, but The LINK would be 100 times the eye sore on South Main Street with the architecture and height of the building. Placing such a large building in a small space is so overwhelming for the community, churches, and the Downtown Historic District. A better future for the Lindsey Home parcel of land would be to build a nice community park for all generations to enjoy for years to come.

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: bug wart <bugwart@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 7:13 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson; Todd and Mary Alexander
Subject: The Link Project (473 S. Main St) rezoning to B-1C

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

Please include the following information in the public comments regarding rezoning of the Lindsey Funeral Home to B-1C

I am adamantly opposed to the B-1C rezoning of the Lindsey Funeral Home. The Link Project is seeking approval by the Harrisonburg City Council to building what is in essence a large student housing complex on the Lindsey Funeral Home property. Based on the rent that is being proposed, few, if any, downtown employees will be able to afford to live there. Certainly no senior citizens will be able to afford to live there. So what is left is a student housing complex at the very entrance to the city of Harrisonburg. There is already a problem with littering, drinking, public nuisance violations, etc from too many of our current student residents and their friends. Even the JMU police department prefers students to not live in the residential communities of Harrisonburg as it makes it harder to control mass gatherings and illegal parties. Traffic through the Old Town Community will become intolerable and unsafe and illegal parking will increase due to the lack of resident spaces at the Links. Our infrastructure will be greatly taxed without economic benefit.

This project does not benefit the City of Harrisonburg or its residents. So many on the City Council campaigned on "affordable housing", but assuredly this project is not. Harrisonburg will need to continue to grow, but let's do it with true thought and planning that benefits the residents who you represent. I urged all members of the Harrisonburg City Council to vote NO on the rezoning to B-1C.

Diane Perry
65 Paul St.
Harrisonburg, Va

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Facknitz, Mark A R - facknima <facknima@jmu.edu>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 2:44 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica.Robinson@harrisonburg.gov
Subject: Comment on Zoning Change
Attachments: LinkCityCouncilApril26.pdf

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

Dear Ms. Ulmer. I would be grateful for the attached comment to be included in the record pertinent to tomorrow evening's council meeting. (I do anticipate reading there.) Thank you, Mark

Mark Facknitz, 221 East Grattan Street

I had the opportunity of speaking at the previous City Council meeting on the Link, and more recently I spoke at the Planning Commission meeting. I am struck by what I have heard repeatedly, and troubled by some of the attitudes and assumptions expressed. At the planning commission, for example, members seemed not to feel obliged to respond to legitimate concerns. Some of the speakers were offensive in the generalizations they made about residents of my neighborhood, and the listing agent for the Lindsey property was smug and simplistic in his contention that basically we are geriatric and self-interested citizens stalling progress. The chairman of the commission went on at some length admonishing speakers to be brief, and squelched all spontaneous groans or laughter. This was especially unfortunate when late in the meeting someone, without irony, referred to the mortuary property as an urban dead zone. The corker was when the developer was reminded that a previous project of his in Tidewater has become an eyesore and unsafe. His comment was that the bad stuff happened after he sold it. Again, we were not allowed to laugh. (I don't believe the project includes any proffer about long-term continuity of management.)

More troubling, however, are some of the assumptions advanced by proponents of the project. For example, there is the contention that the construction of expensive rental properties will relieve the pressure on lower-income residents. That's déjà vu all over again; trickle-down economics has not delivered on its promise. The way to make neighborhoods stable and livable is to encourage ownership, not rentals. If I learned anything from my time on the Habitat board, it is this fact. The places we were trying to get people out of were often decaying student apartment complexes, some of which were scarcely thirty years old.

I have also heard that 'walkability' is panacea for downtown business. Well, I routinely walk the mile to Parentheses Books, the Food Coop, and Kline's, and that is because those establishments offer me what I want. 'Walkability' will not compensate for a poor business model or mediocre food. There are empty store fronts all over town, not just downtown. This in a town with eleven tattoo parlors.

I have also heard that residential density is a virtue in its own right. We were shown glossy images of the Link as a revenue spike penetrating the sky. As vivid as this argument might be, putting the Tower of Babel in the 'dead zone' relies on the presumption that there are no other opportunities for renovation or new building. Really? What about Two South Main? Or a block away at Market and Mason, the condemned bank building, or the gravel lot caddy-corner from there. Or the decaying and underused parking deck behind

Blessed Sacrament, or for the really imaginative, that enormous and underused white factory a couple blocks west on Wolfe. And above all, remember the eight acres of decaying asphalt at Roses. Now *there* is a chance to finally atone for the disaster of urban renewal.

The Lindsey property offers the opportunity for a unique investment in downtown outdoor space, with People's Park in the works, Turner Pavilion and large churches nearby, plus the revenue stability that comes from ownership of homes and condos. (I trust you're aware that the sketches in the master plan show three story buildings, not six.)

At last, there are two issues that I have not heard even whispered, and they ought to be fully voiced. One is annexation. Sooner or later, apologists for maximalist building bemoan the pressure being put on city services by the sprawling apartment and shopping complexes out Reservoir and Port. Well, hmm, gee. What stronger case needs to be made for annexation? And, sure the fight is gnarly and long, but go ahead and float the idea. You'll be talking about fundamental fairness, respect for the environment, and encouragement of public transit. You will alarm the county board of supervisors, which perhaps is not a bad thing.

Finally, my last concern is that the plan is for a huge six-story building that is *stick-built*. Two South Main is a wonderful old building begging for renovation, but NOT because it's made out of wood. It is not. The fact is, thirty years is a long time for an apartment building that is stick-built, even if veneered in brick. And the longevity of buildings tends to diminish the more transient are the occupants. I did not hear the planning commission seriously consider whether workmanship, design, and materials would guarantee a building that would outlast a generation. And if JMU goes forward with its intention to draw up to five thousand students back to campus even while keeping enrollment steady or slowly declining, what will Harrisonburg have? A parking deck and a slum blocking the sight of the Baptist steeple. The Forkovitch Building times twenty. Please. Old Town ain't broke. Don't fix it.

Mark A. R. Facknitz
Roop Distinguished Professor of English, Emeritus
James Madison University
221 East Grattan Street
Harrisonburg VA 22801

We did not inherit the earth. We are borrowing it from our children. Puebloan saying.

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Betsy Mauzy <ecmauzy@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 3:15 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Vote No to B-1C

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

Dear Ms. Ulmer,

My name is Elizabeth Mauzy, and I reside at 650 Ott Street. I am a member of the No to BC-1 Committee, a diverse coalition of professionals, artists, retirees, and local leaders dedicated to the thoughtful growth of Harrisonburg.

While we recognize the urgent need for high-density housing, the BC-1 "Link" proposal is the wrong fit for this location. The proposed density levels would place an unsustainable strain on our downtown infrastructure and negatively impact the character of our neighborhood.

Please consider "repurposing" the existing funeral home, much like neighborhoods throughout the Valley have done, most especially, Staunton and Winchester. Design up-scale condominiums, 1-3 bedroom/baths, single level, with developed green space. I can assure you that with the correct architectural design for the current structure, the city could look forward to better long-term income revenues and more options for downtown growth.

A "No" vote is not a dead end; it is a beginning. If you vote against this proposal, our committee is prepared to offer our full creative energy and support to help develop a superior vision for Harrisonburg. Conversely, a "Yes" vote disregards significant community concerns and sets a precedent for over-development.

We urge you to lead us toward a better alternative. Please vote "No" on BC-1.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Mauzy

--

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 1:42 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Mon, 04/27/2026 - 13:41

Submitted values are:

Name

David Bernstein

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-04-28

Agenda Item Number

6b

Comment

I am opposed to the proposed zoning change. In my opinion The Harrisonburg Downtown 2040 Plan should guide future development in Harrisonburg, and the proposed project is inconsistent with it in many ways.

The Project Is Bad For First Impressions Of The Downtown

The 2040 Plan states that "Main and Liberty Streets are the primary front doors to Downtown. They should aspire to the highest standards in design, as they reflect the first impression visitors have of Downtown." I think that this is currently true of all of the existing buildings on Main St. As a result, this is the way I direct people to the downtown. However, I don't think this will continue to be true if the 10 parcels are rezoned to B1-C and the proposed project is approved. In particular, the height, setbacks, greenery and facade are not consistent with the surrounding buildings.

The Project Does Not Provide Affordable Housing

The 2040 Plan states that "The recently completed housing market study for the City emphasizes the need for more housing at the upper and lower ends of the income scale." However, the proposed project does not include any low-income units, and I doubt that trickle-down will lead to the kind of low-income housing that the City aspires to have. To the extent that people leave cheaper housing to live in the proposed development, it is likely to be from complexes in the County, not the City.

The Project Provides An Insignificant Amount Of Mixed Use Development

The 2040 Plan aims to "encourage mixed-use ... development in key clusters of underutilized space" including in improvements of the Water St. Parking Deck and the Elizabeth St. Parking Deck. Though the proposed project is technically mixed-use, it only includes a guarantee of 2000 sq. ft. of commercial space, so isn't in keeping with the spirit of the 2040 Plan.

The Project Is Not Bicycle Friendly

The 2040 Plan aims to make the city more bicycle-friendly, in part by "introduc[ing] bicycle infrastructure" on Liberty St.

However, the proposed project only includes 120 indoor bicycle spaces (for 550 bedrooms and up to 695 residents) and 16 exterior bicycle spaces for their guests and visitors to the commercial space. In addition, the exit from the parking deck onto Liberty St. will interfere with the new bicycle lane.

The Project Is Not Business Friendly

The proposed project will increase traffic in the downtown and worsen parking problems, both of which will be bad for downtown businesses. An enormous number of trips are likely to be generated by the between 665 and 695 residents and their visitors. An enormous amount of parking will be needed by the residents and their visitors. The 65 spaces that will be reserved for municipal/public uses (at a cost to the city of \$42,900) do not make up for the 250-280 residents that will not have spaces and will either use those spaces or other spaces in the vicinity of the proposed development, making it even more difficult for people to drive to the downtown.

The Project Is Not Consistent With The Historical Zoning Of The District

These 10 parcels have been zoned R-3 for a very long time. They are currently intended to be part of a Medium Density Residential District that includes the Harrisonburg Baptist Church to the south, 265-335 S. Liberty St. to the immediate west, 132-161 Lewis St. and 100-130 W. Grattan St. farther to the west, and 512-660 S. Main St. to the east. The parcels should remain a part of this district.

The Project Is Not Consistent With The Proposed Re-Zoning

The proposed project is not consistent with a B-1C designation. Though "transient and non-transient housing facilities are permitted within limits" in areas designated B-1, that is only true "if they will assure a supporting role to the primary functions of the district", which is not true in this project. Given that the proposed project will have one bathroom for every bedroom, it will almost certainly be occupied by transients (especially students), and there is no evidence that these transients will assure a supporting role to the primary function of the district.

Conclusions

The lots in question should remain R3. Other developers will come. How do I know? There are 21 different projects currently underway or recently completed residential projects in Harrisonburg consisting of 44 duplexes, 415 town homes, 763 multi family units, and 87 single family units (i.e., 1309

units in total). This badly conceived project is not the only opportunity Harrisonburg will have to develop these lots.

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 1:36 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Mon, 04/27/2026 - 13:35

Submitted values are:

Name

Sharon Cote

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-04-28

Agenda Item Number

6b

Comment

I am opposed to the proposed zoning change.

Do We Need Housing?

Yes, and the City has many new housing projects in the works. There are 21 different projects currently underway or recently completed residential projects in Harrisonburg consisting of 44 duplexes, 415 town homes, 763 multi family units, and 87 single family units (i.e., 1309 units in total). This proposed project shouldn't be considered in isolation.

Do We Need Rental Housing?

Perhaps now, but not for long. 16,000 JMU students currently occupy a significant portion of the 10,000 rental units in Harrisonburg and the 8,500 rental units in Rockingham, but this is going to change. JMU is planning to build 10,000 beds (as it grow to 30,000 students) over the next 10 years. This means that only 12,000 students will be occupying those off-campus units, freeing-up about 4,000 beds. This means that Harrisonburg will be at the statewide rental vacancy rate in only a few years.

Is Rental Housing Our Only Need?

According to the 2020 Harrisonburg Housing Study, 94% of owner-occupied units are traditional single-

family homes. In other words, the City has a clear need for other kinds of housing, exactly the kind of housing that is likely to be built if the zoning remains R-3.

Do We Need Low-Income Housing?

Yes, but this project doesn't provide any, and the construction that is planned by JMU will result in considerably more trickle-down housing than the proposed project will.

Do We Need Housing at this Location?

I don't know, but if we do it must be appropriate. This location, "the primary front doors to Downtown" according to the 2040 plan, "should aspire to the highest standards in design, as they reflect the first impression visitors have of Downtown." This is true of all of the existing buildings on Main St., but will not continue to be true if the 10 parcels are rezoned to B1-C and the proposed project is approved. On the other hand, if the zoning is left R-3, appropriate housing is likely to be built.

Is Housing the Only thing the City Council Should Consider?

Of course not. This is a major re-zoning change, and the City Council should consider all of the implications. It should consider the impacts of the change on: safety, traffic, parking, air quality, sunlight, etc. All of these will suffer if the zoning change is approved.

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Laura Douglass <lauradouglass@vaumc.org>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 12:59 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson
Subject: Message regarding "The Link" for Public Record

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

Dear City Clerk,

I oppose zoning approval for The Link Apartments. This 6-story, student oriented development negates plans and existing structures and spaces in the downtown area that provide a lifestyle that complements The Friendly City vision. This large, overcrowding (people/vehicles/critters) proposal is the antithesis of a welcoming space for those who live and come downtown for business and pleasure. Stating that The Link provides tax revenue is not a sufficient reason to jeopardize the beauty, flexibility and aesthetic appeal of the area it would occupy. The quick profit will translate into lost dollars due to its impact - short and long term. AND JMU does not need more housing - it already exists all around the city, and more is planned on campus. Those of us who live near campus experience student foot and vehicular traffic as well as other student-related interactions - both good and bad - on a daily basis. This proposal should never have gotten this far, and I feel those supporting it have turned a deaf ear to their constituents, as I experienced in a rapid conversation with a member of council ...lots of talking in circles. Let's begin with some straight talk about the real impact of this project that will benefit a few at the expense of a majority of Harrisonburg's residents and visitors.

Sincerely,

Laura B. Douglass, Harrisonburg Resident since 1991

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: CARL WHITTEN <kawhitten@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 12:49 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Fw: Failure Notice

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

Thought I'd send this one as well.

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "mailer-daemon@yahoo.com" <mailer-daemon@yahoo.com>
To: "kawhitten@comcast.net" <kawhitten@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 at 12:42:14 PM EDT
Subject: Failure Notice

Sorry, we were unable to deliver your message to the following address.

<AndeBanks@harrisonburgva.gov>:

550: 5.4.1 Recipient address rejected: Access denied. For more information see <https://aka.ms/EXOSmtpErrors> [BL02EPF0001B416.namprd09.prod.outlook.com 2026-04-27T16:42:11.793Z 08DE9FB58961B811]

----- Forwarded message -----

Dear Council Member:

With your election, your swearing-in ceremony and your promise to the voters and residents of the City to do your best to guide it to a better future, you must consider all aspects of any decision. I feel that the decision to convert the Lindsey Funeral Home property to B1-C for a student apartment building is the worst decision that will have occurred in many years. It seems as though most of the Planning Commission had made up their minds before the Public Hearing and that is a terrible shame. It seems as if the out-of-town developers have all of the respect and admiration for their amazing efforts and the folks who actually live in the City have none. They are simply the ones that you have to put up with listening to for hours on end as they detail the reasons to stop this terrible mistake. The following is my list of reasons why this project makes no sense.

- 1.) This development company builds big student apartment complexes, but they don't hang around very long after the building is done. This project will be sold to the highest bidder as soon as it is finished. Check on it yourselves. They are venture capitalists.. And why in the world would they pay over \$6 million dollars for this parcel of land? That question begs an answer.
- 2.) The road development for this project is inadequate and you must know it. You have been provided with reliable information regarding the flaws in the traffic study. After living on Mason Street for almost 38 years, I can tell you that the numbers are just plain wrong. You should be listening to your residents on this fact.
- 3.) This project is a far cry from mixed-use development. The very small space available to make it "mixed-use" will be barely enough for an office for their own rental services and maybe a small store or fast food shop. It is a large building providing housing for a large number of college students that is not needed according to your own commissioned housing study. There are lots of projects to be built on land already zoned for them. This project is the most likely to be purchased by JMU for a downtown dorm. If that happens, your very shaky tax income disappears.
- 4.) Harrisonburg has done a really bad job of addressing the results of a college student's lifestyle. The noise from parties, the trash, the unique driving strategies, and the ridiculous abuse of alcohol rampant among JMU students. One of the best examples of this is the building across the street from

this development at the corner of Paul and Main Streets. There are so many complaints about behaviors, condition of the property, trash, fireworks and noise that they are too numerous to count. I have shared photos with Community Development multiple times and the cycle continues, never to be addressed with a lasting solution. Our children walk and ride bikes to school in front of the houses where disrespect runs rampant. Our visitors also walk by and observe what could be a beautiful Main Street, but instead is marred by old homes ruined by the greed of their owners. Adding to this density of problems is foolish indeed.

5.) There was no real plan by our City of what the dream for this property would be. There certainly should have been. The park that has been planned and will commence soon will stand in the shadow of this blocky apartment building. Many people and businesses in the City and the County contributed to this project. This new development will remove most, if not all of the old growth trees that remain in our downtown.

Our City stands at a crossroads of opportunity. Walk away from a development company who promises big money from property taxes or consider that we stand on the precipice of choosing to desire a better result for our community. I believe that this decision will open the door to Harrisonburg looking like ANYWHEREVILLE with little remaining of our City. You can go to any of the many areas of Northern Virginia who have opened their door to this type of building sitting on the sidewalk and you cannot tell one from the other. Please consider the gravity of this decision and vote "NO" on behalf of the people who live-in and love Harrisonburg.

Sincerely,
Kathy Whitten
100 Breezewood Terrace
Bridgewater, VA 22812
540-476-4202

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: T.W. Johnson <twjuofr66@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 12:03 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: OPPOSITION TO REZONING 473 South Main Street

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

I would like for the public record to show that I am strongly opposed to the rezoning of the Lindsey Funeral Home property from R-3 to B-1C.

Tommy W. Johnson, Jr.
98 Perry Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Kerry Abbott <kerry.abbott@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 11:30 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Fwd: help make Harrisonburg a beautiful attraction

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

Please include this in the public record. It is longer than the previous version I sent.

Many thanks,
Kerry Abbott

The most beautiful town in the Valley

Who recalls when the Washington Post Travel section had an article on a weekend visit to the Shenandoah Valley?

It went through the towns, one by one, until it reached Harrisonburg and said, "Keep driving".

The downtown had been abandoned in favor of Route 33 malls and big box stores and was mostly charmless.

The City Council sent a letter in protest, offering to show them the highlights on a return visit. Like what, we wondered? Jess' chili dogs and Kline's custard, or Glen's shop of novelties, as the town's popular sites?

And today?

There is no reason why the small area of downtown Harrisonburg cannot be transformed into a beautiful, enticing place for residents and visitors. Every building could be subject to a renovation plan to create visual appeal, and gaps in services could be filled.

The Downtown Renaissance should have done that, but was clueless as to the mix of offerings needed and fearful of appearing like "Big Brother" with property owners. Yet, once it became clear that attractive, well conceived businesses thrived, others would have complied.

Instead, the downtown was again abandoned, relegated as an entertainment hub for students.

That abdication of leadership still haunts the downtown, as investors establish another cafe serving sandwiches, or a bike shop. Parking lots intrude where prime commercial space once stood. And the City's own Development Plan, based on community consultations, is ignored, allowing for a mammoth dorm at the entrance to downtown. Even a three-story building, with pool and park, would generate a ruinous imbalance in public use.

Instead, what if the Council decided that its revenue could come from tourist dollars, and planned to cater to more varied interests? Staunton underwent a transformation that made it the most beautiful town in the Valley. Can Harrisonburg compete? To do so, every remaining space in downtown needs to be part of a careful plan supporting a development strategy. The Virginia Historical Registry will reassess the status of downtown Harrisonburg, as historic buildings are lost. The Elks lodge could be next. The houses west of Liberty Street could also rush to develop into apartment blocks that may say they are mixed housing, but in reality others do not want to live in majority-student buildings. One rezoning decision that brings dense student housing downtown condemns the future of downtown Harrisonburg forever.

This not only violates the City Development Plan that the City Council should safeguard. It makes a mockery of the stated aim to revive downtown with a Renaissance effort. That "vision" posted banners declaring the City had fine dining, history, and culture, which was more aspirational than real.

The aim was to make the area appealing to visitors, to build an economic base. Just because the effort lacked an effective strategy does not mean the downtown cannot hold broad appeal and attract tourists and investment. However, it is assured that if it becomes an extension of campus dorm life, it will doom other options. Because of the limited supply of goods and services available in town, most students wait to make high-value purchases when they go home. Here, they are a market for sandwiches and smoothies.

It is time to invest in an optimal future for downtown, and conserve the remaining spaces for maximal value. Please vote against the Link, and recommit to the scale of the Development Plan.

Kerry Abbott
469 Myers Ave
549 434-3382



Virus-free. www.avg.com

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Dale Wilson <davenportwindows@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 25, 2026 10:15 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Rezoning at 473 S. Main st.

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

I strongly oppose the rezoning of this property for the obvious reasons of high density road traffic that we already experience when JMU is in full session. We experience this everyday with the dangerous intersections of every road that connects S. Main st. And Mason st. On the east side of S. Main st. I invite you to walk up and down Mason st. And S. Main st. when school is in session. Parking along these streets are swallowed up by students and residents that live in this neighborhood. Not to mention the trash that is on full display of many of these rental properties. Adding more people and vehicles to this area makes no common sense. There are a lot of families that live here and the safety of these children should be a priority to any local council members. Thank you for your common sense. Dale Wilson Sent from my iPhone

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Roberta McCorkle <brpfdz@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 25, 2026 10:32 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: 473 S. Main Street Rezoning Comment for City Council Meeting on April 28, 2026

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

Dear Ms. Ulmer,

I request that my comment be included in the public record for subject meeting.

I oppose the rezoning of 473 S. Main Street from R3 to B1C. Change and growth are inevitable and positive when executed properly. When huge numbers of people who live and work in the downtown neighborhood present dozens of legitimate reasons why this rezoning is wrong, one would hope those in positions of leadership would listen.

Please, I implore you, vote against this rezoning.

Thank you and with kind regards,
Roberta McCorkle
95 Campbell St.
Harrisonburg

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Tom Reynolds <treynp@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 25, 2026 11:19 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer

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

My wish for the Lindsey Property is a public park flowing into the farmer's market and city government complex, thus enhancing and humanizing the area of old town and its environs. Please imagine quality of life rather than density of population and traffic. If the city needs more housing, look elsewhere and expand public transit accordingly. Respectfully, Tom Reynolds.

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Saturday, April 25, 2026 6:45 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Sat, 04/25/2026 - 18:44

Submitted values are:

Name

Sherrie Good

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-04-28

Agenda Item Number

6.b

Comment

I am a Harrisonburg native. I strongly oppose rezoning the property at the current Lindsey Funeral Home on Main Street from multiple structures to one, giant structure. Those of us who actually grew up here saw what happened to downtown when Valley Mall was built. Our once vibrant and cute downtown died. It has been a long uphill climb to restore the vitality and charm of downtown, and building one huge JMU dorm at the gateway to downtown will destroy the gains that have been made. Timberwolf originally advertised this development as a JMU development, then tried to hide that fact as it is not what we citizens who live near Lindsey's want. We all know what 4 bedrooms, 4 baths per unit means. None of this helps beautify downtown, helps downtown businesses or adds to a historic area. The developers have not been transparent with us citizens since day 1. Please don't destroy downtown. JMU has plenty of property to build more dorms, we only have one downtown and if you work with citizens we can find a beautiful, creative plan for the Lindsey's site that helps actual citizens.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

Yes

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

sherrie@sherriegood.com

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Laurie Gabriele <lbgabes@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 25, 2026 9:00 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer; Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica.Robinson@harrisonburg.gov
Subject: City Council Meeting resident request

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

Dear Members of City Council,

I am unable to attend the April 28 meeting, but I respectfully request that my comments be entered into the public record.

As a 20-year resident of Harrisonburg, I urge the council to vote against the proposed construction of the Link at this location. This site serves as a gateway to our city and represents one of the few remaining green spaces. I hope the council will carefully consider preserving the character and openness of this area.

While the developer has indicated that the project is not intended to function primarily as student housing, the design features and projected rental costs suggest otherwise. If the development does become predominantly student housing, I am concerned it could have a negative impact on the surrounding community. I support integrating student housing throughout Harrisonburg, but not in a large concentration at the heart of the city.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the council to deny approval of the Link at this location.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Laurie Gabriele

261 Paul Street

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Don C. Rockey <dcrockey@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 10:22 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; nassar.Alsaadun@harrisonburgva.gov; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson
Subject: B1-C

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

Dear Ms. Ulmer and City Council Members,

I'm writing to strongly oppose the proposed B-1C rezoning at 473 S. Main St. In examining this from an objective viewpoint, it seems as if the only explanation for something like this is a simple money grab by a developer or commercial enterprise. Harrisonburg is a historic city, and its downtown should be preserved. Such an effort would never be allowed, or even considered, in other cities with such historic spaces.

I would suggest that the City Council carefully consider the rationale for something like this and develop creative ways to accomplish your goals without ruining Harrisonburg's historic district and without lining the pockets of commercial entities.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would include this message in the public record.

Sincerely,

Don C. Rockey

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Williams, Jacqueline A - williaja <williaja@jmu.edu>
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 5:28 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson
Subject: Public Comment regarding rezoning 473 S Main St

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

Dear City Clerk & Council Members,

Please include this in the public record for the rezoning at 473 S Main St.

I am a long-time resident of Old Town, and **OPPOSE** the rezoning of 473 S Main St. As a 29-year professor at JMU I appreciate what students bring to our community both financial and service commitments. However, I also experience first-hand the disrespectful, disruptive and disdainful actions for property and neighbors that occur on any given day/evening. Their high-density presence leads to noise pollution, littered streets/sidewalks, drunken pedestrian traffic, and dangerous high-speed traffic throughout our neighborhood streets. None of which are conducive to families and children in the neighborhood.

I was attracted to the Old Town neighborhood almost 30 years ago to raise a family, to walk downtown and to create close and considerate neighborly connections. We love our Old Town community. However, this rezoning is the opposite of what this community needs. Instead of implementing common sense density-controlled blocks of student and family housing, we now have blocks with the majority of homes rented to students. Those few families within these blocks have unfortunately been driven out by those temporary inconsiderate entitled students who only have their own desires to consider. I encourage you to take time to listen to families in the community before voting, to understand the situation we live with daily. This historic neighborhood had seen old beautiful homes turned to rubbish instead of preserving them for families.

This rezoning will only exacerbate the situation by bringing more traffic, trash and noise to this historic part of town. Is this the *Friendly City* the City Council wishes to see for downtown Harrisonburg? Are there other areas in town that need this type of housing to uplift the neighborhood rather than at the entrance to downtown. Does this project help alleviate the affordable housing shortage or line the pockets of developers who only have a 5-year commitment and then they're out of here with us left with a poorly constructed complex designed to accommodate the ever-increasing population of JMU?

Who are your constituents; greedy developers and JMU or the long-term, tax paying, considerate community members who have established roots, are raising families and love this community? Thank you for your time, service and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jackie

Jacqueline Williams
220 West View Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
540.908.8885

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Lindsay Denny <lindsayhdenny@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 6:19 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: For Public Record- Rezoning at 473 S Main Street

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

Please include my message in the public record for rezoning at 473 S Main Street [The Link]

Thanks very much,

Lindsay Denny
64 Ott Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

I AM OPPOSED TO REZONING 473 S MAIN ST TO B-1C

Here are some questions for consideration before voting on the rezoning proposal.

Is the Link really addressing a shortage of student housing?

JMU has announced they are dedicated to building more dorms on campus. Their plan is to house 60% of students on campus, and shift away from large off-campus complexes.

Is it possible that we are building for yesterday's demands, and not tomorrow's plan?

Is it possible that the Link is adding density, but not connection?

Are there better uses for this land, that would bring together those in our community?

For example, expanding the public park that has already been approved for this area— and expanding the entertainment offerings (such as the current summer Levitt Amp music series). These are all things that will bring people together to connect, and enrich their lives.

Does the Link meet the needs of long-term downtown residents?

The proposed Link apartments will create problems with traffic, parking, noise and trash. The increased amount of cars concentrated into this area will decrease pedestrian safety.

Is the Link the first thing we want people to see when they enter our city?

All interstate signage directs visitors to our city to enter through the downtown Main Street corridor. The same Main Street that won the national Great American Main Street Award in 2014. According to their website, the criteria for winning GAMSA include: strength of the Main Street program in spurring community transformation, *commitment to historic preservation*, innovative programming, implementation of cross-sector partnerships, community outreach and stakeholder engagement, and ensuring their downtown districts are for everyone.

If we continue to tear down our historic buildings, our Main Street will no longer be great.

Wouldn't it be wise to make sure we have a vision for what we want our city to look like, before approving the re-zoning to 473 Main Street?

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Valerie Sulfaro <vasulfaro@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 6:23 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: The Link proposal

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

Please include our letter below in the public record for this upcoming vote.

—
26 April 2026

This letter is to register our objection to the rezoning of the Lindsey Funeral site from R3 to B1C, and to the building of the Link development.

Nothing in Harrisonburg's current long term plan envisions a project of this size at this location. We'd note that on page 60 of the 2040 Plan (often displayed by the developer in presentations), the buildings are 3 stories, and designated R3. Given the relationship of this parcel to the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods, the R3 development in the 2040 plan appears appropriate in scope. There has been no discussion that we are aware of that involves an alternative to the proposed location for the Link; if additional housing is truly needed within the city limits, it is not at all clear why this location would be the most appropriate place for it to be built. Tenants would still need to drive to work, drive to shop for groceries, drive to medical appointments, and it is not within walking distance from any school.

The developer has made it quite clear that this was never intended to be affordable housing, with units starting at \$1,900 per month (excluding parking and other fees). The configuration of the units makes them unsuitable for families, and most young professionals won't find it appealing to live in a complex densely packed with undergraduate college students. Notably, these prices are actually in excess of starting salaries for most new JMU faculty or any other recent college graduates. There are no provisions for playgrounds. This housing is not readily convertible in the future if the targeted student body decides to live elsewhere. It has this in common with most of the off campus student housing being built in the area — those developments are not in locations, and lack interior layouts, to ever become part of an affordable housing market in the future.

The specious argument that creating a top tier large, expensive student housing complex downtown will somehow drive down rents elsewhere makes no sense, either. That's similar to arguing that the opening of a new, expensive restaurant would drive down food prices at other restaurants in town. No reasonable person would make that

claim. Similarly, this merely invites other landlords who covet JMU students as tenants to raise their rents.

Harrisonburg currently does a poor job of enforcing occupancy limits, residential zoning requirements on inhabitants of property, and parking regulations. There is no reason to believe that existing problems won't be exacerbated by the Link. The city has shown no propensity to ensure that the number of actual occupants matches the number of bedrooms in existing housing, or that capacity is within the designated limits. Allowing the owner to charge for parking also creates problems. Because half of the JMU population is from out of state, and only freshman are banned from having vehicle permits, almost all JMU students bring vehicles to Harrisonburg. By charging for parking, the Link creates a perverse incentive for students who live there to simply avoid paying by parking elsewhere. This will affect the Baptist church, the Episcopal church, the farmer's market, and the existing parking structures. One reason local residents spend less time downtown is because of the utter lack of parking in the Water Street deck. This development, as planned, will make a bad situation worse.

Moreover, it will not aid most downtown businesses. Despite claims by the developer, the art gallery spaces we've lost in recent years, the Court Square theater, and various restaurants, have not been because more student foot traffic didn't exist downtown. Those businesses cater to other constituencies such as local families and tourists. The solution to downtown isn't more students and less parking. And, there is absolutely zero data to suggest otherwise. This is a fanciful assumption based on no real understanding of our local community and its relationship with our local merchants.

The No B1C group has accessed numerous public complaints about the development this same company created in Williamsburg, including problems with heating, cooling, and waste disposal. The response to the developer has been anything but comforting — they've simply dismissed the claims as not being their problem because they no longer own the property anymore. They've avoided answering questions about problems that have occurred on their watch, including averaging over a manager a year, and what their intentions are for the future of the property. In one early meeting, the developer's representative acknowledged that they'd probably sell the property in the short term. That has been typical for luxury student housing; a small number of investment firms have purchased such properties in other college towns, and rents have gone up as maintenance issues have also increased. The developer also acknowledged that the small space dedicated to mixed use could, in fact, be consumed entirely by their rental office, which would mean that there is no actual mixed use at this property at all. The language of the proffers suggests that every one is subject to abandonment by the developer for any reason whatsoever (including cost to the developer).

Compared to nearby cities such as Staunton, or even Waynesboro, Harrisonburg has done very little to beautify downtown, preserve its architecture, or offer citizens input into the process for doing so. Allowing the building of a large Soviet-era style housing block at

the entrance to downtown will be the nail in our coffin. Just like the destruction of the Virginia Theater cannot be undone, letting this monstrosity define our skyline and create the entryway to our city will be the end to any attempt to preserve our historic character. We've already heard from Preservation Virginia that such a project would jeopardize the historic designation of our downtown, which is already precarious. It involves the destruction of one of the few remaining Victorian era homes on Liberty, and risks the octagon house across the street. Other property owners may find it difficult or impossible to receive historic renovation grants if this project goes through as planned. And, the city itself may lose access to these funds.

Yet, the tax revenue generated by this project is a pittance. Indeed, the Lindsey's property already generates 50% of this projected revenue yearly with various sorts of taxes it pays. And, improvements to the sewer system, which are being done in anticipation of this project by the city, is simply a means of foisting on residents some of the costs of this project that should rightfully be the responsibility of the developer. The city is, in fact, obligated to replace 40 yards of our property's sewer line from our property line to the main line, but for two years, has failed to do so. The entire community is currently wondering what undisclosed tax rebates will be offered in the future to this developer.

The burden of proof for the rezoning process is not on the residents of this city, but on its elected officials, and to some extent, the developer. It is your job to prove to all of us that the proposed B1C rezoning to meet the demands of this out of state company is more our interest than would be any building done under the current R3 zoning. I have yet to see any compelling argument made by either entity. The Link is unrelated to the bike path, and would actually limit access to the proposed park. No study has been done of the effect on acoustics for live performances. No study has been done on environmental effects. And, traffic studies have been deceitful, relying on days and times that are not normal parts of the student resident experience, and relying on an apartment model that presumes families and not students (thus, underestimating the amount of vehicular traffic). No attempt has been made to evaluate effects on school buses or rescue vehicles. Indeed, the city has not indicated whether it will need to purchase additional fire trucks to access a building this size. The zoning commission and the council have not been honest with residents about the true costs, including externalities, of this project.

If any of you lived downtown (in any direction), you'd already know that hundreds of students attend off campus parties. By placing between 800-900 (or more) upperclassmen in proximity to those off campus party houses, more will have the opportunity to be present at these events. Yet, enforcement of current laws is abysmal, and the quality of life for full time residents in many areas surrounding downtown is already being degraded. Worse, the Link shows balconies for every unit. This means that whatever behavior that is happening within this complex won't be contained in the complex itself. It will spill out in every direction, and affect a large radius of other residents. We live blocks from downtown and already hear planned performances. We appreciate being

able to enjoy concerts from a distance. But, student parties are different, and hearing even more student music and screaming, at even later hours of the night, would make our lives more miserable. It would also increase litter, public drunkness, and congestion downtown. This won't attract residents or tourists to businesses, which is why so many have signed on to the No B1C petition. We invite the council members to walk past the student houses on any Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday (starting at around 2:00 p.m.) to witness this behavior for themselves.

Your responsibility as an elected member of the council is to your constituents, not to an out of state developer or their local representatives. And, few of your constituents have indicated that they feel this development will be beneficial to the community; many, many more have indicated otherwise. If any member of the council feels that their obligations lie elsewhere, and not with the community, then expect us to feel free to vote other representatives into office who will offer us greater transparency and will be willing to listen to the voters.

Valerie Sulfaro

Jack McCaslin

611 Ott Street

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Bobby Lifka <nakedrunner@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 8:09 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Fwd: No to B-1C

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

Pamela,
Please include in public record.
Thank you
Bobby Lifka
220 W. View St.
Harrisonburg VA
22801

----- Original Message -----

From: Bobby Lifka <nakedrunner@comcast.net>
To: "Deanna.Reed@harrisonburgva.gov" <Deanna.Reed@harrisonburgva.gov>
Cc: "Dany.Fleming@harrisonburgva.gov" <Dany.Fleming@harrisonburgva.gov>, "Nasser.Alsaadun@harrisonburgva.gov" <Nasser.Alsaadun@harrisonburgva.gov>, "Laura.Dent@harrisonburgva.gov" <Laura.Dent@harrisonburgva.gov>, "Monica.Robinson@harrisonburgva.gov" <Monica.Robinson@harrisonburgva.gov>
Date: 04/26/2026 6:16 PM EDT
Subject: No to B-1C

Dear city council members,

My name is Bobby Lifka, I have lived in old town on W. View for 29 years. I really do not want to go into the importance of protecting our neighborhood. You have undoubtedly received those points of view. I want to ask you where you live. I don't think any of you actually live downtown, on our neighborhood streets. Have you ever driven around our streets.

With two way traffic with only space for one car to drive? Have you seen our school buses, stop to pick up our kids and JMU students blowing off the school bus stop sign? Have you ever driven around on Sat. or Sun. Morning and seen the piles of garbage, cans, bottles broken glass just thrown everywhere at these student houses? The Forkovich building is a disgrace. Why is the city not stopping this behavior. You do not even enforce the zoning laws for homes on each side of Mason Street passed years ago. And now you want to invite more disrespectful student behavior into our downtown space with more zoning changes. We know where this is going. Eventually this building will be passed to JMU and then the real mess begins. Until you live in the heart of this city, you have no right making decisions that disrupts the lives of families who have worked for years to create an environment free of the disrespectful conduct and behavior you are signing us up for. Vote No

Thank you,
Bobby Lifka

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 10:05 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Sun, 04/26/2026 - 22:05

Submitted values are:

Name

Kate Davis

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-04-28

Agenda Item Number

N/A

Comment

I am writing as a resident who walks through Purcell Park weekly to express my concern and frustration regarding the Kids Castle reconstruction project.

While the zip lines and main structures appear to have been in place for some time, there has been a total lack of visible construction activity on-site for weeks. Currently, a 'mountain of gravel' remains sitting untouched next to the equipment, and the ground remains torn up and inaccessible.

We were told this project would be completed in 2025. Given that it is now late April 2026 and no progress is being made on the final surfacing or site work, I am requesting a specific status update. Why has construction stalled, and what is the new firm completion date? Our community deserves a real answer rather than a 'check back for updates' response.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

Yes

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

thekate2.0@gmail.com

7575068419

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Nancy Faulkner <nfaulkner130@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 9:01 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson; Nasser A. Alsaadun
Subject: I oppose the rezoning of Lindsey Funeral Home property to B-1C.

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

As a Harrisonburg resident I would like to go on the public record and state my opposition to the rezoning of Lindsey Funeral home property to B-1C.

1. The scope of proposed housing is too large for this parcel and the downtown location.
2. The "mixed use" designation is not really believable for a housing development of this scale. What is the percentage of space for business endeavors compared to student housing?
3. Parking and traffic problems come with the proposed project.
4. This does not align with community objectives for green, gathering spaces downtown, particularly creating a downtown park in that area.
5. This also does not align with efforts to affordable housing that is needed in Harrisonburg.

Thank you for your continued consideration of the opinions of Harrisonburg residents.
Nancy Clark Faulkner

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Laura Larsson <laura.l.larsson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 10:00 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica.Robinson@harrisonburg.gov
Subject: For the Public Record on B-1C us

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

Ms. Ulmer,

Please include my comments below in the Public Record for the Vote on B-1C. **If you will kindly reply to this email to let me know that you received it I would greatly appreciate it.**

To: City Council Members & all who care about the future landscape of downtown Harrisonburg:
From: Laura Larsson, Williamsburg, VA, **Concerned Citizen, Educator, Historian, Horticulturist**

I urge you to **vote NO on B-1C.**

The building and land at 473 South Main Street are historic. Replacing the land, trees and historic funeral home will forever bury part of Harrisonburg's history and charm, replacing it with a big block of concrete. **There are more suitable places to build the proposed structure.** You must be vigilant in preserving historic places for generations to come. If not, the town will begin to lose its individuality. **Please, VOTE NO on B-1C.** The future of the town depends upon you!

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Erik Larsson <larssoneg@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 8:03 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica.Robinson@harrisonburg.gov
Subject: No to B1-C

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

Dear Pamela,

I am writing to respectfully share my opposition to B1-C and request that my message be included in the public record.

As a long-time friend and regular visitor of the city for 10+ years, I have grown and maintain a deep affection for Harrisonburg and its citizens. After carefully reviewing the facts of B1-C, it is my conclusion that its passing would benefit a select few individuals at the expense of the greater community.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Erik Larsson

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Nicole Kornblatt <coe.marie@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 3:17 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: No b-1c

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

Good afternoon,

I am unable to attend the meeting, but please include this in the record.

I am emailing an official request that this zoning change not occur that would allow a six story building to be built in our beautiful downtown.

As a family we use downtown all the time and this would only add to the limited parking problem.

Please keep Harrisonburg beautiful.

Nicole Kornblatt

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Natalie Didawick <natalie.didawick@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 2:04 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Subject: Subject. B-1C

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

Definitely NO

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: phyllis coulter <coulterp@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 11:11 AM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer; Laura A. Dent
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Monica L. Robinson
Subject: Public record for rezoning at 473 S. Main St.

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

For the record I oppose the rezoning at 473 S. Main St., The Link for the following reasons:

The proposed building jeopardizes the historic district status of the existing structures in the area.

The Links presents an extension of JMU as an intrusion in the separate and independent city of Harrisonburg.

The Links is inconsistent with the 2020 plan for future of Harrisonburg and the plan of the President of JMU to house second year students on campus

The Links puts the needs of students ahead of permanent citizens who pay taxes to live in the city .
The Links will create traffic patterns that jeopardize the safety and well being of nearby neighborhoods

The Links will create a burden on existing water and sewer lines at the risk of disturbing the nearby residential area.

Do we want a university with a town for their convenience and use or do we want a city with a downtown that serves the needs of permanent, tax paying residents???

Phyllis Y. Coulter
475 Ott St.
Harrisonburg

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Faythe Silveira <faythes79@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2026 2:15 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; lauradent@harrisonburgva.gov; monica.robinson@harrisonburgva.com
Subject: Objection to B-1C rezoning

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

I would implore you to vote no to rezoning. I see approval as a sellout of the real and long term interests of the Friendly City. This project has a small group that will benefit financially by millions. Harrisonburg as a city will benefit very little, the biggest supposedly is the gross tax revenue, but I see no other real benefits, but multiple risks. We don't need density at all cost.

You have heard all the objections, and they are many!

I have heard a suggestion to make this property into a park! If financing could be secured, wouldn't this benefit us so much more!

Faythe Silveira

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: noreply@harrisonburgva.gov on behalf of City of Harrisonburg, VA
<noreply@harrisonburgva.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 4:54 PM
To: Michael E. Parks; Pamela S. Ulmer; Thanh Dang
Subject: Webform submission from: Agenda Comment Form

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

Submitted on Tue, 03/10/2026 - 16:54

Submitted values are:

Name

Michael Miriello

Type of Meeting

Harrisonburg City Council

Date of Upcoming Meeting

2026-03-11

Agenda Item Number

4d

Comment

A Follow-Up: Addressing the Opposition

I want to dig into a few of the arguments I keep hearing against The Link, because I think some of them fall apart when you look at the actual data. I'm going to focus on three: affordable housing, traffic, and whether this project even fits our city's own plans. Spoiler: it does.

"What about affordable housing?"

I care about affordable housing. Deeply. And that's exactly why I support The Link.

Here's the thing: housing affordability isn't some mysterious force. It's supply and demand. Econ 101. When there are more people who want to live somewhere than there are places to live, prices go up. When you add supply, prices stabilize or come down. It's that simple.

Harrisonburg has the lowest rental vacancy rate in the entire state of Virginia at 2.1%. That means for every 100 rental units in this city, only about 2 are available at any given time. That's not a housing market. That's a bidding war. And the people who lose that war are the ones who can least afford to compete: the young professionals just starting out, the service workers, the families trying to stay in the city they love.

Every unit we add to the market, whether it's a studio or a four-bedroom, takes pressure off the existing inventory. When new supply absorbs demand, landlords across the city lose leverage to jack up rents on older, more affordable units. That's how it works. That's how it's always worked. You don't solve a shortage by refusing to build.

The Link contributes \$93,738 to Harrisonburg's Affordable Housing Fund, the maximum allowed under city guidelines. But the bigger contribution to affordability is the 250 units themselves. More doors. More options. More breathing room in a market that is suffocating.

And let's be clear: there is no developer lined up to build subsidized affordable housing on this site. That's not one of the options on the table. The choice is between The Link and *nothing*. And nothing doesn't lower anyone's rent.

"Traffic is going to be a nightmare."

The traffic study says otherwise, and it was conducted while JMU was in session, not over summer break. The site is walkable and bikeable, sitting between downtown and campus. The project includes 136 bike parking spaces, 14 EV chargers, and the Paul Street extension that will actually help alleviate traffic on the Grattan Street crossover.

And here's the irony: the people most concerned about traffic are also often the people asking for more parking. As one urbanist put it, "If your primary concern is traffic, and your primary request is parking, you need to understand that those things are at cross-purposes." More parking invites more cars. The Link unbundles rent from parking, meaning residents pay separately for a parking spot. That's a real incentive to show up without a car.

"This isn't what we planned for."

Actually, it is. Harrisonburg's own [Downtown 2040 Plan](<https://timberwolfcp.com/link-documents/>) specifically identifies this area of south downtown as a target for high-density housing development. The plan calls for new residential density to support local businesses, reduce sprawl, and grow the tax base. City staff has recommended the rezoning. The Planning Commission recommended approval. This project *is* the plan.

We spent years as a community building that vision. Now that someone is actually willing to invest \$100 million of private capital to help make it happen, are we going to say no because it's not perfect?

Where I Stand

I said it before and I'll say it again: I'm a business owner on W Bruce Street and live in Old Town. I have skin in this game from both sides. And from both sides, The Link makes sense.

It adds supply. It grows the tax base by \$600,000+ per year. It brings 500 new customers to our downtown businesses. It provides 65 public parking spaces. It funds affordable housing. It delivers on the 2040 Plan. And it does all of this with private investment, not taxpayer dollars.

We can keep waiting for the perfect project that checks every single box for every single person. But while we wait, rents keep climbing, talented people keep leaving, and downtown keeps underperforming its

potential.

I'd rather build something great today than hold out for something perfect that never comes.

Let's move forward. Let's build The Link.

Would you like to be contacted by city staff?

Yes

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

mike.miriello@tdcmarketing.com

540-414-6733

Pamela S. Ulmer

From: Williams, Jacqueline A - williaja <williaja@jmu.edu>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2026 4:06 PM
To: Pamela S. Ulmer
Cc: Deanna R. Reed; Dany R. Fleming; Nasser A. Alsaadun; Laura A. Dent; Monica L. Robinson
Subject: Re: rezoning 473 S Main St

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

Dear City Clerk & Council Members,

I attended the City Council meeting on Tuesday, April 28 and was amazed that the council didn't vote no to the rezoning. Just by voting no on this parcel of land for rezoning is not a vote against downtown development; it just means that this piece of property is not appropriate for this kind of intrusive project at the entrance to downtown.

Common sense development would be to take a revision of this plan and build it on the Rose's property which is still within a reasonable distance to JMU, close to downtown businesses, restaurants, auto maintenance, schools, and fire department. This location also would not entail rezoning, road extensions and closures, encroachments on church property, and the obstruction of historic downtown. The Rose's property allows easy traffic access to Liberty, High, and Market Streets. In addition, the stores and market in this area of town would benefit from people living in this location. This location in town is convenient to downtown businesses, public schools and universities and would encourage walking, biking and public transportation.

Additionally, this housing project should address the housing shortage for young professionals, families, retirees, and graduate students who desire to live within the city limits. Certainly, if students wish to live there, they can comfortably live in an apartment designed for a family or young professionals and follow the agreement of the lease. There is no need to have units rented by the bedroom.

I hope the City Council will consider the taxpaying long-time residents for which you represent (1600) who strongly and respectfully object to the rezoning of the Lindsey property on Main Street. Thank you for your time and service to our community.

Sincerely,
Jackie

Jacqueline Williams
220 West View Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
540.908.8885

From: Williams, Jacqueline A - williaja
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2026 5:28 PM
To: Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov <Pamela.Ulmer@harrisonburgva.gov>

Cc: Deanna.Reed@harrisonburgva.gov <Deanna.Reed@harrisonburgva.gov>; Dany.Fleming@harrisonburgva.gov <Dany.Fleming@harrisonburgva.gov>; Nasser.Alsaadun@harrisonburgva.gov <Nasser.Alsaadun@harrisonburgva.gov>; Laura.Dent@harrisonburgva.gov <Laura.Dent@harrisonburgva.gov>; Monica.Robinson@harrisonburgva.gov <Monica.Robinson@harrisonburgva.gov>

Subject: Public Comment regarding rezoning 473 S Main St

Dear City Clerk & Council Members,

Please include this in the public record for the rezoning at 473 S Main St.

I am a long-time resident of Old Town, and **OPPOSE** the rezoning of 473 S Main St. As a 29-year professor at JMU I appreciate what students bring to our community both financial and service commitments. However, I also experience first-hand the disrespectful, disruptive and disdainful actions for property and neighbors that occur on any given day/evening. Their high-density presence leads to noise pollution, littered streets/sidewalks, drunken pedestrian traffic, and dangerous high-speed traffic throughout our neighborhood streets. None of which are conducive to families and children in the neighborhood.

I was attracted to the Old Town neighborhood almost 30 years ago to raise a family, to walk downtown and to create close and considerate neighborly connections. We love our Old Town community. However, this rezoning is the opposite of what this community needs. Instead of implementing common sense density-controlled blocks of student and family housing, we now have blocks with the majority of homes rented to students. Those few families within these blocks have unfortunately been driven out by those temporary inconsiderate entitled students who only have their own desires to consider. I encourage you to take time to listen to families in the community before voting, to understand the situation we live with daily. This historic neighborhood had seen old beautiful homes turned to rubbish instead of preserving them for families.

This rezoning will only exacerbate the situation by bringing more traffic, trash and noise to this historic part of town. Is this the *Friendly City* the City Council wishes to see for downtown Harrisonburg? Are there other areas in town that need this type of housing to uplift the neighborhood rather than at the entrance to downtown. Does this project help alleviate the affordable housing shortage or line the pockets of developers who only have a 5-year commitment and then they're out of here with us left with a poorly constructed complex designed to accommodate the ever-increasing population of JMU?

Who are your constituents; greedy developers and JMU or the long-term, tax paying, considerate community members who have established roots, are raising families and love this community? Thank you for your time, service and consideration.

Sincerely,
Jackie

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