Grace & Main Parking Lot

Request for Variations or Exceptions

October 9th, 2026

City of Harrisonburg
Department of Community Development
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801

RE: Walnut Lane Entrance– Request for Variances/Exceptions
Property: 741 S Main St, Harrisonburg, VA 22801
Tax Map Parcels: 25 L 1, 17 ("the Subject Property"); 25 L 16 ("the Adjacent Property")

On behalf of James Madison University ("JMU", or the "Applicant"), we respectfully request approval of the following variations or exceptions pursuant to Section 10-2-2(a) of the City of Harrisonburg Subdivision Ordinance and the Design Construction Standards Manual (DCSM). The requests are associated with the development of the JMU Grace & Main Parking Lot (the "Project") on the Subject Property, and the construction of a new access entrance to the Subject Property through the Adjacent Property onto Walnut Ln. The proposed site layout and access configuration are illustrated on the enclosed Concept Plan.

Principal to the requested variations / exceptions are the inappropriate access conditions on S Main St and Grace St frontages of the Subject Property, and the associated need to establish new access onto Walnut Ln through the Adjacent Property despite existing driveways in conflict with standard access application. S Main St and Grace St frontages are inappropriate for access due to their locations within the functional area of the intersection's functional area, which presents significant safety hazards to any turning movements within.

Strict application of the applicable DCSM standards to the proposed access onto Walnut Ln is not feasible within the terms and conditions established by an agreement between JMU and the property owner of 16 W Grace. The agreement allows JMU to construct a parking lot with access through the Adjacent Property onto Walnut Ln, subject to the condition that existing property features and access serving 16 W Grace remain undisturbed. Specifically, the proposed improvements cannot require relocation or modification of the existing driveway or interfere with the use of the Adjacent Property. The Adjacent Property is a residential building in zone R-3. The requested variations/exceptions relate to the proposed entrance width and commercial entrance curb return radii.

1. Entrance Width

We request a variation/exception from Harrisonburg DCSM Section 3.10.2.4.1 to permit a 20-foot-wide entrance in lieu of the required 30-foot minimum width. The requested variation is necessitated by the limited frontage available along Walnut Ln and the location of existing site features that are required to remain, including the existing driveway serving the Adjacent Property. Providing a fully compliant 30-foot-wide entrance is impossible within the space allocated by the agreement. The proposed 20-foot entrance represents the minimum width necessary to provide 2-way vehicular access to and from Walnut Ln to the proposed parking area. The reduction in entrance width is anticipated to operate safely and efficiently given the relatively light traffic volumes it is designed to handle.

2. Commercial Entrance Curb Radii

We request a variation/exception from Harrisonburg DCSM Section 3.10.2.5.2 to permit an entrance curb radii of 8 feet in lieu of the required 12.5-foot minimum specified. The requested variation is again necessitated by the limited area available for the proposed entrance and the proximity of the existing entrance serving the Adjacent Property. The proposed 8-foot curb radii will allow for construction of the new entrance without impact to the neighboring parcel frontage to the north (TM 25 L 14 15). Given the relatively low volumes of traffic utilizing the entrance, and the fact that the lot is intended to only serve passenger vehicles (which require smaller turning radii than larger vehicles), the entrance as proposed is expected to operate safely and efficiently, while encouraging lower speeds.

Note that the northern side of the entrance is proposed to accommodate the minimum standard of a 12.5' radius, and that the exception is only requested on the southern side, where it abuts the existing entrance serving the Adjacent Property.

Collectively, the requested variations and exceptions are necessary to accommodate the physical constraints associated with establishing a new access connection from Walnut Ln while preserving the existing driveway serving the Adjacent Property in compliance with the access agreement between property owners. The requests are anticipated to serve the Project in a safe and efficient manner, while avoiding unsafe and impractical alternatives to access along either S Main St or Grace St.

For these reasons, we respectfully request approval of the requested variations and exceptions as depicted on the submitted plans. Thank you for your consideration of this request. We would be pleased to provide any additional information necessary to assist in the review of this application.

Sincerely,



Feidra Gjata
Project Engineer
Monteverde Engineering & Design Studio, PLC



ZONING INFORMATION:

ZONING:	R-3
FRONT SETBACK:	N/A
SIDE YARD:	N/A
REAR YARD:	N/A
PARKING BUFFER:	N/A

PARKING SUMMARY:	
PARKING PROVIDED:	62 VEHICULAR SPACES

HEAVY DUTY ASPHALT

SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"

20 10 0 20 40

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SITE PLAN
GRACE & MAIN PARKING LOT

741 S MAIN ST, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801
LOCALITY, MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT

Revisions:

No.	Description	Date

PRELIMINARY ISSUE
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

SITE LAYOUT

Project number:	26XXXC
Date:	APRIL 21, 2026
Drawn by:	FG
Checked by:	SOR

C4.01