



ANNOTATED OUTLINE

Maple Avenue Commercial Corridor Zoning Code Update

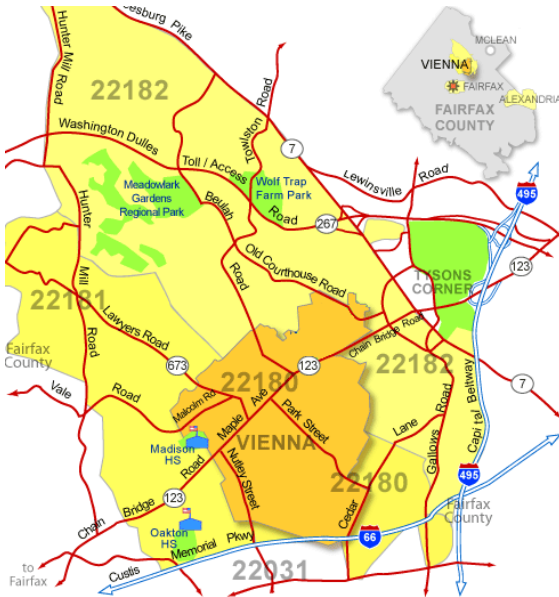
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SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND



The Vienna area.

The Town of Vienna is a mature, built-out, low-density residential community of 16,000 in northeastern Fairfax County. One of the many desirable aspects of Vienna frequently cited by town residents is its “small town” atmosphere. Vienna’s main street is Maple Avenue (State Route 123). It bisects the town in a northeasterly direction and serves as the primary commercial street. Additionally, and because of the street’s location along the State Route 123 corridor, it also serves as a major commuter route to Washington D.C. and as a route taken by persons shopping, working, and recreating in Tyson’s Corner just to the northeast of Vienna.

Town residents and government officials have long recognized Maple Avenue’s role in supporting the town’s character and economic viability. Businesses along the corridor provide retail and personal services, offices, and places to recreate for town residents. The corridor is a significant part of the community’s identity. However, as the region has grown, Maple Avenue has had to function not just as a small town main street, but also as a major travel way for commuters travelling to regional destinations. While it is true that many businesses along the corridor cater to both residents and commuters, the street’s different functions are often at odds with each other and create a tension between the desire to maintain Vienna’s small town character and the need to provide a viable transportation route for the region’s commuters.

The corridor’s evolution from small town main street to regional travel way is evident in its development context. Many of the uses along the corridor are small-scale and town-serving in character, but are located in a development context configured to support passing motorists. There are sidewalks, but in many places they are narrow, and located close to a street with a high level of traffic. There are some examples of buildings located close to the corridor right-of-way, but in most cases buildings are set back from Maple Avenue and fronted by surface parking. There are numerous curb cuts and driveways that also



Auto-oriented use along the Maple Avenue corridor.

contribute to an inhospitable pedestrian environment. There is exterior lighting along the corridor, but in most cases, the lighting is of a height and configuration intended for automobile safety rather than lighting for pedestrians.

The building stock along the corridor is also a function of the corridor's evolution. The vast majority of the lots along the corridor are small (under one acre in size) and narrow (typical of a small town "main street" configuration).

Many commercial buildings along the corridor were built in the 1960s and 1970s, maintain floor plates of 4,000 to 6,000 square feet, and have a diverse array of building materials and styles.



Most buildings along the corridor are set back from the street, have small footprints, and maintain a diverse array of styles and materials.

In many cases, commercial lots

lining the corridor back up to single-family residential neighborhoods. This configuration can create compatibility problems, such as traffic, parking, noise, excessive light, odor, aesthetics, and other negative impacts on these abutting single-family lots.

As early as 2001, the town recognized the tensions and competing objectives that exist along Maple Avenue, and began to examine the issue through establishment of the Vision Vienna. The Vision recognized Vienna's character as a single-family community with limited, low-rise commercial development. The problems identified included traffic, parking, aging housing stock, and changes in the retail and office markets that were rendering the existing structures in the town obsolete. The effort identified the Maple Avenue corridor as the key area for revitalization in the town.

Following adoption of Vision Vienna, the Town Council established the Maple Avenue Vision Committee, who was charged with finding ways to realize its goals and objectives. The Vision Committee recommended development of a form-based code¹ as a means to revitalize the Maple Avenue corridor in 2005. The Committee determined that a form-based code was warranted to promote better integration between the commercial and residential portions of the town as well as a means to provide increased predictability to commercial property owners. Following the recommendation to develop a form-based code in 2005, an assessment of regulatory options (including form-based provisions) was conducted in 2006. One of the key recommendations in the assessment was that before the town considered regulatory reforms, a clear vision for how the Maple Avenue corridor should develop needed to be completed.

In 2010, the town initiated a visualization study to examine a range of three maximum building heights (35 feet /50 feet /54 feet) and two minimum front setbacks (15 feet /30 feet) from the public right-of-way as part of creating a vision for the corridor. The Town Council identified the

¹ A form-based code is one that emphasizes building form and design over the kinds of uses that might locate within it. The majority of standards and requirements in a form-based code deal with how a site and its structures look and function. In many cases, form-based codes seek to encourage mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development and discourage automobile-oriented single-use buildings. One notable and relevant example is the form-based code applied to Columbia Pike in Arlington County.

15-foot minimum setback from the right-of-way and 54-foot maximum building height as the appropriate dimensional requirements for consideration as part of new development standards for the corridor. While this work was important in establishing some of the primary parameters for encouraging redevelopment, the visualization process did not address other issues important to the establishment of a vision for the corridor, like:

- Building massing;
- Building orientation;
- Roof and window treatment on the front building façade;
- Location and design of off-street parking areas;
- Landscaping provisions;
- Pedestrian features;
- Potential negative impacts on the single-family residential character of the neighborhoods from new development; and
- Ensuring nonresidential, mixed-use, and multi-family buildings could remain compatible with nearby single-family residential uses.

1.2. WORK PROGRAM

In Spring 2012, the town issued RFP 12-06 requesting professional assistance in updating the Zoning Ordinance as it relates to the Maple Avenue corridor. The goal of the project is to encourage pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development and redevelopment along the corridor that will reinforce its role as Vienna's main street and provide opportunities for beneficial infill. Additional goals for the project include maintaining the town's small-town character and ensuring the character of the existing single-family neighborhoods abutting the corridor is maintained during redevelopment.

The first step in the process was to meet with senior town staff and conduct interviews with Town Council and Planning Commission members to hear more about previous planning efforts and their concerns regarding the corridor. The consulting team also undertook reconnaissance of the corridor to better understand existing conditions. Following reconnaissance, the consulting team prepared a series of explorations, or a "capacity analysis" for some sites along the corridor (such as the Giant supermarket site) given the current zoning ordinance requirements and guidance from Town Council on allowable heights and front setbacks. Results from this initial investigation revealed the following:

- Pedestrian enhancements along the Maple Avenue corridor are possible, despite the traffic congestion. Traffic counts along the corridor are similar to those on the more pedestrian-oriented Washington Street in Old Town Alexandria.
- The 15-foot setback from the right-of-way will likely result in front building walls being located



Capacity analysis sketch of the Giant supermarket site.

anywhere from 26 feet to as much as 30 feet from the back of the curb.

- Increasing the maximum building height from 35 feet to 54 feet along the corridor will not likely lead to a continuous row of 54-foot-tall buildings along the corridor due to the combination of shallow lot depth and the need to comply with parking requirements.
- A continuous row of buildings along Maple Avenue would require the majority of parking provided along the corridor to be located within parking structures.
- The current off-street parking standards in Article 16 of the zoning ordinance are somewhat high for some uses (residential), and somewhat low for other uses (institutional). The lack of flexibility in the current standards could further complicate redevelopment.
- Redevelopment scenarios that rely solely on surface off-street parking will not increase the potential amount of leasable area on a site. Only redevelopment including structured parking is likely to increase the amount of potential floor area in a meaningful way. There would only be an insignificant increase in leasable area if only surface parking supplied.

Following the completion of the initial interviews and corridor reconnaissance, the Mayor appointed a steering committee to work with the consulting team to establish a vision for the corridor and review draft work products in advance of Town Council review.

In October 2012, the consulting team delivered a Zoning Discovery Report that describes the study area and reviews the zoning ordinance provisions that apply to the land in the study area. Some of the key findings from the Zoning Discovery Report are:

- The lots in the study area are currently zoned Local Commercial (C-1), Special Commercial (C-1-A), or General Commercial (C-2).
- There are no distinctions in maximum building heights or dimensional requirements across the three districts (the only distinctions between the districts are the kinds of allowable uses).
- There is almost no distinction in the setback requirements between the three zoning districts (C-2 allows slightly smaller rear setback than the other districts).
- There is no applicable lot width, lot area, or lot coverage standard in the study area (except for lands within the Chesapeake Bay Protection area, which are subject to some lot coverage limitations).



The Zoning Discovery Report explores the existing zoning regulations that apply along the Maple Avenue corridor.



- Freestanding restaurants along the corridor must maintain a minimum seating capacity of 125 seats (thus prohibiting smaller establishments more likely to cater to pedestrians).
- Outdoor display or sales (the kind of which would cater to pedestrians) is prohibited.
- Outdoor seating associated with a restaurant (a very common feature on pedestrian-oriented streets) may only be permitted through a conditional use permit.
- Each of the districts (even the C-1 Local Commercial district) allows drive-through uses

with a conditional use permit (though drive-throughs associated with restaurants are prohibited).

- Each of the commercial districts allows upper-story residential as an accessory use, but it is unclear as to the review procedure, the maximum amount of floor area that may be devoted to residential use, or the maximum allowable density.
- The standards include no provisions for screening roof-mounted equipment or other materials requirements.
- There is little in the way of aesthetics or design controls, such as prohibited materials standards, glazing standards, requirements to screen roof-mounted equipment, or limitations on prototypical architecture like that found in chain retail establishments.
- The current parking standards do not address parking lot placement, lack many modern flexibility provisions, and only address bicycle parking requirements associated with amusement establishments.
- The landscaping standards lack precision regarding placement and configuration of parking lot landscaping. The minimum size at-time-of-planting requirements are higher than is typical (4½" diameter at breast height), making tree planting more expensive and less certain that planted trees will survive.
- Commercial group developments (developments of more than one building or lot) must provide open space (10 percent of the total development area), but there are no provisions controlling its placement, configuration, or function (such as requirements for public gathering areas).
- The current zoning ordinance contains little in the way of standards to help address transitions between nonresidential and residential development other than a six-foot masonry wall.
- Each district includes requirements that trigger the need for full code compliance on a site after an addition of a building's floor area by 50 percent or more.



The steering committee met three times to discuss and provide direction on the vision for the corridor, review the capacity analysis prepared by the consulting team, and consider the key elements of a new regulatory strategy to achieve the corridor vision. While no vision statement for the corridor was articulated, members of the steering committee agreed upon several

principles for development along the corridor, which are listed in the textbox below:



Principles for Development along Maple Avenue

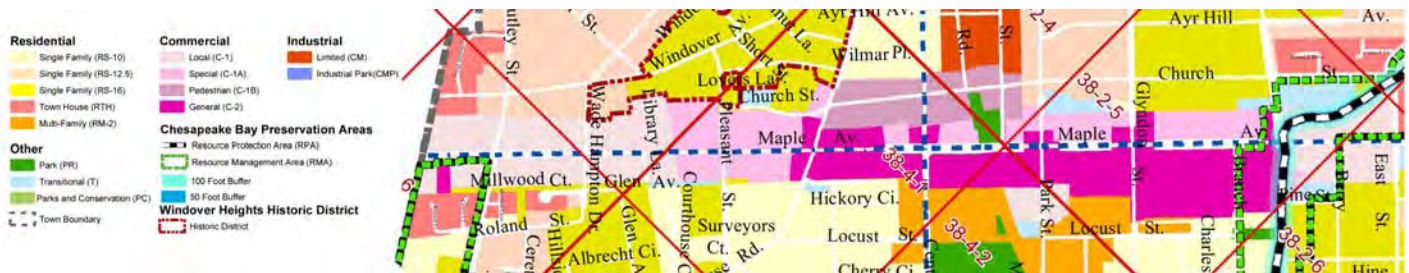
The new regulations for the Maple Avenue corridor should:

- Encourage redevelopment and infill on the corridor;
- Cater to the needs of town residents as well as commuters;
- Increase pedestrian orientation and human-scale design of streets and buildings;
- Address chronic problems such as parking scarcity and traffic congestion;
- Foster more mixed-uses and destination retail;
- Not reduce the existing development potential currently available to landowners along the corridor;
- Maintain and promote the eclectic character in buildings and site configuration found today;
- Raise the bar for development quality and aesthetics;
- Encourage diversity of building height, density, and mass to maintain visual interest along the corridor;
- Improve environmental quality through more sustainable development approaches; and
- Be compatible with single-family homes and neighborhoods backing up to the corridor.

Based on the initial inspection of the corridor by the consulting team, input to date from the Town Council, information in the Zoning Discovery Report, and the work of the steering committee, the consulting team has now prepared this annotated outline for new zoning regulations along Maple Avenue. The next section goes into greater detail about the organization, structure, and contents of the proposed regulations.

SECTION 2. PROPOSED REGULATIONS

This section includes an overview of the proposed structure and contents of new regulations for lands currently zoned C-1, C-1-A, and C-2 along the Maple Avenue corridor. The following paragraphs provide an organizing framework for continued discussions of key zoning and development regulations in the study area. This material is presented as a suggested framework for discussion with the steering committee and Town Council about how the proposed zoning changes along the Maple Avenue corridor can assist in achieving the town’s vision.



The lands under consideration for these new regulations are lands zoned C-1, C-1-A, and C-2 that abut the Maple Avenue corridor from the western town line to East Street.

2.1. REGULATORY APPROACH

In light of the input received thus far, our recommended approach for the application of new regulations along the Maple Avenue corridor is the establishment of a new voluntary base zoning district that would be available to lands currently zoned C-1, C-1-A, and C-2 that are directly adjacent to the corridor.

We suggest the zoning district be named the Maple Avenue Corridor (MAC) zoning district and be a “stand-alone” set of provisions to be located in new Article 13.1 of the current zoning ordinance (as was done with Article 12.1, the C-1B Pedestrian Commercial Zone). The proposed MAC district provisions would seek to promote compact, mixed-use redevelopment and infill that is more pedestrian oriented and human-scaled than much of the current development along the corridor. The district would offer greater flexibility in terms of allowable uses, building heights, and reductions to some development standards than is available under the C-1, C-1A, and C-2 district standards, but the district would also include new requirements intended to foster high-quality, compact, pedestrian-oriented development.

This new district would be available for landowners to request as part of a rezoning in accordance with Article 24 of the current zoning ordinance. As a means of preserving the existing development potential in place along the corridor, rezoning to the MAC district is not a requirement; rather, it is an option available to landowners owning lots along Maple Avenue. Applicants could develop or redevelop their land along the corridor using the current zoning

district provisions, or choose to file a rezoning to the new MAC zoning district and proceed with the forms of development available in this district. Only lands zoned C-1, C-1-A, or C-2 and abutting the Maple Avenue right-of-way would be able to file a rezoning request to establish the MAC district.

As with all rezonings in the town, applicants would be required to file a site plan for concurrent review with the rezoning application. However, to ensure proposed development is consistent with the range of applicable district-specific design and development standards, site plans and building elevations in the MAC district would be subject to conceptual review by town staff and the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) prior to review of the rezoning application by the Planning Commission and the Town Council. Once the town staff and BAR have determined that the proposed site plan is consistent with all applicable requirements, the rezoning application will be processed in accordance with Article 24 of the current zoning ordinance.

2.2. PURPOSE AND INTENT



Purpose statements can be supplemented with photos of preferred development patterns, such as this pedestrian-oriented grocery store in Middleton, Wisconsin.

Purpose and intent statements at the beginning of a zoning district explain the community's reasons for establishing the district and the kind of development(s) anticipated for it. These statements can also describe the types of development that are not appropriate for the district. With the exception of the Pedestrian Commercial (C-1B), Town House (RTH), and Transitional (T) zoning districts, the zoning districts in the town's current zoning ordinance do not include purpose or intent statements.

We suggest the proposed MAC district include detailed purpose and intent statements that indicate the town's desire for

compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development along the Maple Avenue corridor. In addition, the statements should clarify the town's desire to revitalize the corridor with uses that will serve town residents as well as commuters. The statements should also clarify that the district provisions are intended to result in high-quality development that is constructed at an appropriate human scale (instead of a scale for automobiles). The purpose and intent statements should also clarify the town's desire to maintain compatibility between redevelopment or infill along the corridor and the existing single family homes that back up to the lots along the corridor. Finally, the purpose and intent statements should also indicate that the district includes a variety of incentives for developments that incorporate sustainable development features as described in the district provisions.

2.3. APPLICABILITY

This section sets out the land in town that may take advantage of the proposed MAC zoning district. As mentioned earlier, the MAC district is a voluntary zoning district available to landowners of land currently zoned C-1, C-1A, and C-2 that is bounded by the Maple Avenue corridor located between the western town limits and the East Street right-of-way. Inclusion of a map showing the lots eligible for inclusion in the MAC district would be a useful addition to the district provisions.

The applicability provisions should also note that use of the MAC zoning district provisions is not required, and landowners may proceed with development or redevelopment under the current zoning district regulations. The applicability provisions should clarify that the MAC district is not available to land that does not abut the corridor, or to land that abuts the corridor, but is not zoned C-1, C-1A, C-2 at the time the new MAC district is adopted.

2.4. BULK AND DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

The bulk and dimensional provisions for a zoning district (e.g., setbacks, lot dimensions, height, lot coverage, etc.) serve as the structural framework or “skeleton” of development in the district. A district’s bulk and dimensional standards help to establish its context, character, and compatibility with its surroundings. While the study area along Maple Avenue is comprised of three different zoning districts, there is no distinction in the bulk and dimensional requirements. The table below summarizes the current bulk and dimensional standards for the C-1, C-1A, and C-2 districts.

DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS SUMMARY FOR C-1, C-1A, & C-2 ZONING DISTRICTS								
MAXIMUM DENSITY	MAXIMUM FAR	MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE	MINIMUM LOT AREA	MINIMUM LOT WIDTH	MAXIMUM HEIGHT	MINIMUM FRONT YARD	MINIMUM SIDE YARD	MINIMUM REAR YARD
None Listed	None Listed	None Listed	None Listed	None Listed	3 stories or 35'	15'	0; 5' + 1'/story for walls with windows or doors; 8' when abutting residential	C-1: 25' C-1A & C-2: 10'

Since the MAC is a new base zoning district, there is little need to ensure consistency with the current C-1, C-1A, or C-2 district standards. For the sake of clarity and more predictability, we suggest the MAC district incorporate a series of new bulk and dimensional standards as described below.

2.4.1. MAXIMUM DENSITY²

As mentioned in the Zoning Discovery Report, the C-1, C-1A, and C-2 districts allow upper-story residential uses as accessory uses, but none of the district provisions include guidance on the maximum amount of floor area that may be occupied by residential uses or the maximum available residential density. The Town House (RTH) district allows eight dwelling units per acre, but may be increased to 10 dwelling units per acre using the town’s cluster provisions. The Multi-Family, Low Density (RM-2) district allows multi-family dwelling units on 2,000 square-foot-lots, for a maximum density of 21 dwelling units per acre. Based on these existing density ranges, we suggest maximum residential density in the MAC district be established at 16 dwelling

² NOTE: The consulting team, the staff, and the Steering Committee are still considering the appropriate range of densities for the corridor. While the maximum density in some of the town’s current districts is around 21 units an acre, this figure may or may not be appropriate in light of the kind of redevelopment being sought. For example, a recent corridor redevelopment in Alexandria included a four-story building with a prominent high-end national grocery store tenant on the ground floor and over 110 apartment and condominium units on the upper three floors. This development occupies one and one-half acres, and as such, has a density of 70 units an acre. While this level of density may not be appropriate for Maple Avenue, it indicates that density figures around 20 units an acre may not be marketable either. The consulting team will continue to explore this issue as the project evolves.

units per acre (though actual densities are more likely to be around 12 units per acre given the existing lot sizes, parking requirements, and height limits). We suggest the current limitation on ground-floor residential be carried forward except in cases where horizontally mixed-use development is proposed and the residential units are proposed behind the nonresidential development relative to Maple Avenue.

2.4.2. MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE



Some communities do not consider porous paving to be an impervious surface.

As is the case with residential density and FAR, the current C-1, C-1A, and C-2 districts include no maximum lot coverage limitations. Maximum lot coverage provisions limit the maximum amount of impervious surface that may be located on a lot. Section 18-173.1.B.8 of the current zoning ordinance requires group commercial developments to set aside at least 10 percent of the site area as pervious open space for the purpose of green areas and plantings.

Given the recent changes with the Federal NPDES regulations pertaining to stormwater and the evolving Chesapeake Bay protection standards, we suggest the MAC district incorporate a maximum lot coverage of 80 percent. This standard would limit the amount of impervious surface on a site to a maximum of 80 percent of the total lot area. In addition to a lot coverage limitation, the standards will need to specify materials that are considered to be impervious as well as materials or site features that are pervious, and therefore, not included within the impervious coverage of a site (e.g., pervious pavers, permeable paving, green roofs, etc.). This will help ensure the site includes sufficient space for landscaping and stormwater management devices as well as promoting more sustainable development forms.

2.4.3. MINIMUM LOT AREA & LOT WIDTH

As with many of the other bulk and dimensional standards for the C-1, C-1A, and C-2 districts, there are no minimum lot area or minimum lot width provisions in the current zoning ordinance. Establishing new minimum lot width or area standards could render some lots along the corridor as nonconforming in terms of lot size or width, thereby triggering the need for a variance with any redevelopment. This could act as a disincentive to redevelopment and complicate financing on these lots.

We suggest the MAC district not include these kinds of provisions to help promote the consolidation of existing curb cuts and driveways along the corridor (which make the corridor less pedestrian friendly). In addition, application of these kinds of minimum standards could render existing lots nonconforming and impede redevelopment.

2.4.4. MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM HEIGHT

As mentioned in the Zoning Discovery Report, in 2010 the Town Council initiated a visualization study that explored three different maximum building heights along the corridor: 35 feet, 50 feet, and 54 feet. The Town Council reached consensus that a 54-foot maximum building height along the corridor could be acceptable, provided compatibility with adjacent single-family development backing up to lots along the corridor was maintained.



Visualization image showing building heights of 54 feet along Maple Avenue.

The consulting team conducted a capacity analysis of lots along the corridor and determined that increasing the maximum building height from 35 feet to 54 feet along the corridor will not likely lead to a continuous row of 54-foot-tall buildings along the corridor due to the combination of shallow lot depth and the need to comply with parking requirements.

We suggest the MAC district include a maximum building height of 54 feet or four stories, subject to neighborhood protection standards (such as step-downs in building height as buildings come closer to existing single-family residential development) described in a subsequent section of this annotated outline. The standards should also include caveats that allow some building features to project above the maximum building height such as spires, decorative towers, parapets, cornices, columns, and features associated with alternative forms of energy (like photo-voltaics).

In addition to a maximum height, we suggest the MAC district also incorporate a minimum first floor height of 15 to 16 feet to ensure proper building scale and enclosure along Maple Avenue. A minimum first floor height of 15 feet also helps ensure proper compliance with nonresidential building code requirements.

2.4.5. FRONT SETBACKS

Another aspect of the visualization study conducted by the Town Council involved front setbacks (or front yards) along the Maple Avenue corridor. The visualization study investigated both 15-foot and 30-foot front setbacks along the corridor. The Town Council reached consensus that a 15-foot front setback or front yard was appropriate along the corridor. The C-1, C1-A, and C-2 districts share a common minimum front yard distance of 15 feet from the edge of the front lot line (which in most cases is the edge of the Maple Avenue right-of-way).

During preparation of the capacity analysis conducted by the consulting team, it came to light that a minimum front yard or setback distance of 15 feet from the front lot line would likely result in front building façade walls being located between 26 and 30 feet or more from the edge of the curb, depending upon the right-of-way width. One key element of pedestrian-oriented streets is “enclosure” or the presence of building walls, street trees, or other vertical elements that line both sides of the street and give pedestrians a feeling of enclosure. The closer the vertical elements, the greater the sense of enclosure. The greater the sense of enclosure, the greater the sense of safety and visual interest for the pedestrian. Many form-based codes seek to establish enclosure of a street by prohibiting parking in fronts of buildings, requiring buildings to maintain a minimum height of two or more stories, and requiring the front building façade wall to be built adjacent to the front lot line or the sidewalk. While enclosure is an important goal for

pedestrian-orientation, it can be difficult to establish along corridors where existing development has a variety of different configurations of building placement, parking location, street trees, and sidewalks.

Development along the Maple Avenue corridor is a patchwork quilt of building placement relative to the sidewalk. Some buildings, such as the “Sweatleaf” building, are built up to the sidewalk with no parking in front, while others, like the TD Bank building have rows of off-street parking between the building and the sidewalk. There are also significant variations in street tree plantings along the corridor, where some areas have street trees, others do not, and those that do have trees in planters or individual pits. There is also significant variation in sidewalk width, sidewalk placement relative to the curb, and sidewalk materials.

We suggest the MAC district establish a uniform streetscape requirement that specifies the configuration and placement of aspects between front building facades and the street. The features to be addressed include:

- Street tree location;
- Street tree planting configuration and planting area width;
- Sidewalk location (relative to the curb);
- Minimum sidewalk width;
- Sidewalk materials;
- The placement of street furnishings (lighting, waste receptacles, benches, transit features, etc.); and
- Front building façade location (including how to accommodate gathering areas and off-street parking) relative to the front lot line.

Determination of an appropriate streetscape configuration will require discussion with different agencies and town departments, but in general, we suggest the streetscape be configured such that street trees are located between the curb and the sidewalk, that the sidewalk be configured to include a “clear” zone for walking next to building facades and a zone for street furnishings, and that public gathering areas be located adjacent to the sidewalk to the front or sides of building walls. Additional discussion and clarification will take place as the MAC district standards are developed.

One other key aspect for consideration is the requirement that some portion of a building's front façade be located to create enclosure along the street, or that some other means of establishing enclosure be included, whether it takes the form of street trees or low decorative fences walls or planters.

2.4.6. SIDE AND REAR SETBACKS

Because of the somewhat wide range of flexibility in side yard setbacks, we suggest no changes to the side yard requirements in the MAC district from the standards of the C-1, C-1A, or C-2 districts (0' when there are no windows or doors on a building, five or more feet when a door is window is present on a side wall, and eight feet from an adjacent residential use). We also suggest carrying forward the 10-foot rear yard setback required in the C-1A and C-2 districts.

One important aspect related to side and rear setbacks are the neighborhood protection standards in the MAC district that will apply deeper minimum side or rear setbacks and height step-back requirements to nonresidential and mixed-uses that are proposed within 100 feet of an existing single-family home.

2.5. USE STANDARDS

One of the key distinctions between the current commercial zoning along the Maple Avenue corridor and the changes contemplated in the MAC district is a greater emphasis on mixed-uses and uses that promote pedestrian travel along the corridor.



Live/work units.

In order to promote more use-mixing along the corridor, we suggest that upper-story residential uses be allowed as-of-right in the MAC district, subject to the bulk and dimensional standards described in an earlier section. We also suggest the town consider adding live/work units to the range of allowable uses along the corridor. While the current regulations limit residential uses to upper floors, we suggest that horizontally-mixed development be allowed to locate residential uses on the ground floor in cases when the residential buildings associated with a horizontal mixed-use development are positioned behind nonresidential structures located adjacent to Maple Avenue. The current prohibition of ground-floor residential adjacent to the Maple Avenue right-of-way should be carried forward.

Two additional modifications that would dramatically increase the pedestrian orientation of the corridor are to allow outdoor dining or gathering areas as-of-right (subject to site plan approval) in cases where there is adequate space between the building and the street. Such uses could be allowed by right, subject to a specific set of

approval criteria intended to maintain adequate pedestrian travel room and safety for patrons from the roadway as well as provisions to ensure the activities do not negatively affect the appearance of building facades along the corridor. Some examples of the standards applied to outdoor display could include:

- All outdoor display of goods shall be located immediately adjacent to the storefront, or building sides, and not in drive aisles, loading zones, fire lanes, or parking lots.
- Outdoor display areas shall be limited to no more than one-half of the length of the store front or building side.
- The area of outdoor display or sales shall not encompass the width of the entrance doors to the establishment as projected straight out from the facility. (For example, if the width of the entrance doors is ten feet, there shall be at least a ten-foot clearance from the doors as projected straight out and away from the facility.)
- No goods shall be attached to a building's wall surface.
- The height of the outdoor display shall not exceed nine feet, except in the case of live or recently cut trees or similar vegetation.
- No additional signage shall be permitted in association with outdoor display areas.

2.6. OFF-STREET PARKING STANDARDS

Article 16 (Sections 18-127 through 18-137.1) sets out the off-street parking and loading standards in the Zoning Ordinance. One comment frequently cited in Vienna is the lack of available parking along the corridor. However, many of the standards appear to be sufficient, in accordance with national standards. It may be that parking shortages are more acute in certain areas due to the nature of businesses in these areas or the lack of sufficient pedestrian

connections between parking areas and uses they serve. Provision of off-street parking can be an expensive proposition in mature communities, and parking requirements that require excessive amounts of minimum parking can be significant impediments to redevelopment. In recognition of these areas, we suggest that the district include incentives for the provision of structured parking such as accelerated credit towards minimum requirements for structured parking spaces.



Aerial view of the Maple Avenue corridor with associated off-street parking. This image shows a considerable amount of off-street surface parking located between buildings and Maple Avenue.

One issue of central importance to establishing a more pedestrian-oriented character along the corridor is new standards that control the location of off-street surface parking. While some uses along the corridor locate parking to the sides or rear of the principal building, most uses locate off-street parking in front of the building. This configuration reinforces the auto-oriented character of the corridor and works against greater pedestrian orientation. We suggest the MAC district include new provisions applied to buildings within 300 feet of the corridor that only allow off-street surface parking between the building and Maple Avenue when the building is two or more stories; and that when off-street parking is allowed between a building and Maple Avenue, it be limited to a single-loaded bay of spaces that may not exceed the building's façade width by more than 15 percent.

Another issue for the town's consideration is the lack of parking alternatives. It is quite common, particularly in mature, built-out communities, to see a wide range of parking flexibility standards including shared parking, off-site parking, deferred parking, and similar approaches. The town's current zoning ordinance is lacking in these kinds of provisions. We note that that the C-1B district encourages shared parking, but these efforts have been largely unsuccessful, due in part, to the fact that the standards include insufficient provisions as to how such shared parking arrangements need to be developed and made subject to a binding shared parking agreement. We suggest the MAC district include provisions for an alternative parking plan (including a more robust set of shared parking provisions) that allows an applicant to request a reduction in the amount of required parking that is reviewed and decided administratively.

Finally, we note that amusement enterprises include parking standards for bicycles, but no other uses include such requirements. More and more modern codes are including bicycle parking standards or incentives, particularly those seeking to foster greater pedestrian organization. As such, we suggest the town consider including bicycle parking standards in the MAC district.

2.7. ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

In addition to modifications to the off-street parking standards to foster increased pedestrian orientation, we suggest the MAC district incorporate a series of new access and circulation standards that foster better mobility and circulation for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles.

One issue identified by the steering committee was the need to ensure that sidewalks along Maple Avenue were sufficient to allow four people to walk side-by-side. Generally speaking, sidewalk widths of 10-11 feet are sufficient to accommodate four people. Existing sidewalks in some portions of the corridor are already 11 feet wide or wider while sidewalks along other portions of the corridor are only four feet wide. We suggest the MAC district require sidewalks along Maple Avenue with a minimum width sufficient for four people to walk side-by-side, in cases where there is sufficient space to accommodate them at that width- otherwise sidewalks must maintain the maximum width possible, given the conditions. Another issue for consideration is new pedestrian connection standards that require an improved pedestrian travel way from a building's primary entrance to the existing sidewalk system serving the site.



Pedestrian ways that connect building entrances to the sidewalk system make communities more pedestrian friendly.

Another impediment to pedestrian travel along Maple Avenue is the large number of curb cuts, driveways, and other forms of vehicular access that cross the sidewalk. In Virginia, closure of existing curb cuts is a voluntary action by a landowner and the town may not require such closure without consent of the affected landowner(s). One way to help reduce the potential for vehicular/pedestrian conflict on sidewalks is to establish new parking lot cross access requirements that require surface parking lots of adjacent compatible uses be connected to one another in a manner that allows vehicles to travel from one site to an adjacent site without having to enter or exit a roadway. By way of example, two compatible uses that should likely have their surface parking lots connected are two commercial developments, or a commercial development and a mixed-use development. Connection of parking lots between a commercial development and a residential development is an example of connection between incompatible uses, and should be discouraged except in cases where negative impacts can be fully mitigated.

2.8. LANDSCAPING STANDARDS

The landscaping standards are scattered throughout the district and supplemental standards in the zoning ordinance. The C-1, C1-A, and C-2 districts are required to provide landscaping over at least 25 percent of the front yard area, subject to approval of a landscaping plan approved by the Town Council. Section 18-134.C requires a landscaping strip of five feet in width when any off-street parking lot abuts a public or private street. The current regulations are not very precise, however, with respect to the location of materials, minimum planting standards, or other configuration provisions. We suggest the MAC district provisions incorporate clear perimeter and interior parking lot landscaping provisions consisting of an opaque perimeter screen to a height of

48 inches around parking lot perimeters as well as heightened requirements for tree shading and plantings within parking lot islands.

We also note that the town's current planting size standards for street trees is four inches in diameter at breast height (DBH), which is considerably larger than that found in most jurisdictions.

2.9. OPEN SPACE



Publically-accessible atriums should be credited towards open space requirements.

Section 18-173.1.a of the current zoning ordinance requires ten percent of the land area occupied by a commercial group development to be set aside as open space to be occupied by green areas and trees for the purpose of approving the appearance of the development. We suggest this requirement be broadened to all forms of development in the MAC district, and that the open space provisions be configured to help establish public gathering and seating areas to the fronts and sides of buildings along the corridor. In addition, we suggest that stormwater management facilities configured as site amenities (through the inclusion of water features, seating, or easy access) be credited towards the open space requirements. Finally, the MAC district provisions

should also recognize and provide full credit towards open space requirements for roof gardens, public plazas, fountains, and publically-accessible atriums and interior seating areas that provide gathering spaces for the general public as open space resources.

2.10. DESIGN STANDARDS

While the C-1B district contains numerous design standards intended to promote high-quality pedestrian-oriented redevelopment, the C-1, C-1A, and C-2 districts contain no similar provisions. Section 18-173.1 in the current zoning ordinance sets out the commercial group building development standards that require applicants to submit materials samples and include provisions preventing materials or architectural design treatments from being identical on adjacent buildings.

To encourage human-scaled design and pedestrian-oriented development patterns, we suggest the MAC district include a variety of design-related provisions. Many modern codes include a blend of required design standards and menu-based design standards. The required standards address fundamental design principles such as building orientation, screening of equipment, and proper site configuration aspects to maintain compatibility with adjacent uses. The required design standards must be complied with and offer little variation or opportunities for deviation. Menu-based design standards, on the other hand, allow some flexibility in addressing other important design aspects like building massing, entry features, window treatments, materials, and roof form. Typically, menu-based design standards are included in the codified text, and provide a range of options for configuration of development. Applicants may choose which of the allowable range of different options they wish to include in their development. In most cases, menu-based standards set out a list of six to ten different options for a particular design feature and ask the applicant to provide at least three from the list. Some communities also allow an applicant to propose an alternative means of compliance, subject to review and approval by a

review or decision-making body (like the Planning Commission). This combination of required and menu-based standards helps ensure all development maintains a minimum level of quality while also preserving necessary flexibility to ensure development retains an eclectic feel.

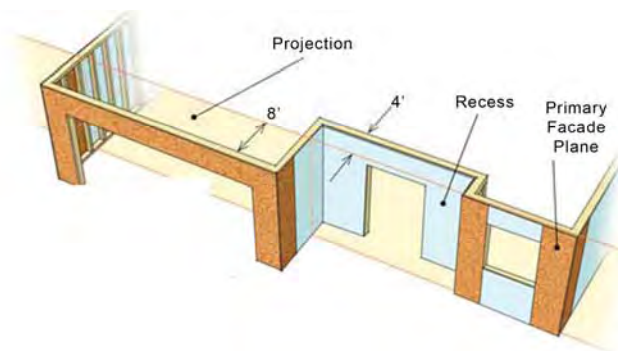
Some of the standards likely to be addressed as required standards include building orientation and entry placement. Along Maple Avenue, the standard might require buildings be oriented so that the primary entrance faces Maple Avenue. Multi-building developments may be modified to front onto a central commons or corridor. Buildings on corner lots can also be configured so that the primary entrance is located on the building's corner.

In addition to building façade modulation, another required design element to foster greater pedestrian orientation is transparency on the ground-floor of the front façade. Windows and transparent building features allow pedestrians to see into buildings and help establish a connection with the sidewalk realm. We suggest the MAC district incorporate a glazing requirement of 50 percent of the ground floor building elevation facing Maple Avenue. Another required element is proper configuration of site features, such as requirements to locate automobile-related features such as drive-throughs, large canopies, or drop boxes to the rear or interior side of buildings away from front facades and pedestrian features.

In terms of menu-based standards, we suggest the town consider menu-based standards to address required entry features, building facade massing, roof form, and materials configuration. Entry features include building elements that accentuate a building's entrance, such as a portico, recessed entryway, special windows or art features, seating or gathering areas, and similar techniques.

Modulation of the building's front façade to break up monolithic wall planes and add visual interest is a key element of keeping building massing at a human-scale. One of the most common methods of accomplishing this is to incorporate wall offsets (e.g., projections or recesses) of at least four feet in depth for every 30 feet of building wall. This creates separate building wall modules that may serve as storefront entrances, display windows, or locations to accommodate seating areas. We suggest the MAC require building facades facing Maple Avenue incorporate wall offsets every 30 feet of building wall. There are other ways to accomplish this objective, such as requiring storefront architecture, or requiring vertical elements to be embedded into architecture at regular intervals,

Another aspect related to design is materials composition. While neither the steering committee nor members of the Town Council are interested in detailed design requirements, most indicated a desire to raise the bar for development quality. One easy way to do this is to incorporate some very basic statements related to desired or encouraged building materials. There could also be some basic configuration requirements like ensuring the materials do not change at building corners and that heavier materials are located below lighter ones. The town may also wish to indicate its desire to avoid prototype or franchise architecture through statements discouraging that kind of design.



Wall off-sets break up façade planes and add visual interest.

Finally, we suggest the MAC district also address roof form through new menu-based standards that require the screening of rooftop equipment and requirements for flat roofs to incorporate a 36-inch parapet with a three-dimensional cornice. In addition, we suggest that buildings with pitched roofs be required to incorporate at least two different roof planes (such as those found on gable or hip roofs) instead of mono-pitch or “shed” roofs.

2.11. NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION STANDARDS



Building step-backs, or decreases in building height, are one neighborhood protection standard. In this example, the building modules on the back of the building are shorter than the ones in front. Neighborhood protection standards would require these shorter heights on the side of the building abutting single-family development.

Maintaining compatible development and redevelopment is an issue in many communities seeking to encourage infill and redevelopment. Neighborhood protection standards are provisions intended to address edge areas where incompatible development borders single-family neighborhoods (e.g., multi-story, mixed-use structures, or commercial, office, or multi-family development is located adjacent to single-family neighborhoods). The standards are established to ensure when this happens, the form of development in the edge areas is compatible with the character of the adjacent single-family development (by addressing building mass, height, appearance, lighting, signage, the location of parking lots and accessways, the location of service areas and outdoor activities, and operational conditions).

We suggest the MAC district include a set of neighborhood protection standards to protect the character of established single-family neighborhoods. The standards would apply to any new nonresidential development (e.g., commercial or office uses) or mixed-use development proposed adjacent to existing single-family residential development. The table below includes a wide range of the types of neighborhood protection standards adopted by other jurisdictions. These exact standards are not necessarily proposed for Vienna – simply provided as examples for consideration and modification as the standards are drafted. One standard of

particular importance in Vienna is the building step-back requirement. This type of standard requires building or parking garages over three stories in height to “step-back” or feather their heights from adjacent single-family homes. The intent of the standard is to ensure that building heights decrease as buildings get closer to single-family homes.

POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION STANDARDS	
STANDARD	POTENTIAL REQUIREMENTS
Building Façade Standards	Construct a similar roof type as single-family development in terms of slope and arrangement, to prevent abrupt changes in roof form
	Use colors on the exterior surfaces of buildings that are compatible with nearby single-family residences
	Orient porches, balconies, outdoor use areas, and other site attributes such as vending machines associated with attached residential development away from adjacent single-family residential uses
	Parking garage facades facing single-family homes receive design treatments to ensure the facades appear as a typical building façade and to ensure that headlight glare is not directed at single-family homes

POTENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION STANDARDS	
STANDARD	POTENTIAL REQUIREMENTS
	Use similarly sized and patterned features such as windows, doors, awnings, arcades, pilasters, cornices, wall offsets, building materials, and other building articulations included on adjacent single-family development
Building Dimension Standards	Buildings over 35 feet be stepped back in height from adjacent single-family homes, so the tallest part of the structure does not abut a single-family residential use
	Buildings be no higher than 55 feet when adjacent or within a certain distance from a single-family residential home
Site Design Standards	When dealing with multi-building developments on one or more lots, establish a continuum of use intensity where uses of moderate intensity are sited between high-intensity uses and low-intensity uses (e.g., office uses between retail and detached residential), as they relate to adjacent single-family development
Lot Size Consistency	Require lot sizes remain within 175 percent of any adjacent single-family lots bounding a development
Parking and Driveway Area Standards	Orient parking spaces away from (or parallel to) single-family residences so that headlights do not project directly into yards
	Require a ten-foot-wide fully-opaque vegetated buffer or a comparable buffer between single-family residences and nonresidential development
	Require parking for developments over 10,000 square feet be located interior to the site, and a minimum distance from single-family development
	Require adjoining parking lots serving nonresidential or mixed-use buildings be interconnected
	Require parking structure facades adjacent to single-family residences receive enhanced design treatment to soften their visual impact
Loading and Refuse Storage Area Standards	Require loading and refuse storage areas be located a certain distance from single-family development
	Require loading and refuse storage areas be fully screened from view of single-family development using materials that are the same as, or of equal quality to, the materials used for the principal building, which are compatible with the materials used for the single-family development
	Require loading and refuse storage areas be incorporated into the overall design of the building and landscaped so that the visual and acoustic impacts of these functions are fully contained and out of view from adjacent single-family development and public streets
	Require loading and refuse storage areas be located within buildings when the building served is over 5,000 square feet
Lighting Standards	Reduce footcandle values by 1/3 at lot lines of single-family development
Signage Standards	Reduce the sign area and maximum height of all signs in transition areas by 25 percent of that normally allowed
Open Space Set-Aside Standards	When open space is required, locate it in the transition area between the nonresidential/multi-family use and single-family development, unless there is a compelling reason for it to be located elsewhere on the site
Operational Standards	Curtail outdoor dining or other activities after 9:00 PM on weeknights and 11:00 PM on weekends
	Limit trash collection or other service functions to only between the hours of 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM
	Require amplified music, singing, or other forms of noise audible at the property line be extinguished (including noise from the typical production process associated with the use) after 9:00 PM Sunday through Thursday nights and 11 PM Friday and Saturday nights

2.12. SUSTAINABILITY INCENTIVES

Increasingly, communities nationwide are realizing that good development should be environmentally-sound, or “green”. This concern was echoed by members of the Town Council and the steering committee. There are increasing concerns that as a society we are using resources at a faster rate than we are replenishing them and are creating communities that will not remain livable in the long run. The current zoning ordinance includes very little in terms of the standards to promote sustainability.

To address this issue, we suggest the MAC district include a series of incentives for development that incorporates green building features. The incentives could take the form of density bonuses (exceeding 16 units an acre but not more than 21 units an acre), additional lot coverage, reductions in parking or other development standards, reduced application fees, or even expedited application review. These incentives would be offered commensurate with the provision of a range of different green building features provided by an applicant from a menu of allowable techniques included in the code. Such techniques could include LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, use of green roofs or other rainwater harvesting techniques, use of on-site generated electricity, provision of additional open space that exceeds minimum requirements, enhancement or upgrade to existing riparian buffers or other on-site natural features, provision of transit features, inclusion of shaded pedestrian walkways in parking lots, or a number of other aspects. We suggest that a menu of acceptable green building techniques be made available for development in the MAC district, and that the ability to take advantage of a range of density or other bonuses be tied to provision of these features. The amount of bonus available would be commensurate with the cost (or value) of the green building feature provided. This approach helps applicants to recover some of the costs of green building features while helping the town to become more livable and environmentally sound.



Green roofs are an example of sustainable development features that should provide some credit towards increased density, height, or lot coverage.

2.13. FLEXIBILITY MECHANISMS

An increasing number of modern development codes are including flexibility provisions and incentives that they apply to certain development contexts or preferred forms of development to add additional support for the desired forms of development or redevelopment. For example, redevelopment and infill generally occurs on vacant or underutilized sites that have difficult topographic, environmental, or access conditions, or on sites that are nonconforming with respect to some aspect of the regulations. Flexibility provisions provide additional flexibility that might make the difference in whether the site may be redeveloped or not. Incentives are added to provide increased attractiveness to the economics of redeveloping the site.

In other instances, the community might have identified important goals its wants to encourage that certain preferred development forms will achieve (e.g., mixed-use development that encourages compact development patterns which reduce traffic congestion and promote healthy lifestyles) – so incentives and flexibility provisions are added to “level, and even tilt, the playing field” toward the desired preferred development.

We suggest the MAC district incorporate a variety of flexibility mechanisms, including alternative parking or landscaping plan provisions that allow an applicant to request a deviation from the minimum parking or landscaping requirements, for good cause, and allow the town staff to review and decide the request based on a set of clear criteria that help ensure the deviation will result in equal or better site design that meets or exceeds the intent of the standards. These

kinds of alternative compliance mechanisms are becoming more common and are excellent ways to address difficult site conditions and foster preferred forms of development.

Another flexibility provision to consider is the inclusion of an administrative adjustment process. Section 18-257 already allows modifications to be considered by the Town Council during the site plan review procedure. We suggest the MAC district include the possibility for the Planning Director to consider requests to deviate from a bulk or dimensional standard (except maximum building height) by up to 10 percent through an administrative review process, based on clear criteria including in the district provisions. This kind of procedure is authorized by the Code of Virginia, and is an excellent way to facilitate redevelopment. We suggest the administrative adjustment process also be configured to allow applicants to request minor deviations from the numeric provisions included in the design standards as a means of allowing alternative (but superior) building design elements.

Finally, we suggest the MAC district revise the current C-1, C1-A, and C-2 district standards that trigger full code compliance in cases of floor area expansion or addition of 50 percent upwards to 75 percent or more additional floor area. This revision will help to incentivize the redevelopment of existing buildings and sites into larger structures more easily capable of accommodating mixed uses.